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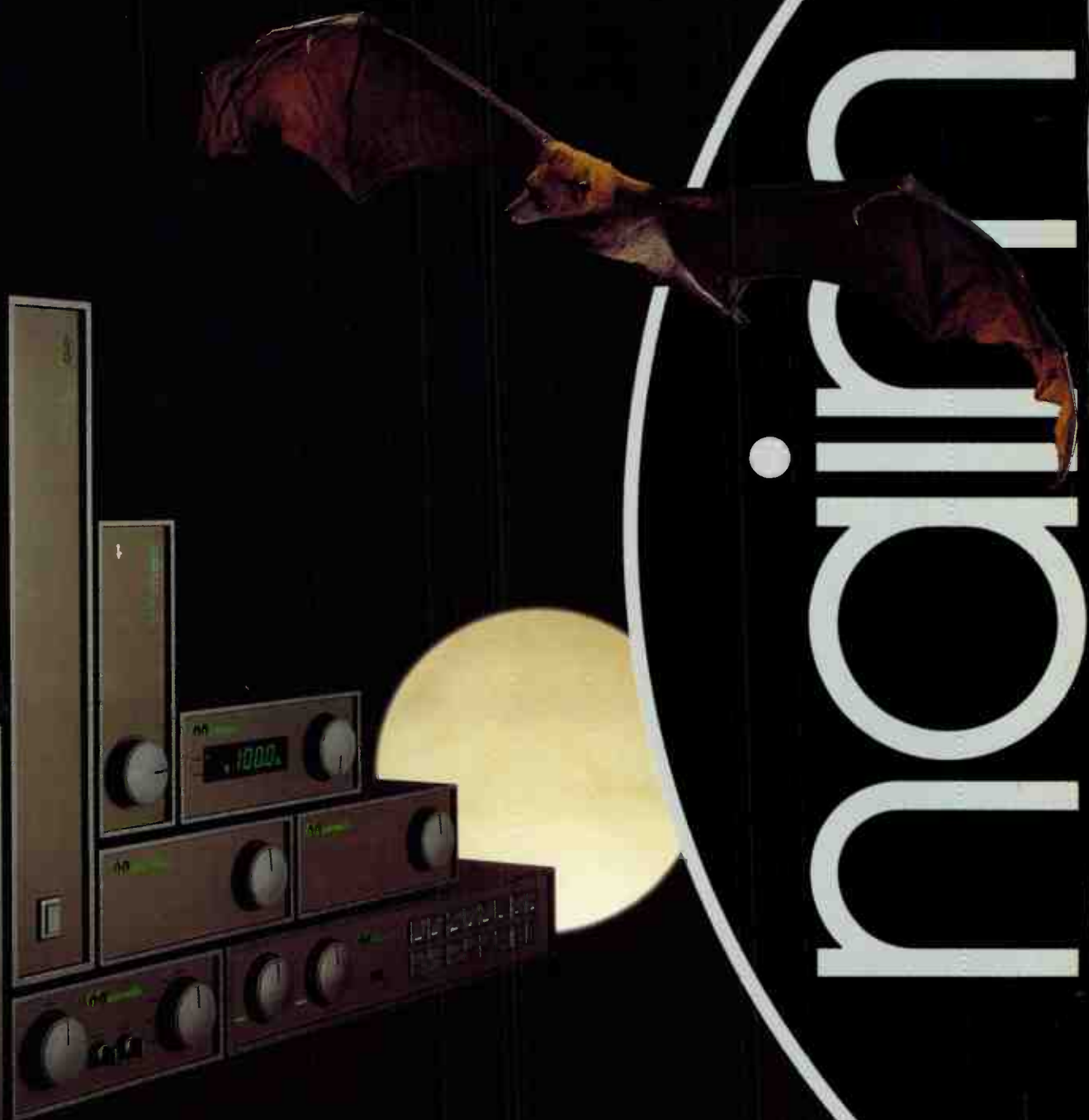


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World Radio History

This Month's World

Grasshopper! A £3450 pickup cartridge. At last we've risked reviewing this legend. But we looked at it in awe, decided we all had jelly hands and sent it to LP expert, Chris Beeching - see p 70.

We've found many other superb and less delicate products to review alongside it. For example -

- McIntosh are a venerable U.S. name whose past includes innovative valve amps. Their new CDM 7009 CD player, big as a Mack truck, had Eric Braithwaite flailing his arms about - sign language for "it's seriously good". See what afflicted Eric on p13.
- Back home, Linn's little Tukan loudspeaker will get people excited, as much as the outgoing Kan, thinks Linn fan David Price. Here's a great little Rock miniature, on p26.
- It sounds good and comes at a bargain price - but is that enough? Check out Philips' latest DCC digital tape recorder, the new DCC730 on p23.
- We've had hi-fi from Russia - now it's China's turn. Fitted with Chinese Golden Dragon 211 valves, directly-heated glowing wonders, here's a fascinating single-ended amplifier from the East, on page 57.

I personally hoped that today's Live shows would take over where London's great Olympia hi-fi show of yore left off, but I was wrong. Times have changed. Today we've got Consumer Electronics, dominated by the Japanese. There's a morass of domestic video, camcorders and what have you, all of which attracts kids with lollipops, carrier bags full of free give-aways and sticky fingers.

Thankfully, this year we also had a Central London show for real hi-fi: Sound & Vision. We attended eagerly, full of hope as always - and it was great! Our demo room was packed much of the time and we loved it. Thanks for coming to see us. Here's looking forward to an even grander event at the Cumberland, Marble Arch next September - we'll be there. Hope to see you too.

Noel Keywood, Editor

TEST EQUIPMENT



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

LISTENING ROOM (TREATED BY RPG ACOUSTIC TOOLS)



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see page 68 for details

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THIS MONTH'S REVIEWS

AMPLIFIERS

SHEARNE PHASE 2/PHASE 3 29

Eric Braithwaite listens to John Shearne's updated Phase 2 integrated amplifier. It has a distinctive sound, and with the new Phase 3 for bi-amping, the combo's even better.

P.M. AUDIO LAB 21 I SE 57

Our first Chinese amplifier! Valve specialists P.M. Components now produce monoblocks using the mighty 211 power triode. There's an accompanying valve line-level preamplifier too. Dominic Baker sees the light.



MOTH STEREO 60/MONO 100 65

Peter Downs listens to Moth's new Stereo 60 power amplifier, and investigates their upgrade system when he takes on the Monoblock 100s.

COMPACT DISC

McINTOSH CDM 7009 13

Eric Braithwaite reminisces over his lost love, the McIntosh CDM 7009. Using TEAC's VRDS mechanism, one-bit chipset and classic McIntosh design who can blame him?

LOUDSPEAKERS

CHARIO ACADEMY ONE 49

Eric Braithwaite receives a lesson in Italian style from Chario's Academy I loudspeaker, a compact, solid Walnut miniature with a sound to match.



KEF CODA 8 18

The war of the boxes continues. The latest to be launched is KEF's Coda 8. Dominic Baker asks whether they have cracked it.

LINN TUKAN 26

Will Linn's new Tukan, successor of the Kans, continue their reign. David Price has the answer.

MORDAUNT-SHORT PERFORMANCE 860 33

Known for competitive lower end models, Mordaunt-Short have launched the Performance range. Can they show the high-end how it should be done? Read Noel Keywood's verdict.

CASSETTE DECK

PHILIPS DCC730 23

A Digital Compact Cassette recorder for just £250. Our studio engineer, Douglas Floyd-Douglass, listens.



VINYL

VAN DEN HUL GRASSHOPPER IV 70

A legend amongst Moving Coil cartridges, here's the ultimate in vinyl replay. Chris Beeching tells us of its secrets



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Finger on the pulse, ear to the ground, remember you read about it here first.

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Your turn to sound off about any aspect of hi-fi.

QUERIES 52

In a confused and troubled world, World makes sense of it all.

COLUMNS 63, 69, 72

Noel and the Dominics draw your attention to this month's relevant issues.

WORLD VERDICT

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

GOOD - Has strong merit. Well worth an audition.

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

POOR - Seriously flawed. Not worth considering.

REGULARS

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A truly British system: the simply styled but silkily finished Sugden CD player and amplifier, with Castle loudspeakers, and remote control.	
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Eric Braithwaite takes delivery of an all Roksan system. With new Attesa CD player, Radius III turntable, L2.5/S1.5 pre/power amplifiers and floorstanding Ojan 3X loudspeakers, was it all worth it?	
SOUND & VISION LONDON SHOW REPORT	41
We bring you all of the news, equipment and gossip from the Hi-Fi Show of the year! If you missed it, our report is the only way you'll catch up.	

DIY SUPPLEMENT

In this month's Supplement we give details of a special active crossover network which allies Quad's ESL63 electrostatic loudspeakers to Celestion's SL6000 open dipole subwoofer. Combined, they give you a cabinet-free loudspeaker with extremely low colouration and a remarkably wide and flat frequency response. There's also a review of the recently updated Loudspeaker Design Cookbook and the new Electrostatic Loudspeaker Cookbook as well as features, news and a whole lot more for the DIY hi-fi enthusiast.

MUSIC

Some excellent new releases for your perusal.

ROCK RECORD OF THE MONTH:
The Charlatans: The Charlatans

CLASSICAL RECORD OF THE MONTH:
George Lloyd: Iernin

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COMPETITION

TEN top pairs of Mission loudspeakers. There are three pairs of Mission 731LE speakers and seven pairs of Mission 731 speakers up for grabs this month. 66



STRENGTHS

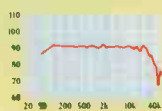
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KEF Reference Series

If only all decisions in life were as straightforward as this.

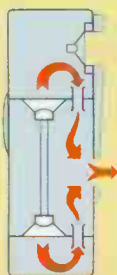
The fact is that if you want the purest sound and the most uncompromising specification, it simply has to be New KEF Reference.



Every speaker must match our engineers' 'reference' prototype to an almost unbelievable

tolerance of 0.5 decibels. This means you can be sure that the sound KEF created will be recreated in your home. Exactly.

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bass performance. With KEF's famous 'coupled cavity' bass system, now further improved with interports, you get it. We go to similar extremes in perfecting every detail.

Some you can't see, like Oxygen-Free Copper internal wiring or magnetic shielding (vital in Home Theatre). Some you can - sumptuously veneered cabinets with heavily gold-plated feet and terminals, for example.

In other words, each pair of Reference speakers is as close to perfection as KEF can make it.

When you know you can choose the best, would you willingly settle for anything less?



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CHELTENHAM	Sevenoaks Hi-Fi	01242 241171
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EDGWARE	Musical Images <i>(head office)</i>	0181 958 8777
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GUILDFORD	P J Hi-Fi	01483 504601
HEREFORD	English Audio	01432 355081
KINGS LYNN	Martins Hi-Fi	01553 761683
KNUTSFORD	Wilmslow Audio	01565 650605
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LONDON W1	HiFi Experience	0171 580 3535
LONDON W1	K J Leisuresound	0171 486 8262
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WORTHING	Phase 3 Hi-Fi	01903 245577

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KEF AUDIO (UK) LIMITED, ECCLESTON ROAD,
TOVIL, MAIDSTONE, KENT ME15 6QP.
TELEPHONE (01622) 672261.

December 1995 trade winds

A MYRYAD DELIGHTS

First in a range of new products from Myriad is the MI 120 remote control stereo integrated amplifier. With 60watts on tap it suits a wide range of loudspeakers. The MI 120's custom machined aluminium fascia (6.3mm thick) houses illuminated touch sensitive switches for input selection, an illuminated standby switch, a headphone jack and infra-red remote receiver. The recommended retail price is £529.95.

Myriad Systems Ltd
2 Pipers Wood,
Waterbury Drive,
Waterlooville,
Hants. PO7 7XU
☎ 01705 265508



VERITY GROUP BUY QUAD

It came as a surprise to learn that Verity Group, owners of Mission, have bought Quad for £3.7m.

Quad had embarked on an ambitious programme to develop and market a stylish system built around the 77 amplifier and their unique Quadlink remote control system. An impressive new production line had been installed in the factory to cope with expected volume, whilst maintaining Quad's legendary quality.

It appears the plan ran into problems. The 77 amplifier and associated Quadlink remote control was designed to run primarily with other 77 sources, notably the 77 CD player and 77 tuner. They were not ready alongside the amplifier, however, limiting its appeal. Doubtless, the long hot summer, which depressed sales generally, had its effect too.

Mission are but a stone's throw away from Quad, in Huntingdon. Their superbly equipped R&D department will doubtless add the sort of resources Quad needs to complete the 77 range and upgrade existing products. The Verity Group includes overseas interests and, doubtless, they'll be delighted at acquiring the Quad brand name. Quad's future seems assured.

BIG PLAYERS TEAC LAUNCH NEW CD PLAYER

Now we bring to your attention TEAC's new one-bit CD player, the CD-P3450. Its features include a 1-bit DAC, an 8-times oversampling digital filter, music calendar, shuffle play, program edit, tape record edit and an auto space function as well as a Toslink optical digital output. It will be available from September, finished in black and priced at £179.

TEAC UK Limited
5 Marlin House,
The Croxley Centre,
Watford, Hertfordshire. WD1 8YA
☎ 01923 819630





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World Radio History

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EASY ENTRY FOR RUARK

Ruark's Icon has been designed to replace the much loved Swordsman, Ruark's entry level loudspeaker. A compact 2-way loudspeaker intended for use close to a rear wall, the Icon uses a reflex loaded 5.5inch bass driver and a 25mm doped fabric/silk diaphragm.

The Icons come as a handed pair which helps improve imaging, and the drivers overlap so that their acoustic centres are as close to each other as possible. The cabinet is constructed from 15mm particle board for the wrap and 18mm MDF for the baffle boards; they are finished in real wood veneer. Recommended UK price is £359.00.



Ruark Acoustics Ltd
59 Tailors Court,
Temple Farm Industrial Estate,
Southend-on-Sea, Essex. SS2 5TH
☎ 01702 601410

THE AGE OF DIGITAL

Harman recently revealed their new digital amplifier. Using a PCM to PWM convertor, output power is 200W with total harmonic distortion less than 0.1% below 20kHz. It boasts an efficiency rate of more than 70% and weighs in at 6kg. This product is expected to reach the shops in January 1997 and is still in the developmental stage. Estimated retail price is expected to be between £2500 and £3000.

Harman Audio
Harman International Industries Ltd
Unit 2 Borehamwood Industrial Park,
Rowley Lane, Borehamwood,
Herts. WD6 5PZ
☎ 0181 207 5050

CHORD SOUND THEIR SIREN

New from The Chord Co. is the Siren, an interconnect constructed from silver plated oxygen free copper. The conductors are held within an air foamed dielectric which has very low capacitance. A lapped silver screen gives good interference rejection. Terminated with Chord's own gold plated phono plugs, price is £65.

The Chord Co.
30a Sarum Business Park,
Portway, Salisbury, Wiltshire. SP4 6EA
☎ 01722 331674

QUAD'S BACK PROBLEM SOLVED

Academy Sound have designed a new back panel for the Quad 33 which uses high quality gold plated phono sockets instead of DIN plugs. Academy Sound will fit this panel along with new tape and pick-up selector boards and provide a free set of high quality IXOS interconnects for £185 including carriage.



Academy Sound
Bank House, St Agnes,
Cornwall. TR5 0QW
☎ 01872 553317

PRICE REVOLUTION

Revolver announce that the success of their production and export sales has enabled them to reduce the prices of two of their loudspeakers. The Purdey 2-way floorstander, formerly priced at £249.99, now retails at £199.90. The Colt 2-way stand-mounting speaker has dropped from £149.99 to £139.99.

Not content to stand still, Revolver will shortly be introducing two large floorstanders and a new stand-mounting design. They promise to be bi-wirable and finished in Rosewood.

Ram UK Ltd
16 William Trading Estate,
55 Waverly Road,
Sale, Cheshire. M33 7AY
☎ 0161 973 0505

ALCHEMY'S GOLDEN TOUCH

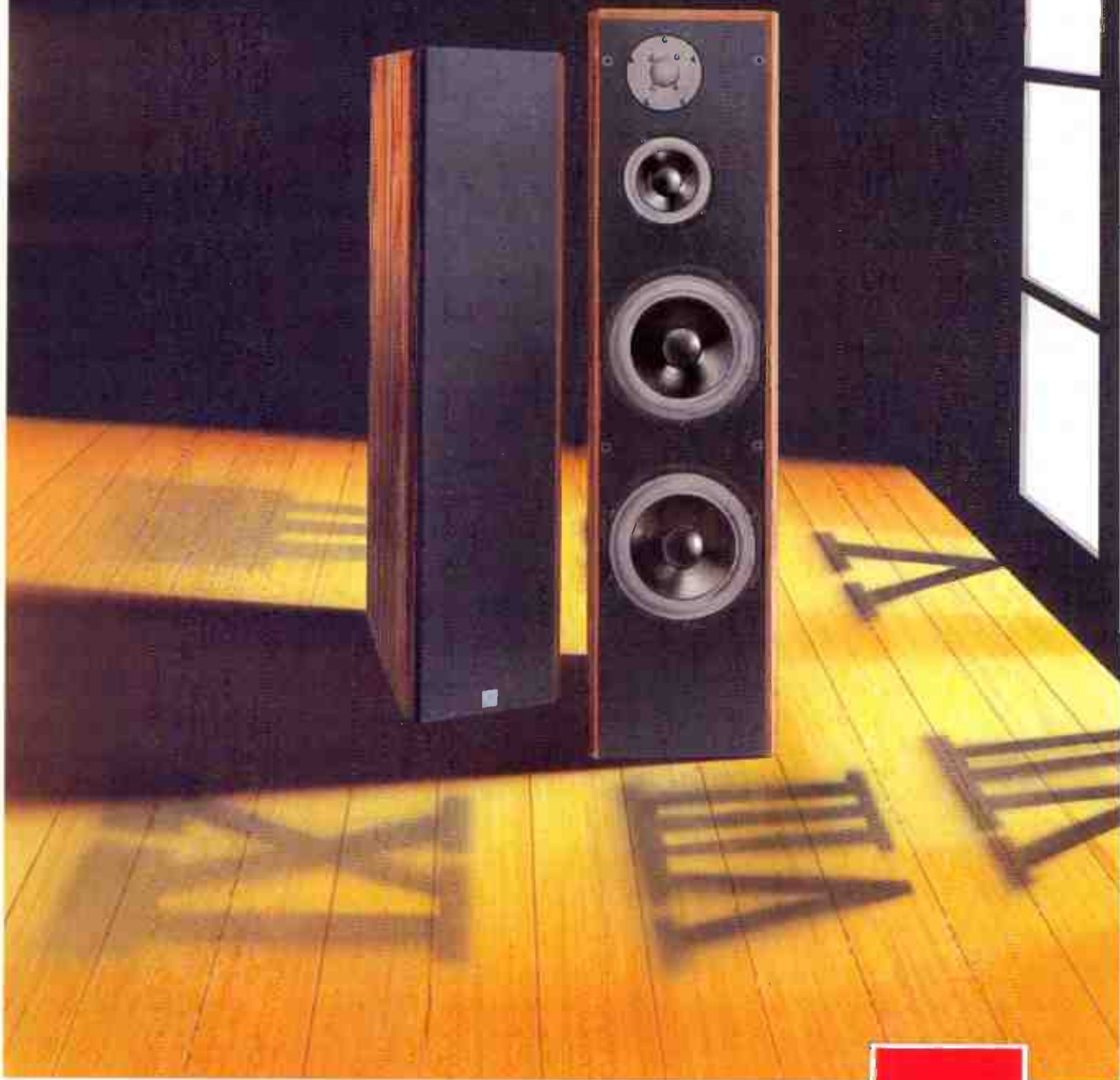
The new Digital Decoding Engine v3.0 is the latest weapon in Audio Alchemy's armoury. At the heart of this design lies the new Pacific Microsonics HDCD filter. The v3.0 has an optional remote control facility for input selection and volume control.

With the optional Intel 87C51 microprocessor and remote control, the v3.0 forms the control centre of a digitally based system. Even in its pure form, Audio Alchemy claim this DAC is a revolutionary addition to the sub £1000 market. Inputs are three coaxial, optical and Toslink. There is also a digital coaxial output. Recommended retail price is £699.95 with Power Station Four and £899.95 with Power Station Three power supplies.



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Desborough Park Rd,
High Wycombe, Bucks. HP12 3BG
☎ 01494 441736

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THE UNISON RESEARCH RANGE

Unison have recently introduced a phono stage to complement their Simply 2 and 4 valve amplifiers. Using three ECC83s, the Simply Phono takes its power from the main amplifier; a separate power supply is available to order. Price is £495.

Also new is the £1750 Mystery One; a pure Class A valve pre-amplifier with five line inputs, the £4,500 Performance One S.E. dual mono integrated using EL34s to produce 25watts and the £11,995 845 Absolute parallel single-ended integrated using 845 triodes for 37watts output.

UK Distribution

23 Richings Way,
Iver, Bucks. SLO 9DA
☎ 01753 652669

ORIGIN OF THE SPEAKER

Origin Live have updated their OL2 floorstanding loudspeaker. The new model uses a new bass driver, and boasts a 3dB increase in sensitivity to 90dB. The tweeter is a soft dome. The cross over has been re-engineered and the cabinet made wider to improve air-flow around the back of the cone.

Origin Live

87 Chessel Crescent,
Bitterne,
Southampton. SO19 4BT
☎ 01703 442183

MURDER INQUIRY

And now a request for your help regarding a very serious matter. On the 3rd August 1995, the body of the Ayodele Odamtten was found in his flat at 14c Cologne Road, Battersea,

London, SW11. Mr Odamtten died through repeated blows to the head and the following list of equipment was missing from his home and has yet to be recovered:

1. Technics SL-PG200A (EBK) compact disc player model with remote control. Serial number 023862 KM B00464.
2. Technics SU-VX600 (EBK) amplifier. Serial number OF2CA6143.
3. Denon TU-260L tuner. Serial number 0004519837.
4. Two Arcam loudspeakers. Serial number ALS000205.



5. Samsung VI - 1560 video recorder Serial number 023862KM B00464.

The location of this property is thought to be a potential key to solving the case. Any information that leads to a conviction will be eligible for a £5000 community trust reward. If you have any information regarding this enquiry please contact Tooting Police Station on 0181 672 9922.

Alternatively, you can call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

ACOUSTICA IN CHESTER

Chester has a new hi-fi dealer specialising in equipment from Linn, Naim, Arcam, Audiolab and Ruark. You can find them at:

Acoustica

17 Hoole Rd,
Chester. CH2 3NH
☎ 01244 344227

MORDAUNT-SHORT CONTINUE IN UPGRADE DIRECTION

Continuing to upgrade their range, Mordaunt-Short have recently added the 'i' suffix to their MS30s and 40s. Visually this means they get gold colour livery, including a gold anodised aluminium dome tweeter. Sonically, the new tweeter is said to improve detail and resolution, a new MCS cone termination offers improved midband performance and a better braced cabinet improves bass. An all round upgrade, it would seem.



The suggested retail price of the MS40i is £450 and the MS50i £550.

Mordaunt-Short

3 Ridgeway, Havant,
Hampshire. P09 1JS
☎: 01705 407722



Epos Acoustics, 3 Ridgway, Havant, Hampshire PO9 1JS. Tel: +44 (0) 1705 407722 Fax: +44 (0) 1705 400099



Mac Man Relishes

Eric Braithwaite relishes the MCD 7009 CD player from McIntosh.

They like things big in the States. Especially when they're Macs. No, you haven't opened Burger Monthly by mistake. I mean McIntosh USA as in big amplifiers. And now as in big-money CD players. The McIntosh MCD 7009 costs £2,650. But don't turn the page feeling faint. It's worth all of it. In actual fact, the McIntosh CD

stands no higher than the average transport and D/A converter together. With its name and legend backlit-green on an engraved black glass fascia, it still looks big, like a fifties Cadillac. It's heavy, it's solid, it feels luxurious, and bearing the Teac VRDS mechanism under the hood, it's the CD equivalent of an upmarket Lexus.

Every now and then a product turns up which leaves a hole in the heart when it has to leave home. Not many CD players fill that category, but the McIntosh is one: my Sugden transport and DAC I wouldn't be parted from; a Meridian 500/563 I was a bit sad about; the Counterpoint transport from California I would love to lighten my



*With a glimmer of a smile, the Commodore's
mind slid beneath Debussy's waves.*

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World Radio History

doorstep again. I shall want to send the Mac a postcard asking it back for its holidays.

Why this enthusiasm? Nay, euphoria? The Mac negates the whole reason for buying separate DACs and transports - that you can always improve the sound as DACs develop. This one is so good, it should last for years. Even though at one stage I threw an £1800 D/A converter and Jitter Box at its digital output, it would be hard to say it was that much of an improvement on what the Mac had under its perforated sleeve already. Different, yes; more subtle, yes. But substantially, £1800 better, no. Apart from one flaw - it absolutely refused to read one CD pressed by a company called Damont which has slid in and out of other drawers without a whimper - everything was fine and dandy.

Very dandy indeed. What distinguishes the really good digital source (DAC or transport, or in this case both) is its ability to portray real music dynamics. Music swelled out of the Mac on a Ravel recording, giving one of the best impressions of true orchestral dynamics to be had from digital. There were the brass instruments, clear and crisp, even the occasional oomping of the tuba quite distinguishable from a bass trombone.

Yet while strong tuttis had the equivalent of a Doc Marten boot behind them, delicate string textures and melodies were both clear and, rhythmically, balletic enough to be wearing pumps. On a Haydn (early instrument) symphony, the brass section powered forcefully out of the speakers while every single demi-semi quaver quivered from the violins. This is not just a matter of dynamics - the brass and lead guitars were pushed just a bit more forward than was entirely real - but detail, too. The Mac was accurate and truthful enough in every department to allow one listener to

wince at a single fluffed note on the part of one cellist.

Imaging had a 'cut-glass' aspect which I favour anyway, laying out the components of a group or orchestra like the individual facets of a diamond. Fischer Dieskau singing Schubert Lieder was simply entrancing. Piano and voice utterly stable, with absolute control of the dynamics of the instrument and vocal nuances to boot. Dieskau's every intonation - essential to appreciate 'Erlkonig' - could have been used for a masterclass.

Along with all this came that digital rarity, real walk-in depth, not just an impression of distance. Tonally,

absolutely no complaints either, except for a very slight tinge of sourness in flute tone and a trace of just-too-much warmth on an oboe, which gave the instrument a little too much of a reedy tone.

Some would call it

a beneficial enhancement, but so much of the rest of the range was so accurate that the Mac encourages you to expect absolute perfection in tonal purity and pitch-perfect perfection.

Subtle and delicate when it needed to be, the Mac could put on the bover boots as well. You want power rock? A bit of House? Well, lead and rhythm guitars ripped out of the speakers, kick drums kicked, and Housebeats thundered across the floorboards. Yet still subtle enough that if you want to know exactly what Rickie Lee Jones' Cabasse guitar sounded like, all you had to do was slide the CD into the McIntosh's drawer in preference to



almost anything else.

In fact, the McIntosh came to be the preferred digital source out of several around over the reviewing period. Two people, visiting the upstairs neighbour demanded to know what was making that glorious sound: apparently my McIntosh-inspired evening concert was heard through the floorboards and hushed the conversation. It almost destroyed the dinner party they came for: they had to come down to listen. Never mind the price, even if you can get DAC/transport combinations for a few hundred dollars less. It sounds worth even more than you have to pay. It's not just inspiring; it's inspired ●

McIntosh MCD 7009

£2,635

MPI Electronics,
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Surrey GU2 6AU
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*“ Two people,
visiting the upstairs
neighbour demanded
to know what was
making that glorious
sound. ”*

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Measured Performance
see p113-121

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audiolab



8000S

The new **8000S**, stereo amplifier, offers the same flexibility and outstanding sound quality as every Audiolab product. At the turn of a switch it will perform as an integrated amplifier delivering 60 watts per channel, or by connecting a second power amplifier act as the pre-amplifier in an audiophile pre/power combination.

As a high performance stand alone pre-amplifier the **8000S** delivers many of the features found on the remarkable new **8000Q**, such as Zq technology and remote control operation. However, the **8000S** also caters for the addition of an Audio Visual Decoder and an active sub-bass system. This ensures that the **8000S** is an ideal amp for the present and the future.

For more details on the Audiolab range, including the new **8000S**, **8000A**, **8000P**, **8000C**, **8000T**, **8000CDM**, **8000DAC**, **8000PPA** and **8000Q**, then contact your local Sevenoaks Hi Fi branch.

arcam



ALPHA 1 CD

The much acclaimed **Alpha 1** is Arcam's most affordable CD player to date. A multi-level Delta Sigma digital to analogue converter means the **Alpha 1** provides musical reproduction of unparalleled quality. As with the renowned **Alpha 5+** CD player, the **Alpha 1** offers slimline styling and a minimalist layout, ensuring ease of operation and the traditionally uncluttered look of top quality British equipment.

The **Alpha 1** is also an ideal aesthetic and sonic match for Arcam's award winning **Alpha 6+** amplifier. The two models combine to provide the convenience of a full remote control system, as well as outstanding sound quality. At Sevenoaks Hi Fi you will discover the Arcam **Alpha** and **Delta** series of products.

monitor audio



STUDIO 12

The breathtaking, new **Studio 12** loudspeakers from Monitor Audio, offer a no compromise approach to design and construction. This is obvious the moment you see them. Whether they are finished in a standard satin veneer or a luscious grand piano lacquer, the **Studio 12**'s are stunning. All of the

models within the new **Studio** series offer a combination of a gold anodized tweeter and an aluminium alloy bass/mid range driver. When partnered with suitable amplification the **Studio 12**'s offer remarkable transparency and the necessary focus to reproduce complex passages of music with glorious accuracy.

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cyrus



PRE & PWR

With the introduction of their long awaited **PRE** and **PWR** amplifiers, Cyrus are able to offer a sophisticated ancillary combination. From the exterior the **Cyrus PRE** looks like the **Cyrus III** integrated amplifier, complete with the familiar shoe-box casing, microprocessor source selection and volume control. The **Cyrus PWR** offers outstanding performance, driving most loudspeakers with ease. It can also be connected to the **PSX-R** power supply, improving performance as it becomes isolated from the mains, reducing the chances of extraneous noise and low level signals. This ensures that all music is delivered with a close attention to detail.

For more information on the **Cyrus PRE & PWR**, **PSX-R**, **DAD7**, **FM7** and **Cyrus III** then contact your local Sevenoaks Hi Fi-Cyrus stockist.

meridian



551

All Meridian components, from the simplest to the most complex, are designed to be operated by the touch of a single button on the MSR remote control.

The **551** integrated amplifier is no exception. It provides the same, very high levels of musical reproduction as every other model within the superb Meridian range. Utilising a dual-mono configuration, similar to that used in the **555** power amplifier, the **551** will deliver enough current to drive most loudspeakers with the necessary control. Combine this with the high quality pre-amplifier section that includes many of the technical features of the **501** pre-amplifier and you have a superb performer suitable for many applications. However, the real benefits of the **551** only materialise when it is used with other Meridian products like the **506** and **508** CD players, the **504** digital tuner and the **A500** loudspeakers. Thus, creating an advanced and flexible digital remote control system.

quad



77 CD

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EXPRESSION

hi fi connoisseurs and music lovers

The new **77** CD player is available in two guises. The first is a conventional, mains powered CD player, which offers all of the hallmarks of performance and style you expect from Quad products. The second is a bus powered CD player, which must be connected to the revolutionary **77** integrated amplifier and operated by the new intelligent remote control. The introduction of this second model enables Quad's **77** system to offer almost limitless expansion capabilities, and with a **77** digital tuner to follow, this exciting family of components will soon be complete. Thus, ensuring Quad continue to combined innovation and tradition.



The **Severn** are Castle Acoustic's all new two-way reflex loaded floor-standing loudspeaker. As with all of their models the **Severn's** are engineered to look good and sound great. The hand crafted enclosure incorporates newly developed drive units. A long-throw bass/mid range driver and a soft dome ferro fluid tweeter, with off-set configuration, ensures outstanding stereo imagery making it adept at handling all types of music, like the bigger **Howard II**.

Although the **Severn** has a slim profile and a small 'footprint', it generates a surprising level of controlled bass. Finally a spiked plinth in a matching veneer from Castle's selection of finishes provides stability.



Marantz are one of the few dedicated manufacturers that enjoy making recorded sound as realistic as is possible. This development of pure hi-fidelity has led the Hi Fi press to bestow numerous Best Buys and Recommendations upon models within their range. This includes the 1995 What Hi Fi Award of CD player Best Buy. The **CD63SE** offers the kind of sparkling performance you associate with more expensive CD players. With its high mass drawer mechanism and copper screening ensuring unrestricted CD Transportation and air flow, music is always reproduced faithfully. The **CD63SE** also offers a logical upgrade path, via its coaxial and digital outputs. With this pedigree, the superb **CD63SE** represents exceptional value for money.

At the heart of the **VRDST1** CD Transport, is Teac's world famous Vibration Free Rigid Disc Clamping system. The **V.R.D.S** mechanism provides precise transportation of the CD, ensuring accurate tracking and retrieval of the digital information stored.

When connected to the **DT1** DAC, via digital or optical outputs the two combine to deliver stunning mid range transparency and bass depth.

The **DT1's** Bitstream conversion in Dual operation and the **VRDST1** represent state of the art performance and unparalleled build quality. For more details on the outstanding Teac **VRDS** series, contact your local Sevenoaks Hi Fi branch.



Designed and developed in the UK, like all of their models. The **RA970BX** integrated amplifier is instantly recognizable as a Rotel product. With the same characteristically solid build, as every model within their range, it delivers the type of performance you expect from this discerning manufacturer.

Four line inputs, a tone defeat switch and a split volume knob provides finite adjustment. When partnered with a suitable pair of loudspeaker's the **RA970BX** is able to get most feet tapping. Its 60 Watts RMS per channel means that bass lines are punchy and treble is crisp.

For further details on the Rotel range, including the superb **RCD970BX** CD player and **RC&RB970BXII** pre and power amplifiers, visit your local Sevenoaks Hi Fi.

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CODE BREAKER

In the war for the budget speaker buyer, KEF have launched their new Coda 8. Will it help them break Mission's grip on the market, Dominic Baker wonders?

The world of miniature loudspeakers seems to have gone crazy again just recently. In the past Goodmans' Maxim, Wharfedale's Diamond, Celestion's I and Mission's 760 have battled it out. Now they've been joined by another well known name - KEF.

This has shaken things up. KEF are no new kid on the block. They have as much knowledge and experience at their disposal as anyone. The new Coda Series has already made waves.

Mission's 731 was one of the first of the new wave of miniatures, a high tech. design for the mass market. It was a little bright and had good bass punch, both things that made its sound impressive - and its sales figures equally so. Just as the 731 was becoming firmly seated as the one to beat, KEF's Coda 7 launched itself onto the market to steal the limelight; in our back-to-back test we reckoned that it just pipped the Missions. Mission, drawing a second pistol at lightning speed, were hot on KEF's heels though with the 731LE, a substantially re-worked 731 that took performance a large step further, for a mere £20 extra. Here, we reveal the second weapon in KEF's armoury, the £199 Coda 8.

KEF's Coda 8s are essentially a bigger Coda 7, and that's just about how they sound. With a bigger, deeper bass and improved power handling they present music with a greater sense of scale and body. Blur's 'Country House' from their latest album *The Great Escape*, had a full and rounded punch in the bass which drove this track onwards. Bass still wasn't the deepest, but within its limits it was taut and firm, giving good pace and attack. And the 8s can do this at higher levels too, less prone to compression than their smaller brethren.

Through the midrange and treble I found them less coherent and focused than the 7s. Although they definitely have a larger sound stage, Damon Albarn's vocal on 'Best Days' was dispersed across a wider plane, rather than tightly defined between the 'speakers. Where the 8s certainly add an extra degree of scale, they are less adept than the 7s at conveying the

structure of a piece of music.

With less focused material, such as the Stones-influenced Supergrass, where a lot of the studio ambience has been (over)captured to give a wide acoustic, the Coda 8s were better suited. Their almost phasey quality suited 'Time' especially well, with fine texture to the fuzzy electric guitar and harmonica, and an echoey spaciousness to vocal harmonies.

But with more closely miked and rawly depicted pieces such as P. J. Harvey's 'C'mon Billy', some of the emotion and urgency was lost by the smearing of her image across the stage. Also, more noticeable on this piece was the slight cuppiness the Coda 8s have through the midrange, which coloured vocals. Although spread wide, P. J.'s voice was restricted in projection and weight. Instead of the full display of power, urgency and emotion in her voice on 'Send His Love to Me', her vocals were more distant and submerged amongst the rapid strumming of acoustic guitar and intricate percussion than I recall they should have been.

One area where the Coda 7s were especially talented, and where the 8s continue to be strong, is in their sweet, open and detailed treble. KEF have chosen a quality fabric dome tweeter for this job and it has certainly paid off, giving a level of quality that few boxes in this price range manage. It is tonally very neutral, free from the sharpness or ringing of cheaper metal domes and with a better range of texture than the sometimes monotonic plastic and polymer tweeters.

