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DIY
SUPPLEMENT
No. 63
INSIDE
THIS ISSUE!

FEBRUARY 2002

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WORLD

& computer audio

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We test the new Naim Allae loudspeaker



plus : the new Videologic DRX-601ES DAB tuner competes with Creek's analogue T43

plus

- Budget bookshelf speaker group test
 - Bryston B-60 integrated amp
 - Plinius Jarrah phonostage
 - NAD T531 DVD/CD player
- Denon UD-M30 mini system
- Wharfedale Diamond 8.3 loudspeakers

Computer Audio World

- Soundblaster Audigy Platinum
- Apple's iPod
- Predator CD-RW

COMPETITION
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02 >

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LINN



Even though staunch Thatcherites will try to persuade you otherwise, I can now reveal that we share a lot more in common with our mainland European brethren than many had hitherto thought. What is it that bonds us so strongly together with our cross channel counterparts? A love of fine art, classical music and poetry? I think not. I can exclusively reveal that the one factor that gels us is the humble audio valve.

Visiting a friend in The Netherlands recently I found myself sitting in a bar pondering the meaning of life over the fortifying combination of an ice cold lager and a toasted cheese and ham sandwich on a Saturday lunchtime. A strong nudge almost shot both out of my hands as one of my companions eagerly attracted my attention and jabbed an excited finger up above the bar. Bolted vertically to the wall above the barman's head were two of the beefiest looking valve amps I'd ever seen, resplendent in stainless steel cases with blue LEDs, with VU meters pumping away - they were real jaw-droppers. These were no cast out Leak or Quad antiques but brand spanking new Art Deco style working models powering the bar's sound system! I managed to discern from the bar manager from whence these monsters came - and found myself trotting just five minutes down the road, tutting mate and wife in tow! When I reached my destination it was awash with quality hi-fi for sale (much of it tubular) and manned by the designer of the aforementioned amps - an enthusiastic, friendly and very trendy dude of perhaps no more than thirty years, who informed me that the Dutch were big fans of valve powered tunes.

This was no shock, as our World Audio Design kits are popular there and we get plenty of website 'hits' from The Netherlands, as well as Germany, Denmark and Italy. It seems that diehard European audiophiles can't get enough of high quality audio of this type. What was a shock (albeit a pleasant one) was to find that it was younger people interested in valves. For example, the bar in which the amps in

question were located was a city rock and dance tunes clientele (and what better was them?), of which I was one but true!

That isn't the case here in the UK, generally valves are associated with a certain type of listener, potentially qualified for a Saga holiday. There's room for improvement, though, as guitar amplification such as Marshall is favoured by many for its 'classic' sound which is powered by (in Marshall's case), you guessed it, valves. We in the UK have one of the strongest traditions of valve amplifier production, but the classic amps from the likes of Quad and Leak are associated with listeners of a certain generation, stereotyped as those who listen to fusty old chamber music and survive on a diet of well brewed tea and cup cakes.

In Europe, from what I can glean, tube amps are regarded as something distinctly more funky. Long may it continue and as we move headlong into a unified Europe it may even rub off on us Brits. You've got to hand it to the mainlanders - not only do they appreciate fine art, classical music and poetry, they also manage to make valve amps hip! ■▲



Simon Pope

how we test the products

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

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Half globes are added for those products that we feel are between categories

FEBRUARY 2002

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world news

► DENON LAUNCH NEW LINE-UP

At a recent London launch Denon introduced its latest AV products to the UK press. Star of the show was the £1800 all-dancing AVC-A11SR, the world's first amplifier with dts 24/96 sound processing and the first to combine dts 6.1 ES Discrete and Dolby Pro-Logic 2 with THX post processing. In addition to this, two more receivers were launched as well as a new DVD-Audio player and a stylish new separates audio system. The DVD-1600 DVD-A player features audio-



presets. It also has timer and alarm functions. Other system options include a cassette deck, MiniDisc recorder and the SC-M201 'speakers designed in collaboration with Mission.

only mode, internal Dolby Digital and dts decoding and headphone Virtual Surround Sound for £600. The chic new system 201 offers the high quality audio performance of the company's entry level hi-fi products in a stylish separates system for under £1000. It features a 50W per channel integrated amplifier with a phono stage for vinyl option, a CD player with 24bit DACs and two optical outputs, and an RDS tuner with 40

Hayden Laboratories Ltd.
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Chiltern Hill
Chalfont St. Peter
Bucks SL9 9UG
www.denon.co.uk

► BFA GO IT ALONE

The British Federation of Audio, a body made up of industry specialists to monitor and promote the audio industry, has now become fully independent and has been made a limited company. It was originally formed back in 1965 by thirty or so British manufacturers, with the intention of promoting the wide use of its products both here, but most importantly, abroad. It continues to do this, as well as sponsor British manufacturers (with the aid of British Trade International) for international shows and exhibitions such as the annual ICE in Las Vegas.

Further objectives of the BFA will be, among other things, to present a unified voice for the industry, improve the promotion of high quality consumer audio and monitor new industry trends. Membership of the Federation is open to any company, organisation, magazine or individual working in the UK, in the field of consumer audio-video.

British Federation of Audio
PO Box 365
Farnham
Surrey GU10 2BD
www.british-audio.org.uk



► ONKYO'S INTEGRAL VISION OF THE FUTURE

The high-end Integra Division of Onkyo (which features Apogee digital technology) is the latest big name to sign up to Imerge's XiVA software framework technology, the rapidly developing standard for hard disc and internet based electronic products. XiVA can receive, record, store, access and manage vast amounts of digital entertainment content using hard disks as the primary storage medium. Integra will apparently make a multi-zone hard-disc audio system powered with XiVA where the music will distributed around a house by Ethernet, employing so-called Integra 'thin clients' for a complete home entertainment system. Hayao

Kamiya responded to the agreement by stating "We are expanding from our core of AV home theatre oriented products to new challenges in the digital home network field. In this way we aim to remain a powerful, forward-looking company and Imerge are offering us advantages in terms of experience, knowledge and time to market."

Onkyo UK distribution:
Jamo UK Ltd.
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Rugby
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Tel: 01788 556777
www.onkyo.net
www.xiva.com

►► LINN GO DISKO!

The venerable LP12 turntable could soon be the choice of big name DJs, if veteran vinyl spinster David Mancuso is anything to go by. The New York based DJ is a big Linn fan and now uses a pair of LP12 turntables in place of the more specialised but sonically inferior Technics decks, the industry standard, at his so-called 'loft parties'. Whilst the LP12 isn't exactly ideal for mixing, as it lacks a pitch control, Mancuso is driven by sound quality over practicality and now specifies LP12s with Linn's top specification Ekos arms and Archiv cartridges. Linn Products have partnered Mancuso events in London, Glasgow, New York, Tokyo, Antwerp and Milan where capacity crowds approach 2000. The system also features a Linn 5103 system

controller with the LIMBIK surround sound processing. As Mancuso says "Once the channel delays for the five individual Limbik channels were adjusted for the room size and to account for 2,000 people on the dance floor, the sound was quite simply awesome, seamless and above all else, so musical. I had not heard sound this good at a disco in almost thirty years of deejaying in New York." Mancuso is currently signed to London-based Nuphonic Records who have issued his Loft party Volumes 1 and 2 on both CD and vinyl.



Linn Products: 0141 307 7777

www.nuphonic.co.uk
www.theloftnyc.com
www.linn.co.uk

►► KEF'S NEW Qs



Following on from the last crop of new models from the Kent-based company, KEF have announced details of two new Q Series products. The Q3 and Q5 both incorporate the company's latest version Uni-Q technology and also feature technology used in the flagship Reference Series 'speakers. The models have the new ergonomic styling of the range, with the curved sections and the Uni-Q 'pod'. The Q3 is a magnetically shielded two-way floorstander featuring the new

metal dome neodymium tweeter and a 160mm Uni-Q driver. The Q5, described as a two and a half way design featuring a high frequency and midrange array, plus a 160mm bass unit with its own tuned enclosure and port. Both are available now priced £399.99 for the Q3 and £599.99 for the Q5.

KEF Audio Ltd.
 Tovil, Maidstone
 Kent ME15 6QP
 Tel: 01622 672261
www.kef.com

►► KOMRI, TOGETHER

November 23rd saw Linn taking to the road with its brand new Komri loudspeaker. Carlisle's Crown and Mitre Hotel was host to the crowded event, organised by Peter Tyson Hi-Fi, which saw an assorted selection of audio's good, bad and ugly including Linn Products' supremo Ivor Tiefenbrun. A fine time was had by all, with the Glasgow boys achieving a far better sound than you'll hear at any show - unsurprising considering the



£86,000 total cost of the system! A sneaky peek of Linn's DVD Classik was given - expect a £2,000 video player with built-in five-channel amplification, with neat styling resembling the company's own 5102 preamp, complete with centrally



mounted disc-loading tray. Certain Linn folk reckon it outperforms the two-channel Classik in stereo mode, too.

next issue

here's a little taster of what we hope to bring you next month

LINN KOMRI

This is the new flagship loudspeaker from Linn, in an exclusive review. With awesome weight and a matching price tag it promises to be a landmark product.

ROGUE AUDIO 99/M120 PRE & POWER AMPS

This pre/monoblock combination from the States is a stylish valve package. See what the tube experts make of it next month!

SEPARATES SYSTEMS

We test out a selection of one-make separates systems from specialist hi-fi manufacturers. Which will offer the best value, and why?

► MAGNAT VINTAGE 105

Although not a mainstream name on these shores, German manufacturer Magnat are well respected in their home country and on the continent - mainly for their involvement in car audio. The company specialise in big sounding 'speakers with plenty of drive and bass, but in the past have skipped somewhat on subtlety (their symbol is a refreshingly non hi-fi Bulldog, for example) except for the previous models in their top range Vintage series. Now the Vintage series has spread lower down the product range to incorporate entry level models starting with this, the £120 Vintage 105.

Build quality is good, with a small but pretty solid cabinet with gently rounded edges designed to prevent diffraction and reflections. A knock on the side of the cabinet results in a boxy but not too resonant sound. The front MDF baffle houses an aluminium coned mid/bass unit and a 25mm dome tweeter. The port is located to the rear and we have a pair of single wire connectors of decent quality.

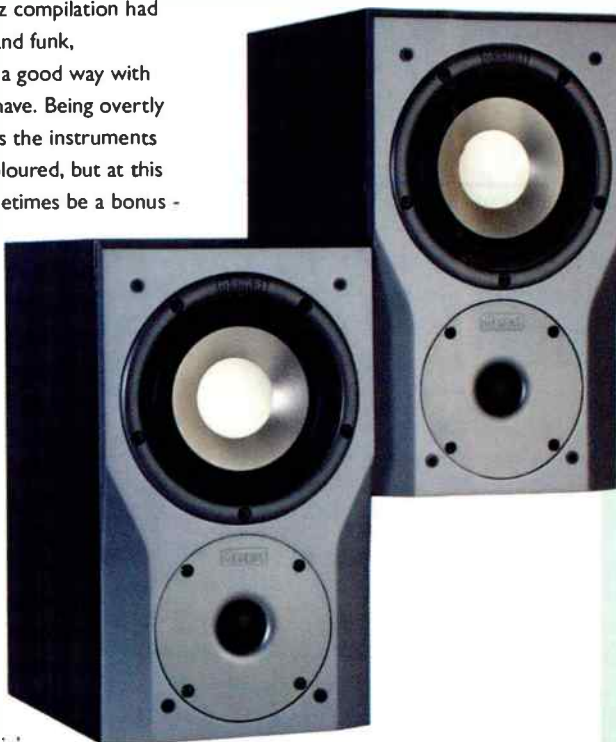
The 105s have the forward sound of the company's traditional sonic stamp, but are less crude than previous models. It's a big and bold sound that gives a good out-of-the-box feel. Whilst far from being the most sophisticated 'speaker around, the 105 is nonetheless exciting and fast, which could appeal to many buyers at this price point. The Blue

Note Brazilian jazz compilation had plenty of groove and funk, emphasising what a good way with rhythm the 105s have. Being overtly critical, sometimes the instruments were a tad too coloured, but at this level that can sometimes be a bonus - few 'speakers around this price point are deliberately neutral in character. Drums were fast and clean, although the upper echelons of the cymbal work could be a bit splashy and hard.

Bass was impressive, as Bjork's 'Homogenic' CD demonstrated, having plenty of grunt and apparent depth. Vocals, though, could be a little too pushed forward at times - a common trait of metal cones.

With classical music the 105s gave a good performance as far as space and staging go but instrumental timbre erred toward sounding synthetic, perhaps due to the inherent forward nature of the 'speakers.

There was a good spread of sound with Beethoven's 'Eroica' symphony, with double basses rich and powerful, but further up the frequency scale a certain amount of information was lost in the midrange.



More than enough was present in the upper frequencies, however.

The Magnats offer pretty good value for money in both build and sound and are more than worth a listen for those who favour rock or dance music. ■ ▲

Magnat Vintage 105 £120

FSM Ltd.
Unit 4 The Nelson Centre
Portfield Rd
Portsmouth
PO3 5SF
Tel: 0239 269 0999

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

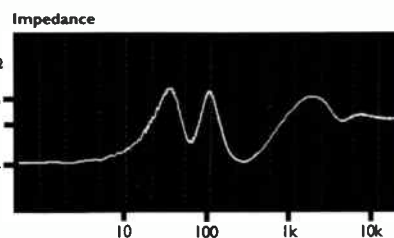
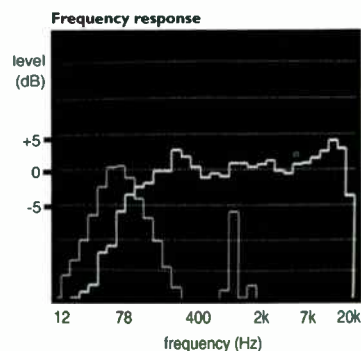
The Magnat Vintage 105 has a noticeable lift in high frequency output and will sound bright. It will need to be partnered with care, preferably with a fairly smooth sounding amplifier like a Creek. Otherwise, its frequency response is reasonably smooth so the 'speaker should be low on colouration and strong in its detailing. The tweeter has a high impedance and does not draw current so it will not stress an amplifier.

Bass rolls down slowly below 125Hz, reaching -6dB or so at 63Hz. This is quite good, even if it doesn't quite match the Diamond for example. A damped response like

this suggests the Magnat should be used close to a rear wall.

The loudspeaker's voltage sensitivity was a mediocre 83dB, equal to some like the Mission, but below the Wharfedale. The 105 has a fairly innocuous impedance curve that shows an absence of strong reactance - a good sign - plus a high impedance tweeter matched to a 4ohm woofer. This results in a 6 ohm loudspeaker.

The Vintage 105 is well engineered in every respect. It will sound clean and detailed, but also quite bright. **NK**



World Verdict



Not half bad for the money, the Vintage 105s are fast and exciting but also a tad too forward sounding.

▶ **WHARFEDALE DIAMOND 8.1**

The Diamond 8.1 is small in stature (296x198x181mm) and features a front port (so close placement to a rear wall isn't a problem). This shares the baffle with a 130mm Kevlar woven cone bass/mid unit and a 25mm fabric dome tweeter. The overall look may not be to all tastes but it's modern and, to a certain extent, funky. High quality bi-wire connections finish off the build quality in a positive way.

Sound quality is somewhat different from the budget bookshelf norm, sharing a sound more in the KEF Cresta mould as opposed to the open and out-of-the-box Mission sound. This gives the impression of a very sophisticated and smooth customer, more akin to a £600-plus product than something from the cheap end of the market. It's been voiced to deliver this taste of the high end at a low end price. And it works. The 8.1 has good detail and cohesion well beyond the traditional sound found in this bracket. A Blue Note compilation of Brazilian music saw the Diamonds really sing, delivering a detailed and fluid sound that was highly impressive. Treble was commendably smooth and bass, whilst not especially low, was nonetheless highly tuneful and

discernable - good at this price point. Most revealing of all though was the 'speaker's midrange detail which, at the £120 mark, is almost unheard of. This is what gives the 8.1 its high-end appeal - and it's very different to what you'd expect at the price.

This loudspeaker is also good with classical. Strings are lush and realistic and wood wind natural, light and airy.

One thing the 8.1 doesn't do is to create an overtly out of the box sound that spreads an orchestra throughout the room but what is there is of commendably high timbral quality.

The Diamonds won't immediately grab you by the throat and shake the living daylights out of you but neither will you be in the land of Nod after five minutes. They are a 'speaker that you can easily live with. ■ ▲



Wharfedale Diamond 8.1 £120.00

Wharfedale International Ltd.
IAG House
Sovereign Court
Ermine Business Park
Huntingdon,
Cambs.
PE29 6XU
Tel: 0845 458 0011

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

Under test the Diamond 8.1s had a fairly full sound with good body, the pink noise test signal showed. Analysis of this noise shows that in its frequency response the 'speaker has a gentle fall toward high frequencies, although treble is quite well extended. The Diamond could well sound smooth and quite large for a small 'speaker.

Also visible in our third-octave response analysis is a small dip at the crossover point, but it's not deep enough to detract from the projection of detail. The port has a resonance that is large enough to disturb the response curve so there will be some audible colouration from this source, especially as the port faces forward.

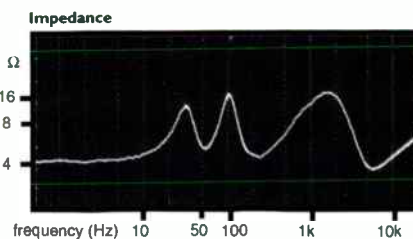
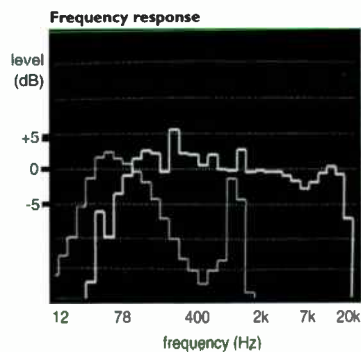
Bass output is well damped and rolls down below 80Hz. However,

there's still good forward output at 40Hz, which is quite low. The port doesn't do much to extend bass down below this frequency, but the Diamond has healthy bass output for a small loudspeaker. It has been designed to be used close to a rear wall, however, hence the forward firing port.

The Diamond was sensitive for a small loudspeaker, delivering 86dB Sound Pressure Level from one nominal watt of input. The Impedance trace has some steep slopes, caused by high reactance, and it bottoms out at 4ohms, so this is not an especially easy load to drive.

The Diamond 8.1 has a few minor blemishes, but it is basically well balanced

and has good bandwidth for its size. It should sound quite impressive. **NK**



World Verdict



An audiophile bargain, the 8.1s have it all.

Walrus Systems

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"These amplifiers really are a bit special." – Andy Grove, *hi-fi world* December 2001

"Here was a sound you could leave playing all day." – Martin Colloms, *Hi-Fi News* September 2001

"The measured performance of this 300B amplifier is as good as it gets." – Noel Keywood, *hi-fi world*

"The whole performance was reproduced with musicality and emotion ..." – Andy Grove, *hi-fi world*

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www.highendaudio.co.uk

MISSION m71

Mission have, for quite some time now, been the ones to beat when it comes to budget 'speaker design. They seem to get the right recipe of creating an impressive sound from fairly modest means and the same goes for their latest range of entry level product in the m7 range.

The m71 featured here is the latest entry level product from them and the smaller of the two standmount models (although a smaller m70 is soon to be launched). The dimensions are pretty miniscule. Otherwise, the m71s are virtually identical to the 72s and 73s.

Build quality is impressive for the money, with solid-ish cabinets and decent bi-wire terminals located at the rear, along with the port (the previous budget 701 had it front mounted). Drive units are also of good quality, the silk dome tweeter being accompanied by a bonded woven glass composite mid/bass unit.

Placing the 'speakers a good foot or so from the rear wall and firing straight down the room as Mission suggest (not 'toed in') the 71s deliver a sound in the true Mission mould; they have superb imaging and space, although sounding a tad thin at times. Bjork and the Blue Note Compilation both had oodles of life and vitality along with true hi-fi credentials such as the aforementioned pin point imaging and a deep sound stage. Treble was nicely smooth and sweet and the midband had plenty of detail.



Bass was nimble and tuneful, although not too deep, as the dimensions dictate. Bjork's vocals were excellent, with good forward projection, a strong tone and a pleasing lack of sibilance. When pushed at high volumes the 71s had a tendency to 'shout' a little but managed to maintain the coherence of recordings.

The Missions were also good with classical orchestral music (few are at this price point) which was a big bonus. There wasn't so much accuracy of instrumental tone but there was enough space and ambience in the sound to manage a pretty faithful reproduction of the airy Giuliani/LA Philharmonic

recording of Beethoven's 'Eroica' on DG.

The m71s are a good all rounder with plenty of ambience and superb staging and imaging. Vocals sound great and the treble is smooth but some may find the bass, whilst very low for the dimensions, somewhat lacking in tautness. ■ ▲

Mission m71 £130

Symphonix Ltd.
Stonehill
Huntingdon
Cambs
PE29 6EY
Tel: 01480 451777

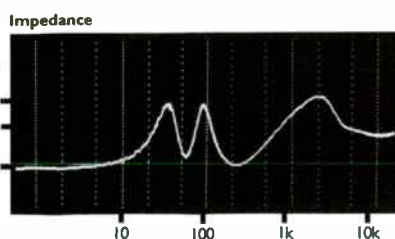
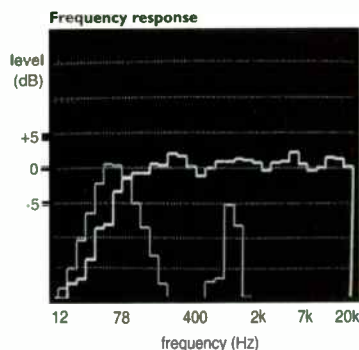
MEASURED PERFORMANCE

The m71 is academically accurate in its frequency response. Our analysis clearly shows an almost straight line with little variation from 80Hz all the way up to 20kHz. This suggests many things, including low colouration, good presentation of detail, quite a forward sound balance and perhaps some dryness in the bass. The port extends output down to 40Hz, so the m71 can handle all frequencies down to the lowest bass notes. The port is tuned to 52Hz and keeps the bass unit under good control.

Sensitivity was mediocre at 83dB, even though Mission use a 4ohm bass unit. The impedance curve is smooth

enough, so is low on reactance and energy storage. It reaches 8ohms across high frequencies and is resistive here, so high frequency distortion from the amplifier will stay low. Overall impedance measured 6ohms.

The m71 measures very well and will have a well damped, dry, fast and detailed sound, with smooth and extended treble. This is an impressive budget design. **NK**



World Verdict



Good value, with many fine hi-fi traits. Great imaging and detail but sometimes thin in the bass.

fig.1. AV receiver that sounds great in Dolby Digital.



"A strong budget contender for forward thinking music fans" **Hi-Fi Choice September 2001**

"Great stereo performance, commendably solid build" **What Hi-fi? Sound and Vision September 2001**

"At this price point, nothing sounds better than NAD" **Essential Home Cinema October 2001**

fig.2. AV receiver that sounds great in stereo.



"A strong budget contender for forward thinking music fans" **Hi-Fi Choice September 2001**

"Great stereo performance, commendably solid build" **What Hi-fi? Sound and Vision September 2001**

"At this price point, nothing sounds better than NAD" **Essential Home Cinema October 2001**

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► BOSTON CR75

Mmm. . .OK with the grills on but the minute they're whipped off the CR75s aren't exactly the prettiest puppy in the litter. Despite this, the 'speakers are well built, as we've come to expect from the chaps at Boston.

Quite a few things mark these 'speakers out as different from the rest of the auditionees. A moulded back baffle and front panel form a kind of frame around which the cabinet sides are attached. At the back also there are mounting points for wall brackets, making wall mounting an option that is easier to exploit than normal.

The drive units are a little unusual for the market sector. The recessed tweeter uses a heatsink within the cabinet to prevent overdriving and the 135mm bass/mid driver is constructed from a co-polymer material. To the rear we have a wide-ish port accompanied by single wire terminals.

These 'speakers have a big, open sound typical of a high sensitivity bookshelf design. It's also one that is smooth and rounded, which makes marriage with most types of recordings and music an easy task. The Blue Note Brazilian compilation on vinyl sounded lush and warm, with fairly good upper band detail and a deep sound stage. Bass was powerful and fairly deep, but lacked enough speed attack to really impress.



Imaging wasn't the sharpest and the sonic picture tended to sound more massed than separated. Bjork's well produced 'Homogeneic' album proved that these 'speakers can really go loud if you so wish them to. They open out to produce a big, room filling sound and don't strain or shout when pushed, like so many at the price point.

Upper band detail wasn't the best around and there was a softness that veiled the overall picture to a certain extent.

With classical the 75s gave a fair performance with nice smoothness and refinement to Beethoven's 'Eroica' but overall there could have

been more involvement.

The 75s are by no means bad but they are a bit off the pace when it comes to the best at the price, lacking a needed touch of excitement. Detail and insight are lacking but they do play anything you throw at them with the same pleasantness. ■ ▲

Boston C75 £200

CS£
Unit 9 Centre Park Holdings
The Airfield
Tockwith
York
YO5 8QF
Tel: 01423 359054

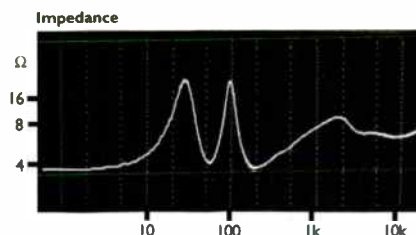
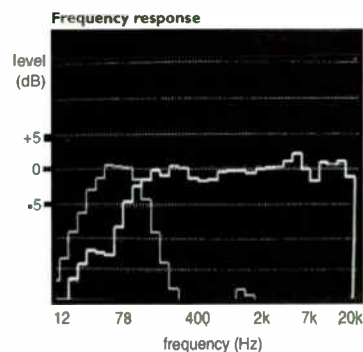
MEASURED PERFORMANCE

Here's yet another budget loudspeaker with an impressively smooth response all the way up to 20kHz. The absence of serious peaks or dips suggests there will be little colouration or innate character to this 'speaker. It will likely sound quite dry, detailed and possibly a little on the bright side. Below 125Hz bass output rolls away smoothly, measuring -6dB at 80Hz, which is a fairly high figure. Below this frequency the port takes over, extending output down to 40Hz. I would expect the CR75 to have slightly lighter bass than the other 'speakers in this group and it should be used close to a rear wall.

The impedance curve of the

CR75 is smooth enough across the frequency range, by modern standards. There's little reactance, except around bass/port resonance as always. The bass unit is a 4ohm design, but the tweeter impedance is 8ohms, making a 6ohm loudspeaker overall. The CR75 has quite a high voltage sensitivity of 86.4dB, meaning it will go loud for any particular volume control position.

Boston's CR75 is a good, modern bookshelf design with every aspect of performance well handled by its designers. Again though, like the Mission and Magnat, it is a little on the 'academic' side and might sound just a bit dry and light. **NK**



World Verdict



A big, full and smooth sound but one that ultimately doesn't involve. Not the most attractive design.

▶▶ JM LAB CHORUS 706

These 'speakers bear little resemblance to the typical budget box. The company use technology similar to that found in their higher level Electra and stratospheric Utopia ranges. Of French design but apparently manufactured in Hungary, their build quality is solid and impressive for the class.

Immediate attention grabbers are the postbox-like front port and the unusual design of the tweeter. Placing the port to the bottom of the front baffle, like that of the Diamond 8.1, means that close placement to a rear wall is an option. This style of port works no differently to any other laminar flow design and should create the same amount of low frequency information as most other 'speakers.

The tweeter uses an inverted 'titanium' dome, as found in the rest of the company's products. It is 'protected' by the vertical metal bar which also lessens high frequency resonance of the tweeter.

What remains is fairly standard to the breed. The cabinet is sensibly sized at 370x200x260mm and features a vinyl wrap finish available in three 'colours'. Loudspeaker connectors are of the good quality single wire type.

JM Labs traditionally have a fairly high sensitivity sound and the new models, as represented here, are no different in this respect. With the Brazilian jazz compilation on vinyl and Bjork's 'Homogenic' on CD the 706s gave a nice, full sounding performance. Bass was impressive for



the cabinet size and they have a good grip on dynamics and speed.

The overall sound errs on the dry side but partly because of this, it is also well detailed and lucid. Imaging was also pretty good. Also on the plus side they don't fall prey to the tendencies of most French designed 'speakers, that of forward treble. For a metal dome tweeter the Chorus unit is very smooth and sweet - a nice surprise.

With classical music in the shape of Beethoven's 'Eroica' symphony the music benefited from the big, dynamic sound. Instruments were clearly defined with a good sense of scale and depth. Instrumental timbres could

have been bettered slightly, as violins scratched a little, and woodwind and brass sounded a tad synthetic.

The 706s are a fine sounding 'speaker if you favour dynamics and drive and want a big and forceful sound, although they could strain under heavy driving. ■ ▲

JM Lab Chorus 706 £229

Focal-JM Lab UK Ltd.
Lonsdale House
52 Blucher Street
Birmingham
B1 1QU
Tel: 0121 616 5126
www.focal-jmlab.co.uk

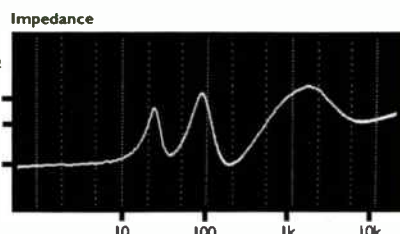
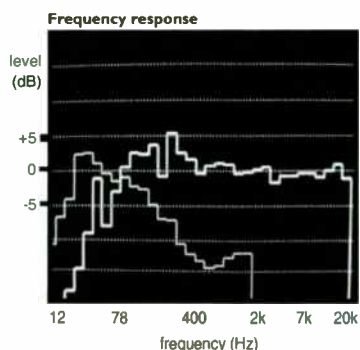
MEASURED PERFORMANCE

Like Acoustic Energy and Wharfedale, in the Chorus 706 JM Lab offer an impressively smooth frequency response coupled with some low frequency lift to add a little body to the sound, and weight to the bass. With no crossover suckout and almost ruler flat treble the Chorus 706 should sound smooth and detailed. Forward bass output extends down to 40Hz and the port provides a little extension down to 25Hz or so. This is a wide bandwidth loudspeaker that should sound quite large relative to its cabinet size.

The slot shaped port is tuned low to 38Hz. It works in conjunction

with a 4ohm bass unit, exerting quite good damping. Above 200Hz impedance rises from 4ohm to above 8ohms, levelling out at high frequencies. Low rates of change indicate there's little reactance in the load and at 6.5ohms overall impedance the Chorus is reasonably easy to drive. Voltage sensitivity was very high at 87dB; under test it was obviously very loud for one watt of input.

The Chorus 706 is a neatly engineered loudspeaker in every area. It uses high quality drive units and integrates them well to give a fine result. **NK**



World Verdict



A big and dynamic sound with a smooth treble. Strain a bit when pushed but overall fine 'speakers.

▶▶ **ACOUSTIC ENERGY
AESPRIT 300c**

The new Aesprit 300c isn't exactly bargain basement priced, but it still has a fairly affordable price tag which many would consider entry level. These 'speakers are visually attractive and their build quality is, as you'd expect at this price, very good, with a sturdy, well braced 15mm MDF wrap cabinet supporting a thick 30mm front baffle. The bass/mid drive unit has a low mass 150mm flared and profiled aluminium cone, chosen for its speed and agility. It is bonded to a 32mm voice coil for good power handling and is a long throw design, mounted on a diecast chassis. The accompanying tweeter is a 25mm Neodymium design. Power handling is rated at 100W and impedance at 8ohms. The cabinet features two front ports which allow close placement to a rear wall and bi-wiring is catered for via good quality binding posts.

Like the previous models in the Aegis range, the Aesprit is brimming with life and attack. Bjork's 'Homogenic' had depth and plenty of power, mixed with control and grip. Bass was very tight and midrange well detailed.

Imaging also impressed, especially with the old style mix of the Brazilian compilation on a Blue Note vinyl LP which had oodles of upper frequency detail. Using a metal coned drive unit the sound is always going to be

slightly forward and not as smooth as some may wish for. This was highlighted in female vocals, which could 'scream' a bit at high levels. However the tweeter is smooth, which means a fairly sweet treble quality exists. There is some forwardness to the mid/bass frequencies. Despite these slight failings the sound with jazz and rock was very fine and cohesive.

With classical there was a good amount of detail in the upper ranges of the orchestra and a good spread of sound, although at times it could be quite 'dry' with a lack of ambience.

Instrumental timbre was good, although brass was slightly raspy and metallic. It's not the most natural performer with classical but the emphasis on rhythm is beneficial and gives the sound plenty of drive. Coloration was minimal, giving the 300cs a transparency worthy of the 'true hi-fi' stamp.

The Aesprits are a good loudspeaker that represent the upper



end of the budget bracket. They have speed and agility, coupled with good build quality. Whilst not the cheapest option here they are still a very good buy indeed. Highly recommended. ■ ▲

Acoustic Energy Aesprit 300c £275

Acoustic Energy Ltd.
16 Bridge Road
Cirencester
Glos
GL7 1NJ
Tel: 01285 654432

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

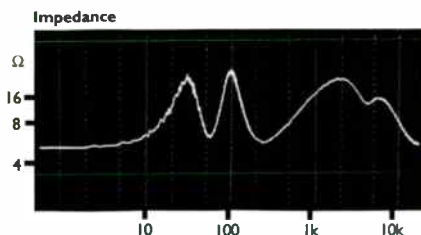
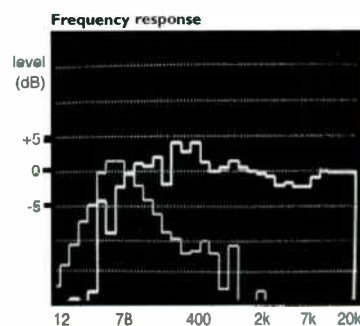
A smooth upper treble characterises this Acoustic Energy 'speaker, as others before it. The company use a very good tweeter and it shows in measurement and listening too. Our one-third octave response analysis clearly shows this as a flat line at right. Together with an absence of crossover suckout I would expect the AE 300c to have refined yet detailed treble, well integrated with the rest of the performance.

To give the sound some body there's a little low frequency lift, before bass tails off to -6dB at 40Hz. Curiously the ports overlap forward output, rather than taking over from it, and the AE shuts off fairly sharply

at 40Hz as a result. There's no port colouration, unlike the other 'speakers.

Acoustic Energy loudspeakers usually have an amenable impedance characteristic and this one was no exception. Shallow slopes indicate low reactance and the bass unit draws less current than usual, overall impedance measuring out at exactly 8ohms. Voltage sensitivity was quite healthy all the same at 85dB SPL.

The Aesprit 300c is a refined design that will likely give an excellent sound: balanced, smooth and accurate. It is very well engineered. **NK**



World Verdict



Plenty of life and verve, with a fast sound. A cracking little design.

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CHEAP THRILLS

In the second installment of our affordable upgrades feature we tackle support and isolation for your components and tell you how to clean up your dirty mains!

►► Isolation platforms and racks - are they necessary and do they work?

A specialist hi-fi rack is for the audiophile who wishes to glean as many subtle nuances from their system as possible. It's a well known fact that structural vibration can hold back the potential of any hi-fi equipment. Turntables, of course, require stable placement more than any other part of your system or they'll simply sound rotten and pitch inaccurate.

It's not the same with amps or even CD players, but there's no denying that a specialist designed equipment rack or isolation system, including support cones actually work and in certain instances can be an affordable, if subtle, upgrade. You can get hold of a half decent hi-fi rack for around £50.

Most racks have a hollow metal frame with either glass or specialist material shelves for less vibrational absorption. There's no doubt having everything equally matched on a surface will tighten things up sonically, but reaching up to the far echelons of rackdom (£1000-£4000) won't bring the sort of magic to many that the money suggests - if you want a change for this money get a new system!

Isolation platforms can also be effective, although are more expensive than many think, starting at around £80 or so. These add a tad more attack and speed to the music, although again for budget buyers the outlay may not always be worth it.

On the plus side for the budget conscious, there are some pretty good value buys around when it comes to alternative support systems such as the Clear Light Audio RDC isolation cones. For £25 for a set of four they are best placed under your

CD player and there should be slightly more focus to the sound, creating a seemingly faster response. Also check out Tenderfeet from the venerable Michell Engineering, at £8.95 or £11.95 (depending on size) these are also a great buy and an ideal Xmas present for your audiophile mate, should you feel generous!



Clear light's RDC cones are an effective and relatively cheap upgrade

Dirty mains - does cleaning up the electrical supply bring results?

It's a well known fact that the majority of peoples' homes have bad mains supply. Cleaning up the source by a number of easy and cheap means can be an effective way of making your system sing. Radio frequency interference (RFI) is everywhere and can sometimes hold back the potential of your hi-fi, no matter how budget it is. There are a number of designs that claim to filter out unwanted RFI that start at around £20 or so. Audioquest's RF stoppers at around £40 for four are a good start.

Another way of improving the sound when dealing with mains is to use specialist high grade mains sockets and power cords. Again the differences are subtle but mains sockets of this sort are cheap (around £5 upwards) and can be bought from electrical stores as well as specialist audio catalogues/retailers. Audio power cables and power blocks designed to clean up sound are often

far more expensive but there are good 'budget' versions available from the likes of Kimber in the shape of their YellO power cable.

Lastly there is a whole bunch of mains conditioners and filters on the market that get to the root of the problem. Mains filters attempt to stabilise and clean up the electrical current, creating a 'new' electrical source from which to run your system. These can be very pricey, such as the £3000 or so that the Accuphase version will set you back but there are more humble versions around such as the excellent and highly effective Clearway. At £200 this isn't exactly cheap but it will suit any system, so as you upgrade your components the Clearway can stay.

Slightly cheaper filters are available from FineFilter (£160) and the simple Hype 5 Pollution Eraser for £100. ■ ▲



The Clearway is a fine upgrade for your mains supply

CONTACTS

www.audiophilecandy.com (for Clear Light and FineFilter, plus lots more)
Russ Andrews, tel: 0800 373467 (for Kimber)
Chord Company, tel: 01722 331 674

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There's lots more to tell, of course. To get the full picture, please call the number below and we'll send you an information pack.

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KEF UNI-Q TECHNOLOGY

19mm titanium dome Hypertweeter™



Aluminium Faraday loop in centre of bass unit



UNI-Q™ exploded view



KEF REFERENCE



RADIO BY



Noel Keywood compares the latest DAB tuner from Videologic with good old fashioned analogue. Is the time now right to go digital?

▶▶ VIDEOLOGIC DRX-601E/ES

I first tested Videologic's DRX-601E digital tuner back in our February 2001 issue. It got unlucky. We pitted it against one of the best VHF/FM tuners I have ever heard – a Denon TU-S10 – and the Denon came off best. Aware they could do something about this, Videologic decided to come back with the DRX-601ES, a tuned up version of the original '601E, designed to give a sound that could match the best FM tuner. It does too – at a price that makes sense. In this review I compared it to Creek's effective VHF/FM T43 to see if DAB is now a clear improvement over traditional radio.

Let's look at prices first. The DRX-601ES is available for around £350, whilst the T43 costs a fairly significant £399. For this you get VHF/FM, plus medium wave and long wave (Europe only), all in a neat package with twenty-nine station presets. With the Videologic you get DAB only.

In use, how many stations you can get on VHF depends upon your location and aerial, but most people will find it difficult to get many more than ten to fifteen. I use a large outdoor aerial pointing to Wrotham (BBC) and Crystal Palace (Commercial) from Central London and tuned in twenty seven VHF stations of reasonable quality with the T43, compared to thirty four DAB

stations all of high quality from the DRX-601ES.

A simple station count isn't enough though; DAB has a host of stations simply not available on VHF and if you could do without another little number from Steps or S Club Seven, then DAB is the place to go, with plenty of rock from XFM, WLN, Big London and Century, to name a few in the London area. Perhaps surprisingly there are only two stations devoted to classical music, Classic FM and Radio 3, just like Band II, but there's a swathe of easy listening from Heart through to Saga, plus sports, news and financial (Bloomberg) channels.

Although Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB) is a complex technology the DRX-601ES is easy to set up. Conventionally sized, light in weight and low in height it slots into a

hi-fi system without difficulty. It took me just minutes to unpack, plug in, turn on and tune in. That's because Videologic supply a wire aerial and the 601ES tunes in automatically. DAB tuners are designed to do this; they lock onto transmission groups called 'ensembles' and each ensemble provides a host of stations. There's no conventional turn-the-knob tuning, because discrete DAB stations don't exist. In effect they're all scrambled together in fixed blocks that take up relatively little air space. The tuner finds these blocks when it auto-tunes and that's it; you have your stations.

