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Lab Test  
12 units  
compared



### Exclusive!

New Naim upgrades  
reviewed inside

Is Trichord's Clock 2  
the **ultimate** CD tweak  
– or not?

**First test:** Miller & Kreisel's  
stonking subwoofer

*The Connoisseur's*

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# The TEAC VRDS Range

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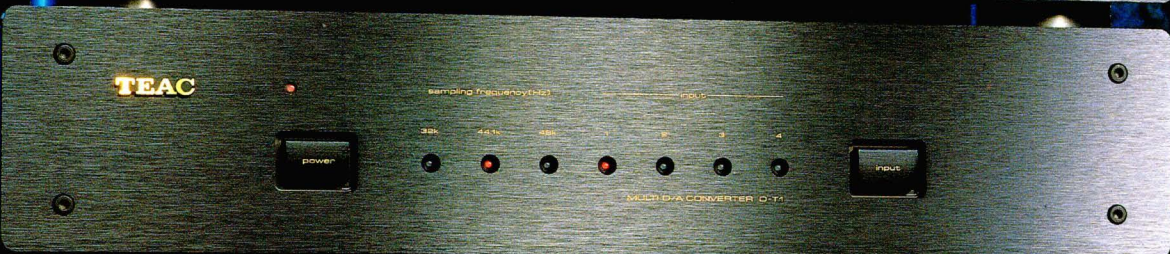
Everybody is aware of the huge success of the VRDS range of integrated CD Players and Transports. Now the VRDS players are complemented by a range of components which share the same outstanding build, engineering and sonic qualities

Everyone knows that the VRDS mechanism is the best CD transport in the world - Now there's no need to compromise with the rest of your system!



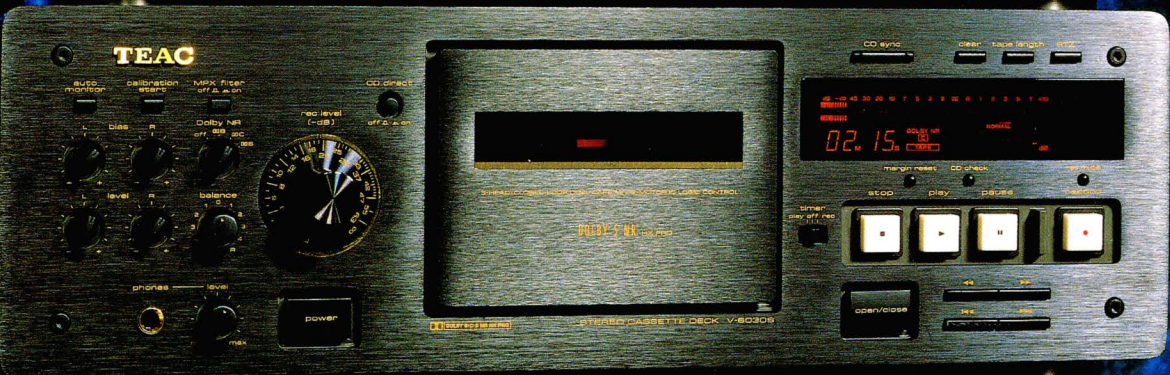
### VRDS T-1 CD TRANSPORT

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# Mail Order Accessories... & Back Issues

This month Hi-Fi Choice have some new products on offer that we feel will be of particular interest to readers.



**Don't delay - see page 84 now!**

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In which Stan Vincent discovers the unexpected connection between health and hi-fi; and other things too

# editor's chair

Davey Boyall Arcangel — 'Typewriter Throne'



## Give Your System A Work-out

In February this year I took the plunge and joined an athletic club. Shocking I know, but all those business lunches had started to take their toll. Naturally the exercise has paid dividends in physical well-being, but I've also noticed a benefit to music listening as well. For a few hours after a work-out session ends, all sensory input is definitely clearer and more intelligible. In hi-fi terms it's like having greater dynamic range, resulting from a lower noise floor. So I see colours and subtle shades more clearly, and I definitely hear much more music — even listening to a relatively prosaic tape deck in the car. It boils down to hearing further into the mix: being able to identify more individual layers and more internal elements of arrangements.

I'd guess that this isn't too hard to explain — all that exercise increases the flow of blood and therefore oxygen around the body, with obvious benefits for the brain and all its sensory centres. Maybe there's a psychological element to this as well, however: exercise really helps you relax, and relaxation lowers the mental noise floor, no doubt about it. I'm sure physically active readers will not hesitate to

write in and agree or disagree with my theory, but for me it's a clearly perceivable effect.

So when your hi-fi sounds different from day to day, don't immediately worry about upgrading or blame the electricity company. Maybe a few miles on an exercise bike and some press-ups are the upgrade you need right now.

## Factsback Comes To Choice

This month we're introducing an exclusive new service for readers seeking back-issue test reports — Factsback (page 83). This high-tech new system is available to anyone with a handset-equipped fax. Until now, as in the other hi-fi magazines, old reviews have only been available by buying a complete back issue. Now *Choice* is leading the way with Factsback, which gives you the information you need for the price of a short premium-rate phone call. A considerable saving, I think you'll agree. As this is a new service there is scope to enhance it in months to come, so we would value your opinion on the features you'd like to see. More reviews from new issues? More reviews from older issues? Features too? We await your ideas with anticipation...

## Arnold Sugden

We are sad to report the death of Arnold Sugden, the hi-fi pioneer best known for his Connoisseur *BD1* and *BD2* turntables — the first British belt-driven designs. The Yorkshire-based engineer, who left school at fourteen and received no formal engineering training, led the major record companies in developing single-groove stereo records. He demonstrated stereo discs, which he had recorded and produced on his own cutting lathe, at the British Sound Recording Association exhibition in May 1956.

Due to the influx of commodity audio products and poor health

## Smoke On The Water

Just before I started to write this column I returned from a jaunt to Geneva, in this instance not to visit my private banker, but instead to attend the voting ceremony for 1995's European Imaging & Sound Association (EISA) awards. As long-standing readers will be aware, *Hi-Fi Choice* is honoured to be the only UK hi-fi magazine belonging to EISA, alongside noted European journals such as Italy's *Audio Review*, Germany's *Stereo* and Spain's *Alta Fidelidad*.

Though the results of our voting cannot be unveiled until the October edition of *Choice* (in the shops from September 8), I can tell you now that this 'European parliament' of editors had some fascinating discussions and debates while reaching its conclusions. The discourse was always opinionated, often heated, sometimes hilarious, but thankfully punctuated frequently with opportunities to sample the local produce. (Note to self: beware wine in screw-top bottles after an evening on the beer.) Above all, we came away reassured that the language of hi-fi is as vibrant as ever, from the southernmost tip of Portugal to the northernmost fjords of Norway.



The late, great Arnold Sugden

caused by overwork, Sugden was forced to sell *Connoisseur* and retire in the early 1970s. The brand hasn't vanished, however: Sugden's enduringly popular designs are still being supported by former main agents Technical & General ☎ (01892) 654534.

## Getting in touch with Hi-Fi Choice

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Accepted by letter only to the fax number, e-mail or snail-mail addresses above. We regret that we don't have time to take 'phone calls. Sorry!

### READER CLASSIFIED ADS

#### SEE PAGE 84 IN THIS ISSUE

Get rid of Granny's old radiogram — it'll only cost you a fiver! Now you don't even need a coupon.

### SUBSCRIPTIONS

#### SEE PAGE 35 IN THIS ISSUE

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#### SEE PAGE 84 OF THIS ISSUE

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We have a wide selection of quality accessories and other merchandise, available to *Hi-Fi Choice* readers around the world. Get it delivered directly to your door!

### BACK ISSUES

#### SEE PAGE 85 IN THIS ISSUE

Telephone (01789) 490215  
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Back issues of most recent issues are available — contact Dennis Direct on the lines above. Please note that the *Hi-Fi Choice*'s editorial staff cannot supply photocopies of articles which are out of print.

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*Hi-Fi Choice* welcomes all information on new and upgraded products and services, for coverage within the news and review pages. However, the publisher respectfully points out that the magazine is obliged neither to review nor return unsolicited products. The Editor is always pleased to receive ideas for articles, preferably sent first in outline form with details of the author's background (and where possible, with samples of previously-published work). However, he does not accept responsibility for unsolicited copy, and it may take time for a reply to be sent.

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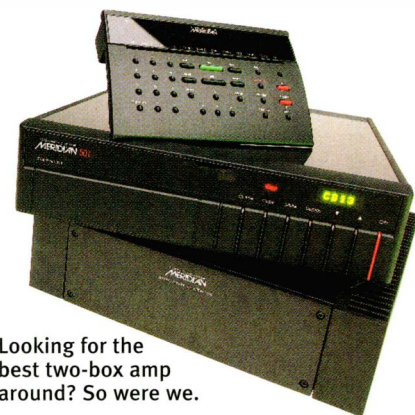
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### THE GET-OUT CLAUSE

While every care has been taken in the preparation of this journal, the publishers cannot be held responsible for the accuracy of the information herein, or for any consequence arising from it. Readers should note that all judgements have been made in the context of equipment available to *Hi-Fi Choice* at the time of review, and that 'value for money' comments are based on UK prices at the time of review, which are subject to fluctuation and are only applicable to the UK market.

Ain't no doubt about it: this here issue of *Choice* is packed right the way to the gills with all manner of hi-fi goodies. And here they are, listed for your delectation.

# contents



Looking for the best two-box amp around? So were we.

## COLUMNS

### 3 From the Editor's chair

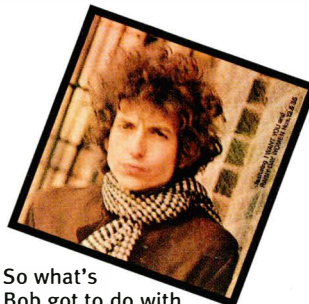
More reports from the hi-fi frontline, as Stan Vincent stretches his word-processing package to the limit. Gasp in horror as he tortures innocent verbs and laughs like a maniac (an audiomaniac of course)!

### 27 Radiohead

Kevin Hilton takes to the wheels of steel, spinning you the platters that matter as he looks into the world of the DJ — awright, mate.

### 41 21st Century Fox

Technology sniffer Barry Fox looks at JVC's new 3D-Phonic system, claimed to offer cinema surround sound from only two speakers. But how does Dolby feel about this?



So what's Bob got to do with Audio Hell? Find out on page 56

### 138 Personal Messages

Cute little fluffy things abound in Paul Messenger's copy, as he discovers that the ugly ducklings of hi-fi often have swan-like sound. Quack.

## THE REVIEWS

### 59 Pre/power amplifiers

"Igor, connect the electrodes," shouted Paul Miller to his assistant as the first of six pre/power combinations was hoisted into the lab. His team of listeners trembled in terror as the beast came to life...

## FEATURES

### 36 The Trichord Phenomenon

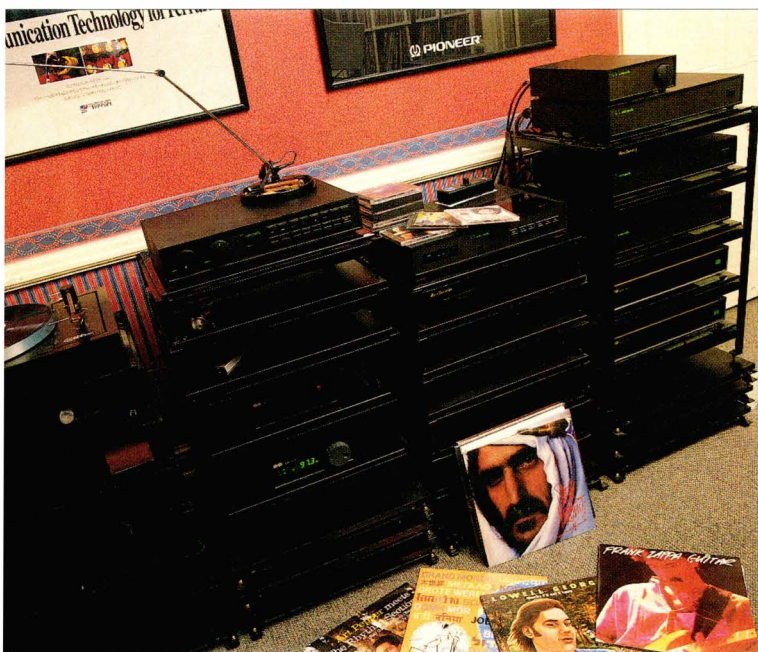
Is Trichord's Clock 2 upgrade the most important step yet for digital? Paul Miller takes the Clock to the lab and puts it before a blind listening panel.

### 49 Totally Wired

Alan Sircom gets cabled up in the first of a new *Choice* series.

### 56 Audio Hell

Are you more concerned with upgrading your hi-fi than the music you play? Do you find yourself listening to sound quality, not musical content? If so, you are stuck in audio hell. But fear not, Leonard Norwitz knows the way out.



Malcolm Steward gets to grips with Naim's latest in Statements

## THE FRONT END

### 7 Update

Press your nose up against the hi-fi window and you'll see our round-up of the freshest products to arrive on the streets. Just remember to clean your nose afterwards.

### 12 Sessions

Our new-look Sessions is hosted by the old-look Paul Messenger and features more glorious hi-fi stuff than you can shake a stick at (stick not included).

### 22 Statements

Malcolm Steward — already As One with the Naim — gets fully Naimed up with the latest batch of Salisbury specials, including the new "not much change from two-grand" *Super Cap* power supply.

### 29 Help

Our resident trouble-shooter, Jimmy Hughes, on a mission to save your flagging hi-fi. Just like James Bond really, but without the vodka martinis, the flash gadgets and the girls in bikinis.

### 43 Write On

Send in your finely-honed, hand-crafted prose about all things audio and perhaps you'll win a cosy sweatshirt with a *Hi-Fi Choice* logo on it. Just the thing for summer.

### 46 Competition

Sony goes all home cinematic with its latest crop of mini hi-fi systems and goodies. You too can be a part of the revolution with one of three Sony surround systems, worth a total of £2,000.

Want to win a nifty new Sony system? Then turn straight to page 46





Choice hunts down the best cables in *Totally Wired* (page 49)

**READER SERVICES**

**35 Subscriptions**

Our highly specialised team of delivery experts – okay, the Post Office – will magically transmit *Hi-Fi Choice* to your home, through the near-magical powers of the letter box.

**53 Next Month**

Ye’Gads. The September issue of *Hi-Fi Choice* will be a veritable cornucopia of tippety-top, top audio gear, especially hand-picked for you.

**81 Readers’ Classified**

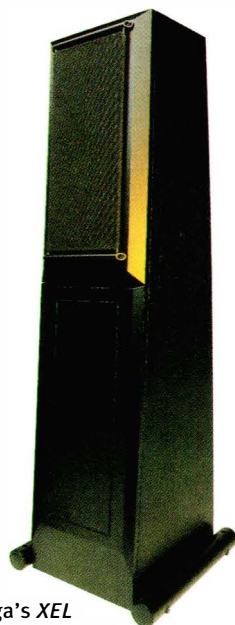
Become a trader on the used hi-fi markets, playing the field in search of the best pre-loved audio goodies. If the price is right, then come on down.



Lost that crucial back issue? Get Factsback instead

**83 NEW! Factsback**

Looking for a review of an outstanding product from a bygone issue of *Choice*? Now you can get features and reviews from recent issues by return of fax.



Rega’s *XEL* gets a thorough going over in *Sessions* (page 12)

**SPECIAL OFFERS**

**84 Choice Mail Order**

Make the most of your hi-fi system with superb audio goodies – all the accessories a hi-fi could ever wish for, exclusive to *Choice* readers.

**BUYER’S GUIDE**

**91 Buyer’s Guide**

The most comprehensive list of current hi-fi products around.

**THE DIRECTORY**

**115 The Directory**

All the current products that have been reviewed in *Choice*.

THE **HI-FI CHOICE** CHARTER

*Why Hi-Fi Choice is your essential choice*

**RESPECTED EQUIPMENT REVIEWS**

Our hi-fi group tests are the most thorough in the business. When we test a product, we assess every facet of its performance – the way it sounds, and its technical specifications. What’s more, our listening tests are conducted under strict blind conditions, using an experienced panel drawn from the hi-fi industry.

**UNIQUE ‘SWING TAGS’ MARKING OUT PREMIUM PRODUCTS**

Our group tests aim to establish value for money based on absolute sound quality, build quality and measured performance. Products awarded the Best Buy swing tag will be of significantly greater value than alternatives in the same price band; both performance and construction will be exceptional. Products awarded the Recommended swing-tag offer greater value than alternatives in the same price band; their performance will be solid through and through, if not sufficiently remarkable for a Best Buy citation.

**EXPERIENCED WRITERS**

Between them, our reviewers and columnists notch up over a hundred years’ experience of listening to hi-fi. They understand what makes equipment tick, and are able to separate the wheat from the chaff. More importantly, they have the skill, honed over time, to predict how individual components will perform in real-world readers’ systems.

**AN UNPARALLELED HI-FI PEDIGREE**

*Hi-Fi Choice* has been testing hi-fi since 1975. We’ve seen the arrival of Compact Disc; the decline and resurgence of vinyl LP; the renaissance of valve amps; the birth of DCC and MiniDisc; and the continuing popularity of good old-fashioned cassette tape. We look forward wholeheartedly to the multi-channel reproduction of music and the fusion of images and sound.



**Editor-in-Chief** ATW ‘Stan’ Vincent • **Consultant Editor** Paul Messenger • **Deputy Editor** Jason Kennedy • **Acting Art Editor** Vici MacDonald • **Reviews Editor** Alan Sircom • **Production Editor** Kristin S. Scharffscher • **EDITORIAL FAX** 0171-323 3547 • **EDITORIAL E-MAIL** 100433.1130@COMPUSERVE.COM ¶ **Contributors** Penny Dommett • Barry Fox • Alvin Gold • Kevin Hilton • Jimmy Hughes • Paul Miller • Leonard Norwitz • Malcolm Steward ¶ **Photography** Chris Richardson ¶ **Group Advertisement Manager** Rob Debenham • **Senior Sales Executive** Sean Gibson • **ADVERTISING FAX** 0171-636 1640 ¶ **Group Production Manager** Simon Maggs • **Advertisement Production Controller** Jane Shepherd • **PRODUCTION DEPARTMENT FAX** 0171-580 6430 ¶ **Circulation Director** Sean Farmer • **Circulation Manager** James Burnay • **Mail Order Manager** Julia French • **Marketing Manager** Paula Nulty • **Co-operative Marketing Manager** Edward Pizey • **CIRCULATION AND PROMOTIONS DEPARTMENT FAX** 0171-636 5668 ¶ **Publisher** Alison Townsend • **Ad Director** Ian Westwood • **Group Publisher** Eric Fuller • **Managing Director** Alistair Ramsay • **Chairman** Felix Dennis ¶

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Let loose among the mighty Redwoods and Scots Pines of the audio forest, and armed only a copy of a Little Axe record, Malcolm Steward sings bravely about being a lumberjack and proud of it...

# update



Technics proves that DDD no longer stands for Debbie Does Dallas.

## Latest Technics DDDoes it

Technics kicked off its European Seminar with a presentation that emphasised the emotional aspects of music and, of course, the ability of Technics components to bring them out. This includes virtual and genuine battery operated amplifiers, Take (bamboo) separated capacitors and DDD loudspeakers.

The new products that should be in the shops this autumn include the £230 *SU-V620* integrated amp and three pre/power combinations. These start with the £400 *SU-C/A800D* and £500 *SU-C/A900*, which feature virtual battery operated preamps; and the *SU-C/A1000* whose preamp can be run

from batteries in a tray on its fascia.

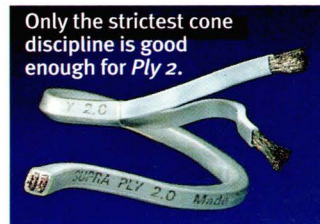
DDD, or Dual Dynamic Drive sports active bass units driving passive radiators, which Technics has employed in two new speakers: the £350 *SBM-300* stand mount and the £400 *SBM-500* floorstander. There's also the more conventional *SBM-20*, a £200 bookshelf. Other new products included AV amps and video CD players, in portable, multidisc and mini systems.

Technics will also be employing thin film head technology (taken from DCC) for cassette playback in a player costing around £250.

☎ (01344) 862444

## Super fly Ply

Supra Ply 2 is a new low inductance speaker cable designed to offer a reasonably priced alternative to expensive solid-core cables. The construction, which consists of two PVC insulated, multi-strand copper conductors placed flat surface to flat surface, is said to substantially reduce losses within the audio band, preserve bass reinforcement and maintain cone discipline. The conductors, each



containing 120 0.15mm strands, are tin plated to minimise oxidation and so counter distortion.

Recommended for runs shorter than ten metres, super-fly Supra Ply 2 costs £5.00 per metre.

☎ (01908) 317707.

## Maximum impact

Celestion has developed a new range of loudspeakers called the Impact series. This consists of seven high sensitivity bookshelf and floor-standing models that aim to deliver the deep, well-defined bass that the company says today's listeners demand. Prices start at £129 for the two-way Impact 10, and work up through the floorstanding £399 Impact 25 two-way, ending with the Impact 40 at £629. All seven are finished in black ash vinyl.

At the other end of the economic scale, Celestion's striking *Kingston* is now on sale. This loudspeaker continues Celestion's quest to reduce cabinet colouration by using a one-piece, AlphaCrystal enclosure. The mineral-filled polymer is inert while the enclosure's teardrop shape helps kill internal standing waves. Smooth external contours are also said to promote cleaner high frequency output with superior detail resolution and imaging.

The design uses a pair of sophisticated drivers: a 32mm aluminium dome tweeter and a 165mm Cobex mid/bass unit mounted with elastomeric dampers. A matching stand incorporates an internal channel to conceal cabling and preserve the £2,500 *Kingston*'s aesthetic panache.

☎ (01473) 322222.

## In brief

*Voyd* has developed a clamping collar that facilitates tweaking your Rega RB250 or RB300's VTA. Said to work well with most combinations, you need to enlarge the arm mounting hole from 24mm to 28mm to accommodate the collar. This automatically raises the arm by about 2mm. Available only through mail-order, the black or clear finished aluminium device costs £39.99 including p&p. ☎ (01242) 574528

Retro radio fans will appreciate the *Bush DreamBreaker*. Selling for £39.99, this clock-radio-cassette has FM and MW bands and lots of chrome trim. ☎ (01923) 859777

REL has updated its Stadium subwoofer. The Stadium II incorporates a ten-inch Volt driver, a stronger cabinet, and a "breathed-on" 100W amplifier. It costs £995 or £1,295 with an upgraded Volt BIG 10 driver. ☎ (0181) 207 5050.

Linn's box speakers now come in a choice of four finishes, and there's also a service for those who want a custom veneer. This finish now extends to the front baffles. The *Tukan* is also available in a paintable white. ☎ Freephone (0500) 888909

## Frill-free CD by NAD

The 510 CD player is just one of twenty new products to be released this year by NAD. Intended as the successor to the entry-level NAD 507, the new machine adheres to the company's no-frills tradition.

To keep costs down, the £199.95 bitstream powered 510 dispenses with remote control and seldom-used facilities. Instead, it concentrates on features that enhance

the player's performance. All circuitry not directly connected with the audio signal is relegated to separate circuit boards to reduce RF interference. This isolated audio section is placed close to the output sockets to minimise the analogue signal path. ☎ (0181) 343 3240.



# One of life's more rewarding decisions.

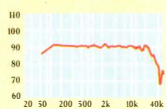
## KEF Reference Series Authorised Dealers



### KEF Reference Series

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

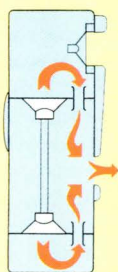
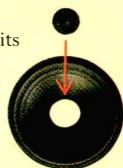
The fact is that if you want the purest sound and the most uncompromising specification, it simply has to be New KEF Reference.



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

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

Our breakthrough Uni-Q® technology delivers an astonishing stereo image, its unique point source design, with the tweeter at the exact acoustic centre of the mid-range cone, lets you visualise the precise location of every performer on the stage. What's more, because of Uni-Q's smooth, even dispersion you'll hear that incredible realism throughout the room. From speakers this good you'd expect outstanding



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

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

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

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

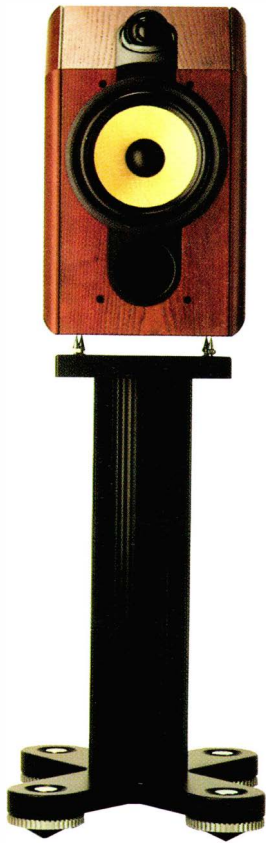


The experience of sound

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CARDIFF	Audio Excellence (head office)	01222 228565
CHANDLER'S FORD	Hampshire Audio	01703 252827
CHELTENHAM	Sevenoaks HiFi	01242 241171
CONGLETON	Congleton HiFi	01260 297544
COVENTRY	Frank Harvey HiFi	01203 525200
EDGBASTON	Music Matters	0121 4292811
GODSTONE	Surrey HiFi	01883 744755
GUILDFORD	P J HiFi	01483 504801
HEREFORD	English Audio	01432 355081
KINGS LYNN	Martins HiFi	01553 761683
KNUTSFORD	Wilmslow Audio	01565 650605
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LONDON NW6	Studio 99	0171 624 8855
LONDON W1	HiFi Experience	0171 580 3535
LONDON W1	K J Leisuresound	0171 486 8262
LONDON W5	Audio Concept	0181 567 8703
MAIDSTONE	Speakers Corner	01622 677773
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NEWCASTLE	J G Windows	0191 2321356
NORWICH	Martins HiFi	01603 627010
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SOUTH CROYDON	Zebra	0181 688 2491
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KEF AUDIO (UK) LIMITED, ECCLESTON ROAD, TOVIL, MAIDSTONE, KENT ME15 6QP. TELEPHONE (01622) 672261.



## Stylistically satisfactory

**B**&W is using 'space age' driver materials in its new *Compact Digital Monitor* range, which aims to satisfy style-conscious '90s people who demand exceptional sound from small, aesthetically appealing bookshelf loudspeakers.

The 370mm tall *CDM1* has a 165mm bass driver using a Kevlar cone and a Kapton voice coil former, and a free-mounted 26mm tweeter sitting above it on a time-aligned, raked section of the baffle. With 88dB sensitivity and a nominal eight-ohm impedance, the speaker is suitable for use with amplifiers rated between 30 and 120Watts and reputedly stays clean and detailed, even when played at high levels. It costs £599.95.

The slightly smaller – just 316mm tall – *CDM2* uses a similar bass driver to the *CDM1* and a conventionally fitted 26mm alloy dome tweeter. Like its stablemate, this £399.95 model is bi-wirable, and has a reflex port and bung arrangement that allows low frequency response tailoring to suit the room and the speaker's placement. Cabinet finish options are black or red ash veneer.

☎ (01903) 750750.

## Take it down to E sharp Anthony

**M**usical Fidelity has released the *E60* CD player and *E50* tuner, both designed to complement the company's low-cost, high performance *Elektra E10* amplifier. The £299.95 *E60* uses bitstream D/A conversion, an eight-times oversampling filter and a three-beam laser mechanism. The identically priced *E50* tuner is an FM-only device that features PLL decoding and twenty pre-sets for your favourite stations.

On a classical tip, MF's clarinet playing boss Anthony Michaelson and group of professional musicians (with Tony Faulkner at the controls) have recorded Mozart's *Clarinet Quintet in A, K.581*. A CD is now available for the price of a £5 cheque made out to the charity of your choice, and sent to Musical Fidelity, MF House, 15-17 Olympic Trading Estate, Fulton Road, Wembley, Middlesex HA9 0TF.

☎ (0181) 900 2866.



MF's new CD is perfect to play MF's new CD.

## Twin tuners

**L**inn's new *Kudos* tuner is unusual in that there's two of it. There's the £549 stand-alone, regular black box type of *Kudos* and a £349 *Sneaky Kudos*, that comes as an add-in module specifically designed for slipping inside a *Majik* amplifier or *Wakonda* pre-amplifier.

Both versions share the same specification, circuit architecture and functionality, and come with an

infra red remote control. They can also be operated by a *Kairn*, *Majik* or *Wakonda* handset. The tuner will store fifty preset stations and covers both AM and FM wavebands. Numerous automated features make the *Kudos* user-friendly, while its performance is reckoned to approach that of Linn's top-of-the-range *Kremlin*.

☎ Freephone (0500) 888909

## Class Struggle

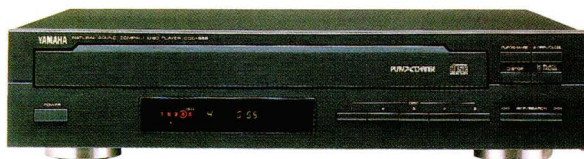
**Y**amaha has two new integrated amplifiers it calls 'middle class'. This distinguishes them from the company's budget models rather than indicating a predilection for swigging gin and tonic.

The £249.95 *AX-490* produces 85W per channel and comes with a system remote. The £299.95 100W *AX-590* hides its secondary controls under a panel on the fascia. Both

models incorporate separate record out selectors and a CD Direct Amplification Circuit.

Yamaha's Silent-CD Changer Mechanism appears in the new £199.95 *CDC-555* and £249.95 *CDC-655* multi-disc CD players. These handle five discs at a time yet allow you to change all the discs simultaneously.

☎ (01923) 233166.



Unfortunately, this page is specially damped so you can't hear the new Yamaha Silent-CD changer, but if you could it's in a class of its own.

## In brief

*DIYers can bone up on the basics with a new illustrated primer from Maplin Electronics. Starting Electronics is available for £9.95 + £1.50 handling charge.* ☎ (01702) 552911

*Castle Acoustics has updated its Howard model to S2 status with revisions including a Kapton voice coil former, heavier gauge internal wiring and a redesigned crossover. The price is £1,099.90.* ☎ (01756) 795333

*Infinity has three new UK Edition speakers. The Reference 1i, 11i and 21i cost £149.95, £199.95 and £299.95 respectively.* ☎ (01908) 317707

*Apologies to Auditorium of London E1 for neglecting to mention their fab listening room, as seen in last month's Statements.* ☎ 0171-247 5000

## Tube tingling Tycho

**A**rion Acoustics has ten new valve amplifiers to tempt those who tingle at the thought of tubes. Said to be "light years ahead of the competition" thanks to clever cable routing and isolation of the transformers and power supplies, the new models all feature a radically styled new chassis and audiophile grade components.

The range includes five integrated amplifiers: from the 18W *Elektra Export* line integrated at £1,199 to the *Tycho* line integrated at £1,850. The *Eros* preamplifier costs £1,050 in line-level guise, with a phono version available for £1,250. Completing the line-up are three power amplifiers: the 18W *Eos* at £1,099, the 10W *Triton* triode at £1,250, and the 50W pentode *Tycho* at £1,650.

☎ (01868) 748632.

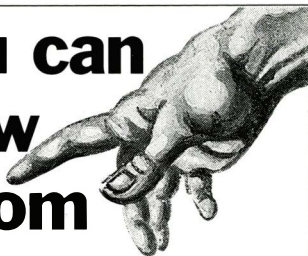
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# choice sessions

Bose introduces the ever-shrinking audio-video system...



**M**y first stab at the rolling-copy Sessions format has brought together even more of a hotch potch than usual. Which, after all, is what this extended column is all about. And if the segues do creak and groan, at least the variety is accompanied by a measure of affordability.

Some of the collection is garnered from my own recent experiences, some came from the monthly mailbag, and some were set up by Jason K before he passed this slot over to me. I'll leave you to figure out which is which.

## Bose Lifestyle 12

Let's talk priorities. Are the most important things you want from a sound system necessarily the same as mine? I want to make the hair stand up on the back of my neck when I put twelve inches of black plastic Ella Fitzgerald on the turntable. I want music reproduction so good I'm encouraged to switch the telly off and settle down to an audio evening.

I haven't got there yet – it wouldn't do to spoil the fun – but I am progressing positively down the road. I've also spent what most people would consider a small fortune, and cluttered up half the room with all manner of ironmongery and cabinetwork which defiantly cock a snook at any new-fangled notions of industrial design.

From my point of view the musical experience is the only real arbiter, and visual aesthetics come a long way further down the list. But I'm a hi-fi loony; music reproduction is so important I don't mind letting it influence my lifestyle; and the fact I earn my living from it is the perfect excuse for self-indulgence.

Most normal people will opt for a different set of priorities. For the majority, cost is usually the prime criterion. But there's still a substantial minority prepared to pay well for qualities unavailable in

package deal land.

The success of leading British hi-fi specialists like Meridian, Quad, Naim, Linn and Mission is down to providing a sufficiently subtle blend of sonic excellence and styling elegance to tempt customers upmarket. However, for every potential customer who takes the trouble to go out and audition the hi-fi alternatives, there are many more who will happily choose on appearance alone, assuming a reasonable sound quality is achieved.

The two companies which serve these demands most successfully are undoubtedly B&O in Denmark, and US speaker specialist The Bose Corporation. And the latest in a long line of imaginative 'Lifestyle' offerings from the latter is the ultimate focus of this extended introduction.

The Bose Lifestyle 12 System comes in one heavy but not unduly bulky carton. It costs £2,300, so obvious perceived value is low. It doesn't sound that good either to these refined ears, so how come

it's so expensive? Partly because it's a very cleverly thought out combination stereo/surround system, but most of all because it's the nearest thing to an invisible sound source, especially if you paint the room white.

This is a sound system for people who don't like sound systems, and who are prepared to pay quite handsomely for Bose to wave its magic wand and shrink all the bits to become Virtually Invisible (a proprietary Bose term). Giving such a thing to a reviewer who does like sound systems is bound to create an aspirational chasm.

Sonically speaking, we're down in mini system country here, with a music centre (CD/radio/switcher) module that looks and feels not unlike a transistor radio on its side. All the mass is in the 'hideaway' bass module, which houses all the power amps and their power supplies as well as delivering the bass and lower mid acoustic output. Then there are five tiny twin-cube satellite speakers which have to

...but will the sound be as unobtrusive from the Lifestyle 12?



be spread around for the spatial effects. Presumably in order to avoid Dolby licensing fees, Bose uses its own 'VideoStage' decoding circuitry for movie-type surround sound material, with broadly similar results.

If it doesn't look like £2,300 worth of hardware, the very clever conceptualisation almost makes up for the fact. A trained Bose person could probably get it all up and running in fifteen minutes, as all the right colour-coded leads, radio aerials and so on are supplied. And once up and running, it's such a delight to use one's tempted to forgive the fundamental sin of a permanently active 'loudness compensator' bass boost circuit. Almost.

The remote uses RF instead of IR, which is much nicer 'cos you don't have to pick up the handset and point it. And those intelligent ergonomists at Bose have correctly figured out that simplicity is a virtue and ruthlessly cut down on the frills and flexibilities, to end up with a genuinely user-friendly product. The only tricky bit remains the snake-pit of wiring that five separate satellite speakers entail — and I bet the boffins up The Mountain are working on that right now.

As for the sound, initial impressions were very negative, but that was before I spotted the tone controls located unexpectedly (though not illogically) on the bass module, and that the treble was turned right down. Even with both knobs at a nominal flat setting the sound is still dominated by a grumbly, heavy bass, but turning the bass level right down and advancing the treble about halfway did give a reasonably decent overall balance. That said, the in-room bass doesn't extend realistically below 50Hz, which even a modest conventional speaker can match.

The decent achievable balance may be a good

starting point, but the significant timesmear and general lack of dynamic grip inevitably results in a decidedly anodyne experience. It burbles along satisfactorily enough, but is never going to grab you by the viscera and make you sit up and take notice. The world is full of people who live on cook-chill food and drink instant coffee, but I shall continue to grind my beans, squeeze my oranges and dig up knobbly things to eat from the garden.

#### Mission Cyrus dAD7 CD player/PSX-R power supply

Style is also a key ingredient in the success of Mission's Cyrus electronics, though here we're talking about a much more orthodox arrangement of separate components and a much more genuine attempt to maximise sound quality, alongside a presentation that seriously out-cutes the opposition. All of it, internationally.

It's simply the most tactile and strokeable kit around, so you start off rooting for it before the dem begins. After the dem when still wracked with indecision, this little sweetie sits on the shelf winking its fluorescent display in your direction. Not surprisingly, many succumb.

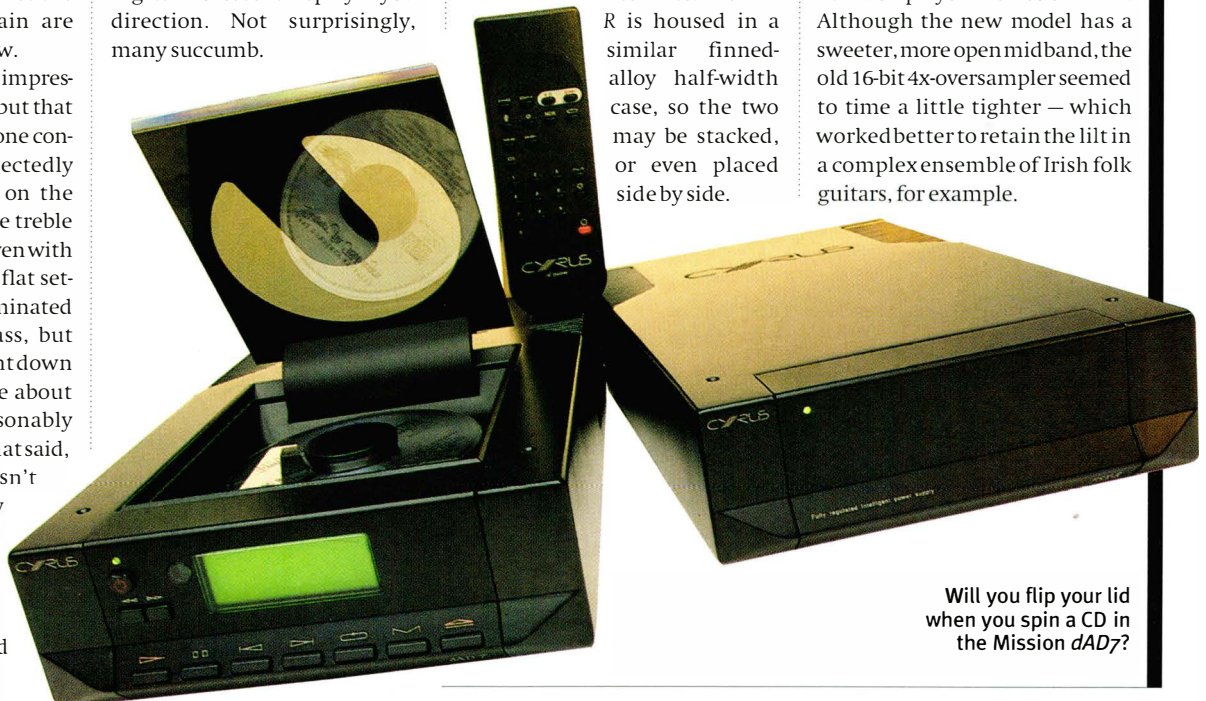
The tuner gave a decent enough account of itself in our recent roundup (issue 142), so now it's time to give the dAD7 CD player the once over. In basic form it costs a not inconsiderable £900, which includes a single mini-width component in a stylish alloy case, supplied complete with a simple handset. Unusually (though no surprise to a Naim CDS user) it's a top-loading player, and the disc is held by a small magnetic puck placed manually in position. This does, of course, require leaving space above the unit for opening the lid and handling the discs.

One very worthwhile Mission tradition is the outboard power supply PSX-R unit, which provides a £300 upgrade path for those who want a better source in the first place, or who want to add this performance booster at a later date. The PSX-R is housed in a similar finned-alloy half-width case, so the two may be stacked, or even placed side by side.

My first impression of dAD7 was that the sound was pleasant but not particularly exciting. A classy, sharply-etched upper midband projects good detail with fine focus alongside an engaging overall sweetness. However, this is tempered by the rather soft bottom end definition and slightly muted dynamic contrasts.

However, I found that adding the PSX-R power supply brings a surprisingly evident improvement, with a wider dynamic range, sharper and more convincing transient dynamics, and an altogether far more generous and expansive soundstage.

Even so, there's still a tendency to emphasise the lead instrument or voice somewhat at the expense of the accompaniment, and the whole doesn't quite gel into a temporally coherent continuum. The earlier (now obsolete) Mission PCMII CD player was also on hand. Although the new model has a sweeter, more open midband, the old 16-bit 4x-oversampler seemed to time a little tighter — which worked better to retain the lilt in a complex ensemble of Irish folk guitars, for example.



Will you flip your lid when you spin a CD in the Mission dAD7?

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High-speed woofing from across the Atlantic, MK style.

### MKV-125 subwoofer

MK, as all true British hi-fi enthusiasts already know, makes some of the best 13 Amp mains plugs around. It's also the brand of long established Californian subwooferspecialist Miller & Kreisel, four models from whom are just being introduced to Britain by newly founded distributor The Mafia Trading Co.

With very few exceptions, subwoofers have never really caught on here in the UK, although they've featured prominently on the US scene for the last twenty odd years.

The reasons are probably partly to do with differences in construction and size of rooms, but also because the products that were around in the early days were often poorly-conceived boom-boxes.

That was until REL founder Richard Lord got his act together, and by happy coincidence the UK home cinema sound bandwagon started to get rolling. The last five years have seen a growing interest in subwoofers, both for hi-fi and AV applications, with REL leading the way among serious active-drive devices.

Now it looks like there's going to be some real competition. The MKV-125 which arrived for assessment is a very impressive piece of kit indeed. At £800 it's a fair bit more expensive than the REL

*Strata*, which is my normal point of reference, and it doesn't offer quite as much in sheer material value terms (REL's new *Storm* would make a closer price comparison here). But it is blindingly fast, even to the point of keeping up with my Rehdekos satisfactorily on some material, which for me is a vital strength.

One crucial factor which I suspect favours the MK is that it uses simple sealed-box acoustic loading (albeit with electronic EQ modification) which ought to ensure a more linear phase response than any ported system.

The difficulty facing the sealed system designer is in controlling the driver excursion. Starting off with a 12inch frame (240mm diaphragm) helps, but I suspect there's some clever electronic monitoring/limiting going on in the active drive circuitry—I never managed to crack it by bottoming the voice coil.

Besides speed and unburstability, the MK V-125 also has proper subwoofer extension down to 20Hz in-room, and the capability of rolling off from a low enough frequency to avoid overlapping and interfering with typical high class miniature main speakers. A quick fiddle with the flexible rear controls can supply boom box mode if preferred.

It is, in short, the very model of what a subwoofer ought to be,

although I did find results a little variable — with some material it brought an obvious improvement, sometimes it was more ambivalent, and on the most taxing KLF tracks there was a little extra muddle and confusion along with the weight.

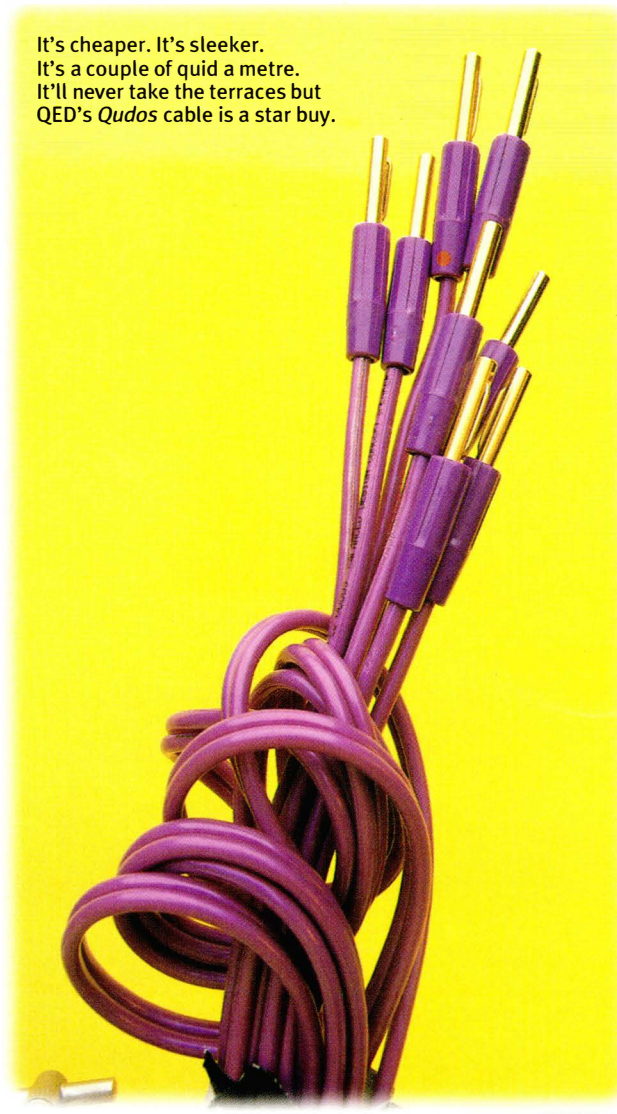
But that's in the context of a system which is about as sub-unfriendly as you could hope to find. That the MK could perform as well as this under very difficult circumstances is very impressive indeed, and has me looking forward to trying out some of the company's bigger bass bins.

### QED Qudos

Since the late '70s, when we began to recognise the influence different cables have on the sound of a hi-fi, we've moved on to the point where decent cables are now a taken-for-granted part of any real hi-fi system.

However, choosing the right cables (either to interconnect components and amplification, or to drive loudspeakers) has since become one of the more confusing elements in system building. One reason is that the underlying mechanisms which control cable effects are still not

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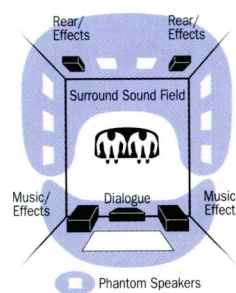
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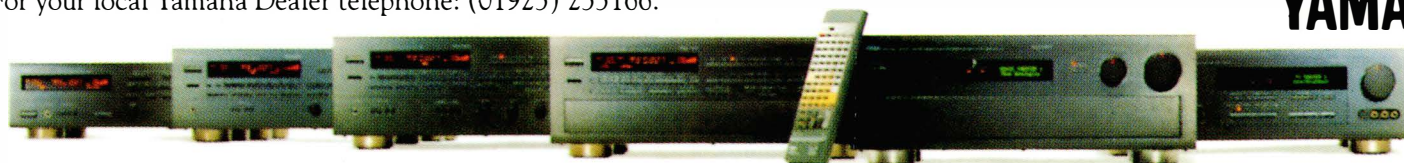
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fully understood; another is that cable suppliers have seized on the fact to introduce all manner of exotic confections which sell at prices which can easily dwarf those of the equipment itself.

I'm not saying these loony links don't work. Under the right circumstances and depending on personal taste, there can be some justification. But with different equipment and aspirations, it's possible to waste a great deal of money. I recently tried some £150/m speaker cable described as 'legendary' in this journal. Although it sounded very nice, I actually prefer the £5/m Naim NACA5 I regularly use, happily saving myself £1,500 (without contemplating bi- or tri-wire options).

As far as I'm concerned, therefore, the exotics are for fanatics, and the arrival of QED Qudos at £2/m is a much more significant event. QED's 79-strand cable has been an industry workhorse for the past decade, and this new arrival is the distillation of lots of experience as well as the embodiment of a number of sensible ideas.

There's a fairly convincing line of technobabble in the accompanying leaflet, the nub being that this is a 79-strand low resistance cable with oxygen free copper and quite stiff polyethylene insulation. Integral to the package are the special Qudos Airloc 4mm plugs (£2 each plus a £5 termination charge per set); dealers use a special crimping tool to create a tight and air-excluded join between wire and plug, in the interests of long term consistency of performance.

The crunch comes in the listening, of course, when Qudos more than vindicates itself. I substituted it for my regular NACA5 and noticed some loss of resolution towards the frequency extremes, a slight softening and smearing in the bass and a slight

forwardness and untidiness in the lower treble. But the dynamic range, dynamics and overall mid-band coherence and integrity is very impressive indeed — due, I suspect, to the fine mechanical integrity of the construction.

Just to confirm the context, I asked QED to send equivalent leads made up using 79-strand (£1/m), and was quite surprised how much poorer this sounded — everything was noticeably vaguer, sort of squidgier and less precise. Qudos sounded closer to NACA5 than to 79-strand. My only real reservation is that it might sound a bit bright-bordering-on-brash in some component combinations, without the sweetness of solid-core alternatives. But that's probably one of the unavoidable trade-offs when choosing between solid-core and multi-strand routes.

#### A Definitive System

This complete CD-based system costing around £2,700 was sug-

gested by Kevin Scott of Definitive Audio in Nottingham. The amp and CD player both come with well established reputations for sound quality, but even their mothers wouldn't be tempted to enter them into the sort of beauty contests which Mission regularly wins. The speakers are no oil paintings either, being utilitarian, compact, floorstanding Dali 104s, which undergo some modification by Definitive prior to sale.

It's been several years since I sampled a Micromega CD player, during which time this French brand has consolidated its position as one of the most successful CD specialists around. The rather severe and understated presentation certainly doesn't provide the explanation, but there's one very neat trick which does distinguish the Stage series from most rivals: upgradeability.

You can buy the basic Stage 1 player for £550, but can then convert this to Stages 2 and/or 3 integrated players by means of

dealer-fitted upgrade kits. Which presumably explains why the basic unit is a bulky full-width player. The £900 Stage 3 isn't the end of the line, as the player can carry on being used as a transport only, alongside two further separate DAC options. The total of five steps from £550 up to £1,750 represents exceptional flexibility for the purchaser unsure of how far to travel down the hi-fi road, allowing easy upgrading without starting over whenever funds and inclination permit.

Less attractive than the Alto or crescent moon series, Audio Innovations' four-poster amps are pretty familiar components these days, often representing the starting point for those pursuing the thermionic route to hi-fi happiness. The £900 Classic 25 supplied for Sessions is no budget starter, and has rather more power than the entry level models. Valves and the necessary cool-

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Rega XELs at floorstanding speakers — but is the new XEL better than before?

ing thereof are the inevitable reason why this particular component is bulky, while the undeniably functional perforated metal cover does little for the aesthetics. Note that the pre-section of this integrated amp is only suitable for line-level sources, so adding vinyl disc replay involves the addition of some sort of phono-stage head amp — a pricey extra in the AI catalogue for those into moving-coil cartridges.

The Dali speakers are new to me, though presumably they form part of the range which includes the 102 tested in issue 114. The floorstanding 104 normally costs £450 with the mass-loaded steel plinth. Definitive's additional internal modifications takes the price up to £650 — quite a jump, though this does involve complete re-wiring with OFC cable and crossover modification which includes conversion to bi-wire connection.

Whilst awaiting the arrival of the authorised connecting cables, I tried the Micromega straight into my regular system. Oh joy! What a nice CD player this is to be sure. There are no sore sonic thumbs poking out here or there to detract from the totality of the performance, and the whole thing consequently sounds all of a piece, with a convincing musical and spatial coherence that communicates effectively and with little apparent effort. About the only thing I don't like is the rather lurid red/blue display, but even that can be switched off.

Connecting up the *Classic 25* took me straight back twenty years to the Radford *STA25* I used prior to acquiring my first Naim. No, I'm not saying they're comparable; no way can I recall accurately across two decades, but switching on the *Classic 25* did jerk a few memory chords.

Still, it's interesting that both use 4xEL34 output valves, and the broad brush-stroke differences

between this new valve design and my current Naims remains much as it was all those years ago.

The sobering factor is the broad midband, where altogether more convincing dynamics, openness, speed and tone colours demonstrate where thermionics can continue to show transistors a clean pair of heels, even if the best direct-coupled solid-states outperform them in bandwidth and top-to-bottom time coherence.

Which is where the Dalis come into the picture. These are very good examples of the compact floorstander, which makes it all the more surprising they're not better known in the UK.

The overall balance is commendably flat, with a mid-range good enough to do the source and amp justice, and a slightly fruity bottom end which provides a perfect foil for the amplifier's character. They're also nominally quite sensitive (91-92dB), but do make correspondingly heavy amplifier current demands, which limits the ultimate loudness available from the system.

The whole thing comes together beautifully, driven from that excellent Micromega source and with the help of £150 worth of high class Hitachi speaker leads. It's not quite the high-drama in-your-face experience I've been used to lately, but succeeds instead through the delicacy, subtlety and sheer naturalness of that superb midband.

Although many will disagree, I wouldn't pick this system for an industrial design award, but there is an underlying sonic beauty which far surpasses many sleeker looking rivals.

Delightfully inviting and easy on the ears, it nevertheless has an uncanny ability to suck you into the musical experience, and is proof positive of what can be achieved through painstaking and thoughtful component matching, allied to a fair degree of system symbiosis.



### Rega XEL

Rega's £1,000 XEL speaker was one of the standout successes of our 1994 speaker review programme, so I approached the company to borrow a pair to act as a reference point in our recent upmarket group test (issue 143). Only then did I discover that XEL had just undergone a significant design change! A new-type pair was rushed over in time for the blind listening tests, but with rather disappointing results. Since our review group was already well over-subscribed, I put the new XEL into the pending tray to investigate further.

The change itself is interesting, involving the (probably unique) use of an eight-layer voice-coil for the bass driver. This increases its self-inductance and so reduces its natural roll-off frequency without needing to use crossover network components.

The bonus, as Rega sees it, is that using just the single main driver through the upper midband gives a clearer and more coherent presentation. My problem is that the loss of 3dB through this critical part of the spectrum has added a rather dull and shut-in character at the same time. Note that this is not just a person-

al or panel reaction; it's fully backed up by room response measurements which confirm that practice follows the theory behind the change.

In an attempt to thrash out the problem, I persuaded Rega to dig out an old pair for side-by-side comparison. The differences are at least to some degree a matter of taste, and the newer model is rather closer to the market norm than its predecessor.

However, the openness-bordering-on-over-brightness which I particularly liked about the original is replaced by a rather more distant and shut-in perspective. And although the upper midband output is down some 3dB, the relative treble level has been left as before, and is consequently now a little more exposed.

Extended hands-on listening has managed to convince me that Rega does have a point. The new version is indeed significantly more delicate, precise and coherent in the midband, and this is especially noticeable when reproducing well recorded acoustic guitars (Christy Moore's *Live at the Point*). In terms of figuring out what's going on musically, the new model does represent a worthwhile improvement, and



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KEF's Coda 7 speaker is the hippest budget box around — it's also one of the nicest.

Rega is making update kits available for £150, so existing XEL owners needn't feel left out. But that doesn't stop me preferring the more open tonal presentation of the original.

### KEF CODA 7

I first tried to borrow a pair of KEF Coda 7s nearly six months back, for last October's budget speaker group test. KEF claimed unavailability at the time, so I let it pass. Unavailable to whom, I wondered a month or so later when *What Hi-Fi?* devoted half an issue to singing its praises...

My findings often don't coincide with WHF's, and I haven't been particularly enthusiastic about the KEF speakers which have recently passed my way, so a certain reticence by the company's marketing operation was not unexpected. Why risk rocking the boat when one outstandingly good review in a rival magazine has already helped you to the number one sales slot?

Several months later, *Choice* still hadn't tried what was now Britain's best selling speaker, I was getting a Sessions group together, and the £130 Coda 7 was still unavailable (as it was now sold out). Any student of conspiracy theories would have expected to stumble into a mausoleum of rats and the assassin of J.R. and JFK.

However, some effective PR chasing managed to prise out a pair two days before the deadline, leaving just enough time to carry out a first impression review —

and confirm that this is definitely one of the better sounding budget miniature speakers currently around.

The basic ingredients and outline configuration are familiar enough for the type, with a 95mm doped-paper-cone main driver and 25mm soft fabric dome tweeter, rear-mounted on a most elegantly shaped — and acoustically effective — plastic baffle with integral port. This provides some stiffening for the modest 12mm wrap of woodprint-vinyl chipboard, though the plastic back is held only by plastic clips. The box is lined with foam and a decent sized magnet drives the main cone.

The sonic advantage comes from a very well judged midband balance, which is broadly flat and just a tad forward. The treble too is relatively a shade brighter than usual, the net result being very explicit and unusually open, if a bit edgy and harsh with the wrong material. The bottom end is not quite as impressive, being a little lean and lacking in solidity, with a rather active port taking a dominant role.

I suspect the clever and fashionable styling has much to do with the Coda 7's commercial success. The sound certainly makes the grade as well, with an unusual and attractive openness. However, among budget speakers there is never one clear winner. Much will depend on the balance delivered by sources and amplification, and models like the Tannoy 631, Mordaunt-Short

MS10 and JPW Sonata all present equally valid alternatives. It's still the case that speakers ought to be auditioned prior to purchase. KEF's Coda 7 isn't just a hot selling speaker; it's also a good 'un.

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## Record review

**TCHAIKOVSKY**

**Manfred Symphony Op 58**

**LSO/Andre Previn**

**Alto/EMI ASD 3018 (LP only)**

**W**ritten between the fourth and fifth symphonies,

Tchaikovsky's *Manfred* has always been neglected. Yet it contains some of the composer's most passionate music. The hour-long work is usually contained on a single LP. However, it's difficult to cut long sides without ruining frequency range and dynamics. So Alto's limited edition reissue of Andre Previn's 1974 EMI performance on vinyl is recut on three sides and issued as a boxed double album at a special price.

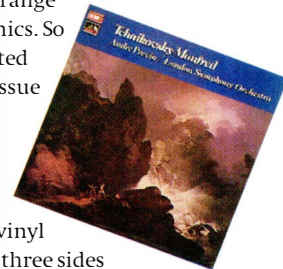
Alto's reissue sounds notably fuller and more comfortable than EMI's single LP original, with cleaner climaxes and improved soundstaging. The organ at the close of the last movement has greater weight, while fine inner detail has greater clarity.

Previn's performance is very musical, if a tad measured. There are wilder and more exciting accounts, but few treat the music with such respect.

Another reason for *Manfred*'s neglect is its technical difficulty. Fortunately, the LSO meets every challenge with real bravura, giving a vintage display of virtuoso solo playing.

The original LP was released in 1974 and never reissued, neither on vinyl nor CD. Alto's new boxed edition reproduces the original UK cover art and the LP pressings (on 180g vinyl, cut at EMI's Abbey Road studios) are superb.

**Jimmy Hughes**



# The Naim of the prose

*Naim addict Malcolm Steward has been down to the Salisbury factory to collect his latest fix, and he's come back smiling.*

**N**ew bits of kit don't appear too frequently for Naim Audio's high-end customers. Unlike many competing marques, Naim isn't continually churning out new products — partly because the company is regularly pushed just to satisfy the demand for its existing models; and partly, as Naim devotees will proudly tell you, because those products are inherently difficult to improve upon. Your humble reviewer, for example, has used NAP250 power amplifiers for over a decade and is still waiting to find an alternative product that offers a better blend of musical qualities.

However, just like waiting for a bus, you can sometimes hang around waiting for a new arrival from Naim and find that several turn up all at once. That happened recently when I made the pilgrimage to see the £1.5 million extension to the company's Salisbury factory, ostensibly to have my SBLs updated with a pair of the new bass units that are built there. I left with these and three new toys that have quietly slipped into the range: the S-NAXO (Super-NAXO) electronic crossover, Super-Cap power supply, and Prefix phono preamplifier.

To assess the impact of each of these as scientifically as a studiously subjective being can, I started by reinstalling just the re-driven SBLs. Meanwhile, I powered up the rest of the gear to help it bed down and warm up. That's essential with Naim's electronics, which are hardly in the Linford Christie class when it comes to accelerating towards their optimum performance. When I first installed my NAC52 it took about five or six weeks before it stopped improving. And that's in spite of being constantly powered up — even holidays and thunderstorms won't make me deprive my full-time system of its juice.

Paul Messenger gave a full appraisal of the latest (passive) SBL in the June issue of *Hi-Fi Choice*, and I'll simply add that I believe the new drivers represent a major step forward in the speaker's evolution. I've always appreciated the SBL's dry, informative balance, but I could understand why some listeners

**The calm before the storm.**

**Mr Steward's Naim electronics get ready to kick his neighbour's butts. V hard.**

found its voicing a little too forceful. That's no longer a valid criticism. The new drivers allow the SBLs to retain the same tightly controlled, communicative character of their forebears, but their presentation is noticeably more easy-going. That's not to say that they've suddenly become laid-back: no, they still come through rejoicing when a bit of artistically justified violence is required. In fact, they put the boot in even harder now but sound more comfortable doing so.

They also dig deeper into music than before. They were never lacking in this respect but I've started finding stuff buried in albums that I thought I knew intimately. The 'new' SBLs navigate through dense and convoluted recordings so precisely that previously ambiguous elements now come out waving explanatory banners.

Make no mistake, the improvements brought about by the new drivers are significant. Anyone who has a pair of SBLs with the original bass units — easily recognised by their pressed steel chassis — should contact their dealer forthwith about having the new cast-chassis drive units installed. This £300 (approx) upgrade includes a factory





overhaul and definitely represents money well spent.

The first completely new product I tried was the £699 S-NAXO. I powered it initially with the *Hi-Cap* that was driving my NAXO 2-4 rather than the *Super-Cap*, so that I'd have a level playing field while I compared the old and new versions. The major difference between the crossovers is in the way that power reaches the various stages of their circuits. In the NAXO, power lines snake around the circuit board to wherever they're going: the S-NAXO sports an increased number of separate rails which navigate through a wiring loom so power only hits the board when and where it's required. The folk at Naim told me that this revision alone — in particular, separating the feeds to the roll-on/off filters, which tend to inject noise into the power lines — provides a marked increase in the crossover's performance.

Listening to the S-NAXO substantiated



Replacement bass unit for Naim's SBL loudspeaker (above) and the Prefix phono preamp (below)

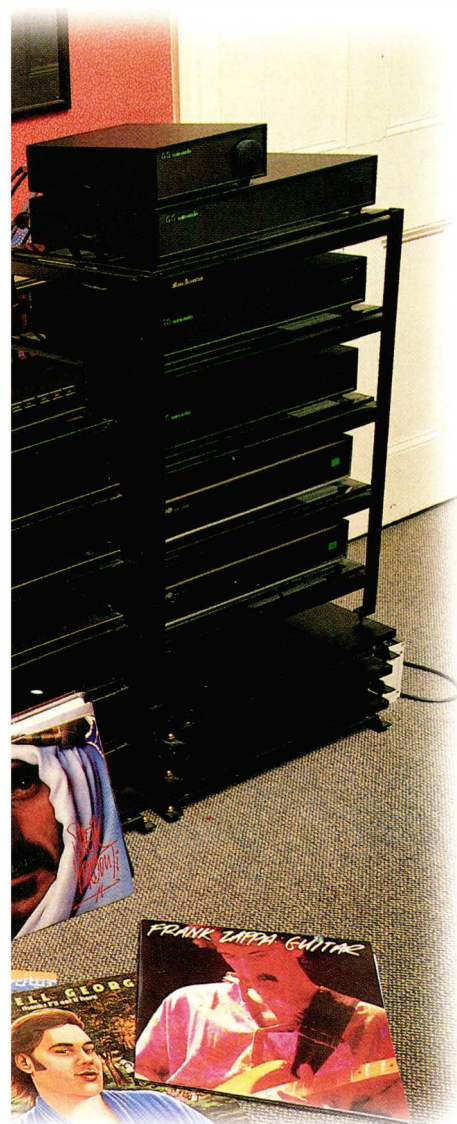
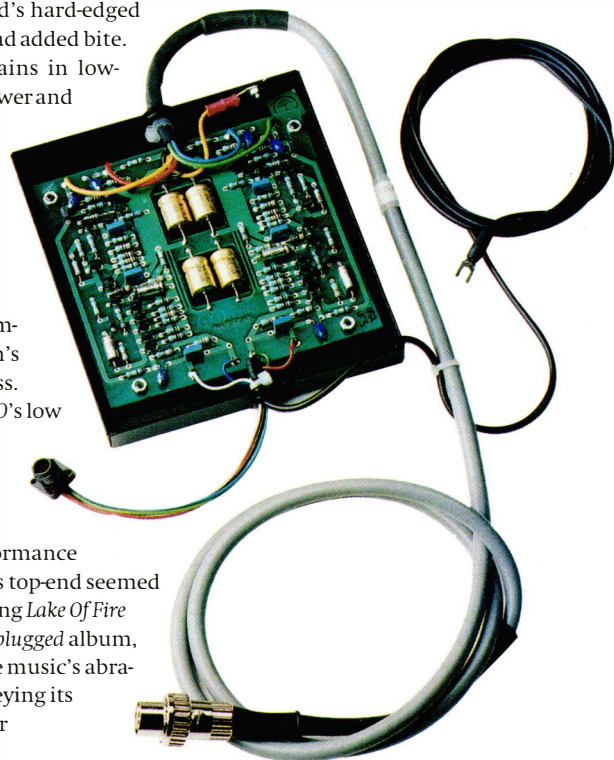
ed that claim. The new crossover showed noticeably improved grip and definition in the bass. It sounded just a little faster, more precisely defining the note envelope of string and keyboard bass lines, giving them a sense of increased slam and rhythmic urgency. The Doug Wimbish line that propels Skip 'Little Axe' McDonald's *Dayton* slid along at a subjectively quicker pace and sounded more purposeful. In addition, what had always seemed a respectably dynamic track now acquired a nitro-fuelled edge. Sharply plucked bass, forcibly struck percussion and McDonald's hard-edged guitar chords all had added bite. Along with the gains in low-frequency horsepower and midrange energy the music's timing seemed more exposed, vividly displaying the interplay between Keith LeBlanc's spry drumming and Wimbish's Kango hammer bass.

While the S-NAXO's low end was now markedly superior, the Super crossover still bettered the original's performance everywhere else. Its top-end seemed more refined playing *Lake Of Fire* from Nirvana's *Unplugged* album, refusing to dull the music's abrasive edge but conveying its energy with greater

finesse. Its imperturbable grip — nothing I played made it sound in the least ragged — and smooth delivery across its bandwidth gave a much more candid insight into this provocative track. Instrumental timbre seemed more faithfully portrayed, suggesting that the revised power arrangements rid the circuitry of the electronic weasels that occasionally added a tinge of 'mechanical' character to the sound of some instruments. Even Terence Trent D'Arby in full-bore, scream-until-I'm-sick mode didn't rattle its composure. In all, if you have passive SBLs, now's the perfect time to go active: if you are already active, get thee to a Naim dealer and place an S-NAXO order hencewith and right away.

Despite all this, using the new *Super-Cap* power supply — at £1,909, the most expensive new item in the group — powered the S-NAXO elevated system performance still further. It raised it to a degree that I hadn't honestly anticipated, even though I've previously witnessed the effects that upgraded power supplies can have on Naim equipment. Describing the *Super-Cap*'s influence isn't easy: the improvements are more abstract, but no less apparent, than obvious leaps such as an extra octave of bass extension, sweeter treble or any other hi-fi artefact. Nonetheless, their impact is still dramatic, making the system's presentation more substantial and persuasive in both cosmetic and musical respects.

As I've discovered in the past, stuffing additional tightly regu-



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lated power lines into a Naim preamp or active crossover opens up and tightens the system's performance, particularly the way it handles low-level information. Years ago, when I switched from the *SNAPS*, Naim's first outboard supply, to a *Hi-Cap*, this was demonstrated graphically. But even so, I still wasn't prepared for the effects of going from a *Hi-Cap* to the monster *Super-Cap*. To use a motoring analogy, powering the *S-NAXO* with a *Hi-Cap* is like putting a hot camshaft in your car; using a *Super-Cap* is like having Frank Williams and posse descend on it and rebuilding it from the ground up.

Naim designed the *Super-Cap* to be a super-low-noise supply, and doubtless this greatly influences the system's ability to resolve low-level information. Subtle events that were previously inaudible, vague or didn't contribute much to your appreciation of the music now emerge crisply resolved and far more telling. By rendering silences more silent, the system becomes sensitive to the tiniest slivers of information and playing nuances. This has a profound influence on its performance.

While you might expect the timbral resolution of the *S-NAXO* to improve further with *Super-Cap* muscle behind it, you probably wouldn't expect music to undergo temporal changes. It does, though: the timing of polyrhythmic music or jazz played in uncomfortable time signatures makes better sense, and simple four-on-the-floor rock tracks groove like they never did before. I guess it's down to sharpening your perception of the leading and trailing edges of notes. While the superficial evidence of this might be minimal, my aching ankles told me that my feet were indulging in more vigorous tapping than usual.

Stimulating music just felt far more 'right' and far more animated. For a convincing demonstration search out some vintage Trouble Funk percussion. Solos from the 1986 *Say What!* album did the trick for me. The *Super-Capped* portrayal of that track left me in no doubt that the drummer and roto-tom player were on a resurrection trip — that groove was out to raise the dead and terminally doped. It even provoked a discernible twitch from a nearby ambient music fan.

While I was hooked by the *Super-Cap*'s musical fluency — its effects on timing alone are enough to make me want it — I'll drop down to Planet Hi-Fi and note that it also enhances cosmetic presentation. This is no bad thing but it's less important: real music doesn't always sound 'nice' so why strive to



**The S-NAXO crossover offers a better defined low-end, improved timing and a more refined treble**

romanticise recordings? Nonetheless, the *Super-Cap* does a fine job with things like the characteristic quality of instruments. Check out the veritable acid trip of tonal colour in live recordings such as Zappa's *Once Again, Without The Net* (from the album *Guitar*). That mutha's vivid. And deep. Man: those sounds go on forever, boldly going into dimensions where timbre, texture, shards of shimmering percussion and pellucid midranges have never ventured without their mums and dads or an adjectivally challenged hi-fi writer holding their hands.

You can use the new *Super-Cap* in place of a *Hi-Cap* with most of Naim's older equipment. It will partner preamplifiers from the *NAC32-5* up to the top-of-the-range *NAC52*, or older *NAXOs*. Essentially it's a *NAC52* power supply that's been re-configured to make it more universally applicable. It comes without interconnects not so that users can whittle their own but because the cable requirements alter according to what you're using it to power. It hooks up to most older equipment through the familiar *SNAIC-5* power/signal lead, but to exploit items such as the *NAC52* and *S-NAXO* you should use the eighteen-core, *SNAIC-18 Burndy* cable.

If a £1,909 power supply with a £220 interconnect is a bit too rich for your bank balance right now, then don't despair. Naim's final newie isn't expensive. But it's no less impressive. The £325 *Prefix* is a phono preamp. If you use it with any preamplifier other than a *NAC52* — whose second (line-level)

input feeds it power automatically — you'll also need a power supply to make it light up — the £317 *Flat-Cap* is the prime budget choice. So you can get *Prefix* for £642, which is peanuts in Naim high-end terms and competitive with other high quality phono stages.

Naim designed the *Prefix* for use primarily with ARO-equipped Linn *LP12s*, but it would be easy to adapt it for any other high quality turntable and/or tonearm. Effectively, it does no more than take the phono input boards out of the preamp and stick them in a slim metal case at the base of the tonearm. The idea's not exactly a spin-off from rocket science, but it's potent nonetheless. Simply replacing a better than average, short, BNC-terminated, impedance-matched tonearm cable with a *SNAIC* carrying a line-level signal has made a consequential difference to my enjoyment of playing vinyl. All the format's admirable qualities remain — in fact, they're heightened, often quite dramatically — while its less likeable facets vanish. You can, for instance, forget quiescent system noise with the *Prefix* — it's relegated to the sub's bench. Even 'surface noise' drops. No, brothers and sisters, the turntable ain't solely responsible for intrusive noise — most cooking-sherry amplifier phono stages contribute their two-penn'orths as well.

Anyone who has deserted vinyl for CD should give a wide berth to the combination of Pink Triangle-modified *LP12*, Naim ARO, Lyra *Clavis DC* and *Prefix* that I use. It's made me regress ten years to when I railed against digital because it made me blow chunks. Domestic digital has advanced significantly, but this analogue front end shows that it still has miles to go before it makes music that's this deeply satisfying. Quite simply, Zappa has never sounded so skilful, Mary Coughlan so licentious, Art Pepper so cool, nor The Pogues so tanked.

Much of this increased enjoyment comes from the way the *Prefix* tidies the cosmetics of vinyl replay, ridding its presentation of most 'mechanical' artefacts that spoil the otherwise flawless illusion it creates. Get one and remind yourself what music really sounds like. Take that from one deeply blissed-out Luddite currently lucubrating with The Velvets circa 1969: not a recording but Lou, Sterling, Mo and Doug in the ashen flesh. I'm beginning to see the light... again.

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# radiohead

**How does the Beeb keep its radio listeners happy? Kevin Hilton looks at their 'it's really simple, honest!' recipe.**

**A**s far as radio was concerned, live recordings were useful as padding, allowing the stations to broadcast more material by well-known bands back in the restrictive days of needle-time. Due to copyright protection, royalty agreements and other ownership regulations, broadcasters only had a set amount of time in any hour to play records, or at least the records that the listener really wanted to hear.

For the rest of the time, schedulers had to find non-copyright material, which meant importing Scandinavian pressings of current hits, playing library music, or filling up the gaps with chat, which gave rise to both the motormouth DJ and the 'phone-in'. The other solution was, if the station had the resources, to record performances at the local gig venue. The BBC was best placed to do this, with its fleet of OB trucks and the recording studios at Maida Vale. The now historically important *Friday Night Rock Show* and *Peel Sessions* were produced there.

Now that needle-time is a rather bizarre footnote in broadcasting history, it would have been logical to assume that programme directors would have turned away from live recordings and binged on playing all the stuff that had previously been denied them. But if anything, the amount of live music on radio, both BBC and commercial, has increased. As Radio 1FM producer Chris Lycett said to me recently: "live recordings are being seen on their own merits".

A specially recorded set (the live session) or tracks taken from a big concert give the impression that the broadcaster is making the effort, offering listeners with something different. There is also the altruistic element, promoting live music in certain areas, sometimes publicising new and upcoming bands.

It is perhaps unfair to focus on the BBC's efforts in this field, given its resources, but this year the Corporation will be involved in a huge number of live music events, covering a wide range of styles. An annual event is Sound City, which is jointly organised by the Beeb, independent producer Stuart Grundy, record industry body

the BPI, the Musicians' Union, and the local council of the host town.

This year Bristol staged a full week of concerts, with BBC Radio 1FM broadcasting its lunchtime show live, with full relays of the gigs in the evenings. Two venues were used, with the broadcasts sliced up into 35 minute segments for each band, alternating between the New Trinity Community Centre in the St Philips district and the Anson Rooms some five miles away. On the Friday night, each site hosted three hours of music starting with the Trinity before moving onto Anson, while on the Sunday, the *Rock Show* came from the Bier Keller in the City Centre.

This set-up called for quite complex communications between the two sites. The Trinity was the master location, which took feeds from Anson via a mixture of microwave and UHF links. This involved a repeater station halfway through, due to the height of buildings in the city centre, to make sure that it reached Trinity. From there, it was sent to Broadcasting House Bristol by microwave, and then on permanent BBC circuits to R1 headquarters in London.

Among the bands appearing were Elastica, The Orb, Orbital, Pulp,

Chemical Brothers and the Prodigy (one of the sweatiest, nastiest sets I've ever seen), with plenty of stage-diving on the Friday night. Estimates put the cost of the week at £130,000, which must be seen as worth it for the promotion of live music, especially as the BBC is involved in an even more ambitious programme of events in Birmingham. And a 'mini' Sound City is due to take place in Camden, London during September.

A high spot for me was getting back down to the West Country again, catching up with BBC engineers Steve Richards, and Richard Earle, who I inadvertently promoted in Radiohead on the BRITS (issue 143). Needless to say, his colleagues had much sport with this, but then, why should anyone else have an easy time?

