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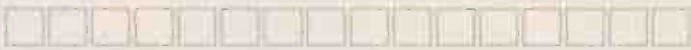
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BUY-SELL-EXCHANGE.
Vintage wireless and classical audio. Repairs, spares, restoration, modification to all valve equipment. Quad II, Leaks etc. Regonda and Vega T.V. and Radio parts in stock. 17 Bell Street, NW1 5BY. Tel: 0171 258 3448 Fax 0171 258 3449 (Apr)

INTERFERENCE / RESONANCE SPECIALISTS.
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e.g. 52, CDS, SCAP, SNAXO, HICAP, NAXO, 135, 250, SBL, IBL, 180, 140, 72, 32, MANA etc
TEL: BOB 01382 819 732 (Dec)

NAGRA IV5, Stereo Pilot, CCIR, power supply, variable, case, very good condition, not BBC rubbish. £2000. Tel: 01246 235 024 (Jun/I)

NO CROWN Jewels in our tower. Only top quality hi-fi, new, x-dem, and used. Visit us at Audio File Objective, 37 Tower Centre, Hoddesdon, Herts. 25% off Mission dem stock. Cash/Cards. Free Parking. Tel: 01992 478 666 or 0973 452 368 mobile. (Jun/I)

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Restorations and up-grades to all amplifiers, ancient and modern. One-off's built to order, kits debugged. Power supplies, P.A. amps etc. Tel: 01642 860 881 Sep(I)

WANTED - EARLY HI-FI LOUDSPEAKERS
Tannoy, Lowther, Parmeko, Voigt, Vitavox, RCA WE etc
TURNTABLES
Garrard, BBC301, EMT SME, Ortofon, Decca, etc.
VALVE AMPLIFIERS
AEI, EMI, Leak, Rogers, PYE- Quad, WE etc
AUDIO VALVES
DA30, KT66, KT88, PX4, PX25, PP3/350, WE300
CLEAR CRYSTAL SYSTEMS
John Petrie-Baker
Tel: 0171 328 9275

AUDIONOTE ONGAKU 211 lineage integrated amplifier. RRP £59,950 Revalved, mint and crated. This rare item will go for £17, 995. No offers. Definite enquiries only please as demo will cost £150 - redeemable against purchase. Tel: 01628 440 873 (Jun/I)

REVITALISE YOUR Cartridge.
Why waste money on a new cartridge. Have yours rebuilt by A.J. van den Hul giving exceptional performance and low record wear. Retips from £210. Tel: 01388 663 273 (Jun/I)

REVITALISE YOUR Vinyl collection. Invest in your record collection with a van den Hul cartridge. Priced from £250 to £3000 they offer exceptional performance and low record wear. Tel: 01388 663 273 (Jun/I)

HORSHAM HI-FI Offer:
Tannoy D-700 £1295. Mark Levinson No.27 power £1995. Michell Argo HR pre-amp £695. Meridian 602 transport £695. Audiolab 8000Q pre-amp £795. Rel Stentor £995. Tel: 01403 251 587 (Jun/I)

HORSHAM HI-FI Offer: SME
Model 20/SME V tonearm £2495. Chord I200B £1995. Manley 300B SE/PP monoblocks £1995. Musical Fidelity F22 pre-amp £695. Beard P35 £549. Tel: 01403 251 587 (Jun/I)

UNISON RESEARCH Simply Four, ex dem £750. Chario Academy One, solid walnut, new £650. Audio Alchemy DDE V3.0, boxed £300. Leak TL12+, perfect phase rebuild £350 pair. Quad II set, POA. Tel: 01942 257 525 (Jun/I)

REVOX B77 MkII HS with trolley and monitor. As new condition £950. Revox A6 FM tuner, as new £600. Tel: 01246 235 024 (Jun/I)

MUSICAL EXPERIENCE
Scotland. 0141 571 4947 or 0411 756 829. MF MA50s two sets, 1 set boxed, MF 3B, MF MVT, Quad 44 phono + 405i, Sony pair TAE78 + pre, tuner, cassette + Elcaset. Cyrus 2 + PSX, mint, boxed, Mission PCMII CD, boxed, mint. Many other items. Contact Frank or Christine for prices and details. (Jun/I)

VINTAGE BUY-SELL. Wanted 1930/60s Hi-Fi's. Lowthers, Charles, Leaks, Rogers, EMGs etc. **FOR SALE:** Valves, Balloon/STs **NEW.** PP3/250s. PP5/400s. Ferranti LP4s. AC044s, AC042s, 41MXP, P12/250s. ACPX4As, PX25/PX4s etc. Arm/Cart: BJ/RGD/BTH/Lowther-FFSS. Various: 300 volume controls, boxed. 200 valves bases new. Prices on request. Old Days Vintage Audio. Tel/Fax 0171 349 9675/0958 607 613 (Jun/I)

AUDIO SELECTION. Buy: Sell: P/Exchange: Sony CDP790 R/C £85, F220 amp £75. Tannoy M20G MkII's biwire £100. Naim 42.5 £145. Stax SR34/SRD4 £120. Audiolab 8000A II £350. **NEW:** TDL T2's £475 (£600). Marantz CD63 II KISI £379, CD67SE £289. Delivery £10. Tel: Jim 01206 510 392 (Colchester) (Jun/I)

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PROGRESSIVE AUDIO



Mid-Season Sale of Ex-Dem and Secondhand Equipment

Analysis Epsilon Ribbon Loudspeakers	(£3750)	Sale £2600
Audio Alchemy DAC 1.2	(£595)	Sale £375
Chord Electronics LS512A Loudspeakers (Ebony)	(£1679)	Sale £1200
Parasound P/LD 2000 Preamp	(£1495)	Sale £1095
VPI HPW 19 MkIII Piano Black Turntable	(£1800)	Sale £1150
Alon Petit Loudspeakers (walnut)	(£1087)	Sale £795
Alon 1 Loudspeakers (oak)	(£1616)	Sale £1200
Chord 800 Power Amp	(£2155)	Sale £1600
Michell Argo HR Pre-Amp	(£1339)	Sale £1050
Audio Alchemy Headphone Amp	(£249)	Sale £199
Beyer 531 Headphones	(£120)	Sale £85
Stax SR-84 Electret Headphones	(£259)	Sale £195
Qestar QA2 Active Speakers/Stands/3M Kimer 4TC		£300 the lot
4M Set Nordost Red Dawn Speaker Cables (Terminated)	(£929)	Sale £750
Audio Silver Knight 300B Mono Blocks	(£2495)	Sale £1750
Roksan Xerxes (Piano Black) Table + SME V Tonearm		£1200
Audionote Meishu (phono m/m) amplifier	(s/h)	£2250
XTC Pre 1 pre amp - 3 weeks old	(s/h)	£800
Trichord Pulsar 1 DAC	(s/h)	£825
Meridian 200 CD transport	(s/h)	£400
Proac Studio 100 loudspeakers (cherry) 3 weeks old		£550
Technics SE-A1000 and SU-C1000 pre/power combo		£450
SD Acoustics SD3 loudspeakers	(ex dem)	£350
SD Acoustics Alexandra stands for above	(new)	£220
Foundation Designer '600' stands 21 inches tall		£210

New in this month and on permanent dem:-
Audio Synthesis Dax Decade and Desire Decade Tube Technology CD player.

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QUAD 303/33/FM3, recently serviced by Quad £296 ono. Boxed with instructions, manuals, with connections. One owner. Buyer collects. Tel: 0117 965 2580 (Jun/I)

NAKAMICHI CR3 Discrete head cassette deck, bias tune, three heads, azimuth alignment, good condition, happy to demo £300 ono. JPW P2 loudspeakers £100 ovno. Tel: 01480 475 616 evenings (Jun/I)

MICHELL SYNCRO turntable (£455). RB300 tonearm (£139). Linn K18 cartridge (£150) Immaculate condition, boxed, instructions £300. Tel: 01952 597 638 (Telford) (Jun/I)

WANTED: REVOX B150 and B250, integrated amplifiers and B285 receiver. For Sale: Leak Stereo 20 and Varislope 2 (excellent). New valves, capacitors, plus 22 spare new and used good valves. Tel: 01736 360 367 (Jun)

PRO-AC SUPERTOWER speakers, walnut, boxed, mint, £1300 new, accept £650. Musical Fidelity P180 + C.R.P.S. £1500 new, accept £650. Alphason Sonata turntable HR100 M.C.S. arm, Atlas power supply £695. Tel: 01634 387 686 (Jun/I)

THORENS TD124/II turntable with SME 3009 arm. Mounted on wooden plinth with removable perspex cover. Complete with Shure V15 type II cartridge and spare Shure diamond stylus £275. Tel: 01684 563 183 (Worcs) (Jun/I)

CYRUS II + PSX. Quality refined sound, firm established bass, exceptional for most needs, boxed as new £350. Tel: 01246 590 161 (Jun)

WORLD AUDIO KLS3 cabinets professionally built and finished in ash veneer £600 ono. Nakamichi CA-5E preamp inc phono stage £250 ono. Meridian M2 active speakers, good condition, new reservoir caps £250. Tel: 0131 468 0173 evs & weekend (Jun/I)

WANTED: LEAK 2075 speakers, any condition, drive units must be good. Thanks to Terry C. for all that info. Tel: 01453 764 734 or 0370 951 875 (Jul/I)

INFINITY MODULUS Speakers + stands, piano black £300 (£1000). Denon DP3000 DDT/T + SME 3009S2I, rare, £250. Michell Focus 1s + Mission arm £95. DNM pre + battery PSU, superb, £200. Townshend Elite monoblocks + 0.6KV PSU £200. No timewasters please. Tel: Adil 0171 308 4044 or 0181 673 3850 (Jun/I)

APOGEE CENTAUR Minors, blown woofers £200 (£1345) + stands £95 (£200). Soundstyle stands X124, 24" gloss black £75 (£100). Michell Gyrodec, Orbe platter, clamp, SME 4 + Trough, Ortofon MC30 Supreme £1350 (£2600+). Tel: 01442 877 853 (Jun/I)

AUDIO ANALOGUE Puccini SE, mint, boxed £390. Denon tuner TU-710, ex. cond. £60. Technics cassette RS-B355, ex. cond. £60. Tel: Brian (work) 0181 908 4633 or (home) 0181 952 2044 (NW London) (Jun/I)

AUDIO RESEARCH LS3/D200, unused £2250. Quad 44/405.2 £350. FM4 £250. Kef Reference 2 (rosewood) £950. Celestion A3s £1550. Quad 77 CD (mains) £650. Revox B77 MkII, 1/2 track, immaculate £600. Tel: 01952 502 097 (Telford) (Jun/I)

NAKAMICHI DRAGON and Nakamichi ZX7 offered for sale, only as a pair. Owned from new with original boxes and manuals. Full service history with B&W. Mint condition. Accept £2000. Tel: 0161 437 5372 (Jun/I)

KENWOOD KA5050R amplifier, and DP7050 CD player. Selection of first class reviews available. Cost £700, accept £450. B&W DM620i floorstanding speakers, cost £369, accept £250. All mint. Tel: 0161 437 5372 (Jun/I)

AUDIOLAB 8000C preamp £250. Pink Triangle DaCapo 22 bit DAC (£1500) £650. Deltec PDM One Series Two DAC (£600) £250. Michell ISO head amp (£450) £250. Arcam One speakers + Heybrook stands (£500) £150. Tel: 0181 765 0627 or 0956 364 868 (Jun/I)

ATC 20 SPEAKERS £850. Quad 66/606 pre power amp £750. Quad 66 tuner £250. Sony 176EB speakers £175. Kef 30B sub-woofer £275. Tel: 01977 643 629 (Jun/I)

ARCAM 170.3 Transport, Audio Alchemy DDE V1.0 DAC, AudioQuest interconnect £485. Eclipse CD101 CD player £50. All in excellent condition. Two Target support tables £35 each. Tel: 01722 322 882 evenings (Jun/I)

AUDIOLAB 8000LX, 10 mths warranty, boxed £350. Quad 44 phono + 405 Mkl £350. B+O 4000 + 4002 linear turntable + C40s £290. NAD 7020E tun/amp, boxed £80. Castle Durhams 900, blk, £125. MF MA 50s x 2, 1 set boxed £350, £395. Ariston Q Deck OM10, boxed £85. Various bookshelf speakers. Tel: Frank 0141 571 4947

WANTED FOR Cash. Naim preamp 52. Old or new style. Tel: 01404 891 392 (Jun/I)

NAIM INTRO Speakers. Bought December '97, boxed and under guarantee. New spec. £490. Tel: 01387 269 249 (Jun/I)

AUDIO INNOVATIONS Series 200 preamp and poweramp £395. Sony CDPI01 superbly engineered first generation CD player £150. KT66-R unused matched set of four £125. Tannoy 63ISE speakers unwanted gift £110. Technics SL1610 Direct Drive turntable £195. Tel: 01834 860 681 (Jun/I)

THETA 'CROMA HDCD' Dac. Purchased new December 1997. Mint, boxed, bargain at £600 (£900) WANTED: Sonus Faber Extrema or Electa Amator or Sendor SP7 or SP9. Tel: Mike 01902 786 818 (Jun/I)

BILL BEARD Model BB30-60 Mk 2 dual mono integrated valve amp. Brand new, unwanted competition prize (recommend £1495) Accept £850. Tel: 0161 370 7599 (Manchester) (Jun/I)

CHORD SPM1200B Silver with full Trager system (£4505) £2500. Klyne System 7 pre amplifier in Gold. Bal in/out, floatation pad, option m. (£4750) £2575. Monarchy 22B DAC in Black (£995) £495. All ovno. Tel: 01622 671 283 (Kent) (Jun/I)

AUDIO SYNTHESIS Passion 8M remote controlled passive preamp, top multiple input model, boxed, mint, 7 months old. Cost £1695, sell £1100. Tel: days 01322 282 512, evs 01622 820 716 (Kent) (Jun/I)

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UNISON RESEARCH Simply Two, mint, boxed £600 ono. Klipsch 3.5 loudspeakers in medium oak £400 ono. Both only 7 months old and boxed. Leak Troughline tuner £80 one. Tel: George 01483 824 602 (Jun/I)

AUDIO INNOVATIONS 2nd audio mono's ECC 82 + 2A3 + spare set of valves. Very good condition £1250. Pioneer 9300 CD player £95. Tel: 01295 257 191 (Jun/I)

LIVING VOICE Auditorium speakers 94dB outstanding musical dynamics. £1500 4 months ago, £875. Audio Synthesis DAX (internal Passion preamp) £750. van den Hul First £70 pair. Reluctant sales. Delivery possible. Tel: 01224 572 370 (Jun/I)

AUDIO INNOVATIONS (Series 800 Mk3) poweramp + off board, valve rectified, choke filtered, power supply. May split £675 ono. Cambridge CDI, not working £50. Rega RB250 £50. WANTED: Owner of Wilmslow Prestige for unbiased view. Tel: 01662 548 623 (Jun/I)

LINN KARIK CD player with remote, boxed and complete, mint £750 (new £1850). WANTED: Linn Kremlin tuner, must be boxed. Cash waiting. Tel: Jerry 01702 545 622 (Essex) (Jun)

WANTED: Ortofon SPU, Garrard 301, SME3012 (ser I&II). Keith Monks or VPI HW16/17/17F record cleaning machine. Tel: 01203 713 501 evenings (Jun/I)

MARANTZ CD 80 £350. Deltac Big-Bit Dac, upgraded to 7350 advanced bitstream chip-set £350. Musical Fidelity The Pre-Amp 2A £80. 2 x pair of Audio Technica interconnects. Cost £140, wanting £70. Tel: 01302 310 029 (Jul/I)

ALCHEMIST FORSETI preamp and two power amps + psu. Stunning sound, fantastic looks, rave reviews, Class A/B bridged or bi-amped. Absolute mint condition, boxed, manuals, rare bargain £1850 (new £3500) Tel: 0181 597 4154 (Jun/I)

GARRARD 401, Fons Q30, Quantum Audio Minstrel valve amp, JR 149 speakers, Tripos rack and speaker stands. All reasonably priced. WANTED: Quad 67 CD. Tel: 01224 646 473 (Jun/I)

NAIM SBL Speakers, black £900 ono. SD Acoustics OBS speakers £400 ono. Mordant Short speakers, walnut £50 ono. Technics CD player £50 ono. All in excellent condition. Tel: 01943 607 336 (Jun/I)

AVI S2000 MP/MM pre amplifier & monoblocks (150w). Remote controlled, six inputs, inc MM/MC phono stage. 10 months old, can demonstrate, boxed, may split. (New) £2600 (Sell) £1700. No offers. Tel: 0151 348 0256 (Jul/I)

PAIR LINN Keilidh speakers. Black with granite stands. Mint. 6 weeks use. £650. Tel: 01977 620 558 (Jun/I)

SME MODEL 20A turntable with SME V tonearm £2300 ono. Linn Archiv MC phono cartridge (retipped by "Expert") £295 ovno. Baby necessitates very reluctant sale of the above. Tel: 0161 288 2995 (Jun/I)

NAIM CD2 CD player. 15 months old. Absolutely as new, boxed. Cost £2000, sell £1150. Tel: 0181 265 8353

EAR834P PHONO Preamp £295 (£499) Loricraft Garrard 401/SME IV/Ortofon Rohmann (30h use) with Loricrafts biggest power supply PSU II. Absolutely stunning performance and looks £1695 (£3090). Rohmann (30h) £575 (£1000). SME IV £550 (£990), Loricraft 401 £400 (£700), PSU II £200 (£400). All items in mint condition. Tel: 01203 713 501 evenings (Jun/I)

PIONEER SX750 receiver (13kgs!) £75. Rogers Ravensbourne amp & tuner £45. Leak Point One Stereo valve preamp £50. Leak Stereo 20 gold, full rebuild £250, Leak Stereo 20 grey, scruffy but superb sound, full rebuild £150. Garrard 401 SME-plinth, SME3009II & Shure M75E £175. Sugden A48 Class A amp, needs attention £60. Tel: 01203 713 501 evenings (Jun/I)

QUAD COMPLETE valve gear-set: Quad 22 (phono & tape adapt)/ II (pair)/FM1 (original stereo decoder) Near mint condition £775. WANTED: Ortofon SPU, Garrard 301. Tel: 01203 713 501 (Jun/I)

KLIPSCH CHORUS MkI speakers, horn treble, horn mid, 15" driver, bass. Medium oak £750 ono. Tel: 0171 790 3404 (Jun/I)

XTC CDP-1 Single ended Class A, High End CD player £700 (Retail £1250). Orelle SA100 RX remote control integrated amplifier, 75wpc £400 (retail £650). Silver interconnects £100. All virtually new. Tel: 01803 211 012 (Jun/I)

QED 240SA amplifier with quality phono stage. £250 when new, asking £95. Micromega Microdeck £170. Box of various hi-fi bits £40. Tel: 0181 299 0075 or Email: Peewee2898@aol.com (Jun/I)

ARCAM ALPHA 6 CD Player £295. Leak Troughline with Studio 12 decoder £95. Sansui SR222 MkII turntable with Linn K5 cartridge £45. Tel: 01780 764 149 (Jun/I)

TANNOY FLOORSTANDERS 637 Profile Plus, 15 months old, boxed, as new £350. Valve amplifier AudioNote Kit 4, 8 months old, including complete spare set of new valves £300. Tel: 01296 423 911 (Jun/I)

HI-END CONVERTERS: Trichord Research Pulsar DAC with PSU (£1850) £950. Parasound 1600 HD DAC (£1450) £750. Both mint, boxed, instructions. Tel: 01208 74522 (Cornwall) (Jun/I)

SUGDEN AU41P 100w per channel power amp. 2 years old, see Worlds favourites guide £350. Tel: 01254 249 897 (Jun/I)

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QUAD ESL 63 loudspeakers, perfect working order, mint condition £1475. Tannoy Berkeley loudspeakers 15" dual concentric, perfect working order, mint condition £390. Tel: 0191 281 0260 (Jun/I)

EXPOSURE 9 PPS 14 preamp £1400, IV dual regulated power £1100, Super 18 monoblocks, new £1200, old style IV, VI, VII £400. Arion EOS valve power £425. Tel: 01574 270 477 (Jun/I)

THORENS TD 160 Super turntable, Mayware Formula 4 (oil-well-damped) arm, EEI 700 parabolic cartridge + extras. Matt black surround. Immaculate condition. Very little used £120. Tel: Paul 0181 965 8105 (NW London) (Jun/I)

MERIDIAN DSP5000 digital active speakers in black, 3 months old, boxed, immaculate condition, 2 year warranty, cost new £3295, will accept £2395 ono. Tel: Richard 0118 959 7768 day, 0118 950 3643 eves (Jun)

NAIM HI-FI. S2-S/Cap, 1.y.o.. £3800, NAP 250, 2.y.o. £1050. SBL 6.y.o. £800 (black), 42.5 £100, Sound Organisation stands, wall + floor £30. Tel: 0161 973 7329 evenings only (Jun/I)

TEAC P30 Transport, brand new, colour Krell grey. 3 outputs ST Optical, RCA, balanced AES/EBU. Paid £2499, will sell £1995 ono. One metre Siltech MC4 56 II with Audioquest XLR's, list £600, will sell £250. Tel: Ian 0171 584 5784 or 0171 589 4840 (Jun/I)

CYRUS 3 Integrated amplifier, just over a year old. Have upgraded to pre/power combination. £370. WANTED: Cyrus power amps and vdH The First interconnects. Tel: 01803 606 331 (Torquay) (Jun/I)

SPEAKER CABLES. Audioquest Indigo 2 2x9m. Linn LK20 2x30m. All bi-wired with gold-plated banana plugs. £80 per set. Tel: 01487 711 169 anytime (Jun)

LENTEK PRE-Power amp. Offers. 401 SME 3009 compact plinth £180. Arcam Delta 5 70.3 CD player £200. Connoisseur pickup arm, boxed £20. Whitley drive units. Offers. Dual 505 turntable, excellent £50. Tel: 01443 814 738 (Jun/I)

REVOX B77 Open reel tape deck. 3 3/4, 7 1/2 ips, 1/4 track, with manual plus 10 10 1/2" reels (70hrs recording time), some accessories. Good condition, had light home use only £600. Tel: 01432 275 729 (Jun)

IMPULSE LALI, Beech, 10 months old, mint. 94dB, suit SE valves. Genuine reason for sale (£1850) £1175 ono. Tel: 0113 260 8656 (Leeds) (Jun/I)

BOSE LIFESTYLE 12 music system. One month old, still boxed, cost £2500, accept £2000. JPW AP3 speakers, just broken in. Marantz CD63SE, Marantz amp PM44 MkII, as new boxed, offers. Tel: 0049 5151 42516 (Jun/I)

LOWTHER BICOR 2000 cabinets. Unused pair. American walnut £130. Tel: 01229 885 214 (Jun)

LINN KAIRN phono/brilliant £1000. Numerik (brilliant) £800. Linn Kans with MkII stands £140. All in mint condition. DAT 120m tapes £2. Tel: 01622 858 085 (Jun/I)

WANTED: DPA Enlightenment drive, Ringmat 330 XLR. For Sale: TDL RTL 3 rosewood £200. Tel: Paul 01287 625 166 (Jun/I)

QUAD 306 Power amplifier £190. Tel: 01626 332 050 (Jun/I)

LEAK TL12.1 Pair. Leak TL10 pair, excellent condition £400. Leak Stereo 20 (charcoal) + pre £250. Leak TL12+ pair, gold £275. Quad II pair + pre + stereo tuner, excellent condition £450. Quad 33/303/FM3 £200. Pye Mozart mono £100. Rogers K688 MkI £100. Rogers Cadet 3 power £80. Tannoy 3LZ pair, oak £250. Tel: 01752 837 338 (Jun/I)

KRELL FOR Sale: KBL line stage £1700. KPA phono stage £1000. Mint condition, boxed, prices include P&P. Tel: 0049 7240 942 113 eves & w/ends. Fax: 0049 7240 942 114 (Germany) or bs@zkm.de (Jun/I)

PAIR OF Boxed 240 watt American linear phase speakers with 10" bass and carpet finish. 92dB per watt efficiency. Ideal for valve amps £900 ono. Tel: 01501 822 544 (Jun/I)

GARRARD 301, white, glass top, with SME arm. Set in wooden case with lid, lockable with key. Excellent sound, includes Shure stylus pressure gauge. Very good condition £300 ono. Tel/Fax: 01903 212 575 (Jun/I)

LINN KEILIDH speakers, with composite bases, original boxes, excellent condition £350. Tel: 01757 630 573 (Jun/I)

SUMO 9 PLUS power amplifier. American pure Class A, 60wpc, very heavy £500 (£1350). Sumiko Blue Point cartridge. High output M/C. Less than 20hrs use, receipts, W.H.Y.? £60 (£100). Tel: 01483 554 064 day, 01442 875 738 eves. (Jun)

INCATECH CLAYMORE Amplifier, upgraded by Manticore, sounds stunning, boxed with all history. £175. Tel: 01932 352 325 (Jun/I)

YAMAHA DSPE390 surround sound processor with rear speakers, 1 year old with box £150. Tel: 01932 352 325 (Jun/I)

MICROMEGA STAGE 3 CD, only £325 ono (£850 new). Audiophile bargain, boxed with manual, pristine condition. Tel: 01784 472 134 anytime or geoff.tmd@btinternet.com (Jun/I)

MERIDIAN MCD Professional (CD101B), one owner from new, good condition, boxed. A lovely warm-sounding CD player £250 ono. Tel: Martin 01580 881 137 (Jun/I)

AUDIOLAB 8000 DAC £650 ono. Audiolab 8000C preamp £350. 2 x 1m AudioQuest Diamond 2 solid silver interconnects £360. New Monarchy 33B Dac/Preamp, Ltd Edition £750. New Monarchy 18B DAC/preamp £450. 2 x Monarchy SE100 monoblocks £700 each. NAD 5020 turntable £70. All in mint condition. Tel: 0141 884 3831 (Jul/I)

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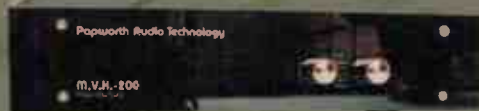
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PINK TRIANGLE Cardinal CD transport reclocked £350. DaCapo DAC converter 20 bit filter £750. Mission 731LE speakers £50. Mission 75C centre speaker £100. Transparent Audio Music Link Plus speaker cable 5m pair £200. Tel: 01256 359 407 (Jul(I))

AUDIO TECHNICA AT33e MC cartridge. Super sound, beats OC30 £190. Sony SBM-1 adaptor, suits TCD-3, 7, 8, 100 £270. Both brand new, boxed, unused, inc carriage. Tel: 016974 78537 (Jun(I))

NAD 3155 amplifier, 55wpc, inputs for phono, tuner, 2xtape, CD, aux. Output 2xsets speakers, separate record/listen facility. Original packaging and handbook. £110. Offers considered. Tel: Mr Lane 01635 42647 (Jun(I))

KEF SPEAKERS handbuilt vented column design. B139, B200, T27 drivers, deliver big rich sound, will handle all music types £90 inc low loss cable. Offers considered. Tel: Mr Lane 01635 42647 (Jun(I))

AUDIOLAB 8000A £250. Kef Q90 floorstanders (Q65 equivalent) 2 1/4 year guarantee £300. Chord Flatline Twin speaker cables, 3m pair £50. All 2 3/4 years old, excellent condition, boxed. Tel: Peter 0121 706 6658 (Birmingham) (Jun(I))

WOODSIDE ISA230 line integrated valve amp, mint (£1000) £425. Speaker cable Hitachi SSX 102 4 metre bi-wired pair (£150) £50. Speaker stands, granite 18" high £40. Tel: 01707 891 974 (Herts) (Jun(I))

MERIDIAN ACTIVE loudspeaker M60 R/W £1450. Meridian active centre speaker M60C £750. Meridian 541 A/V processor £750. Mission 75H Freedom, black £800. All boxed, mint, manuals etc. WANTED: Musical Fidelity F16 power amp. Tel: Nik 01509 219 489 (Loughborough) 0498 712 975 (Jun(I))

MUSICAL FIDELITY F15 £1100. AVI S2000 MP £450. Marantz 63 £80. All boxed and in excellent working order and in excellent condition. Tel: 01705 352 987 (Gosport) (Jun(I))

KENWOOD L-1000C preamp and L-1000M poweramp £650. Kef 104/2 loudspeakers, rosewood £650. Rotel RT-830AL tuner £55. Leak Troughline 3, G.T. overhauled with Studio 12 decoder £150. Tel: 0121 427 8810 (Jun(I))

DENON DL304 moving coil + Michell Iso/Hera phono stage (new £740) £400 ono. Tel: 0181 654 6292 after 6pm (Jun(I))

EPOS II SPEAKERS plus stands £200. Mission 760i's speakers £30 (crossover has been split for bi-wiring) Target speaker stands £20. Musical Fidelity X10-D £60. Tel: 01502 730 754 (Jun(I))

NAIM FLATCAP, mint £240. Tel: 01865 778 821 (Oxford) (Jun(I))

NAIM 101 TUNER c/w Snaps power supply. Mint condition, boxed with instructions £375. Audio Innovations T2 moving coil transformer. Mint condition, boxed with instructions £225. Tel: 01443 685 492 (Jun(I))

NAKAMICHI 700 ZXL computing cassette deck. Full service B&W, mint, boxed £750. Krell KSP 7B preamp (£3200) separate power supply, balanced out £850. Sumo 9 plus power, pure Class A 60wpc (£1200) £450. All immaculate and boxed. Tel: 0181 523 1134 (Jun(I))

QUAD II Monoblocks, plus matching control amps, original condition £400. Mission Argonauts, floorstanders, in original boxes £220 ono. Radford Renaissance SC25 valve preamp £450 ono. Tel: Ian 0113 294 1772 (Jun(I))

CELESTION 7000 ribbon speakers £350. Wharfedale Harewood speakers £150 (cost £500, 5 star review What Hi-Fi, powerful bass, integral stands) Tannoy 625ALF subwoofer £150 (great review Hi-Fi World) Tel: 0181 672 4319 (Jun(I))

RUARK "CRUSADER" loudspeakers in rosewood £700. Musical Fidelity The Preamp + Musical Fidelity Typhoon power amplifier £200 ono. Tel: 01229 462 027, mobile 0441 087 578 (Cumbria) (Jun(I))

GAMMA ERA preamp £200. Space power amp £800. Epoch speakers £500. Burmester 838 phono stage £300. Voyd Valdi, no platter/lid £100. Thorens TD124. Martin Bastin plinth (£300), F&S power supply (£100), Fidelity Research FR64S, Ortofon SPU £700. Cambridge Audio CD4, Dacmagic 2 £150. Meridian 203 Dac £170. Tel: 0181 672 4319 (Jun(I))

B&W AS6 Digital monitor active sub-woofer for sale. Mint condition, boxed. Accept £300. Tel: 01904 635 898 anytime (Yorkshire) (Jun(I))

NAIM NAC72, new style £300. NAP 140, new style, Avondale modified £360. HiCap, old style £260 or £850 for all three. Tel: 01925 727 243 evenings & weekends (Jun)

SCAN SPEAK Drivers type 21W/8555-01 ideal for sub woofers. 19 Hz resonance 100 watt power handling. Never used, data sheet available. Cost £240 per pair, bargain at £70 each. Tel: 01572 747 753 (Jun(I))

ONIX 0A21 amplifier plus Soap including Blackhead step-up transformer £300. Naim NAC5 tri-wire x3m £60. Tripod stand 4 shelf Target valve table £50. Tel: 01386 860 931 (Evesham) (Jun(I))

CONRAD JOHNSON PV10A preamp (phono), latest model £795. Yamaha TC7000 tuner, very collectable £425. Art Audio Quintet Mk2 valve amp, triode switchable £625. Technics SP10/Mk2 record deck, including SL1000 marble plinth, mint unmodified condition (5 yr. old factory exchange unit) £595. Tel: 01603 714 528 days/evenings (Jun(I))

MUSICAL FIDELITY A1000 Class A £925. Micromega Drive 2 £550. Both boxed and guaranteed. ProAc Studio 100 walnut, British craftsmanship £440. Meridian 263DS Dac, perfect £295. VDH Second interconnect £100. Cord Myth 7m £60. Linn Basik Akito K9 £210. Tel: 0117 924 6297 (Jun(I))

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	Choice Price	Original Retail Price
POWER AMPLIFIERS		
Audion Golden Knights	£2495	£4000
LFD PA2/ LS1/ MC1	£1495	£3000
Audion Silver Knights (Gold)	£1495	£2250
Musical Fidelity P140/P3A	£450	£900
Musical Fidelity E10 integrated	£195	£310
Jadis Defy 7 mk III	£3250	£4790
Audiolab 8000A (Latest)	£350	£500
Audiolab 8000A (mkl)	£225	£450
Mark Levinson 20.5	£5995	£12000
Jardis JA 500	£7995	£21000
Audio Research VT150	£8500	£17000

	Choice Price	Original Retail Price
PRE AMPLIFIERS		
Meridian 208 incl. Phono (C.D/ pre amp)	£495	£1500
Audio Research Ref I Mk II	£6500	£9000
Audio Note M2	£650	£1000

	Choice Price	Original Retail Price
SPEAKERS		
Alon Circe	£6500	£11000
ATC SCM 50 A Rosewood	£3995	£5500
Rel Stentor I	£750	£1800
Sonus Faber Sub woofer + X-over + power	£1495	£3200
Proac Studio I mk II	£395	£650
B+W 802 Matrix	£1395	£2000

	Choice Price	Original Retail Price
TURNTABLES/ANALOGUE/VARIOUS		
SME 20/ Series V arm	£2500	£4500
Linn Arkiv (new)	£695	£1000
Quad FM3 Tuner	£225	£ -

	Choice Price	Original Retail Price
C.D PLAYERS & DACS		
Meridian 208 Pre/amp	£495	£1500
Marantz CD94	£395	£1000
Audio Alchemy DDE 1.0 + psu 4	£195	£400
Pink Triangle Ordinal	£595	£900
Meridian 200 Transport	£450	£1000

Power Amplifiers

Conrad Johnson MF 2300	£1895	£2990
Audio Research M300 monoblocks	£4995	£10000
Conrad Johnson Prem 8a	£7995	£16000
Boulder 500 AE	£3295	£5000
LFD PA1/LS1	£895	£1998
Musical Fidelity P180 & CRPS	£895	£1600
Meridian 557	£1050	£1400
Meridian 505 Monoblocks	£1195	£1590
Mark Levinson ML 2 Monoblock	£2795	£15500
Audio Research D200	£1995	£3248
Audio Research D240 mk II	£1795	£3500
Talk Electronics 2P	£475	£730
Unison Research Smart 845	£2300	£3000
Audio Note P1 SE	£595	£950
Audio Research VT130	£3995	£6000
Jadis JA 80 Monoblocks	£4995	£10000
Meridian 551 Integrated	£650	£900
Conrad Johnson Prem 11a	£2395	£3500
Quad II's 2 x 2 monoblocks (special)	£600	£ -
Meridian 555	£595	£800

Pre Amplifiers

Audio Research SP14	£1395	£3000
McCormack TLC-1	£595	£995
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Boulder L5AE	£2250	£3400
Conrad Johnson Prem 7B	£5995	£11000
Exposure IX professional power supply	£795	£1595

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Jadis JP 80 mm	£4995	£8000
Expressive Technologies SU1 Step Up	£1500	£3000
Audio Research LS3	£1195	£1900
Audio Research SP15 Rev A	£2495	£6000
Audio Research LS5 mk II	£3000	£5700
Audio Research SP11 mk II	£1795	£3500
Audio Research LS1	£895	£1900
Audio Research LS2	£1495	£3300
Magnum P200	£995	£1895
Conrad Johnson PV12 (mm/mc)	£1995	£2590

Quality Speakers

ATC SCM 10 Black	£795	£1150
Alon IV mk II	£2000	£3500
Snell JII's	£450	£800
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Spendor SP2/2	£395	£769
Monitor Audio 700 PMC	£450	£600

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Proac Response 4	£7995	£12500
Soundlab Dynastat	£2500	£3790
Royd Priors	£495	£950
Alon V mk II Oak	£2500	£5000
Wilson System 5.1	£12500	£17000
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Wilson 3/2	£5995	£15000
Alon Lotus SE	£3000	£ -
Sonus Faber Extrema + Stands	£4250	£7000
Linn Kan	£250	£500
Linn Kabers (Active) Oak	£995	£2200
Linn Keilihds	£395	£700

CD Players & DACS

EAD 7000 Transport	£1295	£2495
PS. Audio Ultralink	£795	£2390
EAD 9000 Series III HDCD	£3250	£6000
Wadia 16	£4750	£7395
Mission Cyrus Discmaster (Transport)	£595	£1000
Krell SBP 64X	£3500	£9900
McCormack DAC-1	£695	£995
Wadia 22/26	P.O.A.	£ -
Acuphase DP70	£2250	£4500
Acuphase DP90/91	£9950	£20000
Forsell Air Ref Transport mk II		
Forsell Air Ref dac	£8995	£13800
Rotel 965 BX	£250	£300
Audio Alchemy Transport DDS 2	£495	£900
Micromega Minium C D	£275	£350
Mark Levinson 30.5/31	£11500	£24000
Wadia x 32 dac	£495	£1995
Teac T1	£395	£600
Meracus Transport	£1995	£3995

Turntables & Analogue

VPI HW 19 jr/ RB 300	£550	£750
Pierre Lurue J1/SL5	£1750	£4500
Basis Ovation	£3495	£4950
Pierre Lurue JI/Sowther mk III	£1800	£4500
VPI TNT Wheaton III	£1995	£5000
Musical Fidelity T1 Tuner	£195	£450
Forsell Air Force One	£11995	£25000
Kinshaw Overture Phono	£250	£395
Linn LP12 Lingo/Cirkus	£1200	£2000
Voyd 0.5 SME V (ref bearing/platter)	£1800	£3000
Ortofon MC 7500	£1295	£2250
Kiseki Purpleheart Sapphire	£495	£1200
Clear Audio Gamma	£495	£895
Koetsu Red Sig.	£1395	£2000
Systemdek II XE 900/ RB 250	£395	£650
Tesseract TAADA Phono mm mc	£795	£1500
Sequera Tuner (Original)	£4500	£ -
LP12/ Iltok	£695	£1500

Clearance Bargains

Audio Research D125 balanced power	£1595	£3500
Jadis DA 30 integrated	£1700	£2880
Beard P35	£495	£1395
Chameleon Ruby Power Amp (200W)	£495	£1200
Duntech Crown Princes	£1650	£6120
Wadia x 64.4 dac	£1395	£4750
Royd Sapphire	£175	£245
Alchemist Kraken x 2 Stereo & Pre-amp	£695	£1400
NVA A80 Monoblocks & P50 Pre-amp	£895	£1760
Audio Innovations S500 Integrated	£450	£999



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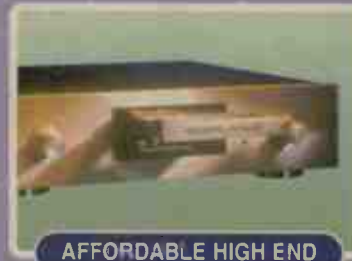
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ROKSAN XERXES, RB300, Torlyte table £350. Rega Xel speakers £490. Rega Elicit amp £360. Ringmat £22. Tel: 01234 309 970 (Jun/I)

AURA VA100 Evolution amp with Aura CD50. Also pair of TDL RT2, rosewood with spikes. All mint condition. Remote with CD50 £420. Tel: 01189 589 466 (Reading) (Jun/I)

WANTED: MUSICAL Fidelity A1000 amplifier. Must be less than 1 year old. For Sale: Monarchy 22B 20bit DAC £600 ono. Tel: 0161 291 9331 (Jun/I)

REVOX B77 tape recorder, 1/4 track, 3 3/4 & 7 1/2 ips. Light use, excellent condition, manual £475. Tel: 0161 283 1689 (Jun/I)

AUDIO TECHNICA AT33E MC cartridge, super sound, beats OC30 £190. Sony SBM-1 adaptor, suits TCD-3,7,8,100, £270. Both brand new, boxed, unused, including carriage. Tel: 01697 478 537 (Jun/I)

LEAK TROUGHLINE III Stereo, superb £125. Troughline II fitted Studio 12 decoder £95, also without decoder £65. Soundstyle Tripod, light blue £135. Target TT1 £30. QED headphone amp £35. Tel: 01978 780 580 (Jun/I)

HI-FI WORLD K5881 MkII valve amp, fitted with Black Gates, Paper in Oils etc. Offers over £350. Linn Klyde cartridge, used less than 6 hours, cost £500 one month ago. Offers. Tel: 01530 831 357 (Leics) (Jun/I)

LINN SONDEK LP12/Lingo/Akito/K9. Walnut, immaculate £425, boxed. Naim Nait 2, immaculate £300, boxed. Epos ES 11s, walnut, immaculate, plus dedicated stands £300, boxed. Beautiful sounding system, will be pleased to demo. Reduction on complete system sale. Baby and space forces sale. Tel: 01203 374 141 or (home) 01455 633 217 (Jun/I)

ROKSAN DPI CD transport and Sugden SDA 1 DAC, both boxed. Cost £2000, now £700. Tel: 01772 315 723 (Jun/I)

AUDIONOTE OTO/SE amp £750. Leak Troughline, recalibrated, wood sleeve £100. Linn Akito arm £50. HFW No.4 to Dec 95 £50. Tel: (h) 0181 539 8272, (w) 0171 412 7410 (Jun/I)

AUDIO RESEARCH D115 MkII, 100wpc £900. SP14 pre-amp £1200. Teac P10 transport, their best, £650. Audionote K0-0N silver passive pre-amp £500. 4x9 metre lengths Kimber 4TC £250. Octet new GEC 6550 valves £100. Tel: 01604 720 122

LINN EQUIPMENT, Immaculate. Karik CD player £1100. Numerik converter £900. Kairn pre-amplifier £1050. Klout power amp £1050. All latest models, boxed and as new. Tel: 0181 942 0996 (Jun/I)

RUARK CRUSADER 2 speakers (£1600) 6 months old £800. Audionote CD2 CD player (£1000) 5 months old £650. Decided on big upgrade of above. Tel: 01244 880 122 (Jun/I)

