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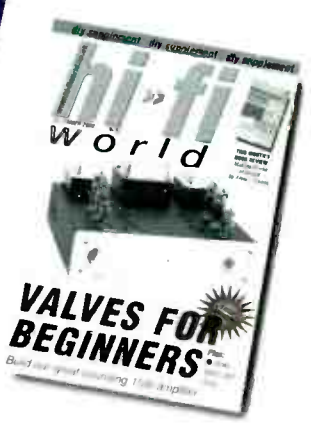
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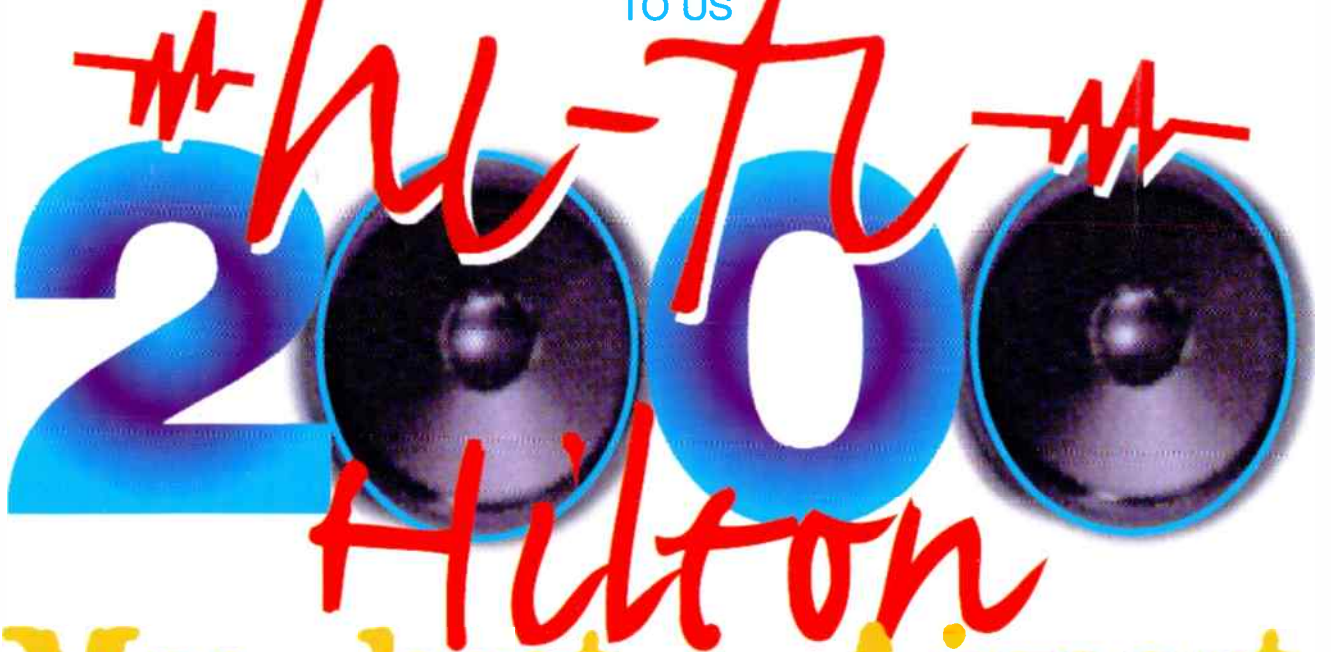
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Without doubt, this is one of the most interesting times for audio since Edison first committed 'Mary Had A Little Lamb' to roll! Things are changing, and fast. I'm a strong advocate of future formats, but with developments sprouting right, left, and centre, it's all very confusing. Reading pages of impenetrable technical info from assorted web sites and press releases doesn't help much either, as I gave up Advanced Quantum Physics at school - it clashed with Croquet.

It isn't just the way we listen to music that's changing, but the way we buy it too. I recently strolled into my local shopping centre in the heart of provincial England to buy a few CDs. Imagine my surprise when I realised the nearest Our Price had miraculously transformed overnight into something more akin to the Millennium Dome than a record shop! It's now known as a 'v shop', which stands for Richard Branson's rapidly expanding Virgin empire, owners of Our Price for some time.

The first change I noticed was that the number of CDs on show had vastly reduced, leaving only chart titles and 'campaign stock' (i.e. 'The Best Of Tina Turner', etc). Along with this culling of titles there was a reduction in price - if you bought more than one album then £14 became £11. And many others were commendably priced below this.

In place of the old shelves were racks of DVDs, portable CDs, Samsung MP3 players and mobile phones, plus five touchscreen 'Find And Buy' terminals with attached keyboards. Here you register your details, choose from a vast database of titles and either buy 'on-line' or pay at the till in the store. The contents of your on-line 'shopping basket' are then duly delivered to your door within 24 hours, P&P included.

Also installed are listening posts with up to 100,000 tracks stored on hard disc. Another terminal deals with MP3. This box of tricks explains to the general public what the format is and how you use it. You can also try out any or all of the four MP3 players in stock and listen to music files, but buying tracks in-store isn't yet available, apparently due to legal complications.

Essentially it's a good idea, as those who can't get to big City Centre stores often can't get what they want, and to v.shop's credit many an obscure title I keyed in was duly located. However, if it's meant to speed up the buying process, it doesn't. Admittedly, this store had only been open two days and there seemed to be some teething problems - only two terminals were in use and these weren't working properly due to server problems! One thing they couldn't blame on servers were the fiddly keyboards - not even a PhD in touch typing would help you out here. Oh, and the listening post discs hadn't arrived yet...

This all added up to a very time consuming experience. For sure it's a fine idea, but when more people start using these stores, the more terminals they'll need or else tempers will doubtless flare. In theory then it's a great move, and fair shout to Virgin for being the first of many to go this way. In practice though, the jury's still out for the time being. ■



Simon Pope

how we test the products

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

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SUITE G4
IMEX HOUSE
THE PARK BUSINESS CENTRE
KILBURN PARK ROAD
LONDON, NW6 5LP

Web Site
www.hi-fiworld.co.uk

Contact Numbers
Mon-Fri 9am - 6pm

General Editor
Simon Pope
+44 (020) 7625 3134
e-mail: simon@hi-fiworld.co.uk

Computer Audio World Editor
David Price

Contributors
David Price
Dominic Todd
Nick Tate

Graphic/Advertising Designer
Tyrone Taylor
+44 (020) 7625 3134
Fax: +44 (020) 7328 1844
e-mail: tyrone@hi-fiworld.co.uk

Production/Photographic Editor
David Noble
+44 (020) 7625 3134
Fax: +44 (020) 7328 1844
e-mail: davidn@hi-fiworld.co.uk

Sales & Marketing Manager
Amanda Sweeney
+44 (020) 7625 3134
Fax: +44 (020) 7625 3134
e-mail: amanda@hi-fiworld.co.uk

Private & Trade Circulation
+44 (020) 7625 3134
Fax: +44 (020) 7328 1844
e-mail: circulation@hi-fiworld.co.uk

Subscriptions & Back Issues
9.30am - 12.00 noon
+44 (0) 1923 270688
Fax: +44 01923 293 588
e-mail: subscriptions@hi-fiworld.co.uk

Accounts
Michael Oyer
+44 (020) 7625 3134
Fax: +44 (020) 7328 1844

Credit Control
Louise Palfrey
+44 (0) 1923 270688
Fax: +44 (0) 1923 293588
e-mail: accounts@hi-fiworld.co.uk

WORLD AUDIO DESIGN
Technical Manager
Nick Lucas

www.worldaudiodesign.co.uk

Tel/Fax: +44 (0) 1923 270688
e-mail: nic@worldaudiodesign.co.uk

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Noel Keywood

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With their new CDR-1000 recorder, Denon now have a foot in both the CD-R and MiniDisc camp (with their DMD-1000). David Price gets recording.

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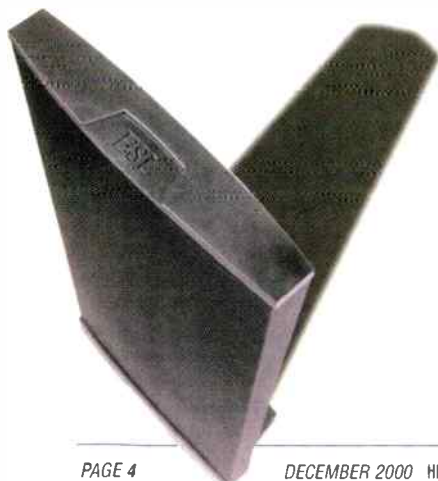


Copland have a reputation for well-built and great sounding hi-fi. Does the gargantuan CDA289 continue this tradition?

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After much anticipation from journalists and consumers alike, the replacement for the ESL-63 has arrived. Simon Pope guides you through HFW's eagerly awaited review.



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The £1,000 783 floorstander is Mission's new flagship loudspeaker. Noel Keywood discovers whether its sound is as impressive as its cabinet size!



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THIS MONTH WE REVIEW SIX FLOORSTANDERS PRICED BETWEEN £230-£350 FROM ACOUSTIC ENERGY, JAMO, KEF, QUADRAL, TANNOY AND YAMAHA. WHICH WILL EMERGE VICTORIOUS?

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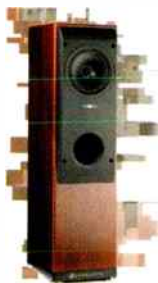
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In this month's super competition we're giving away a pair of KEF's magnificent Reference One - Two loudspeakers worth £1,350. Answer the questions correctly and they could be yours!



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David Price gives this value-packed, digital out-equipped soundcard the full treatment.

diy supplement



From ace designer Gary Devon comes our new 15W KEL-84 integrated valve amp - a kit that's perfect for beginners.

WORLD NEWS

TAG MACLAREN LAUNCH DVD



TAG McLaren Audio have launched a top end DVD player, at a top end price of £3995. For this you get a lot of fancy engineering, and a player that is upgradable from your computer.

Much like high-end CD transports, the new DVD32R uses a heavy, lead weighted platform to provide a stable base for the motor and laser assembly. TAG use an eye-catching top loading disc mechanism, with a servo-motor driven diecast cover that slides smoothly over the disc cavity. Blue LEDs light this space in the dark.

Video MPEG decoding is carried out by a Pantera-DVD highly integrated DVD chip. It's sourced from Mediamatics, a division of National Semiconductor, and has a 32-bit RISC (Reduced Instruction Set)

processor on board. TAG are majoring on the idea of using heavy on-board data processing within their products to provide future upgradability, already being a customer for Analogue Devices Melody chipset, based on the SHARC processor. The player's software is kept in re-programmable FLASH memory. Updates can be downloaded from the company's website and sent from PC to the machine via a programming cable.

TAG have also taken into account the approaching need to be able to play DVD-Audio (i.e. 24-bit resolution at 192kHz sampling rate). At present, due to hackers, the encryption algorithm has to be re-defined, and the digital output format decided. However, TAG say their transport can

read DVD-Audio, but extra hardware and software are needed.

Both NTSC and PAL are output, upgradable to progressive scan. There's remote control and a TAGtronic bus for connection to other TAG products. Video outputs provide Composite, S-Video and Component, but there's no SCART. There are SP/DIF digital audio outputs, co-axial and optical, and provision for IEC1394 (FireWire) high data rate digital link for future digital video formats.

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SACD with DVD FROM PHILIPS

Philips are to launch a hybrid DVD player in the USA that will play not only CDs, but ultra high quality SACDs (Super Audio Compact Disc) too. This is in addition to video DVDs of course. Priced at \$1999 (£1250) the SACD1000 will be introduced at the end of 2000. It should reach Europe at a similar date, but price has yet to be announced.

The player will have a very wide range of abilities, so much so most purchasers will barely understand what they are getting. Even Philips seem confused, saying it handles MPEG2, a bit like saying your new car comes with wheels. With six analogue outputs it has an on-board surround-sound decoder that will likely be able to handle the most popular Dolby

(AC3) system. Philips mention 'compatibility' with dts (digital theatre sound), but this usually means a dts digital output. The SACD1000's pickups are sensitive enough to handle low reflectivity CD-RWs.

Philips Consumer Electronics
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www.sony.co.uk

Customer information centre 08705 111 999
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World Radio History



go create

SONY

A SEA-CHANGE FOR WHARFEDALE

In addition to its success selling DVD players and TVs through Tesco, Wharfedale is attempting to re-establish itself at the peak of audio excellence - launching three new ranges of loudspeakers onto the UK market. As well as dabbling in video appliances, Wharfedale now wish to show that their previous core market hasn't been ignored.

Targeted first and foremost at the hi-fi/audiophile market is the flagship Pacific range. Three years in the making, it features Wharfedale's own bi-directional woven Kevlar cone, itself in development for over two years. This drive unit is featured in all models in the range, from the Pi-10 two-way standmount to the top-of-the-range, three-way floorstanding Pi-40.

One of the major features of the new range is the pod-mounted globe tweeter found on the top of the cabinet. The

tweeter's own enclosure is decoupled from the main cabinet, protecting it from front baffle vibration. It is positioned slightly backwards from the cabinet to improve time-alignment in an attempt to improve stereo imaging.

All models are bi-wireable and available in beech and silver, beech and black or rosewood and black. Prices range from £250 for the Pi-10 standmount to £500 for the three-way Pi-40

Wharfedale International Ltd.
IAG House, Ermine Business Park
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Cambs PE29 6XU
Tel: 0845 4580011
www.wharfedale.co.uk



Pacific Pi-20



Pacific Pi-40

MR. HIGH-END RETURNS WITH A NEW 'BABY'

Known affectionately throughout the industry as the father of the high-end, Mark Levinson has launched a new audiophile range featuring its own flagship showroom in Manhattan, Red Rose Music. This store also boasts a concert grand piano and a Sony DSD (SACD technology) recording system which is used for classical and jazz recording. This, claim Red Rose, is there because "recording live music and playing it back is necessary to understand the performance characteristics of audio components" - serious stuff.

Whilst the Mark Levinson brand name products remain in production, the man himself has teamed up with three musical and engineering colleagues (Bo Bengtsson, Victor Tiscareno and Byron Collet - the latter two of Audio Prism Inc.) to launch Red Rose Music. Mr. Levinson describes them all as being "essentially minimalists who value

simplicity".

The look of the new gear is, as you'd expect, stylish and chic. Also as you'd expect, it's not cheap.

Depending on the customer's choice of source components and configuration, the entry level Baby Reference System is expected to cost anywhere between £10,000-£15,000.

The amplifiers in the range consist of the Model One 140W monoblock power amp, the 45W Model Two power amp with a Silver Signature Model Two version using premium components.

The Model Three preamp is joined by a Silver Signature version. All of the amps use solid state FET power supply regulation which is combined with a 'pure' valve signal path. This, say Red Rose, results in the valves being only lightly used and so long-lasting and stable.

The company also produces their own high sensitivity 'speakers that use

The model Two Silver Signature power amp



Red Rose R1 with ribbon tweeter



ribbon technology combined with dynamic bass and mid range units - two floorstanding models and a bookshelf design. To finish off, there's also a range of interconnects and 'speaker cable. UK prices still have to be confirmed but the products are to be distributed by The Musical Design Company.

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MUSIC BIZ PLAYS MONOPOLY POLITICS

Warner Music has announced that its much touted merger deal with EMI has been called off. The decision was down to the European Commission's concerns that the \$20 billion Warner/EMI tie-up would be anti-competitive, giving the new company too much control over CD prices, song licensing and online music distribution.

The upshot is that both companies have decided to restructure their merger plans, then re-apply for regulatory approval. In a joint statement with EMI, Time Warner President Richard Parsons said, "we

will continue to explore ways to structure a combination that will make sense for the two companies and be acceptable to the Commission".

Whether this is good for the music business en masse remains to be seen. As EMI is currently the world's fifth largest music company (after Universal, Sony Music, BMG and Warner Music) merging with Warner would create a huge company with particular strengths in the field of online music.

According to music industry sources, based on 1999's total album

sales, Warner EMI would be the world's second biggest music seller with 25.2% of the US market, behind Universal Music's 26.4%. The danger is that if Warner and EMI don't merge, then the companies would be open to acquisition from non-music conglomerates like Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. or the Walt Disney Company. With AOL's acquisition of Time Warner, the European Commission was concerned that it could offer European users a package of Internet access with magazines, news, video and film, plus extensive music downloading facilities.



SON OF NAPSTER ARRIVES!

To add to the music industry's online woes comes news of Tropus, an erstwhile secret music application which gives complete anonymity for online music sharers. Based on Freenet, a file sharing technology designed by Irish computer programmer and Internet activist Ian Clarke, Tropus doesn't rely on a central server to pass around files but instead passes them between individual computers without identifying their source or destination. As users can't be linked to the files they're sharing, it makes it theoretically impossible to identify people using it. Tropus works in a fundamentally different way to Napster, then, and is a nightmare to police.

Despite its different architecture, Tropus offers similar functionality to Napster by providing extensive music searching capabilities and usability. Will Dye, the man behind Tropus, is reported as saying, "Freenet already provides the critical networking and security functions, so all we really need to do is put a nice wrapper around it. The hard part is that we'd like it to be friendly and stable enough to be used on the same scale as Napster -- tens of millions of users." With unmetered Net access and the likes of Tropus around, next year looks an exciting time for music fans!

next issue

Here's a selection of some of the delights that we hope to bring you in January's bumper issue.

QUAD 989 ELECTROSTATICS

Quad's new top of the range electrostatic loudspeaker, with extra bass power. Is it the ultimate 'speaker'?

QUAD QC TWENTY FOUR and QUAD II-FORTY valve amps

These are the long-awaited valve preamp and monobloc power amps from Quad. We provide an in-depth analysis.

NAIM NAIT 5

New entry level integrated amplifier from the boffins in Salisbury. Will it bring the high end to the high street?

CYRUS aCA7.5 / SmartPower pre/power + CLS70 'speakers

Cyrus launch a new pre/power amplifier and quality loudspeaker. Don't miss them!

LINN GENKI CD, KOLLECTOR, LK85 CD player and pre/power.

From the experts come three new products to whet every Linnies appetite.

COMPUTER AUDIO WORLD

Aiwa MM-VX100 - we welcome Japan's first mp3 portable.

FLOOR SHOW



The budget loudspeaker market is still as important as ever. In this month's group test, Hi-Fi World tackles six £200-£300 floorstanders head on.

There's no denying that floorstanders are a genuine attraction to many hi-fi hunters. They generally look smarter than similarly priced standmounts and there's no messing around buy-

ing stands at extra cost or desperately trying to hide ugly hanging cables. As well as looks, they also traditionally offer something their smaller relations don't - deep bass. Here we've gathered half a dozen big

boxes from Acoustic Energy, Jamo, KEF, Quadral, Tannoy and Yamaha. Which offers the best all round sonic package and value for money? Should be tough, but rocking good fun!

What we listened with: Roksan Caspian CD player, Audio Analogue Pucinni SE integrated amplifier, Musical Fidelity X-A2 integrated amplifier, Chord Company Anthem interconnect, van den Hul Royal Jade 'speaker cable.



ACOUSTIC ENERGY AEGIS TWO – £350

JAMO E850 – £300

The entry-level Aegis range from Acoustic Energy offers exceptional build for the money. The cabinet size of the Two is 840x190x244mm, meaning these won't be hidden in your listening room, and the front baffle that houses the drive units is commendably thick and solid. The drivers themselves are exactly the same as those of the standmounting Aegis One: a striking white 130mm alloy coned bass/mid partnered with a 25mm silk fabric dome tweeter. Unlike the KEFs, Yamahas and Tannoy's, the Aegis Twos are rear ported and so need to stand a fair way from rear walls to avoid boomy bass. They take up to 120W of power, so they're some of the toughest cookies in the test, but also need some driving as sensitivity is fairly low. A good 60-70W per channel is needed to get the best from them.

We've been constantly impressed with the new entry-level Aegis range from Acoustic Energy - they offer a fast, exciting listen without the crudeness that often accompanies budget boxes. Their alloy cones inject speed and punch to the sound, making them brilliantly suited to the all-out rock of Skunk Anansie. The drum kit pounded away for all it was worth, while guitars and vocals cut through the mix like a knife through butter. But they possess a trait that some could find a little wearing - due to that alloy mid/bass, midrange information can sometimes sound a bit harsh, especially with powerful compressed rock music.

With classical music the Aegis Twos didn't fare quite so well, and it's a fairly common trait with budget 'speakers. Maybe it's something to do with the fact that manufacturers presume classical music listeners have more money to spend! The Aegis Twos managed to get to rhythmic grips with Bruckner's Eighth Symphony but were found rather wanting when it came to timbre and phrasing. Despite this the Aegis Twos showed a fine treble that was smooth and nicely covered, keeping the raspy brass section under control. Still, despite a few shortcomings, they showed that they could easily cope with the large scale and orchestration of the piece.

These are good all rounders that offer fine value for money. If you're into dance or rock music they'll give a tight and fast performance that's exciting but not so forward as to get you ducking for cover.

WORLD VERDICT



Solid build and an exciting sound mean the Twos should be on your listening list. Good value too.

This speaker is what's commonly known as a 'two and a half-way' design, meaning the two mid/bass units work in parallel. Bi-wire terminals are located at the rear along with the port, and the design is finished off with Jamo's new distinctive spiked feet designed for extra stability. Using technology from the upper echelons of Jamo's pricier products like the old Concert series, the hefty cabinets are constructed from 19 and 22mm particle board with a 19mm front baffle to house the drivers. These cabinets have been slimmed down to streamline the overall look as well as improve imaging. The two Jamo mid/bass units feature a wide surround that covers the whole basket to help absorb resonances, plus mineral fibre-reinforced pressed cellulose pulp for rigidity. It's a very flat design, which often results in a wider frequency range than usual. The units employ a centre plug to avoid dust covers, which Jamo says eliminates diaphragm break ups. High frequencies are left to a 25mm textile dome tweeter.

The fact that Jamo recommend amplification up to 200W gives you some idea of the power of the 850s before you even hear them. They have a beefy sound that's full and rich, making them well suited to all rock and pop recordings. The twin drivers and large cabinet result in oodles of bass power, which although deep and fast could also boom at times - they need to be placed some way from the rear wall to avoid this. Skunk Anansie's brash guitar rock pounded through the 850s with power and poise, and Skin's vocals whilst not over detailed were clean and smooth. With large scored classical music in the shape of Bruckner's Eighth Symphony, the Jamos showed their sheer size could easily manage the scale and breadth of this vast soundscape. The only downside was that intricate detail and phrasing was lost in the quest for scale and power, as well as pin-point imaging. Treble was good, with violins smooth and brass well rounded but the double basses had a tendency to muddy the sound somewhat, which was otherwise a clear panorama.

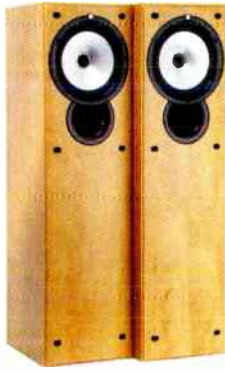
This is a big step forward for Jamo in this price range. The 850s are dynamic and powerful but lack that last ounce of detail and subtlety to raise them to the top of the pile.

WORLD VERDICT



With oodles of power, the 850s produce a big, if not always cohesive, sound with deep bass.

Measured Performance
see page 111



KEF Q35.2 – £350



QUADRAL QLX 180 – £325

Along with the relaunch of their flagship Reference Series, KEF are in the process of an overhaul of the Q Series, renamed imaginatively the Q.2 series. The Q35.2 uses the fourth generation Uni-Q technology drive unit which features a centrally mounted tweeter at the acoustic centre of the mid-range cone. This traditionally makes Uni-Q 'speakers very room friendly and disposes of a 'hot spot' listening position, so you can actually listen to music as a human being rather than a static crash test dummy!

The 35.2 uses an improved 19mm tweeter with a larger magnet than previously employed, and the 160mm bass/midrange unit has been made more rigid by using stiffer polypropylene. It's also had a touch up with the spray gun, resulting in a silver cone finish which looks better in the flesh than it does on paper. In fact, the whole package is a very attractive one and the 35.2s have a classy finish and solid build for the price. The 28 litre cabinet's interior has diagonal internal bracing to help reduce coloration, and the crossover has had the once over too. The Q35.2 is front ported with bi-wire terminals found at the bottom rear of the cabinet, and is available in black ash, cherry and autumnal dark apple.

First impressions reveal they have a deep and spacious feel - wherever they're positioned they give the same big sound. They have an undoubtedly impressive bass response too, which while not the most uncoloured or tuneful around was nevertheless satisfyingly tight. If they're put in an over resonant room however, bass could well become a problem and overwhelm the midrange and treble. Midband and treble proved very capable - Skin's vocals came over detailed and smooth, as ride cymbals glided effortlessly along in the background. Indeed, the KEFs showed a good dynamic response with Skunk Anansie, which was brought further to light with Bruckner's Eighth Symphony conducted by Solti on Decca. The low level opening of the wondrous slow movement was full of detail and depth when rising to climaxes. The KEFs showed they had plenty left in their arsenal to deliver, but could sometimes grate a little with brass and timps at full pelt. Violins also had a certain edge to them at high registers.

The Q35.2s proved a well built and designed loudspeaker that offers a big and rich sound for relatively little money. They're sensitive and easy to match with most amps, and sound good sitting virtually anywhere in the room.

WORLD VERDICT

 Well finished and full sounding with a deep and rich bass. Could be a little 'big' sounding for some rooms but they're easily among the best at the price.

Chances are you won't have heard of this company, but it's been making equipment since 1968 and is apparently the fourth largest speaker brand in Germany by volume, and has been distributed in the UK by Yello for about a year now. Although Quadral makes both professional monitors and domestic 'speakers, only the domestic products arrive in the UK. The QLX series is part of the entry-level CAERUL range, but its products extend to the dizzy heights of £3,000 VULCAN floor-standers. The company also dabbles with esoteric stuff too by the way, including ribbon tweeter technology.

The 180 replaces the previous 175 model with a host of changes. Now designed by Bernd Starke (formerly of JBL Europe), it's had a complete re-voicing. The only true three-way 'speaker in the test, whereas the previous mid and bass drivers used paper cones, the new 200mm bass and 100mm mid range units are both now graphite coated and impregnated by damping lacquer to aid stiffness. They are aligned slightly to the left of the sturdy cabinet. All Quadral's come with a confident five year guarantee from the manufacturer.

As the cabinet size suggests, these loudspeakers have a large, fulsome sound which doesn't take much driving to get reasonable volumes, making them an easy match for most amps. As Skunk Anansie's 'Weep' demonstrated, bass is very low and powerful although slightly lumpy, but the bass drum pounded forcefully enough to bring bags of drive to the track. Surprisingly enough, integration between the three drivers was very good. The midrange and treble were open and sweet, female vocals impressive and cymbals detailed, and the overall sound was pleasantly smooth. This smoothness was inherently suited to the sound of Bruckner's Eighth Symphony. Strings were rich and the bass, although heavy, still blended in with the overall sound, which was just a touch too luxuriant yet highly listenable. Again, upper frequencies were open and detailed with especially light woodwind. The 180s are well matched to classical orchestral pieces.

These are very fine 'speakers with a rich, lush sound that's runs counter to the traditional 'German sound'. They're well suited to both larger scale classical music and large scale rock and pop productions. The bass can sometimes be a bit heavy but apart from this everything's nicely integrated.

WORLD VERDICT

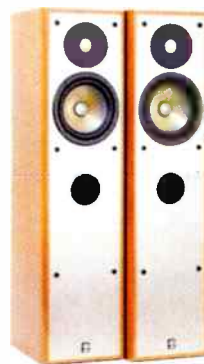
 Large, open sound from these big three-way 'speakers. Good integration but the bass could be too heavy for some.

Measured Performance see page 111





**TANNOY MERCURY mx3 –
£230**



YAMAHA NS-200 – £200

▶▶▶▶▶ The mx range replaces the m series, which was so successful that it's hard to imagine why Tannoy would want it terminated after such short a time! Still the mx is a real improvement. The '3' is the smaller of two floorstanders, and like the rest uses the same prepared and treated paper cone bass driver found in the mx2 standmounter - also in the same white finish. During the manufacture of this drive unit, the temperature and beating rate of the pulp mix is controlled in a way that attempts to result in more mid range detail. The cut-down chassis profile means the spacing between the 25mm fabric dome tweeter and the bass unit is reduced by 28mm in comparison to the m series. This results in a slimmer cabinet, which can vastly improve imaging. The cabinet itself is hardly of Centurion build but is nonetheless well put together. The front baffle is glued and screwed for extra rigidity, and the rear panel is tongued and grooved. Inside, the mx3 has two cabinet strengthening braces, plus an isolated lower chamber for mass loading should you require it. There is a biwirable crossover at the rear and a port at the front.

As well as looking good value on paper, the mx3 delivers great sound for the price. In addition to well controlled bass extension, it has a fine midrange which is shown to great effect with vocals. The brilliant voice of Skunk Anansie's *Skin* sounded alive and vibrant through the mx3s, with the thumping backing of the band in the track 'Weep' sounding both muscular and musical. What impresses most about the mx3 is its well balanced sound in respect of both timbre and frequency. Treble is full and smooth - as demonstrated with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra strings in Bruckner's Eighth Symphony on Decca under Solti - and bass natural and rounded, with that excellent midrange completing the mx3 recipe.

The mx3s are a very tasty dish for £230. They have more fullness to their sound than the mx1s or 2s and deserve a long demo from anyone in the market for a loudspeaker at this price. You get an extremely untiring yet naturally alive sound.

WORLD VERDICT


 These new Tannoys are well balanced and full sounding through and through, making them fantastic value for money.

Although these days Yamaha is primarily considered a home theatre manufacturer, the company's line up of dedicated hi-fi can produce the odd gem. These 'speakers are the middle model of three and are labelled as AV designs, although they work equally well in two channel systems and don't necessarily seem to be tweaked in the 'crash bang, wallop' style of many AV loudspeakers. Indeed, we know from previous experience that Yamaha is no mug when it comes to loudspeakers - its fast-as-lightning NS-1000M studio monitors are firm favourites here at Hi-Fi World, and many believe them one of the very best designs ever for rock and pop. Despite this, in the UK at least, Yamaha has never been recognised as a 'speaker manufacturer, which is something the new NS series could well change.

Visually very different from the rest of the bunch, the NS-200s have a certain look of the professional monitor about them. The drive units are especially unusual looking. The shiny 160mm bass/mid unit is a Polymer Injected Mica Diaphragm (PMD) design chosen for its use of natural material and high strength. The accompanying 30mm tweeter is a gold silk dome, and beneath the two drivers there's a front firing port. The MDF cabinet is well put together and there is bi-wiring capability in the crossover.

Like many of the floorstanders in this test the NS-200s have plenty of low frequency wallop. Bass guitar and kick drum in Skunk Anansie's 'Weep' thundered through these 'speakers with drive and power, but there was also a touch of the 'one note' bass syndrome here too, despite it being low. Also, with this kind of hard, forward rock music the treble showed it could be a tad grating with thickly layered guitars and Skin's screaming (although bang in tune) vocals. With Bruckner's thickly scored Austro-Germanic symphonic music the Yamahas showed they had an ace up their sleeves, in the shape of a very realistic and open midrange, which is rare at this 'budget' end of the market. The rich vibrato bowing of the Chicago Symphony's violin section was a joy to hear, even though it was sullied slightly by the 'woofy' effect of the bass.

Despite their slightly overbearing bass, the Yamahas are fine 'speakers with excellent detail and a good midrange. Like the best in this test they are equally suited to both classical and rock and will play both with the same effort.

WORLD VERDICT

 Notwithstanding slight problems at either end of the frequency spectrum, the NS-200s dish up a detailed and persuasive sound. Well worth a listen.

Measured Performance
 see page 111

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World Radio History

conclusion

This particular section of the hi-fi market has always reached a particularly high standard, and so it is this month too. It's also one of the sectors where it's



tough to pick out one particular model as an outright winner. Whereas six CD players at the same price can sound quite close to each other, six 'speakers often differ quite markedly. The CD players can be



graded on facilities and usability far easier than loudspeakers. It's mainly down to sound, which is much a matter of personal taste.



For sheer value for money our least expensive candidate, Tannoy's mX3, deserve a special mention. They sound very different to most people's perception of a budget floor-stander, which is no bad thing at all. You won't find the deepest bass from these slim cabinets, but bass isn't everything. What you do get is a very refined and articulate sound more akin to the stereotype of a £600-plus 'speaker. The midrange is light and detailed, with woodwind sounding particularly strong, and the treble sweet and smooth. Let's put it like this - these are gentlemen's loudspeakers in a boot boy's price range. A great purchase then at just £230. Thumbs up to Tannoy.



In a more traditional vein come the KEF Q35.2s and Acoustic Energy Aegis Twos. The KEFs have a beefy sound and are magnificently engineered and well put together - build is exemplary. Despite slightly peculiar impedance measurements, they sound excellent. Room placement is the easiest in the test

thanks to the excellent Uni-Q configuration and they suit all types of music. For £100 cheaper than the



KEFs a similar - if slightly rougher - sound can be gleaned for the Aegis Twos. Definitely worth a serious listen, they'll grace any room with their modern presence. Better suited to rock and pop, they have a forward but well balanced sound that few could criticise.