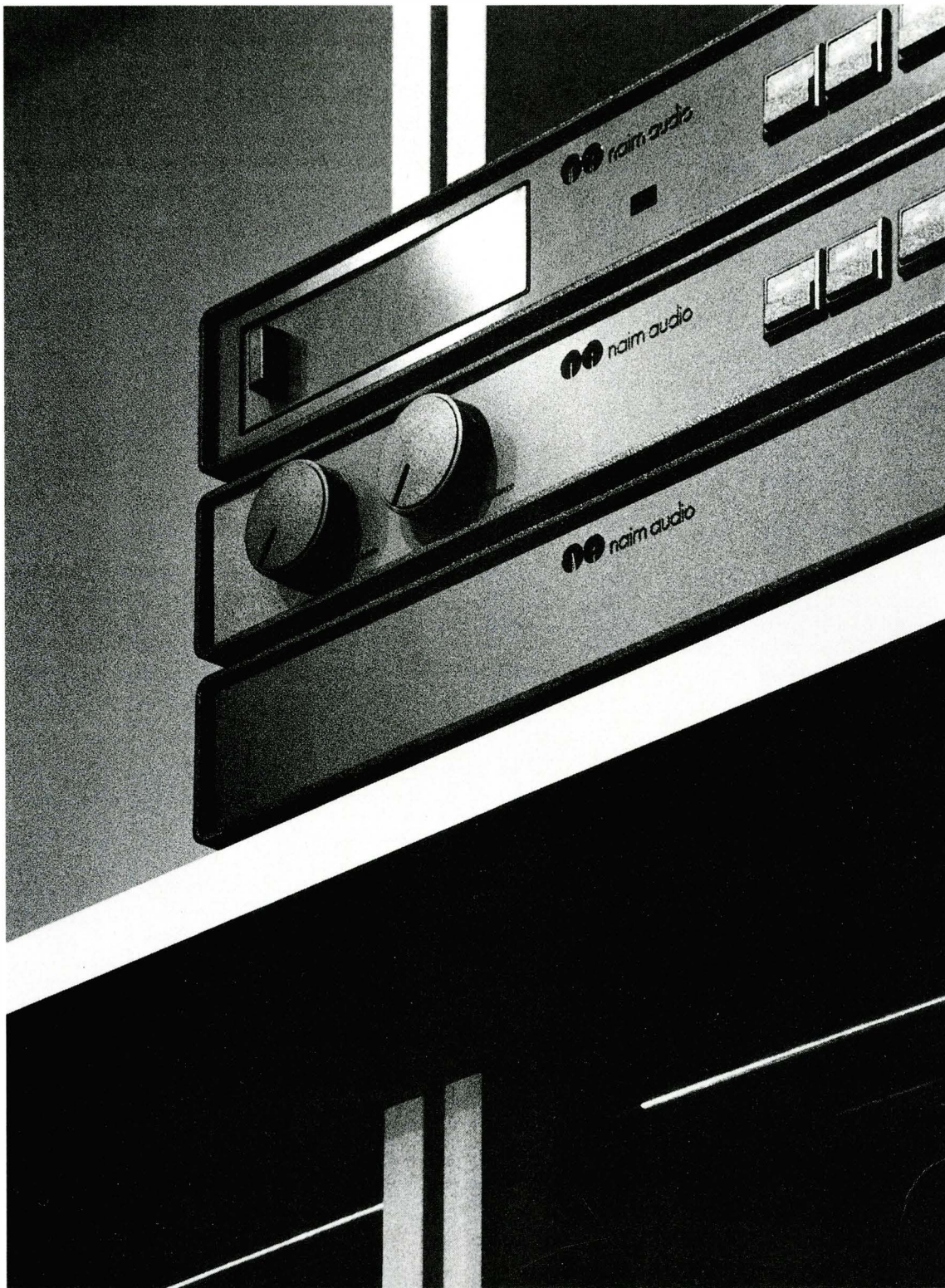
Since that last column, the radio industry has moved on, much of it in the unusual, unassuming way. Apart from Virgin Radio, that is. New figures have shown that the 24-hour rock service is now the fastest growing station in the UK. Much of Virgin's good fortune has been at the expense of Radio 1, which is haemorrhaging listeners at an alarming rate. This has not been helped by the departure of Steve Wright, although the arrival of Chris Evans should be seen as a giant Band Aid. In other respects, the news was sad, with the death of a major influence on Wright and Evans, Kenny Everett.

Due to contractual wranglings, Wright stayed on the Breakfast Show longer than he intended, and there is still no word about what he's up to in radio terms. The ever-cheerful Evans has slipped into his slot comfortably, but is still pushing out the same show he did for GLR, R1 (the last time round), and Virgin, with the familiar old routines (Tickle Your Trout, The Kids Are Alright But Only If They're Wrong). In my view, Evans worked brilliantly on local radio, but as soon as he went national, he lost his focus.

Both Wright and Evans, like Adrian Juste, Noel Edmonds and other self-consciously 'wacky' DJs, owe a great debt to Kenny Everett. He may have over-played the zanycard on TV, but his radio shows were well-constructed, entertaining, and often hilarious. His political views were well known, but that didn't stop the now infamous gag about Margaret Thatcher which got him fired from Radio 2. For that alone, he should be remembered.

**Radio has lost one of its great stars with the untimely death of Kenny Everett.**





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# help!



Before you decide on floorstanders, check out the JBL L90.

## CD solo

**C** I want to buy a CD-only system and my budget is about £3,500. I like a warm sound with good bass and prefer floorstanding speakers.

**W A Silverthorne, Hertfordshire**

**A** For many years, system recommendations have been weighted towards spending a large percentage of the budget on a source component of the highest possible

quality. But with some truly excellent CD players and amplifiers available at very reasonable prices this advice looks more and more out of date. Small inefficient speakers, however well designed, suffer major limitations in terms of their ability to reproduce lifelike depth and scale. So, if the choice were mine, I'd go for a pair of JBL L90s or Audiovector 3Xs and partner them with something like Musical Fidelity's E100 integrated amp and perhaps AVT's S2000MC CD player. Also check out the valve-based system in this month's Sessions. Finally, invest in some Mana supports to put under these fine components.

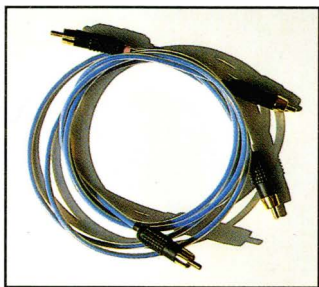
## Ready for retirement

**C** I have a Fons CQ-30 turntable fitted with an SME 3009 fixed-headshell arm and Shure ME-97HE cartridge, Marantz CD-63SE CD player, Ferrograph 20+20 amplifier, and Richard Allan Pavane speakers. I'm looking to upgrade the amp and speakers, which are both over 25 years old. I've listened to a set of Mission 780SEs, which impressed me. Do you have any other suggestions?

**M Lee, London**

**A** As the majority of your system is nigh on a quarter of a century old, why not take the opportunity to upgrade the entire

## Query of the month



Each month we're giving away a one metre pair of Precious Metals interconnect cables to the writer of the most interesting letter. If you've any system queries send them to: **Hi-Fi Choice (Help!) Dennis Publishing Ltd, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ.**

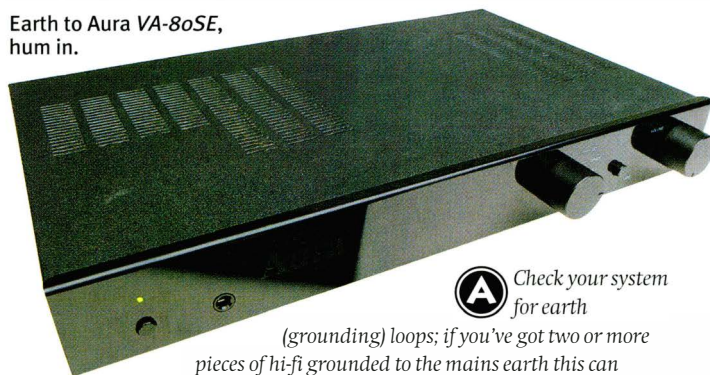
## Query of the month

### Travelling hum

**C** Building a true separates system is no easy matter in Moscow, where the market is dominated by cheap Japanese brands. Embarking on a complete upgrade based on 'British' sound I arrived at the following: Micromega Stage 1 CD player, Aura VA-80SE amplifier, and Royd Merlin speakers on dedicated stands with MIT interconnects and Monitor bi-wiring cables. The system sounds good, but I soon noticed a distinct low-key humming noise from both speakers with the amp's volume at maximum. I identified the Micromega as the culprit, and further tests showed the hum remained during Play and Pause. I took the player back to my dealer for trials with only marginal improvements, but as the noise was most evident at full volume (which I'll never reach), I decided to accept the fault. I now find, using the amps' line input instead of CD, the noise is now only on the right channel! What's going on?

**A Naumenkov, naum@tokoex.msk.su**

Earth to Aura VA-80SE, hum in.



**A** Check your system for earth

(grounding) loops; if you've got two or more pieces of hi-fi grounded to the mains earth this can sometimes cause the problems you're experiencing. Also experiment with the position and direction of your interconnect cable between CD and amp; even with screened cables you sometimes have to orientate the cable for minimum hum pickup. Incidentally, try the Micromega through the Aura's tape monitor input — you'll find this gives better sound quality than the other line inputs because it by-passes the main selector.

analogue section (turntable, amp and speakers). The Fons and SME combo is really going to show its age through a modern amp and speakers. Try a Rega Planar 3 turntable and Super Bias cartridge, an Arcam Alpha 6 amplifier and either the Mission 780SE you mention, or a pair of Rogers LS2/all loudspeakers. Finally, connect the CD to amp with with Cable Talk Monitor 2 interconnect and amp to speakers Cable Talk 3 speaker cable.

### My mains dedication

**C** I hope to be moving house soon, and will then have the opportunity of running a dedicated mains supply for my

hi-fi system. I propose running one (or maybe two) dedicated spurs from my fusebox and intend to use the heaviest mains cable available, terminated in an unswitched socket. Any comments or thoughts on this?

**G Dew, 100555.1300@compuserve.com**

**A** Sounds good to me! Having a dedicated mains spur should give you a cleaner, more consistent quality of mains voltage that's less influenced by other appliances used in the house. If you can add the extra spur that should be all the better.

A dedicated earth made with a long copper pipe is also said to be beneficial. Just watch for the drains!

# close your eyes and see



## the new improved Arcam Alpha 5 system

Close your eyes and see the difference between Arcam's new Alpha 5 system of hi-fi components and anything else in its price range.

Ignore the fact that the Alpha 5 amplifier is our best 'budget audiophile' amplifier ever, outselling all others in the UK for the past year. Don't be tempted by its attractive styling or a price tag which looks too good to be true. Just listen, and discover for yourself a quality of sound that can only be described as exceptional.

Next, try the Alpha 5 FM tuner. Again, don't let its surprising affordability seduce you. Instead, listen to broadcast sound that is natural, clear and dynamic - qualities which gained it a class leading

Recommendation in the 1994 What Hi-Fi? Awards.

Finally, feast your ears on the new Alpha 5 Plus CD player - quite simply, the best value high performance CD player ever produced by a UK manufacturer. Over the past year the critics have heaped praise on its predecessor, the Alpha 5 CD player, calling it "the player to beat" (What Hi-Fi?) and "standing head and shoulders above the rest" (Hi-Fi News)\*. Now, thanks to new master clock circuitry, the 5 Plus sounds even better and once again sets the standards for other CD players to match.

Just listen. Close your eyes, open your mind, and see the light.

\*If you already own an Alpha 5 CD player, we'd be happy to update it to full 5 Plus specification. Please call our service department at the number below during office hours for full details and prices.

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Will a Systemdek IIX/900 turntable sound brighter with a decent set of cables?

### Is it my cables, doctor?

**Q** I have a Systemdek IIX/900 turntable with Rega RB-300 arm and Audio Technica OC-7 cartridge, Audiolab 8000A amplifier, Denon DCD 2560 CD player, and Monitor Audio Studio 20SE speakers bi-wired with Linn K-20 cable, plus a set of Sennheiser HD560 Ovation headphones. Interconnects are Monster L500 between CD player and amp. I feel I've got some good components, but the sound lacks fullness and detail.

When I tried the speakers at home (using a Rotel 820BX4 amp), the sound was detailed with nice forward placement of vocals. Now, the vocals linger behind the instruments as though the singer were at the back of the room. Yet on headphones the vocals sound fine. Since the Audiolab gives the sound I want on headphones and is regarded as a step up from the 820BX4, I've reached the conclusion that the problem must be my cables. I'm looking at Chord, DNM, Silver Sounds, and XLO; what do you think?

**S Read, Munich, Germany**

**A** It sounds like your system needs livening up; DNM speaker cable would tilt the tonal balance away from bass towards the treble and could be your best bet — although it might be necessary to use

a double run for the bass connection given your 10m runs. Chord Flatline is excellent, but will sound richer and fuller than the DNM — possibly not what's needed here. I do think it would be worth trying another amp in place of the Audiolab (can you get the Rotel RA-820BX4 back?) since there's only so much cables can do.

### Sony down under

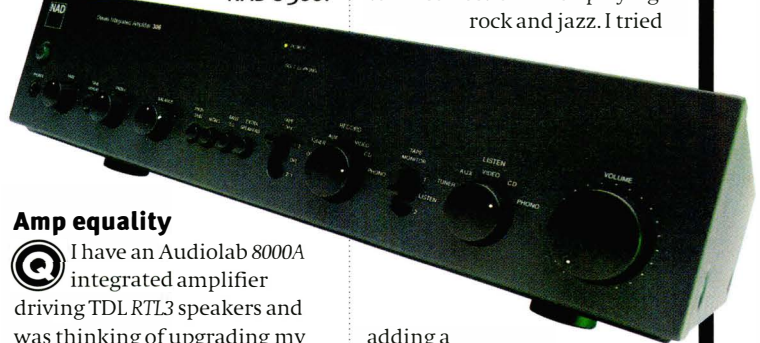
**Q** As the Sony CDP-715E CD player (Best Buy in the Dec '94 issue) is not sold in Australia, I hoped to import one through a UK retailer. However, it appears this model is now discontinued and has been superseded by the CDP-761E. Are the two players similar? The new 761 may be an improvement, but if the 715 was so good why change it?

**N Godfrey, Queensland, Australia**

**A** I checked with Sony UK, and it seems the new CDP-761E will not be available in Australia — just like the 715. Sony UK claims the

761E is an improvement on the 715E, and features a new digital filter, an FET line output stage, upgraded power supply, and a display on/off. The UK version also loses its variable line output and headphone socket. We hope to review the CDP-761E in our next issue.

### Tone up your discs with NAD's 306.



### Amp equality

**Q** I have an Audiolab 8000A integrated amplifier driving TDL RTL3 speakers and was thinking of upgrading my system by adding an 8000P power amp and bi-amping the speakers. Audiolab suggested using the 8000A for the tweeters and the 8000P for the woofers, but as the two amps have

different outputs, would I get too much low frequency?

**J Tester, West Sussex**

**A** Providing the two amps produce equal output when fed from an identical source, it shouldn't matter that one has a higher Wattage than the other: you'll not get a greater output from the more powerful amp. Of course, driven to its limit, the bigger amp will play louder before it reaches clipping, but given the falling energy response of most music in the treble region, the lower-output 8000A should more than hold its own against the 8000P when used to drive a set of tweeters.

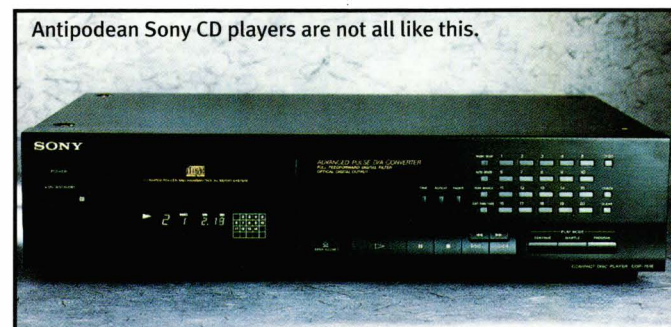
### Not the rock generation

**Q** I've owned an Arcam Delta 60 for many years, and like it very much indeed. Unfortunately, it doesn't have tone controls and I find I need tonal correction when playing rock and jazz. I tried

adding a graphic equaliser but wasn't happy with the sound.

**K Brady, London**

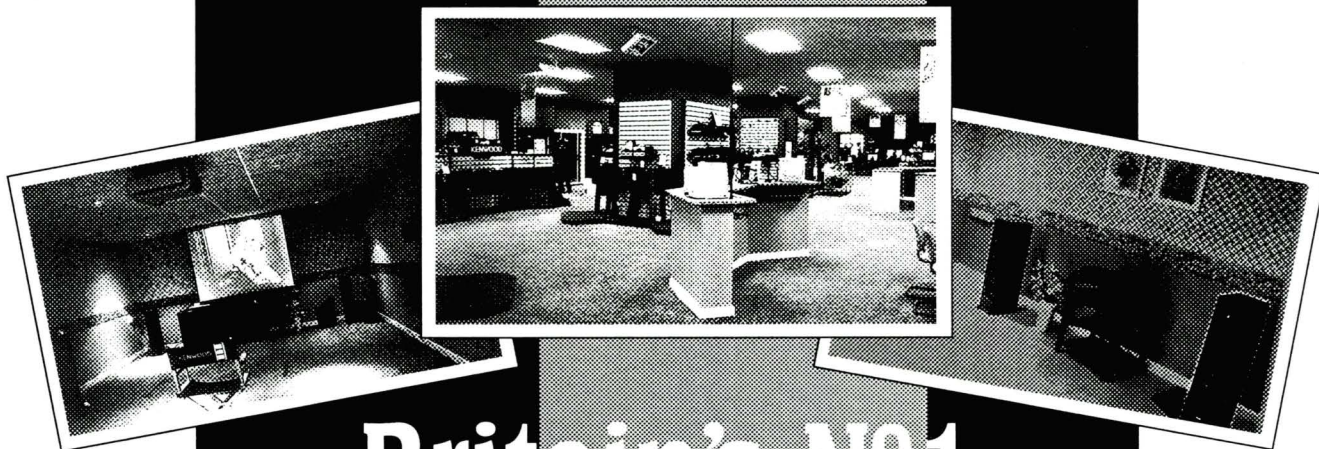
**A** The Arcam Alpha 5 and Alpha 6 amplifiers both offer tone controls and would give you a livelier, more assertive sound than you get with your old Delta 60. However, it's as well to appreciate that most modern amps with tone controls only offer limited correction — massive boost and cut isn't offered. NAD's 306 amplifier is worth checking out; it offers a useful switched deep-bass boost that beefs up the low-frequency performance of speakers without introducing boom.



Antipodean Sony CD players are not all like this.

# Britain's No1

Hi Fi group has created



# Britain's No1 Hi Fi Superstore.

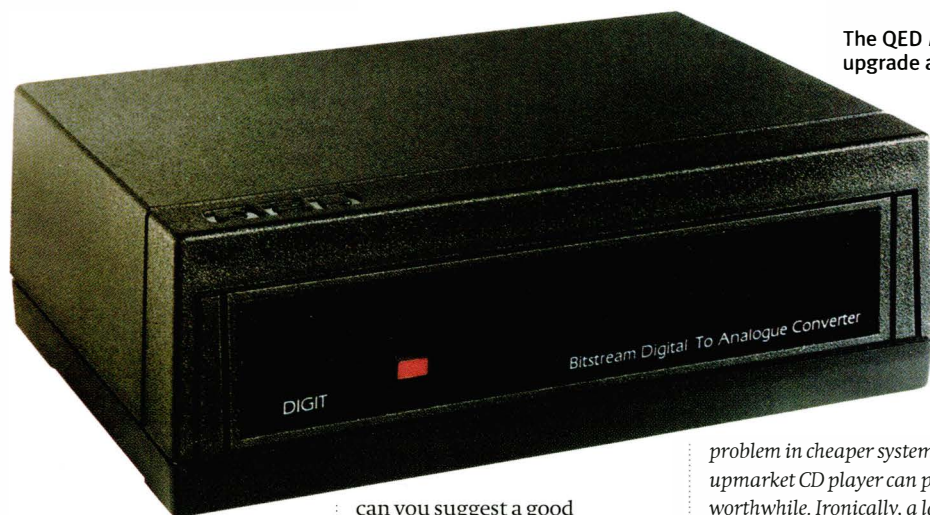
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The QED *Digit* — a neat way to upgrade a budget player.

### Fading away

**Q** I've put together a system in the past few years that works well, but it suffers a strange intermittent fault; after several hours' listening the volume fades. If I switch to tuner all is well. The only way to eliminate the problem is to switch the CD player off, and wait a few minutes. The CD machine is a Marantz CD-63 (less than a year old), used with an Arcam Alpha 5 amp and Systemdek System 931 speakers. I want to upgrade soon and wonder where to start — should I add a DAC or replace the amp?

**D Maldonado, London**

**A** What a strange fault! Since your CD player is under a year old and still in warranty I'd get it fixed soon. Adding a DAC would seem to be your best upgrade bet (check out the QED *Digit*, Audio Alchemy's DAC-in-the-Box, and Cambridge Audio's DACMagic 1), and as an added bonus it will almost certainly cure your 'fading' volume problem. The other alternative is to send the Marantz to Trichord Research for their Clock 2 modification, but doing this will invalidate your warranty — unwise, given your player's fault.

### High volume fatigue

**Q** Thanks to *Hi-Fi Choice*, I've put together a system that's given me hours and hours of listening pleasure. I'm using a Marantz CD-52 CD Player, NAD 3225PE amplifier, and AR M1 speakers on sandfilled Target TR stands. Speaker cable is QED 79 Strand. My only complaint is that the amplifier sounds muddled and fatiguing at high volume;

can you suggest a good integrated amp costing around £350 that will help solve this irritating problem?

**T Leong, Lawrence, USA**

**A** Before changing your amp you should audition some Chord Flatline speaker cable; this should sound much smoother and cleaner than your old QED 79 Strand, and ought to reduce muddle at high volume levels. If the sound still isn't clean enough, Pioneer's A-400X integrated amp should give the sort of improvement in sound quality that you're after. If a little extra can be spared listen to Orelle's superb SA-100 integrated, which sounds bold and detailed but very smooth and sweet.

### What the dealer says

**Q** I listen to classical music through an Arcam Delta 90 amplifier and Rogers LS-7 speakers using a six year old Marantz CD-65/II as the source. A well-known hi-fi shop tells me my CD player is the weak link in the chain and suggests I audition players in the £500 to £900 price range. Are they right? Do I need to spend such sums when Sony's CDP 715E and CDP-915E seem to offer such good performance for £300 or less?

**E R Newman, Middlesex**

**A** A burning question! In terms of build quality you certainly get what you pay for with most upmarket CD players, but quite a few of the good cheaper models produce such lively and engaging music that it's hard to justify spending more in sonic terms alone. Often, more expensive CD players sound smoother and more refined than their less costly counterparts, and since harshness is a common

problem in cheaper systems, an upmarket CD player can prove worthwhile. Ironically, a large system that sounds full and perhaps over-refined can often benefit from a good inexpensive CD player that has plenty of zip.

### Thin walls, big speakers

**Q** I am thinking of putting together a system based on CD using either a Mission Cyrus III or Rotel RA-970BX2 amplifier, and a Sony CDP-715E or Marantz CD-63SE CD player. My problem concerns the choice of speakers. Living in a terraced house with thin walls, how do I get good solid bass without rocking the neighbours? With about £350 to

spend, should I go for stand-mounts or floorstanders?

**S Ahmet, London**

**A** If your house has thin walls, then almost any speaker — even one as devoid of bass as your average TV speaker — will be audible next-door if played at a loud-ish volume. Bass seems to 'travel' more than middle or treble, so try to avoid something with a heavy, thumpy bottom end. It's difficult to generalise, but small stand-mounted speakers typically have better bass tightness and control than floorstanders, albeit less bass depth. Try to choose a speaker that's lively and pleasantly assertive so that it fills the room without having to be played too loudly. Arcam's Delta 2 offers very good bass for its size, while Mission's 733 floorstander is also worth trying.



Mission's 733 speaker for good bass, but will it wake the neighbours?

# Choice music



**T**he editorial department of *Hi-Fi Choice* is rarely a quiet place. In fact, two years ago,

our constant music playing meant that we got relegated to the deepest, darkest dungeons of Dennis Towers, along with other groups of noisy animals, such as

*Home Entertainment*, *Metal Hammer* and *PCZone*.

Those studious computer types on titles like *Network Reseller* just couldn't take the endless stream of Metallica and The KLF, and the folk on *MacUser* objected to the entire margarita-fuelled *Hi-Fi Choice* editorial team playing *Ebenezer Goode* by The Shamen at maximum volume each and every Friday night (never understood why).

Once we were locked in our basement with our own dedicated listening room and a storeroom full of hi-fi goodies, it wasn't too long before the *Hi-Fi Choice* office system switched into a higher gear. That the *Metal Hammer* crowd are in the next office with a pair of the large, loud Cerwin Vega speakers only highlighted the need for a good set-up.

Our in-house system consists of an AVI 2000MC CD player, hooked up via solid-core Furukawa Analogue cables to a Musical Fidelity Elektra E100 amplifier. This, in turn, is connected to a pair of Audio Note AN-J speakers using Cable Talk 3 speaker cable. There's

also a Kenwood KX-5060S Dolby S cassette deck. All of the electronics sit on a three-tier Alphason stand. Made up entirely from components that were lying in the back of our store room, this improvised system just happens to blend together far better than we could realistically have expected or hoped, especially when it is cranked up loud enough to shout down the roar from *Metal Hammer*.

Located as we are in uptown NoHo (North Soho), the lure of the Virgin Megastore in Oxford Street is often too great to withstand, especially around pay-day. Any resistance to CD-spend-frenzy is quickly removed at one of the many Dennis-approved pubs on the way. Unfortunately, this can also remove the last vestiges of taste, as the spate of easy-listening albums currently on our playlist will testify.

So what music do we spend our hard-earned cash on when we aren't doing listening tests? By way of an answer, we present the *Hi-Fi Choice* Top 20. **AS**



The *Hi-Fi Choice* office system: Audio Note AN-J speakers; AVI 2000MC CD player; Musical Fidelity Elektra E100 amplifier



1. *Stanley Road*, by Paul Weller
2. *Post*, by Bjork
3. *Leftism*, by Leftfield
4. *Parklife*, by Blur
5. *Headz*, *Mo' Wax records compilation*
6. *Sleeps With Angels*, by Neil Young
7. *Maxinquaye*, by Tricky
8. *No Protection*, by Massive Attack v Mad Professor
9. Soundtrack to the film *Pulp Fiction*, various artists
10. *Words and Silence*, by The Silent Poets
11. *Dummy*, by Portishead
13. *Ill Communication*, by the Beastie Boys
14. *Explorations 1*, *Ubiquity records compilation album*
15. *Sixteen Stone*, by Bush
16. *Foo Fighters eponymous debut album*
17. *Hed Phone Sex*, by Funky Porcini
18. *The Sound Gallery compilation album*
19. *Live at the Hollywood Palace*, by King Sunny Ade
20. Soundtrack to the film *Superfly*, by Curtis Mayfield

...and finally a big mention for *Chocolate Elvis*, by Kruder & Dorfmeister. Not only is it a killer single, but it also has the smartest name since *Paddock of Love*, by Lubricated Goat.



# the trichord phenomenon

For a modest fee, Trichord Research will give your CD player a heart transplant that set the critics raving. Paul Miller has been investigating the Clock 2 open-player surgery.

**W**hat enthusiast has not been intrigued by the controversy surrounding the 'Trichord phenomenon'? Is this proprietary clock upgrade a sure-fire transformation for your ageing CD player, or is something less predictable at work? In the next three pages, all will be revealed...

Trichord's £141 *Clock 2* modification consists of a small PCB (Printed Circuit Board) that must be hooked up, piggy-back style, to a convenient power supply line within the CD player. This operation is best performed by Trichord or one of its dealers.

This board houses a discrete, custom-specified crystal oscillator module (within a square screening can) which is fed from a high quality, RF-decoupled 3A regulator. Depending on system frequency of the CD player, the clock may vary between 11.3MHz (Philips-based players), 16.9MHz (most Far Eastern players), 33.8MHz (Technics' MASH machines) or even 45MHz (Sony PLM players).

Once installed, the Trichord board effectively replaces the player's existing master clock in an attempt to improve its

stability (reducing any fundamental error to <math><5\text{ppm}</math>) and its immunity from cross-modulation via the power supply. All laudable stuff that is conceived to reduce levels of jitter, improve the accuracy of D/A conversion and in the process help the player achieve its full subjective potential.

## The Proof of the Pudding

Both unmodified and *Clock 2*-modified versions of Denon *DCD-825* and Pioneer *PD-S703* CD players were auditioned by our blind panel at matched listening levels, using an A/B/X technique to cross-check 'repeatable' versus 'imagined' differences between the pairs of players.

In the event there wasn't a huge difference observed between the sound of modified and unmodified *DCD-825s*. Where a preference was expressed, however, the unmodified player was criticised for lacking 'speed and attack', suffering a slight lack of stereo focus and crispness.

By contrast the modified player was thought to possess more leading-edge detail despite emphasising sibilance from the likes of Cassandra Williams' *In My Kitchen*. Bass generally had more power and solidity while the main violin from Mendelssohn's concerto was more clearly positioned just as the accompanying orchestra enjoyed a better defined sense of urgency. In tandem with this extra zest, however, its music also sounded slightly brighter and dirtier.

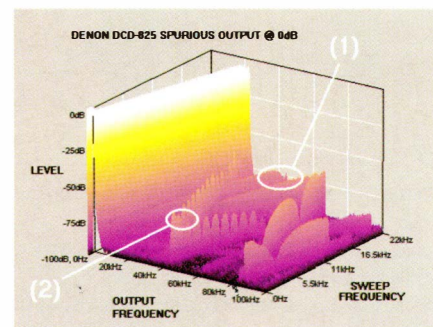
A greater difference was observed between modified and unmodified Pioneer *PD-S703s*. The basic character of the player, that of a rounded, smooth and slightly manipulative sound was retained. Yet the modified version was criticised for its restricted dynamic range

and reduced tonal shading.

'This is a difference rather than an improvement' our listeners' suggested 'trading what appears to be a slightly smoother and better defined sound for a loss in dynamics, crispness and speed'. Freddie Hubbard's brass certainly lacked its customary verve while the weird El Malo sounded 'tamer', its compressed dynamics ensuring the entire performance was 'less exciting'.

## The Ingredients of the Pudding

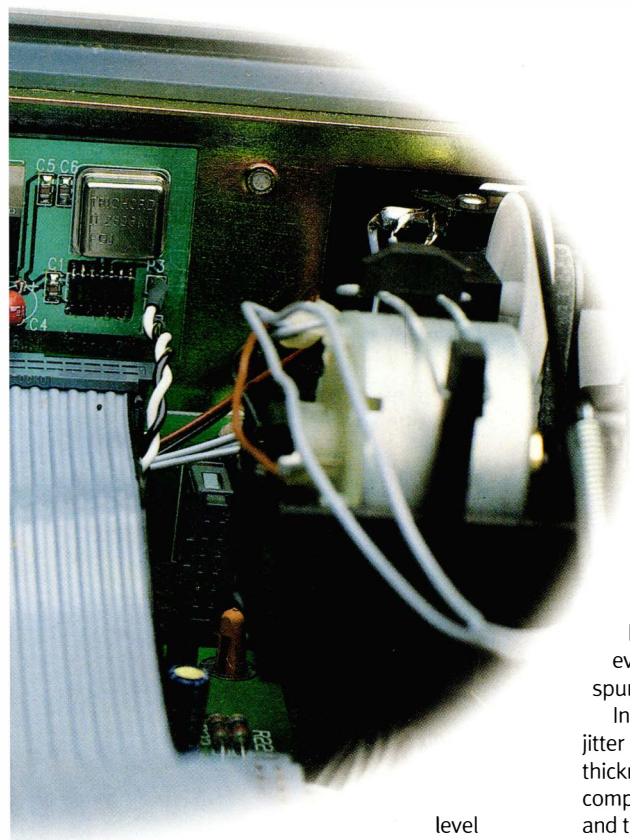
These subjective results indicate a very different outcome for the modification of both Denon and Pioneer players. Fortunately, our application of advanced VI technology (issue 143) helps to explain precisely what is going on. Indeed, the only feature common to the 'upgrade' of both players is an improvement in basic clock accuracy from -80ppm to -0.5ppm (Denon) and from -26ppm to +2ppm (Pioneer).



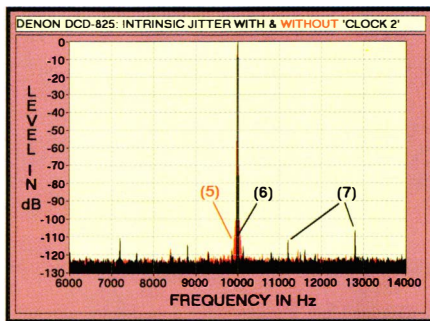
Otherwise the Denon *DCD-825* demonstrates no significant change in distortion (1) (0.0022-0.07 per cent at 0dB), rejection of stopband noise (2) (54dB), low-



Just a humble Pioneer CD player on the outside — but see what's inside...



level linearity (+0.6dB/-2.5dB over a full 100dB range) or frequency response once modified.

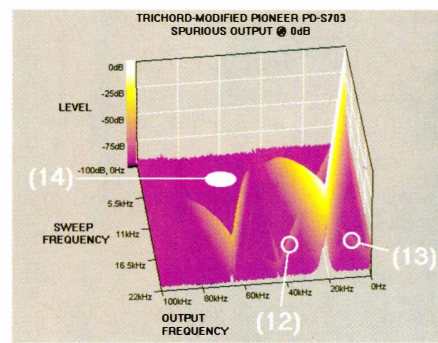


At lower levels still, we find the player's overall S/N ratio has fallen from 111.9dB to 110.6dB (A-wtd). Meanwhile the low-rate jitter suffered by the standard *DCD-825* (5) has clearly been banished by the *Clock 2* mod (6), even though this is at the expense of more spurious high-rate jitter (7).

In general, very low frequency or low-rate jitter brings about a general confusion, a thickness or muddling of the sound, compromising the solidity of stereo images and the spaciousness of the music's soundstaging. High-rate jitter, meanwhile, introduces traditional gritty-sounding digital distortions that are often mistaken for 'extra attack or detail'. This fully explains the

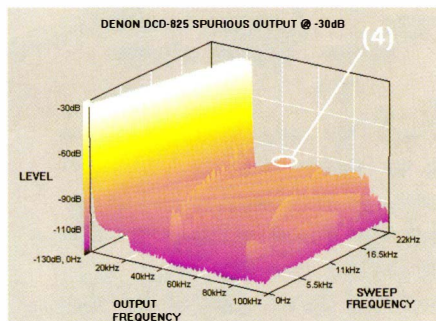
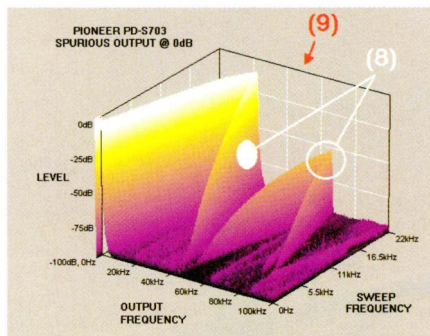
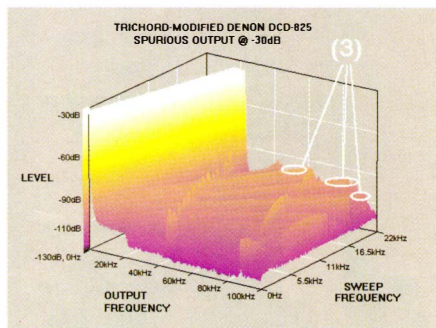
Now we can see 3rd harmonic distortion (10) (typ. 0.002-0.007 per cent) plus an in-band sampling image (11) from behind these huge stopband images (8). However, it does seem that Pioneer has engineered its budget *PD-S703* player very 'close to the edge', with on-board power supply resources that are adequate for the basic player but are severely stretched by the demands placed upon it by Trichord's *Clock 2* board.

The upshot of this additional stress is increased levels of noise on the power supply feeding both the PD2029A oversampler/DAC and analogue op-amp.



So, once modified, there is a 30-fold increase in 2nd harmonic distortion (12) (0.04 per cent) and in-band sampling images (13) (typ. -75dB). In addition, there is a massive increase in noise, clearly evident from the colour of the 3D plot (14).

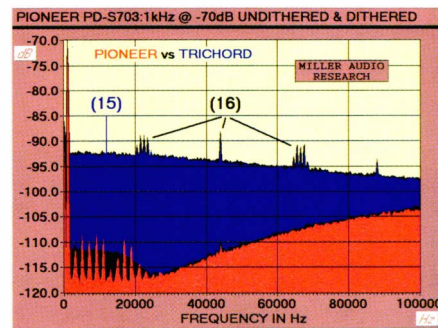
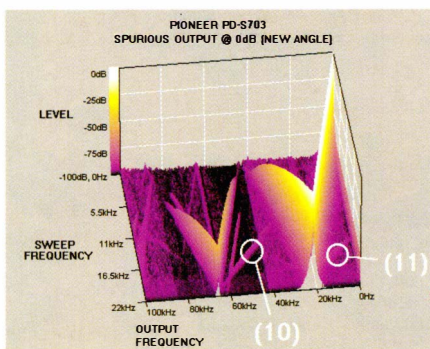
Low-level signals are modulated (or bounced) by this noise which, in turn, accounts for the small differences in linearity detected between the original and Trichord *Clock 2*-modified players.



difference in sound quality between modified and unmodified *DCD-825*'s.

Pioneer's player is an entirely different kettle of chips, not least because its Legato Link digital filter throws up huge stopband images (8). So this data must be viewed from another angle (9).

At -30dB, where much of the musical action takes place, distortion remains between 0.07-0.16 per cent on both unmodified and modified players. However the complement of this distortion has clearly altered with 3rd, 4th and 5th harmonics (3) shifting in level relative to the 2nd harmonic (4) which remains stronger on the unmodified Denon *DCD-825* player.



The influence of this added noise (15) is most obvious from the -70dB plot which clearly illustrates the deterioration in S/N from 103dB (unmodified) to just 78dB (modified) together with an increase in sampling distortions (16). This is the poorest signal to noise ratio I have encountered for any CD player and is equivalent to reducing the practical dynamic range to little more than a meagre 14 bits.

# Home Entertainment

M A G A Z I N E

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### It's a bird! It's a plane!

No it's Shaquille O'Neal airwalking his way to jamming another basket for Orlando. In our sport on film special, find out why Hollywood is obsessed with basketball, and why the world is still waiting for a half-decent footie film.

### Wow! They're enormous!

Ever seen a TV so big that it dwarfs the 'scrapers in the Gotham City skyline?! We scaled three mighty monoliths from Sony, Philips and Pioneer and put them through the kind of tests that only superhero sets could survive.

### 'Holy Cheese! It's an earthquake!'

'Chill out, caped crusader! It's only Boom Boy (a once ordinary home cinema system reviewer who was bitten by a radioactive bass bin) testing the scariest active subwoofers this side of The Marvel Universe.'



### Wonder TV

The surround sound TV brigade must face its most dangerous foe: 3D-Phonic TV. It has created a superhuman Dolby Logic set that doesn't need rear speakers. Will this be the end of civilised surround sound as we know it?

### Kerpow!

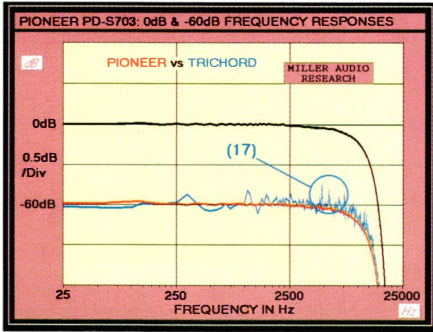
...Go your rear speakers! *Thwack!* The front pair joins in. *Boom!* Your subwoofer explodes. You're enjoying a surround sound session of epic proportions and you haven't even got your TV switched on. Find out which CDs, games, and radio shows have mega sound effects.

**Plus** Amazing feats of heroism as we review every new movie released for home consumption and spin a web so large it catches all the top new TVs, VCRs and surround sound gear on the market.

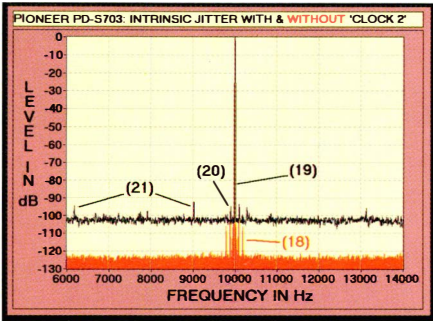
# You'd be a joker to miss it. On sale 21 July







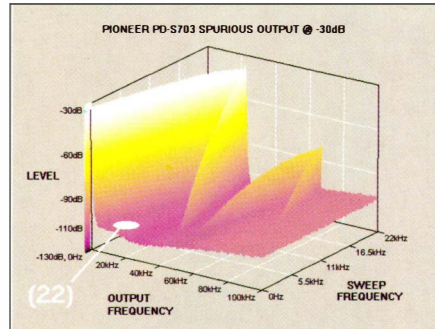
Additional evidence is supplied by comparing the -60dB frequency responses of original (red) and modified (blue) players, the latter clearly infested with significant quantities of broad-band noise (17). But is the intrinsic level of digital jitter improved by the *Clock 2* modification?



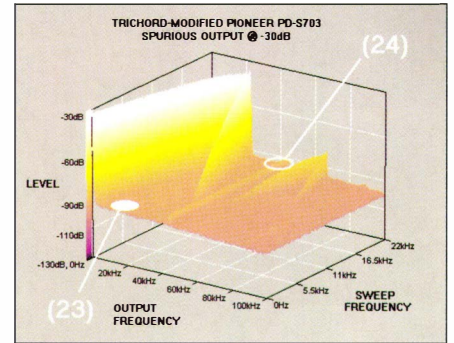
Sadly, the answer is no. This plot shows that the original *PD-S703* suffers some low-rate jitter (visible as the broadening of the red peak near its base) plus some simple mains-induced jitter at +/-100Hz and +/-200Hz (18).

The signal derived from the modified player seems sharp enough (19) but its dynamic range is clearly restricted by the 20dB increase in noise. Moreover, the level of mains-induced jitter has increased (20) by 8dB along with the emergence of additional, spurious high-rate components (21).

Previously unaware of these side-effects, Trichord subsequently re-routed the *Clock 2* power supply feed from its original point on the main board to a new position immediately off the bridge rectifier on this hot-rodged *PD-S703*. This improved the modified player's S/N by some 5-6dB, although the spurious jitter sidebands (20 & 21) remained unaltered. This demonstrated the influence of *Clock 2* is highly critical of both the CD player's power supply regulation and layout.



Finally, the observations of our listening panel concerning the modified player's 'compressed dynamics' are graphically illustrated by first viewing the wide and distortion-free 110dB range achieved by the original player (22) and then comparing it with the reduced



90dB range of the modified player (23) along with its additional 44.1kHz spurious sampling tone (24). Once again, this shows the effects of placing unforeseen stress on a power supply that has already been honed down for a specific application.

**Conclusion**

Clearly, such an 'upgrade' cannot be generally recommended at this stage, not only for its unpredictable effect with different players but also for its invalidation of existing guarantees and potential compromise of EMC compliance (see our feature on this subject in the September issue). However, Trichord does guarantee the clock module and any work that it carries out. And should you decide that *Clock 2* is not your cup of tea the company will remove the module, refund you and return the player to its nominal standard specification.

Given that results seem to vary from player to player we'd be interested in hearing from those of you who have had machines clocked or indeed anyone who has an opinion on the matter. The *Clock* debate starts here.



Will the Denon *DCD-825* CD player and Trichord's *Clock 2* prove perfect partners?



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# 21<sup>st</sup> century fox

**A new JVC television claims to produce five speakers' worth of surround sound from two built-in drivers. Barry Fox investigates.**

**H**i-fi and movie buffs like to have a home cinema system with a Dolby Pro-Logic surround sound decoder feeding five loudspeakers round the room — three at the front and two at the rear. However, buffs' beloved ones usually veto anything more than two loudspeakers at the front — preferably the size of a pea or built into the TV set. In the end, they usually settle for two big ones, as long as there are only two. So, the ideal solution for a 'harmonic home' would be a two-speaker Pro-Logic system...

Two years ago, Panasonic tried to create a surround effect with rear speakers at the front of the room and angling them so that the sound bounced off the walls and seemed to come from behind. But bouncing sound was not a commercial success. You get phase effects if the room is too lively and no effects if the room is too dead.

Now JVC is offering a way of electronically processing the sound intended for five loudspeakers and feeding it to two. JVC's system, which it variously calls 'Dolby Pro-Logic 3D-Phonic', 'Pro-Logic 3D-Phonic' and 'Pro Logic 3D-PHONIC' in the same announcement, builds on technology called BiPhonics, which JVC developed in the '70s during the craze for quadrasonic sound.

Several rival quadrasonic systems relied on four loudspeakers, one in each corner of the room. Buffs' loved ones quickly sprang into action to object, but their worries soon faded. As fate would have it, the systems died anyway, mainly because there were so many of them — all incompatible and with only mediocre improvements in the sound quality on offer.

BiPhonics itself was built on binaural sound. That's the dramatic surround sound effect created when the left ear only hears the sound recorded by a microphone to the left of an orchestra, and the right ear only hears the sound from the right. Binaural is regularly re-invented. The latest iteration, Thorn EMI's Sensaura, was launched last year. But when I last asked EMI's Record division about Sensaura releases, I couldn't find anyone who knew what Sensaura was.

Binaural stereo surround usually

works only with headphones. When sound is emitted by loudspeakers, the left and right halves mix in the room and are heard by both ears. BiPhonics compensated for this by playing two tricks with the signals before they reached the speakers. A tiny part of the signal from one channel was bled into the other channel, with the bled sound slightly delayed and deliberately out of step or phase. This meant that sound from one speaker cancelled out the unwanted sound from the other.

BiPhonics surround died with quadrasonics because it relied on analogue delay lines, which were imprecise and added unwelcome hiss to the music. Only one or two people could hear the effect, and they had to sit in a very tightly defined position in the middle of the room.

Updated by JVC, the new system uses digital circuits, which add no hiss and are much more accurate. A standard Dolby Pro-Logic decoder delivers five channels of sound to the 3-D Phonic processor, which condenses them into two channels, fed to two loudspeakers, one on either side of the TV screen.

JVC recently flew a hundred lucky retailers to Athens for a demonstration; they later told me that 3-D Phonic worked well as long as they sat cosily on a three seat sofa in a carefully chosen position in the room. However, Dolby Laboratories, who licence Pro-Logic, objected that this requirement is too limiting. JVC therefore delayed press demonstrations and reviews.

"We didn't co-develop or approve JVC's 3-D Phonics," says David Fraser at Dolby's Licensing Operations. "We believe you need all five speakers to get the full effect."

JVC counters with the argument that five speaker surround is flawed, as people sitting too near the back of the room only hear the rear speakers.

Early in June, we finally got to hear 3D Phonics working, under ideal conditions; a few people at a time on a sofa in a quiet hotel room, with the chance to switch the new effect on and off. With the system 'on', there is an airiness about the sound which spreads well outside the TV set, much like the super stereo effect of some hi-fis.

But however hard I tried, and however much I wanted to hear surround from the rear, there just wasn't any. An experienced home cinema listener who was in the same room at the same time independently drew exactly the same conclusion.

I'd say Dolby are right, you do need five speakers for Dolby Surround.

The powers of suggestion are, however, very strong. And the *Symphonix* TV set is very easy on the eye. With high profile publicity, JVC may well sell 3-D Phonic TV sets to people who can't abide extra speakers and then grow to assume that this is the way Dolby Pro-Logic is supposed to sound. Whether Dolby Labs is happy for the Pro-Logic trademark to be used this way remains to be seen.

For me the most interesting thing about 3-D Phonics is the news that the system can be used to deliver Pro-Logic surround to stereo headphones. It presents the opportunity for warring couples to reach a new compromise. One half gets to have a TV with two quiet speakers, while the other half gets to watch *The Fugitive* at deafening level in surround through headphones.

This could also have an impact on airlines. Long haul passengers already get stereo headphones. With 3-D Phonic they could have movies in surround. But only if the movie studios stop supplying mono soundtracks to airlines.

**Can JVC's new 3-D Phonic system really offer surround sound without the speakers?**



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## Aswad's Fourth Symphony

I've read a lot about hi-fi recently, and have noticed that your *Help!* pages are always full of problems of the "too laid back", "speakers too forward", "not enough bass", "lacks transparency" variety.

Isn't it about time for a change in the way hi-fi is tested? If a dozen CD players are on test and a Best Buy tag is given, you should name the amp and speakers that are best suited and ones to avoid. Surely this would help avoid mis-matching.

How many times do we read that a particular Best Buy CD player would sound 'a bit thin' in the wrong system? It's the same with amps; some sound great if you're into classical music, but wouldn't suit reggae fans and vice versa. Speakers also play a major role in what the end-product sounds like.

I was brought up to believe that hi-fi is all about how low and how high — and not how loud — a system goes. It seems

that hi-fi has lost its way of late, despite advances in technology. If components aren't matched well, a system can sound too bright or too dull, even with the best-designed components.

**CS May, Scunthorpe**

## Panel play

Paul Messenger's letter (Issue 143) mentions the subtle (and successful) enclosure design of the Spondor BC1 and asks whether Deflex damping would offer any advantage over the delicate compromise achieved by the manufacturer. Unless the bitumen is new, then I suggest it will: Deflex Panels are made from high memory plastic and do not dry out. My experience of modifying speakers suggests that when bitumen is fitted to cabinet walls, it often dries out and can become brittle and crumbly. Rather than damp out cabinet resonance it just rattles along to the music.

**J Morris, Clwyd**

## Techno nightmare

I read your magazine avidly and enjoy your no-nonsense reviews. However, articles on matching various components seem to be studiously ignored in *Choice*, which is very frustrating. If we have to have articles on measured performance by Paul Miller, then why not advice on system matching in plain English so that the average reader can get the benefit. Paul Miller's latest article — *The Virtual Laboratory* (issue 143) — was a nightmare to read, let alone understand.

I appreciate that we all have our individual tastes in hi-fi sound, but surely your readers would be interested in reading your suggestions so that when it comes to making up their own minds about good combinations the process will be easier. In the letters section you give advice to hi-fi upgraders — why not

expand on it and do a special feature on system matching?

**V Romiszewski, Carshalton**

Hi-Fi Choice tries to cover every aspect of hi-fi. Agreed, Paul Miller's recent *Virtual Laboratory* article was not the most easily accessible, but it was about a highly technical subject. Such articles may be dense, but are extremely useful to those of a technical bent who are after the bigger picture. When it comes to system-based reviews, watch this space. We will soon incorporate regular system advice into *Choice*.

**Alan Sircom, Reviews Editor**

## Cookin', US style

The article *American Excess* (July 1995), on The Stereophile High End Show in Los Angeles got me cookin'.

Andy Giles' personal dislike for all things American was on display throughout the piece. Is he upset that the US market is more buoyant than the UK market, and therefore feels the need to mount a personal attack in which his allegiances to the BFA and others were made cringeingly plain on numerous occasions?

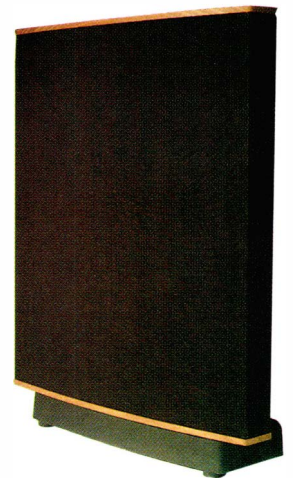
Giles should have asked why the show was so "well attended", why there was so "much enthusiasm in the corridors" and how UK show organisers could learn from their US counterparts. The shrinking market for hi-fi reflects on and is compounded by poorly-organised and ill-attended UK shows.

If I was American, I would feel insulted by the whole tone of the piece. Indeed, it insulted the intelligence of a largely knowledgeable readership. It did nothing to help an industry badly in need of a break. This was pointless, damaging journalism in what is otherwise a fast-improving magazine.

**Mark Browell**

**Wollaton Audio, Nottingham**

## Upgrade Wars



Quad ESL63: "not half bad" according to Mrs Lach

If there's one thing you can bet on, it's that the wife will never acknowledge the benefits of an upgrade. It doesn't matter if you're going from a Sherwood AI-2210 to an *Ongaku*, as far as she's concerned, "it's just more noise". So, imagine my surprise when Russ Andrews waved his magic wand over my ESL63s. "Hey, that's not half bad," she said. Well \*\*\*\* me, there is a God. Thanks Russ.

**Daniel Lach**

**100031.2564@compuserve.com**

*The piece was intended as a light-hearted overview of a brilliantly organised show. It was written with wry observation on the Americans attending as an alternative to the standard room-by-room show report.*

*At heart, the US market is no more buoyant than the UK's. It is growing faster but that's due to the earlier recovery that has taken place in the US. I have been travelling to the US for 20 years and on the whole I love the place and its peoples. I was in California at my own expense and have many friends there, including both the show organiser and Stereophile's publisher. Andy Giles*

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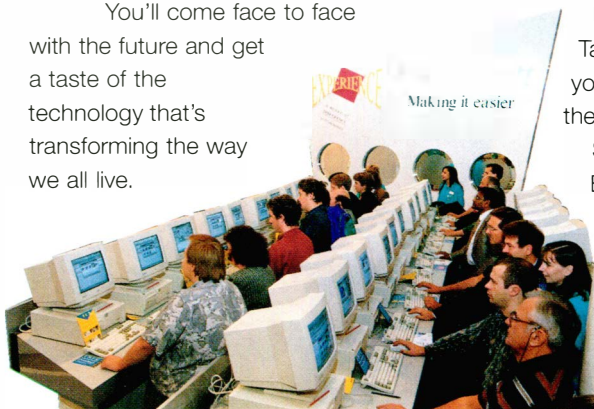
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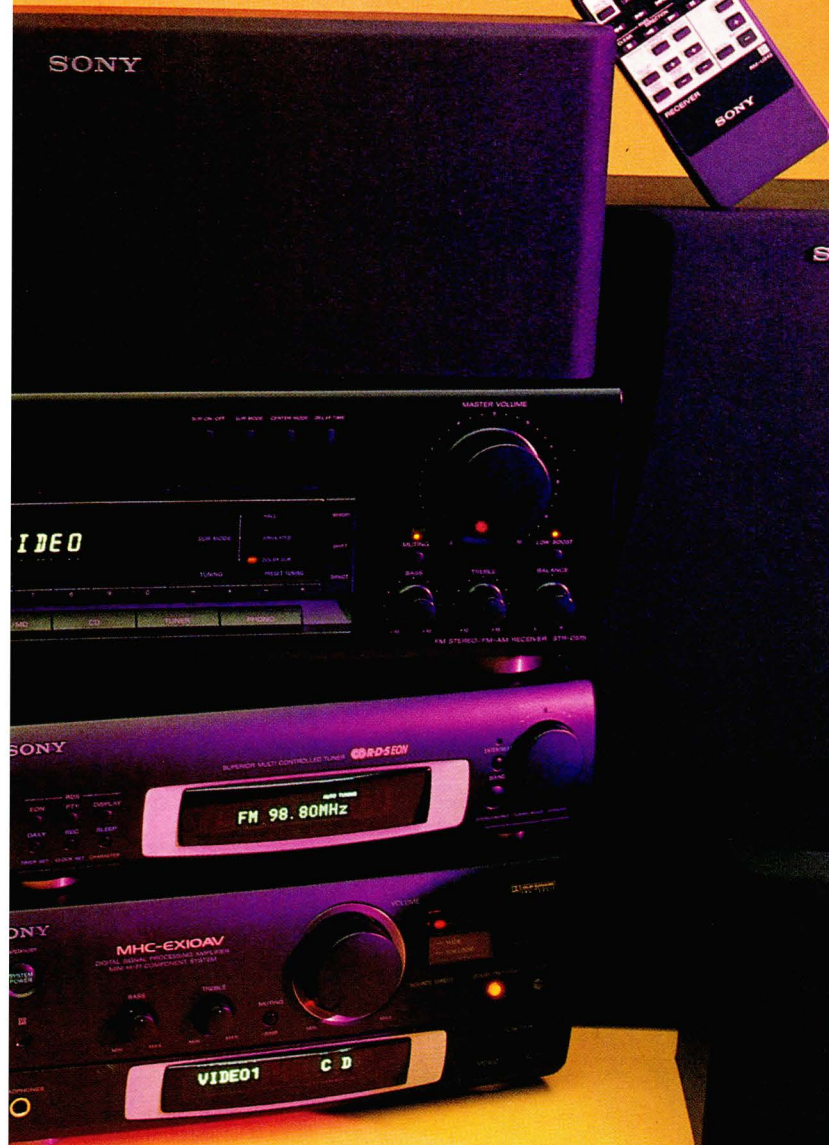
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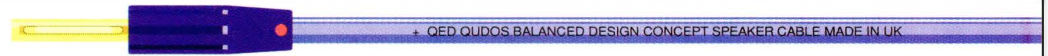


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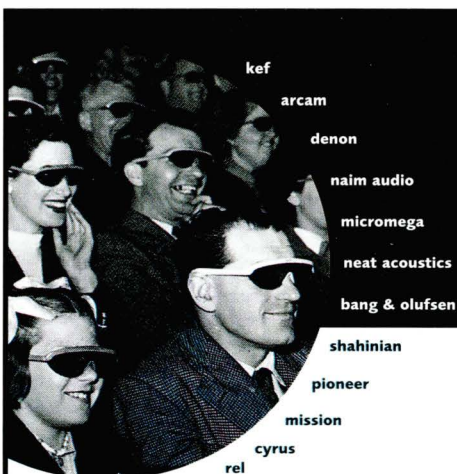
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Alan Sircom begins a new series of subjective cable reviews, with the emphasis on complete outfits from just one manufacturer.



**T**he cable world is a nightmare of complexity and confusion. It sometimes seems that for every company making hi-fi hardware, there are three cable companies struggling to hook up a living. Many of these companies rely on a single interconnect or speaker cable, but the larger cable suppliers have entire families of cables.

While *Choice* has a reputation for the finest tests of individual cables, testing speaker and signal cable together defeats the object of a blind test, as more than one parameter of the system is changed. Therefore, rather than completely overlooking the synergistic match, we decided to give non-technical overviews of some of the key families of cables, suggesting in what systems they may be applicable. This in no way undermines any blind-test cable showdowns past or future, but is meant to simply highlight any magic combinations that may miss the blind eye of our panel.

To this end, the cable combinations were tested in a range of matched systems, ranging from the mid-priced to the high-end. We also included a low-powered valve amp in the tests, as these can show up any difficulties in driveability. The cables were tested in families and individually, comparing wherever possible to a known reference at the price. The reference cables and electronics are largely arbitrary; they are simply products I am familiar with.

## Cable Talk

Resolutely British in its approach, Cable Talk's popular Cable Talk 3 speaker cable has dominated the low and mid end of the speaker cable market since its introduction. Very similar to Linn, Naim and Exposure speaker cables, Cable Talk 3 is admirably copper-heavy and down to earth.

Its construction has changed little since the early days, but today's bi-wire Cable Talk 3 (£4.50 per metre) has two sets of 42-strand 0.3mm 6N copper conductors, kept apart by a dark-blue PVC dielectric sleeve. This is complemented by the new purple *Monitor 2* interconnect (£50 per pair). It's a straight-forward four-core copper cable, using 0.2mm 6N copper filaments. Three of the foil-wrapped filaments are used for the signal itself (one of these is reversed as a return); the third is an RF drain wire, connected at the CD end only.

This combo is full, weighty and powerful, especially when partnered with British-style equipment. It sang with products like the Arcam *Delta 290* amp and the Epos *ES14* speakers, adding a touch of zest without too much zing. On such systems, Cable Talk's combo possessed a fine sense of control. For example, on *Woodcutter's Son* from the superb *Stanley Road* CD by Paul Weller, the bass and drums shifted into a higher gear, yet the piano and organ still stayed up in the mix (if the tonal balance of the cables is not spot

on, these instruments often disappear behind the guitar and percussion).

Taken on their own, both cables worked in broadly the same direction and could confidently be recommended separately. The new Cable Talk 3 was slightly two-dimensional and blurred when put under serious signal pressure. Adding the *Monitor 2* helped matters greatly, improving the image depth and seemingly the dynamic headroom of the speakers at the same time.

Both sounded a trifle brash and loud when hooked up to a more high-end system, made up of two-box CD, valve amplifier and a pair of even-handed loudspeakers. However, in fairness, most cables of the price and design will give a broadly similar performance in this context, and this makes Cable Talk the stuff of low-cost systems.

## Transparent Audio

American cable manufacturers often wrap their product in the sort of hyperbole that sticks in the throat of the more conservative British audio buyer. Fortunately, there is less hype than normal surrounding Transparent Audio's *Wave* speaker cable (£22.84 per metre) and *Link* (£92) interconnect. These are at the lower end of a range that stretches up into megabuck territory. The *Wave* and *Link* are also free from filter boxes that are a signature of the more expensive Transparent

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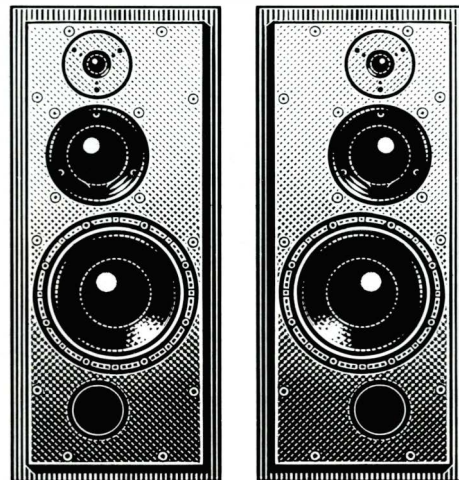
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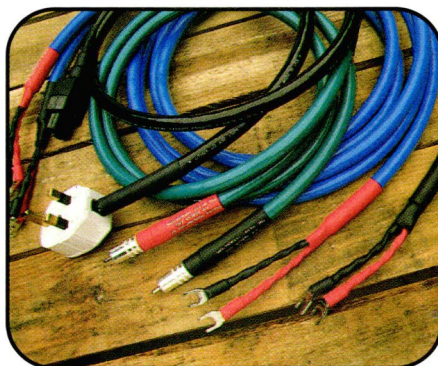
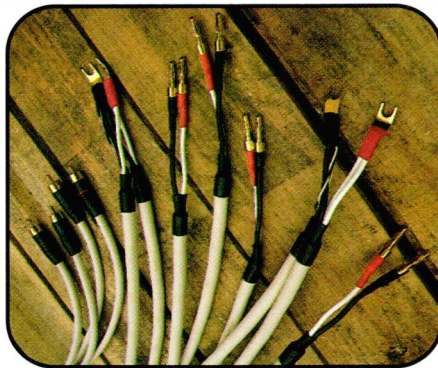
cables. Both use a straightforward twisted twin copper core design; the *Wave* cable has a drain wire terminated at one end only.

Where these Transparent cables score is in their neutrality. They aren't as up-beat and zingy as cheaper cables, but have an admirable 'no-cable' invisibility. Imagery, coherence and detail, especially inner detail; everything is portrayed without ring or artifice. They have a slightly dark tone, but one that's never bass-heavy or moody. This type of sound will score highly with classical enthusiasts: The Sixteen's rendition of Bach's Mass in B Minor had a sense of balance and poise that was more honest than forthright. On a fast-paced rock system, one may prefer the added zing of a brighter, cheaper cable, even though more detail is presented by the more transparent Transparent (sorry, couldn't resist that).

Balance and coherence are the words that sum up the Transparent Audio sound, all wrapped up in a remarkably grain-free package. This can make a less-well-matched system sound rather anodyne, however, so you need to get the rest of your system sorted before going Transparent. In the States, Transparent Audio suggests that the user should spend at least ten per cent of the total cost of the system on cables (but they would, wouldn't they?). As I would recommend using the Transparent cables with even-toned systems in the £1500-£5000 range, the ten per cent rule seems too arbitrary, but it's more accurate than one might believe at first.

Two small observations should be made. First, the *Link* interconnect cable has a very slight bloom in the upper bass. This only adds to the warmth of the system's sound and is not a criticism, especially when used with a bare-faced preamplifier or CD player. Instead, this is more like a deliberate attempt to smooth out a shortcoming inherent in many low and mid-priced products. Second, this cable is a somewhat capacitive and demanding load for a low-powered amplifier. While for almost every other application this would pose no difficulty at all, one should be aware that Transparent Cables and three-Watt triodes are not a match made in heaven.

This cable duo would be perfect to hook up to a pair of well-balanced speakers, like Rogers or ProAcs; to decent amplifiers such as the Quad 77, Audio Research *LS7/VT60*, Copland *CSA14* or similar; and a tidy-sounding CD player of the Marantz *CD-16* or Quad *67* school. This contrasts greatly with the sort of systems that the Cable Talk family matches well. This is not to say that Transparent Audio cables will not work with British 'flat-earth' systems mentioned above (they add a healthy weight and ease to them) but simply that they suit slightly more even-sounding systems with their roots firmly planted in high-end soil. If you have to use a cable to correct imbalances in your system, pass Transparent swiftly by. Otherwise, this is one of the finest cable systems you can buy at the price.



Cables and interconnects from Cable Talk (inset, page 49), Transparent Audio (top), and Cardas (above)

### Cardas

Manufacturer hype doesn't get any more florid than that of George Cardas. Printed on recycled paper, Cardas Audio information is broken up into single-sentence stanzas. "This ring becomes a song/sung to the resonance/ of the alternating current." Very Zen.

Cardas's cables stretch from the relatively cheap *300B-Microtwin* (£115 per metre pair) to the five-metre set of *Hexlink Golden-Five C* speaker cable that, at £1750, sends a shiver through even the deepest wallet. From that range I tested the £360 Cardas *Cross* interconnect, a 1.5m set of *Quadlink-Five* speaker cables at £250, and a 1.5m long power cord, the £210 *Hexlink-Five C*. All are sheathed in a neat PTFE-like outer shield of myriad colours. Beneath this casing lies Cardas's patented cable stranding. Each strand of cable is laid to avoid sharing common nodes or resonant points, in accordance with the 'golden ratio' or the Fibonacci sequence, as used in everything from architecture to classical painting. This is said to eliminate stray resonances produced by alternating current and other influences. The company also patented the use of smaller strands toward the centre of the cable, which is claimed to reduce inductively stored energy and overcome cable resonance. These concepts are considered to be of greater importance than the cable material, though the company uses high-purity copper Litz throughout, with PTFE and air dielectrics.

I have rarely encountered cables this expensive and, in fairness, my system probably doesn't have the resolving power to unveil all the changes that these Cardas

cables brought about. One thing, however, is clear: if a chain is only as good as its weakest link, you can be sure that the weak link in my system was not the Cardas cables. I have never heard my equipment sound as detailed or as smooth as it did with this stuff.

Music is possessed of easy dynamics and considerable grace, yet the overall balance is not so smooth that the sound is corrupted or bland. Although we claim that we have an exclusive on musicality on this side of the pond, Cardas undermines that idea. These cables give detail without a hint of brightness. Those glib, prissy phrases found in American hi-fi mags — microdynamics, liquidity and dimensionality — lose their hyperbole and take on significance, even with decidedly un-American tracks like *Radiation Ruling the Nation* from Massive Attack v Mad Professor.

Cardas (*Cross* in particular) makes almost every other cable sound aggressive and pinched. Paradoxically, Cardas was not the type of cable that sounds like 'no-cable', yet the sound it produced was neither coloured nor subtractive. Cardas must be the Good Times cable of audio, making all it touches as honest as possible. Only the finest silver cables can do better.

In the right system, Audio Note cable can sound free, open, dynamic and more musical than almost any other cable around. In the wrong system, however, it sounds like you've slugged the system with a couple of heavy-weight capacitors. Cardas cables have the same dynamic freedom and musicality, but with the advantage of being more universal.

Finally, I am very sceptical of fancy mains cables. Granted, they can make a difference, but I often wonder if it is really a step forward. If all mains cables made as big an improvement as the Cardas, I'd wire up my kettle.

### Conclusion

It's very fortunate that with three different cable systems at three price points, all three have plenty to offer different users. If you have a humble, fun and typically British system, Cable Talk's bouncy boppy nature is the perfect complement. If you have progressed into even-handed high-end systems, Transparent Audio is the one for you, and if you are the sort of person who demands the best wine, the best car and the best hi-fi, then get your butler to hook up some Cardas forthwith.

**Cable Talk:** Cable Talk, Unit 12, Farnborough Business Centre, Eelmoor Road, Farnborough, Hampshire GU14 7XA.  
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**Transparent Audio:** Absolute Sounds Ltd, 58 Durham Road, London SW20 0DE.  
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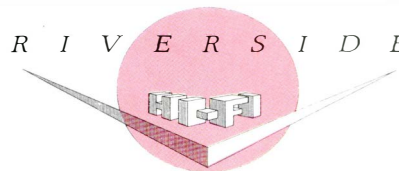


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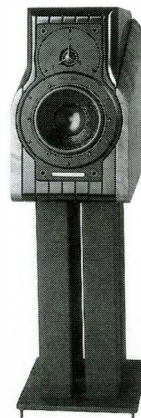
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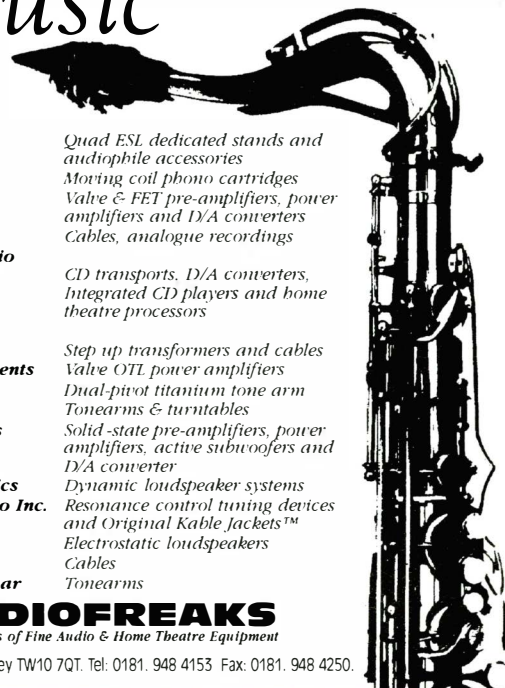
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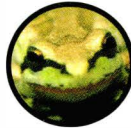
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# HI-FI CHOICE



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Bravely will Sir Alvin Gold joust with a dozen multi-headed beasts of **Cassette Deckke**. And there will be much rejoicing and toasts of y<sup>e</sup> ffynest tape cleaner.

### Gadzooks

Two evergreen **hi-fi classics** gambol and frolic with a hey nonny nonny. Verily these products doth compare favourably to new stuffe. And there will be much rejoicing and sipping of flagons of mead.

### Lawks a Lordy

September **Sessions** shall cleave thee in twain with wonder at Sony's latest CD player. Court jester Jimmy Hughes runs hither and thither through y<sup>e</sup> New Forest of Audio. And there will be much rejoicing and feasting upon suckling pig.



### God's Teeth

Bawdy yeoman of the bard Jason Kennedy goes on a crusade, as he uses y<sup>e</sup> ffynest alchemy to turn molten ResinRock into **Mordaunt-Short Performance 860** speakers. And once again there will be much rejoicing and boiling of oil.

### Plusse

Wynne wonderful Alpine in-car systems • Wynne fine Solid speaker systems • Learne y<sup>e</sup> storyes of y<sup>e</sup> Merrie Wyffe of Bath, y<sup>e</sup> Noone (a Prioress), y<sup>e</sup> Shepherd and y<sup>e</sup> Reeve • Plentie more ffyne stuffe\*.

### Get thee to y<sup>e</sup> Shoppe

September's issue (warts 'n' all) will be in y<sup>e</sup> shoppe on Friday 11 August, in y<sup>e</sup> year of Our Lord, nineteen hundred and ninety five. May God have mercy on our souls.

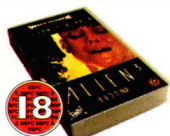


\*Except for the stories, they're in Chaucer's 'The Canterbury Tales'

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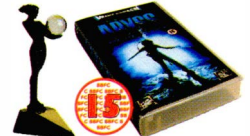
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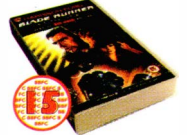
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# revisiting audio

# HELL

**H**ave you ever upgraded your hi-fi, only to find that you're dissatisfied with your purchase within months or even weeks? You've been to Audio Hell. But if you're prepared to change the way you listen to new equipment, there is a way out.

We often approach component assessment with the hope of hearing something that we already accept as very good, but with more information, detail, resolution, dynamics and so on. In other words, what we've liked so far, but better. Very compelling, very linear, and unfortunately very misleading. The problem with this approach is that it assumes there is a fundamental correctness about our reference system and our evaluation methodology. After all, we spend countless hours listening to endless components and combinations thereof, and pay big bucks for them. How could we be on the wrong track altogether? Under the circumstances, how could we even imagine ourselves to be on the wrong track?

So many of us are in Audio Hell not because we're suckers for consumerism (though this does play a part), but because we choose new components with a methodology that more or less guarantees it. We choose a component or system on the basis that it satisfies our taste for particular sonic effects — I call them 'musical theatre effects' — as presented by selected recordings. For instance, when listening to a recording of a harpsichord concerto, we apply our notions of soloist/orchestra balance to what we want to hear. We may feel that the harpsichord should be presented at a certain distance and size; or that it should be of a certain weight; or that it should be buried in the orchestral texture, yet still distinct.

## Comparison by reference

We make assumptions about the 'reference' recordings we use, based on our past experience with them in other audio systems, and in

*Ever found that upgrading your system only keeps you happy for a few weeks? Tube aficionado Leonard Norwitz believes that finding a way out of this 'audio hell' depends on choosing hi-fi that reveals the variety in recordings*

this way come to believe that we 'know' what they should sound like. We then use these recordings as evaluating tools. When sound approximates to our notions of correctness (especially in systems we come to believe are similarly 'referential'), and more information is delivered on 'better' systems, we believe ourselves to be on the right track. And why not? The problem is that we refer back to the sound in our memory. Since we have come to use these recordings more or less reliably in a variety of systems, we come to believe in the validity of the test. It is plausible, however, that there appears to be a sufficient degree of similarity of presentation from these recordings simply because the systems are not as different from one another as we would like to believe, or because these recordings aren't sufficiently engaging to permit us to respond to the communicative potential of the music.

Some of us are sophisticated enough to point to 'correctness of timbre' as evidence that system X is better than system Y. And some lucky listeners can make comparisons with the recording session they were privy to... as if any recording or recording equipment is accurate enough to convey real musical timbres or an exactly similar realisation of the live musical event. With all the inaccuracies of recording method and playback components combined in infinite permutations, it is likely that a semblance of 'correctness of timbre' could just be a confluence of near misses and mishaps.

## The illusion of the live reference

Let's say that you're present at the recording of the aforementioned harpsichord concerto. If the recording is made with more than a single microphone, how could you position yourself in the room to get an accurate understanding of how the array of microphones will translate into the mix of sound? And even if you could do that, would you know how the recording electronics and wires affect the manufactured software? The problem is multiplied when we consider that few pop recordings are entirely acoustic and that artists aren't always recorded at the same time or venue. Given that it's impossible to know what's really on a recording, how can we rely on our predilections about instrumental balance and timbres in a way that confidently leads us to a purchase?

At some level we seem to know this, because many of us resort to more manageable and perceivable musical theatre effects such as the height, width, and depth of the stage; or the relationship of the instruments on the stage; or the balance of vocal to instruments, or the shape and size of the vocal; or the frequency balance; or textual intelligibility. All of these things certainly play a part in our enjoyment of the audio experience, but they may or may not be present in the degree desired or presumed in a given recording. Since components and playback systems actually produce these effects either deliberately or willy-nilly, we fall into the trap of believing that certain recordings can and should be used as discriminating

tools. (And this doesn't begin to address the frequently made error when we substitute a component in our 'reference' system and conclude that the resulting poor sound is due to that component and not that it might have revealed an inadequacy or incompatibility elsewhere in the system.)

While relying on theatrical effects can be seductive, we will eventually become bored because there is no dependable correlation between these effects and the communication of a musical performance, and because we have limited our listening to a narrow range of recording productions and musical styles. (Haven't you ever been profoundly moved by music played over a simple radio, or an old mono recording?)

If the bass in recording X has greater weight, depth, texture, or pitch definition — all very desirable ends — when played through a particular system, it may just be because that recording's energy and frequency colorations are complemented by the system in use. Yet the recording becomes grandfathered into the evaluation process forever. So misleading is our desire to hear certain theatrical effects that I strongly recommend that any evaluating experience should include a spell with mono recordings and another listening well off-axis. A good system will convey the musical sense of a performance, and if it satisfies the rules described shortly, it will also do the best job overall of realising the theatrical effects that are actually recorded.

A final canard about the 'comparison by reference' method is that it encourages non-musical listening. How can we reliably anticipate musical pleasure at home with our extended recorded library when we audition components in the classic A/B or A/B/A style? Music isn't made up of sound bites; it takes the whole piece to work its wonders on us. And if we don't use fairly small chunks as we must in A/B evaluations, how are we to reliably compare two temporal events?

### An alternative objective

So what are we to do? We have to depend on present technology, and we must use the very recordings we own since these are where the music is encoded. My solution is to take advantage of the discrepancies between recordings, to make their realisation the objective of our evaluation methodology. The essentials of this method (which I call 'comparison by contrast') are first, that an ideal system should create an exact acoustic analogue of the recorded musi-

cal programme. Second, our objective should be that our playback system involves us emotionally, physiologically, and intellectually without existing music library. Third, that our playback system should be accurate — despite recording errors, only the more accurate system will colour the music less and reveal more of each recording's unique character, warts and all. If you try to get around the warts, you will also drive right past the music! And fourth, that whichever playback system gets least in the way of realising the differences between our recordings is the most accurate.

