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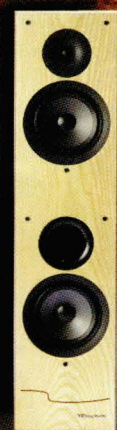
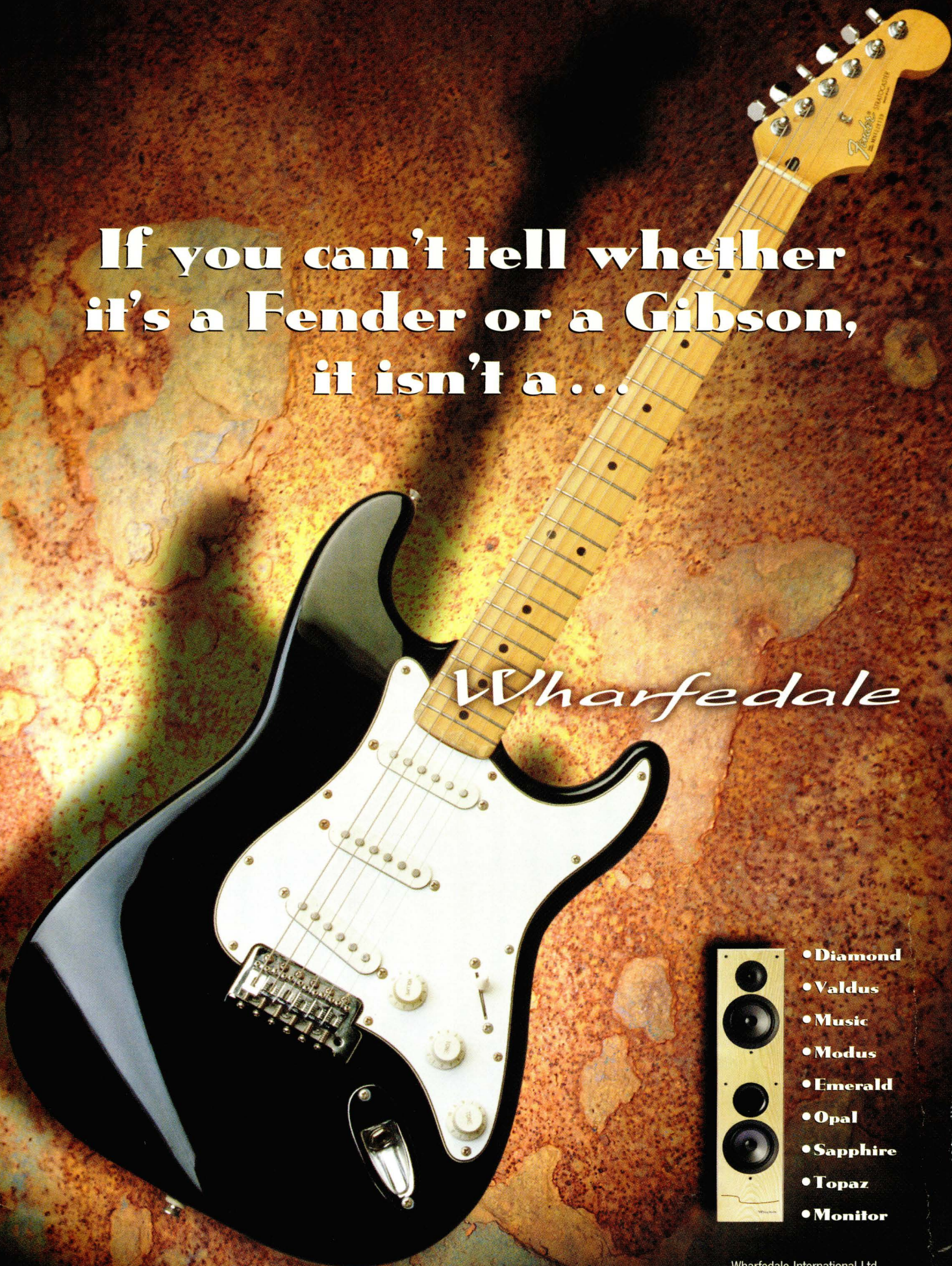


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Hi-Fi Choice is the UK hi-fi magazine representative of the European Imaging & Sound Association (EISA). Every year EISA honours the finest hi-fi and home cinema products throughout Europe.

# EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

The Ed's taking a break, so Reviews Editor **Tim Bower** takes over Notebook duties. While the cat's away...



Regular readers may have been disturbed upon opening their crisp new copy of *Choice*, only to discover my mug staring back at them instead of our esteemed Editor's visage. Fret not, for Captain Kennedy isn't dead; he's only sleeping. The lucky blighter is off on a six-week sabbatical, earned through his long and tireless service to the venerable hi-fi Bible you hold in your hands. Right now he's sunning himself on an Indonesian beach, wrapped in a loose-fitting sarong and sipping sweet papaya juice from the shell of a freshly-plucked coconut... poor chap. He's missing all the fun!

Imagine six weeks in 'paradise' with just a portable tape player for musical company. No soaring highs or gut-wrenching lows, just plenty of 'boom', oodles of 'tizz' and a sound as flat as a pancake. It's a painful prospect for those of us enraptured by the joys of real hi-fi, who have experienced the irresistible pull of life-like soundstaging, bandwidth and dynamic range. Once you've heard the best, it is so terribly difficult to take a backwards step.

Anyway, while Jason suffers his fate, I'm honoured to step into his considerable shoes. Here's a quick resumé so you know where I'm coming from: I've loved music for as long as I can remember, and that passion progressed into the realms of hi-fi when I reached my early teens. I knew my favourite bands could sound more alive than my knackered old midi system would allow, so I did some research, talked to a few dealers and gradually began to upgrade. Through university I was proud to own "the best system on campus", but my immediate neighbours weren't so enamoured when the walls were still shaking at 4am.

It was five years ago that I wrote my first piece on hi-fi. "Music should raise the roof, not paper the walls," I concluded, and my outlook hasn't changed. True hi-fi is about involvement, not background music. It's about reproducing the energy of the recording session in the comfort of your own front room, involving the listener and heightening the musical experience. Entertainment is the bottom line – lose sight of that and passion means nothing.

So that's me, HFC's Reviews Editor, humbly at your service. And here's to Captain Kennedy – may he and his wife make beautiful music together until their hi-fi system welcomes them home.

## THE EISA AWARDS

This issue, we're delighted to bring you the European Hi-Fi Awards, organised by the European Imaging and Sound Association (EISA). These are Europe's most thorough and prestigious hi-fi awards, with voting spanning 19 magazines from 16 countries.

Hi-Fi Choice and its sister title, *Home Entertainment*, are the only UK magazines to take part, and the results represent the opinions of Europe's foremost hi-fi experts.

Starting on p26, you'll find details of all the winners, from CD players, amps and speakers to pre-packaged systems and even car audio. If you want to discover the best hi-fi around, these are the awards you can trust. So why put up with anything less?

## AND THERE'S MORE!

As if that wasn't enough, we've squeezed in the usual assortment of reviews and features to tickle your aural taste buds.

Hi-fi fans are in for an exciting few months, with UK launches of DVD-Audio and SACD, but there's still plenty of life in the ol' CD yet. Starting on p75, I get to grips with five superb high-end CD players and explain why they're still hot property.

Meanwhile, anyone who fancies plugging themselves into their own private musical universe should check out Lee Dunkley's headphone group test from p89. Cans can be a blessed release for family and neighbours, and they're addictive in their own right. A good pair can be incredibly involving – sound at its most direct.

It's a busy month for our Technical Editor, too. Mr Miller puts Arcam's Alpha 7SE CD player through its paces, gets to grips with TACT's fascinating digital amp and gathers some interesting findings from a group test of MiniDisc blank media. He also continues his world exclusive look at Sony's first SACD player, something no audiophile should miss. Enjoy!

## THIS MONTH'S EDITOR'S CHOICE

Our crop of 'high-end' reviews has harvested several candidates, but two stand out as exceptional examples of their own particular breed. Before he departed on his sabbatical, Captain Kennedy had a fantastic time with Avid's Acutus turntable (p62). It's one of the best he's heard, and our Editor knows a thing or two about vinyl – it was almost enough to make him stay. Meanwhile, Richard Black reckons Sony's MDS-JA555ES (p67) is probably the best MiniDisc recorder yet. It seems this flexible digital recording format is finally coming of age.





**SUPER TEST HIGH-END CD PLAYERS P75**



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# NEWS & VIEWS

Tim Bown and Lee Dunkley forget it's the silly season and dig up the top news nuggets.

## NEWS IN BRIEF



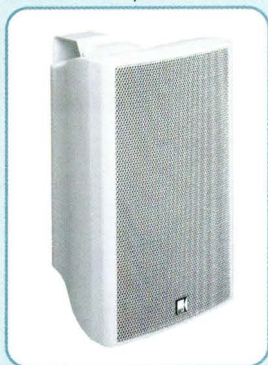
**SANYO** is introducing two micro systems with an emphasis on stylish design. The DC DA100 and the DC DA300 combine high-tech metallic looks with wood finished speakers. The DC DA300 offers 12 Watts per channel RMS while its sibling, the DC DA100, offers 6 Watts RMS. Both are available from your nearest stockist at about £130 and £90 respectively.

☎ (01923) 246363

**BANDRIDGE** has announced a new range of interconnects from Profigold. Aimed at both audio and home cinema applications, the range includes fibre optical, digital coaxial, phono to phono, scart and FM aerial coaxial interconnects. All are touted as being 100 per cent shielded with 24 carat gold-plated connectors.

☎ (0181) 543 3633

**MAPLIN** is going on-line. The specialist electronics retail and mail order company has launched a fully interactive Internet ordering service following on from the success of its print and CD-ROM-based catalogue. The company say this will improve the accessibility of Maplin Electronics' 30,000 products, offering a quick, effective and user-friendly service. Website: [www.maplin.co.uk](http://www.maplin.co.uk)



**KEF** has announced the introduction of an all-weather loudspeaker – the Ci 500AW. As part of the Ci Series, KEF claims this two-way, closed-box design can be used in almost any outdoor environment from patio to poolside to ocean-going yacht. Finished in white, the Ci 500AW is expected to retail at around £299.99.

☎ (01622) 672261

**ARCAM** is no longer handling the UK distribution of products from US cable firm Audioquest. The two companies have brought their 12-year partnership to an amicable end, and Goldring has stepped into Arcam's shoes.

☎ (01284) 701101

## See the light fantastic

 A CD player, three processors and a power amp are the first products to hit these shores from Enlightened Audio Designs following its distribution deal with The Disc Emporium.

The brand specialises in multi-channel applications and claims to be among the first to champion HDCD, Dolby Digital and DTS. It's best known for its high-end TheaterMaster processors – the Encore is available at £2,299, with the Ovation at £3,699 and Signature at £5,499. There's a matching five-channel power amp called the PowerMaster, priced at £3,999, with a claimed output of 400 Watts per channel.

But Enlightened Audio's line-up doesn't only cater for multi-channel. The Ultradisc 2000 CD player (£1,200) features Pioneer's Stable Platter Mechanism with dual




Enlightened Audio Designs' Ultradisc 2000 CD player.

differential 20-bit DACs and HDCD compatibility. A DVD player should also be with us by the end of the year.

Whether two-channel or multi-channel, the brand claims a purist approach for all its products. "The true fidelity of the source" is, it says, the ultimate goal. *The Disc Emporium* ☎ (01438) 816688

## Back to bass-ics

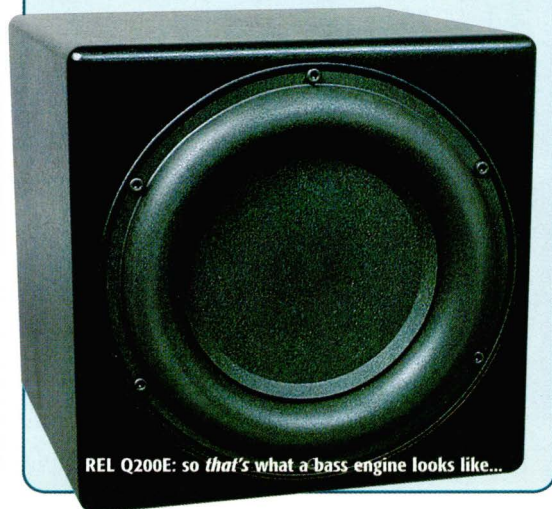
 Welsh bass specialist REL is poised to make waves with a new compact subwoofer. The Q200E's cabinet is less than a cubic foot in volume, yet the company claims a performance of enormous pace, depth and impact.

The Q200E boasts a 200 Watt, fully discreet MOSFET amp coupled to a heavy-duty 25cm driver with a 7.6 kg magnet. Other details include a toroidal transformer, gold-plated phono connectors and the provision of both spikes and nylon feet.

The price of all this bass-driven technology is £600, but REL would prefer it if you don't call it a subwoofer, thanks – it's a "bass engine", don't you know!


Who knows, it might just catch on.

*REL Acoustics* ☎ (01656) 768777



REL Q200E: so that's what a bass engine looks like...

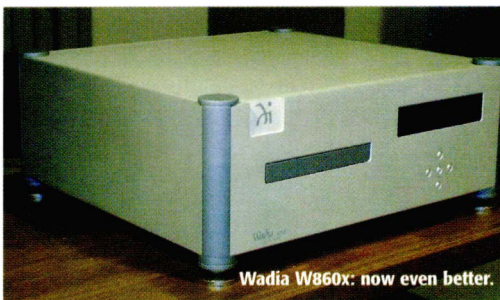
## Wadia know!

 The digital gurus behind US brand Wadia have unveiled details of an upgrade to the acclaimed W860 CD player. The result is the W860x, said to substantially improve on the performance of the W850, and also provide options for future upgrades.

The new player now incorporates 24-bit/96kHz decoding, in line with current thinking. Like all Wadia products with digital processing, the old W860 used the proprietary 24-bit Digimaster filter. But new software allows signals recorded with 24-bit resolution to be processed directly, while sampling rates of 96kHz can be handled with 16 times oversampling.

Also new is an external 'clocklink' facility, designed for use with an off-board processor. It allows the digital signal to be routed out to the processor and then back to the 860x, maintaining Wadia's formidable reputation for advanced jitter reduction. The final change is to the master clock, which is claimed to improve high frequency detail and that sense of 'being there'. The W860x costs £7,450, the same as the model it replaces, and existing W860 owners can upgrade for £250.


*Musical Design Company* ☎ (01992) 573030



Wadia W860x: now even better.



# Gettin' Genki with it

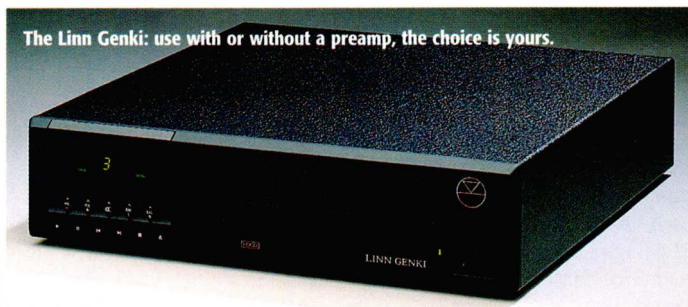
 Linn has added a new sub-£1,000 CD player to its range, following on from the CD12-inspired Ikemi announced last month. The Genki costs £995 and features both fixed and variable volume control outputs. This means you can use it with or without a preamp – skip the pre and you create a more direct signal path, with positive sonic gains.

It also means that you can create a simple multi-room system with the minimum of fuss. Connect it to a conventional hi-fi system in one room, and use the player's localised volume control to feed a power amp and loudspeakers in a second room. Additional features include Linn's


proprietary Brilliant Silent Power supply, a Delta-Sigma DAC and an HDCD-compatible digital filter. The player is available from Linn dealers now.

Linn ☎ (0141) 307 7777

**The Linn Genki: use with or without a preamp, the choice is yours.**



# Multiple metal mayhem!

 Monitor Audio is set to add several new multi-channel speakers to its Silver Series, designed for both movie and music applications.

For centre channel duty comes the Silver 12i, a £400 centre speaker using twin 16.5cm mid/bass drivers and a 25mm metal dome tweeter. Taking care of rear effects are the £400 Silver Surround model, a switchable di-polar/bi-polar design featuring a pair of 14cm mid/bass units and two 25mm tweeters. For that extra bass slam, there's the ASW 110, a £500 active sub-woofer with a 25cm driver and integral 150 Watt amp.

All models in the Silver Series feature C-CAM woofers, an acronym for Ceramic Coated Aluminium


Magnesium Alloy, so continuing Monitor Audio's tradition of all-metal drive units.

Monitor Audio ☎ (01223) 246344

**The Silver 12i centre channel speaker.**



## MiniDisc advance – technically superior?

 Technics claims its new MiniDisc (MD) recorder is the best yet. The SJ-MD100 uses the "latest" version of MD's ATRAC compression and "high grade" 20-bit A-to-D/D-to-A converters for supposedly superior sound quality.

To cope with the rising number of digital sources in the home, Technics has provided two optical digital inputs in place of one, together with an optical output and an analogue input with recording level control.


You also get full remote control, a fascia-mounted 'jog' dial for text entry and a headphone socket with independent volume control, all for £230.

Technics ☎ (0990) 357357



Technics' SJ-MD100 boasts the latest ATRAC technology.

## Tape two

 Tape legend Nakamichi is hoping to breath new life into the traditional tape deck market by relaunching two of its most popular models.

The DR-8 is a re-issue of the DR-2 at £550, and the DR-10 is a re-badged version of the DR-3 at £800.

Both decks sport Dolby B and C noise reduction, but the DR-10 has three Crystalloy heads – useful for monitoring – and the DR-8 has two. The DR-10 adds an "asymmetrical dual-capstan diffused resonance transport" for precise tape travel, and a bias tuning control to cope with variations between cassette brands.

During the heyday of cassette, Nakamichi was widely reputed to make the best decks around. The company has recently returned to the UK market following a lengthy absence, and is now largely concentrating on 'lifestyle' systems and DVD, but these new models mark a welcome return to the format on which the company built its reputation. Watch out for a review of the DR-10 in our next issue.

BBG Distribution ☎ (0181) 863 9117

**Nakamichi's DR-10 has three heads for tape monitoring.**



## NEWS IN BRIEF



**SNELL** has launched a new centre channel loudspeaker. A three-way design, the XA 55 employs a central 2.5cm aluminium dome tweeter, with two 6cm midrange units and two 15cm bass units. Designed to complement the XA 75 and XA 90 'tower' loudspeakers, the XA 55 is expected to sell for about £1,000.

☎ (01233) 813111

**DAB** update: despite slow take-up by other home hi-fi manufacturers, Arcam claims steady sales for its Alpha 10 DAB tuner, with back-orders building up and several hundred already in use. Meanwhile, take-up among in-car manufacturers continues apace, with JVC being the latest to announce new car audio products featuring DAB tuners.

☎ Arcam (01223) 203203

☎ JVC (0181) 450 3282

**TIMMOL.COM** is a new Internet site giving Web surfers a place to search for new musical talent. Bands are able to promote themselves in a self-contained area with biographies, pictures and MP3-compressed samples of their music, which may be downloaded if the artist agrees. According to its creator, Sonitus Ltd, services like this will eventually make record companies redundant. Indeed, the value of Internet music sales is growing – they will be worth \$4 billion by 2004, according to a report in the *Financial Times*. Website: [www.timmol.com](http://www.timmol.com)

**DOLBY** headphone technology is now available to Singapore Airlines' passengers in all classes of travel, supplying "cinema-quality" surround sound using standard headphones. The technology will soon be available to all Dolby customers, but SIA passengers are the first to experience it via the airline's in-flight entertainment system on all 747s, A340s and B777s. ☎ (01793) 842100

**SCHNEIDER** has launched an MP3 player, and at £160 it is one of the most affordable yet. The MPMan F20 allows users to store music downloaded from the Internet and play back at "near CD quality". Look out for more next month. ☎ (0161) 374 0101



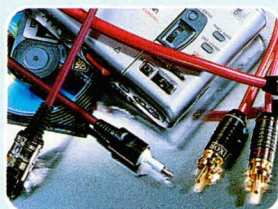
**PROWIRE**, a range of cables and interconnects available from Vivanco, has cut the price of its Out of Sight speaker cable. The oxygen-free, flat copper cable, which is just 0.18mm gauge, comes with a self-adhesive backing and, as the name suggests, is designed to be easily concealed. Available as a single stereo pair or



## NEWS IN BRIEF

bi-wire versions, prices are £199 and £3.99 per metre respectively.  
☎ (01442) 403020

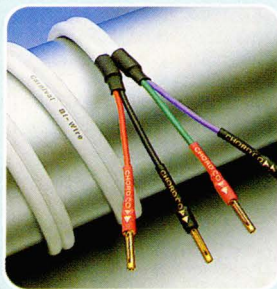
**HI-SPACE** introduces the Clip-Tray – a slimline CD-R storage system. At one-third the thickness of a normal CD case, the Clip-Tray is touted as the ultimate portable space-saver. Prices start at £28 for a set of 25. Website: [www.hi-space.com](http://www.hi-space.com)



**IXOS** has unveiled three new interconnects aimed at personal MiniDisc recording. The range offers digital optical connection via standard TosLink to mini-TosLink cable, with a mini to mini-TosLink version also available. An analogue alternative comes in a mini-jack to stereo phono plug form. Prices are £19.95 for the analogue cable, with both optical cables at £29.95.  
☎ (01494) 441736

**NAKAMICHI** is introducing four new SoundSpace CD changer/hi-fi systems to join the SoundSpace 8. The new line-up will be demonstrated at the forthcoming Novotel Hi-Fi Show, Hammersmith, London, between 23 and 26 September.  
☎ (0181) 863 9117

**TDK** has launched four new cleaning accessories. Three of the products are designed to remove foreign particles from the optical pick-up lenses on MiniDisc and CD players/recorders and CD-ROM drives. A fourth product is for cleaning the recording head on MiniDisc recorders. The products range in price from £9.99 to £16.99.  
☎ (01737) 773773



**THE CHORD COMPANY** has released a new bi-wire speaker cable. The Carnival Bi-wire features two twisted pairs of multi-strand oxygen-free copper in a figure of 8 geometry. Colour coded for easy identification, it's available now at £5.49 per metre.  
☎ (01722) 331674

**EXPOSURE ELECTRONICS LTD** has announced it has no contractual links with Monitor Audio. In an attempt to clarify the situation after the failed takeover bid by Monitor Audio, John Farlowe of Exposure has revealed plans for a new UK sales office. New Exposure products are to be launched later in the year.  
☎ (01273) 423877

# Astonishingly Lumley



British loudspeaker brand Lumley is set to launch the new jewel in its crown – the Monarch 2000. Priced at £16,000 per pair, this stunning-looking speaker is the pinnacle of Lumley's 'free air' open baffle concept. Each cabinet is home to no less than 13 separate drive units, arranged so that different parts of the speaker's frequency range are handled by drivers in their own free air space.

The bottom section of the Monarch 2000's structure is a sub-bass enclosure, incorporating two 20cm bass drivers. Above this sit three separate pillars, sandwiched between the top plate and sub-bass cabinet with rubber pads for isolation. One of these pillars houses four 15cm upper bass units, another holds four 5cm midrange domes, and the last contains two 25mm dome tweeters and a 5cm ribbon super tweeter.

Each column is independently adjustable to help with room-matching, and crossover performance can also be tweaked via a series of 'tuning' plugs at the rear.

Impedance is rated at 5 Ohms and power handling is 500 Watts, but don't expect great performance straight from the box – Lumley recommends at least 500 hours to run them in!

Lumley Loudspeakers ☎ (01892) 616383



The Monarch 2000: the new jewel in Lumley's crown.

# A new pair of NADs



NAD has unleashed a new entry-level CD player. The C520 costs £170 and replaces the 522, with improvements inside and out.

In terms of performance, additional damping for the master clock crystal is said to lower jitter, and changes to the mechanism have increased tolerance of CDs in poor condition. On the aesthetic side, the player's styling has been updated in line with NAD's latest look, and the display now features electro-luminescent back

lighting. A coaxial digital output has been added as well.

Also available from NAD is the 319 amplifier at £500. Its power section is said to be identical to the Model 216THX power amp, able to deliver a massive 125 Watts per channel. What's more, you can add a Model 216THX, bridge both amps and give yourself 2 x 400 Watts! Additional features include six line inputs, remote control and bypassable tone controls.

NAD ☎ (01296) 482017

# Noughts and crosses



The XO is a new three-box preamp from high-end US specialist Pass Labs. The top box houses the power supply and digital

control circuitry, featuring independent digital and analogue power supplies, and full shielding from digital and radio frequency noise. The other two boxes incorporate the analogue gain stages.

This approach is said to allow greater isolation of the

preamp's delicate components. It also facilitates Pass Labs' Supersymmetry circuit topology, apparently raising performance by matching the characteristics of the two

balanced halves of a simple Class A circuit. The result, Pass claims, is lower distortion and noise.

Five line-level inputs are provided, with both balanced and single-ended socketry. And the price for all this? Some £8,500.

Zentek Music  
☎ (01892) 616383



Pass Labs' three-box XO preamp.



## Sharp thinking



Sharp has just released pictures of its forthcoming digital amp, as previewed in last month's *Editor's Notebook*. Most amplifiers operate in the analogue domain, but this Autumn the SM-SX100 will join Tact's Millennium MkII (see p68) as a ground-breaking digital product.

At the Sharp's heart lies single-bit technology and a 2.8MHz sampling frequency shared by DSD, the conversion system employed by SACD. Sharp plans to build several hi-fi systems around the technology next year, coupling SACD players with one-bit digital amps, including a system with micro-sized components.

Sharp claims several benefits for its one-bit technology, as seen in the SM-SX100. First is its sound – with 7th order Delta-Sigma noise shaping, the claimed results include superb transient response and a huge dynamic range. It's also said to use half the electricity and generate 80 per cent less heat than analogue amps with an equivalent power 2 x 100 Watt output. And it's space-efficient too, allowing powerful yet relatively compact amps to be built for both two-channel and multi-channel domains.

The SM-SX100 will weigh in at a suitably high-end price, expected to be around £8,000. That's hardly familiar territory for Sharp, but it has always claimed to be at the forefront of digital technology, and the SM-SX100 looks set to prove the point.

Sharp ☎ (0800) 262958



Sharp's SM-SX100: ground-breaking digital technology.

## MP3 to be



SAMSUNG has unleashed the YP-E32, Europe's Internet Audio product of the year (see p43), in the UK. This portable MP3 player offers the latest digital audio technology downloaded from the Internet. With a 32Mb memory, the YP-E32 (or 'Yepp') stores up to 60 minutes of music from Web sites as well as your own CDs converted to the MP3 format. Available now for £149.99.

☎ (0800) 521652



Samsung's YP-E32: aka 'Yepp'



## PAUL MESSENGER

Paul's thoughts turn to Teutonic sonics.

Globalisation might be the millennial buzzword, but national boundaries can still represent a formidable obstacle in the higher stratas of specialist hi-fi. The top UK brands do plenty of business overseas, and it's long been possible to find a fair selection of imported exotica here, although the mix has always been heavily dominated by products from the USA.

We do get high-end equipment from Europe and elsewhere – French and Italian brands seem to be enjoying some success – but one virtual absentee from the lists has been German hi-fi. Our roads may be full of BMWs and Mercs, but the only upmarket German hi-fi that springs to mind as currently UK available are the (very) specialist speakers from Audio Physic and AvantGarde.

That could well be about to change. I've just visited the small town of Herford in North Germany, home of T+A – an unfamiliar name unless you happened across them at the 1997 or '98 Heathrow Hi-Fi Shows. The initials stand for Theory + Application, the firm's been around for some 20 years, and currently turns over about DM20m (£7m).

To date, 90 per cent of its sales have been in Germany, but two years ago T+A decided to expand its European export activities, with the UK a principal target. Distribution here is through the UK subsidiary of Hirschmann, a larger German firm which makes electronic equipment and also distributes Becker and Focal high-end in-car kit.

T+A started out in loudspeakers, but has evolved into a fully-fledged Digimeister, broadening its activities to include advanced digital audio techniques and a range of electronic products.

The Solitaire A2D digi-speaker might not be the first to work from a direct digital input, nor is it a true 'digital speaker'. But it does seem to be a very well thought-out attempt to use the unique capabilities of digital signal processing to enhance the performance of what is, in many ways, a conventional three-way speaker.

The key lies in the ability to execute high precision, flexible filtering in the digital domain. Each loudspeaker is fed directly from a CD transport or

other digital source (such as a digital pre-amp), and thus contains built-in DACs to convert the signal back to analogue, before feeding (4 x 150W) power amps which (actively) drive the (five) moving-coil drive units.

The clever DSP bits are situated between the input and the DAC, where the filter cascade is not only used to 'flatten' the inherent driver responses and provide precision high-slope, phase-linear crossover transitions, but also to 'pre-equalise' the speaker to deliver a fundamentally flat amplitude and phase response.

Nowadays many normal passive speakers can deliver a reasonably flat amplitude (loudness) frequency response under anechoic conditions. Put a pair into a room, however, and you'll get a very different net balance, because the 'flatness' of the speaker is swamped by the up-and-down signature of the room's main resonant modes.

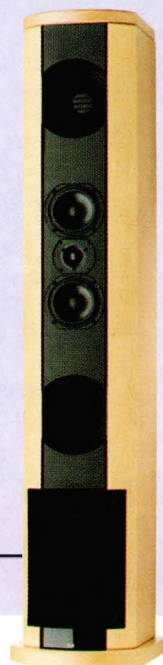
Although other companies (Marantz, B&W and Celestion for starters) have investigated similar approaches, the T+A Solitaire's ability to 'flatten out' room modes is probably unique. To put further icing on the cake, the bass drivers are controlled via opto-electronic feedback. The guys at T+A are candid that this isn't the loudspeaker for everyone, but I for one am looking forward to finding out what they sound like in my place.

T+A's Digimeisters have also come up with some interesting techniques on their CD players. For starters, they're a trifle miffed that Sony has been making a big play of its switchable digital filter options, a feature which T+A introduced a year or two earlier.

It has long been my view that 'bitstream'-type DACs sound smoother and sweeter at higher frequencies, while the earlier 'multi-bit' DACs tend to punch out the bass lines with rather more confidence. So I'm intrigued by the combination T+A employs in its top CD players, which use bitstream DACs for the top end and multi-bit in the bass in a dual-differential two-way configuration.

These are just a few highlights of a very interesting company which could well make an impact in the UK over the next few years. If you want the full SP, Hirschmann has a stylish and witty 100-page English language brochure to drool over.

☎ 01234 345999



T+A's Solitaire A2D digital speaker.



## PREVIOUSLY UNHEARD

**Phil Strongman** digs out rare and classic tracks appearing on CD or virgin vinyl for the first time. Go strut your funky stuff...



**BOB MARLEY AND THE WAILERS**  
**Catch A Fire**

This 1973 set is the first serious reggae album and MoFi's gold CD does it justice, revealing the full bass architecture and the layers of Peter Tosh's Hammond behind Marley's yearning vocals. The relentless *Concrete Jungle*, deadpan *Kinky Reggae* and infectious *Stir It Up* are only eclipsed by the *Midnight Ravers* finale. *Catch* contains some amazing guitar work as well as some fine lyrics. One of the all-time greats. But where's the Zippo sleeve? *Mobile Fidelity from Vivante*  
Music ★★★★★ Sound ★★★★★

**FRANK SINATRA '57 In Concert**

Was he the godfather of rap? It's not such a daft question when you consider that Ol' Blue Eyes was virtually the first to sing-talk in that oh-so-casual manner. *You Make Me Feel So Young* and *I Get A Kick Out of You* are among the hits here, recorded live but with the quality of a studio recording. *DCC CD and 180 g LP from Vivante*.  
Music ★★★★★ Sound ★★★★★

**ANDREW WHITE** *Guitarra Celtica*

Incredibly expressive sounds from the gentle Geordie guitar genius who got his

break in New Zealand. Beautifully arranged and played, this mostly instrumental set has some of the best acoustic gee-tar work I've heard all year.

*Linn CD*  
Music ★★★★★ Sound ★★★★★

**THE NITTY GRITTY DIRT BAND**

**The Dirt Band/All American Dream**  
Classic feelgood stuff including *In For The Night* and *For A Little While*. Two albums from their 1978-80 heyday that sound like a happy Steely Dan, if you can imagine it. *BGO*  
Music ★★★★★ Sound ★★★★★

**CHAKA KHAN** *I'm Every Woman, Best of*

Chaka always had a great voice and *Ain't Nobody, I Feel For You* and the title track have superb performances. *Nights In Tunisia* and a live *Tell Me Something Good* are the cherries on a well produced cake. *Warners*  
Music ★★★★★ Sound ★★★★★

**ROY BUDD** *Marseille Contract*

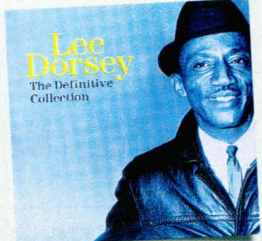
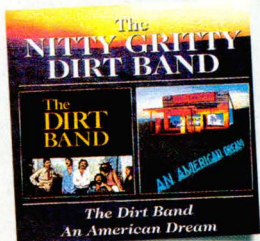
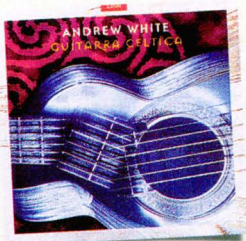
Another Budd OST that outclasses its movie. Moody, nifty slice of 70s film soul. Has everything, including wide dynamics and a House theme version. *Cinephile*  
Music ★★★★★ Sound ★★★★★

**LEE DORSEY** *The Definitive Collection*

Seminal rhythm'n'blues from the former garage hand including *Ya Ya, Ride Your Pony* and *Working In A Coal Mine*. *Camden*  
Music ★★★★★ Sound ★★★★★

**SEX GANG** *Veil*

Steve Harley meets Mick Ronson on acid in Goth violin-heavy Eastern Europe. Unique. *Magicavern*  
Music ★★★★★ Sound ★★★★★



## Now hear these!



Californian speaker specialist Now Hear This has a new 'reference'

model heading towards these shores. The NHT Model 3.3 is a four-way floorstander with a 30cm polypropylene bass cone that fires from the side.

All other frequencies are delivered from the front in the conventional manner: there's a 17cm lower midrange unit, a 10cm cone for the upper midrange and a 25mm aluminium dome tweeter. Sensitivity is rated at 87dB and impedance is given as 6 Ohms. It's available now in three finish options: black, mahogany and sycamore, priced per pair at £3,000, £3,200 and £3,300 respectively. *Recoton* ☎ (02392) 240287



## Samsung's affordable DVD players



Samsung has launched two DVD players, the DVD709 and the DVD909. Both models are competitively priced at about £280 and £380 respectively, and benefit from the provision of DTS.

The budget-priced DVD709 is touted as a first-time buyer's DVD player with 24-bit/96kHz audio capability and a 10-bit video processing converter. For those without a full home cinema set-up, the DVD709 incorporates a 3D sound facility called 'Spatializer' which, Samsung claims, reproduces a convincing surround-sound effect with a two-speaker hi-fi system.

With a similar specification, the DVD909 features a built-in Dolby Digital decoder for connection straight to a five-channel amplifier and speakers. Versatile audio and video connections adorn the DVD909, with on-screen displays for audio output level adjustments. The front panel features a jog-shuttle control for manipulation of playback modes. Both models are currently available from Samsung dealers nationwide. *Samsung* ☎ (0800) 521652







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**Technics**





# GET RICH Quick

**Tim Bown** takes a listen to an entry-level 'student system' ready for the new term. Who chose the kit? None other than Richer Sounds, hi-fi retail's perennial budget specialist.

## THE SYSTEM

Cambridge Audio CD4SE CD player	£120.00
Sony MDS-JB920 MD recorder	£200.00
Pioneer A-300R amplifier	£120.00
JPW ML510 speakers	£70.00
Atacama SE24 speaker stands	£70.00
Cambridge Audio Pacific interconnects (3x1m pairs)	£90.00
Gale XL315BW bi-wire speaker cables (1x4m pair)	£32.00
<b>TOTAL COST</b>	<b>£702.00</b>

Note: all prices as quoted by Richer Sounds

**T**he audiophile is not a special breed. To develop a fascination for hi-fi, all you need is a love of music and a desire to hear it in its original state, presence and realism intact. Instruments sound much more real and the music comes alive through a good system; you get a clearer, sharper picture of the original event – a musical masterpiece caught in time.

Weighing up the sound of high street 'audio' against that of 'real hi-fi' is like comparing a disposable camera with a professional photographer's kit. Both provide an image of the same event, but one is flat and strangely lifeless, the other vibrant and realistic. Don't get hung up on mini systems – if you love music, do the research and investigate separates.

But every audiophile needs to start somewhere. Here's the first rung: a solid, entry-level separates set-up – a classic 'student system', if you like. This kind of stuff is meat and

drink to Richer Sounds, the bargain-basement retail chain from which this month's recommendation was obtained.

Its stores specialise in budget hi-fi separates, tempting the first-time buyer with heavy discounts (reflected in this system's price) and a lack of pretension. No minis or micros – just stacks of components.

True, some industry insiders aren't so keen on Richer Sounds' price-pinching philosophy. But for the first-time buyer, the stores are very popular, and it's easy to see why – they're friendly, accessible and cheap. Indeed, no retailer can claim to have converted more people to hi-fi separates, and that's surely worth applauding.

The common pattern is this: if you're a first-time punter, you're likely to be drawn by the prices at your local branch of Richer Sounds. Then, once the bug has hit and it's time to upgrade, you might outgrow its range of budget separates and

need to visit a more 'specialist' type of outlet. For many, Richer Sounds represents the first rung on hi-fi's ladder – and that's an important role.

## THE SUM OF ITS PARTS

The challenge was to come up with a blockbusting budget set-up. It had to cost less than £800, for which we wanted a CD player, a MiniDisc recorder, an amp, speakers, stands and all cables. Naturally, it should knock any mini system for six, as well as most similarly priced separates set-ups. Here's what Richer recommended.

Ingredient one is the CD4SE CD player from Cambridge Audio – a predictable choice, considering the brand's ownership. It falls under the Audio Partnership banner, a firm with which Richer Sounds has strong business ties. But we wouldn't change a thing, because the CD4SE (HFC 163) is probably the best player around for less than £200.

OK, aesthetically it's a little cheap and nasty, the green





display and 'blocky' fascia failing to hint at the quality under the lid. But money has been spent where it counts, with Philips' respected CD12 transport and a pair of Crystal CS4327 DACs helping to put its sound comfortably above the budget pack. You won't find a more detailed and articulate performer for the money.

The system's second source is Sony's MDS-JB920 MiniDisc recorder (HFC 184), reflecting the format's hard-won popularity as a recording medium. There's no better

**"At its best this system is budget genius. You'd be hard pushed to find a sound that comes close for the money."**

machine to show off MD's strengths - it's packed with editing features and a superbly intuitive user interface, making it a joy to use. Factor in its neutral and dynamic sound and you have a digital recorder of considerable allure.

Both sources hook up to Pioneer's A-300R (HFC 149), the original model on which the company's excellent A-300R Precision is based. Performance is fresh and vital - a touch bright, but full of life - allied with smart build and a flexible array of facilities.

The volume is controllable via the supplied remote handset, and there are sockets for up to six sources including two tape loops and a moving magnet phono input.

Then come the speakers. Richer Sounds recommends JPW's ML510 (see HFC 169), a budget box similar in character to Pioneer's sparky little amp, supported by Atacama SE24 stands. It's bold, bright and at times over-aggressive, but next to most price-point peers it shows real class.

You see, all budget speakers are going to involve a balance of compromises - some play it safe, others end up overblown - but the JPW's tight, lean and informative sound is (mostly) a breath of fresh air.

And finally... cables, the vital last link in the chain. We're using XL315BW bi-wire speaker

cable from Gale, and three pairs of Cambridge Audio Pacific interconnects in place of those in-the-box freebie wires. However, one thing that the Richer guys left out was a cable to record digitally from CD to MiniDisc. The Cambridge has only a single BNC-type electrical digital output, so an RCA-to-BNC digital interconnect is required.

**SOUND QUALITY**

You'll have gathered that these aren't the kind of budget components to sit on the fence. When they're working together this effect is further amplified, delivering a sound that's sometimes brilliant but also inconsistent - engaging or frustrating, depending on your choice of music.

At its best this system is sheer budget genius. Slip a clean and smooth-sounding CD into the CD4SE's drawer and you'd be hard pushed to find a sound that comes close for the money. It's so taught, crisp and communicative you'd think the system cost considerably more.

There may be no real bass weight on offer, but the zest with which it delivers the music more than compensates, giving instruments real zip and sparkle. Orchestral pieces sound clear and well separated, while cleanly-recorded acoustic material is conveyed with more ambient detail than is usual at this price.

But things don't always sound so good. Performance varies from disc to disc, depending on factors inherent in the recording and production process. If a disc's sound is rough or 'toppy', the system emphasises its harshness and can border on the unpleasant.

The upshot was that while Sibelius and Lorrie Lieberman sounded lovely, Oasis and the Chemical Brothers did not. Placebo and Groove Armada landed somewhere in between - good snap to the snare and a pleasing sense of energy, but a little lean and papery up top.

More consistent is the quality of recordings made via the Sony MD recorder. It produces impressively faithful copies from CD, and adds greatly to the value of this set-up for anyone interested in making their own compilations.

**CONCLUSION**

Before embarking on the listening tests, I thought it wise to assume student character by consuming a tin of baked beans, swiftly followed by four pints of snakebite and black.

I wish I hadn't. In addition to leaving a nasty stain on the porcelain, my actions culminated in a desire to play thumping rock and dance music at ridiculous volumes - which is when you hear this set-up at its least impressive.

Thus, this is one 'student system' that may not actually suit your average hard working scholar, 24-hour parties and all. But spread its remit wider, and

it really has much to offer. In fact, I'd even go as far as to say that it delivers a whiff of high-end sound at a tiny fraction of the price.

At its best, truly impressive.

**VERDICT**

<b>SOUND</b>	★★★★☆
<b>SYNERGY</b>	★★★★☆
<b>VALUE</b>	★★★★★
<b>PRICE</b>	<b>£702.00</b>

Given the right kind of disc, this is a remarkably capable budget system. And at Richer Sounds' discount prices its value is excellent.

Richer Sounds (0500) 101112

**THE SYSTEM COMPONENTS**

**AMPLIFIER**

**PIONEER A-300R, £120**

A remote-controllable amp with a fast and engaging sound, it delivers 55 Watts per channel and offers five line inputs, including two tape loops, and a moving magnet phono stage.

Alternatives: Arcam Alpha One, £230; NAD C320, £200; Rotel RA-971, £200.



**CD PLAYER**

**CAMBRIDGE CD4SE, £120**

It looks a little rough but the sound oozes class. You won't find a more articulate CD player for the money.

Alternatives: Denon DCD-635, £180; Kenwood DP-3080, £170; Sony CDP-XB720E, £200; Technics SL-PS670D, £200.



**CABLES & SUPPORTS**

We used Atacama SE24 speaker stands (£70), Gale XL315BW bi-wire speaker cable (£4/m) and Cambridge Audio Pacific interconnects (£30/m pair), all recommended by Richer Sounds. For the purposes of review, all electronics were sited on Mana Acoustics equipment supports.



**MINIDISC RECORDER**

**SONY MDS-JB920, £200**

A superbly-designed MiniDisc recorder from Sony's QS range; it's versatile, easy to use and makes crisp digital recordings - a great advertisement for the benefits of MD.

Alternatives: Pioneer MJ-D707, MD recorder, £250; Sharp MD-R2 MD recorder, £300; Philips CDR-760 CD recorder, £299.



**SPEAKERS**

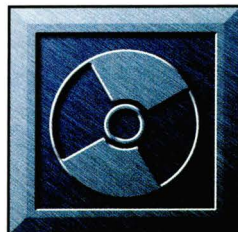
**JPW ML510, £70**

A virile little speaker with a doped paper mid/bass cone, fabric dome tweeter and a decent vinyl finish. Sensitivity is rated at 88dB and impedance is about 5 Ohms.

Alternatives: Acoustic Energy Aegis One, £150; B&W DM302, £150; Mission 700, £130.







# PAUL MILLER'S OASIS OF SANITY

Last month **Paul Miller** exclusively examined the inner workings of Sony's first SACD player. Now it gets the listening panel treatment.

**N**o sooner had the plots dried on our technical exclusive of Sony's SCD-1 Super Audio CD (SACD) player (HFC 193), than the company announced this model would not undergo any regional modifications. So the 240V UK version of this player should be effectively identical to the Japanese sample still occupying a shelf in the lab. The blind listening tests – which were put off last month for fear of auditioning an unrepresentative sample – now got the green light. Likewise a description of the basic functions which, if you've operated a CD player, won't be difficult to master!

All the usual culprits are available, including direct track access, repeat, random and program play modes, index skip, and a scrolling display to accommodate CD Text and SACD Text subcodes (where included). The player will automatically detect CD and/or SACD discs, but you can manually select between the CD/SACD layers of hybrid discs.

Incidentally – and despite rumour-mongering to the contrary – all the hybrid discs I tried successfully replayed in a variety of Sony and Philips transport-based CD players, although tracking performance and access times did occasionally suffer.

The SCD-1 incorporates a digital output, though this only delivers a standard linear PCM signal (as used by CD), not the high speed, low-bit DSD code used by SACD. It also has user-selectable digital filters similar to those used in Sony's CDP-X3000ES and CDP-XB720E models (HFC 169 and HFC 184).

These are only available with traditional CD software, as SACD by design deliberately avoids any use of oversampling technology.

**“Switching to SACD again wrought a transformation into a fundamentally more open and easy-going sound, with cello, horns and flute now easily differentiated and free of any clinical processing.”**

A retractable cover, evidently modelled on a bacon-slicer, conceals a transport that features a variation on Sony's 'Fixed Pick-up' mechanism, where the disc both spins and moves fore and aft to position itself over the laser. The latter includes two optical pickups, one at 650nm that reads the SACD 'surface' and another, at 780nm, that reads deeper into the hybrid disc where the CD layer is buried (for details see last month's *Oasis*).

#### A TASTE OF THE PUDDING

Before auditioning any SACD software, we assessed the SCD-1's sonic performance with familiar conventional CDs.

Lesley Garrett's clean-cut performance suited the player's clean and detailed sound, although Cassandra Wilson's *Right Here, Right Now* was a little less impressive. While the music eased unhurriedly from the speakers, the voice seemed slightly more muddled and individual performers were less easy to distinguish.

Christy Moore's diction was sharp, though his voice lacked the full colour and humour that we have come to expect – and, indeed, know is possible – with the most transparent conventional CD players. Overall, the player's balance is

very neutral, with no undue emphasis of bass, mid or treble, but its performance is not as entertaining as possible. At the risk of generalising, in its alter-ego as a CD player, the SCD-1 is on a par with most heavily engineered Far Eastern machines – bomb-proof but lacking some musical colour and spontaneity.

This established, we auditioned a series of hybrid CD/SACD discs with the player in CD and then SACD mode. Telarc's recording of *Night and Day* proved of particular interest to one listener, who felt the CD track sounded hard and

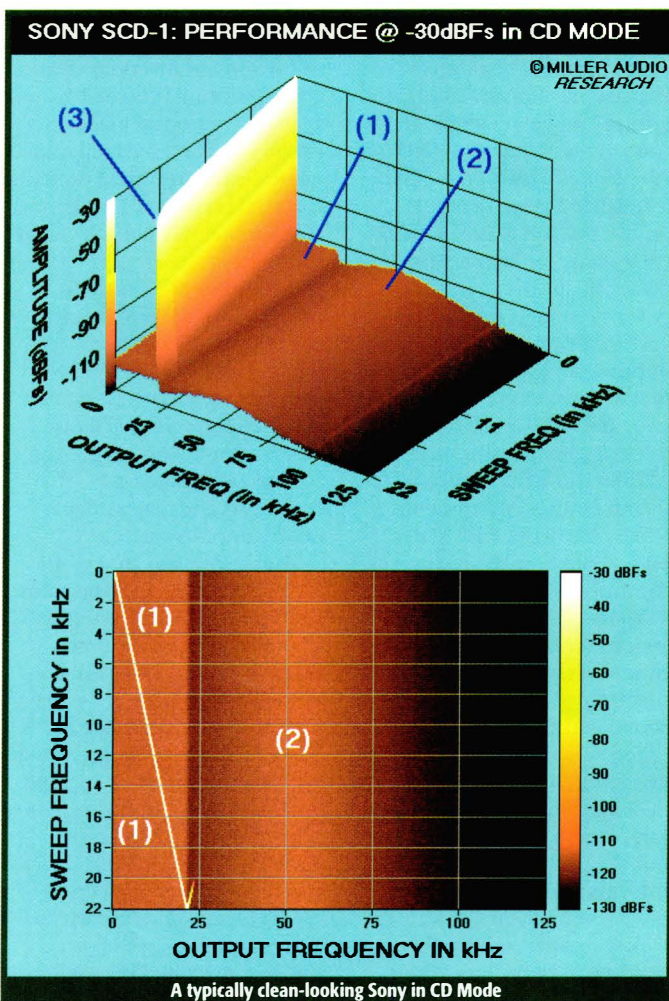
aggressive, the trombones suffering an unnatural edginess that rapidly became uncomfortable.

In SACD mode this recording was transformed. The edginess and aggression was dissolved into a fundamentally more open and natural performance.

Elgar's *Sakyt D'Amour* sounded upfront and compressed when operating in CD mode, as the performers vied with one another for a place in the limelight.

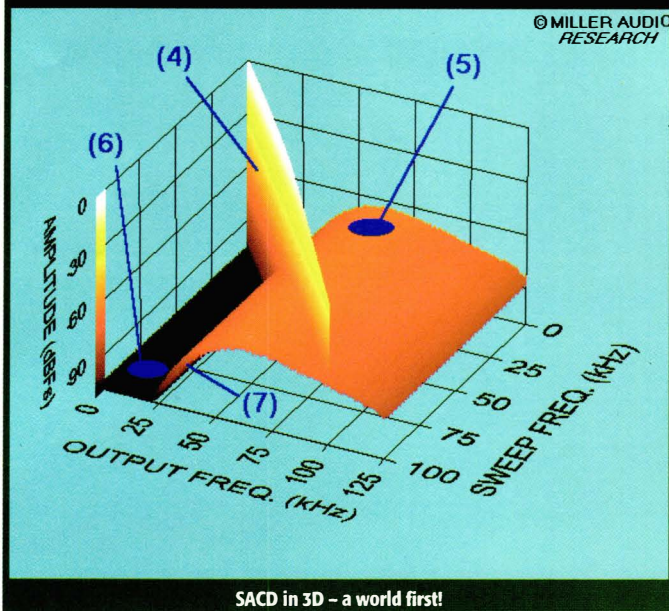
Switching to SACD again wrought a transformation into a fundamentally more open and easy-going sound, with cello, horns and flute now easily differentiated and free of any clinical processing.

Just as we were beginning to suspect our CD selections





## SONY SCD-1: PERFORMANCE @ -0dBFS in SACD MODE



SACD in 3D - a world first!



## SUPER AUDIO CD

might have been 'rigged', the jazz track *Shadow of Your Smile* turned-in a foot-tapping performance, with a well shaped, expressive voice, solidly located centre-stage. In CD mode at least, here was the SCD-1 at its very best.

That said, the SACD version of the recording burst into the room with startling realism, the voice sounding fuller while the surrounding ambience was now more obviously a cocktail lounge. All this information was evidently present on the CD layer, but was subjectively less obvious.

Rather like drawing aside a semi-translucent veil, the SACD brings vague musical shapes into sharp rhythmic relief. And all, our listeners concluded, "without a hint of stress or strain" - all very 'un-digital' in fact. As one

**"In SACD mode this recording was transformed. The edginess and aggression was dissolved into a fundamentally more open and natural performance."**

very enthusiastic listener put it: "This is what I've been waiting for: digital audio that you can turn up loud, that doesn't hurt and sounds genuinely realistic."

**THE INGREDIENTS OF THE PUDDING**

Technically, SACD differs markedly from CD in key performance areas, particularly in its extended 50kHz-plus frequency response. Otherwise, small differences in peak-level distortion from, say 0.0006 per cent (CD) to 0.0003 per cent (SACD), and an advantage in dynamic range of around 5dB don't reveal very much. Indeed, in CD mode, the SCD-1 gives results very like

any other high-calibre Sony player, with excellent low-level linearity, and jitter already below the 200psec watershed for state-of-the-art players.

The 3D plot shows no obvious distortion at -30dBFS (typically <0.0035 per cent). The audio band is free from digital artefacts (1), and any ultrasonic rubbish (2) is controlled by both noise-shapers and analogue filters. The sharply-limited 22kHz response of CD (closer to 20kHz in practice) is also impossible to escape (3).

**ENTERING THE THIRD DIMENSION**

Here then, for the first time, is a comparable 3D image (part computer simulation, part real data) of Sony's SACD player in action. The extended response and lack of any severe cut-off is obvious (4), as output has fallen by just -3dB at 50kHz, subsequently reaching -30dB at 100kHz. Is this extended response the major factor behind SACD's remarkable sound? If so, then DVD-Audio, with its 192kHz sample rate (giving a 90kHz-plus frequency response), should enjoy the same benefits.

But what if the use of aggressive FIR digital filters is the limiting factor, as the likes of Pioneer and Wadia have been arguing for years (see also *Oasis*, *HFC* 188 and 189)? If that's the case DVD-A, with its linear PCM format, may still be at a disadvantage. This assumes that DVD-A needs oversampling - with its 192kHz sample rate, manufacturers may decide instead simply to use an analogue filter.

On the other hand, SACD has its foibles. Just look at the huge wave of ultrasonic noise (5), lapping at the shore of its extended response. As I explained last month, this comes from the noise-shaping action of the ADCs used at the point of recording, and can't be filtered out by the SACD player without affecting the real information contained in its extended response.

It's particularly interesting to note that these noise-shapers are engineered to optimise the dynamic range through the 20kHz audio range (6), at the expense of frequencies immediately outside (7).

I imagine this is the case because - until now at least - most digital recordings are destined for down-sampling to CD's 44.1kHz/16-bit format, where no information above 20kHz is coded. In contrast, SACD exposes the whole shooting match, but suffers a relatively sharp loss in dynamic range immediately outside the audio band as a result. Then there's the question of how this wave of noise influences the performance of the analogue amplifiers that follow (see *Oasis*, *HFC* 159).

DVD-Audio might suffer the supposed indignity of digital filters, but its ultrasonic spectrum may well be cleaner and this, in the roundabout of "what ifs", may tip the balance in its favour. Clearly, these are uncertain but exciting times for the audio enthusiast, as these new format(s) either sink, swim or learn to live together. I'll pick up the story the moment we lay our hands on a genuine DVD-Audio player.

**Do you have a subject matter for the *Oasis*? Please contact Paul Miller via e-mail on MILLER\_AUDIO\_RESEARCH @compuserve.com**

**GLOSSARY**

**ADC OR ANALOGUE-TO-DIGITAL CONVERSION:** The process by which music signals are first sampled then represented in binary form through quantisation.

**BINARY OR DIGITAL WORD:** A number composed solely of 0s and 1s. A 16-bit binary word is 16-digits long. As each digit can be a 0 or a 1, there are  $2^{16}$  (65,536) possible permutations from 0000000000000000 to 1111111111111111.

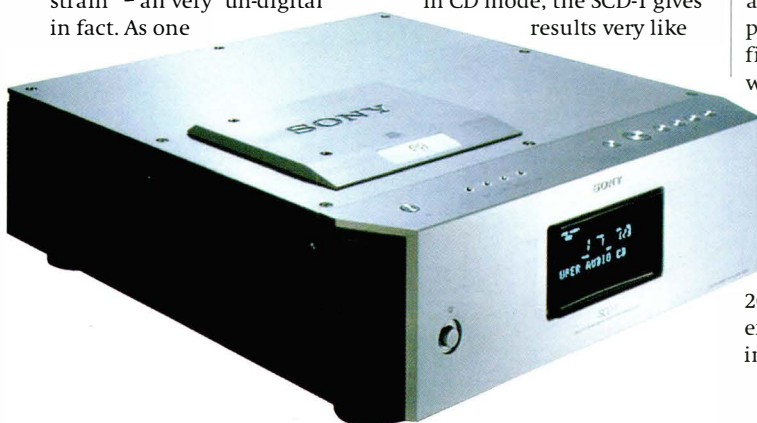
**DAC OR DIGITAL-TO-ANALOGUE CONVERSION:** The process by which recognisable music is reconstructed from binary data.

**DSD OR DIRECT STREAM DIGITAL:** The code composed of a high-speed, single-bit bitstream used by SACD in place of linear PCM.

**NOISE-SHAPING:** A type of 'digital feedback' used to move digital errors that occur as noise out to higher, inaudible, frequencies.

**PCM OR PULSE CODE MODULATION:** The code used by CD whereby the music signal is described using discrete steps at uniform intervals.

**QUANTISATION:** The association of a binary word or number with the voltage (level) of an analogue waveform during the interval of one sample.







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# DAVID VIVIAN

**Hate to break it to you, but hi-fi isn't cool. Whoever told you it was lied to you. Decent kit isn't pretty and vice-versa. Or is it?**

**D**efinition of a hi-fi buff: a person who has a record collection worth roughly twice the national debt but plays just one track from one record over and over again. What could it possibly be? Beethoven's 9th? Mahler's 5th? *Bridge Over Troubled Water*?

No. *Walking Tambourine* from *How to Set Up Your Hi-Fi - The Ultimate Test Disc*. The lyrics go like this: "Ahem. I'm now standing three feet back and two feet to the left of the microphone and my friend, standing next to me, is going to shake a tambourine. Bash. I'm now standing eight feet back from the microphone..."

First, *Walking Tambourine* is played with the turntable's lid down, then with it removed, then with it half shut. Then the felt turntable mat is turned upside down, the drive belt twisted inside-out, the tracking weight of the cartridge altered by 0.00012 of a gramme, all the mains plugs buffed to a bronzed shine with Brasso, the speaker grilles removed and the listening session repeated.

These people never sit down. They stand midway between the speakers, hands on hips, wearing a perplexed expression that suggests they can hear a tap dripping but don't know quite where it is.

But lifestyle literacy isn't playing about with bits of wire and anti-vibration cones, it's a Sony micro system - all tech-sheen facias, soft-touch controls and a big, rubber-buttoned remote. We're talking sonic wallpaper, mood lighting and tinkling ivories wafting eerily out of dinky speakers hung on the wall. A fluffy cloud base of soothing, mellifluous murmurings. But that can't be right, either - it's just one

step to Kenny G and eternal damnation. What's needed are sound systems that deliver sonically as well as aesthetically.

Bufs are much closer to understanding the meaning of life than too-easily-pleased micro system buyers. Top sound is an absolute necessity if you're going to extract maximum value from those annoyingly expensive silver discs. Look at it this way. Shove a gallon of unleaded in a Ford Escort

**"These people never sit down. They stand midway between the speakers, hands on hips, wearing a perplexed expression that suggests they can hear a tap dripping but don't know quite where it is."**

and you're motoring. Put it in a Porsche 911 and you're Steve McQueen at Le Mans. Same stuff, different result.

But it's got to look the business, too. Stacks of black boxes just won't do. They need a row of 9.5s or more for artistic interpretation, minimum. People put hi-fi in cupboards because they can't bear to look at it. We want hi-fi that people will talk about and want to buy. Hi-fi to die for.

So back to the Sony micro system. It's called the Series D (D for Designer) and kicks off with the basic SD1 set-up. Amazingly, this packs a CD, amplifier and tuner into one box and looks as cute as hell sandwiched between the sexily chamfered, light wood-grey grille, two-way speakers.

Just another Sony micro system, then? No. It's a deadly serious assault on the ears and wallets of lifestyle-conscious music lovers. B&O beware, Technics take cover - Sony is flexing its reputation.

The SD1 has an average selling price of about £350. You can add a matching Dolby B/C cassette deck (£450) or, if you prefer, a MiniDisc player (£550) - or both for £650. The full-house package - and you have to buy it as such - throws in "illuminated" satellite speakers and a Corian wood-finish sub-woofer for £690. But whichever way you cut it, Series D seeks to combine separates' performance with all-in-one style.

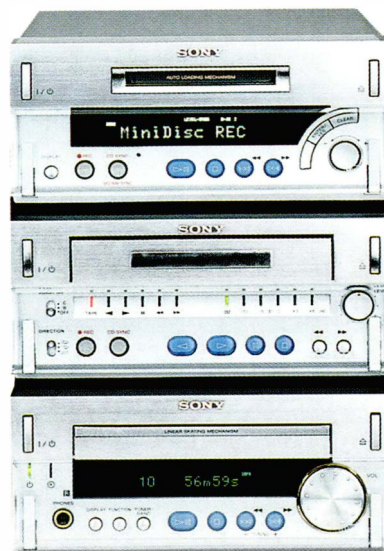
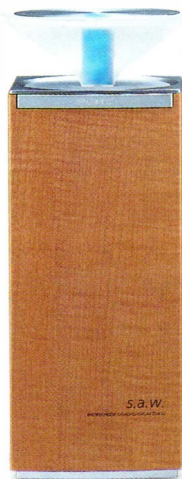
As for the CD-receiver, its modest on-paper 25 Watts a side belies a meaty power supply and commendable attention to detail, display/logic circuitry and an RDS tuner. The whole caboodle can be controlled from the one remote handset, once the appropriate connections have been made, and stacked smartly - either vertically or horizontally.

And how does it sound? Never less than competent and enjoyable, and occasionally very good indeed. Clean and dynamic recordings like drummer Chad Wackerman's *Scream* on CD (EFA 06466-2) were portrayed with great clarity and verve, if a rather samey (although surprisingly weighty) bass.

Using CD and the crisp-sounding tuner as sources, MD easily won the battle of the recording media, faithfully preserving the emotional content of the source as well as its basic fidelity. The MiniDisc deck, which uses ATRAC v4.5R compression, excelled with pre-recorded discs, too, which it rendered not merely intelligible but satisfyingly musical.

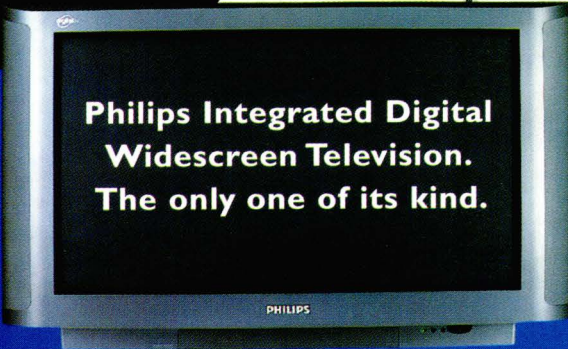
So, not bad at all. Does the D Series sound as good as a lovingly selected £650 separates combo? Maybe not - but, to be honest, I don't know. I never felt inclined to make the comparison. The whole thing sounded just about good enough for me not to want to get up out of my chair. And I think that's probably the point.

Ⓞ Serious sonic welly apparently now comes in dinky packages. Stop sniggering at the back...





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# ARCAM ALPHA 7SE



**Given the fact that the Alpha 7's successors are winning plaudits by the bucketload, why should you bother about the 'SE' version of the old stager? Paul Miller finds out.**

**C**an you tell the difference between Arcam's new Alpha 7SE and the three-year-old Alpha 7 it replaces? From the front, only the gold 'SE' badge gives the game away, while an extra optical digital output at the back, destined for use with the increasing number of MD recorders, is the only other physical sign of change. But you'll need x-ray vision really to appreciate what's gone into this player.

The £350 7SE offers the same basic functionality, greenish display and reliable Sony transport mechanism as the 7 which, incidentally, topped 30,000 units before the plug was finally pulled. Out goes the 7's hybrid DAC in favour of a revised motherboard, designed around Burr-Brown's superior 24-bit PCM1716 converter. This is the converter now cropping up in a variety of players from Musical Fidelity, Denon and NAD, to name but three, where critical acclaim has been almost universal.

Naturally, there's more to a competitive CD player than the choice of DAC. It's good to see equal attention being paid to the roles played by the power supply - beefed up here - and the selection of passive components in the output stage. The transport retains its own servo electronics and decoder, ensuring swift track access and good tolerance of less-than-perfect discs.

However, as the basic strategy of the final analogue 'amplifier' stage is culled directly from the Alpha 7, the sound of the 7SE is a development rather than an outright departure. The 7SE retains the quick and lucid character of the Alpha 7 but is simply more wholesome, slick and mature thanks to its superior sense of musical integration.

Bold classical recordings surge from the speakers with a grand sense of acoustic, giving strings and horns plenty of space to breathe, rather than sounding forced or compressed. Simple, dynamic material can

sound quite shocking. The percussive introduction to Mary Black's *Shine*, for example, bursts into the room with a resounding crack that capitalises on the player's great sense of space and atmosphere.

Soaring vocals, however, can spread their wings just a little too far. There's no obvious emphasis of treble - it's not classically bright-sounding - but the player will occasionally

**"Even the most timid of technophobes will not fail to appreciate the improvement offered by the 7SE."**

inject a hint of acid into any natural vocal sibilance. In fact, there's a clarity that can border on the astringent. It's a 'lemon-fresh' CD player.

**TAKE YOUR PARTNERS** Citrus or not, the 7SE will prove a more consistent performer from amp to amp and system to system. The older Alpha 7 was capable of a stirring performance in most systems, but could still sound aggressive or harsh in a minority of them.

It's something I discussed in an early *Oasis* (HFC 159) where the relatively high output of ultrasonic 'rubbish' from the DAC's noise-shapers was seen as a possible cause of audible distortion once it hit the amp.

