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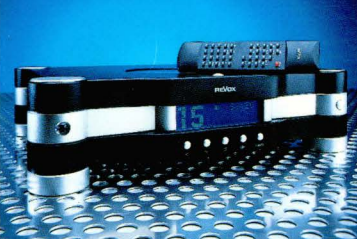
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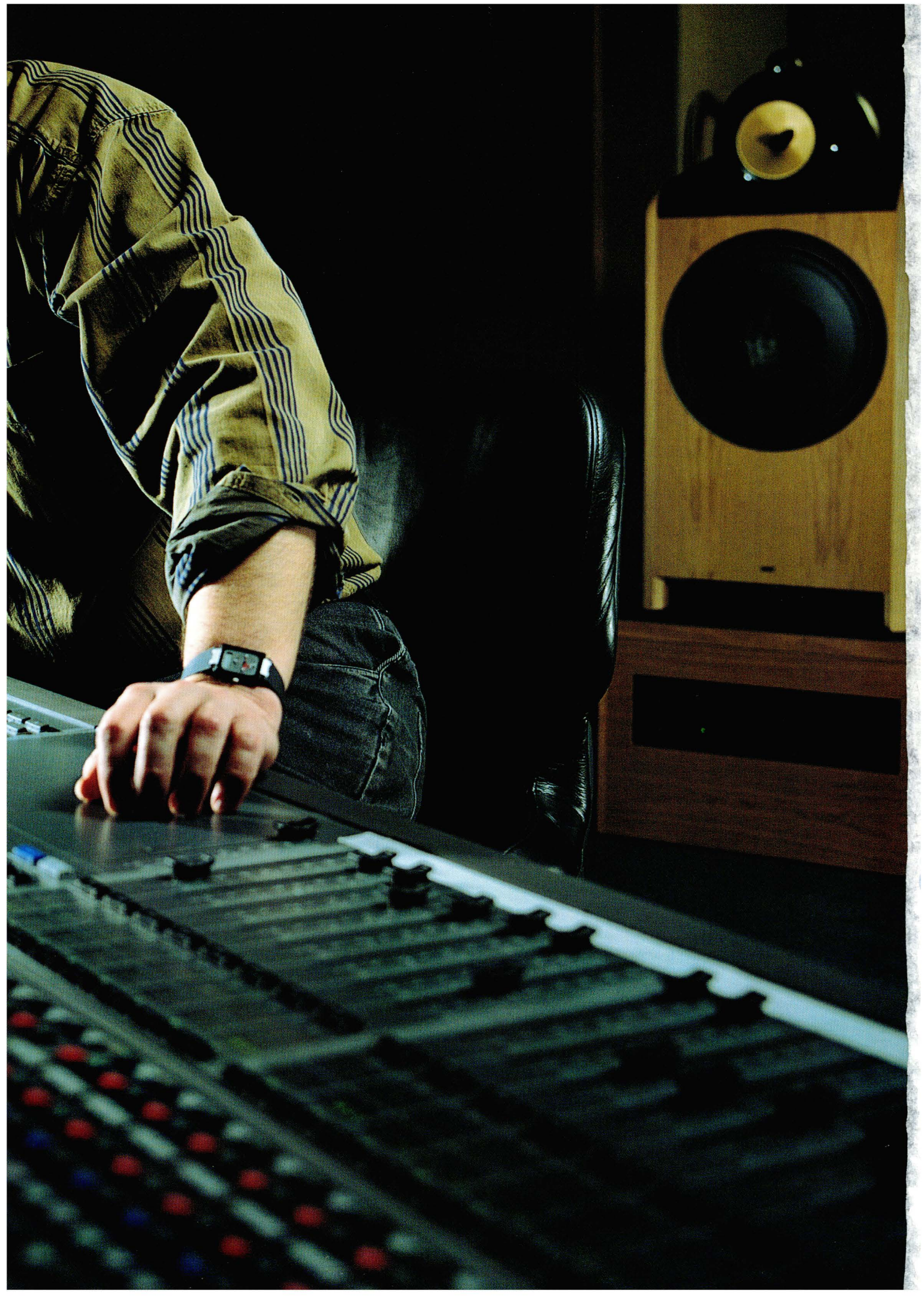


Buyer's Guide

Our experts name the best hi-fi 3,500 Products ★ 400 Star Buys



ISSUE 182
OCTOBER
1998 • £2.99
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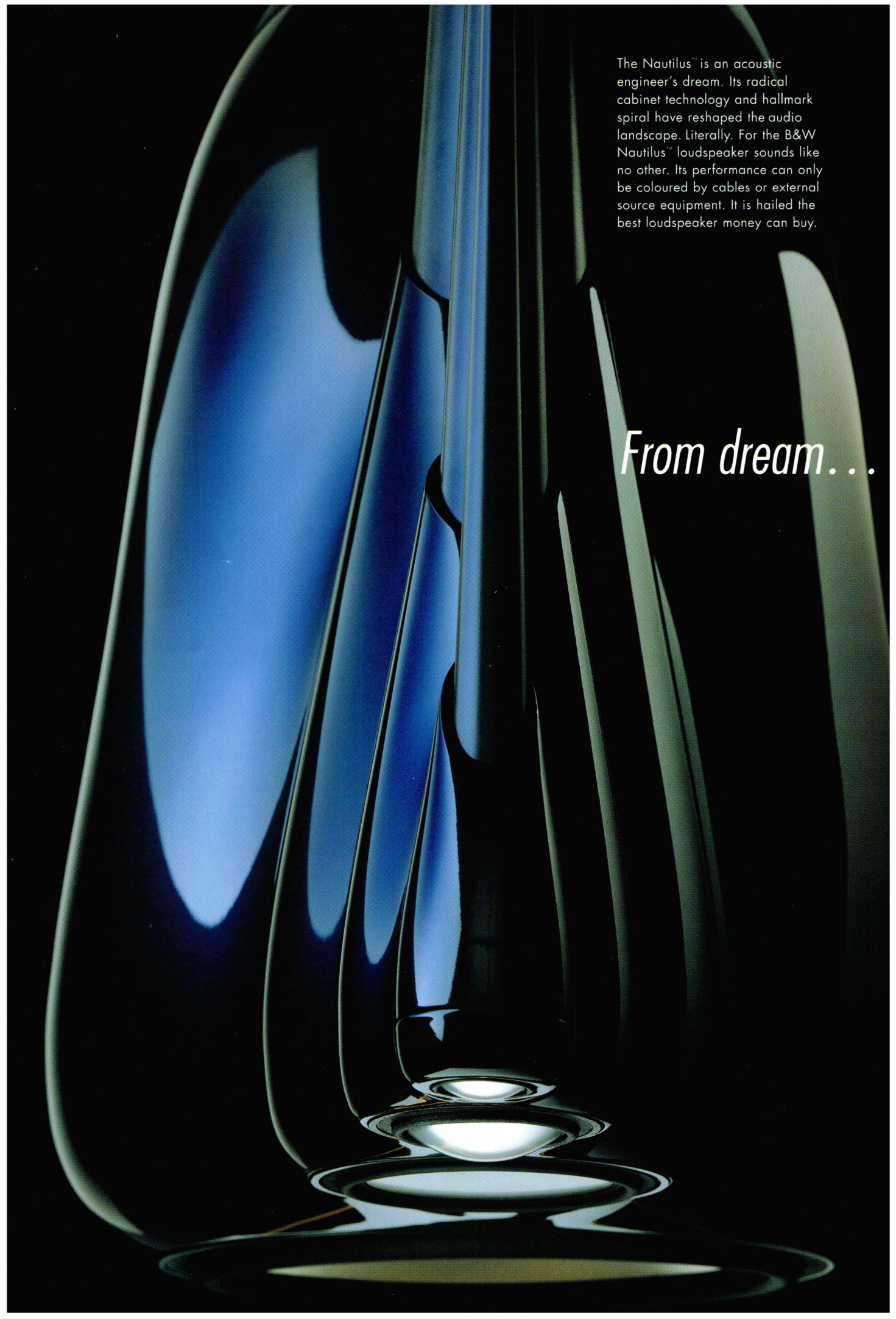




Alan Parsons is highly regarded in the recording industry. Principal engineer on Pink Floyd's 'Dark Side of the Moon', and producer of Al Stewart's 'Year of the Cat', Alan has worked with Paul McCartney, and has ten Grammy award nominations to his name. Himself a dedicated musician (The Alan Parsons Project), the former chief recording engineer at EMI's Abbey Road Studios says of the new loudspeakers: "The Nautilus™ 800 Series will undoubtedly make a major impact on the professional recording world, and influence loudspeaker technology well into the next millennium."



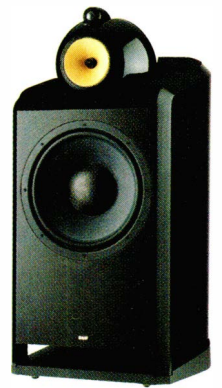
L I S T E N A N D Y O U ' L L S E E



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REVIEW REPRINTS

Please use our FactsBack service (p. 129).

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 *Hi-Fi Choice* is the UK hi-fi magazine representative of the European Imaging & Sound Association (EISA). Every year EISA honours the finest hi-fi and home cinema products throughout Europe.

Editor's Notebook



PHOTO BY SEAN BLOOMFORTH

The price is right... or is it? Stan Vincent decries government action that's keeping hi-fi consumers in the dark.

From page 76 of this issue, you'll see our annual presentation of the European Awards. These are pan-European in scope, but we always add specific information for UK readers, including the UK price of each winner. This year, everything's changed.

Since 1997's Monopolies & Mergers Commission (MMC) investigation into the UK electrical goods market, certain companies have been wary of quoting recommended retail prices (RRPs) for publication, lest they fall foul of a government order. This is why you'll see a number of entries advising you to check prices with your dealer. Hi-fi separates are said to be exempt from this legislation, but any company selling audio systems must comply.

I am sure there were honourable intentions behind this directive, but the attack on recommended retail prices does not help the consumer. How can we evaluate a retailer's 'special offer' if we don't know what the price was initially? And in the absence of a recommended price, who has the time to conduct a straw poll of local retailers, to establish some sort of average?

The MMC says that retailers should have complete freedom to sell at whatever price they choose. But in service-conscious hi-fi circles, manufacturers have tended to shun ultra-discount merchants. Because while not all full-price retailers provide sufficient service to justify their higher prices, many do, and when buying hi-fi, good specialist service and backup is essential. You're unlikely to get this from a retailer exercising his right to sell at a loss.

As I have said in this column before, you only get what you pay for. In hi-fi, remember that a good dealer should ensure you make a best buy, not just a purchase. Help like this is worth paying for!

Pray silence for music

An interesting article in the Aug/Sept 1998 edition of *Prospect* magazine proposes various reasons why musical culture is decaying, one being that "the ubiquity of music means that we have lost one of the most precious necessities for truly enjoying and understanding it: silence." I agree completely. Turn off that radio and listen to your hi-fi with serious intent!

Our new-look Directory

We have redesigned our *Price Guide* and *Directory* pages this month (p102 onwards), for increased clarity and ease of use. Next month, the rest of the magazine will follow suit. As Spinal Tap once said, we hope you like our new direction!

EXCLUSIVE READER OFFER!

BUY THE XLO TEST & BURN-IN DISC FOR JUST £15!

XLO's Test & Burn-In Disc was a massive success when offered as an *Hi-Fi Choice* subscription gift earlier this year. As Jimmy Hughes noted in his review (*HFC 170*), this gold-plated, HDCD-compatible disc contains numerous useful tracks to aid optimum system set-up, loudspeaker positioning and running in.

Regrettably the subscription offer was for one month only, and demand massively outstripped supply. Long after the offer had closed, folks were still writing in to find out how they could obtain a copy.

Well, due to extreme serendipity we have managed to acquire a strictly limited number of additional discs for sale to *Hi-Fi Choice* readers. These will be sold on a first-come, first-served basis, at a price of just £15 inc p&p. This represents a £10 saving on the typical selling price.

Please send a cheque for £15, made payable to Dennis Publishing Ltd, to: Ms Ghazala Khan, Circulations Controller, Dennis Publishing Ltd, 19 Bolsover Street, LONDON W1P 7JH.

REMEMBER: THIS IS A LIMITED OFFER, AND ORDERS WILL BE FULFILLED ON A FIRST-COME, FIRST SERVED BASIS.





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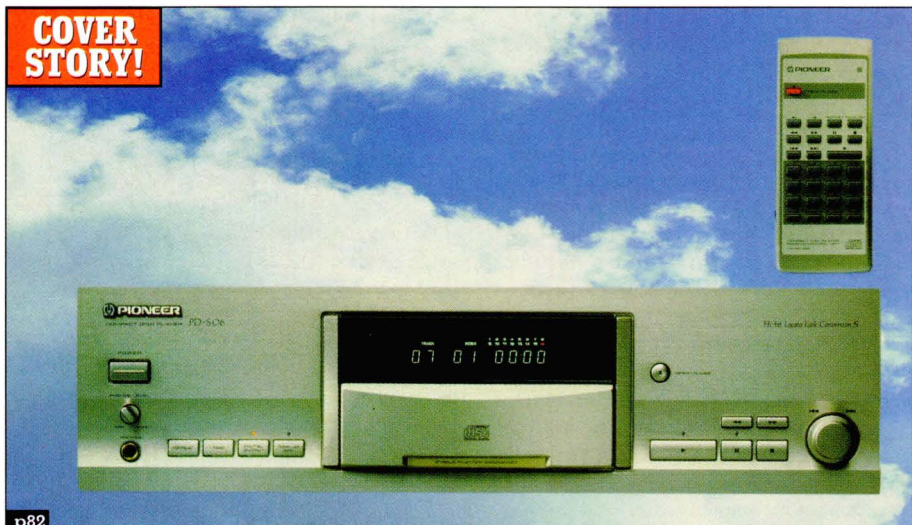
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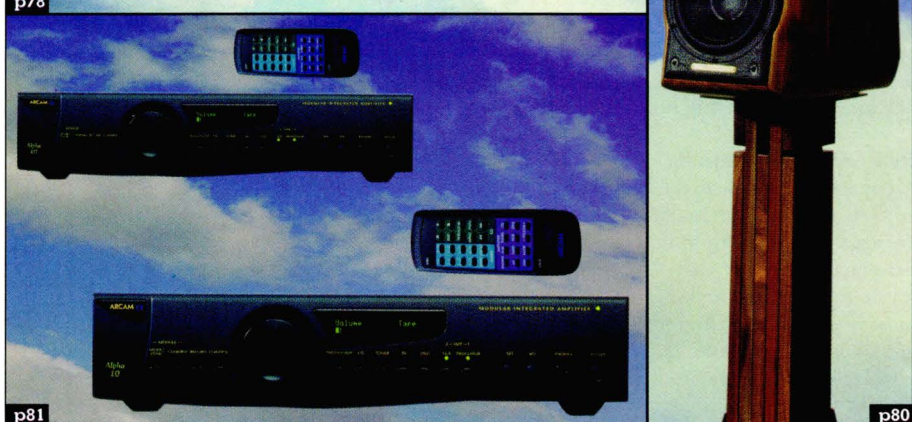
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WIN! WIN! WIN!

Top AV gear up for grabs from NAD and Dali! Plus tickets for Live '98! Prizes worth £1,500!



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Update

THIS MONTH... SONUS FABER'S WORSHIPFUL SPEAKER... ARCAM'S NEW AMP... DENON'S AFFORDABLE AUDIOPHILE

In brief

The *Hi-Fi News* Hi-Fi Show returns to Heathrow for its 16th year, on September 19 and 20, in the Renaissance and Excelsior Hotels. Claiming to be the biggest show yet, it will be open from 10.00am till 6.00pm both days, and the entry fee will be £4. There will be a shuttle-bus service to both hotels from Hatton Cross Underground station, on the Piccadilly Line. ☎ (0181) 686 2599

Denon has produced three Dolby Digital classical music titles on the DVD Video format. The £19.99 discs were recorded by the Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra and include Beethoven and Chopin works with Vladimir Krainjew under Carl St Clair (DEG-02001); Beethoven and Bruckner works under Gianluigi Gelmetti (DVD-02002); plus Beethoven and Mahler works with Andreas Haefliger under Eiji Oue (DVD-02004). ☎ (01753) 888447

The Black Box Monitor Stand, more than one metre tall, has been designed to bring a touch of hi-fi stand savvy to the pro-audio market. It aims to combine maximum rigidity and damping with the height required to top the meter bridge of a mixing console. Prices start from £861.27. ☎ (0181) 858 5888

Audiophile International, supplier of premium vinyl records, has recently opened new offices in the USA and the UK, and is now trading as Audiophile UK under new joint owner Tube Technology. Visitors to Tube Technology's room (1129) at the Heathrow Renaissance Hi-Fi Show can enter a competition to win 200 classical LPs. ☎ (01932) 821111

Sonus Faber pays homage

As the second tribute to the three great master-violin-makers of Cremona, Italy, Sonus Faber has launched the Amati homage (said to be priced in the region of £10,000) in memory of Andrea Amati.

The lute-shaped enclosure, first developed by Sonus Faber in 1990, aims to confer structural rigidity, resonance control and "excellent" sound dispersion. The cabinet is made from wooden sheets of varying consistency, bonded with highly-viscous polymeric glue.

Covering this is a hand-applied artisan finish, with seven coats of red and black lacquer, to evoke Amati's exquisitely-finished instruments.

The 28mm soft-dome tweeter



Sonus Faber's new homage, the Amati.

contains no ferrofluid cooling agent, since Sonus Faber believes this is deleterious to sound. The 180mm midrange unit has a paper/carbonium/titanium cone, while twin 210mm bass units have carbonium cones, leading to claimed sensitivity of 92dB and frequency response of 24Hz to 30kHz.

The dividing network has high conductivity copper/silver cables and is insulated against vibration with a resin encapsulation system.

The first in this series, the Guarneri homage, was voted European High End Audio of the Year '94-'95 by EISA. Still to come is a tribute to Antonio Stradivari.

AbsoluteSounds ☎ (0181) 971 3909

AE's Ch-Ch-Changes

Acoustic Energy has revised its speaker line-up with new models including the £149.95 Aegis One, whose new, 130mm-diameter, metal-alloy mid/bass cone is targeted to "set new standards" in the budget market.

Both the mid-bass driver and the 25mm-diameter silk-fabric dome-tweeter are magnetically shielded for home cinema applications, and are hooked up to the dividing network using oxygen-free copper (OFC) wire.

Specified sensitivity is 89dB, frequency response is nominally 38Hz to 22kHz, impedance rated at eight Ohms and power handling said to be 120 Watts max.

The 192x362x235mm enclosure is in 15mm-thick medium-density fibreboard (MDF), while the 'low diffraction' baffle is in 25mm MDF front baffle. There is a choice of beech, rosewood or black ash finishes, and the speaker will be shown at September's Hi-Fi Show in London Heathrow's Renaissance Hotel.

Other news from Acoustic Energy concerns the 100SE Series, now available in real-wood-veneered cabinets.



The new 100SE range from AE: wood you believe it?

Available from October, these special edition versions will range in price from £230 to £600, and will be joined by a new, two-way, floorstanding loudspeaker, the AE105.

The company is also promoting its AE-2PRO, a three-way professional monitor design with dual metal mid-bass cones, which costs £1,700 per pair.

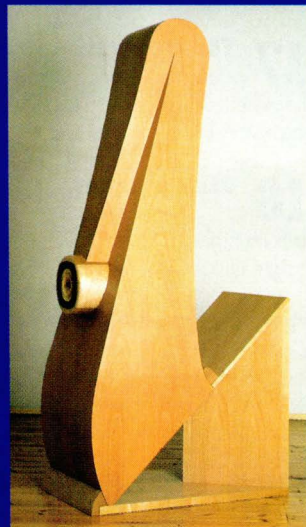
Acoustic Energy
☎ (01285) 654432

Use your HORN

Carfrae Loudspeakers, of Totnes, Devon, has launched an £18,000, full-range horn speaker, called the CarfraeHORN, which stands over two metres tall. Built around the new Lowther DX3 drive unit, this crossoverless design claims massive sensitivity (108dB) and is clearly oriented toward the valve amp user.

Unlike the majority of horns, the CarfraeHORN has cut out all but one 'fold' in the horn, thus claiming to offer proper expansion of the sound wave coming from the rear of the drive unit. The CarfraeHORN claims further to follow the much-vaunted Tractrix horn contour exactly, and vents onto a V section at the bottom of the speaker.

The full-range DX3 drive unit is mounted on a hardwood maple cylinder, while the rest of the enclosure is made from birch laminate. Look out for the CarfraeHORN at the forthcoming Heathrow Hi-Fi Show, in the Excelsior Hotel. Carfrae ☎ (01803) 868461



Carfrae's CarfraeHORN: audio sculpture for the home.

Arcam going for the One

A&R Cambridge is expanding its popular Arcam line-up with a new, entry-level amplifier dubbed the Alpha One. With a suggested price of £229.90 it brings Arcam within reach of the first-time buyer, and brings the brand head-to-head with Far East competition. Alpha One's features include a specified 35 Watts per channel output, headphone socket, preamp outputs for use with an Alpha 8P power amp, and defeat-able tone controls.



Start from the beginning: Arcam's new Alpha One.

Arcam has also upgraded its Alpha 7 and 8 integrated amps to R (signifying 'remote') status. The new Alpha 7R

(45 Watts) offers remote volume and muting control at £299.90, while the 50 Watts Alpha 8R, priced £379.90, gains a larger power supply and a processor switch for use in multi-channel systems.

In the more rarefied strata of Arcam's roster arrives a new preamplifier, the Alpha 9C (£399.90). Designed to complement the Alpha 8P, 9P and 10P power amps, this fully-remote-controllable design features a "high performance" MC/MM phono stage and outputs for multi-room set-ups. The latter are fixed-level, front-panel-switchable outputs to drive integrated amps in remote locations. Arcam ☎ (01223) 203203

IXOS goes Gamma

Hot on the heels of the IXOS 6003 single-wire speaker cable, here comes the IXOS 6002 Bi-Wire, the first in a series of new Gamma Geometry products.

Ixos 6002 Gamma Bi-Wire.



Priced at £6.99 per metre, the IXOS 6002 Gamma has been designed to "deliver an improved musical performance across the full bandwidth, with a deeper taut bass extension and sweet but smooth treble," says the maker. It comprises two low-frequency conductors, including 336 strands of polycrystalline, oxygen-free copper (PC-OFC); and two high frequency conductors with 168 strands of PC-OFC.

Another four pure PC-OFC conductors, with three solid PVC dummy cores, contribute to IXOS's proprietary Gamma Geometry configuration, which claims to reject induced noise. Path Distribution ☎ (0121) 749 2240

Dynaudio wows its Audience



Dynaudio's £400 Audience 40.

Dynaudio is celebrating the 100th anniversary of the loudspeaker with a new-look Audience range. Audience 70, priced at £1,100, is an update of the Audience 8, while the Audience 50, priced at £577, was the first Audience-range member to be revised.

The Audience 40 (£399) and 60 (£730) make Dynaudio available to a more price-conscious audience. Both are housed in vinyl-wrapped, reflex-loaded cabinets. The former has a 150mm mid/bass drive unit

and a magnetic-fluid-cooled 28mm soft dome tweeter, with claimed power handling of 150 Watts; while the latter has a 170mm mid/bass and 28mm tweeter with four-millimetre, die-cast, aluminium front-piece, again yielding 150 Watts power handling.

At the top end of the range, all hail the three-way, floor-standing Audience 80 (£1,460). This time the 28mm soft-dome tweeter is a double-magnet version of Dynaudio's D28/8, while a 150mm Esotec driver handles midrange and two 190mm woofers look after bass. Power handling is said to be 210 Watts and the impedance trend claims to be very linear from the midrange upwards.

Dynaudio ☎ (01732) 451938

Infinity plays Overture

Infinity's new Overture series of hi-fi/home cinema enclosures, follow the latest speaker market trend for an active bass system, in an attempt to extract greater bass extension and power from slim cabinets.

A range of three models starts with the stylish Overture 1, a compact standmount (with integral stand) that retails for £1,000. This has a side-mounted, 200mm woofer with two midrange drivers and a centralised tweeter on the moulded front baffle.

The Overtures 2 and 3 are floorstanders at £1,500 and £1,750 respectively. The 2 features a pair of 165mm woofers, one firing backwards, while the 3 doubles this with four drivers. Both designs have the same 125mm midrange units coupled to the 25mm soft dome tweeter which is common throughout the range.

With magnetic shielding for AV applications, the Overture range is available in glass composite (1) or real-wood finishes (2 and 3).

Gamepath ☎ (01908) 317707



The Overture 1: should produce a good tune or three.

Rega's Jurassic part

Essex-based Rega Research, celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, has launched the first in a new range of loudspeakers. The bi-wirable Jura, priced at £450, incorporates a custom-designed, one-inch, treated, soft-dome tweeter, while the midbass driver is Rega's own RR7.2 device with a seven-inch-diameter, paper cone and a two-layer voice-coil.

The 12kg floorstanding enclosure, which stands 800mm tall, is loaded by a rear-mounted reflex port, and comes in a choice of cherry and black-ash finishes. Rega claims the Jura "offers greater dynamics and bass extension, without losing any musicality and can be used in many types and sizes of rooms."

Rega Research ☎ (01702) 333071

In brief



Heybrook's new £799 Duet.

Heybrook's newest loudspeaker, the £799 Duet, joins the company's Octet in using an elliptical, gold-plated, polymer-film, gas-filled tweeter. This partners an acrylic, polymer-gel bass unit mounted in a reflex-loaded, real-wood-veneered cabinet. Other models in Heybrook's range have seen dramatic price reductions, typically of 20 to 35 per cent for models such as the Heylette, Ultima and Heylios. ☎ (01579) 342866

North-West-based hi-fi retail chain, Practical Hi-fi, will host The Entertainment Show on October 17 and 18, at the Forte Post House Hotel in Preston. Many leading hi-fi and home cinema brands are booked to exhibit, and tickets cost just £2. ☎ (01524) 36991



Wadia: now available in the UK.

The Musical Design Company has announced exclusive UK distribution for US high-end Wadia Digital. A carefully-chosen group of "top-class dealers" is currently being assembled for Wadia, according to MDC. ☎ (01992) 573030

In the latest edition of *Audiofreaks News*... Details of an alternative to the conrad-johnson ART pre-amplifier: the "more affordable" Premier 16LS priced at £7,995... Revelation of an upgrade to the Cabasse Farella 400 speaker (Rec, HFC 180), in which it is resuffixed 401 — retro-fittable kits for existing owners will be available. ☎ (0181) 948 4250

The PressIT labelling kit, priced £22.33 from Rocky Mountain Traders, claims to be an inexpensive domestic solution for the design and printing of professional-quality CD labels and jewel-case inserts. It comprises

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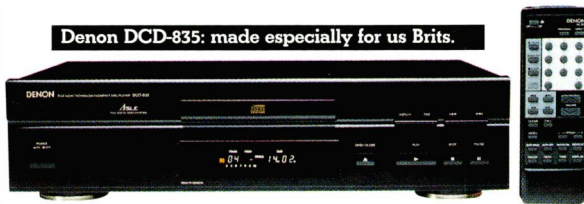
TANNOY[®]

Denon builds budget CD

The DCD-835 CD player, the latest in Denon's UK Design Series, replaces the long-running DCD-825 (Recommended, HFC 137). At £280 it adds a £40 premium to its predecessor's price, but Denon claims to have engineered it to the standard of a more expensive CD player.

The DCD-835 claims to have been designed specifically for the British market, with a high-performance power supply and extra-large power transformer. It has a new centrally-mounted transport controlled by an upgraded micro processor, which reportedly keeps jitter to very low levels.

The 18 bit DAC is a high-grade, selected, Burr-Brown device operating in dual-mono configuration. Denon's proprietary Lambda DAC configuration, which claims to



Denon DCD-835: made especially for us Brits.

avoid zero cross distortion, works in conjunction with an NPC digital filter.

There is more Burr-Brown silicon in the output stage op-amps, together with

Cerafine, Silmic and polypropylene film capacitors, plus selected high-precision metal-film resistors. Denon claims the output stage has a low source impedance, and thus will be widely compatible with amps and interconnects.

Other enthusiast features include display dimming and index-search capability for in-depth access to classical and operatic works.

Denon Brochureline ☎ (01234) 741 200

M-S take elliptical course

Mordaunt-Short has re-invented the elliptical drive unit in the new, three-strong MS800 loudspeaker range, which is claimed to have been three years in the making.

M-S claims three benefits for elliptical drive-units compared with the conventional circular type: greater room compatibility due to stronger horizontal than vertical dispersion, a sharper dynamic response, and reduced coloration. The MS800's mid-bass ellipsoids feature moulded polypropylene cones, while a new gold-anodised, metal-dome tweeter handles high frequencies.

The new range includes the MS812 two-way stand-mount (£200), MS814 two-way floorstander (£300), and MS815 three-way floorstander (£450). Range plans for the future are said to embrace home-cinema-oriented designs.

More common circular drive-units power Mordaunt-Short's other new (and more mainstream) range, the MS200 series. Priced from £140 for the MS202 up to £550 for the MS208 (and incorporating a centre speaker, the MS209C) these new speakers have slim cabinet profiles, claimed high sensitivity and power handling, and overload-protected soft-dome tweeters. Mordaunt-Short ☎ (01705) 498866



Mordaunt-Short's MS800: oval tones.

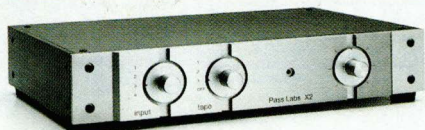
If you have to ask...

Aficionados of US high end should note that the highly-touted Passlabs amplifiers are now available in the UK via Zentek Music Ltd, alongside Balanced Audio Technology amplifiers, and loudspeakers from Hales, Egglestonworks and Reference 3A.

Prices of the Nelson-Pass-designed Passlabs solid-state equipment start at £1,995 for the Aleph-3 power amp, and rise to £25,000 for a pair of X1000 monoblock power amps. Balanced Audio Technology's valve amps manage to stay the right side of six grand for the most part, while Egglestonworks speakers, resembling a hybrid between Wilson Audio and Avalon, will set you back anything from £2,795 for the Isabel to £80k for the Ivy. The Andra centre channel comes in at £1,295.

Reference 3A is a relatively affordable brand with models starting at £1,990. Zentek ☎ (01892) 539595

Passlab amplifiers: top US high-end now available in the UK.



Ruark's Autumn Solstice

The new Solstice loudspeaker slots in between the Equinox and Excalibur in Ruark's Sterling Reference series. This imposing floorstanding transducer is a three-way design with four drive-units, and incorporates two acoustically-damped enclosures per speaker.

The upper enclosure incorporates a 19mm tweeter of hand-treated silk fabric, and a 75mm treated-fabric dome for the midrange. Both have aluminum voice coils, with ferrofluid cooling for the former.

The lower enclosure, loaded by twin gas-flowed reflex ports, includes two 180mm long-throw drive units with paper cones and 35mm four-layer voice coils.

All internal wiring, including the cord between the upper and lower enclosures, is high-purity, silver-plated oxygen-free copper (OFC). Four-millimetre WBT terminals accept amplified signals, while the crossover has 15 elements.

Twin toggle switches on the upper cabinet allow independent attenuation of both mid-range and high frequency drive-units.

A plinth, with custom-made cone assemblies, aids stability, and the enclosures may be ordered in beech, rosewood, walnut, yew, piano-black lacquer or lacquer veneer finishes.

Ruark ☎ (01702) 601410



Ruark Reference Series Solstice

In brief

special PC layout software, laser or ink-jet printable labels and an applicator which claims to apply a bubble-free, accurately-centred label every time. ☎ (0171) 631 0707

Spaced-out is a novel audio stacking system made up from tubular aluminium sections,

102mm in diameter, which have rubber edging and are available in 45 and 60mm depths. Developed by Afterglow



Spaced out? You will be, mate!

Design of Nottingham, each spacer includes a slot for cable management. A set of four spacers costs £18.99. ☎ (0498) 608928

Clarion claims its DAB9475R is the world's first DIN-size digital car radio. It switches automatically between present-day FM (with RDS-EON) and digital broadcasts according to signal availability, and displays information on a large-format dot-matrix LCD. It can hook up to CD or MiniDisc autochangers and will interface with an external data service decoder. Price to be confirmed. ☎ (01793) 870400

Hi-fi specialist Auditorium is opening a new shop at 112 Kings Road, London, SW6 4LY. ☎ (0171) 384 3030



JVC XU-301: 3 CD changer.

JVC's XU-301 combines a three-CD changer and MD recorder in one unit. It has a one-bit DAC, mic-mixing input, and three-frequency sampling-rate converter for the MD recorder (to accept input from DAT and digital satellite sources as well as CD). The CD mech is compatible with CD Text and will display it on TV screens when fed via JVC's RX-774R receiver. Optical digital input/output, CD pitch control and a clock/timer complete this £399.99 package.

The RX-774R costs £499.99 and has six-channel inputs for Dolby Digital, plus rated power output of 350 Watts. ☎ (0181) 450 3282

I am the Walrus

In the heart of London's West End there's a new kid on the hi-fi block.

Alan Sircom visits Walrus Systems in search of a sophisticated £3,500 system.

When KJ West One changed hands at the beginning of this year, Les Wong and Peter Sahren knew the time had come to move. This pair, both stalwarts of KJ's long-founded hi-fi dealership on London's New Cavendish Street, decamped just half a mile west to form Walrus Systems, a new hi-fi shop which expanded into High Street retail premises from an initial 'virtual' shopfront on the World Wide Web. (For netheads, the Website's URL is www.walsys.demon.co.uk/.)

To misquote former PM Harold Wilson, half a mile is a long way in London, and

there could not be a greater difference between the philosophies of Walrus and KJ. Walrus Systems is situated in New Quebec Street, just to the rear of Marble Arch, deep in the heart of London's chi-chi belt. And its product roster has been designed to reflect the upmarket locale. You'll find no regular bastions of British dealers, Arcam, Marantz and the like. Instead, shelves are stacked with upmarket wares, many fine pieces among them, being assembled into systems with care and attention. There is a handful of lower-priced products hailing predominately from the Rega Research portfolio.

On HFC's visit to Walrus, the plan was to

THE SYSTEM

| | |
|------------------------------------|---------------|
| Helios Model 1 CD player | £1,250 |
| Audio Analogue Bellini preamp | £475 |
| Audio Analogue Donizetti power amp | £575 |
| ATC SCM A7T speakers | £1,200 |
| Total (exc cables) | £3,500 |

assemble a £3,500 single-source system. Managing director Les Wong claims he has a unique spin on the high-end hi-fi game, and would prove it while accepting our challenge. And rather than taking the common route of starting with a rig priced below the

budget ceiling, then slowly upgrading in excess of it, Les commenced at the target price and worked up. A bold move, surely, but the £3,500 system sounded so good, I was reluctant to press on. This attitude turned out to be woefully conservative.

Here is Les's reasoning for kicking off at the budget max: a carefully-matched £3,500 system can outperform anything below that price point, so why waste time exploring cheaper component combinations only to end up in the same place? Given how stressful it can be to choose hi-fi gear, the Wong way sounds like the right approach to this author's pair of ears.

The heart of the system was the French-made, £1,250 Helios Model 1 CD player, a brand well known to *HFC* which seems to be emerging as a '90s version of Micromega.

Joining the Model 1 was a pair of Italian Audio Analogue amplifiers, the £475, phono-equipped Bellini and the £575, 60-Watts-output Donizetti power amplifier. Neither product has been tested in *HFC* before, although their brand sibling, the Puccini, earned a Best Buy in *HFC* 175.

Rounding off the system was a pair of slim, floorstanding ATC speakers, the £1,200 SCM A7T. With comparatively inexpensive Sonic Link cables for hook-up, the

total system cost strays only just onto the wrong side of the £3.5k limit.

Sound quality

My initial concern was that, on paper at least, the ATC speakers would require about 200 Watts more power than the Donizetti power amp could muster; but in practice these fears proved unfounded. Unlike ATC's domesticated studio monitors like the SCM 10 and SCM 20, the SCM A7T does not require behemoth amps to produce the uncoloured, crisp, honest performance for which studio monitors are revered.

When combined the Walrus way, all three components in this system seemed to give of their best. The Helios CD player contributed brightness and excitement, to which the Audio Analogue pre/power gave body and warmth, and all was displayed on a wide-open soundstage and with pin-sharp clarity by the ATC speakers.

A headbanger might want for greater dynamic scale and sheer heft, but above all this package displayed the unique ability to offer high-end refinement one minute and grass-roots earthiness the next, just as the music required. Best of all, this system just sounds innately 'right'. I could have sat in front of it for hours — it's ideal for those

long, languorous, late-night music sessions.

Perhaps one reason for this is the way it can delve into inner musical details, teasing out the important but subtle 'microdynamics' so beloved of US high-end hi-fi magazines. The Walrus combination gives you both the big picture and the brush-strokes.

Having got off to such a good start, Les went on to prove himself a master of system permutation at an even more exalted level, swapping the ATCs for a pair of £2,000 Audio Physic Tempo enclosures (HFC 143), and thereby filling out the sound no end. And by swapping the Audio Analogue power amp for a pair of valve-powered Audion designs, we started to hear the richness and grace one always seeks (but doesn't always get) from adding another £1,000 to the bottom line. Every component swap more than justified the its requisite cash investment, and you would have to go a long way down the line before becoming dissatisfied with the CD player and preamp.

So despite the fact Walrus Systems is a new kid on the block, its system-building abilities prove it has audiophile experience way beyond its tender years. We recommend you pay a visit whenever you're at a loose end the West End!

Walrus Systems ☎ (0171) 724 7224



new setting standards in headphone design



HD 570



HD 470



HD 400

This high definition headphone has all the refinements: duofol diaphragms, extremely lightweight aluminium voice coils and a new damping technique to name but a few. The result: simply irresistible.

This slim headphone, with a radically new design, features a fresh, lively sound and full bass for hi-fi systems, personal stereos or portable CD players. Comfort is optimised by a self-adjusting headband.

Whatever your choice of music, these open headphones offer a vivacious, natural sound reproduction with a warm bass response. Lightweight, yet rugged - the HD 400 also makes an ideal travelling companion.

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Ear Waxings

Jason Kennedy meets a team trying to build the world's first truly digital loudspeaker. Plus: a new glass platform from TLC Audio – guaranteed to make your system 'transparent' . . .

Companies like Meridian and Philips have already developed speakers with on-board power amplifiers and digital-to-analogue converters (DACs), but we've yet to see a 100 percent digital loudspeaker which turns digits into sound by electroacoustical means alone.

Dr Tony Hooley of Cambridge University thinks he can make one. Together with his partner David Gillett, he is currently seeking funds to design a commercially-viable digital loudspeaker, which can be used without either amplifier or DAC, yet will produce equal sound pressure (and theoretically, greater fidelity) than a regular enclosure.

Though the idea has been simmering since 1994, it could be on the market within a couple of years if the Hooley/Gillett partnership, now named 1...Limited, can hook up with a company with the requisite production facilities.

The technique proposed by Hooley is called binary to unary conversion. The CD system, using binary on-off code, holds 44,100 samples for every second of music, and any one of them can have a level between 0 and 65,536 (that's two to the power of 16.) In the unary system you could represent the same information using an array of between one and 256 'ones', actuated at rate of 352,000 samples per second (ie 352kHz). More detailed information on this process is available on the company's Web site at <http://www.uno.to>. Suffice it to say here that the intended speaker will be battery powered, will have at least 256 drive units to represent full dynamic range, and should offer 10 per cent mechanical efficiency (a conventional speaker musters one or two percent at best).

Tie a wire ribbon...

Although this technology can be applied to regular drive units, 1...Limited is working to develop a drive unit which is sufficiently small, fast and inexpensive to be used for hi-fi applications. In the hope of achieving this aim, the company is using a two-layer, piezo-electric ribbon formed into a helical tube.



TLC Acoustics base

Stick your floor-standing hi-fi products on these platforms, to produce a more relaxed and spacious sound.



(Think of a ribbon wrapped around an invisible pipe.) When an electrical signal is applied to this material, it can be made to flex into a cone shape, and this flexure is used to propel a very light diaphragm along the inside of the virtual 'tube'. Flexing the tube at the other end pushes the diaphragm back again.

The diaphragm, which has a proposed diameter of 10mm, needs to be rigid, light, yet experience very low friction at its boundary. One possible material is called Aerogel — not the material used for the cones of some conventional drive-units, but instead a silicone-based gel that can be made with a tenth the density of air. To reproduce the full hi-fi frequency range, an Aerogel diaphragm will need to travel 10 to 20mm. With 256 of these, sound pressure should be adequate.

In the demonstration I heard, using a two-year-old system loaded with inexpensive fire-alarm diaphragms, the sound was distinctly reminiscent of Edison's epochal recording of *Mary Had A Little Lamb*. But just look what that did for home entertainment . . .

1...Limited ☎ (01223) 575398

Give yourself a raise

Meanwhile, back in the almost-real world of audiophilia, a man from the glass-works has been having fun with platforms. So much fun, he's made some business out of it. Carl Whiten (for it is he), of TLC Acoustics, has created a laminated-glass plate with nylon-decoupled spikes running through it, which slots under your speakers, power amplifiers or any equipment standing on the floor. This sounds like something the Mana Acoustics guys have tried already, but those angle-iron enthusiasts use toughened 10mm glass as a platform, resting on spikes, and generally don't apply it to speakers.

TLC, meanwhile, uses two sheets of bonded glass, drilled to accommodate nylon washers and stainless spikes. The result is a stackable system in which the spikes of one platform will mate with insets on the spike tops below.

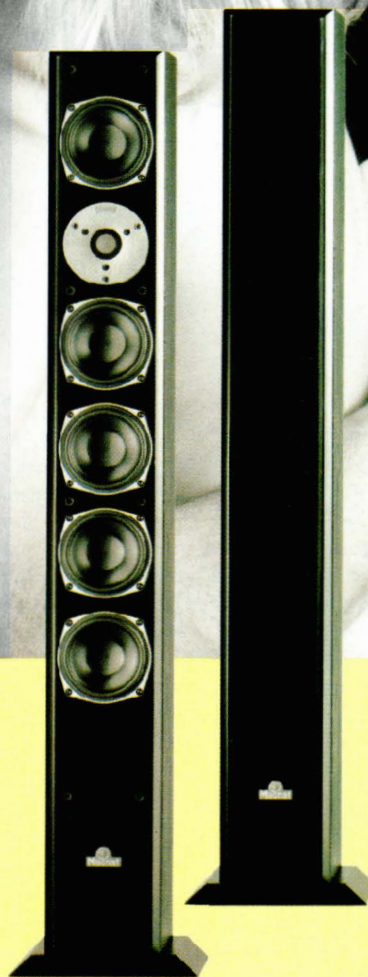
I tried a pair of these platforms under the two speakers I use regularly: JBL 4312mkII and Acoustic Precision Eikos FR 1. Both are stand-mount designs, and as such are probably not naturals for these bases, but the experiment yielded interesting results. Putting any kind of support under a speaker changes the position of the listener's ear relative to the drive-units, which has the consequence of altering perceived tonal balance. This must be considered in parallel with any effects due to a base's enhanced isolation or stabilisation capabilities.

The TLCs are 40mm high, ie less than two inches, yet when placed under the Kudos stands beneath the FR1s, made the sound more spacious and relaxed. Taking the bases out produced a hardening of the midrange.

With the bigger JBLs (on MAF stands), I noticed a similar effect; here the sound just escaped from the boxes much more easily — it even seemed to get louder. Removing the bases seemed to clarify the midband, but atmosphere diminished and the bass seemed lighter. I decided to leave them in, but not before cracking the glass around one hole with some cack-handed adjustments. If you use these bases, take care to undo the lower nut before tightening the upper one! ▲

TLC Acoustics ☎ (01924) 368432

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The Jimmy Hughes Experience

Is this an audiophile's ultimate coffee-table accessory? **Jimmy Hughes** reviews a beautifully-illustrated encyclopaedia dedicated to the rise and gentle fall of classical music on vinyl LP.

Vinyl has long since retired as the world's preferred music-storage medium, but there's life in the old LP yet. Small, specialist companies are still issuing music on LP, and the market for secondhand discs is limited but undeniably enthusiastic. Now would be a good time to trace the rise and fall of the long-playing record, charting its course through 50 or more years of development; and a Dutchman, Jaco van Witteloostuyn, has attempted just such a task. His book, *The Classical Long Playing Record: A Comprehensive Survey*, celebrates the rise and golden twilight of the classical-music LP.

It's not just about discs that are rare or collectable: illustrated are a fair number of recordings and performances which were long ago superseded. What makes them venerable is the beauty of their sleeves, and the fact that they represent a musical snapshot in time, a window on a vanished era. The LP is a beautiful thing in its own right, and some of the great sleeves of the '50s and '60s are true works of art by any measure.

However, with such a vast subject to cover, where does one begin? LPs were produced in huge quantities, in almost all civilised countries, by a staggering number of labels both large and small. Often, big variations in sound quality and sleeve design occurred even between copies of the 'same' record pressed in different countries.

For this reason it would be almost impossible to undertake a comprehensive and minutely-detailed overview of LP development. However van Witteloostuyn remained undaunted by the enormity of such a task, taking five years to write the book and casting his nets wide in the process.

Not for him an academic treatise on classical vinyl; rather it's a compendium of general facts useful to record collectors, plus anything interesting and unusual that happened to catch his fancy. And why not?

Maybe the chapter on room acoustics could have been omitted, since articles on this subject are rarely (if ever) much practical use.



The Classical Long Playing Record
by Jaco van Witteloostuyn.

And perhaps the section on the mechanics of cutting records could have been livened up with some pictures and diagrams. Not that the book lacks visual impact, though, quite the reverse. The illustrations are perhaps the best thing about it — over 500 colour photographs of classic sleeves and LP labels constitute a sight for sore eyes.

There's something for everyone

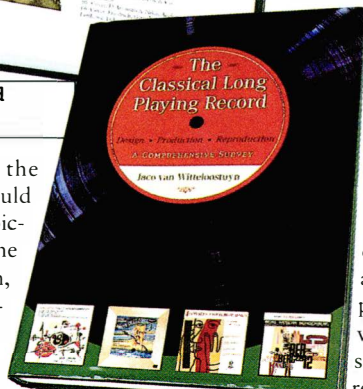
Even the most seasoned collector is sure to find previously unknown record covers. I found many that I didn't know about, as well as some I'd forgotten years ago.

There are some highly collectable discs on show, such as RCA's magnificently-presented Soria Edition of Fritz Reiner's Verdi *Requiem*, and the sumptuous libretto from Karajan's RCA Bizet *Carmen* (also in its original Soria Edition).

This contrasts with legendary Decca producer John Culshaw's bitter reminiscence regarding the 'poor' artwork on some of his classic recordings. Specifically the three-LP set of Verdi's *Aida* (1959), which was originally issued in a red vinyl wallet (rather than a proper box) much to his dismay! Incidentally, Speaker's Corner in Germany has released an excellent replica copy of this set, pressed on 180g vinyl — thankfully, they have omitted the red vinyl wallet...

With its broad editorial scope, van Witteloostuyn's tome offers something for everyone. It's a coffee-table book, to be browsed and savoured at leisure, yet it also repays study in depth, for example between pages 68 and 73 where it explains the significance of the various numbers and letters on an EMI LP matrix number.

To establish the precise age of an LP can be difficult, since many labels in the '50s and '60s declined to publish release dates. However the rear half of the book (some 270 pages) is given over to a vast compendium of labels and record numbers, prefixed with dates which roughly correspond to the time of release. Of course, this won't necessarily tell



you the age of a particular LP — only the date upon which it was first released.

With a record that held its catalogue place for 15 or 20 years under the same number, you would only know by experience whether or not your pressing was an original or later edition. For example the Herold-Lanchbery *La Fille Mal Gardée* ballet excerpts on Decca SXL 2313, which remained in the UK full-price catalogue from 1962 until about 1987.

The book is a bit of a magpie's nest, though hugely enjoyable; and it would have been interesting to see a potted history of major labels. The translation from the Dutch lacks fluency in places — the text is wordy and not always easy to follow. There are a few mistakes (inevitable given the scope of the book and the lack of accurate reference data generally available), but above all it's an undeniably good read and utterly unique in approach. One for the Christmas list! ▲

Publ. at £65 by A A Balkema International, Rotterdam. UK enquires to: Momena Publishing ☎ (0181) 542 2465

Paul Miller's Oasis of Sanity

Paul Miller reveals exclusive insights into the workings of the HDCD system, and explains how it successfully decreases the limitations of conventional 16-bit CDs.

High Definition Compatible Digital (HDCD) was the theme of our group CD player test in *HFC* 181. This month, in the first-ever explanation of its kind, I will explain the workings of Pacific Microsonics' HDCD process.

HDCD adheres to the letter, if not the spirit, of CD's 16-bit standard, manipulating it to achieve a claimed higher level of performance overall. Recordings are mastered through an HDCD processor, which modifies and then 'encodes' the data so that it will be recognised by a compatible decoder. In this instance, the 'decoder' is built into Pacific Microsonics' PMD-100 oversampling chip, currently used by a number of CD player manufacturers. Other chip makers, including Analog Devices, are licensed to include HDCD decoding in their oversampling filters.

It is easy to identify encoded CDs by the 'HDCD' logo printed on their sleeve. These discs are still playable in all non-HDCD machines, though the music will not sound the same as it would from a 'standard' CD. Only those players equipped with the PMD-100 chip (or equivalent) will realise the full effect of HDCD encoding.

The nitty-gritty

It's important not to confuse HDCD with similar acronyms like 'High Density Compact Disc'. Indeed, HDCD's *raison d'être* is best appreciated by reference to history. Currently we are being bombarded with details of emergent 'high density' audio formats such as the bitstream DSD and DVD-compatible 96kHz/24-bit linear PCM technologies, being promoted by Sony/Philips and 'the rest of the world' respectively.

Some years ago, however, the engineers at Pacific Microsonics were already endeavouring to manipulate the 44.1kHz/16-bit CD format whose future, at the time, looked to be set in stone. Rigorous listening tests enabled Pacific Microsonics to correlate many subjective colorations or distortions with the CD standard and its practical execution. It identified many audible colorations linked to inaccuracies in D/A conversion,

with the limited 96dB dynamic range afforded by 16-bit quantisation, and the different mathematics adopted by popular digital filters. The company has published some tantalising glimpses into the physiology of human hearing, linking a subjective 'graininess' to digital crosstalk and mismatches in the 'steps' of multi-bit converters, for example. Interestingly, this is the same correlation we have relied upon in *HFC* CD player tests when measuring noise-modulation, also caused by mis-matches in 'step-by-step' D/A conversion.

Pacific Microsonics' Model One HDCD Processor bears the fruits of this research, modifying and encoding the audio data so that, with complementary decoding in an HDCD-equipped player, a broad spectrum of audible distortions are apparently minimised. The

Pacific Microsonics' PMD-100 is an oversampling digital filter containing the company's HDCD decoder. New silicon from Analog Devices will also implement the decoder.

HDCD decoder, buried in the PMD-100 chip, is instructed how to process data by a 'flag' added into the 16th or 'Least Significant' Bit. Because the flag only pops up two to five per cent of the time, its pseudo-random nature tends to conceal any correlated distortion that might otherwise be caused by its presence in the datastream.

For the sake of argument, we can assume that Pacific Microsonics' HDCD encoder operates at 88.2kHz with a resolution of 24 bits, and involves three principal methods of perceptual coding. Perhaps the most controversial of these is its use of a variable 'decimation filter' to truncate the encrypted, high-resolution data into the required 44.1kHz/16-bit code. In this case, the mathematics of the filter are altered on a sample-by-sample basis according to the nature, the dynamic and spectral content, of the music at hand.

All this stems from the company's listening tests, which have demonstrated that one type of digital filter might be better at reproducing transient detail, while another more accurately preserves the tonal colour and ambient richness of the music. Of course, modifying sound quality by using different

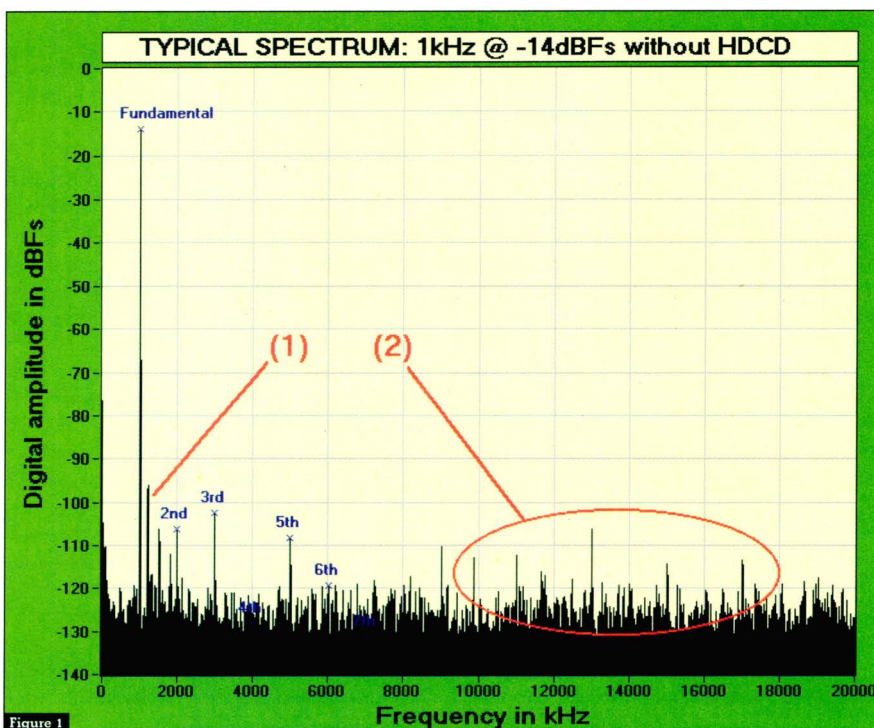
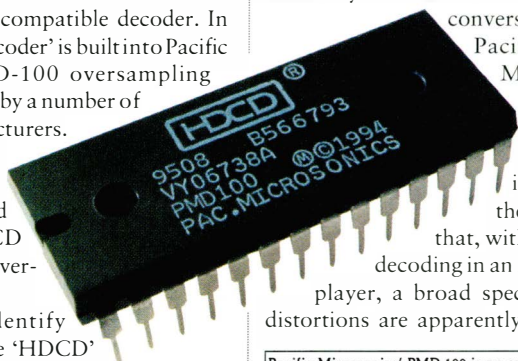


Figure 1

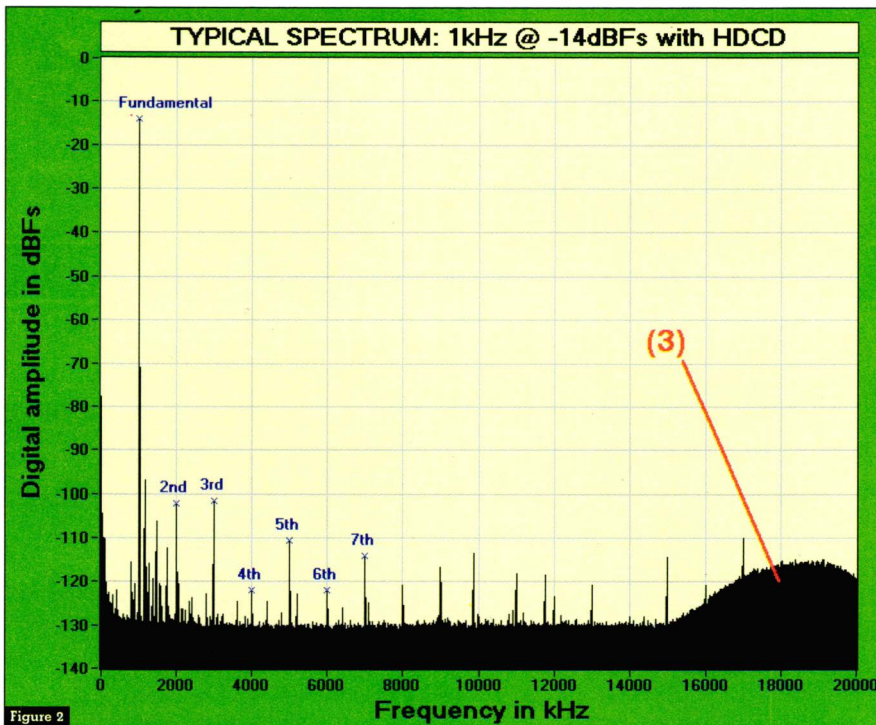


Figure 2

styles of digital filters is what distinguishes Pioneer (Legato Link), Denon (Alpha Processing) and Onkyo (FPCS) to name but three brands of CD players. Nevertheless, the HDCD process is unique in calculating the ideal type of digital filter on the fly. The powerful Model One encoder does all the hard work, with its embedded flags telling the PMD-100 which conjugate digital filter to invoke during oversampling.

Before the data is truncated to 16 bits, however, the HDCD encoder also attempts to maximise the data's dynamic range, and minimise the distortions caused by quantisation errors. By way of example, Fig. 1 shows a typical plot, taken from my own high-resolution spectrum analyser, of a 1kHz signal at -14dBFS , replayed on an HDCD-equipped CD player. This signal is *not* HDCD-encoded, so the PMD-100 behaves like a high-quality eight-times oversampling filter, and addresses the DAC in the usual way. In this example, the 1kHz tone is marked as the 'Fundamental' while distortion harmonics are picked out in '2nd', '3rd', '4th' order etc. You can see other, spurious peaks like idle-pattern tones (1) and complex, grainy-sounding distortions that manifest as 'grass' above the noise floor (2).

And that's not all...

As part of the HDCD process, subtle low-level signals are gradually boosted as their *average* midband level falls below -45dBFS . This is a very gentle level increase, amounting to just four dB per 20dB's range, never exceeding 7.5dB. The exact boost is determined by the nature of the musical signal, and is duplicated on both channels to prevent any 'image shift' should the encoded CD be replayed through a non-HDCD player. The boosted level may still have the effect of enhancing quiet sounds, unless the complementary

reduction is applied via the PMD-100 decoder. Either way, by raising the level of quiet sounds they may be more accurately described by the 16-bit code and, therefore, should suffer less quantisation distortion upon conversion.

In a further tweak, Pacific Microsonics introduces a high frequency dither as its encoded datastream is rounded to 16 bits. This dither takes the form of a special noise added above 16kHz (Fig. 2-3) but that succeeds in 'smoothing out' all those digital quantisation distortions seen in the previous graph (Fig. 1-2). The difference between these plots is quite remarkable, though it's interesting to see a slight *increase* in 2nd/3rd harmonic distortion

as a result of the HDCD encode/decode process. However it's obvious that subtle musical harmonics, which provide audible clues about acoustic space, ambience and sound staging, would now be unencumbered by that aggressive 'grass' of digital distortion!

The third way

The third facet of the HDCD process involves the gradual compression of peak-level signals. Usually, the average digital recording level is forced downward for the sake of accurately preserving the occasional transient. And, as we've discussed, the lower the digital level, the more distorted the signal becomes. So, peaks falling between 0dBFS and -9dBFS are squeezed into a tighter 0dBFS to -3dBFS range, effectively lending a further 'extra bit' of dynamic range to describe those delicate, lower-level sounds. Upon replay, the HDCD flag tells the PMD-100 to provide anything up to a six dB correction in level, though this can be achieved in either the digital or analogue domains.

Remember, this 'peak extension' facility is only flagged on a momentary basis as the music hits crescendos but, as Pacific Microsonics acknowledges, such segments of the waveform will have a larger quantisation error. Our graph shows the 'peak extension' facility at maximum, with harmonics illustrated and dither (Fig. 3-3) clearly visible. Nevertheless, in this 'worst-case' scenario, it's also clear that digital artefacts (Fig. 3-4) are not ameliorated by the sophisticated processing. Fortunately, this occurs rarely and only alongside high-level peaks, so such distortions should be adequately masked. HDCD is an ingenious, sophisticated and evidently successful 'fix' for the limitations of our established 16-bit CD format! ▲

Do you have a subject matter for the Oasis? Send e-mail to MILLER_AUDIO_RESEARCH@compuserve.com.

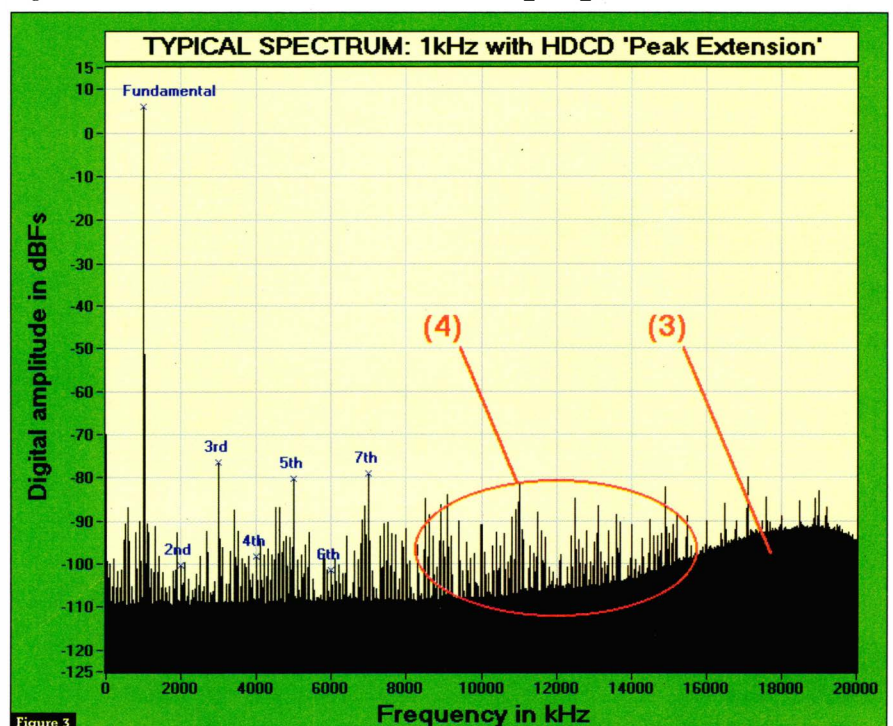


Figure 3

C A P T U R E T H E E S S E N C E

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Personal

French loudspeaker company Focal.JMLab is the number one hi-fi brand in France.

Paul Messenger pays the company a visit to find out what puts it on the map.

A couple of months back (HFC 179) I reviewed a loudspeaker from French manufacturer JMLab — a new name on the British market, and one that meant little to me at the time. It has nothing to do with Jamo or, for that matter, a much older (and now much smaller) French brand JMR (Jean Marie Reynard). In fact, JMLab's JM stands for one Jacques Mahul, a speaker engineer who learned his craft at Audax before setting up his own business in 1979.

I half expected a negative reaction to the lukewarm reception I'd given the company's Spectral 909.1. Instead I was invited to travel to St Etienne in south-east France, to learn more about the company by attending its J.A.M.1998 distributor conference which launched the new 1999 range. There I discovered that the Spectral is being phased out, its nearest replacement being the more advanced (if also somewhat more expensive) Electra range. Moreover, those I spoke to didn't seem too put out by my Spectral review (one actually agreed with me!).

I found this so interesting, I shelved previous plans for this column to pass on the news. Focal.JMLab (to give its full name) is simply one of the most impressive speaker manufacturers I've come across. The company started out as speaker driver specialist Focal, which provided units for some of the best and most expensive systems around (such as the legendary US high-end Wilson Audio models), and which also has quite a reputation in the specialist in-car market. The JMLab speaker ranges are essentially Focal drivers engineered into complete systems.

A growing reputation

The company is still a teenager, and therefore much younger than many well-known British names. Inevitably the corporate culture has yet to match the maturity of some venerable British institutions, but growth rate is nonetheless impressive. JMLab is already the Number One hi-fi brand in France, and steadily moving up the European Top 10 as well. Total sales for the 1997/8 financial year were over 100 million French francs (around £10m).

Messages



These figures and future prospects look all the more impressive considering that JMLab only started exporting in 1988, and international sales still account for less than half the total. And, to be frank, the company is only just starting to get its marketing act up and running. The reasoning behind the new launch was to rationalise a hitherto rather confusing mish-mash of models. Now there are seven less products overall, and five coherent ranges. Each range covers a spread of sizes and types (all bar the high-end Utopias include AV dialogue and surround speakers), while the ranges themselves are distinguished by driver technology and cabinet finish.

But it's the driver technology that really sets JMLab apart. Inverted (concave) dome tweeters are a particular trade mark present throughout, while the materials used for main driver cones are quite different from those used by other brands, both in construction and treatment. Yellow Kevlar cones are familiar enough from generations of B&W models, though JMLab does them very differently. We were shown how the company makes some of its 'PolyKevlar' cones, and I was quite shocked at the amount of craftsmanship, labour and time involved in creating a 'sandwich' construction, with layers of Kevlar either side of glass 'micro-spheres' held in a resin matrix.

Bread and butter

Another sign of the company's increasing maturity was evident in the gradual changeover from PolyKevlar to a newer 'type W' sandwich material, this time using a spe-

cial structural foam held between sheets of woven and resin-impregnated glass fibre. This technique not only claims to give a better combination of stiffness and self-damping, but is allegedly better suited to consistent industrial production. W-sandwich cones first appeared on the Utopia models a year or three back, but now are also featured in the more affordable Electrax models.

While I'd be the first to point out that a unique diaphragm material is no guarantee of superior performance, it's also true that any brand will derive some marketing advantage from the use of a unique material. And synthetics should offer some advantages in sample and long-term consistency.

Besides, 'sandwich' construction makes intuitive sense when trying to optimise the conflicting requirements for high stiffness, good internal damping and low mass that the choice of material involves. I'm old enough to remember the Leak Sandwich models, designed by the late Dr. Don Barlow in the '60s, and memorably marketed by a picture of Harold Leak himself standing on a board balanced on one of these aluminium foil/polystyrene sandwich cones.

I haven't had a chance to try these upmarket JMLab models at home yet, to find out what the Millennial sandwich is capable of achieving after over 30 years of material development. But I did think the Utopias sounded very good indeed in the demos the company had organised, and was intrigued that they managed to wring new subtleties from my well-used Christy Moore *Live at the Point* CD. ▲

JMLab, Sound Image UK Ltd ☎ (0181) 255 6868

Write on!

HERE'S WHERE HI-FI CHOICE READERS WRITE IN TO SHARE THEIR VIEWS WITH THE WORLD.

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Vive la différence

Well, what a cross-patch W Kayacan is (*Write On* 180)! I know Alvin Gold defended himself perfectly ably, but I really had to say how unfair I thought Mr or Ms Kayacan. Just because *you* think a piece of kit is either good or bad, and a reviewer thinks otherwise, tells you nothing other than that you are different people! Recently, while auditioning for a new CD and amp, I listened to the Quad 77 CD and pre/power, which Alvin had described as "smooth, dynamic and enjoyable, with a strong boogie factor". I went in with great expectations, but just because I found this combo sharp, hard edged and tiring, with a disappointingly flat soundstage, doesn't mean I can start accusing Alvin of being biased towards Quad and having turnips for ears. All it proves is that Alvin listened with different components in a different location — and that he is a different person!

So, W Kayacan, I suggest you use reviewers' views as guides for home auditioning and then let your own ears and tastes decide for you. And if you don't agree with the reviewers, don't get all bitter and twisted; just put it down to the fact that we are all individuals (thank God!).

Ian Manning, via the Internet

A method in our madness

I should like to take issue with the bar graphs which you use to illustrate your group equipment tests. By dividing each group into three price bands, each unit will only be compared with two or three others.

The group average, derived from only three or four in the sample, will not be a statistically

significant selection of the 'population' as a whole (ie all the units on the market).

Instead, you could derive the group average from the whole survey in which case any large deviation from the mean (whether plus or minus) would be very much more significant. Although the more expensive models would be expected to

measure better, such variations could be analysed in relation to the unit's price.

Another possibility would be to incorporate data from previous tests so that the group average for each price band would include more units of comparable market type.

Either way the bar graphs would then show genuinely meaningful variations rather than statistical quirks caused by poor methodology.

James Taylor, Wood Green, London

Stan Vincent replies..... We have fought shy of test-wide bar graph comparisons as they would place the cheaper products at a great disadvantage to the more expensive. Our approach now aims to reach two objectives. First to compare like with like at a given price point, and second to gain understanding of how absolute standards of performance vary with price.

However, as of November we will be introducing specific comparison tables in the conclusions, which will make it very easy to compare the technical characteristics of all products.

With regards to our "poor methodology" I realise there are always ways to improve our test régime, but I believe Choice provides the most rigorous approach of any UK hi-fi magazine on the market (not that I'm biased...).

Home is where the truth is

I recently took advantage of a £100-ish complimentary loan amplifier when my Marantz PM-66SE became unwell. After initial scepticism regarding performance, I was pleasantly sur-

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We reserve the right to edit all letters. Concise correspondence preferred! All letters must include address and daytime phone numbers.

Tee-time!

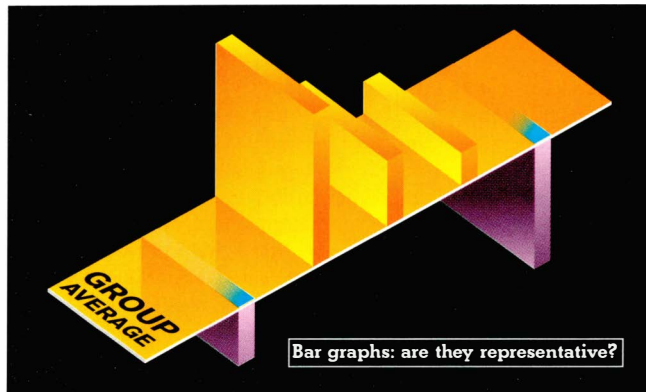
Every letter published on these pages wins a KEF pen while the best letter every month wins a stylish KEF polo-shirt. One 'large' size fits all. A definite talking point at the local hostelry!



prised when things warmed up and got going. Although my replacement on paper was clearly inferior, the different sound it offered was pleasantly refreshing, so much so that I listened for hours.

This experience has led me to believe that only when in very familiar surroundings can you truly appreciate the difference between components. The acoustics of the retailer's facility can influence sound so much that your newly-purchased piece of kit can sound very different when slotted in at home.

In conclusion this is a plea to retailers and consumers: please



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can you implement a system where consumers can easily audition kit at home; it's in every consumer's best interests to demand a home trial — only then can you truly 'audition' your potential purchases.
D George, Kent

Heavy metal

I'm a reader of *Hi-Fi Choice* and I have a comment about it.

Most of your reviews are aimed at solid-state equipment. Is it possible to have more reviews on valve equipment like Matisse pre or power amps?

Thank you for your kind attention.
KY Tang, via the Internet.

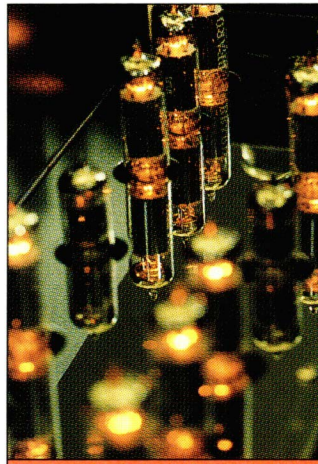
Disbeliever down under

I have been reading your magazine for some time now, and I must admit that the more I read it, the more I get confused.

Let's assume real hi-fi means the reproduction of sound as close to the original as possible. If there are four musicians in a recording studio playing acoustic instruments, the sound produced is essentially an analogue signal which is picked up by the microphone and then further processed onto CD for the consumer.

Surely there must be a way to scientifically measure the acoustic signals and compare them with what's coming out of our speakers at home? If so, wouldn't this be the absolute benchmark by which all products have to be compared with? Would this not be a reason to do away with all the listening auditions you perform?

On that note, doesn't it also prove everything you write about cables to be nonsense? A cable should, and please correct me if I am wrong, simply transport a signal from A to B. If you really are purists as far as the reproduction of sound is con-



Where are all the valve amps?

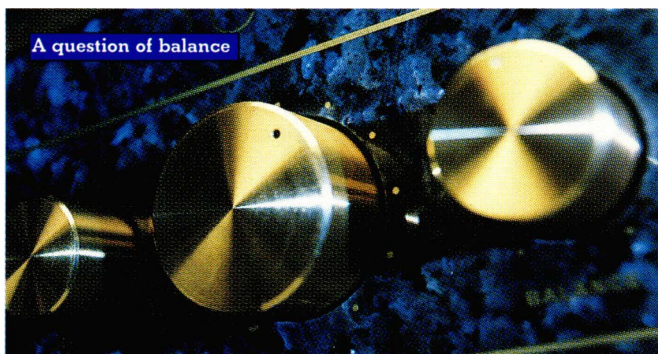
cerned, then who cares if this amp and that cable or this speaker with that CD player sounds "rich, subtle and warm", or whatever terms you use to describe it?

K Zadeh, Yulara, Northern Territory, Australia

Stan Vincent replies... Ever heard the old saying about not being able to see the wood for the trees? Music is ultimately a matter of emotional responses, and as yet, the equipment to measure these has not been invented. Objective measurements are a useful tool for quantifying certain aspects of hi-fi performance, but they will never replace listening tests as the final arbiters of quality.

Wot no knobs?

Given that stereo is a wonderful illusion which demands each loudspeaker has no more than its perceived share of the appropriate channel, despite unfavourable listening environments, equipment or recordings, I would be interested to hear your point of view on the following. Why do you have a policy of never criticising the absence of a balance control on the amplifiers you review?
E Courtney, Gloucs



A question of balance

Top tips

I thought I'd write with this tip. First get a PC with a newish CD-ROM drive with digital audio extraction. Next get Windows '98, and a Creative Labs Soundblaster AWE-64 Gold or other card with digital output. Then go to the Multimedia options and choose the option 'enable digital audio' for this drive. Connect the digital output to a suitable outboard DAC and listen as the digital data travels along the data, not audio, cable of your computer, gets checked by the Windows filing system for accuracy, a sample rate conversion courtesy of MMX, and becomes analogue by a far superior outboard DAC.