In this way it is not necessary — in fact it's counter-productive — to compare a recording against any reference at all, whether it be live music, the best audio system we've ever heard, or what we liked about the sound we heard just a few moments ago. It is only necessary to compare a few recordings at a sitting, and whichever playback system differentiates individual recordings better is the more accurate, the one which will give us more pleasure from all our recordings. It is also unnecessary — and similarly counter-productive — to rely on recordings we know very well because we will almost certainly begin searching for familiar theatrical cues.

What we're after is the rescue of our music library from disuse. There are more myths about our recordings than I have room here to reflect upon, but for now it is important to observe that the unique character of a recording has as much to do with a performance as with the producers' ideas about sonic presentation. Each vocalist or musician has an individual way of shaping words, notes and phrases. These are a function of energy as well as of frequency and time, and can be perceived as such with appropriate components.

### Comparison by contrast

How do we achieve this end in practice? Easy. Instead of playing sound bites from our best demo records in A/B fashion, play at least a half-dozen recordings that you've never heard before on two different systems. The system that reveals more differences between the recordings is more accurate. To help

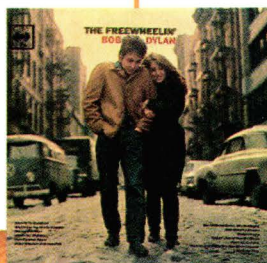
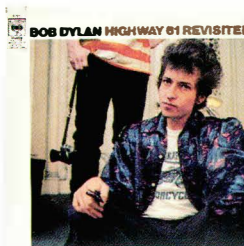
diminish your reliance on familiar cues, try the experiment while sitting 180° off-axis.

The following example should help inspire your own invention: Play a dozen or so variants of Bob Dylan over his long career; from the twang of *Freewheelin'* to the laments of *Blood On The Tracks* to the work with The Band. Play these as a group on two different systems — varied by one or as many as all components in the chain. If what we hear through either or both systems is that same whiney then croaky voice we know and love so well, we're on the wrong track. There are no two recordings which reproduce Bob the same way, so what we should be hearing are young Bob and old Bob; thin Bob and fat Bob; smooth Bob and coarse Bob; sad Bob and happy Bob; fabulous Bob and so-so Bob. The system that presents us with more different Bobs is the more accurate. It will also be the one that better preserves the unique qualities of our other recordings. The same test could be made for different recordings of the same orchestra; different pressings from the same master; groups of CDs together with groups of LPs (the differences between the mediums should always be apparent); and, most interestingly, groups of recordings of totally different musical styles.

Since no two recordings are produced in the same way, it follows that the most accurate playback system is the one that gets least in the way of those differences. Conversely, the more accurate system is the one which shows more differences between various programme sources, and therefore will do so with our entire music library, providing us with a longer-lived pleasure.

Moreover, this methodology guarantees that the system will eventually sort itself out in the same general direction, ensuring that each additional or replacement component introduced will provide similarly improved gratification of playback over the years. And since you won't be relying on the same recordings each time, you will further improve your chances for the preservation of the unique.

Leonard Norwitz runs  
The Audio Note Co USA in  
San Jose, California.



**“We should hear young Bob and old Bob; thin Bob and fat Bob; sad Bob and happy Bob; fab Bob and so-so Bob.”**

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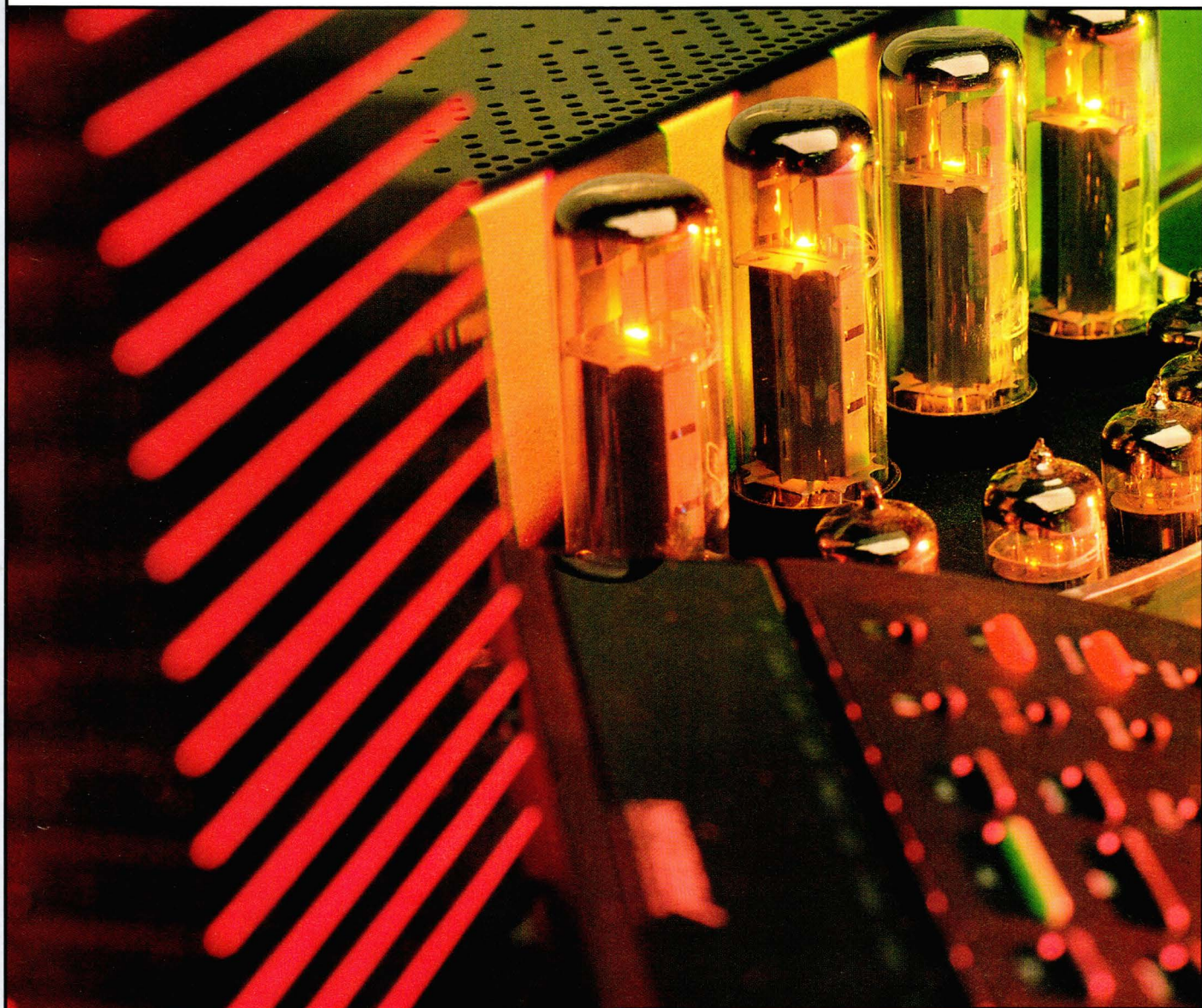
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**T**he best part of two years has expired since a group of pre/power amplifiers were last left to the tender mercies of our blind listening panel. Two years in which integrated amplifiers, and particularly a slew of budget models, have stolen much of the limelight.

Let's assume that you bought one of those integrateds and you are ready to upgrade. You want more power, an improvement in sound quality and the inherent flexibility offered by a two-box pre/power combination. But you don't want to re-mortgage your house, part-exchange the company car or be forced to advertise granny in your local paper.

With this in mind, we've endeavoured to track down six of the hottest new pre/power amplifiers without falling foul of the £2,000 price barrier. Okay, so Audiolab's 8000-series sneaked under the fence at £2,500, but this is a three-box combination, employing two monoblock power amps instead of a single stereo chassis. Otherwise, our six-pack of kicks off at a positively affordable £1,200, thanks to Meridian's latest 501 and 555.

This price level allows the designer to indulge in a little innovation. It justifies the use of custom-specified mains transformers, input selectors, volume controls and 'tweaky' components like high-tolerance resistors and capacitors. More attention can be paid to the quality of the circuit board itself, in addition to its layout and screening. At this price level, refinement is just as important as the pursuit of brute power.

Audiophile pretensions are often high on the agenda, so don't expect an abundance of fancy widgets. All six of these preamps have abandoned a built-in MM/MC phono stage in favour of line-only operation, with phono modules available as add-ons or as standalone units in their own right. Puritans will relish the stark 'hands-on' operation of Audio Innovations, ECA and Sumo amplifiers, while armchair enthusiasts may prefer the remote-controlled convenience offered by Musical Fidelity, Audiolab and Meridian.

Nevertheless, not one of these amplifiers is willing to trade a drop of sound quality for the dubious advantage of bass and treble tone controls. The most flexible of the sextet offers adjustment of volume, balance, input and record-out selection, muting, and 'direct' line operation. And that, as they say, is your lot.

As ever, for an amplifier to be Recommended it must achieve a given quality within this broad £2,000 price band. This is a benchmark judged to be above average for those suitably deep of pocket. By contrast, a Best Buy is something very special indeed, a reliable, compatible and supreme performer



## What's in a Watt?

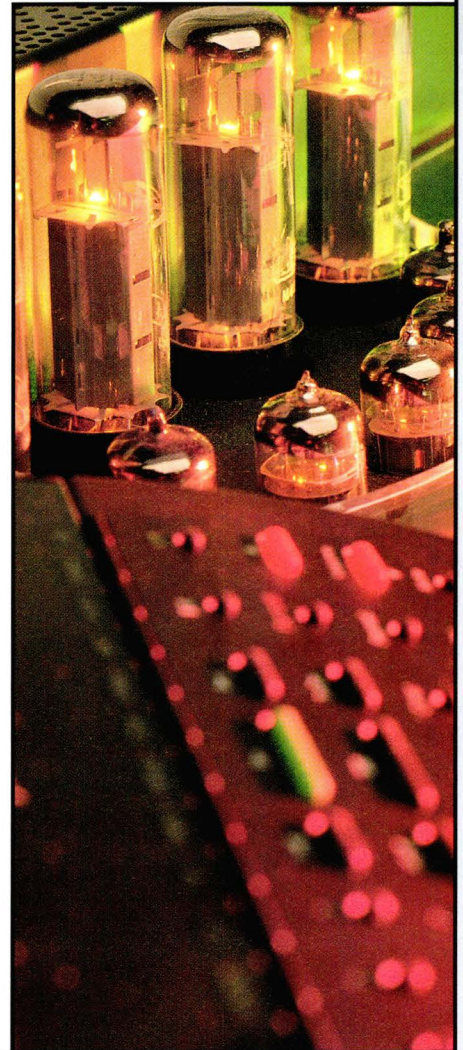
**F**irst things first. Do not worry overmuch about 'matching' the nominal output of an amplifier to the power rating of your speakers. If the boxes have 50W slapped on the back, this does not prohibit the use of a 30W or even a 100W amplifier. Similarly, a 10 or 20 Watt difference between two nominal 100W amplifiers will not exert much subjective influence.

For example, an increase in loudness of just 3dB is only achieved by doubling the output of the amp from, say, 50W to 100W or from 100W to 200W. Then again, 3dB is rather less than the difference in sensitivity between competing speakers these days.

More power doesn't always mean more quality, but it's easier to damage your speakers by pushing an under-powered amp too hard than blasting out the occasional clean peak from a monster amp.

So what's all this fuss about maximum current? Well, current comes into the equation because a certain number of amps (or milliamps) are required to maintain the voltage across the speaker load, and the lower the load (or impedance), the more current is demanded for any given voltage level.

Combine a demanding style of music with low impedance speakers and your amplifier's current reserve may run dry. Distortion momentarily goes through the roof, stunting dynamic impact and potentially damaging the speakers en route. If this sounds like you, then look for amps with ampères.



that represents astonishing value. Many are the amplifiers conceived with a Best Buy ticket in mind, but very few realise its glory!

### How the listening tests were done

Variety and objectivity are the keys to the reliability of our comprehensive listening tests. Variety comes in our choice of music which extends from pop, rock and jazz through to classical, female vocal and folk — an extensive battery of software chosen by our listeners at the beginning of each session.

Objectivity, meanwhile, is maintained by the use of a consistent and familiar hi-fi system that allows the cross-

correlation of results from one test to another.

So, Sony's CDP-715E CD player was retained from issue 137 alongside Audio Note's AN-E loudspeakers and



cabling from Silver Sounds (issues 108 and 109). Furthermore, before auditioning, each preamp/power amp combination was thoroughly 'burned-in' using a white-noise generator in the lab.

Our use of precisely matched listening levels is yet another unique feature of the *Hi-Fi Choice* reviews, ensuring that every amp is auditioned on a fair and level playing field. On this occasion no less than two separate panels were employed. At the beginning of each day's listening, the volume level was adjusted according to the taste of the panel, and after that time it remained constant from amp to amp.

Thanks, as ever, go to Roger Batchelor (Denon), Mark Haughey (Kenwood), Jason Kennedy (*Hi-Fi Choice*), Guy Sargeant (Audio Components Ltd) and Alan Sircom (*Hi-Fi Choice*) for the loan of their experienced ears.

# AUDIO INNOVATIONS L1 / SERIES ANNIVERSARY



Looking for something a little different? Well, in a market dominated by high-powered solid-state electronics, amplifiers are rarely more 'different' than Audio Innovations' anachronistic *Series 800* power amp and *L1* preamp.

Regular readers will undoubtedly recognise the stylised appearance of the *800*, with its concentric semi-circles of triodes and pentodes — the older *Series 700* was reviewed in issue 116. It's pretty much the same beast, minus an input selector and volume control, of course. Nevertheless, the *Series 800* has witnessed a general polishing-up of its construction: the perspex top-plate, for example, is now much more firmly affixed than before.

The 'Anniversary' model features a silver-plated circuit board and silver-plated, Teflon-coated wiring, but otherwise the topology is unchanged. Pairs of EL34 pentodes are run in 'ultra-linear push-pull mode' with custom-made output transformers to keep distortion low, especially through the mid-band.

The partnering *L1* preamp, by contrast, is like an 'active' version of Audio Innovations'

*Series 1000* passive control unit, providing a modest amount of gain with a uniform if not particularly low output impedance. There are three line inputs and a tape input. Under the gauze-effect bonnet, a single ECC82 double triode provides a buffered output.

If Audio Innovations had wanted a lower output impedance, it would have used a cathode-follower topology. Instead, it plumped for a higher-gain anode-follower circuit using switchable feedback around the output triode to provide two gain settings. For optimum results, the *L1* should be used in its 'low' setting when partnered with the *Series 800* power amp.

## Sound Quality

Generous and well-natured, this combination can sound explicitly detailed without any explicit edginess, conveying the message of the music as a whole rather than concentrating on one or two key players from within the mix. Sure enough, there's not the bass extension, dynamics or 'cleanliness' heard elsewhere in this test, but the sweet sound of percussion from both Freddie Hubbard and Robert Cray still managed to convey a sense of power without brashness.

Our first panel was impressed by the 'togetherness' of its music, although our

second session found it to be straining at the leash when played at a higher volume (+6dB). The sound was big but could also come across as 'wobbly and blowsy', even through the sensitive Audio Note *Ell*. It certainly worked well with El Malo's percussive *Floppy Loop Stomp* which had a bruising bass that did justice to the impact and excitement of this unusual track. When pushed a little harder, Victoria Williams' vocals were lifted bodily from the mix, sounding lush and articulate while presenting the backing instrumentation 'like a big girl's blouse'. Here, our listeners balked at the forwardness of her voice which left the harmonica, strings and percussion languishing in what was described as a 'greeny purple-ish hallucinogenic haze'.

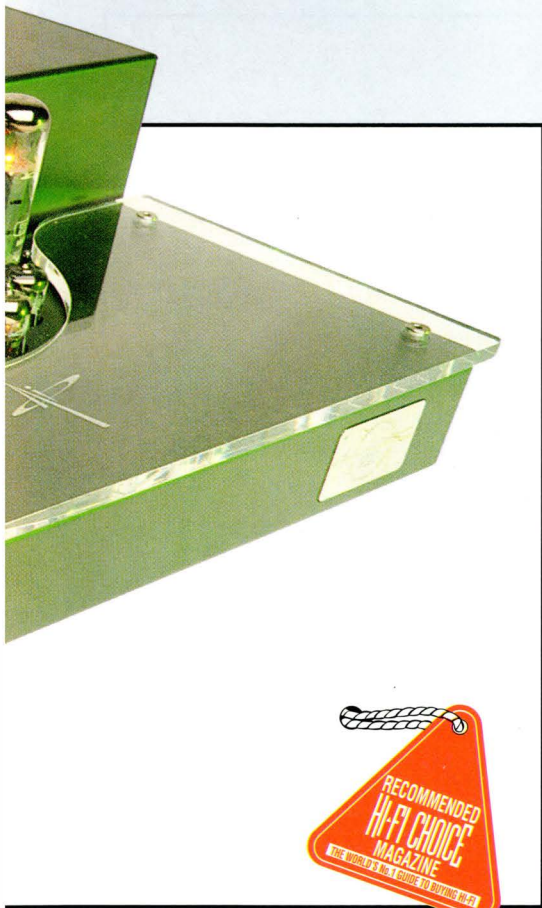
Yet, on the first day's listening, and at a 6dB lower volume, the airy studio recording of Robert Cray's *Things You Do To Me* had sounded especially 'balanced' rather than, as is often the case, allowing one facet of the performance to leap-frog another. This sense of proportion and harmony was just as evident with the swinging sound of Cassandra Wilson's *In My Kitchen*, where the awkward rhythm was preserved to good effect.

At higher, but never excessive levels, the busy *Life In The Fast Lane* from the Eagles sounded distorted but enjoyable. In similar



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800



fashion, Mahler's awesome *Eighth* failed to present itself quite as airily or spaciously as we knew possible, while the massed chorus was steeped in a imperceptible mist, limiting its resolution of the subtlest detail.

**Conclusion**

Attractive though it is, there's simply no escaping the laws of physics when dealing with this breed of under-powered, mid-band orientated valve amplifier. The upshot is an easy-going and thoroughly un-fatiguing combination which, for all its virtues, will quickly run out of steam at anything other than modest listening levels and with anything less than very sensitive loudspeakers.

Accept these foibles, dress the remainder of your system around the warmth of its glowing triodes, and this Audio Innovations duet will provide a worthy alternative to the solid-state convention.

**VERDICT**

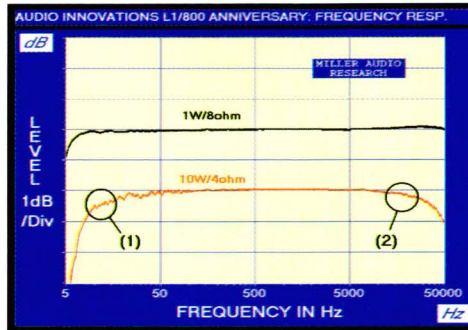
- ▲ Relaxed and natural sounding. Coherent.
- ▼ Could sound better organised. Needs very sensitive speakers.

SOUND ★★★★★

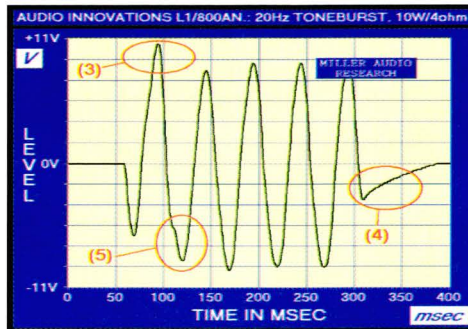
VALUE ★★★★★

PRICE £299/  
£1249

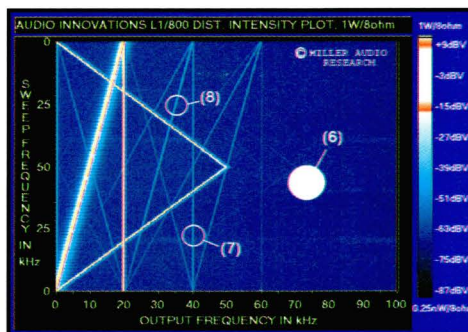
✉ Audio Components Ltd,  
Albany Court, Albany  
Road, Granby Industrial  
Estate, Weymouth, Dorset  
DT4 9TH.  
☎ (01305) 761017



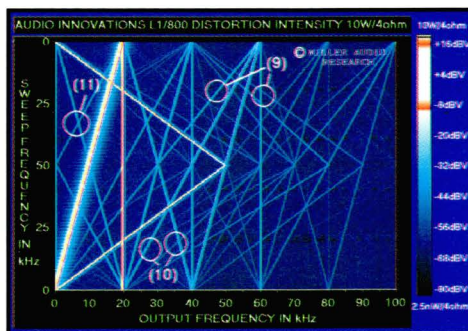
Frequency response



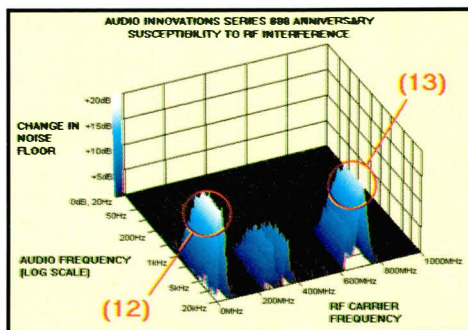
20Hz toneburst



Distortion intensity – 1W/80hm



Distortion intensity – 10W/40hm



RFI susceptibility

Like the *Series 700* before it (issue 116), this silver-plated *Series 800* is destined for use with high sensitivity, easy-load speakers. Why? Just take a look at the response curves: they clearly show how the *800*'s 25W mid-band output quickly sags to 6W and 10W at the respective frequency extremes.

As the iron core of the output transformer begins to saturate, distortion increases more rapidly at low frequencies (1) while magnetic slewing progressively limits its output at higher frequencies (2). As a result, the amplifier is technically – and subjectively – biased in favour of mid-band frequencies where it offers a greater dynamic headroom and lower distortion.

This is also reflected in the low frequency toneburst, which demonstrates a degree of overshoot (3), a long settling time (4) and a saddle-like distortion (5). The asymmetry of this waveform, along with its high 1.5Ohm output impedance, explains the softening of dynamic bass detail.

The *L1*, meanwhile, uses an anode-follower circuit with a high 4.9kOhm output impedance, so long pre/power interconnects are not advisable. The extra 9.5dB boost provided in the 'high' setting (yielding an overall input sensitivity of 70mV for full output) is best suited to low output tape decks and tuners, rather than CD players or DACs.

Furthermore, the full range of its volume control is little more than 60dB, even if its massive 26V output seems to imply bags of headroom. Ultimately, the triode preamp provides extra gain, but it also adds extra thermal noise which, in turn, contributes to a deterioration in the overall S/N ratio to just 70-73dB S/N ratio (ref 1W).

This compressed range is evident from the lighter blue noise floor (6), which also shows simple second harmonics (7) and second-order IM patterns (8) produced by the *Series 800* power amp. When driven harder, it responds with additional odd-order harmonics (9) (typ. >0.1 per cent) and odd-order IM distortions (typ. >0.1 per cent), both outside (10) and well within the audio band (11).

This combination of background noise and shifts in distortion contributes to the 'colour' of its sound although, in practice, it may also serve to disguise the clumps of RF IMD visible in response to spurious signals around 1-40MHz (12) and 600-800MHz (13).

# AUDIOLAB 8000Q/8000M



**A**udiolab's products are not especially famous for their racy aesthetics, but their internal design is typically a reflection, if not the model, for the latest in leading-edge technology. This line-only 8000Q preamplifier is no exception even if, by comparison, the matching 8000M monoblocks both look and sound a little long in the transistorised tooth.

At the 8000Q's heart lies Audiolab's proprietary 'Zq technology', a novel servo arrangement that dynamically stabilises the preamp's DC offset rather than using conventional AC-coupled or capacitor-coupled circuitry. And anything that removes in-line capacitors is probably worth pursuing. A chase, I might add, that began with Audiolab's 8000PPA phono preamp, the natural partner to this combination.

Audiolab rightly claims there are no capacitors in the signal path because the 'coupling capacitor' has effectively been moved into the feedback loop, where it

defines the low frequency response of the amplifier — in this case around 0.1Hz! This novel and fully integrated Zq circuit offers full protection against DC inputs from ancillary equipment and enables the 8000Q to quickly whittle away any residual (and potentially speaker-busting) offset.

Full remote operation of its volume knob and rotary input selector is available courtesy of Audiolab's system handset, although record-out selection must be accomplished manually. The overall gain or 'amplification-factor' of the preamp is also adjustable in six steps, which ensures that the range of the volume control can be optimised for high or low-output line sources.

The 8000M power amp is no less conservative in appearance nor less reliable in design, even if its guts are a more traditional arrangement based on the 8000P reviewed way back in issue 97. This mono version still uses Audiolab's favourite Sanken power transistors, for example, but has now been

revised to comply with all up-and-coming European standards (including IEC65). The only feature that might be described as 'unusual' is the option, via an additional phono socket, to change the input loading of the amplifier to suit different preamps and/or interconnect runs.

## Sound Quality

Described as 'ballsy' for its portrayal of deep and solid bass, this combination still lacks a comparable extension at higher frequencies, smothering a little of the air and expectancy that might otherwise have been anticipated. Our second panel agreed that the amp "lacks some dimensionality". Despite sounding meaty and powerful, it was "neither especially airy nor spacious" in character.

With plenty of "big amp control" at its disposal, Freddie Hubbard's jazz track sounded as if it was "carved out of stone", appearing very solidly focused and articulate in the broadest terms but hardly sweet or

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colourful. This makes it easier to grasp the message, conveyed in a forceful fashion, rather than the aesthetics or subtle tonal quality of the instruments themselves.

Victoria Williams seemed to be going through the motions, just as the very flat and colourless choral section from Mahler's *Eighth* Symphony fell "below the amplifier's dynamic threshold". In similar fashion, Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto lacked a little crispness, its vague presence obscuring the leading violins and, as a result, failed to either grasp or maintain our attention. Once again the lack of treble brilliance brought a slightly claustrophobic atmosphere to the piece as a whole — a breath of fresh air was undoubtedly required to re-awaken both its music and our panel.

Then again, the powerful bass line from Cassandra Wilson's *In My Kitchen* quickly kicked our panel into touch, even if the remainder of the track proved a little shaky.

This combination certainly seems better suited to the raw energy of rock, where its rigid bass and authoritative grip over the music proves more important than pandering to the niceties of presentation.

### Conclusion

Our listeners concluded by likening the costly *8000Q/8000M* to a "grand-sounding but slightly old-fashioned amplifier, struggling to sound like a classic Class A monolith but ending up sounding like a tree — big, knotty and wooden".

This duet often starts out with bags of enthusiasm but soon runs out of steam, which suggests that Audiolab's older power amp design is squandering the Zq technology of its *8000Q* preamp. As a result, I'm waiting until

Audiolab's direct-coupled Zq-circuit is applied throughout the *8000*-series chain before passing final judgement on its potential. Fortunately, a Zq *8000M* power amp is just around the corner...

#### VERDICT

▲ Strong, controlled sound with confident bass.

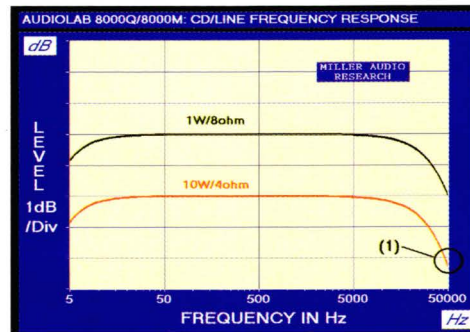
▼ Slightly colourless, lacks dynamic contrast.

SOUND ★★★★★

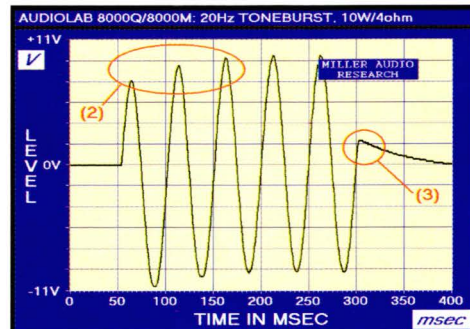
VALUE ★★★★★

PRICE £1000/  
2x £750

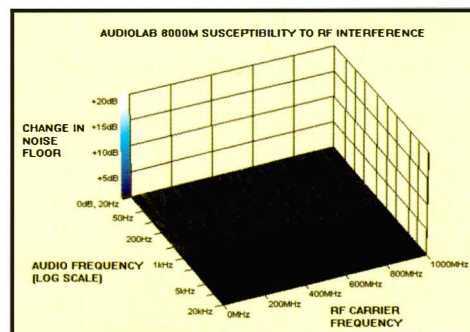
✉ Cambridge Systems Technology Ltd, Spitfire Close, Ermine Business Park, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire PE18 6XY  
☎ (01480) 52521



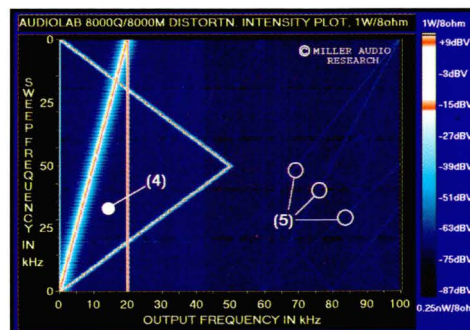
Frequency response



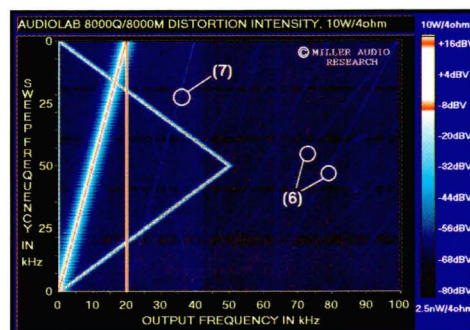
20Hz toneburst



RFI susceptibility



Distortion intensity — 1W/8Ohm



Distortion intensity — 10W/4Ohm

Anyone looking for a healthy excess of power will not be disappointed by the *8000M*'s prodigious 150W output, but it's worth noting that this is by far the costliest combination in our survey. The low 0.050hm output impedance is also in line with the *8000P* (issue 97), just as its maximum current (equivalent to bursts of 280W into 10hm) is still cut short by Audiolab's conservative protection circuitry.

The combined pre/power response shows a mild 0.4dB drop at 20kHz and the merest hint of sagging (1) as the amp drives lower impedances at higher output. Nevertheless, it's the 10W/40hm toneburst that reveals the second-order response of Audiolab's very conventional AC-coupled power amplifier, visible in the ringing (2) and protracted settling time (3) — features that will be eliminated in the forthcoming 'Zq *8000M*'.

On a more positive note, Audiolab's attention to detail outside of the audiorange continues to ensure that the *8000M* is entirely impervious to RF interference. Furthermore, revisions to the amp's two-pole feedback network have reduced distortion to less than 0.001 per cent throughout the audiorange (4), leaving the merest hint of high-order IM patterns (5) outside the loop at ultrasonic frequencies.

These persist at higher outputs and lower impedances (6) along with a very slight increase in second-order IM distortion (7). Nevertheless, compared to much of its competition, the 'character' of the *8000Q/8000M* remains remarkably consistent regardless of either output or loudspeaker load impedance.

There is a momentary burst of distortion as the Zq servo tracks changes in volume and keeps any DC offset under control which, otherwise, would cause the preamplifier to mute. Furthermore, there are only slight changes in distortion (0.0007 to 0.0013 per cent) as different gain settings are selected on the *8000Q* preamp.

This, in addition to the deterioration in noise, is to be expected as extra gain is selected. The maximum 95dB S/N (re. 1W) can only be obtained at the unity-gain (0dB) setting, where a preamp input of 1.2V is required to deliver full power from a pair of *8000Ms*. This is well within the compass of today's CD players, which suggests that higher gain settings will only be required with, for instance, lower-output tape decks and tuners.

# ECA VISTA/LECTERN



**S**o who or what is ECA? I'd love to tell you, but the organisation is rather secretive and its key designers appear to be working for other companies at the moment! According to its masters, ECA distribution, the acronym 'ECA' doesn't stand for anything in particular. However, I can't help but note that ECA's preoccupation with what it describes as 'phase coherence' and 'phase linearity' bears more than a passing resemblance to similar claims made by Trichord, to name but one.

This leaves us with an intriguing if rather 'cottage industry'-ish pre/power combination — I was certainly unimpressed by the *Vista*'s loose mains transformer. This preamp is a line-only affair with inputs marked for four line sources and one tape deck. One of these inputs is padded-down with a pair of extra 4.7kOhm resistors for use with very high output CD players or D/A converters (typically

>2.5V). LP sources are serviced by ECA's matching phono preamplifier, the *Prisma*.

Both the *Vista* and *Lectern* power amp benefit from large and well-regulated power supplies and both appear to employ wholly symmetrical, complementary circuit configurations. Otherwise, they might just as easily have emanated from two entirely different sources.

The *Vista*, for example, is based entirely on op-amp ICs (each with its own heatsink), while the *Lectern* power amp is almost wholly discrete, even to the point of using LED's as stable references in the biasing of its constant-current sources. The *Vista* is also distinguished by its use of quality Holco resistors and Siemens layer capacitors, popularised by Rotel some years ago.

Apart from that, what you see is very much what you get: no-frills engineering conceived to deliver great sounds at a reasonable price.

## Sound Quality

Our first panel of listeners were content to place the ECA duo on a par with the Sumo, but they did so for entirely different reasons. Specifically, the ECA is not quite as relaxed or sweet-sounding as the Sumo, relying on a more explicit and overtly detailed performance as a "very solid and precise platform on which it builds its music".

Lower listening levels reveal what was described as a "hint of saccharin", an upper-mid coarseness reflected in the extra verve of brass from Robert Cray's *Things You Do To Me* and the stripped-back vocals of Cassandra Wilson's *In My Kitchen*. "Sounds as if she could do with another drink," quipped one listener. Every word was clearly audible yet the 'sexiness' that had oozed from our speakers with the MF combination was traded for a slightly meaner and less passionate dialogue. Our second panel

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concluded, pointing to a hint of edginess which persisted with both Victoria Williams's voice and the soprano vocals that punctuate Mahler's *Eighth*.

Nevertheless, this was the only occasion where the 'space between the notes' was clearly defined with Mahler's *Eighth Symphony*, this complex recording now rising out of a genuinely black acoustic. Similarly, Freddie Hubbard's trombone solo sounded both vivid, alive and natural. Even El Malo's *Loop Stomp* sounded powerful and gutsy with a "groovy and funky bass" juxtaposed between the drifting quality of a Hammond organ and accompanying farmyard animals. "Great fun," beamed the listeners.

At modest listening levels the amp would benefit from less liveliness and more drama, often lacking the weight or momentum to keep everything driving along. But once the volume is raised over a few Watts, its sense of contrast and scale broadens to great effect. The opening sequence of Mahler's Eighth proved especially memorable as the brass section soared along with the massed choir to deliver a very dramatic and uplifting performance. "This is real God-fearing stuff," remarked one awe-struck listener.

## Conclusion

At its very best, the *Vista/Lectern* combination is like a proverbial breath of fresh air, even if it's not thunderously powerful. More importantly, it possesses an indefinable 'rightness' that succeeded in uplifting the spirits of our ear-battered panel at the end of a long day's listening.

Furthermore, and despite always looking on the sunny side of its music, it seems more than capable of revealing the contrast

between different recordings with what was described as a "comfortable enthusiasm". These are evidently small-time, low production amplifiers yet, by majority verdict, ECA still steals itself a Best Buy.

### VERDICT

▲ Very detailed, sharply focused and exhilarating sound.

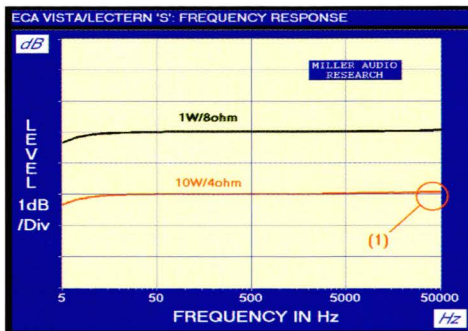
▼ Slightly coarse upper midrange and lack of very deep bass at lower listening levels.

SOUND ★★★★★

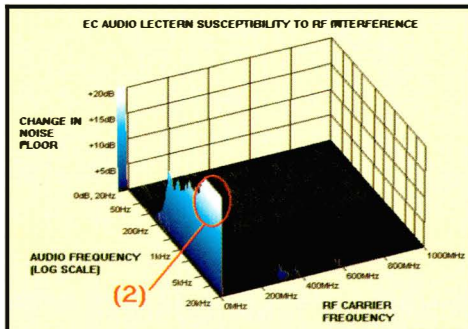
VALUE ★★★★★

PRICE £760/  
£880

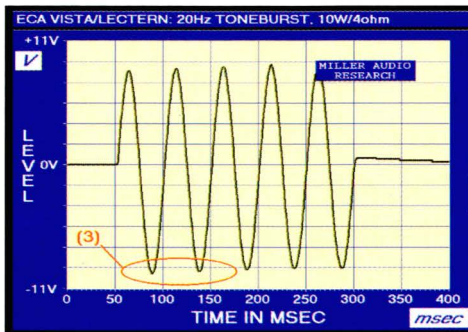
✉ ECA Distribution, PO Box 3023, London NW2 7RW  
☎ 0181 830 5128



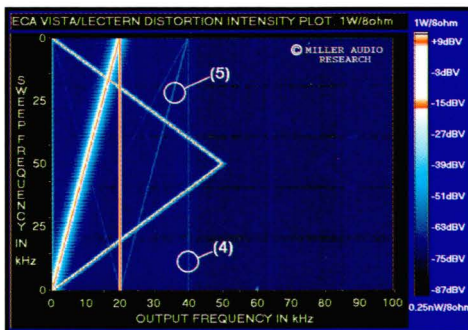
Frequency response



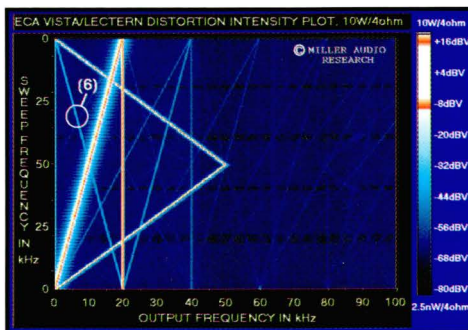
RFI susceptibility



20Hz toneburst



Distortion intensity — 1W/80hm



Distortion intensity — 10W/40hm

There is much that is impressive about the ECA *Vista/Lectern* combination. Nevertheless, after a short time on the test bench, the power amp imparted a feeling of 'twitchiness'. Disconnecting a 'scope probe from the dummy load, for example, caused both of the *Lectern's* 6.3A supply fuses to blow, suggesting that the amp may not respond too successfully to the new breed of flat and highly capacitive speaker cables.

There was no further suggestion of instability, yet the *Lectern* is clearly a very 'fast' or wide bandwidth amplifier whose response remains flat well beyond 100kHz (1). Indeed, it's this extended response that gives rise to the blip of RF IMD between 1-2MHz (2), for otherwise the *Lectern* proves utterly resilient to on-line interference.

The generous +2.3dB increase in power of 53W to 90W suggests a very 'stiff' and load-tolerant power supply (as does the comparably low +0.5dB dynamic headroom), while the direct-coupled output ensures a usefully low 0.02Ohm output impedance. Nevertheless, when the *Lectern* clips, it does so very abruptly indeed.

The low frequency toneburst also demonstrates less modification (3) than with other power amps due to what, I assume, is a combination of single-pole compensation plus a sympathetic DC servo. This lack of filtering, in part, is presumably linked to ECA's suggestion of 'phase coherence'.

ECA's *Vista* preamp has no serious 'oddities', although the 10kOhm impedance of its standard line inputs will place added stress on the output of some CD players. Similarly, its 2.5V overload limit only represents a headroom of some +2dB over the nominal 2V CD output level. When in doubt, use the attenuated line input (marked LATT).

The overall 84dB S/N ratio (re. 1W) is adequate, but there is a marked change in distortion as the *Lectern* drives lower impedance loads (typically increasing from 0.01 per cent to 0.2 per cent at just 10W/1kHz). At lower listening levels, conventional harmonic (4) and IM patterns (5) are suitably suppressed (typ. <0.01 per cent). However, at modest levels with lower impedance speakers, there is an obvious increase in audible, even-order IM patterns (6). This may account for the perceived 'improvement' in its overall balance when auditioned at a higher level on our second day.

# MERIDIAN 501/555



**D**espite regular appearances in our CD player, transport and DAC tests, Meridian's amplifiers have avoided the tender mercies of our blind listening panel for at least seven years. So the time is ripe, if not fully perished, for Meridian's 501 preamp and 555 power amp to strut their high-tech stuff.

And, sure enough, the 501 does feature its fair share of novel thinking, despite being Meridian's only 'analogue' design. All sources are addressed via electronic input switching which flashes up information on a yellow four-digit display. Simply press the 'Source' button to cycle through its six line inputs, one of which can be loaded with an optional £75 MM or MC phono module. In similar fashion, Meridian also offers an additional video input switching module to enhance the 501's compatibility with AV systems.

Another key, labelled 'copy', lets you assign different input sources to both tape and main outputs. This is the equivalent of independent record-out switching. But few other amps come complete with two and three-room multi-room software allowing the 501 to display CD or tuner information from products in another room, for example.

Furthermore, this internal software is user-configurable, allowing you to re-assign new input sources and legends using the MSR system remote (£49). All this, plus muting, display on/off and a 99-step switched-ladder volume control from just six function buttons!

By comparison, the 555 power amplifier is positively conventional, even if its styling, with a black perspex top-plate and midi-sized casework, is clearly struck from the Meridian mould. It's a twin-mono design, DC-coupled throughout with fully complementary circuitry

that's reinforced by pairs of bipolar Motorola output transistors. These are bolted to fluted heatsinks that run the length of the 555. Dual 4mm binding posts, for instant bi-wiring, complete this tidy package.

## Sound Quality

The general lack of humanity displayed by this combination was summed up by Cassandra Wilson's *Come On In My Kitchen* where, our listeners suggested, "instead of sounding seductive, she simply invited us in to do the washing up". So although the amplifier does not sound overtly bright or aggressive its music can still sound a little hard and mechanical, lacking both spontaneity and inspiration.

Nevertheless both Robert Cray's *Things You Do To Me* and Freddie Hubbard's *Plexus* benefited from a decent sense of acoustic

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despite the former's voice sounding "slightly stilted or cropped" and the latter's tenor sax adopting the register of an alto. All were in agreement that this amp "places an accent on the upper registers of its music".

Our second panel described the 501/555 as "pear-shaped with a shock of orange hair", referring to its blend of brilliance with a weighty but leaden bass. So Victoria Williams's CD may have sounded more complete than it had with Audio Innovations' euphonic combo; yet for all this apparent composure, it still ended up sounding too intense.

These listeners also remarked upon the amplifier's emphasis of upper-mid detail by complementing its quick and lucid handling of El Malo's percussion. Unfortunately, Mendelssohn's *Violin Concerto* now suffered a loss of colour, contrast and range, prompting our panel to suggested "the ensemble were there simply to make up the numbers".

Sadly, because the 501/555 tends to drain music of richness and colour, its purpose often becomes difficult to discern, leaving us listening to a collection of individual players with little sense of musical community.

## Conclusion

All things considered, this is a very unfortunate result for Meridian, which has clearly tried to keep its 501/555 combination on the technical straight-and-narrow. Nonetheless, by providing something of a "wide open window" on the music, this vista also exposes the unsympathetic effects of both RF and very low-level IM distortions suffered by power amp and preamp respectively.

This may well account for the slightly "dry, mechanical and uncompromising" sound described by two successive panels of

listeners. A great pity then, bearing in mind both the existing flexibility and upgrade potential of this design. Having forwarded all my data to Meridian, I'm confident it will soon bounce back with customary innovation.

### VERDICT

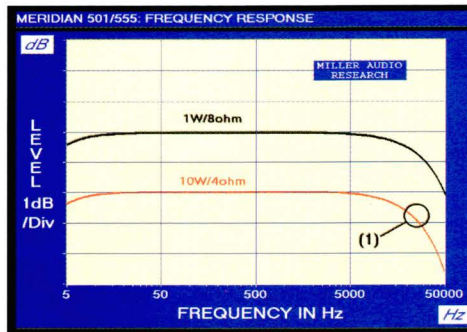
- ▲ Keeps things spinning along with a tight and positive sound.
- ▼ Dispassionate sound, lacking fluidity; sounds too intense at higher listening levels.

SOUND ★★★★★

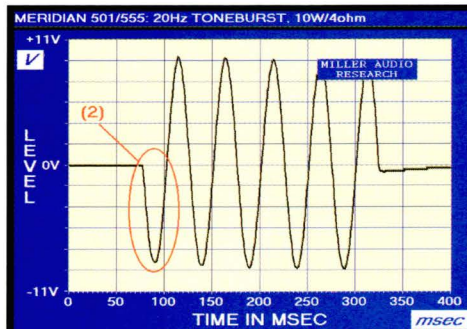
VALUE ★★★★★

PRICE £695 / £625

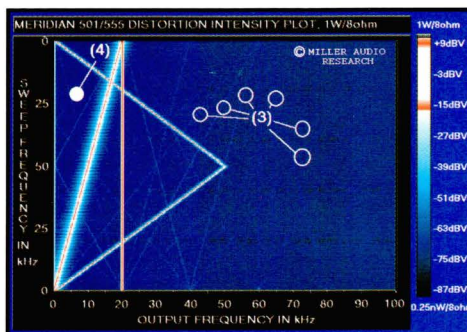
✉ Meridian Audio Ltd, 14 Clifton Road, Huntingdon, Cambs PE18 7EJ  
☎ (01480) 434334



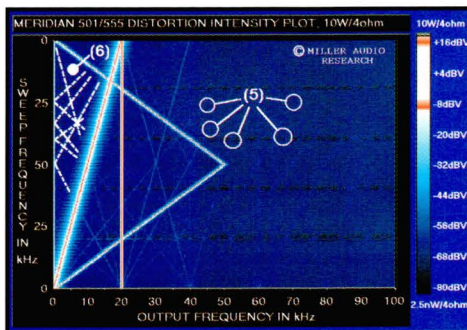
Frequency response



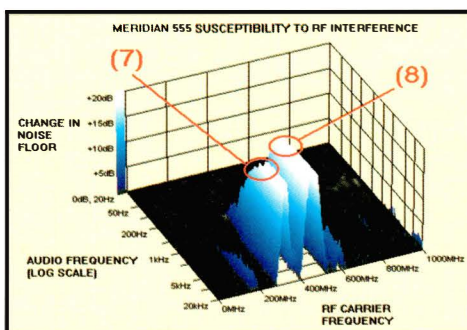
20Hz toneburst



Distortion intensity – 1W/80hm



Distortion intensity – 10W/40hm



RFI susceptibility

Having secured its technical front-door, Meridian's own 'cleverness' has let a number of gremlins in via the back gate. Let me explain. At first sight the +1.8dB power increase from 83W to 125W into 40hm seems pretty generous as does the +1.2dB headroom for musical peaks. Yet, into trickier loads, its maximum current is limited to just 5A (25W into 10hm) as a result of its comprehensive thermal and DC offset protection which, with the benefit of hindsight, seems a little too invasive for its own good.

Furthermore, by placing an inductor in series with its output, thereby ensuring full stability into silly speakers with silly capacitive cables, the 555 now has a higher 0.120hm output impedance. This, in turn, could modify its HF response, already -0.6dB down at 20kHz (1), with certain cable/speaker combinations. Then again, Meridian's DC-coupled 555 with its single-pole feedback network ensures a clean, first-order response with transient signals. Do note, however, the 501/555 is phase-inverting (2), so it may be worth swapping over your red and black speaker cables.

Then there's the issue of noise versus distortion. On the one hand Meridian has engineered a fabulous 1W/80hm S/N ratio of 90dB — quite the best in this test. Distortion, meanwhile, has been squidged down to around 0.001 per cent at all frequencies and output levels. A technical tour-de-force, and no mistake. However, the setting of the tape function apparently influences the nature of the amp's low-level but extensive-order intermodulation (IM) patterns (3) in addition to limiting the 501's input headroom.

Unfortunately, this busy nest of IM distortions, which extends beyond 7th and 8th orders, sails directly into the audioband (4) and remains un-sung by higher power levels (5). In case the blue IM patterns get lost in the magazine printing process, I have highlighted the worst offenders with a series of white dashes (6).

Sadly, these peculiar and unmusical artefacts would have been buried by an inferior S/N ratio, which might also have served to disguise the 555's clear susceptibility to RF interference around 300MHz (7) and 450MHz (8). In practice, if the 501/555 were 'noisier' or bathed in the warmth of moderate 2nd-order distortions, it may well have fared better in our listening tests...

# MUSICAL FIDELITY E200/E300



**T**hese Elektra amplifiers have class written all over them. Not class as in the 'Class A' topology of earlier Musical Fidelity amplifiers, but an aesthetic class that sets the *E200* preamplifier and *E300* power amp apart from the mundane matt black boxes that comprise its competition.

Both are built into matching cases and both feature very heavy, piano-black facias dotted with gold livery. The *E300* power amp is a straightforward bipolar design with internal heatsinking, offering both single-ended and balanced input options together with chunky, gold-plated speaker terminals. Mono, but not bridged, operation allows a pair of *E300*s to be used for what MF describes as 'passive bi-amping'.

Neither pre nor power amp is based on any previous design from Musical Fidelity. Indeed, the *E200* is its first product to feature

electronic (Toshiba) input switching together with full remote control of source selection, output muting and its motorised volume knob. Two line inputs, labelled 'option 1 and 2', include balanced XLR terminals while the remaining two line and two tape inputs use standard phono sockets. Each input selection button is fitted with its own indicator LED.

Under the bonnet, MF has held the volume control within the feedback loop of a central gain stage, sandwiching it between both input and balanced output stages. There's even a separate amplifier for the headphone socket which, in case you were wondering, is on the side — not the front — of the *E200* apparently for reasons of "stylistic integrity"!

## Sound Quality

"Safe", replied one listener in response to my request for a comprehensive description of this amplifier's performance. Nevertheless,

this combination does enjoy a distinctly mellow and relaxed style of presentation, a laziness that suited the languid and sultry performance of Cassandra Wilson if not the turbo-charged energy of The Eagles' *Life In The Fast Lane*. Our second panel concurred, pointing out that the *Elektra* combination sounded very smooth and fluid, encouraging a "well-rounded, seamless and glossy sound" that was very much more enjoyable than that from the Audiolab that had just passed before our ears.

Yet, in truth, the *Elektra* combination turns in a very mixed performance. At its best it relishes the idiosyncrasies of different recordings, emphasising Victoria Williams's quirky vocal style and exposing the "donkey and bagpipe solo" from El Malo's *Loop*



# LAB REPORT

Stomp as easily as reproducing the vast concert hall acoustic of Mahler's *Eighth*. It's this reproduction of light and shade that, on the whole, intrigued our listeners. But this weighty, warm balance and grand sense of scale still fails to provide a truly penetrating insight. As a result it could sound slightly congested, 'tight' or even too conservative at times. "It plays within its limits and never takes risks" suggested one panelist. For example El Malo's bass notes now sounded a little too rounded, almost as if a hard guitar pick were traded for a soft pick, losing a little bite and attack but filling out the body of the sound. So upper bass detail often appears a "little too warm and wobbly" though this rarely detracts from the fun and frolics of the music.

The *Elektra's* congestion, however, was more obvious with the likes of Mendelssohn's *Violin Concerto*, which was perhaps too smooth and lacking in contrasting detail, giving the piece as a whole a slightly restricted, even constipated feel. Otherwise the *Elektra* typically sounds very measured, and is seemingly best-suited to music that meanders, rather than music that sets a more energetic tempo.

## Conclusion

"A rich-sounding and weighty little number" concluded one panel, "lacking a little incisive drama and pizzazz in an effort to promote long-term easy-listening". Technically, too, there's no doubt that MF has deliberately engineered its *Elektra* amplifiers to turn a friendly face on all styles of music, leaving us with an undemanding and chummy-sounding

amplifier that's unlikely to set your pulses racing.

Best teamed up with a pair of lively-sounding loudspeakers, the *E200/E300* is a quart of mild in a pub-full of keg bitters — well worth considering if you've a thirst for a big sound.

### VERDICT

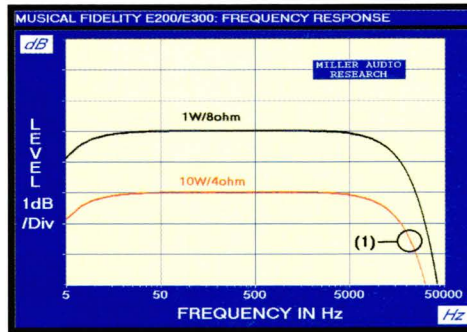
- ▲ **Weighty and luxurious sound complements the piano-black aesthetics. Balanced operation.**
- ▼ **Very pleasant, but hardly scintillating stuff. Sensitivity to RF interference is unchecked.**

**SOUND** ★★★★★

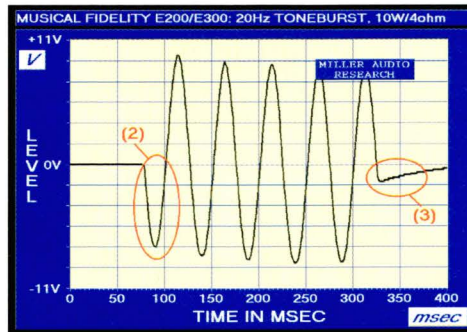
**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £599/  
£699

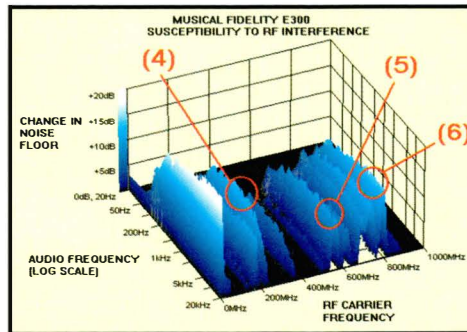
✉ Musical Fidelity Ltd,  
MF House, 15-17 Olympic  
Trading Estate, Fulton  
Road, Wembley,  
Middlesex HA9 0TF  
☎ 0181 900 2866



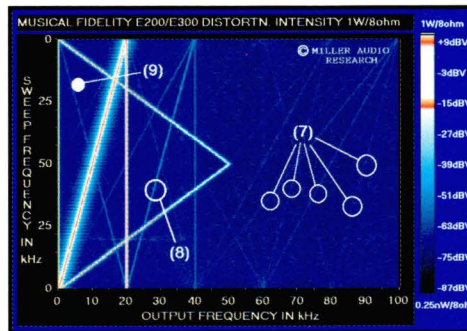
Frequency response



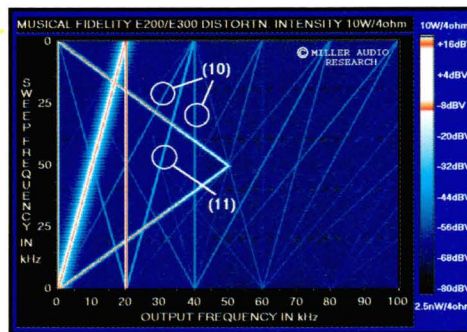
20Hz toneburst



RFI susceptibility



Distortion intensity — 1w/80hm



Distortion intensity — 10w/40hm

The *Elektra* combination is a story of musical manipulation: and bearing in mind the results, one that works surprisingly well. For starters the bandwidth of the amplifier has been deliberately restrained by a -1.3dB droop at 20kHz (1); slightly more than MF's 0.8-1.0dB specification. This is the first indication of a potential sonic 'sweetening'.

As for power, its 109W/8ohm output seems beefy enough, as does the 13.6A reserve of current for musical peaks (equivalent to 185W into 10hm). Furthermore, MF uses multiple high-current output devices which contribute to its low 0.015ohm output impedance. Even so, there's no avoiding the collapse in power bandwidth at lower impedances, amounting to a loss of some 0.7dB even with a modest 40hm load. So, speaker impedance may prove more important than speaker sensitivity.

You may also care to experiment with speaker phasing as the *E200/E300* combination is evidently phase-inverting (2). Furthermore, MF's use of two feedback loops, the outer as a DC servo, gives rise to a second-order response to transient signals and a slightly longer settling time (3).

The issue of balanced against single-ended operation is complicated in this instance by the extra circuitry in the *E200* (op-amps from Analogue Devices) and *E300* (from Signetics) necessary for its balanced mode. Instead of reducing noise and distortion, these additional op-amps contribute an extra +6dB of gain (amplification) together with some +4.5dB of noise. In single-ended mode, the 1W/8ohm S/N ratio is closer to 83dB.

However, we must not overlook the *E300's* disturbing sensitivity to RF interference (measured in single-ended mode) — there are clumps of distortion from signals at 200MHz (4), 550MHz (5) and 800MHz (6). The common-mode rejection in balanced mode could prove invaluable in combating radiated interference.

The extra noise also has benefits in the audio band where it cloaks the higher-order IM distortions visible out-of-band (7), leaving relatives of the 2nd-order pattern (8) to bring a hint of extra warmth into the audio range (9). At higher output levels, the restriction in bandwidth is joined by higher distortion (increasing from 0.007 to around 0.1 percent into 40hm), visible mainly as innocuous 2nd harmonics (10) and 2nd-order intermodulation (11). Once again, it's all pretty inoffensive stuff.

# SUMO ATHENA IIB/POLARIS III



**I**ronically, just as Far Eastern majors like Pioneer, Technics and Kenwood have taken a conscious decision to adopt Western-sounding brandnames, it's an all-American company that lies behind the Japanese-sounding Sumo brand. The origins of its products are confused further by Sumo's adoption of model names like *Athena*, *Andromeda*, *Polaris* and *Ulysses*, all of which have a distinctly Greek flavour.

Those readers with particularly good memories will recall the predecessors of the *Athena IIB* preamp and *Polaris III* power amp from issue 80, in which they won the hearts of our listening panel and a Recommendation into the bargain. Five years on and, in this respect at least, little has changed.

The *Athena* retains its super-slim profile though the phono stage has been abandoned in favour of six line inputs, one of which will accept either a MM/MC phono module (£209) or a DAC module (£524) to service the digital outputs of CD players and transports. Three rotary controls, complete with LED indicators, dominate its low-profile fascia. These cater for volume and balance, input selection and independent record-out switching.

Balanced outputs are another new option for the *Athena* (hence the *IIB* iteration) which elevates the basic price of £734 to £944. Naturally, this complements the balanced inputs which now come as standard on the *Polaris III* power amp. The *Polaris* still features a chunky MOSFET output stage but now benefits from full DC-coupling (like the *Athena*), a bigger power supply (which means more Watts) and an improved symmetrical circuit layout.

All in all, these new Sumo amplifiers represent a fearsome blend of high-power, high-value engineering that could easily wrestle the crown from many a so-called high-end champion.

## Sound Quality

In a remarkable correlation with results obtained over five years ago in issue 80, our listeners reiterated their predecessors' critique with descriptions like "big, natural and tidy-sounding". Once again, both panels remarked upon the very natural reproduction of both acoustic and electric instruments — at least Freddie Hubbard's brass now possessed a vitality and natural energy that enhanced the overall performance.

Similarly, individual performers were now

heard to work in greater harmony. A fact reflected in the range of expression displayed by Robert Cray, who now only sounded "passionately strained" during the tensest of sequences rather than "sounding strangled all of the time".

Nevertheless there was a suspicion that the amp was tampering with the decay of individual notes. So though the percussive impact of El Malo's *Floppy Loop Stamp* was clear for all to hear, our listeners suggested that it was "bumping" rather than "bouncing" along. Occasionally the amplifier will let its music slip, tending towards over-exuberance or even a slight vagueness in an effort to be as open and free-sounding as possible.

Otherwise, the textures of the various instruments from Mendelssohn's *Violin Concerto* were clearly differentiated: the differences between the cellos, violas and violins, for example, were rendered with conviction rather than being allowed to wash from the speakers *en masse*. Furthermore, as the orchestra gives way to the chorus in Mahler's *Eighth*, the opening soprano sounded distant, as it should, yet the amp was still able to sustain the tremulous atmosphere built-up only moments before. This is an

# LAB REPORT



exceedingly difficult piece of music to tackle, yet the Sumos, as ever, passed muster without any obvious distress.

## Conclusion

These amps make an enjoyable and involving combination, one that's easy to sit and listen with, encouraging you to delve into your music collection through the wee small hours. Since they sound neither over-controlled nor too relaxed, the *Athena* and *Polaris* succeed in towing a convincing path through all styles of music, a feat achieved without recourse to euphonic colorations. Just like the original *Athena/Polaris*, in fact, way back in issue 80.

"Rather than set upon you like a Doberman, the performance of this amplifier will worm its way into your affections like a Golden Retriever". At £7.30 per Watt, even your bank manager might smile. Highly Recommended.

### VERDICT

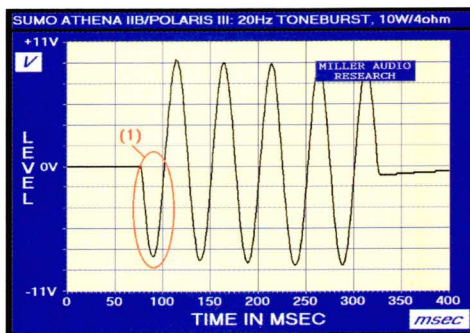
- ▲ Colourful and lively-sounding combination likely to prove appealing in the long term.
- ▼ Slight loss of both transparency and biting clarity.

SOUND ★★★★★

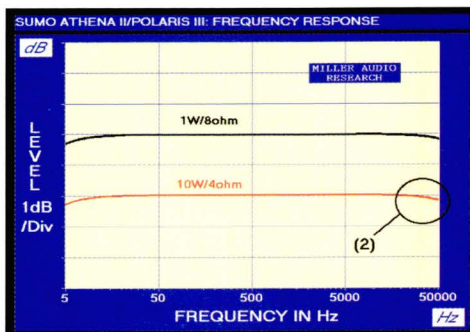
VALUE ★★★★★

PRICE £944/  
£891

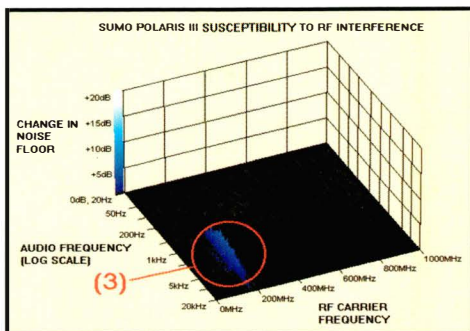
✉ Audusa & Co, 4 Arundel Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT1 3RZ  
☎ 0181 942 6241



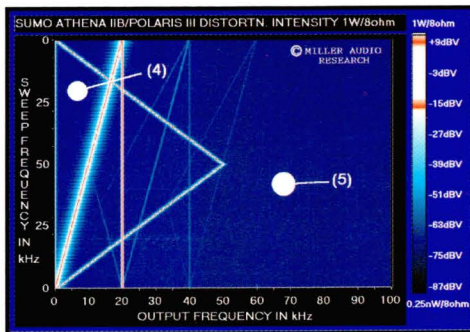
20Hz toneburst



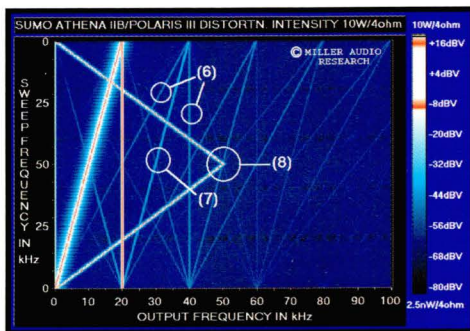
Frequency response



RFI susceptibility



Distortion intensity – 1W/80ohms



Distortion intensity – 10W/40ohms

Sumo's *Polaris III* is a powerhouse and no mistake. The five years since we first looked at it have seen its output go up from 128W to 164W (8ohm) and 212W to 253W (4ohm) though its reservoir of current remains fixed at a heady 29A (see issue 80). This is equivalent to short-term bursts of 840W into 10hm loads at less than 1 per cent distortion. Few speakers are going to argue with such belts of power, though it's worth noting the *Polaris's* output is phase-inverting (1), so try swapping red and black cables to achieve the best sound.

Its fully complementary MOSFET output stage enjoys a low 0.04ohm output impedance and is clearly a very 'fast', wide bandwidth design. This is evident from the extended response of both *Athena* and *Polaris* (2), as it is from the mild RF instability which occurs just prior to true clip at very high frequencies – an anomaly common to other MOSFET designs. Otherwise the *Sumo Polaris* is utterly resilient to the ravages of external RF interference. The blip at 180MHz (3) is inconsequential.

Like Musical Fidelity's *E200/E300*, the *Athena/Polaris* combination may also be operated in balanced mode where common-mode noise and distortions should be reduced according to the CMRR (Common-Mode Rejection Ratio). Once again, this additional circuitry adds to the overall system noise, in practice, decreasing the single-ended S/N ratios of 83dB and 100dB (re. 1W and 2/3 output) to 79dB and 93dB respectively.

This is evident from the 1W/80hm distortion plot where a smooth carpet of in-band noise (4) successfully masks potential distortions. Unlike the *Elektra*, however, the ultrasonic range (5) remains free of any obvious distortion.

I say this because, at 10W into 4ohm, the distortion spectra of both MF and Sumo amplifiers – both low-feedback, DC-coupled designs – prove remarkably similar. Both incur mild 2nd harmonic (6) and 2nd-order intermodulation distortions (7), though the extra bandwidth of the Sumo (which contributes to its crisper sound) is revealed in the 0Hz-50kHz-0Hz sweep which extends, unabated, to 50kHz (8). This also demonstrates the futility of single-frequency distortion measurements which would have the *Athena/Polaris* THD hovering around a minute 0.006 per cent!

# PRE/POWER AMPLIFIER COMBINATIONS

## Best Buys and Recommendations

The long and rocky road to a *Hi-Fi Choice* swingtag is paved with the good intentions of products that stumbled by the wayside. And who could argue with the intent of either Meridian, Audiolab or Musical Fidelity? Three companies responsible for three very different amplifiers, but each with an Achilles heel that tripped up its subjective performance.

This is especially disappointing as the three designs are among the most professionally crafted in their field, from companies who know how to build reliable products and give good value for money. The **Meridian 501/555**, with its microprocessor heart, is especially adaptable, yet its music sounds rather dry, brittle and colourless. The **Audiolab 8000Q/8000M**, by contrast, is too mechanical and dispassionate in delivery. It tends, as one listener suggested "to wheel individual sounds on and off the stage rather than allow them to flow and intermingle in a more colourful fashion". Hopefully, the up-and-coming Zq-based power amp will redress the balance.

**Musical Fidelity's E200/E300** picks up where the resplendent vibrancy of the *E100* (issue 140) leaves off, even if the end result is perhaps too ripe, big and soulful for its own

good. On the other hand, if your system is bereft of chromatic detail, these *Elektra* amplifiers will certainly provide more than an occasional daub of music pigment.

Not that **Audio Innovations' L1** preamp and **Series 800 Anniversary** power amp are exactly colourless. Far from it. However, as long as this undynamic duo is not distressed with insensitive and/or low impedance speakers, it will surely charm your socks off with its generous, subtle and insightful performance. These are amplifiers for the specialist, rather than the enthusiast who wants to raise the roof once in a while. And if that isn't enough for Recommendation, you can even toast crumpets on them too...

On the opposite side of the technical universe comes the mighty and Recommended **Polaris** power amp along with the **Athena** preamp from **Sumo**, though its beefy soundstaging has the same 'blossoming effect' heard with the *Series 800* on a good day. Watts come by the truckload thanks to Sumo's *MOSFET* power amp (actually they're *HEXFETs*, but it's nearly impossible to tell the difference), ensuring they plough through the likes of The Eagles' *Life in the Fast Lane* with what was described as 'a natural vitality'. This is a marvellous and

rugged all-rounder that includes the option of both MM/MC phono and internal D/A converter modules. Try to hear one soon.

Less powerful and possibly a little fussier in its compatibility with different cable/speaker combinations, **ECA's Vista/Lectern** combination nonetheless stole the heart of our second panel. Its quick and exceptionally lucid sound comes into its own at moderate to high listening levels, where it cuts through the 'thickest' of recordings to reveal layers of underlying detail.

However, this is not without reservation. The general standard of construction suggests these are not items of mass-production and, with their limited availability, they also lack a long-term track record in the mainstream of hi-fi. I would certainly like to see more sophisticated protection for the *Lectern* power amplifier, particularly bearing in mind its uncommonly substantial mains transformer.

Yet, with the ECA combination at the helm, music soars to the rafters, filling the room with a sparkling and effervescent performance that's hard to resist. ECA's 'top brass' should come out from its self-imposed exile. After all, the *Vista* and *Lectern* are worth shouting about. Putting on our most magnanimous hat, a Best Buy is more than appropriate.

## Measurement data at a glance

	Audio Innovations L1/ Series 800 Anniversary			Audiolab 8000Q/8000M			ECA Vista/Lectern			Meridian 501/555			Musical Fidelity Elektra E200/E300		
	20Hz	1kHz	20kHz	20Hz	1kHz	20kHz	20Hz	1kHz	20kHz	20Hz	1kHz	20kHz	20Hz	1kHz	20kHz
MAX CONTINUOUS POWER OUTPUT															
1% THD INTO 8Ω	5.6W	25W	10.3W	141W	154W	144W	52W	53W	50W	73W	83W	77W	108W	109W	97W
INTO 4Ω	5.4W	25W	10.4W	220W	244W	227W	86W	90W	85W	104W	125W	109W	170W	175W	149W
DYNAMIC HEADROOM (IHF)	+0.6dB (29W)			+1.0dB (194W)			+0.5dB (60W)			+1.2dB (110W)			+1.0dB (137W)		
MAXIMUM CURRENT (5mSEC, 1% THD)	3.7A			16.8A**			9.7A			5.0A			13.6A		
OUTPUT IMPEDANCE	1.53Ω			0.047Ω			0.023Ω			0.120Ω			0.015Ω		
DAMPING FACTOR	5.2			169.6			354			66.6			539		
	CD/Aux			CD/Aux			CD/Aux			CD/Aux			CD/Aux		
STEREO SEPARATION (1kHz)	58dB			116dB			96dB			106dB			79dB		
(20kHz)	32dB			90dB			70dB			78dB			56dB		
CHANNEL BALANCE (1kHz, -20dBV)	0.2dB			1.3dB			0.0dB			0.1dB			0.5dB		
(-60dBV)	1.8dB			0.6dB			0.3dB			0.2dB			8.3dB		
TOTAL HARMONIC DIST. (0dBW)	-73dB (-74dB*)			-103dB to -98dB*			-80dB			-98dB			-83dB		
(2/3 POWER)	-59dB (-57dB*)			-110dB to -107dB*			-68dB			-97dB			-78dB		
CCIR INTERMODULATION DIST (0dBW)	-67dB (-69dB*)			-99dB			-76dB			-96dB			-82dB		
(2/3 POWER)	-63dB (-62dB*)			-103dB			-64dB			-97dB			-78dB		
NOISE (A WTD, 0dBW)	-70.5dB (-73.0dB*)			-94.8 to -83.9dB*			-83.9dB			-89.7dB			-78.3dB*		
(2/3 POWER)	-81.3dB (-83.5dB*)			-113.9 to -100.3dB*			-95.7dB			-99.1dB			-93.6dB*		
RESIDUAL NOISE (UNWTD)	-55.4dBV (-57.3dBV)			-73.1dBV to -70.4dBV*			-70.6dBV			-77.8dBV			-66.7dBV		
INPUT SENSITIVITY (FOR 0dBW)	13mV (41mV*)			96mV to 18mV*			24.8mV			18.6mV			36mV		
(FOR FULL OUTPUT)	70mV (221mV*)			1169mV to 219mV*			183mV			171mV			381mV		
LINE OVERLOAD (1kHz)	≥16V			≥16V			2.54V (3.67V)*			4.5V			10.5V		
(20kHz)	≥16V			≥16V			2.50V (3.66V)*			4.5V			11.3V		
(50kHz)	≥16V			≥16V			2.37V (3.48V)*			3.6V			11.5V		
PREAMP OUTPUT/IMPEDANCE	28V / 4.9KΩ			13.3V / 82-74Ω*			12.0V / <1Ω			3.3V / 57Ω			6.6V / 99Ω		
PRE/POWER INPUT LOADING	110KΩ / 216KΩ			19KΩ / 60PF / 48KΩ			10KΩ / 15KΩ* / 48KΩ			17KΩ / 120PF 13KΩ			31KΩ / 700PF 15KΩ		
DC OFFSET, LEFT RIGHT	0mV / 0mV			-0.2mV			0mV / 0mV			1mV / +3mV			-16mV / -6mV		
SERIAL NUMBER	210532/02			21A02061/218D09193			VS216/95106			101000/100872			E020530/E030544		
TYPICAL RETAIL PRICE	£299/£1249			£1000/£750 (MONO)			£760/£880			£595/£595			£600/£700		

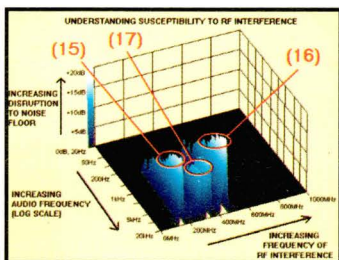
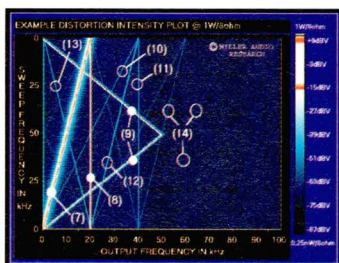
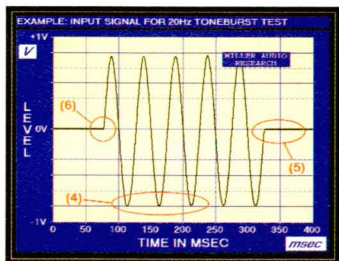
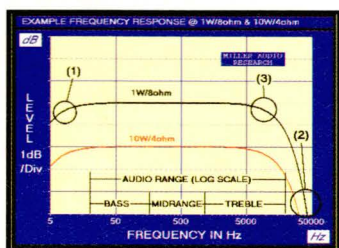
\*LOW PREAMP OUTPUT

\*\*RELAY PROTECTED

\*ATTENUATED LINE INPUT

\*BALANCED MODE

# Making the most of the test results



**M**ost hi-fi buffs are interested in the more obviously macho areas of objective performance, like power output, headroom and maximum current. So it's as well to know that all three parameters are quoted to a fixed limit of just one per cent distortion.

However, more power does not necessarily mean more quality. Instead, if you want a power amp to drive difficult or multiple speaker combinations, look for a high-current device that gets close to doubling its power output between 8 and 4 Ohm loads.

Unfortunately, any amplifier with an appropriately stiff power supply will, perversely, also suffer from a limited dynamic headroom. This latter figure gives us some idea of the maximum short-term power available under dynamic music conditions encountered in real life.

## THE FREQUENCY RESPONSE PLOT

These plots detail the frequency response of the amplifier from the deepest sub-bass (1) to beyond the limits of our hearing (2) at 1W into a standard 8 Ohm speaker load and 10W into a lower 4 Ohm load. In this example, I have also marked out the 20Hz-20kHz audio range, showing the regions related to bass, mid-range and treble performance.

The example shows that the amplifier has a mild bass roll-off (1) allied to a significantly more 'droopy' treble (3). Ideally, the amplifier's response should not change with power output or variation in the speaker load impedance. If differences do exist, they are usually most obvious between 20kHz and 50kHz, where the amplifier begins to struggle and distortion starts to climb.

## THE 20Hz TONEBURST PLOT

This plot demonstrates the perfect symmetry of the low-frequency toneburst fed into each amplifier in this test. It compares to a synthesised drum beat which starts and stops abruptly rather than gently decaying away.

Depending on the nature of compensation within the amplifier (negative feedback and/or DC servos), which defines its low frequency response, this toneburst usually emerges with a certain amount of modification.

The more brutal but thoroughly conventional feedback schemes usually disrupt the symmetry of the first few cycles (4) while taking longer to settle overall (5). If the amp is phase-inverting, the leading edge is reversed from positive to negative-going (6). Ideally, the output toneburst should look identical to this input.

## THE DISTORTION INTENSITY PLOTS

It would be convenient for us to believe that very low distortion goes hand-in-hand with very high sound quality but, unfortunately, this is not the case. If it were, many far cheaper integrated amplifiers would be superb performers. In practice, the amount of THD (Total Harmonic Distortion) is less important than how its composition varies with the changing power output of the amplifier.

