

p. Jones

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CALLING all students! If you've been struggling to save up the readies necessary for a Midi or Micro system to keep the music flowing, think again. Instead of shelling out on electronics which qualify as 'mid' rather than 'hi-fi', invest in one of our three student systems this month, which prove that superb sound doesn't have to cost an arm and a leg. From under £300 up to £500, these set-ups get the best from either vinyl or CD, and they won't make your room look like an equipment warehouse.

Equally small and perfectly formed is the selection of portables we've rustled up now

that The Great British Summer is finally here. If MiniDisc warms your ears, take a look at Sharp's tiny MD-MS722H recorder. On the other hand, if CD tickles your fancy, there are four gifted machines from Kenwood, Panasonic, Aiwa and Goodmans.

Staying with the MD theme, we also have Kenwood's latest top recorder, the DMF-9020. This tasty device gets the most from MD with proprietary technology that provides a more natural, realistic sound.

Another fresh face in the world of hi-fi comes

from Castle, famous for their traditionally-styled and solidly built 'speakers. The Inversion 15 stand mounters mark a radical design departure with their tapered cabinets. Find out how they fare on page 51.



Jon Marks

How we test the products

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



<p>●●●●●</p> <p>OUTSTANDING - Superb sound, something we'd use ourselves.</p>	<p>●●●●●</p> <p>GOOD - Has strong merit. Well worth an audition.</p>	<p>●●●●●</p> <p>ADEQUATE - Mediocre in several areas. May be worth auditioning.</p>	<p>●●●●●</p> <p>POOR - Seriously flawed. Not worth considering.</p>
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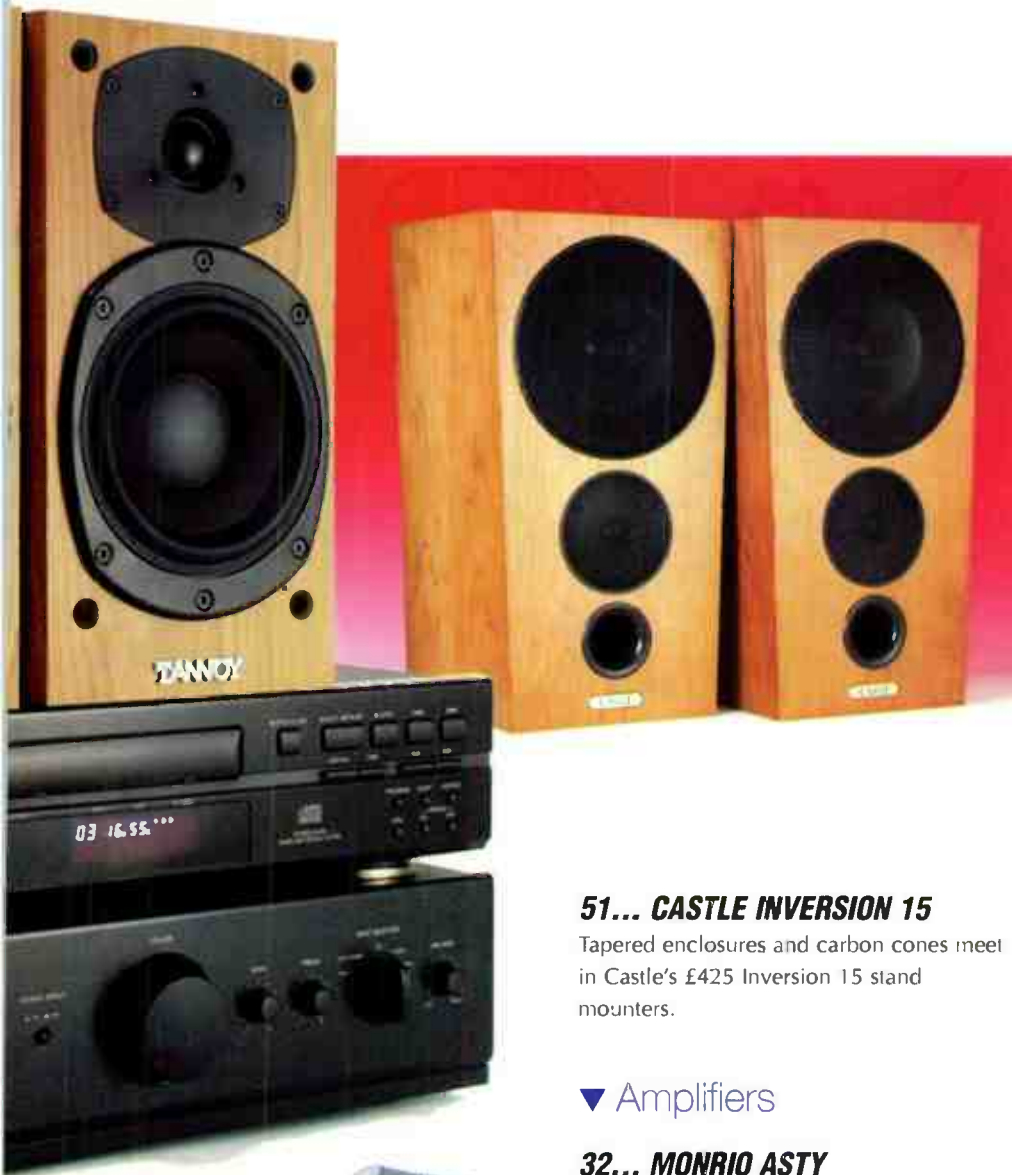
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Musical Fidelity X-P100 Pre	£800
Musical Fidelity X-AS100 Pwr	£800
Wilson Benesch Orator Spkrs	£2900
System Price	£5300
Minimum Deposit	£530
Maximum Balance	£4770

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Krell 250CD CD Player	£2490
Krell 300i Integrated Amp	£2495
Martin Logan Aerius i Spkrs	£2199
System Price	£7184
Minimum Deposit	£724
Maximum Balance	£6460

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Now, from the minds at Mirage, comes the all-new AVS-Series MicroSystem - a perfectly balanced blend of front and rear surround satellite speakers and matching center channel, that is winning rave reviews both for the power of its performance and the compactness of its componentry.



HOME CINEMA CHOICE
A.M.A.S. WINNER 1998



▲ One of four new amplifiers is the PM6010 OSE, which will set you back £230 when it goes on sale in August. Its four source inputs (including an MM phono stage and tape monitor switch) sit upstream of a 50watt power amp stage. The technology used in the '6010 OSE apparently improves its ability to drive 'speakers with low sensitivities.



▲ The £1200 DR-17 (available from September) offers HDCD copy and playback through an HDAM output stage, double-speed finalisation and automatic sample-rate selection.

MILLENNIAL MARANTZ

BUSINESS partners Marantz and Tannoy recently chose the sunny climes of Southern Italy to announce to the British press their production plans for the turn of the Millennium. Ken Ishiwata, audio guru and leading visionary of Marantz, was present in Naples to demonstrate some of the 20-plus goodies they intend to introduce by the end of the year 2000.

Although part of the Philips group, and therefore linked with Sony in Super Audio CD development, no prototype Marantz SACD player was unveiled, although the company remains supportive of the technology.

Of the four CD players in the 'New Century' range, the CD6000 (£250) is the



replacement for the popular CD-67 MkII and, like all the new players, is compatible with CD-RW playback and can accommodate CD Text information.

Also available from August is the £300 CD6000 OSE (pictured), which replaces the CD-67 MkII OSE (Original Special Edition). Demo listening showed the '6000 OSE to be a solid and musical performer, with the rhythmic grip you'd expect from Marantz. And in case you're wondering, the CD-63mk II KI-Signature

remains at present, with no replacement planned as yet.

Figures show that sales of digital recorders are rising sharply, a fact which hasn't escaped Ken Ishiwata who feels all Marantz playback-only CD machines could eventually be replaced by recording models. As a result, joining the existing CDR-700 is a high-end CD-RW recorder in the Premium range. The £1200 DR-17 (available from September) offers HDCD copy and playback through an HDAM output stage, double-speed finalisation and automatic sample rate selection.

▼ The DVD890 is the first DVD player from the Marantz stable. Released in June, it is Dolby Digital, DTS and MPEG compatible and has Tru Surround with Sound Retrieval System (SRS). Included in the £500 price is the ability to play all audio CD standards as well as Video CDs and DVDs.



▲ Marantz's second-generation CD-17.



Marantz
Kingsbridge House,
575-583 Bath Road,
Longford,
Middx. UB7 0EH
Tel: 01753 680868



STAND AND DELIVER

IF you're on the look-out for harmonious hi-fi storage, Apollo Hi-Fi Furniture's new Real Wood Soprano might be of interest. The rack, which can be had in any one of five wood veneers, consists of 6mm grey-tinted glass shelves on 44mm hardwood uprights fitted at their base with carpet-piercing spikes. The modular nature of the system means various shelf spacing

combinations are possible. The price of a four-tier Soprano in any finish is £275, with both Midi and Mini sizes catered for too.

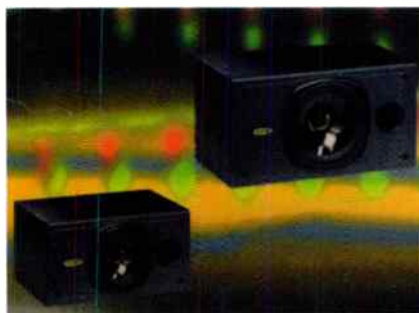
Apollo Hi-Fi Furniture
Tipton Road,
Dudley,
West Mids. DY1 4SQ
Tel: 0121 520 5070

THE RING OF SATURN

TANNOY recently pulled the wraps off their loudspeaker line-up for the coming season. While the existing Revolution and Mercury ranges are extended, the Saturn series (aimed at AV users) is wholly new to the scene.

The Saturns are split into two sections, one handling rear (S6LCR and S8LCR) and centre duties (S6C and S8C), the other dealing with front left and right channels (S6, S8 and S10). Whatever their function in life, all of the Saturns feature the same dual-concentric drivers which Tannoy fit to their studio monitors, the only differences being in size.

Smallest of these planetary bodies is the £500 S6, an 87cm. floor stander with a 165mm woofer underpinning a dual-concentric unit of the same size. Bigger



brother, the £700 S8, gains 10cms in height and moves up to 200mm diameter cones. Finally, the S10 with its 254mm drivers hits 112cms. and 27kgs. per cabinet in weight. Throughout the Saturns, polypropylene is employed in the LF cones and duralumin in the tweeters.

Moving the Revolution model count from one to three are the R2 and R3 floor standers. Like their smaller R1 sibling,



OH SOLUS MIO!

AIMED at providing a "new entry level" for their Sterling Reference systems, Ruark's Solus is a plush two-way stand mounter. Should you not be able to stretch to the £7000 Excalibur floor standers, the Solus with its 28mm textile-dome and 150mm mid/bass goes rather lighter on your wallet at £1200.

On the outside, a slate-textured front baffle is sandwiched between cheeks of real wood veneer (Natural Oak, Black Oak and Natural Cherry amongst others). The bi-wire terminals are gold-plated WBTs. Internally, multiple bracing has been included to minimise cabinet coloration and the crossover (at 3.6kHz) is wired with silver-plated OFC cable.

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

these boast 25mm soft-dome tweeters matched to paper-cone mid/bass units through a bi-wirable crossover. Unusually, where most manufacturers alter tweeter output level with resistors, Tannoy have opted for auto-transformers. Prices start at £200 for the R1 and rise to £350 and £550 for the R2 and R3 respectively.

Last of the list to grow in number are the Mercuries. In this case, m1, m2 and m3 are joined by mM (aka mMain, £300, for fronting AV systems), mC (mCentre, £100), mR (mRear, £80) and mSUB10 (mSubwoofer10, an active type with variable input filtering at £250).

Tannoy
Rosehall Ind. Estate,
Coatbridge,
Strathclyde ML5 4TF
Tel: 01236 420199

Crimson

Virtual Reality

P.O. Box 383 Brentwood Essex CM14 4GB
Tel: 01277 227355 Fax: 01277 224103 e-mail: info@virtual.demon.co.uk

campaign audio design



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Ring or write for details:-

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AUDIO EXCELLENCE *Sirameson* 01792 474608

BARTLETTS *Woking* 01483 771175

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[C U R A H I G H Q U A L I T Y
U D S P E A K E R S Y S T E M S]

NAKED AMBITION!

WHO said hi-fi advertising was boring? Down in deepest, darkest Gloucestershire, Acoustic Energy put all their effort into what they regarded as a subtly artistic advert for their 100 'SE' Series. Little did they expect to be on the receiving end of a complaint to the Advertising Standards Authority. The complaint was lodged that it supported the "stereotypical view of women as sex objects". AE's Sales & Marketing Manager, Neil Truckell, claimed in response that the ad was "designed with particular emphasis being placed on the notion of beauty, whilst always maintaining the highest levels of taste and quality".

AE emerged victorious from the case, with the adjudication stating that the image wasn't deemed to be 'gratuitous'.



Despite all the rumpus, the advert was a success for AE, prompting an "unprecedented level of requests for more information" - about the 'speakers, presumably.



DTS 4 DVD

THE new DVD-2500 DVD player from Denon mixes audiophile components with DTS compatibility. As confirmed in their flagship DVD-5000, Denon regard audio reproduction to be every bit as important as picture quality, so they have liberally sprinkled high-grade electrolytic and film capacitors throughout the audio circuits and power supply of the '5000.

Mechanically as well as electronically this machine has come in for some extra attention to minimise resonance in the chassis and the front panel. A so-called

'black' circuit board apparently increases heat dissipation and reduces vibration too. Other features include an S-Video output, two SCART connections and optical and coaxial digital outputs. The DVD-2500 is available now priced at £499.99.

**Hayden Labs,
Chiltern Hill,
Chalfont St. Peter,
Gerrards Cross,
Bucks. SL9 9UG
Tel: 01753 888447**



THE VIRTUE OF VALVES

LONG-TERM Swedish valve fans Copland have a new addition to their range of amplification. Evolutionary rather than revolutionary, the £1698 CTA 402 integrated valve amplifier builds on the strengths of its predecessor, the 10-year-old 401.

Squeezing 35watts per channel from two pairs of matched EL34 pentodes, the 402 runs "very close to Class A" in ultra-linear mode. Where most thermionic gear struggles into low-impedance loads, Copland say that the 402 will work with loudspeakers which dip as low as 2.5ohms. Helping here are the mains (a 500VA toroidal) and output transformers, these last E/I parts made of soft iron laminations with welded sections to ensure close coupling between primary and secondary.

Icing the 402's cake are an improved MM phono stage (now with lower noise) and switchable remote control. To maximise performance, the microprocessors dealing with signals from the handset can be turned off completely to eliminate digital noise and its impact on the analogue circuitry.

**Copland
Xena Audio AB,
Idavägen 5,
35246 Växjö,
Sweden
Tel: +46 (0)470 729215**

NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE

Here's just a wafer-thin cross-section of what to expect next month:

CD RECORDER GROUP TEST

We round up five CD-R machines from the likes of Philips, Marantz, Pioneer and Traxdata to find the top digital recorder.

DENON DVD-2500 VS PIONEER DV-717

If you've got £500 to spend on DVD/CD machinery, these two sleek new players from Denon and Pioneer should be on your shopping list.

VESTAX BDT-2000 TURNTABLE

Can this stylish-looking DJ deck make it in the world of domestic hi-fi? Vinylphiles can discover the answer in four weeks.

AudiophileAcademy



Calling all students! If it's time to trade in your tired ghetto blaster for a serious set-up, you need to hear our three bargain systems.

LIFE may not be easy for students in these days of pay-back grants, but one consolation is that a life in academia normally means more time to listen to music than most other audio-philes. The grey cloud to this silver lining is that revising or partying to the sound of a plastic biscuit box with cheap drivers and 300mW of useful power is about as much fun as watching paint dry.

The hurdle, as ever, is how do you sort out your sounds without breaking the bank? For many, the only choice seems to be lashing out on a Midi with more flashing lights than Heathrow airport during peak hours. While this sort of equipment might go louder, it's more about quantity than quality, taking you right back to square one.

Rather than going for the all-in-one solution, the best route to travel is the road to separates. In the past this would have involved shelling out some considerable amounts of cash, but CD players, amps and loudspeakers with a genuine hi-fi pedigree can now be had for less than £100 each.

Our first £300 combination of components shows just how far a limited budget will stretch these days. Heading the threesome is Technics' SL-PG590 remote control CD player, priced at a measly £120.

Sneaking in below the ton at £99 is Cambridge's A1 Mk3 integrated amplifier (reviewed in July 1998) with its 30watts per channel output. The final link is Tangent's Monitor 5 loudspeakers, which sell for £60. Stringing these together are 79-strand loudspeaker cable (available from shops like Maplin for well under £1/m.) and Monacor's Green interconnects at £5.50 (0.8m).

If your pocket has about £400 burning a hole in it, try Denon's DCD-435 CD player, their classic PMA-250SE amp (reviewed February 1997) and Tannoy's Mercury m1 loudspeakers (see our June 1998 issue). Wiring comes courtesy of Monacor once again and CableTalk Talk 3.1 loudspeaker cable (£2.50/m.) And remember, prices can vary from shop to shop, so it's worth searching out the keenest prices.

Our third entry is one for the committed vinylist, comprising as it does Project's 1.2 turntable package (£200), Rotel's RA-931 integrated with MM phono stage (£150) and Mission's 771 stand mounters (£170). Cabling is SonicLink's £15 Bonus and Talk 3.1 once more. This brings the total for our last system up to about £550, the exact sum dependent on how long your cabling needs to be.



THE CAST

- Technics SL-PG590 CD player
- Cambridge A1 Mk3 amplifier
- Tangent Monitor 5 loudspeakers
- 79-strand loudspeaker cable
- Monacor Green interconnects

THE RESULTS

Considering that our in-house reference system costs about £6000 in total, I had been expecting a bit of an aural culture-shock listening to this system, but I was surprised to find that, as far as enjoyability was concerned, these three budget components never shamed themselves.

Even fresh out of the box they all performed in a highly musical way with discs like that old chestnut, **Eric Bibb and Needed Time's Good Stuff**. The combined warmth of the Cambridge and Monacor Green necessitated a small treble boost, but with this tonal tweak the results were impressive.

One of the most likable traits of this set-up after its musicality was its transparency. On *Saucer And Cup* the Technics, Cambridge and Tangents served up a well-defined sound stage with plentiful detail and width, even if the last was a little too cinematic to be strictly accurate. **Eric Bibb's** plucked guitar went to show that dynamics were not a problem for this bunch either, part of the reason this instrument sounded so convincing being the low cabinet coloration of the Monitor 5s, whose small panels added hardly any mid/bass honk or vocal blurring.

Cranking up the pressure with *Nothing Like You Used To Do* with its powerful double-bass and percussion, I tried to trip this system up. In spite of the lack of bass grunt and a slight loss of focus as the mix grew more complicated, what was emerging from the Tangents maintained the strengths it had manifested before - musicality, control and detail. Another minor adjustment to the tone controls provided a balance that my ears were happy with. Helping here was the fact that the Bass and Treble on the A1 Mk3 offer sensible amounts of boost and cut.

When it came to muscle music, **Grace Jones Slave To The Rhythm** was first choice. The massive scale of some of the tracks on this CD has a habit of causing confusion in cheap electronics and 'speakers, but not this time. Always eminently listenable, this system had no real difficulties dealing with the crisp but extremely busy production on the title

track, only a lightness to the synthesiser basslines and lack of absolute smack and impact betraying the extremely affordable nature of these components.

The most testing of genres, Classical, was also handled with a poise and confidence which genuinely outstripped what you might expect from some pricier, less synergetic systems. An HDCD copy of **Stravinsky's Firebird** may be a wonderfully clear and enjoyable disc to start with, but the majority of mid-price equipment saps life and colour from it, leaving it sounding bland and mechanical. Showing up these sub-standard performers, the Tangents, Technics and Cambridge rustled up a broad spectrum of tonal colour that worked particularly well on brass and strings. Aside from a touch of fizz to cymbals, the overall results, especially the sound stage width and depth, really were very good.

The final stamp of approval was applied by **John Lee Hooker's Boom Boom**. His guitar playing was as powerful and effective as ever, and the sweetness of this system's presentation didn't get in the way of the requisite gravel growl to vocals. Factor in the ability to communicate the full Blues emotion of this album and you won't get better than this

unless you're prepared to move up to our second system this month.

UPGRADE POTENTIAL

- 1) Try replacing Monacor's Green interconnect with the Bonus from SonicLink (£15 for 1m.)
- 2) Move up to new loudspeaker cable - CableTalk's Talk 4 (£4.25/m) or DNM's Reson (£6.95/m).
- 3) If the Tangents aren't on stands, a pair of Atacama's SE24s (£70) would be a major step forward.

GETTING IN TOUCH

- Technics, tel: 01344 862444
- Cambridge, tel: 0171 827 9827
- Tangent, tel: 0500 828620
- Monacor, tel: 0181 452 0161



THE CAST

- Denon DCD-435 CD player
- Denon PMA-250SE amplifier
- Tannoy Mercury m1 loudspeakers
- CableTalk 3.1 loudspeaker cable
- Monacor Green interconnect

THE RESULTS

As a long-term fan of both Denon's PMA-250SE and Tannoy's m1s, I knew there was a certain inevitability to the selection of the parts in this system. Having heard this amp and 'speakers on many an occasion, I realised this was a combo which could outperform all others at the price and needed just a decent CD player to fill it out.

With the DCD-435 in place, I was happy to hear this trio gelling easily, the whole definitely greater than the sum of the parts. Particularly appealing were

the speed and impact which dynamics had, albums like **Joe Beard** and **Ronnie Earl's Blues Union** thumping out of the m1s in truly Rockin' fashion.

It wasn't only blood and guts, though, these components going about their duties with a transparency and delicacy which are very hard to find in this price bracket. The lion's share of the credit here goes to the PMA-250SE, whose natural tonal balance and tonal finesse have helped maintain its best-selling status.

These talents were at their most obvious on **Eric Bibb and Needed Times'** album, where mandolin, guitar and bazuki all had a harmonic resolution which budget 'speakers with their cheap tweeters normally gloss over completely. There was also a freedom from the top-end roll-off or fizz that most low-cost electronics inflict on a signal, which at least partly explained the sense of scale and effortless delivery of this set-up.

The Denon and Tannoys really earned their spurs when they faced up to **Eiji Oue** at the helm of the **Minnesota Orchestra** performing **Stravinsky's Firebird Suite**. With its lucidity, musicality, dynamics and tonal colour, this gathering of equipment produced a wonderfully realistic picture of an entire orchestra squeezed into

our listening room. There was plenty of depth as well as width to the sound stage, the various sections of the orchestra clearly distinguished from each other. And if you're wondering just how low the m1s can go, low enough was the answer provided by the timpani, whose thunderous beats came through with satisfying extension, even though we're not talking sub-woofer territory here, of course.

Rimsky-Korsakov's Scheherazade served to hammer home the point that this system was a real professional when it came to handling music which spans the spectrum from low-level subtlety all the way up to huge climaxes. The way it communicated the emotional content of recordings was an added, vital bonus. So often a set-up does the 'nuts and bolts' of bass, midrange and treble adequately only to rank in the interest stakes on the same level as watching a nail rust. If you're after a hi-fi which has you spending a large chunk of your disposable income on CDs rather than accessories, this one wins hands down.

Separation was another strength manifested when I slipped **The Chemical Brothers' Setting Sun** into the Denon. Vocals were securely located to the centre front of the sound stage while all the bass and sample pyrotechnics went on behind them without causing any intelligibility problems in spite of this single's extremely poor sound quality.

Denon's PMA-250SE might not be the most generously endowed watt-wise, but you'd never think it was running out of steam from the solidity and power of its presentation. Married to the excitement of the DCD-435 and the ability of the Mercury m1s, the result is maximum music all the way.

UPGRADE POTENTIAL

- 1) Try replacing Monacor's Green interconnect with the Chrysalis from The Chord Company (£30 for 1m.)
- 2) If you fancy splashing out on 'speaker cable, at £15/m. QED's Profile Silver 12 is one to consider.
- 3) A two-shelf rack like Target's Beta 2 II at £112 would be a sound investment.

GETTING IN TOUCH

- Denon, tel: 01753 888447
- Tannoy, tel: 01236 420199
- CableTalk, tel: 01276 686717



ultimate



THE CAST

- Pro-ject 1.2 turntable
- Rotel RA-931 amplifier
- Mission 771 loudspeakers
- CableTalk 3.1 loudspeaker cable

THE RESULTS

This system differs from the others here in more than just price and source format. While you can get away with plonking down a CD player on a level surface free from vibration, a record deck requires a little more nurturing to give of its best.

The Pro-ject 1.2 is at least less fiddly than a suspended sub-chassis turntable since it consists of a slab of MDF sitting on four compliant feet. All you really have to do is put the belt on, level the deck and get the arm ready for action. This includes a quick cartridge alignment and tracking pressure check with the

tools that come with the deck.

This system didn't take long to show why vinyl is still a sonically viable format. The Rotel's phono stage in tandem with the 1.2 produced surprisingly solid images and bass through the 771s. Yazoo's *You And Me Both* album, a classic slab of the black stuff from 1983, highlighted a rhythmic, punchy bottom-end and clear vocals that had me putting my pen to one side so that I could concentrate on the music instead.

Emphasising the chalk and cheese presentations of budget record decks and CD players was the solidity and impact of the basslines of songs such as *Mr Blue* and *Nobody's Diary*. CD has the edge when it comes to a general lack of coloration, but LP pulls ahead easily when it comes to the weight and realism of the lower frequencies in particular. And once the cartridge had had a few of its rougher edges polished off

after 12 or 15 hours' use, the midrange and treble were equally appealing, both nicely detailed and more tangible than what often emanates from CD.

Upping the odds with *Skunk Anansie's Stoosh* album, I found the Mission/Pro-ject/Rotel combo happy to handle some of the loudest grooves committed to vinyl. With its ability to scale wide-ranging dynamics, the 1.2 had no trouble differentiating the soft bits from the very, very loud bits on tracks like *We Love Your Apathy* and *Yes It's F**king Political*. On a more subtle note, the sombre string backing to *Infidelity* was rendered with delicacy in spite of the heavy drum beat which punctuates this number.

A spot of minor tweaking which proved worthwhile involved removing the cartridge's flip-down stylus guard by prizing it off carefully with a small screwdriver. This lowers the mass at the headshell, thereby allowing the counterweight to be moved in closer to the arm pivot, reducing its moment of inertia and cleaning up the sound generally.

Mozart's flute concerto No1 in G major gave this set-up the chance to handle something of a more acoustic nature and, apart from a slight wiriness to strings, it acquitted itself very well. With minimum arm bias, the result was lilting music unencumbered by excessive surface noise.

If you're still into vinyl and most of your collection consists of Dance, worry not. Discs like *Moloko's Do You Like My Tight Sweater* were fast, funky and crisp. In fact, whatever you play on it, this threesome will keep you busily ploughing through your record collection.

UPGRADE POTENTIAL

- 1) Try replacing the 1.2's standard cartridge with Goldring's 1006GX (£65) or even DNM's Mica (£135).
- 2) Invest in a proper isolation platform like Goldring's Sound Absorber (£130).
- 3) Although the RA-931 is a fine amp, an outboard phono stage like Rotel's own RQ-970BX (£170) would offer a major improvement and work with any future turntable upgrades too.

GETTING IN TOUCH

- Pro-ject, tel: 01491 834700
- Rotel, tel: 01908 317707
- Mission, tel: 01480 451777



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World Radio History

MUSICAL MOBILITY

Simon Pope dons track suit and trainers and heads for the streets in a quest to find the best CD portable around £100.

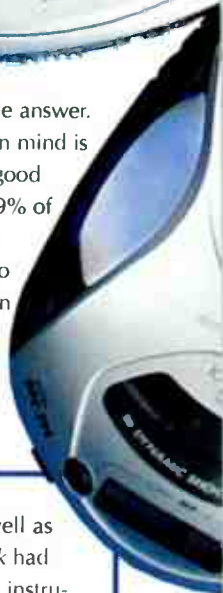
WELL, summer is allegedly here and the time is apparently right for dancing in the street. But how will you be inspired to trip the light fantastic with the drab sounds that emanate from cheap portable tape players? If you're after the ultimate in sounds on the move, here's a quartet of polished pocket CD players at £80-£100. The combatants come from the likes of Kenwood (XP-V74), Panasonic

(SL-SX410), Aiwa (DPC-395) and Goodmans (GCD90K).

CD portables are forever becoming smaller and more stylish, their anti-shock mechanisms are increasingly effective and battery life is rising. MiniDisc sales might be soaring, but when it comes down to the availability of pre-recorded software, there's no comparison. If the idea of shelling out on an MD recorder and spending hours transferring your CDs doesn't

grab you, these portables are the answer.

One extra expense to bear in mind is earphones. Regardless of how good the players themselves are, 99.9% of them are held back by the sub-standard earphones supplied. So in addition to those that came in the box, I plugged in a pair of £30 Grado SR40s and then wired the players up to a home system.



AIWA XP-V74 £80

This chunky device looks like it means serious technological business: it has a claimed 21-hour battery life and an anti-shock system which can be toggled between 10 and 40 seconds. In everyday use the latter ate through battery power quickly but ensured that even a day out on a roller-coaster would have a hard time joggling the Aiwa.

On the facilities side, there are a two-level DSL (Dynamic Super Linear) Bass and a natty remote with an LCD display that is backlit like the one on the player itself. This gobbles power too, but who cares, it looks great!

Thankfully, the XP-V74 doesn't sound

bad either. The ace up its sleeve is the two settings of the bass control. Feeling that the balance was rather thin without any boost, I switched in the first of the two and discovered it worked a treat, filling out the lower frequencies and adding some warmth further up.

Sampling **Beth Orton's *Trailer Park*** album, I came across a natural rendition uncommon amongst portables, one that was confirmed when I hooked the Aiwa up to my main system. The only minor disappointment was, as it had been with the Technics, some dynamic compression.

GOODMANS GCD90K £69.99

In days of yore Goodmans were renowned for their relatively high-end components, especially drive units. They still make separates as well as a large range of mobile machinery such as the GCD90K, which stands out here because it comes with an in-car mounting kit instead of the customary rechargeable battery. A pick-up in a cassette shell plugs into your dashboard cassette machine and power comes from the car's own battery.

The Goodmans' cosmetics don't come up to the standard of Panasonic or Aiwa, but its sound quality was impres-

sive, with good bass depth as well as clarity. **Beth Orton's *Trailer Park*** had plenty of drive and the acoustic instruments were relayed more clearly than I would have expected from an £80 portable. In addition to the tight bass, treble was smooth and sweet and there were decent amounts of detail and separation, which allowed Dance music to pump along rhythmically.

On the move the GCD90K was a secure performer thanks to its 20-second anti-shock system. In addition, track selection was commendably smooth and fast. The Goodmans' sound quality more than makes up for the uninspiring aesthetics and lack of batteries.





either love or hate. Either way, for a portable the construction is on a par with others at the price and all the traditional features are included: bass boost, 10-second anti-skip memory and a remote. Playback is quoted at a not insubstantial 25 hours.

The DPC-395 is possibly the friendliest player of the four here - it actually flashes up "hello" on the screen when powered up.

Unfortunately, you have to have sharp sight to read this message as the display is tiny.

When it came to sound the Kenwood wasn't the strongest of the group - without a lift in the bass it was thin and tinny. Sadly, pressing the BB button swung things too far the other way. The golden mean was with the volume low and the boost on, not the most inspiring of conditions to listen to music in as involvement and detail both suffered.

Kenwood's DPC-395 has build and appearance on its side, but sonically it's not going to threaten the other three members of our group test.

PANASONIC SL-SX410 £99.99

This snazzy metallic blue creation is by far the thinnest (at 21.5mm) and lightest of the group. Its main attraction, apart from the tasty looks, is an amazing quoted playback time of 41 hours (with the supplied rechargeable batteries). On top of this are an efficient 10-second anti-shock buffer, an S-XBS Extra Bass System and a three-key remote.

While the Technics' size is sure to be one of its selling points, it also means

the controls can be fiddly and the display is difficult to read. Get past these hurdles, though, and you'll be greeted by an expansive presentation which possesses better bass than the competition without having to resort to S-XBS.

Through Grado SR40 headphones **Beth Orton's Trailer Park** album had a controlled, cohesive sound. Dynamics were a bit on the limited side, as is often the case with portable machines, and this detracted from 'serious' listening as I discovered when I connected the SL-SX410 to Cambridge's A1 Mk3 integrated amp and a pair of Heybrook Optimas. The Panasonic managed to make up lost ground when it came to choral music, where it produced very musical, engaging and finely-detailed results, with the voices clean and precise.

The two EQ settings, one the aforementioned S-XBS, the other a very peculiar "Live", are largely irrelevant since the Panasonic works well without them. The only time you might need the first is when you're listening at low levels.

Quite why "Live" was even included is beyond me - it's like a cross between chorus and flange effects with a splash of wide panning for extra measure. The only way you could match this would be by standing two miles back from the second stage at the Reading Festival in a strong head wind!



KENWOOD DPC-395 £99.95

Kenwood have a history of, erm, uniquely-styled portables and the DPC-395 is no exception. It goes for that 'sporty spaceship' look that potential buyers will



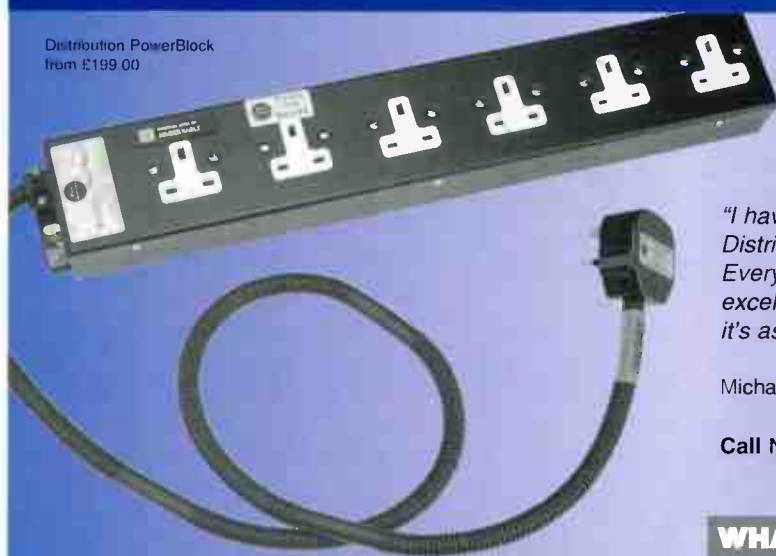
contacts

- Aiwa 5 Heathrow Summit Centre, West Drayton, Middx. UB7 0LY Tel: 0181 897 7000
- Goodmans Industry Ltd Units 2-3, Mitchell Way, Portsmouth PO3 5PR Tel: 02392 391004
- Kenwood Dwight Road, Watford, Herts. WD1 8EB Tel: 01923 816444
- Panasonic Willoughby Road, Bracknell, Berks. RG12 4PF Tel: 01344 862444



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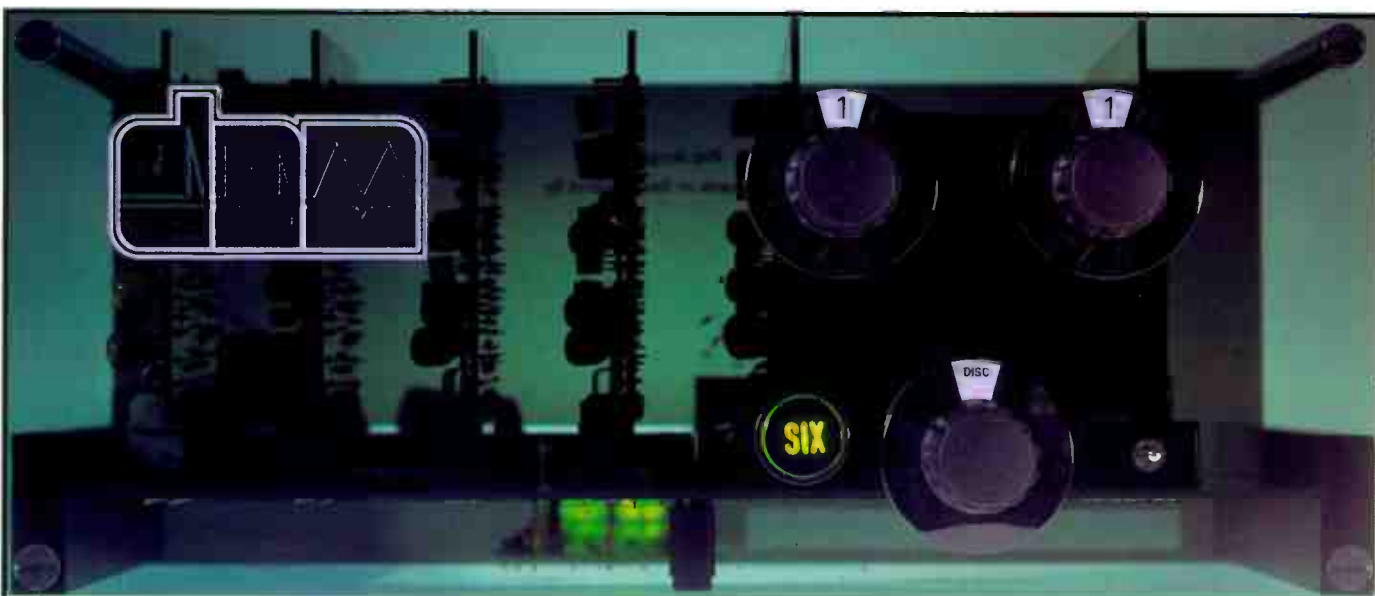
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B&W IN COLOUR

Noel Keywood looks at B&W's new Series 2 DM602 loudspeakers.

B&W'S new loudspeakers have attractive styling that strikes a neat balance between being modern yet at the same time slick and unobtrusive. After all, if you are going to spend a not inconsiderable £300 on a pair of loudspeakers that are supposedly the bees knees when it comes to technology, you're likely to want them to look the part. The DM602 S2s do.

There are neat plastic trims around the tweeter, the bass unit and over the front panel which contribute to the good standard of finish. The eye-catching woven cone of yellow Kevlar sets off the textured front panel nicely, and carries a bullet-shaped dust cap that radiates high frequencies. And as our measurements showed, it goes low too, the DM602 S2 having been designed to work at least 1.5m. away from side and rear walls. Putting it closer to a wall will most likely result in bass boom.

Above the mid/bass unit sits the metal-dome tweeter, its output controlled by a shallow 'dish'. This takes over from the main driver as it starts to roll off above 4kHz. I have felt B&W's previous metal domes to be harsh and others have apparently felt likewise. Happily B&W have uprated this tweeter significantly, adding a loading tube at the rear as well as a better suspension system.

DRIVEN BY Musical Fidelity's X-A1 integrated, the property that first struck me about these loudspeakers was their considerable clarity with vocals. I could easily understand **Gabrielle's** lyrics, a surprise because her husky voice doesn't invariably make itself plain on her eponymous album. Projection and definition of vocals was conspicuously clear. The flip side was the way her rich, warm tones came with some added sharpness and sibilance, including an overly prominent 'schhh' that was none too attractive.

With use I found the DM602s sounded pleasantly bright and transparent most of the time; their Kevlar cones have a sweet



tonality reminiscent of carbon fibre. However, largely due to the tweeter, some of the artificialities and electronic contrivance behind *Temptation Waits* from **Garbage** were over-emphasized.

THE BIGGER a loudspeaker gets, the more bass it provides (so runs the theory), and the DM602 S2s have been designed to give 'floor stander' quantities of bass. With my bass cap on, I returned to **Garbage** and *Temptation Waits*.

With synthesized low-frequency content I found the 'speakers gave the sort of massive bass presence you'd expect from a sizeable enclosure, but with a less artificial, more tuneful bassline the DM602s failed to shine. There was relatively little note differentiation to be heard on **Angelique Kidjo's** *Sound Of Drums*. I could feel that the track had bass, but what it was doing was less easy to pin down.

When I shifted source material to Classical, I could make out the cabinets getting in on the act along with the drivers. Some boxiness made itself felt when excited by the horns of the Chicago Symphony orchestra's *Scheherazade*. In addition, I'd expected violins to suffer from treble prominence, but instead I found individual string instruments clearly

distinguished, with a welcome absence of 'shriek'.

The DM602 S2s were certainly strong in the imaging and sound stage departments. Controlled dispersion meant the sound was consistent across a wide range of listening positions. Indeed, a realistic sound stage was the great strength of the B&Ws. On the con side, tweeter output is a bit high, making the 'speakers bright and at times a little harsh. My only other serious caveat would be that, considering their bass output, positioning them for the best tonal balance is going to be tricky as they were quite room-sensitive.

B&W DM602 S2 £299.95

B&W Loudspeakers
Marlborough Road,
Churchill Ind. Estate,
Lancing,
W. Sussex. BN15 8TR
Tel: 01903 750750

WORLD VERDICT

A fair design that needs partnering with smooth amplification in a well-furnished room.

Measured Performance see page 119

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Raise A Sharp

Fearless Interplanetary Ace Richard White tries out Sharp's space-age 722 portable MiniDisc recorder.

WE'RE on a special mission this month. Earth Control has received an SOS from President Kleeg of the planet Zorx, so it's all scramble for the Silver Soarer with Professor Einburger (Chief Scientist) already on board, as is the lovely Ophelia Anyplace (Medical Officer). Join us as we throttle back the retro-blasters and head for warp speed!

In case the above hints aren't broad enough, Sharp's 722 portable MiniDisc recorder bears more than a passing resemblance to everything you've ever dreamt an intrepid inter-galactic warrior might require. Supplied with the highly-covetable main unit is a transformer for recharging the internal battery and a handy adaptor for an external AA cell. In addition, a very necessary mini-jack to phono interconnect and an optical connector are standard. And at a time when many manufacturers manage to make the cheapest materials look expensive, I'm happy to report that the 722's half-pound weight is encased in real brushed alloy.

Both the recorder itself and the remote can be 'locked' to prevent inadvertent track changing when either unit is in your pocket. The remote has a duplicate LCD screen for track information, so there's a risk of falling down a man-hole or running into a lamp-post if you're not careful on the move (some simulated brisk exercise failed to unseat the 40-second Shock Resistant memory). The sole disappointments were the cheapish earphones.

To establish a base camp before trying to record anything, I had an earful of Sony's Classical MD Sampler, a broad collection which has the advantage of being



recorded, as it were, straight from the horse's mouth. Jupiter from Holst's Planets was given a very fair show, even through the earplugs; playing the whole lot again through a 'proper' system demonstrated that a good pre-recorded in the 722 will give a good result; not super-fi, maybe, but of a decent general standard.

Having set the scene, I slipped in a blank TDK disc and gave the 722 a run for its money as a recorder. **The Hanover Band's** complete **Beethoven** symphonies on CD gave a fine impression of both the power and clarity available with MiniDisc recording. It is almost true to say that the Sharp didn't drop a stitch - with a digital source it took quite

careful listening to distinguish one from t'other thanks to the Sharp's 24-bit resolution ATRAC system.

A tougher test was presented by **Trevor Pinnock's** 1980 vinyl recording of the **Goldberg** variations; as usual, a high-grade analogue source is the pace-setter for recordings. Mr **Pinnock's** harpsichord brushed off a little of its bubble and sparkle in the process, but beside this

there were few of the digital nasties common to MD up until a year or so back.

For a varied bill of fare the radio is hard to beat. Once I'd unglued my dial from Radio Three, I tried a few rather more up-to-the-minute stations. The heavily synthesized sounds and enhanced vocals of Radio 1 seemed to present no problems to the Sharp; playback was slightly less spiky and treble-biased than the original, but there was not much in it with this sort of material.

Considered as a very well-endowed portable, the Sharp 722 has a lot to boast about for those hours spent commuting from galaxy to galaxy. With a little time and trouble, and a pair of quality interconnects, the unit could earn space as a very versatile recorder in a domestic, or even an interplanetary, hi-fi system.

Sharp MD-MS722H £230

**Sharp Electronics UK
Customer Information,
Tel: 0800 262958**



WORLD VERDICT

Flash looks with solid build. First-class portable with domestic potential, but it isn't cheap.

Measured Performance see page 119

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HHB's little Circle 3 actives hope to follow in the footsteps of their bigger Circle 5 brothers by frightening the competition. Jon Marks gets scared.

“Cute” is not normally the sort of word you’ll find on the lips of people in audiophile circles (sorry, couldn’t help the pun), but there’s no denying HHB’s Circle 3s have this rare quality. These tiny boxes with their textile tweeter and purple mid/bass have that air of small and desirable that crops up more commonly in portable gear.

Heft one of these little cabinets and you’ll realise these are no key-fob transducers. Inside each box are two power amplifiers (rated at 60watts “programme” for the bass and another 30watts for the tweeter). These ICs are bolted to the inside of the purple back panel (mounted on rubber grommets to isolate it from vibration) along with a toroidal mains transformer and the PCB which carries the active crossover components.

