

The B&W Nautilus has pioneered technologies which will shape the audio industry well into the next millennium.

Hollow pole magnets, exponentially tapered tubes and its characteristic shell eliminate cabinet resonances and make the Nautilus effectively a 'cabinetless' loudspeaker.

World players



Matrix [™]801 Gramophone

"Unequivocally a legend in its own lifetime." Gramophone – Jan '96



CDM ™1



"For a domestic loudspeaker that knows how to groove, our European Award is an honestlybestowed plaudit." EUROPE EISA – Aug '95



DM ™601



"The 601s sound like the voice coils of God." What Hi-Fi? – Nov '95



HI FI CHOICE

"As a speaker that is all things to all people, the P"4 deserves a good long look. It sounds good and goes up to 11 on the volume control. Little wonder it won the British Hi-Fi award." Hi-Fi Choice – Aug '96



Nautilus

"The B&W Nautilus is the most ideal speaker I have ever heard. It can be only limited or coloured by the sources, amplifiers and cables, without any coloration of its own. This is the best loudspeaker that money can buy." Hi-Fi Review, Japan – 94/5

For more information contact B&W Loudspeakers (UK) Ltd on: +44(0)1903750750 http://www.bwspeakers.com



Listen and you'll see...

At B&W, music is our very reason for being. In our search for the perfect music reproduction, we have pioneered loudspeaker technologies such as the separate tweeter housing, the Nautilus transmission pipes, the Matrix[™] cabinet and the Kevlar[®] cone. These innovations symbolise all the dedication and love of music which have inspired B&W engineers ever since the company was established 30 years ago.

Today, B&W produce loudspeakers of class-leading performance through a unique blend of pioneering research, relentless pursuit of engineering excellence and traditional craftsmanship. Leaving you to enjoy your music exactly as it should be – with nothing added, nothing taken away.





B&W's Matrix construction uses sophisticated internal bracing to reduce both the amplitude and decay time of cabinet resonance, resulting in clear, coherent musical reproduction.



Matrix ™801

The B&W Matrix [™]801 studio loudspeaker has been judged 'Speaker of the Year' by Audio/Video International for an unprecedented seven years in a row and is now used in more than 80 per cent of all recordings of classical music.

DECCA

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B&W's patented method of using Kevlar's unique woven fibres for loudspeaker cones has been a major factor in reducing unwanted standing waves.

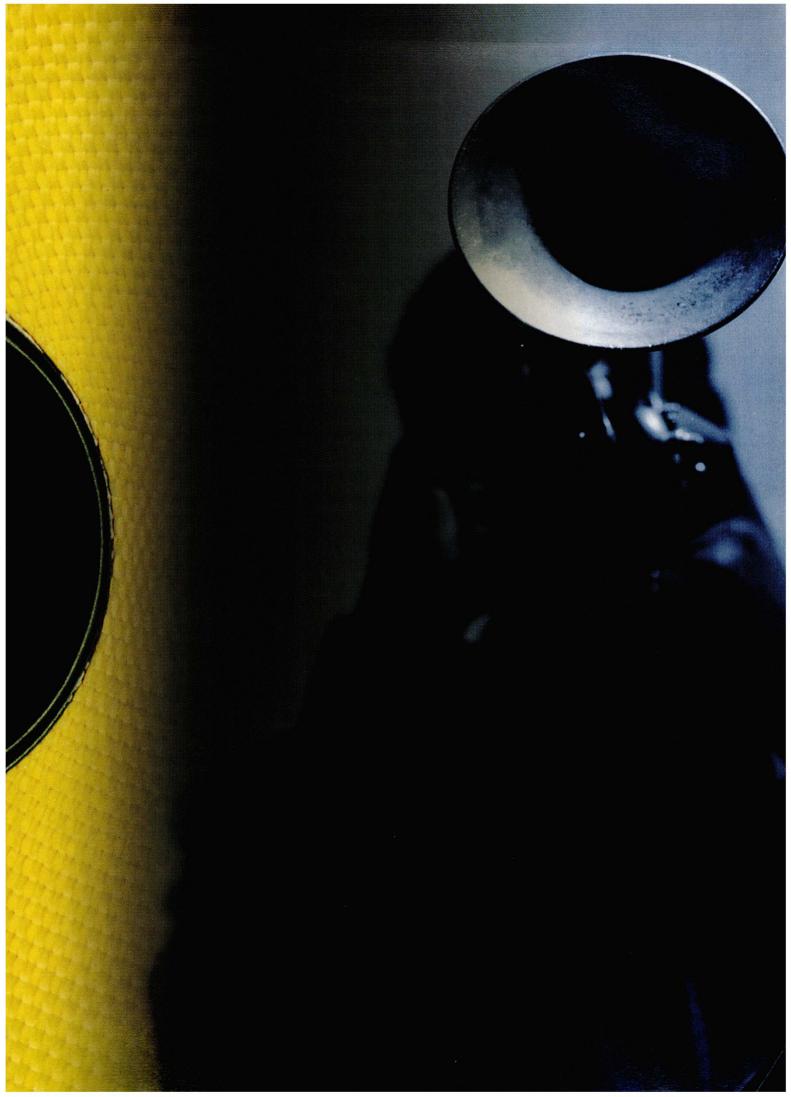


DM **601

"Soaring through the speaker market like a breath of fresh air, the DM[™]601's demand to be heard. Big and powerful sound with plenty of subtlety. Miss them at your peril." What Hi-Fi? 5 Stars – Jun'96

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The Mini was always synonomous with performance, whether it was the car or the fashion. And now there's another Mini which delivers unbelievable performance. The Reference 500 System from Teac. The sound quality of separates combined with the convenience of a Mini System. No other Mini comes even close!

T-H500 TUNER AV-H500 PRO-LOGIC AMP







R-H500 CASSETTE DECK





CD PLAYER



'TEAC mini sets standards" **WHAT HI∗FI**, |an 97

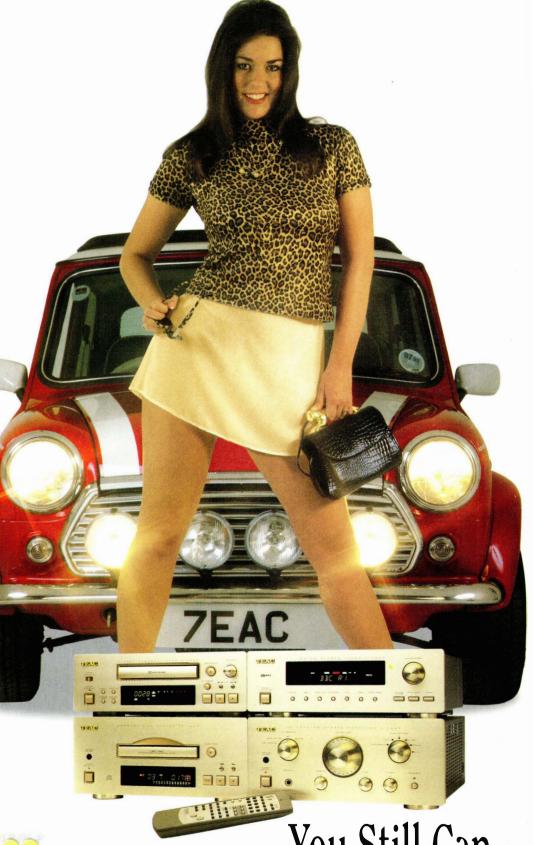
"All three sources sound big and confident, with an accuracy and delicacy more akin to separates than minis" WHAT HI∗FI, May 97

"In terms of its good looks, the system's asking price could just about be doubled" Gramophone, Jan 97

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You Still Can.

DUE TO TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES BEYOND THEIR CONTROL, OTHER MINI SYSTEMS WILL NOT BE DELIVERING THIS LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE Chief Musical Officers' Warning

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(I) OPINION

Is hi-fi the last bastion of sanity in a world gone mad with electronic widgets? Stan Vincent invites you to find out...

eople can't get to grips with all the new techno-widgets on offer. As life becomes more complicated, consumers just want simplicity. And that's why the new Philips CDR 870 (reviewed this issue p32) has a significance in inverse proportion to the muted fanfare of its announcement. The fact it's a CD recorder (CD-R) is nothing new, but eyebrows have been raised by its sub-£500 price and ability to use new 'rewritable' CDs (CD-RW). Suddenly, the key advantage of Sony's MiniDisc (MD) system — it's rewritability - has come under fire. The CD family has

a chance to end format wars that have dogged consumer electronics for so long. Almost a year ago we published a

MiniDisc supplement. Even since then, the MD format has progressed apace, with high-end recorders garnering audiophile credibility and portable devices setting new standards for miniaturisation. But no matter how appealing the little MD may be, to the man on the Clapham omnibus it's 'another format', with all the complication and expense that might imply. This is why Philips' 'one-disc' initiative is setting pulses racing in the audio community.

The Dutch company has a good story to tell. CD is the world's most popular music carrier. Until recently the only consumer recording medium has been cassette tape. Though cheap, it has never offered great sound quality, and it is not particularly easy to use. Tempt people with a CD-based recording solution, and by comparison it offers an immediately-perceptible benefit. Price it keenly and Bob's your uncle.

"But wait," comes the cry. "Aren't blank recordable CDs expensive?" Well, actually no. CD-R has become popular in the computer market for storing data - it can hold 650 Megabytes (Mb). So now it benefits from economies of scale.

You can buy record-once CD-Rs for around $\pounds 3$ — little more than you'd pay for a premium-quality tape, and a lot less than the cost of a blank MiniDisc. (While the latter has begun to find applications in recording and broadcasting systems, it has never taken off as a computer peripheral because at present, it holds only 140Mb.)



Now Philips hopes it can work the CD-R miracle for CD-RW, by launching it simultaneously for domestic and computer users. Computer users understand CD-R and CD-ROM (prerecorded computer data on CD). But for rewritable applications they have been stuck with the outmoded, outgunned 3.5in diskette, or left to place odds on the longevity of numerous third-party 'removable storage media'. Philips wants to make CD the universal data interchange standard, both for audio and PC. We will appraise the PC version of the CDR 870, the CD 3610, in a forthcoming issue.

Philips sources indicate that 1998 will see the roll-out of new CD-RW products at lower prices, in user-friendly midi packages. And the PC angle is fascinating, because of options it opens up for CD mastering and signal processing, for example removing clicks and pops from old LP records, or the hiss from taped recordings.

We detect only two clouds on the horizon: an obscure glitch in the CDR 870 that adds lots of jitter to recordings; and the the CD-RW disc's unpredictable compatibility with existing CD players.

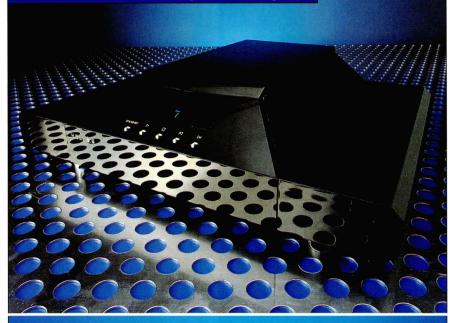
We hope that Philips can sort out the jitter, but alas a number of players thus afflicted will have been released to dealers in the pre-Christmas rush. Our advice, unlike that of our colleagues on another UK hi-fi mag, would be to not buy this product until Philips remedies the defect on all machines. And I do not believe CD-RW incompatibility will become an issue until the price of CD-RW discs reaches a par with CD-R.

These teething problems notwithstanding, it looks like we must give Philips a round of applause. They've created a massmarket product that people really want!



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Update

THIS MONTH... BIG CHANGES AT AUDIOLAB... SPECIAL EDITION B&W AND ARCAM...DOUBLEX MF...AND MUCH MORE...

In brief

The Sound & Vision Bristol show returns to the Bristol Marriott Hotel from 20 to 22 February 1998. At press time organisers claimed over 40 exhibitors had booked space. Opening times are 11.00am to 6.00pm the first day, and 10.00am to 5.00pm on subsequent days. Entrance costs £5.00 for adults, £3.00 concessions, but is free to children under 16. A ten percent discount will be given on all purchases made at the show.



Alphason HDS: heavy metal

- Alphason's new High Damped Structural (HDS) range incorporates proprietary tension rods, offset damping pads within their metal columns, and a 'mineral aggregate' filling material. Supplied in 40cm, 50cm or 60cm heights, and priced from £85, they are finished in gunmetal grey with the option of a matching rigidsteel, toughened safety-glass or rosewood-coloured veneer base. 20 (01942) 678000
- Attention vinyl users! Moth Group has introduced an'electronic stylus balance from Len Gregory, the 'Cartridge Man'. Claimed to be accurate within 0.02g between 0g and 4g, it operates for up to 45 minutes from a 2.4V rechargeable NiCd battery (charger supplied). It has been designed to work with

Formula 8000! All change at Cambridge Systems Technology Ltd (CST),

All change at Cambridge Systems Technology Ltd (CST), where the manufacturer of Audiolab products has been acquired by the TAG/McLaren Group. A new company, TAG Electronic Holdings Ltd, has been formed to control both CST and TAG Electronic Systems Ltd.

Dr Udo Zucker, CEO of the new company, commented: "I am looking forward to seeing our Formula One technology spinning off into products everyone can buy."

Wasting no time on the product front, Audiolab has already upped the digital ante with the new 8000DAX, a 24-bit DAC priced at £999.90. This digital-to-analogue converter has been designed to partner the company's 8000CD CD player or 8000CDM CD transport. Audiolab sources claim it will provide "outstanding resolution of detail and dynamics".

Key features include a single bit DAC, low-noise master-reference clock for minimal jitter, HDCD compatibility and intelligent signal-seeking software to identify all manner of digital sources.

Cambridge Systems Technology Ltd 2 (01480) 415600

Image: Contraction of the contraction o

8000DAX: TAG/Heuer "clock" upograde to follow?

Alpha, Sierra Echo

Arcam has joined the special edition feeding frenzy with a reworking of its popular Alpha 8 CD player. The Alpha 8 SE weighs in at £599.90 but does not replace the Alpha 8, which now sells for £449.90.

The key improvements are a new DAC module featuring a jitter-busting reclocking circuit retrospectively: and the fashionable Pacific Microsonics PMD100 filter with its HDCD decoding abilities.

Both Alpha 7s and 8s can be upgraded to 8SE status, 7 owners will have to fork out £299.90, while 8 users benefit from a trade-in discount for the existing DAC board.

Back at the R&D department work continues on the range topping Alpha 9 which is due to feature a 24-bit



DAC, while in the AV labs they have been busy with the Xeta 2 processor. This three channel Dolby Pro-Logic decoder is now equipped with the six inputs required for external Dolby Digital processors. In other words the new £649.90 Xeta 2 can now be used with AC-3, DTS or MPEG decoders for 5.1 channel digital surround. A&R Cambridge Ltd \mathfrak{G} (01223) 203200

CDM gets special

B&W has taken the first step toward revamping the CDM range by bestowing Special Edition status on the EISA award-winning CDM1 loudspeaker. The CDM1SE is still £599.95 but now incorporates a number of improvements to the crossover and mid/bass driver which are said to improve midrange clarity and imaging.

The most obvious change is the appearance of a solid phase plug where once there was a dust cap. This 'fixed dispersion modifier' is bullet shaped and is claimed to improve integration with the tweeter by improvements in dispersion. The speaker retains B&W's favoured Kevlar-fibre, 6.5 inch



CDM1SE with distinct phase plug.

cone along with the existing discrete metal dome tweeter housing.

The crossover network has been split asunder to reduce interaction between the components for each drive unit. Two separate boards are used so that bi-wiring and biamping confer distinct benefits.

The speaker retains its selection of real wood finishes: cherry, red and black ash. B&W UK Ltd **2** (01903) 750750



Great X-pectations In brief

Musical Fidelity's X-series is due to get wider in March, with the introduction of the £479 X-A1 integrated amplifier. Resembling a stretched version of the now-familiar extrusion-housed X-series electronics, the double-width case conceals a 50 Watt integrated amp. This has antecedents in the X-A50 monobloks reviewed in HFC 169, but harks back also to an old MF favourite, the A1.

It will accommodate up to six line-level sources, with preamp and tape-out sockets to complete the array. Those compact dimensions are ensured by an external power supply which, the company claims, is much more sophisticated than the plug-top transformers supplied with X-Series components thus far.

MF boss and sometime clarinet blower, Antony Michaelson, says that the X-A1 design team was given the objectives of sound quality, imagery, slam/attack, speed and load-driving ability.

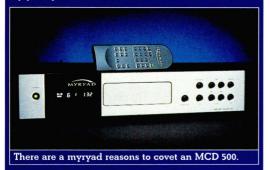
Musical Fidelity 2 (0181) 900 2866

Myryad's tech boost

Electronics specialist Myryad has upped its digital ante with the £1,299.95 MCD 500 CD player. Myryad's second CD player incorporates key technological advances evolved from the existing MC100 player.

At the heart of this stylish player lies a 20-bit, deltasigma, dual differential DAC controlled by a crystal controlled master clock. This feeds a pair of low pass filters utilizing DIFET op-amps which claim to filter high frequency energy from the DAC. The signal then passes to the discrete output stage with its complementary crosscoupled class A configuration.

Two toroidal transformers are used to supply 13 individual power supplies, the most critical of which have a power-supply rejection ratio exceeding 130dB. Whoa! Myryad Systems 🕿 (01705) 265508



TDL's carbon copies

TDL has announced three new speakers featuring carbonfibre cones, metal-dome tweeters and real-wood veneered cabinets. What's more, the CF100 Chiltern is TDL's first stand-mount, two-way ported enclosure. The latter opens the range at £449.95 (Cherry, Mahogany and Oak) or £499.95 (Rosewood).

Models CF200 Cotswold and CF300 Cheviot are 'reflex/transmission-line'

hybrids in the TDL tradition. They are priced at £649.95 and £849.95 respectively for the three standard veneers Rosewood commands a £100 premium

TDL claims carbonfibre cones offer the acoustic advantages of metal cone without the latter's need for powerful amplifiers

TDL 2 (01628) 850 111

HI-FI CHOICE



TDL CF100: fibre coned cutie.



HDCD's pro processor

Pacific Microsonics, creators of the High Definition Compatible Digital (HDCD) system, has announced a professional HDCD processor. This is claimed to offer 24-bit Dto-A/A-to-D conversion, and a sampling rate of 88.2kHz. Plus, with sample-rate conversion, Pacific Microsonics claims the unit will be compatible with 96kHz systems.

The company claims that this processor offers modern recording engineers the best of both worlds: a means of capturing signals both for release on today's CDs, and for inclusion in higher-quality future formats.

It claims that recordings now being made at 96kHz/24bit inevitably degrade during conversion to 44.1kHz/16-bit, as used in CD. Pacific Microsonic's system claims to avoid such problems by sampling at 88.2kHz - twice the sampling frequency of CD. It claims further that via sample-rate conversion, the 24-bit/88.2kHz signal may be enhanced to 96kHz sampling.

The company has also published a new catalogue featuring 'hundreds' of HDCD recordings. Memec plc (01844) 261 919 • www.hdcd.com

Porky Primare cuts

Danish company Primare's new 20 Series claims to offer an affordable taste of the high end. Its first products are the A-20 integrated amp and D-20 CD player, both priced at £799.95.

The remote-control A-20 claims to embody low-feedback, dual-mono circuits which develop 60 Watts per channel into eight Ohms. Quality touches include a 1dB stepped volume attenuator calibrated to 0.1dB with its own digital display, and surface-mounted (SMD) components throughout.

Over on the digital side, Primare's D-20 incorporates a Philips CDM 12.4 transport and the 'brand-new' AKM

AK4324 one-piece digital filter/deltasigma convertor. Allegedly the S-20 is the world's first implementation of this silicon, which claims to be compatible with 24bit/96kHz data. The D-20 also deploys **SMD** components within a heavygauge steel chassis. Musical Design Co. (01992) 573 030



all record-playing apparatus, and is priced at £185. 2 (01234) 741152



WXT: the ultimate EL34, or is it?

- Q: When is an EL34 valve not an EL34 valve? A: When it's a Sovtek EL34WXT. Higher transconductance and power ratings than any other EL34 are claimed of the WXT variant by the New Sensor Corporation. This is thanks to a 'unique grid block construction'. Other benefits are said to include greater longevity - and, naturally, 'the richest-sounding, most dynamically-sensitive' performance ever. 🕿 +1 (212) 529 0466 • www.sovtek.com
- Superclock is a new jitter-busting device from AudioCom (UK) of Pembrokeshire, claimed to 'outperform any other type of [digital word] clock currently available'. This, claims the maker, is thanks to extensive power-supply isolation, surface-mount components, lownoise RF transistors and 'twostage analogue oscillator'. (01834) 842803



Care to pep up your Planar 2 or 3? You might consider the Chantry Audio QT, a five-stage upgrade system for the original Rega turntables and clones. A basic new-platter/bearing-oil-change kit is availble for £115, while ready-built brand-new turntables start at £705. 🕿 (01777) 870372

Allied Battery Technologies, whose rechargeable alkaline manganese (RAM) cells we announced in Update HFC 168, has extended the range to include AAA cells as used in many remote controls. The company claims its RAM products last over ten and up to 50 times longer than single-use alkaline designs. You'll find them in Maplin shops nationwide. 🕿 (01494) 484919



The best things in life cost quite a bit, actually.

Music is one of life's great pleasures. But like caviar and Champagne, the best never comes cheap.

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Hence the flawless response. The astonishing lucidity. The consummate musicality. Technical supremacy in a Savile Row suit. Actually, they don't seem expensive at all.



Reference Series



KEF Reference Series authorised dealers: Bath Paul Green Beckenham Musical Images Belfast Lyric Hi Fi Bishop Stortford The Audio File Bolton Sound & Vision Bournemouth Sutton's Bristol Radford Hi Fi Bristol Audio Excellence Cardiff Audio Excellence Cheltenham Sevenoaks Chester Audio Excellence Croydon Spaldings

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MODELS SHOWN ARE THE REFERENCE SERIES COMPRISING THE MODEL One, MODEL Three AND MODEL Three AND MODEL Four. KEF AND UNI-Q ARE REGISTERED TRADEMARKS. UNI-Q IS PROTECTED UNDER GB PATENT 2 236929. U.S. PAT. NO. 5,548,657. WORLDWIDE PATENTS PENDING.

508 becomes 24

Meridian Audio has introduced a 24-bit version of its top integrated CD player, the 508. The new 508.24 (£1,995) succeeds the 20-bit version, itself a first back in 1995, and claims to have significantly improved upon every aspect of its predecessor's sound quality.

The new 508 is the first player on the market to employ Crystal's latest 24-bit digital-to-analogue converter chip. We hear that the Meridian 566 DAC will be receiving the same treatment soon. The 508.24's transport electronics have been upgraded in line with the converter.

The player features balanced analogue outputs and an AES/EBU digital output. Existing 508.20 owners can have their players upgraded with the new DAC for £395. Meridian Audio 🕿 (01480) 52144

News from the world of cables ■ Here's a new service for owners of hi-fi with figure-8 mains leads. Campaign Audio Design offers an upgraded wire, rated at 30A/240V and conforming to IEC65/ IEC348, plus a 'Touchproof' connector with self-cleaning gold-plated contacts. 2 (01222) 779401

■ Insert Audio has developed a Mark II version of the Reference Series IC100, with improved Class 1 Linear Crystal OFC conductors and polyethylene insulation. Available with a variety of connectors, its price is £46.95 per half-metre pair. 🕿 (01622) 664070.

SonicLink has four new interconnects. Maroon is derived from the company's Violet cable, comes with 'expensive-look' zinc/nickel-bodied phono plugs, and is priced at £125 for a metre-long pair. Silver Pink SE and Violet SE have the same plugs, and cost £50 and £100 respectively for a one-metre pair.

Black Rhodium is a new hand-made design, with a signal-connector of rhodium-plated molybdenum and rhodium-plated connectors. Start saving to fork out £995 for a one-metre pair! Finally there's the S130x2 biwire speaker cable made from 19 cores of 0.3mmdiameter, silver-plated copper insulated in silicone rubber. 🕿 (01332) 674929

van den Hul VDH D102III interconnect updates the original D102 that has been on-sale for over 13 years. In its latest iteration it boasts the hybrid carbon-silver-copper signal conductor, Teflon-insulated gold-plated plugs and halogen-free "Hulliflex' insulation. 🕿 (01388) 663273

SPM Reference interconnects and speaker cable are the new flagships in Nordost's range of wires, which are made under the company's exclusive world manufacturing rights to the patented extruded Teflon Flatline series of cables. Claiming low capacitance, low inductance and consistent electrical characteristics, the speaker cable costs £2,795 for a three-metre pair, while the interconnect checks in at £825 for a one-metre pair. 2 (01352) 730251





Anthem's new six-pack

Audiophiles in 'user-friendly' shocker? A 'high-end' multiplayer? What fresh lunacy is this? In fact it's the Anthem CD 1, the first offering of a new 'entry-level' brand from Canadian high-end manufacturers Sonic Frontiers. This £1595 player features a six-disc Sony 'Musicbank' mechanism and a 'valve output buffer', along with a Pacific Microsonics HDCD decoder, Burr-Brown PCM1702 DAC, S/PDIF and AES/EBU digital outputs and, as you'd expect, remote control.

Picture The Sound (07000) 443426



High end multi-disc CD player shocker. Whatever next?



QED's quixotic enhanced Qnect cables. Nice

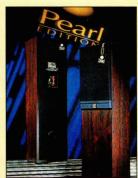
Get Qnected, gain Qudos

QED has launched two new interconnects: the Qnect 2 and Qnect 4. Both cables use low density polyethelene for insulation which, the company claims, produces a lower loss and results in an improved sound performance. The Qnect 4 also has foamed LDPE for even lower loss and better sound.

Prices start at £27 for the Qnect 2 while the Qnect 4 costs from £54. Both cables use 99.9 per cent oxygen-free copper, claim to cancel out noise and interference, and are fitted with gold-plated plugs. Those on the Qnect 4 are onepiece with a Teflon insulation block.

The company has used the results of its Genesis project to create of a new silver-plated version of its Qudos Original loudspeaker cable, to celebrate QED's 25th anniversary. The Qudos Silver costs £3.95 per metre and boasts LPDE insulation, four-bunch 'rope' lay-stranded construction and 2.5mm sq cross section of oxygen-free copper. QED 🕿 (01276) 451166

In brief



MS's Pearl anniv

The Mordaunt-Short MS25i Pearl helps commemorate the company's 30th anniversary with a new mica-filled, polypropylene polymer cone developed in house. Other improvements include a redeveloped dividing network with 'dual capacitor configuration', a larger cabinet volume and extra cabinet bracing. Price is £329.99. **2** (01705) 407722

With reference to our feature "Pick'N'Mix", in our supplement DJ Choice (HFC 173). We would like to clarify that Intimidation was the inventor of the 'Kill' channel-specific frequency equaliser feature on its range of DJ mixing consoles. It was not derived from another manufacturer's pre-existent product .

Thomas Transducers, maker of loudspeakers formerly known as Bravura, has renamed its brand B*a in the wake of legal action by Bose BV, asserting ownership of the trade-mark 'Bravura' for speakers. Thomas Transducers' new telephone number is 🕿 (01424) 813888.

ALBUMS PLAYED IN THE HI-FI CHOICE
OFFICE THIS MONTH
Fluke
Risotto
Various Artists
The Black Box of Jazz
Various Artists
UntouchableOutcaste Beats Vol 1
Archive
Londinium
Laurie Anderson
Bright Red/Tightrope
Various Artists
Sometimes God Hides:
A Young Person's Guide to Discipline
Bullitnuts
Nut Roast
Puccini
Turandot (London Philarmonic
Orchestra)
Various Artists
Café Del Mar 4
the second s

Designer Clash

Alan Sircom referees a philosophical contest between hi-fi gurus Ken Ishiwata and Tom Evans. Can either lay claim to the sonic high ground?

t's not easy to assemble a system in which components work together harmoniously. One oft-recommended tack is to combine separates from the same manufacturer, on the basis that the same pair of ears will have honed their tonalities. And this approach has received even more credence recently, with the emergence of tweaked mainstream equipment aiming to be the hi-fi equivalent of a Ford Cosworth saloon. Two 'name' designers of the moment are Tom Evans and Ken Ishiwata: the former is the brains behind the Precision range from Pioneer, while the latter turns ordinary Marantz CD players and amps into KI Signature versions. But how do their approaches compare, side by side?