As long as distortion rises and falls in sympathy with the music, most listeners quickly become accustomed to its presence. Naturally, some types of distortion are more tolerable than others, but using the new distortion intensity plots we can now examine all types of distortion in one shot.

Rather than using a single test tone, this method taxes the amplifier in a more realistic fashion by inputting a combination of signals. These signals are highlighted in red on all the Intensity plots and include a sweep from 0 to 20kHz (7), a fixed 20kHz tone (8) and a further sweep (some -24dB lower in level) from 0 to 50kHz to 0Hz (9).

The amplifiers are raised to a 1W output into a standard 8Ohm load where, as with real music, both harmonic and intermodulation (IM) distortions occur simultaneously. Without changing the input, the amp's volume is then increased to 10W into a tougher 4Ohm load to see whether the 'pattern' or fingerprint of these distortions changes.

Broadly speaking, any pattern that's not highlighted in red is a distortion and the brighter its blue colour the higher, or more intense it is.

In our example we can see simple 2nd harmonics of (7) and (8) being indicated by the markers (10) and (11) respectively. Intermodulation or 'beating' between (7) and (8) is represented by one half of the 'V-pattern' (12), whose 'other half' reflects directly into the audioband (13). Higher-order IM patterns (14) — which are subjectively more distracting — can also occur.

## THE NEW 3D RF SUSCEPTIBILITY PLOT

These busy lattices of distortion are further complicated by electrical noise leaking in from central heating systems, dimmer switches, fluorescent lights, CD players and all manner of domestic or external appliances.

This is called Radio Frequency (RF) noise and, once inside an amplifier, it will often mask subtle detail by disrupting the natural background of hiss. Even if background noise seems inaudible, RF interference can still make music sound fatiguingly hard, gritty or just plain muddled.

The magnitude of this effect shows up as raised areas on the new 3D RF susceptibility plot which, in this example, draws attention to the amplifier's sensitivity to RF noise at 160MHz (15) and 420MHz (16). By looking across to the audio frequency scale we can see how the audibility of this effect will be most obvious beyond 5kHz or so — the treble region.

The plot also shows a slightly milder susceptibility at 270MHz and 320MHz (17). It's worth noting that if the amplifier is exposed to any electrical interference within these ranges, it is unlikely to storm through with flying colours.

Sadly, no-one can ensure that his or her environment is entirely free of such electrical appliances causing stray interference. But by referring to the new RF plots, we can now determine accurately which amps are most susceptible in the first place.

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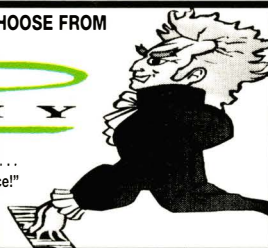
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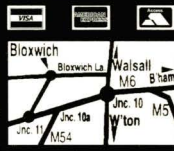
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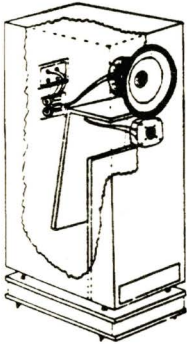


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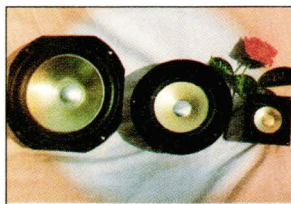


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**LASER DISC PLAYERS**  
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 CLD1950/M55 £599/£999  
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 A203 40 W.PCH £169.99  
 A400 60 W.PCH £249.99  
 A602 80 W.PCH £329.00  
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**TWIN CASSETTE DECKS**  
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**MIDI SYSTEMS**  
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**MINI SYSTEMS**  
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 N100/100W £549

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 TCK561S/TCK611S £229/£299

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**MIDI SYSTEMS**  
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**MIDI SYSTEMS**  
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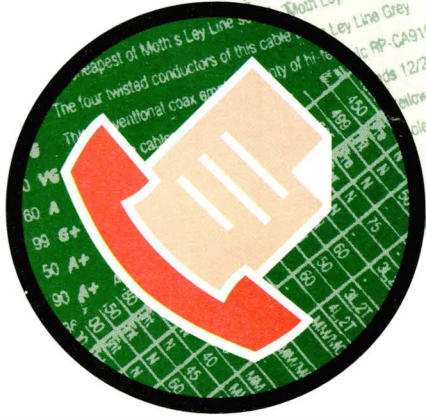
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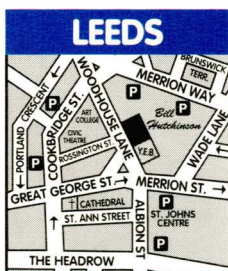
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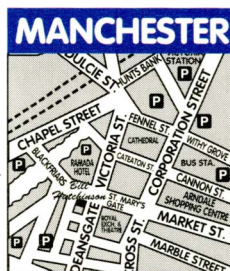
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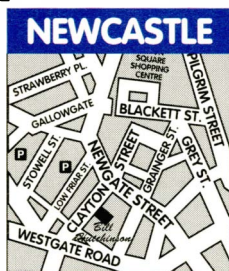
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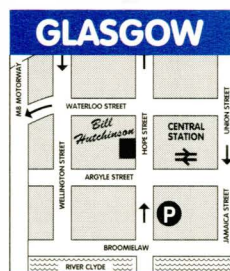
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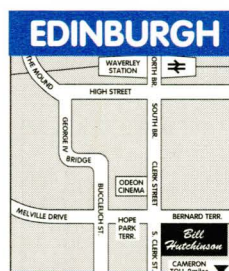
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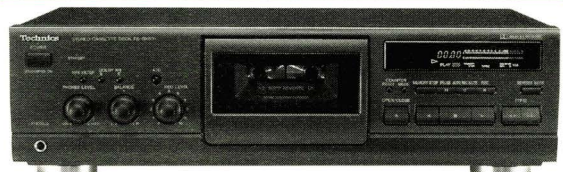


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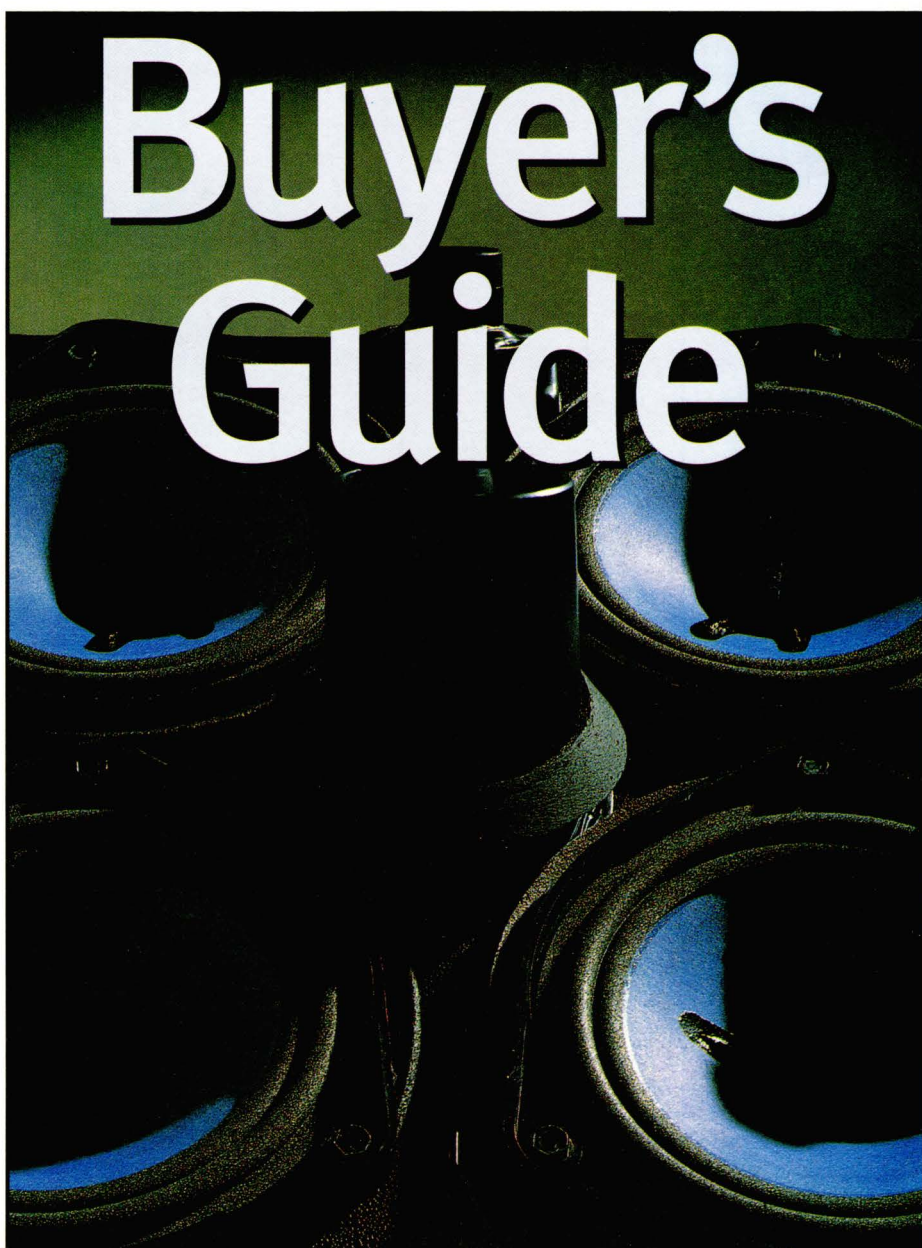
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## Index

YOUR AT-A-GLANCE REFERENCE TO HI-FI PRICES, TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS AND OPTIONS. OVER 2,500 ITEMS LISTED! IF IT'S HOT AND HI-FI, IT'S HERE.

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Key to amplifiers  
Price - typical retail, to nearest pound.  
Power - output power in watts, per channel, RMS.  
Inputs - MM/MC - phono moving coil and moving magnet, L - line (CD, aux etc), T - tape.  
A/V - includes Dolby Surround or Pro Logic decoder and amplification.

Type: Int - integrated, Pre - preamplifier, Pwr - power amplifier.  
Headphone - Y - yes, N - no.  
Remote - Y - yes, N - no.  
Size - width x height x depth in cm.

Highlighted products have been tested in *Hi-Fi Choice*. Please refer to The Directory for full test results.



Key to amplifiers  
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Remote - Y - yes, N - no.  
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Products highlighted in red have been tested in *Hi-Fi Choice*. Please refer to The Directory for full test results.

Model	Price	Type	AV	Power	Inputs	Headphones	Remote	Size	Special
<b>AMPLIFIERS</b>									
Adyton PSU	569	-	N	-	-	-	-	-	PSU
Adyton CHORUS	1295	Pre	N	-	MC	N	N	44,3,25	RIA/A phono stage
Adyton TEMPER	1795	Pre	N	-	MC,2L	N	N	44,3,25	Phono & line source preamp
Adyton MODUS	2095	Pre	N	-	4L,2T	N	N	44,5,25	Line control amp
Adyton OPERA	2395	Int	N	50	MM/MC,3L,2T	N	N	21,33,13	Optional phono
Adyton CORDIS 1.6	3399	Pwr	N	120	-	N	N	45,9,35	Stereo power amp
Adyton CORDIS 3B	11950	Pwr	N	290	-	-	-	49,39,43	Reference 2x dual mono
Alchemist Kraken/pre Anniv	0	Pre	N	N	MM,3L,2T	N	N	25,9,25	Stainless steel/gold finish
Alchemist Kraken/Pwr Anniv	0	Pwr	-	60	-	N	N	32,9,25	Stainless steel/gold finish
Alchemist Kraken/Pre	380	Pwr	-	60	-	-	-	32,9,25	Bridgable
Alchemist Kraken/mono	380	Pwr	N	60	-	-	N	32,9,25	
Alchemist Kraken	395	Pre	N	-	5L,1T	N	N	25,9,25	Bridging circuit built-in
Alchemist Kraken/Pwr	399	Int	N	60	3L,2T	N	N	32,9,25	MM £45 option
Alchemist Kraken Anniv	499	Int	N	60	MM,3L,2T	N	N	25,9,25	Stainless steel/gold finish
Alchemist Forseti	899	Int	N	100	4L,2T	N	N	47,10,39	
Alchemist Freya	1020	Pre	N	-	6L,1T	N	N	31,7,30	
Alchemist Odin	1020	Pwr	-	80	-	-	-	31,14,30	Stereo
Alchemist Genesis	1525	Pwr	-	110	-	-	-	25,14,30	Pair monoblocks
AMC AV81 Control	289	Pre	Y	-	8L,2T	N	Y	-	
AMC 2445	299	Pwr	-	45	-	-	-	-	4 channels
AMC 1030	379	Pre	N	-	MM	N	N	-	
AMC 2030	449	Pwr	-	30	-	-	-	-	
AMC S84	479	Pre	Y	-	8L	N	Y	-	Multiroom, bal/unbal inputs
AMC AV81 H.T. Control	499	Pre	Y	-	8L,2T	N	N	-	As AV81 plus Dolby Pro Logic
AMC CVT3030	529	Int	N	30	6L,1T	Y	N	-	Tape amp
Analogue Saturn	75	Pre	N	-	MM	N	N	-	
Analogue Saturn MC	75	Pre	N	-	MC	N	N	-	
Analogue Jupiter	330	Int	N	30	MM,4L,1T	N	N	-	
Arcaam Alpha 5	230	Int	N	40	MM,3L,2T	Y	N	43,8,30	Bypassable tone controls
Arcaam Alpha 6	330	Int	N	50	MM,3L,2T	Y	Y	43,8,30	Remote volume facility
Arcaam Delta 290P	400	Pwr	N	75	-	Y	N	43,9,30	Can bypass with Delta 290
Arcaam Delta 290	480	Int	N	75	4L,2T	Y	Y	43,9,32	Opt MM/MC phono module
Arcaam Delta 110S	520	Pre	N	-	MM/MC,3L,2T	Y	Y	43,7,30	As Delta 110, w/o DAC
Arcaam Delta 110	750	Pre	N	-	MM/MC,2L,2T	Y	Y	43,7,30	On-board DAC, 2 inputs
Arcaam Xeta One	999	Int	Y	50	MM,5L,2T	Y	N	43,13,32	Video switching, 5ch Dolby
Arion EOS	899	Pwr	N	18	-	-	-	-	With volume control
Arion Elektra	999	Int	N	18	4L,1T	N	N	-	Class A valve
Arion Eros Line	1050	Pre	N	-	4L,1T	N	N	-	Dual mono construction
Arion EOS Export	1099	Pwr	N	18	-	-	-	-	With volume control
Arion Elektra Export	1199	Int	N	18	4L,1T	N	N	-	Class A valve amp
Arion Triton	1250	Pwr	-	10	-	-	-	-	Triode, volume control
Arion Eros Phono	1250	Pre	N	-	3L,1T	N	N	-	Dual mono construction
Arion Talos Line	1350	Int	N	10	4L,1T	N	N	-	Triode Class A valve amp
Arion Talos Phono	1550	Int	N	10	MM,3L,1T	N	N	-	Triode Class A phono amp
Arion Tycho Pwr	1650	Pwr	N	50	-	-	-	-	Pure Class A
Arion Tycho Int	1850	Int	N	50	4L,1T	N	N	-	Pure Class A integrated
Art Audio Minuet	499	Pre	N	-	5L,1T	N	N	-	
Art Audio Headline	600	Pre	N	-	L	Y	N	-	Single ended triode Class A
Art Audio VPL	741	Pre	N	-	6L,2T	N	N	-	
Art Audio Conductor Phono	750	Pre	N	-	MM/MC	N	N	-	Separate PSU, upgradable
Art Audio VP1	952	Pre	N	-	MM,5L,2T	N	N	-	
Art Audio Conductor	1100	Pre	N	-	6L,2T	Y	N	-	Upgradable
Art Audio Quintet	1393	Pwr	-	15	-	-	-	-	Class A triode/pentode
Art Audio Integra	1499	Int	N	30	5L,2T	N	N	-	Class A Pentode
Art Audio Concerto	1669	Pwr	N	50	-	-	-	-	2x mono triode/pentode
Art Audio Conductor Export	2000	Pre	N	-	6L,2T	Y	Y	-	Separate PSU, mono
Art Audio Tempo	2499	Pwr	-	30	-	-	-	-	2x mono Class A triode
Art Audio Maestro	3524	Pwr	N	100	-	-	-	-	2x mono triode/pentode
Audio Innovation L1	299	Pre	N	-	3L,1T	N	N	25,10,30	
Audio Innovation Alto	299	Int	N	35	4L,2T	N	N	43,8,30	
Audio I Alto Chrome	329	Int	N	35	4L,2T	N	N	43,8,30	
Audio Innovation T2	399	Pre	N	-	MC	N	N	12,16,8	MC stepup
Audio Innovation P2	679	Pre	N	-	MM	N	N	50,12,30	Phono stage
Audio Innovation L2	699	Pre	N	-	4L,1T	N	N	50,12,30	
Audio Innovation Ser 800	849	Pwr	N	25	-	-	-	41,15,34	
Audio I Classic 25	899	Int	N	25	4L,1T	N	N	46,15,34	Kit amplifier
Audio Innovation P2MC	899	Pre	N	-	MM/MC	N	N	50,12,30	Phono stage
Audio Innovation Ser 500	999	Int	N	25	MM,3L,2T	N	N	41,15,34	
Audio Innovation Ser 700	999	Int	N	25	4L,1T	N	N	41,15,34	
Audio Innovation 1000	1499	Pwr	N	50	-	-	-	41,15,34	Monoblocks
Audio I First Audio	1549	Pwr	N	7.5	-	-	-	41,15,34	
Audio Innovation 1000SE	2249	Pwr	N	50	-	-	-	41,15,34	Silver circuit board
Audio I 2nd Audio	2999	Pwr	N	15	-	-	-	41,15,34	Monoblocks
Audio Note Ongaku	22411	Int	N	26	6L	N	N	-	Single-ended Class A tube
Audio Note Oto	1250	Int	N	24	MM/MC,4L,1T	N	N	-	
Audio Research PH-1	1690	Pre	N	-	MM/MC	N	N	48,14,26	Phono preamp
Audio Research LS-3	1695	Pre	N	-	5L,1T	N	N	48,14,26	1 direct input
Audio Research LS-3b	2250	Pre	N	-	5L,1T	N	N	48,14,26	1 direct input
Audio Research VT60	2430	Pwr	N	35	-	N	N	-	Single ended tube mono
Audio Research D-200	2800	Pwr	N	110	-	-	-	48,14,31	Single ended, balanced
Audio Research SP9 II	2850	Pre	N	-	MM/MC,4L,2T	N	N	48,14,26	Hybrid
Audio Research PH-2	2895	Pre	N	-	MM/MC	N	N	48,14,26	Balanced
Audio Research LS-2 II	2997	Pre	N	-	5L,1T	N	N	48,14,26	1 direct input/hybrid
Audio Research V35	3355	Pwr	N	30	-	-	-	48,18,37	Balanced in, hybrid
Audio Research LS-2b II	3398	Pre	N	-	5L,1T	N	N	48,14,26	1 balanced direct input/hybrid
Audio Research V70	4480	Pwr	N	60	-	-	-	48,18,40	Balanced in, hybrid
Audio Research D-300	4800	Pwr	N	160	-	-	-	48,18,33	Single ended, balanced
Audio Research LS-5 II	5290	Pre	N	-	5L,1T	N	N	48,14,30	Full balanced in/out

Model	Price	Type	AV	Power	Inputs	Headphones	Remote	Size	Special
<b>AMPLIFIERS</b>									
Audio Research VT130	5600	Pwr	N	65	-	N	N	-	Stereo tube, balanced
Audio Research D-400 II	6200	Pwr	N	200	-	-	-	48,23,33	Single ended, balanced
Audio Research V140	8960	Pwr	N	120	-	-	-	48,22,30	Monoblocks, hybrid
Audio Research VT150	14940	Pwr	N	130	-	-	-	37,31,56	2 x monoblocks, tube
Audiolab 8000A	500	Int	N	60	MM/MC,2L,3T	Y	N	45,8,36	Preout/main in
Audiolab 8000C	520	Pre	N	-	MM/MC,2L,3T	Y	N	45,8,36	2 pairs of outputs
Audiolab 8000P	700	Pwr	-	100	-	-	-	45,8,36	Bi-wire speaker terminals
Audiolab 8000M	750	Pwr	-	125	-	-	-	45,8,36	Single monoblock
Audiolab 8000PPA	850	Pre	N	-	MM/MC	-	-	45,8,36	Phono preamplifier
Audiolab 8000Q	1000	PRE	N	-	3L,2T	Y	Y	45,8,36	'Pure Direct' signal path
Audiolink Sterling II	350	Int	N	60	MM/MC	N	N	43,7,270	Available in chrome
Audiolink P400	467	Pre	N	-	4L	N	N	43,7,270	Available in chrome
Audiolink PR401	583	Pwr	N	100	-	-	-	43,10,37	Available in chrome
Aura VA100 II	330	Int	N	70	MM,4L,1T	Y	N	43,6,31	Chrome finish add £50
AVI S2000MA	599	Pwr	-	90	-	-	-	-	
AVI S2000MI	799	Int	N	100	4L, 1T	-	Y	31,25,9	Includes S2000RC handset
AVI S2000MP	799	Pre	N	-	5L,1T	N	-	31,25,9	includes S2000RC handset
AVI S2000MM	1099	Pwr	-	150	-	-	-	-	2x monoblocks
Bryston 4	641	Pre	Y	-	4L,1T	N	N	48,5,25	
Bryston BP1	673	Pre	Y	-	MM or MC	N	N	48,5,25	Phono stepup, bal & unbal
Bryston 2B-LP	750	Pwr	Y	75	-	N	N	48,5,25	Bridgable
Bryston BP4	802	Pre	Y	-	4L,1T	N	N	48,5,25	Balanced out
Bryston BP5	889	Pre	Y	-	MM/MC,3L,1T	N	N	48,5,25	MM or MC, balanced out
Bryston BP20	1126	Pre	Y	-	8L,1T	N	N	48,5,25	Balanced in/out
Bryston 3B-NRB	1159	Pwr	Y	150	-	N	N	48,13,23	Bridgable, bal & unbalanced
Bryston THX3B	1262	Pwr	Y	150	-	N	N	48,13,23	2 channels, THX approved
Bryston 4B-NRB	1756	Pwr	Y	300	-	N	N	48,13,39	Bridgable, bal & unbalanced
Bryston 7B-NRB	1815	Pwr	Y	500	-	N	N	48,13,39	Single monoblock
Bryston THX4B	1858	Pwr	Y	300	-	N	N	48,13,39	2 channels, THX approved
Bryston THX7B	1917	Pwr	Y	500	-	N	N	48,13,39	1 channel, THX approved
Bryston 8B-NRB	2195	Pwr	Y	150	-	N	N	48,13,39	4 channels, bridgable
Bryston THX8B	2400	Pwr	Y	150	-	N	N	48,13,39	4 channels, THX approved
C.R. De Kalyso	499	Int	N	15	5L	-	-	-	
C.R. De Romulus	998	Int	N	35	5L	-	-	-	
CAT SL1 Sig line	5500	Pre	N	-	3L,1T	-	N	31,48,14	2 outputs, valve
CAT SL1 Sig phono	6000	Pre	N	-	MM,2L	-	N	31,48,14	2 outputs, valve
CAT JLT1	13500	Pwr	N	200	-	-	-	-	
Chimera X-150C	800	Pre	N	-	4L,1T	N	N	-	Balanced CD in, balanced out
Chimera X-800	800	Int	N	80	4L,1T	N	N	-	MOSFET, s/steel & chrome
Chimera X-150P	1200	Pwr	-	150	-	-	-	-	MOSFET, balance, bridgable
Chimera X-100	1200	Int	N	100	4L,1T	N	N	-	Ext PSU, s/steel & chrome
Classe Audio Audio 3D	1320	Pre	N	-	MM/MC,4L,1T	N	R	48,7,28	
Classe Audio Audio 70	1399	Pwr	-	75	-	-	-	48,12,30	Single ended, balanced
Classe Audio Audio 4L	1697	Pre	N	-	5L,1T	N	N	48,9,34	Remote option
Classe Audio Audio 4	1735	Pre	N	-	MM/MC,4L,1T	N	N	48,9,34	Remote option
Classe Audio Audio 10	2299	Pwr	-	125	-	-	-	48,17,42	Single ended, bal bridgable
Classe Audio Audio 5L II	2395	Pre	N	-	5L,1T	N	N	48,15,43	Remote option
Classe Audio Audio 5 II	2657	Pre	N	-	MM/MC,4L,1T	N	N	48,15,43	Remote option
Classe Audio Audio 15	3399	Pwr	-	175	-	-	-	48,19,42	Single ended, bal bridgable
Classe Audio Audio 6L II	3469	Pre	N	-	5L,1T	N	N	48,15,43	Remote option, sep PSU
Classe Audio Audio 6 II	3817	Pre	N	-	MM/MC,4L,1T	N	N	48,15,43	Remote option, sep PSU
Classe Audio Audio 25	4639	Pwr	-	250	-	-	-	48,20,53	Single ended, bal bridgable
Classe Audio Audio M-700	7690	Pwr	-	700	-	-	-	48,19,44	Single ended, bal monoblock
Classe Audio Audio M-1000	9998	Pwr	-	1k	-	-	-	48,22,53	Single ended, bal monoblock
Concordant Exhilarant	900	Pre	N	-	5L	N	N	-	6 tube pre, wood case option
Concordant Exquisite	1950	Pre	N	-	5L	N	N	-	10 tubes, 2 line out, ext PSU
Conrad-Johnson PV10AL	995	Pre	N	-	5L	N	N	-	Line version of

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Key to amplifiers  
Price - typical retail, to nearest pound.  
Power - output power in watts, per channel, RMS.  
Inputs - MM/MC - phono moving coil and moving magnet, L - line (CD, aux etc), T - tape.  
A/V - includes Dolby Surround or Pro Logic decoder and amplification.

Type: Int - integrated, Pre - preamplifier, Pwr - power amplifier.  
Headphone - Y - yes, N - no.  
Remote - Y - yes, N - no.  
Size - width x height x depth in cm.

Highlighted products have been tested in Hi-Fi Choice. Please refer to the Directory for full test results.



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Model	Price	Type	A/V	Power	Inputs	Headphones	Remote	Size	Special
<b>AMPLIFIERS</b>									
Counterpoint NPS-400E	4395	Pwr	-	400	-	N	N	-	Rated at 4 ohms, hybrid
Counterpoint NPM-E	8995	Pwr	-	150	-	-	-	49,18,49	Twin monoblocks
Credo PMP003	385	Pre	N	-	-	N	N	22,6,24	Phono amp MM/MC, & PSU
Credo HMP003	388	Pre	N	-	-	Y	N	-	Class A headphone amp
Credo MMP002	439	Pre	N	-	-	N	N	-	Mic amp, phantom power
Credo IMP702	499	Int	N	70	6L	-	N	44,6,31	
Credo IMP703	538	Int	N	70	MM/MC, 6L	-	Y	44,6,31	As above, with remote
Credo CMP004	799	Pre	N	-	6L	N	N	44,6,31	3 outputs
Credo CMP005	1119	Pre	N	-	6L	N	Y	-	Remote controlled
Credo PMP154	1699	Pwr	N	150	-	-	N	44,16,31	
Credo PMP303	1699	Pwr	N	30	-	-	N	-	Class A power amp
Credo PMP102	2181	Pwr	N	100	-	-	N	44,21,31	Class A power amp
Credo PMP252	2509	Pwr	N	250	-	-	N	44,21,31	
Creek P42	250	Pre	-	-	4L,2T	Y	-	42,6,20	Plug-in modules available
Creek A42	250	Pwr	-	50	-	-	-	42,6,20	
Creek 4240	250	Int	N	40	3L,1T	Y	N	42,6,20	Optional phono input
Crimson 620	395	Pwr	N	40	-	-	-	-	
Crimson CS610	395	Pre	N	-	MM/MC,2L,1T	N	N	9,10,35	
Crimson CS620	395	Pwr	N	40	-	-	-	9,10,35	
Dawn Audio Cmd 2 by 20	890	Pwr	-	200	-	-	N	38,11,26	Single monoblock
Dawn Audio Prelude +50	951	Pre	N	-	MM/MC,2L,2T	N	N	38,9,26	Pre out line driver
Denon PMA-250 III	160	Int	N	30	MM,3L,1T	Y	N	44,10,28	UK design
Denon PMA-350 II	220	Int	N	50	MM,3L,2T	Y	N	44,12,28	UK design
Denon PMA-480R	220	Int	N	50	MM,3L,2T	Y	Y	44,12,29	
Denon PMA-450SE	270	Int	N	60	MM,3L,2T	Y	N	44,14,36	UK design
Denon PMA-715	300	Int	N	60	MM,3L,2T	Y	Y	44,16,40	
Denon AVC-1530	480	Int	Y	70	MM,2L,2T	Y	Y	44,14,34	
Denon AVC-3530	1000	Int	Y	110	MM,4L,4T	Y	Y	44,16,43	Learning remote
DNM 3 Start	850	Pre	N	-	MM/MC,2L,1T	N	N	27,13,16	
DNM 3A Start	1200	Pre	N	-	MM/MC,2L,1T	N	N	27,13,16	
DNM PA1	1450	Pwr	N	45	-	-	-	27,13,18	Triwire output
DNM 3B Primus E	2050	Pre	N	-	MM/MC,4L,1T	N	N	27,13,16	
DNM 3B Twin E	3050	Pre	N	-	MM/MC,4L,1T	N	N	27,13,16	
DNM PA2BE	3550	Pwr	N	90	-	-	-	27,13,18	Triwire output
DNM 3B Six E	4050	Pre	N	-	MM/MC,4L,1T	N	N	27,13,16	
DNM PA2BS	4450	Pwr	N	90	-	-	-	27,13,18	Triwire output
DNM PA2BS-1	4800	Pwr	N	90	-	-	-	27,13,18	Triwire output
DPA DSP200S	495	Pre	N	-	5L,1T	N	N	22,30,8	
DPA Renaissance	595	Int	N	40	MM,4L,1T	Y	N	40,28,8	'Compound Class A' o/p
DPA DP200S	750	Pwr	-	60	-	-	-	22,30,8	Bridgable to 200 watts mono
Dynavector P100	1495	PRE	N	-	MM/MC	-	-	44,6,22	Phono stepup
Dynavector L100	1995	PRE	N	-	3L,2T	N	N	44,6,24	
Dynavector HX1.2	3995	PWR	N	130	-	-	-	44,13,37	High current capability
EAR 834P	399	PRE	N	-	MM/MC	N	N	40,40,15	Valve phono stepup
EAR 834L	449	PRE	N	-	5L,1T	N	N	-	Valve, line-only
EAR 859	1595	INT	N	13	6L	N	N	40,40,15	Single ended valve
EAR 834	1599	INT	N	50	6L	N	N	40,40,15	Valve
EAR 802MC	2599	Pre	N	-	MM/MC,2L,2T	N	N	-	Valve
EAR 509 Mk II	3499	PWR	N	100	-	N	N	36,20,25	Valve monoblock x1
EAR 519	4699	PWR	N	100	-	-	-	43,14,20	Valve monoblock x1
EAR 549	6999	PWR	N	200	-	-	-	43,27,22	Valve monoblock x1
EAR 688	6999	Pre	N	-	MM/MC,3L,2T	N	N	-	Valve
EAR P52	15999	PRE	N	-	MM/MC,4L,2T	N	N	-	Valve
EAR Yoshino P52	15999	Pre	N	-	MM/MC,4L,2T	N	N	-	Valve
ECA Vista	760	Pre	N	-	4L,1T	N	N	39,10,39	Phase coherent design
ECA Prisma	760	Pre	N	-	MM/MC	-	-	39,10,23	Phono stepup
ECA Lectern S	880	Pwr	-	50	-	-	-	39,10,30	Phase coherent design
Electrocompaniet ECP-1	535	Pre	N	-	MM/MC	N	N	24,7,16	Adjusts to match cartridge
Electro ECP-1 SF	699	Pre	N	-	MM/MC	N	N	24,7,16	auto-adjusts, blue stone facia
Electro EC-4 Line	1315	Pre	N	-	5L,2T	N	N	48,9,23	inc XLR balanced in/out
Electrocompaniet EC-3M	1485	Pre	N	-	MM,4L,2T	N	N	48,9,23	Balanced XLR in/out
Electro EC-4 Line SF	1565	Pre	N	-	5L,2T	N	N	48,9,23	XLR in/out, blue stone facia
Electrocompaniet EC-3MC	1810	Pre	N	-	MC,4L,2T	N	N	48,9,23	XLR in/out, adj MC input
Electro EC-3M SF	1995	Pre	N	-	MM,4L,2T	N	N	48,9,23	XLR in/out, blue stone facia
Electro AW100DMB	2030	Pwr	N	100	-	-	-	48,13,36	High current (80A)
Electro EC-3MC SF	2075	Pre	N	-	MC,4L,2T	N	N	48,9,23	XLR in/out, blue stone facia
Electrocompaniet EC1-1	2100	Int	N	100	5L,2T	N	N	45,13,36	High current (80A)
Electro AW100DMB-SF	2175	Pwr	N	100	-	-	-	48,13,36	High current, blue stone facia
Electro EC1-1 SF	2350	Int	N	100	5L,2T	N	N	45,13,36	High current, blue stone facia
Electro AW250DMB	3620	Pwr	N	250	-	-	-	48,22,45	High current (100A)
Electro AW250DMB-SF	3990	Pwr	N	250	-	-	-	48,45,22	High current stereo
Electrocompaniet AW180MB	4200	Pwr	N	180	-	-	-	28,29,48	High current, price per pair
Electro AW180MB-SF	4430	Pwr	N	180	-	-	-	28,29,48	High current, price per pair
EMF Audio Sequel	349	Int	N	50	MM,4L,1T	Y	N	43,65,28	
Exposure XX Super	699	Int	N	55	4L,2T	N	N	43,85,35	Upgraded model
Exposure XIX	799	Pre	N	-	5L	N	N	43,85,35	Line only version of XVII
Exposure XV Super	799	Int	N	55	MM/MC,3L,2T	N	N	43,85,35	
Exposure XVII	849	Pre	N	-	MM/MC,3L,2T	N	N	43,85,35	MM/MC optional
Exposure VIII Super	849	Pwr	N	70	-	N	N	43,85,35	Upgraded model
Exposure XIV	1400	Pre	N	-	MM/MC,3L,2T	N	N	48,8,30	Needs 9 power supply
Exposure XVIII (pr)	1599	Pwr	N	65	-	N	N	43,85,35	Upgraded 2x monoblocks
Exposure IV	2199	Pwr	N	80	-	N	N	48,13,35	Fully regulated
Fullers Pre 1	599	Pre	N	-	MM/5L,2T	N	N	48,9,30	Optional MC stage
Fullers Pre 1+	649	Pre	N	-	6L,2T	N	N	48,9,30	No phono option - hard wired
Fullers A10	1200	Pwr	-	10	-	-	-	48,13,30	Single ended Class A
Gamma Aeon Signature	78600	Pwr	N	98	-	-	-	29,21,53	SE Class A
Gamma Acoustics Gemini	699	Int	N	12	3L	-	N	33,23,8	Single ended, triode
Gamma Era Signature	900	Pre	N	-	MM,3L,1T	N	N	44,17,30	Triode, fully regulated

Model	Price	Type	A/V	Power	Inputs	Headphones	Remote	Size	Special
<b>AMPLIFIERS</b>									
Gamma Acoustics Rhythm	1999	Int	N	22	MM,3L	-	N	38,30,53	SE phono integrated
Gamma Acoustics Era	2499	Pre	N	-	MM	-	N	44,17,30	Triode, fully regulated
Gamma Space Signature	3499	Pwr	N	18	-	-	N	44,21,53	Single ended Class A, mono
Gamma Space Reference	3999	Int	N	18	-	-	N	43,22,31	Line integrated
Gamma Era Reference	3999	Pre	N	-	MM,3L	-	N	44,17,30	SI Triode
Gamma Acoustics Aeon	11999	Pwr	N	30	-	-	N	29,21,53	Single ended Class A, mono
Gamma Era Signature	19999	Pre	N	-	MM,5L	-	N	44,24,39	Triode preamp, regulated
Grant CD10	482	Pre	N	-	4L	N	N	-	
Grant G100P	764	Pre	N	-	MM,2L,1T	N	N	-	
Grant G50A	1128	Pwr	-	60	-	-	-	-	Monoblocks
Grant G100AMS	1528	Pwr	-	100	-	-	-	-	
Grant G350A	3455	Pwr	-	350	-	-	-	-	
Grant G200AMS	3760	Pwr	-	200	-	-	-	-	Monoblocks
Grundig V210	130	Int	N	50	MM,5L,1T	Y	Y	36,12,30	Pre-main split
Grundig Fine Arts V1	150	Int	N	50	MM,5L,1T	Y	Y	43,14,30	Tone defeat
Grundig V310	170	Int	N	70	MM,5L,1T	Y	Y	36,12,30	Pre-main split
Grundig Fine Arts V2	200	Int	N	80	MM,5L,1T	Y	Y	43,14,30	Tone defeat
Grundig Fine Arts V3	250	Int	N	120	MM,5L,1T	Y	Y	43,14,30	Pre-main split
GT Audio Pre	1500	Pre	N	-	MM,3L,1T	N	N	-	Regulated HT/LT PSU
GT Audio Pwr	2000	Pwr	N	30	-	N	N	-	Triode switchable (15w)
Harman-Kardon PA2100	349	Pwr	-	45	-	-	-	45,11,37	
Harman-Kardon HK1400	399	Int	N	40	MM/MC,3L,2T	N	N	45,11,37	
Harman-Kardon AP2500	499	Pre	N	-	MM/MC,6L,2T	N	N	45,11,35	
Harman-Kardon PA2200	579	Pwr	-	70	-	-	-	45,14,38	
Harman-Kardon PA2400	899	Pwr	-	120	-	-	-	45,16,41	
Heybrook Integra	555	Int	N	75	MM/MC	Y	N	77,44,30	
Heybrook SIG C/P	649	Pre	N	-	MM/MC,5L,2T	N	N	-	
Heybrook SIG MNE	698	Pwr	-	140	-	-	-	-	Mono, uses ext PSU
Heybrook SIG CAP	829	Pre	N	-	6L,2T	N	N	-	Line only
Heybrook SIG /SP	922	Pwr	-	140	-	-	-	-	Stereo power amp
Inca Tech Oberon Pre	350	Pre	N	-	MM/MC,6L,2T	N	N	43,8,22	CD direct & Two outputs
Inca Tech Oberon Pwr	400	Pwr	-	70	-	Y	N	43,8,22	Two inputs
Inca Tech Oberon	450	Int	N	-	MM/MC,6L,2T	Y	N	43,8,22	Preout, biwire
Jadis DEFY-P60	3774	Pre	N	-	MM/MC,4L,1T	-	-	43,17,30	Tube
Jadis JPL	4720	Pre	N	-	5L,1T	-	-	43,17,30	Tube
Jadis JPP-200	4778	Pre	N	-	4L,1T	-	-	-	
Jadis DEFY-7	529								

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Remote - Y - yes, N - no.  
Size - width x height x depth in cm.

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Model	Price	Type	AV	Power	Inputs	Headphones	Remote	Size	Special
<b>AMPLIFIERS</b>									
LFD Linestage LS2	1599	Pre	N	-	4L,1T	N	N	48,7,37	Hand tuned LS1
LFD Powerstage PA2	1599	Pwr	N	75	-	N	N	48,7,33	Hand tuned PA1
LFD Linestage LS2P	1750	Pre	N	-	MM/MC,4L,1T	N	N	48,7,37	As LS2 with phono stage
LFD Linestage LSB	1999	Pre	N	-	4L,1T	N	N	48,7,37	Balanced LS2
LFD Powerstage PA2M	1999	Pwr	N	90	-	N	N	30,7,37	Mono PA2
LFD Disc Preamp	4499	Pre	N	-	MC	N	N	30,5,36	Battery powered
Linn Majik-1 (Line)	524	Int	N	33	4L,2T	Y	N	32,8,33	Works as pre/int multi room
Linn LK100	549	Pwr	-	50	-	-	-	32,8,33	Stereo
Linn Majik-1 (Phono)	593	Int	N	33	MM/MC,3L,2T	Y	N	32,8,33	As line Majik
Linn Kairn Pro	998	Pre	N	-	4L, 2T	N	N	32,8,33	Multi-room compatible
Linn Kairn Preamp	1398	Pre	N	-	MM, MC 3L,2T	N	N	32,8,33	Multi-room compatible
Linn Klout	1895	Pwr	-	80	-	-	-	32,8,33	Stereo, tri-wire connectors
Lumley Reference PP70	325	Pre	N	-	6L,1T	-	N	36,46,6	Passive, bolts to ST70
Lumley Reference PP40	325	Pre	N	-	6L,1T	-	N	29,40,6	Bolts to ST40
Lumley Reference PP1	325	Pre	N	-	6L,1T	-	-	29,44,6	Passive, stand alone
Lumley Reference LV1	1000	Pre	N	-	6L,1T	N	N	29,44,6	Active valve circuit
Lumley Reference ST40	1250	Pwr	N	40	30,40,17	N	N	-	Pentode
Lumley Reference PV1	1500	Pre	N	-	MM,5L,1T	N	N	-	Phono version of LV1
Lumley Reference ST70	1950	Pwr	N	70	-	N	N	36,46,18	Switchable triode/pentode
Lumley Reference M120	3200	Pwr	N	120	-	-	-	29,44,18	2xmono, triode/pentode
Lumley Reference M500	12000	Pwr	N	-	-	-	-	35,80,30	2xmono, triode/pentode
Luxman A-312	200	INT	N	40	MM,4L,2T	Y	N	13,44,36	CD direct, A/B speakers
Luxman A-331	250	INT	N	60	MM,4L,2T	Y	N	13,44,36	inc CD direct
Luxman A-353R	350	INT	N	60	MM/MC,4L,2T	Y	Y	13,44,37	Motorised vol control
Luxman A-373	400	INT	Y	80	MM/MC,4L,2T	Y	Y	13,44,37	Also has AV inputs
Lynwood Opal	685	Int	N	80	7L,1T	N	N	-	-
Lynwood Ruby	985	Pwr	-	120	-	-	-	-	-
Magnum IA120	249	Int	N	50	MM,5L,2T	Y	N	-	-
Magnum Quartet	329	Int	N	36	MM,3L,2T	Y	N	-	-
Magnum MF125	515	Pwr	-	140	-	-	-	-	Monoblocks
Magnum MF300	595	Pwr	-	180	-	-	-	-	Monoblocks
Magnum Class A	599	Int	N	60	MM/MC,3L,1T	N	N	-	-
Magnum MA500	1295	Pwr	-	280	-	-	-	-	Monoblocks
Marantz PM-34	150	Int	N	40	MM,3L,2T	Y	N	42,14,28	Source direct
Marantz PM-44 Mk IIse	200	Int	N	40	MM,3L,2T	Y	N	42,14,28	Custom components
Marantz PM-43	200	Int	N	55	MM,3L,2T	Y	N	42,14,30	Twin speaker sockets
Marantz MA-500	250	Pwr	N	125	-	-	-	9,15,45	D-bus, monoblocks, bridgable
Marantz PM-53	250	Int	N	65	MM,3L,2T	Y	Y	42,14,30	Remote control
Marantz PM-63	300	Int	N	70	MM,3L,2T	Y	Y	42,14,30	Remote control
Marantz AV-500	699	Pre	Y	-	MM,7L,2T	N	Y	42,10,34	Dolby Pro Logic
Marantz SC-22	900	Pre	N	-	4L,1T	N	N	25,9,22	Audiophile micro component
Marantz PH-22	1000	Pre	N	-	MC,MM	N	N	25,9,22	Phono stepup
Marantz MA-22	1600	Pwr	N	50	-	-	-	23,9,22	Audiophile monoblock x2
Marantz MA-24	2400	Pwr	N	30	-	-	-	21,17,36	Class-A monoblock x2
Mark Levinson 29	3450	Pwr	-	50	-	-	-	-	-
Mark Levinson No 38	3995	Pre	N	-	6L,2T	N	Y	-	Fully remote, balanced
Mark Levinson 27.5	5399	Pwr	-	100	-	-	-	-	-
Mark Levinson No 38S	6495	Pre	N	-	6L,2T	N	Y	-	Special Edition, balanced
Mark Levinson 23.5	7399	Pwr	-	200	-	-	-	-	-
Mark Levinson 20.6	15790	Pwr	-	100	-	-	-	-	Monoblocks, Class A
Matisse Fantasy	2300	Pre	Y	-	6L,2T	N	N	-	Line stage
Matisse Reference	3500	Pre	Y	-	MM/MC,5L,2T	N	N	-	-
McIntosh MC7100/2	1095	Pwr	N	100	-	-	-	-	-
McIntosh C712	1295	Pre	N	-	6L, 2T	Y	Y	-	-
McIntosh C38	2095	Pre	N	-	MM, 5L,3T	Y	Y	-	Multi-room, balanced out
McIntosh MC7150	2295	Pwr	N	150	-	N	N	-	-
McIntosh C39	2795	Pre	Y	-	MM, 10L (6 Vid)	Y	Y	-	Two zone, THX compatible
McIntosh C40	2795	Pre	N	-	MM, 6L, 3T	Y	N	-	Balanced in/out
McIntosh MC7106	2995	Pwr	Y	100	-	N	N	-	Six channel THX amp
McIntosh MC7300	3195	Pwr	N	300	-	N	N	-	-
McIntosh MC275	3595	Pwr	N	75	-	N	N	-	Classic valve amp
McIntosh MC2600	5395	Pwr	N	600	-	N	N	-	-
McIntosh MC1000	9595	Pwr	N	100	-	N	N	-	Monoblocks
Meridian 501	625	Pre	N	-	MM,4L,T	Y	N	33,9,34	MC option, system handset
Meridian 555	625	Pwr	-	80	-	N	N	33,9,32	Stereo
Meridian 562	685	Pre	N	-	MM,8L,T,6D	N	N	33,9,34	Digital main out. MC option
Meridian 551	695	Int	N	55	MM,4L,T	Y	Y	33,9,34	MC option
Meridian 501V	785	Pre	Y	-	MM,4L,T	Y	N	33,9,34	As 501, plus video switching
Meridian 562V	895	Pre	Y	-	MM,8L,T,6D	N	N	33,9,34	As 562, plus video switching
Meridian 601	2750	Pre	N	-	MM,4L,T	Y	Y	-	DSP tone control, MC option
Metaxas Ikarus II	995	Int	N	40	MM/MC,3L,1T	N	N	40,7,40	-
Metaxas Charisma	1095	Pre	N	-	MM/MC,3L,2T	-	N	36,6,29	Separate PSU
Michell Iso	412	Pre	N	-	MM or MC	N	N	small	Phono stage
Michell Argo	715	Pre	N	-	3L,1T	N	N	33,7,19	2 pairs outputs
Michell Iso HR	879	Pre	N	-	MM or MC	N	N	small	Phono stage
Michell Alecto Stereo	1150	Pwr	N	50	-	N	N	32,20,36	-
Michell Argo HR	1339	Pre	N	-	3L,1T	N	N	36,8,22	2 pairs outputs
Michell Alecto Mono	1989	Pwr	N	100	-	N	N	32,20,36	-
Michi RHC-10	795	Pre	N	-	5L	-	-	47,8,34	Passive
Michi RHB-05	995	Pwr	N	100	-	-	-	47,8,36	-
Michi RHO-10	995	Pre	N	-	MM,MC	-	-	47,8,34	Phono equaliser
Michi RHA-10	995	Pre	N	-	5L	-	Y	47,8,34	Active
Michi RHB-10	1650	Pwr	N	200	-	-	-	47,19,37	-
Minstrel Ultra Linear	899	INT	N	30	3L,1T	N	N	-	Low feedback hybrid
Minstrel Partridge	1499	Int	N	30	3L,1T	N	N	-	Zero feedback hybrid
Mission PSX-R	300	-	N	-	-	N	N	22,8,36	Outboard PSU
Mission Cyrus III	500	Int	N	50	MM,5L,1T	Y	N	22,8,36	PSX-R outboard PSU option



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Remote - Y - yes, N - no.  
Size - width x height x depth in cm.

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Model	Price	Type	AV	Power	Inputs	Headphones	Remote	Size	Special
<b>AMPLIFIERS</b>									
Monrio Primus	895	Pre	N	-	6L,1T	N	N	26,8,36	Line only preamp
Monrio MC-200S	950	Int	N	60	6L,1T	N	N	43,10,37	Simplified version of MC-20S
Monrio MC-25	995	Pwr	-	80	-	-	-	43,10,36	Dual mono construction
Monrio MC-20S	1595	Int	N	80	6L,1T	N	N	43,10,36	Inc pre-out sockets
Monrio Cento HP	1695	Pwr	N	135	-	-	-	43,10,36	Dual mono, high current
Moth 30 Passive	149	Pre	N	-	4L,1T	N	N	5,10,35	-
Moth 30 RIAA	199	Pre	N	-	MM/MC	N	N	5,10,35	Stand alone phono stage
Moth 30 Series Power	239	Pwr	-	30	-	-	-	5,10,35	-
Moth 30 Active	249	Pre	N	-	4L,1T	N	N	5,10,35	-
Moth 30 RIAA 100VA	299	Pre	N	-	MM/MC	N	N	5,10,35	Stand alone phono stage
Moth 30 Integrated	320	Int	N	30	8L,T	N	N	8,18,35	-
Moth 30 Active 100VA	349	Pre	N	-	4L,1T	N	N	5,10,35	-
Moth 30 Mono/40	459	Pwr	-	40	-	-	-	5,10,35	2x monoblocks
Moth 30 Stereo/60	549	Pwr	-	60	-	-	-	5,15,35	1x stereo, 1xPSU
Moth 30 Mono/100	879	Pwr	-	100	-	-	-	5,15,35	2x mono, separate PSU
Musical Fidelity E10	299	Int	N	40	MM,4L,1T	Y	N	44,10,34	Optional phono/DAC modules
Mus-Fid A1 Final Edition	399	Int	N	40	MM/MC,3L,1T	N	N	41,6,25	Separate PSU, limited edition
Musical Fidelity E200	599	Pre	N	-	5L,2T	Y	Y	44,12,35	Optional phono/DAC modules
Musical Fidelity E100	599	Int	N	70	MM,4L,1T	Y	Y	44,12,35	Pre/power removable link
Musical Fidelity E300	699	Pwr	N	100	-	-	-	44,12,35	Mono/stereo switch
Musical Fidelity F22	999	Pre	N	-	5L,1T	N	Y	49,12,33	Optional phono/digital boards
Musical Fidelity FX	1099	Pwr	N	90	-	N	N	49,12,38	Bal/unbalanced in
Musical Fidelity A1000	1399	Int	N	50	MM/MC,3L,1T	N	N	49,13,36	Separate PSU
Musical Fidelity F15	1899	Pwr	N	100	-	-	-	49,19,38	Bal/unbalanced in/hybrid
Musical Fidelity F18	3999	Pwr	N	220	-	-	-	49,19,67	Bal/unbalanced in/hybrid
NAD 302	189	Int	N	25	MM,3L,2T	Y	N	-	-
NAD Monitor 1000	229	Pre	N	-	MM/MC,3L,2T	Y	N	-	-
NAD 304	249	Int	N	35	MM,4L,2T	Y	N	-	-
NAD Monitor 1000S	349	Pre	N	-	MM/MC,3L,2T	Y	N	-	-
NAD 306	349	Int	N	50	MM,4L,2T	Y	N	-	-
NAD Monitor 208	999	Pwr	-	250	-	-	-	-	THX approved
Naim Flat-Cap	317	-	-	-	-	-	-	43,56,30	Power supply
Naim NAP90/3	416	Pwr	-	30	-	-	-	43,56,30	Latest style. Suits 92
Naim NAC92	435	Pre	N	-	5 (L or T)	N	N	43,56,30	Latest style. Suits 90/3
Naim Hi-Cap	649	-	-	-	-	-	-	21,76,30	Power supply
Naim NAC72	670	Pre	N	-	2MM/MC, L,2T	N	N	21,76,30	Upgradable with PSU, MC VP
Naim NAP140	699	Pwr	-	45	-	-	-	21,76,30	-
Naim NAP180	987	Pwr	-	60	-	-	-	43,76,30	-
Naim NAP135	1529	Pwr	-	70	-	-	-	43,76,30	-
Naim NAP250	1529	Pwr	-	70	-	-	-	43,76,30	-
Naim Super-Cap	1909	-	-	-	-	-	-	43,76,30	Power supply
Naim NAC82	1997	Pre	N	-	6 (L or T)	N	Y	43,76,30	-
Naim NAC52	5006	Pre	N	-	6 (see note)	N	Y	43,76,30	Optional phono board
Nakamichi IA4s	200	Int	N	30	3L,1T	N	N	43,7,32	'Harmonic Time Alignment'
Nakamichi IA2	600	Int	N	50	MM/MC,3L,2T	Y	Y	43,12,36	'Harmonic Time Alignment'
Nakamichi IA1	750	Int	N	80	MM/MC,3L,2T	Y	Y	43,12,36	-
NVA P-50	300	Pre	N	-	3L,1T	N	N	-	-
NVA AP-30CD	370	Int	N	50	MM/MC,3L,1T	N	N	-	-
NVA P-90	400	Pre	N	-	5L	N	N	-	-
NVA AP-30	440	Int	N	80	3L,1T	N	N	-	-
NVA Control Tube CD	470	PRE	N	-	5L,1T	N	N	-	-
NVA A70	470	Pwr	-	70	-	-	-	-	Mono
NVA A60	490	Pwr	-	60	-	-	-	-	-
NVA AP-50CD	520	Int	N	60	5L,1T	N	N	-	-
NVA AP-50	590	Int	N	60	MM/MC,5L,1T	N	N	-	-
NVA Power Tube	620	PWR	-	60	-	-	-	-	-
NVA The Tube	620	INT	N	60	5L,1T	N	N	-	-
NVA Control Tube	670	Pre	N	-	MM/MC,4L,1T				



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Headphone - Y - yes, N - no.  
Remote - Y - yes, N - no.  
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Key to cassette decks  
Price - typical retail, to nearest pound.  
Type - T - twin transports, allowing tape to tape dubbing, sequential play etc; S - Single transport, AR - auto-reverse.  
Dolby - B (10dB noise reduction), C (20dB), S (24dB). B is standard for prerecorded material.

Heads - 2 - combination record/play heads; 3 - independent record/play heads, allowing real time off tape monitoring.  
Size - width x height x depth in cm.  
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<b>AMPLIFIERS</b>									
Pioneer A-303R	200	Int	N	45	MM,3L,2T	Y	Y	42,13,36	
Pioneer A-300X	230	Int	N	40	MM,3L,2T	N	N	42,13,36	
Pioneer A-400	280	Int	N	60	MM/MC,3L,2T	Y	N	42,13,36	
Pioneer A-400X	300	Int	N	50	MM/MC,4,2	Y	N	42,13,36	
Pioneer A-503R	300	Int	N	70	MM,3L,2T	Y	Y	42,13,36	
Pioneer A-602	350	Int	N	80	MM/MC,3L,3T	Y	N	42,17,44	
Pioneer VSA-701S	500	Int	Y	55	MM,2L,2T,5V	Y	Y	42,17,42	Dolby Pro Logic
Pioneer VSA-D802S	600	Int	Y	55	MM,2L,2T,5V	Y	Y	42,17,42	Dolby Pro Logic, DSP
Project Model 7	259	Int	N	40	MM,3L,2T	N	N	-	
PS Audio 6.1	799	Pre	N	-	4L,1T	N	N	43,6,19	Outboard PSU
PS Audio 6.2	899	Pre	N	-	MM/MC,3L,2T	N	N	43,6,19	Outboard PSU
PS Audio Phono Link	899	Pre	N	-	MM/MC	N	N	43,6,19	Outboard PSU
PS Audio 100 Delta	1499	Pwr	N	120	-	-	-	42,15,35	
PS Audio 200 Delta	2279	Pwr	N	200	-	-	-	42,15,45	
PS Audio 200b Delta	2490	Pwr	N	200	-	-	-	42,15,45	
PS Audio 250 Delta	2980	Pwr	N	250	-	-	-	42,15,45	Monoblocks
QED Vector One	199	Pre	N	-	4L,1T	N	N	-	
QED Vector Reference	299	Pre	N	-	4L,1T	N	N	-	
Quad 306	350	Pwr	N	50	-	N	N	33,7,21	Stereo power amp
Quad 34	398	Pre	N	-	MM,2L,T	N	N	33,7,21	Optional MC phono input
Quad 77	595	INT	N	50	2L,T	-	-	33,6,30	System remote E279
Quad 606	690	Pwr	N	140	-	N	N	33,14,24	Stereo power amp
Quad 66	863	Pre	N	-	MM,4L,2T	N	Y	33,8,26	Variable inputs, inc RVC
Rega Brio	229	Int	N	30	MM,3L,1T	N	N	43,7,15	
Rega Elex	398	Int	N	50	MM,3L,1T	N	N	43,7,25	
Rega Elicit	730	Int	N	70	MM,MC,3L,1T	N	N	43,7,25	Full dual mono
Roksan ROK-L2.5	995	Pre	N	-	4L,1T	N	N	43,8,33	Revised
Roksan ROK-S1.5	1495	Pwr	N	70	-	N	N	-	
Roksan ROK-L1.5	2250	Pre	N	-	4L,1T	N	N	43,8,33	
Roksan ROK-M1.5	4500	Pwr	N	160	48,11,34	N	N	-	Pair monoblocks
Rose RV-23	450	Pre	N	-	MM,2L,1T	N	N	33,9,26	Tube, zero feedback
Rose Scion	499	Int	N	50	MM/MC,3L,2T	N	N	42,7,30	2-box, purist design
Rose RV-23S	525	Pre	N	-	MM/MC,2L,2T	N	N	33,9,26	Tube, separate PSU
Rose RP-190 (Dual Mode)	550	Pwr	N	75	-	-	-	33,9,30	Low feedback monoblock (x2)
Rotel RC970BX MkII	175	Pre	N	-	3L,2T	Y	N	44,8,29	
Rotel RB970BX MkII	225	Pwr	N	60	-	-	-	44,8,29	New upgrade
Rotel RA935BX MkII	250	Int	N	50	3L,2T	Y	N	44,10,35	Separate listen/rec selectors
Rotel RA970BX	300	Int	N	60	4L,2T	Y	N	44,7,35	
Rotel RC980BX	350	Pre	N	-	MM/MC,3L,2T	Y	N	44,7,33	
Rotel RB980BX	450	Pwr	N	120	-	-	-	44,12,33	
Rotel RC990BX	500	Pre	N	-	MM/MC,2L,2T	Y	Y	44,7,33	
Rotel RB990BX	750	Pwr	N	200	-	-	-	44,12,38	
Sansui AU-X117	170	Int	N	30	MM,3L,1T	Y	N	-	
Sansui AU-X3172	275	Int	N	40	MM,3L,1T	Y	N	-	
Sansui AU-X417R	280	Int	N	45	MM,3L,2T	Y	N	-	
Sansui AU-X517R	450	Int	N	60	MM/MC,3L,2T	Y	Y	-	
Sansui AU-Alpha 607	1300	Int	N	90	MM/MC,2L,1T	Y	Y	-	
Sansui AU-Alpha707	1500	Int	N	90	MM/MC,4L3T	Y	Y	-	Built in BS DAC
Sentec PP9 RIAA MM	500	Pre	N	-	MM	N	N	5,12,23	Phono step-up - MM
Sentec PP9 RIAA MC	600	Pre	N	-	MC	N	N	5,12,23	Phono step-up - MC
Sentec SC9	800	Pre	N	-	4L,2T	Y	N	34,7,15	
Sentec PA9	1000	Pwr	N	60	-	-	-	20,8,30	Monoblocks
Shearne Phase 3	569	Pwr	N	55	-	-	-	-	Can biamp with Phase 2
Shearne Phase 2	599	Int	N	55	5L	N	N	-	MM/MC phono i/p E87 extra
Shearne Phase 1 Pre	1099	Pre	N	-	MM/MC,5L,2T	N	N	-	Bi-amp upgradeable
Shearne Phase 1 Power	1799	Pwr	N	100	-	-	-	-	Dual mono
Sherwood AI 1110	100	Int	N	55	MM,4L,1T	Y	N	-	
Sherwood AI 5010	170	Int	N	70	MM,3L,2T	Y	N	-	
Sherwood AM/AVP8500	800	-	Y	230	-	Y	Y	-	A/V Pre/power amp
Sonic Link DM20 Gold	598	Int	N	30	MM/MC,3L,1T	Y	N	23,8,43	
Sonic Link DM30	725	Int	N	25	MM/MC,3L,1T	N	N	23,8,43	
Sony TAF211B	150	Int	N	30	MM/2L	Y	N	43,14,31	Source direct
Sony TAF244B	200	Int	N	40	MM/2L	Y	N	43,14,31	MOSFET power stage
Sony TAF444E	250	Int	N	50	MM,3L,2T	Y	N	43,15,38	
Sony TAF542E	300	Int	N	90	MM/MC,3L,2T	Y	N	43,15,38	UK optimised sound
Sony TA-AV570B	400	Int	Y	70	MM,4L,5T	Y	N	43,15,36	Dolby Pro Logic
Stemfoot Audio SF60	549	Int	N	60	4L,1T	N	N	43,8,35	Passive line amplifier
Stemfoot Audio SF100	849	Int	N	100	4L,1T	N	N	43,8,40	Passive line amplifier
Synergy 3080	0	N	15	MM,	N	N	-	-	
Teac A-X1030	180	Int	N	40	MM,3L,2T	Y	N	44,13,36	Mic input
Teac A-X3030	220	Int	N	60	MM,3L,2T	Y	N	44,13,36	Mic input
Teac A-X5030	260	Int	N	75	MM/MC,3L,2T	Y	N	44,16,36	
Teac A-BX10	999	INT	N	100	MM/MC,3L,2T	N	N	-	Balanced input
Technics SU-V300	150	Int	N	25	MM,2L,1T	Y	N	43,13,32	A/B speaker select
Technics SU-A600 MkII	200	Int	N	37	MC/MM,3L,2T	Y	N	43,13,32	MOS, R-Core transformer
Technics SU-A700 MkII	250	Int	N	45	MC/MM,3L,2T	Y	Y	43,13,32	
Technics SU-A800 Mk2	350	Int	N	55	MC/MM,3L,2T	N	Y	43,14,37	
Technics SU-A900 Mk2	400	Int	N	90	MC/MM,3L,2T	N	Y	43,14,37	Virtual Battery operation
Technics SU-C2000	700	Pre	N	-	-	N	Y	45,13,35	Rotary resistor attenuator
Technics SE-A2000	1050	Pwr	-	100	-	-	Y	45,19,44	Meters, R-Core, MOS AA
Tesseract TAADA	1500	Pre	N	-	MM/MC	N	N	-	
Tesseract TALA	1500	Pre	N	-	5L,1T	N	N	-	
Tesseract TAHA	1800	Pre	N	-	MC,	Y	N	-	
Tesseract TAP-A	5300	Pre	N	-	MM,3L,2T	N	N	-	
Tesseract TAMP-60	7350	Pwr	-	60	-	-	-	-	2x Monoblocks
Thorens TTP2000	500	Pre	N	-	MM/MC,4L	N	N	-	Minimalist, shoebox form
Thorens TTA2000	550	Pwr	N	35	-	-	-	-	Matches TTP2000
Thorens TTP2000	1500	Pre	N	-	MM/MC	N	N	-	Phono step-up

Model	Price	Type	A/V	Power	Inputs	Headphones	Remote	Size	Special
<b>AMPLIFIERS</b>									
Thorens TRA3000	2000	PWR	N	90	-	-	-	-	Valve
Thule IA50	599	Int	N	50	4L,1T	N	N	-	Fully balanced operation
Thule IA100	899	Int	N	100	4L,2T	N	N	-	Fully balanced operation
Triangle TE60SE	649	Int	N	70	MM/MC,4L,1T	Y	N	-	
Triangle Nemo Allion 02	1550	Int	N	80	5L,2T	N	N	-	
Tube Tech Seer Line	575	Pre	N	-	5L,1T	N	N	35,8,25	Entry level, 10 year guarantee
Tube Tech Seer Phono	649	Pre	N	-	MM,4L,1T	N	N	35,8,25	Tube phono stage
TT Unisis Power Amp	1099	Pwr	N	30	-	-	-	35,17,27	Stereo power amp
Tube Tech Prophet	1199	Pre	N	-	4L,1T	N	N	35,8,25	Two box pre, separate PSU
TT Unisis Super Line	1399	Int	N	30	4L,1T	N	N	35,17,27	Line level version of Unisis
Tube Tech Unisis	1399	Int	N	30	MM,3L,1T	N	N	35,17,27	One tube phono stage
Tube Tech Genesis	2599	Pwr	N	100	-	-	-	35,15,27	2x monoblocks
Tube Tech Synergy 1	3999	Int	N	150	5L,1T	N	Y	47,18,47	Bias monitor, soft-start
Unison Simply Phono	495	Pre	N	-	MM/MC	N	N	-	For Simply series
Unison Simply Two	995	Int	N	12	4L,1T	N	N	25,16,40	Single ended triode Class A
Unison Simply Four P	1495	Int	N	24	4L,1T	N	N	35,16,40	Single ended Pentode
Unison Simply Four T	1545	Int	N	11	4L,1T	N	N	35,16,40	Single ended triode Class A
Unison Smart 845	2995	Pwr	N	24	-	-	-	-	SE triode monoblocks
Woodside SC27 Line	705	Pre	N	-	2L,1T	N	N	-	
Woodside SC27 MM	881	Pre	N	-	MM,2L,1T	N	N	-	
Woodside ISA230 Disc	899	Int	N	30	MM,2L,1T	N	N	-	
Woodside ISA230 Line	899	Int	N	30	4L,2T	N	N	-	
Woodside ISA 2.40	949	Pwr	-	40	-	-	-	-	
Woodside SC27 MC	999	Pre	N	-	MC,2L,1T	N	N	-	
Woodside MA50 Class A	1224	Pwr	-	50	-	-	-	-	1 channel monoblock
Woodside STA35	1323	Pwr	-	35	-	-	-	-	
Woodside SC25 Line	1420	Pre	N	-	2L,2T	N	N	-	
Woodside SC26 Phono	1931	Pre	N	-	MM/MC,3L,2T	N	N	-	
Yamaha AX-490	239	Int	N	85	MM,MC,3L,2T	Y	Y	44,15,39	UK specified, system remote
Yamaha AX-590	299	Int	N	100	MM,MC,3L,2T	Y	Y	44,15,39	UK specified, system remote
YBA Integre Line	999	Int	N	45	4L,1T	N	N	43,9,33	
YBA 3 Power	1199	Pwr	-	45	-	-	-	43,9,33	
YBA Integre	1199	Int	N	45	MM,4L,1T	N	N	43,9,33	
YBA 3	1250	Pre	N	-	MM,3L,1T	N	N	43,9,33	
YBA 2	1699	Pre	N	-	MM,3L,1T	N	N	43,9,33	
YBA 2 Power	2150	Pwr	-	70	-	-	-	43,9,33	
YBA 1	3750	Pre	N	-	MC,4L,1T	N	N	43,9,33	
YBA 1 Power	4250	Pwr	-	85	-	-	-	43,14,33	
<b>CASSETTE DECKS</b>									

# 98 HI-FI CHOICE BUYER'S GUIDE



Key to cassette decks  
 Price - typical retail, to nearest pound.  
 Type - T - twin transports, allowing tape to tape dubbing, sequential play etc; S - Single transport, AR - auto-reverse.  
 Dolby - B (10dB noise reduction), C (20dB), S (24dB). B is standard for prerecorded material.

Heads - 2 - combination record/play heads; 3 - independent record/play heads, allowing real time off tape monitoring.  
 Size - width x height x depth in cm.  
 Highlighted products have been tested in *Hi-Fi Choice*. Please refer to The Directory for full test results.



Key to compact disc players, transports and DACs  
 Price - typical retail, to nearest pound.  
 DAC Type - MB - multibit, 1 bit - single bit, BS - Bitstream, DS - Delta Sigma, M - MASH, Hybrid - combines multibit and single bit.  
 Outputs Digital: Opt - optical (usually Toslink), El - electrical (usually coaxial S/PDIF).

Remote Control - Y - yes, N - No.  
 Size - width x height x depth in cm.  
 Highlighted products have been tested in *Hi-Fi Choice*. Please refer to The Directory for full test results.

Model	Price	Type	Dolby NR	HX Pro	Heads	Size	Special
<b>CASSETTE DECKS</b>							
Luxman K-373	400	S	B,C	Y	3	13,44,35	System bus, mic inputs
Marantz SD-53	200	S	B,C	Y	2	43,14,30	D-bus
Marantz SD-535	250	T	B,C	Y	2	43,14,32	Synchro record
Marantz SD-63	270	S	B,C	Y	3	43,14,30	D-bus
Marantz CP-230	400	S	B	N	2	-	DC portable, semi-pro
Marantz SD-635	400	T	B,C	Y	2	43,9,32	Drawer loading
Marantz DC-1010	450	S	B,C	Y	2	42,8,31	Inc CD player module
Marantz CP-430	500	S	B	N	3	-	Portable, dbx NR, anti-roll
NAD 602	199	S	B,C	Y	2	-	Play Trim
Nakamichi DR3	400	S	B,C	N	2	43,10,32	
Nakamichi DR2	600	S	B,C	N	3	43,10,32	Diffused resonance transport
Nakamichi DR1	850	S	B,C	N	3	43,10,32	Manual azimuth calibration
Nakamichi Dragon	2350	AR	B,C	N	3	45,14,30	Auto azimuth correct
Onkyo TA-RW313	250	T	B,C	Y	2	46,12,31	
Onkyo KR-609	350	AR	B,C	Y	2	28,12,31	Mini component
Onkyo TA250	350	S	B,C	Y	3	46,12,31	
Onkyo K-W606	370	T,AR	B,C	Y	2	28,12,32	Mini component
Onkyo K-611	430	AR	B,C	Y	3	28,12,32	Mini component
Pioneer CT-S330	170	S	B,C	Y	2	42,13,28	Audio tape setup, FLEX
Pioneer CT-W503R	200	T,AR	B,C	Y	2	42,13,25	Auto NR, FLEX
Pioneer CT-S430S	200	S	B,C,S	Y	2	42,13,28	Auto tape setup, FLEX, Dolby S
Pioneer CT-W603RS	230	T,AR	B,C,S	Y	2	42,13,25	Auto tape setup, FLEX, Dolby S
Pioneer CT-W803RS	300	T,AR	B,C,S	Y	2	42,13,25	Twin record, mic i/p
Pioneer CT-S630S	300	S	B,C,S	Y	3	42,13,38	Auto tape setup
Pioneer CT-M601R	380	AR	B,C	Y	2	42,14,38	Six tape record/play, r/ctrl
Pioneer CT-S830S	500	S	B,C,S	Y	3	42,14,38	Slant Z transport mech
Pioneer CT-95	1000	S	B,C,S	Y	3	44,15,38	Copper plated chassis
Sansui D-X117HX	220	S	B,C	Y	2	-	
Sherwood DS1150	80	S	B,C	N	2	-	
Sherwood DS1010C	100	S	B,C	Y	2	-	Mic input
Sherwood DD1030C	100	T	B	N	2	-	
Sherwood DS3010C	120	S	B,C	Y	2	-	
Sony TCFX211B	100	S	B,C	N	2	43,12,29	
Sony TCK 215B	130	S	B,C	Y	2	43,12,31	Tape calibration
Sony TCK311B	130	S	B,C	Y	2	43,12,31	Auto calibration
Sony TCW445B	150	T	B,C	Y	2	43,12,31	Full logic control
Sony TCK415B	180	S	B,C	Y	3	43,12,31	UK optimised sound
Sony TCWR545B	200	T	B,C	Y	2	43,12,29	Auto calibration
Sony TCWR645S	250	T	B,C,S	Y	2	43,12,31	UK optimised sound
Sony TCK511S	250	S	B,C,S	Y	3	43,12,31	UK optimised sound
Sony TCK611S	300	S	B,C,S	Y	3	43,12,30	UK optimised sound
Teac V-600	150	S	B,C	Y	2	44,15,29	Fine bias
Teac R-550	200	AR	B,C	Y	2	44,14,29	Blank scan
Teac W-750R	200	T	B,C	Y	2	44,15,29	
Teac V-1010	250	S	B,C	Y	3	44,15,29	Fine bias adjust
Teac V-3010	350	S	B,C	Y	3	44,15,36	Remote control, pitch adjust
Teac W-6000R	450	T	B,C	Y	2	44,15,33	Pitch control, remote
Teac R-9000S	500	AR	B,C	Y	3	49,15,36	Remote control
Teac V-6030S	550	S	B,C,S	Y	3	-	Dual capstan
Teac V-8030S	650	S	B,C,S	Y	3	-	Quartz locked, dual capstan
Teac V-8000S	699	S	B,C,S	Y	3	48,15,36	Direct drive, tape cal, remote
Technics RS-TR373	180	T,AR	B,C	N	2	43,14,29	Play transport unidirectional
Technics RS-TR474	200	T,AR	B,C	Y	2	43,14,29	High speed FF/REW
Technics RS-BX601	230	AR	B,C	Y	3	43,13,29	Mic inputs, auto tape cal
Technics RS-TR575	250	T,AR	B,C	Y	2	43,14,29	Optical quick reverse
Technics RS-TR701	270	AR	B,C	Y	3	43,13,30	Anti-vibration base
Technics RS-BX747	300	S	B,C	Y	3	43,13,30	Fine bias adj, THC LO-red base
Technics RS-TR979	380	T,AR	B,C	Y	2	43,13,28	Both decks record, quick rev
Yamaha KX-380	169	S	B,C	Y	2	44,13,29	Play Trim, manual bias
Yamaha KX-W282	199	T	B,C	N	2	44,13,28	Twin auto-reverse, 1 records
Yamaha KX-480	199	S	B,C	Y	2	44,13,28	Auto-tape tuning, Play Trim
Yamaha KX-W482	249	T	B,C	Y	2	44,13,28	Twin recording auto-reverse
Yamaha KX-580	249	S	B,C,S	Y	2	44,13,28	Award winning Dolby S deck
Yamaha KX-650	260	S	B,C	Y	3	-	
Yamaha KX-W952	599	T	B,C	Y	2	44,16,37	Twin record, opt remote

Model	Price	Dac Type	Outputs Dig	Remote	Size	Special
<b>CD PLAYERS</b>						
Cambis CD200 Mk II	150	1bit	-	Y	42,9,29	
Cambridge Audio CD200	150	MB	N	Y	42,9,29	Can play in reverse order
Denon DCD-615	180	MB	E	Y	44,11,29	Digital attenuator
Denon DCD-825	220	MB	E	Y	44,11,28	UK design
Denon DCD-1015	300	MB	E,O	Y	44,11,28	Alpha processor
DPA Renaissance	895	BS	E,O	Y	40,28,8	DPA DP16 DAC
Dual CD1135RC	140	MB	E	Y	42,8,28	Var. headphone out
Dual CD1150RC	150	MB	E	Y	-	Var. headphone out
Dual CD1000RS	170	BS	E	N	-	Remote control via CR9000RS
Dual CD1180RC	180	BS	E	Y	44,9,29	Var. headphone out
Eclipse CD101	80	MB	-	Y	36,8,29	
Eclipse CD420	100	MB	-	Y	42,8,29	
Goodmans Delta 700	110	MB	N	Y	-	
Goodmans GCD360R	120	MB	N	Y	-	
Grundig CD210	120	BS	E	Y	36,8,30	30 mem, random repeat
Grundig Fine Arts CD1	140	BS	E	Y	44,9,30	30 track memory, auto-space
Grundig Fine Arts CD2	190	BS	E	Y	44,9,30	
Grundig Fine Arts CD3	240	BS	E	Y	44,9,30	
Grundig CD3	240	BS	E	Y	44,9,30	FTS, display off, fade, DAC7
Harman-Kardon HD7225	230	BS	-	Y	45,10,33	
Harman-Kardon HD7325	299	BS	E,O	Y	45,10,33	
Harman-Kardon HD7425	349	MB	E	Y	45,10,33	
Harman-Kardon HD7525	449	MB	E	Y	45,10,33	
Harman-Kardon HD7625	549	MB	E	Y	45,10,33	
Harman-Kardon HD7725	799	MB	E,O	Y	45,10,33	
Jadis JS-1	8068	MB	-	-	-	
JVC XL-V174BX	140	1bit	-	Y	44,10,28	
JVC XL-284	160	1bit	-	Y	44,11,28	
JVC XL-V274BK	160	1bit	-	Y	44,10,28	
JVC XL-F116	180	1bit	-	Y	44,13,40	5-disc carousel
JVC XL-F216	200	1bit	-	Y	44,13,40	5-disc carousel
JVC XL-Z674	300	1bit	-	Y	44,11,28	
JVC XL-M408BK	300	1bit	-	Y	44,13,32	Six disc
JVC XL-Z1050TN	500	1bit	E	Y	45,11,34	
JVC XL-MC100	800	1bit	-	Y	36,37,38	100 disc player
Kenwood DP-2060	160	1bit	-	Y	44,10,26	Central mechanism
Kenwood DP-R4070	200	1bit	-	Y	-	5-disc tray loading
Kenwood DP-R4060	200	1bit	-	Y	44,12,38	Five disc carousel
Kenwood DP-3060	200	1bit	-	Y	44,10,26	High precision master clock
Kenwood DP-M5570	250	1bit	-	Y	-	6+1 disc changer
Kenwood DP-5060	250	1bit	O	Y	44,12,31	D.R.I.V.E
Kenwood DP-7060	380	1bit	O	Y	44,12,31	D.R.I.V.E
Kenwood DP-J2070	600	1bit	-	Y	44,19,38	100 disc autochanger
Krell CD-DSP Mk II	5000	-	-	Y	42,13,28	Digital inputs facility
Krell CD DSPII 5000	5000	MB	2E	Y	42,13,28	Has digital in, balanced out
Krell KSP20i	9950	-	E	Y	-	Balanced out, top loader
Krell KPS20i	9990	-	E	Y	-	Balanced out, Bit String conv
Linn Mimik	798	DS	E	Y	32,8,33	BNC digital
Linn Karik	1497	DS	E,O	Y	32,8,33	BNC digital
Luxman D-322	200	MB	-	Y	44,10,28	18bit, 8x oversampling
Luxman D-373	550	MB	O	Y	44,11,35	System bus remote
Luxman D500XS	4500	MB	O	Y	44,12,39	Top loading
Marantz CD-53	200	BS	E	Y	43,9,30	New transport, DAC, circuit
Marantz CC-45	250	BS	O	Y	44,12,40	5 disc carousel
Marantz CD-63	250	BS	E,O	Y	42,9,30	As CD-53
Marantz CD-1010	300	1bit	O	Y	42,8,31	Slim Series component
Marantz CD-1020	334	1bit	O	Y	42,8,31	Slim Series, motorised cover
Marantz CD-72 Mk II	600	BS	E,O	Y	42,13,30	DAC7
Marantz CD-10	1200	BS	E,O	Y	46,14,36	Twin DAC-7, heavy build
Marantz CD-16	1400	BS	E	Y	25,29,13	Twin DAC-7
Marantz CD-15	3000	BS	E	Y	46,14,36	Twin Star Mark DAC-7
Marantz CD-23	4000	BS	E	Y	25,29,13	CDM-9/DAC-7 DAC
McIntosh MCD7008	1995	MB	E	Y	-	Seven disc multiplayer
Meridian 506	875	DS	E,O	N	33,9,34	Recently improved sound
Meridian 606	1350	1bit	3E,O	N	-	
Meridian 508	1475	DS	E,O	N	33,9,34	
Micro-Seiki CD-M2DC	3695	MB	E	Y	-	
Micro-Seiki CDM2000X	4689	MB	E	Y	-	
Micromega Stage 1	450	BS	E	Y	43,28,88	Upgradable
Micromega Stage 2	600	BS	E	Y	43,28,88	Upgradable
Micromega Stage 3	800	BS	E	Y	43,28,88	Upgradable
Micromega Trio	6000	BS	E	Y	34,48,31	AES/Toslink digital output
Mission DAD7	900	MB	E	Y	22,8,36	
Mission Disc/Dacmaster	1900	MB	E	Y	22,8,36	Two box, inc Dacmaster DAC
Musical Fidelity E60	299	BS	E	Y	44,10,34	
Musical Fidelity E600	599	BS	E	Y	44,12,35	Balanced XLR output
Musical Fidelity FCD	1499	BS	2E,O	Y	49,12,33	XLR balanced out, tube o/p
NAD 501	189	BS	-	N	-	
NAD 507	239	M	E	Y	-	
NAD 512	400	BS	E	Y	44,108,40	5-disc carousel player
Naim CD3	949	MB	-	Y	43,56,30	1 box
Naim CD1	1997	MB	-	Y	43,56,30	One box
Naim CD5	3642	MB	-	Y	43,56,30	Two box
Nakamichi MB4s	300	MB	-	Y	43,9,27	6+1 Music Bank, 16 x 4 o/s
Nakamichi MB3s	500	MB	-	Y	43,9,38	6+1 Music Bank, 18 x 8 o/s
Nakamichi MB2s	700	MB	E	Y	43,9,38	6+1 Music Bank, 18 x 8 o/s
Nakamichi MB1s	900	MB	E	Y	43,9,27	6+1 Music Bank, 20 x 8 o/s

Model	Price	Dac Type	Outputs Dig	Remote	Size	Special
<b>CD PLAYERS</b>						
Aiwa XC-300	150	1bit	O	Y	-	
Aiwa DX-C100M	500	1bit	O	Y	-	100+1 disc autochanger



Key to compact disc players, transports and DACs  
 Price - typical retail, to nearest pound.  
 DAC Type - MB - multibit, 1 bit - single bit, BS - Bitstream, DS - Delta Sigma, M - MASH, Hybrid - combines multibit and single bit.  
 Outputs Digital: Opt - optical (usually Toslink), El - electrical (usually coaxial S/PDIF).