Shouldn't this mean that the digital audio arrives 100 per cent at the DAC, and is therefore the closest to the original recording as can be, or am I missing something?
Nadir Jeewa, via the Internet

Paul Miller replies... Yes, I'm afraid you are missing something — it's called jitter. You see, computers don't care about jitter (a variation in the timing between bits) unless it gets so bad that consecutive bits are overlapped, lost or corrupted.

Nevertheless, well before this happens there can be more than enough digital jitter to cause very audible distortion products during D-to-A conversion in your 'superior outboard DAC'. So, all the digital data may be transmitted intact and in the right order, but the music could still sound grim. There's no simple cure, but a healthy dose of Oasis of Sanity taken once a month will probably help.

Seismic confusion

Thanks for the five stars and Best Buy for the Seismic Sink Stand in the September issue.

However, I am mystified as to the value ratings when comparing like with like. The Wilson benesch stand reviewed is a four-shelf model for 17in (43cm) wide equipment which costs £1,110 all up. Our equivalent stand, a model 1-4, costs £995, so how can you justify five stars for value for the benesch and four stars for our product?

It is also important to mention that we offer one, three, four, five and six-shelf models

for 17"/43cm (model 1) 19"/48cm (model 2) and 22"/56cm (model 3) wide equipment.

Max Townshend, Townshend Audio, Surrey

David Vivian replies... Perhaps we didn't make enough of the fact that the Wilson benesch Asside, unlike the Seismic Sink Stand, can be used successfully without shelves. Supplied brass tabs sit on top of the spikes and form a minimalist support platform for the equipment.

With the equipment used in the test, the table was marginally preferred with the shelves in place, but we've used the Asside with other hardware where the tabs have sounded better.

Because it's possible to have such stunning sound and looks from just £590, we felt the Asside deserved a five-star value rating.

As clear as mud

Having read your magazine for many years, HFC 180 whetted my appetite for DVD. As a result, I purchased your sister magazine, *Home Entertainment*. However, I find the whole thing unclear. I am now left wondering how DVD and Dolby Digital would fit into my existing system, and am trying to make sense of what all these things mean. A glossary would be useful as would an explanation of how it all comes together.

Many enthusiasts will be wondering if DVD will play through their existing processors — mine is a Yamaha DSP-E1000 Pro Logic. Also, the cost of DVD and a Dolby Digital decoder with a five-channel amp is vast. And, as you say, Sky and Terrestrial TV have no plans for broadcasting Dolby Digital, so it will be of little use. I don't watch films everyday, do you?

So, there must still be a big market for Pro Logic DVD software. I feel many people will at first be intrigued by DVD, but won't bother once they try to get information about the format. Well at least not for a long time. Unless magazines clear it up.
Karl Todd, Chadderton, Oldham

Jason Kennedy replies... As DVD discs carry a stereo PCM sound track they can be played back in Pro-Logic as well as Dolby Digital surround formats.

WHY ARE WE WAITING

We've seen tantalising glimpses of DVD-Audio discs which could set amazing new standards for domestic music replay. Videophiles already have DVD-Video, so what's the hold-up with the audiophiles' version? **Tim Frost** and **Paul Miller** have the latest news and forecasts.

At the beginning of 1998, the DVD Forum presented an 'aggressive' time-table for the development of DVD-Audio. There would be a finalised DVD-Audio specification by April... then May... then June. At the time of writing this article in July 1998, there is still no sign of a final specification.

However, the Forum's DVD-Audio group has released DVD-Audio v0.9, a work-in-progress specification which shows what's in store. It reveals not so much a standard, but more a collection of all the options that DVD's interested parties will build into the 'CD of the future'.

DVD-Audio follows closely in the footsteps of DVD-Video, whose specifications have been agreed for some time. It will use the same range of DVD disc formats, which can store up to 17 Gigabytes (Gb) of data — equivalent to more than two-dozen CDs. Like DVD-Video, the DVD-Audio disc has space for stereo and



One of Classic Records' Digital Audio Discs, forerunners to DVD-A.



multi-channel sound, text, still images, video and computer data, but swings the balance in favour of audio. Where DVD-Video can assign 95 per cent of the disc's capacity to movie content, DVD-Audio turns the tables and can allocate up to 90 per cent of the capacity to sound.

Playing time can be extended beyond CD's 74 minutes (useful for compilations and long orchestral or operatic works). However, the majority of DVD albums are likely to remain at the 60-70 minute length, and the extra data storage capacity on disc will be used to offer the same music in different levels of sound quality and diverse formats.

DVD's quality street

Multimedia goodies may be attractive to the average chart-album buyer, but for the serious hi-fi user, the attraction must be the additional audio quality which DVD can offer. If you take as a baseline CD's 44.1kHz/16-bit standard, DVD-Audio extends bit rates and sampling rates up to 192kHz/24-bit. This promises a theoretical 144dB dynamic range and 96kHz audio bandwidth.

DVD-Audio presents the user with 18 linear pulse-code modulation (PCM) audio options, with any permutation of 16, 20 or 24-bit data words, sampled at 44.1, 48, 88.2, 96, 176.4 and 192kHz. (Linear PCM is the same system as used to encode musical data on CD, and is not compressed at all, unlike Dolby Digital, for example.)

DVD-Audio discs will major on the 44.1kHz sampling rate and multiples thereof (88.2kHz, for example), since at present, most recording studios are locked into variations of the CD standard.

Uncompressed PCM tracks can be used for multi-channel audio, but there are limits to how many channels of 'super audio' can be extracted together. So a 'lossless' compressed PCM audio format (eg Meridian Lossless Packing, see box) is also being considered, which can increase the number of PCM channels without affecting the sound. Since there is a strong commercial argument for home-cinema-type multi-channel audio the video portion of the disc can also carry compressed multi-channel formats.

A broad church

Rather than upset anyone, the Forum has opened its doors to virtually any and every home-cinema multi-channel format around, including Dolby Digital, MPEG2 Audio, DTS, SDDS and DSD. The latter, Direct Stream Digital, is the format adopted by Sony and Philips for their DVD alternative, Super Audio CD. (See feature, HFC 175).

Even though it isn't a direct competitor for DVD-Audio, the CD/DVD-compatible

SACD is still adding to the growing consumer confusion over new DVD software and its hardware applications.

The DVD Forum has gone so far as to admit that in principle, the SACD concept of combining a CD layer and a DVD layer on one disc is a "good idea", but it has stopped short of making SACD part of the official DVD Audio specification.

No matter, say Sony and Philips. They have two opportunities to make SACD an official format. One is to get SACD included as an option by the DVD-Forum; this, it seems, is out of the question. The other way is to make the SACD format an extension of the existing CD specification. This is a crafty move. Since Sony and Philips completely control the existing CD specification, they can establish SACD as a CD which just happens to have DVD compatibility. They can simply publish SACD as an extension to the CD specification, without having to pass it through the DVD Forum.

Raise the skull and crossbones

So now, if all DVD-Audio specifications are in place, why the further delays? It all comes down to a small matter of copy protection. When the record industry embraced CD, it erred crucially by failing to insist upon a means of preventing unlimited copying. The industry is not about to make the same mistake with DVD-Audio, and a whole raft of proposed anti-pirating technologies is under consideration by the DVD Forum.

This could lead to each DVD-Audio disc employing up to three different copy-protection systems: one would be used to disable digital recorders; another to stop large-scale pirates copying and pressing DVD-Audio discs *en masse*. The third measure, a watermarking system, buries data inside the audio signal which positively identifies the original source, should the first two systems fail to prevent unauthorised duplication of copyrighted tracks. However, these technologies remain unproven in the field, and arguments continue over their efficacy, sonic transparency and political expediency.

Copy protection issues, just like these, added six months onto the development time for DVD-Video. On the same basis, that pushes an announcement on DVD-Audio back to the DVD-Forum conference due to be held in October. And that's an aggressive estimate. The more realistic members of the working group are saying that it could be next spring before manufacturers get a DVD-Audio standard from which an actual product can be manufactured.

What's the point?

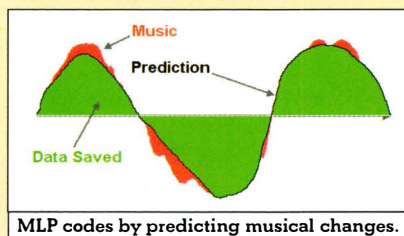
Though all this talk about DVD-Audio and SACD is undoubtedly exciting, it begs a simple question: what's the point of going beyond the 16-bit, 44.1kHz digital standard of CD? After all, it closely matches the ear's abilities by storing frequencies from DC up

WHAT IS MERIDIAN LOSSLESS PACKING?

Paul Miller explains how an innovative British technology could revolutionise the next generation of audio discs all around the world.

'Lossless' packing is exactly what its name suggests: a method of compressing audio or any other kind of data, so that it occupies as small a space as possible without actually discarding any information. In this respect MLP (Meridian Lossless Packing) is rather like the '.zip' application used by IBM PC computer systems to compress, but not corrupt, large data files. Right at the outset, though, it's important to distinguish MLP from *lossy data reduction* systems like Dolby Digital, DTS, MPEG and even MiniDisc's ATRAC. All of the latter can deliver far greater rates of compression, typically from a factor of four to a factor of 11, but only at the expense of lost information, and thus a less transparent sound.

Instead, MLP offers the chance of longer playing times without sacrificing quality. Indeed, there's even the possibility it could enhance audio quality by permitting a recording to have higher sampling and bit rates than might ordinarily be possible.



For example, at 48kHz sampling, MLP offers an average saving of eight bits per sample, which increases to 10 bits at 96kHz (or 40 and 50 per cent respectively at 20-bit resolution). MLP will even support 192kHz sampling, and will increase the potential of DVD from, say, six channels at 96kHz/16-bit resolution, to six channels of 96kHz/24-bit audio for the same 'data volume'.

How MLP works (see diagram above)

Traditional digital PCM audio transmits information independent of content. Even digital silence occupies the same amount of data as a full-scale signal. In practice, music varies in its data density (or loudness), so there's a certain degree of redundancy available; moreover, anything that's of interest to listeners has a degree of predictability about it (eg rhythms).

MLP works by examining the level and rate of change of the music across several tens of samples at a time. Then it codes the signal by 'predicting' the changes that are taking place, rather than repeatedly storing some 50 per cent of the same information, sample-by-sample.

Novel features of MLP

Lossless processing also provides an opportunity to introduce controlled quantities of digital dither, further linearising performance (for more information on this, please refer to my column, on page 18 of this issue.)

There are operational novelties too. For example, because the MLP datastream knows 'where it is' from data block to data block, it is possible for users to 'drop in' and search for a track, or perform a fast audible cue within a 25msec time frame. Here's another distinction from a computer data-compression algorithm, which treats the entire data file as a single object. Thus MLP could be used for real-time data transmission, such as delivery of audio over the Internet, via the emerging Firewire standard or via the traditional S/PDIF digital interface as used for transmission of digital data between CD transports and DACs.

License to sell

In a remarkable announcement just before going to press, Meridian announced that licensing for MLP is being handled by Dolby Laboratories. At present the technology is only available in Meridian's 561 processor, but soon it will appear in the 861 and 565 multimedia controllers as well. However, Dolby Labs has had vast experience in licensing its own technologies, and has the infrastructure to deliver both effective implementation of MLP, and effective technical support for it.

And while the only official announcement to date concerning MLP has been to record the signing of the distribution deal with Dolby, there must be a very strong likelihood that Meridian Lossless Packing will become the method of choice for storing audiophile-quality multi-channel music within the confines of a digital disc. If that should turn out to be the case, Meridian's Bob Stuart will have good reason to rub his hands with glee.



Meridian's 561 processor.



Early DVD-Audio releases are likely to be from record companies owned by hardware manufacturers, like these early MiniDiscs from the Sony Music labels' catalogues.

◀ to 20kHz, with dynamic range of 90dB or more. However, there is already strong evidence that the ability to store and replay frequencies beyond these limits can lead to better-sounding recordings, despite the fact that most of us can't detect pure audio tones much above 18kHz.

A number of specialist recording engineers are producing remarkably open-sounding recordings using higher sampling rates than CD. These engineers point to a number of reasons for the sonic improvements generated by higher sampling rates.

One benefit concerns the 'brick-wall' filter necessary for all digital recordings. In CD this is very close to the top of the audio band, and 'ringing' effects can stray into audible frequencies. In a higher-sampling-rate system, the brick wall and any consequent ringing effects are well beyond the human hearing limit.

Other experts say that by recording at higher sample rates offered by both DVD-Audio and SACD, harmonics within the normal audio spectrum are stored more accurately and with better timing information. (To make this kind of recording is not difficult, as *HFC* correspondent Richard Black proved in his article last month. In side-by-side comparisons, the higher-bit-rate, higher-sampling-frequency recordings proved audibly superior every time. —Ed.)

Word up

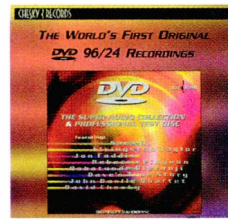
The new formats offer another improvement: larger digital word-lengths. SACD offers 20-bit, while DVD-Audio offers both 20-bit and 24-bit formats. On paper, the advantage of high-bit rates is widening the dynamic range to 120dB for 20-bit and 144dB for 24-bit. An orchestra going at full pelt generates maximum levels in the 120dB region. In theory, this is beyond the capability of CD's 16 bits, but would be accommodated by 20-bit DVDs.

Further up the scale, 24-bit DVD-Audio

opens the dynamic window much further than that required by real music — and promises irreducibly wide dynamics. Why irreproducible? Well, consider an efficient hi-fi speaker delivering 90dB of sound for 1 Watt of amp power. To reproduce 120dB you would need to feed it 1kW (1,000 Watts), and you would need more than 10kW to break the



Above: California Audio Labs CL-20 'audiophile' DVD player (\$2,495, US only); above, R: Chesky's 24/96 DVD sampler; R: Pioneer's professional DVD recorder, the DVR-S101. Yours for \$17,000!



130dB barrier (assuming the voice-coils had not long since melted and dribbled out through the reflex port). Some rock'n'roll sound-reinforcement rigs could just about deliver DVD-Audio's 140dB maximum levels, but there's no way you'll ever survive that in your living room.

24-bit music-data storage exceeds the capabilities of hi-fi electronics for other reasons, too. When you start talking about a format with a -140dB noise floor, this is far in excess of the 'self-noise' created within the equipment's semiconductors. No matter how theoretically good a data storage format, real-world electronics will limit the performance of any 24-bit system.

However, there is a strong argument for recording at 24-bit resolution but distributing at 20-bit quality. 20-bit recordings will deliver audible advantages over CD in the home because of their enhanced dynamic

range, low noise, higher resolution and reduction of low-level sample errors on the quietest signals. Recording at 24-bits will help to deliver this 20-bit quality after the music signal has passed through all of the studio processing and mixing stages.

Testing, testing

That brings us neatly to another difficulty surrounding DVD-Audio and SACD: the attitudes of the people actually making the recordings. To make the new formats successful, the majority of recording engineers and studios must embrace them, and that won't happen overnight.

For a start, not every recording engineer appreciates the need for higher bit rates and sampling frequencies. Many in the trade would still be extolling the virtues of direct-drive turntables if they thought the LP was still in vogue (which, of course it is: see p68 —Ed); these knob-twiddlers certainly will not rush into a studio upgrade just because a few hi-fi journalists have suggested it might be a good idea.

Another problem confronts engineers and studios prescient enough to see the point of hiking up standards — all existing recording equipment is designed for 16-bit/44.1kHz. To update an individual item of recording gear is a relatively straightforward affair, although none of it comes cheap. But to produce the ultimate DVD-Audio master tape, everything in the studio's recording chain has to be high-bit/high-sample ready. The studio must be using the lowest-noise

mics and preamps, the highest quality interconnects and mixers, along with high sampling-rate/bit-rate digital processors and recorders.

In this respect, there is little difference whether the studio has opted to work with DVD-Audio's PCM or SACD's DSD, since the cost of the actual recording system is only a small fraction of the total cost of upgrading a whole studio.

Also, right now, the buzz in recording studios is not about high bit-rates, but rather about implementing 5.1 multi-channel recording for film, TV and DVD-Video soundtracks. There is little enthusiasm, and even less cash, for a wholesale equipment upgrade just to make an occasional super-fi DVD-Audio recording.

DVD's driving force

So what will generate DVD-Audio or SACD releases? As with any new format there will be the pressure on the recording studios owned by supporters of DVD-Audio and SACD, to seed the market with albums by high-profile bands. Fortunately for these

DVD-AUDIO: FOUR YEARS IN THE MAKING

Stan Vincent gives a brief history of DVD and related topics, as printed in former issues of Hi-Fi Choice.

October 1994

Barry Fox introduces the concepts of the Dolby Laboratories AC-3 and DTS cinema-sound systems which provide 'discrete' surround.

December 1994

Stan Vincent tackles the as-yet-unformed issue of better-quality CDs and how they might arrive.

May 1995

Barry Fox introduces the concept, technological background and market implications for a 'second-generation CD' which had been an "open secret" since mid-1994.

June 1995

Barry Fox sets out 10 questions he would like to ask the progenitors of 'high-density CD'.

September 1995

Barry Fox reports on comments from Philips' (then) boss, Jan Timmer, over the battle between Sony/Philips' MMCD and Toshiba's SD, DVD's two competitive forerunners.

November 1995

Stan Vincent reports on demonstration of SD discs at Berlin's IFA show.

February 1996

Barry Fox introduces proposals for multi-channel music replay, and early suggestions for higher-sampling-rate CDs from the elusive Acoustic Renaissance for Audio grouping.

April 1996

Tim Frost offers an introduction to the technical details of Dolby's AC-3 compressed 5.1-channel surround-sound coder/decoder (codec).

June 1996

Barry Fox introduces Sony's Direct Stream Digital technology (DSD), then being proposed for archiving applications; now it is foundation of the Super Audio CD system.

December 1996

Report of Pioneer's prototype 'DVD-Audio'-disc demonstration at Heathrow Ramada Hi-Fi Show.

June 1997

Review of Thomson DTH-1000, the first DVD player on the UK market, which fails to impress with its audio performance.

October 1997

Paul Miller explains the inner workings of Dolby's AC-3 codec, now becoming known as Dolby Digital.

November 1997

Stan Vincent's Berlin Internationale Funkausstellung (IFA) show report notes 25 European DVD movie titles from Warner Home Video, a shock over MPEG2-only surround sound in Europe, and eight new DVD players including the Panasonic DVD-A350 — first model to have both Dolby Digital and MPG2 decoders on board.

December 1997

Tim Frost reports on the split between Philips/Sony and Matsushita/Pioneer/Toshiba, over whether or not the DVD Audio disc should be compatible with existing CD players.

February 1998

The DVD Forum's Steering Committee decides that Dolby Digital will be a "mandatory" format in the DVD spec for Europe — effectively killing off the ill-founded MPEG2 initiative. In the same issue, Richard Black explains the technology behind Super Audio CD, Sony/Philips 'next generation' music-data disc.

March 1998

Classic Records, a US-based audiophile record label, launches 24/96 Digital Audio Disc (DAD), claimed to play on existing DVD-Video machines. US high-end manufacturers Muse Electronics and Resolution Audio reveal plans for high-end DAD players.

April 1998

Sony and Philips announce licensing terms for Super Audio CD (SACD), permitting existing CD licensees to

embrace SACD for no extra charge. SACD will be appended to the Red Book CD standard. Pioneer launches DV-505 DVD-V player and DVL-909 combi LaserDisc/DVD player. Sony launches DVP-S715 and DVP-S315 DVD players.

July/August 1998

'Un sighted' test of six DVD players priced £450 to

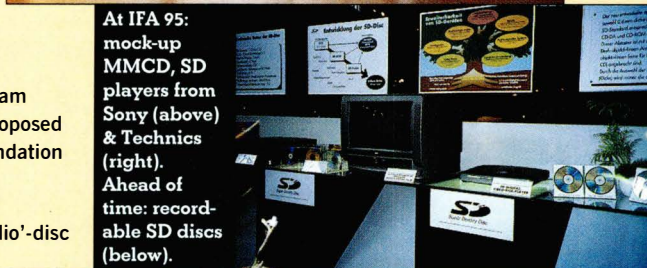
£900, to establish DVD players' performance with CD software. None exceeds the performance of a £330 CD player and misgivings remain over the character of DVD sound. Alvin Gold and Tim Frost give an update on the current status of DVD and SACD.

September 1998

Richard Black evaluates 96kHz/24-bit audio with 44.1kHz/16-bit audio, using one of his own recordings and high-end kit from digital gurus dCS.



At IFA 95: mock-up MMCD, SD players from Sony (above) & Technics (right). Ahead of time: recordable SD discs (below).



studios, their new recording equipment will be paid for largely out of the company's corporate treasure-chest, just to ensure there are enough titles available in the new format to spur on sales of the hardware.

Inevitably it will be specialist labels who are the next entrants into DVD-Audio/SACD — the small audiophile labels cutting jazz and classical sessions with minimalist audiophile recording gear. New audio for-

matists have always been a great way of making money out of obscure music performed by even more obscure artists. Alongside these will be DVD-Audio releases from mainstream classical labels, which are becoming involved simply because of DVD's potential for improving audio performance.

However, to ensure wholesale acceptance, the DVD-Audio catalogue needs to include titles by the whole spectrum of cur-

rent artists. That will only happen when recording studios have upgraded their systems piece by piece, and can start offering DVD-quality recording to the record companies at no extra cost. DVD-Audio's supporters have to pray that this happens before we get bored with the DVD Forum's new baby and turn to alternatives — or simply stick with CD despite its limitations...

Tim Frost edits the newsletter DVD & Future CD.

the man behind TAG McLaren's explains what's

Q: why have TAG & McLaren, best known for their Formula One racing team and watches, bought Audiolab?

Dr Udo Zucker, Physicist and founder of TAG Electronic Systems Ltd.

Largely because of me. I have always loved music. I have my best ideas listening to music and could not live without it. For a long time, I've nurtured an ambition to push music reproduction to the absolute limit. I believe that in TAG McLaren Audio we will be able to do that.

Q: what do you think TAG McLaren can bring to the world of high quality music reproduction?

Dr Udo Zucker: Several things: Firstly, radical ideas and the resource to carry them out. TAG McLaren has over 100 engineers already working in one of the most demanding of all disciplines - developing specialist electronics for Formula 1 racing. Some of this experience is directly applicable to hi-fi equipment: we have world beating experience in digital circuitry design, use of quality materials and in handling complex sensor data signals in the cramped, high vibration and electrically noisy environment of a racing car. There is also a unique, TAG McLaren attitude that overrides all this resource and expertise. This attitude is focused on winning, it demands excellence and is obsessed by attention to detail.

Q: what are your aims and aspirations for TAG McLaren Audio?

Dr Udo Zucker: My goal for TAG McLaren Audio is a simple one: to build the world's best sound reproduction systems. I want to recreate, with absolute fidelity, the artists' performance in your own living room, so that when you close your eyes you can believe you are together in that room.

Q: how has TAG McLaren changed Audiolab?

Dr Udo Zucker: Let's not forget that Audiolab have been making outstanding high fidelity products for many years. In this way Audiolab complemented our own way of working. In fact, both teams of engineers already have the intuitive understanding of people that have been working together for years. When Audiolab and TAG McLaren's electronics division joined forces we became one of the most powerful companies involved in high end audio products.



WORLD LAUNCH AT 'HIFI SHOW 98', EXCELSIOR HOTEL, HEATHROW, SEPTEMBER 19-20

email: helpdesk@tagmclarenaudio.com freephone: 0800 7838007

electronics behind TAG McLaren Audio.

Q: did you change the electronics and appearance of the product?

Dr Udo Zucker: Yes. Most importantly, with our additional resources, Derek Scotland, co-founder of Audiolab, has achieved significant improvements in sound reproduction. Our attitude has been one of 'no compromise', whatever it takes to raise the standard to the level of a true TAG McLaren product. Furthermore, Peter Stevens, designer of the McLaren F1 road car, has made a big investment in design and superior materials to give these products a look for the new millennium.

Q: will you add to the product range in the future?

Dr Udo Zucker: The first fruits of our collaboration will be the new F3 series. This will be the ultimate Audiolab product, but for TAG McLaren Audio it will only be the beginning. We plan to follow the F3 with two further, more advanced and therefore expensive, complete systems: the F2 series and F1 series respectively. These systems will take TAG McLaren Audio into genuine high end products and to new heights in high-fidelity.

Q: what music system do you currently have at home?

Dr Udo Zucker: To be honest, I listen to a much more expensive Krell system at the moment but I can't wait to replace it with a better TAG McLaren F1 Audio system.

Q: and finally, what sort of music do you enjoy listening to?

Dr Udo Zucker: Ah, the question they always ask in the hi-fi stores. But I believe the question is irrelevant. Perfection is what I want, not a system that 'colours' sound. Purity, to my mind, is the most desirable quality reproduced sound can have. So it shouldn't matter what I listen to. In delivering our promise of "hi-performance, hi-fidelity" we will make this question irrelevant for good.

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No Anorak Required

Phil Strongman suggests a selection of 'real' music to show off your hi-fi at its finest!

Hi-fi reference discs are ten-a-penny, but most of them are populated with strange whistling and grumbling noises, or delicately-phrased jazz music by a mystery band from small-town USA. This is fine if your best friend is an oscilloscope, but not so useful if you want to impress real people with your system's music-making abilities.

To do that requires the use of music that everyone knows and loves, but not just any old tunes. What's needed is a selection of tracks, old and new, which have subtle recording details just waiting to be discovered. Once folks have heard hitherto-buried quirks, details, nuances and subtleties coming to light, they'll be won over to the hi-fi cause. Our timing indications will take you straight to the noted excerpt: for example, 1'37" is one minute, 37 seconds. All titles are single tracks unless indicated.

1998

Morcheeba
Big Calm (album)

You haven't really heard *Melody Maker's* Album Of The Year until you can pick out details like the open guitar sounding to the right on *The Sea*, at 1'37", and the scratches in the first minute of *Blindfold*. The centred acoustic guitar, picking through the end of *Part Of The Process*, is almost hidden under the louder guitar that plays to one side.

1997

Prefab Sprout
Andromeda Heights (album)

This is a remarkably clean set, produced by lead singer Paddy McAloon. You can hear fingertips squeaking on the strings at the album's very start, the shaker that kicks in on the left just before the minute mark on *Anne Marie* and the almost subliminal percussion 'clunks' that start around 2'38", centre-stage, during the poignant *Steal Your Thunder*. On *Life's A Miracle*, the bouzouki-like guitar-trills should be clearly evident in the first 14 or so seconds, and again later throughout the song. Oh, and don't forget the three-dimensional 'satellite' effects during the last 30 seconds of *Weightless*.

1989

Bob Dylan
Ring Them Bells

On this track from Bob Dylan's mellow late '80s classic *Oh Mercy*, some distant, unwiped kick-drum booms can be briefly heard at 0'36". And is that some kind of electronic noise or someone's fingers squeaking on a guitar at 1'10"?

1984

The Bluebells
Young At Heart

Listen out for a bored session musician half-heartedly tapping an unwanted drum, to the left, just two seconds into the Bluebells' huge Number One hit. Where are they now?

1983

The Style Council
Long Hot Summer

Paul Weller and the Style Council's steamy *Long Hot Summer* has an opening keyboard flourish that should be heard reverberating until the sixth second.

1982

The Stranglers
Golden Brown

The Stranglers' odd ode to Summer, and other things, should yield the start of the lead guitar riff as early as 1'53"

Grandmaster Flash & The Furious Five
The Message

On this pioneering rap gem listen out for the tambourine that stutters to the right at 0'46", again a few seconds later, and several more times throughout the piece. The synth effect just before the choruses — at 1'20" and elsewhere — is being played backwards as it pans from right to left.

1979

Sex Pistols
The Great Rock 'N' Roll Swindle (album)

On the Pistols' ode to corporate music, *EMI*, some enthusiastic but well mixed handclaps occur under the guitar solo at 1'30". An almost subliminal moment from producer Chris Thomas.

1971

The Who
Who's Next (album)

The Who's *Song Is Over* has a nice little left-right panned

string twang at 1'51", and on the album version of the classic *Won't Get Fooled Again* there's a distant drum roll slightly to the left half-a-dozen seconds in.

1970

The Carpenters
Close To You

In the easy-listening room, the Burt Bacharach-Hal David composition, as performed by the Carpenters. During the track's 'silent' break (3'54"), an audible drumstick count-down occurs.

1969

The Beatles
Hey Jude [The Beatles Again] (album)

The Beatles' *Revolution* number is the kind of song you can hear a hundred times, but only when played through a decent system will it yield the attempted — and failed — vocal over-dub during the line "you tell me it's an evolution" at 23 seconds in, and the "uh, uh, uh" grunts from Lennon during the guitar solo at a minute and 55. George Harrison's morse-code-style guitar will also be a revelation — it's screechier and wilder than any pre-punk axe had the right to be. The ending's even more outrageous: at three minutes 15 there's a hollow popping as someone (George Martin?) simply switches off the guitar amp.

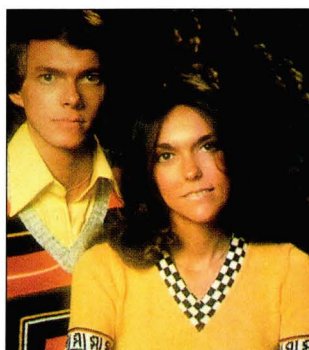
Harrison, or maybe Lennon, is audible during the massed singalong of *Hey Jude* at 5'34", asking someone to "hang up the batteries" (or is it "hold up at the back, please"?). ▲



Have you ever heard the Fab Four's grunts and geetar solos?



Young Bob. The Zimmermeister in his one-man-band days.



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Query of the Month

Chain testing

My current system is: Arcam Alpha 5 CD (recently upgraded with the Alpha 6 board), Audioquest Ruby interconnects, Audiolab 8000A amp, driving Mission 753 bi-wired with QED Profile Silver 12. I also use a Yamaha KX-580SE tape deck.

My musical taste varies from Queen to classical, Ella Fitzgerald to Tina Turner. My listening room is 11 by 22ft with the speakers pointing down the length of the room.

What is the weak link in my system, and what are your recommendations for an upgrade?

Gary Raynor, Colchester, Essex

There are a couple of options to consider here. The weak link in the system is probably still the CD player and upgrading to an Alpha 9, Cyrus dAD 3Q or Meridian 506 would certainly take the system up a few notches.

Alternatively, concentrate on the details, and get the most from your system with a serious equipment support such as those from Wilson benesch, Mana, or a Townshend Seismic Sink Stand (see HFC 181). Uprate your CD player's mains supply with a Russ Andrews lead and Acoustic Precision Black Box mains cleaner and make your amplifier's life interesting with some Electrofluidics or Goertz speaker cable.



Processing power

Regarding your answer to the Query of the Month in September's edition of *Hi-Fi Choice*: you mention Meridian and Acurus processors/preamps without specifying models.

Can you please elaborate? Can I presume you mean the Meridian 565 or the Acurus ACT III processor? I am trying to decide whether to get a Yamaha A1 to add on to my Audiolab 8000S, or whether to go for a processor and Rotel five-channel power amp.

A Jenkins via e-mail



You are correct in your presumptions about the two processor models. As for your multi-channel processing and amplification conundrum, having consulted Alan Sircom, Reviews Editor of HFC's sister publication *Home Entertainment*, it would seem that the separate processor and power-amp route is more highly regarded than the integrated one.

The problem with integrated units is that their high-powered microprocessors and associated spurious have a deleterious effect on the internal amps. Plus the latter are usually going to be less substantial than gain stages found in standalone amps.

A third option that we could suggest is combining the Acurus ACT III with your Audiolab and the Acurus A100x3. This isn't the cheapest option available, but should ensure uncompromised performance in two and five channel modes.

Radio ramblings

In *Ear Waxings* (HFC 181), concerning Digital Versatile Disc (DVD), you refer to RFI—Radio Frequency Interference (which Jimmy Hughes has discussed recently in relation to Kimber Cables). Is this the same as RF, which you mentioned in your response to a *Help!* letter in HFC 181 (from Axel S entitled *CD Conundrum*)?

Also, I'd be interested to know what are ferrite clamps (you recommended them to Axel S), how much they cost and where they're available — I haven't seen them around.

Thanks in anticipation.

Kevin McHale via e-mail

Radio Frequency Interference (RFI), as its name suggests, results when radio frequencies — hundreds of thousands of kiloHertz — interfere with circuits reproducing audio frequencies (20 kiloHertz is nominally the upper limit of human hearing). RFI can derive from many sources, of which microprocessors are fast becoming the most pugnacious. Since they are now found in all but the most "hair-shirted" hi-fi components, RFI is becoming a big problem for audiophiles. CPC plc, for example, sells three sizes of ferrite split-sleeve cable clamps, priced from £2.58+VAT. Call them on ☎ (01772) 654455 or see www.cpc.co.uk/.

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SOURCE HELP!

Needle talk

I am in need of a replacement cartridge for my NAD 533 turntable. Until now I have used a Goldring Elektra cartridge (as supplied with the deck). As I have to replace the cartridge I want to upgrade it at the same time.

I use my turntable with a NAD 116 preamplifier, NAD 214 power-amplifier and Elipson Colonne speakers. I'm not sure what cartridges would fit the arm (basically a Rega RB250) because it has no height adjustment. My record collection consists of jazz, blues and rock.

I'm also wondering if it's possible to rewire the arm with some better quality cable. If this is possible what cable should I use?

B Velthuis via e-mail

You could use a variety of cartridges on your deck but it would be advantageous to find one of similar height to the Elektra. We'd imagine that other Goldring magnetics and Rega models would be suitable. Alternatively Ortofon's 510 and 520 models are good, as is Denon's DL range, the latter giving a smoother sound.

As for re-wiring the arm, this is feasible but quite tricky, and unless you relish a challenge it might be an idea to bring in a specialist company such as Origin Live ☎ (01703) 671237 or Chantry Audio ☎ (01777) 870372.



Goldring 1012GX

Chill out

I currently have an ageing Marantz CD42, Audiolab 8000A (grey variety) and Ruark Talisman II speakers.

The tonal balance of the set-up is very bright and I have had to try several types of CD-to-amp leads to tame the top end. The speakers are loaded with sand and close to the wall but the bass, although well controlled, does not extend very far.

It's time to upgrade and I am considering the Arcam Alpha 8SE CD player to give a warmer sound. I could change the amp and am wondering about the Arcam Alpha 10, purely on the grounds of matching the looks of the CD. I want to keep the Ruarks and would like to get the best from them. Am I looking in the right direction? My maximum budget for the new CD and amp is around £1,500.

Graham Brewer, Enfield

Looking at our May '93 review of the Talisman 2 it's not surprising that you are getting a bright, dry balance, and while the brightness can probably be countered with a more relaxed source, the speaker itself limits bass extension. So a carefully selected CD player and amp will significantly improve matters. However, there's only one matching pair that looks suitable (Sony's CDP-X3000ES/TA-F3000ES combo) and you will probably get better results with two units from different brands. CD players to consider include:

Acurus ACD11, Marantz CD-17, Mission Cyrus dAD 3, Myryad MC100 and Pioneer PD-S505 Precision, while appropriate amps include Primare A-20mkII, Musical Fidelity A2 and Roksan Caspian.



Myryad MC100



Wilson benesch Actor

You lucky man!

My present system is as follows: Audiomeca Talisman CD transport, Audio Alchemy DDE v3.0, Audio Alchemy DTI pro32, Gryphon Belcanto preamp, Gryphon S100 power amp, Acoustic Energy AE1 speakers.

I'm very pleased with the sound of my system, but fine detail and soft voices seem a little smothered compared to some systems I've heard. It's been suggested that I invest in a better DAC, such as the Sonic Frontiers 2 or the Audio Synthesis DAX. Which of these do you recommend? Or are there any other models you could suggest?

I'm also considering upgrading my speakers — the AE1 is great, but seems cold and bass-shy compared to some newer models. What would you recommend for my room/system? I have read great things about the Monitor Audio Studio 20s, but it's impossible to listen to them fairly as the dealer only has cheap CD and amp systems. Would floorstanders work in my room?

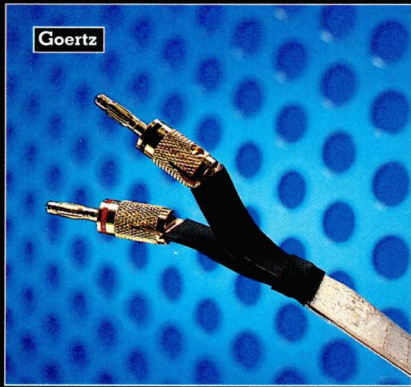
Adam Giles, via e-mail

Given the distinctly high-end nature of your system, you have a long quest ahead of you before sonic revelations occur. The DACs you mention are both well regarded but predicting their precise response to your transport is difficult. Instead we'd encourage you to find an Audiomeca dealership and listen to what its staff recommend. Just to keep you on your toes, however, we'd suggest you also try to hear what Theta can do, as well as the units you mention.

The Monitor Audio Studio 20SE is well regarded by another hi-fi magazine but we're not familiar with it ourselves. A floorstander, however, would seem appropriate and we'd suggest you try one or more of the following: Wilson benesch Actor, Dynaudio Contour 3.0, ProAc Response 2.5, Ruark Equinox or ATC SCM50.

Prog prob

I have an Arcam Delta 250/BB50 CD player and DAC (connected with Audioquest Video Z), driving Monster 400 Interlinks into an Audiolab 8000C/P pre/power amp (circa Nov.94), and Chord Co. Flatline Twin cable into JBL L100 Monitors.



I listen mainly to progressive and heavy rock music and wanted a full-range detailed sound with plenty of attack and slam, but also lots of low-level resolution and detail. Despite the enormous range and ability of my speakers I do not listen at high volumes.

The problem is that I now have almost too much slam and a little bit too much top end. The solutions I have considered are as follows: replace the CD with a Meridian 508 (20/24) or a Marantz CD-17KI (or other); or replace the preamp with an Audiolab 8000Q and either add a second 8000P or get two 8000Ms. I have also been tempted by the Audio Analogue pre/power combo. Alternatively I could go for a big integrated such as a Musical Fidelity: what do you think would best tame the over-active top end without adding extra bass bloom or lowering the level of detail retrieval? My budget is around £2,000 and I don't mind buying second-hand.

James Ramsey, Ramsgate, Kent

Being quite familiar with a variation on your speakers (JBL 4312mkII) we can appreciate that they might expose anything untoward in the signal. Start by replacing the cable with something less 'exciting' such as Electrofluidics or Goertz; this will clean up the treble and substantiate the bass. Then consider a new CD player: as well as the two you mention, try to hear an AVI S2000MC Reference, Acoustic Precision Eikos and a Helios Model 1, and use an interconnect cable recommended by those brands.

Alpha phased

My current set-up consists of: Arcam Alpha 7 CD player (one day to be upgraded to Alpha 8 or even Alpha 9), LAT IC-100D signal cable, Yamaha AX-630 amplifier, Ixos 603 speaker cables and Celestion A3 speakers.

I would like to upgrade the amp with the Arcam Alpha 9 series; however, I am puzzled by the seemingly endless possibilities of the Alpha series pre, integrated and power amplifiers. Some of the combinations I am considering are: Alpha 9/9P (bi-amping), Alpha 9C/P, Alpha 9C and two Ps (bi-amping), Alpha 10.

Which combinations would you recommend and why? Also, what would be the best interconnect between the pre and power amplifier or integrated and power amplifier in this scenario?

I currently use Ixos 603 speaker cable (bi-wired). Should I upgrade to keep up with the new amplifier(s)?

Martin Bruczkowski, Singapore

You're ahead of us with the Alpha 9C preamp, which has yet to surface on these shores, but from talking to people at Arcam it would seem that using this with either the Alpha 9P or 10P would give you the best quality amplification. Bi-amping delivers more power but not necessarily higher resolution, but having said that it might be worth your while waiting for our definitive statement on bi-amping in the November issue.

As for cabling, Arcam is the UK distributor for Audioquest and has been for some time, so it's safe to assume that Arcam products will have been developed using the stuff, so it should work better than most in Arcam company.

Difficult circumstances

I own a harman/kardon HK7600 CD player and have just bought a pair of B&W DM603 speakers. I use an old NAD 7020e receiver, but I am thinking about replacing it with a new amplifier. Unfortunately, for real tests, it is impossible to bring amplifiers home to audition. Furthermore, harman/kardon CD players are not sold in Israel, therefore I cannot test my system or similar in a store.

I would be glad to hear your professional opinion, if possible. Which amplifier in the £200-£500 price range is the best choice for my system?

I listen mostly to classical and jazz music.

Gabriel Koren, Israel

There is a variety of very decent amplifiers that would fit within your budget, but the question would appear to be one of availability in your part of the world. Our international favourites are the Audio Analogue Puccini, Magnum 1A170, Marantz PM-66 KI Sig, Musical Fidelity X-A1 and Sony TA-F3000ES. We assume distribution or lack of it will help narrow down the list but if you can get them all, find a store that can demonstrate a few with your speakers. It's the amp/speaker interface that is most crucial.



Let's rock

I need help in finding a power amp and CD player for my B&W P5 speakers. This is an upgrade from a Marantz CD-48 and Rotel RB981.

I have upgraded my cables to Silversonic from Audioquest Type 4, and from Topaz II interconnect to Kimber PBJ.

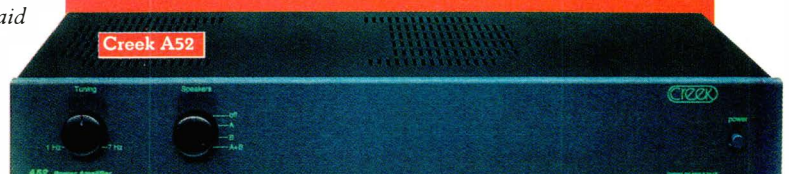
I have found the preamp I want: a Creek OBH-12 which replaces a Rotel RTC-970. I live in the US and have access to Cambridge Audio, Parasound, Acurus, Audiolab, Magnum, Marantz and Rega electronics.

My budget is between \$1,200 and \$2,000 (£750-£1,250) and I'm after a sound that's dynamic and tonally accurate with great imaging. Oh, and one that rocks.

Tom Helton, Canton, Michigan

As your chosen preamplifier is a passive model you need to be a little more careful than average when selecting a partnering power amp. The most obvious choice would be something from Creek's range, such as the A52 or the SE version of the same. These will have a sympathetic input impedance for the preamp and the 80 Watt SE version will give you plenty of rockin' power.

As for a CD player, within the bounds that you specify, we are inclined toward the Rega Planet, Marantz CD-63mkII KI Sig and Acurus ACD11. Given the likely price advantage that the latter will have it is probably the most competitive option.



Up against the wall

I am currently upgrading my system and now have only the speakers left to choose.

As the rig now stands, it comprises Naim CD3.5 CD player, Rega Planar 3 turntable with Linn K9 cartridge, Naim Nait 3 amp and my old JPW P1 speakers. Interconnects and cables are by Naim.

Very standard and unimaginative I know, but I do like it. My room measures 10 x 18ft, and the speakers would need to be very near the back wall.

The speakers I have auditioned so far include Linn Keilidh, Ruark Talisman 2, Ruark Crusader 2, Naim Intro, B&W P4 and B&W CDM1 SE.

The Linn is my favourite so far, apart from its aggressive, forward presentation which makes it rather harsh (oddly the Naim also has this trait).

Could you recommend any speakers in the £700-£1,200 price range which share the Keilidh's strengths — big sound stage, dynamic, detailed, great bass etc — but without this forward aggressiveness? Or are some of these characteristics a result of the forward sound? Could different cables ameliorate this trait?
Cedric Taylor, London SE10

The attributes you seek are not necessarily a result of the forward balance that you hear in the Keilidh, but it is unusual to find them in a great many wall-mount speakers. Part of the problem may be your amplifier which doesn't really have the impetus to drive a tricky load like the Keilidh in comfort.

There are a few speakers which are both efficient and do what you want with their backs against the wall in our records. The strongest contenders look to be the Cabasse Farella 400 and Celestion's A2 but also worth considering are Audio Note's AN-J/Bs and B&W's Matrix 804, though the latter, being more compact, won't offer the same dynamics.



Cabasse Farella 400

Speakers for Quad

I have a complete Quad 77 system feeding Spondor SP2/2 speakers via bi-wired van den Hul Snowtrack speaker cables. The equipment is installed in a well-furnished 18 by 12 ft room.

My query is: what improvement (if any) could be made by using different speakers to get the optimum performance from my system? I could spend up to £1,500 on alternative speakers.
AA Ridley, Whitley Bay, Tyne & Wear

The sort of improvements one can expect from a speaker upgrade pretty well cover the board: increased dynamic range, better imaging, better timing, broader bandwidth and fundamentally lower distortion to name a few.

The sort of speakers that will give you these qualities (and should suit your system) are the Vandersteen 2ce, Living Voice Auditorium, ProAc Tablette 50 Signature, Totem Model 1 and B&W Matrix 804. All of them are extremely capable and entertaining designs.



Living Voice Auditorium

Fairly heavy

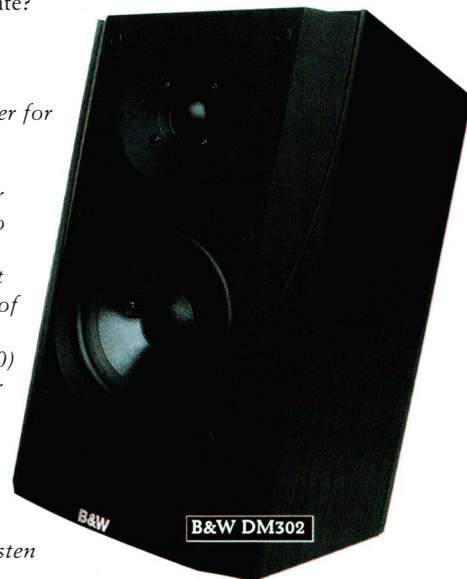
I am after a pair of so-called 'budget' speakers (about £150) and was baffled by the choice available and all the different sizes etc. So to cut a long story short, I bought your magazine to read the reviews and discovered the Tangent Monitor 9 speakers. Would these work with my Marantz CD-46 player and old Marantz amp (with tuner)?

I listen to a wide range of music from rock (sometimes fairly heavy) through to some more mellow stuff, but on the whole just vocals, guitar, bass and drum music (not synthesised). Would the Monitor 9 be appropriate?

Harry Payne via e-mail

While the Monitor 9 is certainly a lot of speaker for the money it would be worth your while considering a few other options and listening to them side by side.

Some of the compact options from the likes of B&W (DM302), JPW (ML510), Mission (700) and Tannoy (M2) offer a more refined version of events that may prove more satisfactory in the long run. But don't take our word for it: listen and discover.



Audio desert

I am using an Audiolab 8000A amp, Linx Theta tuner, Nakamichi DR2 and Marantz DD-82 DCC tape decks with a Linn Sondek/Basik Plus/K9 record player. My speakers are Griffin Aperiodic model 27, now about 20 years old, on Target stands. Connections are all nondescript or as supplied by the various manufacturers.

My present speakers lack the openness, clarity of detail and range that I seem to hear on some good modern products, and I think it is time to consider a change. I am prepared to spend about £800, maybe more if it's justified, plus, no doubt whatever is appropriate for suitable speaker cables.

While this is rather an arid area in which to audition quality equipment, I am willing to travel to find the right thing.
W Luscombe, Callington, Cornwall

You are spoilt for choice at this price point: there's a plethora of excellent designs to choose from so you may have to do a bit more travelling than anticipated. Make sure you listen to your own music at the sort of levels you usually prefer; speakers can vary quite a lot with volume.

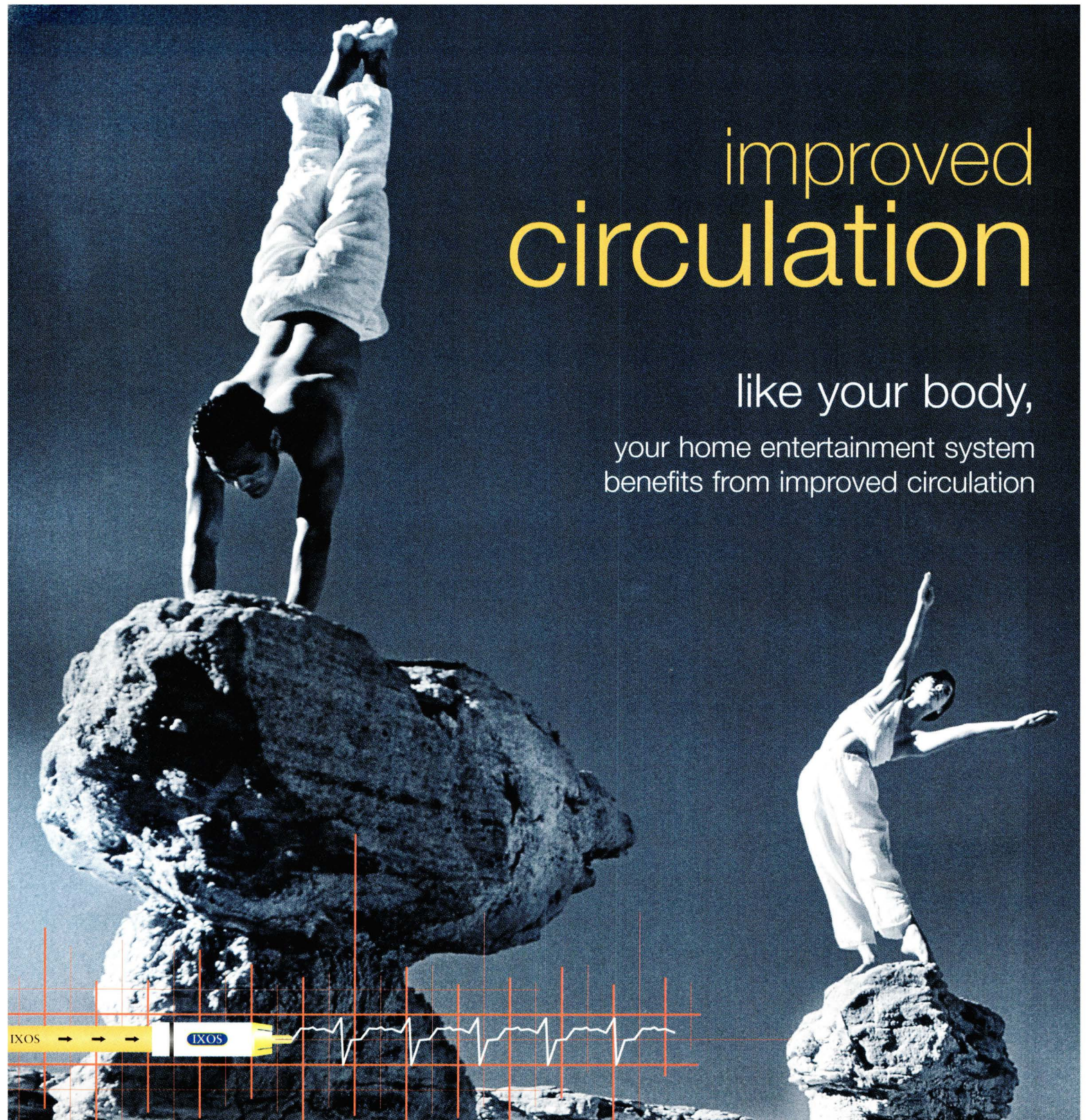
Seek some or all of the following and try to listen to them with an 8000A: Castle Harlech, Celestion A1, Dynaudio Audience 50, Epos ES14, Heybrook Quartet, Mission 753F and Rega ELA mkII.



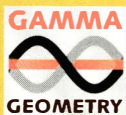
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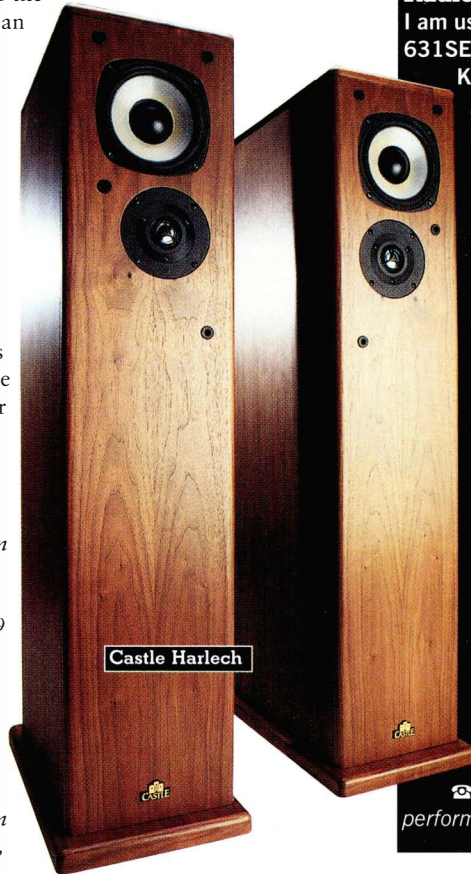
Satisfaction

After years of trying to satisfy my lust for the ideal sound, I've decided, yet again, that an upgrade is needed. My current system consists of an Arcam Alpha 8SE CD player with Alpha 9/9P amps, Mission 753F speakers and a REL Q100E. Connections are Audioquest Quartz and vdH 2nd with Audioquest Indigo+ speaker cable. The kit rests on an Apollo five-tier stand and the speakers have Mana Sound Frames beneath them.

With about £750 to spend I think a CD player upgrade is my priority, but I would also like to change the speakers as well. Do you think I could do without the sub by buying speakers capable of deeper bass? I'm after good, strong presence, imaging and detail without brightness.
John, Charlton, London

You've got a pretty well-balanced system at the moment and there are no obvious weaknesses. On the one hand a CD player upgrade to the likes of an Alpha 9 would be worthwhile, but a speaker change is equally valid.

As speakers tend to make a bigger difference this would be the place to look and listen, but you will need to save a bit longer to get a worthwhile upgrade. We would suggest you audition the Cabasse Farella 400, Castle Harlech, JBL L40 and Kelly KT3.

**Radio 1, CD 0**

I am using Audiolab 8000A/P amplification; Tannoy 631SE speakers on filled stands, bi-wired with Linn K20; Sony CDP-77ES CD player with a Musical Fidelity X-10D. Interconnects are Chord Cobra with supports from Target and Townshend.

I also listen to classical music on the radio with a Hitachi FT-5500 tuner connected to a roof aerial. The reproduction is at times breathtaking and creates a life-like picture and spatial depth that my CD player cannot match.

I realise that radio stations use high-quality equipment, but I would like to try and get my system to sound closer to this standard. My CD player was top of the range in 1991 (it weighs 35lbs and sports balanced outputs) and I would like to keep it. Would adding a DAC help?

Joslyn M Willis, London SW16

A new DAC would certainly change the results you get from CD but if it's spatial depth you are after the most cost effective route would be to have your CD player upgraded with a new clock. There are at least two companies that perform this 'heart transplant' for between £150 and £200 and the results improve spatial resolution, often quite dramatically. We would recommend you speak to Acoustic Precision ☎ (01483) 267516 and Trichord Research ☎ (01684) 573524 to discuss the feasibility of performing this modification on your player.

HINTS AND TIPS

JIMMY HUGHES RAIDS HIS STICKY LABEL COLLECTION IN THE QUEST FOR CLEAN CDS.

Although CD is relatively insensitive to dust and scratches, sound quality is affected when playing surfaces are less than pristine. So it's obviously good to take care of your discs. The problem is, how do you maintain CDs in perfect condition? First, start with a disc that's not soiled or damaged. Speaking personally, I avoid buying discs from shops that 'master bag' their stock. For security reasons, some shops put out only the disc caddy, keeping the CD itself bagged-up behind the counter.

I'm particular about how CDs look, and take great care not to soil my discs. The same goes for the CD caddies or boxed-set slip cases. I won't buy a CD unless it is perfect physically and cosmetically. I was exactly the same with LPs; both the disc and sleeve have to be as near perfect as possible. Even when buying a secondhand LP that's 30-plus years old, I still want perfection!

Unfortunately, most shop assistants seem to have little idea when it comes to handling CDs safely, finger-marking the disc without a moment's thought. The master bags in which the discs are stored can scratch the surfaces too, particularly if the CD's been in stock for a while. You wouldn't expect to pay top-price for an expensive shirt covered in dirt and finger-

marks, yet shops seem to think you'll cheerfully cough-up for CDs that are damaged without thinking twice about it. Grrr!

So, my first rule is to keep your CDs factory-sealed where possible. But, supposing you do buy a

CD that isn't in perfect condition — perhaps something cheap in a sale, or a secondhand disc — how do you clean it? Actually, CDs are difficult to clean safely. The polycarbonate from which the disc is pressed is very soft and scratches easily. Rubbing it with a cloth or tissue risks putting fine scratches on the surface; if you're fussy, like me, this won't be acceptable.

Actually, one of the safest ways to remove dust from a CD is to use a removable self-adhesive sticky label — the store's price ticket and/or bar code label often works beautifully. Those circular '2CDs for £22' stickers the HMV shop uses, for example, are ideal. Simply peel off the sticker, then use it to remove surface dust by lightly pressing it on the disc. Alternatively, buy some large sticky labels from a stationers (something in the region of 3cm x 6cm should be ideal in terms of size) and use these. You must, however, be sure to get removable labels; not the type the sticks permanently.

If you lightly breathe on the surface, then press the label down, you can even remove fingerprints. And all without rubbing the disc — so there's no chance of scratching the surface.

Sticky label cleaning is not the last word in CD maintenance, but it is relatively safe, quick, and cheap. What more do you want?

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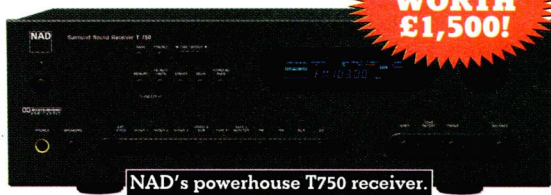
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At Earls Court, London, from 24-27th September, the Live 98 exhibition will showcase a sumptuous range of audio and visual products from across the globe. See page 131 for full details. One key exhibitor will be AudioClub, which has teamed up with *Hi-Fi Choice* to offer this month's First Prize: a spectacular audio-visual system from Dali and NAD. At the heart of the system is NAD's £700 T750, a remote-controllable Pro-Logic home cinema receiver, which has 5.1-channel inputs (and outputs) for use with Dolby Digital sources. It packs 210 Watts output, with a 35 Amp peak current capability, and comes complete with NAD's famous 'soft clipping' facility. There are four audio inputs, four video inputs, two tape outputs and one VCR output, while the RDS tuner has 30 presets.

Front left-right speakers are the £400 Dali 606, a Best Buy in *HFC 174*. This design has a ferrofluid-cooled, soft-dome high-frequency driver, with three bass/midrange units configured in a unique two-and-a-half-way 'crossover-overlap' design. Meanwhile, to reproduce dialogue and surround effects, the winner will receive a pair of £200 Dali Trio Sat surround speakers and the £100 Centre loudspeaker. Both designs employ Danish drive-units and enclosures are available in either black or white. The Trio Centre has an integral wall-mounting bracket and a matching stand for mounting on a shelf or TV.

The prize comes complete with 10 metres of Dali Viper speaker cable, made from stranded oxygen-free copper. And as a special incentive to enter straightaway, we're giving away five FREE pairs of tickets to Live 98, for the first five correct entries received by September 18. Send in your coupon today!



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HOW TO ENTER

Answer the questions below by circling the correct answer, then fill in your name, address and daytime telephone number in the spaces given below. Please remember to tell us whether you are over 18 years of age.

POST THIS ENTRY FORM TO:

Hi-Fi Choice Competitions (CHFC810A)
Bradley Pavilions,
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All entries must arrive by First Post, Friday September 18th, 1998.

THE QUESTIONS

- 1) What is the name given to the Dali 606 drive-unit configuration?**
- a) Overcrossed laps
 - b) Overlap crossover
 - c) Crossover-overlap
 - d) Crossroads motel
- 2) What is the peak output current of the NAD T750?**
- a) 35 Amps
 - b) 70 Amps
 - c) 210 Amps
 - d) 64,000 Amps

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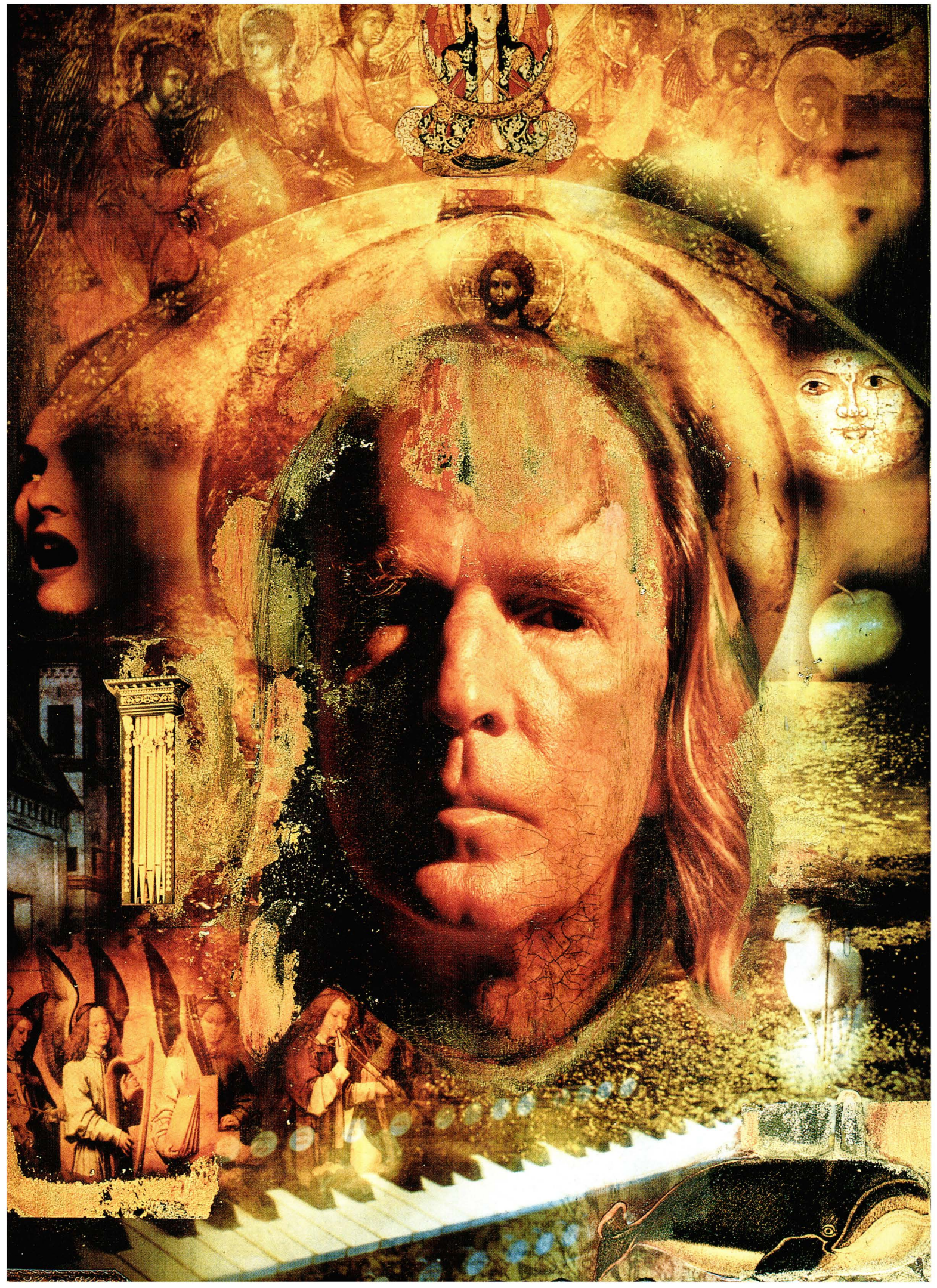
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- 1) The Closing Date for the 'Early Bird' bonus ticket draw is First Post, Friday, 18th September 1998.
- 2) The Closing Date for the AudioClub competition is First Post, Thursday, 8th October 1998.
- 3) Winners of the AudioClub Competition will be judged from all correct entries submitted, and drawn at random after the Closing Date given in 2) above.
- 4) Winners of the 'Early Bird' bonus ticket draw will be senders of the first five correct entries received before the Closing Date given in 1) above.
- 5) All winners will be notified by post.
- 6) The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.
- 7) The AudioClub Competition is not open to employees of Dennis Publishing Ltd, Audioclub UK Ltd, nor their suppliers, agents or associates.
- 8) We regret this competition is open to UK residents only.
- 9) No cash alternatives will be offered.
- 10) We reserve the right to substitute alternative prizes with equal value to those shown, in the unlikely event of stock being temporarily unavailable.
- 11) By entering the competition, you agree to be bound by the rules.
- 12) All entries must be on this official entry coupon. If you do not wish to cut your magazine, you may send a photocopy of the page instead. Please note: only one entry form per household.

Congratulations to the following winner of our Arcam competition in the July/August 1998 issue, A Eley of N Yorks. The correct answer was: b) Smart rotary selector



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Gramophone, Jan 97

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Chief Musical Officers' Warning

TEAC

Hasta la Vista

Jason Kennedy goes back to the Cold War with Musical Fidelity's NuVista preamp – and finds it to be a unique blend of old and new.

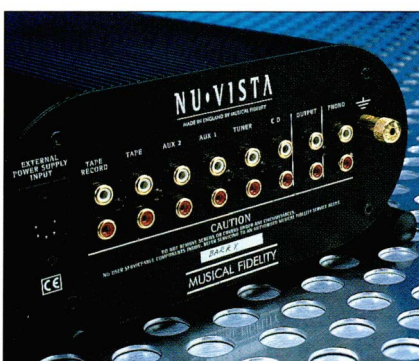
Musical Fidelity boss, Antony Michaelson, is a persistent character. Hardly a week goes by when he is not telephoning to evangelise his company's latest offering. And why not? Who better to flog the apples than the man who grew them? But sometimes it's a little hard for mere mortals to keep up with the flow of new goodies.

From the look of it alone, and its resemblance to the X-A1 integrated amp (Best Buy, *HFC* 181), one could have dismissed the new NuVista preamp (£1,295) as 'just another product' — as if any new MF offering ever was! This would have been a classic case of misjudging the book by its cover. The NuVista is a remote-controllable, electron-tube-powered pre-amp, and a very special one at that. It must be the first MF 'valve' product since the early '90s, and will be produced only in a limited run of 500.

The real point of intrigue, however, is the electron-tube Nuvistor device from which the preamp takes its name. Tiny, metal-canned Nuvistors were the last electron tubes to be developed, and were designed especially for low-noise and military applications. The intention was that they would avoid previous tubes' weaknesses in the areas of noise, microphony, longevity, robustness, consistency and stability — precisely the virtues which semiconductor transistors addressed.

Thanks to the modern dominance of silicon in audio circuits, it has been a long time since there was a demand for a specialised device like the Nuvistor. Consequently, there are very few of them left anywhere in the world — only US valve-electronics specialist Conrad-Johnson has produced a hi-fi amp with Nuvistors in recent years. However, Musical Fidelity claims to have purchased "a large proportion" of those available, and will keep an extra set of tubes for every NuVista sold. Working on the basis that a Nuvistor should run for 100,000 hours, MF reckons that each NuVista preamp should have a minimum life potential of 24-30 years.

Having noted earlier that the NuVista is remote-controllable, I should mention one minor quirk: when tested with the Revox Exception CD player (p47), if I pressed



'pause' on the latter's handset, the preamp switched to a different input! However the handset has a 'mute' button and offers a useful range of gain adjustment. On the rear panel there are four line inputs, a phono pickup input for high output cartridge (MM, or MC with step-up transformer) and a tape loop. The NuVista uses an outboard power supply in the now-familiar 'X-ponents' case.

Listening to Nu music

On its first outing, the NuVista slotted into my system in place of the DNM 3C preamp, joining a DNM PA-3 power amp and JBL 4312mkII speakers. The ergonomic change was most welcome, though the clarity and speed of the MF could not match the more expensive DNM device. In due course a pair of MF's beefy X-A200 'biscuit-barrel' power amps (*HFC* 179) joined the party, creating a 'darker' tonal balance but sacrificing neither dynamics nor timing.

As listening progressed, and I tried other

speakers like the Eikos FR1, the qualities of the NuVista/X-A200 combo shone through. The sound was agile, coherent and with the right recording very enjoyable. I compared the NuVista with a couple of similarly-priced alternatives from either side of the 'divide'. In the tube corner was the SJS Arcadia 1 at £1,000, while in the solid-state corner we had the Densen DM-20 at £1,300. The latter gave the NuVista a run for its money on bass and image depth but was very similar in terms of tonal rendering and timing. It lacks the luxury of remote control, though, making it slightly more expensive in real terms.

The SJS is another non-remote-controllable device, and does not support a phono stage internally, but nonetheless it showed the MF's sound to be atypical of traditional electron-tube amps. I felt the Arcadia to possess superior clarity and quality of timbre; its dynamics and imaging, too, cast a little shade on the NuVista. However it would be hard to criticise the latter's timing and image depth, even if it lacks a little scale. In timbral terms, the NuVista sat squarely between the semiconductor and electron-tube device.

When it all comes down

The NuVista is a delightful preamplifier, with looks, sound and convenience to woo the modern user, yet enough historical intrigue to draw in anacrophiles. It offers a good blend of performance and features, and will provide hours of gripping entertainment during which one will forget hi-fi and (re)discover the pleasure of music. ▲

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Quite Exceptional

Jason Kennedy experiences the Exception E426 CD player from Revox. Will its sound be as space-age as its looks?

Ir's Revox, Jim, but not as we know it. The highly-regarded Swiss brand has moved on from the heavily-engineered cassette decks, open-reel tape recorders, and tuners of high quality but conservative looks. Today the Revox name graces products like the new Exception series, whose CD player is under scrutiny here.

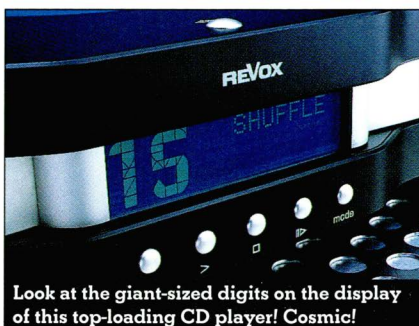
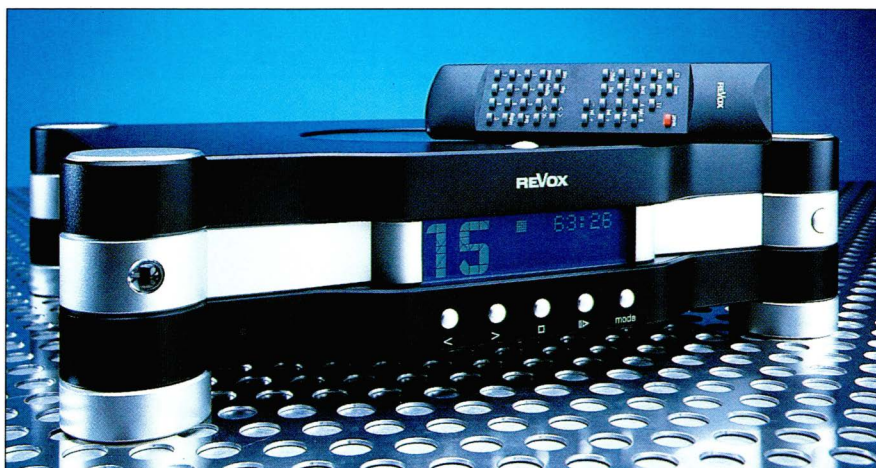
First and foremost, the Exception range is a collection of three independently-usable components: the E450 amplifier, E460 tuner and E426 CD player. However, each one has been designed with multi-room installation in mind, thanks to a bus-link system addressable via rear-panel DIN sockets. All of Revox's current line-up, including the stylish Evolution gear and complete home-cinema rigs, offer the multi-room option.

All of the control electronics for multi-room operation reside within the E450 amplifier, and this fact is reflected in its above-average price tag. The Exception series' unusual casework, fabricated from 2mm steel throughout, allows components to stack vertically, or horizontally with the tuner and amp flanking the CD player.

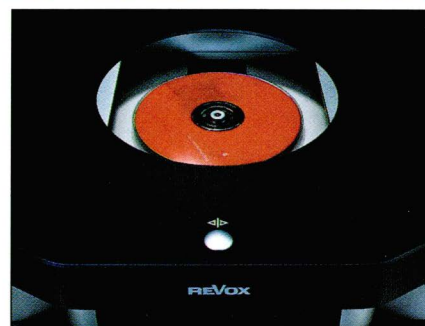
This configuration aims to discourage unwanted vibration, but in any case it looks pretty striking. Equally arresting are the Star-Trek-style doors which part to reveal the disc tray in the player's top panel. These were a little reluctant to operate initially, but loosened up over time.

As this is a top-loading player, you need to cap each CD with a retaining 'puck' to prevent the disc from whizzing off. On first impressions this seems a little hair-shirted for the new, user-friendly Revox, and very reminiscent of, say, expensive top-loading players from Micromega. What an amazing coincidence — Micromega owner Daniel Schar designed the guts of this machine!

The brochure remains coy on the technological nature of the E426's innards. Furthermore, the intricately-designed casework discourages an internal investigation. However, Revox claims to have kept analogue and digital circuits apart, all the way down to transformers and power supplies — usually a good thing. Furthermore, the spec sheet reveals the ever-popular bitstream digital-to-analogue conversion system.



Look at the giant-sized digits on the display of this top-loading CD player! Cosmic!



One specification I could determine easily: size. This player has a hefty footprint of 478mm wide and 405mm deep. In Imperial units that's 19in by 16in — an echo of Revox's professional heritage in the standard width for a rack-mount component? Within the cylindrical legs are rubber feet which protrude slightly below the casing, to bear weight and reduce by about an inch the necessary dimensions of any supporting surface. On the back panel, alongside the multi-room connectors, you will find a selection of balanced and regular signal outputs.