The two drivers are knit together at 3.5kHz with Sallen and Key filters. HHB’s literature claims the circuitry is constructed from low-noise semi-conductors and 1% resistors. Input connection is by either phono plug or XLR selectable by a rear-panel switch. The only other features are the Master Volume control, an On/Off switch and the IEC mains socket.

Providing a synergetic system match to put the HHBs through their paces were Musical Fidelity’s XP-100 pre-amp, Teac’s P-30 transport and an Alchemist TS-D-1 converter.

IT DIDN’T TAKE the Circle 3s long to confirm that their sound was, thankfully, closely related to that of their larger brothers, the Circle 5s. Since that diminutive mid/bass cone is housed in an equally small, non-ported enclosure, bass extension was never going to be furniture-rattling, and it wasn’t. But, apart from a woolliness in the lowest octaves, what there was displayed the usual active properties of speed and control on **Eric Bibb’s**



Good Stuff album. And considering that these ‘speakers are aimed at less than large home studios with minimal acoustic treatment, thunderous bass would be one of the least appropriate additions.

Where the HHBs played size to their advantage was in areas such as imaging and sound staging, which were both clear and well-proportioned, especially on lightweight numbers like *Saucer And Cup* and the more balladic moments of **Joe Beard’s Blues Union** CD. The tweeter didn’t let the side down either, as its clarity and lack of harshness, along with the tonal naturalness of the internal amplification, resulted in a presentation that had none of the fatiguing edge that you often find in professional monitors.

Two very different recordings, one HDCD of **Stravinsky’s Song Of The Nightingale**, the other **Skunk Anansie’s Stoosh**, both benefitted from the Circle 3s’ immediacy, which gave all sorts of music a vitality and excitement that would be costly to replicate with passive ‘speakers and out-board amps. And even when the going got complex, there was sufficient separation to prevent all the various

instrumental and vocal lines becoming entangled.

At over £700, the Circle 3s are hardly cheap in material terms; although they save you splashing out on power amps and loudspeaker cables, they’re dinky boxes. If your listening room is limited space-wise, they would be a better choice than the Circle 5s. If your loudspeakers will be able to enjoy more room to breathe, then the bigger HHBs would be more appropriate.

HHB Circle 3 £594+VAT

HHB
73-75 Scrubs Lane
London NW10 6QU
Tel: 0181 862 5000

WORLD VERDICT

Revealing and engaging little ‘speakers but their bigger brothers are better if you have the space.

Measured Performance see page 118



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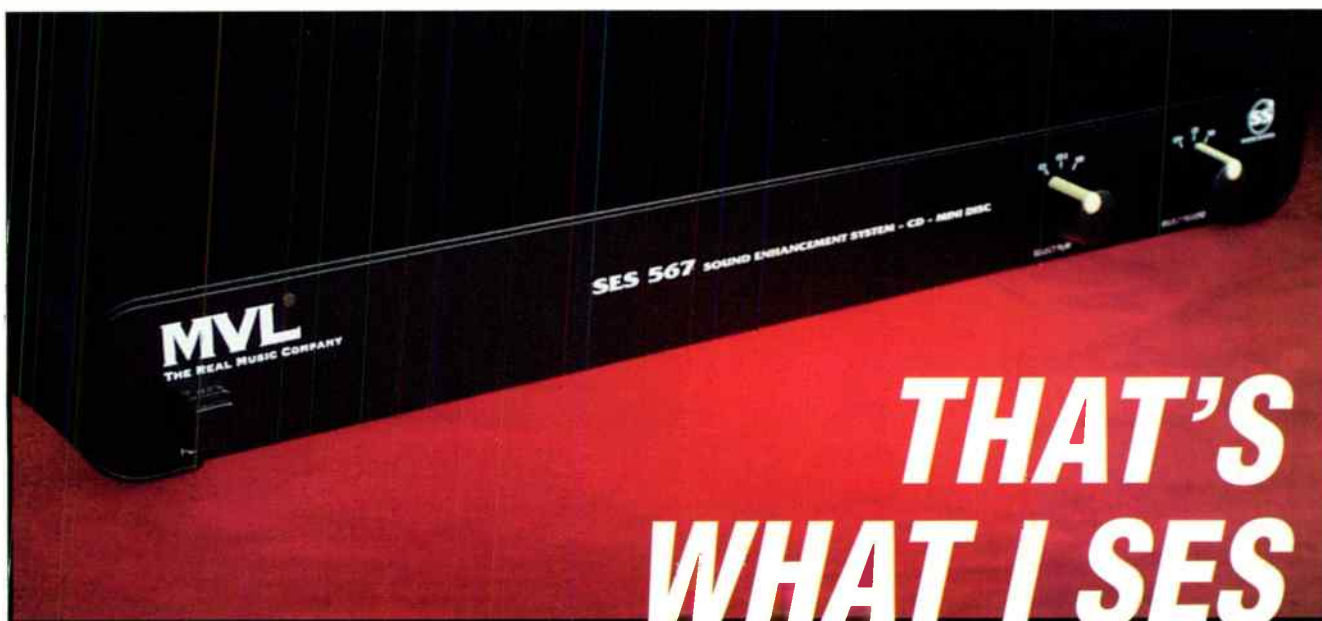
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**What's to do with domestic digital besides DACs?
Richard White does duty with MVL's SES 567
processor for CD and MD recorders.**

THERE'S always been a certain air of the dubious around mystery black boxes like MVL's SES 567 which plug into the signal path and claim to improve the final sound. After all, putting extra gubbins in the way of the music normally makes it sound worse. However, as Musical Fidelity's X-10D (admittedly a none too mysterious valve buffer) has shown, there can be more to this approach than sceptics might first assume.

For a start, some thought has been given to the home recordist's flexibility requirements. The MVL operates as an external switch box 'with attitude'. Up to three digital sources can be directly accommodated: plain CD, CD-Recordable and a MiniDisc recorder. Additionally, other sources such as the wireless and the gramophone can be plumbed in as usual via your pre-amplifier recording outlet. Basically, the whole thing works as an extended recording loop with extra control of source switching.

Unfortunately for analogue, once the MVL is joined up to the pre-amp there is no room for your Old Faithful tape recorder, but I'm afraid that seems to be the way things are going. If (being a millionaire) you have a good recordable CD machine and/or MiniDisc, it begs the question "Whither, (or even wither) cassette?"

SO WHAT IMPACT does the '567

actually have? Well, if you've never bemoaned the apparent toss-up between harsh or lacklustre with CD as it stands, you need read no further. If, on the other hand, you are often left feeling that surely there must be something which can be done about it, this might just be something. Let's not mistake what we're on about here: the MVL is intended subtly to give your digital recorder a more sporting chance of capturing the original material.

Willing to be convinced, I tried a straightforward playing session with our resident X-Ray. Although I have no complaint against this worthy player, it seemed to me that whatever processing was being applied was having a beneficial effect; the sound of the strings was less aggressive but retained the proper attack essential for correct articulation. Bass gave evidence of a fuller character without resorting to stodginess. In sum, the MVL seemed to have injected 'more' into the sonic mixture.

TAKING THINGS further with MiniDisc recording, I began with an Archiv vinyl record of Handel violin sonatas. Let it be noted that the recorder I was using claims 24-bit resolution, so it needs a careful touch to 'improve' this really quite reasonable sort of standard without it becoming obvious. Happily, the same deft touch was at work with recording as with playing. If the difference was

not so marked as with the plain CD player, the better general standard of 24-bit is probably responsible. Having said that, the difference in perceived quality between recordings I'd made with the same recorder without the MVL a couple of days before was quite marked.

Bearing this in mind, MVL have done well to encapsulate such ear-soothing circuitry in a convenient package. Separate play and record switches can have their uses if you wish to monitor something only sporadically, although all the old caveats about not arranging for a source to record its own output apply, unless of course you were going to re-plaster the ceiling anyway.

Perhaps the best way I can put it is to say that heard through the MVL, domestic digital recording became a shade more civilized. With the undeniable convenience of digital media, it needed but a splash of refinement to give a more (dare I write it?) 'analogue' sound to home recorders.

MVL SES 567 £195

**MVL Technology
Northfield Mill,
Wymondham,
Norfolk NR18 0DF
Tel: 01953 850800**

WORLD VERDICT



An intriguing box of tricks worth investigating for fans of digital recording.

Measured Performance see page 119

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ASTY SPUMANANTE

Simon Pope gets an affordable taste of the good life with Monrio's sparkling little Asty integrated.

I think it's safe to say that Italians are better known on the world stage for their Classical rather than their Rock, Pop or, heaven forbid, Rap music. This aspect of their musical character is reflected in the sound and style of their audio equipment. Companies such as Audio Analogue, Sonus Faber and Chario have made inroads into the British market with a selection of stylish and capable kit that's well suited to acoustic and Classical music.

Another name to join the illustrious line-up above is

Monrio. Their Asty is uncannily similar in looks to the Audio Analogue Puccini SE, one of our fave integrations. Described by Monrio as an "entry-level, high-end" integrated, it comes in a variety of flavours, one of which is the remote-controlled volume version here. Other added benefits over the standard item are a beefier power supply section, which employs a 300VA toroidal transformer, as well as assorted component tweaks.

EMPLOYING A ROKSAN Caspian CD player, Nordost Blue Heaven cable and Magneplanar SMGa 'speakers I began chipping away at the audio coal face. The

Asty made the glorious, shimmering orchestration of Ravel's *Danse Generale* from his *Daphnis et Chloe Suite No2* sparkle like freshly-polished Waterford crystal, its clean, transparent sound not unlike that of the Puccini SE. Percussion was another forte, triangle and cymbals

hovering out in my room ahead of the strings.

New Order's seminal *Movement* album found the Asty digging out a wealth of low-level detail without compromising on control and overall cohesion. Playing a part here was a tonal

balance where the bass was lean and dry, but at least what there was was taught and rhythmic. This meant the Monrio was adept with drumwork, which was driving and muscular rather than meaty but sluggish. Up in the midrange, vocals were securely located, their imaging subtle but precise, while the sound staging was naturally proportioned if not exactly all-enveloping.

THIS INTEGRATED is cast very much in the current Italian mould with a visual and sonic presentation that doesn't disappoint. If you like a chocolate rich sound to your hi-fi, then stick to chocolate rich

material because the Asty is about as revealing and uncoloured a sound as you can get for £500. It might lack some of the Puccini SE's innate musicality, but if you play sufficiently well-recorded discs in the first place then it's not a shortfall you'll notice. On brassy and percussive pieces there was also a touch of emphasis in the higher frequencies, but this could easily be eliminated through correct cable choice.

The Asty RM is an Italian with a talent for both Rock and Classical, bringing insight and space to any recording. What you get for your £500 is an amp that manages to be revealing without being too critical, so below-average discs never become unlistenable. It's not the most powerful of amplifiers (although it managed to drive the power-hungry Maggies) but its speed, transparency and build give it an edge over the competition.

Monrio Asty RM £500

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Iver,
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WORLD VERDICT



Attractive integrated that offers a glimpse of real high-end performance. touch bass light though.

Measured Performance see page 119

The Numbers Game

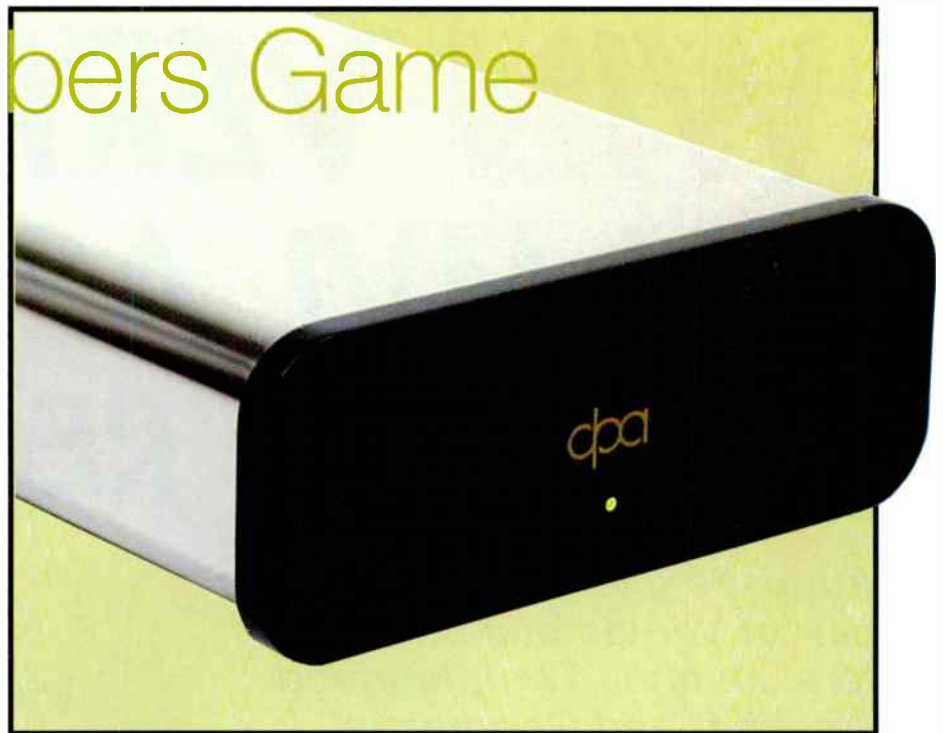
Jon Marks rediscovers his CD collection with help from DPA Digital's SX64 DAC.

YOU'RE not alone if you have been wondering what has become of DPA Digital since we reviewed their £8000 SX512 DAC back in June 1998. Happily for audiophiles, Rob Watts, the company's prolific designer, has not decided to hang up his boots and saunter off to a spot in the sun, leaving hi-fi behind. Now this Wales-based firm is back with the £800 SX64 DAC, which is constructed around DPA's proprietary Pulse Array Modulation conversion technique rather than off-the-shelf ICs.

Having lived with DPA's 50S pre-amp for many a year, and having laid ears on a lot of their digital components, I was expecting a chip off the old block in the SX64 with crisp, incisive treble, great midrange clarity and lean, fast bass. However, as our measurements had hinted, this silver-clad converter marks a departure from DPA Digital's customary engineering.

Where the company's previous efforts have turned in relatively poor distortion figures, with more spikes than a cross-country marathon, the new Pulse Array Modulation circuitry yields much cleaner graphs. More in keeping with tradition was the sharp lift in treble output above 8kHz, which on paper at least should add that characteristic DPA brightness to the sound.

Hooked up to a clocked Kenwood DP-X9010 transport via The Chord Company's Prodac digital cable, the SX64 turned in an enlightening performance.



On discs like Suzanne Vega's *Nine Objects Of Desire* and the Folk of Nick Drake's *Pink Moon*, there was none of the slight coarseness which has marred DPA's more affordable DACs. In fact, the SX64 brought to mind Pink Triangle's *Ordinal* with its new 24-bit filter, as both output a very smooth, organic signal.

The above wasn't the only difference at the top-end, where, in spite of the measured frequency response, there was no excessive brightness or sharpness. This meant the overall tonal balance of the SX64 was more even than that of its predecessors, which tended to favour high frequencies over low. This trait made CDs like Alanis Morissette's *Jagged Little Pill* much easier to listen to after the aural sand-blasting of its presentation through less gifted converters, even if the SX64 wasn't quite as obviously devoid of distortion as Denon's outstanding DVD-5000 DVD player with its Alpha Processing system.

One area where there has been no change is speed. Some electronics have

an unfortunate habit of sounding as though they're merely going through the motions; this DPA was nimble and lively when it was the Palladian Ensemble's turn to spin inside the '9010. This disc of trios for four proved that Classical posed no problems for the SX64, as its transparency, tonal finesse and sound-stage spaciousness dismissed those doubts which have lingered over the genre for the company's earlier components.

If you've lived a long time with older DPA gear, you might find you need a while to acclimatise to the sound of Pulse Array Modulation. It has a smoothness and poise which are quite a step forward, although it does mean that some of the excitement of Rock is diluted unless you swap your original cabling for something more 'in your face'. At the end of the day, though, the SX64 is a very polished DAC.

DPA Digital SX64 £800

DPA Digital
81 Dobbins Road,
Barry CF63 2NP
Tel: 01446 747288



WORLD VERDICT

Combines lack of grain and tonal richness with typical DPA speed and lucidity.

Measured Performance see page 119

WIN VERITAS 7 AN MVL A2+ AMP DELTA 901 RECORDER

August's give-away includes a pair of Veritas stand mounters, an MVL A2+ integrated amplifier and Goodmans' Delta 901 CMD CD player/MD recorder.

THIS month we celebrate the height of summer with a trio of top components. Heading the list are the Veritas 7 loudspeakers from Veritas Horn Systems.

These small two-ways rely on reflex loading rather than horn to get some useful bass extension from their diminutive cabinets. And where most boxes are built from a single layer of either Medium Density Fibreboard or plywood, the 7s are double-skinned in an attempt to cut down on enclosure coloration.

The piano black pair Simon Pope reviewed in our June edition earlier this year wore a handsome outer suit of 10mm solid hardwood. Beneath this was an 18mm MDF box which the custom Morel 5in. mid/bass unit fires into. Above it on the front baffle with its rounded edges (which reduce diffraction and sharpen imaging) is the SEAS 1in. textile-dome tweeter, joined to its partner through a crossover constructed with polypropylene capacitors and air-core inductors hard-wired directly to the bi-wire terminals.

Rap the Veritas 7s with your knuckles and you'll discover they're as dead as the

proverbial door nail. This much was confirmed during the course of the review as well, Simon commenting: "Their construction made for substantial bass that was as tight as a convention of accountants."

Higher up in the midrange, these stand mounters stayed on the pace: "Lead vocals were pristine as they emerged from between the loudspeakers, establishing an acoustic with a satisfying sense of depth."

Simon summed up the 7s thus: "If you're looking to

invest in a small pair of stand mounts which major on detail, control and freedom from cabinet coloration, the Veritas 7s are appealing newcomers."

If you're after amplification to cover a



moving-magnet cartridge as well as CD and a host of other line-level sources, then MVL's A2+ integrated will be of interest. This £1250 100watt went down a storm in June 1999 with all at World Towers, especially the enthusiastic Mr Marks: "Whistler's eponymous CD had a natural smoothness and lucidity that made this disc an addictive listen." It was the same story when it came to Classical music - "The 3-D presentation of both orchestra and quartet proved the MVL was just as competent with depth perspectives as width, not a talent solid-state is renowned for."

The A2+ stands out from the crowd technically as well - this is no mere re-hash of existing circuitry. According to MVL, a number of patents cover the inno-

LOUDSPEAKERS, OR A GOODMANS WORTH OVER £2200



**Goodmans
Delta 901
£300**

vative design points (included in the Sound Sentinel modules fitted to all the inputs) which help endow this amplifier with a speed, transparency and harmonic richness that are rare amongst affordable solid-state integrations: "The A2+ demonstrated a winning way with harmonics as it did an excellent job of allowing through those of strings plucked and bowed." Confirming this amp's pedigree, Jon Marks concluded with these words: "If you're after a genuinely transparent, natural and effortless performer, the A2+ is currently at the top of the pile."

Number three in the prize line-up is Goodman's 901 CMD CD player and MiniDisc recorder. This £200 machine

allows MiniDisc-lovers to turn out in a jiffy compilations of their favourite CD tracks for playing in MD portables.

Making digital transfers from the 901's CD deck couldn't be easier. Simply load the CD side with your chosen tunes, pop a blank MD into the slot, select the track you want to record and hit the Synchronisation button to get the Goodman's ready to spin. A prod of the Pause button will then get the digits flowing from big disc to small.

If you prefer to archive precious LPs instead of CDs, the CMD will handle those as well. Richard White found its on-board Analogue-to-Digital Convertors did a good job of Cab Calloway, "his final contribution to Porgy and Bess transferred

to MD without losing a jot of his tortured laryngeal efforts." To top it all, the 901 is no mean performer purely for CD replay either, with a warm tonal balance that's very

easy on the ear.

If you'd like to be in with the chance of making one of this month's audio jewels your own, just answer the questions below correctly and complete the tie-breaker in no more than 30 words. Stick the form or a photocopy of it on the back (not inside) a sealed envelope or postcard and send it to the following address before August 4th:

**August Competition
Hi-Fi World Magazine,
Suite F29, Imex House,
Kilburn Park Road,
London NW6 5LF**

Don't forget to say which prize you'd prefer!

COMPETITION ENTRY QUESTIONS

1) What sort of tweeter do the Veritas 7s use?

- A. SEAS textile dome
- B. Tonigen ribbon
- C. Focal titanium dome
- D. Dr Spokk plasma beam

2) What cabinet construction do the 7s rely on?

- A. Thick-skinned
- B. Semi-skimmed
- C. Double-skinned
- D. Gold-top

3) What is the power output of MVL's A2+?

- A. Two megawatts
- B. 2.75 horse power
- C. Half an ounce
- D. 100watts.

4) What sort of cartridge can be plugged into the A2+?

- A. Moving coil
- B. Moving iron
- C. Moving house
- D. Moving magnet

5) Which other format besides CD can Goodman's Delta 901 CMD handle?

- A. Mini Moke
- B. LP
- C. Cassette
- D. MiniDisc

COMPETITION VERSE (obligatory)

Complete the following in fewer than 30 words

Veritas loudspeakers from distant Norfolk:

What'll be the sources they play to us?

P'rhaps recordings from Goodman's

CD/MD; MVL and their A2+!

COMPETITION WINNERS

June's lucky and meritorious winners were: J Heyward of Hardricourt, France; K O'Kane of Northampton; A Clifford of Nottingham and M Pool of Bucks. **Congratulations!**



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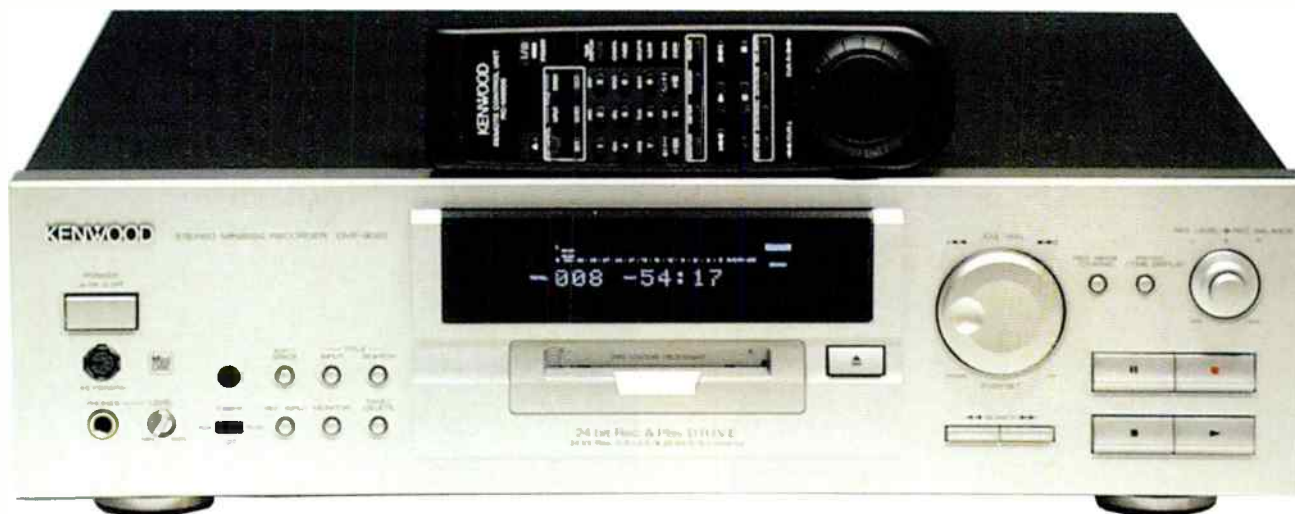
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MINIMAX

Domestic MiniDisc steps up a league with Kenwood's new DMF-9020 recorder, as Richard White discovers.

MINIDISC machines are growing up fast these days, hardly a week going by without a boost to the little format's sound quality. This should sway all those fence-sitters who loved MD's compactness and convenience but weren't taken by the performance of earlier examples, some of which did an accurate impression of digital at its worst that posed no threat to cassette at all.

Mid-way through 1999, and MD continues to pull ahead of cassette sonically and ergonomically. The £500 DMF-9020 boasts a choice of manual or pre-set automatic recording levels, balance control and handy options for things like adjustable fade times and level limiting. In short, the whole get-up is reminiscent of a well-endowed tape deck without the complications. By some mischance, our review sample was supplied without instructions, but this did not prevent a thorough work-out by trial and error (happily not too much trial and very little error).

THE RECORDING LEVEL control may seem like an unnecessary throw-back to tape recording, but not so. With any

recording in any format there will be an optimum level, one at which the highs are not forced into overload nor the lows into silence. Letting a machine decide these parameters for itself (as on most of the cheaper MD offerings) can lead to distinctly unsatisfactory results. Still, should you choose to go automatic, the Kenwood's pre-set arrangements are menu-prompted and easy to follow.

ALTHOUGH NOT UNIQUE to MD, the precision with which edits can be made and sections of the recording cut,



moved and spliced is a dream. I spent a little time editing a song down to about a third of its original length by removing repeats and so on. No recording of a real performance will

suffer this sort of thing entirely seamlessly, but the results remained listenable, without any of the "wrrps" and "k'donks" which dogged my attempts to do the same on cassette.

For reasons I can't quite fathom, most modern domestic recorders lack microphone inputs. Whilst the multitude of home-studio outfits might seem to obviate the need for them, it is sad to think that the up-coming generation will be missing

out on the delights of home recording.

We have in previous issues remarked on MiniDisc's sonic inferiority to CD-R. Now that the ATRAC system is in its capable 4.5 version and the '9020 possesses 24-bit processing, the gap is certainly closing. Previous acid tests, such as recording from vinyl, no longer produced evidence of squashed dynamics and flat sound staging, proving the Kenwood's pedigree. CD-R remained out in front when it came to digital-to-digital recordings, of course, as there is no need to reduce the amount of data from a CD to fit it onto a blank CD-Recordable.

MD is developing so fast that the names and numbers of the top components change almost monthly. For the time being, the DMF-9020 is a definite class-leader. It combines the best features of cassette with those of MD in such a way that home recording fans like myself are left feeling that they've lost very little in the recording process. If you've been on the fence thus far, unable to choose between cassette, MiniDisc and CD-R, maybe now is the time to come down and give MD another listen.

Kenwood DMF 9020 £499.90

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

WORLD VERDICT

 An excellent tool for home recording, the Kenwood combines convenience, superb sound and a fair price.
 Measured Performance see page 119

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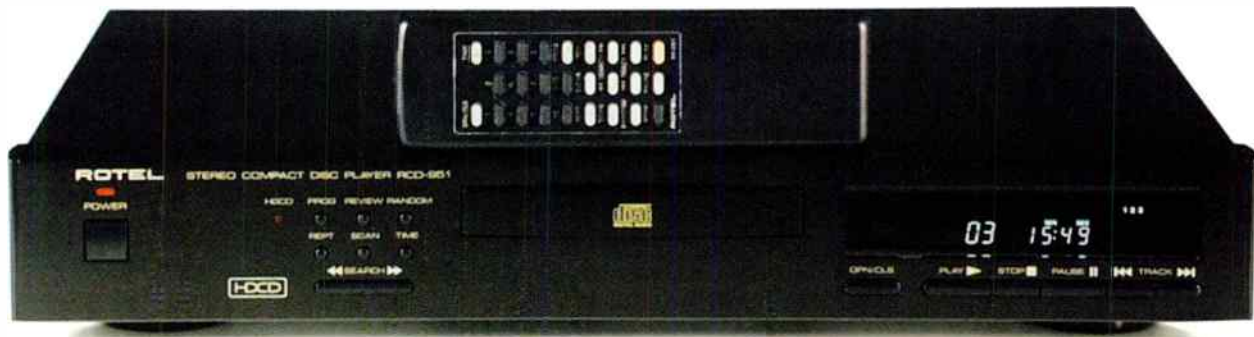
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ROTEL CALIFORNIA

Simon Pope hails the launch of an affordable way to experience the sound of HDCD with Rotel's RCD-951 CD player.

It seems that only yesterday the audio business was hailing the development of California-based Pacific Microsonic's High Definition Compatible Digital system as the possible successor to ordinary 16-bit CDs. While the current industry fervour regarding SACD and DVD-A has knocked HDCD out of the limelight, Rotel have not overlooked its potential. The company has opted to fit the expensive PMD-100 HDCD filter to the new RCD-951.

During the run-up to the arrival of SACD and DVD-Audio, it would be a good idea to remember that there are over 2000 HDCD recordings currently available (for a complete listing: www.hdc.com) and, importantly, the performances are good ones by well-known artists and orchestras. The only difficulty is that you won't necessarily find all of them in the high street.

Another point in the Rotel's favour is its price. The first new-format players will be expensive, as HDCD-compatible machines have been up until now due to the cost of the PMD-100. However, the RCD-951 weighs in at a mere £300.

Rotel have stuck to their customary, super-model thin styling for the '951, with fluorescent display to the right and the drawer placed centrally. All the usual

facilities feature, including a calendar-style track number display, 20-track memory, time remaining and two repeat modes.

SITTING INSIDE the slim chassis is circuitry configured along the same lines as that used in the more expensive '971. Burr-Brown's PCM-69A convertor sits at the heart of the player. Round the back you'll find a coaxial digital output for external DAC use or digital-to-digital recording.

Setting off with standard CDs, the '951 was immediately impressive. **Bernard Butler's** *Stay* opened in its customary measured fashion, the vocals clear and forward. This gradually built up into a sustained crescendo, the Rotel taking everything in its stride without even a hint of confusion.

With **Bach's** cello suites (Yo-Yo Ma holding the bow), in spite of a touch of bass boom, the Rotel produced results that were smooth, open, devoid of treble harshness and engagingly musical in a way many budget machines conspicuously aren't.

Bruckner's Ninth Symphony, played by the Minnesota Orchestra on a Reference Recordings CD, is a very fine disc which benefits from HDCD encoding. With the red LED on its fascia confirming this pedigree, the Rotel came up with some of the best sounds I've encountered from £300 equipment. String tremolos sent a shiver down my spine and chunky brass chords had a refreshing lightness and space to them.

Another performance by the same

orchestra (on the same label) playing **Stravinsky's** *The Rite of Spring* highlighted the great sense of spaciousness and subtlety can be achieved with HDCD - I was taken aback by how a 100-piece orchestra could sound both light yet powerful at one and the same time.

AN EXAMPLE OF this clarity came at the end of the piece - every crash, bang and wallop of the percussion could be heard along with the breathy nuances from the flutes. As it hurtles towards the conclusion, this piece can often get out of control on your average CD player. No such problems with the '951 in HDCD mode, and the bass looseness on normal CDs all but disappeared too.

As a non-HDCD machine the RCD-951 holds its own against the competition at its price without difficulty. With HDCD discs it starts seriously to rival £500+ players. £300 and a few HDCD purchases can launch you further than you might have imagined towards the goal of convincing reproduction from CD. At this sort of level, HDCD is still a more than viable medium.

Rotel RCD-951

£299.99

Rotel
Gamepath, 25 Heathfield,
Stacey Bushes,
Milton Keynes MK12 6HR
Tel: 01908 317 707

WORLD VERDICT

Good with ordinary CDs, excellent on HDCD. Construction is very solid too.

Measured Performance see page 119

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Sonically quite exceptional, for my money these are the best headphones in the review. (Hi-Fi choice, England)***

Distinguishing the Ergo AMT from my reference AKG 1000 (costing twice as much) was an extremely difficult task. (Audio USA) ***

Ergonomic headphone without any pressure, ideal for long term listening. Exceptional clean and transparent sound. (Sound Switzerland) ***



Their lightweight comfort and effortless sound make the Float 2 a joy to use (What Hi-Fi, England).

The Ergo AMT can be viewed like the best combination between a dynamic headphone and electrostatic, with a total absence of distortion and a complete balance in its timbre. (Audio Review Italy). **

Hours of listening pleasure for everyone without the typical headphone fatigue. (New HiFi Sound, Australia) ***

The balanced advantages and excellent sound image make the JJ Float 2, without question, the headphone I would like for myself. (Audio Ideas, Canada) **

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LETTER OF THE MONTH

YOURS, BAFFLED

I am one of the increasing group of wrinklies with partial loss of hearing in the upper registers. A modern loudspeaker with its extended top (which I can't hear) and extended bass (which I do not want to hear) produces an unbalanced sound. This suggests a single driver in a baffle or open-back box suitably carpeted.

E.R. Cook
Hants.

Although you may have lost the top-end of your hearing, I'm not so sure that you'll be able to dispense with the top-end of your hi-fi without sensing the difference. Generally, we can hear the product of various frequency interactions whether or not we can catch the original elements. It is possible that if you deliberately 'waste' the upper octave, you'll wonder who's been rebuilding your listening room.

Baffles are a good way of going about things assuming they're big enough. As a simple formula, all you

need to do is make the width half as big as the wavelength of the lowest sound you wish to reproduce. For example, at 80Hz the wavelength is about 13ft. Half of that gives a baffle of over six feet - plainly a ridiculous size for home use.

An open-back box with damping is an alternative, albeit not a particularly easy one. Cancellation effects can be cut down by this method because of the uneven paths taken by the front and back radiation, but the box itself can behave like a tuned pipe, 'hooting' in the lower midrange.

For reasonably well-behaved impedance curves and gently rolled-off bass, the old 'distributed port' or slotted back can yield good results (see picture). I do not claim that it really counts as hi-fi in the strict sense of the term, but it can give a

more civilized result than some of the one-note reflex outfits.

For one thing, the design is easy to make and its very nature obviates fine tuning. Cover the insides with an inch of wadding and this should cut out the worst reflections.

As with all cabinets, the better the driver, the better the results, but I wouldn't use this primitive sort of loading for an expensive high-tech unit.

A word of warning about full-range drivers: some of the cheaper units claim spectacular frequency responses. Unhappily, they don't often say what the +/-dB range is. Response up to 20kHz is of little value if the top is 10dB down. If your hearing is also sloping off at a rate of knots, Radio 3 is going to sound like the Home Service! RMW

1/4in x 8in slots cut in back



▲ A distributed port is one way to load a driver.

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THREE TONS

I need your help with regards to my next purchase. However, I am a student so the budget has a limit of £300, but if you think I could do better for a wee bit more, please advise.

My current system consists of a Technics SL-PG390 CD player connected to an NAD C320 integrated via QED Qnet2. The loudspeakers are Tannoy Mercury m2s wired with CableTalk Talk 3.1. The Tannoys are on sand-filled stands and the components are on some MDF and Polipod shelves I have made (and very good they sound too!)

I have a feeling the CD player is letting the side down; I am very happy with the NAD and the Tannoys so I want to keep them. I was thinking along the lines of a Denon DCD-835, but due to living in a town with NO dealerships, it is impossible to audition without travelling miles and miles. My main music interests lie in Paul Weller and The John Spencer Blues Explosion as well as Dancier and even Classical recordings.

I am looking for something with drive and punchy bass. Most of all, though, I really want more of that special sparkle which is lacking in my current set-up.

On a totally different subject, I am looking for a partner to a loudspeaker driver I picked up for a fiver. It is an RS twin-cone 8in. 8ohm affair. I am thinking of entering the DIY scene and really need a pair so I can dabble! If anyone knows where I can get one, please let me know as RS have stopped making them.



▲ Wharfedale's old Super 8 twin-cone is the perfect vehicle for 'speaker experimentation.

Mark Downie
mkd7@aber.ac.uk

One killer machine which will set you back only £200 is Cambridge's CD4SE, which has that "special sparkle" in

spades. Loudspeaker cable could then usefully be upgraded to CableTalk's 4.1 single-wire. The final flourish would be a Sound Absorber platform from Goldring for the CD player, although it would add a few tenners to your overall outlay. If RS have discontinued the driver you have, you could spend a long time trying to find its mate. A much better idea which would probably offer better sound quality would be a pair of Wharfedale's old

Super 8 RS DD twin-cones which, if necessary, can be refurbished by DK loudspeakers on tel: 01708 447344. JM

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ECCLESIASTICAL ELECTRICITY

I am using a Kenwood KA-1030 amp for a low-level sound reinforcement system in a church and I want to connect four 'speakers to it. The Loudspeaker A/B buttons on the amp seem to prevent both sets from being used at the same time. As I see them, my options are: (a) wire the four 'speakers in parallel; (b) wire them in series; (c) alter the amp's wiring to allow A and B to be used simultaneously as in my Denon PMA-350; (d) give up?!

There is a switch at the back of the amp to accommodate <8ohms or >8ohms. What happens to the 'speaker impedance and the amp output power in options (a) and (b) assuming 8ohm 'speakers to start with? My knowledge of electric circuits is rusty 'O' level Physics as you may have guessed!

Philip Buckmaster
PhilipBuckmaster@compuserve.com

The Kenwood KA-1030 isn't exactly bursting with power so I wouldn't recommend altering the wiring to use both outputs. Most likely the switch is simply a change-over device in any case, so it's not as if there's any extra circuit to get the benefit of.

As regards connecting two loudspeakers to each channel, there's a couple of options. You could either fix the 'speakers in series and use the >8ohm setting, or else connect in parallel with the <8ohm setting.

As a rule, series connections are not used for loudspeakers because the impedance of one driver tends to strangle the other. With parallel connections, you don't get this problem.

Resistances or reactances connected in parallel have a resistance calculated by adding the reciprocals of the values and then finding the reciprocal of the answer. As an example, to find the combined resistance of, say, two 4ohm resistors, add the reciprocals ($1/4 + 1/4 = 1/2$) and take the reciprocal of the answer ($1/2 = 2ohms$). This is far from being a 'pure' case because loudspeakers have a capacitive element as well, but in the terms we are talking, it'll do for the moment.

As a matter of fact, transistorized gear tends not to be too fussy about loads as long as they don't get too low, as they might do if you connect your 4ohm load to the >8ohm output. A rule

of thumb is that transistorized amps must not be shorted and valve amps must not be used 'open circuit' with no load. RMW

Try The Chord Company's Siren interconnects on your home system.

▼ A word of warning for owners of thermionic amplification - never switch on your amp without a pair of loudspeakers connected!



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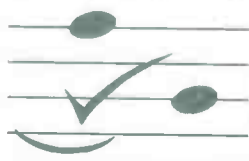
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Richard White (Hi-Fi World, April 1999)

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Jimmy Hughes (Hi-Fi Choice, March 1999)

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LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR

For the sake of neighbourly relations I need to install a second set of 'speakers in my house so that I can listen to music when in the kitchen without the volume in the sitting room being turned up too high. The simplest, and cheapest, solution would be a splitter box but I am concerned that this would dilute the sound quality. The obvious solution is to buy an integrated amp with two, switchable, 'speaker connections.

My last consideration, and this is where your advice is needed, is that in a lot of articles in your magazine or replies to letters you direct people towards bi-amping. This seems to involve connecting an integrated amp to the tweeters and a power amp to the mid/basses. Does this mean that, as you are using two amps to drive one set of 'speakers, the same two amps could drive two sets of 'speakers with the on/off switch of the power amp controlling whether two sets of 'speakers

or one are being used?

Please could you direct me down the correct path along with any recommendations, bearing in mind that my current amplifier (Rega Elex) does not have a Pre - Out.

Jayne Gatward
jayne@gatward.freemove.co.uk

Seeing as your current amplifier doesn't have a Pre Out socket, by far the simplest and least costly option is to buy a splitter box. As long as you go for one with decent switches inside, the impact on the music won't be that great.

If you decided to go for a two-amp solution, you'd obviously have to shell out on another amplifier. If you wanted to hook these up so that you could either bi-amp one set of 'speakers or switch between two pairs of single-amped loudspeakers, you could expect plenty of interconnect spaghetti. To be



▲ Amps like Sony's TA-FB920R with built-in 'speaker switching offer the tidiest solution to your problem.

honest, this second option isn't really practical and, if all you want to do is run two separate sets of loudspeakers, a switch box is the best way to go about things. JM

Keep your signal sweet with a free bottle of DNM's Licon contact enhancer.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Firstly, on behalf of Carlsson UK, thank you for the complimentary report on the performance of the 52.2 'speakers in the loudspeaker Group Test. It was reassuring to read that you experienced the same "naturally-proportioned sound stage" and openness so characteristic of Stig Carlsson's designs and shared by Richard White when he reviewed the smaller Carlssons in December.

However, having read what was an interesting Group Test, we must bring to your attention a serious error in the May article relating to the positioning of Carlsson 'speakers which is misleading and will seriously degrade the loudspeakers' performance.

The instructions you refer to under "Technology" do not apply to any 'speaker in the Carlsson range. We can only assume that, in this instance, some other manufacturers' instructions were used to configure the Carlsson OA 55.2 'speakers, not the written and verbal ones provided to the editorial team for the December and the May reviews.

Under no circumstances is it recommended that Carlsson "'speakers be placed against side walls and kept away from the rear walls".

The left and right 'speakers are designed to be placed on the floor with the back of each 'speaker against the

designated listening wall. Ideally each 'speaker should then be at least 50cms. away from its adjacent/side wall. The distance between the left and right 'speakers is dependant upon room size and how large a sound stage the listener wants. The 50cm gap from the side walls allows the bass-reflex port on each 'speaker (shown in your photograph of the Carlsson OA 52.2 left 'speaker) to operate effectively.

The positioning described in the May article will certainly explain why problems were experienced with 'angles' etc. Correctly configured there are no problems about angles, imaging, centre-stage or unevenness with any of the Carlsson 'speakers. They are simple to configure and will reproduce a wall of sound so well described by Richard White in December.

In the light of the above, we would ask, given your magazine's reputation for accuracy, that the readership has the opportunity of reading a revised commentary on the Carlsson OA 52.2s' performance with the 'speakers configured as recommended.

Richard Burden
Carlsson OA Ltd.

No written instructions were included with the 52.2s delivered for review,



▲ Carlsson's OA 52.2 loudspeakers as originally reviewed in May 1999.

which were your own personal loudspeakers, we have been led to believe. The written instructions alluded to in your letter were for the 50.2s, reviewed in September 1998.

After we received your letter, we re-evaluated the performance of the Carlsson 52.2s with the loudspeakers positioned as specified. Imaging out to stage right and left no longer dipped down towards the loudspeakers' cabinets and imaging was less sensitive to positioning. These were the main differences. Otherwise, the 52.2s sounded much as described in our original review. JM

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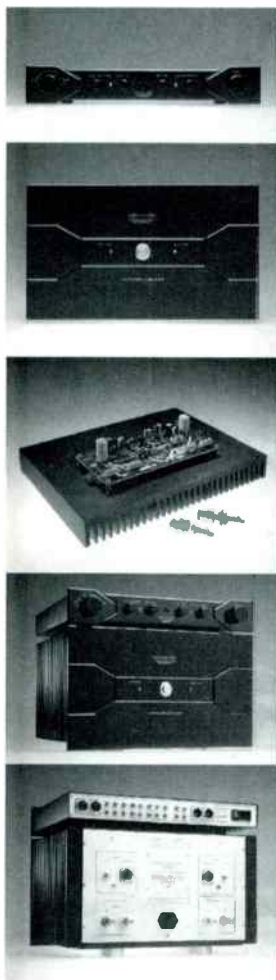


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PORTUGUESE PURCHASE

I am a Portuguese audiophile interested in buying a good set-up (CD player, tuner, amp and 'speakers). I plan to spend a total of £1650-£1800, including cables. Which combination do you think would be the best?

Luis Roma Castro
lrcastro@icn.pt

I'd be tempted by a system made up of Audio Analogue's Puccini SE integrated at £595, Cambridge's T500 tuner (£180) and Creek's C043 (£499).

It's sometimes more difficult to suggest a pair of loudspeakers than

anything else; tastes vary so much. I would suggest you audition the Mission 774s at £500; we reviewed these in February and found them competent allrounders, if you don't mind a brightish sound. To start off with, you could use the cabling supplied free with these items and get some 'speaker cable thrown in with the Missions (say, CableTalk



Talk 4.1) and then upgrade as finances permit. JM

Maximise the sounds from CD with a free Ringmat Statmat.

◀ They may have a treble lift, but Mission's 774 floor standers can impress when partnered with appropriate ancillaries.

INTO THE NINETIES

I am writing to you from India and hope you can give me some badly-needed advice. My system consists of a nine-year-old Denon DCD-1420 CD player running through a Musical Fidelity X-ACT DAC.

Amplification is a NAD 106/214 pre/power combo feeding a pair of ancient Boston Acoustics A100s. All cables are balanced and constructed locally.

Although I love the sound, I feel that my Denon is on its last legs, so I would like to get either a dedicated transport or buy a CD player with a good transport and run it through the MF. What would you recommend considering that my budget is about \$500? Unfortunately, in India there's no opportunity to try out various combinations since all decent hi-fi equipment has to be imported. As a result, I have to be very careful about what I buy since I'll be stuck with it.