The big tuning knob you can see on the Videologic is a station selector. It rolls smoothly with a light detent action, each click bringing up a station name on the blue fluorescent display screen. For the reason I explained above, DAB



NUMBERS



stations are identified by name, not by frequency. Finding stations was quick and easy. Pressing an Info button toggles the display over to show data rate or signal strength. Most programmes are transmitted at 128kbps, the same low data rate used by mp3 music files. This is where DAB starts to show what it really is, a clever transmission system that can cram a lot of stations into a small amount of waveband space. It uses 10:1 data reduction to achieve this, however, and at times it can be heard, even if the effect is subtle and transitory.

I was soon in trouble with the wire aerial Videologic supply, strong burbling sounds on commercial stations (an ensemble) telling me signal strength was dangerously low, even though I live only six miles or so from the Alexander Palace DAB transmitter in North London. DAB can be a bit unpredictable like this so although it can in theory work with a very weak signal, an aerial may well be needed even in primary reception areas. Connecting up to the TV aerial brought in a strong signal and so did a full sized indoor DAB aerial.

All VHF/FM tuners need a relatively strong signal (1mV or more) for minimum hiss, which in most areas means using a proper aerial. This adds to cost if you don't already have one, something to bear in mind with a tuner like the T43. It doesn't make much sense to pay a not inconsiderable £399 then use a piece of wire. You can get fantastic sound quality from modern VHF/FM tuners partnered with a good aerial - and this included the Creek I found.

CREEK T43

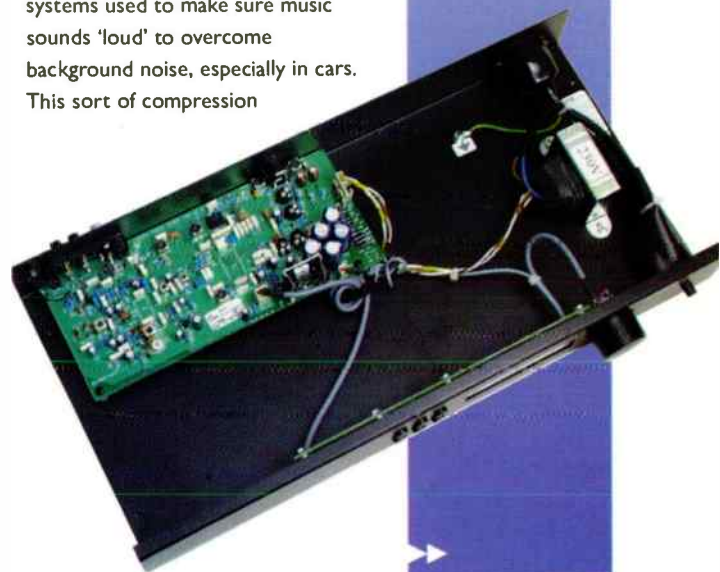
Physically, the T43 was almost curiously like the DRX-601SE, being compact in its dimensions, light and simple to install, with a fuss-free front panel. The tuning system is similar too: once stations have been tuned in and stored, they are selected by spinning the tuning knob, which sequences through the stored frequencies. Pressing a Mode button switches back to conventional tuning. Auto-tune is provided too.

The T43 has useful signal strength and tune accuracy indicators, as well as a Multipath indicator, something I have not come across before. If you want the best from VHF/FM, these indicators are essential. Signal strength shows whether the aerial is good enough to get the tuner into 'full quieting', meaning minimum hiss. It was interesting to see how VHF/FM and DAB compare in this respect. DAB does have a lower measured noise figure but VHF/FM is so quiet you cannot hear hiss in any case. Most noise comes from the broadcast programme itself; I heard humming and whirring sounds, tape hiss and strange graunching noises from what sounded like a damaged old LP when listening intently to classical on both Radio 3 and Classic FM. Neither tuner produced audible hiss in itself though.

These tuners sounded very alike. Both reached a high standard, the T43 offering what is basically a neutral, uncoloured and balanced presentation as VHF/FM goes. Anyone expecting digital to sound better will be disappointed with DAB, but

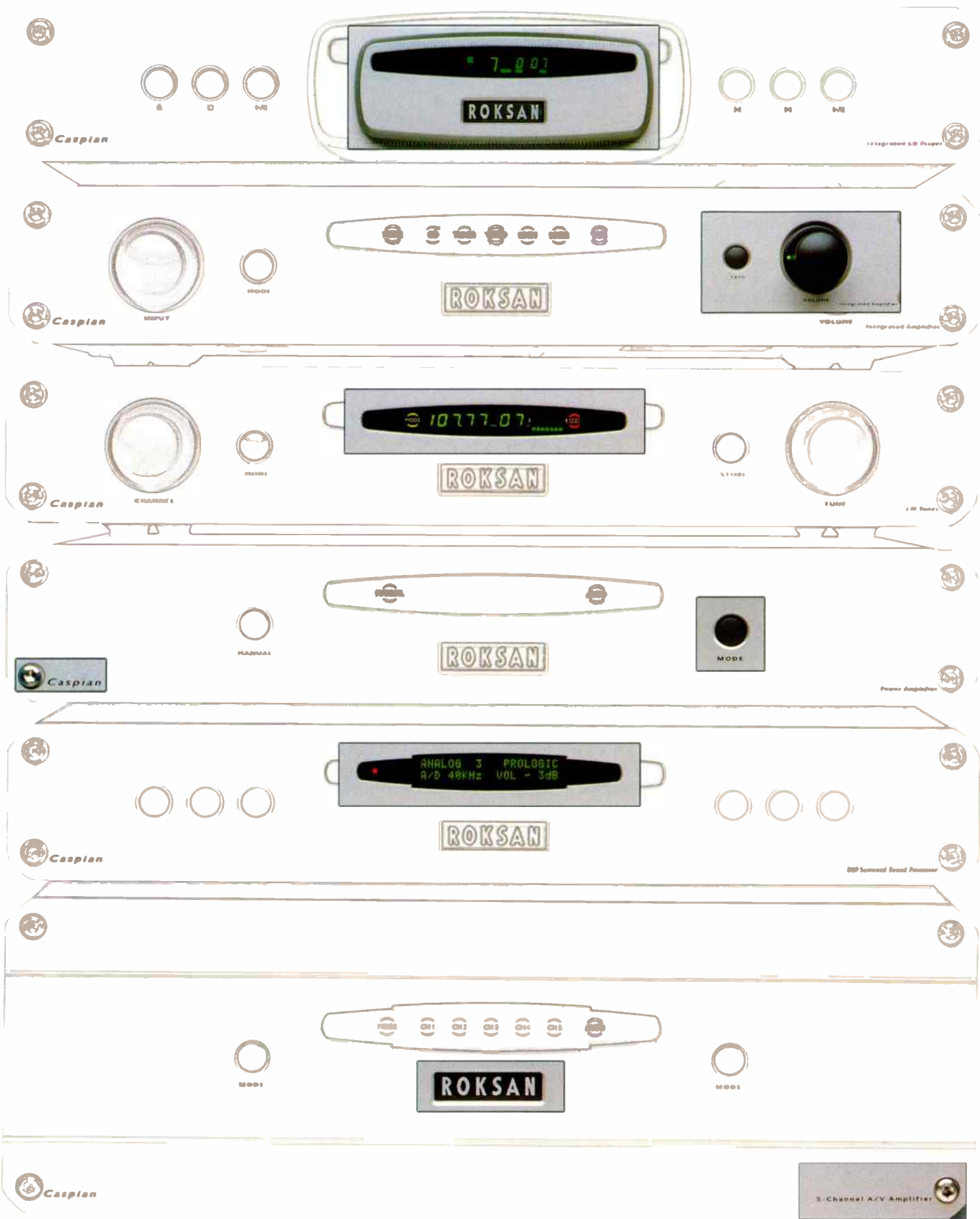
Videologic have been successful in re-balancing the sound of the DRX-601 to better match that of VHF/FM. The problem they face is the characteristic sound of the transmitter-end mpeg data reduction system, which tends to make DAB sound a little bass light and lacking in warmth. This made the original DRX-601E sound a trifle sterile. The DRX-601ES has been successfully re-balanced to counteract this, having an almost identical presentation to the T43. At times on Radio 2 I noticed that when really deep, rumbly bass was in the programme the T43 reproduced it but the DRX-601ES did not. However, you don't often get high quality programme material like this on radio. It's a feature of Radio 2 mainly, to which I always turn when judging tuners off-air.

Otherwise, with quality tuners like this you are listening as much to the studio equipment, including some fierce dynamic range compression systems used to make sure music sounds 'loud' to overcome background noise, especially in cars. This sort of compression



ROKSAN

The full picture.....



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◀ tends to overwhelm everything. Switching between programmes like Capital and XFM on VHF and DAB revealed almost no difference between the two tuners as a result.

Although I found it hard to tell the difference between VHF/FM and DAB when comparing the Creek to the Videologic, I did get a feeling of a sense of sterility from DAB generally. At times, on well recorded complex classical programme from Radio 3 and Classic FM, differences did become clear. Orchestral string sections sounded soft and a little blurred through DAB, almost certainly a result of data reduction, rather than tuner limitations. In the scheme of things though, such differences were reasonably small and fleeting in nature, against the variable and often mediocre sound quality available generally.

Had I hung both tuners off the

same piece of wire then the T43 would have been hissy of course, unlike the DRX-601ES. Being run from an outdoor aerial the T43 was always in full quieting under test, its signal strength meter showing maximum. So DAB can in practice match the best that VHF/FM can do from a simpler aerial set up. That's one benefit. Another is a greater range of stations. I found myself listening to Century and Big-London, for example, which both transmit classic Rock; there's little of this on VHF/FM nowadays. Conversely, you don't get pirates on DAB so there's no Reggae, Rap or Soul as yet.

Creek and Videologic are in some ways quite alike in their approach, combining thoughtful and effective engineering with a useful understanding of the fine details that make a product sound good. I liked both of these tuners. They were easy

to install, set up and use and they both gave excellent sound quality. Differences between the two were minor in this respect. Videologic's DRX-601ES now offers superb sound quality with minimum hassle, plus the wide variety of stations DAB offers. But if you don't live in an area covered by DAB, Creek's T43 will provide a subtly richer and more detailed sound, providing you use it with an appropriate aerial. ■ ▲

Videologic DRX-601ES £349

Videologic UK Ltd.
Tel: 01923 277488
www.videologic.com

Creek T43 £399

Creek Audio
Tel: 020 8361 4133
www.creekaudio.co.uk

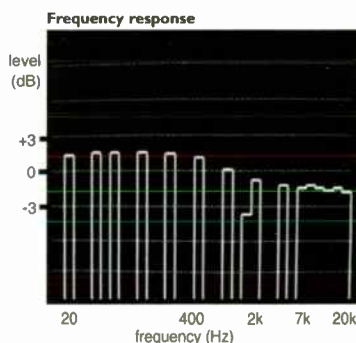
MEASURED PERFORMANCE

VIDEOLOGIC DRX-601ES

An off-air DAB test transmission showed Videologic have applied fixed equalisation in the analogue output stages to give +1.5dB plateau boost of low frequencies and a similar amount of plateau cut at high frequencies in the DRX-601ES. Our third-octave analysis of a fixed tone sequence (below) clearly shows this, as well as confirming the fact that this tuner's frequency response runs from 20Hz to 20kHz. A 3dB variation in response is quite significant, but the DRX-601ES did sound smooth and very well balanced in use, almost identical now to a flat-response VHF/FM tuner. Note that if the DRX-601ES is paired with an external DAC the equalisation will not apply.

Frequency response apart, the DRX-601ES still measures as before, being hiss free, of negligible distortion and highly sensitive. It is an excellent DAB tuner with a fine measured performance. **NK**

Frequency response	20Hz-20kHz
Stereo separation	65dB
Distortion (50% mod.)	0.009%
Hiss (IEC A)	-103dB
Signal for minimum hiss	6µV
Output	2V



CREEK T43

The T43 differs from most VHF tuners in that it lacks a pilot tone (mpx) filter notch at 19kHz. This allows its audio response to extend smoothly out to 20kHz, our analysis clearly showing how it rolls down slowly and smoothly above 10kHz. Most tuners extend flat to 15kHz or thereabouts before a 'brick wall' notch filter takes effect. The Creek manages a similar measured -1dB bandwidth figure of 14kHz, but doubtless its phase characteristics are a lot less severe. I feel the smoothness of its sound owes something to this result.

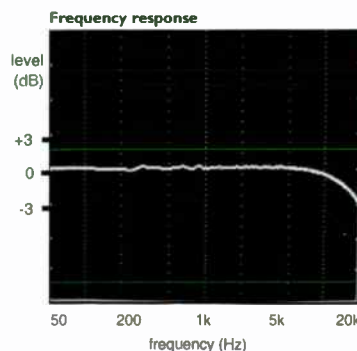
Although the T43 lacks a pilot/sub-carrier filter pilot tone suppression was good at -53dB, suggesting the tuner uses phase cancellation instead. There were modulation products around the pilot and subcarrier frequencies all

the same, much like any VHF/FM tuner. Distortion was very low, measuring 0.12%, likely coming as much from the test generator as the tuner at this level. Audio output was high at 750mV.

The highest segment on the signal strength display lit above 1mV so this display does usefully show when the tuner is in full quieting.

There are some nice touches in the engineering of the T43, subtleties that lift it above the norm. It is very much in the Creek mould of things - elegant and very effective. **NK**

Frequency response	4Hz-14kHz
Stereo separation	28dB
Distortion (50% mod.)	0.12%
Hiss (CCIR)	-74dB
Pilot	-53dB
Sub-carrier	-70dB
Signal for minimum hiss	1mV
Output	750mV



Two excellent tuners: both offer good value and a fine sound.

LITTLE WONDER

Simon Pope discovers bigger isn't necessarily better with Denon's UD-M30 one box wonder.



It's only over the past few years that the one box system has gained credibility with audio journalists. They've been popular with the public for ages, as everyone craves quality, usability and aesthetics in one affordable package. Only recently have all three have been amalgamated by the likes of TEAC and Kenwood, and the higher echelons of audio in the shape of Linn's Classik and the Cyrus Quattro.

We must not forget Denon, who have a tried and tested recipe for success in this area. It is repeated in the elegant form of the UD-M30 CD Receiver reviewed here. There are some options available to this package including a matching CD-R or cassette deck which can be attached via the two inputs, or the cute little SC-M50 'speakers, made for Denon by none other than Mission, and used in this review.

The UD-M30 is remarkably easy to set up and use and comes with a very comprehensive and stylish remote control. The unit comprises a CD player, RDS and EON tuner and an adequate output of 20W per channel. There's also a clock/timer section with a sleep function for those who like to nod off to the Shipping Forecast or Bells On Sunday.

Once connected to the 'speakers, one small gripe here being the cheap plastic clip connectors rather than banana plugs, the system looked compact, sleek and unobtrusive. As the 'speakers feature a small front firing port they can be placed against a back wall with little detriment to the performance.

Putting a favourite CD, in the form of Supergrass's eponymously titled album, into the smooth loading drawer, I was treated to a genuinely fine and surprisingly clean sound. This product won't pound out bass or grab you by the throat, but it has a sound that works extremely well in small rooms, delivering a detailed and open sound that pound-for-pound matches many budget separates for clarity.

The 'speakers have all the right Mission traits, such as a depth of stage and excellent imaging, which is refreshing to find in a package such as this. Although the SC-M50s are of minuscule proportion, they give a good open sound with a fair amount of bass and good treble. If you need a bit more bass, incidentally, the UD-M30 features a Super Dynamic Bass button which when switched will blossom out the low end a little more - but to sensible proportions. It actually works quite well for filling out the sound a tad more in larger rooms, for example.

Tuners have always been a speciality of Denon and so it was easy to rely on this section of the UD-M30. The radio is easy to use and gives a good account of itself. Radio 3 and 4 both had a nice 'dead' sound to voices that resembled the traits of a stand alone hi-fi tuner. With music on Radio 3 there was timbre to be found in orchestral instruments and a good sense of reality generally existed in

the broadcast.

With commercial radio stations the studio compression and effects didn't hurt so much as they would through a high-end dedicated tuner, which of course, is no bad thing as most stations have some kind of compression, albeit to a different level. Capital and Kiss sounded full and lively with plenty of bass but also not too much sibilance, which can be the major problem with these stations.

I was mightily impressed with this little package. Any hi-fi fanatic wishing to set up a system in the bedroom/kitchen/study etc. will be pleasantly surprised by the UD-M30 and SC-M50 'speakers. The combination gives a clean and detailed performance, to which the 'speakers contribute much. In this respect Denon's little system is the best option around £300 by far, showing that one-box CD receivers are not the also-rans they were in the past. ■ ▲

Denon UD-M30 £300
Denon SC-M50 £70

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

World Verdict



Great sounding and great value package. 'Speakers are impressive too.

sevenoaks sound & vision

sale starts

15th December

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The following pages show a selection of the numerous sale offers that can be found in-store, and with the added peace of mind of Sevenoaks competitive pricing policy, and the ability to spread the cost of buying with 0% finance option, Sevenoaks Sound & Vision are the perfect choice.

Hi-Fi Components and Systems

Pages 2-5

Digital Tuners • CD Players • CD Recorders
Amplifiers • Loudspeakers • Systems

Outlets Nationwide

Pages 6-7

Who are Sevenoaks? • Sevenoaks Online • Outlet Details
Christmas and New Year Opening



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Systems
Best Buy £1000 plus



LINN



Classik K CD Receiver

"Since the Scottish company added a tuner to the amp/CD player, mouths have gaped even wider in appreciation. The addition of colour options panders to the public's taste for kit to match their interior design, but it doesn't just look lovely in the lounge: the Classik sounds simply marvellous. Boasting fine impact and drive, it retains its grip even as it thumps out rock and dance tracks. Ask it to play quite acoustic music and its smooth, liquid presentation impresses still further. The Classik offers the performance you'd expect from hi-quality separates in one lovely package - this is a very superior product." ★★★★★ **WHAT HI-FI? | Awards 2001**

Sale £899.95

DENON

D-M30 CD Receiver

Sale £199.95

SC-M50 Speakers

Sale £59.95

"Denon's gorgeous D-M30 has a fine pedigree - and a record of success. Its forebear the D-M3 kept impressing us with its balance of good looks and great sound, winning two What Hi-Fi? Awards on the trot. Now the latest generation takes home a Product of the Year gong two years in a row. On its own merits, too, as this is much more than a rehash of the D-M3. Upgraded audio circuitry, improved power supply and the Mission-designed speakers all improve the package. The sound is superb, well-balanced and weighty... It's a big system in a very cute box." ★★★★★ **WHAT HI-FI? | Awards 2001**

Optional CD Recorder:

CDR-M30 CD-RW Recorder Sale £149.95



VideoLogic DRX-601ES Digital Tuner



"New name, new format, new winner: the VideoLogic story is as simple as that. The £299 DRX-601E digital tuner came out of nowhere to establish the firm as a major player in the digital tuner market. With this upgrade, VideoLogic goes one step further: it's still a DRX-601E at heart, but quite apart from the sleek silver styling and sexy blue LEDs it now has a

better, white-on-blue display, and what the company calls 'Psycho-acoustic Compensation' - a form of signal processing designed to make the tuner sound less digital.

And it works: the DRX-601ES has a presentation that's rich, clean and extremely informative. Bass is big and powerful, while the midband and treble are well controlled. The style alone would justify the slight price rise; the sound quality makes it a Product of the Year."

★★★★★ **WHAT HI-FI? | Awards 2001**

Sale £329.95

Also Available: Sony STD777ES Sale £429.95



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World Radio History



ARCAM DiVA
CD92T CD Player
Sale £799.95
A85 Amplifier
Sale £699.95



Arcam's quest for higher performance, has led to the development of the DiVA series, the most complete range of high performance home entertainment equipment ever launched by a specialist audio manufacturer. Innovative design and production techniques have enabled Arcam to build on established values of excellent sound quality and value. All DiVA products are available in Silver or Black.



Stereo Amplifiers
 Best Buy £601-£1000

DIVA A85 "You'll have realised by now that we rather like this amp. It took us completely by surprise, and further strengthens Arcam's already impressive product range... The A85 is superb, and we can't wait to put it up against its peer in a group test." ★★★★★ **WHAT HI-FI? | March 2001**



TEAC
Reference 300 System



Systems
 Best Buy £501-£1000

"Teac's Reference 300 system is an absolute belter. The company's Reference series has won lots of awards and many admirers in the past, and the 300 range at £200 less than the bigger 500 series, is no disappointment. Your £600 buys you everything but speakers: an amplifier, tuner, CD player and cassette deck, CD-Synchro recording, optical digital output and built-in timer. This being a Teac, upgrading will not be a problem when you get that new job, with a DVD player and multichannel amp among the most recent options... As beautifully built as we've come to expect from Teac, this system delivers the goods with style." ★★★★★ **WHAT HI-FI? | Awards 2001**

Sale £499.95

MISSION
M71 Speakers

"With silky smooth treble, staggeringly refined detail and a bass that digs deep and punches hard, they're little short of miraculous when you consider the price... The Mission M71s are truly exceptional speakers for the money." ★★★★★ **WHAT HI-FI? | Awards 2000**

Sale £99.95



Please Note: Some products may not be available at all outlets. Advertisement valid until at least 16th January 2002. E&OE.



marantz

CD6000Ki Signature
CD **Sale £429.95**
PM6010Ki Signature
Amplifier **Sale £329.95**

CD6000 Ki Signature "The result is a player of real power and grace, and one that sounds dynamic, exciting and fresh. Rhythms are tight and clean while the live atmosphere of discs is conveyed with a real 'you are there' feeling. Even massive scale and weight isn't beyond the Marantz: it delivers all the bass your amp and speakers can handle without ever drowning out the high stuff. The audiophile bargain of the Nineties is back, and it's even better!." ★★★★★ **WHAT HI-FI? | Awards 2000**

PM6010 Ki Signature "Yes, this is the most expensive amplifier in this group, but provided you like its bright yet weighty, detailed yet wide-open sound, it's still something special." ★★★★★ **WHAT HI-FI? | September 2001**

marantz

DR6000 CD-RW Recorder **Sale £299.95**



"Most CD recorders make excellent copiers but are less than brilliant as plain CD players. Not so this Marantz: the DR6000 is a recorder you can also use as your main CD player, using your existing machine as a source for recording, for unless you have a very good machine in the £400+ league, chances are the Marantz is going to outperform it.

Whether playing its own recording or standard CDs, the DR6000 sounds big, confident and highly detailed, delivering a sound with real presence and few sonic foibles. Fast rhythms are delivered with terrific conviction, and the way the Marantz digs out detail of percussion and brass instruments knows no rival at the price. What's more, recordings made on this machine have bags of punch and impact, sounding virtually identical to the original discs.



The work that has gone into making the Marantz a good CD player has resulted in a fine recorder that also earns its keep as a system upgrade. No, it's not the least expensive recorder around, but it's one of the best, and worth every penny." ★★★★★ **WHAT HI-FI? | Awards 2000**



Cresta 2
Speakers (cherry Finish)



"It's been a few years since KEF made an assault on the entry-level speaker sector. Well it's back with a vengeance with the Cresta 2s and, as proved in October's affordable-standmounter *supertest*, they are the class of their field. These well-built and handsomely-finished 37cm-tall boxes employ a 25mm soft dome tweeter allied to a 13cm long-throw mid/bass driver, and they're biwireable, too, something not often found at this price point. When wired and placed on a pair of sturdy stands, the Cresta 2s sing in a way that belies the £150 price. As good with the atmosphere and excitement of a live recording as with the punchy basslines of dance music, the Cresta 2s have all the qualities of a truly classic loudspeaker." ★★★★★ **WHAT HI-FI? | Awards 1999**

Sale £99.95



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World Radio History

page **four**



ROKSAN

Caspian MKII

CD **Sale £799.95**
Amp **Sale £729.95**

Founded in 1985, Roksan's objective has always been to bring high-end specialist hi-fi to every home. Today with the Caspian range, that goal has been fully achieved.



Caspian CD Player "If you can stretch to it, though, Roksan's Caspian is the player to go for. Yes, it's the most expensive here, but no rival can touch it when it comes to bringing music to life - regardless of genre. And that's what hi-fi is all about." ★★★★★ **WHAT HI-FI?** | May 2001

Caspian Amplifier "The Caspian has been around for a few years, but Roksan has developed it to a point where it now leads the class in all-round terms. In specific areas other amps equal it, but overall none can beat its combination of clarity, timing and dynamics. The Caspian is a worthy winner." ★★★★★ **WHAT HI-FI?** | February 2001



MONITOR AUDIO Silver 8i Speakers

"No other speaker in this test can match the Monitor Audios when it comes to delivering seismic basslines with sofa rattling power and weight. That this part of the spectrum also enjoys plenty of speed and control confirms the Silver 8is' position as bass kings... A great speaker needs more than simply great bass, however, and the Silver 8is do far more than merely thump. With the likes of Curtis Mayfield's 'Move On Up', they produce a sound of such verve that it becomes hard to sit still... They produce music with plenty of excitement - but don't forget the subtleties too. Add excellent build and an easy load and these Monitor Audios make a formidable case for themselves." ★★★★★ **WHAT HI-FI?** | April 2001

Sale £599.95

MUSICAL FIDELITY

X-A2 Amplifier

"Resolution is never in doubt, and yet this is music-making very definitely on the human scale, the X-A2 being as much about a natural balance as electrical ability. It's capable of driving even big, demanding speakers, is upgradeable with the addition of extra Musical Fidelity power amps - when things get even more special - and is an absolute steal for the money. The X-A2 is set to become even more of a What Hi-Fi? favourite than the X-A1 it replaces."

★★★★★ **WHAT HI-FI?** | September 2000

Sale £399.95

Also Available: X-Ray CD Player **Sale £699.95**





who are sevenoaks?

Founded as Sevenoaks Hi-Fi in the summer of 1972, the original shop, in the market town of Sevenoaks, Kent, quickly gained a reputation for offering a wide range of products at competitive prices, and providing excellent service.

Exciting new technologies like compact disc, meant that throughout the 1980's there was considerable interest in hi-fi and Sevenoaks were able to grow. By 1990, the company was established as one of the leading independent hi-fi specialists in the country.

More stores were opened and a number of the original shops were relocated. In 1995 the important decision was made to change the name to Sevenoaks Sound & Vision, reflecting the wide appeal of new audio visual products.

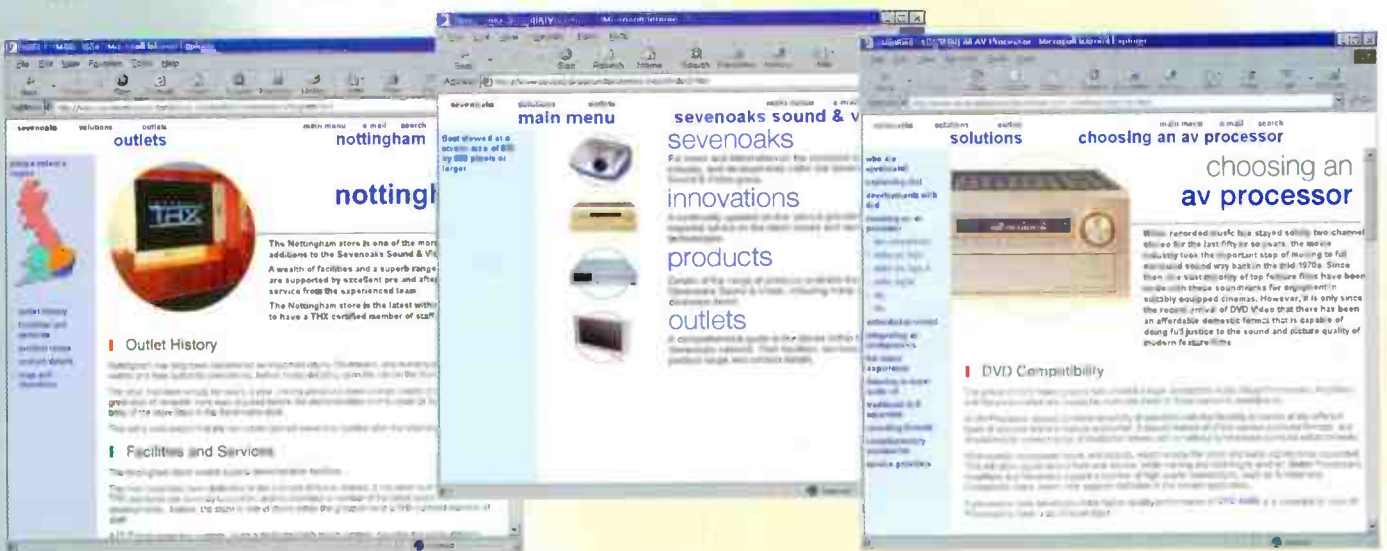
After twenty-nine years of trading, the company has more than forty outlets nationwide, and is for many of the UK's leading manufacturers of electronics and loudspeakers, their largest and most successful retailer.

The people at Sevenoaks appreciate that customers have a choice. This appreciation has meant that over the years Sevenoaks have had to adapt. As new products and technologies have arrived, the staff have been trained to ensure that they can explain the issues, simply and informatively. This orientation to customer service remains, and the implementation of a company charter is one example of this commitment.

By staying true to the original ideals of offering a wide range of the latest products, at competitive prices, and providing superb service in pleasant surroundings, Sevenoaks are able to listen, recommend, demonstrate and supply the products that best suit the needs of their many customers.

As the world becomes a more complex place and people search for entertainment and relaxation, Sevenoaks Sound & Vision believe that whatever the requirement, they have the solution.

sevenoaks online



www.sevenoaks soundandvision.com

The Sevenoaks Sound & Vision website has news and information on the Sevenoaks group and its 44 outlets nationwide. The website is designed to provide you with answers to the questions you may have when buying new equipment.

The site has comprehensive guides to a range of products and technologies from vinyl and compact disc to all the latest formats, including DVD Audio, SACD and widescreen plasma monitors and front projection systems.

There are regularly updated stock clearance lists with hundreds of products on offer and detailed pages to help you locate your nearest store.

For impartial advice and information, just click on sevenoakssoundandvision.com.



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christmas and new year opening hours

Sunday 16th December

Most Outlets Open - Please confirm before travelling.

Sunday 23rd December

Most Outlets Open - Please confirm before travelling.

Christmas Day

All Outlets Closed.

Boxing Day

All Outlets Closed.

Sunday 30th December

Most Outlets Open - Please confirm before travelling.

New Years Day

Most Outlets Closed - Please confirm before travelling.

Sundays in January

Most Outlets Open - Please confirm before travelling.

Check www.sevenoakssoundandvision.com for latest information.

ALLAE-D FORCES



Naim's enigmatically named new Allae loudspeakers assault David Price's preconceptions.

How can I put this politely? Naim loudspeakers have traditionally been the province of the devoted Naim fan, and an 'acquired taste' at that. The past few years have seen Naim's brand values shift subtly from hardcore, hairshirt hi-fi to a more egalitarian position, attempting to appeal to a broader range of listeners. For example, the company's amps now have remote controls, a sensible range of inputs and even - of late - very sleek and svelte looking styling.

Where then does this leave the company's loudspeakers? The Allae is the epitome of the 'new breed' - using bang-up-to-date design and engineering principles to bring that olde Salisbury magic to a new generation of music lovers.

The Allae is certainly a joy to behold. A combination of curved and non-parallel surfaces make it arresting to look at (and Naim would also point out this reduces internal standing waves). There's a range of modern, real wood veneers (American Cherry, Maple, Black Ash and Santos Rosewood) for the 940x240x280mm cabinets. Needless to say, the review samples were finished beautifully.

The big idea is resonance - or a lack thereof. To wit, the Allae drivers are separated into their own enclosures to reduce mechanical interference. Naim PIPs (precision interface pins) separate the individual cabinets: the lower cabinet acoustically loads the bass-mid driver, whilst the PIPs define the air gap between the two cabinets, providing a controlled distribution reflex port, free of the usual turbulence problems.

Another interesting touch is the cast aluminium stands, which combine a leaf spring and spikes to control the

critical interface between loudspeaker and floor. This springing is such that the bass appears solid (and unsprung) when the mid-bass section is removed, facilitating easy location on the floor.

Inside both cabinet walls and on the outside of the drive units, Naim has used thermally stable brass mass dampers to control and reduce resonance. The drivers themselves comprise a bespoke Naim 200mm mid-bass unit featuring a computer modelled aluminium chassis and split-mass aluminium phase plug to improve heat dissipation and power handling.

The 19mm wide-dispersion Scan tweeter is spring-mounted to provide extra isolation and mechanical filtration between the cabinet and drive unit.

All of this adds up to a loudspeaker with a claimed 100W power handling, healthy 89dB sensitivity and a frequency response of 30Hz-20kHz +/- 3dB.

My listening kicked off with the £1,125 CD5, £625 NAC115 and £750 NAP150, with both CD5 and NAC115 driven by a £475 FLATCAP2. Very briefly, with the 5 series there was the trademark Naim rhythmic grip, but a good deal of vagueness in image location and a slightly asthmatic bass. I wasn't altogether disappointed - they were still a lively listen - but I'd suggest that people only use these with 5 series front end is used.

My point is - rather circuitously - that these speakers are so damn good that they could be the last ones that most people would ever need to buy. Using the higher end Naim electronics brought a stunning transformation - one that made me

forget I was listening to speakers that cost 'just' £2,000. As usual, 4hero's brilliant second album ('Two Pages') was wheeled out to put the poor review candidates through their paces. Awesome! The Allaes kicked and punched their way through the sinewy rhythmic and dynamic twists and turns of 'Spirits In Transit' with incredible aplomb. Lightning fast, razor sharp, exhaustively detailed yet incredibly musical, it was a total 'live vibe' in the listening room. The snare sound was sublime, as was its incredibly tight interplay between cymbals and tablas - I've never heard it so good. The Fender Rhodes sounded beautifully alive - vibrant and spread widely across the recorded acoustic; you got the sense you were listening to it from a concert PA. And yet despite all these firecracker dynamics, the Allaes remained civilised - as evinced by the smooth, lilting ARP string sounds hanging at the back of the mix. It was at this point that I realised the Allae is a surprisingly neutral and couth speaker, if the electronics in the chain permit.

David Sylvian's 'Orpheus' brilliantly revealed the Allaes' essence - once again they were very hot on the showy stuff (leading edges and attack transients, etc.) but when the pace slows you realise how subtle they can be. Just as the gaps between the notes were very 'black' - there being virtually no overhang - intricate nuances in the mix were more audible with the Allaes than any of its price

◀ rivals I've heard. Likewise, the Byrds' 'You Ain't Goin' Nowhere' demonstrated how they could cut through the 'gloop' of a messy mix to bring the subtlest of fine detailing - the song became alive with the singer's gentlest vocal inflections and breathing. All this time, of course, the Allaes obliged with a wondrous 'walking' bass line.

The Go-Betweens' 'Streets of Your Town' showed off the Naim speakers' superb soundstaging at their best. They're not great on hanging instruments far back behind the plane of the speakers - instead, everything goes upward and forward, giving a vast, expansive recorded acoustic with bold and tight image projection. In fairness they don't match the pin-point precision of dual concentrics, or even some conventional floorstanders, but what they lack in millimetric accuracy is more than compensated for by their brassy, 'out

there' attitude. The strummed guitar part starting this song was incredibly confidently placed, and well ahead of the plane of the speakers.

Tonally, the Allaes are surprisingly good for Naim loudspeakers, confirming my idea that these aren't just 'voiced' to be forward and powerful, but actually let the character of the front end flood out. Everything from the rich, woody double bass and rasping French horns in 4hero's 'Escape That' to David Sylvian's uniquely resonant vocal strains showed the Allae's textural dexterity.

Tonally these 'speakers are quite dry - as you'd expect - and lean. Their bass could be characterised as light, but in fairness it lacks the woody, boxy coloration you get with most floorstanders (thanks to over-resonant cabinetry). The answer is to place them a little closer to the wall than usual and use the very best front end you can.

The Allaes have few weak points for such a purposeful design focused on getting to the music's heart and soul. I would have loved more air and space from those Scanspeak tweeters - treble is smooth but doesn't exactly indulge lovers of the high notes.

Likewise, the very lowest bass notes are just a little compressed and

sat upon when you've cranked the volume up - a decent sub would work wonders here.

Finally, these speakers have a 'brightly lit' mid-band, so are best not matched with forward front ends. They should also be set up with care and devotion.

Brilliant, then - awesomely musical and a riot to listen to. I adore the Allaes for their focused, no-nonsense approach to music making. Better still, I have an inkling that they'd partner a lot of softer, soggier, non-Naim high end systems superbly too - by drawing them out of their shells and getting into the music's groove. A top effort from the Salisbury boys, and one of the very best £2000 loudspeakers available.



Naim Allae £1,990

Naim Audio
Southampton Road
Salisbury
Wilts SP1 2LN
Tel: 01722 332266
www.naimaudio.co.uk

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

Like other Naim loudspeakers I have tested in the past, if less so, the Allae has a characteristic mid-band emphasis that will give it good projection. Low frequency output slopes downward in a peculiar fashion but reaches down to 40Hz in quite a smooth way. The distributed port arrangement seems to have good damping, because of the acoustic resistance of the carefully dimensioned port I suspect. The low frequency end of the impedance curve is well damped, so all in all Naim's bass loading system seems to be pretty effective. The 'speaker reaches downward smoothly to 40Hz and the port extends this down to 25Hz or so.

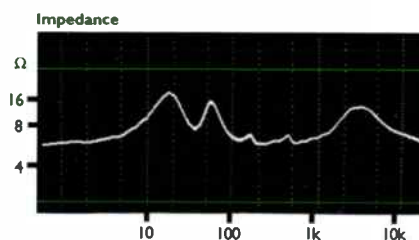
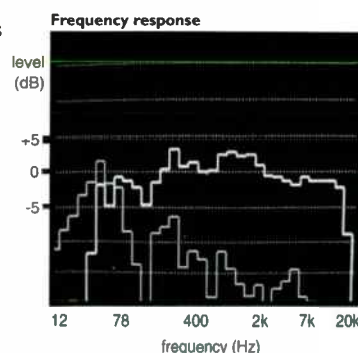
At the other end of the frequency spectrum the tweeter provides a very smooth and well integrated performance, right up to 16kHz. The Allae should have easy

going treble as a result.

Naim have engineered an interestingly flat impedance curve that measures out at 7.7ohms. So the Allae is an almost perfect 8 ohms and especially non-reactive. Producing 85dB SPL from one nominal (and true) watt of input the Allae was reasonably sensitive considering its high impedance. Ironically, although Naim amplifiers are designed to be very good at driving current into low loads the Allae is an easy and undemanding load. However, the nature of a 'speaker as a load says a lot about it's acoustic effectiveness and in this case the picture is a very good one - which is no accident.

The Allae is an interesting piece of loudspeaker engineering that will certainly have its own sound, which in

many areas could well be a notch above what is generally available. It is very well engineered. **NK**



World Verdict



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STAGE CRAFT



David Price reviews a Plinius phono stage finished in the wood of the same name - Jarrah.

There aren't many hi-fi folk who started work at the Australian Hydro Electricity Commission in Tasmania. Peter Thomson's ascent to the managing director of a highly respected audiophile manufacturer down under has been a long one, but Plinius is now a purveyor of some fine audiophile fare.

After moving to a new job in architectural aluminium design and fabrication, he went to New Zealand to establish a factory in Palmerston North, on behalf of a Christchurch-based family business. But Peter's love of music meant that it wasn't long before he began working on his own hi-fi products, and in 1980 Plinius Audio Systems Limited was formed.

After more than two decades of steady growth and merger with Craft Audio Ltd. in 1987, the company is one of the country's pre-eminent audio brands.

The Jarrah was introduced in 1996 as a 'low cost' phono option for users requiring a high quality, yet affordable way to handle vinyl sources. It works with pickup cartridges from low output moving coils to standard output moving magnets, selected by jumpers and cartridge load switches fitted near the centre of the very neat single printed circuit board. It's housed in an aluminium case with a solid Jarrah front panel - which is said to be a tribute Peter Thomson's native land. Juice comes courtesy of a separate external power supply, with the rectification and regulation circuitry at the front of the circuit board.