You can't help but notice the huge LCD display on this unit. It's the biggest in the business by far, and distinctly reminiscent of a high-tech elevator control panel. In counterpoint to this ergonomic and stylistic marvel there is a rather mundane system remote handset, which not only has track entry buttons at the bottom, making thumb selection tricky, but also requires the user to press '0' before single-figure track numbers. Still, unlike some rivals, the E426 enters play mode straightaway after track number selection.

Sound quality

It's a bold step for a purportedly 'lifestyle' component to mix it with the heavyweights in our *Statements* reviews. However, Revox's current importer has faith in the E426's out-and-out sound quality — on the whole that faith is well founded. Despite being pretty,

this is a very nice-sounding CD player, too. Its sonic style is distinctly European, being light and agile with excellent treble extension and clarity, but no glare. Compared to the somewhat more expensive Proceed CDP it loses out slightly in bass extension, but by the same token its tonal balance makes the American player seem rather dark. It would not be true to say that the Revox lacks bass extension; quite the contrary, it has a most adequate presence in the nether frequencies. However the bass is a particular strength of the Proceed whereas the Revox revels in space and harmonics. Both units portray exemplary midrange.

Seasoned listeners would no doubt point to classic sonic characteristics of a bitstream DAC: real 'snap' and energy, allied to a strong, rhythmic gait in every piece played. I thoroughly enjoyed auditioning this player.

Conclusion

Revox has successfully combined aesthetic style, flexibility of application and respectable sound quality in the Exception E426 CD player. Many other brands have sought to blend similar ingredients but very few have done so with such aplomb. Best of all, while this unit ranks among the better players at its price, the icing on the cake is its ability, effortlessly, to slot into a multi-room set up when required. ▲

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Movies On The Move

Alan Sircom gets goggle-eyed over the world's first personal DVD player. Long journeys will never be the same again!

In this issue you'll read about the latest developments in Digital Versatile Disc (DVD), and find out about the hottest new digital personal stereos. Now witness a new product with feet in both camps. Ladies and gentlemen, behold one of the most exciting gadgets ever to grace the pages of this magazine: Panasonic's new £999.95 DVD-L10, the world's first personal DVD player.

Though it is only slightly larger than the first CD personals from the 1980s, the DVD-L10 is bulky by comparison with today's miniaturised MD and CD marvels. However, just try lugging around a separates DVD player and a telly, and you'll soon warm to the Panasonic's virtues. Like a lap-top computer, its lid flips up to reveal a five-inch, wide aspect ratio (16:9) LCD screen, with a pop-up disc tray residing where a computer's keyboard would be situated.

Flanking the screen are two of the most pathetic little speakers you will ever hear. They rattle, they shake, they don't go loud. But it's a simple matter to circumvent them with a pair of headphones — the sound from the 'can' socket is excellent.

The DVD-L10's transport controls are refreshingly simple, though access to more esoteric functions is governed by arcane multiple button-pushes. Thankfully, the supplied remote-control handset provides more straightforward access to the sophisticated options, though it's not a couch-potato accessory — the player's small screen means the 'L10 will never be more than a metre from your eyes. Panasonic has included a mains power option and a full set of sockets via which to hook up the 'L10 to a regular AV system. You can even abstract the Dolby Digital datastream from movie discs if you have a suitable decoder in your system, making the 'L10 just about suitable as a home *and* mobile DVD player.

The unit looks very svelte without its battery, though the power-pack does add bulk. Average battery life is about two-and-a-half hours between charges, which is just about enough for one film unless it's *Once Upon A Time In America* or all 28 hours of *Fanny & Alexander*. Regular long-haul flyers will need to invest in spare rechargeable cells, but fortunately these

recharge in just over two hours and, according to Panasonic, will do so 300 times before needing retirement.

Some like it hot

The DVD-L10 is hot stuff — and that's not just because of its gadget appeal. After no more than two hours of use, the unit's base warmed up like a valve-amp, making it too hot to rest comfortably in one's lap for the whole of a film. The battery pack heats up impressively, too, when charging. In both instances, this may be due to a lack of vents, and there was no indication that the heat resulted from any form of malfunction. However, as ever-stiffening European legislation seeks to limit the maximum permissible temperature of external casework on many types of electrical product, will this Panasonic need to cool down?

Notwithstanding all of the above, when it comes to movie playback, the DVD-L10 is nothing short of spectacular. But for music, especially CD audio, the price looks very steep. It performs reasonably well as a music machine with both DVD and CD, but as a portable it's out-classed by £200 juniors with the added benefit of 40-hour batteries and 20-second anti-shock protection. Even in a straight sound-for-sound shoot-out, the DVD-L10 is no match for any decent CD player *Hi-Fi Choice* has rated over the years. There's less to separate the DVD-L10 from a regular

separates DVD player, but, for example, Panasonic's own DVD-A350 homedek will easily take the upper hand.

However, to split hairs about sound is to miss the point entirely. The DVD-L10 permits the viewing of films on the move, with picture and (headphone) sound quality unavailable outside cinemas only 12 months ago. By comparison with the laughable 'transportable' personal VHS machines touted about a decade ago, this is a true portable no more massive than a laptop PC, but with much more entertainment value.

I don't spend enough time commuting to watch a whole film *en route* to work, but nonetheless even for 20 minutes, it was worth distracting lap-toppers from their spreadsheets with a quick blast of *A Time To Kill*. Subtitles are irresistible on a noisy train! So the strength of the Panasonic DVD-L10 resides in its excellent picture quality, both on the small, built-in LCD screen and via the video outputs on a TV; in its fine headphone output; but most of all in the entertainment it promises to galactic-class frequent flyers. CEOs of the world, this one's for you! ▲

Panasonic ☎ (0990) 357357

Panasonic's DVD-L10: perfect for avoiding the in-flight movie — or inciting your fellow passengers' jealousy!





■ Vestax, designers and manufacturers of the most innovative DJ products are proud to present the CDX-12.

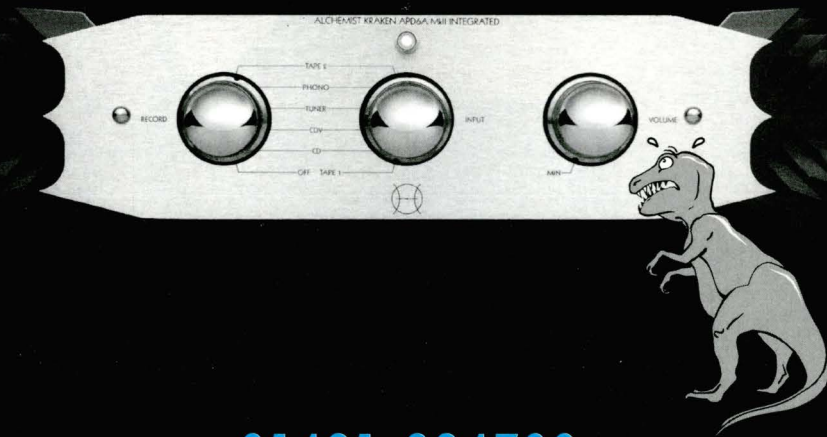
■ The CDX-12 has been a long time coming, ever since its conception we have been practically under siege from DJ's around the world awaiting tip-offs of its arrival... But wait no further...

■ Incorporating all the features found on our top professional players, along with unsurpassed Japanese engineering, the CDX-12 has one major advantage:.... a built in mixer. The only connection you need is to your amplifier / hi-fi system, the on board mixer does the rest. Two channels switchable with phono inputs, bass and treble control for each make the CDX-12 a force to be reckoned with. Connect two PDX-D3 Digital Turntables to the CDX-12 and you have absolute mixing heaven.

■ All lasers wear out eventually, all CD players need to be serviced. A new system developed by Vestax re-aligns the laser mechanisms every time you power up. This lengthens the times between services, giving you more time to enjoy your CDX-12. Nothing lasts forever, but at least at Vestax were working on it!



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Slovenian soul

Kuzma's new Stabi S turntable proves that simple is not only beautiful, but cost-effective too, according to **Alan Sircom**.

Imagine a turntable stripped of all decoration, then remove any suspension or speed control. Chances are that the new £700 Kuzma Stabi S from Slovenia will match your mental image. However, despite its pared-down specification sheet and low price, the sound of this deck remains uncompromised.

Though it resembles a prototype of the Mir space station, the basic Kuzma S design is simple in the extreme. Unlike Mir, it isn't made from old tin-cans and recycled bicycle wheels. The basic turntable comprises just four main parts: chassis, motor, alloy sub-platter (with the spindle bearing) and main platter. The chassis is a solid-brass, tubular T-bar, with a Linn arm-cut out at one end and the bearing structure below the point where the T-bar crosses. This structure is decoupled from its surroundings by three rubber rings.

The motor also resides within a brass case, and has no contact with the rest of the turntable save for the drive belt. A solitary green push-button operates this standard AC synchronous motor. At present, the 45rpm speed is unavailable, although there is talk of an electronic power supply which would offer such an option.

The spindle bearing shaft is a conventional (non-inverted) structure, but there is a non-metal ring to prevent vibration between two metallic sliding surfaces. Last but not least, the heavy, solid-aluminium main platter rests upon the inner platter, and is damped by two elements: a rubber insert on the underside, and a butylised-fabric compound mat to support LPs.

Arms and needles

Any deck is only as good as the tonearm it carries, and the isolation support it rests upon. Fortunately, Kuzma distributor Audiofreaks can offer potential purchasers a complete package including a completely new Kuzma unipivot tonearm, and a Shun Mook isolation platform. The new arm is expected soon, and the whole caboodle is expected to retail for less than £1,000 (excluding cartridge). For our test a Kuzma Stogi tonearm stood duty. This well-respected pivoted arm, priced at £1,000, is



The Kuzma's aluminium main platter (right) rests upon the inner platter (above), producing an overall effect not dissimilar to a prototype of the Mir Space Station (top).



no newcomer, but remains one of the better choices at the price — and certainly its characteristics are more in line with those of the Kuzma S than the Rega RB300 arm which was also suggested.

Audiofreaks supplied the player with the Benz Micro Glider cartridge (£650). The turntable was compared directly to my trusty modified Linn-LP12/Armageddon/Naim-ARO/Sumiko-Sho LP rig, supported on a multi-tier Mana table. This was an especially valuable comparison given that the output of both cartridges is similar. Both decks were played through a DNM 3B/Twin pre-amplifier into a Meridian 557 power amplifier, driving Rehdeko RK115a speakers on their own stands. DNM cable was used throughout.

Catching up with Linn

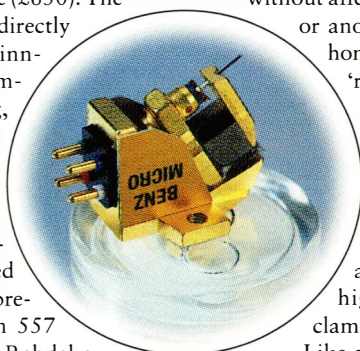
Though less expensive than the Linn component, the Kuzma did not exhibit a marked discrepancy in sound. Both players interpreted sound very differently, but in many respects they were equals. The Kuzma offers a typical high-end sound: rich and warm,

with loads of information, and a precise, walk-in soundstage. By contrast, the Linn was more finger-snappy and rhythmic.

The Kuzma has a sense of 'right' that only the very best platter-spinners can muster. Only a handful of decks can achieve this without affecting the sound in one way or another. Save for a couple of home-grown exceptions, other 'right' sounding decks invariably cost several times as much as the Stabi S, which makes it a bargain in my opinion. What constitutes 'right'? The ability to sound musical and honest, and to integrate with ultra-high-end systems without clamouring for attention.

Like a child ignoring the toy and playing with the box, I find myself most impressed by the Benz-Micro Glider. Its sheer precision and focus is refreshing, yet it is substantial enough to outperform more costly devices with reputations beyond their performance. Paradoxically, this highlights just how good is the Kuzma turntable. If it can highlight the performance of an excellent cartridge and arm, no further investigation is required. ▲

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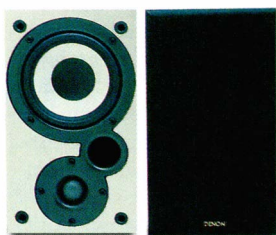
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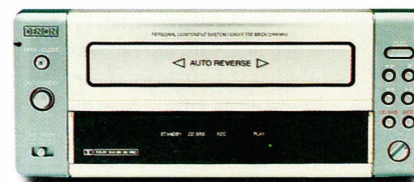
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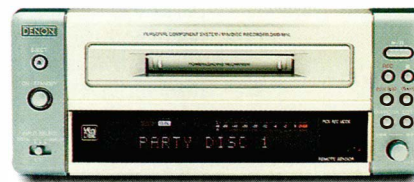
D-M5 Super Micro RDS CD/Receiver

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The next generation from **DENON**

First Response

This new ProAc speaker is a plushly-veneered basshead.

Paul Messenger finds out it's a bit of a movie freak, too!

ProAc's Response 3.8 is a decidedly upmarket affair. The basic price is £3,995, but additional expense awaits those who fork out for deluxe real-wood veneers such as the gorgeous yew which adorned our review samples. The enclosures are reassuringly sharp-edged, and rest on neat matching plinths, but with a height of 1.28m these speakers will loom large in most rooms. What's more, they must sit away from walls.

Mid-bass drive-units are mounted flush with the front baffle, while tweeters are off-set and mirror-imaged, to spread the influence of baffle-edge standing waves. The tweeters are quite high off the ground, comfortably above 'normally-seated ear height', so the ideal vertical listening axis has been arranged roughly within the horizontal 'window' defined by the upper main driver.

Top-quality drive units, made by Scanspeak to ProAc's specs, include two cast-frame main drivers, 178mm in diameter, with carbon-fibre-loaded paper cones 130mm in diameter. Two 75mm-diameter ports in the rear panel, tuned to around 30Hz, will add extra very-low-frequency 'grunt'. The tweeter is a 32mm soft dome.

Despite there being three drive-units, there are just two pairs of terminals, because of this ProAc's 'two-and-a-half-way' configuration. Essentially it's a two-way design, but supplements bass with an extra main driver operating up to 500Hz, rolling off at 12dB per octave thereafter. The mid-to-treble dividing network, centred on 2.8kHz, rolls off at 18dB per octave both sides.

The impedance stays above eight Ohms throughout the range, and therefore represents an easy load in electrical terms. However, low midband sensitivity — around 83-84dB on my estimate — means that this speaker will need a powerful amplifier if high listening levels are to be achieved. The balance, averaged over the far field in a room roughly 3x5x7m (HxWxD), is unusually flat over most of the audio range, ie above 100Hz. However, below that point, and especially through the midbass, output is several dB stronger. The smoothness and flatness through the broad midband is par-



ProAc Response 3.8

A treat for vocals, enough bass to scare the neighbours — but hook it up to a big amp!

ticularly impressive: ± 1.5 dB from 250Hz-5kHz would be an achievement under anechoic conditions, never mind under much less ideal in-room conditions.

Bass: how low can you go?

The bass output of any speaker system is heavily modified by the characteristics of the listening room. In typical domestic lounges the ceiling height is usually the smallest room dimension, and therefore has its influence at the highest frequency — typically boosting the midbass output by several dB. This may benefit small speakers but prove a handicap to larger designs, depending on the designer's trade-off between bass extension and sensitivity. The quite heavy midbass of the Response 3.8 is therefore entirely consistent with its type, but it might be better suited to rooms with a generous ceiling height.

You'd expect a four-grand loudspeaker to sound good, but the Response 3.8 was not a massive hit on its first outing. When reproducing heavyweight modern dance material,

sourced from vinyl, the speaker's strong bass output seemed rather too obvious, even though its rhythmic timing was fine. Happily this turned out to be the 'worst case' scenario, with much sweeter results from with less challenging music and CD-sourced material. After some experiments I elected to block the lower port of each speaker to try and achieve a better all-round result in my room.

When I queried the strong bass output with designer Stewart Tyler, he revealed that movie soundtrack reproduction was also part of the design brief — a realistic response (ahem) to market needs if not necessarily of prime importance to hi-fi music fans. A few days later, BBC TV obligingly transmitted *Terminator 2*, which via the ProAcs came across exceptionally well without any degree of subwoofer augmentation.

A speaker for speech

Switching on the radio tuner revealed that the 3.8's biggest strength is unquestionably its voice reproduction. Spoken word is particularly impressive, managing to avoid the rather 'shut in' character which seems to be the current norm with most commercial loudspeakers. Instead it sounded both neutral and open without straying over the line into forwardness and harshness. Coloration, too is negligible, with just a touch of nasal-ity and chestiness sometimes apparent.

The brochure refers to the tweeter as: "a minor miracle... with delightful sweetness and clarity". While I'm normally disinclined to take much notice of brochure-speak, I also find it rather difficult to disagree here. However, while there were no problems with dynamic range (the ability to resolve low and high level signals simultaneously), less convincing were the expressiveness and realism of dynamic contrasts. This was not unexpected. Years of reviewing hundreds of speakers has led me to the inescapable conclusion that low-sensitivity designs have less dynamic realism than high sensitivity speakers — by the same token, high sensitivity designs are usually less smooth and more coloured than low sensitivity models.

The Response 3.8 may use Scandinavian drive units in a modern, slimline floorstanding enclosure, but the final mix brings to mind two of the most venerable (and venerated) 'classics' in my collection of references: the Spondor BC1 and Quad ESL57. The ProAc shares something of these classics' midband magic, thanks to its beautiful voice-band coherence — and similarly low sensitivity. The benefit is all the bass you get thrown into the bargain for free. ▲

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| Mordaunt Short MS10i Pearl .. | £149.00 |
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| Denon AVC 1530 AV Amplifier (WOW!) | (479.00) | £199.00 | Mordaunt Short MS10i Classic (WOW!) | (279.00) | £179.00 |
| Epos ES12 Speakers | (499.00) | £299.00 | Mordaunt Short MS20i Pearl | (199.00) | £139.00 |
| Arcam Xeta 1 AV Amplifier (Boxed 2Yr G/tee) .. | (449.00) | £299.00 | Mission 751 Freedom Spkrs (WOW!) | (348.00) | £229.00 |
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| Linn Kudos (Sneaky) Module Tuner S/H | (500.00) | £295.00 | Naim NAP 180 Power Amp S/H | (1090.00) | £695.00 |
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| Linn Kairn (phono) Pre Amp S/H boxed | (1700.00) | £1115.00 | REL Senter 2 Sub Woofer (WOW!) | (1800.00) | £1195.00 |
| Linn LK100 Power Amp S/H boxed | (650.00) | £395.00 | Rega XEL Monitor Speakers (black) (WOW!) .. | (1040.00) | £699.00 |
| Linn Wakonda (phono) Pre Amp S/H boxed ... | (900.00) | £679.00 | Rega Brio Amp (small case) | (229.00) | £159.00 |
| Marantz CD67se CD Player (WOW!) | (299.00) | £219.00 | | | |

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Vorsprung Durch T+A

German manufacturer T+A is hoping to make giant leaps and bounds into the UK market, with a whole range of products like this CD1220R. Alan 'Bootleg' Sircom investigates. . .

T+A has yet to become a household name in the UK, but back home in Germany, it is one of the leading brands, making hi-fi in the Meridian mould. Alongside the £1,499 CD1220R and its £1,150 sibling, the CD1210R, the company produces a whole range of electronics, plus passive and active speaker systems. On the whole T+A products look conventional, but if the CD1220R is anything to go by, more radical ideas are embodied internally.

Although the CD1220R is an integrated player, T+A treats its transport and DAC sections as if they were two separate devices: they share only the power supply and case. Most noticeably, T+A specifies a so-called 'reverse-clock' arrangement, whereby the oscillator in the D/A converter acts as a master, while the clock in the transport decoder stage is the slave. This is common among high-end separate CD transports and DACs, but rare in integrated players.

Most high-end CD players work perfectly well using a dual-differential DAC design, the CD1210R among them, but the CD1220R takes things further. Here the regular, dual-differential, 20-bit Delta/Sigma DACs are allied to a separate 20-bit DAC. The signal from the latter passes through a low-pass filter, while that from the dual-differential system passes through a high-pass filter before the two feeds are recombined. The summed signal is then passed through a further low-pass filter before output. Like products from Wadia and Pioneer, the CD1220R's final low-pass filter rolls off in the region of 60kHz, some 40kHz higher than usual.

Even the digital filter system differs distinctly from the norm. The filter has a standard setting and four options: FIR, IIR, Bezier/IIR and Bezier. These switchable filters are strongly evocative of a similar system implemented in Sony's CDP-X3000ES player, but T+A got there first, and its filtration options are both less gimmicky and more practical in real-world applications.

You won't find an infra-red remote-



Mild-mannered on the outside, technologically innovative on the inside. And like Cliff Richard's Livin' Doll, the T+A has a roving 'eye' — for remote control operation, that is...

control sensor on the front panel, though the unit does come complete with an infra-red handset. Instead, the latter operates through a sensor on the end of a two-metre cord, connected via the player's rear panel — a distinct benefit for hi-fi users whose electronics sit remotely from speakers, for example.

And while we're on the subject of absent friends, at this price level I would have liked to see balanced sockets for analogue and/or digital signals. Many manufacturers believe that balanced operation should be restricted to professional applications, but in markets like the US and the (Endangered) Tiger economies, if it ain't balanced, it ain't sold.

It's filter-tastic

A CD player like this has been designed as a purist device, and its switchable digital filters are not just for amusement. But in the UK at least, purist users tend to take umbrage at anything which could impede the flow of pure audiophile vibes. However, I have to admit that I was decidedly impressed by the CD1220R for distinctly impurist reasons.

I own a number of bootleg recordings, on which individual tracks differ markedly from one another in recording quality: track one is bright, track two is dull, track three has the rustle of clothes hiding the microphone, etc. Played on a regular CD machine, usually only one track per disc will be listenable.

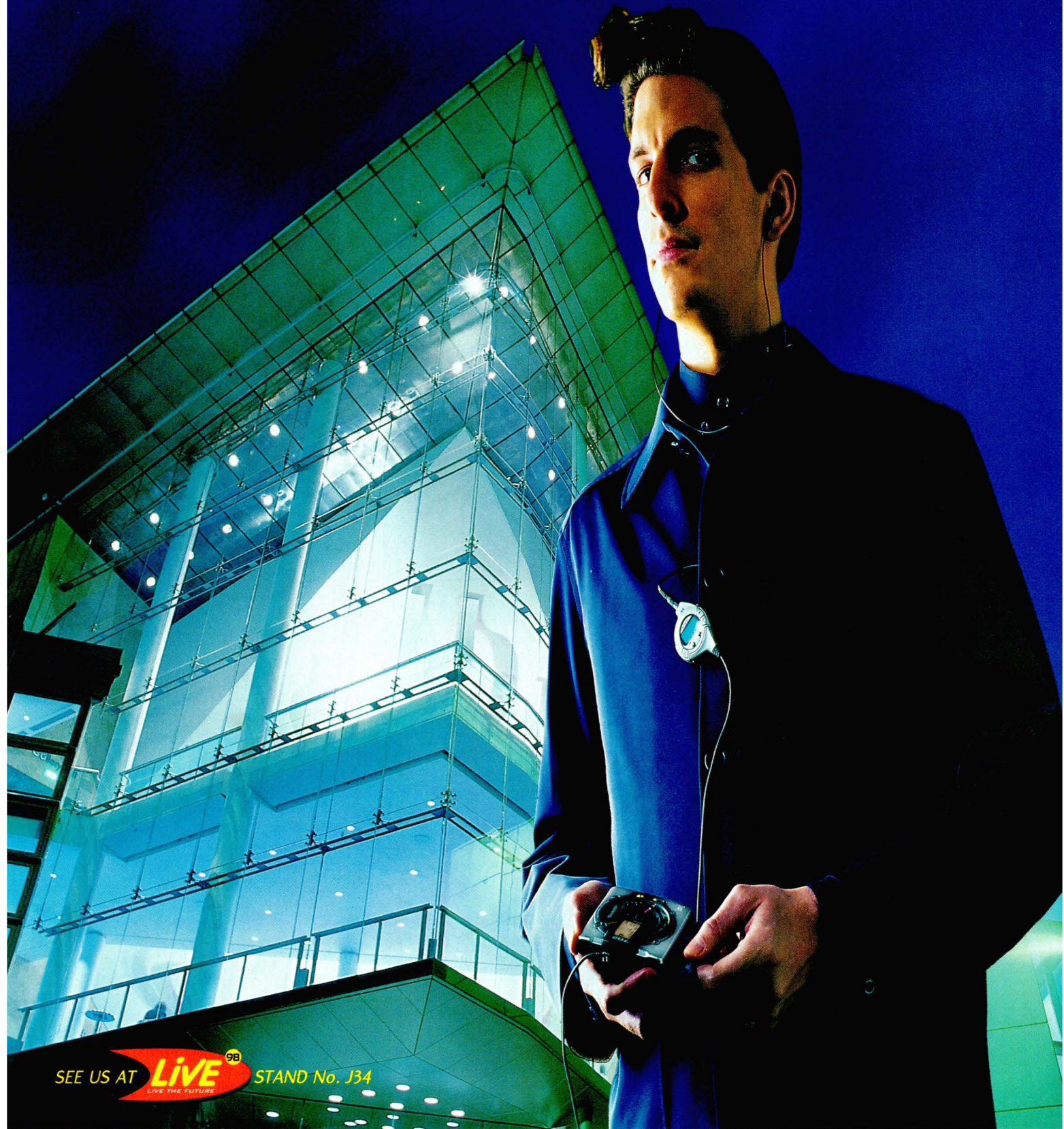
Played on the CD1220R, however, the number of listenable tracks increases threefold, mostly thanks to filters three and four, which respectively help lift and cut the treble in a manner no analogue tone-control system could ever hope to match.

However, it is easy to get paranoid with a switchable filter system. Life's too short to play every track five times in the hope of finding the ultimate filter setting. For 80 per cent of the average music collection, the standard setting will be superior — only resort to the alternatives when sound quality is in doubt.

Talking of sound quality, the CD1220R is extremely presentable, with a clear, extended character which is detailed and open. Perhaps too open, again like the Pioneer and Wadia designs. In use, with the standard filter engaged, I found the T&A traded blow for blow with my resident (but pre 24-bit) Meridian 508. The two were fundamentally different in approach, with the Meridian sounding darker, the T+A more transparent. It would be extremely difficult to declare a champion in this particular contest; but by facing up to a tough opponent, the newcomer T+A has proved itself a brand with which to conjure. ▲

T+A ☎ (01234) 345999

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T3 ★★★★★ MD-R3H MD-DECK
March 1998

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home, the choice is as wide as anyone's musical tastes. From

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WHAT HI-FI? ★★★★★
June 1998 March 1998



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MD-X8H MD/CD
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SMALL WONDERS

Christina Bunce throws her cassettes away and joins the digital age, trying out the latest MD and CD personal players.



Having recently moved from central London to the wilds of Kent, I was in need of distraction on the arduous trek to *Hi-Fi Choice* Towers every day. Luckily I had the opportunity to try some examples of the latest digital personal audio products: CD players and MiniDisc (MD) recorders.

Perhaps the digital personal's greatest advantage is giving control over the mobile playlist. Gone are the days of waiting for a tape to rewind while batteries dwindle away inexorably. CD and MD personals give direct access to the track you want; and with a MiniDisc recorder, it's child's play to make compilations of favourite tracks. There are numerous new audio products with CD transports and MD recorders within one package; alternatively, you can hook up to any CD player with an optical digital output.

Neither CD nor MiniDisc personals are the latest thing, but dwindling prices are enough to make the headlines. Whether this is due to streamlined manufacturing processes or the strength of the pound, there's never been a better time to invest in pocket power.

A word about software

Before leaping out to wave around your plastic, bear in mind that prerecorded MiniDiscs are still relatively scarce. For instance, in London's monstrous HMV shop on Oxford Street, just one island is devoted to prerecorded MiniDiscs, compared with the umpteen ones overflowing with CDs. And

recent letters to *Hi-Fi Choice* have highlighted the lack of anything but rock and pop titles available on MD — and most of the latter are drawn, unsurprisingly, from the ranks of Sony Music's catalogue, by way of in-house support for the format.

Maybe this will change in the years ahead, but for now consider MD as a much more convenient, high-tech version of the cassette tape, and stock up on blank MDs. In line with the players, these are coming down in price: for example, again in the Oxford Street HMV shop, five blank MDs are available for £15, and major-name brands like TDK, Sony (natch) and Maxell have discs on sale. Beware ultra-cheap MDs from obscure Far East brands — although we've yet to test blank MD software in depth, early indications are that giveaway-priced discs may suffer more tracking or other errors than premium discs from major-name brands.

It could be argued that if CD personals are now so cheap, why should anyone invest in another format onto which music must first be copied? To counter that, bear in mind that: a) MDs and MD players are smaller and lighter than their counterparts in CD; b) MD enables you to compile the best tracks from numerous CDs onto fewer MDs; and c) MD players tend to be more shock-proof than CD players. On the other side of the coin, CD personals are still cheaper than personal MD recorders, and the ultimate sound quality of a CD personal is likely to be

THE CAST LIST

| | | |
|--------------------|---------|-----|
| Aiwa AM-F5 | £249.99 | p59 |
| Aiwa XP-770 | £89.99 | p59 |
| Kenwood DMC-J7R | £249.99 | p60 |
| Kenwood DPC-981 | £179.95 | p60 |
| Panasonic SL-SX500 | £149.95 | p61 |
| Sanyo CDP-865 | £99.99 | p61 |
| Sanyo MDC-3100 | £349.99 | p62 |
| Sharp MD-MS702 | £249.99 | p62 |
| Sony D-E405 | £119.99 | p63 |
| Sony MZ-R5ST | £499.99 | p63 |
| Sony MZ-R50 | £279.99 | p64 |

higher. However, you're more likely to get the benefit of this in a hotel room rather than on the 8.42 to Charing Cross!

How the tests were done

All players were tested both in domestic and mobile environments. CD personals were tested with original CD software, while to assess the MD hardware, music tracks were recorded onto each unit from a Denon DCD-1550AR using supplied optical cables. All players were auditioned via their own supplied headphones and also, when fitted with line-level output sockets, via a NAD 312 amplifier and Neat Mystique speakers.

WHAT MUSIC DID WE USE?

■ MINIDISC

Faithless: *Drifting Away (Paradiso Mix)* from *Irreverence* on Cheeky CHEKXCD500

Air: *La Femme D'Argent* from *Moon Safari* on Source 724384497828

Cornershop: *Brimful of Asha (Norman Look Remix Single Version Brighton)* on Wiiiija Records 17 WU 81CD

Hans Zimmer: *You're So Cool* from the *True Romance* soundtrack on edel 0022422MCM

David Bowie: *Station to Station* from *Station to Station* on EMI CDP 79 6435 2

Blur: *Song 2* from *Q's Festival CD*, free with Q 142

Rachmaninov: *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini Op 43 Variations 10-14*, Budapest Symphony Orchestra, Cyula Nemeth on Naxos 8.550117

■ COMPACT DISCS

Antonio Forcione and Sabina Sciubba: *Dark and Long* from *Meet Me in London* on Naim cd 021

Underworld: *Dirty Epic* from *dubnobasswithmyheadman* on Junior Boy's Own

Rachmaninov: *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini Op 43 Variations 10-14*, Budapest Symphony Orchestra, Cyula Nemeth on Naxos 8.550117

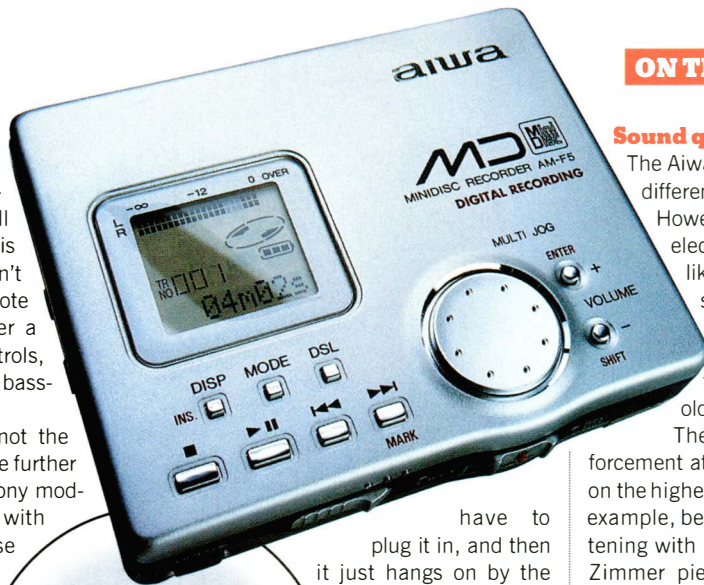
AIWA AM-F5

This AM-F5 is a solid, compact-looking unit, with small but simple-to-use controls which are well laid out. The display on the unit is clear and concise, though it doesn't light up. The headphone-lead remote control, meanwhile, doesn't offer a display, but has all the usual controls, including record, edit, and a 'DSL' bass-boost button.

Headphones are in-ear but not the usual shape: they actually protrude further into the ear than most, like the Sony models. Sometimes I have a problem with ear-pieces falling out, but these seemed to stay put.

Useful features include a switch for synchronised recording from CD, and one which prevents the volume level from exceeding a certain level.

Though it comes with a rechargeable cell, the AM-F5 also offers the possibility of using 'AA' alkaline cells. The two may be used in conjunction for extended playing time. Aiwa claims 19 hours of continuous playback with alkaline cells, as opposed to seven with the rechargeable. Use both together and, yes, you get 26 hours of music! One drawback is that the external holder for the alkaline cells doesn't actually clip onto the main unit like some alternatives; you



have to plug it in, and then it just hangs on by the wire. This, together with a suitcase-style lid, could be clumsy. On the main unit you have to open the disc holder before you can insert or remove the rechargeable cell, which is a little awkward.

There is a basic stereo microphone provided, which makes decent recordings though will not set you up as the Rolling Stone mobile overnight.

The unit measures 97mm wide, 21.6mm high and 77.6 mm deep. The manufacturer claims its mass is 219g with the rechargeable cell inserted.

Sound quality

The Aiwa does not exhibit night-and-day differences from its competitors here. However, it did make a good job of electronic dance tracks from bands like Faithless and Air. The harder sounds of Blur and David Bowie didn't fare so well, and the Rachmaninov seemed rather flat. The piano sounded like an old bar-room joanna — very tinny. The 'DSL' control sets bass reinforcement at one of four different levels, but on the highest level tracks from Faithless, for example, became distorted. I did all my listening with DSL set to level two. The Hans Zimmer piece was beautifully clear, yet sounded warm at the same time.

Conclusions

This player is well made, and put in a strong performance on harder music like the Blur and Faithless tracks. It doesn't do so well with more complex classical music, however.

| AIWA — VERDICT | |
|---|---------|
| SOUND | ★★★★☆ |
| VALUE | ★★★★☆ |
| PRICE | £249.99 |
| ONE YEAR GUARANTEE | |
| Small and compact, better on heavier tracks. | |
| Aiwa UK Ltd, Unit 5, Heathrow Summit Centre, Skyport Drive, West Drayton, Middlesex UB7 0LY | |
| (0990) 902902 | |

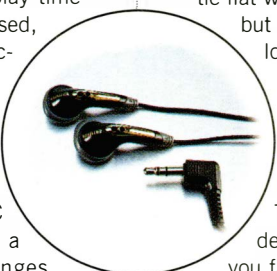
AIWA XP-770

It may be shaped like a scallop shell, but there's nothing fishy about this Aiwa. It has a 20-second electronic anti-shock feature called EASS, which can be set to activate automatically when playback begins. Operation is indicated by a tell-tale in the LCD display. However, use of this facility drains batteries more quickly, so you may opt to leave it off until needed for music on the move.

The display lights up when a button is pressed, but individual digits within it are small, and the LCD panel is buried deep beneath its clear plastic visor, making it hard to see in some circumstances.

Track search and track skip share a button; keep the button pressed and the player moves forward within a track. The track search feature is quite fast. A random-play option is also available but this cannot repeat tracks or go back to a previous track. There is also an option to display time remaining rather than time elapsed, accessed by another dual function button, whose night job this time is as the track-program 'enter' key. You may program up to 24 tracks.

The player comes with a rechargeable cell and an AC mains power adaptor. There is a useful indicator which changes colour from green, through amber to red as the cell runs down.



Headphones are of the standard in-ear variety, comfortable enough, but they have no remote control. The headphone socket doubles as a line-level output.

Dimensions are 146 mm wide, 28mm high and 158 mm deep. Manufacturers claim its mass is 240g, not including batteries.

Sound quality

The Rachmaninov piece sounded clear on this player, but the DSL function (which adds to the player's bass) just seemed to add hiss. Underworld sounded clear if a little flat without the bass boost engaged, but DSL generated thicker slabs of low frequencies.

The Forcione & Sciubba piece sounded very clear, with lovely guitar detail.

Conclusion

This player sounds good depending on the kind of music you favour, but its 'DSL' bass-boost feature is a mixed blessing. Dance music lovers will enjoy it, but there's no denying



the sound is clearer when it is switched off. The scallop shape of the player provides an unusual look, and the XP-770 earns a Recommended flag because of its very reasonable £90 price tag.

| AIWA — VERDICT | |
|---|--------|
| SOUND | ★★★★☆ |
| VALUE | ★★★★☆ |
| PRICE | £89.99 |
| ONE YEAR GUARANTEE | |
| Decent sound quality, and check out the price — a total bargain! | |
| Aiwa UK Ltd, Unit 5, Heathrow Summit Centre, Skyport Drive, West Drayton, Middlesex UB7 0LY | |
| (0990) 902902 | |

KENWOOD DMC-J7R

This brand-new model is hot off the production lines in Japan, and is only just about to hit the UK's High Street stores. Cosmetic touches apart, the DMC-J7R bears a striking resemblance to Sharp's MD-MS702H, leading to strong suspicion that they embody the same mechanism in two different packages. Kenwood has given the DMC-J7R a more sophisticated design, in contrast with the sporty look of the Sharp.

Both units are priced identically, and both have the same display on the main unit and the remote. Thus the latter shares the Sharp's aquatic-themed graphics on the headphone-lead remote's LCD screen.

I have to say that the headphones seemed to slip out of my ears with greater alacrity than Sharp's, though they were comfortable enough. The remote is coloured black rather than Sharp's silver, but displays its control buttons in the same way, offering volume adjustment, track search/skip, start/stop, hold, display



illumination and play-mode functions.

Again like the Sharp, this player has three levels of bass reinforcement: tracks sounded very good on all three, so settings will depend on individual preferences.

The controls are clear and easy to use, the only proviso being that volume controls could be mistaken for track skip/search buttons initially.

Sound quality

As you might expect, the Kenwood offers a very similar sound to the Sharp unit. The Faithless track pumped out with strong bass and fine detail, producing fine depth and a real foot-tapping sound, benefiting from the bass enhancement.

Hans Zimmer and Air were both clear and clean, and came across as very atmospheric reproductions. On playing this unit through a domestic audio system rather than headphones, it was not embarrassed by many a lounge-bound component.

Conclusion

It would be no privation to sit and listen to this unit all day. Since the Kenwood has been reduced from an original price of £299.99 to £249.99, putting it on an equal footing with the Sharp unit, nothing less than a Best Buy flag will suffice!

| KENWOOD — VERDICT | |
|---------------------------|---|
| SOUND | ★★★★★ |
| VALUE | ★★★★☆ |
| PRICE | £249.95 |
| ONE YEAR GUARANTEE | |
| 📁 | Fine-sounding MD player, strongly built, with good looks to go with it. |
| ✉ | Trio-Kenwood UK, Kenwood House, Dwight Road, Watford, Herts, WD1 8EG |
| ☎ | (01923) 816444 |



KENWOOD DPC-981

Full marks to Kenwood for providing noise-cancelling headphones with this unit. Operated by an AAA cell mounted inside the left ear-piece, these 'cans' reduce the amount of ambient noise within a band of mid-bass frequencies, and will be especially useful for airline and other passengers. The headphones were comfortable, and it was reassuring not to worry whether the ear-pieces would fall out, even though this type of headset is more bulky to carry.

The price paid for this luxury, however, is that a headphone-lead remote control is an optional extra, unavailable in the UK according to the instruction leaflet.

The player feels heavy and chunky — its case is metallic rather than plastic, complemented by dark plastic trim in blue and

charcoal grey. There is no window to watch the CD as it spins, which may prove annoying to some but aesthetically beneficial to others. Repeat playback can be selected for one track, all-tracks or shuffled tracks. (The maximum number of repeats is 16.)

Additionally there is a fast forward/back track-search feature, accessed via a mode switch and the track-skip buttons. A hold button prevents inadvertent operation while the unit is being carried.

Kenwood's anti-skip system is known as 'DASC', and claims to buffer up to 20 seconds of sound. Volume level is shown on the display as a number between 0 to 62; I listened at 26.

The unit has a separate line-out socket for connection to a domestic hi-fi system. Dimensions are 134mm wide, 26.5mm high and 151.8mm deep — and its mass is 270g net of batteries.

The DPC-981 is supplied with two AA-sized NB-130 rechargeable cells, which slot into two of four slots within the battery compartment, in which they are also charged. For extended playback two extra AA cells can be added, taking claimed operation time to

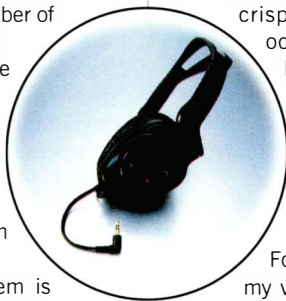
27.5 hours. Ultimate performance, however, results with four alkaline batteries on board: 40 hours says Kenwood. These times will be reduced if the anti-skip function is engaged.

Sound quality

There is a two-stage 'Bass Boost' function, but even with this feature defeated there is a strong sense of low-frequency reproduction — the Underworld track sounded clear and crisp, with plenty of bottom-end oomph. The number from Forcione and Sciubba, and the Rachmaninov track, both came across well. In particular, the piano on the latter gave an impression of great depth.

Conclusion

For sheer listening quality this got my vote — the headphones were a great bonus, and very comfortable. Sound quality was good and again this player did not skip easily. The Kenwood DPC-981 oozes class and quality.



| KENWOOD — VERDICT | |
|--|--|
| SOUND | ★★★★★ |
| VALUE | ★★★★☆ |
| PRICE | £179.95 |
| FIVE YEAR GUARANTEE TO ORIGINAL OWNER | |
| 📁 | Top quality sound and build, if you're prepared to pay for them. |
| ✉ | Trio-Kenwood UK, Kenwood House, Dwight Road, Watford, Herts, WD1 8EG |
| ☎ | (01923) 816444 |

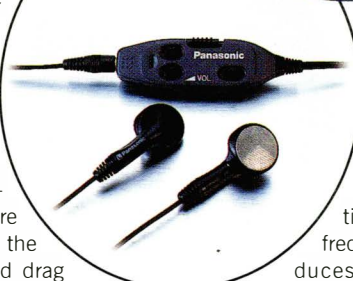
PANASONIC SL-SX500

This well-built model has a clear display split into two sections: one showing main controls, the other showing battery level. Operation buttons are arranged around the display, and the whole unit feels solid. In fact, this was the only CD player in our group to offer a 40-second anti-shock buffer. On the debit side, however, the unit was very noisy in use — clearly audible at low volumes.

A separate battery case enables the user to extend playing time over and above the operation time available using only the batteries used in the main unit.

The remote control offers a start/stop button, volume control, track search/skip and hold switch. It is simple but a little plasticky. However, there is no pocket clip here, so the weight of the module could drag the in-ear headphones out of the left ear. Those cans are not particularly comfortable, and prone to falling out of the ear.

Like the Sony, the Panasonic offers a



resume function, where the unit starts playing at the point where it stopped previously; but again, the 'resume' information disappears if the lid is opened.

There are three 'EQ' settings: XBS boosts the low frequency response, LIVE produces a 'concert-hall' sound, while NORMAL passes through the sound *au naturel*. Incidentally, this was the only CD player of our group which come equipped with a decent carry bag.

Sound quality

The Forcione and Sciubba track sounded clear and detailed, particularly in the LIVE EQ mode. I could hear every little detail of the recording. The XBS mode doesn't seem to help at all with this or other tracks that have little bass.

Underworld, on the other hand, sounded flat, and even weak, even with the XBS bass enhancer switched on. Rachmaninov sounded distant: after the first two CDs I expected it to sound better, in fact it was rather flat.

Conclusion

One for quieter music types. A pretty-looking player though, and solidly built. The Rachmaninov, with its many musical layers, wasn't reproduced with much precision, however. And it has a noisy play mechanism.

| PANASONIC — VERDICT | |
|--|-----------|
| SOUND | ★★★★☆ |
| VALUE | ★★★★☆ |
| PRICE | £1,199.00 |
| ONE YEAR GUARANTEE | |
| <p>📁 Noisy mechanism, sound quality is variable, but looks pretty, and is well built.</p> <p>✉ Panasonic Consumer Electronics UK, Panasonic House, Willoughby Road, Bracknell, Berks RG12 8FP</p> <p>☎ (0990) 357357</p> | |

SANYO CDP 865

This CD player boasts a 20-second anti-shock memory buffer, 18-bit DAC and a 'sound equalisation' system which works in three stages. The unit looks quite smart, but the buttons felt a bit plasticky, and are designed in such a way that they appear to increase the depth of the machine. The overall feel of this player is light, which does affect perceptions of material value.

The front-panel liquid-crystal display is small, not particularly clear, and bereft of all but the most basic information. Headphones are the normal in-ear style with a remote control attached. Buttons on the remote are small and easily missed, while the remote itself is in

a black and dark grey, and made from insubstantial plastic. It offers stop/start and track forward/rewind, plus volume control. It has a flimsy clip which I think could be easily broken if used carelessly. The headphone jack crackled when accidentally jolted.

The anti-shock mechanism helps the CDP 865 along nicely, providing a good buffer against accidental knocks and bangs. There is also a line output for connection to a hi-fi system.

Dimensions of the CDP 865

are 156mm wide x 134mm deep and 27mm high.

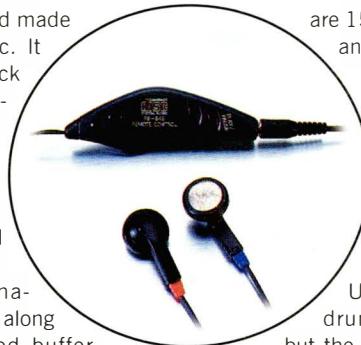
Sound quality

Sound reproduction was fair enough, but there was a sensation of muffling on delicate tracks such as the Forcione & Sciubba. On the Underworld number, the drum beat sounded muffled, but the player did generate a good sense of stereo imagery.

So although the sound was reasonable, and the player looks smart, its build quality lets the side down. Also it took time when executing a long track-skip operation.

Conclusion

This CD player is good value at less than £100, and provides decent sound quality for the price. It just misses out on a Recommendation, however, due to inescapably insubstantial build quality.



| SANYO — VERDICT | |
|---|--------|
| SOUND | ★★★★☆ |
| VALUE | ★★★★☆ |
| PRICE | £99.99 |
| ONE YEAR GUARANTEE | |
| <p>📁 Decent sound and good value, but build quality lets this player down.</p> <p>✉ Sanyo UK Sales Ltd, Sanyo House, Otterspool Way, Watford, Herts WD2 8JX</p> <p>☎ (01923) 246363</p> | |

ON TEST: PORTABLE HI-FI

SANYO MDC-3100F

Sanyo has kept its options open with this little unit. Offering MD, CD, cassette and tuner facilities, it's nothing if not versatile. Despite not conforming to the strict definition of a personal player, it's in this test because it is very much a portable device that will supply music on the move.

I've never been a fan of portable stereo equipment — blasters as they're more popularly known. I prefer either the in-ear sound of a headphone, or the flexibility of separates hi-fi where I can move the loudspeakers to a preferred place in the room.

This caveat aside, it's a nice unit. To have CD and cassette in one box with an MD recorder must be a unique selling point. Making MD compilations of CDs is a cinch.

It's an odd-looking beast, seeming very futuristic in a '60s sort of way. The speakers are covered by a blue mesh material — you can't see where they begin and end. Its also very short and deep, thus looking a little squashed.

Radio reception was acceptable in a top-



floor flat, and the tuner is easy to use. The clear display shows up vivid graphics, but not being equipped with RDS, it will not go so far as to state the name of the station tuned in. Dimensions are: 486mm wide, 166mm high and 291mm deep.

Sound quality

This is not about to become a new hi-fi classic, but I'm sure almost everyone would find it perfectly acceptable for a second unit to use in a kitchen or bedroom. The operatic excerpt at the start of the Faithless track came across very clearly through the built-in speakers.

Volume level is indicated as a level from 0-50, but after 35 quality begins to suffer. I listened at level 28. The volume knob is a rotary encoder with no fixed starting/stopping position, which obviously addresses some form of digital volume control.

Conclusion

This unit is versatility with a handle, and would be the perfect travel companion unit if only it took batteries. Somehow, it's hard to think of it as portable when it needs the companionship of a mains socket to operate. Still, in terms of functionality, it's ideal for running off quick tapes or MDs from radio or CD sources.

| SANYO — VERDICT | |
|--|---------|
| SOUND | ★★★★☆ |
| VALUE | ★★★★☆ |
| PRICE | £349.99 |
| ONE YEAR GUARANTEE | |
| Versatile, compact product providing access to radio, CD, tape and MiniDisc. | |
| Sanyo UK Sales Ltd, Sanyo House, Otterspool Way, Watford, Herts WD2 8JX (01923) 246363 | |

SHARP MD-MS702H

This little unit really looks the biz, and should appeal to the trendy set who seek the latest in top looks and great sound. On the front panel a shiny disc is the central cosmetic feature, around which the transport controls are arranged. (Compare with the Kenwood DMC-J7R which looks very similar mechanically but takes a different styling route.)

The rechargeable battery casing, which mounts into the back of the unit, is a nice piece of design which contributes greatly to the Sharp's compactness. The main display is clear, and lights up brightly when a button is pressed.

A separate battery case is available as an option, as is a car adaptor kit. Headphones are of the standard in-ear variety, with remote control in the lead. For an in-ear design, the earphones are quite comfortable. The remote has its own display, which will scroll the name of an album and/or track if this information is present on the MD; if not, little fish and musical notes flash by instead. Volume goes from 0-30; I listened at 20.

Dimensions are: 87mm wide, 29 mm



high and 82mm deep. It weighs 219g with the rechargeable battery *in situ*.

Sound quality

The Air track was moody and atmospheric, with prominent bass. Indeed, this is a good unit for low-frequency freaks: the bass boost function can be set at four levels, and on the highest, for example, the Faithless track really pumped. But the quieter Hans Zimmer track lost nothing by way of subtlety.

David Bowie's excerpt showed good stereo separation between each headphone,

with the opening train sequence being well balanced. This is a complex track with many layers, and the Sharp handled it well. Pop tracks had some get up and go. On the Blur, the drum introduction came across sharply, delineating different drum sounds very well indeed.

Even through a domestic hi-fi system, the sound of the Sharp ran a close second to a well respected CD player.

Conclusion

MiniDisc has often been touted as an ideal music-replay choice for active types, because of its small size and greater immunity to knocks than CD. With its sporty looks and good replay of pop and dance material, I think the MD-MS702H will appeal to this type of market, though I recommend it to music lovers of all persuasions. Superb value at £249.99, down from £279.99.

| SHARP — VERDICT | |
|---|---------|
| SOUND | ★★★★★ |
| VALUE | ★★★★☆ |
| PRICE | £249.99 |
| ONE YEAR GUARANTEE | |
| Sporty-looking MD player with good sound quality, and decent build. | |
| Sharp Electronics (UK), Sharp House, Thorp Road, Newton Heath, Manchester M40 5BE (0800) 262958 | |

SONY D-E405

This attractive blue CD player is shaped like its Sanyo rival, but seems a lot more user-friendly.

Its proprietary anti-skip feature is known as ESP, while bass augmentation may be selected in the guise of MB (MegaBass) or GRV (Groove). MB was sufficient for me — GRV produced very heavy bass.

The buttons are all solid enough, but not clearly marked, though this doesn't affect ease of use too much. Track search and track skip operations are performed by the same controls. The LCD is clear, and gives all the information you need.

The in-lead remote has track skip/search, play, pause, stop and volume control. Like many in-ear phones, the ones supplied here have a single lead from the player to one earpiece, with a short 'daisy-chain' wire carrying signals to the other transducer. Since the main lead incorporates the remote control module, there's more of a tug on the left earpiece than the right — a possible long-term irritation.

Note that these 'cans' sit further in the ear than some, so they bring the music closer to your eardrum, but are also harder to remove.



Up to 22 tracks may be programmed in; shuffle-play serves them up at random. And here's a useful feature for those who intend listening for long periods: an Automatic Volume Limiter System (AVLS), which prevents volume being increased above a preset level, no matter how far the volume knob is rotated.

The control for this is situated underneath the player near the switch for the anti-skip circuit.

One function enables the user to resume playing a track from the point where it stopped, rather than picking up from the beginning. However, this information only remains as long as the lid remains closed.

Dimensions are 129mm wide, 28mm high and 146mm deep. It weighs 220g without its rechargeable cells.

Sound quality

The Forcione & Sciubba sounded clear on all three settings, with more depth on MB. GRV proved to be too bass-heavy for my tastes.

On the 'no-bass' setting, Underworld sounded slightly tinny, but opened up significantly once MB was operational. It really thudded on the GRV setting; you'll like this one if you enjoy heavy bass.

Rachmaninov was slightly cloudy with no bass, but beefed up with MB engaged, even though piano still sounded clangy.

Conclusion

This is not a player for complex classical music: the Rachmaninov did it no justice. The D-E405 is happiest playing riotous dance music, although it can cope with simpler, quieter tracks. At £119.99, it's good value.

| SONY — VERDICT | |
|---|---------|
| SOUND | ★★★★☆ |
| VALUE | ★★★★☆ |
| PRICE | £119.99 |
| ONE YEAR GUARANTEE | |
| Bass-level adjustments give flexible options for enhancing different styles of music. Good value at this price. | |
| Sony UK Ltd, The Heights, Brooklands, Weybridge, Surrey KT13 0XW | |
| (0990) 111999 | |

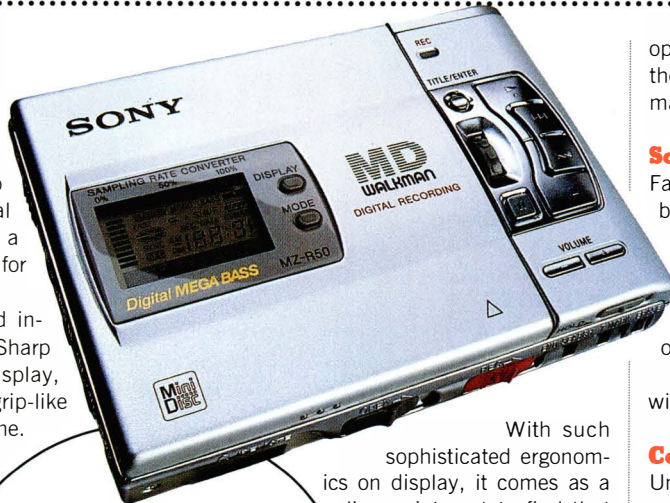
SONY MZ-R50

The MZ-R50 is one of Sony's latest-generation MD personals. It has a 40-second anti-shock buffer, a sampling-rate converter to record from DAT and digital radio as well as CD, and a synchro recording function for direct digital dubs from CD.

Earphones are standard in-ear, with remote. Like the Sharp the remote has its own display, but was neater with a hairgrip-like clip mechanism, and slimline.

Useful features include a 'vertical jog dial', which consists of a knurled rotary control whose axis is suspended within a push-switch. On playback, for example, you can rotate the jog dial to select a specific track, then push it down to start playing the selection. There are separate buttons for track search.

The jog dial also plays a useful role when you want to add your own titles to a pre-recorded MiniDisc. Spin the wheel to scroll through alphabetical, numerical and symbolic characters, then press down to insert.



With such sophisticated ergonomics on display, it comes as a disappointment to find that the volume-control and Megabass buttons and record switch are positively Lilliputtian.

Sony obviously assumes that most users will rely on the headphone lead remote for transport operations. Here, the track selector is a jog dial situated on the end of the module. A twist skips tracks; twist and hold to search within a track.

The unit also has a line out, optical line in (with optical lead supplied as standard), and 'plug-in power' microphone sockets. The

optional battery unit, attached to the side of the main unit, is not made from the same materials and has a cheap, plasticky feel.

Sound quality

Faithless sounded squashed to begin with, but once the bass kicked in it opened up. It was powerful with the boost switched on — clear low frequencies complemented this music. Compared to the Sharp MD recorder, however, the Sony's rendition of the Cornershop sounded clouded.

Dimensions are: 110mm long, 76mm wide and 20mm high.

Conclusion

Undoubtedly this is a well-equipped unit, equalling many full-size components for functionality. Furthermore, its price has recently been reduced to £280 from £350, making it an attractive proposition for feature-freaks. The only drawback is the miniature-sized controls on the casework.

| SONY — VERDICT | |
|---|---------|
| SOUND | ★★★★☆ |
| VALUE | ★★★★☆ |
| PRICE | £279.99 |
| ONE YEAR GUARANTEE | |
| Good sound quality, useful features, but some control buttons on this personal are too small to be practical. | |
| Sony UK Ltd, The Heights, Brooklands, Weybridge, Surrey KT13 0XW | |
| (0990) 111999 | |

SONY MZ-R5ST

Dubbed as a 'docking station', this unit looks like Thunderbird 2, with a portable MD personal player that lives in the main body of the unit when not out and about. This is a really clever idea from Sony, combining the input options and usability of a full-sized component, with the unbeatable convenience of a portable player.

The main unit offers three optical inputs as well as a stereo analogue input and output accessed by phono plugs. The great benefit of the optical connection, however, is that it permits synchronised recording of CDs from players equipped with optical outputs. Activate the function, start playback on your CD player and the MD follows suit automatically, incrementing tracks as it goes along. In the absence of a signal, the unit goes into standby after three seconds.

With Time Machine recording, the unit will transfer input signals into a solid-state



buffer while in record standby mode, and once the record command is selected, two seconds' worth of the buffer are added to the recording.

The unit comes with a credit-card-sized remote, which handles the main functions and power on/off. It will also control the level of an active speaker output. Sony makes matching speakers for this, though any units with the right jack should do.

Dimensions of the main unit are: 232 mm x 61 mm x 154 mm; those of the docking personal are 104.5mm x 20.1mm x 77mm.

The personal weighs 235g, including rechargeable cell.



clangy on the headphones, not very open or clear. The portable Walkman unit is based on the MZ-R50, but with different buttons and a special 'data port', hidden behind a sliding door, via which it interfaces with the docking station.

Conclusion

A better gadget would be hard to find. For gizmo-freaks who want music truly on the move, but the convenience of a full-size MiniDisc component, this unit will be hard to beat. However, bear in mind that by shopping around, you could probably buy a MiniDisc homedek and a personal for at worst the cost of the MZ-R5ST, and at best a few pounds less. And if nothing else this would hedge against the possibility of music blackout if ever the docking MD unit expired!

| SONY — VERDICT | |
|--|---------|
| SOUND | ★★★★☆ |
| VALUE | ★★★★☆ |
| PRICE | £499.99 |
| ONE YEAR GUARANTEE | |
| Gadgets galore with this superb-looking system, ultimate techno appeal — and it sounds pretty good, too! | |
| Sony UK Ltd., The Heights, Brooklands, Weybridge, Surrey KT13 0XW | |
| (0990) 111999 | |

Conclusions

On the evidence of this test, MiniDisc (MD) is a superior format for portable audio, since the MD players proved less susceptible to knocks and bumps than their CD counterparts. Also, for anyone contemplating entry into the MD market, the purchase of a portable might be ideal. No longer do MD portables command a hefty premium over home decks.

Furthermore, it is easy to copy CDs onto MD digitally, complete with track numbers, provided your home hi-fi CD player has a Toslink optical output. All of the MD players come supplied with a suitable lead. The ultimate gadget in this respect must be Sony's MZ-R5 'docking station' — the base unit remains plugged into your hi-fi while the MD personal goes out and about when you do!

CD: the cost-effective option

If the prospect of grappling with MD is a digital concept too far, or if the prices are still beyond your means, there are some great value CD portables around. Playing time used to be a major bugbear with CD personals, but years of refinement in cell technology and power consumption have seen maximum playing times approach 30 hours.

Best Buys

Sharp's MD-MS702 looks stunning, sounds crisp and remains easy to use. The same is true of the Kenwood DMC-J7R, which is not surprising as both players appear to use the same mechanism but with external different trim. A deserving Best Buy to both units, then, especially taking into account their recent price reductions to £250.

Another honour to Kenwood comes courtesy of the £180 DPC-981 CD personal, another resounding Best Buy. By no means is it the cheapest CD player on the market, but its build and sound quality make the price very reasonable in our view.

Recommended

Sony's MZ-R5ST Docking Station may look like a prop from Thunderbirds, but in fact it's a novel idea for those who can afford to pay £500 for such a whizz-bang piece of lounge sculpture. Highly Recommended.

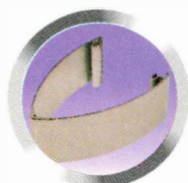
At £90, Aiwa's XP-770 proves that decent sound can be portable and not astronomically priced. And Sony's D-E405 Discman, also Recommended, is superb for bass-heavy dance music, and an ideal value-conscious buy at just £120.



DON'T BUY IT JUST BECAUSE IT'S BEAUTIFUL



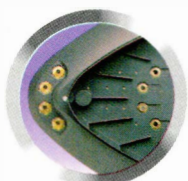
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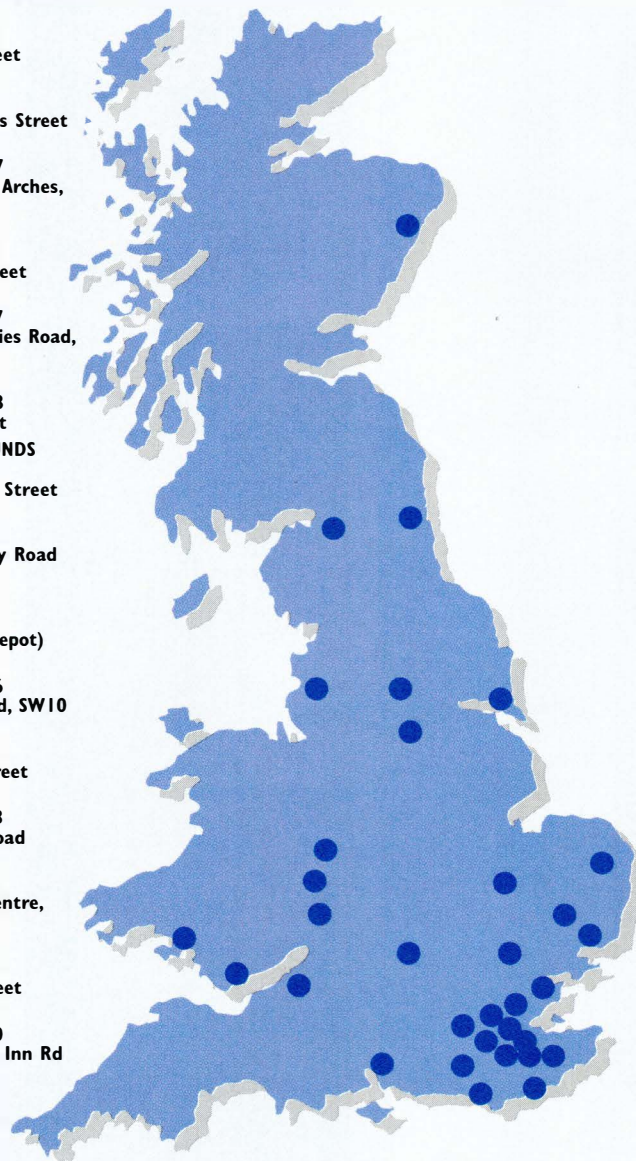


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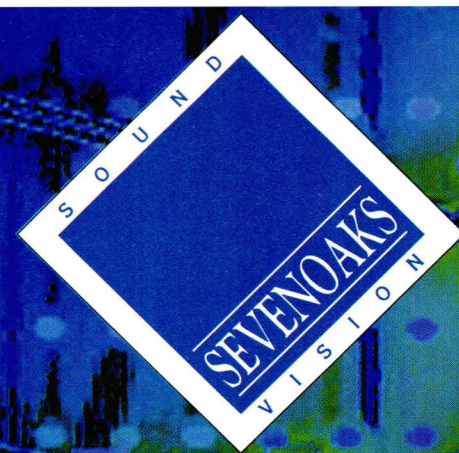
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| Arcam Alpha 7 | £ 329.95 |
| Arcam Alpha 8 | £ 449.95 |
| Arcam Alpha 8SE | £ 599.95 |
| Arcam Alpha 9 | £ 799.95 |
| Audiolab 8000 CD | £ 999.95 |
| Cyrus DAD1 | £ 399.95 |
| Cyrus DAD3 | £ 599.95 |
| Cyrus DAD3Q | £ 899.95 |
| Denon DCD425 | £ 149.95 |
| Denon DCD635 | £ 179.95 |
| Denon DCD735 | £ 229.95 |
| Denon DCD835 | £ 279.95 |
| Denon DCD1550 AR | £ 349.95 |
| Exposure CD | £1049.95 |
| Marantz CD48 | £ 199.95 |
| Marantz CD6711 | £ 249.95 |
| Marantz CD67SE | £ 249.00 |
| Marantz CD6711OSE | £ 299.95 |
| Marantz CD6311KI Signature | £ 399.95 |
| Marantz CD17K1 Signature | £1099.95 |
| Meridian 506 20 Bit | £1099.95 |
| Meridian 508 24 Bit | £1994.95 |
| Myryad T10 | £ 399.95 |
| Myryad T20 | £ 599.95 |
| Myryad MCI100 | £ 699.95 |
| Myryad MCD500 | £1299.95 |
| Naim Audio | P.O.A. |
| Pioneer PDS505 Precision | £ 459.95 |
| Roksan Caspian | £ 894.95 |
| Rotel RCD971 | £ 349.95 |
| Sony CDPXE3 I0 | £ 99.00 |
| Sony CDPXE520 | £ 129.00 |
| Technics SLPG490 | £ 99.95 |
| Yamaha CDX493 | £ 179.95 |

CD MULTIPLAYERS

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| Arcam Alpha MCD | £ 449.95 |
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CD TRANSPORTS

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| Audiolab 8000CDM | £1399.95 |
| Meridian 500 | £1244.95 |

DACS

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|-------------------------|----------|
| Audiolab 8000DAX 24 Bit | £ 999.95 |
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| Musical Fidelity X-ACT | £ 129.95 |

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| Kenwood DM3090 | £ 169.00 |
| Marantz DR700 | CD Recorder £ 599.95 |
| Philips CDR880 | CD Recorder £ 499.95 |
| Sony MDSJE520 | £ 179.00 |
| Sony MDSJB920 | £ 299.95 |
| Yamaha MDX793 | £ 299.95 |

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| Denon DRM550 | £ 159.95 |
| Denon DRW580Twin | £ 199.95 |
| Sony TCKE4005 | £ 129.00 |
| Yamaha KX393 | £ 129.95 |
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| Technics SL1210 | | £ 359.00 |
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| Arcam Alpha 7 | £ 229.95 |
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| Cyrus FM7 | £ 399.95 |
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| Meridian 551 | £ 794.95 |
| Musical Fidelity X-AI | £ 479.95 |
| Myryad T40 | £ 399.95 |
| Myryad MI 120 | £ 599.95 |
| Naim Audio | P.O.A. |
| Pioneer A300R Precision | £ 399.95 |
| Roksan Caspian | £ 694.95 |
| Rotel RA921 | £ 99.95 |
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| Rotel RA971 | £ 199.95 |
| Sony TAF248E | £ 159.00 |
| Talk Electronics Storm 1L | £ 499.95 |
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| Arcam Alpha 9C | £ 399.95 |
| Audiolab 8000C | £ 579.95 |
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| Musical Fidelity X-Pre | £ 199.95 |
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| Arcam Alpha 8P | £ 249.95 |
| Arcam Alpha 9P | £ 399.95 |
| Arcam Alpha 10P | £ 599.95 |
| Audiolab 8000SX | £ 549.95 |
| Audiolab 8000PX | £ 849.95 |
| Audiolab 8000MX Mono (each) | £ 899.95 |
| Cyrus XPA | £ 299.95 |
| Cyrus PSXR | £ 329.95 |
| Cyrus Power | £ 499.95 |
| Exposure Super18 | £ 899.95 |
| Exposure Super18 Mono (pair) | £1799.95 |

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| Meridian 556 | £ 894.95 |
| Meridian 557 | £1399.95 |
| Myryad MA120 | £ 479.95 |
| Musical Fidelity X-A50 Mono (pair) | £ 499.95 |
| Naim Audio | P.O.A. |
| Roksan Caspian | £ 594.95 |
| Rotel RB971 | £ 199.95 |
| Rotel RB981 | £ 299.95 |
| Talk Electronics | P.O.A. |

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| Kef Q55 | £ 499.95 |
| Kef Reference | P.O.A. |
| Mission 700 | £ 129.95 |
| Mission 701 | £ 159.95 |
| Mission 771 | £ 169.95 |
| Mission 772 | £ 229.95 |
| Mission 773 | £ 349.95 |
| Mission 774 | £ 499.95 |
| Mission 750LE | £ 249.95 |
| Monitor Audio Monitor 2 | (Blk) £ 299.95 |
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| Technics SCHD55 | inc spks | £ 449.00 |
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| Yamaha CLAV10 | ex spks | £ 849.95 |
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| Panasonic DVDA100 | £ 349.00 |
| Panasonic DVDA350 | £ 629.00 |
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| Pioneer DVL909 | £ 799.00 |
| Sony DVPS315 | £ 449.00 |
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| Yamaha DVDS700 | £ 599.95 |

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| Arcam AV50 | £ 699.95 |
| Yamaha DSPA492 | £ 199.00 |
| Yamaha DSPA592 | £ 299.00 |
| Yamaha DSPA1 | £1599.95 |
| Yamaha DSPA1 Gold | £1699.95 |

SURROUND RECEIVERS

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| Denon AVR1400 | £ 499.95 |
| Denon AVR3200 | £ 999.95 |
| Kenwood KRV5090 | £ 119.00 |
| Kenwood KRV9090 | £ 249.00 |
| Kenwood KRV888D Ex Demodulator | £ 349.00 |
| Yamaha RXV392 | £ 179.00 |
| Yamaha RXV592 | £ 369.00 |

SURROUND PROCESSORS

| | |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| Cyrus AV Master | £ 699.95 |
| Denon AVD2000 | £ 379.95 |
| Meridian | P.O.A. |
| Yamaha APD1 | Demodulator £ 99.95 |
| Yamaha DSPE492 | £ 249.95 |
| Yamaha DDP2.AC3 | Decoder £ 349.95 |

CENTRE SPEAKERS

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|------------------------|----------|
| Acoustic Energy AE107C | £ 149.95 |
| B&W CC6 | £ 229.95 |
| Kef Q95C | £ 199.95 |
| Mission 70c1 | £ 99.95 |
| Mission 70c2 | £ 149.95 |
| Mission 77C | £ 169.95 |
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| Tannoy MC | £ 99.95 |
| Yamaha NSC60 | £ 59.95 |
| Yamaha NSC105 | £ 79.95 |
| Yamaha NSC150 | £ 109.95 |

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| | |
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| Boston | P.O.A. |
| Mission 73S | £ 99.95 |
| Yamaha NSE60 | £ 79.95 |
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| Acoustic Energy AE108S | £ 299.95 |
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LET'S GO ROUND AGAIN

We've had 15 years of CD, we've got MD and DVD, and now even the Internet is a source of music. So why, surrounded by high-tech wonders, do we still love old-fashioned vinyl? In this special five-page investigation,

Phil Strongman talks to record dealers, **Jason Kennedy** compares LP and CD head on, **Charlotte Ricca** celebrates Rega's glorious 25th, and we hand-pick HFC favourites from the still-healthy turntable market.

Half a century after the birth of vinyl, and 15 years after the first onslaught of CD, the 12-inch LP format is still very much alive, even resurgent in some quarters. The vinyl medium itself is simply an updated version of the brittle shellac 78s, which themselves were not too far removed from Edison's wax cylinder of the 1890s. Indeed, as early as 1951, guitar and studio king Les Paul was complaining about vinyl: "Whenever I cut a record I feel like a farmer dragging a crude plough along a furrow..." So why does it appear to be staging a come-back?

Tony Fischetti, owner of London's Totem record shop, has been in the music industry for 20 years. He says vinyl's initial decline was the consequence of deliberate tactics by the music industry. "They were running down the quality of vinyl way back," he says, "and from the early 1980s onwards the quality dropped drastically. That's when I first noticed new records that would smear

when you pulled them out of their sleeves. After the introduction of CD the manufacturers used more recycled vinyl, too — the number of returns rose as CD was being shoved down people's throats!"

It's true that the physical mass of many vinyl releases has declined over the years. 1972 was when RCA first opted to use its 'Dynaflex' vinyl to keep up with demand for Bowie's million-selling *Ziggy Stardust*, and ever since vinyl has been getting thinner, and many standard releases are now almost like floppy flexi-discs. It's ironic that, in the '70s, just when turntables like the Linn LP12 were arriving to start prising more and more musical detail from records, the quality of vinyl first began to waver. Hence the current hi-fi fetish for audiophile LP releases on heavy vinyl weighing 180 grams or more.