EAR 509 Tim Paravacini monoblocks 100wpc, chromed and mint £900. Unison Research Smart 845 monoblocks £2000, boxed. Rock turntable with Syrnix PU2 £200. Tel: 01274 545 219 (Jun/I)

HEYBROOK TT2 turntable, Linn Basic+ arm, Nagaoka cartridge, boxed £165. Teac RDS stereo tuner, 3 months old, boxed £80 (£165). Revox A77 Mk4, 2 track and Ferrograph Series 7, 4 track. Offers. Tel: 01492 878 107 (Jun/I)

KEF 104.2 Reference speakers, superb condition/sound £620 pair. Alchemist Kraken Anniversary Edition power amp and preamp and manuals, superb £450 the pair. Tel: 01600 713 755 (Jun/I)

CHARIO MASTERPIECE speakers, superb Italian speakers £1400 ono. Genuine reason for sale. Tel: Terry 01384 359 273 after 6pm (Jun/I)

ATC ACTIVE 100 speakers £3900. AVI preamp £380. Teac D500/P500 2 box CD player £700. Neat Mystique floorstanding speakers £325. Rotel Pro-Logic preamp and 6 channel power amp £380. B+W CC6 centre channel speaker £150. Tel: 01977 643 629 (Jun/I)

QUAD 77/707 pre power, with remote control £1100. Ruark Crusader speakers £650. Rega ELA speakers £175. Tel: 01977 643 629 (Jun/I)

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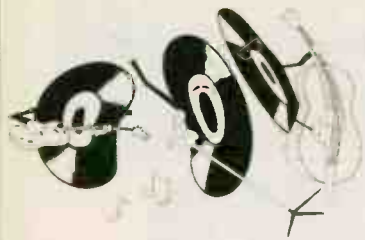
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MERIDIAN 551 Integrated amp, with M.S.R. (new £855) £450. Meridian A500 floorstanding passive speakers in rosewood (new £800) £300. Tel: daytime 07771 508 444, eves/weekend 01205 722 000 (Jun/I)

EAR 859 SE Integrated amplifier, boxed, good condition £795. Tannoy Lancasters 12" Monitor Golds £495. Lowther Acoustas £275. MM/MC phono pre amplifier, Chantry Audio type £65. Tel: 01766 890 456 (Jun/I)

CYRUS III and power £890. Cyrus DAD3Q £790. Mission 752F (Prima) £450. All tip top condition, with box. Urgent sale. Tel: 0467 398 366 after 7pm (Sheffield) (Jun/I)

NAKAMICHI BX300 £350 ono. Aiwa 6900 c/deck £150. Power/amp NAD 902 new £150. Russian valve amp new £500. Luxman receiver £150. Pioneer A400 amp £150 ono. Denon DRS 610 cassette deck £120 ono. Tel: 01494 721 274 (Amersham, Bucks) (Jun/I)

REVOX TAPE Recorder, B77 MkII reel to reel. Reasonable offers only please. Tel: 0118 926 2441 (Jun)

KEF REFERENCE Model Three, classic rosewood, boxed, three months old £1700. 2x Audiolab 8000P, boxed, six months old £450 each, all as new. Tel: 01622 844 556, mobile 0973 899 651 (Jun/I)

MUSICAL FIDELITY 3A preamp £150. Thornes TD160 Super £140. B&W DM-601 speaker £125. Ferrograph Series 6 valve tape rec, exc cond VGWO £250. Tel: 0121 326 8083 (Birmingham) (Jun/I)

NAIM 62 Pre 90 power amp old type. Excellent condition £300. Arcam Alpha 5+ CD, mint, boxed £150 (cost £470) Cambridge Audio CD4, mint, boxed £55. Speakers, Rogers LSI unplayed £45 mint. Tel: 01865 559 737 anytime (Jun)

LINN KEILIDH Speakers with Polymer composite bases, black ash finish, as new condition, with boxes and set up video £500. 01722 334 694 (Jun/I)

ATC TRI-AMPLIFIERS/Active crossovers for SCM100 type speakers, 350 watts/channel. Easy convert passives or build own monitors. Used few hours only £1500. Classic Spendor BCIII speakers, teak £350. Tel: 01924 223 226 (Wakefield) (Jun/I)

YAMAHA DSP-A3090 audio-visual AC-3 amplifier £750. Pioneer CLD2950 Videotech upgraded to AC-3/coaxial digital/illuminated drawer £450. Theta TLC de-jitterer £100. Audio Alchemy Dac-in-Box £100. Pioneer F-91 Reference digital FM/AM tuner £125. 600 assorted CDs jazz/pop/classical - list available. Tel: 01945 463 077 (Jun/I)

AUDIOQUEST LAPIS Hyperlitz silver interconnects 1m £175. Cogan Hall Intermezzo full range interconnects 1m £125. Van Den Hul Revolution speaker cables 2m bi-wire pairs £270. Tel: 01778 422 623 (Lincs) (Jun)

EAR 802 pre-amp, black/gold (phono. 2 tape, 2 line) £780 (£2K). Pioneer A400 £150 (£240). Offers considered. **WANTED:** Ekco 3-band valve radio. Tel: Mark 01222 520 022 (work) 01495 243 258 (home) (Jun/I)

AUDIO INNOVATIONS Classic 25 integrated amplifier £375. Arion Electra valve power amplifier £345. Arcam Delta 170 CD transport £175. DPA Little Bit 3 DAC £175. Harbeth HLP3 loudspeakers £250. HKTU950 tuner £75. All in mint condition. Tel: 01293 771 455 after 7pm weekdays (Surrey) (Jun/I)

LEAK DELTA 30 Amplifier £25. Sansui SR-200 turntable £25. Audio-Technica 1005 tone arm £25. All in mint condition. Tel: 01296 655 287 (Jun/I)

AUDIOLAB 8000C £325. 8000P £400. Trichord Genesis CD £350. Vgc. Tel: 01932 886 663 (Sunbury, Middx) (Jun/I)

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KLIPSCH LASCALA Speakers, 3-way horn enclosures, black ash, very loud/efficient, 100wpc (500 watts peak), incredible dynamic range, 3D-Stereo ambience, brand new condition, boxes, guarantees, cost £2600, accept £1600 ono. Tel: 01902 427 477 (Jun/I)

NAIM NAC 72, NAPI80, M/C boards, mint, boxed, with leads and instructions £975. Tel: 01803 315 391 (South Devon) (Jun)

CELESTION SL600si (new) plus SL6000 subs and controller, boxed, demo'd once, mint. One of the finest speakers ever made. SL6000 system £950. SL600s £450 or £1300 the lot. Tel: 0181 299 1575 (Jun/I)

QUAD ESL 63, black, mint, with stands £1600 ono. Meridian 203 DAC7 £180. Sony DTC 55 ES DAT recorder plus tapes £270. Tel: 01703 345 188 after 6pm (Soton) (Jun/I)

NAIM NAPI80 Power amp. Mint, only 4 months old and under guarantee, boxed £800 ono. Tel: 01905 356 923 (Jun)

APOGEE CALIPER Signature ribbon loudspeakers, anthracite, bi-wireable, treble contour control, boxed, manuals £1395 (£4000 new). Mark Levinson 23.5 power amplifier, 200wpc dual mono, mint, boxed £3250 (£7450 new) Tel: 0860 850 786 (Jun/I)

KRELL KSP-7B Pre-amp inc phono stage £895. Bryston 4B-NRB power amp 300 wpc £895. Audiolab 8000Q pre-amp £745. All boxed as new. Tel: 01234 713 199 (Beds, Bucks) (Jun/I)

MARTIN LOGAN SL3 (light oak), mint, awesome, boxed. Purchased new on 15.08.97, bargain £2600 (£3500) WANTED: Sonus Faber Extremas II. Tel: Mike 01902 786 818 (Jun/I)

LINN KARIK, Kairn Pro, 2 x LK100, all boxed, excellent condition, can demonstrate £2800 ovno. May split. Tel: 01705 828 236 after 6pm (Jun)

ROKSAN DPI CD transport, recently serviced by Roksan. Roksan Attesa DAC and DS5 PSU. All in excellent condition with boxes, instructions, remote and XLO digital interconnect £1600. Tel: Alan 01277 214 707 (Jun/I)

AUDIOLAB 8000 CDM/DAC £1500. 8000S £500. 8000P £500. Project 2 turntable £200. All items boxed with instructions. 18 months transferable warranty. Leave message on 0410 965 664 (North Yorkshire area) (Jun/I)

WANTED: PAIR of Tandberg TL 5020 speakers. Teak preferred. Tel: 0113 248 3656 (Jun/I)

LINN LP12, walnut, Ittok arm, Assak cartridge. All bought new by owner, little used, absolutely perfect £625. Tel: 01342 321 918 evenings (Sussex) (Jun/I)

TRICHORD GENESIS CD Player, boxed, as new condition £325. Meridian 203 DAC, good condition £200. WANTED: Marantz CD94 CD player and Marantz CDR94 DAC. Cash waiting, will collect. Tel: 01780 764 149 (Jun/I)

IMPULSE H2 speakers, very late pair, beautifully burred light oak finish with piano black rear panel, perfect, complete with original boxes £1350 ono. Tel: 01787 882 038 day or 01787 371 539 evenings. (Jun/I)

CYRUS DAD7 for sale. Immaculate condition. Selling due to upgrade. £400 ono. Tel: 01487 824 418 evenings (Jun/I)

SUMO ATHENA Class A pre-amp with MM & MC inputs £425. Sumo Andromeda power amp 200w/channel £850. Original boxes and instructions. Together for £1200. Tel: 01980 655 467 or Email: josharp@mcmail.com (Salisbury) (Jun/I)

AUDIOLAB 8000 DAC (1995) £350 ono. Tel: 01403 241 304 evenings & weekends (Horsham) (Jun/I)

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The simplest & most cost effective way to upgrade your existing system



You need at least 2 Deflex panels for a pair of small bookshelf speakers, 4 panels for a pair of Tannoy 6's, and at least 6 panels for larger cabinets

Once you have gained access to the inside of the cabinet, remove foam and/or wool damping from the inside of the speaker (if fitted)

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"...a marked improvement was obvious from the first few bars of REM's Automatic for the people album..."
Hi-Fi News & Record Review - March 1994

"...Deflex panels seemed to give greater tightness and control, improved internal clarity, and pitch definition - all without deadening the sound in any way..."
Hi-Fi News & Record Review - April 1994

"...But one thing for sure - the Deflex panels are no gimmick. They work..."
Hi-Fi News & Record Review - May 1994

"...the result was sharper imaging, wider dynamics and a more natural sound..."
Hi-Fi News & Record Review - June 1994

CHOICE VERDICT

Sound Quality

Value for money

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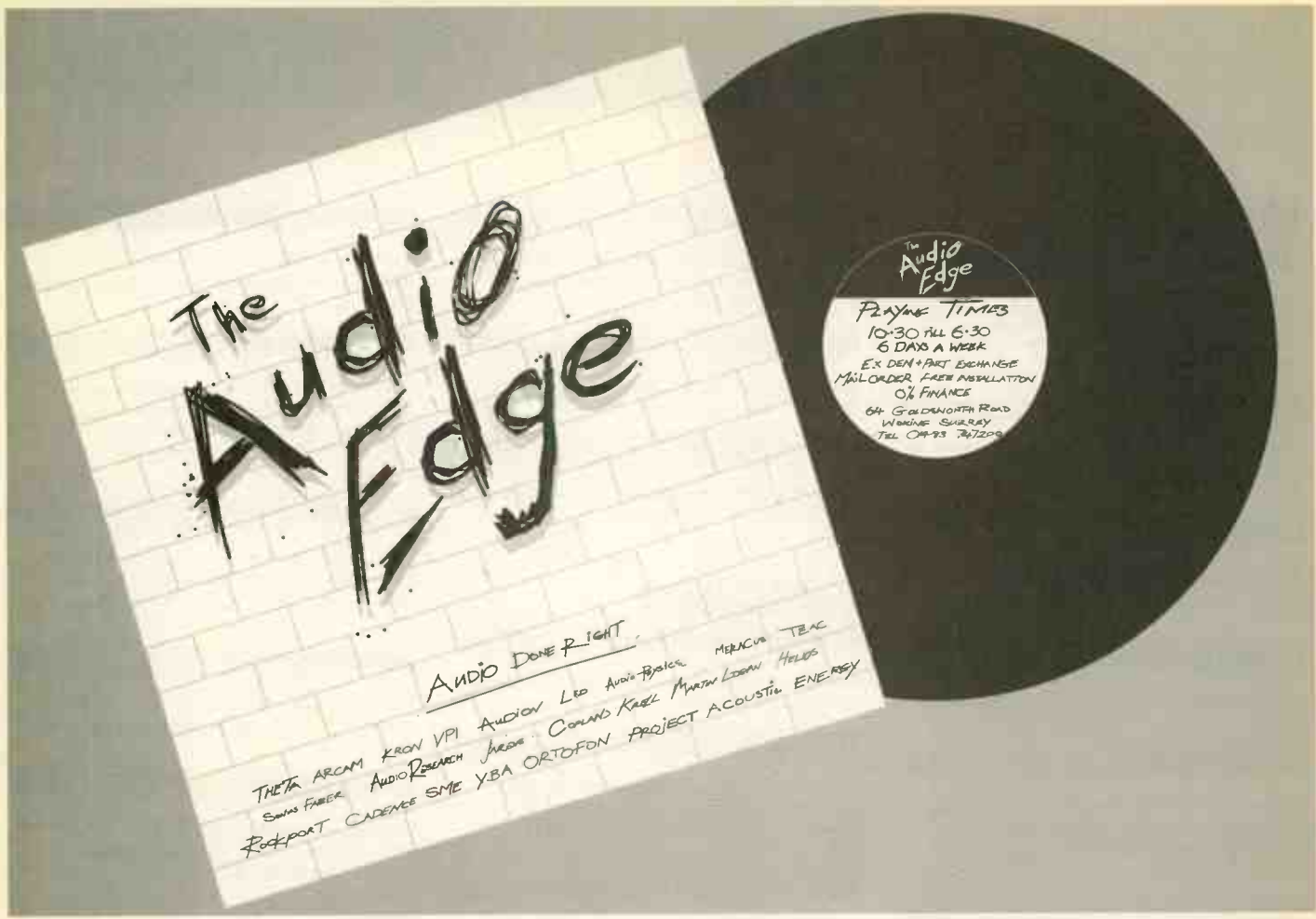
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New And Forthcoming Releases

Barry Adamson	As Above So Below 1/6	£10.50
Brian May	Another World - Pic Disc 1/6	£TBC
Carleen Anderson	Blessed Burden	£11.90
Embrace	Good Will Out 1/6	£TBC
Jeff Buckley	Sketches 'My Sweetheart' 11/5	£TBC
Jimi Hendrix	BBC Sessions - 3LP 1/6	£TBC
Massive Attack	Mezzanine	£13.90
Medeski/Martin Wood	Selections from 'Shackman'	£5.00
Nick Cave/Bad Seeds	Best Of 11/5	£11.90
Page/Plant	Walking Into Clarksdale	£15.90
Sean Lennon	Into The Sun 18/5	£12.50
Simply Red	Blue 18/5	£TBC
Sonic Youth	Thousand Leaves 11/5	£TBC
Sunhouse	Crazy On The Weekend 18/5	£TBC
Tori Amos	From The Choirgirl Hotel	£11.90
Various (intense present)	Logical Progression 3 11/5	£TBC
Zombies	Odyssey & Oracle - Reissue	£9.90

Current And Recent Releases

Adverts	Wonders Don't Care	£11.90
Bernard Butler	People Move On	£12.90
Country Joe/Fish	Life And Times Of	£12.90
Culture	Two Sevens Clash	£9.90
Eric Clapton	Pilgrim	£13.90
Gang Starr	Moment Of Truth	£16.50
George Martin/Various	In My Life	£9.90
Madonna	Immaculate Collection	£8.90
Mandroid	Electro Freaks Rehab Clinic	£8.90
Miles Davis	Pantalassa	£13.90
Motorhead	Snake Bite Love	£12.90
Pulp	This Is Hardcore	£12.90
Stereolab	Mars Audioc/Translent each	£9.50
Sugar Ray	Floored	£9.90
Terry Callier	New Folk Sound Of	£12.90
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Tortoise	TNT	£10.90

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*VALVE AMPS *TUNERS *RECORDS*
 *SPEAKERS *COMPONENTS *BOOKS*
 *CASSETTE DECKS *TAPE RECORDERS*

World favourites guide

TUNERS

LEAK TROUGHLINE second-hand

Our favourite way of listening to the wireless. A deliciously mellifluous sound will have you junking your transistor radio in seconds.

NAD 412 £190

The 412 is remarkably musical and natural sounding. Rich sound and full bass are a rarity.

SONY ST-SA3ES £250

Beguiling RDS tuner for sonically discerning button lovers. Good ergonomics and sensitive too.

MISSION CYRUS FM7 £300

Clear and lucid sound puts it up with the best regardless of price. Superb build too.

ROTEL RT990BX £500

High quality Michi-based tuner with a sophisticated, forward sound with great imaging and soundstage. Sensible facilities and remote control.

NAIM NAT03 £500

The NAT03's warm, atmospheric sound is further proof of Naim's proficiency with tuners.

FANFARE FT-1 £1350

In its native US the FT-1 is no mere tuner but a 'broadcast monitor' no less, a task at which it acquires itself well, with a clear and powerful sound.

NAIM NAT01 £1380

This is the best solid-state tuner available bar none. For better radio, go and live in the studio.

CASSETTE DECKS

AIWA AD-S750 £150

Sonically a very decent machine. For the price there's nothing better. Comes fitted with Dolby B, C and S.

KENWOOD KX-3080 £160

A simple deck, but high quality head and transport give an unusually high level of performance at this price. Not to be missed.

YAMAHA KX-580SE £250

The 'Special Edition' tag is more than a marketing gimmick. Sound is solid and clear with Dolby S.

AIWA AD-S950 £300

A stable transport, superb head and Dolby S make the AD-S950 an excellent all rounder.

PIONEER CT-S740S £430

A great piece of engineering from Pioneer, with first rate sound on playback and recording.

NAKAMICHI DR2 £600

Where serious cassette decks start. The DR2 pushes recordings to the limit, remaining unflustered at all times.

NAKAMICHI DR1 £850

Better still than the DR2, with manual head azimuth adjustment to boot.

NAKAMICHI CR7 £1500

Kills every other cassette deck and stamps on their graves.

LOUDSPEAKERS

TANNOY MERCURY m2 £140

A true audiophile bargain which embarrasses many more expensive boxes.

KEF Q15 £199

These stand mounters offer impressive bass and excellent clarity but need a powerful amplifier to perform at their considerable best.

MISSION 732 £200

Characteristically fast, punchy Mission sound. Very well balanced tonally.

B&W DM 602 £300

Deep and strong bass, pure, projected and uncoloured midrange. Treble quality a little metallic, but imaging precise. A lively, enjoyable sound.

REL Q-BASS £350

Few subwoofers match the Q-Bass at the price. The tuning controls can be a bit of a fiddle, but once set up the rest is pleasure.

CASTLE EDEN £450

Impressively vice-free 'speakers that offer great transparency and involvement. Unbeatable at the price.

EPOS ES12 £495

Strong, punchy bass is allied to detailed and articulate midrange and treble. Above all, these 'speakers are thoroughly musical.

REL STRATA £500

The Strata subwoofer is not a toy. It offers superb, true hi-fi bass depth and power, and opens up sound stage depth in particular.

HARBETH HL-P3ES £799

A fine example of good loudspeaker engineering. The top of the mini-monitor league.

HARBETH HL-K6 £975

Clean, musical and classy - Harbeth have done themselves proud again.

KEF REFERENCE SERIES ONE £995

The KEFs combine pin-point imagery and detail with a smooth and polite balance. Good, agile bass too.

JAMO CONCERT 8 £1500

With their inch-thick cabinets and fabulous drive units, the Concert 8s are the most transparent stand mounters around. They don't suffer poor sources gladly though.

EPOS ES25 £1505

Epos' best. Combines near-uncoloured tonality with characteristic fireworks in the rhythm department. Superb by any other name.

SPENDOR SP7/1 £1970

This big Spendor floorstander is very appealing thanks to its open, lucid sound and valve-friendly load.

TANNOY AMS8 £2700

Bold sounding professional active monitor with solid bass, clearly focused midrange and delicious treble. Built-in amplification.

QUAD ESL 63 £2860

A reference against which all other loudspeakers are judged, the '63s have superb imaging qualities and genuine transparency. Earlier ESL model is a fine second-hand buy.

KEF REFERENCE SERIES FOUR £3099

Superb bass and near-electrostatic sound staging make these involving loudspeakers a reference to others. Need a strong amplifier though.

JBL S2600 £3500

Smooth, detailed and spacious with great dynamics and fine imaging. Capable of producing a superb performance when used in a big room.

TANNOY WESTMINSTER ROYAL £10,000

An incredibly dynamic, detailed full-range horn design with a rich sound. Its high sensitivity predisposes it to valve amplification.

MINI DISCS

SONY MDS-JE500 £300

An impressive overall sound quality and unmatched convenience and editing facilities make this budget MiniDisc player an excellent buy.

KENWOOD DM-7090 £500

Both replay and recording quality are superb through this Kenwood. Nakamichi owners should start getting worried - at last there's competition.

World favourites guide

DNM MICA £185

Bettors Goldring's 1042 and costs only £135 on trade-in. An assured, detailed and transparent MM.

ORTOFON SUPREMES £225-£450

The MC10, MC20 and MC30 Supremes all offer superb sound and value for money, with a rich, smooth and musical performance.

ORTOFON MC2000 £650

We came across this one in an SME IV on a Garrard 401; it duly gave one of the best results we've ever heard.

ORTOFON ROHMANN £1000

In a way it's MC2000 meets MC7500 with the tonal strengths and dynamo sound Ortofon put into their moving-coil cartridges.

LYRA LYDIAN £649

A truly musical, sophisticated device that makes most other MCs sound frigid.

VAN DEN HUL MC-10 £840

Fluid bass, finely etched treble and highly tuneful in between. The MC-10 is honey, pure and simple.

ORTOFON MC7500 £2000

Conclusive proof that there's hope for humankind. CD lovers would die if they heard it.

INTEGRATED AMPLIFIERS

MISSION CYRUS I/II S/H

Both versions give a detailed, articulate and dynamic sound but can sound lean.

DENON PMA-250SE £160

It might not have bags of grunt but the Denon can sound very natural and open.

ROTEL RA-970BX £250

With its smooth and powerful sound, the Rotel sings a seductive song with all types of music.

PIONEER A-300R PRECISION £299

This is the cooking A-300 tweaked with special components and it shows. Rhythm and detail are first-class and the phono stage isn't far behind.

AUDIO ANALOGUE PUCCINI SE £595

This superbly made Italian integrated has a lucidity and control which leave the competition at up to £1000 standing. Sound stage depth is unequalled.

SUGDEN A21a £640

Class A transistor amp. Rich, crisp, deep, tight sound and it images well too. Wonderful.

ROKSAN CASPIAN £695

Smooth, warm integrated with remote control that works happily into most 'speakers.

SONETEER ALABASTER £995

Builds on the strengths of the Campion with ample control, colour and drive.

UNISON SIMPLY 2 £995

This single-ended valve amplifier is smooth, sweet and open. An extremely musical performer.

UNISON SIMPLY 4 £1495

Sonically similar to the Simply 2, but with more power and control.

McINTOSH MA6800 £3735

The MA6800 not so much plays music as takes control of it, with effortless bass drive and a three-dimensional sound stage.

PHONO STAGES

QED DISCSAVER £35

A true bargain that offers a cohesive, musical sound but avoid using it in thin sounding systems.

ROTEL RQ-970BX £130

Superb value entry-level phono stage with audiophile quality components and clear sound.

LFD MISTRAL PHONO STAGE £300

The Mistral has a warmth and involvement that make many more expensive phono stages sound overpriced.

MICHELL ISO/HERA £530

Open, spacious and 3-D sound. Not for fans of warmth though.

AUDIO INNOVATIONS P2 £749

Fantastic bass and super insight make this one of the best phono stages around. One for vinyl lovers.

ROKSAN ARTAXERXES X £950

With the Atessa PSU the Artaxerxes X MM/MC stage still shines. Its fortes are great stage depth, neutrality and tonal colour. Musical too.

PRE-AMPLIFIERS

AUDIOLAB 8000C £520

Versatile with superb phono input. Can sound sterile, but latest version is much improved.

AUDIOLAB 8000Q £995

Excellent line-level only pre-amp, greatly improves on 8000C with a more fluid, musical sound and greater grip. Remote control.

XTC PRE-1 £1000

Almost valve-like in its smoothness, the line-level Pre-1 is a warm and seductively clear.

CHORD CPA1800 £1800

Clarity, insight and control are second to none - an addictive mixture.

MARANTZ MODEL 7 PRE-AMP £3500

A '60s reissue, the Marantz pre-amp still sounds superb. Has a great phono stage.

POWER AMPLIFIERS

QUAD II second-hand

Classic valve monoblock with many thousands still in use. Archetypal warm, smooth valve sound, although not the last word in detail or dynamics.

LEAK STEREO 20 second-hand

The Stereo 20 can sound impressively up-to-date, although power and detail are ultimately limited.

ARCAM ALPHA 9 £400

With 70watts on tap, the 9P will drive most loudspeakers with a spacious and detailed sound. Good bass drive too.

MISSION CYRUS POWER £450

This power amplifier is a real honey. Rich and smooth, but with a firm grip; a fine blend of properties.

SUGDEN AU41P £530

Extremely competitive at the price with 100W of unusually smooth, full-bodied sound.

NAIM NAP180 £900

Partnered with a NAC82, this has classic Naim control, making for a superbly rhythmic presentation. A touch lean for some tastes.

MICHELL ALECTO STEREO £1300

A refined transistor amplifier with valve-like transparency and a full, warm, easy-going sound. The £1800 Alelecto monoblocks have rare lucidity and three dimensional realism.

CHORD SPM 400 £1400

There's a sense of effortless power to the Chord that gives music scale and presence.

XTC POW-1 £2000

Like the SPM 400 but loads more power on tap. Will drive just about anything.

CHORD SPM 1200 £2995

As smooth and composed as the Pre-1, the POW-1 has bags of power and refinement.

MARANTZ MODEL 9 £8000

Authentic reproduction monoblocs still more than cut the sonic mustard. The sound combines grunt with great tonal colour and expressiveness.

World favourites guide

COMPACT DISC PLAYERS

QUAD 67 second-hand

One of Quad's best products for a long time, the 67 is warmer and smoother than most, yet is highly musical and revealing.

KENWOOD DP-3080/II £180

Has great clarity and presence for the price. Not quite as naturally expressive as the CD4SE though.

CAMBRIDGE CD4SE £200

A touch soft in the treble but outstanding in every other aspect.

ARCAM ALPHA 7 £320

This British built player is extremely good value. Upfront, punchy nature suits Techno and Rock.

MARANTZ CD-63MKII KI-S £400

Similar to the CD-63SE but more powerful bass and an all-round smoother sound.

PHILIPS CDR 870 RECORDER £500

Replay quality is on a par with £250 machines but analogue and digital recordings on CD-R and CD-RW are outstanding.

ROKSAN CASPIAN £895

The Caspian has a smooth, even sound with some of the clearest treble in the business. Very engaging, dynamic character.

MERIDIAN 506 20-BIT £1100

Very detailed and revealing player. More cerebral than visceral though.

DENON DCD-S10 £1300

A warm, atmospheric and smooth performer that never fails to involve.

MARANTZ CD-17 KI-S £1300

The Marantz excels in all areas. Without doubt this is one of the most involving CD players on the planet. Build quality is also exemplary.

PINK TRIANGLE LITAURAL £2100

Possesses the same lush tonal colour as the Da Capo but is superior in every other way.

MCINTOSH CDM7009 £2635

A thoroughly inspiring machine. One of the most musical CD players around; sweet, open and detailed.

COMPACT DISC TRANSPORTS

TEAC VDRS-TI £550

Not as substantially built as its chunky looks suggest, the TI is nevertheless a good entry-level transport with a warm, expansive sound.

AUDIOLAB 8000CDM £1300

Beautifully built and finished, the CDM is packed with sensible features and performs reliably, day-in day-out.

TEAC P-30 £2500

Cheap it isn't, but then it sounds like a million digital dollars. Nothing short of superb.

CD CONVERTORS

MUSICAL FIDELITY X-DAC £300

A bargain for normal CDs and even better with HDCDs.

ASSEMBLAGE DAC-2 £400 (KIT)

Takes little building to produce a clean, clear sound. HDCD filter included.

MARSTON SILHOUETTE £795

With Crystal Semiconductors' 18-bit DAC the Marston produces clean-cut images and a transparent sound stage. Very rhythmic too.

PINK TRIANGLE DA CAPO £1450+

Offers a choice of filter modules, all up there with the best. The Da Capo is impressive in many respects, but is long in the tooth now.

DPA 1024 £6000

Proof positive that today's CDs needn't sound CD-like! Uses an in-house discrete convertor, and DPA haven't skimped on the build either!

TURNTABLES

GARRARD 401 second-hand

In a decent plinth with an arm of SME 309 calibre, the 401 has a highly authoritative overall sound with the most solid, expressive bass in the business. Very musical, but treble isn't up to modern standards.

THORENS TDI24 second-hand

One of Thorens' best-ever turntables. Needs a modern plinth to give its best. Duly installed, it's good enough to face off the Garrard 401, swapping some of its bass power for a more delicate, incisive treble.

ORIGIN LIVE STANDARD £145 (KIT)

Fine in standard form with AC motor, frighteningly good with a DC motor and battery PSU.

SYSTEMDEK IIX900/RB250 £330

A fine all rounder and easy to upgrade too. Has more depth and breadth than Rega Planar 3.

PINK TRIANGLE TARANTELLA £575

Not only does the Tarantella have more style than a catwalk full of models, it also combines PT's usual clarity with real authority. The biz.

VPI HW 19 JUNIOR/RB300 £599

With its control and grip on music the Junior never fails to engage. Set-up is a piece of cake and there's a whole range of upgrades on offer too.

MICHELL GYRODEC £800

Stunning looks, build and fine sound. Standard PSU has detailed, architectural, if undynamic sound. With QC PSU, scale and insight kill the competition.

PRO-JECT 6.1SA £999

The Pro-ject places the listener in the best seat in the control room. Outrageous dynamics and a punchy, seriously deep bass. Comes with Sumiko arm and Ortofon MC30 Supreme.

ROKSAN XERXES X £1295

DSU or XPS 3.5 power supply £150/170 extra. Excellent pitch stability from a new Swiss motor and outboard power supply. Very tight bass, fine dynamics and revealing clarity.

MICHELL ORBE £1950

The Darth Vader of analogue, the Orbe builds on the strengths of the Gyrodec. An ultra-tuneful, expansive sound.

SME MODEL 20 £2495

Including the excellent SME V tonearm, the Model 20 is possibly the last great turntable, unless you've got £11,000 for the Model 30, that is.

TONE-ARMS

LINN ITTOK S/H

This early heavyweight arm benefits from fine engineering. Good dynamics and grip.

REGA RB300 £130

Supremely capable at the price, but not quite humankind's salvation as has been suggested. Detailed, tight, rhythmic sound but tonally rather grey and cold-sonding.

SME 3009SII £375

This Paleolithic device doesn't bother with frequency extremes or detail, but its legendary serviceability makes it a cult in Japan. Oh death, where is thy sting?

SME309 £570

A down-market version of the IV and V with aluminium armtube and detachable headshell. Tight, neutral sound with good tonality, but lacks the IV's pace and precision.

SME V £1235

A masterpiece of precision engineering with a cohesive, ultra-transparent sound.

CARTRIDGES

ORTOFON VMS-2E £10

Warm, full-bodied, punchy and fast. Not to be sniffed at for a tenner. Can be upgraded with a better stylus at a later date.

GOLDRING 1012GX £60

An accomplished MM with a solid bass, slightly forward midband and clean transients. £20 buys the faster, more dynamic 1022GX.

GAMMA ACOUSTICS

"This amplifier possessed a seductive vitality, a marvellous sense of communication with the heart of the music. Vocals were most communicative, subtle dynamic contrasts were portrayed very well, and the music bounced along with a fine sense of rhythm. This amplifier was seriously transparent, showing great clarity, fine stereo depth and very fine presentation of space and ambience in the sound stage."
"It sounded quick, direct, uncomplicated, with an ability to resolve subtle textures in instrumental scoring. Taken overall, the sound quality score (on my usual subjective listening test scale) was an impressive 23 points.

Martin Colloms

HI FI NEWS / RR March 97

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

Jon Marx

HiFi World July 1996

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

WHAT HI*FI? says

sound	★★★★★
facilities	★★★★★
build	★★★★★
verdict	★★★★★

Dan Houston

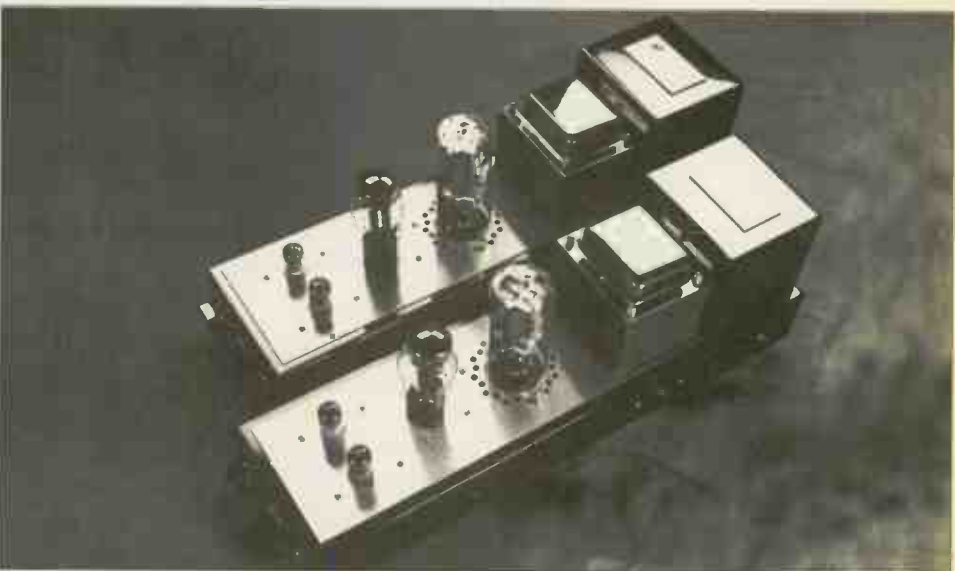
WHAT HI*FI May 1997

Tel: 01753 526939

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RHYTHM 211/VT4C LINE INTEGRATED £2499



NEW AEON MONO BLOCKS £4999



**EPOCH REFERENCE 5
LOUDSPEAKERS
£2999**

CLEARANCE LIST

	RRP	XD	S/H
Audionote SPX reference speaker	£7000		£2800
cable 2.5m by wire set (10m)			
Mana sounds table	£300		£160
Torlyte stand "one of the best ever made"			£160
EPOCH Reference V black ex demo as new	£2999		£1650
Lumley Stereo 40 Power Amp S/H Mint	£1000		£380
Trichord Pulsar DAC and Transport Ex-demo as new (Mint)	£2119		£1600
Genesis	£569		£479
GEMINI line integrated S. Ended BARGAIN Last one!	£699		£350
RHYTHM 211/VT4C phono Ex-Demo Marked	£2499		£999
RHYTHM LINE Ex review/as new	£2499		£1499
AEON MK1 MONOBLOCKS 20 Watt S.E. Si construction Ex-review new marked - to clear	£4999		£2499
Epoch loudspeakers Ex-demo	£1499		£750

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ARISTOCRACY



David Price looks at a one-time king of turntables, Ariston's RD11.

Ariston was once one of hi-fi's most illustrious brands. The proud name on one of Scotland's finest turntables, it was revered by many a well-heeled Seventies audiophile. Nowadays, though, the brand is a shadow of its former self, the name branded on inexpensive, mass-market DJ turntables.

The course of the Ariston story depends on who tells it - to this day it remains clouded by controversy. The gist is that, back in the early Seventies, Hamish Robertson approached a fresh-faced Ivor Tiefenbrun with a business idea. Ivor's dad owned an engineering facility in Glasgow, which Hamish wanted to manufacture his Ariston turntable. Although the deal came to nothing, soon after Ivor formed Linn Products and launched the LP12, a high-end deck in many ways similar to the Ariston. Hamish and Ivor duly fell out, one accusing the other of plagiarism. This allegation is open to contention, since, despite the decks' obvious similarities, both owed a great debt to Thorens' TD150, not to mention the original AR turntable. In truth, until the advent of the Oracle and Michell GyroDec (which appeared within weeks of each other in 1981), all belt-drive decks were pretty similarly fashioned.

The RD11 was a heavily-built, suspended sub-chassis design with a massive two-section die-cast platter weighing 5.5kg. This was driven via a

square-section neoprene belt by a 24-pole AC synchronous motor - speed change was effected by moving the belt on the stepped pulley. The steel sub-chassis was mounted on coil springs to decouple it from the solid, real-wood plinth, and a decent acrylic lid completed the package.

True enough, this will all be familiar to LP12 owners, even down to the heavy rubber mat which early Sondeks also featured. The only obvious visual differences were the smaller, circular armboard the Ariston used, the position of the On/Off switch (which was on the front right of the deck) and the very Seventies pin-stripes around the inside of the plinth top. Measured specs were similar to pre-Valhalla Linns as well, contemporary reviews putting rumble at -73dB and wow and flutter around 0.06%WRMS - very good figures for the day.

The RD11's subjective sound quality was excellent in a 1970s sort of way, clean and open with powerful, extended bass and crisp highs. By modern standards imaging is poor, the midband coloured and the bass rather loose, but it still makes a pleasingly euphonic sound. Modern super-decks are often too analytical for their own good, a criticism you couldn't level at the Ariston which sounds big, fat and warm regardless of what's actually on the record!

SME's Series III tone-arm was a favourite partner for the RD11 and the

two worked nicely together. Other popular marriages were with Grace's G707, ADC's low-mass LMF arms, Rega's Acos-derived R200 and SME's ubiquitous 3009S2. These days the obvious choice is Rega's RB300, although SME's 309 and Series IV are both said to work reasonably well.

So what possible value could this old deck have in 1998? Well, the great thing about RD11s is that they're heavily underpriced second-hand, making for a fantastic sound-per-pound ratio. Although the Ariston's performance isn't a million miles behind early Sondeks, the price is! Pay £100 for a good early RD11 or £150 for a later Superior and you'll have a cracking high-end deck for sub-Rega money. Spares aren't plentiful but Manticore (tel: 01767 318437) does a good job of keeping these decks spinning, supplying armboards, belts and motors at very reasonable prices.

Drawbacks? Aristons are pigs to set up - they need hours of fiddling with P-clips, suspension spring locknuts and belt alignment adjusters to give of their best. Still, some would say that's half the fun! Sadly, the Ariston story doesn't have a happy ending. The company went down-market in the early Eighties, making some pretty good budget tackle like the RD40, 80 and Icon. But the advent of CD finished Ariston as a hi-fi company, and, despite some last-ditch attempts at diversifying into electronics, it was game over ●

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AudioNote: AN TT1 / AN TT2 / AN TT3
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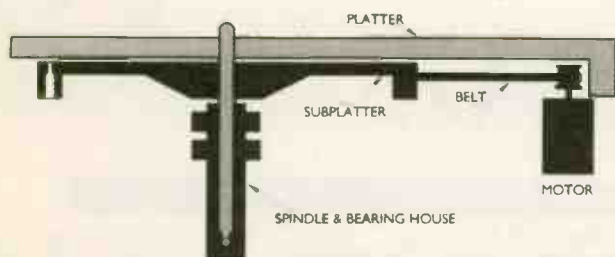
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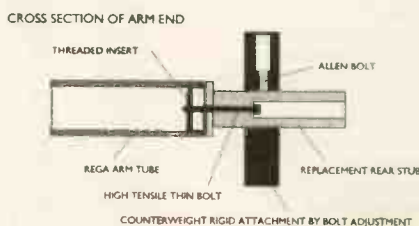


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Electrocompaniet AW100 DMB dual mono power amp	£POA	N
Electrocompaniet EC4.6 line level pre-amp, remote cntrl	£POA	N
Grado SR325 headphones	£199.00	N
Heybrook TT2/Linn Basik LVX	£150.00	U
Kinshaw Overture DAC	£199.00	N
Kinshaw Perception pre-amp	£350.00	U
Linn Kairn pre-amp	£700.00	U
Micromega Minium amp	£200.00	X
Micromega Minium speakers, black	£200.00	X
Pioneer A-400 amplifier	£165.00	U
QED Vector Reference pre-amp	£269.00	N
QED Digit Plus DAC	£150.00	N
Roland Model 5 Transfiguration power amp	£2350.00	U
Sanyo Plus N55 Noise reduction system	£300.00	U
SME 20/2 precision turntable	£POA	N
SME 20/2A as above with Series V arm	£POA	N
SME Series V pick-up arm	£POA	N
SME 3009 ser III carrying arm model CA1	£20.00	U
TDL Studio 1 loudspeakers, walnut	£450.00	U
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Spica Angelus Cost £1600 Sell for	£ 400	Rogers LS1 speakers Mint Boxed	£ 75

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Garrard

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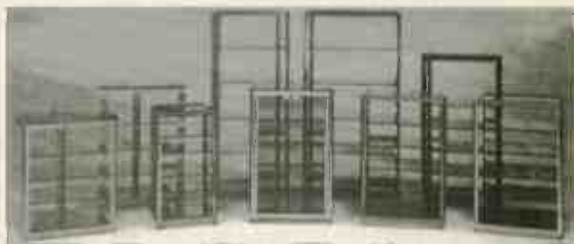
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1)INNER SOUND EROS: FIRST SEEN AT RAMADA LAST SEPTEMBER IN PROTOTYPE FORM AND FINALLY LAUNCHED AT THE CES, LAS VEGAS IN JANUARY, THE EROS IS OUTWARDLY SIMILAR TO MARTIN LOGAN ELECTROSTATIC HYBRIDS, BUT THE SIMILARITY ENDS THERE. THE EROS USES AN ACTIVE CROSSOVER WHICH IS HOUSED WITH A 200 WATT/CH AMPLIFIER TO DRIVE A TRANSMISSION LINE BASS UNIT (10 INCH). A PRE/POWER AMPLIFIER IS THEREFORE REQUIRED TO CONTROL THE SYSTEM AND DRIVE THE ELECTROSTATIC UNIT. GREAT CARE HAS BEEN TAKEN IN INTEGRATING THE BASS TO THE FAST ELECTROSTATIC BY USING A LIGHT CONE WITH TRANSMISSION LINE LOADING. VERY TRANSPARENT AND OPEN, AND LOVES VALVE AMPS. AT £4000 AN INTERESTING NEW ADDITION.