Remote Control - Y - yes, N - No.  
 Size - width x height x depth in cm.  
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Model	Price	Dac Type	Outputs Dig	Remote	Size	Special
<b>CD PLAYERS</b>						
NVA T.T.S	3200	BS	E	Y	-	
NVA T.L.S	3300	BS	E	Y	-	
Onix CD33	999	BS	-	-	43,8,33	DAC7
Onkyo DX710	200	1bit	O	Y	46,11,31	
Onkyo DX703	240	1bit	O	Y	46,11,31	
Onkyo C-711	290	1bit	O	Y	28,8,30	Mini component
Onkyo DX750	350	1bit	O	Y	46,11,31	
Orelle CD-100	500	MB	E	Y	44,10,28	DC coupled
Philips CD710	120	MB	-	Y	-	16 bit continuous technology
Philips CD740	130	MB	E	Y	-	Hybrid 5-bit DAC
Philips CD720	130	MB	-	Y	-	16 bit Continuous Calibration
Philips CDC745	199	BS	E	Y	-	Multi-disc
Philips CD750	199	BS	E	Y	-	Selected BS DAC, differential
Pioneer PD-77	100	1-bit	E,O	Y	44,13,33	Satin gold finish
Pioneer PD-103	140	1-bit	-	N	42,11,28	Display off
Pioneer PD-203	160	1-bit	-	Y	42,11,28	As 103, variable output & remo
Pioneer PD-SS03	200	1-bit	-	Y	42,11,29	Legato Link
Pioneer PD-M603	250	1-bit	-	Y	42,11,30	Six disc
Pioneer PD-S703	300	1-bit	O	Y	42,13,27	SPM, Legato Link, twin PSU
Pioneer PD-M703	300	1-bit	-	Y	42,13,30	Six disc, DSP soundfield ctrl
Pioneer PD-DM802	450	1-bit	-	Y	42,14,31	Dual magazine 12-disc
Pioneer PD-S901	499	1-bit	E,O	Y	42,13,33	SPM, Legato Link, Twin DAC
Pioneer PD-1M3	500	1-bit	-	Y	42,18,35	Triple magazine, 18-disc
Pioneer PD-F100	600	1bit	-	Y	42,19,40	100 disc, Legato Link
Pioneer PD-95	2500	1-bit	E,O	Y	44,16,34	Balanced out., Legato, SPM
Quad CD67	825	DS	E	Y	33,8,26	
Roksan ATT-DP2P MkII	1495	DS	E	Y	46,12,35	Player, four level isolation
Rotel RCD-930AX	200	1bit	-	Y	44,9,29	
Rotel RCD-940BX	250	MB	-	Y	44,10,32	
Rotel RCD-965BX	300	BS	E	Y	44,10,32	Audiophile components
Rotel RCD-970BX	375	BS	E	Y	44,8,30	
Rotel RCD-965BX D	375	BS	E	Y	44,10,32	Discrete output
Rotel RCD-965BX LED	425	BS	E	Y	44,10,32	Discrete & slit foil caps
Sansui CD-270	180	BS	N	N	-	
Sansui CD-117K II	200	MB	N	N	-	
Sansui CD-X217I	200	MB	E	N	-	
Sansui CD-X317	250	BS	E,O	Y	-	
Sansui CD-X617	350	BS	E,O	Y	-	
Sentec Diana	1100	MB	E,O	N	12,5,23	20 bit
Sherwood CD3020R	130	BS	Y	N	-	
Sherwood CDC5030	200	1bit	N	Y	44,10,38	Five disc carousel
Sony CDP-M302	130	1bit	N	Y	36,10,33	Mid-size, full remote control
Sony CDP-312	150	1bit	-	Y	43,10,29	Digital servo
Sony CDP-C325M	230	1bit	N	Y	36,10,39	Mid-size, 5-disc player
Sony CDP-C345	230	1bit	-	Y	43,13,39	Digital servo
Sony CDP-715E	250	1bit	O	Y	43,11,30	UK optimised sound
Sony CDP-915E	300	1bit	O	Y	43,11,36	UK optimised sound
Sony CDP-CX100	800	1bit	O	-	43,13,38	100 disc autochanger
Teac CD-P3200	150	MB	-	Y	44,12,28	
Teac PD-D880	250	MB	-	Y	44,11,38	5-disc carousel
Teac CD-3	250	BS	E	Y	45,13,28	Central mechanism
Teac CD-P4500	280	BS	E	Y	44,12,29	Digital attenuator
Teac VRDS-7	599	BS	E,O	Y	45,15,34	Twin BS, VRDS mech
Teac VRDS-10	770	BS	E,O	Y	45,15,34	Twin DAC7, balanced output
Teac VRDS-20	1299	BS	E,O	Y	50,15,34	Twin DAC7, balanced output
Teac X-1	2500	MB	-	Y	46,14,40	Balanced out., 4x20bit
Technics SL-PG370	120	M	N	N	-	Remote control ready
Technics SL-PG470AK	140	M	O	N	-	CD edit
Technics SL-PG570AK	160	M	-	Y	-	Digital servo, THCB base
Technics SL-P670A	200	M	O	Y	45,12,29	Virtual Battery operation
Technics SL-PS770	250	M	O	Y	43,13,29	S-Advanced MASH
Technics SL-PS840	450	M	O	Y	43,13,34	Advanced MASH converter
Technics SL-P2000	1000	M	O	Y	45,13,33	THCB base, R-Core transformer
Wadia 16	7395	MB	-	-	-	Glass, plastic, BNC & AES/EBU
Yamaha CDX-480	169	BS	-	Y	44,10,28	Entry level model
Yamaha CDC-555	199	MB	-	Y	44,11,39	Entry level
Yamaha CDX-580	229	BS	E	Y	44,10,28	UK specified o/p stage
Yamaha CDC-655	249	BS	O	Y	44,11,39	Tray load multi-player
Yamaha CDX-880	339	BS	E,O	Y	44,10,29	UK specified components
YBA 2	2999	MB	E,O	Y	43,10,33	Outboard power supply

Model	Price	Dac Type	Inputs Dig	Remote	Size	Special
<b>CD TRANSPORTS</b>						
Krell MD-10	7990	-	2E,O	Y	42,13,28	
Krell KPS 20T	8490	-	E,O	Y	-	AT&T, AES/EBU balanced in
Krell DT-10	9090	-	2E,O	Y	42,13,28	Front loader
Meridian 200	895	-	E,O	Y	32,32,10	
Meridian 500	1095	-	E,O	Y	32,33,9	
Meridian 602	1750	-	E,O	Y	32,33,10	
Micromega Drive 1	600	-	E,O	Y	43,28,88	Upgradable, AES/EBU out
Micromega Drive 2	900	-	E,O	Y	43,28,88	Upgradable, AES/EBU out
Micromega T-Drive	1200	-	E	Y	22,28,88	Tray loading, AES/EBU out
Micromega Duo CD3-1	1350	-	E,O	Y	34,9,31	Top loading, AES/EBU out
Micromega Duo CD2-1	2500	-	E,O	Y	34,9,31	Top loading, AES/EBU out
Orelle CD10-T	799	-	E	Y	44,10,32	Isolated PSU, silver wiring
Pink Triangle Cardinal	795	-	-	-	46,8,36	Upgradable transport & player
PS Audio Lambda tr	2250	-	E	Y	38,8,34	AT&T, AES/EBU optional
Roksan ATT-DP2 MkII	1295	-	E	Y	46,12,35	AT&T optical, AES/EBU optional
Teac VRDS-T1	499	-	E,O	Y	44,15,33	VRDS mechanism
Teac P-700	899	-	E,O	Y	23,14,40	Half width, anti-resonance cha
Teac P-2S	4299	-	O,E	Y	23,14,49	Gold plate circuit boards
Theta Data Basic	1997	-	E	Y	42,8,34	AT&T, AES/EBU option
Theta Data II NTSC	3290	-	E	Y	42,12,40	AT&T, AES/EBU option
Theta Data II PAL	3490	-	E,O	Y	42,12,40	AT&T, AES/EBU balanced in
Wadia 20	4370	-	-	-	-	Glass, plastic, BNC, AES/EBU
Wadia 7	9995	-	-	Y	35,16,46	

Model	Price	Dac Type	Inputs Dig	Remote	Size	Special
<b>D/A CONVERTERS</b>						
Arcam Black Box 50	450	Hybrid	E,O	N	43,7,28	Two inputs, sync lock
Arcam Black Box 500	750	BS	E,O	Y	43,9,28	7 inputs, sync-lock
Audio Alchemy DAC-in-the-box230	230	MB	E	-	-	Upgradable external PSU
Audio Alchemy DDEv1.1	399	BS	E,O	-	-	Upgradable external PSU
Audio Note DAC1	600	MB	E,O	Y	-	
Audio Note DAC3	1650	MB	E/O	Y	-	
Audio Research DAC2	3940	MB	-	-	48,14,26	20bit, 8x o/s
Audiolab 8000DAC	800	BS	-	-	45,8,36	Balanced AES/EBU input
Audiomeca Elixir	745	BS	E,O	Y	25,39,9	
Avi S2000MD	549	MB	-	-	31,25,9	16 bit, optical & elec i/p
Counterpoint AD20	255	MB	-	-	-	DACCARD for DA-10E
Counterpoint CS18	395	MB	-	-	-	DACCARD for DA-10E
Counterpoint BB69	655	MB	-	-	-	DACCARD for DA-10E
Counterpoint UA20	1295	MB	-	-	-	DACCARD for DA-10E
Counterpoint DA-11E	1495	-	E,O	Y	49,6,27	Optional AT&T & AES/EBU balanc
Counterpoint DA-10E	1895	-	E,O	Y	-	Interchangeable DACs, optional
DPA Renaissance	550	BS	-	-	20,28,8	Unique DPA DX16 DAC
DPA Enlightenment	795	MB	-	-	20,28,8	Unique DPA DX32 DAC
DPA PDM256	2995	BS	E,O	-	20,28,8	Unique DPA DX64 DAC
DPA PDM10924	5995	BS	E,O	-	40,30,8	Unique DPA DX128 DAC
EMF Audio Crystal	500	BS	-	-	-	
Krell Studio 2	3198	MB	-	-	42,13,27	AT&T in
Krell Studio	4450	MB	-	-	42,6,32	AT&T in
Krell Reference 64	14900	MB	-	-	42,13,39	AT&T in
LFD DAC3	2699	MB	-	N	48,7,37	Optional balanced output
Linn Numerik	1075	MB	-	-	32,8,33	CD sync link with Karik
Mark Levinson No 36	3995	MB	E	-	-	20 bit, FIFO input buffer
Meridian 563	750	DS	3E,O	N	33,9,34	
Micromega Microdac	349	BS	E,O	-	22,5,15	Coax/optical
Micromega DAC	600	BS	-	-	43,28,88	AES/EBU input
Micromega Duo BS2	600	BS	-	-	8,28,9	AES input
Micromega T-DAC	800	BS	-	-	22,28,88	Four inputs
Micromega Duo Pro 2	1350	BS	-	-	34,48,31	AES input
Mission DAC5	300	BS	-	-	7,11,29	Outboard DAC, matches DA05
Monrio 18B	925	MB	E,O	N	14,8,36	Inc outboard PSU
NVA Dacon	320	BS	E	N	-	
Orelle DA-188	399	MB	-	N	22,7,23	DC coupled, optical & coax in
Perception DAC	695	MB	-	-	-	
Pink Triangle Ordinal	837	BS	E,O	-	23,8,35	Interchangeable DAC & filter
Pink Triangle DaCapo	1536	BS	E,O	-	46,8,35	Unique discrete DAC
Pink Triangle DC	1590	-	-	-	46,8,35	Massive battery PSU for DaCapo
PS Audio DigiLink II	688	MB	-	-	38,8,16	
PS Audio SuperLink 2	1230	MB	-	-	38,8,16	
PS Audio UltraLink 2	2650	MB	-	-	38,6,20	AT&T input option
PS Audio Ref Link	4550	MB	-	-	38,8,36	AT&T input
QED Positron	89	-	-	-	-	Upgrade PSU for Digit
QED Digt Plus	139	BS	E	N	-	
QED Digt Reference	299	BS	-	-	-	Combined 2x Positron/Digt
Roksan ATT-DA2	549	DS	-	N	22,10,33	DAC 4 inputs, optional AT&T
Sentec Diana	993	MB	E,O	-	-	
Teac D-T1	450	BS	E,O	-	44,10,33	Multi-input converter
Teac D-700	599	MB	E,O	-	23,14,40	Matches P-700, 4x20bit
Teac D-2	2499	MB	-	-	23,14,49	18 bit, balanced output
Theta Pro-Prime II	1800	BS	E	-	42,5,23	
Theta Probasic II	2299	MB	-	-	42,5,29	
Theta Pro Gen III	5690	MB	-	-	42,8,34	AT&T input option

Highlighted listings (as shown below) are covered in the Hi-Fi Choice Directory.  
 Audiolab 8000A 450 Int N 60 MM,MC,1T,3T Y N 45,8,36 Preout/main in

Model	Price	Dac Type	Outputs Dig	Remote	Size	Special
<b>CD TRANSPORTS</b>						
ATD Drive 1	3499	-	E,O	Y	44,9,34	Top load, 2-box acrylic
Audiolab 8000CDM	1300	-	E,O	Y	45,8,36	Precision master clock
Audiomeca Damnation	950	-	E,O	Y	29,10,32	
Audiomeca Damnation BE	1100	-	E,O	Y	29,10,32	Trichord clocked
Audiomeca Kreatura	1199	-	E,O	Y	25,14,39	Heavily modified CDM
Audiomeca Kreatura SE	1350	-	E,O	Y	25,14,39	Trichord clocked
Audiomeca Mephisto	2100	-	E,O	Y	43,15,33	Integral platter, layer suspen
Audiomeca Mephisto SE	2250	-	E,O	Y	43,15,33	Trichord clocked
Counterpoint DA-11 SE	1895	-	E,O	Y	-	
DPA Enlightenment	635	-	-	Y	40,28,8	



Key to digital recorders  
Price - typical retail, to nearest pound.  
Type - MD - MiniDisc, DCC - Digital Compact Cassette, DAT - Digital Audio Cassette.  
Digital In & Out - E - Electrical (usually coaxial S/PDIF), O - optical, (usually Toslink).

DAC Type - MB - multibit, 1 bit - single bit, BS - Bitstream, DS - Delta Sigma.  
Size - width x height x depth in cm.  
Highlighted products have been tested in Hi-Fi Choice. Please refer to The Directory for full test results.



Key to headphones  
Price - typical retail, to nearest pound.  
Type - Opn - open back, vented or velocity type; gives less environmental isolation, but is usually more natural feeling in extended use. Sld - sealed - the headphones form an air seal around the ears, helping reduce sound leakage. IR - Infra red cordless.  
Ear - in-ear model.

Weight - without cable.  
Impedance - in ohms.  
Highlighted products have been tested in Hi-Fi Choice. Please refer to The Directory for full test results.

Model	Price	Dac Type	Inputs	Dig	Remote	Size	Special
<b>D/A CONVERTERS</b>							
Theta Pro Gen V	8500	MB	E	N	N	42,8,34	
Wadia 12	1530	MB	E,O	N	-	-	Balanced and AT&T input
Wadia 15	3790	MB	E,O	Y	35,9,41	-	Software upgradable
Wadia 64.4	4750	MB	E,O	N	35,8,28	-	Balanced output
Wadia 9	12790	MB	E,O	Y	44,9,36	-	Digital volume, separate PSU
Woodside DAC2	509	MB	E,O	-	-	-	
Woodside DAC1	909	MB	E,O	-	-	-	

Model	Price	Type	Dig. In	Dig. Out	DAC Type	Size	Special
<b>DIGITAL RECORDERS</b>							
JVC XM-D1BK	900	MD	E,O	E,O	BS	18,5,13	
Meridian CDR	4500	CD-R	E,O	E	BS in/	-	
Nakamichi 10007	0	DAT	E,O	E,O	MB in/	-	
Philips DCC300	179	DCC	E	Y	BS in/	36,11,30	
Philips DCC600	199	DCC	E	Y	BS in/	44,12,30	
Philips DCC951	300	DCC	E,O	E	MB	-	Turbodrive mech, 18 bit
Pioneer D-05	800	DAT	-	-	-	-	96kHz sampling
Pioneer D-07	1150	DAT	E,O	E,O	-	44,14,38	96kHz record, Legato Link
Sharp MD-M11E	450	MD	-	Y	-	8,3,11	Recorder, title generator
Sony MBS501	800	MD	E,O	E,O	BS	43,9,35	Sample rate converter
Sony DTC80ES	800	DAT	E,O	E,O	BS	43,11,55	SBM
Teac R-9	1200	DAT	E,O	E,O	BS	45,16,36	Based on TASCAM technology
Technics RS-DC8	400	DCC	E,O	E,O	BS	43,12,35	Title input capable

Model	Price	Type	Weight	Impedance	Special
<b>HEADPHONES</b>					
Aiwa HP-V141	7	Ear	5	16	Bass resonator ducts
Aiwa HP-A160	7	Opn	45	32	Banded, 3.5/6.3mm
Aiwa HP-JB33	8	Opn	18	16	Vertical ear fit, ultra soft
Aiwa HP-V143	9	Ear	5	16	Bass resonator ducts
Aiwa HP-A260	9	Opn	54	32	Banded, bass resonator ducts
Aiwa HP-V145	10	Ear	5	16	Carrying case included
Aiwa HP-V147	10	Ear	5	16	Bass resonator ducts
Aiwa HP-X201	13	Sld	230	-	Dual plug
Aiwa HP-A360	13	Opn	65	40	Banded, bass resonator ducts
Aiwa HP-X301	20	Sld	230	-	3m lead, dual plug
Aiwa HP-VX303	25	Sld	230	-	In-line controls, dual plugs
Aiwa HP-X705	40	Sld	130	-	Dual plug, 2m ext. cable
AKG K2	23	Opn	70	200	Mini
AKG K33	25	Opn	90	50	
AKG K44	42	Opn	90	50	
AKG K135	46	Opn	160	150	
AKG K141	74	Opn	225	600	
AKG K240 Monitor	82	Opn	240	600	
AKG K270	112	Sld	250	75	
AKG K280 Parabolic	117	Opn	250	75	
AKG K400	118	Opn	250	120	
AKG K270 Studio	121	Sld	250	75	
AKG K500	138	Opn	250	120	
AKG K340	191	Opn	380	400	
AKG K1000	646	Opn	270	120	
Audio Technica ATH-P1	10	Opn	88	24	'Omniphones'
Audio Technica ATH-S22	11	Opn	5	16	Inner ear
Audio Technica ATH-P3	15	Opn	90	22	'Omniphones'
Audio Technica ATH-S44	16	Opn	5	16	Inner ear
Audio Technica ATH-P1/TV	20	Opn	55	25	'Omniphones', vol control
Audio Technica ATH-P5	20	Opn	70	40	'Omniphones'
Audio Technica ATH-M2A	28	Sld	115	22	Mid size
Audio Technica ATH-M4A	42	Sld	139	28	Mid size
Audio Technica ATH910P	70	Sld	280	40	Dynamic, full size
Audio Technica ATH-M7A	78	Sld	210	40	Mid size
Audio Technica ATH911	90	Opn	280	600	Dynamic, full size
Audio Technica ATH9000	273	Opn	240	32	Electret, bypass switch
Beyer DT211	33	Opn	120	40	
Beyer DT311	49	Opn	124	40	
Beyer DT331	59	Opn	210	40	
Beyer DT411	69	Opn	120	250	
Beyer DT431	89	Opn	210	40	
Beyer DT511	99	Opn	200	250	
Beyer DT531	129	Opn	245	250	
Beyer IRS790	129	Opn	270	-	Cordless infra-red
Beyer DT770 Pro	139	Sld	250	600	
Beyer DT100	139	Sld	350	600	Choice of impedances
Beyer DT801	159	Sld	250	250	
Beyer DT990 Pro	163	Opn	230	600	
Beyer DT811	179	Opn	245	250	
Beyer IRS890	199	Opn	270	-	Cordless infra-red
Beyer DT901	199	Sld	280	250	
Beyer DT911	219	Opn	275	250	
Grado Prestige SR60	90	Opn	-	40	
Grado Prestige SR80	125	Opn	-	40	

Model	Price	Type	Weight	Impedance	Special
<b>HEADPHONES</b>					
Grado Prestige SR200	230	Opn	-	40	
Grado Prestige SR300	320	Opn	-	40	
Grado Signature HP3	410	Opn	-	40	
Grado Signature HP2	510	Opn	-	40	
Grado Signature HP1	615	Opn	-	40	
Jecklin Float Model 1	75	Opn	400	200	
Jecklin Float Model 2	99	Opn	400	200	
Jecklin Float ELS	399	Opn	600	8	Electrostatic
JVC HA-22	6	Ear	38	32	
JVC HA-M3	6	Sld	33	32	1.2m dual plug lead
JVC HA-F15	9	Opn	6	16	Mini 1.2m, 3.5/6.3mm plug
JVC HA-X55	12	Sld	45	32	2m dual plug lead
JVC HA-D410	15	Sld	90	32	2m, 3.5/6.3mm plug
JVC HA-X77	16	Sld	40	32	2m dual plug lead
JVC HA-F35	16	Opn	6	32	Mini 1.2m, 3.5/6.3mm plug
JVC HA-CD88	18	Opn	38	32	
JVC HA-D525	20	Sld	-	-	
JVC HA-F65	20	Ear	-	32	In-ear
JVC HA-D510	20	Sld	110	32	3m, 6.3/3.5mjacks
JVC HA-D625	25	Sld	-	-	
JVC HA-D610	25	Sld	120	32	3m, 6.3/3.5mjacks
JVC HA-D727	43	Sld	-	-	
JVC HA-D710	55	Sld	210	32	3m, 6.3/3.5mjacks
JVC HA-D910	65	Sld	220	32	3m, 6.3/3.5mjacks
JVC HA-D1000	250	Sld	340	32	5m, 6.3/3.5mjacks
JVC HA-F25	699	Ear	-	32	In ear
Kenwood KH-535	15	Ear	-	32	3.5mm plug
Kenwood KH-757	20	Ear	-	32	3.5mm plug
Kenwood KH-1000	20	Opn	30	32	2m OFC lead
Kenwood KH-959	25	Ear	-	32	3.5mm plug
Kenwood KH-2020	40	Sld	210	32	2.5m OFC lead
Kenwood KH-5000	70	Sld	280	32	2.5m OFC lead
Maxell EB-125	4	Ear	15	32	Stereo ear buds
Maxell HP-100	4	Ear	3	32	Replacable pads, 1m lead
Maxell HP-200	5	Opn	30	32	Replacable pads, 1m lead
Maxell EB-225	8	Ear	44	21	Stereo ear buds, winder case
Maxell HBS-150	8	Ear	25	32	Water resistant head buds
Maxell HP-400	8	Ear	4	32	With pouch, 6/3/3.5mm fit
Maxell EBS-325	9	Ear	13	32	Water resistant earbuds
Maxell EB-425	10	Ear	13	32	Stereo ear buds, winder case
Maxell HP-700	10	Opn	56	22	Adjustable locking headband
Maxell HP-500	13	Opn	45	32	2.7m lead, 6.3/3.5mm fit
Maxell HP-1000	15	Opn	95	32	2.7m lead, digital ready
Maxell HP-2000	20	Opn	140	32	Volume control digital ready
Maxell HP-3000	30	Sed	120	32	Volume control digital ready
Nakamichi SP7	70	Opn	150	45	
Pioneer SE-5	16	Opn	60	30	2m OFC cable
Pioneer SE-15	20	Opn	65	30	2m OFC cable
Pioneer SE-32	23	Opn	94	40	2.5 OFC cable
Pioneer SE-52	25	Opn	104	40	2.5 OFC cable
Pioneer SE-15V	30	Opn	65	30	5m OFC cable
Pioneer SE-330D	35	Sld	165	35	3m cable, bass boost duct
Pioneer SE-400D	37	Sld	185	35	3m cable, dual bass horn
Pioneer SE-500D	48	Sld	175	35	3m cable, dual bass horn
Pioneer SE-700D	60	Sld	180	35	3m cable, dual bass horn
Ross RE-233	5	Opn	25	8	Micro
Ross RIH-150	6	Ear	5	16	Inner ear headphone
Ross RE-235	6	Opn	5	16	Personal stereo
Ross RE-234	6	Opn	5	16	Personal stereo
Ross RE-229	6	Opn	35	8	Folding
Ross RE-2030	6	Opn	5	8	Personal stereo
Ross RMH-300	7	Opn	51	8	Lightweight
Ross RE-280	7	Ear	10	16	Vertical inner ear
Ross RE-246	7	Opn	5	16	Micro stereo phones
Ross RE-223	7	Sld	155	8	Stereo/mono
Ross RMH-500CD	9	Opn	48	16	Lightweight
Ross RIH-360CD	9	Ear	16	16	Vertical inner ear
Ross RE-2060CD	9	Opn	5	16	Inner ear headphone
Ross RMH-310TV	10	Opn	51	8	For video and TV
Ross RIH-550	10	Ear	5	16	Inner ear, with volume control
Ross RIH-460CD	12	Ear	16	16	Vertical inner ear, volume pot
Ross RDH-200CD	13	Sld	150	8	Closed back
Ross RDH-100CD	15	Sld	144	8	CD headphone
Ross RDH-300CD	17	Sld	155	8	CD headphone
Ross RDH-400CD	22	Sld	186	8	Digital headphone
Sennheiser HD16	20	Opn	45	32	Mini, 1.2m lead, dual plug
Sennheiser HD36	13	Opn	62	32	Mini, 1.2m lead, dual plug
Sennheiser HD56	15	Opn	72	32	Mini, 1.2m lead, dual plug
Sennheiser Vegas	28	Opn	118	32	3m lead, 3.5/6.3mm
Sennheiser Manhattan	28	Opn	118	32	3m lead, 3.5/6.3mm
Sennheiser HD60TV	38	Opn	118	32	6.8m lead (inc vol control)
Sennheiser HD440 II	38	Opn	125	60	3m lead, 3.5/6.3mm
Sennheiser HD414 Classic	50	Opn	-	-	Limited edition HD414
Sennheiser HD455	50	Opn	-	-	3m lead, 3.5/6.3mm
Sennheiser HD465	65	Opn	-	-	3m lead, 3.5/6.3mm

Highlighted listings (as shown below) are covered in the Hi-Fi Choice Directory.

Sennheiser HD300 45 Opn 120 60 3m lead, 3.5/6.3mm



Key to headphones  
Price - typical retail, to nearest pound.  
Type - Opn - open back, vented or velocity type; gives less environmental isolation, but is usually more natural feeling in extended use. Sld - sealed - the headphones form an air seal around the ears, helping reduce sound leakage. IR - infra red cordless. Ear - in-ear model.  
Weight - without cable.

Impedance - in ohms.  
Highlighted products have been tested in *Hi-Fi Choice*. Please refer to The Directory for full test results.



Key to loudspeakers  
Price - typical retail, to nearest pound.  
Type - 2x, 3x etc - number of independent drive units, Pt - ported, IB - sealed, Active - dedicated active crossover, needs amps for each driver, ABR - auxiliary bass radiator, Sub - subwoofer, Uni-Q - KEF prop. coaxial drive unit, Horn - horn loading, MC - moving coil, ESL - electrostatic, CC - coupled cavity, Hybrid - dynamic bass/ESL or ribbon top.  
Sens - output at given power input

Level.  
Impedance - in ohms. Power - maximum recommended amplifier output.  
Size - width x height x depth in cm.  
Highlighted products have been tested in *Hi-Fi Choice*. Please refer to The Directory for full test results.

Model	Price	Type	Weight	Impedance	Special
<b>HEADPHONES</b>					
Sennheiser HD475	75	Opn	-	-	Single sided cable
Sennheiser HD25 SP	85	Sld	115	85	Monitoring headphone
Sennheiser HD535	100	Opn	255	150	3m lead, 3.5/6.3mm
Sennheiser HD545 Ref	120	Opn	255	150	3m lead, 3.5/6.3mm
Sennheiser HD565 Ova	140	Opn	255	150	3m lead, 3.5/6.3mm
Sennheiser HD265 Linear	140	Sld	260	150	Closed back
Sennheiser IS450	150	-	160	-	Infra-red cordless - hi-fi
Sennheiser HD25	160	Sld	140	70	Professional, closed back
Sennheiser IS550	180	-	170	-	Infra-red cordless
Sennheiser HD 580 Prec	200	Opn	260	300	Flagship model
Sennheiser Charleston	225	Opn	210	140	3m lead, dual plug, leather tr
Sennheiser HD580 Jubilee	230	Opn	-	-	Limited edition HD580
Sennheiser IS850	860	-	330	-	Digital audiophile infra-red
Sennheiser HE60/HEV70	998	Opn	260	-	Electrostatic with energiser
Sennheiser Orpheus	9652	Opn	365	-	Electrostatic, valve energiser
Sony MDR-E505	8	Ear	-	-	Supplied soft case
Sony MDR-E515EX	8	Ear	5	-	1m lead, mini plug
Sony MDR-007 Mk II	8	Opn	36	-	2m, 3.5/6.3mm plug
Sony MDR-009	10	Opn	40	-	2m, 3.5/6.3mm plug
Sony MDR-W07L	11	Ear	13	-	1m mini plug
Sony MDR-A009	12	Opn	-	-	-
Sony MDR-E515V	12	Ear	5	-	1m lead, mini plug
Sony MDR-V50	13	Sld	-	-	-
Sony MDR-E525	15	Ear	5	-	1m lead, mini plug
Sony MDR-24	15	Opn	-	-	7m, 3.5/6.3mm plug
Sony MDR-25	16	OPN	-	-	-
Sony MDR-W12L	16	Ear	-	-	1.2m mini plug
Sony MDR-008TV	17	Opn	-	-	5m, 3.5/6.3mm plug
Sony MDR-E535	18	Ear	5	-	1.2m lead, mini plug
Sony MDR-44	18	Opn	-	-	7m, 3.5/6.3mm plug
Sony MDR-009TV	19	Opn	-	-	5m, 3.5/6.3mm plug
Sony MDR-35	20	OPN	-	-	-
Sony MDR-CD30	20	Sld	-	-	2m, 3.5/6.3mm plug
Sony MDR-E747MP	20	Ear	6	-	1.2m lead, mini plug
Sony MDR-CD50	20	Sld	180	24	2m, 3.5/6.3mm plug
Sony MDR-5747	20	Ear	6	-	1.2m lead, mini plug
Sony MDR-P1TV	22	Sld	-	-	5m, 3.5/6.3mm plug
Sony MDR-A22L	22	Ear	-	-	1.2m mini plug
Sony MDR-CD250EX	28	Sld	-	-	3m, 3.5/6.3mm lead
Sony MDR-CD450	45	Sld	260	24	3m, 3.5/6.3mm plug
Sony MDR-IF210	50	IR	170	-	Extra h/phone w/o transmitter
Sony MDR-CD550	60	Sld	270	45	3m, 3.5/6.3mm plug
Sony MDR-D33	70	Sld	120	45	1.5m, 3.5/6.3mm plug
Sony MDR-IF210K	80	IR	170	-	Seven meter range infra red
Sony MDR-D55	90	Sld	120	45	1.5m, 3.5/6.3mm plug
Sony MDR-CD750	90	Sld	290	45	3m, 3.5/6.3mm plug
Sony MDR-D77	120	Sld	140	45	1.5m, 3.5/6.3mm plug
Sony MDR-610k	190	IR	470	-	Seven meter range infra-red
Sony MDR-CD1000	200	Sld	330	45	1.5m, 3.5/6.3mm plug
Stax SR34	169	Opn	170	-	Electrostatic
Stax SR Gamma	239	Opn	300	-	Electrostatic
Stax SR84	259	Opn	160	-	Electrostatic
Stax SR Lambda	349	Opn	325	-	Electrostatic
Stax Gamma Pro	399	Opn	300	-	Electrostatic
Stax Lambda Pro	449	Opn	325	-	Electrostatic
Stax Lambda Sig	549	Opn	325	-	Electrostatic
Stax Omega	1695	Opn	400	-	Electrostatic
Technics RP-HT77	30	Sld	160	32	3m lead, OFC wire
Technics RP-HT86	40	Sld	165	35	3m lead, XBS acoustic load
Technics RP-HT600	50	Sld	-	-	3m lead, double headband
Technics RP-HT700	60	Sld	-	-	5m lead, double headband
Technics RP-F10	100	Sld	300	32	3m lead, XBS pipe phone
Technics RP-F30	180	Sld	340	32	3m lead, XBS double drive
Vivanco SR60	3	Opn	-	-	Mini, fits outer ear
Vivanco SR12	3	Opn	-	-	In ear, with spare plug
Vivanco SR52	5	Opn	-	-	Mini headphones 3.5mm plug
Vivanco SR54	7	Opn	-	-	Mini, volume control, 3.5mm
Vivanco SR14	7	Opn	-	-	In ear, micro
Vivanco SR16	8	Opn	-	-	Micro, volume control 3.5mm
Vivanco SR250	19	Sld	-	-	Xtra bass feature
Vivanco SR606	40	Opn	225	32	3.5/6.3mm plug
Vivanco IR5700	50	-	-	-	Infra-red cordless
Vivanco IR5000	50	-	-	-	Mono, infra red cordless
Vivanco SR850	50	Opn	-	-	Double bow design for comfort
Vivanco IR6000	70	-	-	-	Stereo infra-red cordless
Vivanco SR909	70	Opn	285	600	Remote control lead, all plugs
Vivanco IR6500	90	-	-	-	Stereo infra-red with charger
Vivanco SR10001FL	110	Opn	265	100	In-front localisation
Vivanco IR7100	120	-	-	-	Stereo infra-red cordless
Vivanco IR7600	140	-	-	-	Stereo infra-red cordless
Vivanco SR2001FL	140	Opn	-	-	In-front localisation

Model	Price	Type	Sens	Impedance	Power	Size	Special
<b>LOUDSPEAKERS</b>							
Acoustic Energy Aegis 1	452	2x Pt	86	8	150	21,39,26	Stand mount, metal cone
Acoustic Energy Aegis 2	799	2x Pt	86	8	200	33,106,26	Floor, reflex, metal cone
Acoustic Energy AE1	870	2x Pt	88	8	200	26,30,18	Metal dome/cone, solid enc
Acoustic Energy AE2	1175	2x Pt	91	6	200	24,40,32	Twin bass, metal cone
Acoustic Energy AE3	1650	3x Pt	87	4	250	37,27,63	Simplified metal dome/cone
Advent Mini	99	-	88	8	120	16,28,14	Bookshelf/stand mount
Advent Baby 2	149	2x	89	8	75	26,39,15	Bookshelf/stand mount
Advent Graduate	219	2x	89	8	210	28,44,17	Bookshelf/stand mount
Advent Prodigy	299	-	89	8	300	24,68,20	Floor standing, free space
Advent Legacy 2	349	-	90	8	500	38,67,22	Floor standing, free space
Advent Laureate	499	-	90	8	500	21,80,29	Floor standing, free space
Advent Heritage	579	-	90	8	600	25,89,31	Floor standing, free space
Allison AL100	100	2x	90	4	150	33,24,19	Boundary, stand mount
Allison AL105	170	2x	90	4	150	24,37,21	Boundary, stand mount
Allison MS200	220	-	90	4	75	13,25,14	Boundary, stand mount
Allison AL110	220	-	90	4	150	24,40,23	Floor standing, free space
Allison AL115	280	-	90	4	150	28,51,26	Boundary, stand mount
Allison CD6	300	-	90	4	150	29,29,29	Cuboid, wall mount
Allison CD7	380	-	90	4	150	24,70,24	Floor standing, free space
Allison AL120	420	-	90	4	200	28,61,29	Floor standing, free space
Allison CD8	550	-	90	4	200	27,73,27	Floor standing, free space
Allison AL125	650	-	90	4	200	28,78,29	Open space, free standing
Allison AL130	800	-	90	4	200	32,95,34	Open space, free standing
Allison I.C. 10	2500	-	87	6	200	48,102,27	Floor standing, free space
Allison I.C. 20	5500	-	87	6	400	53,122,31	Floor standing, free space
AMC WM50	120	-	86	8	60	19,28,7	Ceiling mount
AMC WM75	160	-	86	8	80	22,30,9	Ceiling mount
AMC WM100	210	-	86	8	100	26,36,10	Ceiling mount
Apogee Grand	0	Ribbon	86	-	-	71,194,86	Three way ribbon, active sub
Apogee Centaur Minor	1345	Hybrid	88	4	100	30,88,20	Ribbon/dynamic
Apogee Ribbon Wall	1750	Hybrid	89	-	-	27,120,7	Ribbon/dynamic
Apogee Centaur	2300	Hybrid	88	4	150	33,102,25	Ribbon/dynamic
Apogee Centarus Slant 6	2400	Hybrid	88	-	-	-	Ribbon tweeter, dynamic bass
Apogee CDD Subwoofer	3490	Hybrid	87	-	-	63,38,55	Active moving coil sub
Apogee Stage Sub	3645	MC	86	-	-	58,25,42	Active moving coil sub
Apogee Centarus Slant 8	3700	Hybrid	88	-	-	-	Ribbon treble, dynamic mass
Apogee Caliper Sig	3998	Ribbon	87	-	-	58,127	Two way
Apogee Stage 1 GS	4100	Ribbon	86	-	-	55,82,5	Two way
Apogee Centaur Major	4980	Hybrid	88	4	200	40,141,27	Ribbon/dynamic
Apogee Studio Grand	14900	Hybrid	87	-	-	63,160,55	Three way ribbon, active sub
AR M.5	139	2x	88	6	-	18,21,15	Boundary, bookshelf unit
AR Pi One	149	-	90	8	60	19,32,17	Stand mount, boundary siting
AR Fun Partner	170	-	90	6	75	27,15,20	Utility model
AR Pi Two	199	-	90	8	100	27,44,2	Stand mount, boundary siting
AR M1	199	-	88	8	100	28,27,20	Boundary, bookshelf mount
AR Pi Three	219	-	89	8	100	21,51,22	Stand mount, boundary siting
AR Active Partner	230	Active	-	-	-	19,27,15	Utility model
AR Rock Partner	240	-	90	8	100	24,37,22	Utility powered (active)
AR M2	299	-	90	8	125	24,42,36	Boundary, bookshelf mount
AR Subwoofer 1MS	300	-	90	4	180	30,21,48	Compact subwoofer
AR M3	349	-	90	8	125	24,55,40	Boundary, bookshelf mount
AR Powered Partner	350	Active	-	-	15	19,27,15	Stand mount, free space
AR Pi Four	399	-	88	8	125	25,57,27	Stand mount, free space
AR M4	429	-	88	8	150	20,72,40	Floor standing, free space
AR M5	799	-	90	8	175	22,92,27	Floor standing, free space
AR M6	899	-	90	8	200	22,106,27	Floor standing, free space
Arcom Delta 2	300	2x Pt	88	8	75	22,38,28	Stand mount, walnut or black
ATC SCM10	995	2x IB	80	8	300	18,38,26	Minimum 100wpc, wall/free use
ATC SCM20	1505	2x IB	83	8	300	31,72,34	Minimum 100wpc, wall/free use
ATC SCM20 Tower	1999	2x IB	83	8	300	24,103,34	Floor standing SCM20
ATC SCM50	3480	3x Pt	85	8	150	31,72,43	Passive/to special order only
ATC SCM100	4033	3x Pt	88	8	-	40,84,53	Passive/to special order only
ATC SCM50A	4864	Active	-	8	350	31,72,48	With int x'over and amps
ATC SCM100A	5660	Active	-	8	350	40,84,59	With int x'over and amps
ATC SCM200A	11207	Active	91	8	850	83,73,440	With ext x'over and amps
ATC SCM300A	11995	Active	94	-	850	-	With ext x'over and amps
Audio Note AN-KB	499	-	90	8	100	28,46,23	Free space, stand mount
Audio Note AN-K/SP	699	-	90	6	100	28,46,23	Free space, stand mount
Audio Note AN-J/B	799	-	93	8	150	38,58,25	Free space, stand mount
Audio Note AN-J/SP	999	-	93	8	150	38,58,25	Free space, stand mount
Audio Note AN-E/B	1299	-	94	8	150	36,84,28	Free space, stand mount
Audio Note AN-E/SP	1599	-	94	8	150	26,84,28	Free space, stand mount
Audio Physic STEP	1299	2xPt	84	4	60	14,33,23	Time aligned, space frame stan
Audio Physic SPARK	1599	2xPt	86	4	70	17,40,25	Time align, space-frame stand
Audio Physic TEMPO	1999	2xPt	88	8	150	22,107,47	Floor stand, time aligned
Audio Physic VIRGO	3399	4xPt	90	4	150	16,100,42	Floor stand, decoupled tweeter
Audio Physic TERRA	3499	Sub	-	-	-	-	Active sub, adjustable
Audio Physic AVANTI	5599	4xPt	86	4	200	19,107,40	Decoupled mid/tweeter
Audio Physic CALDERA	9999	5x	91	4	250	25,111,50	Pneumatic baffle, 3 cabinet
Audio Physic MEDEA	20999	4xPt	91	4	400	24,110,50	Phase linear
Audio Vector 2X	850	2x	89	8	120	17,90,22	Black ash
Audio Vector 3X	1500	3x	89	8	150	19,98,52	Black ash + cuba
Audio Vector 5X	2500	4x	91	8	200	24,110,34	Black ash + cuba
Audio Vector 6	4600	3xPt	92	6	250	38,115,42	Black piano lacquer
Aura SP50	400	2xPt	87	4	120	21,40,24	Carbon fibre bass unit
B&O Beovox RL1000	215	3x	86	8	60	32,40,13	Simplified RL6000
B&O Beovox CX50	285	2x IB	89	6	100	12,21,21	-
B&O Beovox CX100	395	2x IB	89	6	200	12,32,21	-

Highlighted listings (as shown below) are covered in the *Hi-Fi Choice* Directory.  
Allison AL100 100 2x 90 4 150 33,24,19 Boundary, stand mount



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Type - 2x, 3x etc - number of independent drive units, Pt - ported, IB - sealed, Active - dedicated active crossover, needs amp for each driver, ABR - auxiliary bass radiator, Sub - subwoofer, Uni-Q - KEF prop. coaxial drive unit, Horn - horn loading, MC - moving coil, ESL - electrostatic, CC - coupled cavity, Hybrid - dynamic

bass/ESL or ribbon top.  
Sens - output at given power input level.  
Impedance - in ohms. Power - maximum recommended amplifier output.  
Size - width x height x depth in cm.

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Model	Price	Type	Sens	Impedance	Power	Size	Special
<b>LOUDSPEAKERS</b>							
B&O Beovox RL6000	435	3x	87	8	100	41,54,18	Simplified RL7000
B&O Beovox 4500	450	2x Pt	87	8	90	45,38,8	
B&O Beovox RL7000	665	3x	88	8	200	50,70,24	Twin bass
B&O Beolab 4500	1125	Active	-	-	45	45,38,8	Attaches to wall, display
B&O Beolab 6000	1350	Active	-	-	80	20,110,21	Column, two amps, shielded
B&O Beolab 8000	1900	Active	-	-	100	15,132,15	Shielded column, int amps
B&O Beolab Penta 3	2375	Active	-	-	150	22,165,34	Line array column, display
B&W Solid HCM2	130	2xPt	87	8	75	14,20,14	White or black finishes
B&W CWM5	150	2x	89	8	70	16,22,7	In wall
B&W DM600i	190	2x IB	87	4	100	21,36,25	Stand/shelf mount
B&W Solid Monitor	200	Pt	90	8	150	17,24,15	Various colours
B&W CWM6i	240	2x	89	8	70	23,32,8	In wall
B&W Solid HCM1	250	2xPt	89	8	50	17,24,17	White or black finishes
B&W DM610i	250	2x IB	89	4	150	24,49,31	Stand/shelf mount
B&W Solid Powerbass	300	Sub	-	-	75	33,39,34	Active sub to match Solids
B&W CWM8i	300	2x	90	4	100	28,39,9	In wall
B&W CDM2	400	2xPt	87	8	120	32,22,25	Kevlar bass, metal dome treble
B&W Solid Verticale	400	Sat/sub	88	4	100	-	Lifestyle, 3 boxes
B&W DM620i	430	2x ABR	90	4	150	24,75,31	Floor standing
B&W Signature 7	500	2x	88	8	150	28,37,10	In-wall monitor, Kevlar cone
B&W CDM1	600	2xPt	88	8	120	37,22,28	Angled tweeter sub-baffle
B&W P4	600	2xPt	88	8	120	20,81,24	3 real wood veneers
B&W P5	800	3xPt	90	8	200	20,90,28	3 real wood veneers
B&W Matrix 805 V	895	Pt	87	8	120	33,33,21	Outboard tweeter
B&W P6	1000	3xPt	90	8	200	20,100,30	Time aligned tweeter
B&W Solid 800ASW	1500	Sub	-	-	200	43,50,58	Active, Matrix enclosure
B&W Matrix 804	1595	Pt	89	8	200	26,92,26	Matrix enclosure
B&W Matrix 803s2	1995	4xPt	90	8	250	26,101,34	Matrix enclosure
B&W Matrix 802s3	2795	3xPt	90	8	500	30,104,37	Matrix enclosure
B&W Matrix 801s3	3795	Pt	87	8	600	44,100,56	Floor, studio monitor
B&W Silver Signature	5000	Pt	88	8	120	25,45,24	External crossover
Bose XL1000	115	Pt	-	8	50	29,19,17	
Bose XL2000	160	Pt	-	8	70	36,23,18	
Bose XL3000	180	Pt	-	8	90	47,29,23	
Bose 101 M'ble Monitor	190	-	-	4	60	13,23,15	Black finish
Bose XL4000	220	Pt	-	8	100	57,32,30	
Bose VS100	250	-	-	8	-	23,15,15	
Bose 151 Environmental	270	-	-	6	60	24,14,16	Waterproof/suitable for extrem
Bose 161 Freestyle	275	-	-	6	60	25,14,16	
Bose 201 Ser III	290	-	-	8	60	38,20,25	Direct/reflecting technology
Bose C'puter RoomMate	300	Active	-	-	60	24,14,16	Self powered AC/shielded, vol
Bose Video RoomMate	300	Active	-	-	60	24,14,16	Self powered AC/shielded, vol
Bose Roomate II	300	Active	-	-	60	24,14,16	Self powered AC/12V DC
Bose 301 VM	380	-	-	8	75	24,43,27	Direct/reflecting technology
Bose 305	430	2x	-	8	100	23,45,28	Tall stand mount, boundary
Bose A'mass AM3 II	500	-	-	4-8	50	36,20,20	Acoustimass technology
Bose 401	500	-	-	4	100	30,30,76	Direct/reflecting technology
Bose SE-5 Ser II System	760	-	-	4-8	100	90,100,18	
Bose A'mass AM511	760	-	-	4-8	200	49,35,19	Acoustimass direct/reflecting
Bose A'mass AM7	830	-	-	4-8	100	35,49,19	Acoustimass direct/reflecting
Bose 601 MkIII	880	-	-	8	200	32,31,76	Direct/reflecting technology
Bose 901 V1	1650	1x	-	8	-	33,53,32	Direct/reflecting technology
Boston Acoustics HD5	139	2x	89	8	50	25,16,18	Bookshelf, black
Boston Acoustics 325	139	-	90	4	50	17,17,5	Wall/ceiling white flush mount
Boston Acoustics CR6	149	2xPt	88	8	100	26,15,20	Magnetically shielded
Boston Runabout	169	-	89	8	50	22,15,16	White indoor/outdoor system
Boston Acoustics 350	179	-	-	4	50	24,17,6	Wall/ceiling white flush mount
Boston Acoustics 335	179	-	90	8	50	18,9	Wall mount, white flush
Boston Satellites	179	2x	89	8	-	-	Also A/V spkrs, black/white
Boston Acoustics CR7	199	-	88	8	100	30,22,24	Magnetically shielded
Boston 360 Ser II	209	-	89	8	60	22,15,7	Wall/ceiling, white, flush mou
Boston Acoustics CR8	239	2x ABR	90	8	125	39,22,27	Magnetically shielded
Boston Acoustics 380	249	-	90	8	75	31,24,8	Wall/ceiling white flush mount
Boston Acoustics CR9	279	2xABR	91	8	150	50,25,29	Stand/shelf, shielded
Boston Acoustics Voyager	299	-	89	8	60	26,16,17	White indoor/outdoor, metal
Boston Acoustics SW10	449	Sub	-	-	100	34,17,42	Powered subwoofer
Boston SubSat Six	449	Sat/sub	89	8	100	-	Passive subs and two satellite
Boston SubSat 7	549	-	89	8	125	-	Passive sub & 2 satellites
Boston Lynfield 300L	2000	-	83	8	250	23,34,28	Inc stands, black
Boston Lynfield 500L	4449	-	85	5	350	122,23,47	Free stand, separate bass/top
Bravura Brio	4750	1xHorn	101	8	100	129,39,81	Coaxial Lowther driver
Bravura Accelerando	5500	1xHorn	103	8	100	129,39,81	Coaxial Lowther driver
Canon S-C10	130	2x	87	8	95	34,15,15	Shielded, wide-imaging stereo
Canon SV-15	130	2x	86	8	50	24,17,17	Utility - wide dispersion
Canon S-30	180	1x Pt	90	6	75	23,27,24	Wide imaging stereo
Canon S-B20	200	Sub	87	8	100	48,39,37	Free standing, passive
Canon V-100	210	2x Pt	90	4	75	25,33,17	Corner mount, wide dispersion
Canon S-35	250	2x	90	6	75	23,27,24	Wide Imaging Stereo
Canon V-SB100	250	Sub	85	6	100	37,34,21	Subwoofer for V100
Canon S-50	350	1x Pt	87	8	75	25,31,25	Wide imaging stereo
Canon S-70	700	2x Pt	87	6	100	25,78,25	Wide imaging stereo
Castle Trent II	200	Pt	89	8	60	20,34,18	Shelf/stand, nine finishes
Castle Durham 900	300	Pt	90	8	85	22,40,23	Shelf/stand, nine finishes
Castle York	370	Pt	89	8	100	26,43,22	Stand mount, stands inc
Castle Severn	500	Pt	87	8	110	23,77,20	Free standing, 9 finishes
Castle Chester	700	Horn	90	8	100	23,91,25	Quarter wave, nine finishes
Castle Howard S2	1100	3xHorn	90	8	125	26,104,41	Improved driver/crossover/encl
CELESTION	99	-	90	8	50	9,20,15	
Celestion Little 1	99	-	90	8	50	9,20,15	
Celestion 1	119	-	86	8	50	16,27,21	
Celestion CSC	129	-	89	6	75	33,13,15	Centre channel
Celestion CS135	139	-	86	8	90	52,19,34	
Celestion 3 MkII	139	-	88	8	75	21,31,18	Integrated LF/baffle moulding
Celestion MP1	149	-	90	8	150	22,30,15	
Celestion CS2	149	-	86	8	60	16,29,22	
Celestion CS4	169	-	87	8	75	18,33,23	
Celestion Centre 2	179	-	90	8	100	17,16,42	Centre channel
Celestion 5 MkII	189	-	89	8	90	25,35,21	Larger version of Celestion 3
Celestion 7 MkII	239	-	89	8	120	31,45,24	
Celestion 9	269	-	89	8	100	21,50,25	
Celestion 11	299	-	89	8	120	31,57,24	
Celestion 15	389	-	89	8	100	21,100,25	
Celestion SL6Si	429	2x	84	8	120	20,38,27	Compact stand mount, free spac
Celestion CS6i	449	-	90	8	100	19,85,31	
Celestion CS8i	499	-	90	8	120	19,100,31	
Celestion 100	539	-	84	8	120	21,42,26	
Celestion SL600si	820	-	82	8	120	20,37,24	Aerolam lightweight enclosure
Celestion 300	1099	-	84	8	120	21,97,33	
Celestion 700SE	1435	-	82	8	120	20,37,24	Aerolam lightweight enclosure
Celestion Kingston	2500	2x	84	8	150	101,24,36	Polymer box, inc stand
Cerwin Vega VS8	250	2x	94	6	100	28,51,29	Bookshelf
Cerwin Vega SAT-6	300	Sat/sub	95	4	125	22,25,32	3 box satellite/subwoofer
Cerwin Vega VS10	350	3x	95	6	125	33,70,29	Floor standing
Cerwin Vega VS12	550	3x Pt	97	4	250	42,81,38	Floor standing
Cerwin Vega DC10	550	3x Pt	96	4	200	29,94,35	Floor standing
Cerwin Vega DC12	650	3x Pt	98	4	300	36,98,35	Floor standing
Cerwin Vega VS15	700	3x Pt	102	4	400	46,90,47	Floor standing
Cerwin Vega DC15	850	3x Pt	100	4	500	44,103,46	Floor standing
Cerwin Vega 1515	1300	6x Pt	103	4	600	44,135,46	Floor standing, hi sensitivity
Chord Sys Audio 905	249	2x	89	8	70	27,15,19	Black Ash + Kumarka (brown)
Chord SysAudio Sig	850	2xPt	89	8	120	27,15,25	Cherry, rosewood, black ash
Clements 300si	395	-	89	4-8	90	24,36,36	Compression line
Clements 600si	595	-	88	4-8	100	24,81,36	Compression line
Clements Reference 1	995	-	86	8	100	20,43,29	Ribbon tweeter
Clements Reference 7	1995	-	88	4.5	200	25,114,4	Ribbon tweeter
Dali 102B	260	-	88	6	100	21,32,26	
Dali 104B	370	-	93	4	120	86,22,27	
Dawn Audio Chorus BS	482	2x IB	89	8	-	26,38,21	Bookshelf
Dawn Audio Chorus FS	698	2x IB	89	8	-	26,88,21	Floor standing
Dawn Audio Symphony	1995	3x IB	91	8	-	34,113,32	Floor standing
Denon SCM2	80	IB	87	6	70	19,28,20	UK designed & built
Denon SC-E313	160	Pt	88	8	100	22,75,23	UK designed & built
ECA SERVO A.2	1850	2x Pt	80	8	150	22,102,30	True ribbon tweeter
Epos ES11	445	Pt	87	8	75	20,38,25	Free space, stand mount
Epos ES14	675	Pt	87	8	100	23,49,29	Free space, stand mount
Epos ES25	1650	3xPt	88	6	200	90,24,35	Floor standing
Faraday SG	345	2x	89	4	75	27,26,25	Matt black or granite effect
Faraday Siren	445	2x	90	4	80	27,25,46	Matt black or granite effect
Faraday FS10	795	3x	91	4	100	27,25,93	Matt black or granite effect
Fullers Sultan	399	2xPt	91	8	50	24,51,30	3 finishes
Fullers Sultan H.E.	439	2xPt	98	8	90	24,51,30	High sensitivity, 3 finishes
Fullers Pharaoh 1	649	2xPt	88	8	60	20,30,20	Curved sides, various finishes
Fullers Sphinx	839	3x	89	8	70	25,91,30	Floor standing, var finishes
Fullers Pharaoh 2	1200	3xPt	88	8	80	39,100,31	Pharaoh 1 with added bass encl
Fullers Pharaoh 3							





Key to loudspeakers  
Price - typical retail, to nearest pound.  
Type - 2x, 3x etc - number of independent drive units, Pt - ported, IB - sealed, Active - dedicated active crossover, needs amps for each driver, ABR - auxiliary bass radiator, Sub - subwoofer, Uni-Q - KEF prop. coaxial drive unit, Horn - horn loading, MC - moving coil, ESL - electrostatic, CC - coupled cavity, Hybrid - dynamic

bass/ESL or ribbon top.  
Sens - output at given power input level.  
Impedance - in ohms. Power - maximum recommended amplifier output.  
Size - width x height x depth in cm.  
Highlighted products have been tested in Hi-Fi Choice. Please refer to The Directory for full test results.



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Model	Price	Type	Sens	Impedance	Power	Size	Special
<b>LOUDSPEAKERS</b>							
Harbeth HL-5	1495	Pt	86	8	100	64,32,31	Free standing, biwire
Harman-Kardon LSQ200	149	-	87	8	50	21,35,30	
Harman-Kardon LSQ300	199	-	88	8	75	21,38,80	
Heliuss Syrius II	2395	Pt	95	4	300	36,107,16	
Heliuss Syrius I	2850	Pt	93	4	500	36,107,16	Floor standing, biwire
Heybrook Prima	139	2xPt	87	6	60	20,29,18	Bookshelf or stands, shielded
Heybrook Solo	199	2x	89	6	75	23,36,23	Boundary, shielded
Heybrook HB1	269	2x	90	8	75	29,47,23	Boundary, shielded option
Heybrook Trio	373	2x	89	8	75	24,47,25	Shielded option
Heybrook Heystack	499	3xABR	89	8	100	98,22,28	Inc stands
Heybrook Quartet	575	2xPt	90	8	80	24,41,22	Matching stands available
Heybrook Sextet	1129	3xPt	88	8	200	27,90,20	With stands
Impulse Kora	1095	Horn	88	8	70	1,86,31	Floor standing
Impulse Lali	1595	Horn	91	8	100	25,99,36	Floor standing
Impulse Ta'us	2695	Horn	94	8	100	31,121,49	Floor standing
Infinity SM65	150	Pt	94	8	100	34,20,19	Auto reset protection circuit
Infinity Reference 1i	150	IB	89	6	50	34,20,20	Pedestal
Infinity Reference 11i	200	IB	-	6	75	39,22,34	Pedestal
Infinity SM85	250	Pt	98	8	125	46,29,27	Auto reset protection circuit
Infinity Reference 21i	300	-	-	-	-	-	Floor standing
Infinity Inf IV Sat	300	IB	90	6	80	16,24,18	Wall mount, shielded
Infinity SM105	350	Pt	100	8	150	53,30,30	Auto reset protection circuit
Infinity Inf Micro II	400	Pt/sub	90	6	100	21, x 127d	Two satellites and passive sub
Infinity SM115	450	3xPt	100	8	175	76,34,32	Auto reset protection c
Infinity SSW-10 Sub	500	Active	-	-	-	34,34,33	
Infinity SM125	550	3xPt	100	8	200	89,37,32	Auto reset protection circuit
Infinity SM155	650	4xPt	102	8	300	102,45,32	Auto reset protection circuit
Infinity Kappa 6.1i	995	Pt	89	6	150	31,95,25	Floor standing
Infinity Kappa 7.1i	1195	Pt	89	6	225	36,108,26	Floor standing
Infinity ARS Epsilon	9995	IB	87	4	500	152,47,41	Includes own servo control amp
Interaudio XL1000	100	-	-	8	50	19,29,17	
Interaudio XL2000	140	-	-	8	70	23,36,18	
Interaudio XL3000	160	-	-	8	70	29,46,23	
Interaudio XL4000	200	-	-	8	75	32,56,29	
Jamo Studio 80	60	2xPt	91	4	45	22,35,17	
Jamo Studio 110	100	3xPt	91	4-8	50	24,42,22	
Jamo Sat 160	100	2x IB	90	8	50	14,20,88	Shelf/wall mount, with wall br
Jamo D115	100	-	91	4-8	75	24,42,22	
Jamo Cornet 30.4	100	2x Pt	88	8	55	20,32,23	Black ash - Mahogany £20 extra
Jamo Sat 200	110	2x	90	8	50	15,22,88	Stereo passive sub
Jamo Sat 300	120	2x	90	8	50	15,21,8	Use with SW500
Jamo Cornet 40.4	140	2x Pt	89	8	60	20,32,23	Black ash - Mahogany £20 extra
Jamo Studio 180	150	3xPt	92	4-8	80	22,50,26	
Jamo Artina	150	2xPt	90	8	50	29,25,8	Small, flat wall speaker
Jamo Sat 500	150	2x Pt	90	8	50	16,21,14	Satellites for SW500
Jamo D135	150	-	94	4-8	90	28,52,25	
Jamo Cornet	150	2x Pt	90	8	50	9,25,24	Lamp-like appearance
Jamo Convert 60.4	180	2x Pt	90	8	80	23,42,27	Black ash - Mahogany £20 extra
Jamo D165	190	-	94	4-8	100	28,52,25	
Jamo SW160 System	200	-	90	8	100	20,34,48	Subwoofer, adjustable
Jamo Art	200	2x Pt	88	8	60	35,40,9	Shape and size of shallow 20 i
Jamo Classic 4	230	2xPt	90	4	100	20,47,25	
Jamo D265	300	3xPt	95	4-8	150	44,68,32	
Jamo Classic 6	300	2xPt	90	4	100	20,84,29	Inc spiked feet
Jamo BX100A	300	3x Pt	91	8	100	32,55,28	Floor or stand mount
Jamo 307	300	2x Pt	87	6	70	18,31,27	Stand mount
Jamo Cornet 90-4	330	3xIB	91	4	140	26,87,27	
Jamo 407	350	2x Pt	88	4	80	22,41,29	Stand mount
Jamo Graphic	350	2x Pt	88	8	60	39,44,8	Wall mount
Jamo Atmosphere	380	2x Pt	88	8	60	27,37,16	Wall mount, doubles as lamp
Jamo Cornet 100-4	400	3xIB	91	4	200	32,95,27	
Jamo Classic 8	400	3xPt	90	4	150	23,90,29	Inc spiked feet
Jamo Silhouette	400	-	90	5	80	25,12,17	
Jamo D365	400	-	96	4-8	200	46,78,35	
Jamo BX150A	400	3x Pt	92	8	150	38,63,31	Floor mount
Jamo SW500 System	430	2x	90	8	140	41,38,53	Passive stereo subwoofer
Jamo BX200A	450	3x Pt	93	8	250	29,17,13	Floor mount
Jamo 477	500	2x Pt	88	4	100	19,77,29	Floor standing
Jamo 507	700	3x Pt	88	4	150	22,91,37	
Jamo 707	900	3x Pt	90	4	200	24,104,39	
Jamo Oriol	6000	3x	87	6	300	40,178,30	Floor standing, coupled cavity
JBL Control One	115	2xPt	87	4	150	24,156,14	Shielded, wall mountable
JBL Ti 1000	1500	2x IB	89	4	150	20,30,13	Asymmetric, double wall
JBL Ti 2000	2000	3x IB	89	4	200	33,82,30	Asymmetric, double wall
JBL Ti 3000	2499	3x IB	90	6	200	46,105,35	Asymmetric, double wall
JBL i 5000	3499	3x IB	91	6	300	48,114,38	Asymmetric, double wall
Jordan Watts JHFLG	420	-	-	-	-	-	Flagon pottery colour
Jordan Watts JH200	510	1xIB	86	8	80	19,33,17	Bookshelf or stand mount
Jordan Watts JH400	820	1x IB	86	8	80	28,32,17	Marble finish available £970
Jordan Watts JH400M	970	1x	86	8	80	82,28,21	
J Watts JH1+1 Aspect	1730	2x	85	8	100	92,40,22	
J Watts JH1+1 Aspect K	2310	2x	85	8	100	92,40,22	
J Watts JH1+1 Aspect M	2745	2x	85	8	100	92,40,22	
J Watts Aspect JH1+1	2745	2xIB	85	8	100	40,93,23	Matt - alt finishes extra
Jordan Watts JH2K	3230	-	-	-	-	-	

Highlighted listings (as shown below) are covered in the Hi-Fi Choice Directory.  
Audiolab 8000A 450 Int N 60 MM,MC,1T,3T Y N 45,8,36 Preout/main in

Model	Price	Type	Sens	Impedance	Power	Size	Special
<b>LOUDSPEAKERS</b>							
J Watts Classic JH2KM	4250	2x	87	8	150	47,82,34	Line tweeter array
J Watts Classic JH5K	4875	2x IB	89	8	250	47,126,40	Floor stand, line array
J Watts Classic JH5KM	5860	2x	89	8	250	47,125,40	Line driver array
J Watts Classic JH10K	9340	2x IB	92	8	500	47,156,40	Floor stand, line array
Jordan Watts JH10KM	10495	2xIB	92	8	500	47,156,40	Line driver array
JPW Minim SGL SHD	50	2x	87	6	70	19,28,20	Shielded, single speaker
JPW Satellite SGL SHD	50	2x	85	8	70	13,24,11	Shielded, single speaker
JPW Satellite	80	2x	85	8	70	13,24,11	Shielded, single speaker
JPW Minim	80	2x	87	6	70	19,28,20	135mm bass, 14mm treble
JPW Minim Pair Solid	89	2x	87	6	70	19,28,20	Shielded
JPW Sonata Vinyl	100	2x	87	8	70	23,32,22	
JPW Sonata	120	2x	87	8	70	23,32,22	165mm bass, 14mm treble
JPW Subwoofer	130	1x	95	8	80	26,51,27	
JPW P1 Vinyl	150	2x	89	8	70	26,44,25	
JPW P1	170	2x	89	8	70	26,44,25	200mm bass, 19mm treble
JPW AP2	200	2x	89	8	80	26,44,25	200mm bass, 19mm treble
JPW AP3	230	2x	88	8	100	26,52,29	200mm bass, 19mm treble
JPW Ruby 1	500	2x	87	6	120	32,19,21	Alloy cones
JPW Ruby 2	700	2x	88	6	150	43,22,25	Alloy cones
JPW Ruby 3	1000	3x	87	6	150	75,19,22	Alloy cones
JPW Ruby 4	1300	3x	89	6	200	90,22,26	Alloy cones
JVC SPX220TBK	100	3x Pt	90	8	60	24,66,24	
JVC SPX550BK	130	3x Pt	90	8	60	24,66,24	
JVC SPX770BK	150	3x Pt	90	8	80	28,75,25	
JVC SPX990BK	230	3x Pt	91	8	100	31,86,27	
JVC SX-SW9	300	2xPt	90	6	100	-	Satellite subwoofer system
JVC SX911WD	660	3x Pt	91	6	150	38,63,35	
JVC SX500	700	2x Pt	90	6	180	27,45,28	
KAL Mini-Ref MKII	395	-	86	8	120	23,27,17	
KAL Mini-Tower	619	-	89	6	150	17,90,22	
KAL Compact Ref	650	-	89	8	140	23,36,27	
KAL Tunejal	795	-	89	8	150	23,100,27	
KAL Trans-double	1500	-	89	8	250	23,112,36	
KAL Warlock	1600	-	90	6	250	25,113,36	
KEF Q10	199	2x Pt	88	6	100	19,32,26	Uni-Q, shielded
KEF 70S	299	2xIB	87	6	100	17,25,12	Uni-Q, shielded, AV surround
KEF Q30	349	2x Pt	88	6	125	19,73,30	Uni-Q, shielded, floor standin
KEF 101/3 Black	549	2x Pt	87	6	150	22,33,26	Uni-Q, Kube option
KEF LS3/5a	599	2xIB	82	11	30	19,30,16	Raymond Cooke Special Edition
KEF Q70	699	4xPt	90	6	175	19,105,30	Uni-Q, shielded, floor stand
KEF Model One	999	3xCC	89	4	150	23,86,30	Uni-Q, floor stand, shielded
KEF Model Two	1499	4xCC	90	4	200	23,101,30	Uni-Q, floor stand, shielded
KEF 104/2 REC	1799	5xCC	92	4	200	28,90,41	Raymond Cooke Special Edition
KEF Model Three	1999	5xCC	91	4	300	27,114,34	Uni-Q, floor stand, shielded
KEF 107/2 REC	3999	4xCC	90	4	300	33,116,45	Raymond Cooke Special Edition
Kenwood LS-200G	200	Pt	89	4	60	21,35,30	European design
Kenwood LS-300G	300	Pt	82	8	60	21,35,30	European design
Kenwood LS-500G	500	Pt	87	4	100	22,44,28	European design
Kenwood LS-700G	1200	Pt	87	4	120	30,90,30	European design
Kenwood LS-1000G	1700	Pt	87	4	160	34,110,38	European design
Keswick Audio Aria	269	2x	88	8	70	21,42,27	Bookshelf
Keswick Audio Volante	499	-	90	8	85	21,85,27	Floor standing
Keswick Audio Figaro	799	-	86	8	125	19,28,27	Features solid timbers
Keswick Audio Alto	999	Sub	87	8	150	19,70,27	To match Figaro
Linaeum LFX Wood	649	Hybrid	90				

# SEVENOAKS HI FI -



## DISPLAY & DEMONSTRATIONS

The moment you walk into a Sevenoaks Hi Fi branch you can be sure that you'll be well looked after. With over 23 years experience in Hi Fi, Video and TV retail, we pride ourselves on supplying the equipment that best suits your needs and your budget.

You'll find a wide range of products with the emphasis on quality. Not only is everything we sell on display, but it's also available for audition in any of our branches dedicated Hi Fi or Home Cinema demonstration rooms, helping you to enjoy choosing your equipment.

## AFTER SALES CARE

Each Sevenoaks Hi Fi branch is served by our dedicated Central Service Department. Approved by all the leading manufacturers, our team of fully trained engineers are capable of repairing 99% of all faults - in our own workshops. Once the repair is complete we give you a 3 month warranty. The kind of back up you'd expect from the leading independent Hi Fi retailer in the country.



## PRICE PROMISE

We always try to ensure that our prices are competitive. However, in the unlikely event a competitor within 30 miles advertises an identical product as available from stock at a lower price, even in a sale, we will **match that price!**

Added value offers not available on price match.

**0% FINANCE**  
We offer 0% finance on a wide range of Hi Fi & A/V separates.

**Package 1:** 10% deposit followed by 6 equal monthly payments. Example: Cost £600. Deposit £60 plus 6 payments of £90.

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**Package 3:** 50% Deposit followed by 12 equal monthly payments.

**All Options:** Minimum balance £400.

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If you thought this level of service might be expensive - you'd be wrong. Our prices are the most competitive around and our added value offers famous throughout the industry.

## SUGGESTED SYSTEMS

### System 1

**CD REPLAY FROM A QUALITY HI FI SEPARATES SYSTEM...**

**£399.<sup>00</sup>**

RRP ~~£570.<sup>00</sup>~~

#### NAD 502 CD PLAYER

A sensational player which plays all music well  
**HI FI CHOICE**

#### NAD 302 AMPLIFIER

European amplifier of the year 1994/1995

**HI FI CHOICE BEST BUY**

#### MORDAUNT SHORT MS10 SPEAKERS

An outstanding small speaker, dynamic and well controlled

**WHAT HI FI? \*\*\*\*\*** June 1994

**OPTION KEF CODA 7 EXTRA £50**

### System 2

**CD REPLAY FROM AN 'AUDIOPHILE' HI FI SEPARATES SYSTEM...**

**£449.<sup>00</sup>**

RRP ~~£580.<sup>00</sup>~~

#### PIONEER PDS703 CD PLAYER

The best CD Player in the 1994/95 Awards

**WHAT HI FI? \*\*\*\*\*** Awards 1994

#### MARANTZ PM44SEMKII AMPLIFIER

Even better in Mark 2 form

**WHAT HI FI? \*\*\*\*\*** June 1995

#### KEF CODA 7 SPEAKERS

These budget boxes are absolutely knockout

**WHAT HI FI? \*\*\*\*\*** April 1995

**OPTION MISSION 731 NO EXTRA CHARGE**

### System 3

**CD REPLAY FROM A 'TRUE AUDIOPHILE' HI FI SEPARATES SYSTEM...**

**£499.<sup>00</sup>**

RRP ~~£850.<sup>00</sup>~~

#### MARANTZ CD63 CD PLAYER

Exceptional performance, excellent value

**WHAT HI FI? \*\*\*\*\*** May 1995

#### MARANTZ PM54SEUK AMPLIFIER

Weighty, system friendly sound with plenty of power

**WHAT HI FI? \*\*\*\*** March 1995

#### TDL RTL2 SPEAKERS

Enthralling, room filling and rhythmic

**WHAT HI FI? \*\*\*\*\*** Feb 1995

**OPTION MISSION 733 NO EXTRA CHARGE**

NB - Regrettably we are unable to offer 0% Finance with these systems.