This gives a crisp edge to cymbals and fine upper harmonics and decay to strings, demonstrated admirably by The Verve's 'On Your Own', with its simple acoustic structure. With twelve string acoustic guitar, maracas and cymbals there is a lot of treble detail to resolve,



which the Coda 8s did in an informative and musical fashion.

The Coda 8s are an interesting loudspeaker. In many ways they do exactly what they should, building on the strengths of the 7s by adding an extra dimension of scale and depth. But in other ways they fall a little short, not having quite the same focus and precision that made the 7s so captivating. Superficially, they appear to be just a bigger Coda 7, but the 8s have quite a different character ●

KEF Coda 8

£199

**KEF Audio Ltd.,
Tovil, Maidstone,
Kent. ME15 6QP
☎ 01622 672261**

WORLD VERDICT



The new KEF Coda 8s have a big, atmospheric sound, but are less focused and a little more coloured than the 7s.

**Measured Performance
see p113-121**

AUDIOPHILE ARISTOCRAT

Dominic Baker combines Sugden's Optima CD player and remote controlled Optima 140 amplifier with Castle's Severn loudspeakers. Here's a system with pedigree.



When Sugden announced their new Optima amplifiers with remote control a couple of months back, I had an idea. Knowing that an Optima CD player has been

available for some time, and finding that it works from the same handset as the amplifiers, I decided to put together a classic

British system offering the traditional strengths of top-class sound, but with remote-control convenience.

A traditional British loudspeaker was needed to complement the combination, so we chose the Castle

Severn. It was driven by the Sugden 140 amplifier, fed by the Optima CD player, forming a neat, elegant system. The silky brushed black finish of the Sugden amplifiers complemented the rich real-wood veneer of the Castles to give the whole a luxury feel.

First of all let me describe the character of the individual components and why they work so well as a system. The CD player has quite a bright balance, not sharp but with plenty of treble detail and insight. The Optima 140 amplifier, like many of Sugden's designs, hits a smoothness about it which many other solid state designs fail to provide. It is quite dry and cold through the midrange, neutral in the treble and powerful and full in the bass. The bass gives strong, deep lows, but as a combination these components were a touch ruthless through the midrange and treble.

Enter the gentle and mellifluous Castle Severns. The bass of the Severns isn't the deepest, but it's tight and taut, so it complements the system well. Its midrange and treble are sweet and full, but a touch soft for my liking. Combined with the Sugden though things fell into place, the various merits of each component balancing out to form a compromise that was the sum total of the better parts. This is what system matching is all about, achieving a balance that allows the best qualities to shine.

To finish off, I installed a set of Culpign Audio Design silver plated copper interconnects, to ensure that the treble from the CD player stayed sweet, and Clford Co. Flatline speaker cable, which has a detailed and neutral balance, whilst at the same time allowing the amplifier to keep a firm grip on the drive units. Once set up the only other necessary adjustment was to raise the front speakers on the Castle Severns, angling them back slightly so that the tweeter was aimed at ear height. I found the sound cleaner and more open with them set like this.

What impressed most about this combination, and where it stands head and shoulders above any comparatively



priced all-in-one system, was in its taut, deep and punchy bass. U2's 'Stay (Faraway, So Close!)' with its deep resonant bass guitar and kick drum conveyed impressive scale, filling the room with rolling bass lines. The Optima amplifier had a firm grip on the Severns, notes stopping and starting with a crisp edge, leaving little impression of overhang.

The Cure's 'Lullaby' from their Disintegration album, a track I haven't listened to in an age, still managed to draw me deep into the eerie, spooky atmosphere of the music. The metronomic cymbals were softly placed in the sound stage, with no sharpness or tweeter colouration, but highlighted enough to clearly set the tempo for the track. The slightly muffled, closed-in vocal of Robert Smith became a little more so with the warm, plucky character of the Severns' bass driver, but remained intelligible, no doubt helped along by the colder, dryer midrange of the Optima amplifier.

Breathing a little freer with The Crash Test Dummies' 'In The Days of The Caveman', the Sugden/Castle combination showed just how open it could be. With a good sense of acoustic space and detail through the upper midrange, this track took on a far more spacious sound, stretching out beyond the 'speakers'.

Following on from this, 'Swimming in Your Ocean' displayed fine projection, vocal and lead guitar pulling forwards and out across the carpet. The system was especially talented in sound stage depth. Often with CD, the

sound stage can be very two-dimensional, with little depth behind the 'speakers and limited projection out into the room. The Sugden/Castle combination certainly doesn't fall in to this category, which is surprising because to get walk-in depth you normally have to spend more.

Capable of delivering very high sound pressure levels cleanly and in a balanced and musical manner, the system continued to compel. As volume level rose, everything stayed in place. Elastica's raucous 'Waking Up' held focus and balance, with just a mild hardening of vocals creeping in as the system was really pushed hard. Bass dynamics compressed a little, but not in an unpleasant fashion, and treble had a crisp bite that never strayed too close to harshness.

Assembling this system was an interesting exercise, showing the convenience of remote controls available in the same package as classic British sound and build quality. The system performed every bit as well as I'd hoped. A true sophisticate, it was stylish, beautifully constructed, slick in use with remote control and offered a top quality sound. ■

Sugden Optima CD £699
Sugden Optima 140 amplifier £549
Castle Acoustics Severn £499

Sugden J.E. & Co. Ltd.,
Valley Works,
Station Lane,
Heckmondwike,
W. Yorks. WF16 0NF
☎ 01924 404086

Castle Acoustics Ltd.,
Shortbank Road,
Skipton, N. Yorks. BD23 2TT
☎ 01756 795333

WORLD VERDICT



A well balanced system offering fine sound and build quality.

Measured Performance
see p113-121

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B&W

Philips' DCC is still trying to get its foot in the door against stiff competition from the conventional cassette, Sony's MiniDisc, DAT and, most of all it seems, consumer indifference. DAT has become an accepted professional industry standard format, but it's expensive for consumer use and pre-recorded software is scarce. Sony's MiniDisc has met some success in Japan and the U.S.A., areas where DCC has so far failed to make any serious inroads and has been declared dead by the majority of the Press.

On European home territory (Philips are Dutch) DCC has struggled. Philips decided recently to renew their marketing efforts, mainly by slashing recorder prices. They've belatedly realised that Sony were knocking DCC badly by offering cost-cut Dolby S recorders like the £300 TC-K61 IS.

This competitive war has caused hardware prices to tumble - good news for potential buyers. However,

tape prices remain high, although little higher than cassette, now that the music biz has raised prices, possibly to kill off cassette.

We've assiduously reviewed DCC recorders since they were first introduced and found that, in sound quality, they deliver. The new £250 DCC730 was no disappointment in this respect either. It can make 18 bit

recordings off CD, and playback pre-recorded DCC cassettes and conventional analogue cassette too (Dolby B & C). This is a value packed product.

The styling of the 730 is derived from the design objective of easy operation and practical functionality. All major functions have been put onto the remote control unit, with basic override

18-BIT BARGAIN



Philips have slashed the price of their new 18-bit DCC730 digital cassette recorder to just £250. Studio engineer Douglas Floyd-Douglass listens in carefully.



sense of touch



VRDS-10SE

The sense of occasion - it all starts when your touch reaches the Open button and the interior of the superb VRDS mechanism presents itself. You will know to anticipate music in glorious detail - detail your last player could never find for you. You will also know why: Nothing is able to touch the VRDS mechanism for stability and musicality, and nothing else can touch the DAC which, in the VRDS-10 Special Edition, comes straight from the acclaimed TEAC D-T1. It is your TEAC. Only you can touch it.

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functions on the machine itself. However, its behaviour at times appeared to be bafflingly illogical and painfully slow. The reason for apparently peculiar behaviour lay in the dual-function controls. For example, stabbing at the Track Skip button gives just that - track skip. But hold it for more than 0.5 seconds and the machine goes into full rewind. This logic sequence changes again when the machine is playing to give fast search if the track skip button is depressed for more than 0.5 seconds. Without prior knowledge, gained from reading the handbook, it appears that the 730 is missing functions like fast wind/rewind and that it

behaves strangely in response to commands. Philips could usefully make the operating logic of this player more transparent and user friendly; it needs domesticating.

Loading cassettes takes longer than usual, as the machine reads the tape's table-of-contents and the user friendly (but dated) LED display scrolls what you are about to hear, along with a string of not very important information. Some of the delays, such as winding through the blank leader of a pre-recorded tape until the time code started, seemed excruciating, as did the clanking and whirring as it shuffled about in track search. However, fast reeling is now relatively fast and there's no doubt that for those who thrive on such things, the logic and track search facilities are comprehensive.

For the librarians among you, the DCC 730 has good titling and editing facilities - great for ID and tape security when sending your precious demo to the record company (as long as they have a DCC) or just impressing your friends with your hi-fi's Star Trek communication skills and backwards compatibility.

Starting with pre-recorded DCCs, Oleta Adams' 'My heart won't lie', from her Evolution album, sounded clean and CD like in character, although there was

a certain warmth and thickness to the bottom end. However, it was pleasant in dynamic contrast to the gifted songstress' voice. Miss Adams' C7 Midi piano sounded really natural, and not overly electronic at all.

Vocals, although slightly 'toppy', were well presented and forward in the mix. There was good stereo separation throughout, and a soundstage with an apparent depth that eludes a lot of similarly priced cassette decks. Bass guitar in particular was convincing and well controlled. The saxophone had tremendous midrange presence, but failed to satisfy an ear expecting the low harmonics and brass timbre only a saxophone can provide.

Recording digitally the DCC 730 is more than capable of delivering arguably the best recording quality around for under £250 pounds. In terms of noise (i.e. tape hiss, hum, etc.) the DCC attains levels of near studio acceptability. The dynamic range is good. I did feel that recordings sounded a little 'dry' and compressed, especially when compared to the more musical Nakamichis and top-end Dolby 'S' machines.

The 18-bit converter is noticeably superior to the 16-bit machines I have heard. This upgrade in specification is heard mainly in the overall smoothness and linearity of programme, and does induce a smoother, more analogue presentation. The whole recording process itself is remarkably simple, although 'customising' recordings, with fade ins and outs, wasn't entirely successful because of the large incremental steps of manual adjustment; it steps in and out rather than fading gracefully.

There was also a danger of over-recording, despite the 'over' warning indicator, which was slow to react and not entirely responsive to transients or subsonics. For fans of noiseless recordings however, the DCC 730 is a must, as it is for archivists. The only foreseeable problem is commercial software - but Philips have assured us

that pre-recorded DCCs will enjoy wider distribution in the future.

Those with a collection of analogue pre-recordeds won't be disappointed by the DCC730 either. It had a tight grip on tempo and reproduced music cleanly; I've heard many people express surprise at DCC's analogue performance. I heard some leanness in the sound, nicely balanced out by fulsome recordings like Tina Turner's 'Private Dancer'. Dull recordings, like Diana Ross' 'Eaten Alive', can sound hopelessly muffled on ordinary cassette decks, but came over well on the DCC730. 'Free Nelson Mandela' fairly span along, as it should - a great sound from The Special AKA. The DCC730 acquitted itself well in this area.

DCC does not offer the sonic integrity of DAT in my experience, but then again it is not designed to. The greatest strengths of this recorder are what it actually demonstrates with regard to the DCC format. Here we have a digital recording system, with available pre-recorded material and the ability to compile personal selections digitally direct from CD. DCC also belongs in-car, where CD tracking can be a problem, especially when negotiating the congested M25 or right handers at Brands. I'd say DCC has a future and the new DCC730 is a good ambassador for the format. It's a bargain - even if you do have to negotiate a daunting handbook first. That's the highest price to pay though ●

Philips DCC 730 £250

**Philips Consumer Electronics Ltd.,
City House,
420-430 London Road,
Croydon, Surrey CR9 3QR
☎ 0181 689 2166**

WORLD VERDICT ●●●●●

Great quality all-around, but not user friendly. A bargain all the same.

**Measured Performance
see p113-121**

“great for... impressing your friends with your hi-fi's Star Trek communication skills.”

UNKANNY RESEMBLANCE



David Price finds Linn's Tukan loudspeakers build on the strengths of their idiosyncratic forebears, the Kans.

"The Earth can be any shape you want it"
Thomas Dolby, 'The Flat Earth'

A decade ago, many audiophiles believed the only boxes to have on the end of a system had the word "Linn" written on the

back. Aided by enthusiastic dealers and a certain now-defunct periodical called *The Flat Response*, Linn argued that the first priority of a 'speaker should be the way it played rhythms. The most extreme embodiment of this approach was the Kan, a tiny box sandwiching the

treble and mid drivers from Linn's flagship Isobarik behemoths.

An unlikely idea, admittedly, but when properly sited against a rear wall on a decent pair of open frame stands, the Kans were capable of a captivating performance. They sounded extremely

fast and tight, with a capacity to disappear into their own soundstage, an ability Linn's bigger speakers never convincingly displayed.

But their downsides were many. There was no deep bass to speak of, or rather there was, but (as the saying goes) not as we know it. Although super-tight and tuneful, Kan bass was a cerebral rather than a physical thing, sounding underwhelming if you weren't used to it.

Kans also shared with Naim's original NAIT amplifier a profoundly fussy approach to matching ancillary components - ironic as both items were

“The Tukans boast many of the strengths of the Kans of yore, with few of their idiosyncrasies.”

often used together with some success. But in true eighties style, if you wanted more than a squeak from them, Kans demanded a large, muscular transistor amplifier. And they also didn't like inferior source components. Early CD was excruciatingly painful through Kans, meaning in those days it was an LP12, a Xerxes, or nothing.

Nowadays, in a somewhat different audio climate, the Linn Tukans boast many of the strengths of the Kans of yore, with few of their idiosyncrasies. Almost identical in size, but with a more modern appearance, gone is the uncanny (excuse the pun) resemblance to the antique BBC LS3/5as. Nowadays, Linn's baby standmounters come in a multiplicity of finishes (of a very high standard) with a removable 'stocking' grille rather in the vein of Mordaunt Short's now deceased MS3.10s. Looking 'round the back of this two-way design, in addition to the standard gold-plated bi-wire terminals, horror of horrors, a bass reflex port can be found (the Kans had a sealed enclosure).

The Tukans then, are a more modern, user-friendly Kan, less "flat

earth" in conception, designed to work in a wider range of systems. Do they live up to their promise? I decided to put them against my own pair of 1984 Kans. Starting with Thomas Dolby's 'Dissidents', the Tukans delivered an extremely expansive, full-bodied sound with excellent speed and dynamics, making your typical sub-£500 floorstander sound ponderous by comparison. Compared to the distinctly atypical Kans, bass was more weighty and seemed to breathe better, with synthesiser bass sequences sounding more supple and tuneful. But not to be outdone, the Kans replied with a lighter, tighter sound, with better attack transients to bass drums and a lithe lower midrange. Where the Tukans started and stopped with real speed and precision, the original Kans were even faster.

As if to compensate for this marginal loss of grip, the Tukans seemed less shut in, with an easier, more open sound. Underworld's 'm.e.' brought their respective differences into sharp relief. Where the Kans had a smaller soundstage inside which instruments were tightly located, the Tukans sounded bigger and more airy. Where the Kans had low-level detail - the arpeggiated keyboard at the back of the mix being easily discernible - the Tukans had a more fluid, musical attitude. Vocals were tangible, and bass lines more bouncy. The Kans on the other hand fought back with outrageously tight rim shots which thwacked the listener betwixt the eyes. Their successors, like nearly all other speakers I've heard, sounded soft in comparison.

It was with jazz that the plot hit home. Although the Kans delivered a superb, finely etched cymbal on Lee Morgan's 'These are Soulful Days', the young newcomers proved ultimately more satisfying. Double bass assumed a physicality and presence that the original Kans couldn't muster, while the soundstage as a whole was larger and more believable. Even compared to other similarly priced high quality designs such as Chario's Hiper One, the Tukans gave superior dynamics, steadfastly refusing to sound

constrained or prone to break-up, even when volume levels went right up.

The downside of the Tukans? Although in no sense coarse, both drivers lack the last degree of finesse of the original design, needing some running in to get them to smooth out. In the upper regions, Tukan treble seems more extended, but gone is the last degree of the Kans' space and clarity, making for a slight softening and lack of detail on hi-hats and tambourines. In the lower registers, although the port is well executed, it's possible to identify a 'sweet spot' in the upper bass that makes the Tukans sound bigger than they really are.

Finally, like the 'speakers they replace, they're fairly critical of source components, so you won't be able to get away with any old front end - I'd say a Marantz CD-63SE would be the minimum. Fortunately, they seem both more sensitive and an easier load, so quality amplifiers of modest power should work well.

The key to the Tukans is consistency. They work seriously well on all types of music, in a far greater range of systems than their predecessors. Bringing strong rhythm, dynamics and imaging together successfully, the Tukans are an ultimately more enjoyable and eminently more usable loudspeaker than their "flat earth" antecedents. Thomas Dolby was right all along ●

Linn Tukan £389

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WORLD VERDICT ●●●●●

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Measured Performance
see p113-121

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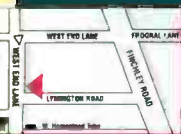
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Latest

Phase

The rich tones of a John Shearne Phase 2 amplifier get a boost when joined by the new Phase 3 bi-amping power amplifier, finds Eric Braithwaite.



It is always a bit risky to use the word 'shock' when writing about an amplifier, because readers might conjure up a picture of a singed reviewer and blue sparks. All that's blown about the Shearne Phase 2 integrated

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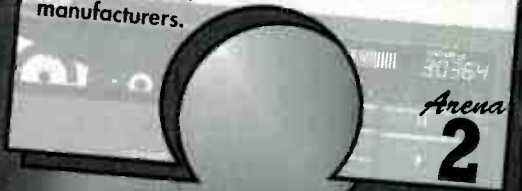
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and Phase 3 power amplifier is their LED and the marble-effect fascia. Possibly, also the faces of one or two other manufacturers, because not knowing the cost of these units until the listening sessions were over, I had happily imagined something getting on towards double the actual price. That was the shock.

PHASE 2 INTEGRATED

The sound of the Phase 2 integrated has changed a bit since it was last reviewed in Hi-Fi World. All to the good it must be said though the original was very good to start with. Their slightly rosy, valvey warmth is still there, even though this is a transistor amplifier, but subjectively the latest version sounds usefully tighter-focused in imaging, detail and speed.

Curiously, a slightly recessed presence region was evident from the Phase 2 on its own, which was not the case when I later tried the Phase 3 power amplifier with it in bi-amp mode. Curious, because the power amplifier sections of the two are the same. This tended to take some vocals back a pace or two in the mix to meld them with backing vocals. This was almost altogether smoothed out when the Phase 3 was used for bi-amping. It didn't affect Gary Moore's *After Hours*, leaving him satisfactorily forward on the stage, with the group more clearly around and behind him.

PHASE 3 POWER AMPLIFIER

The word 'neutral' these days is too often used as a synonym for 'boring'. The Shearne Phase 3 power amp is decidedly not so, but 'neutral' it is. Pressed into service via a passive pot for some hurried listening to a number of CD players, it became clear within minutes that the character of anything put through the cables into it was going to come out absolutely unaffected except by a tinge of richness at the bottom end.

Wired up to my usual Argo HR pre-amp - but to Harbeth HL Compact 7 dynamic speakers instead of ESL-63s, for

reasons which will be apparent later - it was difficult to believe the Decca Ashkenazy recording of Tchaikovsky's Sixth wasn't issuing out of big B&W monitors in one of Decca's Kilburn mastering suites. It was dynamic, big, brassy and thoroughly exciting. This is a fine power amp.

To further investigate its qualities I decided to use the Phase 2 integrated as a pre-amp instead of the Argo. A spot of Ravel, also on Decca, suggested the depth was almost as good as it had been with the Argo, but slightly less airy and spacious, while the serious razzmatazz of horns and trumpets was a touch richer and fuller. There was a mild question mark over the purity of the treble: in the

“What comes across when the pair are together is a combination of sheer detail and precision, combined very happily with a very subtle warmth”

Allegro of the Pathétique, cymbal clashes soared over the full band, but the Argo HR had the better extension. Anyway, this showed how little the preamp stage of the Phase 2 added to things.

BI-AMPING

In bi-amping mode, a second pair of speaker cables allows the Phase 2 integrated to feed the tweeters while the Phase 3 powers the main driver. Hence the use of bi-wirable Harbeth Compact 7 speakers.

Benefits there were a-plenty for a first step onto the bi-amping ladder. The Tchaikovsky broadened its stage width across the speakers perceptibly. Along with this improved breadth came an equally improved depth perspective and a much tighter clash of cymbals in the brass - and - percussion laden third movement than the pair had when used simply as a pre/power amp. The overall perspective was a little more laid-back, but while the brass was a touch less dynamically forward, there was much more distinction between the instruments.

No slouch at rock music, either, the Shearne pairing turned out strict-tempo timing. Bryan Adams' live 'C'mon Everybody' was the very living picture of a live performance, so much so if a teenage girl had been listening she would probably have rushed up to the speakers and found herself kissing air instead of the singer.

What comes across when the pair are together is a combination of sheer detail and precision, combined happily with a very subtle warmth which adds a fraction more body to what in some cases might be a cooler and almost disconcertingly 'white' sound of the recording. That the Phase 2/3 combo does this without colouring tonalities or mucking about with anything else is almost genius, especially for just over £600 apiece.

CONCLUSION

The Phase 2 on its own rates among the best half-dozen of the £500-ish integrated amps around. It has a distinctive, unusual and engaging character.

With the Phase 3 power amplifier and bi-wired, the two are an astonishing sonic bargain in my experience. But with the Phase 2 alone Shearne owners start off a good few rungs higher up the quality ladder than most. ●

Phase 2 integrated £649
Phase 3 power amplifier £619

Shearne Audio,
P. O. Box 22, Stevenage,
Herts. SG2 8HF
☎ 01438 740955

WORLD VERDICT

Building on the strengths of the original, the Phase 2 integrated has a smooth valvey sound with good focus.

The Phase 3 power amplifier is highly neutral and has a smooth balance, a sonic bargain.

Measured Performance
see p113-121



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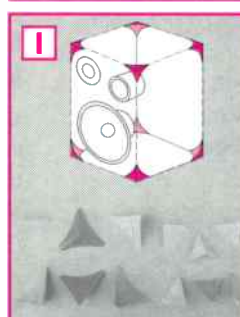
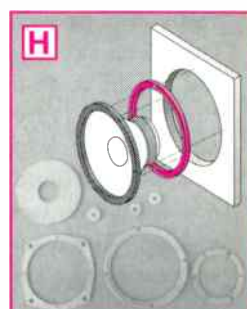
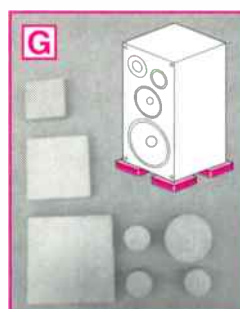
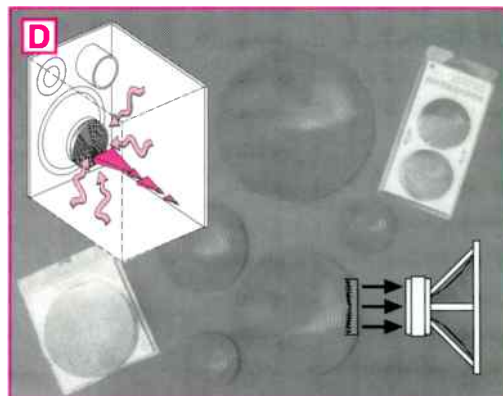
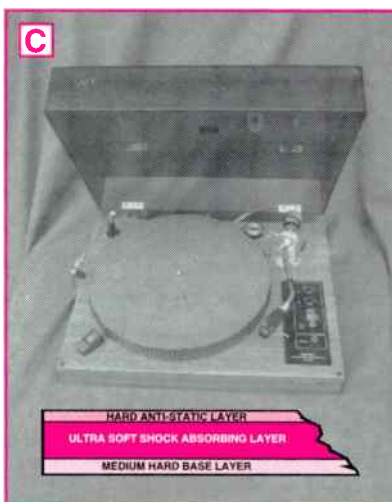
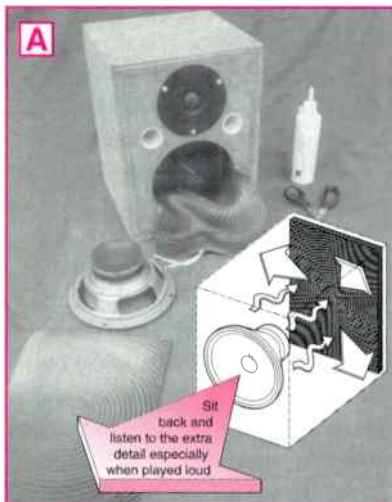
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Audio Video - November 1994

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World Radio History



ROCK-ER

Built from ResinRock, Mordaunt Short's new 860 loudspeaker is heavy, says Noel Keywood.

Here's a big speaker backed by a lot of engineering and flaunting some interesting ideas. Its ResinRock cabinet is impressively inert to a rap of the knuckles and it uses a set of polypropylene coned drive units custom designed to provide "improved integration with partnering drivers". The midrange unit sits on its own isolated front baffle to avoid vibrational interference from the cabinet. Twin bass drivers offer good power handling and harness floor reinforcement, Mordaunt Short claim, to improve depth. A metal dome tweeter handles treble.

I wasn't surprised to be confronted by a loudspeaker crisp, fast and precise, as it pounded out Primal Scream's 'Rocks'. The opening drum strikes had power enough, if not floorboard shaking

depth, and percussion was clean and vigorous. This isn't a great recording, but Bobby Gillespie's vocals came across as well as can be expected. He was in correct perspective to the rest of the band, neither muffled nor too forward.

A little upper midrange brightness gave percussion a firm edge; the 860 has some brightness in its sound and it's forthright: there's clear image resolution and forceful detailing. It comes at you with Rock like this, I found, after trawling through a range of material.

For the size of the cabinet, bass didn't go as low as expected, but it was dry and tight. The rumbling bass line and roar at the end of Angelique Kidjo's Tatchédogbé sounded quite normal, when it is in fact inflated by studio E.Q.

The corollary to this is that the 860s deliver dry and controlled bass, which gave good drive to the rhythm section. I also detected a little megaphonic 'shout' from the midrange cone. It sounded like return energy from within the cabinet, which prevented performances enjoying complete freedom from the speakers. The sound stage stretched earth-bound from left to right, in the plane of the speakers.

The metal dome tweeter used in the Performance 860s sounded forward in the lower treble, adding brightness, but curtailed in upward extension. Cymbals were muted, lacking the sonorous ring of brass.

In one of Steve Earle's classic Southern Blues numbers, 'Mercenary Song', suffused with Mexican imagery made real by his guttural drawl, the Mordaunt Short tweeter lost the rich metallic twang of strings, the air around them and the copious delicacy and complexity of their vibrant harmonics. The tweeter wielded a disproportionately large influence upon the whole 'speaker, adding a pervasive metallic tonal colour.

Well engineered in most areas, the Mordaunt Short 860 is fast, tight and seemingly accurate. It's for Rock aficionados who want punchy percussion and clear bass lines, cleanly etched vocals and cymbals that crash. The tweeter was unimpressive though. Partnered with tight, powerful solid-state amplifiers, the 860s will likely appeal to those who favour the speed and timing element of Rock ●

MS Performance 860

£1450

**Mordaunt Short Ltd.,
3 Ridgeway, Havant,
Hants. PO9 1JS
☎ 01705 407722**

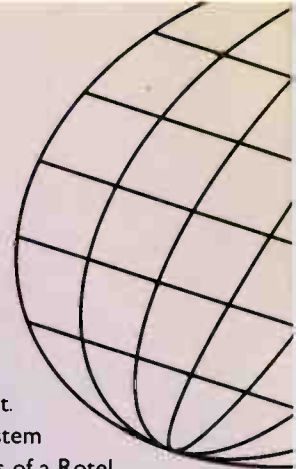
WORLD VERDICT

Fast, tight and informative. But poor tweeter that casts a grey shadow. Lacks sweetness, but arguably suits Rock.

**Measured Performance
see p113-121**



World



IN A SPIN

I am writing in response to Morten Svendsen's letter in the October edition. I too was interested in acquiring a record cleaning machine, but was rather worried about the cost. I actually enquired about the possibility of buying one from a local hi-fi dealer. After discussion it was suggested that I use a Black and Decker drill to clean my records - yes, I laughed too. However, when I got home I began to think that this was not as stupid as it sounded. I devised a system to attach a record firmly to the drill bit - rather in the same way a sanding disk is held firm. Actually, I inverted the rubber grip in the sanding device and placed a plastic spacer between the record and the metal spindle.

Having got as far as this I then concentrated upon cleaning the record, selecting as a test piece something I never listened to. I used a mixture of half distilled water and half isopropyl alcohol. Using a felt brush I soaked the record and wiped the record quite firmly on both sides. When it had soaked enough I rinsed with a small amount of distilled water and allowed to drip dry. I then attached the record to the drill and span it at high speed. Centrifugal force flings out the moisture and dirt. Using a hair dryer on low heat I dried the label on both sides.

This technique is especially good for cleaning records with mildew or grease marks. There is very little surface noise even with records that are quite marked. True, it can take between 5-10 minutes per record, but this is a small

sacrifice surely and certainly cheaper than buying a record cleaning machine.

**David Riggs
Norwich.**

TERRIBLE TWEAKS

I'm all in favour of Dominic Todd promoting 'real hi-fi' (Fair Views, Sept., 1995), but his analysis did not shed light on the real extent of the problem.

A friend of mine owns a system which is always switched off when not in use (he has a toddler running riot). It lacks proper supports, is coupled together with awful 'freebie' leads and the 'speakers are not optimally placed. Straight from being switched on, it sounds superb and it doesn't get any better. We've tried 'better' leads with it, but we always decide the changes

aren't worth it. The system consists of a Rotel 965BX CD player, a Creek 4140 S2 amp and Infinity Reference 10 speakers. For sheer involvement, it easily outperforms many high-end systems I've heard, including my own £3k plus outfit. It is simply a well put together system that doesn't use

Letter of

MORE THAN MUSIC

I've become accustomed to the cover slogan 'For the love of music' which you adopted earlier this year, but I can't help thinking it typifies the worried audiophile's stock response to accusations of, well, audiophilia.

Self-taught specialist expertise (which is usual in the case of the hi-fi user) and genuine enthusiasm for any subject are likely to be met with condescending indifference by the world at large. One can hardly blame the weary audiophile for acting upon the realisation that the enjoyment of music is near-universal and is therefore the safest aspect of a hi-fi habit to wear in public - "For all our apparent interest in playback equipment, we really only care about the music, honest!" Yet many (if not most) hi-fi products seem to be marketed without

reference to music at all. The fact that there's more to audio than music is inescapable!

In many respects, it's the wide accessibility of audio which lies at the root of the problem. The image of the hi-fi anorak is a popular caricature, but you'll never hear anyone refer to a contemporary art anorak, or a wine anorak, or a nouvelle cuisine anorak. One may choose to have high end aspirations or not, but the audiophile attitude costs nothing; all one needs is a means of unchaining canned music and the will to maximise the efficiency of the can opener (plus, of course, a copy of Hi-Fi World).

Hopefully most hi-fi enthusiasts actually are, like myself, interested mainly in the music. However, an interest in audio must entail an interest in aspects of engineering, technology,

industrial design and manufacture, and even social and cultural history, all of which will contribute to the making of informed choices in the selection and use of audio components.

Why is it so unfashionable to admit to this kind of awareness? Are these subjects somehow less worthy than music? Why not celebrate the fact that such an interest allows the simultaneous exploration of both musical and technical subjects? This has to be a more sophisticated and interesting stance than just occupying your chosen space in the record market and feigning nonchalance vis-a-vis the technical and aesthetic aspects of audio hardware.

Hi-fi enthusiasts ought to stop apologising for themselves. The subjects attendant on audio are legitimate areas of both intellectual and practical

Send your letters to Hi-Fi World Letter Page,

writes

tweaks and tricks.

Dealers and manufacturers need to ask themselves why this is so, and start doing something about it. Tweaks, like mats, cleaners, green pens, spikes and exotic cables, are not the answer. I, like many other enthusiasts, have a box full of such 'nine day wonders' to prove it.

My mini-system owning

friends aren't stupid, they just can't believe many of the ridiculous claims masquerading as responsible journalism in magazines. The best one yet has been 'room tuning' devices - 16 small, furry discs - which cost a staggering £545. And Mr. Todd wants hi-fi to be taken more seriously?

A few good dealers I know are fed up with the emphasis given by the press

to tweaking. It's just more clutter for the dealer to remove from the mind of a budding hi-fi nut who's had his head buried for too long in the latest hi-fi mags. So many people waltz into dealers demanding hyped items like the Marantz CD63SE, and no amount of cajoling can persuade them to even listen to something else. I found the Marantz had many ultimately misleading strengths because it failed to portray rhythm and timing effectively for long-term satisfaction.

The fact is, the dealers, the press and the industry as a whole are their own worst enemy. If they want us to appreciate good hi-fi, they should curb their collusiveness, their 'short-termism' and stop publicising useless tweaks and clap-trap which rely so heavily on false promises of sonic nirvana. But then, not a damn thing will change because a 'cleaned up' industry would

be a slimmer one - and who wants that?

Richard Ward
Courthill Road,
London.

There's no doubt that people are confused by the variety of choice available in hi-fi, and perhaps too much emphasis has been placed on tweaks. But as you say, it is possible to buy a fine system whose components work in apparent symbiosis.

You are moving onto different territory when talking about dealers blaming the press for recommending products like the Marantz CD63SE. Dealers commonly complain about press recommendations when they happen not to stock the product concerned. Readers, for their part,

continued on page 37...

the Month

interest in their own right and it's in the interest of both the industry and the consumer that they are perceived as such.

Tom Corbin.
Amersham,
Bucks.

Well, yes. But as you say, the common perception is of dottiness, epitomised by freezing CDs in the icebox to get better sound quality. Audio attracts loons and space cadets and, to quite some degree, they get a disproportionately high amount of publicity. It's audio's equivalent of the Second World War Bomber Found on the Moon story. Doesn't art often get (mis)represented as a pile of bricks in the Tate?

We do like to see audio as embracing various worlds, in the way you describe, yet at the same time our slogan

was an attempt to establish the root of what we feel hi-fi should be about. I've seen, and still see, audio discussed solely in terms of trade/commerce/profit, or technical performance/features/quality. One American magazine never bothers to mention sound quality, instead publishing lines of meaningless test figures. Similarly, too many engineers pursue performance parameters - especially distortion - that have a tenuous influence upon sound quality. We really do have to remember that these approaches, which exclude musical enjoyment altogether, can rightly turn people off the subject.

And, the next letter out of the bag says it all! See (Music Is The Answer). NK

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- Hi-Fi World. October 1995



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.... continued from page 35

expect us to review products with diligence and care and to offer independent advice. I believe we do this well.

There's no collusion or conspiracy to mislead, as you suggest. People might see things differently to you, but that doesn't make their views claptrap. NK

MUSIC IS THE ANSWER

CD players or LPs? Valve or solid-state? Bass reflex or Horn? Too many questions, so few answers.

Each choice is subjective, but from my point of view sophistication kills the emotion music is supposed to bring. I use an Audion 300B SE driving a pair of Lowther 'Fidelio' (bought directly from the factory with a first class service) and nothing matters but the flow of music filling my room with pace and fluidity. The technology is from the twenties but the music it delivers is timeless and I believe as far as my experience goes - will remain so for ages to come.

Balestie Remi Pezenas, France.

SOUNDING OUT VALVES

I am intrigued by the many advertisements placed in Hi-Fi World, especially in the supplement issues by companies selling valves. Whilst I find very little difference between these companies price wise etc., I do find the difference in valves and perceived valve quality somewhat confusing.

My confusion was brought about by a conflict of opinion between my dealer and an amplifier designer, whom I contacted for advice some time ago. It followed a query I had concerning the valves on the

Phono Stage of my pre-amplifier, a Beard 506.

There are six valves on the phono stage, two ECC81s and four ECC82s. What I wanted to know was, if I changed the valves would it improve the sound quality? I was told that it would and after looking through my supplements I noticed a myriad of ECC81 and 82s, i.e. Brimar, Mullard, Golden Dragon, Chelmer etc.

The manufacturer told me that there was no difference between them, whilst the dealer told me to go for the Golden Dragons as they are better quality and would liven up the sound of my amp.

This leaves me as confused as ever. Am I to buy valves at £4.50 or pay extra and buy Golden Dragons at £6.95? I am sure I am not the only one out here that wants to know. Should we content ourselves with the norm or indulge in the ways of the Dragon?

S. Petch Hartlepool, Cleveland.

There's a big difference between apparently similar valves. We could fill this magazine with our experiences on the subject! However, to keep to the

point, it isn't easy to generalise or be specific about what you will find, this is such a complex subject made insoluble by all the interactions. For example, we've just tested the Russian Edicron 6L6 against the Chinese Golden Dragon 6L6 and find that the less expensive Edicron just meets its spec. of 24watts anode dissipation, whilst the Golden Dragon can manage 28watts before the anode starts to glow (!). The anode plates are of differing thicknesses and heat conduction properties. This is just one example of apparently similar valves giving different performances. You'll see talk of thoriated tungsten filaments, which are emissive and retain their emission longer than other materials, and also of gettering - the process of air removal from a valve, plus much more. There's a lot to a valve. I can assure you they all differ and each has its own sound. Generally, of old manufacture, valves from Mullard and GEC were highly regarded, as well as the big American brands of course, like Western

Electric.