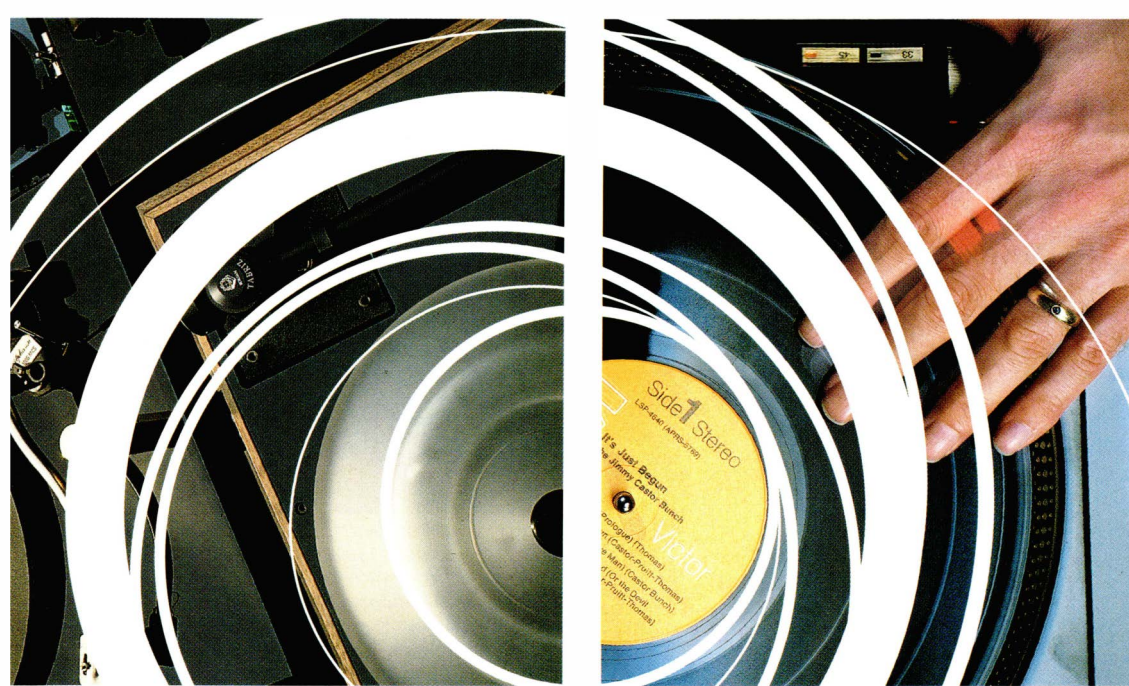
Rack to basics

Another criticism, levelled at LP by CD promoters, was that it took up too much space

by comparison with CD. Tony Fischetti believes that was — and is — a red herring. "What rubbish!" he comments. "I stock both: CDs take up as much room as LPs. There was also talk about vinyl surface noise, but you get noise everywhere you listen. You could only ever hear pure music in a vacuum and then it would sound weird. I think it's quite simple — all the musical classics should be available on vinyl."

"It should be a cultural thing, like the EU putting money into the making of European movies. Video and cable now have more viewers, but film is still important. Same with vinyl, the music of bygone generations is important. It should be heard as it was meant to be. Not that most modern speakers can reproduce such a sound, but that's another matter..."

In 1990, the mega record retailing chain Tower Records floated the idea of dropping vinyl completely. The company carried out this plan in 1992 and was later forced to



reverse the decision; even in 1992 it was obvious that 'wax' platters were still the music medium of choice amongst the dance fraternity of rappers, DJs and mixers. 1990 saw a dozen CD and 12-inch tracks, most noticeably the Brand Nubians' *All For One*, which featured vinyl 'scratches': some were rhythm samples, but most were there purely to inject some street cred.

The Britpop phenomenon erupted next, injecting renewed life into the seven-inch vinyl format, then last winter we saw numerous UK chart acts flaunting vinyl in their pop videos — *Brimful of Asha* by Cornershop being a notable example. Vinyl was — is — chic again. As if to confirm this, several big mail-order companies, *The Innovations Catalogue* among them, have reintroduced turntables to their stock, while even hard-nosed retailers like Dixons are now selling midi systems with turntables again.

Tower Records remains tight-lipped about its past experiences with vinyl, but has been unable to resist the residual strength of the vinyl market. Now you'll find all manner of vinyl in Tower Records stores, and in London's recently-opened Camden Town branch of the chain, vinyl is said to account for more than five per cent of total album sales — a healthy proportion by any measure.

Vivante las Vinyl

Steven Carr finds vinyl "fascinating". He's the proprietor of Vivante London, vinyl importer based in south-west London ☎ (0181) 977 6600, which has more than 600 new vinyl titles on its audiophile mail-order list, alongside several hundred gold CDs, HDCDs and the JVC XRCs featured in Jimmy Hughes's column, *HFC 180*.

The list varies from standard pressings of Tori Amos and Massive Attack right through to classical classics — on Classic Records, naturally. Most of the Vivante vinyl catalogue comprises 180 gram pressings, all on virgin vinyl (which indicates a lack of recycled constituents rather than any connection with the toothful Mr Branson). Titles include Vivante's own-label releases such as *Friday*

Night In San Francisco, a seminal 1980 jazz-guitar extravaganza featuring the talents of John McLaughlin, Al DiMeola and Paco DeLucia. The latter was originally issued on the Philips label, but the Vivante is clearly superior, allowing the musicians to speak for themselves with breath-taking clarity.

The next release on the Vivante label will be JJ Cale's *Naturally*, taken from the original master tapes. Vivante's prices aren't low, with LPs costing from £16 to £25, but don't forget that record companies such as EMI chart have recently hiked the dealer price of chart CDs to £9. It seems inevitable, taking current business models as a basis, that EMI chart CDs will soon retail at £17.50 or more, compared to which a premium for audiophile LPs doesn't seem excessive.

Carr, a music industry veteran, started his firm in 1995 "because there was real demand for quality vinyl that wasn't being met, here and abroad. We've had situations where American record companies have pressed up 5,000 Hendrix LPs for the world market. We've bought some, the few they had in the States instantly sold out, and then we're selling them back to vinyl fans in New York!

"The market has grown, of late, partly because vinyl is still the definitive medium — and there will always be new people discovering that. The covers can be art, too: we've got them all over the walls of the office! Maybe digital will match the sound of vinyl one day, but for the moment you get more detail, more life with vinyl... and it's easier to listen to. Period. A recent academically-conducted study of people listening to both LP and CD concluded that those who took part in the tests got listener fatigue far quicker with CD.

"For music that you're really listening to, rather than just playing in the background, it has to be analogue. I think it must be the digital aspect that holds CD back. The brain has to work subliminally to make sense of all the quirks and numbers."

Dance this mess around

So science has started to confirm what many of us knew all along, but how did

vinyl survive the bad times? "Well, the consensus is right, it is down to the dance kids, really," insists Carr. "Vinyl fans owe a lot to those club DJs in the '80s and early '90s. Without them, vinyl would have gone the way of the 78, and all the factories would have closed.

"Now, it's true to say that there is an upswell in interest. We're just about to receive new stuff by The Waterboys and Dr. John, and as with the JJ Cale LP, I know from advance orders we're going to shift hundreds and hundreds. That would have been unlikely even a year ago."

Chris Checkley is a dance expert in charge of distribution at London-based Indochina records. It consistently uses vinyl for its releases. "Most albums we put out on double vinyl," says Checkley. "We use four sides because the CD's 70 minutes wouldn't fit on two. Fifteen minutes each side gives us a better sound quality. There is a vinyl revival but, in the long term, it's becoming more of tool for DJs and promotion.

"People like to buy something special, in albums as with any other commodity. The ten-inch single, a see-thru plastic release, slabs of vinyl in colour sleeves — all look good racked up in HMV, and they certainly draw more attention than CDs.

"For some labels, avoiding vinyl is just penny-pinching, but for others it is too expensive. Getting a cut for the The Egg's album *Travelator* cost us £1,100. A CD cut would cost under £500, and while it's not impossible to recoup the extra cost, I can see why some labels don't try it.

For Indochina, though, vinyl still works. Go around London's West End, or any big city, and you'll see buzzing record shops... the public likes the sheer collectability of vinyl. Every issue is a limited edition these days, and DJs love the hands-on element, so who knows? Given all the developments there are in different digital formats right now, in 10 years maybe the standard CD will have followed the eight-track cartridge into obscurity, while 12-inch records will probably still be around..." PS

ESSENTIAL TURNTABLES

If our paean to vinyl has set you a-salivatin', here's a list of our favourite turntables to try out at your local hi-fi emporium.

New readers may be forgiven for thinking that record decks are rarer than hens' teeth these days, but the truth of the matter is that you can still buy brand-new record players at all price levels, from budget-conscious bargains to the most extravagantly-priced luxury models. Here at *Hi-Fi Choice* we've kept our eye on turntable developments over the years, so we are well positioned to suggest 10 of the best record decks any vinyl novice should consider. We've picked out five starter decks from the lower end of the price range, and five top-notch players for those with greater sonic aspirations.

First, a little essential shopping information. At middle and high price points, turntables are often not sold in the form of complete packages, but rather as standalone motor units to which may be added an individual's (probably dealer-assisted) choice of cartridge and tonearm. A motor unit will typically include some form of supportive plinth for the whole outfit, a high-precision electrical motor, and some sort of platter on which to spin LPs.

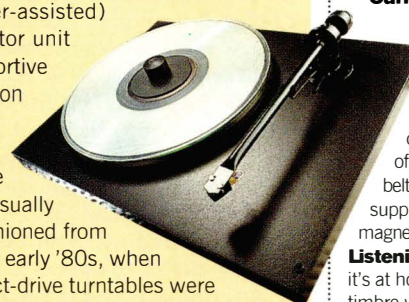
On most high-quality turntables, the motor drives the platter via a drive belt, usually made of rubber but sometimes even fashioned from a silk cord. However, in the late '70s and early '80s, when LP had yet to be supplanted by CD, direct-drive turntables were proposed as the ultimate platter-spinners because of low speed variations. However, this was yet another case of specifications telling only part of the hi-fi story. Today, the only application of direct-drive turntables is in the specialist DJ market. Belt-drive is the only hi-fi way to play.

There are two basic types of turntable: those with and without suspension. If a turntable is suspended, this is usually via spring support for the platter and tonearm, to isolate these groove-transcribing elements from the motor, and from vibration coming up through the support via the plinth. However, many top-quality turntables have no suspension whatsoever, and will not suffer for it when placed upon a best-quality isolation support to keep external vibrations at bay.

As we have mentioned, when one ascends the price ladder, record-playing apparatus is increasingly permuted from separate components. Companies such as Linn Products, Rega Research, Nottingham Analogue and DNM offer motor units, tonearms and cartridges; others, like SME, restrict themselves to motor units and tonearms, and others, like Michell, specialise only in motor units. This makes choosing an upmarket turntable even more of a matter for personal preference than usual, and it is one reason why a good, knowledgeable dealer is an essential ally in a quest to find the ultimate platter spinner.

Also bear in mind that turntables tend to be more expensive than CD players, for several fundamental reasons: material content, engineering standards and, critically, the fact that these are not mass-produced items. However, because the quality of a record transcription system is determined purely by the standard of engineering it embodies, if all other things are equal, you should achieve a proportionally higher standard of reproduction from a more expensive deck.

If you become a hard-core vinyl user, you may also need to consider a phono stage. The audio signal emanating from a record player needs tonal equalisation and much more boosting than the output of, say, a tape recorder or CD player. Thus a dedicated phono input or separate phono stage is necessary, and if your amplifier does not have one built in, investigate an outboard unit. Prices start at around £30. *JK*



HI-FI CHOICE'S FAVOURITE STARTER/BUDGET TURNTABLES

Turntable: Dual 505-4 UK
Reviewed in: *HFC* 103 (Recommended)
Price: £250



As we noted in our review of February 1992, this is the latest incarnation of a very long-running classic, and one which

launched a thousand student record collections. The eminently reasonable asking price for a Dual 505-4 is the least amount you can expect to shell out for a turntable with a degree of automation, decent sound quality and a cartridge thrown in for good measure.

Listening Notes The 505-4 has an easy, fluid nature; its stereo presentation is remarkably firm and stable, but inevitably it cannot offer insight into the depth of recordings like a more expensive unit. Dynamics are a little restrained, too, but its limitations are largely benign and it certainly will not get in the way of the music. Furthermore, it will lift the arm at the end of the record and switch off the motor — a genuine luxury among decent turntables.

Turntable: Pro-Ject 2/520
Reviewed in: *HFC* 164 (Best Buy)
Current Price: £325

Though it is a relative newcomer on the turntable scene, Pro-Ject has made a good impression with its good-sounding, competitively-priced decks from the Czech Republic. The Two sits in the middle of the company's range, and follows the Rega pattern of non-suspended motor plinth, manual drive-belt change and glass platter construction. It's supplied complete with an Ortofon 520P moving magnet cartridge — a nice choice.

Listening Notes The Pro-Ject 2 is a capable deck: it's at home with dense recordings and reproduces timbre with little difficulty. Surface noise is kept to a minimum and its rhythmic drive will keep you dancing as long as you want.

Turntable: Rega Planar 2/3
Reviewed in: *HFCs* 48/164 (Best Buy/Recommended)
Current Price: £214/£274

These evergreen decks mark the divide between basic record players and serious turntables. It's a clean, reliable design with a felt-topped glass platter, MDF plinth and highly regarded tone-arms: RB250 on the Planar 2 and RB300 on the Planar 3. Rega has been at the forefront of budget turntables for 20 years.

Listening Notes The more substantial Planar 3 excels in impact and immediacy, though maybe lacks a little subtlety. It comes alive with material where rhythm and timing are significant issues, injecting vigour and enthusiasm. The Planar 2 does much the same job but with slightly less aplomb, however both models represent the benchmark to beat among budget decks.



Turntable: Reson RS1M
Reviewed in: *HFC* 159 (Best Buy)
Current Price: £695

The Reson looks quite similar to the Rega decks, but is distinguished by a white felt mat. However, it is a true hot-rod design that has been intensively set-up. It carries a Rega arm, but this is decoupled and adjusted to get the



Rega beavers

Black discs still prevail in Rega's silver jubilee year, writes **Charlotte Ricca**.

In 1998, Rega Research celebrates 25 years in business. Not bad for a hi-fi company which made its name selling turntables. And, despite the digital revolution, it has kept record decks coming.

Rega first came to fame in 1975, with its stylish Planar 2 and 3 turntables, born out of the earlier Planet. They were quickly established as the best budget turntables on the market, and are still in great demand today.

"I was frustrated by the limited record decks available and their ridiculous prices," says Roy Gandy, the man behind Rega. "So I decided to build my own. I wanted to make quality products at affordable prices, and not forget what this whole business is about — music."

In fact, so serious is Rega's policy of value for money, that it never advertises, preferring to spend its budget on the creation of new products. This has enabled Rega to branch out into other areas of hi-fi, and its latest offerings are the Jura speaker, Cursa preamp and Maia poweramp.

So what makes Rega such a continuing success? One contributing factor is surely the relaxed environment in which the staff work. "Rega believes strongly that if you have a good relationship with your colleagues, it is reflected in the work you produce," says Owen Knight, a senior member of the turntable production team. This is reflected in the lack of hierarchy within Rega's staff — it even decides how much the boss, Roy Gandy, is paid.

However, Rega has not been afraid to move with the times, and despite a stronghold in turntables, Rega's range has grown to reflect the significance of CD players in the hi-fi market.

Indeed Gandy believes that CDs have opened his eyes to a whole new musical experience. "Before CDs came along, I never listened to background music; but now I realise that you can have music playing without needing to be totally absorbed in it."

No surprise, then, that in 1993 Rega reincarnated the name of its first turntable, the Planet, this time in the guise of a CD player. Later this year, meanwhile, another more exalted CD player is promised. Rega has also turned its hand to designing wheelchairs, motorbikes and corkscrews, and even a new Website is promised. Is nothing beyond the realms of this extraordinarily Regalitarian society?

cartridge tracking at precisely the right height and thus angle. It is supplied with Reson's Mica moving-magnet cartridge, a modified Goldring unit.

Listening Notes Offers first-class midband and impressive rhythmic pace, two qualities which go some way to outweighing a slight lightness in the bass. It's an idiosyncratic and transparent design.

Turntable: Thorens TD166VI/UK/RB
Reviewed in: HFC 103 (Best Buy)
Current Price: £400

Thorens is one of the best-established brands in the turntable business, and the TD166 is one of its core products. After all, you only get a mkVI version of something that was pretty darn good to begin with! This is a true suspended design with a two-part platter, belt drive and Rega's evergreen RB250 arm.



Listening Notes A confident and capable deck with a clean, tight sound that remains calm even at high playback

levels. It's refined and produces excellent stereo imagery, and while there's a degree of softness to the sound, clarity is of a high order.

HI-FI CHOICE'S FAVOURITE UP-MARKET TURNTABLES

Turntable: Linn LP12 Basik
Reviewed in: HFC 103 (Recommended)
Current Price: £1,100

The Linn Sondek LP12 was the turntable that put belt drive on the map back in the early '70s. Now it is available in a variety of guises, but this, as the name suggests, is its basic form. Yet should the urge strike you, you can upgrade this unit to top specification for approximately three times the price. The LP12 is a suspended deck, with a two-part platter and wooden armboard. Speed change is manual and requires an adaptor.



Listening Notes Renowned for its fine sense of timing, the LP12 also has impressive authority, and a seamless grasp of the frequency range that sets it apart. It's worth bearing in mind that the LP12, more than most alternatives, needs impeccable set up and support furniture.

Turntable: Michell Gyrodec
Reviewed in: HFC 55 (Recommended)
Current Price: £875

This is still one of the more stylish decks on the market. The Michell is constructed from aluminium, glass and acrylic, and combines a high-mass platter with suspension. An external belt pulley effects speed change manually.

Listening Notes Combined with a Rega RB300 tonearm in our test, it offered a smooth, almost liquid quality through the midrange, and excellent dynamic shading. The Gyrodec has a light but sure and refined touch, enhanced by solid pitch stability. This deck works to good effect with SME arms.



Turntable: Nottingham
Analogue Space Deck
Reviewed in: HFC 159 (Best Buy)
Current Price: £750

The Spacedeck is a high-mass design with a solid plinth and matching tonearm. It's the base model in a five-strong range extending up to the Anna Log at £5,500, and is complemented by Nottingham Analogue's own ranges of tonearms and cartridges.

Listening Notes This deck is very appropriately named, since it reproduces music with plenty of air, and a 'virtual reality' soundstage which goes way beyond mere sonic holography. The bass plumbs depths that few suspended decks could ever dream of. Our reviewer ended up digging out all his old vinyl to spin afresh!

Turntable: SME Model 20/2
Reviewed in: HFC 118 (Model 20A)
Current Price: £3,403

SME has been making the world's finest tonearms since the dawn of stereo LPs. It remains a mystery why the company took until the '80s to release its first turntables, the Models 20 and 30, but this was a wait worth enduring. Both are high mass, suspended subchassis designs, and the Model 20/2 is the more affordable of the two by a factor of three — it stands as a superb example of old-fashioned engineering in an age of corner-cutting compromises.

(Available complete with SME V arm as SME 20/2A, at £4,863).



Listening Notes Coupled with the company's Model V tonearm and an appropriately-qualified cartridge, this deck will extract every last nuance from your record grooves, giving you power, grace and speed as it was intended. A first class tool for vinyl exploration, built to last for ever and inspire pride of ownership.

Turntable: Wilson benesch Full Circle
Reviewed in: HFC 174
Current Price: £1,995

The Full Circle is the second and most competitively-priced record-playing package from Sheffield-based audiophiliacs, Wilson benesch. The motor unit, known as Circle, is constructed from aluminium, medite and carbon fibre, the latter forming a stiff suspension system. The acrylic platter is designed to take a fibre mat while the metal armboard has a predilection for the company's elegant carbon-fibre arms and cartridges. In Full Circle guise the deck comes complete with the ACT 0.5 tonearm and Ply moving-coil cartridge.



Listening Notes The Full Circle hails from the nimble school of sound reproduction, and as such appreciates a well-damped support. Under such circumstances it will breathe life into your record collection with an even, dynamic character that simply lets music shine.

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SOUNDS LIKE...

What is it about vinyl records? Why do enthusiasts keep bashing on about how great they are, and how unworthy a replacement is the otherwise remarkable CD? After all, LPs are a pain to look after, and if your turntable's not up to the challenge, noise on an LP's surface can almost overwhelm the music. So there must be more to LPs than their superior artwork and the ritual of playing the darn things. So could it be that records often sound better than their polycarbonate CD counterparts, and that purely commercial forces banished them from the shops?

If you've never heard a good record-player in action, you'll wonder what all this fuss is about. On a cheap deck, like one supplied with a midi system, records sound pretty noisy and distinctly inferior to CD. But compare a decent turntable with a decent CD player in a transparent hi-fi system, and you'll hear why vinyl is the hi-fi fraternity's best kept secret.

Level playing field

Is it possible to be objective about this? To determine exactly what makes 'black gold' so appealing? To attempt such an evaluation, I carefully compared LP and CD copies of the same albums, on high-grade players reproduced through revealing amps and speakers. To be specific: Acoustic Precision Eikos and Wadia 830 CD players; SME Model 20 turntable with SME V arm and Wilson benesch Carbon cartridge; DNM 3C Twin/PA-3 pre/power amp combination; and JBL 4312mkII speakers.

This system was assembled to bring out the best in both LP and CD. I used a variety of recordings, from strictly audiophile pressings on top-notch vinyl, through to standard, well-used copies of preferred music.

Classic cuts

I started out with the special set of recordings prepared by US-based audiophile label, Classic Records, to showcase the potential of its DVD-based 96/24 DAD discs (see *Ear Waxings*, HFC 177). This set contains not only CD and DAD versions of four pieces, but also vinyl versions at both 33 and 45rpm! Who says audiophiles are fanatics? First up was *Stella By Starlight*: a 1957 recording

Why do music lovers still dig out their old vinyl in preference to shiny new CDs? We perform A/B comparisons in an attempt to find out.



The man with the stick, Steve Davis, is no stranger to the joy of vinyl.

Coldcut's *More Beats & Pieces*, but here the 12-inch vinyl and CD album cuts were quite different: the silver disc gave a brighter balance which distorted the comparison.

In these latter two instances I used Wadia's new 830 CD player, which helped bridge the gap with its unusually strong dynamic performance, but didn't seem to match the SME turntable outfit for a sheer sense of scale.

Of course it is possible that a turntable's appealing quality is a benign form of distortion — after all, distortion in a guitar-amp's speaker brought us some of the

by jazz trumpeter Red Rodney, especially remastered by Classic Records.

Listening to the LP after the CD gave an immediate sense of relaxation, but conceded neither energy nor vibrancy. In any case I had played the CD on the Eikos, one of the most relaxed CD players around. Cymbals sounded notably more realistic, musical drama much more charged. On returning to CD the sound seemed expressively reined in.

From the same label but more up to date is another jazz recording, *A Time Remembered* by Art Davis, made in 1995. The LP in this instance produced more energy and presence, with more than a hint of extra purpose in the leading edges of notes. Thus reinforced, this swingin' material had a stronger groove.

Back to earth

So far so good, but what of 'real-world' vinyl that's been around the block a few times? How much does LP's physical frailty put it at a disadvantage to more robust CD? I dug out my copy of *Moving Pictures* by Rush, to compare with a near-equally-abused CD copy. Here the black stuff sounded mid-forward and less weighty than the CD. However, in terms of image scale it stole the show. A more contemporary classic is

sweetest blues. And the kind of distortion encountered in digital systems tends to be much less palatable: purchasers of the first CD players will remember the steely edge they brought to music, which helped seal CD's reputation as a cold and emotionless alternative to cuddly ol' vinyl.

The Teardrop explodes

It took Massive Attack's track *Teardrop*, from the recent album *Mezzanine*, to prove the point finally. I happened to buy the single on CD before splashing out on the double vinyl version of the album, so I could audition the same cut on both formats. The LP is a particularly fine example of the record producer's art, being pressed on a heavy, flat biscuit of vinyl and sounding pretty impressive in its own right. However, when stacked up against the digital single, a tangible difference became immediately apparent: the LP created an 'electric' atmosphere that the CD couldn't match.

To be fair, the CD out-plumbed the LP in sheer bass depth, and served to enhance vocals, but in terms of overall 'life' the LP had it beat. Music is all about emotional communication, a transfer of feeling. For all the LP's technical limitations, its emotional power is still 100 per cent prof. *JK*

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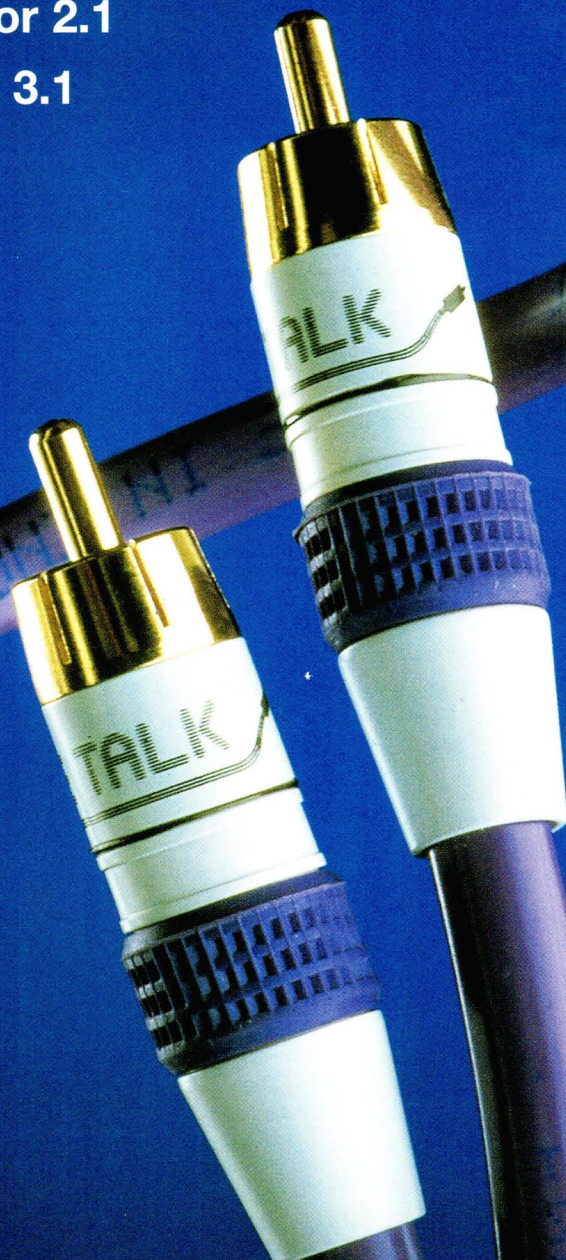
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European unity is still a headache for politicians, so perhaps they should take a few lessons from us hi-fi and home cinema journalists. Because in this year's EISA Awards voting, there was close agreement on which new products should be honoured as the winners. If you're new to the European Awards, the box on the opposite page will get you up to speed, and the official citations for each winner follow over the next few pages. However, if you've been keeping up with Europe's favourite hi-fi selections since *HFC* joined EISA in 1993, I need only remind you that, unlike certain other hi-fi awards we could mention, where the decisions are made on the basis of personal preferences, the EISA Awards are unique and thoroughly democratic. Uncork the *entente cordiale!*

Stan Vincent

ATW "Stan" Vincent
Editor-in-Chief

Stan Vincent (third left, kneeling) and HE Reviews Ed Alan Sircom (standing behind) warm up for Awards voting in the picturesque French village of Yvoire.



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European Video Innovation of the Year '98-'99
Samsung Multi-Standard Receiver

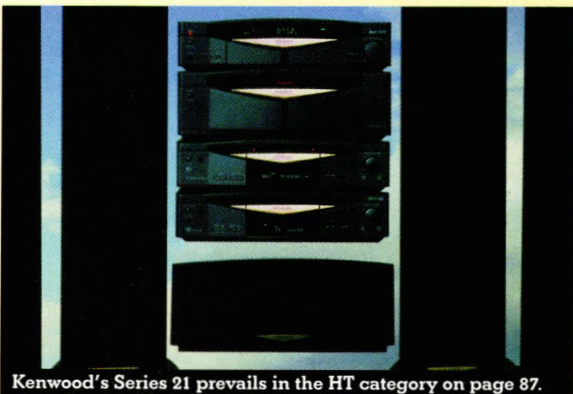
European Camcorder of the Year '98-'99
Sony DCR-PC1E

European TV/Video Combination of the Year '98-'99
Philips 21 PV 688

European Video Recorder of the Year '98-'99
JVC HR-S9500E



Mission's X-Space splashes down for an Award on page 85.



Kenwood's Series 21 prevails in the HT category on page 87.



WHAT IS EISA?

EISA is an acronym for the European Imaging & Sound Association, an organisation based in Geneva which promotes photography, video, hi-fi and home cinema equipment throughout Europe. The specialist magazines which report upon these topics are the members of EISA. In total, there are 40 magazines, from 19 countries spread across Europe from Portugal to Russia.

The origins of EISA date back to 1982, when five European photo magazines came together to select a Camera of the Year. This award proved so popular with consumers and manufacturers alike, there were soon awards for many different categories of photographic equipment. In 1989, the organisation emerged in its current incarnation, swelling its roster of awards with new 'gongs' for video, hi-fi and home cinema equipment.

Nowadays there are three European Awards Panels: Photo, Video, Hi-Fi & Home Theatre. On the latter panel, *Hi-Fi Choice* and its sister title, *Home Entertainment*, are among 21 magazines from 17 European countries. We are the only UK magazines to be members of EISA: *Hi-Fi Choice* has been on board since 1993, *Home Entertainment* since 1997. In addition to its rôle on the Audio & HT Panel, *Home Entertainment* represents UK interests on EISA's Video Awards panel. In the Awards citations which follow, you will see references to reviews in both *HFC* and *HE*, where these have taken place. Please note also that due to recent legislation, some companies are refusing to issue Recommended Retail Prices (RRPs) for certain products. Where no price is listed, consult a local dealer.

HOW DO THE JUDGES DECIDE ON THE WINNERS?

In late Spring, each member magazine of the Audio & HT Panel proposes its own favoured products to be shortlisted for an Award. In June, the Editors-in-Chief of those member magazines come together in Geneva to debate the selections proposed, then they vote on the short-list, and select one winner in each category.

WHICH PRODUCTS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR AN AWARD?

All candidates must have been in commercial production, and available for evaluation, to a majority of panel members before voting. They must be available for sale to the general public in a majority of European countries by August 15 in the year of the Awards. Each award is valid from 15 June one year until 14 June the next.

HOW DO I USE THE EISA AWARDS TO BUY HI-FI?

Use these Awards like *Hi-Fi Choice* Best Buy and Recommended flags, as a starting point. Then rely on your local specialist hi-fi dealer for system matching. Don't assume that the winning CD player, amp and speakers will combine to form a great rig: there's no guarantee they will. A good dealer will help you to find the best partnering components for any winner. Find your nearest specialist hi-fi dealer in our Dealer Directory on page 132.



EUROPEAN COMPACT SYSTEM OF THE YEAR '98-'99

JVC UX-MD9000R



WHAT THE JUDGES SAY

With a CD player and RDS tuner, JVC's UX-MD9000R is one of the world's smallest compact systems which also incorporates a MiniDisc recorder. Its tiny speakers have a beautiful 'piano lacquer' finish, and are equipped with full-range, metal-hyper-olefin-coned drive-units. These create a really musical sound, with smooth high and mid frequencies and a fantastically wide stereo image. Thanks to 'Active Hyper Bass Super-Pro', low frequencies are reproduced in a truly convincing and realistic way. This beautifully-designed micro system comes complete with a 'mini-tower' remote control.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

JVC UX-MD9000R

Price: To be confirmed

Reviewed: Forthcoming issue

Distribution:

JVC ☎ (0181) 450 3282



EUROPEAN LOUDSPEAKER OF THE YEAR '98-'99

Tannoy Mercury M1



WHAT THE JUDGES SAY

The Mercury M1 loudspeaker stands just 30cm tall, but it plays music with the assurance of a much bigger speaker. It incorporates a 25mm soft-dome tweeter and a 130mm mid-bass drive unit, in an enclosure with a rear-facing reflex port.

Despite being small it sacrifices little bass response; and generates a much more focused and lifelike sound than you would expect of any speaker this size – or at such an attractive price! True hi-fi performance is rarely so affordable.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Tannoy Mercury M1

Price: £119.99

Reviewed: HFC 179 (Best Buy)

Distribution:

Tannoy ☎ (01236) 420199



EUROPEAN HIGH END AUDIO OF THE YEAR '98-'99

Sonus Faber Electa Amator II



WHAT THE JUDGES SAY

This exquisite Italian loudspeaker represents a complete redesign of the famous Electa Amator, but with new components and a fresh sound concept. Scan Speak drive units of the highest quality, specially designed in conjunction with Sonus Faber, are perfectly matched and acoustically optimised within a beautifully-crafted real-wood and leather enclosure. The sound is very natural with total transparency and outstanding resolution, even when playing the most demanding music. Its solid engineering and unique execution make this loudspeaker truly representative of the high-end ethos.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

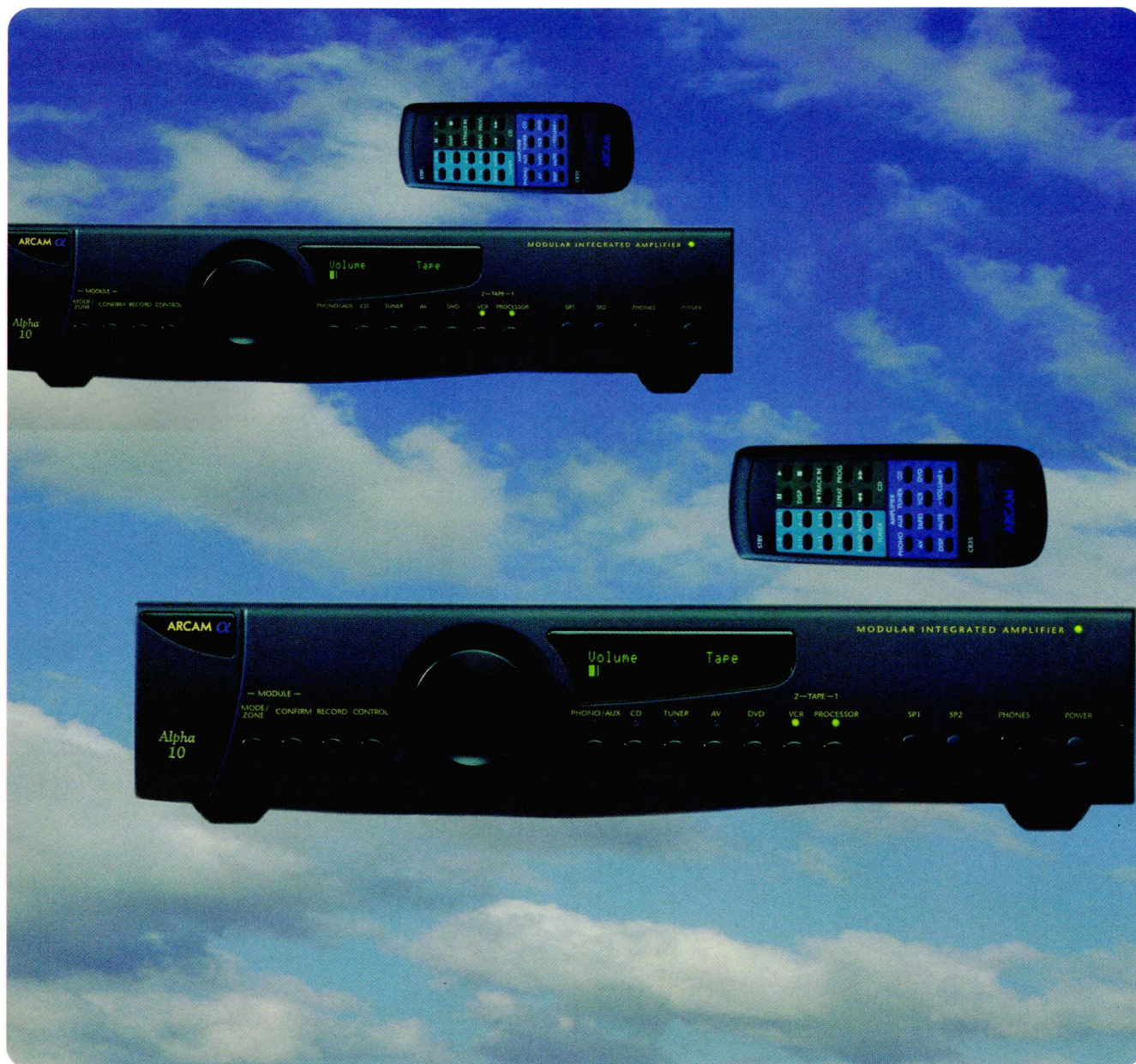
Sonus Faber Electa Amator II

Price: £3,293

Reviewed: Forthcoming Issue

Distribution: Absolute Sounds

☎ (0181) 971 3909



EUROPEAN AMPLIFIER OF THE YEAR '98-'99

Arcam Alpha 10

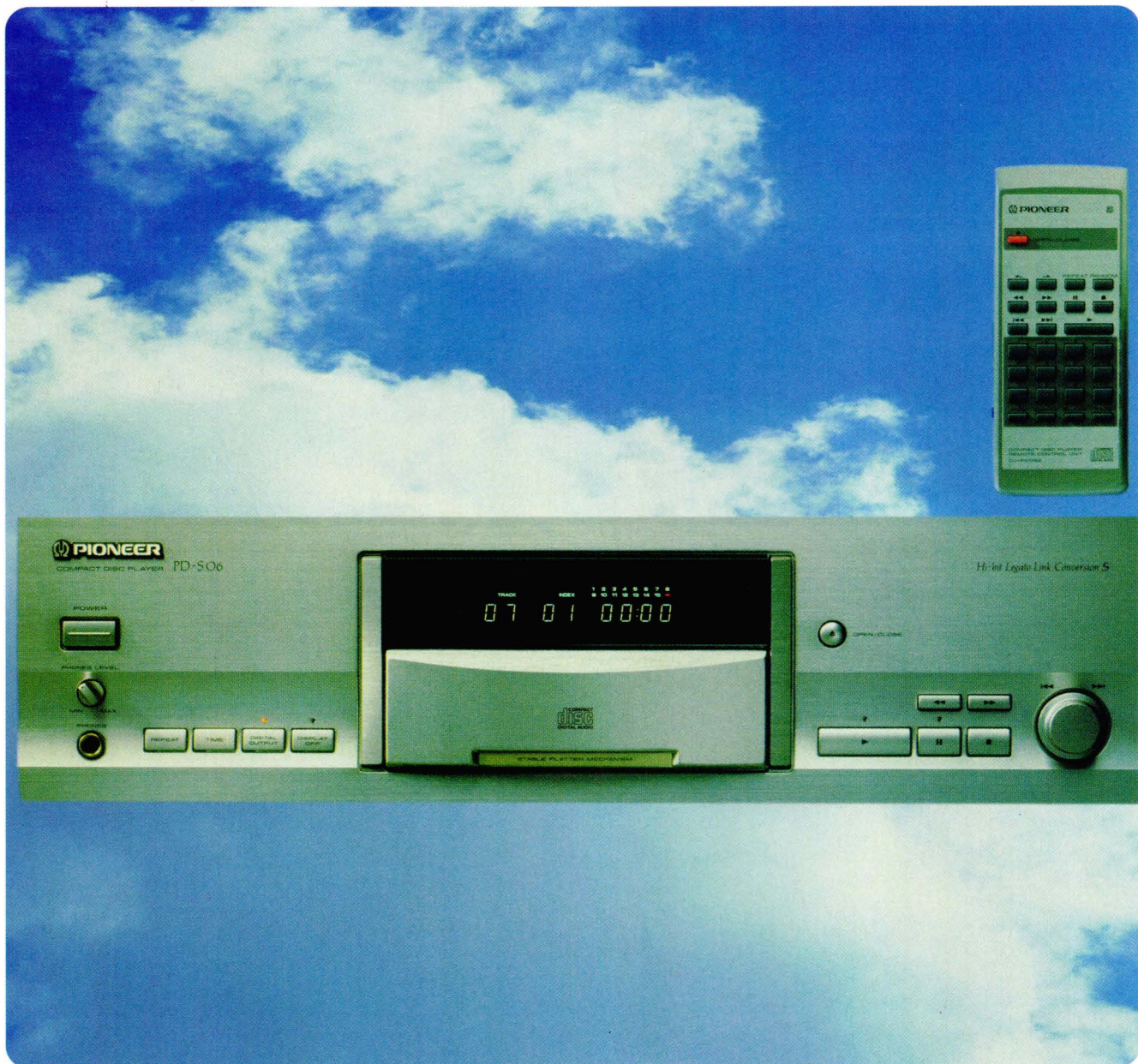


WHAT THE JUDGES SAY

The Alpha 10, from one of the most well-respected British hi-fi manufacturers, Arcam, is a truly 'future-proof' design. Being of modular construction, this 100 Watt-per-channel integrated amplifier can be upgraded to accept numerous card-based internal upgrades, such as Dolby Digital or DTS decoders. In this way it can be easily transformed into a very versatile AV amplifier without compromising any of its purist audiophile performance.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Arcam Alpha 10
Price: £799.90
Reviewed HFC 181
 (Recommended)
Distribution: A&R Cambridge
 ☎ (01223) 203203



EUROPEAN CD PLAYER OF THE YEAR '98-'99

Pioneer PD-S06



WHAT THE JUDGES SAY

In the PD-S06, Pioneer has successfully incorporated impressive digital technologies that clearly improve the standard of CD replay. Enhanced features include the new Legato Link Hi-Bit digital filter, top-quality multi-bit digital-to-analogue converter and, of course, Pioneer's legendary 'Stable Platter' mechanism. The consequence of all this is a stunning sound quality for such a reasonably-priced product.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Pioneer PD-S06
Price: £549.99
Reviewed: HFC 176
(Recommended)
Distribution: Pioneer Hi-Fidelity (GB) Ltd
☎ (01753) 789500



EUROPEAN CAR AUDIO OF THE YEAR '98-'99

JVC KD-MX3000R



WHAT THE JUDGES SAY

The JVC KD-MX3000R is the first car audio receiver whose built-in multi-player is compatible with both CDs and MDs. Using only a few push-buttons and one big rotary controller to access the function menus, it is very easy to handle. A small rotary controller, meanwhile, permits safe operation while the user is driving. Comprehensive tone controls, line-in/line-out signal connections and four integrated power amps top the bill of this great-sounding but moderately-priced in-car hi-fi system.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

JVC KD-MX3000R

Price: To be confirmed

Reviewed: Forthcoming issue

Distribution:

JVC ☎ (0181) 450 3282



EUROPEAN AUDIO RECORDER OF THE YEAR '98-'99

Sony MDS-JB920

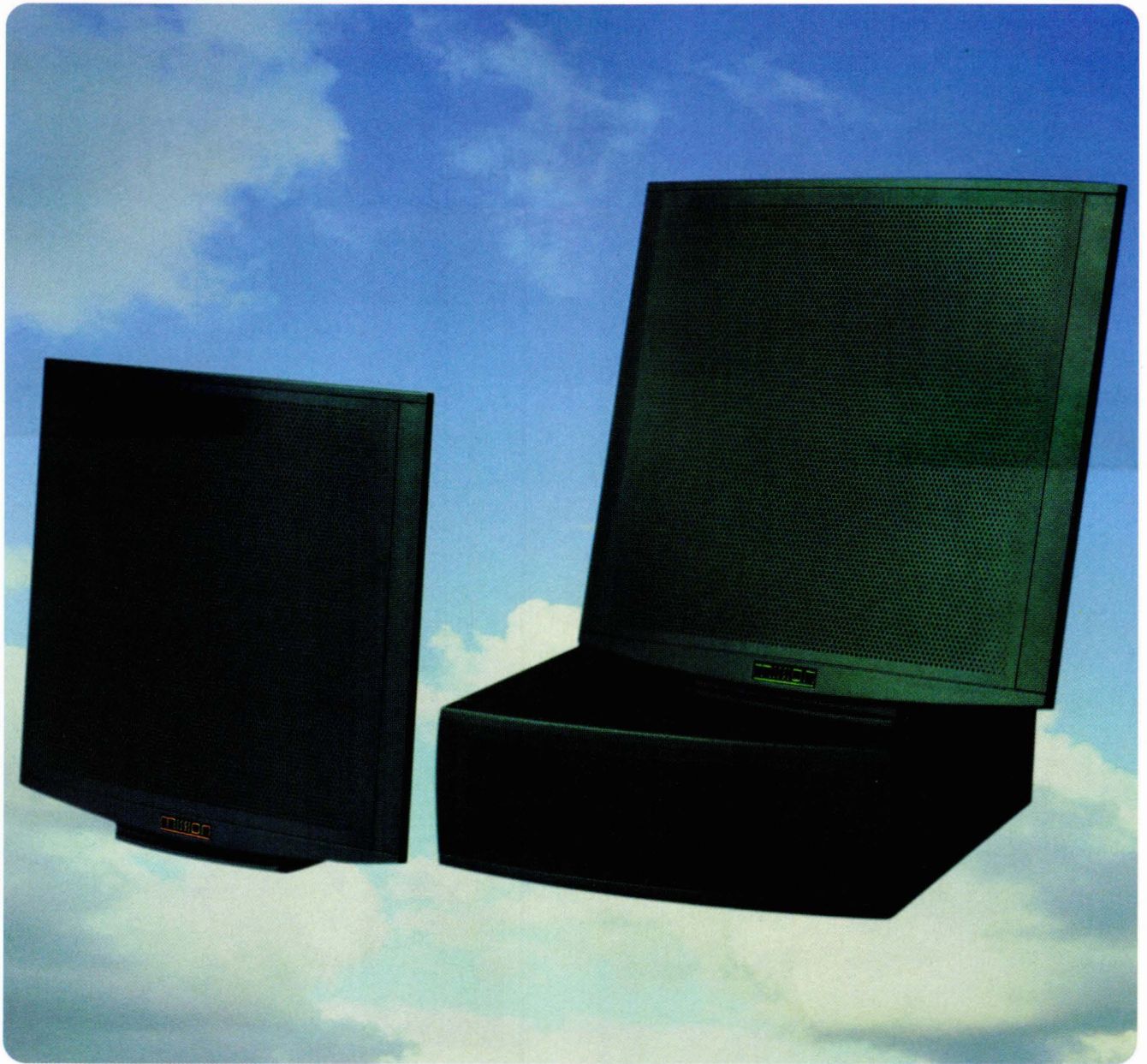


WHAT THE JUDGES SAY

By incorporating the latest generation of its ATRAC data-reduction system in the MDS-JB920, Sony has made the performance of its prestigious ES series available at a much more affordable price. Being meticulously finished down to the smallest detail, the unit is extremely well built, yet is easy to use. Its high-tech design fully exploits the recording and editing capabilities of the MiniDisc medium.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Sony MDS-JB920
Price: To be confirmed
Reviewed: Forthcoming issue
Distribution:
 Sony UK ☎ (0990) 111999



EUROPEAN AUDIO INNOVATION OF THE YEAR '98-'99

Mission X-Space



WHAT THE JUDGES SAY

NXT confers numerous benefits over traditional loudspeaker approaches. Its microscopically-vibrating panel technology permits the manufacture of extremely slim speakers, and generates sound that can be heard throughout the room. Mission's X-Space is an NXT stereo system with amplification built into a discreet subwoofer module. Its speaker panels are only a few millimetres thick, and have a unique integral wall-bracket/stand system. The X-Space points the way forward for both general audio applications and computer multimedia.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Mission X-Space

Price: £499.90

Reviewed: HFC 180

Distribution: Mission

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☎ (01480) 451777

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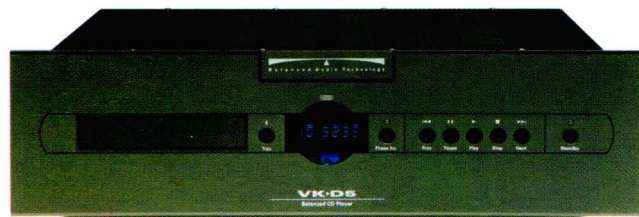
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EUROPEAN HOME THEATRE AMPLIFIER OF THE YEAR '98-'99

Yamaha DSP-A1



WHAT THE JUDGES SAY

This new amplifier combines massive sophistication with seven channels of amplification, five of them identically rated for the most convincing surround-sound effect. It has 42 DSP (Digital Soundfield Processing) surround modes on offer, ranging from Dolby Digital and DTS programs to the simulated acoustics of theatres, jazz bars ...and churches. The DSP-A1 creates an expansive, dynamic movie atmosphere using Yamaha's own digital processing techniques. Furthermore, it can accommodate numerous analogue and digital audio signals from any source. The DSP-A1's 'alter ego' is its programmable remote-control, which can learn the commands of every other handset on your coffee table. Truly a complete solution for home theatre enthusiasts!

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Yamaha DSP-A1**Price:** From £1,599.95**Reviewed:** Forthcoming issue of Home Entertainment**Distribution:**

Yamaha ☎ (01923) 233166

EUROPEAN HOME THEATRE SYSTEM OF THE YEAR '98-'99

Kenwood Series 21



WHAT THE JUDGES SAY

Kenwood's Series 21 system, designed by Giugiaro, offers a wide choice of separate components which may be combined to suit the needs of individual users. The pre-amplifier is ready for the home-theatre age with its built-in Dolby Digital decoder, and there are 5.1-channel signal inputs to allow for future surround-sound upgrades. Other components include a six-channel power amplifier, a CD player, a DVD player and a MiniDisc recorder. There is a broad range of home-theatre loudspeakers to complement the electronics, and the whole system is extremely easy to operate using an infrared remote handset with bi-directional communication. Given the amount of technology it embodies, Kenwood's System 21 offers remarkable value for money.

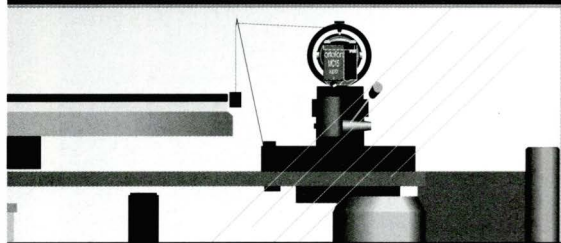
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Kenwood Series 21**Price:** check with your dealer**Reviewed:** HE 56**Distribution:**

Kenwood Electronics

☎ (01923) 816444

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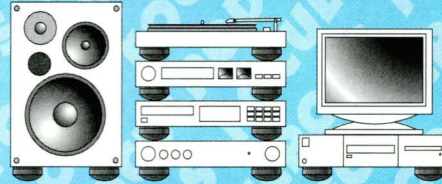
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HI-FI Choice
July 1995

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WHAT THE PRESS HAVE TO SAY
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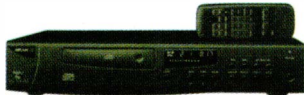


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THE CHOSEN FEW

ARCAM ALPHA 8SE



AUDIOLAB 8000 S



COPLAND CDA 266



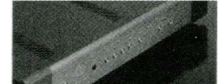
COPLAND CSA 28



KRELL KAV 250CD



KRELL KAV 300i



Total Price for System
£1897

Deposit £397
Balance £1500

18 monthly payments
of **£83.33**

Total charge for credit

0%

Subject to status

SONUS FABER CONCERTINO



Total Price for System
£4649

Deposit £649
Balance £4000

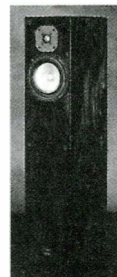
24 monthly payments
of **£166.66**

Total charge for credit

0%

Subject to status

MONITOR AUDIO STUDIO 20SE



Total Price for System
£8494

Deposit £3494
Balance £5000

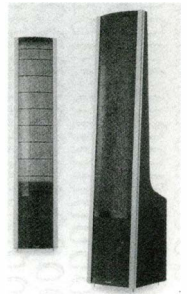
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of **£138.88**

Total charge for credit

0%

Subject to status

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EUROPEAN HOME THEATRE LOUDSPEAKER OF THE YEAR '98-'99

B&W ASW2000



WHAT THE JUDGES SAY

With the latest improvements to its renowned subwoofer designs, B&W demonstrates again its mastery of electro-acoustical engineering. At its price, the ASW2000 can be considered the most evolved, refined and accurate subwoofer available on the European market. Its impressive drive unit and carefully-profiled reflex port are partnered with a true high-end Mosfet power amplifier. With all the controls required to optimise performance in every acoustic environment, the ASW2000 assures fantastic results in both audio and home theatre applications.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

B&W ASW2000

Price: £799.95

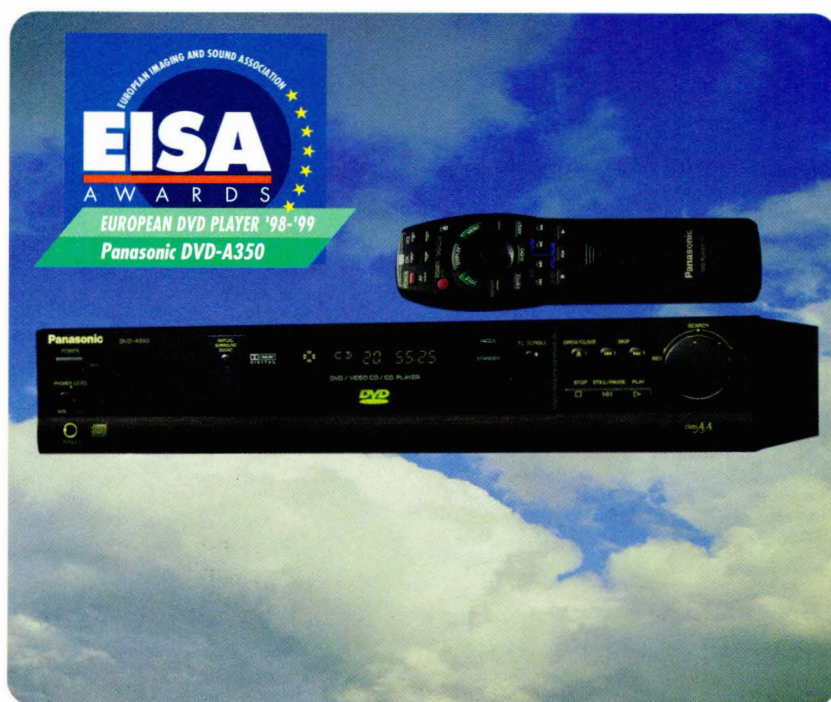
Reviewed: Forthcoming issue of Home Entertainment

Distribution:

B&W Loudspeakers
☎ (01903) 750750

EUROPEAN DVD PLAYER OF THE YEAR '98-'99

Panasonic DVD-A350



WHAT THE JUDGES SAY

The picture quality of the Panasonic DVD-A350 redefines the standards of performance anticipated at this price. Also, it offers excellent sound with both CD and DVD sources, including 24-bit, 96kHz audio discs. It is one of the few players to include a decoder which processes both MPEG and Dolby Digital 5.1 to give a six-channel analogue output. The unit may be connected to any existing TV or video projector, through a variety of sockets. Its remote control and menu system are both easy to understand and simple to use, and the unit itself is very ruggedly built.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Panasonic DVD-A350

Price £699.95

Reviewed: HFC 180

Distribution

Technics/Panasonic
☎ (0990) 357357

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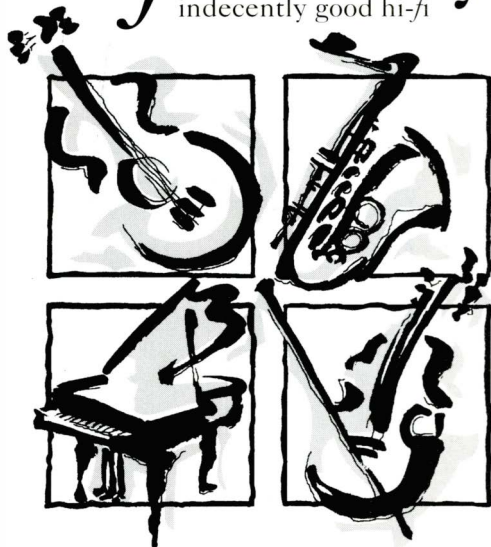
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EUROPEAN VIDEO PROJECTOR OF THE YEAR '98-'99

Philips Fellini 100



WHAT THE JUDGES SAY

Of all the video projectors available today, the compact Philips Fellini 100 is probably the one model most optimised for this demanding task. Key features include high-resolution LCD panels, with Philips' patented 'Limesco' (Line Memory Scan Converter) chips which interpolate any input video signal to the full capacity of the projector. Specially adapted colour correction circuits aim to optimise video reproduction, while the highly efficient UHP lamp develops very high brightness without needing a noisy fan-cooling system.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Philips Fellini 100

Price £4,465

Reviewed: HE 60

Distribution: Philips

Consumer Electronics

☎ (0181) 665 6350

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Stan Vincent supplies a few extra details about this year's EISA winning products.

JVC UX-MD9000R

This JVC is the latest iteration of the UX-1000 which scooped the same award in 1996. It embodies a shrunk-to-fit MD recorder, RDS tuner with presets and alarm function, plus the obligatory CD player. Rated power is 10 Watts per channel RMS into four Ohms, and the miniature long-throw drive-units use edge-wound, four-layer voice coils fashioned from Oxygen-Free Copper (OFC) wire.

TANNOY MERCURY M1

This speaker completes Tannoy's incredibly successful Mercury trio, of which each member is an *HFC* Best Buy. Perhaps its main strength is the ability to flatter a broad range of systems with widely-varying sonic dispositions.

SONUS FABER ELECTA AMATOR II

Luxury for those who appreciate it and can afford it. You can certainly buy bigger speakers for this much money, but you'll be hard pressed to match the craftsmanship on display here. This award comes just as Italian-based Sonus Faber launches the Amati Homeage, the second of its three speaker tributes to the great Italian master violin makers of Cremona. The first, the Guarneri Homeage, was voted European High End Audio of the Year '94-'95.

ARCAM ALPHA 10

Arcam recognises that many hi-fi users crave flexibility and upgradability as much as this week's best sound. The company's products of

recent years have offered more and more by way of upgrade options, but the Alpha 10 caps them all with a sophisticated modular approach extending from hi-fi into home cinema and multi-room.

PIONEER PD-S06

'Hi-Bit Legato Link Conversion S' is the latest version of Pioneer's controversial digital filter system, which aims to enhance low-level signal resolution by requantising 16-bit CD data into 24 bits, and thus, allegedly, put some analogue 'warmth' into CD. Also notable is Pioneer's substitution of its own one-bit DACs for a 20-bit Burr-Brown chip.

JVC KD-MX3000R

Like MiniDisc? Like in-car entertainment? Got lots of CDs as well? Now you don't need to copy your CDs onto MiniDisc to play them in the car; but this unit is equally receptive if you enjoy making up CD compilations on MD, or use MD for business dictation, or even buy prerecorded MDs. A much better bet than using portable CD or MD machines with a car kit.

SONY MDS-JB920

The battle for MiniDisc home recording has reached the middle-price ground, where the new 'sensibly-priced' QS range of separates from Sony includes the MDS-JB920. Feature highlights include a jog dial for quick track access, optical digital socketry for direct dubs from CD, an informative two-line display and sampling rate converter for recording any digital

source. Look out for a full review in our December issue (*HFC* 184).

MISSION X-SPACE

Probably the best pair of computer 'multi-media' speakers we've ever heard — and certainly the slimmest! Powered by a matching active subwoofer module, the two satellite speakers employ a special vibrating panel, rather than conventional drive units with cones, magnets and coils. As a consequence their sound disperses all around the room, bringing a new meaning to surround sound.

YAMAHA DSP-A1

This battleship amplifier is Yamaha's latest statement of serious intent to dominate the high-end home cinema market. It has 620 Watts RMS of built-in amplification, oodles of input and output sockets on its back panel, and Yamaha's proprietary 'DSP' system, which digitally replicates the acoustics of real venues. Plus there's a limited-edition version with wooden end-cheeks and gold-coloured front-panel.

KENWOOD SERIES 21

You can mix'n'match your own Series 21 components from a mind-boggling list of basic options: three tuner-preamps (one with Dolby Digital decoder), two receivers, two power amps, three front loudspeakers, a dedicated dialogue speaker and surround speaker, two surround/dialogue speakers, an active subwoofer. Then choose between a MiniDisc recorder, CD player or multi-changer, single and

twin cassette decks, NTSC-compatible Laser Disc player, turntable, graphic equaliser and bi-directional remote control. Phew!

B&W ASW2000

B&W's Flow Port System, pitted like a golf-ball, aims to ensure free-flowing air and thus cleaner, non-resonant, louder bass. A 12-inch drive-unit utilises a stiff, light die-cast chassis, while the built-in amplifier develops a rated 175 Watts. The ASW2000 stands 500mm high, weighs a hefty 35kg and responds down to 22 Hz (-3 dB). Beat that for woofs.

PHILIPS FELLINI 100

The Fellini 100 is an update of the Proscreen 4500, winner of last year's European HT Projector of the Year award. Fellini claims to be the first video projector with remote-switchable colour options which aim to add impact to video-game displays or compensate for ambient light. Three three-inch LCD elements offer 2.35 million pixels in total; the light source is a UHP lamp, rated at 120 Watts with life expectancy of 4,000 hours. There are composite and S-Video inputs, multistandard TV signal compatibility, and the working range is from 0.23-13.2 metres.

PANASONIC DVD-A350

Coming up to one year's production, and already the 'A350 has been reworked twice as Denon's DVD-3000 and Yamaha's DVD-S700. The first DVD player to include both MPEG2 and Dolby Digital decoders.

Five Stars

Paul Messenger explains why you should visit an independent

Why use a specialist hi-fi dealer? The short answer is because he knows one hell of a lot more about hi-fi than you do. And if you've gone to the trouble of picking up a specialist magazine on the subject, you're obviously interested in something rather more than a mini system from the nearest electrical superstore.

You've probably bought this magazine for one of two reasons. You're looking for advice (presumably unbiased and good) on choosing and using your hi-fi system, and/or you're checking out the ads to decide where to go and buy it.

The independent specialist dealer doesn't know everything, and he doesn't know much about you, but if music's an important part of your life, he's the only guy around who's able (and hopefully willing) to help you choose the equipment which will give you the best long term satisfaction.

Power of the Press

Dealers sometimes moan to me about the power of the press, and the disproportionate influence of its 'Best Buy' and multi-star ratings. Well, I've been in the press for twentysomething years, and still feel more ignorant than powerful.

The more I mess around with hi-fi gear, the more I become aware of our lack of real understanding of the subtleties involved, and the more I appreciate the importance of the dealer's skills and experience, in bringing together components so that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

We hacks get paid to write words, often about components in isolation, because individual product reviews are still the staple diet of the press. They can sometimes provide a useful guide to the way a product performs, but only under the particular circumstances in which the review was conducted.

The hi-fi reviewer attempts, with varying

degrees of success, to evaluate a particular component, and find something interesting (and hopefully positive) to say about it. That's about the end of it, and it's on to the next product.

The magazine prints the review, and that very process magically confers a measure of authority. Experienced hi-fi enthusiasts, who read reviews over a period of years and try out various products themselves, soon start to realise the limitations of that approach. Some reviews are better than others, but none can get to grips with the real heart of the problem - whether a given product will improve your musical satisfaction, in your system and your room.

The Role of the Dealer

The dealer's role is very different, and potentially much more valuable. He has the chance to talk one-on-one. If he's good at his job, he'll use that opportunity to find out what you as an individual are looking (or listening) for.

His motivation is very different too. Sure he wants to make a sale. That's the lifeblood of any shop. But he also knows that if something he sells really does deliver long term satisfaction, there's a very good chance you'll come back again to see if he can repeat the trick some time in the future.

If you go into a shop and demand a particular CD player, on the basis that it got seven stars (out of five) in last month's magazines, the shop will probably simply take the line of least resistance and sell it to you. (Or switch-sell you to a similar price alternative, if he's fresh out of stock

For Value

specialist dealer if you are searching for real hi-fi satisfaction

of that particular flavour-of-the-month.)

If you go in and say you're looking for a CD player, and want his advice on what to choose, things are liable to become more interesting. The onus is now on the dealer to show what he can do. His first task is to ask the right questions to try and get some idea of what you might be after.

Asking the questions is the easy bit. The real skill comes in using the information to come up with a shortlist of likely contenders, and then conducting a demonstration so that you have a real chance to play a central role in the decision making process.

Putting together a successful hi-fi system might not be as difficult as it was twenty or thirty

"If music is an essential ingredient in your daily diet, you owe it to yourself to become a member of the discriminating minority."

years ago, but it's just as easy to make a mess of things. Put the 'wrong' combination of components together and it'll still sound a lot better than any cute little mini system package. It might even rate a five star review. But it won't match the potential of a carefully balanced and properly installed system, and it certainly won't cater for your own particular preferences and personality.

We British are notoriously indiscriminating consumers, at a mass market level at least. The majority of the population don't even bother to drive a car they're thinking of buying, never mind take the trouble to listen to hi-fi equipment.

The majority will therefore end up with hyperstore mediocrity, and hi-fi that's about as tasty as supermarket bread. But if music is an essential ingredient in your daily diet, you owe it to yourself to become a member of the discriminating minority.

You know full well that your music collection is as individual as your wardrobe, and just as

precious too, so it's worth taking the time and trouble to search out the dealer and equipment that will make that collection come alive, and give you a new buzz every time you play your favourite discs.

The independent specialist may not beat the chain store on price, but he continues to thrive in a hostile environment because real hi-fi is so much more than a matter of price. The people who work in these shops are themselves enthusiasts, often with many years of experience in meeting customer's needs, and the very necessary expertise to ensure that the whole thing is properly set up to deliver the best results.

The better the hi-fi, the more important it is to get the fine details right at the installation end of things, but even the least expensive equipment can be made to sound a whole lot better if good care is taken over the fine details - the support furniture, the cabling, the positioning of speakers and so on.

Without expert assistance even high class hi-fi can give mediocre results. With it you'll stand a very good chance of ending up with something rather more than a consumer durable - something which will be a source of considerable pleasure and genuine emotional satisfaction for decades to come.

I agreed to write this signed piece, irrespective of the specific sponsors, because I believe the independent specialist dealer plays a vital role in giving customers long term hi-fi satisfaction.

Paul Messenger

The specialist Dealers listed here are professional and enthusiastic.

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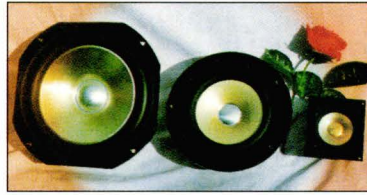
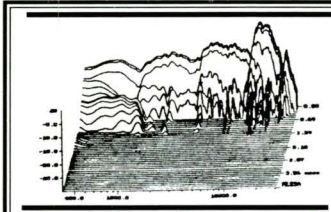
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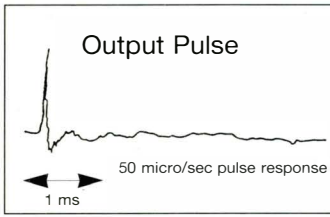
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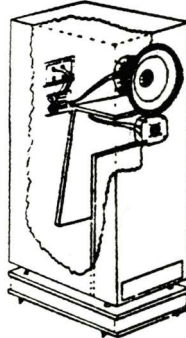
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- Exposure 7/8 £350. Rotel RB980BX 120 WPC £275. Arcam Alpha 8 CD £275. Alphason Xenon VDH arm £180. Warks (01926) 740254.
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- Holfi Xaurus CD player, pre 8 & power 8. Reviewed by Paul Messenger (*HFC* 179), as new. Cost £3,900, sell for £2,500. (01244) 831348, after 6pm.

- Linn Aktiv Kaber system (Kabers, Aktiv crossover cards, 3 x LK100) vgc, £2,500 ono. Scotland (0131) 225 4523.
- Linn LP12/Ittok III/Sumiko Blue Point. Upgraded progressively, ex cond. Boxed. £525. Also, Target TT2 table £30. Hants (01705) 470123.
- Linn Majik integrated amp with phono stage (switchable MM/MC), immaculate condition, with remote, manual and box. £500. Greenwich (0181) 853 2566.
- Mission 752 floorstanding loudspeakers, rosewood, boxed. Excellent condition. £350. Swindon (01793) 882231.
- Mission 753 speakers, rosewood, ex cond, any audition, boxed £425 (£800 new). (01952) 660207.
- Monitor Audio Studio 205E speakers, piano black, absolutely mint condition, unused. (£2,800 new) £1,650 ono. (0421) 507842.
- Musical Fidelity Pre 3 & Power 150 amp £395. Boxed, mint, reason for sale: upgraded. Eastbourne (01323) 768784.
- Myryad MI120, latest spec, boxed, as new £475. Also Cable Talk bi-wire (£180 new), Sound

- Organisation rack (£140 new). Sensible offers invited. Herts/Beds (01582) 467 021.
- Naim NAC72 (with phono board) £475 + NAP140 £425 or both for £850 preferred, due to upgrading Naim system. Mint with boxes. (0171) 594 5815.
- Naim NAP 250 power amplifier. New style. Ex cond. Boxed. £1,000 o.n.o. E. London (0181) 558 6431 after 6pm.
- Nakamichi DR-3 cassette deck, VGC £200. (0181) 363 7889, after 6pm.
- NVA Soundpipes 3 x 0.75m £45ea, 1 x 0.5m £35. Audioquest Ruby 3, 2 x 2m £45ea. Siltech HP6 0.5m £45. Linn mains conditioner (£125) £55. (01772) 314151.
- Pioneer GR-777 graphic equaliser, mint, barely used £180 ono. Pioneer PDM70 6 multiplay CD, mint, excellent. £95 ono. (01527) 65444 (day)/ (01527) 892740 (eves).
- Quad 34 and 405.2, recently serviced, MD module and accessories, immaculate, boxed, booklets. £395 ono. Sevenoaks (01959) 523794.
- Quad 66 preamp and remote, manual and boxed, VGC £420. 20 months old. Sussex (01903) 247779.

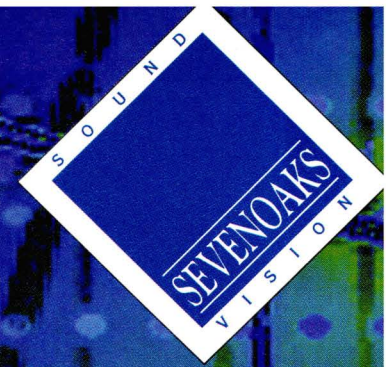
- Quad 77 preamp, power amp, RDS tuner, system control and manuals. Excellent condition, reluctant sale. John (0956) 961451.
- Roksan Caspian amplifier, only two months old, two years' warranty. Comes with remote, superb sound. Very reluctant sale. £540. (0171) 722 3389.
- Roksan Caspian CD player, brand new, boxed and guaranteed, genuine reason for sale. Cost £900, asking £650. London (0181) 488 0987.
- Royd Abbots £300 ono. 120W, 90dB, black ash. John, Worcs (01885) 410517.
- Sony CD players, 337 ESD, superb condition and sound £195 (£500 new). Also CDP 101, The Original, £95 (£490). Kent (01959) 523794.
- Spendor SP1 Classic loudspeakers, matched pair, wonderful sound, perfect including good stands (£1,390 new), will accept £475. Will demonstrate. Kent (01959) 523794.
- Teac VRDS 7 CD player, mint cond, boxed, manuals etc. Superb. £335. Anybody swap my NVA P50 + cash for a P90? Alex (01664) 566362.
- Technics SLP2000 Reference CD player, incredibly detailed sound. Cost new £1,000, mint, boxed. £650. (0115) 946 4047 days/ (0115) 972 4048 eves.
- Yamaha DSP E1000 Pro-Logic add-on processor, 2 pairs of JBL Control Ones, KEF C100 centre speaker, REL Strata 2 active sub-woofer. £1,400 the lot. Andy, Bucks (01908) 666973.

WANTED

- Linn Troika or Arkiv, Quad ESL 57. (0043) 664 49 22 582. stony@aon.at.
- Wharfedale 708 or 507.2 speakers. Cabinets must be good. Michael, 8am-5pm (01480) 431737, after 6pm (01462) 813334.

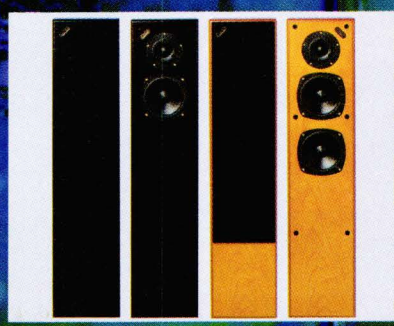
**INTEREST FREE
OPTION AVAILABLE
ASK IN STORE FOR DETAILS**

Exposure & Acoustic Energy



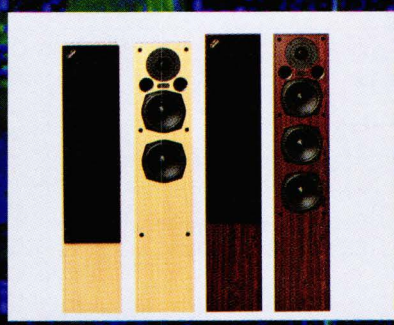
Exposure CD Player
 Since its release, the Exposure CD Player has received universal worldwide acclaim. Now revised, it offers even more for the discerning music lover. Dynamics, soundstaging and superb timing give a sound that is never less than involving. **Audio Heaven!**

Acoustic Energy 500 Series Loudspeakers
 Designed to provide reference performance from elegant, floorstanding cabinets. The 500 Series use Acoustic Energy's innovative metal cone drive units to produce uncompromising sound quality. All 500 Series loudspeakers are mass loaded for reduced coloration.



Exposure 25 Integrated Amplifier
 The Exposure 25 is the latest in a line of integrated amplifiers designed for musical satisfaction. Improved isolation and increased power have made a great amplifier even better. The 25 combines the convenience of remote control operation with unparalleled sound quality.

Acoustic Energy 100 Series Loudspeakers
 The 100 Series provides a versatile range of superbly built loudspeakers from one of the world's most renowned manufacturers. With superb dynamics, scale and authority they represent excellent value. They are compatible with all equipment from budget to esoteric.