If bass and power are your bag, then look no further than Quadral. These are fine 'speakers with a smooth integrated sound and a good midrange and treble - there's oodles of low bass from the large cabinets. They may not be the most room friendly 'speaker in the looks department, but they are certainly easy to drive. Be warned though, they could boom easily in certain environments. Equally big bass is found in both the Jamos and Yamahas. Having a rear firing port, the Jamos are the hardest to position but the sound is big and lively with plenty of kick. Equally lively are the Yamahas, but remember that they have a lift at each end of the spec-

trum which gives a 'loudness' boost more suited to AV applications than pure hi-fi. Both are exciting with dance and rock music but are tripped up by more demanding classical recordings. **||▲**



Acoustic Energy Ltd. 16 Bridge Rd. Cirencester Glos GL7 1PO Tel: 01285 654432

Jamo UK Ltd. Oakfield Park, Bilton Road Rugby Warwickshire CV22 7AL

KEF Audio Ltd. Tovil Maidstone Kent ME15 6QP Tel: 01622 672261

Quadral Yello UK Ltd. 9 Westleigh Office Park Scirocco Close Northampton NN3 6AP Tel: 01604 491999

Tannoy Ltd Rosehall Ind Est Coatbridge Strathclyde ML5 4TF Tel: 01236 420199

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REFERENCE SERIES



static

After years of waiting, Quad has finally launched its brand new 988 electrostatics. Here's what Hi-Fi World made of Huntingdon's latest panel loudspeakers.

When audiophiles heard through the grapevine that Quad was to release two all-new electrostatic 'speakers, we held our collective breath and waited for almost three years. Now, at last, both the 988 and larger 989 models are in full production, and Hi-Fi World managed to procure an early pair of each, plus the equally eagerly awaited new QC-twenty-four preamp and II-forty monobloc valve power amps, for review. Here's our view of the ESL-988, plus a preview of the valve power amp.

YOUNGER THAN YESTERDAY

Although work on the ESL-988 started three years ago, this 'speaker shares more than a passing visual and technical resemblance to its much-loved ESL-63 predecessor - so much so that it could almost be described as a '63 'Special Edition', as fundamentally the two are the same. Circuit topology is identical, and it uses the same principle of a concentric ring of electrodes fed through a calibrated delay line - sound first leaves the centre and after a short delay leaves the next ring, and so on. This results in a spherical waveform that resembles a theoretical point source, traditionally thought to be ideal.



Despite the similarities, around ninety percent of the internal components have been re-designed, upgraded or modified. Andy Grove, who also designed the new Quad valve amps reworked the 988's audio transformers, power supply and delay line. Mylar, a strong and non-stretchable substance (and apparently often used for the sails of wind surfers), is now used as the diaphragm, as well as in the transformers. The 988s retain the same loudspeaker protection and clamping system of the 63s.

Electrostatics are easily damaged through excessive input signals, so the protection circuit uses a 'multifuse' device to prevent unwanted damage. If the panel is over-driven for any length of time, this circuit will effectively reduce drive to the 'speaker. Quad recommend caution if using power of over 100W per channel into 8ohms - the 988s should ideally be used with amps of between 20v and 30v RMS (50-100W into 8ohms). The protection circuits limit maximum input voltage to 40v, so although an insensitive load, there are no benefits from attempting to drive the 988s with a kilowatt each side!

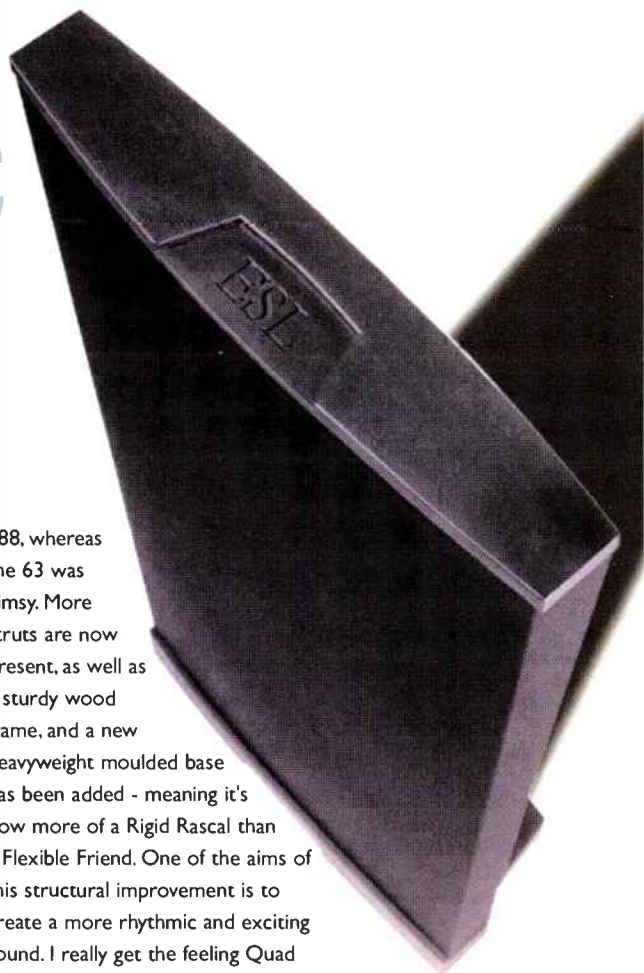
One of the most common tweaks on both the 57 and the 63 was to wedge something under the frame to angle the 'speaker upwards. Quad claims to have eliminated this problem by angling the diaphragm backwards exactly five degrees. Also, a new lighter grille has been employed, and height-adjustable floor spikes which screw into the base plate are also available. The benefits of spiking electrostatics are less than those of spiking box loudspeakers, however.

The biggest difference between the 988 and its predecessor is its superior structural integrity - special attention has been paid to the rigidity of the

988, whereas the 63 was flimsy. More struts are now present, as well as a sturdy wood frame, and a new heavyweight moulded base has been added - meaning it's now more of a Rigid Rascal than a Flexible Friend. One of the aims of this structural improvement is to create a more rhythmic and exciting sound. I really get the feeling Quad want to shake off the 57 and 63s' 'pipe and slippers' image. Quite right too, as the original Quad electrostatic design was first demonstrated in 1956

PLACEMENT

Electrostatics are more sensitive to placement than possibly any other 'speaker, despite having no 'hot spot'. As such, trying them out in more positions than you'll find in the Karma Sutra pays dividends. There are many schools of thought as to how and where you should place them in your listening room. Being a dipole design that fires to the rear as well as the front, many say you should put them either two-thirds or three quarters of the way down the listening room, angled face-on flat, rather than angled. Others say that two feet from the rear wall and slightly toed in is the way. Like most things in life, though, the best way is to find your own. Often furnishings, concrete floors and of course room size make the biggest difference. One thing's for sure though, you'll probably have to play around with the 988s for a while until you find a sound you're comfortable with. We listened to them in your average Victorian semi's front room - smallish (13' x 13') with suspended floorboards, a fairly high ceiling and an average amount of soft



electricity

furnishings. Placed about three feet in from a bay window with heavy curtains, face on (not toed in), we thus found the right balance between damping and reverberation.

SOUND

The first thing to say about the performance of the new ESL-988s is that they need lots of warming up - they didn't really come into their own until a good three days of constant use. Prior to this the sound was hollow and sucked out with a fairly unpleasant, shouty midrange. It's unwise to use cold or hard sounding amps with the 988s, as they won't subjectively match these 'speakers, which possess stronger treble than the ESL-63s. The rich sound of Audio Analogue's 60W per channel Puccini SE managed to get the 988s sounding fluid during running in. An ideal match for the 988s is powerful valve amplification like Quad's own new valve pre and power amps (see next month's issue for a full review). The new Quad II-fortys deliver 40W RMS, and this blend of power and vacuum tubes proved the ideal partner. Source components included a Roksan Caspian CD player, NAD's S500 Silverline CD player, and a Michell GyroDec turntable with Musical Fidelity X-LP2 phono stage (there's no phono input on the Quad preamp as yet). Speaker cables were van den Hul's Royal Jade and Nordost's frighteningly expensive SPM, interconnects were Chord Company's Anthem.

We started off with a finely honed recording in the shape of Copland's 'Fanfare For The Common Man' by the Minnesota Orchestra on Reference Recordings. Its fine ambience and detail shone out through the 988s. The percussion and brass section under the baton of Eije Oue seemed as though they were transported from the recording venue into my bay window, such was the realism. The bass drum solo that heralds the opening of the piece put paid to one of the myths surrounding electrostatic 'speakers -

that they have no bass. The 988s delivered seismic low frequencies coupled with that unmistakable electrostatic transparency and lack of coloration. The trumpets were smooth and yet sunny, showing a clean and detailed treble.

It's always been the mark of a Quad electrostatic that they show up fine low level detail, and the 988s continue this tradition commendably. Even at low volumes they picked up the players' movements and the odd elbow knocking the music stand. Eric Bibb's bluesy acoustic strumming on the fine Swedish Opus 3 label once again confirmed that there's nothing quite like a Quad ESL for sheer detail and presence with acoustic music. His fingers on both strings and guitar bridge were frighteningly realistic and his voice was pure and lucid beyond the standard of most cabinet 'speakers available at any price and anywhere. His brèathy, close microphoned vocals drifted cleanly into the room. It's with this type of music that the ESLs reign supreme with a totally unaffected performance - a light yet full wall of sound with excellent imaging.

Something else new to these Quads is the chance to enjoy rock, pop and dance music. The previous 'statics were always far better suited to string quartets than drum'n'bass, and this is something Quad apparently wished to put right. I tried them with CDs and LPs ranging from Smashing Pumpkins to LTJ Bukem, and the good news is that they rock. Admittedly maybe not as much as some such as Ruark's similarly priced Solstice or KEF's Reference Model Four, but they still have a real kick to them. Odyssey's 'Submerge' had the foundations shaking with amazingly low and uncoloured bass. This new-found rhythmic injection gives an upfront sound to rock and pop music that can sometimes be a little grating, especially with bad recordings.

According to our measurements there's a slight upper mid peak present in which guitars and vocals can sound harsh, but this is the only gripe with an otherwise - dare I say - surprisingly funky sound!

The 988s are truly superb performers which are well worthy of the Quad badge. Their lifelike sound and sheer presence is rarely bettered in the audiophile universe and they possess a clarity and intricacy at all volume levels that makes them without doubt 'The Best Late Night 'Speakers in The World...ever!'

Careful matching is needed. We used Quad's smooth valve amplifiers but they work well with quality solid-state amps too. Their forward nature and lucidity makes matching with solid-state amps a potentially painful experience with the wrong choice.

Although the 988s play most music with transparency and insight, they still favour acoustic and classical music over rock. If you've got lots of rock recordings ensure they're good ones, because bad recordings sound really bad. By the same token however, good recordings sound superlative. ■▶▶


QUAD ESL 988 £3 500
 Quad Electroacoustics IAG House
 Sovereign Court
 Finsbury Business House
 Hurlingham, Cambs PE18 6WA
 Tel 01480 447700



Quad's new II-forty monobloc valve power amp. The original Quad II is in the background.



The new Quad ESL-989 and below the ESL-988

WORLD VERDICT

 Partner with suitable amplification and the 988s offer the unmistakable transparency of an electrostatic coupled with a firm hold on rhythm and bass. The bizzol!
Measured Performance see page 111



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How an electrostatic works

► An electrostatic loudspeaker uses a thin lightweight Mylar film to move air, instead of a plastic or paper cone. Much like a sheet of Clingfilm, it is feather light, so problems associated with moving mass, such as colouration and the coarseness that comes from 'breakup' are eliminated.

The film is driven over its entire surface by an electrostatic field. This replaces the coil and magnet of a cone loudspeaker and is a massless drive system that distributes the drive force evenly across the film. Again, this is an ideal way of doing things.

Our diagram shows in simple outline how an electrostatic like the 988 is constructed. Fixed outer electrodes carry the varying audio signal, stepped up to thousands of volts by a transformer fed from the amplifier. The thin, vibrating diaphragm lies between the electrodes, stretched in a frame. Its tension is critical. Sound generated by the diaphragm passes out through the perforations in the electrodes. An

electrostatic needs a mains supply and carries on-board protection and voltage supply circuits.

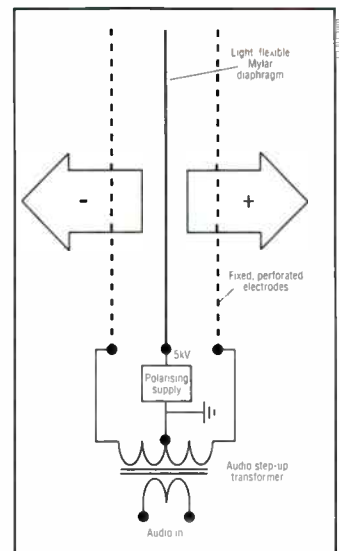
The original Quad ESL-57 used a vertical-strip central treble panel, flanked by bass panels. The ESL-63 used a series of annular ring electrodes, connected by a delay line, to simulate the radiation pattern of a point-source. The new 988 retains this system. Quad have revised and improved the physical structure and component quality of the ESL-63, they say, to derive the 988, rather than make fundamental changes.

In operating principle, electrostatic loudspeakers appear perfect. In practice they are difficult to get right. Although the diaphragm has little mass, the perforated electrodes, safety screens and dust screens through which the sound must pass can affect the sound. Electrostatics work at thousands of volts, so need internal power supplies. The diaphragm has a constant, evenly distributed charge maintained by a 5kV polarising supply. An audio input transformer steps up the audio signal

to many thousands of volts on the outer electrodes, as well as providing isolation from the amplifier.

Maximum volume is less than that developed by a cone loudspeaker. Protection circuits prevent overload, which would otherwise lead to sparking. Most parts must be specially sourced or manufactured, unlike cone loudspeakers where parts are produced world-wide. Even getting the right film tension is critical, a black art understood by few except Quad.

In spite of the difficulties and limitations, a good electrostatic loudspeaker can deliver a sound unmatched by other drive systems. The 988 further refines Quad's unique position in this field.



Quad introduced their first electrostatic loudspeaker back in 1957. Called "Walker's little wonder", after company founder Peter Walker, it was one of the earliest commercial designs and became world famous. Gilbert Briggs, founder of Wharfedale - not then allied to Quad - said "I remember meeting Stanley Kelly (a maker of ribbon loudspeakers) at the first demonstration of a full range ESL at

the Waldorf in 1955, when we solemnly agreed to change into black and meet in due course in the workhouse". As good as it was, Quad's new electrostatic didn't put conventional loudspeaker manufacturers out of business, but its introduction caused quite a stir in Britain and America.

Known at the time as the Quad Electrostatic it was later dubbed the ESL-57 to distinguish it from the ESL-63. This is a little confusing because the ESL-63 was introduced in 1981; development was started in 1963.

Quad's first electrostatic had a vertical strip tweeter, flanked on either side by bass panels. Technically, the drawback of this arrangement is lateral lobing, but in practice Quad owners rarely complain about it because after spending so much on such a special loudspeaker they don't listen off-axis. All the same, Peter Walker decided he could improve matters, moving to a complex point-source radiator in the ESL-63, a system retained in the 988.

Quad is now a part of Wharfedale, itself owned by International Audio Group (IAG), based in China. The company started development of the new 988 and 989 two years ago at their Huntingdon headquarters and all manufacturing is carried out there. ■ ▲



Peter Walker – founder of Quad



The ESL-57



The ESL-63 with grille cover removed

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NAD's budget C340 integrated amplifier now has a bigger brother in the beefy shape of the C350. Simon Pope listens to this New Acoustic Dimension.

NAD has a long and distinguished history in the field of integrated amplifiers. Ever since the classic 3020 was launched in the exotic surroundings of Harrogate in 1980, NAD has continued to prove that good sound can come in low price packages.

The C350 shows things at camp NAD haven't changed much, least of all in the looks department. At £300 it's a more powerful version of the £270 C340 integrated but doesn't replace it, the latter continuing in production for some time yet. Both share seven line inputs, including two tape loops.

Turntables can be accommodated by purchasing NAD's external PI moving magnet phono stage, which is brilliant value at just £40. In keeping with tradition the 350 also has the same defeatable tone controls - no bad thing for budget amps.

Improvements to the C350 are numerous, centring around the improved power output which is up to a claimed 2x60W, from the 50W of the 340. Our tests showed it nearly hit 100W!

The remote control now features a standby function and can operate a full stereo NAD system using their NAD link function. There is also a weighty new toroidal transformer, plus shorter signal paths and relay input switching for smoother operation. Round the back lie two pre-amp outputs (instead of the single one found on the 340), making bi-amping a possibility. In a final nod to sophistication, all sockets are gold plated. As far as aesthetics go, the familiar military look still prevails but

the 350 manages to be a little more streamlined.

There was little wrong with the sound of the 340, but the 350 manages to improve things beyond the £30 price difference. Using my reference Mission 782s, I encountered a powerful and clean sound that wouldn't be out of place £300 further up the price scale. Massive Attack's *Mezzanine* album on CD thundered through the speakers with authority and muscle. The repeated bass line of the opening track 'Angel' rumbled the floorboards with supreme control, showing that clean, deep bass is a priority of the new amp. It's not only the bass that impresses, but the midrange is open and clear with vocals especially expressive and lyrical. The NAD gave a highly powerful rendition of this album, showing compelling grip and rhythmic integrity.

This excellent phrasing quality heard on the Massive Attack track was just as enjoyable on an SACD of Faure and Ravel's *Piano Trios* on Hyperion records, performed by the Florestan Trio. Having an experienced knob twiddler in the shape of Tony Faulkner at the helm, this disc's sound is superlative, and the NAD communicated it in no uncertain terms. It really made the most of the deep and natural soundstaging in this recording, with piano placed tightly to the rear right

and the strings left and central. This was all very subtly done though - none of your Beatles' Revolver-era stuff here! As the bows dug hard into the strings, the NAD made things sound deliciously realistic and intense. All in all, a beautifully balanced and well rounded performance.

Purists will doubtless sniff at the tone controls, but they worked well on the C350. A quick twiddle revealed that they're not as severe as some on the market and could usefully be employed on certain types of music and recordings. Used frugally, treble never became over harsh or the bass too boomy.

Overall, this latest NAD easily rivals the class best, and indeed anything up to the likes of Audio Analogue's £475 Puccini, which just brings a touch more subtlety to proceedings. Whatever type of music you play through the C350 and whichever ancillaries you use, you'll get the same committed and musical sound time and time again. The only downside is the styling - many amplifiers at the price look better, but then again very few sound as good. ■

NAD C350 £300
 Lembreke UK Ltd
 unit 2, Old Wolverton Road
 Milton Keynes
 MK12 5NP
www.lembreke.co.uk


WORLD VERDICT



The C350 has a lot going for it. A well balanced and natural sounding amplifier that's hard to better at £300.

Measured Performance see page 111





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WIN A PAIR OF KEF REFERENCE ONE - TWO

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In keeping with our habit of giving away gear that we'd all love to have in our own homes, this month sees a pair of KEF's stunning Reference One - Two loudspeakers up for grabs.

KEF was founded in 1961 by electrical engineer Raymond Cooke. The 'factory' was a Nissin Hut on the premises of Kent Engineering & Foundry, a metalworking operation beside the River Medway, near Maidstone, Kent. The first production model, the K1, was an immediate success. It was followed by the bookshelf Celeste.

In 1967 two new drive units, the B110 and B200, appeared. They sold over three million units, appearing in other loudspeakers around the world. Then a new, smaller tweeter called the T27 arrived, which led to the famous BBC/KEF collaboration and the LS3/5a, of which over two million units were sold.

KEF introduced their first Reference Series model, the 104, in 1973. It swept reviewers, then customers off their feet. 1977 saw the most radical KEF design yet in the Model 105 which, apart from setting new standards for flat frequency response, introduced a design concept where the mid and treble were split from the bass chamber and placed within a contoured, moulded enclosure above it. The ability to angle the head unit allowed users to tailor the 105 to their own environment. This loudspeaker captured popular interest. The Daily Telegraph featured it on the front cover of its magazine supplement.

More Reference Models followed. 1978 saw the launch of the 103 and 101, and in 1979 a further refined 105/2 Model appeared. 1986 saw the debut of the 104/2, regarded as one of the world's truly outstanding loudspeakers.

In 1988 came Uni-Q. This co-axial driver was evolved by KEF over

several years, and made a single point source a reality. The HF units used Neodymium/Iron/Boron rare-earth magnets developed for the NASA space programme. Ten times more powerful than a conventional loudspeaker magnet, this material allowed KEF engineers to make a tweeter small enough to fit within the bass unit coil former at the precise acoustic centre of the cone. Uni-Q technology delivered well-defined stereo imaging over a much wider listening area without the need for a 'hot-spot' in the listening room.

In 1994 and 1995 the company brought out the versatile and appealing Q Series, and the new Reference Series Models One, Two, Three and Four. Then, at the end of 1994 the company launched three loudspeakers that were to become one of KEF's most spectacular success stories in recent history - the Coda series.

Today's latest Reference Series has had an internal makeover of the crossover to enhance its already excellent sound. This updated Reference Series is quite exceptional in terms of quality, finish and sonics. All Reference models still use Uni-Q technology and are hand-finished with beautiful real wood veneers. The quality of the new Model One - Two bowled us over in our October issue, with wide soundstaging, tight, tuneful bass and sweet treble. With a cultured sound that's matched by equally sophisticated looks, the Reference One - Twos are winners.

Speaking of which, getting your hands on this brilliant pair of 'speakers couldn't be

easier!

Simply answer the following questions on a postcard and send it to this address before November 30th, 2000.

The lucky winner will be picked out of Hi-Fi World's baseball cap.



Competition Questions

[1] What does KEF stand for?

- [a] Kentish Electrical Foundation
- [b] Kent Engineering & Foundry
- [c] Killer Electronics Fear
- [d] Kopyright Equity Front

[2] Who founded KEF?

- [a] Roger Cook
- [b] Raymond Chandler
- [c] Peter Cook
- [d] Raymond Cooke

[3] Which KEF/BBC monitor sold over 2 million units?

- [a] LS3/5a.
- [b] LS4/5a
- [c] QS3/5a
- [d] L.S. Lowry

[4] In which year was the first reference model launched?

- [a] 1873
- [b] 1973
- [c] 1978
- [d] 2001

Please send all entries to:

Hi-Fi World
December Competition,
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digitally

Denon's brand new CDR-1000 CD burner

David Price listens in



It hardly seems a moment since Denon gatecrashed Sony's budget MiniDisc party with its superb DMD-1000. Here was a capable machine at a stormingly low price, with great build quality. It was one high profile entrance to the digital recorder market, that's for sure!

Two years later MiniDisc isn't quite at the forefront of Denon's mind anymore. The DMD-1000 remains in production, but is now beginning to look old. Instead of updating it, Denon has turned its corporate gaze to CD-R. Perhaps this is a wise move, since MD is 10 years old now and sales aren't strong.

So does Denon's new £399 CDR-1000 work the same magic as its spiritual predecessor? Well, at four and a half kilos you can't help noticing that it doesn't feel as solid as the DMD-1000, lacking its mass and slick, almost high-end finish. True, you do get an aluminium front panel (which looks rather fetching in champagne gold, it must be said), but it's hardly Mercedes S-Class quality, and the Philips-sourced display looks very cheap and not-so-nice.

Overall dimensions are 434x100x285, which are noticeably smaller than the DMD-1000 incidentally. Rather, the CDR-1000's build seems par for the price - adequate and nothing more. Its feature count is rather more potent however, boasting everything from a 24bit D/A

converter to full CD-R text (disc, artist, track) compatibility. There's a fine sounding sampling rate converter, meaning you can commit your 48kHz DAT tapes to silver disc with relative impunity, and a host of digital ins and outs (2 coaxial and 1 optical, plus 1 coaxial and 1 optical respectively). Other features include a useful External Monitor facility, a myriad play modes, Disc Synchro recording which automatically finalises discs, and the ability to write to both audio CD-R and CD-RW blanks.

GOING FOR A BURN

Unlike earlier hi-fi CD recorders I've tried, this is a pretty painless one to use. You just insert a disc, press the INPUT button to tell the CDR-1000 where to record from, press the REC MODE button to display 'REC MANUAL' and set the level, displayed in dB, so the meter never gets into the red. Usefully, you can choose manual level control whether recording from a digital or analogue source, meaning you can notch up levels on under-recorded pre-recorded music discs.

By pressing REC MODE again, you can then choose 'RECORD DISC' or 'RECORD TRACK', depending on whether you want to digitally copy an entire disc or just a specific track. Using the Disc Synchro facility, the Denon will then start recording when it detects a signal reaching its digital

inputs. For automatic finalisation after recording, 'MAKE CD' sets and seals the disc, meaning it can't be recorded or added to, but can be played in virtually all modern CD players. Simple, huh? Of course, if you're recording from an analogue source, you can manually start and stop the recording as you would a cassette deck, for example, and choose to finalise the disc when you've finished by pressing the 'FINALIZE' button.

PLAYBACK SOUND

As a standalone £400 CD player the Denon is surprisingly good. It would be foolish to pretend it's up to the standards of the best CD separates in this price bracket, but nor is it a million miles away. Essentially it has a fast but smooth sound that glosses over the deep, inner detail of recordings in the name of making simple, enjoyable music.

In truth, it isn't crude sounding as others have said - if anything it's a little woolly. Put on BeBop Deluxe's 'Modern Music' and what you get is a light, breezy and thoroughly enjoyable rendition of the song. Low bass was obviously lighter than my reference top-of-the-range Sony ES CD player, but is nevertheless far from weak. Indeed, upper bass is actually fairly warm, the only concession to the reference player being its inability to really punch out dynamic inflections on bass guitars. Rhythmically the

remastered

is what happens when the king of budget MiniDisc recorders decides it's time for a change.



Denon is less accurate, adding noticeable overhang to walking basslines such as those on Corduroy's 'High Havoc'. It isn't an unpleasant effect, and if anything actually adds a little extra weight to the low frequencies which partly compensates for its lightness at the very bottom of the range.

One reason this slight slurring of upper bass notes isn't too harmful is the Denon's sprightly midband, which romps through every type of music you play in it. Again, compared to both the reference Sony and class leading CD separates like Arcam's Alpha 7SE, you notice a little too much cotton wool added to the gaps between the notes, but the CDR-1000 still manages to capture the essence of the song's rhythms and get it out through the speakers. This means that on music as diverse as 4Hero's 'Universal Love' and the slick rare groove of Lonny Smith's 'Drive', you always get the full gist of the song, if not the last ounce of detail. Against all the odds, the Denon is a real music maker.

In other respects like stereo imaging and soundstaging, the CDR 1000 falls further behind the class best. Bill Nelson's trademark guitar licks permeating 'Modern Music' hung back in the middle of the acoustic with the Denon, whereas the reference had them screaming from the front of the mix. Likewise, stage depth is also compressed, and the

deep sumptuous acoustic of Corduroy's 'London England' found itself rather flattened. Tonally and timbrally, the Denon is also a little off the pace of the likes of the Arcam Alpha 7 - treble is a touch too splashy and rolled off, although thankfully not hard or brash.

Overall though, the Denon's playback performance seems more than the sum of its parts. Even by top budget CD standards, it's an enjoyable listen. Indeed, if you don't mind forsaking some detail and dynamics, it's good enough to use as a main CD player. Interestingly, many of the Denon's failings in these respects are down to its internal transport - connect it to a standalone high end CD transport like Teac's VRDS-T1 and you'll find its onboard digital converter really isn't half bad!

RECORDING QUALITY

Using the superb transport from my Sony player (Trichord Clock 3 modified, I might add), the Denon produced fine CD-R recordings. The sound was very slightly softened and flattened out, but this is as much down to the vagaries of the dye used in the CD blanks as the recorder's laser mechanism and electronics. A recording of Scritti Politti's 'Absolute' proved just a touch compressed with a marginal sharpening of high treble and lightening of low bass. The effects really weren't that noticeable though,

and far less than either cassette or MiniDisc.

Running a 48kHz DAT recording of some live jazz music in through the Denon's sampling rate converter, the CDR-1000 burned a great sounding disc, this time slightly softening the treble (which is a give-away sonic signature of the sampling rate conversion process). Via its analogue input the Denon was less accomplished, compressing and muddying the sound somewhat compared to the A-D converter in my Sony TCD-8 DAT portable. It still isn't bad, just not really up to the high standards achieved by direct digital input at 44.1kHz. Overall though, a good result indeed.

CONCLUSION

The CDR-1000 is a strong player all right, if not as gobsmacking as the old DMD-1000 MD recorder. Build is noticeably poorer, and the ergonomics aren't heroically good either. Sound is up to the standards of the class, and being uncompressed, better than the DMD-1000 with ATRAC compression. The only problem is that this Denon isn't comprehensively better than Pioneer's PDR-509 rival at nearly half the price, making it only reasonable value for money. ■▲

Denon CDR-1000 £399.95
Hayden Labs Ltd., Hayden House,
Chiltern Hill, Chalfont St Peter Bucks
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WORLD VERDICT



Accomplished all rounder, but faces stiff competition in an increasingly competitive market.

Measured Performance see page 111

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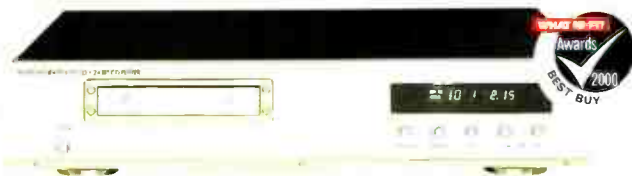


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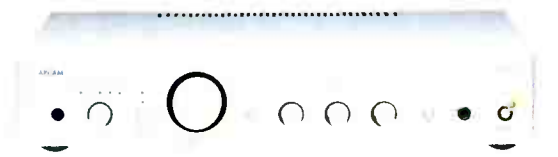
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THE HI-FI INSIDERS GUIDE

If you're seeking audio perfection, there are a few things you should know. In the first of three articles, David Price gets to grips with the nitty gritty of buying hi-fi.

Okay, so you've just had a fruitful flutter on the gees, Camelot's two fingers have pointed obligingly at you, or your favourite Uncle has just vacated his mortal coil. Now you want to spend real money on hi-fi, so what do you do?

Well, if you're anything like I used to be, you'd hot foot it down to your nearest dealer and blow it on something that just happens to take your fancy at the time. In a desperate bid to get your yearly equipment fix, you 'buy now and repent at leisure'. Then, when you plug it in to find it sounds like a sack of spanners, suddenly you're in the ignominious position of having to sell the darn thing, barely hours after you've bought it. This is bad enough, but then there's the small matter of having to sell the darn thing for a fraction of what you paid for it. Ouch.

Not a nice position to be in, but as Hi-Fi World's classifieds attest, an alarmingly common one nevertheless - don't forget that every ad tells a story! Of course, this is a worst case scenario, but it's happened to all of us at least once on our long and tortuous path to audio Nirvana. So how to stay on hi-fi's straight and narrow?

[1] SHORTLIST INTELLIGENTLY

Much as it would like to think so, Britain's hi-fi press isn't the fountain of all knowledge - dealers and manufacturers alike constantly voice their disbelief that people believe everything they read in hi-fi magazines. So when shortlisting kit you're thinking of buying, take equipment reviews as rough guides only, as introductions to particular products on test, rather than the last word.

Whichever magazine(s) you buy, read reviews in the context of the reviewers that wrote them. Get to know their preferences, and if you share them then take heed, otherwise take a pinch of salt. Make no mistake, reviewers' tastes differ dramatically, and reviews are about honestly expressing opinions based on personal preferences. That's why you have to read between the lines.

Remember that there's no best product, and that hi-fi is about finding the compromise that best suits you. Some people love valves, some transistors. The same goes for analogue and digital, MP3 and MiniDisc, moving coil speakers vs. electrostatics. Ultimately there's no black and white answer, just shades of grey. If a reviewer says 'this is the best' then always assume it has an invisible 'I think.' before it. With this in mind, don't pay too much

attention to magazine awards - many industry insiders privately admit that they're more about promoting the publication concerned than enlightening the buying public. It's marketing.

This said, it's also dangerous to go to the opposite extreme and assume everything in the hi-fi press is a cynical attempt to extract advertising revenue or payola from manufacturers and importers. Many people are quite convinced that hi-fi hacks only write good reviews if they've first collected a briefcase full of used notes from the boot of a getaway Jag. Unfortunately (!) this simply isn't true. If journos are well-disposed to certain brands, it's usually down to more prosaic reasons like having useful PR guys able to get review kit to them at short notice. In publishing, it's invariably cock-ups rather than conspiracies which cause iffy reviews. Every magazine has been known to rush-review something in a bid to meet publishing deadlines, and this is when standards suffer.