Of todays valves, as a broad generalisation, Russian types are considered best, but it does look like the Chinese are catching up. We've had few problems with either 6L6s or 300Bs from Golden Dragon, and they've performed well too. NK

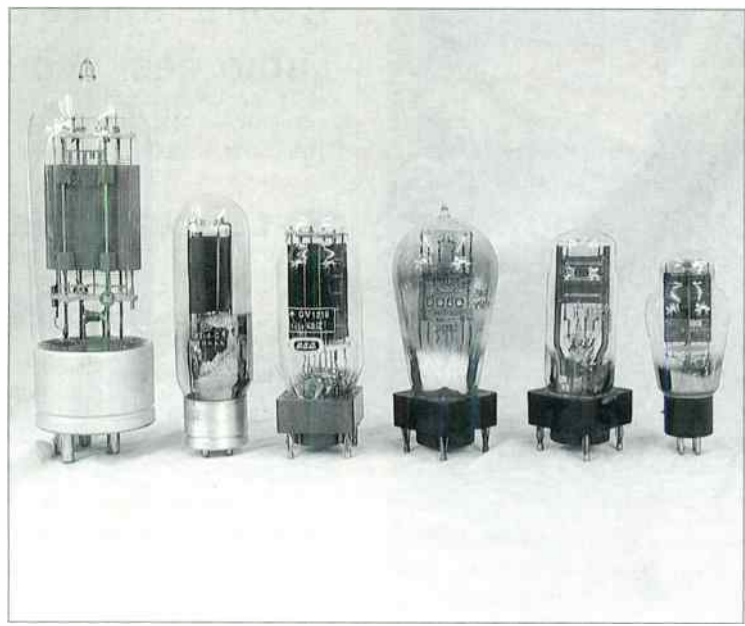
MIDIS AND SEPARATES

There has been a lot of concern expressed in Hi-Fi World and the hi-fi press recently that people are buying so called 'Midi' systems instead of 'Real hi-fi'. A number of correspondents suggest that the reason for the dominance of the Midi system over the market at the moment lies in consumer ignorance of the benefits of Real hi-fi. That indeed may be so, but another (more likely?) reason is the clutter a separate system creates in comparison to a Midi system.

I am a hi-fi enthusiast having used quality separates since the mid 'seventies. I bought my wife a JVC Midi system for our kitchen/living room last year. I installed the Midi system, used good quality 'speaker cables (not the supplied bell wire), an external aerial for the tuner

and wall mounted the 'speakers. I feel in a position to give a comparative analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of each, also maybe to give manufacturers some feedback that they may find useful.

The JVC Midi system is a 'one box' unit with remote control. It is hard to find fault with the package. The sound quality is adequate, the machine plays CDs, cassette tapes, including 'books on tape', copies from



There is a big difference between different brands of valves. Generally, we find the modern manufacture Russian valves most reliable.

continued on page 39

PERFECTION IS A PASSION



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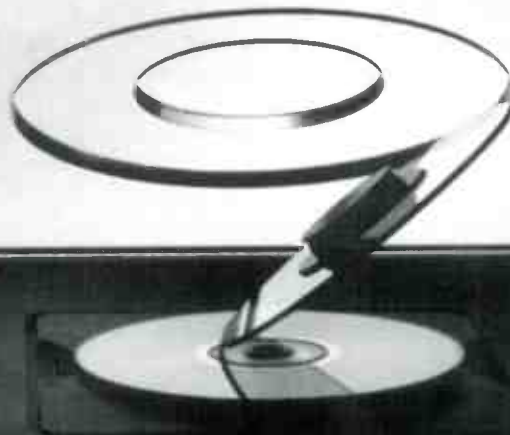
*Review of PASSION - Martin Colloms
HiFi News April '93 and November '94*

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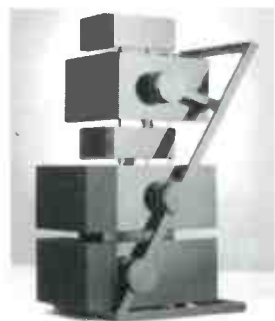
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.... continued from page 37

tape to tape etc. The tuner is not bad either, which proves the benefits of a good aerial. In absolute terms the sound can be described as boomy 'one note' bass with limited extension, spitty treble, a reasonable left/right stereo image with very little depth. Wall mounting the 'speakers would account for some of the bass boominess and lack of depth, but for the money it is extremely good value and hard to beat at around IR£340.

Our separates hi-fi system is the following mix of components: Meridian 208 transport and 206 D.A.C., Naim Audio NAC72-Hi Cap-NAP250-NAC A5 Linn SARA 'speakers on SARA stands (spiked), Akai cassette deck, Mitsubishi VCR. The system is set-up on a Target 5 tier stand.

The sound as you would expect is very full, deep bass, which can go loud, has tremendous depth and a stereo image that remains constant over a wide area. Not quite the walk around type of image, but more than satisfactory. What's the problem I hear you ask?

This system has evolved a lot over the past 20+ years. The styling of hi-fi has changed a lot in that time. From the bright brushed aluminium facias of the seventies, to the muted black of the nineties. Our system has bits from both times and lots in between. No manufacturer, apart from Linn with their LPI2, stays with the same case for more than a few years. Naim Audio equipment is now fitted in different styled cases from those used ten years ago. I have one new style and two old style cases! So much for the concept of an upgradeable system. Am I expected to replace a NAP250 and a Hi Cap to the new case model just because Naim Audio decide to change the look of their equipment?

The system is, from the back, a nightmare. The cables are tucked behind as neatly as possible, but with the speaker leads a few metres are coiled up (wasted) to ensure that each channel has the same length of cable and the same loading.

Each piece of equipment also has it's own power supply cable. On my system that requires two four way distribution boards. If I upgraded further to a second NAP250 and a NAXO, there would be more interconnects and mains cables and an extra mains distribution board. Yeecccch! All this equipment just to play music. At least the SARAs are meant to work close to the wall and they don't intrude too much into the room.

Recently I looked at a pair of Castle Howards - they don't so much invade the room as take it over. The situation was even worse earlier this year when I had a Linn Sondek LPI2. The LPI2 stood on its own table and had an 'angle poise' lamp with a low wattage bulb to keep the m/c cartridge at an even temperature. Then there was the anti-static gun, etc.

I am reluctant to call the system anything but 'technical looking', maybe even 'macho', but certainly not 'discreet'. I suggest part of the problem is in the number of boxes and all the interconnects, an obstacle that the Midi system overcomes.

**Thomas Fox
Kinnegad,
Co. Westmeath.**

MUSICAL NOTEBOOK

I bought a CD-ROM drive (Multiport CD-Jet) as an upgrade for my notebook computer and was surprised to see audio line out jacks at the back. So I connected it directly to the volume control to see what would happen. Ah, it works! I'm a hard-core turntable guy, but

now my interest is growing (and I bought my first CDs!). Early impressions of the sound are: weaknesses at top and lower ends, loss of edge, rhythmically not so involving, but stable. Handling is very comfortable when done from CD player software by the computer.

Now the question: could this be Real hi-fi? Multimedia PC or personal computer with power amplifier as hi-fi? I have never read anything about such combinations in the well established hi-fi press. Maybe it's time for great competition between drives and a comparison with CD players, and how about tweaking and upgrading my drive? Even if the result (reproduced music) is not of the highest order, the topic seems interesting.

**Hartwing Christian
Dorner
Leithagebirge.**

We haven't assessed CD-ROM as a serious hi-fi product and you must accept that high quality audio reproduction is not its main role. There are lots of inexpensive all-in-one Digital-to-Analogue convertor chips around that manufacturers can bundle into such drives to give an audio output. Most, like the relatively new Crystal CS4330 all-in-one DAC on a chip, give a good standard of quality, but they are not top-of-the-range devices. I'd expect a ROM like yours to probably rival a budget CD player costing £150 or so.

The Consumer Electronics industry, however, sees CD ROM and your set up as their future. In this scenario, the computer, television, hi-fi and heaven knows what else are all integrated into one glorious Multimedia package which will control and provide for all aspects of your life. Exciting isn't it? NK

SURROUNDED

Could you help me? Some two or three years ago 'Tomorrow's World' demonstrated 3D sound. I have looked around for some material recorded in this way and not found anything.

Speaking to my hi-fi dealer, Paul Green of Bath, he suggested Roger Waters 'Q' Sound "Amused to death", but again I have been unable to locate this.

Can you advise?
S.M. Beckford.

*We assume that you are thinking of the Sensaura releases from Thorn EMI. There aren't very many of them at the moment but here is an up to date list: 1994 Releases
Charllie Floyd, Charlie's Nite Life
Liberty C2-80475.
Milla Jovovich, The Divine Comedy'
SBK 7243-8-27984-2-2
Frank Sinatra, Duets
Capitol 7243-8-28067-2-1
Vasari / Jeremy Backhouse, Requiem (Howells) Mass (Martin) United 88033 CD*

*1995 Releases
Stephen Kovacevich, Schubert Son.D960
EMI Classics 7243 5 55359 2 4
Cikada Quartet, Black Angels (Crumb, Webern & Lutoslawski)
Cala CACD 77001
Stephen Kovacevich, Beethoven Son. Op.31
EMI Xclassics 7243 5 55226 2 7
Daniella Ganeva, Dream of the Cherry Blossoms
Cala CACD 77002*

We hope this is what you are looking for. It is a rather limited list, but EMI tell that some more of these CDs are due for release shortly.

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Robert Deutsch (Stereophile, Vol. 17 No. 5, May 1994)

"Better than ever is what I have to report about the MkII.... Buy a RINGMAT and turn your AR into a killer 'table. It almost seems too good to be true."

Sam Tellig (Stereophile, Vol. 18 No. 1, January 1995)

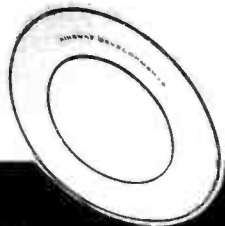
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Jimmy Hughes (Hi-Fi Choice, February 1995)

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Dominic Todd (Hi-Fi World, January 1995)

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SOUND & VISION -

LONDON'S 1995 HI-FI SHOW

Here are the new products we discovered.

London's newly established Sound & Vision Show was a great success. Held at the Cumberland Hotel, right beside Marble Arch, it was situated in the heart of London, next to Oxford Street. The venue was extremely popular, the show being busy every day. With Live '95 now dominated, by mobile phones, computers camcorders and what have you, real hi-fi enthusiasts made a beeline for the spacious and palatial rooms of the Cumberland Hotel, to enjoy the sounds made by top audio manufacturers and distributors from around the world.

We were there with two rooms to offer help and advice on all aspects of audio, demonstrate a selection of our latest kit designs and investigate the wealth of new equipment launched at this prestigious event. Here's some of what we spotted on our travels around the hotel.

AURA

A wealth of new products were on show from Aura,



including the long awaited replacement for the TU-50 tuner, the TU-80. Also on show for the first time was the new VA150 integrated amplifier, boasting 100watts output, and the remote controlled CA200/PA200 pre/power amplifiers.

PM AUDIO LAB

Also on show for the first time was PM Audio Labs' MP 211A valve monoblocks and



matching MP L15 valve preamplifier. Using the 211 power triode the monoblocks will set you back £2750, and the line level preamplifier £650. The amplifiers are designed exclusively for valve supplier PM Components.

ENSEMBLE

PM Components have also taken on the



distribution of the Swiss made Ensemble products, known for their highly transparent monitor loudspeakers. The latest in this line is the Elysia, which was on demonstration with their Profundo Silver stereo subwoofer system. Also on show was their latest range of electronics, including the Dichrono CD transport and convertor and Evocco amplifier.

ORELLE



On display in the Orelle room was their new line up of XTC Series electronics. Finished with gloss black front panels this high end range marks a new era for Orelle.

QLN

Distributors Projekt were demonstrating the QLN range of loudspeakers along with the wooden faced Holfi range of electronics. QLN have recently made a welcome return to the UK, we'll be bringing you a review of their compact Signature loudspeaker in a forthcoming





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issue.

Holfi, also new to the UK, were demonstrating a wide range of electronics from a CD transport to feedbackless integrated amplifiers, all sharing the same wooden fascia styled cases. Expect to see more of these soon.

REL

Known for the best bass around, REL launched a new subwoofer at the Sound & Vision show. It is set to bring entry to their active subwoofer range down to an even more affordable level. The £350 Q-bass uses a powerful 10" bass driver and an electronic safety circuit that limits excessive peaks to prevent damage.



ACOUSTIC ENERGY

Acoustic Energy were making surprisingly powerful sounds with their new



miniature AE100. Priced at £200 they look pretty impressive, with a 4" bass midrange driver and 25mm fabric dome tweeter.

TDL

TDL also announced a new subwoofer, the



Nucleus SBR.

This passive subwoofer has been designed to complement TDL's own Near Field Monitor 'speakers, or other bookshelf 'speakers of similar sensitivity (87-90dB). Price will be £200.

MERIDIAN

Unveiling their new monster 557 power amplifier at the Sound & Vision Show, Meridian had a fine sound going. This 200watts power amplifier features a new circuit design which Meridian hope to patent. Price is expected to be around £1200.

ART AUDIO

Present at the show with new valve amplifiers and an intriguing three part loudspeaker system, Art Audio's room was certainly worth a visit. The new, compact, Duet power amplifier uses the popular 5881 tetrode output valves to give 20watts, and its



matching Minuet line preamplifier uses two ECC83s. Prices are £880 and £500 respectively.

AUDIO INNOVATIONS

Another valve amplifier manufacturer getting into loudspeakers, Audio Innovations were displaying their Alto loudspeakers with Alto CD player and amplifier. The £329 Alto loudspeakers are a 2-way



reflex design with a sensitivity of 88dB, complementing the Alto range of electronics.

SONNETEER

Another new name to appear at the Sound & Vision Show was Sonneteer, revealing their Champion



integrated and power amplifiers. The integrated will be available in the shops

first, with a power output of 30watts and an expected sub-£500 price tag. We'll be bringing you a review in the near future.

ROKSAN

Roksan unveiled an all-new loudspeaker in their custom built demonstration room. The Roksan 1s are expected to cost around £495 when they are officially launched, and the pre-production prototypes certainly looked very smart. Also new and due for launch sometime next Spring was the DPI0/DA10 transport and DAC. Price is undecided at present, but don't expect them to be cheap as they will be top of the range.



SEQUENCE

Announcing a new loudspeaker line up, Sequence were out in force. Their three new models are the 200, 300 and 400, priced at £200, £250 and £330 respectively. The Sequence range of loudspeakers are all just 7cm deep, and can all be wall mounted or, in the case of the larger 300s and 400s, used with Sequence's Tri-Mount 'speaker stand ●



Eric Braithwaite sings his own ditty about Roksan. Well, about a complete system they've assembled for his pleasure.

A GREEN LIGHT FOR ROKSAN

Roksan, starting off with a turntable of curious, but effectively implemented

principle, now has a whole hi-fi chain. The boxes that made my kitchen un-navigable for a while contained the new

Ojan 3X loudspeakers, Atessa ATT-DP2MKII CD player, Radius III turntable, LI pre-amplifier, S1 power

“The whole has that kind of ambient warmth allied with subtleties of detail that makes so many jazz collectors opt for valve amps and the ‘warmer’ kind of speaker balance.”

amplifier and a choice of two power supplies for the pre-amp.

Single-manufacturer systems have their drawbacks, but Roksan has pulled it off. The whole is quite surprisingly better than the component parts, given that there's not a lot wrong with any of the parts. The only grief was caused by the selector knob on the pre-amp spinning on its shaft, but it had been elsewhere before reaching me. Perhaps it had been well-used, for I was surprised to see some gun-metal grey paint flake off the top edge of the fascia after a few days when my fingers caught it. Otherwise there was no aberrant behaviour.

There are, however, what some designers would view as decided aberrations, or at least departures from conventional wisdom, in elements of the design. Roksan's designer likes springs. The Attessa CD player's mechanism is very softly sprung compared to most; where you don't expect to see springs is in a loudspeaker.

Some years ago, Roksan came up with the Darius loudspeaker which suspended the tweeter clear of the cabinet on springs. Interesting, but not elegant. The notion has been developed for the Ojan floorstanding speakers supplied for this system. They were the up-rated model, distinguishable from the similar but cheaper version by the copper phase plug on the (different) main driver. Their novelty lies in the way the tweeter - placed below the main driver - is mounted on a sprung

MDF 'paddle'. The last place you would want resonating springs, I would have thought, was near a tweeter, but however odd the practice, it does seem to work.

B&W, of course, have taken the tweeter out of the main cabinet in a number of models and parked it on the top in a pod for perfectly sound reasons, so the fundamental principle I won't argue with.

The cabinet is based on equally valid principles. It is deeper than usual and has angled sides to reduce

unwanted internal reflections.

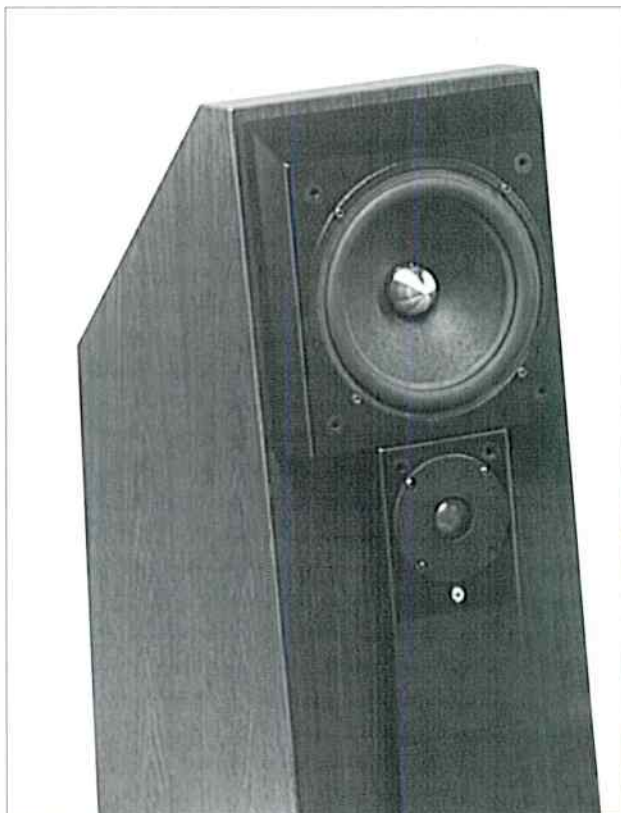
At a time when we are being flooded with 'affordable' floorstanding speakers which have practically no pretensions to real bass performance, it was a relief to have speakers which stood on the floor and did the business their size entitled you to expect. Not that they in fact do go very deep; little lower than a pair of large-ish Harbeth Compact 7s, for example. A matching subwoofer is available however.

The Ojans were responsible for a good part of the very satisfying sound that came from this Roksan system. In themselves, the pre- and power-amplifiers are very representative of current British solid-state designs, but they are not exceptional in any particular aspect. The power amplifier is pretty neutral and barely interferes with the signal. On its own with the cheaper power supply the pre-amp is a little soft and veiled, but the higher-grade power

supply does a very good 'Mr Sheen' job, adding a little more polish to the whole performance.

The surprise in the system was not in fact the loudspeakers, but the Attessa CD player. Previous experience of the earlier Attessa outboard DAC and transport had led me to expect a good, but unexceptional sound. This Attessa integrated struck me as much more - well - integrated, with a more equable response, a firmer bottom end and more detailed treble than the combo I had some time ago. However, there was a little too much polish in the spit-and-polish to really make Hendrix sear into the ears as much as he should. Perhaps this polish was also largely responsible for a splashiness on cymbals, which lost that tight sparkle and clear ring they should have - although the speaker tweeters are on the soft side at the top end too.

Apart from this and a slight haziness in the mid-range, the Attessa CD player was quite a worthy performer and a considerable improvement on the early two-box pairing. Admittedly, the



The bass driver of the Ojan 3X loudspeakers has a copper plate on the pole piece which helps smooth impedance.

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magnetic puck which has to be dropped over the CD spindle can be tricky to put on sometimes; and I dislike the 'American laundromat' look, but my aesthetic sense is mine and it doesn't have anything to do with the sound. Unlike one earlier example of the transport, which sometimes stubbornly shut like a clam in a temper and somehow always trapped a favourite CD inside, the servo-assisted lid always opened and closed when asked.

There are some systems which are 'right' for music, some which are 'wrong', but still eminently listenable. The Roksan system, unusually, has a foot cleverly planted in both camps. As a friend remarked, the Ojan speakers have a coloured mid-range, but it is tempered by the electronics: a very good example of some small wrongs making a good right. The mid is warm but not bloomed: it gives instruments a very attractive richness. The give-away is in vocals. It doesn't matter what range, tenor, soprano, contralto or baritone, it is mildly unnerving, simply because they sound either too light or too dark - or both momentarily, depending on the note that's being sung. This is especially noticeable against ESLs or Harbeth Compact 7s which are superbly 'voiced' for voice.

The system's sense of space, depth and general imaging is particularly good. Those Decca recordings from Montreal have a very strong acoustic signature which swamps some electronics and speakers so it either disappears, leaving the orchestra sounding laid back and lazy, or mucks up the whole business until violins and violas, or trumpets and trombones might as well be one. Not with the Roksan. This was one of the rare occasions when the whole horse-shoe shape of an orchestra was properly laid out.

The violi section seemed a bit

squeezed laterally, due to a lack of space in the listener room. The bass was good, although in reality little more extended than the Harbeths. It sounds a lot deeper, because it isn't as dry. This made for a superbly resonant and lifelike representation of Rob Wasserman's electric double bass. Warm, but very tuneful. This is not floppy bass at all, and when it comes to jazz quartets amazing in its time-keeping.

In fact, it is really on jazz and classical chamber music that the Roksan system excels, especially with the turntable in tow, though this has a slightly different feeling of scale to the digital source, and is in parts a little over-emphatic in its punchiness. The whole has that kind of ambient warmth allied with subtleties of detail that makes so many jazz collectors opt for valve amps and the 'warmer' kind of speaker balance.

And let's not forget the detail: from piccolo way back in the orchestra to a plectrum slipping from guitar string to body. All just a bit larger than life, it helps to distract from the recording in the drawer or on the platter and just focus on music. So often an excuse for

The Attesa CD player uses a sprung, top loading transport mechanism.



trying to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, in this case, synergy works ●

Ojan 3X Loudspeakers (Black) £1,195
Attesa ATT-DP2MK11 CD £1,295
L1 Pre-Amplifier £2,250
S1 Power-Amplifier £1,495
Radius III Turntable with Tabriz arm and Corus cartridge £865

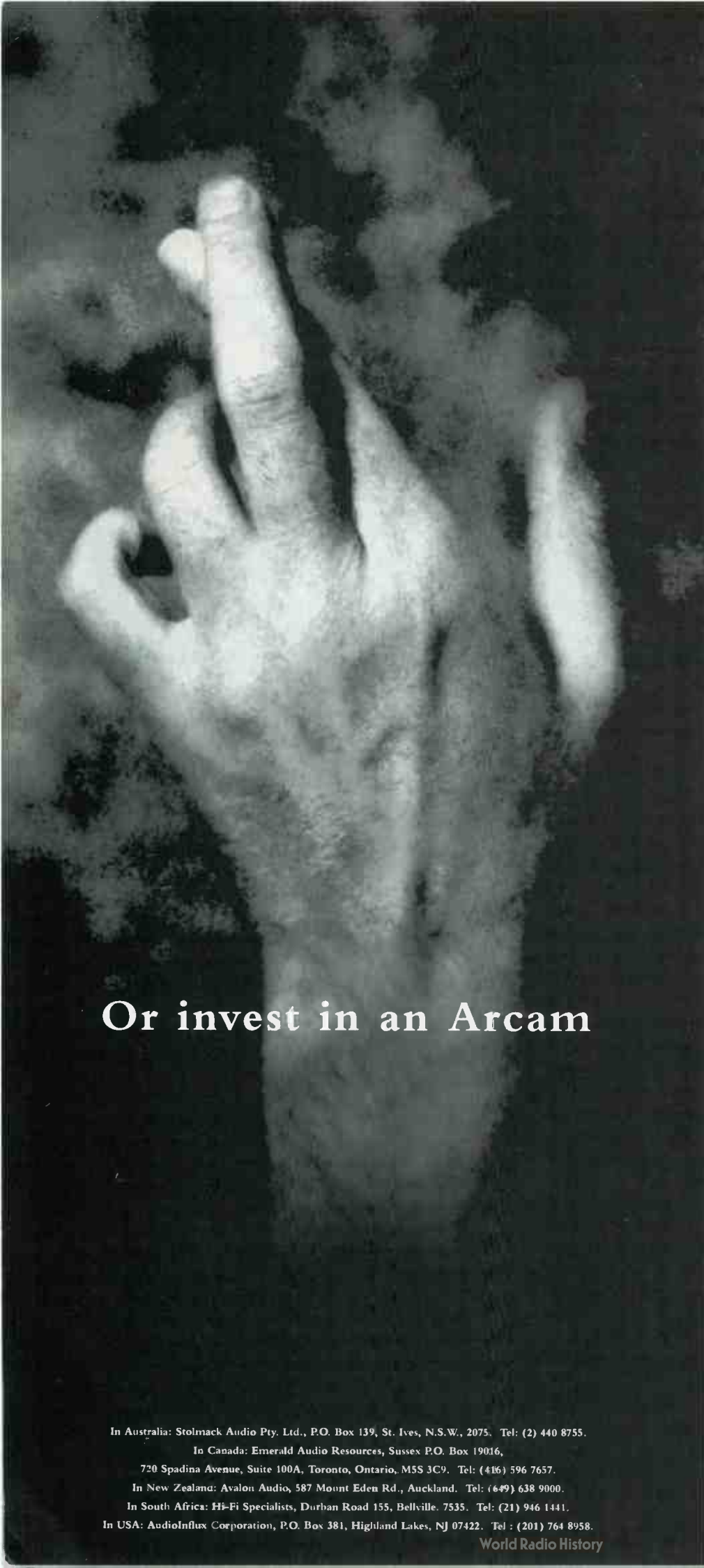
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WORLD VERDICT



System with good sense of space, depth and imaging; more than the sum total of its parts.

Measured Performance
 see p113-121



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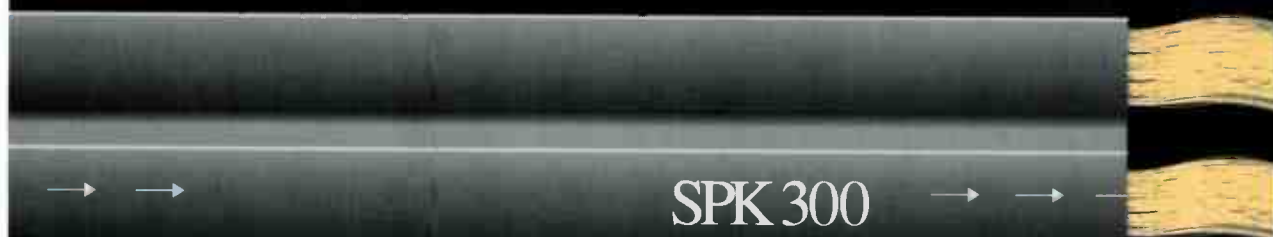
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and the Academy I speaker. Except here the clichés become unreliable: only the bit about beautiful, sensuous design is true of this sweet-sounding speaker. The price for the loudspeaker equivalent of Sophia Loren: a few million lire or £1200, and worth every penny just for the feel of the oiled walnut, let alone the sound.

What is most noticeable is a holistic apparent 'rightness' which has the listener sitting back relaxed and engrossed. A good deal of the pleasure is in a warm, rich mid and bass, which brings out the texture in woodwind and lower strings. The bass sounds rather deeper than in reality it can be: drum rolls and timps are very realistic, although not as strong as from the Harbeth Compact 7s. But let's not object too much: the 7s are much larger enclosures.

What the Academy I does well is produce a superbly listenable illusion. An orchestra sits between the speakers in a true arc, either beginning in front and stretching well back, or in a plane between them, depending on the recording, which is how it should be. Close your eyes and the illusion is complete: try to imagine where the boxes are and you fail.

For a small box, the Academy Is make an excellent fist at orchestral dynamics. Brass comes forward, to give the impression of rising over the body of an orchestra; strings, although a little lacking in complete fullness of tone, are sweet and in perfect proportion. Most importantly, the Charios have the timekeeping of an Olympic stopwatch. If you can happily sing along with the melody and switch to a counterpoint without thinking, then we have a good speaker. Rebel's wonderful Les Elemens has a number of sudden changes in tempo; the Charios almost anticipated them so a listener never fell behind the beat.

In rock music, this knack came well

to the fore, sometimes literally, with a tight, fast, exciting rhythm and very tuneful bass. Again, the amount of projection depended entirely on the recording. Iggy Pop's 'China Girl', a mucky, mid-distance mix was determinedly stuck between the speakers where Tony Visconti put it, while Blur and Bryan Adams had their guitars out in front of the boxes.

There are rivals around at this price, but they are of a different style. Members of Chario's peer group are the German Audio Physic Step, the BBC LS5/12a and Harbeth's HL Compact 7, though the latter is not a miniature like the Chario. Both the Harbeth and the BBC designs are true 'studio monitor' speakers, ruthlessly revealing, while the Step is notable for its equally fine detail and depth. The Academy I is more domestically amenable, painting the sound in broader

brushstrokes with less of the monitor's essential pernickety highlighting of sometimes distracting detail. It is as though it pictures the action on stage without spotlighting the fact that the costumes are tie-dyed cotton instead of real velvet and damask.

Compared to a true monitor, there are minor failings. The bass/mid-range unit has a slight thickness which rounds off the sound of woodwind and cellos superbly, but smoothes over the inflections in a bass voice. There is also a degree of unevenness around the crossover region, which catches out a

soprano on her way up to a high C. The tweeter strains a little on the way up the scale, and can sound somewhat constricted in scale and reach. Tinkling triangles in Madonna's 'I'm a material girl' were tucked away in the back of the mix on the Charios, more clearly defined on the Compact 7s, while her voice could have sounded a bit stronger. A harpsichord recording of high technical quality caught them out, with a somewhat bright, hard, edge to the treble clef and a bass clef which had a slight sense of disconnection between the two manuals.

All the same, it's the music that matters, and the Charios make a good recording sound like a real concert performance, not an artificial reproduction. If it was an opera in their home town, the three gents whose names appear on the brass plate on the back of the Academy I would be hearing yells of 'bravo!' ringing around La Scala ●

Chario Academy I £1,199

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WORLD VERDICT



Musical realism and a great real-wood finish make these speakers enjoyable, if not perfect.

Measured Performance
see p113-121



readers' queries

A MELLOWER SOUND FOR CD

I currently own an Arcam Alpha Plus CD player, Audioquest interconnect to a Meridian 563 DAC with a Chord Co. interconnect to Naim NAC 92/NAP 90 amplifiers, Naim cable and Roksan Ojan 3 speakers. No record deck.

I have had my present system for over a year and was at first happy with the sound, but now find the treble too hard and slightly over bright when listening to CDs.

What I am after is a mellow, softer sound which will make my CDs more listenable. My dealer recommends that I buy a Hi-Cap power supply for the Naims to fill out the frequency extremes, which he tells me will make the sound more balanced. I somehow feel that this will not do anything to soften the sound which I assume is due to the forward presentation of the Naims and the slightly bright balance of the Ojans. I would like to retain the Ojans since I am fond of their bass control. Although I appreciate the speed and resolution of the Naims, I am toying with the idea of part exchanging them for a more mellow sounding amplifier, with a gentler delivery.

Write in with your problems to Hi-Fi World, 64 Castellain Road, Maida Vale, London W9 1EX. Our panel of experts will endeavour to solve them, or at least offer some practical advice.

My price limit is £900 and I am considering an Alchemist Forseti APD 15A integrated, which I have heard is a soft sounding amplifier although I have yet to hear or audition one. Could you please let me know if this amplifier would satisfy my requirements and do you have any other suggestions? I listen mainly to classical music.

**Julian Thomas
Aberystwyth,
Dyfed.**

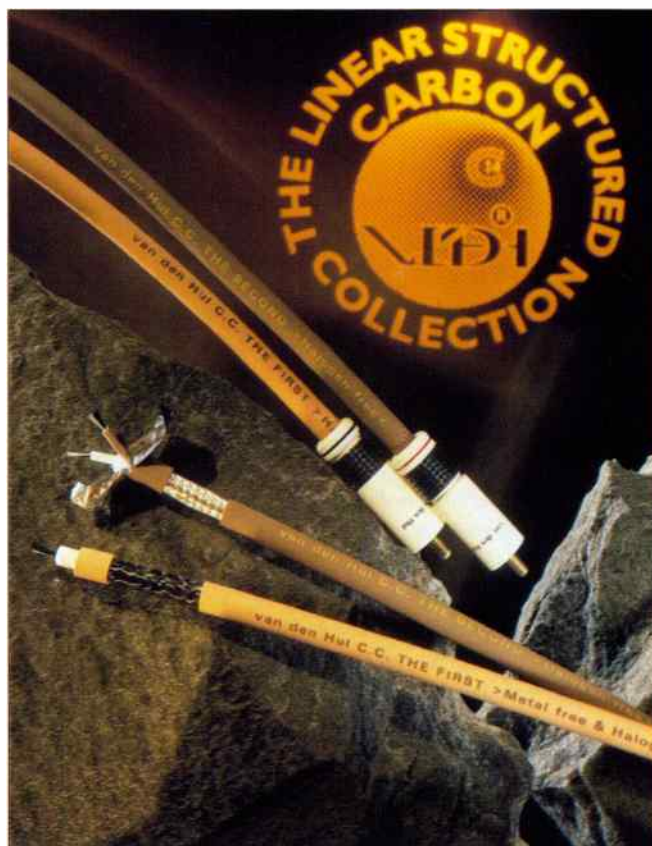
You are right that a Hi-Cap power supply will not change the basic balance of your system; it may even make it worse, allowing the Naims to reveal more of the problem. As you seem basically pleased with the sound of your

system and have some very good equipment, I'd suggest you experiment with some fine tuning first.

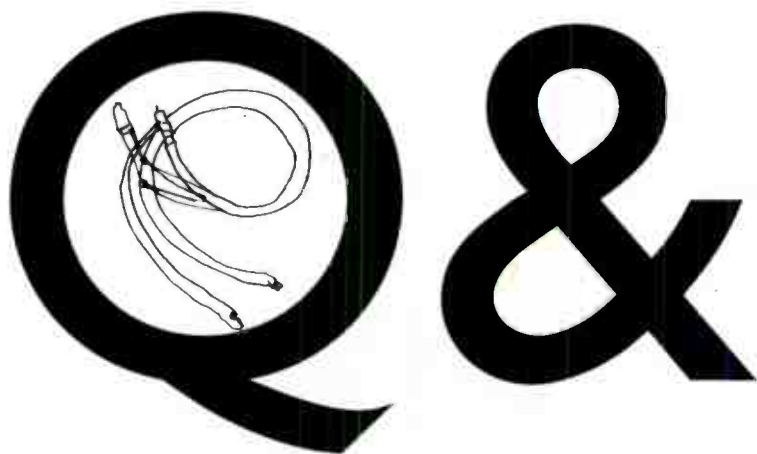
Firstly, it is worth taking a careful look at your listening room. Hard reflective surfaces, especially those on a path between you and your 'speakers, will add glare and hardness to the sound. Soft curtains or wall

tapestries will help absorb some of these hard reflections and soften the sound. Also, if you have a nice polished wooden floor this could be covered with a thick, soft rug, again this will help soften the sound.

Try auditioning van den Hul's First carbon interconnects in place of your Audioquest. These, although expensive, have a



van den Hul's carbon interconnects have a smooth, richly textured sound giving them sweet treble.



The writer of the most interesting system query will receive a free set of super Connections Jade interconnects.

o f t h e M o n t h

TURNTABLE PERFORMANCE

I have a query regarding the performance of my turntable. I use a Roksan Xerxes, presently with a Moth arm and AT95E cartridge. I am experiencing a problem with end-of-side distortion - mainly a sort of 'sibilance' particularly noticeable on 'S'-type sounds and a hardening 'edginess', particularly at higher frequencies. The records affected are not especially old and have not been played very often. I have had the cartridge realigned and the stylus has been replaced as it should have been. Tracking weight and anti-skate settings are also fine.

It has been suggested that the cartridge is being overwhelmed by the turntable, and that I should upgrade to one which has better tracking capabilities and a more polished sound - models suggested include the Roksan Corus Black, Linn K9, Sumiko Blue Point Special and AT moving coils. Would you concur? (In theory, I have a budget of (£100-150.)