Listening was done with my Michell Orbe, packing a new Origin Live Silver 250 and Ortofon Kontrapunkt B moving coil. The Jarrah was compared to the Michell Dino, which also does the biz with both coils and magnets. The Jarrah has a wide, open and even

sound, as Scritti Politti's 'Perfect Way' showed. Not too dissimilar to the Michell in its clear, matter-of-fact character, there was none of the smooth, euphonic silkiness of, say, Densen's DP Drive or the 'in your face' get-up-and-go of Creek's OBH-8SE. Rather, the Jarrah treads a balanced line and doesn't try too hard to influence the proceedings. Bass was deep and extended, but didn't boom or exhibit any signs of overhang - it's just a touch dry compared to the Dino (which is itself no EAR 834P!) but still managed to sound convincing. Better still was the way it tied into the midband. Rather than sounding like two separate preamps each doing their own things, it managed to integrate the low frequencies with the midband very well. This all-important 'presence' region was very impressively voiced, the Jarrah giving an even-handed and comprehensive rendition of Moloko's 'Time is Now'. Vocals were smooth and yet earthy, with a touch more grain than the sensibly middle of the road Dino could muster. Don't confuse this with distortion though - the Plinius was simply doing its job by conveying the singer's voice in all its glory.



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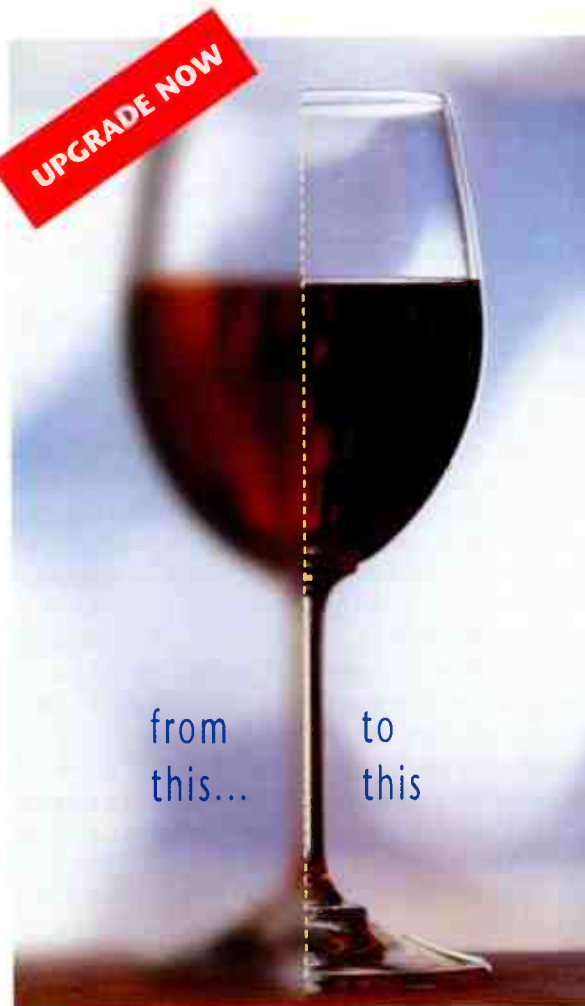
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 **RINGMAT**

Soundstaging was decently strong and confident, without being particularly bold or well articulated. Whereas the Dino was a little more able to communicate the spatial relationship between instruments at the front and back of the mix, the Jarrah pulled things in a little closer. In this respect it doesn't help the sense of detail - the Dino giving the impression of more clarity by letting those bell-like Roland digital synth parts chime out of the mix more conspicuously. In truth though, the Plinius is impressively detailed nonetheless - stereo imaging left to right is usefully clear and well defined, and there's a lot going on if you listen for it. You could say that in this sense, it's less 'hi-fi' than the Dino and more like real music.

Treble was another competency - the Plinius offering up a smooth and airy presentation without embellishing things. Hi-hats sounded clean, but weren't as silky as the Michell, and certainly not as rose tinted as any valve phono stage. Instead, you get a balanced, even-handed, workmanlike effort that neither adds or detracts. Herbie Hancock's 'The Prisoner' let the Jarrah conjure up a convincing

acoustic, with satisfying airiness, making for a convincingly atmospheric performance. There wasn't a whole lot of glistening, shimmering or chiming going on, just an accurate, no-nonsense acoustic with a good deal of room to breathe.

Rhythmically the Plinius is something of a snake in the grass - despite its relatively sober tonal character, it's no slouch. Indeed, you find yourself tapping your toes sooner than you'd expect - Oasis's 'Slide Away' can be quite dirge-like through some phonostages, but the Jarrah cut to the rhythmic chase and worked hard on bringing out the swing. It isn't a big bopper like Michell's Delphini, but neither is it a wet blanket like the Densen DP-Drive whose even-

handed, slightly dry tonality it shares.

Overall I liked this phono amp - it's definitely a well-sorted design and I would enthusiastically recommend an audition. The problem is that in both price and character it rather falls between two stalls. It suffers from offering a taste of transistor detail and valve liquidity, whilst excelling in neither.

Likewise, its price point puts it awkwardly between entry level, 'value for money' designs and cost-no-object product you've always promised yourself. If you can get a Creek for under £200 that isn't a million miles behind, or a £1000 Michell Delphini that's light years better, why go for the middle option? ■ ▲

Plinius Jarrah £600

Absolute Analogue
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MEASURED PERFORMANCE

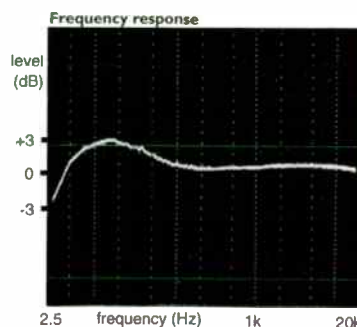
There were some unusual and interesting features in this phono stage. It has a very high output capability of 23V, which in turn gives it a good input overload ceiling of 95mV on MM. The (low) gain available is quite high at x240, or on HIGH setting x600 for MC. Around x100 is usual for MM cartridges, but x1000 for MCs. The Plinius falls somewhere between, meaning it will cope with all MMs, including those with low output, as well as most MCs.

The frequency response of this stage was peculiar in possessing significant bass boost, which our analysis clearly shows. Gain starts to

rise (relative to the RIAA recommendation) below 100Hz, peaking by +3dB at 20Hz. This unfortunately means there is a lot of gain available right down at warp frequencies of 5Hz and lower. So although the Plinius will have strong bass it will also emphasise warps, something to be borne in mind. At the other end of the frequency spectrum the Plinius extends right out to 52kHz. Input noise was a low 2.16µV which means hiss will not be a problem.

This is an interesting phono stage, but it's departure from RIAA is quite strong and record warps will be emphasised. **NK**

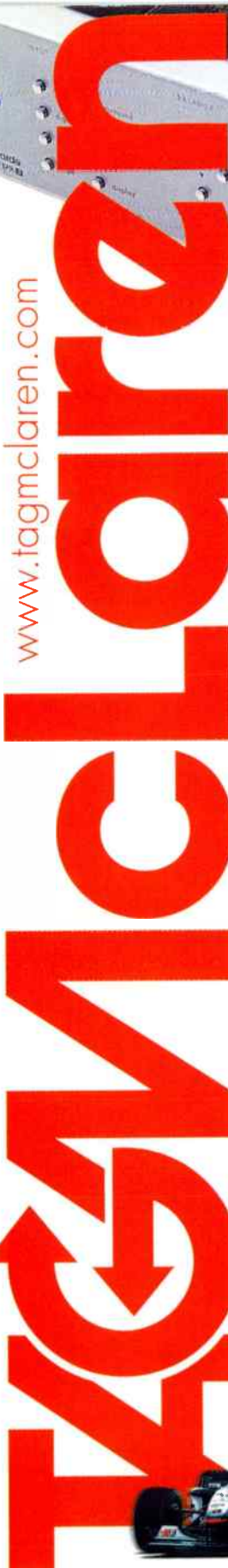
Frequency response	5Hz-52kHz
Separation	84dB
Noise (e.i.n.)	2µV
Distortion	0.01%
Gain	x240/x600
Overload	23V out/95mV in



World Verdict



Musical, even handed and built well, this has much to offer - only the high price and stiff competition detract from the package.



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TWO'S COMPANY

David Price spends some time with AudioNote's budget CDT-Zero and DAC-One combination.

Think of AudioNote's Zero mini components as a kind of alternative TEAC Reference Series. Indeed, so alternative is it that it has valves inside, plus an extremely cool instruction manual which begins thus, "Although the DAC-One 1.x is a digital component (there is no avoiding this unfortunately!)." Right on, daddio!

As far as I was concerned, this certainly got the review off to a good start. Peter Quartrop is a controversial figure, but even his detractors can't deny the man's passion for vinyl. This digital duo comes from a company that knows all too well the problems with digital - always a good sign.

Indeed, this is no gruesome twosome - together, the £549 transport and £749 DAC look very smart. Both get the benefits of the midi sized (120x220x300mm) chunky aluminium casework used by the rest of the Zero series, plus the thick retro brushed alloy front panels, weighing in at 4kg apiece. The display on the transport looks a bit naff in my estimation, and I can't say I like the Japanese-style writing on the DAC. This goes into detail about what's inside, and frankly isn't terribly useful - pretty much like the 'Super Twin Power Servo Feedforward Plus'-type scrawl you used to see on Jap amps!

So what is inside? The CDT features a pretty nondescript Sony transport, nicely laid out but nothing to get carried away with. The fascia is bafflingly free of buttons - it looks neat but it would be better to have at least open/close and play/pause buttons here for emergencies. In fact, they're hidden round the back - just



where you can't see (or use) them! Presumably, they're there in case you lose the remote - which I inevitably did.

The DAC One is a more interesting design, boasting AudioNote's '1x oversampling direct from disc circuit topology', borrowed from the considerably more expensive DAC5 Signature. This is claimed to dispense with all the correction measures used in other converters. The AD1865N converter chip itself is an 18bit multibit design which works at 44.1, 48 and 96kHz, truncating any datastream it receives up to 24bit resolution.

Then there's AudioNote's trademark tube connection, in the diminutive form of a solitary 6111WA anode follower output stage - hardly in the Ongaku league, but then again the only thing that glows in the dark on most DACs is the power LED. A 100,000-hour life (over nine years of continuous use) is predicted, and the valve generates so little heat that

cooling isn't a worry. A single coaxial input and one set of analogue outputs completes the picture round the back.

The AudioNote combo sounded pretty strange at first, but just like the manual says, filled out and smoothed up with use. Listening 'in anger' kicked off with Mercury Rev's sublime 'Deserter's Songs'. This modern, cleanly produced album isn't a particular sonic treat - sounding a bit bland and nondescript (quite unlike the music, I might add) - but the AN combo really got the best from it. As you'd expect, it's a pretty even sounding duo, with a pleasingly fulsome and rounded character.

Most impressive about this combo is the way it gently smooths off the rough edges from the sound, and yet keeps much of the dynamic and rhythmic information intact. Make no mistake, it isn't as grippy as Cyrus's own CD7/PSX-R (which costs a similar amount), but it is no less beguiling. Whereas the latter

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WHAT HI-FI?
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seemingly moves heaven and earth to impart every detail of every note's attack, sustain and decay characteristics, the AudioNote combo rounds a little of the notes' leading edges off (just softens them a tad), yet still sings out the rhythmic nuances and dynamic inflections.

Spin up Nirvana's 'Come As You Are' and you'll hear a slightly less firecracker rendition of the song, yet this combo sounds just - if not more - musically coherent and satisfying. It isn't one for forensic detail retrieval but the AN adds a touch of bottom end bloom at the expense of some tightness, a little bit of silk at the top and a big, brassy, bold midband that's positively brimming with musical detail. Even if the event is less exhaustively described, you still get more of a sense of its emotional impact.

Move to jazz and the AN is even happier. Although it's less able to tell you about the recording techniques and studio particulars, there's oodles of atmosphere and 'vibe'. Herbie Hancock's 'The Prisoner' was a joy, this combo proving more adept and communicating the tonal character of the instruments used in this classic sixties BlueNote recording. Flutes sounded more breathy, trumpets more grainy, double bass more full

bodied. The Cyrus combo sounded a touch analytical and monotone by comparison, despite being tighter and ultimately more dynamic.

Whatever kind of music you play through the AudioNote CDT-Zero/DAC One, you'll enjoy yourself. It's one of those 'feel good' hi-fi products that makes the best out of poor recordings (i.e. most) but doesn't quite give you the last nth degree of detail on the good ones. As such, it fits into the AudioNote Zero system superbly, but many spending nearly £1500 on a silver disc spinner might be after more refinement, composure and accuracy. Meridian's 506.24 has all this, plus much of the AN's benign, smooth and musical nature.

Alternatively, you could save yourself a couple of hundred quid and go for the almost as accomplished Arcam FMJ CD23. If you enjoy holding onto your seat and strapping



yourself in, there's always the Naim CD5 and to a lesser extent, Cyrus's CD7/PSX-R. The problem is that, although a great player, this AudioNote combo faces a lot of stiff competition at the price, and rather falls between a number of different stalls. Recommended all the same. ■ ▲

AudioNote CDT-Zero £549
AudioNote DAC-One £749

AudioNote UK Ltd.
125-127 Davigdor Road
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MEASURED PERFORMANCE

Frequency response of the Audio Note DAC-One convertor was rather out of line with what is usual from CD, or from any source if it comes to that. As our analysis shows output starts to fall away above 5kHz, measuring -1dB at 7kHz. By the time the upper 20kHz limit is reached output has dropped to -7dB. This is excessive and will give the DAC-One an obviously warm or dull sound.

The distortion behaviour was more normal. There was some second harmonic at higher signal levels. It measured 0.2%, a level that is not normally encountered from digital but, being second harmonic only, it will have little subjective effect. As signal level decreased the Audio Note became quite linear, until -60dB or so when things started to go out of line a bit, distortion rising to around double the usual figure.

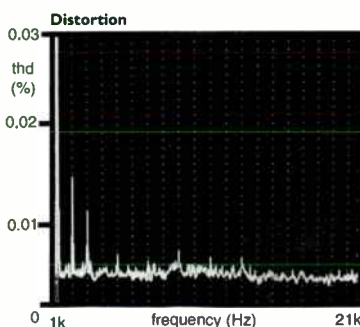
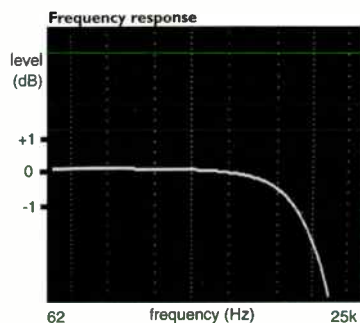
Output was very high at 4.6V,

meaning the DAC will sound very much louder than any other, the level usually being 2V. Separation and noise figures were good, but dynamic range limited at 102dB.

The DAC-One is a bit extreme in its characteristics. Frequency response is so restricted it will sound unusually warm or dull. **NK**

Frequency response	10Hz-7kHz	
	left	right
Distortion		
-6dB	0.2	0.2
-30dB	0.02	0.021
-60dB	0.73	0.77
-90dB	44	42
Separation	left	right
1kHz	81	82
20kHz	78	79
Noise	-110dB	
with emphasis	-110dB	

Dynamic range 102dB
Output 4.6V



World Verdict



An enjoyably musical package, and beautifully presented too, but a touch too coloured to compete with the best of the rest.

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LETTER OF THE MONTH

A SNIP AT WHAT PRICE?

Dear Hi-Fi World
All this recent talk
about SA-CD and

DVD-A seems to dodge the sort of issues that are much closer to the hearts of many of your readers. For example, a reviewer in another magazine once stated that on the system he was reviewing he could hear wire cutters on Peter Gabriel's 'Intruder' (PG3 album) as he sings the line "snipping the clippers". Many years have since passed and despite upgrades to my system, I still can't hear this effect on my vinyl copy of the album. I now suspect that the reviewer just made this up as a cunning ploy to bolster the hi-fi industry! Either that or, alas, my system still isn't good enough.

I use a Pink Triangle LPT turntable, OL RB300, Roksan Corus Black, X-LP and Copland CSA-8 amps feeding Celestion DL8 speakers. Before I contemplate a new pair of speakers, could you please 'spin the Orbe' and put me out of my misery. Did those clippers ever leave Peter's toolbox? If so, your

suggestions for a suitable upgrade please!
Yours, Alan

I can hopefully put you out of your misery, Alan. Ironically, it's SACD and DVD-A that are formats theoretically more likely to bring up such intricate high frequency detail such as this. I managed to get a copy (on CD) of the track in question from a buddy and couldn't detect any snipping of the clippers with a Meridian CD player. Sugden pre/power amps and a pair of Quad ESL-988 (just the tools for the job). Maybe it was a scratch on his record!

However, on the theoretical side, it all depends if you think Mr. Gabriel's wire clipping is an essential component of the sonic picture or not. I once encountered a chap who used to compile CDs of metal spades being dragged across concrete, with the intention of selling them to like minded individuals around the globe. I'd stick my neck out and say he hasn't retired to Mustique as yet, because people tend to buy CDs for music, not something they can recreate to near-

perfect accuracy on their barbecue patio. Likewise, few (hopefully) would relish the inclusion of a wire snip over a tuneful bass line or deft fingerwork on a fretboard. Little details such as this are purely of interest to the reviewer, who can 'compare and contrast'. If those that 'listen for pleasure' go down this route it could end in tears and personal bankruptcy!

My personal advice is to save your money, live without the snip (if it was ever there in the first place) and get into the communicative effect of the music. Rest assured that on paper at least your system is very fine and should have easily enough detail and lucidity for most applications. If you do favour the more clinical approach to audio detail you may get more high frequency intricacies from the likes of a pair of Jamo D80s (formerly the Concert 8s) but a more cohesive choice would be a pair of high sensitivity 'speakers such as Living Voice's awesome Avatars which would suit the Coplands a little better and deliver a wonderfully smooth and detailed sound that would better your Celestions. **SP** ■

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To snip or not to snip, that is the question. . .

MP3 - AND EASY?

I'm an audio equipment novice who simply wants to play my MP3 files through my stereo system for louder and better sound. I currently do that by connecting my laptop to my stereo amplifier using a cord that has a mini-jack on one end and two RCA jacks on the other. I am considering buying a new computer system though, and I am bewildered by all the equipment available for this. I don't know anything about soundcards or how I would connect a desktop system that has its own speakers to my stereo - can you help?

Ronan Lasso, Oceanside, California

The cheapest and easiest way to play your MP3s with hi-fi sound quality is to get a soundcard with a digital output and run it into your existing hi-fi DAC, MiniDisc or CD recorder. Any thus-equipped design would be fine, but as you're based in the US then a Turtle Beach Montego II Plus would be ideal - they're very popular in the States. Look out also for Yamaha's cheaper, ever-popular WF192 WaveForce. Even if you don't have an external DAC, the audio (LINE OUT) output of either of these soundcards would be quite listenable for MP3 or AAC purposes.

Another way is to buy a PC with a CD burner, and burn all your MP3s to CD-R. You can then buy one of the growing number of MP3-playback equipped CD or DVD players - everything from the Meridian 588 to NAD 531 has this facility now. This

would give excellent quality playback, using the player's internal DAC going straight into your amp.

Finally, consider an Edirol UA-3 USB audio adaptor, which plugs into the USB socket of any computer (made in the past 5 or so years) and offers both audio line outs or direct digital outputs, bypassing the computer's internal soundcard completely. This is available from www.edirol.co.uk, but as it is made by Roland (I believe) it may be available in the USA thus badged. It's an incredibly handy gadget and you can of course use it on any computer at home or work because it's hot-pluggable, and therefore easy to move between machines. **DP**



A soundcard with a digital output would do the trick

TRYING A CONVERSION

I am a subscriber to your excellent magazine, and particularly like your

computer audio section. Could you please advise me on this problem of how to get good integration of computer and analogue equipment? I am not a hi-fi nut, as the music is more important. My equipment comprises an MVL SS amplifier, Marantz 630 Pro CD Recorder, Technics DAB Radio, Pioneer MJ-D707 MD Recorder, Philips and Panasonic DCC Recorders and my trusty FonsCQ30/SME turntable. All are linked to a twin Pentium computer with Creative Live Drive. I can get direct digital output by coaxial or optical from my computer, so that could be fed to an external DAC.

I imagine I could improve the sound from some of the above equipment. Would I be able to get some gains from my MP3s, which I have recorded at 128, 192 and 256kbps, as conversion would be external and therefore separated from any computer noise and artefacts? If so, could you please suggest a solution which is not too esoteric? A dCS Elgar sounds nice but I am afraid it is out of my league! Seriously, I am looking for a converter which is up to date and ideally capable of upgrades. I am sure this will be of interest to your readers as conversion is only round the corner.

David Smith

Have you tried piping the optical digital out from your LiveDrive into one of your DCC or MiniDisc recorders? If you try each one in Monitor mode (usually achieved by pressing the 'Monitor' button or

selecting Record with no disc or tape in), you may find a considerable improvement. If either of your DCC decks are early, high end designs (as I suspect your Panasonic may be), you'll already have a very respectable DAC built in - that's the equal of any cheap



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Which brings me onto this subject - external digital converters are very much the province of the high-end nowadays, so if you're on a budget you'd be best advised to buy second-hand.

In the context of your system, it certainly makes sense to upgrade the DAC, as you have so many sources that would benefit from this one upgrade. Decent DACs haven't got a whole lot better over the past 10 years - so unless you need HDCD or 24/192 capability, look no further than a used DPA Renaissance or Plink Triangle Da Capo, available for under £500. A cheaper but slightly less accomplished solution would be a Meridian 203 DAC7 - which would set you back less than £200 if you look hard enough. **DP** ■

Excuse me for butting in, but another DAC option is to check out the fine MSB 24/96 DAC. This is excellent value at £249 and a fine a DAC as you can get up to, say, £1000. Another cheapy option is the MidiMan Flying Cow for just over £100. Both also, incidentally, turn a bog standard DVD player into a CD playing star! **SP** ■



The Flying Cow is a fine new purchase for those after a quality DAC for little money.

|| NICKED IN THE BUD

Hello,
Until recently I was that apparently rare species in the hi-fi world: someone wholly happy with his hi-fi. However, after a visit from the local burglar, I now need to find suitable components to replace those stolen (incidentally, showing consummate poor taste, the miscreant didn't take my Rega Planar 3). My system was 7 or 8 years old, and consisted of a NAD CD player, an Arcam Alpha 5 amp and Mission 761 speakers. This gave me the full, relaxed sound I prefer. I've heard "better", more dynamic systems but

they're not for me.

I'd be very grateful if you could recommend a new CD, amp and speakers. Ideally, I'd like a minimalist amp (with phono stage). Is either Rega, Creek or, at a push, Audio Analogue likely to be to my taste? In terms of speakers, I would like some small floor-standers that can go close to a wall, though I suspect you'll recommend stand mounts, for reasons of sound quality.

The real virtue of my hi-fi was that I never thought about it, only the music it



was playing. I'd be very grateful if you could return me to this vanished paradise.
regards,
John Brosnan

You're not alone. A good friend of mine had a whole flat full of desirable hi-fi from the likes of Quad, Microseiki and Nakamichi and was broken into. However all that was

nicked was a rough old cheapy JVC tuner that he propped up a bookshelf with! So there's a lot to be said for bad taste.

Your trip back to Elysium starts here, John. If you liked what you had so much then stick as close to that as possible and you're on the right lines in your ideas. Starting at the source, NAD still make some of the finest budget CD players around. The C521 at £200 is a class leader, as is the more expensive and sophisticated sounding C541 at £330. Start with these and you have a good base for the rest. Next I'd plump for a Rega Brio (£298), a cute sounding and looking little integrated with a transparent yet smooth sound, it has

easily enough power and a fine phono stage - what else would you require?

The Brio matches Mission's 'speakers well. The £300 780 standmounts would be a fine choice but the cheaper m73s at £200 could fit the bill nicely. They are floorstanders with plenty of grunt and nice high sensitivity for a fine open sound. Any of the above choices would be a budget system worthy of inclusion in even the fussiest audiophile's abode! **SP** ■

The Brio is a sophisticated and sweet performer.

|| HARSH BUT TRUE

Thanks for an unbiased and informed mag, I have read many others but feel more 'connected' to your reviews. Maybe you could help me?

My current system seems to lack the tonal quality that seduces you into sitting down and 'drinking in' the music. I find that the sound is unconvincing and lacks separation and smooth, realistic definition. Could you give me some direction as to how I can improve things? My music taste is predominantly Rock/Pop, some Blues and Occasional Classical. I listen to both digital and analogue formats.

My system started its life in the early eighties (I can remember now the smug grin on my face, as I walked into the mystical surroundings of my hi-fi emporium). There I acquired a Thorens TD160 Mk2/Thorens arm and Ortofon VMS 30 mkII cartridge... along with Yamaha NS1000m speakers (mounted on stands which have castors - well cool!). In the last two years I have bought a Marantz CD-17 KIS, Musical Fidelity X-A1 amp and X-LP phono stage. QED Qudos 'speaker cable and Qnect 4 interconnects thread it all together. The units sit on veneered chipboard cabinets (no less!), in a 9' by 13' room.

I have often wondered about disclosing all this info, as I am sure the Hi-Fi World office is now in fits of tearful laughter, rolling around the pub floor wheezing... he matched his amp with WHAT !!!!!" Anyhow, as I concentrate to

remain unaffected by that vision I am happy to spend up to £650 in making any changes - O.K. 'corrections'. I would be happier buying more music, if I could get benefits for less.

Howard Barlow (not my real name.....obviously!!)

Don't be so harsh on yourself, Howard (or is it Ken?). Or us, for that matter! The thought of us being a bunch of patronising drunks couldn't be further from the . . er . truth!

Even in the lofty heights of hi-fi magazine editors' systems there's something that doesn't often feel right about the sound. It's the nature of the beast, I'm afraid - the audiophile as opposed to the hardware, that is.

What you regard as a change instead of a correction is indeed that. 'Upgrades' change the sound, not necessarily better it (unless say, 'speakers are out of phase, etc.) and they're only successful if the person who has to live with it likes it.

There's no denying that your system errs towards the bright end of the scale. The Yamahas are fine 'speakers, fast and dynamic, but aren't

the smoothest customers around. Likewise Musical Fidelity amplification and to a lesser extent, Marantz CD players. I'd say the Yamahas need calming down a little. With the financial resources you have to hand there are a couple of options available. The X-A1 isn't the cream of Musical Fidelity's crop any more and sounds a tad thin compared to the A3, for example. Although fine for many systems it's probably the weak link in your set up. Selling it secondhand could raise a few bob to add to your £650 and you could plump for something like the Sugden A21a, the latest generation of this timeless integrated. At £999 it delivers a

smooth and sophisticated high end sound. You'd have to crank it up a little as it's only 25W, but its 25W of Class A - equal to that of a valve power rating. Indeed, my esteemed colleague Mr. Price runs his "Yams" with a valve power amp.

Otherwise, try something from Audio Analogue such as their Puccini SE Remote at £750 or LFD's Mistral for £600, both musical and fluid performers. Or if you want to go in the more rhythmic and fast mode, give the £800 Naim Nait 5 a try - it could work well. Then when funds permit try out the Chord Company's cabling for that extra touch of cohesion and balance. **SP**



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► NEEDLE, DOCTOR

A friend, on getting a new cartridge, gave me an Ortofon MC 20 Super which he hoped I could sort out. It had hit the spindle on his Garrard 301 and thereafter only plays one channel. Don't laugh! His theory is that - with the stylus slightly to the left now - both channels in a recording are no longer located in tracking. Could he be right? I've been given to wonder, though, whether the cartridge has been damaged internally since the stylus doesn't appear woefully misaligned. I've suppressed the idea of taking a pair of tweezers to it for fear of making matters worse. In any case, are there any remedial services for cartridges as what comes from one channel is very nice indeed. And if so, what would the likely cost be? That is, would it be cost-effective?

Gilbert

If your friend thinks the analogue signal in LPs is no longer located in the groove, it sounds like he's been watching his platter revolve for slightly too long. You're right, of course, to suppose that the internals have been damaged, and sage and perspicacious in not getting your watchmaker's screwdriver out to have a look. Internal surgery is best left to an experienced specialist who's been wielding tweezers for years. This is why you should give Len Gregory (a.k.a. The Cartridge Man) a bell on 0208 688 6565 or have a look at www.thecartridgeman.com. He'll be able to advise you on the damage, and cost of a rebuild. At this point you'll have to take a view on whether you want to spend the sum on the Ortofon or on a new MC. Ortofon offer a like-for-like exchange, where you get a new MC20 Supreme for £355, through your nearest dealer. Phone Henley Design on 01235 511166. The MC20 Supreme was (is) a fine design, with Ortofon's characteristically sweet, smooth and open (albeit slightly mechanical) sound.

You could also think about about a Dynavector DV20X-L (£299) which would give it a run for its money - and also has a new stylus (obviously) which wouldn't need replacing for years. If cost is less of an issue, the one I'd aspire to in the £500 bracket is either Ortofon's own MC Kontrapunkt B or Lyra's Lydian B - both are dynamite, with the Lyra a little more detailed but less punchy. **DP**



The Kontrapunkt B is a cracking MC kartridge

► ELITE ASPIRATIONS

For many years my system was an Elite Rock/RB250/Decca Gold, Audio Innovations 300, Snell Type Jllls. A fun system that really played music, albeit not terribly subtly! CD arrived seven years ago with an Arcam Alpha 5+. This quickly became my main source, especially as my musical taste went more towards opera, classical and contemporary rather than more mainstream rock and pop. The problem with the turntable set-up is that it's going through a NAD phono stage that isn't too good. What should I do to make this work - I'm thinking of a new cartridge and phono stage - or would you recommend dumping it (it's half my life old!) and getting a GyroDec? I can't see vinyl being as major a source as CD for me given the lack of classical (or do you have some good sources?)

On the CD side, a recently-acquired LG DVD player somewhat outperforms the Arcam as a transport, which makes me think that technology has moved on, and that dedicated CD transports probably sound better than £150 DVD players! Is there an alternative to the rather expensive matching Meridian? Finally, I read recently about new Quad ESLs, and I'm mightily tempted. Would my 13w single-ended 859 drive them, or would this be a very expensive upgrade indeed? I adored the old ESL-63 but wanted some bottom-end - do the 989s do this? Also, are they able to work about two feet from a rear wall and be relatively cat-proof? I need a sense of direction here, as mistakes are starting to look pretty costly.

Adam Slim

First your vinyl. Yes, I know a number of good sources for classical - an internet search engine will glean plenty of results here. Better still, try record fairs and second-hand shops, and buy a decent record cleaner (such as a Moth) - or find a local hi-fi or record shop with a Keith Monks cleaning machine. A £1 classical LP with a 50p clean can often sound surprisingly good.

As to what turntable to buy - it

really depends on how much you're going to use your vinyl. If you get back into it - and many people are - then I'd go ahead and get a Michell GyroDec SE, complete with the latest DC motor, for £825. You could use your existing RB250 for a while, and then get it modded by Origin Live when funds permit.

Cartridge-wise, the closest thing to a modern day Decca is probably an Ortofon Kontrapunkt B - which is very punchy and energetic, but with a lot more finesse.

Your phono stage could be usefully upgraded with a Creek OBH-8SE (£130) or a Michell Dino (£299) if funds allow. If you don't want to commit to vinyl - I'd just go for the Creek phono stage and possibly a cheaper Dynavector DV10X4 and leave it at that.

CD transports are much of a muchness in my humble opinion. I'd go for a TEAC VRDS-T1 (ideally second-hand, for £300ish) and save my cash for getting it Clock 3 modded by Trichord, which really makes a difference in clarity and dynamics. The Quad would work with your EARs, but don't expect to get the Environmental Health round complaining about noise levels. A palliative would be to pair them to an active REL subwoofer (or even two), to really take the strain off your EARs. Carefully matched to your room and ancillaries, they'd sound superb - but I'd insist on a home dem from the supplying dealer before cash changes hands - and keep the cat in the other room! **DP**

Quad's ESL-989: the world's costliest cat scratching (di)pole!



GUARAN



Mani Sandher encounters the small but perfectly formed Bryston B-60, an entry level integrated from Canada.

▶ **W**hat sort of warranty would you expect on your newly purchased amplifier? One year? Three years, perhaps? How about a 20-year unconditional and fully transferable warranty? Well, that's what the Canadian manufacturer, Bryston, offer on every product they make. This is no hype or else everyone would be doing it. No, it's real confidence in design and manufacture, gained over a quarter of a century, serving both professional and consumer audio marketplaces.

Here, we take a look at the Bryston B-60, their base offering. This is an integrated amplifier, providing 60 watts per channel into 8 ohms and 100 watts per channel into 4 ohms, Bryston claim. There are provisions for four high level inputs, (CD, Tuner, Video and Aux) in addition to one tape loop. A headphone socket is provided on the front panel for those requiring monitoring and private listening provisions. At the rear of the case are gold plated, five-way speaker binding posts and gold plated RCA input and output connectors. Our sample came with an fairly chunky remote control that adjusts volume only.

Bryston have packed a lot into

the slim case of the B-60. All signal circuitry is fully discrete with no ICs in sight. Interestingly, the amplifier has one independent toroidal transformer and high current reserve for each of its two channels, eliminating channel-to-channel cross talk or interference. Other features include pre-out/main-in connectors, which allow for quick and easy multi-channel system integration.

Eager to hear what the B-60 had to offer, I connected it to my reference system: Sony SCD-1 (heavily modified), B&W Nautilus 803s, Analysis Plus Silver Oval interconnects & speaker cables, Townshend seismic sinks, Cardas Golden Cross mains leads and an Esopower mains conditioner. The speaker terminals on the B60, though easy to use, proved a tight squeeze for the 2.5mm-thick spades on my speaker cables. The B-60 was placed on a Townshend seismic sink to reduce the affect of any external vibrations and was left playing music for a couple of days before any serious evaluation.

Having now listened to the B-60 over an extended period of time, it seems to me that Bryston have focused heavily on getting a couple of

areas right, namely midrange purity and timing. To test the midrange, I first tried a bit of piano in the form of Manfredo Fest's 'Just Jobim' SACD. This sounds incredible (as do all DMP offerings), being a pure DSD live-to-2-track recording by Tom Jung - the music's not bad either! The B-60 shone in terms of midrange purity, smoothness and timing. Each note of the piano sounded nicely full and round, without any harshness or edginess. Percussion and drums lead the rhythm of the music nicely. Only on track S, 'Amparo', did the B-60 struggle with the lower octaves of the piano.

John Lennon's 'Double Fantasy' CD (MFSL 24K pressing) was replayed with high levels of resolution and depth. Separation and focus were also impressive, helping to reproduce Lennon and Ono's vocals in a rich yet insightful way, and creating the illusion of having them in the room - scary.

I next tried Claire Martin's 'Take My Heart' SACD on the Linn label. I find that Linn recordings require a system with real resolution and depth to get the most out of them. The B-60 didn't disappoint here, Claire's vocals being crystal clear and rich. The same was true playing Madonna's

TEED SUCCESS

'Ray of Light' CD. Track 11 on this CD starts with strange synthesised sounds that can verge on being painful to the ears. But through the B-60 they remained pure and smooth.

So, is the B60 perfect? No, but then what is? It's an accomplished performer in the midrange, and comes close to projecting the same naturalness as my Pass Labs X1/Aleph4 combo. But it does lack low and high-end extension. The delicately struck cymbals on 'Just Jobim' didn't sound quite as sweet as they should. It seems Bryston have compromised powerful transients and dynamics in favour of good timing, rhythm and pace.

Lenny Kravitz's '5' CD contains

some powerful low-end transients that the B-60 couldn't entirely manage, especially on track 14, 'American Woman'. My N803 speakers probably don't help here, being more difficult to drive than most.

Overall, I really like the B-60. Rather than trying to do too much, it focuses on getting a few important things right. For me, midrange purity is of paramount importance – it's where so much of the emotional content of the music sits. Good timing, rhythm and pace make music sound more. . .well, musical! The B-60 excels in both of these areas, to the slight detriment of low- and high-end

extension. If you're interested in buying a £1500 amplifier, do audition the B-60 with a top-flight front end and a pair of reasonably easy-to-drive speakers. You'll find that your favourite music sounds great. Should there happen to be a problem in the coming 20 years, don't worry, the B-60 will still be under warranty! ■ ▲

Bryston B-60
£1350 (remote £1550)

PMC Ltd.
43/54 Crawley Green Road
Luton
LU2 0AA
www.bryston.com



MEASURED PERFORMANCE

Under test the Bryston produced 66W into 8ohms and 90W into 4ohms. That's a useful amount for the average home and system, giving plenty of volume under most conditions. The distortion behaviour of this amplifier looked promising in some important areas. There was no increase into a low 4ohm load, as is so common. Since most loudspeakers now use 4ohm bass units this is becoming ever important. In the mid-band distortion was negligible, right up to full output. At higher frequencies there was a little second harmonic, but that is innocuous enough subjectively. Again the amplifier remained linear even into

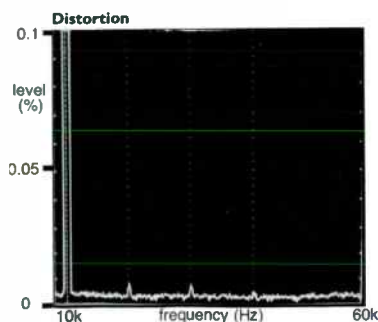
low loads. The Bryston looked good in terms of distortion, producing little even under difficult conditions.

Bandwidth was quite wide, measuring 4Hz-62kHz, good enough for modern sources such as DVD-A and SACD. Noise was very low and channel separation high. Like many modern amps though the Bryston was a little insensitive, needing 440mV for full output. For older cassette decks and tuners this is a little low.

The Bryston is a neat looking amplifier that measures well. It should give a good account of itself.

NK

Power	66watts
CD/tuner/aux.	
Frequency response	4Hz-62kHz
Separation	80dB
Noise	-107dB
Distortion	0.006%
Sensitivity	440mV
dc offset	0.7/1.4mV



World Verdict



Clean and controlled, the B-60 has an impressive way with rhythm. Lacks a bit of low end slam, though.

WELCOME TO CHEAP SEA



NAD's new T531 CD/DVD player will not amaze you with its incredible looks or Herculean build, but it was never supposed to. David Price goes back to budget basics.

► This is an interesting product for two reasons. First, because it's a new NAD - lest we forget, this is a company that has done more than most in furthering the cause of impoverished audiophiles over the past two decades. Second, it's not a purpose-built CD player (à la NAD's C Series), but from the 'Theatre' series, which means it's ostensibly a DVD player that plays CDs.

The T531 is a versatile machine, just as you'd expect. As well as the claimed dynamite CD performance, it also has the ability to play CD-Rs, CD-RWs, and MP3 data discs recorded by your computer CD burner. Its spec includes a dts digital out (for use with an external decoder), which is useful even to us audio boys as there are a number of audio-only dts discs out there for our audiophile delectation. There's a component video output (on the 115V version only), a 10-bit Video DAC, the usual SCART with RGB and Composite Video outputs (230V version only), and PAL/NTSC compatibility with PAL 60 option (230V version only).

More up our avenue are the

coaxial and optical digital outputs and the usual RCA stereo analogue outputs.

Pulling this player out of its packaging was an eerily familiar experience - having owned more than a few NADs in my time, the straightforward construction quality and greeny-grey finish weren't new to me. It's hardly an auspicious bit of kit but the T531's light is well and truly hidden - until you feed its somewhat cheap feeling disc tray with something round and shiny.

The first silver frisbee to find itself spinning inside was Caravan's 'In The Land of Grey and Pink'. Feeding my World Audio K5881 and Yamaha NS1000Ms, the wee NAD made some surprisingly nice sounds. It's not the world's most detailed digital disc player, and there's a considerable lessening of air and space compared to the likes of my cheapo (£200, now no longer on sale) Cambridge CD4SE. Just as the high treble seems veiled and softened, the lower bass isn't the most powerful or extended you'll hear.

The NAD doesn't appear to be a mid-forward player, as its upper bass is pleasantly warm, and its lower

treble is sweet and smooth - both are characteristics, lest we forget, that NAD is famous for, as anyone who's ever owned a 3020 will tell you.

The T531 is an exceptionally musical performer at the price - it just gets into the music and enjoys itself. It's particularly strong on carrying melodies, as the Caravan disc proved. It isn't Naim-like in the sense that it doesn't grip, grip, grip - yet you still end up tapping your feet to the sumptuous and melodic sound emanating from betwixt your bass bins.