So when shortlisting equipment, think first about why you're spending more money on hi-fi? Do you want a major sonic improvement, or something with more facilities and upgradeability? Read magazine reviews to get a feel for the general nature of the various products available, then take this next essential step:



[2] FIND A GOOD DEALER

Forget the source, amp or 'speakers. The single most important part of your hi-fi system is a decent dealer. It might be an unfashionable thing to say, especially to Hi-Fi World readers who are famously individualistic and experimental when system building. But ultimately the only way to tell whether something's going to work in your system is to find someone who'll let you try it.

Like setting your tracking angle or positioning your speakers, finding dealers requires a degree of experimentation. The easiest way of sussing out them out is by looking at the equipment they stock. If the store is crammed wall-to-wall with mass market entry level Japanese gear, you'd be right to think this isn't the place to audition a Goldmund Reference turntable. On the other hand, those with kit on dem bearing strange esoteric names (and price tags) probably aren't the best place to find that 3150 CD player you were looking for. Use the franchise list as your first indicator of whether the dealer is right for you.

After checking Hi-Fi World's incredibly handy Dial-a-Dealer list to find some obvious candidates in your general area, pick a rainy day (sunny days are better spent on your Harley

Davidson) and go on a reconnaissance mission armed with your favourite music. Go inside and tell the salesman what system you're running and that you're looking to upgrade. First, see if he's familiar with it, and then wait for questions like 'why are you upgrading?' and 'what for?' to come before the usual 'how much do you want to spend?'

See what the dealer suggests, and how he suggests it. Is he listening to you? Does he know enough about your existing system to advise? Is he prepared to take time to get to the bottom of your upgrade problems?

Next, do some auditioning. Look for dealers with single speaker dem. rooms. Check they have good acoustics (clap your hands - if there's an echo, you're likely to hear more of the room than the system). If the dealer says his dem. room has deliberately poor acoustics in order to resemble 'real life' listening environments, take this as a bad sign. You wouldn't test drive a performance car with bald tyres because many people drive their Fiestas around on worn out rubber now, would you?

Check that he's an authorised dealer, and that he hasn't got equipment in on the cheap through some grey import channel. This might affect your warranty and servicing

situation later, not to mention the fact that some Japanese kit (like Sony, for example) is specially tweaked for the UK only.

If you really like what you hear, see if the dealer does a home dem. This might involve you buying the equipment - for a full refund if not satisfied - or putting down a deposit like a car rental company. Hearing the kit in your own system is absolutely the best way to tell whether or not you're making the right move.

Although 'committing yourself' to the dealer by buying stuff on approval in this way might frighten you, it's a hell of a lot less frightening than taking something home you've just bought and paid for to find it sounds crap.

Finally, when you've established that you've found a decent dealer, keep an open mind. Many hi-fi retailers lament how people come in expecting to buy certain products simply because they've counted up the awards it's won and simply don't entertain the possibility that a product from a less well reviewed brand could be better. So don't make your mind up before you enter the store, or flatly dismiss less 'critically acclaimed' kit. It could well be better in your system or possibly better outright. Go forth with an open mind and open ears.

A good dealer will save you more money than you think!





...only buy classic products that you know still have spares available

||▶ [3] MIX CAREFULLY

If you've got a single make system, the sad news is that you're not getting the best sound per pound. Quite simply, all hi-fi companies do some things well and some not so well. It's rare even to see one manufacturer doing two or more storming products, so the chances of finding a one make system comprising the pick of turntables, CD players, tuners, digital recorders, amplifiers and speakers are slim. This is because designers employed by hi-fi manufacturers have speciality areas in which they positively shine. In other fields, like FM tuners for example, they won't be so accomplished, and might even buy-in a middling design from an OEM (Outside Equipment Manufacturer) in order to offer a complete system. Again, use your ears and your dealer productively to get the right system. Be prepared to mix and match if you want decent sound.

It's important at this point however to remember that a system is about the sum of the parts, rather than the parts themselves. You could assemble a system using leading products from all categories and still it could sound terrible, thanks to the dreaded system synergy factor. On a simple level it's obvious - don't match bright, strident CD players with bright, strident amps and speakers and then expect to not get headaches. Given that you've got a soft-around-the edges amp like Audiolab's old 8000a, you might like to get a bright, lithe sounding CD player like Sony's SCD-XB940 to partner it. If you've got a Naim Nait 3, better go for an Arcam Alpha 8SE if you want to get out of your listening room alive.

On another level there are issues at stake like how much to spend to get a useful improvement, and how much of your funds you should allocate to each different link in the chain? This is the eternal system building dilemma, and there's no real universal answer. Again, a good dealer becomes invaluable here, allowing you to audition, say, £1000 amps and speakers with your existing source to see which gives you the biggest bang for your buck. Generally, it's still no bad idea to allocate more funds to the source than to the amp or speakers, because even the best ancillaries won't make a naff front end sound like a million dollars.

[4] USED BUYERS BEWARE!

Let's be honest here - loads of new products on the market today are rubbish - and t'was ever thus the way. In the same way that many people want utilitarian cars to get them from A to B and car manufacturers duly oblige, most audio buyers are after something that switches on and off easily and doesn't break down, end of story. This has led many audiophiles to conclude that much of what passes for hi-fi today is bland, characterless factory fodder that isn't for them. As a result, many look to audio's glorious past for a bargain.

Of course, readers of this august mag have more than a passing interest in classic kit from yesteryear. There's no doubt the likes of Leak TL12s, Garrard 301s and Quad ESL57s - and other classics of their ilk - are stormingly good products. The problem is though that hi-fi's historic greats are now getting expensive, old and unreliable too.

So don't forget that if you choose to go the 'classic' way, you stand to

lose a lot. In pursuit of 'amazing bargains', far too many people end up spending thousands of pounds on something advertised by a bloke they've never met before living in a dodgy bedsit in Plymouth. If it goes wrong, there's no comeback, and if they get it home and it doesn't sound as good as their existing kit, they've wasted their cash

If you're contemplating buying something second-hand, the first thing to do is phone the manufacturers or importers and ask if they can still service it, or supply spares and a service manual. If not, you'd be better off buying new, unless the seller is asking such a low price that you wouldn't take too much of a loss if it went wrong. (For example, we spotted an ad for an old Technics turntable for £400. With virtually no spares support, you buy it, take it home, it stops going round and you've just thrown all your cash away!) If you do decide to go 'classic', there are a number of specialists who advertise in the back of Hi-Fi World that are generally well established and respected in the industry. Other than buying a brand that still supports every product it's ever made, like SME or Quad, these are your best bet.

Overall, buying hi-fi should be a relaxing and enjoyable experience with a thoroughly worthwhile result at the end. Unless you're willing to gamble, don't blindly accept magazine awards, mail order retailers, junk shops, unsupported 'classics' and shark-like box shifters. Find a good dealer. Then you'll be able to get into the music instead of having to worry about unloading something you bought in error. ■



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music maestro..

Simon Pope encounters two types of conductor, each with a different way of making music.

VAN DEN HUL ROYAL JADE HYBRID 2.53 metre, terminated

Dutch company van den Hul are without doubt one of the best all-round cable manufacturers in the biz. Head honcho in Holland, A.J. van den Hul, is personally involved with each product design and his experience in both cable and cartridge making is next to none. Named apparently not because of its green hue but for its 'noble musical qualities' and durability, this twin-lead cable is part of the VHD Hybrid range.

The 'Hybrid' of the title lays in the construction of the conductors, whereas cable such as The First, First Ultimate and The Second use pure carbon technology, Royal Jade uses a copper/carbon mix. The two 2.53mm (cross-sectioned) conductors are each constructed of 126 strands of high purity Matched OFC (Crystal Oxygen Free Copper) with a highly dense pure silver coating. They are then covered by a Linear Structured Carbon saturated layer to transform the radiated magnetic field back into an audio signal. Carbon is a product to which van den Hul are truly committed and their results have been often outstanding. The green outer jacket is made from HULLIFLEX 4, a substance known for its flexibility and shielding capacities.

The Royal Jade is a bit of a gem sonically as well as in name. It delivers a clean and insightful performance with any music. Used between Quads new valve power amps and their 988 electrostatics, Playing Copland's 'Fanfare For The Common Man' the imaging was excellent and bass fast and exciting, as the bass drum intoned the opening to the rear of the mix. This created a spaciousness that was very realistic and engaging.

To a small extent these cables have some brightness about them, but it's a bonus rather than a penalty, counterbalancing the smooth and sophisticated sound of the Quad system to make a great pairing. Brass notes were clean and crisp, but never harsh and the whole scale of the piece was perfectly conveyed. This is a musical and exciting cable that I could happily live with at home. It's well suited to most applications but will give a real lift to sluggish components, and represents excellent value for money. ■

van den Hul UK Ltd.
Tel: 020 8997 4280

No, my finger didn't hit an extra digit on the keyboard. Hard as it may seem to some of you, this 3m pair of 'speaker cable will set you back just the right side of three grand should you feel inclined or inspired to purchase them. This is definitely one to keep away from the dog - a real three Michelin-star chew!

To some, SPM - Speed, Precision, Musicality (or is that Money?) - is the Holy Grail of cable. Like their Blue Heaven and Red Dawn, Nordost's SPM is a Teflon flat design 44mm wide and only 0.95mm thick, derived from US space programme work. It's easily stuck under the carpet, but why do this when you've spent £2,800 on it? - it ideally ought to be framed. It has 32 conductors of solid OFC and they're extruded with 60 microns of pure silver. This basically results in transmission at over 95% the speed of light.

For this kind of money cable is either going to be mind-blowing or a disappointment, there's no in-between. Happily I can report SPM is the former. It's quite unlike any cable I've heard before; it gives simply amazing insight and presence. The opening bass drum thump of 'Fanfare For The Common Man' blew my wig off - the dynamics were frighteningly realistic and fast. With SPM you hear exactly when something starts and when it stops, the silences become part of the music and you sit on the edge of your seat waiting for the next note. Partnered with Quad's new 988 electrostatics, detail was simply jaw-dropping - you could almost hear the players breathing - and bass was bone crunching and as fast as...well, 95% the speed of sound, whilst treble was sweet and natural. It simply doesn't get in the way of the music, it's ironic that you have to pay nigh-on £3,000 for this effect!

You get a lifetime guarantee and they come in a lockable, velvet lined box, but no safe is supplied to put them in at night! I suppose you're asking yourselves one question, would I have them at home? You bet, they sound absolutely unlike any other cable and I don't think the grass would be any greener elsewhere. Would I pay the money? If I had it, and after a few whiskies, perhaps. Truly a sonic experience to savour. ■

Nordost UK Ltd.
Tel: 01352 730251

Everything but

Noel Keywood encounters Mission's flagship 783 floorstander.

“**E**verything but the kitchen sink” isn't good enough for Mission.

With the 783 they give you the kitchen sink, or at least a spin off from it. I'm alluding to a time before stainless steel, when kitchen sinks were big, buff coloured affairs with inch thick ceramic walls. These things were strong and defiantly inert. The loudspeaker business, in its search for the perfect cone material, likes the sound of anything inert - and its lack of sound too. The 783's bass/midrange driver has a Keraform ceramic matrix cone to minimise coloration.

Cone material has a pervasive impact upon sound quality. Its characteristic affects everything, giving a loudspeaker what can almost be described as a flavour. Plastic cones were often accused of being “quacky”, whilst metal cones “ring”. Not unsurprisingly these characteristics are the ones we normally associate with the material in every day life. Kitchen sinks don't have a sound of their own so someone had the bright idea of using them as a cone material, hence Keraform.

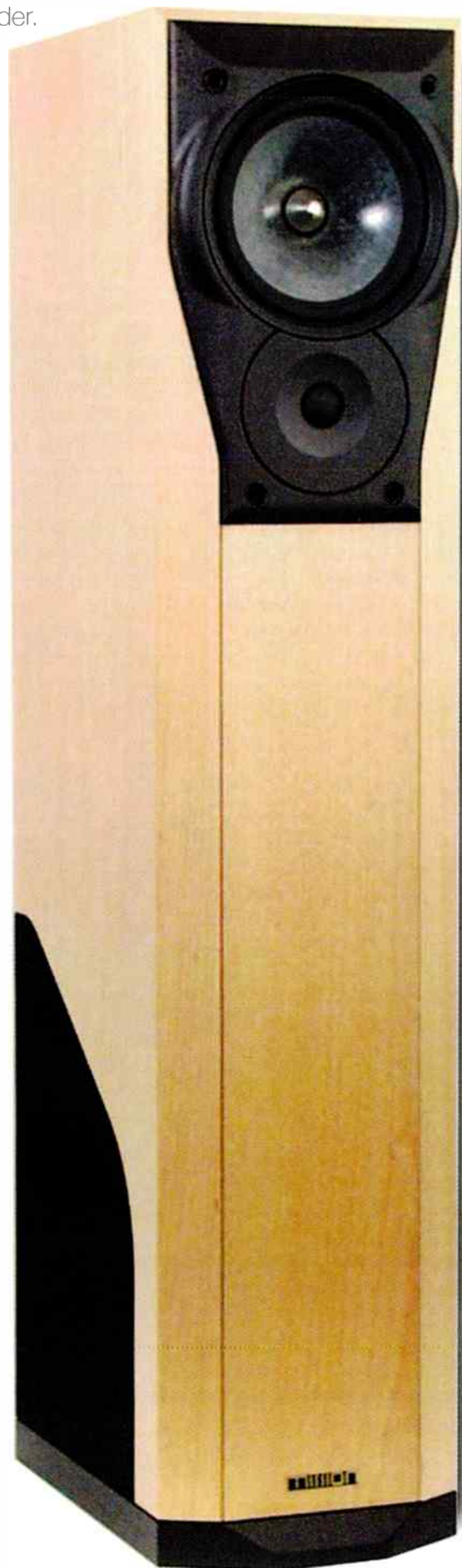
Reducing coloration in one area draws attention to afflictions elsewhere. It's a bit like peeling layers off an onion; getting rid of one reveals another lower down. Mission have had to put a lot of work into reducing cabinet coloration by using asymmetry to disperse cabinet panel

resonances and foam damping to reduce cavity resonances (“woofs”).

Mission call the 783 a three-way, which it is. There's a dedicated bass unit, a bass/midrange unit and a tweeter. It is better thought of as a two-way with fill-in bass driver though. Small bass/midrange units give a clean midrange and treble performance, crossing over more smoothly to the tweeter. What they lack is the bass power handling of a larger cone. To develop lower bass power Mission use an 200mm driver positioned at the base of one side panel in each cabinet. By working near to the floor, a reflective boundary surface, it transfers more energy into the room, boosting low frequency power.

The 783 is tall at 970mm (38in) high. However, it is slim at 206mm wide and not too deep at 337mm. Narrow cabinets do make a dramatic difference to imaging and Mission carefully contour the surrounds and immediate cabinet geography to ensure their loudspeakers image well. Although the 783s are symmetrical on the front panel Mission suggest the bass unit is faced inward for best imaging and outward for widest sound stage by swapping cabinets right to left and vice versa.

The 783s are heavy fellas, well built and finished. They can be spiked and bi-wired, and the grilles are removable. Mission recommend amplifiers of 50-200W.



the kitchen sink

TECHNICAL INSIGHT

It's best if I outline this loudspeaker before discussing its sound, because certain traits dominate the performance. Measurement showed the 783s have an upper midrange suckout at the crossover point and a treble peak. A suckout like this gives a warm midrange but reduces insight, whilst a treble peak adds brightness to upper treble and can improve fine detailing. Both phenomena together can make for 'obvious' treble too - and the 783 had all these things. They delivered a silky smooth and beautifully civilised performance when I eventually found a suitable partnering amplifier, which perhaps not unsurprisingly turned out to be a Cyrus 7, biwired with Van den Hul Teatrack cable.

The 783s just did not work with anything else, including Musical Fidelity and Tag Maclaren amps., generally sounding bright and hard. Amplifier matching is an issue here, stick to 'smoothies'.

I noticed straight away that vocalists sounded a little warm in tone and distant, yet there was also a lot of high frequency detailing. Playing high resolution 24/96 DVD sound track material from Chesky, Rebecca Pidgeon's vocals on 'MacDougall's Men' hung between the loudspeakers well and images were nicely etched, but her enunciation wasn't conveyed with any force, even though these are close-miked, dominant vocals, part of

a simple, cogent Scottish ballad. There was emphasis of sibilance in the opening verses with all amplifiers except the Cyrus 7.

Lack of coloration gives the 783s a good sense of clarity, individual instruments and vocalists seemingly well defined, if a little set back on the soundstage. Whilst strings seemed warm and distant, they were also natural enough and vibrant in Wagner's Rienzi overture; horns had a fruity rasp.

Generally, the 783s sounded clear and colour free and they imaged well, yet the sound stage was recessed, the sound warm, and the natural 'body' of vocals and instruments a bit muted.

With processed hard rock the 783s came alive. I listen to enough rock and know that deep, thunderous bass and shimmering treble draws attention to the energy at spectrum extremes that most rock recordings have. Driving the height mode of a room also emphasises bass speed, by underpinning the 60-80Hz region. Kick drum on Billy Idol's 'Pumping on Steel' kicked hard, with lightning attack and real punch. Cross fade images shot between 'speakers like bullets. The track's tricks really came across. I could see immediately how the 783s will perform under demo with suitable rock recordings. This track has a trick up its sleeve: at 2.54 mins there's the thunderous rumble of a door slamming shut, just after

Idol's "I walk through your door". Most loudspeakers don't go low enough to reproduce it. The 783s got a hold on it, albeit a tenuous one, as a soft rumble.

For percussive speed and kick the 783s do well. For rumbling deep bass they also sound impressive, whilst not going super-deep. Bass sounded soft with the Cyrus 7, the only drawback with this amplifier relative to others. Their apparent clarity is superb and lack of coloration undoubted. The midrange was warm and a little distant, there was an absence of deep insight or analysis, except at higher frequencies where the treble unit did a very good job.

Skilfully engineered in a technical sense, subjectively the balance of the 783s has been wrought to give a smooth and inviting sound, with plenty of top and bottom end action. Partnered carefully they sound easy going, refined and yet dynamic. ■▲

Mission 783

£995

Symphonix Ltd.

Stonehill

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Camb., PE29 6EY

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WORLD VERDICT



Partner with smooth sounding amps and the 783s are superb, with a supreme lack of coloration and excellent imaging.

Measured

Performance see

page 111

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THE PERSPECTIVE



CLASSIC CHERRY



CLASSIC 9



Copland's new CDA 289 CD player is a big, in-your face looking chunk of heavy metal. David Price sizes it up.

COPE WITH THIS!

Even in a player costing as much as the £1,898 CDA 289, you can't waste too much of your build budget on fancy front panels without compromising the stuff that really matters - what's under the hood.

Look inside this Swedish behemoth and you'll see many encouraging signs. For starters, the Sony transport mechanism buffers the data out of the laser assembly before it's transmitted to the decoding board, which is said to reduce unwanted digital noise. There's a reference grade master oscillator which is mounted directly onto the D/A board for minimum jitter, and individually regulated power supplies for motors/servo and decoding functions.

Two (top quality) 'K' grade 20bit PCM63P DACs are used per channel, and these feed the Pacific Microsonics PMD100 8 times oversampling digital filter. This isn't just famous for its musical sound, but also offers HDCD (High Definition Compatible Digital) playback. If you've ever heard a decent player thus equipped, you'll know this is a fine feature to have.

Other tricks include polypropylene capacitors in critical areas and a clever idle mode for the CD player's control ICs when not in use. Overall then, despite its flashy styling the Copland is extremely well built and thoroughly executed under the hood.

I found the player impressively fuss-free in use. Those big, chunky knobs might look naff but they're

certainly smooth and positive in action, proving a satisfying point of contact between man and machine. The display is standard Sony, and there's a little HDCD light that glimmers when you've fed the Copland some suitably enhanced software. Round the back there are gold plated RCA phonos and a coaxial digital output, complete with a little switch to flick between digi and analogue outs.

From the moment this player was plugged in it proved a joy. It's expensive at nearly two grand, but the order of improvement it gave over class-leading products around £1000 (like Meridian's 506-24 and Arcam's FMJ23) was huge, completely going against hi-fi's 'law of diminishing returns'. Essentially, the CDA 289 is a tremendously big hearted player and a real rhythmic tour-de-force. You usually find you're forced to choose between one or the other, but the Copland approached the best of both worlds - it has most of the Meridian's richness of tone and much of the Naim's lithe musicality.

LJ Bukem's 'New Horizons' showed that while it doesn't have the incredible speed of Naim's pricier CDX, it's still highly tuneful and bouncy. Not only is the bass deep and even, but there's more of it than most other players around. Although its lows seem slightly more detached than the superbly integrated Naim, the Copland still sounds very organic. Projecting an unusually wide, well defined and brightly lit stereo


soundstage, this player really drew attention to the hi-hat and snare drum work - the timing, the phrasing and the sounds of the beats themselves - yet at the same time carried the backing Prophet synth pads in all their fruity glory.

Switch to the cool strains of Art Blakey's 'Moanin' and its treble is sweet and remarkably finely detailed for a player of this price bracket. The CDA 289 dived into groove with a beautifully judged sense of rhythm and timing, whilst never forgetting to convey the textural richness of the acoustic instruments used in this fine recording.

A great all rounder then, my only criticism being its tonal 'sameness' - like all PMD100-equipped players, from Arcam's Alpha 85E upwards, it sounds rather sugary. HDCDs sounded truly superb.

While not the very best on the market at one particular aspect of hi-fi performance, the CDA 289 puts in a remarkably strong showing across the board. It's both significantly better than the latest £1000 market leaders and not dramatically inferior to much £5000 gear I've heard. This player is all most people could possibly want from sixteen bit CD ■

Copland CDA 289 £1,898
 Absolute Sounds Ltd
 58 Durham Road
 London SW20 0DE
 Tel: 020 8971 3909
 Fax: 020 8879 7962

WORLD VERDICT

 Powerful yet beguiling sound puts it close to the top of the CD pile, making it excellent value for money.
Measured Performance see page 111



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LETTER OF THE MONTH

BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE

After your advice I recently bought myself a Michell Orbe turntable, which I'm running with an EAR 834P head amp, Pioneer A400 integrated and Celestion 5000 speakers. While I agree the Michell's very good, I'm not convinced that it's much better than my old Rock mkIII. However, I still think the rest of my system is letting the side down, so need your advice on the following points:

- [1] Would I be better off ditching my silver wired SME IV and opting for a OL RB250?
- [2] I'm using an Ortofon MC25FL at present, so would the likes of your MC30 Supreme be a major improvement?
- [3] I've always fancied a Townshend Rock Reference, the big £2250 version that came out around 1991. I know where there's one going but would it be any better than my Orbe?
- [4] I know the amp and speakers need upgrading, and am currently looking at the likes of a Krell 300i or Musical Fidelity A3 pre-power combo, and the IPL kit speakers using Aerogel units and Audax

HD3P gold tweeters. I know you love the Yamaha NS 1000m's, but is there really nothing better?

[5] What support does your Orbe sit on and are there any tweaks you've made?

[6] Just for the record, I haven't heard SACD yet. Are vinyl's days over?

Nicky Danylyck Via email

Hi Nicky, I reckon the reason the Michell doesn't sound much better than your old Rock is that your system is far from well balanced right now, and frankly not up to signposting the differences between the old and new front ends!

[1] your SME IV is far from being the weakest link in your system, so I'd keep it and enjoy it - although it's a tad clinical, it's still a fine arm and certainly is not letting the side down right now...

[2] ...however, the MC25FL is! Although a great entry level MC, it's out of its depth with this front end. The MC30 Supreme is an excellent cartridge and well worth aspiring to, but I'd go for a more bouncy, musical performer such as Lyra's superb Lydian Beta or Dynavector's DV17D2. The Lyra is ultimately more capable

than the other two, but the DV's superior fluidity might just counteract the SME's cerebral sound better.

[3] No, the Orbe blows it into the weeds, if properly set up. See [5]

[4] It's dead hard recommending an amp when you don't specify your music tastes. If it's fireworks you're after, the Naim NAC82/HI-CAP/250 is peerless at the price, and comes with a superb phono stage. If you're more into fluidity and texturing, the Michell Orca/Alecto Monoblocks are my fave combo at the price right now. The EAR 834P phono stage was a good model in its day, but by modern standards it's very cloudy and dull sounding. Go for a Michell Delphini to replace it, if you don't go the Naim way. Sorry to keep recommending Michell to death, but right now I've yet to hear any better all rounders.

Re: speakers, again very much a personal voyage of discovery. For me, my system and my music tastes, the NS1000Ms are the best I've ever heard, but they're far from perfect. There are loads of great designs out there, from the big Tannoys, KEF Reference Series to Martin Logans, Quad 989s or Cadences. You'll have to



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[5] I use a Base SP01 from Audiophile Furniture - or two of them, to be precise, one on top of the other. If your Orbe isn't causing your jaw to drop whenever you cue up a record, it's because it's poorly set-up - watch this space for a turntable set-up feature soon. Very briefly though, with Michells, levelling is everything - ensure the support it's sitting on is 100% level and level the turntable from there. Turn the spring adjusters for a free, up-and-down bounce and remove the dustcover. Tighten the cartridge bolts to the arm as hard as you reasonably can, and check the arm geometry. It should start singing after all that!

[6] Vinyl's days are not over, and won't be for a long, long time. It's an infinitely upgradeable format, and even current superdecks like the Orbe trash all the latest digital formats, to my ears at least. Digital is great for convenience and portability, but analogue is still the only real hi-fi music carrier I've heard, except for open reel tape running at 15ips or over. **DP** ■

dealers are offering us demo stock at a good price. Would I notice any improvement through my 8000P? Also, can you still get passive preamps? I was wondering whether routing my CD player and MiniDisc deck through such a device would be a cheaper upgrade?

C. Calver

It's doubtful whether you'd actually benefit from replacing your 8000C with the TAG McLaren PA10. Good though it is, the sonic difference is too minimal to justify a purchase - even with a hundred quid or so off. Audiolab amps have a tendency for brightness and the TAG equivalents even this out to a certain extent, but it could be worth saving some bucks and going for your second suggestion. A good passive pre is essentially a high quality 'pot-in-a-box' and as such could be described as the purist preamp design available - and, yes, you can still get them. The best and simplest example of a passive preamp is Creek's OBH-12 at £200. It has only 2 line inputs but a remote can be added by using the external power supply. The only slight problem is that it can sound a bit thin. The simpler the system, the better. You don't state which CD player you own but if it's a fairly rich sounding one then the up front sound of the Audiolab 8000P should balance it out nicely. If not, an 'active' preamp like Creek's excellent P43R (with optional phono stage) at £350 would work well. If you crave

yet more warmth, Musical Fidelity's valve aspirated X-PRE would be just the job. **SP**

The Creek OBH-12 is definitely the value for money choice, but if this doesn't give you the musical results you're after then you can do one of two things. Either buy another preamp that's a synergistic match with your Audiolab 8000P or start from scratch with a pre-power from another manufacturer. I'd be tempted to do the latter, because good as it was in its day, the Audiolab is now a long way off the pace. As you'd don't specify a budget, the sort of ancillaries you have or the music you like, it's hard to be specific. If it's dynamic and rhythmic integrity you like then go the way of a Naim NAC82/NAP250. If it's sweet, lilting music, a Michell Orca/Alecto Stereo would be more your thing. A good working compromise would be the Creek passive pre and Musical Fidelity XA-200s, which would still trounce your existing set up and not bring about too much financial upset. **DP** ▶▶▶

Audiolab owner seeks a fast-track upgrade to his 8000P

I've woken up again after a few years slumber, and wonder whether any of the current TAG/McLaren gear could replace my 8000C in a cost-effective way? I was thinking of the PA10, which many



McLaren



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Michell Delphini - the best £500 phono stage money can buy?



Would you please recommend a valve or transistor phono stage for under £500? It would have to be technically and sonically compatible with my Garrard 4011 SME 3009/ Shure EDT2. The rest of my system comprises a Project 7 amplifier and Castle Richmond speakers. I prefer a warm, smooth sound if possible.

George Parry

It's actually quite hard to come by good, smooth sounding phono stages these days, especially valve models and especially at an affordable price! However, there are a few options open to you. If £500 is your limit it may be worth giving the Cyrus Phono aEQ7 a listen. This is an MM/MC switchable phono stage with a clear and sophisticated, if not over-smooth sound that may however suit your tastes. But perhaps best of all would be the Sonneteer Sedley at £400. This is an open sounding and stylish MM/MC phono amp with a performance that far outweighs its asking price.

SP

I'm bound to say that while your turntable/arm combination is good, your Shure cartridge is past its prime. Do you want to choose a phono stage for your obsolete Shure, or match it to a possible future upgrade? If it was me, I'd buy a Dynavector DV20X-H for £300, and then shell out another £300 for LFD's superb Mistral Phonostage. This would give you a big, powerful, musical sound that's warm and sweet, and would also be a fine mechanical match for your old SME tonearm. If you can't afford the Dynavector then substitute it for a Goldring 1042, which is still a peach of a MM for only £100. If you wanted the very best phono stage at around £500, then Michell's base

model Delphini has got to be the one, but as that only works with MCs, you'd need the DC20X-L (low output) version of the Dynavector. Your SME would still work with this, but it might be better to invest in an Origin Live modded Rega RB250 tonearm too. It's a long and winding upgrade path, but I can assure you that the Garrard/ Rega/ Dynavector/ Michell combo is **absolute dynamite! DP**

▶▶ POWER SUPPLY

I have finally given up hope of solving my problem alone. The system is: Sony CDPX3000ES, Audio Analogue Bellini pre amp, Rotel RB981 power amp, Monitor Audio 703PMC speakers, VDH the second interconnects and Sonic Link Aero biwire cables.

All is well at low volumes below a 'quarter to' on the volume knob with lovely imaging and excellent detail. Above this, the sound is thinnish and mechanical, becoming progressively congested. Kenny G's horn is shrill even at low volumes and the guitars in Pink Floyd's Dark Side of the moon are jangly and unpleasant. There was also sibilance at moderate volumes but that's almost gone when the original Ruark Talismans were replaced with the MAs

Mass loading the MAs has improved things somewhat, but any more loading will make them sound lifeless! I have been advised that the problem is the power amp, and that Rotels are notorious for being dry and analytical. I am therefore planning to get a pair of MF XA2000 monoblocs. They sound OK in the shop, but is there an even better solution?

*Thanks very much,
Ade Basimi.*

It's quite an audio jumble you've got there! The Sony and the Bellini should stay in your care, as Sony's CD players are top stuff and the Bellini has a sophisticated sound of the sort it seems you crave from

your whole operation. There are two things I think you should do.

[1] Ditch the Rotel. Their strength has never really laid in power amps. You're correct in saying that Rotel's power amps, whilst muscular and powerful, are dry and even a little crude. It's not an ideal match for your Bellini. A pair of X-A200s would be fine, with good transparency and oodles of power, but again could be a little hard when partnered with your Monitor Audio 'speakers, which look on the bright side of life themselves! Try the brand spanking new Audio Analogue Donizetti Monoblocs at 100W and £460 each. They were premiered at the London Hi-Fi Show recently and have the same round and warm sound as the single Donizetti power amp, but with more balls. They don't have the power of the Musical Fidelity pair but they have got a detailed, smooth sound, with excellent phrasing, which could cancel out the brightness in the MAs.

[2] Change the 'speaker cable. There's nothing wrong with your Sonic Link Aero but their cable is renowned for its brightness and it's certainly not helping your overall sound. You could swap it for either the detailed but subtle sound of Chord Company's Rumour at £10 per metre or if your budget will stretch to it, the Ecosse Reference MS2.3 at £20 per metre.

Hopefully one or both of these changes will have Kenny G blowing a little more smoothly. **SP** ■▲



The Bellini/Donizetti combination could solve your problems!

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computer audio world

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All the latest happenings in the world of online audio...

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Direct from South Korea comes Lucky Goldstar Electronics' smallest and cutest portable to date. David Price tries it out for size.

Beyond MP3 55, 57

After MP3 and WMA comes AAC and MPEG-4 Audio. David Price looks at computer audio's next format blockbusters.

VideoLogic SonicFury 58

David Price gives this value-packed, digital out-equipped soundcard the full treatment.

21st CENTURY CAR AUDIO

Expect integrated, Internet-based car hi-fis by the end of the decade, with directly downloadable and purchasable music available at the touch of a car dashboard button! The American Ford Motor Company has gone into business with wireless phone technology giant Qualcomm Inc. to deliver wireless services, including music and multimedia content, to up to one million Ford cars by the 2002 model year. The system will also provide Internet, telephony, navigation and safety features on a subscription basis. The plan is to get the

system into every new Ford car from 2004.

General Motors and Honda are also rumoured to be planning similar systems. Ford and DaimlerChrysler are both investors in a company called Sirius Satellite Radio Inc., due to launch in late 2000 with 100 channels of subscription-based music, news, sports and information delivered to special in-car receivers. The so-called 'telematics' market is thought to be potentially very big, with earnings growing from \$1 billion in 1998 to \$42 billion by 2010 according International Data Corporation.