TOM'S TOPPERS

The Pioneer Precision range needs little introduction to readers of *Hi-Fi Choice*. The £399.95 A-300R Precision amplifier took honours in *HFC* 162, while the £449.95 PD-S505 Precision CD player received its laurels in *HFC* 166. Both are veteran Best Buy components, so it's not hard to see why they're so popular.

Tom Evans took a conventional-buthumble Legato Link CD player and remotecontrol amplifier from the Pioneer stable. He replaced key components with replacements costing up to 100 times more. For example, the PD-S505 CD includes a proprietary IC output stage, a master reference clock with its own dedicated power supply,



and a discretely driven display, plus upgraded basic circuit boards. Each component sounds first-rate in its own right, although the Legato-Link DAC's 'interpretation' of frequencies above 20kHz can lead to unpredictable behaviour with certain CDs. In combination, however, this pair is hard to beat at any price, especially when partnered with complementary speakers and cables.

The latter exist in the guise of Acoustic Precision Eikos FR1 speakers (*HFC* 172), the same brand's £85/m Eikos interconnects, and the flat, unrolled capacitor of a £40/m cable called Monolith 20/20.

Monolith cable was designed by Paddy Handscombe of Electrofluidics, who conspired with Tom Evans to produce the £799 loudspeakers that complete the system. These have been modified since JK was blown away by them in December 97's *Statements*, but they're still among the simplest speakers on the block.

 Eschewing crossover, grille-cloth and many trappings normally associated with hifi loudspeakers, the FR1's has a cellular

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utitation in

polymer cabinet weighs a paltry 269g, but remains incredibly stiff. Plumb in a Jordan metal-coned drive unit, and you have an almost full-range single-driver speaker that weighs about as much as a pint of Guinness.

The mass, or lack of it, makes the FR1 such a radical combination with the Precision CD player and amp. The latter especially sounds wonderful with any number of speakers, but until you plug this combo into the FR1s you won't know half of what the source components are capable of. The system takes all the conventional tenets of hi-fi reproduction and wipes them aside with a single stroke of true stereo genius. It's as if virtually all other systems — at any price — have been forgetting the important sonic third dimension.

If this rig's character is boiled down to its essential ingredients, the felicitous combination of Precisions, Monolith and Eikos just seem to make sense of music in a manner that is increasingly hard to come by. Play jazz next to classical, sprinkle in some rock, and the system reproduces only what's spinning off the upside-down CD on Pioneer's Stable Platter mechanism. If the music sounds compressed or hard, blame the record producer, not the system. Until the moguls of music-making realise that a £199 micro system is insufficient for most listeners' needs, compressed, duff recordings will continue to be released. Fortunately this complaint afflicts principally the mainstream music destined for OneFM. So if your collection is a little more eclectic than the norm, the Pioneer/ Acoustic Precision/Electrofluidics outfit will show you why musical diversity makes the rockin' world go round.

If playing Devil's Advocate, I would point to limited bass output, but nothing that a subwoofer couldn't fix. Elsewhere, the Tom Evans special sets new standards for focus, clarity and sheer musical resolution, both at this comparatively humble price — and some way beyond.

Acoustic Precision ☎ (01483) 267516 Electrofluidics ☎ (0171) 247 0813 Pioneer ☎ (01753) 789500

> > in in

THE 'TOM EVANS' SYSTEM

Pioneer PD-S505 Precision CD player	£449.95
Pioneer A-300R Precision amplifier	£399.95
Acoustic Precision Eikos FR1 loudspeakers	£799.00
Acoustic Precision Eikos interconnect cables	£85/m
Sonolith Monolith 20:20 speaker cables	£40/m
Kudos S-50 speaker stands	£100
Total (including 2x3m speaker cable) £	2,073.90

JANUARY 1998

17

Precision

WHICH IS THE BEST SYSTEM?

INSTANT SYSTEMS - EXCLUSIVE

3

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As there is a price difference of £640 between the two systems, it might appear unfair to compare them side by side. But both outfits are so good that you would need to spend a lot more money to significantly improve their overall level of performance.

In many respects, they transcend issues of price-watching. The Marantz/Tannoy Ken Ishiwata system represents the best of what today's hi-fi does well. Tom Evans's Pioneer Precision/Acoustic Precision rig might just be what the next generation of audio will sound like.

I believe that more people will buy Ken Ishiwata's vision of hi-fi than Tom Evans's. Not just because of the £640 price gap, or even because the cheaper system is in some way better than the other. No: people will buy that system because it's amenable to the ear and quick to commend itself. In practice, few people entertain re-education of their musical taste-buds, to give up an easy listening lifestyle for something more cerebral. Speaking personally, however, I believe the concepts behind the Tom Evans system are revolutionary — and I feel a revolution coming on. 1161051117

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HI-FI CHOICE

POWER

KEN'S KORKERS

Ken Ishiwata's name appears on a select handful of products in the Marantz range. Like Tom Evans, he takes standard models and sprinkles fairydust upon them. A mainstay of his souped-up range is the EISAaward-winning CD-63 mkII KI Signature (£399.90). Although the standard CD-63 mkII disappeared some time ago and was replaced by the CD-67, the Recommended (*HFC* 169) KI Signature version lives on. Modifications to the player include an upgrade to key components in and out of the signal path. There is also a customdesigned toroidal transformer and a significant amount of copper plating throughout.

The CD-63 was joined this year by the £399.90 Marantz PM-66 KI Signature amplifier. This was based on the PM-66 SE design (Recommended, *HFC* 167) and followed its digital sibling by attracting another EISA award, plus a Best Buy in *HFC* 168. Once again, Ken's hot-rodding moves have included substantial copper plating, improvements to key components and

uprating the power supply. Quoted specs remain unchanged, but our lab test indicated improvements.

At a Marantz/Tannoy press conference last summer, one highlight was a demonstration by Ken Ishiwata of these two components combined with a pair of £139.90 Tannoy Mercury M2 loudspeakers. This stunned the audience of normally unflappable hi-fi journalists and reviewers, destroying our preconceptions of a sub-£1,000 system's capabilities.

Yet another *HFC* Best Buy, the Mercury M2 was formally tested in issue 169, and is a conventional, two-way, rear-ported affair. However, the 15-litre cabinet is larger and heavier than its peers, and has excellent but slightly sober fit and finish. The key to its charm (and low price) is simplicity. It uses a 25mm plastic-dome tweeter allied to a 120mm woofer.

Marantz made an interesting recommendation of cables and speaker stands to evaluate the system. To wit: a pair of £249 Audioquest Emerald interconnects, Kimber



Kable's £19.60/m 4TC speaker cable (Recommended, *HFC* 168), and a pair of £119 Heybrook HBS1 speaker stands. They also mentioned a Mana equipment support. Usually, such audiophile ancillaries are reserved for components costing <u>much more, but who am I to argue?</u>

Especially when they go together as well as this bunch do. This system reminds me of why I got into the whole hi-fi game in the first place. In days of yore, hi-fi nuts had pretty similar systems, often exactly the same system: a Rega Planar 3 turntable with A&R C77 cartridge, an A&R A60 amplifier and a pair of AR18 loudspeakers. It sounded warm, relaxing and comfortable, but didn't shy away from ballsy rock and could even turn its hand to classical. Many of those original hi-fi aficionados still own the self-same system, and if they had to upgrade, they would hanker after a similar sound today.

Well, this is that system, gone digital. It's the no-nonsense king: unpretentious even with expensive cabling in the chain, musical, and totally fit'n'forget. The treble is smooth and laid back, the mid-band relaxed yet still communicative and the bass is warm and rounded, if not the deepest or tightest around.

While Ken's designer label decorates both CD and amplifier, this is no prima donna. It will not make a fuss about eclectic musical tastes or poor recording quality. It simply plays music with a relaxed, cool hand. This isn't to indicate a lack of character, though: like its aforementioned spiritual heir, it will tend to sound best at the rock end of the spectrum. But whatever the music, you can guarantee that this combo pulls all the strings, while making those same strings invisible. ▲ Arcam (Audioquest) ♀ (01223) 203203

Heybrook
(101579) 342866
Marantz
(101753) 680868
RATA (Kimber Kable)
(0800) 373467
Tannov
(01236) 420199

THE 'KEN ISHIWATA' SYSTEM

Marantz CD-63 mkII K I Signature CD player £399.90
Marantz PM-66 K I Signature amplifier £399.90
Tannoy Mercury M2 loudspeakers £139.90
Audioquest Emerald interconnect cables £259/m
Kimber Kable 4TC speaker cable £19.60/m
Heybrook HBS1 speaker stands £119
Total (including 2x3m speaker cable) £1,435.30

Ear Waxings

Jason Kennedy discovers the majesty of rock and the mystery of roll - thanks to the unlikely ministrations of compressed air and flattened copper...

ast summer I visited the research labs of a high profile hi-fi company. During the visit I was treated to a demonstration of the latest products in a customised listening room. The playback system utilised state-of-the-art equipment with megabucks price tags, yet all of the equipment was placed upon very prosaic supports. The £10,000 transport and DAC source were resting on a coffee table!

I took the manufacturer to task over this, and think I made an impression, because shortly afterwards they asked me for recommended brands of hi-fi supports. At the time I suggested Mana Acoustics and the then-unfinished Seismic Sink Stand (SSS) from Townshend Audio. I didn't hear whether they acted on my recommendations, but eventually I got my own SSS to try at home. But if my industry chums have tried it, they'll have discovered that my audiophile rantings were not altogether in vain.

The SSS is a magnificent, OTT piece of hifi furniture. Install one in your system, and even totally uninterested observers will start asking why a small pipe organ has appeared under your record player. The four-tier version of the stand incorporates 22 tubes, nine platforms and two inflatable cells in its threepart construction.

The four shelves hang on two inflated

Seismic-Sink load cells. The structure sways with a gentle prod, but claims to offer massive isolation from low-frequency vibration. The design is most elegant considering the complications of dividing supported weight across two independent cells. The result is that there is nothing more substantial than compressed air between the equipment rack and the floor.

There are two ways of assessing the SSS. You can judge it by comparison with a competing equipment support; or you can assess the difference between its sound when the load cells are deflated; and then inflated.

Comparison with its peers is hampered by the articulated nature of the SSS's construction. Because the mass of your hi-fi is actually suspended on the lower of the two load cells, you have to adjust a counterweight to keep the structure vertical. It's not quite as bad as setting up a turntable, but involves much more effort than the installation of most stands!

Anyway, I ended up doing the comparison both ways, and I got pretty much the same result in each instance. In particular, the sound was cleaner: treble was more natural; bass was better extended and articulated. It was a sense of relaxation without loss of power or grip. In fact, with all

manner of components, with myriad musical styles, and at all playback volumes, the effect remained the same. A quite remarkable result, I think you'll agree.

Better still, I perceived no loss of musical tension either. Musical drama seems to get a greater chance of shining through. It makes for very compelling listening!

Is that a pipe in your basement or are you just pleased to see me? Townshend Audio's Seismic Sink Star



It's a wirefull world...

David Vivian's cable adventures in this month's Ultra Vivian Scene (p.154) reminded me of a recent tweaking session I undertook with Border Patrol main man Gary Dews. We were at his place recovering from the night before — how loud are night clubs these days? — and hooked up a system so that I could hear some of his records.

I couldn't resist having a go at the system, and we spent a couple of hours doing all sorts of

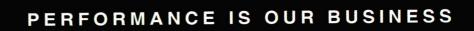
tweaks. Most of these were of the damping/resonance avoidance variety, but since this was a tube man's system, there had to be a couple of transformer changes as well. In fact, we even went so far as to try a prototype of the Border Patrol preamplifier which sounds very promising.

After literally two hours and maybe a dozen significant improvements, we were about to chew on some 'different' music when I noticed a few lengths of Electrofluidics Monolith 20/20 cable that

I had brought down for Gary six months before. On that last visit I was glad to have impressed him with the stuff, but he'd gone back to his bi-wired 'usual' out of habit as much as anything else. So, what the heck, one more tweak wouldn't hurt. We plumbed it in, put the needle on the record, and split our sides laughing. All that tweaker effort, and we could probably only hear half of its effect through the regular cable!

It doesn't surprise me that Electrofluidics' radical wire works in 'phase-linear' systems I use, but in an all-tube, analogue system, the result was equally gob-smacking. Three dimensionality, timbre and dynamics, all waiting to party. And the system didn't sound so bad before the change!

Now I'm desperate to get hold of similarly-conceived Goertz interconnect. Will it do the same trick? ▲ *Electrofluidics* ☎ (0171) 247 0813 Townshend Audio ☎ (0181) 979 2155





The Jimmy Hughes **Experience**

Jimmy Hughes delves into the mysteries of a black-box 'signal enhancer', and a new twist on CD.

he intriguingly-named Z-Man Corporation has sent us an Audio Signal Enhancer. This valve-powered black box connects between CD player and amplifier to create a richer, more detailed sound. Voices and instruments have more space around them, plus improved separation, while treble is cleaner, sweeter, more sharply defined.

Although the ASE is said to work best between CD player and preamp, I achieved excellent results connecting it between preamp and power amp. Again, the soundstage was wider and deeper, with improved clarity and separation. Removing the unit made the sound rather 'flat', and much less special. The ASE became a vital component of my system very quickly.

The obvious comparison is with Musical Fidelity's X10-D. The MF is cheaper and more impressively styled; the ASE costs more, and currently it is only available for 110V operation. A small Radio Shack 110V/240V adaptor is supplied free of charge, but alas I left this transformer switched on overnight a few times and burnt it out. So I bought a much more durable, 75 Watt, 110V stepdown transformer from electrical retailers Ryness for £19.95. This improved the sound. I understand that Z-Man is now supplying a heftier 50 Watt transformer as standard.

Further improvements resulted when I replaced the supplied valve with a Mullard CV-4004. This costs about £14.50 (including postage, packaging and VAT), from Langrex Supplies, Croydon **2** (0181) 684 1166. The sound grew sharper and more clearly focused, with an expanded soundstage and greater spatial definition. With these 'extras' the ASE sounded extremely good and improved upon the less costly X10-D in tonal richness and depth. Used as supplied with original valve and Radio Shack transformer, the difference was less pronounced, but I would not say ASE was inferior to X10-D.

If, like me, you decide the Audio Signal Enhancer is a must-have product, it costs US\$198, plus \$26 for shipping. Adding duty and VAT the total comes to \$275.57 which, depending on exchange rates, should not cost more than £175. To order, call $\mathbf{2}$ +1 616-246 7929 between 4pm and 10pm UK time, with credit-card details to hand.



Does exactly what it says on the tin... Archaeological, dig?

Z-Man ASE

For today's CD collectors, the long-promised launch of a superior medium (like DVD) is a double-edged sword. Of course it holds out the promise of better sound quality, but also threatens to make existing CD hoards obsolete. I have lots of CDs, so I suppose I should be worried. But progress isn't a game of skittles, in which the goal is to demolish past standards. I still enjoy listening to mono material taken from shellac 78s, so the 'limits' of CD don't hurt.

More importantly, I believe CD is capable of greater things. Despite the inherent technical limitations of the format, its sound can be improved. I've just had my Pioneer PD-75 upgraded with Trichord's Clock 3 modification, and I'm encountering musical detail I'd never heard before. Clearly we're not at the end of the road yet.

With this in mind, I was intrigued to receive a CD-R from US company Sound Archaeology (fax: 2 + 1 516-434 9174). This disc contains various musical selections transferred to CD using a new re-mastering process. 'Before' and 'after' examples of each musical excerpt are included, and after listening to both, there was little doubt that the processed tracks sounded more full and three-dimensional than the standard versions. Bass was stronger, and the sound displayed greater body and immediacy.

Sound Archaeology makes bold claims for its system. It alleges that Shawn Britton,

of audiophile record company Mobile Fidelity, compared a Sound-Archaeology-remastered version of Elton John's Honky Chateau with Mobile Fidelity's own digital copy of the master tape in Sony 1630 format. Guess what: he preferred the SA disc. If true, this is a truly remarkable statement given that SA actually used Mobile Fidelity's Gold CD of the album as its source. It might seem a fantastic proposition to some, but SA's claim is to impart information into the CD that was lacking from the master tape.

Unfortunately, Sound Archaeology gives no technical details about its remastering process, except to say that it operates in the digital domain and is the

result of 15 years' research. It warns that SA treatment defies being copied, and says you must listen using your CD player's analogue output (rather than the digital variety) to enjoy the full effect. (The company claims to have published further info on the Web at *www.signal2noise.com* –Ed.) This seems to mean that the use of a two-box player would dilute or eliminate the SA benefits. But I used such a machine with apparently good results, obtaining a noticeable difference in sound.

A number of questions remain. First and foremost: how can you re-master using CD as a source, only to end up with a copy that betters not only the original CD, but also the digital master tape itself? It seems barely plausible. But perhaps the SA process is additive, and enhances what's there already.

If so, this would stick in the craw of hi-fi purists who are wedded to the concept of simplicity. Their philosophy is to maintain the purity of an original signal by altering it as little as possible. By holding to this, they expect to hear music in its true glory. But perhaps this assumption is fallacious, and in fact what's needed is a little audio seasoning to bring out the flavour of music.

Certainly, having listened to the SA remastered tracks, my instinct is to say that the process *is* additive, but not in a false, unnatural sense. It simply expands upon information that's present already. I'm impressed by what I've heard so far — but will it be enough to interest the notoriously glacial major record companies?



The TAG McLaren group, encompassing leading edge activities as diverse as a Formula One team, a road car manufacturer and an automotive control system manufacturer. We are delighted to welcome our new member Cambridge Systems Technology, the manufacturer of the Audiolab brand, to join in our pursuit of excellence.

Audiolab's designs have always been based on technical excellence to achieve supreme sound quality. TAG McLaren is rapidly expanding Audiolab's activity to provide our customers in the future with even better product and services than they enjoy at present. Our large investment in people, systems, tools, equipment and facilities are providing the ideal environment for people to join us now to become part of the most exciting development in the Hi-Fi industry for a long time.

If you want to be a part of this new challenge and prefably have experience in the Audio industry in any of the fields shown then apply today with your full CV to:

Mrs Cate Judson

Personnel Department, TAG Electronics Holdings Genesis Business Park, Woking GU21 5RW

> or email us at audiolab@compuserve.com

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Analog, Digital and RF Engineers Applying technology and innovation in the pursuit of perfect reproduction

EMC Engineers

Guaranteeing compliance with international standards using in-house facilities

Embedded Software Engineers, 'C' and Assembler Producing the product and system control software that brings our products to life

Head of Administration

Optimising and co-ordinating admin systems and activities in our expanding organisation

Head of Marketing

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Mechanical Engineers

Designing objects of desire that are functional and cost effective

NOW MAKE IT YOURS.....

PCB Design Engineers

Transforming schematics into PCB's optimised for performance and manufacturability

Production Introduction and Support Engineers

Managing the transition from design to production and maintaining production flow

Production Systems Set-up

Selecting and optimising manufacturing systems, equipment and methods

Sales

Selling and distributing our highly regarded product range in the UK and abroad

Technical Authors

Producing Plain English user manuals which are informative and enjoyable







COMPETITION

rizes from Ruark! Our monster First Prize is ideal for hi-fi and AV fans. It's a full-on, top-quality surroundsound system worth almost £1,500, and incorporates a pair of Ruark's Prologue One main stereo speakers, Dialogue One centre channel, and a pair of Epilogue mini-monitors.

The Prologue One will be supplied in the winner's choice of real Cherry, Rosewood or Walnut veneers. The Dialogue One and Epilogue have real-wood veneered side-cheeks, and will be supplied in the winner's choice of Cherry, Rosewood or Walnut (or Lacquer Black in the case of the Epilogue).

The Prologue One is an elegant floorstanding design, created to match the Ruark Dialogue centre speaker. Its slim cabinet employs a bass-reflex system, and thanks to full magnetic shielding it can be positioned near a large TV set.

The Dialogue One centre-channel speaker has been conceived with a smooth midband and firm bass, to be the perfect AV complement for a high-class hi-fi speaker system. It's a two-way, infinite-baffle design with full magnetic shielding.

The Epilogue is a rear-ported mini-monitor system, voiced to work in harmony with other Ruark speakers. It's ideal for the effects channel, but doubles as a hi-fi speaker in its own right.

Our Second Prize winner will receive a pair of Templar II speakers worth £559. This medium-sized two-way, floormounted design, slightly taller than the Templar, will be delivered as shown with sides in real-wood Black Ash veneer, or in the winner's choice of Cherry, Rosewood or Walnut. It has a rigid plinth and hardened spikes. Finally, four Third Prize winners will each receive a pair of Epilogue loudspeakers (worth £269) in the finish of their choice. Don't delay – enter today!

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FOLLOWING WINNERS OF OUR OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER COMPETITIONS.

In the GLL competition from October, the correct answer was: a) Inductive Coupling Technology. **Three First Prizes of GLL** systems go to: B Hastings of Glasgow R Jackson of Sussex D Penna of Cornwall In the Vivanco competition from November the correct answer was: d) 30m. 12 First Prizes of Vivanco FM Stereo headphones go to: R Kirkbridge of Cheshire Caulfield of Merseyside • E Wise of Hartlepool • O Martin of Middlesex • B Walsham of Sheffield W Hughes of London P Langford of London • E Hughes of Rotherham M O'Neill of Worcestershire S Holding of Cumbria • S Riggall of London

J Macrae of Preston

 In the JPW competition from November the correct answer was:
 b) Because it has red-coloured, anodised-metal cones.
 First Prize of JPW Ruby 4 speakers goes to:
 J Weatheritt of Edinburgh

Two Second Prizes of JPW ML510 speakers go to: • J Villiani of London • E Hughes of South Yorkshire

Three Third Prizes of JPW

ML210 speakers go to:

- S Gearing of Essex
- A Lyall of Hertfordshire
- D Kay of Clwyd

 In the Sony competition from November the correct answer was:
 d) 9
 First Prize of a EISA-awardwinning Sony CDP-XA50ES
 CD player goes to:
 D Lancaster of Exeter



HOW TO ENTER

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

POST THIS ENTRY FORM TO:

- Hi-Fi Choice Competition (CHFC801A)
- Bradley Pavilions,
- Bradley Stoke North,
- Bristol BS12 0BQ

All entries must arrive by first post, Thursday January 29th, 1998.

THE QUESTION

What feature enables the Prologue One to be placed near television sets?

- a) Plastic covering
- b) Full magnetic shielding
- c) Stands
- d) Full metal jacket

YOUR DETAILS

Name	
Job Title	
Company Name	
Address (inc. postcode)	

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THE CONCERT 8 - A GREAT ORATOR FROM Jamo

Paul Miller's Oasis of Sanity

Just as we were getting used to the idea of record-once CDs, Philips has unveiled the re-recordable variety. **Paul Miller** explains the technology issues of the formats and differences between them.

hilips has just launched the world's first rewritable CD recorder — see our review on page 32. Here I examine the technology and execution of CD-RW, and its relationship with MiniDisc (MD), the only other rewritable disc-based digital audio recording format.

Figure 1: secrets of digital audio

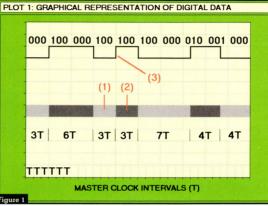
The format of digital audio code stored on CD-RW discs is identical to that used by conventional CD software, including older 'write-once' CD-R discs. This linear, uncompressed code is in contrast with the data-reduced ATRAC format adopted for MD.But both MD and CD code is carried as binary data, a stream of zeroes and ones represented on conventional CD by a series of 'pit'/'bump' and 'land' structures pressed into a spiral on the disc's surface.

As the laser beam passes between a land (reflective) and bump (non-reflective) area, (1) and (2) respectively, this is registered as a transition or a digital 1 (3). Moving from bump (2) to land (1) also represents a transition and a digital 1. Importantly, these transitions are regularly spaced, because the so-called 'run-length' of a pit/bump or a land area occupies an integer (whole number) multiple of the Master Clock period, known as big 'T'. In reality, the shortest pit/bump or land run-length is 3T, the longest 11T.

With CD-R, a digital 1 is also represented as the transition from a land to a pit structure within the spiral (or vice-versa). The spiral itself is 'wobbled' at 22.05kHz to give the CD-R unit a frame of reference when record-

ing. During recording, or 'writing', the laser tracks this wobbled groove, melting pits into the disc's green dye-layer by momentarily increasing the intensity of the beam to achieve a spot temperature of around 250 degrees Centigrade. These changes are permanent, leaving melted pits that offer a 40 per cent reflectance of the beam during playback, which provides sufficient contrast with the 70-80 per cent reflectance of adjacent 'land' areas.

MD represents a digital 1 by a change in the polarisation of the reflected laser beam, the so-called Kerr



rotational angle. Once again, momentary increases in the intensity of the laser beam are used to heat the dye-layer in the MD disc, resulting in a change in the magneto-optical property of the layer rather than its reflectance. During playback, its laser pickup is specifically designed to respond to changes in polarisation, not reflectance. A further, fundamental incompatibility between the MD and CD formats.

This change in a physical property of the MD disc must not be confused with the 'phase-change' discussed in Philips' CD-RW documentation. In this instance, 'phase' refers to the crystalline state of the dye-layer in the CD-RW disc, which may be amorphous (non-reflecting) or polycrystalline (reflecting). During recording, a laser beam heats this dye-layer rapidly above its 600 degree melting point; it cools quickly to produce an amorphous area (like a CD 'bump'). Longer heating at lower temperature produces a reflective area (like a CD 'land').

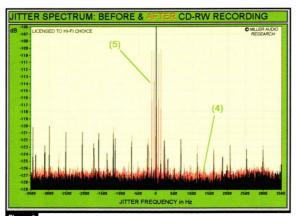


Figure 2: the jitter bug

If transitions between amorphous and polycrystalline areas are not clearly defined, the digital data becomes 'jittered'. This plot shows the difference in jitter when a special test signal is replayed on an ordinary CD player, both before (black) and after (red) recording on a CD-RW disc. If the copy were flawless then both traces would overlap. In practice, however, we see a general but very faint increase in background noise (uncorrelated jitter) (4) with a very distinctive pattern of correlated jitter appearing at +/-65Hz (5). So the CDR 870 recorder is good, but not perfect.

Meanwhile, it is clear that the crystalline state of the CD-RW dye-layer may be interconverted depending on how, moment by moment, the spot under the laser is 'heated'. In this way, it's possible to 'erase' the disc by converting the entire wobbled groove to its non-reflective or amorphous crystalline state. In practice, an amorphous 'bump' has a 15 per cent reflectance and a polycrystalline 'land' about 25 per cent reflectance, so the difference in reflectance between amorphous and polycrystalline areas does not offer the contrast provided by either CD or CD-R. For this reason, not all existing CD players will be able to read a CD-RW disc, despite the format of the data being entirely compatible with the CD standard.

My research suggests that most Sony players of two or three years' vintage should replay CD-RW discs, as should models using Sony CDM14 mechanisms, including

Arcam, Myryad and Rega for example. Philips' own players using the older (now discontinued) swing-arm CDM9 mechanism will also handle CD-RW material. Likewise earlier CDM9based players from Meridian and Naim. Sadly, almost no players using Philips' latest CDM12 mechanism will read CD-RW discs. A slight lack of foresight on Philips's part, I'd say. Future CD mechanisms, I am assured, will all replay CD-RW discs. ▲

Do you have a topic for the Oasis? Contact P.Miller via E-mail on 100576.3021@compuserve.com

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Is there any such thing as 'The Best' hi-fi? **Paul Messenger** juggles amps in an attempt to find out.



hen, like most 11-yearolds, I started listening to music seriously, hi-fi wasn't part of the vocabulary. By my late teens, however, I'd become aware of a world beyond the transistor radio, tape-recorder and record-player. I converted the (mono) Dansette to stereo operation, and found myself starting down the rocky road towards hi-fi nirvana.

My ambition wasn't too great at first, but some lucky secondhand purchases helped me assemble a pretty decent system over the next couple of years, and it wasn't long before the hi-fi bug had dug in its claws. The desire to blend business with pleasure was one of my principal reasons for joining the hi-fi industry in the mid '70s.