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CARTRIDGE

DNM RECA

The Reson conspicuously does not suffer midrange droop. It is flat across the midrange and then lifts at high frequencies, reaching a peak of +3dB at 10kHz, above which output falls away. Since MMs traditionally have falling upper-midrange output the Reson will sound less warm but more detailed.

This response is on outer grooves where an LP's mechanical wavelength is longest and high-frequency transduction most efficient. Toward inner grooves the peak flattens to +1dB or so, but it does not disappear. This means the stylus has a well-profiled tip able to read short wavelengths.

Tracking ability was good at low frequencies and in the midrange

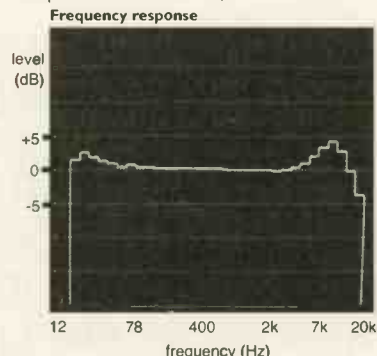
where acceleration becomes important, requiring low tip mass. The Reson will track loud bass sounds and strong vocals with confidence.

Distortion was low on lateral information, but high on vertical components due to a VTA of 27degrees. Measuring 4% and comprising second harmonic though, the problem isn't especially consequential.

The Reson measured well. It is a good, modern design likely to get the best from LP. NK

Tracking force 1.8gms
 Weight 6gms
 Vertical tracking angle 27degrees
 Frequency response 20Hz-

20kHz
 Channel separation 24dB
 Tracking ability (300Hz)
 lateral 63µm
 vertical 45µm
 lateral (1kHz) 20cms/sec.
 Distortion (45µm)
 lateral 0.8%
 vertical 6%
 Output (5cms/sec rms) 7mV



AMPLIFIERS

MUSICAL FIDELITY A1001

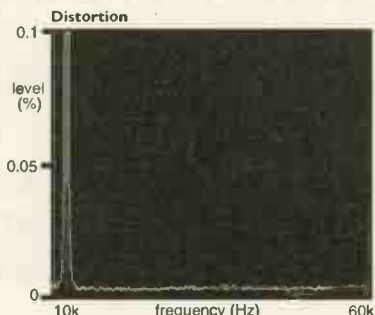
The A1001 has some strong measured features. It is hugely powerful, delivering no less than 250watts into 8ohms and 400watts into 4ohms. This amplifier will drive just about any loudspeaker to any volume level in any normal room.

The other interesting feature is an almost complete lack of distortion, at all output levels and frequencies, except under the most arduous test of delivering full power at 10kHz. But then the A1001 produced just 0.015% second harmonic distortion

only, which in magnitude and nature is not enough to have any influence upon sound quality.

In all other areas the Musical Fidelity measured well. This is a massively powerful, low-distortion amplifier likely to give excellent results. NK

Power 250watts
 CD/tuner/aux.
 Frequency response 7Hz-40kHz
 Separation 78dB



Noise -99dB
 Distortion 0.004%
 Sensitivity 280mV
 DC offset 1.7mV/14mV

HOLFI AUDIS

By current standards the Holfi Audis produces a lot of distortion, hitting 1.4% at 10kHz, full output (-1dB). It displayed a classic solid-state extended harmonic structure too, as our analysis shows, where fifth harmonic is particularly strong. In my experience this sort of distortion results in audible harshness. It is of a very different and less benign nature than many other distortions, within valve amps and loudspeakers, for example.

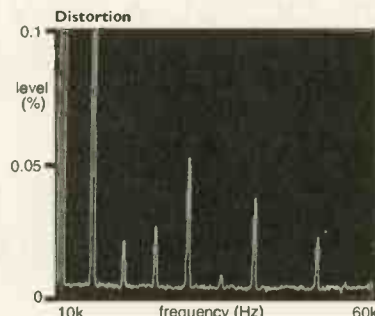
Distortion apart, the Holfi measured well enough, with good

bandwidth, low DC offset and low noise.

There was useful power. Output measured 50watts into 8ohms and 90watts into 4ohms.

An amplifier like this will possess a distinctive sound. I'd strongly recommend a good listening session first. NK

Power 50watts
 CD/tuner/aux.
 Frequency response 4Hz-50kHz
 Separation 66dB



Noise -90dB
 Distortion 0.3%
 Sensitivity 400mV
 DC offset 6mV/15mV

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JAMO CONCERT 8 LOUDSPEAKERS - not to be under-rated

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EXPOSURE CD PLAYER - have you read the Stereophile review ???

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just wait till you hear it

MUSICAL FIDELITY 1001 AMPLIFIER - a really excellent new amplifier - try it!

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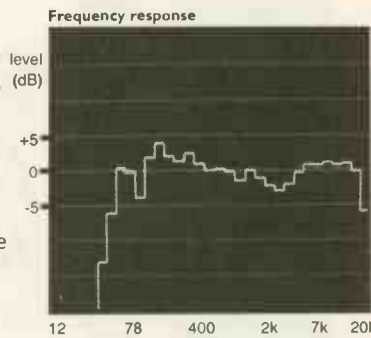


hi-fi for grown-ups

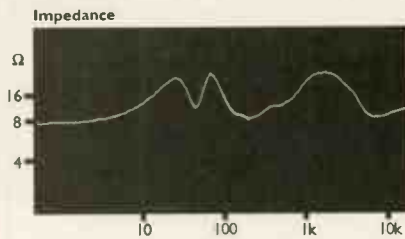
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SPENDOR FL8

The Spendor has a high impedance that stays above 8Ω at most frequencies. The port is tuned on the centre of the mid/bass driver's resonant peak at about 90Hz. A 3dB drop around the crossover point of 2.5kHz, combined with slight accentuation of upper bass, may give this 'speaker a warm and forgiving sound. A sensitivity of 85dB is disappointing for a floor stander,



where we would normally expect at least 87dB for 2.84V at 1 metre. But with their impedance averaging out at 11.6Ω, then they should present



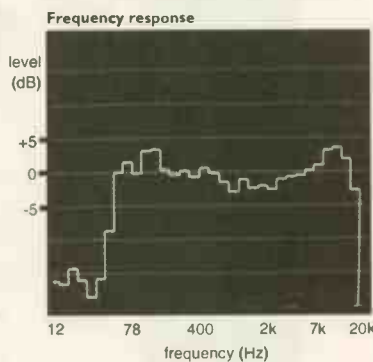
AUDIOVECTOR M2

The M2 has a rather prominent HF response and slight rise in the upper bass. The subjective impact will very much depend on the refinement of the tweeter. Firing the 'speakers directly forward rather than toe-in may be of benefit.

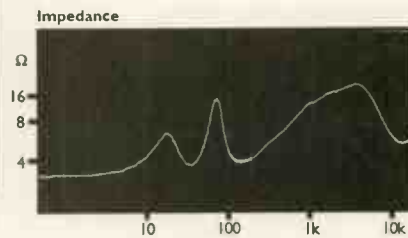
The impedance curve shows a low overall impedance which drops to 3Ω below 10Hz. A strong dip from the reflex port creates a sharp, highly-reactive peak around 70Hz, likely to upset some amplifiers. The overall impedance measures a low

5.2Ω, the average being raised by a large hump starting around 500Hz.

Measured sensitivity was good at



89dB, allowing the M2 to go loud with low-power amplifiers, assuming that a partnering amplifier is happy with sub-4Ω loads at low frequencies. AH

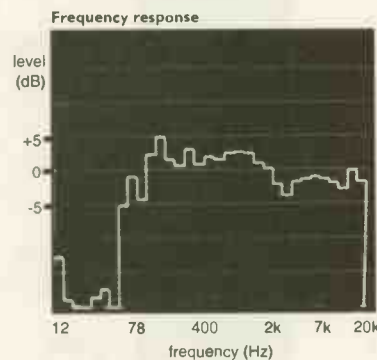


HEYBROOK HEYLETTE

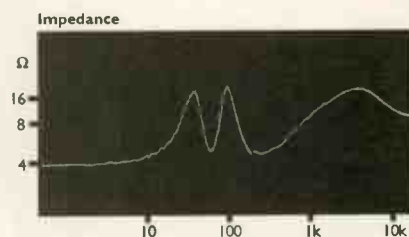
Under test with pink noise the Heylette sounded warm and smooth and its response shows why - tweeter output is around -3dB down on the mid/bass unit. Bass performance looks lively, due to the peaking visible around 160Hz. The port kicks in at 50Hz showing the 'speaker should get down to low frequencies quite well.

The impedance curve was smooth across the midband and possesses the usual twin peaks of

reflex loading. The Heylette should be a reasonable load as a result. Sensitivity was satisfactory at 86dB



for one nominal watt input, meaning amplifiers of 40watts-60watts should be satisfactory. The Heylette has no weak spots and should provide a warm sound with good bass. NK

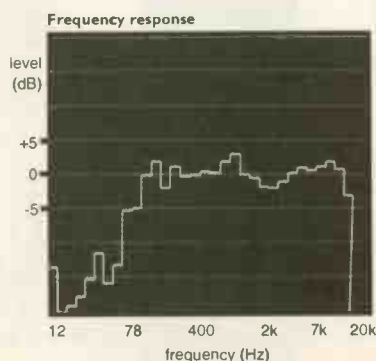


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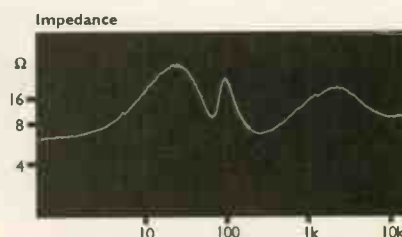
With an impedance curve that remains predominantly on the high side of 8Ω, measuring an average of 11.4Ω, these 'speakers will not draw much current from amplifiers.

A slight peak in the midrange at 1kHz will add brightness, but also enhance image projection. A subsequent dip at the crossover point around 2.5kHz mars an otherwise smooth frequency response from 125Hz to 12.5kHz. The tweeter has rising energy and will sound bright, even though response is down 3dB at 16kHz.

The high overall impedance combined with a reasonable sensitivity of 87dB (2.84V/1m)



should allow these 'speakers to go quite loud without too much strain on an amplifier. The apparent 'lean' bass response below 100Hz means they shouldn't upset neighbours nor excite room modes too much. AH



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DPA SX512

The DPA SX512 DAC possessed a flat frequency response on both channels, with just a little filter ripple visible at the top end. The upper limit reached a high 21.4kHz. The lower limit was a normal 5Hz.

Linearity was excellent once the unit had warmed up thoroughly. Our spectrum analysis of distortion shows a complete absence of harmonics. When this happens the analyser measures noise in bands, returning a value of 0.02% with 19 harmonic bands. At lower signal levels distortion rose but levels were normal enough, reaching 0.5% on a -60dB signal. Few convertors manage better. Channel separation was high and noise low. Dynamic range measured a very good 108dB and output was a conventional 2V. DPA's own unique Pulse Array

Modulation convertor technology measures very well. It is a tribute to their abilities, since it isn't easy to derive and produce an entirely new approach like this. NK

Frequency response 5Hz-21.4kHz

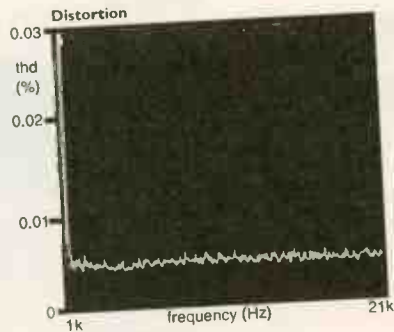
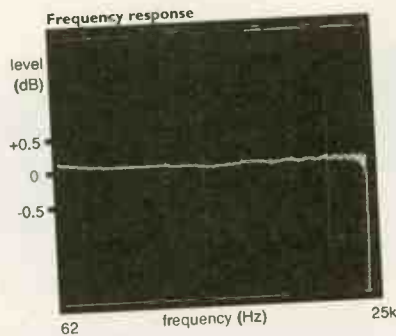
Distortion (%)	left	right
-6dB	0.012	0.012
-30dB	0.02	0.02

-60dB	0.46	0.55
-90dB	31.8	31.8

Separation (dB)	left	right
1kHz	101	102
20kHz	98	97

Noise -94dB with emphasis -95dB

Dynamic range 108dB
Output 2V



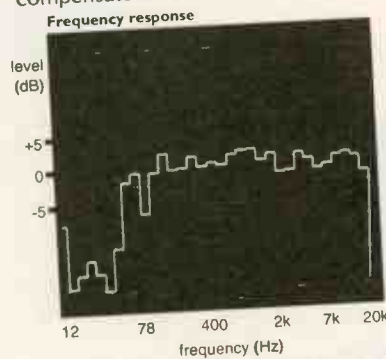
LOUDSPEAKERS

EPOS E522

Blessed with an extended and relatively even frequency response, the Eposes have the look of a well-engineered design. Reference to the impedance plot, however, suggests that some care may be needed in matching 'speaker to amp since, like the Audiovector M2s, a challenging current drain may be presented to an amplifier's at low frequencies. Further up the plot we see a peak where the bass driver/reflex ports' presence is revealed, but nothing too tortuous to worry about here.

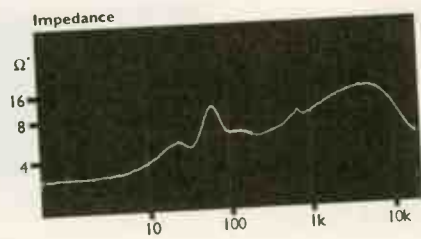
Overall impedance was calculated at 5.6Ω and sensitivity measured 85.5dB (2.84V/1m). This

would suggest a 'speaker that requires a reasonably muscular amplifier (50watts-60 watts+) to give its best, and one that can supply both current for the low-impedance load as well as swinging volts to compensate for a below-average



sensitivity.

The lack of crossover and phase suck-outs across the midband, coupled with that extended HF response and smooth bass roll-off, bodes well for performance. Third-octave pink-noise measurement showed that good tonal balance was attainable within a relatively wide area - listening position is not as

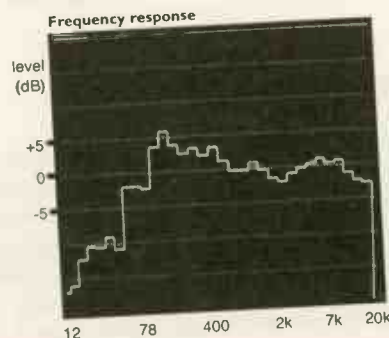


CELESTION A2

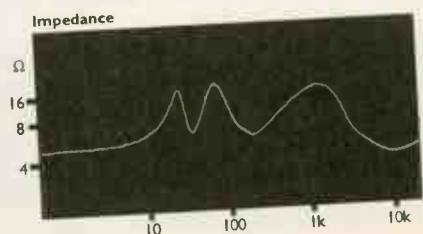
These Celestions have plenty of bass power, not only from the 3.5dB or so rise around 120-200Hz, but also from the amount of energy radiated all the way down to the 12.5Hz threshold of measurement. Just beware of warped records played without subsonic filters because cone flap is likely.

Across the midband and lower treble, response stays within good limits, with just a 2dB dip around 2.5kHz and then smooth roll-off after 10kHz to about -2.5dB at 20kHz.

The quoted impedance of 4Ω was a little pessimistic - we measured an average across the range of 6.8Ω. Sensitivity was a little low at 87dB



but because of the amount of deep bass these A2s can supply there should not be any lack of apparent loudness, even at low volumes. Amplifiers from 40watts upwards shouldn't have much trouble in getting good volume levels. AH



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CD PLAYER

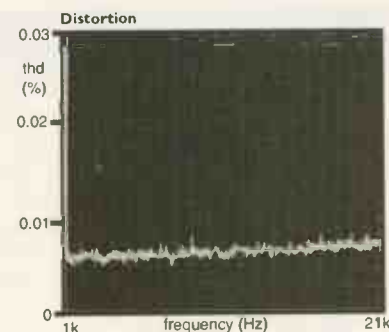
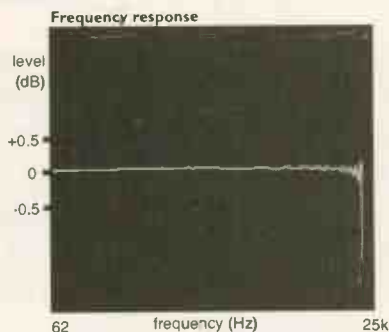
ARCAM 8SE

The Arcam 8SE has a very flat frequency response, with little sign of the roll-off Arcam have traditionally used to tame the remorseless treble of CD. This has made their CD players sound warm. The 8SE will likely sound less so. Distortion was low on high-ish level signals but down at -60dB linearity was mediocre. There may be a little perceptible coarseness.

Channel separation values were good and output high at 2.5V. Dynamic range was so-so due to poor linearity at -60dB, measuring 104dB. Top players hit 110dB.

The Arcam 8SE was good all round, if not exceptional. It should sound a little brighter than earlier models. NK

Frequency response	5Hz-	
21.5kHz		
Distortion (%)		
-6dB	0.004	0.004
-30dB	0.007	0.008
-60dB	0.5	0.9
-90dB	28	29
-90dB dithered	7	11
Separation	left	right
1kHz	106	102
20kHz	82	94
Noise	-105dB	
with emphasis	-105dB	
Dynamic range	104dB	
Output	2.5V	



MIDIMAN FLYING COW

The Flying Cow has a digital-to-analogue convertor but also an analogue-to-digital (ADC) convertor able to produce digital code for recording purposes.

The D/A produces respectable results. It is linear at high levels, although maximum output is 1.8V - a bit below the 2V standard. As signal level falls both channels behave similarly, showing good channel matching. At -60dB signal level distortion measured 0.5%, a performance up with the best.

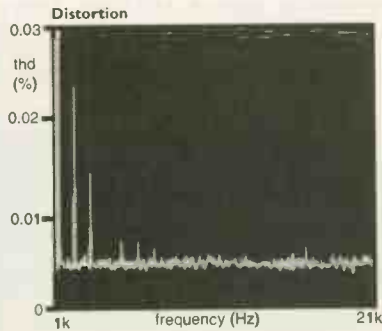
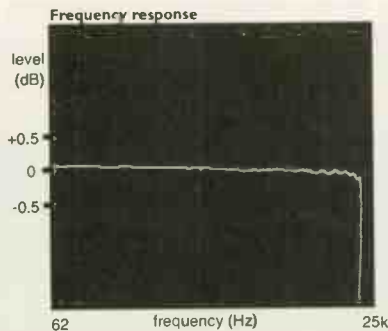
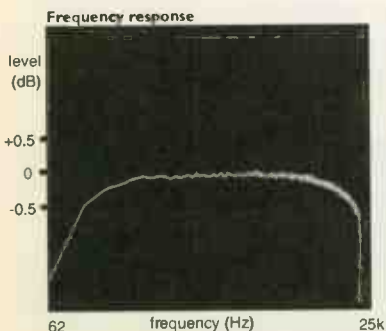
Frequency response was flat from 5Hz up to 21.4kHz (-1dB). The ADC was not so flat, displaying a little

treble plus some bass roll-off. Its response measured a respectable 50Hz-22.4kHz (48kHz sample rate) and can be seen in our analysis. There was little distortion in this part of the convertor. I'd expect a clean, smooth sound from the ADC, although a little lightness in the bass will be obvious at times.

The Flying Cow worked well in all areas. It obviously incorporates some good chips, combined with effective support circuits. Savings have been made on the case, but this is no bad thing if there are gains elsewhere. NK

Distortion (%)		
-6dB	0.004	0.005
-30dB	0.028	0.029
-60dB	0.5	0.5
-90dB	32	32
-90dB dithered	11	11
Separation	left	right
1kHz	101	102
20kHz	80	83
Noise	-105dB	
with emphasis	-105dB	
Dynamic range	105dB	
Output	1.8V	

Frequency response 5Hz-21.4kHz



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ASM100 ACTIVE SUBWOOFER MODULE



This attractive module consists of a low pass filter and power amplifier ready for you to mount in a suitable sub-woofer cabinet. The combined unit can then be combined with any new or existing hi fi or home cinema speaker system to add in the real bass punch missing from most setups.

The ASM 100 module comes as a ready-to-mount unit on a solid diecast aluminium frame/heat-sink. Input signal can be at line or speaker level for easy system integration. There are three separate stereo inputs at line level and the unit will use any signal presented or mix all inputs to add bass to any signal. The speaker level inputs are used by simply wiring the unit in parallel with the existing speakers to provide them with strong bass support. Crossover frequency can be selected to 50, 100 or 200Hz and the bass level can be adjusted by a front panel control. The 'Green' power supply switches the unit to standby if no signal is present. Drawings are included free for the compact 418 x 380 x 303mm cabinet.

With its powerful 125 watt output and versatile filtering the ASM 100 is the ideal universal active driver module for all subwoofer requirements.

ASM 100 Module, complete with IEC mains lead, instructions and ASM - W20 cabinet drawings. Pt. No. V7000 £185.29
W 200 S 20cm Long Throw Drive unit for use in ASM - W20 cabinet Full Version (3") £36.68

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LK5961 Kit £392.42



EXPERIENCE V20



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 Max. Music Power 300W
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 Crossover Frequency 450Hz, 3KHz
 Mean Sound Pressure 88dB
 Box Volume 100Ltr. & 7Ltr.
 Size/Height 1,300mm
 Width 300mm
 Depth 360mm

LK5965 Per Pair £538.70

ASM - T20 SUBWOOFER

An easy to build, but very effective, bass reflex cabinet design using the ASM 100 Active Sub-woofer Module and the W200S, high compliance, 8" driver, with its 20mm maximum cone displacement! Easy to incorporate into a modern living environment the size of the cabinet has been kept as small as possible at 418 mm high, 303 mm wide, and 380 mm long. To aid its ease of positioning in the room both the drive unit and the vent are situated on the front of the cabinet. Despite these compact dimensions, and with a volume of only 31Ltrs, the ASM T20 gives up to 106dB with an acoustical cut-off frequency of 25 Hz.1. The cabinet is made from 19mm MDF, and needs about 8 sq.ft.

W200S 20cm. Long Throw Drive unit. Part No. 9030 £36.68



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"AUDIO DESIGN" 80 WATT POWER AMPLIFIER.



Our John Linsley Hood designed 80 watt Power Amplifier continues to amaze all who listen to it, and it is now finding new friends among speaker manufacturers who use it to show their own products to their best advantage. Its flawless performance is a result of the combination of inspired circuit design and the very best components, specified by the designer. Such innovations as the six rail fully stabilised power supply make great contributions to the overall reproduction quality yet are not found on even the most expensive run-of-the-mill designs in the High St shop window.

We have long known that the delicacy and transparency of sound from this amplifier placed it in the world class and side-by-side comparisons with amplifiers costing five times as much still show small performance advantages, which suggests that even the most expensive amplifiers will only equal rather than exceed, its sound quality. All amplifiers in the range have the same basic quality and the decision about whether to use a preamplifier is governed by the facilities you need. The STANDARD amplifier has switching for up to three inputs, if you need more than this then a preamplifier feeding a SLAVE power amplifier will give you up to seven inputs.

If you would like to hear this incredible amplifier in action then arrange a visit to Wilmsham Audio's new premises at Broughton Astley, near Leicester. Their phone number is 01455 286603, speak to Shaun or Terry.

All amplifiers are available in kit or factory assembled form.

K1100 Complete STANDARD Amplifier Kit	£415.21
A1100 Factory Assembled version	£515.21
K1100S Complete stereo SLAVE Kit	£353.62
A1100S Factory Assembled	£522.22
K1100M MONOBLOC Amplifier Kit	£271.20
A1100M Factory Assembled	£351.20

Super Audiophile (SA) Versions of all the above come with selected audiophile components at an extra cost of only £39.30 per channel. All HART kits are designed for easy home construction to the very highest standards, and can be built by anyone of average manual ability. If you are still not convinced how easy it is to build it yourself with a HART kit you can order the Instruction Manual to read for yourself and we will refund the cost when you buy your kit!

JOHN LINSLEY HOOD 15W SINGLE ENDED CLASS 'A' POWER AMPLIFIER

A design for the experimenter who wants to try and re-create the warmth and purity of sound given by valve amplifiers from the vintage years, without the problems of cost, deterioration and danger associated with trying to use valves today.

It employs the newly re-discovered single-ended circuit configuration to give total freedom from crossover artifacts and to give a sound that is indistinguishable from the famous 'Williamson' design, the undisputed leader of the field, with its triode connected KT66s and all-triode drivers. See our list for full details.

Reprint of Article	£2.50
CM4000 Construction Manual	£5.00

MAINS LEADS & POWER DISTRIBUTION.

All our kits use standard IEC mains leads and these are available for a range of countries. We also stock distribution boxes with IEC sockets to minimise the space needed for power leads. See our lists for details.

"CHIARA" HEADPHONE AMPLIFIER.



Highest quality, purpose designed, 'single ended' class 'A' headphone amplifier for 'stand alone' use or to supplement those many power amplifiers that do not have a headphone facility. Easy installation with special signal link-through feature, the unit uses our 'Andante' Ultra High Quality power supply.

Housed in the neat, black finished, Hart minibox it features the wide frequency response, low-distortion and 'musicality' that one associates with designs from the renowned John Linsley Hood. Volume and balance controls are Alps "Blue Velvet" components. Very easy to build, or available factory assembled, the kit has very detailed instructions, and comes with Hart audiograde silver solder. A valuable personal listening option and an attractive and harmonious addition to any hi-fi system.

K2100 Complete Standard Kit	£112.50
K2100SA 'Series Audiophile' Kit with selected audiophile components	£115.46
A2100SA 'Series Audiophile', Factory Assembled	£115.46
CM2100 Construction Manual	£2.50

SHUNT FEEDBACK PICKUP PREAMPLIFIER



If you want the very best sound out of vinyl discs then you need our high quality preamplifier with Shunt Feedback equalisation. The K1450 also has an advanced front end, specially optimised for low impedance moving coil cartridges as well as moving magnet types. Selected discrete components: are used throughout for ultimate sound quality. The combination of John Linsley Hood design, high quality components and an advanced double sided printed circuit board layout make this a product at the leading edge of technology that you will be proud to own. A recent review in "Gramophone" magazine endorsing this view. Bought in kit form our step by step instructions it is very easy and satisfying to assemble, or you can buy a factory assembled version if you wish.

This magnificent kit, comes complete with all parts ready to assemble inside the fully finished 228 x 134 x 63mm case. Comes with full, easy to follow, instructions as well as the Hart Guide to PCB Construction, we even throw in enough Hart Audiograde Silver Solder to construct your kit!

K1450 Complete Kit	£116.58
K1450SA Audiophile Kit	£138.94
A1450SA Factory assembled Audiophile unit	£188.94

"Andante" Linear Technology AUDIOPHILE POWER SUPPLIES



The HART "Andante" series power supplies are specially designed for exacting audio use requiring absolute minimum noise, low hum field and total freedom from mechanical noise.

Utilising linear technology throughout for smoothness and musicality makes it the perfect partner for the above units, or any equipment requiring fully stabilised $\pm 15v$ supplies.

There are two versions, K3550 has 2 $\pm 15v$ supplies and a single 15v for relays etc. K3565 is identical in appearance and has one $\pm 15v$. Both are in cases to match our 'Chiara' Headphone Amplifier and our K1450 "Shunt Feedback" Pickup preamp.

K3550 Full Supply with all outputs	£94.75
K3565 Power Supply for K1450 or K2100	£84.42
A3550 Factory Assembled Full Supply	£147.25

ALPS "Blue Velvet" PRECISION AUDIO CONTROLS



Now you can throw out those noisy ill-matched carbon pots and replace with the famous Hart exclusive ALPS "Blue Velvet" range components only used selectively in the very top flight of World class amplifiers. The improvement in track accuracy and matching really is incredible giving better tonal balance between channels and rock solid image stability. Motorised versions have 5v DC motor.

MANUAL POTENTIOMETERS

2-Gang 100K Lin	£15.67
2-Gang 10K, 50K or 100K Log	£16.40
2-Gang 10K Special Balance, zero crosstalk & zero centre loss	£17.48

MOTORISED POTENTIOMETERS

2-Gang 20K Log Volume Control	£26.20
2-Gang 10K RD Special Balance, zero crosstalk and less than 10% loss in centre position	£26.98

ALPS PRECISION SWITCHES.

At long last, switches to match the quality of our Alps pots. These switches not only solve the quality gap but also have features facilitating their use in real audio applications. The "Flex" version having a panel mounting control coupled to a rear mountable switch unit by a 190mm Flex Link. Also available is a motor driven option which, like the pots, can also be operated with its control knob.

HC5520. 4P 4W, Manual Control	£16.73
HC519. 4P 6W Manual	£17.95
HC5545. 8P 5W Flex Switch	£21.60
HC5560. 4P 6W Motorised	£29.80

SOLDERING

The size of modern components makes the right soldering equipment essential for good results. Everything we offer we actually use in our own workshops! See our Lists for the full range.

845-820 XS240 ANTEX 240v 25w Soldering Iron. This is the Ideal Multi-purpose iron as the bit is designed to totally surround the element giving the best heat transfer. This excellent design also means that although it is small and handy enough for modern components its heating capacity is better than larger irons of conventional construction. Excellent Value. £12.43

845-080 ST4 Lightweight Soldering Iron Stand. This has provision for the classic damp sponge for bit wiping.	£3.95
--	-------

HART SUPER AUDIOGRADE SILVER SOLDER.

Hart Super Audiograde Silver Solder has been specially formulated for the serious audiophile. Not only does it give beautiful easy-to-make joints but it is designed to melt at normal soldering temperatures avoiding the possibility of thermal damage to components or the need for special high temperature irons. A very low residue flux makes perfect joints easy but eliminates the need for board cleaning after assembly.

845-007 3mtrs 22SWG in Hart Mini Tube	£3.90
845-008 100g. Reel Special Valve Grade, 20swg	£12.90
845-009 100g. Precision PCB Grade, 22swg	£14.75
845-110 100g Reel Superfine 24swg for ultra precise control and easy working	£21.45

PRINTED CIRCUIT BOARD SOLDERING PRACTICE KIT.

Unsure whether you can construct a HART kit?, this is your chance to try! Your HART Printed Circuit Board Soldering Practice Kit comes with a range of modern components, a typical Hart quality PCB, a roll of the correct grade of solder and full instructions. It enables the enthusiast who is uncertain of his, or indeed her, ability to put together and solder a printed circuit to try their hand at minimum cost. The instructions explain the right technique and guide even an absolute beginner through the seemingly daunting, but in fact very simple, art of making a good soldered joint. Excellent value for money at only £4.99

Super Version with Hart Silver Solder	£6.95
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LINSLEY-HOOD 400 SERIES SUPER HIGH QUALITY FM TUNER.

This ultra high quality analogue tuner system is the ideal companion to the 80W Audio Design Amplifier in any ultimate hi fi setup, with case size, front plate layout and even control pitches unified for stacking. Like the 80W Audio Design Amplifier this is your route to ultimate performance at incredibly modest cost! Novel circuit features include ready built pre-aligned front end, phase locked loop demodulator with a response down to DC and advanced sample and hold stereo decoder together making a tuner which sounds better than the best of the high-priced exotica but, thanks to HART engineering, remains very easy to build and set up. Since all components are selected by the designer to give the very best sound this tuner is not cheap, but in terms of its sheer sound quality it is incredible value for money.

K400 Complete Kit	£256.82
RLH8 Reprints of 3 articles covering the FM tuner.	£3.70
CM400 Construction Manual	£4.95

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	Offer	List
Voyd, The Voyd, 3 motor split-phase mahogany	£895	(£1850)
Helius Cyalene tonearm (AudioNote silver wired)	£800	(£1799)
Rega RB300 tonearm	£65	(£130)
Border Patrol 300B SE 10W single-ended power amp	£1750	(£2500)
Audio Innovations S500 integrated valve amp	£495	(£1200)
Audio Innovations S200 pre-amp	£175	(£350)
Naim NAC 42	offers	
AudioNote AN SPX silver speaker cable. (Two 3m sets).	£995/set	(£2750)

TEL/FAX: BRIGHTON 01273 276716



F. & S. Audio Components
Sales and Service

CODE KEY:- N = NEW X = EX DEM S = SECOND HAND

Make	Model	Description	Code	Stock	R.R.P.	Now
Arcam	Alpha 6	Amplifier	S	1	£330.00	£200.00
Audiolab	8000 A	Amplifier	X	2	£500.00	£350.00
Audiolab	8000 S	Amplifier	X	1	£700.00	£500.00
Audiolab	8000 CD	CD - Ex Dem but unused!	X	1	£1,000.00	£800.00
Castle	Isis	Bookshelf Loudspeaker - Mahogany	X	1	£250.00	£175.00
Castle	Severn II	Loudspeaker of the year 1997 - Yew	N	1	£670.00	£600.00
Celestion	9	2 Way Loudspeakers	N	1	£290.00	£190.00
Celestion	A1	Loudspeakers with Stands Black	X	1	£1,100.00	£700.00
Celestion	A2	Floor Standing Loudspeakers	X	1	£1,500.00	£1,250.00
Celestion	A3	Floor Standing Loudspeakers	X	1	£2,400.00	£2,000.00
Celestion	30i	Floor Standing Loudspeakers	N	1	£449.90	£349.90
Cyrus	Cyrus 1	Amplifier	S	1	£279.00	£100.00
Cyrus	Remote	Remote Control	S	1	£100.00	£60.00
Kel	RDM 1	Loudspeakers	X	1	£500.00	£375.00
Meridian	566	Digital to Analogue converter	X	1	£1,095.00	£795.00
Meridian	DSP 5000	Digital Active Loudspeakers Black	X	1	£3,295.00	£2,500.00
Nad	910	Surround sound Processor	S	1	£400.00	£125.00
Naim	NAP 110	Power Amplifier Old Style	S	1		£200.00
Quad	77 Preamp	Pre-amplifier	N	2	£850.00	£680.00
Quad	77 Amplifier	Integrated Amplifier	X	1	£700.00	£500.00
Quad	77 Poweramp	Power Amplifier	X	1	£600.00	£450.00
Quad	77 CD	CD Player	X	1	£700.00	£500.00
Quad	10L	Loudspeakers	X	1	£600.00	£450.00
Rega	Elicit	Amplifier	S	1	£730.00	£450.00
Rotel	RA 931	Integrated Amplifier	X	3	£150.00	£130.00
Rotel	RB 970	Power Amplifier	S	1	£225.00	£160.00
Rotel	RB 981	Power Amplifier	X	1	£300.00	£250.00
Target	MB3W 165	Wide Modular Equipment Rack	X	1	£200.00	£140.00
Yamaha	DSPA 1092	Prologic Amplifier	X	1	£850.00	£650.00
Yamaha	DSPA 990	Prologic Amplifier	N	2	£900.00	£400.00
Yamaha	DSPA 590	1996 Pro-Logic Amplifier for the year	X	1	£350.00	£200.00
Yamaha	DSPA 592	Pro-Logic Dolby Digital Upgradable	X	2	£330.00	£300.00
Yamaha	DSPA 492	Pro-Logic Amplifier	X	2	£250.00	£225.00
Yamaha	DSPE 1000	Pro-Logic Processor	S	1	£700.00	£275.00
Yamaha	DSPE 492	Pro-Logic Processor	X	2	£250.00	£225.00
Yamaha	KX 580 SE	Dolby B, C, & S Cassette Deck	X	3	£250.00	£215.00
Yamaha	KX 690	Dolby B, C, S & 3 Head Cassette Deck	X	2	£400.00	£300.00

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B&W 801 Series II's	£1195
AUDIONOTE P4 Monoblocks	£3395
REVOX B2155 Cassette Deck	£995
MARK LEVINSON No 29 Power Amplifier	£1995
LUXMAN C1000 Pre-Amp & M4000 Power Amp	£1495
VOYD Standard Turntable. MINT	£1495
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MARK LEVINSON 35 Dac EX DEM	£5795
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NAIM NAC 62 Pre-Amp with SNAPS PSU	£295
KEF 104 Loudspeakers	£450
REGA PLANAR 2 Turntable	£150
AUDIONOTE M2 Line Pre Amp	£599

ALL USED CARTRIDGES ARE CHECKED UNDER A MICROSCOPE BEFORE BEING OFFERED FOR SALE.

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AUDIO NOTE M7 Silver Signature pre-amp	£7000
ARCAM Delta Black Box II DAC Boxed	£175
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MERIDIAN 557 Power Amp	£995
LUXMAN T-14 Tuner (Lab Standard)	£550
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MARK LEVINSON ML1 Pre-amp with Phono	£895
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VOYD T/BI/SME V & Clearaudio Delta Cart.	£2495
AUDIO RESEARCH D400 Amplifier	£2995
SOLSTICE AAD speakers with stands	£495
SME IV Silver Wired Fluid Damper	£895
MARANTZ CD12 Transport and DAC	£1995
KRELL KRS Reference six box pre-amp	£3995
AUDIO NOTE ANE/SE L/Speakers (F/Veneer Rosewood)	£3995
LUXMAN MQ 3600 KT88 stereo power amplifier	£1295
Q.E.D. Digit Dac & Positron PSU	£125

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LUMLEY Promenade SP1 Loudspeakers (NEW)	£250
CR DEVELOPMENTS Remus valve amp	£995
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BOULDER 250 AE Power Amplifier MINT	£1995
BEARD P100 Monoblocks	£995
SME V Tonearm	£995
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AUDIO RESEARCH SP9 MK II Stereo Pre-amp	£1295
AUDIO TECHNICA Art 1 Cartridge	£395
LYRA Parmassus DCT Cart. Ex Dem Guaranteed	£1200
NAKAMICHI 682ZX Cassette Deck	£595
MARK LEVINSON 38S pre-amp ex-demo	£4850
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Trichord Genesis CD player	450 569	Naim SBL latest	1,500	2,030
Marantz CD63MK2 KI Signature CD player	349 399	ProAc Response 2.5's (Cherry, mint cond)	2,100	2,700
Theta Data Basic Mk2 CD Transport	1,500 2,300	Kef Q35	279	350
Wadia 15 DAC/digital preamp; bal/unbal; remote control, digital volume etc - connect DAC directly to power amp - the ultimate!	1,500 3,800	Kef Q55	399	500
Amplifiers		ProAc Tablette 50 (Light Oak, mint)	499	600
Naim 102 remote preamp	850 1,080	Triangle Titus	250	380
Naim 180 poweramp	850 1,090	Triangle Zephyr	499	800
Alchem'ist Nemesis incl. Phono Stage	750 550	QLN Qubic 111 (Light Cherry)	150	200
Roksan Caspian R/C amplifier	595 700	Ruark Icon (Cherry)	250	359
Rotel 921 New Model	79 100	Roksan Rok 1 (Light Elder)	499	645
Rotel RQ970 Mc/Mm phono stage (excellent)	99 130	Tannoy M2	115	140
Marantz PM66 KI Signature	349 400	Teac Reference 500 System, mint	699	800
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Cambridge Audio CD3	800	295	Naim IBL black	1000	395
Arcam 170 Transport	800	295	Acoustic Energy AE1 + stands	1145	650
Meridian 203 DAC	600	250	Heybrook Sextets Mk3 (walnut)	1200	695
Meridian 200 Mk2 Transport	1000	450	Meridian D600 (Digital Drive) Rosewood	3000	1495
Meridian 263 Delta Sigma DAC	700	295	Linn Sara 9 + stands	900	395
Acoustic Precision Eikos CD	1850	1250	Linn Kans + stands (Teak)	500	195
AMPS			TURNTABLES/TUNERS ETC		
NVA Phono 1	300	150	Linn LP12 Lingo Cirkus Armomatic Arkiv	4000	1695
Densen B100	650	395	Linn LP12 Ittok Klyde	2500	595
Linn LK100 x 3	650	395	Roksan Xerxes + Artemiz	1600	495
LFD LSI	1000	350	Linn Active - Cards for Keltiks	N/A	POA
Naim Naxo 2/4 (new style)	650	350	Roksan Artemiz	950	395
Marantz SMII (200 watt power amp)	1500	695	Oracle Delphi + Alphason HR100	2000	595
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Naim 32.5 K	500	195	Quad FM3	200	95
Naim 180	1060	695	Yamaha 590	350	95
Linn Kairn	1700	695	Yamaha 390	300	45
Quad 34 phono	500	250	Siltech HF6 1/2 metre Digital Link	100	50
Quad 306	350	195	Linn Tune Box (Active X-Over)	450	150
Quad 303 x 3	N/A	95			
Quad 405 Mk2 2x3 (full recent Quad rebuild)	500	275			
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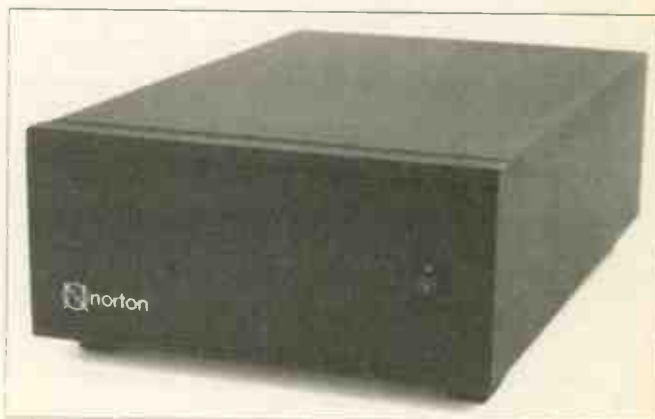
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Hi-Fi World May 1998

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Components & Valves

Pre-Amp Kit

The Audio Note Pre-Amplifier Kit (illustrated)

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Audio Note Cerafine Powdered Ceramic Electrolytic Capacitors

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

Audio Note Potentiometers

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

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

Audio Note Moving Coil, CD Line & Input Matching Transformers

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

Valves

The Audio Note AV300BSL (illustrated)

Audio Note is proud and happy to announce a joint venture with Mr Alesa Vaic of AWI in the Czech Republic. Under the agreement reached Alesa Vaic's company will be making a range of directly heated triodes for small signal, driver and output stages exclusively for **Audio Note**. This will with time allow us to explore hitherto uncharted territory in the field of Single-Ended Audio Amplifier design, by putting us in a position to design and manufacture triodes specifically for a given purpose, something which has not been within our reach in the past, where we have always had to settle for the best amplifying devices available, but which good as many of them are, were generally made for other purposes.