I was wondering if Denon's DCD-835 or the Marantz CD-67SE mkII might be suitable because spares are available relatively easily.

Kedar Gopaldas
India.

One of those rare rules in hi-fi which has almost no exceptions is that a dedicated transport will always outperform an integrated player, especially a cheap one, whose digital output is most likely an after-thought. Given your budget, Teac's T1 transport is probably

out of the question since it sells here for around £500. Second-hand is therefore the most practical option, although there is obviously an element of risk involved, particularly if you're purchasing overseas.

One killer piece of equipment which I've grown to love is Kenwood's DP-X9010. It may be getting long in the tooth, and it



▲ Heavyweight build and great musicality mean Kenwood's DP-X9010 transport can be a second-hand bargain.

certainly benefits from the fitting of a new, upgraded master clock, but it is far more musical than most current digital gear, which I suspect has something to do with its excellent build, particularly in the transport area. If you can track down a specimen which has had relatively little use (otherwise the laser might be getting ready to give up the ghost), it would be a wise choice. Then again, a used T1 would also be a worthy contender. JM

A bottle of DNM's Licon will help extract more music from your hi-fi.

WOOL WARY

My system currently consists of a Linn Karik 3, Linn Wakonda, four X-A200s and KEF Reference 3 'speakers. Interconnects are Kimber Silver Streak and 4AG/8TC 'speaker cable.

Although I am happy with the set-up, I feel I can do better. I suspect the CD and pre-amp to be the culprits and would value your advice on options for change. Budget is in the £2000-2500 range.

Neill Lillywhite
neill@neill.force9.co.uk

One pre-amp which would certainly fit hand in glove with the X-A200s is MF's own Nu-Vista at £1200. On the CD player front, audition Audio Analogue's Paganini which weighs in at £750. Purist Audio Design's Elementa interconnect at about £150/m is very revealing too, and a platform like Audiophile Furniture's Base would help as well. JM



▲ Mucho Music from CD - Audio Analogue's Paganini CD player.

A Statmat from Ringmat should sweeten the sound of your CD player.



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Audio Analogue Paganini	£675	£749
LFD Mistra	£649	£999
Pink Triangle Numeral	£749	£1040
Teac VRDS 8	£499	£599

Amplifiers	sale price	rrp
Audio Analogue Bellini/Don zetti	£975	£1100
Crimson 610/620	£649	£775
LFD LSO pre (inc MM/MC)	£349	£679
LFD Mistral integrated	£399	£499
LFD Mistral phono stage	£249	£299
Trilogy 901/948 (valve)	£2499	£3090

Loudspeakers	sale price	rrp
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Keswick Blueprint Point One	£550	£1000
Neat Critique mk I (black)	£349	£495
Neat Mystique (cherry)	£549	£723
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Ariston RD 80 Turntable (no arm)	£ 100	
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Naim CD2	£1200 (£2000)	
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UP THE CREEK

My system has remained unchanged for quite a few years now. It consists of a Rega Planar 2 with Goldring 1022GX, Musical Fidelity X-LP phono stage, Aiwa XC-300 CD player, Aiwa AD-F410 cassette deck, Sony ST-S261 tuner and Marantz PM-30SE integrated amplifier. Speakers are Mission 761s on Atacama SE24 stands and a REL Strata subwoofer (run at 'speaker level from the amp).

One of my most recent purchases was the phono stage. I bought it because I suspected the one on my amp was limiting the performance of the Rega, which was indeed the case. My problem now is that the Rega out-performs my Aiwa CD player in many respects - dynamics, openness, ambience, naturalness, etc. The only thing the CD player does slightly better is perhaps absolute bass extension.

I am now itching to replace the Aiwa but there is very little money in the kitty at the moment. You will probably agree that my amplifier is also a weak link in my system, but I think I should attend to the CD player first.

I noted that in your May edition you recommend the Midiman Flying Calf at £109. I could quite easily afford one of these. If I purchased one to hook up to the digital output of my CD player, am I likely to get an improvement in sound quality?

Bearing in mind that I will have to live with the Marantz amplifier for quite some time, if I need a completely new CD player, how much should I spend to hear a useful



◀ Allied to a switch box for multiple analogue sources, Creek's OBH-14 DAC/passive pre is a bargain at £240.

improvement over the Aiwa and get sound quality as good as, if not better than, my turntable?

Tarn Stenning
Lancs.

The Flying Calf from Midiman (tel: 01423 886 693) is a superb little convertor for the money. Then again, Creek's OBH-14 combined DAC and pre-amp is better still and it provides a potential upgrade path. Seeing as your amp could do with being replaced too, if your finances will handle the strain, why not go for the Creek, a switch box

and a new power amp?

Selling your Marantz will help you raise some extra cash. The switch box (try Maplin's YZ24B at £20) will enable you to hook up your other sources to the Creek, which has only a single analogue input. Finally, add a power amp such as AMC's £200 2100, and you should notice a very large boost to sound quality. JM

The Chord Company's Siren interconnects should give you more of everything from your sources.

REVIVAL SELECTOR

I have a Sugden C51 pre (working) and a pair of P51 bridgeable stereo power amps (not working). Could you tell me whether they would be worth fixing or are they simply too long in the tooth?

My system consists of an old Thorens TD126 MkII, a pair of KEF Cara and Bose 601 Series 2 loudspeakers and a little Onkyo subwoofer. I am presently running a Kenwood amp, but would prefer to use the P51s through the Boses, although if both were working I could power the KEFs as well.

Holger Drewsen
holger@retnet.net.au

The P51s would definitely be worth resuscitating, as long as it wasn't going to cost an arm and a leg. From using an A21 Series One integrated

(with its huge 10watt, pure Class A output), I've come to appreciate the very smooth, musical presentation these amps are capable of.

The C51 pre-amp isn't really in the same league as the powers, so a switch to a more modern combination like Creek's OBH-8 phono stage coupled to the OBH-12 passive pre (£200) would offer a major improvement in sound quality. The only problem with the '12 is that you'll need to keep interconnects very short (preferably 50cms or less; go for longer 'speaker leads to enable you to do this).

If you were using the P51s as monoblocs but you feel confident enough to split the crossovers on your loudspeakers to allow bi-wiring, mov-



▲ Sugden's A21a, the modern integrated incarnation of class A amplification.

ing back to running the amps as two stereo chassis and bi-amping would also boost performance considerably. JM

For more information on how amps work, turn to John Linsley Hood's Audio Electronics.

THE HILLS ARE ALIVE...

Simon Pope packs his lederhosen, Alpine Horn and notebook and travels to Austria for the latest on DVD-Audio at the 28th Technics/Panasonic Seminar.

“SALZBURG, where digital meets Classical” read the headline on my welcome pack. Let’s face it, if you’re going to hold an audio seminar, you might as well slum it and go for one of the world’s most picturesque cities. And as for its musical connections, Mozart



▲ The DVD-compatible SU-C1010 battery pre and SE-A1010 power...

was born here, one of the most prestigious music festivals (as they would have you believe) is held here and **Julie Andrews** ran joyously through the neighbouring mountains in *The Sound Of Music*.

It was also appropriate that in 1999 a place that spawned perhaps the best-known musician of the last 1000 years was chosen as the location for the latest briefing on what could be the dominant format of the first part of the next century.

DVD-AUDIO (intended primarily as an audio format, although early models will be video compatible) has the potential to produce excellent sound quality with sampling rates ranging from 44.1kHz right up to 192kHz, with 24-bit resolution.

More versatility is available with the possibility of between two and six channels (the latter with a maximum sampling rate of 96kHz each). And thanks to the vast storage capacity of the discs, extras such as discographies, track info and even Internet access can be added.

ON THE SOFTWARE front, the music industry is convinced of DVD-A’s viability. **Peter Olliff** from Universal Music (Polydor, Island, Geffen, DG, Decca, Philips to name but a few!) admitted that replacing CD is “an awesome task” but he was confident that artists will take to the format. The multi-channel mode means there’s room for remixes of



▲ ...with the SB-M500 Mk2 'speakers whose response reaches 50kHz+...

existing material and plenty of scope for future creativity. Apparently, it’s seen as a “useful marketing tool” for selling DVD-A to the public as well. There is obviously potential money to be made by both recording companies and artists, but the ball can only really get rolling after the finalisation of a reliable Copy Protection System which doesn’t degrade the sound.

The issue of the Copy Protection System is a fraught one. Basically, a future DVD-A recorder would only be permitted to make one digital recording of any given disc, and

that copy will be of CD quality (16-bit 44.1kHz). Both music and video discs will contain these codes, while a sonic ‘watermark’ on the analogue output will be included to prevent unlimited analogue copies being made from a single original.

ON THE HARDWARE side, at the seminar Technics unveiled a prototype DVD-A player expected to be available “world-wide” sometime in the later part of this year (Japanese consumers will probably see it first). The machine incorporates Technics’ own MASH technology and employs the company’s specialist audiophile Take II capacitors.

Short bursts of both a Japanese guitar duo and an excerpt from the orchestral version of *Pictures At An Exhibition* were very revealing. Without doubt, DVD-A is vastly superior to standard CD, especially in areas such as clarity and dynamics.

Also launched was an “accompanying” range of components known as the DVD-Audio Ready series. This included amplifiers, receivers and ‘speakers’ engineered to accommodate the requirements of DVD-A’s specifications, in particular its wide frequency response, whilst still remaining compatible with current hi-fi.

It also seems that Japanese manufacturers have at last accepted DAB as a viable medium. The Technics ST-GT1000 DAB tuner should be available from September/October this year.

It seems that Technics and Matsushita, their huge parent company, regard DVD-A as the heir to CD’s throne, saying that by the year 2007 they believe DVD-Audio will dominate the world hi-fi market. Only time and sales of Sony’s competitor, Super Audio CD, will tell.



▲ ...and the ST-GT1000 Digital Audio Broadcasting tuner.

Head over Heels

Will Castle's new Inversion 15 loudspeakers turn the competition upside-down? Richard White takes a sideways look.

In a world of uniformity, Castle's new Inversion 15 stand mounters certainly can't be accused of toeing the same old stylistic line. Their truncated pyramid cabinets are oriented pointing downwards, and so look a bit like an exclamation mark without the full-stop at the bottom. From a company like Castle, known for their traditional but well-executed 'speakers, these aptly-named Inversions mark a major change of direction, one which we were keen to investigate.

Driver-wise, things are more in keeping with Castle's past efforts, a woven carbon-fibre mid/bass placed above the 19mm polyamide dome tweeter. Because of the low mass and minimal energy storage of carbon fibre, the crossover can be set at a high 3.3kHz and implemented with a relatively simple second-order design.

BEGINNING WITH Radio 3, I tuned into the 5th *Brandenburg Concerto*. As always, properly-played **Bach** takes no prisoners where clarity is concerned. The Inversions certainly gave little evidence of lagging in this area, string transients crisp and well-defined. A slight lack of delicacy to harpsichord I was prepared to put down to a heavy-handed player rather than the 'speakers.

Heading into the lower Hertz, I found a bass that was warm and welcoming. This lent a pleasant fullness to the Castles' tone, although this is where careful positioning to avoid 'boom' can pay dividends, particularly when you consider the recommended 'back close to the wall' placement.

With the tweeter on the vertical axis of a fairly broad baffle, imaging wasn't as keen as it could have been (it's more normal to off-set the tweeter to stagger the front-baffle reflections and diffraction which mar imaging). This was clearly demonstrated in the interview item which



followed the **Bach**. With spot-on imaging, there should be a slight shift of position between the voices. With the Inversions, the effect was closer to a broad mono. Noticeable too was a nasal tinge to the voices, albeit not an obvious one.

SWITCHING TO CD, I plied the Inversion 15s with **Rolf Lindblum's** sprightly interpretation of the Allegretto from the *Moonlight Sonata*. This testing track lost very little of its vitality through the Inversions, and the piano's tone (hanging judge of midrange reproduction) was well projected and coherent, if not sparkling.

Returning to the radio, I spun the dial through some of the commercial stations. In spite of this provocation, the Inversions' presentational foibles helped rather than hindered here. If anything, their general approach was unduly forgiving of the poor Pop mixes on the air. Similarly well served were the icing-on-the-cake sound effects used to bolster the bits between the songs. True, what I'd taken for a kazoo solo by an adenoidal somnambulist turned out to be a news bulletin, but that's a mistake any loudspeaker can make on commercial radio.

Despite this onslaught, I still felt the Castles hadn't been thoroughly checked for bass quantity as well as quality. Step forward a selection of organ compositions on LP.

Germani's performance of the Allegro from the *Widor Toccata* may be a bit long

in the tooth but it has its moments, not least the splendour of Selby Abbey's pedal reeds. At the finale, with all 32-foot guns tiring, the Inversions managed to shift a fair amount of air for their size without losing their grip on midrange transparency.

The Inversion 15s are reasonably competent all-rounders when it comes to sound quality. I have to say, though, given Castle's past efforts such as the outstanding Edens, I had been hoping for more in the imaging, smoothness and detail departments. To their credit the '15s never offend by overstepping the treble or bass lines and they are easy on the ear. When all's said and done, there was nothing very much either for or against the Inversions; I suspect looks as much as musical presentation will be the deciding factor.

Castle Inversion £425

**Castle Acoustics
Shortbank Road,
Skipton,
North Yorks. BD23 2TT
Tel: 01756 795333**

WORLD VERDICT

Unusual styling will polarise opinion, but sonically the '15s are fair performers. Imaging could be better.

Measured Performance see page 119

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Finally, after months of pacing the warehouse floor and periodic bouts of brow-thrashing, the Vivante team breathed a collective sigh of relief when 'Classic' announced that, at long last, the Dylan *Albert Hall* box set had made its tardy appearance. It seems that the lavish colour booklet was the problem, with The Zim and his various managers, minders, liggers and assorted acolytes taking forever to approve the copy. That said, the end result seems to have been worth the wait and this top-notch set looks certain to become a much sought-after release in the months and years to come.

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A Hard Act To Follow

Richard White looks at Leak's Stereofetic tuner, which had the unenviable task of replacing the famous Troughline.

WHEN Leak went over to transistorized amplification in 1963, it says much for the company's reputation that they don't appear to have dropped a single sale. Certainly the Stereo 30 ampsold very well and its sonic shortcomings - so obvious now - were apparently just ignored. By the end of the Sixties, when the (better) Stereo 30 Plus came out, memories of the excellence of the pre-transistor gear had faded. All that was left of the old regime was the trusty Troughline tuner.

There must have been many audio-philosophes who hoped that Leak would adopt an 'if it's not broke, don't fix it' approach; after all, by the standards of the time, and with only one stereo station in the UK, what significant improvement was there to make? Valves were yesterday's news, though, so a replacement tuner was designed using FETs instead, hence Stereofetic.

On its release in 1969/70, the get-up for the tuner differed a little from the outgoing Troughline: instead of the Off/Mono/Stereo knob and the two slide switches, a row of rectangular buttons underneath the tuning scale controlled all functions except tuning, which was achieved by ganged variable capacitors looped to the tuning knob with cord. Crystal oscillators replaced IF transformers in the discriminating circuits.

THE CHOICE OF FM stations in the UK was somewhat limited at the time, and those were all at the lower end of the band. The specification of the Stereofetic, like the Troughline, therefore reflects hopes for the future and Leak's thriving export sales, particularly to the US. FM broadcasting had been commonplace there for at least ten years, with a consequential filling up of the airwaves all the way to 108MHz. Also largely unnecessary at home in those days was the Stereo but-



ton, an automatic selector which muted any non-stereo broadcast. Using this in Britain at the time would have given you an expensive (£59 18s) piece of kit for receiving one channel (BBC 3), stereo sometimes!

Instructionless owners of Leak Stereofetics and the later facelifted Delta must have, at times, puzzled over the Quasi-Stereo button. Was this a frequency discriminating device for making 'stereo' from a mono signal? Actually, no: Quasi-Stereo worked by mixing the upper treble of true stereo output to achieve a degree of hiss cancellation, without affecting the midrange and bass.

On the Stereofetic, this can be operated by degrees: button 1; button 2; buttons 1 and 2 for maximum impact. With poor reception, the idea is quite clever, because a good deal of the stereo signal is left untouched even with both buttons in. Perhaps a fault with the system lies in the psycho-acoustic phenomenon whereby our hearing is much more sensitive to directionality in the high treble than the mid and bass regions. Hiss certainly disappears, so do many of the subtlest effects of full-range stereo!

HAVING ACQUIRED a live specimen recently, I was curious to compare it with the known excellence of the Troughline tuners it replaced. Superficially, the Stereofetic was well matched with the, um, delightful black and silver styling of the rest of the range. It is certainly lighter in weight and consequently a little more wieldy than its predecessor. As regards specification too, the 'fetic showed signifi-

cant improvements, particularly in side-band rejection and frequency drift.

Sensitivity is sufficient to permit wet-string aerials in strong reception areas and a moderately well appointed dipole in the fringe. Inter-station muting is by manual switch, the rejection threshold being about 12uV of signal.

Giving the Stereofetic an extensive earful was an enlightening experience. For a start, stations 'come in' much more rapidly on the dial, so tuning before switching on AFC can be a delicate matter. Since the limiting circuit works well, you don't actually hear overloads but the overenthusiastic signal strength meter is not as useful as the old magic eye.

I WAS QUITE surprised at how good this tuner sounded in spite of there being an air of 'inevitable disappointment' with solid-state gear of this vintage - look at the Stereo 30, now languishing in price-per-skipload obscurity. There is a slight paperiness to the treble which you might expect considering its advancing years, but the Stereofetic outputs a much more pleasant audio signal than you'd guess listening through a contemporary amplifier. Bass is good, as is stereo separation; and all the tuning circuitry seemed to be in good health.

Having said all this, the Troughline was an impossible act to follow: for all its merits, including latterday cheapness, the Stereofetic has to jostle for space in the already swollen ranks of tuners which are by no means bad but are otherwise undistinguished. Perhaps the unkindest cut of all would be: 'not a Troughline!'

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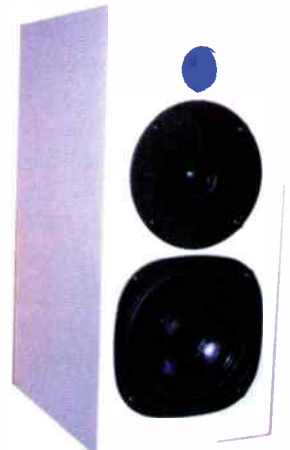
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THE hi-fi business has always been an interesting place for technical innovation and it is going through some major changes yet again. Strong sales of recordable CD and MiniDisc put the two into direct competition. Since they do a similar job, will there be another format war?

Digital in the form of Compact Disc arrived in 1983, but that was replay only. I always believed a digital recording medium is what the world wants, and the right one will eventually supersede simple 'players' as we've known them. That is happening now, a lot later than I could ever have imagined.

When Digital Audio Tape came along in the mid-Eighties I made the prediction that it could well end up wiping out CD. That drove the music industry a little barmy, as well as the mainstream hi-fi business - both saw it as a threat to their business.

The whole issue of digital recording became a hot potato in the late Eighties. Nobody saw it as being in their inter-

est to offer such a thing, largely because the music business objected so furiously on the basis that it would promote copying and piracy, threatening their future.

It wasn't until 1992 that a new digital recording medium appeared: Digital Compact Cassette from Philips. It was followed in 1993 by MiniDisc from Sony. I wasn't alone in wondering why Philips devoted so little budget to advertising and marketing DCC. After a short, lacklustre life it died.

Sony seemed more confident in the future of MD, pushing it hard in Japan, where sales took off. In retrospect they seemed wise in pushing MD toward young purchasers as a "must have" gadget. That's the market sector MD appeals to and it may be that, as purchasers grow older, they will stay with it, giving MD a great potential future.

Philips meanwhile are betting on CD-R, CD-RW, and its upcoming replacement, DVD recordable, which is why they put so little into DCC, I think.

Look what is happening now. Both MD and recordable CD are taking off at

much the same time. All of a sudden buyers are faced with having to make a choice between these mediums, as they have done in the past with video recorders, digital recorders, four-channel formats and heaven knows what else. This is where competition equals confusion and, to those who make the wrong choice, hard-earned money wasted.

This isn't the straight fight it has been in the past. We now have to take note of what the computer business is up to, because audio is becoming a big issue in computers and this cannot be ignored. I am told that these days, the music business wields less power than it once did. Now, computers set the pace.

MiniDisc was conceived to be the perfect portable hi-fi format. At stake was the global cassette market, which is

” Strong sales of recordable CD and MiniDisc put the two into direct competition. Since they do a similar job, will there be another format war?

absolutely vast. When we talk hi-fi we might think America, Japan, Europe - not India or China. The cassette is the dominant medium in both these countries, though, and much of South America. This market comprises a cool two billion people, which is definitely worth having. To challenge it you must have a cheap and durable music-carrier, and MiniDisc can certainly be that.

The problem is this: MiniDisc is a hi-fi medium and it hasn't yet adapted to the modern world of computers. The MD should have replaced the floppy disc, but it didn't. MD recorders should be equipped to do the job of MP3 recorders, but as yet they aren't. Sony have been slow here, but I know they are working on it.

As Philips are no doubt aware, it is the CD, and its successor, the DVD, that have become universal computer carriers. The impact of this upon the future of hi-fi is difficult to predict, but I

cannot ignore the way CD-R and CD-RW sales have taken off in computers. A huge, already-installed base of CD players around the world gives CD an incredible presence. Whether MiniDisc can ever challenge it is questionable.

It's a funny sort of format war. CD is too big to be ideal for portable use and MiniDisc would need to suddenly become computer friendly to ever challenge the CD. So neither recordable CD nor MD seem ideal.

Did you see that 3in. give-away mini-CD containing Microsoft's Office 2000 on a magazine front cover a few months ago? CD singles, as they were once called, store 150MB - exactly the same as MiniDisc. They are the same size as a MiniDisc but will play in all CD players and CD-ROMs, so they neatly fulfil both major requirements. If we had recordable 3in. blanks, plus mini-CD players for portable and car use, the format could be got up and running. This is my solution to the format war!

TDK did actually produce 3in. CD-Rs for a time, they told me, but stopped because there was too little demand.

Unfortunately, such a format would get little backing. Sony would see it as another threat to MiniDisc and Philips fell out of love with consumer audio many years ago. So war it is.



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THERE comes a time when many audiophiles must give it a cursory thought. The hi-fi system is sounding great, but it's in just one room. Wouldn't it be grand to have quality music all around the house? The idea of multi-room systems isn't new, but the last 10 years have seen an increase in suitable hardware, which makes the idea feasible and relatively affordable. Having recently moved into a new house, I found myself pondering the possibility of just such a system, but where do you start?

The problem with many multi-room systems is that their main aim is to fit in with a 'life-style' rather than maximise music reproduction quality. The Bose Acoustimass system has much to recommend it - active 'speakers in two rooms and a radio remote control do much to alleviate the complexity of wiring such a system up. Yet for anyone used to a carefully-selected separates system, the sound quality is likely to be slightly disappointing, especially at a cost of £1500-£2000 for background music. Ditto some of Bang and Olufsen's efforts - well built and very flexible, but my six numbers have yet to come up on a Saturday evening.

Option two is to keep your existing hi-fi and simply build a house-wide system around it - Meridian, Audio Access, Bryston and others would be happy to oblige with system controllers and multi-channel power amps. The only pitfall here is spiralling cost, as a proper set-up can easily top five-figure sums.

One manufacturer offering an alternative which will go lighter on the wallet is QED. Their Systemline components are just as flexible as the competition's with multi-channel amps, room remote sensors, displays and even keypads that attach to light-switch sized panels. The total cost will obviously vary depending on how large your house is, but it should be somewhere between £2000-£3000. It's certainly one way to go, but it's not the one I eventually settled on.

It wasn't the price of commercial products that put me off so much as the

sheer complexity. Having finished decorating only a few weeks ago, the idea of chiselling out channels for cables, boxes and ceiling 'speakers sent a chill down my spine.

It was time for a different approach chez Todd. I was happy with my existing equipment (which is located in a dedicated listening room), so I thought, why not leave it be and go for a second stack with 'speaker switching? The idea was to buy a remote control amplifier with terminals for two pairs of loudspeakers, a CD player from the same manufacturer, a remote relay and the 'speakers. With this arrangement, the hi-fi would operate as normal in one room while the sound could be piped through to a second area with the minimum of wiring.

A remote relay can be purchased

” Do I really need a multi-room system at all? I enjoy music around the house and I appreciate my hi-fi, so why not have equipment: in every room?

from shops such as Maplin for about £60, so only a single handset would be needed assuming the electronics had been bought from the same company. This would allow full remote control of the system in both rooms, no mean feat for a total of about £700. The sole hic-cough turned out to be finding an amplifier suitable for the job - remote operation and two sets of 'speaker terminals aren't things you'll find on any amp. Candidates between £200-£300 that boast decent sound are almost non-existent.

It was then, in a flash of inspiration, that I wondered: "Do I really need a multi-room system at all? I enjoy music around the house and I appreciate my hi-fi, so why not have equipment in every room?" This solution would offer plenty of opportunity for upgrading when necessary while allowing me to achieve a different presentation in each location. Put it like this; if you've always lusted after a valve amp but have shied away

because they generally have low power outputs, you could put one in the smallest room. Fancy huge PA floor standers but couldn't live with their rough edges all the time? Simple, have a pair in room number two for a bit of headbanging.

Naturally, there are still drawbacks to this approach - space and him/her indoors, I hear you cry! Granted, other less audio-enthusiastic occupants may not be best pleased, but then a second or third system doesn't have to be anywhere near as large as the main one. An amp, CD and pair of bookshelf 'speakers can be stowed away almost invisibly. Look at brands such as Creek and Rega (little front-to-back depth) as well as Cyrus and Micromega (nice and narrow), if space is a real issue.

Should you opt for the multi-system route, with decent cables the sound will far exceed that of a Midi and most multi-room set-ups. Best of all, the total price is completely up to you, especially when you can buy second-hand and experience once again the pleasure of assembling a unique system. I'm now the proud owner of three unobtrusive set-ups which all have their own strengths and weaknesses. I might have to cart my favourite CDs around the house and there are more black boxes than you can shake a stick at, but I believe it's the only way to go for true audiophiles on a budget.



Dominic Todd

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MOST audiophiles, their wives and their wallets are all too aware of what a terrible addiction hi-fi can be. More than many other past times, it soaks up vast amounts of effort, time and money while leaving your living room decorated with liberal amounts of PVC spaghetti and ugly black boxes. As far as I know, there is no therapy available for those who suffer from chronic audio addiction (apart from letters in red ink from the bank), but there is an alternative. The upgrade hit it offers can be just as strong, and use of this substitute is much more financially sustainable.

As **Dominic Todd** commented in his column last month, they don't build 'em like they used to. So what better way of slaking your upgrade thirst with a battleship component than purchasing second-hand?

There are naturally risks attached to buying used gear. Unless you know exactly what it is you're after, you can end up wasting money on a real lemon which simply doesn't work in your own system. And gear bought solely on the basis that it's constructed like a bomb-shelter and must therefore sound equally impressive can be unpredictable to say the least. Add to the above the worry that most service manuals will be unobtainable and a lot of the parts are likely to be going wobbly unless the item in question has had light use, and going second-hand would seem about as appealing as navigating a mine-field on a dark night after 15 pints.

So why even bother? Well, for a start you can learn about the hi-fi of previous eras 'on the job' - you can begin with cheap Seventies integrations and record decks (or some later valve amps and tuners) and get an idea of quality and reliability without blowing a fatal hole in your bank account. And, as the bits in question are already 'pre-

owned', they have depreciated about as far as they're going to and can be sold on without loss (assuming you pay a reasonable price in the first place).

Two enjoyable aspects of dabbling with this sort of kit are the thrill of the chase and the fact that you never know what you might find. For instance, I narrowly missed a pair of JVC full-range electrostatics not so long ago. Yes, you did read that correctly - electrostatics made by JVC. I was informed the FR-100s were roughly the size of fire guards but made a much sweeter sound! Never imported into this country (so I was informed by the gentleman parting with them), they had been bought in the Far East, flown back to the UK and now had to go.



The used market is a great place to discover all such 'hidden', innovative or outrageously well-built equipment (almost invariably from Japanese manufacturers). It was never sold in Britain because there were too few potential customers with wallets large enough.

One range which did make it into the mainstream was Trio's high-end L Series separates (including the L-07D direct-drive turntable with a variety of matching pres, powers and integrations. There was the L-01T tuner too).

A fellow bargain-hunter recently brought over an L-01A two-box integrated he'd picked up for £60 as the output transistors had been barbecued thanks to a loudspeaker short-circuit. My jaw hit the floor when I lifted the power supply

out of the box - there were two very large, potted mains transformers and a smaller third, bringing the PSU's weight up to around 20kgs.

The rest of the circuitry was accommodated in a

large case made predominantly of plastic (like DNM's amplifiers). Trio's engineers had come to the same conclusion as **Denis Morecroft**, that

metal enclosures cause distortion which degrades sound quality. They had measured this in their labs and, despite such distortion appearing at vanishingly low levels, went ahead with predominantly non-metal chassis in a lot of the L Series.

More tasty features included: what looked suspiciously like early versions of Panasonic's current For Audio potentiometers in the volume control; heavy copper buss bars from the output devices to the loudspeaker terminals; and more buss bars to the output stage from the reservoir caps, which were pairs of 18000uF cans potted in blocks of plastic to reduce microphony.

An interesting loudspeaker to keep an eye out for, although it's neither quite so esoteric or aged a component as the L-01A, is Technics' SB-RX50. Tipping the scales at 16.5kgs each, these relied on a flat-diaphragm, carbon-fibre mid/bass 'ring' around a mica/epoxy resin tweeter to turn electricity into sound. They received some glowing reviews when they first came out in 1991/2 and can now be had at very affordable prices.

Whatever your budget, the second-hand market offers plenty of scope for both audio explorers and those who want to assemble a system inexpensively. Start off cheap, remember that it's "caveat emptor" and try not to fall into the trap of assembling a floor-to-ceiling hi-fi collection!



Jon Marks

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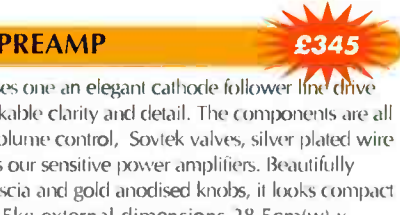
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K5881PSE VALVE AMPLIFIER KIT

An audiophile parallel-single-ended valve amplifier at an affordable price. K5881PSE uses the reliable Russian 5881 output valve. Its 17watts is enough to drive most loudspeakers, making high-end sound quality and design available to everyone. Can be easily monoblocked to give 32watts. Weight 17kg external dimensions with valves 40cm(w) x 32.5cm(d) x 17cm(h).



K5881 MkII VALVE AMPLIFIER KIT

A 20watt, Class A power amplifier that uses reliable Russian 5881 output valves, a military version of the American 6L6, designed for low distortion audio work. Now with a super shunt regulated push-pull (SRPP) input stage K5881 offers amazing sound quality. It can be used with a simple passive pre-amp or one of our own pre-amplifiers, and it matches modern loudspeakers well. Weight 15kg external dimensions with valves 40cm(w) x 32.5cm(d) x 17cm(h).



300B VALVE AMPLIFIER KIT

This is a specialised 28watt amplifier based on the highly linear 300B triode valve. Our 300B runs in Class A, giving one of the most sweet, open and neutral sounds possible today. Matched with good loudspeakers, it is unsurpassed. All parts are included in the kit, except valves since different 300B makes are available. Weight 26kg, external dimensions with valves 44cm(w) x 35cm(d) x 20cm(h).



K5881 MkII Upgrade kit

Upgrade your pre November 1996 K5881 amplifier to MkII status. The kit converts your amplifier to the new 7025 double triode input stage in place of the original EF86 pentode input

£35

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KLS10 HIGH TECHNOLOGY COMPACT MONITOR



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

£394

DRIVE UNITS & CROSSOVER KIT £394.00
DRIVE UNITS ONLY £358.00

KLS10 GOLD SUBWOOFER



£149.95

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

DRIVE UNIT & CROSSOVER KIT £149.95
DRIVE UNIT ONLY £71.00

KLS9 TWO WAY FLOORSTANDER



£230

Here's a storm for you - KLS9, with its BB4 alignment bass cabinet and Audax High Definition Aerogel 8in bass/midrange unit. Designed by Noel Keywood to possess optimal bass damping and a clean step response. Aided by a teensy bit of bass lift, KLS9 really thunders; it will re-arrange your furniture. But it does not waffle, falling silent when there's no bass in the music. Aided by a high power 1in fabric dome tweeter, KLS9 is detailed, evenly balanced and images superbly. It is an easy 12ohm load and is 88dB sensitive. For amps up to 60W. Easy to build and great for beginners. Internal volume 70ltrs, 18m MDF external dimensions 25cm(w) x 93cm(h) x 40cm(d).

DRIVE UNITS & CROSSOVER KIT £230.00
DRIVE UNIT PACK £160.00

KLS3 3 WAY CARBON-FIBRE DRIVER LOUDSPEAKER



£350

KLS3 uses extremely light and stiff carbon-fibre cone drive units for a fast, accurate sound. A dedicated 4inch carbon-fibre midrange drive unit provides the clean, smooth and detailed midrange characterised by superb projection. Its high 90dB sensitivity and near flat 8ohm impedance make it one of the easiest loudspeakers to drive. An ideal loudspeaker for high-end valve amplifiers. 25mm MDF, internal volume 60ltrs, external dimensions 26cm(w) x 100cm(h) x 35cm(d).

DRIVE UNIT & CROSSOVER KIT £350.00
DRIVE UNIT PACK £230.00

KLS7 2 WAY CARBON-FIBRE DRIVER FLOORSTANDER

Compact and affordable two way reflex loudspeaker. KLS7's slim dimensions make it easy to accommodate, but it uses top quality carbon-fibre drivers, so performance isn't compromised. An audiophile bargain. Sensitivity 86dB at 1W/1m 12mm MDF, internal volume 18ltrs, external dimensions 15cm(w) x 80cm(h) x 22cm(d).

DRIVE UNIT & CROSSOVER KIT £195.00
DRIVE UNIT PACK £110.00

KLS12 TWO WAY FLOORSTANDER/STANDMOUNTER



£175

KLS12 is a versatile budget loudspeaker that delivers fine sound quality at a low low price. It utilises Audax's HT210F0 woven fibre glass cone, mid/bass unit, beautifully married with the TW034X0, 34mm diameter doped fabric dome tweeter. Noel Keywood says, 'The KLS12 is a transparent, vividly detailed transducer with fine projection. It has tight well defined bass, which means it is best positioned close to a rear wall. Vocals possess a clean outline with an intense clarity.' At 89dB the KLS12 is easy to drive, thus, it is suitable for 20W and upward power amps. Internal volume = 34.1 litres

standmounter external dimensions = 58cm(h) x 24.2cm(w) x 34cm(d) floor stander external dimensions(with sand filled space cavity) = 58cm(h) x 24.2cm(w) x 34cm(d)

DRIVE UNITS & CROSSOVER KIT £175.00
DRIVE UNIT PACK £100.00

KLS11 3 WAY DESIGN



NEW!

Our newest design is a wonderful three way bass reflex enclosure stand mounter. Another star performer, featuring the superb gold dome tweeter, the HD3P. This, married perfectly to a HM100Z0 midrange unit and utilising the deep full sound of the 10 inch PR24OZ0 bass unit. All units are from Audax. As both these units use high definition Aerogel cones they have similar sonic signatures, providing a deliciously gelled sound. Our KLS11 is a quality three way, with powerfull bass and midrange driver that ensures vocals are handled with high fidelity. The treble is both smooth and sweet. Sensitivity 88dB

Volume 45.5 litres External dimensions 31cms (w) x 37.3cms (d) x 64cms (h)

DRIVE UNIT & CROSSOVER KIT £595.00
DRIVE UNIT KIT £470.00

£595

KLS8 TWO WAY HIGH SENSITIVITY

With a sensitivity of 94dB, KLS8 needs very little power. Its 10in. professional bass driver and horn loaded tweeter give it a BIG sound. Ideal for low power amplifiers. Internal volume 50.5ltrs, external dimensions 29cm(w) x 65cm(h) x 36cm(d).

DRIVE UNIT & CROSSOVER KIT £260.00
DRIVE UNIT PACK £175.00

KLS3 GOLD MK II



ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY THREE WAY LOUDSPEAKER

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

DRIVE UNIT & CROSSOVER KIT £575.00
DRIVE UNIT PACK £450.00

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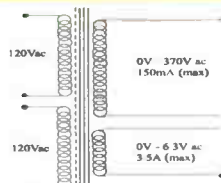
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HD83 Transformer set.....	HD83-K240/120(T.set).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£105	90
KEL34 Upgrade Kit.....	KEL34 Upgrade Kit).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£150	£125
KEL34 E&I 40W push-pull integrated amplifier.....	KEL34 E&I -K240/120(withvalves).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£315	£270
KEL34 E&I (without valves).....	KEL34 E&I -K240/120(No valves).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£270	£230
KEL34 E&I Transformer set (1 main & 2 outputs).....	KEI 34 E&I -K240/120(T. set).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£130	£110
KEL34 E&I Output Transformer (pair).....	KEL34 E&I -K240/120(OPT).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£80	£68
K5881 MkII 20W push-pull valve amplifier.....	K5881-K240/120.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£395	£350
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Drive Units + Crossover kit etc.....	KLS12-C.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£175	£150
Drive Units.....	KLS12-D.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£100	£85
KLS11 3-way aerogel standmounter loudspeaker with piezo gold tweeter				
Drive Units + Crossover kit etc.....	KLS11-C.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£595	£505
Drive Units.....	KLS11-D.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£470	£400
KLS10 2-way carbon-fibre standmounter loudspeaker with piezo gold tweeter				
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Drive Units.....	KLS10-D.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£358	£311
KLS10 SUBWOOFER Drive Unit + Crossover Kit etc.....	KLS10-SubC.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£149.95	£130
KLS10 SUBWOOFER Drive Unit.....	KLS10-SubD (1 x HM210Z2).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£71	£61
KLS3 3-way carbon-fibre driver floorstanding loudspeaker				
Drive Units + Crossover kit etc.....	KLS3-C.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£350	£300
Drive Units.....	KLS3-D.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£230	£200
KLS3 Gold 3-way carbon-fibre driver floorstanding loudspeaker with piezo tweeter				
Drive Units + Crossover kit etc.....	KLS3-C.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£575	£500
Drive Units.....	KLS3-D.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£450	£392
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Drive Units.....	KLS7-D.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£110	£95
KLS8 2-way high sensitivity standmounting loudspeaker				
Drive Units + Crossover kit etc.....	KLS8-C.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£260	£225
Drive Units.....	KLS8-D.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£175	£150
KLS9 2-way HDA driver floorstanding loudspeaker				
Drive Units + Crossover kit etc.....	KLS9-C.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£230	£200
Drive Units.....	KLS9-D.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£160	£140

AUDAX DRIVE UNITS

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8inch bass, 91dB.....	HM210Z0.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£64	£55*
10inch bass, 90dB.....	PR240Z0.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£76	£65*

Carbon Fibre Drivers

4inch midrange, 90dB.....	HM130C0.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£41	£35*
6.5inch bass/mid, 90dB.....	HM170C0.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£47	£40*
8inch bass, 90dB.....	HM210C0.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£58	£50*

Paper Cone Drivers

10inch paper cone bass, 95dB.....	PR240M0.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£67	£55*
13inch paper cone bass, 97dB.....	PR330M0.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£147	£125*

Fabric Dome Tweeters

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34mm 93dB - powerful sound.....	TW034X0.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	£26	£22*
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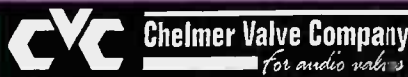
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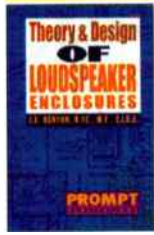
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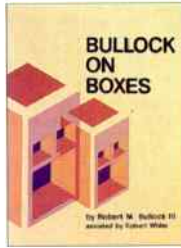
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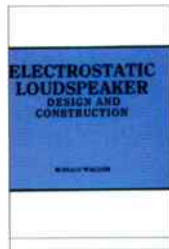
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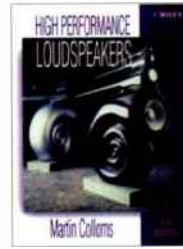
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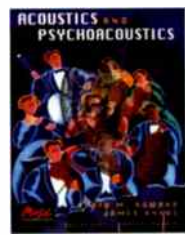
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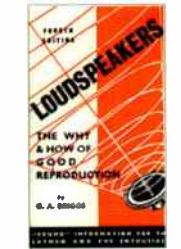
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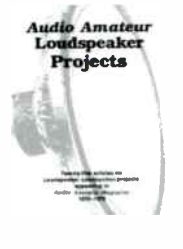
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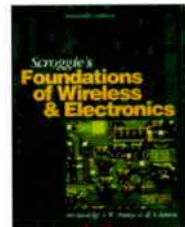


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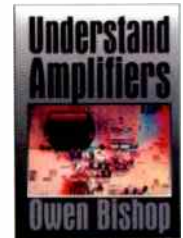
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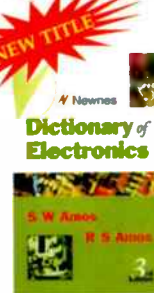
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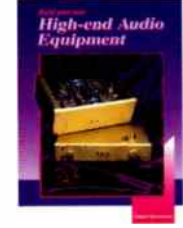
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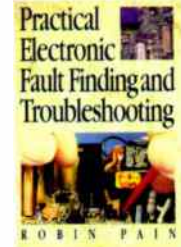
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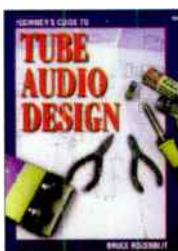
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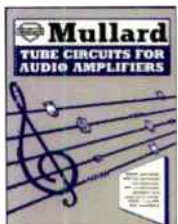
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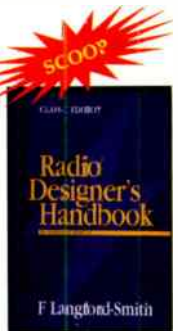
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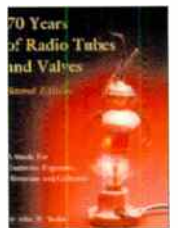
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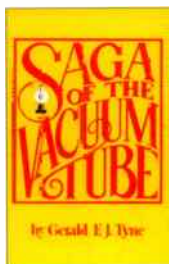


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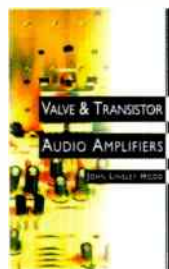
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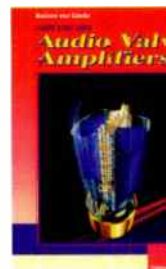
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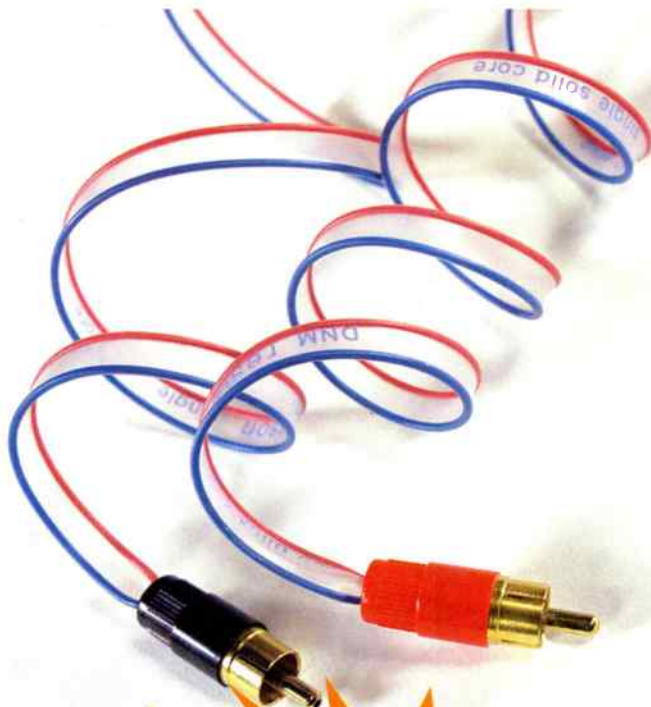
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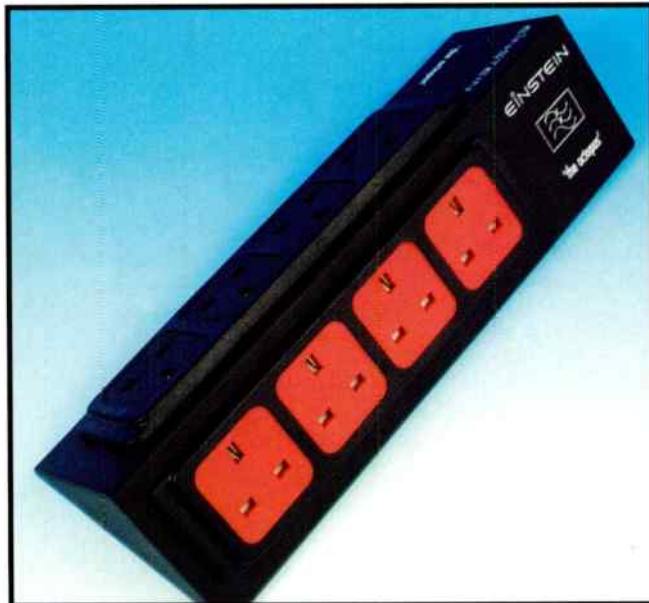
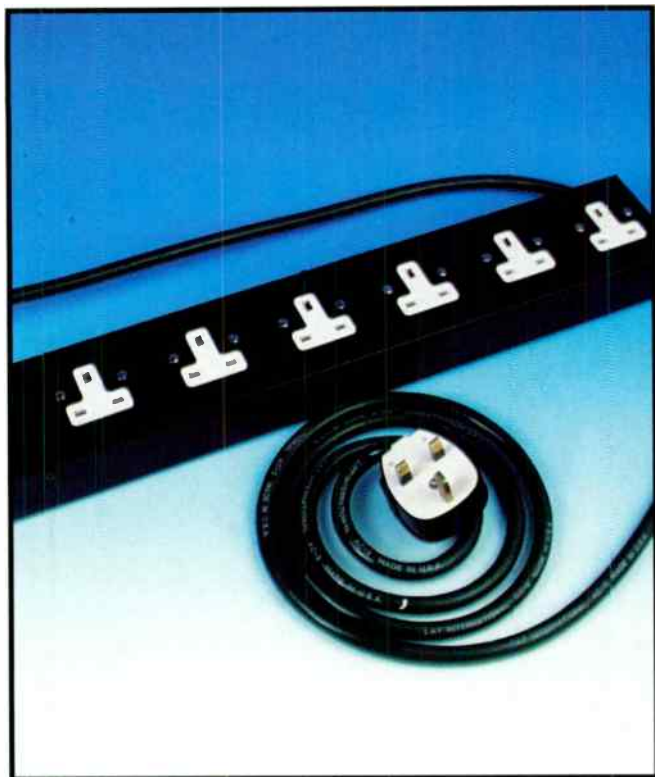
MAINLY MAINS

Jon Marks purifies his system with mains distribution blocks from LAT International and Einstein.