It wasn't long before I started dreaming of a truly great system, and the prospect of assembling it became all the more feasible when I moved from making speakers with Spendor, to working for one of the hi-fi magazines. Contacts were made, and there seemed a real chance of my dream becoming reality. Not just a great system, but The Best.

Some 20 years down the road, hi-fi has given me enormous pleasure and satisfaction. But two decades of accumulated experience has made it necessary to revise the ambition. Quite simply, there is no 'The Best'. It may be The Best for me — I'm not look-

ing at changing anything right now — but it isn't perfect, and does involve compromises.

Back in the '70s I used Radford valve amps, but changed to Naim transistor electronics. I can still recall the trade-off involved, between the delicious midrange transparency of the valves, and the full-bandwidth slam of the solid-state devices. I took the transistor route back then, and have stuck with it ever since, but I do get the chance to try valve gear from time to time. (Briefly, I even grappled with the legendary Ongaku from Audio Note.)

Such experiences only serve to remind of a hi-fi dimension I normally do without, and never more obviously than during the few weeks I spent recently with a Definitive Audio Border Patrol 300B SE power amp. The plan was to try for a completely feedback-free chain, but it's is taking a bit longer to organise than I expected. The single-ended triode power amp is only the third link in my electronics chain, yet swapping to it from my regular NAP135 power amps still had much greater impact than I'd imagined.

Quantitatively it was much greater, but qualitatively it was similar to my earlier experiences. This, I presume, has to do with the steadily-improving resolving power of my system. Inserting the Border Patrol brought forth a gush of enthusiasm for rich midband lucidity, which is the valve amp's stock in trade, and reaches its peak with a high-class single-ended design. Because it sounds so effortlessly natural and beautiful, basking seems more appropriate than nit-picking; to take a critical stance seems churlish. something in this, but I'm not convinced. The musical genres of The Prodigy and The CBs are not that far apart, yet there was no denying that *Breathe* (from The Prodigy's *Fat of The Land* album) was a more involving experience with the Border Patrol in command, yet I had to return to the Naims to get the full tension and scale of *It Doesn't Matter* (from The CBs' *Dig Your Own Hole*).

Twist my arm and I'll admit that *Breathe* has a slightly more 'acoustic' quality to its instrumentation, but not one to warrant generalisations. In the final analysis it comes down to personal taste and preference.

The same is also true of the Krell KAV-300i, which I borrowed in order to broaden the perspectives of this month's speaker tests.



Border Patrol's triode amp "Brought forth a gush of enthusiasm for rich midband lucidity."

After days of tubular basking, I went back to my transistors. I missed the midband clarity; instead there was a congested quality, as though the system had picked up sinusitis. But there was a return to the full, wide-bandwidth sound I'd been missing, especially in deeper and much more authoritative bass.

However, to say that one was 'better' than the other would be to miss the point entirely. It would be like saying oranges are 'better' than apples, coffee 'better' than tea, or The Prodigy 'better' than The Chemical Brothers. Any attempt to make the comparison is simply invalid.

A question of taste

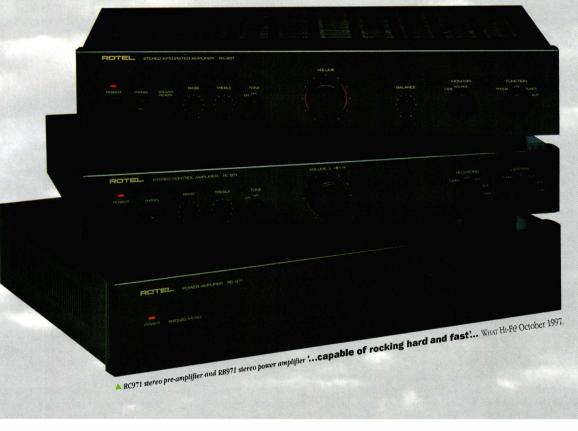
Some suggest that a preference for valve or transistor amplification is likely to be related to one's musical preferences. There may be It's been years since I tried a Krell, and I have to say I enjoyed this integrated 'baby' of the range very much indeed. It didn't offer the analytical capabilities of my several-timesmore-expensive Naim pre-/power combo, but I found a new perspective when listening to the speakers with Krell power.

Given the ghastly recording quality of many modern pop recordings, I sometimes find myself wondering whether 'listenability' might not be a more valid hi-fi criterion than sheer information-retrieval-at-all-costs. However, the fact that the best recordings carry on getting better as the system resolution increases would seem a good enough reason to carry on pursuing The Best — even though the concept is entirely mythical. ▲ Border Patrol @ (01273) 276716 Krell, Absolute Sounds @ (0181) 947 5047 A veritable tour de force in high performance sound, Rotel's integrated and pre/power amplifiers have already made a big noise in the hi-fi press. The RA931 has just added a coveted WHAT HI-FI? Award for Best Amplifier in it's price class, to a list of over 60 others for Rotel hi-fi.

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LETTER OF THE MONTH

The devil's work

I noted with horror that Alan Sircom in his Linn Arkiv/Linto article said that the phono stage was sporting a "Brilliant switchedmode power supply". Does he not realise that switched-mode power supplies are allegedly 'works-of-the-devil', and when incorporated into hi-fi equipment will have a very bad influence on the sound, not to mention the listener. I strongly urge Mr. Sircom to play a selection of religious music through any such equipment to show he has not "sold his soul". This should then be followed by a period of meditation, and any further listening to music must be conducted with pure equipment free of any devil's work. It will only be after taking such action that one can be sure of what one is listening to again.

Philip Tyler via the internet

Alan Sircom would like to point out that the word 'Brilliant' in this context is Linn Products' K-free name of said switched-mode power supply, and not an expression of glee.

Amazed and amused

I was quite amazed (and, frankly, quite amused) by Alan Sircom's description of the purpose of RIAA circuitry in the review of Linn's Linto Phono Stage (*HFC* 171): (It) "compensates for electro-mechanical curiosities of cartridges".

The truth is that the RIAA circuit is a noise-reduction apparatus which applies an opposite equalisation to that applied to the signal feeding the cutting lathe. The equalisation used during cutting boosts high frequencies, and the phono stage uses an opposite equalisation process which results in a flat frequency response AND a reduction in playback noise. The process can be viewed as a simpler version of Dolby-B noise reduction, where equalisation is not applied uniformly to the signal as in RIAA, but is altered with regard to the signal level (the stronger the signal, the less boosting is applied). This is required because of magnetic tape's tendency to become saturated when recording high-frequency signals, a problem of which vinyl is devoid. Yuval Goldstein, Rishon Lezion, Israel

Thanks for clarifying this complex subject for us, Yuval. I fear Alan may have been a little casual in his remark, but at least he was concise. He will be duly thrashed for his sloth!

The DTS experience

I was wondering if you'll be covering the new DTS decoders in the marketplace and reviewing some of the new DTS high-definition surround recordings that are coming out. The availability of true 20-bit sound in a discrete format promising the clarity, transparency, dynamic range, and lack of distortion that DTS



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DSP

offers, is incredible. It's like an obstruction or filter has been taken off the music.

As an audio enthusiast I listen to both records and CD, and I would agree that in some cases I prefer LPs to CDs, but when going from a high definition surround session immediately back to records or CD I have to say there's no comparison.

This new format allows us to get closer to the "real" high fidelity experience (and that's what it's all about, isn'tit?); and there are five discrete channels to provide a true 360 degree sound field. I would think you would want to give this more coverage in your magazine.

I have seen some mention of AC-3/Dolby Digital in your publication. With its severe data compression it will hopefully never be considered for audiophile CDs, but DTS certainly should be. I know that DTS and AC-3 are associated primarily with LaserDiscs and home theatre (especially here in the US), but I believe the future for home DTS will be audio recordings. *Steve Rike via the internet*

I agree, DTS looks like an interesting format, however, at present it has yet to make much of an impact in the UK. When both hard (and more importantly soft) ware start to appear, we will endeavour to listen in to it.

The whole picture

"A reviewer has to experiment with a product in order to elicit its full potential"! This is a part of your answer to T Huffinley in Write on! HFC 170. It's a statement that, unfortunately, works against your policy when testing products, especially loudspeakers.

Why? Because it's impossi-

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OUR ADDRESS

The Editor-in-Chief, *Hi-Fi Choice*, 19 Bolsover Street, LONDON W1P 7HJ. f⁽²⁾ 0171-917 5512. e⁽²⁾ editor.hifichoice@dennis.co.uk. We reserve the right to edit all letters. Concise correspondence preferred! All letters must include address and daytime 'phone numbers.

ble to pick out the best loudspeaker in a group by listening to it for a while and then comparing it with the sound of the others. What you can say about the speakers in these tests is how well they matched the chosen amplifiers and speaker cables.

My opinion is that you should test one at a time, so you have time and enthusiasm enough to "experiment with the product in order to elicit its full potential". It's the only way to really give the speakers a fair judgement — and your readers the "whole picture".

Stefan Fridefors, Sweden.

If you read Paul Messenger's reviews this month you'll see that he does indeed listen to each speaker with a variety of ancillaries, and takes the time to give each box every chance to infuse him with enthusiasm.

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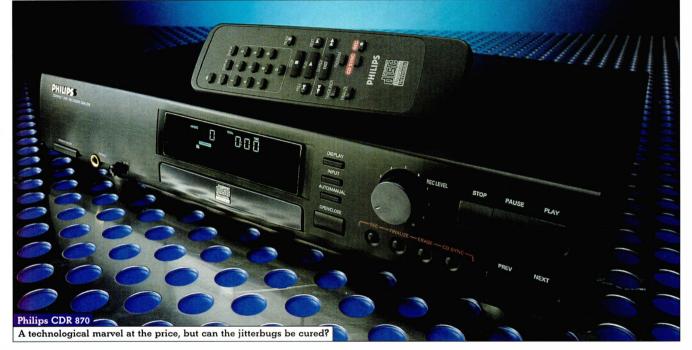
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EA



Home-Brew Heaven?

Philips' new CDR 870 smashes the £500 barrier for CD-Recordable, and offers rewritable CD as well. As **Tim Frost** and **Paul Miller** report, only a digital gremlin spoils the party.



D-Recordable (CD-R) is not new, but until recently it has been prohibitively expensive. The multinational hardware companies behind CD-R have substantial interests in music software sales, and consequently have been reluctant to upset the record industries of which they are part. The record industry has always argued that any form of recordable CD is a 'pirates charter'. This fact, combined with widespread ignorance about CD-R, has helped to inflate the price of hi-fi quality digital recorders above a consumer-friendly level.

As regular readers of *Hi-Fi Choice* will know, Philips has a large share of the market in CD mechanisms for third-party player manufacturers. Naturally, it has done equal if not greater volumes of business with computer manufacturers, this time in the supply of CD-R drives for data storage applications.

In fact, computer manufacturers buy so many CD-R drives that the unit price of manufacture has decreased dramatically. Now Philips has decided that CD-R audio recording should be available cheaply to everyone, not just PC users. With the arrival of the CDR 870 at £499, the company has set a new price point for audio CD-R, 40 per cent lower than the previous benchmark which was Pioneer's cheapest CD recorder, the PDR-04 (£699.95, *HFC* 171).

Furthermore, the CDR 870 has upped the ante with a new facility to record on erasable CD-RW discs, which can be written and rewritten over and over again.

Philips believes CD-R is the future for domestic digital recording. Spurred on, no doubt, by an unwillingness to support MiniDisc's heavily promoted revival, Philips has aimed to make the CDR 870 as much of a consumer product as possible. (Indeed, Philips sources hint we'll see the CDR 870's technology in midi-system products come the new year – Ed.)

Sockets and controls

The CDR 870 looks and works like a hybrid CD player/cassette deck. On the back panel are analogue inputs and outputs, plus elec-

trical (phono socket) and optical digital in'n'outputs. Since inputs may be selected from the front panel, I left the CDR 870 permanently connected to two separate sources. To the analogue input I hooked up the pre-amp, to supply signals from LP vinyl, cassette tape and tuner sources. To the electrical digital input I made a straight link to the CD player. The optical input remained available to handle any other digital source I might have wished to record.

The front panel offers minimalist CD transport controls, a knob to adjust the level of analogue input signals, plus switches to select between inputs and automatic/manual record modes. Almost in hiding beneath the transport controls are four miniature buttons for the record functions: Record, Finalise, Erase and CD-Sync.

Recording a CD is as straight-forward as recording a cassette — almost. The instructions helpfully suggested that I use a CD-RW instead of a CD-R disc to get acclimatised to the machine, since the recording method is the same for both types of disc. Thanks,



Philips — in the early stages I could have wasted a dozen CD-Rs working out every aspect of the routine to suit my needs!

Rewriting the book on CD

The CDR 870's ability to use erasable CD-RW discs is an important bonus. They're good for test recordings and well-suited to recording radio. (No annoying interruptions half-way through the tape.) CD-RW also holds some appeal for live recording, as a disc-based alternative to DAT, and a compression-free alternative to MiniDisc.

However, since the CD-RW discs are expensive (\pounds 15- \pounds 20), and are not guaranteed to play on all CD players, they have limited appeal for CD and LP transfers. I suspect that CD-Rs (at \pounds 3 a go) will be most users' primary recording medium.

When you insert a blank or partiallyrecorded CD-R/CD-RW disc into the CDR870, it checks that the disc is a valid, recordable, audio CD, then sets laser power to match the disc's recording needs, rather like the auto-bias function in a cassette deck. This takes a few seconds, then the machine is ready for recording. When it uses the digital inputs to copy tracks from a CD, the recorder automatically includes the original's track numbers, using sub-code data from the CD player. (In theory, this should also allow you to copy the new CD Text information, that displays lyrics, track names etc. on suitably-equipped CD players. – **Ed**)

Studious recording

Recording from vinyl, the CDR 870 looks for three seconds of silence between tracks to trigger the track numbering system. This worked fine with albums in prime condition, but noise and crackles on favoured-butknackered '60s albums defeated the system, leaving me to manually increment the track numbers as the recording progressed. At the end of a recording there's a pause as the disc's temporary 'table of contents' is updated. This enables the recording to play back on the CDR 870, and permits further tracks to be recorded. This 'open' disc won't yet play on an audio CD player: it needs to be 'finalised', effected by pressing the Finalise button on the panel. This initiates a twominute operation making the disc 100 per cent CD-Audio compatible. Once finalised, the disc will accept no further data. (See *HFC* 148; or use our FactsBack service, quoting reference 1397 — details on p144.)

Recording onto CD-RW entails the same processes, but tracks can be erased, starting from the last track to be recorded and working backwards. Although CD-RWs can be 'finalised' to be CD-Audio compatible, the discs have lower reflectivity, so a third-party CD player must be sensitive enough to read them. The most recent CD players are building in the ability to read CD-RW, but at least 80 per cent of older CD players will be unable to 'see' the data on a CD-RW disc.

Conclusions

Recordings made via the digital inputs are subject to the CD-R jitter identified during the lab test (see Lab Test). Those made via the analogue inputs (which entail a built-in analogue-to-digital encoder) were good, but just as external DACs have proved their worth as an enhancement to CD transports, I am sure the CDR 870 would benefit from a higher-spec external A/D converter. Currently these are manufactured principally for professional applications, with price-tags two or three times higher than the cost of the CDR 870 itself. Specialist manufacturers will no doubt wise up to an after-market opportunity once the CD-R scene takes off.

In audio terms I expected playback performance to equal that of a $\pounds150$ player, and this, pretty much, is what it achieves.

IS RECORDABLE CD RELIABLE?

Computer users' vast demand for blank CD-Rs has set the price of PC CD-Rs tumbling below £2. Audio CD-Rs to work on the Philips or Pioneer recorders now cost between £3 and £7. CD-RW, on the other hand, is still an emergent technology, so these discs will set you back between £15 and £20.

There is a lot of debate in the trade about whether all CD-R discs are created equal: or whether, in fact, some are much less durable than others, and therefore pose a risk to those who wish to use them for archiving purposes. Well, the truth of the matter is that all audio CD-Rs come from big-name manufacturers like TDK and Maxell. But there are some PC-destined CD-R discs that are made at obscure locations in the Far East. The problem with these is not so much how long they will last, but whether they will work at all. The lower-quality discs may simply cause write failures which may make a whole disc unrecordable.

CD-RW discs use a crystalline material whose reflectivity is modified, while CD-R employs a layer dye that is burned away — in both instances by laser. (See p27 for more info.) When stored under normal conditions, both types of disc should last 50 to 100 years. But remember that recordable discs are much more easily damaged than CDs, either by bending them or writing on them in heavy ballpoint pen.

The only other issue with CD recording is that of piracy. Despite the record industry's moans about the CDR 870, its arrival will make no difference to the real pirates, who rely instead for their nefarious deeds on double-speed PC CD-R drives costing less than £200.

Furthermore, the record industry forgets to mention that in some countries, a levy is collected on every blank audio CD sold, whether you use it for copying CDs or not. The record business cut the deal for a levy and the use of Serial Copy Management System (SCMS); the new recorders meet all their demands for protection against piracy, so their moans and groans seem increasingly unjustified. *TF*



HI-FI CHOICE

STATEMENTS EXTRA

This isn't a major criticism, as the CDR 870 is likely to join a system with a better-quality CD player. Better to view it — potentially as a phenomenally good digital recorder, which is significantly cheaper than equivalent DAT machines, and which produces cost-effective recordings that will play on any CD-equipped hi-fi system.

Is this the dawning of a new age? Perhaps. Certainly, as the price of CD recorders decreases, and blank-disk prices settle below £3, it'll be hard to resist the urge to record in digital's only universal format. All that remains is for Philips to sort out the glitch that scrambles up digitallysourced CD-R recordings. TF Philips **2** (0181) 689 4444

EDITOR'S COMMENT

As you will read in Paul Miller's report, the unit on test exhibited anomalous behaviour while transcribing digital sources onto CD-R. But does this problem really matter? A vast



majority of listeners may never hear it if they hook up the CDR 870 to unrevealing systems. And goodness knows there have been enough reviews committed to print

already in which the CDR 870 gets a 100 per cent clean bill of health.

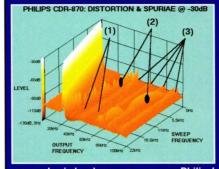
However, just because some listeners won't hear the problem, doesn't mean none will. And because of this magazine's unique commitment to both subjective and objective reviewing, we know how much jitter can degrade digital sound quality.

Our original plan for this test was that Tim Frost and members of *Hi-Fi Choice* staff would undertake detailed listening sessions after the conclusion of Paul Miller's lab test procedure. Thus, once Paul identified the problem, I decided to postpone a formal sound-quality appraisal until Philips has remedied the problem we identified.

To its credit, Philips has reacted very swiftly and positively to our findings. The company claims that a revised design will be in production shortly. However, until we have tested a revised pukka production unit, we cannot wholeheartedly advise readers to purchase this product.

Inevitably, CDR 870s already in the shops suffer from the CD-R jitter problem Paul identified. I am sure that many non-audiophile consumers will buy — and appreciate — the unit solely for its low price and features, but I know *Hi-Fi Choice* readers want only the best. So while we salute Philips for bringing this product to market at a revolutionary price, it cannot receive our blessing until it ceases to smear unwanted jitter all over its digital dubs onto CD-R. sv

PHILIPS CDR 870 - LAB REPORT BY PAUL MILLER



n a basic level you can compare Philips' CDR 870 with any budget CD player based on the popular TDA1305 hybrid DAC. In this regard, the CDR 870 has links with conventional players from Mission, Cambridge, Rotel, Micromega and Roksan, though it features a more specialised transport mechanism (the CDM36) which facilitates both recording *and* playback.

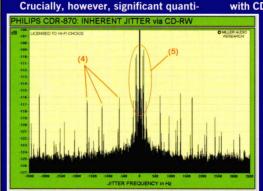
In playback mode, and regardless of whether the disc is CD, CD-R or CD-RW, the CDR-870 offers a typical 0.0016 per cent midband THD (re. 0dB), that increases to 0.02 per cent at HF (1).

The overall S/N ratio is also pretty typical at 102dB, and likewise low-level linearity that holds true to within +1.6/-1.0dB over a full 100dB range. The TDA1305's oversam-

pling filters' pattern of stopband images is familiar (2), but the interference tones at 44.1kHz and 47kHz, 62kHz, 78kHz and 93kHz (3) are not. The 44.1kHz signal is a 'leaky' sample tone, though the others (separated by a regular 15-16kHz) appear specific to the CDR 870. Incidentally, all computer monitors were turned off during this test, so there was no risk that these patterns were caused by CRT flyback interference, for example.

he real bugs only appear once

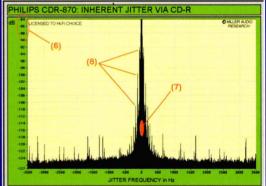
the CDR 870 is used for recording. It's worth noting that the record/playback level meter is way off beam, registering peak-level signals as 'Over' while signals from –3dB to –50dB are displayed 6-10dB *below* their real level. Pre-emphasised sources are also incorrectly flagged, which would result in a seriously compromised treble upon replay.





ties of digital jitter are added to the data upon recording. Oddly enough, this is less of an issue with CD-RW recordings. These, when recorded and replayed via the CDR 870, yield a total of 452psec, comprising data-induced distortions (4) and a variety of low-rate patterns (5) that are 'embedded' onto the CD-RW data. In other words, replay this CD-RW disc on any other (compatible) player and these patterns will always appear.

he bug in Philips' software only really bites if you make copies from a *digital*



source onto CD-R. Here there's a huge increase in jitter to 1602psec, requiring a change in the graph scale (6) to reveal its full extent. The broad, uncorrelated jitter (7) appears as a noisy hump that's impossible to pin-point. However, the correlated peaks (8), seen previously with CD-RW recordings, are also apparent (albeit at a higher level) with CD-R. The subjective consequence is

clear: recordings made on CD-R will sound significantly softer and greyer, and will suffer a blurring of stereo imagery when compared to the original CD on any compatible CD player.

Philips has been informed of these oversights and, at the time of writing, is attempting to redress them before full-scale production commences. I'll endeavour to update *Choice* readers as soon as Philips has revised models in full production.

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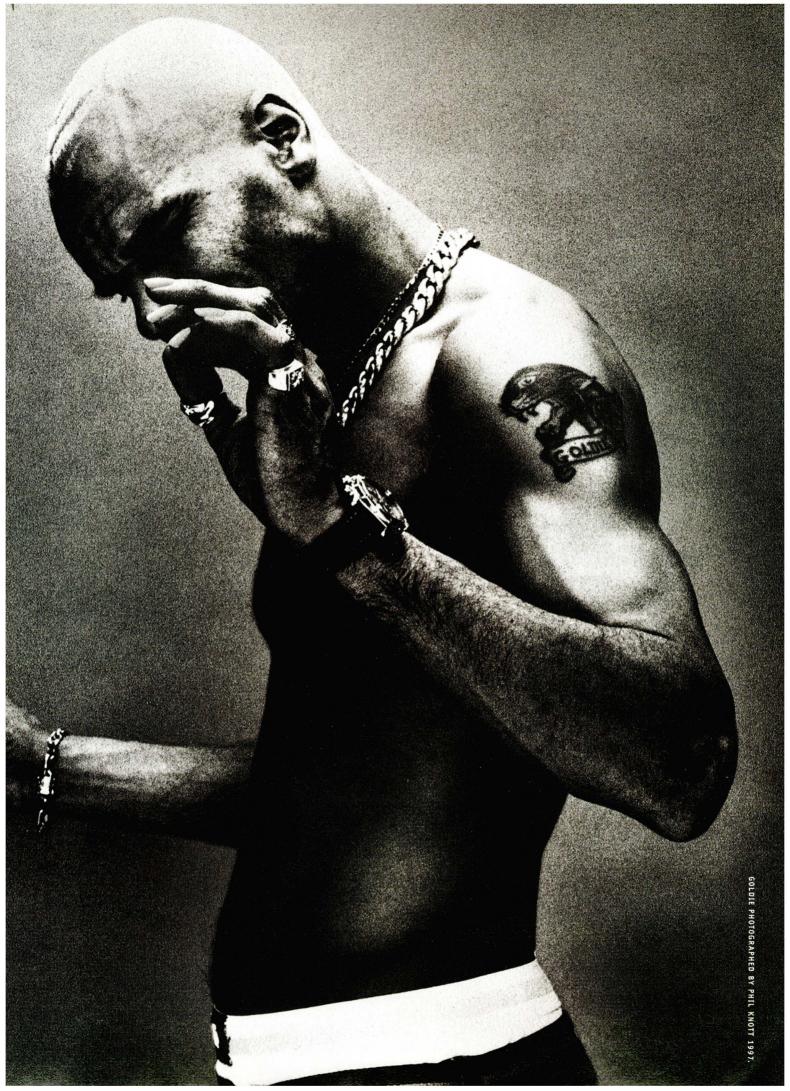
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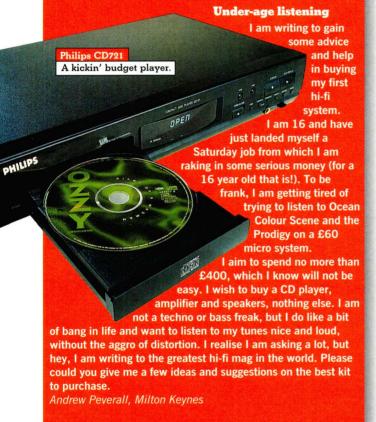
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Alan Sircom and Jason Kennedy are here with the answers. Every letter published wins a TDK SA 90 tape worth approx. £2.39! Ten tapes for our Query of the Month!

Query of the month Brought to you in association with TDK



We can suggest a list of recommended components that fit your budget, but if you want really kickin' tunes you may have to find another £60. The Pioneer A-204R amp, Philips 721 CD player and Revolver Beretta speakers come in with a tenner to spare, but if you can stretch a little bit further you could substitute a harman/kardon HK610 amp and floorstanding



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Every issue, we're giving ten of TDK's awardwinning SA 90 tapes to the writer of the month's best query. When reviewed in Hi-Fi Choice, TDK's SA tape revealed the heart and soul of music with a graceful and transparent sound. We awarded Five Stars for Sound Quality and our coveted Recommended flag!

Power corrupts?

Is it really worth thinking about supplementing my budget NAD 314 amplifier with an external power amplifier as a future upgrade? How do these NAD integrated amps perform as preamps? How would such a combo sound, compared to an integrated amp of similar investment for example?

Or would biamplification be a better approach? In that case, I would guess the power amp must not only be similar in power rating, but also in tonal balance etc. Does such an amplifier exist, or is the combination of two 314 amps my ideal solution? That sounds a bit funny to me.

I Veda, Germany, via our Website

Although those budget NADs have a set of links for connecting a power amplifier, the preamp stage is not up to the mark. You would be far better opting for a Marantz PM-66 KI Signature (or similar) amplifier than making an odd hybrid.

Likewise bi-amping: you could add a second NAD and create a cat's cradle of wire at the back, but we would still prefer the sound of an amplifier that costs a little more.



NAD 314 Versatile socketry, but not a hi-fi panacea.

Bass boost for budget box

My system consists of a Marantz PM-44SE amp, a Marantz CD-46 CD player and Rogers LS1 speakers on stands. Interconnects are SonicLink Silver Pink, speaker cables are Cable Talk Talk 4. The bass from this system is almost nonexistent. Should I put in a subwoofer, and if so what model? 'Limlark' via our Website

The LS1 is not the most bass-heavy speaker around, but are you using the speakers in free-space? If so, try putting the speakers bang up against a wall. This will help reinforce the



bass considerably. If you need more bass, you could go for a subwoofer, but you'd need at least a REL Q-100E to keep the music coherent. Ultimately a bigger pair of speakers is the answer.

A great little speaker but it needs wall reinforcement.

Running in, please pass

I've just purchased a new Naim system and have had the dealer set it up at home over the weekend. I've purchased a CD3-5, NAC72, and NAP90 with Intro speakers. What is the best way to run in the system? How long does it take? And is a seperate power supply good for the CD3-5?