Currently, we have a super linear version of the 300B available, dubbed The **Audio Note** AV300B SL it is available in limited numbered samples at US \$250 each either single, or in matched pairs. We will follow this fairly quickly by a new, more powerful, power triode, the **Audio Note** AV32B SL with 65 watt dissipation for about 18 watt class A in single-ended configuration for an expected price of US \$300 each. The **Audio Note** AV52B SL with an 85 watt dissipation for 28 watts of class A operation will be available in early 1998. This will be quickly followed by the most powerful and linear power triode available - the **Audio Note** AV62B SL with 120 watt dissipation for about 40 watt class A in single ended configuration at an expected price of US \$500 each, it will help advance the case for SE operation despite the deplorable inefficiency of most modern loudspeakers!



Audio Note Selected Audio Valves

Our valves are selected from the best available sources and are tested to the same stringent standards that we apply in the production of our own amplifiers. They fall into two categories, standard production items and rare, mostly NOS (New Old Stock) valves which are no longer in production. We have compiled a special list of the NOS items, which is available against a stamped self addressed envelope, if you live outside the UK, send US \$2. You should be aware that the valves on this list are NOT cheap, but we have stock of original GE, RCA and United Electronics 211, both standard versions and reinforced anode type for the US airforce, 845 Westinghouse, VT25/10/10Y, VT62/B01A, WE300B, STC4300A, Mullard GZ34/CV1377, Tungsol 5U4G (best sounding 5U4G we have ever heard!), Chatham 5R4WGY and many others.

Audio Note Recommended Magazines Full list available on request.

Listener - Review based music & hi-fi magazine that contains some of the best considered & well written articles in print. A very good read £4 per copy.

The Audio Adventure - Well produced publication, a good alternative to the established magazines. Not afraid to be controversial. £4 per copy.

Sound Practices - Our best seller. A must for all DIY projects. Contributors include Audio Note, Herb Reichert and Diego Nardi. £5 per copy.

Vacuum Tube Valley - Specialising in anything to do with audio valves. A wealth of information on specific valves and their applications. £8.50 per copy.

Positive Feedback - Including many, controversial articles from a wide range of contributors including our own Peter Øvortrup. £7 per copy

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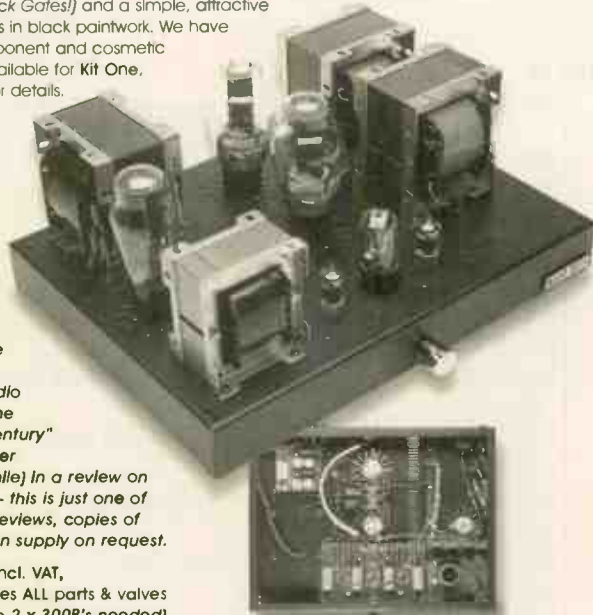
Audio Note Kit Amplifiers -

Power-Amp Kit

The Audio Note Kit One (illustrated)

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

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



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

Price: £799 incl. VAT, which includes ALL parts & valves (yes, also the 2 x 300B's needed) but not postage/packing which to UK customers is £12.

KIT ONE ORDER CODE: AN-KIT-001

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

Audio Note Loudspeaker Drivers & Kits

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

Audio Note Circuits, Valvedata & Basic Technical Information

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

Audio Note Quality Output Transformers

We are in the process of building up four separate ranges of **Audio Note** output transformers. In order to offer the best possible outputs at different pricepoints, they will fall into four categories.

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Audio Note Mains Transformers

Available for most popular designs. We shall continue to expand the range as opportunities become available.

The Audio Note Kit Two

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

Kit Two costs £599 incl. VAT, includes valves, but not postage/packing.

KIT TWO ORDER CODE: AN-KIT-002

The Audio Note Kit Three

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

The Kit Three costs £1,550 incl. VAT but excluding delivery.

KIT THREE ORDER CODE: AN-KIT-003

The Audio Note Kit Four

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

The Kit Four costs: £299 incl. VAT but not delivery.

KIT FOUR ORDER CODE: AN-KIT-004

Audio Note Driver, Interstage & Pre-Amplifier Output Transformers

Here is a product group that you do not see advertised every day! As usual we start small with the intention to grow quickly.

Audio Note Paper In Oil Signal Capacitors

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

Audio Note Paper In Oil Tin Foil Signal Capacitors

The tin foil is better than alu-foil for most applications, we recommend you try them!

Audio Note Paper In Oil Copper & Silver Foil Signal Capacitors

These copperfoil paper signal capacitors are considerably better than both the standard offerings and the tin foils. To start with there will be a few values / voltages of each available and we shall expand as fast as we can to cover all the popular values.

Audio Note Acid & Chloride Free Silver Solder

The best solder available, used in all our amplifiers from OTO to the mighty GAKU-ON.

Audio Note Cables & Wires

Audio Note manufacture a range of high quality copper and silver coax, speaker and wiring cables, which, depending on the overall price of the project, will do justice to any hi-fi system, regardless of price. Please call for prices and details.

Audio Note High Quality Stepped Attenuators & Switches

These handmade attenuators and switches are manufactured by a friend of Mr Kondo of **Audio Note**. They are the best you can buy.

Audio Note High Quality Valve Bases

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

Audio Note Resistors

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

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THE REVIEWERS

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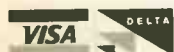
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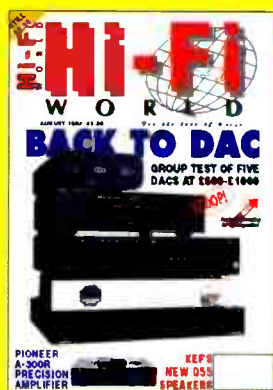
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CLASSICAL

RECORD OF THE MONTH

Ivan The Terrible - Oratorio Op 116
Liubov Sokolova, mezzo-soprano; Nikolai Putilin, baritone; Chorus of the Kirov Orchestra; Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra; conductor, Valery Gergiev
PHILIPS CLASSICS 456 645-2 (DDD/64.50)

In 1938, Prokofiev had enjoyed a highly successful collaboration with the film director Sergei Eisenstein on the historical epic Alexander Nevsky, and was delighted when, four years later, Eisenstein approached him to write the music for an even bigger project, a trilogy of films telling the story of the Sixteenth-century Tsar Ivan the Terrible. The director, now revered by all cineastes for his silent masterpieces Battleship Potemkin and October, had learnt from Alexander Nevsky, his first foray into talkies, the impact and importance music had in film. And such was Eisenstein's appreciation of Prokofiev's contribution that, although the composer obviously had to tailor his score to the film scenario, the director was not above manipulating the film, if it better suited the music.

In the war-torn Soviet Union, historical epics which made much of Russian

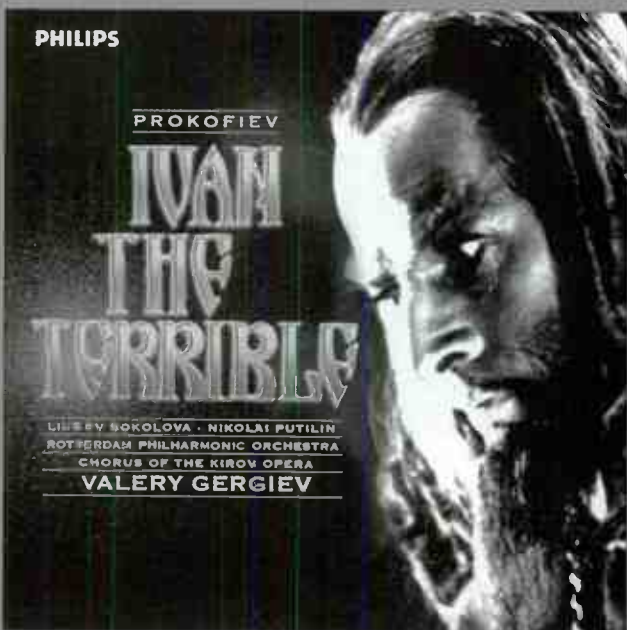
perfidious foreign invaders met with the full approval of Stalin and his apparatchiks. The tale of Ivan the Terrible, who not only had to battle

had to wait until 1958, five years after Stalin's death (and Prokofiev's, for that matter), for its first screening. Eisenstein had died in 1948, so the concluding part of the

recording.

It is evident from the outset that this is in no respect 'second-rate' Prokofiev: quite the reverse. Nor is it a disjointed hotchpotch of musical items. Stassevich's reconstruction results in a coherent and utterly absorbing musical experience. This dazzlingly colourful score gets exactly the approach it merits from Gergiev, the most exciting conducting talent to emerge from Russia in recent years. The performance is powerfully projected, with electrifying playing from the Rotterdam orchestra, of which Gergiev is chief conductor. However, for the all-important vocal contributions, which use verses by Vladimir Luptovsky, he has wisely imported native Russian voices: two excellent soloists in Liubov Sokolova and Nikolai Putilin, and the chorus of the Kirov Opera in St Petersburg, of which Gergiev also happens to be director.

The product of this Dutch-Russian collaboration is incandescent, and with a recording to match. Percussion and brass are vividly captured in the battle sequences, as Prokofiev pulls out all the orchestral stops, while the darker sequences have a spine-tingling menace. Terrific stuff, brilliantly recorded. All I need now is to get to see the film!



with forces from outside Russia but conspirators within, must have seemed particularly relevant and the first part of Eisenstein's trilogy, which was completed in 1944, was duly acclaimed. In the very different post-war atmosphere, however, the second film of the projected three fell foul of Stalin's 'cultural clampdown'. The tyrant-paranoid at the best of times – having doubtless identified with the heroic, if cruel, Ivan of part one was probably distressed to find him questioning his actions in part two. This second film

trilogy was never made. Prokofiev filed away his score for Ivan the Terrible. Unlike the music for Alexander Nevsky, he appears for whatever reason to have decided against producing a concert work from it. That task was eventually undertaken with considerable success by the Russian conductor Abram Stassevich, who also interpolated recitations from the films themselves. It is this version, minus the interpolations, which Valery Gergiev employs here in a quite spectacular Philips

CLASSICAL

ardent nationalist). Here, he tackles a large musical structure and the disciplines of variation technique with both inventiveness and boldness. The Ballade, with its (unusually for Grieg) highly virtuosic nature, proved one of his few successes using a large musical canvas, and Jablonski plays it with a persuasive mixture of poetry and panache. He also makes a good case for the E minor sonata of 1865, here playing the original version rather than the 1887 revision. However, even Jablonski's eloquent playing cannot disguise the paucity of ideas in the last two movements. Grieg was much more at home in the charming pastiche of the Holberg Suite, with its flavour of the French baroque given a whiff of Nordic air. This suite is much better known today in its orchestral guise but Peter Jablonski capably demonstrates that the piano version is no less engaging.

The works which made Grieg's fame and fortune were the 66 Lyric Pieces which he published in 10 volumes between 1867 and 1901. Peter Jablonski plays a well-chosen half-dozen, including the very first (Arietta) and the last (Remembrances). He also offers the intriguingly-named and dark-hued For Dine Fodder (At Your Feet), another piece which, like the Ballade, has echoes of Liszt.

This new recording doesn't oust the classic Emil Giljels (Deutsche Grammophon) in

the Lyric Pieces, but the warmth and evident affection of Jablonski's playing, and his generously-timed programme, makes this an ideal introduction to Grieg's piano music. The recording, made in London's Henry Wood Hall, is clear, full and well-focused, but could have done with being given a little more 'air'.



GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL
Organ Concertos, Op4 Nos 1-6, Op7 Nos 1-4
Paul Nicholson, organ; Frances Kelly, harp; Choir Of Clare College, Cambridge; The Brandenburg Consort; director, Roy Goodman
HYPERION CDA67291/2 (2 CD)

Although it is now surrounded by streets of semi-detached houses, the Georgian church of St Lawrence Whitchurch in the north-west London suburb of Edgware was originally enclosed by the Canons estate of the Duke of Chandos. It was to here that, during the summer of 1717, the 32-year-old Handel came as resident composer to perform for his aristocratic employers on the recently-installed organ of

what was the estate's parish church. Since that time, the prospect of playing Handel's organ concertos on an instrument intimately associated with the composer has doubtless appealed to many performers but the consequence of several rebuildings was that, by 1949, little of the original Gerard Smith organ survived.

Some four years ago, the team of Martin Goetze and Dominic Gwynn set about restoring the instrument as closely as was feasible to the condition of Handel's time, in the process employing what remained from that period. The resulting sound sprang some surprises, notably in its richness, beefy robustness and piquancy, this last effect enhanced by the tuning which is appropriate to that used in Handel's time. True, the old instrument produces its share of wheezing and clattering, but far from diminishing the pleasure of hearing it, this contributes to recreating much of the scale and style of Handel's conception.

Achieving that is far from easy, given that these concertos originally served as instrumental interludes during performances of Handel's oratorios, with the composer himself taking the solo role and improvising much of it. How did he flesh out the often skeletal framework or embellish the melodic line? And what about those daunting and extensive passages marked "ad libitum"? Paul Nicholson tackles the

task with relish and produces performances that are unfailingly intelligent, fluent and tasteful. His playing may not have the freedom or flamboyance of, say, Ton Koopman on Erato, but it is nonetheless richly characterised, and the rapport with the players of the Brandenburg Consort (who accompany with splendid verve and imagination) is evident.

Two special aspects of this particular recording deserve to be singled out. First, the sixth concerto of Op4 is given to the harp (Frances Kelly the soloist) as it was probably conceived for the oratorio Alexander's Feast and, second, the final movement of Op4, No4 is embellished with a choral alleluia, as heard during a performance in 1737. The chorus, later incorporated into the oratorio The Triumph Of Time And Truth, is performed here with great gusto by the Choir Of Clare College, Cambridge.

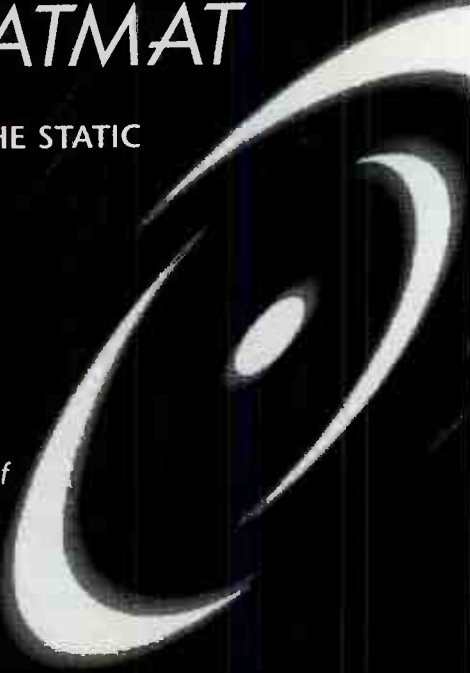
For those who prefer a direct, unpretentious and essentially collaborative approach to these works, Paul Nicholson's finely-crafted performances can be recommended. If there is a drawback, it is not with the playing but with the sound. Despite the best efforts of recording engineer Tony Faulkner, the acoustic of St Lawrence Whitchurch proves less than sympathetic, its comparative lack of resonance helping neither organist or orchestra●

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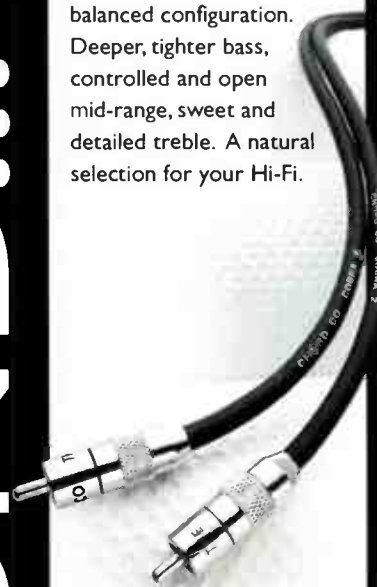
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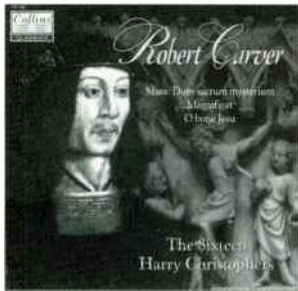
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by Peter Herring

Here's a musical journey to savour, from the Russian steppes through Sixteenth-century Scotland to discover a jewel of the Baroque in the most unlikely surroundings of semi-detached suburbia.



ROBERT CARVER
Missa Dum Sacrum Mysterium/motet O Bone Jesu

ANONYMOUS
Magnificat a 7 The Sixteen; conductor, Harry Christophers
COLLINS CLASSICS 14782 (DDD/68.07)

Judging by the number of CDs bearing its name, The Sixteen must have the busiest recording schedule of any British choir. Despite, or perhaps because of this, Harry Christophers and his colleagues manage to be not just consistent, but consistently successful, and this selection of works by the Sixteenth-century Scottish composer Robert Carver maintains the standard.

Born in 1487, Robert Carver became a canon of James IV of Scotland's Chapel Royal in Stirling, and held a

similar post at the Augustinian Abbey of Scone in Perthshire. The monumental Mass setting Dum Sacrum Mysterium and the 19-part motet O Bone Jesu - a sumptuous example of late medieval polyphony - both date from the last decade of James IV's reign, which came to a bloody end with his death at the Battle of Flodden in 1513. This event also triggered the demise of what had previously been a flourishing musical life at the Chapel Royal, although Carver was to live on into his seventies, dying in 1566.

It has been suggested that the Missa Dum Sacrum Mysterium was sung at the coronation of James IV's successor, James V, in 1513, but here The Sixteen present it as originally intended for the Feast of St Michael (September 29th), appropriately preceded by the plainsong chant from which the Mass is derived.

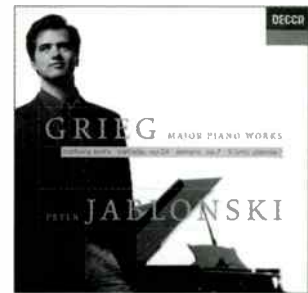
In this setting, Carver achieved a sublime marriage of music and liturgy and this is brought home in the performance which has an arresting intensity. Harry Christophers and his choirs sustain a wonderful balance between maintaining the underlying, slow-moving, almost mesmeric pulse while illuminating and highlighting

the contrapuntal lines and textual detail. Wedded to a finely-balanced sound quality, this also allows those intimate passages scored for smaller vocal groupings to shine through, such as in the Credo.

Something of a choral jewel, the motet O Bone Jesu, which James IV had sung at his private prayers, exemplifies the idiomatic qualities of Carver's composing style which, while owing much to the model of the Eton Choirbook, has several features characteristic of the Scottish tradition of the period.

The provenance of the anonymous seven-part Magnificat which is to be found in Robert Carver's own choirbook (now part of the collection of the National Library in Edinburgh) is uncertain, but the style suggests it is of English origin. It may have been added to the repertoire of Carver's choir in Stirling after the marriage of his Scottish monarch to one of the daughters of Henry Tudor (Henry VII).

The contrast with Carver's own compositions is marked (the emotional range is comparatively limited) but, as with the other works here, The Sixteen's passionate rendition makes a cast-iron case for its inclusion.



EDVARD GRIEG
Sonata in E minor, Op7/Ballade in G minor, Op24/Holberg Suite (original piano version), Op40/Lyric Pieces
Peter Jablonski, piano
DECCA 455 631-2 (DDD/77.34)

The youthful Peter Jablonski makes a surprisingly convincing case for Grieg's piano music; surprising because it is fashionable these days to pigeon-hole the Norwegian composer as little more than a miniaturist with an ear for a good melody. These assertions are both valid - Grieg was happiest when working in small musical forms - but, as Jablonski demonstrates, tuneful doesn't necessarily equate with insubstantial. This is borne out by the Ballade Op24 of 1875-76 which, despite its title, is actually a set of 14 variations on a Norwegian Folk song (Grieg was an

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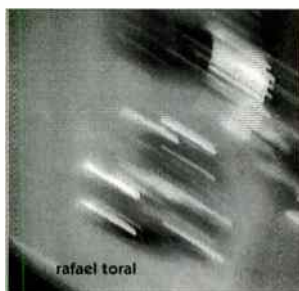
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JAZZ



RAFAEL TORAL
WAVE FIELD
 DEXTER'S CIGAR DEX14

Toral sounds so different on *Wave Field* that I can hardly believe it's the same musician - and I can think of no greater accolade. The album is released on another musician-owned label, that of Jim O'Rourke (ah, there's that name again). *Dexter's Cigar* is a reissue label which seems to be dedicated to neglected work by ground-breaking guitarists. It's already released work by British Improv-godfather Derek Bailey, introspective neo-Blues player Loren Mazzacane Connors and Californian avant-Surf improviser Henry Kaiser. So this reissue of Toral's 1995 CD, originally released on Moneyland (if that means anything to anyone, and if it does, please share your knowledge with this hapless

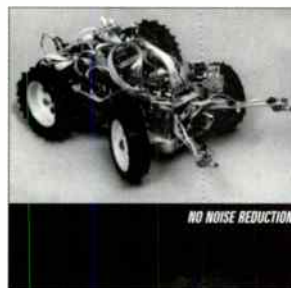
writer!) finds Toral in some pretty awesome company. I'd say the album lives up to it.

The territory in which he's working here is hardly new. Toral feeds the signal from an electric guitar through a long chain of FX - wahs, filters, delays - to produce seemingly endless, static drones. Recent years, and the whole Ambient explosion, have seen a slew of guitarists from Rock and Jazz using similar working methods, among them, say, Improv-Thrash trio OLD's Jim Plotkin, former *Ambitious Lovers'* keyboardist Peter Scherer, Main's Robert Hampson and the formerly noisy Japanese player KK Null.

Toral carves out altogether different territory from these players and composers though. Part of his own sleeve notes hint at this: "The *Wave Field* is located somewhere in a faraway region of the Ambient territory, close to the frontier with a swampy area where abstract vibrations from liquid rock are solved under noise-charged clouds echoing some electrical irradiation". This deliberate confusion of formal description of the music and whimsical fake geography is crucial, as *Wave Field's* three long pieces (the

longest, the album's opener, runs to just over half an hour, so CD has a purpose after all!) somehow summon up a vivid sense of actual space, something they have in common with Jon Hassell's on-going *Fourth World* project, or the Brian Eno of *On Land* and *Thursday Afternoon*. This latter album was particularly recalled for me by *Wave Field*, with its similar shimmering ecstasy, the aural equivalent of the play of bright sunlight across the surface of water.

If you find *Chasing Sonic Booms'* harsh Improv a little hard to take, then try *Wave Field*.



NO NOISE REDUCTION
NO NOISE REDUCTION
 ANANANA NNN001

The third part of the Portuguese puzzle is supplied

by this debut disc from No Noise Reduction. No Noise Reduction is the duo Toral has created with his fellow traveller on the Jazz road, Paulo Feliciano.

No Noise Records approach their own hugely unique form of improvising almost as laboratory-bound boffins, albeit boffins with an altogether unhealthy interest in trashy toys and extreme sounds. The album's sleeve notes are almost a parody of lab-notes: "Several two-dollar sound-generating electronic toys, such as laser gun, mobile telephone or karaoke beatbox, were opened and modified." And so on. (Tellingly, the duo term themselves the "No Noise Reduction Research Team").

The album consists of pieces performed and composed for broadcast on Portuguese radio, for Lisbon's XFM (which we can only assume is, er, rather different from London's), Rádio Universidade de Coimbra and Obidos' Rádio Litoral Oeste. I won't say that I'm jealous, but, well actually, no, I will say that I'm jealous. The idea of these pieces really making it out onto the airwaves anywhere is pretty mouth-watering●

JAZZ

by Simon Hopkins



RAFAEL TORAL
CHASING SONIC BOOMS
ECSTATIC PEACE! E#33

Until this year, I couldn't honestly say that Portugal had struck me as much of a home for cutting-edge Jazz or Improvisation. That began to change when I first heard that my colleague, the improvising musician, composer/sound-scaper and music historian David Toop had been commissioned to put together music for a daily show at this Summer's Lisbon Expo. Then I happened across the work of the young Portuguese guitar player Rafael Toral. As it turned out, these revelations were not unrelated, as Toral, along with his partner in the group No Noise Reduction (see below) are working on the Expo as well.

Of his three CDs here, *Chasing Sonic Booms* - released through Sonic Youth guitar player Thurston Moore's highly eclectic Ecstatic Peace! label - is perhaps the closest to the heart of what we cover here.

The album brings together various live and mainly

collaborative improvisations recorded either in concert or for radio broadcast between 1994 and 1996. They paint a very different picture from the Toral heard on his own solo albums. Here his playing is altogether more fractured, less concerned with over-arching, open-ended drones than with highly episodic Improv. Because of his overall approach, using the instrument more as a sound source for manipulation than as a device for producing specific pitches and chords, his improvising recalls more the work of such pioneering guitar abusers as Keith Rowe, Hans Reichel and (more contemporary, and therefore more apt) Jim O'Rourke.

O'Rourke, arguably one of the most important musicians of his generation and certainly one of its most innovative guitar players, is featured here on two pieces, deferring to Toral's guitar playing with the accordion, hardly a mainstay of the Improv arsenal. These pieces are among the album's best, moving from edgy calm to moments of ferocious, violent energy. Elsewhere, Toral plays with violinist Jane Henry, treated-acoustic-guitar player Manuel Rota and accordionist (there it is again!) Waldo Riedl.

All in all, he reveals himself as a superbly adaptive improviser, and I for one am keen to see him perform music like this in the company of these or any other equal players (what a pity that Derek

Bailey no longer runs the annual Company Festival - but that's another matter). If the music here is unsettlingly difficult, it certainly bears up to repeated listening.



RICHARD YOUNGS
ADVENT
TABLE OF THE ELEMENTS
NB41 CD

It's fitting that the prolific and somewhat prodigious young Glaswegian composer Richard Youngs has found, after a half-decade of releases through sundry underground vinyl-only labels, a more permanent home with the US Table Of The Elements. Of all the labels to have emerged in the '90s, TOTE stands out for exploring the poles of experimental composition and brutally austere Folk music, and the many surprising ways in which they interact. And this is the very path Youngs has been following since he first started working with tape loops at the age of 11.

This release sees the first appearance on CD, in its complete form, of Youngs'

1988 piece *Advent*. If it's an utterly daunting album, it's also about as direct an introduction to Youngs' peculiar art as one could get at this stage.

Advent is a suite of long, highly minimalistic pieces built around a single five-note piano phrase played with an unvarying psychotic stamina. Over this phrase, piece by piece, Youngs adds either his own voice (in itself an extraordinary sound, a strangled Folk cry that's somewhere between Martyn Bates and Robert Wyatt, yet like neither), saxophone phrases which owe far more to Folk traditions in pipe playing than to Jazz or Improvisation, and lo-fi electronic screeches and scrapings, sounds which nod towards modish interest in Krautrock or *Musique Concrete* yet which, again, somehow hint at hidden ancient melodies.

Not that these elements are at any point stacked up against each other. Instead, Youngs sticks to a rigorously minimal logic. This in itself, in tandem with Youngs' choice of stern sound sources, makes *Advent*, without doubt, a 'difficult' record, or at the very least a superficially unyielding one. However, the sense of uncomfortable trance it yields to rapt attention helps elucidate the comparisons Youngs has already drawn - admittedly a tad enthusiastically - to La Monte Young and Tony Conrad.



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

DANCE & AMBIENT

RECORD OF THE MONTH

DANCE NATION 5
PETE TONG AND BOY GEORGE
 MINISTRY OF SOUND
 DNCDS

Pete Tong may be the best known Dance DJ on the radio but he's never really been one to mix records. So when it comes to the first half of Dance Nation 5 there's an element of intrigue - how will the man named after a hair-styling product present a 15-track play-list without the use of a microphone? The answer is, of course, silently, but smoothly too. And the same goes for Boy George (another celeb who's not exactly famed for his cross-fading technique) on CD number two. Yep, the mixing's fine - though not hugely imaginative - and the pace of both CDs is good.

On Tong's disc we open with the unexpected 'Brimful Of Asha' which has been beefed-up by ex-Housemartin Norman Cook. Moving through a brief phase of Tuff



Jam/Sommore-style Speed Garage, side one warms up quickly with the aid of Johnny Dangerous' abusive but pleasurable 'Beat That Bitch'. Z-Factor's 'Keep Pushing' bumps and grinds the proceedings into full force just as Tong drops into a set of infectious anthems of the Da Hool kind.

Boy George's selection is

equally respectable, if a little more middle-of-the-road and softer. Check his chosen tunes on the second CD for Prodigy, Black Grape and De La-cy's 'Hideaway'.

Reading like a typical Radio 1 play-list of '97/'98, Dance Nation is about as mainstream as you get - but don't let that put you off. This is a fine collection of tunes

that you will recognise but not necessarily know, tunes that put a smile on your face and make you wish your living room was a crowded dance floor. Get yourself a copy and just try to sit still.

DANCE NATION 5 GIVE-AWAY

If you don't have the readies necessary to purchase a copy of this worthy M.O.D. compilation, you could win yourself one of the five we're giving away free instead. All you have to do is answer the easy question below and post the answer to our usual competition address (see p34 for more details) on the back of a postcard.

QUESTION: Johnny Dangerous' 'Beat That Bitch' is included on Dance Nation 5. Which other group also featuring on this album released a song with a similarly controversial title? The five winners will be chosen on June 4th and their names printed in the August issue of Hi-Fi World.

Scott knows what sounds people want to hear, and exactly when they want to hear 'em.

King Of Disco' will no doubt be a well-placed and popular album for its Garagey vocals, phat bass beats, kooky

samples and (very) mellow outlook. Track four, 'Solar', for example, blends all these elements with quirky scratching and distorted, Portishead-style strings. 'Radio', a catchy track that has already featured on other

compilation CDs, is another corker with profound film-soundtrack samples and a real Fifties science-fiction feel to it. 'Midway' takes a haunting melody and injects that special Hip-Hop beat. In fact, the whole album is the same -

pure Funk, poetic samples of dialogue and meaty bass all neatly laid out around a traditional Hip-Hop core. Grab yer skateboard; LoopTroop's latest is going to be a great summer soundtrack●

DANCE & AMBIENT

by Sara Davis & Leon Palmer

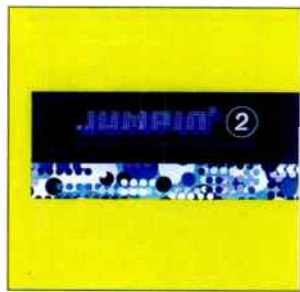


QUIETMAN
SHHHH
PLATIPUS PLAT40CD

Run-of-the-mill Ambient albums have been overlooked recently but now a production has come to light that's so smooth it warrants a much closer inspection. Featuring an Ambient and a Trance CD, this pack has some extreme bpm levels but it's the more down-tempo numbers that deserve a mention.

Hailing from the Trance outfit Friends, Lovers And Family, Quietman have put their collaborations with Coldcut and Sven Vath on the back burner and created music from a different plane altogether. As the name suggests, this is pure, unadulterated and uncomplicated Ambient. Quietman's Shhhh style is so relaxed it's horizontal and, while the mood is definitely the brighter side of ponderous, 'uplifting' is stretching it a bit. The same can't be said of the Trance CD, a hyperactive foil containing three recent club hits designed to catch your attention.

However it's the mellower CD which should be of more benefit to the stressed-out masses. Sweet melodies and soothing chords wash the listener along with wave after wave of introspective Ambient. At nearly ten minutes long, 'Passages' is a highlight, its magical developments of light Electronica masterfully controlled so as not to upset your lobes in any way. 'Genetic Drift' and 'Summit Temple' give us the shimmering moodiness associated with spaced-out Ambient. On a journey which has more ups than downs, however, once you've chilled your way across these soundscapes you'll feel all the better for it.



VARIOUS ARTISTS
JUMPIN' 2
HARMLESS HURTC D 006

Together on a compilation for the first time, the funky Disco tracks showcased here would cost a fortune - if you could find them. Luckily, long-deleted '70s and early '80s classics are being made more

accessible now and this volume, cashing in quickly on the success of the original *Jumpin'*, presents some of the finest music from the trailblazers of modern Dance music in one package.

The people at Harmless have realised there's a market for the older generation of early '80s clubbers who are still young enough to give this celebratory style of Disco a revival. Like it or not, most of these tracks have been successfully re-mixed or sampled of late. Depending on your point of view you are sure to spot a descendant of one of your favourite/most irritating House tunes in here somewhere.

As Michelle Weeks' 1997 Garage-style mimicking of 'Moment Of My Life' hits the Dance charts, some people will be able proudly to say, "I've got the 'Inner Life 82' original featured here". On the other hand, the green and uninitiated will instantly recognise Harvey Mason's 'Groovin' You', funkier than the Gusto remix and with authentic hand-claps! Also, Roy Ayers' 'Sweet Dreams', a wonderfully-arranged Disco favourite, has been re-recorded for last year's smash, *Nu Yorican Soul* - sound familiar?

So whether these musicians are ahead of their time or just eternal nostalgics, the Dance music of today certainly seems heavily influenced by this kind of good-taste Disco, just as

happened when Garage first emerged 10 years ago. But even without the publicity from modern remixes these tracks are funky enough to stand alone.



LOOP TROOP
KING OF DISCOIN'
DIFFERENT DRUMMER

So Trip-Hop is no longer cool, Run DMC have brought Break-Beat back into vogue and now LoopTroop release this CD as if to suggest that the time is ripe for a Hip-Hop revival. No, this isn't a new breakfast cereal, it's Dub outfit LoopTroop aka Scott Tinsley, and the album's out this month.

As an ex-DJ, producer and club promoter, our trooper Scott isn't exactly an old-skool Hip-Hop king. In fact, most of his production credits rest in House/Garage remix projects for artists like Tony di Bart, Reel to Reel and Gabrielle. But with 10 years of experience in the music industry - running free parties as well as working in the biz - it would be fair to say that

ROCK & POP

the Spice Girls, they share little in common. Where the Spices have that aggressive 'me, me, me' approach: "I'll tell you what I want," etc, the style of All Saints is much more laid back and their music mostly based in West Indian culture.

What's more, they've worked their way up the ladder and are, in short, the real thing. They were not manufactured by the Hand of Wad, like the Spice Girls et al, but came about through their own endeavours. And, like the music, they have more empathy with girls of their generation than the Spices ever could. Down-to-earthness rather than posture is the catch phrase here.

First single, 'I Know Where It's At', hit number four last September and showed exactly what they could do, something they demonstrate leisurely on so many successive tracks here.

The album, mainly an irresistible blend of Pop and Hip-Hop, dovetailing neatly between American Rap and Swingbeat, is actually quite impressive. Occasionally Sister Sledge Disco in style, this offering is also somewhat funky. And there are some real surprises, The Red Hot Chili Peppers' 'Under The Bridge', for instance.

Opening with the ambling and Hip-Hoppy 'Never Ever' is a promising start. Built simply around a drum sample and bassline, the song soon develops its own structure and melody. Telling the story of a jilted love returning to get her own back, it unfolds like the

Shangri-Las' 'Leader Of The Pack' (remember them?) with all the girls providing a choral uplift to storming effect.

The All Saints appeal lies generally in their sassiness, female intuition and the evident control they have over their own lives. Strong though their personalities are, it is a welcome relief that not once on this release do they encroach on the territory marked by the likes of warbling man-haters in the Alanis Morissette mould. They are here to celebrate life and to enjoy a man when it takes their fancy - you only have to listen to the Salt 'n' Pepperish 'Bootie Call' to recognise this.

Girls on top, indeed. The music speaks to a generation of confident, attractive girls who take charge of their lives rather than simply 'flaunting' it and this is, of course, what they are all about.



MADONNA
RAY OF LIGHT
WARNER 9362468472

It's been a long time since Madonna's last release, such a long time that many had written her off. But in the four years since *Bedtime Stories*, the Material Girl - now

reportedly worth around £30m - has had a child, gone through a spiritual rebirth and seen her way through countless lovers, the latest an English beau.

It's a lot to take on board for a girl whose playful artistry always depended on youth, vitality and vigorous sexual workouts. And let's face it, these days she ain't looking so young (she's actually a stone's throw from 40 years old).

One thing Madonna will never lose though is her musical talent, and *Ray Of Light*, oddly and admirably, is as good a work as anything she has done before. Nowadays she seems more focused, more certain of herself and more settled than ever before. After all, this was a woman who was once just as likely to reveal her navel (the coffee-table book *Sex*) as parade her catholic guilt complexes in songs such as 'Like A Prayer.'

The tracks on *Ray Of Light* show these shenanigans have now been unequivocally ditched for the more esoteric teachings of The Kabbalah and Hinduism, which today dominate her world. Universal truths and spirituality are her new friends.

Is this just another face to a woman with a cast of thousands, or something less contrived - a journey to find her real self? Whatever, the former basque-toting Boadicea has found a new maturity to her work and returned with her most unified album to date. But, in the process she has relinquished

the funky, uplifting and warm side to her nature, and while the tracks may groove, the climate is distinctly chillier.

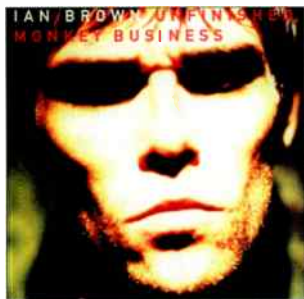
To put this in context, it has been her much-vaunted collaboration with William Orbit, the Techno wunderkind, that has given her ideas their explicit musical direction. Hence opener 'Drowned World' is nothing we would traditionally have expected. It's a reflective song suspended in Electronica, drum loops and fragmented static electricity, Madonna doing her best to put all those aromatherapy sessions into a musical form. It works well, as does 'Swim' where she draws an analogy between swimming to the bottom of the ocean and the struggle to find herself, a theme which constantly repeats itself on the album.

The Orbit-engineered slabs of digital Trance are in force at all times, yet there are many other distracting influences throughout *Ray Of Light*. There for all to see are strong traces of Bjork in the airy, wispy textures and the heavy dose of violins and breakbeats, particularly evident on the single 'Frozen'.

HiNRG for the '90s rears up in 'Sky Fits Heaven' and the title track 'Ray Of Light', a steamroller of a song which roughly awakens the audience from their stupor, pleasant though it may have been. It evokes all those '70s Donna Summer/Giorgio Moroder collaborations and proves that at least Madonna has not entirely forgotten her Disco

ROCK & POP

by Jon Clarke & Stuart Lenz



IAN BROWN
UNFINISHED MONKEY BUSINESS

POLYDOR 539 565-2

It's been a long time since Madchester and the Monkey Man Ian Brown has done well to cling on. When the now-legendary Stone Roses packed it all in last year, after their long-awaited second album failed to make the grade, things looked decidedly ugly for Brown. It was guitarist John Squire who had really made that spine-tingling Roses sound; Brown had merely wheezed over the top of it. If it hadn't been for his almost demi-god status and grungey Rock-star looks, he probably wouldn't have had a chance.

It's been a classic roller-coaster ride for Brown over the last decade. From the crowning glory of the Roses' blow-away Spike Island concert to the miserable lows of label in-fighting, it was the flawed Reading festival caper in 1995 that finally blew the flame out of one of Blighty's finest acts. And the only real victim it seemed was Ian Brown, the hapless vocalist. So, stepping back from the abyss, he has fortunately discovered an artistic trait which most people assumed

belonged solely to guitarist John Squire, now of The Seahorses.

Brown's haunted simian features, which stare out from the album cover, show that the task has not been easy. He has, to be blunt, got the looks of a monkey. And this much he admits. Still, *Unfinished Monkey Business* starts promisingly enough with a psychedelic gesture in the shape of single 'My Star', and quite a little gem it is too. Delving into the realms of David Bowie's 'Space Oddity', the infectious guitars are punctuated by interesting samples of astronauts.

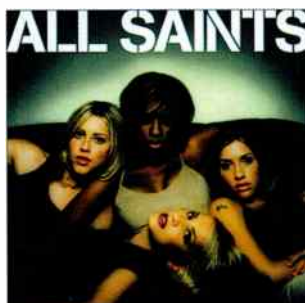
But before the delights of space travel can be further explored, Brown touches down in some familiar, earthy Funk with 'Can't See Me', which resonates with all the charm of The Roses' 'Fool's Gold' and was, we learn, co-written with Mani and Reni before the split. There on in things start to go pear-shaped, however.

What follows is sadly a succession of half-baked ideas that never quite work out. We are offered a quasi-Led Zeppelin boneshaker in 'Ice Cold Cube', followed by an acoustic lament, 'Sunshine', which sounds as if Ian is nursing a monster hangover. Then it's 'Lions', a strange track doing its best to come over all spacey and Krautrocky by featuring some heavily-processed guitar, which, alas, fails to go anywhere. It is not until 'Corpses', undeniably the stand-out track, that things pick up again. Grooving along

nicely, Aziz Ibrahim's flickering guitar licks compete any day with a John Squire special, while the Monkey Man croons and simpers like the Brown of old.

The remaining efforts variously see Ian Brown levelling accusations of betrayal at his former friend and comrade in arms ('What Happened To Ya?') and then underscoring the falling-out by painting him as a sad figure, content with his \$60 bag (?) and cheap limousine in 'Deep Pile Dreams'.