## TDK TAPE SPECIAL

**D90 54p SA90 99p**

# 16 BRANCHES NATIONWIDE

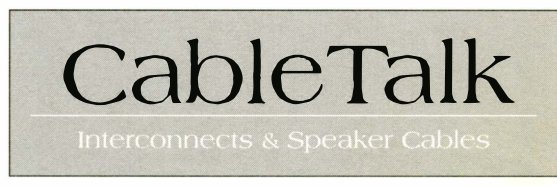


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# Mana Acoustics

Music with Life



Photo: Paul Hanley Studios

The MANA Reference 5-tier Amplifier Stand with Sound Stage

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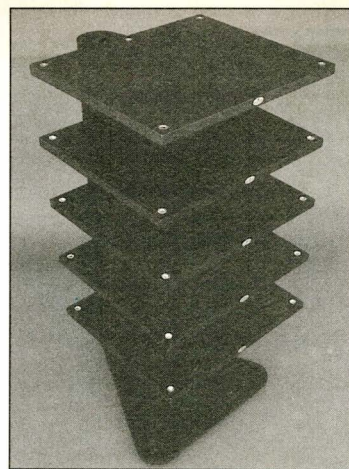
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*What Hi-Fi? June 1995*

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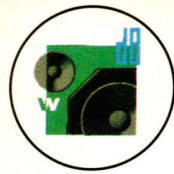
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Key to loudspeakers  
Price - typical retail, to nearest pound.  
Type - 2x, 3x etc - number of independent drive units. Pt - ported, IB - sealed, Active - dedicated active crossover, needs amps for each driver, ABR - auxiliary bass radiator, Sub - subwoofer, Uni-Q - KEF prop. coaxial drive unit, Horn - horn loading, MC - moving coil, ESL - electrostatic, CC - coupled cavity, Hybrid - dynamic

bass/ESL or ribbon top.  
Sens - output at given power input level.  
Impedance - in ohms. Power - maximum recommended amplifier output.  
Size - width x height x depth in cm.  
Highlighted products have been tested in Hi-Fi Choice. Please refer to The Directory for full test results.

Model	Price	Type	Sens	Impedance	Power	Size	Special
<b>LOUDSPEAKERS</b>							
Mantecore Minaret F1	750	IB	94	8	100	23,15,11	Nearfield monitor
Mantecore Matisse	1300	IB	90	8	200	100,28,22	Fibrelem honeycomb cabinets
Martin-Logan Statement	0	Hybrid	87	-	-	23,140,10	ESL/dynamic, biwire,
Martin-Logan Aeries	2286	Hybrid	89	-	-	23,122,30	Two-way
Martin-Logan Stylos	2993	Hybrid	2x	88	-	23,35,28	In wall
Martin-Logan Sequel II	3277	Hybrid	89	-	-	31,160,29	Dynamic bass/electrostatic, tw
Martin-Logan QLS IIz	4333	ESL	86	-	-	62,127,32	Full range panel
Martin-Logan Quest Z	4998	Hybrid	90	-	-	42,160,29	Dynamic bass/electrostatic, tw
M-L Monolith IIIPT	8730	Hybrid	89	-	-	59,163,28	ESL/dynamic, two-way
M-L Monolith IIIx	9354	Hybrid	89	-	-	59,163,26	ESL/dynamic, active crossover
Meridian A500	695	2x	90	-	100	83,20,28	Shelf/stand, shielded
Meridian DSP6000	850	DSP	-	-	-	133,28,43	Digital active DSP based
Meridian DSP5000	2995	DSP	-	-	225	90,21,30	Digital active DSP floor stand
Mission 73S	100	2xPt	89	8	50	15,26,15	Stand mount, shelf, w/brackets
Mission 731	130	2xPt	89	8	75	31,17,20	Stand mount, bookshelf
Mission 732	150	2x	90	8	75	16,20,43	TV top, shielded
Mission 73C	200	2x	89	8	100	41,21,31	Stand mount, boundary
Mission 780SE	270	2x pt	89	6	75	18,30,26	Stand mount, boundary siting
Mission 753	300	2x	89	8	100	84,21,31	Floor standing, boundary
Mission 731	300	2x Pt	89	6	75	19,32,27	Stand mount, boundary
Mission 734	430	3x	90	8	125	84,21,33	Floor standing, boundary
Mission 752	500	2x Pt	90	8	125	20,84,26	Floor stand, boundary
Mission 735	600	3x	90	8	150	106,21,33	Floor stand, boundary
Mission 753	700	2x Pt	90	6	150	21,88,32	Floor stand, transverse folded
MA Monitor 1 Gold	200	2x IB	88	8	70	16,24,16	Miniature stand/shelf mount
MA Monitor 7 Gold II	245	2x Pt	89	8	70	17,35,17	Stand/shelf mount
Monitor Audio MA100G	280	2x IB	89	8	120	16,24,16	As MA Monitor 1, shielded
Monitor Audio MA201	300	2xPt	90	8	100	22,41,27	Gold dome tweeter, pulp bass
MA Monitor 9 Gold II	350	2x Pt	88	8	100	21,37,21	Stand/shelf mount
Monitor Audio MA202	450	2xPt	90	8	100	22,89,29	Gold dome tweeter, pulp bass
MA Monitor 14 Gold II	500	3x	88	8	120	21,76,24	Floor/shelf standing
Monitor Audio Studio 2	600	2x	89	8	100	27,17,20	
Monitor Audio Studio 6	900	2x Pt	88	8	200	22,35,25	Stand/shelf mount, metal bass
Monitor Audio Studio 12	1000	2	90	8	200	92,17,20	Black - rosewood extra
MA Studio 20SE	2200	2x Pt	88	8	200	20,92,26	Floor stand, metal cone bass
Monitor Audio Studio 50	4000	2x	90	8	300	20,104,30	Floor stand, metal bass & mid
M-S CS-1 Dialogue	60	2xPt	87	8	100	16,23,13	Shielded, Positec protected
Mordaunt-Short MS05	110	Pt	87	8	60	26,17,18	Bookshelf, wall positioning
M-S CS1 Stereo	115	Pt	87	8	100	16,23,13	Shielded, Positec protected
Mordaunt-Short MS10	140	Pt	88	8	60	19,31,22	Alloy tweeter, MCS woofer
Mordaunt-Short HT30	150	Pt	90	8	120	25,43,29	Shielded, Positec protected
Mordaunt-Short SW1	150	Sub	90	8	100	24,58,26	Coupled cavity, matches CS1
Mordaunt-Short MS20	190	Pt	89	8	75	22,37,22	Alloy tweeter, MCS woofer
M-S CS-1 Triple	200	2xPt	87	8	100	16,23,13	Shielded, Positec protected
Mordaunt-Short MS30	270	Pt	90	8	100	25,43,28	Alloy tweeter, MCS woofer
Mordaunt-Short HT50	275	Pt	90	8	120	25,87,33	Positec, integrated subwoofer
Mordaunt-Short MS40	400	Pt	90	8	150	23,82,28	Alloy tweeter, MCS woofer
Mordaunt-Short MS50	530	Pt	90	8	200	25,87,33	Alloy tweeter, MCS woofer
M-S Performance 860	1450	-	90	6	225	86,26,35	Time-aligned, ResinRock enc
NAD 800	149	Pt	90	6	60	20,32,24	10 litre enclosure
NAD 802	249	Pt	90	6	80	20,40,26	11.5 litre enclosure
Naim S-NAXO 3-6	699	-	-	-	-	21,76,30	Active crossover
Naim S-NAXO 2-4	699	-	-	-	-	21,76,30	Active crossover
Naim IBL Active	776	-	-	65	-	25,80,28	Boundary, floor standing
Naim IBL Passive	895	-	86	6	65	25,80,28	Boundary, floor standing
Naim SBL Active	1692	-	-	75	-	27,89,27	Boundary, floor standing
Naim SBL Passive	1821	-	88	6	75	27,89,27	Boundary, floor standing
Naim DBL Active	6991	-	-	200	-	65,120,40	Boundary, floor standing
Naim DBL Passive	7672	-	92	4	200	65,120,40	Boundary, floor standing
Neat Petite	595	2x	87	6	100	20,30,18	
Orelle Orator II	699	2xPt	91	8	100	27,40,30	Time aligned, biwire
Origin Live OLIB	289	-	89	8	100	20,30,19	
Origin Live OL2B	349	-	90	8	150	19,80,19	Floor standing
Origin Live OL-1AS	399	-	89	8	199	20,30,190	Floor standing
Origin Live OL-1A	399	-	86	8	150	20,30,19	
Origin Live OL-2AS	469	-	90	8	100	19,80,19	Floor standing
Origin Live OL-2A	469	-	86	8	150	19,80,19	Floor standing
Origin Live OL-1	499	-	86	8	150	20,30,19	
Origin Live OL-2	649	-	86	8	150	19,80,19	Floor standing
Origin Live OL3	975	3x	88	8	150	19,83,23	Floor standing
Origin Live Conqueror	1600	3x	89	8	150	23,87,23	Floor standing
Pentachord A	469	IB	87	8	80	21,28,20	Direct coupled
Pentachord B	519	IB	87	8	80	52,35,52	Active crossover, including el
Pentachord Pentode	729	IB	87	4	80	20,74,20	Active crossover, including el
Pentachord P column	1649	2xIB	87	4	80	21,108,20	Including active crossover, fo
Philips Legend FB720	200	Pt	80	7	75	21,37,31	
Philips DSS930	1300	Active	-	75	-	22,58,33	Active digital loudspeaker
Pink Triangle Ventral	896	Hybrid	86	11	100	15,80,32	Ribbon hybrid
Pioneer CS-3030	120	3x Pt	90	8	120	27,54,24	Bookshelf
Pioneer CS-5030	170	3x Pt	90	8	140	31,53,25	Bookshelf
Pioneer CS-7030	230	3x Pt	90	8	190	35,70,28	Bookshelf
Pioneer S-4UK	250	2x Pt	88	6	80	21,37,28	No crossover, UK optimised
Pioneer S-60	270	2x	87	4	80	22,47,28	Bookshelf
Pioneer CS-9030	280	3x Pt	92	8	220	39,75,29	Bookshelf
Pioneer S-80	370	2x	88	4	80	23,56,28	Bookshelf
Pioneer S-200	600	2x	89	4	120	26,90,34	Biwire, floor standing
Pioneer S-400	950	2x	89	4	160	27,96,38	Biwire, floor stand, shielded



Key to loudspeakers  
Price - typical retail, to nearest pound.  
Type - 2x, 3x etc - number of independent drive units. Pt - ported, IB - sealed, Active - dedicated active crossover, needs amps for each driver, ABR - auxiliary bass radiator, Sub - subwoofer, Uni-Q - KEF prop. coaxial drive unit, Horn - horn loading, MC - moving coil, ESL - electrostatic, CC - coupled cavity, Hybrid - dynamic

bass/ESL or ribbon top.  
Sens - output at given power input level.  
Impedance - in ohms. Power - maximum recommended amplifier output.  
Size - width x height x depth in cm.  
Highlighted products have been tested in Hi-Fi Choice. Please refer to The Directory for full test results.

Model	Price	Type	Sens	Impedance	Power	Size	Special
<b>LOUDSPEAKERS</b>							
Polk M3 II	220	2x Pt	89	8	100	17,29,21	Multi-app, including wall brac
Polk M5	300	2xPt	91	8	125	21,33,23	Multi-app, inc brackets
Polk S6	300	2x ABR	91	8	125	26,54,20	Stand mount
Polk S8	450	2x ABR	90	8	150	29,64,22	Stand mount
Polk S10	600	2x ABR	91	8	200	32,74,26	Floorstanding
Polk LS50	800	2x Pt	89	8	250	27,83,29	Floorstanding
Polk LS70	1200	2x Pt	90	8	250	31,94,37	Floorstanding, biampable
Polk LS90	1700	3x Pt	90	8	250	31,94,37	Floorstanding, biampable
Posselt Alpha I	950	Pt	89	8	60	24,44,28	
Posselt Alpha II	1200	Pt	89	8	90	23,100,27	
Posselt Alpha III	1350	Pt	89	8	100	26,102,30	
Posselt Alpha IV	1500	Pt	89	8	135	27,104,31	
Posselt Albatros	2200	Hrn	93	6	200	31,186,32	Ultra sensitive
Proac Tablet 3	479	-	87	8	100	17,28,23	Stand mount
Proac Studio 100	699	-	87	8	150	20,40,25	Stand mount
Proac Tablette 3	779	-	87	8	100	16,28,23	Stand mount
Proac Response One S	999	-	87	8	100	18,30,23	
Proac Response Two	1634	-	88	8	150	23,45,28	
Proac Studio 200	1850	-	89	8	250	23,115,28	Floor standing
Prof Monitor Co TB1	481	2x Pt	90	8	150	20,40,25	Shielded version available
Prof Monitor Co LB1	998	2x	89	4	300	18,53,25	Transmission line
Prof Monitor Co AB1	1598	2x	89	6	400	26,79,43	Transmission line
Prof Monitor Co MB1P	4681	2x	91	8	500	38,87,53	Transmission line
Prof Monitor Co BB5P	6754	2x	91	4	600	43,104,79	Transmission line
Quad ESL-63	2860	ELs	86	8	100	66,93,27	Panel, simulates point source
Realistic Minimus 3.5	30	-	-	8	15	9,15,5	
Realistic Minimus 21	30	-	-	8	10	15,24,13	
Realistic M'mus 26	56	-	87	8	40	18,28,11	
Realistic Minimus Pro-7	60	2xPt	87	8	50	11,18,11	Revised design
Realistic Minimus Pro-77	100	2xPt	86	8	55	14,22,11	Revised design
Rega Kyle	198	2x	-	8	-	19,31,19	Stand/wall/shelf mount
Rega EL8	298	2x	-	8	-	17,72,20	Floor stand
Rega ELA Mk II	498	2x	-	8	-	30,80,20	Floor stand
Rega XEL	1040	2x	-	6	-	20,82,30	Floor stand
Rehdeko RK115	1200	Pt	104	8	-	34,42,28	
Rehdeko RK125	2300	Pt	102	8	-	34,61,28	
Rehdeko RK145	3400	Pt	102	8	-	39,66,29	
Rehdeko RK175	6500	Pt	106	8	-	50,96,37	
REL Strata	499	Sub	-	-	1kw	42,52,31	Active, internal amp
REL Stadium	795	Sub	-	-	1kw	58,52,36	Active, internal amps
REL Stentor	1495	Sub	-	-	1kw	60,56,37	Active, internal amp
REL Studio	2995	Sub	-	-	1kw	69,62,53	Active, internal amp
Revolver by Ram Beretta	100	2xPt	87	6	80	30,19,22	Bookshelf/stand mount
Revolver by Ram Colt	149	2xPt	88	6	100	30,19,22	Bookshelf/stand mount
Revolver by Ram Purdey	249	2xPt	88	6	120	75,19,22	Floor stand, with plinth
Rogers LS1	199	2x	-	6	85	20,20,30	Stand required
Rogers LS2a/2	250	2x	86	8	100	23,36,21	Use about 30cm from wall
Rogers LS4a/2	330	2x	88	8	100	25,65,45	Various finishes
Rogers AB1 Subwoofer	499	1x	-	8	50	57,19,16	Passive subwoofer
Rogers Studio 3	499	2x	85	8	45	19,30,16	Stand required
Rogers P20	599	2x Pt	88	8	150	26,42,30	Stand mount
Rogers LS3/5A	699	2xIB	83	11	30	31,19,16	Small broadcast monitor
Rogers Studio 5	699	2x	87	8	100	25,25,48	Stand required</



Key to receivers  
 Price - typical retail, to nearest pound.  
 A/V - minimum requirements - Dolby Surround/Pro-Logic circuitry.  
 Power - watts/channel, both channels driven RMS 8ohms, 20Hz - 20kHz.  
 Wavebands - FM, L - long wave, M - medium wave.  
 Presets - number thereof.  
 In/outputs - MM/MC - moving coil/moving magnet, L - line, T - tape, V - audio input or tape circuit with

video signal routing.  
 Remote - control.  
 Size - width x height x depth in cm.  
 Highlighted products have been tested in Hi-Fi Choice. Please refer to The Directory for full test results.



Key to systems  
 Price - typical retail, to nearest pound.  
 Sources - CD - compact disc, R - radio tuner, Tu - turntable, T - cassette tape, V - video signal routing (composite and/or S-Video).  
 Power - output power in watts, per channel, RMS.

Size - main unit dimensions - width x height x depth in cm.  
 Highlighted products have been tested in Hi-Fi Choice. Please refer to The Directory for full test results.

Model	Price	Type	Sens	Impedance	Power	Size	Special
<b>LOUDSPEAKERS</b>							
Sonus-Faber Minuetto	898	2x	88	-	-	23,35,28	Compact, stand mount
Sonus-Faber Minima Amator 1498	-	2x	88	-	-	20,34,31	Compact, stand mount
Sonus-Faber Electa	1790	2x	88	-	-	38,27,24	Compact, stand mount
Sonus-Faber Amator	2992	2x	88	-	-	37,22,35	Compact, stand mount
Sonus-Faber Guarneri	5500	2x	88	-	-	19,38,38	Compact, limited edition
Sonus-Faber Extrema	5991	2x	88	-	-	55,27,46	'Reference Standard'
Sony SS-E300	50	IB	88	8	160	73,41,20	Magnetically shielded
Sony SS-V77	50	-	90	16	-	19,9,14	Full range surround speakers
Sony SS-E500	80	IB	88	8	120	35,47,20	Magnetically shielded
Sony SS-J90AV	100	-	-	16	-	19,12,15	Shielded centre speaker
Sony SSB5E	100	IB	85	4	70	9,32,24	UK optimised sound
Sony SS125E	120	IB	86	4	90	22,38,38	UK optimised sound
Sony SA-W90	350	-	-	-	70	22,49,51	Active subwoofer
Sony SSA1L	450	IB	85	4	120	19,30,32	Bio-cellulose tweeters
Sound-Lab Dynastat	3790	Hybrid	88	8	350	44,183,41	Oak or walnut finished £3990
Sound-Lab Pristine II	6990	ESL	88	8	300	72,153,69	Steel frame, curved panel
Sound-Lab A3	11990	ESL	88	8	300	78,187,23	Any finish, curved panel
Sound-Lab A1	13990	ESL	88	8	400	91,208,27	Curved panel, any finish
Spendor LS3/5A	630	2x	83	8	40	19,30,16	BBC inspired location monitor
Spendor S20	760	-	84	8	70	22,38,26	On stands, free space
Spendor SP3/1	890	2x	85	8	70	40,22,25	Stand mount, free space
Spendor SP2/3	1100	2x	88	8	80	28,55,33	On stands, free space
Spendor SP1/2	1430	3x	89	8	90	30,63,30	Stand mount, free space
Spendor SP7/1	2000	2x	89	8	100	85,30,35	Floor standing
Spendor SP100	2230	3x	90	8	100	37,70,43	Classic monitor, free space
Spendor SP9/1	3300	3x	90	8	125	106,37,44	Floor standing monitor
Spica Angelus	1295	IB	87	8	200	53,117,26	Free space, floor standing
Tannoy 631	149	2xPt	87	6	70	19,34,15	Advanced 'silent' enc
Tannoy 632	189	2xPt	88	8	90	51,43,27	
Tannoy 633	319	3xIB	89	8	100	29,75,28	
Tannoy Subsat3	399	3xPt	88	8	120	11,16,9	Subsat system with ICT tech
Tannoy 636	419	3xIB	90	6	120	29,75,28	
Tannoy 637	499	3xIB	91	6	150	33,86,32	
Tannoy 625	595	Active	-	-	90	58,49,45	Servo, current drive subwoofer
Tannoy 638	599	3xPt	91	6	175	33,96,32	
Tannoy D100	649	2xPt	89	8	120	25,36,22	6.5 inch Dual Concentric
Tannoy D500	1470	3xPt	91	6	175	31,93,34	8 inch Dual Concentric
Tannoy Sterling TW	1750	2x	93	8	150	48,70,31	
Tannoy D700	2100	3xPt	93	6	200	37,99,36	10 inch Dual Concentric
Tannoy Edinburgh TW	2700	2x	95	8	180	66,102,42	
Tannoy GRFM TW	3500	2x	95	8	200	80,100,48	
Tannoy Canterbury 12^	5500	2x	94	8	200	58,90,43	
Tannoy Westminster TW	6000	2x	99	8	200	-	
Tannoy Canterbury 15^	7000	2x	96	8	250	68,110,48	
Tannoy Westminster Royal	13500	2x	99	8	200	98,139,56	
TDL Near Field Monitor	90	2x	88	8	70	18,30,17	
TDL NFM2-S	100	2x	90	8	100	18,45,17	Priced for single speaker
TDL NFM2	180	3x	90	8	100	18,45,17	
TDL RTL2	300	2x	87	8	80	20,73,22	Reflex transmission line
TDL RTL3	400	3x	90	8	120	20,90,37	Reflex transmission line
TDL Studio 0.5	499	2x	85	8	75	20,62,30	Transmission line
TDL Studio 1	699	2x	86	8	120	23,77,33	Transmission line bass
TDL Studio 0.75m	749	2x	85	8	100	20,67,30	Metal drive units, TLS
TDL Studio 1m	899	2x	86	8	120	23,77,34	Metal drivers, TLS
TDL Studio Monitor M	2449	3x	87	8	150	27,112,43	TLS, metal drivers, int stands
TDL Ref Standard-M	4999	7x	89	8	800	56,121,50	Dual TLS, metal drivers
Teac LS-X8	80	2x	-	8	30	11,18,11	In black or white
Teac S-W1	120	Sub	-	6	100	17,44,30	Coaxial, shielded
Teac S-300	150	2x Pt	-	6	100	17,24,17	
Technics SB-CS55	80	2x Pt	-	8	60	25,43,25	Shelf/stand, shielded
Technics SB-CS75	100	3x Pt	-	8	60	27,49,25	Composite mica cone mid
Technics SB-CS95	150	3x Pt	-	8	100	29,54,25	Composite mica cone mid
Technics SB-M20	200	2x Pt	-	-	60	-	
Technics SB-EX2	200	2x Pt	84	4	100	24,48,29	Composite mica cone mid
Technics SB-EX3	250	3x Pt	84	4	125	24,60,29	Mica diaphragms, separate LF b
Technics SB-M300	350	3xPt	-	-	70	-	
Technics SB-EX7	450	3x Pt	84	4	180	29,85,32	Mica diaphragms, separate LF b
Technics SB-MX1000	2000	2x Pt	86	6	100	23,47,34	Floor standing, separate LF ba
Technics SB-MX2000	4000	3x Pt	88	4	125	35,91,43	Mica bass/tweeter
Totem Model One	995	Pt	87	4	120	17,31,23	
Triangle Titus TZe	325	-	90	8	75	20,25,32	New tweeter, lifetime warranty
Triangle Comete TZe	475	-	91	8	100	22,28,40	High sensitivity
Triangle Antel	899	-	92	8	150	22,102,30	
Triangle Zays	1299	-	92	8	250	99,22,28	
Triangle Aitinis	1850	-	90	8	300	104,22,22	
Triangle Altair	2450	-	92	4	300	35,120,30	Proprietary tweeter
Triangle Octant Txe	3750	-	94	4	300	42,150,19	Ultra high sensitivity
UKD-Opera Prima	450	Pt	88	8	75	20,33,25	Solid walnut, stand mount
UKD-Opera Seconda	550	Pt	88	8	100	23,35,34	Solid walnut, stand mount
UKD-Opera Operetta	660	Pt	87	8	70	22,30,26	Solid walnut, stand mount
UKD-Opera Super Pavarotti	875	Pt	88	8	150	23,55,23	Solid mahogany, stand mount
UKD-Opera Callias II	895	Pt	87	6	150	34,22,32	Solid walnut, Focal drivers
UKD-Opera Divina	1390	Pt	86	8	150	24,39,40	Solid walnut, stand mount
UKD-Opera Caruso II	2250	3xPt	88	8	200	22,97,28	Solid walnut, floor standing
Vandersteen 2Ce	1395	4x	88	7	160	41,101,27	Free standing, phase aligned
Visionic David 5001	132	-	-	-	4-8	50	10,17,10
Visionic Sub 4	154	-	-	-	4-8	100	36,49,31
Visionic David 6001	163	-	-	-	4-8	60	13,20,12

Model	Price	Type	Sens	Impedance	Power	Size	Special
<b>LOUDSPEAKERS</b>							
Visionic David 8001	228	-	-	-	4-8	80	16,25,17
Wharfedale Centre Cube	49	Pt	87	8	75	14,13,12	Shielded centre speaker
Wharfedale Valdius 100	89	2xPt	88	8	180	27,17,18	2-way bookshelf
Wharfedale Diamond 6R	99	Pt	89	8	100	16,27,22	Stand/bookshelf mount
Wharfedale Valdius 200	109	2xPt	89	8	180	38,21,22	Stand/bookshelf
Wharfedale Modus Micro	109	2x Pt	86	8	75	14,23,12	Shielded
Wharfedale Modus Centre	119	Pt	87	8	75	46,14,12	Shielded centre speaker
Wharfedale Modus Mini	139	ABR	86	8	75	14,39,12	Shielded two-way
Wharfedale Valdius 300	149	2xPt	90	8	180	47,25,23	Stand/bookshelf
Wharfedale Modus One	159	2xPt	89	8	100	22,41,29	Stand/bookshelf mount
Wharfedale Modus Sub-bass	179	Pt	88	8	200	57,23,38	Two channel double tuned sub-w
Wharfedale Modus Three	199	2xPt	90	8	100	22,57,29	Stand/bookshelf mount
Wharfedale Valdius 400	199	3xPt	91	8	250	80,25,26	Floor standing
Wharfedale Modus Five	259	3xPt	90	8	125	22,65,29	Stand/bookshelf mount
Wharfedale Valdius 500	299	4xPt	91	4	350	108,25,29	Floor standing
Wharfedale Modus Seven	339	3xPt	90	8	125	22,81,20	Floor standing
Wharfedale Modus One-T	439	3xPt	90	8	150	22,109,29	Floor standing
Wilson X1 Grand Slam	0	3x	94	-	-	-	Three-way reference
Wilson WAP Puppy II	5600	Sub	91	-	-	25,53,35	Passive subwoofer for WATT
Wilson WAP Puppy 5	7375	Sub	91	-	-	-	Passive sub for WATTs
Wilson WATT 5	8800	2x	91	-	-	27,31,36	
Wilson WHOW II	12500	Sub	98	-	-	88/65,36	Active subwoofer for WATT
Yamaha NS-C80	99	-	90	6	80	14,45,17	
Yamaha NS-E80	120	-	90	6	50	27,20,7	
Yamaha NS-C110	149	-	90	6	120	15,47,18	
Yamaha NS10M	250	-	90	8	100	21,38,20	
Yamaha NS-1000	1399	-	90	8	250	38,68,36	
ZYP A1	199	IB	88	8	50	14,22,12	Wall mount
ZYP A1T	219	IB	88	8	50	14,22,12	Magnetically shielded
ZYP AZS	299	2xIB	88	8	50	22,14,12	Studio nearfield monitor

Model	Price	A/V	Power	Wavebands	Presets	In/outputs	Remote	Size	Special
<b>RECEIVERS</b>									
B&O Beomaster 7000	920	N	75	FM,M,L	20	MM,2L,2T	Y	-	
Denon DRA-265R	200	N	35	FM,M	40	MM,2L,1T	Y	44,12,31	
Denon DRA-365RD	250	N	45	FM,M	40	MM,3L,1T	Y	44,12,32	System remote
Denon DRA-565RD	320	N	55	FM,M	40	MM,3L,2T	Y	44,12,32	RDS
Denon AVR-1000	520	Y	70	FM,M	16	MM,2L,2T	Y	44,15,33	Auto input balance
Dual CR9000RS	200	N	55	FM,M,L	30	MM,4L,2T	Y	44,14,30	System component
Grundig R210	150	N	50	FM,M,L	59	MM,5L	Y	36,12,30	Gain switch, remote
Grundig Fine Arts R2	250	N	50	FM,M,L	59	MM,5L	Y	44,14,30	RDS, Radio text, remote
Harman-Kardon AVR-30	999	Y	50	FM,M	16	MM,3L,3T,6V	Y	45,13,35	Dolby Pro Logic
JVC RX-212XBK	200	N	50	FM,M,L	40	MM,3L,1T	Y	44,13,34	4ch surround
JVC RX-308BK	230	N	70	FM,M,L	40	MM,3L,1T	Y	44,13,34	4 channel surround
JVC RX-416VBK	270	Y	50	FM,M,L	40	MM,1L,3T	Y	44,13,35	Dolby Pro Logic
JVC RX-616RBK	350	Y	50	FM,M,L	40	MM,1L,3T	Y	44,16,41	Dolby Pro Logic
JVC RX-508VBK	350	Y	50	FM,M,L	40	MM,1L,3T	Y	44,13,34	5ch Dolby Pro Logic
JVC RX-816RBK	570	Y	70	FM,M,L	40	MM,1L,3T	Y	44,16,41	Dolby Pro Logic
JVC RX-808VBK	570	Y	70	FM,M,L	40	MM,1L,3T	Y	44,16,40	5ch Dolby Pro Logic
Kenwood KR-A4070	230	N	60	FM,M	20	MM,3L,2T	Y	44,13,34	RDS
Kenwood KR-V5570	300	Y	70	FM,M	20	MM,8L,2T	Y	44,17,40	RDS, Dolby Pro Logic
Kenwood KR-V6060	350	Y	100	FM,M	20	MM,3L,2T	Y	44,15,40	Dolby Pro Logic, RDS
Kenwood KR-V7070	400	Y	100	FM,M	20	MM,3L,2T	Y	44,15,40	Dolby Pro Logic, RDS
Kenwood KR-X1000	1300	Y	110	FM,M	20	MM,8L,2T	Y	44,17,40	THX, Dolby PL, RDS
Marantz SR-73	599	Y	75	FM,M	30	MM,3L,3T	Y	43,15,38	Dolby Pro Logic
Marantz SR-82	899	Y	75	FM,M	30	MM,3L,2T	Y	43,17,43	Dolby Pro Logic, multi-room
NAD 701	279	N	25	FM,M	24	MM,2L,1T	Y	-	
NAD 705	349	N	40	FM,M	39	MM,2L,2T	Y	-	
Philips FR940	450	Y	100	FM,M,L	30	MM,4L,4T	Y	44,14,30	Dolby Pro Logic
Pioneer SX-203RDS	200	N	35	FM,M	30	MM,2L,2T	Y	42,14,29	RDS tuner
Pioneer SX-303RDS	250	N	50	FM,M	30	MM,2L,2T	Y	42,14,34	RDS tuner
Pioneer VSX-452	400	Y	50	FM,M	30	MM,2L,2T,2V	Y	42,14,35	Dolby Pro-Logic
Sansui RZ790	250	N	30	FM,M	30	MM,2L,2T	Y	-	
Sansui RZ-3500 II	370	N	30	FM,M	30	MM,2L,2T	Y	-	
Sherwood RX1010	120	N	30	FM,M	-	MM,2L,1T	N	-	
Sherwood RV5030R	330	Y	80	FM,M,L	-	MM,4L,4T			

# HI-FI CHOICE BUYER'S GUIDE



Key to systems  
Price - typical retail, to nearest pound.  
Sources - CD - compact disc, R - radio tuner, Tu - turntable, T - cassette tape.  
V - video signal routing (composite and/or S-Video).  
Power - output power in watts, per channel, RMS.

Size - main unit dimensions - width x height x depth in cm.

Highlighted products have been tested in *Hi-Fi Choice*. Please refer to The Directory for full test results.



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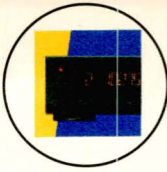
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Model	Price	Source	Power	Size	Special
<b>SYSTEMS</b>					
Aiwa LCX-500	250	CD,R,T	10	-	Micro, remote, DC operation
Aiwa NSX-V20	280	CD,R,2T	20	-	Mini, 3-CD
Aiwa NSX-V25	280	CD,R	25	-	Mini, single box
Aiwa NSX-V70	280	CD,R,2T	20	-	Mini, remote
Aiwa LCX-60	300	CD,R,T	25	-	Micro, front loading CD
Aiwa LCX-65	300	CD,R,T	10	-	Micro, inc 25watt subwoofer
Aiwa NSX-V30	300	CD,R,2T	25	-	Mini, 3-CD player
Aiwa NSX-430	330	CD,R,2T	40	-	Mini, inc front surround spkrs
Aiwa NSX-V50	350	CD,R,2T	40	-	Mini, 3-CD player
Aiwa Z-1290	350	CD,R,Tu,2T	20	-	Mid, 3-CD player
Aiwa NSX-V70	400	CD,R,2T	85	-	Mini, front surround, hi-power
Aiwa Z-1500	400	CD,R,Tu,2T	30	36,48,35	3 CD player
Aiwa NSX-999	450	CD,R,2T	150	-	Mini, 3-CD, power
Aiwa Z-1800	500	MM,CD,R,2T	100	-	Mid, 3-CD, front surround
Aiwa NSX-V90	500	CD,R,2T	60	-	Pro-Logic, 3-CD, front surround
Aiwa Z-1800	500	CD,R,Tu,2T	100	-	Mid, front surround, hi-power
Aiwa NSX-V150M	550	CD,R,2T	60	-	Mini, 50 CD changer
Aiwa Z-2300	600	CD,R,Tu,2T	60	-	Mid, Pro Logic
Aiwa NSX-D757R	600	CD,R,2T	60	-	Mini, Pro-Logic, RDS EON
Aiwa NSX-D858	650	CD,R,2T	60	-	Mini, Pro-Logic
Aiwa Z-D3300M	700	CD,R,2T,Tu	75	-	Mid, 3-CD, power
Aiwa Z-D8300M	800	CD,R,Tu,2T	75	-	Mid, 3-CD, power
Aiwa Z-D9300M	1000	CD,R,Tu,2T	80	-	Mid, Pro Logic
Akai MX92	279	CD,R,2T	25	26,38,24	
Akai MX92/T	329	CD,R,P,2T	25	27,46,31	As MX92, with mini turntable
Akai MX115	399	CD,R,2T	35	27,39,26	Graphic equaliser
Akai RX590	449	CD,R,2T,P	38	27,31,33	3x CD player, Dolby B
Akai MX115T	449	CD,R,P,2T	35	27,48,31	As MX115, with mini turntable
Akai RX590T	499	CD,R,2T,P	38	27,40,33	As RX590, with mini turntable
Akai RX690	549	CD,R,2T	50	27,40,33	3x CD player, Dolby B&C
Akai RX690T	599	CD,R,2T,P	50	27,49,33	As RX690 with mini turntable
Akai RX890	799	CD,R,2T	60	27,42,33	Virtual Room Simulator, RDS
Akai MX950	799	CD,R,2T	65	27,42,34	Triple CD, separates
Akai RX890T	849	CD,R,2T,P	60	27,51,33	As RX690, with mini turntable
Akai RX890 Compo	999	CD,R,2T,P	60	64,78,35	RX890 with stand & AP A950
Akai MX950 Compo	999	CD,R,P,2T	65	64,78,36	As MX950, with speaker stands
Amstrad MC500	100	CD,R,T	3	16,22,22	FM,MW 20 presets, bass boost
Amstrad Micro 1000	150	CD,R,T	5	15,20,26	15 presets, FM, MW, LW
Amstrad Micro 1500	170	CD,R,T	5	15,20,26	20 presets, FM,MW,LW
Amstrad CD3-500	200	CD,R,2T	5	28,34,30	Three disc CD player, FM, MW
Amstrad Micro 2000	230	CD,R,T	5	17,28,23	20 presets, FM, MW, LW
Amstrad Mini 3000	250	CD,R,2T	8	26,32,49	RDS tuner, mix mixing
Arcam Alpha One	1050	CD,R	40	43,23,30	Based on Arcam separates
Arcam Alpha 5	1220	CD,R	40	43,23,30	Based on Arcam separates
Arcam Alpha 6	1320	CD,R	50	43,23,30	Including Alpha 6 R/C amp
Arcam Delta	2880	CD,R,T	75	43,37,34	Fully remote controllable
B&O BeoSound Century	995	CD,R,T	-	75,37,17	Wall mounted active speakers
B&O Beocenter Overture	1100	CD,R,T	-	32,36,16	Audiomaster, replaces 2500
B&O Beocenter 9300	1500	CD,R,T	80	76,11,34	
B&O Beosystem 2300	1500	CD,R	-	83,36,16	As 2500, without cassette
B&O Beosystem 7000	3075	CD,R,Tu,T	100	42,8,33	Components, speakers extra
Denon D-65/S	640	CD,R,2T	30	27 wide	Includes optional UK speakers
Denon D-90/S	740	CD,R,Tu,T	30	27 wide	RDS, inc optional UK speakers
Denon D-110/S	870	CD,R,Tu,2T	40	27 wide	RDS, inc optional UK speakers
Denon D-250/S	1000	CD,R,Tu,2T	50	27 wide	RDS, inc optional UK speakers
Denon D-2F10/S	1150	CD,R,Tu,1T	50	-	All components sold separately
Dual MS2600	499	CD,R,2T	30	27,39,30	Karaoke support
Goodmans System 700	600	CD,R,2T	50	-	
Grundig MC10	300	CD,R,T	25	18,36,29	'Super Mini', Dolby NR
Grundig M10	330	CD,R,2T	22	27,37,34	Five band graphic & full remot
Grundig Mini 15	350	CD,R,2T	30	-	Mini system
Grundig R120	400	CD,R,2T	30	-	Mid, system
Grundig Mini 25	430	CD,R,2T	30	-	7 disk CD changer, mini
Grundig Fine Arts S1	750	CD,R,2T	50	44,45,30	
Grundig Fine Arts S2	890	CD,R,2T	80	44,45,30	Separates system
Hitachi AX10	280	CD,R,2T	20	23,29,28	Inc graphic equaliser
Hitachi AX10	330	CD,R,2T	20	23,29,28	6-disc, graphic equaliser
Hitachi AX15	370	CD,R,2T	35	45,34,63	Multi-disc player
JVC S200	330	R,CD,2T	40	17,27,25	Music live surround
JVC S300	380	R,CD,2T	45	17,27,25	Music live surround
JVC S330	400	CD,R,2T	45	19,32,25	6+1 CD, music
JVC Midi -W48CD	400	R,CD,2T	50	36,50,34	Live Surround
JVC Adagio S50	450	R,CD,2T,V	40	25,36,35	Live Surround system
JVC S500	500	CD,R,2T	50	21,37,25	Music jog control
JVC S700R	700	CD,R,2T	100	14,21,14	Dolby Pro Logic
JVC Adagio G7	800	R,CD,2T,V	50	28,43,28	Panoramic surround
JVC Adagio G9	1000	R,CD,2T,V	55	28,43,28	Panoramic surround
Kenwood UD-303	400	CD,R,Tu,2T	50	27,36,31	3-disc carousel
Kenwood UD-403	500	CD,R,Tu,2T	55	27,41,31	3-disc, Pro Logic
Kenwood UD-403P	550	CD,R,Tu,2T	55	27,41,31	As UD-403, + Pro Logic spkrs
Kenwood M-28MG	600	CD,R,T,2T	30	36,56,38	Five disc CD carousel
Kenwood UD-703	750	CD,R,Tu,2T	80	27,41,31	Pro Logic, RDS
Kenwood UD-753	800	CD,R,Tu,2T	80	27,41,31	6-disc, Pro-Logic, RDS
Kenwood HD-600	900	CD,R,Tu,T	40	27,40,35	'Audiophile' mini
Kenwood UD-952	1000	CD,R,Tu,2T	70	27,41,31	Dolby Pro Logic
Kenwood HD-1000	1000	CD,R,T	40	27,40,35	MD & equaliser options
Kenwood M-97G	1250	CD,R,V,Tu,2T	85	36,64,38	Dolby Pro Logic

Model	Price	Source	Power	Size	Special
<b>SYSTEMS</b>					
Marantz System-3	750	CD,R,T	45	42,16,31	Basic Slim Series system
Marantz System-1	900	CD,R,T	45	42,77,31	System Link Operation
Marantz System-2	1000	CD,R,T	45	42,77,31	Motorised Front Panel
Marantz The Arch	1500	CD,R	35	-	6-CD, clock, lamp
Nakamichi S'space 7	1495	CD,R	40	-	Multi-CD, aux & tape input
Onkyo L-909	1200	MM,3L,2T	70	-	Component system, 4ohm rated
Panasonic SC-CH32	300	CD,R,2T	20	-	
Panasonic SC-CH33Z	370	CD,R,2T	30	-	
Panasonic SC-CH170	400	CD,R,T	20	18,25,28	51cm wide, including speakers
Panasonic SC-DH80	430	CD,R,2T	5	-	
Philips FW21	300	CD,R,2T	12	26,30,22	
Philips AS44CD	329	CD,R,2T	20	36,38,29	
Philips AS540CD	379	CD,R,2T	40	36,39,29	
Philips FW41	400	CD,R,2T	30	26,30,25	
Philips AS640CD	429	CD,R,2T	30	36,38,29	Five disc CD
Philips FW91	499	CD,R,DCC	60	26,35,26	DCC mini
Philips FS380	499	CD,R,DCC	100	44,50,30	DCC midi
Philips FW370	900	CD,R,DCC	75	36,50,35	DCC midi
Pioneer N-25	299	CD,R,2T	20	-	Double cassette, three-disc CD
Pioneer N-50W	349	CD,R,2T	50	-	One touch Karaoke, smart timer
Pioneer J-200	399	CD,R,2T,Tu	50	-	Mix mixing, five band equaliser
Pioneer N-70W	399	CD,R,2T	70	-	Double auto-reverse cassette,
Pioneer N-70W/M	449	CD,R,2T	70	-	Multi-play version of N-70W
Pioneer N-100W	499	CD,R,2T	100	-	Double auto-reverse cassette,
Pioneer J-300	549	CD,R,2T,Tu	49	-	Single play CD with Smart tune
Pioneer N-100W/M	549	CD,R,2T	100	-	Multi-play version of N-100W
Pioneer J-400M	649	CD,R,2T,Tu	50	-	Six-disc multiplay, Dolby Surr
Pioneer Impresso-3	749	CD,R,T	35	-	Separate components, CD with S
Pioneer J-500	779	CD,R,2T,Tu	65	-	Dolby Surround, seven band equ
Pioneer J-500M	829	CD,R,2T,Tu	65	-	Six-disc multiplay version of
Pioneer J-V600	879	CD,R,2T,Tu	65	-	Dolby Pro Logic A/V system, Mo
Pioneer Impresso-7	899	CD,R,T	45	-	As Impresso 3, with RDS tuner
Pioneer J-700	999	CD,R,2T,Tu	115	-	CD with Stable Platter mechani
Pioneer J-V600LD	1199	CD,R,2T,Tu	65	-	Includes PAL/NTSC LaserDisc pl
Samsung SCM6550	230	CD,R,Tu,2T	5	35,33,29	Mid, remote control
Samsung MAX335	230	CD,R,2T	10	23,30,30	Mini, remote control
Samsung SCM8100	300	CD,R,Tu,2T	20	36,37,26	Mid, remote control
Samsung MAX370	300	CD,R,2T	20	45,32,34	Mini, remote control
Samsung SCM8300	329	CD,R,Tu,2T	20	36,37,30	Mid, equaliser, 5 CD carousel
Samsung SCM9100	430	CD,R,Tu,2T	30	36,47,29	Mid, remote control
Sansui MS6901	420	CD,R,2T	50	18,26,34	
Sanyo SYS 220	300	CD,R,2T	15	36,36,37	
Sanyo MS1	300	CD,R,T	25	22,21,22	
Sanyo DC D10	300	CD,R,2T	15	27,36,32	
Sanyo DC-D15	350	CD,R,2T	15	27,36,32	10 disc CD player
Sanyo DC-D40	400	CD,R,2T	30	27,36,32	10 disc CD player
Sanyo SYS915	430	CD,R,2T	30	36,43,36	Four-disc CD player
Sharp Mini C2400	230	CD,R,2T	10	61,32,31	Remote 3 disc CD changer
Sharp Midi CDR160E	270	CD,R,2T	10	76,40,38	X-bass boost feature
Sharp Mini S3460	300	CD,R,2T	30	63,32,30	3 mode programmed equaliser
Sharp Midi CDR260	300	CD,R,2T	25	76,40,38	3 mode programmed equaliser
Sharp System CD170E	300	CD,R,Tu,2T	10	36,40,36	Remote control, auto-reverse
Sharp System-Q8E	330	CD,R,T	12	15,19,26	Ultra compact
Sharp Mini C4450	350	CD,R,2T	20	63,32,30	3 disc CD changer
Sharp Micro XL12E	399	CD,R,1T	50	48,23,31	
Sharp Mini S6470	399	CD,R,2T	100	63,32,30	
Sony MHC 450	300	CD,T,Tu,2T	20	22,29,27	Remote, double cass deck
Sony MHC 590	330	CD,T,Tu,2T	-	-	Auto reverse
Sony Compact 190	330	CD,R,Tu,2T	9	35,48,34	
Sony MHC 650	380	CD,T,Tu,3T	35	22,28,26	Full remote
Sony Compact 195	380	CD,R,Tu,2T	9	35,49,41	
Sony Compact 290	400	CD,R,Tu,2T	30	35,48,35	
Sony Compact 295	450	CD,R,Tu,2T	30	35,49,41	Full remote
Sony MHC C50CD	500	CD,T,Tu,3T	30	22,33,32	Five-disc CD
Sony MHC 2900	500	CD,T,Tu,3T	40	22,28,26	Electronic EQ
Sony Compact 490	500	CD,R,Tu,2T	40	35,59,36	Five-disc CD
Sony MHC C70CD	600	CD,T,Tu,3T	40	22,39,31	Five-disc CD
Sony Compact Plus 590	600	CD,R,Tu,2T	60	43,48,39	Five-disc CD, electronic EQ
Sony Compact Plus 695A	800	CD,T,Tu,2T	60	-	Full size separates, Dolby P-L
Sony MHC 4900	800	CD,T,Tu,3T	60	22,41,28	
Sony MHC 5900AV	1000	CD,T,Tu,3T	60	22,41,28	UK sound, Dolby Pro Logic
Sony Compact Plus 795A	1000	CD,R,Tu,2T	60	43,48,39	Dolby Pro Logic, Dolby S
Sony Compact Plus 995A	1500	CD,R,Tu,2T	60	43,47,42	Dolby Pro Logic, LaserDisc
Technics SC-CH40	350	CD,R,2T	30	-	
Technics SC-CH510	450	CD,R,Tu,2T	35	27,42,34	Mini, including speakers
Technics SC-CH610	550	CD,R,2T	35	27,42,34	Mini, multi-changer
Technics SC-CH1060	700	CD,R,2T,Tu	40	-	Mini, inc 'air coupling' spkrs
Technics SC-LS10					





Key to tuners  
Price - typical retail, to nearest pound.  
Bands - FM - VHF, stereo and hi-fi capable, M - Medium wave, low quality, mono, L - Long Wave, low quality, mono, N - Nicam digital TV stereo sound.  
Presets - total number of presets on all bands.

RDS - Radio Data System, which provides station IDs and sometimes other data on the FM waveband.  
Size - width x height x depth in cm.

Highlighted products have been tested in *Hi-Fi Choice*. Please refer to The Directory for full test results.



Key to turntables.  
Price - typical retail, to nearest pound.  
Speeds - 33, 45 and/or 78 revolutions per minute.  
Type - A - Auto, that is, automatic play initiation, and arm return at end of side.  
S - Semi, arm lift or arm return at end of side. M - Manual.

Size - width x height x depth in cm.  
Special - Cartridge and/or arm included etc.

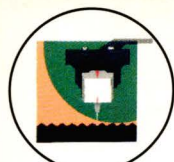
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Model	Price	Bands	Presets	RDS	Size	Special
<b>TUNERS</b>						
Aura TU80	350	FM,M,L	30	N	43,6,27	Chrome finish add £50
AVI S2000MT	599	FM	16	N	31,25,9	R/C via system handset
Day Sequerra FM Ref	5937	FM	-	-	-	
Day-Seq S B'dcast Mon	14640	FM	-	-	-	
Denon TU-260L	120	FM,M,L	20	N	44,8,24	Low impedance output
Denon TU-380RD	190	FM,M	40	N	44,8,24	RDS Radiotext/EON
Goodmans GST650	90	FM,M,L	36	N	-	
Goodmans Delta 700	100	FM,M,L	36	N	36,11,30	
Grundig T210	120	FM,M,L	59	N	-	Manual station name
Grundig Fine Arts T1	130	FM,M,L	59	N	44,9,30	User station name, gain switch
Grundig T310	140	FM,M,L	59	Y	36,8,30	RDS (PS, CT, RT, PTY)
Grundig Fine Arts T2	170	FM,M,L	59	Y	44,9,30	RDS (PS, RT)
Grundig Fine Arts T4	210	FM,M	59	Y	44,9,30	RDS (PS, CT, RT, PTY)
Harman-Kardon TU94000	299	FM,M	24	-	45,8,33	
Harman-Kardon TU96000	499	FM,M	24	-	45,8,33	
JVC FX362BX	130	FM,M,L	40	N	44,8,30	
Kenwood KT-1060L	120	FM,M,L	30	N	44,8,26	Preset scan
Kenwood KT-206CL	140	FM,M,L	30	N	44,8,26	Built-in timer, RDS
Kenwood KT-3050L	170	FM,M,L	39	Y	44,10,28	IF selector, RDS
Kenwood KT-6050	300	FM,M	39	Y	44,10,33	IF switch, two antennae, RDS
Linn Kremlin	1995	FM	80	N	32,8,33	Dual aerial capability
Luxman T-353	200	FM,M	30	N	9,44,36	System bus remote control
Magnum Dynalab FT11	550	FM	-	N	-	Analogue, black finish
Magnum Dynalab FT101	825	FM	-	N	-	Analogue, black finish
Magnum FT101 Eude	1250	FM	-	N	-	Analogue, black finish
Marantz ST-55	150	FM,M,L	59	N	42,10,34	D-bus
Marantz ST-72	300	FM,M,L	59	Y	42,10,34	D-bus, IF switch, local switch
McIntosh MR7083	2095	FM,M	16	N	-	Interface to McIntosh remote c
Meridian 504	625	FM	30	N	33,9,34	System handset
Meridian 604	1350	FM	30	N	-	
Michi RHT-10	895	FM	16	N	47,8,34	Remote control
Mission Cyrus FM7	400	FM	29	N	22,8,36	Remote control bus
Musical Fidelity E50	300	FM	20	N	44,10,34	
Musical Fidelity E500	499	FM	20	N	44,12,35	AGC/IF switch, remote control
Musical Fidelity FT	899	FM	20	N	49,12,33	Remote control, AGC/IF switch
Naim NAT03	549	FM	-	N	43,56,30	
Naim NAT02	998	FM	-	N	43,56,30	
Naim NAT01	1599	FM	-	N	43,56,30	
Nakamichi ST3s	350	FM	30	N	43,7,32	
Onix BWD1	420	FM	-	N	75,23,37	In-house front end
Onkyo T-401	160	FM,MW	40	N	46,8,31	
Onkyo T430RDS	190	FM,MW	30	Y	46,9,30	
Onkyo T-409	230	FM,MW	30	N	28,8,30	Mini component
Onkyo T-450RDS	260	FM,MW	30	Y	46,9,31	
Onkyo T-411RDS	280	FM,MW	30	Y	28,8,30	Mini component
Onkyo R-811RDS	420	FM,MW	30	Y	28,12,33	Mini component, incl timer
Philips FT930	160	FM,M,L	40	Y	44,11,30	
Pioneer F-203RDS	130	FM,M,L	30	Y	42,8,29	RDS at very budget price
Pioneer F-303RDS	180	FM,M	40	Y	42,8,29	RDS with FON
Pioneer F-502RDS	250	FM,M	40	Y	42,9,34	2 ariel inputs
Quad FM4	434	FM	7	N	33,7,21	
Quad FM66	532	FM	19	N	33,8,26	For use with Quad 66 system
Rotel RT-950BX	220	FM,M,L	20	N	44,8,24	
Rotel RT-990BX	500	FM	16	N	44,8,29	Remote control
Sansui TU-X317	170	FM,M	20	-	-	
Sansui TU-X519	220	FM,M	30	-	-	
Sherwood TD1120	90	FM,M	24	N	-	
Sherwood TX1010C	100	FM,M	30	N	-	
Sherwood TX3010C	120	FM,M	30	N	-	
Sony STS211LB	130	FM,M,L	30	N	43,9,30	Station naming
Sony STS311LB	200	FM,M,L	30	Y	43,9,30	RDS EON, 'Autobetical' select
Sony STS505ES	250	FM,M,L	30	Y	43,9,35	UK optimised sound
Teac T-X4030	120	FM,M	20	N	44,9,28	
Technics ST-6T350L	140	FM,M,L	30	N	43,7,30	Remote control capable
Technics ST-GT550L	190	FM,M,L	39	Y	43,7,31	Remote control capable, RDS
Technics ST-GT650L	230	FM,M,L	39	Y	43,10,31	Class AA, remote control ready
Yamaha TX-480L	139	FM,M,L	40	N	44,9,30	
Yamaha TX-580RDS	199	FM,M	40	Y	44,9,30	

Model	Price	Type	Speeds	Size	Special
<b>TURNTABLES</b>					
Dual CS3700/3701	85	S	33/45	36,10,36	Mid-sized turntable
Dual CS435	130	F	33/45	44,12,36	Turntable includes cartridge
Dual CS503-2	170	S	33/45	44,13,37	Turntable includes cartridge
Dual 505-4 UK	200	S	33/45	44,15,37	Turntable inc cartridge
Dual CS750-1	350	S	33/45/78	44,14,38	Turntable includes cartridge
Dual Golden II	500	S	33/45/78	44,14,38	Plano finish CS750-1
Genexxa Lab-710	60	M	33/45	-	Includes MM cartridge
Genexxa Lab-810	70	S	33/45	-	Includes MM cartridge
Goodmans Delta 700	55	S	33/45	36,90,37	Part of Delta system
Grundig TT1	180	AUTO	33/45	-	Black finish
Kenwood KD-492F	100	A	33/45	44,10,39	Includes cartridge
Kuzma Stabi/PS	1200	M	33/45	51, 18, 4	Belt driven, external PSU
Kuzma Stabi Ref/PS	3000	M	33/45	-	Two motor, belt driven
Linn Basik	349	M	33/45	45,14,36	Complete with Akito arm
Linn LP12 Basik	745	M	33	45,14,36	Non-crystal motor drive
Linn LP12 Valhalla	894	M	33/45	45,14,36	Electronic PSU, upgradable
Linn LP12 Lingo	1345	M	33/45	45,14,36	Outboard high grade PSU
Manticore Madrigal	570	M	33/45	46,36,12	Turntable, lifetime guarantee
Manticore Mantra	890	M	33/45	46,14,34	Turntable, lifetime guarantee
Manticore Magister	3800	M	33/45	57,46,18	Special order only
Michell Mycro	397	M	33/45	46,14,34	
Michell Mycro/arm	539	M	33/45	46,14,34	Includes Rega RB300 arm
Michell Gyrodek	765	M	33/45	53,19,41	Optional outboard PSU
Michell Gyrodek/arm	907	M	33/45	53,19,41	Includes Rega RB300 arm
Michell ORBE	1950	M	33/45	55,29,71	Inc OC power supply
Moth Alamo	175	M	33/45	-	Comes with RB250 arm
Moth Turntable	199	M	33/45	-	Split-plinth design
Moth Kanoot Mk I Arm	249	M	33/45	-	Inc Rega RB250 arm
Moth Kanoot Mk III Arm	299	M	33/45	-	Inc Rega RB300 arm
NAD 5120	129	S	33/45	-	Includes arm
N'ham Spacedeck	600	M	33,45	-	
N'ham Illusion	600	M	33,45	-	
N'ham HyperSpacedeck	1200	M	33,45	-	
N'ham Graphic	1200	M	33,45	-	
N'ham Mentor	2200	M	33,45	-	75lb alloy or graphite platter
N'ham Mentor Ref	4800	M	33,45	-	150lb platter, graphite top
Origin Live Oasis-S	899	M	33	-	Suspended turntable
Pink Triangle PT Export	948	M	33/45	46,15,37	Suspended turntable, acrylic
Pink Triangle Anniversary	1797	M	33/45	45,15,37	Two box reference deck
Pink Triangle Anni/DC PSU	2173	M	33/45	45,15,37	Battery PSU version of above
Pioneer PL-225	120	S	33/45	42,10,36	Belt drive, fitted cartridge
Pioneer PL-335	150	A	33/45	42,10,36	Belt drive, fitted cartridge
Pro-ject 0.5	145	S	33/45	42, 11, 3	With Ortofon OM5 cartridge
Pro-ject 1	185	M	33/45	42, 11, 3	With Ortofon 510 cartridge
Pro-ject 1 (E)	209	S	33,45	42,11,32	Semi-auto version of Pro-ject
Pro-ject 2	249	M	33/45	46, 12, 3	Metal/glass platter, clamp
Pro-ject 2/Ortofon	275	M	33/45	46, 12, 3	With Ortofon MC1 cartridge
Pro-ject 6	379	M	33/45	46, 17, 3	Suspended turntable
Pro-ject 6/Ortofon	435	M	33/45	46, 17, 3	As above, with Ortofon MC15
Pro-ject 6/Sumiko	699	M	33/45	46,17,3	With Sumiko arm
Rega Planar 78	198	M	78	45,13,37	As Rega Planar 2, 78 only
Rega Planar 2	198	M	33/45	45,13,37	Includes RB250 arm
Rega Planar 3	260	M	33/45	45,13,37	Includes RB300 arm
Rivelin Audio Eclipse	1595	M	33/45	45,13,38	Motor unit
Roksan Radius	595	M	33/45	45,12,35	Motor unit
Roksan Radius/Tabriz	795	M	33/45	45,12,36	As above, with Roksan arm
Roksan Radius/Tabriz zi	895	M	33/45	45,12,35	
Roksan TMS	2475	M	33/45	45,12,35	Suede block
Roksan TMS	2750	M	33/45	45,12,35	Black lacquer
Sherwood PS1870	70	S	33/45	-	Budget turntable with arm
SME Model 20	2950	M	33/45/78	42,16,32	Precision turntable
SME Model 20A	4244	M	33/45/78	42,15,32	As above, with SME Series V ar
SME Model 30	10166	M	78	45,22,35	Flagship turntable
SME Model 30A	11460	M	33/45/78	45,22,35	As above, with SME Series V ar
Sony PSLX150H	90	S	33/45	43,10,36	Player, with MM cartridge
Sony PSLX431B	150	A	33/45	43,11,36	Player, auto rec size select
Systemdek I/920	136	M	33/45	-	Semi-suspended deck
Systemdek IIX/900	230	M	33/45	-	Fully suspended design
Systemdek I/920/Moth	235	M	33/45	-	As above with RB250 arm
Systemdek IIXE/900	330	M	33/45	-	As above with separate PSU
Technics SL-BD20	140	S	33/45	43,10,38	Belt drive, includes T4P cartr
Technics SL-BD22	160	S	33/45	43,10,38	Belt drive, includes T4P cartr
Technics SL-1210MkII	450	M	33/45	46,17,36	Quartz DD, no cartridge
Technics SL-1200MkII	450	M	33/45	43,10,38	Quartz DD, includes T4P cartri
Thorens TD-180/AT91	180	S	33/45	-	Belt drive
Thorens TD180/S500	200	P	33/45/78	-	Belt drive, plays 78s
Thorens TD-280 IV/UK	200	S	33/45	-	Electronic belt drive, AT95E
Thorens TD-166 VI/UK/BC	200	M	33/45	-	Blank armboard, cut to shape,
Thorens TD-166 VI/UK/AT95E270	300	M	33/45	-	Inc TP50 manual arm, AT95E
Thorens TD-166 VI/UK/Rega	300	M	33/45	-	With Rega RB250 arm, no cart
Thorens TD-3001BC	630	M	33/45	-	No arm, various armboards avai
Thorens TD-2001	700	S	33/45	-	Includes Thorens TP90 arm, no
Thorens TD-3001/UK	770	M	33/45	-	Suspended, Rega arm no cart
Thorens TD-520	900	S	33/45/78	-	Pitch control, no arm
Townshend MkIII Rock	799	M	33/45	-	Headshell end arm damping

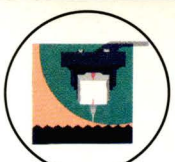
Model	Price	Type	Speeds	Size	Special
<b>TURNTABLES</b>					
Akai AP A950	179	M	33/45	44,12,35	Inc cartridge
Alphason Sonata	835	M	33	-	Motor unit, suspended
Alphason Sonata/Atlas	1235	M	33/45	-	Motor unit inc PSU
Alphason Symphony	1860	M	33/45	-	Motor unit & PSU
Ariston Pro-1200	160	M	33/45	-	Semi-pro disco deck
Audiomeca Romance	1675	M	33/45	-	With Romeo unipivot arm
Audiomeca J1	2500	M	33/45	50, 40, 2	Top of the range model
Audiomeca J1/SL5	4250	M	33/45	50, 40, 2	With parallel tracking arm
B&O 7000	555	Auto	33/45	42,8,33	Inc MMC2 cartridge, RIAA pream
Basis Ovation II	4800	M	33/45	58,42,14	Lead/brass, record clamped
Basis Debut Gold Std III	7200	M	33/45	58,42,19	Belt drive, high mass, four po
Basis Debut Gold Vacuum	9250	M	33/45	58,42,19	Includes suction platter
DNM Rota 1	2850	M	33/45	59,14,37	Includes arm and cartridge
DNM Rota 2	4000	M	33/45	59,14,37	Includes arm and cartridge

Highlighted listings (as shown below) are covered in the *Hi-Fi Choice* Directory.  
Systemdek I/920 136 M 33/45 - Semi-suspended deck



Key to cartridges.  
Price - typical retail, to nearest pound.  
Type - MM - moving magnet (output typically 1mV/cm/sec), MC - moving coil (output typically 0.5mV/cm/sec).  
Output - in mV/cm/sec  
Int. stylus - Y for removable/replaceable styli and N for fixed styli.

Fit - N for normal half inch mountings, T for T4P plug in types.  
Weight - in grams.  
Highlighted products have been tested in *Hi-Fi Choice*. Please refer to The Directory for full test results.



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Model	Price	Type	Speeds	Size	Special
<b>TURNABLES</b>					
Voyd The	1570	M	33/45	51,16,42	Original three-motor model
Voyd 0.5	3940	M	33/45	51,16,42	Upgraded standard Voyd
Voyd Reference	6500	M	33/45	51,16,48	Turntable, polycarbonate platt
Well T Record Player	1800	M	33/45	45,18,36	Unique arm & bearing
Well Tempered Classic	2800	M	33/45	48,19,39	The original Well Tempered
Well Tempered Super	3500	M	33/45	49,19,39	Classic with carbon arm
Well Tempered Reference	5000	M	33/45	49,19,39	*Fountainhead* base/carbon arm
Wilson Benesch	1550	M	33/45	-	High-tech turntable

Model	Price	Type	Output	Int. stylus	Fit	Weight	Special
<b>CARTRIDGES</b>							
London Decca Maroon	199	MM	5.0mV	N	N	8	Spherical stylus
London Decca Gold	239	MM	5.0mV	N	N	8	Elliptical stylus
London Decca Maroon Dp	259	MM	5.0mV	N	N	10	Decapod mounting
London Decca Gold Dpd	299	MM	5.0mV	N	N	5	Elliptical stylus, Decapod
London Decca S Gold	339	MM	5.0mV	N	N	7	Line contact stylus
London Decca S Gold Dp	399	MM	5.0mV	N	N	10	Decapod mounting
London Decca Jubilee	999	MM	5.0mV	N	N	5	Line contact, 0.5 inch mount
Lyra Lydian	649	MC	-	Y	N	-	
Lyra Clavis Da Capo	995	MC	Low	N	N	-	
Lyra Parnassus	1995	MC	-	Y	N	-	
Milltek Aurora	299	MC	2.0mV	N	N	9.5	High output MC
Milltek Olympia	399	MC	2.0mV	N	N	9.5	As Aurora, sapphire cantilever
Nagaoka MP-11	24	MM	-	Y	N	-	Elliptical stylus
Nagaoka TS11	70	MM	-	Y	N	-	Line contact stylus
Nagaoka TS12 Boron	80	MM	-	Y	N	-	As MP-11, with boron cantilever
N'ham Tracer I	98	MM	-	-	-	-	
N'ham Tracer II	175	MM	-	-	-	-	
N'ham Tracer III	350	MM	-	-	-	-	
N'ham Tracer IV	550	MM	-	-	N	-	
Ortofon VMS2	10	MM	5	Y	N	-	Entry level elliptical cart
Ortofon OM-5E	16	MM	-	Y	N	-	
Ortofon OMP-5E	17	MC	4	Y	T	-	
Ortofon OM Pro S	21	MM	5	Y	N	-	Budget disco cartridge
Ortofon OM10 Super	25	MM	4	Y	N	-	Elliptical stylus
Ortofon OM Night Club S	32	MM	6	Y	N	-	Spherical stylus
Ortofon 510/P	32	MM	3	Y	N	-	
Ortofon OM Night Club E	37	MM	6	Y	N	-	Elliptical stylus
Ortofon Concord Pro S	40	MM	5	Y	N	-	Pro use, inc headshell
Ortofon Concord NC S	55	MM	6	Y	N	-	Pro use, inc headshell
Ortofon 520/P	55	MM	3	Y	N	-	Elliptical stylus
Ortofon OM20 Super	60	MM	4	Y	N	-	
Ortofon MC1 Turbo	60	MC	3.3	Y	N	-	
Ortofon Concord NC E	60	MM	6	Y	N	-	Spherical version of Concord
Ortofon OM30 Super	80	MM	4	Y	N	-	Fine line stylus
Ortofon MC10 Super	85	MC	0.3	N	N	-	
Ortofon 530/P	85	MM	3	Y	T	-	T4P fit
Ortofon MC3 Turbo	110	MC	3.3	N	N	-	
Ortofon MC15 Super II	110	MC	0.35	N	N	-	
Ortofon 540/P	110	MM	3	Y	N	-	
Ortofon MC25E	160	MC	0.5	N	N	-	High output, elliptical stylus
Ortofon MC25FL	210	MC	0.5	N	N	-	High output, Fine Line stylus
Ortofon MC10 Supreme	250	MC	0.5	N	N	-	High output MC
Ortofon MC20 Supreme	350	MC	0.5	N	N	-	High-output elliptical MC
Ortofon MC30 Supreme	450	MC	0.5	N	N	-	High output
Ortofon MC2000II	650	MC	0.12	N	N	-	
Ortofon MC3000II	950	MC	0.12	N	N	-	'Replicant' stylus
Ortofon MC5000	1500	MC	0.12	N	N	-	Sapphire cantilever
Ortofon MC7500	2000	MC	0.13	N	N	-	75th Anniversary model
Pickering TE-15	20	MM	-	Y	N	-	Tracks 1.5gm
Pickering VE-15	25	MM	-	Y	N	-	Tracks 1 - 3gms
Pickering T-E	25	MM	-	Y	T	-	Elliptical
Pickering V15-DJ	28	MM	-	Y	N	-	Disco model
Pickering TL-E	35	MM	-	Y	T	-	
Pickering XV15-350C	40	MM	-	Y	N	-	Conical stylus
Pickering TL-2E	45	MM	-	Y	T	-	
Pickering XV15-625E	50	MM	-	Y	N	-	
Pickering XV15-150-DJ	50	MM	-	Y	N	-	Professional cartridge
Pickering TL-2-S	55	MM	-	Y	N	-	Line contact stylus
Pickering XV15-757S	60	MM	-	Y	N	-	Line contact stylus
Pickering XV15-625DJ	60	MM	-	Y	N	-	Broadcast cartridge
Pickering XV15-1800S	70	MM	-	Y	N	-	Line contact stylus
Pickering TL3S	80	MM	-	Y	T	-	
Pickering XEV-3001E	95	MM	-	Y	N	-	Elliptical stylus
Pickering XLZ-3500	100	MM	-	Y	N	-	
Pickering TL-4-S	100	MM	-	Y	T	-	
Pickering TL-3003	145	MM	-	Y	T	-	
Pickering XLZ-4500	150	MM	-	Y	N	-	Line contact
Pickering TL-4004	175	MM	-	Y	T	-	
Pickering XSV-5000Q	200	MM	-	Y	N	-	High output
Pickering XLZ-7500	200	MM	-	Y	N	-	Hybrid, low impedance
Pickering TLZ-7500-S	200	MM	-	Y	T	-	
Rega Bias	34	MM	-	-	N	-	
Rega RB78	34	MM	-	-	N	-	for 78rpm records
Rega Super Bias	52	MM	-	-	N	-	
Rega Elys	74	MM	-	-	N	-	3-point fixing
Roksan Corus Black	130	MM	6.5mV	Y	N	-	
Roksan Shiraz	975	MC	0.2mV	N	N	-	3-pt generator mount, no glues
Shure ME70B	18	MM	6mV	Y	N	-	Conical stylus
Shure M92E	22	MM	5mV	Y	-	-	Dual T4P & normal fit
Shure SC35C	28	MM	5mV	Y	N	-	For broadcast use
Shure M44C	33	MM	9mV	Y	N	-	Professional, spherical stylus
Shure ME95ED	38	MM	5mV	Y	N	-	Elliptical stylus
Shure M55E	42	MM	6mV	Y	N	-	Professional, spherical stylus
Shure M104E	44	MM	5mV	Y	-	-	DualT4P & normal fit
Shure ME97HE	60	MM	4mV	Y	N	-	Hyper elliptical stylus
Shure M110HE	74	MM	4mV	Y	-	-	Dual T4P & normal fit
Shure V15V-MR	265	MM	3mV	Y	N	-	Micro ridge stylus

Model	Price	Type	Output	Int. stylus	Fit	Weight	Special
<b>CARTRIDGES</b>							
Arcam C77	30	MM	4mV	Y	N	-	Conical stylus
Arcam C77MG	40	MM	4mV	Y	N	-	As C77 with metal body
Arcam E77	50	MM	4mV	Y	N	-	Elliptical stylus
Arcam E77MG	60	MM	4mV	Y	N	-	As E77, with metal body
Arcam P77	63	MM	4mV	Y	N	-	'Profiled' stylus
Arcam P77MG	73	MM	4mV	Y	N	-	As P77, with metal body
Audio Note lo IIV	1395	MC	-	N	N	-	Silver wired
Audio Note lo Ltd V	2950	MC	-	N	N	-	Needs PSU
Audio Technica AT-91	13	MM	2.8	Y	N	-	
Audio Technica AT-95E	19	MM	2.8	Y	N	-	
Audio Technica AT-110E	24	MM	3.8	Y	N	-	
Audio Technica AT-OC5	146	MC	0.4	N	N	-	
Audio Technica AT-OC9	245	MC	0.38	N	N	-	
Audio Technica AT-OC30	619	MC	0.4	N	N	-	Nude micro linear stylus
Audio Technica ART-1	944	MC	0.4	N	N	-	
Audioquest MC5	250	MC	1.4mV	N	N	-	High output MC, line contact
Audioquest 404L	599	MC	0.5mV	N	N	-	Boron cantilever
Audioquest 404MH	899	MC	1.4	N	N	-	Boron cantilever
Audioquest 7000NSX	1495	MC	0.4	N	N	-	Boron tube, silver coils
B&O MMC4	1	-	-	-	-	-	MM, elliptical diamond
B&O MMC2	1	-	-	-	-	-	MM, Contact Line stylus
B&O MMC1	1	-	-	-	-	-	MM, Contact Line stylus
Benz-Micro The Glider	600	MC	1mV	N	N	-	Semi-nude design
Benz-Micro H200	700	MC	2mV	N	N	-	
Benz-Micro M090	700	MC	0.9mV	N	N	-	
Benz-Micro L040	700	MC	0.4mV	N	N	-	
Benz-Micro Wood Ref	1100	MC	0.3mV	N	N	-	Bryure housing, boron
Benz-Micro Ruby Ref	1400	MC	0.3mV	N	N	-	Bryure housing boron
Denon DL110	70	MC	-	N	N	-	Elliptical stylus
Denon DL160	90	MC	-	N	N	-	
Denon DL103	100	MC	-	N	N	-	
Denon DL304	200	MC	-	N	N	-	Elliptical stylus
Dynavector 50X	159	MC	2	Y	N	-	High output, exchange scheme
Dynavector 10X	189	MC	2	N	N	-	High output, exchange scheme
Dynavector 23RS	375	MC	0.15	N	N	-	Jewel cantilever, exchange
Dynavector 1702	450	MC	0.15	N	N	-	Jewel cantilever, exchange
Dynavector XX-1L	998	MC	2	N	N	-	High output, exchange scheme
Dynavector XX-1	998	MC	2	N	N	-	High output, exchange scheme
Goldring Elan P	17	MM	5.0mV	Y	T	6	T4P version of Elan
Goldring Elan	17	MM	5.0mV	Y	N	4	Rigid body
Goldring Elektra	25	MM	5.0mV	Y	N	4	Elliptical stylus
Goldring 1006	50	MM	6.5mV	Y	N	6	Elliptical stylus
Goldring 1012GX	65	MM	6.5mV	Y	N	6	Gyger II stylus
Goldring 1022GX	85	MM	6.5mV	Y	N	6	Gyger I stylus
Goldring Eroica LX	100	MC	0.5mV	N	N	6	As Eroica, low output
Goldring Eroica	100	MC	2.5	N	N	6	Gyger II stylus
Goldring 1042	105	MM	6.5mV	Y	N	6	Gyger S stylus
Goldring Elite	200	MC	0.5mV	N	N	6	van den Hul, silver wire
Grado ZTE+1	27	MM	-	Y	N	-	Moving flux, high output
Grado ZCE+1	37	MM	-	Y	N	-	Moving flux
Grado Z3E+1	47	MM	-	Y	N	-	Moving flux
Grado ZF1+	82	MM	-	Y	N	-	Moving flux
Grado Signature Junior	149	MM	-	Y	N	-	Moving flux
Grado Signature BMZ	250	MM	-	Y	N	-	Moving flux
Grado Signature MCZ	375	MM	-	Y	N	-	Moving flux
Grado Signature TLZ	650	MM	-	Y	N	-	Moving flux
Grado Signature XTZ	975	MM	-	Y	N	-	Moving flux
Kiseki Blue GS	499	MC	0.4mV	N	N	8	
Kiseki Purpleheart	749	MC	0.4mV	N	N	11	
Kiseki PHS	899	MC	0.4mV	N	N	8	
Kiseki Blackheart	1995	MC	0.3mV	N	N	11	
Kiseki Lapis Lazuli	5000	MC	0.4mV	N	N	8	Gemstone body
Koetsu Red T	1550	MC	-	N	N	-	High-output MC
Koetsu Red K Sig	1998	MC	-	N	N	-	Selected, re-tuned Red T
Koetsu Urushi	2297	MC	-	N	N	-	Metal alloy body
Koetsu Signature	3218	MC	-	N	N	-	Rosewood body
Linn K5	54	MM	4.5mV	Y	N	-	
Linn K9	109	MM	4.5mV	Y	N		



Key to tonearms  
Price - typical retail to the nearest pound  
Type - F - fixed armtube/headshell, A - interchangeable armtube, H - interchangeable headshell.  
Base type - S - SME fit, L - Linn/Alphason fit, P - proprietary fit.  
Effective length - from pivot point to headshell in millimetres.

Weight range - the range of cartridge masses that the arm can accept in grams.  
Special - characteristics of the arm.  
Highlighted products have been tested in *Hi-Fi Choice*. Please refer to The Directory for full test results.