This great hump of noise is clearly visible as the bright area (1) on the top 3D plot. "So what?" I hear you cry. "This noise peaks at 80kHz which is well above audibility." True enough, but the cumulative power of this unwanted noise is quite significant, and the

**○ The 7SE: a cracking little player.**

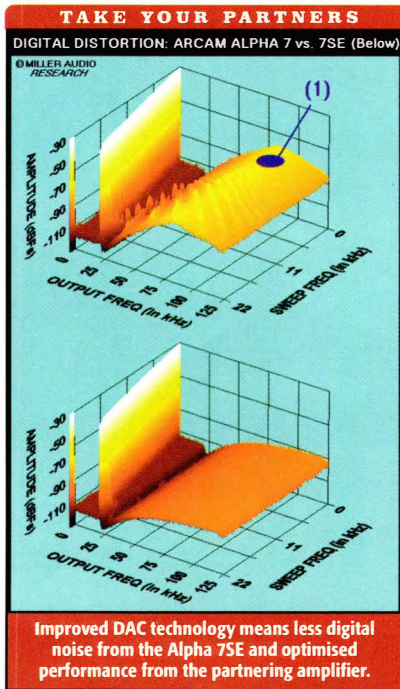
linearity of the average amp is less than impressive at 80kHz.

The upshot is a form of intermodulation that produces a distortion that folds back well within the audible range, encouraging a harder and less sympathetic sound.

Simply put, and all else being equal, the lower this ultrasonic garbage, the smoother the sound of the system.

Even the most timid of technophobes will not fail to appreciate the improvement offered by the Alpha 7SE, visualised by the cleaner-looking, lower 3D plot. Less noise, less distortion, improved low-level resolution and lower ultrasonic output all contribute to a worthwhile improvement in sound quality.

The 7SE really is a new CD player, despite appearances! And should you get the 'upgrade itch' soon after buying a 7SE, Arcam still provides a route to the 8SE (£200 upgrade) and 9 (£500 upgrade) models with minimal fuss. This is a cracking little player and the perfect stepping stone to even better things.



**VERDICT**

<b>SOUND</b>	★★★★☆
<b>BUILD</b>	★★★★☆
<b>VALUE</b>	★★★★☆
<b>PRICE</b>	<b>£350.00</b>

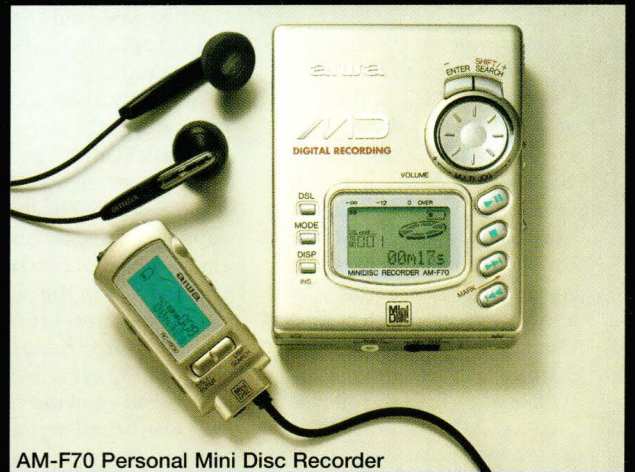
■ A thoughtful evolution of a popular player keeps the Alpha 7 flag flying high. Indeed, the 7SE is such an effective upgrade that the older Alpha 8 may be fatally undermined...

■ TWO YEAR GUARANTEE

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# LETTERS

Hi-Fi Choice's very own 'points of view' page, where you, the reader, can express your opinions!

## LETTER OF THE MONTH

### STATEMENTS OF THE OBVIOUS CORNER

My system comprises a NAD 302 amp, Sony CDP 770 CD player, Cambridge Audio Dacmagic 2, Mission 760i loudspeakers mounted on Atacama SE 24 stands, Cambridge Audio interconnects and Gale speaker cable.

Recently I was dissatisfied with the performance of my hi-fi system and was seriously considering buying some Krell components. However, the purchase of a bottle of ear drops costing 75p softened the wax that was clogging my ears, and the subsequent visit to my doctor to have my ears syringed made me realise what a wonderful sounding system I already have. I decided not to buy the Krell components after all, saving myself thousands of pounds!

Other modifications I have made, incurring minimal cost, include a bag of sand for filling the speaker stands, which improved the bass and stereo imaging for just £1. Also, cutting 1.5 meters off each of the speaker cable lengths gave vast improvements to the stereo image.

I have also noticed that my CDs of Pink Floyd, Roger Waters, the Eagles and others who have high production standards in the engineering of their recordings sound fantastic on my system, whereas artists with lower standards don't quite cut the mustard – "garbage in, garbage out".

Keep up the good work on your highly informative magazine.

Andrew Fox, Kearsley, Bolton



things that, at the time, other speaker makers could not. Where have all the classics gone today?

The obvious explanation is that the art of loudspeaker design and materials has advanced to a point where there are so many good speakers that there are very few that set themselves apart.

It seems that everything that can be done is being done – aerospace materials, diaphragms lighter than air, advanced crossover networks and inert cabinet construction.

In my opinion, there is one area of loudspeaker design that is being sacrificed to gain advantages in other areas: reproduction of the human voice. This used to be the benchmark of all great loudspeakers and now it is barely mentioned. In May's test of loudspeakers from £400 to £1,000, which one, if any of them, really got it right?

Sean Engel, via e-mail

*The Consultant Editor replies... There's no short answer to the above. The speakers you mention were indeed*

### VINYL WORDS

I hope you won't mind me saying so, but I found your editorial blazing on about the virtues of vinyl (HFC 192) really annoying. I have spent thousands of pounds over the past few years buying digital replay kit, amplifiers to handle it, replacing all my LPs with CDs and getting ready for DVD-Audio – all largely on the recommendations of your

magazine. Now it appears this was all a waste of money. I need not have bothered and should spend more money on a new turntable. Well, thanks for the advice, but I think I'll pass.

Paul Davey, via e-mail

*The Consultant Editor replies... The point is that vinyl has stood the test of time, and you don't need to replace your LPs if you don't want to. Vinyl and the new order can co-exist!*

### ARTERIES OF HI-FI

With a background in electronics, my hi-fi has been an experiment as well as a listening pleasure. My experiments initially produced

better results, but there was often something that didn't quite suit all my discs and I found myself analysing rather than enjoying.

A recent experiment was inspired by the interconnects review in your March issue (HFC 188). My original interconnects were of a reasonable quality, but I decided to make my own.

I used silver-coated, oxygen-free copper cable and gold connectors purchased from my local Maplin store. I based my design on a non-coaxial cable and kept the length as short as possible.

My system now sounds great. The bass is deeper, the sound stage is better defined and the treble has lost its harshness. Even the kids' CDs sound good. Eeeeeek!

So, if you're not completely satisfied with your system, the message is to experiment but give things time to 'burn in'. I believe it takes a good couple of days for a new interconnect to come to life. Strange but true.

Peter Rhymes, Brackley, Northants

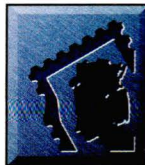
### WHITHER TRANSPARENCY

What determines transparency in loudspeaker design? Over the years a number of speakers have been recognised as 'classics', such as the Quad ESL-57 and ESL-63, the Spondor BC1, the Rogers LS3/5A, the B&W 801, Acoustic Energy AE1, Wilson Watt and Celestion SL600. They each did

◉ A cunningly disguised Triangle.





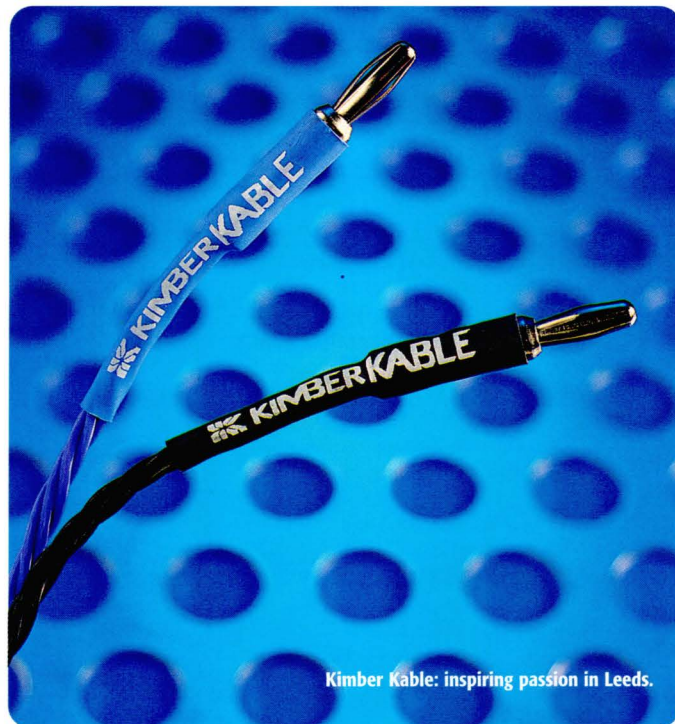


# LETTERS

classics in their day. Indeed, I regularly return to a pair of Spendor BC1s, and marvel at their midband delicacy and transparency – still probably unequalled by any dynamic speaker. But they're not perfect. The bass is less than wonderful, dynamics are underwhelming, both sensitivity and power handling are modest, and they'd probably cost over £2,000 if manufactured today. They're marvellous voice-band monitors, but not such a complete all-rounder.

I'll wager you'll get a better all round performance with a more recent design. Check out the Triangle Zephyr II, the Musical Technology Falcon and the Dynaudio Audience 40, plus more upmarket models from Dynaudio and ProAc.

👉 **The Audiovector M2: popular prize.**



Kimber Kable: inspiring passion in Leeds.

**KILLER KIMBER**

I write in praise of Kimber Kable. I recently replaced my speaker cable with a two metre run of Kimber 4VS Kable. This has improved the sound of my loudspeakers almost as if I'd upgraded them – but at a fraction of the cost!

Also, plugging the Kimber Yellow mains lead in to my portable radio/cassette player has successfully cured its hiss and distortion problems for just £20. Needless to say, I'm a Kimber Kable convert!

*Julian Bedford, Leeds, West Yorkshire*

**HIGH PRAISE INDEED**

I would like to express my grateful thanks to all the staff at Hi-Fi Choice for the wonderful competition prize of a pair of Audiovector M2 loudspeakers which I was very fortunate to win after entering your competition in the January issue.

I would also like it to be known that Tim O'Malley of distributor Glaive Ltd was most efficient, helpful and friendly with his advice regarding delivery arrangements and subsequent use of the speakers with my existing system.

I look forward to many hours of pleasant listening, as well as informative and interesting reading in your magazine.

Thanks again to all concerned.  
*Mr G Morgan, Llanelli*

**SOUND LOOKS**

I recently had a ground-levelling experience when I decided to upgrade the amplification in my system. After four years of staring at the Audiolabs on my rack, I wanted something a little more attractive to peer at.

I'd set my sights on obtaining boxes with a better performance and more striking looks. I had considered a demo of Densen components but kept sniggering at the thought of inviting friends to look at my big shiny knob.

Musical Fidelity's X Series was next on my wish list – until I clapped eyes on the A-200s. Huge! Meridian was next. Very nice – almost lush-looking in the flesh – but not at all me.

I suddenly realised what was going on in my head. I hadn't listened to a single component.

👉 **MF's X-A200s: huuuuuuuuuuuuuge!**



I booked a demonstration with my local dealer who listened intently to my needs and made a few suggestions for audition within my budget.

I walked out of the shop with a Talk Electronics Hurricane 5 preamp, Whirlwind 2 PSU and a pair of Tornado 4 power amps. These plain boxes have struck a major artery leading straight to my musical heart that has made me realise exactly why I chose those plain, boring-looking boxes in the first place.

Looks aren't everything – the music is.

*Chris Sellings, Eastbourne, Sussex*

**A LOADED QUESTION**

In your review of the Acoustic Energy 120 loudspeakers (HFC 170), you note an impedance of 4 Ohms and state that the speakers put a heavy load on the amp. This contradicts the manufacturer's specification of 8 Ohms and is confirmed by reviews in other publications.

So is the figure used in your review a mistake, or have your tests proved otherwise?

*Kevin Grayling, via e-mail*

*The Consultant Editor replies...*

*Defining the impedance of a loudspeaker is always problematic, to say the least, because it varies dramatically with frequency.*

*Even disregarding the additional problems posed by phase shifts, the basic impedance modulus of the AE 120 is quite complex. Above 1kHz it stays above 10 Ohms and will be easy to drive, and the average value below 1kHz is around 6 Ohms or so.*

*The problem, however, is a dip to around 3 Ohms centred on 130Hz – a not unusual situation with three-way speaker designs. And the reason it's a problem is that this part of the spectrum tends to contain a lot of program energy, and could therefore stress the current delivery capability of the amplifier.*

*The standards allow for some impedance variation: an '8 Ohm' impedance permits a minimum of 6 Ohms, and by the same token the AE 120's 3 Ohm minimum represents a 4 Ohm load.*





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The FMH 7980s we have up for grabs, which are worth £60 each, are a fully closed-back design, making them ideal for listening to music with plenty of bass. They will also go down well with your friends and family, insulating them from the worst excesses of your musical taste!

So how do you go about winning one of our stash of FMH 7980s? Grab yourself a pen, a stamp and an envelope, and pin back your lug 'oles...

### HOW TO ENTER

Answer the questions below by circling the correct answers, then fill in your name, address and daytime telephone number in the spaces given.

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- c) Beefburg

**ON WHAT FREQUENCY DOES THE VIVANCO FMH 7980 OPERATE?**

- a) 386MHz
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- c) 863MHz

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### COMPETITION RULES

- 1) The closing date for the Vivanco competition is First Post, Thursday, 7 October 1999.
- 2) Winners of the Vivanco Competition will be judged from all correct entries submitted, and drawn at random after the Closing Date given in 1) above.
- 3) All winners will be notified by post.
- 4) The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.
- 5) The Vivanco Competition is not open to employees of Dennis Publishing Ltd, Vivanco, their suppliers, agents or associates.
- 6) We regret this competition is open to UK residents only.
- 7) No cash alternatives will be offered.
- 8) We reserve the right to substitute alternative prizes with equal value to those shown, in the unlikely event of stock being temporarily unavailable.
- 9) By entering the competition, you agree to be bound by the rules.
- 10) 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.

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**45**  
**TOP PRIZES**  
**WORTH**  
**£2,700!**



# EUROPE'S HI-FI AWARDS

Gong! Jason Kennedy introduces this year's ultimate hi-fi and home cinema equipment, as voted for by members of the European Imaging & Sound Association (EISA). Gong!

**B**y comparison with the slow and sometimes painful process that is the integration of Europe, getting the 40 EISA panellists to agree on what audio, home theatre and video product they think is the best in Europe is a relative piece of cake. It wasn't easy to narrow so many great components down to just one per category, but some very strong winners have emerged – and if they can survive this test they warrant a place on anyone's shortlist.

Those of you familiar with the EISA awards will notice a few new categories this year – we've added an AV Design award which is a terrific opportunity to show that it's not all black and boring boxes. There are also two awards reflecting the increasing influence of the computer on audio, notably Internet Audio for the new personal format MP3, and Multimedia. The latter is a broad category, but one in which competitors need to be highly capable in audio, video and photographic disciplines.

When you check out the results, bear in mind the models chosen represent the very best kit in Europe, democratically selected by a panel with a breadth of experience that other publications can only dream of. Enjoy.

*Jason Kennedy*

Jason Kennedy, Editor



## EISA AUDIO & HOME THEATRE PANEL

ALTA FIDELIDAD	SPAIN
AUDIO	POLAND
AUDIO	PORTUGAL
AUDIO REVIEW	ITALY
DIGITAL VIDEO	
HOME THEATRE	ITALY
HEIMKINO	GERMANY
HI-FI CHOICE	UK
HIGH FIDELITY	DENMARK
HOME ENTERTAINMENT	UK
ITM PRAKTIKER MHCE	AUSTRIA
LIUD & BILD	SWEDEN
MEDIA EXPERT	SWITZERLAND
MEDIA TOTAAL	NETHERLANDS
PRESTIGE AUDIO VIDEO	FRANCE
SOUND & HI-FI	GREECE
STEREO	GERMANY
STEREO VIDEO	CZECH REPUBLIC
STEREO VIDEO RUSSIA	RUSSIA
SZTEREO	HUNGARY

## EISA AWARDS IN OTHER CATEGORIES

### PHOTO AWARDS

CAMERA	CANON EOS 300
COMPACT CAMERA	SAMSUNG VEGA 140S
APS CAMERA	FUJIFILM FOTONEX 1000ix MRC
LENS	TAMRON AF 28-300/3.5-6.3 LD
COLOUR PRINT FILM	FUJIFILM NEW SUPERIA 100, 200 & 400
COLOUR SLIDE FILM	KODAK ELITE CHROME EXTRA COLOUR 100
DIGITAL CAMERA	NIKON COOLPIX 950
DIGITAL PRINTER	EPSON STYLUS PHOTO 1200
IMAGING SOFTWARE	JASC PAINT SHOP PRO 5
PROFESSIONAL CAMERA	HASSELBLAD XPAN

### VIDEO AWARDS

TELEVISION	PANASONIC TX-36PF10
FLAT TV SYSTEM	PHILIPS 42 PF 9952
CAMCORDER	PANASONIC NV-EX3
VIDEO RECORDER	JVC HR-DVS1
VIDEO INNOVATION	SONY DIGITAL 8
VIDEO PROJECTOR	JVC DLA-G10E
DVD PLAYER	PIONEER DV-717
AV DESIGN	GRUNDIG FINE ARTS





## WHAT IS EISA?



**E**ISA is an acronym for the European Imaging and Sound Association, an organisation based in Geneva that promotes photography, video, hi-fi and home cinema equipment throughout Europe. The specialist magazines which report upon these topics are the members of EISA.

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 that 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.

Now there are three European Awards panels: Photo, Video and Hi-Fi and Home Theatre. On the latter panel, *Hi-Fi Choice* and its sister title, *Home Entertainment*, are among 19 magazines from 16 European countries which participate. 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 role on the Hi-Fi and Home Theatre panel, *Home Entertainment* represents UK interests on EISA's Video Awards panel.

In the Awards citations that follow, please note that any product prices given are approximate – for current prices, consult a local dealer.

### HOW DO THE JUDGES DECIDE ON THE WINNERS?

In late Spring, each member magazine of the Hi-Fi and Home Theatre panel proposed its own favoured products to be shortlisted for an Award. In June, the Editors-In-Chief of those member magazines came together in Munich to debate the selections proposed. This was followed by a vote on the shortlist and, finally, the selection of one winner in each category.

### WHICH PRODUCTS ARE ELIGIBLE?

All candidates must have been in commercial production and available for evaluation to a majority of panel members before voting. They must have been 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 find the best partnering components for any winner. Find your nearest specialist hi-fi retailer in our Dealer Directory starting on page 146.



# CYRUS



For further information please contact: Cyrus Audio, Huntingdon PE18 6ED  
Tel: +44(0) 1480 451777 Fax: +44(0) 1480 432777  
Email: [info@cyrusaudio.com](mailto:info@cyrusaudio.com)





EUROPEAN HI-FI AWARDS 1999-2000

EUROPEAN AMPLIFIER OF THE YEAR 1999-2000



## TAG MCLAREN AUDIO 60i Rv

£999.00 ☎ (0800) 783 8007



### WHAT THE JUDGES SAY

**T**AG McLaren Audio has succeeded in developing an extremely refined integrated amplifier that combines truly high-end technology, high quality components and engineering and, most important, audiophile sound – all at a reasonable price. It comes with remote control and can serve as a standalone preamplifier or be incorporated in multi-channel and multi-room systems. Its sound is characterised by transparency, lightness of touch and a lucid, open delivery.



# MINIDISC SYSTEM WITH HIGH SPEED DIGITAL RECORDING DESIGNED BY SHARP, INSPIRED BY FERRARI



The MD-M3H stand is available as an optional extra.

As a brilliant digital recording and playback medium, MiniDisc has raced forward in popularity. With its compact design, editing features and convenient operation, it's by far the best audio format.

Now though, with the new Sharp MD-M3H MiniDisc Micro System, we've really pressed the accelerator.

With unique High Speed Digital MD Recording, it's twice as fast as anything else.

It also leaves the rest standing in features and styling.

High gloss finish two-way speakers and a powerful 20W/CH RMS (10%THD) combine to deliver dynamic Surround Sound.

While an RDS EON Tuner with Radio Text facilities, 3 mode preprogrammed graphic equaliser and X-Bass (extra bass) system completes the impressive performance.

But what else would you expect from Sharp, the Formula 1 in MiniDisc.

For more information, including your nearest stockist, ring Freephone 0800-262958. You can also visit our website at [www.Sharp-world.com](http://www.Sharp-world.com)



**HIGH SPEED**  
DIGITAL RECORDING







**EUROPEAN HI-FI AWARDS 1999-2000**

**EUROPEAN AUDIO RECORDER OF THE YEAR 1999-2000**



## PHILIPS CDR-950C

£400.00 ☎ (0181) 665 6350



### WHAT THE JUDGES SAY

Compiling your own CDs is becoming increasingly popular and the Philips CDR-950C makes it as easy as recording a cassette. Just push the button and the result is a bit-for-bit copy of a CD or your favourite tracks from different CDs (even HDCD discs). Not only is the recording quality stunning, playback is now in the same league as that of regular CD players. The CDR-950C is an exceptional audio recorder with a rich, detailed and natural sound. *(Available in the UK in the autumn.)*



# another world-first.

hi-tech home cinema for the audiophile

## 1 Latest DSP Technology

World premiere in an audio product of the 32-bit 60MHz Analog Devices ADSP-21065L SHARC™ Digital Signal Processor; decodes, as standard, all current movie formats with capacity to cope with the future.

## 2 Powerful 16-Bit Microcontroller

The 16-bit Siemens C161RI microcontroller controls the AV32R and its Set-up Wizard provides most comprehensive on-screen user interface, making set-up extremely simple, without printed manuals.

## 3 96kHz/24-bit DACs

With its multiple 96kHz/24-bit DA-converters, the AV32R is equipped to handle the finer resolution and more spacious sound recordings of DVD Audio.

## 4 Minimal Jitter / TAGtronic™ Sync Link

The precision twin phase-locked loop reduces jitter to an absolute minimum, while the unique TAGtronic™ Sync Link sends a signal to products designed for this advanced technology (e.g. the forthcoming DVD32R) to synchronize its clock to the master reference within the AV32R. DVDs will sound better than ever before.

## 5 Future-Proof

All software is stored in Flash Memory and is entirely user upgradable, with upgrades downloadable from the Internet via a PC and the TAGtronic™ Communications Bus. This bus also allows the easy transfer and sharing of information for multi-room installations and powerful communication between components.



five-channel amplifier 100x5R  
(launch summer '99)



## 6 Learning Remote Control

The powerful back-lit remote control operates all our home cinema products. It can also be user-programmed to control almost any product that uses an infra-red remote, such as our audio products, so just this one handset will control your whole system.

## 7 Gold-Plated Multi-Layer PCBs

The gold-plated multi-layer printed circuit boards control return currents, provide controlled impedances and minimize couplings, with the ground planes split between audio and digital processing.

## 8 Mixed Technology Construction

Surface mount components for fast digital circuitry and leaded components for perfect audio signals, to optimize performance, requiring both reflow and wave soldering production techniques. Anything less would be inferior.

## 9 Broadcast-Quality Video and Premium Grade Audio Components

No-compromise broadcast-quality video components and premium grade audio components for maximum clarity and transparency.

## Ⓢ TAG McLaren Surround Sound

An audiophile processing mode for listening to stereo and mono sources in surround mode. TMS-Surround is capable of processing 24-bit/96kHz recordings without artefacts.

[www.tagmclarenaudio.com](http://www.tagmclarenaudio.com) - freephone: 0800 783 8007

TAG McLaren Audio Ltd., Ermine Business Park, Huntingdon, Cambs PE18 6XY.

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**TAG McLaren**  
audio





EUROPEAN HI-FI AWARDS 1999-2000

EUROPEAN AV DESIGN OF THE YEAR 1999-2000

**GRUNDIG** Fine Arts

£TBC ☎ (0181) 324 9461



**WHAT THE JUDGES SAY**

**T**he new Grundig home entertainment line is not only one of the best styled AV systems of recent times, it's also one of the most versatile. The design is very user-friendly. A two-way RF remote handset controls the TV and built-in DVD player as well as the hi-fi system, the latter combining CD with analogue and digital tuners. Active speakers are wireless and thus offer easy to install multi-room options. *(Not yet available in the UK.)*



ultimate statement

Full 4 way system • 5th generation Uni-Q® technology • 15" dual suspension LF driver • individually selected crossover components  
3 dedicated separate enclosures • 25mm braced MDF construction  
bespoke gold plated hardware • fine veneer and lacquer finish

Designed on computer • fine tuned by ear • hand built by music lovers

REFERENCE SERIES MODEL 109  
THE MAIDSTONE

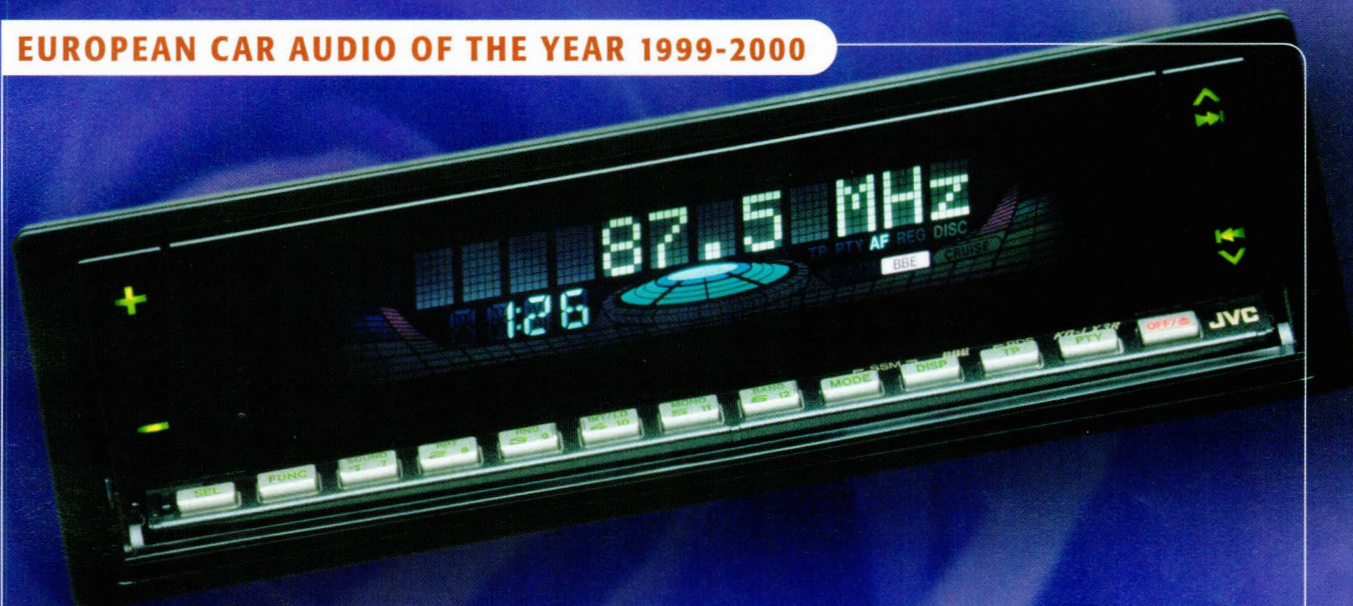






**EUROPEAN HI-FI AWARDS 1999-2000**

**EUROPEAN CAR AUDIO OF THE YEAR 1999-2000**



**JVC KD-LX3R**

£TBC ☎ (0181) 208 7654



**WHAT THE JUDGES SAY**

**T**he KD-LX3R from JVC – with its ‘flat face’ nickname – represents an exciting new approach to displaying information, theft deterrence and user convenience. To the outside world, the front panel of this car CD receiver changes from a completely black face when switched off to a vivid, highly informative screen when on. The owner doesn’t have to carry a front panel, and further protection is ensured by a user-selectable password.



SilverLine

Give your music a  
New Dimension.



'Sell your soul to buy this, or suffer in eternity.  
The best Hi-fi we've heard this year'.

**T3 June 1999**

'I have to applaud NAD for doing such a nice job with SilverLine'.

**Hi-fi Choice April 1999**

'Gorgeous build quality and a lush, smooth but close-detailed sound'.

**What Hi-fi? May 1999**

**A new NAD for a new millennium**

A stunning new range of true audiophile components which set new standards - even for NAD.

The SilverLine remains faithful to the traditional NAD philosophy of high performance and sound quality combined with excellent value for money and ease of use.

Contact us at the address below for more information.



New Acoustic Dimension

**AudioClub**

Dept WHF, 15 Faraday Road  
Aylesbury HP19 3RY

Tel 0700 00 AUDIO  
0700 00 28346

web: [www.nad.co.uk](http://www.nad.co.uk)





EUROPEAN HI-FI AWARDS 1999-2000

EUROPEAN CD PLAYER OF THE YEAR 1999-2000



**ROTEL RCD-971**

£350.00 ☎ (01908) 317707



**WHAT THE JUDGES SAY**

**T**he Rotel RCD-971 is excellent value. Its circuitry combines a digital filter with HDCD decoding and outstanding D/A converters normally used in far more expensive players. The analogue output components are built around expensive and carefully selected audiophile-grade components, while the power supply uses a very efficient transformer designed and produced by Rotel exclusively for this model. The RCD-971 also has a clear, incisive and very dynamic sound.



# *Au naturel*

The appeal of natural materials is unsurpassed... with the introduction of 'Special Edition' cabinets in real wood veneers, AE's multi-award winning 100 Series loudspeakers are now more attractive than ever!

Thanks to their superb quality, stunning performance and outstanding value, their beauty is more than skin deep.

And the further assurance of AE's world-wide reputation, backed by years of experience in hi-fi and pro-audio loudspeaker design, adds body and soul.

100SE Series loudspeakers from £230 to £600

Telephone: 01285 654432  
[www.acoustic-energy.co.uk](http://www.acoustic-energy.co.uk)

**AE**  
ACOUSTIC ENERGY







**EUROPEAN HI-FI AWARDS 1999-2000**

**EUROPEAN COMPACT SYSTEM OF THE YEAR 1999-2000**



## DENON SYSTEM 6.5

£800.00 ☎ (01753) 888447



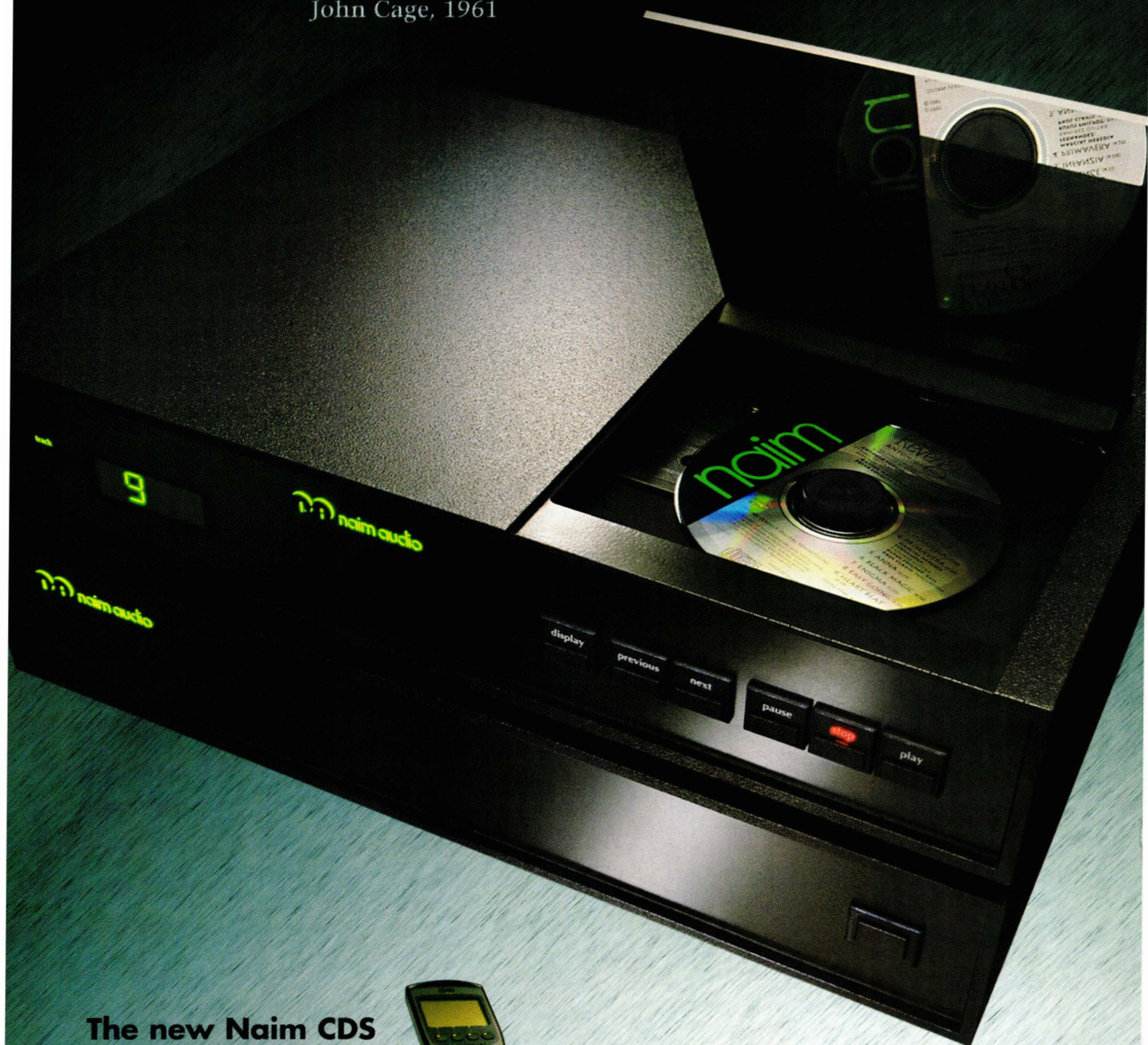
### WHAT THE JUDGES SAY

**D**enon's System 6.5 is a high quality compact system that competes not only with other such systems but also holds its own against separate components at similar and higher price levels. It performs like a dream in either large or small rooms, with precise sound reproduction even at higher volume levels. Overall, Denon has created a system with excellent build quality and first-rate sound which should appeal to a wide range of listeners.



"Let no one **IMAGINE** that in  
owning a recording he has the  
**music.**"

John Cage, 1961



### The new Naim CDS

Because ultimately, if you  
don't own the right  
playback equipment, you'll  
never hear the real sound.



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**EUROPEAN HI-FI AWARDS 1999-2000**

**EUROPEAN HIGH-END AUDIO OF THE YEAR 1999-2000**

# **B&W NAUTILUS 802**

B&W

£6,000.00 ☎ (01903) 750750

B&W



## **WHAT THE JUDGES SAY**

**W**ith the Nautilus 802, B&W has succeeded in condensing the exceptional technology and experience of its Nautilus 801 into a loudspeaker system of the highest quality, but at a lower price and smaller size. As a result, music lovers can now experience at home the astonishing sound quality of the recording studio. This speaker shows how to combine electrostatic transparency with horn dynamics and cut out coloration in the process.



# High-end loudspeakers now have a great Future.

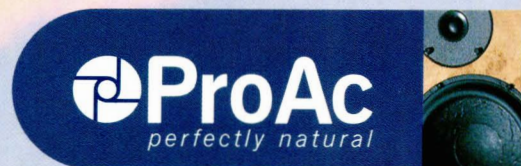
The revolutionary new Future One  
and Future Two from ProAc.



- Asymmetric bass chamber.
- Dipole midrange.
- Ribbon tweeter.

Quite unlike anything you've ever  
heard. There's no time like the  
present to listen to the Future.

*Hear them in the Blaye Room  
at the Novotel Show September 23rd-26th*



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Tel: 01280 700147 Fax: 01280 700148 Website: [www.proac-loudspeakers.com](http://www.proac-loudspeakers.com)

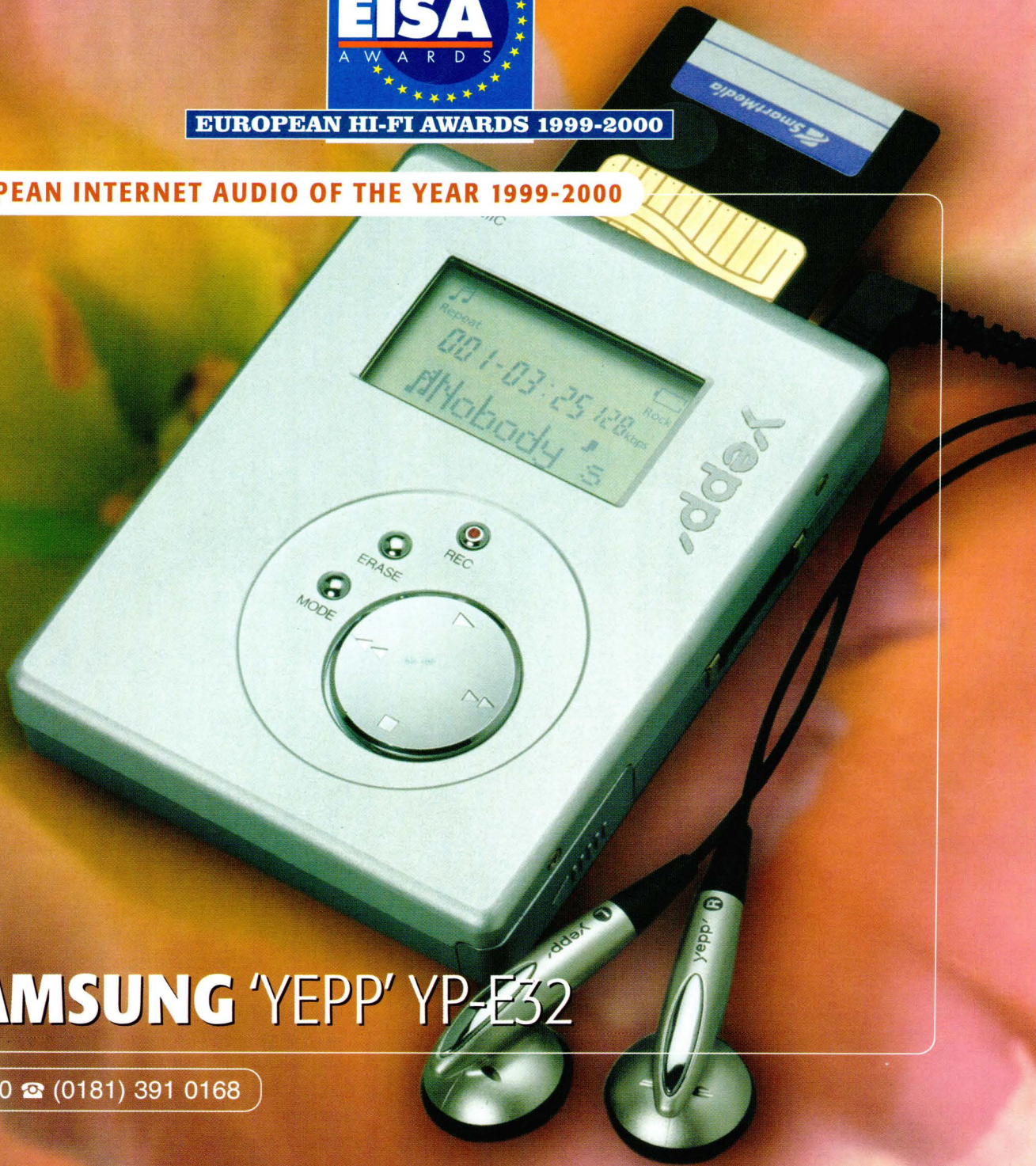
HFC10.99





EUROPEAN HI-FI AWARDS 1999-2000

EUROPEAN INTERNET AUDIO OF THE YEAR 1999-2000



## SAMSUNG 'YEPP' YP-E32

£150.00 ☎ (0181) 391 0168



### WHAT THE JUDGES SAY

**D**ownloading from the Internet is made easier thanks to MP3 (MPEG-1 layer 3), a long established format in professional audio. The 'Yepp' is one of the first 'solid state audio' devices to make use of this system, allowing the user to record and play 'tracks' from the built-in flash memory and interchangeable 'Yepp card'. The player comes with plug-and-play software for the PC and is ready to download or upload tracks.



THE SPIRIT OF MUSIC



CL 310i JET



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Hi-Fi Choice June 99 ★★★★★ (Build Quality),

Hi-Fi World July 99 ●●●●●

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NOV IN THE UK FOR THE 1ST TIME

# Perfect Partners

Now, on their 25th anniversary ATC have set up the perfect partnership at a never to be repeated price.



SCM10s (in a choice of rosewood, yew or walnut), powered by the SIA2-150 Stereo Integrated Amplifier for ONLY £2,550.00 including VAT (current recommended selling price £3,223.95). This special offer applies while stocks last and is strictly first come, first served. Sounds tempting?

"The SCM10 deserves to be regarded both as a compact professional monitor and a music-lover's home speaker. It avoids distortion at all levels, maintains its smooth unpeaky response over the whole working spectrum and has an unusually wide polar pattern. In short, it really comes close to that ideal of neutral transparency which is high fidelity's reason for existence." - John Borwick of Gramophone

#### Available from the following premier studios:

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Radlet Audio, Hertfordshire.	Tel: 01727 855577	Fax: 01727 858727
Signals, Ipswich.	Tel: 01473 622866	Fax: 01473 622866
Robert Taussig, London.	Tel: 0171 286 1728	Fax: 0171 266 2365
Grandix, New Maiden.	Tel: 0181 336 0012	Fax: 0181 336 2703
Manders Hi Fi, Grimsby.	Tel: 01472 351391	Fax: 01472 351591
English Audio, Hereford.	Tel: 01432 355081	Fax: 01432 354302
Studio 99, London.	Tel: 0171 624 8855	Fax: 0171 624 5315
The Cornflake Shop, London.	Tel: 0171 631 0472	Fax: 0171 436 7165
Nicholas Hi Fi, London.	Tel: 0181 852 5780	Fax: 0181 852 0453
Audio Reflections, Wakefield.	Tel: 0113 252 8850	Fax: 0113 252 8850
Walrus Systems, London.	Tel: 0171 724 7224	Fax: 01 71 724 4347
Decibel Distribution, Glasgow.	Tel: 0141 334 3660	Fax: 0141 334 3660
Audio Images, Sheffield.	Tel: 0114 273 7893	Fax: 0114 275 5371





**EUROPEAN HI-FI AWARDS 1999-2000**

**EUROPEAN LOUDSPEAKER OF THE YEAR 1999-2000**

# DYNAUDIO AUDIENCE 40

£400.00 ☎ (01732) 451938



## WHAT THE JUDGES SAY

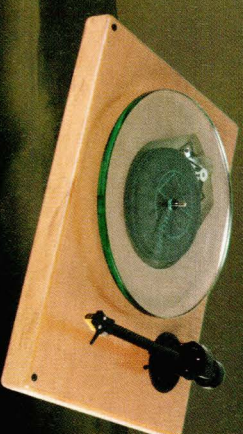
**D**ynaudio has succeeded in implementing a wide range of sonic qualities in a small two-way loudspeaker at a reasonable price. High quality parts and the tremendous know-how of this Danish manufacturer make the Audience 40 a clear winner. A speaker that fits in any environment and produces deep and powerful bass, few if any others of a similar price and size can offer the same winning combination of neutrality, dynamic range and sheer musical involvement.



# In the beginning there was darkness

Then God created Music and it was good

The new Classic series of turntables from Pro-ject  
Composer series loudspeakers from Vienna Acoustics  
Somehow the world seems a better place



Stunningly finished in piano lacquer and beautiful veneers  
these Austrian creations are as pleasing to the eye as they are to the ear.  
Classic turntables from £360, Composer loudspeakers from £650

Henley Designers Ltd  
The Old Coach House,  
The Street, Crowmarsh Gifford,  
Wallingford, Oxfordshire, OX10 8EH  
Tel: 01491 834700, Fax: 01491 834722  
e-mail: [henleydesigners@virgin.net](mailto:henleydesigners@virgin.net)





## EUROPEAN HI-FI AWARDS 1999-2000

### EUROPEAN HOME THEATRE AMPLIFIER OF THE YEAR 1999-2000



## DENON AVC-A1D

£2,000.00 ☎ (01753) 888447

### WHAT THE JUDGES SAY

**D**enon's AVC-A1D is an audio/video dream. It has two fast DSP processors, allowing it to manage a full range of hi-fi and home cinema systems such as Dolby Digital, DTS, digital THX and PCM audio (96kHz/24 bit). Inside are five 150W amplifiers which drive each home cinema speaker – so the AVC-A1D isn't short on volume! There are also two component video inputs and a 7.1 channel input for upgrades. A wonderful home cinema performance is backed up by very good hi-fi sound, so all audio needs are catered for.



### WHAT THE JUDGES SAY

**P**ioneer's state-of-the-art DVD player combines the best of digital disc technologies. It plays DVDs, video CDs, music CDs and CD-Rs – and all at the right price. It is thoroughly modern in conception, plays anything you throw at it and is capable of streaming 24-bit/96kHz audio from its digital output. Pioneer has combined full component video processing with a fantastic D/A converter and DTS capabilities. Its easy to use on-screen display enhances an already fine machine.

### EUROPEAN DVD PLAYER OF THE YEAR 1999-2000



## PIONEER DV-717

£550.00 ☎ (01753) 789500





# “...LET THERE BE SOUND.”

[QED 1/1/99]

## .....hi-fidelity sound

- delivered to your speakers as never before.

QED has achieved what at one stage seemed an impossible dream - a truly esoteric speaker cable at an affordable price.

Born out of the industry's most authoritative and respected research paper "The Genesis Report", comes **GENESIS SILVER SPIRAL**. This product has taken five years to develop, such were the manufacturing challenges that needed to be overcome.

Now, the only difficulty is believing that the improvements made to your system can possibly be down to a "mere" speaker cable.

**One could say it's nothing short of a small miracle.**

AUGUST 99



*"If they were handing out Oscars for killer speaker cables, this scintillating silver number would be among the nominations."*

JULY 99



*"The Genesis proved especially gifted when it came to retrieving low level detail... it gives the competition at two or three times the money a very tough time."*

AUGUST 99

**WHAT HI-FI?**



*"Clarity is the name of the game here and if the information is there... you can be sure this cable will let it all through... detailed treble coupled to weighty and tight bass, always ensures a dynamic and exciting performance... Genesis performs so well it's certainly worth the money."*

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Ridgeway Close, Lightwater, Surrey GU18 5XU

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# GENESIS SILVER SPIRAL





**EUROPEAN HI-FI AWARDS 1999-2000**

**EUROPEAN HOME THEATRE VIDEO PROJECTOR OF THE YEAR 1999-2000**



**JVC DLA-G10E**

£TBC ☎ (0181) 208 7654

**WHAT THE JUDGES SAY**

**J**VC used impressive digital technology to ensure that the DLA-G10E is a bright performer. It uses a 400W xenon bulb, similar to those in cinema projectors. It also has three LCD panels which are driven by a direct drive light image amplifier, resulting in higher perceived resolution. The lens can project images from 1.3m to 13m; colours are vivid and contrast is high. A full range of inputs and a remote are included, and the projector is easy to operate. Overall, it is of a high quality, offering an attractive package at a competitive price.

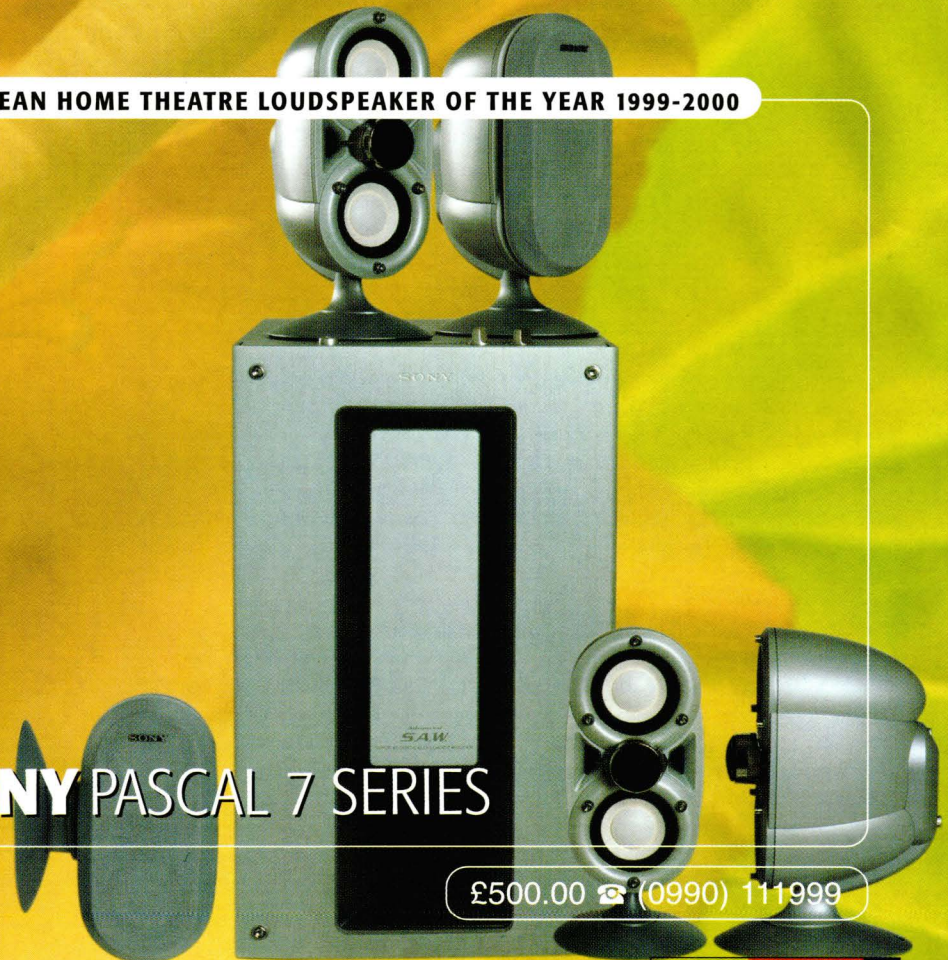


**WHAT THE JUDGES SAY**

**P**ascal is a new home cinema speaker system from Sony. Its pleasant, compact, aluminium design is complemented by neodymium magnet technology, providing extremely comfortable sound – particularly suitable for those who demand home cinema sound in a small room. The set comprises five loudspeakers and a gutsy subwoofer, all easily integrated into any room at a reasonable price. *(Not yet available in the UK).*



**EUROPEAN HOME THEATRE LOUDSPEAKER OF THE YEAR 1999-2000**



**SONY PASCAL 7 SERIES**

£500.00 ☎ (0990) 111999



# Absolute Sounds...has an unbeatable track record

## 1996

DIGITAL SOURCE DESIGN  
**Krell KPS 20i/I**  
Theta Data III

DIGITAL CONVERTOR DESIGN  
**Krell Reference 64**  
Theta Generation V

SIGNAL PROCESSOR DESIGN  
**Angstrom 200**  
Audio Research SDP1

TUBE ELECTRONICS DESIGN  
**Audio Research Reference One**  
Audio Research VT60SE

CABLE DESIGN  
**Transparent Music Link**

BEST LOUDSPEAKER DESIGN  
**Wilson WATTS/Puppy**  
Sonus Faber Guarneri

BEST LOUDSPEAKER VALUE  
**Martin Logan Aerius**  
Sonus Faber Concertino

BEST NEW COMPANY  
**Angstrom**

## 1997

DIGITAL SOURCE DESIGN  
Audio Research CD2  
**Krell KPS 20i**

DIGITAL CONVERTOR DESIGN  
**Theta DS Pro Generation Va**

SIGNAL PROCESSOR DESIGN  
**Krell AV Standard**  
Theta Casablanca

TUBE ELECTRONICS DESIGN  
**Audio Research Reference One**

SOLID STATE ELECTRONIC DESIGN  
**Krell FPB600**

CABLE DESIGN  
**Transparent Reference XL**

BEST LOUDSPEAKER DESIGN  
**Sonus Faber Concerto**

BEST LOUDSPEAKER VALUE  
Sonus Faber Concertino

BEST AESTHETIC DESIGN  
**Martin Logan Statement**

## 1998

AUDIO DIGITAL SOURCE DESIGN  
**Krell KPS25s**  
Krell KAV 300CD

VIDEO SOURCE DESIGN  
Theta Data III

DIGITAL CONVERTOR DESIGN  
Theta DS Pro Generation Va

AUDIO PROCESSOR DESIGN  
**Z-systems rdp-1**

SURROUND SOUND CONTROLLER  
DESIGN  
**Theta Casablanca**

VIDEO PROCESSOR DESIGN  
Krell AV Standard  
Theta Casablanca

TUBE ELECTRONICS DESIGN  
Audio Research VT200

SOLID STATE ELECTRONIC DESIGN  
**Krell FPB650M**

BEST VIDEO PROJECTOR  
Vidikron Vision One

BEST LOUDSPEAKER DESIGN  
**Wilson X1 Grand Slam II**

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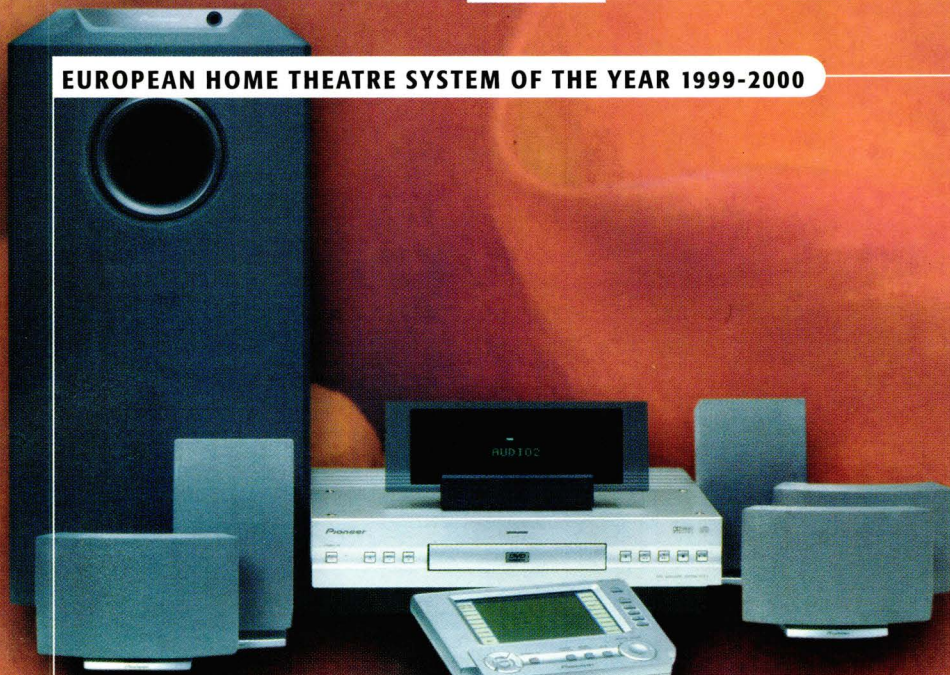
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**WHAT THE JUDGES SAY**

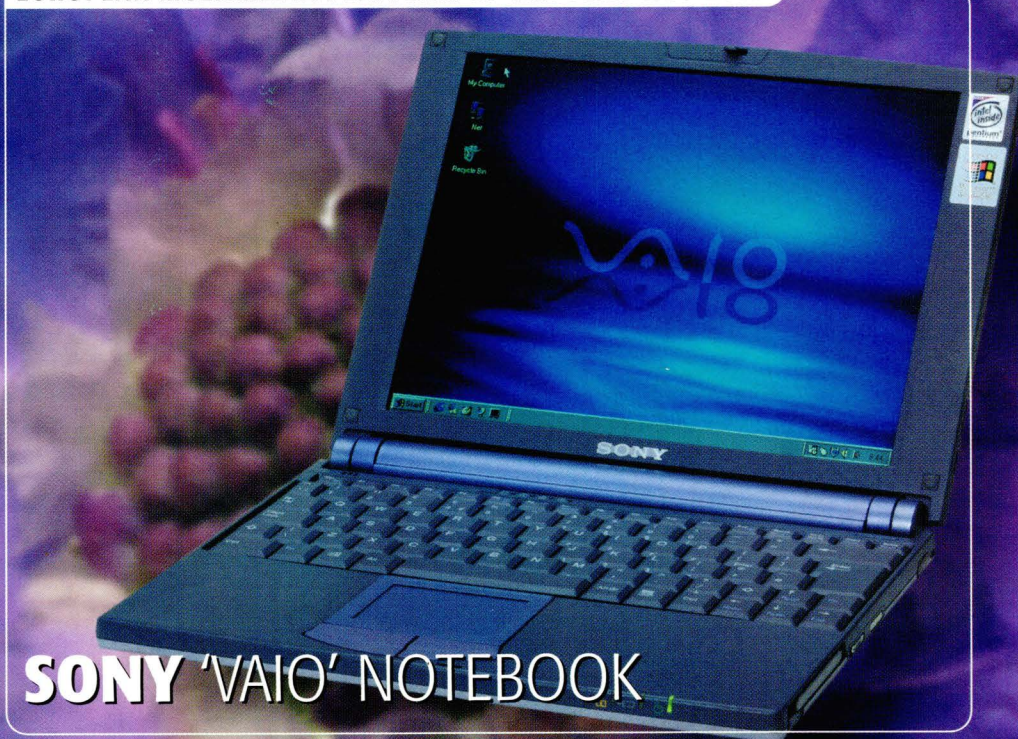
The Pioneer NS-DV 1 combines full home cinema functionality with exceptional styling and usability. The built-in DVD player delivers the best movies and music available for your home. The electronic features include Dolby Pro-Logic as well as Dolby Digital. The impressive remote control, with touch-panel and a large, detachable display, offers unrivalled handling. The package is completed by a powerful active subwoofer which houses the amplifier and five elegant and extremely compact satellite speakers.



**WHAT THE JUDGES SAY**

VAIO is the acronym for Video Audio Integrated Operation. This ultra-mobile notebook PC has a high-speed iLink (IEEE 1394) connection for digital camcorders; it can easily be connected to a digital camera, and for PC peripherals there's a port replicator next to the USB connection. Because nearly all the necessary software for editing and/or playing photo, video and audio is inside the computer, this is a complete multimedia platform. You can also use the highly flexible Sony Memory Stick for data transport.

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**SONY 'VAIO' NOTEBOOK**

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The Arcam Alpha 10 amplifier "redefines the meaning of excellence", but it still can't make a decent cup of tea.



My son says the Arcam Alpha 10 integrated amplifier is the world's most advanced modular amplification system. As you'd expect, it's wonderful for music, however it is its flexible upgrade capability that has really caught the imagination of customers and reviewers alike. This allows the Alpha 10 to be upgraded as further technological advances are made. How nice.

It can be transformed into a state of the art home cinema system by adding DAVE, that's the Digital Audio Video Entertainment module. Very sophisticated. This module provides Dolby Digital, Pro Logic and DTS decoding. Add a matching Alpha 10P three channel power amplifier and every movie soundtrack is just like being at the pictures. Lovely.

Or, if you'd rather hear your favourite music all round your home, you could install MARC, that's the Multi Area Remote Control module. It wasn't expensive and it means TIM, that's my son, Totally Into Music, can listen to what he calls music, anywhere in the house. The Arcam Alpha 10 may redefine the meaning of excellence, but it's just like my Tim when it comes to making tea. Absolutely useless.

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WHAT HI-FI?



JANUARY 99



**ARCAM**

**HI-FI WITH A FUTURE**





# HELP!

Tim Bown is here to help rid you of your hi-fi horrors and acoustic anxieties.

## QUERY OF THE MONTH



I'm confused about all this 24-bit/96kHz/DVD-Audio stuff. I own a Panasonic A160 DVD-Video player, and its instruction book says it can output a 24-bit/96kHz signal. To my understanding, that's the same resolution as the forthcoming DVD-Audio discs.

Does that mean my Panasonic is going to be able to play them when they hit the shops? Do I need to buy a decoder and feed it from the player's optical output to get the benefit of the discs' improved performance? If so, how much will it be? Please help!

*Steve Leib, Hertfordshire*

*The Technical Editor replies...* The manual's reference to "96kHz/24bit" solely relates to the ability of the A160's onboard DACs to handle data of this extended sampling rate and wordlength (and replay the few audio



### GET A GORGEOUS GREEN GARMENT!

The reader whose letter is our Query of the Month will receive one of these stylish, lovingly crafted and, dare we say it, groovy green clothing items courtesy of – well, us.



○ **Panasonic DVD-V: don't expect any guarantees beyond the usual warranty.**

discs available to this standard under the DVD-Video umbrella). It does not refer to the S/PDIF (digital) output. In practice, a linear 96kHz PCM bitstream will be downsampled to 48kHz at 16-bit wordlength. This prevents any 'shortcut' route you might have envisaged to upgrade your player with an 'outboard decoder', should such a product be devised.

Frankly, neither I nor Panasonic can guarantee that current players will recognise the forthcoming 24-bit linear PCM DVD-A discs. This format will offer both two-channel and multi-channel formats at a minimum 96kHz sample rate. But whether you'll get to hear 'something or nothing' with the existing players is still open to debate among the manufacturers themselves! Universal CD/DVD-V/DVD-A machines that offer cross-format compatibility are expected to be launched later in the year.

## CAN IT!



I've fallen in love with the quality of sound that a really good pair of headphones can deliver when hooked up to a decent system. It's so much more immediate and involving than listening to music through a pair of speakers. Now I want to assemble my own headphone-based system, but since the tonal characteristics of headphones can vary as much as those of speakers, do I need to system-match as carefully as I would if choosing a conventional hi-fi? My budget is about £600, and the source should be CD.

*Brian Chisholm, Berkshire*

If you're into solo listening, a good pair of headphones can involve like nothing else, as if you're plugged directly in to the heart of the music. Our ten-way group test of 'phones (on p89), including the Best Buy Grado SR60s shown here, should help you to decide on a perfect pair, and when you've found a set that suits you it's time to set about finding a suitable CD player.

Assuming the headphones you choose cost somewhere between £70 and £150, it's fair to say you should set aside another £100 or so on a dedicated headphone amp. A good one makes a huge improvement over integral headphone sockets, and

Musical Fidelity's X-CAN will do nicely. That should leave you with £300-£400 for a CD player, with the likes of Sony's CDP-XB930 (£300), Arcam's Alpha 7SE (£350) and the Marantz CD63II

KL-Signature (£400) vying for attention.

**"If you're into solo listening, a good pair of headphones can involve like nothing else, as if you're plugged directly in to the heart of the music."**



### PLAYING A BIT-PART



I'm interested in buying an X-24K 24-bit/96kHz compatible DAC from Musical Fidelity, but I need something clearing up first: will it give a non-24-bit/96kHz DVD player like my Pioneer DVL-909 full 24-bit compatibility? I don't want to buy the DAC and then find it will only operate at 16-bit level with the Pioneer, so forcing me into another DVD upgrade.

*Wes Mason, Australia*

*The Technical Editor replies...* Unlike almost all other manufacturers' DVD players, Pioneer's combi-player does 'free-run' up to 96kHz on optical and coaxial digital outputs. In keeping with the spirit of the IEC958 spec, most players will downsample this 96kHz stream to 48kHz. The digital receiver used in MF's X-24K will also accept 96kHz-sampled data at the extended 24-bit wordlength. The datastream maintains this format right through to the 96kHz/24bit DAC used at the output of the X-24K. As a result, the Pioneer/MF combo is one of the few to really reap the benefits of 24-bit audio on today's DVD software. Unfortunately, the DVL-909 will *not* be compatible with the new generation of DVD-A currently being discussed.



**TWO GRAND AMP**



◊ **Primare A30.1: superbly musical, warm and detailed in equal measure.**



My current system consists of the following: Exposure CD player, Audiolab 8000S amplifier and ProAc Studio 150 speakers, along with Cable Talk Broadcast interconnects, Nordost Flatline Twin speaker cable and Mana equipment supports.

I have around £2,000 to replace my amp. To date I've auditioned the Musical Fidelity X-AS100/X-AP100 and the Primare A30.1, which I found particularly good.

Are there other manufacturers or models that I should be considering, and is there a specific price level at which the benefits of separate pre/power units outweigh those of an integrated amplifier?

*Paul Kirk, Bangor*

The two amplifiers you have auditioned so far are fine examples indeed, and it's no surprise that you found the Primare particularly appealing. At £1,499, the A30.1 is a superbly musical integrated amp, warm and detailed in equal measure. And seeing as you liked it

so much, we would have no qualms in recommending that you make the purchase.

But naturally, it would be advisable to consider a few other avenues first, so let's look at your pre/power question. It's not an exact science – there's no specific price level at which you can definitively say: "There's no point buying an integrated amp; buy a pre/power."

Some excellent high-end integrated amplifiers cost considerably more than your £2,000 budget, although the proportion of amps that come in two boxes instead of one rapidly increases at and beyond £1,500.

Separating the relatively small and delicate line level signals from an amp's power stage by splitting the pre and power sections can give real benefits, so you could do worse than check out the combinations available from the likes of Naim and Densen.

Back on the integrated side of the equation, if you fancy trying out a highly flexible valve-based design, Copland's CTA-402 is certainly well worth a listen.

**SINGAPORE SWING**



About three years back, I bought a pair of British Ruark Equinox speakers. These are presently hooked up via Monster cable to a 55W NAD 3155 amp, with a Kenwood KD-650 turntable and a Marantz CD-76SE CD player.

I use the system to listen to jazz, classical and vocal music – the Ruarks make voices sound particularly good. Unfortunately, I don't think my NAD amplifier is doing these wonderful speakers justice, so I've put aside up to £1,500 for a new amp.

Any suggestions?

*Jeffrey Pereira, Singapore*

You're right, Jeffrey – an upgrade in the amp department will get your Ruarks singing more sweetly than ever. Several integrated amps spring to mind as able partners.