All in all the songs have a demoish, DIY feel to them and seem to act as a catharsis for Ian. And while they're generally a bit too down-beat and sullen, it's not a bad debut solo effort. Not a touch on the Roses but a good deal better than anything The Seahorses have thrown at us, the Monkey Man shows signs that he doesn't intend to be knocked out of his tree. For now, at least.



ALL SAINTS
ALL SAINTS

LONDON RECORDS 828979.2

All Saints Road, W11, former

'front line' and site of the infamous Mangrove Cafe, strategy HQ of many an '80s riot and also, lest it be forgotten, the location of the famous Profumo affair, is sadly now more famous for a teen Pop band.

While Shaznay, Nicky, Natalie and Mel - recent winners of two BRIT Awards for best single and best video - might like to sport the trendy Notting Hill badge, their sound is much more Oxford Street. This is music for Saturday shoppers on the raz, pocket-money in hand. It is as throwaway as a pair of leg warmers and, while often fun and funky, it's nothing to challenge the industry's greats.

For the sound captured by All Saints' eponymous debut does not reverberate with revolution. They are not The Clash, unsurprisingly, and this is absolutely not Britpop. What it is, however, is on the pulse, and it positively and undeniably reeks of London, even if this comes via France, in Mel's case, and Canada and the States for the Appleton sisters.

The girls know how to sing, unlike numerous mass-market teen bands of late, and they have an understanding of Soul and Rap that the Spice Girls, for example, could only dream of. On top of that they're cute, of that there is no doubt, even if in reality their egos have swelled rather large of late.

While it's tempting to compare the streetwise nature of these girls with the all-conquering feminist bluster of

remember which one it is off the top of my head. With this recording you can actually hear the true percussive nature of the instrument and visualise a grand piano, not a smaller instrument.

Acoustic Blues give you a sense of how crudely, or, occasionally, how brilliantly some pieces are recorded. In terms of enjoyment I listen to anything that sounds good. By that I don't mean hi-fi-wise but a piece that's well played. I don't care what it is - Blues, Jazz, Rock, Classical. In fact, the only genre I've never managed to get into is Punk.

KB: Are there any design decisions which you've taken that you'd change with experience and hindsight?

TM: Yes, definitely. I would've made the Darius active right from the start. My original reason for producing the Darius was solely for listening to the Xerxes while I was fine tuning certain things. Two or three of the then-potential dealers for Roksan who liked the Xerxes also got to hear the Darius and liked them so much they persuaded me to produce them.

The first passive crossover design had a very hard job to weave together those drive units. As a result, over the years we carried on refining it to the point where the latest one goes a long way to answering criticisms of coloration and so on. However, properly set-up, the Darius came to life like no other 'speaker I know.

Imagine what a pair of Darius would sound like with a Caspian amp in each box - it would be brilliant! You could design it as a floor stander with the amps and crossovers built into the base. In fact, maybe I'll do that!

What I would also like to design is a better motor for the turntables because that would make a massive difference. In order to make a motor that good though you'd need to manufacture it by the million to make it feasible, and I don't think other people who'd use the motor in different applications would be very happy to

pay a lot more for a silent, smoother unit. It wouldn't make a

difference to them.

KB: Which country do you think leads the way in terms of innovative hi-fi?

TM: I think one of the most influential countries in hi-fi is probably the UK. There's a lot of work that goes on behind the scenes involving pure engineering. Even on the digital side, we have companies right at the cutting edge. I'm not saying UK hi-fi is necessarily the best sounding stuff around, but in terms of innovation and really clever ideas this country is one of the leaders.

KB: Do you have any easy tips for our readers to improve the sound of their systems?

TM: I don't know about tips as each system is different. I mean, yes, things like decent supports and stands make a difference. But this is where a good specialist dealer comes in. They can see the home environment and make the system perform at its best within those surroundings.

The first thing to look at when you set your system up at home is the positioning of the 'speakers. Find the place where they least interact with the room. If your 'speakers are not working at their best, there is no way that you can fine-tune and set-up the rest of the system.

KB: How much more sound quality do you think can be squeezed out of CD and LP?

TM: On records you can never pick up all the information that is in the groove so you can forever improve it. On CD you can argue that, if you've read all the 0s and 1s, you've got everything. But it isn't as simple as that. You still have all the number crunching that goes on and the buffering, the induced noises and unwanted interferences that come from tracking, spinning the disc, the clocks and the grounds. There are billions of things you can improve. If someone were to tell me that a CD player can't be improved, I'd think they needed their head examined. CD and CD players are so primitive in a way that it's quite unbelievable - it can be improved in every aspect. Whether it is financially feasible to do so at the fundamental level though is a different matter.

KB: What future digital format looks the most promising for audiophiles - DVD, DSD, etc - and which one do you think will succeed?

TM: I don't know, it's not a technical question. This whole thing is so much bigger than the specialist hi-fi industry. There are issues such as piracy, copyright, royalties and big company politics. The matter of which system is technically better doesn't enter the equation. None of the formats may materialise or maybe all of them will. But I hope when the dust settles the winning format is a good stepping stone for making hi-fi better.



Roksan's first component, the Xerxes turntable, along with the Artemiz arm and Shiraz cartridge.

KB: What is Roksan's underlying design philosophy?

TM: There is not just one concept but two. The first is to bring the pleasure of well-reproduced music into the home. Ideally people would be able to go and listen to live music on demand, but obviously this isn't always possible. The second concept is that of tackling the problem of constructing hi-fi in a scientific and structured manner.

Every decision we take is for a specific reason. I have never said my products are the best in every respect. What I always say is that this product is designed to do a specific job and within that brief it achieves its goal. If I think I can make something better than someone else, I'll do it. If not, I won't.

KB: Which products do you admire and why?

TM: I love the Ortofon SPU cartridge. Then there's this small German amp manufacturer called Omtec. I've always admired his designs. They are weird in certain ways, and I don't agree with some aspects of his designs, but he really does care.

We had a pair of CA25s, which were his 25W monobloc amps, and when used with the Darius they sounded great. I had tried Krells, Audio Research, Accuphase, you name it, but this little amplifier bettered them all in terms of listenability. It was this musicality that encouraged us to see if we could do better.

I admire EMT's TSD 15 cartridge too. We actually use a modified version of its generator in the Shiraz.

KB: How important to you are a component's looks?

TM: Very important, as long as the product looks functional and not frivolous. How something looks isn't just down to its design though; execution is also an important part of it. It even comes down to things like the standard of machining or type of paint.

I think some products we've made could've looked a heck of a lot better but you've got to look at their selling price and pick the best compromise. Even so, I think Roksan products have a certain charm, and in general people like the way they look.

KB: What lessons do you think vintage hi-fi holds for today's designers?

TM: There is a book called *The Past Is A Torch Of The Future*. I think if you have no appreciation of the past, you're going to have some serious problems. But equally, if you don't stick your neck out and do something innovative, then that's just as bad. Things have got to advance. People shouldn't live in the past but should value it and learn from it. And then change. Without change one might as well be dead.

KB: Do you think direct-drive turntables were a missed opportunity?

TM: No I don't. It's not ideal to put the platter on the motor. Any motor, in order to rotate, requires certain



Roksan's Darius loudspeakers suspended their tweeters on springs for better treble.

parameters to be taken into account for its bearing design - for example, weight or energy input. The same applies to the platter bearing. You are probably better off designing both on their own and optimising the individual design parameters.

The real reason the Japanese companies embraced direct drive was to reduce cost. Accurate drive belts are both difficult and expensive to manufacture and require regular replacement. With belt drive, the motor pulley and inner platter have to be machined very precisely, all of which is, once again, expensive.

Of course, with development they managed to get a reasonably good sound from direct drive, but it's highly debatable if the starting point was the right one. You can liken the design process to a journey of a thousand miles: it's a long way to go but it starts off with just one step. If that first step is in the wrong direction, you're never going to get there.

KB: What do you think are the most common failings in today's hi-fi?

TM: I think you can only judge something a failure or not depending on what the designer was actually trying to do. If it achieves his aims, then it has to be counted a success regardless of what you think of the product. It may not be for you but someone else could love it.

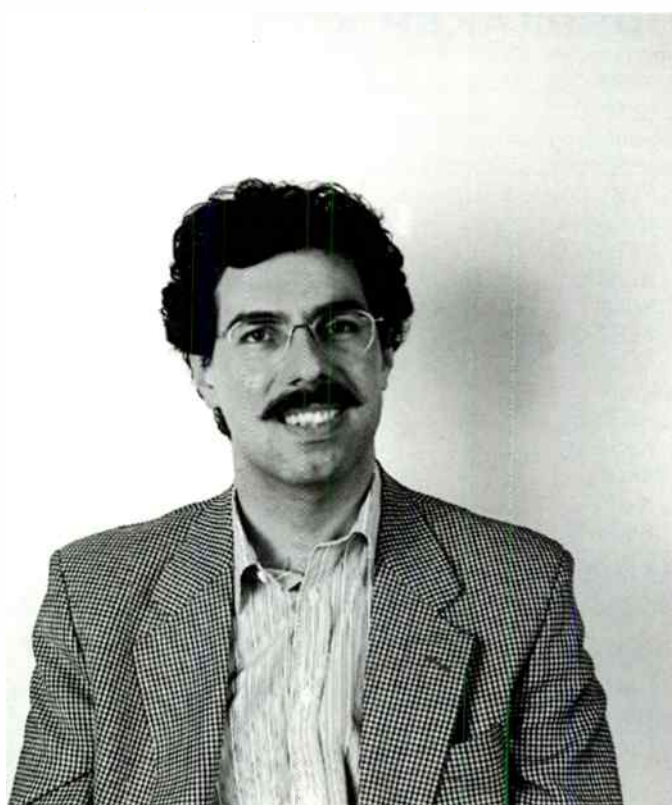
KB: What sort of music do you enjoy and are there any particular pieces that you use for testing?

TM: I use quite a few test pieces to develop and improve equipment. It depends on which aspect of the performance of the product I am testing. For example, I use Pink Floyd's *Division Bell* and Roger Water's *Amused To Death* for imaging because they are recorded in Q Sound. I also use *Amused To Death* for setting up 'speakers in the room.

Stevie Ray Vaughan's *'Tin Pan Alley'* is good too, as is a particular Mozart piano concerto, but I can't

ROKSAN

Ketan Bharadia speaks to Roksan's inventive head designer, Touraj Moghaddam.



Roksan is a hi-fi company known for its innovative engineering solutions to complex problems. Recently, the company, which started off as a turntable specialist, has made the transition to system manufacturer with the Caspian range, a process in which many others have failed. We spoke to co-founder and head designer Touraj Moghaddam to find out about the man behind many of the products.

Ketan Bharadia: How did Roksan come into being?

Touraj Moghaddam: It all started because I was dissatisfied with the sound my system made. I had a top-spec. Linn/Naim tri-amped system at the time but it just didn't sound as good as I thought it should've done. After much investigation I concluded it was the Sondek letting the side down. This wasn't because it was a bad deck - in fact, out of all the decks I listened to at the time, it was the best. But it was this that first set me off researching turntable design and trying to figure out what

differentiates a good deck from a bad one. I was a mechanical engineering student at the time and did my final year thesis on a vertical-axis wind turbine which taught me a lot about structures. Later, when I was doing research on a high-speed wind turbine the measured results on the turbine didn't match mathematical predictions: it turned out the actual measurement method wasn't correct. This is what got me interested in Metrology - the study of measurement - and started me thinking about designing a turntable which could accurately measure the grooves of a record with respect to time.

The next stage was building a deck for myself. Some of my friends heard it and liked it enough to buy one. After that the idea of putting the turntable into production came about. That's how the Xerxes was created and Roksan born.

KB: There are some interesting component names in your range. Where do they come from?

TM: The names come from Persian history, from the Achaemenian era which I love. The Persians at that time were a highly advanced civilisation which had real vision and a great sense of morality - for example, there were no slaves. Xerxes and Darius were two of their kings. Roksan is from Roxanne who was a Persian princess but the name is shortened and spelt with a k to give it a stronger edge.

As for Artemiz, that's an interesting story. There was a sea battle between the Persians and the Greeks. The Persian king was watching his fleet lose; only one ship was doing well, the one captained by a woman called Artemiz. Messages were sent to the rest of the fleet to follow this ship's tactics and the Greeks were defeated. Artemiz was later made head of the navy.

KB: How did you originally become interested in hi-fi?

TM: I've loved music for as long as I can remember and I've also loved making things. Even at three-and-a-half years old I used to make toys and open up things just to see how they worked. I've always been fascinated by machines and their operation.

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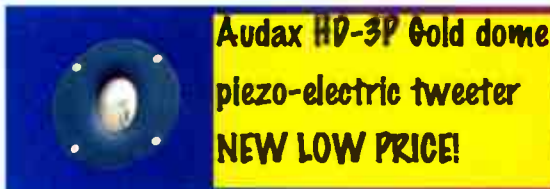
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Mini separates - 18 months ago the words were on everyone's lips, but since then precious little has happened to change the status quo in hi-fi land. The boxes out there in systems across the land are still bulky and black. A year or so ago, I was among many keen to see Mini separates succeed as they seemed to offer all things to all audiophiles. For the hi-fi literati, there would still be the excellent engineering and sound quality mandatory for happy listening. Arguably more importantly, for those not interested in hi-fi per se, these components offered a feasible alternative to the various 'lifestyle' and Midi systems thanks to their domestically-acceptable aesthetics and decent sound. It all added up to a fine way of spreading the good word about hi-fi separates.

But it hasn't really happened. There are, of course, the respected smaller-is-better manufacturers like Cyrus, Meridian, Quad and Linn who have long been travelling the Mini path. Then, in the mass market, Denon and Teac have come up with popular ranges of dinky separates. However, it's these same companies producing the goods now who were also doing so 18 months ago - where are the eagerly-anticipated new Midi arrivals?

A quick glance at the major players on the separates scene will tell you that precious little is changing size-wise. Arcam, NAD, Rotel, Cambridge, Sony, Technics, Pioneer, Kenwood and Yamaha either have no Mini separates on their books at all or, if they do, then they're still comprehensively out-sold by all the standard equipment.

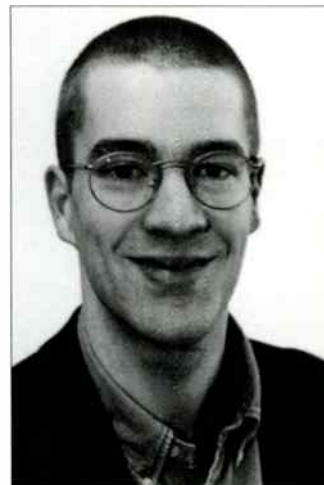
Of those listed above it's Sony who have come closest to offering a genuine choice. Even here, however, the Minis lose out. Two of Sony's MiniDisc players offer good examples. The MDS-JE510 and MDS-S38 are players of almost identical specification (excepting the fact that the '510 has a co-axial digital input) - they cost the same and possess the same features. The '38 is, in effect, a miniaturised '510. This doesn't stop the '38 being a pale shadow of the '510 when it comes to sales.

Public recognition is one of the reasons why, I believe, sales of Minis have been so disappointing. This is for two reasons, word of mouth and magazine reviews. Take the Sony MD players as examples again. Whenever reference is made to MiniDisc, whether it be in the specialist hi-fi press or the more general media, you can bet your bottom dollar that the picture reference will be that of a '510. As this is also the best selling machine, when people see their friend's MD machinery, it is most likely to be the full-size version. Hence anyone shopping for an MD recorder will already have a picture of the '510 in mind. And, from working in retail, I have seen that when this is the case the machine the customer usually walks out with is the '510, even when there's a choice of others on offer. So, as has often been said, Mini separates need an outstanding product that receives mass acclaim from all areas of the press and then

continues to dominate the sales chart after the initial marketing frenzy has died down.

There's another reason why smaller boxes haven't been quite as successful as many had hoped. Just take a look in the corner of your room and 'clock' your system. How does it look? The chances are you and your system will fall into one of two categories. Either you've been fortunate enough to buy your system in one fell swoop, or you've built it up over the years.

Now, if it's the latter, it will probably have been assembled with an eye to improving sound quality and synergy rather than aesthetics. Hence, you may have a piece of



Dominic Todd

Cyrus here and an item of Quad there, but a harmonious collection of Minis hasn't worked out to be the case because you enjoy your hi-fi and, most importantly, love the music it recreates. Even if you bought your system as a whole, you might not have been as concerned with the visuals as the sound quality anyway. Many choose a collection of

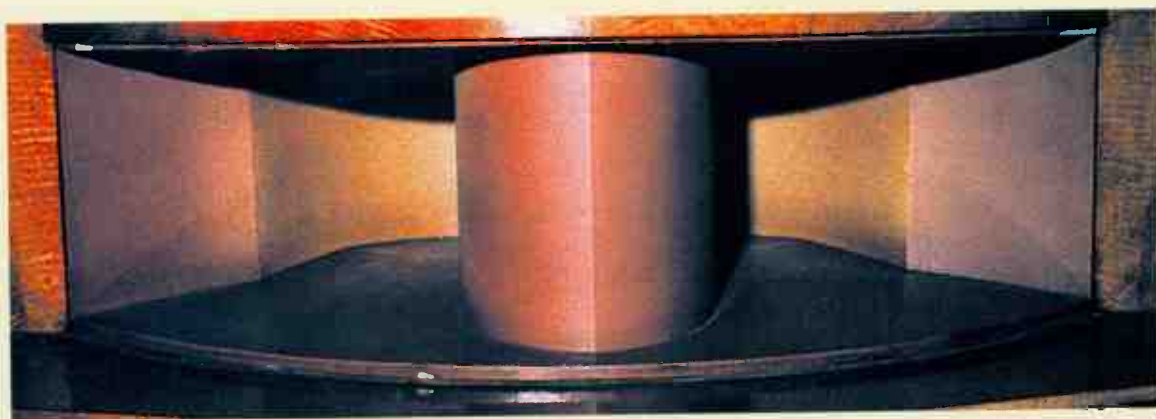
"A quick glance at the major players on the separates scene will tell you that precious little is changing size-wise."

boxes (each in their own unique shade of black and widths that are ever so slightly different) in order to obtain the sonic character and balance of features they're after.

So where does all this leave Mini separates? I think they'll have their day but it will take time. Unlike the lower end of the audio market, where a music centre turns to a stack which turns to a Midi which turns to a Mini within the space of a couple of seasons, trends in hi-fi separates take far longer to mature. For now, you can look forward to the continued supremacy of bulky black boxes. Give it another few years though and things could be quite different. Perhaps●

listener. The 'upper' horn covers the bulk of the audio band, its lower cut-off point down at around 100Hz. The bass horn covers the rest down to about 40Hz. The Hegeman is 105dB/watt efficient and will handle an amplifier of up to 10watts, so it's capable of delivering over 110dB in-room constantly. But because of the unique design of the horn, the sound carries well; you can go so far as to say the upper horn is a line source, but one spread horizontally rather than vertically (remember, this is still some seven years before Stereophonic records were made available, so the desired effect was to spread the sound as wide as possible).

The Hegeman weighs a ridiculous amount - I have an



The high-frequency horn was designed for wide horizontal dispersion in the days of mono recordings.

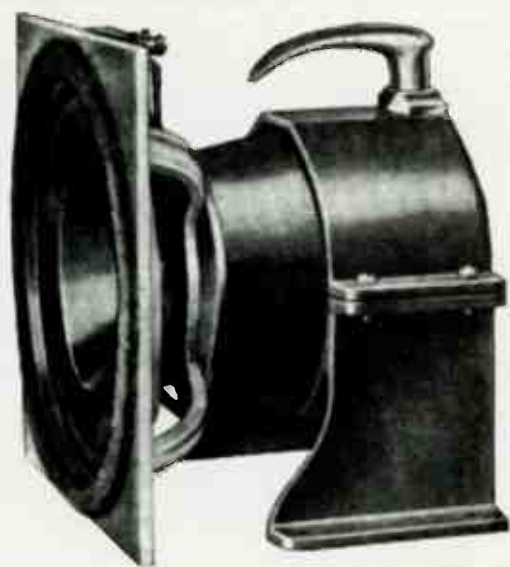
The biggest shock is the non-directionality. Hegeman must have done a lot of work on this, for wherever you sit in the room, the sound is excellent. This kind of dispersion sadly doesn't suit Stereo - the Hegeman is strictly a mono 'speaker. I only have one and I don't know quite where I would fit another, but I have heard stereo systems with smaller sound stages than this.

The PM4 drive unit sits in the middle of the plaster horn, pointing towards the back of the cabinet. This arrangement is what allows its excellent high-frequency dispersion. The wooden bass horn is taken from the rear of the unit (or the front of the cabinet if you prefer), fed down the folded bass horn and split into the illuminated mouth area.

At a cost of well over £100 the Hegeman was the most expensive loudspeaker ever to be offered on the UK market at the time. It was considerably more expensive in its day than the top-of-the-range Tannoy G.R.F. horn. Don't forget that Tannoy's modern equivalent, The Westminster, retails for over £10000.

Hegemans are, unfortunately, incredibly rare; before I came across this one, I had only ever seen one other example, and that was nearly 10 years ago. The serial number on this one is 18 and I doubt very much that Lowther built many more. It was in perfect condition, but sadly I had to leave it in store with someone in Huntingdon who managed to crack the plaster of paris horn in two. Even so, the sound is so good, and the 'speaker so rare, its value remains undiminished. The Hegeman is a tribute to both Lowther and Stuart Hegeman, its designer.

The vertical slats on either side of the lower cabinet hide the twin mouths of the bass horn.



The monstrous magnet on the rear of Lowther's PM4 driver endows it with massive sensitivity and superb sound quality.

iron-frame piano that's lighter! It's also top-heavy as the upper horn is made from Plaster of Paris. The biggest laugh I had with this 'speaker was with the AC mains socket on the back. When I first picked up the beast, I presumed it had a field-coil loudspeaker, and thus would require mains power. So very slowly I powered the thing up with a variac, but imagine my horror when I detected a dim glow at the bottom of the cabinet. I thought I had melted the driver! In reality, the loudspeaker has an incandescent light bulb in the rear of the wooden bass horn!

The Hegeman commands attention. Never mind its physical size and weight, or even the fact it lights up, the sound quality generated by this unit is simply one of the finest I have ever heard. It is totally effortless, has incredible treble power (something that modern-day dome tweeters can only dream about) and clean, genuine bass slam.



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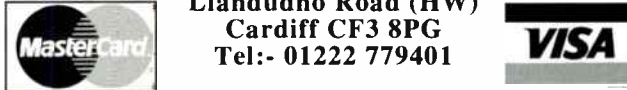
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VINTAGE VIRTUES

by Haden Boardman

Hi-fi, as we know it, really grew up quickly in post-war Britain. And back in the late 1940s and early 1950s, there were one or two frightfully expensive pieces of kit a budding connoisseur could spend his money on.

This has always amazed me. From the middle of World War II through until 1952, under the war-time 'Utility' act, the government of the day (under Gordon Russell, the designer of several rather ugly Murphy radio sets amongst other things!) was forced to limit supplies of wood and other raw materials, and set a pattern as to what kind of furniture could be manufactured. How Decca, Lowther and a good few other hi-fi manufacturers were even able to make their great landmark designs has always puzzled me.

Immediately post-war, Decca launched FFRR (Full Frequency Range Recording), and for the first time on recorded media, a high-frequency response past 10kHz could be reproduced in the home. Prior to the war, the best sound quality was available from AM radio, usually listened to on a TRF (Tuned Radio Frequency) or 'straight' set. This was followed by Columbia's 33 1/3rpm Microgroove recording technology (developed by a Mr Goldmark, a previous employee of Pye in Cambridge) and RCA's 45rpm single. Even in the early 1950s, the frequency response was capable of going higher than CD sources do today.

Garrard's 301 was the first of many high-quality transcription motors, capable of sufficiently quiet, stable performance to get the best from these records. There were tasty monaural pick-ups in the form of ribbons (Ferranti), moving irons (Decca) and moving coils (just about everyone else - Leak, Lowther and Ortofon's outrageously-priced pieces. Can you believe £27 for a pick-up head in the early 1950s?). On top of that there were amplifiers ranging from the classic Williamson, through Leaks, Lowthers, Dynatrons et al.

Loudspeaker technology had not really improved that much from before the War, and nearly everything that had been developed owed something to Western Electric in America. It was to be several years before Peter Walker came up with a working, manufacturable electrostatic. The one British exception was, of course, Lowther, who by now had the rights to the Voigt designs of the early 1930s. Voigt himself had moved to the



United States, finding it impossible to live in post-war England with a German surname. He continued developing his full-range loudspeaker but eventually lost contact with the factory, and Lowther became synonymous with Mr Donald Chave. Sadly, as both men are dead, this period in the Lowther-Voigt history remains a mystery. By 1951, the year of the 'Festival Of Britain', Lowther had employed American designer Stuart Hegeman (later of Harman/Kardon Citation fame) to come up with a flagship hi-fi "loud-speaking instrument".

Hail the Hegeman, one of the largest, heaviest loudspeakers I have ever had the privilege to use. It stands square at exactly 4ft. wide by 4ft. high, with a depth of 2ft. It has two large horns attached to a single Lowther PM4 drive unit, which points away from the

The huge Hegeman might look like a Wurlitzer but sounds far, far better!

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UP THE M1

Small can be beautiful reckons

Jon Marks of Tannoy's tiny Mercury m1 loudspeakers.

How small can real hi-fi 'speakers shrink before they end up as a little more than a pair of the bassless, high-volume headphones you so often find either side of a PC? A surprising amount is the answer in Tannoy's £120 Mercury m1s, designed to complete the systems where cabinets as large as their m2 siblings' represent a furniture overload.

Mercuries m1, 2 and 3 all have a 1in. soft-dome tweeter in common, in this case crossing over at 2.5kHz to a 5in. long-throw paper cone (6.5in. in the m2 and m3). Squeezing out the extra bass vital if a stand mounter is not to sound anaemic and lightweight is one of the narrowest reflex ports you'll set eyes on (it looks almost like a socket to take more loudspeaker cable!)

What makes the Mercuries different from most of the competition at this cut-throat price is their lack of plastic cabinet mouldings. Where Mission, Wharfedale et al go for mouldings front and rear, the Tannoy is particle-board throughout. This isn't the most high-tech of materials, but with panels as small as the m1s', it provides an unusually stiff and solid enclosure, which means fewer honks and quacks from the cabinet. A dinky front baffle should also mean better imaging. "Should" is the important word though, as many stand mounters of this size fall victim to their restricted budget and fail to capitalise on their potential due to cheap drivers and crossovers.

Mercifully, the Mercury m1s have escaped the worst ravages of the bean counters. Listening to them turned out to be an experience both uplifting and sobering; uplifting because they offer the kind of quality that is usually the province of more expensive components,

sobering because they make many of these pricier components sound overpriced.

To find out what the m1s could do, they were spiked onto open-frame Linn stands and driven by the Audio Analogue Puccini SE integrated as well as the Musical Fidelity A1001 and X-A200 monoblocs via Pentacone loudspeaker cable (oh for another pound or so on the Tannoys' cost if it meant bi-wire terminals).

The results of feeding with a decent digital signal from the Pink Triangle Litaural were rather satisfying. Chesky's sampler Volume 1 with its Latin tracks had the Tannoys pulling off the 'invisible 'speaker' trick that good miniatures are famous for. If the neighbours are out and you can explore the further reaches of your volume control, turn the lights off, close your eyes and then try to pinpoint the Tannoys' position. They won't go to head-banging levels, but a slightly larger dose of power brings greater solidity to their presentation.

Where many small drivers and boxes give up the ghost when asked to handle orchestral pieces, the m1s show their bottle and plough on regardless - they don't get ragged, rough or unpleasant, unless the recording is so inclined. The tweeter remains calm and collected however hard the string section labours, an ability rare outside of Mission's silk-domed models such as the 731 Pros.

Obviously, you wouldn't pick a pair of boxes like this if you wanted timpani or cannon to blow you across the room every time you listen to the 1812, but you won't end up constantly craving two more octaves at the bottom of the scale. The m1s' 5in. mid/bass firing through that small-bore but lengthy



port gives a firm foundation to all music, excepting perhaps the Dubbier side of Reggae. The only manner in which it betrays its size and cost is a mild reduction in dynamic swings that adds a light compression to the signal. Still, at £120 the Tannoy beats off the competition (including the 731 Pros) without any real problems.

There's more than the tweeter shared between m1 and m2. There's that clarity and tonal evenness which allows the Mercuries to hop from one musical category to the next and maintain their considerable composure.

Imaging precision is another forte, although in this respect, as in sound stage width and depth, the m1s actually better the m2s. So why should you lash out £20 more to obtain the bigger of the two? If you lust after transparency, the m1s are the model to go for. If you prefer swifter dynamics, quite a lot more bass weight and higher volumes, then consider the m2s instead.

£120 goes a long way in loudspeaker land these days. Apart from a very slightly wooden sound to their lower register and marginally compressed dynamics, the m1s are excellent all-rounders for the money. In fact, they're good enough to finish the top spot from Mission's 731 Pros, praise indeed ●

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David Price

Until the advent of the Sony Walkman Professional back in 1985, music on the move was hardly the brightest star in the constellation of real hi-fi. Up to then, we'd suffered mediocre little cassette walkies with all the audiophile cachet of AM radio. But the WM-D6C (for that's its proper name) rewrote the rule book, bringing us open-reel quality with cassette compactness for the first time ever.

Remember the rapturous welcome it got from practically every corner of the hi-fi press? Reading all those rave reviews that compared it favourably with the best Nakamichis, I couldn't believe my eyes. But then I heard one and knew they were right. Quite simply, it had one of the most stable, open and detailed sounds I'd heard from tape. In fact, I'd still bet on it against anything more lowly than a Revox B77 or a top-flight DAT deck.

Perhaps the ultimate testament to the elevated abilities of the Walkie Pro is that it's still in production, unchanged after 13 years. Nothing special for a British design perhaps, but from a Japanese company with sub-six month product life cycles, it's nigh on unbelievable. Indeed, it's proof positive that if something is so instinctively and immutably right for its purpose, not even the Japanese will change it. You can count the number of other such designs on the fingers of one hand – just Technics' SL1200 turntable and Denon's DL103 cartridge spring to mind.

Unfortunately though, the Walkman Pro may soon meet its Waterloo, not because of any faults on its part but because the format it blesses – the Compact Cassette – is dying. In most Western markets there's now little doubt Philips' early Sixties dictation format is moribund. True, it's hardly going to disappear overnight – light bulbs aside, it's still probably the world's most popular consumer electronic technology. But all the big manufacturers are gearing down and looking to either MiniDisc or recordable CD as The Next Big Thing.

So where does this leave people who need the best of mobile music now? Preparing for a trip to Japan this spring, I suddenly found myself needing a really good music medium on the move – without one, all the green tea in Tokyo couldn't tempt me away from my beloved hi-fi and records. One thing was certain: it had to be digital.

"Digital Audio Tape is now 10 years old, having been born in a time when PCs ran pre-historic 80286 CPUs and mobile phones needed a portable satellite dish to get a dial tone".

Having bought one of the first Sony DAT portables, the TCD-D3, back in 1992, I just couldn't go back to analogue tape with no Start IDs, restricted playing times and the inability to make direct digital copies. The prospect of one of the new generation of MD portables was enticing. But while I'm a big fan of Sony's MDS-JE510 home recorder, none of the MD miniatures have so far impressed me, lacking as they do fourth-generation ATRAC coding, which is a must for serious MiniDisc listening. And, as CD-RW portables aren't with us as yet (although I'm sure it's a case of watch this space) and DCC walkies are both obsolete and not terribly impressive, it was back to DAT for yours truly.

It seems strange. After all, Digital Audio Tape is now 10 years old, having been born in a time when PCs ran pre-historic 80286 CPUs and mobile phones needed a portable

satellite dish to get a dial tone. Fortunately though, like the Walkman Pro, DAT wears its age well. It's still very much alive and kicking amongst pro users and bootleggers alike, who appreciate its true 16-bit 48kHz digital recording capability and the flexible, compact, 'stealthable' nature of DAT portables.

So I got myself a shiny new Sony TCD-D8. As well as all the usual goodies (Long Play mode, time and date stamping, versatile digital recording options), it also works with Sony's SBM-1 Super Bit Mapping adaptor giving (claimed) 20-bit resolution. While I still prefer the original 'D3 with its multi-bit DAC, the Bitstream-wielding 'D8 is a highly impressive performer through my system.

What it doesn't do is drive headphones well, thanks to its wretched digital volume control which, at low levels, gives you little better than 8 bits of your precious

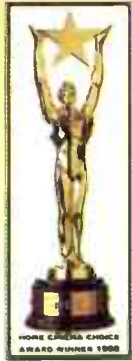
16-bit digital data stream. Help was at hand in the shape of Musical Fidelity's X-Cans headphone driver. This little beauty not only offers the delights of a tube gain stage but takes the signal from the Sony's line stage, thus side-stepping the digital volume control.

Very nice it all sounds too, especially with my superb Sennheiser HD-580 cans. In fact, it's staggeringly high fidelity, especially when you remember the TCD-D8, X-Cans and HD-580s are together smaller and lighter than just one of my loudspeakers' bass drivers or my turntable platter! Kind of makes me wonder why my home system is sprawling through the house so much. Perhaps that's the old Walkman Pro's most important legacy, the fact that we audiophiles no longer have an excuse for letting our hi-fis take over our homes. Shame!●

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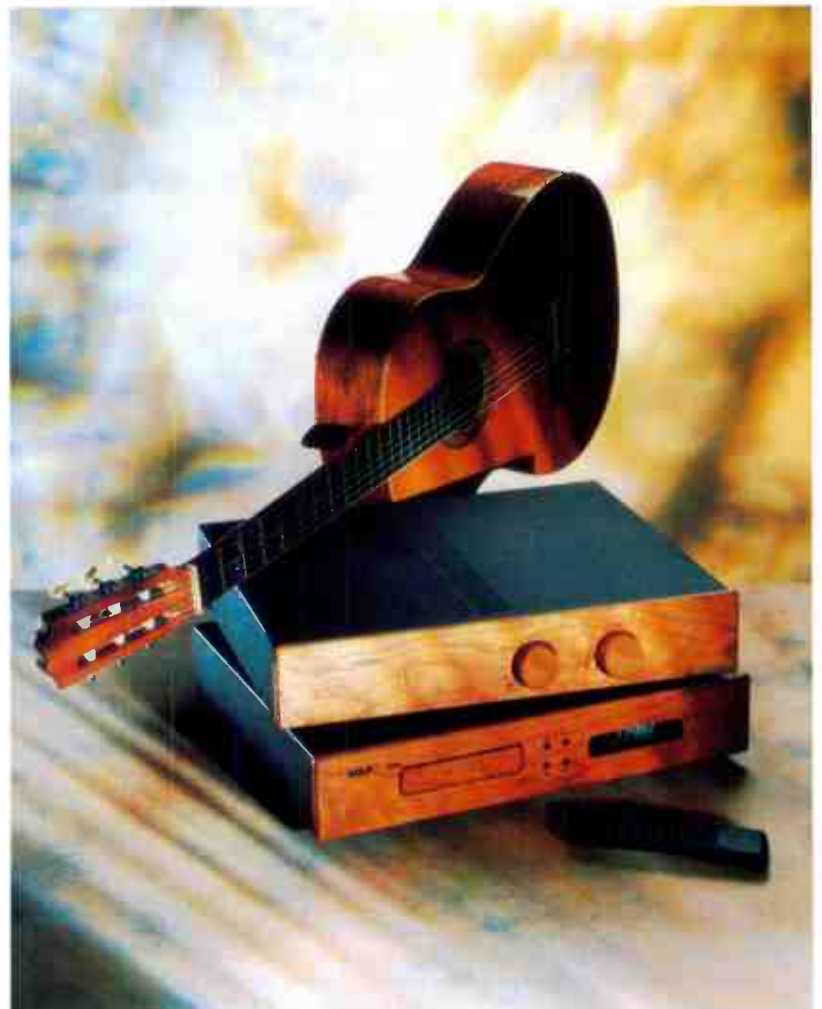
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XRCD were startling. That imaging fuzziness was wiped off the music and the instruments snapped vividly into focus. You could make out the space of the acoustic around them too, an area of the performance which the Philips had struggled with.

Returning to Soundgarden gave me a chance to let my hair down and contemplate a bit of pseudo-stage diving from the tops of Origin Live's Sovereign loudspeakers. Common sense prevailed before injury occurred however. The Flying Cow let through a lot of the drive and dynamic power which A-Sides had lost through the on-board convertor. 'Spoonman' now painted a picture of a Metalhead attempting to cull a tune from a set of spoons rather than an antique hunter shuffling through a trayful of prospective purchases.

To put this into perspective, remember that the Philips on its own is a capable player and the Midiman is a very good budget DAC. Considering the Flying Calf (the DAC-only variant of the Cow) costs just £130, it leaves pretenders to the throne from purely domestic hi-fi companies standing, and goes on to challenge machinery at closer to two or three times the money.

Confirmation of this came when Soundgarden were rotating inside Teac's £2500 P-30 transport. How did it sound? In a phrase, "Let there



be Rock!" Bass was now pumping out the two hidden octaves which the P-30 is so good at revealing, and the sound stage went back and out a foot or two. Rhythms became harder, faster and tighter and tonal colour fuller as well.

FROM NUMBERS TO WAVES

The Flying Cow has another string to its bow as an ADC. How would it stack up against the Philips? I found out by using the Panasonic DVD-A350 with a Classic Music 24-bit 96kHz sampler as the analogue source. First I made recordings through the Midiman into the Philips' co-axial digital input before putting the CDR 870's own ADC to the test. Then the CDR was Finalised and the various tracks replayed through the Pink Triangle Litaural

(unfortunately, the Panasonic refused to read this CDR, which none of our other CD players rejected).

The Midiman's digitisation of the 24/96 signal caught a lot of the space around individual images and their clear outlines. Sound stage width was equally strong, although depth suffered, instruments moving from our listening room's rear wall and up level with the front baffles of the Origin Live loudspeakers. What mattered most perhaps was that the Flying Cow had transferred the analogue-style flow and rhythm of the high-sampling-rate originals intact. In addition, there was a finesse and smoothness across the frequency span that made the recordings sound quite un-CD-like.

The Philips wasn't far behind in its bovine competitor this time. It might have been a little slower in the bass and not as beguiling in the treble, but in terms of sound staging it was very close. Images clustered around the 'speakers and the sound stage flattened in the same fashion as they had done with the out-board ADC.

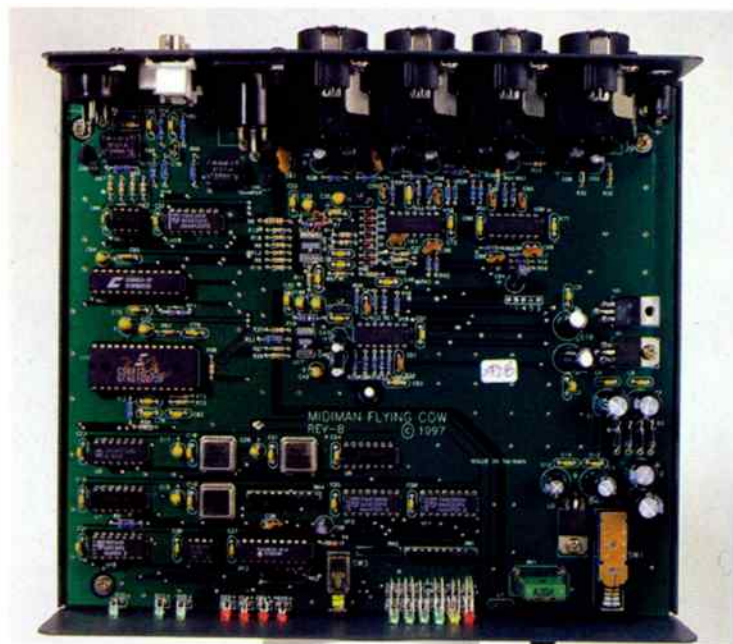
MOO-TASTIC

Take into account the fact that the Flying Cow offers both A-to-D and D-to-A in a single slim, if not unobtrusive box, for £300, and it would be churlish not to admit its bargain status. As a DAC it is up with the best at £300, let alone at the Flying Calf's £130. As a budget ADC it scores highly too, although if you buy a CD recorder like Philips' CDR 870 for archiving, its own internal ADCs are on a par

On the back panel are the combined XLR/0.25in. analogue inputs and outputs along with the digital connections.