LAT INTERNATIONAL MAINS BLOCK £179

EINSTEIN OCTOPUS

£199.99



THIS very solidly-built six-way block is wired with the same cable used in this company's AC-2 individual mains leads (reviewed in June 1999). Inside the green sheath and steel case are a shield and three silver-plated OFC conductors within a Teflon dielectric.

As had been the case with the AC-2, this block took a very long time to burn in. Straight from the box it offered an improvement, but not a large one. It was actually a good three weeks before it suddenly loosened up, becoming smoother, more dynamic and considerably more musical. These changes were most obvious with the LAT connect-

ed to a Trio L-07D turntable, which is especially susceptible to RF pollution on the mains. Where the sound had previously been slightly sluggish and lacking in fluidity, with the LAT it gained in speed, control, and involvement. The same went for MVL's A2+ integrated amp, an old Mission Cyrus 1 and a Pioneer DV-505 DVD player, although to a lesser extent.

The LAT is a very effective way of cleaning up the electricity coming out of your wall socket. Just make sure you give it time to burn in fully before judging its performance.

LAT International
Audusa, tel: 0181 241 9826

OCTOPUS might sound like an unusual name for a mains block until you realise that Einstein's device features eight sockets. These are colour-coded too, one bank in red for digital equipment (which is fitted with a line conditioner), the other in black for analogue. These are arranged, four to a side, on a box with a triangular cross-section, which is quite a lot less obtrusive than the six-in-a-line alternatives. Another difference is the fact that the Octopus doesn't come with a hard-wired flying lead to the wall socket - you have to supply your own.

Linked to the mains via a standard cable the same length as that of the LAT, the Octopus went to work. I was struck by how much 'mush' had been removed from the sound, as low-level detail and sound stage depth were both much more in evidence than before.

Tonally, components running from the Octopus also sounded considerably more realistic. In these respects the Einstein outperformed both the LAT and Kimber's competitor which we use in our reference system.

It was in areas like overall cohesion and musicality where the LAT overtook the Octopus. Where the latter tended to home in on individual strands within a song, the former was better at presenting the overall picture complete with the ebb and flow that gets you swaying to the music.

Einstein's Octopus is a cost-effective way of bringing increased clarity and three-dimensionality to a system. It reduces problems like sibilance and grain, but it isn't as musical as the LAT.

Einstein Octopus
Midland Audio Exchange,
tel: 01562 822236

rock & pop

by Jon Clarke & Stuart Lenz

RECORD OF THE MONTH



Suede
Head Music

So we've had **Damon's** little effort, now it's **Brett's** turn. And if it's another cracking slice of W11 shenanigans and intrigue you're looking for, step right this way! Warped, drug-inspired, weird and muddled, *Head Music* could never be anything but an adventure.

Brett Anderson, in customary androgynous guise, has cooked up another 13 **Suede** tracks ranging from sure-fire hits *Electricity* and *She's In Fashion* to the downright annoying *Savoir Faire* and *He's Gone*.

The 31-year-old's gay/straight icon status is well maintained, particularly with a line from *Can't Get Enough* where he says he "feels real, like a man, like a woman, like a woman, like a man". Yeah, right, **Brett**.

In keeping with **Suede's** decadent image, *Head Music* is also littered with drug references, a legacy of **Brett's** heroin addiction, which he recently claims to have kicked once and for all after much pain and effort. (Head Music: music for the mind, mind expanding! That's it, got it!)

It all kicks off with the aforementioned *Electricity*, an uplifting, hard-edged Pop tune as good as anything off the trio of earlier albums. In his snarling, **Sex Pistols** draw **Brett** is at his best: "Oh it's bigger than the universe/it's bigger than the two of us/We got a love between us that's like electricity" he screams convincingly.

Skipping the bizarre *Savoir Faire*, where **Brett** has a go at skanking, we come to *Can't Get Enough*, a door-kicking Seventies chant with shades of **The Who** and **T-Rex**. **Brett's** having fun and, guess what, he's talking about needing another fix.

Everything Will Flow is the album's ballad, a warm, string-based opener that's quickly followed by the brilliant, anthemic *Down*, apparently written (surprise, surprise) while coming down from a hard night of drug-taking. Moody, swirling and building up slowly, it has latest addition **Richard Oakes** (who took over from **Bernard Butler**) literally burning the midnight oil on guitar.

Then it's the album's high-point, *She's In Fashion*. Shallow, silly, but equally catchy, this is thus far the song of the summer. So easily-conceived, it could have been written by a college band, that fact doesn't detract from its delectability. Other notable works are the Fall-inspired *Elephant Man* and sad *Indian Strings*. However, the album peters out in a somewhat tedious fashion with *He's Gone* and *Crack In The Union Jack*.

Brett might have kicked the evil habits he was once so famous for, but he clearly doesn't want to venture too far from that winning druggy formula. Better the devil you know, as he might chunter, and that musical devil ain't half good.

Electronic 01:01:52 Make it happen Haze Vivid Breakdown ... Can't find my way home - **Twisted Tenderness** Like no other... Late at night... Prodigal son When she's gone Flicker.



ELECTRONIC
TWISTED TENDERNESS

While they may no longer be the young men **Barney Sumner's** band **Joy Division** so tragically saluted in the late Seventies, neither are **Electronic** its lost souls. In fact, on this evidence, they are gunning ever quicker towards musical deliverance.

Twisted Tenderness (which draws on 40 years of musical experience from seasoned Mancunian guitarists **Barney** and **Johnny Marr**, formerly of **The Smiths**) is indeed a rebirth, following their suspect second album *Raise The Pressure* from three years ago.

From the haunting **Bakunin**-type figure staring from the cover to the track listing alongside him, there is plenty of initial evidence to suggest things are still sparky in the **Electronic** camp. Dipping into the album's contents confirms this.

Blasting off with the excellent *Make It Happen*, the boys show they mean business. After a kind of Prodigy-esque opening, this number swiftly evolves into a hip, late-Nineties grungey Dance opus. Swirling synth, acoustic accompaniment and a powerful guitar lead a song that's as surprising as it is engaging, although some things never change - "I am a fraction, part of a broken man" as **Bernie** intones in

typically happy fashion.

Haze echoes this sentiment, while *Vivid* builds on it. A big **Bob Dylan** mouth organ entry, a classic **New Order** **Barney** warble ("a revolution in a looking glass, I'm sick and tired of being second best").

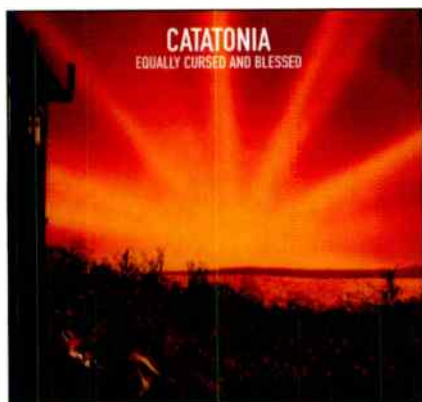
Perhaps with the sudden re-emergence of **New Order** last summer in a trio of live appearances and the promise of new material, **Bernard** has been somewhat rejuvenated. This potential comes across most strongly on the brilliant title track, a Dancey love song with classic uplifting Ibiza-style synth lines.

At the same time there also appears to be a new urgency about **Johnny's** strumming and melodies. In fact, at times, particularly on *Twisted Tenderness* but also on *Make It Happen* and the melodious *Can't Find My Way Home*, the pair at last combine the best elements of **The Smiths** and **New Order**. Their potential has been realised.

rock & pop

by Jon Clarke & Stuart Lenz

the list


CATATONIA
EQUALLY CURSED AND BLESSED

Poor old **Cerys Matthews** - fame plays tricks on the soul at the best of times. *Equally Cursed And Blessed* shows just the kind of emotional helter-skelter ride it has been for her since emerging from the Welsh valleys a few years ago.

The success of last year's platinum-selling debut, *International Velvet*, was the reward for the band's perseverance over a 10-year period. With *Equally Cursed*, **Catatonia** carry on their love affair with Pop. While **Cerys** has herself become the Indie darling that puppy dogs **Louise (Sleeper)** and **Sonya (Echobelly)** were in previous years, the music continues to be enthralling and engaging.

Unfortunately (perhaps it is due to the syrupy production), **Cerys** has a tendency to sound like a little girl scampering around in her nappies - just listen to *Dead From The Waist Down* or *Valerian*. Pleasingly, though, there are moments where she shows she can slip into various other vocal guises without trouble, although to some extent this is as much to do with the tone set by the rest of **Catatonia**. Still, she shows she is not hiding behind anyone when she blasts off like a rabble rouser in the Punk-riffed *Storm The Palace* ("Turn it into a bar, let them work in Spar"), one of the album's best tracks.

A change of direction comes in the Disco-inspired *Karaoke Queen*, with **Cerys** going for an unusual Glam approach. But best of all is *Shoot The*

Messenger, which sees our lady hamming it up as the archetypal bar room moll. With its nod to **Kurt Weill** and **Cerys'** own vodka-ravaged **Marlene Dietrich** inflections, it's a heady mix to be sure.


BILLY MAHONIE
THE BIG DIG

They may have been called "The best live band in Britain", but can they cut the mustard in the studio? On the strength of debut album, *The Big Dig*, the studio is too small for them. Swampy, snarling, agit-prop Rock, **Billy** and his arse (or something like that, if we go on the assumption that the **Pogues** previous name was **Pogue Mahone**, meaning "Kiss my arse") are tooled up and ready to ruck.

Think of **Billy Mahonie** as being similar to **Mogwai**, who were also unencumbered by a vocalist, but with influences that range from **Charlie Mingus** to **AC/DC**, and don't expect anything you can put your finger on straight away.

A typical **Billy** track is *Flagiolettes*, which builds up slowly from a bassline and cymbal link into a clever, swooning West Coast anthem, à la Big Black, Husker Du or Descendants. But somehow, things never get quite that heavy, and the hardcore Punk edge is only really hinted at, the band preferring to stick in a sentimental riff or **Pink Floyd**-type floaty number.

Recorded in the Somerset studio popular with **PJ Harvey** and produced by her main man **Head**, this is a gem of an album. Now go out and find some new live material, boys!

Here are our Top Five albums from previous issues:

1 SUEDE: HEAD MUSIC

Brett might have kicked the evil habits he was once so famous for, but he clearly doesn't want to venture too far from that winning druggo formula. Better the devil you know, as he might chunter, and that musical devil ain't half good.

2 KULA SHAKER: PEASANTS, PIGS AND ASTRONAUTS

Peasants, Pigs And Astronauts very much keeps the faith and should please all those die-hard Kula fans out there. Spiritual and hypnotic, with an eclectic range of Oriental instrumentation, it has genuine passion in its grooves and offers one of the best returns to Sixties style for a long while. Whether it will win any plaudits for originality is debatable.

3 BLUR: 13

A good deal of 13 is hit and miss, but there is much to suggest that Blur will yet, like Radiohead, carry on producing important music well into the millennium. And who knows, there might be a happy ending: the tabloids are already reporting a baby on the way for Damon and his new flame.

4 U2: THE BEST OF, 1980-1990

The inclusion of recent single 'Sweetest Thing', a love song originally from the Joshua Tree sessions, brings the compilation to a nicely-polished conclusion. It also proves that, this enduring combination drawn from both sides of the religious divide can offer some hope to even the most hardened sceptic of the Northern Ireland peace process.

5 CHUMBAWUMBA: UNEASY LISTENING

Nowhere did this bunch's formula work better than on their first album, *Pictures Of Starving Children Sell Records*, an extremely clever and catchy debut. Sadly, only one of its songs, 'In A Nutshell', a Geno-inspired trumpet standard with Tony Blackburn inserts, is included on this oddly-chosen compilation. It opens *Uneasy Listening* which does its best to cover the band's 13 years of history in the space of 20 tracks.

Audio Note Kit Amplifiers -

Power-Amp Kit

The Audio Note Kit One *(Illustrated)*

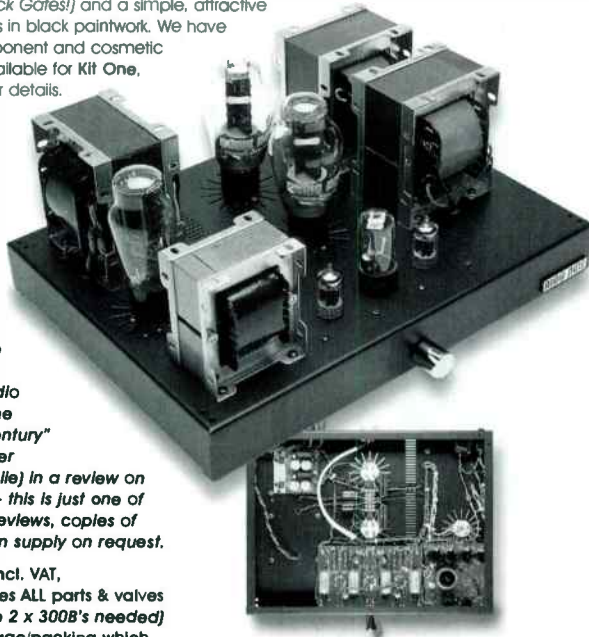
Based around the justly famous 300B directly heated triode, we see this kit as the introduction to *real* Audio Amplification, as it covers all the important aspects of design necessary, Single Ended, No-Feedback, Class A, Directly Heated Triode, to become a member of this exclusive club of amplifiers.

Kit One has one 300B per channel running at 420 volts with 75mA current giving 8-9 watts of the cleanest power you will ever hear, the input stage consists of a 6SN7GT with a 5687 double triode driver stage running in SRPP. The power supply is capacitor-choke-capacitor configuration with a 5U4G HT rectifier, the 300B's have a DC filament supply for hum-free operation whilst the other valves are AC heated. Component quality is similar to our Level 2 finished products, **Audio Note** paper in oil signal capacitors, Beyschlag 1 watt 1% metal film resistors, good quality electrolytics (*sorry NO Black Gates!*) and a simple, attractive stereo chassis in black paintwork. We have several component and cosmetic upgrades available for Kit One, please ask for details.

The Kit One has recently been awarded the title "The Greatest Audio Bargain of the Twentieth Century" by Dick Olsher (ex-Stereophile) in a review on the internet - this is just one of many rave reviews, copies of which we can supply on request.

Price: £799 incl. VAT, which includes ALL parts & valves (yes, also the 2 x 300B's needed) but not postage/packing which to UK customers is £12.00.

KIT ONE ORDER CODE: AN-KIT-001



The Audio Note Kit Two

Kit Two features a single 6550 tetrode running in Single-Ended mode, yielding some 12 watts of pure Class A. With a valve rectified HT for the output stage, stereo chassis, and 6SN7GT input and 12AX7/ECC83 SRPP driver stage, componentry and chassis as Kit One.

Kit Two costs £599 incl. VAT, includes valves, but not postage/packing.
KIT TWO ORDER CODE: AN-KIT-002

The Audio Note Kit Three

Kit Three features 2 x 300B's per channel running in single-ended parallel yielding 16/17 watts in pure Class A. This kit is on two mono chassis with valve rectified HT supplies, no signal feedback, it uses a 6SN7GT double triode as input valve and a pair of 5687 double triodes running in SRPP as drivers. The Kit Three is essentially a mono version of the Kit One with double the power, the same component choices and on two chassis' instead of one.

The Kit Three costs £1,550 incl. VAT but excluding delivery.
KIT THREE ORDER CODE: AN-KIT-003

The Audio Note Kit Four

The Kit Four is really our introduction to valve amplifier kit building, the circuit and power supply being mounted on a single printed circuit board. The high-quality push-pull output and mains transformers are all mounted in a small aluminium chassis covering everything so nobody will be able to see that you have succumbed to the lure of the valve amplifier which is sweeping the world. The circuit consists of two 6V6GT tetrodes running in Push-Pull class A, yielding about 10 watts, driven by a 6SN7GT and a 12AX7/ECC83 input stage. Easy to build, even for the beginner. Visually Kit Four matches the Audio Note Pre-amplifier shown here but with a single chrome-plated volume control. As with all Audio Note kits everything (except solder) is included.

The Kit Four costs: £299 incl. VAT but not delivery.
KIT FOUR ORDER CODE: AN-KIT-004

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These handmade signal capacitors are sonically superior to any of the plastic or other paper types we have come across. If you have never experienced the difference that a really good paper / oil capacitor can make in a valve amplifier, then you really should try.

Audio Note Paper In Oil Tin Foil Signal Capacitors

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Audio Note Paper In Oil Copper & Silver Foil Signal Capacitors

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All of our valve bases are of the highest possible quality materials. Ceramic, Teflon and gold and silver plated. If you want the best look no further - they are the ultimate!

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Audio Note endeavour to stock the entire E12 range of all the different makes of resistor, since most are used in our products stock is generally available within four weeks.

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AUDIO NOTE 1 Watt Tantalum Resistors

AUDIO NOTE 2 Watt 1% Tantalum Resistors

AUDIO NOTE Precision Carbon Film Resistors

ALLEN BRADLEY 1 Watt 5% Carbon Film Resistors

Audio Note is happy to provide a wide range of complete kits, output and mains transformers, chokes, paper in oil, aluminium, tin, copper or silver foil signal capacitors, Black Gate, Cerafine or standard electrolytic capacitors, tantalum, carbon and metal film resistors, silver wires, interstage and driver transformers, switches, balance controls, potentiometers, attenuators, chassis's and fittings for the quality oriented DIY'er, whether you are a beginner or hardened experimenter, male or female, we have the best (and not always most expensive) parts for most projects.

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We shall be offering the speaker drivers that we use in our own loudspeakers for general sale from now on. You can buy the drivers individually or together with matched and tested cross-overs, cabinet drawings and reflex ports.

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If you would like some suggestions which to base a future project around, then we shall be happy to provide you with a circuit pack containing good circuits like ONGAKU, KEGON/KASSAI, NEIRO, GAKU-ON plus several other power amplifier circuits and the M7Tube & M10 pre-amplifiers, which are the best sounding pre-amplifier circuits we have come across.

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Components & Valves

Pre-Amp Kit

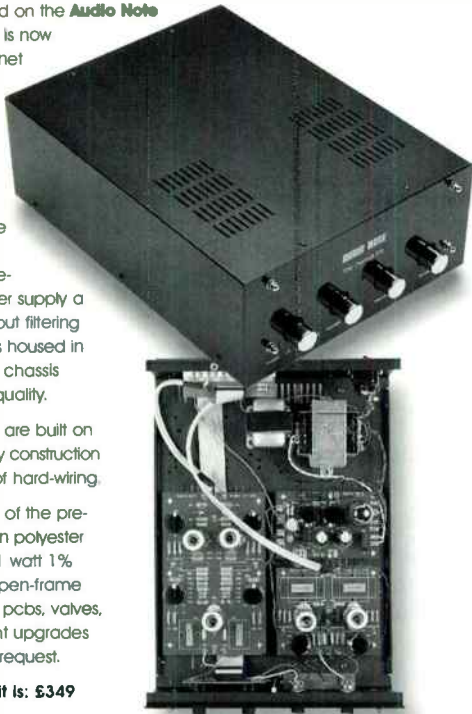
The Audio Note Pre-Amplifier Kit (illustrated)

A complete kit loosely based on the **Audio Note** M7Tube pre-amplifier circuit is now available. The moving-magnet compatible phono stage consists of a cascode input, with passive RIAA equalisation and anode-follower output using the 12AX7/ECC83. Line buffer/amplification for the four line inputs consists of an ECC82 configured in parallel anode-follower mode. For the power supply a valve rectifier and choke-input filtering are employed. All circuitry is housed in a non-magnetic aluminium chassis giving the very best sound quality.

Both phono and line stages are built on 'track-less' pcbs allowing easy construction but with the sonic benefits of hard-wiring.

The standard-quality version of the pre-amp kit includes Roederstein polyester film capacitors, Beyschlag 1 watt 1% metal film resistors, Noble open-frame style potentiometers and all pcbs, valves, wire etc. Various component upgrades are available, details upon request.

Cost of The Pre-Amplifier Kit is: £349 incl. VAT but not delivery.



Audio Note Black Gate Electron Transfer, High Performance, Graphite Foil Capacitors

Audio Note is currently the sole source in Europe that holds any significant range of values in stock, we use literally 1000's in production, as we were the first company to realise the tremendous benefits that Black Gate capacitors offer, and we are to date the only high-end audio company in the world to incorporate Black Gate capacitors consistently in our finished products.

There are very few audio parts that promise a guaranteed improvement when replacing practically any other part, but this is what the BLACK GATE capacitors actually do. Exchanging any electrolytic capacitor anywhere in the circuit of an amplifier or in the crossover of a speaker will greatly improve sound quality. We are working on some guidelines as to where, how and which types of Black Gates to use in different circuits, the first such technical guideline is available now and is called "Improving your CD-Player" and can be obtained by sending a stamped addressed envelope to us requesting this leaflet. All AUDIO NOTE Level 2 Signature products use Black Gate Electron Transfer in critical signal / power supply junctions.

Audio Note Cerafine Powdered Ceramic Electrolytic Capacitors

We have at long last secured a reliable source for these fine power supply filter capacitors, a must in any single-ended project. The Cerafines really cover many of the Black Gates values and where the prices for the BG's are prohibitive the Cerafine is a fine sounding alternative. We have increased the range of Cerafines we stock quite recently, and strongly recommend all the Cerafines as a far superior replacement or substitute for ordinary electrolytics, and at the prices offered that should be within most budgets. All power supply Cerafines are supplied with a capacitor clamp and are upright mounting.

Audio Note Potentiometers

The best available from a sound quality / price viewpoint, made by Noble in Japan, utilising high quality conductive plastic film. However a better alternative is the KO-ON volume controls which are used in pre-amplifiers like the M7 Tube, M7Line, and in a mono version on the input in the NEIRO, KASSAI, KEGON and GAKU-ON, these are very good sounding pots by any standard.

Audio Note also carry large quantities of STANDARD TYPE SWITCHES, STANDARD ELECTROLYTIC CAPACITORS (good quality industrial types), RCA, BNC, BANANA, PLUGS, RCA SOCKETS, SPEAKER & GROUND TERMINALS & LOUDSPEAKER SPADES.

Audio Note Moving Coil, CD Line & Input Matching Transformers

Audio Note now offer moving coil, CD and Input matching transformers for general sale. Common to all of these small signal transformers is that they come in a mumetal screening can with a threaded spindle with a nut for mounting.

Stock Clearance SALE

In anticipation of the arrival of the new in-house made Audio Note copper foil paper in oil signal capacitors, we are pleased to offer a **60% discount on current list price** on all Tobias Jensen made paper in oil aluminium, tin and copper foil signal capacitors.

Offer strictly limited to availability, while stocks last.

Minimum Order
4 pcs single or mixed values or £20.00.

Audio Note Selected Audio Valves

Our valves are selected from the best available sources and are tested to the same stringent standards that we apply in the production of our own amplifiers. They fall into two categories, standard production items and rare, mostly NOS (*New Old Stock*) valves which are no longer in production. We have compiled a special list of the NOS items, which is available against a stamped self addressed envelope, if you live outside the UK, send US \$2. You should be aware that the valves on this list are NOT cheap, but we have stock of original GE, RCA and United Electronics 211, both standard versions and reinforced anode type for the US airforce, 845 Westinghouse, VT25/10/10Y, VT62/801A, WE300B, STC4300A, Mullard GZ34/CV1377, Tungsol 5U4G (best sounding 5U4G we have ever heard!), Chatham 5R4WGY and many others.

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Audio Note

Music's Finest Conductor

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classical

by Stephen Priest & Frank Blake



WILLIAM WALTON
Violin and Viola Concertos
& Sinfonia Concertante
Various Artists
AVID AMSC 604

Walton expressed the concern that, after the pinnacle of the Violin Concerto, his critical standing was doomed to fall. Listening to his concert works on this beautifully re-mastered disc, it seems to me that Walton was far too musically literate to last forever. Do you remember how all-but shunted into a siding he had been for 20 years before his death (a film composer, ugh!)? Or how *Façade* is nowadays a ballet suite and little else?

This is another of Avid's series of *Great Performances Of The 20th Century*. As that century rapidly runs out, it is sobering to think that, in human terms, sound recording is still so recent that 'great performances' of any other age are mostly a matter of hearsay, or at best rather scraggy piano rolls and practically unlistenable waxings.

Recording has changed the way we think about musicians - not entirely for the better, either. Legends have to be fairly hardy to withstand the scrutiny of a later and possibly less reverent generation. Striking examples of this are typically singers - Peter Pears and Owen Brannigan come to mind - but even Menuhin has left ample evidence of 'off' days. Recordings can be cruel things.

As the best-remembered of the soloists on this album, Jascha Heifitz seems to me to be one of the lucky ones, who managed to combine a copper-bottomed technique with great expressive restraint. The

result is music making which has worn its 50-odd years uncommonly well.

Since the latest of these works was first performed in 1939, Walton is shown as a composer who matured very early. What's perhaps more striking is the sense of a living tradition in his work. Whilst his output often displays the quirks of true musical humour, and a sometimes daring predilection for dissonance, Walton walks down the broad high road; musically speaking, there is always a happy ending.

With artists of the calibre of viola maestro William Primrose, and the optional piano part of the Sinfonia in the distinguished hands of Phyllis Sellick, and of course Heifitz himself, it is a truly nourishing experience to listen to these vintage recordings.

On the evidence of the selection on this disc, one can not only pronounce the artists' and composer's contemporary reputations to have been well-earned, but their places in the history of music as a living recorded art should be well assured.

is associated musically with Beethoven, Webern and the composer featured here, Bach.

Both of these pieces, of course, were originally written for harpsichord and the French 'style' of the music comes not in the harmony but in rhythm and form - both being, basically, a group of French-named dances, all in the same key. The dances all have the traits of French stately majesty with their use of dotted rhythms and ornamentation.

Suites of both the orchestral and keyboard kind were an important form during the 17th and early 18th centuries. Although the earlier suites of the 16th century were both English and Italian, the French style of the genre became by far the most popular with musicians and the public.

Naming a sequence of dances as an Overture was by no means a one-off for Bach, as his four orchestral suites all had the French title 'Ouverture'. Although the Overture featured on this disc appears to be a more technically demanding and substantial work than the Suite, this was by no means uniform of the style.

Bach's inherent mathematics never fail to delight when used in this form (the orchestral suites being other examples), and both constraint and elegance are called for to carry such music off.

Anderszewski has both of these in abundance and, together with a seemingly effortless technique, he makes this music breathe and flow.

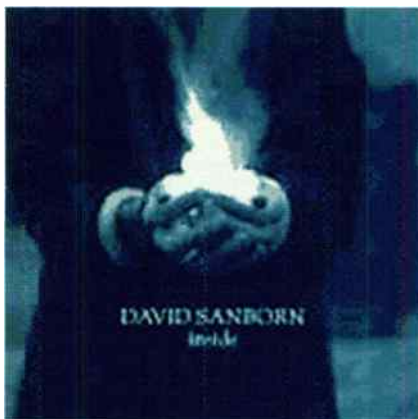
The Suite gracefully moves from one dance to the next, each displaying the pianist's dexterity, phrasing and lightness of touch. In the Overture, however, we can see Anderszewski's association with Beethoven more clearly realised. The Overture is more muscular and measured in style than the Suite, and the 12-minute opening passage introduces a sense of controlled grandeur to the music and, indeed, the playing that is sustained throughout the piece to great effect. With all the fluidity and involvement of Anderszewski's playing, due to his sound technique he still retains that mechanical essence that is, for me, the key to Bach's glorious output. Wonderful stuff.



J.S. BACH
French Suite No5, BWV
816/Overture In The French Style,
BWV 831
Piotr Anderszewski, piano
LES NOUVEAUX
INTERPRETES/HARMONIA MUNDI

Anderszewski was born to a Polish father and Hungarian mother and studied in Lyon, Strasbourg, Southern California and at the Chopin Academy in Warsaw. At 29 years old he already has a sound CV and

by Ian Nicholson

**DAVID SANBORN***Inside*

ELEKTRA 62346

Since the days when he left his home town St Louis to play for the **Butterfield Blues Band** in California, **Sanborn** has worked hard at staying a top dog among the LA studio sessioneers - and succeeded. He has also commuted effortlessly between sophisticated Jazz-Pop solo albums stressing his distinctive alto tone and R'n'B roots, and the occasional full-ahead Jazz outing like 1990's *Another Hand*, or *Upfront* a year or two later. This time he's found a place somewhere between the two; like Goldilocks' favourite porridge, it's neither too lumpy nor too smooth (or was that the mattress?), and it works well.

Produced and largely written by bass ace **Marcus Miller**, there's more than a nod here to the current East Coast Soul-Jazz fusion sound, with vocals by **Cassandra Wilson** on an oh-so-delicate reinvention of **Aretha's** *Daydreaming*, and **Lalah Hathaway** on **Miller's** *When I'm With You*, plus a discrete cameo from **Sting** on *Ain't No Sunshine*.

Guest star vocals aside, we are deep in Crusaders territory here, with **Miller's** big city collection of Housey beats and exotic accents layered around **Sanborn's** athletic or melancholy tone. And sometimes the Funk is allowed to drip more generously - try **Miller's** *Brother Ray*, with its **Dr John** vocal samples and **Tower Of Power**-style horn section.

The mid-section of *Inside* is three songs that showcase **Sanborn's** ability to bend Pop melodies over itchy-feet rhythms or

"go ahead, hang yourself in the spaces" ballads. His own perfect-for-midnight-radio ballad, *Lisa*, is followed by the Fender Rhodes-powered slow Soul-Funk of *When I'm With You*, which lifts an infectious trick or two from the **Quincy Jones** crowd vocals book. The engineering is flawless throughout, suggesting live feel while navigating a crucial cusp for this kind of Jazz: fat bottom-end when you turn it up, sharp balance and presence at lower levels or on the radio. Not half bad at all, even for **Sanborn**.

**DIANA KRALL***When I Look In Your Eyes*

VERVE IMP13042

It wasn't until a mid-point in the elegant new set from US Jazz pianist **Krall** that the penny dropped. There had been clues aplenty - the sultry echoes of **Julie London** and **Peggy Lee** in the song selection, the big-room reverb, the bold, forceful, somehow 'urban' mixes and, most of all, the striking, original string arrangements.

But by the time **Johnny Mandel's** lush, cinematic overture to *I've Got You Under My Skin* shimmered out of the Tannoys, the inside fake had been swallowed and the basket made with style. A Jazz star is being born here. Not one of your **Chet Baker** stars, mind you, but a **Nat King Cole**, **Shirley Bassey**, **Ella Fitzgerald** kind of star - another few years and household name status is on the cards.

This 20-something New Yorker's first two albums for Verve were anchored in the piano trio and quartet traditions, although her live shows quickly established that the pretty girl singer at the key-

board had no problem punching her musical weight with the young turks in her band like guitarist **Russell Malone**.

Those live shows also revealed that she enjoyed revisiting the standards just as much as playing 'catch my drift' with the band. And *When I Look In Your Eyes* is a record that manages to mate credible with accessible at every level. From the Bossa remake of *I've Got You Under My Skin* to the elegant wordplay of **Michael Franks'** throwback chestnut *Popsicle Toes*, **Tommy LiPuma's** production and **Al Schmitt's** engineering work their apparently effortless magic yet again, capturing great material performed with joy by outstanding musicians without losing a single useful harmonic.

**REGINA CARTER***Rhythms Of The Heart*

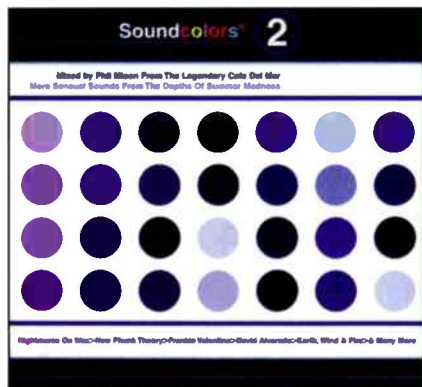
VERVEVERCD 54

This is simply a delightful, winning record. Bursting with echoes of the charm and verve (sorry) **Joe Venuti** or **Stephane Grappelli** brought to the 'difficult' violin from the Thirties to the Eighties, or **Ray Nance** to **Ellington's** sound, this third solo set from **Carter** should brighten anyone's day.

Although she is better known until now for sessions with **Lauryn Hill**, **Wynton Marsalis**, **Billy Joel** and **Aretha Franklin**, **Carter** and her core band (**Kenny Barron**, **Lewis Nash** and **Rodney Jones**) gallop irresistibly across a global panorama with help from Brazilian, Latin and African stars, yet never sound over-influenced or untrue to their own voices. If you get off on Blues, Folk, hot pickin' or hot Club Jazz, this is uplifting, original and splendid.

dance & ambient

by Sara Davis



**Mixed by Phil Mison
(Cafe del Mar)**

Soundcolors 2
X:TREME RECORDS XTR54CDM

Featuring **Nightmares On Wax**, **Frankie Valentine**, **David Alvarado** and Seventies Glam kings **Earth, Wind and Fire**, *Soundcolors 2* follows on where the first album left off, with **Cafe del Mar** chill-out dude, **Phil Mison**, behind the decks again.

Having begun his career in '92 at the Milk Bar's Recession Session alongside **Darren Emerson** and **Nicky Holloway**, **Mison** has developed a classy but idiosyncratic blend of down-tempo beats in recent years. His stint in Ibiza with **Jose Padilla** helped consolidate his mix of laid-back grooves even further (something to do with sunsets and smokes, no doubt) and this series just goes to show how low the blissed-out vibe can go.

Soundcolors 2 features a cross-section of mainly brand new music from all over the world, including **Mato** from Japan, **Native Elements** from New York, **Bouzoo Bajou** from Germany alongside our own boys, **Frankie Valentine** and **Nightmares On Wax**. The rest of the roster includes an as-yet-unreleased track (*Jersey Street* from **Junior Boys Own**) well worth checking out for its smoochy groove and other underground movers in the form of **Peacefrog & David Alvarado** (*Next*) and **Mr. Hermano** (*Caixixi*) on Disorient Records.

As ever, it's a relatively diverse yet complementary selection of tunes which injects a summery vibe into all things slow and soulful. Don't miss the closing feature, **Earth, Wind and Fire's** delightful

Departure, which rounds proceedings off in the most chilled form of all.



DJ Todd Terry
House Music Movement

MASTER DANCE TONES HMMCD-8093

Native New Yorker **Todd Terry** is a working hurricane who has clocked up a massive amount of classic tracks over the last 11 years. Hugely respected as an early House pioneer, the turning points in his career include the 1989 release of **Black Riot's** *A Day In The Life*, 1992's CLS monster *Can You Feel It*, and assorted other mammoth successes with the likes of **Jamiroquai**, **The Lightning Seeds** and **The Cardigans**.

It's workmanship of a similar calibre that **Mr Terry** brings to the *House Music Movement*, allowing Master Dance Tones to unleash what must be one of their strongest sets in the series to date thanks to the mostly vintage **Todd Terry**-produced classics, mixed down by the great man himself. *Back To The Beat* sets the pace and is bolstered by the phenomenal *Bounce To The Beat* and recent smashes such as *Something Going On* and **Martha Wash's** *Catch The Light*.

All in all, there are 14 tunes in the same vein. Between them they showcase **Todd Terry's** uncanny ability to stay one step ahead of the trends game with his unique sound based around the classic TT beats. Artists such as **Kym Mazelle** and **Lighthouse Family** also benefit from his touch, and he sounds as fresh as ever across this set.



Cutmaster Swift

The Breaks II
HARMLESS HURT CD15

The Breaks was universally recognised as one of the Dance compilations of '98, due to the fact that it featured 12 of the most influential and sampled tracks of all time in the worlds of Dance and Hip-Hop. The *Breaks II* can't quite make the same claim as there are few big-name tunes to mention, but it's always worth checking out the new men (or women) in the mix, especially when they've just been crowned DMC World Mixing Champ.

Expect all the Funk of the first episode, with a rather more classic edge tune-wise, in most cases quite rare grooves, many of which have been excavated for the first time since their original release. We're talking **Kool And The Gang** resurrected with kudos thanks to their Funky Disco expertise, and the **Commodores**, whose contribution boasts samples à la **DJ Jazzy Jay** and **Teddy Riley** (known as the 'Huh' Break by those in the biz). Artists such as **Curtis Mayfield**, **Gil Scott-Heron** and **Booker T And The MGs** all feature for their part in the Break Dance revolution, some as catalogues of samples lifted from yesteryear, others as seminal tunes from the sub-culture itself.

This album's tracklist is very specialised, and given that most of the tunes are featured simply for one or other riff or beat which has been sampled by the Hip-Hop Soul generation, it's only likely to appeal to hard-core Break kids or their parents (who probably remember the originals from the first-time round).

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Buying Guide

Our comprehensive new guide contains over 1000 hi-fi components, all tried and tested by Hi-Fi World's listening team. Backing up each one is our performance verdict to help you select the perfect upgrade or first purchase. Happy reading!

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Loudspeakers £ Year Verdict

Under £300

Acoustic Energy AE100	£200	Jan 96	Reasonably neutral but ultimately lacklustre. Control of treble and mid-range poor.
Audio Gem Opals	£240	Dec 97	Partner the Opals with warm ancillaries and you get an involving sound. Avoid bright amps and sources.
Aura LSB-627M	£230	Aug 98	Energetic, bold and highly detailed, the Aura is one to consider for the budget-conscious.
Aura LST-627	£299	Oct 98	Like Aura's matching stand mounters, the 627Ms are lucid and controlled. Treble is brightish.
B&W 601	£200	Jan 96	Unrestricted and clean sound with satisfying musicality. An engaging subtlety not common at the price.
B&W DM302	£130	Apr 96	Clear open and detailed sound but balance too forward and weak bass.
B&W DM602	£250	Nov 96	Excel with taut hard-hitting bass with dynamic and uncoloured midrange. Metal dome tweeter bleaches out the treble.
Boston CR6	£150	Sep 98	With simple music, the CR6s work well, but not quite as well as the best of the competition.
Castle Isis	£230	Jan 96	A lively little animal, well worth the money.
Celestion 12i	£119	Feb 98	The 12is' powerful, confident sound belies a rather poor measured performance.
Celestion Impact 15	£200	Jan 96	Big presentation but a rather distant quality. Could sound boomy and confined.
Celestion Impact 23	£299	Nov 96	Sterling performance in the bass with speed and control. Good midrange projection.
Charlo Hiper 1000	£299	Feb 99	Quality construction and sound marry to produce a very capable 'speaker. Open treble and firm bass for the size.
Eltax Liberty 3+	£150	Jan 98	A lot of loudspeaker for the money. Punch and slam in the bass but sometimes thin in the treble.
Eltax Symphony 6	£240	Nov 96	Although bright, the Symphony 6s score for clarity and power. Bass is fast and accurate.
Gale 2i	£140	Feb 97	Smooth, balanced performers that do a good job on any genre. Free from the nasties that afflict many at the price.
Gale Mini Monitor	£50	Apr 97	Not the last word in midrange or bass clarity, but gives real hi-fi results for a paltry £50.
GLL ICT100	£170	Nov 95	For their size and price they offer some super qualities, especially stable imaging.
Heybrook Heylette	£270	Jun 98	A mini monitor with more precision and dynamism than the size and price tag would suggest.
Heybrook Optima	£259	Oct 98	Capable all-rounders, the Optimas combine smoothness, insight and control to great effect.
Heybrooks HB1 S3	£269	Nov 96	Excellent imaging with clear treble and midrange. Bass slightly dry and boxy but would suit a smaller room.
Jamo CS5 Actives	£200	Oct 98	In spite of a few colorations, the Jamos are fine examples of budget active operation.
JPW ML510	£130	Jan 98	With greater transparency and a bit more get-up-and-go, the 510s could be leaders of the budget pack.
Kef 60S	£200	May 96	The 60S is open and detailed but coloured too.
Kef Coda 7	£129	Apr 95	Rhythmic push and tuneful bass are the plus points of these small standmounts.
Kef Coda 8	£200	Jan 96	Breezy presence, good dynamics and a sense of fullness. Not the utmost in clarity, some box colouration.
Kef Coda 9	£299	Jul 96	Strong bass can get out of control, as can treble. This tends to overpower the midrange.
Kef Q15	£199	Feb 97	Impressive bass and a sweet clarity make the Q15s 'speakers that'll put a smile on any audiophile's face.
Kenwood LS90UK	£129	Jul 98	The LS90UKs have dry bass and limited tonal colour, but staging and imaging are superb.
Linn Sekrit	£298	Apr 96	Well-behaved and with a decent tonal quality.
Mission 700	£130	May 98	The 700s are easily outclassed by Mission's own superb 731 Pros at a £10 premium.
Mission 731	£129	Apr 95	An initially impressive, upfront sound but ultimately a little uninvolved.
Mission 731 Pro	£139	Jul 97	Music makers with a clean, punchy sound. Real value for money.
Mission 731i	£130	Nov 96	Mission's babies are a truly worthwhile improvement on the original 731s.
Mission 731LE	£150	Nov 95	Excellent sound puts the competitors in the shade. Well built and pretty too!
Mission 732i	£200	Aug 97	If you've got £200 with 'loudspeaker' written on it, then the 732i should be on your shopping list.
Mission 771	£170	Jul 98	Superb stand mounters of real refinement and musicality. A touch bass light.
Mission 772	£230	Apr 95	Civilised standmounters which lack nothing in control, finesse or transparency.
Monsoon MM-1000	£200	May 99	A novel multi-media two-satellites-and-sub which nevertheless demands to be taken quite seriously.
Mordaunt-Short MS20i	£200	Jan 96	Very tight bass and an all-round big sound. Some sharpness in the treble but assertive and clear.
Nad 801	£100	Jun 97	Impressive bass with midrange clarity are pluses. Prominent treble stops the 801 from challenging the best.
Paradigm Mini Monitors	£230	Aug 97	The Paradigms have a generally enjoyable sound but treble is sharp and midrange recessed.
QLN 122	£270	Jun 96	Solid bottom end will drive a large room well, but they're a bit bright too.
RA Labs Mini Ref	£99	Jul 95	Engineering is not tip-top, but with a smooth system they will produce a clear and open, if bright, sound.
Revolver Purdey	£200	Jan 96	Rather small sound for a big cabinet. Absence of deep bass hard to forgive.
Rogers LS1	£149	Feb 95	Clear, bright and open but with weak bass. Best used close to or against a wall.
Rogers LS33	£250	Nov 96	Detailed and clear with a forward midrange. Could be a little rough on vocals; bass extension is limited.
System Audio 1005	£299	Aug 96	Excellent all-rounder that provides a real open window into almost every genre of music.
Tangent Monitor 11	£200	Nov 97	The Tangents' bass has attractive speed and impact, matched with smooth treble and open midband.
Tangent Monitor 2	£60	Jul 96	Good imaging as well as control. Tweets a bit too much but more than fine for the money.
Tannoy Mercury m1	£120	Jun 98	The best at the price and capable of embarrassing many more expensive 'speakers.
Tannoy Mercury m2	£140	May 97	For £140, you get a 'speaker with transparency and enjoyability unmatched at the price.
Tannoy Mercury m3	£240	Nov 97	Even overall balance and taut secure bass, if not the deepest ever. Slightly lightweight and uninvolved.
Tannoy R1	£199	Nov 98	Worth an audition if you need to balance a bright source and amp, but treble lacks clarity.
TDL NFM 1	£120	May 97	Bright treble is partially balanced by taut, well integrated bass, but outclassed by the competition.
TDL Nucleus 1	£60	Apr 97	Clean, incisive, detailed and revealing, especially in the bass.
W'dale Active Diamond	£180	Mar 99	Great value introduction to active. The sound is deep and powerful but could be a little coloured for some.
Wharfedale Valdis 300	£150	Jul 96	Can work well if partnered to give weighty bass and smooth treble.