K-klass's 'Rhythm is a Mystery' showed the NAD's limited low bass ability - it doesn't like the bottom octave and prefers to forget they're there. Likewise, the Roland TR909 hi-hats sounded curtailed and lacking their characteristic 'glisten'.

The midband showed the T531 to be limited at placing stereo images within the mix - the synth glides seemed to hang about in the middle of the acoustic rather than being nailed to one spot. Likewise, there was a poor sense of the air around the vocalist - I couldn't clearly hear the booth in which she was singing, whereas my old budget reference the

TO THE TS

CD4SE made it plain as day. Despite this, the NAD gave an incredibly bouncy rendition of the song. Indeed, it sounds very 'organic' and ebbs and flows with the song without trying to deconstruct it or pronounce on its recording characteristics. Air's 'All I Need' merely confirmed this - the NAD turning in a wondrously warm, sweet, louche rendition that caught the mood brilliantly.

Tonally, the T531 is NAD through and through - which means warm and sugary, even if the original recording isn't. It's a great characteristic to have for a budget CD spinner, because the ancillaries are likely to be rough - but

through higher end kit it can often sound a bit samey and predictable. Nevertheless, Lonnie Smith's 'Think!' - a nicely judged late sixties Blue Note recording - sounded fantastic. Put through something like a Cyrus CD7/PSX-R you'll hear all the ragged edges, but the NAD doesn't bother with the unpleasant details and just gets into the groove. Once again, frequency extremes and image location could have been better, but the song's emotional force and delicate rhythms were carried surprisingly well. As a video player it's tops too, with a clear and lucid picture, as a DVD of New Order

revealed. Colours were natural and functions such as pause and fast forward operated well, with the picture still easily discernable.

It's a top little deck, the T531. NAD is right to claim its status as a legitimate piece of hi-fi - it sounds better than many budget CD-only Sonys, Pioneers and Marantz's at (almost) the same price - and of course plays DVD movies beautifully. ■ ▲



NAD T531 £330

Lenbrook UK Ltd.
Unit 2, Old Wolverton Road
Milton Keynes
Bucks MK12 5NP
Tel: 01908 319360
www.lenbrook.co.uk

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

The T-531 has a ruler flat audio frequency response that runs out to 20.25kHz. A response like this usually gives a slightly bright balance in practice, but the T531 is certainly accurate in this area.

There was a little more distortion than usual from CD, level measuring 0.03% at -30dB, normal music level. Our analysis shows this was due mainly to a slightly raised noise floor. At lower signal levels the rise was greater, distortion measuring 0.9% at -60dB instead of a more common 0.4% or so. This player isn't quite as linear as the best, but it puts up a reasonable performance.

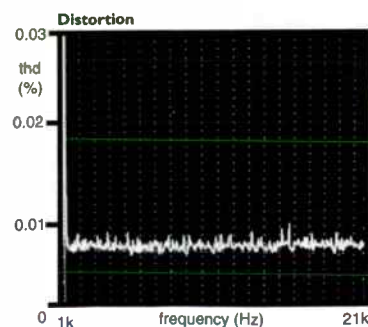
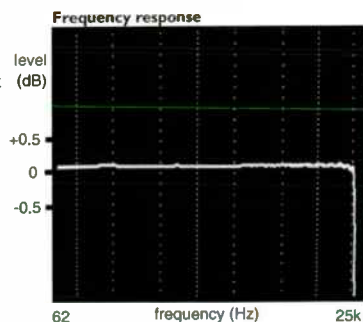
Channel separation was high right across the audio band. Noise was low, but this was probably due to muting in view of the slightly raised noise floor in our distortion analysis.

Output was a normal 2V.

The T-531 offers a good enough set of results as a CD player, even if it doesn't quite match the best. **NK**

Frequency response 4Hz - 21.25kHz

	left	right
Distortion		
-6dB	0.008	0.009
-30dB	0.03	0.033
-60dB	0.886	0.9
-90	37	36
Separation	left	right
1kHz	100	101
20kHz	74	74
Noise		-114dB
with emphasis		-114dB
Dynamic range		107dB
Output		2.04V



World Verdict



Brilliant value DVD/CD hybrid with loads of useful features and a warm, smooth and musical sound.



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email: info@creekaudio.co.uk internet: www.creekaudio.co.uk

ALL ROUND GEMS

The 8.3 is the big boy of the new Diamond series from the re-vamped Wharfedale brand. Dominic Todd discovers whether this floorstander is as class leading as its smaller siblings.

Wharfedale appear to be going through something of a renaissance of late. First we had the Pi-range, whose transparency of sound proved something of a revelation after years of not overly successful efforts from the former stalwart of the British 'speaker industry. Later in 2001 came the new Diamond 8 range. It's a range that, with the smaller 8.1 and 8.2, has already been well received within these pages. Now it's the turn of the biggest, so far, Diamond geezas of them all, the 8.3.

Lifting them out of the box, and almost breaking my back in the process, led me to believe that either these 'speakers had been seriously well built, or had cunningly been sand filled by Wharfedale. It turned out to be the later, yet brief tests without the sand showed just what a difference it can make.

As well as being sand fillable, the 8.3s are also bi-wirable, and feature a small plinth and MDF cabinets of marginal thickness with limited bracing. Pretty much text book stuff for a £200 floorstander. Rather more impressive are the good quality drive units. The silk dome tweeter and Kevlar woofer really wouldn't look out of place on a 'speaker costing twice as much. If only the same could be said for the rest of the finish. Still, for this price, something has to give and I'd rather have a dubious finish

and decent drive units rather than vice versa, any day.

In terms of price, the Wharfedales have plenty to contend with here. Favourite floorstanders of mine are the Mission M73s and Eltax Liberty 5+s, whilst one shouldn't rule out Tannoy's R1s either. All three cost exactly the same as the Wharfedales.

Using my usual system, Nelly Furtado's, 'Turn off the light', got proceedings underway. Just as I'd noticed with Wharfedale's previous Pi-range, the 8.3s immediately struck me with their excellent vocal reproduction. For a 'speaker of this price, the articulation and projection of vocals was extremely impressive. The resolution of guitar was equally fine, with real delicacy shown, again unusual from any speaker of this price.

Less good was a certain amount of congestion in the upper-bass response, which had the effect of spoiling the timing. It became clear at this point as to why Wharfedale had filled the 'speakers with sand, as without the ballast this aspect was emphasised. Ultimate bass response was also a little curtailed, in comparison with either the M73s or Liberty 5+s. Yet, by most £200 'speakers standards, the overall balance of sound was pleasingly full bodied.

'Les Jours Tristes', by Neil



Hannon and featuring in the film, *Amelie*, showed the Wharfedales in a very favourable light. It features an ensemble of acoustic instruments culminating in a rather busy mix. Crucially the 8.3s had little trouble in separating the instruments out, or in portraying their varying textures of sound. There was wonderful string definition from both banjo and mandolins, where I could almost trace the players' fingers along the strings.

Again the bass was a little 'shut in', which affected the 'speakers imaging somewhat. As the track became more complex, they did miss

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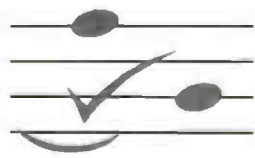
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The Right Note

Music in the home



BATH

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out on a few subtleties such as cymbal decay yet, overall, the 8.3s kept a good grip on the piece. My only real concern here was that with harsh ancillaries they could just overstep the mark from detailed to over bright.

This type of 'speaker is often bought to kick out bass lines from dusk 'til dawn. Hence, I loaded The Brand New Heavies, 'Shelter' into the CD player to see how they'd fair. In truth, whilst the dynamic range was more than fair, it did rather lack weight and authority. Attributes which the rivalling Mission and Eltax have by the bucket load. Yet the 8.3s have other attributes. Their transparent treble picked up nuances in the deliberately distorted vocals that most rivals would gloss over. The balance was also smooth and coherent, just not especially exciting.

Ian Shaw's 'Ruby' was more the Wharfedale's bag. Shaw's vocals positively leapt from the 'speakers possessing great definition and presence. Occasionally, such as the treble's fine transparency, it could sound just a little detached from the upper mid-band, yet overall the sound remained cohesive and very much together.

In summary, these 'speakers encapsulate the best features of both



emaciated with large scale and bass rich music. Their imaging is fine also.

Whilst the 8.3s are generally smooth and cohesive, they will occasionally surprise with a sense that the treble has become slightly detached from the rest of the mix. Perhaps of more concern is the lack of deep bass weight. Whilst I'm happy for this path to be taken with budget 'speakers, there will be some potential buyers who'll demand more bass.

Taking everything into account then, the Wharfedale 8.3s have some pretty impressive qualities, and are well worth adding to the auditioning list. What they lose to rivals in some areas they more than make up for in others.

budget stand mounts - speed, transparency and fine imaging - with those of budget floorstanders - bass weight and dynamic contrast.

In terms of vocal reproduction and delicate instrumental timbre, the 8.3s match or exceed the best at this price, regardless of size. They also have just enough grunt not to sound

Wharfedale Diamonds 8.3 £199.00

Wharfedale International Ltd.
IAG House, Sovereign Court
Ermine Business Park
Huntingdon
Cambs, PE29 6XU
Tel: 01480 431767
Web: www.wharfedale.co.uk

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

The floorstanding Diamond 8.3 is sand filled for stability and suppression of box resonance. This will give it stronger bass, with more attack. Bass will also be boosted by a lift in response from 80Hz - 125Hz, which raises output by no less than +5dB relative to the mid-band. It is quite a large bass boost and will give the Diamond 8.3 a noticeably bass-emphasised balance.

Forward output from the bass driver reaches down to 40Hz (-6dB), before the port takes over. The port has a fairly limited effect, the impedance curve suggests, but extends output down to 25Hz or so. It looks like Wharfedale have decided to ensure this 'speaker has a powerful bottom end.

Although further up the band the 8.3 is a bit bumpy in its frequency response, as our third-octave analysis shows, it basically maintains a

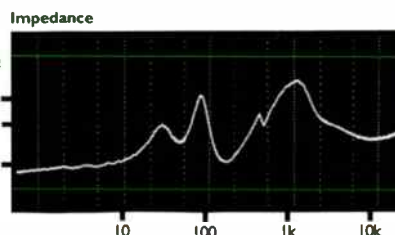
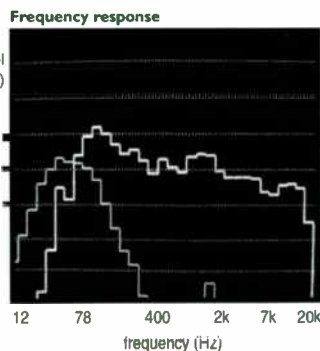
reasonably even balance right up to 16kHz, albeit a slow fall in overall output meaning the sound will have a warm balance.

A broad peak around 1.25kHz, where there is also a peak in port output, may indicate the presence of some colouration. It could possibly add a little brightness or similar, especially to violins.

As is common these days, Wharfedale use a 4ohm bass driver for maximum voltage sensitivity, allied to an 8ohm tweeter, giving a 6ohm overall impedance, which is exactly what we measured. There is some reactance in the load and it will draw current, so a hefty amplifier would help. However, the 8.3 goes loud enough from one nominal watt of input, delivering 87dB.

The Wharfedale 8.3 has been balanced to have big bass

and a generally smooth, warm sound. It should have good detail and innocuous treble. I suspect it will have strong appeal. **NK**



World Verdict

A touch more cohesive and sophisticated than rivals, with a very revealing treble. Some may wish for deeper bass but the 8.3s are up there with the best at the price.

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Part exchanged and ex-dem clearance.

Digital

	Sale	New
Sugden Masterclass CD - new - boxed	£1990	£2500
Helios Model CD2i - new	£890	£1200
Helios Model CD3i - ex-dem	£690	£900
Wadia 860x Ex Dem - boxed	£4950	£8000

Analogue

Nottingham Analogue 'Foot' - 12" carbon fibre tonearm - new	£700	£1100
Nottingham Analogue Space Deck - with SME arm mount	£650	£850
Helios Cyalene - tonearm	£590	£1350
Hadcock GH228 Super - 9" tonearm - nearly new	£440	£640

Loudspeakers

Living Voice Auditorium - Hi-Fi Choice 'Best Buy'		
2 pairs - Walnut - ex-dem	£1150	£1500
Cadence DS	£750	£1750
Kilpash LaScala Black	£1750	£3500
Quad ELS63 - fully reconditioned by Quad	£1100	£3000
Quad ELS63 - fully reconditioned by Quad	£900	£3000

Amplifiers

Border Patrol 300B SE - with new Western Electric valves.		
Light Oak - the best SE available - ex-dem	£3750	£4500
Canary Audio 301 - 24 watts stereo power amp with 2 matched pair Western Electric 300B - fabulous	£3900	£5200
Art Audio Concerto - integrated 40 Watts Class A. V.good	£1500	£2650
Joule Electra 2 box phono pre-amp	£800	£2000
Art Audio VPS - valve line pre-amp	£600	£1400
Sugden A21 - integrated (line only) ex-dem - mint condition	£750	£900
Musical Fidelity A1000 - 'super pre main' class A	£850	£1800
Cary '2A3' 7 watt power amp. 1992	£850	
Cary 5500 Line pre-amp. 1992	£550	
Unison Mystery One PR+	£950	£1750
Tube Technology MAC phono pre-amp. Fully refurbished by manufacturer. Including Hovland film and foil capacitors.	£900	£1400
Tube Technology line pre-amp with separate power supply. Fully refurbished by manufacturer.	£850	£1450

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WHAT HI-FI?

extract from June 1999
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THREE OF A KIND

Paying £150-plus for cable means it should deliver the goods. Simon Pope listens to three interconnects at the top end of the scale - will they deliver?



Origin Live Laminar Flow Reference £149/metre



John Dory Hi-Fi Silver Foil £200/metre



Neotech NA-12165 £425/metre

This is top dog in the Origin Live pack of three! It features a two core braided sheath, like the £85 Ultra, but has a different configuration of stranded conductors. The high quality phono plugs claim to have twice the conductivity of gold plated brass. The plugs are of good build quality but don't resemble Volvo spark plugs and the outer sheath is made from black PVC. Direction is discerned by the plugs on the source end being double banded.

Victoria's Spanish renaissance choral polyphony sounded open and intricate through the Reference, with voices well blended yet detailed. A good sense of acoustic ambience was also present, creating a fine resonant soundstage. With the hypnotic of Miles Davis's 'Kind Of Blue' the upper frequencies were nicely open and smooth and detail in the piano of Bill Evans was superb.

A good buy at the price, the Ultra may not have the Boa like dimensions of the Neotech but your money is spent here on sound quality only - it's a fuss free sound that will suit most set-ups, from midprice to high-end. It doesn't quite have the organic coherence of, say, Chord Company's Chorus at £200 but it picks up oodles of detail and creates space in recordings.

Origin Live
Tel: 02380 442183
www.originlive.co.uk

As anglers and gourmets will know this company is curiously named after a rather tasty fish, as opposed to the founder of the company (one hopes for his sake!). Both products available (analogue and digital interconnects) are designed by Allen Wright, the author of the Super Cables Cook Book. The analogue pair reviewed here now come with the acclaimed Neutrik Profi RCA plugs as standard. Construction is 99.99% pure silver foils incorporating a Teflon insulator, plus the addition of Kynar. The silver foils measure 3mm x 0.05mm which makes the cable quite fragile, so they should be handled with care.

However, the gentle handling pays off, as these are a real surprise. They deliver a true high-end neutral sound which is often the trait of much more expensive designs. Choral music was wonderfully natural and open, with perhaps a tad of emphasis on the upper frequencies, in the Nordost mould. The rest of the sound was beautifully open and balanced, with great insight and clarity. Miles Davis's Kind Of Blue benefited from this openness and sounded intimate and natural, with good speed and rhythm. These newcomers are very competent and they offer much - you could do a lot worse than to catch this particular fish.

John Dory Hi-Fi
Tel: 01282 867819
www.jdhifi.co.uk

These Neotech interconnects resemble a chunky design in the Monster/top-end Kimber mould, complete with locking plugs and plenty of girth. However, they actually originate from the Electric Wire & Cable company in Taiwan. The 12165 is a symmetrical type interconnect which employs a single crystal, pure silver solid conductor, between which are found hollow tubes. These are wrapped by PTFE tape, Mylar, nylon braid, a double shield of aluminium foil and a PVC jacket - a list that resembles a breakfast order for an alien in a US diner!

Sound-wise the Neotechs are full and beefy. This tended to suit Miles Davis better than choral music, which favours the more neutral sound. That's not to say the Neotechs are a disappointment, they are rich and powerful sounding, with good bass response and a smooth treble which never grates. The choir's voices had an impressive cohesion that sounded like a genuine body of sound which gave a good organic approach to reproduction. 'Kind Of Blue' sounded warm and fluid, with good presence and timing. These are very good, well constructed cables but are also on the hefty side when it comes to price - similar sounds can be gleaned for less. ■ ▲

Audiocom
Tel: 01646 685601
www.audiocom-uk.com

CLASSIC CUTS

They'd come a long way since Andy Giles encountered them in Walthamstow – but **GOATS HEAD SOUP?** Just what were the Rolling Stones on in 1973?

At the Assembly Halls, Walthamstow, in September 1963, I shared an alarmingly large joint with Keith Richard, who, subsequent to a few puffs, announced that after one album The Rolling Stones would retire. That first album emerged under a year later and – the rest is history. The fact that Keith got it slightly wrong is of little interest here – and just how many albums the Stones have made is anyone's guess.

Whatever, there were some good ones, some weird ones (did any of you catch 'Between the Buttons' in 1967?), some downright bad ones – and some gems. The 1973 offering - 'Goats Head Soup' was one such gem.

The album was recorded amid an absolute flurry of publicity at Byron Lee's Dynamic Sound Studios in Kingston, Jamaica and was always surrounded in controversy. At one end of the raging hullabaloo that surrounded its delayed release, was the perceptible incongruity of the schmaltzy 'Angie', with Keith Richard later granting that the worldwide success of the song as a single backfired and almost overshadowed the album from whence it came.

Meanwhile at 75 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, Ahmet Ertegun reached for the smelling salts and the phone number of the company lawyer when he heard the test pressing of 'Star***er'. Immediately, both Ertegun and Atlantic Records, who distributed the Stones products, were adamant - they didn't want that song on the album at any price.

Even though Mick Jagger insisted that 'It's our label', Atlantic argued that they might be arrested for trading pornography! They suggested that, three things were decidedly dodgy. First, not surprisingly, the title; secondly, a rather explicit reference in

the second verse to, er, feminine freshness and in the third and final verse, the line concerning a nameless groupie 'giving head to Steve McQueen', adding that they were frightened in case the actor called in his lawyers. Jagger refused to budge and eventually a compromise was reached. The title was changed to 'Star Star', a sloppy over-dub (US copies only) amusingly failed to remove the word 'pussy' and an undertaking was secured from a somewhat bemused Steve McQueen that he wouldn't sue. It was well worth the battle because Richard jams his guitar firmly between his knees and pulls out a brash boogie while Mick drools out the definitive groupie paeon. Pure Stones outrage.

But, amid all the confusion, at the centre of the controversy there was still an album; one that serves as a relaxed exercise in the fundamental deployment of rhythm and sound - those two basic ingredients that initially attract the listener to any record before the lyrics slip into focus.

The first four tracks are classic examples of the Stones moving carefully into slightly new territory. 'Dancing With Mr D' and 'Doo Doo Doo Doo Doo (Heartbreaker)' stand out in their continuing search for rich eclectic rhythms. The former trips the light fantastic with the Grim Reaper while the latter is an angry street- corner indictment of the American way of death with trigger-happy cops and doomed sub-teen junkies - which rises with intensity with the introduction of a sweeping Jim Price horn arrangement. Aside from the swirling strings that adorn the Jaggeresque impression of California dreaming on 'Winter' and the oddly neo-psychedelic 'Can You



Hear The Music', an austere aura of controlled lethargy prevails throughout most of the album. Take Richard's country concussed song of experience 'Comin' Down Again', Jagger's knockabout piano pumping on the 'Hide Your Love' studio jam and the revealing '100 Years Ago' with the line 'Don't you think it's sometimes wise -not to grow up!'

'Goats Head Soup is the only adequate representation of what we are because it's our latest effort,' admitted Mick Taylor. 'My favourite Stones album is Beggars Banquet and I didn't even play on it.' While Charlie Gillett pointed out that, according to the Theory of Relativity, 'a record is as good as other contemporary records allow it to be. And the only comparable rock in' groove records being made today, produced by Willie Mitchell in Memphis (Al Green, Otis Clay, Ann Peebles), do not match the relaxed power of all the tracks on Side One of Goats Head Soup.'

When Keith Richard saw how photographer David Bailey had transmogrified him into a death-mask on the sleeve, he remarked: 'Pretty grotesque innit! I think most people use the word 'charred' to describe it'. Not surprising. This record is ablaze from start to finish. ■ ▲

Rolling Stones, Goats Head Soup. Original recording on Rolling Stones COC 59101.

HI-FI WORLD'S

GREAT COMPETITION GIVEAWAY

WIN A SUPERB CREEK CD 53 CD PLAYER IN OUR NEW YEAR COMPETITION

Another Christmas is over and you have yet another dozen ill fitting socks of dubious hue to add to the pile of unwanted gifts in the attic. However, Christmas isn't necessarily over if you're reading this, as you can enter our February competition and get delivery of a £1200 CD player, courtesy of Creek Audio, which can take pride of place in your home.

Creek Audio Limited was started back in 1982 by Michael Creek with the view to fulfil the requirements of audiophiles on a budget by offering a range of well designed, quality components at a sensible price. Over the past nineteen years the company have forged themselves a successful business supplying hi-fi to people from all walks of life seeking and achieving the common goal of value for money.

In many ways Creek are unsung heroes of the British hi-fi scene. Without lavish advertising the company have gained a worldwide reputation for quality, with strong sales in the USA, for example. Recently the company acquired Epos, the respected loudspeaker name, and continues to develop and produce new Epos products along with Creek electronics.

Products both past and present range from accessory-like components such as the brilliant value OBH-12 passive preamp and OBH 8/9 moving magnet and moving coil phono stages, through the '43' midprice range of amps and source players, and up to the new high end '53' range of products.

Each range offers fine musical performance at a competitive price. Over the years we've reviewed most of Creek's products and always found them impressive in all aspects of their design at the price point - they often give a performance that exceeds rivals, and the latest top of the range CD player is no exception.



The 53 range is part of a concerted effort by Creek Audio to produce a range of products with high end sound quality, at an affordable price point.

With the development of SACD and DVD-A Creek decided to produce a statement product that will produce the best sound quality from existing CD collections, the result of which is the CD53. It took well over a year of development and research before this player was released. It features a Philips transport along with customised Creek software, an ultra-low jitter master clock and waveform shaping for maximum signal retrieval. There's also the added bonus of a professional standard balanced audio output as an alternative to the normal unbalanced phono outputs.

When we reviewed the CD53 back in our November issue it impressed us with every aspect of its performance. David Price wrote of its "beautifully natural, organic sound and exquisite sense of timing". He summarised his review thus: "A tremendously evocative silver disc spinner with an impressive ability to transcend the technical facets of a recording and just get on with the

music... a truly fine, musical performer". You can't argue with that can you?

The winner of this month's competition will find a CD53 on the way to them. Entering couldn't be easier. Simply answer the questions below on a postcard (**small postcards only please**) and send it to the address below by January 31st. The first correct answer picked out of our very large hat will be the lucky winner. ■ ▲

Hi-Fi & Computer Audio World Competition rules and conditions of entry

1. Only one entry per house hold.
2. Multiple entries will be automatically disqualified.
3. Purchase of the magazine is not a pre-condition of entry.
4. No correspondence will be entered into.
5. The Editor's decision is final.
6. No employees of Audio Publishing Limited, or of any companies associated with the production or distribution of the prizes may enter.

Competition Questions

[1] Who was the founder of Creek Audio

- [a] Michael Creek
- [b] David Creek
- [c] John Dawson
- [d] Dawson's Creek

[2] In which year was the company founded?

- [a] 1981
- [b] 1882
- [c] 1980
- [d] 1982

[3] Which loud-speaker company did Creek acquire?

- [a] Spendor
- [b] Wharfedale
- [c] Tannoy
- [d] Epos

[4] What transport does the CD53 use?

- [a] Sony
- [b] Philips
- [c] Toshiba
- [d] The Tube

February Competition
Hi-Fi World Magazine
Unit G4 IMEX House
The Park Business
Centre
Kilburn Park Rd.
London NW6 5LF

CONGRATULATIONS!

...to Mr. A Cann of Oakham, Rutland, the winner of our December competition. A Philips SACD/DVD-V/CD player is on its way to you!

THE NAIM GAME

Hi-Fi World visited Naim's Salisbury HQ to get the latest news and views from the audio stalwarts. David Price reports. . .

Visiting Naim Audio's Salisbury factory was an experience not to forget. Any British hi-fi nut who's followed the scene for over a decade will have the company's design ethos indelibly stamped deep into their psyche. So famous is it, that it's very hard not to know at least something about Naim's products, philosophy and history.

As a gauge to the company's significance, think of another successful manufacturer, of roughly similar age, size and/or niche - can you say the same about Meridian or Musical Fidelity, for example? No disrespect to Messrs Boothroyd, Stuart or Michaelson, but they have got on with the business of designing, manufacturing and selling hi-fi whereas Naim has done all this - and more. Like Linn, to which the Salisbury-based company was once famously allied, it has been spreading a philosophy too.

The cynics will say that Naim is just like any other brand, and that all its eccentricities (okay - here we go - unipivot tonearms, DIN plugs, weird speaker cables, exhaustive power supply options, no digital outputs on CD players, SNAIC shakers, non-biwireable speakers) are just clever marketing touches. Indeed even yours truly has to admit to having thought that treacherous thought too, at one time or another! But visiting the company and seeing what goes on dispelled any conspiracy theories I may have had in an instant. The frightening thing is - they really mean it, man!

The result is a range of charismatic (and rather eccentric) products which - more than almost any other brand - do what it says on



Paul Stephenson of Naim Audio at the Salisbury HQ

the label. It is unlikely that people who've spent the last forty years listening to Leak valve amplifiers will be hankering after a brace of Naim NAP250s - but for those wanting kick-ass dynamics and dizzying levels of grip, punch and control from their sources and amplification, Naim simply has no rivals.

Still, all the hocus-pocus stuff can be a bit annoying - why oh why can't a CDX be specified with a digital out for me to record CDs for the car? And does the ARO really have to have a non-adjustable headshell, with holes pre-drilled for just one cartridge? And couldn't we have at least one AUX input on the preamp using RCA phonos? Frankly, installing and using Naim gear can be a right pain in the posterior - but then again

it's worth it. Like a petulant classic car with a useless heater, twitchy handling on the limited and no boot space to speak of, you kind of grow to love its quirkiness.

Paul Stephenson is an unlikely but brilliant new supremo for the company - he's the yin to Julian Vereker's yang (or is it the other way round). Whereas Naim's founder was often an outspoken character, Paul is a bridge over troubled water. You get quietly spoken, reasoned and persuasive arguments. He knows Naim has had a bit of a hard time from the UK press, but he's happy to let the products speak for themselves, simple as that.

The most impressive part of editor Pope and my visit to Naim Audio was being whisked back to

Paul's pad for a quick listening session. No time for speech-making or grandiose presentations - he just hit the volume control and we were off (Naim devotees will know the equipment was already turned on, of course.!) The sound through those DBLs was awesome - power and punch without any of the Naim nasties you get if the system's mismatched or poorly set up (i.e. hardness and shrillness).

As PS ran through a range of CDs, including some very impressive recordings on Naim's own label, you couldn't help thinking, 'well, this is what all the fuss is about'. This towering, magnificent sound is why some people spend half their lifetimes working their way up the Naim upgrade ladder, why people buy all



Around 100 employees work at the Salisbury manufacturing plant



A mammoth stack of Naims past and present models adorn the listening rooms



Every ARO tonearm is built by hand

the special speaker cables, bespoke equipment supports and wretched stupid bloody DIN interconnects. If this is the result, I found myself thinking, I'd probably go through at all too.

Right now, Naim is moving into multichannel. They're not pious about stereo hi-fi - the philosophy is to get a good a sound as possible from all formats - which is why they still make the ARO! That's why you can expect to see some distinctly 'epoch-making' products from the Salisbury veterans in the not too distant future. Yes, I can exclusively reveal that Naim fans are set for the biggest surprise they've had in their lives since the company introduced its first remote control pre-amp. Watch this space unbelievers, because even you too could be - sooner or later - Naiming that tune! 🎧

PROBABLY THE BEST

NEW DEMONSTRATION ROOM NOW OPEN AT 12A SPRING GARDENS, NEWPORT PAGNELL,

KIT6550 VALVE INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER KIT & KAT6550 VALVE POWER AMPLIFIER KIT

£595



Ki6550
upgrade kit now
available £130

NEW KITS

£580



KaT6550
upgrade kit now
available £120

These are our new 6550 series amplifiers. A pure class A design providing 40 watts into a 8 ohm load, (available in a 4 ohm version if required) A truly high end design by Andy Grove, using Svetlana 6550Cs in push-pull (any 6550 or KT88 tube can be used with this amp). It features valve rectification (5U4) a choke pi filter power supply and is hard wired. Weighs 19kg with dimensions 390mm(w) x 330mm(d) x 190mm(h)

with valves or 220mm(h) with cage. Simon Pope says - "If you favour attack and rhythmic grip, together with a smoothness of sound that's incredibly easy to live with, the KiT6550 could well be the kit amp for you. The 6550 is one for those who like a valve sound married to the attack and clout of a good quality solid state design".

Kel84 VALVE INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER KIT

This is our brand new, low cost, beginner level amplifier kit. It features a pair of EL84 valves per channel in push-pull configuration. They give 15 watts into an 8 ohm load - plenty for medium sensitivity loudspeakers. The output transformers are Ultra Linear, keeping distortion down to a minimum. Up front the ECF80 input/phase splitter valve has an extremely smooth sound.

The Kel84 has very low hum, to solid-state standards. For simplicity the kit is built on a printed circuit board. A strong steel chassis is fronted by a 3mm anodised front panel and attractive chromed custom made knobs. There are five line level inputs, plus one monitor input, with a tape output included, all controlled from the front panel. The phono input sockets and 4mm banana socket speaker terminals are gold plated.

At rear is a mains switch, an IEC power input and an earth post. This kit is aimed at beginners. The instructions include pictures as well as diagrams, making them very easy to follow. At a UK price of £278.00 all inclusive you cannot ignore Kel84. Simon Pope says, "The quality that can be gleaned from this amp is a fine introduction to the joys of the valve sound. The Kel84 will highlight all the intricacies and depth of detail in your favourite recordings whilst retaining a warmth and fullness that is almost exclusive to pure valve amps and is rare at this price point."

Kel84 weighs 10kg. External dimensions with valves are 300mm(w) x 270mm(d) x 150mm(h).

£278



KAT88 VALVE POWER AMPLIFIER KIT

Here is the amazing KaT88. The circuit is similar to that of our popular KEL34 with a few changes to incorporate the Tesla, JJ branded KT88 power tetrode. This is a pure Class A push-pull design providing 36 watts into an 8ohm load. Andy Grove has come up with a gem of an output transformer (E/I). With the KT88 it offers a virtually unmatched result for a valve amplifier. Frequency response measures 11Hz to 75kHz, separation 71dB, noise 98dB, sensitivity 400mV and distortion 0.03%. "As valve amplifiers go, the KaT88 is one of the best measured performances I have ever come across", said Noel Keywood. Jon Marks said, "The KaT88 pulled a series of surprisingly fast, meaty basslines out of its trickbag when dealing with Suzanne Vega's Nine Objects Of Desire album. As if this wasn't enough, the mid and treble were nice too - cymbals had a deliciously natural, golden shimmer without sounding soft, and vocals were extremely transparent and crisply defined. KaT88 didn't hang around when it came to exploiting the virtues of its four output valves on numbers such as 'Leaves' and 'Suspect Sustain' from Cirrus' Land's End Jazz CD. Saxophone had a wonderfully smooth, realistic character, and acoustic guitar mixed speed with harmonic richness to very impressive effect. Asian Dub Foundation and Moloko showed no sign at all of the sluggish, woolly bottom-end and poorly-delineated bass beats that most valve amps are to blame for. Which makes the KaT88 an all-round, high-end bargain." Weight 16kg, external dimensions with valves are 330mm(w) x 300mm(d) x 190mm (h).

£468



KiT88
upgrade kit now
available £150

KaT88
upgrade kit now
available £140

DIY KITS IN THE WORLD

MILTON KEYNES, BUCKS MK16 0EE - CALL FOR DETAILS ON 01908 218836

ALL NEW SERIES II MODULAR PRE-AMP KIT

The PRE-II is a valve pre-amplifier with six inputs, tape monitor and two sets of output sockets. It utilises a high quality line driver transformer and x5 gain. The PHONO-II is a dedicated valve phono stage that incorporates a step-up transformer for MC users. Finally, PSU-II is a power supply unit that feeds both the PRE-II and PHONO-II.

Power Supply Unit (PSU-II)	£195.00
Pre-amplifier (PRE-II)	£195.00
Phono Stage (PHONO-II)	£110.00
Moving coil step-up transformer	£77.00
Passive pre-amplifier (PAS-II)	£215.00

NEW!



KAT34 VALVE POWER AMPLIFIER KIT & KIT34 VALVE INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER KIT

£480



**KAT34
upgrade kit now
available £120**

KIT34 is a 32 watt stereo valve integrated amplifier, featuring a pair of EL34s, in push-pull mode, per channel, plus an ECF80 pentode/triode as input/phase splitter. The power supply is valve rectified (2 x 5U4), using a heavy duty choke to achieve exceptional smoothing. The output transformers are 14% Ultra Linear tapped to keep distortion down to its lowest level and the kit is totally hard wired utilising three tag boards. It has five line level inputs, plus a tape-in and tape out, all controllable from the front.

NEW KITS

£495



**KIT34
upgrade kit now
available £130**

Simon Pope says, "This integrated bring together the best sonic virtues of our KIT88, kel34 and top of the range 300B PSE in an affordable package. The highlights of the sound are a deep and taut bass response, together with an open and highly detailed mid and high frequency response that only the best valve designs can achieve... a true valve classic!"
Weight 22kg, External dimensions with valves fitted - 390mm(w) x 360mm(d) x 210mm(h)

300B PSE MONOBLOC KIT

Our Parallel Single Ended amplifiers offer ultimate sound quality Each monobloc has two of the beautifully linear 300B directly heated triode in its output stage, producing 20 watts into an 8 ohm load. At the front we have a 6AU6 pentode and an ECC82 as the driver valve. This design utilises a 5U4 rectifier valve in the power supply, in combination with a 10H choke, giving an extremely quiet supply. Both mains and output transformers we E/I pattern.

For purists, feedback is switchable and the kit is totally hard-wired. For those that require valves we provide the superb Tesla 300Bs, Russian 5U4s and European 6AU6s & ECC82. Simon Pope says, "Not to put too fine a point on it, the sound these monoblocs create is among the finest that can be encountered in hi-fi." Our 300B PSE kit bears an affordable price of £875.00 (UK price) excluding valves. Each monobloc weighs 23kgs., external dimensions with valves: 25cm(w) x 38cm(h) x 22cm(d) per monobloc.

**300B PSU
upgrade kit now
available £150**

**£875
A pair**



KEL80 MONOBLOC AMPLIFIER KIT

Following the success of our budget KEL34 40watt kit amplifier, we have come up with a 'big brother' design. The output stage uses two pairs of TESLA EL34 pentodes in parallel-push-pull mode, allowing KEL80 to turn out 80 watts into an 8ohm load. Heading up the input stage we have the wonderfully linear Russian 6AU6 working into an American 5687 phase-splitter. KEL80's output transformers are 4ohm and 8ohm tapped. With an input sensitivity at around 380mV for full output, it will happily partner both passive and active pre-amplifiers. It is easy to assemble. Simon Pope says, "The proof of the pudding is in the eating and the KEL80 is a feast for the ears, with solid bass attack, lightning fast reactions, that emphasises musicality as well as power. At £649.00 a pair, a definite valve winner. Each monobloc weighs 12kgs., external dimensions with valves: 14cm(w) x 8cm(h) x 43.5cm(d).

**£649
A pair**



HD83 VALVE HEADPHONE AMPLIFIER KIT

The HD83 headphone amplifier is a beautifully simple design using Mullard ECL83 valves, a triode and power pentode housed in the same envelope. It works directly from any source, be it CD, tape, tuner etc., or from an amplifier's tape out or pre-amp out sockets. The circuit uses high specification E/I output transformers that will drive any headphone load from 16 ohms to over 300 ohms depending on how the secondaries are wired up. The HD82 is a single-ended design with the power pentode wired up in triode configuration for added sonic purity, and it is as quiet as a mouse. For sound quality Jon Marks says, "The bass is punchy and controlled without becoming artificial, while treble has the crispness of the best

solid-state, with the tonal purity, delicacy and speed associated with valves." External dimensions 18cm(w) x 30cm(l) x 8cm(h) weight 4kg.

£195



World Audio design

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KLS10 HIGH TECHNOLOGY COMPACT MONITOR

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

Drive Unit & Crossover kit **£433.00**
Drive Unit only **£394.00**



£433

KLS10 GOLD SUBWOOFER

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

Drive Unit & Crossover kit **£164.00**
Drive Unit only **£78.00**



£164

KLS3 GOLD MK II ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY 3 WAY LOUDSPEAKER

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

Drive Unit & Crossover kit **£633.00**
Drive Unit Pack **£495.00**



£633

Upgrade your KLS3s to Gold status. Includes latest oval gold dome piezo tweeter and all components.

for

£363

Mains transformers & Chokes

KIT6550/KAT6550 mains transformers
2 inch stack, 130mm(h)x120mm(w)x135mm(d) drop through fitting with zinc cap. Secondaries: 0V-240V 300mA, 3.15V-0V, 6A, 3.15V-0V-3.15V, 9A. Suitable for 120V & 240Vac operation

KEL84 mains transformer
1.5 inch stack, 90mm(h)x 80mm(w)x 95mm(d) drop through fitting with zinc cap. Secondaries: 0V-240V 300mA, 3.15V-0V-3.15V, 5.5A, suitable for 120/240V operation

KIT88/KAT88 mains toroidal transformer
120mm dia. x 60mm(h). Secondaries: 195V-0V-95V, 450mA/0V-27V, 100mA/3.15V-0V-3.15V, 9A, suitable for 120/240V operation

KIT34/KAT34/KIT6550/KAT6550 choke
1.25 inch stack, 65mm(h)x105mm(w) with fitting holes x 60mm(d), clamp fitting, 2.5 H, 350mA

300B PSE mains E/I transformer
130mm(h) x 95mm(w) x 115mm(d). drop through fitting with zinc cap. Secondaries: 380V-0V-380V, 180mA/150-0V-150V, 25mA/0V-5V, 1.2A/0V-5V, 1.2A/0V-5V, 3A/3.15V-0V-3.15V, 0.4A suitable for 120/240V operation

KEL80 mains toroidal transformer (encapsulated)
130mm dia. x 65mm(h). Secondaries: 195V-0V-195V, 390mA/0V-27V, 100mA/3.15V-0V-3.15V, 7.5A, suitable for 120/240V operation

HD83 mains toroidal transformer
80mm dia. x 35mm(h). Secondaries: 0V-165V, 75mA/3.15V-0V-3.15V, 1A, suitable for 120/240V operation

PSU-II mains toroidal transformer
80mm dia. x 35mm(h). Secondaries: 0V-270V, 60mA/0V-10V, 2A, suitable for 120/240V operation

TRANS1 mains toroidal transformer
95mm dia. x 50mm(h). Secondaries: 0V-370V, 150mA/0V-6.3V, 3.5A 300B E/I choke 65mm(h) x 70mm(d) x 80mm(w) open frame fitting, 10H, 180mA.

KEL84 E/I choke
0.5 inch stack, 40mm(h)x 35mm(d)x 70mm(w) clamp fitting, 1H, 250mA

PSU-II E/I
40mm(h) x 35mm(d) x 70mm (w) clamp fitting, 15H, 20mA

KIT34/KAT34 mains transformer
2.5 inch stack, 120mm(h)x115mm(w)x95mm(d), drop through fitting with zinc cap. Secondaries 365V - 0V - 365V, 300mA/0V - 5V, 6A/3.15V - 0V - 3.15V, 7.5A. Suitable for 120/240V operation.