There's the Primare A30.1 (£1,499), heartily recommended by Mr Kirk just over to the left of us on this page, Copland's CSA 28 (£1,249), and I've heard good things about Lavardin's IS at £1,595 (look out for a full review in

the next issue). All are likely to suit your system, although the Primare is perhaps favourite to find synergy with your Ruarks.

**"My Ruarks make voices sound particularly good. Unfortunately, I don't think my amplifier is doing these wonderful speakers justice, so I've put aside up to £1,500 for a new amp. Any suggestions?"**

Anyone with a budget like yours would be mad to ignore Roksan's superb Caspian integrated, bi-amped with a Caspian Power amp (£1,290 the pair), and a similar bi-amp combination from Densen – the Beat B100/B300 (£1,450) – is also worth a listen for its sheer musical aplomb. Enjoy!



**Copland's CSA 28: a likely partner for Ruark speakers.**

**HINTS & TIPS**



Most amplifiers are silent when switching between inputs or raising/lowering volume. But if your amp crackles or makes a rustling sound through the loudspeakers, it could indicate that there's a problem.

The simplest cause of such noise is dirt; switch contacts and volume control tracks need to be clean to work properly. Turn the amplifier off at the mains and unplug it from the wall socket, then turn the various controls back and forth so that the contacts can rub themselves clean. If the fault persists, it could mean that tracks are worn and pitted; if that's the case, the only course of action is to replace the faulty component.

Alternatively, it could indicate the presence of stray DC in the signal path – perhaps because a coupling capacitor has failed. A loud bang through the speakers each time you select a new input is a definite indicator of DC.

**ARE YOU RECEIVING ME?**



I want to replace my old Toshiba tuner and Rio amplifier with a more modern receiver. I'm considering either the NAD 710 or 712, or two models from Denon – the DRA-275 or DRA-375. Would any of these receivers improve my system's sound? My speakers are B&W DM302s.

*Maurice Canham, via e-mail*

If you like listening to radio, a receiver is a neat way of getting

both tuner and amp in a single box. It certainly saves on rack space, but the drawback is often rather mediocre hi-fi sound. Consequently, most of the receivers around these days are built for home cinema use rather than serious music listening, and that's why we rarely test them. In fact, none are currently listed in our reviews directory, which might just tell you something!

Although they've never been given an official *Choice* rating, I have had some experience with the NAD

and Denon models you mention, and both are solid enough products. The two Denon models you mention probably offer the best value for money, but if you can stretch your budget a little more, and you're still willing to put up with two boxes, you're better off going for a separate amp and tuner.

For example, put the new Cambridge A500 amp (£200, below) together with Denon's TU-260L MkII tuner (£130) and it'll knock your old combination for six.





**ONLY MUSIC MATTERS**

**Arcam Alpha 8: a real star in the £500-ish price bracket.**



I'm currently listening to music through an A/V system, fronted by a Samsung DVD-907 DVD player. The amp is a Nakamichi, with B&W and Definitive Technology speakers. I know it's not the kind of system you rate in *Choice*, but I'd be glad of some advice. You see, I'm more of an audio enthusiast – it's music that matters to me. In fact, I've only watched three movies on the Samsung since I bought it in February! If I were to keep the DVD player for movies, and buy a dedicated CD player for music, would that improve the sound? Hitarth Shah, via e-mail

DVD players may be excellent value for movie watchers, but when it comes to playing CDs you'll still get far more out of a good CD player at an equivalent

price. You don't give a budget, so we'll assume you're looking at players around the cost of the DVD-907 – £500. You've got some real stars to choose from, including the Arcam Alpha 8 (£520), Pioneer PD-S505 Precision (£460) and Musical Fidelity E624 (£500). Any of them would improve your system's sound with music CDs: it just requires some auditioning.

Further down the line, you may find you want to add a good quality two-channel amp and speakers, but integrating stereo hi-fi and surround sound movie systems poses tricky practical problems. You could end up with two completely separate systems, one for music CDs and the other for movie DVDs. Keep 'em in separate rooms too, if that's feasible! For the time being, that's the best way to experience both movies and music, but with new multi-channel music formats waiting in the wings, who knows what the future holds?

**MOVERS, NOT SHAKERS**

I'm interested in buying a MiniDisc recorder for home, and also one to take out and about. Are they really that much better than personal CD players for music on the move? Which ones should I be looking at?

Mark Hardy, Maidstone

MiniDisc recorders can't match the recording quality of CD recorders, but they have two big advantages. First, there's their flexibility when re-recording tracks and moving them around. Second, they have much better portability. Not only is the format much smaller, it also has far better shock resistance.

Our favourite domestic MiniDisc recorders include the Sharp MD-R2 and Sony MDS-JB920 (about to be replaced by the very similar MDS-JB930), both at £300, and the MDS-JA20ES at £500. Also from Sony, let's not forget the new MDS-555SE reviewed on p67.

Portable players don't really fall within our remit – they're music on the move rather than hi-fi – so it's difficult to advise you.

However, I'd be tempted to plump for a Sony – the company makes some gorgeous MD personal-als and they sound pretty good too. The Sharp range is also well worth a look, particularly if you decide to go for a recordable personal.

**“Are MiniDisc machines really that much better than personal CD players for music on the move? Which ones should I be looking at?”**



**Sony MDS-JA20ES: a cracking MD recorder.**

**RAAAAWKSAN!**

Most of my system is Roksan based – I've got a Roksan Caspian CD player and amp, and ROKone speakers. Now I want to upgrade my turntable, currently a Rega Planar 2 with an Ortofon 510 cartridge, and add a tuner. Would you recommend I stick with Roksan, or are there other makes I should try?

Bill Tarrant, Oxford

Sticking with Roksan makes sense. That way you'll get a fine visual match and strong sonic synergy, made all the more tempting by the calibre of the products themselves.

On the turntable front, Roksan's Radius is a nimble and detailed-sounding deck, attractively designed and strong value for money at £470. If you can afford more, the Xerxes 10 is better still at £1,295. But good as these decks are, it's still worth auditioning them against one or two rivals to ensure

you find the optimum product for your ears. Try Michell's Gyro 'SE' (£775) and the Reson RS1 (£600 including arm and cartridge) for size.

As for the tuner, Roksan's Caspian model makes a tempting case for itself. It'll look just right racked up with your existing components and

it's a capable performer, though a little pricey at £595. If you're not too bothered about the visual match, it might be worth trying a few less costly models, to decide whether the extra is worth paying. Pioneer's F-504RDS Precision (£300) springs to mind.



**◉ Roksan's Radius: strong value for money.**

**HINTS & TIPS**

Quite a few CD players have a 'Display Off' facility, whereby the illuminated display giving details of track number and elapsed time can be switched off. Thoughtful manufacturers offer the option for those who want to listen in a darkened room, and might therefore find that the glare of a bright display disturbs their repose.

But there's a sonic effect too; many CD players sound slightly cleaner with the display switched off – almost as though the lights were generating noise that found its way into other parts of the circuit via the power supply.

The effect depends on the CD player in question, and its age; many more recent machines seem to sound much the same regardless of whether the display is on or off – as though the problem had been dealt with by more careful circuit design.

So if your CD player offers 'Display Off', give it a listen and see if there's any improvement one way or t'other.



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**MULTIPLE LAYERS**

I have recently replaced my Marantz CD-63SE CD player with a Marantz CD-63II KI-Signature, and my Audiolab 8000A amp with an 8000Q bi-amped with an 8000P. The improvements are obvious, but now I feel the system is let down by my Castle Durham 900 speakers (on sand-filled stands).

Most acoustic-based music sounds marvellous, as does chamber music, but the speakers don't seem to convey rock or large scale orchestral music very well. For example, I get far more impact with snare drums and the like through my Beyerdynamic 531 headphones, and I find the speakers struggle to cope with the multiple layers of sound in Bruckner's *Symphony No. 7*.

Could you suggest a standmounting speaker between £500 and £1,500 that might solve these problems?

A. Roden, Scunthorpe

It's worth experimenting with your speaker stands first. It's possible to over-fill them with sand and so over-damp the sound – reducing the amount of sand can give the impression of greater impact and expression. However, that's unlikely to help your Durhams "cope with multiple layers of sound", and they're never likely to match the direct impact of a punchy pair of cans like your Beyerdynamic 531s.

So, which speakers should you be listening to? Your price range is wide; at the lower end, check out Dynaudio's Audience 40 (£400) and 50 (£577), and Celestion's A Compact (£600), all three of which play music with real bite and enthusiasm. Further up the ladder, listen to Celestion's larger A1 (£900), Dynaudio's Contour 1.3 MkII (£1,198) and Jamo's Concert 8 (£1,365). All should match well with the rest of your system.

▼ **The Celestion A Compact.**

**HINTS & TIPS**

Although carpet-piercing spikes help when you're trying to make speaker fixings rigid, there are other ways of achieving the same end. One admittedly rather extreme alternative is to place your speakers (or speaker stands) minus spikes on to a heavy concrete paving slab or slate base, using coins as wedges to eliminate any rock. If the interface between speaker/stand and base is too rigid, try covering the support base with vinyl tiles. This will soften the surface without sacrificing rigidity. Should the speaker (or stand) be screwed to the base, it'll ensure the centre of gravity of the whole speaker system is low, improving rigidity. Many tall floorstanders are top-heavy, and this may encourage the whole speaker cabinet to rock back and forth slightly during loud climaxes, robbing the sound of its clarity and focus. Whether or not you spike the support base to the floor is another can of worms!



I've recently moved house, and am looking to replace the stand-mount speakers I built myself. In my previous place they sounded great, but now I'm plagued by terrible bass resonance and I'm sure my speakers are to blame.

I recently read your review of the Dynaudio Audience 40 and I'm interested in buying a pair, but the article says they're best suited to smaller rooms (40-60m<sup>3</sup>). My room is 70m<sup>3</sup> – is that likely to be a problem?

I listen to indie, world and jazz music, with the likes of Therapy?, Killing Joke and Asian Dub Foundation thrown in every now and again – I do like to listen loud occasionally...

Geoff Nolan, Germany

The £400 Dynaudio Audience 40 is a cracking little speaker, a fact reinforced by its well-deserved

**NAMING SPEAKERS**

My system consists of mainly Naim models: CDX CD player with an XPS power supply and NAC82/NAP180 pre/power amp with a HiCap power supply. I also use a Nakamichi DR3 cassette deck. I'm in the process of upgrading my ancient Spendor SP1 speakers and I'm not sure which to choose. I've listened to the Naim SBL but I find it bass-light. I just want a speaker that is musical. Can you help?

Patricio Gomes, via e-mail

The first question that springs to mind is to ask why you're so keen to change your SP1s. They've presumably served you well for many years, and ageism doesn't really apply with high pedigree hi-fi speakers. Our regular speaker reviewer Paul Messenger still frequently uses his even more ancient Spendor BC1s, and finds that in their strengths they can show most modern speakers a clean pair of heels (especially under 'blind' listening conditions!).

The only major limitation is some lack of power handling and loudness capability compared with more modern designs. If your current speakers need servicing, Spendor ought to be able to help.

Matching speakers to a Naim system can be tricky, particularly if you have already discounted Naim's own models. A selection of alternative speakers at a similar



Chario's Academy Millennium 2.

price to the Naim SBLs, but which may well offer a more musical presentation to your ears should include Chario's entertaining Academy Millennium 2 standmounts (£2,100), or the Dynaudio 1.8 MkII floorstanders at £1,842. The Neat Petite II stand-mount/Gravitas subwoofer combo is an interesting option at £2,000, and the Ruark Equinox is a tasty £1,849 speaker.

Also try the Wilson benches Orator (£2,900) and ProAc Response 2.5 (£2,700). Another brand with particular affinity with Naim is Epos – the £2,550 ES30s can give a thrilling sonic ride.

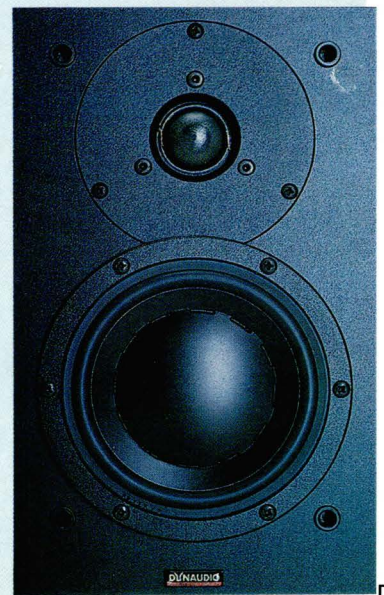
**MOVING SPEAKERS**

EISA Award in this issue. I actually use a pair in the bedroom, where they're subjected to everything from smooth, downbeat music to hard-edged rock, with a spot of classical thrown in, and they have never shown a sign of strain.

It's certainly a speaker that prefers smaller spaces, and 70m<sup>3</sup> might be pushing it a bit. But you should still be able to fill the room at pretty high volumes, and the quality of bass and general involvement on offer is exceptional at the price.

Also consider the 40's bigger brother, the Audience 50, a more substantial £577 speaker better equipped to fill larger spaces. However, if your room has problems with bass resonance – we'll assume that you've experimented with the positioning of your existing speakers – then the 40 might still prove to be the better bet.

▼ **Dynaudio 40: just the ticket for thrashing out a bit of Therapy?...**







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IT'S THE HOLIDAY OR THE HI-FI

**I recently acquired a Technics SL-P777 CD player, replacing my old Marantz CD-873, and a set of van den Hul Thunderstorm cables. A Thunderstorm it isn't!**

The CD player is a definite improvement, but the cables have the opposite effect – I think it's probably their interaction with my old 25 Watt Aura amp and home-made speakers.

I now realise the need for an amp/speaker upgrade, and would appreciate your advice on which components to consider with a budget of £1,200. If it's worth it, we can even forego our holiday and stretch up to £1,600.

We listen mainly to jazz, classical and world music, in a fairly large room.

*Agni Bolin, Sweden*

We wouldn't dream of telling you to skip your holiday, Agni. Then again, you might find the beautiful sound that results from a successful system upgrade gives you all the relaxation you need. Listen to some of our suggestions below, and decide for yourself whether it's worth it.

On the amp side, start with the likes of Musical Fidelity's XA-1 (£479) and the Audio Analogue Puccini (£450), both of which are well balanced and highly musical

designs. From there, move up the price ladder a little and try Densen's Beat B-100 MkII (£650), Roksan's Caspian (£695) and Primare's A-20 MkII (£799).

While you're auditioning each amp, try two or three different pairs of speakers to see if a particular combination really suits. The Dynaudio Audience 40 (£400) and 50 (£577) are both excellent standmounting designs and should be heard, along with AVI's well regarded NuNeutron (£500) and B&W's CDM1 SE (£600). For that matter, the Celestion A Compact (£600) is great for smaller spaces – see last month's review.

If you'd prefer floorstanders, try Triangle's superb Zephyr II (£599) and the Mission 752 Freedom (£578, but soon to be replaced). Moving up the price ladder, consider the Castle Harlech floorstanders (£880) and Celestion A1 standmounters (£900).

◉ Musical Fidelity's musical XA-1.



ABSOLUTE BEGINNERS

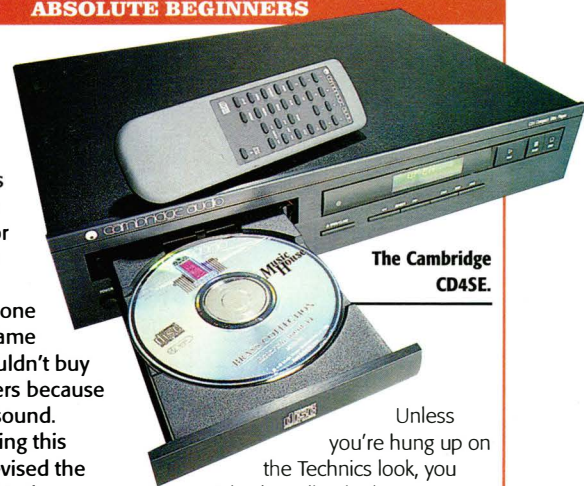
**I'm just about to buy my first hi-fi system. A friend told me Technics components are good and that for compatibility it's best to buy everything from one brand. But the same friend said I shouldn't buy Japanese speakers because they colour the sound.**

After considering this advice, I have devised the following shortlist: the SL-PS670D CD player, RS-AZ6 tape deck, ST-GT550 tuner and SU-A700 Mk3 amp, all from Technics, together with B&W's DM602 speakers.

Would this make a good beginner's system, or could I make a better system for the same price?

*Laszlo Mocsar, via e-mail*

It's true that components from a single company are usually designed to work well together, and also offer coherent cosmetics and (often) system remote control. But it's also true that mixing and matching components from different sources can sometimes provide a more satisfying mix of sonic flavours, provided they're all pulling in the same direction.



The Cambridge CD45E.

Unless you're hung up on the Technics look, you might do well to look at one or two other options, particularly if you're planning to drive B&W602s (now in Series Two form).

Your proposed system adds up to £1,130. How about trying the following for similar money – the Cambridge CD45E CD player (£200), Arcam Alpha One amp (£230) and Denon TU-260L MkII tuner (£130)? Stick with the Technics cassette deck you suggest and try the B&W speakers on the end, together with alternatives like the Dynaudio Audience 40 (£400) and Heybrook Heylios (£389).

Don't forget you'll need a good pair of speaker stands, like Atacama's SE24 (£73) and some suitable cables – QED Qnect 2 interconnects (£30) and Cable Talk 3.1 speaker cable (£2.25/m) should do the job nicely.

BETTER THAN BEFORE!

**Having spent many years building my system, I recently had all my hi-fi stolen. I now face the exciting but daunting task of replacing it all in one go.**

I intend to buy vinyl whenever possible, so a turntable will be my main source, for which I'm prepared to spend up to £1,200. I also need a CD player for occasional use, an amp, speakers, equipment support and cables, for which my budget is around £3,000.

My room is 15x11ft, I listen to jazz, hip-hop, acid jazz and soul, and I'm open to suggestions.

*P West, Wakefield*

We're sorry to hear about your stolen hi-fi, but, assuming that your insurance company has coughed up a realistic sum, try to enjoy the business of choosing your system all over again. The process of browsing

and listening should be nothing less than fun, and hopefully you'll end up with an even better hi-fi this time.

Turntables first, try the Michell Gyrodec (£875), Pink Triangle Tarantella II (£850) and Wilson benesch Circle (£750), all with a Rega RB300 arm (£174) and a good quality cartridge like the Sumiko Blue Point Special at £250.

Then, as a rule of thumb, consider spending around £500-£1,000 each on amplifier and speakers. An amp like Roksan's Caspian (£695) would do a sound job, perhaps teamed with the matching Caspian Power amp (£595) to bi-amp if you can

afford it. You'll also need a good affordable phono stage like Moth's 30 Series Phono (£249).

In terms of speakers, decide if you want compact floorstanders or stand-mounts, and listen to the likes of the following: B&W 603 SII (£550), Triangle Zephyr II (£599), AVI Biggatron (£599), Musical Technology Falcon (£680) and Celestion A1 (£900). Spend less on the CD player, as it's only "for occasional use" – consider the Arcam Alpha 7SE (£350) or Musical Fidelity E624 (£500). And put the rest of your budget towards equipment support and cabling – combining recommendations from our product directory with careful listening should complete a

set-up that'll give you years of joy.

◉ Pink Triangle's Tarantella II: gets to the point.



HINTS & TIPS



When you try a tweak and it works, there's a natural tendency to think that doing more of the same to other parts of the system will intensify the benefit.

For example, imagine you've put a set of cones under your power amplifier, and the result is a welcome improvement in sharpness and detail. It's tempting to assume that putting similar cones under your preamp, CD player, DAC and turntable and whatever else you've got will bring more of the same.

And so it might! But you can sometimes have too much of a good thing, so tread carefully on the path of overkill. Listen to each change separately, one at a time. Don't install five sets of cones at once; evaluate each set one at a time.

Refrain from moving on until you're quite sure the changes made are fully beneficial. That way you'll avoid costly mistakes and end up with a system where you really like the sound.



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## Hi-Fi Choice

(December '96)

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## THE VERDICT

▲ Tonally, dynamically and rhythmically a truly first-class cable

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## Home Entertainment

(August '98)

Cable Talk Studio 2  
Verdict \*\*\*\*\*

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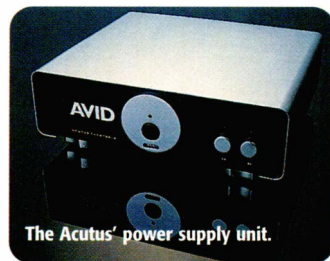
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the drive belt and motor spindle, the latter sticking out of a massive free-standing casing that is located, with another rubber belt, on the side of the 'spider' base, a tri-star element that connects the three support pillars.

The platter's top surface features a hard polymer layer that is designed to transmit energy more efficiently in the vertical plane than in the lateral, the idea being that vinyl resonance is channelled away from the disc into the platter and thence through the bearing to the subchassis.

This all adds up to a very substantial record player, most notably in terms of height – some 18cm (more than seven inches). Width and depth figures aren't particularly unusual (41x39.5cm) and will be easily accommodated on the average equipment support.

The purpose of this heavy, all-aluminium engineering is to isolate the sensitive parts of the system from the outside world, and to maintain constant (angular) velocity at the stylus/vinyl interface. The latter is achieved by a very high torque Crouzet motor, which 'pulls' 140mN and is hand re-built by Avid. The electronic motor supply was designed by Guy Adams of Voyd turntables fame, and takes cues like split phase and crystal locking from that classic deck.

The suspension system is adjustable from below each column – you need to put the deck on a speaker stand or similar to achieve this – but it only needs to be done if the arm is changed. The

suspension itself feels and looks very impressive – tap the platter and there's none of the yawing or pitching that you'll find with most sprung decks. Instead, the energy is absorbed in a vertical bounce that tails off very smoothly. In all functional respects this appears to be an extremely

**T**urntable design has traditionally fallen into one of two schools of thought. On the one hand there is the lightweight, spring-suspended approach embodied by designs from Linn, Pink Triangle, Wilson benesch et al. On the other, you find high-mass platters supported by meaty plinths in models from Nottingham Analogue, Verdier and any number of small Japanese brands. There are, of course, exceptions, such as Rega's lightweight-no-suspension designs, and high-mass designs with suspensions such as those from Michell and SME. And it's to the latter group that this turntable belongs, albeit taking the approach to extremes by using a 10kg platter and very meaty suspension to match.

Priced from £4,000 depending on finish, the Acutus is a new name on the scene, and when I first saw it, and found out it was made by

one Conrad Mas, I assumed it was of German origin – the taste for big, chrome hi-fi is a lot stronger there than it is here. But Conrad is as English as the next turntable enthusiast, it would seem, and the reasons for the Acutus' size and weight are pure physics.

There are some quite unusual elements in this turntable, the suspension being the most obvious. This combines very strong vertical springs with nitrile 'O' rings acting as lateral retainers to discourage any side-to-side

movement. These rings are held by the three caps you see at the top of each supporting pillar.

The subchassis is a large casting, with an unusual V section in each supporting arm, the shape being designed to dissipate vibration and give huge rigidity. This subchassis supports the large tapered bearing housing that, in turn, supports the platter. The bearing itself is an inverted affair with a ruby thrust ball.

The aluminium platter has a wide slot cut out of its underside to hold





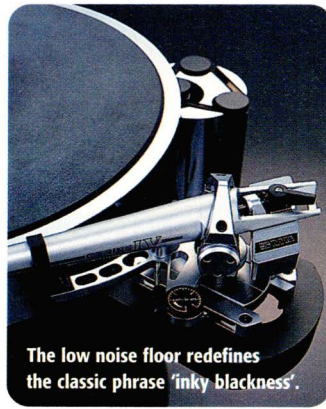
well thought-out turntable. Fit and finish quality is also high, if not quite approaching my SME Model 20A reference.

The Acutus has one element that appears to have been inspired by SME: its record clamp. But, being Avid, it couldn't just be a regular clamp – nothing short of a veritable monster would do. The clamp is pretty big and made up of a central face which holds the record centre against the bearing housing, plus an outer clamp which presses the record down onto the platter, helping flatten out warps as well. Avid recommends that the clamp be screwed down extremely tight for best results. This makes changing records a relatively slow process, but the sonic improvements wrought by tightening the clamp an extra turn are not subtle, so it's worth the effort.

**SOUND**

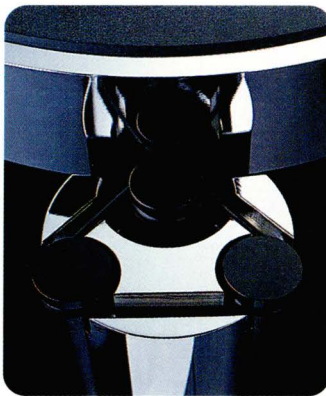
For the purpose of this review I used a variety of ancillaries, including: SME Model IV arm, van den Hul MC One Special and Wilson benesch Carbon cartridges, Michell Iso/Lithos phono stage, DNM 3C Twin/PA3, Krell KAV-500i, Roksan ROK-S1 and Lundahl Mag amps with B&W N802 and Living Voice Avatar speakers.

As the deck turned up with the vdH cartridge fitted, that's where I started, and while the results were pretty stunning it



The low noise floor redefines the classic phrase 'inky blackness'.

**“The suspension itself feels and looks very impressive – tap the platter and there’s none of the yawing or pitching that you’ll find with most sprung decks.”**



soon became clear that this cartridge was overdriving the 'highly sensitised' phono stage. Switching to the Wb Carbon sorted that out and the deck really started to motor.

First impressions are of considerable presence and precision, a good LP taking you right to the musical event, such is the degree of ambient resolution. After a while it becomes clear that this is largely due to the turntable's extraordinarily low noise floor. It redefines the classic phrase 'inky blackness', and does so in such unobtrusive fashion that you often wonder, when you've just let go of the arm lift, if the needle is on the record at all. Suddenly there's sound; it makes you jump – it also makes you wonder how much rumble there is on other turntables.

With a high-mass platter and high-torque motor there's an expectation that the bass performance will be special, an expectation that is fully rewarded by the Acutus – but not in an overpowering sense.

You're not distracted by the lower registers – rather, they act to underpin the music and reinforce its power. I've not heard Massive Attack's bass-heavy *Mezzanine* sound as alive and powerful as it did here – there's a lot more going on down there than you'd think.

The Acutus isn't heavy sounding either, which can be a problem with mass. In fact, its inertia seems to supply tremendous agility and speed, and dynamics leap out of the speakers. On the other hand, compressed records sound compressed – the Acutus revels in what it finds in the groove, good or bad.

And while this doesn't extend to making worn records unplayable, it can't cover up the distortion such wear produces. The prices charged for 180g pressings suddenly seem very reasonable when you hear the results. *Sketches of Spain* (Miles Davis) has a presence that is tangible – the horn is there in the room.

Only after writing most of the sound section of this review did I realise that I hadn't made it clear how much information this turntable is capable of extracting from a record.

It is simply phenomenal – every familiar record I put on offered up new layers of sound, more nuance and fine detail. And the more complex the material, the more rewarding the experience.

It's important to emphasise that this deck does not have the characteristics that turntable enthusiasts associate with typical high mass or suspended designs. It seems to have combined the strengths of both, while avoiding the weaknesses. And while fans from both camps might feel that it is weak in one respect or another, they'll be hard pressed to find an alternative at or near the price that is so competent across the board.

**CONCLUSION**

The Avid Acutus is one of those hi-fi components that you quickly get used to. Because it doesn't seem to introduce any colour of its own, there's really very little that you can say about it – apart from what your records sound like, because that's what you get to a greater extent than with any other turntable I've tried.

Some rivals have enhanced timing, bass extension or dynamics to give them an edge in those departments, but none have the range and neutrality of the Acutus.

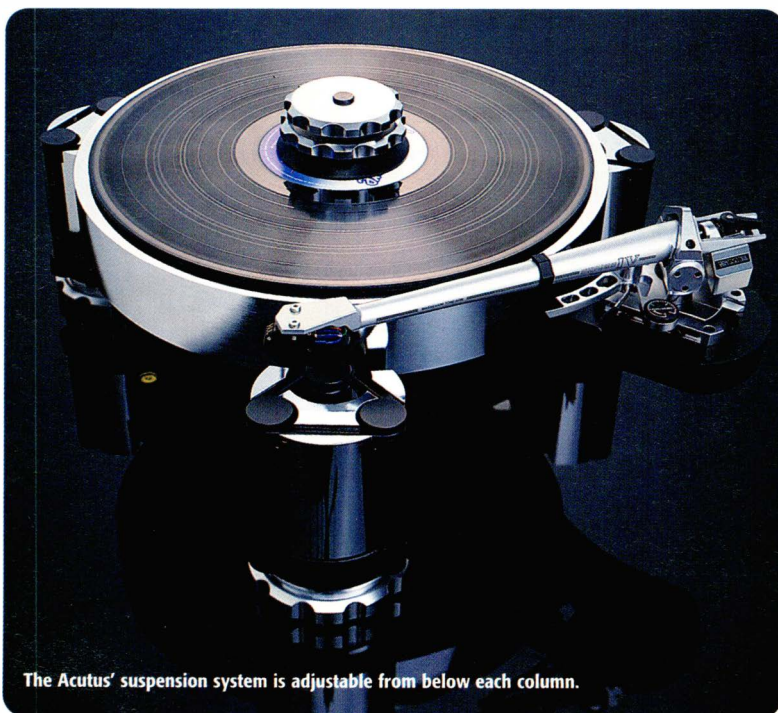
And while the deck is perhaps not quite as beautifully finished as some, its beauty shines through the records you play on it. Don't underestimate the power of vinyl.

VERDICT

<b>SOUND</b>	★★★★★
<b>BUILD</b>	★★★★☆
<b>VALUE</b>	★★★★★
<b>PRICE</b>	<b>£4,995.00</b>
<b>£3,995.00 MATT CHROME</b>	

i **Extremely capable design with no apparent shortcomings; don't even think about selling your vinyl till you've heard it on this!**

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The Acutus' suspension system is adjustable from below each column.





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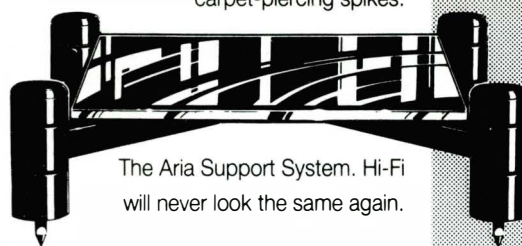
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# STATES of the art

**Paul Messenger checks out the latest arrivals from the US. But is the performance quite as towering as their looks would suggest?**

**T**here's a new breed of speaker sweeping across America, and samples thereof have just started trickling over to our shores. This Snell XA75ps is the first example to arrive for *Choice* scrutiny, and therefore the first opportunity to explain this interesting new concept.

From the front this looks like a classy but otherwise fairly conventional floorstanding speaker. But look around the back and you'll find knobs, switches, cooling fins and a mains socket, as well as the usual speaker terminals.

It does have a built-in amp, but just the one channel, specifically to drive the bass section of the speaker. And there's the socketry, too, for directly connecting the LFE (the separate '.1' bass channel) signal from a 5.1-channel Dolby Digital movie soundtrack, plus switches for EQ and the like, including a Cinema/Reference operation – but, this being a hi-fi magazine, I left it on 'Reference' throughout.

This is, in essence, a rather intelligent response to the need for speaker systems which can handle both home cinema surround and music stereo sources, with the versatility to accommodate the differences without compromising either.

Of course, what it also does is automatically bi-amplify your system (in fact, the bass section has full active drive), which should make life somewhat easier for your existing amp and potentially improve its sound quality too, although purists might object to the fact that the speaker's internal amp won't necessarily match the character of your main amp.

As well as its built-in 200W bass amp, the XA75ps is stuffed with enough other interesting features to help justify its hefty £4,345 price-tag. The most

visually striking is the clever way the enclosure houses a decent sized bass driver while keeping the front panel slim. It's an unusual and interesting bass driver too, with an extra external spider, presumably to improve cooling and high excursion linearity.

Perhaps the most interesting technical feature is the 'eXpanding Array' from which the model gets its name. The XA75ps is actually a five-driver, four-way design, with crossover points at 100Hz, 500Hz and 3kHz. The bass driver has a 10in frame, the lower mid unit is a 6.5-incher, while most significantly the two-and-a-half octaves from 500Hz-3kHz are handled by a pair of relatively tiny (2.5in) midrange drivers, positioned above and below the 1in fabric dome tweeter.

**“The beautifully open, even balance and seamless mid/treble integration are big pluses, giving wonderful stereo imaging.”**

By using such small mid drivers, the mid and treble sources can be placed very close together, which improves mid-to-treble crossover integration, avoiding any diffraction cancellation effects as well as inhibiting floor and ceiling reflections. The result is a remarkable consistency in voicing across a wide range of listening positions.

Other highlights include a three-layer baffle with constrained layer damping, a defeatable rearward-facing tweeter (a long-standing Snell tradition, now widely imitated elsewhere), and switches which provide alternative treble levels and compensate for near-wall or free-space positioning.

The 45kg weight is proof of the considerable engineering content, although I did notice the cabinet's top surface seemed prone to vibration.

Far-field in-room traces confirmed notably consistent mid-to-treble transition, as well as that between the lower mid

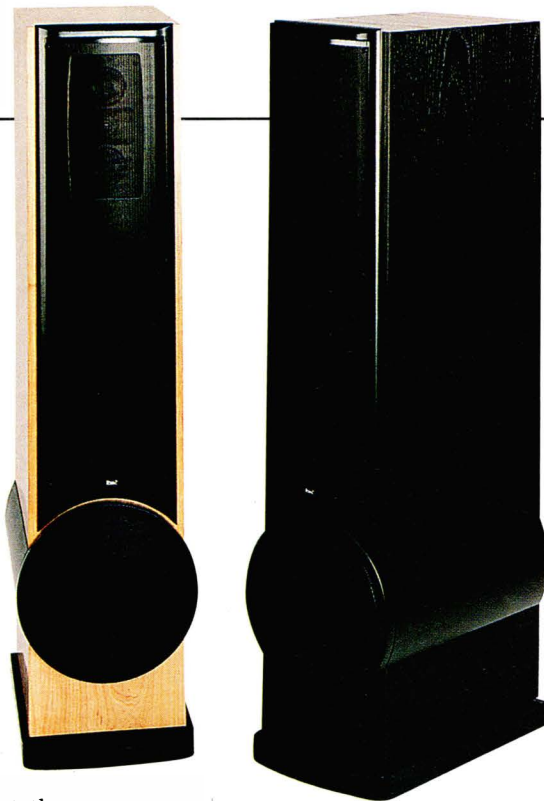
and upper midband, for that matter. But I have a few more qualms about the relationship between the active subwoofer section and the rest.

When I powered up the sub-woofers and set the volume controls to the mid point, there was altogether too much bass. Room measurements showed the 30-60Hz octave average was around 7dB stronger than the midband datum in my room. I backed off the bass volume to bring it into line, only to find it left a bit of a hole at 70-90Hz.

In fact, blocking the two ports with bungs (converting the bass to a sealed box alignment) gave the best extended and integrated bass balance. This is at some expense in bass headroom and ultimate loudness capability, but there's plenty of these available, and to spare.

If the bass proved rather problematic, the midband is smooth and even, with an attractively open balance, alongside startlingly precise and well focused stereo images. The way the sound stays consistent and free from phasiness as one moves around is unusual, remarkable and a real bonus (even though one is more likely to stay in one place when listening at home).

To my ears, the sound seemed a little more natural with the rear tweeter in operation and, by way of compensation with the front tweeter on its lower setting (it's a very subtle change). The high quality enclosure engineering ensures a very wide dynamic range, and the active bottom end certainly delivers plenty of punch, especially if you like



◉ **Stick 'em where you like – the Snell XA75ps' will still perform consistently.**

your bass on the full and fruity side. Dynamics seemed slightly constrained, perhaps reflecting the complexity of the crossover, and voices had a slightly pinched, nasal quality.

## CONCLUSIONS

It's a difficult speaker to sum up. I'm impressed by the XA75ps' versatility, but a little daunted by its complexity. The beautifully open, even balance and seamless mid/treble integration are big pluses, giving wonderful stereo imaging. But bass integration is less well handled (the bigger XA 95ps offers greater scope), and dynamic expression seemed a little muted. But for those seeking speakers capable of doing equal justice to both hi-fi and home cinema, the XA 75ps seems to make great sense.

## VERDICT

<b>SOUND</b>	★★★★☆
<b>BUILD</b>	★★★★☆
<b>VALUE</b>	★★★★☆
<b>PRICE</b>	<b>£4,345.00</b>

■ **Active-bass floorstander with marvellous mid coherence, slightly suspect bass integration. Good package suits both home cinema and hi-fi.**

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*As close as it gets*



# SONY'S Mini Maestro

Here comes another Sony MiniDisc recorder. Big deal, right? **Richard Black** thinks this one might be...

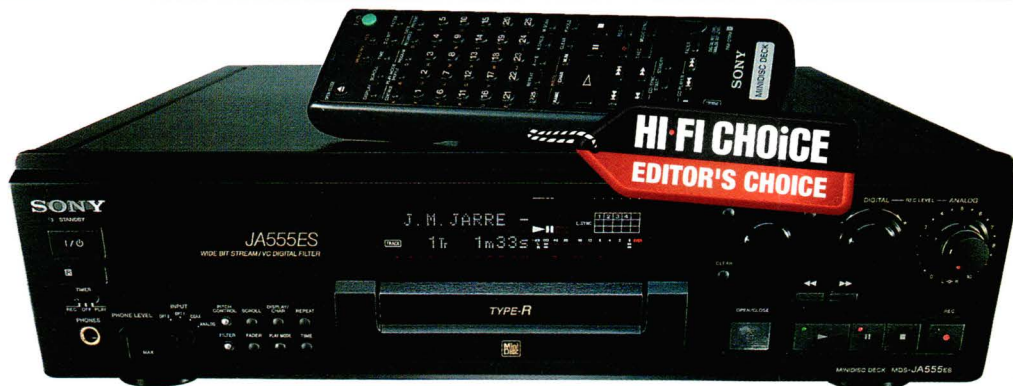
**T**here's no doubting Sony's seriousness about MiniDisc. Apart from the prodigious amounts of money the company has spent on promotion, it has launched not so much a raft as a whole navy of products over the past couple of years, from the cheap to the esoteric. The £650 MDS-JA555ES most definitely falls into the latter category.

At first glance it looks little different from 'ES'-designated CD players such as the '20ES and '3000ES (we'll receive in these pages). Pick it up, though, and its vast weight – the sort of weight you might expect from a fairly powerful valve amp – suggests it's a bit special.

Most of that weight is down to the dramatically over-specified chassis, but the two generous-looking mains transformers doubtless help. The transport mechanism also has more metal parts than usual, instead of plastic. The idea of such a bulky chassis is to minimise vibration and hence microphonic behaviour, especially in the crucial jitter-prone stages, but Sony might have managed something a little friendlier than this brute force approach.

The real innovation here is a 'Type-R' ATRAC coding. Solid details are rather lacking, but basically it's a tweak intended to give better sound. It's inevitable that data reduction systems should benefit from performance upgrades as the designers' understanding of coding systems and the target psycho-acoustical parameters improves, while rapidly evolving Digital Signal Processing (DSP) technology is

◊ Familiar looks; substantial chassis.



**"Build quality is excellent. Sony has used top-quality printed circuit board material and everything is immaculately fitted."**

bringing increases in power and reductions in cost.

Similarly, it's not surprising that this model includes such features as high-bit processing, variable coefficient digital filters, digital input and output level control, plus Sony's 'Time Machine' recording feature – which stores six seconds of audio in a buffer so you don't miss anything on a recording – and, of course, the usual MD editing and titling set.

Build quality of this unit is excellent throughout. Sony has used top-quality printed circuit board material, rather than the more common cheaper grades, and everything is immaculately fitted. Mind you, component quality isn't remarkable, despite a sprinkling of 'Audio' capacitors: there are the usual decent-but-not-great output op-amps, for instance, and ordinary commercial-grade

resistors and internal cabling. Users with an external DAC won't be troubled by this, but it suggests there is still room for the 'ultimate' MD machine to come along.

## SOUND QUALITY

To my ears, this is the most successful MD recorder yet. I wouldn't say it's inaudible on all material, but on my MD 'torture tracks' it makes less of a meal of things than any other. For example, Track 5 of that all-time jazz fave, *Kind of Blue*, begins with a couple of minutes of muted trumpet from Miles Davis that reliably trips up the ATRAC processing, inducing symptoms akin to mild amp clipping. The '555 can't quite beat the challenge, but rises to it bravely. There's some discernible roughness, but it's much less marked than on the best of its forbears.

My other favourite MD test is *Dance the Night Away* from The Mavericks, a brilliantly produced and performed track which is very 'busy', and suffers borderline-audible warbling in the background with many MD decks, leading to loss of detail.

Sony decks have fared better than most with this problem, and the '555 does better yet again. It's not perfect, but it's hard to hear distinct additions to the sound. Rather, there's a small loss in precision of the magnitude one might expect from an amp or cable change.

With classical music, which is less treble-rich and less prone to produce obvious artefacts, the 'disinterest factor', which for me has been the main drawback of ATRAC, is likewise diminished, and it is possible to

◊ It's well built, full of features, and sounds good – what more do you want?

listen for extended periods without fatigue. There is some loss in ultimate involvement, but it seems to me that the loss is smaller than ever before.

Judging the deck as a DAC (in record pause mode), to assess its output stages alone, there's some lack of stereo image depth and precision and, while strong bass is well reproduced, subtle bass seems a little shy. The analogue inputs are quite neutral tonally, but again there's a (small) loss of focus.

## CONCLUSION

There's no doubting the fine value of this deck. It's probably the best MD recorder yet for sound. It's well built, laden with features and in material terms it's masses for the money... but there's still CD-R.

Put it like this: if you don't mind hair-shirt features and frankly poor ergonomics, go for CD-R. But if you can tolerate a small quality loss, value user-friendliness and have £650 to spare – buy this.

## VERDICT

SOUND	★★★★☆
BUILD	★★★★☆
VALUE	★★★★☆
PRICE	£650.00

Probably the best MiniDisc deck to date, with consistently less quality loss over a wide range of programme.

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# TACTFULLY DONE



Paul Miller finds out whether this Danish brand's latest offering lives up to the promise of its innovative predecessor.



TACT's Millennium MkII: unusual styling for an unusual amplifier.

Some four years after my inaugural review of the "World's first digital amplifier", this remarkable product is now in production under the Danish TACT Audio brand, with UK distribution firmly established alongside NAD. The core innovation of this amplifier, known as EquiBit processing, remains

the property of Toccata Technology, which has struck a deal so that TACT Audio gets a head start in the market, but which means we may also see a number of similar products from other companies during the year 2000.

Now officially in MkII guise, TACT's own £7,000 Millennium is still the standard-bearer for

this exciting technology, which was described in full back in HFC 178. Here's the gist. The Millennium connects directly to the digital output of your CD, DAT or MD player, and drives speakers directly, bypassing all traditional analogue pre/power or integrated electronics.

A huge, flywheel-action volume control (more on that

later) sits in the centre of an equally massive alloy fascia, and offers a range from 3.7dB (min) to 99.9dB (max), effectively calibrated in 0.2dB steps. A remote control handset operates this volume control, along with digital input selection, absolute phase switching, and display on/off.

The Millennium is a true Digital Class D amplifier which, like 'analogue' Class D amplifiers, employs a very high speed switching output stage that represents the music by varying the length of time the switches are held on or off.

This is known as pulse width modulation (PWM), but is achieved very elegantly in the Millennium amplifier because the pulses are derived directly from the incoming digital data, while the output switching remains entirely synchronous with the 44.1kHz sample rate of a CD source.



There are no intermediate analogue stages or analogue feedback, and distortion or low-level errors inherent in the output switching stage are addressed in advance by sophisticated DSP (Digital Signal Processing). A final, gentle filter reveals the underlying music waveform from the high speed train of pulses that emerge from the switching stage. In practice, the 'switches' are high-speed HEXFET power transistors, encased in alloy blocks to help cut unwanted RF interference.

The Millennium includes no tone-shaping equalisation on board. It's TACT's plan to use the Millennium in conjunction with its forthcoming 2.0DD room correction processor (£3,200) to iron out peaks and troughs in balance caused by different speakers and listening rooms!

This DSP-based processor will also confer compatibility with 96kHz DVD-A sources, and will have the capacity to handle 192kHz DVD-A in the very near future. Analogue sources may also be interfaced to the amp via a £700 A-to-D converter which, I believe, is also incorporated in the room correction unit. *Hi-Fi Choice* will be first with the details of these peripherals as they emerge.

#### HOW DO THEY DO THAT?

In some respects, the digital path through the Millennium

is not unlike that of a beefy outboard D/A converter. For example, the incoming digital data is acquired using a Crystal CS8412 interface chip, while a Pacific Microsonics' HDCD compatible, PMD-100 digital filter provides 8x oversampling.

From this point on, custom DSP is used to generate the PWM signals and provide all the necessary 'housekeeping' for its high-voltage switching stage. But even though the incoming data may have 16-bit precision, the PWM signals only offer 8-bit accuracy.

The resulting errors are manifest as a type of noise that's spread right across the amplifier's range, so 'noise-shaping' is employed to shovel any digital rubbish out of the audio range and higher, ostensibly inaudible, frequencies (see Figure 1).

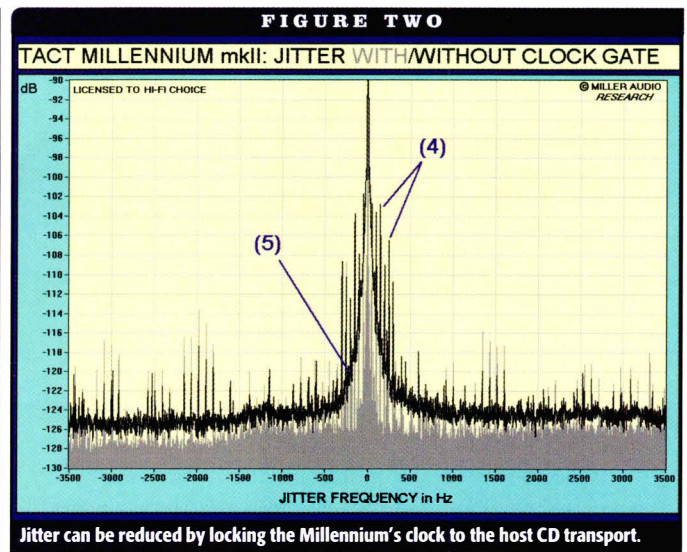
This hump of noise (1) is clearly depicted in the 3D plot, as is the recovery of a decent 100dB+ dynamic range through the audio range (2). Harmonic distortions (3) are still produced, but at 0.01 per cent (re. 0dBfs/1W/8 Ohm) these are some 6dB lower than those of the MkI Millennium (see *HFC* 178). As a guide, the latest incarnation's optimum performance is achieved through volume settings 62-89.

The amplifier's power output is also improved, and readily bests its 150W/250W 8/4 Ohm specification at 160W/310W,

respectively. This is sufficient to handle the vast majority of loudspeakers with comparative ease, though the amplifier/speaker response will vary from box to box according to its impedance trend at high frequencies. This is a side-effect of the filter mentioned earlier, and is something I'll cover in next month's *Oasis*.

#### JITTERBUG?

The outboard DAC analogy extends to the Millennium's dependence on a digital source – typically a CD transport – and, like other two-box



combinations, it has to deal with the jitter that's aggravated in between. The black trace on my jitter plot (Figure 2) not only shows a high level of power supply-related jitter (4) – to 900psec – but also a broad hump (5) that's never good news for sound quality.

This result comes from the NAD 514/Millennium combination and, as the grey trace shows (at 650psec), is

**“TACT was obliged to introduce extra gain because various dealers were unsettled by the fact that the volume control could be advanced to full without creating distorted sound.”**

improved by adding TACT's £220 Clock Gate modification to the host transport. The Clock Gate may be retro-fitted to NAD's 514, 522, 524 and Silverline series players by Millennium dealers, although there's no reason why it may not be added to other brands of CD player too.

In this instance, the clock used to 'time' the operation of the Millennium's PWM output is also used by the CD transport itself, harmonising the flow of data through all stages of the player and amplifier. With the conventional CD transport and digital amp connection, the clock is 'lost' across the digital link, and must be regenerated

in the amp. The clocks in the CD transport and amp are no longer truly synchronised, and an increase in jitter is almost inevitable. Ironically, the jitter spectrum obtained using a superior, non-locked (Theta) transport is pretty close to that of the cheaper NAD with its Clock-Gate mod...

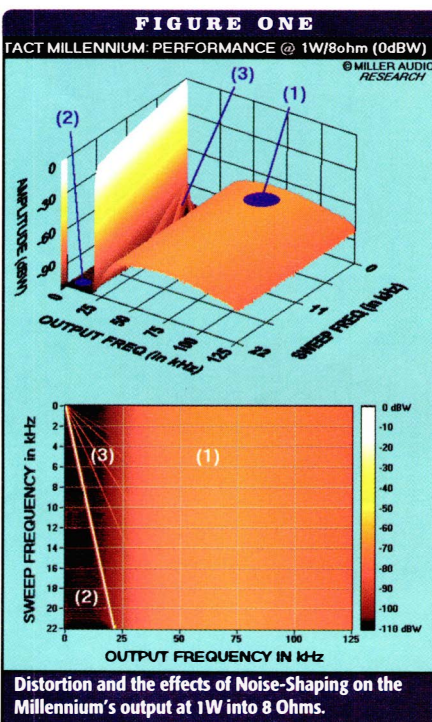
I must mention TACT's super-slick volume control. From 3.7dB to 62dB it makes use of the digital attenuator that's part-and-parcel of Pacific Microsonic's PMD-100 digital filter. From 62dB to 89dB it controls the DC (power supply) voltage available to its PWM output stage. But the final 11dB represents digital gain and can, depending on the peak level represented by the incoming digital data, cause the amp to crash into high distortion.

Believe it or not, TACT was obliged to introduce this extra gain because various dealers were unsettled by the fact that the volume control could be advanced to full without creating distorted sound.

If your source material has peaks in the top 10dB (0dBfs to -10dBfs) of the digital range and you set the amp's volume to full, you too can experience the sort of clipping TACT sought to avoid in the first place. Bonkers. My advice? Never advance the volume beyond 89dB – the Millennium will never clip and you'll also be less likely to distress your speakers.

#### SOUND

In line with my earlier reviews, thanks must go to the diligent listening panel: Roger Batchelor (Denon), Kevin





# Our starter system



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# SME

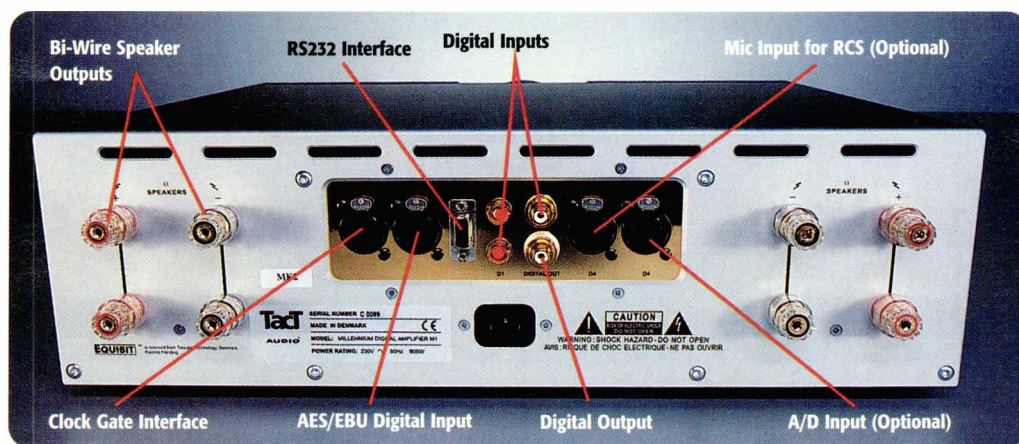
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Edwards (Talk Electronics) and Mark Hockey (Kenwood). The system remains equally consistent: Theta Data Basic II and NAD 514 CD transports (equipped with Clock-Gate), Audio Note EII and REL Stentor II loudspeakers.

The key to understanding the 'sound' of the Millennium is first to appreciate that it handles music as *data* to the last possible moment. This data might directly represent the voltage of the original analogue signal, but it still results in a performance fundamentally different from that of a conventional analogue amp.

The Millennium's music is etched and spontaneous, and with digital (DDD) recordings there's no lead-in hiss by way of a clue. But there's also a stark and occasionally unsympathetic reality about its music that comes as a shock to first-time listeners. Notes rise and fall into a vacuum of silence filled only by the ambience of the venue captured in the recording.

Where music is essentially 'electronic', the Millennium can sound especially startling, and arguably closer to what the artist had in mind.

Nevertheless, when a new technology or tweak sounds 'different', opinions will inevitably be polarised, just as a core of enthusiasts weaned on decades of vinyl have never got to grips with the 'alternative' sound of CD. Here, familiar analogue colorations – the harmonic distortion and noise – of amplifiers used for similar decades in all hi-fi systems are very different from the quantisation distortion(s) and requantisation noise that go hand-in-hand with an all-digital product like the Millennium.

Not surprisingly, the quality

of the digital source is very audible through this amp. In our test, a superior Theta Data Basic II transport brought extra life and attack into percussion, and a firmer hand to bass lines.

The two acoustic guitars from Cassandra Wilson's *Right Here, Right Now* (Travelling Miles, Blue Note, 7243-8-541232-5) have a realistic 'jangly' quality that seemed muted with our budget NAD 514 transport, but this sophisticated recording sounds

**"The Millennium's music is etched and spontaneous, and with digital (DDD) recordings there's no lead-in hiss by way of a clue. But there's also a stark and occasionally unsympathetic reality about it."**

appropriately clean, clear and superbly delineated with the Theta in the driving seat. Subtle but vital details, including the marimba in the background percussion, were more clearly defined without being spotlighted.

Picking out an individual performer within the mix was easy with the Theta/Millennium combination – no stress, no bother, no musical confusion. By contrast, the standard NAD transport tended to squash the overall dynamic presentation, draining some life from the performance and altering the "relative importance of different performers".

Engaging TACT's proprietary Clock Gate connection between the NAD transport and Mk II markedly improved the projection of vocalists, while

the soundstage became bolder in its audible 'construction'.

We replayed some of our all-time favourite CDs, including Christy Moore's *Reel in the Flickering Light* and Lesley Garrett's *Laughing Song*. These vocals were flatter and simply less interesting without the Clock Gate, their natural vibrancy diminishing along with a shrinking of dynamics. Reinstating the Clock Gate opened up the soundstage, allowing the vocals to project with improved expression.

"We've moved back onto the balcony from outside the back door," noted one listener. Nevertheless, I can't imagine many enthusiasts shelling out £7,000 for a digital amp then driving it from a £200 CD transport, clock-locked or not.

In theory, locking the clock transport to the DAC should unify the performance of different host transports, but there's still the issue of circulating interference through the connecting cable. This clouds the advantage the clock-locked NAD might have over the free-running Theta, which remains the superior transport in terms of its basic digital 'building blocks' (mechanism, decoder and buffered digital output).

The Theta elicited a slightly harder and more clinical sound from Lesley Garrett, but the backing orchestra simply 'moved with the music' in a more believable fashion.

So there remain pros and cons to this, theoretically, ideal solution. The Theta still had the edge in its resolution of subtle detail, whereas the clock-locked NAD was less precise, but benefited from a bigger, if not necessarily much louder, musical projection.

## CONCLUSION

Uniquely, *Hi-Fi Choice* has followed the conception and commercial development of this fascinating product, seeing the technology steadily improve while the price, sadly, has slowly escalated. For the future, not only can we expect products from other licensees of the technology, but TACT itself plans a £3,500 version with cheaper casework and power supplies, alongside a six-channel home cinema amplifier for about £6,000 – and all by the turn of the century.

That said, I must urge some caution when recommending you audition this radical amp. Judging something so fundamentally new is tricky, when we've all been pre-conditioned by equipment of a different type over so many years. If our entire experience of reproduced music had been with CD transports and digital amps, and we were suddenly exposed to a vinyl front-end, phono stage and analogue power amplifier, then this, too, would sound strangely alien.

Thus, opinions like "this sounds strangely dead" or "this sounds very dark but lacks atmosphere" must be viewed in the light of our experience or, rather, our prejudices.

So is the sound of the Millennium really dead, or is it simply a more accurate reflection of the recorded data?

Is a total lack of background noise disconcerting when conventional amps all – to some degree or another – add 'hiss'? And is this subliminal noise typically heard as 'ambience'?

Those who like the warm and cosy sound of the archetypal valve amp may well dislike this one. But those mindful of the future of digital audio will find the exciting possibilities of this innovative product impossible to ignore.

## VERDICT

SOUND	★★★★★
BUILD	★★★★☆
VALUE	★★★★☆
PRICE	£7,000.00

TACT's Millennium MkII represents a bold declaration on the future expansion of digital audio in the home.

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# 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 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



# for Value

**specialist dealer if you are searching for real hi-fi satisfaction**

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 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

**"If music is an essential ingredient in your daily diet, you owe it to yourself to become a member of the discriminating minority."**

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. The views and opinions expressed here are my own and not necessarily those of Hi-fi Choice.

Paul Messenger

*The specialist Dealers listed here are professional and enthusiastic.*

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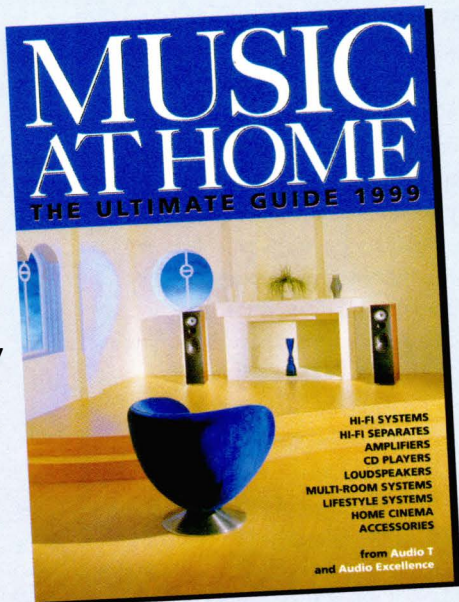
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# SUPER TEST

# CD PLAYERS

With DVD-A and SACD in the wings, is there still a place for the humble CD? **Tim Bown** listens to five top-of-the-range CD players to find out how good CD can really sound.

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Tube Technology Fulcrum	£2,800.00
YBA CD1α	£3,895.00

**T**hese are changing times. New 'CD-beating' formats like DVD-Audio and SACD are the talk of the town. It's hardly surprising: when was the last time we had a new music-carrier on the horizon with the genuine potential to sound better than anything we've heard before? It's like buses – you hang around for ages and then two come along at once...

But whither CD amid all this kerfuffle? Is the writing on the wall for the 16-bit/44.1kHz format that's been the cornerstone of hi-fi these past 15 years? Judging by our letters bag, there are plenty of punters willing to invest in new digital sources, but they're unsure whether to stick with CD or wait for one of the new formats. Verily, we say unto you – CD! It lives!

Our view on the matter is plain. CD players are still at the top of the agenda, even for someone



machines in all, priced from a little under £2,000 to almost £4,000. Each originates from a different country with significant hi-fi heritage, and each represents the pinnacle of its manufacturer's range.

**“CD technology has had nearly two decades of development, and today's best players take digital sound to new heights, all from the humble 16-bit/44.1kHz CD.”**

planning to spend thousands of pounds. We'll tell you why.

First, neither DVD-Audio nor SACD is yet with us. The first wave of hardware is imminent, but it's uncertain how the players will perform and how comprehensive the software support will be. And if a decent amount of software *is* forthcoming, will it boast high-resolution two-channel sound? Or will most discs employ a lower-resolution multi-channel specification? The latter seems more likely – its added value is easier to sell to the consumer.

On the other hand, CD has been the primary music carrier for

years, and is likely to remain that way well into the next decade. Most consumers are perfectly happy with the level of two-channel stereo sound it provides, and production won't cease overnight, if at all.

So, given that we'll continue buying the vast majority of our music on CD for the foreseeable future, how will these 'next generation' disc players perform when you load one up? It's impossible to tell for sure, but you can bet the early machines won't necessarily match a top-quality dedicated CD player, when replaying compact discs.

CD technology has had nearly two decades of development, and today's best players take digital sound to superb heights, all from the humble 16-bit/44.1kHz disc. Meanwhile, both DVD-Audio and SACD have long, uncertain roads to travel, and their relevance to audiophiles and the mass market is still to be established.

The group test which follows is intended to show just how far CD players have come. There are five

Together, they show the many approaches designers can take to make a high-end player, with customised DACs, valves in the output stage and all manner of tweaking under the lid. But most of all, they show just how much sound can be squeezed from the humble, common-or-garden CD.

### GLOSSARY

**DAC:** The digital to analogue converter transforms the digital music data off disc into an analogue waveform. They come in various guises: multi-bit, Delta-Sigma, the one-bit or Bitstream type, and numerous variations.

**CD TRANSPORT:** The CD transport (or disc drive) reads the digitally encoded information from a CD and sends it to the DAC for conversion to analogue. All integrated CD players incorporate both a transport and a DAC, but some two box designs split them into separate units.

**DIGITAL OUTPUT:** Most CD players (and all separate CD transports) incorporate a digital output that provides access to the digital datastream via the 'S/PDIF' interface. Typical uses include the hook-up of an external DAC or digital recorder.

**FILTER:** Intrinsic to digital audio is the extensive use of filters, both analogue and digital. These are often very sophisticated designs, and probably have as much to do with the 'personality' of a CD player's sound as any other factor.

**JITTER:** Jitter describes any uncertainty in the timing of digital signals en route through the CD player. This varies from one machine to another, with high values resulting in harshness, loss of resolution and the like. State of the art is below 150psec, but figures worse than 1000psec are not uncommon.

### HINTS & TIPS

Extracting the best from your CD player is, to a large extent, a matter of common sense. CD players don't like to be run from cold, so don't expect the best sound straight away, unless your player is one of a growing number with a standby feature.

Try to avoid stacking the player on top of another hi-fi component, especially if it generates copious heat, but if you must, try to arrange some isolation between the layers.

Site your player on a dedicated hi-fi support for best results, and the addition of some isolating feet – either the cone or Sorbothane variety – can pay surprising dividends. High-end players often benefit from a degree of 'tweaking' – check out the manual for the manufacturer's advice.

### HOW THE TESTS WERE DONE

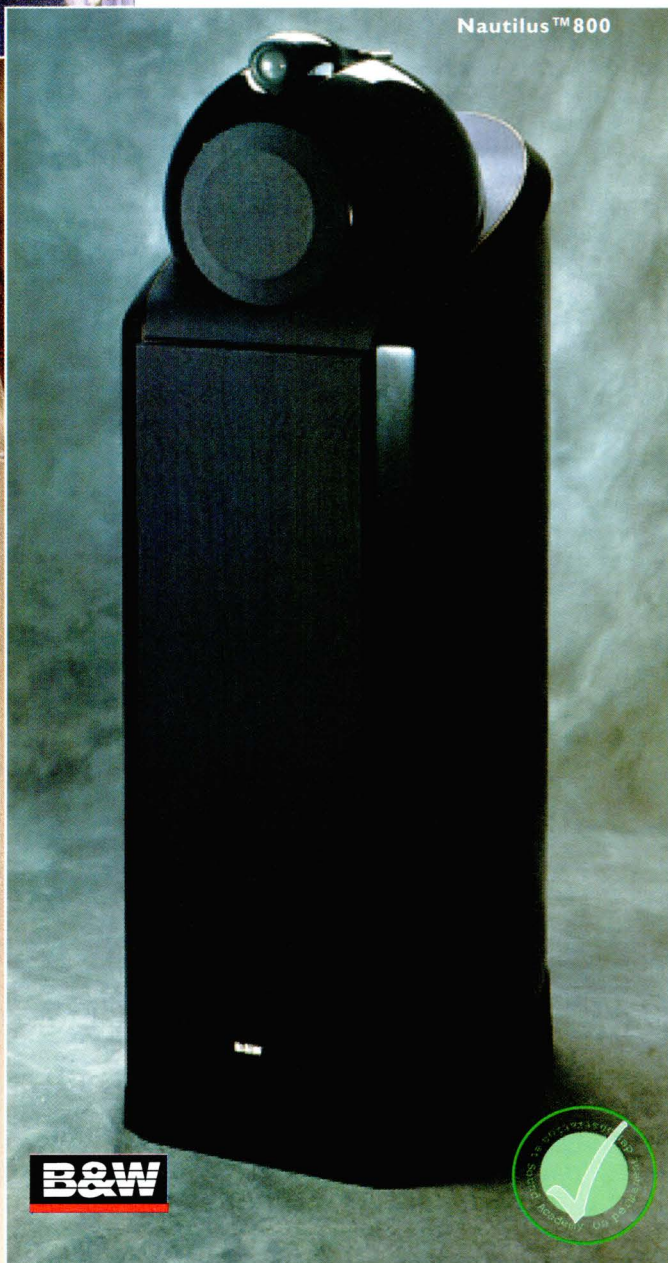
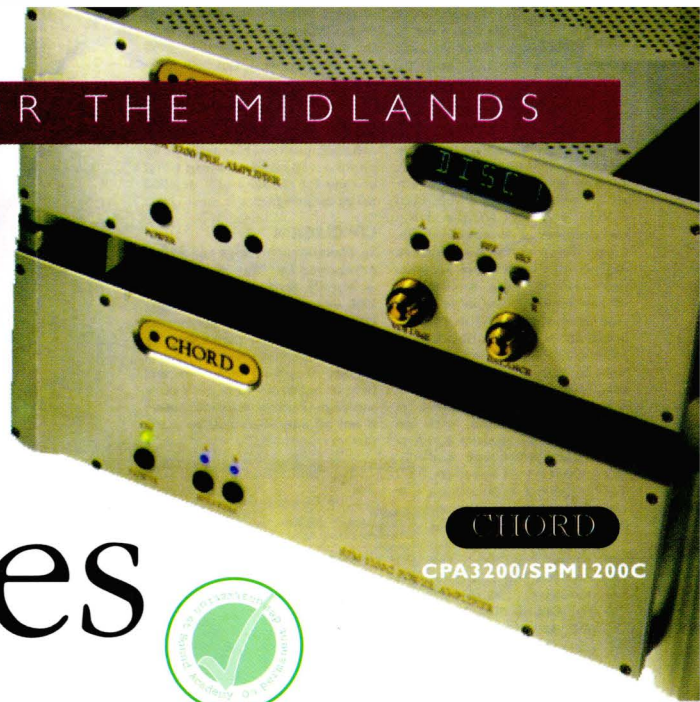
**T**he primary test system consisted of a Plinius 16 preamp and SA-250 power amp with Wilson benesch A.C.T. 2 speakers. A secondary system made up of a Musical Fidelity A1001 amplifier and Mordaunt-Short Performance 860 speakers was used for comparison, with Nordost Red Dawn cables throughout. Two additional players were slipped into the review for reference purposes – the Wadia 830 and Advantage CD15.