Aura LST 627.



Blue Room Mini Pod.

£300-£799

B&W CDM1SE	£600	Apr 98	Tuneful and confident, these 'speakers are well suited to Pop and Dance music.
B&W DM305	£350	Mar 97	All the ingredients for listening fun are mixed into the DM305. Overall presentation could be more cohesive though.
B&W P4	£600	Mar 95	Good-looking solid 'speakers with great spirit and tenacity but with a dry treble. Not fans of classical music.
Blue Room Minipod	£400	Jan 97	Arresting style allied to an engaging sound makes the Minipods attractive. Best with smooth amps and source.
Carlsson OA 50.2	£585	Dec 98	Acoustic music gets nicely. More artistic pieces sometimes don't work so well.
Castle Avon	£699	Dec 96	Taut, dry bass and lucid midrange but need matching to warm ancillaries to avoid sounding bright. Castle

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Loudspeakers £ Year Verdict

£300-£799

Model	Price	Year	Verdict
Cardo Harpoc	£799	Aug 96	Bass power and extension will impress but overall sound is uneven and rather sterile.
Cardo Kendo	£450	Mar 98	The Kendals have great clarity but need coupling to warm ancillaries.
Cardo Severn 2	£579	Jul 98	Apart from some hardness in the tweeters, the Severn 2s are accomplished all-rounders.
Charmhaus 1	£399	May 95	Music makers through and through with a great feel for rhythm and dynamics.
Charv Lynn	£549	Apr 99	The Lynxes are superbly built but their rising bass and treble suit home cinema more than hi-fi.
Earl 452	£700	Feb 96	A powerful and rich sound from these competitively priced floorstanders makes them worth a recommendation.
Epica E212	£495	Oct 96	Strong, punchy bass allied to detailed and articulate midrange and treble.
Heylios Heylic	£339	Aug 97	The Heylios stand out for their bass depth, dynamics and sound staging. Overall balance prefers Classical to Rock.
Heybrook Heylic	£389	Oct 95	Posses a neutral, fast and dry sound. A good match for soft sounding systems.
John 311	£300	Apr 95	Delicate, detailed sound, albeit with rather imprecise imaging. Will work well on a bookshelf.
JPW Ruby 2	£300	Nov 97	The 910s aren't perfect but they make music fun. Quality, power and extension, the Milleniums are worth a listen.
JPW Ruby 2	£395	Oct 98	Once allied to warm electronics, the Ruby 2s mix insight with plenty of involvement.
Kef LS35A	£599	Jul 95	Partnered with the Rogers AB1, this is a substantial marriage.
Kef Q30	£350	Nov 97	Very accomplished midrange and treble but the dry in the bass. For Rock fans the upper bass speed is appealing.
Kef Q55	£499	Aug 97	The Q55s look rather expensive at £500 with their 'boom and tizz' presentation.
Kef RDM1s	£499	Oct 97	The RDM1s soundstage well thanks to their Uni-Q drivers. Can be uninvolved because of a lack of scale and impact.
Linn Tylas	£389	Dec 95	Highly musical standmounters that give similarly priced floorstanders a great deal to worry about.
Melodan 4500	£750	May 95	Very polite and many will appreciate their civility. Deep, powerful bass.
Mission 723	£300	Apr 95	Captivating floorstanders that bring music to life - what good hi-fi should do.
Mission 724	£430	Sep 95	Engineered for low price and showroom appeal rather than absolute sound quality.
Mission 751 Freedom	£350	Apr 97	Charming little stand-mounters with a sweet, warm, musical sound.
Mission 752 Freedom	£578	Jan 97	Dynamic, punchy, and musical yet refined like few at the price. Bass lacks a little depth.
Mission 774	£500	Feb 99	With the right ancillaries, the 774s have a clarity and lack of colouration still rare at the price.
Ortofon Short M520	£300	Nov 96	Sweet sounding metal dome tweeter although the dry bass and rather plasticky midrange work against it.
Musical Technology PM15	£474	Jan 99	Sophisticated, neutral sound and fine musicality put the PM15s near the head of the class.
Nov 101	£500	Jan 96	A thin and hard sound but precise with it!
Ortofon Clitonia II	£445	Jan 99	Deserving 'speakers with good looks and build. Can fall to shine with over-polite equipment.
Ortofon II	£389	Aug 95	Very crisp sounding 'speakers best suited to smaller rooms.
Ortofon Prima	£495	Feb 99	The Primas offer a taste of the high-end at a sensible price. They are more fans of Classical than Rock though.
Ortofon Clitonia II	£329	Oct 95	Good value floorstanders with clean enjoyable sound - not quite supersonic, though.
Polk PW150	£500	Jul 97	The PSW150 adds depth to a system but can sound obvious at times.
ProAc Taper	£600	Aug 98	Amp-sensitive and slightly boxy in the lower treble, the ProAcs are still highly musical.
ProAc Q Series	£350	May 96	Needs care in setting up but this subwoofer offers serious quality bass for not a lot of money.
ProAc Q Series	£500	Apr 98	Another capable sub from REL that boosts bass and improves sound staging.
Rogers AB 1	£499	Jul 95	When used with the Kef LS3/5a this sub delivers the goods, beyond a doubt.
Rogers AB 1	£595	Feb 97	Musically involving 'speakers that many will enjoy, but a little unrefined at times.
Sevenson 490	£329	Apr 96	Good at orchestral scale but coloured in the midband.
Sevenson 490	£799	Oct 97	The Absolute 4Ps excel in all areas except for the rather bright, hard treble. Bass is exceptional.
Sevenson 500	£599	Jun 96	Smooth, focussed and coherent in their delivery with deep and taut bass extension. Not the most spacious sound.
Sevenson 500	£400	Feb 96	Dry and clean sound, but can become hard and confused when pushed.
Tannoy Precision P10	£300	May 98	Though very even in their performance, the P10s lack ultimate clarity and punch.
Tannoy Precision P10	£300	Nov 96	Weighty bass and rhythmic detail work well on dance. Less satisfying with classical music. Firm imaging.
TDL RT1 4	£650	Feb 95	Easy going with plenty of detail and timbral richness. Better with classical fare.
TDL RT1 4	£550	Jan 97	Midrange and treble have good tonal colour, detail and speed. Bass is slow and blurred.
Techflex 38-4500	£350	Nov 95	A great sound with solid bass from a compact and well priced 'speaker.
Techflex 38-4500	£450	May 96	Clean, dry and taut with good imaging and sound staging. More neutral than Mission's 752s but less euphonic.
Triangle Cornets 724	£475	Jan 95	Quite pleasant, inoffensive sound but others costing less can offer more.
Triangle Cornets 724	£300	Oct 95	Good for adding scale and power to a weak system or budget separates.



JPW Ruby 2.



Soundcraft Absolute 4P.

£800-£1499

Model	Price	Year	Verdict
Aggorn 11	£1450	Mar 95	Big, bulky and ultra-sensitive with quick pace and a well balanced sound, but not without flaws.
Audiowatch B1 Sig	£1479	Aug 98	The M1 Sigs may be a little laid-back, but they have a pleasant and involving sound.
Audiowatch M2	£1499	Jun 98	The M2s are marred by a boom 'n' tizz presentation that suits Heavy Metal but not much else.
BEW CDM7	£999	Feb 98	With warm ancillaries the CDM7s produce a weighty, open sound. Bass could be faster.
Charmhaus 22	£1099	Mar 96	Fantastically deep and tight bass but some treble sharpness requires careful matching.
Clavin 42	£1499	Jun 98	Focus is not a strength, but bass extension and even tonality are. Metal tweeter can be bright.
Clavin Acoustic One	£1199	Dec 95	Musical realism and a great real-wood finish make these 'speakers enjoyable, if not perfect.
Clavin Acoustic One	£1250	May 99	Small cabinet precludes the deepest bass, but a sweet little act for all that. Seriously imaging abilities.
Epica E222	£1185	Jun 98	Aside from a slightly cool balance, the ES22s shine. Dynamics, bass depth and control are tops.
Event 2020AS	£829	Sep 98	Warm, detailed and well-endowed in the bass, the Events lack only a touch of overall control.
Event 2020AS	£849	Sep 98	Now HNB's Circle Actives, these loudspeakers mix the best of pro and domestic to produce first-class results.
Harbeth HL Companion 7	£1329	Jun 96	Dry and analytical but truthful with it. A first class monitor ideally suited to acoustic or classical music.
Harbeth HL Companion 7	£975	Dec 96	Clean, musical and classy - Harbeth have done themselves proud again!
KAR Torino	£895	Jan 97	The Torinos' stylish sound won't shame any system. That powerful bass does need space to breathe properly though.
KAR Torino	£995	May 95	Beautifully fluid and integrated mid band and treble but can be slow, with a little loss of bass control.
Kef Helios 2	£1499	Jan 95	Handles rock and classical with equal aplomb, with the ability to reproduce detail that flummoxes many others.

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CYRUS
DENON
DENSON
DYNALUDIO
DYNAVECTOR
EPOS
GOLDRING
GRADO
HEYBROOK
KEF
LINN
LOEWE
MARANTZ
MAXELL
MERIDIAN
MICHELL
MILLER & KRISSELL
MISSION
MJI
NAD
NAIM
NORDOST
ONKYO
ORTOFON
PANASONIC
PARINGTON
PIONEER
PRIMARE
PROJAE
PROJECT
QED
QUAD
QUAMBRIDGE
REGA
REL
ROTEL
RUARK
SENNHEISER
SHAHINIAN
SONANCE
SONIC LINK
SOUND STYLE
STANDS UNIQUE
SYSTEMLINE
TAD MCLAIRN
TALK ELECTRONICS
TANNOY
TARGET
TEC
TEAC
TECHNICS
THORENS
VAN DEN HUL
YAMAHA

Not all products are stocked by every shop. We please check with your local branch before travelling.

Loudspeakers £ Year Verdict

£800-£1499

Amplifier	£1199	Apr 98	The KT3s go very loud very easily but they don't possess the most even response.
Klipsch Heresy II	£1150	May 99	Horn and infinite-baffle hybrid with power to spare. Phasing and frequency accurate beyond belief.
Utopia V8	£995	Sep 98	Ultra-detailed and revealing, the V8s are true pro more than domestic transducers.
Magneplanar MG12 QR	£1370	Mar 95	Very clear detail and separation, but just falls to produce a fully 3-dimensional sound.
Magneplanar MG12 QR	£1200	May 99	Lightness of touch, dynamics and clarity in trumps. Needs powerful amplification for 77dB/W/m. Not a valve 'speaker.
Mirage 800	£1075	Oct 95	An easy going, open and natural sound makes the mirages an attractive proposition.
Mirage 754 FS	£1299	Sep 96	Articulate and informative sound with fine imaging and tight, deep bass.
Miridon Short 800	£1450	Dec 95	Fast, tight and informative, but a poor tweeter casts a grey shadow.
Musical Tech Falcor	£955	May 96	Give a big sense of scale on rock and jazz but not subtle and even enough for the critical classical listener.
NEAR Unarmoured	£1199	Aug 95	An interesting, musical floorstander that's good value even at this price.
Orion Live Acoustics	£1225	Jun 98	The OLs have transparency and detail in considerable amounts. Bass can be loose though.
PT Ventrate	£896	Aug 95	Smooth and refined floorstanders that some listeners will find captivating.
QED Signature	£1499	Mar 96	Super sound staging, openness and detail. Well worth seeking out.
REL Stadium 2	£995	Aug 95	Excellent bass performance means that this subwoofer is no toy.
Revela 1000	£1000	Jan 98	Unusual 'speakers with great rhythmic capabilities and bass. Could be more transparent.
Frank Pallaser	£1099	May 95	The Paladins possess a detailed and expansive soundstage but also a rather dry character
Speaker 2000	£899	Oct 96	The tweeter works well but a recessed midband and one-note bass are the Achilles heels.
Spender FL8	£1275	Jun 98	The FL8s are warm, mellow performers which prefer Classical to Rock.
Tannoy 1200	£1000	Apr 97	Impressive bass extension and control go hand in hand with precise imaging to make the D300s a snip at £1000.
Totem Model 1 Sig.	£1250	Sep 97	Good but the move from standard to Signature has taken speed and punch out of the Model 1s
UFO Color Gold	£995	Jun 96	A rich and open sound, extremely musical if not strictly accurate. Great bass extension for their size.
UKD Dirina	£1390	Jun 95	Not the most neutral 'speakers but they are extremely smooth with an overall coherence to the sound.



Magneplanar
MG12/QR.

£1500-

Andromeda 6	£4600	Jun 95	If you have enough room and money the 6s are capable of a highly musical, involving performance.
BKS 107 Mk2	£1500	Dec 98	The 107 Mk2s may look slim but they have a solid sound and are fabulously revealing.
Concerto E3	£3500	Sep 95	Interesting design that incorporates an electrostatic tweeter. An impressive sound but an inconsistent performer.
Concerto 6L3	£1500	May 99	Unusual design which is placed back against a wall for optimum performance.
Concerto A3	£1800	May 97	The A3s are quite simply superb. All you'll need to enjoy them is a large enough listening room.
Epos 8205	£1505	May 95	An extremely coherent and focussed sound; these are true audiophile speakers. Captivating with classical music.
Falcor 10.25	£1999	Mar 97	Glassy clarity, bright treble, with bass that comes alive when given welly. Expensive though.
Haybrook Octet	£1800	Jul 98	The Octets are smooth, laid-back floor standers. Lack speed and transparency.
Jamo Concert 12	£2000	Dec 97	A worthy bigger brother for the Concert 8s, with a fast, transparent and even sound.
Jamo Concert 8	£1500	Jun 97	The Concert 8s are superbly clean and transparent. Their nature will show up any source shortcomings.
JS 30000	£3500	Jul 96	Smooth, detailed and spacious with great scale, dynamics and imaging. Capable of producing a real performance.
Kir Reference 3	£2000	Nov 95	For superb reproduction within large rooms, the 3s are a force to be reckoned with.
Kir Reference 4	£3099	Oct 96	Superb bass and near-electrostatic soundstaging make these involving 'speakers a bargain.
Living Voice Auditorium	£1500	May 99	Their strengths suggest a Classical 'speaker but they suit electronic compositions better. Rich tone but loose bass.
Power Home 150	£1500	Mar 99	They may be musically engaging but the tall ProAc's brightness suits them best for smooth valve amplification.
Siata Acoustic Soundstage	£8000	Feb 99	The best home for a reflex-loaded Tannoy dual-concentric, but they don't come cheap!
Speaker SP01	£1970	Jan 95	Gorgeous looking. Listening becomes an enjoyable experience, full of surprises from subtleties.
Spender SP01	£3400	Apr 96	One of the clearest and most expressive loudspeakers you'll ever find for a large room. Easy to drive, too.
Tannoy AM10	£2702	Aug 96	Bold and powerful sound with solid bass, clearly focussed midrange and delicious treble. Well worth tracking down.
Tannoy 0200	£3999	Sep 97	£4000 may be a lot to pay for a pair of 'speakers, but the Tannoys deliver to great effect in all areas.
Tannoy 3000	£1500	Nov 96	Materially excellent value. Sound clean and extended but can lack involvement.
Thomas Transducers (UK)	£4750	Feb 95	Capable of producing a captivating performance of life-like proportions with a great air of naturalness.
Thomas Vortex Dual	£3395	May 98	Impressive horns that combine lightness of touch with power and clarity.



Jamo Concert 8.

Integrated £ Year Verdict

under £300

Amplifier	£299	Mar 96	Fluid and musical but upper bass is a little dry. Useful phono stage with but with a little sibilance and ringing.
AMC 3025	£150	Nov 96	A lot for very little money - sweet sound and good build make the AMC 3025 a great starter amp.
AMC 3050A	£170	Feb 98	Offers plenty of power for the money but sound quality is not class leading.
Arashi Alpha 5 plus	£250	Oct 96	Good with efficient loudspeakers but generally needs more power and control.
Audio Acacia One	£230	Jan 99	In a smooth system with a warmish bias the Alpha One makes a strong case for itself.
Aura VAB1	£279	Apr 95	Excellent value for money and will get the best from any component. Needs a separate phono stage.
Aura VAB2	£250	Mar 96	The Aura has a smooth, civilized sound with fine detail. Bass punch really rolls along. Good phono stage.
Cambridge A1 MHT Integ	£100	Jul 98	Involving and finely detailed, the Cambridge pushes forward the boundaries for inexpensive amps.
Denon PMA 2002S	£160	Feb 97	A mix of control, delicacy and detail allows it to excel with any music.
Denon PMA 425R	£230	Sep 96	Good drive, punch and an open soundstage, but suffers from confusion plus a thin midrange and treble.
Denon PMA 425SC	£280	Oct 96	Big and brutish but unfortunately bland with it. Something of a blast from the 1970s-80s past!
Harman Karbon MK10	£180	Jun 95	Thorough-going down to earth liveliness. Bright but clean which gives appealing vivacity.
Harman Karbon FK200	£280	Oct 95	Not quite a giant killer, the Harman is nevertheless a good solid budget buy.

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Integrated £ Year Verdict

under £300			
Musical Fidelity E11	£299	Feb 98	A very capable integrated with a smoothness and warmth predisposed to classical rather than rock.
NAD 304	£239	Apr 95	Fine quality bass but rather lackadaisical as regards timing. Phono stage moderate. Needs careful matching.
NAD 310	£130	Jan 95	Good detail and a spacious open sound gives acoustic music and the majority of rock superb clarity.
NAD 310n	£200	Apr 99	Younger sibling of the famous 3020 with many of its virtues to boot. Pre-eminently balanced and natural.
Pioneer A103	£130	Mar 95	Luxuriant presentation doesn't compensate for the tendency to un-rhythmic effects. MM phono stage.
Prolect A300X	£230	Apr 95	Another highly capable all-rounder although a touch sterile sounding for some tastes.
Prolect 7	£259	Apr 95	On a budget, the Pro-ject has strong merit, including an excellent phono stage. Not for all systems.
Pro RA-3000X	£250	Oct 96	Fresh sound with sharp attack. A slight midrange emphasis can make certain music sound rather forward.
Pro RA-971	£150	Dec 98	For the money there's no faulting such a gifted performer.
Tony TA-F40E	£250	Aug 95	Bright clear and detailed, but needs a touch more refinement to prevail.
Technics SU-A700 mk3	£250	Jan 97	A smooth, unassuming sound misses out on the subtlety which brings music to life.

£300-£799			
Alphacast Axiom	£300	Sep 95	Musically rewarding; deserves serious audition. Great British hi-fi on a budget.
AMC 1130A	£329	Nov 98	Not the most musical amp ever but good value. The tone controls and balance adjustment will appeal to some.
Audio Alpha 6+	£350	Jan 96	Full and smooth sound, unfortunately with loose bass.
Arman Alpha II	£500	Dec 96	Excellent value. A detailed and open sound gives great atmosphere to all types of music
A. A. Alpha 82	£595	Dec 97	All the main ingredients like rhythm and dynamics present and correct. Natural smoothness and transparency.
Audio Analogue Puccini SE	£595	Sep 97	Excellent sound quality gives the competition under £800 a lot to worry about.
Audio 9000A	£500	May 95	Manages the rare feat of sounding powerful and lithe at the same time. Bass taut but not the last word.
Audio 9000S	£700	Dec 97	Powerful hefty sound which doesn't blench when driving awkward loads.
Audio Research R2A T	£680	Aug 96	Too thin and crisp which makes prolonged listening fatiguing.
Audio 3	£500	Oct 96	Highly refined and detailed performance with a clear well-proportioned soundstage.
Audio Straight Line	£398	Nov 98	A good, honest bit of kit with a fine musical sound and no glaring vices.
Denon Beat	£650	Dec 97	If a musical adrenaline rush is what you seek, fine. Listening in bulk, rather clinical and cold sounding.
Denon ES1 10	£400	Apr 99	Solid build and a big sound make the ES1 10 worthy of audition. Not perhaps the transparent at the price.
Hi-Fi Audio	£750	Jun 98	Powerful and refreshingly pure; a sound investment.
Hi-Fi Audio K4-1000	£400	Apr 98	Excels with sound staging but lacks subtlety and tonal colour.
LFD Integral	£499	Jun 97	An extremely enjoyable, lucid little amplifier that really gets to the heart of the music.
Marantz PM46 KHS	£400	Nov 97	An enjoyable and rhythmic sound but may be too lean for some bass-light 'speakers.
Marantz 9U	£695	Jan 97	An engaging musical performance; sweet overall sound. Doesn't cope with difficult loads so well.
Mojo 50 Integrated	£320	Jul 95	A big open sound sets the Mojo apart at this price. Low powered, though. Distinctly amateurish looks.
Musical Fidelity X-A1	£480	Dec 98	Two boxes don't form a pre and power in the X-A1 but the result is nevertheless a winning combination.
Myriad T-10	£399	Nov 98	Couple the Myriad with a warm system and enjoy. Possibly a little lightweight on the Reggae & Rap side.
Nad 317	£470	May 97	With 80 watts on tap, the NAD has power aplenty but is rather dynamically limited and ultimately uninvolving.
Nad Mod	£500	May 95	Rather monochromatic with midband emphasis and slightly dry bass. Good imaging but smallish soundstage.
Orelle SA 100	£449	Jul 96	Clean, open, active sound. Smooth and detailed with good punch too. One of the best at the price.
Pioneer A-1000 Processor	£400	Aug 97	A bargain at £400 pure and simple. Outclasses the competition in every area.
Pioneer A400X	£300	Oct 96	Complements all sorts of music with power and confidence. Outstanding value for money.
Quad 77	£595	Feb 95	Although classically orientated, the Quad will rock too. Precise and stable imagery and fidelity to tonal values.
Reikon Captain	£695	Jun 97	Mixes the best of solid state and valve worlds (without valves!) to produce a seductive sound.
Reikon Scion	£615	May 97	Great packaging and super sound make the Scion a winner.
Scion/Reikon Captain	£579	Jan 96	Highly detailed and smooth sound. Worth searching out.
Sony TA-F1000	£300	Feb 99	Partnered correctly to counterbalance its forwardness, the Sony offers a fast, rhythmic presentation.
Tenc ABY7B	£700	Jun 96	Big and powerful sound, but a little unsubtle with it.
Tencos SE-400 Mod	£300	Mar 99	Nominally a separate pre and power, but the pre can't work alone. Exciting but unsubtle.



Audio Analogue Puccini



MVL A2+.

£800-			
AudioNote Solo Se	£1999	Mar 95	Needs the right loudspeaker but a good musical presentation is in there somewhere.
Chivald CSA 14	£1099	Apr 96	A sweet and subtle sound. Fine midrange; transparent and open with vocals.
Denon DM 10	£1299	Jun 95	Dual mono construction gives strong stereo separation. Brutal resolution of detail but not the clearest ever.
Denon 31y Plus	£2499	Jul 96	Partnered with sensible loudspeakers of good bass depth, the Rhythm is capable of impressive performance.
Layravin IT	£3200	Apr 99	Has clarity in spades and an extremely rare tonal purity. Outclasses many transistor alternatives with ease.
Layravin Mar 90	£3735	Sep 95	A mighty confection of power, facilities and style, and it sounds good to boot.
Musical Fidelity A1001	£2499	Jun 98	Awsome power and seismic bass. A very good all-rounder with super-clean sound.
MVL Integral A2	£850	May 99	An excellent performer with any music. Adept at handling subtle details. Difficult to beat at the price.
MVL A2+	£1250	Jun 99	Seamless, natural and very open, the A2+ sets the pace at the price.
Phonon Phase 2	£800	Apr 97	Even-handed performer deals confidently with music regardless of genre. Not as smooth as the best.
Sonic Frontiers Anthem	£1295	May 98	A characteristically competent and musical integrated. Prefers fairly efficient loudspeakers though.
Sonic Frontiers Ambassador	£900	Oct 97	Excellent high-end integrated with a real love of music and plenty of poke.
Tenc AB X10	£1000	Sep 95	Very strong all round performer with excellent build and finish. Verging on the expensive though.
Union Res. Smoky 815	£2950	Mar 98	Allied to all the right 'speakers will handle all musical genres with smoothness and power.

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HI-FI WORLD MAY 1999

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Pre-amps £ Year Verdict

under £300

AAC 1100	£150	Mar 99	Tone controls cannot be defeated and the sum total is a little metallic but value in spades.
Creek DSH-115E	£199	Apr 99	A very lucid, natural headphone amp which scores as highly on acoustic and Classical as it does on Rock.
Creek DSH-12	£200	Jul 98	Only poor cosmetics mar the Creek. Sonically it's a gem.
Muth 30 Passive	£149	Mar 99	Won't win prizes for best build but a flexible effort for a passive. Somewhat dry presentation overall.
Musical Fidelity X-Cans	£130	Mar 98	If you haven't yet experienced the world of quality headphone listening, the X-Cans is the way to start.
Musical Fidelity X-Fre	£200	Jan 98	A smooth, sweet and musical performer.
Musical Fidelity X-Tone	£120	Mar 99	Easy-to-use stand-alone modern tone control with subtle effect. Rather a bargain.
Project 7	£259	Feb 95	Immensely enjoyable and listenable, a rare mixture of sophistication and fun.
Road RC971	£150	Mar 99	Five line-level inputs and tone controls make for a flexible unit. Partnered by the RB-971 power amp, very good value.
Technic SU-C1000DAI	£299	Apr 98	Needs slightly more taut bass and a less grainy midrange to bring it up with the best.

£300-£799

Audio Analogue Bobbi	£475	Apr 98	Organic and transparent. Free from transistor harshness.
Aura CA200	£749	Mar 97	A smooth and sweet sound devoid of roughness.
Chord C5010C	£440	Nov 98	The phono stage is the main area of weakness. Can sound a touch muddled at times.
Craft Epoch	£600	Jun 96	A fine sounding preamp, but the phono stage is weak in the bass.
Cyrus Pre	£650	Feb 96	Pre-amplifier has plenty of facilities, but sounds a little unexciting and 'conventional'.
Heybrook Signature II	£549	May 97	Impressive smoothness and tonal colour, transparent as well.
IM Audio Ltd L15	£650	Dec 95	This valve pre-amp is very good value indeed
Rothwell Indus	£499	May 99	Passive pre of box-of-switches, whichever way you look at it the Indu is stylishly finished and well conceived.
Sony Alpha 9	£767	May 96	More valve-like than transistor in sound; highly competent if not spectacular.
Talk Hurricane 1	£500	Jun 97	Flexible with a strong controlled sound, but won't suit all tastes.
Technic SU-G1000	£350	Feb 97	Good when mains powered, even better running on its batteries. One to consider at the price.
Thomas TTA 2000	£550	Jul 95	Poor sound quality and engineering let this pre-amp down. Pricey too.
Wilson Res. Feather 1	£795	Aug 98	Warm but still exciting, it is only let down by a slightly recessed midrange.



Musical Fidelity X Tone.

£800-£1499

AudioLab 8000D	£999	Jun 95	Highly recommended for its blend of operational sophistication, build and sound quality.
Exolon Preamp	£1095	Feb 98	Smooth, even and transparent. Well worth the outlay.
John Shewan Phase 6	£895	Sep 96	Matched with a smooth amp and 'speakers the Phase 6 is capable of a transparent and rewarding performance
Link Wakonda	£900	Apr 98	In terms of musicality and involvement it falls short.
Meridian 500	£1295	Dec 96	Transparent, detailed sound with good tonal range and very natural presentation.
Musical Fid. Nu-Vista	£1200	Sep 98	A truly competent pre-amp whose high-end sound comes with a very reasonable price tag.
Nuon NAC100	£999	Apr 97	This even-handed performer images well and deals confidently with music regardless of genre.
Quest 7741	£850	Jul 96	Bright and detailed, but phono stage is inadequate at this price.
TAG McLaren PA10	£850	Nov 98	Justifies its price with a very musical and revealing performance.
XTC Pire4	£1000	Nov 96	This pre-amp is highly detailed and spacious.

£1500

AudioLab RPP20	£1995	Mar 95	A bright and lean approach to the valve sound.
Canary 801 MkII	£1600	Apr 99	Very musical, very revealing. A credit to the valve tradition with considerable kick in reserve.
Chord CPA 1800	£1774	Mar 98	Has it all - detail, transparency, slam and rhythm. In a word excellent.
Final Music 5	£1500	Feb 99	Partner for the Final Music-6 power amp. Battery powered.
Final Music 4	£2345	Feb 96	Smooth and detailed sound. Not as clinical as some professional amps can be.
Galactica Pre	£1630	Nov 95	Smooth, but dull balance makes it suitable for bright systems.
Mano 7	£3500	Mar 97	Superb, combines delicacy and power, especially with a vinyl source.
Michael Grell	£1650	Oct 98	With its Panasonic pot, the Orca reaches new standards of transparency and involvement.
Union Res. Mystery 2	£1750	May 98	Offers finesse, control and clarity for a very reasonable outlay.



Chord CPA-1800.

Power amps £ Year Verdict

under £800

AAC 2000	£150	Mar 99	Super value separate with first-rate sound staging. Midrange subtleties sometimes suffer but at this price . . .
Arcam 9P	£400	Dec 96	A detailed and open sound gives great atmosphere to all types of music.
Arcam Alpha 10P	£600	Jul 98	This power amp lags behind the best of the competition, and the build is flimsy.
Audio Analogue Donizetti	£575	Apr 98	As smart as an Armani suit, they sound powerful in a natural, organic manner
Aura PA100	£749	Mar 97	A smooth, sweet powerful sound free from the rough brightness that afflicts many solid-states.
Creek A43	£399	Mar 99	Shows what a skilled designer can do, even when hooked up with a passive pre. A very realistic approach.
Cyrus Power	£449	Feb 96	The Cyrus Power is simply impressive in all respects.
Link LK100	£650	Apr 98	Well built, but judged purely on a musical basis they fall short.
Link LK240	£750	Aug 97	The LK240 plays tunes exceptionally well, tonal colour and image precision are not its fortes though.

AUDIO ANALOGUE

In just a short while, Audio Analogue has won plenty of admirers. When Hi Fi World tested the *Puccini* Special Edition, they gave it their top star rating with the words

"Excellent sound quality ensures the *Puccini* S.E. outstrips the competition at up to £1,000". And the influential USA magazine *Stereophile* (Dec.98) praised its "harmonic richness, stunning purity of tone and sheer musicality". To top that,

the basic £475 *Puccini* won Hi Fi Choice's Best Buy for amplifiers in an up-to £1,000 group test (Feb. '98). In their words: "This is a first-rate budget amplifier that looks and sounds like an altogether more costly model. Check it out". The *Bellini* preamp and *Donizetti* power amp fared equally well. Ken Kessler in *Hi Fi News* (Jan. '98) had this to say. "A new benchmark in the value for money stakes". Now, we're proud to introduce you to the latest member of the family: the *Paganini*. It's a real music-lover's CD-player. For more details contact:



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Power amps £ Year Verdict

under £300

Meridian 505	£795	Aug 97	Crisp, clear images are set in a broad spread between the 'speakers but the 505 lacks stage depth and grunt.
Monarchy 302 III	£595	Jan 99	The Monarchy is a smooth, warm amp most at home with 'speakers that are easily driveable.
Mojo 30 Power	£249	Mar 99	Refined approach with the lighter acoustic music but lacking a little in overall clout.
Mojo 3000 III	£549	Dec 95	This power amp unfortunately suffers from sharp sounding treble and poor depth.
Musical Fidelity X-450	£500	Jan 98	Very smooth, sweet and musical performers, not over-analytical but very involving.
Quad 779C	£600	Jul 96	With good punch, speed and attack its not bad at all but can be a little uninspiring.
Real HD-971	£225	Mar 99	70 Watts a channel helps give lucid presentation with deep sound staging. Perhaps on the bright side.
Shoema Phase 3	£889	Apr 97	The Phase 3 possesses impressive clarity, detail and dynamics.
Tali Termino 1	£500	Jun 97	A flexible power amp with a strong, controlled sound, but won't suit all tastes.
Technic SE-41000	£400	Feb 97	Smooth, warm sound has plenty of grunt when needed and is very enjoyable to listen to.
Thorens TTP 2000	£500	Jul 95	Its best feature is the key on/off switch, otherwise its a case of poor sound quality and engineering.

£800-£1499

Chromadon Ruby	£995	Jan 96	Well specified and powerful, but dry and short of life. Suits Rock on bass-heavy 'speakers.
Chord SPM 426	£1325	Mar 98	This amp has it all - detail, transparency, slam and rhythm. In a word, excellent.
Conquest C2000C	£800	Nov 98	These monoblocs have a tonal richness and bass speed rare amongst powerful amps.
Craft Series V	£800	Jun 96	Fast, clear and detailed sound will win friends in both the transistor and valve camps.
Diaper On Diaps	£1469	May 95	Quality bass and a clear midband but the treble can be harsh at high volume.
DPA 2100	£1245	Jul 93	Serious audiophile product at an affordable price. Well constructed, pleasant to use and fine sounding.
Galactron Power	£1200	Nov 95	Smooth sound but dull balance make the Galactron suitable for bright systems.
HD Audio Duo	£1185	May 95	Not dissimilar to the Audiolab monoblocs, the sound has a sweet top and amazing clarity.
Highway Synthesizer 3	£1051	May 97	Not quite as transparent as it could be but impresses with its smoothness and tonal colour.
Meridian 957	£1400	Dec 96	Great control and dynamics allied to seductive smoothness. A rare combination of power and delicacy.
Musical Fidelity X-4200	£1000	Aug 98	Hugely powerful and controlled, the X-A200s are still superbly musical.
Myriad MA120	£1000	Apr 96	The sound is a somewhat acquired taste and a little rough in places.
Orion Jewel One	£899	Jul 95	A lot of amplifier for the money. Big, warm, sweet sound places it ahead of most.
Quad 707	£800	Jul 97	The 707 embodies a rare blend of grace and power in its sleek grey casework.
Refined Music 6	£949	May 99	Low on power at 8 watts but fairly musical for all that. Good resolution of detail and texture.
Sonus Power III	£898	May 96	More valve-like than transistor in sound; highly competent if not spectacular.
StC McLaren 602	£850	Nov 98	Fully justifies the cost with a very musical and revealing performance.
VHR Arur	£1495	Jun 95	Lovers of light piano-based fare and Baroque music will appreciate this amp's delicacy.

£1500-

Audiophile LCD	£1995	Mar 95	Eschews the traditional lavish tube sound for a brighter and leaner approach.
Carley 301	£3055	Nov 98	The 301 puts the 300B's traditional virtues to good use in a push-pull design that will drive most loudspeakers.
Cary 300B SE	£3975	Feb 95	Cary have a winning amplifier that is a prime example of how a 300B can sound.
Edson Ampli	£2925	Feb 98	Very natural, substantial presentation with lots of power on tap.
Final Music 8	£1500	Feb 99	Battery powered amp puts convincing scale and three-dimensionality into suitably sensitive loudspeakers.
Favourite Red 5	£2057	Feb 96	Powerful, smooth and detailed sound. Not as clinical as some professional amplifiers can be.
Gemma Arava	£4999	Apr 97	Sound quality of these monoblocs is impressive but marred by a rather obvious hum. Build could be better.
Meranti 8	£8000	Mar 97	These monoblocs are superb, producing a beguiling performance of great control and verve.
Myriad Alecto	£1989	Oct 98	The new Alecto is crisper, cleaner and more controlled than earlier incarnations.
Oregon RQ2SE	£6600	Aug 96	A powerful grip on usic, but articulate and detailed too. A rare combination.
Shoema Phase 3	£1999	Oct 94	Good sound quality and an impressive tonal balance.
Symetra Symetra	£1550	Oct 96	The Symetra monoblocs impress with their grip. They run hot and sound warm.
Tali Technology Genesis	£2599	Jun 94	Valve monoblocs that produce explosive bass, midrange as clear as a bell and shimmering treble.
Ultima Res. Smart 300B	£4250	May 98	Powerful, neutral sounding amps thanks to their modified 300B valves, but expensive for the same reason.
Ultima Res. Power 20	£1525	Aug 98	A great compromise between delicacy, power and practicality. Very musically satisfying, too.
Valis S15	£2350	Jul 98	The S15's purity and clarity are impossible to beat for the money. Bass not brilliant, but still better than most.
VTC Power	£2000	Nov 96	This power amplifier is smooth and seductive, although a little pricey.

CD Players £ Year Verdict

under £300

AMC CD8	£150	Oct 97	The CD8 is free from grain but can sound too polished at times.
Conquest CD4SE	£200	Feb 98	Natural and very life-like, the CD4SE embarrasses many pricier players.
Denon DCD-435	£150	Apr 97	Crisp, up-beat player which is inconsistent in its overall presentation.
Denon DCD-430	£180	Feb 98	Rhythmically slick and dynamic, the Denon errs to the cool side of neutral.
Denon DCD-835	£280	Nov 98	Warm and smooth, the 835 is laid-back rather than in-your-face.
Denon DCD	£240	Sep 94	Great for simple Jazz and Folk, but soft bass slows things down.
JVC SD-V230	£157	Jan 99	Slightly muddled in the bass, the '230 isn't the most rhythmic of players.



Final Music-6.



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CD Players £ Year Verdict

under £300

Kenwood DP-3080/II	£180	Feb 98	One of the best budget all-rounders there is. A shade treble-heavy.
Kenwood DP-5050	£250	Aug 93	Waffly bass and enthusiastic treble mean the Kenwood prefers Classical to Rock.
Kenwood DPF-3010	£180	Jan 99	A fine performer. Lacks only some of the spirit of its predecessors.
Marantz CD-63	£249	Jun 94	Upholds the Marantz tradition of lively CD players.
Marantz CD-67	£270	Nov 96	Fine vocal projection and treble. Bass is deep if not that tight.
NAD 510	£200	Oct 95	Hard to criticise at the price, with a typically smooth, fluid NAD sound.
NAD 522	£170	Jan 99	Warm and smooth, this is a cultured player. Can be over-civilised at times.
Philips CD 21	£130	Feb 96	Not the most accurate machine, but holds its own at the price.
Pioneer PD-103	£140	Feb 95	Rolled-off treble limits detail. Light bass retains foot-tapping ability.
Rotel RCD-940BX	£230	Oct 94	Controlled and invigorating player albeit a touch sterile.
Teac CD-P3450SE	£200	May 97	Refuses to become flustered. Can lack emotion as a result, though.
Teac CD-P4500	£249	Nov 92	Like many of its contemporaries, the Teac is too smooth to shine.
Technics SL-PC450A	£100	Jan 99	In spite of a bias towards bass and treble, this machine remains a bargain.
Technics SL-PS570D	£200	Feb 98	Typical Technics' bright and bassy sound. Prefers Dance and Rock.
Yamaha CDX-480	£200	Mar 95	Mature, laid-back machine drops points for inferior timing and imaging.
Yamaha CDX-590	£230	Feb 98	Detailed, refined but not particularly engaging or exciting.
Yamaha CDX-593	£180	Jan 99	Lean and up-front, the Yamaha is involving on Rock but can sound rough.

£300-£799

AMC CDM7	£340	Jun 96	Very musical outfit which gains sweetness with optional valve output stage.
ARC 07	£300	Jan 92	The '07 is even-handed but has no real fortes.
Arcam Alpha 7	£320	Jan 97	Superbly-designed, instinctively musical player destined for success.
Arcam Alpha 8SE	£599	Jun 98	The 8SE builds on the strengths of the standard 8 with HDCD filtering.
Arcam Alpha 9	£799	Dec 98	Apart from its tonal brightness, the Alpha 9 is a very capable machine.
Audio Analogue Paganini	£749	Apr 99	Effortless, wholly musical delivery. The Paganini does for CD replay what its stablemate Puccini does for amplification.
Audio Innovations Alto	£449	May 96	Grainless treble is detailed but the Alto misses that vital emotional spark.
Aura CD80	£450	Jul 93	High measured distortion mars the treble and bass is dry.
Creek CD43	£499	Oct 98	A competent player with a musicality that will seduce any music-lover.
Cyrus dAD 1.5	£398	May 99	Great detail and imaging with intimate music. Classical and Jazz suit the 1.5 down to the ground but Rock can sound harsh.
Cyrus dAD3	£598	Dec 96	Lacklustre with Classical, dramatic and lively on Dance and Rock.
Denon DCD-1550AR	£350	Jul 98	Clean and precise, the Denon lags only in warmth and openness.
Hairman/Kardon HD730	£300	Aug 96	Strong on dynamics and drive, but lifeless treble can dampen music.
Linn Mimik	£798	Apr 95	Tonally hard but possesses many, if not all, of the Linn rhythmic strengths.
Marantz CD-63 KI-Sig	£500	Sep 96	This is a rare player, greater than the sum of its parts.
Marantz CD-63SE	£350	May 95	Taken as a whole, the CD-63SE is one hell of a CD player. No digital nasties.
Maryad T20	£600	Dec 98	With its brightness balanced by warm ancillaries the T20 will win friends.
Orelle CD100e	£650	Mar 97	Clean and tidy on electronic music. Not so good with acoustic material.
Pioneer PD S904	£400	Sep 96	Fluid midrange leads a dry bass and tonally-limited treble.
Quad 67	£790	May 93	One of the top players at the price with great speed and grip.
Rotel RCD-965BX Discrete	£375	Dec 94	Fast, clean sound verges on the clinical at times.
Rotel RCD 971	£350	Sep 98	Refinement is a plus point, but lack of vitality holds the Rotel back.
Rotel RCD-975	£450	Sep 96	Tuneful, pungent bass are the pros, flat sound staging and tone the cons.
Sony CDP-X3000ES	£500	Mar 98	Neutral, dynamic and stylish but not quite up with the best.
Sony CDP-XE900E	£300	Mar 97	In spite of fine sound staging and clarity, the Sony fails to involve.
Teac CD-5	£350	Jan 96	Clean and dry, the Teac is rather sterile compared to the competition.
Technics SL-PS840	£450	Sep 95	Not the last word in bass control. Midrange is more persuasive.
Thule CD100	£600	Apr 99	A very smooth and refined player with the added bonus of good detailing. Can lack rhythmic bite at times.
Trichord Genesis	£549	Sep 96	Warm and bassy, but extremely natural. Not the most consistent player.
Trichord Revelation	£799	May 97	When it's good, it's very good indeed. Can get confused on dense mixes.



Sony CDP-X3000ES.



Marantz CD-63 KI-S.

£800-£1499

Audiolab 8000	£1000	Dec 96	Sweet treble and full midrange give the 8000CD a lucid sound.
Copland CDA 266	£1199	Feb 99	Perhaps lacks the last ounce of strength on Rock, nonetheless has winning all-round ability.
Cymbal CDP12	£1279	Dec 97	Its warm, musical sound plus HDCD compatibility are a strong combination.
Cyrus dAD-7	£899	Jan 95	Up with the best at the money, the Cyrus simply sounds 'right'.
DPA Renaissance	£895	Jun 95	Breathtaking Imagery and dynamics. Not strictly accurate, but who cares?
Hairman/Kardon HD7725	£800	Jan 94	Construction is price-correct, but not the excessively relaxed sound.
Heybrook Signature	£989	Oct 97	The Heybrook loses out because of its rough treble and lack of clarity.
Hoff Xara	£950	May 98	It's not cheap but the Xara scores for firm bass and exciting presentation.
LFE Mistral	£999	Nov 97	The Mistral is outclassed in areas like pace and bass depth.
Marantz CD-17	£800	Mar 96	The CD-17 has a presentation which excels in musicality and lucidity.
Marantz CD-17 KI-S	£1300	Sep 97	The KI-S has a valve-like smoothness and clarity.
Meridian 506	£875	May 95	Characteristically dry Meridian balance which could do with more emotion.
Musical Fidelity X-Ray	£800	Feb 99	Bright, clear and well-built, the X-Ray's transparency can be hard on poor recordings.