THREE YEAR GUARANTEE

At Sevenoaks Hi Fi you will find a wide range of products which combine to offer systems of unbeatable value for money and quality from £500. Every branch boasts dedicated demonstration rooms which enable you to audition these in comfort. Our friendly and experienced staff are happy to assist you through every step of your purchase to ensure total listening satisfaction.

Sevenoaks Hi Fi are one of the UK's largest independent dealers. As a member of BADA we provide a minimum two year guarantee with the majority of products we sell.

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Spread the cost of buying these quality systems with our 0% finance terms. Up to 24 months interest free.

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- BIRMINGHAM** 0121 233 2977 • 12 Queensway Arches, Livery St
- BRIGHTON** 01273 733338 • 55 Preston Street
- BRISTOL** 0117 974 3727 • 92B White Ladies Road, Clifton
- BROMLEY** (NEW) 0181 290 1988 • 39a East Street
- BURY ST EDMUNDS** 01284 753776 • 47 Churchgate Street
- CARDIFF** 01222 472899 • 104-106 Albany Road
- CARLISLE** 01228 590775 • 3 Earls Lane (Next to Bus Depot)
- CHELSEA** 0171 352 9466 • 403 Kings Road, SW10
- CHELTENHAM** 01242 241171 • 24 Pittville Street

- CROYDON** 0181 665 1203 • 373 London Road
- ESSEX** 01376 501733 • 1 The Grove Centre, Witham
- GUILDFORD** 01483 536666 • 73b North Street
- HOLBORN** (NEW) 0171 837 7540 • 144-148 Grays Inn Road
- HULL** (NEW) 01482 587171 • 1 Savile Street
- IPSWICH** (NEW) 01473 286977 • 12-14 Dogs Head Street
- KINGSTON** (LATE THURS) 0181 547 0717 • 43 Fife Road
- LEEDS** 0113 245 2775 • 112 Vicar Lane
- MAIDSTONE** 01622 686366 • 96 Week Street
- NEWCASTLE** 0191 221 2320 • 19 Newgate Street
- NORWICH** 01603 767605 • 29/29A St Giles Street
- OXFORD** 01865 241773 • 41 St Clements

- PETERBOROUGH** (LATE THURS) 01733 897697 • 36 Park Rd
- PRESTON** 01772 825777 • 40-41 Lune Street
- READING** 0118 959 7768 • 3 & 4 Kingswalk
- SHEFFIELD** 0114 255 5861 • Savings Bank, 635 Queens Rd
- SOUTHAMPTON** 01703 337770 • 33 London Road
- SOUTHGATE** (NEW) 0181 886 2777 • 79-81 Chase Side, N14
- SWANSEA** (Opening Soon)
- SWISS COTTAGE NW3** (Opening Soon)
- TUNBRIDGE WELLS** 01892 531543 • 28-30 St Johns Road
- WATFORD** (OPEN SUN) 01923 213533 • 478 St Albans Road
- WORCESTER** 01905 612929 • 2 Reindeer Court

PLEASE NOTE: NOT ALL PRODUCTS AVAILABLE AT ALL BRANCHES. PLEASE TELEPHONE TO VERIFY PRICE AND AVAILABILITY BEFORE TRAVELLING

HOW TO USE THE BUYERS' GUIDE

Best Buys, Recommendations & Editor's Choices

B BEST BUYS: Awarded to group-tested products which display an unbeatable blend of performance and value for money.

R RECOMMENDED: Top performers in group tests: perhaps not the cheapest but possibly more sophisticated than Best Buys.

E EDITOR'S CHOICE: More expensive components which exhibit outstanding engineering, industrial design and sound quality.

Our Three Step Guide to Buying Hi-Fi

The Hi-Fi Choice Price Guide and Directory are extremely simple to use, but contain all the information you need to select and buy the perfect hi-fi system. Here's how it works.

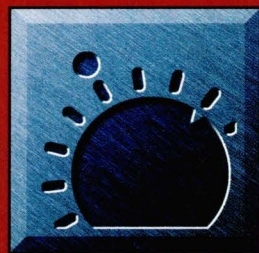
STEP 1 DISCOVER which products fall within your budget by using our Price Guide, which starts on this page. The product listing is updated using manufacturers' data every other month, and aims to include every hi-fi component currently available in the UK. (But please fax us on 0171-917 5512 with any omissions!) It is an alphabetical listing divided into different types of hi-fi component, and also into price bands.

STEP 2 PRODUCTS whose names are printed in **RED** are those we have reviewed, which you can read about in the Directory (starts after the Price Guide). Here you will learn which items have been singled out for our famous Best Buy, Recommended or Editor's Choice awards, denoting products of exceptional quality and value. The Directory is sorted by product type and listed alphabetically, and the beginning of each section provides essential information about each kind of hi-fi component.

STEP 3 FIND your nearest hi-fi store in our Dealer Directory (at the end of the Directory) to book a demonstration of the hi-fi equipment you want to hear. Remember to take your own LPs or CDs!

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AMPLIFIERS INTEGRATED

KEY

Ⓜ - Number of line-level inputs.

'20W' - Rated RMS output power per channel into nominal load of 8 Ohms.

UP TO £250

| | | | |
|----------------------|---|------|-----|
| Akai AM1 100 | Ⓜ | 50W | 230 |
| AMC 3020 | Ⓜ | 20W | 100 |
| AMC 3025A | Ⓜ | 30W | 140 |
| AMC 3050A | Ⓜ | 45W | 170 |
| Ariston AX900 | Ⓜ | 30W | 80 |
| Ariston AX910 | Ⓜ | 30W | 100 |
| Cambridge A1 Mk III | Ⓜ | 30W | 119 |
| Cambridge A3i | Ⓜ | 60W | 200 |
| Denon PMA-250SE | Ⓜ | 30W | 160 |
| Denon PMA-350SE | Ⓜ | 50W | 200 |
| Denon PMA-425R | Ⓜ | 45W | 230 |
| Denon PMA-100M | Ⓜ | 80W | 240 |
| Goodmans Delta 900A | Ⓜ | 100W | 130 |
| H/K HK610 | Ⓜ | 30W | 180 |
| H/K HK620 | Ⓜ | 40W | 250 |
| JVC AX-V4BK | Ⓜ | 30W | 200 |
| JVC AX-A372BK | Ⓜ | 40W | 200 |
| JVC AX-R5BK | Ⓜ | 45W | 200 |
| Kenwood KA-1080 | Ⓜ | 60W | 140 |
| Kenwood KA-3080R | Ⓜ | 70W | 170 |
| Kenwood KA-3020SE | Ⓜ | 50W | 200 |
| Marantz PM-47 | Ⓜ | 40W | 150 |
| Marantz PM-57 | Ⓜ | 50W | 200 |
| Marantz SR-47 | Ⓜ | 40W | 200 |
| Marantz PM-66SE | Ⓜ | 50W | 230 |
| Musical Fidelity E1 | Ⓜ | 30W | 199 |
| NAD 310 | Ⓜ | 20W | 100 |
| NAD 312 | Ⓜ | 25W | 200 |
| Pioneer A-105 | Ⓜ | 30W | 130 |
| Pioneer A-204R | Ⓜ | 25W | 160 |
| Pioneer A-300R | Ⓜ | 50W | 200 |
| Pioneer A-305R | Ⓜ | 50W | 200 |
| Pioneer A-405R | Ⓜ | 45W | 250 |
| Rega Brio | Ⓜ | 30W | 229 |
| Rotel RA921 | Ⓜ | 20W | 100 |
| Rotel RA-931 | Ⓜ | 35W | 150 |
| Rotel RA971 | Ⓜ | 70W | 200 |
| Sansui AUX-410R | Ⓜ | 50W | 150 |
| Sansui AUX-510R | Ⓜ | 70W | 230 |
| Sherwood AX 4050R | Ⓜ | 50W | 150 |
| Sherwood AX-7030R | Ⓜ | 95W | 250 |
| Sony TA-FE210 | Ⓜ | 45W | 130 |
| Sony TA-FE310R | Ⓜ | 45W | 150 |
| Sony TA-F248E | Ⓜ | 40W | 200 |
| Sony TA-F448EB | Ⓜ | 55W | 250 |
| TEAC A-R300 | Ⓜ | 45W | 200 |
| TEAC A-R500 | Ⓜ | 90W | 250 |
| Technics SU-V300 | Ⓜ | 25W | 150 |
| Technics SU-V500 | Ⓜ | 30W | 180 |
| Technics SU-A600 Mk3 | Ⓜ | 37W | 200 |
| Technics SU-V620 | Ⓜ | 70W | 230 |
| Technics SU-A700 Mk3 | Ⓜ | 45W | 250 |
| Yamaha AX-392 | Ⓜ | 60W | 170 |
| Yamaha AX-9 | Ⓜ | 50W | 200 |
| Yamaha AX-492 | Ⓜ | 85W | 220 |

£251 TO £500

| | | | |
|------------------------|---|------|-----|
| Alchemist Maxim | Ⓜ | 30W | 350 |
| AMC CVT 3030A | Ⓜ | 30W | 400 |
| Arcam Alpha 7 | Ⓜ | 40W | 260 |
| Arcam Alpha 8 | Ⓜ | 50W | 360 |
| Arcam Alpha 9 | Ⓜ | 70W | 500 |
| Audio Analogue Puccini | Ⓜ | 40W | 450 |
| Audioagram MB1 | Ⓜ | 40W | 493 |
| Audiolab 8000LX | Ⓜ | 60W | 470 |
| Audiolab 8000A | Ⓜ | 60W | 500 |
| Aura VA-100 II | Ⓜ | 70W | 350 |
| CR Dev CR324 | Ⓜ | 100W | 499 |
| Creek 4330 | Ⓜ | 35W | 279 |
| Creek 4340 | Ⓜ | 35W | 279 |
| Creek 4330R | Ⓜ | 35W | 355 |
| Creek 5250 | Ⓜ | 50W | 450 |
| Cymbal CA1 | Ⓜ | 40W | 499 |
| Denon PMA-725R | Ⓜ | 65W | 350 |
| EMF Audio Sequel | Ⓜ | 50W | 450 |
| H/K HK640 | Ⓜ | 55W | 400 |
| Kenwood KA-5090R | Ⓜ | 65W | 300 |
| Kenwood KA-7090R | Ⓜ | 85W | 400 |
| Magnum IA120 | Ⓜ | 65W | 265 |
| Magnum IA170 | Ⓜ | 96W | 330 |

| | | | |
|--------------------------|---|------|-----|
| Magnum IA170SE | Ⓜ | 90W | 430 |
| Marantz PM-68 | Ⓜ | 90W | 300 |
| Marantz PM-66 KI Sig. | Ⓜ | 50W | 400 |
| Micromega Minium | Ⓜ | 40W | 350 |
| Mission Cyrus SL | Ⓜ | 50W | 398 |
| Monrio Asty | Ⓜ | 55W | 400 |
| Musical Fidelity E11 | Ⓜ | 60W | 300 |
| Musical Fidelity X-A1 | Ⓜ | 50W | 480 |
| Musical Fidelity A2 | Ⓜ | 25W | 500 |
| Myyad T-40 | Ⓜ | 50W | 400 |
| NAD 314 | Ⓜ | 35W | 260 |
| NAD 317 | Ⓜ | 80W | 470 |
| Onkyo A9210 | Ⓜ | 40W | 260 |
| Onkyo A921 | Ⓜ | 70W | 350 |
| Onkyo A922 | Ⓜ | 50W | 400 |
| Orelle SA-100 | Ⓜ | 50W | 499 |
| Pioneer A-400X | Ⓜ | 50W | 300 |
| Pioneer A-605R | Ⓜ | 80W | 400 |
| Pioneer A-300R Precision | Ⓜ | 35W | 400 |
| Rega Luna | Ⓜ | 40W | 375 |
| Rega Mira | Ⓜ | 60W | 450 |
| Shearne 2.5 | Ⓜ | 35W | 489 |
| Sony TA-F3ES | Ⓜ | 70W | 400 |
| Sony TA-F3000ES | Ⓜ | 35W | 500 |
| Talk Electronics Storm 1 | Ⓜ | 50W | 500 |
| TEAC A-H500 | Ⓜ | 50W | 280 |
| Technics SU-A800D Mk2 | Ⓜ | 55W | 300 |
| Technics SU-A900D Mk2 | Ⓜ | 70W | 400 |
| Yamaha AX-592 | Ⓜ | 100W | 280 |

£501 TO £700

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|------|-----|
| Alchemist Kraken APD6A | Ⓜ | 55W | 600 |
| Alchemist Nemesis | Ⓜ | 80W | 700 |
| Audio Analogue Puccini SE | Ⓜ | 50W | 595 |
| Audio Note Kanji Line SE | Ⓜ | 9W | 699 |
| Audio Note First integrated | Ⓜ | 40W | 699 |
| Audioagram MB2 | Ⓜ | 60W | 599 |
| Audiolab 8000S | Ⓜ | 60W | 700 |
| CR Dev Kalypso | Ⓜ | 15W | 599 |
| CR Dev CR325 | Ⓜ | 175W | 699 |
| Creek 5250R | Ⓜ | 50W | 575 |
| Creek 5250SER | Ⓜ | 60W | 665 |
| Densen Beat B-100 MkII | Ⓜ | 60W | 650 |
| DPA Renaissance int. | Ⓜ | 40W | 595 |
| Exposure XX Super | Ⓜ | 55W | 700 |
| Fase Evoluzione Performance 2.0 | Ⓜ | 40W | 570 |
| Gamma Gemini | Ⓜ | 12W | 699 |
| H/K HK660 | Ⓜ | 65W | 700 |
| Hi Q Sound MCI | Ⓜ | 30W | 565 |
| Jolida 202 | Ⓜ | 40W | 695 |
| LFD Integrated 0 | Ⓜ | 50W | 549 |
| Linn Majik (Line) | Ⓜ | 33W | 650 |
| Linnwood Opal | Ⓜ | 80W | 685 |
| Magnum IA200 | Ⓜ | 100W | 599 |
| Magnum Class A | Ⓜ | 85W | 690 |
| Mission Cyrus III | Ⓜ | 50W | 598 |
| Musical Fidelity A220 | Ⓜ | 50W | 700 |
| Myyad MI 120 | Ⓜ | 60W | 600 |
| Naim Nait 3 | Ⓜ | 30W | 575 |
| Orelle SA-100RX | Ⓜ | 75W | 649 |
| Prime Design A-100 | Ⓜ | 100W | 650 |
| Quad 77 Integrated | Ⓜ | 85W | 700 |
| Roksan Caspian | Ⓜ | 70W | 695 |
| Rose Scion | Ⓜ | 65W | 615 |
| Shearne Phase 2 | Ⓜ | 50W | 649 |
| Stemfoot SF60 | Ⓜ | 60W | 549 |
| Talk Electronics Storm 2 | Ⓜ | 50W | 650 |
| TEAC A-BX7R | Ⓜ | 50W | 700 |

£701 TO £1000

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|------|-------|
| Alchemist Forseti Integrated | Ⓜ | 100W | 1,000 |
| Audio Note Oto Line PP | Ⓜ | 12W | 950 |
| AVI S2000MI | Ⓜ | 100W | 999 |
| Copland CSA8 | Ⓜ | 60W | 945 |
| Credeo IMP702 | Ⓜ | 70W | 850 |
| Credeo IMP703 | Ⓜ | 70W | 1,000 |
| Electrocompaniet ECI-2 | Ⓜ | 50W | 995 |
| Exposure XV Super | Ⓜ | 55W | 800 |
| Fase Evoluzione Performance 1.1 | Ⓜ | 70W | 790 |
| Fase Evoluzione Performance 1.0 | Ⓜ | 60W | 790 |
| Golden Tube Audio SI-50 | Ⓜ | 50W | 1,000 |
| H/K HK680 | Ⓜ | 85W | 1,000 |
| LFD 0 LE Integrated | Ⓜ | 60W | 799 |
| Linn Majik (Phono) | Ⓜ | 33W | 800 |
| Magnum Class A SE | Ⓜ | 80W | 795 |
| Marantz PM-17 | Ⓜ | 60W | 900 |
| Meridian 551 | Ⓜ | 55W | 795 |
| Micromega Tempo 1 | Ⓜ | 50W | 750 |
| Micromega Tempo 2 | Ⓜ | 75W | 950 |
| Naim Nait 3 R | Ⓜ | 30W | 760 |
| Opera Aida | Ⓜ | 60W | 795 |
| Pioneer A-07 | Ⓜ | 80W | 999 |
| Primare A20mkII | Ⓜ | 60W | 799 |
| Rega Elicit | Ⓜ | 70W | 730 |
| Shearne Phase 2 Reference | Ⓜ | 50W | 799 |
| Sonnesteer Alabaster | Ⓜ | 50W | 900 |
| Stemfoot SF100 | Ⓜ | 100W | 849 |
| TEAC AB-X10 | Ⓜ | 100W | 1,000 |

£1001 TO £2000

| | | | |
|-------------------------|---|------|-------|
| Art Audio Integra | Ⓜ | 30W | 1,499 |
| ATC SIA2-150 | Ⓜ | 150W | 1,984 |
| Audio Note Soro Line PP | Ⓜ | 20W | 1,200 |
| Audio Note Oto Line SE | Ⓜ | 12W | 1,200 |

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|------|-------|
| Audio Note Oto Phono SE | ⊖ | 12W | 1,500 |
| Audio Note Soru Line SE | ⊖ | 18W | 1,699 |
| Beam-Echo SA-50 | ⊖ | 50W | 1,950 |
| Bow Technologies Wazoo | ⊖ | 50W | 1,795 |
| Bryston B-60 | ⊖ | 60W | 1,249 |
| Copland CSA14 | ⊖ | 70W | 1,199 |
| Copland CSA28 | ⊖ | | 1,299 |
| Copland CTA401 | ⊖ | 25W | 1,699 |
| CR Dev Romulus V3 | ⊖ | 35W | 1,198 |
| CR Dev Remus V3 | ⊖ | 60W | 1,989 |
| Credo LIM 702 | ⊖ | | 1,191 |
| Credo LIM 703 | ⊖ | | 1,249 |
| EAR 834 | ⊖ | 40W | 1,999 |
| Graaf Venticinque | ⊖ | 20W | 1,695 |
| LFD Integrated 1 | ⊖ | 65W | 1,099 |
| Meracur Intrare | ⊖ | 60W | 1,095 |
| Primare A301 | ⊖ | 80W | 1,699 |
| Rogers E-20a | ⊖ | 20W | 1,229 |
| Rogers E-40a | ⊖ | 40W | 1,900 |
| Sonic Frontiers Anthem Integrated | ⊖ | 25W | 1,299 |
| T+A PA1200 | ⊖ | 90W | 1,350 |
| T+A R1200R | ⊖ | 90W | 1,495 |
| T+A PA1500 | ⊖ | 135W | 1,650 |
| T+A R1500R | ⊖ | 135W | 1,895 |
| Unison Simply Two | ⊖ | 12W | 1,100 |
| Unison Simply Four P | ⊖ | 24W | 1,600 |
| Unison Pentode 35 | ⊖ | 35W | 1,650 |
| Unison Simply Four T | ⊖ | 11W | 1,650 |
| Woodside ISA230 Line | ⊖ | 30W | 1,099 |
| Woodside ISA230 Disc | ⊖ | 30W | 1,249 |
| YBA Integré DT | ⊖ | | 1,650 |

OVER £2000

| | | | |
|----------------------------|---|------|--------|
| Adyton Opera | ⊖ | 50W | 2,595 |
| Audio Note Meishu Line | ⊖ | 9W | 2,750 |
| Audio Note Ongaku | ⊖ | 26W | 56,000 |
| Audio Research CA50 | ⊖ | | 3,990 |
| Cary CAD-300SEI | ⊖ | 11W | 3,995 |
| Conrad-Johnson CAV-50 | ⊖ | 50W | 2,495 |
| EAR V20 | ⊖ | 24W | 2,495 |
| EAR 859 | ⊖ | 13W | 2,499 |
| Electrocompaniet ECI-1 | ⊖ | 100W | 2,195 |
| Gamma Rhythm | ⊖ | 18W | 2,499 |
| Gamma Rhythm Ref | ⊖ | 20W | 3,499 |
| Gamma Moment | ⊖ | 40W | 19,999 |
| Jadis DA30 | ⊖ | 30W | 3,490 |
| Jadis DA60 | ⊖ | 60W | 5,750 |
| Krell KAV300i | ⊖ | 150W | 2,550 |
| McIntosh MA6400E | ⊖ | 100W | 3,999 |
| McIntosh MA6800E | ⊖ | 150W | 5,999 |
| Meracur Onesta | ⊖ | 75W | 2,595 |
| Musical Fidelity A1001 | ⊖ | 200W | 2,500 |
| Pioneer A-09 | ⊖ | 45W | 4,000 |
| Rowland Conentra | ⊖ | 100W | 5,500 |
| Tube Tech Unisis Sig. Int. | ⊖ | 30W | 2,300 |
| Tube Tech Synergy PPS | ⊖ | 150W | 6,900 |
| Unison Simply 845 | ⊖ | 24W | 3,195 |
| Unison Performance One | ⊖ | 25W | 4,500 |
| Unison 845 Absolute | ⊖ | 40W | 11,995 |

PREAMPS

KEY
 ⊖ (etc) - Number of line-level inputs.
 Ph - Phono input fitted as standard
 (may be an option on some other models).
UP TO £500

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|----|-----|
| Art Audio Minuet | | | 499 |
| Audio Analogue Bellini | ⊖ | Ph | 475 |
| Audio Note The M | | | 350 |
| Beam-Echo PP-21 | | Ph | 499 |
| Bryston BP1 | ⊖ | Ph | 438 |
| Carver CT-24 | ⊖ | Ph | 499 |
| CR Dev Themis | | Ph | 349 |
| Creek P43 | ⊖ | | 399 |
| Creek P52 | ⊖ | | 499 |
| Crimson CS610C | ⊖ | Ph | 450 |
| EAR 834P | ⊖ | Ph | 349 |
| EAR 834L | ⊖ | Ph | 449 |
| Electrocompaniet ECP-1 | ⊖ | Ph | 495 |
| Fase Evoluzione Phonodrive 1.0 | | Ph | 445 |
| Henley HMC50 | | | 200 |
| Henley HMC100 | | | 450 |
| Hi Q Sound LCP2 | | | 149 |
| LFD Mistral Linstage | ⊖ | | 449 |
| LFD ISO Linstage | ⊖ | | 499 |
| Lumley PP70 | ⊖ | | 345 |
| Lumley PP1 | ⊖ | | 345 |
| Magnum MP120 | ⊖ | | 330 |
| Magnum MP660 | ⊖ | | 500 |
| Magnum MP330 | ⊖ | | 500 |
| Monrio ADN-N | | Ph | 295 |
| Monrio Asty L | ⊖ | | 500 |
| Moith 30 Passive | ⊖ | | 149 |
| Moith 30 RIAA | | Ph | 249 |
| Moith 30 Active | ⊖ | | 349 |
| Musical Fidelity X10-D | ⊖ | | 120 |
| Musical Fidelity X-1P | ⊖ | Ph | 130 |
| Musical Fidelity X-PR | ⊖ | | 200 |
| Musical Fidelity E20 | ⊖ | Ph | 400 |
| NAD 114 | ⊖ | Ph | 270 |
| NAD 116 | ⊖ | Ph | 430 |
| Naim Prefix | ⊖ | Ph | 350 |

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|------------------------------|---|----|-----|
| Naim NAC92 | ⊖ | | 470 |
| Parasound P/HP-100 | ⊖ | Ph | 130 |
| Parasound P/HP-850 | ⊖ | Ph | 400 |
| Rega EOS | ⊖ | Ph | 398 |
| Rega Cursa | ⊖ | Ph | 450 |
| Roksan Artaxerxes 10 | ⊖ | Ph | 395 |
| Rose RV-23 | ⊖ | Ph | 450 |
| Rotel RQ970BX | ⊖ | Ph | 130 |
| Rotel RC971 | ⊖ | | 150 |
| Rotel RC972 | ⊖ | | 225 |
| Talk Electronics Hurricane 1 | ⊖ | | 500 |
| Technics SU-C1000 Mk2 | ⊖ | Ph | 300 |
| Trilogy 905 | ⊖ | Ph | 375 |
| Trilogy 904 | ⊖ | Ph | 375 |
| Trilogy 900 | ⊖ | Ph | 499 |
| Unison Simply Phono | ⊖ | Ph | 500 |

£501 TO £2000

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|----|-------|
| Adyton Chorus | | | 1,995 |
| Alchemist Kraken Pre | ⊖ | | 550 |
| Alchemist Forseti Pre | ⊖ | | 950 |
| Art Audio Headline | ⊖ | | 700 |
| Art Audio VPL | ⊖ | | 741 |
| Art Audio Conductor Phono | ⊖ | | 750 |
| Art Audio VP1 | ⊖ | | 952 |
| Art Audio Conductor | ⊖ | | 1,250 |
| Art Audio Conductor Export | ⊖ | | 2,000 |
| Audio Note M1 Line | | Ph | 550 |
| Audio Note M1 RIAA | | Ph | 999 |
| Audio Note M2 Line | | Ph | 999 |
| Audio Note Discovery | | Ph | 1,099 |
| Audio Note M2RIAA | | Ph | 1,750 |
| Audio Research LS7 | ⊖ | | 1,997 |
| Audio Research LS3 | ⊖ | | 595 |
| Audio Synthesis Pro Passion | ⊖ | | 695 |
| Audio Synthesis Passion | ⊖ | | 1,295 |
| Audio Synthesis Passion 8S | ⊖ | | 1,695 |
| Audio Synthesis Passion 8M | ⊖ | | 580 |
| Audiolab 8000C | ⊖ | Ph | 1,000 |
| Audiolab 8000PPA | ⊖ | Ph | 1,250 |
| Audiolab 8000Q | ⊖ | Ph | 700 |
| Aura CA-200 | ⊖ | | 949 |
| AVI S2000MP | ⊖ | | 1,199 |
| AVI S2000MP+P | ⊖ | Ph | 1,116 |
| Beam-Echo SP-21 | ⊖ | Ph | 642 |
| Bryston 4 | ⊖ | Ph | 889 |
| Bryston BP5 | ⊖ | | 1,126 |
| Bryston BP20 | ⊖ | | 1,326 |
| Bryston BP-25 | ⊖ | | 995 |
| Cary SLP-50 | ⊖ | | 1,795 |
| Cary SLP-74 | ⊖ | | 1,795 |
| Cary PH-301 | ⊖ | Ph | 1,774 |
| Chord CPA 1800 | ⊖ | | 900 |
| Concordant Exhilarant | ⊖ | | 1,950 |
| Concordant Exquisite | ⊖ | | 995 |
| Conrad-Johnson PV-10AL | ⊖ | Ph | 1,295 |
| Conrad-Johnson PV-12AL | ⊖ | Ph | 1,990 |
| Conrad-Johnson EF-1 | ⊖ | Ph | 1,990 |
| Conrad-Johnson PF-2 | ⊖ | Ph | 1,990 |
| Copland CSA303 | ⊖ | Ph | 1,199 |
| Copland CTA301 MkII | ⊖ | Ph | 1,399 |
| CR Dev Carmenta | ⊖ | | 659 |
| CR Dev Argento | ⊖ | Ph | 699 |
| Credo CMP004 | ⊖ | | 1,246 |
| Credo CMP005 | ⊖ | | 1,876 |
| Densen DM-20 | ⊖ | | 1,200 |
| DNM 3 Start | ⊖ | Ph | 1,000 |
| DNM 3A Start | ⊖ | Ph | 1,650 |
| DPA Enlightenment pre | ⊖ | | 795 |
| DPA DSP500S | ⊖ | | 2,000 |
| Dynavector L200 | ⊖ | Ph | 1,195 |
| Dynavector P100 | ⊖ | Ph | 1,495 |
| Dynavector L100 | ⊖ | Ph | 1,995 |
| Earmax Pre | ⊖ | | 1,895 |
| ECA Vista S | ⊖ | | 760 |
| ECA Vista HD | ⊖ | | 880 |
| ECA Prisma | ⊖ | Ph | 880 |
| Electrocompaniet EC-4.5 | ⊖ | | 1,195 |
| Electrocompaniet EC-4R | ⊖ | | 1,495 |
| Electrocompaniet EC-4.6 | ⊖ | | 1,750 |
| Exposure XIX | ⊖ | | 800 |
| Exposure XVII | ⊖ | Ph | 850 |
| Fase Evoluzione Controlsource 2.0 | ⊖ | Ph | 625 |
| Fase Evoluzione Controlsource 1.0 | ⊖ | Ph | 1,395 |
| Golden Tube Audio SEP-1 | ⊖ | | 990 |
| Graaf WFB Two | ⊖ | Ph | 1,195 |
| Graaf WFB One | ⊖ | Ph | 1,725 |
| Henley HMC200 | ⊖ | | 750 |
| Heybrook Signature II Pre | ⊖ | | 555 |
| Hi Q Sound MCB2 | ⊖ | Ph | 545 |
| Hi Q Sound MCL2 | ⊖ | Ph | 645 |
| Jadis DPL2 | ⊖ | | 1,790 |
| LFD MC1 PhonoStage | ⊖ | Ph | 949 |
| LFD LS1 Linstage | ⊖ | Ph | 999 |
| LFD MC2 PhonoStage | ⊖ | Ph | 1,499 |
| LFD LS2 Linstage | ⊖ | | 1,599 |
| LFD LSB Linstage | ⊖ | | 1,999 |
| Linn Wakonda | ⊖ | | 950 |
| Linn Linto | ⊖ | | 850 |
| Linn Kairn | ⊖ | | 1,400 |
| Lumley LV1.5 | ⊖ | | 895 |
| Lumley LV1 | ⊖ | | 1,150 |
| Lumley PV1.5 | ⊖ | Ph | 1,700 |
| Lumley PV1 | ⊖ | Ph | 1,700 |
| Matisse Atom | ⊖ | Ph | 1,000 |

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|-------------------------------|---|----|-------|
| McIntosh C712 | ⊖ | Ph | 1,999 |
| Meracur Ingredi | ⊖ | | 925 |
| Meridian 501 | ⊖ | | 695 |
| Meridian 562 | ⊖ | | 765 |
| Meridian 562V | ⊖ | | 995 |
| Meridian 502 | ⊖ | | 1,295 |
| Michell Argo | ⊖ | | 750 |
| Michi RHC-10 | ⊖ | | 795 |
| Michi RHQ-10 | ⊖ | Ph | 1,150 |
| Michi RHA-10 | ⊖ | Ph | 1,150 |
| Micromega Tempo P | ⊖ | | 1,250 |
| Mission Cyrus Pre | ⊖ | Ph | 648 |
| Monrio Pluri-L II | ⊖ | Ph | 900 |
| Muse Model 3 | ⊖ | | 1,990 |
| Musical Fidelity F25 | ⊖ | Ph | 1,500 |
| NAD 118 | ⊖ | | 1,000 |
| Naim NAC92R | ⊖ | | 650 |
| Naim NAC72 | ⊖ | | 725 |
| Naim NAC102 | ⊖ | | 1,050 |
| Quad 77 Pre | ⊖ | Ph | 850 |
| Rega Hal | ⊖ | Ph | 998 |
| Roksan ROK-L2.5 | ⊖ | | 1,250 |
| Rose RV-235 | ⊖ | Ph | 525 |
| Rotel RC995 | ⊖ | | 525 |
| Shearpe Phase 6 Pre | ⊖ | | 899 |
| Shearpe Phase 1 Pre Ref | ⊖ | | 1,399 |
| Sieml MC20 | ⊖ | Ph | 650 |
| Sieml MM20 | ⊖ | Ph | 650 |
| Sieml TU10 | ⊖ | | 1,599 |
| Sieml TR20 | ⊖ | | 1,599 |
| Sonic Frontiers Anthem Pre 1P | ⊖ | Ph | 899 |
| Sonic Frontiers Phono 1 | ⊖ | Ph | 1,999 |
| Sonographe SC26 | ⊖ | | 995 |
| Sumo Athena II Line | ⊖ | | 767 |
| Sumo Athena IIB/II LS | ⊖ | | 987 |
| Sumo Athena III | ⊖ | | 987 |
| Sumo Artemis-UP | ⊖ | | 1,595 |
| T+A P1200R | ⊖ | | 890 |
| Talk Electronics Hurricane 2 | ⊖ | | 650 |
| Talk Electronics Hurricane 3 | ⊖ | | 900 |
| Talk Electronics Hurricane 4 | ⊖ | | 1,550 |
| Talk Electronics Hurricane 5 | ⊖ | | 1,900 |
| Technics SU-C2000 | ⊖ | Ph | 700 |
| Tesseract TAADA | ⊖ | | 1,500 |
| Tesseract TALA | ⊖ | | 1,500 |
| Tesseract TAHA | ⊖ | | 1,800 |
| Thorens TTP-2000F | ⊖ | Ph | 699 |
| Trilogy 901 | ⊖ | | 750 |
| Trilogy 906 | ⊖ | Ph | 995 |
| Trilogy 902 | ⊖ | | 1,595 |
| Tron Retro | ⊖ | | 1,000 |
| Tron Nucleus Phono | ⊖ | Ph | 2,000 |
| Tron Nucleus | ⊖ | | 2,000 |
| Tube Tech Seer Line | ⊖ | | 935 |
| Tube Tech Mac Phono | ⊖ | Ph | 1,150 |
| Tube Tech Prophet | ⊖ | | 1,970 |
| Unison Feather One | ⊖ | | 795 |
| Unison Mystery Two | ⊖ | | 1,750 |
| Unison Mystery One | ⊖ | | 1,750 |
| Unison VPP One | ⊖ | Ph | 1,995 |
| Van Den Hul Pre-amp | ⊖ | | 1,700 |
| Wilson Benesch Stage One | ⊖ | Ph | 995 |
| Woodside SC27 Line | ⊖ | | 949 |
| Woodside SC26 Line | ⊖ | | 1,557 |
| XTC PRE-1 | ⊖ | | 1,250 |
| Yamaha CX-2 | ⊖ | Ph | 650 |
| YBA 3 | ⊖ | | 1,199 |
| YBA Integré | ⊖ | | 1,199 |
| YBA 2 | ⊖ | | 1,999 |

OVER £2000

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|-----------------------------|---|----|--------|
| Adyton Temper | ⊖ | | 2,495 |
| Adyton Modus | ⊖ | | 2,695 |
| Alchemist The Alchemist pre | ⊖ | | 4,995 |
| ATC SCA2 | ⊖ | | 2,499 |
| Audio Note M3Line | ⊖ | | 2,650 |
| Audio Research LS15 | ⊖ | | 3,399 |
| Audio Research LS22 | ⊖ | | 4,391 |
| Audio Research L55 MkIII | ⊖ | | 6,435 |
| Audio Research REF 1 | ⊖ | | 9,900 |
| Boulder L5AE | ⊖ | | 2,100 |
| Boulder L5AE | ⊖ | | 3,400 |
| Boulder L5M | ⊖ | | 3,800 |
| Boulder 2010 | ⊖ | | 19,995 |
| Cary SLP-98L | ⊖ | | 2,595 |
| Chord CPA 2200 | ⊖ | | 2,355 |
| Chord CPA 2800 | ⊖ | Ph | 3,246 |
| Chord CPA 3200 | ⊖ | Ph | 3,320 |
| Chord CPA 4000 | ⊖ | | 6,210 |
| Conrad-Johnson PF-R | ⊖ | | 2,490 |
| Conrad-Johnson PV-12A | ⊖ | Ph | 2,590 |
| Conrad-Johnson Premier 15 | ⊖ | Ph | 3,995 |
| Conrad-Johnson Premier 14 | ⊖ | Ph | 4,495 |
| Conrad-Johnson Art | ⊖ | | 14,995 |
| CAT SL1 Sig. Mk3 | ⊖ | Ph | 6,500 |
| CR Dev Kastor | ⊖ | | 2,995 |
| Credo LPR 001 | ⊖ | | 2,815 |
| DNM 3C Primus | ⊖ | Ph | 3,500 |
| DNM 3C Twin | ⊖ | Ph | 2,850 |
| DNM 3C Six | ⊖ | Ph | 5,050 |
| EAR 802MC | ⊖ | Ph | 2,599 |
| EAR G88 | ⊖ | Ph | 9,999 |
| EAR P52 | ⊖ | Ph | 15,999 |
| Gamma Era Ref | ⊖ | Ph | 7,999 |
| Graaf GM15.5B | ⊖ | | 3,750 |
| Jadis DP60L | ⊖ | | 2,800 |

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|--------------|---|----|--------|
| Jadis DPL | ⊖ | | 3,190 |
| Jadis DPMC | ⊖ | Ph | 3,190 |
| Jadis JPL | ⊖ | | 4,720 |
| Jadis JPP200 | ⊖ | | 4,998 |
| Jadis JP30MC | ⊖ | Ph | 5,978 |
| Jadis JPS2 | ⊖ | | 7,900 |
| Jadis JP80MC | ⊖ | Ph | 11,989 |
| Krell KRC3 | ⊖ | | 3,25 |



HI-FI HELP

Send your hi-fi woes by post, e-mail or fax, and let those in the know remedy your ills. Turn to page 33

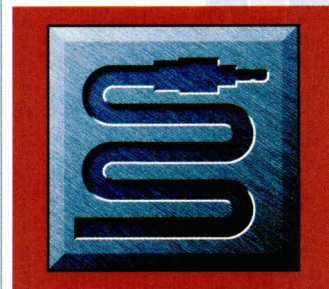
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|---------------------------------|------|-------|
| Carver A-500X | 250W | 949 |
| Carver A-760X | 380W | 1,299 |
| Chord SPM 400 | 100W | 1,325 |
| Chord SPM 600 | 130W | 1,720 |
| Conrad-Johnson MV-55 | 50W | 1,995 |
| Copland CTA501 | 30W | 1,750 |
| CR Dev Amphion | 12W | 1,949 |
| Crede PMP 804 | | 1,876 |
| Creek A52SE | 80W | 599 |
| Crimson CS630C | 100W | 800 |
| Densen DM-30 | 100W | 1,200 |
| DNM PA Start | 45W | 1,000 |
| DNM PA1 Start | 45W | 1,650 |
| DPA Enlightenment pwr | 100W | 995 |
| Earmax Power | 25W | 1,895 |
| ECA Lectern S | 50W | 880 |
| ECA Lectern HD | 50W | 1,480 |
| Electrocompaniet AW60B | 60W | 1,095 |
| Exposure XVIII Super | 70W | 850 |
| Fase Evoluzione Powersource 2.0 | 65W | 860 |
| Fase Evoluzione Powersource 1.0 | 100W | 1,670 |
| Golden Tube Audio SE-40 | 40W | 1,100 |
| Golden Tube Audio SE-300B MkII | 8W | 1,490 |
| Golden Tube Audio SE-100 | 1995 | 1,995 |
| Graaf Venticinque P | 25W | 1,395 |
| Heybrook Signature II Pwr | 120W | 1,045 |
| Hi Q Sound MCM | 70W | 715 |
| Jadis DA5 | 40W | 1,997 |
| Lexicon 212 | 120W | 1,850 |
| LFD PA1 Powerstage | 60W | 999 |
| LFD PA2 Powerstage | 75W | 1,599 |
| LFD PA2M Powerstage | 90W | 1,999 |
| Linn LK100 | 50W | 650 |
| Linn LK240 | 120W | 750 |
| Linn AV5105 | 100W | 1,200 |
| Lynwood Ruby | 120W | 985 |
| Magnum MF350 | 150W | 685 |
| Magnum MF660 | 125W | 825 |
| Magnum A500SE | 200W | 1,485 |
| Magnum A505E | 200W | 1,595 |
| McIntosh MC7100 | 100W | 1,999 |
| Meracus Ciere | 60W | 1,095 |
| Mendian 555 | 60W | 750 |
| Meridian 556 | 100W | 895 |
| Mendian 557 | 200W | 1,400 |
| Meridian 505 | 160W | 1,590 |
| Michell Alecto Stereo | 50W | 1,150 |
| Michell Alecto Mono | 100W | 1,989 |
| Michi RHB-05 | 100W | 1,100 |
| Michi RHB-10 | 200W | 2,000 |
| Micromega Amp | 100W | 1,250 |
| Monrio Asty P | 100W | 950 |
| Monrio Cento | 135W | 1,495 |
| Monrio HP-1 | 135W | 1,750 |
| Moth 60 Stereo | 60W | 599 |
| Moth 30 Mono/100 | 100W | 879 |
| Muse Model 100 | 100W | 1,490 |
| Musical Fidelity X-A200 | 200W | 1,000 |
| NAD 218THX | 200W | 850 |
| Naim NAP140 | 45W | 750 |
| Naim NAP180 | 60W | 1,060 |
| Naim NAP135 | 75W | 1,655 |
| Naim NAP250 | 70W | 1,655 |
| Papworth TVA50 | 50W | 1,425 |
| Parasound HCA-1000A | 125W | 600 |
| Parasound HCA-1500A | 205W | 1,000 |
| Prime Design P-150 | 150W | 650 |
| Quad 77 Power | 85W | 600 |
| Quad 707 | 140W | 800 |
| Rega EXS | 70W | 598 |
| Rega Exon | 125W | 1,196 |
| Roksan Caspian | 70W | 595 |
| Roksan ROK-S1.5 | 100W | 1,495 |
| Rose RP-190 (Dual Mode) | 75W | 550 |
| Shearman Phase 3 | 50W | 619 |
| Shearman Phase 3 Reference | 50W | 729 |
| Shearman Phase 5 Mono | 100W | 1,500 |
| Sonic Frontiers Anthem Amp 1 | 40W | 1,299 |
| Sonographe SA250 | 125W | 1,195 |
| Sonographe SA400 | 220W | 1,695 |
| Sumo Polaris III | 164W | 950 |
| Sumo Model Five | 60W | 1,975 |
| Sumo Andromeda III | 240W | 1,975 |
| T+A A1200 | 110W | 845 |
| T+A A1500 | 140W | 1,495 |
| Talk Electronics Tornado 2 | 65W | 600 |
| Talk Electronics Tornado 3 | 100W | 750 |
| Talk Electronics Tornado 4 | 110W | 1,100 |
| Technics SE-A2000 | 100W | 1,100 |
| Thorens TTA-2000 | 30W | 599 |

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|---------------------------|------|-------|
| Trilogy 948 | 50W | 1,895 |
| Trilogy 948T | 22W | 1,895 |
| Tube Tech Syrinx | 45W | 1,150 |
| Tube Tech Unisis Sig. Pwr | 30W | 1,900 |
| Unison Power 35 | 35W | 1,500 |
| Woodside SA240 | 40W | 1,199 |
| Woodside MA100 | 100W | 1,733 |
| Woodside STA50 | 50W | 1,880 |
| XTC POW-2 | 150W | 1,450 |
| Yamaha MX-2 | 150W | 750 |
| YBA 3 stereo | | 1,299 |

OVER £2000

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|-------------------------------|-------|--------|
| Adyton Cordis 1.6 | 120W | 3,495 |
| Adyton Cordis 3B | 280W | 12,995 |
| Alchemist The Alchemist pwr | 220W | 3,995 |
| Alchemist The Alchemist mono | 55W | 3,995 |
| Art Audio Tempo | 30W | 2,499 |
| Art Audio Quintet SE | -W | 2,500 |
| Art Audio Maestro | 100W | 3,524 |
| ATC SPA2-200PRO | 200W | 2,056 |
| ATC SPA2-150 | 200W | 2,500 |
| Audio Note P3 | 9W | 2,150 |
| Audio Note Quest | 9W | 2,750 |
| Audio Note Yubi | 18W | 3,850 |
| Audio Note Conquest | 18W | 4,450 |
| Audio Note Tomei | 30W | 8,500 |
| Audio Note Neiro | 7W | 11,360 |
| Audio Note Ankoru | 60W | 14,500 |
| Audio Research D130 | 130W | 2,299 |
| Audio Research VT60 | 35W | 2,395 |
| Audio Research D300 | 300W | 4,678 |
| Audio Research VT100 | 100W | 4,995 |
| Audio Research D400 MkII | 400W | 6,850 |
| Audio Research VT130 SE | 130W | 8,500 |
| Audio Research VT150 SE | 150W | 17,000 |
| Audio Synthesis Desire Decade | 200W | 2,495 |
| Beam-Echo DL7-35 | 30W | 3,525 |
| Border Patrol 300B SE | 10W | 3,495 |
| Boulder 102AE | 100W | 2,800 |
| Boulder 102M | 100W | 3,100 |
| Boulder 500AE | 100W | 4,995 |
| Boulder 500M | 150W | 5,500 |
| Boulder 2060 | 600W | 19,000 |
| Boulder 2050 | 999W | 35,000 |
| Bryston THX8B | 150W | 2,385 |
| Cary CAD-572SE | 20W | 2,495 |
| Cary CAD-300SE | 12W | 3,995 |
| Cary 300SE Sig | 12W | 4,795 |
| Cary CAD-805 | 50W | 8,995 |
| Chord SPM 800 | 160W | 2,265 |
| Chord SPM 1000B | 200W | 2,785 |
| Chord SPM 1200B | 250W | 3,525 |
| Chord SPM 1200C | 315W | 3,915 |
| Chord SPM 1600 | 200W | 4,718 |
| Chord SPM 1400B mono | 380W | 7,830 |
| Chord SPM 5000 | 415W | 13,544 |
| Conrad-Johnson MF-2300A | 250W | 2,990 |
| Conrad-Johnson Premier 11A | 70W | 3,500 |
| Conrad-Johnson Premier 12 | 140W | 6,900 |
| Conrad-Johnson Premier 8XS | 150W | 17,000 |
| Conrad-Johnson Premier 8A | 275W | 17,000 |
| CAT JLI | 100W | 18,000 |
| Copland CTA505 | 67W | 2,099 |
| CR Dev Artemis | 4995 | 4,995 |
| Crede LPO 804 | 2,456 | 2,456 |
| Crede PMP 155 | 2,676 | 2,676 |
| Crede LPO 455 | 4,975 | 4,975 |
| Crede LPO 155 | 6,983 | 6,983 |
| DNM PA3 | 2,500 | 2,500 |
| DNM PA3S | 3,750 | 3,750 |
| DPA DAP5005 | 250W | 3,000 |
| Dynavector HX75 | 75W | 2,195 |
| Dynavector HX1.2 | 150W | 3,995 |
| EAR 861 | 32W | 3,299 |
| EAR 509 Mk II | 100W | 3,699 |
| EAR 519 | 100W | 4,699 |
| EAR 549 | 200W | 6,499 |
| Electrocompaniet AW100DMB | 100W | 2,095 |
| Electrocompaniet AW120DMB | 120W | 2,695 |
| Electrocompaniet AW250DMB | 250W | 3,995 |
| Electrocompaniet AW180MB | 180W | 4,595 |
| Exposure IV | 80W | 2,199 |
| Exposure XVI | 125W | 4,000 |
| Gamma Aeon | 20W | 4,999 |
| Gamma Space Ref | 18W | 7,999 |
| Gamma Aeon Ref | 70W | 49,999 |
| Graaf 5050 | 2,100 | 2,100 |
| Graaf GM20 | 60W | 2,750 |
| Graaf GM100 | 100W | 4,250 |
| Graaf GM200 | 200W | 7,500 |
| Jadis DA8 | 80W | 3,333 |
| Jadis DA7 | 100W | 5,290 |
| Jadis JA50 | 30W | 5,980 |
| Jadis JA500B | 9,000 | 9,000 |
| Jadis JA80 | 9,912 | 9,912 |
| Jadis JA200 | 160W | 15,518 |
| Jadis JA500 | 400W | 21,500 |
| Krell KAV500/2 | 100W | 3,485 |
| Krell FPB200 | 200W | 6,490 |
| Krell FPB300 | 300W | 9,500 |
| Krell FPB600 | 600W | 12,900 |
| Krell KAS2 | 200W | 20,000 |
| Lexicon 225 | 250W | 2,500 |
| Lexicon 501 | 500W | 5,000 |
| Linn Klout | 80W | 2,400 |

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|----------------------------|-------|--------|
| Lumley M125 | 120W | 3,750 |
| Lumley M250 | 250W | 7,500 |
| Magnum Class A mono | 180W | 2,450 |
| Magnum A200SE | 275W | 3,750 |
| Mark Levinson 331 | 100W | 4,495 |
| Mark Levinson 332 | 200W | 6,495 |
| Mark Levinson 333 | 300W | 8,495 |
| Mark Levinson 33H | 150W | 19,395 |
| Matisse Ref Monoblocks | 180W | 8,000 |
| McIntosh MC150 | 150W | 3,499 |
| McIntosh MC300 | 300W | 3,999 |
| McIntosh MC500 | 500W | 8,999 |
| McIntosh MC1000 | 999W | 14,999 |
| Meracus Tentare | 75W | 2,245 |
| Meracus Cantare | -W | 8,995 |
| Muse Model 160 Ser. II | 160W | 2,290 |
| Muse Model 150 | 125W | 2,629 |
| Muse Model 175 Ser. II | 175W | 3,490 |
| Muse Model 300 Ser. II | 300W | 3,990 |
| Musical Fidelity F16 | 200W | 2,500 |
| Musical Fidelity F19 | 300W | 4,000 |
| Papworth M100 | 100W | 2,645 |
| Papworth M200 | 200W | 3,825 |
| Roksan ROK-M1.5 | 160W | 2,250 |
| Rowland Model 2 | 75W | 4,999 |
| Rowland Model 6 | 150W | 10,999 |
| Rowland Model 8T | 250W | 12,499 |
| Rowland Model 9T | 350W | 27,999 |
| Shearman Phase 1 Pwr Ref | 2,199 | 2,199 |
| Siemal TA20 | 2,350 | 2,350 |
| Sonic Frontiers Power 1 | 55W | 2,499 |
| Sonic Frontiers Power 2 | 110W | 4,999 |
| Sonic Frontiers Power 3 | 220W | 8,599 |
| Sumo Model TeryM | 240W | 4,200 |
| Sunfire Sunfire | 300W | 2,170 |
| T+A A3000 | 190W | 3,000 |
| Talk Electronics Tornado 5 | 200W | 2,100 |
| Tesseract TAMP-60 | 60W | 7,350 |
| Trilogy 958T | 45W | 3,395 |
| Trilogy 958 | 100W | 3,395 |
| Tube Tech Genesis Sig. | 100W | 4,700 |
| Tube Tech Synergy DMA | 150W | 6,400 |
| Unison Smart 845 | 24W | 3,500 |
| Unison Smart 300B | 24W | 4,250 |
| Unison Palladio | 32W | 11,995 |
| Van Den Hul Power amp | 65W | 2,500 |
| XTC POW-1 | 200W | 2,250 |
| YBA 2 stereo | | 2,200 |
| YBA 1 HC stereo | | 4,999 |



CABLES Analogue Interconnects

KEY

- Stranded construction.
- Solid-core construction.

Prices of interconnects are for a one-metre terminated pair.

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------|
| Apertura Model B | 260.00 |
| Apertura Model A | 469.00 |
| Art Yam Church 5000 | 515.00 |
| Audio Note AN-A | 18.00 |
| Audio Note AN-C | 35.00 |
| Audio Note AN-S | 99.00 |
| Audio Note AN-V | 179.00 |
| Audio Note AN-Vx | 450.00 |
| Audioquest Jade | 30.00 |
| Audioquest Turquoise 2 | 40.00 |
| Audioquest Topaz 2 | 59.95 |
| Audioquest Ruby 2 | 80.00 |
| Audioquest Quartz | 125.00 |
| Audioquest Opal | 200.00 |
| Audioquest Emerald | 260.00 |
| Audioquest Lapis | 399.00 |
| Audioquest Diamond | 549.00 |
| Cable Talk Improved 2/CD | 26.00 |
| Cable Talk Advanced 2 | 34.95 |
| Cable Talk Improved 2/Tape | 47.00 |
| Cable Talk Monitor 2.1 | 50.00 |
| Cable Talk Studio 2 | 65.00 |
| Cable Talk Professional 2 | 85.00 |
| Cable Talk Broadcast 2 | 100.00 |
| Cable Talk Reference 2 | 150.00 |
| Cable Talk Signature 2 Gold | 300.00 |
| Cambridge Atlantic | 10.00 |
| Cambridge Arctic | 20.00 |
| Cambridge Pacific | 30.00 |
| Cambridge Studio Reference | 40.00 |
| Cambridge Silver Spirit 40 | 70.00 |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| Cambridge Silver Spirit 60 | 100.00 |
| Cardas Audio 300B-Microtwin | 115.00 |
| Cardas Audio Quadlink-Five | 200.00 |
| Cardas Audio Cardas Cross | 360.00 |
| Cardas Audio Hexlink-Five C | 530.00 |
| Cardas Audio Hexlink Golden-5 C | 600.00 |
| Cardas Audio Golden Cross | 700.00 |
| ChordCo Chrysalis | 33.00 |
| ChordCo Cobra 2 | 50.00 |
| ChordCo Siren | 65.00 |
| ChordCo Chameleon | 85.00 |
| ChordCo Solid | 99.00 |
| ChordCo Chorus | 185.00 |
| Connections UK Ultra | 28.00 |
| Connections UK Midas | 39.00 |
| Connections UK HD | 46.00 |
| DBF Acoustics Black Velvet | 30.00 |
| DBF Acoustics Black Velvet SE | 40.00 |
| DBF Acoustics Azure SE | 75.00 |
| DNM-Reson TCC75 | 34.00 |
| DPA Slink | 41.00 |
| DPA White Slink | 75.00 |
| DPA Black Slink | 245.00 |
| Expressive Tech IC-1 | 700.00 |
| Gamma Wow Balance | 799.00 |
| Goertz M1 Interconnect | 145.00 |
| GT Audio Intercon | 130.00 |
| Henley HSP10 | 20.00 |
| Henley HSP50 | 35.00 |
| Henley HSP100 | 65.00 |
| Henley HSP200 | 95.00 |
| Heybrook Black Flash | 49.95 |
| Insert Audio Focus 1.2 | 21.50 |
| Insert Audio IC100 Mk II | 46.35 |
| Insert Audio Status 3.4 | 160.00 |
| Ixos 104 | 20.00 |
| Ixos 1003 | 30.00 |
| Ixos Gamma 1002 | 39.95 |
| Ixos 103 | 45.00 |
| Ixos 102 | 60.00 |
| Ixos 101 | 100.00 |
| Ixos 100.X03 | 150.00 |
| Kimber PBJ | 68.00 |
| Kimber KC1 | 96.00 |
| Kimber Hero | 110.00 |
| Kimber Silver Streak | 180.00 |
| Kimber KCAG | 390.00 |
| Kimber KCTG | 720.00 |
| Kronos Konnekt 3 | 49.00 |
| Kronos Konnekt 2 | 99.00 |
| Kronos Konnekt 1 | 199.00 |
| LAT International IC-50 | 37.00 |
| LAT International IC-80 | 60.00 |
| LAT International IC-100-D | 89.00 |
| LAT International IC-200 Mk II | 151.00 |
| Lieder Chanson | 340.00 |
| Lieder Lek | 420.00 |
| Lieder Het Lied | 420.00 |
| Lieder Song | 580.00 |
| Lieder Maas | 620.00 |
| Lieder Rijn | 1,000.00 |
| Lieder Waal | 1,400.00 |
| Lumley Silver 12/2 | 115.00 |
| Lumley Silver 14/4 | 175.00 |
| Moth Leyline Black | 100.00 |
| Moth Leyline Grey | 200.00 |
| Nordost Magic | 35.00 |
| Nordost Black Knight | 60.00 |
| Nordost Blue Angel | 98.00 |
| Nordost Blue Heaven J/C | 144.95 |
| Nordost Red Dawn | 285.00 |
| Nordost SPM | 825.00 |
| Ortofon 7N interconnect | 250.00 |
| Precious Metals Silver Signal 35 | 40.00 |
| Precious Metals Silver Signal 50 | 50.00 |
| Precious Metals Silver Signal 52 | 70.00 |
| Precious Metals Silver Signal 53 | 90.00 |
| Precious Metals Silver Signal 100 | 100.00 |
| Precious Metals Silver Signal 102 | 130.00 |
| Precious Metals Silver Signal 103 | 160.00 |
| Precious Metals Silver Signal 104 | 190.00 |
| Precious Metals Silver Signal 200 | 220.00 |
| Precious Metals Silver Signal 202 | 290.00 |
| Precious Metals Silver Signal 203 | 360.00 |
| Precious Metals Silver Signal 204 | 430.00 |
| Prowire Silver | 60.00 |
| PAD Elementa | 145.00 |
| QED Qnet 2 | 30.00 |
| QED Qnet 4 | 60.00 |
| Roksan ROK-Intercon | 75.00 |
| Shinpy Red Devil | 80.00 |
| Shinpy Red Star 2 | 120.00 |
| Shinpy Black Star 2 | 240.00 |
| Shinpy Pulsar 2 | 495.00 |

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|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Sonic Link Silver Pink | 35.00 |
| Sonic Link Black | 49.00 |
| Sonic Link White | 65.00 |
| Sonic Link Brown | 70.00 |
| Sonic Link Violet | 85.00 |
| Sonic Link Maroon | 125.00 |
| Sonic Link Blue Nickel | 150.00 |
| Sonic Link Vermilion | 195.00 |
| Sonic Link Red Earth | 300.00 |
| Sonic Link Black earth | 450.00 |
| Sonic Link Blue earth | 695.00 |
| Sonic Link Black Rhodium | 995.00 |
| Straightwire Chorus | 40.00 |
| Supra DAC-X | 60.00 |
| Supra EFF-ISL | 80.00 |
| Supra EFF-XLR | 90.00 |
| Transparent Cable Musichord Int | 48.00 |
| Transparent Cable The Link | 92.00 |
| Transparent Cable Music Link | 119.00 |
| Trichord Pulsewire 75 | 169.00 |
| Vampire Wire CC | 24.00 |
| Vampire Wire CCC/II | 58.00 |
| Vampire Wire SC/II | 98.00 |
| Vampire Wire SC/IV | 144.00 |
| Vampire Wire AI/2 | 259.00 |
| Vampire Wire SL | 412.00 |
| Van Den Hul Storm | 25.00 |
| Van Den Hul Source HB | 50.00 |
| Van Den Hul D102 III | 69.99 |
| Van Den Hul Thunderline HB | 130.00 |
| Van Den Hul First | 210.00 |
| Van Den Hul Second | 240.00 |
| Van Den Hul MC Gold | 400.00 |
| Van Den Hul MC Silver IT | 1,240.00 |
| Van Den Hul MC Silver IT Bal | 1,560.00 |
| Wireworld Orbit | 30.00 |
| Wireworld Solstice II | 40.00 |
| XLO Type 150 | 50.00 |
| XLO Type 0.1 | 180.00 |

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|-------------------------|--------|
| Sonic Link Green | 60.00 |
| Supra EFF-ID | 45.00 |
| Supra DAC-XLR | 45.00 |
| Transparent Cable PDL | 199.00 |
| Trichord Pulsewire 75D | 75.00 |
| Trichord Pulsewire 110D | 145.00 |
| Vampire Wire DI/1 | 150.00 |
| Van Den Hul Source HB | 30.00 |
| Van Den Hul Videolink | 60.00 |
| Van Den Hul AES-EBU 110 | 65.00 |
| Van Den Hul First | 125.00 |
| Van Den Hul Second | 130.00 |



Speaker Cables

KEY
 ● - Stranded construction.
 ○ - Solid-core construction.
 Price per mono metre, unterminated.

| | |
|---------------------------------|--------|
| Acoustic Energy AESC-C3 | 11.95 |
| Apertura Silver | 82.50 |
| Art Yam Church M2000 | 470.00 |
| Art Yam Church 5000 | 795.00 |
| Audio Note AN-D | 4.50 |
| Audio Note AN-B | 16.50 |
| Audio Note AN-L | 29.50 |
| Audio Note AN-SP | 150.00 |
| Audio Note AN-SPx | 450.00 |
| Audioquest Type 2 | 3.50 |
| Audioquest F-18 | 3.60 |
| Audioquest Type 6+ | 9.00 |
| Audioquest Indigo + | 15.00 |
| Audioquest Crystal + | 25.00 |
| Audioquest Forest | 75.00 |
| Audioquest Argent + | 125.00 |
| Audioquest Clear 3 | 200.00 |
| Bandridge LC7409 | 4.00 |
| Bandridge LC4110 | 28.00 |
| Bandridge LC3410 | 40.00 |
| Bandridge LC3210 | 75.00 |
| Bandridge LC3219 | 75.00 |
| Bandridge LC3220 | 90.00 |
| Bandridge LC3310 | 95.00 |
| Bandridge LC3240 | 125.00 |
| Cable Talk Theatre 2 | 1.50 |
| Cable Talk The Flat One | 2.00 |
| Cable Talk Talk 3.1 | 2.25 |
| Cable Talk Overture 2.1 | 3.25 |
| Cable Talk Talk 4.1 | 4.25 |
| Cable Talk Talk 3.1 Biwire | 4.50 |
| Cable Talk Concert 2.1 | 7.00 |
| Cable Talk Talk 4.1 Biwire | 8.50 |
| Cable Talk Symphony 3 | 12.50 |
| Cable Talk Concert 2.1 Biwire | 14.00 |
| Cardas Audio 300B-Microtwin SC | 35.00 |
| Cardas Audio Quadlink-Five SC | 59.00 |
| Cardas Audio Cross SC | 99.00 |
| Cardas Audio Hexlink-Five SC | 109.00 |
| Cardas Audio Hexlink Golden5 SC | 175.00 |
| Cardas Audio Golden Cross SC | 789.00 |
| ChordCo Myth | 6.00 |
| ChordCo Legend | 15.00 |
| DNM-Reson LSC | 6.95 |
| DNM-Reson LSCB | 11.95 |
| DPA Black Sixteen | 100.00 |
| Electrocompaniet EC-K2 | 30.00 |
| Gale XL105 | 1.00 |
| Gale XL189 | 1.00 |
| Gale XL315 | 2.00 |
| Gale XL160-2 | 2.50 |
| Gale XL315-2 | 3.99 |
| Gamma Wonder Line | 99.00 |
| Goertz M1 | 16.00 |
| Goertz M2 | 32.00 |
| Goertz Big Boy | 64.00 |
| GT Audio Speaker | 50.00 |
| Ixos 607 | 2.00 |
| Ixos 6004 | 3.00 |
| Ixos 6003 | 3.00 |
| Ixos 605 | 3.00 |
| Kimber 4PR | 3.90 |
| Kimber 4VS | 9.00 |
| Kimber 4TC | 19.60 |
| Kimber 8TC | 32.70 |
| Kimber 4AG | 394.00 |
| Kimber 8AG | 656.00 |
| LAT International SS 800 | 21.00 |
| LAT International BIWIRE | 27.00 |
| LAT International SS 1000 | 42.50 |
| Lieder Pad | 340.00 |

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|-----------------------------------|----------|
| Lieder Bel Canto | 450.00 |
| Lieder Spoor | 580.00 |
| Lieder Straat | 1,000.00 |
| Lieder Weg | 1,400.00 |
| Linn K20 | 4.00 |
| Linn K400 | 10.00 |
| Linn K600 | 15.00 |
| Lumley Silver 12/2 | 35.00 |
| Lumley Silver 14/4 | 40.00 |
| Mission Duet | 1.90 |
| Mission Quartet bi-wire | 3.90 |
| Naim NACA 5 | 5.50 |
| Nordost Octava | 3.00 |
| Nordost 4-Flat | 12.00 |
| Nordost Blue Heaven Spkr | 55.00 |
| Nordost Red Dawn | 110.00 |
| Nordost SPM | 325.00 |
| Ortofon SPK100 | 3.00 |
| Ortofon SPK200 | 5.00 |
| Ortofon SPK300 | 8.00 |
| Precious Metals Silver L'r 32 | 7.50 |
| Precious Metals Silver L'r 102 | 10.00 |
| Precious Metals Silver L'r 34 | 15.00 |
| Precious Metals Silver L'r 104 | 20.00 |
| Precious Metals Silver L'r 106 | 30.00 |
| Precious Metals Silver L'r 108 | 40.00 |
| Puresonic OFC 7892 | 1.20 |
| Puresonic OFC 7844 | 1.65 |
| Puresonic OFC 7845 | 1.95 |
| Puresonic OFC 7891 | 2.85 |
| Puresonic OFC 7816 | 3.75 |
| Puresonic OFC 7832 | 3.75 |
| Puresonic OFC 7812 | 3.75 |
| Puresonic OFC 7825 | 6.95 |
| Puresonic PSOCC 7801 | 9.50 |
| Puresonic PSOCC 7802 | 18.00 |
| Puresonic PSOCC 7803 | 27.00 |
| QED Qudos Micro | 1.25 |
| QED Qudos micro 4 core | 2.00 |
| QED Qudos 4 core | 4.00 |
| QED Qudos Bi-Wire | 4.50 |
| QED Qudos Silver | 4.95 |
| QED Profile 4x4 | 9.00 |
| QED Profile Silver 12 | 15.00 |
| Rega REGA | 2.00 |
| Roksan ROK-Speaker | 6.00 |
| Shinpy Red Devil | 30.00 |
| Shinpy Red Star 2 | 39.00 |
| Shinpy Black Star 2 | 62.00 |
| Shinpy Pulsar 2 | 104.00 |
| Shinpy Quasar 2 | 208.00 |
| Siltech LS2-45 | 109.00 |
| Siltech FT-12 Mkl | 240.00 |
| Siltech LS4-120 | 549.00 |
| Silver Sounds 12 Gauge | 15.00 |
| Silver Sounds 10 Gauge | 35.00 |
| Silver Sounds 8 Gauge | 75.00 |
| Silver Tone Silver-Sonic | 10.00 |
| Silver Tone Silver-Sonic HC | 15.00 |
| Silver Tone Silver-Voice | 55.00 |
| Silver Tone Silver-Voice Ultra | 85.00 |
| Sonic Link AST50 | 1.95 |
| Sonic Link AST75 | 2.75 |
| Sonic Link AST200 | 5.95 |
| Sonic Link AST200x2 | 10.00 |
| Sonic Link S500 | 18.00 |
| Sonic Link S130x2 | 20.00 |
| Sonic Link S300x2 | 35.00 |
| Sonic Link S900 | 50.00 |
| Sonic Link S600x2 | 70.00 |
| Sonic Link RE3.1 | 90.00 |
| Sonic Link RE3.4 | 330.00 |
| Supra Classic 2.5 | 2.49 |
| Supra Linc 2.5 Flex | 3.49 |
| Supra Classic 4.0 | 3.95 |
| Supra Ply 2.0 | 4.95 |
| Supra Linc 4.0 Flex | 4.95 |
| Supra Ply 3.4 | 6.95 |
| Supra Quattro 4x4 | 8.95 |
| Supra Classic 10 | 9.95 |
| Tech + Link SPC 79 | 1.20 |
| Transparent Cable Musichord Spkr | 11.00 |
| Transparent Cable The Wave | 23.00 |
| Transparent Cable Music Wave Spkr | 25.00 |
| Vampire Wire SC-384 | 11.00 |
| Vampire Wire SC-554 | 15.00 |
| Vampire Wire ST-I | 30.00 |
| Vampire Wire SC-1108 | 30.00 |
| Vampire Wire ST-II | 48.00 |
| Vampire Wire ST-III | 73.00 |
| Van Den Hul Skyline HB | 3.50 |
| Van Den Hul Snowline | 5.00 |
| Van Den Hul Skytrack HB | 5.50 |
| Van Den Hul Clearwater | 7.00 |
| Van Den Hul Snowtrack | 10.00 |
| Van Den Hul CS122 HB | 12.00 |
| Van Den Hul Cleartrack | 13.00 |
| Van Den Hul D352 HB | 20.00 |
| Van Den Hul Teatrac HB | 22.00 |
| Van Den Hul SCS12 | 34.00 |
| Van Den Hul Magnum HB | 38.00 |
| Van Den Hul The Wind HB | 40.00 |
| Van Den Hul Revolution HB | 76.00 |
| Van Den Hul Revelation HB | 120.00 |
| Van Den Hul The Third | 900.00 |
| XLO Pro 625 | 4.00 |
| XLO Pro 600 | 16.60 |



CARTRIDGES

KEY
 MM - Moving-magnet type.
 MC - Moving-coil type.
 UP TO £100

| | | |
|---------------------------|----|-------|
| Audio Note IO1 | MM | 99 |
| Audio Technica AT-91 | MM | 15 |
| Audio Technica AT-95E | MM | 20 |
| Audio Technica AT-110E | MM | 28 |
| Audio Technica AT450E | MM | 70 |
| Audio Technica AT440ML | MM | 90 |
| Benz-Micro MC20EII | MC | 70 |
| Denon DL110 | MC | 70 |
| Denon DL160 | MC | 90 |
| Denon DL103 | MC | 100 |
| Goldring Elan | MM | 19 |
| Goldring Elektra | MM | 29 |
| Goldring 1006 | MM | 59 |
| Goldring 1012GX | MM | 79 |
| Goldring 1022GX | MM | 99 |
| Grado ZTE+1 | MM | 27 |
| Grado ZCE+1 | MM | 37 |
| Grado ZF3E+1 | MM | 48 |
| Grado Prestige Black | MM | 49 |
| Grado Prestige Green | MM | 59 |
| Grado Prestige Blue | MM | 69 |
| Grado ZF1+ | MM | 83 |
| Grado Prestige Red | MM | 99 |
| N'ham Tracer I | MM | 98 |
| Ortofon VMS2 | MM | 15 |
| Ortofon OM 5E | MM | 20 |
| Ortofon OM 10 | MM | 30 |
| Ortofon 510 | MM | 40 |
| Ortofon OM DJ | MM | 50 |
| Ortofon OM 20 | MM | 70 |
| Ortofon 520 | MM | 70 |
| Ortofon MC1 Turbo | MC | 75 |
| Ortofon Concorde DJ | MM | 80 |
| Ortofon OM 30 | MM | 90 |
| Ortofon 530 | MM | 100 |
| Pickering TE-15 | MM | 20 |
| Pickering VE-15 | MM | 25 |
| Pickering T-E | MM | 25 |
| Pickering V15-DJ | MM | 28 |
| Pickering TL-E | MM | 35 |
| Pickering TL-2E | MM | 45 |
| Pickering XV15-625E | MM | 50 |
| Pickering XV15-150-DJ | MM | 50 |
| Pickering TL-2-S | MM | 55 |
| Pickering XV15-7575 | MM | 60 |
| Pickering XV15-625DJ | MM | 60 |
| Pickering XV15-1800S | MM | 70 |
| Pickering TL35 | MM | 80 |
| Pickering XEV-3001E | MM | 95 |
| Pickering XLZ-3500 | MM | 100 |
| Pickering TL-4-S | MM | 100 |
| Rega Bias | MM | 39 |
| Rega RB78 | MM | 39 |
| Rega Super Bias | MM | 59 |
| Rega Elys | MM | 85 |
| Shure M708X | MM | 21 |
| Shure M92E | MM | 22 |
| Shure SC35C | MM | 29 |
| Shure M447X | MM | 35 |
| Shure M44GX | MM | 35 |
| Stanton 500AL II | MM | 35 |
| Stanton 500EL | MM | 44 |
| Stanton 680AL/X | MM | 59 |
| Stanton 680EL/X | MM | 74 |
| Sumiko Oyster | MM | 30 |
| Sumiko Black Pearl | MM | 50 |
| Sumiko Pearl | MM | 70 |
| Sumiko Blue Point | MC | 100 |
| OVER £100 | | |
| Audio Note IO2 | MM | 139 |
| Audio Note Soara | MC | 795 |
| Audio Note IO1V | MC | 1,095 |
| Audio Note IO1Ld | MC | 4,500 |
| Audio Technica AT-OC9 | MC | 350 |
| Benz-Micro The Glider | MC | 650 |
| Benz-Micro M090 | MC | 700 |
| Benz-Micro L040 | MC | 700 |
| Benz-Micro H200 | MC | 700 |
| Benz-Micro Reference | MC | 1,100 |
| Benz-Micro Reference Ruby | MC | 1,500 |
| Benz-Micro Ruby Open Air | MC | 1,600 |
| Clearaudio Aurum-Alpha | MM | 135 |



CABLES Digital Interconnects

KEY
 ● - Stranded construction.
 ○ - Solid-core construction.
 Prices of interconnects are for a one-metre terminated pair.

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------|
| Apertura Model B | 139.00 |
| Apertura Model A | 255.00 |
| Apogee Digital Wyde Eye | 20.00 |
| Apogee Digital Wyde Eye Bal. | 30.00 |
| Art Yam Church 5000 | 275.00 |
| Audioquest Digital/video 1 | 30.00 |
| Audioquest Digital/video 2 | 60.00 |
| Audioquest Optlink X | 90.00 |
| Audioquest Digital Pro | 100.00 |
| Audioquest Optlink Pro | 149.00 |
| Audioquest Optlink Z | 179.00 |
| Cable Talk Digital 2 | 78.00 |
| Cardas Audio Lightning | 190.00 |
| ChordCo Codac | 36.00 |
| ChordCo Prodac | 50.00 |
| DNM-Reson DIG100 | 26.00 |
| DPA Opti-link | 20.00 |
| DPA Digi-link | 28.00 |
| Insert Audio Dataline 500 | 24.95 |
| Insert Audio Optic 2.1 | 29.95 |
| Insert Audio Dataline 700 | 39.95 |
| Insert Audio Image 5.1 | 44.95 |
| Ixos 105 | 25.00 |
| Ixos 106 | 30.00 |
| Kimber Opti-link | 50.00 |
| Kimber Illuminati DV-30 | 70.00 |
| Kimber Illuminati D-60 | 325.00 |
| Kimber Illuminati DX-50 | 350.00 |
| Kimber Illuminati Orchid | 750.00 |
| LAT International DI-20-D | 79.00 |
| Moth Levine Datalink | 140.00 |
| Nordost Moonglo | 155.00 |
| Precious Metals Silver Dig 35 | 20.00 |
| Precious Metals Silver Dig 100 | 50.00 |
| Precious Metals Silver Dig 200 | 110.00 |
| Precious Metals Silver Dig 202 | 145.00 |
| QED DigiFlex | 20.00 |
| QED OptiFlex | 25.00 |
| Roksan ROK-Intercon | 45.00 |
| Shinpy Digital | 265.00 |
| Siltech HF-6 | 145.00 |

WRITE TO US!