Midiman Flying Cow
£299.99

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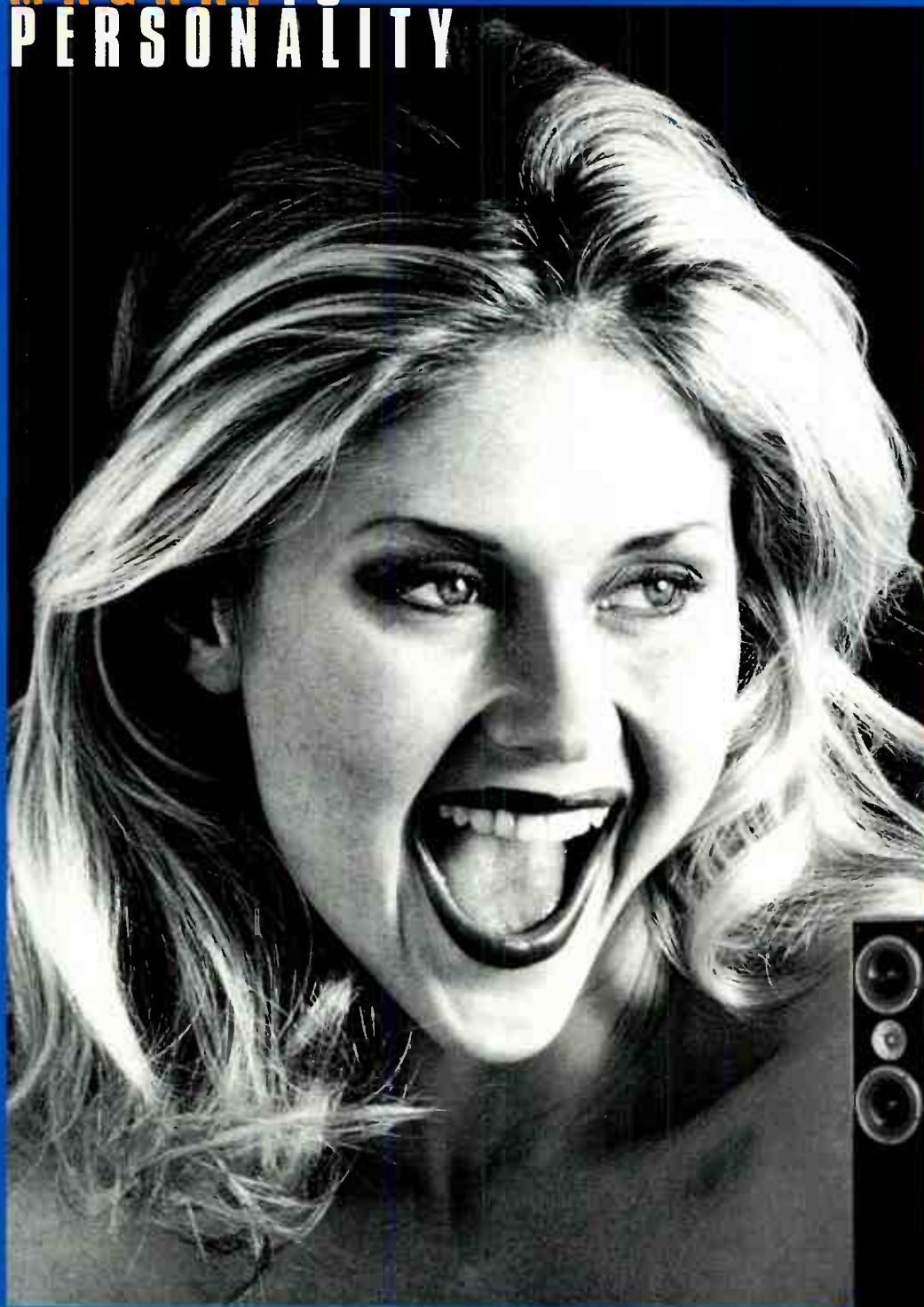
A clean, tidy PCB is studded with the Crystal chipsets for ADC and DAC sections.

WORLD VERDICT

Excellent as a DAC and doubles as an ADC for archiving to CDR. Great value.

Measured Performance see p111

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Replaying or recording CD-R, CD-RW or DAT?
Sample Midiman's Flying Cow D-to-A and A-to-D convertor for tasty results.

The professional and domestic hi-fi worlds don't always see eye-to-eye, especially when it comes to the likes of green CD pens and directional loudspeaker cables. Recently though, with the growth in small home studios, there has been a kind of grey area where semi-pro equipment nudges up next to purely domestic components. One product which straddles both scenes is Midiman's Flying Cow DAC and ADC.

The Flying Cow gives away its pro ancestry in the socketry on its back panel. Lined up to the right of the AC power input are a pair of balanced XLR/quarter-inch jacks for the analogue outputs. Then comes the same type of socket again for analogue inputs to the ADC. Finally, there are an AES/EBU Out and In either side of co-axial digital options. With its external PSU and 20-bit Crystal chipsets, the Midiman would appear to have a lot on offer for only £300, so we decided to see how it would do against more overtly hi-fi candidates.

The Flying Cow was plugged into a Philips CDR 870 CD-Recordable and CD-ReWritable recorder to test it both as a digital-to analogue and as an analogue-to-digital convertor next to the Philips' internals. The two boxes were linked digitally via

length of Kimber's DV-30 co-axial cable, with the analogue output taken from the Midiman through The Chord Company's Chameleon 2 interconnects with RCA phonos at one end and quarter-inch jacks at the other.

ALL ON MY OWN

Re-acquainting myself with the CDR 870 (reviewed in January 1998) as a simple one-box CD player was an enjoyable experience, even though its rack space was still warm from the heatsinks of the Pink Triangle Litaural, whose boots it had stepped into.

Connected to the National Grid with a Kimber PowerKord and mains distribution block, the Philips was much more dynamically relaxed than the PT but still knocked together a listenable musical recipe. The heavyweight sounds of Soundgarden's A-Sides album struck an appropriate balance between adrenal misery and red-eyed high-energy moshing, depending on the tenor of the song in question. Imaging could have done with greater precision, as could bass, but neither of these prevented the CDR 870 from rattling Soundgarden's rusty sabre.

An XRCD of Gene Ammons' saxophony lying under a Ringmat

Statmat slipped next into the Philips. The sparser arrangements and higher recording quality gave the '870 more of an opportunity to polish its audiophile badge. Sound staging was respectable for a machine whose *raison d'être* is as a CD-RW recorder, and foot-tapping came as standard, although out-and-out excitement seemed an optional extra at times. Treble was clean, well defined and, above all, not gritty or in-your-face. Where the '870 was marginally less impressive was with the synthetic edge it gave to Ammons' saxophone and the sense of woodenness in its piano reproduction.

HOLY COW!

Even with the Flying Cow fired up straight out of the box, its 20-bit convertor was well out ahead of the Philips'. This didn't come as a shock given the fact that the Midiman has its own wall-plug PSU to isolate it from supply-transmitted interference generated by the servo and motor-control circuits within an integrated CD player.

What the innards of that grey casework with the bionic beef graphic did above and beyond the CDR 870's DAC was dig out much more ambient and tonal detail. The improvements on the Gene Ammons

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The April 98 edition of Hi-Fi Choice carries a review of a Definitive Audio starter system. This review illustrates in the most luminous and frank terms what you should expect from your specialist dealer. At Definitive Audio you will find all that is highest and best in serious audio, strong minded and independent advice, interesting and sometimes unusual products, and outstanding service.

"Definitive Audio's 'starter' system departs from the beaten path of Hi-Fi. At a cost of £3,492 the set up breaks almost all the rules, but justifies it's iconoclasm with superb sound quality. The whole package creates a sound that moves air and emotions in equal measure. There is a perfectly natural sense of scale, real world dynamics and 'musicians in the room' presence. All of these phrases are grossly over used in hi-fi reviewing, but are wholly justified here.

The hardest thing here is to express just how good this system is. Perhaps the easiest way is the most honest: I have heard far too many conventional systems that cost in excess of £40,000 which exhibit only fractional amounts of this cleverly matched outfit's musical dexterity. I have encountered few systems that sound as good as this one - at any price. It just goes to show that in hi-fi, the whole is much greater than the sum of the parts."

Alan Sircom, Hi-Fi Choice April 1998



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Noel Keywood

There's nothing like a good three-way loudspeaker. They're glorious - that's why I like our KLS3 kit loudspeaker so much. It has spawned KLS3 Gold MkII and, in this issue, another variant, KLS10, a compact two-way. But three-ways are more difficult to engineer and more expensive than two-ways, and as a result have their own particular problems. Here are the strengths and the weaknesses of both types of loudspeaker, so when you go into the showroom you will be aware of the issues involved.

I personally prefer a three-driver layout because this doesn't compromise all-important midrange performance. I want clean, clear vocals projected out into the room, forward from the loudspeaker. This means perfect handling of the human voice. However, the voice covers a broad band of frequencies, even wider than those commonly quoted, as I have found from our own measurements. Speaking into a microphone, our analyser shows my voice produces frequencies from 80Hz up to 6kHz. That's a wider range than most drive units are happy with. Add this to the fact that the human ear is most sensitive from 500Hz to 6kHz, with an inconvenient sensitivity peak at around 4kHz, and we are starting to uncover properties that are at odds with the construction of many of today's loudspeakers.

Two-way designs cross over at 3kHz, right where the ear is most sensitive. This introduces a range of problems. To reach up so high in the frequency range you need a mid/bass unit with a small cone. This conflicts with the need to reproduce bass well, which demands a large cone. There's a direct trade-off between bass output and a smooth midrange able to handle vocals effectively.

The three-way is meant to overcome

this dilemma. The midrange unit has a small, light cone able to cover most of the human vocal range. A treble unit is used to extend the loudspeaker's response to 20kHz smoothly. The bass unit can then be made larger so it works less hard to move large volumes of air. Power handling increases and distortion drops.

In real life the point of this arrangement is often lost, I feel. Market pressures don't help. Out in the High Street it is the number of drive units that sells a loudspeaker, I'm told by retailers, with rated power handling not far behind. Nothing wrong with that on first inspection; buyers have got the right idea it would seem. Probe a little deeper though and we find that this good idea has been undermined by cost-cutting.

A three-way really is a lot more

*“Out in the
High Street
it is the number
of drive units
that sells a
loudspeaker,
I'm told by
retailers”*

complex and expensive to make than a two-way. Since drive units contribute significantly to the overall cost of a loudspeaker it is common for a three-way to use cheap drivers, pushing midrange quality back into the compromise from which it was trying to escape. A poor midrange unit, backed by a simple, undamped chamber will likely sound coarse and coloured. If it works with an equally mediocre tweeter, treble quality will be nothing to write home about either.

The loudspeaker business takes the view, demonstrated by its actions, that a good two-way with higher-quality drive

units is better than a big three-way where everything has been cost cut. I don't disagree. Budget three-way loudspeakers can be a bit grim across the midrange and treble regions, although by and large they do offer more bass and better power handling than two-ways. Bear this in mind when buying.

Watch out for the two-and-a-half-way loudspeaker that looks like a three-way. This is essentially a two-way with a dedicated bass driver to improve bass performance. It isn't a three-way in the original sense and quite often manufacturers like to use the same mid/bass unit for this function and for bass alone. The give-away here is the presence of two identical mid/bass drivers. If you see this, suspect a two-and-a-half way.

ZERO FEEDBACK

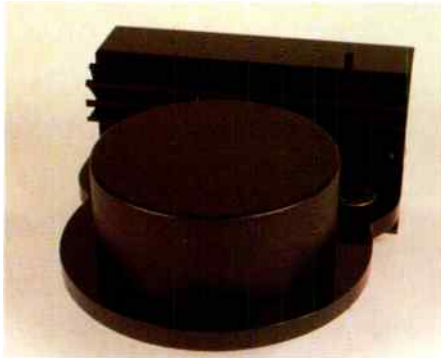
I'm fascinated to learn that one of Britain's most technically-advanced hi-fi manufacturers is soon to launch a zero-feedback amplifier. When I put forward the idea in 1993 that, if an amplifier needed feedback, then, by definition, it wasn't good enough for its purpose, it didn't exactly set the world on fire.

Such a view is only consequential if feedback adversely influences sound quality; otherwise it is disingenuous. But how can you know? Well, produce a zero-feedback amplifier and take a listen was my view. We used the linear 300B valve and excellent transformers of our own design to get an amplifier that was good enough to be used without feedback, then we added a feedback switch so anyone could make a free, unhindered choice as to what they preferred. Our 300B kit amplifier was born.

In the usual way, switching in feedback greatly improves measured performance. Yet everyone I have asked prefers to use our 300B amplifier without feedback. They all say the same thing: "it sounds more open, relaxed and natural".

It is far more difficult to use solid-state devices without feedback, almost impossible in fact. They are horribly inconsistent and non-linear. All the same, Onkyo of Japan claim to have produced such a beast and now a British company is about to follow. I'm a little pleased that Hi-Fi World questioned the use of feedback many moons ago and there are 300B owners around the world who got there first and know what this debate is all about●

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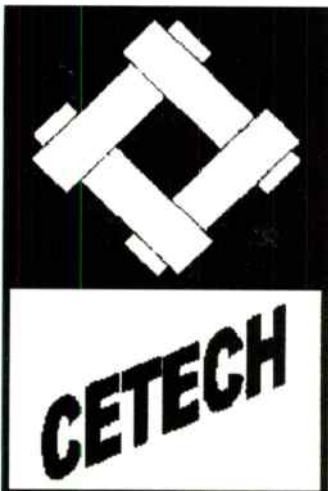


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What's black,
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harmonica?
No, the Reson Reca
cartridge says
Andrew Harrison.

Just when you thought the world had seen its final Goldring 1042 cartridge clone, tweaked up and rebadged by another manufacturer, DNM bring you (drum roll) the Reca from Reson of Switzerland. This Moving Magnet is outwardly identical to the Mica reviewed in February, the differences purported to lie in the choice of stylus profile and assorted covert rummagings around the internal generator assembly.

The Reca uses a Fritz Gyger stylus profile like most of Goldring's own, in this case a Gyger S. This is an improvement on the Mica's Gyger II, but only equivalent to the standard 1042 that is now fitted with the 'S'. Where the Reca gains, DNM told us, is in the quality control, which ensures that only the choicest cuts of diamond make the Reson grade. Like the Mica and Roksan Corus Black, this groove tracer has threaded bushes within the cartridge body, making installation a lot less fiddly.

To hear what this MM was up to, it was mounted on an Ittok LVII atop a Linn LP12 with Lingo power supply. Prior to this came a quick résumé of the Goldring sound in the context of this front end courtesy of the aforementioned Mica.

Having lived through three replacement needles on a 1042 in as many years before taking the plunge with an Ortofon Rohmann, I found the signature of the Mica not unfamiliar. There was that warm yet solid bass, as boppy as ever, smooth midrange and detailed top end. Inner groove resolution wasn't as good as I recall, but the fault here may be a nostalgic memory more than any tangible difference in

performance. So I persevered with the Mica.

Listening carefully to some records, you can hear where this particular über-Goldring starts to slip from the pedestal of perfection. Cymbals on Pink Floyd's opus 'Echoes' erred on the splashy and bass tunes came out a tad smeared. Also apparent was a narrowing of sound stage, where instruments seemed panned a little less far to left or right, instead enjoying more intimacy at mono central. To be fair though these criticisms surface when comparing the Mica to an MC at over five times the price. Anxious to clap ears on the Reca, I removed the Mica and replaced it with big bro.

Apparent straight from the carton and before it was awake enough to mumble the mantra, "run me in", the Reca was doing a fine job of Bob Marley and The Wailers. "Slam" and "funk" were two words that sprang straight to mind, along with "expressive" and "articulate".

On 'Buffalo Soldier', the bass guitar line is engineered to contain the fundamental (Dub) element under a clanky Rickenbacker-like line from the same instrument. With the Reca, the difference between these elements was much better differentiated and either could be followed independently. Added to this it became more obvious that they were one and the same instrument. Production values aside, we're talking sweet funk music!

From Air's album Moon Safari, the syncopated Vox-like organ staccato had bags of melodic flow and boogie factor galore. Whoever said you need a Linn cartridge on a Sondek before it will play tunes can't have heard the Reca.

What became more obvious as time passed was the sympathetic tonal balance this cartridge had. At either end of the flat midband was a gentle loudness contour, where the frequency extremes benefited from subtle augmentation - not always such a bad thing since it can compensate for tired pressings. This aspect, combined with the better stylus profile, also meant end-of-side tracks were favourably presented.

Pink Floyd's *The Division Bell* gave the Reca another chance to show off. Gilmour's guitar on 'What Do You Want From Me?' soared through the backing, that delicate treble lift allowing the creamy valve-distorted guitar line to be enjoyed to the full.

Turning to acoustic instruments, Roy Harper's *The Unknown Soldier* was lifted from the shelf. The track 'Short And Sweet' is a fine mix of close-mic'd cello and strings, flanged bass, electric guitar and Harper's worldly-wise vocal. Again this MM delivered the goods, giving a tight rendering with rhythm, and intimate yet accurate presence to instrumentation.

Weaknesses, as ever, can be detected but only when comparing the Reca to a cartridge at some higher price point. There's a lack of absolute stage depth, along with a faint veil across the sound which detracts from that 'where are the 'speakers' transparency. In most important respects, though, this is a funkmeister to be reckoned with. And what is the costa Reca? £255 if bought outright, but the nice people at DNM will take just £185, if you submit any tired old cartridge in exchange. Replacement styli are £100●

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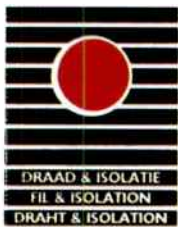
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WORLD VERDICT



If the Mica betters the 1042, and this betters the Mica, where will it all end? Not quite an MC but has super-MM virtues.

Measured Performance
see p111



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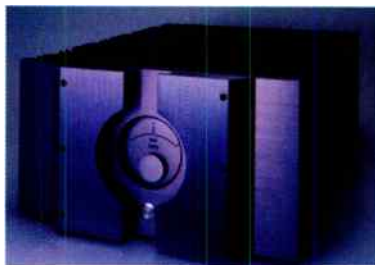
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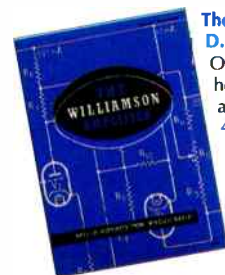
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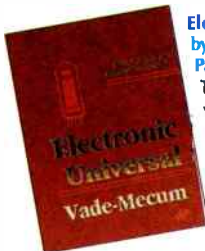


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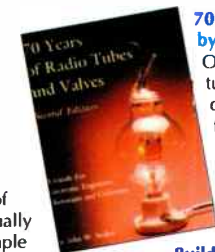
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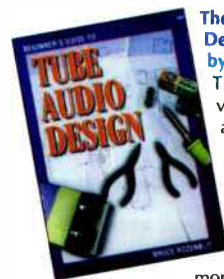
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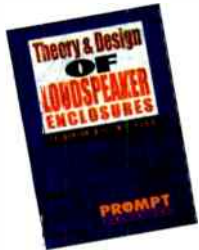
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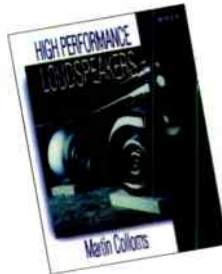
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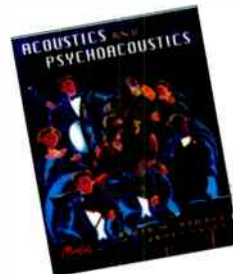
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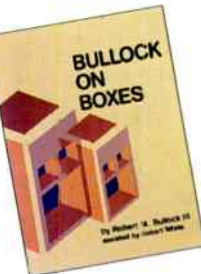
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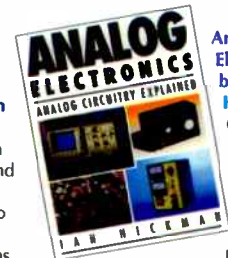
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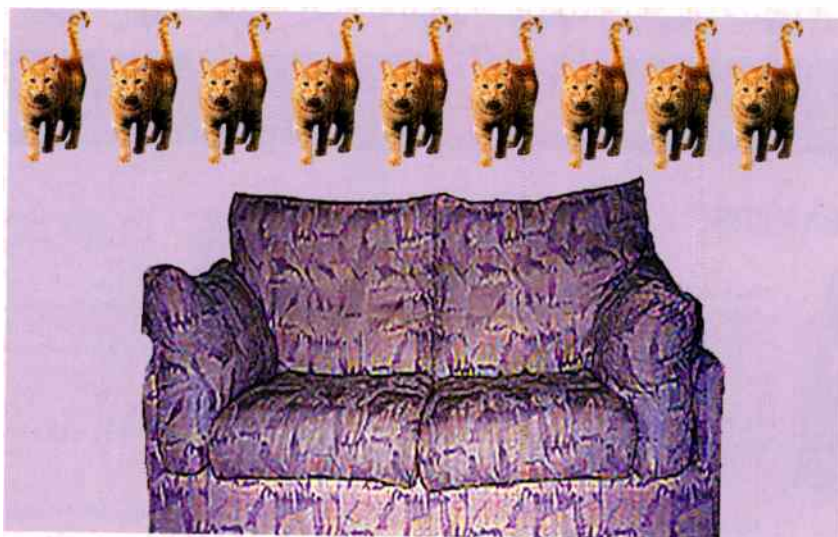
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FINAL FELINE FOLLOWER

I was disappointed to read Jon Marks's suggestion for Blu-Tacking Rod Bushell's cat to the sofa (Letters, February 1998 issue). Surely attaching the cat to the wall and using it as an acoustic panel would have been the more elegant solution?

Andrew Maynard
amaynard@dust.demon.co.uk

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SPEAK THE LINGO

I like your magazine very much and I particularly like what you do for (the revival of) vinyl!

Basically, because you wrote so enthusiastically about it, I had my new Linn LP12/Akito/Armageddon fitted with a Goldring 1042 cartridge instead of Linn's own K9, which you didn't seem to like very much. I have to add that there was no possibility to listen and compare beforehand.

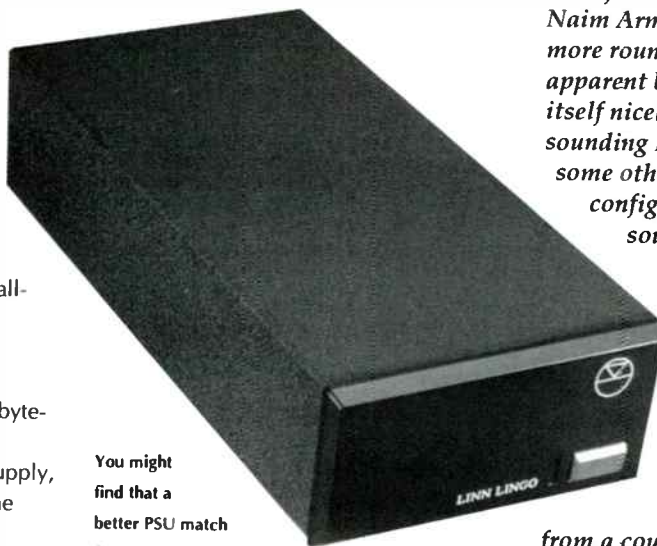
Compared to the Lingo-ed LP12 of a friend this combination sounded rather bass-heavy and slow, with a lack of speed, timing and rhythm. High-frequency detailing seemed better, but that was about it. Listening to records was a rather boring experience compared to the all-singing and dancing, bompin' and stompin' player of my friend.

We both use Naim Nait 3s and Mission 780SEs (tweaked) on Soundbyte-filled Atacamas, so the problem, I thought, had to be with the power supply, because after all the Goldring was the best MM in the world.

Not so. After my player had been properly set up by the Linn importer for The Netherlands, Mr. Malcolm Latham, (thanks again, Malc) the cause of the problem turned out to be the 1042. After a K9 had been installed, the combination 'sung' as beautifully as my friend's player does, the only difference being the power supply.

Which brings me to the conclusion that the Goldring 1042, that probably

works wonders in a Rega RB300 or SME 309, just doesn't do the trick in an Akito arm on a Linn player (and with Naim amplification?) Also I think that in the right combination the old canine (sic) is still excellent and doesn't deserve to be underrated in the way that you do. A reader's Linn Axis or a Basik LP12 might benefit more from a new needle in the old K9 than from a completely new cartridge of another make.



You might find that a better PSU match for a Goldring 1042 is Linn's Lingo.

Willem le Noble,
willemlenoble@compuserv.com

Your observations of wildly contrasting sounds from two Sondeks that differ ostensibly only in cartridge and power supplies are entirely valid, but I wouldn't lay all

the blame at the door of the Goldring. Aside from the set-up changes your Sondek underwent between cartridges (which are more than a minor consideration), there is that issue of power supplies.

Last month we tried a few power units for the LP12 and found they can substantially affect, amongst other things, the tonal balance of the sound from LP. A transformer-type unit, such as the Naim Armageddon, gives a warmer, more rounded sound with more apparent bass weight, which lends itself nicely to the lean and sharper sounding K9. On the other hand, in some other turntable

configurations, a K9 would sound too thin and topky.

The 1042, in contrast, has a more balanced presentation, making it more universally compatible across the board. But there may still be occasional instances where too much low-end emphasis from a couple of other components can make for a rhythmically slow sound. An interesting combination you might like to try with your friend's help is a Lingo-ed LP12 with the Goldring 1042. You should find the snappy, tight and detailed Lingo will allow the 1042 to really sing. AH

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And Hi-Fi World's Jon Marks (who knows a class act when he sees one) writes: "Their construction inside and out shows the almost obsessive lengths Audio Analogue will go to to get good sound and good looks..."

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*Bellini preamp £475, Donizetti power amp £575. Puccini S.E. £595



WASHING UP

I have a growing vinyl collection which I find increasingly hard to keep free of pops, hissing and dust. Although a carbon-fibre cleaning brush has helped with the dust, I know that brushes push some of the dirt into the grooves.

While the purchase of a cleaning machine would be the best idea, my budget will not stretch that far. Do you at World know of anywhere in the Manchester area that offers record-cleaning services? Unfortunately I cannot travel very far as I am not a car driver.

George Harris
gurg@zen.co.uk

As you mention, the only sure way to bring vinyl up to scratch is by cleaning with a wet suction machine. A cleaning solution dissolves dirt and grime embedded in the grooves and is then promptly

removed by suction to leave a shiny, often better-than-new record as it also takes the mold-release agent off the surface of the record. In your



You'll be amazed by the difference a proper clean can make to the sound of your records.

area, Gibbs Bookshop (10 Charlotte Street, Manchester, tel: 0161 236 7179) offers a cleaning service, and they charge £1 per record including new inner sleeve. Be warned, though, that their waiting list can run up to two weeks.

You may yet want to consider acquiring your own machine. Initial investment can seem high but the staggering results may inspire you to cleanse several hundred records, making it a relatively cheap option. Why not team up with another local enthusiast (preferably someone with a car for the to-ing and fro-ing!) and timeshare on the machine? One of the most cost-effective cleaners is made by Moth (Tel: 01234 741152) for £369, or £199 as a kit. AH

Here's another addition to your LP collection from Vivante.

ALL DECKED OUT

I am about to upgrade my system and after several hours in my local dealer's demo room I settled on a combination of the Audio Analogue Puccini SE amp with a pair of B&W P4s. However, it became clear during this demo that my turntable is in desperate need of an upgrade. I currently have a vintage 1973 Ariston RD11 fitted with an SME 3009 Improved S2 arm and a Goldring 1006 cartridge. The cartridge was bought with upgrading to the 1042 in mind.

My question is, do I upgrade the current deck with an Avondale or Manticore PSU plus a new arm (RB300 perhaps, or second-hand Linn) and new springs, or should I sell the turntable and buy something like the Pink Triangle Tarantella or VPI HW Junior? I would appreciate any comments.

Steve
akhanna@ukssc.europe.dg.com

For more background on the RD11, see this month's Olde Worlde. As David Price says, there is some

sonic mileage in these turntables yet. You should find, if you are inclined to roll up your sleeves, that with a little bit of attention the Ariston will relatively cheaply reward any efforts to restore and update it. Given the vintage of the machine it sounds like it may be one of the original RD11s which used a Tiefenbrun bearing, and



Origin Live's modified RB300 would sit very comfortably on an RD11 powered by a modern external PSU.

since the LP12 has more than a little in common with the Ariston, you may be able to cross-breed with parts from a Sondek. For example, if needed, Linn suspension springs and rubbers might be worth looking into. The drive belts changed over time, but provided you don't need an obsolete square-section type then try Manticore.

As far as arms and power supplies go, you could look out for a second-hand Linn Ittok or Akito, or indeed an Origin Live RB250/300, but bear in mind that changes will need to be made to the armboard. To save surgery the SME could even be looked at, a full service from SME costing about £86.

If you want 45rpm at the touch of a switch, then your choice of power supplies narrows to a Manticore MB6, Linn Lingo or something like a Mki Pink Linnk or Systemdek IIXe unit. The first two can still be bought new, but then you are meeting and exceeding the cost of a new Pink Triangle or VPI turntable. A re-boxed Valhalla is the most cost-effective option although you then lose out on two-speed switching. And don't forget to allow some cash for that 1042 stylus for your cartridge! AH

The last link in your hi-fi chain is a set of DNM's Reson loudspeaker cables.

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DIGITAL PRE-SCRIPTION

I currently use a Quad 44 pre-amp and Quad 606 Mk1 power amps to bi-amp my KEF Reference 3 loudspeakers. I am seeking a new CD player since the existing one is a 12-year-old Philips CD-304. I've a budget of about £1000.

This then leads me on to the next issue, that the pre-amp is not great. Notwithstanding the choice of CD players, any thoughts here would be appreciated. Budget is flexible, but I don't really want to exceed the £500 mark unless it's for something exceptional new or second-hand.

I particularly like the sound of the KEFs, although the midrange could be a little sweeter and warmer. As a criticism, the existing set-up is a little laid-back, but I prefer this to 'in your face' listening. I'd like something to open it out but I don't want it to become too bright.



Audio Analogue's smart Bellini pre-amp will certainly be a step up from your Quad 44.

My musical tastes are diverse but cover mainly Classical, Opera, organ and some Rock.

Steve Hayward
 ETL.ETLSHD@MESMTPSE.ericsson.se

If you want a touch of warmth and

sweetness in addition to extra clarity, then you're probably best off going for Pink Triangle's Numeral CD at £1000. A Ringmat Statmat will also help produce a slightly smoother, more amenable sound.

One pre-amp which should bring about the changes you're looking for is Audio Analogue's Bellini at £475. This will certainly let a lot more musical information through your system.

JM

Relax to the strains of a Classical box-set from Nimbus Records.

THE LOW-DOWN

I recently bought a subwoofer and I'm wondering what is the best way to connect it - to the Tape Out of the amplifier by RCA cable; to the 'speaker output of the amplifier by 'speaker cable; to the low-pass output of the Dolby processor? Or can I connect it to the second 'speaker output of the amplifier? The manufacturer's manual says that only two sets of 'speakers with an impedance of 8ohms can be connected - and mine are 6ohms, and the subwoofer 5ohms.

My components are a Rotel RA-930 AX amp, Yamaha DSPE390 Dolby processor, Yamaha YST-SW80 subwoofer, KEF Coda 8 loudspeakers, Marantz CD-67SE CD player, Ixos 104 interconnects and QED Qudos 'speaker cable.

J.P.S.
jps@sc.ipp.tl

We went through the various

wiring permutations à la subwoofer when we reviewed REL's Q100E subwoofer back in our April 1998 issue. To be frank, it didn't seem to



Whether you connect subwoofer to amp via line-level or 'speaker-level connections doesn't make a great deal of difference.

make any real difference. In the REL's manual, it recommends connecting the sub to the amp's loudspeaker terminals to ensure

tonal consistency with the main 'speakers as both are being fed the same signal, but I think it's more a case of try it and see.

As your Yamaha is an active subwoofer, the impedance your Rotel amplifier sees when it's hooked up to the sub won't be 5ohms, which is likely to be purely the impedance of the YST-SW80's drive unit on its own. Instead, your Rotel will see the impedance of the sub's active circuitry, which should be between 10kilohms and 50kilohms. This means you needn't worry about your Rotel not being able to drive the KEFs and the Yamaha together.

One more point. Make sure that your sub is spiked firmly to the floor, as this will have a much larger impact on sound quality than cable arrangements. JM

Lift a veil off your system's sound with DNM's Licon contact enhancer.

If you do not want your e-mail address published, please let us know.

MOTLEY CREW

You lot at Hi-Fi World have much to answer for! It's through you that my valve mania started and out went £3000 of tranny gear to be replaced by a "motley collection" (my Linn dealer's words) of Quad and Leak stuff. Trouble is, I think it sounds pretty damn good and nobody's going to tell me different!

The current set I'm using is the ubiquitous LP12 with all the mod cons and an Ittok LVII arm. On your advice the K9 went out to be replaced by a Goldring 1042. This goes through a Tim de Paravicini EAR 834P phono stage into the Quad IIs, Leak Stereo 20s or TL12+s with their respective 'control units'. The interconnects are Kimber, the 'speaker cable DNM (again your recommendation) or Audioquest Indigo Blue playing into Quad ESL 57s.

My listening is almost wholly on vinyl and, since I'm an orchestral musician, it's predominantly Classical. Though I'm happy with the system I'd like more of the same and better.

I reckon those control units must be on the list for the chop, and maybe the Ittok too. I've considered the EAR 834L in combination with the 834P (mine is the MM only, no-volume-control

version) as well as your KLP1 and KLPP1 kits with upgrades. However, I've also heard it said that valve power amps sound better with a transistor pre-amp, so I'm in a bit of a quandary. At least I do know what I want of my system, a nice, broad sound stage and tight bass.

Simon Styles
Zurich,
Switzerland.

PS How's this for an upgrade? I've always thought the ESLs should be higher off the floor, so one evening, having nothing better to do, I stood them on tins of tomatoes. Sounds barmy, yes, but try it - it made an amazing difference. Now the hi-fi widow finally knows I'm loopy! I've yet to discover whether baked beans or cat food with a higher density make a difference to bass extension, stereo image, etc.

Vintage valve power amps have weathered the passage of time much more gracefully than their



Old valve pre-amps are generally not as accomplished as their matching power amps.

pre-amp partners. The 'control units' are, indeed, not up to much and should be replaced. The EAR kits and our line and phono pre-amps are both worth a listen.

I wouldn't say valve power amps are best partnered by transistor pre-amps - a good valve pre is likely to be better than a good transistor pre. It's simply a question of listening to solid-state and thermionic candidates in your system to find out which one suits. One of the former camp to put on your list is the Myryad MP100 at £600 alongside the Audio Analogue Bellini at £475. JM

Canned goods might not be listed in the pages of John Linsley Hood's Audio Electronics book, but most other hi-fi topics are.

FREEDOM FROM WORRY

I have a Michell GyroDec/QC PSU, an SME 309 tone-arm and an Ortofon MC 30 Supreme for vinyl. CD comes courtesy of a Teac VRDS-7/Meridian 203 DAC. Amplification is by Naim 72/HiCap/140 working into Mission 752 Freedom 'speakers.

Originally, I asked at various dealers about replacing my CD player. Although it sounds solid and creates a plausible sound stage, it lacks the treble extension, detail and outright musicality of the turntable. Instead of helping with the task of auditioning a suitable CD player, most dealers were preoccupied with telling me that my loudspeakers are inadequate.

I am very happy with the tonal balance of the Missions. Surely, if I can hear a difference between the turntable and CD, I have not yet reached their peak performance. I am, however, human and so I'm intrigued as to whether I really am losing out or not.

The whole auditioning process can be time-consuming and confusing. Differing acoustics within listening rooms can drastically change a loudspeaker's performance. For example, a 'speaker



If you think it's your CD player causing you listening problems, change it and keep the Mission 752f 'speakers you already like.

with any real bass extension seems to excite my room. So, for a couple of grand can I totally transform my hi-fi by upgrading the Missions? I am not interested in deep bass; it must just be tight, tuneful and lean.

Michael Jacka
Essex.

A couple of grand wisely spent would improve most hi-fi systems! I think it comes back to the comment you made about the disparity between CD and vinyl replay though. You seem to be happy with your turntable through the Missions, so the digital source is letting the side down. That being the case, I'd look in the direction of either tweaking your Teac/Meridian or replacing them.

Keeping this digital duo would necessitate fitting a new master clock to the DAC and a new digital output board to the Teac (both of which are available from Trichord and AudioCom). You can carry out these changes yourself or have them done for you, which will cost roughly £400.

Player replacements for a couple of grand number the Pink Triangle Litaural, Meridian 508.24 and Linn Karik. Have a listen to Denon's new DCD-S10 MkII player as well. JM

Cure another bout of upgraditis with a pair of The Chord Company's Cobra 2 interconnects.

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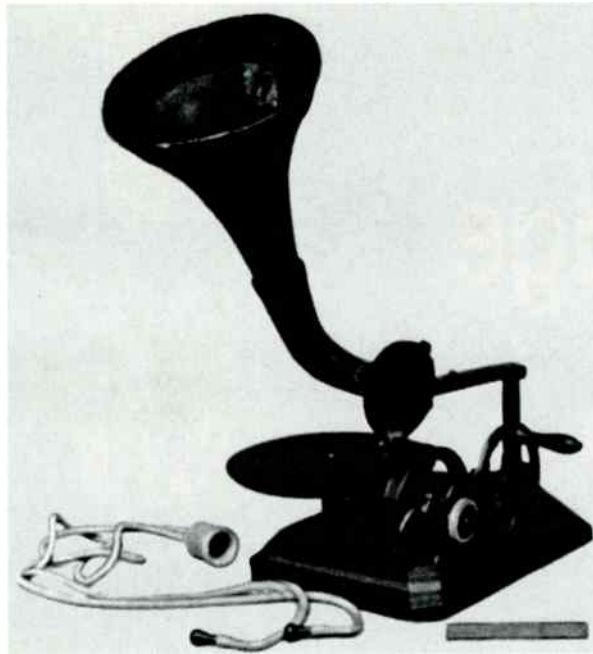
Having this week read about the wind-up torch by the same people who gave the world the wind-up radio, it occurred to me that this technology could have significant use in the world of hi-fi. After all, unless I am mistaken, aren't power-line-induced fluctuations one of the nasties that designers would like to be able to eliminate?

What really appealed to me was the thought that, if nothing else, there may be an answer to that age-old question of, "Just how are all of those castaways on all of those desert islands supposed to play their favourite discs?"

I imagine that there is no theoretical barrier to such an application and, assuming that sufficient voltage, amperage and storage times can be attained, then it would seem to me that there is a whole new world of sound quality on the horizon.

Having no technical background I would be interested to know your thoughts on the matter.

Jack Clark
Henley-on-Thames,
Oxon.



Castaways without electricity fear not. Listen to your cherished discs on a wind-up mechanism.

Not a bad idea, except for the fact that a dynamo-type generator produces a raw DC voltage with ripple that pulses in time with the armature revolution speed, thus bringing us back to problems similar to those besetting our mains

supply. And the storage medium would have to be batteries, which have already been put to use in hi-fi by various companies. In fact, in the early days of valves, most equipment was battery powered.

Still, a variation on the wind-up generator theme could be used in some kind of clockwork mechanism to spin a turntable's platter. This would take the form of a winding handle that tightens a coil spring that unwinds

to spin the 78, ahem, LP at a steady speed. Directory enquiries? Give me the number of the Patent Office, please. AH

Improve your hi-fi's contacts with a bottle of DNM's Licon contact enhancer.

PRIZED POSSESSION

Thanks to all at Hi-Fi World for the delivery of the Roksan Ojan 3 loudspeakers following the Christmas competition. I have quite a humble system, so it was a shock to see £1000



Crimson Electric's CS610C and CS620C pre/power have a smooth, powerful sound that will get the best from your Ojans.

worth of loudspeakers in my room! The sound is a world away from that produced by my Castle Durhams - it's now far more vivid and dynamic. I'm sure, however, that I'm only realising a fraction of the Roksans' potential - they are currently being partnered with a Denon DCD-635 CD player and Audio Innovations Alto amp (35watts). Although enjoyable, the sound is rather hard-edged and flat at times, with restricted bass extension.

I'm tempted to think long-term and save for something of the order of a Caspian front end, but I'm concerned about the comments that the Ojan 3s are a difficult load. Is it conceivable that an upgrade to a more powerful amp might be the first stage in the upgrade path? Cabling is Audioquest Ruby and Naim NACA5 bi-wired.

Justin Holmes
Epsom,
Surrey.

A better amp would allow much more of your system's potential to be realised. The Alto isn't the best amp at the price sonically, and as

you say, 'grunt' isn't its middle name either.

The tweeter on the Ojans would benefit from a smooth, sweet sounding amplifier like Crimson Electric's CS610C and CS620C pre and power amps at £875 the pair (including DNM interconnects and mains lead), if your budget can go that high. If the purse-strings are tighter, have a listen to Pioneer's A-300R Precision at £400. With 50watts into 8ohms and 80watts into 4ohms, it should drive the Ojans without undue trouble.

The Roksan Caspian CD player is one of the strongest sub-£1000 contenders around, but it does have treble that errs a little on the bright side of neutral. This neatly counterbalances the warmth of the matching amp but it won't be quite so synergetic with that Ojan tweeter. Instead, see if you can arrange a demo of Sonneteer's new CD player alongside the Pink Triangle Numeral. JM

Add a Ringmat Statmat to your new CD player for maximum replay quality.

Letter of the Month

The writer of the 'Letter of the Month' wins a free subscription to Hi-Fi World as well as a Top Prize every other month

NOISE POLLUTION

I have a rather strange problem and I wonder if you can help me. My hi-fi system should sound fine. It comprises Audio Research LS-15 and VT-50 pre/power amps, a Sony XA7ES CD player, a Sony ST-A5ES tuner and a Heybrook TT-2 turntable with a Linn arm and cartridge, all connected with MIT cables. I should hear the 'wonder of tubes', but far from it. The highs sound harsh, bass is lumpy and the midrange is muddy.

I tried everything - different cables, other CD players - until finally, out of sheer curiosity, I disconnected the antenna cable (which is supplied by a

cable company). All of a sudden the sound was as it should be. What is going on here? Is this an earthing problem? Does cable radio 'poison' my stereo? And what do I do now? I am using one of those cheap wires as an antenna, which works fairly well. Reception is not bad in London but the offer from the cable provider is much better and the signal a lot stronger. Unfortunately, I cannot put an antenna on the roof because I am living in a rented house.

Michael Heine
mikheine@compuserve.com

There's a couple of potential causes for the problems you're experiencing. The first comes down to whether your Sony tuner is being fed solely an FM signal, or if it's getting sundry TV frequencies too. If the tuner is connected to a wall box, there should be two sockets, one for the TV and one for the tuner. If this isn't the case and there's only a single wall socket, you should try fitting a diplexer, which separates the TV signals from the radio ones. Otherwise, you may well be suffering the effects of TV's UHF transmissions leaking into the rest of your system.

If you have the two sockets or a set-top box with dedicated TV/tuner outputs, then an RF attenuator is the next step. There's a possibility that too high an FM signal level from the cable company could be giving your system and your tuner a hard time.

Failing that, the blame could lie with interference between the various signals coming down the cable. If the cable has insufficient bandwidth, the signals might not have the necessary frequency gaps between them to ensure that there's no interaction. If this is the case, then it's going to be difficult to sort out as it's the cable that's physically not up to the job.
JM



A diplexer which splits TV signals from FM radio could be the answer to your problems.

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Quo Audis?

After the Xara CD player tickled his lobes last month, Leo Lam continues his quest for audio nirvana with Holfi's Audis amplifier.



The knotty problem of hi-fi styling has proven an insurmountable hurdle for many manufacturers. But the designers at the Danish company Holfi are no saps and they've twigged the fact that the natural look is popular amongst audiophiles lost in a forest of aluminium and steel. Branching out from the mainstream, they've gone against the grain with wooden-fronted components like the 45watt Audis amplifier.