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91924	Acoustic Energy AE2 Series 2 speakers in black including stands	S/H	12 months	£900
12552	Acoustic Energy AE2 Series 1 speakers in black including stands	S/H	12 months	£500
71507	Arcam Delta 250 CD transport	XDEM	6 months	£500
96131	Arcam Black Box 50 DAC	XDEM	6 months	£275
11980	B&W Matrix 803 speaker in black	S/H	12 months	£1500
91303	Celestion A1 speaker in cherry (cosmetic fault)	XDEM	12 months	£600
86374	Denon AVC1530 Prologic amplifier	XDEM	6 months	£175
73304	Denon AVC1800 Prologic amplifier	XDEM	6 months	£300
88499	Harbeth HLK6 speaker and stands in yew	XDEM	12 months	£900
12781	Harbeth LS5/12a speaker in rosewood	S/H	12 months	£900
62803	Heybrook Sextet speaker in walnut	XDEM	12 months	£700
98799/00	Linn LK280 and Spark power amplifier and power supply	S/H	6 months	£500
92914	Linn Kaber speaker in rosewood finish (nearly new)	XDEM	12 months	£1650
93964	Linn Kaber speaker in black finish	XDEM	12 months	£1000
66028	Linn Keltic in black with 3 new LK140 amplifiers and active crossover	XDEM	24 months	£5500
95919/20	Marantz PM66ki amplifier	NEW	24 months	£350
80782	Meridian 562v DAC pre-amplifier with A to D and D to A converter	XDEM	12 months	£950
10662	Meridian 565 7.1 Digital surround processor	S/H	12 months	£1850
84599	Meridian 541 Pre-amplifier and Prologic processor	XDEM	12 months	£500
77206	Meridian 501v pre-amplifier with video switching (nearly new)	S/H	24 months	£500
12946	Meridian 502 pre-amplifier	S/H	12 months	£900
11472	Meridian 557 power amplifier	S/H	12 months	£1000
77650	Meridian 500 CD transport	XDEM	12 months	£975
92116	Meridian DSP5500 digital speakers in black.	XDEM	12 months	£5000
12571	Musical Fidelity MVT pre-amplifier	S/H	6 months	£300
89072	Naim AV1 surround processor	XDEM	12 months	£995
Various	Naim NAC72 pre-amplifier	S/H	12 months	£450
Various	Naim NAC62 pre-amplifier (new and old style)	S/H	6 months	£175
10412	Naim NAP250 power amplifier (old style)	S/H	6 months	£850
97628	Naim IXO Crossover	XDEM	12 months	£375
12191	Naim CD-S CD player	S/H	12 months	£2000
12574	Naim CD-X CD player	S/H	12 months	£1800
12191	Naim CD-2 CD player	S/H	12 months	£1300
11141	Naim CD3 CD player	S/H	12 months	£675
94291	Naim Intro	XDEM	12 months	£560
97591	Naim Credo in cherry	NEW	24 months	£1090
12551	Naim SBL in black (Latest bass unit)	S/H	12 months	£995
91406	Pioneer PDS-505 Precision CD player	XDEM	12 months	£375
87302	Pioneer PDR-05 CD recorder	XDEM	12 months	£500
95571/2	Pioneer F504 Precision tuner	NEW	24 months	£250
89515	Pioneer A300r Precision amplifier	XDEM	12 months	£330
59822	Quad ESL-63 in black	XDEM	12 months	£1700
99539	Quad 77 CD player (mains version)(nearly new)	S/H	12 months	£600
83929	Quad 77 CD, amplifier and remote control	XDEM	12 months	£1000
95433	Rega Big Brio	XDEM	12 months	£250
76840	Rega XEL in rosewood	XDEM	12 months	£700

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World Radio History

CD Players £ Year Verdict

£800-£1499

Pink Triangle Tramez	£1099	Apr 98	This very natural one-box fully justifies its £1000 price tag.
Quad 77	£850	Nov 95	Competent, entertaining machine with neat styling and remote.
Harman Caspian	£895	Aug 97	The Caspian is a gifted player well worth its asking price.
Sugden SDT-1	£850	Mar 93	A superb all-rounder with particularly convincing rhythms.
Teac VRDS-10SE	£850	Apr 96	Draws you into the music. Soundstaging fine but treble is a little bright.
Teac VRDS-25	£1300	Aug 96	Solid build doesn't make up for sound which lags in integration and detail.
XTC CDP 1	£1250	Dec 97	Rhythmically satisfying, but can sound hard in the wrong system.

£1500

Anthem CD1	£1600	Mar 98	Sweet sound and numerous features make the Anthem fine value for money.
Burmester 337	£5460	Sep 94	Amongst the best with its belt-drive transport.
McIntosh CDM-7009	£2635	Dec 95	Unmatched quality from CD at a high but fair price.
Mindian 508.24	£1995	Jul 98	The 508.24 is one of the top performers at its price.
Naim CD2	£1998	Apr 97	CD2 excites at the expense of subtlety. More at home in a Naim system.
Pink Triangle Litaural	£2099	Feb 98	One-box player with sound capable of mixing it with the best.
Teac CD-X1	£2300	Jun 92	You'll either love or hate this machine's great flair and confidence.

Turntables £ Year Verdict

Under £800

NAD S33	£200	Nov 94	Based on a Rega Planar 2. Both pleasant to use and look at with a mature sound, all for £200.
Project 1.2	£200	Jun 97	A bargain at £200 with its substantial and involving sound.
Thorens TD180	£180	Feb 95	A good, basic budget bargain.
Thorens TD280 Mk4	£199	Jun 93	Superbly lucid and clear midrange, but lower reaches are a little lightweight.
Clearaudio Solution	£750	Feb 99	If you seek a powerful presentation where musicality takes precedence over absolute finesse, this could be the answer.
Linn Break	£400	Sep 94	Definitely a turntable for devotees of attack and strong bass lines. Not strong on imaging.
Michell Gyrodec SE	£775	Apr 99	Great sound, superb build and excellent upgradability make the 'spider' a wonder at the price.
Michell Mycro	£539	Jan 94	Silent and beautifully made, with transparent reproduction.
Cygnus 3 Continuo/Cantus	£900	Oct 95	Solid as a rock and almost as heavy, it's a satisfying performer, but not quite the best.
Pink Triangle Tarantella	£575	Oct 97	Simply the best at the money. Combines PT's customary transparency with real authority.
Project 1.1	£350	Dec 93	Involvement and rhythm are priorities. Highly recommended.
Project 6.1	£435	Sep 94	The 6.1 gives a very full, strong sound. A very exciting deck.
Systemdek 252	£500	Aug 96	Clear and precise sound through midrange and treble puts it up with more expensive rivals.
Systemdek IIX900	£415	Sep 94	Detailed sound stage and broad imaging with a good, even range of tonal colour.
Systemdek IIXE	£450	Jan 93	Combined with an SME 309 it achieves great results, with a massive sound stage.
Thorens TD166 Mk6	£405	Sep 94	Totally smooth with a warm midrange, but a little too laid back.
Virtual Reality Reson rs1	£600	Nov 95	With fine detail resolution, transparency and a neutral balance the Reson rs1 represents super value.
VPI Junior	£500	Oct 97	The Junior is a very good deck indeed, with an assured and involving sound.



Roksan Caspian CD.

£800-

Alphason Symphony	£1860	Nov 92	The Symphony has to be one of the best the British can offer. It's expensive, but a true sophisticate.
Michell Orbe	£1950	Apr 95	Fast and detailed with crisp sheer treble and clean, deep bass.
Oasis Line Oasis A	£950	Dec 98	Nice looks and a good sound, but can be bettered on price.
Oasis Line Oasis S	£2250	Oct 98	The Oasis-S is a cool, lean but very transparent performer thanks to battery power. Up against strong competition.
Project Perspective	£900	Aug 98	Aesthetically, the Perspective is a winner, but better sound can be had from cheaper decks.
PT Anniversary	£2390	Oct 96	With its battery supply and ultra-quiet DC motor, the Pink displays great accuracy and neutrality. A top-flight deck.
Reikon Xpress X	£1295	Jan 97	An undoubted bargain and class leader in all areas with a precise, confident and well-balanced sound.
SME Model 20	£2500	Oct 92	This is a deck for those with a substantial record collection who demand the best. Exemplary sound.
Technics SL-1200 LTD	£1000	Apr 97	Looks expensive at £1000, but don't let that put you off the capable standard version.
Wilcoch Einesch	£1775	Jul 96	Gives a technically excellent rendition but fails to really communicate the emotion in music.
Wilson Research Full Circle	£2000	Mar 98	Offers clarity in abundance with a natural ease. Looks gorgeous too.



Pink Triangle Tarantella.

Phono stages £ Year Verdict

Under £800

Creek OBH-8SE/OBH-2	£160	Nov 97	One of the best MC phono stages on the market at the price
Creek OBH-9/OBH-1	£110	Nov 97	Smooth and truly musical, exceedingly worthy entry-level phono stage.
Dansen DP Drive/DP-02	£350	Sep 97	A beautifully made, fine sounding device that looks great too.
LPA LSP 2005D	£495	Oct 94	Could be too forceful for some, but with excellent detail and extremely powerful bass.
EAR 834P	£340	Oct 94	Very fine phono stage with precise imagery and a bargain at the price.

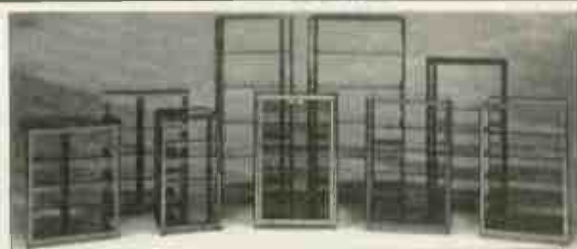
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Phono stages £ Year Verdict

Under £800			
Linnairis Quartz Cable	£295	Oct 98	Capable of involvement, neutrality and insight usually the preserve of stages three or four times the price.
LFD Musical	£299	Sep 97	The most lucid and musical budget phono stage around - a true audiophile bargain.
Musical Fidelity X-UP	£130	May 99	First-class inexpensive phono stage. MM and MC inputs catered for. Low on distortion, high on clarity, build legendary.
NAD PP1	£40	Sep 98	At this price the NAD is an accomplished all-rounder. Slowish bass will suit leaner systems though.
QED Discourse	£35	Jan 97	A bargain. Beguilingly musical presentation, with more than enough detail and power for a mere £35.
Rotel RD-970BK	£130	Nov 94	Combine with a good cheap line level integrated and it will show you how good vinyl can be.
Somerset Sedley MC/MM	£399	May 98	The Sedley combines transparency and fine dynamics with excellent rhythmic ability.
Unison Simply Phono	£495	Mar 96	Liquid sound with great dynamics, but a little hissy and muddled too. Beguiling, but not perfect.

£800+			
Anthem PTP 1P	£899	Aug 96	Despite a sizeable price tag the Anthem offers a smooth, lucid sound and superb build quality.
Audi Inno speakers P2	£749	Feb 96	Fantastic bass and super insight make this one of the best phono stages around.
Kudavati H000PFA	£800	Oct 94	Instruments can have a somewhat flat perspective, but excellent clarity
Kinshaw Perception	£525	Oct 94	Extremely impressive results, especially with MM cartridges.
Linn Linn	£850	Oct 97	Marries beautifully into the Linn family, but not too hot with other components.
Michell Iso	£528	Oct 94	Gives a thoroughly cohesive picture of a recording with a very tight and rhythmical bass.
Michell Iso HF	£850	May 93	Perhaps too good for some record collections. Extremely revealing.
Roksan Arzakor DS5	£945	Oct 97	Doesn't worry about genre, it just gets on with the job of making music in an enjoyable way.
Sonic Frontiers Phono 1	£2000	Apr 98	Expensive, yes, overpriced, no. The Phono 1 is a superb all-round phono stage.



Sonic Frontiers Phono 1.

Cartridges £ Year Verdict

Under £200			
Clearaudio Alpha	£130	Apr 99	Tends to sound quite hard at the top but imaging and detail are good. Best in a warm system.
Demo DL30MM	£110	Aug 97	First manufactured in 1963, it sounds mature and sure-footed rather than over the hill.
Demo DL110	£65	Mar 94	May be a little soft-natured for some. Splendid dynamics and an even tonal balance.
Ortofon	£185	Feb 98	Better Goldring's 1042 without difficulty. MC quality from an MM.
Goldring 1042	£90	Jan 93	One of the best MMs at the price with strainless delivery.
Goldring 1012GX	£60	Jul 93	Great with Rock music, the 1012GX is the best value low-price MM.
Ortofon Prestige Silver	£119	Apr 97	Good tracking and inoffensive sound, but somehow lacks sparkle in any department.
Linn K9	£58	Sep 94	Rhythmic bite compensates for a lack of vibrancy in music (MM).
Ortofon 540	£100	Jan 93	Smooth operator and very good value for money (MM).
Ortofon MC15 Super II	£110	Mar 95	In the right system, can be masterful with its dry and accurate response.
Ortofon MC25E	£170	Sep 95	A considerable achievement that adds true verve a pizzazz to the MC15 Super II
Polson Corp MM	£120	Jan 93	Light and dry presentation with good presentation (MM).
Slate Brazen MM	£185	Sep 97	If you like the V15 you'll love the Brazen. Works well with an SME 3009.
Sony Silex HF	£100	Oct 92	Excellent value for money. It does its job of transcribing the information on the disc without fuss or bother.



van den Hul Grasshopper.

£200+			
Cartridge Man Moving Magnet	£549	Feb 99	Good price, high output and a winning musicality make this Moving Iron cartridge the one to beat.
Ortofon Linn	£1300	Jan 99	A Goldring make-over that tracks well and sounds good. Pricey, though.
Ortofon Linn MC Cartridge	£255	Jun 98	This betters the Mica, has super-MM virtues.
Dynavector DV20X H	£299	May 99	Delightfully musical sound makes the Dynavector a very strong contender in the budget MC stakes.
EMI HIS15	£850	Oct 96	Solid bass and smooth, musical sound make this rare MC cartridge worth the money.
Goldring Escal VX	£495	May 97	Has fine midrange clarity, but is bettered in other areas by cheaper competitors.
Linn Akly	£1200	Dec 97	Linn fans will love it but it's up against strong competition.
Linn Klyde	£489	Jun 95	Sumptuous sounding cartridge that borders on the bass heavy but has a good feel for music.
Linn Lyran	£649	Jun 95	Extremely smooth, civilised MC with no obvious weaknesses.
Ortofon Jubilee	£1250	Mar 99	Detailed, musical and sure-footed, the Jubilee goes a long way towards justifying its elevated price tag.
Ortofon MC25E	£225	Sep 95	Delightfully sweet, musical sound with added refinement on FL that takes some beating.
Ortofon MC30 Supreme	£450	Jun 95	Involving yet refined presentation but some could feel it's slightly coloured.
Ortofon MC700H	£2000	May 94	Conveys the full gamut of emotion from A-Z with the fervour of a live concert. Expensive, but the business.
Ortofon Rohmann	£1000	Apr 96	A top quality MC with superb tonal quality and excellent imagery.
shure V15V4R	£295	Mar 97	Warm, dynamic rendition of music with great detail and impact (MM).
Transfiguration Spirit	£1000	Jul 98	A balanced all-rounder that misses out only on the last ounce of detail and bass weight.
van den Hul MC10	£840	Jun 95	The MC10 is very hard to fault. A honey, pure and simple.
VDH Grasshopper IV	£3750	Dec 95	Allows music to flow with superb fluidity and reveal things which were previously unheard - at a price!

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HI-FI WORLD

Tone-arms £ Year Verdict

Hadcock GH 228 SE	£595	Dec 98	Construction won't worry SME but its sound quality will unsettle a lot of the competition.
Cyrus Live Helios/Helios	varies	Nov 97	These modified arms are a considerable improvement on the originals
SME 329	£689	Jan 93	Tight, neutral sound with good tonality, but lacks the IVs pace and precision.
NAD IV	£828	Mar 92	Sexy chassis and staggering engineering along with potent performance earn it a place in audio history.

Tuners £ Year Verdict

Under £300

AMC T7	£130	Jul 97	Although it has a tempting price, its sound quality is poor compared with its rivals.
Arden Alpha 7	£230	Mar 97	An attractive, smooth sounding tuner that won't break the bank.
Centrange T500	£180	Feb 99	The T500 is one of the most gifted tuners under £500; a very accomplished all-round performer.
Hamam/Kenwood TU 900	£200	Jul 96	Sound quality is generally impressive. Let down by a rather constricted sound stage, but still good value.
Kenwood KT-2080	£130	Feb 97	Smooth, even balance allows the KT-2080 to convince with whatever it's receiving. £130 well spent.
Marantz ST-57	£150	Oct 97	The ST-57 is a smooth, warm tuner but lacks a little clarity and transparency.
Mission Cyrus FM7	£299	Apr 94	Musical, communicative and extremely detailed and a steal at the price.
NAD X13	£190	Jun 96	A remarkably musical and natural sounding tuner. Unbeatable at the price, or even twice the price for that matter.
Orion T401	£160	May 94	A competent machine, but time has taken its toll on the sound quality.
Phonix P-504PQJ	£300	Dec 98	One sole mark against the class-leading transparency is its slightly dry character.
Rego Rama	£230	Jan 95	Sounds on the whole more than its price, but in other respects it isn't especially competitive.
Real RT-930AX	£175	Aug 94	The RT-930AX is a glowing little bargain, real quality at a very realistic price.
Sony RT-5A2ES	£250	Apr 97	The Sony is worth every penny of its asking price. If you're a fan of radio this is one to go for.
Sony ST-SE700	£180	Aug 97	The ST-SE700 is one of the best at this price. LW reception is a welcome bonus.
Technics ST-6T-350L	£140	Jun 95	Not a bad buy at all and a very good fit for budget and mid-price systems.
Yamaha TX500 PDS	£200	Feb 95	If you want something for casual listening with superior aesthetics, this might be the one for you.



Hadcock 228 SE.

£300+

Alban DFT 885 Z	£399	May 93	Quite musical but does not rejuvenate the waves! Good solid performance but less than luxurious.
Bostons K11	£4347	Nov 94	This is not a cheap tuner, but its cheaper than buying a radio station, which is the only possible alternative.
Cock 143	£399	May 98	A great little tuner. This is the one in the price bracket.
Denon TU-575	£400	Mar 98	A stylish, well-built tuner which has a detailed sound but needs careful partnering
Fanfare FT 1	£1350	Mar 95	Whether it's sweaty disco or symphony hall, the Fanfare comes up to scratch.
Kenwood KT-4000L	£300	Oct 95	A good value, excellent sounding rds tuner, but lacks full EON facilities
Linea Keminia	£1645	Mar 92	Commendable basic performance but, considering the price there are limitations.
Magnan Dynamic FT101A	£749	Apr 92	Worth auditioning but bass rather dry and light.
Marantz ST-17	£600	May 99	Knock-out build quality and rich velvety sound. Poor-signal mute a bit too enthusiastic.
Meridian 204	£660	Mar 96	A clear, natural sound with good punch. Has strong rivals at the price, but acquires itself well.
Multimedia Tuner	£700	Jul 95	An unusual design from Micromega that's well built but sonically unrewarding and expensive.
NAD 702	£330	Jul 94	Well worth auditioning, even if you've never previously considered a receiver.
Naim NAT 03	£499	Sep 93	Soft and pure, especially across the midband. Speech very well reproduced plus solid weighty bass.
Phonix P-504PDS	£350	Nov 95	Well engineered and competent tuner, but a little uninspiring.
Rotel Michi RHT10	£895	Mar 94	This classy looking tuner can hold its head up high amongst the best tuners at the price.
Hitite RT-5600X	£500	Apr 95	The price of twenty concert tickets, and for that you can listen as if you were there. A bargain.
TAZ McLaren T20	£1100	Mar 99	Extremely well built with a lucid if slightly dry sound. The only real drawback is the high price.
Thomas THT-2000	£500	Dec 97	An otherwise competent tuner is let down by a rather processed character.



Rotel Michi Tuner.

Cassette £ Year Verdict

Under £300

Alwa AD-F580	£150	Apr 98	No Dolby S, but three heads and two capstans make the Alwa a bargain.
Denon DPM-500	£160	May 96	Good enough for the price and no worse than the competition.
Denon DPM-550S	£230	Aug 96	Top sound quality with ferric and chrome makes this deck a steal.
JVC TD-9802	£299	Sep 98	Only the lack of Dolby S conspires against the otherwise excellent JVC.
Kenwood KR-3090S	£200	Jan 97	Stable transport gives fine results on metal and chrome. Rough on ferrics.
Nad 613	£230	Jan 96	Decent playback and good recording when used carefully.
NAD 614	£270	Sep 95	Excellent electronics are let down by a low-grade transport.
Philips RD-906X	£230	Oct 95	A solid, competent machine which is reasonable value for money.
Sony TC-K311	£150	Dec 93	Auto-tuning is mediocre and the general results are unexceptional.
Sony TC-K43C	£170	Jan 93	A mix of average heads and electronics doesn't make for happy taping.
Teac V-610	£100	Apr 97	The V-610's performance matches its price well, but audiophile it isn't.
Teac V-602	£150	Sep 94	Satisfactory for in-car recordings, but the low price shows.
Yamaha KR-580 SE	£250	Sep 97	The '580 lives up to its SE tag with a fine performance in all areas.

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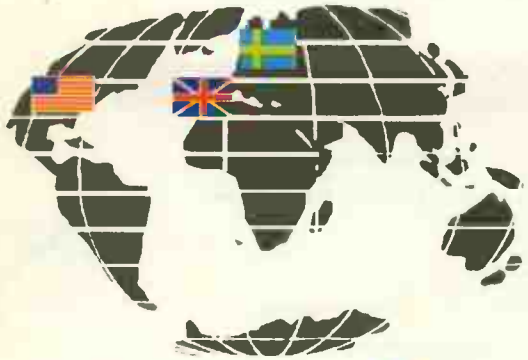
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Cassette £ Year Verdict

£300+			
Adair A11-000	£300	Feb 95	Vice-free playback is mirrored by impressive recording.
Denon DR5-810	£300	Jan 92	On the right tapes, the Denon repays with delightful sound quality.
IVO TD-117H	£400	Sep 92	Disappointing on replay but recording is another kettle of fish altogether.
Konoson KK-70005	£330	Dec 94	Convincing all-rounder except for heavy-handed noise reduction.
Nakamichi 1.1	£500	Jan 92	The Cassette Deck 1.5 has no rivals in its ability to recreate a realistic performance.
Nakamichi DR-1	£780	Jun 93	Not perfect but as close as you can get for the money.
Nakamichi DR-3	£300	Mar 93	Unfortunately keeping the price down keeps performance below Nak's norm.
Orbits TA300	£350	Oct 94	Top transport but the electronics aren't on a par.
Orbits CT 31	£1000	Mar 97	On chrome and ferric, the '95 is smooth and natural. Not so good with metals.
Plan V CT-20205 Precision	£340	Feb 99	Three heads, ease of use and high quality make the Dolby S equipped Precision a strong contender
Proson CT-5150	£430	Jun 96	Complex but superb in every important area.
Sony TC-K6110	£330	Feb 94	Muffled on pre-recordeds but pulls out all the stops on recordings.
Toshiba 40000	£550	Nov 97	Solid build and solid sounds. Top-notch at the price.
Yamaha 40005	£650	Aug 95	One of the highest quality Dolby S decks available.
Yamaha RC-327	£300	Jul 96	Excellent bass but mid and treble lack dynamics. Auto-tunes poorly on metal.



Nakamichi DR1.

DVD £ Year Verdict

Denon DVD-3000	£700	Aug 98	The Denon is a fine performer with CD and better still with 24/96.
Denon DVD-3000	£1500	Mar 99	Build is second to none. Sound is very solid convincing, but not as musical as the 3000.
Philips DVD-A350	£700	Jul 98	The A350 wipes out the CD-only competition at the price and threatens players up to £2000.
Philips DVD-L19	£1000	Nov 98	Isn't cheap, but it's an outstanding portable and a capable domestic device.
Sony DVP-A15	£700	Aug 98	The Sony is warm and smooth but lacks clarity and precision.

Headphones £ Year Verdict

Erigo Model 3	£140	Mar 99	Wonderfully lucid and transparent panel-like sound.
Grado SR80	£100	Mar 99	Clarity and openness are their traits, rather than slamming bass, but still good value.
Sennheiser HD-600	£200	Nov 98	In the company of a smooth, warm system the 580s can shine.
Sennheiser HD-600 V TC	£1000	Feb 95	Electrostatic that set a class standard and can put a case for chucking out your power amp and 'speakers.
Wanaco MH-6800	£80	May 98	Have a lot of potential but basic operating problems have to be cleaned up first.
Wanaco 5800	£50	Nov 95	Excitement that is rarely heard in headphones, but have a little trouble with heavy orchestral loads.



Panasonic DVD.

CD Transports £ Year Verdict

Audiovox 3005 CDH	£1249	Aug 94	Distinguished by a wide array of facilities. Thoughtfully designed and high quality.
Conat Disc Master	£1800	Jul 94	Smooth and cohesive. The Disc Master looks good and comes with the Dac Master within the price.
DNA Enlightenment	£695	Mar 95	Solid and lifelike sound with Rock music and full bodied on Classical.
Harwood CP-3000	£530	Feb 92	Superb build for the money and a very musical sound. Benefits greatly from clocking.
Memphis Cua	£3435	Apr 93	Excellent build quality and a sound quality to match.
Mercury DT-60A	£1595	Jun 94	Isn't cheap but has a solid dependable sound with a big, powerful presentation.
Parasound CND-2000	£1695	Jun 97	The belt drive is an interesting idea but the Parasound is bettered by cheaper transports.
P. Umbal	£1440	Feb 95	Heart-stopping speed and impact contribute to what is an exceptionally good machine.
Ratel HD-800	£450	Jul 96	Good, clean dynamic sound with a neutral and pure midrange tone.
Sonic Frontiers 3	£2295	Aug 96	Top flight machine with an easy, musical and enjoyable sound, for those that can afford it.
Staco Equinox 3	£6999	Sep 98	A handsome machine both sonically and aesthetically. We love the camera aperture-style loading system.
Tos 400	£2500	Jun 97	Costs a lot of money and sounds nothing short of superb.
Tos WH-571	£499	Feb 95	Enjoyable player with good insight. Good finish and keen pricing make it a thoroughly good buy.
Toshiba TCD-2000	£900	Jun 96	A soft and warm sound will please vinyl lovers, but it's not the last word in detail.
YTC CD71	£1200	Apr 96	A warm and musical sound with a taste of high-end refinement and detail.

CD Convertors £ Year Verdict

Behringer TD-D-1	£300	Jan 99	Smooth, natural and relaxed, highly persuasive with acoustic material. A bit soft on Rock and Dance.
Acorn 8000	£750	Aug 97	Smooth and accurate treble and easy-going rhythm. Measured and engaging; good value too.
Audiovox 3000D40	£900	Aug 97	Treble roll-off serves to remove some of the music's sparkle; lags behind the group leaders somewhat.
Cambridge Converter	£150	Jun 95	Instant upgrade for a budget player but out of its depth within a properly designed hi-fi CD player.



Sonic Frontiers 3.

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CD Convertors £ Year Verdict

Chord DAC 900 DAC	£1700	Dec 98	The Chord combines composure with musicality and transparency. Fort Knox build and priced to match.
Chord CDB 11	£239	Jun 99	Combined DAC and passive pre-amp; at the money there is no competition.
DFA Enlighten DAC	£795	Mar 95	Powerful, taut bass and remarkably solid higher frequencies. A nice touch with acoustic music especially.
DFA Light DAC	£825	Aug 97	An engrossing listen with good manners to boot. Never uninvolved or lacklustre, plays with realism.
DFA Light DAC 2	£300	Nov 95	Don't be misled by the name - It's the budget convertor to have. Impossible to criticise for the money.
DFA Logic DAC	£8000	Jun 98	A real smoothie for high-end digital conversion. Given the right transport, an outstanding sound is on the cards.
Marantz SRP001PSU	£895	Aug 97	If detail is high on your list of priorities, with forceful, hard-edged presentation, this looks like a very good bet.
Midiman Flying Calf	£109	Feb 99	A great little DAC which simply can't be beaten at the price. A bargain in all areas.
Midiman Flying Cow	£300	Jun 98	First-class as a DAC; doubles as an ADC for archiving to CDR - great value.
Ministry Audio Desk 10	£595	Aug 97	Never offensive; its multi-bit convertor packs a mighty bass punch. Useful analogue volume control.
Moerassy Delta 18	£795	May 95	Delicate brightness does a lot to open out music and create a sense of space.
Moerassy Delta 18	£300	Jun 99	Crisp, detailed and dynamic, the MF is a genuine music maker, if a touch hard and bright at times.
Musical Fidelity X-DAC	£300	Nov 97	Outstanding value for money. Excellent sound in the usual attractively styled package.
Orion DAC	£399	Jun 95	Nicely built using quality components, the DA-188 has a lively sound. Solid bass, tidy midrange and crisp treble.
Pink Triangle Da Capo	£1400	Feb 95	An old hand at the game. One of the first HDCD-compatible convertors is still a fine piece of gear.
Real Audio	£699	Nov 95	A fine musical performance makes this idiosyncratic CD convertor worth searching out.
Rhodes RDP 980	£450	Jul 96	An affordable route into two-box players. Good, clean dynamic sound with a neutral and pure mid-range tone.
Sony Trionics DAC ad	£240	Jan 95	Easy and fun to build, competitively priced and delivers fine sonic results.
Sony Trionics DAC ad	£7000	Sep 98	An awful lot of money - use it forever. Quality which can outlive any amount of cheaper purchases.
Sony Trionics DAC ad	£699	Jul 95	The Transdac has a smooth and focussed sound, but partnered with the Ultra Jitterbug looks expensive.
Transdac TDA2000	£700	Jun 96	Partnered with the TCD 2000, produces a sound that is certainly focussed, detailed and spacious.
KTC DAC	£1200	Apr 96	A taste of the elegantly smooth, slightly laid-back sound - the epitome of American good taste.



Midiman Flying Calf.

World Classics Section

Cassette

Nittanichi (various) See main Guide
 Yamaha TC-800GL Early classic in serious cassette. Its ski-slope looks got it a cult following once it had ceased to be simply ugly.

CD Players

Meridian 207 Beautifully-built two-box with pre-amp stage. Very musical although not as refined as modern Bistream gear. No digital output.
 Pioneer PD-91 Built-to-last player with easy upgrade routes for modifiers. Not knockout as it stands but get one cheap and have a go!

Amplifiers

Leak Point One, TL12 & TL10 Ancestors of hi-fi, consequently expensive nowadays. As with all vintage stuff, overhauling is de rigueur before use.
 Leak Pre-amps Line of 'good for their time' pre-amps. Use of EF86 pentode for high gain rules out ultra performance. Not the highest-fi.
 Leak Stereo 20 Excellent workaday classic. In good order the 20 will not disgrace itself. Various upgrades are available from specialist repairers.
 Leak TL12+ Proliferous monobloc equivalent of Stereo 20. Reasonably inexpensive and a tweakers' dream. Genuine hi-fi on a budget.
 NAD 3020 You can't argue with success! NAD's budget integrated gave thousands their first taste of hi-fi and remains great value.
 Quad 33 By no means a bad job and value for money. With its matching 303 pre-amp makes a good introduction to audio classics.
 Quad II One of the all-time classic mono amplifiers. Unusual circuit but it works beautifully. 22 pre-amp not up to today's standards.
 Sugden A21 Seventies transistor integrated has an eminently likeable smoothness and musicality. Limited inputs via DIN sockets.
 Technics SE-A5 Mk2 Nice transformer and electronics, shame about the casework. With tweaking, this 150watter can sound sweet.

Loudspeakers

Klipphorn Not exactly plentiful or cheap but a splendid beast. For efficiency they have seldom been equalled. Space hungry!
 Leak Sandwich Rather warm sounding big infinite baffle but cheap with it. With reasonably powerful amp can sound quite satisfying.
 Lowther PM6A High quality full-range driver; still manufactured. High sensitivity, as fitted to many classic horn designs.
 Magneplanar SMGa Touch dry in the bass but a technological 'speaker with genuinely musical abilities. Usual warnings re: dipoles apply.
 Mission 770 Father of the 77 range which continues to this day. Well mannered with a warm sound and a kind load to amplifiers.
 Quad ESL57 Unvalued. Properly serviced there is nothing like 'em. Their natural presentation may make them caviar to the general.
 Tannoy GRF & Autograph Folded horn monsters which certainly sound good if you have the space. For Tannoy vintage see HFW November 1998.
 Wharfedale Super 8 RS DD Ideal experimenters' driver. High sensitivity ~14,000 Gauss magnet and extended frequency range. Inexpensive too!
 Yamaha NS1000M Hi-tech favourites of the Japanese and Americans. Viewed more warily in the UK but can give excellent results.
 Tannoy, Lancaster etc Many similar models of infinite baffle or reflex design. Not the last word in tautness but the drivers work well in modern cabinets.

Vinyl

Acos Lustre Very honest piece of kit, well made and easily adjusted. Vinyl beginners could do very much worse.
 Aphason HR100S First class arm, up to present-day standards. Buy carefully, though, as there's no service available now.
 Ariston RD11 A one-time king of turntables very similar to the Linn LP12. Now deposited but worth a look at the right price.
 Garrard 301 & 401 Legendary and fairly plentiful. Excellent back-up available; many different custom plinths available. High quality.
 Goldring Lenco 88 & 99 Great deck for the kitchen table enthusiast. Garrard fans won't look at 'em but cheap and capable. Servicing available.
 Hadcock 228 Recently out-classed by Hadcock's updated 228 Special Edition but a proper hi-fi arm for all that. Makers still service.
 Linn Axis Uncomplicated, lower-price version of the famous Sondek. Considerably less expensive than some of its stablemates.
 Michell Proton One 20 years and still going strong. Early runner in the 'modern' turntable cycle with a first class arm. Factory servicing available.
 Shure M75 Recent line-contact improvements have left the M75 behind but the wide range of needles make it a handy tool.
 SME 3009 IIS Everlasting classic tone-arm. Spares permanently available from SME. No longer the last word but peanuts second-hand.
 Thorens TD124 Best classic deck ever? Judging by the prices they fetch it's possible - 78rpm too!
 Thorens TD150 Mid-price deck with a keen following. No real difficulty with servicing - novices may find the suspension system unnerving.
 Trio L-07D Knockout heavyweight from 1980 with stainless bearing and 11lb platter! Not a give-away and beware! - spares scarce.

Tuners

Leak Troughline (original) Interesting ornament but no longer hi-fi. Bandwidth limited to 88MHz to 100MHz only.
 Leak Troughline II & III mono Arguably the best-sounding tuners ever. Adaptation for stereo easy via phono multiplex socket.
 Leak Troughline III Stereo Excellent tuner with indifferent stereo decoding circuit. Best when adapted to use modern outboard decoder.
 Marantz ST-8 Possibly the ultimate Tardis console, including an oscilloscope for checking the strength of signal. Expensive even now.



Leak TL12 Point One.



Thorens TD124.



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Gale 401	£ 250.00	-
Kinshaw Overture Phono	£ 195.00	£ 395.00

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Krell KSA 50 mk II	£ 995.00	£ 3000.00
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Quad 34	£ 220.00	-
EAR 802 (inc phono)	£ 650.00	£ 1200.00
Musical Fidelity F25	£ 795.00	£ 1500.00
SPEAKERS		
Infinity Reference 2B	£ 1495.00	£ 4000.00
Meridian D.S.P. 6000 Active SPK	£ 4995.00	£ 8500.00
Martin Logan Stylos	£ 2200.00	£ 2900.00
Monitor Audio Studio 50SE	£ 2495.00	£ 4000.00
AE 2 (Piano Black)	£ 795.00	£ 1495.00
C.D PLAYERS & DACS		
Meridian 500 Transport	£ 750.00	£ 1245.00
Meridian 562 V	£ 495.00	£ 800.00
Audio Lab 8000 DAC	£ 500.00	£ 900.00
Audio Lab 8000 CPM	£ 895.00	£ 1400.00
Audio Lab 8000 CDM & 8000 DAC	£ 1295.00	£ 2300.00
Marantz 63 Ki Sig	£ 195.00	£ 400.00
TURNTABLES/ANALOGUE		
Audio Lab 8000T Tuner	£ 495.00	£ 700.00
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Meridian 504 Tuner	£ 495.00	£ 800.00

Power Amplifiers

Copeland CSA 14 Integrated (Silver)	£ 795.00	£ 1195.00
Restek Extract Monoblocks (180 watt)	£ 1995.00	£ 3500.00
Mark Levinson 331	£ 3395.00	£ 5000.00
Krell KAS 2 Monoblock	£ 9995.00	£ 18000.00
Michell Alecto Stereo	£ 995.00	£ 1500.00
Jadis JA500	£ 7995.00	£ 21000.00
Boulder 102 AE	£ 2650.00	£ 3400.00
Boulder 500 AE	£ 2995.00	£ 5000.00
Audio Note P1 SE	£ 500.00	£ 950.00
Jadis JA 80 Monoblocks	£ 4995.00	£ 10000.00
Audion Golden Knights	£ 1995.00	£ 4000.00
Audion Silver Knights (Gold)	£ 995.00	£ 2250.00
Jadis Defy 7 mk III	£ 3250.00	£ 4790.00
Micromega Tempo 2 Integrated	£ 550.00	£ 900.00
Krell FPB 600	£ 8995.00	£ 12900.00
Krell KSA 250	£ 2750.00	£ 6700.00
Audio Note Ankoru Monoblocks	£ 8500.00	£ 14500.00
Micromega amp	£ 695.00	£ 1295.00
Micromega Tempo P	£ 695.00	£ 1250.00
FM Acoustics 611X Resolution Power	£ 14995.00	£ 22000.00
Audio Research M300	£ 4995.00	£ 12000.00
Naim NAP 250	£ 1150.00	£ 1800.00
Lamm M1 Monoblocks (100W)	£ P.O.A.	£ P.O.A.
Quad 77 Integrated (Quadlink)	£ 495.00	£ 700.00
AVI 2000 Monoblocks (As New)	£ 895.00	£ 1400.00
EAR 519	£ 2695.00	£ 4699.00
VTL 225 Monoblocks	£ 2250.00	£ 5000.00
Audio Note Kassi	£ 12995.00	£ 30000.00
Audio Note Kagon	£ 29500.00	£ 80000.00
Exposure Dual Reg IV x 3	£ 895.00	£ 1800.00
Krell 50S	£ 2250.00	£ 3690.00
Arcam Alpha x 10 power amp	£ 450.00	£ 600.00
Audio Research V.T.60	£ 1095.00	£ 2000.00
Meridian 557 (as new - uncollected order)	£ 1100.00	£ 1400.00
Exposure Super XV integrated	£ 450.00	£ 795.00
Exposure XV integrated	£ 350.00	£ 750.00
Aura Evolution A100	£ 195.00	£ 350.00
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Pre Amplifiers

Jeff Rowland Constate + Phono (3 box)	£ 3995.00	£ 8000.00
McCormack Micro Line Drive	£ 350.00	£ 595.00

Audio Research LS5 mk II	£ 2495.00	£ 5700.00
Meridian 541 Dolby Surround	£ 650.00	£ 1095.00
Audio Research LS7	£ 1095.00	£ 1620.00
FM Acoustics 266 Resolution Boulder LS5AE	£ 10995.00	£ 17000.00
Exposure XIV pre IX psu	£ 2000.00	£ 3500.00
Unison Research Mystery One pre	£ 1500.00	£ 3000.00
Krell KRC2	£ 1195.00	£ 2000.00
Krell KRC HR	£ 2200.00	£ 4190.00
Arcam Alpha 9 pre amp	£ 4995.00	£ 7000.00
Audio Research LS2 (£1500.00 upgrade)	£ 295.00	£ 400.00
Meridian 501.2 (New)	£ 2250.00	£ 3300.00+
	£ 595.00	£ 700.00

Quality Speakers

Wilson 3/2 (Black)	£ 5995.00	£ 15000.00
Sonus Faber Extrema + Stands	£ 4250.00	£ 7000.00
Wilson 5.1 (Piano White)	£ 11500.00	£ 19000.00
Thiel CS1.5	£ 1595.00	£ 2700.00
B & W 801 Series 2 (Black Ash)	£ 1895.00	£ 4000.00
Apogee Stage	£ 995.00	£ 3000.00
Quad ESL 63 Black	£ 1895.00	£ 3200.00
Sonus Faber Guarneri	£ 4500.00	£ 6500.00
Roksan ROK 1	£ 295.00	£ 600.00
Sonus Faber Concerto Grand Piano + Stone base (Piano Black)	£ 1700.00	£ 2200.00
Wilson System V.1. (Black)	£ 12000.00	£ 18000.00
Rogers LS3/5A Black (NEW)	£ 575.00	£ 798.00
Rogers AB1 Sub (NEW)	£ 395.00	£ 598.00
Monitor Audio Studio 50SE (Black Laquer)	£ 3500.00	£ 4799.00
Linn Kheids (Oak)	£ 395.00	£ 750.00
Ruark Accolades Passive/Active	£ 1495.00	£ 2699.00
JM Lab Spectral 909.1 (External Damage)	£ 595.00	£ 1375.00
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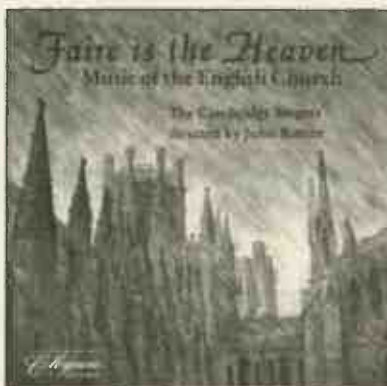
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testing...testing

Simon Pope and Richard White reveal two more of their favourite recordings for grilling hi-fi components.



The Cambridge Singers
FAIRE IS THE HEAVEN
Cond. John Rutter

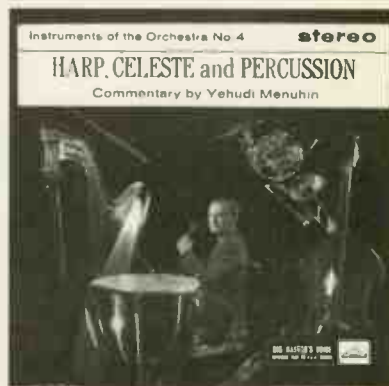
The Cambridge Singers are a mixed professional chamber choir consisting of former Cambridge University choral scholars, mainly hailing from Clare College. The selection of pieces on this magical record spans the life of sacred English choral music as we know it, from Tallis to Britten, via Purcell, Vaughan-Williams, Howells et al.

Of all the professional chamber choirs around at present, I think the Cambridge Singers have the edge when it comes to balance and phrasing.

Although much of this music was composed with boys' voices in mind, the clear tone and lack of overt vibrato in the females results in a pure tone that blends seamlessly with the lower parts.

Pieces such as Purcell's *Hear My Prayer*, Howell's haunting, modal *Sing Lullaby* and Parson's sublime *Ave Maria* are perfectly executed, striking the ideal balance between phrasing and precision.

Like many people involved one way or another in Classical music, my 'education' started with this type of music at school. Call it soppy nostalgia if you must, but whenever I hear unaccompanied choral music (especially sung this well) I simply have to sit down and listen to it. This recording contains only a microcosm of music of which there is a vast catalogue, but the pieces selected are all gems and chronological landmarks in the history of English church music. SP



HMV
Instruments Of The Orchestra
Commentary By Yehudi Menuhin

I'm cheating slightly this month as I wouldn't recommend these discs for system testing exactly. HMV's *Instruments Of The Orchestra* set used to be de rigueur for schools' record cabinets and it was by no means uncommon for a lay listener who wished to improve his knowledge to get a set. High fidelity? Perhaps not; the reason I'm touting them is that at the time of writing, we haven't long bid narrator Yehudi Menuhin farewell.

No sooner had Radio 3's tribute evening begun to fade from memory than James Blades, Everyman's Percussionist, died at the very grand old age of 98. In addition to their distinguished playing careers, both men were notable educators, Menuhin with his schools and Blades with his frequent lectures and television appearances.

By modern standards these records are a little high and dry; they pre-date the *Hey! kids...* approach by a couple of decades. Demonstrations of the particular instruments are followed by typical orchestral passages to put things in context. Perhaps there is some test-worthy aspect after all - where else will you find the bottom note of the double-bassoon (33Hz) played solo?