'JayJay', New Zealand, via our Website

The best way of running a Naim system in is to use that stuff called music. You can try all those fancy burn-in discs and they may improve the sound, but a rousing blast of Led Zep does the



job just as well, with so much more panache. In terms of timing, Naim kit takes weeks before it is properly on song. But remember that you should only switch off your equipment when you go on holiday or when there's a thunderstorm. Otherwise leave it powered up constantly. If you keep switching off the power to the CD or the preamp, it will never sound optimal.

We've not heard the new CD3-5, so we can't comment on the upgraded PSU. However, I'd suggest using a Hi-Cap for the NAC 72 before upgrading the CD player. Why? Because it allows you to turn off the power amp at night, and improves the juice delivery to the preamp, making it sound much better in the process.

Cost-cutting cable

I'm thinking of making my own speaker cables — it's cheaper, but what if I get it wrong?

Do you have any tips or types of cables that you have used which work?

Mike Bakey, via our Website

The usual 'home made' cable is good ol' twin and earth — 15A solid-core cooker cable. It's not very flexible and it's a bit of a pig to terminate but reasonable results can be achieved at little cost. But it's not a question of being cheaper if you get things wrong, though. If you get it really wrong and short the amplifier out, the repairs to the amp could be more expensive than a set of speaker cables.

In truth, I have heard many home-grown speaker cables, but few of have been up to the quality of 79-strand Gale or QED.



Strategic arms limitation talk

I am looking for a replacement for my Arcam P-77 cartridge. I am considering several including: Audio Technica ML-150, Shure V-15xMR, Denon DL 110, Sumiko Blue Point, Grado Reference Platinum and 'even' the Stanton CS-100. I am not including Ortofon, Goldring or other European types as they are too expensive in Canada.

My primary concern, apart from sound quality, is the compliance of the cartridge and its match to the tonearm. Compliance information is rarely provided by manufacturers and makes choosing a suitable cartridge difficult. My turntable is a Linn Axis with an Ittok arm, installed by a dealer when I wanted to upgrade the Basik arm. The rest of the system comprises a Mission Cyrus 1 amp and NHT Model 1 speakers. I listen to all types of music.

Also, how does one go about rebalancing the deck with the Ittok, seeing as it has no real suspension? I know fitting an Ittok to an Axis is not common practice, but the improvement in detail made it a worthwhile upgrade. Maggie P, via our Website

The Linn arm should not prove so heavy that it physically unbalances the turntable, even though the combination is unconventional. The Axis was conceived as a complete package with the Basik Plus arm, so installing a better tonearm, such as the Ittok, will not necessarily result in an all round improvement because that arm was designed for a suspended turntable.

As for cartridges, of the bunch you have listed, we'd say the DL110, the Grado and the Sumiko BP (or better yet, the BPS) will suit. Additionally, most modern MM cartridges will match the compliance of an arm like the 'Tik-Tok'.



Flat Symphony

I own a NAD 312 with a 512 CD-player and KEF Coda 7 loudspeakers, and I find that it sounds a little bit too flat when there are voices and music together, in Beethoven's *9th Symphony* for example. I would like to know how to correct that. Would it be a good idea to buy a NAD 214 power amplifier and use the 312 as a preamp?

Larry Theryl, France, via our Website

No, the amp is not the main problem — it's your speakers. The KEF Coda 7 is a fine budget speaker, but lacks the dynamic range to deal with Beethoven's 9th. Changing these speakers for a pair of B&W DM601 on Kudos S50 stands, the Tannoy M2 on Heybrook HBS1 stands or the floorstanding M3 will make greater sound improvements than adding a 214 power amp.

Sexy MF

My question regards the Musical Fidelity A2. I am assembling a small system around it and was wondering which CD players and speakers would be complementary *John Montgomery, via the Internet*

We liked the A2 amp for its full upper bass and transparent midband — all typical MF characteristics. The matching A2 CD player from Musical Fidelity could be a good option, but if you find this too warm, then the Arcam Alpha 8, the Marantz CD-63 KI Signature, Pioneer Precision PD-S505 or the Sony CDP-X3000ES will fit the bill. Loudspeakers that match this amplifier are models like the Heybrook Heylios, the PMC TB1 and the NHT SuperOne.



New life from old speakers?

I have the following system: Marantz CD-63 mkII CD player, Denon PMA-350 mkII amplifier and an old pair of Celestion Ditton 110 speakers, with Cambridge Audio Arctic interconnects. I want to upgrade but am unsure of what to change first.

I think my source is fine, but the amp and speakers could be much better. The first thing I want to do is replace is the amp, as the speakers give me reasonable detail and enough bass for listening in my small room (4m x 4m). I was thinking of Rotel's new pre-power combo as it is very reasonably priced and would seem a better option than a similarly-priced integrated. Or should I check out new speakers with the existing components? *Joe Marr, Italy, via the Website.*

We think that you can get a better sound from an integrated amplifier — the Pioneer A300R Precision springs to mind. The Rotel pre/power is good, but not quite in the same league.

However, a more up-to-date pair of speakers will be necessary to get the best from the room and the system. Go for a pair of Royd Minstrels, or Heybrook Heylios or Keswick Aria II.

Refuse tip!

My system comprises Linn LP12/Ekos/Lingo/Decca London Gold record player, Naim NAC102/NAP250/Supercap amps and KEF RDM2 Monitors on Target stands and concrete slabs.

The Decca is now a bit long in the tooth and I'm looking to upgrade. Although Linn's new MC has been well received, I am reluctant to purchase one because I was infuriated by Linn's refusal to re-tip and rebuild my Troika. Can you recommend some cartridges to audition, other than Linn? *Mike Rodway, Christchurch, Dorset*



Getting the sort of energy you have been used to with the Decca will not be easy, and we are inclined to suggest you try another one. However, there are a couple of alternatives, notably the Dynavector 17D2 and the Lyra Lydian.

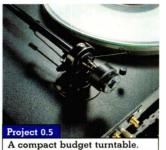
An accomplished MC cartridge that should suit an LP12 well.

Space saver

I am in the process of purchasing a new turntable for my Quad stereo system. The problem I have is lack of space, so I was wondering if you could recommend any small, quality turntables?

The space I have is approximately 400mm wide x 350mm deep. I have a budget of between $\pounds 170-\pounds 250$ and would appreciate any help you can give me.

G.F. Merriman, via the Internet

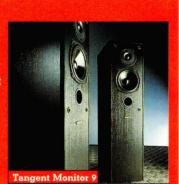


Unfortunately, most turntables are about 50mm wider than you can accommodate. Also, unless you factor in about another 30-50mm at the rear, the lead-out wires will foul the space you have available.

The only turntables that even begin to fit the bill are from the Dual and Project range, but even these may prove too wide.

Watts up?

I've just purchased my first valve (tube) integrated amplifier. It cost just £50 and can squeeze out only 3.5 Watts. However, I use it with a Marantz CD12, Audioquest Lapis interconnect, Naim NACA5 cable and Neat Petite speakers. This little amp drives my Neats quite well, especially with vocal music (when not pushed too hard or too loud).



Inexpensive and sensitive.

So I plan to build another system with it, and need some speaker recommendations (with high sensitivity and eight Ohms impedance). Currently I have a Naim 82/180/HiCap and am thinking about buying a Naim CD player to be used with the Neat Petites. So my Marantz will be used with the small tube integrated and the new speakers. My shortlist include Blue Room's MiniPods and Mordaunt Short MS10i Pearls. *Kozit, Thailand, via the Website*

We would suggest NOT going for either of these speakers with a 3.5 Watter. Instead, opt for the Tangent Monitor 9 floorstander. It's 90dB efficient and the touch of rawness will balance with the softness you may get with the valve amp.

Swap shop

My mostly elderly system comprises: Rotel 820BX amp, 830L tuner and RCD-965BX CD player with Mission 70 speakers. I would like to replace the speakers with bookshelf models that have a bigger sound. I have a budget of \pounds 500.

I have also inherited a Technics tuner and amp with some bulky Monitor Audio speakers. These are between 16 and 20 years old. Do you think any of this kit would be worth swapping for mine? *W. Armstrong, Henfield, W.Sussex*

The best way to assess your inheritance is the 'listen to it and see' technique, a system that worked well in the old days but which has become unfashionable in some circles. However, we doubt if an aged Technics would hold a candle to late-'80s Rotel.

As for new speakers, we would steer you towards the following redoubtable 'bookshelf' models: Castle Isis, Heybrook Heylios, JBL LX2 or Monitor Audio MA700PMC.



A gaggle of hi-fi

At present I have the following gaggle of hi-fi gear: Pink Triangle Export turntable with the ubiquitous Moth arm and a Goldring 1022 cartridge, Denon DCD 920 CD player, Rotel RA820 amp and Ruark Swordsman Plus speakers. Connections are Exposure on the speakers and £18 Cable Co interconnect, while stands are Target with marble under the turntable.

I intend to upgrade the amp as I feel it does not do justice to my system. I also intend to renew the cables and cartridge. What do you recommend on a budget of around £400?

I would also like to include a Kenwood SS3300 surround processor given to me recently - should I run it from the new amp or use it with the Rotel?

PR Eaton, Bolton, Lancs

The main problem with this particular set-up is the combination of amp and speakers, and we rather suspect that the amp is the better-sounding component of the two. If you paired it with a nice sensitive loudspeaker you might be surprised at its potential. Try one or all of the following and see if you agree: B&W DM602, Dali 104B and Mordaunt-Short MS30i.

As for cables, check out the DNM TCC75 or SonicLink Silver Pink interconnect with DNM LSCB500 or Ortofon SPK300 speaker cable.

On the needle front you could make life easy and buy a Goldring 1042 stylus, or try a decent solid-bodied MM like Rega's Elys.

There's no reason not to use the Rotel in a surround set-up, so long as the Kenwood has the requisite amplification for the centre and rear channels.



Should work well with an RA920.

Expensive negotiations

I wonder if you could help me negotiate the shifting sands of amplification. At the moment I have a Pink Triangle Da Capo (22-bit filter) DAC and Cardinal Transport, with Chord Solid and Prodac interconnects. Speakers are Ruark Equinox with the XLO umbilical and bi-wired DNM Reson speaker cable. The amplification is Crimson 620 pre/power.

I like the sound very much; (it is fast and quite revealing,) but I feel the amps are struggling when I play demanding music. I have been considering an upgrade for a while and would be glad of any suggestions. I have a broad taste in music, including classical, jazz, rock and folk. I thought a price bracket of £1,500-£2,500 would give a good choice.

David Hale, Linlithgow, West Lothian

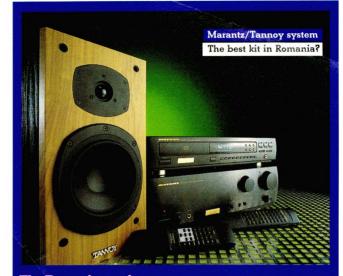
We agree, the amp does look like the weak link and with your budget you should be able to get something pretty special. We're thinking Densen DM 20/30, Krell KAV300i, Quad 77 pre/power or Sumo Athena IIB/Polaris III. Alternatively try the Naim or

Exposure routes, both very popular and with precise upgrade paths.

You don't mention equipment supports, which makes us wonder if you have got this side of the system sorted. If not you are missing out on its full potential: try a Quadraspire or Mana with a Seismic Sink for crucial components. You won't want your money back.



Tasty Danish pre/power combo.



The Romanian recipe

I currently have a Yamaha CDX-570 CDP, Technics SU-VX500 amp and Pioneer CS-501 speakers, plus a Technics SH-GE70 equaliser and Technics RS-BX 727 tape deck. I listen to all kinds of music (sometimes loud), including soul, R'n'B, rap, techno, '70s rock and occasionally classical.

I have a budget of around £2,000 for an upgrade and am looking for a new amp (around 70 Watts, pre/power combination preferred), a good set of speakers with deep bass and clear treble (as good as I can get for this value) and a new CD player.

Please bear in mind that the range available in Romania is restricted to major brands (list supplied). Andrei Cracium, Romania.

The last part of your query is the only real limit to your options, and looking through the list we suspect that the only electronics both recommendable and available will be the Marantz KI Sig series. Have a look at the two system reviews at the front of this issue (p16), they fall into your budget and you should be able to get most of the components from the Ken Ishiwata set-up. And don't dismiss the cables: they may seem expensive but the end result proves that they're an intrinsic part of a successful recipe.

Telly trouble

I have a problem with my loudspeakers and television. My system at the moment is: Meridian 200/203/201 mkIII555 electronics, Mission 753 loudspeakers, Audioquest Quartz interconnects and Type Four speaker cable. The system is mounted on isolation units.

As a system it gives me great listening pleasure, but a problem occurred when I introduced a big Philips Pro-Logic TV into the room. Due to the physical size of the TV the Missions have to sit two foot from each side, causing the colour to run on the screen.

Can you advise me on some good-quality screened speakers to replace the Missions, that will retain or improve the sound? Simon Morson, Warwickshire

Sounds like you've got too many magnets in the area. In general, speakers used that distance from a TV would not cause a

problem, which is a good thing because there aren't too many full-range shielded speakers around. But the five drivers on the 753s are obviously too powerful.

So go for the best speaker you can afford with the least drive units — this month's batch has turned up a few gems (p74 onwards), or you could seek out the Roksan OJ3X, Heybrook Quartet or Epos ES14 for a listen. If you really need shielding try Spendor's 2030 or something from the NHT line-up.

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Pre-posals

Please could you help me with my hi-fi system. It consists of a Meridian 105S, 101 preamp (modified eight years ago by Meridian), 104 tuner, Linn Sondek/Ittok/Asak record player, Marantz CD17 KI Sig with SonicLink Vermilion interconnect, on a Townshend Seismic Sink and playing through Mission 753F speakers via Nordost Flatline Gold (bi-wired) cable. The kit sits on a Soundstyle support in a sound-proof room.

My Meridian 101 lacks enough inputs — thus I would like a new preamp. My dealer tells me things have moved on in preamps and I could do much better. Could you suggest a model that would suit? How about a Meridian 502?

I would also like to get a subwoofer and am looking for something in the range £200-300. But I live in a tower block so I have to be careful.

B. Marshall, London

Does that mean you have the £1,295 asking price of a 502 for your preamp? If so, there's a good selection to pick from. However, the age of your power amp makes it a little tricky to predict the end result. It may even make sense to go for an integrated design such as AVI's S2000MI or a Copland CSA-14.

On the preamp front the 502 looks like a good option but try and listen to a Sumo Athena IIB or Michell Argo HR.

On the sub front we suspect that you are unlikely to improve on the bottom end of the Missions without risking neighbour angst, so we'd suggest you go for qualitative improvements with a decent speaker cable such as Electrofluidics Monolith 20/20.

HINTS AND TIPS Shun Mook Valve Resonators

JIMMY HUGHES POPPED SHUN MOOK'S WOODEN TAM O'SHANTER ON HIS TUBES, AND THIS IS WHAT HE FOUND!

ull marks to the boffins at Shun Mook. They're forever thinking up ever more interesting and original ways of using pieces of mpingo wood, to improve the sound of our hi-fi systems. For those using tubed equipment, there's now a set of four Valve Resonators designed to fit like a cap on top of small valves. As with other Shun Mook products, the use of these Valve Resonators seems to increase the feeling of depth and space around voices and instruments, improving dynamic separation.

They're very easy to fit, though you need to align the little dot on top of each resonator so it's at 12 o'clock (or pointing toward the back of the amp), if you like a neutral effect. Turning the resonator clockwise makes the sound slightly more forwardly balanced and tighter, while counterclockwise adds warmth and tonal body, leading to a smoother, more relaxed presentation. It's recommended you wait for the product being treated to warm up for at least 30 minutes before tuning the resonator. And of course, if protective covers need to be removed to allow access to valves, you should unplug the equipment to be treated from the mains supply.

I used mine in the Z Man Audio Signal Enhancer (see p22), which uses one valve, and Musical Fidelity's X-PRE, which uses two. I was slightly concerned that there wouldn't be space for the

Acoustic mixtures

My system includes a Rotel RC/RB 850 pre/power amp (seven years old), Marantz CD10 player and KEF Q90 speakers. Connections are Transparent Musichord



interconnects and Straight Wire Waveguide 1.5 bi-wired speaker cable. My room is 6x4 metres and my favourite type of music is the blues, tex-mex (Ry Cooder) and other country/rock 'acoustic mixtures'.

I would like to upgrade my amplifier and am looking for a more detailed and rich sound with a little more bass. What should I go for: Marantz PM17, Copland CSA-8 or a Roksan Caspian? I am also interested in speaker cables; what do you suggest ? *Branko Klemencic, Slovenia.*

Of the amplifiers you list the Marantz is for us an unknown quantity, but has potential. The Copland was much loved by Alvin Gold but may not have the bass grunt you seek, which leaves the Caspian looking the most suitable in our experience. But try and listen to all three if you can, and do so with your KEFs. We found them a little laid-back when we tested them so you may need an amp with a bit of bite. Try a big Exposure or Rega integrated. See if you can find some Goertz M2 speaker cable for full effect.

Resonators in Musical Fidelity's tightly packed X-Pre case, but luckily there was just enough. However, because it's a bit tricky to operate the MF unit when the circuit board is removed from its case, you can't easily A/B compare the different tuning positions. So I just placed my review samples at 12 o'clock.

Even using a single Resonator (on the Audio Signal Enhancer) produced a worthwhile gain in spaciousness and detail. It's difficult to describe in just a few words, but separation is improved, which enhances the feeling of space and depth around voices and instruments. Imaging is more vivid and dimensional too, highlighting the spatial qualities of the original recording. Turning the Resonator clockwise or counterclockwise in one hour

increments changed the sound slightly in the manner already outlined above.

Putting a cap on top of a valve may cause it to run very slightly warmer than usual. But any change in operating temperature is likely to be pretty miniscule as most small valves usually don't get too warm. Certainly, the tubes used in the MF X-Pre and X-10D run fairly cool; even when you leave these items on for 24 hours the case temperature doesn't increase significantly. Shun Mook also makes a much larger set of Valve Resonators, intended to go around large power tubes.

As I don't use a valve power amp, I didn't ask to try these, but on the strength of the smaller Resonators I can imagine they make quite a useful improvement. Meanwhile, all this makes me wonder if it might be possible to come up with a Resonator designed to fit over integrated circuits. How about it, Shun? Shun Mook small Valve Resonators cost £100 for four. Audiofreaks 🕿 (0181) 948 4153

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Jason Kennedy checks out the new Circle turntable from Wilson benesch. Is it likely to shake up the mid-market spin doctors?



Two MDF slabs support this circular turntable — note Wb's trademark carbon-fibre finish.

arning: this is a record player review. In the text that follows you will read language that may alarm the vinyllychallenged. That should have seen off the analogue-o-phobes. What's all this 'kids of today don't know what a turntable is' nonsense anyway? Who do you think the bedroom DJs are? OAPs? They may not know just how good vinyl can sound, but they sure know where that wicky-wicky sound comes from. Not from a high-end turntable, that's for sure.

Enough ranting. Let's turn our attention to this rather gorgeous new Wilson benesch record player. Ladies and gentlemen, I give you the Circle. This £2,000 assembly of precision-engineered parts represents the Sheffield-based company's point of entry into the world of 12-inch black vinyl. The deck alone (£795) undercuts the existing Turntable by just under a grand, and is presented here with a £795 version of the ACT tonearm called ACT 0.5, and an open-bodied cartridge dubbed Ply.

The Circle is as circles do: circular in all respects. It's based on two MDF slabs, 30mm thick and 12inches in diameter. The lower one supports the motor unit and features a captive mains cable; the upper one attempts the more complex job of isolating the arm-board and platter bearing. Only on the top stage do we encounter the first telltale sign of Wilson benesch's favourite material: carbon fibre. Three 3mm-diameter carbon rods are employed to decouple the bearing-housing and arm-board; on the latter the gap between pillar and board is so small you can barely see it. The armboard is connected by more substantial bars of the stuff to the bearing housing, so two of the three fundamental parts of the system are supported on less than 10mm of this ridiculously light. stiff, self-damping material. The only other decoupling in the system is a series of rubber feet attached either side of the base unit in vertical alignment. Scary stuff.

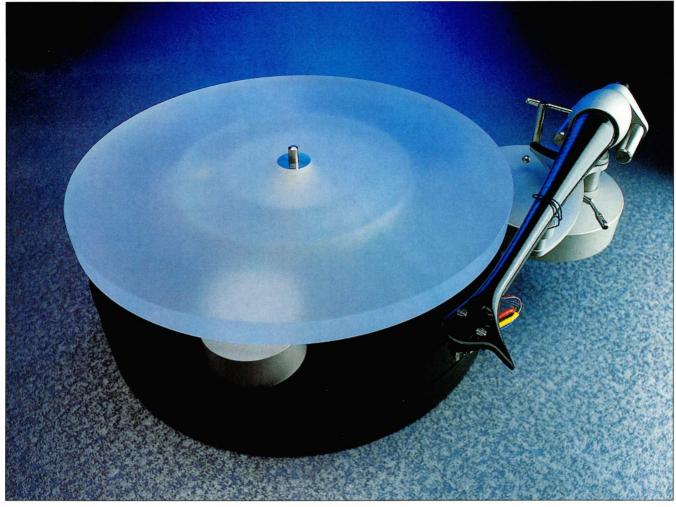
The platter is an 18mm acrylic job, but while several turntable makers use this as

the sole disc support, Wb has added a thick compressed-fibre mat, arguing that it gives better results in this design. Also included is a cardboard cartridge-alignment protractor, which turns out to be a handy accessory for users who have 180gm designer vinyl in their collections. Because these records are thicker than usual, if you optimise your armheight for them, 'ordinary' LPs will be played with a less-than-optimal VTA (vertical tracking angle). With the Circle, however, if you set the arm-height for 180gm, you can maintain correct VTA by inserting the cardboard protractor as a shim.

The ACT 0.5 tonearm's bearing is a variation on the uni-pivot theme, with three ball bearings acting as a cradle for a fourth. In this respect, as well in design and materials, the 0.5 does not vary greatly from the ACT 2 (*HFC* 156). Economies are made on a less spectacular but still impressive finish, and by replacing the plug-in lead with a captive one. So it's a serious tonearm that uses high-tech materials and innovative design to give the cartridge a low-resonance platform to work with. I've used the ACT 2 on a Voyd for some time, and can vouch for its unusually light touch resulting from low coloration.

The Ply moving-coil cartridge is a Wb Matrix without the trimmings — no screwdrivers, spirit-levels or response plots. The Matrix retails for £786; as the Ply it's pretty much thrown in at £410. It's an open-body design with a carbon-fibre chassis and an Empire generator, the latter extending a very long cantilever with an elliptical tip. Without this cantilever, correct alignment would be very difficult; the lack of any body removes the usual sight lines.

The Circle is pretty simple to operate. To change speeds you must move a belt manually, but you can't do this easily with the platter in situ. A basic wire tool could help. A simple rocker-switch controls power on/off, but it is placed on the opposite side of the base to the arm, so if you stick the arm in the traditional 'back-right, two-o'clock' position, the switch is less obvious and the badge position apparently incorrect. Wb prefers to stick the arm base right at the back, which doesn't complicate the process of cueing, but does make the lift/lower lever less accessible. Still, that's probably a good thing.



Isolation platforms

Having undertaken the fiddly but fairly straightforward process of setting up the Circle, I plonked it down atop a Mana stand and spun a few slabs of the black stuff. First results were pretty lively; even after a bit of VTA adjustment and the addition of two different isolation devices, there was still quite a lot of excitement in the sound. Some music sounded very good, but there was a distinct preference for certain instruments that my speakers hadn't revelled in before.

Clearly I needed greater mechanical isolation. A Townshend Audio Seismic Sink Stand (SSS) stood to hand, but it was crowned by an SME Model 20 turntable. If you think cat juggling's difficult, you should try swapping heavy record players! The Circle isn't as light as it looks, and really benefits from a degree of acoustic decoupling. I could hardly believe the transformation brought about by the SSS. For example, with the choir and organ of Philip Glass's Koyaanisqatsi — deep voices, deeper organ - it was as if I'd opened the doors to the venue: depth, ambience and timbre came flooding out. This is a serious turntable, but I wonder how many listeners will realise just how serious it is.

I had to keep reminding myself that at heart this was a $\pounds795$ product, because in many ways it displays many virtues of the



Turntable speed is changed by removing the platter and moving the drive belt.

aforementioned SME. Inevitably, because of its massive construction, the latter has greater low-frequency solidity and sonic stability, but the Circle keeps time evenly without drawing attention to itself, and generates stereo images in an enthusiastic, open manner hinting at old-school valve amps.

There is certainly no shortage of resolution, since information retrieval is its forté, and instruments sound convincing as they take their place in the soundstage with little hesitation or uncertainty. The overall balance is a little further forward than neutral, so if your speakers seem a little overcivilised or reticent, the Circle should balance them nicely. And it should work well with less extravagant ancillaries — try a Rega arm, and Grado or Shure cartridge for instance. You won't hear the same amount of detail but balance will be more relaxed.

Though turntables can be neutral, this quality seldom makes them popular. They exist to breathe energy into record collections. And the Circle in any guise is more than capable of this — renditions of School Days, Rage Against the Machine and Prince Far-I & The Arabs left me in little doubt.

Conclusion

It's about time that the middle echelon of turntables had some new blood. Michell's Gyrodec and Nottingham Analogue's SpaceDeck have had this market to themselves too long. The Circle offers sound and aesthetics pitched between the latter incumbents, but with resolving capabilities to match. Like the Spacedeck it has no dust cover, but practicalities take a back seat with LP. The joy of vinyl is hearing great music from the medium it was made for, of using a totally honest tool. If you have black discs in your cupboard, spin a few on the Circle and join the analogue underground.

Black Light

In this World Exclusive review, Jason Kennedy auditions a new French CD player and asks the eternal question: how much more black could it be?

t's a funny old world. While British hi-fi specialists like SME have found industrial markets for their particular kind of precision engineering, French defence contractor ETNA has created a subdivision, Helios, to produce CD players. To date the project has borne fruit in three front-loading designs, plus the Stargate product you see before you. And behind it all is one Didier de Luca, alleged pal of Micromega main-man Daniel Schar, who clearly reckons he can go one better than his compatriot.

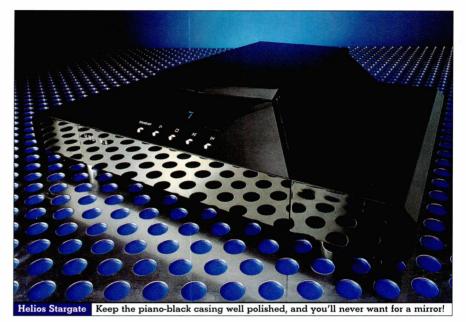
The £2,550 Stargate is a hefty threelegged lump with looks that suggest Darth Vader, but a somewhat more articulate voice than the dark lord. Its transport mechanism sits in a blacker-than-black bay, with discclamping effected by a full-diameter fibrous puck built into the manually-operated lid. While not exactly replete with features, Stargate caters for most CD users'

needs, and its fancier functions can be operated by remote control. It has run o' the mill sockets, with RCA phonos for digital and analogue outputs. (I was surprised not to find balanced XLR sockets given the pricepoint. Owners of Stateside-style amps may miss this interface.) The piano-black finish will be

a joy to polishers everywhere, but a pain to the less fastidious. Still, it looks great, and the blue display works a treat with the little stainless-steel buttons.

MELIXE

A number of unusual features are concealed beneath Stargate's shiny bodywork. These include a Crystal chipset that's proprietary to Helios, and a logic card designed in-house. ETNA is a data-transfer and logic control specialist, so naturally it has a head start in this department. It even goes so far as to suggest that it has virtually eliminated



jitter. The analogue output is a hot little pure-Class-A device with an unusually high output. In subjective terms alone it sounds twice as loud as my usual player.

The player has three feet: two metal/rubber composite units at the front, and a big spike at the rear. In theory the latter acts as a 'valve' for unwanted mechanical energy: what it lets out it keeps out. Thus the transport mechanism, a Philips CD12.4, sits in a

chassis of graphite and carbon-fibre designed to transfer vibration into the energy-sink spike. I was told that the player prefers a heavy support; so I used the Townshend Audio Seismic Sink Stand (see also p20), which is definitely heavy, even if it isn't high mass in the traditional sense.