Output transformers

KIT6550/KAT6550 E/I 16% TAPPED UL push-pull output transformer 2 inch stack, 80mm (w) x 95mm(l) x 100mm(h), drop through fitting with zinc cap. Primary-secondary 4.5K, 16% UL tapped. Secondary 4 Ohm, pls specify on order. max output 45 watts, max current 180mA, valves, KT88, 6550 etc

KEL84 E/I Ultra Linear push-pull output transformer
1.25 inch stack, 76mm(h)x 65mm(w)x 76mm(d) Primary - secondary, 8K with 12.5% UL cap - 8ohms, max o/p-15watts, max current 150mA valves EL84 etc

KIT88/KAT88 E/I push-pull output transformer
80mm(w)x95mm(l)x100mm(h). Primary-secondary 10K - 8ohms, max o/p-40watts, max current-160mA valves-KT88, 6550, EL34

KIT34/KAT34 E/I 14% tapped Ultra Linear push-pull output transformer
2 inch stack, 80mm(w)x95mm(l)x100mm(h), drop through fitting with zinc cap. Primary-secondary 6.4K, 14% UL taps. Secondary 8ohm, max output 34watts, max current 150mA, valves EL34, 6L6, 6CA7

KEL80 E/I parallel-push-pull output transformer
95mm(w)x115mm(l)x133mm(h). Primary-secondary 4.6K - 8 & 4ohms, max o/p-80watts, max current-250mA valves-EL34, 5881, 6L6

HD83 E/I single ended output transformer
40mm(w)x50mm(l)x55mm(h). Primary-secondary 4K - 4 x 64ohms windings, max o/p-1watts, max current-25mA valves-ECL83 etc

Pre-II E/I driver transformer
80mm(w)x60mm(l)x65mm(h). 6:1 step down transformer, max current-10mA valves-6922 etc pre-amp stage

300B PSE E/I parallel single ended output transformer
130mm(h) x 95mm(w) x 115mm(d), drop through fitting with zinc cap. Primary 1K5 Secondary 8R, output .

Printed circuit boards

- KEL84 Printed Circuit Board 280mm(w) x 135mm(l) x 1.6mm(d).
- KIT88 KaT88 Printed Circuit Board 140mm(w) x 310mm(l) x 2.4mm(d).
- KEL34 Printed Circuit Board 140mm(w) x 310mm(l) x 2.4mm(d).
- KAT88 Printed Circuit Board (a pair) 120mm(w) x 215mm(l) x 2.4mm(d).
- HD83 Printed Circuit Board 140mm(w) x 160mm(l) x 1.6mm(d).
- PSU-II Printed Circuit Board 105mm(w) x 130mm(l) x 1.6mm(d).
- PRE-II Printed Circuit Board 105mm(w) x 130mm(l) x 1.6mm(d).
- PHONO-II Printed Circuit Board 105mm(w) x 130mm(l) x 1.6mm(d).



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 KaT6550 valve power amplifier kit (without valves)
 KaT 6550 upgrade kit
 KiT6550 valve integrated amplifier kit (with valves)
 KiT6550 valve integrated amplifier kit (without valves)
 KiT 6550 upgrade kit
 KaT34 valve power amplifier kit (with valves)
 KaT34 valve power amplifier kit (without valves)
 KaT34 upgrade kit
 KiT34 valve integrated amplifier kit (with valves)
 KiT34 valve integrated amplifier kit (without valves)
 KiT 34 upgrade kit
 Kel84 valve integrated amplifier kit (with valves)
 Kel84 valve integrated amplifier kit (without valves)
 Kel84 upgrade kit
 PSU II power supply unit module
 PRE II pre-amplifier module
 PHONO - II phono stage module (with valves)
 PAS II passive pre-amplifier module with 10K or 50K attenuator (pls specify)
 Moving Coil step up transformers
 KiT88 upgrade kit
 KaT88 Valve integrated amplifier kit (with valves)
 KaT88 Valve integrated amplifier kit (without valves)
 KaT88 upgrade kit
 HD83 Valve Headphone amplifier kit (with valves)
 Kel80 Valve Monobloc amplifier kit (with valves) - a pair
 Kel80 Valve Monobloc amplifier kit (without valves) - a pair
 300B PSE Valve Monobloc amplifier kit (with valves) - a pair
 300B PSE Valve Monobloc amplifier kit (without valves) - a pair
 300B PSE Upgrade Kit - a pair

order No.

KaT6550 (with valves)
 KaT6550 (without valves)
 KaT 6550 upgrade
 KiT6550 (with valves)
 KiT6550 (without valves)
 KiT 6550 upgrade
 KaT34 (with valves)
 KaT34 (without valves)
 KaT 34 upgrade
 KiT34 (with valves)
 KiT34 (without valves)
 KiT 34 upgrade
 Kel84 (with valves)
 Kel84 (without valves)
 Kel84 upgrade
 PSU - II
 PRE - II
 PHONO II
 PAS II
 MC - step up (pair)
 KiT88 upgrade
 KaT88 (with valves)
 KaT88 (without valves)
 KaT88 upgrade
 KaT88 upgrade
 HD83 (with valves)
 Kel80 (with valves)
 Kel80 (without valves)
 300B PSE (with valves)
 300B PSE (no valves)
 300B PSE upgrade kit

qty

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 £130.00
 £480.00
 £415.00
 £120.00
 £495.00
 £430.00
 £130.00
 £278.00
 £248.00
 £100.00
 £195.00
 £195.00
 £110.00
 £215.00
 £77.00
 £150.00
 £468.00
 £341.00
 £140.00
 £195.00
 £149.00
 £372.00
 £1177.00
 £875.00
 £150.00

overseas

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 £105.00
 £510.00
 £395.00
 £110.00
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 £354.00
 £105.00
 £420.00
 £365.00
 £110.00
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 £394.00
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 £78.00
 £164.00

overseas

(exc. vat & carriage)
 £422.00
 £539.00
 £336.00
 £369.00
 £67.00
 £140.00

parts description

KiT/KaT6550 mains transformer
 KiT34 mains transformer
 Kel84 E/I mains transformer
 KiT88/KaT88 mains toroidal transformer
 Kel80 mains toroidal transformer(encapsulated)
 HD83 mains toroidal transformer
 PSU-II mains toroidal transformer
 300B PSE E/I mains transformer
 KiT34 E/I choke
 Kel84 E/I choke
 KiT6550 choke
 300B PSE choke
 PSU-II E/I choke
 KiT34 E/I UL push pull output transformer
 KiT/KaT6550 E/I UL output transformer
 Kel84 E/I push-pull output transformer
 KiT88/KaT88 E/I push-pull output transformer
 Kel80 E/I parallel-push-pull output transformer
 HD83 E/I single ended output transformer
 Pre-II E/I driver transformer
 300B PSE E/I output transformer
 Kel84 Printed Circuit board
 KiT88/KaT88 Printed Circuit Board
 Kel34 Printed Circuit Board
 Kel80 Printed Circuit Board
 HD83 Printed Circuit Board
 PSU-II Printed Circuit Board
 PRE-II Printed Circuit Board
 PHONO-II Printed Circuit Board
 Tag board 2 x 16 connections (hard wiring)
 Alps blue audio grade 50K dual log potentiometer
 Alps blue audio grade 100K dual log potentiometer
 Stepped attenuator with resistor pack 10K of 50K (pls specify)
 LCR 22.5uF 440Vdc polypropylene capacitors
 Ansar 22.5uF 630Vdc polypropylene capacitors
 Jensen 0.47uF 630Vdc paper in oil capacitor
 Jensen 0.22uF 630Vdc paper in oil capacitor
 Jensen 0.22uF, 400V paper in oil capacitor
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 Black Gate 4700uF 16Vdc electrolytic
 Black Gate 100uF 100Vdc electrolytic
 Black Gate 470uF 16Vdc electrolytic
 Black Gate 1000uF, 16V electrolytic
 Black Gate 100uF, 50V electrolytic
 KiT88/KaT88 chassis
 650V safety gloves (a pair)
 6550/34 cage

order No.

6550 mains T
 KiT34 - mains T
 Kel84 - mains T
 88 - mains T
 Kel80 - mains T
 HD83 - mains T
 PSU-II - mains T
 300B - mains T (each)
 KiT34 - choke
 Kel84 - choke
 KiT6550 choke
 300B - choke
 PSU-choke
 34 - O/P T (pair)
 6550 O/P T 4ohm?/8ohm?(pair)
 Kel84 - O/P T (pair)
 88 - O/P T (pair)
 Kel80 - O/P T (pair)
 HD83 - O/P T (pair)
 PRE-II - driver T (pair)
 300B - O/P T (each)
 Kel84 - PCB
 88 - PCB
 Kel34 - PCB
 Kel80 - PCB(pair)
 HD83 - PCB
 PSU-II - PCB
 PRE-II - PCB
 PHONO-II - PCB
 TAG
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 ALPS - 100K
 Attenuator + resistor pack
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 ANSAR - 22.5U
 JEN - 0.47U
 JEN - 0.22U
 JEN - 0.22U, 400V
 BG - 220U
 BG - 4700U
 BG - 100U
 BG - 470U
 BG - 1000U16V
 BG - 100U50V
 88-CHAS
 SAFETY GLOVES
 34/6550 cage

qty

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 £83.00
 £83.00
 £39.00
 £39.00
 £130.00
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 £45.00
 £50.00
 £20.00
 £130.00
 £130.00
 £88.00
 £143.00
 £187.00
 £94.00
 £77.00
 £140.00
 £24.00
 £41.00
 £12.00
 £52.00
 £20.00
 £20.00
 £20.00
 £20.00
 £3.50
 £14.00
 £14.00
 £75.00
 £10.00
 £18.00
 £20.00
 £16.00
 £12.00
 £12.00
 £10.00
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 £8.00
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 £100.00
 £14.00
 £65.00

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 £71.00
 £71.00
 £34.00
 £34.00
 £111.00
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 £17.00
 £38.00
 £43.00
 £17.00
 £110.00
 £110.00
 £75.00
 £122.00
 £160.00
 £80.00
 £66.50
 £119.00
 £20.90
 £35.15
 £11.40
 £44.65
 £17.00
 £17.00
 £17.00
 £17.00
 £3.00
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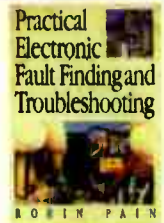
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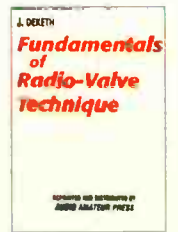
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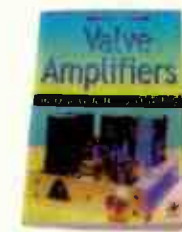
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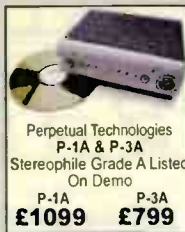
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Connoisseur Audio

There's gloom and doom in the music business at present, another loss from EMI making the headlines. As always the spectre of copying has been revived to explain everything. This time it's domestic CD recorders that are responsible for it all, according to one worried record business executive. Are people now copying CDs rather than buying them? Are CD sales in decline as a result?

I went to the British Phonographic Institute for their view on all this, which although partial – representing the music business – is nevertheless usually interesting for one reason or another. They report that in the third quarter (Q3) of 2001, meaning the months of July to September inclusively, overall sales revenue was down -4.2% on the previous year's Q3 figures – hence the doom and gloom. However, this single figure doesn't identify some strong trends that have had a serious impact on the figures. They're interesting to anyone who takes an interest in hi-fi and what the great British buying public are up to in aggregate.

Nothing is more final than the death of a format it seems. It is brutal too, if like me you have developed a small affection for some of our passing 'steam age' analogue technologies. And although not steam driven, the cassette is still from the 'steam age'. It was Philips solution to the problem of an easy-to-use tape recording system, launched in 1963, just as steam engines were being phased out of active service in Britain. Not everyone in the hi-fi business wanted to know when the humble pre-recorded cassette took over from the LP as Britain's number one music carrier, sales peaking at 98million in 1987, but it happened, believe it or not.

Modernity overtook the poor old cassette. Once people were exposed to the wonders of digital in the form of the CD, launched in 1983, they started to desert the cassette. Now, its sales are down to just below 1million, having dropped a massive 53% from last year. I was told long ago that market research had shown people just turn off from a technology, even when there's no

available alternative. They take up knitting instead I suppose. Once Britons decided the cassette was uncool, the digital cassette (DCC) was equally fated, by the way. Which brings me to the next surprise.

The MiniDisc was always marketed as being very cool by Sony. They pitched it as a fashion item for the young, not mentioning that really it was a high technology replacement for the cassette. Their advertising for it today is aimed at much the same audience as it was in 1991, when launched, and if a young audience is buying MD, then



dead.

I have to smile when I see the way the LP has bounced back from the

they're certainly not buying pre-recorded software. Sales are plummeting even faster than the pre-recorded cassette, now being listed as a paltry 100,000, no less than a 64% decline from last year.

MiniDisc is an eminently sensible medium in my view. It is small, durable, easy to use and has excellent sound quality. Japan apparently took to it, but America never did, and there ends the tale. In practice to accept MiniDisc into your life means changing all those CD players you own, in car, kitchen, bedroom and wherever to MiniDisc players. Looked at like this MiniDisc is just too expensive and this is one reason it never caught on.

I have to smile when I see the way the LP has bounced back from the dead, but is this an example of 'dead cat bounce'? OK, with pictures of turntables appearing on television regularly it's obvious that the LP has developed a new cool that no marketing man in his wildest dreams could ever have foreseen. But is it really going to last? Well, brace yourself. Year on year sales of 12in singles and LPs are UP, by 4.3% and 6% respectively. Annual sales of LPs now total 3million, quite a respectable figure. Even though Dance is behind this revival and the Ministry of Sound hasn't closed yet, I still find it hard to believe the cat

won't fall back to earth with a thud sometime soon.

Now onto the CD. In spite of the gloom about overall music sales, the Q3 figure for 2001 is still up on last year, albeit by a small +1.4%. So sales are not falling yet. Britons bought a massive 212 million CDs in the most recent twelve monthly period, rather contradicting any supposition that home copying is killing sales. It is the steep drop in singles and cassette sales that have affected the overall figures adversely.

Home taping never did kill music. Quite the reverse. At its peak in 1975 the LP sold 91.6 million units, followed by the pre-recorded cassette which peaked in 1989 at 83 million units. CD sales have exceeded both of them by a healthy margin. The BPI figures strongly suggest hi-fi is reducing down to the CD as our music carrier of the future, with LP given an honorary place in the Pantheon of formats we have known.

Music sales have increased steadily over the decades, in spite of all the feared threats. It isn't music sales that are changing so much as equipment sales, these figures suggest. ●



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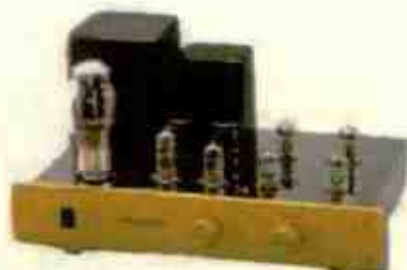
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It's sale time, again. This is one of the busiest times for hi-fi retailers across the nation. At the time of writing the lead up to Christmas has already proved busy, and traditionally brisk trade should continue throughout January.

It comes as little surprise to find DVD leading the way again. Last year saw prices fall to just over £100, yet this Christmas has seen the main retailers advertising players from less than £80. Perhaps more significant has been the fall in price of branded machines. Whereas last year you'd have needed close to £300 to lay your hands on a reputable branded machine, this year it's closer to £200. Expect the discounters to be offering Panasonic, Pioneer and Toshiba for less than £150 as the sale period commences. Rather like MiniDisc, I expect this to be the point where prices bottom out, although demand should remain strong for some time yet, especially with the advent of 'affordable' recordable DVD still some way off.

With all the attention and some might say hype, which DVD has been attracting over the season, it's easy to overlook other formats. One such format that finally appears to be making inroads is Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB). It's been some time now since Arcam launched the first DAB tuner and until recently take up has been sluggish, to say the least. Yet from the autumn of 2001, the format seems to have finally begun to gather momentum. The reason is simple: price. From the beginning of the year VideoLogic launched a sub £300 receiver. This was under cut in the summer with the arrival of the £250 Lektropack. Now DAB tuners are finally reaching the crucial £200 mark. Tellingly, the second best selling tuner in the run up to Christmas turned out to be the VideoLogic, just being pipped to the number one spot by Denon's stalwart TU-260. There are now several respected manufacturers on the brink of launching receivers between £150-£200. Hence, in terms of price, DAB has finally met the mark.

Yet there's more than simply price

that DAB needs on its side if it is to succeed. Reception is a key factor. Until recently, the BBC reported national coverage to be at 60%. Although they admitted these to be rather conservative figures, it still left much of the nation left out. Furthermore, no new transmitters were being built.

However, at the close of 2001, building had restarted and the coverage figure now stands at 65%. The plans are to have 80% of the population covered by 2003, rising to 85% by early 2004. If this still sounds rather some way away, cast your mind back to the introduction

” The majority of DVD players end up sitting beneath the TV, with the hi-fi being a separate entity altogether.

of Nicam stereo which took the best part of eight years to be rolled out.

More promotion of Digital comes from the promise of five new national services to be offered by the BBC over the course of the year. Local radio station licenses are also finally starting to be rolled out. So, with the combination of affordable prices, improving coverage and new services, I wouldn't be surprised to see DAB becoming the big hit of the year. Putting things into perspective, however, it's still unlikely to challenge DVD, or even CD in terms of boxes out the door.

Speaking of CD, sales have fallen slightly over the past year. There's no doubt that some sales have been lost to DVD, yet not as great an amount as some may have predicted. For the most part, those serious about their music are still buying separate CD players. The majority of DVD players end up sitting beneath the TV, with the hi-fi being a separate entity altogether. Sony have made a great push towards SACD over the season but, as yet, this has still really yet to capture the public's imagination. Just as DAB still needs better coverage, so SACD needs a healthier catalogue of discs before it can really take off.

The status quo regarding recordable formats remains much as before. Cassette tape continues its decline, with many manufacturers now

ignoring the format altogether, or relegating it to the back pages of the catalogue more usually occupied by a plastic turntable or two.

MiniDisc got a shot in the arm last year, thanks to Sony's Long Play system, but it is difficult to see how it will do anything but decline throughout this year. MiniDisc's trump card is portability, making it popular with students, musicians and commuters countrywide.

CDR hasn't been as popular as we thought. Even though players are now available for £150, sales have remained fairly steady. This is likely due to the fact that people record using their PCs, rather than any failing with the format itself. I also sense that those in the know are waiting to see what happens in terms of hard drive recording before selecting a particular recording format.

In summary - and with the crystal ball as help - I expect DVD sales to remain strong through the year, whilst CD player and MiniDisc sales decline slightly. CD recorders and vinyl will probably remain static, but analogue radio will really start feeling the pressure towards the end of the year. Yet, in the words of Murray Walker, anything can happen and anything does happen. Happy New Year. ●



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Never let it be forgotten - hi-fi is about music and the enjoyment thereof. But wouldn't we be kidding ourselves if we didn't rather like 'the whole smash' - all the extra bits that get bolted onto the deal?

Think, for example, of cars. These days, there are probably few better ways - for sporting drivers at least - of getting from A to B in something like, say, a Subaru Impreza Turbo. Any pocket rocket like this, with oodles of horsepower, 4WD, traction control and ABS will catapult you to the mother in law in less time than you could bear to think.

But what of the driving experience? Awesomely fast and grippy - yes - but is it really as much fun as your first Mini?

When we look to buy products - be it hi-fi, cars, motorbikes, or whatever - its strict ability to do the job simply isn't the whole story. To wit, there's something profoundly unsatisfying about a modern CD player that you switch on and just play. The sound certainly isn't bad - you can bet your bottom dollar that the likes of a Marantz CD6000OSE (or similar) would outperform the vast majority of turntables you had in your formative years in almost (and I stress 'almost') every respect. But somehow there's something curiously unfulfilling about owning and using it.

Back in the old days, your system's sound depended very much on your level of expertise in setting it up. If you blithely stuck your Dual CS505 deck on the floor it would sound appalling. You had to get into the hows and whys of the deck for it to give of its best - everything from cartridge selection, tracking weight and choice of mat (was that a Spectra, GA or Rega felt mat) informed how tight your bass would be, or how sparkling your highs.

Now though, we live in a 'plug and play' society. Bill Gates can be thanked for this phrase, as it describes - in a nutshell - where the whole of modern life is heading. It implies a hermetically sealed, idiot-proof world which requires absolutely no insight or understanding of the things (scientific, physical processes) going on around

you. It's nice and easy. The tragic thing is, you get out of life what you put in - or not much in this case.

Nowadays, if you buy three boxes and plug them in, you'll get a competent sound; one that many take to be 'hi-fi' and therefore good enough to tick off from the list of things they aspire to. Twenty years ago, not only did you have to buy these components, but understand them and laboriously (and lovingly) set them up too.

In 1983, my Rega 3 tracked its R100 cartridge at 1.75g with 1.5g of bias dialled in, on a light coffee table

“ Hi-fi, cars and bikes - consumer goods en masse - have now had the glitches designed out. They've evolved so much that now they miss the point.

that was meticulously levelled. It sounded best at over 20 degrees centigrade and when the stylus had played a full side. Now, the modern equivalent - the brilliant Rega Planet 2000 just sounds great, erm, all the time, anywhere.

My point is that the plug and play society has robbed us. It's made life easier, more casual. It's reduced and rubbished the noble idea of specialisation (something still alive and well in Japan, complete with its own 'otaku' subculture, thankfully). It's an easy come, easy go, undemanding approach to life that somehow dulls the mind and anaesthetises everyone it encroaches upon. It also encourages waste: to improve a system throw it away and buy a new one, rather than upgrade or modify.

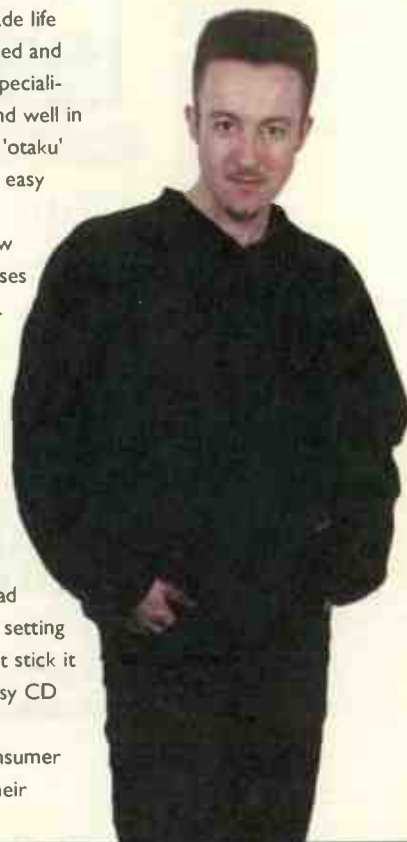
Want to make a perfect music compilation? Once, only a Nakamichi would do - plus about half an hour of head cleaning, demagnetising, level setting and bias calibration. Now, just stick it into your PC and click on 'Easy CD Creator'.

Hi-fi, cars and bikes - consumer goods en masse - have had their

glitches designed out. They've evolved so much that now they miss the point. As well as a product's ability to fulfil its primary function (i.e. travelling, playing music etc.), there are a welter of other things we shouldn't forget. Ergonomics, the way the 'user' connects with the machine and the media, styling, the historical importance of the brand, etc.

All these things add to the overall experience - not just of performing the primary function, but of being alive. That's why some old blokes still blat around on equally old BSAs, when there's a Honda that's a thousand times better in every respect 'on paper', they could just as easily be riding.

Likewise, that's why a lot of us are still seduced by the weird and the wonderful in hi-fi's historical canon - from the severely compromised but utterly irresistible sound of old valve amps to the madcap designs of Lecson, Gale and Transcriptors et al. What a shame that we can never go back. ●



David Price

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SWEET 16

Naim's CDS was one of the company's seminal early adventures in digital audio. David Price listens to this sixteen-bit special.

Funny isn't it? This time ten years ago, CD player manufacturers were scrambling to get their first 'Bitstream' digital disc spinners out into the shops. Philips had pipped everyone to the post with its famous CD850/II, and the rest, as they say, is history. All of a sudden, multi-bit CD players and DACs were about as fashionable as your little sister's old Bros singles.

All was not what it seemed though. While Marantz fast began to clean up in the budget market with its Bitstream CD52SE, the upper echelons of audio proved less eager to jump onto the good ship 'One Bit'. There were two reasons for this - the first was simply why spoil a winning formula? If you'd spent two years honing your multibit based masterpiece, why go back to the drawing board and do it all again simply in order to write that magic word 'Bitstream' on your player's front panel? The second reason was that some tortured souls actually believed multibit sounded better - or should we say 'more musical' - anyway.

Naim's CDS was born from this idea. It was not a trendy piece of cutting edge high tech but it sure as hell sounded good. Launched in 1991, the CDS wasn't a conventional two box player like its rival Linn Karik/Numerik, but was split into CDS CD player and XPS power supply sections. This was because the company considered (and still does) that the separation of transport and DAC caused more problems than it solves. The biggest was jitter, which Naim characterised as causing increases in non-correlated distortion, lower resolution and inferior signal-to-noise ratios. True to form, the CDS also lacked a digital

output - heresy to a world full of ever-so-trendy high-end two-box players!

The CDS duly comprised a proprietary full width Naim box housing an XPS power supply, on top of which another box sat containing the CD player itself. Inside this were selected versions of the Philips TDA1541 Silver Crown multibit DAC chip, and another important part of the equation, a CDM-44 transport. Many designers still believe this to be the best and most suitable for high quality CD players. Naim did too, which is why they bought as many as they could get their hands on, in anticipation of the CDS's long and happy production run. The transport was augmented by a quality, top loading CD door arrangement and the famous Naim 'puck' which functioned much like an old record stabiliser weight of yore.

Needless to say, the player sounded superb, fast propelling itself into the realms of 'classic' CD players. Best characterised as a 'vinyl lover's delight', it offers incredible musicality and firecracker dynamics if properly set up. This isn't as easy as some, requiring careful levelling (just like a turntable), and clean discs and laser (Naim recommend the use of Bluetack for this purpose, interestingly).

Many believe the CDS to be the most natural 'music making' CD player around, describing it as akin to a good turntable. You get a rich, vivid, tactile sound that simply gushes forth from your loudspeakers, without giving so much as an inkling that it's a digital disc being spun. Listen hard and you'll hear that trademark 'brightly lit' upper mid band and a very slight fizzy



quality to the treble, but you'll be churlish in the extreme if you let this interfere with this CD spinner's deliciously musical sound.

Downsides? The CDS is a bit finicky sometimes. Like the vinyl turntables it emulates so well, it has more than a passing interest in the quality of the disc surface it's playing. This means meticulous care on your part if you aren't going to get all your silver frisbees sounding like remixes from MC Scratchy.

The CDSII arrived in 1997, loosing the multibit DACs and early transport. Heavily redesigned, it sounded quite different to the original - in some ways better, in others a little more polite. In many ways, the newer version is by far the more sensible option, but many love the original CDS for its character and vintage appeal. It's a deliciously musical little box (or two) of tricks, and many will want it for this reason alone. The good news is that there are more around second-hand than you'd think, the bad news is that they're expensive - and sellers can more or less name their own price, circa £700. ■ ▲

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BIG AUDIGY DYNAMITE

David Price tries out Creative Labs' latest and greatest computer audio tour de force, the SoundBlaster Audigy Platinum.

In the world of serious soundcards, Creative Labs is not a name to drop. The company made its name in bringing bleeps and buzzes from the latest PC CD-ROM games straight to your multimedia loudspeakers. Never in its original gameplan did it expect to usurp the likes of Digidesign or Yamaha in the grown up world of pro computer audio recording.

The SoundBlaster Live! was its first foray into the world of sonic respectability. It wasn't half bad, bringing an admirable blend of facilities (including those all-important digital audio ins and outs) along with reasonable sonics to countless cash-strapped computer audiophiles. But neither was it quite good enough - its EMU101K chip converted everything to 48kHz oversampling, preventing bit-for-bit copying of 44.1kHz sources (i.e. CD-quality digital audio). The onboard converters weren't particularly special either, although to be fair they weren't bad at the price.



Nevertheless, this was the card Brits, Yanks and Europeans turned to in droves when they wanted something just a bit better than the rubbish that came bundled with their PCs as standard - and quite right too.

That's all old hat now, because the new Audigy promises all this and more - "The Definitive Professional Audio Solution", as CLabs so modestly puts it! Without getting into ridiculous detail, it promises better sound (thanks to its 24/96 resolution digital converters), more powerful

digital signal processing and better connectivity.

The new converters give a claimed signal-to-noise ratio of 100dB, and a new EAX, Advanced HDT chip (processing up to 4 complex environments simultaneously, and offering new algorithms like Environment Panning and Morphing) will keep gamers and musicians happy.

Last but by no means least is SBI394T connectivity - which is Creative Labs-speak for FireWire.

FIREWIRE

The new Audigy offers 'SB1394T Connectivity' which is Creative Labs' Speak for FireWire. This is a high speed serial data connection in IEEE 1394 specification, giving data transfer rates of up to 400Mbps, plus hot-plug support for EASB of connecting or disconnecting external devices, intercomnection of up to 63 devices. There's one FIREWIRE socket on the LiveDrive, plus another round the back on the soundcard's rear panel.

◀ Yes, the Audigy offers two FireWire connections, which are a dream come true to anyone doing serious digital audio or video editing.

One of the Audigy Platinum's best features - carried over from the latter versions of the SBLive! - is the LiveDrive. It's a silly name for an incredibly useful thing. Essentially it's an interface panel that slots into one of the spare (five and a quarter inch) drive bays in your PC and offers front panel (hurrah!) access to all your digital inputs and outputs, plus that all-important FireWire. It's bristling with features - there are connectors for optical and coaxial digital ins and outs, a quarter inch headphone jack, complete with volume control, a quarter inch Line In 2 and Mic In 2 with gain control, MIDI In and Out (using mini DIN connectors), a stereo Aux In (using two RCA phonsos - perfect for hooking up to your hi-fi), a single FireWire port and an Infra-red Receiver.

GET CONNECTED

At a stroke, fumbling around the back of your PC is banished. Want to record direct from your DAT or MiniDisc? Fine, no problem - just plug its optical or coaxial cable into the LiveDrive, select it using the bundled software and Bob's your funny uncle! Want to hook up your portable CD writer? Easy - just plug it into the front panel. This feature alone makes computers take one step nearer the big wide world outside. You can tell the folks at Creative Labs have been thinking more about real people using computers for audio than anyone at the swanky soundcard manufacturers ever did!

LiveDrive aside, the Audigy is a standard PCI soundcard that fits into a slot on your motherboard, its rear panel facing out onto the outside world offering up 3.5mm line level stereo minijack sockets for front and rear speakers to take advantage of the unit's full Dolby Digital 5.1 multi-channel surround capabilities (yes, it's got that too). You also get 3.5mm jacks for Line in, Mic in, headphones

out and a second FireWire, while on the card itself are analogue CD in and digital audio in ribbon connectors.

Onboard is a 32-bit chip that does all the sound effects, synthesis and digital signal processing. It offers real-time digital effects like reverb, chorus, normaliser, pitch shifting, and distortion across any audio source, and also has a customisable Plug-In Effects architecture which allows new audio effects to be downloaded from the net. It can play back up to 64 different audio channels simultaneously, each with its own independent sample rate. The 24bit digital converters work at up to 48kHz sampling rates. When 16bit resolution is selected, they offer 8, 11.025, 16, 22.05, 24, 32, 44.1 and 48kHz sampling frequencies, with 96kHz achievable by upsampling or downsampling to 48kHz before processing.

BUNDLE OF JOY

As with the SBLive! Platinum, the software bundle is frankly dazzling. The Creative Labs software includes Audio HQ, Creative Recorder, Creative TaskBar, Creative Remote Center, Creative Surround Mixer, Creative MiniDisc Center, Creative PlayCenter 3, Creative WaveStudio, Creative Oozic Reactor, Creative Diagnostic, Creative Vienna SoundFont Studio. Essentially this is all the basic sound editing, recording and music making software you'll ever need, and then some. Then there's the 'third party' software, including Steinberg's Cubasis VST, WaveLab Lite and ReCycle Lite (Soundfont Edition), Ulead VideoStudio 4.0 SE Basic, Arturia's Storm - Platinum Edition, MixMeister Technology's MixMeister 3.03, Unibrain S.A.'s FireNet 2.x, iM Networks Inc.'s iM Tuner (Internet radio). This is quality - Steinberg's WaveLab Lite being a particularly capable audio recorder.

As with all soundcards these days, there's nothing terribly complex about getting it up and running. Basically, you remove one of the blanking plates from the back of your

PC case, slot the card into a vacant PCI slot on your computer motherboard, push out one of the front drive bay blanks on your PC's case and slot in the LiveDrive, screw everything into place and connect up the various ribbon cables in the way shown in the manual. Then it's a case of switching on and letting Windows detect the new hardware, pointing it in the direction of the drivers contained on (one of) the bundled CD-ROMs. This done, you can load up as much (or as little) of the bundled software at your leisure - the most useful being Creative Audio HQ which handles all the basic audio activities.

Sound quality is obviously better than the previous SoundBlaster Live!, but don't expect it to topple the likes of, say, Guillemot's MaxiSound ISIS. It has a smooth, rounded character with impressive levels of detail and a firm, tight - if somewhat lightweight - bass and crisp treble. The Audigy's new DAC is a real improvement over its vague and wishy-washy sounding processor - with its handling of dynamics and rhythms now reaching respectable budget hi-fi standards.

This card is not a specialist hi-fi 'audiocard', and if you expect it to be you'll end up disappointed. But if you want to dip a toe into the world of computer audio - including playing back WAV, MP3 and AAC files, recording or copying analogue or digital hi-fi sources or doing basic audio restoration - it's absolutely brilliant. The sound isn't bad, but the LiveDrive, complete with FireWire connectivity, turns your PC into a powerful, versatile multimedia tool that you can easily hook up to your hi-fi equipment. Considering the welter of bundled bits, it's a bargain at its (often discounted) £153 selling price. The best starter soundcard ever made. ■ ▲

SPECIFICATIONS

Creative Labs claim an A-Weighted signal to noise ratio of 100dB, a crosstalk figure of 100dB, Total Harmonic Distortion & Noise at 1KHz (A-Weighted) of 0.004% and a frequency response of 10 Hz to 22 kHz (-3dB). These are based on digital-to-analogue audio playback (e.g. CDDA, WAV, MP3, Dolby Digital).

World Verdict

Not the best soundcard ever made, but an awesomely well put together package with brilliant connectivity. A bargain for beginners!

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MAC AT

David Price previews at the tastiest digital audio player dish this year, Apple's iPod.

► **A**n event at Apple's headquarters in Cupertino, California in October saw Steve Jobs announcing, "the unveiling of a breakthrough digital device", with the catch being, "hint: it's not a Mac".

Apple's iPod is an important product for two reasons. First, it's a brilliant bit of kit in its own right that raises the digital walkie game still higher. Second - and more importantly - it's further confirmation, as if we needed it, of which way the wind is blowing for both the recording and IT industries. Here we see one of the computer business's most influential players (with a tremendous canon of innovative design behind it) going out on a limb to bring digital music to the masses. And when it's Apple, you just know it's gonna be tasty!

iPod is a digital music player 'the size of a deck of cards' which stores 1,000 songs on its hard drive. It costs £329 for the stainless steel cased version. Like Creative Labs' DAP Jukebox that came over a year before, it has a 5GB hard drive (offering around 1,000 'CD quality' songs), but iPod connects to Macs only using FireWire via Mac OS 9 and Mac OS X. It includes a 10-hour lithium polymer battery and offers 20 minutes of anti-skip protection. The software bundled is Apple's famous iTunes, which syncs with iPod automatically. A free download of this is now available from Apple's website at www.apple.com/ipod/itunes.html.

From the acknowledged masters of modern industrial design - if you

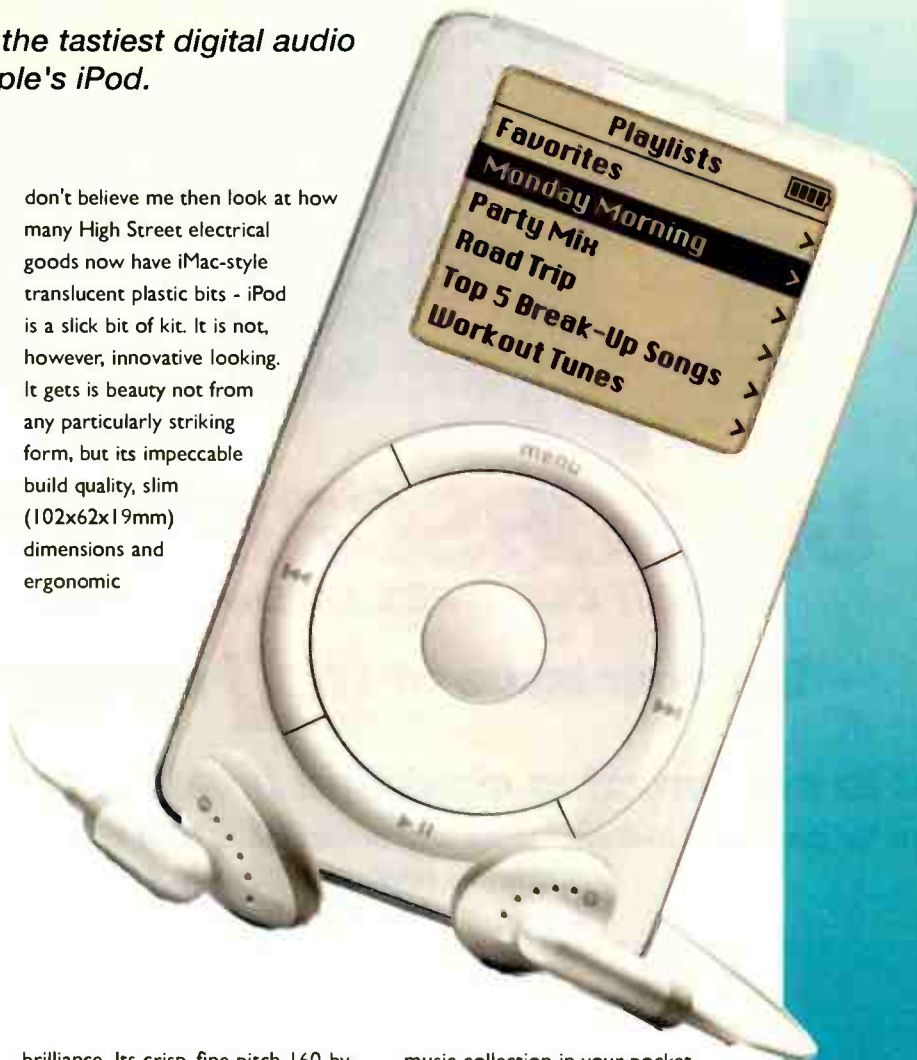
don't believe me then look at how many High Street electrical goods now have iMac-style translucent plastic bits - iPod is a slick bit of kit. It is not, however, innovative looking. It gets its beauty not from any particularly striking form, but its impeccable build quality, slim (102x62x19mm) dimensions and ergonomic

brilliance. Its crisp, fine pitch 160-by-128-pixel six line high-resolution display is backlit by white LEDs, which not only makes it supremely readable but also kind of different.

The Auto-Sync system automatically downloads all your iTunes songs and playlists into your iPod whenever you dock it, and keeps them up to date. This removes the most tiresome part of running a digital audio portable at a stroke. Steve Jobs again; "With iPod, Apple has invented a whole new category of digital music player that lets you put your entire

music collection in your pocket and listen to it wherever you go". Not completely true this - vis the aforementioned CLabs DAP Jukebox and Hango's PJBox - but iPod certainly integrates better with its host computer than most.

FireWire is the key to its slick operation. It lets you download an entire CD into iPod in under 10 seconds and 1,000 songs in less than 10 minutes. That's 30 times faster than USB-based players. The days of snail-like Rio 300 parallel port connections are gone forever! Better still, the FireWire cable also allows the unit to function as a portable hard drive for storing large computer files, graphic images and digital movies! Power management is no less impressive. When you're transferring music via FireWire, iPod automatically



MAC- WHO?

Apple ignited the personal computer revolution in the 1970s with the Apple II and reinvented the personal computer in the 1980s with the Macintosh. Apple is committed to bringing the best personal computing experience to students, educators, creative professionals and consumers around the world through its innovative hardware, software and Internet offerings.