The reviewing process consisted of both intensive A/B comparison testing and more relaxed listening with a wide variety of discs, including the following: Brahms – *Symphony No.2*; Chemical Brothers – *Surrender*; The Church – *Hologram of Bahl*; Fauré – *Requiem*; Fun Lovin' Criminals – *Come Find Yourself*; Lauryn Hill – *The Miseducation of...*; Lambchop – *How I Quit Smoking*; Laurie Lieberman – *Home of Whispers*; Thievery Corporation – *DJ Kicks*; plus many others enjoyed during the reviewing period.



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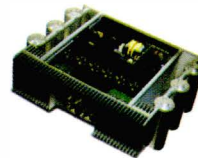


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# BALANCED AUDIO TECHNOLOGY VK-D5



**B**alanced Audio Technology is a name few UK buyers will find familiar; if you prefer quirky abbreviations, you can call it BAT. The brand, founded in Delaware, USA, in 1995, has been brought to these shores by Tunbridge Wells-based distributor Zentek Music. Its primary *raison d'être* is high-end amplification, with valve-based preamps a speciality, all designed by Russian-born engineer Victor Khomenko.

So much for the background. Where does this CD player fit into BAT's grand scheme? The £3,995 VK-D5 is the company's sole disc-spinning product thus far, and therefore qualifies as top-of-the-range by default.

Not surprisingly, given the company's name and overriding philosophy, its design is balanced throughout both digital and analogue domains; equally predictable is the inclusion of some serious valves, visible through the player's top and side grilles. But let's start at the top.

Khomenko's goal for the VK-D5 was to "establish a new benchmark in CD player performance", the key to which was deemed to be simple, elegant engineering. He chose a Philips transport synchronised to a single master clock by a proprietary servo board, with digital filtering courtesy of Pacific Microsonic's popular HDCD compatible PMD 100. Four top-notch Burr-Brown PCM-63K DACs are also employed, two for each channel.

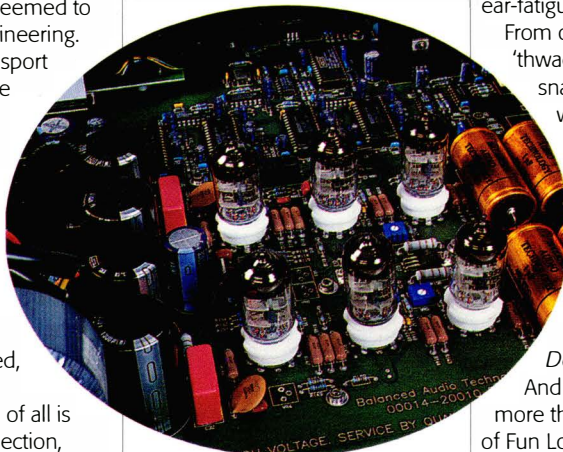
But most impressive of all is the player's analogue section, which features BAT's own reconstructive filtering and discreet components for current-to-voltage

conversion, including top quality Vishay bulk foil resistors. A balanced, genuinely high-current output stage sports six '6922' triode valves, and allegedly benefits from its maker's trademarked 'Unistage' circuit topology to deliver "ten times as much

**"This isn't the most aesthetically pleasing player at about £4,000, but there's no arguing with the quality of the engineering."**

current as simple buffered outputs found in competing designs". Essentially, Unistage is all about short and direct signal paths without buffers and op-amps cluttering the way.

It's not the most aesthetically pleasing player at about £4,000 – the general look and feel are a little disappointing – but there's no arguing with the quality of the



◊ Six '6922' triode valves contribute to the BAT's big and engaging sound.

engineering. Around the back there's a choice of balanced XLR and unbalanced RCA sockets for amp hook-up, together with a solitary BNC-type digital output.

### SOUND QUALITY

Those who aren't compelled towards a valve-driven way of life may harbour the following notion: a CD player with such substantial valve influence impressed on its circuits is bound to sound soft and unexciting, in a pipe 'n' slippers kind of way. If you hold such preconceptions, hear the VK-D5 and stand corrected. This is a player with guts, spirit and not a little "oomph" – as one casual listener put it: "Woah! There's a party going on inside *this* baby!"

First impressions are of a big and beefy sound, anchored by bass that's solid, well extended and pleasingly tactile in quality. Bandwidth is impressive, the mid-to-treble region is smooth yet conveys a decent sense of attack, and confident dynamics heighten the music's impact. The net effect grasps and holds the listener's interest without a hint of ear-fatiguing strain.

From orchestral swells to the 'thwack' of kick drum and snare, you get a full and wholesome view of music's emotive force.

On test, it was perhaps the most enjoyable of this group of five, serving swift justice to the meaty projectile bass and deeply swinging groove of Lauryn Hill's *Doo Wop (That Thing)*.

And its ability to rock was more than ably proved by a spot of Fun Lovin' Criminals' *Scooby Snacks*, the rhythm and guitar strutting forth with suitably bold swagger. Very tasty.

But though such sonic traits are worth much – maybe even this player's asking price – compare its performance with the best of its peers and some cracks begin to show. Ultimately, it falls short of the class offered by its significant competitors in this group: it can't deliver the precision and control of the Marantz, or the delicacy of the YBA. An A/B comparison between the BAT and YBA using Fauré's *Requiem* proved very interesting, the former's full-scale sound losing out somewhat to the latter's liquid flow.

### CONCLUSION

The VK-D5 doesn't suffer from an overt lack of detail, but does miss a degree of space and subtlety, leading to a slightly heavy-handed impression with some material.

That said, it's thoughtfully designed, well built and able to conjure a seriously satisfying musical experience. It just falls short of that magic quality required to earn formal Recommendation at the price. **TB**

### VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** **£3,995.00**

■ An excellent valve-infused player with a big and engaging sound, enjoyably musical though lacking a little precision and subtlety.

#### ■ FIVE YEAR GUARANTEE

☒ Zentek Music, Lizanne House, Mount Sion, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN11 1UE

### FEATURES

■ DAC type: 20-bit Burr-Brown

■ Analogue outputs:

XLR (balanced); RCA (unbalanced)

■ Digital output: coaxial (BNC)



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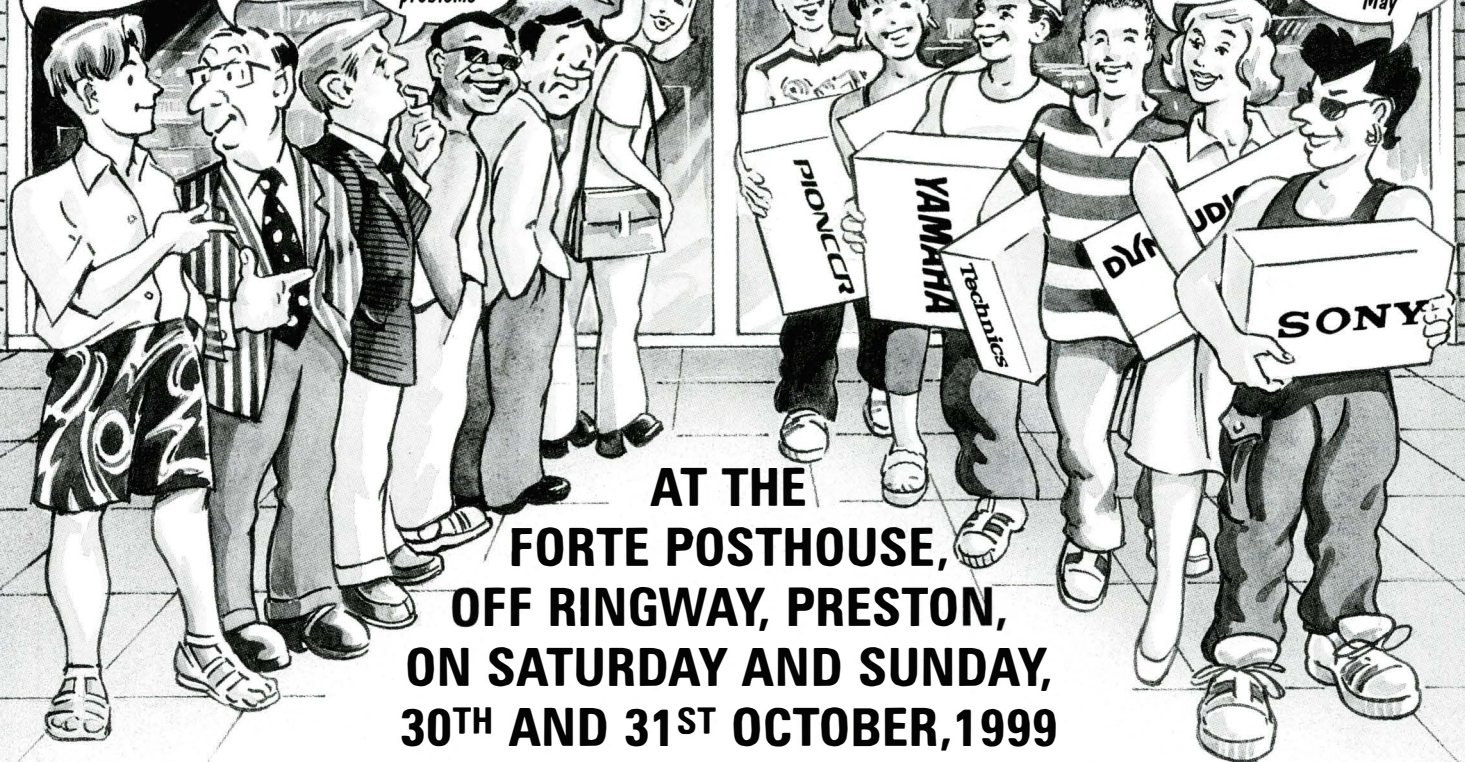
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# COPLAND CDA 289



**H**ot from Scandinavia comes Copland's CDA 289, a new range-topping player of kingly size and build. At £1,898, it's this group's least costly player by some margin, yet its aesthetic prowess matches the best of them. Its innards are encased in steel and the fascia formed from ice-cool alloy plate, through which slides a centrally-located CD drawer, flanked by a pair of crafted alloy knobs to access the player's basic functions.

Opinion is bound to be split, but if you want a player that makes a statement, something with real kit-rack presence, this is as distinctive as they come. Anyone familiar with the CDA 289's predecessor is unlikely to raise an eyebrow – the CDA 288 was outwardly very similar. However, some rather important changes have been made under the lid.

The older player sported TEAC's excellent VRDS 7 mechanism, but that's now discontinued and Copland has opted for a Sony unit. No problem, it says: the new mechanism is well specified, with sprung isolation, powerful error correction and signal buffering to protect the audio information before it reaches the decoding board.

What's more, this change has apparently allowed Copland to work on the player's jitter performance, culminating in a custom-built reference master clock to which the mechanism is slaved. This clock is located on the digital-to-analogue circuit board, its

**“Opinion is bound to be split, but if you want a player that makes a statement, something with real kit-rack presence, this is as distinctive as they come.”**

job to optimise accuracy and allow a cleaner conveyance of audio information.

Digital filtering is performed by Pacific Microsonics' eight-times oversampling PMD 100, a fine HDCD-compatible filter also used in the player's predecessor. This is augmented by an additional filter of Copland's own making, doubling the data rate to 16 times the sampling frequency. This rate is shared between two 20-bit

Burr-Brown DACs per channel, allegedly reducing error and improving the signal-to-noise ratio.

Build quality is excellent throughout, extending from the quality of external fit and finish to the comprehensive engineering within. For

instance, separate isolated power supplies are used for digital and analogue circuits, with an additional nine regulated secondary supplies, so reducing mutual interference. Socketry is sparse, however, with just a pair of RCA analogue outputs and an on/off switchable coaxial digital output protruding from the rear.

### SOUND QUALITY

When we last tested the CDA 288 following a few internal tweaks, we weren't mightily impressed. "A gentle giant of a player that errs in favour of pastel shades instead of

bold daubs of colour," said we, describing a certain vagueness and insipidness about its sound. In its new incarnation, however, things seem to have changed for the better – there's still a hint of vagueness about the way it tackles music, but insipid it truly ain't.

Although valves aren't involved in its construction, there's more than a little 'valviness' inherent in its performance – hardly a surprise when you consider the maker's valve amp heritage. The sound is weighty and substantial, endowed with bandwidth and contrast many audiophiles would pay a lot more for. True, attack is rather soft, and it lacks the pace of some thoroughbreds, but the overall impression is big and enveloping.

The CDA 289 is a player best suited to recordings of acoustic instruments. Of the discs played during testing, the likes of Laurie Lieberman, Lambchop and the lighter side of Morcheeba fared best. It's adept at placing a convincing vocal centre-stage, and producing a life-size (or larger) impression of a starkly-scored arrangement – strong, vibrant and never harsh. At best it's almost intoxicating.

But spin faster-paced material or more complex arrangements and the Copland's weaknesses become more apparent. It lacks the precision to separate busy instrumental threads, tending to concentrate on the musical whole instead of its constituent parts.

It's an enjoyable macro view, but at the expense of some micro-analysis. Instrumental texture is not as clear as it might be at this level of CD replay, and soundstaging lacks the sense of space and fine detail apparent with the best in this test (though it is half the price of the most costly contenders). Equally, although it can rock when called upon to do so, don't expect to be riveted by razor-sharp attack – it's simply not that kind of player.

### CONCLUSION

The CDA 289 is distinctive to both eyes and ears. Beautifully built, it offers a particular style of music making that'll draw as many fans as it does detractors.

If £2,000 is the full extent of your budget, and you place musicality before analysis in the order of all things hi-fi, you should certainly give this engaging player a long, hard listen. **TB**



VERDICT	
<b>SOUND</b>	★★★★☆
<b>BUILD</b>	★★★★★
<b>VALUE</b>	★★★★☆
<b>PRICE</b>	<b>£1,898.00</b>
<p><b>Distinctive looks and sound will divide listeners. Not the most informative player at the price, it's nonetheless musically enjoyable and came very close to being Recommended here.</b></p> <p>■ <b>TWO YEAR GUARANTEE</b></p> <p>✉ Absolute Sounds, 58 Durham Road, London SW20 0DE ☎ (0181) 971 3909</p>	
FEATURES	
<p>■ DAC type: 20-bit Burr-Brown</p> <p>■ Analogue output: RCA</p> <p>■ Digital output: coaxial (RCA)</p>	



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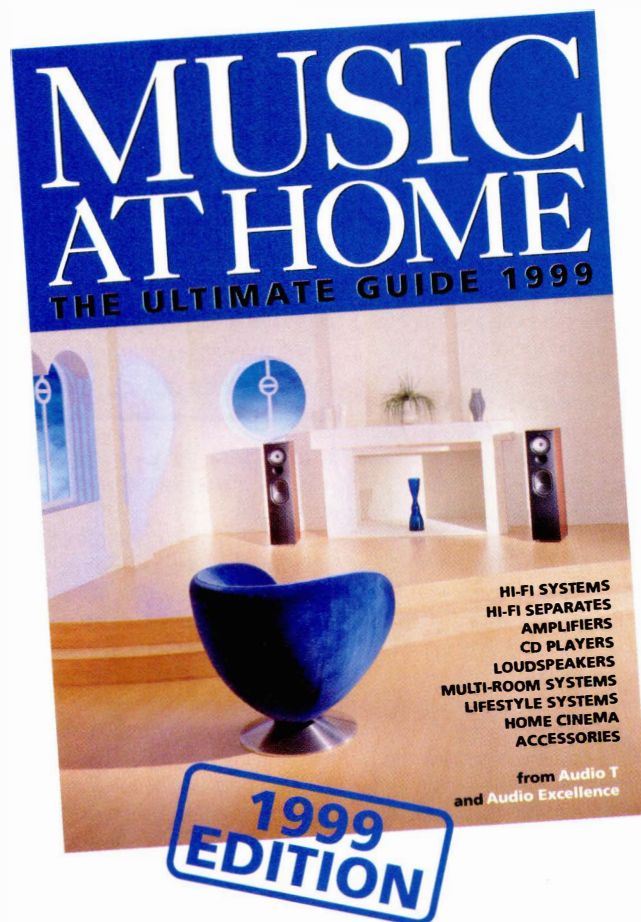
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# MARANTZ CD-7



**M**arantz's lofty market position in CD separates it as a source of envy for many manufacturers. It's not just the raw sales that Philips' daughter company generates – it's the way its influence spreads across the UK market, from budget machines to true high-enders and everything else in between.

Fan or not, any audiophile with exacting taste would do well to cock an ear in the direction of the £3,500 CD-7. This recently introduced behemoth represents the pinnacle of Marantz's Reference range, a flagship player bristling with serious technology as well as champagne good-looks.

Build quality is exemplary, fortified by a copper-plated diecast chassis which makes a hefty contribution to the unit's 16kg weight. Inside, copper shielding protects the most susceptible parts of the signal path from mechanical and electro-magnetic radiation – all part of the thorough, heavyweight construction.

Not surprisingly, the transport mechanism is from Philips, a CDM12 'Industrial' – that is, a CDM12 modified to include sprung isolation and an inert metal chassis to protect CD tracking from vibration. Much more of a surprise

**Build quality is exemplary, fortified by a copper-plated diecast chassis.**



is the use of multi-bit DAC technology, replacing the newer bitstream process adopted by the company years ago.

But perhaps we shouldn't be surprised. The word from Marantz is that design guru Ken Ishiwata always planned to return to multi-bit for this special high-end project. Sitting at this player's core, therefore, are two multi-bit Double Crown DACs (16-bit devices, one per channel), which it claims give exceptionally linear performance.

**“Bass is weighty and determined, yet without an ounce of flab, and the clarity with which it delivers high frequency detail is equally impressive.”**

Marantz has also paid attention to the digital filtering process, developing its own technology via Digital Signal Processing to create the so-called 'Linear Music Filter' (LMF). Poor filtering of spurious noise can badly hamper multi-bit performance, causing 'ringing' distortions that blur and smear sound. The LMF, says Marantz, is much more precise than a standard filter, reducing these distortions and allowing music to

retain its dynamic edge.

And there's more: this new filter is also user-adjustable, with three settings that provide a degree of sonic tailoring. The effect slightly modifies weight, attack and the like, but don't dwell on this too long – it'll only be a distraction.

Elsewhere inside the player's workings, IC

op-amps are eschewed in favour of discrete components for current-to-voltage conversion, while analogue, digital, control and power supply blocks are independent, each fed by a stabilised power supply.

There are plenty of input/output options too: balanced (XLR) and unbalanced (RCA) analogue outputs, one optical and two coaxial digital outputs, and a set of three digital inputs (two coaxial and one optical) so you can use the DAC with other digital sources.

### SOUND QUALITY

In my experience, Marantz CD players tend to be the benchmark by which rivals are judged – rightly or wrongly. Some models are clearly impressive at their price points, like the £400 CD-6311 KI-Signature, while others sharply divide opinion.

Here, however, is a Marantz machine of undoubted stature – the CD-7 is a disc-spinning *tour de force* with a performance that lives up to its prestigious flagship status.

Its sound is all about control, precision and resolution, particularly at the frequency extremes. The bass is the best controlled of the group – weighty and determined, yet without an ounce of flab – and the clarity with which it delivers high frequency detail is equally impressive. It's incisive, detailed and confidently dynamic, showing its 'class' from the moment the music starts.

But I have to admit, as listening progressed there were times I wasn't so sure. It was undoubtedly good, but was it really entertaining me like the BAT and YBA? On occasions it seemed a touch cold and hard, notably with poorer recordings, and I missed some of the seductive qualities these other players are able to deliver. But by

the end of the session I was in no doubt – the CD-7 may present a different character, but its attributes are equally valid.

From Laury Hill to Lamb Chop and on to Brahms, this player's crisp, articulate delivery seemed to delve into the recording, pluck out every last bit of musical information and present it in a thoroughly coherent manner.

Its sense of drama is impeccable, even at low volumes, imbued with pace and definition that leaves the listener feeling firmly in the picture. And that feeling is heightened further by superb three dimensional images with well-recorded discs. If it sounds flat or ruthless, blame the recording, not the player.

### CONCLUSION

The CD-7 is a highly impressive player both inside and out. Its sound is superbly controlled and precise, but not at the expense of serious musical drama.

If you're in the market for a CD player at this price point, you simply must audition it. **TB**

### VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £3,500.00

**A beautifully engineered player, with a performance both precise and dramatic.**

**TWO YEAR GUARANTEE**

Marantz (UK), Kingsbridge House, Padbury Oaks, 575-583 Bath Road, Longford, Middlesex UB7 0EH

(01753) 680868

### FEATURES

■ DAC type: 2 x 16-bit Double Crown

■ Analogue outputs: balanced (XLR); unbalanced (RCA)

■ Digital outputs: 1 x opt.; 2 x coaxial (RCA)



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Electra CC 30

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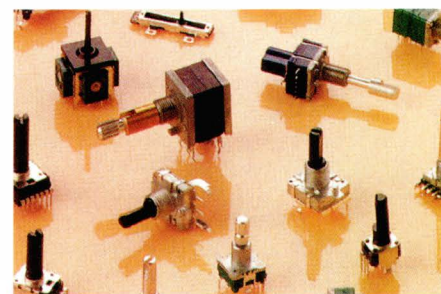
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# TUBE TECHNOLOGY Fulcrum

Surrey's Tube Technology is not unusual in this group. Like BAT and Copland, its heritage lies in the amplifier department, and valve amps in particular. Beautiful designs such as the Unisic and Synergy have earned the company a considerable reputation, and the time is now deemed right to add digital source components to the mix. First came the £1,300 Fusion integrated CD player, swiftly followed by this two-box Fulcrum, at a total cost of £2,800.

It's not the only two-box player in this group, but it is the sole contender to take the traditional route of separate transport and DAC. Once revered as the ultimate path to CD fulfilment, this technique has fallen from grace as the jitter debate intensified. Many designers now believe it's best to integrate both in one box, perhaps with external power supplies (see YBA), but Tube Technology obviously disagrees. "It's a question of flexibility," says Zia Farugi, the firm's head honcho.

The Fulcrum combo is nothing if not different. The DAC's the most interesting bit, available separately for £1,850 and sporting a custom-built 24-bit converter using "low bit pulse array modulation", as opposed to typical bitstream or multi-bit technology. Essentially, this involves splitting the signal into a stream of pulses, each slightly different from the other. These contrasts contain subtle information that conventional DACs miss, or so the theory goes, and lower sensitivity to jitter is claimed too.

Like the BAT player, the Fulcrum DAC's output stage uses '6922' triode valves, in this case one per channel. The choice of digital filter is shared with several machines here – Pacific Microsonics' PMD-100, favoured more for its performance with standard CDs than for its HDCD-compatibility.

Less typical, but nonetheless welcome, is the thought given to forthcoming formats like 96 and

192kHz DVD-Audio and SACD, with a custom-designed filter to handle the two-channel aspects of these formats' specifications.

There's even a pair of LEDs ready to light should such signals ever grace the DAC's circuits, although its suitability for the task will remain a mystery until appropriate software emerges.

The 950 Fulcrum transport is moderately more conventional, featuring a laser assembly sourced from Sony. Tube Technology's notes make particular play of its

**"Tube Technology should be congratulated for applying some genuinely original thought to the Fulcrum's design. It's versatile."**

error correction abilities, and although there's nothing out of the ordinary about its specification in this regard, a couple of scratched discs used during review showed better than average resistance to damaged media.

Linked to this, and rather more unusual, is a little LED on the fascia labelled CDQL, which lets you know when theoretically audible reconstructive correction is being employed – the worse the state of the disc, the more the LED will flash.

● The two-box Fulcrum has a plethora of input/output options.

Another interesting addition is the transport's ability to lock on to a master clock signal generated by the DAC via an optical link (supplied), which should help to minimise potential jitter caused by the two-box approach. And although the transport unit doesn't share the DAC's compatibility with those forthcoming formats, its maker claims the necessary upgrade will become available.

When it comes to aesthetics, well, looks are always a matter of taste, but when you compare the two-box Fulcrum's rather fussy appearance, tinny casing and clunky drawer mechanism with its price peers, you have reasonable grounds for concern. There are no worries about input/output flexibility, though – the transport gives a choice of BNC, AES/EBU and optical digital connections, with five digital inputs (three BNC, one AES/EBU and one optical) on the DAC, plus RCA analogue outs and an optical digital output.

Comprehensive enough?

## SOUND QUALITY

The first thing to notice about the Fulcrum's sound is its texture. It caresses the music and percolates a soothing flow of sound towards your ears, not at all 'digital' in character, and distinct from most CD players. Its performance is rather like a great, easy-flowing river – the listener is presented with an attractively musical but rather diffuse wash of sound. It's eminently easy on the ear, but where's the raging torrent when you really need it?

Certainly, there's much to enjoy in the way the Fulcrum presents music in all its many guises.

Orchestras ebb and flow, vocals are graceful, and even bad production jobs sound cohesive and listenable. As a friend who entered the listening room put it: "That

sounds really nice." But at a price just shy of £3,000, is "nice" really what it takes?

Compared to the best players in this group, the answer has to be no. It doesn't grip like the BAT, lacks the precision of the Marantz and misses the majesty of the YBA. On one hand it's relaxing, fairly detailed and dynamically capable. On the other the bass is somewhat soft, the treble a little papery and the overall effect lacks bite and separation.

It's certainly not a bad player. With careful matching to a lively amp and speakers, those who hate sharp, edgy 'digital' sound may find it the perfect antidote. But it lacks the all-round clout to out-punch its peers here.

## CONCLUSION

Tube Technology should be congratulated for applying some genuinely original thought to the Fulcrum's design. It's versatile, and its value may increase if two-channel DVD-Audio and SACD has the impact its maker is anticipating. But as a CD player, its sound is behind the best. **TB**

## VERDICT

SOUND	★★★★☆
BUILD	★★★☆☆
VALUE	★★★★☆
PRICE	£2,800.00

There's some real ingenuity under the lid, but CD replay lacks some lustre at the price. It's a genuine smoothie, ideal for the musically laid-back.

### TWO YEAR GUARANTEE

✉ Tube Technology, Technology House, Station Road, Addlestone, Surrey KT15 2PH  
☎ (01932) 821111

## FEATURES

- DAC type: 24-bit custom
- Analogue output: RCA
- Digital outputs: transport – BNC, AES/EBU, optical; DAC – optical





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# YBA CD1 $\alpha$



The French make some fine CD players. In the past, models from Audiomeca, Helios, Micromega *et al* have graced our ears, some boasting world-beating sonics. Now there's another to add to the list: YBA's superb CD1 $\alpha$ .

The force behind the company is Yves-Bernard André, a hi-fi nut if ever there was one. He splits his time between lecturing on laser technology at the *Polytech de Paris*, and pushing sound to its theoretical limits via his own brand of components, allegedly listening to every unit personally before it leaves the plant. Crazy? Perhaps. Talented? Exceptionally.

The £3,895 CD1 $\alpha$  is top of a three-strong range of high-end YBA CD players, each upgradeable from the last via improvements to the power supplies. Let me explain. First, there's the CD3, a single-box player with power supplies built-in. Then comes the CD2 – the same integrated player with an extra 400 VA offboard power supply dedicated to the analogue part of the player. Finally there's the CD1 $\alpha$ , taking things a step further with a larger 800 VA offboard supply.

The units are connected by a cord made from thick, high purity copper conductors, and both are powered from the mains via cables of the same construction.

The player is a top-loader, its mechanism accessed through a manually-operated sliding door. The chassis is made from steel alloy and supported by three small feet – two bare and the other

**Yves-Bernard André is said to listen to every unit before it leaves his plant.**

felt-covered for sonic reasons – and a magnetic puck is supplied to stabilise discs as they spin. Further details are sketchy; YBA is rather tight-lipped about the player's somewhat unusual innards, presumably because of its high content of proprietary parts.

We know the mechanism is partly TEAC-derived, and its triple-lens laser is mounted on a belt-driven sled. We've also found out that its dual 18-bit DACs are of YBA's own making, and that simplicity is paramount, right down to the omission of a filter on the player's output. Beyond that

**“Its performance is magnificently airy and transparent, endowed with a ‘listen-through’ quality that sparks instant admiration.”**

there's not much to be said – save for one thing: the Blue Laser, YBA's not-so-secret weapon.

This is something the firm is happy to publicise: not actually a laser, but a blue LED that rides alongside the standard red beam as it reads the CD.

It bathes the underside of the disc in blue light, creating a random ‘noise’ that effectively amplifies very small signals through a phenomenon known as ‘stochastic resonance’. In theory, it permits the recovery of data without sufficient energy to turn a 0 to a 1 or vice-versa. More information, more ambience, more music, or so the story goes.

**YBA is rather tight-lipped about the player's somewhat unusual innards.**

Aesthetically speaking, the CD1 $\alpha$ 's outward finish is a little idiosyncratic, and the small toggle switches that operate the player from its fascia are awkwardly placed, if pleasingly tactile.

Socketry is also limited, with just RCA analogue outs and a single coaxial digital output, but the provision of a tool kit containing screwdriver, lens cleaner and CD cleaning cloth is a lovely touch.

### SOUND QUALITY

In the manual, YBA asserts that this player sounds as analogue as a digital source can. Much of this is put down to the ‘Blue Laser’, allowing more efficient extraction of information and less reliance on error correction. It's hard to argue.

The CD1 $\alpha$  is not an obvious-sounding player. It doesn't hit you with incisive detail or cataclysmic dynamics, neither does it impose an overt character on the music it plays. It simply *plays*, and you, the listener, will fall in love.

Its performance is magnificently airy and transparent, endowed with a ‘listen-through’ quality that sparks instant admiration; what's more, like a good bottle of claret, your appreciation can only grow as time slips by. Music flows from its outputs with free-breathing ease, giving you what seems to be the full breadth of the composer's vision, the broad brush strokes as well as the fine detail within.

It's perhaps not the most inherently neutral of players, and neither is it endowed with especially deep bass or snappy attack – although a spot of The Chemical Brothers' *Surrender* showed plenty of momentum. It's just the way it presents music that draws you in, full of open space and natural ambience. An example: I've heard Fauré's *Requiem* sound superb on many



occasions, but never have I felt so much a part of it as through this player and the Plinius/Wilson benesch set-up used for this test.

The CD1 $\alpha$  isn't a perfect player, and alongside the likes of the BAT and Marantz it's possible to pick holes in aspects of its performance. But whatever criticisms one may lay at its door, its supreme mid-to-high frequency performance and wonderfully unsullied character add up to real musical magic.

### CONCLUSION

It may be a bit of an oddball, but the CD1 $\alpha$ 's superbly musical sound surely justifies its asking price. What's more, one can obtain this level of performance in stages, starting with the CD3 and building up when it suits. It is... ‘ow you say?... *magnifique*. **TB**

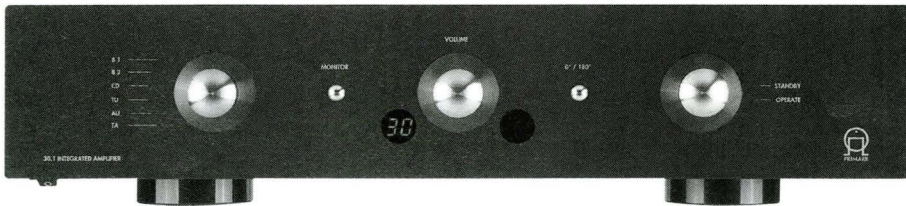
VERDICT	
SOUND	★★★★★
BUILD	★★★★☆
VALUE	★★★★☆
PRICE	£3,895.00
<p><b>A remarkably graceful sound flows forth from this highly musical player. One of the best we've heard below £5,000.</b></p> <p><b>TWO YEAR GUARANTEE</b></p> <p>Sound Image UK, 52 Milton Road, East Sheen, London SW14 8JR (0181) 255 6868</p>	
FEATURES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ DAC type: 18-bit proprietary</li> <li>■ Analogue output: RCA</li> <li>■ Digital output: coaxial (RCA)</li> </ul>	



YBA CD1 $\alpha$  Visit Our Website: www.hifichoice.co.uk



A 30.1 INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER

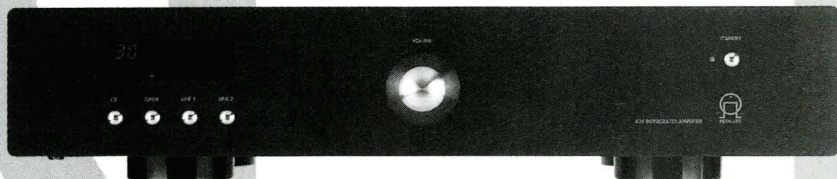


D 30.2 COMPACT DISC PLAYER



# Primare Systems a perfect partnership

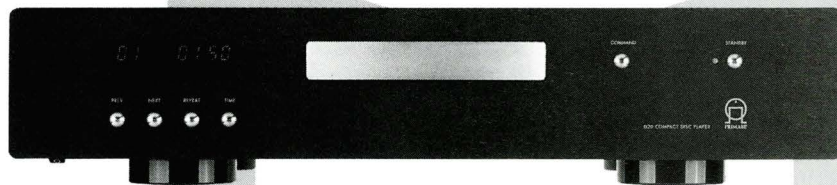
A 20 INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER



T 20 STEREO FM TUNER



D 20 COMPACT DISC PLAYER



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# CONCLUSIONS

# CD PLAYERS

They don't come cheap, but this group of high-end machines shows the quality on offer to those willing to invest heavily in a CD front-end. It clearly demonstrates the sonic heights to which 'lowly' 16-bit/44.1kHz compact discs can climb, given the right treatment, and should even give hardened digi-phobes pause for thought.

It's a little ironic that many manufacturers of high-end CD players declare their intention to make CD sound more like vinyl, in deference to that venerable format's exalted place in the heart of many an audiophile.

Judging from this group, some succeed to a quite astonishing

**"It's a little ironic that many manufacturers of high-end CD players declare their intention to make CD sound more like vinyl."**

degree – all could claim to mirror significant elements of vinyl's sound, with similarities in terms of dynamic range, musicality and so on. The YBA, in particular, has a remarkably 'vinyl-like' sound.

This group test covers a fairly wide price range, and results

should be considered with that in mind. For example, the Copland can't match the better players here – it simply doesn't have the subtlety and resolution – but then, it costs half as much as the others. Viewed against its strict price-point competition, it's well worth serious consideration.

Of the more costly machines, the BAT, the Marantz and the YBA all make strong cases for themselves. Each will have its own fans – it's not necessarily a case of 'better', just 'different' – but all in all it's the Marantz and YBA that impress the most, each for quite different reasons.

If I were making a purchasing decision, I'd be tempted to go for

the YBA's wonderful musicality, but the Marantz is a superb package, physically and sonically, and demands to be heard.

There are no Best Buys here – that title confers value-for-money, a concept largely irrelevant at these rarified prices. But if you want the best, the Marantz and YBA are highly Recommended.

Of course, if you want to spend yet more on a CD player, the likes of Krell, Wadia and Mark Levinson make players at five times the price (considerably more in ML's case). But for most audiophiles with an expanding collection of CDs, this group's leading contenders offer sonic thrills aplenty. And CD is here to stay.

## THE BEST IN THE TEST

**RECOMMENDED**  
**MARANTZ CD-7** £3,500.00

The new Marantz flagship is a technical *tour de force*, superbly built both inside and out. Its sound is precise, controlled and incisive, exacting by nature yet full of presence.



**RECOMMENDED**  
**YBA CD1α** £3,895.00

Some highly imaginative thinking has gone into this machine. It's a bit of an oddball alongside the sleek Marantz, but its 'player plus power supply' configuration contributes to its liquid musicality.

### CD PLAYER COMPARISON TABLE

MAKE	BAT	COPLAND	MARANTZ	TUBE TECHNOLOGY	YBA
MODEL	VK-D5	CDA 289	CD-7 <small>HI-FI CHOICE RECOMMENDED</small>	FULCRUM	CD1α <small>HI-FI CHOICE RECOMMENDED</small>
PRICE	£3,995.00	£1,898.00	£3,500.00	£2,800.00	£3,895.00
SOUND	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
BUILD	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
VALUE	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
GUARANTEE	5 years	2 years	2 years	2 years	2 years
DAC TYPE	20-bit Burr-Brown	20-bit Burr-Brown	2 x 16-bit Double Crown	24-bit custom	18-bit proprietary
ANALOGUE OUTPUTS	XLR (balanced) RCA (unbalanced)	RCA	XLR (balanced) RCA (unbalanced)	RCA	RCA
DIGITAL OUTPUTS	coaxial (BNC)	coaxial (RCA)	1 x optical; 2 x coaxial (RCA)	transport – BNC, AES/EBU, optical; DAC – optical	coaxial (RCA)



# SUPRA<sup>®</sup>



### Interconnects

- EFF-ISL analogue *"Best Buy"* - Hi-Fi Choice, 04/99
- EFF-IXLR balanced (XLR/XLR)
- EFF-ID co-ax digital (phono/phono)
- EFF-IV 75 ohm video (phono/phono)
- DAC-X analogue (phono/phono)
- DAC-XLR AES/EBU digital (XLR/XLR)
- ZAC Fibre optic (TosLink) **NEW for 1999**



### Speaker Cables

- Classic Series: 2.5mm, 4mm, 6mm (NEW) & Quatttro 4 (bi-wire),
- Ply Series: 2.0, 3.4 (low inductance) & 3.4S (shielded - NEW)
- LINC Series: 2.5mm and 4mm (shielded)



## AUDIOVECTOR



### Loudspeakers for 1999

#### Entry level C Series

- C1 bookshelf *"over-riding musicality"* - Hi-Fi News 05/99
- C2 floorstander *"Recommended"* - Hi-Fi Choice 05/99
- (finishes: Beechwood, Black Ash, Cherry & Rosewood)

#### And the UPGRADEABLE M Series

- M1 (from £759/pr - *"worth consideration"* - Hi-Fi World 08/98)
- M2 (from £1399/pr - *"Recommended"* - Hi-Fi Choice 07/98)
- M3 Signature (from £2499/pr) - Active upgrades (from £1495)
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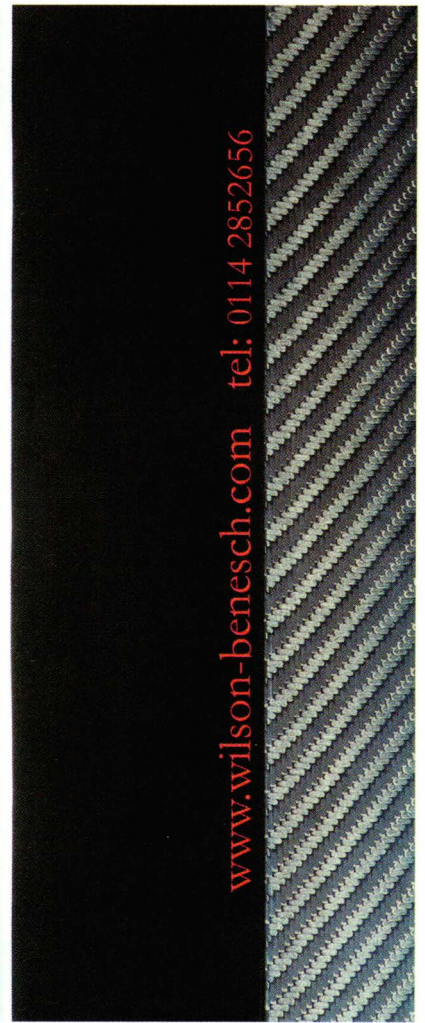
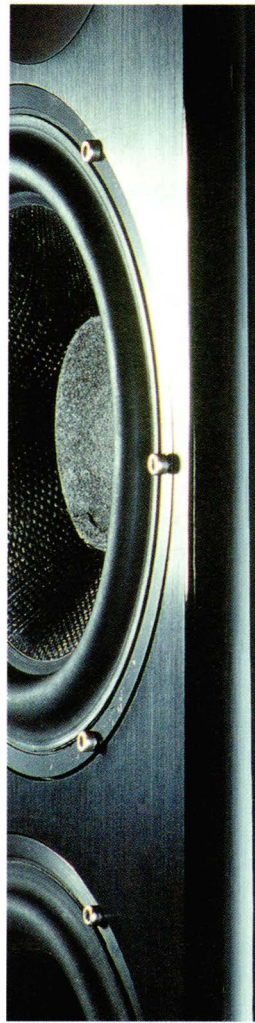
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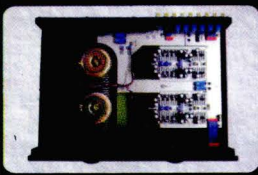
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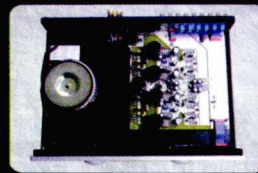
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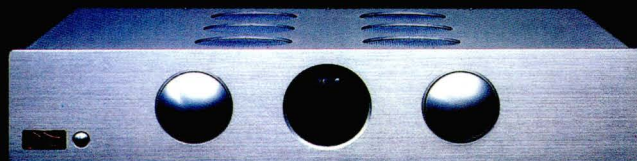
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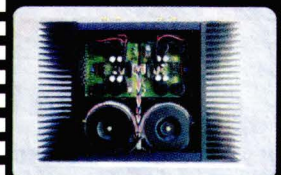
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# AUDIO ILLUSION

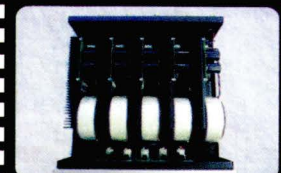
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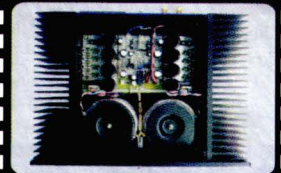
from £449....



K3 HE



K5



K1 HE





# SUPER TEST

# HEADPHONES

Lee Dunkley reviews ten pairs of corded headphones in search of the ultimate head music.

## THE CAST LIST

AKG K301	£69.95	p91
Audio Technica ATH-D40fs	£99.95	p91
Beyer DT 331	£65.00	p93
Grado SR60	£79.00	p93
Jecklin Float Two	£99.00	p95
JVC HA-D50	£45.00	p95
Koss TD/80	£49.99	p97
Sennheiser HD 570	£89.95	p97
Sony MDR-V700DJ	£100.00	p99
Vivanco SR 950	£79.99	p99

Forget about positioning yourself equidistant from your loudspeakers and adjusting your seating for that perfectly balanced central image. One device can guarantee you always have the hottest seat in the house, no matter where you sit.

Forget the tiresome battle with members of your household for quality listening time that doesn't clash with their favourite TV shows. Forget about having to keep the volume down to a barely audible level because the walls of your house are paper-thin and you don't fancy appearing in an edition of *Neighbours From Hell*.

The answer to all your hi-fi listening woes may well come in the form of a pair of small loudspeakers strapped to your head. Popularly known as headphones, 'phones or cans, these mini acoustical marvels may be just what the doctor ordered for blowing away the cobwebs in your listening environment.

For less dosh and a lot less hassle than your average tweak or

accessory, a pair of quality 'phones is an oft-overlooked hi-fi bargain. Good quality 'phones will get you closer to the music, revealing a level of detail and increase in involvement you never imagined possible. Immersed in your very own pool of pure unadulterated sound, interruption-free hi-fi nirvana can be yours.

Headphones today tend to be closely identified with personal/portable use, but their role in domestic hi-fi reproduction goes back some decades. The technology is broadly similar for both applications, although personal headphones put a high priority on compactness, often at the expense of sound quality, and come with a cord length of around one metre rather than three.

Headphones have traditionally been connected to hi-fi amplifiers using a rather bulky 6.3mm stereo jack plug. Sockets of that size are still usually fitted to hi-fi equipment, but the personal stereo introduced the much smaller 3.5mm jack, and this is also now widely used in domestic equipment such as TV sets and VCRs. Most of the headphones in this test come fitted with a 3.5mm jack plug and are supplied with a 6.3mm jack adaptor for use with traditional-sized sockets.



This Super Test looks at ten pairs of serious hi-fi headphones ranging in price from an extremely affordable £45 to a rather more extravagant £100.

One major distinction is between open-back and sealed (closed-back) designs. Open-back 'phones tend to give a more spacious 'out-of-the-head' image, but also allow sound to escape from the back of the driver diaphragm and be heard by the outside world. This can be irritating

to people nearby, but the corollary is that they let you hear the telephone or doorbell ring.

Closed-back phones give much greater isolation from noisy environments, and also tend to boast a more powerful bass delivery, but often have a rather 'closed-in' sound.

There are a few points to consider before rushing out to buy a pair of 'phones.

First, even the most comfortable can become fatiguing when used over long listening sessions. Whether it's a numb skull, itchy ears, or the sometimes rather odd in-the-head stereo effect, it can often be quite a relief to remove them after a lengthy listening session, especially if you've been playing the music quite loud.

Which leads me on to the hearing damage warning. Due to the extremely low distortion levels of many headphones, volume levels can often be louder than they seem. So beware: prolonged listening at high volume levels can lead to permanent hearing damage. Don't wait until tinnitus sets in, keep the volume down to a comfortable level and enjoy your music for many years to come. Sorry if this seems obvious, but you have been warned.

## GLOSSARY

**OPEN-BACK:** These 'phones have a vented back offering an open sound but also let noise in and out.

**CLOSED-BACK:** Useful in noisy environments, these 'phones have sealed earpieces which helps reduce the intrusion of external noise.

**CIRCUM-AURAL:** The type of earpiece that completely encloses the outer ear and rests on the head.

**SUPRA-AURAL:** The type of earpiece that consists of a flat pad that sits on the outer ear.

## HOW THE TESTS WERE DONE

The ten pairs of headphones featured in this test were subjected to both quick-fire and long-term listening sessions. Each pair was reviewed using a Meridian 508 CD player through a Quad 77 Series integrated amplifier and a Musical Fidelity X-Cans headphone amp. Kimber Kable PBJ interconnects were used throughout. All equipment was supported by the Audiophile Furniture Base.

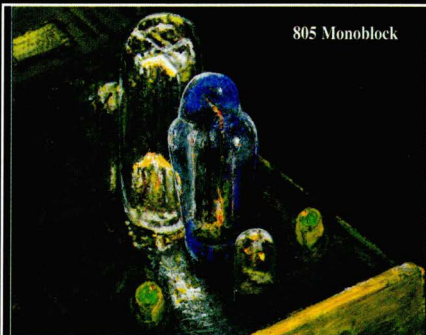
The range of listening material included: Curtis Fuller Quintet - *Love Your Spell Is Everywhere '93*; Mozart - *Piano Concerto No.23*; Jamiroquai - *Cosmic Girl*; Massive Attack - *Unfinished Sympathy*; Madonna - *Sky Fits Heaven*, and Q.T. Quartet - *Hold That Sucker Down*.

## HINTS & TIPS

Decent headphones sound clean even at ear-shattering volumes, so there are none of the natural loudness cues that you come to expect from loudspeakers. Listening to your headphones for long periods at high volume levels is most definitely not advised. Your mother was right, it really will make you deaf - which might not be a problem for Napalm Death fans, but would make life intolerable for many of us.



# The Sweetest Feeling CARY SINGLE-ENDED TRIODES



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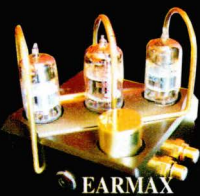
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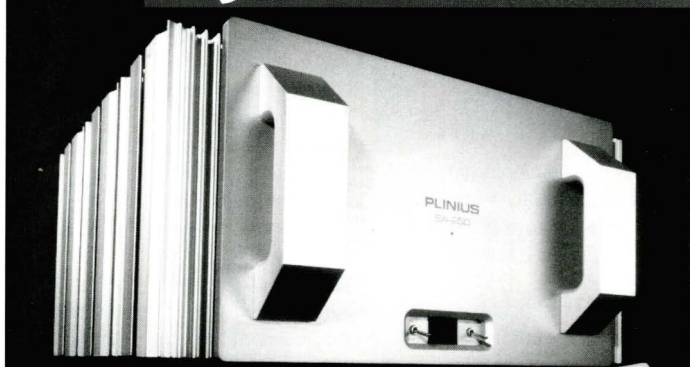
(Paul Messenger  
Hi-Fi Choice May '99)



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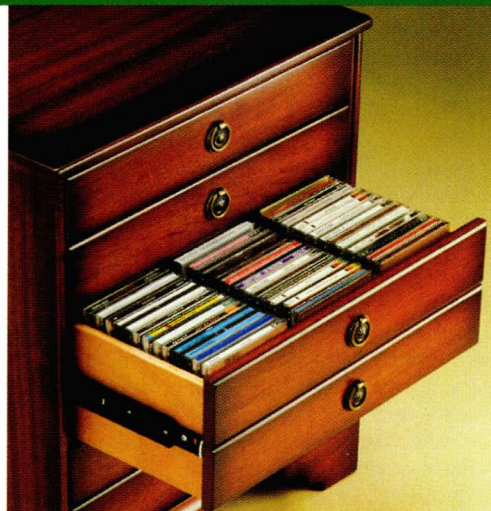
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## AKG K301

Employing speaker diaphragms of a respectable size, these headphones look somewhat on the large side and are sure to let the world know you're serious about your music.

An open-backed, circumaural design, the leatherette roll-cushions are pretty comfortable, but my ears became rather hot and humid with prolonged wearing.

A 'double'-type headband with bonded leather inner band, the £70 K301s feel lighter than their specified 230g weight, and are comfortable enough, if a little loose-fitting.

The cord is a lengthy 3 metres fed to the left ear-piece, providing adequate freedom of movement. The lead is terminated with a 3.5mm stereo jack, but a 6.3mm adaptor is also supplied for use with traditional hi-fi sockets.



### SOUND QUALITY

The K301s claim to offer a balanced tonal response and transparent three-dimensionality and, while it's true that these headphones have one of the most even frequency responses in this

group, with a clear midband and well balanced high frequency performance, they do lack significant bass depth. What they possess is good quality with a strong sense of attack and timing, but the weight is insufficient. The various test tracks sounded just a little too lightweight for my tastes.

However, it is possible to become accustomed to this sound balance. The Curtis Fuller Quintet's *Love Your Spell Is Everywhere* captured the natural timbre of instruments, with clear detail and without any of the muddiness that can accompany a more substantial bass.

Jamiroquai's *Cosmic Girl* was presented with a good sense of structure, and with a soundstage well outside the confines of the

head, but again the track failed to make the grade because of the light-footed bass. Fast, rhythmic dance tracks demonstrated the 'phones' fast and tight attack but also betrayed a lack of conviction.

The AKGs' somewhat big and loose styling is not reflected in their sonic abilities. The K301s are a detailed and transparent pair of 'phones, but ultimately sound thin and lightweight in the bass. **LD**

### VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**COMFORT** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £69.95

Big 'phones with an even and detailed sound, but lacking sufficient bass weight.

#### ONE YEAR GUARANTEE

Path Distribution, Unit 2, Desborough Ind. Park, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP12 3BG  
(01494) 441736

### SPECIFICATIONS

Weight	230g
Cord length	3m
Type	Open-back

## AUDIO TECHNICA ATH-D40fs

Billed as 'precision studiomphones', the £100 D40s certainly have a professional, quality feel. The luxurious roll-cushions and sumptuous padded headband held my head in a reassuring yet tender way, with all the comfort and feel of a top-of-the-range product.

A closed-back design with circumaural sound coupling, they provide good isolation from external noise, and remain fairly free from unpleasant humidity even after prolonged listening. Their professional design and build quality is evident throughout.

The 'single' headband adjustment clicked smoothly and reassuringly into position and the reversible earpieces for one-ear listening is further evidence of their refinement and professional aspirations.

The captive cord is about 3.4 metres long, fed to one side only, and terminated with a 6.3mm gold-plated jack.



### SOUND QUALITY

Wow! That was my initial reaction to hearing these 'phones, and I daresay others will agree. The 'D40s claim a bass enhanced frequency response, and give the bass grunt you'd expect, alongside good midband transparency and a detailed treble. While the quality is good, the bass can at times sound a little bloated, making string sections seem rather warm and coloured.

The Curtis Fuller Quintet piece was extremely involving and 3D, making me feel I had a front row seat. The occasional indication that the midband was being a little drowned out by a full and persistent bass didn't spoil my enjoyment of this or the classical test piece. Pop and dance tracks tended to highlight the conflict between bass and

mid frequencies though, and vocals could sound distant.

The 'D40s are well-built, studio-oriented headphones with a truly transparent sound and deserve Recommendation. They sound great for all types of music, but especially rock and pumping dance, and may have professional DJ appeal. **LD**

### VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**COMFORT** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £99.95

Detailed and involving sound with a professional 'studio' quality appeal.

#### TWO YEAR GUARANTEE

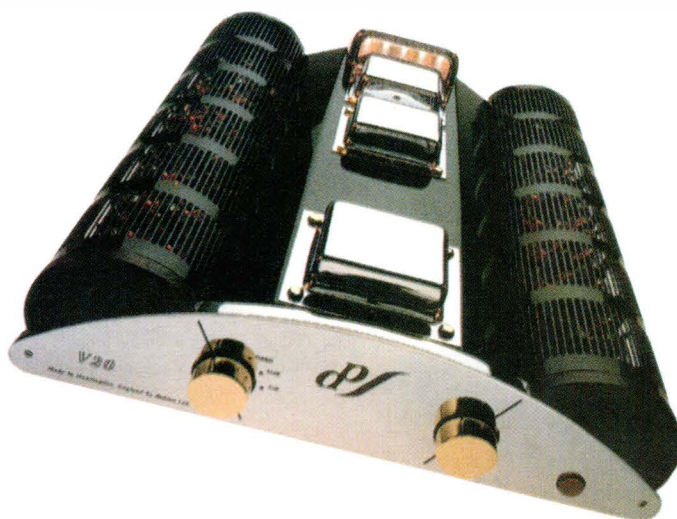
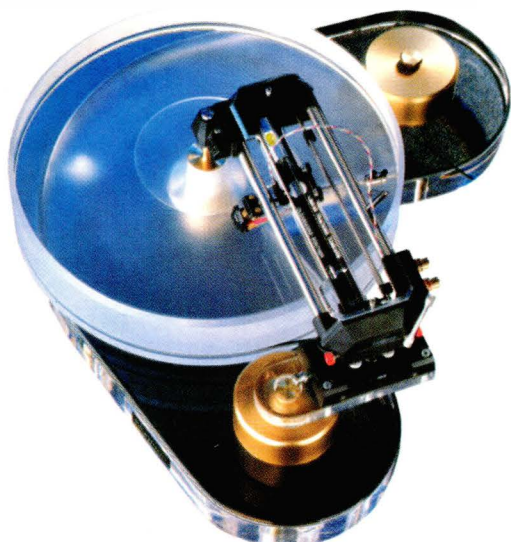
Audio Technica, Technica House, Royal London Industrial Estate, Old Lane, Leeds LS11 8AG  
(0113) 277 1441

### SPECIFICATIONS

Weight	250g
Cord length	3.4m
Type	Closed-back



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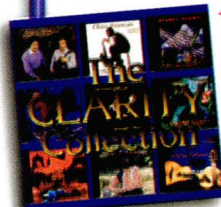
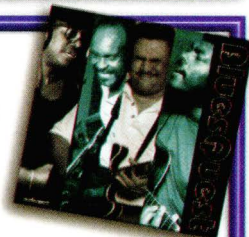
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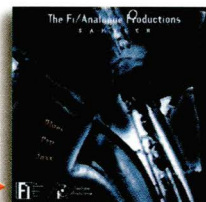
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# BEYERDYNAMIC DT 331

**H**eadphones have come a long way since 1924 when Berlin inventor Eugen Beyer came up with the idea of placing small loudspeakers over the ears. A dynamic, open-back design, today's £65 DT 331s claim to offer maximum comfort with voluptuous roll-cushions and a two-piece adjustable headband – the same as used in the company's more up-market models.

The circumaural cushions sit neatly around the ears, but they feel heavier on the head than the claimed 210g.

After prolonged listening the 'phones became less comfortable and the fabric cushion gave an increasing prickling effect. A damp patch also formed where the plastic headband rested on my head. The captive cord is 2.5m long, providing ample freedom and flexibility, and is fed to both earpieces. A 3.5mm jack plug is fitted and a 6.3mm adaptor is supplied.



## SOUND QUALITY

What tends to strike you when you first don the DT 331s is their warm bass, clinical treble and a strong sense of spaciousness and soundstage outside the head.

It's not an entirely believable sound, but it's a fairly appealing one nonetheless. The Beyers seemed to favour classical and jazz pieces, bringing a warm, seductive feeling to Mozart's *Piano Concerto No 23* and the Curtis Fuller Quintet's *Love Your Spell Is Everywhere*, although I felt these pieces lacked any real bass scale.

Pop and dance tracks were less satisfactory, exhibiting a rather exaggerated and abrasive treble which at times made listening uncomfortable. The Q.T. Quartet dance track lacked enough bass drive to

get it moving with real conviction, while a splashy treble made the whole thing less than satisfying.

The DT 331s are quality headphones from a well established manufacturer, but not quite the all-rounders I had hoped for. It's probably better suited to soothing classical and jazz, rather than fast, rhythmic dance music.

LD

## VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**COMFORT** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £65.00

Clear and extremely detailed sound with rather thin bass.

ONE YEAR GUARANTEE

Beyerdynamic, Veda Products Ltd, 5 Burchanger Industrial Estate, Stanstead Road, Bishop's Stortford, Herts CM23 2TH  
(01279) 501111

## SPECIFICATIONS

Weight	210g
Cord length	2.5m
Type	Open-back

# GRADO SR60

**W**hen it comes to headphones, Grado seems to know its stuff. The £79.00 Prestige Series SR60s are one of the most compact models in this Super Test, and the styling also provides a welcome break from the norm, with a retro appeal that wouldn't look out of place on a WWII radio operator.

An open-back design, this Grado has no-nonsense simplicity written all over it, with a single loop headband and supra-aural foam ear pads. Both earpieces are fed by a thick cable of stethoscope proportions, and just 2m long. Terminated with a 3.5mm jack, the SR60s come supplied with a 6.3mm adaptor.

Despite their old-fashioned looks, these 'phones feel surprisingly lightweight and comfortable to wear. The 'single'-style headband gives adequate tension to hold the 'phones

in position, while the removable foam ear pads allow the ears to 'breathe' even after prolonged use. My only criticism is that the headband would benefit from more sumptuous padding.

## SOUND QUALITY

The moment I listened to the SR60s I knew what Grado meant by its "truly the world's finest..." claim. I was blown away. Not by the bass, although there's plenty of it, but by the sheer articulation and lack of coloration. This is what headphones should sound like. The SR60s gave

perhaps the best balanced frequency response in this test. Transparent to a fault, the Grados breathed new life into recordings, highlighting intricacies in the music that were masked before. Classical and jazz tracks are portrayed with such refinement and detail that the full emotion of a performance comes across.

Bass depth and quality has a good sense of attack and rhythm, making speedier tracks move along with pace and

confidence. The SR60s boast a soundstage offering unrivalled stereo image and spaciousness.

An exceptionally neutral performer which adds nothing and takes even less away, the SR60s are a simple pair of 'phones doing their job properly. They sound superb, and are an outstanding Best Buy.

LD

## VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**COMFORT** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £79.00

For sheer musical enjoyment these 'phones are hard to beat. Retro styling may not be to every taste.

ONE YEAR GUARANTEE

Grado, Goldring Ltd, 8 Greyfriars Road, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP32 7DX  
(01284) 701101

## SPECIFICATIONS

Weight	200g
Cord length	2m
Type	Open-back





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## JECKLIN Float Two

The £99 Jecklin Float Twos are possibly the most unusual looking 'phones I have ever come across. Although they feel and look quite lightweight in design, they're quite bulky and certainly stand out from the crowd. The less than conventional styling has a tendency to make the wearer look rather like a *Dr Who* creature – anyone brave enough to wear them in public will find themselves on the receiving end of numerous sideways glances.

An open-back design, the Float Two rests somewhat precariously on the top of the head, with earpieces positioned directly over, but not upon, the ears. Sort of circumaural-ish in design, Jecklin says this gives a natural flow of air between ear and 'phones and helps to prevent fatigue over longer listening periods.



Weighing in at a hefty 385g, they do feel heavy on the head – and a little unsecure at first – but

confidence in their ability to stay on grows with use. A 3m cable gives good freedom of movement, and comes terminated with a standard 6.3mm jack.

### SOUND QUALITY

Forget the looks – Jecklin's obviously onto something here. The Floats are excellent all-round performers, and have a superbly balanced frequency response. The Jamiroqui track perhaps demonstrates a slightly over-damped bass, but the Float Two is otherwise difficult to fault.

My comment for the Curtis Fuller Quintet read: "like walking into the room where the band are playing", illustrating just how vivid these 'phones can be.

Sonically they have it all and give the listener a great sense of

being immersed in a huge pool of sound. The one (very small) nagging drawback is the slightly over-damped bass attack, which doesn't quite give speedier music the pace and fluidity it needs.

The Jecklin Floats produce an extremely neutral and satisfyingly well-balanced sound. If you're not too concerned about their looks, and the looks you'll get, then they come highly Recommended. **LD**

### VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**COMFORT** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £99.00

Not the best looking 'phones in the world but neutral and spacious to a fault.

#### ONE YEAR GUARANTEE

Jecklin, May Audio Marketing (UK) Ltd, Box 27, Skipton, North Yorks BD23 1YE  
(01756) 793777

### SPECIFICATIONS

Weight	385g
Cord length	3m
Type	Open-back

## JVC HA-D50

Manufacturers' claims on product packaging get me decidedly worried. JVC's £45 HA-D50s purport to be 'digital ready' – a claim which also appears on each earpiece. What does that mean? Your guess is as good as mine. 'Super Bass' is another feature that gets rather a bold mention too – I'll come back to that one later.

These JVCs are a closed-back design with circumaural cushions coupling the sound to the ear. A single-sided 3.5m cable gives plenty of freedom and is terminated by a 3.5mm jack – a 6.3mm adaptor is supplied.

JVC's tension-adjustable headband is possibly the most novel feature in this group, enabling the 'phones to be loosened or tightened on the ear for maximum comfort.

The HA-D50s might appear somewhat dated with their rather large earpieces and wrinkly leatherette cushions, but they maintained their snug and comfortable fit throughout

prolonged listening, with none of the hot spots experienced with other models. DJ enthusiasts may find the

reversible ear-pieces useful for one-ear listening.

### SOUND QUALITY

The HA-D50s have a clear and detailed treble, and a modest amount of lower bass, but are ultimately let down by a rather unappealing midband which makes material sound undynamic and limited.

Jamiroqui's *Cosmic Girl* was presented as an uncharacteristic jumble, making it difficult to distinguish the musical layers. Classical and jazz tracks fared just as unfavourably, sounding almost synthetic and lacking attention-grabbing presence or dimensionality.

Q.T. Quartet's *Hold That Sucker Down* probably did slightly better than the rest, with

reasonable attack and control plus a fair dollop of that JVC 'Super Bass'. Get the picture?

The HA-D50s have both good and bad points, but to my mind the good fail to carry the day. If a pair of audiophile quality headphones is your heart's desire, then the HA-D50s are not the solution. **LD**

### VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**COMFORT** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £45.00

Detailed but with a characteristic mid-band that's all their own and a modest amount of lower bass.

#### ONE YEAR GUARANTEE

JVC UK Ltd, JVC House, JVC Business Park, Priestley Way, London NW2 7BA  
(0181) 208 7654

### SPECIFICATIONS

Weight	290g
Cord length	3.5m
Type	Closed-back





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## KOSS TD/80

**K**oss is a well respected American headphone specialist with a 40-year history in both the recording and hi-fi industries.

The £50 TD/80 is a closed-back design with somewhat dated styling and a plasticky feel. The leatherette ear cushions feel a bit uncomfortable, and things can get humid, while the discomfort is compounded by excessive tension on the headband, making your head feel as if it's being held in a vice. The neat padded headband rests unobtrusively on the head though.

At just over 1m long, the TD/80's cord is the shortest in this test: it yanks you back (no pun intended) should you stray too far. The cord feeds the left earpiece and is terminated in a 3.5mm jack – a 6.3mm adaptor is also

supplied. A novel feature with the TD/80 is an independent volume control on each earpiece.



### SOUND QUALITY

Despite their appearance and tight fit, these 'phones perform well. The closed box design certainly helps to emphasise the bass, which seems almost sub-sonic in reach. Pop and dance tracks are carried along with plenty of head-nodding, foot-tapping rhythm and speed.

High frequency detail is a little less obvious but is clean and smooth. The Curtis Fuller Quintet jazz track gave a pleasing rendition of *Love Your Spell Is Everywhere*, with suitably weighty bass, but the Mozart piano concerto demonstrated some unevenness in frequency response. An overly rich bass plus a midband suck-out made string sections sound artificial and synthetic, swamping other instruments and detail: this piece was so thick and syrupy you could almost taste it.