Under whatever pretext, I take the opportunity of saluting two distinguished musicians - may they lie sweetly at rest. RMW

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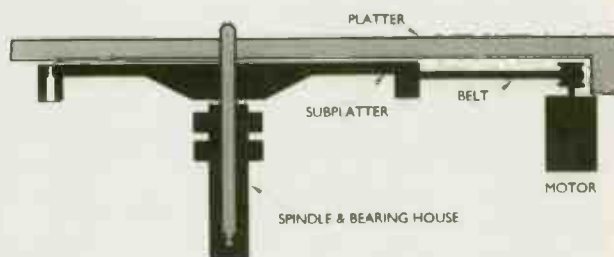
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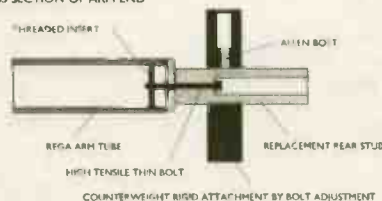
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Audion Silver Nights (300B) valve power amps (mint) s/h	2250.00	1100.00
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Creek CAS 320 int. M.M. Phono (vgc) s/h	-	95.00
Denon PMA 320 int. M.M. Phono (vgc) s/h	200.00	109.95
Lumley VTP 1000 valve line pre-amp (vgc) s/h	1000.00	399.95
Marantz PM55 SE 2x55 Watts/Full Remote Int. (Mint) s/h	2000.00	169.95
Marantz PM66 SE 2 x 6 Watts (Full Remote) (vgc) s/h	3000.00	189.00
Mission (Yus) MPSX (late model) (vgc) s/h	6000.00	379.95
Morden 1018 Pre-amp, M.C. board (g.c.) s/h	-	90.00
Morden MKA int. amp (from module) (vgc) s/h	-	199.95
Musical Fidelity AA200 2x 200 watts monoblocks (mint) s/h	1000.00	695.00
Paperth M100 100 watts valve monoblocks power amps (mint) s/h	3800	1995.00
PH Components MP LIS Mk. II Valve Pre-amp (MGC) s/h	450.00	299.95
Pioneer A400 (original) int. (vgc) s/h	280.00	149.00
Quantum 102/2020 pre/power 2x 35 watts 1 phono stage (vgc) s/h	-	149.95
Rotel RB 9408X (2x40watts) power-amp (vgc) s/h	-	149.95
Sony TAF 3000ES remote int. (g.c.) (mint) s/h	500.00	349.95
Sugden CS1 pre-amp (vgc) s/h	-	89.95
Union Research Simply Two Valve Integrated (Mint) s/h	1150.00	795.00

TURNABLES/ARMS/CARTRIDGES PHONO-STAGE ETC

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Dual 750 (pre/rev) used (mint of course) s/h	350.00	229.95
E.A.R. B346 M.M./M.C. phono stage (vgc) s/h	450.00	225.00
Garrard 401/Rega RB-300/Boo/Phono-Back (mint) (vgc) s/h	500.00	399.95
Hebrosnik TT 2 / Formula Four / Grado MC + (vgc) s/h	750.00	249.00
Kuzma Stage silver - wind tonarm (mint) s/h	2000.00	549.95
Linn LP12 /Black Plus / Track M.C. (vgc) s/h	1500.00	499.95
Linn LP12 /Maz/Tabul/Black plus/Denon DL-110 cart (MGC)	loads	399.95
Mission 775 SW774 arm/MPS 20E (vgc) s/h	226.95	-
Monacor SP6 M.M. Phono Stage/PSU (Brilliant Value) New	130.00	-
Musical Fidelity X LP (The One At This Price) MM/MC NEW	200.00+	109.95
Q.E.D. R232 /arm/MLA R220 (g.c.)	300.00	179.95
Rega Planar III/RB-300/Gang Electra (vgc) s/h	250.00	139.95
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Revolver Rebel c/w arm/AT cart (mint) s/h	149.95	-
Sankho Blue Point special high output M.C. cart (vgc) s/h	250.00	125.00
Trio 104A50 M.C. head amp (vgc) s/h	-	79.95

LOUDSPEAKERS

Apogee Galper (piano black) with bases	3500.00	500.00
(Restoration project/need finishing) (g.c.) s/h	1100.00	795.00
Acoustic Energy AE.2 inc stands (vgc) s/h	-	-

A selection of our ever changing offers for sale (all fully guaranteed)

	Equivalent New Price	Sale Price
Canon S.35 inc. stands (vgc) s/h	300.00	169.95
Canon SU.15 mini monitors (mint) s/h	110.00	74.95
Castle Durham Bi-wire (black) (vgc) s/h	200.00	119.95
Celestion SL 65 (black) (L.C.) s/h	400.00	169.95
Heybrook Point 5 Bi-wire (black) (vgc) s/h	179.00	89.95
Infinity Reference 10 (vgc) s/h	200.00	129.95
JPW Monitors c/w stands (black) (vgc) s/h	250.00	139.95
Kel 103/4 Uni-Q Floorstanders (Black) (vgc) s/h	1300.00	599.95
Linn Helix LS 150 (vgc) inc. stands (black) s/h	280.00	179.95
Monitor Audio III Mk.2/Plinth (pine) (mint/as new) s/h	400.00	299.95
Monitor Audio R300 MD (black) (vgc) s/h	300.00	159.95
Monitor Audio RB52 MD (gold) (vgc) s/h	450.00	189.95
Ruarik Paladin (Dark Walnut)/Soundbytes (vgc)	1100.00	599.95
Spendor SP.2 (walnut) (vgc) s/h	450.00	229.95
Tannoy T185 Dual Concentric (Walnut) (vgc) s/h	loads	249.95
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Denon DDM10.HX cassette deck / 3 motor / HX/Pro etc (vgc) s/h	-	119.95
Denon DAM 550 HX/PAD etc (mint/as new) s/h	160.00	139.95
Teac TH 500 R.D.S. Tuner in gold (mint/as new) s/h	170.00	119.95
Technics ST-GT350 FM Digital Tuner (New)	150.00	119.95
Technics RS-TR113 Twin/Auto-REV/HX-Pro etc (vgc) s/h	180.00	109.95

COMPACT DISC PLAYERS/TRANSPORTS/D.A.C.S.

Arcam Delta 250 transport/Black Box 50 DAC (mint) s/h	1250.00	795.00
Arcam Alpha 5 remote	450.00	249.95
Cambridge Discmagic I/ Dacmagic I (vgc) s/h	500.00	269.95
Denon DCD 910 full remote (vgc) s/h	400.00	149.95
DPA little bit 3 DAC (vgc) s/h	350.00	199.95
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Marantz CD42 (f.c.) s/h	250.00	119.95
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Teac VRDS7 (mint) s/h	600.00	379.95

OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST

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Chord Cobra Incon (boxed) s/h	60.00	30.00
Karber cable incon s/h	60.00	30.00
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Ennio Morricone - 2LP	A Fistful Of Sounds	21/6	£19.90
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Calatonia	Way Beyond Blue	28/6	£14.90
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Les Rhythmes Digitales	Darkdancer	2LP	£11.90
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- Orpheus Audio - Lancs. 01257 473175
- Sounds of Music - Tunbridge Wells - 01892 547003
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S/hand and ex-demo clearance items - August '99

	Was	Now			
CD Players & DAC'S			Amplifiers		
Audio Note ANCD2 Valve CD Player (new boxed)	1000	695	Audio Innovations 200 Poweramplifier	N/A	195
DPA Enlightenment 24/96 DAC (new style)	850	625	Audio Innovations 800 Series III power amplifier	999	499
DPA Little Bit III (4 months old)	325	219	Audio Note Meishu (new Vaic valves - silver wired)	4000	1995
DPA Renaissance 24/96 CD Player (new style)	995	795	DPA Enlightenment Poweramplifier (new style)	995	795
DPA SX 128 / HDCD DAC (new style)	2000	1299	Meridian 205 mono block Amplifiers	1100	499
Krell KPS20i/L CD Player	11,000	5999	Musical Fidelity P140 Poweramplifier	N/A	149
Meridian 200 Transport	895	395	Musical Fidelity A1000 Integrated	1500	799
Meridian 203 DAC 7	499	169	Naim Audio NAC 32 MM/MC Preamplifier	N/A	149
Meridian 263 D/A Converter	495	225	Orelle SA 100 Amplifier	449	299
Radford / Woodside WS2 CD Player	1200	399	PassLabs Aleph 3 Stereo Class A	2299	1699
Roksan Atessa DP3T Transport	1295	699	Quad 306 Poweramplifier	N/A	175
Roksan Caspian CD Player	895	650	Roksan Caspian Power Amplifier	595	479
Roksan DA1 DAC	495	179	Unison Research Smart 845 mono single ended valve	3450	2099
Roksan DA2 DAC	595	449	Yamaha DSP A1 Amplifier (3 weeks old)	1600	1295
Roksan DP1 Transport	995	399			
Roksan DS4 PSU	495	269	Loudspeakers		
Sugden SDT-1 Special Edition CD Player	1499	895	Celestion SL6S Walnut	N/A	99
Teac T1 Transport Black	550	299	Harbeth HL-K6 Cherry	1049	599
			Impulse Lali Cherry Loudspeaker	1750	1199
			Impulse Maya Loudspeaker	695	459
Turntables, Tonearms & Cartridges			Odeon Riggleto 94db horn loaded Beech Loudspeakers	1700	950
Audio Note TTL/RB250/IQ1	750	495	Rega Jura Cherry (latest Spec.)	450	375
Basis 1400 / Rega RB300	1175	899	Roksan Rok-1	650	279
Basis 2000 series Turntable / Air tangent 1B Tonearm	4000	2500	Roksan Ojan 3 R/wood	999	450
Decca London cartridge (re-built)	N/A	199	Royd Minstel Black Loudspeakers	249	145
Heybrook TT2 Turntable Black	N/A	149	Ruark Equinox Black Ash Loudspeakers	1750	950
Heybrook TT2 Turntable Walnut/SME 3009/V15	N/A	249	Ruark Talisman II Dark Oak	750	599
Impulse Moskito/RB300 Turntable (new & boxed)	695	399			
Linn Ekos MK1 (boxed immaculate)	1500	650	Cables & Accessories		
Roksan Radius 3/Tabrizi / Chorus Blk	1170	595	Alphason 5 Tier table Glass	300	149
Roksan Shiraz (350hrs use)	1000	375	Alphason 5 Tier table Rosewood	350	169
Roksan Xerxes SME cut/XPS2 Black (Needs a paint job)	N/A	185	Cogan Hall Intermezzo REF 0.5M	375	95
Roksan Xerxes Syrinx PU2 Supex 900 Mk II	N/A	499	DPA The Power /Power Slink	199	125
Roksan Xerxes XPS2/RB300/MC25FL	1500	595	Elemental Audio SCZ Custom Loudspeaker Stands	1399	750
			GM Audio Heavy Speaker Stands 24"	599	250
			Meridian System Remote	N/A	50
			Transparent Music Wave Plus 2x 2.44m	428	295
			Transparent Reference Balanced Music Link 1.5m	2895	1495
Preamplifiers					
Audio Note M3RIAA Phono Stage	3950	1750	Tuners & Tape Decks		
Audio Research LS2 Hybrid Valve Preamplifier	2450	1299	Arcam Alpha Tuner (original analogue one)	199	79
Audio Research LS3b Remote volume (black)	2750	1395	Magnum Dynalab FT11 (new & boxed)	550	399
Audiolab 8000C Preamplifier	450	229	Revox B77 fi track 3fl - 7fi MK1 Reel to reel	1600	595
Conrad Johnson PV10 AL SE	1299	750	Stax Lambda Pro/SRD-x Electrostatic Headphones	650	299
DPA Enlightenment Preamplifier (new style)	795	599			
Meridian 201 Preamplifier	695	250			
Michell Engineering Orca Pre amplifier (4 months old)	1650	1195			
Parasound M/M Phono Stage	130	99			
Quad 34 Preamplifier	N/A	150			
Rega EOS Phono Stage	398	279			
Rega HAL Pre Amp MM/MC Remote	998	499			
Rotel RC 970 BX Pre Amp (new)	175	99			

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LS 25 VT Fully Remote Controlled Preamp	4999
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VT 50 Vacuum Tube 50 Watt Bal-O Poweramp	2950
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Martin Logan	
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Nakamichi DVD Player
Nakamichi AV 10 Dts Ac3 Processor/Amplifier
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With plans to release two new cassette decks in the Autumn things are looking rosey for all you Nak fans out there.

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Martin Logan QuestZ	Loudspeakers	Used	£5500	£2050
Linn LK100	Power Amplifier	Ex-D	£650	£395
Linn Karik	CD Player	Ex-D	£1850	£1495
Linn Mimik	CD Player	Ex-D	£875	£650
Cyrus 3i	Integrated Amplifier	Ex-D	£598	£395
Cyrus Pre	Pre Amplifier	Ex-D	£648	£350
Epos ES12(D.Cherry)	Loudspeakers	Ex D	£550	£350
Epos ES22(Cherry)	Loudspeakers	Ex-D	£1350	£695
Epos ES30(Cherry)	Loudspeakers	Ex-D	£2550	£1995
Audiolab 8000Q	Pre Amplifier	Used	£1200	£995
Project 6+MC15	Turntable inc MC15	Ex-D	£500	£325
Krell PAM3	Pre Amplifier	Used	£1900	£500
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Leak TL12+ pair	£300.00
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Producing the very best from vinyl has long been a black art and it's no wonder with so many permutations involved. Most people agree that Moving Coil cartridge design is technically superior than the Moving magnet but demands much more from it's ancillaries, especially the phono stage.

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ECC35	Mullard	£25	45H	5mA	£10	15H	120mA £20	
ECC81	Mullard	£6	2H	300mA	£15	5H	250mA £20	
ECC82	Mullard	£10	16H	30mA	£10	5H	40mA £15	
ECC83	Mullard	£12	6H	250mA	£20	10H	25mA £10	
EF86	Mullard	£12	10H	250mA	£30			
EL84	Mullard	£12	OIL-FILLED TRANSFORMERS					
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5U4G	USA	£12	Mc Murdo Ceramic Octal			Bulgin FXD 3 pin plug		
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AUDIOLAB 8000Q pre amp	NEW/EX DEMO	£1,250 £800
ANTHEM INTEGRATED AMP 1	EX/DEMO	£1,300 £800
ANTHEM CD 1	EX/DEMO	£1,700 £1,000
B&W CDM1 speakers	S/H	£600 £300
CABASSE FARELLA 400 beech speakers	EX/DEMO	£1,000 £700
CASTLE HOWARD S2 oak speakers	EX/DEMO	£1,450 £1,000
CHORD SPM 2000 6 channel power amp	S/H	£5,540 £4,000
DENON- PMA Q5 10II amp	EX/DEMO	£1,800 £1,100
DENON DF07 mini system	EX/DEMO	£650 £400
LINN LK100	EX/DEMO	£650 £450
LINN CLASSIK	S/H	£1,000 £700
MARANTZ MM 500THX (pair) mono power amp	S/H	£500 £300
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Make	Model	Description	Code	Stock	R.R.P.	Now
ARCAM	ALPHA 9	AMPLIFIER	X 1	£550.00	£350.00	
BANG & OLUFSEN	BECCENTRE 9300	CD/RADIO AND CASSETTE	X 1	£1,650.00	£1200.00	
BANG & OLUFSEN	BEOLAB 2000	ACTIVE LOUDSPEAKER	X 1	£550.00	£350.00	
BANG & OLUFSEN	BEOLAB 3500	HORIZONTAL ACTIVE LOUDSPEAKER	X 1	£900.00	£500.00	
CASTLE	AVON	LOUDSPEAKERS - BRICH	N 1	£730.00	£475.00	
CASTLE	SEVERN	LOUDSPEAKERS - NATURAL OAK	X 1	£580.00	£450.00	
CASTLE	HOWARD	LOUDSPEAKERS - WALNUT	N 1	£1,200.00	£800.00	
CASTLE	KENDAL	LOUDSPEAKERS - WALNUT	N 1	£400.00	£325.00	
CELESTION	A-1	LOUDSPEAKERS - & STANDS	X 1	£1,150.00		
CELESTION	100	LOUDSPEAKERS - MAHOGANY	N 1	£540.00	£300.00	
CELESTION	SL 6 SI	LOUDSPEAKER - WALNUT	N 1	£450.00	£200.00	
CELESTION	25J	FLOORSTANDING LOUDSPEAKERS	N 1	£450.00	£250.00	
KEF	C ODA 9	FLOORSTANDING LOUDSPEAKERS	X 2	£300.00	£200.00	
LINX	QUASAR	AMPLIFIER	S 1	£500.00	£200.00	
MERIDIAN	500 & 566 DAC	CD TRANSPORT & 20-BIT DAC	S 1	£2425.00	£1400.00	
MERIDIAN	565 7 1 AC-3	AC-3 DOLBY DIGITAL PROCESSOR	S 2	£2850.00	£1850.00	
MERIDIAN	556	POWER AMP	X 1	£950.00	£760.00	
MERIDIAN	557	POWER AMP	X 1	£1,525.00	£1,220.00	
QUAD	77 AMP	AMPLIFIER - NEXTEL	N 3	£700.00	£320.00	
QUAD	77 CD	CD PLAYER - MAINS + BUS POWERED	N 2	£900.00	£420.00	
QUAD	ESL 57S	ELECTROSTATIC LOUDSPEAKERS	S 1	£300.00	£300.00	
REL	STRATA 2	SUBWOOFER	X 1	£600.00	£450.00	
REGA	PLANNER 3	TURNTABLE	S 1	£120.00		
ROTEL	RB 956	SIX CHANNEL POWERAMP	S 1	£350.00	£225.00	
ROTEL	RB 976	FIVE CHANNEL THX POWERAMP	X 1	£750.00	£650.00	
SPENDOR	2040	FLOORSTANDING LOUDSPEAKERS	S 1	£900.00	£400.00	
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YAMAHA	DSPA 492	AV AMPLIFIER	N 3	£250.00	£140.00	
YAMAHA	DSPA 592	AV AMPLIFIER	N 3	£330.00	£200.00	
YAMAHA	DSPA 1	DOLBY DIGITAL/DTS AMPLIFIER-GOLD N	N 1	£1,700.00	£1,300.00	
YAMAHA	DSPA 2	DOLBY DIGITAL/DTS AMPLIFIER N	N 1	£1,000.00	£850.00	
YAMAHA	DSPE 492	AV DIGITAL	X 1	£250.00	£175.00	
YAMAHA	RDX 592 RDS	AV RECEIVER	N 3	£400.00	£275.00	

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PIONEER	DV 717	DVD PLAYER MULTI REGION	N		£550.00	
PIONEER	DV 515	DVD PLAYER MULTI REGION	N		£400.00	

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AUDIOLAB 8000Q	1,249.90	799.00	D
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LINN 5103 AV Controller	4,850.00	2,999.00	D
MERIDIAN 555 POWER	695.00	449.00	D
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MARANTZ CD67 SE	349.90	269.00	D
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MICROMEGA STAGE 2	549.00	299.00	D
MICROMEGA STAGE 1	499.00	279.00	D
QUAD MODEL 77	595.00	359.00	D+N
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Measured Performance

amplifiers

MONRIO ASTY

The Asty produces 66watts into 8ohms. This is enough to cope with most 'speakers in most rooms, driving them loud without distortion. Into lower impedance loads there was a healthy increase in power, reaching 110watts into 4ohms.

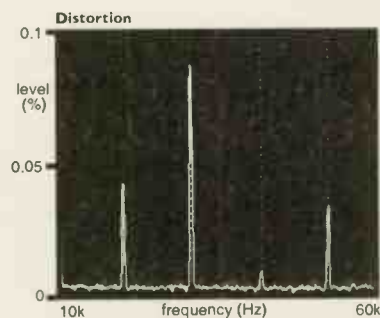
Across the midband, distortion levels were low, but at high frequencies third-harmonic distortion dominated at low levels, other higher-order harmonics joining it at higher levels. This meant there was 0.25% total harmonic distortion produced at full output, 10kHz. This may be audible as roughness or edginess in the sound.

Input sensitivity was low at 500mV. Older sources like cassette decks and tuners may not have enough output to drive the amp to full output. Frequency response was adequately wide, running from 4Hz up to 32kHz.

The Asty produced some distortion, so it may well be a low-feedback design. It's measured performance was not great. **NK**

Power	66watts
CD/tuner/aux.	
Frequency response	4Hz-32kHz
Separation	81dB

Noise	-107dB
Distortion	0.03%
Sensitivity	500mV
DC off-set	3mV/0.2mV



cd players

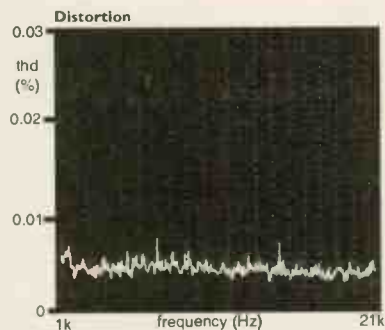
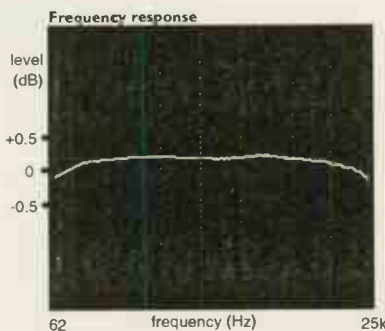
AIWA XP-V74

This player has bass roll-off below 50Hz, which might make it sound light at times, especially through a hi-fi system.

Otherwise it produced little distortion - always a good feature - and measured normally in all other areas. It has enough output to drive a hi-fi system. **NK**

Frequency response	50Hz-19.5kHz	
	left	right
Distortion (%)		
-6dB	0.05	0.04

-30dB	0.06	0.07	Separation (dB)	66dB
-60dB	2	2	Noise	-94dB
-90dB	58	65	Output	500mV



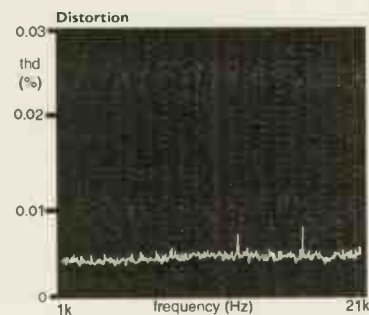
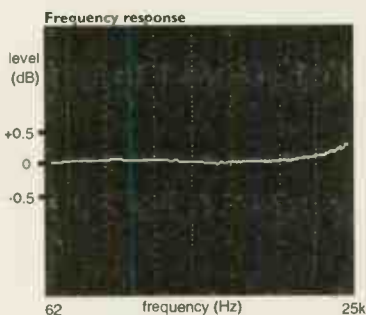
DENON DCD-435

There was an unusual high-frequency lift in the Denon's frequency response characteristic, as our analysis shows. With material possessing a lot of treble energy, this may well make the Denon sound a little bright or sharp. At other times it may well make it seem crystal clear.

The DCD-435 was very linear at all levels, turning in some superb distortion figures. This should make it sound smooth, but unfortunately treble lift can accentuate recorded distortions so quite how smooth this player will sound can only be determined by listening tests.

All other measured results were good so the DCD-435 measured well but is likely to have a bright sound. **NK**

Frequency response	5Hz-21.25kHz		Separation (dB)	left	right
	left	right	1kHz	109	113
			20kHz	83	87
Distortion (%)			Noise		-98dB
-6dB	0.006	0.006	with emphasis		-98dB
-30dB	0.018	0.018	Dynamic range		110dB
-60dB	0.43	0.4	Output		2.16V
-90dB	30	30			



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LEAK TL 10 POA; TL12+ £350 (pair), TL12.1 £1000-1250 (pair); TL25+ POA; Stereo 20 £300; TL 50 POA; TL60 (pair) POA; Throughline Stereo Tuner £100; **QUAD** I early model POA, QUAD II + preamp + tuner from £450; QUAD 405 mint £200; QUAD 606 POA, also available **RADFORD** various model including STA 25; **DYNATRON** amp (pair) with PX4's; other brands available on request. **AUDIO NOTE SHINRI** 300B still boxed with original set of 300B valves, great sound (£23,000 new) £9500; P4 £1900; P3 £1300; M2 preamplifier phono £1000; M3 preamplifier phono £2500; CONQUEST used few hours £3800; M7 preamplifier phono £5000; **GRAAF** GM100 VTA £3800; GM20 £2700; GM 200 OTL £5800; Venti-cinque £900; **UNISON RESEARCH POWER** 35 £1350; SMART 845 £3150; PENTODE 35 £1400; FEATHER ONE Preamp £800; **MASTER-SOUND** 300BS.E.2 £2200; DUB VENTI S.E. £1100; REFERENCE 845 £4000; **JADIS** JA30 £2650; DEFY 7 £2600; **AUDIO VISION** AVI-MASTER 50 EVOLUTION only £2000; **NIGHTINGALE** ADM 20 POA; ADM 30 WL/ST £2000.

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AUDIO VALVES

PX 4 POA; PX 25 POA; PP3/250 POA; KT61 £10; KT66 G.E.C. £40; 6550A General Electric with original box £45 each; 300BWE POA; EL34 MULLARD POA; EL84 POA; CV455 and CV4024 (ECC81, rare, low microphony) 45 pieces £5 each or £125 the lot; ECC81 Mullard £7 each; ECC82 Mullard, 15 pieces £5 each or £40 the lot; ECC83 Mullard £7 each; E88CC Brimar/Mullard £7 each; EF37A Mullard grey paint, low microphony (30 pieces) £120 the lot.

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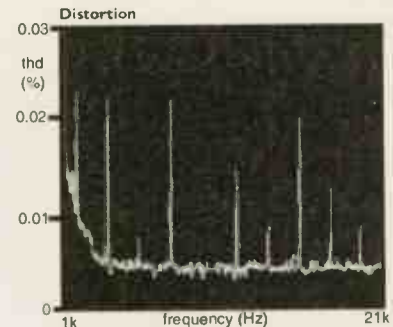
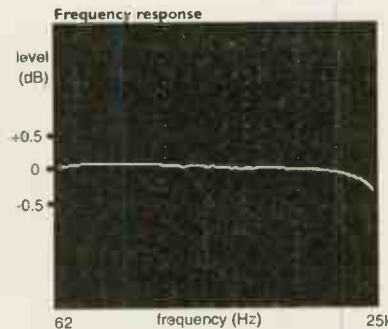
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GOODMANS GCD-89R

Goodmans' player measured well in all areas, possessing flat frequency response, low-ish distortion, adequate channel separation and low noise. I noticed some random bursts of noise in its output and the spectrum analyser showed there were some unwanted non-harmonic distortion components and noise - general rubbish - but these were at a very low level. The Goodmans measured well all round. NK

Frequency response	15Hz-20.6kHz	
	left	right
Distortion (%)		
-6dB	0.03	0.03

-30dB	0.07	0.07	Separation (dB)	78dB
-60dB	1.8	1.9	Noise	-107dB
-90dB	60	59	Output	700mV

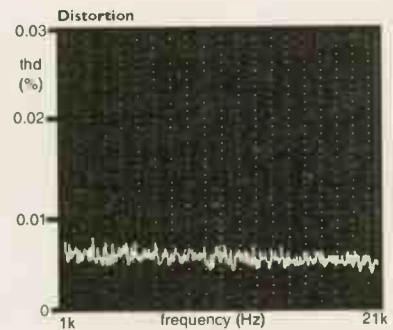
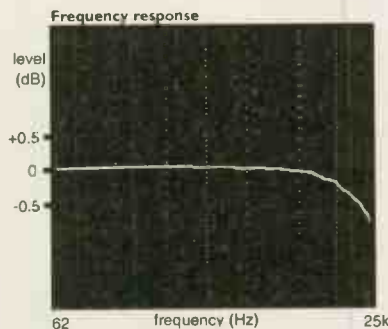


KENWOOD DPC-395

The frequency response of Kenwood's DPC-395 portable CD player has falling treble, which will give it a softer sound than some players. Otherwise it looked good in measured terms, producing little distortion or noise, whilst output was strong enough at 640mV to drive a hi-fi system through an Aux or CD input. NK

Frequency response	5Hz-13kHz	
	left	right
Distortion (%)		
-6dB	0.07	0.07

-30dB	0.083	0.08	Separation	71dB
-60dB	3.2	3	Noise	-106dB
-90dB	75	74	Output	640mV



ROTEL RCD-951

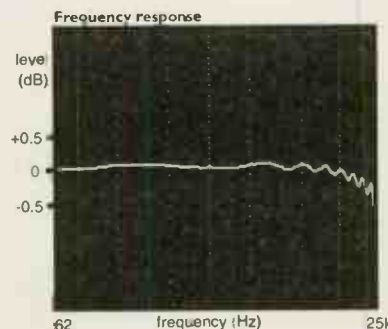
The RCD-951 produced more distortion than I have come to expect from earlier HDCD players, one channel producing 0.12% at -30dB. These days values of 0.02-0.04% are common. The Rotel was not overly impressive here.

At -60dB distortion was again higher than expected, which affected the dynamic range figure. The best players can achieve 110dB whilst 106dB is common. The RCD-951 managed 99dB, again not an especially good result.

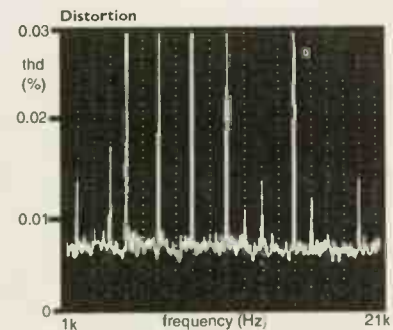
Frequency response shows signs of filter ripple and treble rolls down smoothly to reach -0.5dB at 20kHz. This will soften the sound of the player just a little, enough to make it sound smooth. Channel separation was high and output levels normal.

The RCD-951 measures reasonably well, well enough to be able to provide good sound quality. Players these days commonly manage better though. NK

Frequency response	5Hz-21kHz		Separation (dB)	left	right
	left	right	1kHz	110	110
			20kHz	98	98
Distortion (%)			Noise	-96dB	
-6dB	0.008	0.007	with emphasis	-96dB	
-30dB	0.12	0.06	Dynamic range	99dB	
			Output	2.2V	



-60dB	1.15	1.38
-90dB	46	52
Separation (dB)	left	right
1kHz	110	110
20kHz	98	98
Noise	-96dB	
with emphasis	-96dB	
Dynamic range	99dB	
Output	2.2V	



SCHNEIDER F20 MPMAN

These performance figures are from MP3 files created with the AudioCatalyst software, V1.5, as supplied.

Frequency response was flat right up to 20kHz, within 1dB limits, as our analysis shows. The F20 was flatter than the Rio, which had falling treble, so it has a

brighter sound.

Distortion was minimal at all levels and there was no dynamic-range compression either. The output amplifiers produced a

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As a small independent dealer we are able to give a more personal, honest approach to customers. But equally we mainly search for those pieces of equipment which are out of the ordinary and offer something that the more mass produced products that shops sell can't match. Invariably this means the smaller British firms such as AVI, whose range of electronics including integrated amp, Pre-amp, Monoblocks, CD Players and Tuners have recently been supplemented by an exciting range of speakers - The 'Trons', starting with the diminutive Nu-Neutron to the Bigatron, Positron and Gravitron. Can any new range of speaker's have received such a rave reviews in so many magazines in such a short time? All the AVI products are realistically priced and make superb complete systems, so do call if you would like a demonstration.

Another British amp that has also recently impressed us is the new Michell Orca/Alecto plus the replacement for the ISO, namely the Delphini, which includes an outboard power supply plus ability to switch gain, impedance and capacitance. While the Alecto Monoblocks are excellent, they do cost £1989, while the stereo amp at only £1150, produces less power but never seems short of real impact, and makes an excellent buy.

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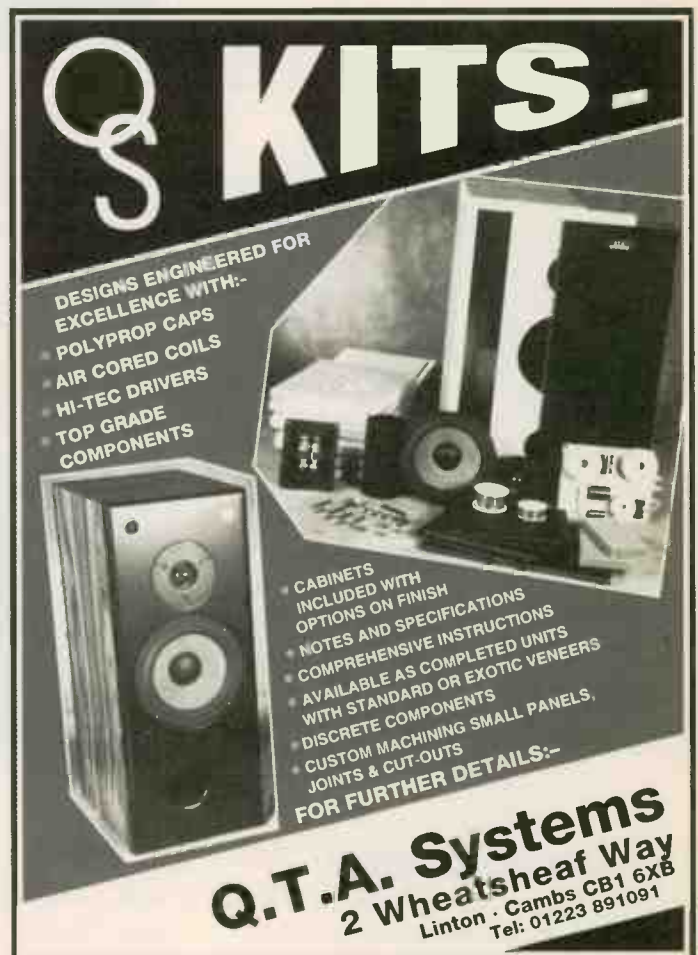
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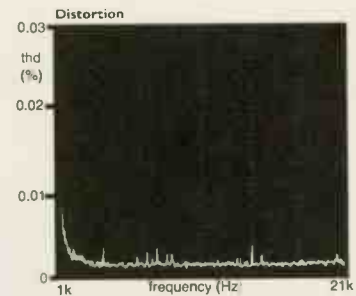
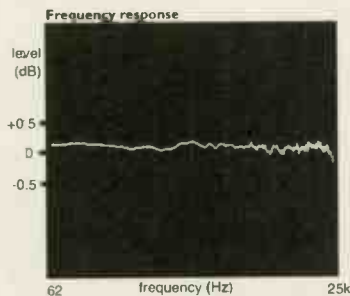
little more noise than those of the Rio, but not enough to be audible at -88dB.

Output was a low 260mV, barely enough to drive a hi-fi amplifier to full output at maximum volume. With headphones maximum volume was limited too.

Battery drain was 260mA whilst playing, and 2mA shut off, which is fairly high. This will give around seven hours' battery life from an alkaline cell.

In conjunction with the AudioCatalyst software supplied, the F20 produced a measured performance similar to that of CD. NK

Frequency response	10Hz-20kHz	Separation (dB)	left	right
		1kHz	96	95
	left			
Distortion (%)		Noise		-88dB
-30dB	0.02	Output		0.26V



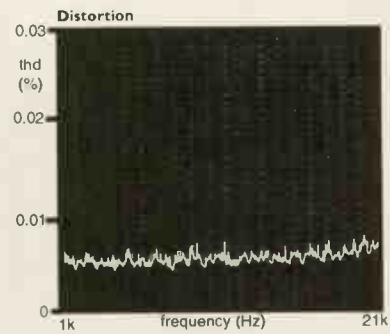
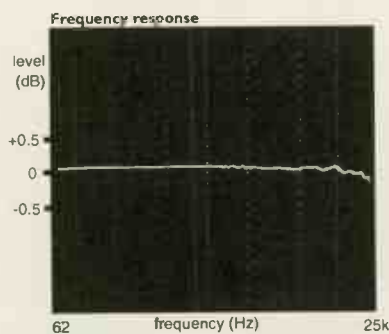
TECHNICS SL-PG590

Frequency response of the Technics was nearly ruler flat, as our analysis shows, so it should sound tonally balanced.

At higher levels there was negligible distortion, but at -60dB results worsened a little, which limited measured dynamic range to 106dB. Lower down still at -90dB, the Technics was again very linear; an unusual set of results. On balance it produced little distortion, though, and should sound free of the coarseness or graininess that characterises digital distortions.

With low noise, good channel separation and normal output levels the SL-PG590 measured well all round. NK

	left	right	Separation (dB)	left	right
Distortion (%)			1 kHz	91	90
-6dB	0.006	0.006	20kHz	65	64
-30dB	0.02	0.02	Noise		-100dB
-60dB	0.73	0.73	with emphasis		-100dB
-90dB	25	25	Dynamic range		106dB
			Output		2.34V



Frequency response 5Hz-20.8kHz

DPA SX64 CONVERTER

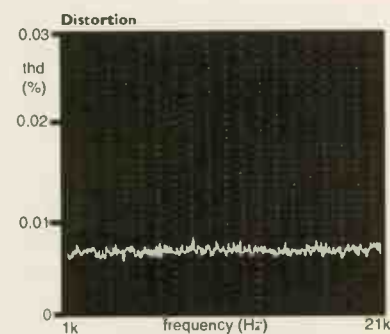
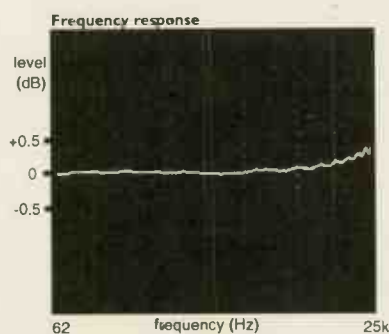
The DPA SX64 has a sudden, steep treble lift above 8kHz. This property will make it sound bright or sharp on occasions when there is a lot of treble energy in a recording. Otherwise, its frequency response measured flat and reached down to 4Hz, so I would expect a clear sound and good imaging.

Unlike this company's earlier DACs with their own processor, this one exhibited minimal distortion. Our analysis at -30dB shows a complete absence of 'spikes' caused by distortion. Distortion levels were low right through the dynamic range too, so the SX64 performs well in this respect. It should have a clean sound free from coarseness.

Channel separation was wide at 123dB in the midband. Output measured a normal 2.2V and noise was very low at -108dB. So the new DPA measures well

all round but it may sound sharp at times. NK

Frequency response	4Hz-21kHz	Separation (dB)	left	right
		1kHz	123	122
		20kHz	94	93
	left			
Distortion (%)		Noise		-108dB
-6dB	0.017	with emphasis		-108dB
-30dB	0.029	Dynamic range		106dB
-60dB	0.77	Output		2.18V



GAMMA ACOUSTICS

"This amplifier possessed a seductive vitality, a marvellous sense of communication with the heart of the music. Vocals were most communicative, subtle dynamic contrasts were portrayed very well, and the music bounced along with a fine sense of rhythm. This amplifier was seriously transparent, showing great clarity, fine stereo depth and very fine presentation of space and ambience in the sound stage."

"It sounded quick, direct, uncomplicated, with an ability to resolve subtle textures in instrumental scoring. Taken overall, the sound quality score (on my usual subjective listening test scale) was an impressive 23 points."

Martin Colloms

HI FI NEWS / RR March 97

The Rhythm presentation as a whole could be described as clean and powerful, in an appealing natural way."... "Whether it was the string quartets of Ravel or Debussy, Alanis Morissette or Joni Mitchell being fed into the Rhythm, what emerged always impressed with its natural, easy power and control. For those in search of an alternative to the 300B, one which couples the organic feel of valve amplification with a rather un-valve-like ear-opening bass extension and control, the rhythm is definitely worth audition."

Jon Marks

HiFi World July 1996

WORLD VERDICT

Partnered with sensible 'speakers of good bass depth, the Rhythm is capable of impressive performance.

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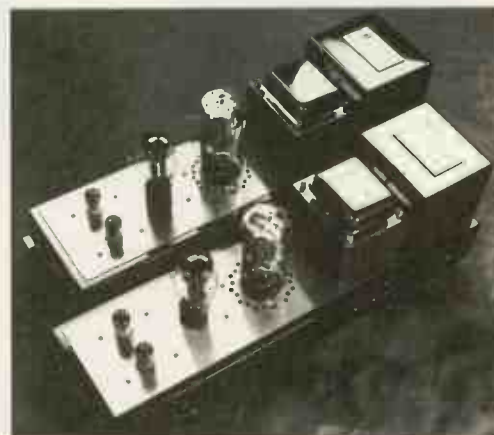
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PANASONIC SL-SX410

The stages after the volume control of this player overloaded if the volume was turned up too high. Maximum output measured 450mV or so (0.3% overload distortion) before distortion levels started to skyrocket due to asymmetric clipping. The other players had less gain before the volume and were better designed.

At -30dB, which gave 45mV output at full volume - well away from clipping - distortion levels were reasonably low. Here the Panasonic was much like the other players in terms of distortion.

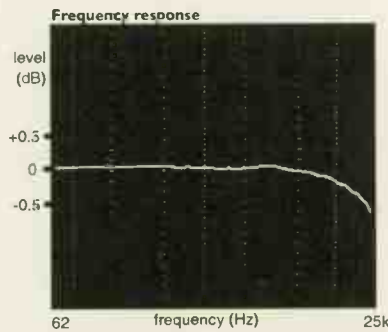
Frequency response had a treble roll-off that amounted to -1.3dB at 20kHz. Although channel separation was limited, it was sufficient to give a stereo effect.

If you need to turn up the volume on

this player it will go into severe overload. The other players did not do this and it is not to be expected either. Otherwise the SL-SX410 worked well enough. **NK**

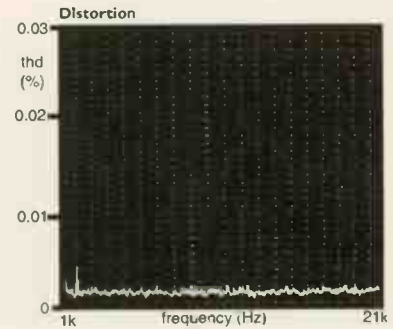
Frequency response 10Hz-17.5kHz
left right

Distortion
-6dB



-30dB	0.03	0.03
-60dB	0.7	0.7
-90dB	28	28

Separation 39dB
Noise -92dB
Output 500mV



minidisc

KENWOOD DMF-9020

MiniDisc recorders produce very little distortion throughout their usable dynamic range, measuring better than CD. The Kenwood DMF-9020 was no exception, producing a small 0.007% distortion at 0dB and -30dB, a low 0.2% at -60dB which was the noise floor rather than true distortion, and 6% at -90dB, which was again noise. This player is very linear and should possess no harshness in its sound.

Frequency response was flat from 2Hz-20.5kHz within 1dB and channel separation adequate at 62dB. Output level was a normal 2V but input sensitivity was low at 500mV. Cassette recorders usually hit 0dB for 100mV input. The Kenwood's sensitivity is fine for CD but low for

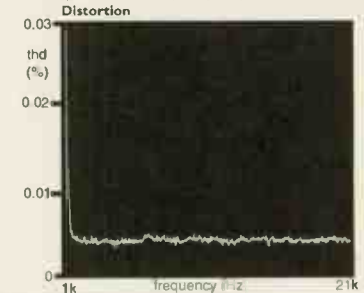
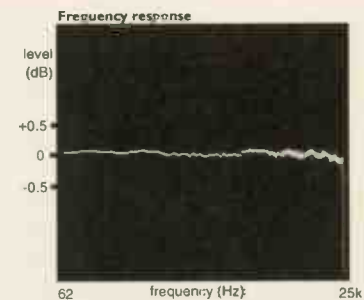
sources like tuners. Apart from this the Kenwood measured well. **NK**

Frequency response 2Hz-20.5kHz
left right

Distortion (%)

-6dB	0.007	0.007
-30dB	0.007	0.007
-60dB	0.2	0.2
-90dB	6	6

Separation (dB) left right
1kHz 92 92
Sensitivity 500mV
Noise -96dB
Output 2V



SHARP 722

The Sharp 722 has the same bandwidth as CD, which means it meets MiniDisc's spec. Although steady tones were reproduced perfectly from 20Hz up to 20kHz, results with an impulse showed a small degradation in response smoothness.

Distortion was very low, as it usually is with MD. Curiously, possibly because noise dithers low-level signals, distortion levels were lower than those from CD. Down at -90dB, where CD usually produces 30% distortion, the Sharp 722 produced just 0.9% distortion. That's a whole lot better than either CD or cassette.