Have we made your blood boil, or your heart sing? Get it off your chest and we'll get in print. Check out readers' letters, p22

| | | |
|--------------------------------|----|-------|
| Clearaudio Aurum-Beta | MM | 195 |
| Clearaudio Aurum-Beta/S | MM | 265 |
| Clearaudio Gamma-S | MC | 745 |
| Clearaudio Signature | MC | 1,495 |
| Clearaudio Accurate | MC | 2,500 |
| Clearaudio Insider | MC | 4,900 |
| Denon DL304 | MC | 200 |
| Dynavector 10X4II | MC | 189 |
| Dynavector 23RS | MC | 375 |
| Dynavector 17D2 | MC | 450 |
| Dynavector XX-1L | MC | 998 |
| Dynavector XX-1 | MC | 998 |
| Dynavector Te-Kaitora | MC | 1,698 |
| Golding Eroica LX | MC | 110 |
| Golding Eroica | MC | 110 |
| Golding 1042 | MM | 120 |
| Golding Elite | MC | 220 |
| Golding Excel VX | MC | 525 |
| Grado Prestige Silver | MM | 119 |
| Grado Prestige Gold | MM | 149 |
| Grado Signature Junior | MM | 150 |
| Grado Signature 8M2 | MM | 250 |
| Grado Signature MCZ | MM | 375 |
| Grado Signature TLZ | MM | 650 |
| Grado Signature XTZ | MM | 975 |
| Grado Reference | MM | 995 |
| Koetsu Red T | MC | 1,550 |
| Koetsu Red K Sig | MC | 1,998 |
| Koetsu Urushi | MC | 2,297 |
| Koetsu Signature | MC | 3,218 |
| Koetsu Gold PR | MC | 5,498 |
| Linn K9 | MM | 125 |
| Linn Klyde | MC | 500 |
| Linn Arkiv | MC | 1,000 |
| London Decca Maroon | MM | 299 |
| London Decca Gold | MM | 319 |
| London Decca Maroon Dp | MM | 379 |
| London Decca Gold Dp | MM | 399 |
| London Decca S Gold | MM | 439 |
| London Decca S Gold Dp | MM | 519 |
| London Decca Jubilee | MM | 599 |
| Lyra Lydan | MC | 649 |
| Lyra Clavis Da Capo | MC | 995 |
| Lyra Parnassus DCT | MC | 1,895 |
| N'ham Tracer II | MM | 310 |
| N'ham Tracer III | MM | 410 |
| N'ham Tracer IV | MM | 660 |
| Ortofon MC15 Super II | MC | 140 |
| Ortofon 540 | MM | 140 |
| Ortofon MC3 Turbo | MC | 150 |
| Ortofon MC25E | MC | 200 |
| Ortofon MC25FL | MC | 250 |
| Ortofon MC10 Supreme | MC | 300 |
| Ortofon MC20 Supreme | MC | 450 |
| Ortofon MC30 Supreme | MC | 550 |
| Ortofon MC200II | MC | 800 |
| Ortofon MC Rohmann | MC | 1,000 |
| Ortofon MC5000 II | MC | 1,200 |
| Ortofon MC7500 | MC | 2,000 |
| Pickering TL-3003 | MM | 145 |
| Pickering XLZ-4500 | MM | 150 |
| Pickering TL-4004 | MM | 175 |
| Pickering XSV-5000U | MM | 200 |
| Pickering XLZ-7500 | MM | 200 |
| Pickering TLZ-7500-S | MM | 200 |
| Reson Mica | MM | 185 |
| Reson Recca | MM | 250 |
| Reson Aciore | MC | 299 |
| Reson Etile | MC | 455 |
| Reson Lexe | MC | 1,300 |
| Roksan Corus Black | MM | 130 |
| Roksan Shiraz | MC | 970 |
| Shure V15XMR | MM | 295 |
| Stanton 890AL/X | MM | 120 |
| Sumiko BPS | MC | 1,000 |
| Transfiguration Spirit | MC | 2,500 |
| Transfiguration Temper | MC | 1,950 |
| Van Den Hul MM-1 | MM | 250 |
| Van Den Hul MM-2 | MM | 300 |
| Van Den Hul DDT-II | MC | 600 |
| Van Den Hul MC-10 | MC | 750 |
| Van Den Hul MC-One | MC | 900 |
| Van Den Hul MC-One Super | MC | 1,050 |
| Van Den Hul MC-Two | MC | 1,200 |
| Van Den Hul The Frog Low o/p | MC | 1,500 |
| Van Den Hul Grasshopper IIISLA | MC | 2,000 |
| Van Den Hul Grasshopper IIIGLN | MC | 2,800 |

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|--------------------------------|----|-------|
| Van Den Hul Grasshopper IIIGLA | MC | 2,800 |
| Van Den Hul Grasshopper IIICMN | MC | 2,800 |
| Van Den Hul Grasshopper IIICHN | MC | 3,000 |
| Van Den Hul Grasshopper IVGLA | MC | 3,000 |
| Wilson Benesch Matrix | MC | 786 |
| Wilson Benesch Carbon | MC | 1,573 |
| Wilson Benesch Analog | MC | 1,850 |



CASSETTE DECKS

KEY

↔ - Autoreverse - no need to remove and turn around the tape.
 3-H - 3 heads, i.e. separate record and replay heads.

UP TO £200

| | | |
|--------------------|---|-----|
| Aiwa AD-F460 | ↔ | 120 |
| Aiwa AD-S750 | ↔ | 200 |
| Akai DXW1100 | ↔ | 200 |
| Akai DX1200 | ↔ | 200 |
| Ariston WX-510 | ↔ | 80 |
| Denon DRM-550 | ↔ | 160 |
| Denon DRW-580 | ↔ | 200 |
| Denon DRS-640 | ↔ | 200 |
| Goodmans Delta 801 | ↔ | 130 |
| JVC TD-X372BK | ↔ | 170 |
| JVC TD-R472BK | ↔ | 200 |
| Kenwood KX-W4080 | ↔ | 160 |
| Kenwood KX-3080 | ↔ | 160 |
| Kenwood KX-W6080 | ↔ | 200 |
| Kenwood KX-5080S | ↔ | 200 |
| Marantz SD-455 | ↔ | 169 |
| Marantz SD-57 | ↔ | 199 |
| Onkyo K 185 | ↔ | 200 |
| Pioneer CT-S250 | ↔ | 150 |
| Pioneer CT-W205R | ↔ | 160 |
| Pioneer CT-W505R | ↔ | 180 |
| Pioneer CT-S450S | ↔ | 200 |
| Pioneer CT-W606DR | ↔ | 200 |
| Sony TC-KE200 | ↔ | 120 |
| Sony TC-WE405 | ↔ | 150 |
| Sony TC-KE400S | ↔ | 180 |
| Sony TC-WE505 | ↔ | 180 |
| TEAC W-416 | ↔ | 100 |
| TEAC V-610 | ↔ | 100 |
| TEAC W-780R | ↔ | 170 |
| TEAC R-560 | ↔ | 180 |
| TEAC R-H500 | ↔ | 200 |
| Technics RS-BX501 | ↔ | 170 |
| Technics RS-TR373 | ↔ | 180 |
| Technics RS-TR474 | ↔ | 200 |
| Technics RS-A26 | ↔ | 200 |
| Yamaha KX-393 | ↔ | 130 |
| Yamaha KX-W321 | ↔ | 170 |
| Yamaha KX-493 | ↔ | 180 |

OVER £200

| | | |
|----------------------------|---|-------|
| Aiwa AD-F850 | ↔ | 230 |
| Aiwa AD-WX929 | ↔ | 230 |
| Carver TDR-1550 | ↔ | 629 |
| Denon DRM-650S | ↔ | 230 |
| Denon DRM-740 | ↔ | 270 |
| Denon DRS-810 | ↔ | 310 |
| H/K TD420 | ↔ | 250 |
| H/K TD450 | ↔ | 350 |
| JVC TD-V662BK | ↔ | 270 |
| JVC TD-W718BK | ↔ | 300 |
| NAD 613 | ↔ | 230 |
| NAD 614 | ↔ | 270 |
| NAD 616 | ↔ | 300 |
| Onkyo TA 6210 | ↔ | 230 |
| Onkyo TARW 211 | ↔ | 270 |
| Onkyo TARW 311 | ↔ | 320 |
| Onkyo TA 6310 | ↔ | 330 |
| Onkyo KR 609 | ↔ | 350 |
| Onkyo KW 606 | ↔ | 370 |
| Onkyo TARW 411 | ↔ | 370 |
| Onkyo K 611 | ↔ | 460 |
| Pioneer CT-S550S | ↔ | 250 |
| Pioneer CT-W806DR | ↔ | 300 |
| Pioneer CT-S550S Precision | ↔ | 340 |
| Pioneer CT-S830S | ↔ | 500 |
| Pioneer CT-95 | ↔ | 1,000 |
| Rotel RC960BX | ↔ | 250 |
| Sony TC-WE805S | ↔ | 250 |
| Sony TC-KA6ES | ↔ | 550 |
| T+A CC1200R | ↔ | 990 |
| TEAC W-850R | ↔ | 250 |

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|-------------------|---|-----|
| TEAC V-1030 | ↔ | 250 |
| TEAC W-6000R | ↔ | 450 |
| TEAC V-6030S | ↔ | 550 |
| TEAC V-8030S | ↔ | 650 |
| Technics RS-AZ7 | ↔ | 270 |
| Technics RS-TR575 | ↔ | 280 |
| Yamaha KX-580SE | ↔ | 250 |
| Yamaha KX-W592 | ↔ | 280 |



CD PLAYERS

KEY

⇒ - Multiplayer: can be loaded with more than one disc.
 □□10 - Electrical (coaxial) digital output.
 Many players also include an optical (Toslink) output.

UP TO £250

| | | |
|--------------------|---|-----|
| Akai CD1100 | ⇒ | 200 |
| Akai CDM1200 | ⇒ | 230 |
| AMC CD9 | ⇒ | 130 |
| AMC CD8A | ⇒ | 150 |
| AMC CD9/DAC8 | ⇒ | 200 |
| Ariston CDX700 | ⇒ | 60 |
| Ariston CDX710 | ⇒ | 100 |
| Ariston CDX910 | ⇒ | 120 |
| Ariston CDG610 | ⇒ | 140 |
| Cambridge CD4 | ⇒ | 150 |
| Cambridge CD45E | ⇒ | 200 |
| Cambridge CD6 | ⇒ | 250 |
| Denon DCD-635 | ⇒ | 180 |
| Denon DCD-625 | ⇒ | 200 |
| Denon DCD-715 | ⇒ | 235 |
| Denon DCD-825 | ⇒ | 240 |
| H/K HD710 | ⇒ | 200 |
| JVC XL-V120BK | ⇒ | 110 |
| JVC XL-V130BK | ⇒ | 120 |
| JVC XL-V230BK | ⇒ | 140 |
| JVC XL-F116BK | ⇒ | 180 |
| JVC XL-F216BK | ⇒ | 200 |
| JVC XL-Z574BK | ⇒ | 250 |
| Kenwood DP-1080 | ⇒ | 110 |
| Kenwood DP-2080 | ⇒ | 130 |
| Kenwood DP-R3090 | ⇒ | 140 |
| Kenwood DP-R4090 | ⇒ | 160 |
| Kenwood DP-3080 | ⇒ | 170 |
| Kenwood DP-R6090 | ⇒ | 200 |
| Kenwood DP-4090 | ⇒ | 250 |
| Marantz CD-38 | ⇒ | 130 |
| Marantz CC-38 | ⇒ | 200 |
| Marantz CD-48 | ⇒ | 200 |
| Marantz CD-57 | ⇒ | 230 |
| Marantz CD-67II | ⇒ | 250 |
| NAD 522 | ⇒ | 170 |
| NAD 510 | ⇒ | 200 |
| NAD 523 | ⇒ | 250 |
| NAD 512 | ⇒ | 250 |
| Philips CD711 | ⇒ | 120 |
| Philips CD721 | ⇒ | 130 |
| Philips CD751 | ⇒ | 150 |
| Philips CDC751 | ⇒ | 180 |
| Pioneer PD-106 | ⇒ | 130 |
| Pioneer PD-206 | ⇒ | 150 |
| Pioneer PD-F606 | ⇒ | 200 |
| Pioneer PD-M603 | ⇒ | 200 |
| Pioneer PD-S505 | ⇒ | 200 |
| Pioneer PD-F706 | ⇒ | 250 |
| Rotel RCD-930AX | ⇒ | 180 |
| Rotel RCD950 | ⇒ | 250 |
| Sansui CD220 | ⇒ | 100 |
| Sherwood CD-4030R | ⇒ | 180 |
| Sherwood CDC680 | ⇒ | 180 |
| Sherwood CDC6050R | ⇒ | 180 |
| Sony CDP-M205 | ⇒ | 110 |
| Sony CDP-XE210 | ⇒ | 120 |
| Sony CDP-M305 | ⇒ | 130 |
| Sony CDP-XE310 | ⇒ | 140 |
| Sony CDP-CE105 | ⇒ | 150 |
| Sony CDP-XE510 | ⇒ | 180 |
| Sony CDP-CE315 | ⇒ | 200 |
| Sony CDP-C325M | ⇒ | 200 |
| Synergy CDJ1210 | ⇒ | 120 |
| TEAC CD-P1800 | ⇒ | 120 |
| TEAC CD-P3450SE | ⇒ | 200 |
| TEAC PD-H500 | ⇒ | 240 |
| TEAC PD-D2200 | ⇒ | 250 |
| Technics SL-PG390A | ⇒ | 90 |
| Technics SL-PG490A | ⇒ | 100 |

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|--------------------|---|-----|
| Technics SL-PG590A | ⇒ | 120 |
| Technics SL-PD688 | ⇒ | 140 |
| Technics SL-PD888 | ⇒ | 160 |
| Technics SL-P5670D | ⇒ | 200 |
| Technics SL-MC410 | ⇒ | 250 |
| Technics SL-P5770D | ⇒ | 250 |
| Yamaha CDX-393 | ⇒ | 130 |
| Yamaha CDC-565 | ⇒ | 170 |
| Yamaha CDX-493 | ⇒ | 180 |
| Yamaha CDX-9 | ⇒ | 200 |
| Yamaha CDC-665 | ⇒ | 220 |
| Yamaha CDX-593 | ⇒ | 230 |

£251 TO £500

| | | |
|---------------------------|---|-----|
| Arcam Alpha 7 | ⇒ | 330 |
| Arcam Alpha MCD | ⇒ | 450 |
| Aura CD100 | ⇒ | 400 |
| Carver MV-5 | ⇒ | 469 |
| Denon DCM-260 | ⇒ | 300 |
| Denon DCD-1550AR | ⇒ | 350 |
| Denon DCD-1015 | ⇒ | 350 |
| H/K HD730 | ⇒ | 300 |
| H/K FL8300 | ⇒ | 300 |
| JVC XL-Z674BK | ⇒ | 300 |
| Kenwood DP-R7080 | ⇒ | 300 |
| Kenwood DP-9090 | ⇒ | 300 |
| Kenwood DP-5090 | ⇒ | 300 |
| Kenwood DP-7090 | ⇒ | 400 |
| Marantz CD-67SE | ⇒ | 350 |
| Marantz CC-870 | ⇒ | 400 |
| Marantz CD-63IIKI | ⇒ | 400 |
| Musical Fidelity E60 | ⇒ | 300 |
| Musical Fidelity A2 CD | ⇒ | 500 |
| Myryad T-10 | ⇒ | 400 |
| NAD 513 | ⇒ | 290 |
| NAD 515 | ⇒ | 350 |
| NAD 514 | ⇒ | 370 |
| NAD 517 | ⇒ | 400 |
| Onkyo DX 7210 | ⇒ | 260 |
| Onkyo CT71 | ⇒ | 290 |
| Onkyo DXC 320 | ⇒ | 380 |
| Onkyo DX 7510 | ⇒ | 400 |
| Onkyo CM 716 | ⇒ | 450 |
| Parasound C/DP-1000 | ⇒ | 500 |
| Pioneer PD-F805 | ⇒ | 300 |
| Pioneer PD-S705 | ⇒ | 300 |
| Pioneer PD-F906 | ⇒ | 350 |
| Pioneer PD-S904 | ⇒ | 400 |
| Pioneer PD-S505 Precision | ⇒ | 460 |
| Sony CDP-CX55 | ⇒ | 280 |
| Sony CDP-XE900E | ⇒ | 300 |
| Sony CDP-CX200 | ⇒ | 380 |
| Sony CDP-XA20ES | ⇒ | 450 |
| Sony CDP-X3000ES | ⇒ | 500 |
| TEAC CD-5 | ⇒ | 350 |
| Yamaha CDX-993 | ⇒ | 400 |

£501 TO £1000

| | | |
|--------------------------------|---|-------|
| Acurus ACD11 | ⇒ | 899 |
| Alchemist Nexus | ⇒ | 600 |
| Arcam Alpha 8 | ⇒ | 520 |
| Arcam Alpha 8SE | ⇒ | 600 |
| Audio Analogue Paganini | ⇒ | 695 |
| Analogue 8000CD | ⇒ | 1,000 |
| AVI S2000M2 | ⇒ | 899 |
| Creek CD42 | ⇒ | 599 |
| Denon DCD-3000 | ⇒ | 1,000 |
| DPA Renaissance int CD | ⇒ | 950 |
| Fase Evoluzione Laserdrive 1.0 | ⇒ | 995 |
| Helios Model 3 | ⇒ | 650 |
| Helios Model 2 | ⇒ | 950 |
| Heybrook Signature II | ⇒ | 989 |
| Linn Mimik | ⇒ | 875 |
| Magnum CD2020 | ⇒ | 595 |
| Marantz CD-17 | ⇒ | 800 |
| Micromega Stage 4 | ⇒ | 600 |
| Micromega Stage 5 | ⇒ | 750 |
| Micromega Stage 6 | ⇒ | 950 |
| Mission dAD3 | ⇒ | 898 |
| Mission dAD3Q | ⇒ | 898 |
| Monrio Asty PL | ⇒ | 675 |
| Monno Privilege | ⇒ | 995 |
| Myryad T-20 | ⇒ | 600 |
| Myryad MC100 | ⇒ | 700 |
| Naim CD3 | ⇒ | 1,000 |
| Orelle CD100eA | ⇒ | 649 |
| Orelle CD-100eSA | ⇒ | 999 |
| Pioneer PDS-06 | ⇒ | 550 |
| Primare D20 | ⇒ | 799 |
| Quad 77 Bus | ⇒ | 700 |
| Quad 77 Mains | ⇒ | 900 |
| Roksan Caspian | ⇒ | 895 |
| Sony CDP-XA50ES | ⇒ | 1,000 |
| Synergy CDJ1220 | ⇒ | 600 |
| T+A CD1200R | ⇒ | 895 |
| TEAC VRDS-7 | ⇒ | 599 |
| TEAC VRDS-9 | ⇒ | 700 |
| TEAC VRDS-10SE | ⇒ | 850 |
| Technics SL-P2000 | ⇒ | 1,000 |
| Trichord Genesis | ⇒ | 549 |
| Trichord Digital Jukebox 25 | ⇒ | 599 |
| Trichord Digital Jukebox 50 | ⇒ | 649 |
| Trichord Digital J'box 100 | ⇒ | 699 |
| Trichord Revelation | ⇒ | 799 |
| YBA Special | ⇒ | 625 |

OVER £1000

| | |
|----------------------------|--------|
| Acoustic Precision Eikos | £1,850 |
| Alchemist Forseti | £1,995 |
| Audio Research CD1 | £3,290 |
| Audio Research CD2 | £4,100 |
| Audiomeca Talisman | £2,150 |
| Audiomeca Talisman SE | £2,300 |
| AVI S2000MC | £1,399 |
| Cary CD-301 | £2,495 |
| Conrad-Johnson DF-2 | £1,695 |
| Conrad-Johnson DV-2b | £2,495 |
| Copland CDA-266 | £1,199 |
| Copland CD277 | £1,800 |
| Copland CDA288 | £2,199 |
| Cymbal CDP12 | £1,299 |
| Helios Model 1 | £1,250 |
| Helios Stargate | £2,250 |
| Krell KPS30i | £5,490 |
| Krell KPS-20i | £9,990 |
| Marantz CD-17K15 | £1,100 |
| Mark Levinson 39 | £4,995 |
| McIntosh MCD7009 | £3,699 |
| Meracus Tanto | £1,395 |
| Meracus Imago Player | £4,495 |
| Meridian 506 | £1,100 |
| Meridian 508 | £1,995 |
| Micromega Solo | £2,750 |
| Myriad MCD500 | £1,500 |
| Naim CD2 | £2,000 |
| Naim CDX | £2,200 |
| Naim CDS | £3,940 |
| Oracle CD Player | £7,300 |
| Pink Triangle Numeral | £1,049 |
| Pink Triangle Litaural | £2,200 |
| Primare D502 | £1,799 |
| Roksan Attesa-DP3P | £1,495 |
| Shenwood CD1 | £1,100 |
| Sonic Frontiers Anthem CD1 | £1,699 |
| Sonic Frontiers SFC-D1 | £3,799 |
| TEAC VRDS-25 | £1,300 |
| Theta Digital Miles | £2,495 |
| XTC CDP-1 | £1,250 |
| YBA Intégré | £1,250 |
| YBA CD3 | £2,250 |
| YBA CD2 | £3,350 |
| YBA CD1 | £4,500 |



CD TRANSPORTS

KEY
 - Electrical (coaxial) digital output.
Many players also include an optical (Toslink) output.

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------|
| Alchemist Forseti Drive | £1,100 |
| Altis CDT III | £4,995 |
| Arcam Delta 250 | £800 |
| Audio Research CDTI | £3,290 |
| Audio Synthesis Transcend Decade | £2,995 |
| Audiolab 8000CDM | £1,400 |
| Audiomeca Damnation | £999 |
| Audiomeca Damnation SE | £1,100 |
| Audiomeca Talisman | £1,850 |
| Audiomeca Talisman SE | £1,999 |
| Audiomeca Talisman DOB | £2,250 |
| Audiomeca Mephisto | £2,350 |
| Audiomeca Mephisto SE | £2,500 |
| Audiomeca Mephisto | £2,750 |
| Cambridge Dismagic One | £300 |
| Conrad-Johnson DR-1 | £1,795 |
| DPA Enlightenment Drv | £725 |
| Jadis JD3 | £4,850 |
| Jadis JD2 | £4,990 |
| Jadis JDI | £12,500 |
| Krell KPS-20t | £8,490 |
| Linn Kank | £1,850 |
| Mark Levinson 37 | £3,995 |
| Mark Levinson 31.5 | £9,295 |
| Meracus Imago | £3,995 |
| Meridian 500 | £1,245 |
| Micromega Drive 3 | £750 |
| Micromega Data | £2,250 |
| Monrio Bitmatch | £950 |
| Muse Model 5 | £1,800 |
| Oracle CD Drive | £4,680 |
| Pink Triangle Cardinal II | £909 |
| PS Audio Lambda TR | £2,250 |
| PS Audio Lambda AT&T | £2,778 |
| Rogers SC-8t | £2,699 |
| Roksan Attesa-DP3 | £1,295 |

| | |
|---------------------------------|--------|
| Sonic Frontiers Transport 3 | £5,999 |
| T+A CM1200R | £990 |
| TEAC VRDS-T1 | £550 |
| TEAC P-30 | £2,500 |
| Theta Digital Data Basic II | £2,397 |
| Theta Digital Data III NTSC/PAL | £5,455 |
| Thorens TCD-2000 | £999 |
| Trichord Digital Turntable | £699 |
| Tube Tech Fulcrum | £1,000 |
| Wadia 8 | £3,195 |
| Wadia 20 | £4,370 |

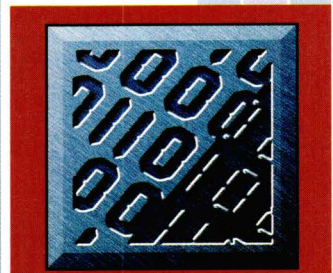


DIGITAL TO ANALOGUE CONVERTERS (DACs)

KEY
 - Number of digital inputs

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------|
| Alchemist Forseti DAC | £1,100 |
| Altis Reference | £4,995 |
| AMC DAC8 | £130 |
| Apogee Digital DA-1000 | £3,395 |
| Arcam Black Box 50 | £350 |
| Arcam Black Box 500 | £500 |
| Audio Note DAC1 | £675 |
| Audio Note DAC2 | £1,099 |
| Audio Note DAC3 | £1,750 |
| Audio Research DAC5 | £2,148 |
| Audio Research DAC3 | £2,335 |
| Audio Research DAC5 | £4,195 |
| Audio Research DAC3 | £4,555 |
| Audio Synthesis DAX Decade | £2,795 |
| Audiolab 8000DAX | £1,000 |
| Audiomeca Elixir | £799 |
| Audiomeca Ambrosia | £1,850 |
| Boulder 2020 | £17,750 |
| Cambridge Dacmagic 2 Mk II | £150 |
| Chord DSC1100 | £2,575 |
| Chord DSC1500 | £3,850 |
| Conrad-Johnson DJA-3 | £1,195 |
| Conrad-Johnson DJA-2b | £1,990 |
| dCS Elgar | £8,500 |
| Denon DCD-425 | £150 |
| DPA Little Bit 3 | £325 |
| DPA Renaissance DAC | £570 |
| DPA Enlightenment DAC | £825 |
| DPA SX128 | £2,000 |
| DPA SX256 | £4,000 |
| DPA SX512 | £8,000 |
| Jadis JS3 | £2,129 |
| Jadis JS1 | £8,068 |
| LFD DAC2 | £1,950 |
| LFD DAC3 | £3,000 |
| Linn Numerik | £1,500 |
| Manley Professional DAC-20 | £6,950 |
| Mark Levinson 36 | £3,995 |
| Mark Levinson 30.5 | £15,950 |
| Meracus Auriga | £1,295 |
| Meracus Flagrare | £2,495 |
| Meridian 566 | £1,095 |
| Micromega DAC 2 | £750 |
| Micromega Dialog | £2,000 |
| Monrio 18B2 | £795 |
| Muse Model 2 | £2,190 |
| Muse Model 2 Plus | £2,500 |
| Musical Fidelity X-ACT | £200 |
| Musical Fidelity X-DAC | £300 |
| Onkyo DX 7310 | £330 |
| PS Audio DL3 | £777 |
| PS Audio SL3 | £1,449 |
| PS Audio UltraLink 2 HDCD | £2,990 |
| PS Audio Ref Link | £4,550 |
| Rogers SC-8m | £1,899 |
| Roksan Attesa-DA2 | £595 |
| Sonic Frontiers Processor 3 | £5,999 |
| Sumo Theorem II | £945 |
| Sumo Theorem IIB | £1,155 |
| Talk Electronics Thunder 3 | £1,000 |
| TEAC D-T1 | £500 |
| TEAC D-700 | £600 |
| Theta Digital Chroma Std | £849 |
| Theta Digital Pro Geny | £1,145 |
| Theta Digital Pro Prime II | £1,800 |
| Theta Digital Pro Basic III | £2,990 |
| Theta Digital Gen V SE | £4,300 |
| Theta Digital Casablanca LS | £5,910 |
| Thorens TDA-2000 | £700 |
| Trichord Pulsar Ser One | £1,395 |
| Tube Tech Fulcrum | £1,400 |
| Wadia 12 | £1,530 |
| Wadia 15 | £3,790 |

| | |
|------------------|---------|
| Wadia 64.4 | £4,750 |
| Wadia 16 | £7,395 |
| Wadia 7 | £9,995 |
| Wadia 9 | £12,790 |
| Woodside DVAC-18 | £1,499 |



DIGITAL RECORDERS

KEY
MD - MiniDisc
DAT - Digital Audio Tape
 - portable

| | | |
|-----------------|------------|-------|
| Denon DMD-1000 | MD | 300 |
| Denon DMD-1300 | MD | 500 |
| Kenwood DM-7090 | MD | 500 |
| Kenwood DM-9090 | MD | 550 |
| Onkyo MD-121 | MD | 450 |
| Onkyo MD 122 | MD | 700 |
| Philips CDR870 | MD | 499 |
| Pioneer PDR-04 | MD | 700 |
| Pioneer D-05 | DAT | 900 |
| Pioneer PDR-05 | DAT | 1,000 |
| Pioneer D-C88 | DAT | 2,000 |
| Sharp MD-R2 | MD | 300 |
| Sharp MD-R1E | MD | 300 |
| Sharp MD-MS200H | MD | 350 |
| Sharp MDXV300H | MD | 1,000 |
| Sony MZ-E20 | MD | 180 |
| Sony MDS-JE510 | MD | 250 |
| Sony MZ-E30 | MD | 280 |
| Sony MDS-S38 | MD | 300 |
| Sony MZ-R30 | MD | 300 |
| Sony MDS-JA30ES | MD | 699 |
| Sony MDS-JA50ES | MD | 1,300 |
| TEAC MD-H500 | MD | 650 |
| TEAC MD-10 | MD | 950 |
| Yamaha MDX-9 | MD | 300 |



HEADPHONES

KEY
'D' - Dynamic type, compatible with virtually all normal headphone sockets.
'E' - Electrostatic type; generally includes a separate power supply.
 - Open-back construction.
 - Closed-back construction.

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|----------------------|---|--|----|
| UP TO £40 | | | |
| Aiwa HP-X301 | D | | 20 |
| Aiwa HP-VX303 | D | | 25 |
| Aiwa HP-X705 | D | | 40 |
| AKG Rox | D | | 30 |
| Aural Envelope DX200 | D | | 20 |
| Aural Envelope DX220 | D | | 30 |
| Beyer DT111 | D | | 15 |
| Beyer DT211 | D | | 31 |
| Beyer DT211TV | D | | 35 |
| JVC HA-CD88 | D | | 18 |
| JVC HA-D525 | D | | 20 |
| JVC HA-F65 | D | | 20 |
| JVC HA-D626 | D | | 25 |
| Kenwood KPM-310 | D | | 18 |
| Kenwood KPM-410 | D | | 25 |
| KLH KHP201TW | D | | 21 |
| KLH KHP-300V | D | | 25 |
| KLH KHP-420V | D | | 33 |
| Maxell HP-2000 | D | | 20 |
| Pioneer SE-A40 | D | | 20 |
| Pioneer SE-A20V | D | | 23 |
| Pioneer SE-M250 | D | | 25 |

| | | | |
|-------------------|---|--|----|
| Pioneer SE-M350 | D | | 30 |
| Sennheiser HD56 | D | | 18 |
| Sennheiser HD433 | D | | 20 |
| Sennheiser HD400 | D | | 25 |
| Sennheiser HD470 | D | | 35 |
| Sennheiser HD60TV | D | | 40 |
| Sony MDR-W20G | D | | 18 |
| Sony MDR-E837 | D | | 18 |
| Sony MDR-P70 | D | | 18 |
| Sony MDR-ED238 | D | | 20 |
| Sony MDR-009TV | D | | 20 |
| Sony MDR-A34L | D | | 20 |
| Sony MDR-E848 | D | | 20 |
| Sony MDR-P1TV | D | | 25 |
| Sony MDR-CD270 | D | | 30 |
| Sony MDR-E868 | D | | 35 |
| Sony MDR-V400 | D | | 40 |
| Sony MDR-D11 | D | | 40 |
| Stanton ST Pro | D | | 25 |
| Technics RP-F200 | D | | 30 |
| Technics RP-HT300 | D | | 40 |
| Vivanco SR150 | D | | 20 |
| Vivanco SR200 | D | | 25 |
| Vivanco SR250 | D | | 25 |
| Vivanco SR300 | D | | 30 |
| Vivanco IR5700 | D | | 40 |

OVER £41

| | | | |
|---------------------------|---|--|-------|
| AKG K301 | D | | 80 |
| AKG K222iR | D | | 100 |
| AKG K401 | D | | 120 |
| AKG K501 | D | | 150 |
| AKG K333iR | D | | 150 |
| AKG K444iR | D | | 180 |
| AKG K2905 | D | | 250 |
| AKG K1000 | D | | 700 |
| Audio Technica ATH910PRO | D | | 80 |
| Audio Technica ATHD40FS | D | | 120 |
| Audio Technica ATHM40FS | D | | 120 |
| Audio Technica ATH911 | D | | 120 |
| Beyer DT311 | D | | 50 |
| Beyer DT411 | D | | 63 |
| Beyer DT511 | D | | 106 |
| Beyer DT801 | D | | 125 |
| Beyer DT811 | D | | 145 |
| Beyer DT100 | D | | 160 |
| Beyer DT901 | D | | 160 |
| Beyer DT911 | D | | 170 |
| Denon AH-D210 | D | | 45 |
| Denon AH-D350 | D | | 65 |
| Denon AH-D550 | D | | 80 |
| Denon AH-D650 | D | | 95 |
| Denon AH-D750 | D | | 130 |
| Denon AH-D950 | D | | 150 |
| Grado SR40 | D | | 45 |
| Grado SR60 | D | | 79 |
| Grado SR80 | D | | 100 |
| Grado SR125 | D | | 150 |
| Grado SR225 | D | | 200 |
| Grado SR325 | D | | 300 |
| Grado RS2 | D | | 495 |
| Grado RS1 | D | | 695 |
| Jecklin Float Model 1 | D | | 79 |
| Jecklin Float Model 2 | D | | 99 |
| Jecklin Float ELS | E | | 399 |
| JVC HA-D727 | D | | 43 |
| JVC HA-W60 | D | | 49 |
| JVC HA-D910 | D | | 65 |
| JVC HA-D1000 | D | | 250 |
| JVC HA-F25 | D | | 699 |
| Philips SBC 3396 | D | | 70 |
| Philips SBC HP9000 | D | | 90 |
| Pioneer SE-M550 | D | | 50 |
| Pioneer SE-M750 | D | | 60 |
| Précide Ergo Model 1 | D | | 120 |
| Précide Ergo Model 2 | D | | 140 |
| Sennheiser IS 380 | D | | 55 |
| Sennheiser HD455 | D | | 55 |
| Sennheiser HD465 | D | | 65 |
| Sennheiser HD570 | D | | 80 |
| Sennheiser HD475 | D | | 80 |
| Sennheiser HD25 SP | D | | 90 |
| Sennheiser IS450 | D | | 110 |
| Sennheiser HD545 Ref | D | | 125 |
| Sennheiser HD265 Linear | D | | 125 |
| Sennheiser HD2500L | D | | 150 |
| Sennheiser HDC 451-1 | D | | 150 |
| Sennheiser HD565 OvaTrn | D | | 150 |
| Sennheiser HD25-13 | D | | 160 |
| Sennheiser HD25 | D | | 160 |
| Sennheiser HD580 P'cision | D | | 200 |
| Sennheiser HD600 | D | | 250 |
| Sennheiser Lucas | D | | 280 |
| Sennheiser IS850 | D | | 859 |
| Sennheiser HE60/HEV70 | E | | 998 |
| Sennheiser Orpheus | E | | 9,652 |
| Sony MDR-IF120K | D | | 50 |
| Sony MDR-E888 | D | | 55 |
| Sony MDR-IF125RK | D | | 60 |
| Sony MDR-V600 | D | | 70 |
| Sony MDR-F1 | D | | 100 |
| Sony MDR-NC5 | D | | 100 |
| Sony MDR-IF420RK | D | | 100 |
| Sony MDR-CD770 | D | | 100 |
| Sony MDR-D77 | D | | 130 |
| Sony MDR-IF520RK | D | | 150 |

| | | |
|------------------------|---|-----|
| Sony MDR-CD1700 | D | 200 |
| Stanton DJ Pro 101/HB | D | 65 |
| Stanton DJ Pro 1000 | D | 95 |
| Stanton DJ Pro 1001 | D | 150 |
| Stax SR-0001 | E | 280 |
| Stax SR-Lambda Nova C | E | 370 |
| Stax Lambda Nova Basic | E | 449 |
| Stax SR-Lambda Nova S | E | 450 |
| Technics RP-F800 | D | 50 |
| Technics RP-HT600 | D | 60 |
| Technics RP-DJ1200 | D | 130 |
| Vivanco IR5800 | D | 50 |
| Vivanco SR850 | D | 50 |
| Vivanco SR650 | D | 50 |
| Vivanco FMH 3000 | D | 60 |
| Vivanco SR750 | D | 60 |
| Vivanco IR6000 | D | 70 |
| Vivanco SR909 | D | 70 |
| Vivanco IR7600 | D | 100 |
| Vivanco SR1000IFL | D | 100 |
| Vivanco SR2000IFL | D | 120 |

| | | |
|------------------------|--|-----|
| Atacama BD25 | | 60 |
| Atacama SE16 | | 65 |
| Atacama SE12 | | 65 |
| Atacama SX500 | | 67 |
| Atacama F2 | | 70 |
| Atacama F1 | | 70 |
| Atacama SX600 | | 70 |
| Atacama SL200 | | 70 |
| Atacama SE24 | | 70 |
| Atacama SE20 | | 70 |
| Atacama SX700 | | 73 |
| Atacama SL300 | | 73 |
| Atacama TP600 | | 75 |
| Atacama TP500 | | 75 |
| Atacama SE615 | | 75 |
| Atacama SE515 | | 75 |
| Atacama SE415 | | 75 |
| Atacama SL400 | | 76 |
| Atacama SE1000S | | 80 |
| AVF Tower P6144BP | | 35 |
| BCD Model 1010 | | 60 |
| Credo STD 001 | | 284 |
| Custom Design CD 500 | | 50 |
| Custom Design AS 130 | | 25 |
| Custom Design AS 630AV | | 65 |
| Custom Design Tri 100 | | 50 |
| Custom Design R/S 200 | | 50 |
| Custom Design R/S300 | | 60 |
| Custom Design Tri 300 | | 55 |
| Custom Design SCS 24 | | 60 |
| Custom Design X24 | | 61 |
| Custom Design C 20 | | 50 |
| Custom Design H1 | | 275 |
| Deadrock 903 | | 60 |
| Deadrock 902 | | 47 |
| Deadrock 901 | | 39 |
| Dynaudio Trophy | | 60 |
| Dynaudio Master | | 60 |
| Dynaudio Ultima | | 60 |
| Harbeth HL-Stands | | 21 |
| Heybrook Stand-ULT | | 3 |
| Heybrook Stand-S6 | | 63 |
| Heybrook Stand-S4 | | 48 |
| Heybrook Stand-S1 | | 47 |
| JPW MS2 | | 45 |
| JPW MS3 | | 61 |
| JPW MS1 | | 46 |
| JPW HS1 | | 58 |
| JPW HS2 | | 45 |
| Kudos Audio Arrow | | 50 |
| Kudos Audio S-50 | | 60 |
| Kudos Audio S-100 | | 63 |
| Mission Micrometer | | 58 |
| Mission Entasis | | 58 |
| Opera S1 | | 345 |
| Pioneer CP-7 | | 50 |

| | | |
|----------------------------------|--|-----|
| Pioneer CP-8 | | 80 |
| Project Signature | | 55 |
| Revolver RS1 | | 70 |
| Royd Royd | | 55 |
| SD Acoustics SD Alexandra | | 369 |
| Silverado Silverado 1 Stand | | 350 |
| SonusFaber Ironwood | | 475 |
| SonusFaber Stonewood | | 497 |
| Sound Org Z037 | | 55 |
| Sound Org Z027 | | 55 |
| Sound Org Z026 | | 55 |
| Sound Org Z518 | | 65 |
| Soundstyle X6118 | | 42 |
| Stands Unique Speaker support | | 59 |
| Stands Unique Tuned Sprk Support | | 220 |
| Stands Unique Tuned Carbon Fibre | | 299 |
| Stands Unique Vivas CF Sprk Supp | | 349 |
| Target TR60 | | 60 |
| Target R1 | | 53 |

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EQUIPMENT SUPPORTS Speaker Stands

KEY
60 - Height of stand in cm

| | | |
|-------------------|-----|-----|
| Alphason NCi | 60 | 47 |
| Alphason Akros I | 60 | 49 |
| Alphason RS1 | 120 | 49 |
| Alphason Akros II | 60 | 59 |
| Alphason NCII | 60 | 84 |
| Alphason HDS-40/M | 60 | 85 |
| Alphason Titan S | 60 | 125 |
| Apollo A26 | 66 | 80 |
| Arcici Q-1 | 30 | 299 |
| Arcici Q-2 | 30 | 299 |
| Atacama BD21 | 56 | 55 |
| Atacama BD17 | | 55 |

| | | |
|------------------------|--|-----|
| BCD Model 1010 | | 60 |
| Credo STD 001 | | 284 |
| Custom Design CD 500 | | 50 |
| Custom Design AS 130 | | 25 |
| Custom Design AS 630AV | | 65 |
| Custom Design Tri 100 | | 50 |
| Custom Design R/S 200 | | 50 |
| Custom Design R/S300 | | 60 |
| Custom Design Tri 300 | | 55 |
| Custom Design SCS 24 | | 60 |
| Custom Design X24 | | 61 |
| Custom Design C 20 | | 50 |
| Custom Design H1 | | 275 |
| Deadrock 903 | | 60 |
| Deadrock 902 | | 47 |
| Deadrock 901 | | 39 |
| Dynaudio Trophy | | 60 |
| Dynaudio Master | | 60 |
| Dynaudio Ultima | | 60 |
| Harbeth HL-Stands | | 21 |
| Heybrook Stand-ULT | | 3 |
| Heybrook Stand-S6 | | 63 |
| Heybrook Stand-S4 | | 48 |
| Heybrook Stand-S1 | | 47 |
| JPW MS2 | | 45 |
| JPW MS3 | | 61 |
| JPW MS1 | | 46 |
| JPW HS1 | | 58 |
| JPW HS2 | | 45 |
| Kudos Audio Arrow | | 50 |
| Kudos Audio S-50 | | 60 |
| Kudos Audio S-100 | | 63 |
| Mission Micrometer | | 58 |
| Mission Entasis | | 58 |
| Opera S1 | | 345 |
| Pioneer CP-7 | | 50 |

EQUIPMENT SUPPORTS Hi-fi Tables

KEY
3 - Number of shelves

| | | |
|----------------------------|---|-------|
| Alphason SM17 | 1 | 49 |
| Alphason VSM17 | 1 | 85 |
| Alphason CSM17 | 1 | 85 |
| Alphason GMV1P | 1 | 110 |
| Alphason R17/17 | 3 | 120 |
| Alphason GMH1P | 1 | 150 |
| Alphason GR17/17 | 3 | 150 |
| Alphason VR17/17 | 3 | 190 |
| Audiophile Base 01 | 1 | 79 |
| Audiophile S4T120 | 4 | 280 |
| Audiophile S4T120P | 4 | 560 |
| BCD Model 1006/8 | 1 | 795 |
| BCD Model 1000 | 3 | 1,250 |
| Custom Design G3 | 3 | 130 |
| Custom Design Aspect 650 | 4 | 240 |
| Custom Design Aspect 500AV | 3 | 270 |
| Custom Design Aspect 850 | 5 | 270 |
| Deadrock 701 | 1 | 60 |
| Deadrock 802 | 1 | 90 |
| Deadrock 703 | 2 | 130 |
| Deadrock 704 | 3 | 190 |
| Deadrock 705 | 4 | 230 |
| Fi-Rax R4 | 6 | 399 |
| Frameworks H175 | 1 | 130 |
| Frameworks FS1 | | 150 |
| Frameworks FT2 | | 285 |
| Frameworks FT3 | | 350 |
| Frameworks H700 | | 355 |
| Frameworks H900 | | 389 |
| Frameworks H500/H175 | 3 | 404 |
| Heybrook Stand-Signature | 4 | 249 |
| Impulse Iso-plate | | 190 |
| JPW 3 Tier | 3 | 80 |
| JPW 5 Tier | 5 | 100 |
| Kudos Audio Corinthian | 5 | 600 |
| Linn K3000 | | 85 |
| Mana Sound Frame | | 125 |
| Mana Mini Table | | 150 |
| Mana Power supply table | | 150 |
| Mana Reference flat top | | 150 |
| Mana Sound Shelf | | 175 |
| Mana Sound Base | | 175 |
| Mana Sound Stage | | 200 |
| Mana Sound Table | | 235 |
| Mana Ref Shelf | | 325 |
| Mana Reference Table | | 350 |
| Mana 2 Tier Amp stand | | 375 |
| Mana 3 Tier Amp Stand | | 450 |
| Mana 4 Tier Amp Stand | | 500 |
| Mana 5 Tier Amp Stand | | 600 |
| Mana 6 Tier Amp Stand | | 700 |
| Mission Hark | | 298 |
| Optimum G2 | 2 | 69 |
| Optimum G2/Pedestal | 2 | 99 |
| Optimum G4/Pedestal | 5 | 130 |
| Optimum OPT 3406 | 3 | 149 |
| Optimum G5/Pedestal | 6 | 150 |
| Optimum OPT 4906 | 4 | 199 |
| Optimum OPT 6606 | 5 | 249 |
| Optimum OPT 340 | 3 | 249 |
| Optimum OPT 490 | 4 | 299 |
| Optimum OPT 440 | 4 | 299 |
| Optimum OPT 10206 | 6 | 299 |
| Optimum AV 300 | 3 | 329 |
| Optimum OPT 700 | 5 | 349 |

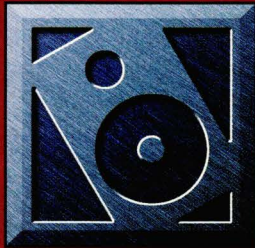
| | | |
|-------------------------------------|----|-------|
| Optimum OPT 610 | 5 | 349 |
| Optimum OPT 660 | 5 | 349 |
| Optimum OPT 1020 | 6 | 399 |
| Optimum OPT 1190 | 7 | 450 |
| Projekt A3 | 3 | 145 |
| Projekt A4 | 4 | 190 |
| Projekt A5 | 5 | 235 |
| Projekt B3 | 6 | 255 |
| Projekt A6 | 6 | 280 |
| Projekt B3i | 6 | 300 |
| Projekt B4 | 8 | 340 |
| Projekt B Multi | 8 | 345 |
| Projekt B3ii | 7 | 345 |
| Projekt C3 | 9 | 375 |
| Projekt D3 | 12 | 420 |
| Projekt C3i | 8 | 420 |
| Projekt B5 | 11 | 425 |
| Projekt C3iii | 11 | 465 |
| Projekt C3ii | 10 | 465 |
| Projekt D3i | 12 | 500 |
| Projekt C4 | 12 | 500 |
| Projekt C3iv | 10 | 510 |
| Projekt D3ii | 14 | 545 |
| Projekt C Multi | 9 | 555 |
| Projekt D4 | 16 | 560 |
| Quadraspire Q45 mini shelf | 1 | 65 |
| Quadraspire Q45 shelf | 1 | 65 |
| Quadraspire QKS Cabinet shelf | 1 | 80 |
| Quadraspire QAV shelf | 1 | 130 |
| Quadraspire Q4M mini table | 4 | 250 |
| Quadraspire Q4 table | 4 | 250 |
| Quadraspire Q4SP Table | 4 | 320 |
| Quadraspire QAV Table | 3 | 350 |
| Quadraspire QAVSP Table | 4 | 400 |
| Quadraspire QK Cabinet | 4 | 450 |
| Reson DOMOPS | 1 | 195 |
| Reson DOMOWS | 1 | 195 |
| Sound Org Z022 | 1 | 65 |
| Sound Org Z021 | 2 | 78 |
| Sound Org Z030 | 3 | 100 |
| Sound Org Z060 | 4 | 120 |
| Sound Org Z038 | 5 | 135 |
| Sound Org Z540 | 4 | 140 |
| Sound Org Z545 | 4 | 140 |
| Sound Org Z560 | 5 | 160 |
| Sound Org Z530 | 3 | 170 |
| Soundstyle X300 | 3 | 180 |
| Soundstyle X305 | 3 | 210 |
| Soundstyle X053 | 4 | 210 |
| Soundstyle X050 | 4 | 210 |
| Soundstyle X6300 | 3 | 215 |
| Soundstyle X100 | 3 | 220 |
| Soundstyle X6110 | 4 | 230 |
| Soundstyle X058 | 5 | 240 |
| Soundstyle X310 | 3 | 250 |
| Soundstyle X105 | 5 | 250 |
| Soundstyle X6053 | 4 | 255 |
| Soundstyle X6100 | 4 | 265 |
| Soundstyle X6310 | 3 | 275 |
| Soundstyle X6058 | 5 | 290 |
| Soundstyle X6105 | 5 | 300 |
| Soundstyle Finewoods W105 | 5 | 320 |
| Stands Unique Isolation Platform | 1 | 52 |
| Stands Unique Sound Support | 4 | 249 |
| Stands Unique Sound Tower | 5 | 289 |
| Stands Unique Compact Sound Support | 4 | 315 |
| Stands Unique Sound Support 10 | 4 | 315 |
| Stands Unique Sound Twr Cabinet | 5 | 369 |
| Stands Unique Ref Wall Support | 1 | 550 |
| Stands Unique Ultimate Tower | 10 | 689 |
| Stands Unique Ref Floor Support | 6 | 799 |
| Target B5 | 5 | 175 |
| Townshend Seismic Sink 1-CD | | 110 |
| Townshend Seismic Sink 1-3D | | 400 |
| Townshend S/Sink Stand 1-4 | 4 | 999 |
| Townshend Seismic Sink 3-4 | 4 | 1,250 |
| VibraPlane Passive | 1 | 1,895 |
| VibraPlane Active | 1 | 3,600 |
| Wilson Benesch Standard Shelf | 1 | 130 |
| Wilson Benesch Mono Block | 1 | 265 |
| Wilson Benesch Kevlar Shelf | 1 | 270 |
| Wilson Benesch Asside Basic | 1 | 590 |
| Wilson Benesch Asside | 4 | 720 |
| Wilson Benesch Triptych | 1 | 990 |

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LOUDSPEAKERS

KEY

- ⌋ - Floorstander; larger models requiring no separate stand.
- ⌋ - Stand mount; smaller models designed to be raised above the floor.
- ⌋ - Wall mount; designed to be hung on the wall or mounted in-wall.
- ⌋ - Box type, including infinite baffle, reflex and transmission line types.
- ⌋ - Horn type; mostly large and very efficient.
- ⌋ - Panel type, including electrostatic and planar magnetic types.

UP TO £130

| | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Allison Micro Monitors | 95 |
| Allison Mini References | 120 |
| Ariston MSX 05 | 80 |
| Celestion 12i | 119 |
| Denon SC-M2 | 80 |
| Gale Mini Monitors | 70 |
| Gale Gold Monitors | 90 |
| Genexa GX300 | 80 |
| Genexa GX350 | 80 |
| GLL Arena | 90 |
| Goodmans Active 75 | 65 |
| Interaudio XL1000 | 130 |
| Jamo Studio-80 | 70 |
| Jamo SAT-90 | 90 |
| Jamo Cornet 25 | 100 |
| Jamo D-110 | 100 |
| Jamo SAT-170 | 110 |
| Jamo Studio-110 | 110 |
| Jamo Cornet 145 | 110 |
| Jamo Cornet 35 | 120 |
| Jamo Artina | 120 |
| Jamo D-115 | 120 |
| Jamo 28 | 125 |
| JBL TLX111 | 120 |
| JPW Mini Monitor | 60 |
| JPW ML110 | 70 |
| JPW Gold Monitor | 80 |
| JPW ML210 | 80 |
| JPW ML310 | 90 |
| JPW ML410 | 100 |
| JPW ML510 | 130 |
| JVC SX-SC1VBK | 60 |
| JVC SP-V50 | 80 |
| JVC SP-X220TBK | 100 |
| JVC SP-X550BK | 130 |
| KEF Coda 7 | 129 |
| Kenwood LS-90UK | 130 |
| Mission 700 | 130 |
| Mission 731i | 130 |
| Mordaunt-Short VS-100 | 100 |
| Mordaunt-Short MS05i | 100 |
| NAD 801 | 100 |
| Paradigm Micro | 100 |
| Paradigm Atom | 130 |
| Pioneer CS-3030 | 120 |
| Polk AB410 | 100 |
| Realistic Minimus 26 | 56 |
| Realistic Minimus Pro-77 | 100 |
| Revolver Beretta | 100 |
| R Allen Minette 2 | 129 |
| Solid HCM2 | 130 |
| Sony SS-86E | 100 |
| Tangent Monitor 3 | 60 |
| Tangent Monitor 5 | 80 |
| Tannoy Mercury M1 | 120 |
| TDL Nucleus 1 | 75 |
| TDL Nucleus 2 | 130 |
| TEAC LS-X8 Mk II | 80 |
| Technics SB-CS55 | 80 |
| Technics SB-CS65 | 100 |
| Technics SB-CS75 | 100 |
| Visonik 5202 | 129 |
| Wdale Valdus 100 | 80 |
| Wdale Diamond 7.1 | 100 |
| Wdale Valdus 200 | 110 |
| Wdale Modus Micro | 110 |

£131 TO £200

| | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Acoustic Energy AE100 | 200 |
|-----------------------|-----|

| | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| Allison Model 4A | 170 |
| B&W DM302 | 150 |
| B&W CWMS | 170 |
| B&W DM601 | 199 |
| Bose 201 IV | 200 |
| Boston CR6 | 149 |
| Boston 325 | 149 |
| Boston Micro 80 Sat | 169 |
| Boston Runabout | 169 |
| Boston 335 | 179 |
| Boston 351 | 189 |
| Boston CR7 | 199 |
| Boston Runabout II | 200 |
| Celestion 15i | 199 |
| Cerwin-Vega CT-165 | 200 |
| Denon SC-E313 | 160 |
| Gale 2i | 140 |
| Gale 4i | 140 |
| Gale 3i | 200 |
| Genexa CX650 | 140 |
| Genexa Pro | 160 |
| GLL Imagio IC100 | 170 |
| Heybrook Prima 2 | 159 |
| Infinity SM65 | 150 |
| Infinity Reference 1i | 150 |
| Infinity Reference 11i | 200 |
| Interaudio XL2000 | 200 |
| Jamo Cornet 165 | 150 |
| Jamo 38 | 150 |
| Jamo 525 | 150 |
| Jamo 560 | 150 |
| Jamo 660 | 170 |
| Jamo Cornet 65 | 170 |
| Jamo Studio 180 | 180 |
| Jamo D165 | 200 |
| Jamo 68 | 200 |
| JBL TLX121 | 150 |
| JBL LX20 | 200 |
| JPW ML610 | 170 |
| JPW SS551 | 200 |
| KEF Coda 8 | 189 |
| KEF Q15 | 199 |
| KEF Model 60S | 199 |
| Kenwood LS-200G | 200 |
| KLH Model 21 | 155 |
| KLH Model 11 | 155 |
| KLH Model 31 | 185 |
| Magnat Vector 22 | 179 |
| Mission 731i Pro | 140 |
| Mission 732i | 200 |
| Mordaunt-Short MS10i Pearl | 150 |
| Mordaunt-Short VS-200 | 150 |
| Mordaunt-Short MS20i Pearl | 200 |
| Mordaunt-Short VS-300 | 200 |
| Paradigm Titan | 150 |
| Pioneer CS-5030 | 170 |
| Polk M2 | 180 |
| Polk RT3 | 200 |
| Polk AB610 | 200 |
| Rega KYTE | 198 |
| Revolver Colt | 139 |
| Revolver The 230 | 169 |
| Revolver Purdey MkII | 170 |
| R Allen Minette 3 | 150 |
| R Allen Dim'n 5/1 Compact | 179 |
| R Allen RA6 | 199 |
| Rogers GS1 | 179 |
| Royd A7X | 155 |
| Sequence 200 | 199 |
| Solid Monitor | 200 |
| Sony SS-126EB | 150 |
| Sony SS-176E | 200 |
| Tangent Monitor 9 | 150 |
| Tangent Monitor 11 | 180 |
| Tannoy Mercury M2 | 140 |
| TDL Nucleus 3 | 200 |
| Technics SB-CS95 | 150 |
| Technics SB-M20 | 200 |
| Visonik 6003 | 143 |
| Visonik 5001 | 170 |
| Wdale Diamond 7.2 | 140 |
| Wdale Valdus 300 | 150 |
| Wdale Modus Music Two | 200 |
| Wdale Valdus 400 | 200 |
| Wdale Diamond 7.3 | 200 |

£201 TO £300

| | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Acoustic Energy AE200 | 250 |
| Audio Gem Opal | 230 |
| B&W CVM6i | 280 |
| B&W DM602 | 300 |
| Bose 151 | 220 |
| Bose 301 IV | 300 |
| Boston 361 | 219 |
| Boston CR8 | 239 |
| Boston 381 | 259 |
| Boston CR9 | 279 |
| Boston Voyager | 299 |
| Castle Isis | 250 |
| Celestion 23i | 299 |
| Cerwin-Vega VS-8 | 250 |
| Cerwin-Vega CT-330 | 300 |
| Chario Syntar 100 | 249 |
| Chario Ref 100 | 299 |
| Chario Hiper 1000 | 299 |
| Dali 102B | 260 |
| Dali 150 | 300 |
| Eltax Linear Response | 249 |
| Faraday FS1 | 245 |
| Gale 5i | 220 |
| GLL Imagio IC110 | 260 |
| GLL Imagio IC115 | 300 |
| Heybrook Optima | 259 |
| Heybrook Heylette | 269 |
| Heybrook HB1 | 269 |
| Infinity SM85 | 250 |
| Interaudio XL3000 | 230 |
| Interaudio XL4000 | 260 |
| Jamo 892 | 220 |
| Jamo Cornet 175 | 230 |
| Jamo Classic 4 | 250 |
| Jamo Art | 270 |
| Jamo D265 | 300 |

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|-----|------------------------------|-----|
| 199 | Jamo 307A | 300 |
| 159 | JBL LX2 | 250 |
| 179 | JBL TLX151 | 300 |
| 199 | JPW ML710 | 230 |
| 179 | JPW ML810 | 260 |
| 155 | JPW ML910 | 300 |
| 199 | JVC SX-SW10 | 300 |
| 200 | KEF Coda 9 | 299 |
| 150 | KEF Model 70S | 299 |
| 200 | KLH 83A | 205 |
| 150 | KLH 183A | 265 |
| 180 | KLH Soundbites System | 276 |
| 140 | KLH Model 81 | 280 |
| 200 | KLH Model 41 | 290 |
| 150 | Mission 750LE | 250 |
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| Ruark Broadsword II | 899 | Origen Live Conqueror | 1,650 | Linn Keltik Aktiv | 6,000 | | | |
| Ruark Paladin | 1,099 | Paragon Jubilee | 1,995 | L Voice Air Scout | 19,500 | | | |
| Shahinian Super Elf | 875 | Pentachord P'column | 1,649 | L Voice Air Partner S | 37,200 | | | |
| Shahinian Compass | 1,395 | Polk LS90 | 1,700 | Lowther Delphic | 3,099 | | | |
| Shinpy Micraphonica | 1,099 | | | | | | | |

Factsback
For access to
past reviews
see page 129.



| | |
|--------------------------|--------|
| Celestion CS135 | 139 |
| Celestion CSW MkII | 329 |
| Celestion S1i | 349 |
| Cerwin-Vega HT-10D | 200 |
| Cerwin-Vega HT-12D | 250 |
| Chario Syntar Bass | 299 |
| Chario Hiper Bass | 499 |
| Credo SDC 001 | 3,054 |
| GLL LE Bass | 350 |
| H/K Citation 7.4 | 875 |
| Infinity SSW-10 | 500 |
| Jamo SW303E | 220 |
| Jamo SW400E | 330 |
| Jamo SW505E | 400 |
| Jamo Sub One | 400 |
| Jamo SW600E | 530 |
| JBL Contol Sub 6 | 200 |
| JBL PSW800 | 275 |
| JBL Sub 10 | 300 |
| JBL PSW1000 | 325 |
| JBL PSW1200 | 375 |
| JPW Subwoofer | 130 |
| JPW SW40 | 199 |
| JPW SW60 | 350 |
| JPW SW-120 | 500 |
| KEF Model 20B | 349 |
| KEF Model 30B | 499 |
| KEF Model AV1 | 2,499 |
| Kenwood SW500 | 250 |
| Keswick Alto | 1,299 |
| KLH ASW10-100 | 350 |
| KLH ASW12-120 | 380 |
| Linn AV5150 | 2,850 |
| L Voice RW24 | 11,500 |
| Magnat Vector Sub 30P | 149 |
| Magnat Vector Sub 30A | 299 |
| Meridian M2500 | 1,595 |
| M&K V7-MKII | 450 |
| M&K V-75 MKII | 650 |
| M&K V-125 | 800 |
| M&K V-125 (THX) | 800 |
| M&K MX-70 | 900 |
| M&K MX-150 (THX) | 1,500 |
| M&K MX-200 | 1,800 |
| M&K MX-300 | 2,500 |
| M&K MX-5000 (THX) | 2,900 |
| Mission 73AS | 450 |
| Mission 75AS | 548 |
| Mordaunt-Short T2000 | 500 |
| Mus Tec Sub | 650 |
| Muse Model 22 | 1,890 |
| Muse Model 18 | 3,790 |
| Neat Gravitas | 1,095 |
| NHT SW2Pi | 699 |
| Paradigm PDR10 | 250 |
| Polk PSW50 | 350 |
| Polk PSW150 | 500 |
| Polk PSW300 | 750 |
| REL Q50 | 375 |
| REL Q-100E | 495 |
| REL Strata II | 575 |
| REL Storm | 695 |
| REL Stadium II | 995 |
| REL Stentor II | 1,800 |
| REL Studio II | 4,000 |
| Revel Sub-15 | 2,195 |
| Revolver The Recol | 100 |
| R Allen Gold Sub | 149 |
| R Allen Dim'n Active | 499 |
| R Allen Magnum Active | 699 |
| Rogers AB1 | 549 |
| Rogers Sub-bass | 679 |
| Roksan Ojan 35 | 795 |
| Sequence FW120 | 249 |
| Solid PB100 | 350 |
| Sony SA-W101 | 230 |
| Sunfire True Sub | 1,450 |
| TDL Nucleus SBR | 200 |
| Triangle Sat III | 650 |
| Tsunami TS200 | 300 |
| Tsunami TS210 | 400 |
| Velodyne VA-68XII | 399 |
| Velodyne VA-810XII | 599 |
| Velodyne VA-1012XII | 699 |
| Velodyne VA-1215XII | 999 |
| Velodyne FSR-12 | 1,099 |
| Velodyne FSR-15 | 1,299 |
| Velodyne F-1800II | 1,999 |
| W'dale Modus Sub Bass | 180 |
| W'dale Modus Powered Sub | 350 |
| Wilson Audio Puppy 5.1 | 8,450 |
| Wilson Audio Whow III | 12,500 |
| Yamaha YST-SW40 | 140 |
| Yamaha YST-SW80 | 180 |
| Yamaha YST-SW150 | 280 |
| Yamaha YST-SW300 | 350 |



TO NEARMS
KEY
⊙ - Pivoted.
- Parallel tracking.

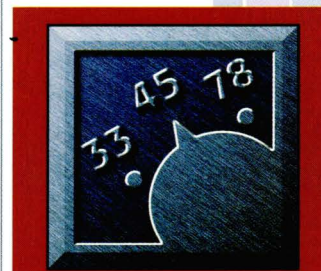
| | | |
|-----------------------------|---|--------|
| Air Tangent IC | # | 4,600 |
| Air Tangent 10B | # | 8,600 |
| Air Tangent Reference | # | 14,000 |
| Audio Note AN-ARM 1 | ⊙ | 169 |
| Audio Note AN-0s | ⊙ | 795 |
| Audio Note AN-1s | ⊙ | 995 |
| Audiomeca SL5 | # | 2,500 |
| Clearaudio TQ-1 Improved | # | 1,950 |
| Dynavector 507 | ⊙ | 1,995 |
| Graham 1.5 Basic | ⊙ | 1,695 |
| Graham Mk 2.0 | ⊙ | 2,650 |
| Helius Orion 4 Copper | ⊙ | 549 |
| Helius Cyalene 2 | ⊙ | 1,495 |
| Kuzma Stogi | ⊙ | 750 |
| Kuzma Stogi Ref | ⊙ | 1,250 |
| Linn Akito | ⊙ | 500 |
| Linn Ekos | ⊙ | 1,500 |
| Manticore Musician II | ⊙ | 595 |
| Manticore Magician II | ⊙ | 895 |
| Manticore Magician 12 | ⊙ | 995 |
| Moth Mk I | ⊙ | 109 |
| Moth MkIII Stainless | ⊙ | 146 |
| Moth Mk III Tungsten | ⊙ | 174 |
| Moth Moth 900 | ⊙ | 598 |
| Naim ARO | ⊙ | 1,040 |
| N'h'am Space | ⊙ | 450 |
| N'h'am Paragon 3 | # | 550 |
| N'h'am Paragon 2 | # | 800 |
| N'h'am Mentor | # | 800 |
| N'h'am Foot | ⊙ | 1,100 |
| N'h'am Paragon 1 | # | 1,600 |
| Rega RB250 | ⊙ | 109 |
| Rega RB300 | ⊙ | 174 |
| Rega RB900 | ⊙ | 598 |
| Rockport Series 7000 | # | 6,000 |
| Roksan Tabriz | ⊙ | 320 |
| Roksan Tabriz Zi | ⊙ | 420 |
| Roksan Artemiz | ⊙ | 895 |
| SME 3009 Ser II Imp | ⊙ | 309 |
| SME 3009 52 Ser II Imp | ⊙ | 338 |
| SME Series II 3009-R | ⊙ | 514 |
| SME Series II 3010-R | ⊙ | 526 |
| SME Series II 3012-R | ⊙ | 565 |
| SME 309 | ⊙ | 689 |
| SME 310 | ⊙ | 705 |
| SME 312 | ⊙ | 802 |
| SME Series IV | ⊙ | 983 |
| SME Series V | ⊙ | 1,461 |
| Wheaton Music Tri-Planar 4i | ⊙ | 3,000 |
| Wheaton Music Tri-Planar 5i | ⊙ | 3,250 |
| Wilson Benesch Act 0.5 | ⊙ | 795 |
| Wilson Benesch ACT2 | ⊙ | 1,350 |
| Zeta AS | ⊙ | 469 |
| Zeta VDH | ⊙ | 549 |



TUNERS
KEY
'P20' (etc.) - Number of presets.
RDS - Radio Data System; receives text information on station, programme type etc.

| | | |
|-----------------|-----|-----|
| Akai AT1200 | P30 | 170 |
| AMC T7 | P30 | 130 |
| Arcam Alpha 7 | P24 | 230 |
| Arcam Alpha 8 | P24 | 280 |
| Arcam Delta 280 | P20 | 300 |

| | | |
|----------------------------|-----|--------|
| Ariston TX-510 | P20 | 60 |
| Audiolab 8000T | P39 | 1,800 |
| Aura TU80 | P30 | 350 |
| AVI S2000MT | P16 | 599 |
| AVI S2000MT2 | P99 | 899 |
| Carver TX-8R | P29 | 469 |
| Creek T43 | P68 | 399 |
| Day Sequerra FM Ref | | 5,937 |
| Day Sequerra S B'dcast Mon | | 14,640 |
| Denon TU-260L | P20 | 120 |
| Denon TU-215RD | P40 | 150 |
| Denon TU-425RD | P40 | 200 |
| Fanfare FT1 | P08 | 1,395 |
| H/K TU930 | P30 | 150 |
| H/K TU950 | P30 | 200 |
| Kenwood KT-2080 | P20 | 130 |
| Kenwood KT-3080 | P50 | 180 |
| Linn Kudos | P50 | 775 |
| Linn Kremlin | P80 | 2,600 |
| Magnum Dynalab FT11 | | 550 |
| Magnum Dynalab FT-101A | | 825 |
| Magnum Dynalab Etude | | 1,250 |
| Magnum Dynalab 108 | | 4,500 |
| Marantz ST-48 | P50 | 119 |
| Marantz ST-17 | P60 | 600 |
| McIntosh MR7084 | P50 | 2,499 |
| McIntosh MX118 | P50 | 4,999 |
| McIntosh MX130 | P50 | 6,999 |
| Meridian 504 | P30 | 695 |
| Michi RHT-10 | P16 | 895 |
| Micromega Minium FM Mk2 | P39 | 329 |
| Micromega Tuner | P39 | 750 |
| Mission Cyrus FM7 | P29 | 400 |
| Musical Fidelity E50 | P20 | 300 |
| NAD 412 | P24 | 190 |
| NAD 414RDS | P30 | 250 |
| NAD 710 | P24 | 270 |
| NAD 712 | P24 | 330 |
| Naim NAT03 | | 595 |
| Naim NAT02 | | 1,080 |
| Naim NAT01 | | 1,730 |
| Onkyo T 421 ORDS | P30 | 180 |
| Onkyo T 409 | P30 | 230 |
| Onkyo T 411 RDS | P30 | 260 |
| Pioneer F-204RDS | P30 | 140 |
| Pioneer F-504RDS | P40 | 250 |
| Pioneer F-504RDS Precision | P40 | 300 |
| Quad 77FM | P25 | 700 |
| Rega Radio | P24 | 298 |
| Roksan Caspian | P50 | 595 |
| Rotel RT-935AX | P20 | 160 |
| Rotel RT940AX | P20 | 200 |
| Sony ST-SE200 | P30 | 100 |
| Sony ST-SE300 | P30 | 120 |
| Sony ST-SE500 | P30 | 140 |
| Sony ST-SE700 | P30 | 180 |
| Sony ST-SA35S | P30 | 250 |
| T+A T1200R | | 745 |
| TEAC T-R400 | P20 | 120 |
| TEAC T-H500 | P30 | 170 |
| TEAC TB-X10 | P20 | 400 |
| Technics ST-GT350L | P30 | 130 |
| Technics ST-GT550L | P39 | 180 |
| Technics ST-GT650L | P39 | 230 |
| Thorens TRT-2000 | P59 | 499 |
| Yamaha TX-480L | P40 | 100 |
| Yamaha TX-10 II | P40 | 130 |
| Yamaha TX-492RDS | P40 | 130 |
| Yamaha TX-59 2RDS | P40 | 180 |
| Yamaha RX-396RDS | P40 | 250 |



TURNTABLES
KEY
⊙ - Arm included.
- Cartridge included.
UP TO £500

| | | |
|---------------------|---|-----|
| Audio Note AN-TT 1 | ⊙ | 349 |
| Dual CS435-1 | ⊙ | 150 |
| Dual CS455 | ⊙ | 190 |
| Dual 505-4 UK | ⊙ | 250 |
| Eclipse TT430 | ⊙ | 70 |
| Genexa Lab-710 | ⊙ | 60 |
| Genexa Lab-810 | ⊙ | 70 |
| Kenwood KD-492F | ⊙ | 100 |
| Michell Mycro | ⊙ | 455 |
| Moth Alamo | ⊙ | 199 |
| Moth Kanoor MkI Arm | ⊙ | 279 |
| Moth Kanoor Mk3 Arm | ⊙ | 329 |

| | | |
|-------------------------|---|-----|
| NAD 533 | ⊙ | 220 |
| N'h'am Interspace | ⊙ | 500 |
| Pioneer PL-J2500-C | ⊙ | 80 |
| Pioneer PL-990 | ⊙ | 130 |
| Pro-Ject 0.5/OM10 | ⊙ | 170 |
| Pro-Ject 1/510 | ⊙ | 210 |
| Pro-Ject 2/520 | ⊙ | 325 |
| Pro-Ject 6/MC15 | ⊙ | 500 |
| Rega Planar 78 | ⊙ | 214 |
| Rega Planar 2 | ⊙ | 214 |
| Rega Planar 3 | ⊙ | 274 |
| Roksan Radius | ⊙ | 470 |
| Sherwood PM8550 | ⊙ | 130 |
| Sony PS-LX150H | ⊙ | 90 |
| Sony PS-LX300H | ⊙ | 150 |
| Systemdek I/920 | ⊙ | 136 |
| Systemdek IIX/900 | ⊙ | 230 |
| Systemdek I/920/Moth | ⊙ | 235 |
| Systemdek IIXE/900AP | ⊙ | 388 |
| Systemdek 960 | ⊙ | 500 |
| Systemdek 2X2 | ⊙ | 500 |
| Technics SL-J110D | ⊙ | 120 |
| Technics SL-BD20 | ⊙ | 160 |
| Technics SL-BD22 | ⊙ | 180 |
| Technics SL-1210MKII | ⊙ | 400 |
| Technics SL-1200MKII | ⊙ | 400 |
| Thorens TD-180 AT91 | ⊙ | 190 |
| Thorens TD-280 IV/UK | ⊙ | 210 |
| Thorens TD-166 V/UK/RB | ⊙ | 400 |
| Thorens TD-318 III TP50 | ⊙ | 500 |

OVER £500

| | | |
|-----------------------------|---|--------|
| Audio Note AN-TT 2 | ⊙ | 995 |
| Audio Note AN-TT 3 | ⊙ | 1,995 |
| Audiomeca Romance | ⊙ | 1,895 |
| Audiomeca J1 | ⊙ | 3,500 |
| Basis 2000 | ⊙ | 1,995 |
| Basis 2001 | ⊙ | 2,995 |
| Basis Ovation II | ⊙ | 5,400 |
| Basis 2500 | ⊙ | 5,495 |
| Basis 2800 | ⊙ | 7,495 |
| Basis Debut Gold Std III | ⊙ | 8,200 |
| Basis Debut Gold Vacuum | ⊙ | 10,300 |
| Chantry QT Level 2 | ⊙ | 705 |
| Clearaudio Evolution | ⊙ | 1,790 |
| Clearaudio Reference | ⊙ | 3,990 |
| DNM-Reson Rota 1 | ⊙ | 3,900 |
| DNM-Reson Rota 2 | ⊙ | 5,600 |
| Impulse Moskitto | ⊙ | 695 |
| Kuzma Stabi | ⊙ | 1,950 |
| Kuzma Stabi Reference | ⊙ | 3,750 |
| Linn LP12 Bask | ⊙ | 1,100 |
| Linn LP12 Lingo | ⊙ | 1,750 |
| Manticore Mantra | ⊙ | 895 |
| Manticore Magister | ⊙ | 4,400 |
| Michell Gyrodek | ⊙ | 875 |
| Michell Orbe | ⊙ | 1,995 |
| N'h'am Spacedeck | ⊙ | 750 |
| N'h'am Graphic | ⊙ | 1,200 |
| N'h'am HyperSpacedeck | ⊙ | 1,500 |
| N'h'am Mentor | ⊙ | 2,600 |
| N'h'am Anna Log | ⊙ | 5,500 |
| Oracle Paris | ⊙ | 1,100 |
| Oracle Delphi | ⊙ | 3,370 |
| Oracle Delphi 15th Anniv | ⊙ | 3,800 |
| Pink Triangle Tarantella | ⊙ | 680 |
| Rega Planar 9 | ⊙ | 1,598 |
| Reson RS1M | ⊙ | 600 |
| Reson Rota 1 | ⊙ | 3,900 |
| Rockport Capella II | ⊙ | 7,000 |
| Rockport Sirius III | ⊙ | 50,000 |
| Roksan Xerxes 10 | ⊙ | 1,295 |
| Roksan TMS | ⊙ | 2,750 |
| SME Model 20/2 | ⊙ | 3,403 |
| SME Model 20/2A | ⊙ | 4,863 |
| SME Model 30/2 | ⊙ | 10,675 |
| SME Model 30/2A | ⊙ | 12,135 |
| Stratosphere ST1 | ⊙ | 6,500 |
| Technics SL-1200LTD | ⊙ | 700 |
| Thorens TD-146 VI TP50 | ⊙ | 550 |
| Thorens TD-2001 TP90 | ⊙ | 700 |
| Thorens TD-520 SME | ⊙ | 1,050 |
| Well Tempered Record Player | ⊙ | 1,850 |
| Well Tempered Classic | ⊙ | 2,980 |
| Well Tempered Super | ⊙ | 3,900 |
| Well Tempered Reference | ⊙ | 5,300 |
| Wilson Benesch Circle | ⊙ | 795 |
| Wilson Benesch WB Turntable | ⊙ | 1,775 |
| Wilson Benesch Full Circle | ⊙ | 1,995 |

PRODUCTS TESTED & RATED
Turn over for a full round-up of all reviewed products.