Could the arm be influencing this problem? I have considered postponing the cartridge upgrade until I can afford a new arm as well - models initially considered include the Rega

RB300 and Roksan Artemiz. In addition, however, I have also considered a linear-tracker such as an Eminent Technology Airbearing or even an Air tangent (probably second-hand!). Would there be any real advantages to using such an arm, in terms of sound, reduced record wear and the aforementioned sibilance/distortion? It has also been suggested that I consider a unipivot arm design - would this be beneficial? Can you suggest any I may like to audition?

Thank-you in anticipation of your advice.
Nicholas Schofield Bolton, Lancs.

The Moth arm, based on the Rega RB250, generally isn't considered ideal for an MC cartridge. An RB300 is normally regarded as the minimum requirement for a good MC. The RB250 can sound superb with a good MM, like the Goldring 1042. This has a lovely smooth and open sound, with fine detail thanks to its top quality stylus. It also has excellent bass extension, something that will build on the inherent strengths of your Roksan Xerxes.

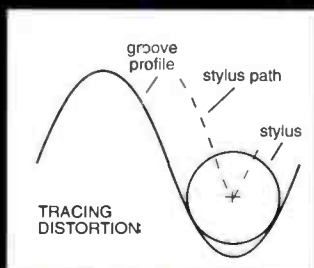
You don't mention what amplifier you are

using, which makes me a bit reluctant to recommend any MC. Ones with a neutral, detailed and transparent sound are the Ortofons, the MC15 Super II representing fantastic value at £110. This has quite a forward balance compared to many other MCs due to its extremely flat frequency response. This may bring a more open and clearer balance to your Roksan, but it could also become a little to clinical if you are using a revealing solid state phono amp. It is definitely worth an audition though, being the best value MC I can think of. DB

The end-of-side distortion you hear is almost certainly tracing distortion - once a well known phenomenon. Because an LP spins at constant rotational velocity (i.e. 33rpm), linear groove speed decreases with radius, so inner grooves effectively move more slowly past the stylus. Because of this the mechanical wavelength of the signal cut into the groove decreases. At high frequencies, which have short wavelengths in any case, a poor stylus

becomes unable to read the groove accurately. The result is distortion from geometric tracing error (see diagram), as well as high frequency loss.

The solution is to choose a cartridge with a high quality, profiled stylus possessing a small minimum radius capable of reading right into the shortest wavelengths, with little loss or distortion. In my experience, you can rely upon Van den Hul, Ortofon and Goldring in particular to have addressed this problem satisfactorily. Their more expensive models (£100+) have fabulous tips, but even their budget models don't disgrace. Don't panic and blow all your cash on a funny arm. A Rega is good enough, above which - dream SME! NK



TIP DISTORTION DIAGRAM

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... Continued from page 52

very smooth, richly textured sound, completely free of brightness or sibilance. This should increase the smoothness of the treble and give a slightly warmer balance.

If these tweaks fail to alleviate the problem, I'd recommend you take a close look at your CD player. This is where I would suggest your weakest link is; the Naim amplifier and Ojan loudspeakers are more than capable of revealing the shortcomings of CD. With your budget, and by part exchanging your Meridian 563, you should just about be able to stretch to Pink Triangle's discrete Da Capo CD convertor. This has a rich and smooth sound, with a much warmer balance than the Meridian. It also is capable of creating great stage depth and width, along with fine detail. I think it is here that you will hear most improvement. DB

And don't forget the less expensive but beautifully smooth and refined Ordinal DAC, by Pink Triangle. NK

WARMING UP VINYL

I have been in search of a replacement cartridge for my LP12, Ittok LVII, Exposure 17 and 4 amp and Royd Prior speaker system.

At the moment I'm using an ATOC9 but am not pleased with the sound. I find the cartridge sounds too much like CDs, exciting at the beginning, but soon after too analytical and uninvolved.

While I appreciate the quality of MCs, the ones I have tried have always left me feeling the same way; too lean and too cool sounding.

I'm curious about some of the Ortofon line as well as

the Blue Point special and possibly the Linn K18 II. The difficulty is finding cartridges which are compatible with the Sondek as most Linn dealers will not recommend non-Linn cartridges.

Believe it or not, I have had relatively positive results with a Grado 8M2 and while it was not the fastest sounding it did convey the emotion of the music quite well. My budget is £200-£300. Your suggestions would be greatly appreciated.

**Conrad LeDrew
Toronto, Ontario,
Canada.**

I suspect the root of your problems lie deeper than just the cartridge. Both your amplifier and loudspeakers have the analytical sound you describe, which in combination with the OC9 will give a rather cold and forward balance. If you can stretch to it, taking into account part exchange on your Royd loudspeakers, audition Mission's 752s. These have a sweet, smooth and warm balance which will be better suited to your system, and should allow you to enjoy the extra detail and neutrality of your MC cartridge.

If this is out of the question, the Goldring 1042 is a rich and warm sounding MM with good detail. DB

MORE SLAM FROM CD?

My system comprises Meridian 200 transport with clock mod. and Deltec PDM 1 MKII convertor, Naim 62/140 and Epos ES 14 speakers.

I am seriously considering changing my CD player as I find it lacking some attack and solidity with rock music. Having recently heard some upmarket multi-bit convertors by the likes of Orelle, Wadia etc., they seem

to give the sound the necessary lift in rhythm.

Could this be the bitstream convertor influencing this type of sound and why so many specialists are staying with multi-bit?

**Adam Tasueem
Billericay,
Essex.**

Multibit players do seem to offer more powerful sound with greater slam and punch for rock, with bitstream convertors generally sounding smoother and sweeter. Your DPA PDM 1 mkII, although a very fine convertor, is a little long in the tooth now, having been replaced by the mkIII first, and more recently the new Enlightenment discrete DAC.

Although on a short audition multibit players do seem to be better suited to rock, I prefer the sweeter balance of bitstream which is less fatiguing over extended listening periods. For this reason I'd stick with bitstream, but upgrade your PDM 1 to the latest Enlightenment convertor. This discrete design will give you a smoother sound with better detail and sound staging and the extra added punch you want. DB

ROOM FOR FLOORSTANDERS

My question is regarding floor standing speakers and which would suit my system. It consists of a Linn Sondek/Grace 707II/Supex 900 super, Rotel 865BX LE (fitted with their discrete board), Pioneer A400. The room is 21x12ft and is sonically slightly bright. I am considering TDL RTL2, Mission 733, or Mission 752.

The cartridge is something I would like to consider as well. I was wondering if a Supex 900 super was up to the modern standards of a Goldring 1042

or an Ortofon MC15 Super II? To attain listening comparisons between two identical turntable set ups is impossible these days, so your guidance in this area would be appreciated. I was pleased to see that Hi-Fi World will be running articles on the Linn Sondek, its history and tweaks and this has prompted me to subscribe to the magazine.

Finally, an easy tweak for your readers' systems would lie in considering computer cable for interconnects and speaker cable. After spending a lot of time and money on all types of cable, these have proved to be the best. What's more it is inexpensive and takes little soldering knowledge. I have used 50 strand on the speaker cable and 12 on the interconnects. Please consider, even very expensive cable didn't match it.

**Paul Roberts
Gold Coast,
Australia.**

I would tend to avoid the TDL RTL2s or any bass prominent loudspeaker



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Continued on page 61...

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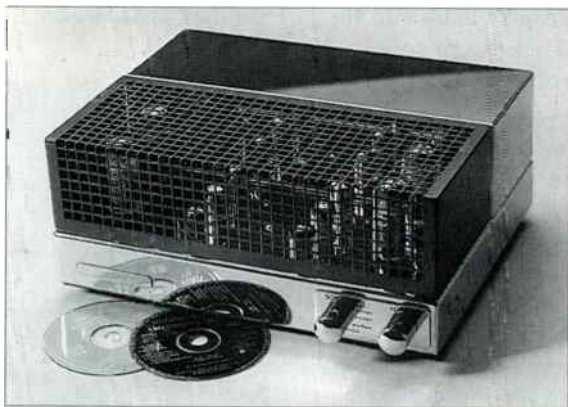
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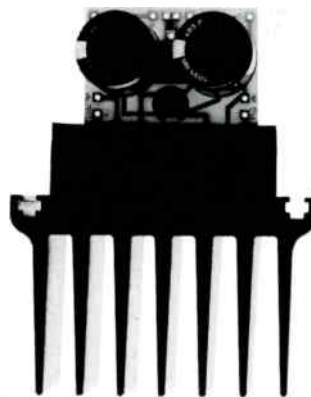
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MEETING THE CHINESE PM



Dominic Baker thinks the new PM Audio Lab 211 valve amplifiers will be great ambassadors for Chinese hi-fi. Will they take up a premiere position?

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the rarefied world of single-ended 211 amplifiers, the P.M. Audio Lab MP 211A monoblocks with their matching MP LIS preamplifier.

Knowing this, it was odd that I was compelled towards Locatelli first, and a graceful, sweeping piece in true Italian style. Perhaps it was the elegance of the amplifiers themselves, with their glowing valves and finely finished metalwork that inspired me. Or was it that being a single-ended design, I knew that a good classical piece recorded in a spacious acoustic would reveal its subtler properties more readily?

Either way, it proved a fine choice. It is pieces like this, recorded in a large hall with the performers spread out across a wide stage, that allows a feedbackless, single-ended design to display its finest strength, that of superb sound staging. The MP 211As didn't disappoint here, the performance spread out three dimensionally all around the 'speakers, images completely in focus, creating a very real performance. The timing of the orchestra was impeccable, giving this simple piece for violin, basso continuo and harpsichord an elegant and captivating presence.

So what is the background of this pairing? Well, PM Audio Lab has been set up by P.M. Components, valve specialists and suppliers of Chinese Golden Dragon valves. The combination of MP LIS valve preamplifier and MP 211A 25watt monoblock power amplifier, is built to their design and specification in China, where the Golden Dragon valves are produced.

The preamplifier is a simple, line level only design, using three ECC83 double triodes. In the power amplifier a 6SN7GT double triode is used as the input valve, and a 6SL7GT as the driver, again a double triode. These amplify the signal and provide the drive for the huge 211 power triode, one of the most impressive valves you'll ever see with its brightly glowing filament.

Continuing my listening, The Pixies' 'La La Love You' displayed a different character. What the Locatelli had failed to convey earlier was the sheer scale and power the MP 211As devote to the lowest octaves. Bass drums had tremendous dynamics. Bass guitar on 'Key' continued the theme, with an explosive punch and vice-like grip. And

“What always amazes me about amplifiers using the 211 is their tuneful bass. Bass lines seem to appear from nowhere.”

cymbals had a silvery sheen to them, brightly lit and strong. Anyone hearing a valve amplifier like this for the first time would be quite shocked; it's not the soft and warm sound you'd expect, but that's the 211 for you.

What always amazes me about amplifiers using the 211 is their tuneful bass. They have an ability to grab individual notes, give them a crisp, dynamic leading edge, massive punch and a clear and taut envelope. Bass lines seem to appear from nowhere. Portishead's heavily produced Dummy album can often sound confused in the bass; its heavy and over-full basslines blur into each other. Not with the MP 211As though. They reached in and grabbed hard and ruthlessly to reveal a solid, clearly defined tune missed by just about every other system I have previously heard with this album.

The introduction to Pink Floyd's 'Coming Back to Life' swelled and grew as the sharply plucked electric guitar, helped by the plasticky click of the plectrum, led into the vocal. At first the MP 211As didn't seem to have quite the same midrange projection and breadth of tonal colour as a good 300B design, and perhaps they were not quite as neutral either, having a brighter, more metallic tone. But it's the apparent subjective extension at either end of the frequency spectrum that gives this impression. With such strong bass and

shiny treble, the midrange seems more subdued in comparison.

Echobelly's 'Nobody Like You' is a raw, stripped bare recording with a great sense of atmosphere and energy. The MP 211As structured the sound well, placing each instrument clearly across a wide sound stage. Treble soared, crystal clear and super precise, giving cymbals dramatic impact. Here careful 'speaker matching is required; a bright or hard sounding tweeter will hit you straight between the ears.

Of the pairing, it must be said that the MP LIS is the limiting factor. But don't discount it. At £650 it is one of the smoothest and sweetest preamplifiers around, free from the transistorised grain many of its solid state rivals at this price point suffer. The MP 211A monoblock power amps are extremely revealing though, with a strong eye for detail. In every sense, this was an unusual amplifier, with a dramatic appearance and sound. The Chinese Dragon stirs ●

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WORLD VERDICT ●●●●●

The MP 211A power amplifiers are detailed and open with great bass. The preamplifier is great value too.

Measured Performance
see p113-121

IN THE JANUARY ISSUE

Christmas is here, or so you'll think when you pick up the January issue of Hi-Fi World. Not only do you get your hands on the most expert and enthusiastic read in hi-fi, full of all the latest equipment, music, news, and more, but in our special Christmas Competition we'll be offering everything we review as prizes. Here's just some of what we hope to bring you in our bumper Christmas issue -

£200 LOUDSPEAKER TEST

We select a group of the newest and best £200 loudspeakers on the market to find out what they can offer. Models tested include KEF's Coda 8, Celestion's Impact 15s, B&W's 601, Mordaunt-Short's MS20i, Revolver's Purdy and Acoustic Energy's AE100



ARCAM ALPHA 6 AMPLIFIER AND ALPHA 6+ CD PLAYER

Arcam have been busying themselves over the summer months, updating and improving their range. We test their new Alpha 6 amplifier and Alpha 6+ CD player.

CHAMELEON

Changing its colours to blend in more harmoniously, the domesticated Chameleon power amplifier now has no internal cooling fan, so it's quieter

TEAC CDS

TEAC's latest CD player is the CD5. Priced at £350 it is aimed squarely at market leaders such as Marantz's CD-63SE and NAD's 514. With TEAC's solid build and DAC-7 convertor it looks as if it could be up to the challenge

FREE WORLD WINNERS SUPPLEMENT

We look back over a year of Hi-Fi World and pick a short-list of components that caught our sonic attention. A selection of the best hi-fi around in 1995

CHRISTMAS COMPETITION

Gluttons for punishment, once again for the January Christmas edition of Hi-Fi World we plan to give away everything we review. Last year it was a logistical nightmare, but worth it when it came to handing out the prizes. Don't dare miss it!

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.... Continued from page 55

with your A-400 amplifier, which in itself has generous bass. Of the three 'speakers you mention the 752 would probably be the best match, but even these may sound a bit too full and warm with the A-400. Try auditioning them, as well as Castle Chesters, if they are available in Oz.

BI-WIRE MISSIONS

I have recently carried out the conversion to the crossover of the Mission 760i you carried in your July 1993 edition, so that they are now bi-wired.

I have no technical knowledge and cannot (perhaps that should be "could not") read a circuit diagram. I had previously re-wired the speakers internally

Isoplat and then placed the glass on top of this, then the CD player and finally some Deflex on top of the player and a metal plate (weight approx 10lbs). This seemed to make the CD sound more coherent and more together; more detail and refinement.

I used another sheet of glass under the amplifier with the Deflex under this and finally the same under the DAC and power supplies.

I find that these simple and inexpensive tweaks have all made an improvement to my system. I have also experimented by making my own interconnect with Maplin cable and I find that the silver coax makes an excellent digital cable, completely neutral.

My main purpose in writing was to recommend the Mission mod. to anyone with the 760i. After I had plucked up the courage to attack the crossover and fit the additional set of binding posts, the whole thing only took about 20mins per speaker - well worth the effort.

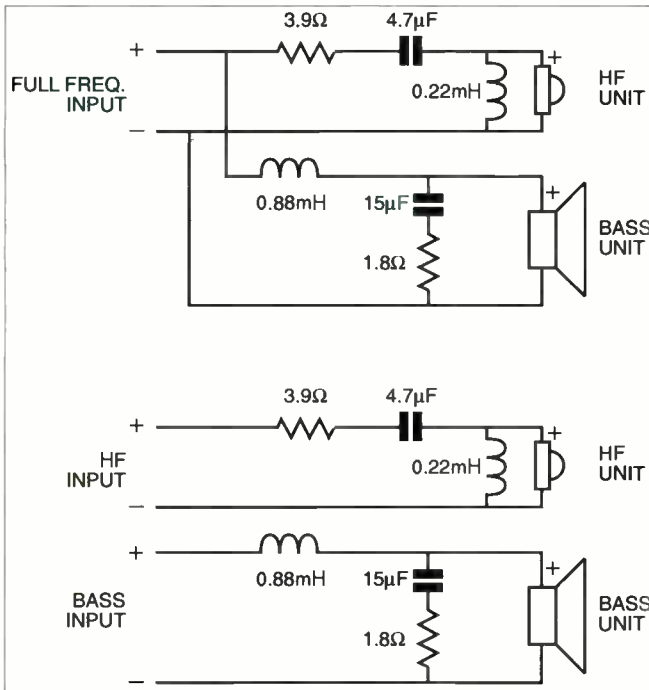
Finally, I am considering buying a power amp. to run with the 8000A as a preamp. Ideally, I would like the 8000P, but don't know if funds will stretch that far. Which other amps would work with the 8000A and

Missions? (I feel the 8000A and 760i is a good match). I have not read any reviews of the NAD 216 amp which on paper seems to have the right credentials. Do you know if this amp. is likely to be compatible and if so would it improve on the 8000A? I would like to now bi-amp the Missions.

Name and address withheld

For other readers interested in bi-wiring their Mission 760i loudspeakers, it is worth bearing in mind that many specialist hi-fi dealers have an engineer who can perform this modification competently and at moderate cost. Remember though, that this kind of tweak will invalidate your guarantee.

Your best bet if you want to bi-amp your system is, as you have recognised, to add an 8000P power amplifier. If you can't stretch your funds to accommodate a new one, it's always worth considering buying second hand. Audiolab amplifiers are known for their build strength and reliability, so this option would be a fairly safe bet. And servicing is not a problem. DB



Converting Mission's 760i loudspeakers for bi-wiring simply involves splitting the crossover into bass and treble sections.

These have a deep and powerful bass, but a dry balance which should complement the A-400 well.

Regarding your cartridge, for similar reasons I would go for the superb Ortofon MC15 Super II. This has a very neutral, detailed and dynamic sound, quite unbeatable at the price. At the same time you would get a great improvement by replacing your old Grace arm with an RB300, which is much more up to the job of taking control of a good MC. This should bring about a worthwhile improvement to your front-end, giving better detail, dynamics and transparency. DB

and fitted Deflex panels, but this latest modification really has transformed the speakers. They sound even bigger, more refined with more depth and I am now rediscovering my CDs.

The rest of my system is as follows: Audiolab 8000A, Philips CD 610II (used as a transport) QED Digit (dual Positroned courtesy of Hi-Fi World mod.), B&W Acoustiline subwoofer.

I have tweaked my system in many ways, but the best I find are those that cost very little (of course!), e.g. the 760i mod. I have a Sound Organisation three shelf table and I use a Cyrus Isoplat under the CD player.

I had some thick glass plate (8mm) lying around and put the cut up Deflex on the



The Audiolab 8000P power amplifier can be used with their 8000A integrated in a bi-amp system.

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When Celestion ditched their heavy, expensive but fascinating SL-6000 subwoofer, publication of my crossover circuit for integrating it into the Quad ESL-63 was shelved. But the project raised so many questions and pointed to so many intriguing possibilities that it remained very much alive in our heads. Just what they are, and why this project is best seen as an introduction to a fascinating, little understood but potentially important part of hi-fi is worth covering here.

For me, the project was more than an attempt to create a great loudspeaker. Since manufacturers these days believe a loudspeaker is a wooden box with a few drivers in it, all other forms have drifted off-limits commercially.

Alternatives have now become enthusiasts' territory. Conveniently, the open baffle subwoofer, or bass dipole as it is also known, is simple in construction, amenable to experiment and yet impressive to hear - an enthusiasts dream!

Firstly, here are the unique properties of the dipole subwoofer and what it has to offer hi-fi.

The cabinet that is put around the rear of a conventional loudspeaker drive unit to contain back radiation imposes a low frequency limit upon bass reproduction, often too high to allow low notes to be played properly. It also compromises bass quality by making it lumpy, boomy, uneven or just dry and anemic. Panel resonance adds mid-band colouration, whilst box echoes add whoomph, chestiness and a megaphone effect. Add in the cost of the woodwork, its weight and volume and you have a severely bad idea staring you in the face.

Amazingly, it gets worse. Here's the least understood but perhaps most significant drawback of the box loudspeaker: it is a monopole that cannot

be properly matched into an enclosed space - domestic rooms in other words. All that pulling and pushing 'speakers around to get good bass performance from them is down to this property.

In return for the certainty that a monopole never works properly is the certainty that it is consistent in its imperfection: it can be plonked anywhere and will give a result. This is why 'speakers placed carelessly in a room invariably deliver poor - often boomy - bass. But their owners are likely to be oblivious to the fact, and as long as there's plenty of boom, boom, boom going on, happy too.

An open baffle dipole is a fundamentally different animal. It cannot be plonked anywhere; it must be tuned into a room by alignment. This is the bad bit. Potentially, it makes the dipole a real tweaky beast, but I suspect this set-up process can be made simple. In return for this difficulty we get a loudspeaker that works better in an enclosed space. It can actually suppress room modes.

What sort of performance do you get? Firstly, bass with no lower limit. In truth the free air resonance of the drive unit sets the lower limit, but this can be manipulated to exist almost anywhere in the frequency spectrum; Celestion got it down to

Reflections from Noel Keywood

5Hz or so, which was frightening. This bass was so deep that it possessed seismic power; the room would move, as if an earthquake was in progress. It takes an enormous box to approach this performance - and none can actually match it!

An open dipole delivers smooth, even and apparently effortless bass lines, that casually reach down to the lowest notes. This is more important than the ability to reproduce seismic events. You have to hear how relaxed and normal bass lines can sound from a dipole before realising just how much a box 'speaker struggles - and often fails - to get down even to 40Hz, the bottom limit of stringed instruments, let alone lower.

Finally, we have no cabinet. This banishes all sorts of ills, especially unwanted colourations.

There are drawbacks, but I believe most of them can be overcome. The box monopole 'speaker has enjoyed decades of rigorous scrutiny and analysis, during which enormous amounts of theory and computing power have been applied to tame it. The dipole has attracted little attention and, in fact, I have never seen associated room matching theory until Celestion launched the SL-6000. This is a little understood subject at present.



What we do know is that the dipole is inefficient and consumes lots of power. It also needs electronic equalisation. Suitable high power, high sensitivity bass drivers exist though (e.g. Audax PR330MO, 13in paper cone, Fr 28Hz, 98dB sensitive, etc) and a power amp with equalisation and overload limiting could be included in the base of each unit or as a separate power amplifier. It could be pure Class B and need not have massive heat sinks.

This may look a bit daunting for amateur experimenters, but is it? Maplin offer suitable power amplifier modules, or an old/second-hand power amp. could be pressed into service. These days, equalisation circuits can be knocked up after a good night's reading of Don Lancaster's Active Filter Cookbook. Maplin can again offer all parts and the inexpensive test equipment needed to validate results. The dipole subwoofer itself is a drive unit on a small baffle - what could be simpler?

I hope that by publishing my circuit in this month's DIY Supplement we've put meat on the theoretical bones, as it were. From this many of you will be able to cobble up a working system and start experimenting. Good luck! You are likely to get quite a surprise ●

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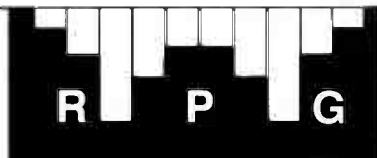
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Moth produce some interesting, no frills amplifiers, including passive and active preamplifiers, a phono stage, four power amps and an integrated. They share the same modular construction of a simple deep aluminium box with a plain wooden front panel.

sleeve notes, this is the amp for you. The clear diction was wonderful. Trying other records revealed the same thing, a good midrange drowned out by harsh and somewhat strident treble. I made the mistake of playing Diane Reeves' 'Never Too Far' which was not a happy experience. The forward mix of the record was too much.

The sound stage was quite open but

again? Wow! What a difference. Was this really the same design? The harshness had gone and what greeted me was a holographic midrange going back miles. It was like being there. Rachmaninov's Piano Concerto No.2 relayed the eerie experience of hearing Ashkenazy fingers tapping on the keys.

Going back to Neil Young, he sounded much more natural, if slightly spotlight compared to the rest of the sound. The bass was a little subdued and lacked slam, and treble was still a bit bright, but it was nowhere near as harsh as the Stereo 60. The more I listened, the more I had the feeling that the balance had been tinkered with. Some instruments would zing out of the mix with such force that I was almost ducking for cover. Side 2 of Young's Harvest has a harp appear out of nowhere, almost drowning out the lyrics.

CONCLUSION

I couldn't recommend the Stereo 60 unless you have a dull, warm system in need of brightening up. The Mono 100 was much better balanced, if still biased towards the midrange. Its clinical approach was sometimes too clean for comfort, but given the right material it could shine. If you are in the market for an amplifier which brings terrific detail and a wonderfully deep soundstage, then the Moth Mono 100 is the one for you ●

Moth Stereo 60 £549
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WORLD VERDICT

Stereo 60: ●●
Sharp treble and poor depth.
Mono 100 ●●●●
Great staging and plenty of detail.

Measured Performance
see p113-121

LIGHT ATTRACTION

Peter Downs thinks Moth's new Mono 100 amplifier is a bright new flame. But with the Stereo 60 you might get burnt.

Reviewed here are the all-new Stereo 60 and Mono 100 power amplifiers. They share common circuitry, enabling Moth to offer an upgrade facility, so that you only pay the difference between the Stereo 60 and Mono 100.

STEREO 60

The Stereo 60 comes in two boxes, one box for the electronics and one for the 400 VA transformer. First reactions were of a crisp sound with bags of detail, but a lean bass. As listening progressed it was clear the overriding quality was a harshness that coloured everything.

Switching to a valve preamp helped a little bit, but it did not solve the problem. A pity, because fighting to be heard was a superb midrange. Neil Young's vocals never sounded so good. If you don't like following lyrics on the

lacked depth. 'Towards the Unknown' by Vaughan Williams showed great width, but a flatish depth, as if the orchestra was squashed together. Bass was dry and tight. Even an old mono record of 'The Clifford Brown All Stars' which should be quite mellow, came across as too polished with prominent tape hiss and added glare to sax. Timing was good and the Stereo 60 didn't lose control of complex passages.

MONO 100

After my experience with the Stereo 60, and bearing in mind the similar circuitry, I was not looking forward to listening to this three-box combination. The difference between the Mono 100 and the Stereo 60 is that each channel has its own enclosure and the power supply houses two 400VA transformers.

Gingerly, I put on the first record. Was this suicide playing Diane Reeves

7 pairs of Mission 731 speakers
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Add 'em all up and you get ten reasons to enter our great competition!

That's right! Enter this month's fabulous competition and you could walk away with one of ten pairs of Mission loudspeakers. There are three pairs of top 731LEs for the top three entrants and seven pairs of super 731s for the

first seven super runners up.

Mission's cleverly engineered and constructed £130 731 loudspeaker appeared on the market a little over a year ago now, and very quickly became the loudspeaker that competitors had to beat. These miniatures are designed for use on a bookshelf or on stands, placed against a rear wall. They have a lively and exciting sound, which helps them

bring any system to life. Good punch in the bass makes them great for small rooms.

The 731s use a novel construction technique, where the front and rear baffle are moulded from plastic and snap together to lock the surrounding wooden wrap firmly in place. This makes them extremely rugged little 'speakers, and having the front braced to the rear

helps reduce cabinet coloration.

The 731LEs, launched recently, are the turbo-charged, super-tuned version of the 731s, offering greater detail and neutrality to the audiophile. Our November issue headline, 'Merci Mission', was apt: the 731LEs are super value for any audiophile on a budget. They are bi-wireable and have been extensively re-worked and tuned to offer a top class performance.

In our World Verdict David Price summed up the 731LEs by saying "Excellent sound puts the competitors in the shade. Well built and pretty too. What more could you expect?"

And what better competition could you ask for too, with the chance to win three pairs of the 731LEs and seven pairs of 731s. So make sure you enter this competition. All you have to do is simply complete the questions and tie breaker opposite.

Please send your entry on a POSTCARD, or the back of a SEALED ENVELOPE, and completed in block capitals, to arrive no later than 5th DECEMBER 1995 to:

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OCTOBER ISSUE
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In the October issue of Hi-Fi World we were offering five superb Alchemist Axiom integrated amplifiers. The lucky winners are:

P. Holyneux of Witley
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Congratulations.

COMPETITION ENTRY QUESTIONS

Cut out and affix to the back of a sealed envelope

- 1) The Mission 731 is -
 - A. A famous track by 'The Mission'
 - B. A miniature loudspeaker
 - C. Mission's secret recipe for chocolate cake
 - D. A secret mission to rid the world of poor sound quality
- 2) Mission's 731s use a clever plastic front and rear baffle which lock together, but what is the cabinet wrap made from?
 - A. Wrapping paper
 - B. Chocolate cake
 - C. Wood
 - D. Polystyrene
- 3) Pick one thing the Mission 731LEs don't have which the 731s do.
 - A. The suffix LE
 - B. Chocolate cake cabinet damping
 - C. Bi-wire terminals
 - D. A £130 price tag
- 4) How did David Price summarise the 731LE in our World Verdict?
 - A. "Well built and pretty too, just like me!"
 - B. "What more could you ask for?"
 - C. "I'd swap my Ferrari for them"
 - D. "I'd rather have some chocolate cake"

TIE BREAKER (obligatory)

Since it has featured so heavily in the questions above but otherwise has no part to play, so far that is, compose a poem to include the words *chocolate cake* as well as *Mission 731* (or *731LE*).

Here's an example to get you started:

Mission's 731's are no fake,
 Like Lyon's original chocolate cake,

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Please do not add my name to your mailing list.

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- [1] Only one entry per household will be accepted. Multiple entries will be automatically disqualified.
- [2] In the event of more than one entrant submitting all correct answers, the winner will be picked from the tie-breaker by the editor. We will endeavour to publish the results in the February 1996 issue. Purchase of the magazine is not a precondition to entry.
- [3] No correspondence about this competition will be entered into and the editor's decision is final.
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E&OE 07/95



A small group of us, including Douglas Floyd-Douglass our acoustics expert and the Editor of Hi-Fi Choice, Stan Vincent, recently went to see Rickie Lee Jones perform live at the London Palladium. Douglas, knowing the sound engineer, had managed to secure some of the best tickets in the house - about ten rows back and right in line with the single microphone stand which stood centre stage. I'm not a great fan of Rickie Lee Jones myself, but Douglas had assured me that this was an event at a venue not to be missed.

Taking our seats, I spotted the 'speaker system Douglas had been enthusing about earlier on, complete with open-baffle Tannoy Dual-Concentric drivers. Apparently, whilst working on the set for Oliver, the sound engineer had found the boy's unbroken voice was strongly coloured by cabinet effects of the loudspeakers they were using. So he mounted several drivers on baffles (i.e. without cabinets) to lessen this effect. The result was a clear and tonally pure vocal quality. Consequently, a similar set-up had been chosen for this Rickie Lee Jones performance.

For a live performance the sound system was very simple, with no processing or effects, just straight amplification from Rickie herself and either the piano or twelve-string guitar she plays. The sound was absolutely superb, with a great acoustic and pure, natural tonal balance which really helped to draw the emotion out of each song.

In many ways the performance wasn't a million miles away from what a top hi-fi system is capable of. Of course there were differences. Most noticeable was the massive dynamic headroom which allowed Rickie Lee Jones to go from a softly struck chord only just audible, to a vocal peak that would

dB on the level

send shivers through you, yet without the slightest hint of compression or distortion.

But, this was an all-seater venue, where the crowd were very quiet during each song, removing one of the largest differences between live and reproduced music. The PA system had been very carefully balanced so that its own inherent character didn't override the performance, something which a hi-fi system also with its own different character will always struggle to achieve. All this, combined with the limited bandwidth material that comes from just vocal and guitar, narrowed the differences between this live performance and a top hi-fi system.

Some of our older readers must be kicking themselves as they read about the current trends towards single-ended valve amplification and now open baffle loudspeakers. This was how hi-fi started, a large 15" Tannoy dual concentric driver on a plank of wood propped up against the wall and a home built single-ended valve amplifier good for a couple of watts. They must be wondering when we'll all start raving about the qualities of mono!

We've been great fans of open baffle loudspeakers for several years now at Hi-Fi World, ever since first encounters with Quad's ESL-63

Dominic Baker



opinion

electrostatics and Celestion's SL-6000 subwoofers (see this month's Supplement). But these are pretty extreme examples of open-baffle loudspeakers, a complex electrostatic and a dipole subwoofer which requires electronic equalisation. Open baffle loudspeakers don't have to be complex; in fact they are one of the simplest arrangements possible.

One of the most sensible ways to implement an open baffle loudspeaker is with a three-way design. Here the midrange driver can be used with an open back cabinet lightly filled with absorbent, long haired wool for example, to reduce rear radiation. This is where the open baffle shows some of its greatest strengths, reducing colouration where the ear is most sensitive.

To get a midrange

driver down to 300Hz, a normal enough place to cross over to the bass unit of a three-way design, it needs a minimum baffle diameter of around 60cm. This could be built into a floorstander 15cm wide and 25cm deep and all that would be required would be to leave the back off the cabinet behind the midrange driver.

I hope we'll see interesting open baffle loudspeakers appear in future. They are easy to build and sound far more natural and uncoloured than any elaborate midrange cabinet arrangement. Perhaps we'll even see an electrostatic panel housed in an open-back cabinet, allowing small size but good enough extension to reach down to a conventional bass driver. We hope to give you more information about all this in the coming months ●

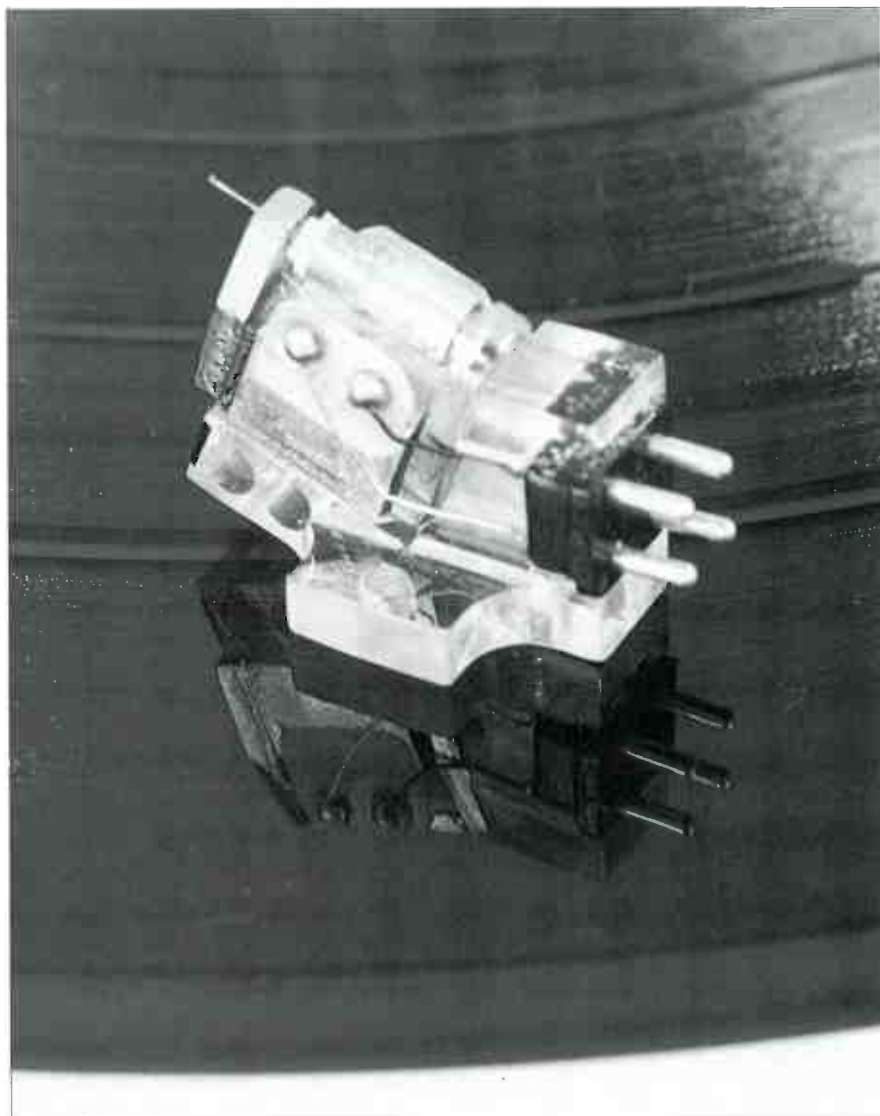
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GRASSHOPPER

- IT'LL MAKE

YOU **JUMP!**

Chris Beeching listens to van den Hul's legendary Grasshopper IV pickup cartridge. The music made him chirp (but the price made him croak!)

Grasshopper is the world's most esoteric pickup cartridge, spoken of in reverential tones. Lack of physical body accounts for its fascinating insect-like appearance. Its sound quality is the vertical propellant that makes you jump. Then there's the price: at £3750 big enough bring you back to earth.