At -86dB, noise was low enough to be inaudible, even if it was above the theoretical level expected (-96dB). Channel separation was very high at all frequen-

cies and output from the headphone socket healthy at 1.2V maximum. The Sharp 722 turned in a fine measured performance. **NK**

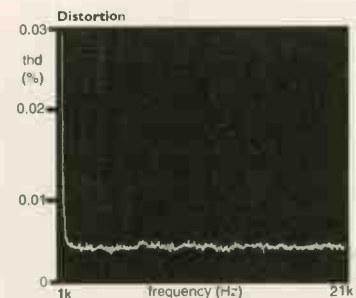
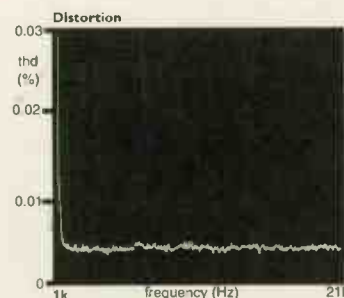
Frequency response 12Hz-20.6kHz
left right

Distortion (%)

-6dB	0.013	0.013
-30dB	0.015	0.015

-60dB	0.36	0.36
-90dB	0.8	0.9
Separation (dB)	left	right
1kHz	93	94
20kHz	58	59

Noise -86dB
Output 1.2V



loudspeakers

HHB CIRCLE 3 ACTIVE

The crossover network of an active loudspeaker can do things tough to achieve with conventional passive designs. The small HHB Circle 3 has an uncommonly flat frequency response with no sign of an upper-midrange suck-out. Phase integration was excellent, which means the 'speaker sounds much the same off-axis as on-axis. It may also sound brighter in hard rooms as it fires more treble energy at walls and ceiling. Wide dispersion doesn't

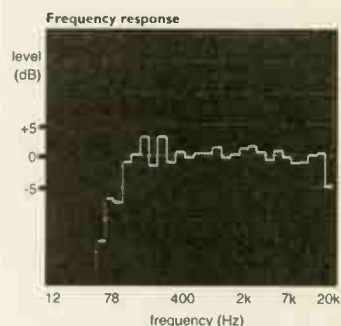
necessarily suit lightly-furnished rooms.

Bass output peaks up by +3dB around 150Hz, which will add some speed. Bass rolls off below 100Hz to become -7dB at 63Hz. The HHBs may benefit from being close to, but not against, a rear wall.

Sensitivity was good enough for the 'speaker to work direct from a CD player, using the rear volume control, since a sound pressure level of 107dB will be achieved from 2V wideband input.

The HHB Circle 3s measured well in

all areas and should give good results for a small loudspeaker. **NK**



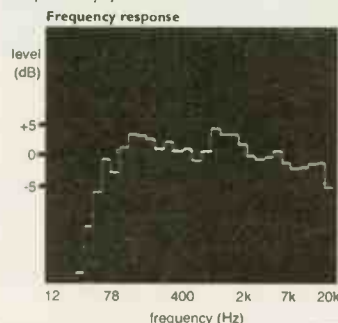
CASTLE INVERSION 15

The Inversion 15s have a peculiar hump in their response around 1.25kHz. Effects like this usually produce coloration such as nasality. The impedance of a 'speaker will reflect physical phenomena - there is a glitch in the curve at this frequency, so the Inversion 15 has a problem here.

Ignoring the peak, the 'speaker has a slow downward trend in its response, which normally gives an easy-going tonal balance, without overt dullness. The tweeter looks pretty smooth so treble quality is likely to be good. Bass output rolls down to reach -6dB at 50Hz, below

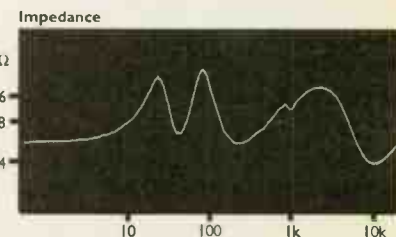
which the port takes over. It is tuned to 40Hz and takes output below this.

Sensitivity was high at 88dB SPL for 1W input, so the Inversion 15s go loud easily. They present an 8ohm load to an



amplifier but the impedance curve is a bit wild, meaning there is a lot of reactance and energy storage in the load, which will be returned to the amplifier and affect feedback. This isn't too clever.

The Inversion 15s were undistinguished in measured terms. **NK**

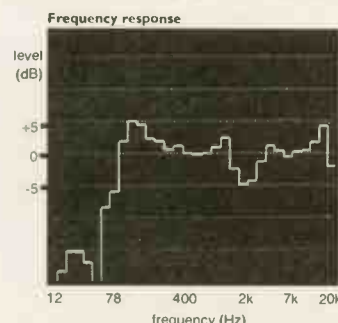


TANGENT MONITOR 5

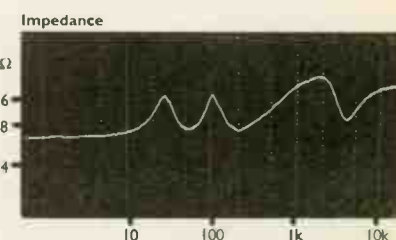
This small 'speaker has a flat frequency response, punctuated by minor problems. The tweeter peaks up at 16kHz which will make it sound a little spitty on music with plenty of treble energy. There is a crossover dip that was an amplitude rather than phase problem, and bass peaks up by +5dB at 125Hz, falling to -6dB at 80Hz below this. The 'speaker will sound lively, but might suffer spitty treble and some bass boom.

Impedance measured 9.5ohms overall

and our analysis shows the curve stays above 8ohms for most of the time. The Tangent will not draw much current from



an amplifier and this was one of the reasons its sensitivity was low at 84dB SPL from a nominal watt (2.8V) of input. In use, a lot of volume will have to be applied. **NK**



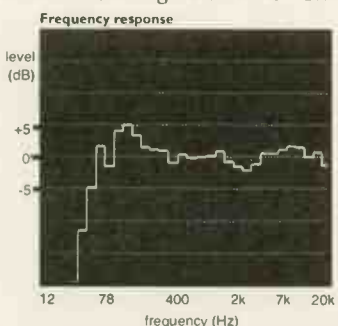
B&W DM602 S2

I was surprised to find that the mid/bass driver of the B&W has a bullet-shaped dust cap having assumed it was a stationary phase plug. It helped give this drive unit a smooth high-frequency response, which took its output up to meet a new metal-dome tweeter that integrated well in the far field. Our analysis clearly shows a small amplitude dip at crossover and, above this, a smooth treble response.

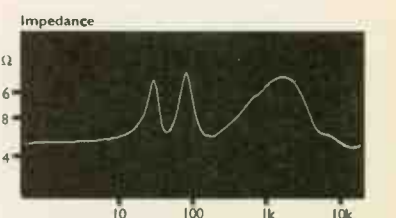
Bass peaks up at 125Hz, a characteristic that suits open stands kept away from walls. Damping will be light and bass output 'enthusiastic'. Forward output mea-

sured -6dB at 50Hz and the port extended output down to 25Hz.

A high voltage sensitivity of 89dB for one nominal watt of input (2.8V) means the DM602s will go loud for a volume



control setting. However, they achieve this partly by having a low-ish impedance of 6.6ohms, which will draw current from an amp. Together with a reactive load characteristic, they are not an especially easy load. A chunky amplifier of around 60watts should suit. **NK**



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KRELL KSA 80, black, excellent condition £1450. Audio Research SP9 Mk1, mint condition £750 ono. Rotel Michi RHC-10 pre-amp, immaculate £200. Krell KSA 100S, 1994 £2500. Krell KSA 50 MkII, as new £1200. Marston Silhouette DAC/PSU, brand new £700 ono. Naim CDI, boxed etc. £1000 ono. DPA 200S pre-amp, excellent condition £120. AVI 2000 MM monoblocks, one year old £1000. Audio Research LS7 pre-amp, as new (two years old) £850. Tel: Jules 01792 280 061 (Aug/I)

REVOX B77 MkII, variable speed, half track, 7.5 and 15 ips. As new £475. Spendor SP2 MkIII, boxed as new, £490. Stax Lambada SR 84 pro headphones, boxed as new £135. Studer A725 CD player, as new £375. Tel: 0191 281 0260 (Aug/I)

MARANTZ CD17-KI £700, Exposure 21 preamp £590, Exposure 18 super monoblocks £1090, Monitor Audio Studio 2SE 'piano lacquer' £360, REL Stentor II subwoofer 'Rosenut' £1090, Meridian 541 Analogue surround sound processor £450, all have boxes, manuals, guarantees. Tel: 0973 899 651 or 01622 844 556 (Aug/I)

HORN LOUDSPEAKERS, superb build & design £2250, Musical Fidelity MA65 monoblocks £425. Tubalog DAC £325. New rare chrome fronts. Wanted for project - Marantz CDA94 reasonably priced. Tel: 01226 764 272 (Aug/I)

REL STENTOR Mk 2 one year old, rosewood finish exc cond £875 (£1900 new). Tel: 01604 645 590 (Aug/I)

HI-FI WORLD magazines from 1994-1999 in reasonable condition plus DIY supplements, buyer collects. Tel: 0171 652 1960 (Aug/I)

CONCORDANT EXHILARANT Line level preamp, Groove Tubed, wooden case £375. Audiolab 8000C pre-amp £250. Rotel RT850AL tuner £75. Yamaha DSP300 Dolby surround sound processor £100. All boxed, excellent condition. Tel: 01502 724 835 (Aug/I)

MERIDIAN 506.20 CD player £930. Meridian 501.2 control unit £540. Meridian 556 power amplifier £750. Epos ES12 loudspeakers inc stands £360. (all brand new) Quad FM4 tuner £250. Quad 34 control unit £210. Quad 306 power amplifier £210 (mint & boxed). Move abroad forces sale. Tel: 0181 741 5262 or 0956 136 421 (Aug/I)

IMF TLS80 Mk II. Kef 105/4. Celestion Ditton 66 mint. Meridian 200/203. Deltec PDM II DAC. Revox A77 High Speed. Teac A3340. Musical Fidelity F22 remote pre. All boxed and as new. Marantz Model 7T pre/15 power amps. Very rare: Michaelson & Austin TVA1 power amp KT88s Tel: 01992 718 265 (Aug/I)

CAT SLI Mk2 phono valve pre, plus Counterpoint SA4 valve power amps (120W). Beautiful sounding combination, only £3500 all together. Tel: 01784 458 176 (Staines) or 0468 476 315 (Aug/I)

THETA DS PRO Basic III £1375. Tel: 01984 629 086 (Aug/I)

WHARFEDALE DOVEDALE 3 loudspeakers £30. John Bowers Active One loudspeakers. 3-way active floorstanders, cost £1500, will accept £500 ono. Quad 50D monoblocks, perfect working order £190. Small Sony amp 30watts/ch £25. Technics S-EA5 Mk2 150watt power amp £400 ono. WANTED: Trio L Series separates, working or not. Also Sansui flagship direct drive turntable. Tel: Jon 0181 904 8023 (Aug/I)

MERIDIAN 203, mint, little use £230 ono. Cambridge DAC Magic2, boxed as new, £110 ono, Cambridge CDI two box classic plus spares, £120 ono. Tel: 01590 672 451 evening, 01705 337 269 day (Aug/I)

LINN KREMLIN tuner, rarely used, perfect, £1200 ovno. Tel: 01908 671 471 (Milton Keynes) (Aug/I)

NVA A80 monoblocks with chrome fronts. Only 5 months old, as new £1275. NVA AP20 £125. Linn LP12/Pinnk Link/Ittock/OC9 £650. Mission 752 rosewood £260. All boxed. Tel: Paul 01271 324 995 after 6pm (Aug/I)

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ARISTON RD50 sub-chassis turntable £50, ribbon tweeter, walnut, boxed, cost £1200 new, accept £250, Denon DCD1560 CD player, mint £500, new accept £80. Ruark Talisman rosewood £200. Arcam Alpha £50. Tel: 0115 910 0544 (Aug/I)

ROTEL RCD971 CD player £299. DNM 610/630 pre/monoblock amplifier £850 brand new. DNM speaker cable £5 per metre, Eikos interconnects £55. Perfect Sound isolator £95. Four shelf Quadraspire rack £199. Genesis CD player £479 brand new. Tel: 01582 724 414 (Aug/I)

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LINN LP12 turntable, Basic plus arm, K9 cartridge updated to current specs £420. Spendor Preludes speakers plus stands £150. Audiolab 8000A amplifier £210, Denon DCD 2560 CD player £200 vgc. Tel: 0181 406 4460 (Croydon) (Aug/I)

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Avante Garde RX20 - a mere 36" tall and 12" x 12" at the base - Absolute Sound review - " a true torture test with a bass line that's big, super fast and continuous - the Gershman's handled it beautifully, servo driver Infinity RS1 towers have more power but are way too slow. The Magnepan MG3.5IR's, can't match the low bass impact of the Avant Gardes, only the Thiel 3.6 can handle this track with apiomb and even they don't sound quite as fast. Unquestionably, the Avant Gardes are a tremendously musical loudspeakers".

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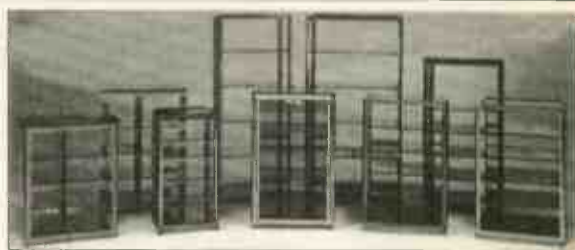
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*Special internet offer
see page 138 for details*

NAIM NAT01 tuner, Naim Supercap PS both three months old, Naim CD1, all boxed and mint, phone for details. Linn LK1, LK280, Spark £600 ono. Tel: 01535 646 456 (Aug/I)

AUDIO RESEARCH Classic 30 £850. Oracle Delphi MkIII, Audio Innovations pre power £495. Leak Troughline with decoder £95. Walker CJ55/SME/cartridge £150. WANTED: Rehdeko RK115. Spica TC50. Vandersteen 2CE. Tel: 0113 255 9475 (Aug/I)

**REVOX A77 2 track
3.75/7.5 with instruction
book: 20 tapes various.
£250. Tel: 01202 708 080
(Aug/I)**

QUAD ESL57s. Superb condition, protection boards fitted. 1963 vintage with consecutive serial numbers!! £450. Quad 44 preamp, grey, mint condition. Includes spare input modules. Boxed. Manual. £250. Tel: 01743 791 598 (Aug/I)

IMP LOUDSPEAKER testing system £200. Arcam Delta 150 Naim receiver £100. Yamaha DSP-1 digital processor £100. Technisat 5000 digital satellite radio receiver £100. Various kit speakers, amps, DACs, call for details. Tel: 01403 251 587 (Aug/I)

PRO-JECT 6.1 turntable, no cartridge, £195. Sugden A21a amplifier, one year old, boxed, £470. Both excellent condition. Tel: 01234 824 682 (Bedford) (Aug/I)

NAIM NAT01 tuner £950. Audio Innovations 1000 valve preamplifier £350. Tel: Adrian 01273 555 774 (Brighton) (Aug)

LINN LP12, Aro arm, Lingo p/supply, Cirkus, Trampoline. One owner. For sale again due to time waster. Tel: 01482 641 261 between 4pm - 7pm. (Aug/I)

WANTED: CASSETTE recorder Nakamichi CR7 boxed late model, mint condition. Panasonic AG4700B SVHS VCR, boxed, late model, mint condition. Tel: Derrick 01706 216 224 (Lancs) (Aug)

LINN LP 12/Ekos/Lingo/AT 0C9 £1100 perfect condition. Linn Isobariks, late model, immaculate £690. Tel: Paul 01309 833 054 (day) 01305 770 222 (home) (Aug/I)

MARANTZ DCC DD82 recorder & Philips DCC portable player, 100 blank tapes in good condition £200 ono. Tel: 01279 304 671 (Aug/I)

STUDER B67 meter bridge & console, superb condition £850. Studer A80 console excellent condition £750. Nakamichi cassette Mk1 professional deck, 3 heads £450. SME pick-up model 3009 seriesII improved plus fluid damper FD200 motor, Thorens TD125 £185. Tel: 0121 356 9636 (Aug/I)

**WANTED. AUDIOLAB
8000P (pref. old style).. Tel:
Richard 01702 714 346
(Southend, Essex) (Aug/I)**

VALVE AMPS for sale: Leak TL20 & preamp, new components, £240 ono. Quad 2 & preamp £440 ono. Tel: 01432 344 150 (Hereford) (Aug/I)

**NAIM SBL speakers, latest
bass/mid units, black
£1000. CDI CD player,
later transport £900. very
near offers considered. can
demonstrate. Tel: Dave
Freeman 01256 328 117 or
07957 248 468 (Aug/I)**

AIR TANGENT 16 arm, Koetsu black VPI 19 III, dark oak plinth, complete £1400. Separately arm/cartridge £1100, deck £400, all boxed. Tel: 01923 826 830 (Northwood, Middx.) (Aug/I)

CLEARAUDIO SOLUTION turntable - Morch arm with alternative arm tube - Sigma cartridge - silver arm cable. All boxed £1250. Sony 557ESD CD player £250. Hadcock 228 arm £50. Tel: 0181 857 5923 (Sep)

COPLAND CTA401 Valve integrated with phono. 7 months old, manual and shop receipt £800. Rogers LS3/5A (15ohm), Target stands, LSB subwoofer, black ash finish, good condition, excellent working order, £275 may split. All ono. Tel: 0171 257 1134 daytime or 01932 841 361 evenings (Aug/I)

QUAD 303 power amp, 33 control unit with soundbox upgrades and CD attenuator, also standard 33 control unit. All in excellent condition, manuals, Quad serviced. £200. Tel: 01780 764 149 (Lincs) (Aug/I)

QUAD 33 PREAMPLIFIER £65 (mint). Quad FM1 tuner £20. Quad 44 input module Type C £15. Does anyone have for disposal a non-working Quad FM4 tuner? Ferrograph defluxer £10. Tel: Mike 01758 613 790 (Aug)

LINN KARIK III CD player in mint condition, boxed. £1200 ono. Tel: 01962 850 514 (Hamps) (Aug/I)

SME 309 BLACK tone-arm, bought Sept '98. Only had four months use due to turntable repairs, immaculate condition, excellent sound, boxed and guaranteed, cost £793, offers around £500. Tel: Alan 0191 222 5960 (daytime) 01661 834 557 (eves) (Aug/I)

**NAIM SYSTEM for sale:
CD2 player, NAC 82 pre-
amp, NAP 180 power amp,
01 tuner, SBL speakers in
light ash. Sounds better
than new! £5200. New
house forces sale. Tel: 0181
504 3826 Email:
dickus@aol.com (Aug/I)**

AUDIO INNOVATIONS 200/2 pre-amp plus 2x 200/2 power amps boxed, immaculate £675. TDL Studio 2 speakers £450. Musical Fidelity F22 pre-amp £450. Acoustic Energy AE2 + AE stands £550. Tel: 01952 502 097 (Telford) (Aug/I)

REGA ELA'S (£535) £290. Sound Organisation 5-tier table (£140) £80. 2x 11m Naim NAC speaker cable (£110) £60. Wall-mounted turntable support £40. 2m Chord/Naim DIN - 2 stereo minijack (Sony WMD6C) (£43) £20. 11m Naim DIN - video/TV scart plug (£34) £18. 1.5m Soundflex high transmission OFC scart-scant lead (£19) £10. Vinyl record collection; many audiophile. Tel: Lawrence 0181 287 5945/07050 053 153 (Sep/I)

PROAC TABLETTE speakers (teak) vgc £165. A & R P77 cartridge, stylus new in December £35. Tel: Chris 01420 82679 (Hants) (Aug/I)

WANTED: PIONEER RG2 Dynamic Processor, DT 500 timer, SG 9800 graphic, TX 7800 tuner or similar models. Tel: 0181 864 9185 or 0973 425 109 (Aug/I)

NAIM CD2, recently serviced by Naim, £1000 (£2000). Tel: 01865 241 178 after 6pm (Aug/I)

LUMLEY LVI pre-amp (£1150) £550, Lumley ST70 power (£2225) £850, Mirage 150 subwoofer (£750) 11 months old £475, Trichord Pulsemaster (£350) £220. NVA Soundpipes various. WANTED: Trichord interconnects. Tel: 01772 314 151 (Preston) (Aug)

NAIM SBL speakers, black ash, crossovers, mint (new £2395) accept £750. Naim Nait 3, mint and boxed (new £650) accept £325. Naim Hicap, new style, mint and boxed £400. Tel: 0370 893 531 (day) 0118 941 2221 (eves) (Aug/I)

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Sugden A21A pure class A integrated £799 Sugden Audition CD player £649

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Telefunken V73 mono Valve amplifier £ 1955 Excellent cond with circuit diagram 4WCH Best offer takes £999
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Quad 680 power amplifier Excellent condition £ 450 Nitech CIA25XND Receiver with MC board £ 99
Conrad Johnson PV4 valve pre-amplifier Excellent £ 350 Auna VAS80 integrated amplifier Unused Boxed £ 140
Sugden P51 power amplifier Mint condition £ 200 1 unitly M101 also mono blocks Fully serviced £ 1200
Quad 441 pre-amplifier Good condition 3 pin dln £ 195 Quad 4052 amplifier Good condition £ 225
Cambridge Aedra P110 integrated amplifier £ 275 Rothwell Indus passive pre. Purchased Feb 1990 £ 325
Sony TAF 301XS 1st amplifier Mint Boxed £ 299 Sound Design SD2 pre-amplifier Valve Amazing £ 495
TVAc line level valve pre-amplifier Ex condition £ 349 Arcam Delta60 integrated amplifier Mint Boxed £ 139
Conradjohn modified Quad 22 pre amplifier £ 75 Roid 9708X pre-amplifier Mint Boxed £ 100
Crimson Electra 510 pre-amplifier Batters Psi £ 125 Cranson Electra 580 mono power amps Ex cond £ 199
Armstrong A10 mono valve power and pre-amp £ 195 BTI valve power amp and pre-amp Rare Serviced £ 200
Audio Innovations Also integrated amplifier 4mt £ 180 Sauten C51 pre-amplifier Excellent condition £ 99
Sugden A68 integrated amplifier Good condition £ 100 Luxman L81 integrated amplifier Mint £ 125
Cecil 4040 MK1 amplifier Excellent condition £ 75 Denon PMA580 amplifier £ 199
Naim Sap 42 5K pre-amplifier with MC board £ 195 Musical Fidelity pre8 pre-amplifier Boxed Mint £ 199
Herman Karbon HK610 integrated amplifier £ 99 O.A.C. Mistral pre amp 55WCH Cost £450 £ 190
Fisher A11A integrated valve amplifier £ 250 Rogers Cade 2 pre-power amplifier Ex condition £ 150
Fisher 400 valve tuner amplifier With manual £ 195 Comoson/Sugden mono pre-power amp very rare £ 195
Musical Fidelity L201 pre-amps with remote £ 200 Rogers Cade 1 unimono valve amplifier £ 100
Quad 11s various conditions from £350 pair £ 150s Richard Allen Alan A integrated amplifier Serviced £ 100
Quad 33 pre-amplifiers Various from £ 200s Rogers Cade 7 stereo valve power amplifier Redecode £ 60
Leak Stereo 20 power amps Various condition from £ 200 Leak TL25 mono valve power amplifiers From £ 150

TURNTABLES

Mitchell Focus Turntable CW Linn Bask arm GAC £ 99 AR Lager L turntable with Mission arm Ex cond £ 159
Arson R100 turntable CW Linn Bask Lxx Boxed £ 149 Garrard 301 401 mono units all serviced from £ 125
Garrard 301 grey finish Used in radio station £ 275 Linn LP12 with cut out for sony 7000 early example £ 135
Linn LP12 with black block LV2 tone arm £ 650 Thomas TD150 chassis only £ 39
Thomas TD100 and Thomas arm No lid £ 50 Rotel RP800 turntable Good condition £ 75

SPEAKERS

Quad ESL 57 speakers All fully serviced with full 3 months warranty Hear whid ESL 57s should sound like From £ 600 pair
HKW DM1 4 loudspeakers Areal hi-fi speaker £ 199 Bose 301 MK3 Unused Boxed Mint Black finish £ 249
Rose powered Acoustatics 3 speakers 1 used Boxed £ 325 Linn Sekon loudspeakers Ex condition Boxed £ 225
Gale 301 speakers in black Mint Boxed £ 150f/r Dynastate electrostatic hybrid speakers £ 400
Pur B&W DM3 speakers Amazing sound £ 125 Rogers L80 speakers Marked black leave £ 69
Pair large corner speakers using roadmans drivers £ 99 Heybrook H81 speakers Black £ 75
Rogers DB101 speakers Mint Boxed £ 75 Kel 105 speakers Boxed Ex condition £ 495
Pair Whitley stoneman corner speakers £ 75 Pair Rogers Studio 3 speakers Ex condition £ 180
Rose 801 speakers with equaliser Ex working order £ 250 TDL RTL2 speakers Mint Boxed £ 100
Cymc 361 speakers Excellent condition £ 99 Pair 10watts PM6A drive units Ex cond £ 280
Meridian Short MS300 with Decca Kelly ribbon £ 195 Kel 1022 speakers Cost £ 750 Ex condition Boxed £ 915
Richard Allan Monitor 30 speakers Ex condition £ 175 Manipling SMGB loudspeakers Mint Boxed £ 530
Pair 10watts Acoustica speakers £ 250 Single 10watts acoustica using PM6A Early style £ 180
Meridian Short MS900 with Decca Kelly Ribbons £ 175

OTHER ITEMS

Monster Powerline 3m loudspeaker cable RRP £3M £ 5M Antiquist F14 loudspeaker cable RRP £3M £ 125M
Musical Fidelity L50 tuner Mint condition Boxed £ 175 Mission 774 tuner Good condition £ 85
Ortofon MC 33D cartridge for use with Sire arm £ 50 Sennheiser HD540 Ref Gold headphones Cw wood box £ 99
Revox A77 R/Reel Cw Nab adapters Built in amplifier and speakers 4 track 3.75 x 7.5 Excellent condition £ 200
Sugden R51 tuner in mint condition Incredible £ 125 Cambridge Audio 155 tuner Serviced £ 85
Pink Triangle Dacaps and Pink Triangle Cardinal Transport & dac Both items in mint condition and boxed £ 1100
Pair original ESL63 loudspeaker stands Black £ 75 Quad Pm1 mono tuner £ 30
Mazort C180 Mint Boxed A real heavyweight £ 249 Cambridge Audio Dacmagik & silver trimms head £ 90
Revox A77 R track 3.5 & 7.5 good condition £ 225 Technics SU 300MC pre amplifier Unused Boxed £ 99
Auna TL101 M tuner 1 used Boxed Mint £ 180 Sire 3012 tone arm in excellent condition £ 250
Audio Technica AT1005 2 tone arm New Boxed £ 35 Quad FM1 tuner Good condition £ 75
Arcam Alpha CD player Boxed with remote £ 150 Phillips CD900 Cd player Cost £ 300 Make ex trans £ 199
Leak Frogtime 2 & 3 Mono Stereo From £ 75 SME 3009 tone arm Final Testhill Mint Boxed £ 100
SME 3009 tone arms Various From £ 60 Sony CDP 361E CD player £ 99

QUAD ESL57 PANELS/SERVICING ETC

Rebuilt & soak tested treble panels. Fitted new dustcovers. Exchange £100
Rebuilt and soak tested bass panels. Fitted new dustcovers. Exchange £120
New high spec rectifier boards. with lifetime warranty. Simply the best £ 50
Clamp boards. (price per pair). £ 45
New dust covers bass or treble panels. Fitted £ 25
Treble protection boards (before S/N 16800) price each £ 15
Returbish Grille with fabric overcover. Black or brown. Each £ 30

NEW. Stands for Quad ESL speakers (Flatpack). Black or wood finish £139 pr
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One Thing stereo decoder.

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Thoughtline tuner service & realignment £55.00. (excludes valves. Rarely needed)

TRANSLUCENT. (somewhat of a bargain) Hifi World. Jan 1999

PURE SILVER INTERCONNECT CABLE

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Ear R34P MM phono stage No volume control Brand new. Boxed at only £350
Ear R34L Line only valve pre-amplifier Amazing Brand new. Boxed at only £450

301/401/124 PLINTHS (lets the Garrards inherent quality show through) Hifi World. Oct 98
Plinths @ only £199 unfinished or £299 finished (referred). Awarded 4 Globes October 98 (HIFI WORLD)
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Arcam Alpha 8 r/control amplifier 2 year old boxed as new s/h (£349) £195

Arcam Delta 290 power amplifiers boxed mint s/h (£349) £250 each or £450/pair

ATC A7 small stand-mount loudspeakers Cherry veneer, ex display Full warranty, boxed etc (£749) slightly marked on one edge £550

Audiomeca Damnation "SE" CD transport Fitted with trichord DOB board, AES/EBU, phono & BNC digital outputs, unmarked, dinky and novel x/r (£1395) £895

Castle liss loudspeakers. Antique oak (stained) real veneer s/h boxed good condition (£250) £120

Chord 1000B power amplifier. 250 wpc / 8 ohms s/h (£31k) Perfect, boxed £1750

Graaf 50-50 valve power amplifier As new (extremely pretty) boxed s/h (£2300) £1195

Martin Logan Aerus hybrid electrostatic loudspeakers Light oak oak frames boxed, s/h as new (£2200) £1299

Nakamichi 600 cassette deck Early Eighties model in champagne silver S/H boxed and in absolutely staggering condition including manuals tool kit etc. No signs of wear. Must be collectable £175

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AUDIONOTE CD2 CD player. with valve output stage. Very smooth, detailed sound, one year old, perfect £625 ono (cost £1000) Tel: 01530 831 357 or 0831 565 010 (Aug/I)

VAN DEN HUL D102 III HD interconnect 5m pair, phono terminations, 2 months old (£260) £145. Musical Fidelity X-PSU £65. X-10D £40. All mint. Surplus due to revised layout. Tel: 01752 773 369 (Aug/I)

MICHELL ISO phono stage. Mint condition £499. Tel: 0141 956 1440 (Aug/I)

MUSICAL FIDELITY X-A1 amp £295. Musical Fidelity XA-50 monoblocs £290. Cyrus DAD 7 CD player £250. Pioneer A-400X amp £90. Musical Fidelity X-Pre amp £120. All mint. Tel: 01803 865 406 (Devon) (Aug/I)

MUSICAL FIDELITY E100 amplifier £425. Rega Radio £130. Henley HMC50 phono stage £120. Thorens TD160 £45. Shure M75, unused Musonic stylus £15. Goldring Elan unused £15. Tel: Malcolm Lee 01274 582 266 ext 2321 (day) 0161 633 6130 (eves) (Aug/I)

IMPULSE H2 tri-wired, Focal titanium dioxide tweeters £1200. Eminent Technology 2 linear tracking arm £300. RATA Torlyte, Target wall shelf, Sound Organisation table. offers. WANTED: RB250 or similar. Tel: 07957 694 360 (Aug/I)

WHARFEDALE AIRDALE corner loudspeakers, excellent condition £250. Garrard 401 + SME 3012 arm £350. Garrard 301 motor unit £225. Tannoy III LZ loudspeakers £350. Leak Stereo 20 amplifier £270. Stentorian corner units £40. Tannoy 2528 10" dual-concentric drive units £50. Tel: 0117 942 7096 (Aug/I)

CLASSIC 100W/channel Tresham Audio DR102 MOS-FET power amp, Separate power supply, brilliant sound, power to spare. With free Linn interconnects (2 sets) £250 ovno Tel: Dave 01491 642 030 (Aug/I)

LINN KAIRN phono preamp, Brilliant power supply, excellent condition (£1300) £800. Impulse H6 floorstanders, horn speakers, black £500. Tel: 01234 240 280 (Aug/I)

ACOUSTATS ELECTROSTAT-IC panel speakers £550. Altec Lansing 604G/604H dual concentric horn drive units only £250 each. Sony 700ES amp sale £200. Luxman tuner T2 asking £80. Tel: 0181 297 2825/01342 850 056 (Aug/I)

LINN LP12, Valhalla, Ittock, Asaka. Brilliant sound, will happily demonstrate £495. Tel: Martin 0181 989 2990 (E. London) (Aug/I)

TUBE TECHNOLOGY Prophet £600. Unisis £600. Conrad Johnson PV5 £350. Magnaplanar MG1C £300. Pioneer A400 £80. Thorens TD160MkII £65. NAD 3020 £50. NAD turntable £30. Tel: 01472 234 565, 0498 895 465 (Aug/I)

UNISON RESEARCH Simply 4P, 24 watt valve amp, 2 years old, excellent condition, boxed with manual, revalved with groove tubes. £795 ono (£1595) Tel: 0114 258 2096 (Aug)

TOP OF the range Wilson Benesch WB turntable, Act Two arm, Cardas arm table, Triptych stand, substantially less than half price £1750. Legendary DA-12 DAC (CD12LE) only £375. Tel: 0181 672 4319 (Aug/I)

LEAK 2075 concert hall speakers, teak finish, one owner with manual and sales literature. Best bid taken. Tel: 01293 862 048 (Aug/I)

AURA PA100 power amp, CA200 preamp, CDI00 CD player, TU80 tuner, chrome, B&W CDM2SERA, all immaculate, hardly used, boxed, bought Jan/Mar (cost £2750). Sensible offers invited. Tel/Fax: 01903 763 134, Email: LJackman@breathemail.net (Aug/I)

GALE 401 loudspeakers, complete Russ Andrews modification - quality. Amazing mid-band. Plus Target stands £580. Also, Linn LK1 preamp. Boxed and perfect £200. Tel: 01843 601 786 (Aug/I)

PINK TRIANGLE digital filter modules for DaCapo or Ordinal DAC. 1307 filter, £125 (warm, musical). 22-bit filter, £125 (detailed, analytical). Either module offers significant upgrade over 18 or 20-bit filters. Tel: 01279 416 041 (evenings) (Aug/I)

OPTONICA RT7100 tape processor (cassette deck) with programmable track selector (overhauled). RP7100 stereo turntable with auto track selector, Ortofon cartridge. With manuals and sales literature. Offers. Tel: 01293 862 048 (Aug/I)

AVI PREAMP, latest spec £475, AVI stereo power amp £425, Linn Keilidh speakers £425, Quad 66/606 pre/power amp £550. Tel: 01977 643 629 (Aug/I)

CHORD 1800 preamp with 400 power amp £2100, Quad 77/707 pre/power with remote control £1000, Spondor LS3/5A speakers in black with stands £350. TEAC D500/P500 CD player £550. Tel: 01977 643 629 (Aug/I)

WANTED: TURNTABLES for private collection. Thorens 121, 127, 124, 184, 224, 226; Acoustical, Garrard, Lenco pre-75, EMT 928. Tonearms: SME, Decca, Grace. Please Fax 0039-051-614 4537 or Email: stefpas@tin.it (Aug/I)

LOUDSPEAKER UNITS two 12" bass, two 10" full range, two 8" mid range two 4" H/F, two 3-way x-over. Two CU.FT reflex cabinets. Offers? Will split. Suit DIY system builder. Tel: 01785 840 602 (Aug/I)

HI-FI SALE (all items immaculate, boxed as new) Audiolab 8000 CDM £650, 8000DAC £400, 8000Q £550, 8000 Mx2 £800. Kimber: Powerkords 8TCM 4ft £70 each, 6 way powerblock £100, Illuminati balanced cable £100, 8TC speaker cable 2 metre pair £100. Chord Chorus .5m £70 each, Target 5 tier blue rack £120, Linn 5 metre interconnect £50, QED 5 metre pair Profile 8 £20, Jamo Concert 8 with stands (3 months old) £1200. Tel: 01792 536 143 after 7pm (Aug/I)

AUDIO PLAN Contrast III speakers were £2700. Phase Linear 3000 pre 300 power classic £500. Naim 110x2 Avondale spec £600. Wilmslow Audio P3 monitors 3'6". PS. Audio pre 4.5. Quantum 150 watt mono's serviced £400. Exchanges. Tel: 01626 774 246 (Aug/I)

LINN KARIK III, Kairn phono LK100 LK20 2x6 metres £2000 or will split, all just serviced. Tel: 0114 288 8031 after 6pm (Sheffield) (Aug/I)

DPA ENLIGHTENMENT DAC £495 32 x oversampling (boxed. Tel: Mike 01684 892 722 (day) 01684 561 526 (eves, before 9pm) (Aug/I)

AUDIOLAB TUNER 8000T as new, hardly used. Complete and boxed. £450 ono. Linn Sara Nine speakers plus stands vgc. £295 ovno. Phone 01462 435 128 eves (Aug/I)

SONY WM D6 Walkman Pro, complete with Sony MDR 40 phones, top spec Sony AC15A PSU and Chord Co. interconnect (Naim). £190 ono. Tel: Bob 01442 870 593 (Aug/I)

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DPA Renaissance CD (Brand New Sealed in Box)	1000	650
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Electrocompaniet EC1-2	1000	595
JBL L80T	1250	395
Jeff Rowland Model 1	3000	995
Linn Kan Stands MkII	n/a	25
Linn Karik III Brilliant P/S	1850	995
Linn LP12 Valhalla no arm	n/a	295
Linn LP12 Valhalla Basik + K9	n/a	450
Meridian 200 Transport MKII	895	395
Meridian 203 DAC	450	150
Meridian 501	2750	995
Meridian 602	1750	595
Meridian DSP 6000	11000	5500
Meridian DSP 6000 (centre)	5500	1995
Micro Seiki CDM 2	2800	795
Micromega Duo B/S	500	195
Mission Cyrus PSX	n/a	150
Mission Cyrus Tuner MK1	n/a	95
Musical Fidelity X10-D	130	70
Naim 135's	3410	1595
Naim 140 old style x2	770	350
Naim 32.5	n/a	250
Naim CD1	1800	1095
Naim Naxo 2/4 New Style	700	350
Naim SBL Walnut	2200	895
Nuance Plentitude pre amp	n/a	295
Pioneer PD95	2500	795
Revox A77 MKIII	n/a	195
Rogers LS35A (6mths old) Black	800	395
Roksan DP1 Transport	1000	295
Roksan Xerxes Artemiz piano black	2500	795
Rotel RB 971	225	150
Rotel RC 972	225	150
Rotel RB 981	300	195
Rotel RC-970BX Phono Stage	130	70
Spendor SP9/1 Walnut	3500	1495
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LINN LP12, Lingo, Ittock, Klyde. Exposure XI/VIII/IX, Pioneer SX950, Yamaha B2, Amcron DC300A/II, Quad 34/I, Cambridge C/50, AKG 2xD/25. Altec horns 811/808, Vitavox horns S2, Mullard 4xEL37 new. POA. Tel: 0171 625 8966 (Aug/I)

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EPOS ES22 speakers (new) £700, Myriad T40 amp £190, Rogers Avanti 625 speakers (new) £225. Rogers home cinema receiver £175, Audio Synthesis DSM DAC with power module £400. Tel: 01344 872 568 (Aug/I)

QUAD/PIONEER DAT, 67 preamp £400, 67 CD £400, 606Mk2 power x 2 £300 each, ESL63 black £950, Gradient sub £500, Pioneer semi-pro DAT D-07 £600, all mint condition. Tel: 0161 291 1333 (Aug/I)

WANTED: MUSICAL Fidelity MC4 loudspeakers (clear cones). For sale: Quad ESL63s in excellent condition, (The Reference Sound). Tel: 01566 781 275 (Cornwall) (Aug/I)

THORENS TD 124 Mk2, SME 3018. mint condition £250. Thorens TD 160 Mk £60. Bush Arena tuner/amp £25. Various other turntables, cheap. Tel: 01248 722 767 anytime. (Aug/I)

I PAIR ROGERS LS/33/AB33 speakers £200 ono. Tel: 0181 286 7577 (Aug/I)

DENON 790 R studio cassette deck. Very little private use, 6 months old £400 (£650). Tel: 01295 780 363 (Oxford) (Aug/I)

NAKAMICHI CR7E cassette deck. Very light use £900. Chord 1000B power amp, 250wpc £1200 (£2800). Apogee Centaur speakers. Full size floorstanders, not the minors £650 (£2300) all mint. Tel: 0181 523 1134 (Aug/I)

MICHELL GYRODEC, RB300 arm. Goldring 1022GX cartridge, very little use. In mint condition 18 months old £700, would take pair of Sonab OA6 speakers in part payment or would purchase them. Tel: 01244 836 131 (Aug/I)

AUDIO NOTE 10 II moving coil cartridge, unused as new £800. Tel: Mike 01895 440 602. Mobile 0860 155 521 (Aug/I)

MUSICAL FIDELITY F16 power amp, 200w per channel Class B, 50w Class A. boxed, cost £2500, accept £995. MF P270.2 power amp 150w per channel, boxed, cost £1500, accept £595. Tel: 01634 268 660 (Aug)

REL STRATA II active sub-woofer, 1 month old, and absolutely as new. Offers a superbly integrated, subtle bass input which transforms system bandwidth and dynamics. £300. Tel: 01702 421 304 (Southend) (Aug/I)

TEAC VRDS 10 CD player, mint. £250 ono. Teac DT1 DAC, mint, £195 ono. Luxman T14 tuner, rosewood sleeve, offers. Quad 33/303, £150. FM2 valve tuner £85. Both excellent. Tel: 01895 631 299 (Aug/I)

LINN KEILIDH Speakers incl. plinths and upgraded tweeter. Boxed/manuals £325 ono. Also Kelly KT2 speakers (less than 1 year old) £425 ono. All in excellent condition. Tel: 01759 373 133 (Aug/I)

REL Q-BASS sub rarely used (boxed) £170. Musical Fidelity preamp 3A, mint, £130. New, unwanted Cable Talk Monitor 2.1 interconnects, still packaged £20. Buyer collects. Tel: Steve 01429 268 218 (Hartlepool, Teeside) (Aug/I)

B+W 801s WALNUT, excellent bargain £1350. Ariston RD11 (1974) Almost identical to LP12, black, rare and controversial. SMEII, boxed, excellent £200. Ariston RD II superior ext psu. Linn Basik plus AT0C5, mint £300. Garrard 401 (20hrs use from new!) Aphelion Audio Architecture plinth, SMEII V15 mint £450. Connoisseur BD3 + cart £85. Akai 630DB 10.5" open reel 22 metal spool tapes mint £350. Akai 4000 open reel £70. Technics SL150 turntable SMEII Shure V15 £175. Luxman PD284 turntable £120. SMEIII arm £100. Decca Gold Garrot Micro Scanner, all documents, inspection cert., Luxman 103 valve CD £300. Naim amps 32.5 & 140. Swap P/X 'LP12', 'Gyrodek', 'Micro Seiki', '1000 DDX'. Tel: 01387 251 111 (Aug/I)

ACOUSTIC PRECISION FRI loudspeakers £350. MIT 750 plus speaker cable (8 foot pair) £270. MIT 330 Proline, 1m balanced interconnect £230. Mana Acoustics Sound Base £100. Tel: 01296 437 314 (evenings) (Aylesbury, Bucks) (Aug/I)

STANDS UNIQUE Tuned speaker supports £160. Target R5 speaker stands £170. 3x Mana Sound Frames each @ £70. MIT 330 plus 1.5m interconnect £120. Tel: 01296 437 314 (evenings) (Aylesbury, Bucks) (Aug/I)

MONOLITH 20/20 Spur cable, 3m pair £150. Audio Synthesis 1.5m digital interconnect £80. 4 way distribution block, Sonic Link Supermains wired £50. Sonic Link Supermains wired IEC mains leads each £30. Tel: 01296 437 314 (evenings) (Aylesbury, Bucks) (Aug/I)

4x1m LENGTHS Red Dawn speaker cable, each £30. Triangle Antal speakers, internally pure silver wired £600. Audio Synthesis Desire poweramp £1650. Tel: 01296 437 314 (evenings) (Aylesbury, Bucks) (Aug/I)

AUDIO RESEARCH D130 power amp silver (solid state), 2 years old, balanced or phono (130watts per channel) £825 ono (cost £1900). Audio Research LS7 preamplifier silver 3 years old (re-valved) £725 ono (cost £1800). Both excellent condition boxed, manuals. Free Townshend Sink, Isolation platform to buyer of both the above. Free delivery anywhere in UK. Tel: 01900 826 400 daytime or 07887 991 500 mobile anytime (Aug/I)

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THE REVIEWERS

"The Slate deck defines what real instrument solidity should be, it's in a class of its own." Alan Sircom, Hi-Fi Choice. "The build and performance of the Slate Audio 401 are the audio equivalent of the E type Jaguar." Audiophile. "I have never used a system like this one, it gets everything right. Peter Soper insists Garrards are best mounted on Marble or stone, and from my experience with this plinth I wouldn't disagree." Noel Keywood, Hi-Fi World. "The Garrards main problems are dealt with most effectively by three cures; correct set up, heavy plinth and appropriate mat. Peter Soper has mastered them all, the results are close to miraculous." Ken Kessler, Hi-Fi News R/R. "I have been using the fantastic Slate plinthed Garrard, the sound was nothing short of breathtaking. The basic Garrard without the Slate plinth is well engineered and pleasant sounding, but they only give exceptional results with the right kind of treatment." Dominic Baker, Hi-Fi World.

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STANDING OVATION

"For me, this is truly the ultimate desert island loudspeaker..."
Jack English, *Stereophile*, volume 19 no. 5.

"I am comfortable in saying that, to this point,
these are the best speakers I have ever heard. I love them..."
Johnathan Scull, *Stereophile*, volume 21 no. 4.



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