Adventures in dynamics

This player made its début in my system with the help of Densen's Beat B-100 amp, Living Voice Auditorium speakers and signal cables from Acoustic Precision and Electrofluidics. Results were spectacular. The Stargate creates a big, ballsy dynamic sound, revelling in midrange detail and low frequency expansiveness. It made an excellent job of Coldcut's *More Beats And Pieces* track from the recent album *Let Us Play*. Revealed in sharp relief were the sculpted textures and sonic shapes of samples on this eclectic slice of post-modern hip-hopware. And I was almost blown out of my seat by 'the heavy bit' in King Crimson's *Lark's Tongues In Aspic*. It's a dynamic recording anyway, but this was only the second time I've been caught unawares by its dynamic contrasts

You pay the price of slight glare for such musical ebullience. Thankfully, Acoustic Precision's Black Box mains conditioner did away with the unwanted sheen. For a long while I was certain of having found a worthy challenger to the Acoustic Precision Eikos, with more specific spatial resolution and staggering portrayal of detail. It costs over £600 more than the Eikos, but was it really better? Only one way to find out: Happy Families (another King Crimson track, this time from *Lizard*), which has tripped up CD players in the past and looks likely to keep on repeating the trick. Because not even the beautiful Gallic dynamo could dig out all of the Crimson track's intricacies. It couldn't match the Eikos's depth perspective, which is the only way to make sense of high-density musical material.

Conclusion

I found much to enjoy in the Stargate. Its enthusiasm is contagious, it creates expansive, dynamic soundstages, and guarantees musical enjoyment. It reminds us how much of CD's potential goes unrealised, and how evolving playback equipment has addressed all but the most hard-core criticisms of the digital format's shortcomings. If your system sounds uninspired try a Helios and inject some light into your listening!

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STATEMENTS

Electric Dreams

Alan Sircom heats up his living room with a Class A Norwegian pre-power pairing, and finds it an affjordable means of creating most convincing stereo imagery.

ack in the days when Britain was grappling with three-day-weeks and power cuts, a Norwegian chap by the name of Per Abrahamsen was developing the revolutionary 25 Watt Electrocompaniet power amplifier, which finally did away with the stereotypical 'transistor sound'. Like the Linn Sondek LP12 turntable, Mark Levinson ML-2 power amplifier and Audio Research SP-10 preamp, Per's amp made a much better sound than most of its ilk, and helped pave the way for exotic solid-state gear we have known and loved ever since.

The same Electrocompaniet ideals survive today, in a pair of power amplifiers complemented by a host of different preamplifiers, phono stages and even an integrated amp or two. This impressive portfolio includes the £1,750 Preampliwire EC 4.6 remote-controlled line preamp, and the £2,695 Ampliwire AW 120 DMB power amp. 'Ampliwire' is not some obscure translation from the Norwegian, nor the product of a designer with a speech impediment. Instead, it denotes that Electrocompaniet is trying to attain that great high-end amplifier goal: the 'straight wire with gain'.

Both pre and power amplifiers follow similar lines. The amplifier is divided into separate input and output gain blocks. The input block is a transconductance amplifier circuit without feedback, designed to prevent large output voltages interfering with the small input signals. By contrast, the output gain block is a transresistance amplifier with parallel feedback, which prevents very high freed-

back, which prevents very high frequencies from entering the feedback loop. The idea is to keep key distortions at bay and obviate the need for extremely wide bandwidth.

Both pre and power amps are Class A designs, and lose more energy to heat than the average kettle. (Bad for your electricity bill; good for sound quality.) And only on examining power supply and reservoir capacitance provisions doyou start to notice differences between the two amps. EC 4.6 has a 50VA toroidal transformer, while AW 120 DMB requires two 650VA toroids. The AW 120 DMB also sports six times more reservoir capacitance than the preamp. But then the EC 4.6 doesn't claim to deliver 120



Electrocompaniet EC 4-6(top) and AW12 DMB European amps beating US gear at its own game.

Watts per channel into an eight Ohm load! The EC 4.6 has four single-ended (phono) line inputs and one single-ended tape monitor circuit. There is a balanced (XLR) line input, which can only be used if the preamp works in balanced output mode; but of course there are single-ended phono outputs as well. The Perspex front panel is minimalist and retro in style, with four gold-plated knobs controlling choice of source, record-

ing output, balance and volume. There is a push-button on/off switch in the middle, and green LEDs on the four knobs. But that is a positive embarrasment of riches compared to the remote handset. This elegant slab of black metacrylate allows you to alter the volume and balance... er, and that's it. As you'd expect, the larger AW 120 DMB wins out

in the minimalism stakes, with just a single central push-button and green LED.

Make them sing

Both units take about 30 minutes to come on song from power-up, but when they do, they pump out music with great panache. This is high-end sound writ large: a dark, brooding musical presence that makes you want to play more and more music. Paired, they combine the feel of a powerful US muscle amp with the kind of easy rhythmic skills heard in the best British gear, all the time sweetly flowing like a valve-powered design.

If this sounds like an ideal vehicle for chillin' out with some mellow Chet Baker, it is. Yet this dynamic duo will mix it with Schoenberg at his most structurally dense, and keeps its head with James Brown in full funk flow. Its strongest point is a lack of ersatz 'hi-fi-ness' in the treble, frequencies which so often sound glassy and fierce with big transistor amps. The worst point is a sense of rhythmic inertia that will not attract those who play a lot of dance music or heavy metal. Within those boundaries exists sound that is hugely detailed, yet never ostentatious or overtly dramatic.

I'd have to cite the pair's imaging abilities as among the very best of any Europeanbuilt hi-fi products. With the right speakers and a good recording, there is a truly three dimensional feel to the soundstage, but this is nothing compared to the almost visceral presence of musicians in the room. You won't get much closer to live performance without living, breathing musicians, or illegal psychotropic drugs. Non-American hi-fi that plays the Yanks' own game so successfully is rare indeed.

Considered individually, the two units are of roughly similar quality. I'd say the power amplifier bests the preamplifier in absolute terms, but in no way does the latter hold back the quality of the former. The preamp is merely very good indeed, while the power amplifier is excellent. And both move up a notch when used in balanced mode.

Some years ago, Jimmy Hughes suggested that the appearance of a product often dictates its performance. If ever there was a justification for this statement, it is in the Electrocompaniet EC 4.6 and AW 120 DMB. The style is opulent, elegant and refined and so is the sound. ▲ Sound Image ☎ (0181) 255 6868

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David Vivian checks out the latest 'lifestyle' audio systems. They look good, they're easy to use, but do they measure up as hi-fi?

trange thing, hi-fi. Audiophiles look at it and see something truly lovely. It doesn't matter how many aesthetically-challenged boxes there are, or how many cables looping conspicuously out of the back. What the eye tells the brain is manipulated by the value, reputation and performance of the kit it beholds. The attraction resides in hi-fi's intrinsic goodness and capacity for emotional gratification; it resides in the way seemingly disparate separate elements combine into a synergistic and satisfying whole, which is much greater than the sum of its parts. Even interconnects seduce the smitten.

Many people simply can't be bothered with all the boxes, and buy a mini system.

HOW THE TESTS WERE DONE

All the systems were installed in true "lifestyle" context, both in rooms around the author's house, and one at a time in the listening room. Cables and interconnects packaged with the components were used throughout. Where the systems were supplied without speakers, they were auditioned with Mission's 731 Pro and Celestion's 12i bookshelf models. Equipment supports were supplied by Alphason Design, speaker stands came from Alphason Design and Slate Audio.

WHAT MUSIC DID WE USE?

Fourplay: The Best of Fourplay on Warner Bros Jeff Lorber: Worth Waiting For on Verve Forecast Dave Grusin: Dave Grusin Presents West Side Story on N2K Encoded Music Arild Andersen: Hyperborean on ECM David Arnold: Shaken And Stirred on East West, Warner Bros Chuck Loeb: My Singing Hour on Jazz City Martin Taylor: Don't Fret on Linn Records Jason Rebello: A Clearer View on BMG Novus Dave Weck! Master Plan on GRP But why not? The enjoyment of music is meant to be a democratic business. If you don't want to go through the whole 'labour of love' number, it should be possible to buy a compact, all-in-one hi-fi system that doesn't look like the aftermath of an explosion in a recording studio. Take it home in one box, plug it into a single mains socket, kick back in a favourite chair with a remote control that does everything but prepare toasted sandwiches and expect it to sound absolutely marvellous. This is the computer generation — technology does it for us. Hi-fi in the late '90s has a lifestyle spin: it's slick, quick and raring to impress.

Just five years ago this would have been a tough call. Purchasers of integrated systems weren't interested in spending £700-£1,000. They wanted swoopy styling and flashing lights for £300. Sonically, they got a bum deal. But they still bought systems by the lorry-load, and this was good, because it established the market and helped it to grow. Now there's a seamless progression from cheerfully grotty sub-£200 toy systems, through all manner of gizmo-gorged mid-market music boxes, to the comparatively jewel-like high-quality integrated systems that join battle here. If you thought the only kind of supermini was a Fiat Punto, think again. Here's a collection of little movers that could change your preconceptions about hi-fi forever.

The next step up from this is a collection of one-make components you can put together yourself — say, from Arcam, NAD or Rotel. The resulting systems will have a neat, one-brand house style but won't necessarily offer any more user-convenience than a regular pot-pourri of separates.

True integrated systems aren't just a collection of components from one manufac-

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MODEL	PRICEPAGE
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Sony Scala 2	£899.99p65
Teac Ref 500 system	£799.99p66
Technics SC-HD70	£650p68
Yamaha Classic Line	£899.95p70

turer. There must be a high degree of intercomponent connectivity to form a communications loop with the remote control. And for starters, the latter must be able to alter volume levels and input selections.

All these systems offer such luxuries, and more. The Bang & Olufsen responds automatically to your approach, and tells you which buttons to press. The Pioneer has a stealth option that allows you to hide away most of the boxes and just have a perspex display and two vanishingly discreet speakers on show. The JVC's speakers have builtin subwoofers, the Sony's power amplifier has MOSFET output stages, the Technics system conceals a very natty digital amplifier. These are not dull products. The ones with the real sound quality, though, are from Denon and Teac.

Would they win the day? There was a sure-fire way to find out. Instead of testing each system individually, I unpacked all nine and set them up around the house, bringing each one into the listening room as required. There were notes and comparisons but, at the end of the session, there was also one system I ended up using for my personal enjoyment. Read on and find out which!



B&O BEOSOUND CENTURY

Bang & Olufsen's brochure is a classic of cold-eyed pretension. Interspersed with stark black-and-white photographs of real B&O customers in lifestyle situations, the highlighted text says stuff like: "Without art, I wouldn't be able to get out of bed in the morning." Know the feeling. And: "I used to have a jazz life. Then we had three children." Mmmm, great.

The BeoSound Century may be B&O's entry-level system — a sort of post-Habitat ghetto blaster — but it's every bit as much of a design statement as the extraordinary BeoSystem 9000 (*HFC* 160). It's a conversation starter (and stopper). It has a smoked glass door covering the CD and tape transports, which glides to one side magically when you approach it. Only the buttons you need to worry about are lit up. To be honest, as an object it's wonderful, and if you haven't fallen in love within five minutes of taking it out of the box, you might as well put it back. If you trip over the mains cable in your eagerness to fire it up and see what it



sounds like, you've missed the point. It may be hi-fi, but not as we know it.

B&O says the Century is a big sound made handy. It measures just 11cm deep and weighs a luggable 12kg. The slenderness of the design allows a range of siting options: a wall, a shelf, even the floor. It comprises a CD player, auto-reverse/auto-recording-level HX-Pro tape deck, FM/AM tuner with 30 presets, connections for headphones and optional Beo4 remote control. It can be ordered with a wall bracket and combined handle/FM antenna. The built-in speakers are driven by a claimed 20 Watt amplifier.

So you reach out towards the Century and the glass door whispers aside. All the relevant buttons light up in red. Pressing a red button makes the system respond either by carrying out your instructions, or by making another set of buttons available to you, or both. Better still, use the Beo4 remote, which is cool, nuggety and tactile.

Sound quality

The Century never sounds less than competent; occasionally it's pretty good. Clean and dynamic recordings such as Fourplay's *Higher Ground* are portrayed with impressive clarity and verve, though a less pleasing aspect of the super-slim speakers is the rather samey (if surprisingly weighty) bass.

While making recordings from CD and the detailed, hiss-free tuner, the cassette deck proved itself a very capable performer, faithfully preserving the emotional content of the signal source, as well as its basic fidelity. The deck

also excels with prerecorded tapes, which it renders not merely intelligible but satisfyingly musical.

Initially, the B&O sounded more reticent and 'polite' than the other minis in the test, but easing up the volume injected a welcome degree of life and pace.

The system's sonic signature has a cool, clean, refined, pristine quality that goes with the spare visual style of the unit. It's more than good enough to provide a classy backwash of sound at a dinner party. It goes pretty loud, too, but complains strongly when pushed a notch too far. Having the speakers so close together is an obvious limitation on stereo breadth.

Another of the B&O's thrill-muzzling traits is a slight lack of openness. Although it's surprisingly good at resolving depth, things sound a little squashed and airless laterally. For all its clarity, integration and tidiness, this mildly closed-in feeling does put a cap on expressive power.

B&O asks a high price for what, in the end, is modest sound quality. But the Century looks so much better than most hi-fi (even the style-conscious opposition here), its failures in ultimate fidelity seem almost trifling. We could live with one.

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DENON DM-7

Billed as a 'Super Micro System', the Denon DM-7 makes no bones about seeking to combine the sound quality of a

good separates set up, with the userfriendliness of a modestly-dimensioned micro. Denon knows how to do this. Its upmarket integrated systems have set the pace for a few years now.

In basic form (£649.99) the DM-7 consists of a receiver, three-disc CD changer and cassette deck. It can be purchased with speakers for £69.99 more. The receiver marries a claimed 30 Watt output with a 30-preset AM/FM RDS tuner. It has a sleep/record timer and even a digital input/output. The CD changer uses a multi-bit DAC and the autoreverse cassette deck totes Dolby B, C and synchronised CD recording. Our package included the optional MiniDisc player, which has optical inputs and outputs as well as analogue connections. (Its presence increases the package price to £1,099.99.)

Each component is housed in cute silver and grey casework just 210mm wide and 95mm high. The UK-benchmarked speakers look a bit dowdy, though. They're twoway designs with three drive units: two 12cm bass-mids, and a dome tweeter. Even so, they handle a useful 80 Watts and boast proper binding posts. Why, then, does the receiver's amp section make do with spring clip terminals? Perennial gripe. Never mind, I sidelined the Denon speakers for a pair of

Celestion's cheap (£119) and capable bookshelf 12is, which sounded fine.

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Sound quality

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The DM-7 sounds very grown-up and polished: big, solid and detailed. Bass is powerful and punchy. And if the treble can be a bit splashy with the supplied cheapo patchcord interconnects, substituting a decent $\pounds 30-\pounds 50$ design from Straight Wire or Puresonic et al makes everything fuller, richer and more involving.

It plays loud without obvious strain and breezes through all types of music. I like jazz, but not all hi-fi does. Atonality, dissonance and horribly complex polyrhythms are commonplace. On a system that doesn't have its wits about it, this stuff doesn't just sound 'difficult' but 'impossible'. Your first and strongest instinct is to reach for the 'off' switch. A good system like the DM-7, though, will make sense out of the apparent mayhem, allow you to hear structure and progression, and reveal why individual strands contribute to the whole.

More important even than this is a system's ability, when the occasion demands, to communicate a sense of fun. The bottom line is that it's got to be able to swing, lock onto a groove, and get your bits moving. If it doesn't involve you on this level, it doesn't matter how deep the bass goes: you just won't get no satisfaction.

What so impressed me about the Denon system was precisely this sense of fun and ebullience. ECM's haunting and understated recording of double-bassist Arild Andersen, with the Cikada String Quartet, had greater presence and drive, and sounded even more engaging than it does usually.

To borrow a boxing analogy, this system is on its toes, ducking and diving — never leaden or flat-footed. It can hit hard but its real skill is in keeping the pressure on, delivering an all-action performance.

In a word, it's exciting. Recording to tape or MD is good, too. No component suffers in comparison to another. Plain excellent.

	DENON DM-7 - VERDICT
D. States	UND $\star \star \star \star \star \star$
PR	E649.99 without speakers or MD, £1,099.99 with MD
	Doesn't quite sweep all before it, this time out, but a cracking mini system nonetheless. Pukka Denon sound, great to use.
2	Hayden Labs Ltd, Hayden House, Chiltern Hill, Chalfont St Peter, Gerrards Cross, Bucks, SL9 9UG (01753) 888447



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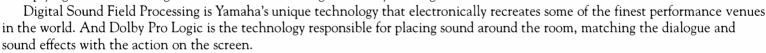
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JVC EX-TD77R

This is a good-looking two-box mini — narrow but deep, and substantially built. You get a threedisc CD changer, a single cas-

sette deck and an AM/FM RDS tuner. The supplied SP-TD7 speakers have built-in 120mm active subwoofers with JVC's "labyrinth port" technology. They're magnetically shielded and have two sets of terminals. Bi-wire cable is supplied.

The units look and feel up-market with weighty metal casings, curved facias and subtly sculpted controls. JVC's Compu Play feature allows you to switch power on and off, and play any function with a single button stroke. The comprehensive remote control isn't exactly intuitive, but easy enough once you've read the manual.

The tape player has a 'CD sync' recording function and Dolby B noise reduction, but little else, while the tuner benefits from all the usual RDS functions. But don't mistake this for minimalism. There are more special effects than you can shake a stick at, including three types of surround mode. 3D Phonic simulates surround sound with just two speakers. JVC calls it a "nearly-surround effect". Choose Action, Drama or Theatre from the menu. The other two surround modes are Dolby Pro-Logic (with additional speakers) and DAP which creates Jazz Club, Symphony and News sound fields.

In the digital domain it's a relatively easy matter to create and mix diverse elements

such as the quantity, delay time, direction, interval and attenuation of the early reflected sound, the density of the reflected sound,

plus time and high-frequency resonance of the reverberations. The early reflected sound and reverberations are added to the original signal in precise amounts and relationships, allegedly, to establish the new 'acoustic'.

There's even an SEA (Sound Effect Amplifier), which serves up Rock, Pop and Classical settings with the possibility of customising three more. You can adjust the level of all the effects while the 'SA (Signal Adaptive) Bass' circuit reinforces bass in two stages. The power amp section claims to deliver 20 Watts to the mid-upper drivers and 30 Watts to the subwoofer.

Sound quality

87.50mm Elvor

The JVC's CD player is a thing of substance and ability. You sense it's getting more than just the basics right. Bass is full-bodied and weighty, even without the two enhancement levels switched in. Basically, this is a bigboned sound that will appeal especially to those weaned on bass-heavy, in-car systems.

This isn't to say that the JVC doesn't convey detail. It may not sound overly 'busy' but you can judge its powers of resolution by the naturalness and harmonic richness it brings to instrument timbre, and the emotion it can pull from a simply-sung song. Even Anita 'The Songstress' Baker's notoriously edgy voice, which can become unbearably screechy through systems that lack poise and control, smooches out of the speakers with a pleasing combination of articulacy and warmth.

The 3D Phonic and other signal processing circuits allow you to simulate a surround-sound speaker array and various acoustic environments — anything from a church to a jazz club to a classical concert hall to a cinema, with its synthesised, threedimensional, crash-bang-wallop-ohmygawd-duck Dolby Pro-Logic effects.

But the fact is, it's all a manipulation of the existing sound. It isn't 'higher' fi and it doesn't improve the music. It just changes the way we hear it. It does this by creating numerous electronic 'analogues' of perceived sound in enclosed spaces. The illusion, like stereo itself, is purely psychological or, to use the current buzz word, 'psychoacoustic'.

Fortunately, the JVC sounds good with all the tricks turned off. Better, in fact, than with them turned on.



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ON TEST : LIFESTYLE SYSTEMS

KENWOOD XD9580 MD

The Kenwood seems slightly out of place in this test. It's too big, and has more flashing lights than Piccadilly Circus. A lot of the casework seems to be filled with fresh air and the styling is somewhat sci-fi. There are two CD player units that can be specified. The DP-H5 is a single CD player, DP-MH5 a six-disc changer. Ours came with the DM-F70 MiniDisc player as a primary source.

Other components comprise the 60 Watt A-H5 amplifier, the C-H6 combined tuner and graphic equaliser (FM/MW/LW), and the X-H5 twin cassette deck with Dolby B. The system even has an auto-power-off function that kicks in after 30 minutes.

Something Kenwood calls a "3D dual display" makes the most efficient use of the display area and shows a mixture of information, including the displays for text, volume and graphic equaliser bar-chart at a glance. If

KENWOOD XD9580 MD - VERDICT SOUND 大大公公公 VALUE 大大公公公 PRICE £799.95

- Comfortably out-performed by its price peers, the Kenwood doesn't really measure up to its size or prodigious flashing-light count.
 Kenwood Electronics, Kenwood House, Dwight Road,
- Watford, Herts WD1 8EB (01923) 816444

that's all too much (and it is) it can be switched to a single display.

The supplied LS-H6 speakers are of a three-way bass reflex design rated at six Ohms and

80 Watts power handling, with a claimed frequency range of 43-20,000Hz. The drive unit complement comprises a 160mm woofer, 65mm cone mid-range unit and 25mm dome tweeter

'SRS (Sound Retrieval System) 3D' seeks to create the impression of a three-dimensional acoustic, improving the feeling of depth, breadth and imaging of the soundstage. It's a feature most commonly found on personal-computer sound systems.

The stored equaliser patterns are rock, pop, disco, jazz and classical, plus one manual custom setting. Tape and MD recording can make use of sophisticated timer functions while the so-called "NB circuit" is a loudness function that compensates for lack of bass during low-level listening.

Despite the OTT styling, the controls for tuning, RDS functions, tuner band and timers have a quality feel, as does the traditionally-styled, vertical-loading, twin-cassette-deck mechanism — press outer edges of doors to open and close.

Sound quality

Even accepting the limit imposed on its sonic reach by the MD player, the Kenwood's sound provides a real mixed bag. Anyone expecting the engaging sparkle and ani-

mation of some of the company's better separates combos is going to be flatly disappointed. This system has plenty of muscle but sounds altogether greyer and more reserved than most of the alternatives here — almost to the point of blandness.

Certainly its sonic presentation is deftly self-effacing and even-handed, but it is never less than easy on the ears. That isn't necessarily such a good thing, however. If this collection of components doesn't favour one style of music over another, it's largely because of its failure to discriminate. It imbues everything with a slightly phoney easy-going style. That said, it has enough balls and rhythmic drive to pump out dance and rock tracks with infectious energy, yet reserves a sufficiently light touch and felicitous tonal sweetness for classical, jazz and AOR.

Most of the time, though, you can't help feeling that the Kenwood sounds vaguely processed and samey; that it isn't allowing tonal and dynamic contrasts free rein. It's homogenising the music. Unfortunate.

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PIONEER NS-7

This is no sneaky back-door attempt to capture the lifestyle mini-system market from the establishment; rather it is a deadly serious assault on the ears and wallets of lifestyle-conscious music lovers. B&O beware, Technics take cover — Pioneer is flexing its reputation.

A shrewd selection of stand-alone, cleanly-styled and well-made components, the NS-7 seeks to combine separates performance with all-in-one style.

Various combinations are possible, including CD/tuner £399.00, CD/tuner and separate cassette deck £499.00, CD/tuner and separate MiniDisc player £699.00, and CD/tuner plus tape and MiniDisc for £799.00. The NS-7 majors on novelty and convenience. The whole caboodle can be controlled from a dinky remote control once the appropriate ribbon-cable connections have been made. This design solution is certainly worthy of B&O.

The two tiny main speakers are the size of small picture frames. You can hang them on the wall or place them on a window ledge or shelf — their built-in stands give them a



slight backwards tilt. A single subwoofer supplements their output.

The cleverest bit is the separate LED display panel which is connected to the main box with a computer-keyboard-style cable. It's supported by a plinth that contains all the essential system controls and communicates with the credit-card-size remote pinched from Pioneer's in-car systems. So you can hide the electronics away if you don't want to see them.

Sound quality

The first thing to note about the Pioneer's sound is its essentially smoothness and musicality. Smooth inasmuch as it doesn't draw attention to any particular area of the frequency range — it isn't 'toppy' or 'shouty' or 'boomy' — and musical because it successfully captures the structure and timing of a performance and, again, does this without undue emphasis or exaggeration.

Initially, all this even-handedness seems dull but, after a while, you find yourself being lured deeper into your favourite tracks and treated to the odd surprise. The Pioneer can project an impressively deep and stable sound stage and image convincingly — not unusual for subwoofer systems with small main speakers. Instruments and performers sound believable and always manage to play together. Thankfully, this isn't a system that pulls music apart for detailed analysis.

The sub kicks out plenty of bass. It's not very extended but quite tuneful and works best on the middle of its three 'boost' settings. The CD and MD players sound crisp and clear and the tuner's good, too — with



distant stations it's surprisingly sensitive.

But it doesn't really matter what the source is: the system has a lucid, undemonstrative and easy-breathing delivery. It has a beguiling presentation of detail, too; a lot of information is present in the signal but so well is it integrated and weighted that you're barely aware of it. The music is allowed to communicate without tripping over the mechanics of its reproduction.

All the NS-7 lacks is muscularity. Heavymetal rock numbers lack grit and grunt, while big orchestral works fail to assume convincing scale, weight and drama. That said, all performances remain nicely coherent and well resolved, with their timing and interest intact.

Overall, the Pioneer system is best suited to smooth background music or, with the subwoofer on its loudest setting, a party in a small room. But if you want to listen more closely, it won't be found wanting.

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SONY SCALA 2

Sony describes this as "the ultimate integrated system package". The spec doesn't seem to dispute the claim. The amp is built around a claimed 55 Watt MOSFET

integrated amp with seven inputs, including phono. A 'source direct' button defeats the tone controls. The synthesiser tuner has FM/MW/LW with 30 presets and RDS/EON with PTY. The CD player has Sony's Automatic Music Sensor (AMS) system as well as shuffle play. And there's an optical digital output for MD/CD recording

FM

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The single drawer-loading cassette deck features auto-reverse, Dolby B/C/S noise reduction and Dolby HX Pro for greater dynamic headroom. The recording level can be set manually or automatically, and there is a recording timer.

The Scala 2 looks the business, too. Nearer midi than mini size, the individual components make an impressive stack with restrained but very smart styling and the sort of no-nonsense functionality which inspires confidence. All audio connections are by phono cables and there are four meaty binding posts at the back of the amp for speaker connections. Choice of speakers is left up to the user, but Sony recommends its own UK-designed, UK-manufactured SS-86E model at £99.99. This two-way, infinite baffle system has gold-plated binding posts, 70 Watts power handling, and magnetic shielding You can see 'em pictured above.

Sound quality

After listening to the Technics

system, the Scala 2 sounded a little lean. It isn't. The Technics's bass is generous to a fault, while the Sony's is tight and snappy. Not only that, it integrates neatly with the open and articulate midrange and a sparkling but not harsh top end. There's a real sense of system-speaker synergy here, as you'd expect.

The Sony system has the rare ability (extremely rare in the mini market) to capture music as a real, living "event" and to sound interesting whatever the material. All the components want to please and seem to be pulling in the same direction.

You can point to a slightly cold character in the upper midrange and the system's strengths aren't best served by over-fierce orchestral arrangements. But, crucially, Gary Meek's saxophone sounded like his own on Jeff Lorber's *Worth Waiting For* CD — not someone else's, not artificial; imbued with just the right amount of biting edge. Yet it was possible to listen for long periods without beginning to feel irritated.

The Sony has somehow a fresher and livelier presentation than the others, one in which the temporal aspects of the music are given equal billing with resolution and focus. This grants life and structure to discs even as flat and clogged as Eric Clapton's August. Better produced material like David Arnold's Shaken And Stirred — James Bond Project positively shimmers with confidence and orchestral bravura.