VIRGIN FREEBIES

The Virgin Megastore Online has been relaunched, with links to the Virgin JaniCast website where you'll find free downloads from EMI. Click on www.VirginMega.com

PINING FOR YOU

A soundcard for £17.99? Well it's hardly hi-fi, but if you're seduced by the prospect of Internet radio, this is a very cheap way to get wired for sound. Pine's PT 2633 is a four channel PCI card offering enhanced audio streaming, and comes with MusicMatch Jukebox for an easy way in to MP3. Using a well proven chipset, it offers Sensaura technology to deliver the latest in 3D Positional Audio and legacy audio support.



www.pinegroup.com/

THE ZAP CLUB

Ziplabs' Zappee ZMP-300 is a neat looking MP3 walkie boasting easily removable and upgradeable MMC (MultiMedia Card) memory and a digital tuning FM radio built-in. Around £100 buys you the 32MB version, or under £70 for the 16MB, making it great value. The ZAPPEE MP3 Creator software is claimed to be easy to use with powerful playlisting, and you also get a parallel port flash reader/writer adapter which transforms the memory card into a data storage device. A USB version for MACs will also be available shortly. For more details, point your browsers at

www.ziplab.com



World Radio History

PLAY AWAY

Doubtless aiding MP3's attempts at world domination is the PSXAMP, which lets you play these much maligned little music files on your Sony PlayStation. Just plug this \$60 device into your parallel port and insert an MP3 CD, then select the tracks you want on the PSXAMP audio menu and play away. You also get changeable skins, a remote controller, support for ID3 tag information and line level hi-fi audio outputs. Point your browsers at www.khlergazzar.com



SCORCHIO!

Serious CD-ers love TEAC burners for their blistering speed and top reliability, and the new £240 CD-58S offers more of the same. Its 8x write speed and (huge) 4MB data buffer give rocket-powered burns time after time, and it reads CDs at 24x too. The only downers are that you'll need a (£30) SCSI card to get going, and that you can't burn CD-RWs. If these trifles don't bother you, TEAC's CD-58S is the one. www.teac.co.uk



If you'd prefer to use your existing E-IDE interface and not trouble yourself with SCSI cards, Philips' new PCRWB04K connects direct to the motherboard of almost any Pentium PC. The drive the Dutch giant does, it reads CD-ROMs at 32X, writes at a blazing 8X rate, and rewrites at a 4X rate. For smooth high-speed data transfer and writing, it comes with a useful 2MB buffer and Adaptec's well proven Easy CD Creator. See www.philips.com

FREE AT LAST!

Free music downloads are here at last with the news that AOL has launched an unmetered Internet service for £14.99 per month, for which users get unlimited 24/7 access. Initially the offer is for AOL's existing customer base, to those who have been with the ISP the longest. www.aol.co.uk

seoul!

music

DIRECT FROM SOUTH KOREA COMES LUCKY GOLDSTAR ELECTRONICS' SMALLEST

AND CUTEST PORTABLE TO DATE, THE MF-PD360. DAVID PRICE TRIES IT OUT FOR SIZE.

The story so far: Last year the first MP3 portables arrive from South Korea, bearing either American brand names previously seen on other computer peripherals (like Diamond Multimedia) or obscure, strange sounding names (like Hango or Hoontech). The surprise was that the Japanese didn't immediately follow suit, having seemingly been caught up in the whole wretched politics of MP3 and digitally downloadable music. Indeed the problem for companies like Sony, Kenwood or Aiwa was that if they'd released an MP3 walkie, it would have been a rival to their own MD and CD portables which they'd invested so much time and money refining!

The absence of any major Japanese players in last year's 'MP3 wars' meant no massive, R&D driven companies fighting it out on the ground, and therefore no hotshots around to really drive standards up. The result of this was a profusion of MP3s all with pretty much the same features, ergonomics and build quality, with only styling to separate them out. Standards were fairly good, but not good enough - compare a £120

Saehan MP3 to a similarly priced Sony MD portable and you'll see what I mean. The only notable exception to the rule was Samsung, whose Yepp was a joy both to look at and use.

It's about time then that LG are in on the act too, but as Sony now has its Memory Stick Walkman in the shops and Aiwa's finally got an entry level MP3 to market, isn't it too late? What can the prosaically titled MF-PD360 bring to the party that isn't already there? The answer is 'quality'. Sure, there are others around that are even better put together, but for its £130 retail price the LG is remarkably nicely screwed (or should that be glued?) together. With a luxurious pearl white fascia, central LED pilot light and backlit LCD remote control, you'd be excused for thinking it cost upwards of £200 or more.

Its small size and low weight are factors of its design, which apes the conventions established for MiniDisc portables just a couple of years ago. The idea is to have a main unit (which in the case of MD holds the disc transport) and an ancillary 'stick remote' control complete with display and volume adjuster. The LG is the first MP3 walkie to follow this

archetype, and being fully solid state and lacking any kind of laser transport mechanism, it's dramatically lighter at just 60g.

Another refinement is its dual power supply, which is another first (as far as I know) for MP3 portables but has been done by the likes of Sony on its MD players for quite a while now. There's a choice of a slim internal rechargeable battery (with its own mains charger supplied), and a screw-on external battery box holding a single AA cell. With both batteries hooked up you get a very generous playing time (well over ten hours continuous), although the LG sadly loses much of its waif-like demeanour when hooked up to that extra battery box.

Another eerily MD-like design touch is the wired LCD remote control, which offers the lion's share of the MF-PD360's facilities. A little silver stick complete with backlit liquid crystal display, it lets you hide the main unit away somewhere in your pocket or handbag and perform track and volume selection duties remotely. The problem is that the controls are just too small to use easily - gone are the large, finger-

LG Electronics



friendly controls of players like Pine's D'Music. Instead, you get a 1p coin-sized 4-way push button on the remote offering Play/Pause, Stop, plus Forward and Back track selection.

The Light, Hold and Repeat buttons can be found on one edge of the remote, with Random play mode selection, Bookmark (a quick find facility) and Sound (with 3 EQ presets) buttons on the other, plus an old-fashioned thumbwheel volume adjuster. It wouldn't be such a hassle if these were replicated on the main unit, but they're not - all you get on the player itself are simple digital volume up/down buttons.

Usefully, the remote's display shows battery remaining time, song title and artist and track number information. A sliding drawer on one side of the main unit gives access to the rechargeable battery, another exposes the twin MMC card slots, and on another there's a USB port. Overall it's a nice design that works well, its clean lines making this MP3 walkie feel slicker than almost all its rivals except the new s3 Rio 600 and the aforementioned Samsung YP-E64.

File transfer duties are handled via the LG's USB 'plug 'n' play' system,

which works like a dream (assuming you've got Windows 95 version C or later). To connect it up, just plug one end of the supplied lead into your PC's USB port and the other into the player. The first time you do this, Windows says it's found a new device and asks you for the drivers. Put the enclosed set-up CD into your CD-ROM drive, point to the Windows 98 (or 2000) drivers directory and the system auto-installs in front of your very eyes.

LG's MP3 Explorer is good enough, if not quite reaching the dizzy heights of the latest Windows Media Player or Rio Audio Manager. Two left hand windows show PC's file structure, a la Windows Explorer, and on the right you can see the files stored on the LG's MultiMedia Card memory. To load the player with MP3s you click on the file you want to transfer and press the 'Download' button. Up comes a window showing the system's downloading, until the download is complete when the file appears in the right window to confirm a successful transfer.

Sound is excellent at the price, with a markedly different character to the super clean - slightly sterile even -

sonics of the s3 Rio 600. With high quality Fraunhofer-coded MP3s ripped at top 320kbps bitrates, it comes very close to CD, apart from a slight softening and thickening of the sound. Attack transients and dynamics are gently curtailed and rounded off, making the music lose some of its urgency, but it's still pretty punchy and there's also a surprising amount of detail for something with such a smooth sound. Treble's also particularly good - sweet, airy and easy to listen to over long periods. By contrast, bass is a just a touch looser than it should be, making it occasionally sound detached from the rest of the mix.

Overall, LG's MF-PD360 is a deeply impressive budget MP3 portable, combining MD-like ergonomics and aesthetics with fine sound and excellent connectivity. Its only real rivals are now the more expensive s3 Rio and Samsung's Yepp, proving that South Korea is still very much a leading force in digital music portables right now. ■

LG MF-PD360 £129.95
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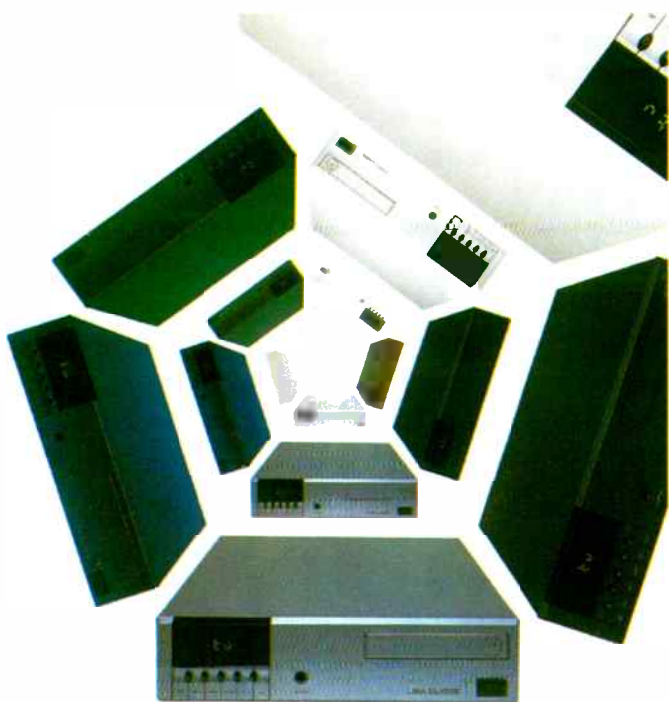
SPECIFICATIONS:

Built-in memory: 32MB
 Expansion slots: 2x Music Media Card (128MB memory max)
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WORLD VERDICT



One of the best designed, built and finished MP3 portables around, this sweet sounding player is now the budget machine to beat.



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beyond mp3

After MP3 and WMA comes AAC and MPEG-4 Audio. David Price looks at computer audio's next format blockbusters.

M P3 was born back in 1991, when the Motion Picture Experts Group defined MPEG Level 1, Layer 3 (called MP3 in short) as an audio carrier. Broadly designed by the Fraunhofer Group of Erlangen, Germany, it drew on powerful mathematical compression algorithms Philips subsequently used for its now defunct DCC format. MP3 works by throwing away the bits of the music it thinks we can't hear. Being a flexible format, the user can choose how much music is actually discarded. By offering variable bitrate coding from 64 to 320kbps at 44.1kHz, it's capable of very good sound if a decent codec like Fraunhofer's Professional is used, yet at 128kbps uses around one tenth of the space taken by uncompressed audio.

Although MP3 has proved astoundingly popular, far more so than its creators could ever have imagined, it isn't the last word on the subject. Recently, Microsoft's WMA (Windows Media Audio) has had a stab at stealing MP3's mantle. The biggest difference between it and MP3 is a 'digital rights management' system which stops people copying the music and freely distributing it around the Net. WMA's sound quality is pretty much on a par with MP3, and indeed we reckon properly coded high bitrate MP3s are still better.

The next step up the compressed

digital audio formats ladder is AAC. This is an offshoot of MPEG-2, which was the second generation of coding developed mainly for digital television finalised in 1994. The MPEG-2 Audio standard had just two extensions bolted onto MPEG-1, including provision for S.I multichannel audio and lower sampling frequencies (16kHz, 22.05kHz and 24 kHz, basically half those of DSB, CD and DAT respectively) than those in the original MPEG-1 specification. In the verification tests carried out that year, the group also stumbled on new coding algorithms that sounded better, which led to the definition of the MPEG-2 Advanced Audio Coding (now called just AAC) specification in April 1997.

Co-developed by AT&T, Dolby, Fraunhofer, and Sony, AAC is currently the latest audio codec from the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) as part of the MPEG spec. It's claimed to give better sound than MP3 while using approximately 30 percent less storage space. In independent tests, the coding efficiency of AAC proved to be superior to MP3, providing higher quality sound at lower bit rates. AAC provides up to 48 channels of audio, sample rates of up

to 96kHz, and can achieve ITU-R broadcast quality at 320 kbps for a S.I-channel audio program. It uses approximately one twentieth of the space of uncompressed Red Book CD audio.

Advanced Audio Coding is supported by a growing number of hardware and software manufacturers including Matsushita, Sanyo and Toshiba, and is compatible with all digital rights management, encryption, and watermarking systems. This combination of high quality, flexibility and digital rights management seems to offer major music companies all they could want, and has led to a speedy take up from two music giants, Bertelsmann Music Group (BMG) and Universal Music Group. Dolby Laboratories' Ramzi Haidamus says, "Dolby is very excited to be working with two major music



HIGHER FREQUENCY RESOLUTION

The number of frequency bands scanned is up from 576 to 1024 [2]

PREDICTION

AAC 'backward predicts' what sounds will be, which is useful for coding constant tone-like signals (i.e. pitch pipes) more efficiently.

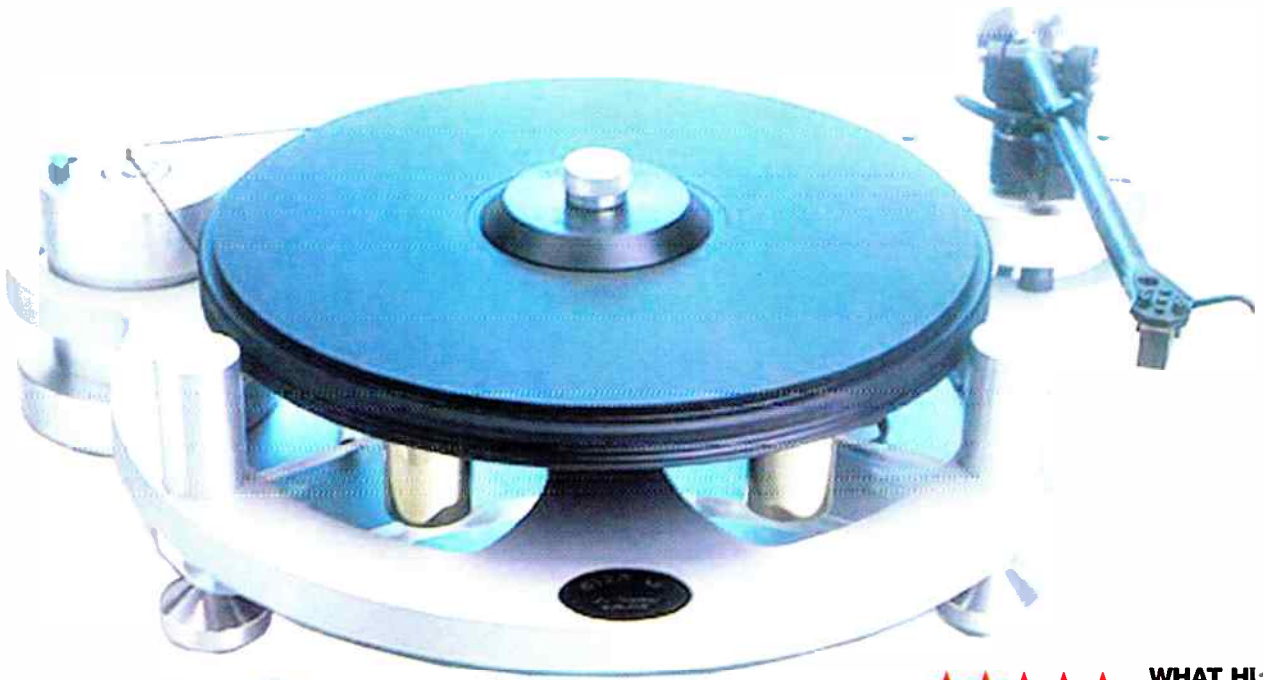
IMPROVED STEREO CODING

The mid-to-side imaging coding and image intensity coding are more flexible, further reducing bitrates.

IMPROVED AUDIO TOOLS

The Huffman coding system is faster and more flexible.

A SYMBOL OF PRECISION



WHAT HI-FI?
June 1999

Michell Engineering, 2 Theobald Street, Borehamwood, Herts WD6 4SE
Tel: 0208 953 0771

5/046

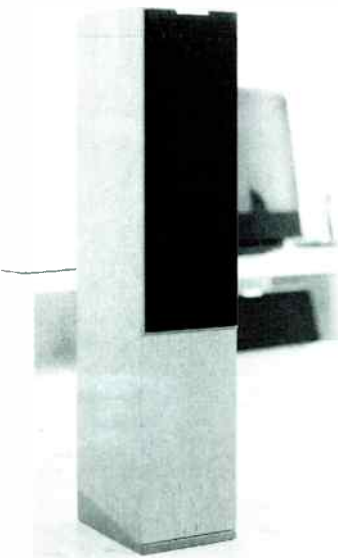


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M1 Signature £1,179.95/pr
Floorstanding speakers
M2 (as "Recommended" by Hi-Fi Choice) £999.95/pr
M3 (tri-wire/tri-amp) £1,199.95/pr
M3 Super £1,699.95/pr*



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PS if you're making a special trip it's best to book, weekdays

companies. AAC compatible devices from major consumer electronics manufacturers will begin to appear on shelves this autumn and we expect to see many devices from major manufacturers in time for the holiday season".

AAC has also been a big hit in Japan, whose broadcasting authorities were the first to decide to use it in practically all digital audio broadcasting schemes from this year. The decision has triggered the development of dedicated AAC decoder chips at a number of manufacturers, and Panasonic is now already selling an AAC portable in its home market.

This new format has a number of technical improvements over MP3. It follows the same high powered mathematical coding algorithms (a high frequency resolution filterbank, non-uniform quantisation, Huffman coding and iteration- by-loop structure using analysis-by- synthesis), but uses some new coding tools.

There's a revised Modified Discrete Cosine Transform filter bank system, together with an increased window length (2048 instead of 1152 lines per transformation).

The introduction of Temporal Noise Shaping lets the distribution of quantisation noise in time be shaped by prediction in the frequency domain.

There is finer control of quantisation resolution, meaning any given bitrate can be used more efficiently.

Entropy coding is used on the information to be transmitted, minimising redundancy.

SOUND QUALITY

Although there are a number of MP2 AAC codecs on the Net which are downloadable for test purposes, it's commonly agreed that they're not yet optimised for sound quality. However, AT&T's A2B Music (www.a2b.com) has been using a tweaked version of AAC for over a year now. It offers a freely downloadable player and music (which expires after thirty days, with the option to buy).

In the same way that it's difficult to compare SACD to CD without the same song in both formats, demonstrating MP3 against AAC isn't easy either. But just a few seconds

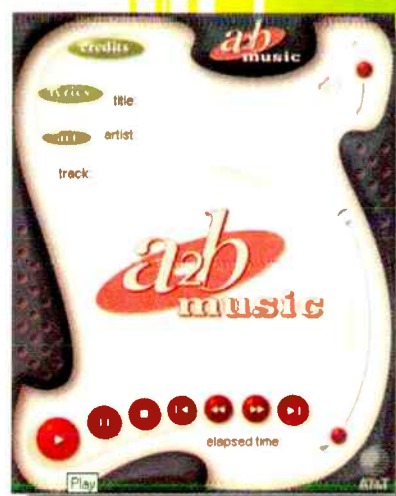
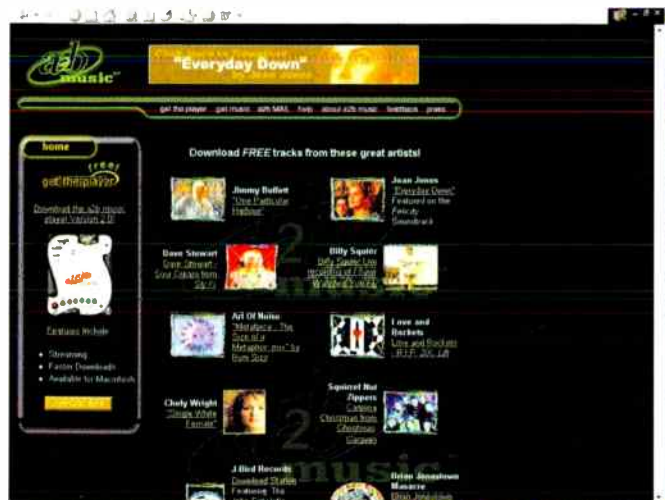
listening to an A2B music file is extremely encouraging. Even compared to top notch MP3s, the music sounds big, powerful and dynamic, with more sparkle and life.

As the system becomes more widespread, AAC's full potential will doubtless be enthusiastically welcomed by computer audiophiles. A2B's Dr Howie Singer told Hi-Fi World that the system has been very well received in the States. "The Journal of Audio Engineering, March 1998, has confirmed that the A2B music platform provides superior performance to MP3. Consumers have demonstrated through their adoption of MP3 that the sound quality delivered by that compression algorithm is adequate. But we believe that better quality matters - certainly to the artists. In some cases, such as with Tori Amos, we had to obtain the artist's personal approval as to the quality of the track we were downloading from the Web".

FUTURE PERFECT?

Now that AAC's been signed and sealed, the ever diligent ISO is working on MPEG-4. The new gold dream of the global entertainment industry, it's meant to become the universal language between broadcasting, movie and multimedia applications.

While former MPEG standards were only concerned with compression, MPEG-4 brings new 'real world' features to the party, including bitrate scalability, object-based representation and digital rights management. Rather than replacing AAC, it actually incorporates its core code and adds a 'toolbox' of other features from other formats, such as synthetic audio, speech coding and sub-band/transform coding. As far as audiophiles are concerned though, pretty much all its high quality options come from AAC, with The Fraunhofer Institute for Integrated Circuits IIS responsible for most of the work. Two versions are currently specified, with the latest MPEG-4 Version 2 Audio specification having error resilience, environmental spatialisation (i.e. "3D Audio" effects processing), low delay audio coding and backchannel syntax bolted on to the Version 1 spec.



AND IN THE END...

MPEG-4 Audio is surely going to be the format we'll all be using eventually for general music duties involving computers (which in a few years will be all music activities with the exception of listening to our prized vinyl collections!) Meanwhile, more and more broadcast organisations look set to adopt AAC for archiving their songs and commercials, even though the actual broadcasts will remain in conventional analogue FM Stereo for a while at least. With the ascent of digital TV, the rise of digital radio (like Eureka DAB and WorldSpace) and the proliferation of digitally distributed music via broadband cable, escaping compressed music is going to be increasingly hard to do. Fortunately, there's going to be lots of choice and diversity. Unlike PC operating systems, we're not all going to be stuck with a Microsoft format for the rest of our lives! ■

For more information on AAC, check out www.aac-audio.com

MODERN MUSIC MAESTROS

Fraunhofer IIS is the leading research laboratory in the area of audio coding. For over ten years, it's actively driven forward international standardisation of audio compression algorithms, including MPEG Layer-3 and AAC. Besides devising advanced algorithms, Fraunhofer IIS engineers focus on the effective implementation of state-of-the-art audio and video coding schemes on PCs and digital signal processors. www.iis.fhg.de/amm



rage hard

VideoLogic's new SonicFury card is out for SoundBlaster Live!'s blood. David Price is there at the showdown

Britain's VideoLogic have teamed up with the US Voyetra Turtle Beach company to bring you the £79.95 SonicFury soundcard. Said to be the world's first to support up to six speakers, it's capable of decoding Dolby Digital 5.1 (and possibly DTS in future) in DVD software, and offers a host of other possibilities. It's based around a reconfigurable DSP core, which is software upgradeable to support all future music formats.

The brain of this card is Crystal Semiconductors' SoundFusionT chip, which offers extensive DSP options and auto-configuring hardware audio acceleration. It looks at what's being played and provides optimal acceleration for the processing required, be it DirectSound3D for games, MP3s for music or Wavetable effects for MIDI. There's a 20bit Crystal DAC and 18bit ADC, running up to 48 kHz sample rates.

Despite its compact size, the SonicFury has a good range of inputs and outputs. In addition to Mic In, Line In and two (front and rear) Line Outs, there's the unique 'Versajack' which lets you switch between coaxial digital output, a third Line Out (for 5.1 channel DVD, or to drive a centre channel speaker or sub), and a secondary stereo Line In

for four track recording. For good measure, VideoLogic bundle three surprisingly good quality mini-jack to RCA leads, complete with gold plated phonos.

The bundled software includes Making Waves (sequencing), Jet-Audio (multimedia player), Yamaha SoftSynthesizer XG and XG Studio (music playback), Future Beat 3D (music creation), PCDJ Phat (MP3 mixing desk), MusicMatch Jukebox (MP3 centre), Voyetra Digital Orchestrator (recording), Soft Karaoke (!), Sonic Foundry ACID Xpress (recording/sequencing) and SIREN Jukebox Xpress(!). Quite a lot, then.

The SonicFury auto-installed easily enough, and the set up CD loaded without a hitch. Ironically, in view of that long list of fancy software, my favourite bits of bundled code were VideoLogic's Sound Control and Audiostation. Replacing Windows' own Volume Control, the former offers several handy features, not least the stereo peak level meters. The AudioStation reads just about every audio format under the sun, and unfussily encodes it into MP3 or WMA at the touch of a button - just a shame it only goes up to 160kpbs (a la Windows Media Player 7). Still, it's all good, easy to use stuff.

Hooking up the SonicFury to my Cambridge Audio DACMagic 3 DAC showed the unhappy news that it upsamples everything to 48kHz. This means you can't get bit for bit copies if you hook up CD or MD recorders to its digital out, because the sampling rate converters are forced into action, degrading the sound slightly. Still, given a good burn-in period, the SonicFury turned out to be a remarkably good performer at the price.

I compared its audio output to the Cambridge DAC working from digital out. The SonicFury sounded just a bit faster and more sprightly, with more positive rhythmic abilities, and a wider soundstage. The DACMagic had slower but heavier bass, and a touch more refinement on female voices. If an £80 soundcard can hold off a £100 hi-fi DAC, it isn't doing half badly.

The SonicFury is a budget way into computer audio and multimedia. As an all-round package even the excellent sounding Yamaha WF192XG can't compete - the VideoLogic's breadth and depth still makes it the better buy overall. **★★★**

VideoLogic's SonicFury (£79.95)
www.videologic.com

probably the best

KEL84 VALVE INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER KIT

This is our brand new low cost, beginner level amplifier kit, featuring a pair of the popular EL84 valves in push pull configuration per channel, providing 15 watts into an 8 ohm load, plenty for most medium sensitivity loudspeakers. The output transformers are Ultra Linear, keeping distortion down to a minimum. Up front we have the ECF80 valve a extremely smooth pentode/triode tube. The Kel84 has an extremely low hum level, to solid state standards. The kit is based on a printed circuit board. We have given the kel84 a high class look with a 3mm anodised front panel and our famous chrome custom made knobs. The amplifier has the capacity to receive 5 line level inputs, plus one

monitor input, with a tape output included, all controlled from the front panel. Both the phono sockets and 4mm banana socket speaker terminals are gold plated. The Kel84 mains switch is positioned at the rear of the amplifier and is easily accessible, the mains is received via an IEC lead, an earth post is also positioned at the back. This kit is suited to the beginner in that the instructions now include pictures as well as diagram, making them very easy to follow. At a UK price of £250.00 all inclusive you cannot ignore this kit. You will not believe the sound quality. The Kel84 weighs in at 10kg. External dimensions with valves are 300mm(w) x 270mm(d) x 150mm(h).



KIT88 VALVE INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER KIT & KAT88 VALVE POWER AMPLIFIER KIT

Here is the amazing KIT88. The circuit is similar to that of the ever popular KEL34 with a few changes to incorporate the Tesla, JJ branded KT88 power tetrode. This is a pure Class A push-pull design providing 36 watts into an 8ohm load. Gary Devon has come up with a gem of an output transformer (E/I). Combined with the KT88 it offers a virtually unmatchable result for a valve amplifier. Frequency response measured 11Hz to 75kHz, separation 71dB, noise 98dB, sensitivity 400mV and distortion 0.03%. "As valve amplifiers go, the KIT88 is one of the best measured performances I have ever come across", says Noel Keywood. Jon Marks says, "The KIT88 pulled a series of surprisingly fast, meaty basslines out of its trackbag when dealing with Suzanne Vega's Nine Objects Of Desire album. As if

this wasn't enough, the mid and treble were nice too - cymbals had a deliciously natural, golden shimmer without sounding soft, and vocals were extremely transparent and crisply defined. KIT88 didn't hang around when it came to exploiting the virtues of its four output valves on numbers such as 'Leaves' and 'Suspect Sustain' from Cirrus' Land's End Jazz CD. Saxophone had a wonderfully smooth, realistic character, and acoustic guitar mixed speed with harmonic richness to very impressive effect. Asian Dub Foundation and Moloko showed no sign at all of the sluggish, woolly bottom-end and poorly-delineated bass beats that most valve amps are to blame for. Which makes the KIT88 an all-round, high-end bargain." Weight 16kg, external dimensions with valves are 330mm(w) x 300mm(d) x 190mm (h).



ALL NEW SERIES II MODULAR PRE-AMP KIT

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

PSU-II is a power supply unit that feeds both the PRE-II and PHONO-II.

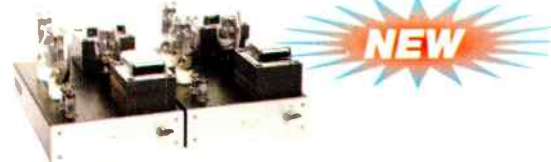
Power Supply Unit (PSU-II)	£175.00
Pre-amplifier (PRE-II)	£175.00
Phono Stage (PHONO-II)	£100.00
Moving coil step-up transformer	£70.00



THE ALL NEW 300B PSE MONOBLOC KIT

Our Parallel Single Ended amplifiers offer the ultimate sound quality, featuring two of the beautifully linear 300B directly heated triode in the output stage (per monobloc) pushing out 20 watts into an 8 ohm load. At the front we have a 6AU6 pentode and the famous ECC82 as the driver valve and the kit utilises a 5U4 rectifier valve for the power supply in combination with a 10H choke, giving an extremely quiet supply. For the mains and output transformers we have used the E/I type. Feedback is

switchable for all those purist out there and the kit is totally hard-wired. For those that require valves we provide the superb Tesla 300Bs, Russian 5U4s and European 6AU6s & ECC82. Simon Pope says, "Not to put too fine point on it, the sound these monoblocs create is among the finest that can be encountered in hi-fi." Our 300B PSE kit bears an affordable price of £795.00 (UK price) excluding valves. Each monobloc weighs 23kgs., external dimensions with valves: 25cm(w) x 38cm(h) x 22cm(d) per monobloc.



KEL80 MONOBLOCK AMPLIFIER KIT

Following the success of our budget KEL34 40watt kit amplifier, we have come up with a 'bigger brother' design. The output stage utilises two pairs of TESLA EL34 pentodes in parallel-push-pull mode, allowing KEL80 to turn out 80 watts into an 8ohm load. Heading up the input stage we have the wonderfully linear Russian 6AU6 working into an American 5687 phase-splitter. KEL80's output transformers are 4ohm and 8ohm tapped. With an input sensitivity at

around 380mV for full output, it will happily partner both passive and active pre-amplifiers. It is easy to assemble. Simon Pope says, "The proof of the pudding is in the eating and the KEL80 is a feast for the ears, with solid bass attack, lightening fast reactions, that emphasises musicality as well as power, at 590.00 GBP a pair, a definite valve winner. Each monobloc weighs 12kgs., external dimensions with valves: 14cm(w) x 8cm(h) x 43.5cm(d).