This £750 integrated stands out in the showroom visually although its features list is more mundane. Five line inputs are provided as standard, but vinyl enthusiasts need not despair - Holfi produce an optional matching phono stage. On the output side there's a single pair of gold-plated sockets per channel, which will leave bi-wirers a little disappointed. Meanwhile, when not in use a stand-by switch keeps the Audis warmed up and ready to deliver optimal sound immediately.

The 9kg mass of the Audis (attributable to a toroidal transformer capable of handling 300VA of power) bodes well. In the wake of the toroid sit super-fast, soft-recovery rectifier diodes (chosen for their inherently low RF injection) and a large capacitance reservoir, totalling 50,000µF, from Nichicon. The input is attenuated by an Alps potentiometer (which is linked to the front panel via a long steel shaft to minimise signal path) before being buffered by the common TL072 op-amp. Then follows a current-amplification stage consisting of a pair of bipolar junction transistors working in Class A/B.

One interesting departure from the norm in both the Xara CD player reviewed last month and the Audis is that all of their transistors which handle the signal are thermally coupled with either aluminium bars or discreet casings. Holfi claim these provide a smoother and more precise sound, a shorter warm-up time and prolonged transistor life. And on the Audis' neat, tidy and minimalistic circuit board there's not a single dB of feedback apparently.

Hooked up between the Assemblage DAC-2 (driven by a Pink Triangle Numeral) and the Seas Mini Monitors with Kimber cables,

the Audis started to sing a seductive song. Midrange was exceptionally transparent and lucid as shown with the Opus3 Test Record 4 (Opus3 CD9200). The Capriccio for four guitars by Mendelssohn is a tricky piece of music for any audio equipment to reproduce credibly because there is bags of background detail associated with the recording venue. Through the Holfi, the presentation was wholly convincing, all four musicians accurately spaced horizontally across the sound stage while the individual tonal characters of the guitars were easily recognisable.

Calm and composed, the Audis also played highly complex passages with poise and dexterity. This conjured up a sweet, relaxed, effortless sound that was very enjoyable. The lack of strain meant the Audis could be frighteningly fast when required and surprisingly powerful when pushed; it always sounded as if there was plenty of power in reserve no matter how loud the music was.

Once the Audis has fully warmed-up, high frequencies are swift and smooth without being bright. Miles Davis' Kind Of Blue remaster came over as extremely live and atmospheric with generous

amounts of detail. This, combined with its legato characteristic, drew me deeper into the music.

Replacing the PT/Assemblage with Holfi's own Xara player I found this system was wooden only in looks - the two worked together hand in glove. The flow of music in large-scale pieces like the Shostakovich Violin Concerto with Vengerov and Slava (Teldec 4509-92256-2) was excellent, giving this system a sense of musicality rarely found amongst mix 'n' match separates. The characteristic string crescendo was attractively dynamic, although the Xara did produce a slightly muted character on the strings' overtones, losing some of their natural tonal texture as a result. Treble also had good bite, and sharp imaging was a plus, lending a real sense of scale to full orchestral swells.

The Audis has achieved more than Holfi's Xara CD player considering its lower price. Very well designed, charmingly built and with a sound that is revealing without being clinical, smooth without being slow, I have no doubt that the Audis will take up residence in many listening rooms even though the competition is tough.

Holfi Audis £750

Holfi
Falkevej 7
3400 Hillerød
Denmark
Tel: +45 48 24 39 24

WORLD VERDICT



Powerful and refreshingly pure, the Audis is a sound investment.

Measured Performance see p111

PICTURE THE SOUND

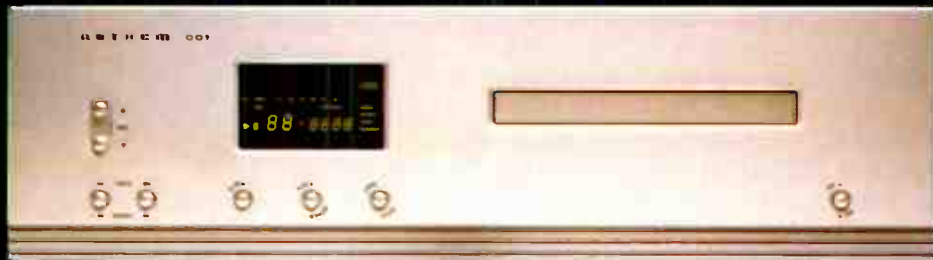
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World Verdict



March 98



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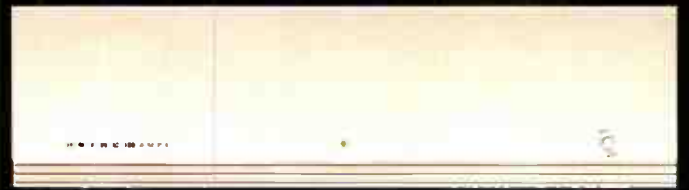
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WHAT HI-FI? ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
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SX512 could mix detail with transparency. Nuances like the light percussion work on 'Unfinished Sympathy' just about carried the tune that integrates the rhythm and harmony, but I couldn't help feeling that the overall emotion of the song was lacking. Shara Nelson's voice hung back in the sound stage, nestled between smooth sampled strings to her right and left.

'Be Thankful For What You've Got' from the same album rippled with funky organ and snappy rhythms, noticeably tighter when using the Teac P-30 instead of the mechanism in the Litaural. While these couplings of both Teac and PT gave me an idea of just how much musical information can be retrieved from a CD, the sense of unease I had first felt over the DPA's lack of involvement never really disappeared. There was rich, extended detail in abundance, only without the kind of overall integrity you would hope for given the money involved here. This digital-to-analogue convertor may just be too revealing for its own good, at least when presented with 16-bit 44.1kHz data from transports that it fails to gel with. But my first impressions underwent something

of a revolution when a Deltran-ed Renaissance appeared at the helm.

TRANSPORTER LOCKED ON, CAPTAIN

After voicing my concerns to Rob Watts that the sound we were hearing was missing the 'rightness' one would expect from an £8000 digital-to-analogue convertor, we went all the DPA way with their Renaissance CD transport and Deltran DAC-to-transport link. Even though this player (and the example we were loaned was indeed a one-box player) uses a modest Sanyo mechanism (albeit quality-selected) the difference in presentation over the P-30 and PT was little short of stunning.

Clear confirmation of this was Massive Attack's cool Funk-fest 'Be Thankful For What You've Got'. Even through the revealing Jamo Concert 8s, the top-end was as smooth as any I've heard. In fact, labels like 'top-end' became almost irrelevant since the traditional areas of bass, midrange and treble were so well integrated. Tight, punchy bass bopped along, drums slammed with real impact and Shara's voice sung

out over the song. The melodic percussion of 'Unfinished Sympathy' tinkled perfectly in time with the song,

unlike before. And then there was that extra space around instruments that really gives the game away, betraying the presence of a classy digital act.

With that Toslink fibre-optic link synchronising the Renaissance and SX512, everything came up trumps. On the Mozart concerto it was immediately apparent that, aside



Two separate external power supplies, one for digital and one for analogue sections, come in matching silver and black cases.

from its transparency, the system was playing neat tunes that warranted more time in listening land.

A more stern test of the DPA's new-found competence was Garbage's debut album, not a prospect I would have relished before the Deltran link cleaned up the sound. The subterranean bass gloom on 'Stroke Of Luck' crept along and enveloped the room without running amok, and 'Stupid Girl's driving bassline had finger-plucked tangibility. Only a hint of tonal greyness nagged, prompting me to dispense with DPA's recommended Toslink digital interconnect in favour of a co-axial electrical. This brought with it more punch, more funk and more sizzle, thankfully without falling foul of the hard brittleness this Seattle Grunge can provoke in the wrong system.

And once again the addition of dither seemed to breathe extra vitality into the music, hi-hats losing their synthesised lustre, even Shirley Mansun's vocal getting more seductively husky.

This is a sterling performance from a class digital-to-analogue convertor. Combined with the DPA Renaissance working as a transport, the SX512 is one of those products that defines the state of the digital art. The sole thorny issue is the price tag; if I had to file a lone remark in the 'against' column it would be the price that sadly puts the combo beyond the reach of all audiophiles bar those with their own private jets●

DPA SX512
£8000

DPA Digital
Crickhowell Road,
St Mellons,
Cardiff CF3 0EI
Tel: 01222 795621

WORLD VERDICT



A real smoothie for high-end digital conversion. Given the right transport, the SX512 will reward with outstanding sound.

Measured Performance
see p111



On the left side of the SX512's case are the PAM DAC daughterboards and discrete output op amps.



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SX-EY LITTLE NUMBER

Is Pulse Array Modulation another way of saying Produces Almighty Music?

Andrew Harrison considers conversion with the DPA SX512 DAC.

As a quick résumé for those unfamiliar with the background of DPA, the company formerly known as Deltec was responsible for pioneering work in the late Eighties and early Nineties on Bitstream conversion. This technological riposte of Philips to comments on the deficiencies of the original Multi-bit DACs seemed to offer, when carefully applied, a cleaner sound, particularly at the top and bottom of the frequency range.

This decade of Bitstream experience has been applied in the SX512, DPA's latest top-notch convertor. Like the 1024 that preceded it, the '512 comes in three boxes (convertor, digital and analogue power supplies), and like the 1024, it ain't cheap, unless you count an £8000 swing-tag as tax-deductible expenses. But with a wealth of features, such as true 24-bit resolution, user-selectable HDCD filter and dither options, future 24-bit 96kHz compatibility and an analogue power supply that doubles as a steak griddle (it doesn't just get hot, it gets very hot), DPA have rather covered the options.

Although not fitted on the early model we reviewed, Rob Watts, the man behind DPA, has told us the 96kHz facility will be offered to '512 owners free of charge as soon as production allows. This will be welcome news for anyone looking to embrace what arguably may be the audiophile format of tomorrow - 24/96 DVD Audio.

WHAM, BAM, THANK YOU PAM

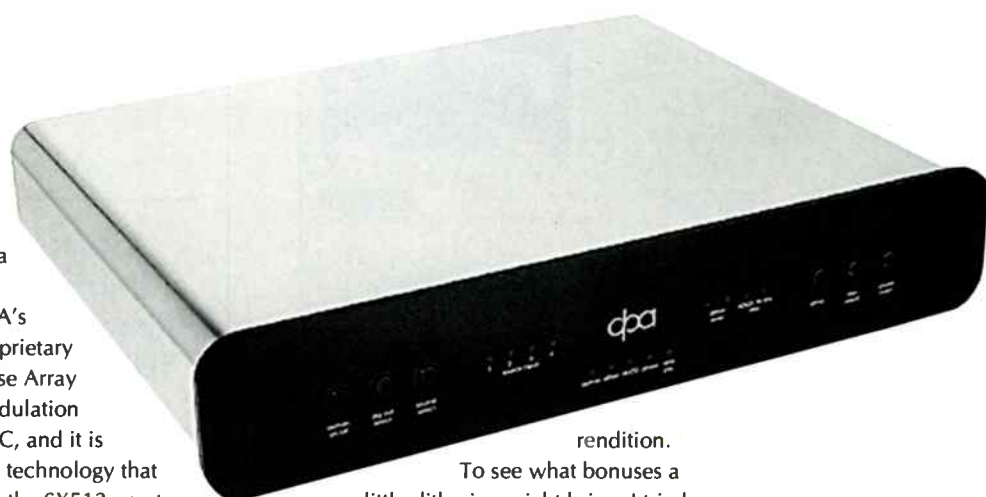
As far as today's more mundane 44.1kHz CD replay goes, you'll find Yamaha 210 and HDCD filters lie at the heart of this machine. These feed

data to DPA's proprietary Pulse Array Modulation DAC, and it is this technology that sets the SX512 apart from the competition who rely on off-the-shelf ICs. Benefits are said to include excellent low-level linearity and a freedom from the RF noise that besets many Bitstream set-ups. Or, in more common parlance, it sounds rather impressive.

BRIGHT SPARK?

The SX512 put its best foot forward with the 210 filter in dither-free mode, the Teac P-30 acting as transport with Kimber's DV-30 digital interconnect in place. I found listening to Bruch's Violin Concerto (Chandos 8974) a surprising mixture of pleasure and uneasiness. Compared to, say, the Pink Triangle Litaural which turns in a civilised performance, the DPA here had a clearer, brighter sheen which allowed for far more revelation of detail. Both solo violin and massed strings had a glassy edge that showed up every trick being pulled by the orchestra.

Mozart's clarinet concerto (MF018) was equally spotlit. The fingerwork on some instruments, like woodwinds and strings, was highly evident, the SX512 actually veering towards a starkly detailed



rendition.

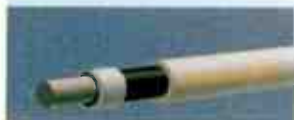
To see what bonuses a little dithering might bring, I tried the same pieces with the dither at maximum (there are four levels available). This subtly helped to release the sound from the worst excesses of clinicality. Instruments became slightly better focused in space and remained securely located in a wide, airy sound stage. Overall, the DPA was now coming up with a less artificial presentation, suggesting that a more synergetic equipment match might be the way forward.

Unhooking the P-30 I partnered the DPA with Pink Triangle's Litaural as a transport and experienced that 'veil-lifting' sensation I had hoped for. Strings soared higher, displaying violin timbres explicitly in the way that allows fiddle buffs to spot the type of lacquer used on individual instruments, while imaging across the stage snapped into pin-sharp focus. The opening phrasing from clarinet doubled wonderfully the same melody from the strings backing it without the two blending together tonally. A throaty lower register on clarinet was the final icing on the cake.

Massive Attack's Blue Lines album further illustrated the way the

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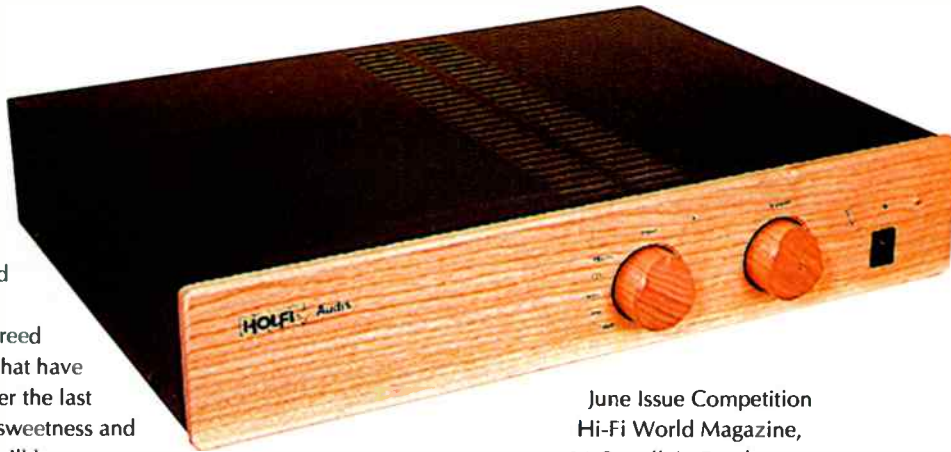
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Partner the Audis with a pair of fairly sensitive loudspeakers and you'll be greeted by a clean, spacious and agile sound. Like many of the new breed of transistor amps that have been appearing over the last few years, it has a sweetness and delicacy to it that will have you plugged into your music collection for hours at a time.

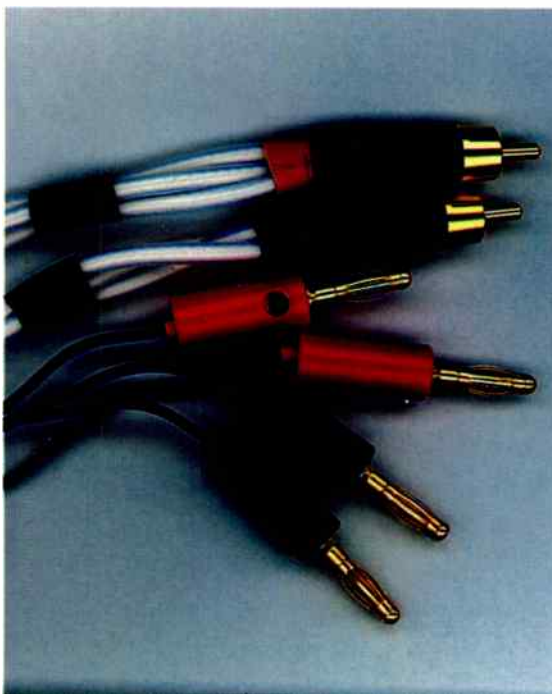


June Issue Competition
 Hi-Fi World Magazine,
 64 Castellain Road,
 Maida Vale,
 London W9 1EX

The final link in the prize chain is a set of loudspeaker and interconnect cables from Precious Metals. The £200 Silver Loudspeaker 104, like the £360 Silver Signal 203, is made from Silver alloy cabling concocted to a secret recipe. Precious Metals say this material gives the best overall transparency without suffering the brightness of pure Silver or the 'spit' of pure Copper. The multi-strand bunches are then coated with Teflon (chosen for its superior dielectric properties) before being assembled into their respective cables.

The Silver Loudspeaker 104 is made up from four Teflon-sheathed co-axial conductors twisted together and can be bi-wired (with one conductor for each run) or single-wired (where they are doubled up). The Silver Signal 203 has three Silver alloy conductors woven together and topped off with non-solder screw-and-crimp phono plugs.

If you'd like the chance to win the Sovereigns, Audis or the Precious Metals cables, just answer the questions opposite and complete the tie breaker. Send in the entry form on the back of a sealed envelope or postcard to reach us before June 4th to:



Don't forget to include your name, address and telephone number if possible so that we can contact the winner promptly.

COMPETITION ENTRY QUESTIONS

1) What are the cabinets of the Origin Live Sovereigns made from?

- A. MDF and hardwood D. Aerolam and carbon fibre
 B. Cardboard and polystyrene C. Aluminium and steel

2) How much reservoir capacitance is there in the Holfi's power supply section?

- A. Two pints B. 50000µF C. Five acres D. 25000pF

3) Precious Metals' Silver Loudspeaker 104 cable has how many conductors?

- A. 17 B. Two C. Four D. None

4) What sort of bass loading do the Origin Live Sovereigns use?

- A. Infinite baffle B. Quarter-wave C. Horn D. Reflex port

5) Which attenuator do Holfi fit to the Audis?

- A. Alps B. Pyrenees C. Himalayas D. Penny and Giles

TIE BREAKER (obligatory)

There are Precious Metals cables fit for a king,
 And royally-named loudspeakers in the Sovereign,
 Holfi supply the Audis with its wooden face,
 Now it's up to you to give one some space

Please list prizes in order of preference:

- 1).....
 2).....
 3).....

COMPETITION WINNER

APRIL ISSUE COMPETITION

In April we had Heybrook's Signature pre and power amps to give away. The lucky winner is Paul Fitzgerald of Birmingham.

Congratulations!

£2500 PRIZE GIVE-AWAY

This month we've got four prizes to be won, with Origin Live loudspeakers and a Holfi integrated amp as well as interconnect and loudspeaker cables from Precious Metals.



The first of our prizes is one for the audiophile loudspeaker lovers out there. Origin Live's £1225 Sovereign floor standers are handsome beasts hewn from a hardwood outer skin lined on the sides and rear with MDF damping panels. Bolted into the 25mm front baffle are the two drivers, one an inverted Kevlar-dome tweeter, the other a doped-paper mid/bass built to Origin Live's specifications.

The Sovereigns certainly turn out a regal enough sound when matched with fine ancillaries. As Jon Marks discovered, on good recordings they have an airiness to their presentation that's difficult to resist. They're also forgiving of bad discs without sacrificing too much detail, a tricky balancing act that few loudspeakers pull off.

Whether Rock or Classical is your chosen genre, the OLs won't stand in the way of the music. They're friendly to amps as well, so you won't need the kind of power it takes to illuminate Blackpool for them to fulfil their promise.

The next prize is Holfi's Audis amplifier. Holfi have borrowed from valve philosophy in the design of this £750 integrated and claim not to use any feedback at all in its circuitry.

Behind that head-turning wooden fascia lies an Alps potentiometer volume control, driven by a long shaft to keep signal paths short. This feeds a TL072 op amp which acts as a buffer ahead of the class A/B power amp section. Ensuring a constant supply of clean electricity at all times are the 50000uF of Nichicon reservoir capacitance, super-fast, soft-recovery rectifier diodes and 300VA toroidal transformer.

As anyone who knows me will tell you, I am the most stubborn follower of the cult of the BBC LS3/5A mini monitors. In spite of their puny power handling, strange impedance characteristics and low sensitivity, their musicality and value for money remain unsurpassed. Recently, there have arrived a couple of new 'speakers which claim to be variations on this classic theme. Although some have turned claim into fact, albeit at a higher price, most of them have failed. The latest such contestants are the £270 Heylettes from Heybrook.

Since their introduction earlier last year, designer Mike Jewitt has breathed on the crossover briefly to improve midrange clarity and lucidity. Traditionally styled and finished in real veneer, the Heylettes are two-way rear-firing reflex designs with a simple first-order crossover whose capacitors, inductors and metal-film resistors (which double as quick-blow fuses) have been specially selected. Both the tweeter and mid/bass drivers are sourced from manufacturer Peerless before being modified to the designer's specifications.

To partner the Heybrooks I picked the Arcam Alpha One CD player, Aura VA80 amplifier and Kimber cabling throughout. The cabinets were then mounted atop filled Atacama SE24 stands.

While most loudspeakers are intended for location either free-standing or close to a wall, the Heylettes can go either way. Mike explained that, although a position away from walls is preferred, the bookshelf placement (with the back of the 'speakers against a wall) which many people adopt is also fine because the wall effectively seals off the port to reduce bass extension and so gives a fairly good response in a small room. I ended up listening to the Heybrooks nearly a meter away from the back wall and achieved a very good balance.

The Heylettes caught my attention from the very first notes they played. There was no hint of the small 'speaker to their sound. Bass was full-bodied and deep, which lent realism to a sound stage of surprising dimensions. Take the



PASSIONATE PERFORMER

Heybrook claim the revised Heylettes are aimed at emulating the strengths of the classic BBC LS3/5A monitors. Long-term devotee Leo Lam investigated.

soundtrack of Titanic the film, with synthesised bass on top of a full orchestra, for instance. The Heylettes never failed to muster this CD's sense of scale without losing track of the delicate chorus line in the background. All this marked a turn-up for the books given the fact that these little boxes were being driven by the capable but low-power Aura, which sounded quite untidy with the Tannoy P10s reviewed last month.

There's a sense of freedom to the sound of the Heylettes that will appeal to a lot of audiophiles. The treble, as our measurements showed, might have been lower in output than the midrange and bass, but it still had a detailed airiness to it. On an RCA Living Stereo recording of Brahms' Violin Concerto No1 (0926-61495-2) string tone was sweet and the instrument's wooden resonance was clearly audible. Quick bowing was adeptly handled, with only the lightest rounding-off of leading-edge

transients.

The Heylettes fared well in the voice department, too. Rebecca Pidgeon's latest offering ('The New York Girls' Club' from Chesky, JD114) includes many tricky passages but the Heylettes barely put a foot wrong. Vocals were natural, smooth and airy, though you'd expect a little more detail in her breathy style, if you were listening to the LS3/5As. That said, her voice hung steady between the two 'speakers while all the instruments were spaced precisely across the sound stage.

I think Heybrook have got themselves a clear winner in the Heylettes. They have an eminently listenable balance and easily justify their claim to be a trimmed-down version of the classic BBC monitors. They might not have matched the low coloration or the studio quality of the LS3/5As, but at less than half the latter's price there's no shame in that. The Heylettes are a class act, no doubt.

Heybrook Heylette £270

Heybrook
Clemlow Road,
Liskeard,
Cornwall,
PL14 3NH
Tel: 01579 342866

WORLD VERDICT



A mini monitor with more precision and dynamism than the size and price tag would suggest.

Measured Performance
see p111

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The marketing division of Arcam are no fools. The new Alpha 8SE has been pitched as a superior variant on the '7 and standard '8 with its provision for HDCD-encoded discs, and yet the different decoding option is readily available to insatiable owners of previous models as an upgrade kit. Bought outright, the 8SE costs £599.90, while an upgrade from a '7 will set you back about £299 including fitting. This makes the entry-level Alpha 7 a very attractive proposition to anyone impatient for a good basic CD player within a tight budget, and who may want more performance when depleted funds are restored. But what do six hundred notes buy you with the Alpha 8SE?

The three base models in the range, the '7, '8 and '9, all share the same casework, allowing economies of scale to keep overall costs competitive. And that rounded, slim case is not hard on the eyes at all, the soft, gold legends on a dark graphite panel giving suitable directions to lost fingers in search of the right button. The front panel is lamentably moulded from plastic, but so well finished that only a pedant with plastophobia would want to sulk over it.

There is a good balance of buttons, too. Alongside the essential Stop and Play switches you have programming capability, Repeat functions and even a Display Off, all without resorting to the remote control. The ability to turn off the display is refreshing, leaving the Alpha 8SE unobtrusive save for a tell-tale green LED softly aglow. Unless, that is, you happen to be playing an HDCD disc, when a red LED completes the port and starboard effect by lighting up from behind the Arcam badge on the left side.

On the rear panel are two pairs of audio outputs, ostensibly for multi-room flexibility, although I do wonder if any perverse bi-ampers might seize the opportunity to persevere with a dual mono set-up that extends to two separate pre-amps. For power connection there is an IEC socket, and available for digital dubbing and other such handiwork is an RCA co-axial digital output.

Within the casework a galvanised steel bottom supports transport and



The Arcam Alpha 8SE takes a small step for CD but a not-so-small leap for music thanks to HDCD capability. Andrew Harrison reports.

electronics. The 20VA transformer is mounted on the main PCB itself along with its smoothing caps and associated regulators. The 20-bit HDCD DAC module is suspended upside down from an alloy extrusion that fills the depth of the player, just to the right of the Sony mech.

The Alpha 8SE was hooked up to a system consisting of a Linn Kairn and Klout feeding Kelly KT3s through Kimber 8TC cable, with Ecosse Maf Reference Monocrystal interconnects. This player has a detailed sound when playing regular CDs, a sound to be welcomed by fans of information used to the apparently clean dynamics of Compact Disc, but it's a presentation that can prove a tad wearing to wavers of the analogue flag.

First in was Garbage's 'Push It' from the Version 2.0 album, a slice of Indie mayhem the Arcam pulled off rather well rhythm-wise. From the Sneaker Pimps came 'Post Modern Sleaze', rendered in a spacious and open way by the Kellys as the brittle acoustic guitar finger-squeaked the opening bars. While imaging left to right was exemplary, front to back perspectives fared less well compared to an old Rotel multi-bit player digitally linked to an outboard Musical Fidelity X-DAC and X-PSU. In the latter front end, individual melody lines were more

finely resolved but the slam and punch available from the Arcam were slurred marginally, leading to an altogether softer sound.

Eric Bibb plays a mighty fine acoustic Blues, and the Alpha 8SE made a fine impression when spinning his Good Stuff album on an Opus 3 HDCD. 'Shingle By Shingle', for example, had a convincing solidity to it that brought to mind pro-quality reel-to-reel tape machines. The nuances of the fretwork here, along with the naturalness of the recorded acoustic, made a strong case for the enhanced format.

On 'New World Comin' Through' Bibb plays 12-string with four-piece vocal accompaniment, and once again the palpability of the performance through the Arcam had me reaching for the Repeat button on the remote. Emotionally drained by this track, Stravinsky's Firebird brought me around with its grand sense of scale. Orchestral peaks especially emerged with their power undiminished and not a trace of top-end distress.

Arcam's Alpha 8SE, when judged by its sound on standard discs alone, is a fine player, as David Price found in his review in January 1997. The addition of Pacific Microsonic's HDCD filter makes it an even more attractive choice.

Arcam Alpha 8SE
£599.90

Arcam
Pembroke Avenue,
Waterbeach,
Cambridge
CB5 9PB
Tel: 01223 203203

WORLD VERDICT



The Alpha 8SE builds on the strengths of its standard sibling with the new HDCD compatibility.

Measured Performance
see p111

*The alphabet according to
Musical Fidelity.*



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up a vast, inky black acoustic behind the 'speakers, through which great quantities of low-level detail shine through.

Duran Duran's 'Ordinary World' evinced this perfectly. The Musical Fidelity gave out a spacious sound stage, with rock-solid stereo imaging and stage depth. Instruments were fixed in place with genuine precision - just as the mixing engineer intended - beneath a wash of bass and powerful Rock drums.

Then, as if from nowhere, vocals and acoustic guitars sprang from the extreme rear of the acoustic and hung between the loudspeakers. Simon LeBon's plaintive voice was clean and dry - perhaps a little thin, but that's digital recordings for you - and you could really feel his pain. Then the song's chorus kicked in with tremendous slam and no loss of control from the A1001. Nice!

Everything But The Girl's 'Sugar Finney' was no less a delight. From the song's opening bars the music came across with immense clarity and grip. Where other amplifiers simply ignore the heavy piano cadences underpinning the rhythm section, the A1001 conveyed them better than any amplifier I've heard to date, the 'speakers pumping more air around the room than a wind turbine. Meanwhile, strings and brass were located with pin-point precision, and Tracey Thorn's vocals projected clean into the air. Again the Musical Fidelity proved absolutely immune to the bass drum's swingeing dynamics, and even at ear-splitting levels seemed barely off idling!

Corduroy's 'London, England' was next on. This is a superb analogue recording with oodles of power and passion. The A1001 thought so too, giving one of the most impressive renditions of this number that I've ever heard. Bass was gob-smackingly powerful yet taut, tight and tuneful without the slightest hint of compression. Drums were tremendously punchy thanks to real clout and body, while cymbals were deliciously smooth yet sharp enough to shave with.

The amp's tonal palette was no less enticing. Although lacking the creaminess of valves, it was extremely good at capturing the

texture and colour of instruments. Rather than the bleak, dank greyness that comes from many solid-state amps, the Musical Fidelity was as clean and crisp as a frosty morning.

You could also say that the MF's treble isn't quite the sweetest around. Cymbals don't quite glisten and shimmer as they do on single-ended triode valve amps, but then

All of MF's power amps have the same sensitivity, and can be daisy-chained, making bi-amping from the A1001 easy.



Brass had a warm, satisfying rasp and strings were wonderfully sinewy - resonant and raw but never harsh.

The A1001's detail retrieval also shone - for the first time ever, I heard a 'lost' wah-wah guitar singing away at the back of the mix and the frame of the harpsichord resonating every time the keyboard player hit a note! This track also underlined the point that, despite this amp's immense reserves of power, it's as fast and fleet as a small £1000 integrated. Despite all the legwork it has to do in the bass region, it never dragged its feet and complained.

Criticisms? If pushed, I'd have to say that the upper midrange is a touch 'cool' and dry, but this could simply be because the A1001 isn't flattering the NS1000s, which have been criticised for just that trait. Neither is the Musical Fidelity quite the best at conveying those tiny little accents and subtleties of playing which let you know musicians are really trying. Still, as it's so superb when it comes to the big picture - communicating the scale and power of the overall performance - you barely notice.

again SEs don't deliver nearly a kilowatt of clean power on peaks! Still, as transistor amps go, the A1001 is no slouch in the high frequencies.

During the MF's stay I found myself going through another one of those banzai listening sessions as I ran through my records and CDs frenetically, leaving them strewn across the floor. Although the Musical Fidelity is an extremely capable all-rounder, I found it really made a name for itself with large-scale Classical works such as the Mercury Living Presence pressing of Stravinsky's Firebird, where its fine blend of clarity and authority was just the ticket. And, in marked contrast to the aforementioned, it's one of the best amps I've heard for Drum 'n' Bass - LTJ Bukem's 'Logical Progression' will never be the same again!

It looks like Mr Michaelson has come up with a deeply impressive amplifier that's cheap at the price considering what it does and how much more you'd have to pay for rivals to do it better. Heartily recommended, but don't forget to turn the central heating down! ●

Musical Fidelity A1001
£2499

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WORLD VERDICT



Awesome power, seismic bass and super-clean sound make the A1001 one of the best all-rounders on the market.

Measured Performance
see p111

HOT STUFF



David Price basks in the heat coming from Musical Fidelity's massive A1001 Class A integrated amplifier.

Despite their immense popularity in Japan, high-end integrated amplifiers are seen by many British audiophiles as a soft option. After all, 'serious' hi-fi is all about millions of separate boxes, power supplies, cables and equipment supports isn't it? Well, Anthony Michaelson - creator of this huge, black beastie - would disagree. He reckons his new A1001 gives 'no-compromise' performance with the convenience of a single box, and power enough to drive absolutely anything.

"Hype", you may say, but experience it in the flesh and you may well change your mind. The A1001 is certainly the heaviest amplifier I've ever reviewed, as my aching back will testify. No monkey metal here - it's 30kgs worth of two 700VA shielded toroidal transformers driving monobloc power amp sections, plus another 100VA toroid for the pre-amplifier. And then there are the two massive heatsinks that dissipate the heat wave

the heavily class A biased power amps produce.

All pre-amp inputs are buffered, and the power amp circuitry uses discrete transistors rather than op-amps. Full remote control is provided, and the pre-amp and power amp sections have their own rear-panel RCA phono sockets joined by gold-plated metal 'U' links. Since this is a line-level device, there's no phono section or optional phono card. Musical Fidelity would instead point analogue lovers to their X-LP at £129, or their high-end, two-box X-Tract 'monobloc' phono stage, due in June and selling for £800.

In use the A1001 is satisfyingly straightforward, with a handy remote, plenty of inputs and classy looks. The only problems are its enormous size - it's big and heavy enough to flatten most equipment racks - and its propensity to get hotter than your average Formula 1 exhaust manifold. This is completely normal, but don't harbour any

illusions about stacking other separates on top unless you want to test their thermal coefficients.

SOUND QUALITY

Downstream of a Michell Orbe, SME V and Ortofon MC 30 Supreme driving a valve phono pre-amp, through my Yamaha NS1000M loudspeakers it was clear this monster Musical Fidelity was something special. Combining neutrality with jaw-dropping power, it gives remarkably little of its character away. And it seems completely in command at all times, showing an almost super-human disregard for difficult loads. Witness the way it drove my big Yamahas - it just grabbed them by the scruff of the neck and shook them. Normally, the Yams sit back and watch as the poor amp driving them struggles!

Most impressive though is that glass-clear midband, which is totally devoid of the low-level mush and hash that spoils most transistor amplifiers. Rather, the A1001 sets

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6kHz recordings when fed from a suitable transport

with scope for considerable refinement - comparing one with the other now doesn't account for how quickly each will improve. From a hardware design perspective, Rob Watts believes there's more room for 24/96 to grow. In time, faster microprocessors using his Pulse Array Modulation architecture will give "true 24-bit performance", he says. LFD's Dr Richard Bews agrees that the Sony system is "compromised", saying "24/96 PCM should be totally adequate for all we ever need".

But isn't all this talk of digital specifications missing the point, which is that the technology's implementation affects sound more than the type of technology itself? Richard Bews says that, "without proper power supplies, earthing and parts, even the best DAC won't sound right". Railing against what he calls "specmanship", he argues that sampling frequencies and word size are more useful to marketing men than digital engineers. Regardless of whether you're using DSD or PCM, "the problem is always how you do it".

This is an important point. Back in the 1970s Japanese manufacturers made a mockery of hi-fi by selling their products on measured specs alone, and we don't need a repeat of that. The worry is that punters will automatically assume a cheap 24/96 PCM or DSD player is better than a high-end 16-bit CD machine and buy on numbers rather than what their ears tell them. In truth, only when you've spent money on the basics do you reap the benefits of better technology - Bews adds, "you can't have a free lunch with digital".

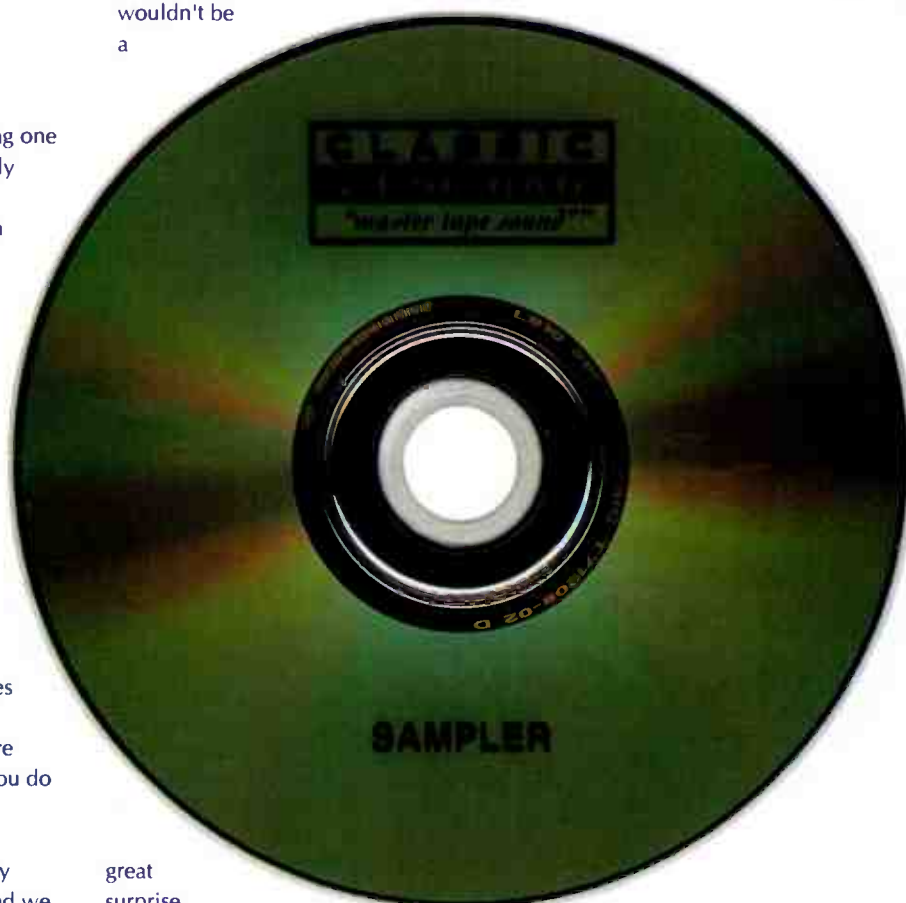
WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS

Compared to DSD, PCM is more expensive and costs real money to get right. At present, cheap and cheerful DACs cost next to nothing but don't reach anywhere near full performance. The likes of Burr-Brown's PCM63/PCM1702 give true 16-bit resolution but cost \$2 each. Low-end PCM will always be more expensive than one-bit because of its complexity, and serious PCM costs an arm and a leg. It's no coincidence then that all the 24/96 PCM hardware and software has come from

leading-edge, high-end US specialists who sell low volumes at high prices. In a sense, it would be perverse for Philips and Sony - as purveyors of good mass-market audio - to choose PCM over DSD.

Then there are all the familiar arguments over compatibility, consumer demand, marketing opportunities and content providers to thrash out. As the DVD Forum contains a myriad different companies, many of whom have next to no interest in pure, high-quality audio but are obsessed with issues of piracy and intellectual copyright, the fact that they've managed to agree anything looks a major achievement.

Again, it wouldn't be a



great surprise, if Sony and Philips decided to run with their Super Audio CD. Ironically though, as the wrangling continues over the best way to fill a 4.7Gigabyte optical disc with music, the discs themselves look set to improve still further. The prospect of blue-light lasers means over 20Gigs of storage from a CD-sized disc, equating to 400kHz sampling frequencies and 32-bit words!

The upshot of this is that perhaps there will never be a definitive replacement for old-fashioned 16-bit Compact Disc. Although hopelessly dated, at least it is a world standard - which is something that definitely cannot be said for DSD or 24/96 yet, or perhaps ever. As soon as one of these two systems appears in earnest, audiophiles such as ourselves will doubtless be cursing its antiquated digital specifications, and ruing the day it was introduced. That, as they say, is the problem with progress!

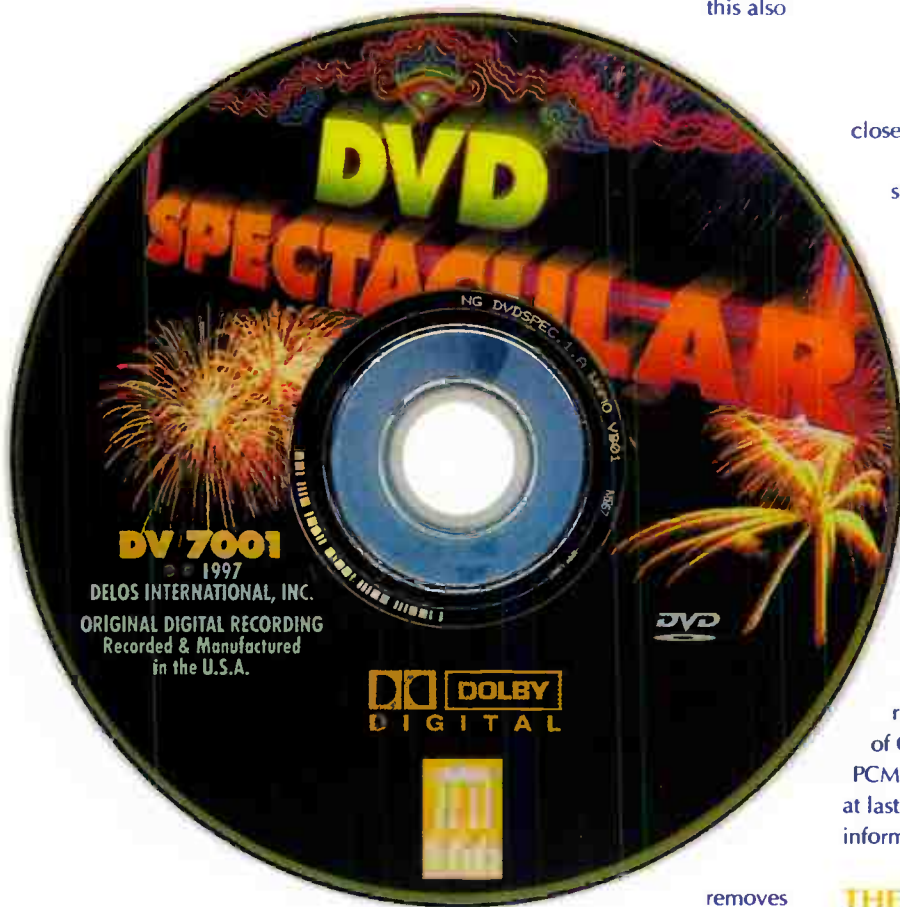
... while this Classic Music sampler is audio-only 24/96.