The TD/80's are fantastic 'phones for bass freaks. They have good attack and a fast, rhythmic pace, and will probably be loved by anyone into rapid dance beats. However, as a pair of all round hi-fi headphones they fall short of the mark, thanks to an uneven midrange and a lack of transparency. **LD**

### VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**COMFORT** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £49.99

📖 **Oodles of bass and a recessed midband, this is not the most transparent of headphones. Prolonged wearing can get tiresome.**

#### LIFETIME GUARANTEE

✉ Koss, BUK (avc) Ltd, Premier House, 18 Deer Park Road, London SW19 3BW  
☎ (0181) 543 3633

### SPECIFICATIONS

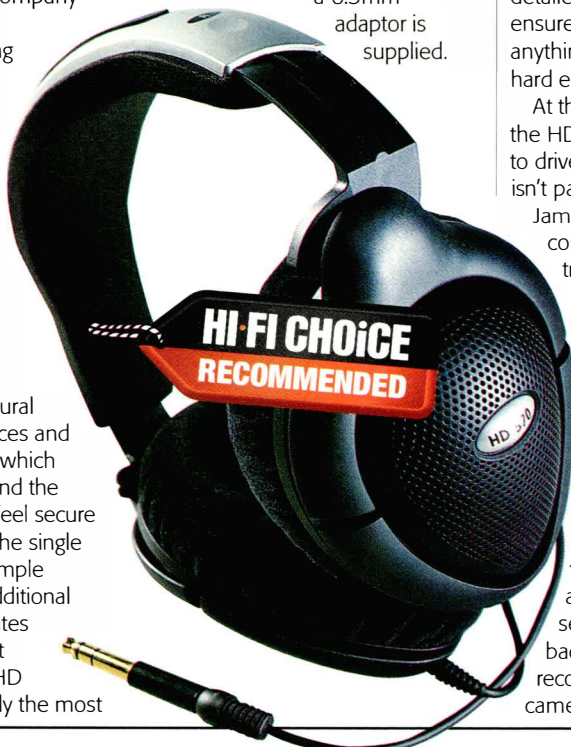
■ Weight	250g
■ Cord length	1.2m
■ Type	Closed-back

## SENNHEISER HD 570 Symphony

**W**hen asked to think of a headphone maker I daresay Sennheiser would be the name on most people's lips. No surprise there, then. The German company has built a strong reputation for making high-quality open-back 'phones since its first appearance in the late '60s. A new addition to the 5 Series, the HD 570 Symphony, is set to replace the HD 535.

The HD 570 is a simple, moulded plastic light-weight design with circumaural oval-shaped ear-pieces and velour roll-cushions which sit comfortably around the ears. The HD 570s feel secure on the head, while the single headband with its ample padding provides additional comfort and distributes the 210g lightweight design evenly. The HD 570s rank as possibly the most

comfortable pair of headphones in the test, even after prolonged listening. They are also supplied with a 3 metre, detachable cable terminated with a 3.5mm jack – a 6.3mm adaptor is supplied.



### SOUND QUALITY

Their HD 570s open back design gives a spacious sound with a good sense of stereo being outside the head. They have a detailed quality about them which ensures you're not missing out on anything but can exhibit a slightly hard edge on brighter recordings. At the lower end of the scale the HD 570s have sufficient bass to drive most tracks along but it isn't particularly well extended.

Jamiroquai's *Cosmic Girl* was conveyed with a slightly harsh treble which became a bit wearing. The Curtis Fuller piece was presented with exceptional imaging and instrument placement but lacked the depth of bass that is characteristic of this piece.

The string section on Mozart's *Piano Concerto No 23* had a warm, cosy feel, but tended to draw my attention towards the seemingly more noticeable background noise level of the recording. Fast rhythmic tracks came across with gusto but

ultimately lacked the bass depth that other headphones in the test conveyed.

The Sennheiser HD 570s offer unrivalled comfort with spacious stereo but, as the model name suggests, may be better suited for classical and jazz musical tastes. **LD**

### VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**COMFORT** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** £89.95

📖 **Extremely comfortable, lightweight 'phones with a detailed and open sound; lack bass depth on weightier music. Well suited to classical and jazz tastes.**

#### TWO YEAR GUARANTEE

✉ Sennheiser UK, 3 Century Point, Halifax Road, High Wycombe, Bucks HP12 3SL  
☎ (01494) 551571

### SPECIFICATIONS

■ Weight	210g
■ Cord length	3m
■ Type	Open back





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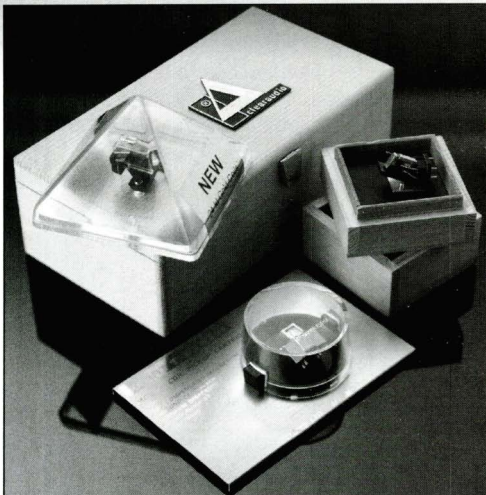
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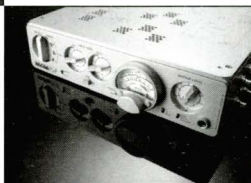
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2 x Vitavox AK 157 bass drivers	£ 500	pair
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Naim CD2	£1000	(£2000)
Naim CDS	£1700	(£3940)
Notts. Analogue Mentor Tonearms	£ 400	(£800)
Notts. Analogue Mentor Turntable	£ 1900	(£2600)
Musical Fidelity A220 Int. amp ex-dem	£ 580	(£700)
Musical Fidelity A2 Int. amp ex-dem	£ 380	(£500)
Musical Fidelity A2 Int. amp NEW	£ 400	(£500)
Mana Soundstage - base	£ 100	
Linn Isobarik Stands - per pair	£ 40	
Living Voice Auditorium - Cherry	£ 950	(£1500)
Kelly KT3 loudspeakers NEW	£ 900	(£1850)
Impulse H2 loudspeakers - Mahogany	£1000	(£2500)
Impulse Taus - Maple	£1250	(£2700)
Hadcock special Tonearm	£ 400	(£ 600)
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## SONY MDR-V700DJ

From the moment I put these 'phones on my head, I knew I was in good hands. These stylish silver and black 'phones look the business, with a quality, high-tech feel, the name indicating the model's aspirations towards the DJ market. These £100 Sonys look like a really serious pair of headphones.

A closed-back design, the 'V700s employ supra-aural ear coupling with luxurious padded roll cushions for sumptuous comfort. The 'single'-type headband is similarly adorned, with additional 'breathing' material to help reduce that 'humid head' feeling. Weighing in at some 300g, the phones are quite heavy but feel comfortable enough over short listening periods – longer sessions can give rise to that head-in-a-vice feeling.

Reversible earpieces facilitate one-ear listening, and, uniquely in this test, the Sonys can be folded up to fit neatly into a natty little carrying pouch. A single-sided coiled cable extends up to 3m, giving ample freedom of movement, while the



obligatory 3.5mm jack plug is supplied with a 6.3mm adaptor.

### SOUND QUALITY

If you like oodles of bass, you'll love these headphones. Pump up the volume (briefly) and you can feel the drive units moving back and forth, vibrating against your head (at this point I should repeat my note about the damaging effects of long-term listening at high volumes). The Sonys do indeed have their fair share of bass, but it doesn't

always sound as clear or as well controlled as it

might. The balance is redressed slightly by a fairly transparent midband and a smooth and detailed treble. They're enjoyable, but not quite the neutral 'monitor' headphones I was hoping for.

If these 'phones are designed for DJ mixing, I'd expect a more tonally even and neutral sound. In normal use I found myself too often analysing the sound rather than enjoying the music. **LD**

### VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**COMFORT** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** **£100.00**

Great looking fold-away headphones with exceptional build quality. Kickin' bass.

#### ONE YEAR GUARANTEE

Sony UK Ltd, The Heights, Brooklands, Weybridge, Surrey KT13 0XW.

(0990) 111999

### SPECIFICATIONS

Weight	300g
Cord length	1 to 3m
Type	Closed-back

## VIVANCO SR 950

The recently launched £80 SR 950s are described as a 'half-open' design capable of producing a very transparent sound. Their circumaural ear coupling and plush velvet roll-cushions provide a comfortable fit, but feel slightly odd due to the earpieces' oval shape. Vivanco claims this ergonomic design will ensure perfect comfort over prolonged periods.

And the 'phones are comfortable, due in part to the 'double'-type headband with its pliable and lightly padded inner band. The headband clamping tension feels light but proved enough to hold the headphones securely in position. The 2.5m length of detachable cord is fed directly to both ear-pieces



and terminated with a 3.5mm jack – a 6.3mm adaptor is also supplied.

### SOUND QUALITY

From comfort through to sonic performance, the SR 950s have a high enjoyment factor. Bass is even and sounds well-extended, with a good sense of pace and control. There's adequate treble too, providing sufficient detail but with an occasional rough sibilance, while the midband tends to sound slightly recessed.

The Curtis Fuller Quintet's *Love Your Spell Is Everywhere* had a warm, rounded feel with an almost tactile quality about it. Strings sounded full and detailed but lacked the openness of the Grado model. Speedier music gives an outstanding bass

thumping performance, but was ultimately a bit too laid-back and relaxed to score top marks here.

The Vivanco SR 950s are a finely built, comfortable pair of headphones with pleasing sonic abilities. Ultimately, they are not the most neutral in the test, but nonetheless they do deserve a Recommended accolade. **LD**

### VERDICT

**SOUND** ★★★★★

**BUILD** ★★★★★

**COMFORT** ★★★★★

**VALUE** ★★★★★

**PRICE** **£79.99**

With a high 'cuddle factor' for both feel and sound, this is an enjoyable pair of headphones.

#### TWO YEAR GUARANTEE

Vivanco UK, Maxtead Court, Maxtead Road, Hemel Hempstead, Herts HP2 7BY  
(01442) 403020

### SPECIFICATIONS

Weight	252g
Cord length	2.5m
Type	'Half-open'



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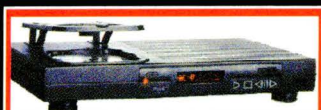
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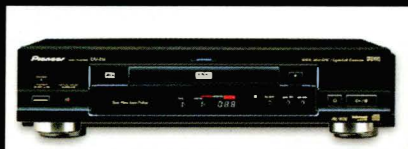
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Epos ES22 Speakers (Light Cherry) .....	(1185.00) £899.00	Rotel RCD 971 CD Player .....	(400.00) £299.00
Epos ES30 Speakers (Black) (WOW!) .....	(2550.00) £1750.00		

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# CONCLUSIONS

# HEADPHONES

Good quality headphones offer you your very own world of audiophile sound. For less than £100, you can experience the intimacy of your favourite recordings as you've never heard them before. No speaker will ever get you this close to the music, and all that's required is a source with a headphone socket and, of course, a volume control.

Listening with headphones can be very tiring, so it's worth taking the time to choose your 'phones carefully. Spend time trying them on in the shop. Look out for hot spots that may develop around the earpieces or where the headband rests on the scalp.

Listen carefully, too. Take along your favourite piece of music and see if it sounds as good as it should. Listen for even more

detail with balanced sound. Beware of over-bright treble, which can become fatiguing.

As always, our Super Test winners are based upon the most important factors. With this in mind, the Grados receive an extremely well deserved Best Buy for their exceptional sound quality and value for money: they are clear winners and superb all-rounders.

The Audio Technica, Jecklin, Sennheiser and Vivanco models are all Recommended for their fine balance between sound quality, build and comfort – mostly at somewhat higher prices.

All in all, this group seems to support the argument that "you get what you pay for". That said, each of the models offers its own unique sound, style and comfort. Happy listening.

## THE BEST IN THE TEST



**GRADO SR60** £79.00  
For sheer musical enjoyment these 'phones are hard to beat. Retro styling may not be to everyone's taste.



**AUDIO TECHNICA ATH-D40fs** £99.95  
Detailed and involving sound with a professional 'studio' quality appeal.



**JECKLIN Float Two** £99.00  
Unusual design may not suit style gurus, but neutral and spacious to a fault.



**SENNHEISER HD 570 Symphony** £89.95  
Comfortable and lightweight, with a detailed and open sound, but lack bass depth.



**VIVANCO SR 950** £79.99  
With a high 'cuddle factor' for both feel and sound, this is an enjoyable pair of 'phones.

## HEADPHONES COMPARISON TABLE

MAKE	AKG	AUDIO TECHNICA	BEYERDYNAMIC	GRADO	JECKLIN
MODEL	K301	ATH-D40FS	DT 331	SR60	FLOAT TWO
PRICE	£69.95	£99.95	£65.00	£79.00	£99.00
SOUND	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆
BUILD	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆
COMFORT	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆
VALUE	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆
GUARANTEE	1 year	2 year	1 year	1 year	1 year
WEIGHT	230g	250g	210g	200g	385g
CORD LENGTH	3m	3.4m	2.5m	2m	3m
TYPE	Open-back	Closed-back	Open-back	Open-back	Open-back
STATUS		HI-FI CHOICE RECOMMENDED		HI-FI CHOICE BEST BUY	HI-FI CHOICE RECOMMENDED

## HEADPHONES COMPARISON TABLE

MAKE	JVC	KOSS	SENNHEISER REC	SONY	VIVANCO REC
MODEL	HA-D50	TD/80	HD 570 SYMPHONY	MDR-V700DJ	SR 950
PRICE	£45.00	£49.99	£89.95	£100.00	£79.99
SOUND	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆
BUILD	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆
COMFORT	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆
VALUE	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆
GUARANTEE	1 year	Lifetime	2 year	1 year	2 year
WEIGHT	290g	250g	210g	300g	252g
CORD LENGTH	3.5m	1.2m	3m	1 to 3m	2.5m
TYPE	Closed-back	Closed-back	Open-back	Closed-back	Half-open
STATUS			HI-FI CHOICE RECOMMENDED		HI-FI CHOICE RECOMMENDED



# SMALL Wonders

The meteoric rise of MiniDisc has brought a potentially confusing array of recording options. What's the difference? Paul Miller investigates.

**O**ur blank CD-R media test in issue 191 showed once and for all that, when it comes to digital recording, data integrity is just the first step on the path to perfect digital copies. This might seem obvious. After all, different CD transports will each have an impact on the overall sound of the system and yet, ostensibly, they all handle the same digital data. It's also true of CD-ROM drives. In the analogue domain they, too, will 'sound' different but, provided there is no overt corruption of data, they will all seem transparent to the PC in its digital domain.

This is what separates the ear from the computer, and why the analogy between data storage for PCs and that for digital audio stretches only so far. This applies to all linear storage systems, including CD-R, CD-RW and DAT - but what about compressed data formats like MiniDisc (MD)? Does the choice of MD blank media exert a similar influence over digital recording quality, or will the ravages of data compression and reduction mask those small differences that do exist from disc to disc?

### BASIC PRINCIPLES

In *Oasis* (HFC 192) we took a very detailed look at the Channel Code used by CD. This showed how the 16-bit audio data is represented by sequences of 'lands' and 'pits' that reflect or scatter the laser that's 'reading' the CD from beneath.

There are only nine variations in pit length on a CD, each being an integer-multiple of the Master Clock, which we call 'T'. The various permutations of pits (from the smallest 3T to the longest 11T) produce a highly characteristic pattern from the laser, from



### LAYER CAKE

Like CD, MD discs are laminated but much smaller (64mm diameter) and are protected by a shuttered plastic case that's derived from computer discs (see Figure 2). The Magneto-Optical layer (3) is sandwiched between two dielectric 'insulators' (2) and backed by a reflective surface (4), which bounces back the laser. The bulk of the MO layer holds program material with room for the UTOC (User Table of Contents) and the lead-in area at its innermost edge. The 'reading' surface is sealed by a transparent polycarbonate

which the original 16-bit music data is derived. MD uses the same Channel Code and error-correction regime as CD. So, while the data is represented on the MD substrate in an alternative fashion, the output from the laser during playback 'looks' just like that from a CD.

### GROOVY, BABY

Like CD, it's the transition from pit to land (and vice-versa) that represents a digital '1' in the binary code that describes the music signal (A). Well, nearly. With MD (or MD-Recordable, to be specific) it's the change in polarisation of the reflected laser that defines a digital '1'.

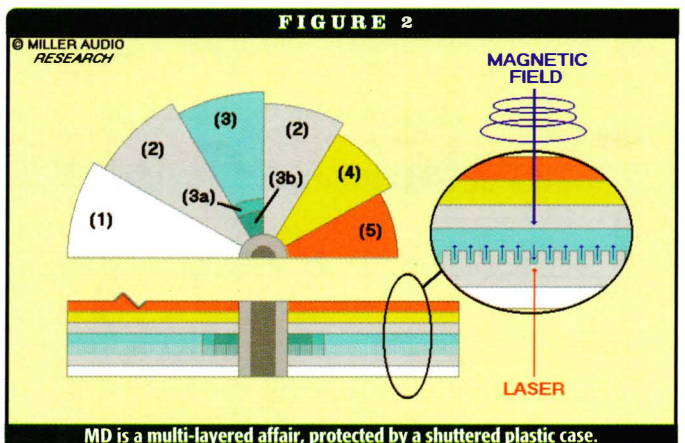
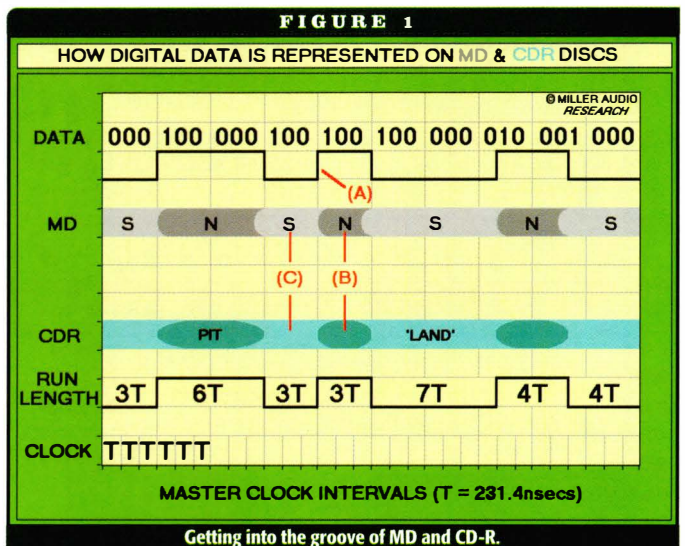
MD relies on a thin Magneto-Optical (MO) layer in place of the dye-layer used by CD-R. This magnetic layer is grooved, but allows stable, magnetised 'patches' to be traced one after another. Figure 1 shows Run Lengths (which appear as a pit on CD-R) represented as a patch magnetised with 'North' polarity on MD (B). Similarly, the reflective land areas on CD-R are magnetised with 'South' polarity on MD (C).

As the MD laser passes over these 'poles', the reflected beam has its plane of polarisation rotated slightly. This is the Kerr Effect, and is what MD relies upon to read data back from the disc.

layer and the rear (what would be the label side of a CD) is coated in a protective lacquer.

During recording, the laser power is increased from typically 0.5W to about 4.5mW, sufficient to heat the MO layer directly under its gaze to about 180°C. This dissipates any previous magnetic orientation, and a new polarity is adopted under the influence of an applied field as the patch cools. So in practice, MD recorders have two 'heads': a laser which either reads or heats the MO layer from below, and a magnetic recording head that pulses its field according to the incoming binary data.

There are other differences between the data stored on a 650Mb CD and that squeezed onto a 130Mb MD. All else being equal, the MD would have room for just 15 minutes of CD-type data, yet in practice it holds the same 74 minutes as its rival.





The answer to fitting a couple of quarts of data into less than a pint pot of storage capacity lies in ATRAC. This Sony-developed mix of data reduction and compression enables a 'facsimile' of the data to be represented in just one-fifth of the original space (see *Oasis*, HFC 164).

The terms 'data reduction' and 'data compression' are *not* interchangeable. Compression is a reversible technique where redundant zeros are removed from long digital words, expressing the data in smaller wordlengths. But data reduction is irreversible – it involves the removal or simplification of musical elements according to defined, psycho-acoustical principles.

Specifically, sounds are said only to be audible if they persist above our 'threshold of hearing', while others are claimed to be masked by the presence of louder, adjacent sounds. ATRAC relies on these phenomena to decide which signals are audible and which may be discarded, thus reducing the 'density' of data.

**"The influence of the ATRAC process hovers like a permanent shadow over the performance. It seems impossible to escape a loss of ambience with MD recordings."**

#### THE LISTENING TESTS

There are currently more blank MDs available than audio-only CD-R, but this group represents a broad cross-section of what's on sale, including one of the new breed of '80-minute' discs.

Theta's Data Basic transport was employed as a low-jitter digital source, and we recorded the same software used in the recent CD-R test. Specifically, Christy Moore's *Reel in the Flickering Light*, Whiskeytown's *Strangers Almanac* and Lesley Garrett's *Prima Donna* (SongCD 907). Selected tracks were recorded in identical positions on all nine of our competing MiniDiscs, along with specialised test signals for the subsequent lab investigation.

The advanced specification of Sony's MDS-JA20ES MD recorder made it an ideal choice for much of the lab work although, in the interests of impartiality, we opted for Kenwood's DMF-9020 MD recorder for the listening tests.

Following the precedent set by the CD-R tests, all nine MD recordings were auditioned in a random order, including multiple repeats, and at a fixed listening level under blind conditions. Unlike the CD-vs-CD-R comparison, there could be no 'pre-recorded MD' to act as a point of reference.

This is a key issue, for while the subjective differences between the different MD media were still surprisingly audible, the influence of the ATRAC process hovers like a permanent shadow over the performance. It seems impossible to escape a loss of ambience with MD recordings, even under ideal conditions.

But this reduction in sparkle and subtle detail is remarkably small when you consider the mathematical violence of the data compression, and is unlikely to be noticed in a car or personal/portable scenario. In a critical hi-fi system against a decent CD reference, however, the loss of full dynamic contrast and transparency is fairly obvious.

Our thanks to our blind but diligent panel: Roger Batchelor (Denon), Kevin Edwards (Talk Electronics), Mark Hockey (Kenwood UK) and Steve Privett (QED Audio Products).

#### THE LAB TESTS

I was surprised by the very real and identifiable subjective differences between all nine of our MD samples. Importantly, these differences also proved repeatable, so that in multiple, random auditions our listeners were able to link, say, the Sony ES, 80-minute and TDK RXG MDs with presentations earlier in the day (product names and prices were withheld).

Following the precedent laid down in our CD-R media test, I thought it would be instructive to compare the pattern of data being read from each MiniDisc.

Like CD, 74-minute MDs rotate with a CLV (constant linear velocity) of 1.2m/sec. But in this case, it's the magnetic orientation of the patches

## BASF MAXIMA



Christy Moore fared no better, the top of his vocal range tainted by sibilance while the mid and low range lacked both projection and presence. Detail seems veiled, creating a largely inoffensive but very sober sound that lacks both air and sparkle. It's not an entirely positive result, but the BASF Maxima was consistently

Lesley Garrett sounded positively huge on this disc, our panel describing the effect as "a big sound spread unceremoniously between the speakers – intelligible but with little or no sense of stereo focus".

rated ahead of the HHB and Sony 80-minute discs.

**BRAND** BASF MAXIMA  
**LENGTH** 74 MINS  
**RATING** ★★★★★★☆☆☆☆  
**PRICE** £1.87 (EACH)  
☎ (01295) 227800

## FUJI MD74



from Christy Moore's track had greater clarity. The Whiskeytown track was underpinned by a solid enough bass, but voices were more aggressive than usual, and percussion was peaky and rather wearing on the listeners. The overall performance flows easily but, typically, seems more impressive through low and

mid octaves than the treble. What was described as a "large vocal presentation" was clearly reminiscent of the BASF MD, although the sense of detailing, air and transparency was judged to be fractionally better here. The strings and percussion

**BRAND** FUJI MD74  
**LENGTH** 74 MINS  
**RATING** ★★★★★★☆☆☆☆  
**PRICE** NOT AVAILABLE AT TIME OF GOING TO PRESS  
☎ (0800) 783 3886

## HHB PROFESSIONAL



bass line lacking shape and the vocals slightly sibilant. This was a mechanical presentation, bereft of the musical spirit sustained by the best MD media. Less demanding vocal tracks lacked sparkle, sounding flat and less persuasive. "There are a lot of discs better than this," concluded one listener after the third blind audition

In common with its contemporaries, recordings on the HHB disc sounded dry, sparse and lacking in atmosphere. The busy-sounding Whiskeytown sounded oppressively hard, the

of the HHB.  
**BRAND** HHB PROFESSIONAL  
**LENGTH** 74MINS  
**RATING** ★★★★★★☆☆☆☆  
**PRICE** £2.29 (EACH)  
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speeding overhead that modulate the polarisation of the reflected laser beam. The shortest 3T (3 x the Master Clock) patches are 0.833um (833 millionths of a mm) long and, consequently, modulate the laser at 720kHz. For the longest 11T patches, the frequency decreases to 196kHz, with 4T, 5T, 6T and so on lying at fixed intervals between. The position of these frequencies, relative to the player's Master Clock, reveals the digital code recorded on the MD disc.

**EYES DOWN**

In line with the CD-R feature, the integrity of the laser readouts (or EFM Eye-Patterns) recovered from each of the MDs broadly correlated with their rankings in the listening tests.

The biggest contrast in results is shown in Figure 3, where the laser readout from Sony's top ES MD (black histogram) is laid atop that from its 80-minute MD (blue shaded histogram). I've indicated the important 3T, 4T and 5T run-lengths where it's clear the 80-minute MD is shifting off-line - that is, the smallest magnetised patches are appearing at a higher frequency than expected.

Furthermore, the obvious broadening of the (blue) histogram demonstrates a far greater, and unwelcome, variation in the length of these magnetically polarised patches.

Presumably, this is caused by the reduced tracking accuracy of the finer track pitch used by these 80-minute discs. As we'll discover, this issue is far more important during recording

than playback. Either way, it ties in with the below-average sound quality reported by our panel with Kenwood's DMF-9020 at the helm.

**BACK TO BASICS**

Now here's a surprise. Figure 4 (over the page) represents the laser readout from the same Kenwood player over the same 60 seconds of music as Figure 3, although the recording was made on Sony's MDS-JA20ES. Two things are apparent. First, there's very little difference between the 'eye-pattern' recovered from the 80-minute MD or the notionally superior Sony ES. Second, the data itself is clearly *different* as evidenced by the increase in longer 8T, 9T and 10T run-lengths on the disc. Subjectively, the sound quality of these recordings - made on the Sony - is far closer when replayed on *either* the Sony or Kenwood machines.

**RETRACING THE STEPS**

Knowing that the same music data can be represented by two different patterns on the disc, depending on the MD recorder, this will fundamentally effect the level of 'digital distortion' that results on playback. This is proved conclusively by Figure 5.

Here we see the playback of the same data on the same Kenwood DMF-9020 using the same TDK RXG MiniDisc. Except the red trace indicates data originally recorded on the Kenwood, while the vastly superior black trace shows the same data originally recorded on the Sony MDS-JA20ES. Remember, despite the black trace enjoying an order of

**HI-SPACE (MPO)**



Providing a sharper stereo focus than the BASF, HNB and Sony 80-minute discs, percussive elements within a recording were still muted, but vocals carried a good deal of the emotion and enthusiasm we had

come to expect. Lesley Garrett also regained a suggestion of her earlier passion, the recording "decently layered" and enjoying a good sense of space.

Similarly, the bustling Whiskeytown maintained a fair measure of the drive and dynamics of the original, with a far better sense of integration than had been achieved by most competing MDs.

Despite the 'loudness' and intensity of the recording, the music still flowed naturally.

**LENGTH** 74MINS  
**RATING** ★★★★★★★★  
**PRICE** £1.99-£2.99 (EACH)  
 ☎ (0181) 600 3900

**MAXELL CRYSTAL**



The Maxell Crystal brought a distinct but slow-sounding colour to its recordings, with words like "lazy" and "soft" being used by the panel each time this particular MD was loaded. Lesley Garrett dropped back into the

soundstage (not unlike the BASF disc), although the image of her voice was better defined. Christy Moore also sounded slightly lazy, his backing instruments lacking gusto and tonal contrast. Bass was muted and soft, so that the Whiskeytown track was left sounding a little listless and uninspiring.

Nevertheless, the Maxell's "pipe and slippers MD" consistently scored ahead of the HNB and 80-minute Sony discs.

**LENGTH** 74MINS  
**RATING** ★★★★★★★★  
**PRICE** £2.99 (EACH)  
 ☎ (01923) 494400

**SONY MDW-80B**



Our sole 80-minute disc sounded noticeably 'quieter' than all others in this test, despite being recorded and replayed at precisely the same level (we are dealing with data, after all). In all likelihood, this is a manifestation of its soft sound that lacks energy

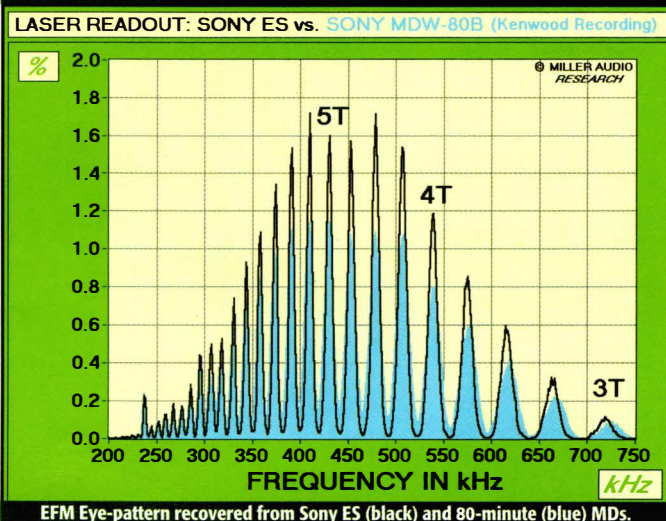
and sparkling detail. The Whiskeytown piece proved to be a two-dimensional rampage to the end of the track, lacking shape, structure and, most importantly, any real sense of dynamic contrast.

Christy's guitars were obvious but inarticulate, while the bass line was not obvious at all. A

loss of shape and texture permeated the structure of the music, leading to inoffensive but inescapably bland recordings.

**LENGTH** 80MINS  
**RATING** ★★★★★★★★  
**PRICE** £3.49-£4.99 (EACH)  
 ☎ (0990) 111 999

FIGURE 3





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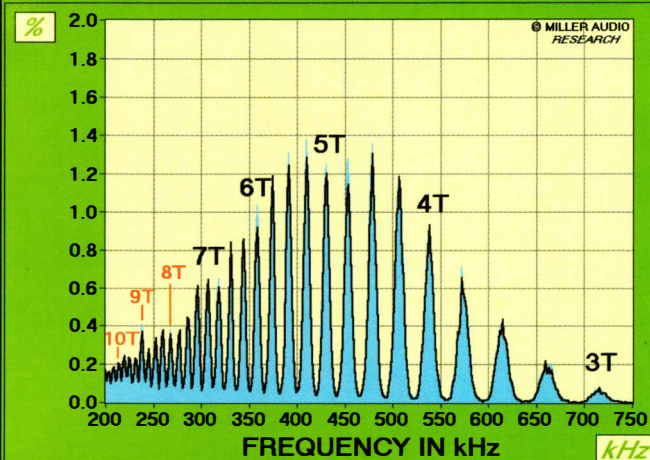
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FIGURE 4

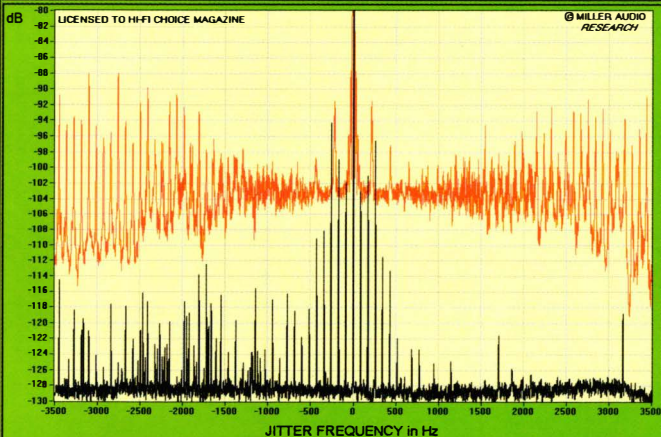
LASER READOUT: SONY ES vs. SONY MDW-80B (Sony Recording)



Same music, different MD recorder and a different EFM Eye-pattern.

FIGURE 5

Data recorded on SONY &amp; KENWOOD; both replayed on KENWOOD



Huge variation in jitter and spurs is evident from recording, not playback.

◀ magnitude less jitter and distortion than the red trace, both are being replayed on the same machine! The black trace doesn't change if this recording is also played back on the Sony machine, proving that MD recording, not playback, is the key to performance.

### CONCLUSIONS

If this was a less-than-objective review we might recommend the Sony, Hi-Space and TDK media without proviso. But although there is a mutual compatibility between MD recordings made on different machines, the data doesn't appear to be represented in a consistent fashion.

The number-crunching at the heart of every MD recorder is achieved using a specialised IC that must adhere to Sony's specification in order for it to be licensed. In this case, the Sony player uses a Sony 'chip', while the Kenwood player uses one sourced from Sharp. Our

results suggest there is some latitude in the implementation of this ATRAC code.

Our lab tests strongly suggest that some MD machines are far better able to record on the 80-minute format discs than others, but, once recorded, the discs will play back equally proficiently on different machines. Thus, the poor showing of Sony's 80-minute MD with Kenwood's recorder doesn't necessarily mean the new discs will cause problems in all hardware.

While I'm confident the best in this test will perform with equal vigour on all players, the indifference of the below-par MDs may prove to be relative.

Depending on price and availability, don't write off the BASF, HHB and – importantly – the new 80-minute discs, just because the Kenwood recorder proved less than sympathetic. Evidently there's more to the practical implementation of MD than meets the eye.

## SONY ES



The contrast between Sony 80 and this ES grade disc could not be greater – this one enjoys a fundamentally greater sense of atmosphere and occasion. Sony ES offers a better sense of realism and musical vibrancy, and is just much easier to listen to. Garrett

sparkled as on no other MD, although there was an impression of "artificial echo". Christy Moore also sounded smoother and less sibilant. All this was achieved while providing a realistic sense of dynamic contrast. Even Whiskeytown's *Strangers Almanac*, which is a very, very loud and busy track, sounded smooth and detailed. Repeated A/B comparisons consistently put Sony ES at the top of the MD pile.

**BRAND** SONY ES  
**LENGTH** 74MINS  
**RATING** ★★★★★★☆☆  
**PRICE** £6.99-£7.99 (EACH)  
 ☎ (0990) 111 999

## TDK COOL



One listener commented: "At least the bass has returned," as this disc followed a couple of particularly soft-sounding rivals. This budget derivative provides a better body to vocals with a little extra spontaneity and pizzazz to

the upper octaves. Christy sounded more like his amusing and colourful self, with the guitars cleanly differentiated. The passion and atmosphere of the Garrett track still suffered the inevitable MD 'flattening'. Meanwhile, the Whiskeytown track bundled along with plenty of detail, a dry vocal presence and firm bass line, avoiding much of the aggression and compression heard elsewhere.

**BRAND** TDK COOL  
**LENGTH** 74MINS  
**RATING** ★★★★★★☆☆  
**PRICE** £2.99 (EACH)  
 ☎ (01737) 773773

## TDK RXG



This is evidently a class act suited to heavyweight performances with an ambience to match, although some verve is lost en route. Opinion was divided over its success – the smooth and velvety sound, the better sense of detailing and ambience must be

weighed against a slight loss of transient attack and some 'letterbox imaging' of central performers. Christy sounded laid back, but still entralling, and the dark atmosphere and momentum of the piece as whole was well conveyed. Whiskeytown, too, boasted a real presence, largely thanks to the well-defined bass and articulate voices. TDK RXG is a sober, smooth and sophisticated alternative to the Sony ES.

**BRAND** TDK RXG  
**LENGTH** 74MINS  
**RATING** ★★★★★★☆☆  
**PRICE** £2.99 (EACH)  
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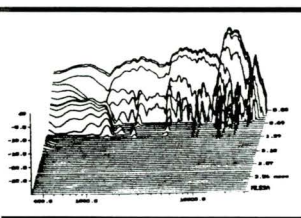
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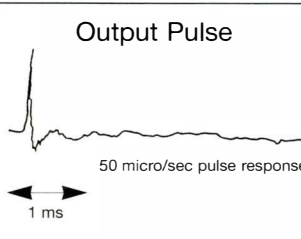


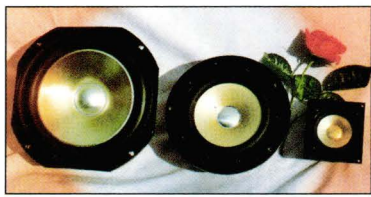
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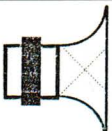
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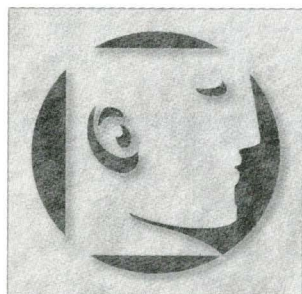


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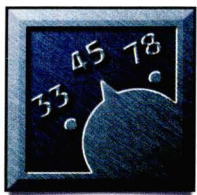
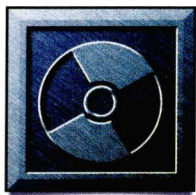
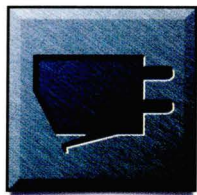
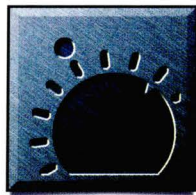
## THE listening rooms

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VISION STANDS UNIQUE STAX  
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AUDIO YAMAHA... AND MORE, AT:





# READER CLASSIFIED



- Arcam Alpha II tuner FM&AM, £85 ono. Quad FM3 tuner, £85 ono. AMC Hybrid 3030 integrated amp, £195. Leak Troughline 3 plus Studio 12 decoder, £140. Call (01202) 481386.
- Audio Alchemy DAC In The Box 2 power supply 1, £95. Pioneer DV-505 reg. 1-3, £250. Cambridge DACmagic II, £80. Call (0181) 668 7193.
- Audio Alchemy transport and 1.1 DAC £400. MIT Digital interconnect £60. All mint. ProAc Super Towers £300, can demo. Call (01442) 890862.
- Audiolab CD player. Never used, unwanted gift. Will accept £600. Call (01953) 605592.
- Audiolab 8000C preamp, £350, 2x 8000P power amps, £450 each. Naim CD3.5, £780. Acoustic Energy AE520, £750. As new, boxed, any trial. Call (01522) 584213 (D)/788014 (E).
- Audio Note interconnects, VGC. 0.75m £50 ANS. 1m £65 ANS. 1m £80 ANV. 1m £80 ANV. Call (01903) 247779.
- AVI Biggatrons, 1 month old, genuine reason for sale, £525. Call (01246) 434822.
- B&W 630 floorstanders, bargain, £295. Sony G4 Pro-Series, unused, boxed, £175. Call (01273) 416151.
- Celef Mini Professional monitor speakers £175. Exposure VI power supplies (2) £150 each. Wanted: Celestion SL6 loudspeakers. Call (01708) 457691.
- Celestion SR1 Series, double units, high-powered precision monitors. No controller, hence £400 ono. Can demo. Call (0181) 524 0217 (eves).
- Conrad Johnson PV10AL plus MV55 £1,350. Copland CTA501 £600. Marantz CD-17K1 gold £450. Spendor BC1 SE £350. Call (0181) 647 7419.
- Cyrus 3/PSX-R, boxed, mint, £500. Rega 3/Elys, boxed, mint, £190. Mission 733 floorstanders, ex cond, £165. Call (01274) 678452.
- Cyrus DAD3 pre, 2x power, 2x PSX-R, Hark stand, Mission 753s, cables, manuals, boxes: £1,795 ono. Call (0115) 979 0431/(0797) 121 7963.
- Heybrook Sextet (walnut), excellent, £490. Call (01892) 536919.
- John Shearne Phase 2 integrated amp inc. MM phono stage. Ex cond, £375 ono. Phase 3 power amp, 9 months old. Boxed, mint, guaranteed. £375 ono. Call (01203) 373378.
- John Shearne Phase 2 integrated amp, pristine condition, £295. Call (0121) 733 1961 weekdays after 6pm or weekends.
- IMF TLS 80 II transmission line speakers for sale, in excellent condition. Offers invited. Call (0191) 427 1636 or (07970) 651955.

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To advertise on this page, write your advert in block capitals and send it to: *Hi-Fi Choice*, Reader Classifieds, 19 Bolsover St, London W1P 7HJ. Include a cheque for £5\* made payable to Dennis Publishing Ltd. The advert will appear in one issue only, must be no more than **20 words** (or five lines) long, and **must** include your phone number.

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We reserve the right to amend or refuse adverts at the Editor's discretion and cannot guarantee that an advert will appear in any specific issue.

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- KEF Reference 90 centre spkr £120 ono. KEF 60 S surround speaker, £85 ono (2 pairs available). Meridian 555 power amp, £350. All boxed, as new. Call (01493) 651287.
- Lumley LV1 preamp £470. Trichord Pulsemaster £220. NVA Soundpipes 2x0.5m £30 ea. Audioquest Ruby 3 2x0.7m £30 ea. Kimber 4PR speaker 2x3m £35. Call (01772) 314151.
- Mana Ref. wall shelf £150. Mana 3-tier equipment support with mini-table, £250. Call Gary (01242) 236981.
- Marantz CD17 KI Signature CD player, £600. Marantz PM17 amp, £500. Both gold versions, 12 months old, mint and boxed. Call Cardiff (01656) 773802 (eves).
- Marantz ST40 tuner, £50 ono. Mission 751 speaker with dedicated pillar stands, £190 ono. Nordost Flat-line Gold cable 4x2.5m for biwire, £30 ono. All boxed. Call (01493) 651287.
- Meridian 541, £550. Musical Fidelity MA50 x2 plus preamp, £450. Denon TU380, £110. Aiwa ADF450 (new), £50. Call (0181) 491 8938.
- Meridian 501.2 preamp, as new. No phono module or remote, hence £395. Call (01892) 536919.
- Michealson Austin TVA1 Thermonic valve amp, Linn speakers, Meridian controller, Supex pickup SDT180, Linn Sondek LP12 + extras, £650 the lot. Call (0956) 466379.
- Michell Aro/Hera. Excellent condition, recently upgraded with Panasonic pot volume control. Bargain at £399. Call (01952) 406759.
- Musical Fidelity E100 amp, £395. Rega radio, £120. Henley HMC50 phono stage, £110. Thorens TD160, £45. Goldring Elan, unused, £15. Call Malcolm (0161) 633 6130 (eves).
- Musical Fidelity F25 preamp, £649. Sony TCD-D100 DAT, £349. Both mint and boxed. Call (01279) 656082.

- Naim Cdi CD player, excellent condition, boxed: £1,250. Call (01225) 812314.
- Naim CDS CD player (£3,940) £2,150 ono. Naim Aro tonearm (£1,195) £795. Linn Trokia cartridge (£788) £145. Linn Axis/Basik/K9 £265 ono. Call Tom (0118) 946 1132 (eves) or (0118) 958 5463 (day).
- Naim system comprising Cdi CD player, NAC102, NAP180 + Hicap, £3,000. Meridian 200/203 CD and DAC £500. All excellent condition and boxed. Call (01905) 767248.
- Philips 950 CD player (£350) £100. Mordaunt Short MS10 speakers (£150) £40. Both mint and boxed, could post. Call (01278) 782622.
- Pioneer A300R Precision plus new Tom Evans modification, as reviewed in *HFC*, £289. Rotel 971 CD player, £275. Moth 30 preamp, £180. Call (01582) 724414.
- Pioneer PD-S901 CD player, top-of-the-range quality, mint, (£500) £250. Pioneer A-300X amp, award winner, never used, boxed, (£200+) bargain at £100. Call (0118) 941 0771.
- ProAc Studio Two speakers, black ash, standmounted (includes Target stands), two-way, VGC. £350 obo. Call (0171) 715 8374 (weekdays).
- Rega Elan MkII, black, excellent condition, boxed, £225 ono. Call (0402) 958344 (day) or (01372) 742477 (eves).
- Rega RB300, mint, can post, £90. JBL 4312 Mk2, 1 yr old, unused for 8 months, mint, boxed, (£1,000) £795. Call (01273) 749304.
- Revox A76 tuner. Superb, teak and brushed aluminium. Instructions, detailed and musical sound, £435 ono. Call (01202) 481386.
- Sony CDP-X3000ES CD player, £299. MDR-CD1700 headphones, £69. Sharp recordable 701 MD walkman

- £89. Grado RA-1 headphone amp, new, £259. Call (0115) 913 8607.
- Sony CDP-716E (black), as new, plus remote and instruction book, £100. Call (01633) 882215.
- Sony TA-F30ES amp, £300. Tascam DA20 DAT recorder, £495. Philips DCC 900 DCC recorder, £100. All mint. Call (01803) 865406.
- Stax Lambda Nova Basic headphones, ex cond, £325 ono. (*HFC* Best Buy). Call (01782) 744875.
- Tannoy Mercury M2, £80. Atacama SE20, £40. NAD 3020i, £50. Sherwood CD5010R, £100. JPW Gold monitors, £50. All as new, boxed, instructions. Call (0121) 243 6886.
- Teac TH-300 tuner, £150. Technics SL10 turntable £495. Nakamichi CR7E £1,200. Money back if not happy. Call (01202) 481386.
- Trichord Revelation (Clock 3) CD player, little used, boxed, £500 ono. Call (01273) 305176.
- Two 5m lengths of Linn K20 speaker cable. Offers? Call (0121) 476 8507.
- Yamaha CX2 control amp and MX2 power amp. 2x150W, 12 months old, £750. Call (01925) 498874.
- 1980 Sony cassette deck, TC-K75, 3 head. VGC, manual and boxed, £150. Call (01903) 247779.

## WANTED

- *Hi-Fi Choice* November 1998 (issue 183) £5 plus postage. Call (01328) 738097.
- Musical Fidelity P180 power amp, cash waiting. Call Steve (0115) 840 0047 after 7pm.



## BUYING TIPS

Buying secondhand can be a great way to pick up a bargain. A formerly-expensive secondhand component might well prove a better long-term bet than a brand-new product engineered down to a price. Do some research on which brands and products have a good service back-up, so if something does go wrong, you can get it fixed. Unless you purchase from a secondhand hi-fi dealer, you're unlikely to get any warranty. So it's up to you to ensure the fitness of any gear that you buy. Products such as speakers should be less prone to breakdown than amplifiers, and amps should be more reliable than CD players. But any abused component could be troublesome – have a proper dem, and judge the seller as well as the goods!



MISSION MISSION MISSION MISSION



The Mission 752 Freedom is available at the following authorized dealers . . . .



To advertise on this page please call Clare at Hi-Fi Choice on 0171 917 3935

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# 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.

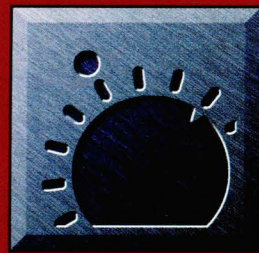
**STEP 1 DISCOVER** which products fall within your budget by using our Price Guide, which starts on this page. The product listing is updated using manufacturers' data every other month, and aims to include every hi-fi component currently available in the UK. (But please fax us on 0171-917 5512 with 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 AM1100	Ⓜ 50W	230
AMC 3020	Ⓜ 20W	100
AMC 3025A	Ⓜ 30W	140
AMC 3050A	Ⓜ 45W	170
Arcam Alpha One	Ⓜ 35W	230
Ariston AX910	Ⓜ 30W	80
Cambridge A1 Mk III	Ⓜ 30W	100
Cambridge A1 Mk3 SE	Ⓜ 30W	120
Cambridge A3i	Ⓜ 60W	200
Cambridge AS00RC	Ⓜ 50W	200
Denon PMA-250SE	Ⓜ 30W	140
Denon PMA-350SE	Ⓜ 50W	180
Denon PMA-535R	Ⓜ 50W	230
Denon PMA-100M	Ⓜ 80W	240
Goodmans Delta 900A	Ⓜ 100W	130
H/K HK630	Ⓜ 40W	230
H/K HK3270	Ⓜ 65W	250
JVC AX-A372BK	Ⓜ 40W	200
JVC AX-R5BK	Ⓜ 45W	200
Kenwood KA-1080	Ⓜ 60W	140
Kenwood KA-3080R	Ⓜ 70W	170
Kenwood KAF-3010R	Ⓜ 70W	180
Marantz PM-48	Ⓜ 50W	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 C520	Ⓜ 40W	200
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-407R	Ⓜ 45W	230
Pioneer A-405R	Ⓜ 45W	250
Rega Brio	Ⓜ 30W	229
Rotel RA921	Ⓜ 20W	100
Rotel RA931	Ⓜ 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	230
Sony TA-FE210	Ⓜ 40W	130
Sony TA-FE320R	Ⓜ 60W	150
Sony TA-F248E	Ⓜ 50W	200
Teac AE-2000	Ⓜ 50W	180
Teac AR-600	Ⓜ 90W	200
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

Arcam Alpha 7R	Ⓜ 40W	280
Arcam Alpha 8R	Ⓜ 50W	300
Arcam Alpha 9	Ⓜ 70W	500
Audio Analogue Puccini	Ⓜ 40W	475
Audioagram MB1	Ⓜ 40W	493
Aura VA-100 II	Ⓜ 70W	350
Creek 4330	Ⓜ 40W	279
Creek 4330R	Ⓜ 40W	355
Creek 5250	Ⓜ 50W	450
Cymbol CA1	Ⓜ 40W	499
Cyrus SL	Ⓜ 50W	398
Denon PMA-735R	Ⓜ 65W	300
Denon PMA-1500R	Ⓜ 70W	500
EMF Audio Sequel	Ⓜ 50W	450
H/K HK650	Ⓜ 60W	330
Kenwood KA-5090R	Ⓜ 65W	300
Magnum IA120	Ⓜ 65W	265
Magnum IA170	Ⓜ 96W	330
Magnum IA170SE	Ⓜ 90W	430
Marantz PM-68	Ⓜ 90W	300

Marantz PM-66 Kl Sig.	Ⓜ 50W	400
Micromega Minium Series 2	Ⓜ 40W	400
Monrio Asty	Ⓜ 55W	400
Musical Fidelity E11	Ⓜ 60W	300
Musical Fidelity X-A1	Ⓜ 50W	480
Musical Fidelity A2	Ⓜ 25W	500
Myryad T-40	Ⓜ 50W	400
NAD 314	Ⓜ 35W	260
NAD 317	Ⓜ 80W	470
Onkyo A9210	Ⓜ 40W	260
Onkyo A921	Ⓜ 50W	350
Onkyo A922	Ⓜ 70W	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
Shearman 2.5	Ⓜ 35W	499
Sony TA-FB920R	Ⓜ 65W	300
Sony TA-FA30ES	Ⓜ 80W	400
Sony TA-F3000ES	Ⓜ 40W	500
Talk Electronics Storm 1	Ⓜ 50W	500
Teac AH-500	Ⓜ 50W	280
Technics SU-A800D Mk2	Ⓜ 55W	300
Technics SU-A900D Mk2	Ⓜ 70W	400
Thule Audio Spirit IA60	Ⓜ 60W	449
Token K50	Ⓜ 55W	350
Yamaha AX-592	Ⓜ 100W	280

### £501 TO £700

Alchemist Kraken APD6A	Ⓜ 55W	600
Alchemist Nemesis	Ⓜ 80W	700
Audio Analogue Puccini SE	Ⓜ 40W	635
Audio Note Kanji Line SE	Ⓜ 9W	699
Audio Note First Integrated	Ⓜ 40W	699
Audioagram MB2	Ⓜ 60W	599
CR Dev CR324se	Ⓜ 150W	569
CR Dev Kalypto	Ⓜ 15W	599
CR Dev CR325	Ⓜ 175W	699
Creek 5250SE	Ⓜ 60W	665
Cyrus IIII	Ⓜ 50W	598
Densen Beat B-100 MkII	Ⓜ 60W	650
Exposure XX Super	Ⓜ 55W	700
Gamma Gemini	Ⓜ 12W	699
H/K HK690	Ⓜ 100W	530
Hi Q Sound MCI	Ⓜ 30W	565
JoLida 202	Ⓜ 40W	695
LFD Integrated 0	Ⓜ 50W	549
Linn Majik (Line)	Ⓜ 33W	650
Lynwood Opal	Ⓜ 80W	685
Magnum IA200	Ⓜ 100W	599
Magnum Class A	Ⓜ 85W	690
Micromega Tempo 1	Ⓜ 50W	700
Musical Fidelity A220	Ⓜ 50W	700
Myryad MI 120	Ⓜ 60W	600
Naim Nait 3	Ⓜ 30W	590
Orelle SA-100RX	Ⓜ 75W	649
Primare A20 Mk II	Ⓜ 70W	600
Quad 77 Integrated	Ⓜ 85W	700
Rose Scion	Ⓜ 65W	615
Shearman Phase 2	Ⓜ 50W	689
Sugden Audition T	Ⓜ 65W	549
Talk Electronics Storm 2	Ⓜ 50W	650
Teac AB-X7R	Ⓜ 50W	700
Thule Audio Spirit IA100	Ⓜ 100W	600
Thule Audio Spirit IA60B	Ⓜ 60W	699

### £701 TO £1,000

Alchemist Nexus	Ⓜ 50W	799
Alchemist Forseti Integrated	Ⓜ 100W	1,000
Arcam Alpha 10	Ⓜ 100W	800
Aria S2	Ⓜ 12W	1,000
Audio Note Oto Line PP	Ⓜ 12W	950
AVI S2000MI	Ⓜ 100W	999
Copland CSAB	Ⓜ 60W	899
Credo IMP702	Ⓜ 70W	850
Credo IMP703	Ⓜ 70W	1,000
Electrocompaniet ECI-2	Ⓜ 50W	995
Exposure XV Super	Ⓜ 55W	800
Exposure RCOV	Ⓜ 60W	1,000
Hofli Audis Signature	Ⓜ 65W	750
LFD 0 LE Integrated	Ⓜ 60W	799
Linn Majik (Phone)	Ⓜ 33W	800
Magnum Class A SE	Ⓜ 80W	795
Marantz PM-17	Ⓜ 60W	900
Meridian 551	Ⓜ 55W	795
Micromega Tempo 2	Ⓜ 70W	900
Musical Fidelity X-A100R	Ⓜ 75W	999
Naim Nait 3 R	Ⓜ 30W	780
Opera Aida	Ⓜ 60W	795
Pioneer A-07	Ⓜ 80W	999
Rega Elicit	Ⓜ 70W	730
Roksan Caspian	Ⓜ 70W	795
Shearman Phase 2 Reference	Ⓜ 50W	799
Sonneteer Alabaster	Ⓜ 50W	900
Sugden A21a Int	Ⓜ 25W	799
Sugden Audition C	Ⓜ 60W	799
TAG McLaren 60i	Ⓜ 60W	800
TAG McLaren 60Ri	Ⓜ 60W	999
Thule Audio Spirit IA150B	Ⓜ 150W	999

### £1001 TO £2,000

Aria Simply Four P	Ⓜ 24W	1,595
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# H I - F I P R I C E G U I D E

Aria Simply Four T	5	11W	1,650
Art Audio Integra		30W	1,499
ATC SIA2-150	4	150W	1,984
Audio Note Soro Line PP		20W	1,200
Audio Note Oto Line SE	4	12W	1,200
Audio Note Oto Phono SE	5	12W	1,500
Audio Note Soro Line SE		18W	1,699
BB Audio BB 30-60	5	30W	1,495
Beam-Echo SA-50	5	50W	1,950
Bow Technologies Wazoo	5	50W	1,795
Bryston B-60	5	60W	1,249
Copland CSA14	5	60W	1,199
Copland CSA28	5	60W	1,249
Copland CTA402	5	35W	1,698
CR Dev Romulus V3	5	35W	1,198
CR Dev Athena	4	38W	1,499
CR Dev Remus V3	5	60W	1,989
Credo LIM 702			1,191
Credo LIM 703			1,249
Densen DM-10	6	75W	1,375
EAR 859	6	13W	1,999
EAR 834	6	40W	1,999
Golden Tube Audio SI-50 MkII	5	50W	1,100
Graaf Venticinque	5	20W	1,790
Jadis Orchestra	5		1,345
LFD Integrated 1	5	65W	1,099
Marantz PM-17K1 Sig	6	60W	1,300
Meracur Intrare	6	60W	1,095
NAD S300	5	100W	1,900
Præcisia Sonoro	5	100W	1,800
Pmre A30.1	6	100W	1,500
Restek Fantasy 2	6	100W	1,499
Sonic Frontiers Anthem Integrated	6	25W	1,299
T+A R1200R	5	90W	1,750
Thule Audio Space IA250B	5	250W	1,799
Woodside ISA230 Line	5	30W	1,099
Woodside ISA230 Disc	4	30W	1,249
YBA Integre DT	6		1,650

## OVER £2,000

Adyton Opera	4	50W	2,595
AMP Flux System 2	5	50W	3,000
Aria Simply 845	5	24W	3,195
Audio Note Meishu Line		9W	2,750
Audio Note Ongaku	5	26W	56,000
Audio Research CA50			3,399
Belcanto SET40		40W	4,450
Belcanto Orfeo 30SI		35W	5,450
Cary CAD-300SEI	4	11W	3,995
Conrad-Johnson CAV-50	5	50W	2,495
EAR V20	6	24W	2,495
Electrocompaniet ECI-1	6	100W	2,195
Gamma Rhythm	5	18W	2,499
Gamma Rhythm Ref	4	20W	3,499
Gamma Moment	5	40W	19,999
Jadis DA30	5	30W	2,690
Jadis DA60	5	60W	4,483
Krell KAV300i	5	150W	2,495
Krell KAV300r			3,333
Mclntosh MA6400E	5	100W	3,999
Mclntosh MA6800E		150W	5,999
Meracur Onesta	4	75W	2,595
Musical Fidelity A1001	6	200W	2,500
Pioneer A-09	6	45W	4,000
Rowland Concentra	6	100W	5,500
Sonus Faber Musica			2,295
T+A R1500R	6	135W	2,015
Tube Tech Unisis Sig. Int.		30W	2,300
Tube Tech Synergy PPS	5	150W	6,900

## PREAMPS

<b>KEY</b>			
5 (etc) - Number of line-level inputs.			
Ph - Phono input fitted as standard			
(may be an option on some other models).			
<b>UP TO £500</b>			

Arcam Alpha 9C	6		400
Aria Simply Phono		Ph	500
Art Audio Minuet			499
Audio Analogue Bellini	5	Ph	495
Audio Note M Zero	5		299
Beam-Echo PP-21		Ph	499
Bryston BP1	1	Ph	438
CR Dev Themis		Ph	349
Creek OBH-9			160
Creek P43/R	6		350
Creek P52	6		499
Cmson CS610C	6	Ph	450
Cyrus aEQ7	6	Ph	498
Densen DP-Drive/DP-02			350
DPA Enl'ment phono		Ph	275
EAR 834P		Ph	349
EAR 834L	5		449
EAR 834P/MC		Ph	499
Electrocompaniet ECP-1		Ph	495
Henley HMC50			150
Henley HMC100			350
Hi Q Sound LCP2			149
LFD Mistral Linestage	5		449
LFD LSO Linestage	5		499
Lumley PP70	6		345
Lumley PP1	6		345

Magnum MP120	6		330
Magnum MP660	5		500
Magnum MP330	6		500
Monrio ADN-N	6	Ph	295
Monrio Asty L	5		500
Moth 30 Passive	4		149
Moth 30 Phono	4	Ph	249
Moth 30 Line stage	1		349
Musical Fidelity X10-D	1		120
Musical Fidelity X-LP	1	Ph	130
Musical Fidelity X-PRE	4		200
Musical Fidelity E20	7	Ph	400
NAD PP-1	6	Ph	40
NAD 114	6	Ph	270
NAD 116	6	Ph	430
Naim Prefix	6		360
Naim NAC92	6		485
NVA P50	4		350
Parasound P/HP-100	1	Ph	130
Parasound P/HP-850	4	Ph	400
QED Discsaver DS-1	1	Ph	35
Rega EOS	5	Ph	398
Rega Cursa	5	Ph	450
Roksan Artaxenes 10	5	Ph	395
Rose RV-23	5	Ph	450
Rotel RQ970BX			130
Rotel RC971	5		150
Rotel RC972	5		225
Sunfire Phono	6	Ph	430
Talk Electronics Hurricane 1	6		500
Technics SU-C1000 Mk2	6	Ph	300
Thule Audio Sprint PR100	5		400
Trilogy 905			375
Trilogy 904		Ph	375
Trilogy 900	5	Ph	499

## £501 TO £2,000

Adyton Chorus	6		1,995
Alchemist Kraken Pre	6		549
Alchemist Forseti Pre	6		999
Alchemist Signature Pre	6		1,499
Aria Feather One			795
Aria Mystery Two			1,750
Aria Mystery One			1,750
Art Audio Headline	6		700
Art Audio VPL			741
Art Audio Conductor Phono			750
Art Audio VP1			952
Art Audio Conductor	1		1,250
Art Audio Conductor Export	1		2,000
Audio Note M1 Line			550
Audio Note M1 RIAA	Ph		550
Audio Note M2 Line			999
Audio Note Discovery			999
Audio Note M2RIAA	Ph		1,099
Audio Prism Mantissa	5		1,995
Audio Research LS8			1,449
Audio Research PH3	Ph		1,490
Audio Research LS9			1,949
Audio Synthesis Pro Passion	1		595
Audio Synthesis Passion	1		695
Audio Synthesis Passion 85	4		1,295
Audio Synthesis Passion 8M	6		1,695
Aura CA-200	Ph		700
AVI S2000MP	6	Ph	949
AVI S2000MP+P	6	Ph	1,199
Beam-Echo SP-21	4	Ph	1,116
Bryston 4	6		642
Bryston BPS	6		889
Bryston BP20	6		1,126
Bryston BP-25			1,326
Canary Audio CA-606	4		1,295
Canary Audio CA-601	4		1,595
Cary SLP-50	5		995
Cary SLP-74	5		1,795
Cary PH-301	5	Ph	1,795
Chord Phono		Ph	1,898
Chord CPA 1800	6		1,905
Concordant Exhilarant			900
Concordant Exquisite			1,950
Conrad-Johnson PV-10AL	5		995
Conrad-Johnson PV-10A	5	Ph	1,295
Conrad-Johnson PV-12AL	5		1,990
Conrad-Johnson EF-1	5	Ph	1,990
Conrad-Johnson PF-2	5	Ph	1,990
Copland CSA303	5	Ph	1,099
Copland CTA301 MkII	5	Ph	1,249
CR Dev Carmenta	5		659
CR Dev Argento	5	Ph	699
Credo CMP004			1,246
Credo CMP005			1,876
Cyrus aCA7	6		798
Cyrus aEQ7/PSX-R	6	Ph	826
Densen Beat B-200	7		1,000
Densen DM-20	6		1,200
DNM 3 Start	4	Ph	1,000
DNM 3A Start	4	Ph	1,650
DPA Enlightenment pre			795
Dynavector L200	1		995
Dynavector P100	6	Ph	1,495
Dynavector L100	6		1,995
Earmax Pre	5		1,895
ECA Vista S	7		760
ECA Vista HD	6		880
ECA Prisma	6		880
Electrocompaniet EC-4.5	6	Ph	1,195

Electrocompaniet EC-4.6	6		1,750
Exposure XIX			800
Exposure XVII	5	Ph	850
Golden Tube Audio SEP-2	5		990
Golden Tube Audio SEP-3	5		1,995
Graaf WFB Two	5	Ph	1,350
Graaf WFB One	5	Ph	1,750
Henley HMC200		Ph	600
Hi Q Sound MCB2	5		545
Hi Q Sound MCL2	4		645
Jadis DPL2	6		1,590
Krell KAV250p	5		1,999
LFD MCI Phonostage		Ph	949
LFD L51 Linestage	5		999
LFD MC2 Phonostage		Ph	1,499
LFD LS2 Linestage	5		1,599
LFD LSB Linestage	5		1,999
Linn Wakonda	5		750
Linn Linto	5		850
Linn Kairn	6		1,400
Lumley LV1.5	6		895
Lumley LV1	6		1,150
Lumley PV1.5	6	Ph	1,700
Lumley PV1	6	Ph	1,700
Matisse Atom	5	Ph	1,000
Mclntosh C712	6	Ph	1,999
Meracur Ingredi	6		925
Mendian 501	6		695
Meridian 562	6		765
Mendian 562V	5		995
Mendian 502	7		1,295
Michell Iso/Lithos	6		599
Michell Orca	6		1,650
Michi RHC-10			795
Michi RHQ-10		Ph	1,150
Michi RHA-10			1,150
Micromega Tempo P	7		1,150
Muse Model 3	5		1,990
Musical Fidelity F25	6	Ph	1,500
Myryad MP100	6		600
NAD 118			1,000
Naim NAC92R	6		650
Naim NAC72	5		745
Naim NAC102	5		1,080
Quad 77 Pre	4	Ph	850
Quad 99 Pre	4	Ph	1,300
Rega Hal	5	Ph	998
Roksan Artaxenes X/DS1.5	5	Ph	1,150
Roksan ROK-L2.5	5		1,250
Rose RV-23S	4	Ph	525
Rotel RC995	5		525
Shearman Phase 6 Pre	6		999
Shearman Phase 1 Pre Ref	6		1,499
Siemel MC20	6	Ph	650
Siemel MM20	6	Ph	650
Siemel TU10	6		1,599
Siemel TR20	6		1,599
Sonic Frontiers Anthem Pre IP	6	Ph	899
Sonic Frontiers Phono 1	6	Ph	1,999
Sonographe SC26	5		995
Sugden Audition Pre	5		549
Sugden Masterdass Pre	7		1,995
Sumo Athena II Line	6		767
Sumo Athena IIB/II LS	6		987
Sumo Athena III	6		987
Sumo Artemis uP	6		1,595
Sunfire The Classic	6		1,630
T+A P1200R	5		965
TAG McLaren PA10	5	Ph	849
TAG McLaren PPA20	5	Ph	1,499
TAG McLaren PA20R	5		1,499
Talk Electronics Hurricane 2	6		650
Talk Electronics Hurricane 3	6		900
Talk Electronics Hurricane 4	6		1,550
Talk Electronics Hurricane 5	6		1,900
Technics SU-C2000	6	Ph	700
Thorens TTP-2000F	6	Ph	699
Thule Audio Sprint PR150B	6		699
Trilogy 901	6		750
Trilogy 906	6	Ph	995
Trilogy 902	6		1,595
Tron Retro	4		1,000
Tron Nucleus Phono	5	Ph	2,000
Tron Nucleus	5		2,000
Tube Tech Seer Line	5		935
Tube Tech Mac Phono	5	Ph	1,150
Tube Tech Prophet	5		1,970
van Den Hul Pre-amp	5		1,700
Wilson Benesh Stage One	5	Ph	995
Woodside SC27 Line	5		949
Woodside SC26 Line	5		1,557
XTC PRE-1	6		1,250
Yamaha CX-2	6	Ph	650
YBA 3	6		1,199
YBA Integre	6		1,199
YBA 2	6		1,999