TACK!

charges its internal batteries, but you can also recharge using the supplied AC adapter when you're on the go. The 32MB memory lets the device achieve its impressive 10 hour battery life (between charges) by limiting the amount of time the hard drive is spinning.

Never one to follow others as far as ergonomics go, Apple's iPod uses a novel scroll-wheel, which you operate with your thumb to access your music collection. This lets you scroll through your various playlists with just one hand, and even automatically speeds up when going through long lists. It also has a vast range of

customisable settings, like shuffle, repeat, start-up volume, sleep timer and menus in multiple languages including English, French, German and Japanese. It even displays song data in any of these languages, letting you mix and match songs from all over the world.

iPod plays music in MP3 and MP3 VBR (variable bit rate) formats at up to 320kbps, as well as AIF and WAV formats. Shame there's no support for AAC though, although this should only be a matter of time. Certainly, there's upgradeable firmware for precisely this reason. Interestingly, Apple has paid attention to the non-

headline matters of the analogue output stage - iPod is equipped with a (relatively) beefy 60mW amplifier and even the bundled headphones have half-decent neodymium magnets for better sound. The package also includes the aforementioned iTunes 2 CD, FireWire cable and FireWire-based power adapter. ■ ▲

APPLE IPOD £329

Apple UK2 Furze Ground Way
Stockley Park East,
Uxbridge

Middlesex UB1 1BB

Apple Store 0800 039 1010.

www.apple.com/ukstore

COMMENT - WOT NO PC?

Why has Apple just launched a brand new digital audio portable now - when (a) it doesn't support PCs and thus excludes 90% of its target market, and (b) the profit mark up on a low priced (\$399) digital audio portable is far lower than a premium priced, added-value computer such as an iMac?

The answer is obvious - to bolster its own platform to the exclusion of its arch rival Microsoft. Music is a killer application for computers - the writing has been on the wall for a while now - and Apple isn't stupid. If it can make the best functioning, most sleekly designed digital walkie then people will want to buy the platform it requires - Mac computers. Well, this is the theory. Getting style-conscious, music loving consumers into Mac showrooms is an important way of selling Apple's somewhat overpriced and esoteric (by the low standards of a PC saturated market, at least) computers. Its launch date is also eerily similar to that of Microsoft's new XP operating system. Ho hum!

The iPod isn't the epoch-making product the Creative Labs DAP Jukebox was in the autumn of 2000.

It's essentially the same, but noticeably smaller, sleeker and more user friendly thanks to some clever ergonomics work and a FireWire port. Whether this will be enough to get people into Mac showrooms remains to be seen. It's an audacious move to try to sell into a tight consumer market, and one that the likes of Sony and Panasonic (in Japan at least) appear to have sewn up. The high-ish £329 price might just be a little too much to potential purchasers who also need to buy a computer to go with it. The iPod is brilliantly specified, but whether the product's target buyers want such a robust feature set at such a high price is a leading question.

Greg Joswiak, Apple's Senior Director of Hardware says there are about 7 million Macs with a FireWire port, and that, "we have very little doubt that every (iPod) we build, we can sell". He adds nonchalantly that the focus this year was on bringing the iPod out for Macs, but says the company will consider making it compatible with Windows-based PCs "when we get some free time. While we know the experience won't be as good (with

a PC), we will probably look at that down the road".

So can Apple prevent users from connecting an iPod to a Windows PC right now? Highly unlikely. Indeed, the company once tried to make its own wireless LAN (Local Area Network) a Mac-only product, but the AirPort was quickly modified to be accessed from PCs. In truth, the iPod is essentially just a glorified hard drive - what gives it its 'iPod-ness' is the iTunes software, which can likely be modified too.

The only real problem is the communications technology that transfers the music data uses FireWire (IEEE 1394 serial communications protocol), which all modern Macs - but only a few PCs - have. Windows PCs are designed by Intel, which until very recently decided to focus on the rival USB (Universal Serial Bus) technology. Now though, FireWire is arriving on PCs en masse, and the only iPod incompatibility being that it loses the charging facility whilst transferring music. Whether iPod massively boosts Mac sales, or just those of add-on PC FireWire cards, remains to be seen!



World Verdict



An elegant mp3 player for aspiring Mac owners with deep wallets. Esoteric.

CATCH THIS!

lomega's new Predator CD-RW is taking portable CD burning to new heights, says David Price



From the company that brought you the Zip, Jaz and Klik! drives - and latterly the HipZip - comes one of its most mainstream and conventional products. By lomega standards, that is - because as CD burners go, this is avant-garde stuff. Although a direct rival to Sony's brilliantly designed but poorly executed Digital Relay, and more recently Plextor's capable but dull S88TU, lomega's Predator CD-RW FireWire promises the best of both worlds. It's hip and funky like the former, and very nearly as well screwed together as the latter.

It's an incredibly versatile little product, and so it should be at its hefty £250 price tag. It reads, writes or rewrites most types of CD formats, making it an ideal storage solution for users who want to copy and distribute music (perish the thought!) or any other data, for that matter. You can save your own music compilations (or CD copies) on to standard CD-Recordable (CD-R) and CD-ReWritable (CD-RW) disks, which then play in most modern CD players. Unlike hi-fi CD recorders, which use the expensive, audio grade blank discs, being a computer burner, the Predator uses cheap data blanks costing under 50p per 74 minute disc. The results are exactly the same as the audio discs, the difference in price being down to an arcane copyright levy charged on the audio discs, plus the intense price competition that data grade CD-Rs are subject to.

The Predator comes in a number of guises, both PC and Mac compatible with a choice of FireWire or USB interfaces (although the latest USB 2.0 isn't available yet, at the time of writing). In its faster FireWire guise, it offers respectable 8x4x32 speeds (just a little slower than the Plextor reviewed last month, but far faster than the Sony). The package includes the drive itself, a FireWire data cable, audio cable, external power supply with European power cord and a single CD-R disc is supplied. The PC package tested here came bundled with MusicMatch Jukebox Plus, Adaptec's Easy CD Creator 4.0 and Direct CDTM 3.0, lomega QuikSync 2 (albeit a 30 day trial version) and Adobe Activeshare. Mac versions have Adaptec Toast 4.1.2, MusicMatch Jukebox Plus and MGI Photosuite.

lomega know a thing or two about making boring old computer peripherals both interesting to look at and easy to use. You can make your own minds up about its aesthetics, but the manual is undoubtedly one of the best of its type I've seen. There's a beginner's section with basic, step-by-step instructions which even computer duffers can follow. Clear, concise and colourful, it's typical of the company's ethos. Starting up was a breeze, with all the software installing easily from a single, common menu. The bundled Adaptec EzCD 4.0 software is pretty behind the times these days, but in truth it's little inferior to the latest Roxio EzCD 5 once you've got the hang of it. Computer audiophiles will doubtless appreciate its built-in, on-the-fly MP3 to WAV conversion facility.

(using EzCD, for example) are rapid and reliable. As always though, it's best to stick at 4x or under for audio use, lest you get flangey, phasey effects. The Predator makes fine sounding discs (as I always say, the media seems to have as much, if not more, effect than the burner), although they could be slightly inferior to the superb Plextor S88TU, which is admittedly far more expensive.

Generally then, a fine product. The lack of a BURN-Proof facility is a glaring omission, but then again this is a cheaper, more mass market device than so-equipped CD-R portables. If this doesn't worry you - and it won't unless you're doing other work on your PC while you're burning CDs - then the lomega Predator comes heartily recommended. ■ ▲

lomega Predator Firewire
External £250.21
www.lomega.com/europe

PREDATOR SPECS

Write 1.2MB/sec, Rewrite 0.6MB/sec, 650MB general capacity. Up to 80 minutes of audio. Random access time: up to 125ms. System requirements: Pentium 166 MHz or higher, IBM PC compatible with available 5.25" drive bay, Microsoft Windows 95/ 98/ 2000/ NT 4.0, 4x CD-ROM drive, 16MB of RAM to run software or 740 MB hard drive space (for original CD duplication)

WHAT'S FIREWIRE?

Also known as IEEE1394, it's a very fast and convenient system that connects computers to external peripherals. It's faster than the older USB system, but retains its superb 'hot swappable' facility which lets you plug and unplug things without having to switch off the computer first.

World Verdict

Fine value PC CD burner with superb ergonomics and useful software - only the lack of a BURN-Proof facility detracts from its obvious charm.

welcome to

world favourites

Here's a list of products that are a good buy. We've tried to cater for a range of tastes, identifying strong products in every area. We're agnostic so you'll find a wide range of products, from valve pre-amps through to MiniDisc players. Products marked * are recently out of production but make a good second-hand buy.

Prices shown are those at the time of the review



Roksan Caspian CD player
Solid as a ROK

COMPACT DISC

ARCAM FMJ CD23 £1100
This British-built player is extremely versatile. Controlled and detailed with a musical insight that few match. (Jul 2000)

CAMBRIDGE CD4SE* £200
A touch soft in the treble but outstanding in every other respect. (Feb 98)

KENWOOD DP-3080/III* £180
Has great clarity and presence for the price. Not as naturally expressive as the CD4SE though. (Feb 98)

LINN KARIK III* £1775
Under rated and overlooked, the final Karik was a gem. Superb transport gives a brilliantly tight, grippy dynamic sound, albeit tonally rather dry.

MARANTZ CD-17 KI-S £1100
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. (Sep 97)

MARANTZ CD-63 MKII KI-S* £400
Similar to the CD-63SE but more powerful bass and an all-round smoother sound. The famous KI tweaks pay off again. Whether or not it is still pre-eminent against the vastly improved competition is a matter of opinion.

MERIDIAN 506 20-BIT* £1100
Very detailed and revealing player. More cerebral than visceral sounding, however. (May 95)

MUSICAL FIDELITY X-RAY £800
Commonsense sturdy CD player of exceptional ability. Clear and detailed with high quality internal processing system. The X-Ray is inclined to show up poor recordings, but it's only doing its job! (Feb 99)

NAD S500 £1000
This dynamic top of the range Silverline spinner delights with any type of music. Exciting, sophisticated sounding and highly recommended. (Jun 2000)

ROKSAN CASPIAN £895
The Caspian has a smooth, slightly bright sound with some of the clearest treble in the business. Very engaging, dynamic character. (Aug 97)

ROTEL RCD 951 £300
HDCC capability at a midrange price. Plain Jane looks but solid construction. There is some higher than average measured distortion which may take the edge off this otherwise tempting product. (Aug 99)

COMPACT DISC TRANSPORTS

SONIC FRONTIERS TRANSPORT £6999
Cutting-edge design and technology combine to make this one very desirable product. The only problem is the fantasy hi-fi price. (Sep 98)

TEAC P-30 £2500
Cheap it isn't, but then it sounds like a million digital dollars. Nothing short of superb. (Jun 97)

TEAC VRDS-TI £600
Excellent mid-price silver disc spinner with a powerful, expansive and warm sound. Easily beats most sub-£1000 designs. A good choice for the budget conscious who want the best. (Feb 95)

DACs

CAMBRIDGE AUDIO DACMAGIC 3* £99
Superb value for money with extensive facilities and solid, detailed sonics. Upgrades any sub-£300 player.

DCS ELGAR £8500
Future-proof convertor which will handle 24/96 and 24/192. Extremely open and natural performer. (Nov 97)

DPA LITTLE BIT 3* £299
A taste of the high end on a budget. Rich, clean, punchy sound transforms budget CD players.

MIDIMAN FLYING COW £299
Excellent as a DAC and doubles as an ADC for archiving to CDR. (Jun 98) Great value, as is junior version Flying Calf at £109. (Feb 99)

MUSICAL FIDELITY X-DAC* £300
A bargain for normal CDs and even better with HDCDs. (Nov 97)

SONIC FRONTIERS PROCESSOR 3 £6999
Quality never comes cheap! This DAC oozes class and when matched with the Transport 3 is certainly up with the best. (Sep 98)

TURNTABLES

LINN SONDEK LP12 BASIK £1100
Off the pace these days in many respects but still an extremely sweet and engaging listen with a quintessentially analogue sound.

MICHELL GYRODEC SE £775
Exquisitely built, infinitely upgradeable deck that gives true high end sound at mid-fi prices.

MICHELL ORBE £2000
Fantastically capable all rounder with commanding, powerful, detailed sound that gets the best from almost any arm and cartridge. Supreme build, brilliant value. (Apr 95)

ORIGIN LIVE STANDARD (KIT) £145
Good in standard form with AC motor; frighteningly good with a DC motor and battery PSU.

PINK TRIANGLE TARANTELLA £680
Not only does the Tarantella have more style than a catwalk full of models, it also combines PT's usual clarity with real authority. (Oct 97)

PRO-JECT DEBUT £110
Straight out of the box and onto the shelf! Nothing short of a bargain. Vinyl's never had it so good, so cheaply!

REGA PLANAR 2 £214
Brilliant starter deck with extremely polished manner. Better built £274 Planar 3 is a great all-in-one package that eats mid-price CD players for breakfast.

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. (Jan 97)

SYSTEMDEK IIX900*/RB250 £330
A fine all-rounder and easy to upgrade too. More depth and breadth than Rega Planar 3. (Sep 94)

VESTAX BDT-2000 £225
A stylish looking deck with infinitely variable speed 16-90 rpm, DC belt drive and built-in MM phono stage. Good value, with plenty of chassis room for alternative arms, if required. (Sep 99)

TONERMS

HADCOCK 242 SE £649
Latest of a long line of unipivot arms. Added mass makes the 242 suitable for both low compliance MCs and straw-in-the-wind high compliance types. Revised geometry and chromium plating completes a first-class job. (Jun 2000)

NAIM ARO* £975
Truly endearing and charismatic performer - wonderfully engaging mid-band makes up for softened frequency extremes

REGA RB300 £180
Some may prefer the simpler RB250 at £130. Detailed, tight, rhythmic sound but tonally rather grey and cold-sounding. Still excellent value, though.



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Prices shown are those at the time of the review



Musical Fidelity X-Cans2
Warm, sumptuous, sweet sound

SME 3009SII £309
Once state of the art, but no longer. Weak at frequency extremes and detail, but its legendary serviceability makes it a cult in Japan. Can be picked up for peanuts second-hand. (Jan 93)

SME 309 £689
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. Like the older SME 3009 series, this arm is also available in 10" and 12" versions. (Jan 93)

CARTRIDGES

AUDIO TECHNICA AT-110E £30
Great starter cartridge that's refined, detailed and musical beyond its price. Best value MM under £50

GOLDRING 1012GX £74
An accomplished MM with a solid bass, slightly forward midband and clean transients. Very reasonable price for such an able performer. (Jul 93)

DNM MICA £185
Better Goldring's 1042 and costs only £135 on trade-in. An assured and transparent MM. (Feb 98)

DYNAVECTOR DV20X-H £299
The best modern budget MC combines deliciously sweet sound with fantastic get-up-and-go. High output version works a treat with valve phono stages too.

MUSIC MAKER £575
When mated with a good quality arm, this hand finished high-output pick-up gives an ear-boggling account of itself. Very high compliance ensures maximum information retrieval. An absolute (grain orientated) gem. (Feb 99)

ORTOFON MC 7500 £2000
Conclusive proof that there's hope for the world. It's a long time ago now but this high-priced favourite still earns its niche - CD lovers would die if they heard it. (May 94)

ORTOFON MC 15 SUPER II £140
Not quite as good as the dearer Supremes but the Super II is a splendid introduction to the joys of moving-coil cartridges.

GOLDRING 1042 £130
One of the best Moving Magnet cartridges going, with beautiful treble and muscular bass. New low price makes it a bargain.

ORTOFON ROHMANN £1000
In a way it's MC 2000 meets MC 7500 with great tonal strengths and a dynamo sound. (Apr 96)

INTEGRATED AMPLIFIERS

AUDIO ANALOGUE PUCCINI SE £595
This superbly-built Italian integrated has a lucidity and control which leaves others nowhere. Sound stage a wow. (Dec 97)

AUDIOLAB 8000a * £495
Well rounded integrated with smooth and detailed sound plus a huge feature count. Great build makes later versions a top used buy.

DENON PMA-250SE £160
It might not have bags of grunt but the Denon can sound exceedingly natural and open. (Feb 97)

McINTOSH MA6800* £3735
The MA6800 not so much plays music as takes control of it, with effortless bass drive. (Sep 95)

MISSION CYRUS 2 * £299
Classic eighties minimalism combines arresting styling with clean, open, lively sound. Further upgradable with PSX power supply.

MUSICAL FIDELITY X-CANS2 £160
Warm, sumptuous, sweet sound h/phone amp. gives startling results with a decent set of headphones.

NAIM NAIT 3 * £575
Superb rhythms and dynamics make for great music making, but tonally monochromatic. Super optional phono stage makes it ideal for vinyl junkies.

ROKSAN CASPIAN £695
Smooth, warm integrated with remote control that works happily into most 'speakers. (Dec 97)

SONNETEER ALABASTER £995
Builds on the strengths of the Campion with ample control, colour and drive. (Oct 97)

PHONO STAGES

CREEK OBH-8 SE £180
Punchy, rhythmic character with oodles of detail makes this a great budget audiophile product.

LFD MISTRAL PHONO STAGE * £300
The Mistral has a warmth and involvement that make many pricier stages sound overpriced.

MICHELL DELPHINI MONOBLOCS £1995
Analogue tour-de-force gives supremely clean, detailed and finely resolved sound with breathtaking dynamics. Great value, even at this price.

MUSICAL FIDELITY X-LP £125
One of the famous MF X series. Full marks throughout for clarity and detail. Switchable between MM and MC. Indestructible build! (May 99)

PRO-JECT PHONO BOX £39
Not the last word in many respects but a thoroughly honest piece of work. Inexpensive introduction to all that vinyl has to offer. MM and MC provision plus choice of two impedances.

ROKSAN ARTAXERXES X £950
With the Atessa PSU the Artaxerxes X MM/MC stage still shines. Great stage depth, neutrality and tonal colour. (Oct 97)

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SONNETEER SEDLEY £399
Combines transparency and fine dynamics with excellent rhythmic ability. (May 98)

PRE-AMPLIFIERS

AMC 1100 £150
Suffers from un-defeatable tone controls but an extremely good value piece of kit. Partners the similarly budget level AMC 2200 power amplifier, also at £150. Comfortable beginners' choice. (Mar 99)

AUDIO ANALOGUE BELLINI £475
Showcases AA's characteristic mix of clarity and musicality and blasts the competition. (Apr 98)

CHORD CPA1800 £1800
Clarity, insight and control are second to none - an addictive mixture. (Mar 98)

CROFT VITALE £350
A modestly priced valve pre-amp with exceptionally transparent performance. MM phono stage plus three line stages are standard. Volume controls are separate for each channel, thus giving balance adjustment. A remarkable item in all respects. (Feb 2000)

XTC PRE-I * £1000
Almost valve-like in its smoothness, the line-level Pre-I is warm and seductively clear. (Nov 96)

POWER AMPLIFIERS

ARCAM 9 * £400
With 70W on tap, the 9P will drive most loudspeakers with a spacious and detailed sound. Good bass welly too. (Dec 96)

CHORD SPM400 £1400
There's a sense of effortless power to the Chord that gives music real scale and presence. (Mar 98)

MARANTZ MODEL 9 * £8000
Authentic reproduction monoblocs still more than cut the sonic mustard. Highly expensive and highly sought after. (Mar 97)

MICHELL ALECTO £1989
Crisp, clean and beautifully controlled with gorgeous styling. Partnered with the £1650 Orca this is a superb winning combo. (Oct 98)

MUSICAL FIDELITY X-A200£1000/pair
200W of high-end monobloc power in a grooved tube. (Aug 98)

NAIM NAP180 £1060
Partnered with a NAC82, this has classic Naim control, and a superbly rhythmic presentation.

TUNERS

CAMBRIDGE T500 £180
An extremely engaging tuner with a performance at odds with its low price. Not exactly a Troughline, but you may not notice... (Feb 99)

CREEK T43 £399
Excellent detail, separation and dynamics. A great little tuner and unbeatable at this price. (May 98)

MARANTZ ST17 £600
A positive dreadnought of a tuner. Sweet and refined but with a heavy punch when needed. A tuner of this quality demands a decent aerial. (Jul 99)

MISSION CYRUS FM7* £300
Clear and lucid sound puts it up with the best. Superb build too. (Apr 94)

NAIM NAT03 £595
The NAT03's warm, atmospheric sound is further proof of Naim's proficiency with tuners. (Sep 93)

SONY ST-SA3ES* £250
Beguiling RDS tuner for the sonically discerning. Good ergonomics and sensitive too. (Apr 97)

CASSETTE DECKS

AIWA AD-S750* £200
Sonically a very decent machine at the price. Comes fitted with Dolby B, C and the dead handy Dolby S. (Apr 96)

AIWA AD-S950* £300
A stable transport, superb head and Dolby S make the AD-S950 an excellent all-rounder. (Feb 95)

KENWOOD KX-3080* £160
A simple deck, but excellent-quality head and transport give top quality sound. (Oct 96)

PIONEER CT-S740S £430
A great piece of engineering from Pioneer, with first-rate sound. (Jun 96)

YAMAHA KX-580SE* £250
The 'SE' tag is more than a marketing gimmick. Sound is solid and clear with Dolby S. (Sep 97)

LOUDSPEAKERS

CASTLE EDEN £469
Impressively vice-free 'speakers that offer great transparency and involvement. One of a select band that simply makes music regardless. (Mar 97)

EPOS ES12 * £495
Strong, punchy bass is allied to finely detailed, articulate midrange and sparkling treble. (Oct 96)



Kef Cresta I loudspeakers
A very musical sound

KEF CRESTA I £100
Delightfully sophisticated presentation for the price. Won't blow the roof off, but will deliver a very musical sound. (April 2000)

KLIPSCH HERESY II £1100
An outstanding high sensitivity loudspeaker with midrange and treble horns coupled with infinite baffle 12" bass driver. Effortless, fast and accurate. (May 99)

MISSION 752 * £495
Cracking mid-price mini towers combined HDA drive units and metal dome tweeters with surprisingly warm results. Benign load characteristics makes them great for valves.

MISSION 771 £170
Characteristically fast, punchy Mission sound from the Aerogel mid/bass and silk-dome tweeter. (Jul 98)

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QUAD ESL 63 * £3450
A reference against which all other loudspeakers are judged, the '63s have superb imaging and genuine transparency.

TANNOY AMS8 * £2700
Bold sounding pro active monitor with solid bass, clear midrange and delicious treble. (Aug 96)

TANNOY MERCURY m2 * £140
A true audiophile bargain which embarrasses many more expensive boxes. Never mind the price, let your ears decide. (May 97)

MINIDISC PLAYERS

KENWOOD DM-9090 £500
One of the best MD players yet. ATRAC 4.5 gives clean and very musical recordings from this Kenwood. (Jan 98)

SONY MDS-JB930Q £250
Great mid-price machine that adds better build and facilities to the '530's already excellent sonics.

SONY MDS-JA50ES * £1300
This Sony can put the wind up Nakamichi cassette decks when used with better blank MDs. (Apr 98)

SONY MDS-JE555ES £520
MiniDisc recorder
The best sounding MD deck made so far, thanks to awesome build and heroic ATRAC-DSP Type R coding.



Alesis Masterdisk
A glimpse of the future

SONY MDS-JE510 £300
An impressive sound and unmatched convenience make this MiniDisc player an excellent buy.

DIGITAL RECORDERS

ALESIS MASTERDISK £1400
A groundbreaking hard disc recorder with a built-in CD drive. An amazing bit of kit, and a glimpse of the future. (July 2000)

KENWOOD DMF-9020 £500
An excellent tool for home recording, combines convenience, superb sound and a fair price. (Aug 99)

MARANTZ DR-17 £1100
Probably the best sounding CD recoder on the market. Built like a brick out house with a true audiophile sound. HDCD compatible. (July 2000)

PHILIPS CDR-765 £360
One of the first twin deck recorders/players that boasts high speed dub facility. Playback could be warmer, but still a bargain. (Oct 99)

PIONEER PDR-555RW £480
Excellent mid-priced CD recorder that both plays and records with equal panache. (Oct 99)

SONY TCD-8 DATMAN * £599
Super clean and detailed sound makes this an amazing portable. Not as robust as it should be though.

DVD PLAYERS

DENON DVD-5000 £1600
Monster build, as you'd expect at this price. Facilities and gadgets galore and drop-dead high end looks. A very smooth and sophisticated sound, although not as good as similarly-priced CD players. (Mar 99)

PIONEER DV-717 £700
Well built and a solid performer, with a 'true' 24/96 digital output. Facilities in abundance and a controlled, exciting way with CD replay. Shame it lacks a Dolby Digital decoder! (Sep 99)

SONY DVP-S725 £490
One of the best buys in the DVD market. Available in a dour white case, but the facilities and performance more than make up for this. Excellent with both music and visuals, and a whole host of up to the minute facilities to keep you occupied. (Mar 2000)

HEADPHONES

JECKLIN FLOAT MODEL TWO £99
Wonderful panel-like and open sound from these esoteric-looking headclamps. Do not wear in public unless you like being made a fool of!

SENNHEISER HD-490 £50
Good value cans with an exciting and bassy sound. Everything one should look for in headphones at a sensible price.



Nordost Blue Heaven
A simple and effective upgrade

INTERCONNECTS

CHORD COMPANY CHAMELEON 2 £90/m
One of our favourite favourites, the Chameleons are musical performers with a smooth yet open sound.

DNM RESON £40/m
Neutral and transparent, and a steal at forty quid!

NORDOST BLUE HEAVEN £150/m
Some of the fastest and most transparent cable around. A simple and effective upgrade.

VAN DEN HUL ULTIMATE THE FIRST £260/0.6m
Carbon interconnects that help you forget the electronics and concentrate on the music. Miraculous transparency.

LOUDSPEAKER CABLE

CHORD COMPANY RUMOUR £9.95/m
The Rumour is our reference at the price. Tight and tuneful bass mixed with air and space results in a cracking cable for the money.

DNM RESON £6.95/m
This cable has a transparency of sound that's rarely heard at the price. Excellent value for money.

NORDOST BLUE HEAVEN £375/3m pair
This isn't cheap, but it sounds absolutely fab. An open and spacious sound that simply carries music.

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Arcam AVR100 Receiver NEW!	(799.00)	£399.00	Marantz DV4100 DVD Player (1Yr G/tee)	(399.00)	£249.00
Arcam FMJ A22 Amplifier NEW!	(999.00)	£729.00	Marantz DV7000 DVD Player (1Yr G/tee)	(599.00)	£399.00
Arcam FMJ CD23 CD Player NEW!	(1099.00)	£849.00	Marantz SR5000 AV Receiver (1Yr G/tee)	(499.00)	£325.00
B&W 603/S2 Speakers	(550.00)	£249.00	Naim NAC72 Preamp (1Yr G/tee)	(760.00)	£449.00
KEF Q35.2 Speakers	(350.00)	£249.00	Naim NAT 02 Tuner (2Yr G/tee)	(1240.00)	£849.00
Linn Genki CD Player (2Yr G/tee)	(995.00)	£695.00	Naim AV1 Surround Procs E/D (2Yr G/tee)	(1835.00)	£659.00
Linn AV5130 Processor-No DTS (2Yr G/tee) (4200.00)		£999.00	Naim SBL Passive Speakers S/H (1Yr G/tee)(2500.00)		£1099.00
Linn AV5140 Speakers (Cherry)(2Yr G/tee) (2150.00)		£1395.00	Naim CD2 CD Player S/H (1Yr G/tee)	(1995.00)	£1099.00
Linn 5150 Subwoofer-Cherry (2Yr G/tee)	(2999.00)	£1995.00	Naim Intro Spkrs - Beech (1Yr/Gtee)	(790.00)	£590.00
Linn Kairn Line Preamp (1Yr G/tee)	(1400.00)	£799.00	Rega Jura Speakers (2Yr G/tee)	(498.00)	£329.00
Linn LP12/Lingo/Akito S/H (1Yr G/tee)	(2250.00)	£1250.00	Vision 42" Plasma Screen (1Yr G/tee)	(5300.00)	£2795.00

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CASSETTE

NAKAMICHI DR-7

A great machine with Nakamichi's legendary heads. The lowest cost 'true' Nakamichi at the time, retailing for £600.

NAKAMICHI CR-7

The last of the great ones, and definitely the best Nakamichi ever (yes, better than a Dragon).

YAMAHA TC-800G

Early classic in serious cassette, its ski-slope looks got it a cult following once it had ceased to be simply ugly.

CD PLAYERS

MERIDIAN 207

Beautifully-built two-box with pre-amp stage. Very musical although not as refined as modern Bitstream gear. No digital output.

PIONEER PD-91

Beautifully-built player with easy upgrade routes for modifiers. Not knockout as it stands but get one cheap and have a go!

CAMBRIDGE CD1

The first two box player with weighted mechanics and even an optional Drop-out/errata indicator. Radical and effective at the time - a classic.

AMPLIFIERS

LEAK POINT ONE, TL12 & TL10

Ancestors of hi-fi, consequently expensive nowadays. As with all vintage valve stuff, overhauling is de rigueur before use, using original parts if possible.

LEAK PRE-AMPS

Line of 'good for their time' pre-amps. Use of 6FB6 pentode valve for high gain rules out ultra performance. Not the highest-fi.

LEAK STEREO 20

Excellent workaday classic valve amp. In good order the 20 will not disgrace itself. Various upgrades are available from specialist repairers.

LEAK TL12+

Plentiful monobloc equivalent of Stereo 20. Reasonably inexpensive and a creakers' dream. Genuine valve hi-fi on a budget.

NAD 3020

You can't argue with success! NAD's budget transistor integrated gave thousands their first taste of hi-fi and remains great value.

QUAD 33/303 PRE/POWER

Great style and construction, also bullet proof. Warm and woolly sound, but easy going. A good introduction to early transistor audio classics.



Garrard 401
A legendary turntable.

QUAD 22/II PRE/POWER

One of the all-time classic valve amplifiers. Unusual circuit but it works beautifully. 22 pre-amp not up to today's standards.

SUGDEN A21

Seventies transistor integrated has an eminently likeable smoothness and musicality. Limited inputs via DIN socket.

TECHNICS SE-A5 Mk2

Nice transformer and electronics, shame about the case-work. With tweaking, this 150watt can sound sweet.

LOUDSPEAKERS

KLIPSCHORN

Not exactly plentiful or cheap but a splendid beast. For efficiency they have seldom been equalled. Space hungry!

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LEAK SANDWICH

Rather warm sounding big infinite baffle but cheap with it. With a reasonably powerful amp can sound quite satisfying.

LOWTHER PM6A

High quality full-range driver; still manufactured. High sensitivity, as fitted to many classic horn designs.

MAGNEPLANAR SMGa

Touch dry in the bass but a technological loudspeaker with genuinely musical abilities.

MISSION 770

Father of the 77 range which continues to this day. Well mannered with a warm sound and a kind load to amplifiers.

QUAD ESL57

Unrivalled. Properly serviced there is nothing like them. Their natural presentation may make them caviar to the general.

YAMAHA NS1000M

Hi-tech favourites of the Japanese and Americans. Viewed more warily in the UK but can give excellent results.

TANNOY GRF & AUTOGRAPH

Folded horn monsters which certainly sound good if you have the space. For Tannoy vintage see HFW November 1998.

WHARFEDALE SUPER 8 RS DD

Ideal experimenters' driver. High sensitivity ~14,000 Gauss magnet and extended frequency range. Inexpensive too!

TANNOY YORK, LANCASTER

Many similar models of infinite baffle or reflex design. Not the last word in tautness but the drivers work well in modern cabinets.

VINYL

ACOS LUSTRE

Very honest piece of kit, well made and easily adjusted. Vinyl beginners could do very much worse.

ALPHASON HIR100S

First class arm, up to present-day standards. Buy carefully, though, as there's no service available now.

ARISTON RD11

A one-time king of turntables very similar to the Linn LP12. Now deposed but worth a look at the right price.

LINN AXIS

Uncomplicated, lower-price version of the famous Sondek. Less expensive than some of its stablemates.

GARRARD 301 & 401

Legendary turntables, once fairly plentiful. Excellent back-up available; many different custom plinths available. High quality.

GOLDRING LENCO 88 & 99

Great deck for the kitchen table enthusiast. Garrard fans won't look at 'em but cheap and capable. Servicing available.

HADCOCK 228

Recently out-classed by Hadcock's updated 228 Special Edition but a proper hi-fi arm for all that. Makers still service.

MICHELL FOCUS ONE

20 years and still going strong. Early runner in the 'modern' turntable cycle with a first class arm. Factory servicing available.

SHURE M75

Recent line-contact improvements have left the M75 behind but the wide range of needles make it a handy tool.

SME 3009 IIS

Everlasting classic tone-arm. Spares permanently available from SME. No longer the last word but peanuts second-hand.

THORENS TD124

Best classic deck ever! Judging by the prices they fetch it's possible - 78rpm too!

THORENS TD150

Mid-price deck with a keen following. No real difficulty with servicing - novices may find the suspension system unnerving.

TRIO L-07D

Knockout heavyweight from 1980 with stainless bearing and 11lb platter! Not a give-away and beware! - spares scarce.

TUNERS

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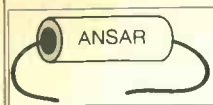
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CPW500	Ansar 6800PF 50V	32 x 11.5	2.00
CPW1000	Ansar 10K 50V	32 x 12.5	2.00
CPW1500	Ansar 15K 50V	32 x 14.7	2.00
CPW2000	Ansar 22K 50V	43 x 14.8	2.50
CPW3000	Ansar 33K 50V	43 x 17.8	3.00
CPW4000	Ansar 47K 50V	43 x 20.7	3.00
CPW5000	Ansar 68K 50V	43 x 22.8	3.50
CPW10000	Ansar 100K 50V	43 x 26.5	4.00
CPW15000	Ansar 150K 50V	55 x 34.1	4.00
CPW20000	Ansar 220K 50V	55 x 39.3	7.50
CPW30000	Ansar 330K 50V	55 x 42.8	7.50
CPW40000	Ansar 470K 50V	55 x 44.7	9.00
CPW50000	Ansar 680K 50V	83 x 46.0	12.00
CPW100000	Ansar 1000K 50V	83 x 51.7	13.00
CPW150000	Ansar 1500K 50V	83 x 55.1	16.00
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CPW300000	Ansar 3300K 50V	115 x 55	20.00
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Part no	Description	L x Ø mm	Price
CPW1000	Proppol 10K 50V	100 x 50	25.00
CPW1500	Proppol 15K 50V	115 x 51	30.00
CPW2000	Proppol 22K 50V	115 x 51	30.00

Philips Polypropylene Axial 1%

Part no	Description	Price	Part no	Description	Price
CPW100	Proppol 10K 50V	0.40	5881	BEAM TETRODE	19.00
CPW150	Proppol 15K 50V	0.40	5882	RECTIFIER	19.00
CPW200	Proppol 22K 50V	0.40	5883	BEAM PENTODE	26.00
CPW300	Proppol 33K 50V	0.40	5884	TETRODE	17.50
CPW400	Proppol 47K 50V	0.40	5885	TRIODE	14.50
CPW500	Proppol 68K 50V	0.40	5886	TETRODE	14.50
CPW1000	Proppol 100K 50V	0.40	5887	TRIODE	11.00
CPW1500	Proppol 150K 50V	0.50	5888	TRIODE	11.00
CPW2000	Proppol 220K 50V	0.50	5889	TRIODE	11.00

Audio Electrolytics Radial

Part no	Description	Price
CPW200	Proppol 2200PF 50V	0.50
CPW300	Proppol 3300PF 50V	0.50
CPW400	Proppol 4700PF 50V	0.50
CPW500	Proppol 6800PF 50V	0.50
CPW1000	Proppol 10K 50V	0.70
CPW1500	Proppol 15K 50V	1.00
CPW2000	Proppol 22K 50V	1.50

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10103	Lo Imp Hi Temp 1000PF 50V	0.30
22103	Lo Imp Hi Temp 2200PF 50V	0.30
47103	Lo Imp Hi Temp 4700PF 50V	0.40
100103	Lo Imp Hi Temp 10000PF 50V	0.60
220103	Lo Imp Hi Temp 22000PF 50V	0.80
470103	Lo Imp Hi Temp 47000PF 50V	1.50
1000103	Lo Imp Hi Temp 100000PF 50V	2.50
4700103	Lo Imp Hi Temp 470000PF 50V	2.50

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CPW200	Ansar 2200PF 50V	0.40
CPW300	Ansar 3300PF 50V	0.40
CPW400	Ansar 4700PF 50V	0.40
CPW500	Ansar 6800PF 50V	0.40
CPW1000	Ansar 10K 50V	0.40
CPW1500	Ansar 15K 50V	0.40
CPW2000	Ansar 22K 50V	0.40
CPW3000	Ansar 33K 50V	0.40
CPW4000	Ansar 47K 50V	0.40
CPW5000	Ansar 68K 50V	0.40
CPW10000	Ansar 100K 50V	0.40
CPW15000	Ansar 150K 50V	0.40
CPW20000	Ansar 220K 50V	0.40
CPW30000	Ansar 330K 50V	0.40
CPW40000	Ansar 470K 50V	0.40
CPW50000	Ansar 680K 50V	0.40
CPW100000	Ansar 1000K 50V	0.40
CPW150000	Ansar 1500K 50V	0.40
CPW200000	Ansar 2200K 50V	0.40
CPW300000	Ansar 3300K 50V	0.40
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5883	BEAM PENTODE	26.00
5884	TETRODE	17.50
5885	TRIODE	14.50
5886	TETRODE	14.50
5887	TRIODE	11.00
5888	TRIODE	11.00
5889	TRIODE	11.00

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e-mail us with news at - diynews@hi-fiworld.co.uk

KIT & COMPONENT NEWS

► YOU'VE GOT THE POWER

A new Canadian website sells valve and MOSFET amp kits as well as test equipment and real diehards have the opportunity to build their own laboratory power supply for the test bench. Invaluable for all dedicated DIYers, a lab power supply is essential for many amateurs as well as professionals. The kit costs \$449 (Canadian) and is provided with a digital volt meter and a digital ammeter. There is an integrated fan so the power supply can apparently operate at full load for an extended period. It is also supplied with housing, knobs and transformers as well as a digital display.



www.qkits.com

► NICEY IC!

Fancy designing your very own digital amplifier? Profusion are distributing the new Tripath TA2022 Class-T digital power amplifier IC that uses Digital Power Processing technology (DPP). This apparently offers the audio quality of class-AB and the power efficiency of Class-D. The 32pin SSIP package is fully integrated, with internal FETs and claims to have a high dynamic range compatible with CD, DVD and internet audio. This new distribution should ensure that digital amplifiers will be cropping up from many sources. Watch this space!



Profusion plc
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Essex SS2 6UN
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www.profusionplc.com

► AUDIO-COM GO HI RES

Audio-Com are now featuring upgrades for both the Marantz SA-1 and Sony's SCD-1 high end SACD players. This involves replacement of the existing clocks with a Super Clock and extensive audio board modifications. Their comprehensive website also includes tips on completing the task and a guide through how to do it. The upgrades do not alter the circuits and are available in sections or as complete packages.



The Sony SCD-1 DA convertor section with Black gate de-coupling, super regulator and OPA 627 module

PRICES FOR SA-1

Audio board electrolytic capacitors = £339.36
Superclock/33.8688MHz = £175
Total parts costing = £514.36

PRICES FOR SCD-1

Audio board electrolytic capacitors = £201.14
Audio board resistors = £567.00
Audio board regulators = £199.75
Audio board op-amp modules = £130.00
Power board electrolytic capacitors = £287.26
Power board regulators = £119.85
Total parts costing = £1505.00

In addition to the player upgrades, Audio-com also now have a range of newly developed Elna ROS series capacitors, which use a newly developed separator paper. The main material of this separator is silk fibre mixed with Manila hemp



The new Elna ROS!