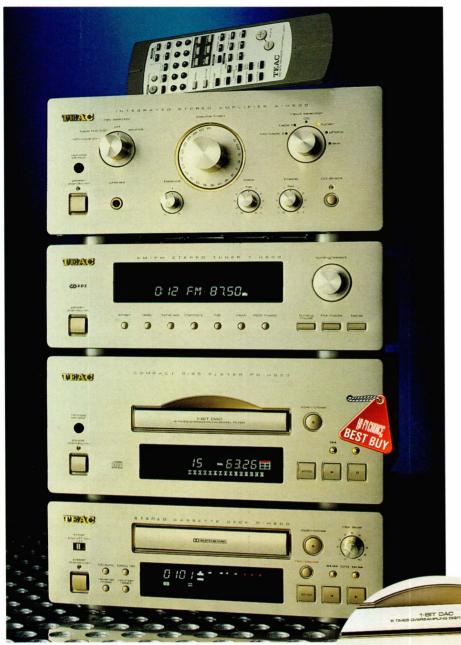
What excites about the Sony is its transparency, the quality that allows you to hear through a recording so clearly that every last scrap of harmonic and timbral resolution, every nuance of technique, every ambient acoustic clue is laid bare. Amplifiers that are talented in this direction sound wonderfully fresh, open and detailed with excellent soundstaging, focus and incisiveness. The Scala's MOSFET effort seems to be right on the money.

Its qualities came together to spectacular effect with jazz pianist David Newton's *Eye Witness* on the Linn label. Newton and friends — Dave Green on bass and Allan Ganley on drums — assume an almost tangible presence in the room, the power and dynamics of *OI' Blue Eyes* coming across with foot-tapping, neck-tingling realism.

Great stuff. Distinctly Recommendable.

SONY SCALA 2 - VERDICT			
SOUND ★★★★☆ VALUE ★★★★☆			
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ON TEST : LIFESTYLE SYSTEMS



TEAC REFERENCE 500 SYSTEM

Teac is major league. Once it was synonymous with quality reel-to-reel decks; now its high-end transports are among the bestregarded. Teac has also been making a name for itself in the budget separates market. But arguably its biggest splash has been made here in the burgeoning lifestyle sector.

It isn't hard to understand why the 500 Reference System has ruffled a few feathers. Its high-precision, pseudo-lab appearance is a bit like Copland's high-end stuff. You'll either love it or think it lamentably pretentious and far too "hi-fi". But it does look absurdly expensive, and it is both sturdy and well made. The line up as tested comprises T-H500 tuner, A-H500 amp, R-H500 cassette deck and PD-H500 CD player.

The CD unit has a one-bit DAC, the cassette deck sports Dolby B, C and HX Pro. The two-band tuner (no LW) comes with all the RDS trimmings (including search by programme type, PTY) and the usual 30 presets. The price excludes speakers, but a £139.90 pair of Mission 731 Pro fitted the bill nicely. The muscular 50 Watt amp should drive a pair of

£250 floorstanders with ease.

More good news comes in the shape of a terrific remote control which, as well as being stylish, is easy to understand and use. And this is a system that can grow: latest addition is the £380 AV-H500 Pro-Logic five-channel home theatre amp, which claims to pump out 80 Watts in two-channel mode, or 50 Watts in AV mode. Then there's the VRDS-9 CD player at £699.95, which uses Teac's acclaimed Vibration-free Rigid Disc-clamping System and a 20-bit DAC. An obvious first upgrade, but what an upgrade: it costs just £100 less than the entire system. The MD-H500 MiniDisc player will set you back a further £649.95.

Sound quality

If one system appears to have it all sonically, this is it. The Teac successfully combines a big, open and confident delivery with plenty of transparency and finesse. Absolute neutrality isn't a goal — and neither should it be in a system like this. Instead, the Teac goes for a colourful, expansive, slightly largerthan-life presentation: a benign balance which does the music no harm at all and suits perfectly the style of the Mission 731 Pro speakers seconded for the audition.

So it doesn't quite hit the audiophile heights, but it is hi-fi central. On Fourplay's formidably funky *Bali Run*, the system's effortless weight and presentation of fine detail — both specific and ambient weren't just involving but thoroughly alluring. Here's a system that sounds open and airy, yet potently full-blooded with tonal colours and timbres convincingly resolved. Even better is a bass which not only integrates extremely well but combines genuine, controlled extension with fine energy and rhythmic drive.

That's the Teac's great strength: it unifies a rare lightness of touch with a real sense of power and, as such, creates a remarkably complete and engaging sound.

Ebullient and energetic with rock, majestic with big orchestras, intimate and tactile with simple, closely-miked material, it has a real talent for capturing the spirit of the music and the performance — the emotional content is laid satisfyingly bare.

Inasmuch as the sound is obviously tactile, low in distortion, tightly focused and projected well beyond the boundaries of the speakers — both in breadth and, more impressively, depth — it lacks something of the startling immediacy of the Sony.

But it still provides outstanding ability in conventional 'hi-fi' terms — its clarity and grip;

its powers of resolution, analysis and organisation; its fundamentally truthful and revealing nature. Better than that, though, is its special skill of giving what might otherwise be the fairly mundane business of listening to music a sense of occasion. Making it an

event. Without resorting to gross tonal aberrations or special effects, it holds the listener's interest like little else in this test. One year on from its debut in *HFC* 160, the H500 still rules the roost.

™*5325*⊞

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	TEAC REFERENCE 500 - VERDICT
VA	UND ★★★★ LUE ★★★★☆ LCE £799.95 (Basic system: does not
	include speakers)
٦	Everything about the Teac reeks of quality and fine engineering. And it's reflected in the thoroughly enjoyable sound quality.
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2	(01923) 819630

This man can't believe what he's hearing...





TECHNICS SC-HD70

Champagne facia, wooden cheeks, dinky dimensions. Hardcore cute. Difficult to imagine that this cuddly collection of components — which replaces the almost identical-looking SC-CA01 — contains a claimed 60 Watt amp that does its amplifying in the digital domain. A true, cutting-edge digital amp in a micro: a signpost to the future if ever there was one.

ALE

The rest is more mainstream. The RDS tuner has a timer-record facility, 39 presets and a big display in relation to overall size. As with the other RDS-equipped tuners, if you want to listen to a particular kind of programme, press the PTY (programme type) button and the programme cate-

gories are displayed in sequence. When you see the one you want, press the Search key, and the tuner automatically searches for an appropriate example.

The five-CD changer is just 67mm high and 229mm deep. It uses a one-bit MASH DAC and claims six-second switching between discs. Only Dolby B for the cassette deck (car-style horizontal power loading; auto reverse) but Technics claims high speed FF and REW. (53 secs for a C60 tape indeed, a little swifter than the average.)

All the units share a single power supply and ribbon cable connectors that congregate at the tuner. The units are genuinely small (forming a stack that measures just 34cm high in a two-by-two arrangement). Special features include scrolling display, a sourcedirect facility that by-passes the tone controls and a more dubious "vocal presence" tone curve.

The supplied speakers look more promising: two-way bass reflex designs of realistic size (not deliberately shrunken). They have

gas-flowed reflex ports, a 12cm woofer, 2.5cm soft dome tweeter and 15mm thick cabinet walls.

Though straightforward and easy to use, the remote looks very old-fashioned.

Sound quality

This is very tidy, very Technics. The PDM amp can whip up bags of volume in smaller rooms and, on

the whole, the system doesn't sound at all cheap or bright. In fact, its resolution, coherence and openness are notably good.

Moreover, the whole thing is smooth and readily listened to with a generous, relatively unforced bass and refined treble. But if its capacity for impressive volume is achieved without strain, this is true only up to a point; that relaxed, listenable presentation hardens quickly if pushed too far.

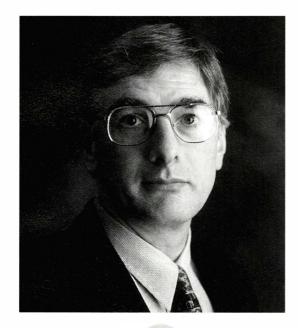
And it doesn't matter how loud you play it, the Technics misses the clarity and control of the bigger systems here. There's no shortfall of detail but the sound lacks convincing scale. The Technics speakers have a full bass and warm balance; what they need is more speed and openness to offset the sugar-coated presentation.

If the system has a failing, it makes everything sound just a bit too nice. I hesitate to use the word 'polite' but, ultimately, the HD70 just won't let go. In short, it can't rock'n'roll. This has a lot to do with the quality of bass frequencies. It can make lower registers tuneful, but is a bit of a powder puff when it comes to belting out boom. Neither does it go particularly deep. Better a controlled bass than a flabby, overpowering one; but a bit more snap and pace in the basement wouldn't have gone amiss.

It adds up to a system which, while lacking the vibrancy and sparkle of the best here, compensates with a warmth and weight that's hard not to like. It goes loud: complicated tunes are delivered without fluster or muddle, simple ones with grace.

The tape deck is disappointing. Dolby B sounds flat, recording level is auto only and there's no CD sync. But there isn't much the Technics can't do.

TECHNICS SC-HD70 - VERDICT			
100			
VALUE ★★★☆ PRICE £650			
	Extremely listenable with a broad range of music, but not best suited to rock. Great styling and a feature-		
	packed spec make it fine value, though.		
	Panasonic UK, Panasonic House, Willoughby Road, Bracknell, Berks RG12 8FT		
•	(0990) 357357		



...But it's true.

Peter J Comeau is no ordinary reviewer. As designer of the only product to win the coveted What Hi-fi Best Loudspeaker Award three times in succession, he's generally regarded as the guru of small speakers. With 30 years'

experience as a specialist hi-fi retailer, **Services** Percussion is firm co-founder of a highly respected UK hi-fi manufacturer and one of the *'terrible* three' who pioneered subjective reviewing in the staid hi-fi press of the 1970s, his opinion carries formidable weight.

and practically floor shaking in its intensity - just a few bars and you are already reaching for

your wallet. **99** Hi-Fi News & Record Review

Seasoned hi-fi critics are notoriously hard to impress. So how come we weren't surprised when Peter J Comeau enthused so fulsomely about our new 12i?

"They sound like a grand's worth of exotic compact," he wrote in October's Hi-Fi News. "If Celestion can achieve this sort of performance for a miserly figure, why are most of the speakers that arrive on the market so poor in comparison?"

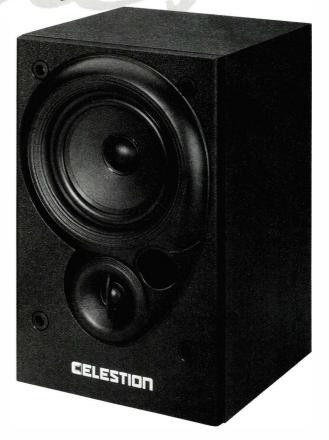
Well, we can't speak for anyone else - but we know what makes the 12i such a remarkable performer.

The smooth, natural-sounding vocals? Celestion's 19mm tweeter, whose neodymium magnet is ferrofluid-cooled for improved power handling.

The phenomenal bass response? 130mm long throw bass drivers, which allow the cone extended movement without removing the HF coil from the magnetic gap where energy is most concentrated.

The acoustic purity and lack of distortion? The use of laser interferometry to tune out the response peaks of conventional speakers. Celestion crossovers to ensure seamlessly smooth transitions. Mounting the drivers and reflex port in a dense one-piece composite baffle to minimise resonance. Cabinets computer-designed to eliminate box coloration.

In the words of the Hi-Fi News lab report, "the horizontal off-axis trace is brilliantly managed." To the listener, that means the same seductive audio experience wherever you sit in the room.



above which all other speakers should rise. But do they? Do they hell! **9**

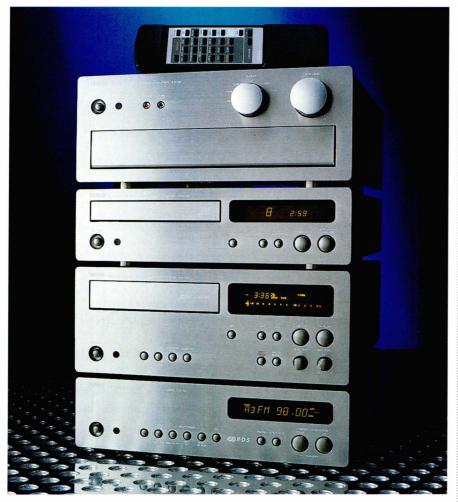
66...The 12i marks

the baseline

performance



No wonder the 12i reproduces the most demanding material with such accuracy 🗁

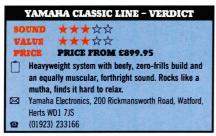


YAMAHA CLASSIC LINE

Built like a nuclear blast bunker, Yamaha's Classic Line collection is almost brutally functional. No cutesey curves, no eye-candy displays, no fancy knobs. No styling frills whatsoever. Just square boxes that look and feel expensive and are equipped with conventional switchgear that's logically laid out. That said, the gun-metal-grey finish and orange displays are unusual and attractive, and the boxes aren't as basic as they look.

A flip-down panel on the front of the amp, much in the manner of the company's AV behemoths, reveals a full complement of tone controls and a headphone socket. Round the back, computer-style ribbon connectors are eschewed in favour of conventional, good-quality phono sockets.

The amp is a real powerhouse, pumping out a very respectable claimed 70 Watts, while the front-loading cassette deck which totes Dolby B and C and an MXP filter — has three heads for real-time monitoring. Full-on RDS heads a tuner feature-list that



includes 30 presets and a signal strength indicator for both FM and MW.

Also available is the RX-V10, a five-channel AV receiver with Dolby Digital and Pro-Logic compatibility, plus DSP modes and RDS radio. A bargain at £399.95.

Both the Missions and Celestions were auditioned; the Missions got the job.

Sound quality

First into the CD drawer was A Clearer View, a dazzling jazz-fusion set for quintet with leader Jason Rebello on assorted keyboards, acoustic and electronic. The Yamaha system sounded immediately impressive handling this clean, full-blooded production, punching out transients with tremendous snap and precision while preserving enough of the music's body to project reasonably tangible images into the room. The speed, vitality and midrange transparency of the CD and amp combo was evident with just about any up-tempo material, ranging from jazz drummer Dave Weckl's wild workout Master Plan to Steve Winwood's Refugees Of The Heart. And the little Mission Pros used for the workout could really soak it up, too, taking serious slugs of current from the beefy Yamaha amp while still contriving to sound as crisp and sharp as a new £10 note.

The sound has life, pace, weight, projection, a reasonably even tonal balance and an easy sense of musical flow. Voices are clean and articulate, treble slightly diffuse but well extended and bass unerringly solid and tuneful. Arguably, the Classic Line doesn't have quite as many tonal colours in its palette as the Denon and Teac, and it can't quite match the latter's dynamic shading. But it does manage to sound remarkably weighty and controlled, and has the most powerful, "architectural" bass of the lot. The proverbial iron fist in a velvet glove.

Counting against this is a hint of glare in the upper midrange, a tendency for footdragging with certain material and an occasionally overblown sense of spaciousness.

But one of this seems to inhibit the system's ability to swing and drive in a manner that is alien to most minis and micros.

On Dave Grusin's *West Side Story* cuts, there was a strong sense of timbral and harmonic richness, and a particularly natural quality to the high frequencies. Jonathan Butler's rendition of *Maria* was characterised by an extraordinary lightness of touch and a finely etched treble which, while not entirely free from grain, possessed a realistic 'zing'.

Yet the Yamaha went loud and low with ease and garnished this with impressive powers of resolution and excellent channel separation. What filled the room was a spacious, well defined and, most importantly, energetic sound.

The RDS tuner is a top-flight performer — clear and punchy. In fact, all the Classic Line components are remarkably gutsy and dynamic.

OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

The **Kenwood** is more a pumped-up midi than an aspirational mini. It seemed ridiculous that it couldn't translate its physical size into a big sound.

On a straight sound-quality score, the **B&O Century** is next to be shown the door. But it is such a gorgeous slice of design that it gets promoted to face off the more sonically talented members of the group.

The **Technics** delivered a warm, well integrated sound that would have been improved with a little more drive and pace to maintain energy levels in rock.

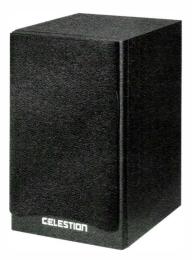
The **Yamaha Classic Line** bounced with enthusiasm and painted a bold picture. It proved a bit unyielding, though, its muscular style grating with softer types of music.

Oriented towards the clarity/detail end of the presentational spectrum, the **Sony Scala 2** provided the most transparent insight, sounding clean and explicit.

The little **Denon DM-7** let the music breathe in an effortless, uncompressed manner. It's delightful and engaging; it has bouncy and zestful delivery but is also capable of capturing quieter moods.

Pioneer's clever NS-7 package is deftly even-handed and musical and has good bass thanks to its subwoofer.

The **Teac Reference 500** represents the real deal: features, finish, build quality, user-friendliness, sonic conviction. Indeed, it was the Teac that I ended up using to the exclusion of all the others.



and emotional depth.

"The coherence is extraordinary," Peter J Comeau remarks. "That each note is so well defined is remarkable for a speaker of this class."

Peter concludes "When you close your eyes, they (the artists) might just as well be in the room with you."

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Technical Knockouts

15 of today's hottest middleweight speakers take to the ring, with **Paul** 'Mills Lane' **Messenger** (listening test) and **Paul** 'Angelo Dundee' **Miller** (lab test) refereeing.

here are three broad price-bands from which we select our speaker review candidates. And this month's £400-£1,200 mid-price sector must be my favourite. Speakers in this price range strike a good compromise. They are expensive enough for the designer to worry about more than just price and perceived value. There's still some scope for flair and innovation to shine through.

This month's test

Of our 15 contenders, 11 are floorstanders, while the remainder are bookshelf-size stand-mounts. Is one shape inherently superior? Not at all. There are good, mediocre and poor loudspeakers of both types.

Floorstanders are the most fashionable enclosure of the moment. However, our experience of the sub-£400 budget sector indicates that most cheap floorstanders will be beaten by better bookshelf models mounted on proper stands. Presumably, this is because of constructional compromises inherent in large, low-cost boxes.

Above £400 the distinction becomes much less clear-cut. Floorstanders still look neater and more homogeneous, but they are bulkier, and someone has to pay for all that real-wood veneer on display.

What's in a box?

Floorstanders can accommodate extra main or bass drivers, but adding more drive units always extracts its own price. Floorstander versus stand-mount is a tricky trade-off for both reviewers and consumers to gauge.

Loudspeaker performance is a complex and multi-dimensional problem, which is all about making compromises between numerous conflicting variables. A small box will restrict both the lowest frequency to which bass extends, and how loud the speaker will play. It also reduces the amount of sound generated by unwanted box vibrations (so-called 'cabinet coloration').

Adding drivers and ports increases the overall 'performance envelope': sensitivity, loudness and bass extension. But this will inevitably detract from the degree to which

THE C	AST LIST
MODEL	PRICE . PAGE
AVI Positron	£899.00 97
B&W CDM7	£999.9599
Castle Severn 2	£579.90 77
Dali 606	£399.95 79
Dynaudio Audience	50£577.00 81
Heybrook Ultima	£649.00 87
Jamo 507A	£700.00 89
	£700.00 91
JPW Ruby 4	£999.99 101
Kelly KT3	£1,199.99 103
Mission 752 Freedo	m£578.00 83
Monitor Audio 702F	MC .£599.99 93
MT Condor	£999.95 105
Ruark Sceptre	£599.00 95
TDL RTL3SE	£449.95 85

sound seems to emanate from a point-source, the hi-fi ideal.

In the December 1996 edition (*HFC* 160), we tested similarly-priced speakers in the same ratio of stand-mounts to floor-standers. So it's a testament to the enormous diversity of speaker manufacturers that only three brands have been featured in both last year's and this year's groups.

Group dynamics

We have divided our test candidates into three segments of five, in order to compare like with like. Group A spans the range £400-£580, Group B covers £580-£800, and Group C rounds up £800-£1200.

Group C comprises floorstanders exclusively, but stand-mount models dominate Group B. If you allow for the cost of high quality stands to partner these smaller boxes, they're as much in competition with the top group as their peers in Group B.

Inexpensive models like the Dali, Heybrook and Jamo incorporate the greatest number of drive units. However, the simple two-way design remains the most popular, with three in Group A, two in Group B, and two in Group C. To tell the truth, however, all of 'em use ports to reinforce the bass output, and this makes them more like three-way speakers than two-ways in the purest sense.

Most use extra main drivers, either exclusively at the bottom end to supplement the lowest bass octaves, or combined up to the frequency where the tweeter kicks in. Again, reflex ports are in evidence, though some models are true three-way designs, in which bass and midrange frequencies are supplied by specific drive units.

HOW THE TESTS WERE DONE

Our unsighted listening tests were spread over two separate days, which allowed us to present some speakers more than once. We supported standmount designs on Slate Audio and Kudos S100 supports.

The main reference system comprised the usual collection of Mana-supported Naim and Linn components, viz: Linn LP12 turntable, Naim ARO tonearm, Linn Arkiv cartridge, Naim CDS CD player, NATO1 tuner, NAC52 pre-amp and NAP135 power amps. Speaker cables were NACA5 and Nordost SPM.

During the hands-on listening sessions we deployed an additional system with a deliberately different flavour. This consisted of: Acoustic Precision Eikos, Marantz CD-17 K I Signature and XTC CDP-1 CD players, partnered with a Krell KAV-300i amplifier. WHAT MUSIC DID WE USE? Excerpts from the following albums, as well as

BBC Radios 3 & 4 during the hands-on work: The Chemical Brothers:

Dig Your Own Hole on XDUSTCD2 42950 2 8. The Pogues:

Rum, Sodomy and the Lash on WX241 244495-1. Cambridge Singers:

There Is Sweet Music/Rutter on Collegium COLCD 104. Joni Mitchell: Hejira on Asylum K53053. Rage Against The Machine:

Rage Against The Machine on Epic 472224 2. LSO/Georgiadis: Dancing in Old Vienna on Enigma K53577. Fun Lovin' Criminals: Come Find Yourself on Chrysalis 37566 2 9. Various Artists: chEMIstry – A Hundred Years of EMI on Vox EMI 100 (free with November 1997 edition of VOX).

THE LISTENING PANEL

Our thanks to panellists David Inman (Castle), Robin Marshall (Mission), Russell Kaufman (Morel, Densen), Keith Haddock (Gamepath), Jason Kennedy and Alan Sircom (Hi-Fi Choice).

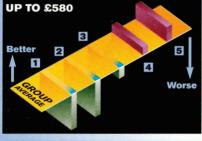


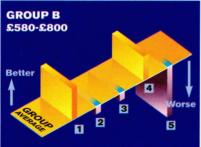


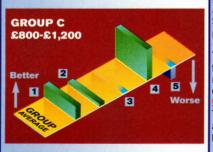
UNDERSTANDING OUR BAR-GRAPHS AND GROUP AVERAGES

here will be significant differences between the cheapest product in our test and the most expensive. For this reason we always segregate our test candidates into two or more categories based on price. Our aim is to assess every product's performance in the context of its closest rivals. Each lab-report panel is colour-coded according to the key given below:

GROUP A EXAMPLE











Jamo 507A p89

UNDERSTANDING OUR BAR-GRAPH MEASUREMENTS

he measurements behind Hi-Fi Choice's unique bar-graphs are provided by our Technical Editor, Paul Miller, using both GPIBcontrolled measurement hardware and his own, award-winning, PC-based Virtual Instrument software. Each bar-graph value is derived from a weighted statistic of several key measurements and is displayed relative to a notional zero per cent which represents the group average for that particular category. Ease of driv

This statistic is derived from the reactive and

resistive components of the speaker load, indicating how tricky it is for the amplifier to drive.

The sensitivity of the speaker is measured at 1m with a 2.83V input across third-octave bands 17-29, then weighted according to the human loudness contour to indicate how 'loud' one speaker will sound relative to another. num loudn

This takes into account the speaker's sensitivity, distortion, the maximum useable amplifier power and the effects of placement in an 'average room' to gauge the maximum practical Sound Pressure Level obtainable from a given pair of loudspeakers.

Audible distortion

This valuable test momentarily raises the output to 96dBA with dynamic signals through bass, midrange and treble. This allows us to assess distortion under realistic, transient conditions. **Off-axis uniformity**

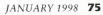
This provides an indication of how the speaker's axial response deteriorates, or otherwise, as the listening position moves to the left or right.



(D)









Castle Severn II

astle's compact, floorstanding Severn picked up a Recommended flag on its début two years ago (*HFC* 152). It returns with several important revisions. The price has gone up significantly, from £500 to £580, but many would argue this is fair compensation for the woven-carbon-fibre-composite main driver it employs.

This isn't the first speaker to use a hightech bass/mid cone of this type. It's not even the first Castle speaker to do so: that honour fell to the Avon, reviewed 11 months back in *HFC* 164. However, the Avon has provided the principal inspiration for the Severn 2's new makeover.

In essence, the Severn has evolved into a down-sized Avon, adopting the latter's 'hidden port' arrangement, which fires down through the base and out through slots between cabinet and the separate plinth. The latter accommodates a set of 6mm spikes, which extend substantially the foreand-aft footprint of a very compact design.

Castle is well known for its classy realwood-veneer finishes, and even though the supplied American walnut was not the most interesting I've seen, its quality was absolute, and Castle has taken great care over the fine details. The post-formed edges



are in proper veneer rather than painted MDF fillets; the plinth is finished in the same veneer; and the bi-wire terminal block is mounted low enough to avoid speaker wire hanging down behind the enclosure.

Both drive units are flush-mounted into the cabinet. The cast-frame main driver has

a 110mm cone, and is mounted above the centreoffset tweeter (which is, consequently, rather closer to the ground than usual). It is certainly elegant to disguise the port within the plinth arrangement, but the floorlevel low-frequency energy thus created might overexcite the floor-to-ceiling room modes.

Room measurements show more than ample midbass output when the speaker is positioned clear of walls — and, incidentally, that its midband output is significantly smoother than that observed in the original Severn and Avon.

Sound quality

Unsighted listening tests gave slightly disappointing results. Initially I ascribed this to the possibility of insufficiently-tightened floorspikes; at least they seemed a little loose when I came to do the hands-on work.

Spike tightness notwithstanding, this speaker offers a fundamentally dull balance. There may well be systems and rooms in which this trait proves beneficial, but under our conditions it sounded rather shut in, irrespective of other virtues noted.

And there are real virtues, especially in the subtle smoothness and evenhandedness of the broad midband. Indeed, I suspect this

might explain the rather indifferent initial reaction of the listening panel. The midband is so neutral and free from obvious character that one tends to take it for granted; focus shifts instead to the rolled-off top and slightly thumpy bass. Get adjusted to these peculiarities - or find a room and system to which they are better suited — and the naturalness of the midband tonality and perspectives shines through. In dynamics it is a little understated, and the bottom end lacks gravitas, but the whole experience can be very satisfying in a low-key manner.

Conclusion

The Severn 2's appealing midband is its most persuasive virtue, but it has the unfortunate side effect of highlighting the speaker's deficiencies at the top and bottom of the frequency range. Potentially, this speaker is capable of fine results, if users pay careful attention to room and system matching. PMe

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THE LAB REPORT

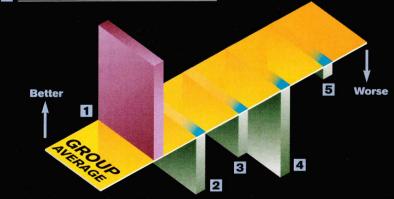
Woven carbon-fibre, with its high strength-to-weight ratio, has now found a niche as a drive-unit material. The Castle Severn, for example, exhibits a slightly 'mild' looking response, gently declining across the spectrum but with broad humps through bass, midrange and treble. This mildness is more obvious off-axis, so I would not recommend toeing-in the Severns more than a few degrees — unless, of course, your partnering electronics already have a biting treble. A narrow-band analysis repeats this trend but also reveals a sharp peak at 4.1kHz following the 3kHz crossover point.