Musical Instruments

Sonus Faber loudspeakers are worked with the old world craftsmanship of the musical instrument maker. Ultimate expression of this craft is the fabled **Guarneri Homage**, a unique lute-shaped speaker with the strong tonal personality of a Guarneri violin.

Guarneri was a 17th century Cremonese master violin maker whose instruments were intensely sculpted acoustic masterpieces characterised by a unique ability to combine tonal strength and full bodied sound with sweetness. This overriding passion for tonal character and dynamic range is a feature of all **Sonus Faber** speakers. To this musical passion is brought modern materials technology and a listening room 'laboratory' to create a family of products true to a musical heritage yet based in today's science.

Baby of this family is the **Concertino**. Its cabinet with solid walnut sides, insulated with non-resonant material brings new meaning to the expression 'substantial'. Ken Kessler reviewing the Concertino (HFN&RR 3/96) referred to it as 'a small speaker for grown-ups' and concluded that 'it's one of the least expensive introductions yet to the joys of "real hi-fi"'. What Hi-Fi (8/96) wrote of the Concertino: 'considering their size they deliver bass of stupendous power, speed and accuracy'.

The bigger **Concerto** two-way was described by Alvin Gold (HFN&RR 4/97) as 'a truly



Concerto — a full bodied, dynamic loudspeaker capable of recreating the subtleties and hush of real music



Concerto Grand piano — a speaker of real stature with extended bass and presence, finished in stunning piano black

remarkable loudspeaker'. He praised the 'exquisitely refined and articulate midband' before concluding 'listening through the *Concerto* was like listening through an open window. Music sounds completely unmanipulated and utterly clear with a sweetness, purity and a sense of presence...all sense of artifice simply vanished'.

Jason Kennedy (Hi-Fi Choice 4/97) simply said 'an admirable design that achieves its sonic goals and looks beautiful'. After many successful years the popular **Electa Amator** is revised and appears in MkII form with a revolutionary new cabinet. As exciting comes the news of a Sonus Faber integrated amplifier — the **Musica** — so you can now hear how the Sonus Faber designers listen to their own products.

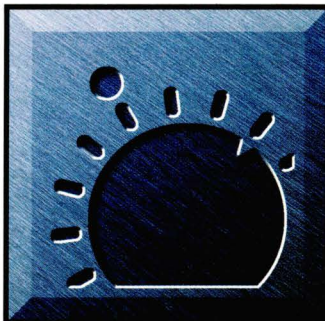
Sonus Faber has also introduced a floor-standing speaker the **Concerto Grand piano** — indeed it has all the physical and musical presence of a concert grand. Ken Kessler (HFN&RR 5/97) found it 'an odd but delightful blend, a small speaker's energy and vim with a large speaker's authority'. He even christened it 'a perfect rock speaker for the headbanger who want the energy and levels the music demands, minus any rough edges'.

Which just goes to show that what can recreate the sound of a Guarneri can recreate the sound of a Gibson! Please contact **Absolute Sounds** for full details of the **Sonus Faber** range and a dealer referral where you can discover the truth and beauty of a real musical instruments.

Sonus faber®

Absolute Sounds
58 Durham Road • London SW20 0DE
Telephone 0181-971 3909
Facsimile 0181-879 7962
Email info@absolutesounds.com





Amplifiers

The amplifier is at the heart of any hi-fi system, accepting the outputs from various music sources, increasing the amplitude of their signal and then driving the loudspeakers to produce sound. One-box 'integrated' amps rule the roost at low-to-middle price points, but if you pay more, the low-level and high-level signal processes are separated into preamp and power amp boxes, and even separate 'outboard' power supplies come into play. Another luxury is a separate amp for each stereo channel: such devices are known as monoblocks. Finally, output power and sound quality are not necessarily related. Some of the finest amplifiers outputs only 12 Watts, but will yield loudness aplenty when partnered with high-efficiency loudspeakers.

KEY TO SPECIFICATIONS

LINE INPUTS: Number of input sockets for line-level (non-vinyl) sources such as CD players, tuners and cassette decks.
MM PHONO INPUT: An input specially designed for moving magnet (high output) phono pickup cartridges.
MC PHONO INPUT: An input for moving coil (low output) phono pickup cartridges.
REMOTE CONTROL: An infrared handset to adjust volume etc.
HEADPHONE SOCKET: An integral output for headphones.
POWER OUTPUT (Watts): Our measurement of an amp's RMS power output into 8 Ohms.
RECEIVER: An amplifier with built-in radio receiver (tuner).
FACTSBACK REFERENCE: The Factsback Reference number permits direct access to our faxed review reprint service. For full info, see the Factsback advert at the rear of this Directory.
ISSUE NUMBER: The issue of *Hi-Fi Choice* in which an original review appeared.
★ Indicates a Statements Review

B BEST BUY **R RECOMMENDED** **E EDITOR'S CHOICE**

Amplifiers

SPECIFICATIONS

MM PHONO INPUTS
 MC PHONO INPUTS
 REMOTE CONTROL
 HEADPHONE SOCKET
 POWER OUTPUT (W)
 RECEIVER
 FACTSBACK NO.
 ISSUE NUMBER

STATUS

| PRODUCT | (£) | COMMENTS | LINE INPUTS | MM PHONO INPUTS | MC PHONO INPUTS | REMOTE CONTROL | HEADPHONE SOCKET | POWER OUTPUT (W) | RECEIVER | FACTSBACK NO. | ISSUE NUMBER |
|---------------------------|-------|---|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|----------|---------------|--------------|
| Alchemist Maxim | 319 | Vivid and colourful-sounding amp, but just too bold and brassy | 5 | ● | | | | 30 | | 1737 | 154 |
| Alchemist Kraken APD6A | 579 | Compact, with Darth Vader styling, yet sound quality is meek and mild, despite strong midband dynamics | 5 | ● | | | | 55 | | 2150 | 175 |
| Alchemist Nemesis | 700 | Good if ultimately undistinguished amplifier whose strengths include warmth, authority and distinctive aesthetics | 6 | | | | | 80 | | 2006 | 168 |
| AMC 3025a | 140 | Surprisingly potent and easy on the ear, if not especially analytical – classic bargain-basement material, in fact | 4 | ● | ● | ● | ● | 30 | | 2045 | 171 |
| AMC 3050a | 170 | Tremendous value for money, and a full, big, if rather uninformative sound | 4 | ● | ● | ● | ● | 45 | | 1970 | 167 |
| AMC CVT3030a | 400 | Beer-budget valve amp, with valve-like virtues (euphony with dynamics) and vices (system dependency, noise) | 6 | ● | | | | 30 | | 2001 | 168 |
| Arcam Alpha 7 | 260 | Decent, if slightly system-fussy amplifier that generally pulls all the right strings | 5 | ● | | | | 40 | | 1971 | 167 |
| Arcam Alpha 8 | 360 | Enjoyably soft-centred amp, won't frighten the animals. Upgradeable via preamp output, and optional remote | 5 | ● | | | | 50 | | 1853 | 162 |
| Arcam Alpha 9 | 500 | Not quite a match for the Alpha 9/9P combo, the solo integrated is nevertheless colourful and explicitly detailed | 7 | | | ● | ● | 70 | | 2007 | 168 |
| Arcam Alpha 10 | 800 | Although not the best sounding in its class, the Alpha 10's modular nature demands it be taken seriously | 5 | | | | ● | 100 | | | 181 |
| Audio Analogue Puccini | 450 | Superbly finished, the entry-level Audio Analogue performs way out of its class | 5 | ● | ● | | | 40 | | 2147 | 175 |
| Audio Analogue Puccini SE | 595 | Upgraded, more powerful Puccini is disappointingly sluggish and curiously lacking in musical vitality | 5 | ● | ● | | | 40 | | | 181 |
| Audiogram MB1 | 493 | The only flaws are the amateurish build, a number of technical problems and inconsistent sound quality | 4 | ● | | | ● | 40 | | 2235 | 178 |
| Audio Note Oto SE | 1,200 | Transparent, dynamic, clear and subtle, but offers limited power output | 4 | | | | | 24 | | | 126 |
| Audiolab 8000LX | 470 | Well built, minimalist entry level model ultimately lacks bottle and pizzazz | 6 | | | | | 60 | | 2148 | 175 |
| Audiolab 8000A | 500 | The 8000A remains a highly disciplined and mature-sounding amp | 5 | ● | ● | | ● | 60 | | 1581 | 140 |
| Audiolab 8000S | 700 | Informative in every sense, only a slight lack of bite detracts. Perhaps Audiolab's best yet! | 6 | | | | ● | 60 | | 1740 | 154 |
| AVI S2000MI | 999 | Fine, detailed amplifier with excellent timing and strong control of a wide range of loudspeaker loads | 5 | | | | ● | 100 | | 2155 | 175 |
| Bryston B60R | 1,249 | Great build, but the lazy bass and opaque treble bracket an articulate midband. Comes with 20 year guarantee | 5 | | | | ● | 60 | | 2156 | 175 |
| Cambridge Audio A3i | 200 | "Maximum information" design, with plenty of usable and reasonably refined power. A snip! | 4 | ● | | | | 60 | | 1972 | 167 |
| Copland CSA8 | 945 | Sophisticated yet transparent, this is one of those amplifiers that sounds good even when the gloss has worn off | 5 | | | | | 60 | | 2010 | 168 |
| Copland CSA14 | 1,199 | Great sound and looks, but avoid high capacitance speaker cables | 4 | ● | | | | 60 | | 1416 | 148 |
| CR Developments CR324 | 569 | Solid and capable on paper, this is a bit of a blunt instrument when let loose on the music | 5 | | | | | 150 | | | 181 |
| Credo IMP702 | 850 | Old-fashioned looking, but bags of clarity and precision, though it can sound brash in the wrong system | 5 | | | | | 70 | | 2157 | 175 |
| Cymbal CA1 | 499 | Lacklustre amplifier tends to underperform with complex material. Best with straightforward compact loudspeakers | 6 | | | | | 40 | | 2236 | 178 |
| Creek 4330 | 279 | Compact, even pretty, but sounds dark and uninviting, with coarse treble and 'woomy' bass | 5 | | | | | 40 | | 2052 | 171 |
| Denon PMA-250SE | 160 | This amp can sound rough when extended, but within its limits it is open, detailed and likeable | 5 | | | | ● | 30 | | 2046 | 171 |
| Denon PMA-350SE | 200 | Reinvented in the minimalist tradition, this SE model is a control freak, but can sound wonderful | 5 | | | | ● | 50 | | 1856 | 162 |
| Denon PMA-425R | 230 | Well-equipped and generally enjoyable but slightly ragged performer | 3 | ● | | | ● | 45 | | 1973 | 167 |
| Denon PMA-725R | 350 | Warm, bold, up-front presentation, but musically unexciting | 5 | ● | ● | ● | ● | 97 | | 1802 | 157 |
| Denon PMA-1500R | 500 | Recommended for its outrageous power, especially with problem speakers. | 5 | ● | ● | ● | ● | 70 | | | 181 |
| Densen Beat B-100 MkII | 650 | High 'air guitar' factor, and can punch above its weight, but check it will complement your system | 5 | | | | | 60 | | 1855 | 175 |
| DPA Renaissance | 595 | DPA's first integrated amp is typically innovative, but a little too 'crisp'n'dry' for our tastes | 5 | ● | | | | 40 | | 1582 | 140 |
| EMF Audio Sequel | 450 | Relaxed and restrained design from Mike Creek | 5 | ● | | | | 50 | | | 109 |
| Exposure XX Super | 700 | Rather transistorised, unexciting sound. Good coherence and rhythm. Best played loud | 6 | | | | | 55 | | 1743 | 154 |
| Electrocompaniet EC1-2 | 995 | A 50 watt amplifier which sounds more powerful, and makes 'real sounding' music | 4 | | | | | 50 | | 2158 | 175 |
| Gamma Acoustics Gemini | 699 | Genuine single-ended triode design, but with low power, mundane sound and poor build | 3 | | | | | 12 | | 1416 | 148 |
| Goodmans Delta 900A | 130 | Coloured and raw sound tarnish high power yield and remarkable pricing, and noisy fan cooling is a real joy-killer | 5 | ● | | | ● | 100 | | 2228 | 178 |
| Harman/Kardon HK610 | 180 | Lively and friendly sound, but could prove too exciting for the faint hearted | 6 | ● | | | ● | 30 | | 1465 | 149 |
| Harman/Kardon HK620 | 250 | Capable and musical amplifier which is one of the nicest at this price. Optional add-in MM/MC board available | 6 | ● | | | ● | 40 | | 1858 | 162 |
| Holfi Audis Signature | 750 | A 'no-feedback' circuit giving outstanding resolution, but significant load dependency | 4 | ● | | | | 65 | | | 181 |
| JoLida 202 | 695 | Well-built and technically accomplished, affordable valve integrated with subtle refined, if not quite gripping sound | 4 | | | | | 40 | | 2011 | 168 |
| JVC AX-V4 | 200 | Respectable performance for a Pro-Logic AV amplifier. Lacks resolution and sparkle, though | 5 | ● | | | ● | 63 | | 1805 | 157 |
| JVC AX-R5 | 200 | Versatile, and lots of even-handed, articulate detail; but let down by superficiality | 5 | ● | | | ● | 45 | | 1466 | 149 |
| Kenwood KA-3020SE | 200 | Not a brilliant phono stage, but this is a lively, exuberant sounding amp via CD | 5 | ● | | | ● | 50 | | 1130 | 134 |
| Kenwood KA-5090R | 300 | Large, well equipped and high tech integrated, but TRAITR output still gives a harsh, unobtrusive performance | 5 | ● | ● | ● | ● | 65 | | 2053 | 171 |
| LFD Integrated Zero | 549 | Lively and brisk, but at the same time cold and unsympathetic | 6 | | | | | 50 | | 1584 | 140 |
| Linn Majik (phono) | 800 | The cornerstone of Linn's modular hi-fi system is innovative, but sounds vague and confused | 5 | ● | ● | | ● | 33 | | 1013 | 129 |
| Magnum IA120 | 265 | Mirror finish amplifier with bold, colourful delivery, but needs careful system matching to avoid loss of clarity | 6 | | | | ● | 65 | | 2054 | 171 |
| Magnum IA170 | 330 | Gives a realistic sense of instruments playing within a very believable acoustic; preserves colour and dynamics | 6 | | | | ● | 96 | | 1260 | 142 |
| Magnum IA-200 | 599 | Sweet, valve-flavoured solid state amplifier which flatters where it doesn't cast light | 7 | | | | | 160 | | 1860 | 162 |
| Magnum Class A | 690 | Lashings of rich and compelling music, but the Class A circuits trade lushness for accuracy | 4 | ● | | | | 60 | | | 116 |
| Magnum Class A SE | 795 | A MOSFET amplifier drawing inspiration from the world of valves, this is an erratically refined, detailed amplifier | 5 | ● | | | | 80 | | 2159 | 175 |
| Marantz PM-57 | 200 | Well equipped but ultimately anodyne amplifier which lacks for nothing but star quality | 5 | ● | | | ● | 50 | | 2049 | 171 |
| Marantz PM-66SE | 230 | A bit lush, and power output is limited, but it gives airy, large-scale music. An excellent budget buy | 5 | ● | | | ● | 50 | | 1969 | 167 |
| Marantz PM66 KI-Signature | 400 | It knows how to rock and roll with holographic detail and stereo, but prefers small/medium scale acoustic material | 5 | ● | | | ● | 50 | | 2003 | 168 |
| Marantz PM-17 | 900 | Probably worth it for the WBT terminals and other build features alone, but this model doesn't sing as it should | 6 | ● | ● | ● | | 60 | | | 181 |

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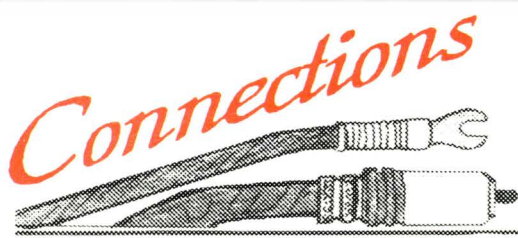
Cables

STATUS

SPECIFICATIONS

SYMMETRICAL COAXIAL STRANDED SOLID CORE COPPER SILVER DIG CABLE TYPE FACTSBACK NO. ISSUE NUMBER

| PRODUCT | (E) | COMMENTS | SYMMETRICAL | COAXIAL | STRANDED | SOLID CORE | COPPER | SILVER | DIG CABLE TYPE | FACTSBACK NO. | ISSUE NUMBER |
|------------------------------|-----|---|-------------|---------|----------|------------|--------|--------|----------------|---------------|--------------|
| ▲ Cable Talk Studio 2 | 65 | A first-class performer from tonal, dynamic and rhythmic standpoints | ● | | | | ● | | | | 160 |
| Cambridge Pacific | 30 | Lacks subtlety and bass impact but is otherwise quite serviceable for the price | | | ● | | ● | | | 2167 | 176 |
| ▲ Cambridge Audio Studio Ref | 40 | Dynamic cable with strong soundstaging and only a slight lack of detail | | | ● | | ● | ● | | | 160 |
| Chord Company Cobra 2 | 50 | Good, strong sound with full-bodied music, less happy with smaller forces | | | | | ● | ● | | 2167 | 176 |
| ▲ Connections Midas HD | 39 | Canary yellow cable with excellent plugs and an open sound. Slight treble glare | ● | | | | ● | ● | | | 160 |
| ▲ DNM TCC75 | 34 | Price for 0.75m. High resolution cable, but best in short runs due to higher than average series impedance | | | | | | ● | ● | 1690 | 131 |
| DPA Slink | 41 | Slightly bright and zingy with flat soundstaging and hollow bass, though vocals and strings sound convincing | ● | ● | | | | | 1690 131 | | |
| DPA White Slink | 75 | Bass recedes as the music gets complex; midrange and treble better with quite good detail and imaging | | | | | ● | ● | | 2168 | 176 |
| ▲ DPA Black Slink | 245 | Initially dark and meaty but after running in, it's lucid and transparent. Quad geometry, Gore-Tex dielectric | ● | | | | ● | ● | | 1691 | 131 |
| Goertz M1 Interconnect | 145 | Soft sound lacking in bite, with excessive and plummy bass (NB sample used in review was only 0.5m) | ● | | | | ● | ● | | 2168 | 176 |
| Insert Audio IC100 MKII | 47 | Mostly good sound is let down by pervasive dryness | | | | | ● | ● | | 2169 | 176 |
| ▲ Ixos 104 | 20 | Open and detailed presentation, full bass and silky if overly smooth treble | | | | | ● | ● | ● | 1692 | 131 |
| Ixos Gamma 1002 | 39 | Lumpy bass, grainy treble, and poor integration. Nice colour, though | ● | | | | ● | ● | | 2169 | 176 |
| ▲ Ixos 103 | 45 | Even-handed and generous sound, bass has a well-rounded, bouncy quality | | | ● | | ● | ● | | 1692 | 131 |
| Ixos 102 | 60 | A bit bright and undynamic, this cable is nevertheless a good all-rounder, whose faults are largely subtractive | | | ● | | ● | ● | | | 160 |
| Ixos 101 | 100 | A cable with personality: its veiled and shut in quality bring an earthiness to vocals and rhythm guitar alike | | | ● | | ● | ● | ● | 1693 | 131 |
| ▲ Kimber Hero | 110 | Slight roughness detracts from some music; seems well suited to rock and jazz. Lively and detailed | ● | | | | ● | ● | | 2170 | 176 |
| ▲ Moth Ley Line Black | 100 | Offers a full sound, neutral yet very solid and confident in delivery. Expansive imaging retains music's energy | ● | | | | ● | ● | ● | | 108 |
| Moth Ley Line Grey | 200 | Detailed, but there's a sense of distance between music and listener: vocals are coarse rather than liquid | ● | | | | ● | ● | ● | | 108 |
| Nordost Black Knight | 60 | Flat black cable that is distinctive but slightly coloured - but not in a wholly negative manner | ● | | | | ● | ● | | | 160 |
| ▲ Nordost Blue Heaven | 145 | Very good bass and only slightly grainy treble add up to a well integrated, natural-sounding cable | ● | | | | ● | ● | | | 176 |
| ▲ Prowire Silver | 60 | A good cable in every way, with just the occasional hint of coloration and coarseness | | | | | ● | ● | ● | 2171 | 176 |
| PAD Elementa | 145 | A fat, heavy and frankly rather lazy-sounding cable; best with music for small forces | ● | | | | ● | ● | | 2171 | 176 |
| ▲ QED Qnect 2 | 30 | Very well balanced, refined and detailed, this is everything a good cable should be, and excellent value | | | | | ● | ● | ● | 2172 | 176 |
| Silvertone Ex-Static | 35 | Pleasantly unfatiguing and competitively priced cable that lacks detail and insight | | | | | ● | ● | ● | | 160 |
| ▲ SonicLink Silver Pink | 35 | Dynamically sensitive and muddle-free. We're unsure about the flesh-coloured finish though... | ● | | | | ● | ● | ● | | 160 |
| ▲ Sonic Link Black | 49 | Nickel-plated copper with a slight dryness in the bass and a hint of treble roll-off don't compromise integration | ● | | | | ● | ● | ● | 2172 | 176 |
| ▲ Straight Wire Chorus | 40 | A very confident cable with good bass, though perhaps a shade of treble loss | | | ● | | ● | ● | | 2173 | 176 |
| van den Hul The Storm | 25 | Price for 0.8m. Rich and warm but bass is rolled off: however there's plenty of drive and top end is clean | | | ● | | ● | ● | | 1701 | 131 |
| van den Hul Source HB | 50 | Price for 0.8m. Hybrid carbon-fibre/copper cable that is a paragon of naturalness | | | ● | | ● | ● | | | 160 |
| ▲ van den Hul D102 MKIII | 70 | A cable with everything; good bass, treble, imaging and naturalness | | | | | ● | ● | ● | 2173 | 176 |
| van den Hul The First | 210 | Using 12,000 carbon fibres, a gentle and subtle sounding cable that conveys oodles of informatio | | | ● | | ● | ● | | 1702 | 131 |
| van den Hul The Second | 240 | Wonderfully open and relaxing but also intimately detailed, slightly softens percussive dynamics | ● | | | | ● | ● | ● | 1702 | 131 |
| XLO Type 150 | 50 | A restrained but useful cable for taming lively CD players, dynamics lack freedom, treble lacks clarity | | | ● | | ● | ● | | 1703 | 131 |
| ▲ XLO Type 0.1 | 180 | Unusual but highly expressive and detailed with a hint of graininess on powerful vocals | | | | | ● | ● | | 1703 | 131 |
| DIGITAL INTERCONNECTS | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Audioquest Digital Pro | 100 | A silver cable with all the drive of Video Z but lacking its clear-cut transparency | | | | | ● | ● | | | E 108 |
| Chord Codac | 36 | A connection with a stranded inner core and a sound that lacks integration | | | | | ● | ● | | | E 108 |
| ▲ Chord Prodac | 50 | Price for 0.6m length. Lively detailed treble, drives music along confidently with no hint of fizz | | | ● | | ● | ● | | E 1706 | 131 |
| DPA Opti-link | 20 | Sound is lacklustre | | | | | | | | O | 108 |
| ▲ DPA Digi-link | 28 | Can seem slightly impassive but there's no avoiding its exceptionally detailed sound | | | | | ● | ● | ● | | E 108 |
| ▲ Ixos 105 | 25 | Extended but soft-edged treble that's mercifully free of fatiguing colourations; plenty of weight, smooth | | | ● | | ● | ● | | E 1707 | 131 |
| ▲ Kimber Kable Opti-link | 50 | Appears to be a bog-standard PMNA fibre, yet sounds a little brighter and livelier than most | | | | | | | | O | 108 |



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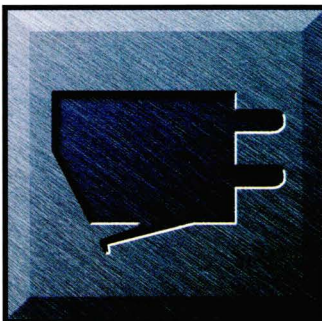
Cables

STATUS

SPECIFICATIONS

SYMMETRICAL COAXIAL STRANDED SOLID CORE COPPER SILVER DIG CABLE TYPE FACTSBACK NO. ISSUE NUMBER

| PRODUCT | (£) | COMMENTS | SYMMETRICAL | COAXIAL | STRANDED | SOLID CORE | COPPER | SILVER | DIG CABLE TYPE | FACTSBACK NO. | ISSUE NUMBER |
|----------------------------|-------|--|-------------|---------|----------|------------|--------|--------|----------------|---------------|--------------|
| Moth Leyline Datalink | 140 | A thin, coaxial version of Leyline Black with a rather hard and unforgiving character. Too expensive | | | | | ● | ● | | | E 108 |
| QED Digiflex | 20 | A top performance, low-loss 75 Ohm coax with a very open, almost liquid quality | | ● | | | ● | ● | | | E 108 |
| Siltech HF-6 | 145 | Sounds detailed, very clean and extended, but bass is less well resolved – a treat for high-end systems | ● | | | | ● | ● | | E 1709 | 131 |
| SonicLink Green | 60 | Spacious, positive and engaging if a bit over-crisp at times – very compelling, however | | | | | ● | ● | ● | E 1709 | 131 |
| van den Hul The First | 125 | Exceptionally natural albeit slightly cautious compared to some. Plenty of subtle information and integration | | | | | ● | ● | | E 1710 | 131 |
| LOUDSPEAKER CABLES | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Audio Note AN-D | 4.50 | Supplied in linear, non-polarised lengths that are twisted into stereo pairs. Sounds rather grippy and forward | | | | | ● | ● | | | 109 |
| Audio Note AN-B | 16.50 | Well suited to valve systems, elastic bass, methodical but unintrusive and musical | | | | | ● | ● | | 1711 | 133 |
| Audio Note AN-L | 29.50 | Fruity bass and expressive vocal rendition was appreciated by the panel, which was happy to accept its foibles | ● | | | | ● | ● | ● | 1712 | 133 |
| Audio Note AN-SP | 150 | A calm and civilised presentation, very quiet in the way it reveals subtle low level detail. Great poise and clarity | ● | | | | ● | ● | ● | | 109 |
| Audioquest F-14 | 2.2 | Ideal for laying under carpets. F-14 encourages a slightly warm and vibrant sound | | | | | ● | ● | | | 109 |
| Audioquest Type 4 | 5 | Four 18-gauge OFHC copper conductors wound in a Litz-type fashion increases capacitance but restrains 'bite' | ● | | | | ● | ● | | | 109 |
| Audioquest Crystal | 25 | Neutral balance is spoiled by some graininess and smearing | ● | | | | ● | ● | | | 168 |
| Bandridge LC7409 | 4 | Detailed and up-beat cable. A bit too steely for classical strings | | | | | ● | ● | | 1800 | 157 |
| Cable Talk Talk 3.1 | 2.25 | Quite well-balanced but tends to lose bass lines in complex music | ● | | | | ● | ● | | | 168 |
| Cable Talk 4.1 | 4.25 | Smooth and cultured sound that lacks fine detail and is a bit too restrained | | | | | ● | ● | | 1800 | 157 |
| DNM LSC350 | 6.95 | Majors on midband and lower treble lucidity at the expense of bass and extreme treble extension | ● | | | | ● | ● | | | 168 |
| DNM LSCB500 | 12 | High impedance can influence the treble response, but this was a winner on sound per pound. Bi-wire | | | | | ● | ● | | 1716 | 133 |
| DPA Black Sixteen | 100 | Unflappable resolution of musical details. No dampening of dynamics, simply oodles of taut information | ● | | | | ● | ● | ● | 1717 | 133 |
| Gale XL189 | 1 | Slightly bright and not too subtle, but a perfectly acceptable cable for any starter system | ● | | | | ● | ● | | | 168 |
| Gale XL315 | 2 | A little lacking in detail but plenty of life and excellent value | | | | | ● | ● | | 1800 | 157 |
| Gale XL160-2 | 2.50 | Rhythmic and bouncy-sounding bi-wire cable. Can be slightly manipulative | | | | | ● | ● | ● | 1800 | 157 |
| Goertz M2 | 32 | Remarkably detailed, smooth, neutral and with excellent bass; check amplifier compatibility | ● | | | | ● | ● | | | 168 |
| Heybrook Heywire | 3.5 | This well-meaning facsimile of earlier ribbon cables ends up sounding lumpy and uneven | | | | | ● | ● | | | 109 |
| Hitachi LC-OFc | 7 | Very crisp, very clear and very confident. In the right system would be very expensive to better | ● | | | | ● | ● | | | 109 |
| Kimber 4TC | 19.6 | A well-balanced cable with good performance in all areas | ● | | | | ● | ● | | | 168 |
| Naim NACA 5 | 5.5 | A 'dinosaur of a cable', this stiff wire rod doesn't belong outside Naim systems, where it works a treat | | | | | ● | ● | | | 109 |
| Nordost Octava | 3 | Fair bass but confused treble and some coloration | ● | | | | ● | ● | | | 168 |
| Ortofon SPK100 | 3 | Grey-sounding – strips instruments of their natural richness and resonance. A bit bass-shy, too | | | | | ● | ● | | | 133 |
| Ortofon SPK300 | 8 | Tremendously open and atmospheric, with robust, full-blooded bass – if slightly bright at times | | | | | ● | ● | ● | | 133 |
| Puresonic 7845 | 1.95 | Big, weighty sound – but too messy and bloated for its own good | | | | | ● | ● | | 1800 | 157 |
| Puresonic 7891 | 2.85 | Chunky cable design; shame about the sound quality | ● | | | | ● | ● | | 1800 | 157 |
| QED Qudos | 2.25 | Despite high-tech design and excellent Air-Loc plugs, its music-making failed to gel | | | | | ● | ● | | 1800 | 157 |
| QED Profile 4x4 | 9 | Good midrange and treble balance, but bass is rather slack and detail not outstanding | | | | | ● | ● | | | 168 |
| Silver Sounds 12 gauge | 15 | Basic 'homemade' construction gives fairly neutral sound. Price not outstandingly competitive | ● | | | | ● | ● | | | 168 |
| Sonic Link S300 | 18 | Happiest with simple music; tends to smudge detail in complex pieces | ● | | | | ● | ● | | | 168 |
| SonicLink AST50 | 1.95 | It may look like bell-wire, but AST50 sounds detailed, ordered and balanced | | | | | ● | ● | ● | 1800 | 157 |
| van den Hul The Clearwater | 7 | Despite its evocative title, the Clearwater turns out to be a disappointingly murky-sounding cable | | | | | ● | ● | ● | | 109 |
| van den Hul The Magnum | 38 | Touted as vdh's most prestigious twin-lead cable, Magnum sounds soft and old fashioned | | | | | ● | ● | ● | | 109 |
| van den Hul The Wind | 40 | 'The Wind' kicks up a storm with its lush midrange and bone-crunching bass! | | | | | ● | ● | ● | | 109 |
| van den Hul Revolution | 76 | Silver-plated OFC combined with carbon fibre prompts a sombre character with an easy and relaxed treble | | | | | ● | ● | ● | 1726 | 133 |
| XLO Pro Type 625 | 4 | Lively but natural and relaxed-sounding – a hint of congestion at frequency extremes | | | | | ● | ● | ● | 1726 | 133 |
| XLO Pro 600 | 16.60 | Basically neutral tonality but can become aggressive and two-dimensional | ● | | | | ● | ● | | | 168 |



Cartridges

Cartridges fall into two groups: high output MM (moving magnet) models, capable of working directly into most phono inputs, and generally more expensive low- and very-low-output MC (moving coil) models. MC cartridges usually have better mechanical integrity, tighter tolerances and give better performance. Many amplifiers are no longer equipped with the necessary phono input for a cartridge, and a separate phono stage is necessary. Phono-input-equipped valve amps need a transformer to cope with MC cartridges. ■ Even basic high-output MM cartridge designs will benefit from a customised amplifier input load. Consult your dealer for further details on this topic.

KEY TO SPECIFICATIONS

- **MM:** Moving-magnet cartridge with a normal output, suitable for all amplifier/phono inputs.
 - **MC:** Moving-coil cartridge with a low output, only suitable for high-sensitivity MC amplifier/phono inputs.
 - **REPLACEABLE STYLUS:** Most MM cartridges have a stylus (needle) that can be removed and replaced when worn out.
 - **OUTPUT (mV):** Cartridge output in millivolts.
 - **MASS (G):** The mass of your chosen cartridge
- affects the choice of partnering tonearm. Consult dealers or manufacturers to establish which arms and pickups work well together.
- **FACTSBACK REFERENCE:** The Factsback Reference number permits direct access to our faxed review reprint service. For full info, see the Factsback advert at the rear of this Directory.
 - **ISSUE NUMBER:** The issue of Hi-Fi Choice in which an original review appeared.
 - **\$:** Indicates a Statements Review

B BEST BUY **R RECOMMENDED** **E EDITOR'S CHOICE**

Cartridges

SPECIFICATIONS

REPLACEABLE STYLUS OUTPUT (mV) MASS (G) FACTSBACK NO. ISSUE NUMBER

| PRODUCT | (£) | COMMENTS | MM | MC | REPLACEABLE STYLUS | OUTPUT (mV) | MASS (G) | FACTSBACK NO. | ISSUE NUMBER |
|---------------------------|-------|--|----|----|--------------------|-------------|----------|---------------|--------------|
| Audio Technica AT-95E | 20 | Clear and dynamic, though richly balanced | | | ● | 2.8 | | | 48 |
| Clearaudio Signature | 1,495 | A great all-round performer with fine dynamic vitality and a seductive midband intimacy | | | | 0.55 | 11.5 | 2142 | 175 |
| Denon DL110 | 70 | A fine all-rounder, this high output MC model is likely to perform well | | ● | | 1.0 | 6 | | 48 |
| Denon DL160 | 90 | Although listeners just preferred the 110, its brother here survived lab tests and is still 'thoroughly competent' | | ● | | 0.1 | 6 | | 43 |
| Denon DL103 | 100 | Good performance in bass and good 'life'. Is seriously let down by its spherical stylus which kills subtle detail | | ● | | 0.1 | 6 | | 103 |
| Denon DL304 | 200 | Uncoloured, detailed, tracks superbly. Top notch altogether, and a bargain at the price | | ● | | | | | 103 |
| Dynavector Karat 17D2 mk2 | 450 | Clean and controlled sound with taut, tuneful bass. Detailed and musically cogent | | ● | | 0.15 | 5.3 | | 158 |

CONTINUED

Cartridges

STATUS

SPECIFICATIONS

REPLACEABLE STYLUS
MM MC
OUTPUT (mV)
MASS (g)
FACTSBACK NO.
ISSUE NUMBER

| PRODUCT | (£) | COMMENTS | REPLACEABLE STYLUS | MM | MC | OUTPUT (mV) | MASS (g) | FACTSBACK NO. | ISSUE NUMBER |
|-------------------------------|-------|---|--------------------|----|----|-------------|----------|---------------|--------------|
| Dynavector Te-Kaitora | 1,698 | A real smoothie, but pricey. Worth checking out for its delicate laid-back transparency and low needle-talk | ● | | | 0.25 | 8.5 | 2142 | 175 |
| Dynavector XX-1L | 998 | Very clear, very detailed; a response lift around 20kHz seems to do no harm | ● | | | 0.25 | 12 | | 84 |
| Dynavector XX-1 | 998 | Good, but not immensely competitive at the price, and not helped by comparison with the low output version | ● | | | 2.0 | 12 | | 84 |
| Goldring Elan | 19 | A lightweight and frisky-sounding MM apparently based on Nagaoka MM4 body | ● | | | 5.0 | 7 | | 67 |
| Goldring 1012GX | 79 | Slightly harsh but plenty of life and detail. Some high frequency colouration apparent | ● | | | 6.5 | 7 | | 85 |
| Goldring 1022GX | 99 | As with 1012, a touch harsh; detail and transient purity improved | ● | | | 6.5 | 7 | | 85 |
| Goldring Eroica LX | 110 | Not the most subtle cartridge in the world: can sound edgy at times, but lively and informative | ● | | | 0.5 | 8 | | 84 |
| Goldring 1042 | 120 | Not terribly subtle, and not such good value alongside 1012 and 1022. Quite lively, though | ● | | | 6.5 | 6 | | 91 |
| Goldring Elite | 220 | The basics are right, and it will cheerfully tackle any source material, but its sound is not the cleanest | ● | | | 0.5 | 8 | | 103 |
| Goldring Excel VX | 525 | Good bass drive but dull and imprecise higher up. An old-fashioned sound that falls short of the true high end | ● | | | 0.45 | 8 | 2143 | 175 |
| Grado Prestige Gold | 149 | Rich sounding with an unusually refined top-end for a moving magnet-type cartridge | ● | | | 4 | 6 | | 158 |
| Grado Reference | 995 | Loads of tracking headroom but treble is limited. A prospect for mid-oriented valve amp users | ● | | | 1.7 | 6.5 | 2143 | 175 |
| Linn K9 | 125 | Linn improved this model by beefing up the Bak's bodywork and adding a super stylus | ● | | | 4.5 | 5 | | Col |
| London Decca Maroon | 259 | Now manufactured under the London brand name, this Decca cartridge is as iconoclastic as ever | ● | | | 5.0 | 6 | | 67 |
| London Decca S Gold | 399 | Immediate and detailed, but coloured and nonlinear, with a questionable effect on records | ● | | | 5.0 | 6 | | 84 |
| Lyra Lydian | 649 | Superbly capable all-round musical performer that improves markedly when its body cover is removed | ● | | | 0.3 | 7 | | 158 |
| Lyra Clavis Da Capo | 995 | A stable tracker, and one of the finest cartridges we've heard | ● | | | 0.1 | 7 | | 143 |
| Lyra Parnassus D.Ct | 1,895 | A real little jewel of a cartridge, with many good qualities, but handicapped by a rather too obvious treble peak | ● | | | 0.22 | 10.5 | 2144 | 175 |
| Ortofon 510/P | 38 | For the price, a good blend of virtues – weight, clarity and neutrality | ● | | | 3.0 | 5 | | 85 |
| Ortofon 520/P | 65 | Sensitive to load capacitance, but the 520/P has a lively, effervescent sound | ● | | | 3.0 | 5 | | 67 |
| Ortofon MC3 Turbo | 130 | The 3 Turbo is bright, cheerful and bouncy, but unsubtle – take it as it comes! | ● | | | 3.3 | 4 | | 103 |
| Ortofon MC15 Super II | 130 | A good all-rounder, with outstanding resolution, if slightly bright and close up | ● | | | 0.35 | 7 | | 103 |
| Ortofon MC25E | 180 | An excellent upgrade for a mid-price turntable | ● | | | 0.5 | 11 | | 139 |
| Ortofon MC25FL | 250 | A bit too stark and honest, but faithful to what's on the LP | ● | | | 0.5 | 11 | | 139 |
| Ortofon MC30 Supreme | 525 | Highly detailed and even-sounding cartridge that has a special affinity with female vocal recordings | ● | | | 0.5 | 10.7 | | 158 |
| Ortofon Rohmann | 1,000 | A class act in nearly every respect, with fine groove security and a very smooth and even-handed sound | ● | | | 0.25 | 8.5 | 2144 | 175 |
| Ortofon MC3000II | 1,100 | A real ear-opener. Nothing to criticise anywhere – one of the very best | ● | | | 0.12 | 10 | | 84 |
| Ortofon MC5000 | 1,500 | Limited tracking ability, bright and forward sound, but good stereo | ● | | | 0.12 | 10 | | 91 |
| Rega Bias | 39 | Difficult to mount in some arms due to its shallow body, but the Bias offers a gentle, refined sound | ● | | | 5 | 4 | | 67 |
| Rega Elys | 85 | Clearly superior to the Bias, the Elys is more detailed, accurate and convincing | ● | | | 5.0 | 5 | | 67 |
| Roksan Corus Black | 130 | Recognisably related to the Corus Blue, but smoother and more civilised | ● | | | 6.5 | 5 | | 91 |
| van den Hul MM-1 | 250 | If woody midrange could be tamed, imaging and security would pull it through | ● | | | 5.5 | 6 | | 103 |
| van den Hul DDT-II | 600 | Outstanding stereo imaging and neutral balance are appealing, but rhythmically the DDT-II is a bit lazy | ● | | | 0.35 | 7.6 | | 158 |
| van den Hul MC-10 | 750 | A neutral, balanced performer, gives fine depth and focus and a firm, extended bass | ● | | | 0.4 | 6 | | 60 |
| van den Hul MC-One | 900 | This extends all the positive qualities of the 10, but adds greater authority and scale – worth all the extra money | ● | | | 0.4 | 6 | | 60 |
| van den Hul MC-Two | 1,200 | MC-Two rewards with a highly detailed yet fluid and musically convincing portrayal | ● | | | 0.4 | 6 | | 72 |
| van den Hul Frog | 1,500 | Seems to control/suppress surface noise better than its rivals. This delicate and subtle performer has great charm | ● | | | 0.65 | 7 | 2145 | 175 |
| van den Hul G' hopper III/IIA | 2,800 | Undoubtedly one of the finest cartridges available. It has tremendous bandwidth, energy and finesse | ● | | | 0.4 | 6 | | 122 |
| Wilson benesch Matrix | 786 | Extraordinarily well balanced cartridge: neutral and detailed yet lively and rhythmically assertive | ● | | | 0.58 | 6 | | 158 |
| Wilson benesch Carbon | 1,573 | Carbon fibre body contributes to a delightfully clean and open midrange, and a quick, lively and coherent sound | ● | | | 0.45 | 7 | 2145 | 175 |

Cassette Decks

The compact cassette is still the world's most versatile and ubiquitous music storage medium. Cassette decks hook up to the 'tape loop' inputs and outputs offered by most modern amplifiers. It's worth taking care to choose the best tapes for a specific machine. For example, expensive metal tapes will be a wasted investment for a cheap deck. Many better-specified decks have manual or automatic bias adjustment to get the best from specific samples of tape. Twin decks offer the possibility of copying from tape to tape, playing two cassettes sequentially or recording onto two tapes at once. Autoreverse is a useful feature, but uni-directional mechanisms promise better sound. Dolby S is the ultimate noise reduction system, and three-head decks permit record monitoring off-tape.

KEY TO SPECIFICATIONS

- **DOLBY B/C:** The first and second Dolby hiss-killers.
- **DOLBY S:** A desirable derivative of Dolby SR professional noise-reduction.
- **DOLBY HX-PRO:** Extends headroom for cassette recording.
- **3-HEAD:** Permits monitoring off-tape while you're recording.
- **TWIN DECK:** Contains two decks for dubbing and continuous play.
- **AUTOREVERSE:** Automatically plays both sides of the cassette.
- **AUTO CALIBRATION:** The deck will automatically set up bias and EQ for any tape.
- **ADJUSTABLE BIAS:** Permits manual optimisation of tape.
- **FACTSBACK REFERENCE:** The Factsback Reference number permits direct access to our faxed review reprint service. For full info, see the Factsback advert at the rear of this Directory.
- **ISSUE NUMBER:** The issue of Hi-Fi Choice in which an original review appeared.
- **RS** Indicates a Statements Review

B BEST BUY

R RECOMMENDED

E EDITOR'S CHOICE

Cassette Decks

STATUS

SPECIFICATIONS

DOLBY C
DOLBY S
DOLBY HX-PRO
3-HEAD
TWIN DECK
AUTO CALIBRATION
ADJUSTABLE BIAS
FACTSBACK NO.
ISSUE NO.

| PRODUCT | (£) | COMMENTS | DOLBY C | DOLBY S | DOLBY HX-PRO | 3-HEAD | TWIN DECK | AUTO CALIBRATION | ADJUSTABLE BIAS | FACTSBACK NO. | ISSUE NO. |
|----------------|-----|--|---------|---------|--------------|--------|-----------|------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|
| Aiwa AD-F450 | 120 | Basic but well-designed deck. Astonishing value; only the poor metering gives the game away | ● | | | | | | | 1513 | 136 |
| Aiwa AD-WX727 | 170 | High-class twin for those who want bells, whistles – and music | ● | | | | | | | 1377 | 146 |
| Denon DRM-550 | 160 | There are some technical limitations, but this remains a fine-sounding deck, and excellent value | ● | | | | | | | | 158 |
| Denon DRW-580 | 200 | Twin deck: OK for casual use, but will quickly pall with more quality critical applications | ● | | | | | | | | 171 |
| Denon DRS-640 | 200 | Draw-loading deck, with simple facilities and smooth, well-adjusted sound | ● | | | | | | | 1591 | 140 |
| Denon DRM-650S | 230 | An improvement on predecessors, it offers a wide-ranging, sound. Dolby S is not the best feature | ● | ● | | | | | | 1920 | 164 |
| Denon DRM-740 | 270 | Breathed-on DRM-710, with good external treatment, offers good, if somewhat detached sonics | ● | | | | | | | 1514 | 136 |
| Denon DRS-810 | 310 | Draw-loading deck, carefully designed yet lacking in subtlety on audition | ● | | | | | | | | 127 |

CONTINUED

CD/DVD Players

| SPECIFICATIONS | | | | | | | ISSUE NUMBER |
|------------------------|-----------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|---------------------|----------------|
| AES/EBU DIGITAL OUTPUT | OPTICAL DIG OUT | 5T OPT DIG OUT | BAL ANALOGUE OUT | HEADPHONE SOCKET | VARIABLE OUTPUT | MULTI-DISC DAC TYPE | FACTS/BACK NO. |

STATUS

| PRODUCT | (£) | COMMENTS | AES/EBU DIGITAL OUTPUT | OPTICAL DIG OUT | 5T OPT DIG OUT | BAL ANALOGUE OUT | HEADPHONE SOCKET | VARIABLE OUTPUT | MULTI-DISC DAC TYPE | FACTS/BACK NO. |
|---------------------------|-------|--|------------------------|-----------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|---------------------|----------------|
| harmay/kardon HD710 | 200 | A player of integrity, but can sound a bit hard and rough when extended, and is amplifier fussy | ● | | | | | | ● | 1bit 159 |
| harmay/kardon HD730 | 300 | Competitive at the price, with a coloured but dynamic and outgoing sound, good features | ● | | | | | | ● | BS 1957 166 |
| harmony/kardon FL8300 | 300 | Generally capable changer with relaxed sound and firm bass. Just a hint of roughness on occasion | ● | ● | | | | | ● | MB 2220 178 |
| Helios Model 2 | 950 | This player may not be to everyone's taste, but it is an individual, with some interesting things to say | ● | | | | | | | 1bit 2180 176 |
| JVC XL-V184BK | 120 | Excellent budget player, well presented, a little opaque, but its heart is in the right place | | | | | | | ● | 1bit 2072 172 |
| JVC XL-V284BK | 140 | Featuring a new set of bitstream innards, this flexible player has a refined sound | | | | | | | ● | 1bit 1270 147 |
| JVC XL-Z574 | 250 | Strong resolving power, good midband and dynamics, but slightly raw and thin | | | | | | | ● | 1bit 159 |
| JVC XL-Z674BK | 300 | Even-handed, but glosses over the most intimate moments | ● | | | | | | ● | 1bit 1637 151 |
| Kenwood DP-3080 | 170 | Bold, dynamic and outgoing sound, though somewhat aggressive. Poor build quality and finish | | | | ● | | | ● | 1bit 159 |
| Kenwood DP-4090 | 250 | Focuses a clear, wide aperture lens on the music – and has CD Text too! | | | | ● | | | ● | 1bit 2076 172 |
| Kenwood DP-5090 | 300 | Disappointing senior brother to the excellent DP-4090, but surface interface is good | | | | ● | | | ● | 1-bit 2267 179 |
| Kenwood DP-7090 | 400 | A lively and compelling performer with an even-handed and coherent disposition | | | | ● | | | ● | MB 1885 163 |
| Linn Mimik | 875 | Useful multi-room features matched to strong bass, but poor imagery and transparency | ● | | | | | | | Hyb 1762 155 |
| Marantz CD-63MkII Ki Sig | 500 | It's the quintessential sound of Marantz – warm, open, and smooth almost to a fault | ● | ● | | | | | ● | Hyb 169 |
| Marantz CD-67SE | 350 | Refined, enjoyable player, though ultimately a little soft-centred | ● | ● | | | | | ● | BS 1958 166 |
| Marantz CD-67 Mk II | 250 | The digital equivalent of a safe pair of hands. Smooooth | ● | ● | | | | | ● | BS 2268 179 |
| Marantz CD-48 | 200 | Somewhat inconsistent, middle ranking player which hints at better things | ● | | | | | | ● | 1bit 2077 172 |
| Marantz CD-17 | 800 | Fabulous packaging and an excellent all round performer: smooth, detailed and consistent | ● | ● | | | | | | BS 1763 155 |
| Marantz CD-17KIS | 1,100 | Minor QC problems aside, this is a superbly turned-out machine, but ultimately a little bland | ● | ● | | | | | ● | BS 2181 176 |
| Meracus Tanto | 1,395 | Believable tonal colours and textures, refinement takes preference over dynamics – but it's not cheap | ● | | | | | | | DS 169 |
| Meridian 506 | 1,100 | Revised 506 includes MSR remote and a new D/A chip, which makes it livelier and more detailed | ● | ● | | | | | | 1 bit 2182 176 |
| Meridian 508 (20-bit) | 1,995 | Combines a delicate mid and treble with rich, opulent bass and has impressive low-level resolution | ● | | | | | ● | | BS 1886 163 |
| Mission Cyrus dAD3 | 598 | A relaxed style of delivery that convinces with guile and subtlety rather than orchestral ordnance | | | | | | | | BS 1887 163 |
| Mission Cyrus dAD3Q | 898 | Lucid, transparent and uncontrived sound quality, superb build, and readily upgradeable | | | | ● | | | | MB 1887 169 |
| Monrio Privilege | 995 | Costly and well-engineered, but ultimately rather heavy-handed and dull, if refined player | ● | | | | | | | MB 1963 166 |
| Musical Fidelity E60 | 300 | This entry-level player lacks proper stereo localisation and clarity | ● | | | ● | | | | BS 1959 166 |
| Musical Fidelity A2 | 500 | Warm (too warm), attractive and open player, a great improvement on (related) E60 | ● | | | ● | | | | BS 169 |
| Musical Fidelity FCD | 1,500 | A forward disposition makes this perfect for Fenders but less appropriate to Guarneris | ● | | | | | ● | | BS 1888 163 |
| Myryad MC100 | 700 | A little extra get-up-and-go wouldn't go amiss, but its sheer maturity and composure ensure listenability | ● | | | | | | | BS 1889 163 |
| Myryad MCD500 | 1,300 | Well-built, attractive player, showing much promise, but can be a little heavy-going on audition | ● | | | | | | | 1bit 2185 176 |
| NAD 522 | 170 | Crude, mechanical sounding player fails to tickle the music buds | | | | | | | | 1 bit 2262 179 |
| NAD 510 | 200 | Pale version of NAD's senior CD players with a stripped-down feature count | | | | | | | | 1bit 2078 172 |
| NAD 512 | 250 | Simple, well-focused presentation, and articulate with it. Hard-nosed quality is not everyone's cup of tea | ● | | | | | | | 1bit 159 |
| NAD 523 | 250 | Nothing seriously amiss with this classic NAD 'no-frills' changer, but it lacks that vital spark | | | | | | | ● | Hyb 2222 178 |
| NAD 514 | 370 | Boisterous sound, but undeniably attractive | ● | | | | | | ● | BS 1639 151 |
| Naim Audio CD3 | 1,000 | The idiosyncratically packaged CD3 is solid and highly articulate. Always has its feet on the ground | | | | | | | | MB 1765 155 |
| Naim Audio CD2 | 2,000 | Provides bags of detail with a solid stereo focus but not all the romanticism we know to be possible | | | | | | | | MB 1890 163 |
| Onkyo DX-7210 | 260 | Well-bred CD player features an unusual digital filter, is smooth and cultured without appearing boring | ● | ● | | | | | ● | BS 1273 147 |
| Onkyo DX-7510 | 400 | Strongly flavoured, assertive sound | ● | | | ● | | | ● | BS 1640 151 |
| Orelle CD-100EA | 649 | Excellent imagery, timing and transparency, and readily upgraded or reconfigured | ● | ● | | | | | | MB 1964 166 |
| Philips CD-721 | 130 | Surprisingly well-sorted, articulate if slightly glossy and attractively presented sound. Captive signal lead | | | | | | | | 1bit 159 |
| Philips CD751 | 150 | Inconsistent and occasionally opaque and scrawny sounding cheapie | ● | | | | | | ● | 1bit 172 |
| Pioneer PD-S705 | 300 | This machine was loved by some for its artistry and disliked by others for sounding too impressive! | ● | | | ● | | | | BS 1891 163 |
| Pioneer PD-F906 | 350 | Interesting appearance and concept, but this changer's sound is lacklustre and ergonomics frustrating | | | | ● | | | ● | 1bit 2223 178 |
| Pioneer PD-S904 | 400 | Too much legato – literally – in sound, but a very smooth performer | ● | | | ● | | | | 1bit 1641 151 |
| Pioneer PDS-06 | 550 | Technologically sophisticated. Pioneer's first multi-bit player for years is polished and capable | ● | ● | | | | | ● | MB 2176 176 |
| Pioneer PD-S505 Precision | 460 | A sure, fluid-sounding player, with great spatial coherence | ● | | | | | | ● | 1bit 1965 166 |
| Quad 77 | 900 | A true thoroughbred combining a penetrating insight into detail with poise rarely found at the price | | | | | | | | Hyb 1893 163 |
| Roksan DP3P | 1,495 | Dramatic and compelling. Classical listeners should be ready to 'air conduct' when auditioning | ● | | | | | | | BS 1896 163 |
| Roksan Caspian | 895 | Solid, articulate, and fundamentally well-engineered player, but with some subtle low-level limitations | ● | | | | | | | Hyb 169 |
| Rotel RCD-970BX | 375 | A combination of solid build, useful facilities and an attention-grabbing sound make this a winner | ● | | | | | | | BS 1897 163 |
| Sherwood CD-4030R | 180 | Easy on the ear, smooth-sounding player, with limits set by the slightly soft, compressed quality | | | | ● | | | ● | BS 159 |
| Sherwood CD1 | 1,100 | A very neutral, even handed sounding player with a rather flat, lifeless sound. Beautiful construction | ● | | | ● | | | | BS 1899 163 |
| Sony CDP-XE310 | 140 | Excellent value and bright as a button, but can sound OTT in some systems | | | | ● | | | ● | 1-bit 179 |
| Sony CDP-XE510 | 180 | Souped up CDP-XE500 which tells a rather bland and unengaging story | | | | ● | | | ● | 1bit 172 |
| Sony CDP-XE900E | 300 | Refined and analytical disc scavenging tool, some distinctive colourations make auditioning vital | | | | ● | | | | BS 159 |
| Sony CDP-XA20ES | 450 | High tech, with a long list of gadgets, oddly configured player that ultimately sounds less than compelling | ● | | | ● | | | ● | 1-bit 2177 176 |
| Sony CDP-X3000ES | 500 | Shoobox format player, looks to die for, switchable digital filters to tweak the already excellent sound | ● | | | ● | | | | BS 169 |
| Teac CDP-3450SE | 200 | For once a budget player where gadgets take second place to respectable, budget amp-friendly sonics | ● | | | ● | | | ● | 1bit 1960 166 |
| Teac CD-5 | 350 | Bright, breezy and up-beat – but short in the trouser department | ● | | | ● | | | ● | BS 1643 151 |
| Teac VRDS-7 | 599 | Although bold and outgoing, this player can sound both intrusive yet lacking in fine detail | ● | | | ● | | | | BS 1769 155 |
| Teac VRDS-9 | 700 | Well-presented. This Teac is crisp, yet shallow, and inconsistent in sound quality and partnering skills | ● | | | ● | | | ● | 1-bit 2178 176 |
| Teac VRDS-10SE | 850 | Superbly built and presented, but rather leaden bass, with an over-prominent mid/top | ● | | | ● | | | | BS 169 |
| Teac VRDS-25 | 1,300 | A solid player in all respects, combining powerful sound with state-of-the-art technology | ● | | | | | | | MB 1903 163 |
| Technic SL-PG480A | 130 | Full driving sound, but somewhat uneven in balance with a unsubtle, slightly harsh top end | | | | | | | ● | 1bit 159 |
| Technics SL-PS670D | 200 | Fine, middle ranking player which sounds solid, sometimes even a little stolid | | | | ● | | | ● | 1 bit 2264 179 |
| Technic SL-PS770D | 250 | High tech and well built technology battleship which smoothes the rough edges off the music | | | | ● | | | ● | BS 2080 172 |
| Technics SL-MC410 | 250 | If you fancy a CD player that holds 111 discs, this one's cheap, pretty capable, and easy to use | | | | | | | ● | Hyb 2224 178 |
| Trichord Genesis | 549 | Breathed-on Pioneer is warm and mellifluous, but ultimately lacks drive and authority. | ● | | | | | | ● | Hyb 169 |
| Trichord Revelation | 799 | Well-ordered and clean sound that may be a little too refined for some, images well | ● | | | | | | ● | 1bit 1966 166 |
| XTC CDP-1 | 1,250 | Bright and sometimes abrasive, but detailed player | ● | | | | | | ● | MB 2186 176 |

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CD/DVD Players

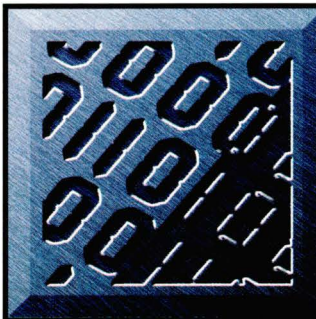
SPECIFICATIONS

AES/EBU ELEC DIG OUT
OPTICAL DIG OUT
ST OPT DIG OUT
BAL ANALOGUE OUT
HEADPHONE SOCKET
VARIABLE OUTPUT
MULTI-DISC
DAC TYPE
FACTSBACK NO.
ISSUE NUMBER

STATUS

| PRODUCT | (£) | COMMENTS | AES/EBU ELEC DIG OUT | OPTICAL DIG OUT | ST OPT DIG OUT | BAL ANALOGUE OUT | HEADPHONE SOCKET | VARIABLE OUTPUT | MULTI-DISC | DAC TYPE | FACTSBACK NO. | ISSUE NUMBER |
|-----------------------------------|-------|---|----------------------|-----------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------|----------|---------------|--------------|
| Yamaha CDC-665 | 220 | This player offers many features and highly listenable sound, with tidy and tuneful bass and good imaging | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | 1bit 2225 | 178 |
| TRANSPORTS | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Arcam Delta 250 | 800 | This model is based on a Philips CDM9 transport. Specification includes Sync Lock facility | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | - 1491 | 130 |
| Audiolab 8000CDM | 1,400 | Super-slick transport and basically very honest sound, but lacking the last degree of fine detail | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | - 1867 | 162 |
| Linn Karik | 1,850 | Based on early Linn transport, the Karik is dry but very positive, detailed and engrossing | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | - 1323 | 144 |
| Meridian 500 | 1,245 | When used with the 563 DAC, we found the combination is thin, brash and uncomfortable | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | - 1103 | 133 |
| PS Audio Lambda | 2,250 | With Ultralink Two, sound positively sparkles with colour and resonant detail | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | - 1106 | 133 |
| Roksan Atessa ATT-DP3 | 1,295 | Not the most detailed or refined but capable of sounding exciting with the right material | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | 1bit 1867 | 162 |
| Teac VRDS-T1 | 550 | Superb quality engineering is mated to tidy and composed sound (tested with D-T1) | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | - 1325 | 144 |
| Theta Data Basic II | 2,397 | Uses a Philips CDM9 Pro mechanism and works a treat with more lively DACs | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | - 1494 | 130 |
| Thorens TCD2000 | 999 | Lively presentation not helped by rather loose bass and splashy treble. (Tested with TDA 2000 DAC) | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | - 1867 | 162 |
| Trichord Digital Turntable | 699 | Very detailed, precise, controlled yet involving; a first-rank performer | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | - 1867 | 162 |
| Wadia 8 | 3,195 | Budget version of Teac's VRDS mechanism in a fancy case; too expensive for the performance on offer | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | - 1495 | 130 |
| DACS | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Arcam Black Box 50 | 350 | Measured and sophisticated sound from a DAC that leaves plenty in reserve for future upgrades | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | Hyb 1506 | 133 |
| Arcam Black Box 500 | 500 | Sophisticated unit with sync lock and discrete DAC | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | BS 1519 | 136 |
| Audio Note DAC1 | 675 | Oddball DAC with manual de-emphasis switch. Needs a high preamp input impedance or bass will suffer | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | MB 127 | |
| Linn Numerik | 1,500 | A new 20-bit DAC and revised Karik transport have cleaned up; but sounds a bit dry and humourless | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | MB 1323 | 144 |
| PS Audio UltraLink 2 HDCD | 2,590 | The sound positively sparkles with colour and resonant detail. (Tested with Lambda transport) | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | MB 1106 | 133 |
| PS Audio Reference Link | 4,550 | Consolidates reputation of PS Audio for high performance digital electronics | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | MB 1069 | 132 |
| Roksan Atessa ATT-DA2/DS5 | 1,145 | Not the most detailed or refined but capable of good excitement with the right material | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | 1bit 1867 | 162 |
| Teac D-T1 | 500 | Teamed with VRDS-T1 for test, this superb quality unit is tidy and composed | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | BS 1325 | 144 |
| Teac D-700 | 600 | With P-700, the D-700 may lack the resolution, but is bubbly and entertaining | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | MB 120 | 120 |
| Thorens TDA2000 | 700 | Lively and up-front presentation not helped by rather loose bass and splashy treble | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | BS 1867 | 162 |
| Trichord Pulsar Series One | 1,395 | Very detailed, precise, controlled yet involving; a first-rank performer. Switchable phase, dither etc | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | Hyb 1867 | 162 |
| DVD PLAYERS | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Denon DVD-3000 | 700 | Enjoyable rather than analytical, includes 24/96 and AC-3/MPEG-2 Audio | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | BS 180 | 180 |
| Panasonic DVD-A350 | 700 | 24/96 converter and AC-3 & MPEG-2 Audio included, well balanced, if slightly blurred and shut in | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | BS 180 | 180 |
| Pioneer DV-505 | 450 | Plenty of analysis, with a slightly ragged edge. Rescued by the price & S/PDIF capabilities | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | BS 180 | 180 |
| Pioneer DVL-909 | 900 | DVD and LD player: self-recommending to AV nuts; musically detailed but occasionally seems disjointed | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | BS 180 | 180 |
| Sony DVP-S715 | 600 | 24/96 converter for DAD compatibility, sharp, forward, but slightly unsubtle sound | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | BS 180 | 180 |
| Toshiba SD3107B | 550 | Dynamic sound and good stereo which lacks lowest stratum of detail | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | BS 180 | 180 |

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Digital Recorders

Domestic digital recording has been possible since the launch of digital audio tape (DAT) in the '80s. Since then DAT has remained expensive and largely esoteric, favoured only by well-heeled or professional users. Digital Compact Cassette and MiniDisc (MD) were launched in the early '90s but only MD has stayed the course. A little later came domestic CD-Recorders using CD-R discs, while the latest twist is the arrival of rerecordable CDs known as CD-RW discs. The recording quality hierarchy is as follows: DAT, CD-R/CD-RW, MD. MD is probably the most convenient to use, and offers sophisticated editing facilities, while CD-R is ideal for making digital 'dones' of prerecorded CDs. DAT is the medium of choice for high-quality location recording.

KEY TO SPECIFICATIONS

- **FORMAT:** Type of recorder - see left for descriptions.
- **DAC TYPE:** Digital to analogue converter: BS - Philips Bitstream; MB - multibit; Hyb - hybrid of multibit and bitstream; 1bit - single bit types such as MASH, bitstream, PWM etc.
- **ADC TYPE:** The analogue to digital converter (ADC) converts sound into digits during live recording. Types of ADC are as per DACs (qv).
- **PORTABLE:** Battery operable, but not necessarily personal-stereo-sized.
- **OPTICAL IN/OUTPUTS:** Digital socketry for optical cable.
- **ELEC IN/OUTPUTS:** Digital socketry for electrical cable.
- **FACTSBACK REFERENCE:** The Factsback Reference number permits direct access to our faxed review reprint service. For full info, see the Factsback advert at the rear of this Directory.
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- **S** Indicates a Statements Review

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STATUS

Digital Recorders

SPECIFICATIONS

FORMAT
DAC TYPE
ADC TYPE
OPTICAL IN/OUTPUTS
ELEC IN/OUTPUTS
PORTABLE
FACTSBACK NO.
ISSUE NUMBER

| PRODUCT | (£) | COMMENTS | FORMAT | DAC TYPE | ADC TYPE | OPTICAL IN/OUTPUTS | ELEC IN/OUTPUTS | PORTABLE | FACTSBACK NO. | ISSUE NUMBER |
|------------------------|-------|--|--------|----------|----------|--------------------|-----------------|----------|---------------|--------------|
| Denon DMD-1300 | 500 | Sound sometimes lacks integration but tonal balance is good and it handles loud music with panache | MD | BS | BS | ● | ● | ● | 2193 | 177 |
| Kenwood DM-9090 | 550 | Slight sibilance and image vagueness do not detract from excellent balance and solid bass | MD | BS | BS | ● | ● | ● | 2194 | 177 |
| Onkyo MD-121 | 450 | Mid-sized deck that sounds slightly coloured at times, though immediate and lively | MD | BS | BS | ● | ● | ● | 2195 | 177 |
| Philips CDR-880 | 500 | Philips' second CD-ReWritable deck sets new low price point and banishes its forbear's jitter problems. | CD-R | BS | BS | ● | ● | ● | 179 | |
| Pioneer PDR-04 | 700 | Scaled down version of the PDR-05 with auto level setting but all the socketry and features you need to make CDs | CD-R | BS | BS | ● | ● | ● | 171 | |
| Pioneer D-05 | 900 | Second generation 96kHz DAT recorder can offer startling realism | DAT | BS | BS | ● | ● | ● | 1652 | 152 |
| Pioneer PDR-05 | 1,000 | The first domestic CD-R deck - excellent sound quality | CD-R | BS | BS | ● | ● | ● | 1652 | 152 |
| Pioneer D-C88 | 2,000 | State-of-the-art portable 96kHz DAT recorder, the size of a lap-top computer | DAT | BS | BS | ● | ● | ● | 1431 | 150 |
| Sharp MD-R2 | 300 | Budget recorder that loses little or nothing in comparisons with much more expensive models - highly capable | MD | BS | BS | ● | ● | ● | 2196 | 177 |



Headphones

There are several different ways of making a headphone. The most expensive models employ electrostatically-driven diaphragms within an open-backed earcup. Most mid-price designs feature dynamic, moving-coil-driven diaphragms in open, semi-open or closed-back designs. An open-backed headphone can sound remarkably transparent, but also permits the ingress of external noise. Closed-back designs keep out unwanted sound, but may be less comfortable to wear and more coloured. The latest development is the cordless headphone using either infrared light or, more recently, radio waves. Quality is improving, but has yet to match the best corded designs.

KEY TO SPECIFICATIONS

- **TYPE:** Operating principle: D - dynamic; E - electrostatic.
- **SUPRA-AURAL:** Where a flat pad presses on the outer ear.
- **CIRCUM-AURAL:** Where the earcup encloses the ear.
- **OPEN BACK:** Offers an open sound but lets in noise.
- **CLOSED BACK:** Keeps out external noise.
- **MASS (g):** Mass in grams
- **IMPEDANCE (Ω):** Load offered to the headphone amplifier. Many headphones offer a significantly higher value than loudspeakers, for example, but this does not mean they will be incompatible with the majority of amplifiers.
- **3.5MM JACK ADAPTOR:** Compatible with mini-jacked components, eg personal stereos.
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Headphones

SPECIFICATIONS

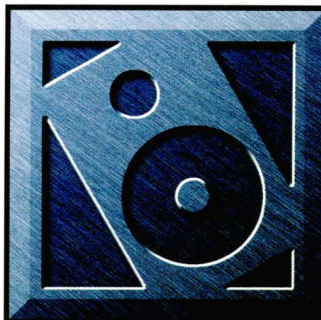
ISSUE NO. FACTSBACK NO. 3.5mm JACK ADAPTOR IMPEDANCE (Ω) MASS (g) CLOSED BACK OPEN BACK CIRCUM-AURAL SUPRA-AURAL TYPE

STATUS

| PRODUCT | (£) | COMMENTS | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----|---|---|---|---|-----|--|--|-----|-----|---|------|--|------|------|
| ▲ AKG K1000 | 700 | One of the best dynamics on the market, hooks directly into speaker outputs | D | ● | ● | | | | 270 | 120 | | | | | 99 |
| ▲ Audio Technica ATH910PRO | 80 | The closed back 910s are an improvement on the 909s, with a nice rhythmic quality rarely found | D | ● | | | | | 280 | 40 | | | | | 55 |
| Beyer DT100 | 160 | Rugged, modular professional design, but bass is woolly and treble lacks detail | D | | ● | | | | 350 | 600 | | | | | 157 |
| Beyer DT311 | 50 | Uncharacteristically tight, unrefined sound quality from this otherwise well engineered 'phone | D | ● | | | | | 124 | 40 | ● | 1098 | | | 133 |
| Beyer DT411 | 63 | A reasonable but not very thrilling headphone that doesn't really offer enough at the price | D | ● | | | | | 120 | 250 | | | | | 111 |
| ▲ Beyer DT511 | 106 | Superb midband clarity and speed slightly at odds with soft bass. High tingle factor, even so | D | | ● | ● | | | 200 | 250 | | | | 2063 | 172 |
| ▲ Beyer DT531 | 135 | A good buy for serious, heavy-duty music making | D | | ● | ● | | | 245 | 250 | | | | | 144 |
| ▲ Beyer DT911 | 170 | Probably too revealing for many headphone amps: these are very subtle and fine, if expensive cans | D | | ● | ● | | | 275 | 250 | | | | | 111 |
| Denon AH-D550 | 80 | A competent 'phone with integrity, but little panache or charisma. Hard headband causes brain strain | D | | ● | | | | 200 | 35 | ● | 1801 | | | 157 |
| Denon AH-D750 | 130 | Loud and gutsy, meaty bass, good with rock and dance. Can sound thick and clumsy | D | | ● | | | | 250 | 30 | ● | 2063 | | | 172 |
| Grado SR-40 | 45 | Cheap and nasty appearance largely redeemed by cheerful, up-beat sound. Very comfortable | D | ● | | | | | 120 | 32 | ● | 2064 | | | 172 |
| Grado SR-80 | 100 | Open and dynamic with pedantically open mid-band. Crude physical design, rough frequency extremes | D | ● | | | | | 60 | 8 | ● | 1801 | | | 157 |
| ▲ Grado SR-225 | 200 | Warm, darkly-coloured tonally and ultimately lacking in clarity, but true to the spirit of the music | D | ● | | ● | | | 200 | 32 | | 1883 | | | 163 |
| ▲ Jecklin Float Model 1 | 79 | While very unusual in appearance, the Floats give remarkable sound quality and openness | D | | ● | ● | | | 400 | 200 | | | | | 55 |
| ▲ Jecklin Float Model 2 | 99 | Helmet shaped, but open sounding and comfortable in the long term, despite lack of adjustment | D | | ● | ● | | | 400 | 200 | | | | | 63 |
| JVC HA-D910 | 65 | Broadly acceptable if unexciting design with low level losses and some colourations | D | ● | | | | | 220 | 32 | ● | | | | 121 |
| JVC HA-W60 | 49 | Remarkable lack of interference and hiss ameliorates adequate sound of this cordless design | D | ● | | | | | 165 | 1/R | ● | | | | 172 |
| Precide Ergo Model 2 | 140 | Still has much of the spaciousness of the Float from which it is derived, but coarse mid/top | D | | | ● | | | 380 | 100 | | | | | 1892 |
| ▲ Philips SBC 3396 | 70 | Remarkably airy for closed-back designs. Fine tonal balance, punchy delivery. Amazing for money | D | | ● | ● | | | 255 | 32 | ● | 2064 | | | 172 |
| Philips SBC HP900 | 90 | Sharper, snappier midrange than 3396: initially impressive but blows it on balance and listenability | D | | ● | | | | 200 | 32 | ● | 2065 | | | 172 |
| Sennheiser IS 380 | 55 | As close as you'll get to real hi-fi with infra-red phones at this price. Inevitable hiss spoils the illusion | D | ● | | | | | 192 | 1/R | ● | | | | 172 |
| ▲ Sennheiser HD 455 | 55 | Inoffensive, if nondescript sound; modular, but can become dislodged from head | D | ● | | ● | | | 185 | 60 | ● | 1801 | | | 157 |
| Sennheiser HD 475 | 80 | Elegant, uncluttered sound and very comfortable but lean bass saps satisfaction | D | ● | | ● | | | 120 | 60 | ● | 2065 | | | 172 |
| ▲ Sennheiser HD 545 | 125 | Fine all-rounder that takes all styles of music in its stride. Ear-clamping headband | D | | ● | ● | | | 255 | 150 | ● | 2066 | | | 172 |
| ▲ Sennheiser HD 565 Ovation | 150 | Wide bandwidth design which is refined, expressive and extremely comfortable | D | | ● | ● | | | 255 | 150 | ● | 1801 | | | 157 |
| Sennheiser HE 60/HEV70/UK | 998 | Very nearly a superb electrostatic, with a pure midband, but top end is sibilant and edgy | E | | ● | ● | | | 260 | n/a | | | | | 1898 |
| Sony MDR-CD770 | 100 | Neutrality and comfort make the Sony easy to live with. Correct-sounding too, yet musically unrewarding | D | | ● | | | | - | - | | | | | 1801 |
| ▲ Sony MDR-CD1700 | 200 | Astonishingly detailed, uncoloured and free of the usual artefacts from a sealed back headphone | D | | ● | | | | 325 | 32 | ● | 1901 | | | 163 |
| Sony MDR-F1 | 100 | Natural, easy-going sound teamed with great looks and comfort. Shame about the lightweight bass | D | | ● | ● | | | 300 | 12 | ● | 2066 | | | 172 |
| Technics RP-DJ1200 | 130 | Functional design with head-pulping bass and muggy tonal balance. Good job they're sweat-proof | D | ● | | | | | 230 | 32 | ● | 2067 | | | 172 |
| ▲ Stax Lambda Nova Basic | 449 | Refined, articulate, yet with real presence - and a notable bargain by electrostatic standards | E | | ● | ● | | | 347 | n/a | | 1902 | | | 163 |
| Vivanco IR5800 | 50 | Consistently musical infra-red design. Doesn't reach for sonic heights so hiss can be forgiven | D | ● | | 1/2 | | | 226 | 1/R | ● | | | | 172 |
| ▲ Vivanco SR650 | 50 | Unusually comfortable 'phone with excellent detail resolution but aggressive | D | ● | | ● | | | 175 | - | ● | 1801 | | | 157 |
| ▲ Vivanco SR750 | 60 | Cossetting physical design, attractive sound, though suffers overhang and lacks ultimate dynamics | D | ● | | ● | | | 188 | - | ● | 1801 | | | 157 |
| Vivanco Cyberwave FMH3000 | 80 | The only cordless 'phone to offer genuine walkabout freedom, but... sounds like a cheap FM tuner | D | ● | | ● | | | 210 | FM | ● | | | | 172 |



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Hi-Fi Loudspeakers

As the last link in the hi-fi chain, loudspeakers are at the mercy of incoming signals. Nevertheless, distortions introduced by loudspeakers (and rooms) tend to be the most obvious. The average loudspeaker comprises an enclosure containing two drive units. Inside the box, a simple electrical circuit (the crossover or dividing network) splits the incoming, full-frequency-range signal into the right portions for specific drive units to handle: highs to the 'tweeter', lows to the 'woofer'. For any given box size, designers must balance the 'sensitivity' of the loudspeaker (how loud it goes for a given electrical input) against bass extension (how low it goes). Subwoofers augment bass and are either passive (unamplified) or, preferably, active (self-amplified).