HD83 VALVE HEADPHONE AMPLIFIER KIT

The HD83 is our new headphone amplifier, a beautifully simple design using Mullard ECL83 valves, a triode and power pentode housed in the same envelope. It works directly from any source, be it CD, tape, tuner etc., or from an amplifier's tape out or pre-amp sockets. The circuit utilises high specification output E/I output transformers that will drive any headphone load from 16 ohms to over 300 ohms depending on how the secondaries are

wired up. The HD83 is a single-ended design with the power pentode wired up in triode configuration for that added purity and is a quiet as a mouse. For sound quality Jon Marks says, "The bass is punchy and controlled without becoming artificial, while treble has the crispness of the best solid-state, with the tonal purity, delicacy and speed associated with valves. External dimensions 18cm(w) x 30cm(l) x 8cm(h) weight 4kg.



parts directory

mains transformers & Chokes

KIT88/KAT88 mains toroidal transformer
120mm dia x 60mm(h), Secondaries
195V-0V-195V/450mA/0V-
27V/100mA/3
15V-0V-3 15V/9A

300B PSE mains E/I transformer
130mm(h) x 95mm(w), drop through fitting with zinc cap.
Secondaries: 380V-0V-380V,
180mA/150-0V-150V, 25mA/0V-5V,
1.2A/0V-5V, 1.2A/0V-5V/3A/3.15V-0V-

3 15V/0.4A

Kel80 mains toroidal transformer (encapsulated)
80mm dia x 35mm(h), Secondaries
195V-0V-195V/330mA/0V-
27V/100mA/3 15V-0V-3 15V/7.5A

HD83 mains toroidal transformer
80mm dia x 35mm(h), Secondaries
0V-165V,
75mA/3 15V-0V-3 15V/1A

PSU-II mains toroidal

transformer
80mm dia x 35mm(h), Secondaries
0V-270V/60mA/0V-10V/2A

TRANS1 mains toroidal transformer
95mm dia x 50mm(h), Secondaries
0V-370V/150mA/0V-6 3V/3.5A

300B E/I choke
65mm(h) x 70mm(d) x 80mm(w)
open frame fitting, 10H, 180mA

PSU-I E/I
40mm(h) x 35mm(d) x 70mm (w)
clamp fitting, 15A, 20mA

output transformers

KIT88/KAT88 E/I push-pull output transformer
80mm(w)x95mm(l)x100mm(h)
Primary-secondary 10K - 8ohms,
max o/p-40watts max current-
160mA valves-KT88, 6550 EL34

Kel80 E/I parallel-push-pull output transformer
95mm(w)x115mm(l)x133mm(h),
Primary-secondary 4 6K - 8 &
4ohms, max o/p-80watts, max
current-250mA valves-

EL34, 5881, 6L6

HD83 E/I single ended output transformer 40mm(w)x50mm(l) x55mm(h), Primary-secondary 4K - 4 x 64ohms windings, max o/p-1watts, max current-25mA valves-ECL83etc

Pre-II E/I driver transformer
80mm(w)x60mm(l) x65mm(h), 6:1 step down transformer, max current-10mA valves-6922etc pre-amp stage

diy kits in the world

KLS10 HIGH TECHNOLOGY COMPACT MONITOR

Our mini-marvel uses an Audax carbon fibre bass/midrange unit, married to the world's most advanced tweeter, the piezo-electric gold dome HD3P from Audax. KLS10 offers high performance from a small package. The main 'speakers are designed to work alone, or with a dedicated subwoofer to extend their bass. Alone, they are suited to near-wall mounting and can be tuned by port adjustment to suit personal

taste and location. They are easy to drive and need just 30-60watts. KLS10 is unique. Technically advanced, yet compact and relatively inexpensive. There is little to match it. Sensitivity 89dB 1W/1m, 15mm MDF, internal volume 9Ltrs, external dimensions 19cm(w) x 31cm(h) x 23cm(d).
Drive units & Crossover KIT £394.00
Drive units only £358.00



£394

KLS10 GOLD SUBWOOFER

Designed to complement KLS10 Gold stand mounters by providing a deep and open bass. The subwoofer is inexpensive, easy to build, comprising a simple crossover network to a high quality 8 inch Aerogel dual voice coil unit. A must for all KLS10 Gold customers. Sens. 89dB,

volume 25 litres external dimensions 28cm(w) x 43cm(h) x 34cm(d).
DRIVE UNIT & CROSSOVER KIT £149.95
Drive unit only £71.00



£149

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. Internal volume 70Ltrs, 18m MDF external dimensions 25cm(w) x 93cm(h) x 40cm(d).
Drive units & crossover kit £230.00
Drive unit pack £160.00



£230

KLS14 COMPACT TWO WAY STANDMOUNTER

The KLS14 is an extremely simple design and was designed to complement our new Kel84 budget amplifier. It uses a H26TG-35-06, a 26mm fabric dome tweeter from Vifa and a Seas CA21RE mid/bass 8 inch doped paper cone, driver from Seas. It is a 20 litre, sealed box design and is a friendly load so will work well with most amplifier types from 10 - 100 watts. Simon Pope says, 'The sound of the KLS14 is exciting and immediate, it also has an overall fluid and smooth response which adds a touch of sophisti-

cation to the sound, so it's never too harsh. It's basically everything you hope for in a standmount but rarely encounter, creating a big sound from a small size and deep bass with control.' It has a frequency response of 50Hz - 10kHz +/- 3dB, a good sensitivity of 85dB and a nominal impedance of 8 ohm. Internal volume 20.6 litres external dimensions = 376mm(h) x 312mm(d) x 256mm(w)
Drive unit & crossover kit £165.00
Drive unit Pack £125.00



£165

NEW

KLS3 Gold Mk II

ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY
THREE WAY LOUDSPEAKER
KLS3 Gold uses the latest version of Audax's innovative oval gold dome piezo electric tweeter, giving it the sweetest and most extended treble. Married to a 4in, carbon fibre cone midrange driver for neutral and clear reproduction, and a powerful

8in. bass driver for superb depth, this is our top-of-the-line reference 'speaker. Sensitivity 90dB at 1W/1m, 25mm MDF, internal volume 60Ltrs, external dimensions 26cm(w) x 100cm(h) x 35cm(d).
Drive Unit & Crossover kit £575.00
Drive Unit Pack £450.00



£575

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

£330

capacitors & potentiometers

- a. ALPS blue audio grade 50K or 100K dual log potentiometer
8.5mm diameter fitting hole
- b. AEROVOX 150uF 500Vdc v. high quality electrolytic (solder tag radial)
55mm(h) x 35mm diameter
- c. AEROVOX 220uF 500Vdc v. high quality electrolytic (solder tag radial)
90mm(h) x 35mm diameter
- d. TROBO 470uF 450V high quality electrolytics (snap in radial)
50mm(h) x 35mm diameter

- e. TROBO 100uF 450V high quality electrolytics (snap in radial)
40mm(h) x 20mm diameter
- f. LCR 22.5uF 440Vdc polypropylene capacitors (wire leadouts radial)
100mm(h) x 45mm diameter
- g. ANSAR 22.5uF 630Vdc polypropylene capacitors (wire leadouts radial)
85mm(h) x 45mm diameter
- h. AMPOHM 0.47uF 630Vdc paper in oil capacitor (axial)
45mm(l) x 20mm diameter



printed circuit boards

- KIT88/KaT88 Printed Circuit Board**
140mm(w) x 310mm(l) x 2.4mm(d)
- Kel34 Printed Circuit Board**
140mm(w) x 310mm(l) x 2.4mm(d)
- Kel80 Printed Circuit Board (8 pair)**
120mm(w) x 215mm(l) x 2.4mm(d)

- HD83 Printed Circuit Board**
140mm(w) x 160mm(l) x 1.6mm(d)
- PSU-II Printed Circuit Board**
105mm(w) x 130mm(l) x 1.6mm(d)
- PRE-II Printed Circuit Board**
105mm(w) x 130mm(l) x 1.6mm(d)

- PHDNO-II Printed Circuit Board**
105mm(w) x 130mm(l) x 1.6mm(d)
tag board 2 x 16 connections (hard wiring)
40mm(w) x 140mm(l) x 3mm(d)

special offers

- K5801 chassis**
70mm(h) x 400mm(w) x 325mm(d) ideal for hobbyists, has punched holes for 4 octal & 4 B9A valve bases, 2 x 78 lam and 1 x 120 lam. Front has switch hole. Rear has 4mm spk. socs. & phono socket pair.

- Kel34 chassis**
330mm(d)x 190mm (h). Ideal for the constructor who requires a compact chassis to incorporate 4 octals, 2 B9A & B7G bases mounted on kel35 PCB - £12.00 2x 78 lam holes, and fixing for a 115mm dia toroidal mains, rear has 5 phono pair holes & 2 XLR holes.

THE SPIRIT OF MUSIC



CL 82 MKII
CL 102 MKII



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ELAC CL 82 MKII – "I thoroughly recommend you to try them out,"
hi-fi+ April/May 2000

ELAC CL 82 MKII – "Reliable German made speakers that sound exciting
with detail and refinement rare at the price."

Hi-Fi World January 2000

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It's good to see the return of Quad's electrostatic, in usefully updated form. Since 1957, when the first electrostatic was introduced, to an awed world-wide audience, this loudspeaker has been something of a reference to loudspeaker designers everywhere. Other manufacturers may fancy they have produced a Reference, so many use the term, but in fact it's Quad's ESL that is to be found lurking in loudspeaker development labs. You see, in theory at least, it is the perfect loudspeaker, having a massless diaphragm with distributed drive, being a point-source and box-free.

Don't immediately reach for your cheque book though. Whilst I think Quad's electrostatic is fantastic and own ESL-63s, the truth isn't necessarily what people want to hear. We are all used to the sound of box loudspeakers and our expectations are built upon what they offer. I disparagingly call it "the disco sound", meaning massive bass, searing treble and vast apparent dynamics. This type of presentation shapes our perception of high fidelity. The first time I heard ESL-63s they offered such a different view it was disconcerting, even though I once owned Braun electrostatics (a short lived German version of the ESL-57).

After living with 63s and getting used to them, going back to box loudspeakers came as a shock. They sounded boxy, woomphed badly in the bass, seemed poorly integrated and were wracked by all sorts of colorations, including drive unit roughness. And that, truthfully, is how box loudspeakers are, which is why they all sound so different. It's a case of 'choose your coloration' with box loudspeakers - and many manufacturers blatantly tune them for effect, making the problem worse.

Avoiding such artificiality, Quads give a more truthful rendition, but also one that can be difficult to come to terms with. It is less viscerally exciting and, to listeners preconditioned by the box sound, even quite disappointing.

Quad listeners have been depicted as a "pipe and slippers" brigade, with a penchant for non-mainstream classical composers. Quad were largely responsible for promoting this image; it didn't necessarily come about because Quads are more suited to playing

classical music, although to some extent they are.

As the world moved on the image progressively isolated the company and its products. Quad were resolute in not updating either the ESL-63 or their image. All the same, I was impressed enough with the ESL-63 to buy a pair - only to start stripping them down. I've got no problems mixing Shostakovich with Hendrix; it just needed some spanner work.

In the great U.S. of A, where they don't hold with tradition and ceremony, people were doing all sorts of amazing things with ESLs, such as stacking them, driving them directly from valve amps., rebuilding them (and they still are - check out any of the many websites via a search engine).

I set to work. It was then that the truth

references, DIY project fodder, etc. Once rebuilt by Quad, they eventually became battered and shaky and have been retired to the loft, that great resting place in the sky.

The new 988s revived memories. Now a part of Wharfedale, Quad is a different company, albeit one that remains appreciative of its heritage. The ESL-63 has been revamped into 988 form in order to better exploit its strengths as a true reference loudspeaker. Always well aware it needed this, I feel Wharfedale's approach is well chosen. The 988 remains a special product - placement and drive sensitive as before. It also needs a long running in period. But this is a great loudspeaker, make no mistake. An awesome loudspeaker in fact, if not in the way we know it Jim.

Where did those spanners go? ●



Quads give a more truthful rendition, but also one that can be difficult to come to terms with.

dawned. As good as they were, the ESL-63s weren't good. Let me give you an example.

Under its cloth covers the ESL-63 had a protective safety grill with louvres. They were stamped and pointed downward. Lying on the floor in front of the speaker gave a great sound; sitting in front a dull one. I removed the grills and lo-and-behold, the sound improved dramatically. Quad simply needed to find a better safety grill - preferably damped plastic rather than ringy metal - but they never did, seemingly unconcerned that the ESL-63 was only half the loudspeaker it could have been as a result.

Much else was wrong. The protection circuits were meddlesome, until upgraded to secondary high voltage diodes. The audio input transformer saturated at low frequencies - deliberately as a form of protection. Quad blithely told me, which only served to muddle bass. And finally the frame was weak and physical construction mediocre. This proved the undoing of my ESL-63s. Reviewer's loudspeakers lead a very heavy life, mine especially so, being stripped, modified, used as review

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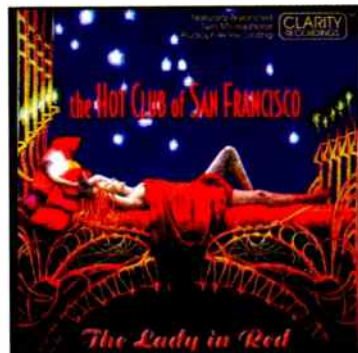
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disk doctor

David price checks out the latest batch of HDCD releases.



(Reprise 9362 47305-2) Neil Young's latest album is a downbeat acoustic affair in the plaintive vein of 'Harvest' and 'Harvest Moon' - a crashing, thundering, blustering 'Ragged Glory' it is not. Featuring seminal session men Spooner Oldham, 'Duck' Dunn and Jim Keltner, plus long-time associate Ben Keith (who also co-produced), it's a slow, meandering but enjoyable record that sees Young older and wiser - and all the happier for it. From the uncomplicated opener 'Good To See You', to the reflective 'Buffalo Springfield Again' (in which Neil over-modestly announces that he used to be in 'a rock'n'roll band') it's a rewarding and engaging listen. Whether you're a passionate Neil Young completist, or just looking for an easy way into the huge and varied canon of his cranked up, distortion fuelled work could get restless, however. The HDCD mastering is superb, removing the brittleness that usually afflicts his voice on silver disc - those nasal tones are hard work from 16bit digital at the best of times. With a nice sense of space around his exquisite vocals, plus a rich and resonant steel guitar sound, the album makes a fine argument for HDCD. Don't expect sonic fireworks though - an introspective acoustic album is never going to test your system to its limits. But this is to miss the point, because the enhanced mastering simply adds to the emotional experience. ■

(Virgin, Roxy CD10 7243 8 47461 2 4) Originally released in 1990, this live recording from a 1982 Roxy concert in Frejus, France sees the band at its late period best. By this time their sound had moved from their mid-seventies electronic experimentalism to a polished, refined proto-stadium rock courtesy of producers Rhett Davies and Bob Clearmountain. The result is a strong, expansive sound which despite being live is about as studio-esque as it's possible to get. Messrs Ferry, Manzanera, Mackay, Hubbard and Newmark (et al) bash out a string of classics from 'Love is the Drug' to 'Jealous Guy'. As you'd expect, there's a fair smattering of cuts from the seminal 1982 studio album 'Avalon' too, plus a brave cover of Neil Young's 'Like a Hurricane' which works better than you'd think! The playing is as meticulous as you'd expect, the band proving as tight and disciplined as on any Roxy studio album, which is a credit to their musicianship and collective unwillingness to indulge in any Simple Minds-style stadium histrionics. HDCD mastering gives the album a far better sense of occasion than standard 16bit playback can provide, with dramatically improved air and space around Ferry's vocals and bags of live atmosphere. Again, don't expect the kind of full on audiophile sound you get from hi-fi demo discs - the original recording quality simply wasn't up to this - but you'll still revel in its sweeter, smoother and more organic sound. ■

The Lady in Red (Clarity Recordings CCD-1019) Clarity is an unashamed audiophile label, boasting 24bit, 88.2kHz recordings downsampled to standard 16/44 with additional HDCD encoding. Special studio techniques are employed, using a large, open room with a high ceiling and two omni-directional microphones suspended in front of and above the band. Clarity claims this maintains the spatial relationships in the recorded acoustic, so listeners can feel as if they're in a large room with the band in front of them! Interestingly, there's also no editing between different takes, and only the highest quality components are said to be used in the recording chain - the two microphones' signal paths go straight into the recording system with no mixing console employed. The result is, you've guessed it, a superb sounding audiophile album (that's also pressed onto a gold disc) that's about as musically rewarding as listening to your computer hard drive whirr. It's all exquisitely played by this all-acoustic jazz trio, but don't expect it to grip you like Miles or Duke. Buy and enjoy as refined background music or a jaw dropping demo disc, but if you want arresting, moving music then look elsewhere. ■

WHAT IS HDCD? High Definition Compatible Digital is a system designed to give near-20bit resolution using the spare, unused capacity on standard Compact Discs. Only discs marked HDCD give this improved sound, but they will play on both HDCD and non-HDCD equipped players. All HDCD players use a special Pacific Microsonics' PMD-100 HDCD Process Decoder Chip. The system has become increasingly popular since its introduction in 1995, but is still far from widespread.

It's a great time to be in hi-fi right now. After a stale and uneventful nineties, suddenly audio is reinventing itself before our very eyes. Watching new developments come out pretty much every week gives me a fantastic buzz.

It's a pity then that this sentiment isn't universally held by Britain's hi-fi press. If ever there was an issue to root out the journalistic stick-in-the-muds, MP3 is it. Of course, it's an easy target for hi-fi hacks because many music files on the Net possess appallingly bad sound. But to dismiss the format, and with it the whole concept of digital music downloads (the two aren't interchangeable, but many hi-fi hacks seem to think they are), on the grounds of patchy standards doesn't do their professional credibility much good.

Logically they're closing themselves off to vast amounts of music they could have otherwise enjoyed, and presumably rejecting other equally 'lo-fi'

recordings on other formats into the process. There are many variable sounding recordings on other formats (often early works from great jazz musicians), so presumably they don't give these space in their music collections either?

Another idea being toted right now is the philosophically problematic contention that MP3 devalues music by making it freely available. If music lovers don't have to pay for their art form, it's argued, then people will respect it less. This is a fascinating point. To suggest that art's worth is a function of its commercial value is sticky territory. Cultural philosophers from Walter Benjamin to Herbert Marcuse have argued the reverse - that turning art, which is a product of human creativity and subjectivity, into a commodity actually devalues it. Rather than appreciating the purity of Leonardo Davinci's brush strokes or the grain of Ella Fitzgerald's voice, the capitalist system reduces everything to a commodity form that can be bought and sold.

If anything, MP3 liberates music. The world's first mass music carrier without a physical form, and increasingly without any

association to monetary value (especially if you're a regular visitor to Napster.com!), it's the first format to privilege content over form. Forget about limited edition blue vinyl twelve inches or numbered collector's edition CD boxsets - with MP3 you 'just' get the artistic product and nothing more. By becoming part of a computer's datastream, MP3 elevates music to its purest artistic form.

Aesthetic issues aside, MP3 provides a valuable practical service to music users on both sides of the producer/consumer divide. While researching an article for The Sunday Times last month (<http://www.sunday-times.co.uk/>, Sept 17, 2000) on the new Windows Media Audio format, I was intrigued to find that many music industry figures see royalty-free

of rights management. It can be argued that MP3 rips off artists and promotes the theft of their intellectual property, which in the long term will damage the record companies' ability to invest in new talent. However, this is still an extremely difficult assertion to prove - the artists have yet to demonstrate that it's having any deleterious effect on music sales. In the same way that the early eighties 'home taping is killing music' campaign coincided with an extremely buoyant period for music sales, both BPI and RIAA figures show that CD sales are booming right now, despite the alleged evils of Napster and its ilk. Indeed, Music33.com's Tony Wilson bluntly dismisses it, insisting that CD piracy is what the music industry's most frightened of right now.

So there you have it. Just like in the mid-eighties' 'vinyl vs. CD' war, the hi-fi press seems to be dividing up into pro and anti MP3 (and/or digitally downloadable music) camps. Talking to other journalists, this doesn't seem to be a magazine thing (i.e. there are no editorial 'policies' on MP3, as far as I can tell), but rather more down to personal prejudices and preconceptions. ●



If anything, MP3 liberates music. The world's first music carrier without physical form.

MP3s in positive terms. Chris Cass, MD of online music portal Vitaminic said that the traditional off-line music industry now regards MP3 as a kind of "business to business marketing tool" that lets record companies and music buyers alike hear bands they'd otherwise not encounter. Tony Martin, head of Sony Music's new e-Media department told me the biz is now seeing free MP3s (or WMAs, etc.) as a "heaven-sent marketing opportunity". All the majors are now gearing up to distribute them as 'promos' to drum up CD sales.

Ultimately my only problem with MP3 stems from its lack



David Price

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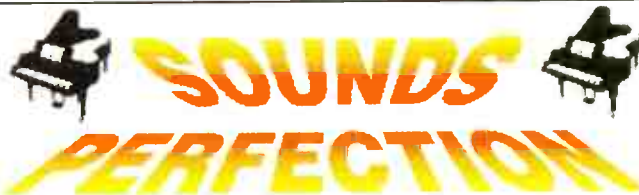
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Separates have always been the conservative looking grandfathers of the hi-fi world. Now they're starting to look positively old fashioned. Over the past ten years we've seen the miniaturisation of much that claims to be hi-fi. The big Japanese producers have replaced tower units with midi systems, then replaced them in turn with impossibly tiny micro systems. Portables continue to shrink in size too. Okay, cassette portables could reach pretty anorexic proportions, but nothing can prepare you for the shock of seeing a Sony MZR 90/91 portable for the first time! Despite having been available for almost a year now the disbelief on many of my customers faces says a lot. Real miniaturisation takes some getting used to. The Sony's no larger than two MiniDisc cases placed back to back - and it even records !

Of course anything MD can do, MP3 can do smaller. Even though sound quality is variable there can be no argument over over size, an advantage it maintains over even the smallest MD players. Whilst MD has reached its packaging limits, set by the disc itself, MP3 has the potential to shrink further and become cheaper into the bargain.

Then there's National Panasonic and Toshiba's new SD Card wristwatch, just in case carrying things in the pocket becomes too tiresome! Sound quality and memory capacity of these new formats should, in the next year or two, allow a full CD to be stored on-board.

How very odd then that whilst on the move we can listen to decent hi-fi that takes up less space than a whisky miniature, whilst at home we are still faced with something the size of a beer crate - and often no better looking! The standard width for most hi-fi separate products from specialists is still 42-44cm, and they're still inevitably grimly styled and finished in ten shades of black.

Now we have the absurd scenario approaching us of full size hi-fi portables taking up about one twentieth of the available space of separates, something that is bound to raise the issue of size and intrusiveness into the home of conventional hi-fi. These days the only components that really need much room are the amplifier

and loudspeaker. Amplifiers have got to be pretty powerful and have a lot of heat to dissipate to justify a large casing. There have always been companies, Cyrus, Meridian, Linn and Quad to name but four that manage quite nicely in getting 50W or more from smaller casings, sometimes half the usual size, so why can't others?

The problem with loudspeakers is a bit more intractable, but NXT panels could well turn out to be one solution to the problem of intrusion into a busy and expensively furnished home.

There have been some interesting, if

“ we are still faced with something the size of a beer crate - and often no better looking”

rather half-hearted attempts at launching mini-separates. I thought the large companies might have had something here, but cost and lack of status soon saw most manufacturers quietly dropping their ranges. Only Denon and Teac soldier on with the format to any great extent. What a shame none of the minis ever made it to the status of "must have CD player" for under £300! That might have changed people's perception of size versus quality.

The largest influence on the appearance of separates is presently coming from DVD, not from rapidly miniaturising portables. Sadly, DVDs are generally a standard 42-44cms but it's not their size that matters so much as their colour. Even the most casual observers can't have failed to notice that the majority of such players are silver. Silver is the new black. As many of the bigger manufacturers integrate audio and video, hi fi separates will become silver in order to match. British separates manufacturers are falling into line. Arcam's new FMJ range is an indication that this transition is

beginning to occur in the separates market. NAD are the last company you'd expect to move away from their thirty year odd tradition of matt grey, but they've turned to silver with their perceptively named Silverline range.

True, silver fads have come and gone regularly over the past ten years but this time I reckon it will become a more permanent feature of hi-fi separates. Black won't disappear but if sales are like that of a DVD player available in both finishes then I expect the split to be somewhere around 50/50.

The move from black to silver may make hi-fi separates look a little less conservative for a while; there's nothing more drab than a stack of black boxes in a well decorated living room full of colour, texture and visual interest. But how long people will put up with the sheer size of specialist hi-fi is anyone's guess. Perhaps this is an area where British specialists will be able to reinvent themselves and get a renewed grip on domestic audio. Size and style are issues that need tackling. The full size box may have a few years left in it yet, but it won't last for ever. Miniaturisation is coming! ●



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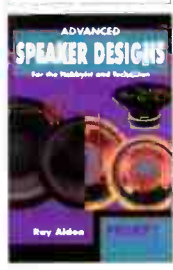
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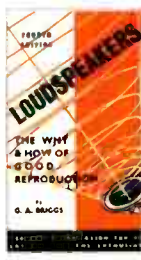
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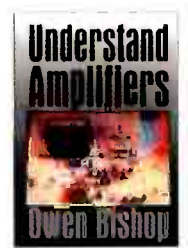
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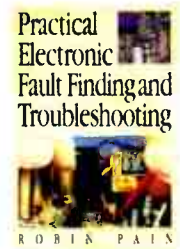
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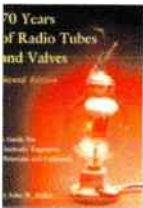
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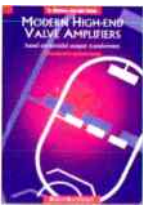
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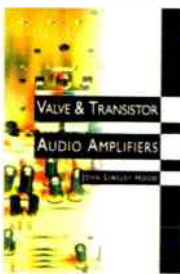
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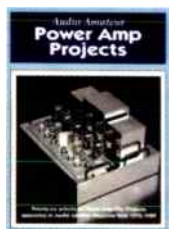
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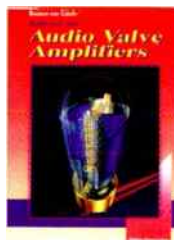
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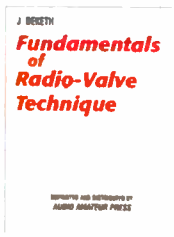
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AMPLIFIERS & VALVE COMPONENTS 2 Bellevue Road, Fern Barne, London N11 3ER Tel: 0181 361 4133 Fax: 0181 361 4136 E-mail: mcc@blm.net Internet: www.creakaudio.co.uk Creak Audio build stylish Hi-Fi products in the UK, combining state of the art electronic design with full bodied accurate and musically rewarding sound. Our standard size products come in two award-winning ranges the entry level 43 series and higher priced 52 series. These include: CD43 - CD player with 24 bit resolution DAC, T43 AM/FM Tuner, Integrated Amps - 5250, 5250SE and 4330 (described by Stereophile Magazine as the best amp under \$1000). Our A43, A52 and A52SE Power Amp range from 50 to 150 Watts and both P43 and P52 Pre-Amps offer passive and active operation with remote control. In addition we have an award winning OBH range of small products: OBH-805E MM and OBH-9 MC Phono Pre-Amplifiers, OBH-11 and 11SE Headphone Amplifiers, OBH-10 and 12 Remote Control Passive Pre-Amps and OBH-14 - 24 bit DAC. See our home page for further details or call us for leaflets.

AMPLIFIERS & VALVE COMPONENTS PO Box 91, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP28 6RY Phone: 01284 811891, Fax: 01284 811791 E-mail: DBSaudio@AOL.COM Superior sound with our self-built loudspeakers, featuring quality components and novel technologies. True high-end on a budget - £269 Room-standing DB857 would cost over £1600 retail! Save £££ with stand-mount DB58, DB58S, DB54S and DB56. C/Duo Lite electrostatic measuring system with mic only £455. Also Nevecal, Bozak and Boardwalk speaker CAD software.

AMPLIFIERS & VALVE COMPONENTS Distributor of Croft Valve Amplification Tel: 01902 665117 Fax: 0121 681 8772 Mobile 0956 921740 UK. Stocks are Classicus Series (Leicester) GT Audio (London) WAF Nottingham Analogue, Purist Audio. The Cartridge Man (Len Gregory - Croydon), call for overseas distributors.

AMPLIFIERS & VALVE COMPONENTS LTD Tabor House, Norwich Road, Malton, Northcote, Norfolk, NR14 8JT Tel: 01508 578732 UK. Distributors of FOCAL drive units and SOLEN (khatavous) polypropylene capacitors and the largest inductor manufacturer in the UK. Comprehensive range of DIY Speaker Parts and Kits, Sub Bass and Electronic Filters. 'Everything but the wood'. Enquiries should be accompanied by a 3p stamped addressed envelope.

AMPLIFIERS & VALVE COMPONENTS 20 Tunbridge Road, Southend on Sea, Essex SS2 6LT Tel: 01702 612116. Fuller's audio produce a range of innovative products. Amplification - a10 single ended class A semiconductor power amplifier - £1200. 370 model - power amplifier of high standard - £595. pre-amp and pre-amp matching pre-amplifiers - £595.649, gem phono stage for mm and mc cartridges £299. Loudspeakers - Phosphor system, upgradeable from 1 pair of cabinets to 3 pairs for ultra extended bass, passive treble equalizers £649, £2499. Sphinx x 3 way floor standing unit £849. Sultan H.E. 98dB sensitivity £439, matching Sub Woofer £559. Sultan, 91 dB sensitivity £309.

AMPLIFIERS & VALVE COMPONENTS The Old Chapel, 282 Skipton Road, Harrogate, Yorks. Tel: 01423 500442. Somebody Somewhere MUST make better storage units for CDs, Music, LPs, HiFi, Books, etc. than Ian Edwards. BUT it isn't appears, why not send for the brochure showing a selection of HAND MADE units. To do this please send 3 x 2nd class stamps.

AMPLIFIERS & VALVE COMPONENTS are a long established supplier of high quality speaker kits, components and PTFE Silver cables. Our kit range includes 6 Transmission Lines and Kits for A.V. use, available with or without flat-pack cabinets (P10m or preveered). Our latest Transmission Line has a spun aluminium bass unit and a super new ribbon tweeter. For details send large 3p S.A.E. - IP# Acoustics 2 Laverton Road Westbury, Wiltshire, BA13 3RS Tel: 01373 823333.

AMPLIFIERS & VALVE COMPONENTS Jarno House, 5 Faraday Close, Drayton Fields, Coventry, Norderlands. Tel: 01327 301300.

AMPLIFIERS & VALVE COMPONENTS Springfield Mills, Spa Street, Ossett, Wakefield WF5 0HW Tel: 01924 277636 Fax: 01924 270759. Fi-Race offers a new dimension in audio visual racking. High quality aluminium construction. Finishes available to your choice. Fully adjustable 6mm glass shelving, sound insulation on shelf/feet. Custom created to suit your system. Free delivery throughout the UK. For further information or a free brochure contact JEM Distribution.

AMPLIFIERS & VALVE COMPONENTS Cyrena Place, 201 Mare Street, Hackney, London E8 3QE Tel: 0181 985 1846. Jordan Watts Acoustics for Sight AND Sound.

AMPLIFIERS & VALVE COMPONENTS 54 Coach Road, Outwood, Wakefield, W Yorks. WF1 3EX. Tel/Fax: 01924 870606. I'd say that the figure is the best miniature speaker I have heard! Audophile March 1995. Write in or call for details on our full product range and your nearest stockist.

AMPLIFIERS & VALVE COMPONENTS 7 Scotch Street, Durganong, BT70 1AR Tel: 01868 753606 Fax: 01868 753006. Kronos is the UK distributor of some of the finest Hi-Fi products in Europe. These include Audionite digital products and turntables, Lieder silver speaker and interconnect cables, Project turntables and amplifiers, Triange speakers and electronics and YBA amplifiers. We also handle Frameworks equipment tables. Also valve amplifiers and main filters and Essex Audio digital products from the UK. Please telephone or write for product details and dealer lists.

AMPLIFIERS & VALVE COMPONENTS 1 Mayo Road, Croydon, Surrey, CRO2 2QP Tel: 0181 684 1166 Fax: 0181 684 3056. One of the largest distributors of electronic valves, tubes and semi-conductors in the UK and USA manufacturers stock. We specialise in obsolete types including original UK and USA made audio valves. Telephone or fax for an immediate quotation.

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AMPLIFIERS & VALVE COMPONENTS 17 Queens Avenue, King's Lynn, Norfolk, PE30 5LR. Tel: 01553 727875 Fax: 01553 767988. email: marston@planetweb.co.uk website: www.planetweb.co.uk/marston Manufacturers of the Silhouette and Silhouette Elite Digital to Analogue Converters and the new 'Harmon Silhouette' CD Player, engineered to produce stunning dynamics, impeccable timing and a beautifully transparent sound. Popular for stockists and future developments.

AMPLIFIERS & VALVE COMPONENTS Areside Mills, Cononley, Kesteven, West Yorkshire, BD20 8LW Tel: 01535 632700 Fax: 01535 632887. Distributors of High Quality audio products from LFD amplifiers, Torm Loudspeakers, Reference Recordings, Jeddin Float Headphones, Specialty loudspeakers, Sonometer amplifiers and quality recordings from Proprium. IF ITS MUSIC YOU LOVE TELEPHONE OR WRITE FOR LITERATURE.

AMPLIFIERS & VALVE COMPONENTS Surrey Sounds, 33-33 Enterprise House, Terrace Road, Wotton On Thames, Middlesex, KT12 2SD Tel: 01932 254797 Fax: 01932 230174. For dealer and product info on the fantastic Muson complete system up to the Solo and Dado and Dado. Also the new 24bit audio and video DVD player and the outstanding new premium range of CD players. All Microgramm CD players play CDs like Vinyl!

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AMPLIFIERS & VALVE COMPONENTS LTD Manufacturers of the acclaimed AirPower UP12 Power Supply 14 Rothsey Avenue, Chisfold CH2 9BU (01245) 283125

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AMPLIFIERS & VALVE COMPONENTS Prom House, Duncan Street, Barri, Aberdeenshire AB45 1JQ Tel: 01261 818444 Fax: 01261 818555. <http://www.prom-audio.co.uk> Email: enquiries@prom-audio.co.uk Prom Acoustics Ltd has pioneered the use of Reflective Wave Technology (RWT) in the design of all our loudspeakers. Contact to find out more!