Grasshopper arrived in a modest but carefully made small wooden box. Inside, the cartridge was held by nothing more than a perspex plate pressing it

down into a moulded plastic tray. There was no stylus guard and no other protective packaging - almost everything about this cartridge is minimalist, including its packaging it would seem. But it arrived intact all the same.

The apparent fragility of the Grasshopper belies its robust construction; the front plate is substantial by anyone's standards and the protruding cantilever looks substantial too. The diamond stylus

seems minuscule in comparison, but then it needs to be to reach into the music in the grooves.

For me, though, the most amazing part was the lead-out wires from the coils, which are exposed to the elements. They are so thin that they are difficult to see with the naked eye. A jeweller's loupe didn't offer much improvement either. How vdH manage to solder these tiny wires I don't know; it amazes me.

The Grasshopper was auditioned in

both a Naim Aro atop an LP12/Armageddon combination with a step-up from Paul Stuart Designs, and also a Nottingham Analogue Spacedeck/Paragon I combination into a cheap pair of the Ortofon transformers. Neither combination disappointed.

Fortunately, the cartridge's robust construction allows easy fitting, and the perspex top-plate has tapped holes which makes installation even more straightforward. Gold-plated pin connections link the output to the rest of a hi-fi system.

Installation took about half an hour. Setting up was easy and having set vertical tracking angle (VTA), tracking force was optimised at 1.6 grams in both arms. At this downforce I found tracking ability was superb. Even from cold the Grasshopper managed to make music from anything I happened to play.

As with any good cartridge, the critical aspects of spatial imagery, soundstage depth and 'presence' were all 'true to the original', but where the Grasshopper scored was its uncanny ability to recreate the music which was taking place. This quality transcended any downfall in the recording process itself. For example, some historical performances can be notoriously difficult to really get into, but the Grasshopper made the music easy and accessible. Somehow the emotion and life of the performance came through where others had failed to present it fully.

Other notably poor recordings which contained good performances also came to musical life. It wasn't that the Grasshopper was kind to all recordings (far from it, in fact), but neither was it ruthless. It seemed to have a discernment about its presentation which let the important musical aspects through while not highlighting the things which weren't as important.

I started with a favourite recording; Ansermet conducting Stravinsky's Petrushka on Ace of Clubs in mono. Now an aged record, and well overplayed, the Grasshopper managed to re-present all the magic of the performance that so captured me when I first bought it. All the subtleties, the

depth of the silences, just how good a performance it was; all was revealed through the Grasshopper.

Many modern stereo cartridges simply don't have the lateral compliance to replay mono records well. The Grasshopper excelled here, with a stable central image, a surprising sense of depth and a treatment of percussion which was extraordinarily close to real life. One aspect of mono recordings which I feel is less successful in stereo is

“Transparency was the Grasshopper's hallmark, allowing music to flow with superb fluidity. Its bottom-to-top presentation was seamless, with good bass weight and a clear, open and extended sparkling treble.”

sudden transients; in mono, the only stylus movement is sideways, while in stereo the stylus is being pushed up the opposite groove wall which can often result in mistracking. Here the Grasshopper showed just how competent a performer it is in lateral compliance and raw dynamics.

Seeking out some stereo recordings, my hand came to rest (among others) on the Sphere album Flight Path. The opening track 'If I Should Lose You' opens with a heavy plucked bass on the right channel followed by a loud, rasping, yet lyrical sax on the left. The surprise is in the non-played information which comes through. Recorded at the Rudy Van Gelder Studios in the USA, the air and space surrounding these two performers was huge. A long, deep and high echo made it seem they were playing in an empty Wembley stadium. This decayed slowly but gracefully over the next few notes played, without being masked by them; the

Grasshopper manages to reveal all this without losing the main thread of the music - quite an achievement.

Transparency was the Grasshopper's hallmark, allowing music to flow with superb fluidity. Its bottom-to-top presentation was seamless, with good bass weight and a clear, open and extended sparkling treble. This lack of tonal colouration is no doubt aided by the absence of a cartridge body, and all its associated resonances. I'm sure the cartridge structure must have a resonance somewhere, but simply by listening, I couldn't find it.

Ultimately it mattered not what sort of music I played, what age of pressing, whether stereo, mono or SQ compatible, the Grasshopper managed to reveal things which I had previously been unable to hear. Its one disadvantage is that a really revealing system is needed to hear the benefits. Plonk it in front of a Pioneer A-400, or a similar budget super-amp, and you're likely to be disappointed, not because the

amps are no good, but because their resolving power is at a lower order of magnitude than the front end. So, highly articulate speakers and very transparent amplification are needed to reveal the Grasshopper's musical abilities.

The biggest downside to reviewing this spectacular cartridge lies in the aftermath: I'd have to go back to missing all the things I'd now heard. When I play again any of the records used for this review I shall be reminded of the joy that the Grasshopper gave as a musical performer, and of the hidden gems which it revealed. Moving back to lesser cartridges will be something of a major culture shock ●

vdH Grasshopper IV £3750

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With the hi-fi season now well under way, after a barrage of Shows, just where does the industry see its future? Although there were a greater number of London based shows for the hi-fi enthusiast this September, there hasn't been the expected split between hi-fi and A/V based products.

The rest of the world (well, America, Japan and mainland Europe, at least), seem to be heading towards an A/V dominated market where the music part of the hi-fi is incorporated with the visual side. This has led most of the large Japanese amplifier manufacturers to reappraise their future output and move over to A/V amplifiers, with stereo amps no longer a mainstay. Although they'll produce the ancillary equipment, such as CD players, cassette decks, tuners, and the like, the market for quality budget to mid-range priced equipment will become poorer. We may never see the likes of the A-400 again.

So where does Britain fit into all this? Well, unlike our Western partners, A/V equipment has been rather slow to catch on over here. Surround sound televisions are still something of a gimmick and it's not a feature likely to dominate the market as Nicam has done over the past six years. Hi-fi originated A/V separates are a similar case. Whilst there has been an interest, stereo amplifiers still outsell multi-channel home cinema ones by at least 10 to 1 (the exact amount varies according to whose figures you believe).

With the home market remaining staunchly stereo, this has placed British manufacturers in something of a dilemma. The fact that the Japanese are now tending to concentrate on Audio Visual equipment has meant that British amplifier manufacturers

Fair Views

- from Dominic
Todd, our man in
retailing



have been able to capitalise on reduced competition. I forecast that over the next few years we'll see fewer Japanese amplifier awards, as they slowly move out of stereo and toward A/V.

At the moment the British hi-fi industry appears to be in something of a dilemma. On the one hand, companies such as Audiolab are (so far)

rightly doing is not putting all their eggs into one basket.

Another part of the industry affected by the intrusion of A/V, is the loudspeaker market. The approach here has been similarly diverse, as with the electronic side of things, yet with varying results. Celestion, for example have been quick to latch on to A/V, but have had their fingers

defined market position, they actually sold well too. This is certainly something that couldn't be said of Celestion's previous CS range. I look forward to reviews of the new Impact range with interest to see if Celestion have regained some of their credibility in the budget to mid-range hi-fi market.

Mission, on the other hand, have managed to get the balancing act right. Whilst pursuing A/V with a full range of 'speakers, with electronics to come from partnering Cyrus too, they've still managed to retain a broad hi-fi 'speaker range that offers a degree of consistency in terms of ability, right through from the 731 at £130 to the £700 753. Excellent sales speak for themselves.

Although A/V is certainly more than a gimmick, I hope that when manufacturers are considering the future they don't use it as an excuse to ignore the hi-fi customer and let music reproduction go to pot. With the Japanese turning towards A/V the coming years could be the most fruitful ever for British manufacturers, provided they clearly identify the market's needs - not its whims. Whatever the results, the next few years will probably prove a turbulent time for the hi-fi industry, but they may be a little more bountiful for real hi-fi manufacturers than expected ●

“ With the home market remaining staunchly stereo, this has placed British manufacturers in something of a dilemma. ”

ignoring the A/V aspect and forging ahead with amplifiers to fill the void left by the Japanese. Others, however, are more cautious. They tend to be dabbling with A/V equipment at the moment, testing the market place. Linn and Arcam have taken the plunge, and Naim have gone one stage further by introducing their own four (rather than five) channel system.

It's interesting to note that what these companies haven't done is alienate their previous stereo customers. The ranges are still based primarily around music sourced components. It's a delicate time and what manufacturers are quite

burnt in the process. For some time they've had A/V speakers, a policy continuing with the Impact range, designed to be driven using "lifestyle" and midi-systems (all credit to Celestion for their superb new up-market, stone cabinet Kingston loudspeaker too).

However, whilst appeasing the A/V and high-end market, Celestion have made the mistake of letting their mid-range 'speakers fade away. Once, 'speakers such as the Celestion DL and SL ranges were the mainstay of the company. And, it should be noted that, as well as sounding good and having a clearly

The Music Daily

Giovanni Dadomo

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OASIS
(What's the Story)
Morning Glory!
 CREATION CBE 119P

● Let's face facts: sometimes you get out of the right side of the bed and sometimes you get your feet all tangled up. Oasis' sequel to last year's debut *Definitely Maybe*, exemplifies both kinds of morning. Oasis were the first group to sing about selling the *Big Issue* on the most inspiring entree for five years, and sadly there's not always such fired up originality on this second instalment. Even hits like "Roll With It" are glib toss-aways compared with the majority of the first record.

One could easily argue that the mere four weeks spent cutting the current disc is well in keeping with their long-standing admiration of the mid-sixties Liverpool sound. Furthermore, it's a strikingly novel notion for a group to pursue simplicity. This goes against the sixties obsession with progressiveness which was, let's be

honest, in most cases something to talk about in interviews.

This is not to say that the distinctive wit of the first album isn't present. Try to work out a line like "She's got a sister with a palm that's got a blister". Clue: it's on page 346 of Les Dawson's 'Anthology of Bawdy Jokes, Vol.23'. These lyrics are sung in a surprisingly high pitched vocal refrain from Gallagher junior.

Ultimately, Oasis' continuing success is down to their flair with a cool, catchy tune, a nose for publicity and their sheer talent. Have the days of *Definitely Maybe* passed? Let time tell.



THE LEVELLERS
Zeitgeist China
 MF4/GD/HFW

● A fifth time out from Brighton's best loved quintet. Apparently, the lads have recently moved into a communal dream home just like The Beatles in the Help

RECORD OF THE MONTH

THE CHARLATANS
The Charlatans
Beggars Banquet
BBQ CD174

● One of our most underrated and immaculate contemporary combos, the Charlatans - an ironic name of ever there was one - prove to be in as sturdy form as ever on this richly vibrant offering of definitive pop/rock. Their fourth long player is full to the brim with cool and groovy tracks. They may not be Blur or Oasis as far as the breadth of their following goes, but they sure can pen music which gets under the skin. And perhaps even more importantly, they aren't patently Britpop enough to confuse America and Japan, and therefore they are more

than likely to make the crossover to desirable world markets. After all, it took The Kinks the best part of fifteen

years to cross the Atlantic.

Perhaps they are a bit laid back in terms of image, but then this is classy pop with strong hooks and not a hint of the pretentiousness that seems to plague so many of our up-and-comers.

Willowly and sweet voiced Tim Burgess up front, Martin Blunt (another ironic name, considering his strong underpinning) and his brother Rob on guitar and keyboards respectively, and drummer Joe Brooks, stretch the gamut from the thundering to the exquisite. Cop an earful of "Toothache" which is anything but likely to have you begging for anaesthesia. But to cut a long review short, there's not a dud track to be found here. A fine band. No lie, honest guv'nor.



movie. They are obviously very close, and as their name suggests, they continue to be PC without sacrificing a palpable sense of joy.

The disc was recorded over nine months - an apt gestation period for a record that alternately provokes, entrances and unless you are careful, is likely have you doing amiably silly dances. Flow with the lads on a mixed melee whose prime moments include the sublime "Maid of the River", the suitably ironic "PC Keen", or the magically wrought "Fantasy". The band recently told Vox mag that you can't be a real musician unless you take some type of drug or other. The record is a definite buzzer, so The Levellers are evidently level-headed on the herbal-chemical front. Just don't try it at home kids - these men are trained professionals and as mad as they come.

LOUDON WAINWRIGHT III
Grown Man
VIRGIN CDV 2789

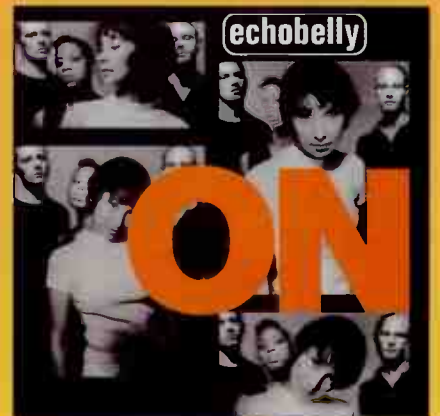
● Loudon Wainwright is eminently articulate, scabrous and just so funny it almost hurts. In short, he possesses a wit few American songwriters can hold a candle to. This man, with his gawky stage movements and truly eccentric vocal style, has a breadth of material that can make you laugh one minute and



cry the next. Even after something like two decades in the business and a persona as quirky as Emo Phillips crossed with Tiny Tim, all spiced up with the wit of David Byrne minus the more pretentious bits, he can still come up with some hot tunes. True perhaps that he has had the obligatory ups and downs, but "Just a Joke", "A Year" and "Father Daughter Duologue", are fine additions to a catalogue that already includes oodles of wit, wisdom and some really neat tunes. Tune in, turn Loudon on and don't drop your false teeth laughing.

ECHOBELLY
On
FAUV 6 CD

● Dunno about you, but I'd buy this



band's discs just for the photos of the glorious Sonya Aurora Madan. However, happily there's more to Echobelly than meets the eye. They have overcome the Smiths copycat tag, to turn up a sturdy and varied act packed with wry social observations and digs, as well as heaps of memorable tunes.

Despite a somewhat odd obsession with motor cars, they're a pleasure to ride with. Look out Blur - the 'Bellies are catching up real fast.





THE REBIRTH OF COOL PHIVE
Subterranean Abstract Blues
BRICO 417 1-525-778-2

● Number Phive and the Rebirth posse bring out the compilation of the year yet again. Still elusive, vague and moody in conception, the flavour is once more progressive and stylish. Ultimately Cool.

The trick it seems is to avoid the labelling and stereotyping that most music has fallen prey to over the years. As the sleeve notes proclaim: "We don't know what to call this music". And this is quite apparent - labelling Rebirth is nigh on impossible. To say it is a celebration of English originality in music - which in part it certainly is - would be unfair to Japan's United Future Organisation or America's Beastie Boys, who both have tracks on Phive.

Rebirth is about the rebirth of originality in music, particularly in the UK, and this is summed up by the inclusion of tracks by Bristolians Tricky and Portishead. Their music can be likened to Trip-Hop, Acid Jazz and Danruful, but the only place it can really fit is in a film score.

Rebirth Phive departs from previous offerings by including already successful and better known acts: Massive Attack with an awesome remix of "Karmakoma", Tricky with his scary "Hell Is Round The Corner", the Beastie Boys with "Get It Together" and strangely Paul Weller with the brilliant "Kosmos".

The establishment are combined with obscurity, for example the soon-to-be massive Ben Harper, with his rudimentary "Whipping Boy". There are also excellent tracks by Leena Conquest and Kruder and Dorfmeister.

Everything on Phive is intriguing to hear, from beginning to end. It is an album for purists, and the truth is that once bitten by this wonderful series of compilations it is difficult to know when one will stop being smitten.



BROWN SUGAR
D'Angelo
724187262922 CDD..TEMO

● It's been out a little while now, but this summer's underground dance success by a long shot came from the little known US dude D'Angelo. Brown Sugar is the sexiest, most soulful album to hit the streets for years and it could - just maybe - be the start of a musical career to rival that of Curtis, Marvin and Prince. The 21-year-old from Richmond, Virginia, used to hold court at local Sunday Church services. He teamed up with Ali from A Tribe Called Quest for a studio jam, when he suddenly hit the piano and the single Brown Sugar was born.

It started the vbe which continues right through the rest of the album - a delightful journey through Motown and smooth, smooth Soul.

Almost entirely written, performed and produced by D'Angelo himself, the album has immediate similarities with Stevie Wonder and Prince's masterpieces. This must be due to his humble musical roots. Learning to play music by ear from the age of four, Michael "D'Angelo" Archer, was soon being handed playlists of songs on a Saturday to rehearse for the following day's Church service. His talent was eventually recognized at the notoriously difficult Showtime At The Apollo competition, in New York, which he won three times.

D'Angelo seems to have a rare talent, not often seen today, to take any groove and make it sound sexy. And without exception all of Brown Sugar's 10 tracks are enough to get anyone in the mood for love-making.

Brown Sugar is where the Gospel meets the nightclub - a rendezvous which culminates in sheer sensuality. Hopefully, D'Angelo, can handle the artistic and social pressure that go hand-in-hand with his talent, and progress without too much pain and heartbreak.



THIS IS CULT FICTION
Various
7241 8 48857 25 VTCDD 57

● Clever, clever, very clever indeed! No guesses where the inspirations on this original little gem lie. An obvious play on the name of film-of-the-year Pulp Fiction, Cult Fiction draws on the music from cult films of the last two decades.

Built unsurprisingly around the superbly selected rare grooves from the two Tarantino masterpieces Pulp Fiction and Reservoir Dogs, it does at times drift into album filling material but the songlist is generally a tribute to some of the coolest moments in film.

Hence we have Nilsson's brilliant "Everybody's Talkin" from Midnight Cowboy, which starred Dustin Hoffman and John Voight. Also "Stuck in the Middle" by Stealers Wheel - the track during which the unfortunate cop gets his ear cut off by Michael Madson in Reservoir Dogs. And Louis Armstrong's wonderful theme from James Bond's first adventure On Her Majesty's Secret Service.

The 28 tracks on Cult Fiction are delightfully varied and ultimately a laugh for a party. Their strength lies in the way they evoke particular memories of each film they represent. The one exception being the very silly "Guaglione" by Perez Prado which, as most of you won't know immediately, was never in a film at all. It is in fact the music of the current Guinness advert, featuring that silly Antonio Banderas lookalike jumping around like a plonker.

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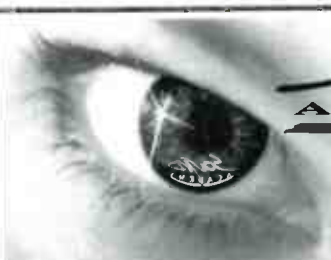
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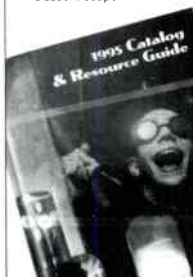


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SAISORO, DEREK AND THE RUINS

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● This is an inspired pairing and no mistake. And, with all due respect to Japanese noise sculptors The Ruins, it gives this column the chance to sound

off at some length about one of the most remarkable figures in modern music.

What can be said about Derek Bailey that hasn't already been said a thousand times already? The English guitar player emerged in the mid sixties as a key figure in a group of radical young jazz musicians who very deliberately cut all links with the 50 year history of the genre and attempted to forge a new, totally spontaneously created music which would avoid the clichés of stylized jazz improvising, and the fetters of idiom generally.

The groups and individuals on the scene - Bailey, Evan Parker, the Spontaneous Music Ensemble, Trevor Watts, the late, great John Stevens, the Music Improvisation Company (the list runs on and on) achieved their aims with varying degrees of success, but always with a depth of intelligence and grace. Their music was distinguishable from other contemporary sounds through its violent and often deliberately cacophonous feel which originated in urban America (the 'New Thing') and Europe.

As time moved on, a lot of the members have moved onto more regular pastures. Dave Holland and Kenny Wheeler, both cohorts of Bailey's in the Spontaneous Music Ensemble, are now rightly renowned for their adept, highly lyrical post bop improvising which has made them natural label mates at ECM. Stevens himself, the SME's leader (in as much as one individual could be) spent much of

the seventies writing and playing an enthusiastically ethnic blend of jazz rock.

Of all these musicians, Bailey, along with soprano and tenor saxist Parker, are the two who stand out as having pursued the most dogged, singular course, albeit along very different lines. Parker's greatest contribution has been the mammoth body of live and pre-recorded solo saxophone work which has built up over the years. Despite the highly modern and esoteric nature of his solo performances, Parker still crops up on more predictable occasions, such as with the gleeful, hard swinging Kenny Wheeler Big Band or that master of manic depressive pop, Scott Walker.

And what of Bailey? It is Bailey's background which makes *Saisoro* what it is, that is an intriguing and dazzling record. It seems to me that Bailey's great contribution to contemporary music is two fold. Firstly, and crucially, for this gets overlooked so often it's painful, Bailey is one of the most significant innovators on the world's most horrendously over played instrument to have emerged in the last three decades, or more. If you were to sit down and make up an objective list of the most significant guitar players since Django Rheinhardt, then sure you'd have Charlie Christian and Jimi Hendrix and Robert Johnson and probably John McLaughlin and possibly Ry Cooder - and unquestionably Derek Bailey.

Call me a late starter, but I first saw Derek Bailey perform live in the mid eighties and experienced a true



revelation. Hearing and seeing Bailey for the first time is to have one's expectations and assumptions about the guitar turned on their head (and for a guitarist, this can seem like having your world turned upside down). He is astounding.

Ironically, it is not really the jazz community - and definitely not that most conservative of breeds, jazz guitar players - who have taken Bailey's playing to their heart. Instead he is looked up to by a whole generation of young rock guitarists who grew up sufficiently in the shadow of punk to despise the clichés of virtuoso rock guitar playing, yet wanted more than the limited resources of punk. Sonic Youth's Thurston Moore in particular has led the cheer leading and you can certainly hear it in his playing.

Bailey's other contribution has been in his tireless evangelizing on behalf of all improvised music. His record label Incus (originally a partnership with Evan Parker, but now all his own work) has been chronicling spontaneous music making for two decades or more. His book, *Improvisation*, recently revised, remains an essential text. It is a huge survey of the practice of musical improvisation in diverse areas of music and a call to arms for would be improvisors around the world.

But his single most important endeavour for over twenty years was the organizing of Company Week, an annual festival of separate concerts during which various groupings of

musicians from a central pool would, unrehearsed, and often meeting each other for the first time in their lives, spontaneously create whole new musical hybrids. The players could come from any background: from jazz and, of course, from Free Improv, but also from heavy metal or contemporary classical, and any number of traditional, ethnic folk and classical styles.

As with all spontaneous creativity, not all these gatherings turned out to be successful, but when they were, they were mesmerizing. Watching a good Company performance could be like watching new life come into the world - nothing less than miraculous.

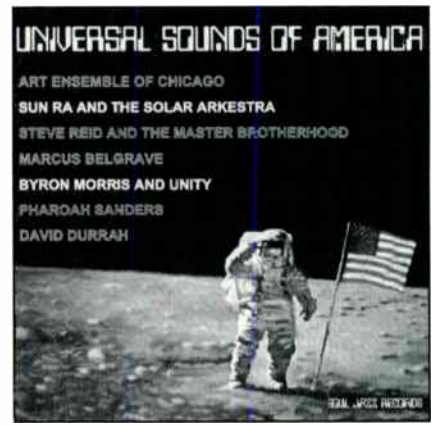
And now to discuss Bailey's most recent collaborators. The Ruins are drummer vocalist Yoshida Tatsuya and bassist Masuda Ryuchi (Yoshida being the mainstay). They are a typically Japanese hybrid of Western hi and lo brow rock influences, a kind of punk rock thrash metal outfit with a serious King Crimson - or Magma? - hang up. Their records on assorted Japanese labels and New York's Arthouse, punk home of the hit 'Shimmy Disc', paved the way for a host of Japanese noise freaks and Western Japophile genre misfits.

Recorded last year in New York, and unfortunately available only as a US import on John Zorn's latest venture Tzadik, Saisoro is either a ridiculous, coyly postmodernist debacle in which two mutually exclusive, if not actually hostile, musical philosophies come head to head just to make a point; or (and I'm with this camp) a meeting as inspired as that of Tony Conrad and Faust. In other words a meeting of idiomatically different but spiritually aligned artists.

Frankly, it's a blast. On 'Yagimbo', Bailey spins a spider's web of a guitar solo around strident, punkish rhythms. On 'Shivareyango', Yoshida's opera singer in a torture chamber shrieks rip out of beautiful, ethereal guitar drones. On 'Quinka Matta', heart stopping guitar harmonics overlay splatter punk hardcore drumming. Other influences are evident in 'Odangdoh' and 'Zomvobischem' which recall Arto Lindsay's late 70s art punk outfit DNA with their lurching, stop start drumming and scratchy guitar.

You get the picture. Saisoro's series of seven vignettes make up one the most enjoyable albums this reviewer has come across in a good while.

The best Magma freak Jap punk band meets brilliant eccentric English experimenter - record of the month, at least. Make the effort to hunt this one down. Essential.



VARIOUS ARTISTS Universal Sounds Of America

HFSOUL JAZZ RECORDS SJRCD27

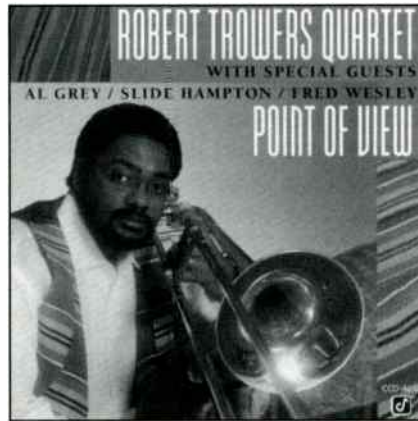
● I can't think of many compilations that we've reviewed in this column over the years. Yet in every area of commercial music, multi artist compilations have come to dominate the market place. Now the general critical tendency would be to see this as a worrying trend, but in truth, for all the throw away TV advertised pap (today's major label major earner, tomorrow's car boot sale fodder) there occasionally emerges a various artists collection which instantly captures the zeitgeist. It is, after all possible to crystallize a whole bunch of diverse music critical perspectives, or simply present an audience willing to listen with a fresh take on music they already know.

With Universal Sounds of America, Soho's cottage industry, Soul Jazz Records, have gathered together a whole bunch of American Jazz from around the mid 70s, which straddles Free Jazz and Jazz Rock. The man on the moon artwork of the cover perhaps sums up this album better than any standard term - this is pure psychedelic jazz. The collection brings together certainly some names one would expect: Sun Ra's 'Solar Arkestra' with a stunning epic take on the bandleader's

classic call to cosmic enlightenment, 'Space is the Place'. This features the blasting tenor and soprano sax of Pharoah Sanders; the Art Ensemble of Chicago are at their very best with a very Arethaesque Fontella bass topping off the weirdly funky proceedings. Joining them are rarer finds from David Durrah, Marcus Belgrave, Steve Reid, and Butch Morris.

This collection stands out against many of pop music's satellites, such as trip-hop, which are keen to invoke the spirit of 70s psychedelic jazz. This set opens a window on an underground of extraordinary music which has idled too long in obscurity. Let's hope they're hard at work on Volume 2.

Simon Cooke

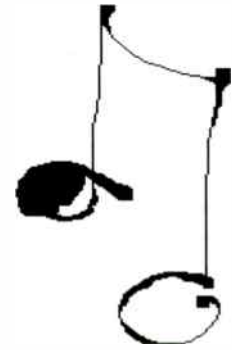


ROBERT TROWERS QUARTET
Point Of View
CCD 4636

● There are great trombonists, as well as great 'bone-led bands. As an instrument, it lends power and weight to the brass section, providing a good, stable platform for the rest of the players. However it will never - and I mean never - be a lead instrument for that same reason. Authority is earned through speed and flexibility, both essential for a lead player, whose job is to interest and involve the listener.

On the other hand, thin, compressed recordings of the 'bone are more of a rarity than those of tenor (and especially alto) sax. If you can afford the time to state notes fully - as with trombone - you give the recording technicians something to get their teeth into, so to speak. Still, even the best recording can't replace the sparkle of a performance originally blown on the 'bone, the same way that your 'speakers won't resolve what's been lost by a lacklustre component earlier in the system. You know that and luckily so does everyone associated with this recording.

Okay, so it takes eight tracks to really come alive and from a total of eleven, I'll admit that's a lot. Nevertheless, slowness is not disappointing per se because the ability of the musicians on these tracks comes through right down the line. Robert Trowers fronts with Al Grey; Slide Hampton and Fred Wesley gust on two tracks, each on trombones; Richard Wyands is on piano, Marcus McLaurine on bass and Gene Jackson on drums. Even during those first eight tracks there are moments of beauty when one or other of the musicians suddenly shines. However, it never really takes off until Trowers' own 'R&B', which is



merely a precursor to Fats Waller's 'The joint is jumpin' (track 10). Here it all comes together in a storming take on an old standard which shows Trowers at his best. Overall, it's an album of well-played jazz which will appeal to trombone lovers, but few others. A pity.



TRIBUTE TO LEE MORGAN
Lee Morgan Tribute Band
NYC 61016 -

● From trombone to trumpet, and into a racier, more driven, modern mode. In fact, the trumpet here is provided by Eddie Henderson, who brings the required virtuosity and deep lyricism to Morgan's compositions. Morgan's tunes are classics of their time and deceptively easy to play. It's good to hear a band of this pedigree tossing these tunes around. The band behind (around and sometimes in front of) Henderson, are Grover Washington Jr. and Joe Lovano, on soprano and tenor sax respectively, Cedar Walton on piano, Peter Washington on bass and Billy Higgins on drums. The nine tunes kick off with 'The Lion and the Wolff' and roam through 'Sidewinder' and 'Speedball', 'You don't know what love is' - taken beautifully slow - and 'Ca-Lee-So', to conclude with 'Search for the New Land'.

Everything is here. The recording is beautifully clean and images detail limpidly. There's really very little more you could possibly expect from a CD, unless you want an autographed copy.

Classical

Peter Herring

Have you heard the one about the Irishman, the Pole and the Russian? Let us enlighten you as to the unexpected influence of an intemperate Dubliner on no lesser person than Frederic Chopin. Also how Rachmaninov produced some of his finest piano pieces while seeking to emulate Chopin. Then, finally revealed in all its colourful splendour, is the opera created by the Cornishman, which combines Italian style and Celtic myth



JOHN FIELD
Nocturnes Nos 1-16
Joanna Leach, piano
ATHENE ATH CDL (DDD/75.39)

● Think of the piano nocturne and the first name that springs to mind, quite rightly, is Chopin, followed perhaps by that of Gabriel Faure. Yet this term was first applied to a solo piano piece not by one of the great keyboard virtuosos from central or eastern Europe, but the Irishman, John Field.

Field was born into a musical family in Dublin in 1782 and made his public debut aged eight. When he was eleven, the boy's father settled in London and John became a pupil of the pianist and piano-builder Muzio Clementi (Field was to later write four piano sonatas dedicated to his teacher). There followed public performances in London which elicited great praise, not least from Franz Josef Haydn who predicted a great future for the Dubliner. Field was also employed by Clementi to demonstrate the latter's pianos to potential buyers. He came to accompany Clementi on overseas sales

trips, and it was on one of these that he decided to part company with his tutor and settle in St Petersburg. During his stay Field gave lessons to the likes of Glinka, but later resumed the nomadic life as a travelling virtuoso.

Field also garnered considerable praise as a composer for the piano, his concertos being widely played (he wrote seven in all, one of which has retained its place in the repertoire). Towards the end of his life Field settled in Moscow, and it was there that he died in 1837. According to the Oxford Companion to Music, "intemperance and carelessness had some part in his comparatively early death"; the nature of this "carelessness" remains a mystery.

John Field is now chiefly remembered for 'inventing' that most freely impressionistic of piano forms, the nocturne, which reached its apotheosis with Chopin. The Polish genius was the first to acknowledge his debt to the Irishman: Chopin urged his pupils to study and play Field's compositions. Listening to them it is easy to appreciate where Chopin's distinctive 'vocal' tone - the ability to make the piano 'sing' - had its roots. Field's achievement was arguably one of the one great innovations in English music during the first decades of the nineteenth century.

Though now performed on the modern concert grand, John Field's music was not written for such an instrument. Originally, it would have been played on the much smaller, essentially domestic square pianos of his time, and this is the approach successfully adopted by Joanna Leach. On this generously filled CD containing all of the nocturnes, she employs three square pianos of Field's era: a five-and-a-half octave William Stodart of around 1823; a six-octave John Broadwood of

By now I ought to know it will be a waste of time. Whenever a new recording of music by the venerable George Lloyd comes my way, I turn to the appropriate reference books for background information - composition dates, first performances, that kind of thing - and, almost without exception, uncover not a solitary mention of the work in question. Some of these tomes, Peter Pirie's excellent *English Musical Renaissance*, for example, ignore Lloyd altogether. Why so? After all, regardless of its quality, the very quantity of his music - operas, concertos, symphonies, piano pieces - merits some comment.

But, then, for some three decades, George Lloyd was outside the mainstream of English musical life. This was partly the consequence of his personal isolation. Lloyd's experiences during the Second World War as a merchant seaman on the Arctic convoys to Russia, left him physically and mentally shattered. For a time, he gave up his career in music altogether and retreated with his wife to Dorset to grow carnations and mushrooms. However, even before the war, Lloyd was also becoming isolated musically. He was someone whose gifts belonged more to the nineteenth century than the twentieth, who felt no empathy with, for example, the neo-classicism of Stravinsky, and whose heart was with the Romantics, especially the Italian opera composers. For this, he was shunned by many in the musical establishment, especially those too concerned with asserting their own

'modern' credentials to recognise that quality of expression is more important than the musical language used.

In recent times though, chiefly thanks to enlightened record labels such as Albany and Conifer, George Lloyd's music has at last attained the audience it deserves. And it is heartening to know that the composer, now eighty-three but still trim and fit and well able to conduct a full-length concert - as he demonstrated at the Barbican last year - is able to enjoy that success.

In conclusion, it almost goes without saying that when I sought out references to George Lloyd's opera, *Iernin*, a work inspired by the Celtic myth and magic of his native Cornwall, I turned up little more than a one-line mention. Do the compilers of the guides, dictionaries and encyclopaedias know what they've overlooked, I wonder?

GEORGE LLOYD IERNIN

Marilyn Hill-Smith, soprano; Claire Powell, contralto; Geoffrey Pogson, tenor; Henry Herford, baritone; Malcolm Rivers, bass-baritone; BBC Singers; BBC Concert Orchestra; conductor, George Lloyd Albany
TROY 121/2/3 -3 CD SET (173.09)

● My gazetteer of prehistoric myth and history lists four groups of standing stones in Cornwall with the name Nine Maidens. No doubt each has its own associated legend, but it

was the stone circle lying west of St Ives, within the Penwith peninsula near Zennor which supplied the inspiration for George Lloyd's three-act opera. The story goes that an early Christian saint, coming across creatures from the Celtic faery world - *Iernin* and her eight sisters - indulging in wild pagan dances and luring mortal men into their embraces, promptly transformed the temptresses into stones.

The opera opens with one of the stones reawakening as *Iernin*. She is pursued by nearby huntsmen, captured and brought before a nobleman, Gerent, who immediately feels an inexplicable bond with this strange creature; it is as though he knew her in some past existence. But whatever emotions Gerent feels must be suppressed as he is shortly to wed Cunaide, the daughter of a Cornish prince, Bedwyr. *Iernin* is released and flees her captors.

However, there is another complication to the marriage between Gerent and Cunaide. The king of the invading Saxons (the plot is set around 950AD) has sent an emissary to Bedwyr demanding Cunaide's hand for his earl, Aethelwulf. Bedwyr is determined to defy the Saxons, even if it means outright rebellion.

Come the day of the wedding, *Iernin* appears among the crowd of onlookers but, upon seeing the Christian Celtic cross being held aloft in the procession, shrieks with terror (hardly surprising given the outcome of her previous encounter with this particular symbol). The crowd's

1823; and another six-octave instrument built by Thomas D'Almaine around 1835. All have been lovingly restored by Andrew Lancaster, and the three have been tuned to $a=415\text{Hz}$, which is a semitone below modern pitch.

So much for the technicalities, what of the end result? As I mentioned when reviewing Joanna Leach's recital of Haydn sonatas in the July issue - also recorded on square pianos - the vital thing is not to consider these instruments as somehow the poor relations of the modern grand piano. They must be listened to as instruments in their own right, as you would the harpsichord or virginals, and appreciated for the delicate tracery of their sound and for their crystalline translucency. Comparisons in terms of weight and projection are invalid, this recording is

best appreciated at a relatively low level, simply because that is how the music was intended to be heard. It caresses the ear rather than cajoles it.

Joanna Leach has certainly mastered the light, precise touch required by the square piano, and these performances have an intimate style and charm all their own. The end result is quietly compelling, perfect relaxation. David Turner's finely-judged recording brings out the subtly different characters of the instruments, and the distinctive timbres of the registers, with the natural separation of the melodic and accompanying lines. Most significantly, the lower volume produced

by the square piano and its lighter damping allows the player to revert to the pedalling technique Field originally envisaged for these pieces. The sustaining pedal can be kept depressed all the time, something which would be out of the question on the modern grand piano.