KEY TO SPECIFICATIONS

- **SIZE wXhXd (cm):** Width by height by depth in centimetres.
- **FLOORSTANDER:** Requires no stand support.
- **SENSITIVITY (dB/W):** How much sound results for a given electrical input – the higher the figure, the louder the speaker.
- **IMPEDANCE (Ω):** Impedance, measured in Ohms, indicates how much resistance the speaker presents to an amplifier. As impedance decreases, demands on an amplifier increase.
- **BASS FROM (Hz):** The lowest frequency that a speaker can reproduce effectively.
- **FREE SPACE:** Speakers which should not sit close to walls.
- **CLOSE TO WALL:** Speakers which should sit between 3 and 12cm from the rear wall.
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Hi-Fi Loudspeakers

SPECIFICATIONS

STATUS

| PRODUCT | (£) | COMMENTS | SIZE WxHxD (CM) | FLOORSTANDER | SENSITIVITY (dB/W) | IMPEDANCE (Ω) | BASS FROM (HZ) | FREE SPACE | CLOSE TO WALL | FACTSBACK NO. | ISSUE NUMBER |
|-----------------------|-------|---|-----------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------|----------------|------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| Acoustic Energy AE200 | 250 | Metal cone miniature has a tendency to shout but is still lots of fun, and well built too | 18.5,30,25 | | 87 | 6 | 40 | | | 2199 | 177 |
| Acoustic Energy AE109 | 350 | Lots of mass-loaded twin-driver speaker for the money, especially for loud, driving bass | 18,90,25 | | 88 | 4 | 25 | | | 1904 | 164 |
| Acoustic Energy AE120 | 500 | Attractive presentation and good sonic headroom, but a heavy, uneven overall balance | 18,98,28 | | 89 | 4 | 25 | | | 1904 | 170 |
| ATC SCM20 | 1,599 | Massively built, invariably informative but the rather forward presentation can be uncomfortable | 24,44,31 | | 83 | 8 | 28 | | | | 86 |
| Audio Gem Emerald | 540 | Pretty compact floorstander with lively if lightweight sound | 18,94,21 | | 87 | 6 | 40 | | | 1905 | 164 |
| Audio Note AN-J/B | 799 | Light damping and local unevenness add some coloration, but don't spoil the speaker | 38,58,25 | | 93 | 8 | 25 | | | | 110 |
| Audio Note AN-E/B | 1,299 | Coherent, dynamic and transparent, with extended bass and high sensitivity – but ugly! | 36,84,28 | | 94 | 8 | 20 | | | | 106 |
| Audio Physic Tempo | 1,999 | Tall and unusually-styled floorstander has stunning stereo but suspect bass tuning | 22,107,47 | | 88 | 8 | 28 | | | 1344 | 143 |
| Audiovector M2 | 1,399 | High-class, smooth and slightly laid-back performer has driving bass. It's upgradeable, too! | 20,102,30 | | 89 | 4 | 22 | | | | 180 |
| AVI Positron | 899 | This 'mini-floorstander' is capable of great precision and delicacy, but in a rather small scale way | 17,5,74,24.5 | | 85 | 6 | 40 | | | 2130 | 174 |
| B&W DM302 | 150 | Highly competent and neutral all rounder; clever Prism enclosure | 19,32,22 | | 88 | 4 | 45 | | | 1778 | 156 |
| B&W DM601 | 199 | Great main driver for the price, entertaining dynamics | 20,5,35,5,23 | | 88 | 6 | 30 | | | 1779 | 156 |
| B&W DM602 | 300 | Prefers tall stands and space, but offers impressive midband dynamics and musical tension | 24,49,31 | | 90 | 8 | 30 | | | 1654 | 152 |
| B&W DM305 | 350 | Ridged paper cone gives lively sound, clever box, but a little uneven | 22,87,31 | | 89 | 4 | 40 | | | 1908 | 164 |
| B&W DM603 | 500 | Squat floorstander with decent dynamics and well-judged, restrained balance; bass could go deeper | 23,5,88,29 | | 89 | 7 | 45 | | | 2030 | 170 |
| B&W CDM1SE | 600 | A great looking stand-mount with one of the best midbands around, and a subtle blend of other qualities | 22,37,29 | | 88 | 5 | 40 | | | 2209 | 177 |
| B&W CDM7 | 1,000 | A combination of serious welly and physical elegance; but a basic lack of midband smoothness | 22,97,29 | | 90 | 4 | 22 | | | 2131 | 174 |
| B&W Matrix 805 V | 1,095 | Stylish, remarkable imaging, good balance and low coloration | 33,33,21 | | 87 | 8 | 30 | | | | 98 |
| B&W Matrix 804 | 1,695 | A great all-rounder which combines exceptional bass extension with fine sensitivity | 26,96,26 | | 88 | 4 | 20 | | | 1985 | 167 |
| B&W Matrix 801S3 | 3,995 | Lacks transparency and the drama of the best dynamics, but acoustically a tour de force | 44,100,56 | | 87 | 8 | 20 | | | | 81 |
| Cabasse Farella 400 | 950 | Exciting but very upfront-and-in-er-face sound. High sensitivity, fine build and good dynamic drive | 26,92,32 | | 92 | 5 | 28 | | | | 180 |
| Castle Isis | 250 | A great miniature at a competitive price. Sound is lightweight but very coherent, with a fine overall balance | 17, 35,5,21 | | 87 | 8 | 45 | | | 2019 | 170 |
| Castle Kendal | 500 | A beautifully finished compact floorstander with a decidedly forward but communicative sound. | 17,76,20 | | 86 | 6 | 45 | | | 2204 | 177 |
| Castle Severn 2 | 539 | Carbon fibre cone gives lovely, subtle midband but treble is a bit dull and bass a bit thumpy | 21,84,25 | | 87 | 8 | 30 | | | 2120 | 174 |
| Castle Avon | 730 | Lovely box and lovely voices from carbon-fibre composite cone | 22,91,28 | | 85 | 8 | 22 | | | 1909 | 164 |
| Castle Harlech | 880 | Handsome big-sounding floorstander, great value and dynamic midrange | 20,96,33 | | 88 | 8 | 28 | | | 1820 | 160 |
| Castle Howard S2 | 1,200 | Ably fills the gap between Chester and Winchester; has a rich, laid-back balance | 26,104,41 | | 90 | 8 | 40 | | | 1078 | 132 |
| Celestion 121 | 119 | Not without virtue, but the relentless enthusiasm and mid-band colourations can become wearing | 19,31,21 | | 88 | 6 | 45 | | | 2254 | 179 |
| Celestion 231 | 300 | Cosmetically flawed, but the bottom end has fine get-up-and-go, and works well with dance tracks | 24,86,27 | | 89 | 6 | 30 | | | 2200 | 177 |
| Celestion A1 | 899 | Rich, warm and laid-back, but a true quality sound; lovely build | 24,41,35 | | 88 | 6 | 25 | | | 1910 | 164 |
| Celestion A2 | 1500 | Full scale, big sound from ultra-elegant floorstander. Smooth and slightly laid back presentation | 24,93,39 | | 89 | 6 | 22 | | | | 180 |
| Cerwin-Vega VS10 | 350 | Not very refined but extremely ballsy; these rock boxes have no shortage of gung-ho | 33,70,29 | | 95 | 6 | 37 | | | 1758 | 155 |
| Chario Syntar 100 | 249 | Pretty with a pleasantly easygoing balance, but not the most communicative or exciting sound around | 18,32,27 | | 87 | 6 | 45 | | | 2020 | 170 |
| Chario Academie | 1650 | Pricy Italian stand-mount, has high class sound and appearance. Solid walnut enclosures | 25,40,31 | | 84 | 8 | 40 | | | | 180 |
| Dali 606 | 400 | A big bruiser at a tempting price. Sounds refined and polite, but also packs some punch | 22,97,32 | | 91 | 4 | 25 | | | 2121 | 174 |
| Dynaudio Audience 5 | 400 | Follows the Dynaudio tradition for fine midband transparency, but the overall timbre is a bit thin | 20,31,26 | | 85 | 4 | 40 | | | 2205 | 177 |
| Dynaudio Audience 50 | 577 | This stand-mount doesn't look big, but sound quality can match many models at twice the price | 20,33,25 | | 86 | 4 | 30 | | | 2122 | 174 |
| Dynaudio Contour 1.8 | 1,842 | Wonderful voice-band delicacy and loads of deep bass from a very elegant and compact box | 21,95,29 | | 85 | 4 | 20 | | | 1986 | 167 |
| Eltax Linear Response | 249 | A curiously dumpy shape, this smooth, laid-back performer is easy on the ears, with fine tonal accuracy | 25,35,32 | | 85 | 4 | 40 | | | 2201 | 177 |
| Epos ES12 | 499 | High quality luxury stand-mount has great midband and stereo imaging | 20,38,25 | | 85 | 8 | 45 | | | 1823 | 160 |
| Epos ES14 | 675 | Substantial stand-mount delivers delightful midrange focus and delicacy with good bass control | 23,49,29 | | 87 | 8 | 25 | | | | 98 |
| Epos ES25 | 1,655 | Handsome floorstander with a rather uneven and bass heavy balance | 24,90,35 | | 88 | 6 | 22 | | | 1346 | 143 |
| Faraday Siren | 445 | High mass concrete cabinet is let down by imbalance of ageing driver combination | 25,27,46 | | 90 | 4 | 48 | | | | 94 |
| Gale 2i | 140 | Unspectacular sound and appearance fail to help this solid little miniature stand out from the crowd | 22,40,27 | | 88 | 7 | 40 | | | 2021 | 170 |
| Genexa Pro | 160 | Terrific treble and upper-mid but coloured and cuppy lower-mid and bass. A mixture of genius and grot. | 14,27,14 | | 86 | 8 | 90 | | | 2255 | 179 |
| GLL Imagio IC130 | 500 | Lots of speaker for the money, but sound is decidedly dull and shut in | 22,112,29 | | 88 | 4 | 20 | | | 1824 | 160 |
| Heybrook Prima 2 | 159 | Great openness, speed and timing. Sounds fresh and vital, though sometimes lacks scale and weight | 20,29,18 | | 87 | 6 | 50 | | | 2256 | 179 |
| Heybrook Heylette | 269 | Attractive traditional-style near-miniature has fine bass-to-mid integrity, but dull and shut-in top end | 19,5,30,20 | | 89 | 6 | 45 | | | 2026 | 170 |
| Heybrook Heylios | 389 | Great all-round performance in a pretty package at a sharp price | 24,36,27 | | 87 | 6 | 25 | | | 1912 | 164 |
| Heybrook Heylo | 439 | Good vocal reproduction, but sounds thin and bass seems an afterthought | 23,73,19 | | 88 | 8 | 30 | | | 1658 | 152 |
| Heybrook Quartet | 649 | Solid, large bookshelf model with good sensitivity and a lively, forward sound | 24,41,22 | | 90 | 8 | 48 | | | | 122 |
| Heybrook Ultima | 649 | Has the bass wallop to justify its dual hi-fi/home cinema roles, but doesn't excite | 22,97,29 | | 89 | 6 | 45 | | | 2126 | 174 |
| Heybrook Sextet | 1,299 | Coherent and highly analytical, partly due to distinct upper-mid forwardness | 27,90,20 | | 88 | 8 | 25 | | | | 102 |
| Heybrook Octet | 1800 | Good-looking but pricey floorstander with novel drivers and a fine ceramic-enclosure midband | 24,97,31 | | 90 | 6 | 25 | | | | 180 |
| Infinity Reference 1i | 150 | Although not to our tastes, this is a competent speaker, and decent material value | 20,34,20 | | 89 | 6 | 50 | | | 1403 | 148 |
| Jamo BX100A | 350 | Offering a cracking output for their size, these rock boxes can be a bit bright but have decent bass | 31,5,54,28 | | 91 | 8 | 40 | | | 1758 | 155 |
| Jamo Classic 8 | 400 | A lot of speaker for the money; good when playing quietly, but boom'n'tizz character sounded crude | 22,90,29 | | 90 | 4 | 28 | | | 1659 | 152 |

CONTINUED

Hi-Fi Loudspeakers

SPECIFICATIONS

SIZE WxHxD (CM) SENSITIVITY (dB/1W) IMPEDANCE (Ω) BASS FROM (HZ) FREE SPACE CLOSE TO WALL FACTS/BACK NO. ISSUE NUMBER

STATUS

| PRODUCT | (£) | COMMENTS | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------|--|----------------|---|----|---|-----|---|--|----------|
| Jamo 477A | 500 | Very prettily styled, but build and sound quality are disappointing at the price | 19,77,28 | ● | 88 | 4 | 40 | ● | | 1549 138 |
| Jamo 507A | 700 | Imaginative styling keeps the front view super slim yet still it packs a punch. Glass top is a nice touch | 22,94,37 | ● | 88 | 3 | 40 | ● | | 2126 174 |
| JBL LX2 | 250 | <i>Invigorating, if a touch crude, this good-hearted speaker reproduces music with considerable enthusiasm</i> | 22,40,27 | ● | 87 | 8 | 40 | ● | | 2022 170 |
| JBL L20 | 700 | Pricey, heavy and a bit laid back, but this is a fine rock'n'roller which is dynamic and communicative | 26,42,28 | ● | 86 | 8 | 30 | ● | | 1550 138 |
| JBL SVA1500 | 700 | A distinctive Pro-style bi-radial horn tweeter, with a fun sound, enlivened by a juicy bass thump | 175,51,31 | ● | 86 | 8 | 40 | ● | | 2127 174 |
| JBL L40 | 1,000 | Classic, large, stand-mount three-way is full of vim and vigour, with a superb sense of balance | 30,65,31 | ● | 88 | 4 | 23 | ● | | 1976 167 |
| JBL SVA 2100 | 1250 | Monstrously large and brutish styling, goes very loud as well as deep. Fine focus but some boxiness | 37,114,52 | ● | 91 | 8 | <20 | ● | | 180 |
| JBL L90 | 1,500 | <i>A classic monitor which communicates with gusto and enthusiasm, though it can sound a bit crude</i> | 24,94,35 | ● | 91 | 6 | 23 | ● | | 1348 143 |
| JM Lab Spectral 909.1 | 1,375 | Multi-driver array in a large and very substantial enclosure. Good scale but lacks delicacy and sweetness | 27,107,35 | ● | 90 | 4 | 20 | ● | | 180 |
| Jordan Watts JH400 | 565 | Piano-finish hexagon has controversial sound, with uneven balance but delightful mid | 28,38,21 | ● | 86 | 8 | 50 | ● | | 106 |
| JPW Mini Monitor | 60 | Ultra cheap miniature works well in a limited way | 18,27,175 | ● | 86 | 8 | 50 | ● | | 1781 156 |
| JPW Gold Monitor | 80 | More informative than Mini Monitor – but fiercer too | 18,27,175 | ● | 86 | 8 | 50 | ● | | 1782 156 |
| JPW ML510 | 130 | <i>Lots of good-quality speaker for the price, but not an ideal match for cheap budget components</i> | 20,34,22 | ● | 88 | 5 | 50 | ● | | 169 |
| JPW ML710 | 230 | Good material value but disappointingly uneven bass – check out the 510s instead | 20,88,30 | ● | 88 | 5 | 40 | ● | | 2202 177 |
| JPW ML1010 | 400 | A seriously substantial speaker for the price, and an obvious choice for those who like their music loud | 22,5,115,40 | ● | 91 | 6 | 25 | ● | | 2031 170 |
| JPW Ruby 1 | 400 | Very pretty but pricey luxury metal-cone miniature has good, if slightly edgy balance | 19,32,21 | ● | 87 | 6 | 55 | ● | | 1572 139 |
| JPW Ruby 4 | 1,000 | Twin metal-cone main drivers improve the dynamic performance and bass extension, with little sacrifice | 22,94,26 | ● | 88 | 8 | 25 | ● | | 2132 174 |
| KEF Coda 7 | 129 | Lovely open voice reproduction, but bass could be tauter; build tougher | 18,30,23 | ● | 88 | 6 | 50 | ● | | 1783 156 |
| KEF Coda 8 | 189 | Outstandingly well-balanced, bass is deep but a little vague | 20,32,5,29 | ● | 86 | 6 | 28 | ● | | 1784 156 |
| KEF Coda 9 | 299 | Uneven budget 3-way floorstander with poor bass definition | 20,86,28 | ● | 89 | 6 | 30 | ● | | 1785 156 |
| KEF RDM One | 499 | Cute and tiny, nice midband but lack of bass warmth and weight | 23,30,24 | ● | 88 | 6 | 70 | ● | | 1913 164 |
| KEF Reference Model 2 | 1,599 | Classy, large floorstander that has massive headroom and clean mid-to-treble, but limited deep bass | 23,103,34 | ● | 89 | 4 | 30 | ● | | 1987 167 |
| Kelly KT3 | 1,200 | <i>Super-high-sensitivity, hefty floorstander sacrifices smoothness for dynamic realism</i> | 25,95,36 | ● | 95 | 4 | 28 | ● | | 2133 174 |
| Keswick Audio Aria II | 379 | Confident and dynamic sound, if a little crude and shut in | 21,42,24 | ● | 89 | 8 | 20 | ● | | 1405 148 |
| Keswick Audio Torino | 999 | Good value, lively contender with distinctive styling. Goes loud and deep but could be smoother | 18-26,93,28 | ● | 90 | 4 | 20 | ● | | 1977 167 |
| Linn Kelikh Passive | 750 | Stunning timing and coherence, and awesome bass drive | 20,83,28 | ● | 87 | 4 | 22 | ● | | 1552 138 |
| Linn Kaber Passive | 2,000 | Dry, bright balance emphasises dynamics and transients, but can sound unforgiving | 20,90,28 | ● | 87 | 4 | 25 | ● | | 118 |
| Living Voice Auditorium | 1,500 | <i>Pretty, compact floorstander has wonderful coherence, high sensitivity and fine dynamic integrity</i> | 21,5,98,29 | ● | 91 | 4 | 25 | ● | | 180 |
| Magnat Vintage 720 | 1200 | Slightly crude in some respects but lots of heart, fine scale, decent dynamic coherence and integrity | 29,113,32 | ● | 88 | 4 | 20 | ● | | 180 |
| Mission 700 | 130 | A lot of speaker for the money. Good bass weight and extension and goes loud with ease | 18,34,26 | ● | 87 | 8 | 40 | ● | | 2257 179 |
| Mission 731 PRO | 140 | <i>Cautious balance makes a fine match with budget equipment. A classy baby for smaller rooms</i> | 175,31,5,20 | ● | 89 | 8 | 55 | ● | | 169 |
| Mission 750LE | 250 | Fabulous cosmetics and a great midband carry the day, though size will out and bass is inevitably limited | 17,28,27 | ● | 86 | 7 | 45 | ● | | 2203 177 |
| Mission 733i | 330 | New tweeter gives a more open sound; a good all-rounder that doesn't sound as big as it looks | 20,5,88,30 | ● | 88 | 8 | 45 | ● | | 2027 170 |
| Mission 752 Freedom | 578 | <i>A beautifully judged compromise in the art of combining presentation with a decent sound</i> | 20,90,25 | ● | 89 | 8 | 45 | ● | | 2123 174 |
| Mission 753 Freedom | 798 | <i>Great styling. New, more restrained tweeter reveals fine midband dynamics</i> | 21,90,31 | ● | 89 | 4 | 40 | ● | | 1914 164 |
| Mission 754 Freedom 5 | 1,298 | Tall but exceptionally elegant floorstander gives fine midband projection; goes loud but limited deep bass | 22,111,31 | ● | 88 | 4 | 40 | ● | | 1981 167 |
| Monitor Audio Monitor 3 | 400 | An exceptionally discreet floorstander; sonically uneven, but capable of fine results | 16,91,21 | ● | 88 | 5 | 30 | ● | | 2032 170 |
| Monitor Audio Monitor 4 | 500 | An oddball balance but an entertaining sound, and a good looking real-wood-box at a realistic price | 20,87,24 | ● | 84 | 6 | 23 | ● | | 2210 177 |
| Monitor Audio MA700 PMC | 600 | Good-looking luxury compact with all-metal diaphragms: lovely midrange, but occasionally edgy | 22,35,26 | ● | 89 | 8 | 45 | ● | | 1661 152 |
| Monitor Audio 702PMC | 700 | A good all-round stand-mount with intimate midband focus | 20,40,25 | ● | 87 | 8 | 30 | ● | | 2128 174 |
| Monitor Audio MA703 PMC | 800 | Lovely but pricey floorstander has up-front, coherent, 'shiny' sound | 20,89,27 | ● | 88 | 8 | 50 | ● | | 1826 160 |
| Monitor Audio Studio 12 | 1,000 | A real looker, but sound and content are a bit on the small side for the price | 17,92,20 | ● | 90 | 8 | 28 | ● | | 1349 143 |
| Monitor Audio 705PMC | 1400 | Beautifully finished compact floorstander with fine midband coherence, but limited bass and top end | 20,94,28 | ● | 89 | 4 | 25 | ● | | 180 |
| Mordaunt-Short MS10i | 140 | <i>Up front, bouncy and a whole lot of fun</i> | 18,5,30,5,20 | ● | 86 | 8 | 50 | ● | | 1789 156 |
| Mordaunt-Short MS30i | 275 | Slightly shut-in and coloured quality is offset by fine bass and impressive communication | 25,43,28 | ● | 90 | 8 | 28 | ● | | 1662 152 |
| Musical Technology Kestrel SE | 300 | Brighter and drier-sounding than the standard Kestrel (and not the better for it) | 20,84,19 | ● | 84 | 5 | 50 | ● | | 1915 164 |
| Musical Technology Harrier | 400 | Very pretty package, good measured performance and even sound. Sensitivity is low, and dynamics limp | 25,80,23 | ● | 86 | 8 | 25 | ● | | 1663 152 |
| Musical Technology Condor | 1,000 | Lots of clever ideas in a floorstander, which places transparency and smoothness ahead of dynamic drama | 25,91,23 | ● | 85 | 4 | 28 | ● | | 2134 174 |
| Musical Technology Hawk | 1250 | Strikingly original, purposeful and attractive enclosure, but upper midband is decidedly shut in | 20-36,93,24-38 | ● | 87 | 5 | 23 | ● | | 180 |
| Naim Intro | 660 | <i>Great dynamic range and info retrieval, but thin, lacks warmth</i> | 24,89,27 | ● | 89 | 6 | 30 | ● | | 1916 164 |
| Naim Credo | 1,060 | Involving sound, but rather forward and cold. Good clarity, but some coloration and a lack of richness | 24,89,30 | ● | 88 | 8 | 28 | ● | | 180 |
| Naim SBL Passive | 1,970 | Lively and punchy – smoother but more upfront than before | 27,89,27 | ● | 88 | 6 | 25 | ● | | 1352 143 |
| Neat Mystique Mk2 | 575 | <i>This elegant package delivers a fine overall sound quality; some might find the top end too insistent</i> | 20,86,18 | ● | 85 | 6 | 23 | ● | | 2211 177 |
| Neat Petite II/Gravitas | 2,000 | Beautifully presented miniature/subwoofer combo with ribbon tweeter gives smooth, laid-back sound | 23,105,40 | ● | 85 | 6 | 25 | ● | | 1988 167 |
| Origin Live Conqueror | 1,650 | Chunky floorstanding three-way has lovely cabinetwork and lively sound, but limited deep bass | 24,94,27 | ● | 88 | 8 | 30 | ● | | 1989 167 |
| PMC TB1S | 430 | <i>Pro-audio version of TBI</i> | 20,41,30 | ● | 87 | 6 | 40 | ● | | 2207 177 |
| PMC TBI | 482 | <i>A classy, laid-back performer that likes going loud and loves the bass guitar</i> | 20,40,31 | ● | 87 | 8 | 45 | ● | | 1830 160 |
| PMC LB1 | 935 | Delightful smoothness and transparency, though bass and treble are both limited | 18,53,25 | ● | 89 | 4 | 33 | ● | | 110 |
| PMC AB1 | 1,496 | Lovely panel-like transparency, slightly shut-in balance, needs a big room | 26,79,43 | ● | 89 | 6 | 22 | ● | | 114 |
| Polk LS50 | 800 | No enthusiast tweaks here, but powerful and beautiful balance | 27,83,29 | ● | 89 | 8 | 25 | ● | | 1155 138 |
| Polk RT16 | 799 | Bass rich, lively and powerful, but suspect top end; big and not very pretty | 22,105,39 | ● | 91 | 4 | 22 | ● | | 1831 160 |
| Polk LS70 | 1,200 | High sensitivity, but balance has too much midbass boom; mid-top is laid back | 31,94,37 | ● | 90 | 8 | 22 | ● | | 1084 132 |
| Proac Response 2.5 | 2,700 | For aspirant high-enders looking for seriously good boxes, this speaker should be first port of call | 22,107,25 | ● | 86 | 8 | 30 | ● | | 1457 149 |
| QLN Signature | 1,000 | Attractive pyramidal stand-mount with heavy, laid-back balance but remarkably unboxy sound | 27,37,36 | ● | 83 | 4 | 25 | ● | | 167 |
| Quad ESL-63 | 3,450 | Classic electrostatic lacks punch, but has strengths some can't live without | 66,93,27 | ● | 86 | 8 | 34 | ● | | 60 |
| Rega Kyte | 198 | Has splendid timing and coherence, sounds very explicit and informative | 19,31,19 | ● | 87 | 8 | 50 | ● | | 114 |
| Rega EL8 | 298 | Kyte drivers in compact floorstander give more bass but less coherence | 17,72,20 | ● | 86 | 8 | 55 | ● | | 122 |
| Rega ELA Mk II | 498 | Pretty and smooth, the latest incarnation has a superb midband and excellent communicative skills | 30,80,20 | ● | 87 | 8 | 40 | ● | | 1578 139 |
| Rega XEL | 1,040 | Looks and sounds great: balance bright but even, with delightful coherence and timing | 20,82,30 | ● | 89 | 6 | 40 | ● | | 1083 132 |
| Rehdeko RK 115a | 1,700 | Single-driver system has limited bandwidth and obvious coloration, but wondrous dynamic coherence | 34,42,27 | ● | 95 | 8 | 55 | ● | | 1982 167 |

CONTINUED

Hi-Fi Loudspeakers

SPECIFICATIONS

SIZE WxHxD (CM) SENSITIVITY (db/W) IMPEDANCE (Ω) BASS FROM (HZ) FREE SPACE CLOSE TO WALL FACTS/BACK NO. ISSUE NUMBER

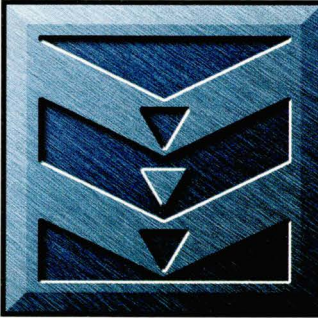
STATUS

| PRODUCT | (£) | COMMENTS | SIZE WxHxD (CM) | SENSITIVITY (db/W) | IMPEDANCE (Ω) | BASS FROM (HZ) | FREE SPACE | CLOSE TO WALL | FACTS/BACK NO. | ISSUE NUMBER |
|-------------------------|-------|---|-----------------|--------------------|---------------|----------------|------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|
| Revolver Colt | 139 | A good all-rounder, if a little bland, and excellent value for money | 30,19,22 | 88 | 6 | 48 | ● | ● | 1407 | 148 |
| Revolver 250 | 250 | A nice price for a floorstander, but over-bright sound balance has potentially fatiguing consequences | 21,85,5,25 | ● | 87 | 8 | 22 | ● | 2023 | 170 |
| RMS Revelation Series 1 | 1,299 | Innovative metal-box compact with integral port/stand – clean with good timing but very laid-back balance | 20,99,24 | ● | 81 | 8 | 22 | ● | 1983 | 167 |
| Rogers GS1 | 179 | Classy looking small box with equally classy, if slightly over cautious sound | 19,30,17 | 85 | 8 | 45 | ● | ● | 2258 | 179 |
| Rogers dB101 | 250 | Tthis shapely sub-miniature is fast and agile but lightweight and forward: great voices; lacks bass | 20,26,20 | 88 | 6 | 45 | ● | ● | 2024 | 170 |
| Rogers LS3/5A | 699 | Clever AB1 stand/subwoofer helps the classic 3/5A monitor give its best shot | 19,31,17 | ● | 82 | 12 | 45 | ● | 1354 | 143 |
| Rogers C6/28 | 1,399 | Large floorstander with carbon-fibre tweeter. Sounds better than it looks, especially through the midband | 25,103,29 | ● | 88 | 6 | 20 | ● | | 167 |
| Roksan ROKone | 595 | Large stand-mount is musically very communicative if a little coloured | 21,45,33 | 89 | 6 | 30 | ● | ● | 1834 | 160 |
| Roksan Ojan 3 Black | 795 | Squat, stylish and black, great bass extension and somewhat uneven balance | 28,76,46 | ● | 88 | 8 | 20 | ● | 1082 | 132 |
| Roksan OJ3X Black | 995 | 'Traditional' cabinetwork with classy veneer and shiny gilt fixings, hampered by rather wayward sound balance | 28,79,46 | ● | 84 | 8 | 20 | ● | 1979 | 167 |
| Royd Minstrel | 275 | Not much wellie or loudness but fine coherence and timing; a bit bright | 18,69,12 | 86 | 8 | 30 | ● | ● | 1167 | 135 |
| Royd Doublet | 485 | Great value compact floorstander: lively and very informative, if a little uneven | 18,93,19 | ● | 90 | 4 | 28 | ● | 1835 | 160 |
| Royd The Sorcerer | 595 | Extremely musical and communicative speaker that's fun to listen to. Aesthetics could be better, though | 20,31,18 | 86 | 8 | 35 | ● | ● | 139 | |
| Royd Abbot | 695 | Dynamic and fine transient qualities are hampered by a rather coloured mid-forward balance | 20,81,30 | ● | 90 | 8 | 43 | ● | 118 | |
| Ruark Sceptre | 599 | 'Traditional' cabinetwork with classy veneer and shiny gilt fixings, hampered by rather wayward sound balance | 21,38,31 | 87 | 8 | 40 | ● | ● | 2129 | 174 |
| Ruark Talisman II | 749 | Less ideologically committed than some, strength lies in fine all-round coherence | 23,84,32 | ● | 88 | 8 | 30 | ● | 118 | |
| Ruark Crusader | 1,599 | Elegant luxury three-way with wonderfully even-handed, if rather laid-back balance | 24,94,31 | ● | 85 | 6 | 22 | ● | 1990 | 167 |
| Ruark Equinox | 1,849 | The primary strength of this speaker is its ability to vanish behind the music | 25,88,34 | ● | 88 | 6 | 45 | ● | 1227 | 140 |
| SD Acoustics SD3R | 649 | New SD3 has the agility and charm of a quality miniature, good bass and low sensitivity | 20,38,30 | 87 | 8 | 25 | ● | ● | 106 | |
| SD Acoustics SD5 | 1,549 | Bass suspect but forward midband is delightfully smooth. Has ribbon tweeter | 20,110,30 | ● | 88 | 8 | 30 | ● | 1081 | 132 |
| Sequence 400 | 329 | Clever hang-on-wall panel is well voiced, though bass isn't too great | 25,100,7 | 86 | 8 | 45 | ● | ● | 1917 | 164 |
| Shahinian Arc | 1,875 | Occasionally wonderful, small, floorstanding omnidirectional design: bright but coherent and revealing | 35,69,25 | 88 | 6 | 24 | ● | ● | 110 | |
| Silverado Raider | 695 | Beautifully built audiophile compact: neutral if bright, tough work for amps | 20,40,25 | 83 | 3 | 30 | ● | ● | 1918 | 164 |
| Spendor 2030 | 599 | Discreet slimline floorstander with delicately coherent, laid-back sound | 18,89,27 | ● | 87 | 8 | 30 | ● | 1836 | 160 |
| Tangent Monitor 5 | 80 | An uneven performer best suited to small rooms and generous volume levels | 17,52,18 | 83 | 8 | 55 | ● | ● | 169 | |
| Tangent Monitor 9 | 150 | Budget floorstander that motors when the music demands, with a solid bass but occasionally raw treble | 19,5,75,5,22,5 | ● | 90 | 6 | 45 | ● | 1926 | 165 |
| Tannoy Mercury M1 | 120 | Sounds much bigger and expensive than it is. Solid, tuneful bass, wide open soundstage, excellent imaging | 17,30,20 | 87 | 8 | 50 | ● | ● | 2259 | 179 |
| Tannoy Mercury M2 | 140 | A fine all-rounder with big box and deep bass for the price; could be sweeter and tighter | 20,5,38,28 | 87 | 8 | 25 | ● | ● | 169 | |
| Tannoy Mercury M3 | 230 | Good-looking floorstander; very neutral and evenhanded, with fine midband but weak dynamics and drive | 20,5,87,28 | ● | 87 | 7 | 20 | ● | 2025 | 170 |
| Tannoy Precision P20 | 400 | A creative and attractive design with time-aligned drivers, but the sound lacks sufficient excitement | 21,80,30 | ● | 88 | 5 | 25 | ● | 2208 | 177 |
| Tannoy D300 | 999 | Gorgeous-looking compact floorstander. And a fine all-round performer, too! | 16-24,85,23 | ● | 87 | 6 | 26 | ● | 167 | |
| Tannoy D500 | 1,999 | Plenty of muscle and stereo, but short of poise and delicacy. Hard work for amps | 31,93,34 | ● | 91 | 6 | 20 | ● | 1355 | 143 |
| Tannoy Westminster TW | 6,600 | These awesome horn-loaded speakers are remarkably controlled and impressive | large | ● | 99 | 8 | 38 | ● | C93 | |
| TDL RTL35E | 450 | A touch of boom'n'tizz might be to taste, but this is a lot of box for the money, with floor-shaking bass | 20,91,39 | ● | 89 | 6 | 22 | ● | 2124 | 174 |
| TDL CF200 Cotswold | 650 | Fine midband tonality and dynamic range, but less happy towards the bandwidth extremes | 22,5,78,23 | ● | 86 | 6 | 40 | ● | 2212 | 177 |
| TDL T-Line 3 | 700 | Plenty of bass and treble, but broad midband is rather repressed | 20,97,38 | ● | 86 | 8 | 20 | ● | 1921 | 164 |
| Technics SB-M20 | 200 | Well-balanced with natural perspectives and fine midband coherence, but bass is a bit boxy and uneven | 20,32,23 | 70 | 8 | 50 | ● | ● | 1413 | 148 |
| Technics SB-M500 | 450 | This model offers a clean, open sound, offset by midbass, heavy balance and low sensitivity | 25,78,37 | ● | 85 | 8 | 25 | ● | 1666 | 152 |
| Totem Model One | 1,195 | Utterly delightful but exasperatingly expensive luxury miniature sets the benchmark for its size | 17,31,23 | 87 | 4 | 28 | ● | ● | 122 | |
| Vandersteen 2Ce | 1,395 | Elegant staggered baffle contributes to a refreshing freedom from boxiness | 41,101,27 | ● | 88 | 7 | 23 | ● | 86 | |
| Wharfedale Diamond 7.2 | 140 | A good-hearted, lively and up-front performer that's a little lacking in subtlety and smoothness | 19,29,5,23 | 88 | 4 | 45 | ● | ● | 169 | |
| Wharfedale Valdis 400 | 200 | Very loud with a minimum of amplification, but the sound is thick and uneven, with a heavy upper bass | 25,80,26 | ● | 91 | 8 | 30 | ● | 1414 | 148 |
| Wharfedale Valdis 500 | 300 | These rock boxes can move plenty of air, albeit not as subtly as alternatives | 25,108,26,5 | ● | 91 | 4 | 40 | ● | 1758 | 155 |
| Wharfedale MFM-3 | 350 | Smooth broad midband gives fine voice rendition; bass could be better | 22,89,28 | ● | 87 | 8 | 40 | ● | 1922 | 164 |
| ZYP AI | 199 | Cute metal-cased micro-miniature is quite coloured but great fun | 14,22,12 | 88 | 8 | 30 | ● | ● | 110 | |
| SUBWOOFERS | | | | | | | | | | |
| Acoustic Energy AE108S | 299 | Lots of loud subwoofer for your money, though ultimately more film than music oriented | 50,42,43 | | | 20 | ● | ● | 2247 | 179 |
| B&W ASW1000 | 499 | (Active) Very competently engineered all round, and goes (unnecessarily) very loud | 54,47,48 | | | 20 | ● | ● | 2248 | 179 |
| B&W AS6 | 500 | (Active) Good material value with a fair amount of low bass from 100W design | 45,51,45,5 | ● | | 30 | | | 1736 | 154 |
| Celestion CS135 | 139 | Compact hideaway passive sub lacks deep bass for high sensitivity speakers | 52,19,34 | ● | 86 | 8 | 45 | ● | 128 | |
| Jamo SW600 | 530 | (Active) Has some neat styling touches and remote control, but deep bass is limited | 38,41,53 | ● | | 30 | | | 1736 | 154 |
| JPW SW60 | 349 | A real heavyweight, sounds clean and transparent, if perhaps a little understated. Usefully flexible | 55,47,39 | | | 20 | ● | ● | 2249 | 179 |
| KEF Model 30B | 499 | (Active) Commendably discreet with good sense of timing but limited extension | 38,5,37,43 | ● | | 45 | | | 1736 | 154 |
| KEF AV1 | 2,499 | (Active) Works well, looks great, shakes the windows but costs a lot and is bulky | 56,43,50 | ● | | 45 | | | 128 | |
| M&K VX-7B | 450 | (Active) Baby of a big range; this active design delivers deep, plenteous bass but lacks transparency | 35,25,37 | ● | | 40 | | | 1736 | 154 |
| M&K MX70 | 900 | (Active) Justifies cost and belies its diminutive size, with an agility that makes sense of the toughest material | 25,5,46,35 | | | 25 | ● | ● | 2250 | 179 |
| REL Q50 | 375 | (Active) Genuinely deep, clean bass from an attractively compact and cost effective package | 40,41,42 | | | 20 | ● | ● | 2251 | 179 |
| Rogers AB1 | 549 | Subwoofer-cum-stand designed as partner for LS3/5a or similar miniatures | 19,57,16 | ● | 82 | 8 | ● | ● | 1354 | 143 |



THE HI-FI CHOICE WEBSITE
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Stands & Supports

Hi-fi supports are more important than you might imagine — they can have very subtle effects on the sound of your system! There are two kinds of support: those for equipment and those (stands) for loudspeakers. Equipment supports keep vibrations and resonances from affecting electronic components, while speaker stands hold enclosures stock-still and ensure they are at the correct height for your ears. Equipment supports may be rigid affairs fabricated from steel or more exotic materials; or they may have a form of suspension. Speaker stands come in a variety of sizes and styles to suit different models, and vary between open-frame and solid-pillar types. Always check with speaker and electronics manufacturers to see which supports they recommend.

KEY TO SPECIFICATIONS

- **HEIGHT (cm):** How tall is your support?
- **TOP PLATE SIZE (cm):** Dimensions of top surface on stand or equipment support.
- **FILLABLE:** Some speaker stands can be mass-loaded with sand or lead-shot to improve sound.
- **WELDED:** The better stands and supports are welded together rather than just bolted.
- **NUMBER OF SHELVES:** The number of tiers on an equipment rack or support.
- **SHELF TYPE:** The material from which shelves are made. Wood generally means Medium Density Fibreboard (MDF).
- **FACTSBACK REFERENCE:** The Factsback Reference number permits direct access to our faxed review reprint service. For full info, see the Factsback advert at the rear of this Directory.
- **ISSUE NUMBER:** The issue of *Hi-Fi Choice* in which an original review appeared.

B BEST BUY
R RECOMMENDED
E EDITOR'S CHOICE

Stands & Supports

SPECIFICATIONS

TOP PLATE SIZE (cm)
 HEIGHT
 FILLABLE
 WELDED
 NUMBER OF SHELVES
 SHELF TYPE
 ISSUE NUMBER
 FACTSBACK NO.

STATUS

PRODUCT (€) COMMENTS

EQUIPMENT SUPPORTS

| | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|------|--|----|-------|---|---|-------|----------|
| Alphason GR 17/17-AS | 275 | Great looks but sound can be bettered at this price | 36 | 60,39 | | 4 | Glass | 181 |
| Elemental Isotube x 4/Ref | 1199 | Blockbusting size and build. Super sound quality | 92 | 45,49 | ● | 4 | Marb | 181 |
| Fi-Rax R4 | 399 | Lively, exuberant sound, slightly weak bass | | | | 5 | Glass | 1633 151 |
| Frameworks H500/H175 | 404 | Two-shelf stand and isolation platform combo in tubular steel — made a spectacular impression on audition | 70 | 52,34 | ● | 3 | Glass | 1952 166 |
| Ixos Deadrock 704 | 250 | Looks unassuming but sound is full and inviting | | 46,39 | | 4 | Resin | 181 |
| Kudos Corinthian | 599 | True heavyweight that doesn't quite manage knockout sound | 91 | 46,38 | | 4 | Wood | 181 |
| Mana Acoustics Ref. Table | 350 | King of its type: angle iron, chipboard and glass combine to make a significant difference to sound quality | 56 | 49,39 | ● | 1 | Glass | 147 |
| Mana 5 Tier Sound Table | 600 | Infinitely upgradeable. Persuasive and thrilling glass and angle-iron design that adds speed and bandwidth | 91 | 49,39 | ● | 5 | Glass | 1633 151 |
| Optimum Int 2000 OPT490 | 299 | 25kg stand with shelves between variable-height tubular uprights. Sounds smooth and relaxed with sturdy bass | 50 | 60,40 | | 4 | Glass | 1953 166 |
| Optimum Int 2000 OPT660 | 349 | Glitzy style isn't reflected in sound, which is wholesome | 82 | 60,52 | | 5 | Glass | 181 |
| Quadraspire Q4 | 250 | Easy to live with, tonally neutral | 54 | 40,49 | | 4 | MDF | 1633 151 |
| Sound Organisation Z038 | 135 | Too lively and lacking order — but inexpensive | 50 | 84,40 | ● | 5 | Wood | 1633 151 |
| Sound Organisation Z560 | 160 | Welded and bolted members give structural integrity. While performance is not up with the best, it's great value | 90 | 46,36 | ● | 5 | Wood | 1954 166 |
| Soundstyle X100 | 230 | Looks lovely, sounds lively but slightly bright | 64 | 49,28 | ● | 4 | Glass | 181 |
| Soundstyle Select 6105 | 290 | Respectable sonics: structurally solid and smart | 78 | 43,36 | | 5 | Glass | 1633 151 |
| Soundstyle Finewoods W105 | 320 | Veneered shelves clamped between tubular uprights. Delivers with classical material | 82 | 48,27 | | 4 | Wood | 1955 166 |
| Sound Organisation Z545 | 150 | Budget gem from the stalwarts of sound supports | 70 | 46,36 | ● | 4 | Glass | 181 |
| Soundstyle X100 | 150 | Looks lovely, sounds lively but slightly bright | 64 | 49,28 | ● | 4 | Glass | 181 |
| Stands Unique Sound Tower | 289 | Wooden uprights combine with glass shelves to provide a fresh, forward sound, but bass could be quicker | 81 | 72,42 | | 5 | Glass | 1633 151 |
| Target B5 | 175 | Free of colorations, fine grip and good value | 81 | 49,36 | ● | 5 | Wood | 1633 151 |
| Townshend Seismic Stand | 1245 | It's big, it wobbles and it's pricey. But this is the ultimate equipment support | 72 | 58,45 | | 3 | Wood | 181 |
| Wilson benesch Asside | 590 | Sounds even better than it looks. And it looks wonderful | 72 | 37,50 | | 4 | Wood | 181 |

SPEAKER STANDS

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|-----|--|-------|-------|---|---|--|----------|
| Alphason NC I | 45 | Filled single-column design without threaded spike holes, that's appropriate for non-critical applications | 40-60 | 16,16 | ● | | | 1373 146 |
| Alphason NCII | 84 | Tall, slim and elegant, though sound and value are unexceptional | 40-60 | 17,17 | ● | | | 159 |
| Alphason Titan | 125 | Excels in the midband and allows voices to come across in a detailed and expressive fashion | 40-60 | 16,16 | ● | ● | | 1373 146 |
| Apollo AZ6 | 80 | Fine engineering value, but sound is unexceptional and top-plate small | 66 | 15,13 | ● | ● | | 159 |
| Atacama BD21 | 55 | Good-looking and good value, but doesn't match the SE24's sound quality | 56 | 15,17 | ● | | | 159 |
| Atacama SE24 | 70 | Stands out from the budget crowd because of the consistency and overall quality of its performance | 61 | 19,57 | ● | ● | | 1373 146 |
| AVF Tower 400 | 35 | Ridiculously cheap and much better than no stand at all | 54 | 17,20 | ● | | | 159 |
| Kudos S50 | 100 | Better sound than the budget stands, particularly in low-frequencies | 60 | 15,21 | ● | | | 159 |
| Kudos S100 | 270 | The best all-round stand around... Probably... | 63 | 15,21 | ● | | | 159 |
| Mana Soundframes | 125 | For use under floorstanders and equipment racks, these make music effortless and natural. Can be stacked | 5 | | | ● | | 1373 146 |
| Revolver RS1 | 70 | A good blend of performance and appearance for the price | 53 | 18,18 | ● | | | 159 |
| RMS/Stands Unique Vivus | 349 | Pricy carbon fibres give ultra-clean sound with exceptional voices | 50 | N/A | | | | 159 |
| Stands Unique HP | 220 | Real wood disguises high-performance tuned technology | 59 | 22,23 | | | | 159 |
| Target R1 | 280 | Truly high-mass four-pillar design with superb weight and speed, giving music delicious attack | 53 | 15,21 | ● | ● | | 1373 146 |
| Target TR60 | 68 | Lively, dynamic midrange and detailed treble from a less-than-audiophile-oriented, twin-column design | 60 | 15,15 | ● | | | 1373 146 |

Select

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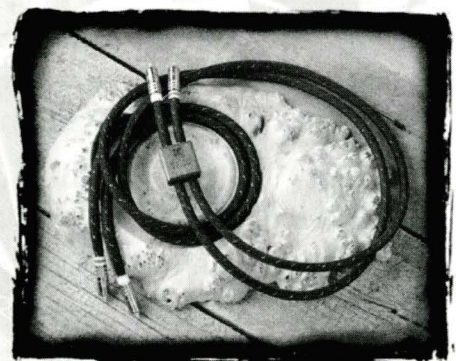


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Tonearms

Less expensive turntables are usually supplied with a matching tonearm (and often a 'starter' cartridge, too). However, hard-core vinyl fans should invest in a more expensive separate motor unit with specialist tonearm – the only way to make the most of vinyl LPs. It is essential to achieve operational synergy between such components, so this is one area of hi-fi where the skills of a knowledgeable dealer are invaluable. The quality of a tonearm's construction and design affect sound quality significantly. There are three basic arm designs listed in the key, and each has strengths, but pivoted designs are the most popular, being usually the most practical and affordable.

KEY TO SPECIFICATIONS

- **EFFECTIVE MASS:** This relates to cartridge compliance. Generally high mass arms are suitable for low compliance cartridges and vice versa.
- **PARALLEL TRACKING:** An arm which allows the cartridge to track the disc in a linear fashion.
- **PIVOTED:** Arms which allow the cartridge to describe an arc as they traverse the record.
- **UNI-PIVOT:** Pivoted arms with a bearing that allows movement in two planes.
- **EFFECTIVE LENGTH (CM):** Length of arm from bearing to cartridge mounting.
- **ADJUSTABLE HEIGHT:** Important for accurate cartridge set-up.
- **FACTSBACK REFERENCE:** The Factsback Reference number permits direct access to our faxed review reprint service. For full info, see the Factsback advert at the rear of this Directory.
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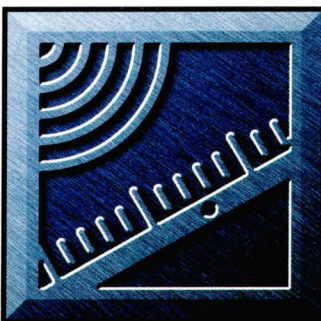
Tonearms

SPECIFICATIONS

- PARALLEL TRACKING
- EFFECTIVE MASS
- PIVOTED
- EFFECTIVE LENGTH (CM)
- ADJUSTABLE HEIGHT
- FACTSBACK NO.
- ISSUE NUMBER

STATUS

| PRODUCT | (£) | COMMENTS | PARALLEL TRACKING | EFFECTIVE MASS | PIVOTED | EFFECTIVE LENGTH (CM) | ADJUSTABLE HEIGHT | FACTSBACK NO. | ISSUE NUMBER |
|---------------------|-------|--|-------------------|----------------|---------|-----------------------|-------------------|---------------|--------------|
| Kuzma Stogi Ref | 1,250 | Large, solid and well-made arm, gives exceptionally clear sound with just a hint of brightness | High | ● | ● | ● | ● | 79 | |
| Linn Ekos | 1,500 | Superb, state-of-the-art design which builds significantly on predecessor's strengths | Medium | ● | ● | 229 | ● | 67 | |
| Moth Arm | 95 | The ultimate budget arm? Refined, sweet, detailed and natural | Low | ● | ● | 237 | ● | 60 | |
| Rega RB300 | 174 | Despite its modest price it sets exceptional standards and could be used on many high-end turntables | Low | ● | ● | 237 | ● | 60 | |
| Roksan Tabriz Basic | 275 | Targeted at the Xerxes, this is a good alternative to the Rega arm in many cases – a touch bright though | Low | ● | ● | 240 | ● | 91 | |
| SME Series IV | 983 | Superb engineering and finish with a finely balanced sound, impressive stereo focus and low coloration | Low | ● | ● | 233 | ● | 60 | |
| SME Series V | 1,461 | Excellent in all respects, this arm arguably sets the standards for pivoted arms, regardless of price | Low | ● | ● | 233 | ● | 60 | |



Tuners

TV has stolen radio's status as the foremost broadcast entertainment medium, but with its Radio Four plays and Radio Three music, the BBC still makes a potent case for audiophile reception equipment. For how much longer, under the cost-conscious Birtist régime, remains to be seen. Another new imponderable is the arrival of digital radio broadcasting, though reception apparatus is currently non-existent outside of the in-car market. These days tuners play second fiddle to hi-fi sources like CD, but in many ways they are a greater engineering challenge than digital equipment, and thus higher price-tags clearly equate to superior performance. High-quality, roof-mounted antennae are essential for audiophile listening, so factor them into your budget.

KEY TO SPECIFICATIONS

- **WAVEBANDS:** FM – (VHF), M – MW, L – LW.
- **PRESETS:** Number of station frequencies that can be stored.
- **RDS:** (Radio Data System) was originally designed for in-car applications. RDS tuners can identify and display the name of the radio station being received, traffic news and other information about broadcasts.
- **REMOTE CONTROL:** Infra-red control handset supplied.
- **SIGNAL STRENGTH METER:** Indicates strength of signal from aerial – useful for aligning your 'twig' during installation.
- **ROTARY TUNING KNOB:** Experience has shown that this analogue throwback is ergonomically far superior to the button-based approach.
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Tuners

SPECIFICATIONS

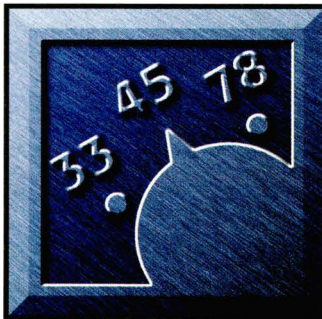
- WAVEBANDS
- PRESETS
- RDS
- REMOTE CONTROL
- SIG. STRENGTH METER
- ROT. TUNING KNOB
- FACTSBACK NO.
- ISSUE NUMBER

STATUS

| PRODUCT | (£) | COMMENTS | WAVEBANDS | PRESETS | RDS | REMOTE CONTROL | SIG. STRENGTH METER | ROT. TUNING KNOB | FACTSBACK NO. | ISSUE NUMBER |
|----------------------|-------|--|-----------|---------|-----|----------------|---------------------|------------------|---------------|--------------|
| AMC T7 | 130 | Performance adequate but price is sharp, especially with remote control. Some hum | FM, M | 30 | ● | ● | ● | ● | 1945 | 166 |
| Arcam Alpha 7 | 230 | Indifferent RF performance but a touch of audiophile sound quality with clean, strong signals | FM,M,L | 24 | | | | | 1946 | 166 |
| Arcam Delta 280 | 300 | Fine sound quality marred by mild synthesiser whine; RF performance only average. Remote £60 extra | FM | 20 | | ● | | | | 120 |
| Audiolab 8000T | 800 | Unusual combination of fine sound quality and RF performance (inc AM), and superb ergonomics | FM,M,L | 39 | | ● | ● | ● | 1254 | 142 |
| Denon TU-260L | 120 | Careful minimalist design promises a surprisingly open and vivacious sound | FM,M,L | 20 | | | | | | 93 |
| Denon TU-425RD | 200 | A fine all-rounder with advanced RDS, good RF performance and decent sound. Remote extra | FM, M | 40 | ● | | | | 1947 | 166 |
| Harman/Kardon TU950 | 200 | Bulky but effective, delivering fine RF performance and good sound for the price | FM,M,L | 30 | ● | | | ● | 1948 | 166 |
| Linn Kremlin | 2,600 | Controversially good sound at a very high price. | FM | 80 | | ● | ● | ● | 1254 | 142 |
| Magnum Dynalab FT101 | 825 | Although fairly expensive given its minimum set of facilities, its excellent sound provided ample compensation | FM | | | | | | | 72 |
| Micromega Tuner | 750 | Has digital output but even without the Micromega DAC, this provides exceptional sound quality. Looks good too | FM | 39 | | ● | ● | ● | 1810 | 157 |
| Mission Cyrus FM7 | 400 | Open, generous soundstaging gives the music plenty of foundation, if a touch shut-in at the top | FM | 29 | | ● | ● | ● | 1254 | 142 |
| Musical Fidelity E50 | 300 | Sounds involving if coloured and with a subjectively larger-than-life presentation | FM | 20 | | | | | 1810 | 157 |
| Naim NATO1 | 1,730 | There may be better sounding tuners in the world, but we have yet to hear one | FM | | | | | | 1254 | 142 |
| Pioneer F-504RDS | 250 | Cable-friendly with advanced RDS and excellent RF performance; slightly disappointing sound | FM,M | 40 | ● | | ● | ● | 1949 | 166 |
| Rotel RT-935AX | 160 | Good ergonomics and sound quality at a realistic price, but limited features and RF selectivity | FM,M | 20 | | | | | 1950 | 166 |
| Sony ST-SA3ES | 250 | Clean, lean presentation but needs a quality aerial to perform at its best | FM,M,L | 30 | ● | | ● | ● | 1810 | 157 |
| Technics ST-GT350L | 130 | Decent RF performance is offset by sound quality more typical of a mini/midi system | FM,M,L | 30 | | ● | | ● | 1254 | 142 |
| Thorens TRT2000 | 499 | Not exactly neutral sounding, but nonetheless makes listening fun | FM,M | 59 | ● | ● | ● | ● | 1810 | 157 |

WRITE TO HI-FI CHOICE

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Turntables

Specialist turntables are at the heart of high-fidelity sound. CD players may offer ultra-low noise and a flat frequency response, but they can't match the dynamics and superlative rhythmic timing taken for granted by serious turntable users. Less expensive turntables are usually supplied with a matching tonearm (and often a 'starter' cartridge, too). Still better quality is found at higher prices among the separate motor units and tonearms. Because turntables are mechanical devices, designed to retrieve micron-small modulations engraved into vinyl, engineering quality is of paramount importance. This is also the reason why turntables cost as much as they do, and require the finest equipment support systems.

KEY TO SPECIFICATIONS

- **MANUAL:** You do all the work.
- **AUTO:** The record player does all the work.
- **SEMI-AUTO:** You put the needle on, the turntable lifts it off at the end of the record.
- **SPEEDS:** In RPM to correspond with long-playing records or seven/12-inch singles.
- **SUSPENDED SUBCHASSIS:** Sprung suspension to minimise structural interference.
- **EXTERNAL PSU:** Outboard power supply, generally indicative of higher-quality performance.
- **SUPPLIED WITH ARM:** Many turntables do not come with a tonearm fitted, but if this category is checked, the deck is already thus equipped.
- **SUPPLIED WITH CARTRIDGE:** If a turntable comes complete with arm and cartridge.
- **FACTSBACK REFERENCE:** The Factsback Reference number permits direct access to our faxed review reprint service. For full info, see the Factsback advert at the rear of this Directory.
- **ISSUE NUMBER:** The issue of *Hi-Fi Choice* in which an original review appeared.

B BEST BUY
R RECOMMENDED
E EDITOR'S CHOICE

Turntables

STATUS

SPECIFICATIONS

MANUAL AUTO SEMI-AUTO SPEEDS SUSP. SUBCHASSIS EXTERNAL PSU SUPPLIED WITH ARM FACTSBACK NO. ISSUE NO.

| PRODUCT | (£) | COMMENTS | MANUAL | AUTO | SEMI-AUTO | SPEEDS | SUSP. SUBCHASSIS | EXTERNAL PSU | SUPPLIED WITH ARM | FACTSBACK NO. | ISSUE NO. |
|--------------------------------|-------|---|--------|------|-----------|----------|------------------|--------------|-------------------|---------------|-----------|
| Clearaudio Reference | 3,990 | Opulent beast tested with Souther TQ-1 arm. Tends to gloss over detail, but can sound bold | ● | | | 33/45 | | | | 1328 | 144 |
| ▲ DNM Rota 2 | 5,600 | Tonally slightly bleached, but extracts detail like few others. Works well on its own table | ● | | | 33/45 | ● | ● | ● | 1328 | 144 |
| ▲ Dual 505-4 UK | 250 | Consistent sounding and well isolated turntable. It is slightly lacking in oomph | | | | ● 33/45 | ● | ● | ● | | 103 |
| ▲ Kuzma Stabi/PS | 1,950 | (Tested with Stogi Reference) Solid oak plinth; sound is very clear, detailed and extended | ● | | | 33/45 | ● | ● | ● | | 91 |
| ▲ Linn LP12 Basik | 1,100 | Trails the full LP12 significantly, but pace, rhythm, timing etc still top rank | ● | | | 33 | ● | ● | ● | | 103 |
| ▲ Linn LP12 Lingo | 1,750 | The classic reference is improved by the Lingo, but charming character remains | ● | | | 33/45 | ● | ● | ● | | 91 |
| ▲ Michell Gyrodec | 875 | Sweet and natural-sounding player, well matched to Rega RB300 arm | ● | | | 33/45 | ● | ● | ● | | 55 |
| Moth Kanoot | 329 | Rather coarse-sounding deck that requires decent isolation and comes with a Rega RB300 arm | ● | | | 33/45 | | | ● | 1907 | 164 |
| ▲ Notts Analogue Spacedeck/Arm | 750 | No fills, just a first-rate, outstandingly natural-sounding deck that will last forever | ● | | | 33/45 | | ● | ● | | 159 |
| ▲ Pink Triangle Anniversary | 2,500 | Possibly the most detailed, clear, neutral-sounding deck around. Likeness to master tape is uncanny | ● | | | 33/45 | ● | ● | ● | | 91 |
| ▲ Pro-ject 2 | 300 | Remarkably effective at the price, with decent timing and a generally well defined sound | ● | | | 33/45 | | | ● | 1907 | 164 |
| ▲ Pro-ject 6/Sumiko | 850 | Don't think of this as a deck with a good arm, but as a scaled-down Oracle Delphi – it's that good | ● | | | 33/45 | ● | ● | ● | | 138 |
| ▲ Rega Planar 2 | 214 | A remarkable product at the price, surprisingly articulate and confident | ● | | | 33/45 | | | ● | | 48 |
| ▲ Rega Planar 3 | 274 | Sounds musical in a balanced manner, needs decent isolation and suffers a little pitch instability | ● | | | 33/45 | | | ● | 1907 | 164 |
| ▲ Reson RS1 | 600 | Supplied set-up and ready-tuned, this unconventional deck is packed with mid-band detail | ● | | | 33/45 | | ● | ● | | 159 |
| ▲ Roksan Radius 3/Tabriz zi | 890 | Elegant-looking turntable with a tidy, ordered sound. Bright and breezy if a shade lightweight | ● | | | 33/45 | ● | ● | ● | | 159 |
| SME Model 20A | 4,863 | Supplied with Series V arm. Engineered to last a lifetime, giving excellent stereo and detail retrieval | ● | | | 33/45/78 | ● | ● | ● | | 118 |
| ▲ Thorens TD166 V/UK/RB | 400 | Refined, solid sound with well-focused imagery; suitable for use with good MM/MC budget cartridges | ● | | | 33/45 | ● | ● | ● | | 103 |
| Thorens TD2001 | 700 | Balances convenience and sound well, but deck lacks detail and bass could be better controlled | | | | ● 33/45 | ● | ● | ● | | 159 |
| ▲ Well Tempered Record Player | 1,850 | Intriguing and challenging. Musically not ideal, but its limpid quality and lack of artificiality set standards | ● | | | 33/45 | ● | ● | ● | 1180 | 136 |

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 JoLida • Wollaton Audio • tel 0115 928 4147
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 JPW Loudspeakers • tel 01752 607000
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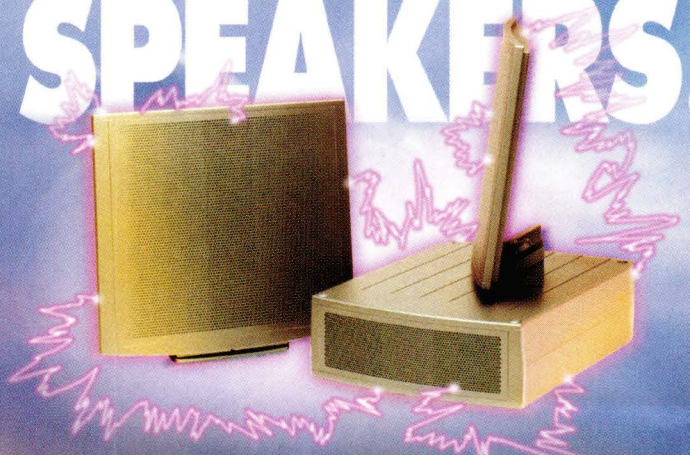
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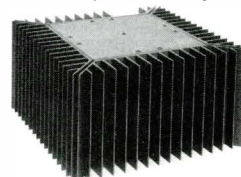
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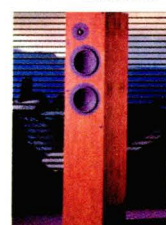
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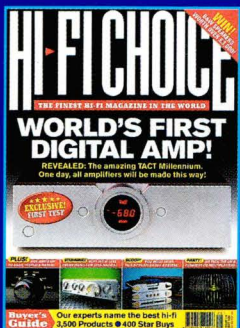
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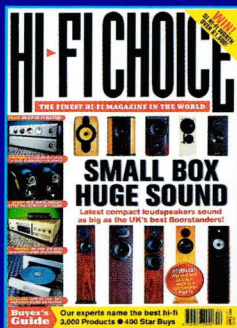
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NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE

- **AMPLIFIER UPGRADES**
- **LOUDSPEAKERS WITH BASS**
- **SPEAKER CABLES**

AMPLIFIER UPGRADES

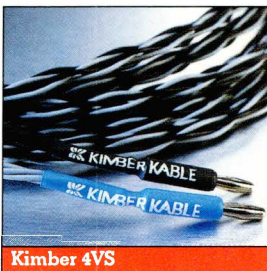
Have you got an integrated amplifier but want to upgrade? If so, don't trade it in until you've read our review of integrated amp add-ons next month. We look at six big-name combos from: Arcam, Cyrus, Densen, Musical Fidelity, Quad and Roksan.



Cyrus III/Power

LOUDSPEAKERS WITH BASS

Sometime it takes solid, raw, uncompromised bass power to ensure the authentic hi-fi experience. In search of such extreme performance we test 14 likely loudspeakers priced between £300 and £700, from B&W, Infinity, Jamo, JBL, JM.Lab, JPW, Kelly Transducers, Magnat, Mission, Musical Technology, Neat, Ruark, System Audio and TDL.



Kimber 4VS

SPEAKER CABLES

Choosing loudspeaker cable can be a baffling process, but not when you've got *Hi-Fi Choice* to help you. Next month we'll test the latest wires from: ALR, AudioQuest, Kimber, Linn, Ortofon, Precious Metals, QED, SonicLink, Straight Wire, Supra Ply, Tara Labs and van den Hul.

HIGH-END REVIEWS

The arrival of B&W's new Nautilus 800 range (*Update*, HFC 180) has been one of the year's hi-fi highlights, and next month we'll be spending quality time with the stunning new Nautilus 802 speaker. Priced at a cool £6,000, it promises amazing performance from the radical 'surroundless' Kevlar midrange unit with no surround. Will it continue the famed Matrix 801's reputation in the new Millennium?

Also looking to the future are the Muse AAD player and Micromega's DVD player, all geared up for the next generation of music and movies, while representing the current state of the CD art is Wadia's 830, plus a new power amp from Danish brand, Sirius. Wow!



B&W Nautilus 802

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THE NOVEMBER 1998 EDITION OF HI-FI CHOICE WILL BE ON SALE THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 24th, 1998. DON'T MISS IT!

Ultra Do looks matter? They do when it comes to speakers, as David Vivian discovers with the room-filling AVI NuNeutrons.

Vivian Scene

Despite all the advice warning against it, judging a book by its cover is easy to do. It isn't just size that matters but shape, colour and presentation. Visual impressions either press the right buttons or they don't.

When it came to me with AVI's amps and CD players, ignition had never been fully achieved. Knew the name, recognised the Perspex front panel with its backlit green AVI logo, managed to live without the T-shirt. My interest should have been snagged the time I came across the company's £999 S2000MI integrated amp, driving a pair of Acoustic Precision Eikos FR1 in Jason Kennedy's system. Marginally better suited to the task than Pioneer's admittedly cheaper but philosophically aligned A-300 Precision, opined Jason — and here's a man who most definitely knows the difference between holographic imaging and his left elbow.

But somehow the significance of the brand's values had slipped by unappreciated. My hazy understanding identified AVI as a Meridian/Linn/Quad lifestyle animal with the emphasis as much on aesthetics, connectivity and remote control as straight sound quality. Nothing wrong with that, of course. Unobtrusive looks and user friendliness are what make the hi-fi world go round these days. And design oriented as they are, none of the above mentioned Brit-fi stalwarts has ever stunted on sonic ambition.

Yet AVI's penchant for cool, mirror-black exteriors was more than usually misleading. I had AVI wrong. Certainly in the case of the company's amps, beneath the studied self-effacement lurks the heart of a lovingly-tweaked hot rod. But it's the magnitude of the difference between what you see and what you hear that startles.

AVI's £2,350 S2000 pre-monoblock combo is a still sterner benchmark for pretentious exotica. It's a veritable Nissan Skyline GT-R of an amp, concealing grunt to burn and a truly mouthwatering spec behind a sober, almost old-fashioned facia.

A legend in the making?

The NuNeutron, meanwhile, is AVI's second go at producing the definitive miniature speaker — something with the sonic stature to oust the legendary BBC LS3/5A as a paradigm of midband accuracy and neutrality, yet the balls and boogie factor to outrun dynamite diminutives such as the ProAc Tablette 50. A tough, some would say impossible, call. The



AVI's NuNeutron bookshelf speaker, shown here in £749 Ebony finish. With the S2000 monoblock amps it made David Vivian reexamine his prejudices!

original Neutron gave a taste of what might be, but didn't quite follow through.

For the new one, AVI has stuck to the same script: tidily reflex box with narrow baffle for good dispersion; top quality, low distortion drive units; carefully designed and matched crossover to minimise phase errors. Apparently, the ending to this story is a happier one. After exhaustive auditioning of drivers, AVI settled on a 110mm doped-paper-cone bass/mid unit from Vifa and a 28mm ScanSpeak viscous-damped fabric dome tweeter. The nominal bandwidths of these top-notch drivers overlap by such a margin — the remarkable bass/mid unit goes from 50Hz to 9kHz, the tweeter from 1kHz to 30kHz — it was possible for AVI to engineer a crossover that made its transition at the smoothest part of the amplitude response, thus ensuring low distortion and phase coherence over the part of the audio band the ear is most sensitive to.

AVI has finessed elements of the original Neutron in numerous other ways to squeeze the last drop of performance from this £499 (£749 finished in Ebony) pint-sized design. And early feedback from the recording industry — which, presumably, has been crying out for a worthy successor to the LS3/5A for years — is promising. Talk of NuNeutrons being used to mix 90-piece orchestras, sug-

gests that the 'miniature monitor' part of the brief has been fulfilled comfortably.

But so-called 'monitors', for all their tonal accuracy, can sound dull and uninvolved in a domestic environment where music has to be enjoyed, not just scrutinised. When I first hooked up the NuNeutrons to my system — Arcam Alpha 8SE CD player, Musical Fidelity X-PRE/X-A50 pre-monoblock amps — it seemed I was in for another dose of the same. The AVIs sounded sweet but laid back: all resolution and no raunch. Substituting a Pioneer A-300 Precision for the MFs ushered in still greater insight and transparency, but even less volume and dynamics.

That's the other thing about baby monitors. They're insensitive, power-hungry blighters — just 86dB for one Watt in the case of the NuNeutrons. A kick up the backside was administered by the 150 Watt AVI S2000 monoblocks mentioned earlier. The difference these made was so extraordinary I still can't believe it. What had been polite became palpable; insight was replaced with a convincing version of the truth and musicians assumed life-sized, flesh-and-blood form.

In short, hi-fi has never seemed so real, and I'm in love with a pair of bookshelf speakers. AV who? I get the message. ▲

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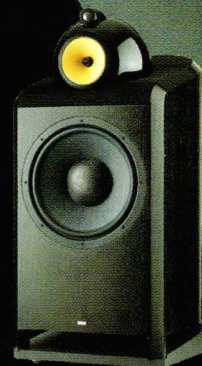
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