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AMPLIFIERS & VALVE COMPONENTS P O BOX 22, Stevinge, Herefordshire SG2 8HF, England. Tel: 01438 740953. Following the highly acclaimed Phase 2 integrated by adding the Phase 3 power amplifier and hi-amp. Stereo Audio are continuing the design philosophy of an exceptionally stable system through the range introducing the Phase 4 a superbly musical special pre-amplifier allowing owners of the Phase 2 or 3 or both to upgrade the system. Its terms to be fulfilled in this also the introduction of the Phase 5 100 watt Monoblock. These along with the phase 6 pre-amplifier can be used via Phono inputs or balanced mode giving even greater versatility.

AMPLIFIERS & VALVE COMPONENTS The Derwent Business Centre, Clarke Street, Derby DE1 2BU Tel: 01332 361390 Fax: 01332 200698. Makes the World's Finest Hi-Fi Cable From the Highest Quality Materials. SonicLink Black Rhodium interconnect uses Rhodium plated wire. Vermonion uses pure Titanium wire. S-Gold mains cable improves the picture quality in TV's, computer monitors and home cinema as well as sound in hi-fi systems. Best selling products include Red Silver Pink and Violet interconnects AST75A2/AST200A2 and 5120A2 Bowie loudspeakers cables and Green digital 75 ohm interconnect.

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AMPLIFIERS & VALVE COMPONENTS distributes some of the best performing hi-fi and av accessories currently available in the UK. These include Purisonec, best known for its range of high performance interconnects and connectors and cable adapters for a wide variety of hi-fi and av applications in its range. TechLink's own brand Switch Boxes are the perfect solution to multiple applications - for example, its highly acclaimed TAS-1 is a very compact and ingenious way of switching your speakers between hi-fi and home cinema systems and Shun - a range of very exclusive high quality cables, interconnects and connectors. For more information contact TechLink at Units 1, 2, 76a Family Road, London SE25 6NX. Tel: 0181 771 8388. Fax: 0181 771 1840.

AMPLIFIERS & VALVE COMPONENTS S Marlow House, The Cranley Centre, Watford WD1 8YA. Tel: 01923 819630 Fax: 01923 236290. TEAC has already established a virtual world dominance in the manufacture of precision recording equipment and disc storage products and the company is now turning its attention to its core hi-fi and audio related products. The Tokyo Electronic Acoustic Company (hence TEAC) was formed in 1956. Over the years TEAC has produced some of the world's most outstanding recording equipment, including many excellent affordable home cassette decks (for which the name TEAC became almost synonymous) and by the time of the dawn of the digital age at the beginning of the 1980's it was internationally acknowledged as a world leader in audio technology with a string of high fidelity firsts to its name. 1997 saw a significant turning point for TEAC with the launch of a superb new mini-system, a newly developed VRDS mini CD player and a British designed CD player.

AMPLIFIERS & VALVE COMPONENTS Following on from the highly acclaimed CD clock lock laser modifications the Pulsar Series One digital to analogue converter. This unique design is part modifiable and part bistream to give absolute linearity over an extremely wide dynamic range. Switchable between 18 or 20 bit resolution this converter will become the standard for CD replay. For details telephone 01684 573524.

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welcome to

world favourites

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

Prices shown are those at the time of the review



Roksan Caspian CD player
Solid as a ROK

COMPACT DISC

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

COMPACT DISC TRANSPORTS

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

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

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

CD TRANSPORTS

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

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

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

MIDIMAN FLYING COW £299.9
Excellent as a DAC and doubles as an ADC for archiving to CDR. (Jun 98) Great value, as is junior version Flying Calf at £109. (Feb 99)

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

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

TUNABLES

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

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

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

ORIGIN LIVE STANDARD (KIT) £145
Good in standard form with AC motor; frighteningly good with a DC motor and battery PSU.

PINK TRIANGLE TARANTELLA £680
Not only does the Tarantella have more style than a catwalk full of models, it also combines PT's usual clarity with real authority. (Oct 97)

PRO-JECT DEBUT £110
Straight out of the box and onto the shelf! Nothing short of a bargain. Vinyl's never had it so good, so cheaply!

REGA PLANAR 2 £214
Brilliant starter deck with extremely polished manner. Better built £274 Planar 3 is a great all-in-one package that eats mid-price CD players for breakfast.

ROKSAN XERXES X £1295
DSU or XPS 3.5 power supply £150; 170 extra. Excellent pitch stability from a new Swiss motor and outboard power supply. Very tight bass, fine dynamics and revealing clarity. (Jan 97)

SYSTEMDEK IIX900/RB250 £330
A fine all-rounder and easy to upgrade too. More depth and breadth than Rega Planar 3 (Sep 94)

VESTAX BDT-2000 £225
A stylish looking deck with infinitely variable speed 16-90 rpm, DC belt drive and built-in MM phono stage. Good value, with plenty of chassis room for alternative arms, if required (Sep 99)

TONEARMS

HADCOCK 242 SE £649
Latest of a long line of unipivot arms. Added mass makes the 242 suitable for both low compliance MCs and straw-in-the-wind high compliance types. Revised geometry and chromium plating completes a first-class job (Jun 2000)

NAIM ARO* £975
Truly endearing and charismatic performer - wonderfully engaging mid-band makes up for softened frequency extremes

REGA RB300 £180
Some may prefer the simpler RB250 at £130. Detailed, tight, rhythmic sound but tonally rather grey and cold-sounding. Still excellent value, though.

Audio Direct (UK)

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E88CC JJ	£4.95	6SN7/6SL7	£4.95	EL34L JJ	£5.95	6AU6WC Jan Philips nos	£3.50
ECC99 JJ	£9.95	6AS7G Sov.	£5.50	12AX7LPS	£8.95	5814a (ECC82) Jan Philips nos.	£5.95
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InfiniCap SETI - (0.01 through to 10 uF) absolutely superb! e.g. 0.47uF @ £8.95 Kiwame carbon resistors 2 watt / £0.95 Superb for crossovers and valves! 5 watt / £1.95

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Blue Vulcan - screened twisted pair with drain wire, 8 nines copper/silver 26 AWG cable with pure Teflon £14.95/m

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Blue Max 1.5m/25 amp cord for preamp and CD.etc. £149.95 1.5m/35 amp cord for power amps etc. £199.95

These cords are quiet, dynamic and transparent, and will outperform everything at comparable prices

Audiolinx new Silver-Max interconnect, super quality screened ultra pure copper cables fitted with best quality shielded Neutrix Phono plugs. Natural and transparent quality cables offered at only £59.95/0.6m and £79.95/1.0m

Powerlinx - 6 way distribution block fitted 25 amp cord, MK plug, Rendar IEC, Brennenstuhl block and non-invasive noise and surge protection. Superb quality, looks and performance at £119.95 - why pay more?

Voodoo Airtek pneumatic isolation systems. Black or Oak veneered platforms c/w pump and oak cone feet. Much more natural presentation than metal or glass platforms. Superb value at £129.95

New Custom "C" Core Mains Transformers. Absolutely top quality, quiet, dynamic & cool running.

Prices comparable with standard products, eg. C Core mains for Hi Fi World KAT88 amp offered at £89.95

The quality of these transformers is the best available at any price. Massive overall sonic improvements.

Range of Top quality valve mains and output transformers, eg 6K P/P @ £35.95, 3K P/P @ £39.95

Also range of Mains transformers from £49.95 5K Audio Note 300B P/P output transformers at £45.00

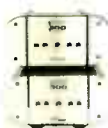
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Musical Fidelity X-Cans2
Warm, sumptuous, sweet sound

SME 3009SII £309
Once state of the art, but no longer. Weak at frequency extremes and detail, but its legendary serviceability makes it a cult in Japan. Can be picked up for peanuts second-hand. (Jan 93)

SME 309 £689
A down-market version of the IV and V with aluminium armtube and detachable headshell. Tight, neutral sound with good tonality, but lacks the IV's pace and precision. Like the other SME 3009 series, this arm is also available in 10" and 12" versions. (Jan 93)

CARTRIDGES

AUDIO TECHNICA AT110E £30
Great starter cartridge that's refined, detailed and musical beyond its price. Best value MM under £50

GOLDRING 1012GX £74
An accomplished MM with a solid bass, slightly forward midband and clean transients. Very reasonable price for such an able performer. (Jul 93)

DNM MICA £185
Better than Goldring's 1042 and costs only £135 on trade-in. An assured and transparent MM. (Feb 98)

DYNAVECTOR DV20X-H £299
The best modern budget MC combines deliciously sweet sound with fantastic get-up-and-go. High output version works a treat with valve phono stages too.

MUSIC MAKER £575
When mated with a good quality arm, this hand finished high-output pick-up gives an ear-boggling account of itself. Very high compliance ensures maximum information retrieval. An absolute (grain orientated) gem. (Feb 99)

ORTOFON MC 7500 £2000
Conclusive proof that there's hope for the world. It's a long time ago now but this high-priced favourite still earns its niche - CD lovers would die if they heard it. (May 94)

ORTOFON MC 15 SUPER II £140
Not quite as good as the dearer Supremes but the Super II is a splendid introduction to the joys of moving-coil cartridges.

GOLDRING 1042 £130
One of the best Moving Magnet cartridges going, with beautiful treble and muscular bass. New low price makes it a bargain.

ORTOFON ROHMANN £1000
In a way it's MC 2000 meets MC 7500 with great tonal strengths and a dynamo sound. (Apr 96)

INTEGRATED AMPLIFIERS

AUDIO ANALOGUE PUCCINI SE £595
This superbly-built Italian integrated has a lucidity and control which leaves others nowhere. Sound stage a wow. (Dec 97)

AUDIOLAB 8000a £495
Well rounded integrated with smooth and detailed sound plus a huge feature count. Great build makes later versions a top used buy.

DENON PMA-250SE £160
It might not have bags of grunt but the Denon can sound exceedingly natural and open. (Feb 97)

McINTOSH MA6800 £3735
The MA6800 not so much plays music as takes control of it, with effortless bass drive. (Sep 95)

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

MUSICAL FIDELITY X-CANS2 £160
Warm, sumptuous, sweet sound h/phone amp. gives startling results with a decent set of headphones.

NAIM NAIT 3 £575
Superb rhythms and dynamics make for great music making, but tonally monochromatic. Super optional phono stage makes it ideal for vinyl junkies.

ROKSAN CASPIAN £695
Smooth, warm integrated with remote control that works happily into most 'speakers. (Dec 97)

SONNETEER ALABASTER £995
Builds on the strengths of the Campion with ample control, colour and drive. (Oct 97)

PHONO STAGES

CREEK OBH-8 SE £180
Punchy, rhythmic character with oodles of detail makes this a great budget audiophile product.

LFD MISTRAL PHONO STAGE £300
The Mistral has a warmth and involvement that make many pricier stages sound overpriced.

MICHELL DELPHINI MONOBLOCS £1995
Analogue tour-de-force gives supremely clean, detailed and finely resolved sound with breathtaking dynamics. Great value, even at this price.

MUSICAL FIDELITY X-LP £125
One of the famous MF X series. Full marks throughout for clarity and detail. Switchable between MM and MC. Indestructible build! (May 99)

PROJECT PHONO BOX £39
Not the last word in many respects but a thoroughly honest piece of work. Inexpensive introduction to all that vinyl has to offer. MM and MC provision plus choice of two impedances.

ROKSAN ARTAXERXES X £950
With the Atessa PSU the Artaxerxes X MM/MC stage still shines. Great stage depth, neutrality and tonal colour. (Oct 97)



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Linn Wakonda Preamp S/H(1Yr G/tee)	(750.00)	£399.00	Quad ESL63 Electrostatic Speakers S/H	(2500.00)	£795.00
Linn LK140 Power Amp (2Yr G/tee)	(750.00)	£469.00	Rega Brio Amplifier (2Yr G/tee)	(298.00)	£225.00
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Mission 773e Speakers (As New)	(399.00)	£329.00	TAG T20 Tuner (2Yr G/tee)	(1099.00)	£749.00
Naim NAC92/NAP90 Combo (S/H)	(995.00)	£675.00	TAG PA10 Pre Amp (2Yr G/tee)	(899.00)	£469.00

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SONNETEER SEDLEY £399
Combines transparency and fine dynamics with excellent rhythmic ability. (May 98)

PRE-AMPLIFIERS

AMC 1100 £150
Suffers from un-defeatable tone controls but an extremely good value piece of kit. Partners the similarly budget level AMC 2200 power amplifier, also at £150. Comfortable beginners' choice. (Mar 99)

AUDIO ANALOGUE BELLINI £475
Showcases AA's characteristic mix of clarity and musicality and blasts the competition. (Apr 98)

CHORD CPA1800 £1800
Clarity, insight and control are second to none - an addictive mixture. (Mar 98)

CROFT VITALE £350
A modestly priced valve pre-amp with exceptionally transparent performance. MM phono stage plus three line stages are standard. Volume controls are separate for each channel, thus giving balance adjustment. A remarkable item in all respects. (Feb 2000)

XTC PRE-1 * £1000
Almost valve-like in its smoothness, the line-level Pre-1 is warm and seductively clear. (Nov 96)

POWER AMPLIFIERS

ARCAM 9 * £400
With 70W on tap, the 9P will drive most loudspeakers with a spacious and detailed sound. Good bass welly too. (Dec 96)

CHORD SPM400 £1400
There's a sense of effortless power to the Chord that gives music real scale and presence. (Mar 98)

MARANTZ MODEL 9 * £8000
Authentic reproduction monoblocs still more than cut the sonic mustard. Highly expensive and highly sought after. (Mar 97)

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

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

NAIM NAPI80 £1060
Partnered with a NAC82, this has classic Naim control, and a superbly rhythmic presentation.

TUNERS

CAMBRIDGE TS00 £180
An extremely engaging tuner with a performance at odds with its low price. Not exactly a Troughline, but you may not notice... (Feb 99)

CREEK T43 £399
Excellent detail, separation and dynamics. A great little tuner and unbeatable at this price. (May 98)

MARANTZ ST17 £600
A positive dreadnought of a tuner. Sweet and refined but with a heavy punch when needed. A tuner of this quality demands a decent aerial. (Jul 99)

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

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

SONY ST-SA3ES * £250
Beguiling RDS tuner for the sonically discerning. Good ergonomics and sensitive too. (Apr 97)

CASSETTE DECKS

AIWA AD-S750 * £200
Sonically a very decent machine at the price. Comes fitted with Dolby B, C and the dead handy Dolby S. (Apr 96)

AIWA AD-S950 * £300
A stable transport, superb head and Dolby S make the AD-S950 an excellent all-rounder. (Feb 95)

KENWOOD KX-3080 * £160
A simple deck, but excellent-quality head and transport give top quality sound. (Oct 96)

PIONEER CT-S740S £430
A great piece of engineering from Pioneer, with first-rate sound. (Jun 96)

YAMAHA KX-580SE * £250
The 'SE' tag is more than a marketing gimmick. Sound is solid and clear with Dolby S. (Sep 97)

LOUDSPEAKERS

CASTLE EDEN £469
Impressively vice-free 'speakers that offer great transparency and involvement. One of a select band that simply makes music regardless. (Mar 97)

EPOS ES12 * £495
Strong, punchy bass is allied to finely detailed, articulate midrange and sparkling treble. (Oct 96)



Kef Cresta I loudspeakers
A very musical sound

KEF CRESTA I £100
Delightfully sophisticated presentation for the price. Won't blow the roof off, but will deliver a very musical sound. (April 2000)

KLIPSCH HERESY II £1100
An outstanding high sensitivity loudspeaker with midrange and treble horns coupled with infinite baffle 12" bass driver. Effortless, fast and accurate. (May 99)

MISSION 752 * £495
Cracking mid-price mini towers combined HDA drive units and metal dome tweeters with surprisingly warm results. Benign load characteristics makes them great for valves.

MISSION 771 £170
Characteristically fast, punchy Mission sound from the Aerogel mid/bass and silk-dome tweeter. (Jul 98)

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QUAD ESL 63 * £3450
A reference against which all other loudspeakers are judged, the '63s have superb imaging and genuine transparency.

TANNOY AMS8 * £2700
Bold sounding pro active monitor with solid bass, clear midrange and delicious treble. (Aug 96)

TANNOY MERCURY m2 * £140
A true audiophile bargain which embarrasses many more expensive boxes. Never mind the price, let your ears decide. (May 97)

MINIDISC PLAYERS

KENWOOD DM-9090 £500
One of the best MD players yet. ATRAC 4.5 gives clean and very musical recordings from this Kenwood. (Jan 98)

SONY MDS-JB930Q £250
Great mid-price machine that adds better build and facilities to the '530's already excellent sonics.

SONY MDS-JA50ES * £1300
This Sony can put the wind up Nakamichi cassette decks when used with better blank MDs. (Apr 98)

SONY MDS-JE55ES
MiniDisc recorder £520
The best sounding MD deck made so far, thanks to awesome build and heroic ATRAC-DSP Type R coding.



Alesis Masterdisk
A glimpse of the future

SONY MDS-JE510 £300
An impressive sound and unmatched convenience make this MiniDisc player an excellent buy.

DIGITAL RECORDERS

ALESIS MASTERDISK £1400
A groundbreaking hard disc recorder with a built-in CD drive. An amazing bit of kit, and a glimpse of the future. (July 2000)

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

MARANTZ DR-17 £1100
Probably the best sounding CD recoder on the market. Built like a brick out house with a true audiophile sound. HDCD compatible. (July 2000)

PHILIPS CDR-765 £360
One of the first twin deck recorders/players that boasts high speed dub facility. Playback could be warmer, but still a bargain. (Oct 99)

PIONEER PDR-S55RW £480
Excellent mid-priced CD recorder that both plays and records with equal panache. (Oct 99)

SONY TCD-8 DATMAN * £599
Super clean and detailed sound makes this an amazing portable. Not as robust as it should be though.

DVD PLAYERS

DENON DVD-5000 £1600
Monster build, as you'd expect at this price. Facilities and gadgets galore and drop-dead high end looks. A very smooth and sophisticated sound, although not as good as similarly-priced CD players. (Mar 99)

PIONEER DV-717 £700
Well built and a solid performer, with a 'true' 24/96 digital output. Facilities in abundance and a controlled, exciting way with CD replay. Shame it lacks a Dolby Digital decoder! (Sep 99)

SONY DVP-S725 £490
One of the best buys in the DVD market. Available in a dodgy white case, but the facilities and performance more than make up for this. Excellent with both music and visuals, and a whole host of up to the minute facilities to keep you occupied. (Mar 2000)

HEADPHONES

JECKLIN FLOAT MODEL TWO £99
Wonderful panel-like and open sound from these esoteric-looking headclamps. Do not wear in public unless you like being made a fool of!

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



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INTERCONNECTS

CHORD COMPANY CHAMELEON 2 £90/m
One of our favourite favourites, the Chameleons are musical performers with a smooth yet open sound.

DNM RESON £40/m
Neutral and transparent, and a steal at forty quid!

NORDOST BLUE HEAVEN £150/m
Some of the fastest and most transparent cable around. A simple and effective upgrade.

VAN DEN HUL ULTIMATE THE FIRST £260/0.6m
Carbon interconnects that help you forget the electronics and concentrate on the music. Miraculous transparency.

LOUDSPEAKER CABLE

CHORD COMPANY RUMOUR £9.95/m
The Rumour is our reference at the price. Tight and tuneful bass mixed with air and space results in a cracking cable for the money.

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

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

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NAKAMICHI DR-2

A great machine with Nakamichi's legendary heads. The lowest cost 'true' Nakamichi at the time, retailing for £600.

NAKAMICHI CR-7

The last of the great ones, and definitely the best Nakamichi ever (yes, better than a Dragon)

YAMAHA TC-800G

Early classic in serious cassette. Its ski-slope looks got it a cult following once it had ceased to be simply ugly.

CD PLAYERS

MERIDIAN 207

Beautifully-built two-box with pre-amp stage. Very musical although not as refined as modern Bitstream gear. No digital output.

PIONEER PD-91

Built-to-last player with easy upgrade routes for modifiers. Not knockout as it stands but get one cheap and have a go!

CAMBRIDGE CD1

The first two box player with weighted mechanics and even an optional Dropout/error counter. Radical and effective at the time - a classic.

AMPLIFIERS

LEAK POINT ONE, TL12 & TL10

Ancestors of hi-fi, consequently expensive nowadays. As with all vintage valve stuff, overhauling is de rigueur before use, using original parts if possible.

LEAK PRE-AMPS

Line of 'good for their time' pre-amps. Use of EF86 pentode valve for high gain rules out ultra performance. Not the highest-fi.



Garrard 401
A legendary turntable.

LEAK STEREO 20

Excellent workaday classic valve amp. In good order the 20 will not disgrace itself. Various upgrades are available from specialist repairers.

LEAK TL12+

Plentiful monobloc equivalent of Stereo 20. Reasonably inexpensive and a tweakers' dream. Genuine valve hi-fi on a budget.

NAD 3020

You can't argue with success! NAD's budget transistor integrated gave thousands their first taste of hi-fi and remains great value.

QUAD 33/303 PRE/POWER

Great style and construction, also bullet proof. Warm and wooly sound, but easy going. A good introduction to early transistor audio classics.

QUAD 22/11 PRE/POWER

One of the all-time classic valve amplifiers. Unusual circuit but it works beautifully. 22 pre-amp not up to today's standards.

SUGDEN A21

Seventies transistor integrated has an eminently likeable smoothness and musicality. Limited inputs via DIN sockets.

TECHNICS SE-A5 Mk2

Nice transformer and electronics, shame about the casework. With tweaking, this 150watter can sound sweet.

LOUDSPEAKERS

KLIPSCHORN

Not exactly plentiful or cheap but a splendid beast. For efficiency they have seldom been equalled. Space hungry!

LEAK SANDWICH

Rather warm sounding big infinite baffle but cheap with it. With a reasonably powerful amp can sound quite satisfying.

LOWTHER PM6A

High quality full-range driver; still manufactured. High sensitivity, as fitted to many classic horn designs.

MAGNEPLANAR SMGa

Touch dry in the bass but a technological loudspeaker with genuinely musical abilities.

MISSION 770

Father of the 77 range which continues to this day. Well mannered with a warm sound and a kind load to amplifiers.

QUAD ESL57

Unrivalled. Properly serviced there is nothing like them. Their natural presentation may make them caviar to the general.

YAMAHA NS1000M

Hi-tech favourites of the Japanese and Americans. Viewed more warily in the UK but can give excellent results.

MAGNETIC

TANNOY GRF & AUTOGRAPH
Folded horn monsters which certainly sound good if you have the space. For Tannoy vintage see HFW November 1998.

WHARFEDALE SUPER 8 RS DD
Ideal experimenters' driver. High sensitivity ~14,000 Gauss magnet and extended frequency range. Inexpensive too!

TANNOY YORK, LANCASTER ETC.
Many similar models of infinite baffle or reflex design. Not the last word in tautness but the drivers work well in modern cabinets.

VINYL

ACOS LUSTRE
Very honest piece of kit, well made and easily adjusted. Vinyl beginners could do very much worse.

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

ARISTON RD11
A one-time king of turntables very similar to the Linn LP12. Now deposed but worth a look at the right price.

LINN AXIS
Uncomplicated, lower-price version of the famous Sondek. Less expensive than some of its stablemates.

GARRARD 301 & 401
Legendary turntables, once fairly plentiful. Excellent back-up available; many different custom plinths available. High quality.

GOLDRING LENCO 88 & 99
Great deck for the kitchen table enthusiast. Garrard fans won't look at 'em but cheap and capable. Servicing available.

HADCOCK 228
Recently out-classed by Hadcock's updated 228 Special Edition but a proper hi-fi arm for all that. Makers still service.

MICHELL FOCUS ONE
20 years and still going strong. Early runner in the 'modern' turntable cycle with a first class arm. Factory servicing available.

SHURE M75
Recent line-contact improvements have left the M75 behind but the wide range of needles make it a handy tool.

SME 3009 IIS
Everlasting classic tone-arm. Spares permanently available from SME. No longer the last word but peanuts second-hand.

THORENS TD124
Best classic deck ever? Judging by the prices they fetch it's possible - 78rpm too!

THORENS TD150
Mid-price deck with a keen following. No real difficulty with servicing - novices may find the suspension system unnerving.

TRIO L-07D
Knockout heavyweight from 1980 with stainless bearing and 11lb platter! Not a give-away and beware! - spares scarce.

TUNERS

LEAK TROUGHLINE (ORIGINAL)
Interesting ornament but no longer hi-fi. Limited coverage of 88MHz to 100MHz only.

LEAK TROUGHLINE II & III MONO
Arguably the best-sounding tuners ever. Adaptation for stereo easy via phono multiplex socket.

LEAK TROUGHLINE III STEREO
Excellent tuner with indifferent stereo decoding circuit. Best when adapted to use modern outboard decoder.

MARANTZ ST-8
Possibly the ultimate Tardis console, including an oscilloscope for checking the strength of signal. Expensive even now.



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Linn Pretek Pre. with M.M. / M.C. Phono-Stage VGC	400.00 179.95
D.P.A. Renaissance Int. / Phono-Stage VGC / Manuals	600.00 279.95
L.F.D. Mistral Line-Level Int. MINT / LIKE NEW Boxed / Manuals	500.00 279.95
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Meridian 101B (M.M. Boards) (Black) MINT (Rare Black Version)	N/A
Meridian 101 (M.M. Boards) 102A Power Amp. / 2 x 103.5W Power Supplies 2x70 Watts GC N/A	229.95
Myst G-Ohm Pre. / 2 x 75 Watts Mos-Fet Power/Phono/P.S.U. 4-Box Amp/VGC	N/A
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(Buy The Two And Bi-Amp. For £250.00)	
Revel RA-971 Int. VGC	225.00 149.95
Revox B-750. 2x75 Watts Int. VGC	800.00 229.95
Revox A-78. 2x50 Watts Int. MINT / Boxed / Manuals Etc:	N/A
N.A.D. 2150 2 x 75 Watts Power-Amp. VGC	N/A
AMC 3050A 2 x 45 Watts / Full Remote Etc: MINT / Boxed Etc.	300.00+
Quad 77 System Bus (Pre. / Power Amp. / Player / Tuner / System Remote)	3150.00
Carbon Fibre (See Systems Section For Further Details) MINT (May Split) P.O.A.	1495.00
Bang & Olufsen Beosystem 6500. (Comprising C.D. Player/Tuner/Amp/Remote Control Station. Complete With Pentavox 9-Way Column Loudspeakers (See Systems Section For Further Details) VGC/Manuals / Cables (Excellent Value)	3100.00 995.00
Pioneer A-300 X Int. MINT / As New	230.00 149.95
Pioneer A-607R Int. With Remote / Phono-Stage MINT / As New	300.00 179.95
Quad 405 Power Amp. G.C. / Pre. / Tuner / VGC	150.00
Yamaha CA-100 II Int. (2 x 90 Watts) Class A Switching VGC / Manuals Etc:	N/A
Arcam Alpha 9P 2 x 70 Watts Power Amp. MINT / Like New / Boxed / Manuals	400.00 289.95
Arcam Alpha 5 Int. / Phono MINT / Boxed Etc	250.00 149.95
Arcam Delta 90.2 Int. / Phono-Stage GC	450.00 199.95
Arcam Delta 90.2 Int. / Phono-Stage MINT / As NEW	450.00 249.95
Arcam A-60 (Original A&R) Slight Cabinet Damage (Black) (Bargain)	300.00 + 59.95
Arcam A-60 (Original A&R) (Another One) GC / (Black) (Bargain)	300.00 + 69.95
Denon DR-325 R Receiver (2x40 Watts/Remote Control) VGC/Manual	250.00 129.95
Mission Cyrus One (Original) VGC	N/A

PRODUCT OF THE MONTH
Technics SL-Z1000 Transport / SH-X1000 DAC
 2-Box State-Of-The-Art Remote C.D. Player (Balanced) In MINT Condition With All Original Packaging / Manuals / Accessories Etc: "Sounds Superb"
Original Retail Price £5000.00 Affordable-Audio Price £2250.00
 Please Contact Paul For Further Details...

TUNERS	
Revox B260 FM MINT / As New	1000.00 P.O.A.
Revox A-76 FM (Excellent Tuner) MINT / Boxed / Manuals	N/A 179.95
Suggden FM VGC	N/A 69.95
Q.E.D. T-231 VGC	N/A 175.00
Meridian 104 (Black Version) MINT	N/A

TAPE DECKS	
Denon DRM 10. HX 3 Motor Etc: VGC	N/A 119.95
Denon DRM 550. HX-PRO Etc: MINT / AS NEW	160.00 109.95
Marantz DCC-82 Digital Recorder MINT / Boxed / Some Tapes	650.00 P.O.A.
Nakamichi RX-202E Auto-Reverse Mechanism Etc: VGC	N/A 429.95
Pioneer CT-91 Reference (3-Head / HX-Pro Etc): VGC	N/A 189.95
Pioneer CTS-440S. (Dolby S Etc.): MINT / Boxed	180.00 119.95
Aiwa ADF-640 3-Head / 2-Motor Etc: MINT	300.00 99.95
Sony MDS-JB 930 Remote Mini-Disc Recorder MINT / Like New / Boxed Etc:	300.00 189.95

LOUDSPEAKERS	
Epos ES-25 (Walnut) inc. 2 x 6 Metres Chord Flatline Tri-Wire Cables MINT / AS NEW / Boxed / Manuals / Fronts	1940.00 995.00
Monitor Audio Studio 12 (Rosewood) MINT / AS NEW / Boxed / Manuals	1100.00 695.00
Pro-Ac Response TS Mini-Monitors Complete With Target Reference 4 "Heavy" Stands MINT	1550.00 895.00
Arcadyis ASC Stand-Mount MINT (3-Months Old) Rosewood	400.00 269.95
Kef Reference 104 aB (Original Model) VGC (Grills Intact)	N/A 125.00
Rogers LS-7 (Walnut) (Polypropylene Drivers) MINT / Boxed / Manuals. (Price Includes Stands)	400.00 + 199.95
Spendor BC-1 (Classic BBC Monitors) GC	N/A 179.95
Heybrook Trio MINT / As New	375.00 189.95
Solid Active Sub. (100 Watts) GC	250.00 99.95
Celestion GC 100 Watt Active-Sub. (Variable Gain / X-Over Points) VGC	350.00 149.95
Musical Fidelity MC-2 (Bi-Wire) VGC	400.00 149.95
J.P.W. ML-610 MINT / AS NEW	170.00 89.95
Bose 301TM Omnidirectional GC (New Bass-Drivers)	300.00 120.00
J.P.W. Sonata Mini-Monitor (Black-Wood) VGC	160.00 89.95
Linn Kaber (Black) GC / Boxed	2000.00 695.00
Linn Isobank Sara/ Stands VGC / Boxed / Afromosia	300.00 295.00
Sequence 300 (Wall or Floor-Mount Flat) VGC / Boxed (Ideal Rear-Surround)	400.00 169.95
Royd Minstral Floorstanders MINT / Boxed Etc:	250.00 139.95
B&W P-4 Floorstanders VGC / Boxed Etc:	600.00 349.95
John Bowers Active One. 2 x 200 Watts Active Monitors VGC (Lovely)	Loads P.O.A.
Tannoy Mercury M2 MINT (Cherry)	140.00 89.95
Tannoy 609 2 X 100 Watts / Dual-Concentric / Stands VGC	350.00 179.95
Mission 771 Mini's MINT / As New	170.00 99.95
Meridian S100 Festival Hi-MINT	350.00 139.95
Wharfedale Modus Two (Black) VGC	200.00 89.95
Lots of Loudspeaker Cables in Stock, both New & Used.	