A nearfield response plot of the carbon-fibre driver shows a marked loss in output around 750Hz, just where the impedance trend demonstrates a blip due to an undamped cabinet column resonance. Distortion also proves moderate at around 1.5 per cent through bass and midrange at the 96dBA test level. On a more positive note, the Severn 2 actually beats its rated 87dB sensitivity with a 'real world' performance of 88.1dB and an *average* impedance of 14.7 Ohms, only dipping briefly below 8 Ohms from 140-340Hz. Otherwise, Castle's downward-firing port arrangement provides an ideal reinforcement at 48Hz (perfectly in tune with the driver's null); but it lets slip some pipe resonances at 250Hz and 500Hz. *PM*

HOW IT COMPARES

EASE OF DRIVE75%RELATIVE LOUDNESS-45%MAXIMUM LOUDNESS-35%AUDIBLE DISTORTION-70%OFF-AXIS UNIFORMITY-10%

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Dali 606

The Dali loudspeaker brand is distributed in the UK by Audio Club, alongside products from NAD and Onkyo. (Its acronymical name stands for DAnish Loudspeaker Industries –**Ed**.) Audioclub is part of a Danish-based operation that has interests in retail as well as manufacturing. The last Dali to be reviewed in *Choice* was the 104/2, a low-cost, high-sensitivity floorstander that proved itself a very impressive general-purpose package (*HFC* 152).

Presumably Dali excels at this game, because the new 606 has been concoted to a very similar cost-conscious formula, to hit a similar price point. In the wake of a recent £30 price cut this new model comes in at £400 — just £30 more than the 104/2. The overall configuration is similar, but in the 606 you get a significantly larger box, a heavier package, and an extra drive unit too.

One might quibble at the quantity of black vinyl wrap on view, and the complete absence of any floor-coupling arrangements such as spikes. To address the latter a set of cones may be used instead, without adding too much to the cost. And though this speaker looks mighty cheap relative to other models in this test group, the scale of its inexpense is not unprecedented. The JPW ML1010 (*HFC* 170), for example, offers a



similar complement of drive-units in an even bigger and heavier box, complete with separate plinth and spikes, for the same money. But there's no disputing the Dali's good basic material value for money, even if the inclusion of aesthetic features appears to have been an afterthought.

A 25mm fabric-dome tweeter tops the front panel, surmounting an imposing column of three main drivers with 120mm cones and impressive cast chassis. The latter are reinforced by two different-sized ports on the rear panel. This configuration is unusual, since all three main drivers operate through the bass region, while only the lower one is rolled off above 500Hz, allowing the upper pair to carry the midband up to the 3.1kHz tweeter crossover point. Cables connect through a single terminal pair.

Room measurement indicates that free-space siting is preferred, though the bass alignment can tolerate some wall reinforcement if circumstances dictate. Interestingly, these far-field, averaged responses show a smoother result than the closer-miked lab tests, though an obvious suckout is visible at 500-600Hz.

Sound quality

Do high-sensitivity designs enjoy an advantage in our unsighted listening tests? Only by virtue of the fact that the amplifier works less hard to drive them. The relative complexity of their driver arrays and the size of their boxes are both likely to detract from the quality of performance, rather than reinforce it.

Bearing this in mind, it is all the more impressive to note the strong second-placeon-the-day performance clocked up by the 606. Its slightly rich, dark balance wasn't to

everyone's taste, but most warmed to its decent bass extension, fine stereo soundstaging and competent dynamic layering. A fine all-round performance, especially at the modest price. My own hands-on listening only served to confirm this design's competent behaviour, fine headroom and commendable freedom from unwanted nasties.

Conclusion

Large speakers are an order of magnitude harder to design than stand-mounts and miniatures, and big cheap speakers are the most difficult task of all. So credit is due to Dali's engineers for creating a speaker that offers high sensitivity, good power handling and fine bass extension in the context of an essentially well-mannered sound. It isn't a Kelly KT3 on the cheap, but it goes a fair way down that road, with a price that demands Best Buy

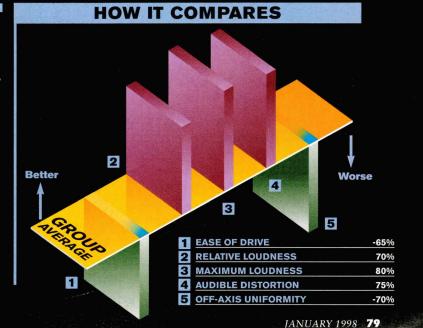
recognition. PMe

THE LAB REPORT

Dali rates its high-sensitivity Model 606 at 92dB/1m. In practice, it clocks up a even lustier 93dB with a projected peak output of between 110-111dB SPL in the average room. This is still a few dB short of the Kelly KT-3 (p103), but it is more than sufficient to make good use of a 10-20W amplifier. Or, alternatively, to compromise your hearing with a 100-200W amplifier.

At 96dBA, the 606s are ticking over effortlessly, so distortion remains better than 0.35 per cent right across the audio band. However, this 'loudness' is purchased at the expense of a uniformly evil impedance trend, averaging 5.1 Ohms from 20Hz-20kHz, and dipping to 3.3 Ohms at 200Hz. <u>None but the hardi</u>est of amplifiers need apply!

The two bass and single bass/mid units combine to yield a rather lumpylooking 100-250Hz region, but this is not uncommon with multi-way designs. The 500Hz-2kHz region also looks decidedly uneven as sensitivity, too, is also traded for uniformity. Careful room placement will prove crucial to avoid a boomy bass. The latter, under ideal conditions, extends smoothly down to 23Hz. This is achieved by reflex-loading the two lower bass units via a port with a broad low-Q output, which extends from 28-92Hz (-3dB points). *PMI*





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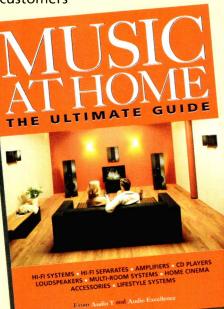
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Dynaudio Audience 50

ynaudio, a long-established Danish company, is better known for its unusual main drivers than complete speaker systems. Nonetheless, word on the latter seems to be getting around.

In HFC 167 we reviewed and Recommended the Contour 1.8, one of Dynaudio's upmarket floorstanders finished in real-wood veneer. This time round, our scrutiny turns to one of the cheapest models in the range. However, this is one of the classic occasions when 'inexpensive' would be a more accurate soubriquet than cheap. Even the marketing man's euphemism struggles with a product that costs two to three times more than same-size offerings from other famous brand names.

On a superficial inspection this is a simple, demure, decidedly understated product. It is vinyl-finished, two-way, and standmount in configuration. The price, a hefty £577, comes as a bit of a shock — you get none of the fancy veneer and cabinetwork offered by other marques at this price. Dynaudio has a number of arguments to rebut accusations of cheapskatery. It claims to spend more of its budget on engineering, with a positive effect on sound quality. Its boxes are more solidly built than most, allegedly, even if they don't look so pretty. Perhaps most important of all, Dynaudio



makes big boasts for its unique main driver, whose combination cone/dome plastic diaphragm is driven nodally from an oversize voice coil. Our listening tests will either justify or debunk such hype, but there is no denying Dynaudio drivers are deployed in impressive and exotic speaker designs from the likes of PMC or Totem.

In the back panel there's a port, supplied with optional foam bungs, and just a pair of signal input terminals (Dynaudio doesn't believe in bi-wiring). Bass alignment wasn't ideal for our room, but the speaker works fine in free space, and the bungs may be inserted for close-to-wall siting.

Sound guality

The moment of truth arrived when Dynaudio's 'under-the-skin' engineering approach took its turn behind the black curtain. And the Audience 50 passed with flying colours. Not only did it register a comfortable 'best of the day' in the company of price-for-price peers; but when I sneaked it in among more upmarket models in a subsequent test, it came close to repeating the trick and comfortably mixed it with the thousand pounders. In fairness, when you add the cost of the pricey Kudos S100 stands I was using, the Dynaudio ceases to look like such a bargain, and its sensitivity is lower than those £1,000 rivals, but I remained very impressed by the way it punched above its weight. It serves to vindicate my longheld contention that a good stand-mount is more than a match for most floorstanders.

Most panellists placed the Dynaudio first or second on the day, handing out praise for its attack, detail and energy: "Excellent vitality - jig-tastic!" A more careful and considered appraisal sums it up rather well: "Tight

2

3

4



and rhythmic with a hard edge. Pretty exciting but just on the edge of aggression for me. Great if it stays this side of the razor's edge."

That tendency towards hardness was the only criticism, which led two panellists to mark it down to average. System selection must be partly to blame. The sound smoothed out when I changed from Naim to Krell amplification in the hands-on work.

Conclusion

A vinyl-finished, two-way, compact standmount speaker: for £577 it's hardly the bargain of the month. But the hi-fi game is all about reproduction of sound and music, not interior design. And in sound and music reproduction terms alone, the Audience 50 is an obvious Best Buy. What it loses on the swings of dynamic grip, it gets back redoubled on the roundabouts of midband transparency, tonal accuracy and dynamic range. PMe

THE LAB REPORT

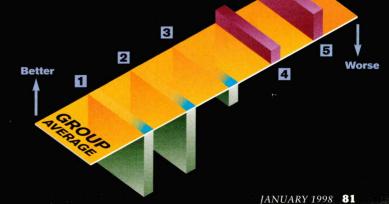
This is not a loudspeaker for faint-hearted amplifiers; nor, indeed, will it suit listeners seeking a mellow balance. These facts notwithstanding, the Audience 50 improves on its rated 86dB sensitivity by measuring 87.8dB/2.83V/1m in our tests. The quid pro quo is a devilishly difficult 4 Ohm load with a 3.5 Ohm minimum at 195Hz and an average of just 6.6 Ohm right across the audio band.

The impedance never rises above 7 Ohm from 3.3kHz onwards; and throughout the crossover region, the amplifier is forced to tackle the speaker's attendant swing in phase angle.

On-axis there's more than a suggestion of bass and treble boost to liven up the balance. The treble lift is at least partially ameliorated by listening 10-20 degrees off axis. Narrowband analysis reveals a generally depressed midband with one or two peaks (notably at 5.5kHz) jutting upwards at higher frequency. Possibly this indicates breakup modes from the stiff bass/mid driver that is braced by a huge central dust cap.

Distortion increases with decreasing frequency, from 0.35 per cent (treble) to 1.3 per cent (bass). The bass-reflex alignment is very good, with a clean, medium-Q port reinforcement at 54Hz and bass null at 47Hz helping to extend the in-room response to 35Hz with the speaker clear of room boundaries. PMi

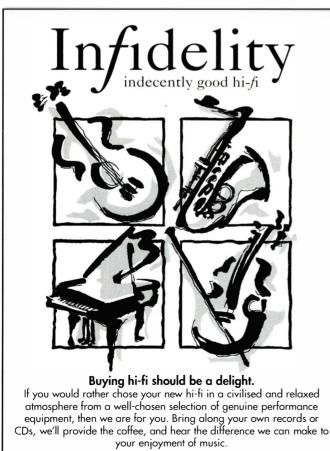
HOW IT COMPARES EASE OF DRIVE -50% **RELATIVE LOUDNESS** -50% MAXIMUM LOUDNESS -15% AUDIBLE DISTORTION 10% **OFF-AXIS UNIFORMITY** 20%



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Mission 752 Freedom

Image of the state of the state

Three years on from our last visit, the price has crept up from £500 to £580, which is not too dramatic an increase, and many of the ingredients are immediately familiar. My only regret is the demise of the elegant backward-sloping front panel of the original, which has been replaced by an altogether less distinctive rectilinear shape. It's a good looker, but has lost some of its own identity by imitating its bigger brothers.

The main reason for launching the new Freedom series was Mission's adoption of a new (and undoubtedly improved) tweeter. In the 752F's case, the company has elected to reprise its 'traditional' approach of siting the main driver above the tweeter.

Where the 753F is notable for an entire

VERDICT					
12.11.12.00	UND ****				
10000					
	PRICE £578.00/(LIGHT OAK) £648.00 A good all-round performer, compactly packaged in				
	an exceptionally lounge-friendly real wood veneer,				
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baffle full of main drivers, the 752F is a simple two-way, with just a single bass/mid driver to cover the lower two-thirds of the audio range. However, the multiple drivers in the 753F are relatively inexpensive pressedframe affairs, whereas the 752F's singleton is altogether more interesting. It incorpo-

rates a hefty cast frame and a 120mm cone made from ultralight Aerogel foam material.

Matched real-wood veneers cover the sides, top and lower third of the front panel. The upper (business) section of the baffle sets drivers and ports against a smart textured section, though all of this may be hidden under a chamfered wood-frame grille. A wide chamfer has been sliced off the sharp enclosure edges all round. and this is filled with MDF fillets painted to match the veneer. The finishing touch is a moulded-plastic plinth that ably accommodates floor-spikes and increases the overall stability footprint.

The original 752 was a little light in the bass, and definitely needed the proximity of a wall to achieve adequate mid/bass output. Close comparison of original and new data shows that Mission has managed to squeeze some worthwhile extra bass out of the box — probably from the extra port tucked around the back, which I don't remember from the original. The speaker is now better suited to free space siting, though some wall reinforcement is feasible.

Sound quality

The 752F acquitted itself well in the listening tests, exhibiting decent consistency between two separate presentations. It did-

n't top anyone's lists, but seemed to do most things pretty well, one or two better than that, and nothing poorly.

> The tonal balance is perhaps a little too safe and conservative. The slight lack of top end robs the sound of some 'air', but tempo and tonality are good, underpinned by a decent measure of dynamic grip. Deep bass isn't on the agenda, but what's offered is lively and punchy. Solo voices are very well articulated, though on test there was a trace of congestion and smearing with choral material.

Conclusion

The 752 Freedom excels as a good all-rounder. It comprises an exceptionally lounge-friendly package at a realistic price, and improves upon the original at both ends of the price spectrum. On offer is a lively and communicative experience, with good foot-tapping potential and a measure of dynamic grip. All of this adds up to a Best Buy rating in my book. PME

THE LAB REPORT

Support the 752F on too high a stand, and it will suffer a fairly obvious upper-mid/lower-treble suckout amounting to a loss of some 7-8dB from 2.9kHz-8kHz. If your listening height equals or exceeds the elevation of the 752F's cabinet top, its response is idealised, showing a broad 1-2dB depression throughout the upper mid, together with a notch at 3.9kHz, but a generally uniform bass and treble.

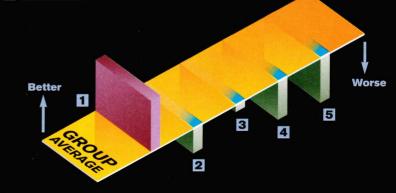
Sensitivity is generous at 89dB (manufacturer's figure: 87dB), and maximum SPLs of 106dBA may well be possible. Even at 96dBA, however, the Aerogel bass/mid unit is showing signs of strain as distortion increases from 0.8 per cent (midrange) to 2.5 per cent (bass). Bass extension is improved by Mission's coupled enclosure design with differential port-tuning, allowing the drive units to roll off very steeply below 80Hz, while the ports take over at 65Hz.

On the other hand, this port output is not entirely clean. A 190Hz resonance coincides with a notch in the forward response and a very obvious 'blip' on the impedance trend. Another huge blip, possibly a cone mistermination, shows up at 755Hz. The bold impedance swings from 60 Ohms to 'safe' minima of 7 Ohms (270Hz) and 5.6 Ohms (9kHz), demonstrate the fundamentally undamped nature of the 752F. *PMi*

HOW IT COMPARES

CHILL

EASE OF DRIVE40%RELATIVE LOUDNESS-20%MAXIMUM LOUDNESS-5%AUDIBLE DISTORTION-30%OFF-AXIS UNIFORMITY-35%





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TDL RTL3SE

t is exactly four years since *Choice* reviewed and Recommended the original TDL RTL3 (*HFC* 126). It was a pioneer of the budget floorstander scene, and the fact of its continuing manufacture indicates the commercial success it has enjoyed.

However, the indelicate art of marketing dictates a regular dose of novelty to attract the fickle attention of dealers and customers alike, so TDL has released an SE variation on the familiar theme. The price has crept up to £449 (from £399), which seems a pretty modest increase over a four-year period, especially since a number of former extras are now standard fitments. Previously vou'd have forked out an additional £12 for a set of spikes, but now the package includes a separate plinth as well as spikes. On the cosmetic front, there are gilt fixing screws for the drivers, and the crossover network has been extensively revised to employ higher-grade components.

TDL's roots lie in large, pricey, speakers that use long, folded transmission lines to load the bass output. The RTL series standing for Reflex/Transmission Line hybrid — seeks to offer the benefits of a transmission-line enclosure at a fraction of the cost. The RTL3SE is certainly a hefty-sized box

VERDICT ****** SOUND VALUE **** PRICE £449.95 A good value big box, with a characteristic flavour that some will find appealing. A touch of boom'n'tizz, but slammin' bass and sufficient fun factor carry it through - provided you can handle the recessed midhand TDL Electronics Ltd, P.O. Box 98, High Wycombe, Bucks, **HP10 9SH** (01628) 850111 0

for the price. It is sensibly shaped, with a slim aspect from the front and plenty of front-to-back depth to provide a firm mechanical footprint. I'm less impressed by the 'cherrywood' vinyl cladding, which one could envisage on a sticky-backed roll in DIY superstores. I guess that goes with the price/size territory. And while there are biwire input terminals fitted on the rear panel, their height above floor-level may leave cables dangling visibly.

There are two identical main drive-units, each with 125mm plastic cones. They are placed above and below a soft-fabric-dome tweeter of 25mm diameter — 6mm bigger than the original RTL3's unit. Internal bracing adds a labyrinth element to the reflex loading, and helps to stiffen those large-area side panels. The substantial twin ports are foam-damped.

From the outside, only the tweeter change is obvious, but comparison of old and new room measurements shows a number of significant changes: notably improved overall sensitivity (without any amplifier load penalty), and a slight bass realignment that still favours free-space siting, but makes close-to-wall locations a more realistic option. More worrying is a rather abrupt discontinuity at 1kHz under far-field averaging.

Sound quality

This speaker split the panel's opinions right down the middle. Some hated "the rumbling thuddy bass with crashy treble". Others basked in "the powerful bass, which is tight and in control, giving a solid foundation to the sound".

There's no denying that this speaker has something of the 'loudness contour' about its balance, with a notably full and extended bass, a rather recessed midband, but too much mid-treble strength. This has tended

to alienate our panels in the past, but not now: with two in favour and two against, this reviewer was forced to take the casting vote.

> The balance is indeed a bit odd-ball, and not much to my personal taste either, but listen 'past' the balance and it's pretty good fun, with good dynamic range, especially through the bass region. The midband does sound a bit constricted, but methinks a great deal of appeal will derive from the fact that it's a bit of a floor-shaker, capable of going loud and probably best suited to larger rooms.

Conclusion

CHERT

COMMENDED

What's in an SE update? In this case, not so much a solution to the limitations of the original, but instead a swap for a slightly different set of compromises. This is still a good-value big box, with a characteristic flavour that has its own appeal, and sufficient fun factor for continued Recommendation. *Pme*

THE LAB REPORT

Few of TDL's older transmission-line speakers have proved terribly sensitive, but the 'reflex/transmission-line' RTL3SE is capable of sustaining peak outputs of 106dBA. This is thanks to its combination of 89.7dB/2.83V sensitivity (manufacturer's figure: 90dB) and tolerant power handling. The RTL3SE presents an easy load to most amplifiers, swinging from 15.4 Ohms to a brief minimum of 4.8 Ohms at 260Hz.

The reflex loading is mildly damped by foam inserts, and brings about maximum reinforcement at 63Hz, some way off the driver null at 38Hz but sufficiently low in Q to drag the speaker's bass extension down to around 24Hz under ideal conditions. Internal resonances at 205Hz and 300Hz do escape the reflex port, however.

The forward response is a little bumpy, with dips at 950Hz and peaks at 1.7kHz and 2.5kHz to bring some 'character' into the equation. Subjectively, however, third-octave averaging indicates that these discontinuities could well be masked under listening conditions. More importantly, its two polypropylene drivers release very high levels of odd-order distortion (typically 5-6 per cent at 96dBA) through the bass, an indiscretion that's likely to have far greater subjective impact. This is a great pity, if only because TDL's fabric treble dome enjoys a fabulously low 0.1 per cent distortion at the same SPL. *PMn*

HOW IT COMPARES 1 EASE OF DRIVE -5% **RELATIVE LOUDNESS** 5% 2 3 MAXIMUM LOUDNESS -5% 4 AUDIBLE DISTORTION -25% 5 OFF-AXIS UNIFORMITY 75% 4 3 2 5 Worse Better 1

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Heybrook Ultima

ur recent reviews of Heybrook speakers have tended to feature compact and prettily-finished stand-mount designs. So it came as quite a shock to unpack this pair of big bruisers. 'Pretty' was not the adjective that sprang to mind as a vast area of woodprint revealed itself; maybe 'purposeful' would fit the bill. But I can see no obvious way of shoe-horning four driveunits and a port into a smaller enclosure.

The £650 Ultima is the largest of four vinyl-wrapped Heybrooks, all conceived with half an eve on home cinema as well as hi-fi. The implication is surely that a pair of Ultimas render further subwoofery unnecessary. It's a reasonable proposition, given that we're dealing with a pair of port-loaded, 26litre bass chambers, each driven by a pair of 120mm doped-paper cones. A driver of similar size handles the midband duties, and this is mounted in its own sealed section at the top of the speaker, above the 25mm fabric dome tweeter.

Heybrook was one of the first speaker brands to become involved with spiked stands, and the company's steel-tubed HBS1 is now a classic. So it's fitting that the Ultima is equipped with a tubular steel frame at the base, which provides a genuinely secure platform for tight fitting spikes. Bi-wire terminals are fitted, quite high up on



the back panel - only a bonus for those who enjoy the sight of trailing wires.

Room responses indicate a more-thanample supply of mid-to-upper bass on offer from the Ultima, irrespective of assistance from nearby walls. It's interesting to note that the Heybrook showed a smoother balance than the other two high sensitivity designs (Dali, Kelly) in the one-metre lab

test, but was actually the least evenly balanced of the three on our far-field reverberant in-room appraisal.

Sound quality

The Ultima gave a rather disappointing account of itself in the listening tests. Because it is so similar to the Dali 606 (in size, shape and driver lineup), inevitably the two of them were juxtaposed and compared. Unfortunately for Heybrook, there's no avoiding the conclusion that the significantly cheaper Dali came in ahead by a small margin.

That's not to say this is a bad loudspeaker. One panellist showed some enthusiasm for the "fine dynamics and timing, the effective level tracking". He wel-

3



comed the impression of real energy coming through, and the good sense of space and air: "Very natural; the music breathes more easily and even has some depth".

Another was less impressed: "Sounds clumped together in the middle... I can imagine some people liking its crude impact... Curious lack of presence with good diction - suggests balance aberrations... A real curate's egg".

> Such polarised opinions leave the reviewer in a dilemma, and compel him to take on the rôle of referee. Experience suggests that both flavours of comment are likely to contain elements of truth, as panellists tend to pick up strongly on an initial first impression, and use the rest of the session as reinforcement.

> The Ultima has quite a lot going for it, and delivers a good impression of weight and scale without the handicap of mid-bass boom. However, in keeping with my initial suspicions, there was definitely something of a 'subwoofer' effect obvious in the bottom-end performance, and low-level information sometimes seemed obscured. The sound is quite tidy but a bit shut in, and could do with a little more life and vigour.

Conclusion

The proverbial mixed bag; during this test Ultima's main problem was in locking horns with the very similarlooking Dali 606 at less than twothirds the price. The Heybrook has the advantage of proper floor coupling, but actually loses out slightly in overall sound quality. PMe

THE LAB REPORT

Yet another multi-way speaker, and one more to feature both a high sensitivity (at 91dB, 2dB higher than its manufacturer's claim), and a slightly irregular response. The Ultima does not feature the broader response anomalies of either the Kelly (p103) or Dali (p79) designs; in fact, the averaged thirdoctave trend looks surprisingly smooth. However, the Heybrook design does have a sharp cancellation notch amounting to -8dB at 7.6kHz, at the (firstorder) mid/treble crossover point.

The broad sub-6 Ohm minima between 140-650Hz, and average 7.4 Ohm impedance, also ensure the Ultima is reasonably current-hungry.

However, if you follow Heybrook's recommendation and install the speaker with lengths of the company's own Heywire speaker cable, the extra resistance and inductance thus introduced will 'ease' the load and fundamentally alter the perceived tonal balance of the speaker through both bass and treble.

The Ultima's upper midrange unit is loaded by its own sealed cavity, and it's here that the highest levels of distortion are seen: typically 0.8 per cent, falling to between 0.2-0.3 per cent once bass and treble units take over.

Meanwhile, the two lower, series-coupled bass units are reflex-loaded through a small, front-firing port at 30Hz, which extends the overall response to 24Hz in-room, albeit with some misalignment. PMi

HOW IT COMPARES 1 EASE OF DRIVE -30% 2 RELATIVE LOUDNESS 55% MAXIMUM LOUDNESS 25% **4** AUDIBLE DISTORTION 75% **5** OFF-AXIS UNIFORMITY 5% 5 2 4 3



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Jamo 507A

D anish company Jamo is one of Europe's most successful speaker brands, thanks largely to the emphasis it places on imaginative design and presentation. This approach is exemplified by the £700 floorstanding 507A, which is quite different from the stereotypical models that constitute the bulk of our test group.

The wipe-clean, smoked-glass top surface is a tidy and practical way of finishing off the awkward visible end of a cabinet. The latter is cleverly constructed with unusual curved sides. But that's just one neat detail. The real trick, ideally suited to our slimline age, is in fashioning a speaker that looks like it is only 13cm wide — it is, but only at the very front edge. Convex sides increase the width to 22cm at the middle, while the decent 29cm depth ensures good overall stability with the supplied spike kit.

In order to achieve that exceptionally narrow profile, Jamo has opted for a three-way configuration. The midrange uses twin drivers with baby 75mm cones, mounted above and below a 25mm soft dome tweeter; while the bass is generated by a band-pass (or coupled cavity) bass arrangement entirely contained by the box.

All of the bass comes out of a large port, which is excited by a cavity inside. The cavity itself is energised by twin internal bass



drivers operating in a pushpull arrangement. This does offer potential benefits in terms of control, but makes inefficient use of enclosure volume.

Room responses show plenty of mid-bass output, even with the loudspeakers well clear of walls. But this is a rather isolated prominence. Deep bass extension is limited, and upper bass is rather lacking, too. Output peaks at around 700-800Hz. Though the driveunit configuration is independent three-way, only biwire signal input terminals are fitted.

Sound quality

The 507A neither disgraced itself in the listening tests, nor covered itself in glory. The consensus view placed its sonic performance a little below average, on a day in which its price was a little below the group average, too. This doesn't tell the whole story, since half the panel was well persuaded by its up-front charms, while the other half focused more closely on its deficiencies.

I never attempt to extract a consensus view from a listening panel, since this is liable to cause



extrovert individuals to lead opinions. Nevertheless, things become difficult when one listener describes a speaker as: "detailed and exciting without being offensive", while another complains of "a slow, overdamped bass with little extension, plus a thin 'spike' in the midband".

> Ultimately, the latter correlates more closely with the measurements and my hands-on listening. I found myself agreeing with another panellist who felt that the speaker sounded quite exciting on first exposure, but had an unrelenting forwardness which tended to hype detail at the expense of more neutral, subtle perspectives.

Conclusion

In practice the Jamo 507A doesn't sound as big as it looks. The bass seems a little detached and thumpy, with only average weight; while the unusually difficult load, only partially compensated by sensitivity, could stress unwary amplifiers. The best feature of this model is an exceptionally clever and imaginative visual presentation, which combines a super-slim front view with a

smoked-glass top. PMe

THE LAB REPORT

This complex speaker demonstrates that it is possible to engineer a flat response with a generous 90dB sensitivity, albeit at the expense of a difficult impedance trend. Indeed, together with Dali's 606, the Jamo 507A should see off all but the most robust amplifiers. Its nominal 4 0hm rating sees a minimum of 2.7 0hms at 120Hz, a maximum of just 12.3 0hms, and a current-sucking *average* of 7 0hms right across the board.

The speaker has been correctly aligned to give its flattest response with a listening axis just *above* the top of the cabinet. Both mid and bass are very uniform under these conditions, but there's a treble 'sting' that's best avoided by toeing-in each cabinet by 10-20 degrees.