## OVER £2,000

Adyton Temper	6		2,495
Adyton Modus	6		2,695
ATC SCA2	6		2,599
Audio Note M3Line	6		2,650
Audio Prism Avanti	6		7,995
Audio Research LS15	6		3,399
Audio Research LS25	6		4,999
Audio Research REF 1	6		8,495
Boulder L3AE	6		2,100

Boulder L5AE			3,400
Boulder LSM			3,800
Boulder 2010	4		22,000
Canary Audio CA-801	4		3,750
Cary SLP-98L	5		2,595
Chord CPA 2200	5		2,530
Chord CPA 3200	6		3,785
Chord CPA 4000	6		6,675
Conrad-Johnson PF-R	5		2,490
Conrad-Johnson PV-12A	5	Ph	2,590
Conrad-Johnson Premier 15	5	Ph	3,995
Conrad-Johnson Premier 14	5		4,495
Conrad-Johnson Premier 16LS	5		7,995
Conrad-Johnson Art	5		14,995
CAT SL1 Ultimate	5	Ph	5,950
CR Dev Kastor	6		2,995
Credo LPR 001			2,815
DNM 3C Primus	5	Ph	2,550
DNM 3C Twin	5	Ph	3,800
DNM 3C Six	5	Ph	5,050
EAR 802MC	5	Ph	2,599
EAR G88	5	Ph	9,999
EAR P			



## POWER AMPS (CONTINUED)

Arcam Alpha 10P	100W	600	Shearman Phase 5 Mono	100W	1,598	Gamma Space Ref	18W	7,999	Apertura Model A	469.00
Aria Power 35	35W	1,500	Sonic Frontiers Anthem Amp 1	40W	1,299	Gamma Aeon Ref	70W	49,999	Argento Copper I/C	105.00
Art Audio Quintet	15W	1,393	Sonographe SA250	125W	1,195	Golden Tube Audio SE-100	100W	2,495	Argento Silver I/C	225.00
Art Audio Quintet SE MB	??	1,500	Sonographe SA400	220W	1,695	Graaf 5050	50W	2,100	Art Yam Church 5000	515.00
Art Audio Concerto	50W	1,669	Sugden Audition Power		549	Graaf GM20	60W	2,850	Audio Note AN-A	18.00
Audio Analogue Donizetti	60W	595	Sugden A21a Power	25W	649	Graaf GM100	100W	4,250	Audio Note AN-C	35.00
Audio Note The P	40W	550	Sumo Polaris III	164W	950	Graaf GM200	200W	7,500	Audio Note AN-S	99.00
Audio Note P Zero	9W	599	Sumo Model Five	60W	1,975	Jadis D48	80W	2,990	Audio Note AN-V	179.00
Audio Note P1	12W	750	Sumo Andromeda III	240W	1,975	Jadis D47	100W	4,790	Audio Note AN-Vx	450.00
Audio Note P1SE	12W	999	T+A A1210	90W	875	Jadis JA30	30W	5,180	Audioquest Jade	30.00
Audio Note P2	1,000	1,000	T+A PA1220R	100W	1,445	Jadis SE300B	10W	7,980	Audioquest Turquoise 2	40.00
Audio Note P2SE	18W	1,499	T+A A1500	140W	1,535	Jadis JA80	60W	9,580	Audioquest Topaz x2	59.95
Audio Note Conqueror	8W	1,599	T+A PA1500R	135W	1,665	Jadis JA100	100W	10,298	Audioquest Ruby x3	80.00
Audio Prism Antares	35W	1,695	TAG McLaren 60P	60W	849	Jadis JA200	160W	13,980	Audioquest Quartz x3	125.00
Audio Research D130	130W	1,890	TAG McLaren 100P	100W	1,099	Jadis JA500	400W	19,990	Audioquest Opal x3	200.00
Audio Research VT60	35W	1,999	Talk Electronics Tornado 2	65W	600	Krell KAV250a	250W	3,145	Audioquest Emerald x3	260.00
Aura PA-100	100W	700	Talk Electronics Tornado 3	100W	750	Krell KAV500/2	100W	3,195	Audioquest Lapis x3	399.00
Aura PA-200	110W	1,200	Talk Electronics Tornado 4	110W	1,100	Krell KAV500i	200W	4,499	Cable Talk Improved 2/CD	26.00
Aura PA-200 C	100W	1,250	Technics SE-A2000	100W	1,100	Krell FPB200	200W	5,998	Cable Talk Advanced 2	34.95
AVI S2000MM	150W	1,399	Thorens TTA-2000	30W	599	Krell FPB250m	250W	8,994	Cable Talk Improved 2/Tape	47.00
Bryston 2B-LP	75W	750	Thule Audio Spirit PA100	100W	600	Krell FPB300	300W	9,500	Cable Talk Monitor 2.1	50.00
Bryston 3B-ST PRO	150W	1,160	Thule Audio Spirit PA150B	150W	699	Krell FPB600	600W	12,900	Cable Talk Studio 2	65.00
Bryston 3B-ST	150W	1,160	Trilogy 948	50W	1,895	Krell FPB350m	350W	15,994	Cable Talk Reference 2	85.00
Bryston THX3B	150W	1,262	Trilogy 948T	22W	1,895	Krell FPB650m	650W	23,800	Cable Talk Broadcast 2	100.00
Bryston 7B-ST PRO	500W	1,545	Tube Tech Synrx	45W	1,150	Lexicon 225	250W	2,500	Cable Talk Reference 2	150.00
Bryston 4B-ST PRO	300W	1,756	Tube Tech Unisis Sig. Pwr	30W	1,900	Lexicon 501	500W	5,000	Cable Talk Signature 2 Gold	300.00
Bryston 7B-ST	500W	1,815	Woodside SA240	40W	1,199	Linn Klout	80W	2,400	Cambridge Atlantic	10.00
Bryston THX4B	300W	1,850	Woodside MA100	100W	1,733	Lumley M125	120W	3,750	Cambridge Arcic	20.00
Bryston THX7B	500W	1,886	Woodside STA50	50W	1,880	Lumley M250	250W	7,500	Cambridge Pacific	30.00
Canary Audio CA-706	40W	1,695	XTC POW-2	150W	1,450	Magnum Class A mono	180W	2,450	Cambridge Studio Reference	40.00
Canary Audio CA-708	50W	1,950	Yamaha MX-2	150W	750	Magnum A200SE	275W	3,750	Cambridge Silver Spirit 40	70.00
Chord SPM 400	100W	1,425	YBA 3 stereo		1,299	Mana Stealth	300W	4,500	Cambridge Silver Spirit 60	100.00
Chord SPM 600	130W	1,850				Mark Levinson 334	125W	5,495	Cardas Audio 300B-Microtwin	115.00
Conrad-Johnson MV-55	50W	1,995	<b>OVER £2,000</b>	120W	3,495	Mark Levinson 335	250W	7,495	Cardas Audio QuadLink-Five	200.00
Copland CSA515	150W	1,299	Adyton Cordis 1.6	280W	12,995	Mark Levinson 336	350W	8,995	Cardas Audio Cardas Cross	360.00
Copland CTA505	67W	1,899	Adyton Cordis 3B	24W	3,500	Mark Levinson 33H	150W	19,395	Cardas Audio Hexlink-Five C	530.00
CR Dev Amphion	12W	1,949	Aria Smart 845	24W	2,400	Matisse Ref Monoblocks	180W	8,000	Cardas Audio Hexlink Golden-5 C	600.00
Credo PMP 804		1,876	Aria Smart 300B	24W	4,250	McIntosh MC150	150W	3,499	Cardas Audio Golden Cross	700.00
Creek AS25E	100W	599	Art Audio Tempo	30W	2,499	McIntosh MC300	300W	3,999	ChordCo Chrysalis	40.00
Crimson CS630C	100W	800	Art Audio Quintet SE	??	2,500	McIntosh MC500	500W	8,999	ChordCo Cobra 2	55.00
Cyrus pA7	150W	948	Art Audio Maestro	100W	3,524	McIntosh MC1000	999W	14,999	ChordCo Siren	69.00
Densen B-30	100W	800	ATC SPA2-200PRO	200W	2,056	Meracur Tentare	75W	2,245	ChordCo Chameleon 2	90.00
Densen DM-30	100W	1,200	ATC SPA2-150	200W	2,699	Meracur Cantare	-W	8,995	ChordCo Chorus	199.00
DNM PA Start	45W	1,000	Audio Note P3	9W	2,150	Muse Model 160 Ser. II	160W	2,290	Connections UK Ultra	28.00
DNM PA1 Start	45W	1,650	Audio Note Quest	9W	2,750	Muse Model 150	125W	2,690	Connections UK Midas	39.00
DPA Enlightenment pwr	100W	995	Audio Note Yubi	18W	3,850	Muse Model 175 Ser. II	175W	3,490	Connections UK HD	46.00
Dynavector HX75	75W	1,995	Audio Note Conquest	18W	4,450	Muse Model 300 Ser. II	300W	3,990	DBF Acoustics Black Velvet	30.00
Earmax Power	25W	1,895	Audio Note Tomei	30W	8,500	Musical Fidelity F16	200W	2,500	DBF Acoustics Black Velvet SE	40.00
ECA Lectern S	50W	880	Audio Note Neiro	7W	11,360	Musical Fidelity F19	300W	4,000	DBF Acoustics Azure SE	75.00
ECA Lectern HD	50W	1,480	Audio Note Ankoru	60W	14,500	Papworth M100	100W	2,645	DNM-Reson TC75	35.00
Electrocompaniet AW60FTT	60W	1,095	Audio Prism Debut Mk II	35W	2,495	Papworth M200	200W	3,825	DPA Slink	41.00
Exposure XVIII Super	70W	850	Audio Prism Mana	100W	12,995	Roksan ROK-M1.5	160W	2,250	DPA White Slink	75.00
Golden Tube Audio SE-40	40W	1,100	Audio Research VT50	50W	2,950	Rowland Model 2	75W	4,999	DPA Black Slink	220.00
Golden Tube Audio SE-300B MkII	8W	1,790	Audio Research 100.2	100W	3,395	Rowland Model 6	150W	10,999	Ecosse Ref CA1	65.00
Graaf Venticinque P	25W	1,425	Audio Research VT100 MkII	100W	4,950	Rowland Model 8T	250W	12,499	Ecosse Ref CS1	75.00
Hi Q Sound MCM	70W	715	Audio Research VT200	200W	8,790	Rowland Model 9T	350W	27,999	Ecosse Ref MA2	155.00
Jadis DA5	40W	1,749	Audio Synthesis Desire Decade	200W	2,495	Shearman Phase 1 Pwr Ref	100W	2,399	Ecosse Ref MS2	165.00
Krell KAV150a	150W	1,990	Beam-Echo DL7-35	30W	3,525	Siemel TA20	50W	2,350	Ecosse Ref US1	550.00
Lexicon 212	120W	1,850	Belcanto SET40	40W	3,450	Sonic Frontiers Power 1	55W	2,499	Expressive Tech IC-1	700.00
LFD PA1 Powerstage	60W	999	Belcanto Orfeo 30S	35W	4,750	Sonic Frontiers Power 2	110W	4,999	Gamma Wow Balance	799.00
LFD PA2 Powerstage	75W	1,599	Belcanto SET80	80W	6,750	Sonic Frontiers Power 3	220W	8,599	Goertz M1 Interconnect	145.00
LFD PA2M Powerstage	90W	1,999	Border Patrol 300B SE	9W	3,995	Sugden Masterclass Power	75W	2,995	GT Audio Intercon	190.00
Linn LK100	50W	650	Border Patrol 300B SE (WE)	10W	4,495	Sumo Model Ten/M	240W	4,200	Harmonix HS-102	135.00
Linn LK240	120W	750	Boulder 102AE	100W	2,800	Sunfire Load Invariant	300W	2,280	Harmonix HS-101	265.00
Linn AV5105	100W	1,200	Boulder 102M	100W	3,100	Sunfire Signature	600W	2,600	Henley HSP10	20.00
Lynwood Ruby	120W	985	Boulder 500AE	150W	4,995	T+A A3000	190W	2,850	Henley HSP50	35.00
Magnum MF330	150W	685	Boulder 500M	150W	5,500	TAG McLaren 125M	145W	2,399	Henley HSP100	65.00
Magnum MF660	125W	825	Boulder 2060	600W	25,000	Talk Electronics Tornado 5	200W	2,100	Henley HSP200	95.00
Magnum A500SE	200W	1,485	Boulder 2050	999W	43,500	Trilogy 958T	45W	3,395	Henley HSP250	150.00
Magnum A50SE	200W	1,595	Bryston THX8B	100W	2,385	Trilogy 958	100W	3,395	Hybrook Black Flash	39.00
McIntosh MC7100	100W	1,999	Canary Audio CA-304	40W	2,695	Tube Tech Genesis Sig.	100W	4,700	Insert Audio Focus 1.2	21.50
Meracur Ciere	60W	1,095	Canary Audio CA-301	22W	2,995	Tube Tech Synergy DMA	150W	6,400	Insert Audio IC100 Mk II	46.95
Meridian 555	60W	750	Canary Audio CA-307	24W	5,495	van Den Hul Power amp	65W	2,500	Insert Audio Image 5.1	84.95
Meridian 556	100W	895	Cary CAD-572SE	20W	2,495	XTC POW-1	2,250	2,250	Insert Audio Status 3.4	160.00
Meridian 557	200W	1,400	Cary CAD-300SE	12W	3,995	YBA 2 stereo	200W	2,200	Ixos 104	20.00
Meridian 505	160W	1,590	Cary 300SE Sig	12W	4,795	YBA 1 HC stereo		4,999	Ixos 1003	30.00
Michell Alecto Stereo	50W	1,150	Cary CAD-805	50W	8,995				Ixos Gamma 1002	39.95
Michell Alecto Mono	100W	1,950	Chord SPM 1000B	200W	2,920				Ixos 103	45.00
Michi RHB-05	100W	1,100	Chord SPM 1200B	250W	3,790				Ixos 102	60.00
Michi RHB-10	200W	2,000	Chord SPM 1200C	350W	4,210				Ixos 101	100.00
Micromega Amp	100W	1,150	Chord SPM 1400B mono	350W	8,420				Ixos 100X03	150.00
Monrio Asty P	100W	950	Chord SPM 5000	415W	14,570				Kimber PBj/Ulttraplate	68.00
Moth Stereo 60	60W	599	Conrad-Johnson MF2250	130W	2,295				Kimber KC1	96.00
Moth 30 Mono/100	100W	879	Conrad-Johnson MF-2500	250W	3,495				Kimber Hero	110.00
Muse Model 100	100W	1,490	Conrad-Johnson Premier 11A	70W	3,500				Kimber Silver Streak	180.00
Musical Fidelity X-A200	200W	1,000	Conrad-Johnson Premier 12	140W	6,900				Kimber KCAG	390.00
NAD 218THX	200W	850	Conrad-Johnson Premier 15X	150W	17,000				Kimber KCTG	720.00
Naim NAP140	45W	770	Conrad-Johnson Premier 8XS	150W	17,000				LAT International IC-50	37.00
Naim NAP180	60W	1,090	Conrad-Johnson Premier 8A	275W	17,000				LAT International IC-80 MkII	58.00
Naim NAP135	75W	1,705	CAT JL1	100W	18,000				LAT International IC-100 MkII	95.00
Naim NAP250	70W	1,705	CR Dev Artemis	35W	4,995				LAT International IC-200 Mk II	151.00
NVA A60	43W	560	Credo LPO 804		2,456				Lieder Chanson	340.00
Papworth TVA50	1,425	1,425	Credo LPO 455		2,676				Lieder Lek	420.00
Parasound HCA-1000A	125W	600	Credo LPO 155		6,983				Lieder Het Lied	420.00
Parasound HCA-1500A	205W	1,000	DNM PA3	50W	2,500				Lieder Song	580.00
Quad 77 Power	85W	600	DNM PA3S	23W	3,750				Lieder Maas	620.00
Quad 909	140W	800	Dynavector HX1.2	130W	3,995				Lieder Rijn	1,000.00
Quad 707	140W	800	EAR 861	32W	3,599				Lieder Waal	1,400.00
Quad 99 Monoblock	150W	1,200	EAR 509 Mk II	100W	3,999				Lumley Silver 12/2	115.00
Rega EXS	70W	598	EAR 519	100W	4,699					




Nordost Black Knight  
 Nordost Solar Wind  
 Nordost Blue Angel  
 Nordost Blue Heaven 1/2  
 Nordost Red Dawn  
 Nordost SPM  
 Nordost Quattrofil  
 Ortofon 7N interconnect  
 Precious Metals S550  
 Precious Metals S535  
 Precious Metals S552  
 Precious Metals S553  
 Precious Metals S5100  
 Precious Metals S5102  
 Precious Metals S5103  
 Precious Metals S5104  
 Precious Metals S5200  
 Precious Metals S5202  
 Precious Metals S5203  
 Precious Metals S5204  
 Prowire Silver  
 PAD Elementa  
 QED Qnect 2  
 QED Qnect 4S  
 Roksan ROK-Intercon  
 Shinpy Red Devil  
 Shinpy Red Star 2  
 Shinpy Black Star 2  
 Shinpy Pulsar 2  
 Shinpy Quasar 2  
 Siltech MC2-12  
 Siltech MC4-24S  
 Siltech FTM-35  
 Silver Sounds S52  
 Silver Sounds S51  
 Silver Tone Ex-Static  
 Silver Tone Sci-Fi  
 SME S2LB-4  
 SME S3LB-4  
 SME 4900A  
 SME 5900A  
 SonicLink Red  
 SonicLink Silver pink  
 SonicLink Black  
 SonicLink Lilac  
 SonicLink Brown  
 SonicLink Violet  
 SonicLink Maroon  
 SonicLink Blue Nickel  
 SonicLink Vermilion  
 SonicLink Red earth  
 SonicLink Black earth  
 SonicLink Blue earth  
 SonicLink Black Rhodium  
 Straight Wire Chorus  
 Straight Wire Sonata  
 Supra DAC-X  
 Supra EFF-ISL  
 Supra EFF-XLR  
 Tara Prism 3  
 Tara Prism 5  
 Tara Prism 8  
 Tara Prism 11  
 Tara Prism 22  
 Tara Prism CD  
 Tara Prism 33-i  
 Tara Prism 55  
 Tara RSC-CD  
 Tara RSC-Prime  
 Tara RSC-Ref Gen. 2  
 Tara RSC-Master Gen. 2  
 Tara RSC-Decade  
 Tara The 2  
 Tara The One  
 Transparent Cable Musicchord  
 Transparent Cable The Link  
 Transparent Cable Music Link  
 Trichord Pulsewire 75  
 Vampire Wire CC

60.00  
 84.95  
 98.00  
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 24.00

Vampire Wire CCC/II  
 Vampire Wire SC/II  
 Vampire Wire SC/IV  
 Vampire Wire A/2  
 Vampire Wire SL  
 van Den Hul Storm  
 van Den Hul PB5  
 van Den Hul Source HB  
 van Den Hul D102 III  
 van Den Hul Thunderline HB  
 van Den Hul First  
 van Den Hul Second  
 van Den Hul MC Gold  
 van Den Hul MC Silver IT  
 van Den Hul MC Silver IT Bal  
 Wireworld Orbit  
 Wireworld Solstice II  
 XLO Type 150  
 XLO Type 0.1

58.00  
 98.00  
 144.00  
 259.00  
 412.00  
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 210.00  
 240.00  
 400.00  
 1,240.00  
 1,560.00  
 30.00  
 40.00  
 50.00  
 180.00



**CABLES Digital Interconnects**

**KEY**

- Stranded construction.
- Solid-core construction.


Prices of interconnects are for a one-metre terminated pair.

Apertura Model B  
 Apertura Model A  
 Art Yam Church 5000  
 Audioquest Digital/video 1  
 Audioquest Digital/video 2  
 Audioquest Optilink X  
 Audioquest Digital PRO  
 Audioquest Optilink Pro  
 Audioquest Optilink Z  
 Cable Talk Digital 2  
 Cardas Audio Lightning  
 ChordCo Codac  
 ChordCo Optichord  
 ChordCo Prodac  
 DNM-Reson DIG100  
 DPA Opt-link  
 DPA Digi-link  
 Ecosse Ref MD2  
 Harmonix HS-101 DIG  
 Insert Audio Datalink  
 Insert Audio Optic 2.1  
 Insert Audio Datalink 700  
 Insert Audio Image 5.1  
 Ixos 105  
 Ixos 106  
 Kimber Opti-link  
 Kimber Illuminati DV-30  
 Kimber Illuminati D-60  
 Kimber Illuminati DX-50  
 Kimber Illuminati Orchid  
 LAT International DI-20-D  
 Monster Datalink 100

139.00  
 255.00  
 275.00  
 30.00  
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 25.00  
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 350.00  
 750.00  
 79.00  
 47.00

Monster Lightspeed 100  
 Moth Leyline Datalink  
 Nordost Moonglo  
 Nordost Silver Shadow  
 Precious Metals SD35  
 Precious Metals SD100  
 Precious Metals SD200  
 Precious Metals SD202  
 QED Digiflex  
 QED Optiflex  
 Roksan ROK-Intercon  
 Shinpy Digital  
 Siltech HF-6  
 SonicLink Green  
 Supra ZAC  
 Supra EFF-ID  
 Supra DAC-XLR  
 Theta Digital AT&T  
 Transparent Cable PDL  
 Trichord Pulsewire 75D  
 Vampire Wire DI/1  
 van Den Hul Source HB  
 van Den Hul Videolink  
 van Den Hul AES-EBU 110  
 van Den Hul First  
 van Den Hul Second

4700  
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 45.00  
 45.00  
 550.00  
 199.00  
 75.00  
 150.00  
 30.00  
 60.00  
 65.00  
 125.00  
 130.00



**Speaker Cables**

**KEY**

- Stranded construction.
- Solid-core construction.

Price per mono metre, unterminated.

Acoustic Energy AESC-C3  
 ALR/Jordan QMM  
 Apertura Silver  
 Argento Copper  
 Argento Copper Ref  
 Argento Silver  
 Argento Silver Ref  
 Art Yam Church M2000  
 Art Yam Church 5000  
 Audio Note AN-D  
 Audio Note AN-B  
 Audio Note AN-L  
 Audio Note AN-SP  
 Audio Note AN-SPx  
 Audioquest Type 2  
 Audioquest F-18  
 Audioquest Type 6+  
 Audioquest Indigo +  
 Audioquest Crystal +  
 Audioquest Forest +  
 Audioquest Argent +  
 Audioquest Clear 3  
 Cable Talk Theatre 2  
 Cable Talk The Flat One  
 Cable Talk Talk 3.1  
 Cable Talk Talk 4.1  
 Cable Talk Talk 3.1 Biwire  
 Cable Talk Concert 2.1

11.95  
 5.00  
 82.50  
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 96.00  
 204.00  
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 795.00  
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 75.00  
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 2.25  
 4.25  
 4.50  
 7.00



Let our experts help with your hi-fi problems. Send your query to 'Help' at the usual address.

Cable Talk Talk 4.1 Biwire  
 Cable Talk Symphony 3  
 Cable Talk Concert 2.1 Biwire  
 Cardas Audio 300B-Microtwin SC  
 Cardas Audio Quadlink-Five SC  
 Cardas Audio Cross SC  
 Cardas Audio Hexlink-Five SC  
 Cardas Audio Hexlink Golden5 SC  
 Cardas Audio Golden Cross SC  
 ChordCo Carnival  
 ChordCo Myth  
 ChordCo Legend  
 ChordCo Odyssey  
 DNM-Reson LSC  
 DNM-Reson LSCB  
 Ecosse Ref FS2.16  
 Ecosse Ref CS2.2  
 Ecosse Ref CS2.3  
 Ecosse Ref CS2.15  
 Ecosse Ref MS2.2  
 Ecosse Ref MS2.3  
 Ecosse Ref MS2.15  
 Ecosse Ref US2  
 Gale XL105  
 Gale XL189  
 Gale XL315  
 Gale XL160-2  
 Gale XL315-2  
 Gamma Wonder Line  
 Goertz M1  
 Goertz M2  
 GT Audio Speaker  
 Harmonix Harmonic-Strings  
 Harmonix HS-101T-1  
 Harmonix HS-101SC  
 Ixos 607  
 Ixos 6004  
 Ixos 6003  
 Ixos 605  
 Kimber 4PR  
 Kimber 4VS  
 Kimber 4TC  
 Kimber 8TC  
 Kimber 4AG  
 Kimber 8AG  
 LAT International SS 800  
 LAT International BIWIRE  
 LAT International SS 1000  
 Lieder Pad  
 Lieder Bel Canto  
 Lieder Spoor  
 Lieder Straat  
 Lieder Weg  
 Linn K20  
 Linn K400  
 Linn K600  
 Lumley Silver 12/2  
 Lumley Silver 14/4  
 Mission Duet  
 Mission Quartet bi-wire  
 Monster XP Clear  
 Monster XP Navajo

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 2.40



# HI-FI CABLES.CO.UK

Online shop for interconnects and speaker cables

You can now buy the cables for your Hi-Fi or Home Entertainment System from our web site on the Internet. The most convenient and affordable way to buy cables and interconnects from leading manufacturers.

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- Special deals on award winning products
- Excellent advice on choosing the right cable for you
- Friendly and helpful response to email queries

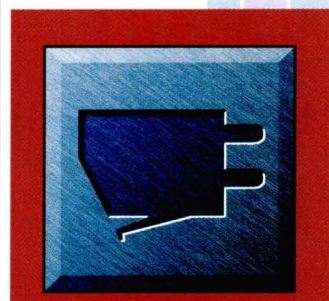
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## SPEAKER CABLES (CONTINUED)

Monster Superflat Mini	2.75
Monster XP HP	3.70
Monster Original	4.40
Monster New Monster	5.50
Naim NAC AS	5.70
Nordost Octava	3.00
Nordost 4-Flat	9.95
Nordost Solar Wind Bi-wire	27.95
Nordost Blue Heaven Spkr	58.95
Nordost Red Dawn	110.00
Nordost SPM	325.00
Ortofon SPK100	3.00
Ortofon SPK200	5.00
Ortofon SPK300	8.00
Precious Metals SL32	7.50
Precious Metals SL102	10.00
Precious Metals SL34	15.00
Precious Metals SL104	20.00
Precious Metals SL106	30.00
Precious Metals SL108	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 MKI	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
SonicLink AST50	1.95
SonicLink AST60	2.50
SonicLink AST75	2.95
SonicLink AST200	5.95
SonicLink AST200x2	10.00
SonicLink S300	18.00
SonicLink S130x2	20.00
SonicLink S300x2	40.00
SonicLink S900	60.00
SonicLink S600x2	80.00
SonicLink Black Rhodium 4	1,000.00
Straight Wire Quartet	8.00
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
Tara Prism Extra	1.95
Tara Klara	2.95
Tara Prism Omni	3.95
Tara Prism 2+2	8.20
Tech + Link SPC 79	1.20
Transparent Cable Musichord	11.00
Transparent Cable The Wave	23.00
Transparent Cable Music Wave	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 Gold Water	7.00
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 Teatrack 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 ZFE+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 OM 3E	MM	16
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	75
Ortofon MC1 Turbo	MC	80
Ortofon Concorde DJ	MM	90
Ortofon OM 30	MM	100
Ortofon 530	MM	20
Pickering TE-15	MM	25
Pickering VE-15	MM	25
Pickering T-E	MM	28
Pickering V15-DJ	MM	35
Pickering TL-E	MM	45
Pickering TL-2E	MM	50
Pickering XV15-625E	MM	50
Pickering XV15-150-DJ	MM	55
Pickering TL-2-S	MM	60
Pickering XV15-7575	MM	60
Pickering XV15-625DJ	MM	70
Pickering XV15-1800S	MM	80
Pickering TL35	MM	95
Pickering XEV-3001E	MM	100
Pickering XLZ-3500	MM	100
Pickering TL-4-S	MM	39
Rega Bias	MM	39
Rega RB78	MM	59
Rega Super Bias	MM	85
Rega Elys	MM	21
Shure M70BX	MM	22
Shure M92E	MM	29
Shure SC35C	MM	35
Shure M447X	MM	35
Shure M44GX	MM	35
Stanton 500AL II	MM	35
Stanton 500EL	MM	44

Stanton 680AL/X	MM	59
Stanton 680EII/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 IO1td	MC	4,500
Audio Technica AT-OC9	MC	330
Benz-Micro The Glider	MC	600
Benz-Micro Reference	MC	1,100
Benz-Micro Reference Ruby	MC	1,500
Benz-Micro Ruby Open Air	MC	1,600
Denon DL304	MC	200
Dynavector 10X4II	MC	189
Dynavector DV20XH	MC	299
Dynavector DV20XL	MC	450
Dynavector 17D2	MC	299
Dynavector XX-1L	MC	998
Dynavector XX-1	MC	998
Dynavector Te-Kaitora	MC	1,698
Goldring Eroica LX	MC	110
Goldring Eroica	MC	110
Goldring 1042	MM	120
Goldring Elite	MC	220
Goldring Excel VX	MC	225
Grado Prestige Silver	MM	119
Grado Prestige Gold	MM	149
Grado Signature Junior	MM	150
Grado Signature 8MZ	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	1,359
Koetsu Red K Sig	MC	1,899
Koetsu Urushi	MC	1,999
Koetsu Signature	MC	2,999
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	999
Lyra Lydian Beta	MC	599
Lyra Clavis Da Capo	MC	995
Lyra Parnassus DCI	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 MC2000II	MC	800
Ortofon MC Rohmann	MC	1,000
Ortofon MC3000 II	MC	1,200
Ortofon MC Jubilee	MC	1,250
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 Laxe	MC	1,300
Roksan Corus Black	MM	150
Roksan Shiraz	MC	990
Shure V15XMR	MM	295
Stanton 890AL/X	MM	120
Sumiko BPS	MM	250
Transfiguration Esprit	MC	950
Transfiguration Spirit	MC	950
Transfiguration Temper Supreme	MC	2,250
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 IIICLN	MC	2,800
van Den Hul Grasshopper IIIGLA	MC	2,800
van Den Hul Grasshopper IIICMN	MC	2,800
van Den Hul Grasshopper IIICGN	MC	2,900
van Den Hul Grasshopper IVGLA	MC	3,000
Wilson benesch Matrix	MC	786

Wilson benesch Analog	MC	1,572
Wilson benesch Carbon	MC	1,573



## 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**

Akai DXW1100	↔	200
Akai DX1200	↔	200
Ariston WX-510	↔	60
Denon DRM-550	↔	160
Denon DRW-585	↔	200
Goodmans Delta 801	↔	130
H/K DC520	↔	200
JVC TD-X372BK	↔	170
JVC TD-R472BK	↔	200
Kenwood KX-W4080	↔	160
Kenwood KX-3080	↔	160
Kenwood KX-W6080	↔	200
Kenwood KX-S0805	↔	200
Marantz SD-455	↔	170
Marantz SD-57	↔	199
Onkyo K 185	↔	200
Pioneer CT-S250	↔	150
Pioneer CT-W205R	↔	160
Pioneer CT-W505R	↔	180
Pioneer CT-S4505	↔	200
Pioneer CT-W606DR	↔	200
Sony TC-KE200	↔	120
Sony TC-WE825	↔	160
Sony TC-KB820S	↔	180
Sony TC-WE725	↔	180
Teac W-416	↔	100
Teac V-615	↔	130
Teac RH-300	↔	160
Teac W-790R	↔	170
Teac V-1050	↔	180
Teac RH-500	↔	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

Denon DRM-650S	↔	230
Denon DRM-740	↔	270
Denon DR5-810	↔	310
H/K TD420	↔	250
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-WE825S	↔	230
Sony TC-KA6ES	↔	550
T+A CC1200R	↔	1,180
Teac W-860R	↔	230
Teac W-6000R	↔	450
Teac V-6030S	↔	550
Teac V-8030S	↔	650
Technics RS-A27	↔	270
Technics RS-TR575	↔	280
Yamaha KX-580SE	↔	250
Yamaha KX-W592	↔	280

## HI-FI HELP

Let our experts help with your hi-fi problems. Send your query to 'Help' at the usual address.





## CD PLAYERS

**KEY**  
 ➡ - Multiplayer: can be loaded with more than one disc.  
 1010 - Electrical (coaxial) digital output.  
 Many players also include an optical (Toslink) output.

**UP TO £250**

Akai CD1100	1010	200
Akai CDM1200	➡	230
AMC CD9	➡	130
AMC CD8A	➡	150
Ariston CDX700	➡	70
Ariston CDC610	➡	90
Ariston CDX710	➡	100
Cambridge CD4	1010	150
Cambridge CD4SE	1010	200
Cambridge CD6	1010	250
Denon DCD-435	➡	130
Denon DCD-635	➡	180
Denon DCD-735	➡	230
H/K HD720	1010	200
H/K FL8350	1010	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 DPF-3010	➡	180
Kenwood DP-R6090	➡	200
Kenwood DP-4090	1010	250
Marantz CD-38	➡	130
Marantz CC-38	➡	200
Marantz CD-48	1010	200
Marantz CD-57	1010	230
Marantz CD-67II	1010	250
NAD 522	➡	170
NAD 510	➡	200
NAD 524	➡	250
NAD 523	➡	250
NAD 512	1010	250
Philips CD711	➡	120
Philips CD721	➡	130
Philips CD751	1010	150
Philips CD751	➡	180
Pioneer PD-106	➡	130
Pioneer PD-206	➡	150
Pioneer PD-5507	➡	190
Pioneer PD-F606	➡	200
Pioneer PD-M603	➡	200
Pioneer PD-F706	➡	250
Rotel RCD-930AX	➡	180
Sansui CD220	➡	120
Sherwood CD-4030R	➡	180
Sherwood CDC680	➡	180
Sherwood CDC6050R	1010	180
Sony CDP-XE220	➡	110
Sony CDP-M205	➡	110
Sony CDP-M305	➡	130
Sony CDP-XE310	➡	140
Sony CDP-XE320	➡	150
Sony CDP-CE105	➡	150
Sony CDP-XB720E	1010	200
Sony CDP-CE315	➡	200
Sony CDP-C325M	➡	200
Sony CDP-CX57	➡	250
Synergy CDJ1210	➡	120
Teac CDP-1120	➡	100
Teac CD-P1820	➡	130
Teac CD-P1440	➡	200
Teac CD-P3450SE	➡	200
Teac PD-D2400	➡	200
Teac PD-H500i	➡	240
Technics SL-PC390A	1010	90
Technics SL-PC490A	➡	100
Technics SL-PC590A	➡	120
Technics SL-PD688	➡	140
Technics SL-PD888	➡	160
Technics SL-PS670D	➡	200

Technics SL-MC410	➡	250
Technics SL-PS70D	1010	250
Yamaha CDX-393	➡	130
Yamaha CDC-565	➡	170
Yamaha CDX-493	➡	180
Yamaha CDX-9	➡	200
Yamaha CDC-665	➡	220
Yamaha CDX-593	1010	230

**£251 TO £500**

Arcam Alpha 7	➡	330
Arcam Alpha MCD	➡	450
Aura CD100	➡	400
Cyrus dAD1.5	➡	399
Denon DCD-835	➡	280
Denon DCM-260	➡	300
Denon DCD-1550AR	➡	350
H/K HD740	➡	300
H/K FL8550	➡	300
H/K HD760	➡	500
JVC XL-Z674BK	➡	300
Kenwood DP-R7080	➡	300
Kenwood DP-9090	➡	300
Kenwood DP-5090	➡	300
Kenwood DP-7090	➡	400
Marantz CD-67SE MkII	➡	300
Marantz CC-870	➡	400
Marantz CD-63H/KI	➡	400
Musical Fidelity E60	➡	300
Musical Fidelity A2 CD	➡	500
Musical Fidelity E624	➡	500
Myryad T-10	➡	400
NAD 513	➡	290
NAD 515	➡	350
NAD 514	➡	370
NAD 517	➡	400
Onkyo DX 7210	➡	260
Onkyo C721	➡	290
Onkyo DXC 520	➡	380
Onkyo DX 7510	➡	400
Onkyo CM 716	➡	450
Parasound C/DP-1000	➡	499
Pioneer PD-S707	➡	300
Pioneer PD-F805	➡	300
Pioneer PD-S705	➡	300
Pioneer PD-F906	➡	350
Pioneer PD-S904	➡	400
Pioneer PD-S505 Precision	➡	460
Rotel RCD-951	➡	300
Rotel RCD-971	➡	350
Sony CDP-XB920E	➡	300
Sony CDP-XA20ES	➡	450
Sony CDP-X3000ES	➡	500
Sony CDP-CX260	➡	500
Synergy CDJ2010	➡	300
Yamaha CDX-993	➡	400

**£501 TO £1,000**


Acurus ACD11	➡	899
Alchemist Nexus	➡	600
Arcam Alpha 8	➡	520
Arcam Alpha 8SE	➡	600
Arcam Alpha 9	➡	800
Audio Analogue Paganni	➡	750
Audio Note CD1	➡	599
Audio Note CDT Zero/DAC Zero	➡	768
Audiomeca Obsession	➡	999
AVI S2000MC 24 Ref	➡	999
Creek CD43	➡	599
Cyrus dAD3	➡	598
Cyrus dAD3Q	➡	898
DPA Renaissance int CD	➡	950
Helios Model 3	➡	700
Helios Model 2	➡	950
Linn Mimik	➡	875
Magnum CD2020	➡	595
Marantz CD-17	➡	800
Micromega Premium 18	➡	650
Micromega Premium 10	➡	650
Micromega Premium 20	➡	850
Monrio Asty PL	➡	675
Monrio Privilege	➡	995
Musical Fidelity X-RAY	➡	799
Myryad T-20	➡	600
Myryad MC100	➡	700
Orelle CD100eA	➡	649
Orelle CD-100eSA	➡	999
Pioneer PDS-06	➡	550
Primare D20	➡	700
Quad 77 Bus	➡	700
Quad 77 Mains	➡	900
Roksan Caspian	➡	895
Rotel RCD991	➡	750
Sony CDP-XA50ES	➡	1,000
Sugden Audition	➡	649
Talk Electronics Thunder 2	➡	700
Talk Electronics Thunder 3	➡	1,000
Teac VRDS-8	➡	600
Teac VRDS-9	➡	700
Teac VRDS-25X	➡	1,000
Technics SL-P2000	➡	1,000
Thule Audio Spirit CD100	➡	600
Thule Audio Spirit CD150B	➡	699
Trichord Genesis	➡	569
Trichord Digital Jukebox 25	➡	619

Trichord Digital Jukebox 50	➡	669
Trichord Digital J'box 100	➡	719
Trichord Revelation	➡	819
YBA Special	➡	625

**OVER £1,000**

Acoustic Precision Eikos	➡	1,850
Alchemist Kraken CD	➡	1,249
Alchemist Forseti Int	➡	1,249
Alchemist Forseti	➡	1,995
Audio Research CD2	➡	3,399
Audiomeca Keeps	➡	1,500
Audiomeca Talisman	➡	2,150
Audiomeca Talisman SE	➡	2,300
Cary CD-301	➡	2,495
Classe CDP-3	➡	1,395
Conrad-Johnson DF-2	➡	1,695
Conrad-Johnson DV-2b	➡	2,495
Copland CDA-266	➡	1,199
Copland CDA277	➡	1,649
Copland CDA289	➡	1,898
Copland CDA288	➡	1,999
Cymbal CDP12	➡	1,299
Exposure CD Player	➡	1,050
Helios Model 1	➡	1,250
Helios Stargate	➡	2,250
Jadis Orchestra	➡	1,345
Krell KAV250cd	➡	2,490
Krell KAV300cd	➡	3,599
Krell KP255s	➡	19,995
Marantz CD-17K15	➡	1,100
Marantz CD-7	➡	3,500
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	➡	2,500
Myryad MCD500	➡	1,300
NAD S500	➡	1,100
Naim CD3.5	➡	1,050
Naim CDX	➡	2,200
Naim NACDSII/XPS	➡	5,625
Orade CD Player	➡	9,499
Pink Triangle Numeral	➡	1,049
Pink Triangle Litaural	➡	2,200
Primare D302	➡	1,500
Proceed CDP	➡	3,395
Quad 99	➡	1,300
Resolution CD50	➡	2,995
Roksan Attezza-DP3P	➡	1,495
Shearman Phase 7	➡	1,499
Sherwood CD1	➡	1,100
Sonic Frontiers Anthem CD1	➡	1,699
Sonic Frontiers SFCD-1	➡	3,799
T+A CD1210R	➡	1,185
T+A CD1220R	➡	1,540
TAG McLaren CD20R	➡	1,250
Theta Digital Miles SE	➡	2,390
Wadia 860	➡	7,450
XTC CDP-1	➡	1,250
YBA Integre	➡	1,250
YBA CD3	➡	2,250
YBA CD2	➡	3,350
YBA CD1	➡	4,500

Mark Levinson 31.5	➡	9,295
Meracus Imago	➡	3,995
Micromega Drive 3	➡	1,000
Micromega Data	➡	2,000
Monrio Bitmatch	➡	950
Muse Model 5	➡	1,800
Muse Model 8	➡	3,500
Orade CD Drive	➡	7,399
Pink Triangle Cardinal II	➡	909
Resolution VT960	➡	3,500
Roksan Attezza-DP3	➡	1,295
Sonic Frontiers Transport 3	➡	5,999
T+A CM1200R	➡	875
TAG McLaren CDT20R	➡	1,499
Teac VRDS-T1	➡	550
Teac P-30	➡	2,500
Theta Digital Pearl	➡	1,349
Theta Digital Jade	➡	2,650
Thorens TCD-2000	➡	999
Trichord Digital Turntable	➡	719
Tube Tech Fulcrum	➡	1,000
Wadia 8	➡	3,195
Wadia 20	➡	4,370



## DIGITAL TO ANALOGUE CONVERTERS (DACs)

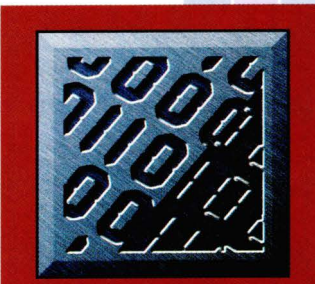
**KEY**  
 4 - Number of digital inputs.

Alchemist TS-D-1	➡	300
Alchemist Forseti DAC	➡	1,100
Altis Reference	➡	4,995
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	➡	2,335
Audio Research DAC3 MkII	➡	3,999
Audio Synthesis DAX Decade	➡	2,795
Audiomeca Elxir	➡	799
Audiomeca Ambrosia	➡	1,850
Boulder 2020	➡	21,000
Chord DSC900	➡	1,850
Chord DSC1100	➡	2,765
Chord DSC1500	➡	4,800
Conrad-Johnson D/A-3	➡	1,195
Conrad-Johnson D/A-2b	➡	1,990
dCS Elgar	➡	8,500
DPA Little Bit 3	➡	325
DPA Renaissance DAC	➡	595
DPA Enlightenment DAC	➡	850
DPA SX128	➡	2,000
DPA SX256	➡	4,000
DPA SX512	➡	8,000
Harmonix Reimyo DAP-77	➡	2,790
Jadis JS2	➡	2,499
Jadis JS1	➡	6,990
LFD DAC2	➡	1,950
LFD DAC3	➡	3,000
Linn Numerik	➡	1,500
Mark Levinson 360	➡	4,395
Mark Levinson 360S	➡	6,895
Mark Levinson 30.5	➡	19,950
Meracus Auriga	➡	1,295
Meracus Flagrare	➡	2,495
Meridian 566	➡	1,095
Micromega DAC 2	➡	750
Micromega Dialog	➡	1,750
Monrio 1882	➡	795
Muse Model 2	➡	2,190
Muse Model 2 Plus	➡	2,500
Muse Model 2/96	➡	3,000
Musical Fidelity X-ACT	➡	200
Musical Fidelity X-24K	➡	300
Musical Fidelity X-DAC	➡	300
Onkyo DX 7310	➡	330
Resolution D92	➡	1,500
Roksan Attezza-DA2	➡	595
Sonic Frontiers Processor 3	➡	5,999
Sumo Theorem II	➡	945
Sumo Theorem IIB	➡	1,159
TAG McLaren DAC20	➡	1,245
Teac D-T1	➡	500
Theta Digital Chroma 396 Std	➡	799
Theta Digital Pro Geny	➡	1,099
Theta Digital Pro Prime Ila	➡	1,699
Theta Digital Pro Basic Ila	➡	2,990
Theta Digital Casablanca LS	➡	6,158
Thorens TDA-2000	➡	700



## DACS (CONTINUED)

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	<b>MD</b>	300
Kenwood DMF-9020	<b>MD</b>	499
Kenwood DM-7090	<b>MD</b>	500
Kenwood DM-9090	<b>MD</b>	550
Marantz CM635	<b>MD</b>	500
Marantz DR700	<b>MD</b>	600
Onkyo MD-121	<b>MD</b>	450
Onkyo MD 122	<b>MD</b>	700
Philips CDR880	<b>MD</b>	499
Pioneer MJ-D707	<b>MD</b>	199
Pioneer PDR-555R	<b>DAT</b>	480
Pioneer PDR-04	<b>DAT</b>	700
Pioneer D-05	<b>DAT</b>	900
Pioneer PDR-05	<b>DAT</b>	1,000
Pioneer D-C88	<b>DAT</b>	2,000
Sharp MD-R1 MkII	<b>MD</b>	180
Sharp MD-R3H	<b>MD</b>	300
Sharp MD-R2	<b>MD</b>	300
Sharp MD-MS200H	<b>MD</b>	350
Sharp MDXV300H	<b>MD</b>	1,000
Sony MZ-R50	<b>MD</b>	1
Sony MDS-S39	<b>MD</b>	1
Sony MZ-R35	<b>MD</b>	1
Sony MZ-R5ST	<b>MD</b>	1
Sony MDS-JE520	<b>MD</b>	230
Sony MDS-JB920	<b>MD</b>	300
Sony MDS-JA20ES	<b>MD</b>	500
Sony MDS-JA50ES	<b>MD</b>	1,300
Teac MDH300	<b>MD</b>	300
Teac MD-H500i	<b>MD</b>	350
Teac MD-8	<b>MD</b>	600
Teac MD-5	<b>MD</b>	600
Teac MD-10	<b>MD</b>	900
Traxdata Traxaudio 900	<b>MD</b>	399
Yamaha MDX-793	<b>MD</b>	300
Yamaha MDX-9	<b>MD</b>	300



## HEADPHONES

**KEY**  
**'D'** - Dynamic type, compatible with virtually all normal headphone outputs.  
**'E'** - Electrostatic type; generally includes a separate power supply.  
 - Open-back construction.  
 - Closed-back construction.

**UP TO £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
Hama SL273	D	20
Hama SL275	D	25
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-V50	D	18
Sony MDR-ED238ML	D	20
Sony MDR-A34L	D	20
Sony MDR-E848LP/MP	D	20
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 SR200	D	20
Vivanco SR150	D	20
Vivanco SR250	D	25
Vivanco IRS700	D	30
Vivanco IRS800	D	40

## OVER £41

AKG K301	D	80
AKG K240DF	D	100
AKG K222R	D	100
AKG K401	D	120
AKG K501	D	150
AKG K333R	D	150
AKG K444R	D	180
AKG K290S	D	250
AKG K1000	D	700
Audio Technica ATH910PRO	D	80
Audio Technica ATHD40FS	D	120
Audio Technica ATH-M40	D	120
Audio Technica ATH911	D	120
Beyer DT311	D	50
Beyer DT411	D	63
Beyer DT431	D	81
Beyer DT511	D	106
Beyer DT801	D	125
Beyer DT831	D	140
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
Hama SL276	D	50
Hama IR Cordless	D	60
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-W200RF	D	75
JVC HA-D1000	D	250
JVC HA-F25	D	699
Koss R/100	D	100
Philips SBC 3396	D	70
Philips SBC HP9000	D	90
Pioneer SE-M550	D	50
Pioneer SE-M750	D	60
Precide Ergo Model 1	D	120
Precide Ergo Model 2	D	140
Sennheiser HD490	D	50
Sennheiser IS 380	D	55
Sennheiser HD495	D	60
Sennheiser HD500	D	70
Sennheiser RS400	D	80
Sennheiser HD570	D	80
Sennheiser HD25 SP	D	90
Sennheiser HD545 Ref	D	100
Sennheiser IS450	D	110
Sennheiser HD265 Linear	D	125
Sennheiser HDC 451-1	D	130
Sennheiser HD250II	D	150

Sennheiser HD565 Ova'n	D	150
Sennheiser HD25-13	D	160
Sennheiser Lucas	D	160
Sennheiser HD25	D	160
Sennheiser HD 580 P'cision	D	200
Sennheiser HD600	D	250
Sennheiser Lucas/HD580	D	260
Sennheiser IS850	D	859
Sennheiser HEG0/HEV70	E	998
Sennheiser Orpheus	E	9,652
Sony MDR-605LP	D	50
Sony MDR-ED268LP	D	50
Sony MDR-E888LP	D	55
Sony MDR-IF130K	D	60
Sony MDR-V600	D	70
Sony MDR-Fi	D	100
Sony MDR-NC5	D	100
Sony MDR-IF420RK	D	100
Sony MDR-D77	D	130
Sony MDR-IF520RK	D	150
Sony MDR-CD1700	D	200
Stanton DJ Pro 101/1HB	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 SR650	D	45
Vivanco FMH 3000	D	50
Vivanco SR750	D	50
Vivanco SR850	D	50
Vivanco FM7980	D	60
Vivanco SR909	D	60
Vivanco SR1000IFL	D	90
Vivanco FM8180	D	99
Vivanco SR2000IFL	D	100

## EQUIPMENT SUPPORTS

### Hi-Fi Tables

**KEY**  
**4** - Number of shelves.

Alphason SM17	1	49
Alphason VSM17	1	85
Alphason GSM17	1	85
Alphason GMV1P	1	110
Alphason R17/17	3	120
Alphason GMH1P	1	150
Alphason VR17/17	3	190
Alphason GR17/17-AS	4	275
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 Aspect 650	4	240
Custom Design e'lite E4	4	250
Custom Design Aspect 500AV	3	270
Custom Design Aspect 850	5	270
Custom Design e'lite AV	6	350
Deadrock 701	1	60
Deadrock 802	2	90
Deadrock 703	3	130
Deadrock 705	5	230
Deadrock 704	4	250
Elemental Isotube X1	1	169
Elemental Isotube B5	1	199
Elemental Isotube TS	1	209
Elemental Isotube IS	1	209
Elemental Reference B1	1	329
Elemental Isotube X2	2	379
Elemental Isotube X3	3	489
Elemental Reference X5	1	499
Elemental Reference X1	1	499
Elemental Reference TS	1	549
Elemental Reference IS	1	549
Elemental Isotube X4	4	599
Elemental Reference X2	2	799
Elemental Isotube X4/Ref	4	1,199
Elemental Reference X3	3	1,199
Elemental Isotube X4RSe	4	1,349
Elemental Reference X4	4	1,599
Fi-Rax R4	6	399
Finite Elemente A03 pagode	4	479
Finite Elemente E03 pagode	4	649
Finite Elemente HD03	4	1,995

Frameworks H175	1	139
Frameworks FS1	1	150
Frameworks H500	3	265
Frameworks FT2	2	285
Frameworks FT3	3	350
Frameworks H700	3	355
Frameworks H900		389
Impulse Iso-plate		190
JPW 3 Tier	3	80
JPW 5 Tier	5	100
Kudos Audio Cornthian	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 Stage		200
Mana Sound Table		235
Mana Ref Shelf		325
Mana Reference Table		350
Mana 2 Tier Stand		375
Mana 3 Tier Stand		450
Mana 4 Tier Stand		500
Mana 5 Tier Stand		600
Mana 6 Tier Stand		700
Mana 7 Tier Stand	7	800
Mana 8 Tier Stand	8	900
Mission Stance		99
Optimum G2	2	69
Optimum G4/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	4	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	10	425
Projekt C3ii	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	3	400
Quadraspire QK Cabinet	3	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	150
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	4	230
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 Supp	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 Stand	4	1,245
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	4	590
Wilson Benesch Asside	4	720
Wilson Benesch Triptych	1	990



**EQUIPMENT SUPPORTS  
Speaker Stands**

**KEY**

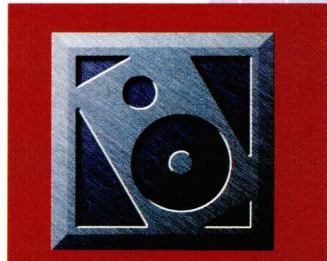
**60 – Height of stand in cm.**

Alphason NCI	60	47
Alphason Akros 1	60	49
Alphason RS1	120	49
Alphason NCII	60	84
Alphason HDS	60	85
Alphason Titan S	60	125
Apollo Olympus	60	75
Apollo AZ6	66	80
Atacama BD21	56	55
Atacama BD17		55
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	61	70
Atacama SE20		70
Atacama SX700		73
Atacama SL300		75
Atacama TP600		75
Atacama TP500		75
Atacama SE615		75
Atacama SE515		75
Atacama SE415		75
Atacama SL400		76
Atacama SE1000S		80
Atacama R724	60	150
AVF Tower P6144BP	60	35
BCD Model 1010	60	595
Black Box Speaker Stand	100	797
Credo STD 001		284
Custom Design Tri 100	50	50
Custom Design R/S300	60	70
Custom Design M3	55	75
Custom Design M2	55	75
Custom Design M1	55	75
Custom Design Tri 300	55	85
Custom Design SCS 24	60	85
Custom Design X24	61	109
Deadrock 903	60	60



**Townshend Seismic Sink stand.**

Deadrock 902	47	60
Deadrock 901	39	60
Elemental Reference SB1	8	399
Elemental Isotube SZ	49	499
Elemental Isotube SZse	61	599
Elemental Isotube SCZ	49	699
Elemental Isotube SCZse	49	799
Elemental Reference SZ	52	999
Elemental Reference SCZ	52	1,499
Harbeth HL-Stands	21	249
Heybrook Stand-ULT	3	55
Heybrook Stand-S6	63	69
Heybrook Stand-S4	48	69
JPW MS2	45	45
JPW MS3	61	55
JPW MS1	46	80
JPW HS1	61	120
JPW HS2	45	120
Kudos Audio Arrow	60	50
Kudos Audio S-50	60	100
Kudos Audio S-100	63	270
Mana Sound Base		175
Opera WS1/E	60	235
Opera S1	60	295
Opera S2	60	345
Partington A-4	60	119
Pioneer CP-7		50
Pioneer CP-8		80
Projekt Signature	55	80
Revolver RS1	50	70
Royd Royd	55	99
Russ Andrews Torlyte	61	599
SD Acoustics SD Alexandra	50	369
Silverado Silverado 1 Stand	50	350
Sonus Faber Ironwood	60	475
Sonus Faber Stonewood		497
Sound Org Z037		55
Sound Org Z027		55
Sound Org Z026		55
Sound Org Z518	45	65
Sound Org Z524	61	69
Soundstyle X6118	42	100
Stands Unique Speaker support	59	159
Stands Unique Tuned Spkr Support	59	220
Stands Unique Tuned Carbon Fibre	59	299
Stands Unique Vivas CF Spkr Supp	60	349
Target TR60	60	68
Target R1	55	280



**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 sited on or near the 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 03	⌄	⌄	30
Ariston MSX 05	⌄	⌄	50
Celestion I2i	⌄	⌄	119
Denon SC-M2	⌄	⌄	80
Denon SC-E3135E	⌄	⌄	130
Gale Mini Monitors	⌄	⌄	70
Gale Gold Monitors	⌄	⌄	90
Gale 2i	⌄	⌄	130
Genexa GX300	⌄	⌄	80
Genexa GX350	⌄	⌄	80
GLL Arena	⌄	⌄	90
GLL Imagio IC208	⌄	⌄	100
Goodmans Active 75	⌄	⌄	65
Heybrook Prima 2	⌄	⌄	129
Interaudio XL1000	⌄	⌄	130
Jamo Studio-80	⌄	⌄	70
Jamo D-110	⌄	⌄	100
Jamo SAT-170	⌄	⌄	110

Jamo Studio-110	⌄	⌄	110
Jamo Artina	⌄	⌄	120
Jamo D-115	⌄	⌄	125
Jamo 28	⌄	⌄	125
Jamo Cornet 145	⌄	⌄	130
JBL CM40	⌄	⌄	90
JBL MX300	⌄	⌄	90
JBL Control 1X	⌄	⌄	100
JBL CM42	⌄	⌄	130
JPW Mini Monitor	⌄	⌄	70
JPW ML110	⌄	⌄	60
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
Mordaunt-Short MS812	⌄	⌄	100
NAD 801	⌄	⌄	100
Paradigm Micro v2	⌄	⌄	100
Paradigm Atom v2	⌄	⌄	120
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
W'dale Valdis 100	⌄	⌄	80
W'dale Diamond 7.1	⌄	⌄	100
W'dale Valdis 200	⌄	⌄	110
W'dale Modus Micro	⌄	⌄	110

**£131 TO £200**

Acoustic Energy Aegis One ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 150

Acoustic Energy AE100i ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 200

Allison Model 4A ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 170

B&W DM302 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 150

B&W CWM5 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 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

Eltax Liberty 3+ ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 149

Genexa GX650 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 140

Genexa Pro ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 160

GLL Imagio IC218 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 140

GLL Imagio IC318 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 200

Heybrook Heylette B ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 199

Heybrook HB1 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 199

Interaudio XL2000 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 200

Jamo Cornet 165 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 150

Jamo 38 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 150

Jamo 525 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 150

Jamo 560 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 150

Jamo 660 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 170

Jamo Studio 180 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 180

Jamo D165 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 200

Jamo 68 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 200

Jamo 892 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 200

JBL CM52 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 150

JBL MX1000 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 170

JBL LX20 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 200

JBL MX1500 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 200

JPW ML610 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 170

JPW S5551 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 200

KEF Coda 8 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 189

KEF Model 60S ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 199

KEF Q15 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 200

Kenwood LS-200G ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 200

KLH Model 21 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 155

KLH Model 11 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 155

KLH Model 31 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 185

Magnat Vector 22 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 179

Mission 701 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 160

Mission 771 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 170

Mission 702 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 200

Mission 771e ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 200

Mission 702e ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 200

M-A Monitor 1 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 200

Mordaunt-Short MS814 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 150

Paradigm Mini Monitor ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 200



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	⌄	⌄	199
R Allen Minette 3	⌄	⌄	159
R Allen Dim'n 5/1 Compact	⌄	⌄	179
R Allen RA6	⌄	⌄	199
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
Tannoy Revolution R1	⌄	⌄	200
TDL Nucleus 3	⌄	⌄	200
Technics SB-CS95	⌄	⌄	150
Technics SB-M20	⌄	⌄	200
TLC Maestro 70S	⌄	⌄	159
W'dale Valdis 300	⌄	⌄	150
W'dale Diamond 7.3	⌄	⌄	150
W'dale Modus Music Two	⌄	⌄	200
W'dale Diamond 7.2 Ann'y	⌄	⌄	200
W'dale Valdis 400	⌄	⌄	200

**£201 TO £300**

Acoustic Energy AE200 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 250

Arcaydis Baby 1 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 299

Audio Gem Opal ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 230

B&W CWM6i ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 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 Iss ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 250

Celestion C1 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 299

Celestion 23i ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 299

Cerwin-Vega VS-8 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 250

Cerwin-Vega CT-330 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 300

Chario Syntar 100 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 249

Chario Ref 100 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 299

Chario Hipar 1000 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 300

Dali 102B ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 260

Dali 150 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 300

Eltax Linear Response ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 249

GLL Imagio IC238TL ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 250

Heybrook Optima ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 259

Heybrook Heylios ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 269

Interaudio XL3000 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 230

Interaudio XL4000 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 260

Jamo Cornet 175 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 230

Jamo Classic 4 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 250

Jamo Art ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 300

Jamo D265 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 300

JBL CM62 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 250

JM Lab Tantal 507 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 295

JPW ML710 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 230

JPW ML810 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 260

JVC SX-SW10 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 300

KEF Coda 9 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 299

KEF Model 70S ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 299

KLH 83A ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 205

KLH 183A ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 265

KLH Soundbites System ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 276

KLH Model 81 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 280

KLH Model 41 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 290

Linn Kan ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 295

Mission 750 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 248

Mission 772 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 250

Mission 703 ⌄ ⌄ ⌄ 300



## SPEAKERS (CONTINUED)

M-A Monitor 2	0	0	250
M-A Silver 3	0	0	300
Mordaunt-Short MS815	0	0	250
Mordaunt-Short MS816	0	0	300
Mus Tec Kestrel SE	0	0	300
NAD 802	0	0	280
Paradigm Monitor 5	0	0	250
Paradigm Monitor 7	0	0	300
Pioneer CS-7030	0	0	230
Pioneer CS-9030	0	0	280
Pioneer S-LC1	0	0	300
Polk AB505	0	0	220
Polk M3 II	0	0	220
Polk RT5	0	0	250
Polk RT7	0	0	300
Polk M5	0	0	300
Promenade SP1	0	0	299
Rega EL8	0	0	298
Revolver The 250	0	0	250
R Allen Dimension Five 1	0	0	239
R Allen RA8	0	0	249
R Allen RA8M	0	0	249
R Allen Dimension Five 2	0	0	269
Royd The Envoy	0	0	249
Royd Minstrel	0	0	275
Ruark Epilogue	0	0	239
Sequence 300	0	0	249
Solid HCM1	0	0	250
Sony SS-176EB	0	0	250
Tannoy Mercury M3	0	0	230
Tannoy Precision P10	0	0	300
TDL Nucleus 4	0	0	300
TLC Maestro 130S	0	0	289
TLC Voyager 350	0	0	289
Wdale Modus Music Four	0	0	230
Wdale Valdus 500	0	0	300
Yamaha NS10M	0	0	300
ZYP A1	0	0	219
ZYP A2S	0	0	295

## £301 TO £500

Acoustic Energy AE105SE	0	0	320
Acoustic Energy AE109	0	0	350
Acoustic Energy AE209	0	0	450
Acoustic Energy AE120	0	0	500
Allison Model 2A	0	0	420
Arcaydis Baby 2	0	0	399
Arcaydis ASC	0	0	399
Arcaydis AK1	0	0	449

Audiovector C1	0	0	399
AVI Neutron	0	0	499
AVI NuNeutron	0	0	500
B&O Beovox CX50	0	0	325
B&O Beovox CX100	0	0	425
B&W CWM8i	0	0	350
B&W DM305	0	0	350
B&W CDM2SE	0	0	400
B&W DM603	0	0	500
B&W Signature 7	0	0	500
Bandor Pictures	0	0	352
Blue Room Mini Pod	0	0	400
Boston Micro 90 Sat	0	0	369
Boston Micro 80 Sys	0	0	369
Boston VR20	0	0	380
Castle Kendal	0	0	400
Castle Eden	0	0	500
Celestion 25i	0	0	399
Celestion 30i	0	0	449
Celestion 35i	0	0	499
Cerwin-Vega VS-10	0	0	350
Chario Syntar 100T	0	0	399
Chario Ref 1000	0	0	499
Clements 300si	0	0	395
Dali 104B	0	0	370
Dali Royal Menuet MkII	0	0	400
Dali 606	0	0	400
Dali Royal	0	0	500
Def Tech Celsius	0	0	395
Dynaudio Audience 40	0	0	399
Epos ES12	0	0	499
GLL Imagio IC248TL	0	0	350
GLL Imagio IC258TL	0	0	450
GLL Imagio IC348TL	0	0	500
Heybrook Heylo	0	0	359
Heybrook Ultrama	0	0	399
Jamo Classic 6	0	0	330
Jamo Cornet 195	0	0	350
Jamo BX-100A	0	0	350
Jamo 98	0	0	350
Jamo D365	0	0	400
Jamo Classic 8	0	0	400
Jamo Graphic	0	0	400
Jamo 128	0	0	450
Jamo BX-150A	0	0	450
Jamo Atmosphere	0	0	500
JBL LX60	0	0	350
JBL Ti 200	0	0	400
JM Lab Micron	0	0	395
JM Lab Tantal 515	0	0	495
JM Lab Megane	0	0	495

Jordan Watts JHFLG	0	0	380
Jordan Watts JH200	0	0	420
JPW ML910	0	0	330
JPW S5553	0	0	400
JPW ML1010	0	0	400
JPW Ruby 1	0	0	400
JPW Ruby 2	0	0	500
KEF Q35	0	0	349
KEF Q55	0	0	499
KEF RDM One	0	0	499
Keswick Aria II	0	0	379
KLH 283A	0	0	310
KLH 383A	0	0	335
KLH Model 51	0	0	375
KLH Model 71	0	0	420
KLH Model 62T	0	0	486
Linn Sekrit	0	0	395
Magnat Vector 55	0	0	349
Magnat Vector 77	0	0	449
Mission 751F	0	0	348
Mission 777e	0	0	400
Mission 704	0	0	450
Mission 774	0	0	500
M-A Monitor 3	0	0	350
M-A Silver 5	0	0	400
M-A Studio 25E	0	0	500
M-A Monitor 4	0	0	500
M-A 700 PMC	0	0	500
Mordaunt-Short MS817	0	0	500
Mus Tec Harrier	0	0	400
Mus Tec PM15	0	0	475
NAD 804	0	0	400
Neat Critique	0	0	445
Opera Duetto	0	0	395
Opera Prima	0	0	495
Origin Live OL-1AS	0	0	399
Origin Live Monarch	0	0	399
Paradigm Studio/20	0	0	350
Paradigm Monitor 9	0	0	400
Pentachord A	0	0	469
Pioneer S-LC2	0	0	450
Polk AB705	0	0	330
Polk RT8	0	0	400
Polk RT10	0	0	500
Polk AB805	0	0	500
Prof Monitor Co TB1SM	0	0	403
Prof Monitor Co TB1	0	0	410
Prof Monitor Co TB1S	0	0	430
Prof Monitor Co TB1M	0	0	447
Prof Monitor Co XB1	0	0	499
Promenade SP2	0	0	399
Promenade SP3	0	0	499
Rega Jura	0	0	450
Rega ELA MkII	0	0	498
Revolver The 260	0	0	350
R Allen Dimension Five 3	0	0	349
R Allen Dimension Five 4	0	0	429
Royd The Squire	0	0	350
Royd Minstrel SE	0	0	399
Royd Doublet	0	0	485
Ruark Icon	0	0	399
Sequence 400	0	0	329
Solid Verticale	0	0	400
S Coast Odette	0	0	325
Spendor S3/5	0	0	499
System 1130	0	0	500
Tannoy Precision P20	0	0	400
TDL G20	0	0	380
TDL Chiltern CF100	0	0	450
TDL G30	0	0	500
Technics SB-M300	0	0	350
Technics SB-M500	0	0	450
TLC Altus 300	0	0	366
Triangle Titus TZe	0	0	379
Triangle Lunn	0	0	500
Wdale Modus Music Six	0	0	330
Wdale Modus Music Eight	0	0	430
Wdale Modus Music 1/6	0	0	500

## £501 TO £800

Acoustic Energy AE505	0	0	700
Acoustic Precision Eikos FR1	0	0	800
Allison Model 3A	0	0	525
Arcaydis AK3	0	0	599
Arcaydis AS2	0	0	699
Arcaydis AK4	0	0	699
Audio Gem Emerald	0	0	540
Audio Note AN-K/D	0	0	620
Audio Note AN-J/B	0	0	799
Audiovector M1	0	0	759
Audiovector C2	0	0	799
AVI Biggatron	0	0	599
B&O Beolab 2500	0	0	750
B&W CDM1 SE	0	0	600
B&W P4	0	0	675
Bose 501	0	0	600
Bose A'mass AM3	0	0	650
Boston VR30	0	0	600
Castle Severn 2	0	0	600
Celestion 45i	0	0	599
Celestion C2	0	0	699
Cerwin-Vega VS-12	0	0	550
Cerwin-Vega VS-15	0	0	700
Chario Constellation Lynx	0	0	549
Chario Ref 100T	0	0	599
Chario Hipor 1000T	0	0	699

Clements 600si	0	0	595
Cura CA-10	0	0	699
Dali 107	0	0	600
Dali 350	0	0	600
Dali 450	0	0	700
Dali 109	0	0	800
Def Tech BP6B	0	0	750
Diapason Micra II	0	0	779
Dynaudio Audience 50	0	0	577
Dynaudio Audience 60	0	0	729
ELAC CL310i JET	0	0	800
Epos ES14	0	0	675
Epos ES14	0	0	699
Harbeth BBC LS3/5A	0	0	799
Harbeth HL-P3ES	0	0	799
Heybrook Duet	0	0	595
Infinity Kappa 60	0	0	795
Infinity Kappa 70	0	0	530
Jamo BX-200A	0	0	600
Jamo Classic 10	0	0	550
JBL LX80	0	0	550
JBL Ti 400	0	0	650
JBL SVA1500	0	0	650
JBL Ti 600	0	0	595
JM Lab Cobalt 807	0	0	775
JM Lab Cobalt 810	0	0	515
Jordan Watts JH400	0	0	500
JPW Ruby 3	0	0	800
KEF LS3/5a	0	0	649
KEF RDM Two	0	0	699
KEF Q65	0	0	799
Kelly KT2	0	0	700
Keswick Volante	0	0	729
KLH Model 82Ta	0	0	690
Linn Tulkan Passive	0	0	550
Linn Keilidh Passive	0	0	750
Magnat Vintage 710	0	0	799
Meridian A500	0	0	750
M&K S-85	0	0	700
Mission 752f	0	0	578
Mission 705	0	0	600
Mission 753f	0	0	798
M-A Silver 7	0	0	600
M-A 702PMC	0	0	600
M-A 703PMC	0	0	800
Mus Tec Falcon	0	0	625
Naim Intro	0	0	680
Neat Mystique 2	0	0	575
Neat Petite II	0	0	745
Opera Seconda	0	0	795
Opera Platea	0	0	795
Origin Live Resolution	0	0	732
Paradigm Studio/60	0	0	650
Paradigm Studio/80	0	0	750
Pentachord B	0	0	519
Pentachord Pentode	0	0	729
Polk RT12	0	0	600
Polk RT16	0	0	799
Polk LS50	0	0	800
ProAc Tablette 50	0	0	599
ProAc Studio 100	0	0	699
Promenade SP4	0	0	650
Quad 10L	0	0	600
Roksan ROKone 1	0	0	595
Roksan Ojan 3	0	0	795
Royd The Sorcerer	0	0	595
Royd Abbot	0	0	695
Ruark Templar II	0	0	559
Ruark Sceptre	0	0	599
Ruark Talisman II	0	0	799
Ruark Prologue One	0	0	799
SD Acoustics SD3R	0	0	649
Shinpy Polarys	0	0	595
Silverado Raider	0	0	695
Snell K5	0	0	750
Sonus Faber Concertino	0	0	599
S Coast Hades	0	0	695
Spendor S1	0	0	549
System 1150	0	0	750
T+A TB 100	0	0	700
Tannoy Precision P30	0	0	600
Tannoy Definition D100	0	0	689
Tannoy Precision P40	0	0	800
TDL Cotswold CF200	0	0	650
Titan Logic T/26	0	0	646
Titan Logic T/2	0	0	704
TLC Classic 2	0	0	535
TLC Classic 1	0	0	800
Totem Mite	0	0	599
Totem Rokk	0	0	765
Triangle Comete TZe	0	0	525
Triangle Zephyr II	0	0	599

## £801 TO £1,500

Acoustic Energy AE509	0	0	850
Acoustic Energy AE520	0	0	1,000
Acoustic Energy AE2-II	0	0	1,095
Acoustic Solutions Eight	0	0	1,200
Apertura Prima	0	0	1,095
Apertura Nova	0	0	1,395
Arcaydis AC1	0	0	1,099
Arcaydis AK5	0	0	1,399
ATC SCM10	0	0	1,000
Audio Note AN-J/D	0	0	930
Audio Note AN-K/SPx	0	0	1,060
Audio Note AN-E/B	0	0	1,299
Audio Note AN-J/SPx	0	0	1,415
Audio Physic Step	0	0	1,299



Celestion A1.