COMPACT DISC PLAYERS/TRANSPORTERS/D.A.C.S	
Teac P-500 / D-500 Transport & DAC VGC	1200.00 549.95
Technics SL-Z1000 Transport / SH-X1000 DAC 2-Box State-Of-The-Art 24-Bit Remote C.D. Player (Balanced) MINT/Boxed Etc: / As New	
See "Star Product" For Further Details	5000.00+ P.O.A.
Pioneer PD-S-505 Precision Digital-Out Etc: / Remote / MINT / As New	480.00 249.95
Revel RCO-970 BX Remote / Digital-Out Etc: VGC	400.00 229.95
Technics SL-PS 840 Remote Etc: MINT	420.00 249.95
Technics SL-VM 500 Video / Movie 5-Disc Remote C.D. / Music Player VGC	450.00 169.95
Mission Cyrus PCM II GC	500.00+ 129.95
Q.E.D. Digit / P.S.U. VGC	150.00 69.95
AMC CD-9 Remote / Manuals / Digital Out MINT	250.00 129.95
Audio Alchemy Data-Stream Transceiver (Powered C.D. Connection) MINT / AS NEW	200.00 129.95
Arcam Alpha 6 Full Remote (MINT / Boxed)	600.00 299.95
Arcam Alpha GC / Digital Out Etc: / No Remote	350.00 159.95
Marantz CD-63 KI Signature Certificate VGC / Manual /	500.00
Marantz CD-63 SE MINT / Boxed	350.00 169.95
Marantz CD-63 SE MINT / Boxed / (Another One) Manuals	350.00 169.95
Marantz CD-67 SE MINT / Boxed	350.00 179.95
Marantz CD-67 II Original SE VGC	350.00 219.95
DPA Little Bit DAC Digital To Analogue Converter MINT	520.00 219.95
Audiolab 8000 DAC MINT / AS NEW	900.00 379.95
Harman Kardon HD-7500 Remote VGC	350.00 129.95
Musical Fidelity X-DAC (HDCC) Boxed MINT / As New /	300.00 169.95
Sony CDP-XE 900E Remote MINT / AS NEW	300.00 169.95
NAD Monitor 5000 VGC / DigitalOutput	310.00 99.95

VINYL	
Notts. Analogue Paragon-One Linear Tracking Tonearm. (Sounds Incredible if You're Patient) VGC	495.00 1600.00
Linn Basik Plus Tonearm VGC	N/A 79.95
Dunlop Systemdek II x 900 / Linn Basik Cartridge (Black Ash) VGC	400.00 249.95
Thorens TD-280 / Stanton 680 Mk. II Cartridge VGC (But Lid Tatty)	260.00 129.95
Mission Tonearm (Linn Fix) VGC	N/A 69.95
Micro-Seiki Precision Tonearm VGC	N/A 69.95
Project 1.2 / Ortofon 510II Cartridge VGC / Boxed / Manuals & Accessories	200.00 + 139.95
Monacor SPR-6 M.M. Phono-Stage / P.S.U. (Excellent Value)	NEW 29.95
Musical Fidelity LP-P2 Mono-Block Phono-Stage X-PSU/(M.M. / M.C) (Switchable Impedance) (Ex-Dem.)	NEW 429.90
Nakamichi MC-1000 Moving-Coil Cartridge c/w MCB-100 Step-Up Transformer (Designed By Sigano) (Sounds Superb) (Very Light Use From New) MINT / Boxed Etc: 1000.00+	P.O.A.
Loton (D.C. Sign) Jubilee Cartridge. (Just Re-Tipped J Wright) MINT / As New	1000.00 595.00
Supex 900 Super M.C. Cartridge VGC / Boxed	400.00+ 149.95
Ortofon 510 Mk. II M.M. Cartridge Boxed / As New	42.00 25.00

SYSTEMS	
Sony MDS-JB 930 Remote Mini-Disc Recorder MINT / Like New / Boxed Etc:	300.00 189.95
Quad 77 Carbon System (Pre-Amp. / Power Amp. / FM Tuner / Compact-Disc VGC Player and Remote Control Station.) (Loudspeakers to Choice)	3150.00 1595.00
Linn Sondek LP-12 Turntable. (Lingo / Ekos / Troika Moving-Coil Cartridge. With LK-1 Pre-Amp. / Dirak Power-Supply / K-280 Power-Amp. / Spark Power Supply and Kaber Loudspeakers. VGC / Boxed Etc:	7730.00 P.O.A.
Bang & Olufsen Beosystem 6500 (Comprising Compact Disc Player, Tuner/Amplifier, Remote Control Station and Perilvox Loudspeakers) VGC/Manuals	3100.00 995.00
Denon DP-10 System. (Comprising 1-Disc C.D. Amplifier/RDS Tuner / 1-Boxed / Manual / Remote Control) VGC	1000.00 + 515.00
Or 595.00 With Mission 771 (Separate Price 99.95)	

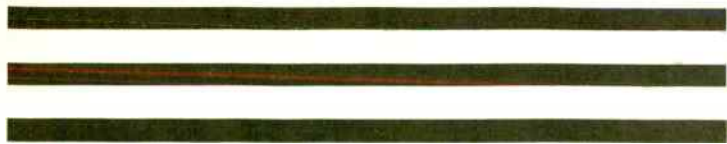
Affordable-Audio will happily "build" Systems to your individual requirements, and if you purchase three or more components, i.e. (C.D. Player, Amplifier, & Loudspeakers), we will give you a 16% Discount on the total price! Please enquire for further details.

OTHER ITEMS	
Sony TA-E1000 Pre-Amp Full Remote Dolby-Pro-Logic MINT / AS NEW	600.00 349.95
Technics SA-EX 310 R.D.S. Receiver Dolby VGC / Boxed	300.00 129.95
Sony TA-NV220 4-Channel Power Amp. MINT / AS NEW	240.00 129.95
Denon AV-1530 Pro-Logic Int. Amp With Phono / Remote Control VGC / Manual	240.00 250.00
Kenwood SS-3300 Processor (Centre Rear Amps.)	250.00 89.95
Remote Pro-Logic / MINT / Boxed Etc:	400.00 169.95
Secure 30 Panels (Ideal Rear Surrounds) VGC / Boxed Etc:	80.00 20.00
Jamo Shielded Centre-Speaker VGC	90.00 ea 30.00 ea
Golden Dragon 300B Valves (2 Of)	64.00 40.00
Pearl Coolers (8 x EL-34 Valve Coolers / Dampers) MINT	230.00 159.95
Target VR-5 Matt Gold Stand / Glass Shelves Ex-Demo	230.00 199.95
Target VR-4 Gloss Silver Stand / Glass Shelves NEW / Slight Second	243.80 199.95
Target B-4 Gloss Silver Stand / Glass Shelves NEW / Slight Second	105.80 89.95
Target HS-60 Piano-Black Spiked L.S. Stands NEW	60.00 35.00
Target SP-60 Spiked Stands MINT	90.00 50.00
Target 24" Spiked Stands (Electric Orange) MINT	N/A 30.00
Sound Organisation L.S. Wall Brackets MINT	NEW 15.00
Roni IS4W Input Expander(4-Way Line-Level Expander)	NEW 6.95
Roni 4 m.m Banana Plugs (Gold Plated) (Screw-Type, Don't Require Soldering) Per Four	NEW 10.00
Roni Optical Linc Cables (C.D / Minidisc to D.A.C. Etc.)	60.00 39.95
Prowire Silver Linc (1/2 Metre) MINT / Boxed	50.00 30.00
Audio Source Petros Incon 1.0 Metre / MINT	45.00 25.00
Audio Source Twin-axial Digital Incon 0.7 Metre / MINT	70.00 49.95
XLO/VDO Digital Linc. 4 Metres / MINT / Boxed	
Monacor SPS-20 Anodised Adjustable Equipment Supports Polished Cone (Superb Spike System at a very good price) (Black Anodised Or Gold Finish) Set of 4	NEW 19.95
XLR Line Sockets (Gold-Plated) High-Grade XLR NEW Only 5.95 Each	
Parastatic Disc Preener VGC	N/A 5.00
Monacor Power Concept Incons (1.5M) Excellent Value Interconnects (Red or Black) NEW	Only 9.95
Van den Hul The Second Incon 0.6 Metre / Boxed / As New	185.00 119.95
Van den Hul CS-122 L.S. Cable 2 x 2 Metres Terminated	90.00 59.95
Soniclink AST-200 Bi-Wire Cable 2 x 3 Metres Terminated	80.00 40.00
79-Strand L.S. Cable (Black-Round-Section White-Flat-Section) or NEW	Only 1.25 Mtr
Naim NAC-5 L.S. Cable Black	6.00 Mtr 3.00 Mtr
Monacor DC-100 Carbon-Fibre Brush (Essential)	NEW 5.95
Various Plugs (RCA/DIN / Cannon Etc.) Various NEW / SH	P.O.A.

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***WELCOME TO
OUR MARKET PLACE***



Here you will find a variety of stalls offering you a wide range of products.

Look out for our regulars, some of which have sales on this issue with some real bargains to be had.

So if you're looking for a great deal this summer then look no further.

HAPPY HUNTING!!!



Previously Cherished Items, Or something new from Choice



Clearance Items

	Our Price	Original Retail Price
Audio Alchemy DDS 2 CD Player	£395.00	£900.00
Audion Golden Knights	£1,495.00	£4,000.00
Audion Silver Knights	£995.00	£3,000.00
Exposure V Active x over (3 Way)	£295.00	£995.00
McCormack DAC	£395.00	£995.00
Micromega Tempo 2 Integrated	£395.00	£900.00
Pink Triangle Ordinal 1307	£495.00	£900.00



New in This Month

	Our Price	Original Retail Price
POWER AMPLIFIERS		
Musical Fidelity A1000	£995.00	£1,500.00
Musical Fidelity XA50 Monos	£350.00	£500.00
Plinius 250	£Dem	£8,000.00
Naim Nap 250 (New style)	£1,095.00	£1,750.00
Audio Note Kasi	£14,950.00	£30,000.00
Lavardin Model IS Integrated	£1,495.00	£2,200.00
Boulder 500 AE	£3,495.00	£5,500.00
PRE AMPLIFIERS		
Audible Illusions L1	£Dem	£2,000.00
SPEAKERS		
Cadence Arca	£6,995.00	£10,000.00
JM Lab Electra 915 (X Dem)	£1,495.00	£1,995.00
Naim SBL's	£1,695.00	£2,225.00
Cadence ES	£1,495.00	£3,500.00
Tanoy Westminster	£7,995.00	£18,000.00
BC Acoustics Fibre	£795.00	£1,100.00
ClaraVox Magnifica B & W CD M7	£9,500.00	£14,500.00
BC Acoustics Arax	£895.00	£1,000.00
Padadigm Monitor 9	£250.00	£400.00
CD PLAYERS & DACS		
Pink Triangle De Capo & Battery p.s.u.	£1,795.00	£3,500.00
Advantage CD	£1,395.00	£2,000.00
Meracur Tanto CD	£1,195.00	£1,495.00
TURNABLES, ANALOGUE, VARIOUS		
Nakanishi 2 x 202E	£295.00	£600.00
Naim Nat 01 Tuner (Old Case)	£850.00	£1,500.00
Musical Fidelity Explora	£325.00	£500.00
Tom Evans - The Groove	£On Dem	£1,500.00
AV COMPONENTS/TV/Plasma		
New in stock Loewe Televisions & NEC & Electrophor Delphi plasma screens	-	POA



Power Amplifiers

	Our Price	Original Retail Price
CSA Copland 28 Int	£895.00	£1,295.00
Graff GIM 200	£4,950.00	£7,900.00
Papworth TVA.10	£1,095.00	£1,950.00
John Shearn Ref 5 Mono blocks (as new)	£1,395.00	£1,700.00
Acuphase E203 Integrated	£795.00	£1,695.00
Adcom GF 565	£1,295.00	£2,200.00
Audio Note Neiro (as new)	£7,995.00	£18,500.00
Audio Note Ongaku (new)	p.o.a.	£45,000.00
Audio Research Classic 150 M/blocks	£5,500.00	£12,000.00
Audio Research VT60	£1,295.00	£2,645.00
Audiolab 8000 S	£590.00	£900.00
Burmester 850 Monoblocks	£1,495.00	£3,000.00
Cary 300 se LX20 Monoblocks	On Demo	£5,250.00
Cary 572 SE Monoblocks	£1,950.00	£2,350.00
Cary 805 C Monoblocks	On Demo	£7,995.00
Counterpoint SA12	£795.00	£1,400.00
Exposure IX Power supply	£795.00	£1,500.00
Exposure VIII	£450.00	£700.00
Graff 50/50	£1,650.00	£2,150.00
Jadis Defy 7 & MK III	£2,950.00	£4,790.00
Jadis JA 200	£6,995.00	£15,570.00
Jadis JA 500	£6,995.00	£21,000.00
Jadis JA 60 Monoblocks	£4,995.00	£10,000.00
John Shearn Reference Phase 2 Integ.	£475.00	£799.00
John Shearn Reference Phase 3 Power Amp	£550.00	£749.00
Kenwood L1000C pre/ L1000M Power Amp	£1,495.00	£2,500.00
Krell FPB 300	£8,500.00	£99,990.00
Krell FPB 500	£8,995.00	£12,900.00
Krell KAS 2 Monoblock	£9,995.00	£18,000.00
Krell KSA 250	£2,750.00	£6,700.00
Meracur Intrare (int)	£850.00	£1,095.00
Meracur Intrare 6 (int) X-demo	£1,795.00	£2,000.00
Musical Fidelity F19	£2,250.00	£4,000.00
Naim 250 (Old Style, just serviced)	£795.00	£ -
Sugden AU51	£995.00	£1,500.00
Pioneer A300 Int	£90.00	£180.00
Quad 77 Integrated	£450.00	£900.00
Rogers E40A (new)	£1,495.00	£1,848.00
Quad 306	£275.00	£400.00
Quad 405	£225.00	£ -
YBA 3x Pre/Pwr	£1,695.00	£2,400.00



Pre Amplifiers

	Our Price	Original Retail Price
Naim 82 Control Unit	£1,695.00	£2,300.00
C.A.T. ultimate reference Pre Amp Inc/Phono Stage X-Demo	£5,195.00	£5,750.00
Graff 13.5	£1,950.00	£3,750.00
Naim S2 Control Unit	£1,495.00	£2,800.00
Super CAP	£1,695.00	£2,200.00
Tube Tech Seer Pre Amp	£650.00	£935.00
Naim 82 + Super Cap	£3,390.00	£4,475.00
Audible Illusions P3A Pre MM/MC	On demo	£3,140.00
Audio Research LS3	£1,095.00	£1,845.00
Audio Research LS9	£1,995.00	£2,500.00
C.A.T. SL1 Ultimate	X-demo	£5,750.00
Electrocompaniet EC 4.5 (new)	£895.00	£1,195.00
Exposure VII	£295.00	£600.00
Exposure XI pre XII psu	£795.00	£1,500.00
Jeff Rowland Consume + phono (3box)	£3,995.00	£6,000.00

John Shearn Phase 6 Pre	£695.00	£900.00
Krell KBL pre amp	£1,595.00	£4,000.00
Mark Levinson No 28	£2,250.00	£4,000.00
Meridian 541 Dolby Surround	£650.00	£1,095.00
Naim 42.5	£1,95.00	£450.00
Naim Nac 72	£475.00	£767.00
Plinius 16P Phono/ remote	£3,995.00	£3,400.00

Quality Speakers

Ensemble Speakers PA1	£995.00	£2,000.00
A.T.C. 20T Active	£2,495.00	£4,000.00
Acoustic Energy AE1 P/BK + Stnd	£795.00	£1,500.00
Acoustic Energy AE120	£350.00	£500.00
Alon Adrians (new)	Special	£10,000.00
Alon V MK III	Special	£5,500.00
Apogee Mini Grand	£2,995.00	£8,500.00
Audio Physic Tempo II	Special	£2,499.00
Audio Physic Caldera	On demo	£10,000.00
Audio Physic Libra	X-demo	£4,799.00
Audio Physic Rhea Sub	£2,350.00	£3,099.00
Audio Physic Spark	On demo	£1,749.00
Audio Physic Steps	On demo	£999.00
Audio Physic Virgo	On demo	£3,295.00
Audio Static DC1 + (Audi Silver)	£2,295.00	£4,250.00
Electrocompaniet On 6	£895.00	£1,400.00
Jamo SW3105 active sub	£495.00	£800.00
Mission 771 & Stands	£95.00	£170.00
Naim Credo	£895.00	£1,175.00
Orelle Swings	£795.00	£1,200.00
Proac Resp 1 SC + Stands	£895.00	£1,500.00
Rogers AB1 Sub (new)	£450.00	£598.00
Rogers LS3/ 5A Black (new)	£575.00	£798.00
Rogers LS55 (new)	£330.00	£430.00
Shahinian Arcs	£1,195.00	£1,875.00
Soundlab Quantum	£1,495.00	£2,400.00
Wilson Cubs	£4,995.00	£8,000.00
Wilson System 5.1	£9,950.00	£18,000.00

CD Players & DACS

Mark Levinson 36s	£2,250.00	£3,995.00
Audio Synthesis DAX 2 SE Balanced	£2,495.00	£3,500.00
Cyrus Dac Master	£495.00	£899.00
Cyrus Disc Master	£595.00	£999.00
Forsell Air Ref Transport MK II	£4,995.00	£8,000.00
Helios Model 3	£495.00	£700.00
Krell KAV 250 CD	£1,895.00	£2,599.00
Krell KAV 300 CD	£2,750.00	£4,290.00
Krell KPS 25s	£14,995.00	£18,995.00
Krell Studio Dac	£1,995.00	£4,450.00
Marantz CD14	£1,295.00	£1,500.00
Mark Levinson 30.5/31	£11,500.00	£24,000.00
Mark Levinson 360S	£5,250.00	£8,995.00
Mark Levinson No.39	£4,250.00	£5,000.00
Meridian 508	£1,395.00	£1,800.00
Meridian 565	£1,495.00	£2,500.00
Micromega CD 3.1	£1,095.00	£1,995.00
Musical Fidelity X-ACT	£95.00	£130.00
Naim CDS 2 + XPS (unopened)	£4,995.00	£5,900.00
Oracle CD 2000 Transport	P.O.A.	£7,299.00
Pink Triangle De Capo	£795.00	£1,595.00
Quad 77 CD Player Quadlink	£495.00	£700.00
Teac P30 Transport (as new)	£1,895.00	£2,500.00
Teac P500	£395.00	£600.00
Theta Data Basic Transport	£1,195.00	£2,000.00
Theta DS Pro Basic D to A	£1,195.00	£2,000.00
Theta Data II Transport AT + link	£1,995.00	£4,000.00
Wadia 3 Transport	£1,995.00	£3,000.00
YBA Integre	On Demo	£1,095.00

Turntables & Analogue

Clear Audio Reference MC Phono stage X-demo	£1,995.00	£2,085.00
Tube Technology Max Phono Unit	£695.00	£1,100.00
Rega Planer 3 + Hi Fi News Out Board	£320.00	£423.00
Power Supply	£850.00	£1,000.00
Roksan Shirex Cartridge (30 hour's use)	£180.00	£248.00
Rega SuperExact Cartridge MM		
Roksan 10 Turntable with Artizm Tone ARM (black) + Shiraz Cartridge	£1,995.00	£3,200.00
Symphono Phono stage X-demo MM/MC	£640.00	£740.00
Lyra Special Edition Evolve 99 Lydian (as new) (5hr use)	£495.00	£730.00
Clear Audio Evolution + ARM	£995.00	£1,475.00
Dynavector XXII (as new)	£795.00	£1,000.00
Goldmund Ref Turntable	£8,995.00	£30,000.00
Helios Cylene Tonearm/ ANS 6 Wire	£995.00	£ -
Lavardin Reference Phono	£ -	£2,500.00
Linn LP12/ LVIII Lingo Cirkus K9	£1,095.00	£2,000.00
Linn LP12/ARD/ Armegeddon/ Prefix/ Hi Cap/ 17 DII	£2,500.00	£4,000.00
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Michell Syncro RB300	£450.00	£ -
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Musical Fidelity XLP Phono Stage	£95.00	£149.00
Naim Nat 02 Tuner (New Case)	£795.00	£1,165.00
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Cary CAD855 CD player	1000	399
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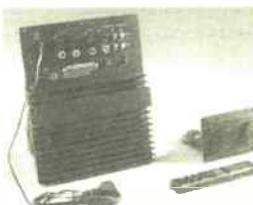
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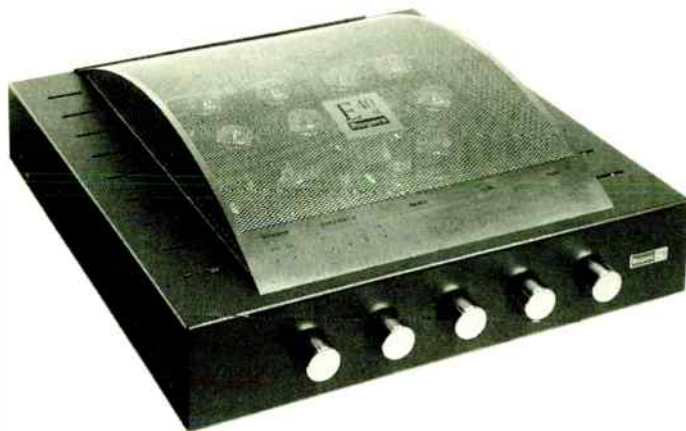
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Rogers E-40a Improved Pure class 'A' valve amplifiers. Special IMPROVED version by Audio Note UK. You get the stunning sound quality of the original E-20a but with double the power output! Improvements include factory pre-set bias adjustment, gold plated input / output connectors and world renowned Audio Note sound quality.....

These very high quality, stylish integrated amps feature four line inputs plus a high quality phono stage. The E-40a Improved is suited to low, medium and high sensitivity loudspeakers, and of course it's the ideal amplifier for driving the LS3/5a and AB-1 combination.

Superb value: 40 watts per channel of top quality pure class 'A' amplification at a bargain price (the last list price was £ 1,898.00 !).
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each: £ 1,088.00

Special Offer 2



Harbeth LS3/5a special Rosewood Limited Edition Version (Alan Shaw signature).
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per pair: £ 688.00

Please note: These are the very rare and collectable final production run version of the LS3/5a loudspeaker, featuring gold tweeter mesh and lucky '8' suffix serial numbers, originally built for the demanding Far Eastern markets. Limited stocks, so don't miss out on this extra special offer.

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Add a pair of AB-1 bass extenders in Rosewood for only £ 338.00

Special Offer 3 Amazing value package deal:

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AMC valve integrated budget 25 watt amp	1000	250	75	COUNTERPOINT DA10 SE111 top transport idac combo
AUDIO INNOVATIONS CLASSIC 25	1500	300	175	CYRUS DADY CD PLAYER top loader
ART AUDIO QUIN/TET stereo power amp	200	700	2000	CYRUS DISCMASTER/DACMASTER
AUDIO INNOVATIONS 300 integrated with phono	1050	500	1200	DENISEN CD PLAYER
AUDIO NOTE M2 RIAA phono stage EX DBM	1500	750	2000+	DPA bigger bit
AUDIO NOTE P2a power amp	4200	2300	1000	KRELL STUDIO DAC 24bit 32x oversampling
AUDIO NOTE P4 monoblocks	800	500	150	MERIDIAN 506 20 bit cd player
AUDIO NOTE ZERO pre/monoblocks silver finish	5311	800	2800	MERIDIAN 206 DAC7 CD PLAYER
AUDIO RESEARCH SP11 mk2	1000	700	400	MERIDIAN 203 dac
AUDIO RESEARCH D115	2250	1200	200	PIONEER PD9300
AUDISON SILVER NIGHTS	800	500	150	RESTEK Madree CD transport
AUDISON PREMIER line preamp	1500	450	1100	ROTEL 980 TRANSPORT & DAC
BEARD BBA100 line integrator	2000	800	250	
CONRAD JOHNSON PVS PREAMP with phono (needs service)	2000	800	400	TURNABLES, ARMS & CARTRIDGES
COUNTERPOINT SA100 100 watt valve/mosfet	2000	700	400	AUDIONOTE ARM (fits Veyr)
hybrid excellent sound	1500	650	135	ALPHASON SONATA with ATLAS psu and HR1005 arm
CROFT MICROFVS	1500	1500	200	ALPHASON SOLO + BASIK arm
CROFT VI power amp	1500	1500	350	ARISTON RD11 ELECTRONIC with arm
GAMMA ERA REFERENCE preamp with phono	1100	600	1800	GARRARD 301 in green marble plinth with SMEV arm
GOLDEN TUBE AUDIO SE 40	1500	800	1900	IBE SLATE / MAYWIRE formula 4
HBC "BEASTIE" 211 single ended amp	600	300	500	KOETSU RED SIG boxed sounds lovely, I'd keep it if I didn't have one already
LUMLEY M75 monoblocks 75 watts	1000	1000	700	LINN AXIS
LUXMAN CL 32/MQ 3600 valve pre/power	3000	900	250	LINN LP12/BASIK/linn cartridge
MELOS 222 20 box pre with phono	2200	2200	540	Linn LP12/UK GOREKOS
MORE FIDELITY 3008 single ended stereo power amp	750	250	1100	LINN LP12/LINGO/ITOK
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RADFORD STA 25 RENAISSANCE	250	100	280	LINN LP12 / ITOK VALHALLA
RADIOPHIL RENAISSANCE SC25 Pre Amp	450	250	700	MICHEL GYRODECK SERB300 latest version as new boxed
ROSE RVS1 valve pre with phono	250	100	850	ORTOFON MC30 SUPREME boxed
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VAC AVATAR new, remote controlled	1000	400	1250	Rega 3 no arm
VTL deluxe preamp (with phono)	1500	600	500	SME 30.72 with v/d Hul wired SMEV
VTL MONOBLOCKS	1500	600	800	SOTA SAPPHIRE with Helius Orion arm
			1500	MISSION 75M TECH 1000 IMPROVED in thorens plinth
			1125	THORENS TD 160 SUPER with LINN BASIK
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Jason Kennedy. Hi-Fi Choice April 1997

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WHAT HI-FI: Verdict ****

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Small but perfectly formed MC3

*****CROFT PRODUCTS*****
Croft's new Vitali Valve Pre with Phono Stage an ideal partner for Vintage Amps or a upgrade from solid state £350.00

MC3
Producing the very best from vinyl has long been a black art and it's no wonder with so many permutations involved. Most people agree that Moving Coil cartridge design is technically superior than the Moving magnet but demands much more from it's ancillaries, especially the phono stage.

E.A.R./Yoshino have just launched the MC3 Cartridge Transformer with a band width of 3Hz-100kHz, facilities for a wide range of quality cartridge outputs and twin isolated earth terminals for maximum noise reduction.

The MC3 captures all the subtleties from the most complex recording without resorting to thrusting or spitting it out. Its extreme clarity and grainless presentation makes for a superb vinyl experience.

ART DUDLEY: Leading American hi-fidelity critic.
I'm impressed with the MC3, and from a musical point of view, I think it's worth every penny of the price. Those of you who have tube-based systems & can afford it should pester your local dealer until he lets you take one home and try out Value/Quality ****

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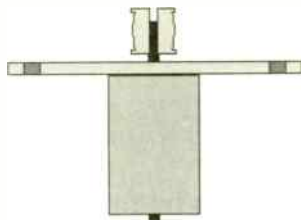
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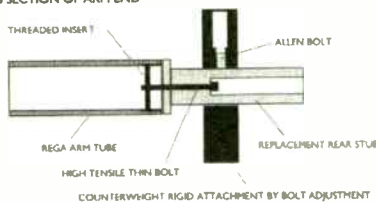
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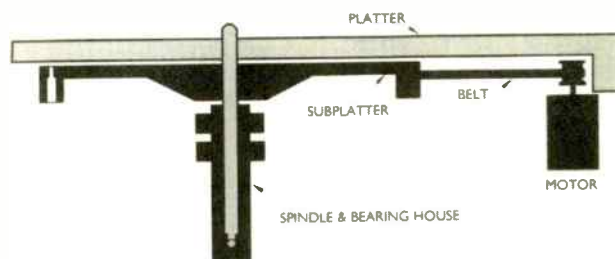
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We have recently been advised that there may be some non-original and / or defect cartridges available on the UK market. Needless to say, these items are offered at very attractive prices and appear to be excellent value for money. Do not be fooled, only Ortofon products purchased from an authorised dealer are guaranteed authentic and are covered by the distributors and manufacturers warranty.

Please contact Henley Designs should you have any doubts or wish to locate your nearest authorised dealer.



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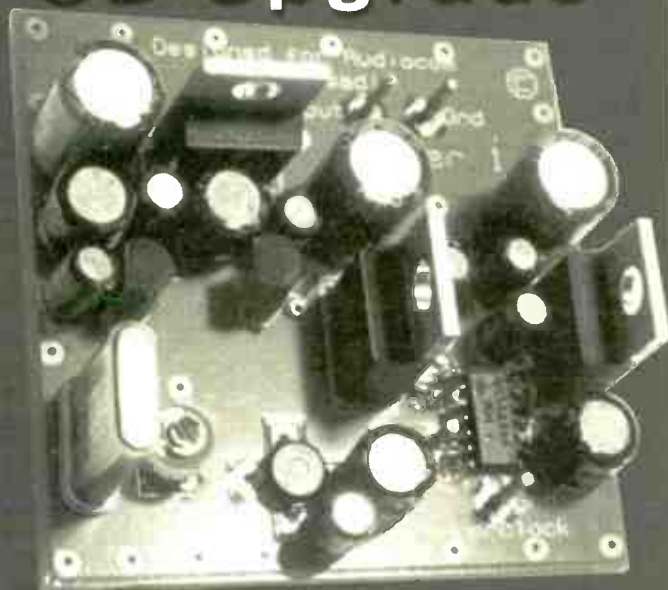
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All of the items shown are either Ex-demo or Secon Hand



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MEASURED PERFORMANCE

LOUDSPEAKERS

ACOUSTIC ENERGY AE2

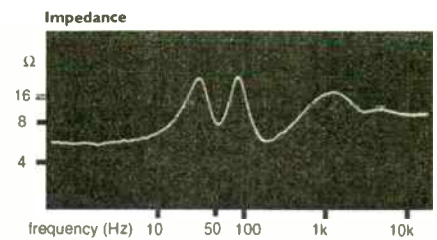
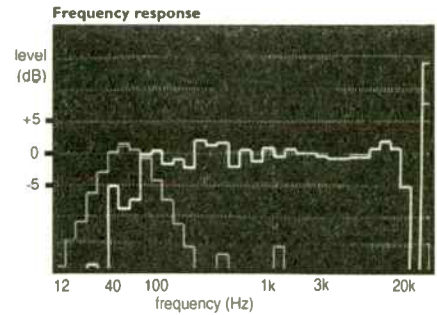
The AE2 has an unusual frequency response characteristic, probably due to its metal cone bass/midrange unit. This looks quite lumpy from 150Hz to 800Hz, a region where most loudspeaker drivers are smooth. The AE2 may have some coloration here as a result, which would affect the basic timbral quality of instruments and voices. Above 1kHz the speaker smooths out, running flat to 16kHz, with just a small treble peak. It is likely to sound vanishingly natural in treble quality and very detailed too, as a result.

Down at the bass end there's strong forward output from the cone down to 40Hz, although the port peaks at 50Hz and reaches down to 30Hz. Port output does not completely cancel forward output on this

speaker. The AE2 should produce good bass, possibly sounding fast and well damped, a bit like a sealed box.

The impedance curve shows the AE2 draws little current, because it has a high overall impedance. Measuring 9 ohms overall, with pink noise, and being largely resistive from 200Hz up to 20kHz the AE2 is one easy load. Amplifiers will see a feather attached. It has an average sensitivity of 86dB, hardly surprising considering the high impedance. This loudspeaker will get the best from partnering amplifiers.

The AE2 measures well and is likely to provide interesting sonic results. It's a neat piece of engineering where everything is in good balance. **NK**



JAMO E850

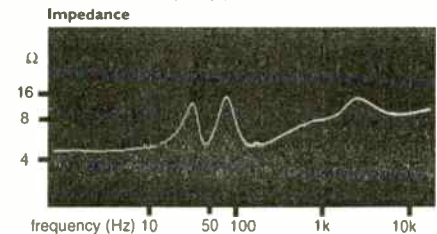
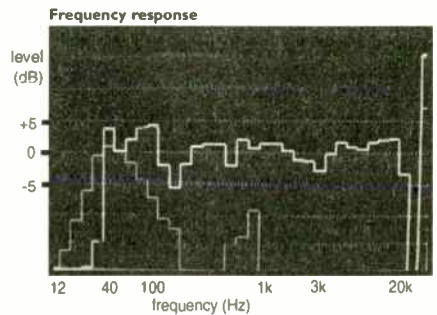
With two bass/midrange units to improve power handling the E850 is well equipped to handle low frequencies, and measurement shows Jamo have exploited it. There's a strong lift in bass output from 100Hz down to 40Hz - the fundamental frequencies of musical instruments - and the huge rear port gets down to 25Hz. Jamo have gone for big bass.

This is a 4 ohm loudspeaker in effect, although overall impedance measures 6 ohms because above 500Hz impedance rises steadily to reach 12 ohms. The E850 is fairly non-reactive, a good sign in terms of amplifier matching. It is also sensitive,

producing 90dB SPL from one nominal watt of input. Although the 4 ohm impedance across the power delivery region below 200Hz means the E850 will draw current, it should not upset most amplifiers.

Frequency response is a little uneven and there's a little lift at high frequencies, just enough to give the speaker positive treble projection. A crossover suckout will add warmth but reduce detail slightly.