Above all though, the attraction of this CD is the music of John Field and the wealth of ideas distilled into these sixteen miniatures. They explore all manner of pianistic devices, from the bel canto technique, through glittering, filigree decoration and harp-like arpeggios, to the 'Scotch snap', and they pass through all the subjective mood changes which were later to become the trademark of the Romantic style. Here is music and playing to be quietly savoured and repeatedly enjoyed.

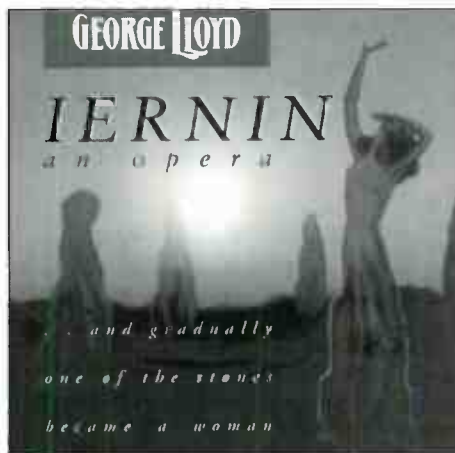
Classical

reaction to this outburst is to condemn her as a witch, which prompts Gerent to desert his bride and spring to Iernin's aid. The pair make for the hills.

Cunaide, however, is not so easily thwarted and pursues Gerent. Upon finding him, she berates him for deserting his responsibilities and he comes to realise, if reluctantly, that the gulf between his world and that of Iernin is unbridgeable. Iernin also becomes reconciled to her fate and resumes her place in the stone circle, this time for ever. Gerent departs to undertake his commitments to Cunaide and Bedwyr, and to face the challenges that his marriage and their defiance of the Saxons will undoubtedly bring.

The libretto for Iernin was produced by the composer's father, William Lloyd, an enthusiast for Italian opera. It was an enthusiasm that was passed on to his son and at the remarkably early age of twenty-one, George Lloyd was able to write for the voice with a confidence and fluency borne out of a good grounding in Bellini, Rossini, Donizetti and the like. Yet the strongest influence here, in terms of the vitality and dramatic energy of the work, must be Verdi and in an interview with the producer, Chris de Souza, which occupies the last twenty minutes or so of the third disc, George Lloyd reveals the impact that *Otello* had on him. One thing he vigorously eschews is any link between Iernin and the misty-eyed nostalgia of the Celtic Twilight espoused by

Rutland Boughton. His opera, declares Lloyd, is about the colours of Cornwall in all their vibrancy and all their shifting moods. Following the Italian tradition, characters are defined by the melodic line, and the power of the work comes from the voices. Yet the orchestration is also wonderfully vivid and



atmospheric.

George Lloyd completed Iernin in June 1934 and it was first performed in Penzance in November of that year. The following summer, it transferred to London and ran for three weeks at the Lyceum Theatre (it would have probably enjoyed a longer run were it not for the heat wave which caused audiences to dwindle). Frank Howes, music critic of *The Times*, saw the Penzance production and gave it an enthusiastic review. In London, most of the leading musical personalities of the day - John Ireland, Thomas Beecham, Ralph Vaughan Williams -

saw the opera and were equally encouraging. Yet after its 1935 success, the work slipped into obscurity. Why so?

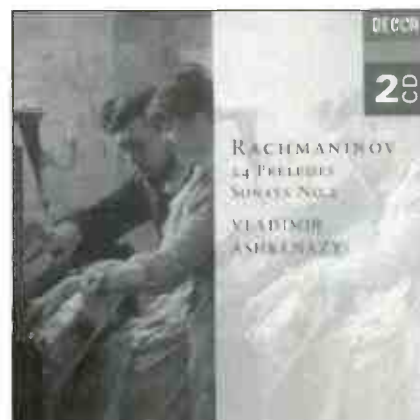
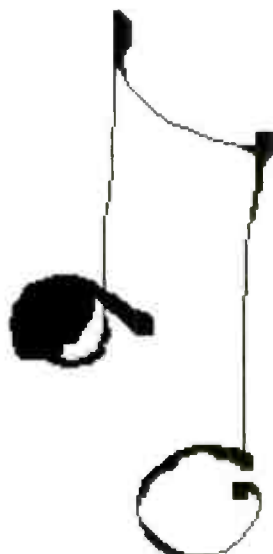
True, stylistically, Lloyd belongs to the era of his beloved Verdi and writes in a Verdian idiom that was out-of-step with the time and reflected little of what was to follow. Yet the work is unusually well-crafted, if lacking some of the polish that maturity might bring, and sincere in its intentions. It is also full of fine music, and it takes little imagination for the opera to come vividly alive in the listener's mind. And, if the plot is rooted in fanciful, albeit attractive, myth, its themes embrace a timeless relevance: the conflict of duty and desire. The mistrust of the outsider, the undermining of a culture by a new orthodoxy - in this case Celtic freedoms by Christian intolerance - even quiescent Cornish nationalism, are concerns very much alive today.

This Albany recording of Iernin has been digitally remastered from tapes made by the BBC in 1985, in a performance directed by the composer. The soloists are uniformly fine, although it is difficult not to single out Marilyn Hill Smith in the title role. The orchestral and choral contributions are first-rate, suggesting a genuine enthusiasm for the score. Given a clean, well-balanced sound, too, it can only be hoped that this first CD appearance of George Lloyd's opera will enjoy the same impact and recognition that its youthful composer encountered exactly six decades ago.

SERGEI RACHMANINOV

Prelude Op3 No2/10 Preludes Op23/13
Preludes Op32/
Piano Sonata No2 in B flat minor Op36
Vladimir Ashkenazy, piano
DECCA DOUBLE 443 841-2 (2 CD SET)
(ADD/106.00)

● Now twenty years old, and always a prime recommendation on LP, Ashkenazy's interpretations of the Rachmaninov Preludes remain the benchmark by which other performances must be judged. They have now been reissued as part of the Double Decca series which offers two CDs for the price of one, in those clever little boxes which holds both discs in the space previously required by



just one. As in its previous CD incarnations the attractions of the set have been enhanced by the inclusion of Ashkenazy's stunning performance of the Second Piano Sonata.

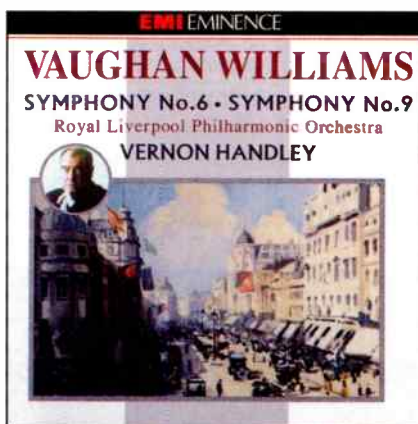
If you are not familiar with the

Preludes (except, doubtless, the hackneyed Op3 No23) then I am tempted to say that this is the 'private' Rachmaninov. It is especially for those who are not enamoured of the 'public' version, embodied in the symphonies and piano concertos. Here the ideas are necessarily more concentrated, and although several of the pieces embody the nostalgic yearning and wistful melancholy associated with Rachmaninov, there is little of the 'heart-on-the-sleeve' sentimentality which characterises the Second Piano Concerto.

But even the doubters would surely be seduced by Ashkenazy's magnetic playing, his obvious empathy for the idiom, and a technique which seems perfectly honed to this music. No other pianist better illuminates the texture of Op23 No4 and understands the mood of Op23 No1, or senses the flow of Op23 No6. Most of all, Ashkenazy communicates the indefinable 'Russian-ness' of these pieces, a collection which Rachmaninov modelled on Chopin's 24 Preludes of a century earlier. Like his Polish predecessor, by including the youthful C sharp minor with the Op23 set of 1904 and the thirteen preludes of Op32 (1910), Rachmaninov was able to encompass all the major and minor keys. However, there the similarity between the Op23 and Op32 sets tends to end, because style, mood and content are surprisingly different.

Rachmaninov's Second Piano Sonata was begun in Rome in 1910, three years after he completed his second set of Preludes. It is a superb work, wrought on a large scale (it lasts twenty-five minutes) and welded together by one of the composer's typical themes. The work is also distinguished by its bell-like sonorities, a conscious or unconscious result of Rachmaninov being haunted throughout his life by the sound of Russian church bells. The piano sound of the sonata, recorded in Kingsway Hall, is very fine, but that of the Preludes is better still. Taped between January 1974 and April 1975 by Kenneth Wilkinson in All Saints', Petersham, Surrey, it displays no inconsistencies and has emerged clear and full-bodied in this

latest CD transfer. The perfect medium to convey Ashkenazy's fabulous playing.



RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS
Symphony No6 in E minor
Symphony No9 in E minor
 Royal Liverpool Philharmonic
 Orchestra; conductor,
 Vernon Handley
EMI EMINENCE CD-EMX2230 (DDD/66.14)

It is one of the mysteries, not to say injustices, of British musical life that a musician of the stature and experience of Vernon Handley has never, to my knowledge, been offered the principal conductorship of a leading orchestra which he so richly deserves. Whichever ensemble he is called to direct, Handley generates performances of insight and character, as well as technical excellence, both in concert and on recordings. This latest issue in his Vaughan Williams cycle simply reinforces that observation.

Here, Vernon Handley offers cogent, illuminating and utterly idiomatic interpretations of two of the three 'difficult' Vaughan Williams symphonies, the Sixth and the Ninth (I would nominate the Fourth as the other work in that triumvirate). The Sixth has partly acquired the 'difficult' tag through associations which have nothing whatsoever to do with the composer. The aggression and turbulence of the opening movement (if tempered by one of the noblest tunes that VW ever wrote) is followed by the latent menace of the second and the bitter sarcasm of the scherzo. It is rounded off, after all the fury and frenzy by an epilogue

which, throughout its ten-minute duration, never rises above pianissimo and is permeated by "whiffs of theme" as the composer described them.

Introduce such music into a post-war world - the premiere was given by Adrian Boult in 1948 - that is a world still discovering its capacity for creating horror, and it was perhaps inevitable that an apocalyptic message would be detected in the last movement's desolation. When asked what he was trying to imply in this eerie, haunted musical landscape, Vaughan Williams merely compounded the mystery by quoting from Prospero's final speech in Shakespeare's *Tempest*: "We are such stuff as dreams are made on, and our little life is rounded with a sleep."

The Ninth Symphony poses its own set of questions, although clues may be found in a programme symphony which VW had planned but then abandoned. It was to have depicted the legendary places of Wessex and its associated literature. The macabre march which suddenly intrudes into the second movement has its origins in music intended to portray the spectral drummer of Salisbury Plain. As in the Sixth Symphony, this work abounds with contrasts, which are however more evanescent and elusive. The first movement opens with towering, granite-like resolution but ends with disquieting uncertainty. The finale of the Ninth is one of VW's most extraordinary symphonic movements, bringing the work to an end in an equally extraordinary fashion: saxophones intrude over long E Major chords, with chords of F and G, swelling to a climax and then just as abruptly receding into a musical void.

The Ninth usually eludes conductors not well versed in Vaughan Williams's symphonic idiom. Vernon Handley, however, is steeped in this music as the coherence and confidence underlying his interpretation makes apparent. The performance of the Sixth, which exhibits outstanding playing from every department of the RLPO, must also rank among the very finest versions currently available. Exemplary recording too (divided violins doing much to clarify the textures) from the ever-reliable production and engineering team of Andrew Keener and Mike Hatch.

Classical

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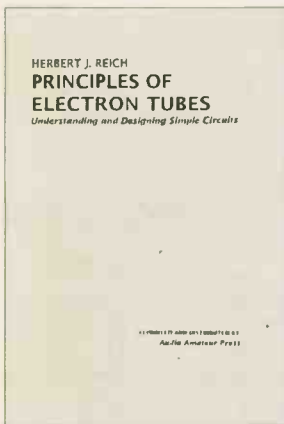
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NEW VALVE BOOKS

PRINCIPLES OF ELECTRON TUBES, by Herbert J. Reich
£29.95

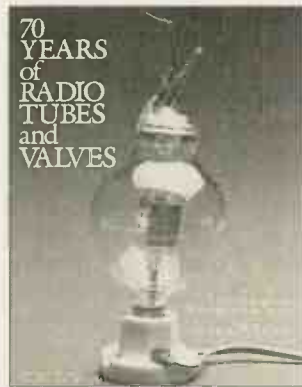


Principles of Electron Tubes first appeared in 1941 as a textbook for beginners studying valves for the first time. The book starts with the basics of how a vacuum tube actually works, including how construction and materials effect performance. Once this basic understanding is in place, Herbert Reich goes on to explain the principles of the simple diode valve, the triode and multi-grid valves. Familiar with the various valve types and their operating principles, the book continues to show how a simple circuit is designed and on to amplifiers, transformers and power supplies. A must for budding valve enthusiasts and an invaluable reference for hobbyists.

70 YEARS OF RADIO TUBES AND VALVES, by John W. Stokes
£19.95

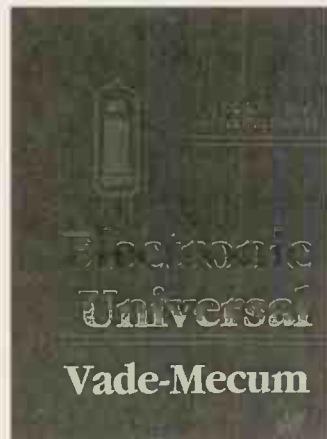
New Zealand author John Stokes, with over fifty years experience, outlines the evolution of radio receiving tubes and the part they played in the domestic radio

receiver in this beautifully illustrated (B&W) book. An ideal reference for those interested in the history and development of valves and for collectors alike.



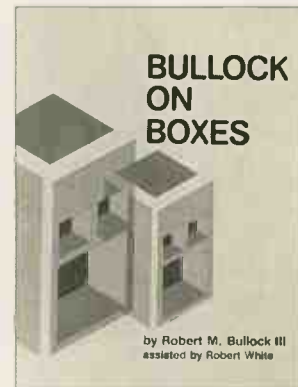
ELECTRONIC UNIVERSAL VADE-MECUM, by Piotr Mikolajczyk & Bohdan Paszkowski
£49.95

This sizeable data book contains no fewer than 5693 valves divided into 442 groups. It contains connection details, operating parameters, load lines, example circuits and more making it one of the most comprehensive reference books we've seen, although there are some omissions, such as 300B and 211 valves.



LOUDSPEAKER BOOKS

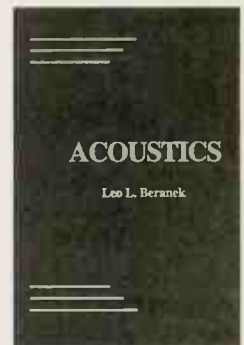
BULLOCK ON BOXES, by Robert M. Bullock
£12.95



This book relies on manipulation of Thiele-Small parameters (supplied with all drive units) to optimise reflex box design, but with a calculator and at high school level. With lots of helpful tables and graphs, this straightforward book is every beginners best bet for getting to grips with sizing the box and port of a reflex loudspeaker.

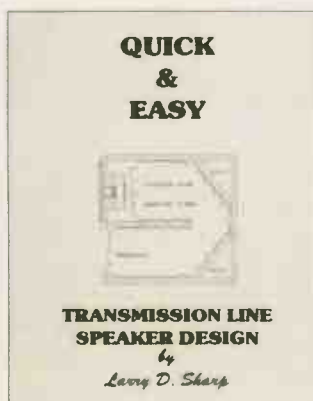
ACOUSTICS, by Leo L. Beranek
£39.95

From analogous electrical circuits important for modelling, the author moves through to microphones then loudspeakers. He covers design factors, showing how theory influences practice in drive units. Loudspeaker enclosure types covered include sealed, ported and horn. The behaviour of sound in rooms, very important for hi-fi, is also covered extremely well here.



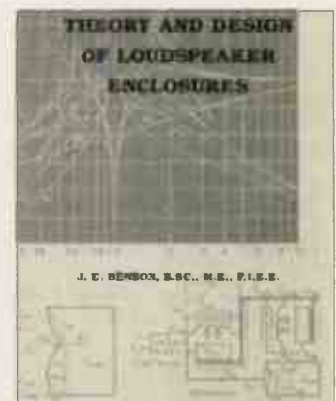
QUICK & EASY TRANSMISSION LINE SPEAKER DESIGN by Larry D. Sharp.
£10.95

A practical approach to designing and building your own transmission line loudspeaker. Covers the background theory, but is very practical in approach. Design examples and equations, even a computer package to run under Lotus 123 which takes care of the maths.



THEORY AND DESIGN OF LOUDSPEAKER ENCLOSURES by J. E. Benson.
£23.95

This book covers loudspeaker enclosure design; infinite baffle, reflex, passive radiator etc in great detail, with a highly mathematical approach, making it unsuitable for beginners, but highly authoritative to experienced designers with a good foundation in acoustics.



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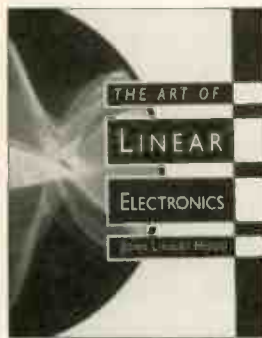
SOLID STATE ELECTRONICS

THE ART OF ELECTRONICS, by P. Horowitz and W. Hill. £35

The definitive electronics book. The Art of Electronics is an ideal book for the beginner through to the engineer. Written in easy to understand English, each chapter takes you from basic first principles through to full design exercises and practical circuits.



THE ART OF LINEAR ELECTRONICS, by J. Linsley- Hood. £16.95



Concentrates specifically on analogue electronics for audio and goes into detail on obscure topics like the drawbacks of feedback, as well as its advantages. Covers mainly solid state but

also includes valves. A must for serious enthusiasts and budding designers.

AUDIO ANTHOLOGIES

Audio Anthologies - When Audio Was Young

There are five volumes of the Audio Anthologies, listed below with a brief description and guide to their contents. They cover one of the most exciting and important eras of hi-fi, from the end of the second world war, through the introduction of stereo, magnetic recording, binaural recording and the FM Multiplex decoder. They contain many ground breaking circuits and theory covering all aspects of hi-fi design. A must for valve enthusiasts.

Volume One - May 1947 to December 1949

The first new audio amplifiers, tuners and speakers designed after the long delays of the Great Depression and World War II.

Summary of Contents: 9.5watt, 5watt and 6.5 watt 6AS7G amplifiers, 30watt 300B amplifier, valve FM tuning indicator, 30watt 211 power amplifier, cathode follower amplifier using 6V6, an adaptation of the Williamson amplifier, valve phono preamplifier, several horn and reflex loudspeaker designs and much more.

Volume Two - January 1950 to July 1952

More great amplifiers, preamps, loudspeaker designs, and the first glimmer of the stereo revolution plus magnetic recording aids.

Summary of Contents: Ultra linear 6L6 design and operation of the Williamson, a direct coupled amplifier, Williamson type amplifier using 6A5s, 40watt 845 push-pull amplifier, valve phono and line preamps, valves and loudspeaker damping, design and construction of reflex and horn loudspeakers.

Volume Three - August 1952 to June 1955

Seven power amplifiers, eighteen preamps, twelve loudspeaker designs, including four horn types and binaural recording techniques.

Summary of Contents: Simple valve phono stage, transformerless amplifier using 6082, 20watt 5881 amplifier, 10watt 6V6 amplifier, stereo valve preamp, high quality valve phono stage, a preamp for the Williamson, low distortion tone control preamp, binaural or stereophonic?, transistor phono amp, corner horn loudspeaker, concrete horn loudspeaker.

Volume Four - July 1955 to December 1957

How to plan an audio system, twelve amplifiers and preamps, solid state techniques and circuits introduced and six loudspeaker designs.

Summary of Contents: 18watt 5881 amplifier, 4watt single-ended tweeter amplifier, budget 11 watt amplifier, versatile bass/treble control, transistor theory, transistor preamp, transistor techniques, battery powered transistor phono preamp, loudspeakers explained.

Volume Five - January 1958 to December 1959

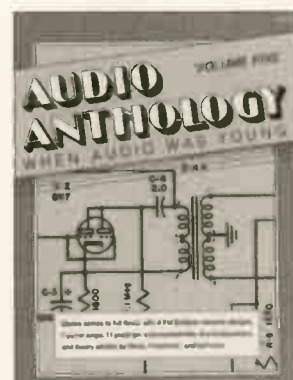
Stereo comes to full flower with four FM Multiplex decoder designs, seven power amps, eleven preamps, a commercial killer, five loudspeakers, and theory articles by Olson, Crowhurst and McProud.

Summary of Contents: Stereo valve multiplex decoder, 7watt EL84 amplifier, valve active crossover and 20watt treble amp/50watt bass amp., monaural, binaural, monophonic and stereophonic explained,

heterodyne FM multiplex adapter, transistor preamp, 60watt EL34 amplifier, high power audio amplifiers, hi-fi loudspeaker enclosure.

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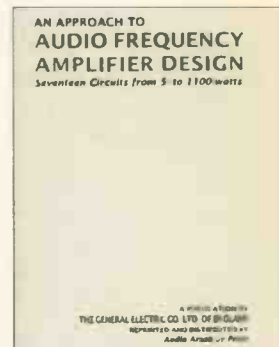


VALVE BOOKS

AN APPROACH TO AUDIO FREQUENCY AMPLIFIER DESIGN, seventeen circuits from 5 to 1100watts. General Electric Co. £19.95

Seventeen high quality amplifier designs from the Research Laboratories of the General Electric Company (UK). Designs range from 5 to 100watts, using KT66s, KT88s, DA100s, etc.

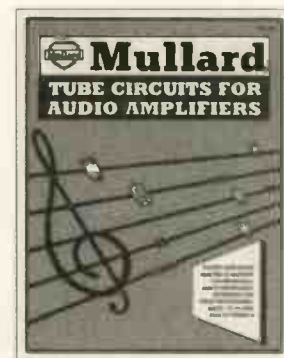
Also includes two valve pre-amplifiers complete with valve phono stages.



MULLARD TUBE CIRCUITS FOR AUDIO AMPLIFIERS. £13.95

First published in 1959 by Mullard, this book includes full designs for eleven power

and control amplifiers, including the 5-20, using valves. This book begins with a four-chapter tutorial on getting the best sound from valve amplifiers.

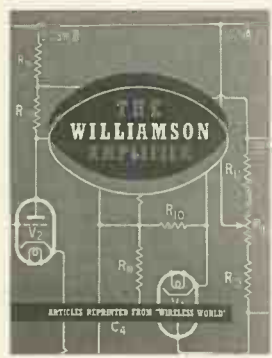


THE WILLIAMSON AMPLIFIER,

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THE WILLIAMSON AMPLIFIER,
by D. T. N. Williamson. £9.95

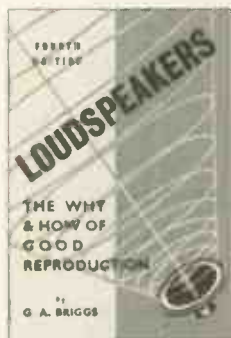
In April 1947, Williamson's valve power amplifier became an overnight success. The author takes you deep into his design decisions and offers practical advice on how to build the amplifier and set it up for best performance.



LOUDSPEAKERS

LOUDSPEAKERS: THE WHY AND HOW OF GOOD REPRODUCTION, by G. A. Briggs. £10.95

A popular and easy to understand book on building loudspeakers, using empirical techniques that pre-date computer analysis. A fine grounding, written by a manufacturer with first hand experience - recommended for beginners.



ELECTROSTATIC LOUSPEAKER DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION, by Ronald Wagner. £19.95

This book takes you step by step through the design and construction of a full range electrostatic loudspeaker, including the basic operating principles behind electrostatics. Whether you intend to build your own electrostatic, repair and restore

a vintage electrostatic or are just interested in the principles behind electrostatics, this book is a must.



NEW 5TH EDITION
THE LOUSPEAKER DESIGN COOKBOOK, by Vance Dickason. £23.75

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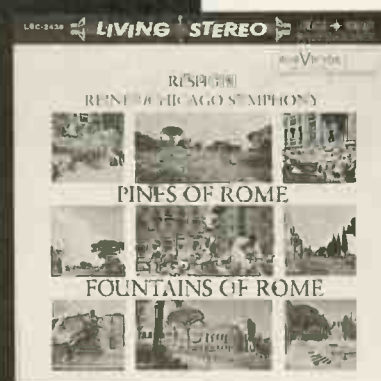
A personal favourite among the RCA living stereos. Fritz Reiner drives the Chicago Symphony Orchestra at a perfect pace throughout and the musicians rise to the occasion, most notably concertmaster Sidney Harth who's violin solo at the end of 'Festival in Baghdad' may bring tears to your eyes. Richard Mohr, in writing the original liner notes, said of the CSO "Under Dr. Reiner's direction (they) have achieved what can only be termed a musical revelation and that in the most literal sense"



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Lt. Kije

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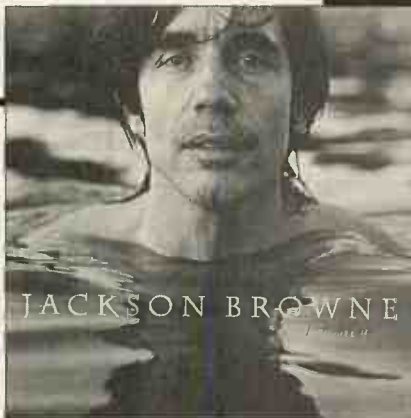
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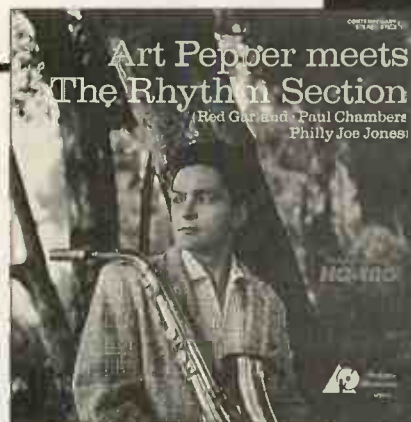
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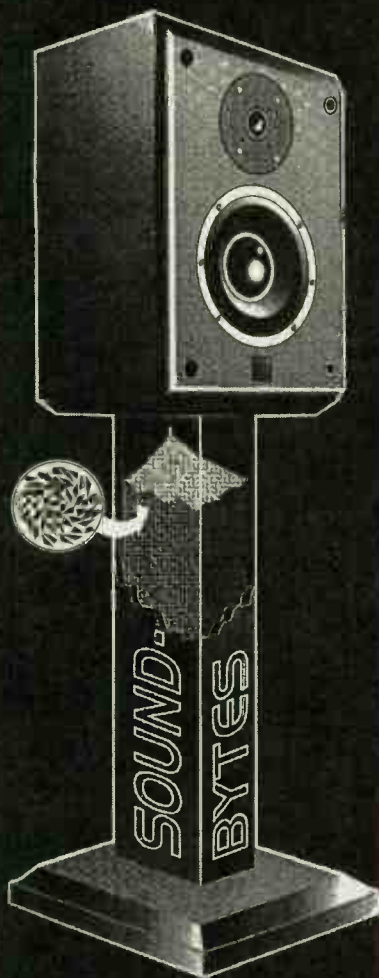
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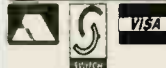
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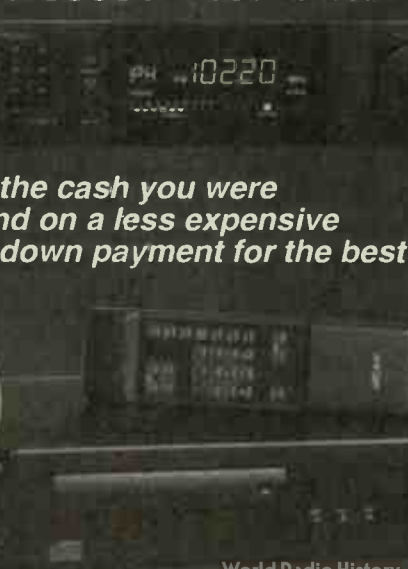
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MEASURED PERFORMANCE

It's important to measure products to assess performance, find explanations of sound quality and warn of peculiarities or faults. Only Hi-Fi World has an advanced in-house laboratory with digital signal analysis for this purpose. In conjunction with this facility we assess sound quality in our own acoustically treated listening room. We measure most products reviewed. Here's a simple guide on our test results.

LOUDSPEAKERS

Smooth, flat frequency response is important to ensure a balanced sound. Look carefully at overall trends; rising treble will give a bright sound, falling treble a dull sound. A rise through the midrange normally corresponds with good projection.

High sensitivity (better than 86dB) means less power is needed for a certain volume, meaning a low power amp. can be used.

The impedance curve tells us how easy loudspeakers are to drive. Low or wildly varying impedance is bad; a flat impedance around 8Ω is good.

CD PLAYERS

Even small trends in frequency response of CD players can affect their subjective balance. Generally, those with a gently rolled off treble and, more rarely, a rising bass will sound best. Rising treble can produce a sharp sound.

The distortion plot we show is taken at -30dB, to represent a typical music signal. High distortion at this level, combined with rising treble, can result in a harsh sound. Yet other effects have to be considered, especially low level linearity, which we also test for, including -90dB signals with dither applied.

AMPLIFIERS

Distortion from solid state amplifiers should be no more than around 0.2%. Even order (2nd, 4th, 6th etc) distortion is aurally innocuous, but odd order (3rd, 5th, 7th etc) distortion makes for a glassy, hard sound, or grittiness.

Frequency response can be band limited, with bass and treble rolled off just out of the ear's range, or wideband. Each has its own characteristics. Small wideband response variations colour tonal balance.

Power output is easy to understand: the higher the figure, the louder it will go. Just make sure there's enough power output to drive any loudspeakers you intend to use.

TUNERS

Frequency response, as always, says much about tonal balance and character traits, like peaky treble (due to a mismatched MPX filter). Distortion and channel separation need to be less than 0.3% (according to harmonic structure)

and better than 25dB.

Hiss level must be lower than -70dB for Radio 3 silences to be just that - silent. And full quieting, the strength of aerial signal needed for optimum results, should be around 1mV or less

Selectivity, the ability to separate stations under the most difficult conditions should be better than 60dB and sensitivity better than $30\mu\text{V}$ on stereo.

CASSETTE DECKS

Replay performance is measured to IEC 94 Standards using IEC test tapes. This ensures that recordings made on a machine transfer to a car player, personal stereo or another domestic recorder properly, as well as ensuring optimum results with commercially prerecorded tapes. Look for a quoted replay response of 40Hz-10kHz, no more than 1% speed error and hiss in the replay amps lower than -58dB.

Recording quality considers frequency response, bias variation, head performance and alignment. Frequency response should stretch from 40Hz-15kHz or so. Head overload (MOL315) must be above 0dB, reaching around +4dB for good results.

From the transport mechanism look for less than 0.15% wow or flutter. Overall (DIN weighted) wow and flutter should be no more than 0.1% or so.

AMPLIFIERS

P.M. AUDIO LAB MP211 PRE/POWER AMPLIFIER.

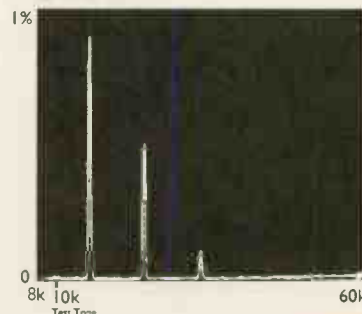
The power amplifier only met its claimed output 'power' with no load, producing 12V. Load matching was poor, producing severe clipping asymmetry, which limited power delivery to around 3watts (3% THD). The design is bandwidth limited, as might be expected with the 211 valve, since it has plenty enough of spectrum extremes in its sound.

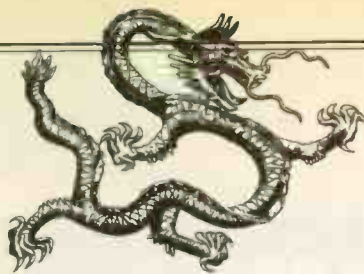
We ran this amplifier combo well within its limits by using our own KLS3 loudspeaker, which goes loud with our own 4watt SE design. It appears that the output transformer is poorly load matched to the 211 valve. NK

TEST RESULTS

Power	3watts
CD/tuner/aux.	
Frequency response	30Hz-15kHz
Separation	90dB
Noise	-78dB
Distortion	1%
Sensitivity	30mV

Distortion





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	Singles	Pairs	Quads
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AMPLIFIERS

MOTH 60/100

The Moth 60 is an unusual and rather daring design. Distortion rose at low levels, reaching 1% in the midband, with extended harmonics, below 1watt. This is high and will produce coarseness. Feedback was low for solid-state, obvious by the difference between channels and with level. Transistors are not as consistent as valves - they must have some feedback. Output measured a healthy 80watts, however, and frequency response was wide, although sensitivity is low at 900mV.

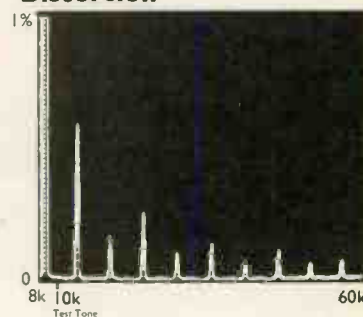
The Moth 100 was unusual. It produced little distortion, but also less power - 60watts - into 8Ω. However, regulation was unusually good, power doubling to 120watts into 4Ω. Distortion behaviour was completely different to the 60. Levels were much lower and decreased with power, staying below 0.06%, a far more benign result. Bandwidth was wide at 4Hz-100kHz.

The Moth 60 produces far too much unpleasant solid-state distortion at low levels. The 100 works well. **NK**

MOTH 60	
Power	84watts
CD/tuner/aux.	
Frequency response	4Hz-126kHz
Separation	80dB
Noise	-83dB
Distortion	0.2%
Sensitivity	900mV
dc offset	5/4mV
MOTH 100	
Power	60watts
CD/tuner/aux.	
Frequency response	4Hz-100kHz
Separation	90dB
Noise	-85dB

Distortion 0.06%
Sensitivity 850mV
dc offset 1.27/10mV

Distortion



The Moth 60 has unacceptable levels of distortion.

JOHN SHEARNE PHASE 2 & 3

John Shearne amplifiers have been designed to mimic the valve sound. In truth, solid-state can do no such thing perfectly, but certain features of valve amp performance are hinted at: these amps have a different and engaging "flavour", I've found. However, measured performance is, shall we say, unconventional. I measured both the Phase 2 integrated amplifier and the Phase 3 power amplifier for this report and they were much alike, as expected.

Producing a healthy 45watts into 8ohms, power declines steeply to 25watts into 4ohms. According to (simplistic) current wisdom, this should result in soft bass, but it seems not to in any significant manner. The distortion spectrum was extended, especially at 10kHz, but levels did not rise above 0.2%. Some muddle is likely. The Phase 2 is very sensitive, has low noise and low D.C. offset.

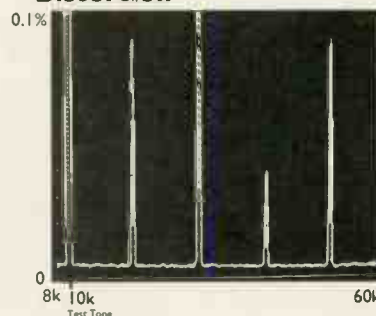
Both amps have a high frequency response limited strictly to 20kHz, but an extended bass response that reaches down to 4Hz.

These amps are well engineered, but are unusual - deliberately so. **NK**

TEST RESULTS

Power	45watts
CD/tuner/aux.	
Frequency response	4Hz-21kHz
Separation	75dB
Noise	-88dB
Distortion	0.2%
Sensitivity	125mV
dc offset	1.8/3.3mV

Distortion



SUGDEN OPTIMA

Like all Sugden amplifiers, the Optima measured well and produced a very clean all-round performance. It has a benign distortion characteristic, even at high frequencies, where second harmonic predominates at all levels, as our analysis clearly shows.

Measured distortion levels were low at all output powers and frequencies, in fact. I know from experience that Sugden amplifiers produce relatively sweet treble as solid-state designs go and this is one reason why, if not the only one.

Frequency response was wide, stretching from a low 6Hz right up to 105kHz, within 1dB. It isn't difficult to engineer a wide response, and it usually results in a bright, open presentation.

Power output measured a healthy 70watts and there was plenty of grunt for low loads. The Optima 140 will drive

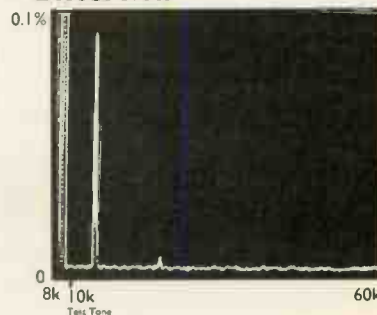
loudspeakers to high levels.