Audiovector M1 Super	999	Silverado Ryder	1,395	Origin Live Conqueror	1,750	L Voice Air Scout	19,500
Audiovector M2	1,399	Sonus Faber Concerto	945	Pentachord P'column	1,649	L Voice Air Partner S	37,200
Audiovector M1 Sig	1,449	Sonus Faber Concerto CP	999	Polk LS90	1,700	Lowther Delphic	3,099
AVI Postron	899	Sonus Faber Signum	1,200	Posselt Albatross	2,500	Lowther Opus One	4,999
B&O Beolab 4000	1,100	S Coast Merlin Monitor	849	ProAc Response 2S	2,000	Lumley L/M 2 Sig. MK3	4,500
B&W P5	875	S Coast Classic	1,495	ProAc Response 2.5	2,700	Magnat Vintage 770	3,500
B&W CDM7	1,000	Spendor SP3/1P	825	Prof Monitor Co IB1S	2,099	Magneplanar MG-3.5SE	3,800
B&W DM604	1,000	Spendor FL6	1,099	Rehdeko RK115	1,700	Magneplanar MG-20 SE P	10,500
B&W P6	1,095	Spendor SP2/3	1,187	Ruark Crusader II	1,649	Magneplanar MG-20 SE A	11,000
B&W Matrix 805 V	1,095	Spendor FL8	1,355	Ruark Equinox	2,000	Martin-Logan SL3	3,399
B&W N805	1,400	T+A TAS 1200E	1,050	SD Acoustics SD5	1,549	Martin-Logan CLS Ilz	4,555
Bandor Trident	846	T+A TB 120	1,060	Shahinian Arc	1,875	Martin-Logan Re-Quest Z	5,875
BKS Audio Hybrid 107	1,500	Tannoy Definition D500	999	Shahinian Obelisk	2,695	Meridian DSP5000	3,295
Bose A'mass AM5	900	TDL Cheviot CF300	850	Shinpy Eurtimica	1,995	Meridian DSP5500	5,950
Bose 701	1,000	Technics SB-M1000	1,500	Shinpy Altair	2,895	Meridian DSP6000	9,400
Boston VR40	1,000	Titan Enigma T/3	822	Silverado Silverado 1	1,995	M-A Studio 50	3,300
Castle Harlech	900	Titan Sovereign T/4	1,292	Sonus Faber Electa Amator 2	2,849	M-A Studio 60	5,000
Celestion A1	899	Totem The Arro	959	Sound-Lab Quantum	2,150	Naim DBL Active	8,050
Celestion C3	999	Totem The Staaf	1,249	S Coast Excalibur	2,750	Neolith NEO 2	3,499
Celestion A2	1,499	Totem Model One	1,249	Spendor SP1/2	1,674	Neolith NEO 3	4,999
Cerwin-Vega AL-1000	1,100	Triangle Antal	1,099	Spendor SP100	2,234	ProAc Response 3.8	3,990
Cerwin-Vega 1515	1,300	Veritas 7	1,000	T+A TB 140	1,760	ProAc Response 5	9,000
Chario Ref 1000T	999	Veritas 20	1,400	Tannoy Definition D500	1,999	ProAc Response 4	12,000
Chario Academy 1	1,299	<b>£1501 TO £3,000</b>		Tannoy Definition D700	2,200	Prof Monitor Co MB1P	4,370
Clements Reference 1	995	Acoustic Energy AE1 Sig	1,995	Tannoy Definition D700	2,500	Prof Monitor Co BBS A	16,688
Cura CA-21	1,199	Acoustic Energy AE2 Sig	2,995	TDL Studio Monitor-m	2,750	Quad ESL63	3,450
Dali 850	1,000	Alon I Mk II	1,795	Totem Tabu	2,299	Rehdeko RK125	3,200
Def Tech BP8B	1,000	Alon II Mk II	2,495	Totem The Forest	2,675	Rehdeko RK145	4,800
Def Tech BP10B	1,500	Apertura Agora Signature	2,295	Triangle Zays	1,750	Rehdeko RK175	8,800
Diapason Prelude II	875	Apertura Tanagra	2,395	Triangle Altinis	2,250	Revel Gem	5,295
Diapason Karis	1,275	Apertura Tanagra Sig.	2,795	Triangle Extan	2,950	Rockport Merak	13,995
Dynaudio Contour 1.1	879	ATC SCM20SL	1,750	Veritas 40	1,900	Rockport Syzygy	15,000
Dynaudio Audience 70	1,100	ATC SCM20 Tower SL	2,400	Veritas H1	2,995	Rockport Procyon	32,500
Dynaudio Contour 1.3	1,198	Audio Note AN-E/D	1,520	Wilson Benesch Orator	2,900	Ruark Solstice	4,000
Dynaudio Audience 80	1,460	Audio Note AN-E/SPx	2,250	<b>OVER £3,000</b>			
Electrocompaniet EC-M1	995	Audio Physic Spark 2	1,749	Acoustic Energy AES	7,995	Ruark Excalibur	7,000
Electrocompaniet EC-Qube	1,195	Audio Physic Tempo	1,999	Alon Lotus SE	3,500	SD Acoustics SD1E	3,495
Electrocompaniet EC-Qube SE	1,495	Audio Wk'p Cyclone 34	2,000	Alon V Mk III	5,495	Shahinian Hawk	4,995
Epos ES15	890	Audiostatic DCI	2,495	Alon Adriana	8,500	Shahinian Diapason	8,895
Epos ES22	1,185	Audiovector M3	1,899	Alon Circe	12,000	Shinpy Enigma	3,995
Harbeth HL-K6	1,049	Audiovector M3 Sig	2,499	Alon Phalanx	19,000	Shinpy Euphonia	5,995
Harbeth HL-Compact 7	1,499	B&O Beolab 6000	1,550	Apertura Athena	6,995	Shinpy Magnifica Suprema	14,500
Harbeth BBS L55/12A	1,499	B&O Beolab 8000	2,100	Apertura Atlante	8,995	Shun Mook Bella Voce	6,000
Heybrook Quintet	1,199	B&O Beolab Penta 3	2,650	ATC SCM20A PRO	3,049	Sonus Faber Guarneri Homage	5,795
Impulse Kora	1,250	B&W Matrix 804	1,695	ATC SCM20ATASL	3,995	Sonus Faber Amati Homage	11,450
Infinity Overture 1	900	B&W Matrix 803s2	2,495	ATC SCM20TASL	3,995	Sound-Lab Dynastat	3,790
Infinity Kappa 80	995	B&W Matrix 802s3	2,995	ATC SCM50PSL	4,250	Sound-Lab Aura	6,490
Infinity Kappa 90	1,295	Bandor Bandora/Mora	2,350	ATC SCM100PSL	4,950	Sound-Lab Pristine III+	7,990
Infinity Overture 2	1,500	Bandor Siren	2,800	ATC SCM50ASL	5,775	Sound-Lab A-3	11,990
Jadis Orchestra	999	Beauhorn Virtuoso Bronze	2,995	ATC SCM100ASL	6,475	Sound-Lab Ultimate II	13,950
Jamo Concert 8	1,365	BKS Audio Hybrid 128	2,549	ATC SCM70	10,000	Sound-Lab A-1	13,990
JBL SVA 1600	850	Bose 901 VI	1,650	ATC SCM200ASL	15,995	Sound-Lab Ultimate III	18,950
JBL 4312 MkII-WX	1,000	Boston Lynfield 300L	2,000	ATC SCM300ASL	17,731	Sound-Lab Ultimate I	23,950
JBL SVA 1800	1,000	Cary SP-301	2,295	Audio Note AN-JSE Silver	7,900	S Coast King Arthur	3,095
JBL SVA 2100	1,250	Celestion A3	2,399	Audio Note AN-ESE Silver	9,600	Spendor FL10	3,475
JM Lab Cobalt 815	1,095	Celestion Kingston	2,500	Audio Physic Virgo 2	3,399	T+A A4D	3,850
JM Lab Electra 905	1,175	Celestion Kingston	2,500	Audio Physic Avanti 2	6,699	T+A A3D	4,550
JM Lab Cobalt 820	1,150	Chario Academy 2	1,649	Audio Physic Caldera	10,599	T+A A2D	8,400
Jordan Watts JH1+1	1,150	Chario Academy Millennium	2,100	Audio Physic Medea	24,999	Tannoy Edinburgh TW	3,250
JPW Ruby 4	1,000	Clements Reference 7	1,995	Audiostatic DCI Plus	3,750	Tannoy Definition D900	3,999
KEF Q75	999	Credo SPB 003	1,820	Audiovector 5X	3,999	Tannoy GRF Memory TW	4,000
KEF Ref. Model One	1,199	Credo SPB 009	2,453	Audiovector 6X	5,699	Tannoy Westminster TW	6,600
KEF RDM Three	1,500	Cura CA-30	1,799	Avalon Avatar	5,995	Tannoy Canterbury 15 TW	7,720
Kelly KT3	1,200	Dali Grand Coupe	2,500	Avalon Arcus	6,995	Tannoy Westminster Royal	14,920
Keswick Tonno	999	Def Tech BP2002	2,400	Avalon Eclipse Classic	6,995	TDL Ref Standard-m	6,000
Keswick Figaro Evolution	1,099	Diapason Adamantes III	1,995	Avalon Radian HC	6,995	Titan Goliath T/4	4,112
Keswick Milano	1,199	Dynaudio Contour 1.8	1,894	Avalon Eidolon	13,995	Totem Mani-2	3,100
Keswick Legato	1,199	Dynaudio Craftt	2,598	Avalon Sentinel	20,495	Totem Shaman	9,999
Keswick Amber	1,499	Dynaudio Crafft	2,930	AVI Gravitron	79,995	Triangle Nemo Altair	4,250
Linn Tukan Aktiv	1,050	ECA Servo A.2	2,450	B&W Matrix 801s3	4,250	Veritas H2	4,495
Linn Kelidh Aktiv	1,250	ELS Res'ch Vision	2,800	B&W Silver Signature	3,995	Veritas H3	5,995
L Voice Auditorium	1,500	Epos ES30	2,385	B&W Nautilus 801	5,500	Wilson Audio Cub	5,495
Lowther Accolade 2	1,199	Gamma Epoch Ref Five	2,999	B&W Nautilus	8,500	Wilson Audio WATT 5	8,390
Lumley L/M3.5	1,050	Harbeth HL-S8	1,999	Bandor Bandoline	35,000	Wilson Audio WTT II	10,995
Magnat Vintage 720	1,199	Helius Syrius II	2,395	Beauhorn Virtuoso Gold	3,290	Wilson Audio Maxx	34,995
Magneplanar SMG-C SE	990	Helius Syrius I	2,850	Beauhorn Virtuoso Reference	3,395	Wilson Audio Maxis	3,900
Magneplanar MG-0.6 SE	1,370	Heybrook Octet	1,799	Beauhorn Accelerando	3,995	Wilson Benesch Actor	3,900
Meridian Argent 1	995	Hi Q Sound SM108	2,000	Boston Lynfield 500L	6,600	Wilson Benesch ACT1 sprk	6,900
M&K S-125	1,150	Impulse Lali	1,850	BKS Audio Hybrid 175	3,995	Wilson Benesch Act 2	8,900
Mission 705a	900	Infinity Overture 3	1,750	Boston Lynfield 500L	4,449	Wilson Benesch The Bishop	20,000
Mission 754F	1,298	Infinity Overture 3	1,750	Chario Academy 3j	5,999		
M-A Studio 6	900	Infinity Kappa 100	1,895	Credo SPB 012	3,147		
M-A Silver 9	1,000	Jamo Concert 11	2,250	Credo SDL 001	5,677		
M-A 705PMC	1,150	JM Lab Electra 915	1,795	Dali Grand	4,000		
Mus Tec Condor	1,000	JM Lab Electra 920	2,350	Def Tech BP2000	3,600		
Mus Tec Hawk	1,250	Jordan Watts JH2K	2,450	Diapason Adamantes Ltd	3,995		
Mus Tec Eagle	1,500	Jordan Watts JH5K	3,000	Dynaudio Contour 3.3	4,815		
Naim Credo	1,090	KEF Ref. Model Two	1,599	Dynaudio Confidence 3	4,846		
Opera Terza	995	KEF Ref. Model Three	1,999	Dynaudio Confidence 5	5,924		
Opera Callas Gold	1,095	Linn Kaber Passive	2,000	Dynaudio Confidence 5	5,924		
Opera Divina II	1,495	Linn Kaber Aktiv	2,640	Dynaudio Consequence	14,566		
Origin Live Sovereign	1,130	L Voice Aud'm Avatar	2,100	Dynaudio Evidence	50,909		
Paradigm Studio/100	950	Lowther Fidelio	1,999	Electrofluidics Sonolith 2.2xi	5,999		
Polk LS70	1,200	Lowther Academy	2,399	ELS Res'ch Vista	3,900		
Polk RT20p	1,500	Lowther Bel Canto	2,699	ELS Res'ch Illusion MkII	9,000		
ProAc Tablette 50 SIG	899	Lumley L/M2 Mk3	2,995	Impulse Ta'us	3,100		
ProAc Response 1 SC	1,199	Magnat Vintage 760	1,999	Inner Sound Eros	3,995		
Prof Monitor Co LB1	935	Magneplanar MG-10 SE	1,650	Jadis 2	5,900		
Prof Monitor Co AB1	1,496	Magneplanar MG-1.5 SE	1,780	Jadis 1	18,900		
Rega XEL	1,040	Magneplanar MG-2.7 SE	2,650	JM Lab Oriel	9,000		
RMS Revelation S 1	1,299	Martin-Logan Aeries i	2,199	JM Lab Mini Utopia	4,500		
Roksan Ojan 3X	995	Meridian M60	2,150	JM Lab Mezzo Utopia	7,250		
Royd The Albion	985	M-A Studio 20SE	2,500	JM Lab Utopia	18,300		
Shahinian Super Efl	875	Naim SBL Active	1,885	JM Lab Grande Utopia	35,000		
Shahinian Starter	1,195	Naim SBL Passive	2,030	Jordan Watts JH10K	7,570		
Shahinian Compass	1,395	Neolith NEO 1	2,999	KEF Ref. Model Four	3,299		
Shinpy Micrphonica	1,099	Opera Caruso II	2,495	Keswick Zero 2	7,000		
				Linn Keltik Aktiv	6,000		



**SUBWOOFERS**

**KEY**

Ⓐ - Active; includes a dedicated power amplifier.

THX - THX-approved by LucasFilm for use in Home THX installations.

Acoustic Energy AE108S	300
Allison Mimi Ref Sub	210
Alon Poseidon	12,000



## SUBWOOFERS (CONTINUED)

ATC SCM 0.1/15	Ⓐ	3,810
Audio Physic Terra	Ⓐ	3,499
B&W ASW1000	Ⓐ	500
B&W AS6	Ⓐ	500
B&W ASW2000	Ⓐ	800
B&W ASW3000	Ⓐ	1,000
B&W Matrix 800ASW	Ⓐ	1,500
Boston CR400	Ⓐ	300
Boston VR500	Ⓐ	450
Boston VR2000	Ⓐ	800
Celestion CS135	Ⓐ	139
Celestion CSW MKII	Ⓐ	329
Celestion S11	Ⓐ	349
Celestion A65	Ⓐ	800
Cerwin-Vega HT-10D	Ⓐ	200
Cerwin-Vega HT-12D	Ⓐ	250
Chario Syntar Bass	Ⓐ	299
Chario Hipar Bass	Ⓐ	499
Credo SDC 001	Ⓐ	3,054
G.L.L. Le Bass	Ⓐ	350
Jamo SW303E	Ⓐ	200
Jamo SW400E	Ⓐ	250
Jamo SW410e	Ⓐ	300
Jamo SW505E	Ⓐ	300
Jamo Sub One	Ⓐ	400
JBL Control Sub 6	Ⓐ	200
JBL Control Sub 10	Ⓐ	300
JM Lab Tantal SW20	Ⓐ	349
JM Lab Cabalt SW27A	Ⓐ	595
JM Lab Electra SW33A	Ⓐ	895
JM Lab Sub Utopia	Ⓐ	2,200
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
Kenwood SW501	Ⓐ	349
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 VX-7MKII	Ⓐ	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-700	Ⓐ	1,595
M&K MX-200	Ⓐ	1,800
M&K MX-350THX	Ⓐ	1,995
M&K MX-5000 (THX)	Ⓐ	2,900
Mission 70as	Ⓐ	300
Mission 75as	Ⓐ	548
M-A ASW110	Ⓐ	500
M-A ASW210	Ⓐ	700
Mus Tec Sub	Ⓐ	650
Muse Model 22	Ⓐ	1,890
Muse Model 18	Ⓐ	3,790
Neat Gravitats	Ⓐ	1,095
Paradigm PDR10	Ⓐ	250
Paradigm Servo 15A	Ⓐ	800
Polk PSW50	Ⓐ	350
Polk PSW150	Ⓐ	500
Polk PSW300	Ⓐ	750
REL Q50	Ⓐ	375
REL Q-100E	Ⓐ	495
REL Strata II	Ⓐ	575
REL Strata III	Ⓐ	600
REL Storm	Ⓐ	695
REL Stadium II	Ⓐ	995
REL Stentor II	Ⓐ	1,800
REL Studio II	Ⓐ	4,000
Revel Sub-15	Ⓐ	2,195
Revolver The Recoil	Ⓐ	100
R Allen Gold Sub	Ⓐ	149
R Allen Dim'n Active	Ⓐ	499
R Allen Magnum Active	Ⓐ	699
Roksan Ojan 3S	Ⓐ	795
Sequence FW120	Ⓐ	249
Solid PB100	Ⓐ	350
Sony SA-W305	Ⓐ	130
Sunfire Sub Junior	Ⓐ	1,099
Sunfire True Sub	Ⓐ	1,499
Sunfire Trus Sub Sig.	Ⓐ	1,699
TDL Nucleus SBR	Ⓐ	200
TDL CF75	Ⓐ	700
Triangle Sat III	Ⓐ	650
Tsunami TS300	Ⓐ	300
Tsunami TS200	Ⓐ	300
Tsunami TS210	Ⓐ	399
W'dale Modus Sub Bass	Ⓐ	180
Wilson Audio Puppy 5.1	Ⓐ	8,450
Wilson Audio Whow III	Ⓐ	10,999
Wilson Audio XS	Ⓐ	17,000
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
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 S	Ⓞ	399
Kuzma Stogi	Ⓞ	750
Kuzma Stogi Ref	Ⓞ	1,250
Linn Akito	Ⓞ	500
Linn Ekos	Ⓞ	1,500
Moth Mk I	Ⓞ	109
Moth MKIII Stainless	Ⓞ	146
Moth Mk III Tungsten	Ⓞ	174
Moth Moth 900	Ⓞ	598
Naim ARO	Ⓞ	1,070
N'ham Space	Ⓞ	450
N'ham Paragon 3	#	550
N'ham Paragon 2	#	800
N'ham Mentor	Ⓞ	800
N'ham Foot	Ⓞ	1,100
N'ham Paragon 1	#	1,600
Pro-Ject 9	Ⓞ	350
Rega RB250	Ⓞ	109
Rega RB300	Ⓞ	174
Rega RB900	Ⓞ	598
Rockport Series 7000	#	6,000
Roksan Tabrz	Ⓞ	350
Roksan Tabrz Zi	Ⓞ	450
Roksan Artemiz	Ⓞ	895
SME 3009 Ser II Imp	Ⓞ	309
SME 3009 S2 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
Triplanar V1A	Ⓞ	3,500
Triplanar V1B	Ⓞ	3,750
Wilson Benesch Act 0.5	Ⓞ	795
Wilson Benesch ACT2	Ⓞ	1,350
Zeta AS	Ⓞ	469
Zeta VDH	Ⓞ	549

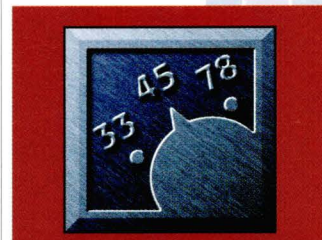


## TUNERS

**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
Aura TU80	P30	350
AVI S2000MT	P16	599
AVI S2000MT2	P99	899

Creek T43	P68	399
Cyrus FM7	P29	398
Davidson-Roth FM Ref Classic		5,590
Denon TU-260L MKII	P40	130
Denon TU-215RD	P40	150
Denon TU-425RD	P40	200
Denon TU-1500RD	P40	250
Fanfare FT1	P08	1,395
H/K TU930	P30	150
H/K TU950	P30	200
Kenwood KT-2080	P20	130
Kenwood KT-3080	P30	180
Linn Kudos	P50	775
Linn Kremling	P80	2,600
Magnum Dynalab FT11		499
Magnum Dynalab FT-101A		795
Magnum Dynalab Etude		1,250
Magnum Dynalab MD108		4,990
Marantz ST-48	P60	120
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	330
Micromega Tuner	P39	700
Musical Fidelity E50	P20	300
Myriad T-30	P39	400
Myriad MT100	P39	530
NAD 412	P24	190
NAD 414RDS	P30	250
NAD 710	P24	270
NAD 712	P24	330
Naim NAT03		615
Naim NAT02		1,130
Naim NAT01		1,780
Onkyo T 4210RDS	P30	180
Onkyo T 409	P30	230
Onkyo T 411RDS	P30	260
Pioneer F-204RDS	P30	140
Pioneer F-504RDS	P40	250
Pioneer F-504RDS Precision	P40	300
Quad 99	P25	700
Quad 77FM	P25	700
Rega Radio	P24	298
Roksan Caspian	P50	695
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-SB920	P30	180
Sony ST-SA3ES	P30	250
T+A T1 200R	P60	790
TAG McLaren T20	P39	1,099
Teac T-R400	P40	100
Teac TR-460	P40	120
Teac T-H500	P30	170
Technics ST-GT350L	P30	130
Technics ST-GT550L	P39	180
Technics ST-GT650L	P39	230
Thorens TR1-2000	P59	499
Thule Audio Spirit TU100	P40	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 Kanoot MKI Arm	Ⓞ	279
Moth Kanoot MK3 Arm	Ⓞ	329
NAD 533	Ⓞ	220
N'ham Interspace	Ⓞ	500
Pioneer PL-J2500-C	Ⓞ	80
Pioneer PL-990	Ⓞ	130

## Factsback

For access to  
past reviews  
see page 153.

Pro-Ject 0.5/OM10	Ⓞ	170
Pro-Ject 1/510	Ⓞ	200
Pro-Ject 2/510	Ⓞ	250
Pro-Ject Classic/510	Ⓞ	360
Pro-Ject 6/510	Ⓞ	400
Pro-Ject 6.9	Ⓞ	500
Rega Planar 78	Ⓞ	214
Rega Planar 2	Ⓞ	214
Rega Planar 3	Ⓞ	274
Roksan Radius	Ⓞ	470
Sherwood PM8550	Ⓞ	160
Sony PS-LX150H	Ⓞ	90
Sony PS-LX300H	Ⓞ	150
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 W/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
Avid Acutus		3,995
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		10,500
Chantry QT Level 2		705
DNM-Reson Rota 1	Ⓞ	3,900
DNM-Reson Rota 2	Ⓞ	5,600
Impulse Moskito		695
Kuzma Stabi S		695
Kuzma Stabi		1,950
Kuzma Stabi Reference		3,750
Linn LP12 Basic		1,100
Linn LP12 Lingo		1,750
Michell Gyro Spider Ed'n		775
Michell Gyrodek		875
Michell Orbe		1,995
N'ham Spacedeck		750
N'ham Graphic		1,200
N'ham HyperSpacedeck		1,500
N'ham Mentor		2,600
N'ham Anna Log		5,500
Oracle Delphi		3,370
Oracle Delphi 15th Anni		3,800
Pink Triangle Taranella		680
Pro-Ject Perspective	Ⓞ	750
Rega Planar 9	Ⓞ	1,598
Roksan RST1M	Ⓞ	695
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

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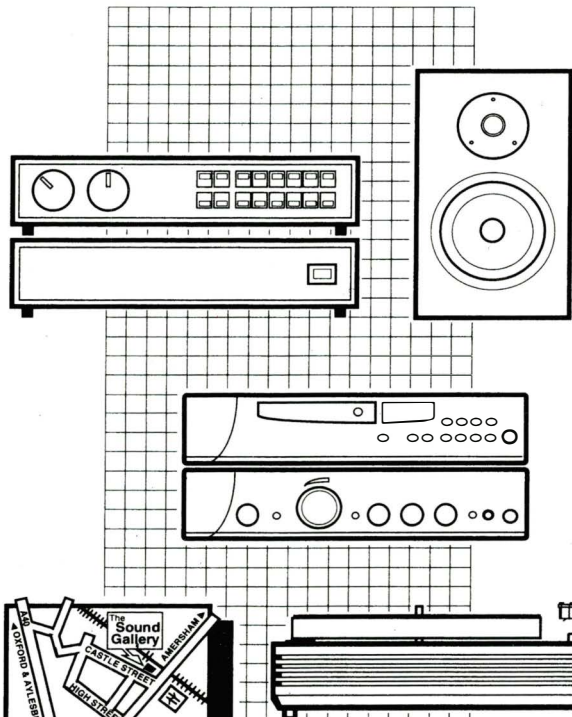
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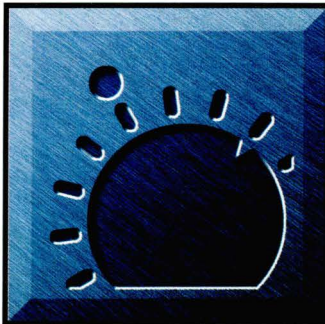
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# Amplifiers

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 on the penultimate page of the mag.  
**ISSUE NUMBER:** The issue of *Hi-Fi Choice* in which an original review appeared.  
**H** High End 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    ISSUE NUMBER    FACTSBACK NO.

STATUS

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	LINE INPUTS	MM PHONO INPUTS	MC PHONO INPUTS	REMOTE CONTROL	HEADPHONE SOCKET	POWER OUTPUT (W)	RECEIVER	ISSUE NUMBER	FACTSBACK NO.
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
Arcam Alpha One	230	Rather like an Alpha 7 but without the remote control and what appears to be better sound quality still	6					35			186
Arcam Alpha 8R	380	The Alpha 8R sets a high level of resolution and stability, and has some useful features for home cinema users	5	●				50			192
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
ATC SIA2-150	1,984	An impressive sounding integrated amp with a dynamic, open and detailed sound	4				●	150			192
Aria S2	1,000	Glamorously packaged valve amp produces a real eyes closed, feet up kind of sound	4					12			190
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
Audioogram 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
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 A500	200	Bargain-basement amplifier whose dowdy appearance conceals a surprisingly powerful and sophisticated sound	6			●		75			193
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 CSA 28	1,249	Elegant Scandinavian cool, abundantly detailed if somewhat system dependent	5	●			●	60			189
Copland CTA 402	1,698	A unusually flexible valve amp with an attractive and textured sound	5	●			●	35			193
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
Cymbal CA1	499	Lacklustre amplifier tends to underperform with complex material. Best with straightforward compact loudspeakers	6					40		2236	178
Creek 4330	279	Diminutive but classy amp will drive anything, and can be specified in various configurations	4	●				40			192
Cyrus SL	398	Articulate amplifier with build quality to die for, superb, outgoing midband and lean, though well-extended bass	6					50			168
Cyrus III	598	Beautifully presented, but mid-dominated balance was not liked. Upgradeable using PSX PSU unit	4	●			●	50		1854	162
Denon PMA-250SE	140	This amp can sound rough when extended, but within its limits it is open, detailed and likeable	5				●	30		2046	171
Denon PMA-350SE	180	Reinvented in the minimalist tradition, this SE model is a control freak, but can sound wonderful	5				●	50		1856	162
Denon PMA-535R	230	The kind of amp they made in the 70's, dressed to the nines, and nowhere to go	5	●			●	50			192
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
Densen DM-10	1,375	Big, bold and expressive amplifier, but sometimes rough around the edges, and not as powerful as it appears	6					75			189
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
Edmund Audio ES110	400	Honest but unexciting straight line amp from REL associate company	6					85			192
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
Exposure RCXXV	1,000	Unaccountably rather underwhelming top of the line integrated sounds a little soft and detached	6				●	60			189
Electrocompaniet EC1-2	995	A 50 watt amplifier which sounds more powerful, and makes 'real sounding' music	4					50		2158	175
Harman/Kardon HK610	180	Lively and friendly sound, but could prove too exciting for the faint hearted	6	●				30		1465	149
Harman/Kardon HK630	200	Sharp, clean but sometimes slightly raw sounding budget amp	4	●				40			192
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 KAF-3010R	180	Plenty of twiddly bits yet weak on inputs, and basically good, but somewhat uneven sound quality	4	●			●	70			186
Kenwood KA-5090R	300	Large, well equipped and high tech integrated, but TRAITR output still gives a harsh, unobtrusive performance	5	●	●	●	●	65		2053	171
Krell KAV-500i	5,000	More at home in background listening/home cinema applications than out and out audio maniac set-ups	5				●	250			192
Lavardin Model IT	3,200	Banishment of 'memory distortion' delivers an amp with the best of valve and transistor sound characteristics	4					40			184
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 IA200	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-48	150	Fine entry level amplifier has excellent midband resolution and top, with a slightly coarse textured bass	5	●			●	50			186
Marantz PM-57	200	Well equipped but ultimately anodyne amplifier which lacks for nothing but star quality	5	●			●	50		2049	171
Marantz PM-68	300	Rather matter of fact delivery, lacks transparency and detail	6				●	90			192
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



CONTINUED

# Amplifiers

STATUS

SPECIFICATIONS


MM PHONO INPUTS  
MC PHONO INPUTS  
REMOTE CONTROL  
HEADPHONE SOCKET  
POWER OUTPUT (W)  
RECEIVER  
FACTSBACK NO.  
ISSUE NUMBER

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	MM PHONO INPUTS	MC PHONO INPUTS	REMOTE CONTROL	HEADPHONE SOCKET	POWER OUTPUT (W)	RECEIVER	FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NUMBER
Marantz PM-17 Kl-Signature	1,300	Full feature audiophile amp where the end results don't quite justify the fantastic ingredients	6	●	●	●	60			189
Monrio AS7Y	400	Engaging, but ill-disciplined, even OTT amplifier with unpredictable system compatibility	5				55	2237	178	
Musical Fidelity E1	199	Richly flavoured tone and realistically-scaled imagery distinguish this entry-level Richer Sounds special	6				30	2050	171	
Musical Fidelity E11	299	Well built minimalist amp with a 5 year guarantee, but can sound congested when extended	6				60	2232	178	
Musical Fidelity X-A1	479	Idiosyncratic visuals just another plus for an amp that is powerful, well built, and serves the music superbly	6				50		181	
Musical Fidelity A2	500	Lucid, transparent midband and a full upper bass are provided by this highly proficient A1 replacement	5	●			25	1862	162	
Musical Fidelity A220	700	Powerful, authoritative and well turned-out amplifier that is easy to match with comparably priced speakers	5	●			50	2012	168	
Musical Fidelity X-A100R	999	Sings like a thoroughbred, but better with Mozart than Motorhead	6			●	75		189	
Myryad T-40	400	The T-40 is a well built and sensible, but needs more dynamics and finesse	6	●		●	50		192	
Myryad M1120	600	Well styled, well built: a good, even tempered amplifier, though it can sound rather brittle	6			●	60	2153	175	
NAD 310	100	Fleet and sure of foot, it seems likely to set all appendages tapping with its blend of enthusiasm and artfulness	5				20	1468	149	
NAD C320	200	Excellent budget amp from the makers of the seminal 3020 offers better clarity and neutrality and good build	6			●	40		186	
NAD C340	270	A classic NAD amplifier copes with any speaker, delivers plenty of power, and does so with calm decorum	6	●		●	50		192	
NAD S300	1,900	Substantial integrated with loads of power and no shortage of finesse, slightly bass strong	5			●	100		189	
Naim Nait 3	575	Distinctive and highly musical sounding integrated amp. Perhaps too distinctive for some tastes	5				30	1748	154	H
Naim Nait 3R	780	Remote control variant of the basic Nait has a similarly dynamic credible sound but ultimately lacks power	5			●	30		189	
Pioneer A-300R	200	Its bright and breezy sound is a natural tonic to those of us worn down by the ongoing stress of life	5	●		●	50	1469	149	
Pioneer A-407R	230	Clean, consistent, finely detailed sound, good finish and (mainly) good build	5	●		●	45		186	
Pioneer A-400X	300	On second addition, this amp was tonally unchanged but less compelling than on its first outing	6	●	●	●	50	1545	138	
Pioneer A-607R	300	Lively, articulate amp with plenty of drive and a hint of brightness	5	●		●	60		192	
Pioneer A-300R Precision	400	Sophisticated variant of the A-300R. Not an obvious winner, but will slowly ply you with its subtle charms	5	●		●	35	1863	162	
Pioneer A-07	999	Curious blend of high-end attributes and inconsistent, though undeniably detailed sound	5	●		●	80	2160	175	
Præcisa Acustica Sonoro	1,800	It is not often that transistor amplifiers are made to sound so palpably valve-like	5			●	100		189	
Primare A-20 Mk II	799	Everything except packaging has changed in mkII version: but ballsier model has lost none of its refinement	5			●	70		181	
Primare A30.1	1,499	Superb build and aesthetics, and undemonstrably musical down to its smallest screw	6			●	100		189	
Quad 77 Integrated	700	Compact and sophisticated amp. Has limited inputs when used with 'foreign' components. (Optional system remote)	3				84	2013	168	
Rega Elex	398	Minimalist amplifier, derived from Elicit, is a little uninspiring, though at least it is well behaved	4	●			50	1865	160	
Restek Fantasy II	1499	Muscular, but ultimately rather strident amplifier which needs careful system matching	6			●	100		189	
Roksan Caspian	695	Well-built, open and articulate amplifier, which is also consistent from system to system	6			●	70	2014	168	
Rose Scion	615	Unique two-box integrated gives real subtlety and low level resolution, but the sound lacks scale and weight	5	●	●		65	2009	168	
Rotel RA-931	150	Rather dry and unforgiving sound from this internally well specified and attractively priced amplifier	4	●		●	35	2048	171	
Rotel RA-971	200	Budget buy par excellence, especially for large rooms and insensitive speakers	6			●	70		186	
Sony TA-F448BE	250	Minimalist interface is matched to carefully considered circuit with satisfactory effect - but keep the volume in check	5	●		●	55	2055	171	
Sony TA-F3000ES	500	Champagne 'shoebbox amp' may lack power reserves, but is quick and articulate. In every sense a knockout	5	●	●	●	35	2239	178	
T+A PA-1220R	1,445	Unique presentation and feature set, but sometimes rather relentless sound quality	7			●	100		189	
TAG McLaren 60i	800	Clean, slightly antiseptic sound from this beautifully turned out entry level Audiolab 8000LX replacement	6			●	60		189	
TAG McLaren 60iRv	999	Looks, feels and sounds better than the Audiolab it supersedes. Smooth, open, refined but lacks body and drive	6			●	60		184	H
Talk Electronics Storm 1	500	Good soundstaging and strong detail are provided by this unassuming and not especially powerful model	6			●	50	1868	162	
Talk Electronics Storm 2	650	Crisp, clean, well defined sound, arguably lacking warmth, but a good midrange purchase overall	6			●	50	2154	175	
Teac A-BX7R	700	Characterful balance mars a meticulously designed amplifier. Includes a balanced input, optional MM/MC stage	5			●	50	1869	162	
Technics SU-A660 Mk 3	200	Plenty of wellie for the price, but the sound can be a tad coarse and lacking in fine detail	5	●		●	37		186	
Technics SU-A700 Mk 3	250	Fully equipped, high-tech amplifier ultimately fails the authenticity test, and can sound messy and inarticulate	5	●		●	45	1870	162	
Technics SU-A800D Mk 2	300	Two-box amplifier looks great, has plenty of gadgets, and makes good, if slightly over-exuberant, music	5	●		●	55	2234	178	
Technics SU-A900D Mk 2	400	Looks like a pre/power amplifier, but in effect it's an integrated, with a rather soft-centred sound to match	5	●		●	70	2149	175	
Token Audio K50	350	Stainless steel finish, others available. Sound is warm and attractive, though a little undynamic	5			●	50		186	
Yamaha AX-392	170	Standard budget fare, and it's easy to pick holes, but in undemanding surroundings it works creditably	6	●		●	60		192	
Yamaha AX-492	220	Powerful, well equipped amplifier at an attractive price, offers powerful and engaging music-making	5	●		●	85	2231	178	
Yamaha AX-592	280	Fine, middle ranking amplifier, with a detailed midband but performance declines at frequency extremes	5	●	●	●	100	2056	171	
<b>PREAMPLIFIERS (CONTINUES OVERLEAF)</b>										
Amp Flux System 2	3,000	Three-box affair with a clean, spacious sound and plenty of slam. A touch steely, but undeniably potent	5			●	50		187	H
Alchemist Kraken APD7A MkII	549	Unusual looks and unusual sound too, rather rough and lacking detail	6						187	
Arcam Alpha 9C	400	Well specified and flexible preamp with sound only just lacking in greatness	6			●			187	
Audio Note M Zero	299	Neat shoe box size preamp. Able to impart music with real life and soul when partnered with P Zero power amps	5						191	
Copland CTA-301MkII	1,249	Sweet sounding, but never gets bogged down in audio treacle	4	●				1630	151	
Creek P43R	350	Excellent sound, remote control operation and upgrade options from this fine value preamp	6			●			187	
Crimson CS610	450	Good, clear sound, including a decent phono stage, but flexibility is limited	3	●		●			187	



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CONTINUED

# Amplifiers

SPECIFICATIONS

MM PHONO INPUTS  
MC PHONO INPUTS  
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STATUS

PRODUCT (€) COMMENTS

**PREAMPLIFIERS (CONTINUED)**

	Cyrus aCA7	798	A decent enough unit at the price but not as good as the Cyrus aPA7 power amp it was tested with	5							190	
	Densen Beat B-200	1,000	A versatile preamp with a high 'air-guitar' factor and Densen's characteristic styling	6	●	●					191	
	EAR 802MC	2,599	Tested with 509 Mk 2 power amp. (See Power Amplifier section)	4	●	●					163	
	ECA Vista	760	Wind up the volume and blow a breath of fresh music into your system. (Tested with Lectern power amp)	5						1302	145	
	Exposure XVII	850	Superbly rhythmic; maybe a bit overpowering in the midband. Tested in Sessions with XVIII Super	5	●	●					142	
	Jadis JP-30MC	5,290	French tubes, beautiful build, nostalgic styling and delightful midrange. (Tested with JA 30 power amp)	5	●						60	
	LFD Mistral Linestage	449	Strong ergonomics, generally decent sound, but a little lacking in detail	6						1930	165	
	Meridian 501	695	Tight, positive sound, but dispassionate; intense at high levels. (Tested with 555 power amp)	5	●					1303	145	
	Meridian 562V	995	Transparent and capable preamp, also features six digital inputs	9	●						140	
	Meridian 502	1,295	Extremely sophisticated analogue controller with tremendous flexibility and a fast and tidy presentation	7							162	
	Michell Orca	1,650	Line-level design with a gorgeous remote and focused, spacious sound. (tested with Alecto power amps)	6							187	
	Moth 30 Passive	149	Modular system gives cracking results. Passive preamp and power amp warrant Best Buy	4							109	
	Moth 30 Active Line Stage	349	Excellent-sounding ultra-simple miniature preamp	4						1931	165	
	Muse Model Three	1,990	Natural sounding tranny preamp with useful audiophile features. Works beautifully with 160 power amp	5							166	
	Musical Fidelity X-PRE	200	Cleverly configured preamp with many upgrade options, and open, lively and engaging sound	4						2152	175	
	Musical Fidelity Nu-Vista	1,295	Fully remote, novistor tube equipped, with fine coherence and musicality	5	●						182	
	NAD 114	270	Beer-budget preamp, sounds focused, detailed and consistent	6	●	●	●			1932	165	
	Naim NAC92R	630	Upgradeable preamp uses proprietary socketry. (Tested with NAP90 power amp)	5						1936	165	
	NVA P50	350	Passive preamp that's more likely than most to cause treble loss	4							187	
	Quad 77 Pre	850	Sophisticated design with 2-way remote control console; open colourful sound and very flexible	4	●	●	●				1941	165
	Rega Hal	998	Passive line stages dedicated to Exon power amps	6	●	●	●				1942	165
	Rose RV-23	450	You can pay more to get a more transparent sound, but it's hard to criticise at the price	3							77	
	Rotel RC-971	150	Low price is offset by rather coarse sound quality with certain types of music. (Tested with RB-971 power amp)	5							178	
	Sumo Athena IIB	767	Big, natural and tidy-sounding with very natural reproduction of acoustic and electric instruments	6						1305	145	
	TAG McLaren PA20R	1,500	Refinement of Audiolab original with clean, detailed sound but limited thrill power. (t/w 125M monoblocks)	6							184	
	Talk Hurricane 2L	649	Design of integrity which gets to the heart, if not the soul, of the music	6							1937	165
	Technics SU-C3000	2,997	Price includes SE-A3000. Supremely clean and even sounding combo, though it could be more musically involving	5	●						188	
	Thule Spirit PR100	400	High-tech preamp slightly marred by tendency to veil the sound	5							187	

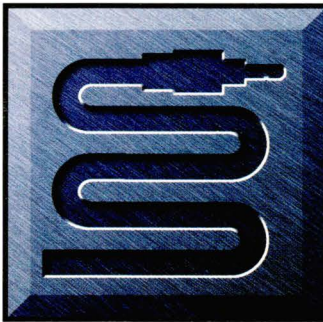
**POWER AMPLIFIERS**

	Alch. Kraken APD8A Mk II	549	Unusual looks and unusual sound too, rather rough and lacking detail	1						55		187
	Arcam Alpha 9P	400	Clear, colourful and well-disciplined, the Arcam is a strong all-rounder that can compete with conviction	1						60	1929	165
	Arcam Alpha 10P	600	Well made and flexible: upgradeable to 3 channels. Good sound lacking the last degree of detail	1						100		187
	Art Audio Quintet	1,393	Switchable triode, ultralinear output stage. In triode mode, these are 15 of the sweetest Watts around	1						15		109
	Audio Note P Zero	599	Neat shoe box size valve monoblocks, priced per pair. Impart music with life and soul (Tested with P Zero preamp)	1						8		191
	Border Patrol 300B SE	3,995	Single ended valve power amp with passion, grace and fire, and plenty of grunt to boot	1						8.5		186
	Copland CTA-505	2,099	Grown-up amplifier with a refined, yet never over-civilised air	1						67	1630	151
	Creek A52SE	599	Well designed and built amplifier with plenty of power, detail and refinement	6						100		187
	Crimson CS630	800	Space-saving slimline monoblocks with both grunt and finesse	1						100		187
	Crimson 620C	875	Not entirely satisfactory power amp which has dynamic strengths, but underachieves when the volume is raised	1						50		181
	Cyrus Power	498	Detail and midband clarity and stand-out qualities. Smooth and refined with most types of music but bass-soft	1						50		183
	Cyrus aPA7	1,896	Low feedback design that's a positive departure from the transistorised norm, (tested with Cyrus aCA7 pre)	1						150		190
	Densen B-300	800	Expensive but highly musical. Colourful and warm sound with strong timing and listener involvement	1						100		183
	EAR 509 Mk II	3,699	Combining sonic strengths of transistors and valves, this amp warrants attention. (Tested with 802 Preamp)	1						100		63
	ECA Lectern	880	Tested with Vista. Wind up the volume and blow a breath of fresh music into your system	1						50	1302	145
	LFD Mistral Power	449	Infectious upper band vitality, but LF dynamics lacking – likewise 'grip' and transparency	1						60	1930	165
	Meridian 555	750	By providing an open window on the music, this amp is wide open to RF and low level IM distortions	1						60	1303	145
	Michell Alecto stereo	1,150	Open, well-focused imagery with natural, refined textures	1						50	1940	165
	Michell Alecto Monoblocks	1,950	Hefty beasts offering real power and striking imaging. Not the last word in timing (tested with Orca preamp)	1						100		187
	Moth 60 Watt Stereo	599	Miniature power amp lacks control and finesse – not comfortable with difficult speaker loads	1						60	1931	165
	Moth 30 Series Monoblocks	879	Tested with Active Preamp. Demonstrated solid balance and proved adept at delivering vital musical qualities	1						100		155
	Musical Fidelity X-A50	500	Cleverly configured and attractively packaged, open, lively and engaging sound. Reviewed with X-PRE	1						50		175
	Myriad MA120	450	Based on MI120 integrated – see latter for comments, but sounds significantly better when bi-amped with MI120	1						60	1935	165
	NAD 214	370	A little lightweight, but detailed, consistent sound quality, and excellent value for money	1						80	1932	165
	Naim NAP90	450	Power amp from a Nait integrated with some improvements	1						30	1936	165
	NVA A60	560	Rather coarse and uninviting sound	1						60		187
	Technics SE-A3000	2,997	Price includes SU-C3000. Supremely clean and even sounding combo, though it could be more musically involving	1						100		188
	Thule Spirit PA100	600	More successful than matching preamp: sound is gutsy and lively, and generally clean	1						100		187
	Quad 77 Power	600	Open, bold and colourful, with mild compression	1						85	1941	165
	Rega Exon	1,196	Monoblock, priced each, dedicated for Hal preamp. Bold, outgoing, in-command kind of sound	1						125	1942	165
	Roksan Caspian Power	595	Excels musically and in conventional hi-fi terms. A power amp for people with long-term satisfaction in mind	1						70		183
	Rotel RB-971	200	Somewhat better than the accompanying preamp – clean, mean and bridgeable. (Tested with RC-971)	1						70		178
	Rotel RB-980BX	450	Times enthusiastically recorded material with a laid-back and occasionally smeared sound	1						120		155
	Sirius D200	2,995	Single MOSFET pair per side gives tremendous resolution and timing (balanced only)	1						200		183
	Sumo Polaris III	950	Tested with Athena IIB. Big and tidy-sounding with very natural reproduction of acoustic and electric instruments	1						164	1305	145
	TAG McLaren 125M	2,400	Refined Audiolab replacement monoblocks with clean sound but limited thrill power. (t/w PA20R preamp)	1						145		184
	Talk Tornado 2	600	Good, but slightly retiring sound which lacks the authority to stand out in a crowd	1						65	1937	165
	Thorens TTA2000	599	Low power shoe-box format, but gutsy and surprisingly subtle and articulate	1						30	1938	165

**PHONO STAGES**

	Creek OBH-9	160	A neat little unit with an essentially neutral and listenable character	0		●						189
	Cyrus aEQ7/PSX-R	826	Very hi-tech product which tends too much towards smoothness except at climaxes, which can be rough	0	●	●						189
	Densen DP-Drive/DP-02	350	Quite unusual design in many ways: sound is mostly good but never quite shakes off a 'synthetic' quality	0		●						189
	Electrocompaniet ECP-1	495	An excellent phono amp that combines well-rounded balance with detail and low noise	0	●	●						189
	Michell Iso/Lithos	599	With the Lithos power supply upgrade, the Iso is a very capable phono stage with just a hint of bass fullness	0	●	●						189
	Moth 30 Series Phono	249	Fine sound all round, in any kind of music, from this bargain phono stage	0	●	●						189
	Musical Fidelity X-LP	130	A little bass lightness does not seriously mar the performance of this fine value unit	0	●	●						189
	NAD PP-1	40	A basic phono stage that does its job rather coarsely: a bit bass-shy too	0	●							189
	QED Discsaver DS-1	35	It's cheap, it's cheerful, it's OK – perfectly adequate for use with a phono-less integrated, though not very refined	0	●							189
	Roksan Artaxerxes X/DS1.5	1,150	Delicate and well balanced, slightly congested at climaxes. Power supply expensive, but runs two Roksan components	0	●	●						189





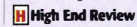
# Cables

Cables are an integral part of a hi-fi system, required to connect source components to amplifiers, and the latter to speakers.

- Analogue Interconnects connect source components and amplifiers, and run between pre and power amps. They are priced for one-metre terminated pairs.
- Digital interconnects connect CD transports to DACs or digital recorders. They come in optical and electrical varieties, the former being made of plastic or glass. The prices shown are for a terminated linear metre.
- Speaker cables are used between the amplifier and speaker. Our prices are per unterminated metre. Termination (plugs and soldering) costs vary.

## KEY TO SPECIFICATIONS

- **SYMMETRICAL:** A twisted pair of conductors.
- **COAXIAL:** A central 'hot' conductor and a shield that carries the negative signal.
- **STRANDED:** Multiple strands with no intervening insulation.
- **SOLID CORE:** Single or multiple, individually insulated strands.
- **COPPER:** Material used for conductor.
- **SILVER:** Material used for conductor.
- **DIG CABLE TYPE:** O - optical digital; E - electrical digital for CD Players, DACs and digital recorders.
- **FACTSBACK REFERENCE:** The Factsback Reference number permits direct access to our faxed review reprint service. For full info, see the Factsback ad on the penultimate page of the mag.
- **ISSUE NUMBER:** The issue of *Hi-Fi Choice* in which an original review appeared.



**B** BEST BUY    **R** RECOMMENDED    **E** EDITOR'S CHOICE

# Cables

## SPECIFICATIONS

- SYMMETRICAL    COAXIAL    STRANDED    SOLID CORE    COPPER    SILVER    DIG CABLE TYPE    FACTSBACK NO.    ISSUE NUMBER

STATUS

PRODUCT (E) COMMENTS

**ANALOGUE INTERCONNECTS (PRICES PER PAIR)**

PRODUCT	(E)	COMMENTS	SYMMETRICAL	COAXIAL	STRANDED	SOLID CORE	COPPER	SILVER	DIG CABLE TYPE	FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NUMBER
Acoustic Precision Eikos	89	Not entirely neutral: probably best suited to upbeat music. Very stiff construction				●	●				188
Audio Note AN-A	18	Not especially impressive: warm but well-rounded balance that restricts 'air' but is quite clear			●		●				108
Audio Note AN-C	35	Neutral but lacking in subtle texture and unable to distinguish fine detail						●	●	1687	131
▲ Audio Note AN-S	99	Up-beat and enthusiastic sound with satisfyingly deep and grumbly bass	●				●		●	1687	131
Audio Note AN-V	179	15 individually insulated silver strands make up this very clean and dynamically unchallenged cable			●		●		●	1687	131
Audioquest Turquoise	40	A 'fit and forget' cable that sounds distinctly lazy				●	●		●		160
Audioquest Topaz X2	60	Well made but let down by a pervading sense of muddle and congestion in the sound			●		●		●		188
▲ CableTalk Advanced 2	35	Slight roughness in loud music barely detracts from a well-balanced performance with good imaging					●		●	2166	176
▲ 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
Cambridge Silver Spirit 60	100	Good bass but a lack of detail and differentiation of instruments			●		●		●		188
Chord Cobra 2	50	Good, strong sound with full-bodied music, less happy with smaller forces					●		●	2167	176
Chord Chameleon 2	90	Deep bass is fine but despite that the sound can be a bit hard and lacking body and resonance			●		●		●		188
▲ Connections Midas HD	39	Canary yellow cable with excellent plugs and an open sound. Slight treble glare			●		●		●		160
▲ DNMC 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 PBJ	68	Assured sound, solid and natural bass and clear treble – excellent performance all round						●	●		188
▲ 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 Solar Wind	85	Good tone and dynamics, with just occasionally a touch of bass-lightness in busy music			●			●	●		188
▲ Nordost Blue Heaven	145	Very good bass and only slightly grainy treble add up to a well integrated, natural-sounding cable			●		●		●		176
Precious Metals SS35	50	Extended bass, but dry character suits electronic music better than acoustic				●	●		●		188
▲ 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 Qnet 2	30	Very well balanced, refined and detailed, this is everything a good cable should be, and excellent value						●	●	2172	176



Tel: 0181 348 5676 (2.00-7.00 pm)  
Fax: 0181 341 9368

## Esoteric High Fidelity CABLES

Dealers in: Absolute, Audio Note, Audioquest, Deltec, Electrocompaniet, Harmonix, Kimber, Mandrake, MIT, Siltech, Symo, Transparent, Van den Hul, WBT and others.