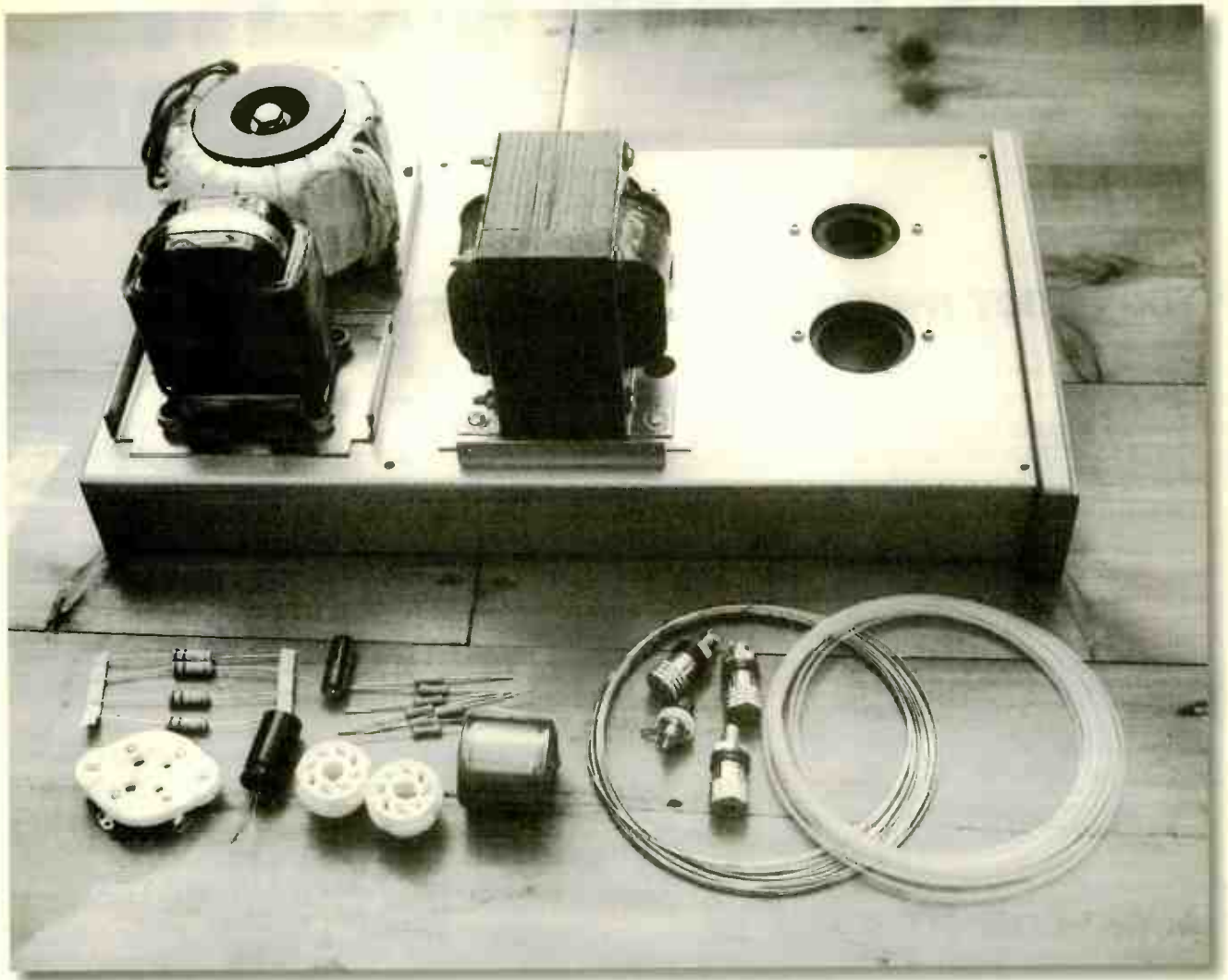
Superclock replaces the existing master clock circuit in the Marantz SA-1

fibre, which was inconceivable as a material of capacitors in the past. Price details are available from the Audiocom website.

Meanwhile, look out for a comprehensive step-by-step guide to the upgrade for the SCD-1 in our next supplement.

Audiocom UK
Unit 14 Pier Road
Pembroke Dock SA72 6TR
Tel: 01646 685601
www.audiocom-uk.com

BUILDING



Clive Meakins builds a 300B single-ended power amplifier kit from Hong Kong.

Do you want to build an Single-Ended Triode (SET) "power" amplifier that will have a chance of driving typical speakers? Your best option is to use the 300B triode valve. The 2A3 isn't powerful enough. There are higher wattage triodes, but unfortunately they run at very high voltages. You need to live to hear your creation! Even though many of the hard-core SET brigade deride the 300B as overrated, it is well suited to normal domestic situations. Large horns are not required. For the tweaker, SET's have the great advantage of a very low component count, making small changes very noticeable.

Going the scratch-build route starts at around £850 just for the ironware for two monoblocks from a well-respected British manufacturer. There are a few 300B SET kits on the market - just scour the internet for the options. Most kits start at £800 to £1,000

with VAT and shipping. Using exotic components pushes prices higher.

The "Billie" kit, described here, comes from www.diyhifisupply.com. The basic 32kg kit comes into the UK at around £770 including shipping and import duty, based on US\$775 without shipping and tax. The Billies are a kit version of the Consonance M500 manufactured by Opera Audio in China. Diyhifisupply themselves operate out of Hong Kong. Its power output is 9 Watts, with 2V input sensitivity into 100k input impedance. The 300B heaters are fed DC and purists prefer AC, but audible hum levels frequently cause distress which is why many commercial amplifiers use DC.

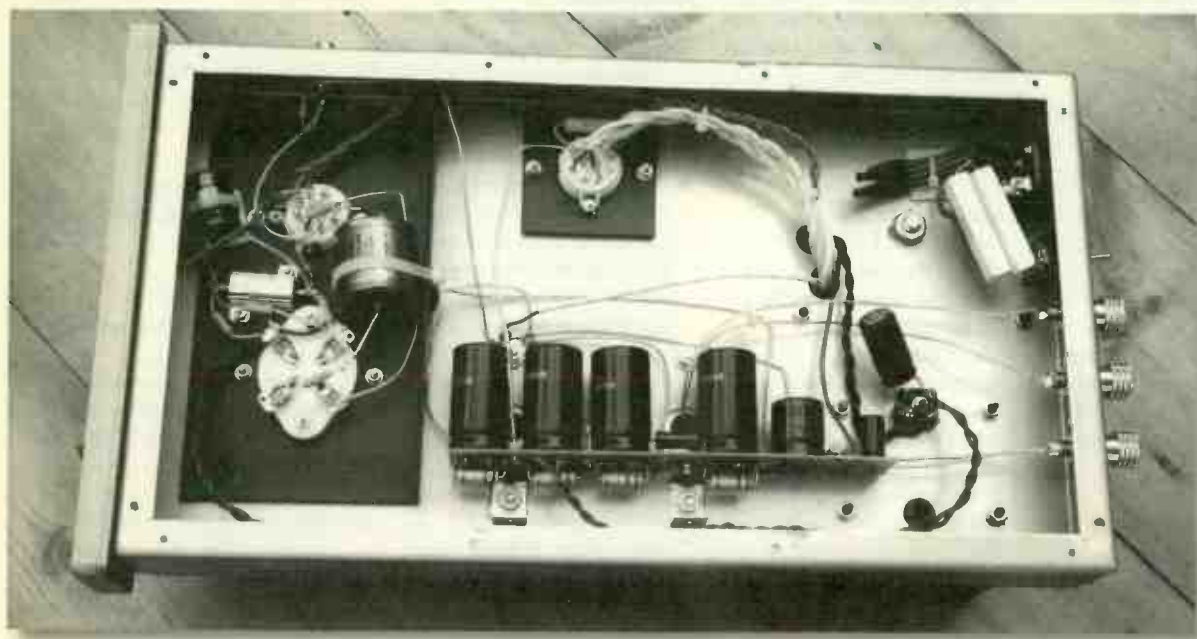
The valves are Chinese, with the 300B from Valve Art, though you can specify the well-reviewed TJ Mesh Plate as a higher cost option. Traditional paper and wax are present

in the output transformer and the choke is reassuringly hefty. Wiring is point-to-point, save for the power supply capacitors which come pre-installed on a pcb. Open sided cages are supplied to protect the valves, children and pets.

The circuit is not unusual. The rectifier is a 5Z3, driver is 6N9P (6SL7) operating as shunt regulated push-pull (SRPP); its cathode bypass capacitor is a Black Gate. The 300B is self-biasing with plate voltage at around 400V with 78mA plate current. The output transformer has 4 and 8 ohm taps. The phono input socket is on the side but can be at the rear. Side positioning gives a very short signal path.

I was sent the version that most people order. This included Jensen PIO coupling capacitors, Kiwame carbon film resistors and CCC (continuous cast copper) high purity

BILLIES



enamelled copper wire with clear sleeving. CCC is a good idea; using stranded wire could have nasty consequences if stray strands were to cause shorts. This amounts to a very attractive spec that gives a total UK imported price of around £830.

THE BUILD

The kit should have arrived with all hardware assembled. It seems this batch (and possibly others in future) didn't have the valve sockets installed. It took an hour or so to fit the sockets to each amp. Actually, I prefer the kit this way, since it allows me to check all bolts for correct tightness after their long journey. Just be careful, when tightening the hex bolts for the ceramic valve holders I held the nuts with my fingers and used my hex key the "wrong" way around to reduce leverage. I screwed up tight, but not so tight as to crack the ceramic. While you're at it, check the 25W resistor bolts. You'll find the chassis is spacious, with plenty of room for exotic capacitors.

I decided to scrape away some paint underneath the mounting bolts for the ironware, earth-to-chassis connection and the single earth point. I discussed this with Brian Cherry at diyhifisupply. He's not found any gain in performance by doing this. In humid regions, such as Hong Kong, you just end up with a rusty chassis. Anyway, I felt better about ensuring good metal-to-metal contact.

The instructions are good, with many pictures; they come pretty close to being idiot proof. Providing you can solder, draw children's dot-to-dot diagrams and can put

together a Meccano kit, there should not be any problems. The key is not to rush, double check everything and enjoy the assembly. To reduce the likelihood of my wife claiming on my life insurance, I used high voltage resistant gloves for testing. The need for safety cannot be overstressed.

There's quite a lot of wiring to do at first. The components come later and are quite quick to install. The enamelled CCC wire can have the enamel burnt off with a soldering iron though I preferred to scrape it off with a modelling knife.

When knitting in the components I used some of the CCC clear sleeving on the component leads, there is enough spare. This lessens the chance of shorts and reduces shock hazard when testing.

After I'd tested the amps I decided to upgrade the 300B cathode bypass capacitor to a Black Gate NH Series 160V type. This was my only change to the kit. It's simply begging for a good quality capacitor here. This is a big upgrade that provides greater scale, bass and simply much more of everything. It's well worth the high cost of the Black Gates.

Following initial testing I needed to install a resistor in series with the IEC socket and change the resistor following the rectifier. This is just fine tuning to get voltages absolutely spot on. Brian at diyhifisupply will advise on this.

THE SOUND

I initially tested voltages into a dummy load then fired up the monoblocks into my 17 year old "budget" Mordaunt Short MS15s. I was

amazed by what I heard just on the testbench. Musical coherence was so obvious. I could easily live with this unusual pairing.

I used CD feeding into a Michell (now "Trichord by Michell") Orca preamp. The Billies were now connected to my Mordaunt Short Performance 860 floorstanders and two REL Storm subwoofers. I was expecting I might need to use my solid-state amps to drive the 860's bass. The 860's are 6 ohm nominal with a 3.8 ohm minimum. Ease of drive could be a problem. At least the efficiency is 90db so reasonable levels were expected. On the 8 ohm tap the sound was a touch bass light. On the 4 ohm tap the bass and richness throughout the frequency range kicked in. The 860's needed no solid-state assistance or, should I say hindrance!

Hum levels were very low. With the 860's I could just hear some hum with my ear almost inside the bass cones. No problem here. I can't imagine there'd be a problem even with significantly more efficient speakers. 9W can't be enough, can it? Whilst I couldn't reach headbanging levels in my 18x15ft room, it was all but. These amps will work with many speakers on the market today.

The valves and particularly the Black Gates need at least 100 hours to burn-in properly so while this was happening I tried my Audio Synthesis Passion switched attenuator. The Billies have a 2V input sensitivity, not ideal for a passive pre. The result was anaemic. Use an active preamp to drive the Billies.

Everyone who heard these amplifiers talked about their big sound, instruments

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soundstaging beautifully with space around them and tremendously lifelike vocals. There's a natural decay to notes, a slightly rounded bass which is also bouncy and detailed. There was plenty of detail but not in a forced way; it was easy to listen to and exciting. Pace, rhythm and timing were excellent. I couldn't directly compare the amplifiers to other 300B SETs. I'm confident they are at least the equal of most I have heard and will outperform most of the (assembled) competition that would set you back between £2,000 and

£4,000.

You often read that a particular SET is mainly suited to certain types of music. This is not the case here. What they do like is well-recorded music. Heavily processed music tends to sound ordinary, much like any other amplifier. This is a problem with the software, not the amplification.

Now for some tube rollin'. Changing the 5Z3PA rectifiers for Sovtek 5AR4/GZ34 added more scale in the bass; they also pushed some internal voltages higher. This is

easily fixed. Mullard GZ32 rectifiers produced a big lush sound, with voltages not as high as the GZ34. They sound and look beautiful.

Swapping the 6N9P for a Philips 6SL7WGT JAN gave a slightly darker and more refined sound. Brimar 6SL7GT gave additional air with a richer sound, perhaps too rich with some combinations. Going to Sylvania 6SL7GT gave air but a less rich bass, probably the best balance. I should add my thanks to Jim Fish at Wilson Valves for finding me the NOS valves.

Sovtek's 300B EH added more body and was a little richer or less bright than the Valve Art. The way you hear it depends upon the rest of your system.

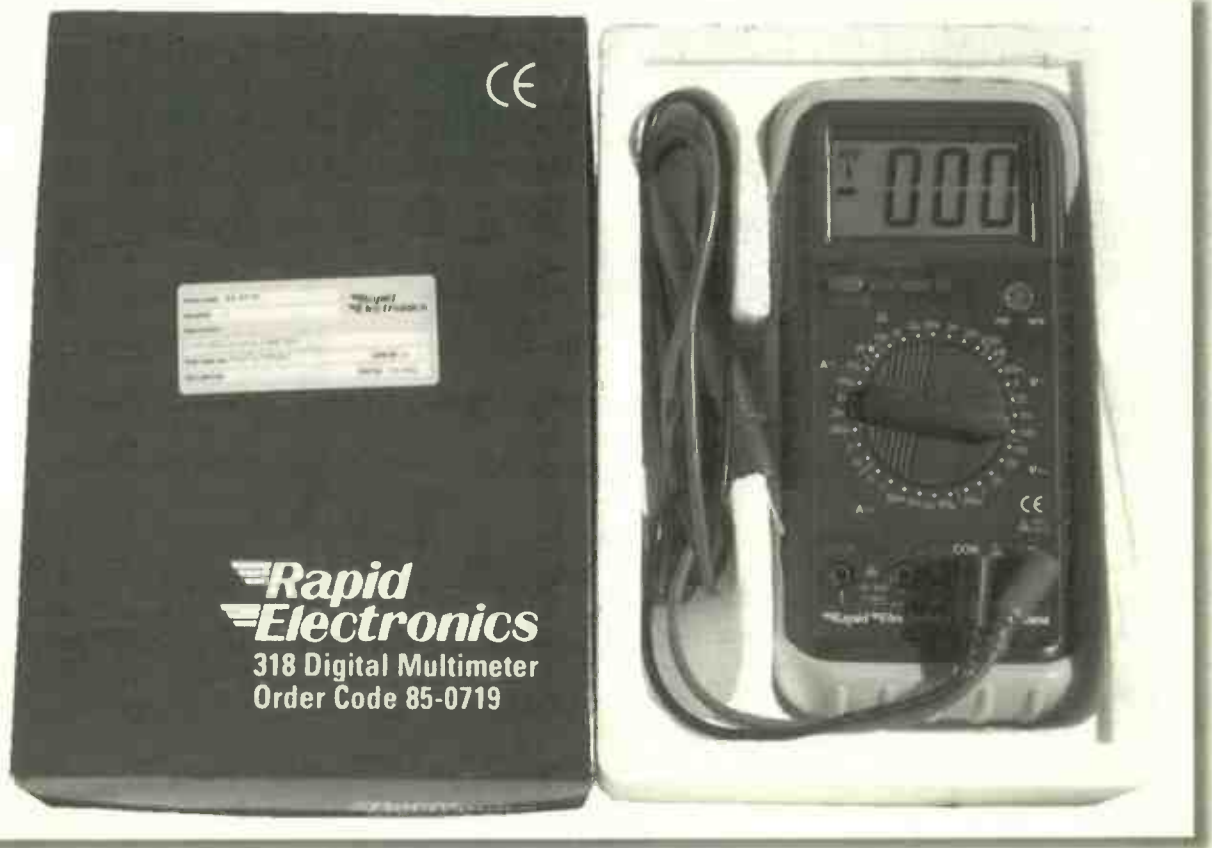
CONCLUSION

The Billies represent just about the lowest cost way of owning a 300B SET. Having built your own amps you'll be confident in tweaking and changing components. You will hear individual component changes easily.

With a sensible complement of valves provided as standard the Billies are fantastic value, producing a tremendous sound. You'll have great fun building them and even more fun making music. If you're in the market for a 300B SET kit, you can't go wrong with the diyhifisupply's Billies. ■ ▲



METER MADE



Needing a new multimeter, Nick Lucas came across a DIY bargain from Rapid Electronics.

► **A**fter 4 years of sterling service my Wavetek multimeter finally gave up the ghost. Its failure was probably due to numerous desktop bungy jumps, long spells sitting close to the soldering iron and a fair few incidents of electrical distress through mis-settings of control dials - plus a great many hours of use.

So my search began for its replacement. With cost being most important I grabbed a pile of catalogues, from Maplin, RS (Radio Spares) and Rapid Electronics.

The latter, you may not have heard of. Rapid Electronics is a mail order electronics catalogue company based in Colchester. They sell all the standard stuff and are very similar to Maplin in this. Where they differ is in their price, because they are generally cheaper, although on some items you have to order larger quantities (100 off), such as low wattage resistors, screws and nuts etc. Capacitors on the other hand are available in low quantities. Check out their excellent range of high voltage axial capacitors, ideal for the 'old style' tag board valve amp. construction. They are

not as well known as Maplins and do not appear on the shelves of W H Smith, but their single volume mail order catalogue of 800 pages can be purchased for just £3. They accept all major credit cards and cheques and will gladly do business with private individuals. Besides cost being an important consideration, when it comes to multimeters a digital meter is essential for me, purely through ease of reading. Time is important when you are trying to hold a probe; trying to decipher the scales of an analogue display is too much for me. I need to see a clear digital reading as I tend to only have a few seconds before I slip and have to re-probe. When there's 450V or so at the end of the tip I like to get measuring over and done with sharpish! Another important factor is the meter's specifications. As I regularly have my head inside a valve amplifier it is essential to be able to read high voltages of 1000V - and not less. You have to pay a lot of money for +1000V meters, be it a top spec. Fluke or an analogue Avometer, and besides, after some eight years of valve servicing I have only had my hands on

one +1000Vdc amplifier, one of Andy Grove's 211 parallel single-ended creation that had a huge 1500Vdc high tension line. I do actually have an Avo 8 under my desk, just in case such an occasion ever arises again! Having the nerve to use it is another matter.

Also, working a lot with valve amplifiers I find myself battling with that old demon, hum. I use the low ac volts range of a multimeter for this, placing the probes across the speaker output posts when connected to a dummy load. Not being able to hear it while on the test bench it is vital I can take a quick look at the hum level so the meter must be able to read to the nearest 0.1mV ac.

Some meters can measure capacitance and inductance. This feature was present on my old Wavetek but, I must admit, I only ever used the inductance meter on a couple of occasions to determine the value of unmarked speaker inductors, so it was hardly worth investing £30.00 or more for this feature.

Searching through RS I located a couple of candidates, but felt them a little over priced. Maplin had a few contenders but they lacked ►►

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◀ that all-important 1000Vdc spec I need. My final choice lay within the pages of the Rapid Electronics catalogue, page 635 to be exact. It was Rapids own 318 digital LCD multimeter offered at an excellent price of £18.50 excluding VAT. I ordered immediately and Business Post dropped it off the very next day. To lists its features -

- dc voltage 0.1mV - 1000V max
- ac voltage 0.1mV - 700V max
- dc current 0.01uA - 10A max
- ac current 10uA - 20A max
- Resistance 0.1ohm - 200Mohm
- Diode tester yes
- Transistor tester yes
- Continuity tester yes
- Auto switch-off if not used within 40 minutes
- physical size 31.5mm x 91mm x 189mm

The package comes with a protective rubberized holster that allows the meter to stand at an angle and even has holders to store the test probes that were provided. A PP3 battery is pre-installed and there's an instruction manual.

My view.

After a month in the field, I cannot fault the 318. It's a rugged unit, which is easy to use. It is also easy to see the display, which is larger than normal LCD display. The test probes are outstanding. Being pin sharp they reduce the chance of slippage and the actual sharpness penetrates the dirt and scum that can prevent a measurement from being taken successfully with blunt probes. The instruction booklet is very clear. Rapid Electronics also offer a calibration service for an additional £29.00

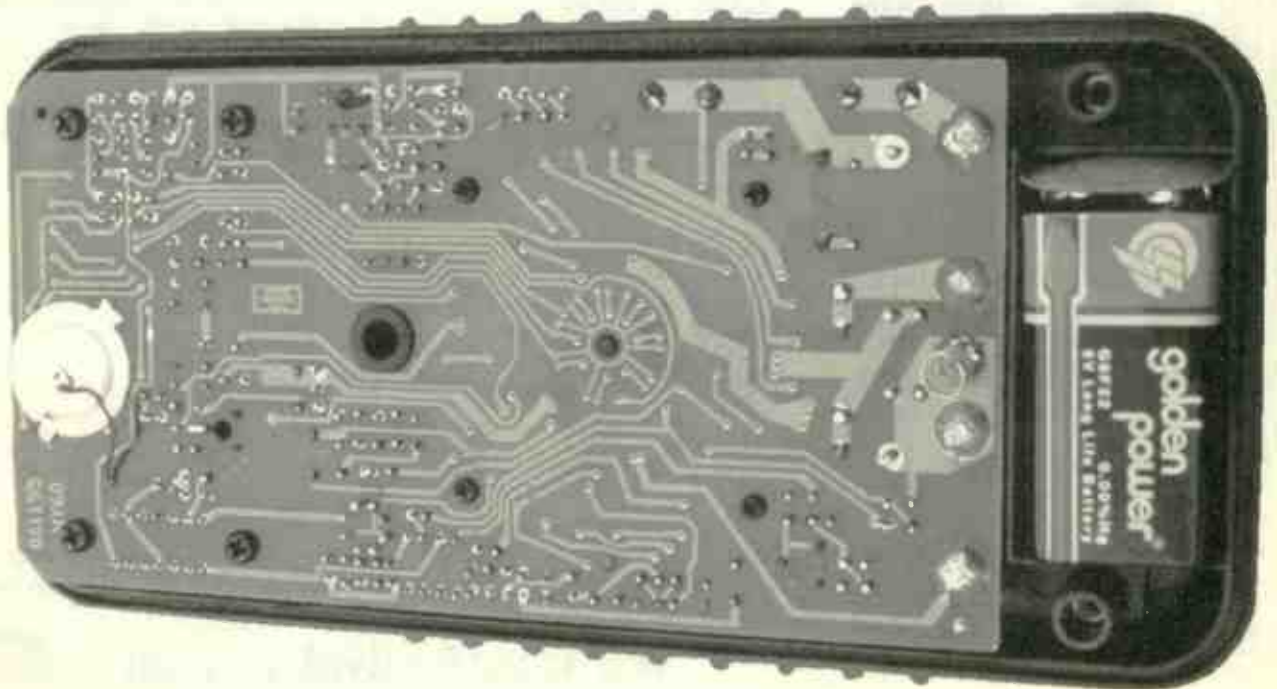
excluding VAT that pushes your meter into BAND A (very good range of accuracy). I did not go for this facility, as this type of accuracy is not essential when one works with valves. Besides, the standard meter has good accuracy through all its functions. Rapid Electronics also offer a 328 model that possesses the ability to measure capacitance, frequency and temperature and there's a 955 auto-ranging multimeter. It is very similar to the 328 except for autoranging and a slightly smaller display. One drawback to the 328 and 955 is that at the lower end of the scale ac voltage measurements are made in 1mV steps - not good enough for hum measurement in my opinion. I went for the 318, basically because I am a myopic tech who likes turning switches - and I am obsessed with hum levels! ■ ▲



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D.I.Y. LETTERS

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▶▶ BLAST FROM THE PAST

I recently took my Troughline 2 tuner to be overhauled and the engineer who accepted the work enthused to me about a stereo decoder he had matched to a Troughline for a customer. Apparently the design was by Tim De Paravicini but the case had the "World Audio" logo. Can you tell me any more and is it still available?

Simon Hilton,
Cumbria

This was a kit/built external stereo decoder for the Leak Troughline tuner designed and sold by Tim De Paravicini. We reviewed it in the July 1992 edition, and published a circuit. Tim called it a World Audio project because a kit like this did not fit in with his company's products.

It was an inspired idea where the mono channel, which carries most information, was valve based, as was the output stage, being built around two ECC83 double-triodes. The difference channel (stereo information) was processed by Motorola MC1310 solid-state decoder. It offered superb results, and sounded pretty amazing but is not now available. **NK ■**

▶▶ POT OF GOLD

I've been using an old valve amp made by Pioneer (SA-810) and recently, the volume control made some metallic noises when the I turned the knob and one of the channels went silent. On closer inspection I discovered that one half of the potentiometer had disintegrated. I also noticed that apart from the usual three terminals, each pot has an extra lug, which is attached at approximately 1 o'clock position to the carbon track (i.e. roughly half way through). I bought a new pot and, as I suspected, it has just "normal" terminals.

I have two questions:

- 1. What do I do with the cables that were attached to those additional lugs?*
- 2. the new pot is 100 k whereas the one that is being replaced is 500 k. Does it matter?*

I would be most grateful for your help. Many thanks -

Marek Podlucky,

It's likely that the terminal you talk about is for 'loudness' compensation at low levels, or for changing the 'law' of the control using an external resistor. Either way, you can leave it disconnected, without affecting basic performance. However, it is quite likely that the circuit will change behaviour for the worse if you substitute 100k for 500k. You should at least use a 500k pot. If possible trace out the circuit to see what values it uses and see if you can understand it. **NK ■**

▶▶ PHONO TUNES

I have some great sounding and easy to execute improvements for anyone with a World Audio Phono II stage and a spare £80.00 to spend. I changed C10/C11 (0.1uF) coupling capacitors for Audio Note copper-foil/paper-in-oils. The result was a fantastic improvement in bass leading edge transients (attack) and mid/treble detail and nuance. Timing also seemed to improve and "gel". My partner, who loves listening, was similarly impressed - to the extent she has let me spend again!

So, last week I changed C18/19 (2.2uF) for Hovland Musicaps. WOW!! Further audible improvement in timing and resolution particularly on 'difficult' tracks like the Talking Heads track 'Born Under Punches' from the Remain in the Light LP. It's interesting how timing and resolution seem to 'play' on each other and when both are in the zone, how the recording can move to a different plane.

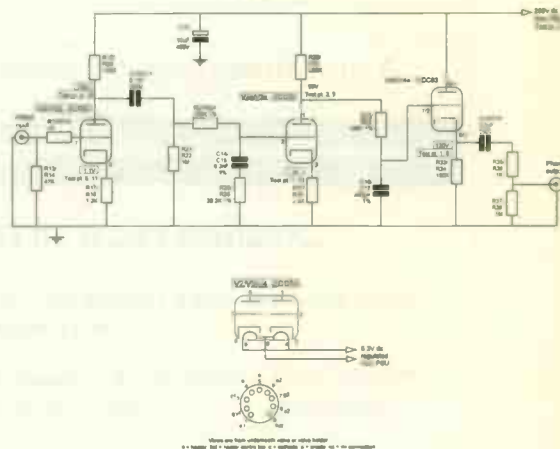
I've now spent a total of £350.00 on my Phono II and I challenge anything in the market under £1500 to touch it for value for money or sound quality. The only small issue is the noise floor which could be a little lower, quieter, darker, call it what you will (I love how you reviewers can associate sound with colour!).

Who's complaining anyway, as it gives me something else to play with and improve on! So next maybe the power supply... a sprinkling of fast recovery diodes and maybe a Blackgate here or there - who knows. Now what we need from the guys at World Audio is a hardwired version (Silver wire, Vishays and/or Caddock's, ANI/Hovland Caps, etc).

My system comprises: Rega 25, RB600, Exact, WA Phono II (modified), Chord Chameleon Interconnects. Amplification is Spark/Cayin Audio AS8i EL34 based integrated and the speakers are Cadence Amaya Electrostatic Hybrids. I have a CD player too but it needs upgrading - a Marantz CD63K1. I'm looking at the new Chord DAC64 or the Perpetual Technology P-1A/P-3A with the CD63 relegated to a transport role.

Regards
Gary Young

SERIES II - PHONO II PHONO STAGE MODULE CIRCUIT DIAGRAM SIGNAL CIRCUIT (ONE CHANNEL)



There will always be a little hiss from a valve phono stage. Although the ECC87 is a little quieter than the ECC83 we used, it is microphonic and often hard and brittle sounding. An alternative we have yet to try are cryogenically treated valves from Pearl of Canada (www.pearl-hifi.com). They are slowly cooled to -117C then brought back to room temperature after a few hours. This relaxes stresses in the metals, Pearl claim, reducing noise and improving sound quality. Pearl also put the valves through a rigorous testing procedure to eliminate duffers.

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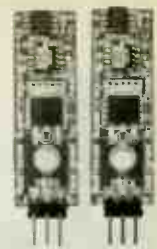
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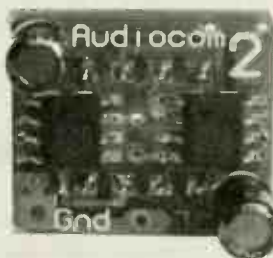


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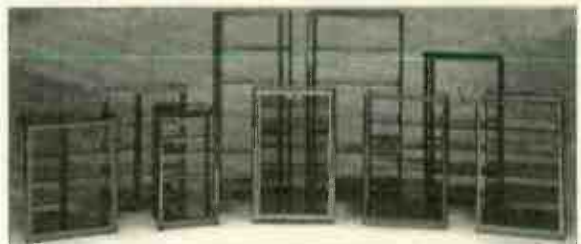
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Roksan DS5 PSU S/H	579	325	20% off

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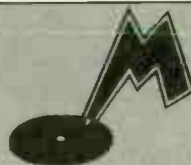
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- SUGDEN AU51 DAC Mint. Boxed. £750. S/H

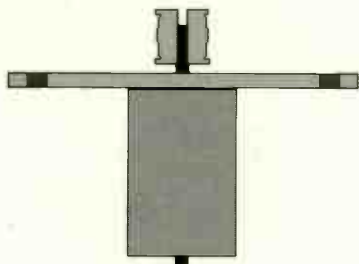
NOW ON PERMANENT DEMONSTRATION THE SUGDEN MASTERCLASS INTEGRATED AMP AND CD PLAYER, RED ROSE ROSETTA AND ROSEBUDS, MOON ELECTRONICS, VELODYNE SUBWOOFERS, WADIA CD PLAYERS, AUDIO ANALOGUE MAESTRO CD PLAYER AND AMP MUSICAL FIDELITY 3D CD PLAYER, LIVING VOICE AND AUDIO PHYSICS LOUDSPEAKERS, AVID TURNTABLES AND CHAPTER AUDIO POWER AMP

UPGRADE YOUR TURNTABLE

"If you are thinking of upgrading your system..the Origin Live dc-motor kit should be high on your list for consideration" TNT AUDIO internet magazine April 2000.

"The single most important upgrade you can ever make to any record deck concerns the motor drivenothing can compare you for the shock of going DC, in a word Gobsmacking" COMMON GROUND MAGAZINE

"Its value is nothing short of tremendous" LISTENER MAGAZINE



Whether you own a Linn Valhalla/Lingo, Rega or any other deck, the results of upgrading to the Origin Live dc motor and power supply are simply astounding. This high grade motor kit is designed as a drop in replacement for almost all turntable motors. Decks benefiting so far from this ultimate of upgrades include Linn, Roksan, Michell, Systemdeck, Rock, Rega etc. With a 12 Volt power supply it is safe and easy to fit. Guidance instructions are provided. At £262 with fully soldered and tested regulator board plus money back guarantee, this is a bargain out of all proportion to it's value in terms of performance. A larger purpose made transformer is also available as an optional extra at £175.

Why pay 4 times the price for less performance ?



LAMINAR FLOW ULTRA

"A high end sound with a sensible look and price tag"
HI-FI WORLD July 2001

"The Ultra's are a deeply satisfying musical product and supreme bargain"
Stereo Times August 2001

Laminar flow cable is a groundbreaking new design of cable. The "Ultra" version is guaranteed to outperform all other interconnects up to 4 times it's price and the "Reference" is a cable that reviewers use to judge other cables due to it's incredible transparency and musicality.

With a money back guarantee if not satisfied you have nothing to lose. Why not order a pair or see your local Origin Live dealer.

Advanced interconnect: £45 per stereo pair
Laminar flow Ultra Interconnect: £85 per stereo pair
Laminar flow Reference Interconnect: £159 per stereo pair

Make cheques payable to Origin Live and send to address shown
We can take credit card orders if you wish. Remember there is a no risk money back guarantee if not entirely satisfied.

EMAIL: origin.live@virgin.net

ORIGIN LIVE TURNTABLE KIT

Now you can save money and build your own high performance deck. The standard parts kit is offered at £282 and is complete apart from a plinth. The kit comes with a full set of drawings and guidance instructions. It allows for your creativity or there are optional parts that will enable you to assemble a tried and tested design within 1 - 4 hours. The optional parts include plinths for suspended and non-suspended designs along with sub-chassis etc. The optional parts upgrade the standard kit to high end performance levels and is probably the easiest kit you will ever make.

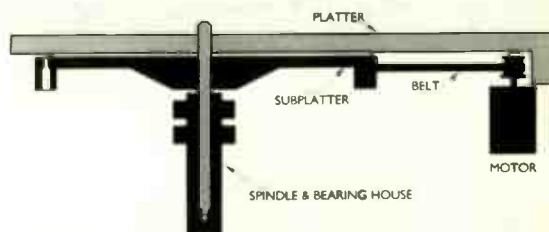
"this Vinyl front end had my jaw heading towards the floor with the solidity and transparency of the music it was making"...
" the standard came up with crystal clear images set in a broad sound stage"... "With all these goodies in place, the standard would give turntables at the £1200-£1400 mark a hard time."

HI-FI WORLD SUPPLEMENT

"is exceptionally easy to build and professional in both sound quality and appearance"

HI-FI NEWS SUPPLEMENT

In group comparison test of 8 turntables, WHAT HI-FI MAGAZINE stated "the origin live turntable is the best sounding deck here... if sonic ability is your top priority just go ahead and buy it... the origin live ultra sounds fantastic"(FIVE STAR RATING)



TURBOCHARGING YOUR REGA ARM

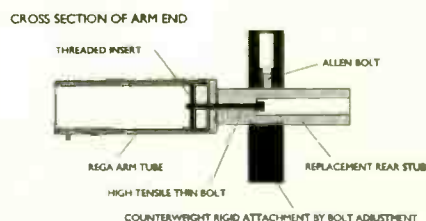
"Nothing less than total dynamite" HI-FI WORLD

If you are the proud owner of any Rega arm, why not utterly transform it into the league of super arms with the Origin live structural modification - £75. This modification will enable your Rega to perform at a level exceeding that of arms costing over £1200.

Rewiring with high grade litz cable is also offered at an additional £70, and external rewiring is £70.

"I have to say the Rega modifications turn this humble arm into a real Giant killer. Gone is the rather grey, sterile sound of the cooking Rega. Instead, tonal colour is fresh, dynamics have great speed and impact, and the sound stage is huge." HI-FI WORLD SUPPLEMENT NOV 97 (structural modification to a RB250) WHAT HI-FI gave this modification a 5 star rating.