My only gripe was a little more d.c. offset than usual at -40mV on one channel (17mV on the other). The usual figure is less than 10mV. Otherwise, this amplifier has been well designed and will deliver good results. **NK**

TEST RESULTS

Power	70watts
CD/tuner/aux.	
Frequency response	6Hz-105kHz
Separation	80dB
Noise	-95dB
Distortion	0.015%
Sensitivity	140mV
d.c. offset	-17/-40mV

Distortion



Audiophonics

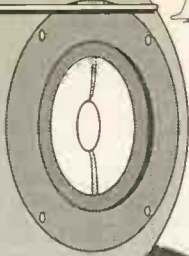
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CD PLAYERS

SUGDEN OPTIMA CD

Sugden's Optima CD player has a rather wonky frequency response. At low frequencies there is quite a strong rise, which will doubtless add weight and scale to bass lines. But in the treble there is a sharp peak, the lift starting just above 10kHz. This could reveal itself in one of two ways; extra incisiveness and perceived detail or a sharp bite to the sound - only listening tests will tell.

Pushing my suspicion slightly towards the sharp bite side of things, is the high distortion at all levels. At -30dB, a level picked to represent a typical music signal, there was a wide range of harmonics, as can be seen from the plot below. At -60dB distortion is around three times higher than the best, leading to a mediocre dynamic range of 99dB (EIAJ test).

Output was a little under the Philips standard at 1.9V, and noise quite high at -92dB, the best all manage lower than -100dB. **DB**

TEST RESULTS

Frequency response	4Hz-21.1kHz	
Distortion (%)		
-6dB	0.02	0.01
-30dB	0.07	0.06
-60dB	1.20	1.20
-90dB	45.4	60.2
-90dB dithered	18.8	21.2
Separation (dB)	left	right
1kHz	91	89
20kHz	89	88
Noise with emphasis	-92dB	
	-93dB	
Dynamic range	99dB	
Output	1.9V	

ROKSAN ATTESSA

The Atessa CD player has a smooth frequency response with some subtle trends which will affect its sound. A gentle lift in the bass will add power and solidity, and smoothly rolled-off treble should ensure a sweet and smooth top end. My only worry would be that this tilted response may make the Atessa a little too soft.

Distortion was quite high, but as you can see from the plot below taken at -30dB to represent a typical music signal, this is caused by a strange looking lift in the noise floor between 8-9kHz. At -60dB distortion was about average, yielding a dynamic range figure of 104dB (EIAJ test). Noise was low enough to be inaudible and separation wide.

The only area of real concern in the measured performance was the very low output of the Atessa. At 1.37V this is significantly under the Philips standard of 2V, something to bear in mind during comparative demonstrations. **DB**

TEST RESULTS

Frequency response	4Hz-21.1kHz	
Distortion (%)		
-6dB	0.005	0.004
-30dB	0.039	0.035
-60dB	0.79	1.03
-90dB	33	37
-90dB dithered	9.3	11.2
Separation (dB)	left	right
1kHz	105	105
20kHz	88	88
Noise with emphasis	-97dB	
	-97dB	
Dynamic range	104dB	
Output	1.37V	

McINTOSH CDM 7009

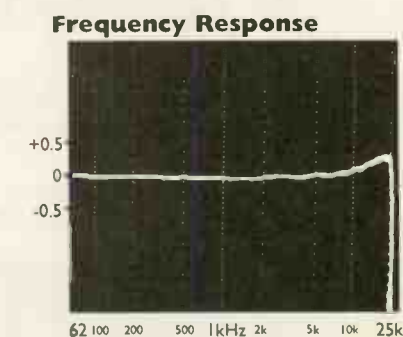
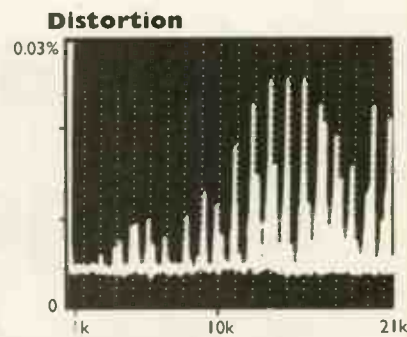
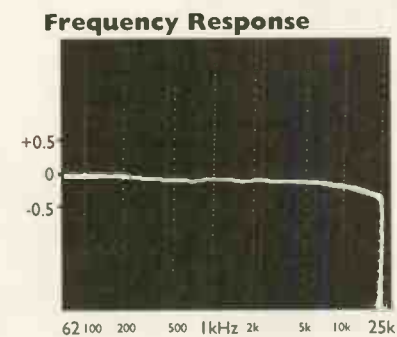
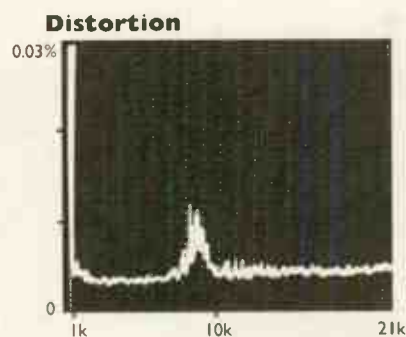
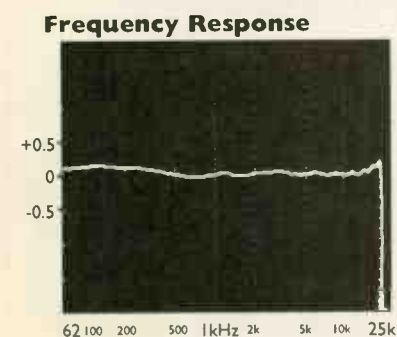
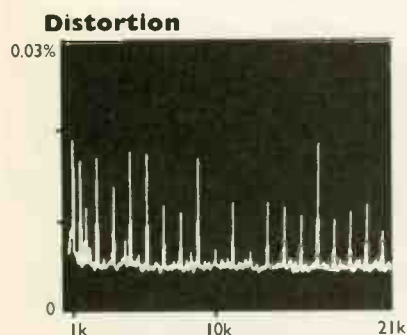
The McIntosh CDM 7009 has a flat frequency response up to 2kHz or so, after which it starts to lift strongly to form a sharp peak at 20kHz. This will certainly add some brightness, though what form it takes will depend on the distortion characteristics. If distortion is high and odd order, I'd expect it to sound sharp. If it's low, this lift may well give the impression of greater insight and detail.

Looking at the distortion plot taken at -30dB, a level picked to represent a typical music signal, things don't look too good. Although non-harmonic, distortion is high and wide ranging. This will almost certainly colour the sound; for better or for worse can only be judged by listening tests however.

Elsewhere the McIntosh measured well, as you'd expect from a company with a strong engineering background. Separation was wide, noise low enough to be inaudible, dynamic range wide at 106dB and output healthy at 2.25V. **DB**

TEST RESULTS

Frequency response	4Hz-21kHz	
Distortion (%)		
-6dB	0.006	0.006
-30dB	0.007	0.007
-60dB	0.56	0.57
-90dB	29.7	30.3
-90dB dithered	5.3	6.7
Separation (dB)	left	right
1kHz	129	129
20kHz	115	114
Noise with emphasis	-117dB	
	-117dB	
Dynamic range	106dB	
Output	2.25V	



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NEWSLETTER NO 7

The summer has been an industrious time for some of the best names in audio. Pro-Ac are one of my favourite loudspeaker manufacturers with possibly the finest choice of quality products available. They have just introduced the new Studio 150 model, which is a small(ish) floorstander using 2 of the company's new bass units and super quality H.F. unit. Elegantly proportioned these speakers are easy to drive requiring from as little as 10Watts (of the right kind of power). I am sure that this product will win many new friends in the future. (Hi-Fi wives will love these as much as the men who will buy them!). Also from Pro-Ac are the incredible and definitely ground breaking Response 2.5. Here is a beautifully crafted piece of furniture that physically is not large, although it is once again a floorstander of the "right dimensions". This speaker is a two way device using the newly developed "carbon loaded bass unit" that Pro-Ac have been working on for some time. The high frequencies are handled by a speak scan unit developed for Pro-Ac. Not only do we have specially developed units but a unique way of aligning the crossover, again developed by hand. One of the main "secrets" of all Pro-Ac speakers is the way in which the cabinets are constructed. This however is to be the subject of a later newsletter.

Audio Note also launch new products with the arrival of the compact series. This is a range of products which offer the usual hi-quality sound and also something different in the way of styling. Traditionally this company's amps have been styled in black box anonymity. The compact series are quite beautiful! The valves are exposed for all to see and tempt the usual array of questions from non audiophiles! On a more technical train the compacts comprise of the Quest which is 9W P.C. 300 output tube. The conquest which is 18W.P.C. 300B. Also units are mono construction with copper cladding (they look like affordable Japanese products). A stereo power amp and pre amp are due before X-mas. All of these products feature the Audionote philosophy of being single ended, direct heated triodes, with no feedback applied.

Sugden as mentioned in last months letter, bring us the 40W mono Symetra amplifiers with a reworked AU41 remote pre amp. More goodies on the way.

No longer the brand new item it was in May, but worth a mention,

Michell's latest record player the Orb continues to impress in both construction and sound quality. It may be time for you to check this one out!

Impulse I am happy to say are back with us in a definite big way. It is true to say that this company have been concentrating on the overseas markets but are now back with a vengeance to concentrate on the U.K. We have a new range to look at (and listen to). The latest horn speaker is called the Kora and at £1095 represents the entry level, moving up the lali at £500 more. This speaker is related to the older H6 model. The top of the range is the TA"US at £2695 and possibly is the most elegant horn system available. These things definitely have a unique and a "vivid" sound. Anyone who has fallen in love with the single end triode, but requires to fill a large room with sound should look at these speakers seriously! Over the last 18 months or so, Serious Kit has accumulated a number of ex demonstration and secondhand "goodies" which due to space requirements must go. Equipment ranges from Krell to Kinshaw, Audio Innovations to Copland. Please ring for details on how to integrate the "right bargain" into your system.

So with this many exciting new pieces joining us we can certainly be expecting to be pushing back the boundaries of performance. I look forward to hearing from you throughout the dark winter months known professionally as "the season".

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As ever, a musical month to you all.

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LOUDSPEAKERS

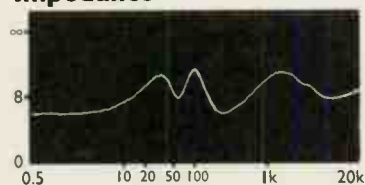
LINN TUKAN

The Tukans are a miniature loudspeaker designed for use against a rear wall or on a bookshelf. Bass rolls sharply off below 125Hz in free space, so even with wall reinforcement bass will not be the deepest. Through the lower midrange the response is very even, but where this passes over to the small ceramic dome tweeter the Tukans run into problems. Treble level is low, around 3dB below midrange level. This will almost certainly give the Tukans a warm, perhaps dull, balance.

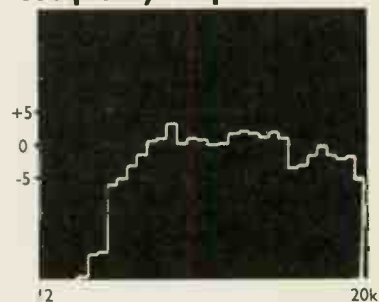
Measuring 85dB at 1m for a nominal watt (2.83V) pink noise signal, the Tukans are one of the most sensitive of their breed (Harbeth HL-P3s, LS3/5as and Rogers Studio 3s are all less sensitive). Impedance measured a high 11.8Ω overall, so the Tukans will not demand high current either. All the same, I'd

recommend amplifiers capable of delivering at least 40watts for good levels. **DB**

Impedance



Frequency Response



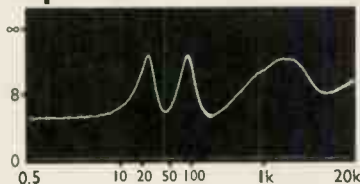
KEF CODA 8

KEF's Coda 8s have a reasonably flat and smooth frequency response. Through the critical midband they are very smooth, response staying well within 2dB limits. The response does show a rise though towards high frequencies which will give extra perceived detail. In the bass there is a lift of around 2dB which should ensure a solid bottom end kick.

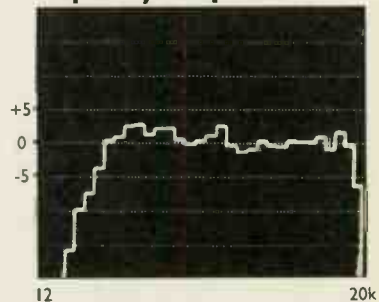
The Coda 8s are a fraction more sensitive than the smaller 7s, producing 88dB at 1m for a nominal watt (2.83V) pink noise signal. Like the 7s though, impedance isn't the kindest, dropping to 4Ω in places. This drags overall impedance down to 7.3Ω. They will need an amplifier with good current delivery to give their best.

The Coda 8s offer extra bass output over the 7s and a smooth frequency response. I recommend amplifiers capable of at least 20watts and with good current delivery. **DB**

Impedance



Frequency Response



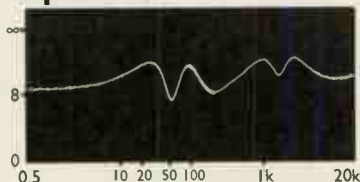
CHARIO ACADEMY ONE

Chario's Academy Ones have a well balanced frequency response, one that I suspect will give good subjective results. The response is smooth and reasonably flat, with just a slight lift at each frequency extreme. Good miniatures are often balanced this way; the bass lift gives extra weight and scale in the bass which makes for an impressive sound, but they need a balancing lift in the treble to avoid coming across as dull. These are only gentle trends so shouldn't affect midrange projection either.

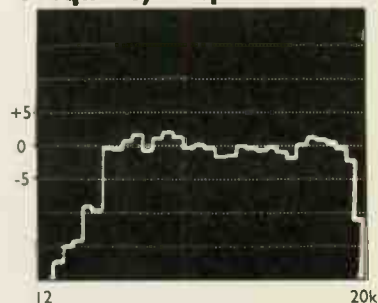
Overall impedance is high at 12.6Ω and the impedance curve impressively smooth, so the Charios aren't reactive and won't demand high current. But they are very insensitive, measuring just 82dB at 1m for a nominal watt (2.83V) pink noise signal. This

means they will need a lot of volts for good levels in anything bigger than a cupboard. I'd recommend amplifiers capable of delivering at least 50watts, including valve amplifiers thanks to their smooth impedance characteristic. **DB**

Impedance



Frequency Response



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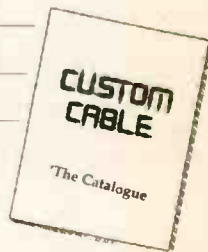
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LOUDSPEAKERS

MORDAUNT-SHORT PERFORMANCE 860

Mordaunt-Short's 860s are a large floorstander using a pair of dedicated bass drivers, so it was surprising to see weak output at 60Hz. This will give them light or dry bass with little real depth, 40Hz being a more usual lower limit.

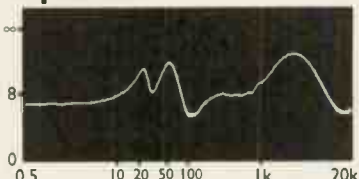
Above this though, the response is smooth and shows good integration between bass, midrange and treble. There is a little lift in the lower treble that will tend to push detail forwards, but above this extension isn't great, high treble rolling off above 12kHz.

Sensitivity of the Performance 860s was reasonable at 87.5dB, so they will go reasonably loud and should fill large spaces easily enough. Overall impedance was a little low at 7.1Ω, the impedance curve showing where this low figure comes from, with dips

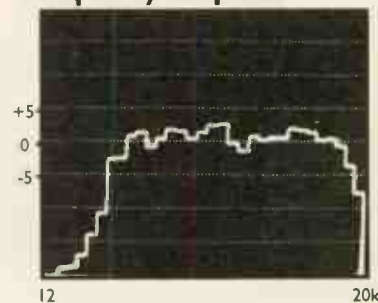
below 5Ω between 100-200Hz and again above 9kHz.

The Performance 860s are well engineered, with a smooth response and reasonably easy drive characteristics making them suitable for amplifiers capable of producing 30-40watts or more. **DB**

Impedance



Frequency Response



CARTRIDGE

van den Hul Grasshopper IV

van den Hul stylus tips measure well, so I expected the Grasshopper to look pretty good under test, like an Ortofon, and it did. The stylus reached right into short wavelengths on inner grooves with uncanny ability, giving consistent response with little inner groove high frequency loss, an unusually good result. The response characteristic was very flat on both channels, as our analysis shows - a first class result.

The cartridge tracked very low, giving it an unusually low vertical tracking angle (VTA) of just 18degrees. Around 22degrees is the usual minimum and many cartridges hit 30degrees, so the Grasshopper was unusual in this respect. However, it couldn't accept too much tracking force in consequence, and this limited tracking ability. My tracking figures are for 1.4gms downforce and they are mediocre. A good Ortofon like the MC30 Supreme can out-track any cartridge, so it is possible to be better. I would call the Grasshopper satisfactory in this area, but it may well be heard to mistrack on crescendos or vocal pushes.

Distortion was low because of the low VTA. Tracing distortion was reasonably low too.

The Grasshopper is no mystery; it is fundamentally well engineered and measures well in consequence, except for mediocre tracking ability. I suspect this is a deliberate trade off to achieve low VTA however, because there's no doubt that van den Hul is well in control of all design parameters. **NK**

TEST RESULTS

Tracking force	1.4gms
Weight	gms
Vertical tracking angle	18degrees
Frequency response	20Hz-20kHz
Channel separation	29dB
Tracking ability (300Hz)	
lateral	50µm
vertical	50µm
lateral (1kHz)	14cms/sec.
Distortion (45µm)	

lateral	1%
vertical	0.4%
Output (5cms/sec rms)	1mV
Channel imbalance	0.6dB

Frequency Response



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"The Gamma RHYTHM REF (æon) is a welcome new comer to the single ended fold the design offers the sort of acoustics treasures that are usually the domain of far more expensive amplifiers, "Gamma is to be applauded for this exciting new product!" (Hi-Fi Choice Jan. '94)

"the Gemini is a peach. Switch it on leave it for a couple of minutes to settle down and (once run in) it will give a truly amazing sound. CD, radio broadcast tape can all sound stunning through this devise the Gemini will charm the very best out of your music collection.

for £699 you'd be hard pressed to match this design for sheer sound quality and enjoyment (Hi-Fi Choice March '95)

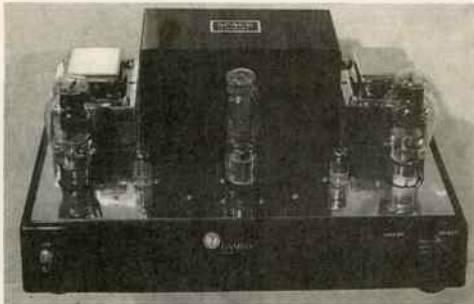
the immediate effect of this new amp was warmth and funkiness.

"Suddenly it had soul" "I had a clearer idea of what they were feeling"

"the Gemini offers a small footprint with a difficult to beat price" (Hi-Fi News & RR Feb. '95)

There's a hugely endearing quality about the Gemini sound, " It has the most attractive price tag: £699 is small money for a decent valve amp, and decent the Gemini is." (What Hi-Fi Feb. '95)

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Alvin Gold, Hi Fi News, July 1995

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Chris Beeching, Hi Fi News, February 1994 on Analysis Epsilons

"The Omegas clearly stand out as exceptional value by any standards, especially those of high end audio ..."

Paul Messenger, Hi Fi Choice, November 1994

"These speakers really swing, an unusual description for panel speakers. Dynamically they were successful beyond the bounds normally accessible to electrostatics."

Peter J. Comeau, Hi Fi News, June 1995

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Although LEAK TL12+ & STEREO 20 are quite capable amplifiers, both are capable of far greater things than the stock circuit would have you believe. The worst part of the circuit is the phase splitter. In the TL12+ an ECC81 is used, and an ECC83 in the STEREO 20, valves that have medium to high *mu*. Sonically, this extra gain around the phase splitter causes AC imbalance, which LEAK try to balance via different values of anode resistor, which results in DC imbalance. All of which makes the amplifier sound slow, lifeless, and lacking in both bass and treble frequencies, not to mention attack. I change these valves for an ECC82, balance the anode resistors, change the valve bias, and remove the localised feedback from around it. The first valve is also modified to improve performance, as is the output stage. The result is an amplifier transformed, fast, clean, and better balanced. The cost for a warranted total rebuild and modification is £150 for either a pair of TL12+, or a STEREO 20.

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LFD, MICHELL, ORIGIN LIVE, KINSHAW,

Apogee	Centaur Minor loudspeakers (b/ash)	£750
ATC	SCM 20 loudspeakers (Walnut) inc. stands	£1,200
ATC	SCM 50A loudspeakers (Black)	£2,600
Audio Pro	Active sub-woofer (Black-Ash)	£250
AVI	S2000MA 70wpc stereo power amp	£325
AVI	S2000MC CD player	£699
AVI	S2000MCII CD player	£520
AVI	S2000MD DAC	£375
AVI	S2000MI integrated amplifier	£699
B&W	801 loudspeaker no acoustic hood B/ash	£1500 ono
Delph	Da Capo stereo power amp	£799
Harmann Kardon	655 Int amp 40wpc	£100
Kimber	Cable	£100
Kinshaw	Overture integrated amp	£295
Kinshaw	Perception preamp	£350
LFD Audio	MMO phono stage MM/MC	£270
Linn	Kaber loudspeaker	£700
Linx	Pulsar 130wpc stereo amp	£399
Marantz	SD62 cassette deck	£60
Meridian	203 DAC	£250
Michell	Argo HR/Hera power supply	£895
Musical Fidelity	A100 integrated amplifier	£250
Musical Fidelity	F15 stereo power amp 7mths old	£1,250
Musical Fidelity	MVT preamplifier MM/MC	£349
Origin Live	OL2 loudspeakers (Black Ash)	£375
Origin Live	OL1 loudspeakers (Black Ash)	£290
Pink Triangle	Export turntable, arm & cartridge	£725
QED	Digit	£95
Quad 606	mk1 power amp (Grey)	£400
Rogers	LS3/5A loudspeakers (Black Ash)	£250
Royd	A7 Series II loudspeakers (B-Ash)	£75
Royd	Minstrel loudspeaker (Grey)	£175
Sansui	AV7000 DSP Pro Logic A/V amp	£399
Sequence	Model 30 loudspeaker (Dark)	£130
Sequence	Model 30 loudspeaker (Light)	£140
Sony	715E CDP CD player as new	£195
Spendor	SP/3 loudspeaker in Walnut	£600
Target	Open Frame 20" stand	£35
Target	Single Column 22" stand	£65
Thorens	166 mkVlp turntable & AT95 Cartridge	£199

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- i. ROKSAN TMS/Artemis/Shiraz
- ii. ROKSAN Xerxes Piano lacquer/Tabriz/Corus
- iii. ROKSAN Radius 3/Tabriz/Corus
- iv. REGA PLANAR 9/Elys.
- v. REGA PLANAR 2/bias

This month's special. We have four only - Special edition Xerxes Piano Lacquer with the latest 3.5 p.s.u. was £1495 - NOW £995

Digital Delights We now sell and stock the Marantz range of CD players including the new D63 SES which Ken Ishiwata has personally signed and for only £499

Also, this month's digital offers include ROKSAN ATTESSA CD player £1495 Now £1295.
ATTESSA TRANSPORT WAS £1295 Now £995.
ATTESSA DA2/DS5 Was £1098 Now £795

Lastly some p.x. goodies on offer:

Robertson Audio 4010 £495
Orange Audio Mk II Pre-amp £995
Rega Planar 3/Elys £165
Sony CDPX55ES CD Player £325
Arcam Alpha + CD Player £250
Arcam Alpha Tuner £65
Roksan L2 Pre-amp (Black) £599
Roksan Darius Inc. Stands £595

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New And Expected Releases

Beatles - audiophile pressings with all inserts etc. All titles inc.

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Muddy Waters	Folk Singer - Remastered	£8.50
Mother Earth	You Have Been Watching	£8.90
Green Day	Insomniac	£9.90
Menswear	Nuisance	£8.90
Cast	All Change	£8.90
Tindersticks	Bloomsbury Theatre - double 10"	£8.50
Pulp	Different Class	£TBC
Simply Red	Life	£9.90
Various	Help - Bosnia Aid	£11.90
Pogues	Pogue Mahone	£9.90
Roxy Music/Ferry	More Than This	£13.50
Beatles	Anthology	06/11 £TBC
Meatloaf	Welcome to the Neighbourhood	£12.90
UB40	Best of Two	£10.90
Queen	Made in Heaven	06/11 £TBC
Rolling Stones	Stripped Live	06/11 £TBC
David Bowie	Live at the BBC	013/11 £TBC
Def Leppard	Vault - dble	£TBC
Ozzy Osbourne	Ozzmosis	£9.90
Salif Keita	Folon	£8.50
Joe Grushecky	U.S. Babylon - with Springsteen	£8.50
Jah Wobble	Heaven and Earth	13/11 £11.90
Chumbawamba	Love/Hate	£7.90

Stock Selection

David Bowie	Outside	£8.50
Emmylou Harris	Wrecking Ball	£8.50
Janet Jackson	Design of a Decade 86-96	£12.50
Mariah Carey	Daydream	£10.90
Prince	Gold Experience	£12.50
Shaggy	Boombastic	£9.90
AC/DC	Ballbreaker	£9.90
Black Sabbath	Between Heaven and Hell	£12.50
Jackie Leven	Forbidden Songs	£12.90
Ash	Trailer - extra tracks	USA £9.90
Garbage	Garbage	£8.90
Garbage	Morning Glory	£9.50
Oasis	Truth	£9.50
Jeff Beck	Truth	USA £9.50ea
Kraftwerk	Man/Radio/Trans	USA £9.50ea
Roger Walters	Pros/Cons/Radio Kaos	USA £9.50ea
Bob Dylan	Another/Wesley/Times	USA £9.50ea
Freddie Mercury	Mr Bad Guy	USA £10.50
Miles Davis	ESP/Sketches/Silent Way	USA £10.50ea

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- MARTIN LOGAN SL3 - the new SEQUEL replacement - a stunning advance.
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- MONARCHY DIP ANTI JITTER DEVICE
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- REL STORM - redefined our ideas about subwoofers.
- B & W THX SPEAKER SYSTEM on dem now
- PINK TRIANGLE DACAPO/DC/ORDINAL/CARDINAL
- RUARK EQUINOX - a big bold sound from a small box
- LYRA CLAVIS DA CAPO - even better than Mk2
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- THETA DATA BASIC CD TRANSPORT - still fantastic value for money
- AUDIO RESEARCH LS7/VT 60 - a snip at the price!

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KRELL PAM 1 PREAMP	£995
NAIM SBL SPEAKERS	£950
OXFORD CRYSTAL SIGNATURE MAHOG SHELF MOUNT	£995
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KINSHAW PERCEPTION DAC	£450
THETA DATA BASIC EX DEM	£1595
B&W 610 SPEAKERS	£175
RUARK SABRE	£295
RUARK SWORDMAN PLUS 2	£195
MICROMEGA STAGE 3 EX DEM	£750
APOGEE CENTAUR	£995
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HEYBROOK INTEGRA AMP	£350 (550)
AUDIO RESEARCH LS5 PREAMPLIFIER	£2495 (5290)
CHORD SPM1400B MONOBLOCK POWER AMPS PIANO BLACK	£2995 (PAIR)



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TECHNICAL INFORMATION BULLETIN No. 3

Turntable Servicing - all makes - please ring for details.

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Arm rewiring - Manticore standard cable	£80.00
Arm rewiring - Van den Hul. Isoda	£160.00
Arm rewiring - Cardas	£160.00
Silver plated mains cable with IEC socket	£50.00
Aerolam equipment support	£54.00
Fibreham equipment support - superior performance	£130.00
Mantra replacement belt - supplied in twos	£22.00
Logic DM101 belt - supplied in twos	£22.00
Logic DM101 spring sets	£23.00
Rega armspacers - polished aluminium 1mm increments	£11.00
Impex motor, pulley and PCB	£90.00
Manticore Jazz turntable - choice of tonearms	POA
Manticore Magister with 12" Magician	£3,800.00
Manticore Mantra turntable - the classic - no arm	£495.00
Manticore Musician tonearm	£395.00
Manticore Magician tonearm	£695.00
Manticore 12" Magician tonearm	£795.00
<i>Part-ex available against all other tonearms</i>	
MB5i off-board power supply "suits most decks"	£290.00
MB6 off-board power supply	£490.00
Motor rebuild	£150.00
RIAA and preamplifier "system Integrity wiring"	£690.00
Active crossovers and AV amplifier	POA

Please telephone or write for more information and a copy of Mumbo Jumbo



MANTICORE AUDIO VISUAL

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Tonearm Rewiring

We have been rewiring tonearms now for as long as we have been manufacturing them and have acquired a high level of expertise in the field. With our own machine shop facilities, we can also do a certain amount of re-engineering, particularly with Rega arms which benefit from having gold-plated plugs fitted to the bottom of the arm pillar so that the arm mates with a Manticore tonearm line socket fitted to the armlead. These sockets are manufactured as 90 degree or axial leadouts and are available in polished aluminium or black acetal. At the amplifier end of the armlead we fit Soundflex locking phonos, Midas connectors or BNC plugs.

There is a choice of four internal cables - standard, Isoda, Cardas or Van den Hul MSS7. The Isoda is very delicate and we only advise this if Isoda is being used throughout the system. The Cardas and Van den Hul are both superior cables and we will be happy to advise which one to utilise in various systems. We recommend Van den Hul D502 for most output applications but other cables such as DNM and Isoda are available if required.

Rega arms a speciality

Rega arms with their fine mechanical attributes are especially suitable for rewiring - it is a mystery why Rega chose not to put a separate earth lead on their tonearm cables, instead opting to double this up with the left-hand signal return. So even rewiring the arms with standard cable can give a sonic improvement. If you opt for standard cable, please note that there is a supplementary charge of £20 for having the gold-plated plugs and sockets fitted.

This is included in the price of the Isoda, Cardas or VdH options.

System integrity wiring

Any tonearms can be rewired in **System Integrity** mode. This is a seven wire system where the signal and signal returns are in a semi-balanced configuration and a separate 'screening' cable is wrapped around each channel pair. These latter two then connect with the screen on the output cable and are kept separate from the earth lead. The armlead is then terminated with two of our Midas connectors which allows for signal returns, screens and earth to be kept apart throughout the system. Full details of **System Integrity** are available on request.

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At Audio By Development you can relax in a home environment and listen to some of the finest audio equipment available anywhere. We have a wealth of experience in assembling both valve and solid state based systems that genuinely do what they're supposed to do: 'Provide lifelike musical reproduction in your home' We confidently recommend that every product we sell will deliver the best performance, reliability, and value for money in its particular class, and if you make a purchase then you can rest assured you will get the aftersales service and future upgrade advice that you should expect from a reputable independent consultancy.

We find that the most difficult type of system to assemble properly, in order to produce convincing results, is for the customer who wants to spend less than £1500, but obtain the realism approaching that of a 'cost no object' system. Over the last few months we have tried many different combinations of equipment, and finally have what we believe is the answer. It's capable of portraying a beguiling sound stage, has sufficient control and dynamics to excite, and above all holds you captivated as live music should! We can't think of a better way to spend £1200 and get this close to real music.

Call for details or better still arrange a demonstration and hear for yourself!

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QLN Superb range of Swedish loudspeakers, from £200 - £2,500. Dynamic full scale presentation with transparent midrange and seamless treble. Furniture, quality cabinet work hiding thoroughly modern technology. Real Gems!

UNISON RESEARCH Outstanding range of single ended valve amplification. The 'Simply Two' is simply outstanding at £999

MONRIO We believe these could be one of the most talked about range of solid products next year. Wonderful versatile phono amp with inky black silent soundstage. Also new DAC and transport at sub £1000.

'CALLAS' A stunning range of loudspeakers from U.K. Distribution, their reputation goes before them. Exemplary gems! in solid wood.

WILSON BENSCH Turntables, Tonearms and Loudspeakers which incorporate carbon fibre technology. The outstandingly musical presentation provided by these products is proof enough that carbon fibre is the way forward.

HOLFI Coming soon - This amazing range of DC Battery powered amplification. Entry to this distinguished family of components starts with the Aura Integrated Amplifier @ £479.

Stock taking sale: The following items have been further reduced to clear:-

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TOCA class A single ended amplifier (last one)	(£2,000)	£795
Audio Innovations 1.2 preamp (boxed unused)	(£749)	£495
Audio Innovations 2nd Audio triode monoblock Amps (ex dem, as new)		£1,395
Audio Note DAC3 Signature (unmarked)	(£3000)	£1495
Leak Troughline 3 tuner with Studio 12 decoder (totally original, unmarked)		£195
Impulse H5 loudspeakers (absolute bargain)		£450
Dali 103 Loudspeakers Stand Mounted 2 way. Black		£275
Oracle Delphi Turntable (Excellent condition)		£575
Castle Durham Loudspeakers (Mint condition) Black		£195
Alphason HS 100 Tonearm VdHul Wired (Mint condition)	(£595)	£375
Leak Stereo 20 Valve Amplifier (Excellent condition)		£249

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The Hi-Fi Consultants
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What do the critics say:

QUINTET

The Art Audio gives you music with a sense of rightness that you don't really question but just get on and enjoy. Sweet open and lucid, the music is produced with an easy sense of naturalness which makes long term listening fatigue free and especially rewarding.

Roy Gregory Hi-Fi Choice

TEMPO

I feel that the Art Tempo amplifiers are among the finest valve power amplifiers currently available. The imagery that the Tempos create is vivid, lifelike and full of space and air.

Alan Sircom, Hi-Fi World

MAESTRO

...they are just so stunningly gorgeous and open to listen to, I can barely imagine anything more alluring.

Noel Keywood, Hi-Fi World

...the Maestro is part of that rare breed of Hi-Fi that makes you forget about the equipment and think about the music. In all, unlike the car, the Maestro lives up to its name

Alan Sircom, Hi-Fi World

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Classified Ads

For details on how to place a Classified Advertisement, please see page 145

WANTED: Good quality moving coil.
Wanted: REL Stadium or Storm. Wanted: Chord Company Blue Heaven at least 2 x 3m. FOR SALE: EPOS 14 and stands (£700) Bargain £300. Please ring after 3pm Mon-Thur
Tel: 01902 786818 (Wolverhampton (Midlands))

MERIDIAN 204 tuner, mint, boxed £220.
Naim 2 x 7 metres, Tri-Wire NACS speaker cable, fully terminated £95
Tel: 0181 689 6855

WANTED: TANNY 615 loudspeaker.
Will pay around £350 for good condition
Tel: 01582 476779 after 8pm (Dunstable)

QUAD ESLS pair Oatmeal perfect £300
Audio Note Kit 1 300B, silver soldered, ANS silver input, awesome £600. Leak stereo 20 v.g.c. £200. Project 1 turntable, as new £120. Armstrong valve amp 20 wpc £30. Wanted: Quad FM4
Tel: Dave 01892 838532 (Tonbridge)

NAIM 72 £350, Hicap £400, 180 £650, Stax SR Gamma Electrostatic headphones with SRD6/5B energizer (new £350) £175. All items boxed and mint, lovingly cared for.
Tel: 01749 676378

CONOISSEUR SAU2 modern light weight pick-up arms with spare heads. Brand new boxed £25 plus £2 postage. (less than half price)
Tel: 0151 638 4711

EPOS ES14 speakers £380. Nitech 102 pre-amp/tuner, plus two 602 power amps (for active of bi-wire system) £450.
WANTED: Bose A'Mass AM5 speakers
Tel: 01934 838881 (nr Bristol)

LINN SARA 9s, black Ash, stands, bi-wire LK20 cable, 5 years old, excellent condition £400
Tel: 01952 255281 (Telford)

AUDIO RESEARCH SP14 pre-amp mint condition inc box £1,200. Classic Rappaport pre I pre amp phono stage dodgy £60, Linn with Basic arm & cartridge £200
Tel: 01279 718325

NAIM system all mint. NAC 52 £3,950; NAP 250 £995; NAIM SBL £1,350. All latest spec.
Tel: George 0181 245 7911 (N.London)

SONIC FRONTIERS SFS-50 power amp, Gold Aero Tubes/Coolers (£600) Spare brand new tubes immaculate £1,250. Quad II valve power amps single ended chromed and sprayed crimson. Stunning, £400. Ion MA40 power amps (£1200) £350. May p/x quality speakers. Buyer collects
Tel: 01386 446756

WANTED: Krell KRC2 pre-amplifier with or without phono. FOR SALE: Target Five shelf equipment stand £100. Forty metres various lengths Talk 3 speaker cable £40. 16 Michell gold plated speaker terminals £25.
Tel: 01797 253073

ARC SPEAKERS made by Shahnian Acoustics Ltd. Semi omni directional, passive bass radiators, 3 active drive units (+p.b.r.) Dimensions 35 x 69 x 25 (cm) Retail: £1,675, Asking: £900 o.n.o.
Tel: Nick 0141 334 0480

SOUNDSTYLE 3 leg, 4 shelf rack with glass shelves and matching turntable isolation shelf in green. £130. My new amplifier will not fit!
Tel: 01924 279281

NAIM NAP 140 power amp, old style v.g.c. boxed £290. Meridian 206B CD with Tricord clock II mod. As new, boxed £480.
Tel: Dave 01703 220251 daytime.