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... for YOUR ears  
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Contact us by phone, fax, or letter and we'll do our best to help you achieve your goal.  
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CONTINUED

# 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	
QED Qnec 4S	70	Some coloration and roughness in the midrange and treble, but bass is gratifyingly solid	●				●	●			188	
Reference CS1	75	A moderate performer, with a little coloration and a tendency to lose bass at climaxes	●				●	●			188	
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	
SonicLink 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	
SonicLink Lilac	65	Some dryness can affect transient sounds, though tone is generally good, especially in the bass	●				●	●			188	
Straight Wire Chorus	40	A very confident cable with good bass, though perhaps a shade of treble loss			●	●	●	●		2173	176	
Straight Wire Sonata	80	Tonal balance favours lower frequencies but despite this it's a very listenable cable			●	●	●	●			188	
Supra EFF-ISL	80	Excellent sound in all areas – nothing to criticise	●				●	●	●		188	
Tara Labs Prism 22	64	Mild tendency to plumminess offsets some hardness in complex music with mixed results			●		●	●			188	
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 PBS	50	A highly neutral cable with fine dynamic and rhythmic performance too – excellent					●	●	●		188	
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 information			●	●	●	●		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	
<b>DIGITAL INTERCONNECTS (PRICES PER TERMINATED LINEAR METRE)</b>												
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 colorations; 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	
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-crip 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
<b>LOUDSPEAKER CABLES (PRICES PER METRE LENGTH)</b>												
ALR Jordan QMM	5	Generally neutral, if sometimes bass-shy, but not very communicative			●		●		●		183	
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 F-18	3.60	Slightly lumpy bass and lack of midrange detail: can also be a bit dry			●		●	●			192	
Audioquest Type 4	5	Four 18-gauge OFHC copper conductors wound in a Litz-type fashion increases capacitance but restrains 'bite'	●				●	●			109	
Audioquest Type 6	9	A very inflexible cable in which the sonic ends don't quite justify the means	●				●	●			183	
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 Talk 4.1	4.25	Smooth and cultured sound that lacks fine detail and is a bit too restrained					●	●		1800	157	
Cable Talk Concert 2.1	8	Can make stereo images recede, and favours the upper bass			●		●	●			192	
DNM LSC350	6.95	Majors on midband and lower treble lucidity at the expense of bass and extreme treble extension	●				●	●			168	
Chord Company Odyssey	17	Relatively vice-free cable with good detail throughout the range and generally neutral bass	●				●	●			192	
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	
Ixos Gamma 6006	5	Bass is better than treble, which can become spitty and sibilant – though only slightly			●		●	●			192	
Kimber 4PR	90 (5m)	Considering the price, this cable's very slight dryness is forgivable when everything else is so right					●	●			192	
Kimber 4TC	19.6	A well-balanced cable with good performance in all areas	●				●	●			168	
Kimber 4VS	9	A good mix of virtues including particularly fine bass	●				●	●			183	
Linn K20	4	Seems to work best with lively, unobtrusive music – can be dry and edgy	●				●	●			183	
Naim NAC A5	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	
Nordost Flatline Gold II	9.50	Exciting sound but a bit too 'in-yr-face', and bass is not always even	●				●	●			192	
Ortofon SPK100	3	Grey-sounding – strips instruments of their natural richness and resonance. A bit bass-shy, too					●	●			133	
Ortofon SPK200	4.99	Good strong bass and fair detail, only slightly marred by a little dryness	●				●	●			183	
Ortofon SPK300	8	Tremendously open and atmospheric, with robust, full-blooded bass – if slightly bright at times					●	●			133	
Precious Metals SL102	10	Unusual construction gives rather strained sound, only really cheering up with simple musical textures	●				●	●			183	
Puresonic 7845	1.95	Big, weighty sound – but too messy and bloated for its own good	●				●	●			183	
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	



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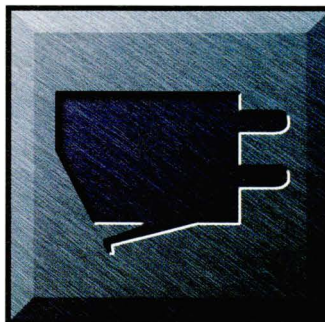
# Cables

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
QED Profile 4x4	9	Good midrange and treble balance, but bass is rather slack and detail not outstanding									168
<b>QED Qudos Silver</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>A few minor flaws but overall performance is very assured for this price</b>									192
Silver Sounds 12 gauge	15	Basic 'homemade' construction gives fairly neutral sound. Price not outstandingly competitive									168
SonicLink 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
SonicLink AST150	3.95	Slightly plummy bass and a useful way of holding musical strands together								1800	157
Sonic Link AST200x2	5.95	At its best with exciting music, this cable seems shy of subtler details									192
Straight Wire Rhythm	6	Its major flaw seems to be woolly and indistinct bass, which pervades most types of music									192
<b>Straight Wire Quartet</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>A good all-rounder with full tone, clear detail and natural ambience</b>									183
Supra Ply 3.4	6.95	Clean sound which stays together well at high levels, with full bass – perhaps a touch of treble restriction									183
Tara Labs Klara	2.95	A good budget cable with an even spread of virtues – and very minor vices – across the board									183
van den Gold Water	7	Bass becomes shy when there's a lot happening, and detail could be clearer									183
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 CS122	12	Good dynamics can make for exciting sound, but fine detail suffers and the treble is often dry									192
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 ad on the penultimate page of the mag.
  - **ISSUE NUMBER:** The issue of *HI-FI CHOICE* in which an original review appeared.
- High End Review**

**B** BEST BUY **R** RECOMMENDED **E** EDITOR'S CHOICE

# Cartridges

STATUS

SPECIFICATIONS

REPLACEABLE STYLUS OUTPUT (mV) MASS (g) FACTSBACK NO. ISSUE NUMBER

PRODUCT	(€)	COMMENTS	REPLACEABLE STYLUS	OUTPUT (mV)	MASS (g)	FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NUMBER
<b>Audio Technica AT-95E</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>Clear and dynamic, though richly balanced</b>			2.8		48
Audio Technica AT-OC9ML	330	A well-finished cartridge with a sound that's smoothly detailed, but also rather unexciting			0.4	8	192
<b>Clearaudio Signature</b>	<b>1,495</b>	<b>A great all-round performer with fine dynamic vitality and a seductive midband intimacy</b>			0.55	11.5	2142
<b>Denon DL110</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>A fine all-rounder, this high output MC model is likely to perform well</b>			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
<b>Denon DL304</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>Uncoloured, detailed, tracks superbly. Top notch altogether, and a bargain at the price</b>					103
<b>Dynavector DV-20X L</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>Articulate-sounding, with impressive treble resolve, though lightweight at times. Needs a high quality turntable and arm</b>			0.25	8.6	192
Dynavector Karat 17D2 mk2	450	Clean and controlled sound with taut, tuneful bass. Detailed and musically cogent			0.15	5.3	158
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
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 coloration 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
<b>Grado Prestige Gold</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>Rich sounding with an unusually refined top-end for a moving magnet-type cartridge</b>			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
<b>Linn K9</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>Linn improved this model by beefing up the Basik's bodywork and adding a super stylus</b>			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 Beta	599	A thoroughly enjoyable cartridge – smooth, agile and dynamic in character			0.5	8	192
Lyra Lydian	649	Superbly capable all-round musical performer that improves markedly when its body cover is removed			0.3	7	158
<b>Lyra Clavis Da Capo</b>	<b>995</b>	<b>A stable tracker, and one of the finest cartridges we've heard</b>			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
<b>Ortofon 510/P</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>For the price, a good blend of virtues – weight, clarity and neutrality</b>			3.0	5	85
<b>Ortofon 520/P</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>Sensitive to load capacitance, but the 520/P has a lively, effervescent sound</b>			3.0	5	67



CONTINUED

# Cartridges

STATUS

SPECIFICATIONS

REPLACEABLE STYLUS  
MM MC  
OUTPUT MASS (g)  
FACTSBACK NO.  
ISSUE NUMBER

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	REPLACEABLE STYLUS	MM	MC	OUTPUT MASS (g)	FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NUMBER
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 MC 10 Supreme	300	A full and cultured-sounding cartridge, with collective attributes far outweighing its shortcomings	●			0.5	10.7	192
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
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	67
Reson Reca	250	If you're after a high quality moving magnet cartridge, they don't get much better than this	●	●		6.5	6.3	192
Roksan Corus Black	130	Recognisably related to the Corus Blue, but smoother and more civilised	●	●		6.5	5	91
Sumiko Blue Point Special	250	A no-nonsense performer with engaging musical properties – one of the best around below £300	●	●		2.5	9	192
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
van den Hul G' hopper III/CLA	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



## 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 on the penultimate page of the mag.
- **ISSUE NUMBER:** The issue of *Hi-Fi Choice* in which an original review appeared.
- **High End Review**

**B** BEST BUY    **R** RECOMMENDED    **E** EDITOR'S CHOICE

# Cassette Decks

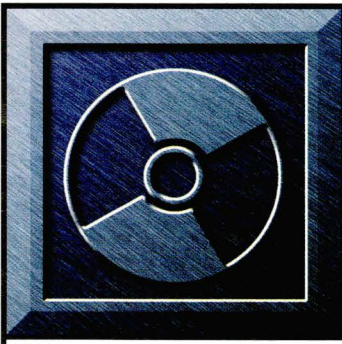
STATUS

SPECIFICATIONS

DOLBY C  
DOLBY S  
DOLBY HX-PRO  
3-HEAD  
TWIN DECK  
AUTO REVERSE  
ADJUSTABLE BIAS  
FACTSBACK NO.  
ISSUE NUMBER

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	DOLBY C	DOLBY S	DOLBY HX-PRO	3-HEAD	TWIN DECK	AUTO REVERSE	ADJUSTABLE BIAS	FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NUMBER
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
Harman/Kardon TD420	250	Minor inconsistencies detract from a well-conceived, minimum features design	●								1592
Harman/Kardon TD450	350	Draw loader with poor tape navigation features; good midband but shallow bass	●							1920	164
JVC TD-R472	200	Excellent auto-reverse deck which doesn't suffer the usual disadvantages and is very sharply priced	●								158
JVC TD-V662BK	270	Assured, clean and agile-sounding recorder, if not quite the most refined in its class	●							1380	146
JVC TD-W718	300	Twin deck. Good for creative live recording, but no timer standby. Respectable performance	●							2039	171
Kenwood KX-W6080	200	Modestly decent-sounding twin deck, with some transport instability and ragged bass	●							2040	171
Marantz SD455	170	Works well as a single deck, especially on replay, but dubbing at high/low speed compromises sound	●								184
NAD 613	230	Rough and ready, but enjoyable sound, though marred by mechanical motor noise	●								158
NAD 616	300	Twin deck with basic features. No Dolby setting memory, transport is too unstable for audiophile use	●								2041
Onkyo K-611	460	Cute drawer-loading mini-size component with 3-heads and dual capstan transport	●								1384
Pioneer CT-S550S	250	Great features, good with cheap low bias tapes, but slightly synthetic sound quality	●	●							1920
Pioneer CT-W806DR	300	Had it not been for the iffy transport quality, this sophisticated twin would have been Recommended	●								2042
Pioneer CT-S830S	500	High-class mechanism, if lacking in battleship externals, and superb sound	●	●							1385
Sony TC-KE600S	300	Mild setting-up problems notwithstanding, this UK-tweaked design has a smooth, open sound	●	●							158
Teac V01050	180	One of the cheapest 3-head machines around, but it shows in very 'thick' sound	●								184
Technics RS-AZ6	200	For those who can't afford the RS-AZ7, clarity over the widest bandwidth than s to AZ thin-film head	●								1920
Technics RS-AZ7	270	Thin-film head gives a solid, almost CD-like bass and midrange. A clear advance in state-of-the-art	●								158
Yamaha KX-490	200	Electrifyingly transparent and capable deck whose only flaw is a trace of audible wow and flutter	●								158
Yamaha KX-580SE	250	Subtle, engaging and transparent deck, with a lightweight tonality, but stability and strong detail	●	●							2043





# CD/DVD Players

All CD players offer a basic selection of facilities, and some can keep you entertained for hours as you programme in disc names and track orders. All but the excessively inexpensive feature remote control. Most CD players can be upgraded by adding an outboard DAC (see p129). To do this the player needs a digital output of either electrical or optical type. The former is preferable for the ultimate sound. A CD player can be split into two basic components: the disc drive or transport, and a device which converts the disc's digital bitstream into an analogue audio signal. This is called a digital to analogue converter, or DAC. Although most players are contained within a single box, expensive players are usually two-box affairs. The first new DVD players have not excelled with CD software.

## KEY TO SPECIFICATIONS

- **ELECTRICAL DIGITAL OUTPUT:** For electrical connection to an outboard DAC.
- **AES/EBU ELEC DIG OUTPUT:** Balanced digital output to be used with similarly equipped DACs.
- **OPTICAL DIGITAL OUTPUT:** For optical connection to an outboard DAC.
- **ST OPT DIG OUTPUT:** High-speed optical analogue output for amplifiers equipped with similarly equipped DACs.
- **BAL ANALOGUE OUTPUT:** Balanced analogue output for amplifiers equipped with balanced inputs.
- **HEADPHONE SOCKET:** For 'car' users.
- **VARIABLE OUTPUT:** Remotely adjustable output level (usually non-audiophile).
- **MULTI-DISC:** Equipped with a carousel or multi-tray system for continuous play of multiple discs.
- **DAC TYPE:** BS – Philips Bitstream; MB – multibit; Hyb – hybrid of multibit and bitstream technologies; 1bit – single bit types eg MASH, bitstream, PWM, etc; CC – constant calibration.
- **FACTSBACK REFERENCE:** The Factsback Reference number permits direct access to our faxed review reprint service. For full information, see the Factsback advert on the penultimate page of the magazine.
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**B** BEST BUY

**R** RECOMMENDED

**E** EDITOR'S CHOICE

**H** High End Review

# CD/DVD Players

## SPECIFICATIONS

- ▲ AES/EBU ELEC DIG OUTPUT
- ▲ OPTICAL DIG OUTPUT
- ▲ ST OPT DIG OUTPUT
- ▲ BAL ANALOGUE OUTPUT
- ▲ HEADPHONE SOCKET
- ▲ VARIABLE OUTPUT
- ▲ MULTI-DISC
- ▲ DAC TYPE
- ▲ FACTSBACK NO.
- ▲ ISSUE NUMBER

STATUS	PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	AES/EBU ELEC DIG OUTPUT	OPTICAL DIG OUTPUT	ST OPT DIG OUTPUT	BAL ANALOGUE OUTPUT	HEADPHONE SOCKET	VARIABLE OUTPUT	MULTI-DISC	DAC TYPE	FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NUMBER	
▲	Acurus ACD11	899	First-rate if costly player, which combines a delightful transparency with an uncontrived naturalness	●								1bit	1962 166	
	Acoustic Precision Eikos	1,850	Seriously customised Pioneer with extraordinary resolution and world beating imaging and bass	●								1bit	165	
	Advantage CD1S	3,995	A CD player of some stature – what it lacks in dynamics it makes up for in subtlety and flow	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		20bit	193	
	Alchemist Kraken	1,249	Distinctive looking player likely to suit a Alchemist system, but will result in variable results elsewhere		●							24/96	190	
▲	Alchemist Nexus APD32A	597	Refined treble, constrained yet capable bass and attractive all-round presentation	●								Hyb	169	
	AMC CD8A	150	Has balanced output, but is otherwise rather grey and unremarkable				●			●	●	BS	2071 172	
▲	AMC CD9/DAC8	200	Beer-budget two-box system (player + DAC) is smooth, attractive and easy on the ear	●								CC	2261 179	
	Anthem CD1	1,595	Unusual combination of high-end player, complete with HDCD, and changer. Good, but noisy	●	●							●	MB	2219 178
▲	Arcam Alpha 7	330	Mildly rehashed favourite comes up smelling of roses	●								BS	1872 179	
▲	Arcam Alpha MCD	450	Excellent bass and natural midband, but just a touch of treble dryness, from this very listenable changer	●								●	MB	2220 178
▲	Arcam Alpha 8	520	Refined, intricately detailed but a little cautious. Should be broadly compatible with a variety of amps	●								BS	1873 163	
▲	Arcam Alpha 8SE	600	Excellent (and very reasonably priced) HDCD-compatible player is a strong all-rounder	●			●					1bit	176	
▲	Arcam Alpha 9	800	Refined, articulate player which employs new DAC technology to great effect	●								Ring	188	
	Audio Analogue Paganini	750	Basically good, but sometimes heavy handed player.	●								24bit	191	
	Audio Research CD1	3,290	Suspends disbelief with a real yet obviously coloured sound. A rare proposition among CD players	●	●	●	●					BS	1875 163	
	Audio Note CD1	600	Easy on the ear, and for a valve player, easy on the pocket, but a bit Radio 2 flavoured	●								Hyb	188	
	AVI S2000MC2	899	A chip off the old block. This model's in-yr-face balance obstructs an otherwise finely detailed sound	●								MB	2179 176	
▲	AVI S2000MC Reference	1,399	Lean, dry, high resolution player, built to outlast most of us. A fine performer in a sympathetic system	●								MB	169	
▲	Cambridge Audio CD4	150	Basic appearance and sluggish track access/track search belies its up and at 'em sound quality	●								Hyb	1268 147	
▲	Cambridge Audio CD4SE	200	Among the best encountered at the price, considerably more refined and convincing than the CD4	●								BS	1877 163	
▲	Cambridge Audio CD6	250	A sharp, articulate player, a real thoroughbred in fact, perhaps too sharp and lively for some systems	●					●			BS	159	
▲	Copland CDA-266	1,199	Simple yet elegant design is unexpectedly sophisticated under the skin, and effective in execution	●								MB	2183 176	
▲	Copland CDA-288	2,199	A gentle giant of a player that errs in favour of pastel shades rather than bold daubs of colour	●			●					MB	1880 163	
▲	Cymbol CDP12	1,299	Clean, detailed and airy HDCD-equipped player with minimalist trappings	●								Hyb	2184 176	
▲	Cyrus dAD1.5	395	Improved dAD1 variant has improved digital filter for a more natural, easy on the ear quality	●								Hyb	191	
▲	Cyrus dAD3	598	A relaxed style of delivery that convinces with guile and subtlety rather than orchestral ordnance	●								BS	1887 163	
▲	Cyrus dAD3Q	898	Lucid, transparent and uncontrived sound quality, superb build, and readily upgradeable	●			●					MB	1887 169	
▲	Denon DCD-435	130	Good low cost player, and a step up from the DCD-425, its predecessor	●			●					DS	191	
▲	Denon DCD-635	180	Modest presentation gives little clue to the thoroughbred electronics ticking away inside	●			●					MB	2075 172	
	Denon DCD-625	200	DCD-615 replacement is generously equipped but lacks sophisticated sound of its forebear	●								MB	1269 147	
▲	Denon DCD-835	280	Refined version of Denon's multibit technology is a bit of a star	●			●					MB	184	
	Denon DCD-1550AR	350	Disappointing bland and ploddy sound from an immaculately constructed, high tech player	●			●					MB	2266 179	
▲	Denon DCD-1015	350	Excellent, mid-range player – fast, fluid and lean	●	●		●					MB	1599 141	
▲	Denon DCD-3000	1,000	Sings with the temperament of a huge orchestra under the baton of a timid conductor	●			●					MB	1881 163	
	Exposure CD player	1,049	Slightly weak sounding, but otherwise well optimised, if costly player	●								MB	188	
	harman/kardon HD710	200	A player of integrity, but can sound a bit hard and rough when extended, and is amplifier fussy	●								1bit	159	
▲	harman/kardon HD740	300	Powerful but subtle and involving player: welcome back harman/kardon!	●			●					DS	191	
▲	harman/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	
	Helios Model 3	650	Disappointing entry level model from Helios lacks verve and transparency.	●								DS	188	
▲	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 DPF-3010	180	Grey, somewhat mechanical sounding player	●			●					Hyb	191	
▲	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	●			●					1bit	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-48	200	Somewhat inconsistent, middle ranking player which hints at better things	●								1bit	2077 172	
▲	Marantz CD-67 Mk II	250	The digital equivalent of a safe pair of hands. Smoooooth	●			●					BS	2268 179	
	Marantz CD-67OSE MkII	300	Lacks dynamic consistency to justify the stunning performance with simple material	●			●					BS	184	
▲	Marantz CD-63 MKII KI Sig	400	It's the quintessential sound of Marantz – warm, open, and smooth almost to a fault	●			●					Hyb	169	
▲	Marantz CD-17	800	Fabulous packaging and an excellent all round performer: smooth, detailed and consistent	●			●					BS	1763 155	
▲	Marantz CD-17KI Sig	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	●			●					1bit	2182 176	



CONTINUED

# CD/DVD Players

STATUS

SPECIFICATIONS

AES/EBU ELEC DIG OUT  
OPTICAL DIG OUT  
ST OPT DIG OUT  
BAL ANALOGUE OUT  
HEADPHONE OUT  
VARIABLE OUTPUT  
MULTI-DISC  
DAC TYPE  
FACTSBACK NO.  
ISSUE NUMBER

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	AES/EBU ELEC DIG OUT	OPTICAL DIG OUT	ST OPT DIG OUT	BAL ANALOGUE OUT	HEADPHONE OUT	VARIABLE OUTPUT	MULTI-DISC	DAC TYPE	FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NUMBER	
Micromega Premium 18	650	Upgradeable player, now with Sony mech, sounds comparatively thin and lifeless	●	●					●		20bit	191	
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 E624	500	Similar to X-RAY, but both better sounding and cheaper	●	●							MB	188	
Musical Fidelity A2	500	Warm (too warm), attractive and open player, a great improvement on (related) E60	●	●							BS	169	
Musical Fidelity X-RAY	799	Brilliantly packaged and clean but slightly antiseptic sounding player	●	●							MB	184	
Myryad T-10	400	Rather ordinary player fails to shine with good music recordings	●	●							DS	184	
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	●	●							1bit 2262	179	
NAD 524	250	Clean, clear and essentially musical player in the NAD mould	●	●							MB	191	
NAD S500	1,100	24-bit player with considerable transparency and bass grunt	●	●				●			MB	189	
Naim Audio CD3.5	1,000	Forward and explicit sound needs careful system matching	●	●							Hyb	188	
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	
Naim NACDSII/XPS	5,625	Brings you the Naim sound, but for once doesn't have to rely on Naim ancillaries to get the results	●	●							MB	188	
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	
Parasound C/DP-1000	499	Comes on like a high end player, but ultimately sounds a tad weak and soft-centred	●	●							Hybrid	184	
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-S507	200	Low cost Legato Link implementation sounds gentle but slightly muddled	●	●							DS	191	
Pioneer PD-S707	300	Idiosyncratic Legato Link dominated sound, but always subtle and interesting	●	●		●					MB	184	
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	Assured, fluid-sounding player, with great spatial coherence	●	●							1bit 1965	166	
Primare D20	799	Well presented player doesn't quite cut the mustard, though it performs promisingly	●	●							BS	188	
Quad 77	900	A true thoroughbred combining a penetrating insight into detail with poise rarely found at the price	●	●							Hyb	1893	163
Revox Exception E426	2,250V	ery stylish with a light, agile sound that extends superbly and has fine timing	●	●				●			BS	182	
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-951	300	Disappointing chopped down RCD-971 – buy the original	●	●							MB	191	
Rotel RCD-971	350	Odd disc handling logic, but bold, detailed and refined sound make this a must	●	●							MB	184	
Rotel RCD-970BX	375	A combination of solid build, useful facilities and an attention-grabbing sound make this a winner	●	●							BS 1897	163	
Rotel RCD-991	750	Flagship player with programmable dither options available to alter its 'voicing'. We liked option number 4!	●	●				●			MB	193	
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	●	●							1bit	179	
Sony CDP-XE510	180	Souped up CDP-XE500 which tells a rather bland and unengaging story	●	●							1bit	172	
Sony CDP-XB720E	200	Good basic performance and a number of filter settings make this an interesting player for tweaks	●	●							Low bit	184	
Sony CDP-XB920	300	Stunning player that serves real musical ends. The switchable filters are merely icing on the cake	●	●							Low bit	191	
Sony CDP-XA20ES	450	High tech, with a long list of gadgets, oddly configured player that ultimately sounds less than compelling	●	●					●		1bit 2177	176	
Sony CDP-X3000ES	500	Shoebbox format player, looks to die for, switchable digital filters to tweak the already excellent sound	●	●							BS	169	
T+A CD1210R	1,185	Intriguing player with rather pushy basic sound, but has switchable digital filters	●	●							DS	188	
Talk Electronics Thunder 2	699	Fine player, slightly lacking in dynamics, but readily, if expensively upgradeable in various ways	●	●							1-bit	191	
TAG McLaren CD20R	1,249	Dry and unatmospheric, but plenty of presence – recommended with caution	●	●							BS	188	
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-8	600	Superb build quality is matched to good, but not exceptional sound quality	●	●							MB	184	
Teac VRDS-9	700	Well-presented. This Teac is crisp, yet shallow, and inconsistent in sound quality and partnering skills	●	●							1bit 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	
Technics SL-PC480A	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	●	●							1bit 2264	179	
Technics SL-PS70D	250	High tech and well built technology battleship which smooths 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	
Thule Spirit CD100	600	Definitely a try before you buy machine, but the bass and mid are excellent	●	●							DS	188	
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	
Wadia W850	3,000	Envelope busting dynamics, power and imaging in a rather unexciting box (digital volume control)	●	●							MB	183	
Wadia 860	7,450	Flagship CD player has unique digital volume control, superb neutrality and awesome bass	●	●							MB	189	
Yamaha CDX-493	180	Open and lively, but this player is also messy and lacking resolving power	●	●							Hyb	191	
Yamaha CD-X993	400	A bit of a lush, though the sound is singularly free of grain, and equipment levels are strong	●	●							BS	184	
<b>TRANSPORTS</b>													
Audio Note CDT Zero	399	Neat shoe box size transport sounds smooth and fluid in the right system. (Tested with DAC Zero)	●	●								191	
Linn Karik	1,850	Based on early Linn transport, the Karik is dry but very positive, detailed and engrossing	●	●							1323	144	
PS Audio Lambda	2,250	With Ultralink Two, sound positively sparkles with colour and resonant detail	●	●							1106	133	
Roksan A tessa 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	



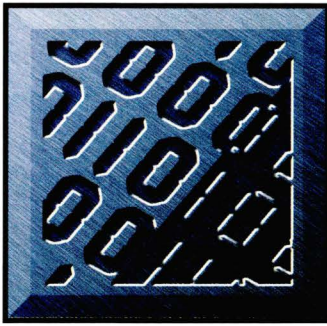
CONTINUED

# 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
<b>DACS</b>												
Alchemist TS-D-1	300	24/96-equipped DAC sounds tidy but a little shut-in with both 16-bit CDs and 24-bit, 96kHz DVDs									BS	187
Audio Note DAC Zero	369	Neat valve-equipped DAC sounds smooth and fluid in the right system. (Tested with CDT Zero transport)									Hyb	191
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
Musical Fidelity X-24K	300	24/96 ready with a warm, natural sound and good soundstaging (tested with Pioneer DV-717)									MB	187
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 Attessa 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
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
<b>DVD PLAYERS</b>												
Denon DVD-5000	1,600	The first DVD-V player that ain't bad as a CD player. A fine musical device	●	●					●		BS	187
Denon DVD-3000	700	Enjoyable rather than analytical, includes 24/96 and AC-3/MPEG-2 Audio	●	●					●		BS	180
Hitachi DV-P2E	400	DVD player, based on last generation Pioneer, is good but uninspiring	●	●								24/96 190
JVC XV-S2000	475	DVD player with excellent picture but flat sound in most modes	●	●								PEM 190
Kenwood DVF-9010	1000	DVD player with brilliant picture and clean, lively sound	●	●								24/96 190
Micromega Premium DVD	1,500	Unique lack of regional coding constrictions but both DVD and CD replay are compromised	●	●								BS 183
Panasonic DVD-A150	400	Simple, mid-market DVD player is vice-free but limited for the audiophile	●	●								24/96 190
Panasonic DVD-A350	700	24/96 converter and AC-3 & MPEG-2 Audio included, well balanced, if slightly blurred and shut in	●	●								BS 180
Pioneer DV-515	400	Unusually well equipped (CD-R compatible etc) DVD with more than fair sound and picture quality	●	●								MB 190
Pioneer DV-717	550	Superb DVD player with good picture quality and which really knows how to play 24/96 discs	●	●								MB 190
Pioneer DVL-909	900	DVD and LD player: self-recommending to AV nuts; musically detailed but occasionally seems disjointed	●	●								BS 180
Samsung DVD-907	500	DVD player with below average picture, and lacklustre sound quality	●	●								24/96 190
Sony DVP-S715	600	24/96 converter for DAD compatibility, sharp, forward, but slightly unsubtle sound	●	●								BS 180
Theta DaVID	4,650	A top-notch CD transport, that also plays DVD-Video discs well. Pricy for a DVD transport, but worth it	●	●								24/96 191
Thomson DTH2000	380	This DVD player's main attributes are reasonable pricing and fair to good all round performance	●	●								24/96 190
Toshiba SD3107B	550	Dynamic sound and good stereo which lacks lowest stratum of detail	●	●								BS 180
Yamaha DVD-S700	600	DVD player, similar to Panasonic DVD-A350 but cheaper – an excellent buy	●	●								24/96 190



## 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 re-recordable 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 'clones' 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 convertor (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.

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STATUS

# Digital Recorders

SPECIFICATIONS									
FORMAT	DAC TYPE	ADC TYPE	PORTABLE	OPTICAL IN/OUTPUTS	ELEC IN/OUTPUTS	FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NUMBER		

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	FORMAT	DAC TYPE	ADC TYPE	PORTABLE	OPTICAL IN/OUTPUTS	ELEC IN/OUTPUTS	FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NUMBER	
<b>MINIDISCS</b>											
Denon DMD-1000	300	A good machine, but it still doesn't manage to shake off the MiniDisc plague of losing the listener's interest	MD	BS	N	●	●			184	
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 DMF-9020	500	One of the best MD decks yet for sound quality, and the first to make titling a practical proposition	MD	BS	BS		●	●		191	
Kenwood DM-9090	550	Slight sibilance and image vagueness do not detract from excellent balance and solid bass	MD	BS	BS		●	●	2194	177	
Marantz CM635	500	CD player and MD recorder in one box: a practical idea but sound and features don't really match the asking price	MD	BS	BS		●	●		191	
Onkyo MD-121	450	Midi-sized deck that sounds slightly coloured at times, though immediate and lively	MD	BS	BS		●	●	2195	177	
Pioneer MJ-D707	250	A handy set of features for the price, though sound is not outstanding	MD	BS	BS		●	●		191	
Sharp MD-R1 MkII	200	It's cheap: sound is not outrageously bettered by rather pricier competition. A bit thin on features though	MD	BS	BS		●	●		191	
Sharp MDR3H	300	Nifty machine combining a 3-disc CD changer with a MD recorder. Sound on both is rather below par, though	BS	BS	N		●	●		184	
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	
Sony MDS-JB920	300	One of the better MD decks, its sound is neutral and dynamic. European Audio Recorder of the Year '98-'99	BS	BS	N	●	●			184	
Sony MDS-JA20ES	500	Sound quality about as good as it gets with MD to date, and a very comprehensive features set too	MD	BS	BS		●	●		191	
Yamaha MDX-793	300	Nice machine to use and has some useful features, but sound quality a little wanting	MD	BS	BS		●	●		191	
<b>CD RECORDERS</b>											
Marantz DR700	600	Dearer than Philips and Traxdata equivalents, with apparently only a smarter front panel to show for it	CD-R	BS	BS		●	●		191	
Philips CDR-880	499	Capable of making perfect copies of CD digital, and very acceptable copies of anything analogue too	BS	BS	N		●	●		184	
Pioneer PDR-555RW	480	Competitor to Philips' CDR880; it can't make perfect copies but has the edge in replay and analogue record sound	BS	BS	N	●	●			184	
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 PDR-05	1,000	The first domestic CD-R deck – excellent sound quality	CD-R	BS	BS		●	●	1652	152	
Traxdata Traxaudio 900	499	Identical to Philips and Marantz models: it makes bit-perfect copies of CDs and has perfectly acceptable replay	CD-R	BS	BS		●	●		191	





# 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.
- **CIRCAURAL:** 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

STATUS

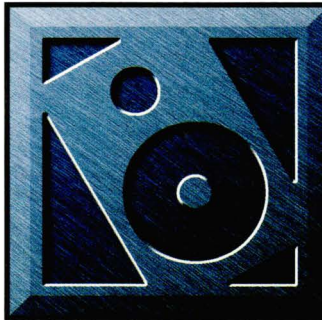
PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	TYPE	SUPRA-AURAL	CIRCAURAL	OPEN BACK	CLOSED BACK	MASS (g)	IMPEDANCE (Ω)	3.5mm JACK ADAPTOR	FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NUMBER
AKG K1000	700	One of the best dynamics on the market, hooks directly into speaker outputs	D					270	120			99
AKG K 240 DF	100	Inoffensive 'phones that are very laid back, if lacking in grunt	D					240	600			186
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
Audio Technica ATH-M40	120	Incredible detail and honesty from these classically designed studio 'phone	D					250	60			186
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 DT431	81	Nice looking 'phones that may not be the best players on the field, but will always give 100 per cent	D					210	40			186
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 DT831	140	These provide silky, smooth textures in abundance and we're not just talking about the velvet ear pads	D					1/2	295	250		186
Beyer DT100	160	Rugged, modular professional design, but bass is woolly and treble lacks detail	D					350	600			157
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 SR125	150	What these 'phones lack in style they make up for ten-fold in musical quality	D					200	32			186
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-W60	49	Remarkable lack of interference and hiss ameliorates adequate sound of this cordless design	D					165	1/8			172
JVC HA-D910	65	Broadly acceptable if unexciting design with low level losses and some colorations	D					220	32			121
JVC HA-W200RF	75	Distinct lack of hiss from these FM cordless 'phones ensures that detail and depth are easily heard	D					280	20,000			186
Koss R/100	100	Rather cheap looking 'phones that supply good detail but are severely lacking in midrange excitement	D					215	60			186
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	163
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	1/8			172
Sennheiser HD 455	55	Inoffensive, if nondescript sound; modular, but can become dislodged from head	D					185	60		1801	157
Sennheiser HD 500	70	A disappointing pair that offer good stereo-imaging, but little else	D					210	32			186
Sennheiser HD 475	80	Elegant, uncluttered sound and very comfortable but lean bass saps satisfaction	D					120	60		2065	172
Sennheiser RS 400	80	FM cordless 'phones that are very wearable, but slightly woolly sounding with interference problems	D					160	N/A			186
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	163
Sony MDR-605LP	50	Funky looking headphones that have a very bold, but tiring sound, with coloured bass	D					145	40			186
Sony MDR-CD770	100	Neutrality and comfort make the Sony easy to live with. Correct-sounding too, yet musically unrewarding	D					-	-		1801	157
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 Cyberwave FMH3000	40	The only cordless 'phone to offer genuine walkabout freedom, but sounds like a cheap FM tuner	D					210	FM			172
Vivanco IR5800	50	Consistently musical infra-red design. Doesn't reach for sonic heights so hiss can be forgiven	D					1/2	226	1/8		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 FM7980	80	A fair amount of whine and crackle detracts from 'phones which are otherwise very listenable	D					280	9,000			186
Vivanco FM8180	99	Well thought-out features and a better than average sound are, at times, marred by intrusive hiss	D					240	9,000			186



## HI-FI CHOICE HELP

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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 tend to be the most obvious. Inside the average loudspeaker is a simple electrical circuit (the crossover) which splits the incoming, full-frequency-range signal for the specific drive units to handle: highs to the 'tweeter', lows to the 'woofer'. For any speaker, 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). Our 'bass from' figures are based on measurements in a particular room therefore results will vary in different environments.

## 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

SIZE WxHxD (CM)   FLOORSTANDER   SENSITIVITY (dB/W)   BASS FROM (HZ)   FREE SPACE   CLOSE TO WALL   FACTSBACK NO.   ISSUE NUMBER

STATUS

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	SIZE WxHxD (CM)	FLOORSTANDER	SENSITIVITY (dB/W)	BASS FROM (HZ)	FREE SPACE	CLOSE TO WALL	FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NUMBER
Acoustic Energy Aegis One	150	At a new low price, this has a very natural and transparent midband, erring a little on the dull side	19,36,5,24		87	6	40	●		187
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
Acoustic Energy AE520	1,000	Could be more neutral, but high-class build is reflected in a high-class sound. Very elegant too	21,98,30		91	3	25	●		190
ATC SCM10	1,000	A compact speaker with good transparency but light-weight bass	18,38,25,5		80	8	65	●		192
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 C2	799	Elegant two-and-a-half-way has a big, full bandwidth sound, but midband seemed a little under-developed	19,106,27		90	4	20	●		190
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 NuNeutron	500	A smooth and subtle though pricey sub-miniature, albeit with the inevitable limitations of the breed	14,27,23		86	4	50	●		190
AVI Positron	899	This 'mini-floorstander' is capable of great precision and delicacy, but in a rather small scale way	175,74,24,5		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 DM305	350	Ridged paper cone gives lively sound, clever box, but a little uneven	22,87,31		89	4	40	●	1908	164
B&W CDM2SE	400	Beautifully styled and finished, respectable midband. Lacks definition towards frequency extremes	22,32,25		87	6	40	●		183
B&W 603 S2	550	Capable of being driven seriously loud, but the cautious balance seems less happy playing at low levels	23,5,87,29		91	4	22	●		193
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 Nautilus 805	1,400	A great looking and extremely capable design with excellent timing and real communications skills	24,41,5,34,5		88	8	22	●		191
B&W Nautilus 802	6,000	Outstanding example of the high-tech speaker builder's art, needs real power but gives real sound	39,111,55		91	8	34	●		183
B&W Nautilus 801	8,500	The 801 is a magnificent loudspeaker in nearly every respect, but it is one that likes to play loud	52,111,69		91	8	34	●		186
Blueroom MINIPOD	249	The MINIPOD can show its competitors a thing or two about freedom from boxiness and looks fab	18,34+,17		91	4	50	●		193
Cabasas Farella 400	950	Exciting but very upfront-and-in-yer-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 Inversion 15	425	This striking looking stand-mount is a good allrounder, commendably free from boxiness	19-22,42,25		91	4	30	●		193
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
Celestion 12i	119	Not without virtue, but the relentless enthusiasm and mid-band colorations can become wearing	19,31,21		88	6	45	●	2254	179
Celestion 23i	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 A Compact	600	Provided the room isn't too large, and your tastes not too heavy, this is a charming little number	17,24,21		90	3	45	●		193
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	1,500	Full scale, big sound from ultra-elegant floorstander. Smooth and slightly laid back presentation	24,93,39		89	6	22	●		180
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 Hiper 1000	300	Classy looking stand mount has a sweet, easygoing sound with fine midband voicing	18,35,28		87	4	45	●		187
Chario Constellation Lynx	550	Beautiful near-miniature is let down by a midband too laid back for its own good	20,36,26		87	3	40	●		190
Chario Academy Millennium 2	2,100	Price includes stands. A showy speaker that lives up to its own hype	22,53,35		90	4	55	●		190
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
Dali Royal Menuet MkII	400	Classy sub-miniature with a beautiful box and fine ingredients, but a little lacking in subtlety and excitement	16,26,18		87	3	50	●		190
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 40	400	Classy engineering content creates a winning combination of neutrality, dynamic range and involvement	17,28,25		87	4	40	●		190
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 MkII	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 Liberty 3+	150	Bright, bassy, laid back and attractively evenhanded, but dynamically challenged. Big box for your dosh	20,5,38,34		86	4	25	●		187
Eltax CL 310i Jet	800	It's pricey, and you can buy better performance for the money. Small speaker, good sound	12,3,20,8,28,2		86	4	42	●		191
Eltax Linear Response	249	A curiously dumpy shape, but 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 ES25	1,655	Handsome floorstander with a rather uneven and bass heavy balance	24,90,35		88	6	22	●	1346	143
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
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 B	200	Attractive traditional style near-miniature with classy main driver now has fine overall balance to match	19,5,30,22		88	4	45	●		187
Heybrook Optima	259	A dumpy ugly duckling with a heart of gold. Deserves a better tweeter, but communicates well	22,88,29		94	4	30	●		193
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 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 Octet	1,800	Good-looking but pricey floorstander with novel drivers and a fine ceramic-enclosure midband	24,97,31		90	6	25	●		180
Infinity Delta 60	700	Striking and massive floorstander, lots of speaker for the price, but seems a victim of its own complexity	16-29,115,41		90	4	25	●		183



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# Hi-Fi Loudspeakers

SPECIFICATIONS

SIZE WxHxD (CM)    FLOORSTANDER    SENSITIVITY (dB/W)    IMPEDANCE (Ω)    BASS FROM (Hz)    FREE SPACE    CLOSE TO WALL    FACTSBACK NO.    ISSUE NUMBER

STATUS

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	SIZE WxHxD (CM)	FLOORSTANDER	SENSITIVITY (dB/W)	IMPEDANCE (Ω)	BASS FROM (Hz)	FREE SPACE	CLOSE TO WALL	FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NUMBER	
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 brash 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	
Jamo Cornet 195	350	Loads of bass, should have plenty of yooof-appeal – it looks the business, and is priced attractively	20,5,91,31		90	3	26	●			183	
Jamo 477A	500	Very pretty 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 T1200	400	Very substantial stand-mount knows how to rock and roll, but can sound uncouth on more delicate material	21,41,30		92	5	40	●			193	
JBL L20	700	Pricy, 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	17,5,51,31		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 4312 II	1,000	Crude but startlingly effective dynamics. The original party animal knows just how to rock'n'roll	36,60,30		94	4	25	●			190	
JBL SVA 2100	1,250	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	
JBL LX70	550	Bassmeister supreme, shame the rest doesn't match up. Fine sensitivity but an itchy scratchy treble	26,5,94,30		91	4	33	●			183	
JM Lab Tantal 507	295	Competent all rounder, this compact stand-mount has a good heart and sweet treble, but sounds a bit small	21,38,27		93	4	40	●			193	
JM Lab Tantal 515	495	<i>Lively and open if bright. Sound is entertaining and informative, but presentation is nondescript</i>	20,94,26		92	5	32	●			183	
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	
JM Lab Mezzo Utopia	7,250	Looks good and sounds even better. A genuinely big speaker with fantastic coherence	35,115,47		92	4	30	●			186	
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	<i>Ultra-cheap miniature works well in a limited way</i>	18,27,17,5		86	8	50	●		1781	156	
JPW Gold Monitor	80	<i>More informative than Mini Monitor – but fiercer, too</i>	18,27,17,5		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 ML910	330	Loads of speaker for the money, plenty of headroom and loudness capability, but sounds dull	23,104,30		91	4	43	●			183	
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 Q15	200	Beautifully balanced and voiced stand-mount, but a potentially tricky amplifier load at high frequencies	20,5,31,27		90	2.5	30	●			187	
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 Q65	799	Dumpy-looking three-way has loads of bass and a laid-back midband; goes loud but lacks poise and impact	23,95,31		92	2.5	25	●			190	
KEF RDM Three	1,500	Definitely a speaker aimed at long-term satisfaction rather than immediate impressiveness. Nice	24,100,27		90	4	40	●			189	
KEF Reference Model 2	1,599	Classic, large floorstander that has massive headroom and clean mid-to-treble, but limited deep bass	23,103,34		89	4	30	●		1987	167	
Kelly KT2	700	<i>Chunky floorstander has tacky finish but whopping sensitivity and a very involving, (if characterful) sound</i>	23,89,34		94	4	33	●		183	183	
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	<i>Confident and dynamic sound, if a little crude and shut in</i>	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 Kan	295	Great bass discrimination from size, ensuring a very informative, if slightly shut in experience	19,31,19		86	4	45	●			187	
Linn Keilidh 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	
Magnet Vector 77	450	Tall, dark and a lot of speaker for the money. Beautiful balance, but lacking in subtlety and transparency	22,115,29		89	5	30	●			183	
Magnet Vintage 720	1,200	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 771	170	<i>Beautiful stand-mount miniature has a delightfully well balanced and voiced sound, and real wood finish</i>	17,31,22		86	7	45	●			187	
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 773e	400	Beautifully designed slim floorstander could be more neutral but still delivers an all round entertaining sound	17,5,88,26		92	4	30	●			193	
Mission 774	500	Gorgeous floorstander is an entertaining communicator, despite some balance oddities (bright treble)	18,95,31		90	4	40	●			183	
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	1,400	Beautifully finished compact floorstander with fine midband coherence, but limited bass and top end	20,94,28		89	4	25	●			180	
Mordant-Short MS812	100	Quirky styling and a very laid back presence, but great musical integrity and solid value for money	20,5,42,25		88	5	44	●			187	
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 Hamier	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 PM15	450	<i>A subtle, understated but very involving example of the 'classic' luxury-finish compact standmount</i>	20,41,27		88	5	38	●			183	
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 Falcon	680	<i>Big speaker has a big but also surprisingly smooth and civilised sound. Fine material value too</i>	33,117,30		89	4	22	●			190	
Naim Intro	660	Great dynamic range and info retrieval, but thin, lacks warmth	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 Critique 2	445	Contemporary standmount has a clean, crisp sound with lovely natural midband voicing	22,32,24		86	6	50	●			183	
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
Opera Prima	495	Good-looking hardwood enclosure, plus fine mid and treble, but less satisfactory bass	19,34,31		90	4	40	●			190	
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



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# Hi-Fi Loudspeakers

SPECIFICATIONS

SIZE WxHxD (CM)    SENSITIVITY (dB/W)    IMPEDANCE (Ω)    BASS FROM (HZ)    CLOSE TO WALL FREE SPACE    FACTSBACK NO.    ISSUE NUMBER

STATUS

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS								
PMC TB1S	430	Pro-audio version of TBI	20,41,30	87	6	40	●	2207	177	
PMC TB1	482	A classy, laid-back performer that likes going loud and loves the bass guitar	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	
ProAc Studio 125	1,000	Pretty if pricey compact floorstander with a beautifully natural and neutral midband, and some bass thump	20,94,28	87	8	28	●	192	167	H
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 Jura	450	Beefy sounding, chunky floorstander sounds very 'direct coupled' to the music, if a touch 'boom'n'tizz'	22,5,92,5,26	90	5	25	●		193	
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	
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	
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	Innovative low-line, 2-way floorstander with decoupled tweeter; great bass and fine dynamic range	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 Epilogue	269	Beautifully finished miniature with a lively balance and plenty of charm; best suited to smaller rooms	17,29,23	87	8	47	●		183	
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	
Ruark Excalibur	7,000	A big handsome speaker with a big, laid-back, but open sound, rocking bass and loads of headroom	30,125,53	90	4	30	●		186	
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 omni directional 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	20	●	1918	164	
Snell K.5	795	Classy AV-ready stand mount is very solidly engineered. Sound is neutral but lacks excitement	22,46,30	87	6	25	●		190	
Sonus Faber Concertino	599	A beautifully neutral loudspeaker in a beautiful Italian suit of clothes. Classy, if quite pricey	21,32,29	87	5	30	●		193	
Spendor 2030	599	Discreet slimline floorstander with delicately coherent, laid-back sound	18,89,27	87	8	30	●	1836	160	
System Audio 1130	499	Super-slim, super smooth, involving experience, but not ideal if you like your bass deep and loud	3,100,21	89	4	43	●		183	
System Audio 1150	749	Pricey but persuasive, sonic subtleties sneak up to confound a dodgy first impression. Super-slim	16,105,26	90	4	30	●		190	
Tangent Monitor 5	80	An uneven performer best suited to small rooms and generous volume levels	17,5,27,18	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 R1	200	Pretty little mini-monitor is smooth, well mannered, and polite to a fault, lacks dynamic expression	17,30,22	86	4	30	●		187	
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 Revolution R2	350	Bargain price real wood floorstander is beautifully voiced and very even-handed, if a tad laid back	17,94,24	90	4	20	●	193	193	
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 Nucleus 2	130	A very competent miniature. Could be smoother, but no serious flaws, and hence good basic value	20,29,22	88	4	45	●		187	
TDL Nucleus 4	299	Handsome and very inexpensive floorstander with fine bass alignment but a pronounced lack of presence	20,5,92,31	92	6	22	●		193	
TDL RTL3SE	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 CF100 Chiltern	450	Tiny but classy monitor has a laid-back balance, a fine midband and a surprising bass; but needs space	20,29,23	85	8	50	●		183	
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	
Triangle Cometes	359	Communicative stand-mount has great midband dynamics, but the very bright top end might be intrusive	22,40,29	91	4	42	●		193	
Triangle Zephyr II	599	Loads of fun. Dramatic dynamics and righteous timing will give any hi-fi system a wake-up call	22,94,29	91	4	25	●		190	
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	
Veritas H3	6,000	Loads of fun with wonderful dynamic and temporal integrity from horn-loaded Lowther drivers	30,110,47	104	4	50	●		191	H
Wilson Benesch Bishop	20,000	Deep and even bass sets new standards for cleanliness and clarity; lovely open midband too	23,161,561	89	4	520	●		189	H
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	
Wdale Diamond 7.2 Anniversary	200	Lively and exuberant, but a tad untidy with it; can sound a bit cold and hard	19,29,5,24	88	4	40	●		187	
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	



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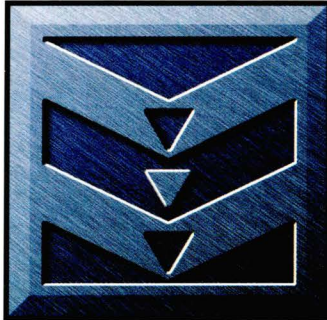
# Hi-Fi Loudspeakers

STATUS

SPECIFICATIONS

SIZE WxHxD (CM) SENSITIVITY FLOORSTANDER IMPEDANCE (Ω) BASS FROM (HZ) CLOSE TO WALL FREE SPACE FACTSBACK NO. ISSUE NUMBER

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	SIZE WxHxD (CM)	SENSITIVITY FLOORSTANDER	IMPEDANCE (Ω)	BASS FROM (HZ)	CLOSE TO WALL	FREE SPACE	FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NUMBER
Celestion CS135	139	Compact hideaway passive sub lacks deep bass for high sensitivity speakers	52,19,34	●	86	8	45	●	128	
Jamo SW 00	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



## 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 on the penultimate page of the magazine.
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**B** BEST BUY    **R** RECOMMENDED    **E** EDITOR'S CHOICE

# Stands & Supports

STATUS

SPECIFICATIONS

TOP PLATE SIZE (cm) FILLABLE WELDED NUMBER OF SHELVES SHELF TYPE FACTSBACK NO. ISSUE NUMBER

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	TOP PLATE SIZE (cm)	FILLABLE	WELDED	NUMBER OF SHELVES	SHELF TYPE	FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NUMBER	
<b>EQUIPMENT SUPPORTS</b>										
Avid Isoschelf	1,100	An enthusiasts equipment support stand free from coloration if a little fiddly to set up	87.5	48		5	MDF		193	
Alphason GR 17/17-AS	275	Great looks but sound can be bettered for the money	36	60,39		4	Glass		181	
Apollo Soprano	275	Uninspiring looks and sonic performance that can be beaten at this price	68.5	45.5		4	Glass		193	
Aavik Furniture A4	350	Good sound and stylish Scandinavian looks at an affordable price	80.5	47		4	Wood		193	
Atacama Europa	240	Stylish, expandable modular design with agreeable full-bodied sound – great value	67	48.6		4	Wood		193	
Audiophile Furniture Base	615	Price is justified by its earth-shattering sonic abilities – a worthy upgrade	82	43		4	MDF		193	
Elemental Isotube x 4/Ref	1,199	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	
Elemental Audio Isotube X4	849	A hefty stand that demonstrates just how much difference a good support can make	90	49		4	Glass		193	
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	
Projekt Furniture A4	215	An elegant support stand that blends in to any home environment with a laid-back sound	56	48		4	Wood		193	
Quadraspire Q4	250	Easy to live with, tonally neutral	54	40,49		4	MDF	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	
Sound Organisation Z545	160	Budget price and great looks make this a great value stand	73	46		4	Glass		193	
Soundstyle X100	230	Looks lovely, sounds lively but slightly bright	64	49,28		4	Glass		181	
Soundstyle Radius SR100	280	Stylish looks and a smooth sound	63.5	49.5		4	Glass		193	
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	
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	
Standalone Design 4	190	An all-in-one support at a budget price with good sonic performance	88.5	50.8		4	Glass		193	
Target B5	175	Free of colorations, fine grip and good value	81	49,36		5	Wood	1633	151	
Townshend Seismic Stand	1,245	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	
<b>SPEAKER STANDS</b>										
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	85	Tall, slim and elegant, though sound and value are unexceptional	40-60	17,17	●					159
Alphason HDS	85	A reasonable stand with a smooth but rather bland sound balance. Good finish options	45-60	15,5,15,5	●					189
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 Olympus	75	A popular stand and a decent performer, but unremarkable by today's standards	40-60	15,12,5	●					189
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 R724	150	Atacama uses its market strength to deliver a superbly appointed product at a very reasonable price	60	15,17	●	●				189
Atacama SE24	70	Stands out from the budget crowd because of the consistency and overall quality of its performance	61	19,5,17	●	●			1373	146
Black Box Speaker Stand	797	A strange and costly beast. Bass is a touch thick, but performance with synthetic music types is worthy of the price	92-112	40						189
Custom Design R/S 300	70	Combining strong aesthetic and sonic appeal at a popular price point, this is a good stand all-round	40.6-60.9	15,15	●					189
Elemental Isotube SZse	599	Stands of distinction, able to free the speaker's sound from its box in a way budget stands simply can't	61	23,27	●	●				189
JPW HS1	120	A purposeful stand, a touch dry-sounding but particularly strong with bass. Great for rock and dance music	61	19,21	●					189
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



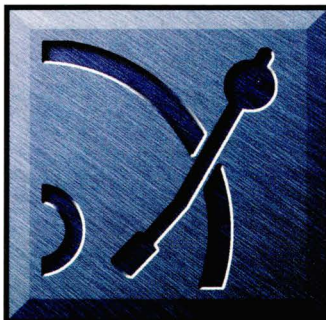
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# Stands & Supports

STATUS

SPECIFICATIONS

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	TOP PLATE SIZE (cm)	FILLABLE WELDED	NUMBER OF SHELVES	ISSUE NUMBER	FACTSBACK NO.
Partington A-4	119	An odd-ball stand with a sound that's sheer class. More open and focused than almost anything below £150	50-100	19,22	● ●	189	
RMS/Stands Unique Vivus	349	Pricey carbon fibres give ultra-clean sound with exceptional voices	50	N/A		159	
Russ Andrews Torlyte	599	Subtle and musical-sounding stands, though a touch more 'pizazz' is need for Recommendation at this price	61	33,5,24		189	
Sound Organisation Z524	69	A coherent-sounding stand with particular strengths in the midband, though quality drops at the frequency extremes	61	16,17		189	
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	● ●	146	1373
Target TR60	68	Lively, dynamic midrange and detailed treble from a less-than-audiophile-oriented, twin-column design	60	15,15	● ●	146	1373



## 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 tone-arm – 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 the arm from bearing to cartridge mounting.
- **ADJUSTABLE HEIGHT:** Important for accurate cartridge set-up.
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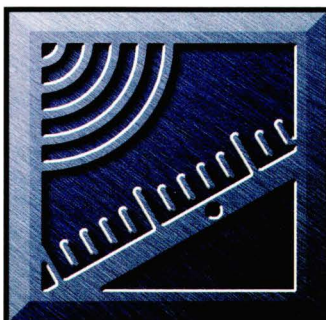
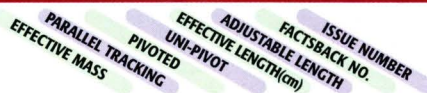
**B** BEST BUY    **R** RECOMMENDED    **E** EDITOR'S CHOICE

# Tonearms

STATUS

SPECIFICATIONS

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	PARALLEL TRACKING	PIVOTED	UNI-PIVOT	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/RB250	109	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	350	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 imperdable 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 prices tag 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 'twag' 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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**B** BEST BUY    **R** RECOMMENDED    **E** EDITOR'S CHOICE

# Tuners

STATUS

SPECIFICATIONS

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	
Denon TU-425RD	200	A fine all-rounder with advanced RDS, good RF performance and decent sound. Remote extra	FM, M	40	●				1947	166	
Denon TU-1500RD	250	A well-balanced and clean sound with good bass and treble extension	FM, M	40	●			●		184	
Magnum Dynalab FT11	499	All-analogue tuner: receives weak or tightly packed stations but loses out on noise and sonic neutrality	FM	3			●	●		184	
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	
Marantz ST-48	120	A classic budget model which manages a performance only just behind much more expensive models	FM, M	60	●					184	
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	
Myriad T-10	530	A very smart unit which works well and offers good rhythmic drive and vitality, albeit at a price	FM	20				●		184	
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	
Pioneer F-504RDS Precision	300	Lots of features, plus a sound that's low on noise and high on communication, adds up to a good value package	FM, M	40	●			●		184	
Roksan Caspian	595	Neat fascia with great ergonomics, but sound is not really any better than models at half the price	FM	50				●		184	





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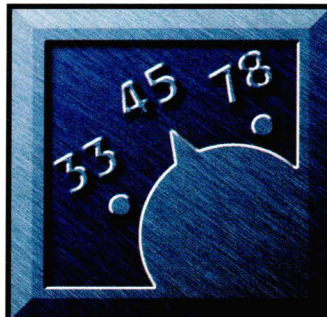
# Tuners

STATUS

SPECIFICATIONS

WAVEBANDS PRESETS REMOTE CONTROL SIG. STRENGTH METER ROT. TUNING METER FACTSBACK NO. ISSUE NUMBER

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	WAVEBANDS	PRESETS	REMOTE CONTROL	SIG. STRENGTH METER	ROT. TUNING METER	FACTSBACK NO.	ISSUE NUMBER
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
▲ Sony STS-B920S	180	A little hiss and image compression don't detract from the clean performance of this feature-packed tuner	FM,M,L	30	●		●	184	184
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



## 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:** Spring 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.
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High End Review

**B** BEST BUY **R** RECOMMENDED **E** EDITOR'S CHOICE

# Turntables

STATUS

SPECIFICATIONS

MANUAL AUTO SEMI-AUTO SPEEDS SUSP. SUBCHASSIS SUPPLIED WITH ARM SUPPLIED WITH CART. FACTSBACK NO. ISSUE NO.

PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	MANUAL	AUTO	SEMI-AUTO	SPEEDS	SUSP. SUBCHASSIS	SUPPLIED WITH ARM	SUPPLIED WITH CART.	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
▲ DNМ 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
▲ Michell Gyro SE	775	A stunningly desirable combination of looks, solidity and sound make this a tempting turntable	●			33/45	●	●	●		190
▲ Michell Orbe 'SE'	1,725	A Superb turntable, able to mix it with the best at virtually any price	●			33/45	●	●	●		192
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 frills, just a first-rate, outstandingly natural-sounding deck that will last forever	●			33/45		●	●		159
▲ Pink Triangle Tarantella II	850	A turntable that looks unlike any other, with rare ability too. Quirky, but sound is immensely likeable	●			33/45	●	●	●		192
▲ Pro-ject 2	300	Remarkably effective at the price, with decent timing and a generally well defined sound	●			33/45			●	1907	164
Pro-ject Perspective	750	Flexible facilities and competitive package, but performance of turntable alone is behind the best	●			33/45	●		●		192
▲ 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 20.2A	4,863	Beautifully built, extremely neutral damped and suspended deck with superb sound. Inc V arm	●			33/45/78	●	●	●		186
▲ 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	850	Intriguing and challenging. Musically not ideal, but its limpid quality and lack of artificiality set standards	●			33/45	●	●	●	1180	136
▲ Wilson benches The Circle	795	A beautiful turntable with a sumptuous sound, all at a very reasonable price – a clear Best Buy	●			33/45	●		●		192



## OPERA DUETTO

"So luxurious that it sets new standards for speakers in the sub-£500 bracket" – Hi Fi News  
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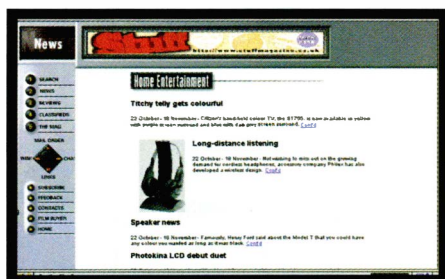
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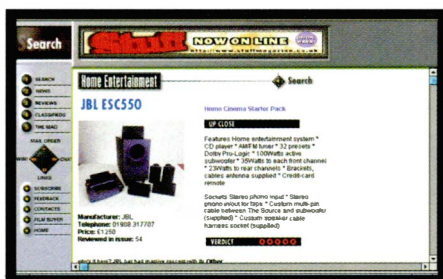






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# THE HI-FI CHOICE ARCHIVE

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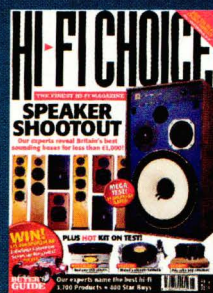
## 1. BUY AN ORIGINAL BACK ISSUE ☎ (01789) 490215



**MARCH 1999/ISSUE 188**  
 ■ 11 CD Players £350-£1,250  
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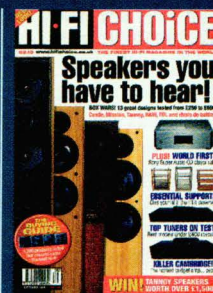
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 ■ Speaker Mega Test £400 - £1,000  
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 ■ Amplifier Mega Test £169 - £400  
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Back issues from 1988 onwards are available as shown in the table. They cost £4.00 (UK) or £6.95 (overseas). Both prices include p&p. Order by phone on ☎ (01789) 490215. Alternatively, fax ☎ (01789) 490878. We accept AmEx, MasterCard and Visa credit, or Switch and Delta debit cards. Or write to Dennis Direct, PO Box 2505, Alcester, B50 4JU. Make cheques payable to Dennis Direct.

## BACK ISSUE AVAILABILITY

YEAR	HFC N°S	SOLD OUT ISSUES	AVAILABILITY
1988	54-65	Feb, Jun, Jul, Sep, Oct	Very limited
1989	66-77	Jan, Feb, Mar, Jul	Very limited
1990	78-89	Jan, Feb, Jun, Aug, Sep, Dec	Very limited
1991	90-101	All except Mar, Apr, Jun, Jul	Very limited
1992	102-113	All except Mar	Very limited
1993	114-125	All except Feb, Apr, Jul, Dec	Very limited
1994	126-137	Jun, Aug, Nov	Very limited
1995	138-149	All except Feb	Very limited
1996	150-161	Mar, May, Jun, Oct, Nov	Very limited
1997	162-173	Feb, Jun, Jul/Aug	Very limited
1998	174-185	All except Mar, Jul, Aug, Sep, Oct	Limited
1999	186-	None sold out	Good

## 2. GET REVIEW REPRINTS BY FAX



*Hi-Fi Choice* reprints are available via fax, 24 hours a day. Our database, operated by Starcomm Ltd, holds a broad selection of

reviews and features from mid-1995 onwards. UK readers can access this service by calling ☎ (0906) 959 2051. You only pay for the cost of the call, which is 75p per minute.

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## 3. VISIT OUR WEBSITE

The *Hi-Fi Choice* website holds copies of reviews from the past two years. It also offers a user-customisable search facility for specific products and price-points. In addition, there is a unique opportunity to swap hints, tips and gossip in our on-line 'chat' areas. Our site has been remarkably successful since its launch earlier this year, and is currently scoring approximately 405,000 hits per month, with a total of 90,000 page impressions. The site has no less than 6,700 unique users!

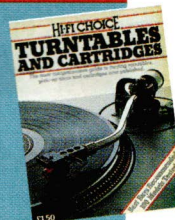
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## 4. ORDER A REVIEW REPRINT

If you are interested in an *HFC* review of an older component and the back issue has sold out, we can send photocopies of old reviews to any UK address for a flat fee (inc. p&p) of £5.00 per review. You must know in which issue the original review appeared; we are unable to search back issues for old reviews. Send a written request, enclosing a cheque made payable to Dennis Publishing Ltd, to: *Hi-Fi Choice* Reprint Service, Dennis Publishing Ltd., 19 Bolsover Street, LONDON W1P 7HJ.

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**THE NOVEMBER 1999 EDITION OF HI-FI CHOICE WILL BE ON SALE THURSDAY 30 SEPTEMBER 1999. DON'T MISS IT!**



# JIMMY HUGHES

**How does Jimmy keep his mains supply in such great condition? Here comes the science bit. Concentrate...**

It's important to choose components that work well together as a system. Equally vital is the attention paid to detail when installing a system – getting the speakers firmly anchored and so on. But even the best components and installation guarantee nothing; the sound might still disappoint if the quality of the mains supply is poor. Hence the interest in mains filters and purification devices. The goal is not just better sound, but more consistent results.

I tested the American Power Wedge a while back, and was impressed with the way it improved clarity and detail. When it finally went back to the importer, my system sounded noticeably more contained and less holographic. If I'd had the cash to spare, I'd certainly have bought one...

So a big welcome to the Power Block from Trichord Research. At £299 plus carriage it's not inexpensive, but still quite a bit cheaper than most of its rivals. You can run as many components off it as you want, providing you stay within its 500VA power rating.

Technically, the Power Block is similar to Trichord's Pure Power conditioner; it's just smaller, lighter and cheaper. The idea was to produce something more affordable without compromising performance. Essentially, it aims to reduce most types of mains noise – especially common-mode noise and DC components that hi-fi kit finds especially difficult to deal with.

My system runs off an eight-way Kimber mains distribution block that plugs into a wall socket. So I simply removed the mains plug from the wall socket and plugged it into the Power Block. Keeping all the equipment settings the same, I made a back-to-back comparison with a movement from one of Haydn's Paris symphonies conducted by Sir Neville Mariner on Philips – a CD I'd just bought.

First impressions (without Power Block) were favourable – the sound seemed clean, open, and nicely dynamic. With Power

Block in circuit, the sound seemed to grow richer and deeper tonally, with a more dynamic 'out of the box' presentation.

Volume levels were untouched, yet subjectively the music seemed slightly louder, which ties in with the more holographic 'projected' presentation. At the same time, the sound was slightly cleaner and more refined – it wasn't louder in an over-forceful or unpleasant sense.

Those with unlimited financial resources could have individual Power Blocks for each component. Isolation between individual items would be greatly improved, so mains noise from digital components wouldn't interfere with the analogue side of things. But it's one thing to deal with noise at source. What about the possibility of noise generated by the components themselves?

Trichord's Graham Fowler is considering making a more elaborate version that would offer a number of individually isolated mains outlets, rather like the bigger Power Wedge models. It'll be interesting to see how much improvement it gives, and whether the increased cost is justified over the basic model.

That's for the future. In the meantime, a single Power Block is still capable of making a sizeable improvement on its own. But much depends on the quality of your mains, and that's likely to vary according to the time of day and even the day of the week – the weekends (Sunday particularly) often being the time when mains quality is cleanest.

In most cases I'd expect Power Block to produce an overall improvement in sound quality allied to increased consistency. The dirtier the mains, the bigger the difference. A more objective way to assess whether or not the Power Block's making a difference is to listen to the noise (if any) made by the mains transformers in

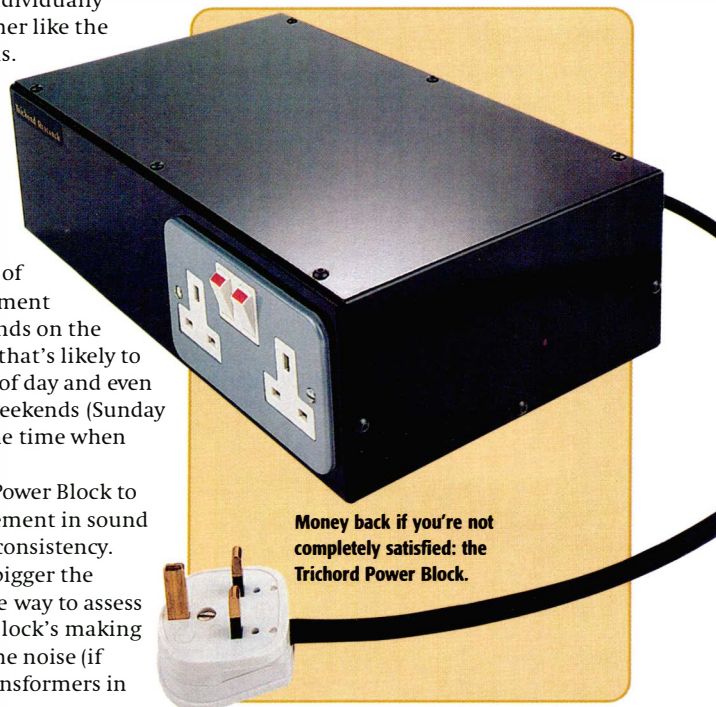
your equipment. For example, if your power amp's mains transformer buzzes at certain times of the day, it's a sign there's some DC on the mains.

If DC is causing transformer buzz, Power Block should eliminate it completely as it's an isolation transformer. The Catch-22 is that Power Block itself may buzz! Equally, it may be your amp has transformers that are intrinsically noisy (my EAR 859 integrated is like this), in which case the Power Block won't make any difference.

I've good reason to believe my house has reasonably pure mains. Nevertheless, Power Block made a noticeable improvement to the sound of my system. In situations where the mains is dirty, the difference with and without should be much bigger still.

Since purchasing a Power Block is slightly speculative, Trichord offers it on a money-back basis. This is one you have to try for yourself – hearing it somewhere else (or reading a review) is no alternative to experiencing the effect in your own home. Only after an audition of a week or so will you know if consistency improves. If you feel it makes no difference, return the Power Block within 14 days and you'll get a refund minus carriage. Sounds fair to me!

Trichord Research (01684) 573524



**Money back if you're not completely satisfied: the Trichord Power Block.**

## HIGHLIGHTS OF NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE ...

### CD PLAYER MEGA TEST

We turn our shell-likes to a dozen CD players costing between £300 and £1,100 from the likes of Arcam, Denon, Myryad, NAD, Rotel, Sony, Talk Electronics and TEAC. Will the higher-priced models rule the roost, or will a star bargain emerge from the ranks?

### SOUNDS FOR THE WIRED

Heard about this new-fangled Internet thing? (All the young people are talking about it. Ask your kids.) Well, who'd have thought it? Turns out there's more to the Net than lonely hearts and Wombles Websites (and sometimes the two combined). Using MP3, you can also get your mitts on music ranging from chart and

classic tunes to unsigned bands and otherwise unreleased rarities. Tim Bower will do his best to unravel the arcane mysteries of the Web for you.

### SPEAKERS THAT SING

Paul Messenger checks out an extremely diverse clutch of floorstanders and standmounters priced between £1,200 and £2,000. Models from Castle, Carlsson, Orelle and Zingali, among others, battle for supremacy.

### HIGH-END LOVELIES

Our Glorious Leader returns from his hols to experience the delights of another turntable, this time from SME. We also test amps from Levinson and Lundahl and – crickey, what's this? A Nakamichi tape deck!

■ The November issue will be on sale from Thursday 30 September.





# WE KNOW ABOUT BASS

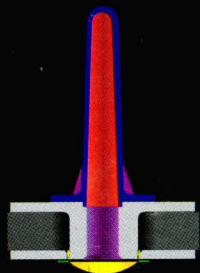


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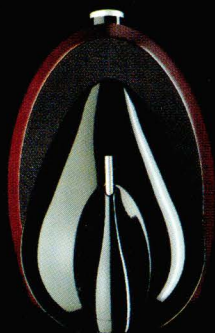


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