In PCM, music is sampled into a multi-bit digital word many thousands of times a second. The word length determines the resolution of the sample. For instance, early drum machines used four-bit words that gave the tizzy cymbal sounds you hear on early Dance music. CD's 16-bits give a far smoother sound.

The number of samples made every second - the sampling frequency - determines the bandwidth of the sample, the general rule being that the sampling frequency needs to be twice the required bandwidth. Above this PCM gets very noisy, so dramatic 'brick-wall' filtering is used to quieten it. But this also



Data Conversion System's Elgar DAC will play 24-bit



Discs like this Delos 20-bit 96kHz sampler contain a mix of audio and video. . .

removes any music signal too, meaning that, with narrow-bandwidth PCM like CD, many instruments' upper harmonics are sliced off.

It's now commonly agreed that a wide bandwidth - giving a clean, extended high-frequency response - is essential, if music is going to sound natural. The benefit of 96kHz sampling is that it gives twice CD's bandwidth, making for a more spacious and open sound. Allied to its better 24-bit resolution, the ARA's proposal looks very attractive. But it does have some downsides.

As Rob Watts of DPA Digital points out, in practice most 24/96 Analogue-to-Digital Convertors (ADCs) and Digital-to-Analogue Convertors (DACs) don't run anywhere near this resolution, thanks to the technological limitations of the chips' internal architecture. Indeed, he says many currently struggle to achieve true 16-bit performance. As chip design improves in future years, convertors will get closer and

closer to true 24-bit, but few are presently up to it.

Also, some think there's little point in having such a high digital specification for consumer discs, if the pro side of the industry runs below 24/96.

Kevin Halverstone of Muse Electronics says that there's currently no recording industry standard for ADCs and DACs, and that most studio digital hardware is not yet 24/96 anyway. In short, what's the point of having a super-high resolution format, if there aren't any recorders or recordings good enough to benefit?

Some experts even think the 24/96

format itself isn't up to the job. PCM rolls off sharply at the top of its frequency range, and 24/96 gives nothing above 48kHz. This doesn't seem a problem until you remember that CD's 20kHz bandwidth was once thought adequate too. Many now believe a 100kHz bandwidth is audibly superior to 48kHz, and recording specialists dCS (Data Conversion Systems) of Cambridge are reported to have said that 192kHz PCM sounds noticeably better than 96kHz. Take a look at last month's report on dCS's 24/192 DAC for more information on this particular topic.

THE SOUNDS

Gauging pre-production, prototype and 'first generation' formats isn't easy, but the consensus of opinion is that DVD-Audio seems the better bet for top sound. Those who heard Classic Music's 24/96 discs at the US CES audio fair are highly enthusiastic, with people like recording industry professional George Cardas calling them "virtually indistinguishable" from analogue master tapes.

On the other hand, Philips' Paul Reynolds believes DSD outperforms 24/96 PCM, describing it as "closer to the original analogue in its nature - you can definitely hear the difference", and says industry demos in the US have been "positive". Other listeners have reportedly said it's closer to 20-bit PCM at 96kHz. ARA founder member Malcolm Hawksford - not a natural advocate of DSD - recently attended an industry demonstration in Japan, and reported hearing "an extremely good sound".

The problem is that both formats are moving targets

CD REBORN

In the first part of his article on the replacement for CD, David Price looked at the background to CD's development and one potential successor, Super Audio CD. Now he examines SACD's rival, 24-bit 96kHz PCM.



While Philips and Sony have put their not inconsiderable weight behind their own Direct Stream Digital, there is another pretender to the throne of future digital format - 24-bit 96kHz Pulse Code Modulation. This is the system the Acoustic Renaissance for Audio would like to see win what looks like the forthcoming battle for the next-generation CD.

Sony, with its extensive CBS musical back-catalogue, may be using DSD for archiving precious analogue master tapes, but most studios rely on Pulse Code Modulation. PCM has been around for over 25 years now, and is employed on existing CDs as well as by recording industry professionals for digital recording, signal processing and mixing.

One to watch as DVD Audio starts to trickle into specialist music retailers - Panasonic's DVD-A350 DVD player with 24/96 compatibility.

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CONCLUSION

You might be thinking that, given a £300 price span in this group test, the more expensive loudspeakers here would have a major advantage over the cheaper ones. But if there's one golden rule of hi-fi that happily works in favour of the impecunious audiophile, it's that what costs the most doesn't automatically sound the best.

BIG AND BOLD

Proof positive of this was the way Audiovector's M2s were sonically surpassed by the less expensive designs gathered here. The M2s' peaked response in the bass and treble looks like a classic piece of showroom engineering. This will give these 'speakers a head start when it comes to instant appeal in a brief audition on Rock music, but it tends to be wearing for longer listening sessions on Classical compositions. Their sensitivity is quite high at 89dB, so they won't have any difficulty filling large rooms with a lot of bass, nor will they load smaller amplifiers too heavily.

When it comes to strictly musical credentials though, the M2s aren't such a good bet. Their loose bass and bright treble don't integrate smoothly, and tend to exaggerate any faults in the recording. They lack transparency too, especially when compared to the Origin Lives at almost £300 less.

SPENDOR AND CO

Standing shoulder to shoulder (or should that be baffle to baffle?) were the Celestion A2 at £1500 and the Spondor FL8 at £1275, although these two possess very different sonic signatures.

The A2s with their Mica-loaded polypropylene mid/bass cones have a generally lean sound that's not a million miles away from that of the Epos ES22s. And like the Eposes they have a controlled, extended bass that will have any loose objects scattered around the immediate vicinity joining in with basslines. This gives the music emanating from the A2s' coffin-like enclosures a sense of solidity, scale and drive that Rockers and Classical lovers alike will admire.

Shift up through the octaves, however, and you might find powerful cymbals and strings don't come in for the same assured treatment. The Celestions' metal dome tweeter isn't the best of the breed, and can sound harsh as the volume levels rise. And while images stay put as you move around the listening position, there's a lack of focus to them that disappoints next to the Origin Lives.

Where the Celestions were cool and controlled, the Spondors are richer and looser. Play either Jazz or Classical through them and you will discover they have a mellow but enjoyably warm way of relaying music. There's no risk of the FL8s offending as their drivers are invariably smooth and unfatiguing, even with brighter, brasher Indie, Rock and Dance recordings.

Unfortunately, it was in these very genres that the Spondors' demonstrated the flipside to their thus-far fine performance. They have a fairly relaxed approach to dynamics, which tends to dilute the pace and excitement as tempos pick up speed. Their grip on bass notes could be stronger as well, with bass guitar, cellos and double-basses becoming larger than life at times thanks to bass boom.

TOP DOGS

It's a tie again for first position, where we have Origin Live's Sovereigns and Epos' ES22s. Once more, the two have quite dissimilar outlooks but what they do, they both do very well.

The Sovereigns manage to mix many of the best qualities of the Spondors with those of the ES22s. Their Kevlar tweeter has the speed and precision of the latter's metal dome combined with the sweet smoothness that you get from the Spondors'. The mid/bass driver does a sterling job too, transparency and sound staging being its two main attributes.

What sets the Origin Lives apart from the ES22s is their forgiving musicality.

Whereas the Eposes don't suffer bad recordings gladly and show up their limitations, the OLs will gloss over the worst studio offences and keep the music flowing. In addition, there's the matter of bass performance. The ES22s are at their best when it comes to any signal below 150Hz, with their grip, depth and speed. The Sovereigns belong more to the FL8 school of low frequencies, and aren't as extended or controlled as a consequence.

The Eposes, with their small, light cones, have surprising punch and weight for their size. And that minimalist crossover pays dividends when it comes to detail, the ES22s letting through more than any of the other loudspeakers here. Helping is a lack of the cabinet coloration that can obscure low-level subtleties, as was occasionally the case with the Sovereigns.

You'll need a powerful amplifier if you're going to get the most from the Eposes, as they're as transparent to inferior sources as they are to duff recordings and prefer plenty of current on tap. But hook them up to the right equipment and they'll shine●



EPOS ES22

£1185

THE TECHNOLOGY

Looking tall and slender alongside the majority of other floor standers, the ES22s' cabinets produce a very 'dead' sound when you rap them with your knuckles, which bodes well for a sound unspoilt by box honk. For £15 shy of £1200, you get an 87cm high 'speaker of excellent finish (in our case a light cherry veneer) that's only 25cms deep. The 25mm front baffle is particularly uncluttered, all mounting screws and fasteners neatly hidden away behind a dark fascia.

The drive units themselves are configured in a 21/2-way arrangement with Epos' standard minimalist crossover - there are only two components! The lower driver handles bass and is rolled off by a low-pass filter consisting of a single 150mm air-cored inductor, shrewdly mounted within the rear of the cabinet in a recessed cut-out to protect it from vibration. This bass unit vents through its own rear-firing reflex port. The 25mm aluminium-dome tweeter is fed its signal via a lone polypropylene capacitor.

Between these two drivers sits a midrange unit, cunningly engineered to roll off naturally at frequency extremes and hence function without the need for crossover equalisation. This unit, in common with other ES designs, features a central phase plug to aid integration with the tweeter and improve midrange dispersion.

On the back panel our sample had three pairs of flush-fitted 4mm banana sockets, making tri-wiring obligatory, although we are told that a tri- to single-wiring kit is available. What also impressed us were the spike inserts on the underside, where a flat-sided shank is inserted through the 19mm particleboard base, allowing high levels of torque to be applied to the spike locking nuts without fear of them rotating in the base and unscrewing, as happens on most other floor standers.

SOUND QUALITY

Despite their relatively diminutive dimensions these 'speakers only sounded happy when they were sited about four feet from the rear wall. Get closer than two or

three feet and you'll be faced with a wallowing, bloated bass that interferes with melodies and suppresses detail.

Carefully sited, the initial impression the ES22s gave was of a lean, tidy sound with no obvious tonal aberrations. Their superbly-controlled bass handled the sliding bass synthesiser in Sneaker Pimps' 'Spin, Spin, Sugar' with ease as it headed for the subsonic regions. Tri-wiring to the A1001 integrated proved a match made

to please, the MF's reserves of power exerting a powerful grip on bass drums and guitars while the Class A amplification injected some sweetness into the Epos' sound.

The lazy introduction on Joe Beard's 'Lay For Me Sometime' opens with Blues crooning and a Gibson guitar before the rest of the group join in. The ES22s thrived on the tight rhythms in this number.

Confident now of the loudspeakers' pedigree, the tweaked World Audio 300B was set up with a Linn Kairn on pre-amp detail. Vocals in particular had winning dynamics, the range of intensity from soft whisper to hoarse Marlboro rasp fully covered. With the 300B's feedback switched off, the Epos' bandwidth extended even further and there was barely a hint of

metallic character from the metal-dome tweeter.

A change of genre was accompanied by a move to more humble amplification in Audio Analogue's Puccini SE integrated. Mozart's Clarinet concerto delivered a lean and detailed performance with excellent midband articulation. And the Sneaker Pimps 'Six Underground', with its understated bass guitar line that creeps up through the song, was adeptly rendered, bass level remaining constant as fingers shuffled up fretboard.

Of deficiencies there are few. The ES22s are slightly cool customers which, while never uninvolved, do reveal any clinicality within a recording. Sound stage width and depth could reach out slightly further too. At the end of the day though, the Epos ES22s revel in anything funky with a backbeat, or anything that calls for a clear, uncoloured midband to faithfully reproduce tonal colour. Just remember these floor standers' insensitivity means they'll need partnering with some fairly muscular glass or silicon.



AUDIOVECTOR M2

£1499

THE TECHNOLOGY

Since Audiovector's last review in June '95, their distribution has been taken over by Glaive, who now import these Danish 'speakers from Copenhagen. The M Series launched last year consists of two main variants, the stand mount M1 and the floor standing M2. Both are available in three upgrade guises, where premiums are rewarded with improvements in cabinet and driver construction.

For this group test we chose Audiovector's basic M2, which costs £1499 in a light Cherry veneer. This, like the Celestion A2s, is a 21/2-way design, featuring two reflex-ported 7in. mid/bass drivers with cones of polymer-coated, carbon fibre-reinforced paper. The matching soft-dome tweeter vents part of its rearward radiation through a dedicated port in what F3 call SES (Sound stage Enhancement System).

On the rear is an impressive set of tri-wire binding posts, large, gilded, knurled knobs gripping the long, gold-plated connecting rod that allows single-wiring.

An extra £650 buys you an upgrade kit that raises the M2 to M3 status. This involves installing a new front baffle as well as a change of mid/bass units and the consequent revisions to the crossover.

For £750 on top of this, the M3 can be brought up to M3 Signature level. This time it's the tweeter's turn for replacement, along with a sandwich baffle on the rear and those crossover mods again. Another option (which can be added at any time) is a dense ceramic-polymer platform, the Superstand, to improve all-important rigidity when siting the 'speakers on the floor. This costs £169.



On the XRCD of Joe Beard's Blues Union, his electric Blues were unconvincing thanks to ride cymbals brought too far forward in the sound stage and a domineering bass drum that obscured partnering instruments. Having the 'speakers well away from the back wall of our listening room did, however, afford us the treat of good depth perspectives and images cast well back behind the Audiovectors' enclosures. Unfortunately, it failed to eradicate the feeling of artifice that stemmed from the unnaturally lifted treble and upper bass.

In the timing department the preponderance of ported bass once again upset things, causing a tardiness to the tempo apparent on even quite sparse bass guitar lines. Listening to female vocals, such as Kelli Dayton's on the Sneaker Pimps album *Becoming X*, we had to strain to make out her voice in a wash of low frequencies. In the M2s' favour, this did mean we never suffered the pitfall of edgy or hard singing.

Switching from bi to tri-wiring did little to even out the tonal balance, adding just a tad more detail. With Classical music, midrange purity was compromised by cellos whose lower registers were rather overenthusiastic. On the Mozart Clarinet Concerto, for example, cellos and basses blended together, leaving a recessed clarinet moving back and forth in the sound stage as it changed registers. Violins, meanwhile, sounded thin and reedy in a recorded

performance now lacking drama and atmosphere.

With Andrei Gavrilov sitting at the grand piano for Rachmaninov's Second Piano Concerto, big, fat chords were indistinct, his playing obscured until he moved further up the keyboard. Less complex pieces, on the other hand, such as string quartets, were given an easier time, where an intimate recording was allowed to breathe.

Tall, slim and attractive, these Scandinavian blonds have fine sensitivity allied to an effortless bass quality that makes Heavy Metal at high levels from a small amp fun, but they're outclassed by the competition at this price. The Audiovectors' plentiful bass would perhaps suit a large open-plan (Northern European?) lounge better than typical smaller British listening rooms.

The potential for upgrading shouldn't be underestimated though. Either of the more highly-specified models should provide more control, especially in the bass department. In fact, in a preliminary listen to the top Audiovector M1 stand mounter, the M1 Signature, we were given more than a hint of the impressive results upgrading can deliver.

SOUND QUALITY

The M2s were allowed to run in over a couple of days before they were fired up in earnest. Early listens to the Audiovectors showed that they offer a big, bright sound without undue provocation from the volume knob of the A1001.

We bi-wired these 'speakers with the Ecosse Maï Monocrystal Reference, where one cable fed the tweeter and t'other the bass and mid/bass drivers coupled by the linking rod. This yielded a smooth midrange but one which was dwarfed by prodigious amounts of bass and an all-too-prominent treble peak. The bass wasn't of the sub-sonic trouser-flapping variety, more an all-enveloping bloom that, despite subsequent efforts with repositioning far from the rear wall and cable reconfiguration, was still omnipresent and tiring to listen through.

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(group tested Feb'98 Hi-Fi World)

SPENDOR FL8

£1275

THE TECHNOLOGY

In traditional Spendor cabinet fashion, the FL8s are constructed from relatively thin MDF panels heavily damped and braced. The wrap (sides, top and bottom) are 12mm thick and covered with a 6mm layer of bituminous damping. The front and back move up to 18mm and 15mm MDF respectively and retain the 6mm damping pads. Two side-to-side and one front-to-back brace routed into the main panels round out the picture.

Screwed to the front baffle above the large reflex port are a 200mm homopolymer polypropylene mid/bass driver and a 25mm soft-dome tweeter. The two sets of drivers are pair-matched to within 1dB (according to Spendor) to ensure consistency between individual FL8s.

The Spendors come fitted with round feet which are more floor-friendly than spikes, but unless you have a mirror-finish parquet to protect, these should be removed and replaced with the spikes supplied. Another mandatory change is the bi-wire links on the binding tray to the rear. Like many two-ways, the FL8s don't really open up until they're bi-wired.

SOUND QUALITY

Spendors have a bit of a reputation for complementing Classical music, so I wheeled in a copy of Rachmaninov's *Symphonic Dances* on a Classic Music Sampler. This recording of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra was made in 1967 and has an enviable spaciousness and drive to it - it's most emphatically not wallpaper music for background listening. The FL8s cottoned on to this fact swiftly and kept my ears tuned in with a smooth, weighty sound free of any treble nasties to pollute the string section. Allied to this was a tonal palette which, although a touch warm, was broad enough to clearly separate the various parts of the orchestra. You could say the FL8s have a typically Spendorian rose-tinted outlook on things when it comes to sonic character - these are definitely not cold, clinical, colourless 'speakers, and with Classical music they work well.

A spot of Jazz ('Evidence' performed by Art Davis, Herbie Hancock, Martin Smith and Ravi Coltrane) from the same Classic sampler disc further strengthened the FL8s' credentials when it came to acoustic instruments. Their slightly mellow and warm presentation suited the

saxophone and drum kit right down to the ground, stirring a dose of richness and smoky bar room ambience into the mix.

Where this didn't sit quite as appropriately was double-bass, which should have been rhythmically tighter and snappier. As it was, the bass player seemed relaxed Bill Clinton-style, after a bit of surreptitious inhalation. The FL8s' view of imaging was a little hazy too. You could certainly point your finger to where each of the band members was standing, but they didn't step forward into full focus. At least the Spendors didn't turn the spirited playing into spineless muzak. But would they change the Harley Davidson of Rock into a moped? Cue JVC's XRCD of the Steve Miller Band's *The Joker* album.

Well, no, but nor were they obviously at home here. Gone was this number's raunch factor 9 - the raunchometer was now hitting about five out of 10, still a respectable score though not enough to have you reaching for your air guitar. Pluses were that amiable tonality and smoothness, while the negatives list contained phrases like, "dynamics could be faster and crisper" and "bass has some tubbiness to it." In spite of this, the Spendors will get your feet tapping and



keep them that way. It's just that they rarely get the adrenaline flowing on Rockier records.

Greener pastures were waiting on Massive Attack's *Blue Lines* album. The classic 'Unfinished Sympathy', with its lush string section, was a better fit on the FL8s, and their timing gelled neatly with the rest of this non-frenetic disc. The sole problem on the above-mentioned song was a tendency for the low bass note that punctuates this track to boom quite badly, as if the large ports on the front of the Spendors' cabinets were going their own way on this one. The bottom end could have been more seamlessly integrated, but it stuck out a lot less on the other heavy, synthetic basslines on this CD.

Switching from a CD source to Panasonic's A350 DVD player and a 24-bit 96kHz sampler, again from Classic, confirmed the Spendors as pleasant and enjoyable loudspeakers, if not the most transparent or exciting. Bearing in mind their £1275 price, they don't look expensive and would slip snugly into either a brash system that requires calming down or one where Classical recordings are the mainstay.



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CELESTION A2

£1499

THE TECHNOLOGY

The A2s' drivers are configured in a 2 1/2-way arrangement, such that the lower unit reproduces just low bass while the topmost takes bass and midrange. On the rear panel two pairs of binding posts (upper for the treble crossover, lower for the bass and mid/bass crossover) accept bare wires or 4mm plugs under screw terminals.

Bob Smith, Celestion engineer, told us the Mica-loaded polypropylene cone drivers of the A series were designed with midrange clarity as the main priority, and then the units were tweaked to suit the cabinet design in question.

Mention must also be made of the Faraday ring featured on the metal-dome tweeter. This copper device aims to reduce the inductance of the voice coil and thus maintain HF performance at high playback levels.

SOUND QUALITY

If exterior finish was the sole criterion for judging this group's competitors, then these Celestions would come close to the top of the list. Our sample was finished in a comely Santos Rosewood which, at £1799, puts this veneer outside of the test budget. However, a standard finish of Black Ash or Cherry comes in at £1499, thereby just qualifying for inclusion. At almost 30kgs apiece, the A2s are the most substantial 'speakers here as well, which is probably just as well

considering the large amount of low-end grunt available from those mid/bass units.

The styling is quite distinctive, and to be honest, not one we immediately took a shine to. I can imagine the gun-metal driver surrounds and treble unit faceplate looking dated within a couple of years, and these 'speakers, with their performance aims and price tag, should outlive any current fashion fad. It was after spending some time listening to what they do with music that I started to look beyond the aesthetics.

The A2s were initially powered by Musical Fidelity's A1001 integrated via Ecosse Maf Reference cables, with PT's Litaural dishing out the digits. From the outset we were treated to a confident, cohesive sound with images spread wide between the 'speakers. A little more positional experimentation found the A2s working at their tuneit best about four feet from the back wall, giving plenty of room for that cavernous rear port to breathe.

Maximising bass extension was evidently another important task for Celestion. The low-frequency content of music underpinned the performance of Joe Beard and

Ronnie Earl on the JVC XRCD Blues Union, giving strummed acoustic guitar and the foot-tapping on 'Lay For Me Sometime' a tangible solidity.

This album was recorded direct to 30ips analogue two-track, and these Celestions shone with the vitality of that session. Their sound stage width and depth couldn't rise to the full spaciousness of the original venue, nor were individual instruments' images entirely 3-D, but in the A2s' favour was the uncanny consistency of balance regardless of listening position - you could walk around the listening room and still get an even presentation of tonal colour. By comparison, some designs have a hot

seat that delivers great sound, but move a foot to either side and the whole hi-fi construct falls apart.

Celestion credit the A2s with 90dB sensitivity (2.83V at 1m). With this in mind we set up the 28watt World Audio 300B valve power amp, newly tuned with AudioLinks audiophile goodies. On went the Joe Beard and now the bottom end mixed the A1001's weight with extra speed and slam on bass transients. The Hammond-infested 'Feets Out In The Hall', with its luscious B3 Leslied to perfection, hung behind the A2s with Beard's raspy vocals to the fore.

In fact, it was with certain voices that a slightly hard sibilance from the tweeter made its presence felt; turn the volume up a tad beyond normal listening levels and the upper frequencies can

start to coarsen.

On a busier production such as Sneaker Pimps' Becoming X, a potentially bright 'n' bassy affair, there was that edginess again, particularly on Kelli Dayton's voice. 'Spin, Spin, Sugar' was the offender in this case, with its additional touch of bass wooliness that had rhythm lagging minutely behind the beat.

On the same track is a falling bass note that can send shivers through brickwork as well as your spine, and sure enough the Celestions handled pyrotechnics like this with confidence, plumbing the lower limits of grin-inducing bass.

Now in case you start to see the A2s solely as a bass-freak's dream date, try them with a disc or two of light Classical fare and you might be surprised by a delicacy of expression that belies their size. On small-scale compositions the bass is agile enough to match the midrange's transparency, the two knitted together by the same slightly dry tonal balance. Only when the string section was whipping up a storm did the A2s sound less comfortable, the tweeter's metal dome roughening strings on crescendos.





*".....Tall, Slim and Attractive these Scandinavian blondes have fine sensitivity allied to an effortless bass quality....."
(Hi Fi World June 98)*

For details of where to hear Audiovector loudspeakers, or for a colour catalogue, please contact:

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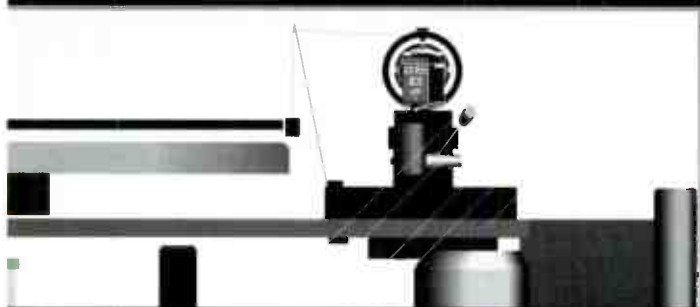
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THE TECHNOLOGY

Loudspeaker drive units aren't normally what you'd call 'attention-grabbing' items, but the tweeter fitted to the Sovereigns is rather different from the fabric and metal-dome norms. What you get is an inverted dome made from woven Kevlar. According to Focal, inverting the dome like this actually gives superior dispersion to a standard tweeter. And whereas most domes are driven around their outer edge by a voice coil of around 25mm diameter, the Focal's 19mm type supports the dome closer to its centre.

This tweeter works in conjunction with a doped-paper mid/bass unit through a crossover whose inductors are specially selected for a claimed 0.3% matching tolerance, as opposed to the more customary 5%-10%.

The cabinet is built from a combination of 18mm hardwood and MDF, the latter forming a 7mm inner skin on the back and side panels; the front, base and top are 25mm hardwood.

The reflex port set into the rear of the enclosure looks like a bit of a blast from the past. Whereas the other contenders in this test have plastic tubes for ports, the Sovereign harks back to the early reflex days with a simple hole cut into the thickness of the back panel.

SOUND QUALITY

Given the tonal sweetness and crisp dynamics that characterise the Kevlar mid/bass units manufacturers like B&W prefer, we were hoping for a clean, smooth top end from the Sovereigns. This they duly delivered on Chesky's Sampler Volume 1 and an Opus 3 HDCD recording of the Zetterqvist String Quartet, where strings were incisive and powerful without resorting to 'spit'.

Transparency turned out to be another of the hallmark traits of the Sovereigns. Where many loudspeakers manage a passable simulation of sound stage width, many fall at the fence of front-to-back perspectives. Not so in this case - the Origin Lives simply stood aside and let through the detail and spaciousness these CDs capture so well.

One of the small silver discs that has come our way recently and left its impression upon us is JVC's XRCD of Joe Beard's Blues Union (available from Vivante, tel: 0181 977 6600). Vinyl worshippers who find it

impossible to convert to the cult of CD because of its lack of bass welly and impact might find this recording helps redress the balance. Although the Sovereigns couldn't pump out the 'boxing glove and horse-shoe smack' actually captured amongst them tar digits, they came close enough, a slight furriness to bass guitar holding them back.

When it comes to amplifiers, these 'speakers were really quite easy to please - sensitivity isn't particularly high at 87dB but an overall impedance of 11.4ohms helps lighten the current load. Getting their positioning

right is trickier, though. If you push them too close to a rear wall, the sound stage shrinks and the bass starts to waffle; too far away, and you begin to lose overall cohesion. We settled on a final location three feet into the room with 20 degrees of toe-in.

Eric Bibb and Needed Time's Good Stuff album shone with the Sovereigns suitably ensconced. Sparser acoustic numbers like 'Saucer 'n' Cup' were addictively open and natural, as a worn Repeat button on the Pink Triangle Litaural's remote control testified to.

More frenetic, complex pieces weeded a couple of sonic contributions from the Origin Lives' cabinets. Double-bass and male

vocals squeezed out a slight but noticeable 'thrum' while hard-plucked guitar notes produced a complementary 'twang'. But every 'speaker that's passed through our listening room has added some of its own character to the music through cabinet coloration, and the Sovereigns are no worse than most in this respect.

A shift of genre showed these floor standers are just as happy with the rougher tunes on Sneaker Pimps' Becoming X album as with those above. Bass didn't have quite enough grunt and extension to do the meatier numbers 100% justice, but the notes flowing from those drivers had an ease and lack of strain which had me glued to the sweet spot for the duration. Poor productions like this one also avoid becoming unlistenable because the Sovereigns aren't 'warts 'n' all' revealing. Rather, detail serves music.

As our measured response shows, the Origin Lives might not be perfect from an engineering point of view, but sonically they make a lot of sense. Their clarity and tunefulness will have you listening to your recordings as opposed to your hi-fi for a long time to come.





If you don't want to spend as much on 'speaker stands as you did on your new mini monitors themselves, try a floor stander instead. Jon Marks and Andrew Harrison meet five of the best from £1200 to £1500.

Mains leads, interconnects, loudspeaker cables, component supports - they can all have a large impact on how your hi-fi sounds. You can add 'speaker stands to this list too. What sits under your treasured transducers may be the deciding factor that turns bass as woolly as a Welsh hillside into something altogether tauter and more transparent. What this means in real life is that a £1500 budget for stand mounters might end up as £1000 for the boxes with the remainder going on supports. So, the \$64000 question is, why spend money on anything other than the loudspeaker when you could empty your piggy-bank on a floor stander? Not only do tall, slim boxes tend to do far better in the aesthetic stakes, they can be more efficient and turn out more bass as well.

We've assembled a five-strong group to track down the best floor stander between £1200 and £1500. The five contestants are drawn from predominantly British stock, with Epos' ES22s, Spendor's FL8s, Celestion's A2s and Origin Live's Sovereigns. The only overseas entrant is the Audiovector M2 from Danish firm F3.

So what do you get for your money at this price? Well, our five all benefited from chunky cabinets, which is a prerequisite with the large panel sizes inherent in floor standers. Skimping here results in blatant cabinet coloration as the box boogies in time to the music.

Driver technology ranges from the more traditional

treated-paper cones of the Sovereigns and M2s to polypropylene in the FL8s, ES22s and A2s. There's the customary split in tweeter material, with soft domes (FL8s, M2s) going up against metal domes (A2s, ES22s).

But there is an outsider too, in the 30mm inverted Kevlar tweeter made by Focal which Origin Live use. Kevlar is more normally used in midrange units where its internal-damping abilities can reduce the standing waves that build up in a cone, colouring the sound. It also has a characteristically sweet tone, as Dominic Baker discovered in June 1995 in the Audiovector 6 four-ways.

Peer around the back of these five and you'll see reflex loading is the rule. Bi-wirers can cable to their hearts' content or voyage into tri-wire territory with the ES22s which, with no links provided, are designed specifically for this mode of operation. (However, Epos inform us there is a single-wire kit available, if you can run to no more than one set of loudspeaker cables.

We relied on three amplifiers for grilling these hopefuls - Musical Fidelity's A1001 integrated, Audio Analogue's Puccini SE and our own World Audio 300B power amp (fed from the MF's pre-amp). Sources were Pink Triangle's Litaural, a Teac P-30 transport and PT Da Capo DAC, and a £700 Panasonic A350 DVD player, which turned out to be excellent with CDs and outstanding with 24-bit/96kHz discs. Cabling came from Roksan, Ecosse Maf, Purist Audio Design and Pentacone.

RADICAL TACTICS FROM WB

Dissatisfied with the traditional construction of drive units, Wilson Benesch have used their in-house production ability to put some of their own ideas on the subject into practice.

The Tactic drive unit employs a Neodymium/Iron/Boron magnet which has been machined to allow the cone's rearward radiation a smooth exit and to reduce reflection off the magnet. WB adhered to the same *modus operandi* when it came to the design of the basket.

Cone material is the final area of research where Wilson Benesch are hoping advanced technology will pay dividends. Apparently, Atactic Polypropylene is woven and



compacted in a new process to give levels of stiffness and internal damping far superior to standard polypropylene.

Your first chance to see and hear the Tactic will be at the Frankfurt High End show in May, where WB's The Bishop loudspeaker will be on exhibition.

Wilson Benesch
Falcon House,
Limestone Cottage Lane,
Sheffield S6 1NJ
Tel: 01142 852656

BUDGET PHONO IN A BOX

Following the suit of QED with their inexpensive Discsaver phono stage, NAD have just unveiled the PP-1. This £39.95 equaliser is housed in a steel box to provide protection from Radio Frequency Interference and hum from nearby transformers. Further lowering noise is its external mains transformer.

The low-noise op-amp that is the heart of the PP-1 is backed up by "high-quality, close-tolerance components" so you get music and not mush from your grooves. A subsonic warp filter will help owners of crinkle-cut LPs sleep easy at night, safe in the knowledge their records won't damage their reflex-loaded loudspeakers. Cable

tweakers may be slightly less enamoured of the captive output lead, in spite of its gold-plated RCA plugs.

NAD
Unit 15,
Faraday Road Ind. Estate,
Aylesbury, Bucks. HP19 3RY Tel: 01296 82017



IN NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE

HEYBROOK OCTET LOUSPEAKERS

Hi-Fi World aren't the only ones to exploit the virtues of Audax's HD-3P gold-dome piezo tweeter. We take a listen to Heybrook's golden floor standers.

MUSICAL FIDELITY X-A200 MONOBLOCS

Built along similar lines to their massive A1001 integrated, Musical Fidelity's X-A200 power amps and

their 200watts will lighten your wallet by £1000.

INTERCONNECTS

We chart the wirey waters of the interconnect world with three of the best at around the £80 mark.

CASTLE SEVERN II LOUSPEAKER

More than just a cosmetic face-lift has gone into Castle's revised floor standing Severn IIs. Will the new

carbon-fibre mid/bass driver reinforce the fine reputation of this transducer?

CREEK OBH-12 PASSIVE PRE-AMP

The only active circuitry inside this dinky box is the remote control. £200 will make you its happy owner.

DENON DCD-1550R CD PLAYER

Can Denon build on their customary CD quality with their latest machine?

The GRF Enclosure

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The Corner G.R.F. by Octave Audio Woodworking is without doubt the ultimate enclosure for the Tannoy Monitor Silver, Red, and Gold series, and the perfect partner for valve amplification both vintage and modern.



For more details and demonstrations contact:

Octave Audio Woodworking
PO Box 1256
Bristol BS99 2XR
Telephone : 0117 924 6005

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Tel: 01703 578877 / 442183 Fax: 01703 398905
E mail: origin.live@virgin.net
Web site: <http://www.originlive.com/index.htm>

HADCOCK'S ARMY

George Hadcock is extending his range of unipivot tone-arms with the addition of the GH 228 Special Edition. What earns this £595 arm its SE tag are the new solid brass bearing housing and counterweights. Retained from the Export version of the same component are the van den Hul silver wiring and stainless steel detachable arm-tube.



G.F.C. Hadcock
Langley House,
11 Highwood Road,

Uttoxeter,
Staffs. ST14 8BQ
Tel: 01889 569166

FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

If you were too young to pick up Tannoy's famous and sought-after Guy R. Fountain G.R.F. corner horn when it was available new in the 1950s, despair not. Octave Audio Woodworking of Bristol have recently started producing cabinets built to the original plans but constructed of birch plywood panels epoxy filleted to increase stiffness and ensure air-tight joints. They claim this removes a lot of the colorations which beset Tannoy's own boxes. All you'll need for stereo is a pair of Monitor Red, Gold or Silver drivers to bolt in and £4950 for Octave's enclosures, which take a month to make.

Octave Audio
Woodworking
Tel: 0117 924
6005



SILVER FOR SILVER

QED are celebrating 25 years in the hi-fi business with the release of Qudos Silver Anniversary loudspeaker cable. The silver-plated Oxygen-Free Copper of the Qudos SA comes in low-loss, thin-profile LDPE insulation at £3.95/m. One happy user, according to QED, is George Martin's (of Beatles fame) Air Studios.



QED Audio Products
Ridgeway Close,
Lightwater,
Surrey GU18 5XU
Tel: 01276 451166

SPEAKER SIE DEUTSCHE

The transducer wares of German loudspeaker manufacturer Inosic have just started arriving in this country. Top of the range is the Taurus, a three-way floor stander featuring two 205mm woofers, two 130mm midrange drivers and a tweeter of 25mm. Price for these 4ohm 'speakers is £1499.99 and they're available in four different finishes: Beech, Cherry, Mahogany and Oak. Also available, in descending order of price, are the Sylt, Lepus, Isis, and the bookshelf-sized Polaris, the latter

priced at £499.99.

Inosic UK
5 Thirlstone Road,
Luton,
Bedfordshire
Tel: 01582 829879



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MINIDISC MOVES ON

Sony's new component arrivals for 1998 will bring joy to followers of the MiniDisc cult. As well as fresh-faced DVD machinery and integrated amplifiers, MD's creator is lifting the lid on the MDS-IA20ES, due out in mid-1998, which will feature a tuned ATRAC 4.5 processor at about £500, although the price has yet to be finalised.

At around £300 there's the MDS-JB520, which will boast a chassis full of audiophile capacitors and resistors as well as a CD-style tray loading mechanism.

Portable MiniDisc recorders are making a name for themselves too in the form of the MZ-R35 (£300), the MZ-R50 (£350, pictured) and the range-topping MZ-R5ST. The second of these claims to be smallest recording MD Walkman and offers up to 12 hours recording or 22 hours of playback. Running for the bus shouldn't cause musical mayhem either, thanks to a 40-second anti-shock buffer.

The MZ-R5ST is Sony's ultimate portable MD recorder. This tiny piece of equipment comes with its own "home base station", which allows access to MiniDisc's comprehensive editing facilities via a large backlit LCD screen. It looks rather special and will set you back £500



when it goes on sale in June.

Digital Versatile Disc is represented by two models, the DVP-S715 and DVP-S315, priced at £600 and £500 respectively. Both possess Dual Discrete Optical Pickups to enable CDs as well as DVDs to be played and sport 24-bit 96kHz compatible DACs.

Sony
The Heights,
Brooklands,
Weybridge,
Surrey KT13 0XW
Tel: 01932 816000

BOTTLE BANK

Many audiophiles are familiar with the usual roster of valves, but the Nuvisor will be a name unknown to most. This miniature valve was developed mainly for military and low-noise applications, which make it perfect for hi-fi use, say Musical Fidelity.

Having scoured the world and bought up the bulk of the remaining stocks of Nuvisors, Musical Fidelity gathered enough to put into production the Nu-Vista line



and phono pre-amp.

Only 500 of these £1200 pre-amps and their external power supplies will be built. At least this means there's a spare set of valves for each Nu-Vista, and with a life-span of 12 to 15 years between replacements, owners should be enjoying tubular music for the next quarter-century.

If you dig the groove in a £799 way, MF also have a new phono stage joining their line-up. This is no single-box equaliser though; the X-Tract comes in three X-series cylinders, the two monobloc amplifiers and their dedicated dual PSU. MC sensitivity is 100uV and load impedance can be switched between 10ohms, 100ohms, 200ohms and 1kohm for more accurate matching. The MM section has a fixed 47kohm input with adjustable capacitance and an IEC warp filter.

Musical Fidelity
Fulton Road,
Wembley
HA9 0TF
Tel: 0181 900 2866

Audio Publishing Ltd would like to point out that the feature "Vinyl Demand" in the January 1998 issue of Hi-Fi World had no connection with Vinyl Demand, the retailer of audiophile

records and hi-fi equipment.

We apologise for any confusion this feature could have caused.



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 Worthing Phase 3 01903 245577

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 01142 737893
 01743 241924
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DNM RICA

It's not every month that, as a hi-fi journalist, you get to say, "a new chapter in the history of recorded and replayed sound is about to open". Too many clichés poison the palate for starters anyway, but that's not the main reason for this phrase's rarity value.

Listening to music in the home meant, up until the silver beermat of CD arrived on the scene 15 years ago, slipping an LP out of its sleeve and running a tiny lump of diamond along its grooves. This process wasn't the sort of cutting-edge engineering that would set the tone for science fiction into the next millennium, but at least it managed a simulacrum of the real thing.

Then said polycarbonate disc hit the streets and all that changed. Marketing departments went wild with promises of "perfect sound forever" and, after an admittedly shaky beginning, CD rapidly picked up sales speed and became the world's dominant music medium.

The only problem with CD (says he, nailing his colours to the mast) is that, unless you listen more to silences than melodies, it almost never hits the audiophile and musical spot. "Almost never", because I have heard some specially-



JON MARKS

modified CD players sound wholly convincing. But such accomplished in-depth tweakery would be horrendously (and I do mean horrendously) expensive should someone try to make a commercial venture of it instead of a knowledgeable past-time. So vinyl has remained the Number One format for me and the rest of the Hi-Fi World crew.

Trouble is, the LP is far, far from being the perfect music carrier. That such an ancient and mechanical technology survives to this day makes you wonder why, at the end of the 20th Century, with Personal Computers that can crunch more numbers in a single second than every pre-PC accountant in history put together, we haven't come up

with something at least to match it. There's is now light at the end of the tunnel though. . .

We've been lucky enough to lay ears on top digital equipment like the 24-bit 96kHz and 192kHz convertors and master tapes from Digital Conversion Systems of Cambridge. What these show is that digital isn't the problem, it's what kind of digital you choose. CD fails quite miserably to cut the mustard. 24/96, on the other hand, is a much more attractive proposition.

On the top shelf of our rack downstairs as I write is Panasonic's DVD-A350 DVD/CD player. In its slim loading tray sits a Classic Music 24/96 sampler disc. You can buy the DVD-A350 for £700 from all good electrical retailers, and four 24/96 discs (John Cage's Pulse, Rachmaninov's Symphonic Dances, A Time Remembered with Art Davis and Herbie Hancock as well as 1957 by Red Rodney) for £21.95 each from Vivante (tel: 0181 977 6600). And the sound quality is truly excellent. Perhaps a little more development will have to go into the players before they equal or surpass vinyl competently replayed, but the "new chapter" has indeed opened and is off to a very good start.

HOW WE TEST THE PRODUCTS

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



WORLD VERDICT



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



GOOD - Has strong merit. Well worth an audition.



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



POOR - Seriously flawed. Not worth considering.

The most important development
in sound reproduction for years.

And the box it
comes in.



The Faraday ring may look insignificant. But it's this tiny component that gives the A Series its huge dynamic range.

By counteracting rising impedance in the voice coil, it allows more power into the tweeter. And with more power going in, you get more power out.

Even the highest frequencies sing out loud and clear, making the A Series the ideal speakers for the faithful reproduction of today's digital music and film recordings.

The Faraday ring is just one of many small, but vitally important components that make the new A Series so special. And there's only one place good enough for it. The beautiful box we put it in.



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CELESTION