AUDIO INNOVATIONS 500 amp, triode coupled, recent Mullards, mint. £599 o.n.o. Snell 'K' speakers, black Ash, welded stands, Mint £375 o.n.o. Pile of quality vinyl.
Tel: 0115 928 6710

MISSION CYRUS 782 black Ash speakers with dedicated stands. Mint condition virtually unused, boxed. £290 o.n.o.
Tel: 01707 322962 (Welwyn Garden City)

LINN/AUDIO INNOVATIONS. Sondek, Basik +, AT95 (boxed) £250. Audio Innovations 500 intergrated valve amp, triode wired, recently checked by A.I. £450. Auditionable (Gatwick area)
Tel: 01293 884139

KEF Q30 speakers, Audiolab 8000A amp, Arcam Alpha 5 plus CD, interconnect and speaker/cable. All items new Feb c/w 2 year guarantee in excellent condition. £995. Will separate.
Tel: Paul 0115 981781/4/9810236 (work)

LEAK TL12 + monoblocks, black, immaculate with pre-amp £325. Quad 2 valve monoblocks, stereo tuner and 22 pre-amp, handbooks. £300. Black Electrostatics £300. Pair Lowther Acoustics, new PM6 drivers £285 o.n.o. Audio Innovations S500 Intergrated amp £475. Leak Troughline £60
Tel: 01245 381961

MERIDIAN 601 DSP pre-amp. Meridian 602 transport CD. Meridian 605 mono amps. All mint condition with remote. £3,500 the lot
Tel: 01527 543442

MORDAUNT-SHORT Decoder One £150. Sequence 20 loudspeakers £125, both latest spec, boxed and as new.
Tel: 01384 424331

TANNY Berkeley 15" D.C. type H.P.D. 385A £250 o.n.o.
Tel: 01904 626915 (York)

D.P.A. 200S Pre-power amplifier, eight months old £870. Naim A5 cable four 5m lengths (bi-wired) £35
Tel: 0161 437 5819

868 HI-FI MAGS £40. Buyer collects, includes H.F.A. & Audiophile 200 in sequence Popular Hi-Fi & Hi-Fi Sound-Fidelity 179; Hi-Fi N & R R 166; What Hi-Fi 96; various others.
Tel: 0161 225 6786

DYNACO USA Original classic valve pre-amp £175. PAT 4 transistor pre-amp £95. FM3 transistor tuner £95. Rogers Cadet III int. valve amp £95. All excellent condition
Tel: 01372 467264 (Esler)

LINN PRETEK/POWERTEK/POWERTEK £620; Origin live 'OL2' speakers £420; Kenwood DPX 9010 (new laser) Microdac £500. Prices include interconnects/cables. Accept £1,450 the lot. Excellent condition
Tel: 01703 327906 (Southampton)

WANTED: Any good Class 'A' amplifier transistor, Sugden, Magnum etc. Have valves or items to part ex. Also wanted floor standing speaker wood finish.
Tel: 01626 774 246

NAIM 72 Pre/Hi-Cap (new style) mint £750. Leak stereo 20, excellent, original £195. Leak Troughline stereo, excellent original, box & manual £160. WANTED: Sonab speakers, preferably OA12 or OA14.
Tel: 01474 708631 (nr Dartford)

MICROMEGA CD3 transport, clock two modifications by Trichord Research with BNC output. Excellent condition £700. DNM 3B (6) pre amp recently serviced by DNM £1200.
Tel: 01208 872316 (Cornwall)

TANDBERG TCD 330 cassette deck. Tandberg TR 2075 Mk II am/fm stereo amplifier. Pair Tandberg studio monitors. All can be seen working, all in excellent condition. o.i.r.o. £1,000
Tel: 01453 542870

GRANT LUMLEY GL50A valve power amplifier, recently serviced, fitted with a new set of Groove Tubes, superb sound £450
Tel: 01978 780580

SONY CD player 337 ESD, £265; Arcam Black Box £135; SD Acoustics OBS loudspeakers £450; Sony CD 101 original machine, offers. All equipment boxed and as new.
Tel: 01922 56160 or 0585 649791

AUDIO PRO B1-45 subwoofer for sale, slightly modified for better performance. £300 o.n.o.
Tel: Stockton-on-Tees 559078

LINN AXIS/AKITO/K9 plus extras. Boxed. Mint. £225. Sony MDR CD350 'best buy' headphones. Barely used. £15. Proton 420 tuner. £35. AR turntable, needs attention £20. WANTED: Pink Triangle turntable.
Tel: 01772 791147 (Lancs)

WANTED: SANSUI TUD99X tuner. Also Sansui SE88 or SE99. Must be in mint condition and perfect working order. Will pay postage. FOR SALE: Sony 770ES tuner £175
Tel: Colin 01382 779295

HEAVY DUTY 4 shelf equipment stand, plus dedicated CD-turntable support, fully welded £150.
Tel: 0115 9463693 eves (Nottingham)

LINN SONDEK LP12 turntable, black Ash, Akito arm, K9 cartridge, 12 months old, excellent condition with boxes and receipts. £500 o.n.o.
Tel: 01474 813047 (after 6pm)

EXPOSURE VII pre-amp and VI power supply £225.
Tel: 01403 241304 eves & weekends (Horsham)

GRADO SIGNATURE junior cartridge, new £100. Rogers BBC LS3/6 loudspeakers and stands, refurbished £200. Audio Technica electronic stylus cleaner £10. Robertson 4010 amplifier £425
Tel: 01603 714528, anytime before 9pm

SUGDEN floor standing speakers £300. John Shearpe Phase II intergrated £350. Rotel RB990 BX power £300. Chord 1200 power. Stunning £1,700. WANTED: Lift jumbo CD trays.
Tel: 01226 710605 (S. Yorkshire)

PINK TRIANGLE Ordinal DAC. As new mint condition, boxed £495 o.n.o. Denon DCD 3300 CD player. Flagship model (£1200 new) £250.
Tel: 01634 387686 (Kent)

QUAD 66 FM tuner with remote control panel, mint, boxed with manual. £360 o.n.o. Linn Axis/Akito/K5 turntable, mint, boxed with manual and parts warranty. £260 o.n.o. Both little used.
Tel: 01208 813613

TEAC VRDS-7 CD player. Excellent condition. One year old. Boxed with manual and remote. (£600 new) £375 o.n.o.
Tel: 0181 647 0410

REGA RB 300 tonearm nearly new, boxed £95. LP12 arm board (Rega mount) £10. Rega Super Bias cartridge nearly new £25. Technics ST-Z15L stereo tuner mint boxed £35.
Tel: 01254 883030

AMPLIFIER 2 x VTL 30/30 valve power amps £400 each. 1 VTL pre-amp £350. If sold together £900. Can demonstrate.
Tel: 0181 683 0507 after 6pm (Croydon)

AUDIO INNOVATIONS Series 500, new valves £480. Rotel RCD-965 BX LE with remote and Monster interconnects. £220. Rega ELA speakers £240
Tel: 01525 374652 eves (Beds)

EXPOSURE 15 intergrated amplifier with moving coil phono board. Good condition. Can demonstrate. £250. 2 x 5m Cable Talk 3 bi-wire loudspeaker cable £15
Tel: 01942 272187 evenings (Wigan)

FOR SALE: NAIM SBLs new factory fitted drive units £950, Naim NAP 250 old style recent overhaul £750, Naim Naxo 2-4 (SBL) new style. £385, Linn Helix £300. All in mint condition.
Tel: Paul 01924 274887 day, 01924 271043 evenings

WANTED: NAIM 6 pack 135s or pairs (old style), Hi-cap, CDS, CDI, Linn CD, or complete system, 70s, 80s, 90s rock LPs etc. Complete collection considered. Cash waiting, can collect, meet 1/2 way?
Tel: Paul 01924 274887 day, 01924 271043 evenings

AUDIOLAB 8000C/P £550; Quad FM4 £200, all excellent. Celestion 44 monitors £75. Nitech CTA 252, Rogers Ravensbourne amplifier and FM tuner in teak cases. Offers for these please.
Tel: 01179 247478

ROBERTSON Audio 4010 power amplifier, Krell standard sound at reasonable price. Very rare, excellent condition, unmarked with box. £620 o.n.o.
Tel: 0181 8781127

ENTHUSIASTS clear out: Aura CD-50 CD player £200 o.n.o.; Tannoy 609 II speakers £200 o.n.o.; Celestion DL3 II speakers £75 o.n.o.; JPW Sonata speakers £50 o.n.o.
Tel: 01202 475781

YAMAHA CT7000 FM/stereo tuner, working order, needs some attention. Service manual etc included. Pair Spondor SA1 mini monitor speakers, very good condition, perfect working order. Offers invited.
Tel: 01723 862837 (Scarborough)

MERIDIAN 500 series system: 506 CD player, 552 intergrated amplifier and A500 loudspeakers. Brand new, genuine reason for sale. New price £2,500, will accept £1,650. Will consider separating.
Tel: 01453 750162 (Gloucestershire)

MERIDIAN 203 DAC, acclaimed DAC-7 model £215.
Tel: 01932 782381 (Sunbury on Thames)

WANTED: Naim NAP 160 power amp (old style). Must be good condition. FOR SALE: Naim NAP 110 power amp v.g.c.
Tel: 01294 217323

NAIM NAC 32-5/NAP140 1988, MM/MC boards, variable aux, boxed £575. Rogers R50 kit transmission line loudspeakers £50.
Tel: 01508 570354 (Norfolk)

QUAD 67 CD player, 66 tuner, 66 pre amplifier and 606-2 power amplifier (one year old) £1,950 o.n.o. Spondor BBC1s (new drivers etc) and Foundation stands £295 o.n.o. Triangle floor standing speakers £250 o.n.o. Nakamichi 682ZX cassette deck £500 o.n.o. Revox tape deck and various cables.
Tel: 01292 441544

NAD 402 tuner, 12 months old, little used, perfect, £115 for quick sale.
Tel: 01530 831357 (Leicestershire)

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SME V tonearm with Audio Note silver internal wiring	# £950	£1500
HORNING AGATHON GOLD Lowther PM 4 driver Oak	# £3100	£4500
HORNING AGATHON BRONZE Lowther PM 6 A. Oak	# £2500	£3500
HORNING AGATHON BRONZE Lowther PM 6 A Mahogany	# £1800	£3500
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IMPULSE H5 Ash	# £999	£1850
IMPULSE H7 Mahogany	# £599	
SNELL AII Mahogany, 3-way, flagship floorstander	# £2100	£4999
SNELL J II Walnut	# £450	£750
AUDIO INNOVATIONS S. 500 25 watt, class A, integrated	# £650	£1200
AUDIO INNOVATIONS S. 800 Mk. 1 25 watt, class A, stereo	# £450	
AUDIO INNOVATIONS S. 200 PRE. 3 months use	# £180	£350
APOGEE DUETTA SIG/D.A.X. Active cross-over	£3900	£11,500
NRG M 400 Monoblocks	£3900	£15,000
HELIUS AURIUS II Tonearm	£190	£400
LINN NEXUS 1990, black ash, Ku-Stone stand	£350	£600
MARANTZ CD 40 £90 / NAD 5320 CD £65 / AIWA AD-F300 £65 / MOTH SERIES 30 phono pre, line pre power amp £300 / KELVIN LABS class 'A' integrated £225 / HELIUS SCORPIO II tonearm £60		

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WATCH THOSE UMBILICALS

We have reported a number of times on one of our favourite speakers, the

Ruark Equinox, which is a clever design, having the X-over in the stand with an umbilical lead going to the speaker box. This has the advantage of reducing vibration on the X-over, but unfortunately also has the disadvantage of the fact that the cable used in the umbilical affects the sound, just as the speaker cable used does. In an article in Hi-Fi Choice in which the Equinox was reviewed by Malcolm Steward it was mentioned that XLO cable improved the sound, over the standard cable provided by Ruark. I have spent the last few days comparing the standard Cable Talk Concert 4 lead with the XLO and a Siltech lead (courtesy of Nick Taylor of Esoteric Audio Imports). The unanimous verdict was that the Siltech won over the Cable Talk, but not by much and few would pay the price! The XLO was not as good as the standard and not worth the extra £150 or so. The system used was the Parasound CD player (while we await new stocks of the AVI players) a bargain at £700, plus either the AVI pre and 90 watter

or the Electrocompaniet EC/AWI00, in both cases using the EC-K3 mains cable (excellent). Conclusions were the same with both amplification systems, and the resulting sound was truly superb! Do phone for an audition. (Note: it could be that Malcolm Steward heard an earlier Umbilical and not the Cable Talk, and might well agree with our conclusions if he now heard the C.T. but even then the results, as we keep pointing out, could be system dependant, which is why we have used 2 different amplification sets.)

RAMADA SHOW

One of the highlights of the show for us, was the excellent sound achieved in the Electrocompaniet room with their new 'Qube' speaker at £1265. This small speaker produced a big sound from some big Electrocompamiet amps, and a lot of very favourable comments were received. As we supplied the RPG acoustic tools which helped to alleviate room problems, we are slightly biased! The Parasound equipment looked very good value - particularly the DACs, which we will be investigating shortly and the Proac range. Apart from these, fine sounds were coming from the Wilson Witt and the Chord speakers but as both in the £9k region, they should.

The grand - dad of every class A transistor amplifier in existence



Sobering thought: every overpriced, overweight class A exotic (and the odd puny pretender) is a blood relative of the compact, black, unassuming Sugden A21a. Since Mr J. E. Sugden manufactured the world's first commercial solid state pure class A audio amplifier, even the famous Krell shares a common bond with this black box through some unspeakably ugly (but rather musical) creations from the early 1960's.

This isn't to say that the current A21a is simply a repackaged 60's throw-back. Considerable development in (so they tell me) cascode gain stages, phase linear wide band circuitry and component specification, have taken place. Thankfully Sugden's sense of style has also moved on. A little. These are still not products likely to appeal to those seeking mere shelf adornments. Music lovers, however, queue here.

I have plenty of customers who will testify to the A21a's mastery of all kinds of music. It offers a level of clarity, tonal colour, sound staging, dynamics and sheer musicality that allows ancillaries way beyond its price to be used to great effect. The on-board phono input is certainly well worth the £70 asking price but the abilities of much more expensive external head amps (Michell ISO, EAR 834p, etc.) come shining through. Similarly the Sugden £1600 two box CD players and loudspeakers of the calibre of, say, the £1300 Harbeth Compact Seven are justified. Rest assured, some far more modest designs (for example the Royd Minstrel) are also given their "head".

For those who consider the £725 25 watt A21a to be in itself esoteric, the new Optima range offers a remarkably high level of performance and value for money. Facilities such as remote control are offered in a range extending from the £325 Optima 80 to the £550 Optima 140R. All of these are passively controlled line level power amplifiers in the manner of the well-received Stenfoot SF60 & SF100.

A corollary of the introduction of this new range is the special arrangement that I have been able to secure to clear the remains of the previous budget product. The A25b, already one of the best sounding amplifiers around the £300 mark, is now available exclusively from Signals for £215 inclusive of UK mainland delivery. All are brand new, boxed, with full manufacturer's warranty.

I do not know of an amplifier available at anything near this price that even comes close. At £300 the A25b was one of the best. At this level of the market £85 is a very significant sum and the A25b is a genuine, unrepeatable, unmissable bargain.

It has a decent phono stage (MM), produces 30 watts per channel, sounds clear, open, controlled and, yes you've guessed it . . . musical. Call or fax me, Alastair Gardner, at the numbers below.



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Roksan Xerxes / Artemiz TT/Arm.....	S/Hand	£895
Musical Fidelity FCD CD Player (£1,500).....	Ex. Demo	£1,095
Musical Fidelity E60 Electra CD player (£300).....	NEW!!!	£249
Audio Research LS7 Linstage (£1,555).....	Ex. Demo	£1,250
Audio Research LS2 Linstage Bal. Output (Black).....	Mint	£1,350
Classe 30 Remote Preamp Bal. (£1,370).....	Ex. Demo	£850
Classe 70 power Amp 70w Bal. (£1,400).....	Ex. Demo	£850
(Classe 30 & Classe 70 sold as a pair).....	Sp. price	£1,595
Magnaplanar MG 1.4.....	Mint	£650
Mirage PS-12-90 Active Subwoofer (£549).....	S/Hand	£325

PRIVATE

WANTED: Radford STA 50 power amplifier, SC22 control unit in excellent condition. FOR SALE: Leak Stereo 30 Plus amplifier, Leak Delta tuner, £15 each or £25 both plus postage.
Tel: 01273 583675

QUAD 67 CD player boxed mint condition £595.
Tel: 01527 835769

MERIDIAN 605 £1200; Meridian 603 £800; Quad ESL63s £1500. As new, boxed, little used, retired owner.
Tel: 01202 470789

AVI CD PLAYER £875; AVI tuner £500; Cyrus 21" speaker stands £65; Soundstyle Tri-Pod, 5 shelf, blue £190; Galaxie 14 aerial £55. All six months old.
Tel: 01462 458527

PINK TRIANGLE Ventricle speakers £600; Linn Kairn pre-amp £730; Teac VRDS 10 CD player £450; Sumo Athena pre-amp £350; A.V.I. mono block power amps £550; Keswick Audio Aria speakers £180; Professional Monitor Co TBI speakers with Target R3 stands £425.
Tel: 01977 643629

AUDIOPHILE LPs; reference recordings, Mobile Fidelity, ATR, Gale, Sheffield, special Japanese pressings, plus Weaver's, in excellent condition, from £6 per LP. List available.
Tel: 0181 883 5618

KLIPSCHORN CORNER horn speakers (pair) Australian Walnut, purchased 1952. Radford STA 25 amplifier and SC22 control unit, plus Garrard 301 turntable, all in excellent condition. Deceased sale, best offer secures.
Tel: 0115 939 3139

AURA VA 40 amplifier v.g.c. £110 onvo; B & W DM 600 loudspeakers v.g.c. £85; Atacama S24 stands (mint condition) £50; Target HS25 stands £35; 2 x 10m AudioQuest (Indigo Blue cable) £55; 2 x 5m Cable talk (biwire) £20. Contact evenings or Sunday or Monday.
Tel: 01908 605617

EPOS ES14s on dedicated stands finished in black Ash, absolutely immaculate condition with boxes and receipts, can demonstrate £400.
Tel: Dave 0589 132007 (day) 0181 270 9393 (night)

LINN LP12, Black Ittok, K18, £495; Exposure 15 £350; Ruark Templars £280, all as new, boxed. Swordsmans with stands £95. WANTED: Exposure 7/8. Micromega Leader 2
Tel: 01792 205598

ROTEL RT850AL tuner FM/MM/LW, auto/manual preset memory tuning, excellent sound, mint condition, boxed with instructions £75.
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KEF SPEAKERS reference series model 103/4, black, boxed as new mint condition £695.
Tel: 01332 751392 (Derby)

T.D.L. STUDIO 3 transmission line speakers, Walnut finish new 1992 (£1000) First sensible offer over £400, will demonstrate, buyer collects, Surrey area.
Tel: 0181 661 2886

NAKAMICHI ZXL 1000 Dolby unit £995, Tannoy 15" HPDs, studio cabinets £350, Reslo valve mono blocks £200, Audiolab tuner £400, Revox B126 CD player, faulty transport £285. WANTED: Avantic Beam Echo, etc.
Tel: 0161 860 5532

MERIDIAN 500 transport - 563 DAC £1500 + AES-EBU lead; Audiolab 8000Q pre-amp £800; Audiolab 8C00M monoblocks x 6 £1200 per pair; 4 x Van Den Hul "Magnum" speaker cable 6 x 2 metre lengths terminated with WBT connectors £400; Alphason rack £200; Klark Accolades "Dark Walnut" £2300. All the brand new with boxes, manuals etc. No time wasters, can deliver.
Tel: 01622 746863 after 6.30pm mon-fri anytime w/ends

TANNOY BERKELEY speakers 15 inch dual concentrics, rosewood cabinets £650 o.n.o.; Leak TL-50 valve power amps new valves £550 o.n.o.; Lowther corner Acoustas, new PM6Cs in folded horns £325. Pair Lowther PM7Cs £200; Quad 33/303 £120
Tel: 01709 555403 (eves)

LINN KANS + LINN stands £180 o.n.v.o.; B & W sub woofer £75 (all black Ash); Technics SL 1400 Mk2 with Ortofon cartridge £125; Audio Technica arm with Ortofon cartridge £25. All excellent condition
Tel: 01453 546191 (Glos)

TOWNSEND ROCK MkII no arm/no lid, excellent £250; Goldring Eroica as new £55; 1006 stylus new £20, 3 shelf rack (sand filled) £20, buyer collects/cash transaction.
Tel: 0181 777 5423

FOR SALE RCA high fidelity Orthorhonic pre and power amplifier £200, commercial Williamson amplifier pair KT66 huge output and mains transformers £200, pair Marconi PX25 new boxed 100 each Warfedale super 12 driver 25
Tel: Alan 01661 852874

QUAD 606 amplifier 140 wpc excellent condition £360 o.n.o.
Tel: 01843 587732 (Kent)

MICHAELSON AUDIO Odysseus integrated valve amp 45w per channel, demonstration, excellent condition £500
Tel: 0181 889 6457

PIONEER TX9800 tuner mint £70; Leak Delta 70 amp Teak sleeved £50; Leak Variislope stereo pre-amp £35; Connoisseur BD1 turntable kit brand new unused £20; Isophone KK8 tweeters £5 each.
Tel: Tony 01472 878919

2 REVOX A77 Mk3 high and standard speed 2 track £295 each; Teac A3340S.H. 4 track £295; Ferrograph series 7 model 724 £155, all in perfect condition
Tel: 01275 835334 (Bristol)

NAIM 72-hi cap with MC boards, 180 power amp, boxed as new only one year old, cost over £2400, accept £1700
Tel: 01633 222538

QUAD 34 PRE-AMP with MM/MC boards £170, REL Strata subwoofer £260, Goldring Eroica low output MC £40. All boxed.
Tel: Andrew 01483 291335 (work) 01737 832789 (home) (Surrey)

ATC SCM10 speakers full six year guarantee £750; Audio Innovations Second Audios new Dragon 2A3s 1000 pre-amp, incredibly dynamic £1,275 (going single ended!) Meridian 203DAC £195? All immaculate.
Tel: 01379541584

SPENDOR SP2/2 speakers Teak finish mint condition with boxes, manual etc £425.
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Tel: 01952 406759 (eves or w/ends)

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Tel: 01372 467 264 (Esher)

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Tel: 01634 387686

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MARANTZ CD94 superb looking two box design immaculate £750; Arcam Alpha 5 £200; Linn Ekos, Troika £800; Epos ES14 plus stands £275; Marantz PM71 IAV pro-logic amplifier £300.
Tel: 01952 502097 (Telford)

QUICKSILVER monoblocks 60 wpc; 8-4-1 ohm taps, gleaming chrome, run KT88 or 6550, boxed as new including spare tubes £795 o.n.o.
Tel: 0151 722 4526

MITCHELL ARGO HR pre-amp as new 1 yr old, bargain at £795 o.n.o.
Tel: 01623 871950

MICROMEGA LOGIC CD player; Crimson Electric pre/power; EPOS ES14s speakers; Linn/Teac interconnects; Cable Talk 3; stands: 1000 o.n.o. Can deliver or swap for van camper.
Tel: Pete 01227 769723 (Canterbury)

MUSICAL FIDELITY A100 integrated amplifier (boxed) £200; Technics RSB85 cassette deck £165; Technics ST-G50L tuner £80; Panasonic NV870 Hi-Fi VHS player £180.
Tel: Rod 0121 705 1142 between 5pm & 7pm weekdays

AUDIOLAB 8000A amplifier, winner of various Hi Fi awards, only one year old vgc £300 o.n.o. Also Monitor Audio MA3 speakers, powerful (3 way big box) £150 o.n.o.
Tel: 01245 224024

NAIM IBL loudspeakers black Ash vgc £350
Tel: 01980 633362

PROAC EBS speakers with stands walnut vgc £750
Tel: 01703 466853 (eves) 01703 445090 (days)

MARANTZ AV500 pro logic pre amp £350, Mission DACS £60; Kenwood GE-1001 parametric equaliser £90; Denon DCDD-1420 £150; Goldring Audio Rack with 5 shelves, adjustable spiked feet in base £60.
Tel: 0181 316 1033

LUXMAN K112 3 head HX Pro cassette deck £120 o.n.o.; Carver TX-10 tuner £135 o.n.o. Both in excellent condition. Dynavector Karat 23 RS Mk II cartridge unused new £280. Sale £130
Tel: D181 658 2490

WHARFEDALES WANTED. 507.2 speakers in Rosewood finish.
Tel: 0141 339 7595 (Glasgow)

REVOX A77/4 half track N.S. suitcase model, built in amps/speakers; 2 x p.z. mikes NAB adaptors £275; Quad 33/303 £150; Leak Troughline III + decoder £60; B & W LMI's £90. Hi Fi News complete (4 copies missing) 1966-1994. Some earlier copies to 1958. Offers.
Tel: 01983 297903

WANTED: MERIDIAN MPA power amp - needed to match my existing MPA for bridging. Must be in mint condition.
Tel: 0113 2530627 after 6pm

LINN LP12, LVX Grace F9 £300; Magnum MP250 pre & power (modified by designer) £400; 10m Linn cable £10; Rotel 965LE Dikrete & Trichord 2 (6 months) £175; JBL 18Ti £250.
Tel: 01628 27406

MERIDIAN 508 CD player £995; 501V preamp £495; 555 power amp £395; A500 speakers in rosewood £495 all boxed, mint, less 3 mths old. Upgrading.
Tel: 0121 783 8214

WANTED: TOWNSHEND Rock Reference turntable. Cash waiting. FOR SALE: Naim 42.5/110 pre/power boxed £300 o.n.o.; Audio Technica ATH70 Electret headphones inc energiser unit £75.
Tel: 0181 989 6434

WANTED: OLD WHARFEDALE SFB3 speaker cabinets (mid to late 50s) in reasonable condition. (Drive units do not have to be working)
Tel: 0171 5384020

LINN KAIRN LK280 pre/power amplifiers £995; Yamaha DSPE200 surround sound processor £195; Denon TU260L £65; Jamo 100 centre speaker £75. Offers considered.
Tel: 01423 528256 (Harrowgate)

MINROYD SINTRAS in real wood veneer. Boxed complete with (Royd) dedicated spiked stands. Will demo for serious buyer £180.
Tel: 01782 515602 eves

AURA CD50 CD player. Must be heard! In nearly new condition. Upgrading to CD transport! £265 o.n.o.
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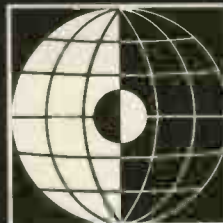
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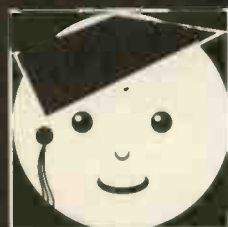
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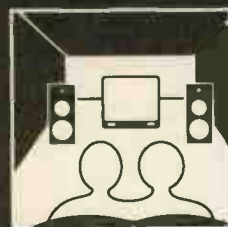
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QUAD 66 PRE-AMP £475; 606 power-amp £400; FM4 tuner £200; all o.n.o. Boxed, recently serviced. Tel: 01995 671426 (eves) (Lancs)

NAIM NA140 (new style) boxed £475 + EPOS ES14 & stands (black Ash) boxed £450 + Linn LP12 Valhalla, Basic LVX, Goldring 1020 cart £300. Tel: 01702 354946 (Essex)

WANTED: B & W 804 or 805 speakers Musical Fidelity MA50/MA65 amps + pre-amp. Offered Hitachi HCA 8300 preamp HMA 7500 power 75wpc black boxed Superfi £250 (SE) Tel: 01322 524381

T.D.L. STUDIO 3 loudspeakers with walnut finish dedicated stands, boxed and in good condition. Can demonstrate £450 o.n.o. Tel: 01492 879547

AUDIO SYNTHESIS DAX "Ultra-Analogue" D/A converter with builtin 'Passion' all Vishay/Silver attenuator (Colloms Reference). Cost new £2,500 Audiophile bargain at £1000. Tel: Robert 01909 479203 (evenings)

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RESTEK CHALLENGER amplifier 130w per channel unused £650. PW Ruby 2 speakers plus stands, as new £550. Tel: 01225 833765

NAIM SBL SPEAKERS, black Ash, immaculate, active £895; passive £995. WANTED: 5 tier Mana Acoustic tables and Sony Walkman Pro record/playback leads. Tel: 0161 43 0744

ACOUSTIMAS 5s (in white). Excellent condition £500 o.n.o. Tel: 0171 6380104

LOWTHER ACOUSTAS, PM6s, refurbished £250; Pioneer A-9 massive integrated amp, 110w rms £90; Yamaha CT800 silver fronted analogue high quality tuner £50. WANTED: Leak 3900A and Leak TL-12 (KT66 type) amps. Tel: 01273 684424 (Brighton)

ROGERS LS7 loudspeakers, excellent condition includes stands QED cables with gold connectors £175. Tel: 01325 320584

MISSION POWER amplifier model 772 Mk 2 class AB design 150 watts rms per channel, 3 sets of loudspeaker terminals, powerful sound, boxed £200. Tel: 01902 782015 (Wolverhampton)

SYSTEMDEK II/900AP, MP11 Boron £200; Musical Fidelity A100 £200; Musical Fidelity MC2 £150; Naim NAC62 Hicap, old style £450; Deltec Little Bit £173; Arcam Alpha CD £185. All vgc. Tel: 01926 831388

ORDINAL DAC by Pink Triangle, 18 bit, 18 months old, as new, receipt and box £500. Tel: 01874 665488 (eves S.Wales)

DELTEC DSP505 pre amplifier. Three box. Mint. All original packaging, instructions and press reviews. (Nice one Noel). Genuinely good value £695 Tel: 01652 636086

VALVE EQUIPMENT FOR SALE. Various amps from Leak (inc TLS0s) Quad, Rogers, Radford etc. Also Quad Electrostatics, black, immaculate, serviced. WANTED: TL10, TL12 and 5nell Ks. Tel: 01548 821360

AKAI GXC325D cassette deck wanted. Any condition at all. Tel: Sandy 01292 314190 (eves or w/ends) or 01563 544550 during working hours.

MICHELL FOCUS 1 deck with Linn Basik arm and AT-25 cartridge. Black and silver finish with three point suspension. Immaculate condition offers around £90. Tel: 0161 485 1634

NOTTINGHAM ANALOGUE SPACEDECK with Mentor arm and Tracer 3 MM cartridge £600 complete. LFD linstage LS2 pre-amp £400. Kelvin Labs M60 monoblocks £400. Tel: 0116 2811736

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APOGEE STAGE5: excellent only £1495. Audiobal 8000C&P £550. Musical Fidelity E100 superb reviews only £425. May p/x (o.n.o.) Tel: 01225 337821

MAGNEPAN 1.5SE white, 2 years old, great sound, no wife acceptance, cheap £550; turntable Heybrook TT2 with AT-Tonearm and Elac cartridge £250, 5 pairs XL0-pro150 £30 each. Tel: Michael 0171 4397986 (work) or 0171 9377935 (home)

REVOX B77 MkII high speed, 2 track, excellent condition £2300 new £750. Tel: 01347 838852 (N. Yorkshire)

LINN LP12 (black). Lingo, Ittok, K9 - 3 years old and little used. Superb for £800. A & R Cambridge amp £30. Linn Kans plus cable and stands £200. Tel: 01706 290094

AUDIION 300B monoblocks export model new £2500, £1750 o.n.o. Audiion Reference preamp (modified) £450 o.n.o. Both for £2000. Tel: Alan 01223 420204

AUDIOLAB 8000A latest spec, few months old, boxed, little use £300. Revolver turntable, Linn LVX arm, AT95E cartridge. Boxed as new £200 Tel: 0161 445 7657 after 6pm (Manchester)

CELESTION 300, transmission line speakers 9 months old, boxed, excellent condition, press recommended, genuine reason for sale £700. Tel: 01553 636 800 eves (Norfolk)

CELESTION SL6-S speakers + dedicated stands £200; Rotel RCD963BX CD player £100 less than three years old. Trio pre power LO8-C & 2x LO8-M power amp mono blocks 180 watts of high quality power. A bargain at £600. Tel: Richard 0115 9376212 day (Nottingham)

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PAIR QUAD ELS black with Mahogany trim, plus REL sub woofer. The ultimate transducer system £600. Tel: 0121 478 3672 or daytime 01675 467432

QUAD FM4 TUNER £250; Quad 34 control unit £175; Quad 33/300 amplifier £150, boxed plus manuals. Tel: 0121 478 3672 or daytime 01675 467432

EXPOSURE 17/18 pre/power immaculate boxed £900 (£1700); EPOS ES14 speakers, dedicated stands, excellent condition £300 (£700); Pioneer PD 73 reference CD player, immaculate, boxed £360 (£800) Tel: 01695 557957

THORENS 124/1 plinth/cover £225; Revox G36 chassis £195; Fidelity research FR64S £360; STOGLI superb £250; Meridian 605 amplifiers mint boxed £1195; Lumley reference ST70 amplifier mint boxed £1195; Audioplan Konzept loudspeakers laquered black £1195; Neat Petites £325; Aura TU50 tuner £175; Revox B750 amplifier £495; Voyo Valdi Rega OCT7 £495; Sony PCMF1/SLF1 digital recording £695; WANTED: Marantz CD10, Nakamichi 505/CR5/CR7, Naim Nat 01, Troughline/TDP decoder VPI HW19, MFA200 amplifier. Tel: 01747 851747 (Dorset)

LINN KLOUT power amplifier 2 years old boxed £995. Will straight swap for Naim 250 power amplifier new facia. Any age. Tel: Mark 0161 456 1024 (Manchester)

QUAD 405/2 power amplifier £150 Canon 5-50 loudspeakers and stands boxed £175. Stone loudspeaker stands £20. Tel: 0850 416752 (Winchester)

LINN SARAS (black) with stands (mint) £325 o.n.o. Meridian 506 CD (latest spec) £650 o.n.o. Thorens TD 160 £60 o.n.o. Yamaha CT810 tuner (mint) £85 o.n.o. Pye HF111 valve tuner £25 o.n.o. QED M/C head amp (boxed) £20. May p/x Tel: 0191 4877796

QUAD FMII tuner (the one with valves but matches Quad 33) Very rare. As new condition £95. Tel: 01902 606268 evenings

MERIDIAN CD506 Trichord clock 2 stunning £650; REL Strata £395; Yamaha DS200 £230; C90 Centre speaker £50; Rogers studio 3 speakers £230; Goldring Lenco turntable/Rega Elys cartridge £85. All excellent, little use. Tel: 01883 330063

EXPOSURE AMPLIFIER XI pre-amplifier; XII power supply; VIII (mono) power amplifier. Original price £2600 will accept £1500 o.n.o. all boxed and in excellent condition, baby forces sale. Tel: 01932 345416 (eves after 6pm) (Woking)

MISSION CYRUS TWO amplifier (with balance control) and PSX power supply No. 70 £350. Cyrus (Two) tuner, remote control £170, brand new B & W 620i floorstanding speakers (boxed) cost £485 for £240. Excellent sounding system all for £695 together. Real Bargain! Tel: 01422 370206

QED DIGIDAC with twin positron power supply £200 o.n.o. JPW subwoofer rarely used £50 Tel: 01704 566258

PROAC SUPER TOWER speakers £600 Tel: 0181 386 4753

LINN LK1 pre amp £200; Yamaha CT1010 FM/AM tuner £95. WANTED: Linn Spark, may p/x Tel: 01423 734846 (Harrogate)

COGAN HALL reference interconnect 1.5m £140; speaker cable 8ft £170; Isoplat £10; Fluxbuster £10; Ringmat £20; Apollo stand £20; Standsign wall shelf £20; ArQ dampers £40; 200 Hi-Fi magazines. Tel: 0115 9308100

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ARCAM TWO PLUS speakers (real black Ash veneer) good condition quick sale hence £110. Naim NAC 42 pre-amp as new bargain £90. Tel: James 01280 813037/0585 457092

NAIM 03 CD player, brand new, boxed, guaranteed £745 o.n.o. Naim 72 pre-amp new style and Hi-Cap (old style) both comparatively new and mint £725. Tel: 00 3531 4591432 (Dublin)

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ARCAM DELTA 150 Naim stereo TV tuner £175 o.n.o. mincondition; also pair LS3/5a speakers built from Wilmslow audio kit, teak veneer finish £60. Tel: 0181 508 3909 (evenings)

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AUDIOLAB 8000C plus pair 8000M latest £1200; DPA Little Bit III X display £250, Proac Studio 100 £479. Quad 66/606 X display £1290. Cyrus Three amplifier £399. Aura TU50 tuner £179. Arcam Delta 70/3 CD £275. Tel: Objective Audio 01279 426647 or 0973 452368

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THE TUBE PREAMP COOKBOOK by Allen Wright. Reviewed by Andy Grove in HiFi World's August supplement "just about everything you need to know about what goes into an amplifier". Price £20 (inc UK P&P) from Vacuum State Electronics (UK) PO Box 4016, Pangbourne, Reading RG8 8UA. Fax 01734 845933. Email 100117.3434@Compuserve.com. Access/Visa accepted. Enquire for overseas agents/prices. Coming soon: The SuperCables Cookbook

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