Model	Price	Type	Output	Int. stylus	Fit	Weight	Special
<b>CARTRIDGES</b>							
Stanton 500EL	34	MM	-	Y	N	-	Elliptical stylus
Stanton 500AL II	34	MM	-	Y	N	-	Spherical stylus
Stanton 680AL/X	50	MM	-	Y	N	-	Spherical stylus
Stanton 680EL/X	56	MM	-	Y	N	-	Elliptical stylus
Stanton 890AL/X	82	MM	-	Y	N	-	Professional cartridge
Sumiko Oyster	30	MM	-	Y	N	-	
Sumiko Black Pearl	50	MM	-	Y	N	-	
Sumiko Pearl	70	MM	-	Y	N	-	
Sumiko Blue Point	100	MC	-	N	N	-	High output MC
Sumiko BPS	250	MC	-	N	N	-	Nude stylus
Transfiguration AF-1 Mk II	1595	MC	230uV	N	N	-	MC, transformer & preamp
Transfiguration Supreme	1995	MC	200uV	N	N	-	Yokeless ring magnet system
van den Hul MM-1	260	MM	5.5mV	Y	N	-	
van den Hul MM-2	299	MM	5.5mV	Y	N	-	
van den Hul DDT-II	699	MC	0.4mV	N	N	-	Silver coils
van den Hul MC-0	799	MC	0.4mV	N	N	-	Silver coils
van den Hul MC-One	999	MC	-	N	N	-	Selected version of MC-10
van den Hul MC-One/Hi	1149	MC	-	N	N	-	High output version of MC-1
van den Hul MC-two	1349	MC	-	N	N	-	As MC-One/Hi, higher output
vdH Grasshopper IIISLA	2200	MC	-	N	N	-	Silver coils, Alnico magnet
vdH Grasshopper IIISLN	2200	MC	-	N	N	-	Silver coils, Neodymium magnet
vdH Grasshopper IIICMN	2750	MC	-	N	N	-	Copper coils, medium output
vdH Grasshopper IIIGLN	2999	MC	-	N	N	-	Gold coils, Neodymium magnet
vdH Grasshopper IIIGLA	2999	MC	-	N	N	-	Gold coils, Alnico magnet
vdH Grasshopper IIICHN	3400	MC	-	N	N	-	Copper coils, high output
van den Hul Type IVGLA	3450	MC	-	N	N	-	Silver coils, Alnico magnet
Virtual Reality Aciore	199	MC	-	N	N	-	
Virtual Reality Etile	299	MC	-	N	N	-	
Virtual Reality Leve	899	MC	-	N	N	-	

Model	Price	Type	Base type	Effective len	Wt. range	Special
<b>TONEARMS</b>						
Air Tangent Tangent 10B	6900	-	-	-	-	Air-bearing
Air Tan Tangent Ref. Sig.	11000	-	-	-	-	Remote version of above
Alphason Xenon	286	F	L	229	3-20	1-piece titanium armtube
Alphason Xenon MCS	370	F	L	229	3-20	vdH silver wiring
Alphason HR100S	490	F	L	229	3-20	Superior quality bearing
Alphason HR100S MCS	550	F	L	229	3-20	vdH silver, top bearings
Audiomeca SL5	1999	-	-	-	-	Parallel tracking
Decca LI Arm	49	H	L	212	5-12	Damped
Decca LIR Arm	99	H	L	212	5-12	Rewired version of LI
Dynavector 507	1400	-	-	-	-	Biaxial design
Graham 1.5T	2550	-	S	-	-	SME base, unipivot
Helius Orion 4 Copper	495	P	P	254	-	
Helius Orion 4 Silver	645	P	P	254	-	
Helius Cyalene 2	1495	P	P	254	-	Silver wired, pivoted
Kuzma Stogi	600	-	-	-	-	Effective mass 13gm
Kuzma Stogi Ref	1000	-	-	-	-	Effective mass 12.5gm
Linn Akito	209	F	L	229	2-10	Statically balanced
Linn Ekos	1297	F	L	229	4-9	Dynamically balanced
Mantecore Musician	395	F	L	230	-	Handmade, lifetime guarantee
Mantecore Magician1	695	F	L	230	-	Polished armtube finish
Mantecore Magician2	795	F	L	305	-	Polished armtube finish
Moth Arm	95	-	-	-	-	Rebadged Rega RB250
Moth Mk III	146	-	-	-	-	Rebadged Rega RB300
Naim ARO	963	-	-	-	-	Unipivot
N'ham Space	350	-	-	-	-	Optional silver wiring, unipiv
N'ham Mentor	750	-	-	-	-	Silver wiring, unipiv
N'ham Alien	1200	-	-	-	-	Graphite tube, unipivot
Rega RB250	95	F	R	237	-	Scaled down RB300
Rega RB300	139	F	R	237	-	Pivoted arm
Roksan Tabriz	275	F	P	240	9-12	Upgradable
Roksan Tabriz ZI	396	F	P	240	5-12	'Intelligent' counterweight
Roksan Artemiz	895	F	P	240	5-14	Flagship arm, new style
SME Series IIS	242	A	S	233	0-12	Economy version of Series III
SME 3009 Ser II Imp	268	F	S	231	3-7	Fixed headshell, low mass
SME 3009 S2 Ser II Imp	292	H	S	231	3-8	Detachable headshell, medium m
SME Series III	335	A	S	233	0-13	Ultra-low mass for hi-complan
SME Series II 3009-R	445	H	S	233	0-28	Heavier version of Ser II S2 I
SME Series II 3010-R	455	H	S	239	0-25	Detachable headshell, 10 inch
SME Series II 3012-R	489	H	S	308	0-25	Detachable headshell, 12 inch
SME Series 300 309	597	H	S	232	6-17	Ser V derivative with detach h
SME Series 300-310	611	H	S	238	6-17	10 inch (nom) version of 300-3
SME Series 300-312	694	H	S	308	5-14	12 inch (nom) version of 300-3
SME Series IV	869	F	S	233	5-16	Economy version of Series V
SME Series V	1294	F	S	233	0-14	Flagship model
Townshend Excalibur	799	F	P	220	3-14	Outrigger headshell damping
Wheaton Tri-Planar 4	2750	-	-	-	-	With terminal box
Wheaton Tri-Planar 4C	3000	-	-	-	-	As above with Cardas cable
Wilson Benesch ACT1	975	-	-	-	-	Carbon-fibre armtube, unipivot
Zeta	469	-	-	-	-	Pivoted
Zeta	555	-	-	-	-	Pivoted, vdH wired

Highlighted listings (as shown below) are covered in the *Hi-Fi Choice Directory*.

SME Series V	1232	F	S	233	0-14	Flagship model
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VA80*	£199.90
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PMA450SE*	£249.90
PMA480R*	£199.90

#### KENWOOD

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KA3020*	£149.90
KA5040R*	£214.90

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#### NAKAMICHI

IA4	£199.90
-----	---------

#### PIONEER

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A300X	£189.90
A400X	£299.90

#### ROTEL

RA930AX II	£149.90
RA930BX	£199.90
RA935BX II	£249.90
RA970BX	£299.90
RC970BX II	£174.90
RB970BX II	£224.90

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#### TECHNICS

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SUA700 II*	£249.90
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AX470*	£219.90
AX570*	£269.90
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#### AURA

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#### DENON

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### TURNTABLES

#### TECHNICS

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SLBD22	£149.90
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#### THORENS

TD180*	£159.90
TD166 VI*	£239.90
TD166 VI REGA*	£269.90
TD280*	£179.90

## CLEARANCE BARGAINS

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#### HARMON KARDON

HK6550	£429.90	£289.90
HK1200	£279.90	£199.90
HD7450	£299.90	£199.90
TD4200	£279.90	£199.90
HK3300	£379.90	£199.90

#### AIWA

ADF850	£229.90	£199.90
XKS7000*	£549.95	£399.90
XKS9000*	£699.90	£479.90

#### ROTEL

RA940BX	£249.90	£189.90
RA960BX	£299.90	£254.90
RCD955AX	£279.90	£199.90
RA935BX	£199.90	£149.90
RA980BX	£439.90	£319.90

normal CLEARANCE  
price PRICE

#### KENWOOD

KRV6060	£349.90	£279.90
DP7050	£349.90	£259.90
UD502	£499.90	£419.90
UD552	£549.90	£469.90
UD751M	£749.90	£619.90
UD952	£999.90	£829.90
M97G	£1249.90	£999.90

#### NAKAMICHI

REC3	£369.90	£199.90
IA3	£349.90	£199.90

#### SONY

TAHV570	£399.90	£319.90
TAHV670	£679.90	£549.90
ST730ES	£349.90	£219.90
ST570ES	£229.90	£169.90

### CASSETTE DECKS

#### DENON

DRM540	£159.90
DRS640	£199.90
DRM740	£259.90
DRS840	£299.90
DRW760	£249.90

#### KENWOOD

KX3050*	£129.90
KXW6060*	£159.90
KXW8060	£259.90

#### NAKAMICHI

DR1	£849.90
DR2	£599.90
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TCK511*	£199.90
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### CD PLAYERS

#### AURA

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#### DENON

DCD315	£149.90
DCD615	£179.90
DCD1015	£349.90
DCD825	£219.90

#### HARMON KARDON

FL8400*	£299.90
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#### MARANTZ

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CD63SE	£349.90

#### PIONEER

PD203	£159.90
PDS503*	£164.90
PDS703	£249.90

#### ROTEL

RCD930AX	£199.90
RCD940BX	£249.90
RCD970BX	£349.90

#### SONY

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CDPX303ES*	£459.90

#### TECHNICS

SLPG560*	£149.90
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#### B&W

2001*	£79.90
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AM3 11	£499.90
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# The DIRECTORY



*The original and best review based hi-fi guide*

**This is the legendary Directory, the second part of the *Hi-Fi Choice Buyer's Guide*, based entirely on comprehensive technical and subjective reviews. Each entry carries the weight of our exhaustive test procedures and should be read in conjunction with the prices and specifications given in our index starting on page 91.**

The *Hi-Fi Choice Directory* was conceived as a reference guide to all the audio products reviewed by *Choice* that are currently available. The products are split into categories, each with its own introduction containing information about the product type and its applications. They are particularly relevant to the uninitiated first time buyer and help sort out the order of priorities when buying a piece of equipment.

Each product along with its current retail price is placed in its respective category in alphabetical order. The prices of the products are updated on a

regular basis, although it should be noted that our value ratings are based on the product's price at the time of review.

### Sound quality

This column contains the ratings for the standard achieved in our listening tests. The sound quality ratings range from Poor to Excellent. Their meaning and order are as follows:

P	POOR
A-	AVERAGE-
A	AVERAGE
A+	AVERAGE+
G-	GOOD-
G	GOOD
G+	GOOD+
VG	VERY GOOD
E	EXCELLENT

With P being the worst and E the best rating within a section.

One important point to remember is that these cannot be used to compare products from different categories. For example, a cassette deck rated Excellent in sound quality will not usually offer the same

## Finding that component

**Before you shop, follow our top eight tips for better buying:**

1. Check out the components' recommended retail prices in the *Directory*.
2. Find out as much as you can about the products you want by reading *Hi-Fi Choice's* reviews and lab tests.
3. Visit local dealers that stock some of the brands you want to hear and try to find one that seems sympathetic to your needs.
4. Don't discount a dealer's suggestions just because the products don't have rave reviews.
5. Take your own software (records, CDs, tapes) along for a demonstration of the equipment that the dealer recommends.
6. Listen at the sort of volume you would normally use at home — systems often sound more impressive when played loud.
7. If you are unsure about something or want to hear an alternative, just ask.
8. Audition a system for a reasonable amount of time, say three quarters of an hour or so, before making a decision.

standard of fidelity as a similarly rated turntable or CD player.

Unless you have first generation masters of course.

### Comments

The Comments column contains a potted summary based on the original review, emphasising the salient points of a product's character and sonic performance. The space available doesn't allow for great detail but we have attempted to put across the essence of the review.

Obviously, important information on compatibility or auxiliary equipment used in the test cannot be included, and we would advise you to refer to the original review for this.

Please note that these comments are those of our own reviewers and not, as is the case with some magazines, those of the manufacturer.

### Features

Product features are shown with a combination of figures and blob charts, with headings at the top of each column indicating the appropriate category, a blob

indicating the existence of a particular feature.

There are different headings for each section and the more complicated categories are explained in the individual introductions. Where figures are used the unit of measurement is shown in the heading.

### Back issues

The final column refers to the issue of *Hi-Fi Choice* which featured the complete review.

## How to use this guide

Perhaps the most influential symbols in the *Directory* are the little red triangles ▲ found in the value column at the beginning of each entry where appropriate.

Products that make the grade are awarded the Best Buy or Recommended accolade.

▲▲ A product carrying the Best Buy swingtag is of excellent quality and good value for money in its price category.

▲ Recommended products are runners up, but still definitely worth considering within their price bands.

Please note however, that an expensive Recommended product will nearly always sound better than an inexpensive Best Buy.

An ideal situation would be to choose suitably priced ▲▲ Best Buy or ▲ Recommended products from relevant categories and create a Best Buy system. However, due to the variety in tonal balance that exists in many audio products, and differences in taste, system building is unfortunately not that simple. These ratings make a useful guideline for shortlisting components, but only experiencing the actual combination will tell you whether it works for you.

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# Amplifiers

The amplifier sits at the heart of the system, processing the outputs from all the various music sources as necessary and then driving the loudspeakers. These two (quite separate) functions are integrated into a single box at the low-to-middle price points; separated pre- and power amplifiers, even separate power supplies, become increasingly common as one moves upmarket.

There is a substantial difference between specialist (sound quality oriented) amplifiers and the consumer electronics style models. The former are bleakly simple, avoiding all unnecessary features to provide the most direct signal path in the interests of sound quality. The latter range

from models with basic tone controls to those with remote control (including volume), surround sound options etc.

We include our measured power output (RMS, 8ohm load, 1 channel driven) – but again, paradoxically, this doesn't necessarily correspond to the loudness capability of the amplifier, which has as much to do with the elegance of the overload characteristics within a given system (valve amplifiers invariably sound more powerful than their rating would suggest).

Apart from output the facilities listing shows how many line (that is inputs besides those for phono cartridges) inputs a product has and

includes tape inputs. The MM and MC blobs indicate which types of cartridge can be accommodated. Integrated, preamp and power amp indicate the type of amplifier and in some instances that a pre/power combination has been tested. In such instances the price given is for both components. The remote control and headphone socket blobs indicate the existence of these facilities.

An increasing number of amplifiers are supplied without RIAA disc stages, or with the phono stage as an optional extra. If you use a turntable, make sure that it has a MM or MC stage to suit your cartridge.

▲▲ Best Buy  
▲ Recommended

## Amplifiers

Product	£Price	Comments	Output W/8Ω	Line inputs	MM	MC	Integrated	Preamp	Power amp	Headphone socket	Remote control	Issue No.
Alchemist Kraken	395	<b>A</b> Class-A objet d'art that's far too sensitive to RF interference. Can sound cold and fierce as a result.	54	5	•	•	•					116
▲ Alchemist Kraken APD7/APD8	775	<b>G</b> A quirky Class A number with an equally warm and colourful sound. Hardly accurate but entertaining nonetheless.	49	4	•				•	•		124
AMC CVT3030	529	<b>A</b> A well meaning and affordable attempt to mix transistors with valves, albeit one that only really shines with simple musical styles.	35	5	•		•					116
Arcam Alpha 5	230	<b>A+</b> A pared-down version of the Alpha 6 that suffers little penalty in power but a significant forfeit in sound quality.	60	5	•		•				•	134
▲ Arcam Alpha 6	300	<b>VG</b> A new MOSFET design with a subtle and melodious sound that takes a conservative view of powerful dynamics	68	6	•	•	•				•	129
▲ Arcam Delta 110S/120.2	1070	<b>VG</b> Now in mkII guise this established combination has matured into a very articulate, powerful if dry-sounding amplifier.	109	4	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	124
▲ Arcam Delta 290	480	<b>VG</b> Combines the dryness and restraint of Arcam's older models with a refreshing sense of detail, dynamics and musical colour.	99	5	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	116
▲ Art Audio Quintet	1393	<b>VG</b> Switchable triode/ultralinear output stage. In triode mode these are 15 of the sweetest watts around. Surprisingly gutsy	15/25							•		109
▲▲ Audio Innovations Alto	300	<b>VG</b> Despite a shortfall in very deep bass this unusual amplifier still sounds beautifully open, natural and relaxed.	40	6					•			138
▲ Audio Innovations Series 300II	500	<b>G+</b> Under-powered and over-distorted yet capable of realising an open and captivatingly expressive sound. Sensitive speakers are a must	9	4	•				•			97
▲ Audio Innovations Classic 25	899	<b>G+</b> Warm, cuddly and immensely musical amp that almost transcends 'hi-fi' with its sheer listenability. Available in kit form	24	5					•			126
▲ Audio Innovations Series 700	999	<b>G+</b> Valve amp that can turn the roughest of digital sounds into music, both understated and graceful. Sensitive speakers are a must	24	5					•			116
▲ Audio Innov L1/Series 800 Anni	1550	<b>G+</b> Preferred at moderate listening levels, this valve combination offers a distinctly midband-orientated yet undeniably compelling sound.	25	4					•	•		145
▲ Audio Note Oto SE	1500	<b>VG</b> Transparent, very dynamic, excellent clarity and subtlety with limited power make for a very clean sounding amp	9.5	3	•				•			126
▲ Audio Note Ongaku	43125	<b>E</b> A single ended, zero negative feedback, triode, line level integrated amp and a half. Probably the best amplifier in the world!	27	6					•			Col
▲ Audiogram MB1	500	<b>G+</b> It'll successfully tackle the most difficult of speakers and still provide a very warm, rich and euphonic sound.	46		•				•	•		116
▲ Audiolab 8000A	500	<b>VG</b> Now fully compliant with European electrical safety standards, the 8000A remains a highly disciplined and mature-sounding amp.	77	5	•	•	•				•	140
Audiolab 8000C/8000P	1220	<b>G</b> Very distinctive, almost stark neutrality that will not appeal to all listeners. Good value engineering, nevertheless	157	7	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	97
Audiolab 8000Q/8000M	2500	<b>G</b> With only the preamp currently featuring Audiolab's Zq circuitry, the resulting 'big-amp sound' was coolly received.	154	5					•	•	•	145
▲ Aura VA-80	280	<b>G+</b> The lower-powered basis for Aura's VA-100 offers a smoother and more natural sound that sparkles with detail.	52	6					•			142
Aura VA-100II Evolution	350	<b>G-</b> Our sample failed to confirm Aura's claims for more power. The big, smooth yet slightly disjointed sound was equally familiar.	74	6	•				•			138
▲ Conrad-Johnson PV-10A	1250	<b>E</b> Fabulous preamplifier. Beautiful imaging, superb detail, plenty of gain on the phono stage; classy build quality too.	4		•				•			78
▲ Conrad-Johnson Premier 7	11000	<b>E</b> The 'Seven is designed without compromise, and is clearly one of the finest (valve) preamplifiers money can buy.	4		•	•			•			Col
Creek 4240	249	<b>G-</b> Bearing no relation to earlier Creek designs, this radical re-think is very much more successful via MM than CD.	49	4	•	•	•				•	134
▲ Denon PMA-250III	160	<b>A-</b> Pretty high resolution for the price, occasionally loses its grip but is generally engaging and enjoyable	55	3	•				•			121
▲ Denon PMA-350II	220	<b>G+</b> In-depth modifications have brought the original PMA-350 out of its shell with a powerful, up-front and compelling performance.	89	5	•				•			134
▲ Denon PMA-450SE	270	<b>G</b> A racy little number based on the original '450 that offers a similarly fast, furious but undeniably entertaining sound.	100	5	•				•			142
DPA Renaissance	595	<b>G</b> DPA's first integrated amp is typically innovative but sounds a little too 'crisp 'n dry' for our tastes.	36W	4	•				•			140
▲ DPA Digital DSP-200S/DPA-200S	1245	<b>E</b> The very dramatic but exceptionally detailed and transparent sound of this combination belies its modest power rating.	48	5					•	•		124
▲ EAR 802/509mkII	4200	<b>VG</b> Extremely well made and combining the sonic strengths of both transistors and valves this EAR combo warrants attention	100	6	•				•	•		63
▲ EC Audio Vista/Lectern	1640	<b>VG</b> This pairing can sound a little edgy unless given its head. Wind-up the volume and blow a breath of fresh music into your system.	53	5					•	•		145
EMF Audio Sequel	349	<b>G+</b> A fresh start for Mike Creek has resulted in the Sequel, a minimalist amp with a very refined but mildly restrained sound	47	4	•				•			109
▲ Harman Kardon HK1400	400	<b>G+</b> HK's first line-only amplifier exudes a relaxed but confident sound that is only troubled by the most dense of recordings.	52	7					•			129
Harman Kardon HK640	400	<b>G-</b> A light and breezy-sounding line-only amp with full remote control. Needs more substance to counter its flyaway balance.	78	6					•		•	138
▲ Jadis JP30/JA30	12204	<b>E</b> French tubes. Beautiful build, nostalgic styling and delightful sounding midrange transcend limitations at frequency extremes	30	4	•				•	•		60
JVC AX-A472	250	<b>A</b> A rather unpredictable performer that can initially sound impressive but often ends up sounding starchy and tiring.	80	5	•				•			142
JVC AX-R562	250	<b>A-</b> More fuss and bluster than detail and dynamics was how one listener concisely described this less than wonderful model	90	5	•				•		•	121
▲ Kenwood KA-3020SE	230	<b>G+</b> A lower-powered but more load tolerant version of the KA-3020 with an up-beat yet very comfortable and generous sound.	39	5	•				•			134
Kenwood KA-3060R	230	<b>G</b> Oodles of classy engineering for the money but a sound that's over-dry, often frustratingly restrained and usually rather unsophisticated.	69	4	•				•	•		142
Kenwood KA-5050R	350	<b>A</b> A listenable but neither particularly communicative or captivating amplifier that puts features ahead of sound.	103	6	•	•	•			•	•	129
LFD Integrated Zero	499	<b>A-</b> A basic amplifier at a not-so-basic price. Provides a rather fierce and generally uncomfortable sound.	60	6					•			140
Linn Majik-1	593	<b>A</b> The cornerstone of Linn's modular hi-fi system has many innovations to its credit but its sound is vague and confused.	33	6	•				•		•	129
▲▲ Magnum IA170	270	<b>VG</b> This is a disarmingly powerful amplifier capable of recreating a deep and naturally colourful sound. Optional phono stage.	96	6					•			142
Magnum Quartet	329	<b>A-</b> An integrated model that incorporates four monoblocks optimised for bi-wiring, but sound is sandy in the treble.	72	5					•			121
▲ Magnum Class A	599	<b>G+</b> Lashings of rich and compelling music, trading a hint of lushness for stark accuracy. An unexpected find. Phono stage option	55	7					•			116
Marantz PM-44SEmkII	200	<b>A-</b> Two generations on from the PM-40SE, Marantz' latest £200 contender provides a disappointingly grey view of music.	56	5	•				•			134
Marantz PM-54SE	330	<b>G-</b> A beefed up variation of the PM-40SE inside a PM-52SE case. It has a very quick but forward and ultimately tiresome balance.	79	6	•	•	•					138
Marantz PM-80mkII	480	<b>G-</b> Less the revision and more an entirely new amp, this model sounds at its sweetest and most agreeable in the 31W Class A setting.	130	5	•	•	•					129

# Amplifiers continued

Product	£Price	Comments	Output W/8Ω	Line inputs	MM	MC	Integrated Preamp	Remote control	Headphone socket	Issue No.	
Meridian 501/555	1190	<b>G-</b> Plenty of sophisticated software on offer here but the sound remains rather grey and unattractive. More colour and emotion is required.	83	6				•	•	•	145
▲ Moth Series 30	587	<b>G+</b> A modular system capable of cracking results. The passive preamp and power amp combination warrant a Best Buy in their own right.	35	4	•	•		•	•		109
▲▲ Mission Cyrus III	500	<b>E</b> The classic Cyrus II is given a new lease of life with full remote control. Sounds convincing, masterful and musical.	73	5	•	•			•		140
▲ Musical Fidelity Elektra E100	599	<b>VG</b> A beautifully crafted amplifier with a vibrantly colourful, almost dramatic sound that's uninterested in technical niceties.	84	6	•	•			•		140
Musical Fidelity E200/E300	1300	<b>G</b> A bigger, bolder version of the E100 integrated. Can sound magnificent but suffocates for a lack of airiness and sparkle.	109	6				•	•	•	145
▲▲ NAD 302	170	<b>G+</b> A spritely and uplifting performance. Sounds loud but never intrusive or fatiguing.	39	5	•	•				•	116
▲▲ NAD 304	230	<b>G+</b> Equally effective with CD and vinyl this is another successful and entertaining NAD amplifier for your shortlist	50	6	•	•					121
NAD 1000S/208	1120	<b>A+</b> One of the beefiest amplifiers we've ever tested. Unfortunately it sounds too restrained and lightweight.	314	5	•	•		•	•		124
▲ Nakamichi IA-3	350	<b>G</b> A minimalist outing for the cassette heroes that's very confident if a tad restrained.	62	3				•			121
Onix OA31	450	<b>A+</b> What this amplifier lacks in subtlety in makes up for in enthusiasm, though the big and brash sound is still tiring.	56	6				•			140
Onix OA-21S/SOAP	730	<b>G-</b> Via MM disc this amp comes alive with a fresh and vibrant sound though its CD input sounds utterly dead by comparison.	60	4	•	•	•				97
Onkyo A-803	260	<b>A</b> This amplifier certainly looks the part but, sadly, sounds surprisingly lifeless, vague and disinterested in the music at hand.	88	5	•	•	•			•	142
▲ Pioneer A-303R	200	<b>G</b> A remote-controlled amp with a surprisingly fresh and uncomplicated sound that bests much of its audiophile competition	56	5	•	•			•	•	134
Pioneer A-300X	230	<b>A+</b> This revamped version of the A-300 was also more confident sounding via CD than MM, yet our panel were still left unmoved	55	5	•	•					116
▲▲ Pioneer A-400	280	<b>VG</b> Pioneer's design concept snaps into focus with an amp that seems to bubble with musical detail. A budget bench-mark	71	5	•	•	•				92
▲ Pioneer A-400X	300	<b>G+</b> Now firmly in production and thoroughly retested, this erstwhile Best Buy was tonally unchanged but less compelling on audition.	67	5	•	•	•				138
Pioneer A-503R	300	<b>A-</b> At its best via MM disc, the dull and claustrophobic sound of this remote-controlled amp is otherwise deeply uninspiring.	75	6	•	•			•	•	138
Pro-Ject 7	259	<b>A</b> A minimalist amplifier brimming with good intent but too quirky for its performance to be reliably predicted. Either MM or MC.	38	5	•	•					142
▲ QED C300/P300	630	<b>G</b> A cost-effective combo, limited in its resolution but less beguiling as a result. Disc stage is sweeter but samey	58	3	•	•	•	•			85
Quad 34	398	<b>A</b> Well-built durable preamp, filtering and above average tone controls but was found lacking in sound quality (viz: detail/dynamics)	4	•	•			•			44
Quad 66/606	1553	<b>G</b> Amplifiers with a classic lineage but compromised by an equally dated, soft and undynamic sound.	138	6	•	•		•	•		124
Rega Elex	359	<b>A</b> Minimalist amplifier that sounds too forward, hard and unforgiving for its own good. Shows plenty of promise, however.	51	4	•	•					116
▲ Rose RV-23	450	<b>G+</b> Beautifully built British 'hybrid'. You can spend more to get a more transparent sound but it's hard to criticise at the price	3	•				•			77
▲▲ Rotel RA-930BX	200	<b>VG</b> A gilded version of the classic RA-930AX with a dark and luxurious sound that's reminiscent of Rotel's heyday.	50	4	•	•				•	134
▲ Rotel RA-970BX	300	<b>G</b> Sounds lively, fresh and perky with plenty of power to manhandle tricky speakers. Not so clever with complex recordings however.	99	6							138
Rotel RC-980BX/RB-980BX	800	<b>A</b> Plenty of watts per pound, sound is expansive but lacks a sense of poise, of control and fine detail - a disappointment	143	5	•	•		•	•		109
Rotel RA-980BX	425	<b>A</b> This integrated version of the 980BX pre/power is certainly very powerful but also lacks poise and subtlety	139	5	•	•	•				129
▲▲ Sansui AUX-417R	280	<b>G+</b> Unusually clean and precise with more subtlety than is usually attributed to remote control amps	53	5	•	•	•			•	121
Sherwood AI-2210	80	<b>P</b> Lightweight in all respects this is better than you'd find on a midfi and at least its reasonably painless.	47	4	•	•					121
Sonic Frontiers SFC-1	1500	<b>G+</b> Smooth, sophisticated Canadian valve amp with a decent direct input and more features than average	54	6				•			126
Sony TA-F444E	250	<b>A+</b> A hi-tech MOSFET-based amplifier that sheds all frippery for an audiophile approach. Still sounds grubby and stilted, however.	61	5	•	•	•	•			142
Sugden A21a	469	<b>G</b> The modern-day relative of Sugden's original Class A amp and one that offers a smooth, easy-going sound.	25						•		92
▲ Sumo Athena IIB/Polaris III	1835	<b>VG</b> Several generations on and an old favourite found equal favour with our latest listening panels. Sounds smooth, natural and effortless.	164	6				•	•		145
Technics SU-A800mk2	350	<b>A</b> A quick audition might convince you the '800mk2 is something special, but longer term listening shows it's little but bluff.	79	5	•	•			•	•	134
▲ Technics SU-A900mk2	400	<b>G+</b> A Jeckly and Hyde amplifier with a dismal-sounding phono stage but delightfully transparent and engaging CD input.	117	5	•	•	•			•	138
Thule Audio IA50	499	<b>A+</b> Best used as part of Thule's balanced-line system, otherwise its performance lacks any meaty substance.	67	5				•			140
Woodside ISA230	900	<b>A</b> Smooth and inoffensive valve amplifier if one that lacks the sparkle and euphony required for a truly entertaining sound.	27	5	•	•					116
Woodside SC26/STA35	3254	<b>G+</b> Synergistic pairing with a cool, controlled sound, good focus and transparency. More about poise than grunt	35	5				•	•		100
YBA Integre	1199	<b>G+</b> Audiophile spec French integrated with good resolution and nice phono stage.	57	4	•	•					121
▲ YBA 1 pre/power amp	8000	<b>E</b> Well finished pre/power amp offers front rank stereo staging and transparency, and is capable of driving the most difficult loads	85	5	•	•		•	•		62
▲ YBA 2 pre/power amp	3849	<b>G+</b> Superbly finished with very good space and transparency, slightly softened bass. Needs transformer for MC cartridges	70	5	•	•		•	•		56
YBA 3 pre/power amp	2449	<b>G</b> This duo produced see-through, ethereal stereo images that were more convincing towards the centre of the soundstage	56	4	•	•		•	•		72



## AV amplifiers

In practice an A/V amplifier provides all the standard CD, tuner, tape, aux and phono inputs offered by a standard stereo amplifier. In addition many also incorporate an AM/FM tuner section, making them A/V receivers.

More importantly a modern A/V amplifier includes a Dolby Pro Logic decoding chip along with extra circuitry to effect the rear channel delay. Naturally there's at least four channel's worth of amplification under the bonnet to feed the five loudspeaker outputs (Front L and R, Centre and

Rear mono L+R).

Some A/V amps offer other surround modes like simulated stereo, Hall surround (L+R is fed to the rear) and Matrix surround (L-R is fed to the rear). Others use an element of Digital Signal Processing (DSP) to steer the Dolby Pro-Logic or permit a variable rear channel delay. Some also include DSP options like Jazz, Church, Hall and Stadium modes which use different delay and steering levels to generate different 'sound fields'.

From left to right the headings below indicate

how many watts per channel each amp has for its front, centre and surround outputs.

Surround modes indicates how many different surround effects are available and includes DSP. The audio inputs are for both hi-fi and AV components. S-type and phono video inputs are for VCRs, Laserdisc players and CTVs, S-type being the better of the two.

Subwoofer outputs are of the phono socket variety for active subs, and AM/FM tuner denotes if the unit is effectively a receiver.

▲▲ **Best Buy**  
▲ **Recommended**

## AV amplifiers

Product	£Price	Comments	Surround output W/8Ω	Centre output W/8Ω	Front output W/8Ω	Surround modes	Audio inputs	Video inputs S-type	Subwoofer output	AM/FM tuner	Issue No.	
Denon AVC-3530	1000	<b>VG</b> A true heavyweight with a richly detailed sound and flexible features to match	142	141	46	10	9	5	5	•	•	125
Harman Kardon AVR30	1000	<b>G+</b> Limited surround options are offset by a very secure sound with excellent control over effects.	74	75	30	7	10	6	0	•	•	125

# AV amplifiers continued

Product	£Price	Comments	Surround output W/82	Centre output W/82	Front output W/82	Surround modes	Video inputs	Audio inputs	Subwoofer output	AM/FM tuner	Issue No.
Marantz PM-700AV	450	A+ Sounds just great through front and centre channels but surround is very weak.	69	52	51	3	7	6	3		125
Philips FR940	450	A- Perhaps as a result of the mismatch between front/centre channels, the FR940 proved a great disappointment on dem.	180	24	24	6	8	4	0		125
Pioneer VSA-D802S	600	A- The disappointingly grey sound lacks attack and confidence, undermining the tension of movie soundtracks.	53	55	32	9	9	5	3		125
Yamaha DSP-A2070	1200	G+ The ultimate in A/V flexibility with full manual control over ever conceivable soundfield.	101	99	35	24	10	6	6		125



## Cables

**C**ables are not accessories but an integral part of your system. You can make do without accessories but no conventional system will function without cables. Inevitably some cables are greater than others. The best cable for your system will only be found through trial and error, but hopefully by combining our recommendations with those of a dealer you will end up with something that suits both your pocket and your system. Generally speaking budget to spend about ten per cent of the total system cost on cables.

Analogue interconnects are the leads that

connect source components to amplifiers and pre to power amps. The cables in this section are priced for a one metre terminated pair. Symmetrical indicates where a twisted pair of conductors are used.

Coaxial means that there is a central 'hot' conductor and a shield that carries the negative signal. Stranded cables have multiple strands and solid core use individually insulated strand(s). Copper and silver indicates whether these metals are used as conductors.

Digital interconnects connect CD transports to

DACs, and are traditionally coaxial with a 75ohm impedance. They come in optical and electrical varieties, the former being made of plastic or glass and the latter in coaxial or alternative configurations. The prices shown are for a terminated linear metre

Speaker cables are used between the amplifier and speaker. Our prices are for a terminated 5metre pair. Resistance and capacitance are indicated as low (L), medium (M) or high (H). Neither high resistance nor high capacitance cables are suitable for long runs.

▲▲ **Best Buy**  
▲ **Recommended**

## Analogue interconnects

Product	£Price	Comments	Symmetrical	Coaxial	Stranded	Solid core	Copper	Silver	Issue No.
Audio Note AN-A	29.50	A- A well-rounded and cuddly sound from a high-ish resistance interconnect. Lacks a sense of scale and dynamics	•			•			108
Audioquest Ruby Hyperlitz	70	A+ A crisp, fast and articulate-sounding cable if one that's a little too pointed for our listeners	•				•	•	108
▲ Audioquest Lapis Hyperlitz	329	E An expensive cable that justifies its tag with a beautifully poised sound - natural, relaxed and very compatible.	•				•	•	108
Audio Technica AT620	28	A Plenty of cable for the money but its performance is distinctly lightweight, lacking depth and subtlety			•			•	108
▲ Chord Blue Angel	85	G A parallel array of multi-stranded silver conductors promotes a light open sound with a wealth of detail, a tad dynamically restrained					•		131
Chord Chameleon	59	A+ An unpredictable cable with an 'anomalous treble' that can sound harsh one moment and oddly recessed the next!			•			•	108
▲ Chord Solid	130	VG What looks like a military RF cable actually provides a slightly forward but incisive and intimately detailed performance. DIN available			•			•	108
▲ Cogan-Hall Intermezzo Ref	185	E A user-hostile cable with a tight, convincing bass allied to a very relaxed and involving mid/treble.	•				•	•	108
Cogan Hall Intermezzo E-M	320	G+ This bigger, thicker and thoroughly unwieldy 3-core version of the Intermezzo Reference actually sounds a little coarser	•				•	•	108
▲▲ DNM Interconnect	40	VG Fresh, transparent and packed full of detail, this slither of a cable scored a direct hit with our listeners	•				•	•	108
Goldring 'Studio Quality'	20	A- A bog-standard OFC coaxial cable that might otherwise be given away with a new amp or CD player. Cheap but nothing special.			•			•	108
▲ Isoda Electric HA-08-PSR	199	G+ This odd-ball cables utilises a mix of copper, brass and aluminium strands to achieve a very distinct sound	•				•	•	108
▲ Madrigal HPC	215	VG A very unusual cable design with a business-like approach to music-making that barely conceals its underlying 'fizz'.	•				•	•	108
Magnan Type Vi	595	A+ With a series resistance some 500-1000 times higher than average, the furry sound of the Type Vi will alter from system to system.			•			•	108
▲ Monster Interlink 500	60	G+ Plenty of hype to keep the marketing bandwagon rolling plus a lively and lucid balance to cheer up the enthusiast	•				•	•	108
▲ Moth Ley Line Black	100	G+ The cheapest of Moth's Ley Line series uses just two twisted conductors to achieve a very solid and confident sound.	•				•	•	108
Moth Ley Line Grey	200	G+ The four twisted conductors of this cable actually mark a downturn in audio quality	•				•	•	108
▲ Panasonic RP-CA910	50	G This conventional coax employs plenty of hi-tech materials which encourage an even-handed balance. A good upgrade.			•			•	108
▲ Silver Sounds 12/2 and 12/3	99/150	VG Both these cables share a similarly open, transparent and dynamic sound though the latter is arguably the better integrated	•				•	•	108



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# Analogue interconnects continued

Product	£Price	Comments	Symmetrical	Coaxial	Stranded	Solid core	Copper	Silver	Issue No.
Sonic Link Yellow	60	<b>A</b> An interesting non-copper cable with an up-front sounded described as 'heavy-handed and pushy'.			•		•		108
▲ Sonic Link Violet	99	<b>G+</b> Another nickel-based cable but with a very much better-balanced sound than Sonic Link Yellow		•		•			108
Straight Wire Laser Link	50	<b>A+</b> Thanks to its high parallel capacitance this interconnect helps remove ultrasonic noise. Unfortunately it still sounds very odd!		•		•		•	108
Straight Wire LSI-Encore	90	<b>A+</b> A solid-sounding cable with a strong mid and bass but a disappointingly sat-upon treble		•		•		•	108
▲ Tara Labs Prism	36	<b>G</b> 6N-purity copper, aero-grade insulation and spaced solid-core conductors all add-up to a slightly bright but frisky sound		•			•	•	108
▲▲ Tara Labs Quantum CD	63	<b>G+</b> Praised by our panel for its lack of obvious vices, Quantum CD encourages a sweet and positive sound.		•			•	•	108
Tara Labs Quantum II	99	<b>G</b> Bass power and extension is the key to the sound of this unusual and hi-tech cable		•			•	•	108
▲ van den Hul The Source	70	<b>G+</b> Accurately reflects the life of the music without detail forcibly from the speakers			•	•		•	108
van den Hul MC D-102mkIII S	80	<b>A+</b> A rather coloured sound thanks to its full and resonant bass but spoiled overall by a dirty treble			•	•		•	108

# Digital interconnects

Product	£Price	Comments	Type	Plastic	Glass	Non-coaxial	Coaxial	75 Ω	Issue No.
▲▲ Audioquest Video Z	50	<b>E</b> The very best available with an expressive sound but generous price to sweeten the pill	Electrical				•		• 108
Audioquest Digital PRO	90	<b>A+</b> A silver cable with all the drive of Video Z but lacking its clean-cut transparency	Electrical				•		• 108
Audioquest Optilink Z	100	<b>A</b> Good level of midband detail but frequency extremes lack depth and extension	Optical			•			• 108
Bandridge AL560	20	<b>P</b> The disappointingly heavy and muddled sound of this basic fibre thwarts any recommendation	Optical		•				• 108
Chord Codac	34	<b>A</b> A connection with a stranded inner core and a sound that lacks integration	Electrical				•		• 108
▲ Chord Pro-DAC	49	<b>VG</b> A narrow copper tube filled with PTFE surrounds a silver plated copper conductor to provide confident and detailed sound	Electrical				•		• 131
▲▲ DPA Digi-link	27.50	<b>VG</b> Can seem slightly impressive but there's no avoiding its exceptionally detailed sound	Electrical				•		• 108
DPA Opti-link	20	<b>P</b> Very similar to Bandridge AL560 with an equally naff sound	Optical		•				• 108
Kimber PSB DigiLink	24	<b>A-</b> An analogue interconnect inappropriately pressed into digital service. A visible deterioration in the digital signal results.	Electrical					•	• 108
Kimber KC-1 DigiLink	52	<b>A</b> This cable adopts a woven construction with the addition of a conductive screen. Music lacks detail and spirit.	Electrical					•	• 108
Kimber KC-AG DigiLink	222	<b>A-</b> An asymmetric cable using silver conductors that deviates from the 75ohm standard. Not ideal for digital applications.	Electrical					•	• 108
▲ Kimber Opti-Link	70	<b>G</b> Hardly cheap for what appears to be a bog-standard PMMA fibre, yet it sounds a little brighter and livelier than most.	Optical		•				• 108
▲ Monster Cable Datalink 100	45	<b>G+</b> A colourful coaxial interconnect with an equally colourful and up-beat sound. Very compatible.	Electrical				•		• 108
▲ Monster Cable Interlink LS100	45	<b>G</b> Well constructed stepped-index fibre with polished ends and rugged connectors. Slightly lean, fuzzy but engaging performance	Optical		•				• 108
Moth Leyline Datalink	140	<b>A-</b> A thin, coaxial version of Leyline Black with a rather hard and unforgiving character. Too expensive.	Electrical				•		• 108
▲▲ QED DigiFlex	19	<b>VG</b> A top performance, low-loss 75ohm coax with a very open, almost liquid quality that allows its music to ease naturally across	Electrical				•		• 75 Ω 108
Sonic Link Brown Digital	35	<b>A-</b> A solid-core, twisted-pair interconnect that deviates from the 75ohm standard and provides an equally unbalanced sound	Electrical					•	• 108
Straight Wire Silver link	60	<b>G+</b> A genuine attempt to get things right with a silver-plated, multi-strand coax. Yet it still sounds too dry and mechanical	Electrical				•		• 108
▲ van den Hul MC Videolink 75	30	<b>VG</b> An AV-cum-digital cable that comes very close to besting QED's DigiFlex. Still some emphasis of vocal sibilants, however	Electrical				•		• 108

# Speaker cables

Product	£Price	Comments	Resistance	Capacitance	Stranded	Solid core	Copper	Silver	Issue No.
▲ Audio Note AN-B	165	<b>G+</b> A very high capacitance Litz-style cable whose sound may well act as a taming influence in many systems	M	H			•	•	• 109
Audio Note AN-D	100	<b>A</b> Supplied in linear, non-polarised lengths that should be twisted into stereo pairs. Sounds rather gritty and forward	L	L		•		•	• 109
▲ Audio Note AN-SP	1270	<b>VG</b> Some 15 individually-insulated silver strands go to make up this very civilised but exceptionally detailed-sounding cable	H	L			•		• 109
▲ Audioquest F-14	44.50	<b>A+</b> Ideal for laying flat under carpets, F-14 encourages a slightly warm and vibrant sound	M	L			•	•	• 109
Audioquest Type 4	75	<b>A+</b> Four 18-gauge OFHC copper conductors wound in a Litz-fashion increases capacitance but restrain the cable's 'bite'	M	H			•	•	• 109
Audioquest Midnight Hyperlitz	260	<b>G</b> Very similar to Type 4 but with a delicate smoothness that contrasts with the brighter sound of cheap cables	L	H			•	•	• 109
▲ Bandridge LC7259 & LC7401	20/30	<b>A</b> Two very traditional figure-of-eight cables. The thinner version (LC7259) sounds lighter and coarser than LC7401	L	L		•		•	• 109
Bandridge LC8258 & LC8408	30/50	<b>A-</b> Two versions of the Silverflex series that, sadly, encourage very little sense of poise or decorum in their music	L	L		•		•	• 109
▲ Chord Blue Heaven	580	<b>VG</b> Allowed the panel to drift into the emotive realm of the music rather than dissect its technical quality	M	L			•	•	• 133
▲ Chord Flatline Gold	85	<b>VG</b> Military spec cable that affords very open and uncluttered sound, driven along without fatigue, bass lacks weighty resonance	M	L			•	•	• 133
▲ Cogan-Hall Intermezzo Full-Range	465	<b>VG</b> Extra care must be taken to prevent shorting this user-hostile cable. Nevertheless it sounds superb!	L	L			•	•	• 109
▲ DPA IS19	275	<b>G+</b> Shares the clear, neutral and transparent sound of the older 8S without the tremendous clarity of Gortex Black-16	L	L			•	•	• 109
▲▲ DNM Rainbow	84	<b>A+</b> High impedance can influence the treble response of some speakers. But this was an out and out winner on sound per pound	H	L			•	•	• 109
Heybrook Heywire	66	<b>A</b> This well-meaning facsimile of earlier ribbon-style cables ends up sounding lumpy and uneven	H	L			•	•	• 109
Isoda Electric HA-20	400	<b>A+</b> This unorthodox cable employs a combination of copper, brass and aluminium strands. It sounds 'oddy impure'!	M	L		•		•	• 109
▲▲ Mission Stranded	20	<b>G+</b> This Swedish-made cable proved a real hit with our listeners - a slick performer and Best Buy upgrade	L	M		•		•	• 109
Monitor PC KC27/KC34	40/60	<b>A</b> Two heavyweight multi-strand cables with a thick and chesty (10027) or light and wispy (10034) balance. Take your pick	L	L		•		•	• 109
Monster Powerline 3 Plus	75	<b>A-</b> The archetypal 'old-style Monster Cable' that labours under a soggy bass and untidy treble	L	M		•		•	• 109
Naim NAC A5	44	<b>A-</b> Described as a 'dinosaur of a cable' by our listening panel, this stiff rod of wire has little application outside of a Naim system	L	L		•		•	• 109
QED Bi-wire 79-Strand	35	<b>A</b> Reminiscent of curtain track, this bi-wire version of 79-strand is unfortunately saddled with a 'loud, hard and untidy' balance	L	L		•		•	• 109
▲ Silver Sounds 12/2	300	<b>E</b> Tonally accurate and exquisitely detailed, this cable opens a very transparent window on the music	L	H			•	•	• 109
▲ Silver Sounds 16/4	200	<b>VG</b> A prime choice for bi-wire systems even if this cable does lack the full finesse of its sister 12/2	M	H			•	•	• 109
Sonic Link Grey	80	<b>G-</b> A spaghetti-thin cable composed of silver-plated OF-copper and PTFE insulation. Lacks bass impact and treble 'air'	H	M			•	•	• 109
▲ Straight Wire Waveguide 1.5	20	<b>G</b> A conventional multi-stranded cable with a refreshingly up-beat, crisp but slightly lean-sounding balance	M	M		•		•	• 109
▲ Straight Wire Flex-4	50	<b>G+</b> Another very quick and dynamic-sounding cable from Straight Wire. A little short on subtlety but very engaging nonetheless.	L	H		•		•	• 109
Tara Labs Quantum III	238	<b>G</b> An imaginatively-named cable that encourages an equally colourful sound. Described as 'dark and fruity' by our panel!	L	H			•	•	• 109

# Speaker cables continued

Product	£Price	Comments	Resistance	Capacitance	Stranded	Solid core	Copper	Silver	Issue No.
van den Hul MC The Clearwater	50	<b>A</b> Despite its evocative title, the Clearwater turns out to be a disappointingly 'murky sounding' cable	M	L	•	•	•	•	109
van den Hul MC The Magnum	265	<b>A</b> Touted as vdH's most prestigious twinlead speaker cable, the Magnum sounds surprisingly soft and old-fashioned	L	L	•	•	•	•	109
▲ van den Hul MC The Wind	330	<b>VG</b> Blown-in from the continent, vdH's 'Wind' kicks up a storm with its lush midrange and bone-crunching bass!	L	M	•	•	•	•	109



## Cassette decks

The bad odour of copyright theft hangs around the compact cassette, but there is no doubt it is the world's most versatile and ubiquitous music storage medium. Buffs may wrinkle their noses, but are happy to use cassette decks to make up tapes for the car or personal.

There is no problem in connecting a cassette deck to any normal amplifier, but some care needs to be taken in choosing the best tapes for a specific machine. (Trial and error is one effective technique, but many decks have manual bias adjustment and some match up to the tape automatically.) Lab

performance and sound quality often go hand in hand, and are frequently somewhat dependent upon factory alignment. The mechanical integrity of the mechanism is another crucial factor, that is reflected in the price.

The columns on the right indicate when the facilities shown in the headings are available on a deck. Dolby B and C offer varying degrees of noise reduction and the HX Pro system gives significant treble improvements with ferric (Type I) tapes. Dolby S increases the level of noise reduction with less signal degradation than B or C. Three-head

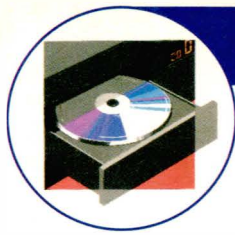
recorders allow you to listen to a recording as it's being made, a useful quality control function. Bias adjustment allows you to fine tune the deck to suit different types of tape when recording. Auto calibration is an automatic system for setting bias and Dolby levels.

Twin deck offers the option to dub tapes or to play two cassettes simultaneously. Autoreverse is a useful convenience feature, but usually with some mechanical compromise. In the case of twin decks a blob is inserted in this column even if only one transport autoreverses.

- ▲▲ **Best Buy**
- ▲ **Recommended**

## Cassette decks

Product	£Price	Comments	Dolby B	Dolby C	Dolby HX Pro	Dolby S	3 Head	Auto calibration Bias adjust	Twin deck	Autoreverse	Issue No.
▲▲ Aiwa AD-F450	120	<b>VG</b> Basic but well designed budget deck; astonishing value, only the poor metering gives the game away	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	136
▲▲ Aiwa AD-F810	230	<b>G</b> First class budget 3-head machine with a dual capstan transport that really works at reducing the 'fudge' factor	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	99
▲▲ Aiwa AD-S950	300	<b>VG</b> High value, high spec package featuring Dolby S, 3 heads, tape calibration - well set up and musically well sorted.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	140
▲▲ Aiwa AD-WX828	200	<b>G-</b> Equipment levels strong, and sound is both vivid and presentable, but control system daunting.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	123
▲▲ Aiwa AD-WX929	230	<b>A</b> Superbly equipped twin deck that works and works well - remote control	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	117
▲ Aiwa XK-S9000	700	<b>G+</b> Fabulous build, clunky transport and sharp, refined sound quality with Dolby S or B and metal tapes	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	105
▲ Arcam Delta 100	850	<b>E</b> Superb transport and a ripe, spacious sound. The Dolby S installation more successful than most. Some replay incompatibility	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	111
Denon DRM-740	260	<b>A</b> Breathed-on DRM-710, with good external treatment offers good, if somewhat detached sonics	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	136
▲ Denon DRS-610	200	<b>G</b> Unique loading mechanism provides stability, and the deck has a crisp, clean quality. Occasionally anaemic bass.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	111
▲▲ Denon DRS-640	200	<b>VG</b> Drawer loading deck, with simple facilities and smooth, well adjusted sound.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	140
Denon DRS-810	300	<b>G-</b> Drawer loading deck, carefully designed, yet lacking in subtlety on audition.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	127
Goodmans Delta 700W	100	<b>P</b> Compact and ultra-basic twin deck which is rough and bass shy, with less than stable tape path.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	123
Harman/Kardon TD420	280	<b>A+</b> Minimalist audiophile deck, with good but not outstanding sound quality, and mediocre setup of the test sample.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	140
▲ Harman/Kardon TD4400	350	<b>G</b> Simple features plus excellent engineering make this a model of integrity.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	127
Harman Kardon TD4600	700	<b>A</b> Original Dolby S deck has improved over the years and now sounds very acceptable. A strong, solid sounding deck - but expensive.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	117
JVC TD-R452	180	<b>A-</b> Tidy, stable but ultimately rather soul-less experience. Auto-reverse is useful though.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	117
JVC TD-X352	150	<b>A-</b> Disappointingly amorphous sound despite decent measured results.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	117
▲ JVC TD-V562	200	<b>G+</b> Ultra-sophisticated transport at a silly price; sound quality is stable but slightly opaque.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	123
▲ Kenwood KA-5060S	250	<b>G</b> Well engineered single capstan transport and Dolby S star in this refined and detailed sounding design.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	140
NAD 602	200	<b>G</b> Minimalist deck for the audiophile market. Unfortunately engineering is minimalist too	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	127
▲ Nakamichi DR-3	400	<b>VG</b> Refined, exquisitely detailed and solid sounding 'budget' Nakamichi 2-header.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	123
▲▲ Nakamichi DR-2	600	<b>VG</b> Accomplished design with simple features (manual tape select!) but superb sound/serviceability.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	127
▲ Nakamichi DR-1	850	<b>VG</b> Typically idiosyncratic Nakamichi with manual everything. Good azimuth adjustment and dynamic, authoritative sound.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	117
Onkyo TA-201	200	<b>A-</b> Slightly old fashioned no-frills design, with some wow & flutter, and limited metal tape headroom.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	140
Philips DCC600	500	<b>A+</b> Simplified circuit and mechanism, but the Philips badly needs a D/A converter transplant	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	123
▲▲ Pioneer CT-S430S	200	<b>VG</b> Against the odds - a 2 head Dolby S deck that works. Well set up and fully equipped.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	136
▲ Pioneer CT-S520	280	<b>G</b> Decent if slightly coloured middle ranker with FLEX to revitalise old or soggy sounding tapes.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	123
▲ Pioneer CT-S630S	300	<b>G+</b> 3 heads and Dolby S feature in an excellent deck that is underbiased with Type IV tapes.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	140
Sansui D-X117WR	220	<b>P</b> Bass is thin and coloured, and the sound lacks dynamics, pitch accuracy and overall stability - the sound is neither stable nor solid.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	111
Sherwood DD-3010C	120	<b>P</b> Good range of features, let down by poor transport and iffy electronics.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	117
Sony TC-K415	180	<b>A+</b> Mainly UK designed with audiophile intent, but spoiled by erratic output, at worst with metal tapes.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	136
Sony TC-K515S	250	<b>A+</b> Transport limitations and some brightness slightly mark down this refined, articulate design.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	140
▲▲ Sony (WMD6C) Pro Walkman	290	<b>G+</b> One of the finest sounding cassette decks on the market today. A mandatory Best Buy, which also fits in your pocket	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	60
▲ Sony TC-K611S	300	<b>G</b> Cheapest Dolby S three header yet, yet slightly let down by lack of attention to detail	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	127
Teac R-9000	500	<b>G</b> Much better than average auto-reverse deck, well worth considering. Nicely engineered too.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	105
▲ Teac V-8000S	700	<b>G</b> Superb stability and real subtlety, this must be the best TEAC yet. The only disappointment was the Dolby C	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	105
▲ Technics RS-BX501	180	<b>G+</b> This is a well priced auto-reverse deck, with good sound quality and pricing.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	140
▲▲ Technics RS-BX646	230	<b>G+</b> Unusually well built and non-microphonic deck with sophisticated facilities and lucid midband.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	127
▲ Technics RS-BX701	270	<b>G+</b> Not cheap, but extremely well built deck, moderately well equipped a pleasure to operate and to listen to.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	136



# CD players

Now over a decade old, this all digital music source is well established despite high disc prices and the opposition of some hi-fi enthusiasts. Compact Disc's strengths over conventional vinyl are complete freedom from surface noise, ease of use, and more robust software.

However, many vinyl enthusiasts still find CDs sound less involving than top quality vinyl. But, with the dominance of CD in the high street, even vinyl die-hards need a CD player today.

The columns on the right indicate when the facilities shown in the headings are available on a CD player: DAC type indicates the type of convertor chip used in each player, 16, 18 and 20-bit are multi-bit types, all the others are bitstream variants. In much the same way that an amp's output is not indicative of its sound quality, the chip used in a DAC isn't the only determining factor in a CD player's sound, but it is an important one. Remote control is not yet universal, and we have included a tick box, more to show which machines don't have

one than which do. The existence of electrical and/or optical digital outputs is important for future upgrading with an outboard DAC, as a rule electrical outputs are the most desirable. Phase inversion in the digital domain is rare on one box players but can make quite a big difference if you've got golden ears. Headphone sockets are useful but beware of those without volume controls. Track entry keypads are those with calculator style buttons which makes track access much quicker.

▲▲ **Best Buy**  
▲ **Recommended**

## CD players

Product	£Price	Comments	DAC type	Electrical digital output	Optical digital output	Remote control	Variable output	Headphone socket	Track entry keypad	Issue No.
Aiwa XC-750	200	<b>A</b> A refined version of the XC-700, sadly it has lost the magic of the original	PDM Bitstrm	•	•	•	•	•	•	119
▲ AMC CD6	349	<b>G+</b> Based on the same 1-Bit circuit as Rotel's RCD-965BX but with a raunchier, beefier but less transparent sound.	PDM Bitstrm	•	•	•	•	•	•	124
Arcam Alpha One	300	<b>A+</b> The first UK-built player under £300 is hampered by a tidy but rather grey and uninspiring sound.	PWM bitstrm	•	•	•	•	•	•	137
Arcam Delta 270	800	<b>G+</b> The dry but tightly-focussed and supremely detailed sound of this player will either beguile or aggravate, depending on taste!	Hybrid	•	•	•	•	•	•	124
Aura CD-50	400	<b>G-</b> Based on an older Philips board with new CDM9 transport, this is a slim player with an innocuous sound	SAA7321	•	•	•	•	•	•	119
AVI S2000MC	999	<b>G+</b> A stylish, midi-width player with an exceptionally refined and comfortable sound. Lacks passion	20-bit	•	•	•	•	•	•	119
▲ Denon DCD-615	180	<b>G</b> Builds upon the smooth and composed sound of the DCD-595 while offering extra widgets at no extra cost.	18-bit	•	•	•	•	•	•	139
▲ Denon DCD-825	220	<b>G</b> Despite extensive revisions, this latest player still sounds like a typical '18-bit Denon', which is no bad thing!	18-bit	•	•	•	•	•	•	137
Denon DCD-1290	330	<b>G-</b> Looks the business but sound is a real five-minute wonder. Its compelling fizz lasts about as long as a firework.	18-bit	•	•	•	•	•	•	107
▲ Denon DCD-1015	350	<b>G+</b> Equipped with Denon's Alpha processor, this top-flight player still sounds beefy but also more refined than its cheaper relatives.	18-bit	•	•	•	•	•	•	141
Dual CD1001RC	180	<b>A-</b> This Yamaha-based CD player is compromised by a number of technical flaws and a fundamental lack of bass.	PDM Bitstrm	•	•	•	•	•	•	139
▲ Goodmans Delta 700	110	<b>A+</b> A 16-bit alternative to the CD650II that furnishes a colourful and animated sound	16-bit	•	•	•	•	•	•	128
Grundig Fine Arts CD2	190	<b>A-</b> A stylish-looking player with a disappointingly vague approach to music-making	SAA7350	•	•	•	•	•	•	128
Harman Kardon HD7425	349	<b>A</b> Harman's cheapest RLS player sounds unpretentious but also rather too rough, abrasive and generally tiring for contented listening.	18-bit	•	•	•	•	•	•	141
▲ Harman Kardon TL8600	700	<b>G+</b> A refined and more flexible version of the TL8500 multiplayer with a significantly more expressive sound	MASH/PWM	•	•	•	•	•	•	132
▲ Harman Kardon HK7725	800	<b>VG</b> This flagship implementation of RLS sounds impressively bold and dynamic - a genuine rock 'n roller!	18-bit RLS	•	•	•	•	•	•	124
JVC XL-V274	160	<b>A</b> This appears to be a re-badged version of JVC's XL-V264, retaining an over-heavy bass and generally gaudy sound.	PEM Bitstrm	•	•	•	•	•	•	139
JVC XL-Z1050	500	<b>A</b> Technically advanced and luxuriously equipped, this player remains rather bland and unsatisfying on audition	PEM Bitstrm	•	•	•	•	•	•	119
▲▲ Kenwood DP-3060	200	<b>G+</b> Based on the same filter/DAC as Marantz' CD-53 but with a more transparent, sober and highly insightful sound.	NPC bitstrm	•	•	•	•	•	•	139
▲ Kenwood DP-7060	380	<b>G+</b> A lyrical-sounding and very expressive player that, from time to time, can sound almost too determined to impress.	DAC7	•	•	•	•	•	•	141
▲ Linh Karik	1497	<b>VG</b> Based on Linn's original CD transport, this player sounds dry but very positive, detailed and engrossing	Crystal BS	•	•	•	•	•	•	119
▲ Marantz CD-53	200	<b>G</b> Looks identical to the CD-63 but component costs are cut inside, exposing a slightly ragged but enthusiastic performer.	NPC bitstrm	•	•	•	•	•	•	139
▲ Marantz CD-63	250	<b>VG</b> New technology has enabled Marantz to steal a march on its old CD-52 series and, once again, regain the upper hand.	NPC bitstrm	•	•	•	•	•	•	137
▲ Marantz CD-52IISE	300	<b>G</b> A new mains transformer plus the full complement of internal mods has recaptured the frothy if startling sound of the original '52	PDM Bitstrm	•	•	•	•	•	•	119
Marantz CD-63SE	350	<b>G</b> Based on the CD-63 but with largely mechanical revisions, this SE version sounds forthright and 'bouncy' but also charmless.	NPC bitstrm	•	•	•	•	•	•	141
Marantz CD-72SE	600	<b>G+</b> A recommendation just eluded the grasp of this superbly built player thanks to its very polished but restrained sound.	bitstream	•	•	•	•	•	•	112
NAD 501	180	<b>G-</b> A thoroughly typical frill-free player but with a slightly too cautious, even restrained musical outlook.	SAA7323	•	•	•	•	•	•	139
▲ NAD 502	220	<b>G</b> This updated version of the 5425 has traded the spontaneity of its forebear for a more precise but mechanical style of music	MASH/PWM	•	•	•	•	•	•	119
Nakamichi CD-4	380	<b>A-</b> This looks new enough but sounds little better than the older CD Player 4 upon which it is firmly based.	18-bit	•	•	•	•	•	•	124
▲ Nakamichi MB-4s	300	<b>G</b> Entry-level MusicBank player that sounds like it's come from a studio control room: plenty of dynamics and detail but little stereo depth	16-bit	•	•	•	•	•	•	132
▲ Onkyo DX-750	350	<b>VG</b> This is a big, bold and very dramatic-sounding player that offers a highly vivid view of all musical styles.	NPC Bitstream	•	•	•	•	•	•	141
Onkyo DX-C110	350	<b>G-</b> A big and beefy 6-disc carousel that strides confidently through rock and pussyfoots around gentle ballads	Bitstream	•	•	•	•	•	•	132
▲ Philips CD732	140	<b>A+</b> A cross between Philips CD690 and CD920 is no more technically accomplished but encourages a very lively and entertaining sound	SAA7341	•	•	•	•	•	•	128
Philips CD740	170	<b>A</b> One of several Philips players using a hybrid of DAC technologies. Still sounds insufferably boring, however.	Hybrid	•	•	•	•	•	•	139
Philips CD750	200	<b>A+</b> The costliest player in Philips range and the last to use its BS DAC lacks a sense of integration and stereo focus.	PDM Bitstrm	•	•	•	•	•	•	137
Pioneer PD-S503	200	<b>A</b> The cheapest Legato Link player yet but another that sounds unpredictable and generally hard work.	PFM Bitstrm	•	•	•	•	•	•	139
▲ Pioneer PD-S703	300	<b>G+</b> Legato Link and bitstream are combined into a cheaper IC though the player sounds as manipulative and intriguing as ever.	PFM bitstrm	•	•	•	•	•	•	137
▲ Pioneer PD-S901	500	<b>G+</b> The very refined but confident, crisp and powerful sound of the '901 snatches Pioneer's LLC concept from the jaws of defeat	PFM Bitstrm	•	•	•	•	•	•	119
▲▲ Quad 67	790	<b>E</b> Deceptively sleek in appearance but with a powerful, fluid and captivating sound reminiscent of Meridian's 206.	Crystal BS	•	•	•	•	•	•	124
Rotel RCD-940BX	230	<b>A-</b> A sea-change in transport and DAC technology lies behind the most untidy-sounding and irritating player to emerge from Rotel.	Hybrid	•	•	•	•	•	•	137
▲ Rotel RCD-945AX	230	<b>G</b> Based on the same CD-player-on-a-chip as Philips CD690 but with improved execution and build.	SAA7341	•	•	•	•	•	•	124
▲▲ Rotel RCD-965BX	300	<b>E</b> An exceptionally refined bitstreamer: transparent, exquisitely detailed and powerfully emotive. A landmark player	PDM Bitstrm	•	•	•	•	•	•	100
Rotel RCD-965BX Discrete	375	<b>G-</b> Featuring a new and discrete analogue output stage, this revamped '965BX lacks the poise of its forebear.	Bit Stream	•	•	•	•	•	•	141
Sansui CD-X317	250	<b>A</b> Not in the same class as older CD-X311 mkII. Same technology but the sound is neither as responsive or engaging	MASH/PWM	•	•	•	•	•	•	107
Sansui CD-X617	350	<b>A</b> This 'double-DAC' version of the CD-X317 is more impressive, sounding light and tizzy with pop but dull with classical CD's	MASH/PWM	•	•	•	•	•	•	112
Sansui CD-Alpha 717DR	1560	<b>G+</b> A beautifully constructed if rather dated flagship player with an equally sedate and unadventurous sound.	MASH/PWM	•	•	•	•	•	•	124
▲▲ Sherwood CD-3020R	130	<b>G</b> Although this budget wonder has little respect for musical convention, what emerges is still remarkably entertaining	NPC bitstrm	•	•	•	•	•	•	119
▲ Sherwood CD-5010R	160	<b>G+</b> A warm, detailed and enjoyable performance from a solidly built but affordable package.	PDM Bitstrm	•	•	•	•	•	•	124

# CD players continued

Product	£Price	Comments	DAC type	Electrical digital output	Optical digital output	Headphone socket	Track entry keypad	Issue No.
Sherwood CDC-5030R	200	A- The replacement for the successful 5-disc CDC-5010R sounds messy, disjointed and generally unpleasant. A great disappointment	Bitstream	•	•	•	•	132
Sony CDP-312	150	G Something of a rough diamond, offering a raft of features and good build but a decidedly technicolour sound.	PLM bitstrm	•	•	•	•	139
Sony CDP-C345	230	A+ Sony's Hybrid Pulse DAC sounds great in the CDP-311 but in this 5-disc carousel it provides a mere skeleton of a performance	PLM Bitstrm	•	•	•	•	132
Sugden SDT-1	850	A Bearing in mind Sugden's SDA-1 converter lies at the heart of this player, its unpredictable performance is disappointing	16-bit	•	•	•	•	119
Teac CD-P3500	200	A A well-meaning attempt to pare-down the CD-P4500 results in a similar looking player with a thoroughly uninspiring sound	PDM Bitstrm	•	•	•	•	112
▲ Teac CD-P4500	280	G TEAC's first genuine 1-bit player its sound described as having a certain 'organic warmth', very composed and easy-going.	PDM Bitstrm	•	•	•	•	107
Teac VRDS-10	770	A+ A basic analogue stage compromises the potential of TEAC's superb engineering and digital electronics. Lacks bass energy	DAC7	•	•	•	•	119
Technics SL-PG460A	160	A Sadly this player lacks the fire of Technics' earlier budget wonders. It looks similar but sounds terribly apathetic.	MASH/PWM	•	•	•	•	139
Yamaha CDX-670	290	G- Yamaha has retained the CDX-660 casework but cut costs with a new multi-task IC that's not entirely de-bugged.	PDM Bitstrm	•	•	•	•	124
Yamaha CDX-880	340	A+ A very well-built player with an appropriately tidy and composed sound. Sadly there's no heart or soul to bind it all together.	Bit Stream	•	•	•	•	141



## CD transports and DACs

A CD player can be split into two basic components; the disc drive or transport, and a device which turns the digital bitstream coming off the disc into an analogue audio signal. This is called a digital to analogue convertor or DAC. Although most players are contained in a single box, expensive players are usually two box affairs.

Although many of these units will be purchased as matching pairs, a DAC can also be

used to upgrade an existing CD player. Thus an early machine with a satisfactory transport can be rejuvenated by adding an outboard DAC.

The columns on the right indicate the facilities available on a transport or DAC. Remote control is self explanatory. The existence of electrical and/or optical digital in and outputs is pretty fundamental to transports and DACs, as a rule electrical outputs are the most desirable. Class 1 transports are those with an output whose crystal clock accuracy that's

better than ± 50ppm (parts per million), certain DACs won't lock onto transports with a lower clock accuracy. DAC type shows the specific convertor chip employed. In much the same way that an amp's output is not indicative of its sound quality, the chip used in a DAC isn't the only determining factor in a CD player's sound. Phase inversion in the digital domain can make quite a big difference if you've got a high resolution system and golden ears.

▲▲ Best Buy  
▲ Recommended

## CD transports

Product	£Price	Comments	Remote control	Electrical digital output	Optical digital output	Class 1	Issue No.
▲ Arcam Delta 250	750	G+ Arcam's best effort yet is a new design based on the Philips CDM9 transport; specification includes Sync Lock facility.	•	•	•	•	130
▲ Counterpoint DA-11E	1495	VG By rights this transport should be highly incompatible yet it delivers a remarkably vivid and natural sound.	•	•	•	•	130
▲ Meridian 200	895	G+ Broadly compatible and offering a light, fresh and very bubbly sound that is both natural, engaging and unfatiguing	•	•	•	•	96
TEAC P-2	3500	G Beautifully styled and constructed but sound is bleached and generally less inspiring than that of the P-10	•	•	•	•	96
TEAC P-2s	4300	A+ The latest version of Teac's luxury P-2 transport sounds as over-engineered as it looks.	•	•	•	•	130
▲ Theta Data Basic	1990	G+ A mild-mannered transport capable of marvellous results with lively-sounding outboard converters.	•	•	•	•	130
Wadia 8	3195	G Includes a budget version of Teac's VRDS mechanism in a fancy case; just too expensive for the performance on offer.	•	•	•	•	130

## DACs

Product	£Price	Comments	DAC type	Electrical dig output	Optical digital output	Phase invert	Issue No.
▲▲ Arcam Black Box 50	450	VG A very measured and sophisticated sound from a DAC that leaves plenty in reserve to accommodate future upgrades.	Hybrid	•	•	•	127
Arcam Delta Black Box 500	750	A+ A very sophisticated unit equipped with Sync Lock and discrete DAC circuitry. Early samples sounded restrained and grubby.	Bit Stream	•	•	•	136
▲ Audio Alchemy DAC-in-the-Box	200	G Despite its slightly veiled sound this giveaway DAC may still rescue the oldest of players from obsolescence.	18-bit	•	•	•	127
Audiolab 8000DACmkII	750	G Just as smooth and refined as its predecessor yet, sadly, still manages to obscure the passion or fire of music.	DAC7	•	•	•	127
Audio Note DAC 1	600	G An oddball DAC with manual de-emphasis switching. Needs a high preamp input impedance if bass is not to suffer.	20-bit	•	•	•	127
AVI S2000MD	549	G Despite using a very different chipset, the S2000MD sounds as civilised and refined as AVI's other digital separates.	16-bit	•	•	•	136
▲ Cambridge Audio DACMagic-1	150	VG Ridiculously under-priced, this DAC is better suited to high-end transports than the budget players it was intended to partner.	Hybrid	•	•	•	136
DPA Digital Little Bit II	400	G A new on-board mains filter promotes a smoother and richer sound at the expense of some life and vitality.	SAA7350	•	•	•	127
▲ DPA Digital Bigger Bit	695	G With either P-10 or Meridian 200 transports it delivers a very taut and dynamic sound, bathed in an open acoustic	DAC7	•	•	•	103
Kinshaw Overture	235	A- A neat enough package that's infested with a variety of technical bugs and severely chastised on audition.	Hybrid	•	•	•	136
▲ Kinshaw Perception	745	VG A two-box converter that sounds loud, quick and very dynamic without tripping over complex material. A good 'un.	Hybrid	•	•	•	136
▲ Meridian 563	695	G+ Warmer but no less detailed than the earlier 200-series, the 563 really comes into its own with top-flight CD transports.	Crystal	•	•	•	127
Meridian 606 DAC7	1350	G By refining the 203's sound further Meridian have also tempered its vibrancy and 'life'. Fickle with other transports	DAC7	•	•	•	101
Micromega Duo BS2	600	G Has a tendency to sound light, airy and 'fast' but it can also become a little hard or - fatiguing with some digital outputs	SAA7321	•	•	•	101
Micromega Microdac	300	A+ Described as a modest but entertaining performer, achieving its sweetest balance with Arcam's D170.3 transport.	SAA7321	•	•	•	113
▲ Mission DAC5	300	G+ Another modest DAC but one capable of a lean but clean and detailed sound that's typical of the DAC7 breed.	DAC7	•	•	•	113
▲ Musical Fidelity Tubalog	499	G+ The animated character of the Tubalog ensures it's a great upgrade on budget CD players.	18-bit	•	•	•	127
▲ Pink Triangle Ordinal	750	E The cheapest dual-differential DAC7 converter available. Offers interchangeable digital filters and top-flight sound quality.	DAC7	•	•	•	136
▲ QED Digit	139	G+ Bearing in mind its expressive but very forgiving performance the Digit is almost embarrassingly cheap	PDM Bitstrm	•	•	•	113
▲ QED Digit Reference	425	G+ No great advance over the basic QED Digit yet its enthusiastic sound is more than competitive at the price.	Bit Stream	•	•	•	136
Select Systems Dacula	400	G The overly warm and heavy bass of this DAC is quite atypical of the Crystal Bit Stream DAC.	Crystal	•	•	•	127
▲ Sugden SDA-1	749	G+ A pleasant surprise from the fuddy-duddies of audio, judging by its 'masses of high resolution detail and tremendous dynamics'	TDA1541	•	•	•	113

# DACs continued

Product	£Price	Comments	DAC type	Electrical dig output	Optical digital output	Phase invert	Issue No.
Thule Audio DAC-200	799	<b>A</b> A good first effort from Thule even though its fizzy and over-eager sound could do with house-training.	DAC7	•	•	•	136
Woodside DAC1	909	<b>G</b> Fine but slightly dated and costly package in performance terms - but flexible, musical and well built	16-bit	•	•		87
▲ Woodside DAC2	509	<b>G+</b> Offering a sharp and dynamic sound, all the more captivating for its lack of graininess and 'tizz'. A reliable upgrade	16-bit	•			101

# Transport/DAC combos

Product	£Price	Comments	DAC type	Electrical dig output	Optical digital output	Remote control	Track entry keypad	Variable output	Headphone socket	Issue No.
▲ Arcam Delta 250/Black Box 50	1200	<b>VG</b> A very sophisticated combination that sounds silky-smooth without appearing soft or sugar-coated. A bargain two-box player.	Hybrid	•	•	•	•			133
Audio Alchemy DDS/DTI/XDP/PS2	2047	<b>A+</b> A multi-box combination with a Bit Stream DAC that is fundamentally more inspiring than its partnering transport.	DAC7	•	•		•			120
A'meca Mephisto/T'chord Pulsar	3595	<b>VG</b> Hailing from two independent companies but often sold as a pair, this duo combines style with a highly composed and tactile sound.	Hybrid	•	•					144
▲ California Audio Labs Delta/Alpha	2899	<b>VG</b> Equipped with a triode-based output stage, this innovative combination sounds both luxurious and larger-than-life.	Crystal	•	•	•				144
Counterpoint DA-11E/DA-10E	3790	<b>A</b> Despite an earlier DA-11E transport having scored a hit, this revised version sounded harsh and fatiguing.	Interchangeable	•	•	•				144
▲ Cyrus Discmaster/Dacmaster	1900	<b>G+</b> A powerful-sounding and perhaps slightly heavy-handed combination that cuts right to the heart of its music.	20-bit	•	•					133
DPA Digital T1/PDM 256	3890	<b>G</b> A highly advanced duet with adjustable dither facility. Sadly its different settings only usher-in different compromises.	Bit Stream	•	•	•				133
▲ EAD T-1000/DSP-1000	2195	<b>VG</b> A two-box player based on Pioneer's Stable Platter CD transport. Its music always sounds fast, furious and fascinating.	20-bit	•	•	•				120
Linn Karik/Numerik	2572	<b>G+</b> A new 20-bit DAC and revised transport have cleaned-up this pair leaving a performance that is perhaps a little too dry and humourless.	20-bit	•	•		•			144
Meridian 200/263	1390	<b>G</b> Now updated with Crystal Bit Stream technology, this popular duet has unfortunately lost much of the charm and poise of the original.	Bit Stream	•	•					120
Meridian 500/563	1670	<b>A+</b> Combined with its own 500 transport, the recommended 563 sounds disappointingly thin, brash and uncomfortable.	Crystal	•	•	•				133
▲ Meridian 602/606	3100	<b>VG</b> Meridian's top-of-the-range two-box player looks and sounds both distinctive and elegant, the perfect partner for a cultured system!	DAC7	•	•	•	•			120
▲ Monarchy Audio DT-40A/M-33	3090	<b>VG</b> An intriguing combination that provides a beefy and enthusiastic performance via its balanced AES/EBU connection.	20-bit	•	•		•			133
PT Cardinal/DaCapo/DC PSU	3700	<b>G+</b> Preferred with its 22-bit filter option, the DaCapo sounds warm and communicative but over-polished compared to the PT Ordinal.	Bit Stream	•	•	•				144
Proceed PDT3/PDP3	5214	<b>G+</b> The third in a series of unusual transport/DAC combinations and a pairing that retains a powerful, confident and rugged sound	20-bit	•	•	•				120
▲ PS Audio Lambda/Ultralink Two	4900	<b>VG</b> In direct contrast with its appearance, this duet positively sparkles with colour and resonant detail	20-bit	•	•	•				133
▲ Teac VRDS-T1/D-T1	950	<b>G</b> Superb quality engineering at an affordable price with a performance that is equally tidy and composed.	Bit Stream	•	•	•				144
▲ Teac P-700/D-700	1500	<b>VG</b> They may lack the resolution of high-end colleagues but still sound warm, bubbly and perpetually entertaining.	20-bit	•	•	•				120
Teac P-2s/D-2	6000	<b>A-</b> Teac's VRDS statement looks a million dollars but sounds rather thin and uninviting. A great disappointment.	18-bit	•	•	•	•			133
Theta Data Basic/Cobalt 307	2696	<b>G+</b> A cautious and slightly over-refined combination that fails to make the best of either component.	Hybrid	•	•	•				133



## DAT players

**D**AT, or digital audio tape, has been on the market for quite some time now but has never really 'made it' as a consumer medium, probably due to the fact that very little prerecorded software has been made available. In the last year or so it has begun to carve itself a niche at the top end of the market replacing reel

to reel tape recorders as the audiophile's tape based medium.