For arm modifications we normally return your arm in 2 - 3 days



For further information contact
Origin Live, 87 Chessel Crescent, Bitterne,
Southampton, SO19 4BT

Tel: 02380 442183 / 578877 - Fax: 02380 398905

WEBSITE: <http://www.originlive.com>

HEATHCOTE AUDIO

TEL: 01992 653999 MOBILE: 07860 511111 E-MAIL ADDRESS: HeathcoteAudio@aol.com

VALVE AMPS

JADIS J480 CLASS A MONOBLOCKS (WERE £10,000) RE-VALVED SUPERB
RAYMOND LUMLEY M-150 MONOBLOCKS (MONSTERS)
COUNTERPOINT SA-20 X 2 (STEREO OR BRIDGED MONOBLOCKS)
AUDIOVALVE PPP-45 MONOBLOCKS
MICHAELSON AUDIO CHRONOS 4 BOX FAB ART DECO STYLE (WAS £10,130.00)
AUDIO INNOVATIONS SECOND AUDIO TRIDDE MONO'S 2X2 (ORDER PATROL MONO)
CONRAD JOHNSON PV10-AL PRE AMP
AUDIO INNOVATIONS 300 INTEGRATED MM/MC PHONO
AUDIO INNOVATIONS 300 INTEGRATED
AUDIONOTE OTO SE INC. PHONO STAGE
AUDIONOTE M-1 PRE AMP (WITH PHONO STAGE) EX DEM
AUDIONOTE P-2 POWER AMP EX DEM
COPLAND CT-401 INTEGRATED INC. PHONO STAGE
LUMLEY REFERENCE 120 MONOBLOCKS (NEW VALVES) TRIODE SWITCHABLE
MONRIO ASTY VALVE PRE (VERY PRETTY) NEW
CARY AE-ONE P LINE PRE AMP (EXPOSED VALVES)
ROTEL MICH RHCI0 PASSIVE PRE
AUDIO SYNTHESIS PASSION PRE (BLACK MARBLE CASE)
MICHAELSON & AUSTINMENT MORE TVA-1 KT88 POWER AMP CHROME CHASSIS

SOLID STATE

ELECTROCOMPANET FC-1 REMOTE INTEGRATED (WITH PRE-OUT) EX. DIS/DEM
ELECTROCOMPANET AW-60 POWER AMP (80 WATTS CLASS A) EX.DIS/DEM
SUGDEN AU-51 CLASS A POWER AMPS EX DIS/DEM
DENSON DM-30 PRE AMP (WAS £1600.00 NEW)
AUDIOLAB 8000 Q PRE-AMP
AUDIOLAB 8000 MONOBLOCKS
AUDIOLAB 8000 S
AUDIOLAB 8000 A LATE MODEL
DPA DSP-200 PRE AMP
DPA DPA-200S POWER AMP (BRIDGEABLE)
DPA 200 PHONO STAGE
ECA VISTA PRE AMP(SUPERB)
TAG MACLAREN 60-1 INTEGRATED FEW HOURS USE ONLY
EZO ARIA REMOTE INTEGRATED (VERY PRETTY) AS NEW- FEW HOURS USE
EXPOSURE 1V POWER AMP
MVL A2+ VERY HEAVY 100 WATT X 2 INTEGRATED VERY LITTLE USE
MUSICAL FIDELITY XA2 INTEGRATED AS NEW
ALCHEMIST FREYA PRE AMP & 2 GENESIS MONOBLOCKS EXTREMELY RARE/BEAUTIFUL
ROTEL MICH RHCI0 PASSIVE PRE
QED VECTOR REFERENCE REMOTE ACTIVE/PASSIVE PRE-AMP
MUSICAL FIDELITY P180
MUSICAL FIDELITY 3A PRE AMP
MUSICAL FIDELITY 3A PRE AMP
MUSICAL FIDELITY MA50 CLASS A MONOBLOCKS
DENON 2500 DIGITAL PRE AMP (MATCHES POA-4400 MONO'S)
LINX STRATOS PRE AMP & 2X 120 WATT MONOBLOCKS MM/MC ETC (VERY RARE/GOOD)
DPA ENLIGHTENMENT REMOTE PRE AMP (LIGHT DEM USE ONLY SUPERB)
TECHNICS SUC 2000 REMOTE PRE AMP/SEA-2000 POWER AMP VERY HIGH QUALITY
MAGNUM REFERENCE MP 125 PRE & 2 X MF125 MONOBLOCKS(140WATTS)
MUSICAL FIDELITY THE PRE-AMP & 2 TYPHOON BRIDGEABLE POWER AMPS(BALANCED)
MERIDIAN MCA
LINN PRETEK PRE AMP
LINN LK14K2 PRE-POWER + REMOTE
ION SP1 PRE-AMP & X-PACK-2 SEPARATE POWER SUPPLY
MISSION 776777 BATTERY PRE & MATCHING POWER (VERY RARE INC. MANUALS)
SUGDEN C51/P51/T51 PRE/POWER/TUNER RECENT £200 SERVICE
AMC AV81HTC PRE-AMP/PROCESSOR STEREO/PRO LOGIC/PBX REMOTE
SONY SDP-EPS95 DOLBY DIGITAL PROCESSOR AC-3 ETC
REVOX A-78 AMP COLLECTORS ITEM

CD

MERIDIAN 506-20 BIT & MSR REMOTE
MERIDIAN 200 TRANSPORT (SERVICED RECENTLY)
TRICHORD DIGITAL TURNTABLE AES/EBU & BNC
DPA PDM 2 LEGENDARY 2 BOX DAC (WAS £2500)
AUDIONOTE DAC-1 EX DIS AS NEW/BOXED
DPA ENLIGHTENMENT DAC MINT/BOXED
THETA CHROMA 396 DAC HCCD MINT/BOXED
TEAC D-TI DAC BRAND NEW BOXED
MICROMEGA T-DRIVE TRANSPORT & T-DAC (WAS £2080) PHONO & BALANCED
ROK SAN DFI 1.5 TOT LOADING TRANSPORT
ARCAM 8 CD PLAYER
MERIDIAN 203 DAC
ORELLE D-188 DAC
WOODSIDE DAC 1
PINK TRIANGLE ORDINAL DAC 7 (1307 FILTER)
MYRIAD T-10 CD PLAYER
ROTEL RDP/980 TRANSPORT
ROTEL RDP/980 DIGITAL PROCESSOR
TECHNICS SLPS 900 REMOTE VOLUME ETC
ARCAM DELTA 70 2 CD PLAYER DIGITAL/VOLUME OUT
ARCAM DELTA 170 TRANSPORT
ARCAM BLACK BOX 3 DAC
AMC CDBA BALANCED PHONO OUTPUTS
PIONEER PD 9700

VINYL

TOWNSEND ROCK WITH FLUID DAMPEH
PINK TRIANGLE PT T00 & PSU
HELIOS ORION 10 INCH TONEARM
HELIOS ORION TONEARM
STD 305M TURNTABLE & MAYWAVE ARM
TECHNICS SL-110 CLASSIC TURNTABLE
DAIS TURNTABLE (GOLD STUNNING LOOKS VERY RARE)MINT/BOXED
PROJECT 6 TURNTABLE & ARM NEW GOLDRING 1022 CARTRIDGE V.G.C.
LINN BASIK PLUS ARM
TOM EVANS MICROGROOVE/LTHOS PHONO STAGE
MICHELL DELPHENI PHONO STAGE
DPA 200 PHONO STAGE
COUNTERPOINT SA2 VALVE STEP UP SEPARATE PSU(WAS £1700 NEW)
SHURE REALISTIC RXT6 (EQUIVALENT V15-47) BRAND NEW
SHURE N75ED-T2 BRAND NEW
MISSION 773 LC. MC VERY LITTLE USE
GOLDRING 1020/1022/1042 ALL NEW STYLUS

AUDIO TECHINICA-AT705LTD EDITION GOLD (NEW ETYLUE)
AUDIO TECHINICA-AT-F300CC MC (APPROX 5 HOURS USE)

LOUDSPEAKER

B K S 107 MK 2 RIBBON HYBRID FLOORSTANDERS (HIGHLY REVIEWED)
AUDIONOTE ANE-SP AMERICAN OAK FINISH EX DISPLAY (NEW £3000)
MAGNAPLANFR SMD C SE HARDLY USED)
PROAC STUDIO-3 MONITORS
SNELL TYPE E MK3 VERY RARE
SD ACOUSTICS SD-06S (SMALLER BROTHER TO SD-1)
CASTLE EDENS
SPEENDOR SP-1 WALNUT ONE
INFINITY REFERENCE STANDARD KAPPA 5 EMIT RIBBON TWEETER SANTOS ROSEWOOD
TANNOY ARDENS 15'
TANNOY ARUNDEL 15' DRIVERS 95/98 DB SENSITIVE VERY RARE
CELESTION 7000 4FT. HIGH RIBBON TWEETER VERY RARE
WHARFPALE OPTION 1 HUGE ACTIVE ONLY 4 PAIRS MADE (WERE £8000NEW)
SONY TCD-08 PORTABLE DAT MACHINE AS NEW COND.
WILMSLOW AUDIO VORTEX VOLT DRIVERS PIANO BLACK EXT. X OVER
KEF CONCERTO.S
ROYD EDENS
PROAC SUPER TABLETS
CELESTION SL 600 SI (AEROLAM ENCLOSURES)
MONITOR AUDIO MA-703 FLOORSTANDERS (CHERRY WOOD FINISH)

TUNERS /TAPE

LINX AUDIO THETA TUNER FULL WIDTH (WAS EXPENSIVE) VERY HIGH QUALITY
SONY ST-SE 300 TUNER AS NEW
SONY TCK 700ES CASSETTE LITTLE USED 3 HEAD SUPERB ES BUILD
NAKAMICHI DR-9
AIWA HD-S100 PORTABLE DAT MACHINE AS NEW COND.
AIWA HD-S100 PORTABLE DAT MACHINE (REMOTE ETC)

RACKS/STANDS

SOUNDSTYLE XS 105 NEW STYLE (CURVED GLASS) 5 SHELF BLACK OR SILVER EX DIS.
SOUNDSTYLE X110 4 SHELF STAND SILVER (SLIGHT MARK ON REAR) EX DIS
SOUNDSTYLE AV TABLE SILVER
TARGET 5 SHELFSTAND BLACK GLOSS/SMOKED GLASS
SOUND ORG. 2530 AUDIO VISUAL STAND SILVER NEW
SOUND ORG. 2540 MIDI STAND
SOUND ORG. 2560
KUDOS S507 18 INCH SPEAKER STANDS SAND FILLED
SOUNDSTYLE SELECT 4 PILLAR 22 INCH SPEAKER STANDS SATIN SILVER/BLACK
ACOUSTIC ENERGY AE-1 DEDICATED LOUDSPEAKER STANDS
ACOUSTIC ENERGY AE-1 DEDICATED LOUDSPEAKER STANDS BRAND NEW BOXED
TARGET R4 LOUDSPEAKER STANDS VERY HEAVY WERE £300
SPECIAL OFFER
SOUNDSTYLE SPEAKER STANDS SOLID PILLAR ATECAMA STYLE BUT HIGH GLOSS BLACK, SILVER
OR SATIN BLACK FINISH SAND FILLABLE 18" OR 24" LOOK SUPERB LIMITED NUMBER
NEW/BOXED WHILE STOCKS LAST ONLY £75

CABLES

QED SILVER ANNIVERSARY AWARD WINNING BI-WIRE CABLE (LTD.STOCK) £650. METRE

LOUDSPEAKER CABLE
CARDAS HEXLINK 2 METRE PAIR £325
GOERTZ M1-3 DIVINITY 2.5 METRE PAIR AS NEW/BOXED £395
LINN LK-400 2.5 METRE PAIR £75
SONICLINK AST-150 X2 BI-WIRE 5 METRE PAIR (NEW) £55
DPA IS19 4.5 METRE PAIR £195
NORDOST FLATLINE GOLD BI-WIRE 3.7 METRE PAIR £125
ROKSAN HDC 815 2.9 METRE PAIR X 2 NEW £35
ROKSAN HDC 815 2 METRE PAIR NEW £25
SILVER SONIC (AMERICAN) 2.4 METRE LENGTH £50
OEHLBACKEABEL (SWISS) 11 METRE LENGTH BRAND NEW (WAS £15.M)
AUDIOQUEST INDIGO BLUE 3 METRE PAIR (BI-WIRE) £95
CABLE TALK 3 BI-WIRE 6 METRE PAIR £35
LOUDSPEAKER CABLE
VAN DEN HUL MCD 352 1.5 METRE PAIR (TERMINATED) £45
DPA IS19 4.5 METRE PAIR £195
NORDOST FLATLINE GOLD BI-WIRE 3.7 METRE PAIR £125
ROKSAN HDC 815 2.9 METRE PAIR X 2 NEW £35
SILVER SONIC (AMERICAN) 2.4 METRE LENGTH £50
OEHLBACKEABEL (SWISS) 11 METRE LENGTH BRAND NEW UNUSED (WAS £15.M)
AUDIOQUEST INDIGO BLUE 3 METRE PAIR (BI-WIRE) £95
CABLE TALK 3 BI-WIRE 6 METRE PAIR £35
INTERCONNECT
DPA BLACK SLINK 6 METRE PAIR (BALANCED XLR) £650
DPA BLACK SLINK 1/2 METRE £80/95
LINDSAY AUDIOPHILE SATIN GRAY (AMERICAN NEW/PACKED WAS £480)
ROKSAN HDC 01A ANALOGUE INTERCONNECT 1 METRE PAIR £50
ROKSAN HDC 02A ANALOGUE INTERCONNECT 1 METRE £35
ROKSAN 001 ISODA 1 METRE £75
ROKSAN ISODA 1/2 METRE £50
IKOS 104 2 X 1 METRE PAIRS £25
YFERA 1.5 METRE PAIR £60
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CELESTION A 2 LOUDSPEAKERS -	£1500	£750.00
DENON AVP-1, POA-T3 & POA-T2 -	£4,950	£1,000.00
JAMO CONCERT 8 LOUDSPEAKERS -	£1,400,	£900.00
JAMO CONCERT 11 LOUDSPEAKERS	£2,300	£1,500.00
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SONY TAN 55 ES POWERAMPLIFIER	-	£195.00
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Leak Stereo 60	£550	Ortofon MC15 super	£60
Models Of Leak Mono + Stereo Pre-Amps In Stock.		Decca professional arm	£100
		Shure V15 II cartridge	£20
Nakamichi 610 Pre-Amp/ 620 Power-Amp/ 630 FM Tuner	£500	Goldring 10-10 cartridge	£40
Tannoy HPD15" gold crossover (Single)	£50	Ortofon SPU-TE (built-in transformer) needs re-tipping	£80
HMV 555 Stereoscope Amp with cathode ray tube	£450	Decca FFSS stereo MKIII	£100
Garrard RC88 Autochanger Turntable	£20	Decca FFSS stereo MKI	£75
Sound Sales D.X. plus one tuner SW/MW/LW (approx. 1946) very rare	£200	Decca FFSS mono LP	£75
		Decca FFSS mono 78	£75
Valves (G E C. Mullard etc.)		Speakers	
KT66, ECC81/84, EF80		Spendor BC1A with built-in amps	£250
Many Others. Please Phone For Details.		Wharfedale Super 3 drive unit, needs new surround (single)	£20
		KEF K1 Slimline Monitors (pair)	£25
		Leak Sandwich Bohm (pair)	£100
		Please phone for details of Tannoy speakers, stock often changes before the next advert	
		Hammond Everell organ mod. S. 10 valve two keyboards with Vibrato + Reverb + Bass pedals. Overall size 35" h x 39" w x 22" d	

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 Naim CDI DC Player 1994 Mint £825
 Manley Stingray Integrated 50w Valve Amp Ex Dem £1595
 Quad ESL 63's Serviced Re-clothed In Black Excellent £1195
 Vertitas 7's And Stands Satin Oak £750.00 Ex Dem
 Vertitas 25's Floorstanders Cherry £1030 Ex Dem
 P M C TB2 Cherry Ex Dem £550
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Tom Waits	Alice/Red Drum	£TBC

LOVE REISSUES ON SUNDAZED RECORDS - £15.90 each
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New Stock And Recent Releases

Basie/Bennet	Basie Swings Tony Sings	£26.90
Beatles	At The BBC (Reissue)	£18.90
Beautiful South	Solid Bronze Greatest Hits	£19.90
Fun Lovin Criminals	Loco (Belated LP Pressing)	£15.90
Eugene McDaniels	Headless Heroes Of Apocalypse	£11.90
Fred Neil	Bleeker & MacDougal	£15.90
Captain Beefheart	Grow Fins Volume 3 (in stock!!)	£19.90
Madonna	GHV2 - Greatest Hits 2	£TBC
Pete Townsend	Scoop - 3LP (Classic Records)	£49.90
Pink Floyd	Echoes The Best Of - 4LP set	£33.00
Paul McCartney	Driving Rain	£18.90
Robbie Williams	Swing When You're Winning	£15.90
Sarah Vaughan	You're Mine You (Roulette)	£16.50
Stephen Stills	Manassas (Classic Records)	£41.90
The Fall	Are U Are Missing Winner	£15.90
Gram Parsons	Safe At Home	£15.90
Dr John	Gris Gris (US reissue)	£10.90
Byrds	Preflyte Sessions/Sanctuary 3	£17.90

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Bob Dylan	Love And Theft	£14.90
Cosmic Rough Riders	Enjoy The Melodic Sunshine	£10.90
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Richard Thompson	Action Packed	£17.90
McCartney & Wings	Wingspan 4LP set	£15.00
Mercury Rev	All Is Dream	£11.90
New Order	Get Ready	£12.90
Paul Weller	Days Of Speed	£14.90
Radiohead	Amnesiac	£18.90
REM	Reveal (US Import)	£21.90
Travis	The Invisible Band	£12.90
Turin Breaks	The Optimist	£12.90
White Stripes	White Blood Cells	£9.90

And not forgetting The Strokes, Nick Cave, Stereophonics, Eels Eric Clapton. Air, Elbow, Ash, Gorillaz, XTC, Manics, SFA

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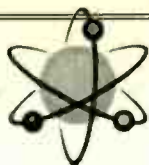
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When Tim de Paravicini does a job, he does it properly, whether it is a custom studio installation of an affordable phono pre-amplifier like the EAR 834P. With years of experience in design and manufacturing, nobody can come close to the unique point of view and life experience he puts into all of his designs.

When first launched, the 834P was the only valve phono stage you could buy with facilities for both good quality moving coil (MC) and moving magnet (MM) cartridges. In addition, the unit could be purchased with a volume control, allowing direct connection to a power amplifier. Now in its seventh year of production it still set the standard with fantastic soundstaging that all transistor phono stages can just dream off, coupled to low background noise and enviable reliability.

There are now four models in the EAR lineup:

The classic 834P uses the same circuit architecture as its more expensive brothers, and shares the same high quality sound through MM type cartridges, it is enclosed in a tough, rigid metal case and is fully "CE" type approved. price £380.00

The signature builds on the Classic 834P specification by adding a superb moving coil (MC) input stage, as well as the no-extra-price option of a high quality volume control. price £530.00

Top of the range, the Deluxe 834P comes in stunning chrome and gold cabinet, and has extra attraction and quality control. With different moving coil input options, this unit will fit the most demanding of audiophile systems. For the true vinyl enthusiast. price £800.00

MC3 - The ultimate stage for MC matching with 3 fixed transformer taps to cover all types of moving coil cartridges, and separate left/right grounding. MC3 in used in the new £10,000 312 pre. price £630.00

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Ear 869 single ended triode integrated amplifier
Improved version of the classic 859 with revised output transformers modified input stage with the addition of a extra signal valve which has allowed an increase to 15watt of single ended power. also the 869 can be used as a power amp. Don't be fooled by its modest power output this amp drives real world speakers. price £2100.99

Ear 8L6 Integrated/Pre-main amplifier
Using 8 EL34 power valves to produce 50watt per channel in push pull class A with in-house designed output transformers. The 8L6 has been designed to meet a wide variety of needs from the most demanding of audio files to the professional seeking high quality monitoring equipment in the studio field. Valve life is long and replacement cost are modest. There is also a balanced power amp version with monoblocking capabilities to produce 100watt per channel. Price £2199.00

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- Quad FM4 Tuner mint with box brown finish £195
- Quad 77 Int amp grey/blue finish £275
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- Marantz CD85 "Martin Colloms rave review" rosewood end stops 15 bit superb sounding player £295
- Naim SBL speakers black finish £695
- Lumley 120 mono block 120 watt per channel £1600
- Kenwood heavy weighted transport £195
- Primare A20 MKII integrated amp new £700
- System Deck IX turntable UPGRADE YOUR REGA from Art Audio valve headphones amp & line stage without board PSU new £750
- Arcam BR integrated amp as new £195
- MAD 312 integrated amp boxed mint £95
- Epos M15 floorstanding speakers cherry new model £595
- B&W 60352 floorstanding speakers cherry £295
- Musical Fidelity E10 integrated amp £175
- Sugden A21 new model integrated amp silver finish £595
- Lusman valve D105 CD player £195
- Rogers LS7 bookshelf speakers £95
- Rogers LS33 with AB33 £295
- Quad ESL63 black mini with stands £995
- Solisica Advanced Acoustic Design open battle design speakers outboard crossover with stands new £1000's?
- SME V tonearm boxed £995
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- Crimson battery 610 £95
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- Musical Fidelity F25 remote pre £795
- Radford Tri Star 3 way speakers £195
- Pink Triangle Ordinal DAC £250
- Quad 33 wooden sleeve boxed as new £50
- Tube Technology Genesis 100watts monoblocs re-valved £1350
- Musical Fidelity P270 MKII power amp with MX pre £750
- Kel Reference 1.2 roseout finish new mint £995
- Cyrus III integrated amp £295
- Sugden T48 stereo tuner £1200
- Pioneer PD3703 CD player £165
- Sonus Faber Signum boxed new £995
- Audion golden knights 300b mono blocs new valves £1250
- Revox G36 open reel mint £395
- Conrad Johnson P110 pre amplifier as new £495
- Audio Research SP14 valve pre amp £295
- Audio Research CD11 cd player £2250
- Audionote K speakers with matching stands £750
- Kel Concerto speakers £125
- SME 309 tonearm £450
- EAR V20 integrated amp bargain price £1795
- EAR 834P £235
- Quad 77 integrated amp with Remote carbon finish £295
- Trilogy valve MC head amp £195
- Michelle CD power supply £250
- EAR 834 L valve line stage £275
- Revox A77 Open Reel £295
- Amcron DC-300A Power Amp £350
- Linn Wakanda MM & MC phono stage £295
- Counterpoint SA 5000 Pre - the ultimate Valve Pre Amp (very rare) £1495
- Audio Research LS2 one of the world's finest line preamps £1250
- Pioneer PD93 CD player battleship build quality with rosewood end stops new £1500 £495

- Pioneer CT-93 tape deck daly's cost new £600:00 £195
 - QED T-37 tuner £75
 - Dynalab Etude tuner "the best" new £1400 £795
 - Sennheiser HD580 headphones boxed as new £95
 - Chord Clearway mains conditioner new £225 £95
 - Croft DTL power amp 10 months old £595
 - Philips CD304 heavy weight build £75
 - Audiolab 8000A Int amp various from £195
 - Linsley Hood 75 de-lux Int amp £75
 - Linsley Hood power tran tuner £75.00
 - Celestion Dilton 10 bookshelf spk's £95.00
 - KEF R2 bookshelf spk's £95.00
 - Leak Sandwich 250 spk's £95.00
 - Marantz 105 tuner £65
 - Nytech power amp £125
 - Meridian 206 CD player £350
 - Audio Innovations L2 valve line stage £495
 - Audio Innovations S200 pre-amp with valve phono stage £375
 - Croft original micro valve pre-amp superb phono stage £175
 - Pioneer 33 reference tuner rosewood side panels £225
- Due In**
- Audio Research remote integrated amp £1795
 - Linn LM100 £295
 - Quad 606 £295
 - Quad II monoblocs consecutive serial numbers £195
 - various centre speakers £375
 - Sonos omni directional speakers £275
 - Gale 401 chrome ended speakers with matching stands £295
 - Garrard 301 £350
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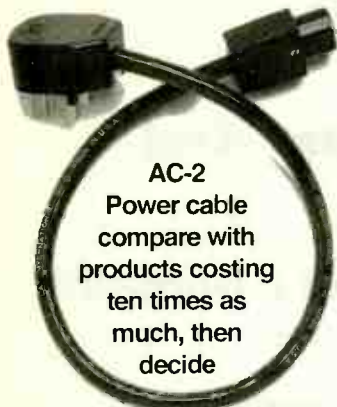
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Fitted with IEC (Martin Kaiser) and MK Tough Plug. Figure of eight, 16 amp IEC, Bulgin, Neutrik etc also available. Plugs - USA, various European, Schuko, and other types. Cable can be supplied fitted to our all steel 4, 6 and 8 way distribution blocks. We can rewire the distribution blocks with Eupen cable as an extra cost option. Refer to our web site for details.

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WANTED: REL STADIUM II sub bass. Any condition but must be sound electrically and mechanically. Garrard 401 Quartz locked power supply. Can collect. Can pay cash. Tel: 01909 470 192 evenings. (Feb/I)

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SPEAKERS WANTED: 2 x 14" 200 watt subwoofers, 2 x 10" 200 watt mid range. Must be excellent condition. Tel: D. Willis 02920 890 770 (Feb/I)

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NAIM NAIT3, good condition, £300. Tel: 0116 270 0989 (Feb/I)

LINN KAN speakers, 50 watts, £180. Nakamichi BX300E, 3 head cassette deck, £200. Creek Stereo FM tuner £80. Nakamichi 480, 2 head cassette deck £100. Naim Nap 140 power amp, Naim Hi Cap, Naim pre amp 32 5N, £700. Total system £1000. Tel: 023 9225 5481 (Feb/I)

MINT GARRARD 301 turntable £150. Leak Point One preamp £25. Quad mono tuner £25. Leak Stereofetic tuner £20. Quad ELS57 speakers for spares £120. Thorens TD150/II turntable £30. Tel: 01745 331 681 (Rhyl) (Feb/I)

A GREAT NAIM! NAC52 preamp with Supercap (2000), (remote, cables, manual). Mint £3500 (£5700 new). Call Vangelis 020 7727 4855. (Feb/I)

PINK TRIANGLE Export Helius Aureus Audio-Technica AT-OC5, little used £400. Tel: 01623 825 794 (Notts) (Feb/I)

TEAC VRDS TI DT1 DAC, mint condition, boxed, £450 ono. Acoustic Energy AE505 cherry finish, immaculate £450 ono (£850). Leak Troughline 2 c/w Galaxy 17, serviced by One Thing £150 ono. Philips RH544 Motion Feedback speakers, impressive £300. Tel: 0161 355 2905 or 07788 441 524 (Feb/I)

CALIFORNIA AUDIO Labs Tempest II. Classic valve output stage Cd player. Very rare, highly sought after two box player. Phenomenal sound, excellent condition. An all time great. (See Hi-Fi News November 1999) £1750 ono. May p/lex Audio Research power amp D76, D79 or D70 or VT50. Tel: 01509 215 230 (Feb/I)

WANTED: SONY Elcaset model EL7 must be mint and fully functional also Elcaset tapes wanted. Tel: 01279 724804 ask for Bob or 01582 793999 daytime (Feb/I)

NAIM NAP250 poweramp, recent Naim service, boxed £875 (new price £1850). Pioneer PDR-04, rare, top of range CDR recorder/player/remote, brand new, unused £595 (new price £1200) Tel: 01279 300 947 (Feb/I)

MICHELL ORBE-SE, RB300 £1500. Trichord Dino £275. Grace 707 MkII £300. ProAc Tablette 2000 £475. Due to health problems cancelled order. All brand new. Thorens TD166 MkVI, RB250, Supex SDX1000 £525. Teac VRDS-9 £375. Tel: 0117 955 6555 (Feb/I)

CELESTION SL600si on Master stands £350. Electrostatic Hybrid speakers from the USA. Black and stunning with matching subwoofers £950 (new cost £4000). Ittok LVII Asak, excellent £250. Tel: 0118 981 5681 or 07909 697 060 (Feb/I)

GRAMAPHONE, REGAL tabletop model, brass horn £100. 400+ hi-fi magazines: Hi-Fi News 1966-7, 1985-97, Hi-Fi For Pleasure 1974-84, Hi-Fi Answers/Audiophile 1977-94. £400 the lot. Tel: Richard 020 8991 0762 (London) (Feb/I)

DENON DVD 5000 £800 Toshiba 50900E as new £800. Audioplan Kontrast II speakers £500. Sony X77ES CD £450. Sony 703ES DAC £500. All mostly boxed and in mint condition. Tel: 0781 294 5704 (Mar/I)

MISSION 775 SM turntable, Mission arm, legendary top of range model £365, Sony Espirit TA-E900 preamp with superb phonostage (£2600) £475. Cartridge Man Musicman 2, virtually unused £295. Atacama Europa 5 tier stand £145 (£299) Tel: 020 8952 2044 (Feb/I)

AUDIO RESEARCH SPI0 MkII preamplifier, exceptionally fine condition. All original boxes and owners manual £1750. Tel: 0191 281 0260 (Feb/I)

BOSE LIFESTYLES System, includes 13 pairs Accustimax speakers, 1x AM9P bass unit, 1x AM3P bass units, includes 4 remotes. Hardly used, £2000. Tel: 0777 445 7619 (Feb/I)

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MERIDIAN 504 tuner, unwanted gift, new, boxed £395. Sony Professional Walkman WMD6C, boxed, as new £215. Sony TAF500ES amplifier, excellent £95. Wanted: Thorens TD126 Mk4 or 5 turntable. Tel: 01275 835 334 (Bristol) (Feb/I)

GARRARD 401 in Aphellion plinth, recently serviced £360. Cartridge Man Musicmaker 2, virtually unused £295. Sony Espirit Tan TA-E900, classic pre-amp, superb MC/MM phonostage, handbook, boxed, £390. Mission 775 SM turntable, superb, £360. Tel: 020 8952 2044 (Feb/I)

NOTTINGHAM ANALOGUE Spacedeck spacearm and Tracer One cartridge. As new condition £700 ono. Castle Harlech SI speakers. Black ash. Excellent condition £350 ono. Tel: Shaun on Grimsby 01472 883 722 (Feb/I)

MUSICAL FIDELITY A300 integrated amplifier, remote, phono, pristine condition. One female owner £825. Mandrake (Siltech) silver interconnect 3 feet, cost £550 sell for £200. Tel: 01730 815171 (Feb/I)

EPOS ES30's, black ash. Three years old, perfect, unmarked with original packaging. Cost £2300, bargain £1400. Custom Design Aspect 500AV equipment rack, black with smoked glass shelves £225. Tel: 020 7742 3215 Email: chrisfruen@cs.com (Feb/I)

DELTEC DPA 50S pair bi-amped all cables offers or exchange. Michell Argo Hera £150. Yamaha DSPE 492 DDPI Dolby Digital processors offers. Panasonic Region I DVD offers. All good condition 01452 721271 or 07968 010939 (Feb/I)

MYRYAD MCD600 CD player £879 (£1300), MT100 tuner £349 (£600) M1240 integrated amp £999 (£1500). Ruark Solus loudspeakers (cherry) £829 (£1250) all less than 6 months old and boxed Tel: 023 808 726 20 (Feb/I)

ROKSAN DP-1 CD transport, vgc, boxed £575. Teac P-700 CD transport, unmarked £475. Pioneer F208 tuner, RDS, text, etc, as new, boxed £65. Tel: 07941 923881 (01273 698793 after 6pm) (Feb/I)

Classified Ads

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NEW, ED-DEM AND CLEARANCE ITEMS

	RRP	SALE	
Arcam Alpha 10	£799.00	£549.00	D
Arcam Alpha 8R Amp.	£350.00	£259.00	N+D
Arcam Alpha 7R Amp.	£280.00	£229.00	N+D
Arcam Alpha 9P Pre. Amp.	£400.00	£300.00	N+D
Acoustic Energy AE1 MKII	£995.00	£695.00	D
Copeland CDA266	£1,399.00	£1,195.00	D
Copeland CDA289	£1,985.00	£1,295.00	D
Krell KAV 500i Int. Amp.	£5,498.00	£3,895.00	D
Mission 701 speakers	£160.00	£119.00	N
Linn Kaber	£1,995.00	£695.00	D
Linn Keosa	£499.00	£369.00	D
Mission X space speakers	£199.00	£95.00	N+D
ProAc 3.8	£3,990.00	£2,990.00	D
Neate Mystique	£735.00	£499.00	D
Cyrus SL Amp	£400.00	£250.00	D
Cyrus AV Master Processor		£200.00	D
Audio Research VT50	£3,499.00	£2,279.00	D
Rotel RX965RDS A/V receiver	£950.00	£695.00	D
Tannoy Revolution R3 speakers	—	£249.00	S/H
Meridian 500 Transport (mint)	£1,350.00	£849.00	D
Meridian 502 Pre. Amp	£1,385.00	£995.00	D
Meridian M33 Active speakers	£1495.00	£995.00	N+D
Quad 77 Integrated Amp.	£700	£350	D

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Winter sale

Alchemist Forsetti Amp	£650
Michell Syncro	£225
TDL RTL 3 Speakers	£200
Garrard 301	£220
Marantz Pm6010 ki+Cd6000 ki	£600
Arcam CD92	£690
Rotel RC980/RB980/RB980	£650
Audio Analogue Donizetti Power	£475
Audio Analogue Bellini Pre-amp	£395
Rega ELA Speakers	£150
Rotel 951 CD Ex.Disp.	£275
Quad 50e (pair)	£350
Linn Classik (silver,ex-dem)	£800
Michell Alecto Stereo	£999
Tannoy 613 Speakers	£150
Quad 988 speakers	£3000
Michell Gyro SE with RB 300	£850
Unison Research S2 valve amp	£830
Quad Forty pre/power (ex.dem)	£3400

used Quad bought and sold

MERLIN MUSIC V.S.M. - Millennium Edition with battery B.A.M. rated Class 'A' by Stereophile magazine who said, 'This is one music lover's speaker you need to hear, however much you're prepared to spend.' Go to www.merlinmusic.com to see the outstanding reviews. U.S.A. price \$7150 asking £4700. Tel: 01296 437314 (Aylesbury, Bucks.) P.S. They love valves (Feb/1)

MANA ACOUSTICS 3 shelf Hi-Fi stand. Custom made to fit M.F. Nu-Vista amp and CD player i.e. accepts 500mm in width. Buyer must collect, asking £350. Tel: 01296 437314, (Aylesbury, Bucks) (Feb/1)

FALCON DESIGN LS3/5A's ash veneer excellent sound/condition with stands £295. Rega 3 black mint condition includes cartridges/spare belt £175 Tel: 01981 550606 (Mar)

MISSION CYRUS amp and tuner plus 770F speakers Genexxa CD-1660 Technics RS-B755 tape deck all leads and connectors cost about £1200, will accept £330. Tel: Paul 01789 778658 (Feb/1)

NAKAMICHI CASSETTE deck model CR7E sounds superb casing immaculate, little used, hence sale £700. Tel: 01454 418 997 (South Gloucs.) (Feb/1)

MISSION 754 Freedom 5 floor-standing speakers oak, bi-wire, boxed, mint (£1400) £649. Harbeth HLK-6 standmount speakers, walnut bi-wire, mint (£1000) £599. Chord Chorus interconnect 1 mtr as new £130. Tel: 0115 960 3934 or 07779 045059 (Nottm) (Feb/1)

HOME BUILT floor standing speakers like KEF CS5 £175. Pair KEF B200A bass drivers £45. Beomaster 1200 tuner amplifier Wharfedale Linton speakers (new bass speakers) Dual CS505-2 turntable £165. Tel: 01322 220912 evenings (Feb/1)

MISSION CYRUS-2 plus PSX power supply £325 ono. Mission D.A.C. 5 DAC £85 ono. Linn Sara loudspeakers complete with Linn stands and Linn speaker cable v.g.c. £275 ono. Tel: 01835 862152 Email: john.swan@virgin.net (Feb/1)

AVANTIC VALVE amps £110. NAD 3020A £70. JBL SVA 1600 horn speakers £220. Copland CSA14 £500. Decca arm new £50. Leak ST20 grey refurbished £295. Tel: 01827 261082 (Tamworth) (Feb/1)

AUDIO INNOVATIONS 300 integrated valve amp v.g.c. £150. Heybrook TT2 basic plus Ortofon 510 £100. Leak Sandwich speakers 15ohm perfect working order £70 Tel: 01564 826794 (South Birmingham) (Feb)

BURMESTER 785 pre-amp (still one of the best) £450. DNM PAI poweramp £450. B & W CDM 9NT (red cherry) unused £1100. Alchemist Forsetti APD 20 Mk2 power amp (unused) £550. Tel: 01952 502097 (Telford) (Feb/1)

SONUS FABER Concertos walnut biwirable £595. Denon 304MC cartridge boxed as new £100. Tannoy Revolution R2 floor-standers £190. Stansesing five shelf rack £100. Apollo 60cm stands £45 Tel: 01243 863371 (Bognor Regis) (Feb/1)

LOWTHER TPI original model Type A corner horn finished in dark oak with PM3A drive unit. VGC. £750. Also pair standard Lowther Acoustas with PM7 units Tel: 01886 853385 (Worcs.) (Feb/1)

SONUS FABER Concerto grand piano speakers. Beautiful gloss black and leather finish, mint condition, original packaging £1100. Copland CSA28 amplifier, black fascia and remote, mint condition - £1000. Tel: 01904 628804 or 622323 (Feb/1)

LINN ISOBARIK speakers DMS model teak? finish with stands £500. Tel: 01932 820825 or Email: rts@newroad67.freemove.co.uk (Feb/1)

NAIM 32.5 K/N boards £195. Hicap £395. NAP 250 £695. NAT101 tuner £495. All mint boxed. Linn LP12 Valhalla Ittok LVII K9 Trampolin base, excellent condition boxed £550. Tel: 0121 422 4371 after 7pm (Feb/1)

AUDIOLAB 8000C & 8000P pair £395 Spondor SP2/2 C/W stands £195. Pioneer A-300 amp £45. Wharfedale Black Diamonds £45. Target 5 shelf stand £45. Yamaha tuner T-09 black £30. Tel: 01634 268 071 (Feb/1)

AUDIO SALON STRATOS II interconnect 0.5m £45. Soniclink AST 200 x2 2m bi-wire terminated pair £12. Russ Andrews 4PR jumper leads pair £25. Tel: 01293 786453 Email: richard.newman4@ertinternet.com (Feb/1)

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P+M COMPONENTS MP211 monoblocs superb condition spectacular looks £1195. Audio Innovations Series 700 integrated amplifier 25wpc £595 superb. Quad 34 two tone metallic grey phono inputs excellent £175. Tel: 0796 0615375 (Feb/1)

BTH AIA stereo valve amp and control unit. Very rare. Similar circuit Leak Stereo 20 but with printed circuit. Original. Mullard valves. In daily use. £150. Tel: 01524 701051 (Lancaster area) (Feb/1)

CASTLE KENDAL speakers (mahogany), as new, boxed £150. Tel: 01702 556116 (S.E. Essex) (Feb/1)

EAR 834P MM/MC boxed £325. Audio Synthesis Passion £350. TDS Passive Harmoniser £75. Harmonic Technology Pro-Silway I/C 1m RCA £200. Leider Chanson silver phono I/C convertible to stereo £150. Harmonix 101 speaker cable 3m £150. All vgc. Tel: 01844 347729 (Bucks) (Feb/1)

FOR SALE pair Naim 135s (7/00) £2250. Supercap (6/01) £1600. NAC 82 (4/94) £1000. SBLs (92) £500. Tripod stands, any offers. Tel: 01984 629086 (Mar/1)

AUDIO NOTE P4 monoblock power amps, excellent condition £2100 ono. Audio Innovations 800 Mk3 power amp excellent condition £500 ono. All with original boxes and instruction. Tel: Andy 01642 482393 (Mar/1)

AUDIOLAB 8000A integrated amp - looks and sounds great - £175. Marantz CD63SE - perfect condition - £175, or £300 for both. Tel: 01494 580640 - leave message (Feb/1)

CASTLE ACOUSTICS Quarterwave Inversion 50 loudspeakers in yew. As new 5 yr guarantee £750. Castle Seven 2SE loudspeakers in black ash, as new guarantee £525 sounds looks superb Tel: 01756 701318 (Feb/1)

HARBETH HL Compact 7ES loudspeakers in eucalyptus mint boxed (£1300) £700. Acoustic Solutions speaker stands (£199) £100. Jamo Concert 8 loudspeakers maple boxed (£1329) £625 Tel: 01704 821146 (Preston area) (Feb/1)

NAIM NAP 250 NAC 62 exceptional condition £650. Kimber high current power cord 3ft £60. Standard power cord £40. Lat international AC2 power cord 13 ft £80. Tel: 01484 841482 (Feb/1)

CASTLE HOWARDS 'Series Two' in yew, mint condition cost £1300 - accept £650 with boxes. Pioneer open reel model 909 logic control NAB reels permaloy heads. Instructions. Beautiful machine. £260. Tel: 01782 265087 (Feb/1)

EXTRON RGB 119. Dedicated VGA and XGA computer to projector video interface with simultaneous local monitor viewing. RGBS or RGBHV outputs. 100-240Vac 50/60Hz £250. Tel: 01945 463077 (Feb/1)

YAMAHA NS100 speakers cherry six months old as new £100. No offers. Tel: 01772 687748 (Feb/1)

NAIM NAC52 Pre-amp w/ SuperCap (2000). All cables, remote, manuals, packaging, mint £3500. (was £5700) Tel: Vangelis 020 7727 4855 (Feb/1)

PIONEER ELITE DV-09 DVD/CD. (cost £1250) absolutely as new, boxed, c/w instructions plus 240Vac transformer, £650. Companion MJ-17D minidisc recorder also available. Tel: 01945 463 077 (Feb/1)

KEF Q35 Speakers (black). Very little use £120. QED Silver Spiral interconnects, 0.5 metre £45. Kimber CD Powercord £35. Signals Powercord £30. Tel: 01634 718 943 (Feb/1)

TAG MCLAREN System: CDT20R, DAC20. PA20R, 100P. Selling £3350, cost £5350 as new, boxes, manuals. Ruark Crusader II, oak, as new, boxes. Selling £1050, cost £1690. Tel: Chris 01428 641 768 (work) (Feb/1)

MICROMEGA TEMPO 'P' (pre-amp) + Tempo 'Amp' (power-amp), 120 WPC (1998). Top of range, inc. 2 pairs van den Hukl 'Source' interconnects, full remote, as new, boxed, (£2500) new, £795 ovno. Yamaha KXW482 twin tapes cassette deck, hi-fi separate, full logic remote, boxed as new £125 ovno. Tel: 0121 358 0459, mobile 07960 945 994 (Feb/1)

COMPLETE NAIM System, awesome sound, excellent condition, sold as boxed with all leads. Buyer collects. CDS, CDPS, NAC82 (incl. Naim moving coil phono input board, NAP250, Hi-Cap SBLs passive (black ash), Soundstyle equipment stand. Package price £5800. Tel: 07710 390 648 after 6pm, 0775 950 1906 after 6pm, 01294 311 037 answerphone or email: kenmcw@bigfoot.com (Mar/1)

QUAD ESL63 Speakers with stands, black grills £1200. See Revolver turntable with Ortofon MC15 Super 2, boxed £150. Musical Fidelity preamp 3A power-amp P140, boxed £350 pair. Tel: 0191 251 2087 (Feb/1)

CARY SLP-50 valve, pre, £1400 new, £700 ono. Art Audio Quintet valve stereo power, £1800 new, £800 ono. Both vgc, boxed, with manuals. Tel: Alan 01661 834 557, may reduce prices! (Feb/1)

CASTLE AVON loudspeakers (cherry) excellent condition, have seen very little use, £450 ono. Wanted: AKG K60 headphones circa 1969. Tel: 01373 822 040 (Feb/1)

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LINN SONDEK, early 1980's £300. Myriad T20 CD player, as new £250. Transparent Music Link Super 25ft, interconnect RCA £600. Transparent Music Wave Plus Bi Wire Speaker cable 8ft £300. Nordost Flatline Gold bi-wire 3.5m £95. Please telephone Jules on 01792 280061, E-mail: sales@sounddrjuleshifi.co.uk Web: www.sounddrjuleshifi.com (Feb(I))

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AUDIO TECHNICA OC9 cartridge brand new exchange £240. Crimson 610 / 620 pre / power £300. Deltac Black Slink 0.75 interconnect £90. Deltac Black Slink 1.0 mtr WBT's, £100. Denon POA660 mono blocks £650. telephone Jules on 01792 280061, E-mail: sales@sounddrjuleshifi.co.uk Web: www.sounddrjuleshifi.com (Feb(I))

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TECHNICS SLP 1200 CD £280, SP10 MkII £250, Revox PR99 MkIII £750, Nagra T-Audio £1500, IVS £1200, EMT 950 £895, 948 £600, Sony CDS 3000, twin CD £1400, Studer A710 £250, A810 £450, A80RCII VU £650. Tel: 01246 275479 (Feb(I))



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