The Jamo measured reasonably well in all respects. It will have very strong bass, go loud from 40watts or so and deliver smooth but obvious treble. **NK**



KEF Q35

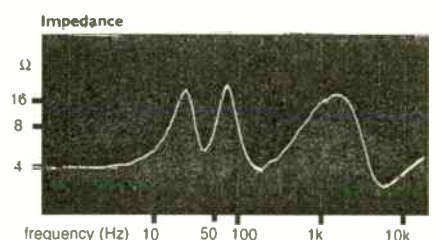
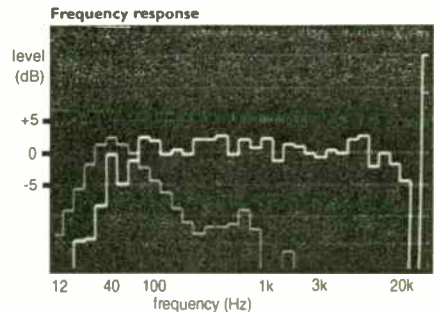
The co-axial woofer and tweeter of the Q35 integrate very well, giving a near perfect 'point source'. Under measurement the Q35 has a consistent frequency response mildly off-axis, either side, above and below. This reduces room dependence, improving consistency across a wide range of living rooms. It also means the sound remains stable as you move around.

KEF have engineered in a smooth response, although the tweeter peaks gently around 8kHz. Subjectively, the Q35 should sound smooth and natural, with just a small amount of treble brightness. The large, front firing port is tuned to around 40Hz and gives good output down to a low 25Hz, so

there should be no shortage of deep bass.

As a load, the Q35 could be better. Impedance swings wildly from 2.5ohms (6kHz) to 30ohms (70Hz). The loudspeaker is highly reactive, even in a region (2kHz-5kHz) where others are largely resistive. With an overall value of 5ohms the Q36 draws current to achieve a good measured sensitivity of 89dB. Some amplifiers may not give their best with this speaker and it is likely to emphasise amp. differences. By today's standards it is not a good load so beware of amplifier matching.

The KEF Q35 measures very well, except as a load. It's best auditioned using the amplifier it will partner. **NK**



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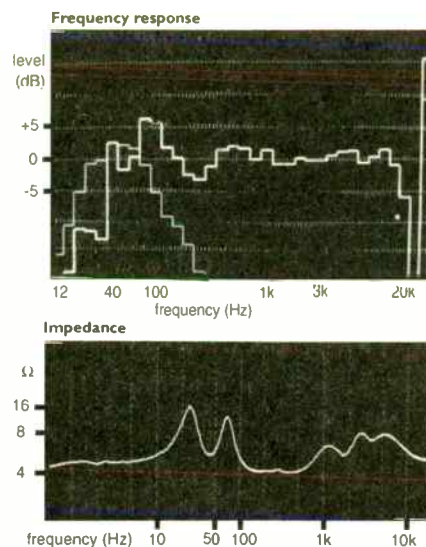
QUADRAL QLX 180

The Quadral has a good line up of drivers, which often means a lumpy response. Not only is it technically more difficult to integrate multiple units, but the budget isn't there for a crossover able to do so, having been dissipated on the drivers. So I was surprised to see an unusually smooth, flat forward response from this loudspeaker, plus quite good results from above too. However, the bass peaks up strongly around 80Hz, forward response getting down to 40Hz. Below this the port takes over, giving strong output down to 20Hz. The Quadral will have heavy bass and is likely to sound boomy too. But it should sound accurate enough elsewhere,

with a detailed mid-band and smooth treble.

The impedance characteristic has some peculiar lumps in it where the drivers integrate but is even and relatively flat, meaning it's primarily resistive and an easy load for an amplifier. At 5.6ohms overall, the impedance is low-ish, contributing to a good sensitivity figure of 89dB SPL from one nominal watt of input. The Quadral will go loud with low power amps and presents an easy enough load.

This loudspeaker measures well in most areas but, like the Jamo, bass has been inflated to give a big sound. Amplifier matching looks good. **NK**



TANNOY mx3

A gentle rise in output toward the lower end of the frequency band will give the mx3 warmth and body to their sound. A very smooth treble response suggests the tweeter is a good one, likely free of coloration. This is important for relaxed long term listening, especially with CD. I was interested to see this is another reflex loudspeaker to have a forward response like an infinite baffle, with forward output down to 40Hz and the port overlapping the forward response. Usually there is complete cancellation as the port takes over from the cone, since the two are 180 degrees out of phase.

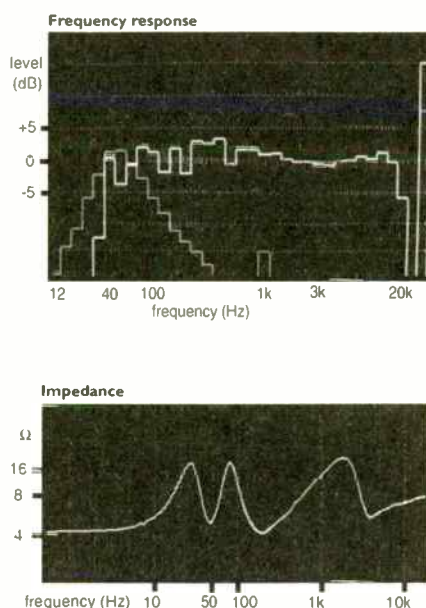
The mx3 port works properly, the impedance curve shows, resonating at 50Hz - quite high for a large-ish loudspeaker. It extends output down to 30Hz or so, enough

for good, deep bass. Tannoy usually get more bandwidth from their loudspeakers than rivals, but whilst good the mx3 is not exceptional. It may, however, have tighter, more impactful bass than a lot of reflexes.

The Impedance curve is very reactive at 3kHz where the tweeter kicks in - not a good sign since the 'speaker returns energy to the amplifier here, potentially upsetting feedback in the time domain. Tannoy usually manage better than this.

Overall impedance measures 6.3ohms, the minimum being a safe 4ohms. Sensitivity was a healthy 88dB so no more than 40-60W would be needed for most situations.

The mx3 isn't quite out of the Tannoy design manual. Although it measured well it has flaws. **NK**



YAMAHA NS-200

Frequency response of Yamaha's NS-200 was a little unusual. The low frequency end rolls off slowly below 250Hz. This looks like an over-damped response, rarely used because it gives dry bass, albeit with a good sense of control. That the NS-200 rolls off because of acoustic over-damping is unlikely in fact; the roll down could be due to other factors. All the same, bass quality looks as if it will be on the light side subjectively.

Another peculiar feature is a large peak in the forward response at 40Hz, which coincides with the port. Port tuning is narrow, the response curve and impedance trace show. Put together, these two phenomena strongly suggest the NS-200 will have quite pronounced one-note bass, and could sound fairly boomy at low frequencies.

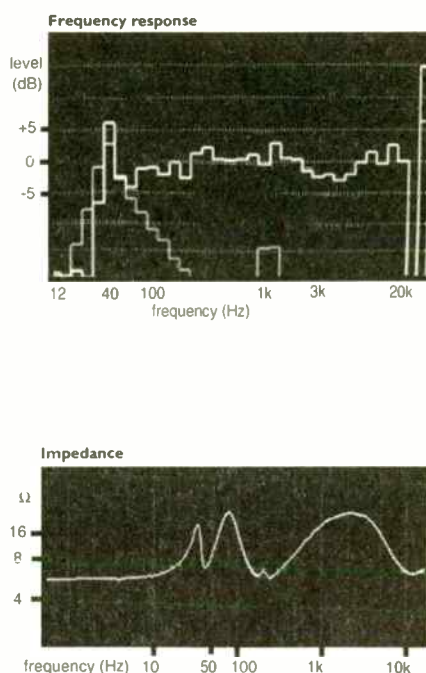
Frequency response otherwise measures fairly flat up to 20kHz, although from

much above the bass unit axis, a phase suck-out between bass/mid and tweeter appears. Drive unit integration could be better. Some peakiness in the treble unit suggests its presence may be fairly obvious subjectively.

Yamaha have given the NS-200 a fairly high overall impedance of 7.8ohms, the impedance curve clearly showing a fairly hilly characteristic with much reactance. Port tuning looks a little awry too. Not good.

Sensitivity was high at 89dB, especially considering the impedance. This is an efficient loudspeaker, suggesting good drive unit technology. It is an easy load for amplifiers and will go loud with little power.

The NS-200 is likely to sound lean, clear and bright, and have a tendency toward boomy or one-note bass. It may well seem quite lucid and dynamic though. It's engineering could be better in places. **NK**



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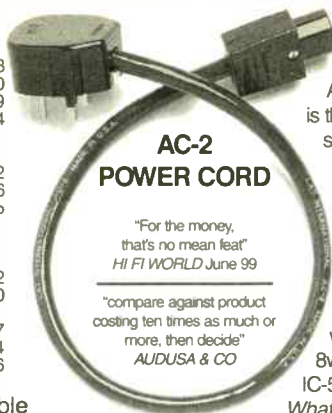
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QUAD 988

Much like the old ESL-63, its replacement - the new 988 - is an open dipole, radiating rearward as much energy as forward. It has the same low sensitivity as before, producing 83dB for a nominal watt of input (2.8V). The rear energy lifts this a little, returning as dispersed, reflected energy to add a dB or so to the apparent loudness. Although this suggests a powerful amplifier is needed to go loud, around 50W is considered the power limit, which of course limits maximum loudness.

With an overall impedance of 5.6 ohms, measured with pink noise, the new 988 isn't a particularly difficult load. Across the audio band, from 10Hz up to 20kHz the minimum is a safe 4ohms. Below 10Hz it falls to the DCR of 3.1ohms. Over much of the frequency range the 988 looks largely resistive to an amplifier, except above 5kHz where impedance dips to 4ohms then peaks suddenly to a resonance just above 20kHz. A small reactive network here would usefully correct both trends, as well as pulling top end response down judiciously.

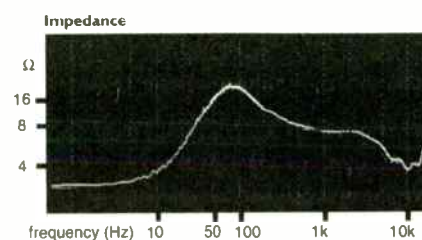
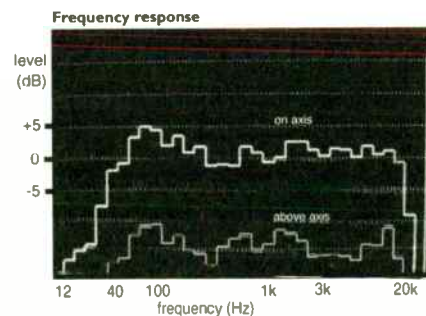
I say this because the 988 is quite obviously much brighter sounding than the old ESL-63, with which I lived for many years. Although now academically flat in on-axis frequency response, from just above the 988s are a little ragged and have a treble peak (see lower trace in the response analysis), which is audible. The ESL-63 had slowly

falling treble and a softer sound than the 988. An inverse network would also improve amplifier matching, because strong reactance at 20kHz is not the sort of thing high feedback solid-state amplifiers necessarily like.

To avoid the roughness of frequency response and high frequency peaking effect when listened to just above axis the 988 is best tilted backward slightly on its spikes so it beams up toward listeners. The alternative is to point them down the room, not directly at the listening position, then treble rolls off earlier and the sound softens considerably.

There is a bass peak of +5dB at 80Hz. Below this frequency, output rolls down, but the 988 reaches down to a creditably low 40Hz all the same, before rolling off fast. These characteristics are classic ESL. It will produce low bass, although quality will depend upon the room. Long rooms suit Quads, with the speakers placed near or against a side wall, one-third the way up.

Amplifier matching needs to be carried out with care. Hard sounding transistor amps are largely unsuitable. Their properties will be highlighted, and some designs could protest at the 20kHz reactance. A clean, lucid but soft sounding amplifier is probably. The dive in impedance at high frequencies will cause valve amps to roll-off naturally, so counteracting the 988s innate brightness - a



symbiotic match no less. Expect Quad's own valve amps to match best, because the 988 as a load suits a valve amp and experience shows the lucidity of an electrostatic serves to highlight the superiority of valves. Quad's new valve amps will be more advanced than any commercial predecessors and should be special in their own right.

The new 988 will have a brighter sound than the old ESL-63 measurement shows. It measures well but, just like the ESL-63, must be room positioned and amplifier matched with care. **NK**

MISSION 783

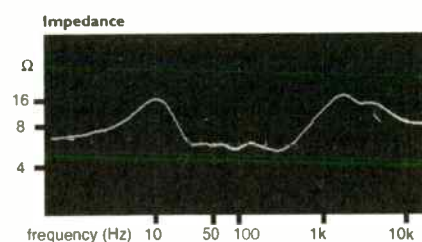
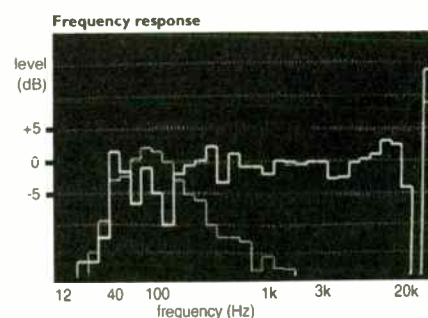
This large floorstander has two forward firing drivers, plus a low frequency bass driver that provides extra support below 200Hz. It's mounted right at the base of a side panel, just above the floor. Mission say facing it inwards gives sharpest imaging, and outwards a more open sound stage. Putting a bass unit here drives the height mode of a room most effectively, giving plenty of bounce in the 80Hz region for the average 9ft high ceiling, strengthening bass speed. Bass output is strong down to 40Hz and in-phase with the main driver to this point. The 783 is likely to have good, solid and fast bass as a result, especially as it cuts off sharply below 40Hz.

The 783's forward response is a little uneven by the best current standards, which means Mission standards! In other words, they have not pursued response flatness. At whatever angle I measured the speaker it has rising treble, so it will sound bright in

any room. The on-axis lift was quite strong, at +4dB or so at 20kHz, enough to make some CDs spit.

Sharing bass output between drivers increases power handling but lowers impedance, the loudspeaker dipping to 5 ohms from 30Hz up to 500Hz. Unusually, the DCR is higher than the minimum, measuring 6.4 ohms, and this happens to be the overall impedance value too, since impedance rises to a maximum of 20 ohms only over two small peaks. The smoothness of the curve indicates low-ish reactance and energy storage, a good sign. The 783 will be an agreeable load, but for a loudspeaker of the size sensitivity was a little disappointing at 86dB sound pressure level from one nominal watt of input, when rivals are hitting 90dB.

The 783 appears to have had a lot of attention paid to bass performance. There's strong treble too. It measures well and will likely have a clean, dynamic sound. **NK**



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CD PLAYERS

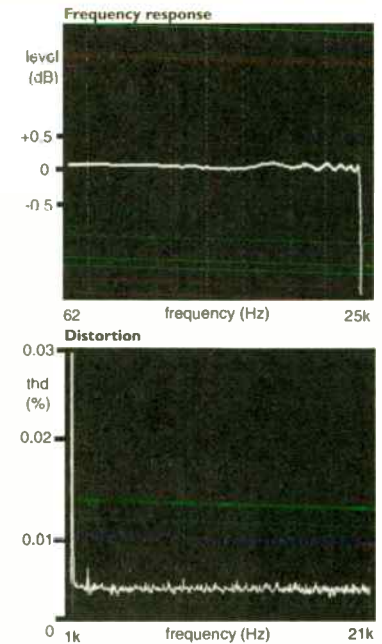
DENON CDR-1000

The CDR-1000 measures well as a player, with a flat frequency response from 5Hz right up to 21.2kHz characterised by filter ripples higher up the band, and a lack of roll-off that normally results in 'obvious' treble. Distortion was low right through the operating range, from 0dB down to -90dB, replaying a test disc. As a recorder noise from the record amps intruded worsening the distortion figures slightly. All the same, the player was better than most from Japan, if not as good as a Philips or Marantz.

Record sensitivity was a useful 400mV at full gain, or 3V at minimum gain, an indicated -12dB of attenuation. Output was a normal 2V.

The CDR-1000 measured well enough all round, better than many CDRs. It has no weaknesses. **NK**

Frequency response	5Hz-21.2kHz	
Distortion	left	right
-6dB	0.005	0.005
-30dB	0.015	0.014
-60dB	0.36	0.38
-90	28	28
Separation	left	right
1kHz	106	107
20kHz	92	93
Noise (record)	-106dB	
	-91dB	
Dynamic range	108dB	
Output	2V	
Sensitivity	400mV	



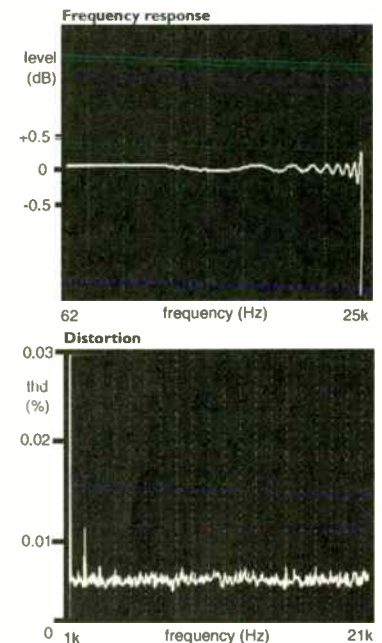
COPLAND 248

The Copland. It's frequency response has quite pronounced filter ripple at high frequencies and a very fast roll-off, suggesting they are using rather different circuits or values than rivals. With a reasonably flat overall trend the player will have a natural enough tonal balance though.

Distortion was very low on both channels from full level (0dB) down to -90dB so there'll be no undue roughness in the sound from this phenomenon. Channel separation was wide at -114dB in the midband and 99dB at 20kHz, but then CD easily meets necessary standards here.

The Copland produces no less than 2.7V at full output, +2.5dB higher than Philips standard of 2V, making it louder in demos. Otherwise it measures normally, with no weaknesses. **NK**

Frequency response	5Hz-21.1kHz	
Distortion	left	right
-6dB	0.003	0.003
-30dB	0.009	0.009
-60dB	0.38	0.38
-90	28	28
Separation	left	right
1kHz	114	112
20kHz	99	98
Noise	-114dB	
Dynamic range	110dB	
Output	2V	



AMPLIFIERS

NAD C350 AMPLIFIER

The obvious difference between this amplifier and all NADs that have gone before is bandwidth. Traditionally NADs have rolled off above 22kHz, the idea being to limit transient distortion caused by fast signals reaching the power amplifier. This applies to all amplifiers, not just NADs. Now, however, SACD and DVD-A reproduce signals up to 100kHz, requiring amplifiers and loudspeakers to do the same.

It isn't difficult to get a solid-state amplifier up to 100kHz; Harman Kardons have always done so, as a matter of design policy. NAD have extended the response of this new amplifier to 96kHz (-1dB) our measurements showed. It should remove some of the subjective 'warmth' associated with

their amplifiers. The C350 reaches down to 8Hz at the other end of the spectrum so it will reproduce deep bass solidly.

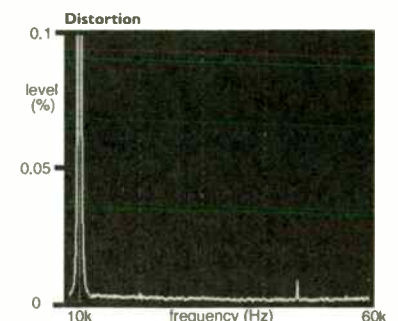
There's plenty of power here too, no less than 98watts into 8 ohms and 121 watts into 4 ohms. This is more than enough nowadays to fill a room with sound.

Distortion was minimal at all power levels and frequencies, with no sign of the high order harmonics still seen with many amplifiers.

The tone controls provided 5dB of lift and cut at spectrum extremes, enough for fine subjective tuning.

The C350 measures well. It provides lots of power with little distortion and is SACD/DVD-A ready. **NK**

Power	98watts
Frequency response	8Hz-96kHz
Separation	110dB
Noise	-106dB
Distortion	0.003%
Sensitivity	340mV
dc offset	1/0.8mV



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AUDIOLAB 8000Q Preamp, 2 x 8000P monobloc power amps (100w), 2 years old, in mint condition, boxed, excellent sound quality. Cost £2800. Offers around £1150. Tel: 01224 211 203, Mobile: 0794 136 8479 (Dec/1)

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COPELAND CSA 28 integrated amp, 48 hrs use (approx), cost £1300, sell £750. Tel: 01738 635 968 after 6pm (Dec/1)

FOR SALE, Yamaha TX480L tuner £65, 2 x 2 metre runs Cable Talk 4.1 cable £10. Wanted: Quad FM3 tuner, non workers considered. Denon DC103 cartridge. Tel: Mike 01758 613 790 (Dec)

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QUAD II AMPLIFIERS, good condition, rebuilt/refurbished to Quad spec. by Peter Lindley, excellent sound. GEC KT 66's, Mullard, Siemens valves + 18 used GEC KT 66 but test good + 1 new OS KT66 + 2 new OS Mullard GZ34 + 2 new OS EF86, £465. Tel: 01628 822 040 (Maidenhead) (Dec/1)

JBL SV 1600 Speakers, floor standing. Twin 6.5 in. + horn. Excellent imaging, ideal for difficult rooms, very well reviewed in Hi-Fi News by Peter Comeau + others. Hih Sens. (£725 new) £265. Tel: 01628 822 040 (Maidenhead) (Dec/1)

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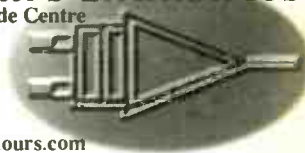
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B&W NAUTILUS 805 with stands £1300 ono. Quad 606 Mk2, 66 preamp, 66 tuner, remote £350 each, £900 all three. Marantz CD 53 Mk2 S.E. £85. Tel: 01777 711 386 (Dec/I)

QUAD 33/401 with Kimber 4 pin/phono connector £300. Musical Fidelity X-Pre £150. Sony 715 SE CD £100. Garrard 650, Ortofon MC10 Super, QED transformer £50. Tel: 07721 470 286 or Email: neilasimon@yahoo.com (Dec/I)

PROAC TABLETTE 50 speakers, mint condition. For sale due to upgrade. Cost £600, asking £300 ono. Tel: 01904 704 078 (evenings) (York) (Dec/I)

YAMAHA NS1000M loudspeakers, mint condition £650. Audio Innovations First Audio valve amplifier £575, EAR 509 monoblocks 100 watts valve amplifiers £950. World Audio KLPP1 preamp cost £695 built £295 (phono). Tel: 01935 891 342 (Dec/I)

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HI-FI SHOW 2000

It has to be said that even the Hi-fi show is more a/v orientated, but considering that appears to be the way business is going these days, it's hardly surprising! The less said about Live 2000 the better, from the Hi-Fi aspect, and even the Warner's demo of 'The Three Kings' was very disappointing.

As always it is impossible to hear everything, but certain demo's stood out.

Firstly, Path Premier's demo of digital recordings made off U.S. domestic HDTV transmissions, displayed via a Madrigal CRT projector onto an 8ft screen, simply made one envious and showed what we in the U.K. are missing. Very expensive but excellent, as was the sound.

Secondly, a demo of the french Lavardin amplifier sounded very clear, open and dynamic, and although relatively expensive is one I certainly plan to investigate, when time permits.

Thirdly, the Nordost cable demo went beyond the cables and showed the contribution of the equipment stand (AaviK) and Nordost Pulsar points in Aluminium and Titanium. Excellent demo!

Next, purely from a visual aspect, as no music was playing, the Timbre Stage equipment supports in Aluminium/glass, stole the show, so we have to see if they sound as good as they look.

Finally, Disc Emporium put on one of the better home cinema demo's using Von Schweikert Audio speakers and Theatremaster/Powermaster electronics.

P.S. it was nice to still see so many turntables around.

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Hi-Fi World June 99

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Hi-Fi World October 99

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Special Internet offer
see page 130 for details

HEYBROOK OPTIMA speakers floorstanders cherry wood (light) new £260, accept £140. Mint condition. Tel: 07909 916 477 anytime (N.E. London) (Dec(I))

TOTEM MODEL I Signature speakers. Boxed as new, will accept £800. Also Theta Data Basic £900. Tel: 01636 830 944 or 07979 536 753 (Dec(I))

EPOS ES11 loudspeakers, no stands £120. Castle Kendal II loudspeakers, mahogany veneer £150. Musical Fidelity B1 amplifier £120. Audio Technica Soundburger turntable, all very good condition. Tel: Hugh 01467 624 251 evenings (Dec(I))

STAX ELECTROSTATIC headphones and energiser £95. Denon PMA350SE amplifier with phono, excellent reviews, immaculate £75. Castle Warwick loudspeakers £75. Phillips CD player remote £15. Kenwood cassette HXPro £15. Tel: 01480 353 649 (Cambs) (Dec(I))

SEX FOR sale, or the next best thing is a pair of Mark Levinson No. 20 Reference monoblocks. Be seduced by the stunning sound of these pure Class A fully balanced powerhouse, and at 66kg will drive anything to a climax. These amps were not built to a price. This is a rare opportunity to own one of the finest power amps ever built £4495. Tel: 07939 266 182 (Dec(I))

NAKAMICHI PA7E power, CASE pre £850. Tandberg 3006A power, 3002A pre, 3001A tuner £875. Musical Fidelity MC6 speakers £800. Wanted: Open valve amp, big AV amp, speakers, W.H.Y., exchanges. Tel: 01626 774 246 (Dec(I))

ROGERS LS35A (15ohm) £300. Lowther Accousta's £350. Rogers HG88 III £100. Linn Klyde Hardly used £150. Tel: 0113 256 5915 (Leeds) (Dec(I))

AUDIO NOTE 'Kit One': Stereo SE 300B triode valve amp, assembled; Panasonic pot; copper foil caps; Holcos; some Blackgates; £490. Tel: 01248 370 414 or 0961 348 628, Email: ludmic@hotmail.com (Dec(I))

NVA TD5 £1400. T/table Mantlcore Musician arm ATF5 SB £650. Phono 2 twin PSU £450. P50 £180. A60 £200. Rega RB300 £75. NAD 910 Pro-Logic preamp £160. AEI's and stands £550. Tel: 01775 766 163 (Dec(I))

SME 3009 Series II pick up arm with weights, headshell, instructions etc. Good condition. One owner from new. £90. Tel: 01803 296 944 (Torquay) (Dec(I))

LOWTHER PM6 Acousta loudspeakers cross-overed to Shackman electrostatic tweeters. All original competent vintage hi-fi at a reasonable price of £300. Tel: 01432 344 150 anytime (Hereford) (Dec(I))

AUDION SILVER Knight 300B valve monobloc power amplifiers, with matching Silver Knight single-ended two box pre-amp including phono stage. New valves throughout. Great sound & looks. Bargain at £1750. Tel: 01403 711 778 (Horsham) (Dec(I))

LINN KABER Active speakers late spec complete with stands active cards passive crossovers available totally unmarked, boxed £545. Tel: Jerry 01702 545 622 (Dec (I))

NAIM 72/140. 72 is new style with new MC boards. Boxed perfect. 140 is old style boxed excellent condition £650. Tel: 01924 290 749 (Dec(I))

BEARD BB30/60 Dual mono integrated valve amplifier, 2yrs warranty, serviced, see HFN&RR Feb 98 (£1500) £750. Naim 42/110 recently serviced, MC boards £325. Exposure VII / VIII, upgraded, offers. Tel: 0191 260 2894 or 0131 661 0126 Email: zebedee@ontel.net.uk (Dec(I))

GOODMANS TREBAX Midax Audiom 60 and Fane 15" base unit in corner reflex cabinets. Also Fane 15" base unit unused. Also Axiom 10 Stentorian treble horn in corner reflex cabinet. Best offer. Tel: 01283 840 703 (Dec (I))

BRENELL Mk IV stereo tape recorder unused for last 15 yrs £25. Goldring GL70 deck/ADC 40 arm on base and cover £25. Tel: 01283 840 703 (Dec(I))

T.D.L. MONITOR Reference speakers superb sound and bass exceptional, cost £2400 new in 1991, sell for £895 ono. Tel: 01455 212 977 / 212671 (Dec(I))

LINN LP12 Valhalla, Ittok, new K9, Afromosa excellent condition £445. Regar Planar 3 with RB300 arm and bracket, black mint £145. Tel: 01455 212 977 / 212671 (Dec(I))

NAIM CDS Transport and power supply, boxed, immaculate £2300. Tel: 01752 509 236 (Dec(I))

QUAD ESL63s, seven years old, recent service by Quad £1300. Tel: 01257 424 819 evenings, weekends (Dec(I))

JPW AP2 loudspeakers, recommended by Hi-Fi Choice £75 ono. Garrard 401 chassis £65 ono. Tel: 0117 906 2728 (weekdays 0117 0900 1900 ask for Ross) (Dec(I))

THORENS TD126 turntable three speeds adjustable strobe fitted with SME 3009S arm two cartridges V.15 IV and M55E plus 78 rpm stylus and two spare headshells £100. Tel: 01732 832 195 (Kent) (Dec)

JM LABS COBALT 815 speakers (unused) £700. Rega Planet + remote £300. Audiolab 8000A £225. Rothwell Indus/Lupus valve pre/power £800. Ruark Solus (rosewood) £775. Lavardin IS amplifier £850. Tel: 01952 502 097 (Telford)) Dec(I)

MICRO-MEGA TRIO (Accutrans) silver transport, black DAC and power supply £850. Comes with half metre of XLO Signature interconnect. Tel: Andy 020 7928 8242 (evenings) (Dec(I))

SA3ES TUNER, boxed, mint £175. Absolute Sound x28, Stereophile x30, Hi-Fi Choice x28 offers please. Can deliver. Tel: 01423 772 723 after 6pm (Dec(I))

LINN KLOUT amps, X3, latest spec, POA. Linn Kabers, less than 12 months old, black ash, stands included, latest spec plus active cards, all immaculate, boxed, POA. Tel: 01920 424 831 (Dec(I))

EAR 834 integrated valve amp £850 (£2,100). EAR MM Phono stage £199. Lowther Acousta PM6C Silver coils (mint) £350. RB300 £75, Ortophon MC30Super £100. Tel: 01723 378 183. Email: paulbarker@westbourne-park.freemove.co.uk (Dec(I))



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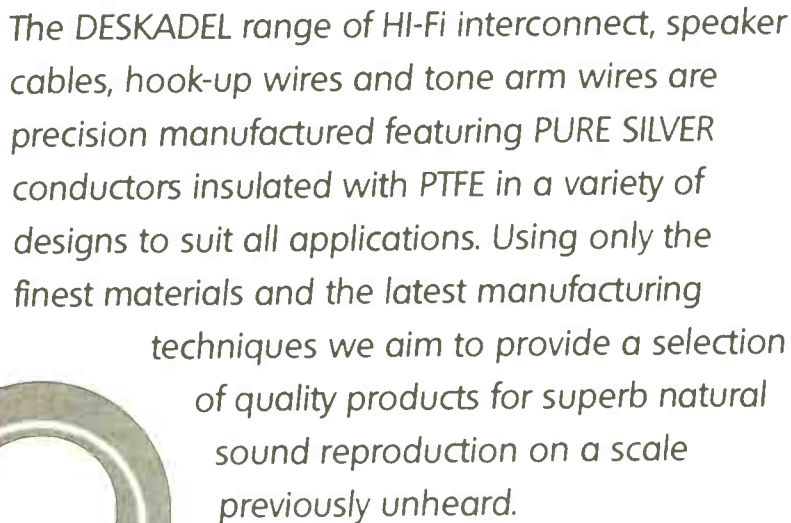
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CONCORDANT QUAD II power amp, preamp and FM1 plus spare valves £400. Quad ESL57s all new panels £700. Rotel RCD991 £600 ono. Tel: Tony 02476 460 729 or 07769 707 847 (Dec/I)

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LOWTHER FIDERIO'S DX2 drive units very efficient 96dB would suit valve amp £400. Tel: 01279 426 046 (Dec/I)

GENUINE BARGAIN, Speakers worth thousands, only £250. Reason for sale - need space for recent 'Desert Island' upgrade. Cabinets tatty but stunning sound for minimal outlay. Demonstration a pleasure. Tel: 01784 440 241 (evenings) (Dec/I)

AUDIO NOTE ANJ-B speakers, matched pair, excellent condition, bi-wireable, h,w,d, 58x33x23cm £300. (plus Target stands £350). Tel: 0117 974 4294 (Dec/I)

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LOWTHER LOWTHER Acousta twin speakers wanted. Made 1960's. Also wanted working drawings, leaflets, Lowther drive units, twin speaker feet, drive unit screws, PM2A L/S drive units. Tel: Jeff 020 8220 0380 (Dec)

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ELECTROCOMPANET Eci1 integrated amp, boxed, manuals, recent service £975 ono. Arcam Delta 70 CD Trichord Clock 3, offers. Pro-Ac Signature 2000 speakers, ebony, boxed £550. Target R4 stands £165. Sonus Faber Concertinos, boxed, mint £435. Meridian 501.2 Pre, priced to sell at £350, boxed and mint. Einstien Octopus mains blocks new from £199. More stock available. Phone for details. Call Steve, Apex Acoustics 01527 450 500, Mobile: 07773 198 336, Email: apexsnm@aol.com (Dec/I)

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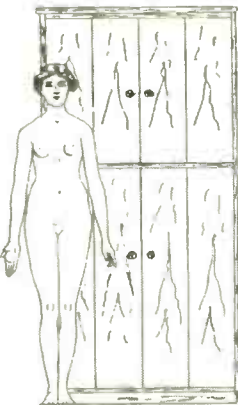
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