The DAT standard specifies a 48kHz sampling rate, which is higher than CD, so direct copying in the digital domain is only possible on those machines with dual sampling frequencies, ie 48kHz and 44.1kHz. Some machines also record at 32kHz

to give a longer recording time for a given length of tape, this is shown in the LP mode column.

The optical and electrical in/outputs in the column headings are for digital signals, analogue in/outputs are universal. The AES/EBU and S/PDIF socketry is for connection to professional components such as mixing desks.

## DAT players

Product	£Price	Comments	Remote control	Optical in/out	Electrical in/out	AES/EBU in/out	S/PDIF in/out	Issue No.
JVC XD-Z1010TN	900	<b>A+</b> Ambitious but ultimately disappointing deck with an opaque musical delivery and more features than you can shake a stick at	•	•	•	•		111
Panasonic SV-3700	1111	<b>A</b> Slick, powerfully equipped, this pro DAT has a clear, quick and colourful sound somewhat lacking in weight and substance		•			•	111
Tascam DA-30	1199	<b>A+</b> Interesting pro DAT deck with solid, tangible sound quality which is nevertheless lacking in analysis	•				•	111

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# Headphones

There are a variety of different approaches to headphone design. Amongst the more expensive models, electrostatic drivers are used in open-backed phones. The majority of these come with some form of transformer which usually takes the signal from the speaker terminals on the amplifier, but some can run from a pair of tape out sockets.

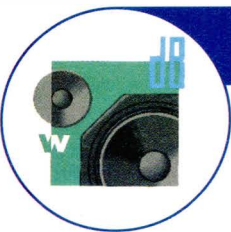
The more down to earth (see affordable) models feature dynamic, or moving coil, drivers in circular open or closed backed designs. The advantage of open backs seems to be a correspondingly open sound, but one can also of course hear external noises. Closed-back designs are useful in situations where it is necessary to block out background noise, but they aren't

generally as good sonically.

Another means of distinguishing different types is the way they sit on your head. There are three styles: circumaural models enclose the ear and rest on the side of the head; supra-aural designs feature a flat pad which presses on the outer ear (pinna); and intra-aurals rest inside the ear itself, and are popular with personal stereos.

## Headphones

Product	£Price	Comments	Type	Open back	Closed back	Dynamic	Electrostatic	Issue No.
▲ AKG K240 Monitor	82	<b>G</b> Something of a classic, these AKGs are very user friendly in all respects; sonically on the warm side of neutral	Circumaural	•				63
▲ AKG K280 Parabolic	117	<b>G+</b> A very revealing and unusual twin driver design that uses the same principle as a satellite dish to beam sound into the ear	Circumaural	•				63
▲ AKG K340	191	<b>E</b> Heavyweight cans in most respects, the K340 with its electrostatic tweeter is a very revealing headphone	Circumaural		•			75
▲ AKG K400	118	<b>VG</b> Comfortable over long sessions. Sound is exquisitely detailed, dynamic and uncoloured	Supra-aural	•				121
▲ AKG K500	138	<b>G+</b> Open and clear, they reproduced music with impressive definition, balance is on the light side but transparency is high	Circumaural	•				111
▲ AKG K1000	646	<b>E</b> One of the best dynamics on the market, hooks directly to speaker outputs and makes much of the competition sound lame	Extra-aural	•	•	•	•	99
▲ Audio-Technica ATH-910	90	<b>G</b> The closed-back 910s are an improvement on the 909s with a nice rhythmic quality rarely found with headphones	Circumaural		•			55
▲ Beyer DT311	49	<b>A+</b> Uncharacteristically tight, unrefined sound quality from otherwise well engineered 'phone	Supra-aural	•				133
▲ Beyer DT411	69	<b>G</b> A reasonable but not very thrilling headphone that doesn't really offer enough at the price	Supra-aural	•				111
▲ Beyer DT911	219	<b>VG</b> Probably too revealing for many headphone amps these are very subtle and fine if expensive cans	Circumaural	•				111
▲ Jekyllin Float Electrostatic	399	<b>E</b> These electrostatics have an openness of sound rarely found in the breed, with good dynamic range to boot	Circumaural	•			•	55
▲ Jekyllin Float Model 1	75	<b>G+</b> Whilst very unusual in appearance, the Floats give remarkable sound quality and openness at a reasonable price	Circumaural	•				55
▲ Jekyllin Float Model 2	99	<b>G+</b> Helmet shaped and pretty unflattering but open sounding and comfortable in the long term. te lack of adjustment	Circumaural	•				63
▲ JVC HA-D690	40	<b>A</b> Competent but rather undistinctive cans, a bit middle of the road and well suited to aggressive sources	Supra-aural		•			111
▲ JVC HA-D910	65	<b>A</b> Broadly acceptable if unexciting design with low level losses and some colourations	Circumaural		•			121
▲ Pioneer SE-400D	37	<b>G-</b> Acceptable if unexciting all-rounder, with good long-term comfort levels.	Supra-aural		•			133
▲ Ross RCH-300CD	17	<b>P</b> In-lead controls are the highlights of this shoddy, sometimes aggressive sounding design.	Supra-aural		•			133
▲ Sennheiser HD320	45	<b>E</b> Superb value: articulate, accurate and musically effective, but location on ears can be uncertain.	Supra-aural	•				133
▲ Sennheiser HD440 II	38	<b>A+</b> Still the one by which others at the price are measured, though now slightly leaden sounding, cold treble	Supra-aural	•				121
▲ Sony MDR-CD1000	200	<b>G+</b> A fine sounding and comfortable headphone that's likely to work well with most sources	Circumaural		•			111
▲ Sony MDR-CD450	45	<b>G-</b> Fair acoustic isolation and comfortable circum-aural construction, moderate sound quality	Circumaural		•			133
▲ Sony MDR-CD550	60	<b>G+</b> A very competent headphone, creates a remarkable sense of space for a closed back design and sounds natural to boot	Circumaural		•			99
▲ Sony MDR-CD750	90	<b>G+</b> Reasonably comfortable and eminently listenable these Sonys have characteristically good bass power and relaxed hf	Circumaural		•			111
▲ Stax Gamma pro/SRD-X pro	678	<b>E</b> The Gamma pros are like a stethoscope for your hi-fi, revealing subtleties that many loudspeakers fail to resolve	Circumaural	•				63
▲ Stax Lambda Signature/SRM-T1	1644	<b>E</b> The Signature when combined with the SRM-T1 valve driver must be the most transparent headphone available	Circumaural	•				72
▲ Stax SR Gamma	239	<b>G+</b> The next model down the Stax range from the Lambda, the Gamma is an excellent headphone with little to criticise but the price	Circumaural	•				55
▲ Stax SR Lambda Pro/SRD-7SB	674	<b>G+</b> An industry reference, frighteningly revealing, bringing across more information than loudspeakers costing twice as much	Circumaural	•				55
▲ Stax SR Lambda Pro/SRM-1	1239	<b>E</b> Extracts layers of information that other headphones only hint at. The SRM-1 has more edge than the SRM-T1	Circumaural	•				75
▲ Technics RP-F10	100	<b>A</b> Another very comfortable sealed model, modest sound isolation and uneven sound favouring bass	Circumaural		•			121
▲ Vivanco SR606	40	<b>G+</b> Although slightly overblown at times, this model is easy on the ears and essentially enjoyable.	Circumaural	•				133



# Loudspeakers

Last item in the hi-fi chain, to some extent the loudspeaker is merely the slave of what has gone before, capable only of reproducing a signal as good as it is fed. Nevertheless the distortions (colorations and stereo effects) introduced by loudspeakers (and rooms) tend to be more immediately obvious than those anywhere else in the chain, so careful choosing according to taste is very important.

The average loudspeaker consists of a smallish

enclosure, much of which may have begun life as part of a tree, plus a couple of drive units hidden behind a removable grille. Inside the box lurks a simple electrical circuit known as a crossover, which divides the incoming (full range) signal into the right bits for the drivers to handle. Variations on the above formula are specifically identified in the entries. The designer's primary task is to balance the 'sensitivity' of the loudspeaker (how loud it goes for a given electrical input) against the

bass extension (how low does it go), shown as 'bass from', for the given box size. After that such subtleties as coloration (or lack of it) and dispersion come into the equation.

Careful placement of the loudspeakers within the room is as important as the initial choice of model. See siting columns for guidance. For good stereo they need to be more or less the same distance from nearby walls. Models not ticked as 'floorstanding' will require rigid stands.

## Loudspeakers

Product	£Price	Comments	Size: HxWxD (cm)	Bass from (Hz)	Sensitivity (dB)	Site in free space	Site close to wall	Floorstanding	Issue No.
▲ Acoustic Energy Aegis 1	452	<b>G</b> Rich and slightly heavy balance doesn't mask fine mid/treble coherence and transparency. Entry level for all-metal drivers	39x21x26	28	84	•			118
▲ Acoustic Energy AE1	950	<b>G</b> Amongst the best miniatures around, shows exceptional mid focus and coherence, but is pricey and could be more agile.	29.5x18x25	48	84	•			102

## Loudspeakers continued

Product	£Price	Comments	Size: HxWxD (cm)	Site close to wall Sensitivity (dB) Bass from (Hz)	Site in free space Sensitivity (dB)	Floorstanding	Issue No.
▲ Acoustic Energy AE3	1650	<b>G+</b> Solid, authoritative and impressively accurate — if a shade ponderous and slow	63x26.5x37	23 85	•	86	
▲▲ Allison AL100	100	<b>A</b> Loud and lively budget wall-mount is bigger and beefier than most of the competition, if lacking some subtlety and refinement	33.5x24x21.5	30 87	•	94	
Allison AL105	170	<b>A-</b> Pretty enough in appearance, sonically the AL105 doesn't really make the grade at the £150 asking price	37x24x21	45 87	•	78	
▲ Allison AL110	220	<b>G-</b> Compact bookshelf model is a little dry and mid forward, but bass is extended and solid	40x24.5x22.5	28 86	•	102	
Allison AL120	420	<b>A</b> Pretty well balanced if slightly mid forward, but sound quality is a little disappointing for the price	63x28x27	30 88	•	98	
Allison MS 200	220	<b>A-</b> Small and solid as a brick, this micro-miniature has limited bass and bright balance, but sounds agile and communicative	25.5x14.5x15	50 85	•	106	
▲ Apogee Caliper Signature	3995	<b>G+</b> Power hungry full range ribbon panels have remarkable transparency and delicacy, loudness and 'grunt' are a bit lacking	122x70x6.5	30 81	•	81	
▲ Arcam Delta 2	300	<b>G</b> Pretty luxury compact sounds a shade forward and coloured but has dynamic and lively bass for its size	37.5x22.5x27.5	40 87	•	94	
ATC SCM20	1461	<b>G+</b> Massively built, invariably informative but the rather forward presentation can be uncomfortable	44x24x31	28 82	•	86	
▲ Audio Note AN-E/B	1300	<b>G+</b> Lovely coherence, great midband dynamics and transparency, extended bass and high sensitivity — pity it's so darn ugly!	80x36x28	20 91	•	106	
▲ Audio Note AN-J/B	799	<b>G+</b> Light damping and local unevenness adds some coloration, but doesn't spoil the very lively, dynamic and coherent sound	58.5x33x24.5	25 90	•	110	
Audio Physic Tempo	2000	<b>G</b> Tall and unusually styled floorstander has stunning stereo precision but suspect in-room bass tuning	107x22x28-46	28 86	•	143	
▲ Audiovector 3X	1500	<b>VG</b> Monolithic floorstander has a restrained but time-coherently informative sound plus a fine in-room balance	103x22x27-35	20 88	•	143	
Aura SP50	400	<b>A</b> Two very tasty drivers rather outclass the cabinetwork; a capable but slightly dull compact stand mount	40x22x25	30 87	•	126	
B&W 2003	190	<b>A-</b> Flashy and assertive ghetto blaster styling is not reflected in the rather bland, if well balanced sound	43x21x25	30 88	•	122	
▲ B&W DM600i	180	<b>A+</b> Smart cosmetics and a very even balance overall, but dynamically rather bland; amplifier current demands are quite high	35x20.5x25	25 88	•	135	
B&W DM610i	250	<b>A</b> Large bookshelf model has fine bass extension and a smooth, well balanced but slightly heavy and laid back sound	49x23.5x31	28 89	•	141	
▲ B&W DM620i	399	<b>A+</b> Good material value, this compact floorstander has a beautifully voiced midband, less happy bass tuning	77x24x32	40 89	•	126	
▲ B&W Matrix 801	3500	<b>G+</b> Lacks the transparency of the best panels, and the drama of the best dynamics, but is something of an acoustic tour de force	77/99x56x43	<20 86	•	81	
▲ B&W Matrix 805	845	<b>G</b> Stylish, with remarkable imaging properties, good balance and low coloration, though less successful at musical communication	42x26x22.5	30 87	•	98	
▲ Bose 305	430	<b>G-</b> A bit of an oddball, fine dynamic liveliness and a good room match more than make up for the strange stereo imaging and treble	28x45x23	40 88	•	78	
Bose 401	500	<b>A</b> Cheaply built but distinctively styled semi-omni floorstander suffers from heavy midbass but still sounds lively and open	78.5x30x28.5	28 89	•	110	
Bose 901 VI	1650	<b>A</b> The pre-equalised multi-driver 901 is cleverly engineered to deliver exceptional loudness	33x54x32	28 89	•	86	
Boston Acoustics HD5	139	<b>A</b> Tiny and prettily shaped miniature has an attractive lack of boxiness, but is a little short of drama and dynamic drive	25x16x18.5	30 86	•	110	
▲ Boston Acoustics SW10	449	<b>G+</b> Clever powered subwoofer system integrates well and improves system loudness and power handling	50x28.5x42	35 NA	•	128	
▲ Canon S-30	180	<b>A-</b> Clever and unusual moulded design has attractive lively coherence, along with 'wide imaging stereo' effect	27x22.5x23.5	50 88	•	114	
▲ Canon S-50	350	<b>A+</b> Only a small cone miniature at heart, the fascinating styling and extended sweet spot feature make it utterly original.	30x24(diam)	48 84	•	102	
▲▲ Castle Chester	699	<b>G+</b> A brilliant throwback, using horn-type approach to provide startling midrange dynamics and coherence.	94x23x27	45 87	•	98	
▲ Castle Durham 900	299	<b>G</b> Lovely veneer and lots of engineering create a very upfront, coherent and exciting sound — maybe too much so for budget systems	40x21.5x24	45 89	•	135	
▲ Castle Howard	999	<b>G+</b> Ably fills the price/size/sound gap between Chester and Winchester; a spacious semi-omni with a rich, laid back balance	104x23x35	25 87	•	132	
▲ Castle Trent II	190	<b>A</b> Very classy finish for the price, plus a sound that passes muster without setting anything much alight	33.5x18x20	50 88	•	122	
▲ Castle Winchester	1499	<b>G+</b> Unconventional and beautifully crafted, large for its bass extension but engagingly agile and attractively open and airy	114x24x47	25 87	•	90	
Castle York	349	<b>A+</b> Pretty little real wood compact has an engaging transparency, good balance and fine timing, could do with more authority	43x22x26	30 86	•	110	
▲▲ Celestion 1	109	<b>A</b> Pretty basic performance but at a very basic price — it all sounds a bit scrappy and untidy, but its heart's in the right place	27.5x16x21	50 87	•	114	
▲▲ Celestion 3 MkII	130	<b>A+</b> Smooth and polished by budget speaker standards, if a bit laid back for some tastes	31x18.5x20	45 87	•	130	
Celestion CS135	139	<b>A-</b> Compact hideway passive subwoofer lacks serious bass extension; for high sensitivity speakers only	52x19x34	45 88	•	128	
▲ Celestion-15	389	<b>G</b> Big box and bang for your bucks, short on subtlety and control, but long on both enthusiasm and perceived vinyl wood grain	103x20.5x25.5	28 90	•	114	
Celestion 9	269	<b>A</b> Nicely presented and fair material value, with impressively flat bass-to-mid balance	49.5x20.5x24	30 89	•	102	
Celestion SL600Si	620	<b>G</b> Has certain remarkable qualities that some will find irresistible, but needs careful system and room matching	27x20x23	52 82	•	68	
Celestion SL6Si	429	<b>A+</b> This stereotype luxury compact can sound a bit dull and congested, but really opens up on Slate Audio stands; favours CD	37.5x20x25	30 86	•	94	
Celestion 300	1099	<b>G</b> Splendid bass extension and fine panel-like openness and transparency, but dynamics and timing are suspect, balance very laid back.	100x21x31	<20 86	•	118	
Dawn Audio Chorus FS	698	<b>G</b> Compact floorstander with superb coherence but rather forward midband. Would suit smaller rooms best	91x26x21	30 86	•	11	
▲▲ Epos ES11	395	<b>G+</b> Integral baffle/driver to give a remarkable combination of low coloration, transparency and speed; bass is a bit shy	37.5x20x25	45 86	•	94	
▲ Epos ES14	595	<b>G+</b> Substantial stand mount delivers delightful midrange focus and delicacy with good bass control. System sensitive	49x22.5x29	25 85	•	98	
Epos ES25	1505	<b>G+</b> Handsome floorstander with fine intrinsic sound quality but a rather uneven and bass heavy balance	94x23.5x35	22 87	•	143	
Faraday Siren	375	<b>A-</b> Interesting if ugly high mass concrete cabinet is let down by imbalance of ageing driver combination	46x27x27	48 87	•	94	
▲ GLL Maxim	119	<b>A</b> Budget miniature offers well balanced strengths and few weaknesses at a very realistic price; a bit feeble	26x17x20	30 85	•	122	
▲ GLL Mezzo	160	<b>A</b> Good value budget compact has splendid midband but foxy extremes; dull treble could suit budget system well	37x21.5x23.5	40 89	•	141	
Harbeth LS3/5A	539	<b>A</b> Still a classic miniature, though not to every taste, and none the better for the recent update under our listening conditions	30.5x19x16	60 81	•	66	
▲ Harbeth HL-P3	479	<b>G</b> Very limited loudness but impressive full-range scale from uncoloured and very well balanced but time-smearing sub-miniature	31x19x17	23 82	•	118	
▲ Harman-Kardon LS 0200	150	<b>A</b> Laid back to a fault but entertaining nonetheless, and a big box for the price	38x21x29	30 86	•	130	
▲ Heybrook Prima	130	<b>A+</b> Neat and discreet miniature delivers fine coherence, pace and timing, though balance is a trifle forward and bass a bit light	29x19.5x18	50 86	•	110	
▲ Heybrook Quartet	555	<b>G</b> Beautifully presented and built large bookshelf model with good sensitivity and a lively, forward sound	41x24x23	48 89	•	122	
▲ Heybrook Sextet	1099	<b>G+</b> Engagingly coherent and highly analytical, partly due to distinct and not always comfortable upper-mid forwardness	96x27x20	25 85	•	102	
▲ Heybrook Solo	189	<b>A+</b> Discreetly styled, sounds a little untidy in both bass and treble but handles complex rhythmic material much better than most	36x23x22	28 87	•	90	
▲ Heybrook Trio	359	<b>G</b> Same drivers as HBS1 in prettier real wood enclosure give a sweeter and more forgiving if less committed sound	47x24x25	45 89	•	118	
Impulse H7	785	<b>A</b> Ultra-compact horn has fine midband contrasts but very little bass and detached treble; gives amplifiers a hard time	87x15x30	45 85	•	132	
Infinity Kappa 6.1i	995	<b>A</b> Good extension and laid back balance from high-tech drivers in classy cabinet, but bass is fat and slow and dynamics unconvincing	97x30x24	25 89	•	132	
Infinity Modulus	795	<b>A+</b> Carefully conceived and beautifully built. Undeniably attractive in the mid and treble, it failed to handle the bass as well	30x18x26	45 84	•	86	
▲ Infinity Reference 10	200	<b>A</b> An engaging and lively sound from a prettily finished and substantial small bookshelf size model	36x23x23	50 87	•	98	
▲ Infinity Reference 20	300	<b>A</b> Well presented and balanced with good bass control, but somehow lacks convincing cohesion and agility	46x27x24	27 88	•	102	
▲ Infinity Reference 30	400	<b>G</b> Budget price floorstander has good overall balance and bass extension, but is rather coloured and uneven	86x27x24	25 89	•	122	
Infinity Infinitesimal sub	499	<b>A</b> Cute but pricey amplified subwoofer is too small to deliver real bottom octave grunt	34x34x34	40 NA	•	128	
Jamo Cornet 40.3	130	<b>A</b> Pretty presentation and a strong box, but poor driver fixing. Decent if bright sound	32x20x22	48 86	•	130	

## Loudspeakers continued

Product	£Price	Comments	Size: HxWxD (cm)	Bass from (Hz)	Site Sensitivity (dB)	Site in free space	Floorstanding	Issue No
Jamo 447	500	A- Very prettily styled, but build and sound quality is disappointing for the price	81x19x29	40	89	•	•	138
Jamo 707	900	G- Superb styling and cosmetics but indifferent build and engineering quality; decent balance apart from detached bass	105x26x39	25	88	•	•	132
JBL Control 1 Plus	250	A Sub-miniature with forward midrange and real bass; highish price partly justified by near-indestructible Pro build	23x15.5x14	50	89	•		90
JBL L1	479	G Good power handling, decent transparency and deep but current hungry bass from a compact and solid enclosure	40x21x25.4	47	87	•		121
▲ JBL L20J	800	G+ Lovely if pricey bookshelf model has that old JBL magic, full of bounce and brio, needs a good quality stand and can sound a bit heavy	44x26x28	30	87	•		138
▲▲ JBL L90	1300	VG Large horizontal bookshelf model vindicates classic three-way 'studio monitor' format, with lively dynamic drive and fine balance	40x60x34	23	91	•		143
JBL ti1000	1500	G Ultra-engineered, beautifully crafted bookshelf model. Performance compromised by over enthusiastic midbass output from port	44x30x28	45	89	•		118
▲ Jordan JH400	590	A+ Piano finish hexagon has single full range driver and controversial sound, with uneven balance but delightful mid coherence	33x24x30.5	50	83	•		106
▲ JPW AP2	180	A Offers real wood veneer at a bargain price; performance is cleaner but broadly comparable to P1 Vinyl overall	43.5x25.5x26	45	86	•		106
▲ JPW AP3	225	A+ Pretty good stereo and well balanced overall it had its own character which is well suited to vinyl replay	52x25x29.5	57	90	•		46
▲▲ JPW Gold Monitor	80	A Great sound for pound value through bass and midband, but the top end's rather coarse	27x18x18	50	85	•		130
▲ JPW Minim	79	A- Very civilised but dynamically limited, the Minim is well suited to the smaller room and where limited loudness is acceptable	27.5x18x19.5	28	85	•		82
▲▲ JPW Mini Monitor	60	A- Ultra cheap Richer Sounds special is lightweight and short of welly, but a snip for surround sound use	27x18x17	50	85	•		122
▲▲ PW P1	170	A+ Longstanding design is remarkable material value (real wood etc) and sounds pretty good too — a touch aggressive maybe	43x26x24.5	40	87	•		141
▲▲ JPW P1 Vinyl	135	A A lot of highly competent loudspeaker for the price, with a safe sound that's unlikely to disappoint.	43.5x25.5x26	32	87	•		102
▲▲ JPW Sonata	115	A+ Well balanced and integrated, offers fine sound if limited bass and dynamic range, plus real tree wood at a nearly silly price	32x23x20	55	86	•		71
JPW Sonata Plus	135	A- This luxury variation on the redoubtable Sonata theme features a metal dome tweeter, and isn't the better for it	32x23x21	30	87	•		90
JPW Ruby 1	500	G Very pretty but pricey luxury metal-cone miniature has good, if slightly edgy balance	32x19x21	42	85	•		139
▲ JRT AD1	500	G+ A fair share of cosmetic deficiencies do little to spoil the impressive coherence and timing	59.5x28x36	28	86	•		86
▲ JRT AD1 Micro	389	G Delightful life and coherence, gives surprising impression of scale; some aggressive tendencies but very open to system tuning	28x17x21	50	87	•		94
▲ KAR Volante	600	G+ Beautiful real wood floorstander doesn't sound as big as it looks, sound is coloured but lightning fast and great fun	88x21x27	40	88	•	•	138
▲ KEF 104/2	1595	G+ A reference point for dynamics, preferred without KUBE, suited to many rooms. Good stereo, high sound level	90x28x41.5	50	92	•	•	60
KEF K120	169	A Physically pretty and sonically competent but undistinguished bookshelf size model has good sensitivity but limited extension	34x20.5x26	45	87	•		106
KEF Q30	349	A Fine focus from Uni-Q driver, but lacks drive and time coherence; acoustically smaller than it looks	73x19x29	44	88	•	•	126
KEF Q50	500	A Compact twin-driver floorstander with Uni-Q treble, and a rather midbass heavy overall balance	84x19x28	30	88	•	•	139
KEF Q80	569	A+ Uni-Q floorstander has good stereo and fine midband coherence, but bass lacks extension, drive and resolution	85x24.5x26.5	45	87	•	•	106
KEF Q90	739	A Generous floorstander has even balance and decent extension but fails to communicate excitement and involvement effectively	90x25x32	25	88	•	•	118
KEF AV1	2499	G- Awesomely built, finished and powerful subwoofer lacks the subtlety and unintrusiveness for top class hi-fi applications	43x56x50	<20	NA	•	•	128
▲ Kenwood LS-770G	260	G Impressively communicative bookshelf model has fine vigour, scale and dynamics, if not the smoothest sound around	48x27x25	25	89	•		106
▲ Kenwood LS-500G	500	G Japanese designed and built luxury compact delivers an invigorating and exciting sound; an interesting contrast to some lazier models	45x23x26	48	89	•		118
▲▲ Legend II	200	G Liveliness, coherence and fine information retrieval justifies the odd looking moulded baffle construction	37x21x30	48	88	•		122
▲ Linn Kaber	1298	G+ Dry, bright balance emphasises superb dynamic range and transient precision, but can sound unforgiving	89x19x29	25	85	•	•	118
▲ Linn Keilidh	595	G+ Stunning timing and coherence and awesome bass drive, especially with ceramic plinth; sounds a bit shut in	83x20x27.5	22	87	•	•	114
Living Voice Air Partner	11990	E Formidable horn design with astounding transparency, dynamics and speed. Its idiosyncracies are compensated by sheer energy	165x64x92	40	101	•	•	117
▲ Lumley Monitor Reference 3	895	G+ Lovely free stander suffers from indifferent bass alignment, but is fast, coherent, solid and very informative indeed.	87x27.5x28	30	90	•		106
Lumley Monitor Reference 4	375	A All metal diaphragm and real wood at fair price; balance uneven — upper mid forward with suspect bass tuning	36x17x23	44	86	•		126
Magneplanar SMGa	668	A Tonally 'rich', in the right room it proved a satisfactory musical experience	122x48x4.5	56	85	•	•	46
Meridian Argent 1	995	G+ Beautifully built, finished and shaped, has fine bass extension and virtual absence of 'boxiness'; needs a big amplifier	33x27x27	28	83	•		98
Meridian Argent 2	875	G Beautiful high-tech 'large compact' delivers extended, smooth and neutral sound with fair speed. Slate Audio stands essential	48.5x21x29.5	23	85	•		94
Meridian M30	950	A Pricey active speaker, easy on the ears and worth considering especially where space is at a premium	38.5x18x32	40	NA	•		46
Mirage M-890i	1075	G Intriguing 'bi-polar' (omnidirectional) design gives spacious, very smooth but rather heavy and laid back sound	103x25.5x20.5	20	84	•	•	143
Mission 731	130	A- Good looking and cleverly conceived high-tech miniature sounds best when driven hard; could have more brio	31.5x18x20	50	87	•		141
Mission 732	200	A- Attractive presentation but a rather dull and thick sounding speaker, and a tad pricey too	40x20x30	40	87	•		141
▲▲ Mission 733	300	A+ Stylish floorstander represents a lot of speaker for the money, and sounds pretty good too	86x20.5x31	45	87	•	•	139
Mission 751	300	A Attractive luxury miniature has great sonic potential, but our our review samples have been marred by sample variations	32x17x27	45	86	•		126
▲ Mission 752	500	G+ Brilliant style and packaging, great engineering and build, plus a sound quality that can give the 753 a run for its money	90x20x25	45	89	•	•	138
▲ Mission 753	700	G+ Gorgeous presentation and potential for open transparency. Floorstander with lots of drivers that gives lots of loudness	90x22x30.5	45	88	•	•	114
Monitor Audio MA200	200	A Cute but pricey sub-miniature sounds lively and entertaining but uneven and obviously coloured; best for small rooms	27x16.5x20.5	50	85	•		141
▲ Monitor Audio MA201	250	A+ Goodlooker with solid engineering sounds lively and coherent with plenty of power handling, but also a bit shut-in and coloured	40x22x26	40	89	•		135
▲ Monitor Audio MA202	450	G- Uneven but informative and easy-listening floorstander delivers decent scale from big vinyl box	89.5x22x28	28	88	•	•	139
Monitor Audio MA1200 Gold II	1200	G Pricey but classy floorstanding variation on MA800 theme; beautifully voiced midband, heavy midbass	93.5x17x27	28	85	•	•	122
▲ Monitor Audio Studio 6	800	A+ Pretty but pricey metal diaphragm compact has clear and transparent midband but is ultimately lacking in vim, vigour and drive.	35x22x25	45	86	•		118
Monitor Audio Studio 12	1000	G A beautiful looking compact floorstander, but sound and content are a bit on the small side for the price	97x16.5x21	28	86	•	•	143
▲ Mordaunt-Short MS05	110	A Tiny and hence bass light but fine voicing at a competitive price; could well suit the smaller room	26x17x18.5	50	86	•		141
▲ Mordaunt-Short MS10	130	A Hi-tech baby has fine bass/mid integrity but the top end is less appealing	30.5x18.5x21	50	86	•		130
Mordaunt-Short SW -1	150	A- Prettily finished and inexpensive passive subwoofer is only really useful with sub-miniature speakers	24x58x25	40	85	•	•	128
▲▲ Mordaunt-Short MS20	180	G Sober 'bookshelf' model uses hi-tech plastics to deliver a notably good midband at a very sharp price — a fine all round compromise	36.5x21.5x22	40	87	•		135
Mordaunt-Short MS50	540	G- Big value big box with fine engineering content and big lazy, laid back sound; lacks charisma	91x25x33	22	86	•	•	138
Morel 704 II	1000	G+ Classy compact three-way floorstander has firm, deep bass with a lively midband, but twin-tweeter treble is less satisfactory	80x23x21	20	87	•		143
Morel Bassmaster 602	1200	G+ Superbly built compact stand-mount, did well in listening tests but suffers (enjoys?) upper midband peak	24.5x40x22.5	25	84	•		114
▲▲ Musical Technology Kestrel	250	A+ Cute little metal cone floorstander brims with clever ideas; sounds very clear and clean if cautious	80x2-20x19	40	84	•		139
Musical Technology Eagle	1400	G+ Huge but very cleverly styled floorstanding two-way has massive low bass output but lowish midband sensitivity. Good material value	105x48x44	<20	84	•	•	143
NAD 801MM	100	A- A rather undistinguished sub-miniature with low sensitivity and indifferent sound quality	27x18x18	48	84	•		130
▲ NAD 804	320	A+ Good value compact floorstander sounds lively and coherent, but quite coloured due to uneven balance too	75x20x26	25	89	•	•	126
Naim IBL	895	G This tiny floorstanding wall mount delivers outstanding dynamics, speed and detail, marred by pronounced upper mid forwardness	80x18x15-20	30	84	•	•	94



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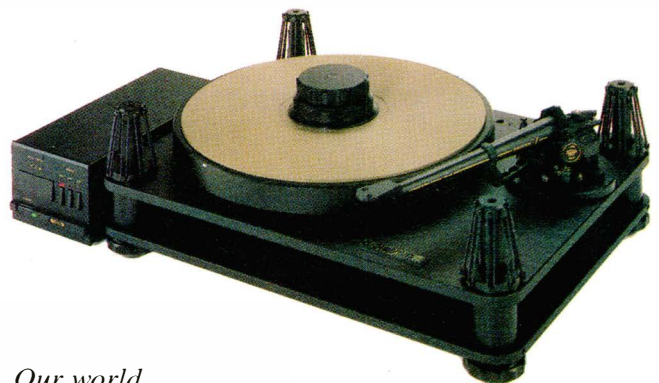
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## Loudspeakers continued

Product	£Price	Comments	Size: HxWxD (cm)	Bass from (Hz)	Sensitivity (dB)	Site in free-space	Site close to wall	Floorstanding	Issue No
▲ Naim SBL	1821	<b>VG</b> Clever multi-box enclosure gives big scale sound with small box agility. Lively and punchy — smoother but more up-front than before	88.5x26.5x16-27	25	87	•	•	•	143
▲ Neat Petite	525	<b>G+</b> Far from perfect, but one of the most entertaining and enjoyable speakers around, colorations notwithstanding.	30.5x20x18	33	86	•			102
Origin Live OL1B	290	<b>A+</b> Pretty little miniature delivers a punchy and dynamic midband, but costs quite a lot for the engineering on offer	31x18.5x22	45	89	•			135
▲ Origin Live OL2A	469	<b>G</b> Compact floorstander sounds open, transparent and evenly balanced; needs a big amp but enjoys hard driving	82x19x19	25	85	•	•	•	122
Origin Live OL1	499	<b>G</b> Luxury miniature has very good overall balance, sacrificing sensitivity to achieve remarkable bass extension for the box size	30.5x19x21	25	82	•			106
▲ Pioneer S-4UK	250	<b>A+</b> Latest version now balances pretty well, with a lively and coherent if bass light sound; dull packaging	37x21x27	42	88	•		no	139
▲ Polk LS50	800	<b>G</b> No enthusiast tweaks here, but plenty of power and beautiful overall balance from a good looking compact floorstander	84x23-27x29.5	25	90	•	•	•	138
Polk LS70	1200	<b>A+</b> High sensitivity and lots of loudness potential, but in-room balance has far too much midbass boom; mid and treble are very laid back	96x31x37	22	91	•	•	•	132
Polk RM 1000W	349	<b>A-</b> Not a true subwoofer at all, but rather the bass section of polk's elegant upmarket three box speaker system	31x52x33	45	90	•			128
▲ Professional Monitor Co LB1	998	<b>G+</b> Delightful smoothness and transparency, though bass extension and sensitivity are both limited	53.5x18x26	33	86	•			110
Professional Monitor Co AB1	1600	<b>G</b> Bulky stand-mount transmission line has lovely panel-like transparency, slightly shut in balance, and needs a big room	79x27x43	22	89	•			114
▲ Quad ESL-63	2384	<b>G+</b> This classic electrostatic may not be punchy in the bass, but has strengths that some can't live without	92x66x27	34	84	•	•	•	60
RATA Two-Way	1795	<b>G</b> Essentially the mid and top sections of the Three-Way, bass is very limited but fast and tight, while midband is dynamic and invigorating	46x32.5x25	50	92				143
▲▲ REL Strata	499	<b>G+</b> Outstandingly value and performance active subwoofer adds serious bass unintrusively to any small speaker system	52x42x31	<20	NA	•	•	•	128
▲ Rega EL8	298	<b>G</b> Kite drivers in compact floorstander give more bass but a shade less coherence; good for small rooms and budget systems	75x16.5x21	55	86	•			122
▲▲ Rega ELA	500	<b>G-</b> Classy new styling for one of the original compact floorstanders — lovely midband life and coherence if a bit bright and lightweight	84x20x20-31	40	87	•			139
▲▲ Rega Kite	198	<b>G</b> Has splendid timing and coherence, sounds very explicit and informative, if a bit bright and short of grunt	31x19x20	50	87	•			114
▲▲ Rega XEL	1040	<b>VG</b> Looks good, measures well and sounds great too; balance is bright but even, with delightfully bass-to-mid coherence and timing	102x21x33	40	89	•			132
▲▲ Rogers LS2a/2	229	<b>G</b> Balance is a bit warm and rich but 2a/2 has delightful mid-to-treble coherence and transparency, and more welly than Mk1	35.5x23x22	30	84	•			106
Rogers LS4a/2	300	<b>A+</b> Civilised but a trifle lazy, this large bookshelf model hasn't quite the timing or agility to be particularly engrossing	43x25.5x25.5	25	86	•			110
Rogers LS6a/2	399	<b>G</b> Largish stand-mount is well built, measures well, good material value, but sounds a bit heavy and lacklustre	51x28x29.5	22	87	•			114
Rogers LS8a	499	<b>A+</b> A mixed bag, with plenty of scale and welly but lacking the subtlety, clarity and agility delivered by some rivals	89x25.5x25	48	91	•			102
▲ Rogers Studio 3	450	<b>G</b> Pricey LS3/5A-derived wall-mount sub-miniature is excitingly coherent if a bit lightweight; no real loudness capabilities	31x19x17	30	83	•			118
Rogers Studio 5	700	<b>G-</b> Luxury finish bookshelf size model has genuine monitoring capabilities, but can sound a little thin and unromantic	44x24.5x24.5	40	88	•			138
▲ Rogers LS3/5A + AB1	1200	<b>G+</b> Clever AB1 stand/subwoofer helps the classic 3/5A miniature monitor give its best shot. Loudness is limited but balance lovely	93x19x16.5	45	83	•	•	•	143
▲ Rogers Studio 7	880	<b>G</b> Latest variation on classic BBC-monitor theme looks old fashioned but has beautifully voiced, laid back sound	63x30.5x30.5	30	88	•			122
▲ Roksan Ojan 3	895	<b>G+</b> Squat, stylish and black, with unusual tweeter decoupling; great bass extension and flat but somewhat uneven balance	78x28x45	<20	85	•	•	•	132
Royd Topaz	173	<b>A+</b> Cheerful, articulate and essentially communicative miniature can also sound a trifle scrappy and shut in; well worth trying	30.5x20.5x19	50	87	•			114
▲▲ Royd Minstrel	229	<b>G</b> Imaginatively packaged super-slimline floorstander. Not much welly or loudness but fine coherence and timing; a bit bright	69x18x12-24	30	85	•	•	•	135
Royd Abbot	666	<b>A+</b> Engaging and dramatic dynamics and fine transient coherence are hampered by a rather coloured mid-forward balance	83x20x34	43	88	•	•	•	118
Ruark Templar	479	<b>A+</b> Compact floorstander with striking baffle has decent bass/mid but dull treble; could tame over-bright system	73x19x27	25	85	•	•	•	122
Ruark Talisman 2	700	<b>G</b> Less ideologically committed than some compact floorstanding rivals, its key strength lies in fine all round compromise	86x25x31	30	86	•	•	•	118
▲ SD Acoustics SD3	399	<b>G</b> Port firmly blocked, the new SD3 has the agility and charm of a quality miniature, with good bass extension but low sensitivity	38x19.5x29	25	83	•			106
▲ SD Acoustics SD5	1235	<b>G</b> Bass tuning and coherence suspect but forward midband is delightfully smooth; high class drivers include ribbon tweeter	112x20x30	30	86	•	•	•	132
▲ SD Acoustics SD1	1650	<b>G+</b> A large scale, airy and unusually detailed system with excellent dynamics. A warmer balance than original model	123.5x38.2x32	50	90	•	•	•	60
SD Acoustics Ribbon	2950	<b>G+</b> Amplifier sensitive, Ribbon is a lively and loud hybrid marred by some colorations; some like it, others don't	152x30x(15-30)	30	91	•	•	•	81
Shahinian Arc	1675	<b>G</b> Unusual and occasionally wonderful small floorstanding omni; too bright but exceptionally coherent and revealing	69x35x25	24	85	•	•	•	110
▲ Spendor S20	579	<b>G</b> Maintains Spendor's tradition for peerless mid-to-treble coherence and perspectives. Bass is rather unconvincing.	38x22x26	25	83	•			102
Spica Angelus	1295	<b>A</b> A little bass shy and soft in the bass and lower mid, otherwise tidy, extremely lively and fluid, if uneven overall	116.8x53.3x26	50	86	•	•	•	60
Spica TC50	649	<b>G</b> This triangular-profile 'grown up' miniature is a shade boxy and laid back but has good rhythmic and musical integrity	40.5x33x29	55	88	•			71
Spica TC50SE	849	<b>G</b> A heavily UK-modified TC50, the SE sounds less boxy and more spacious, but lacks some of the urgency of the standard model	40.5x33x29	55	88	•			71
▲ Systemdek System 937	600	<b>G</b> Compact real-wood floorstander incorporates transmission bass loading to give fine bass extension and an open midband	93x22.5x25	25	88	•	•	•	138
TDL NFM	120	<b>A-</b> A disappointing underperformer in our tests, at a price that's not very nice either	27x18x18	50	86	•			130
▲ TDL RTL3	400	<b>A+</b> Bargain price floorstander has rich, heavy and bright sound with good scale and fine basic neutrality	92x20x38	25	88	•	•	•	126
TDL Studio 0.5	499	<b>G</b> Tiny floorstanding transmission line has good agility but doesn't provide the coherence or even balance of Studio 1	55x20x30	40	85	•			94
▲ TDL Studio 1	699	<b>G</b> Genuinely extended bass from a compact enclosure, very detailed but a shade clinical and detached in presentation	76x23x33	25	84	•	•	•	78
▲ TDL Studio 1M	899	<b>G+</b> Transmission line helps bring the best from metal cone driver: lovely transparency and fine bass extension	81x23x33	<20	84	•	•	•	118
▲▲ Tannoy 631	150	<b>A+</b> High class miniature is beautifully balanced, open, unboxy and quite lively, if a bit short of real muscle	34x19.5x17	40	86	•			141
▲▲ Tannoy 632	190	<b>G</b> Clever cabinet shaping avoids boxiness and promotes focus and imaging; fine bass extension but tricky stand compatibility	41x14-24x23	25	87	•			135
▲▲ Tannoy 633	330	<b>A+</b> Compact floorstander with slammin' bass — real extension and coherence without boom — but dubious midband	74x24x23	<20	87	•	•	•	139
Tannoy 638	599	<b>G</b> Big value vinyl big box has pretty good balance and lots of loudness capability, but needs a good amp and bass isn't entirely convincing	94x16-29x27	25	90	•	•	•	138
Tannoy D500	1560	<b>G</b> Big luxury heavyweight has muscle and balance but a little short of poise and delicacy. Fine stereo but hard work for amps	96x16-30x35	20	90	•	•	•	143
▲ Tannoy Westminster	6000	<b>G+</b> These awesome horn loaded speakers are remarkably controlled and impressive, if only suited to a few pockets and rooms	Huge	38	96	•	•	•	Col
Technics SB-EX2	200	<b>A</b> Nicely presented, well built and decent size enclosure sounds solid but somewhat dull	48x23.5x27	20	86	•			98
▲ Thiel SCS	1069	<b>G+</b> Luxury piano-gloss compact sets class-leading standards for coherence and communication, can sound a shade dark and shut in	40x22x23	45	87	•			114
Thiel CS1.2	1219	<b>G</b> Elegant compact floorstander has fine balance and dynamic range, but transient timing and dynamics are less convincing	94x27x27	30	86	•	•	•	118
▲ Totem Model One	995	<b>G</b> Utterly delightful but exasperatingly expensive luxury miniature sets the benchmark for its size	31x16.5x23	28	86	•			122
Vandersteen 2Ce	1395	<b>G+</b> This compact American floorstander's elegant staggered baffle arrangement contributes to a refreshing freedom from boxiness	100x30.7x25.6	23	87	•	•	•	86
Visonik David 6001	163	<b>P</b> Sharp styling but the complex grillework worsens a sound which starts off with too much top and not enough bottom	20x12x13	130	87	•			74
▲▲ Wharfedale CRS3	89	<b>A+</b> Loads of fun — a remarkably coherent and lively performer at any price; pity it doesn't look prettier	38x22x18	50	88	•			122
Wharfedale Diamond V	130	<b>A</b> This miniature is smoother than most, but rather stodgy with it, inspiring little enthusiasm among our listeners	27x18x20	50	86	•			114
▲ Zyp A1	199	<b>A+</b> Cute metal cased micro-miniature is quite coloured but great fun, with surprising dynamics and fine wall-loaded room balance	22.5x14.5x13	30	85	•			110

## THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO BUYING REAL HI-FI



# Systems

**S**ystems is a generic title that we've chosen to describe any form of complete system package. Fundamentally what we're talking about here is midi and mini systems, you know those all singing all dancing, lights blazing systems that hi-fi snobs are allergic to. Sold on the basis of their ability to play virtually all mediums at the flick of a remote control switch stack systems offer a plethora of features, and the dearer the system the more complex they tend to

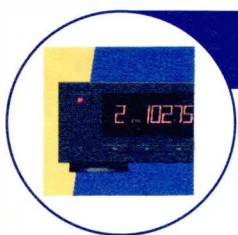
become. With things like double cassette decks, multi preset tuners, CD players and graphic equalisers supplied as standard the big boys of the stack world offer such luxuries as Surround Sound, separate chassis for different components and occasionally a record player. They usually have a few line inputs for extra sources and a few are available without loudspeakers. As the latter are often the weakest part of a stack system buying good quality speakers separately will bring

worthwhile improvements. The section headings for stack systems include size of the complete stack without speakers and rated output per channel — where a system has more than two channels this is indicated in the comments. Tuner presets and the existence of a remote control are self explanatory. A blob in loudspeakers shows that they supplied, an "o" indicates that they are optional. The final column is for those of you with records to play.

▲▲ **Best Buy**  
▲ **Recommended**

## Systems

Product	EPrice	Comments	Size: HxWxD (cm)	Rated output Watts	Remote control	Loudspeakers	Turntable	Issue No.
▲ Denon D110/S	870	<b>G</b> Nearly hi-fi from pretty but pricey silver stack; richer, fuller speakers would help	37x27x33	40	30	•	o	125
Goodmans System 700	600	<b>A</b> Separates flexibility and upgraeability in remote midi package; anodyne sound	69x35x37	50	20	•	•	125
▲ JVC Adagio G7	799	<b>A</b> Wondrous 2-speaker surround movie sound system, but a very uneven package elsewhere. Four by 20W output	42x28x28	20	40	•	•	125
▲ Kenwood HD-1000	1000	<b>E</b> Mini lifestyle system, well built with minimalist facilities and exacting performance standards all round	30x27x35	40	30	•	•	131
Marantz 1020	1000	<b>G</b> Component lifestyle system which is as elegant on audition as it is to look at	22x42x32	30	20	•	•	131
Onkyo L-909	1200	<b>G</b> Simple yet flexible lifestyle mini system suffers iffy cassette deck set-up, but otherwise satisfies	38x28x32	40	30	•	•	131
Philips FW91	999	<b>A+</b> Good looking and performing package rendered expensive by inclusion of DCC deck	37x26x32	60	30	•	•	125
▲ Technics SC-CH950	1000	<b>A+</b> Classy if rather bland allrounder includes useful Dolby Pro-Logic AV capabilities	42x27x34	60	39	•	•	125



## Tuners

**T**he radio medium operates at a much lower profile than TV, but in areas outside pop music the BBC service is the envy of the world. Live Prom concerts can rival all other sources from a hi-fi perspective.

Only the FM (VHF) bands give stereo hi-fi sound, though AM (MW & LW) are useful for certain transmissions in the UK.

Something of a hi-fi afterthought, tuners are often selected merely to match a chosen amplifier

cosmetically. However, the task they carry out is far from simple, combining the skills of RF (reception) and audio (signal processing) engineering. The importance of the former will depend on local reception conditions, but money invested in a high quality outside aerial system is well spent.

Tuners come in two basic types. Analogue models tune gradually (and usually manually) across the bands, and can have analogue or digital displays; they are often preferred for sound quality,

and are certainly best for AM bands. Digital tuners offer convenient automatic tune facilities and preset memories.

The 'Presets' column heading shows how many different frequencies a tuner can memorise for instant station access. FM, LW and MW shows which wavebands a tuner can access. 'Signal strength meters' are useful for aerial alignment. 'Automatic tuning' means that a tuner can seek out signals for you.

▲▲ **Best Buy**  
▲ **Recommended**

## Tuners

Product	EPrice	Comments	Presets	FM	LW	MW	Signal strength meter	Automatic tuning	Manual tuning	Issue No.
Aiwa XT-003	120	<b>A-</b> Economically designed and built in the UK, but trade-offs have a marked influence on FM and AM sound quality.	30	•	•	•	•	•	•	93
▲ Aiwa XT-950	150	<b>A</b> Decent enough performance all round given the modest price, though RF tweaks have limited value	24	•	•	•	•	•	•	129
Arcam Delta 280	350	<b>G+</b> Fine sound quality marred by mild synthesiser whine; RF performance only average, remote £60 extra	20	•	•	•	•	•	•	120
▲ Audiolab 8000T	700	<b>VG</b> Unusually combines fine sound quality and RF performance (inc AM); superb ergonomics are a joy to use	39	•	•	•	•	•	•	120
Aura TU-50	300	<b>G</b> Tonally neutral, but with rather poor imaging and a certain woodenness to the sound.	16	•	•	•	•	•	•	109
▲ Denon TU-260L	120	<b>G+</b> Bare minimum of features. Careful designwork promises a surprisingly open and vivacious sound, so don't overlook it!	20	•	•	•	•	•	•	93
▲ Denon TU-580RD	220	<b>G</b> Fine feature package including remote and RDS, plus excellent RF performance and decent sound quality	30	•	•	•	•	•	•	120
Harman Kardon TU9200	219	<b>A</b> The listening panel appreciated its liveliness, but found it a little muddled	32	•	•	•	•	•	•	109
▲ HarmanKardon TU9400	299	<b>G+</b> Striking in appearance and with a sound to match, it comfortably exceeded our expectations. On stereo FM it's HK's best yet.	24	•	•	•	•	•	•	93
Harman Kardon TU9600	499	<b>G</b> Good bass and detail, and good - perhaps slightly enhanced dynamics	24	•	•	•	•	•	•	109
JVC FX-362	140	<b>A-</b> Disappointing all round performance — watch out for aerial input overload in strong signal areas. Tuning knob unspecial	40	•	•	•	•	•	•	129
Kenwood KT2050L	150	<b>A-</b> Decent RF capabilities despite simple front end. Sounds a bit bright and ergonomics are a bit complex	30	•	•	•	•	•	•	129
Kenwood KT-3050L	170	<b>A</b> Excellent RF performance and plenty of features including RDS, but did sound rather ordinary under our conditions	39	•	•	•	•	•	•	120
▲ Linn Kremlin	1995	<b>E</b> Controversially good sound at a very high price. The reviewer's saving up but you should check it out for yourself	80	•	•	•	•	•	•	120
▲ Magnum Dynalab FT101	825	<b>G+</b> Although expensive for its fairly minimum set of facilities, its excellent sound makes up for what it lacks elsewhere	0	•	•	•	•	•	•	72
Marantz ST-53	170	<b>A+</b> Sweet sound could well satisfy audiophile sensibilities, but selectivity is not great	59	•	•	•	•	•	•	129
▲ Meridian 604	1350	<b>VG</b> Unique digital converter makes most sense in Meridian system context; smooth sweet sound with fine front end	30	•	•	•	•	•	•	120
▲ Naim NAT 01	1453	<b>E</b> There may be better sounding tuners in the world, but we have yet to hear one	0	•	•	•	•	•	•	50
▲ Quad FM4	434	<b>G+</b> Fine sound, excellent ease of use, good build and finish and a more than satisfactory technical performance	7	•	•	•	•	•	•	50
Quad 66	532	<b>G+</b> Very pretty and compact but technically unadventurous. Smooth sound but only makes sense in Quad system context	19	•	•	•	•	•	•	120
▲ Rotel RT-930AX	175	<b>G-</b> A competent rather than exciting performer, with low audible interference though slightly compressed and muddled sound.	20	•	•	•	•	•	•	108
Sherwood TX-3010C	120	<b>A</b> Lots of features and fine RF discrimination for price. Sound is communicative but inconsistently tacky	30	•	•	•	•	•	•	120
▲ Teac T-X4030	120	<b>A</b> Not exactly special, but still a well balanced, tolerable and capable allrounder at a very reasonable price	20	•	•	•	•	•	•	129
Yamaha TX-350L	130	<b>A-</b> Enticingly pretty and compact presentation but performance isn't great; beware of aerial overload	40	•	•	•	•	•	•	129



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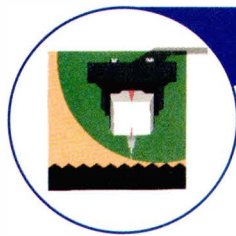
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# Turntables – cartridges

**C**artridges fall into two groups: high output models, capable of working directly into most amplifiers and categorised as having a normal (N) output, and more expensive low and very low output models (L, VL). Stereotypically, low output cartridges use the moving coil principle of operation, have better mechanical integrity and tighter tolerances, and give better performance but

at much higher cost. With CD now the dominant medium many amplifiers are no longer equipped with the necessary phono input for a cartridge and a separate phono stage is necessary. Valve designs need either an extra head amp or transformer to cope with the low output of moving coil cartridges.

Cartridge/amplifier interfacing can be very subtle, but even basic high output MM designs

benefit in overall balance from optimised amplifier capacitance loading. The mechanical characteristic of cantilever compliance ('springiness') needs to be considered in the light of the effective mass of the tonearm, and to achieve a good match compare the effective mass requirements figures with the actual effective mass of specific arms. 'turntables' and 'tonearms' sections.

## Turntables – cartridges

Product	£Price	Comments	Arm effective mass (g)	Output	MM	MC	Issue No.
▲▲ Arcam C77	30	<b>A+</b> A sensible moving magnet package with good bounce at a competitive price	6-16	N	•		48
▲▲ Arcam C77Mg	40	<b>A</b> Punchy sound quality with plenty of extra energy to liven things up. The solid body seems well worth the extra £10	4-8	N	•		67
▲ Arcam E77Mg	60	<b>A</b> Our sample had a disappointing stylus, but gave a coherent, rich and laid back sound, with good 'scale'	3-8	N	•		48
▲ Arcam P77Mg	73	<b>A+</b> Preferred to its cheaper partner by virtue of a better tip. Channel balance could have been better	4-9	N	•		48
▲ Audio Note IO IIV	1395	<b>E</b> One of the best, giving 'an extraordinarily relaxing midrange clarity', needs a transformer	8-18	VL		•	100
▲ Audio-Technica ART1	850	<b>VG</b> This is a delicate and very fluid-sounding MC that tracks well, offers very low distortion and exceptionally good separation	9-18	L		•	72
▲ Audio-Technica AT-420E	36	<b>A</b> Better suited to pop recordings, this MM bears some of the sonic hallmarks of the Linn K5	7-14	N	•		67
▲▲ Audio-Technica AT-95E	20	<b>A</b> Clear, dynamic if richly balanced, the magnetic '95E is a definite Best Buy	8-14	N	•		48
▲ Audio-Technica OC-5	130	<b>G</b> For the price, it's unusually effortless and detailed, but it tends to become rather relentless and tiring after a while.	5-14	L		•	103
Audioquest AQ 404i-L	500	<b>G+</b> Slight harshness detracted from the performance of this otherwise clear-sounding and detailed cartridge	8-16	L		•	84
Audioquest AQ 7000	1295	<b>G+</b> Stunning stereo imaging and good detail at low levels are spoiled by less-than-perfect tracking and high sensitivity to arms.	6-20	L		•	91
Denon DL103	100	<b>A+</b> Good performance in bass and general 'life' is seriously let down by its spherical stylus which kills subtle details.	9-22	L		•	103
▲▲ Denon DL110	70	<b>G</b> Firmly recommended as a fine all-rounder, this high-output MC model is likely to perform well in nearly all circumstances	6-16	N		•	48
Denon DL160	90	<b>G</b> Although listeners just preferred the 110, its brother here proved a twin in lab tests and is still "thoroughly competent"	6-16	N		•	43
▲ Denon DL304	200	<b>VG</b> Uncolored, detailed, neutral, superb tracking; top notch altogether, and a top notch bargain too.	4-12	L		•	103
▲ Dynavector 17D2	450	<b>VG</b> Clear, detailed, neutral and generally very informative - excellent	6-18	L		•	91
Dynavector XX-1	988	<b>G+</b> Good, but not immensely competitive at the price, and not helped by comparison with the low output version	7-15	N		•	84
▲ Dynavector XX-1L	988	<b>VG</b> Very clear, very detailed, no troubles with tracking; response lift around 20kHz seems to do no harm	7-13	L		•	84
Empire Benz Micro MC-Gold	150	<b>G</b> Nothing is obviously wrong, but nothing is stunningly right either. Safe, but perhaps a little too safe	7-17	L		•	103
▲ Empire Benz Micro MC-Silver	150	<b>G</b> Ultimately not the peer of the MC Gold is more appropriate to the sort of equipment it's likely to be partnered with	8-18	N		•	103
▲ Empire Benz-Micro MC-3	800	<b>G+</b> Offers a warmer and very transparent account of the music. Its tracking prowess is slightly limited	5-12	L		•	72
Glanz GMC-10LX	80	<b>A+</b> Bearing some of the hallmarks of the '10EH, the '10LX is still less competitive in the sonic stakes	7-15	L		•	67
▲ Glanz GMC-20E	129	<b>G+</b> Very good tracking, smooth sound and good detail. Very slight surface noise enhancement	5-10	L		•	91
▲ Goldring 1012	50	<b>G</b> Slightly harsh sound but plenty of life and quite good detail. Some very high frequency coloration apparent	6-12	N	•		85
▲ Goldring 1022	70	<b>G</b> As with 1012, a touch harsh; detail and transient purity improved, though, and it goes well with electric guitar!	5-11	N	•		85
Goldring 1042	90	<b>G</b> Not terribly subtle, and not such good value alongside 1012 and 1022. Quite lively, though	7-12	N	•		91
▲ Goldring Elan	20	<b>A</b> A lightweight and frisky-sounding MM that appears to be based upon the same body as the Nagaoka mm4	7-15	N	•		67
Goldring Elite	200	<b>G</b> The basics are right, and it will cheerfully tackle any source material, but its sound possesses a certain dirtiness	8-18	L		•	103
Goldring Eroica H	100	<b>G-</b> More confused and coloured than low-output LX, high output less of an issue these days	8-15	N		•	84
▲ Goldring Eroica LX	100	<b>G</b> Not the most subtle cartridge in the world; can sound edgy at times, but lively and informative	8-14	L		•	84
Goldring Excel	549	<b>G</b> Errs on the warm and heavy side of neutral. Strong bass lines are its forte, but resolution of subtle treble details is weak	6-13	L		•	72
Goldring Excel GS	600	<b>G+</b> True high end quality in its lack of colorations, but tracking seems indifferent and high levels tend to sound rough and edgy.	9-20	L		•	103
▲ Linn K5	49	<b>A+</b> Not as crisply focused as the costlier Linn magnetics, the K5 offers a smoother presentation	7-16	N	•		67
▲▲ Linn K9	98	<b>G</b> Linn threw this model into the leading pack by beefing up the Basik's bodywork and adding a super stylus	6-15	N	•		Col
London Maroon	199	<b>A+</b> Now manufactured under the London brand name this Decca cartridge is as iconoclastic as ever	9-20	N	•		67
London Super Gold	339	<b>A-</b> Immediate and detailed, but very coloured, very nonlinear and questionable effect on records. Devotees swear by it	9-15	N	•		84
▲ Milltek Aurora	299	<b>G+</b> An overall feeling of relaxed ease characterised this clear and atmospheric Kiseki-built cartridge	8-16	N		•	Col
▲▲ Ortofon 510	32	<b>G+</b> For the price, a good blend of virtues weight, clarity and neutrality	3-11	N	•		85
▲ Ortofon 520	55	<b>A+</b> Very sensitive to load capacitance this new Ortofon maintains the company tradition for a lively, effervescent SQ	7-16	N	•		67
▲ Ortofon 530	85	<b>G+</b> Very clean and assured sound; transients not quite perfectly pure but plenty of detail.	4-11	N	•		85
Ortofon 540	110	<b>A</b> Graced with FGII stylus but possessed of too high a compliance for broad arm matching. It could also sound a little unforgiving	3-8	N	•		67
▲▲ Ortofon MC10 Super	85	<b>G</b> "What a delightfully sweet-sounding cartridge this is . . ." we said	5-15	L		•	48
▲▲ Ortofon MC15 Super	110	<b>G+</b> A good all-rounder, with outstanding performance in detail retrieval, even if it can be very slightly bright and close-up	10-24	L		•	103
▲ Ortofon MC3 Turbo	110	<b>G</b> Not terribly subtle, but it obviously doesn't aim at that. The 3 Turbo is bright, cheerful and bouncy - take it as it comes!	10-24	N		•	103
▲ Ortofon MC3000 MkII	950	<b>E</b> Low levels of body resonance are a real ear-opener. Nothing to criticise elsewhere; one of the very best	9-16	VL		•	84
Ortofon MC5000	1500	<b>G</b> Review sample could not be fully run-in, limited tracking ability, bright and forward sound, though imaging is excellent	12-20	VL		•	91
Rega Bias	34	<b>A+</b> Difficult to mount in some arms due to its shallow build, the bias offers a gentle, refined SQ	4-10	N	•		67
▲ Rega Elys	74	<b>G</b> Clearly superior to the Bias, despite their common heritage, the Elys is both more detailed, accurate and musically convincing	8-15	N	•		67
▲ Roksan Corus Black	130	<b>G</b> Recognisably related to Corus Blue, but distinctly more civilised and smoother.	7-12	N	•		91
Roksan Corus Blue	75	<b>G</b> Roksan-specified modified Goldring 1012; slight harshness detracts from otherwise good sound	7-12	N	•		91
▲ Shure ME97HE	55	<b>A+</b> It won't turn a sow's ear of a turntable into a silk purse, but will at least keep going and produce an acceptable result	8-20	N	•		48
Shure V15 VMR	220	<b>A+</b> Initial listening gave promising results, but extended familiarity gave the feeling of a lack of energy and a "shut-in" sound	5-12	N	•		38

# Turntables – cartridges continued

Product	£Price	Comments	Arm effective mass (g)	Output	MM	MC	Issue No.
van den Hul Grasshopper II/GLA	3200	<b>E</b> Undoubtedly one of the finest cartridges available, it has tremendous bandwidth, energy and finesse	6-10	L		•	122
▲ van den Hul MC One	975	<b>G+</b> This extended all the positive qualities of the '10 but added greater authority and scale worth it for the extra money	6-12	L		•	60
van den Hul MC One/High	1100	<b>G+</b> Slight softening on transients was the only real flaw, but it didn't quite seem to have that special touch one expects	8-15	L		•	84
▲ van den Hul MC Two	1300	<b>G+</b> Connected directly to any standard MM input it rewards with a highly detailed yet fluid and musically convincing portrayal	6-13	N		•	72
▲ van den Hul MC10	775	<b>G+</b> A neutral balanced performer giving transparent midrange, fine depth and focus with firm extended bass. Gosh!	5-10	L		•	60
▲ van den Hul MM1	275	<b>G+</b> If woody midrange coloration could be tamed, the excellent imaging and admirable security would make it excellent	7-15	L		•	103



## Turntables and tonearms

**S**pecialist turntables are what high fidelity sound is all about, CD may offer silent backgrounds and flat frequency responses but they can't match the dynamics and superlative timing that serious turntable users take for granted. Turntables at the cheaper end of the market (sub-£350) tend to be supplied with matching tonearm, and often include a 'starter' cartridge. Still better quality is found at higher prices amongst the

separate motor units and tonearms. Careful partnering and set-up is essential for these components, but 'sympathetic' combinations exist.

The columns show from left to right, 'arm effective mass' relates to cartridge compatibility with regard to compliance (springiness) and is explained in the 'Cartridges' introduction. 'Suspended subchassis' — decks which have some form of internal isolation, generally in the form of

springs but occasionally more solid materials such as rubber. 'Manual' and 'Automatic' refer to the operational tendencies of the deck/arm combination — automatic high end turntables are as rare as hens teeth. 'Cartridge' — if one is supplied. 'Belt drive' as opposed to direct drive is the preferred method in most quality decks. An 'Electronic PSU' offers switchable speed change and a 'smoother' power supply for better sound.

▲▲ **Best Buy**  
▲ **Recommended**

## Turntables

Product	£Price	Comments	Suspended subchassis	Automatic	Cartridge	Electronic PSU	Issue No.
▲ Alphason Sonata/HR100S MCS	1785	<b>G+</b> Good sound in all areas - bass, clarity and neutrality all in the top class and bettered by very few decks at price	13	•	•	•	79
▲ Dual CS-503-2	160	<b>A</b> Not wholly inspiring; generally coarse and wooly sound is at least not offensive, but easily bettered by the CS505-4	10		•	•	91
▲ Dual CS-505-4	200	<b>A</b> Consistent sounding and well isolated turntable. It is slightly lacking in balls, compensates with a consistently unclouded presentation	10		•	•	103
▲ Kuzma Stabi/Stogi Reference	2000	<b>G+</b> Beautifully made solid oak plinth, the Stabi also sounds very clear, detailed and extended. Stogi Reference is very capable.	12	•	•	•	91
▲ Linn Basic	299	<b>A+</b> Strong midband analysis and imagery, clean if sharp treble is matched to a good if occasionally wooden bass	10	•		•	103
▲ Linn LP12 Basic/Akito	904	<b>G</b> Trails the full LP12 significantly, but pace, rhythm, timing etc. still in top class, and bass tauter than of old	10	•	•	•	103
▲ Linn LP12-Lingo/Ekos	2642	<b>G+</b> The classic reference is improved by the Lingo but charming character remains. Ekos is well made and suited to many decks	9	•	•	•	91
▲ Michell Gyrodec	697	<b>G</b> Sweet and natural sounding player, well suited to Rega RB300. Aesthetics, and the acres of clear acrylic are very distinctive	NA	•	•	•	55
▲ Michell Syncro	325	<b>G</b> A happy blend of qualities endows the stylish Syncro with a blend of subtlety and force - the mailed fist in the velvet glove	NA	•	•	•	67
▲ Pink Triangle Anniversary	1495	<b>E</b> Possibly the most detailed, clear and neutral deck around. Likeness to master tape is uncanny	NA	•	•	•	91
▲ Pink Triangle Export	890	<b>E</b> The PT T00 with built in PS. Retains features of great transparency and neutrality. Review sample had highish motor noise	NA	•	•	•	91
▲▲ Rega Planar 2	185	<b>G</b> A remarkable product at the price, surprisingly articulate and confident	11.5	•		•	48
▲▲ Rega Planar 3	250	<b>G</b> A long time leader in its category, the '3 (with excellent RB300 arm) sounded nicely 'musical' in a balanced and coherent manner	11.5	•		•	48
▲ Roksan Radius/Tabriz zi	740	<b>G</b> Design is subtle, refined and easy on the eye. Musically it offers exceptional performance with a minimum of fuss	9	•	•	•	103
▲ Systemdek 1.920	235	<b>A-</b> The motor unit is derivative of the Rega Planar 2 with a Moth arm. Up tempo even bright at times but never lacks enthusiasm	12	•	•	•	115
▲ Systemdek IX/900	230	<b>G</b> A high performance budget turntable which is particularly strong at fine detail resolution and imagery	NA	•	•	•	103
▲ Systemdek IXE/900AP	388	<b>G+</b> The acrylic platter'd IXE is one of the most capable budget decks on the market, good resolution, dynamics and timing	NA	•	•	•	103
▲ SME Model 20A	3763	<b>E</b> Supplied with Series V arm. Engineered to last a lifetime, giving excellent stereo and detail retrieval.	10.5	•	•	•	118
▲ Thorens TD-3001/TP90SF	760	<b>G</b> Excellent middle ranking esoterica, with strong all round abilities rather than excellence in particular areas	NA	•	•	•	103
▲ Thorens TD166 VI/UK/RB250	280	<b>A-</b> Refined and articulate sound with well focused imagery, suitable for use with good MM and budget MC cartridges	11.5	•	•	•	103
▲ Thorens TD2001	650	<b>G-</b> Similar to TD320 but much dearer - why? Sound is comfortable but not very detailed	15	•	•	•	91
▲ Voyd 0.5	3368	<b>E</b> Halfway between standard and Reference Voyds with the latter's platter and bearing. Superb finish, colourful and dynamic sound	NA	•	•	•	72
▲ Voyd Reference	5950	<b>E</b> Voyd's flagship, equipped with three substantial motors, a Lexan platter and brute PS. A strong contender for world's best	NA	•	•	•	C91
▲ Well Tempered WTAT	1800	<b>G+</b> Intriguing/challenging design. Musically it is not ideal, but has a limpid quality and a lack of artificiality that sets standards	7.5	•		•	67

## Tonearms

Product	£Price	Comments	Effective mass (g)	Height adjustment	Pivoted	Parallel tracking	Issue No.
▲ Alphason HR100S	490	<b>VG</b> S-shaped arm sounds smooth, but nevertheless reproduces transients with fine attack	10	•	•		C86
▲ Kuzma Stogi Reference	1000	<b>VG</b> Large, solid and well made arm, gives exceptionally clear sound with just a hint of brightness	12	•	•		79
▲ Linn Ekos	1297	<b>VG</b> Superb, state of the art design which builds significantly on predecessor Ittok's strengths	9	•	•		67
▲▲ Moth arm	95	<b>G+</b> The ultimate budget arm? Refined, detailed, sweet and natural	12		•		60
▲▲ Rega RB300	139	<b>VG</b> Despite its modest price it sets exceptional performance standards and could be used on many high end turntables	11.5		•		60
▲ Roksan Tabriz	190	<b>G+</b> Targetted at the Xerxes, this is a good alternative to the Rega arms in many cases - a trifle bright	9	•	•		91
▲ SME 309	568	<b>VG</b> Beautifully made and finished, fully adjustable, a highly neutral performer	10	•	•		79
▲ SME Series IV	828	<b>VG</b> Superb engineering and finish with a finely balanced sound, impressive stereo focus and low colouration	10.5	•	•		60
▲ SME Series V	1233	<b>E</b> Excellent in all respects, this arm arguably sets the standard for pivoted arms regardless of price	10.5	•	•		60

# personal messages

**Paul Messenger has found a young waterfowl of a hi-fi system that pleases his ear — if not his eye.**

Carrying out this month's Sessions trawl through the latest goodies may not be the most profitable form of reviewing, and the work involved does rather preempt the sort of experiences I normally use for this column. But it has also proved to be a rather educational project, thanks to the decision to include a complete system supplied by a specialist dealer. I also benefited from the overall perspective which exposure to such a wide cross-section of different devices forces onto the reviewer.

For an inevitably brief review of Definitive Audio's CD-based package, please turn to Sessions, starting on page 12. Each of the three components involved has genuine merit in itself, no question, but it was the way they fitted together hand-in-glove sonically that really impressed me.

I've no way of telling how much of this was due to the selection of the components themselves, to the choice of ancillary interconnects and cables, or whether it had to do with the modifications which Definitive carries out on the Dali 104s. But it's still revealing that the crucial X-factor which distinguishes a great from a good hi-fi system will only be achieved when a committed and experienced specialist dealer is involved in the selection process.

Reviewing a complete system is itself an interesting challenge. I imagine all reviewers utilise some sort of reference system for day-to-day use, and this provides a framework into which components for test can be inserted. It's not an ideal approach because the system context is bound to exert some influence on the outcome, but it's probably the only practical way of achieving some consistency within inevitable time and budgetary constraints.

With a complete system, this reference context becomes an irrelevance, if not a positive handicap. Much mental and perceptual gear changing is necessary in order to clear the brain of existing preconceptions and expectations and tune in to whatever the new package is providing.

For an expanded first impression, I tried each component in my normal system before connecting the full package. Predictably, the Micromega Stage 3

CD player source was the most successful in that context. However, it was when the whole thing came together that the harmony shone through, with each bit helping to make the very best of the others. This wasn't the kind of system I was used to, nor was it near anything I would have chosen for my own indulgence. But it was thoroughly engrossing and entertaining, and so inviting and easy on the ears that I was soon embarking on the re-exploration of musical favourites — my definitive behavioural clue to system success.

What you're getting is Definitive's (ie Kevin Scott's) best shot at a particular price point. The personal element permeates throughout, the hallmark of the true enthusiast being a willingness to put up with hair-shirt ergonomics (no remote amplifier control) and a mish-mash of styling for the sake of sound quality and musical values.

Taking components from different brands and putting them together artfully so that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts used to be the very *raison d'être* of the specialist hi-fi dealer. It's a role which has been undermined the past decade or two with the emergence of complete 'real hi-fi' system packages from many British specialist manufacturers.

There's no denying the appeal of the one-make package's consistent and attractive presentation, convenience and presumably coherent and consistent sonic character. But it was good to rediscover that the ultra-specialised bit-by-bit approach still represents a very potent and cost-effective route to audio nirvana, if handled with sensi-

tivity and experience. After all, the Naims, Linns, Meridians, Arcams *et al* started out as component specialists, offering the sound quality alternative to Japan Inc's feature-rich component systems of the Seventies; *plus ça change*.

I understand Kevin's under-£3k system has been selling very well, which is also very encouraging. Why? Because the only reason anyone would possibly choose such an uninteresting looking collection of bits at such a price would be because it sounds wonderful. Proof positive that there are still people out there who take the trouble to listen to what they're buying rather than allowing their eyes to make the decision.

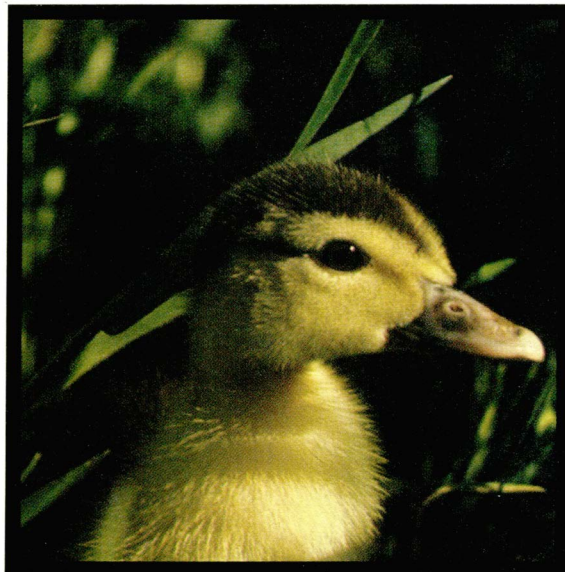
You can say what you like about traditional values, but the amp is a real aesthetic clunker, taking the retro concept well beyond classic valve circuitry into the oil-rig styling and agricultural switchgear. Maybe it's all part of achieving that luscious mid-band, as is the need to install air-conditioning for summer listening, but it falls a long way short of the user- and family-friendliness of today's typical transistorised gear. (I can't help feeling that someone could clean up by creating a valve amp with modern remote switching at a fair price, for those enthusiasts who are currently unwilling to pay the ergonomic price of thermionics.)

It remains that there are customers prepared to pay serious money for ugly hi-fi, provided it sounds great. The fascinating corollary, via a gentle application of *reductio ad absurdum*, is that in any given hi-fi shop there's a very good chance that the best sounds are going to emanate from the ugliest gear.

The prettiest components will always attract customers. Great looking equipment like Quad, Mission Cyrus and Meridian will chalk up sales simply on the basis of reputation and demonstrable competence. But if there's a thousand pound amp on the shelf which looks like it's been in store since VE day, it's going to stay there until the millennium unless it's offering something else very special indeed.

A worthwhile rule of thumb when searching out the best hi-fi is therefore to keep a sharp eye open for the ugly ducklings. They wouldn't be there at all if they didn't sell, and if they do sell that must be because their beauty is more than skin deep. Needless to say, it doesn't by any means follow that good looking gear need sound any the worse for its design artistry.

"Quack, quack. Quacky, quacky, quack, quack."



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