The two internal 6.5-inch bass drivers are reflex-loaded via an undamped rear-firing port, providing maximum reinforcement at 58Hz and a projected in-room bass extension of 40Hz when placed about 0.5m from rear walls. Whatever advantages this (presumed) coupled-cavity arrangement might bring, distortion is markedly higher here, up to 3 per cent in fact (re. 96dBA), and is almost entirely second harmonic in character. Distortion through mid and treble is progressively lower at 1-0.4 per cent. *PMI*

HOW IT COMPARES

- EASE OF DRIVE-75%RELATIVE LOUDNESS20%MAXIMUM LOUDNESS25%AUDIBLE DISTORTION-65%OFF-AXIS UNIFORMITY50%
 - AXIS UNIFORMITY 50%



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JBL SVA1500

oudspeaker packing cartons aren't the most useful vehicle for point-of-sale material. However, JBL's decision to highlight the 'loud' in loudspeaker here should give some idea as to where this design is coming from - or where it would like you to think it's coming from.

Take a famous brand name, lace it with a slice of attitude, and you end up with an interesting niche product. Though it is relatively expensive for a stand-mount at £700, the SVA1500 looks like one of the US-built JBLs, as distinct from the Danish variety.

The most distinctive feature here is a tweeter that's probably unique on the domestic hi-fi scene, borrowed from JBL's pro-audio heritage. Described as a bi-radial horn, it looks like a scaled-down variation on the 'elephant's bum' theme. Badger's backside may be more appropriate.

There are reasons why horns are more popular in pro-audio than hi-fi. Their advantages of high sensitivity and controlled directivity must be set against the difficulty of avoiding coloration. But on any of our measurements, the SVA1500 actually has a sensitivity just below average, so efficiency cannot be the reason for including the horn. My cynicism suggests that in marketing land, any unique selling point is better than none,



but at least JBL has provided an engineering 'white paper' to explain controlled directivity in a domestic hi-fi context.

While there may be a case for focusing treble frequencies in such a way as to reduce room reflections, the SVA1500 behaves as an omni-directional point source at low frequencies, moving over to a line-source in the midband before the horn takes over. The only simple answer is that this is a complex scenario!

Acoustics aside, the construction of this large horn structure should provide a firm mechanical platform for the tweeter; while the act of horn-loading should add a useful degree of damping for the diaphragm.

Twin 100mm main drivers are used

above and below the horn, creating the Symmetrical Vertical Array (SVA) of the nameplate. The combined area of the two cones should equate to a 140mm diameter single cone. But the use of two smaller units permits the loudspeaker enclosure to be unusually slim, and the horn loading will help to prevent the tweeter from suffering baffle-edge diffraction effects.

The back panel has a single terminal pair and an enormous reflex port. Said port contributes altogether too lustily to room measurements for one to consider placing the SVA1500 near to walls. The upper bass looks decidedly lean.

Sound guality

The SVA1500 put in a solid listening test performance, and was well liked by all, though it did not appear at the top of anyone's list. Even when sited on high stands well clear of walls, the 1500's thuddy, thumpy bass did not appeal wholly to the tastes of our listeners. But that is not to say it might not be a popular selling feature out there in the real world!

For a small speaker, the JBL kicks. It may thud, but also it stops, starts and times well, with some drip and drama. The balance is a little recessed in the middle, yet diction is very clear and coherent, and one panellist singled out percussion for particular praise.

That indicates the tweeter is making a positive contribution.

Conclusion

To be honest, the SVA1500 is a bit of a sheep in wolf's clothing; the classy main drivers and unique tweeter are bound to command some sort of premium, but £700 does seem rather high for a vinvl-covered standmount. You'll have to make up your own mind about the aesthetic attitude, but it does sound good, and gets into the spirit of the music. All that detracts is the over-enthusiastic port thumping away, but a lot of potential buyers never grow tired of large bass. As for the Loud bit on the box

- I should coco! PMe

THE LAB REPORT

The positioning of these loudspeakers will prove crucial to the overall 'boom' and 'tizz' of their balance. Listen directly on the treble compressiondriver's axis and its stinging peak might singe your ears. Site the speakers too low and, while the treble will be smoother, you will encounter a dramatic loss of the presence band. Ideally, you need to raise the speakers up on tall stands so that your listening height is midway between the throat of the horn and the upper of the two bass/mid units. Then toe-in both speakers by 20 degrees or so. Hey presto, a smooth mid and treble with a mildly boomylooking bass.

Otherwise, the relatively high-Q port tuning at 43Hz is almost perfectly aligned with the driver null(s) at 48Hz. This has the effect of dragging down bass extension to around 30Hz in-room. Distortion is remarkably constant at 0.5 per cent right across the audio band at 96dBA, some 7dB above its nominal 89dB/2.83V sensitivity.

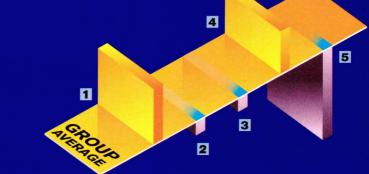
The nature of this distortion shifts, however, from odd-order through bass and low midrange, to even-order once the horn takes over. The load, too, reaches a broad 5.8 Ohm minimum through the upper bass and midrange, before swinging to a maximum of 34 Ohms as the inductance of the voice-coils takes over. PMi

HOW IT COMPARES

1 EASE OF DRIVE 45% 2 RELATIVE LOUDNESS -10% -15%

.

- 3 MAXIMUM LOUDNESS **4** AUDIBLE DISTORTION
- 5 OFF-AXIS UNIFORMITY



35%

-70%



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Monitor Audio 702PMC

o Igbal's Monitor Audio company has a reputation for turning out some of the prettiest woodwork imaginable, and this rosemahveneered standmount is no exception. The base price for the 702PMC may be £600, but that's for the black version only. Rosemah, cherry or oak will cost an extra £100. Perhaps you'll be more surprised to learn that it costs only another £200 to get the floorstanding 703PMC version -Recommended in HFC 160. Since you will need a pair of stands to support the 702PMC properly, this smaller model could work out more costly, especially in the realwood-veneered guise that we tested.

That said, they're deuced pretty little things. Fifteen-year-old Tallulah surveyed the assembled 15 speakers and immediately pronounced these the ones to die for. "When you've finished with them ... please, Dad!" she said, casually but persuasively. The poor bairn looked guite crestfallen when I pointed out a) that they cost £700, and b) that Uncle Mo has a business to run.

The 702PMC is the second model up in a four-strong range, and the third to come under Choice scrutiny. All three have shared the same complement of drive-units and similar crossovers so far as I can tell. The



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impedance curves vary mainly in bass tuning, which is a function of box size.

Drive units as much as cabinetwork are responsible for this range's premium prices. 'Pure Metal Cones' are still enough of a distinguishing feature to command an upmarket price-point, even though a number of brands have begun to challenge this status quo (see reviews of JPW on p101, and Musical Technology on p105).

Gold anodising imbues Monitor Audio's cones and domes with distinctive visual flair. The 115mm-diameter, curved-profile cone operates in an injection-moulded basket, while the 25mm tweeter is heavily protected by a gilt mesh. Bi-wire terminals are fitted on the rear, alongside a solidly-fitted port.

Like its mates, the 702PMC likes to be mounted clear of walls. A close comparison of data from the three Mo'sketeers makes

interesting reading. Tonal balance differences occur more in the upper bass and lower midband than in the bass alignment itself. The 702PMC improves on the 700PMC with worthwhile extra warmth around 200Hz, but still falls well short of the flatness and smoothness of the 703PMC floorstander. Ironically, the latter has the least absolute bass extension by a small margin.

Sound quality

Though it was well liked during the listening tests, the 702PMC didn't suit every taste, but attracted

many favourable comments. "Integrated, fast, controlled. Doesn't clog up. Got guts and doesn't overhang. Nice texture to the choir. Rounded, balanced and nice to listen to."

Alternatively: "Focus and power combine to produce a meaty result, with some depth layering for a change. Makes musical and lyrical sense better than usual; toe-tapping stuff with energy and verve, though still not dynamic enough. A well-balanced product that's hard to trip up, and easy to enjoy."

I don't share such unbridled enthusiasm - to my ears the bottom end is a little disengaged, and voices seem a smidgen closed in. But I do admire the splendid mid-frequency coherence and focus, and I believe the cautious voicing will be welcomed every time this speaker is partnered with aggressive-sounding components.

Conclusion



It would be churlish to refuse the 702PMC a Recommended flag. It shares so many ingredients with the 700PMC and 703PMC, which have already earned their laurels. So the 702PMC receives equivalent honours on the basis that it is slightly better than the 700, but also in the knowledge that the 703 is better still, and by a rather greater margin. And it could even work out cheaper, since it doesn't need a stand. PMe

THE LAB REPORT

This is emphatically not a speaker with a sting in its tail. Quite the opposite in fact, since its axial response betrays a generally mild overall balance, which lacks a little energy in the presence band but remains otherwise well integrated through bass and midrange. Bass alignment is spot on, with port reinforcement and driver null occurring at 62Hz, providing a low-frequency extension to 35Hz despite the cabinet's modest proportions.

In an uncanny parallel with JPW's Ruby 4, the narrowband analysis reveals two sharp peaks at 2.6kHz and 3.3kHz. It's not unlikely that such phenomena are linked to both companies' use of metal-coned bass/mid drivers, though the principal break-up mode of MA's alloy-dome treble unit is somewhat more violent at 26kHz.

The 702PMC matches MA's claimed 89dB sensitivity within 0.1dB, while its excellent power handling should enable peaks as high as 107dB SPL when a sufficiently lusty amplifier is engaged. The speaker's load, meanwhile, drops to a manageable 6.9 Ohms at 250Hz, though the high-order crossover also causes an extra swing in phase angle and impedance between 1.4-4.4kHz.

So the 702PMC might prove more tricky to drive than we first imagined. Distortion rises from a respectable 0.4 per cent at the frequency extremes, to around 4 per cent of odd-order harmonics through the crossover band. PMi

HOW IT COMPARES

- 1 EASE OF DRIVE 35% **2** RELATIVE LOUDNESS -5% 10%
- **3** MAXIMUM LOUDNESS **4** AUDIBLE DISTORTION
- **5** OFF-AXIS UNIFORMITY



-45%



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Ruark Sceptre

t has long been a Ruark hallmark to decorate the front panel of a speaker by using gilt bolts. There's no harm in it, since most front panels are decidedly boring to look at. And at least it emphasises the point that you're taking trouble to bolt the drive units into place.

Appearance has a lot to do with Ruark's success. The house style is classy veneerwork with scalloped edges, which will fit in beautifully with traditional-style real-wood furnishings. Advanced aesthetics may also be invoked to explain why this pretty little stand-mount costs a hefty £600.

Quality components are used throughout. The drive-units are flush-mounted into the veneered front panel in an inverted arrangement, with the main driver above the tweeter. The tweeters are offset from the centre line, the better to distribute baffleedge discontinuities. This has the added benefit of leaving room for a large port, while the mirror-imaging asymmetrical front-panel layout adds a touch of class. (Inevitably, this feature also represents a significant manufacturing cost.) Bi-wire terminals, goldplated of course, provide for signal input.

In-room far-field measurements suggest the Sceptre should be quite tolerant of diverse rooms and placement sites. In free



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space the trace shows a dry but well extended bass alignment. Close-to-wall siting leaves the sound a little midbass-heavy and rather less even, though still viable. So logic suggests experimenting with positions inbetween.

The other Paul's lab tests (single speaker at one metre) don't always correlate with my far-field, stereo pair, reverberant field room measurements, but on this occasion there's no disputing a

strange tonal balance. The Sceptre shows a dramatically sucked-out presenceband prior to an obvious 10kHz treble peak.

Sound quality

Since every test candidate possesses different electrical efficiencies, during our tests we adjust amplifier volume settings to ensure no speaker gains an unfair advantage by seeming louder. The Ruark's balance anomalies made it very difficult to set volume levels accurately when carrying out the unsighted listening sessions.

Furthermore, since listeners become very sensitive to tonal balance shifts when they are asked to comment upon hidden speaker after hidden speaker, perhaps it will come as no surprise that the Sceptre ended up at the bottom of the day's list under our conditions.

That is not to say it disgraced itself. It sounded sufficiently 'different' and 'wrong'



to lose a few marks, but still it

attracted some favourable comments. These highlighted the clarity and articulation of voices, with the treble peak providing some useful emphasis to consonants.

It is one arguable advantage of reduced presence (midband) energy, that a speaker may be driven harder and to higher levels before it starts to sound aggressive.

The bass is clean, even and quite agile too, even though it lacks weight and grip. Deftly, though, it avoids

the loss of upper-bass warmth that drags down the reputation of compact stand-mounts. My own hands-on work did little to change the aforementioned observations, but I found that the Sceptres worked better when I sat close to them.

Conclusion

When we reviewed Ruark's Crusader, a large floorstander, in *HFC* 167, it exhibited what was probably the most delightfully neutral balance of 14 competing upmarket designs. By total contrast, the mid-market, stand-mounted Sceptre turns out to have the least neutral and most anomalous balance in its test group. How could both speakers have come from the same stable? I don't know the answer, though it might have something to with room sizes and listening positions. Maybe the Sceptre should pursue a rôle as a near-field monitor? *PMe*

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THE LAB REPORT

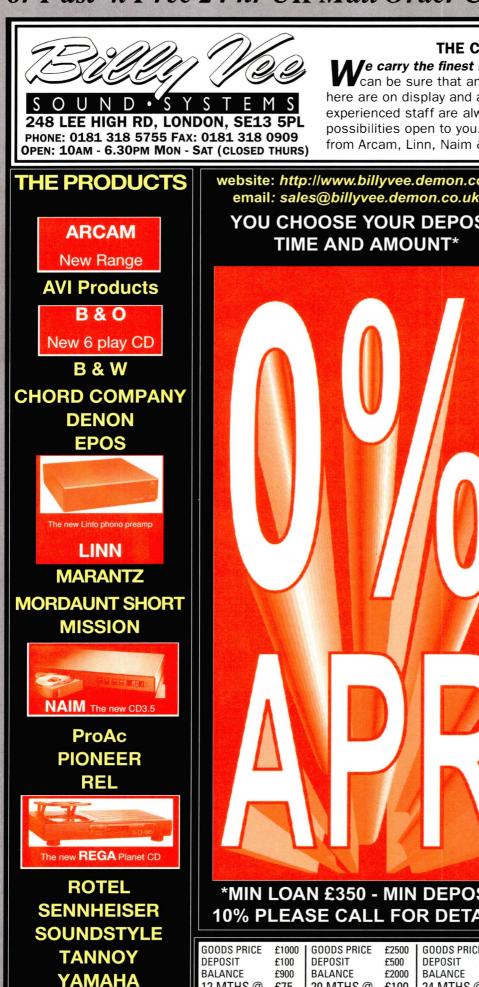
There is no escaping the fact that this speaker, or at least this sample, has a distinctly uneven balance. Almost regardless of your listening axis, it is difficult to escape a generalised loss in output between 1-6kHz followed by recovery to a very bright-looking treble which peaks around 10kHz. Unusual 'clumps' are also evident in a harmonic series centered on 600Hz, 1kHz, 2kHz and 4kHz.

Thankfully, conventional harmonic distortion is pretty low at 0.4-1.1 per cent across the audio band at 96dBA, particularly as the Sceptre ranks among the least sensitive speakers in our test at 87.7dB/1m (manufacturer's figure: 88dB). On the other hand, its load is a little tougher than expected, dipping to 5.7 Ohms at 195Hz following the system resonance; and, more disturbingly, to 5.4 Ohms at 11.7kHz with an attendant phase angle.

Back on the response trail, we find that Ruark's bass reflex alignment is also wayward. The driver null occurs at 37Hz, for example, while the port provides maximum reinforcement at 55Hz. This is a very broad, low-Q resonance but one that also lets slip a spurious peak at 600Hz to coincide with one of the aforementioned 'clumps'. Whatever else might be said about the Sceptre, 'neutral' or 'mundane' are unlikely to be popular adjectives. *PM*

HOW IT COMPARES EASE OF DRIVE 25% **2** RELATIVE LOUDNESS -50% **3** MAXIMUM LOUDNESS -75% **4** AUDIBLE DISTORTION -10% 5 5 OFF-AXIS UNIFORMITY 60% 4 3 2 1

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AVI Positron

his is the first loudspeaker from West Country manufacturer AVI to come under formal Choice scrutiny. The company is known primarily for a range of amplifiers and other electronics with a reputation for meticulous build and sound quality. Regular readers will have encountered this pretty little floorstander in our recent Systems feature (HFC 172). Here it undergoes a more rigorous trial-by-peer-group, which provides a more revealing marketplace perspective.

Appearances hold the first surprise. The Positron carries a hefty £900 price-tag, yet it's the smallest and lightest floorstander in our group. It's well presented, with a separate plinth section, rebated drivers, and a decent real-wood veneer in a warmly nostalgic stain. Granted, you don't need to shell out any extra for stands, but the price does seem high in the context of ingredients evident, especially considering the inevitably modest capabilities of the small port-loaded main driver. This is particularly apparent in comparison with other models in the review, for example from Castle and Mission.

It's a simple, two-way design, embodying a high-quality main driver with a \approx 90mm diameter doped-paper cone. This size is more commonly associated with seven-litre



miniature stand-mounts than floorstanders. The front-mounted port is a diminutive 50mm in diameter, while the total active enclosure volume is a modest 12 litres.

The averaged room responses show that the Positron's bass alignment is well suited to free-space siting, although some wall proximity is unlikely to do much

harm. Unlike the 'Ushaped' response recorded in the lab tests, this far-field reverberant measurement shows a remarkably neutral and well controlled balance, albeit with a small degree of local unevenness

Sound guality

The Positron received very similar marks and comments on two separate presentations, when the panel showed unusual unanimity and consistency in placing it a little below average overall. They characterised a sound which is very much the logical consequence of the ingredients involved and their limited performance envelope.

"A pleasant speaker if not too much is demanded of it... well balanced but loses control as the bass gets deeper". "Slightly soft-sounding; lacks dynamic edge ... not at all involving". "Very

1

3



clean and articulate, but 'too precise' ---needs to be less well mannered, less dry". "Pleasant and nice - an old man's speaker!" And I mightn't have repeated the last quote, out of politeness, except that the same listener uttered a duplicate quip on the Positron's second-round audition.

Regrettably, there's no avoiding the

observation that little Positron was rather out of its depth under our test conditions. Extended hands-on work only confirmed the unsighted findings. My notes refer to "feckless dynamics" and a "lightweight balance that's close to neutral, smooth, but a little too polite". On the plus side, it's tidy, clean and quite transparent, providing the volume control is used with judicious restraint.

Conclusion

In acoustic terms, Positron is the smallest speaker within the test group, and suffers somewhat when compared to significantly larger alternatives available at a similar price. Arguably, it might be better suited to smaller rooms than the 5x7m example used for our tests. Low sensitivity and restricted bass weight are the limiting factors in a sound which, otherwise, is impressively neutral and transparent, if a little over-polite and lack-

ing in gusto for our listeners. PMe

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THE LAB REPORT

The Positron's averaged, third-octave response is typically 'U-shaped', with a broadly-depressed midband flanked by mild peaks in upper bass and treble. Frequency extremes, however, look rather muted. This is confirmed by a narrow-band analysis that also reveals a number of sharp peaks, at 2.4kHz and 5.2kHz in particular, as the speaker lifts its output across the mid-treble region. Off-axis, the trend looks a lot smoother above the 3.3kHz crossover frequency.

Maximum bass reinforcement occurs cleanly at 55Hz via the port, precisely at the -6dB point of the bass driver and sufficient to extend the typical in-room bass response to 50Hz or so. Distortion, however, climbs to >2 per cent below 250Hz at 96dBA, suggesting that AVI's 'curvilinear' cone is beginning to struggle at moderate-to-high listening levels. Then again, its claimed 87dB/1W/1m sensitivity (also repeated in a recent technical review) actually turns out to be 84.6dB - a figure now agreed by AVI.

The impedance trend demonstrates a very broad minima of 4.8 Ohms such that the load remains below 5 Ohms from 190-690Hz, contributing to a current-hungry average of 7.6 Ohms and a nominal rating of 6 Ohms overall. All told, a powerful (100W+) amplifier will be required if decent SPLs are to be achieved, PMI

HOW IT COMPARES EASE OF DRIVE 5% **2** RELATIVE LOUDNESS -75% MAXIMUM LOUDNESS -50% **4** AUDIBLE DISTORTION -60% **5** OFF-AXIS UNIFORMITY -20% 5 4 3 2 Bette



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B&W CDM7

Two years ago B&W picked up an EISA Award for the CDM1, and the bestowal of this honour no doubt stemmed in part from exceedingly pretty styling and presentation. This compact stand-mount incorporates a luxurious real-wood finish, heavily post-formed edges, and an interesting shape. The top section of the front baffle is 'sliced off', creating an angled face which in turn permits the tweeter to be mounted proud of the surface in its own little pod. B&W has pursued this technique for most of its long history, but never has it been been more elegantly executed.

The success of the CDM1, in the context of a marketplace moving inexorably away from stand-mounts towards floorstanders, could have only one logical outcome: the introduction of the £1,000 floorstanding CDM7. All the CDM1's styling cues are retained, but the dramatically different proportions have unfortunate repercussions. The cute, chunky quality of the CDM1 has been sacrificed for something altogether less well shaped. Even the tweeter pod looks as though it is celebrating Black Nose Day.

Unflattering proportions aside, the ingredients look pretty promising. The smart cabinet is a clever combination of real-wood

	VERDICT
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	Solid, deep bass and an attractive visual presentation on the plus side of the equation, but midband lacks smoothness and the whole has
⊠	insufficient coherence to justify the hefty price tag. B&W Loudspeakers Ltd, Marlborough Road, Lancing, West Sussex, BN15 8TR
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veneer with matching MDF inserts. It feels very solid and secure on its floor spikes, despite the modest footprint. A three-way driver configuration consists of a 120mm Cobex cone (plus port) for the bass, a 120mm Kevlar cone covering bass and midrange, and a 25mm metal-dome tweeter using neodymium magnets.

Bi-wire terminals only are fitted, despite the three drivers, and foam plugs are supplied to limit the port output (centred here around a low 30Hz) if desired. These were not needed for our tests, however, as room measurements showed an unusually even and deep bass extension with the speakers clear of walls. More worrying was the uneven midband.

Sound quality

I've got used to B&Ws doing well in the blind listening tests. And the CDM7 seemed an obvious choice for the preparatory run-through which introduces our listening panel to the musical programme. So I was a little taken aback by some rather uncomplimentary comments. However, these were only confirmed by the subsequent unsighted presentation: the CDM7 actually registered the lowest mark of the day, which was a real surprise.

The lab reports indicate (and the room responses con-

BAU

firm) that the CDM7 has a rather uneven balance. This could be one factor that distressed our panellists. Genuine deep bass weight is usually a definite plus-point, but there was criticism of timing and transparency, with the overall effect being rather thick, muddled and opaque, even though

the overall spectral balance seemed quite well judged.

During extended hands-on work the bass speed and timing seemed to improve, suggesting that perhaps our test samples might have benefited from a longer running-in period. But the midband remains an unexpected weakness, and the overall effect never hinted at full and convincing top-to-bottom. coherence or seamlessness.

Conclusion

Something important seems to have been lost during the translation of B&W's CDM concept from stand-mount to floorstander. It's called charm. B&W's speakers have performed so consistently well in recent years, it comes a surprise to find one which doesn't quite deliver. By no means is this a bad loudspeaker, and it did improve steadily throughout the test programme. But despite its generous performance envelope, I cannot avoid concluding that this design remains undistinguished

within its price group. PMe

THE LAB REPORT

It is not unknown for unscrupulous manufacturer to 'massage' the specifications of their loudspeakers, but you can always rely on B&W to provide a true representation. And so it is with the CDM7, rated at 90dB/2.83V/1m. My computerised measurement returns a figure of 89.9dB! Maximum SPLs of 106-107dBA should be possible in the average room, provided you have a 150W-ish amplifier and scant regard for your long-term hearing.

Nevertheless, the CDM7's response looks less tidy than that obtained from recent B&W monitors, particularly through the upper 3kHz crossover region where some prominence might be audible. Whether this might be perceived as a coloration is tricky to say, particularly as distortion is very low indeed. Even taking the speaker's generous sensitivity into account, figures as low as 0.6 per cent through the bass and 0.2-0.25 per cent through the midrange are still quite exceptional at 96dBA.

Off-axis, its response falls away through the midrange and treble, rallying slightly in the high treble at 12kHz or so, but producing a definite bass 'bump' which could aggravate LF room modes around 200Hz. The two bass drivers begin rolling off below 55Hz (-3dB) and are reflex-loaded to a very low 33Hz, giving a projected in-room bass limit of around 30Hz. *PMI*

HOW IT COMPARES 1 EASE OF DRIVE 20% 2 **RELATIVE LOUDNESS** 5% 3 MAXIMUM LOUDNESS 0% **4** AUDIBLE DISTORTION 45% 5 OFF-AXIS UNIFORMITY -15% 1 Worse Better 5 4 3

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JPW Ruby 4

PW is known primarily for its ultracompetitive budget speakers, distributed in the UK by budget hi-fi specialists Richer Sounds. Less well known perhaps is the upmarket Ruby series of speakers, whose models feature advanced metal-diaphragm drive units and luxuryveneer finishes, at prices comfortably elevated above the bargain basement.

We reviewed the stand-mount Ruby 1 way back in issue 139, and while its performance was good, the price seemed high at £500. Since it costs only £400 three years down the road, maybe it's time to look afresh at value. The Ruby 4, the subject of this review, also started out handicapped by a hefty £1,300 price-tag, but this model too has benefited from a substantial price cut. Now you'll pay only £1,000: still decidedly upmarket, but more affordable than before.

The Ruby part of the name refers to the colour of the metallic main-driver diaphragms. As a by-product of the anodising process, the tinting has the twin advantages of looking rather pretty and creating a strong brand identity, the better to distinguish JPW from obvious rivals such as Monitor Audio (which favours gold).

In dimensions the Ruby 4 is a classic compact floorstander. Our review sample



was finished beautifully in a lustrous realwood veneer (a \pounds 200 optional extra). The veneer contrasts nicely with the cone.

The metal-diaphragm drivers are not this design's only intriguing feature. Other engineering touches mark out this model from the pack. Instead of fitting spikes into the base, or into a plinth attached to the base, the Ruby comes with a shaped tray, complete with chunky 8mm spikes, into which the speaker sits snugly. This

provides stability, a measure of decoupling, and arguably a more predictable interface with any number of floor construction types.

It came as a real surprise to realise that this was actually the only sealed-box speaker system in our 15strong test group. All of the others feature some form of reflex-port loading. There are pros and cons with both approaches, but the gentler, minimum-phase-shift rolloff of the sealed box has much to commend it under real-room conditions. And the two 120mm metal cones covering the bass region are quite sufficient for normal rooms and average sensitivity. Three separate terminal pairs are fitted, giving good flexibility for biwire/bi-amp options. The gentle roll-off implies that some wall reinforcement might help to achieve the best bass balance.

Sound quality

The JPW was an impressive loudspeaker for all but one of our panellists, and ended up high on the list. It attracted plenty of favourable comments: "A fast, dynamic speaker with excellent, tight, tuneful bass, somewhat spoiled by a hard and forward midrange"; "Good fun factor... tonally and dynamically just fine for me, but lacks the last ounce of midband focus". The one dis-

senter's main complaint was of a seri-

ous lack of upper bass energy, which might well be related to his particular seating position (bass balance inevitably varies from seat to seat, sometimes quite dramatically).

The Ruby 4 became a favourite in the hands-on tests, too, especially with the slightly sweeter Krell amplifier doing the honours. It continued to sound a little shiny and forward, but maintained fine clarity and articulation even at very low levels.

Conclusion

This is a very clever design, as well as a good-looking package. By adding an extra main driver to the two-way metaldiaphragm stereotype, JPW has managed to retain most of the precision and focus, while adding a much more convincing dynamic dimension. The vocal balance is beautifully judged, but also very revealing, so careful system matching is advised. N on etheless, confident Recommendation is assured. *Pme*

THE LAB REPORT

Narrow-band analysis shows sharp peaks in the response either side of the 3kHz crossover point at 2.5kHz and at 3.8kHz, which may represent breakup modes in the two aluminium-coned bass/mid drivers (see MA 702PMC review, p93). A high-order crossover also ensures that the impedance trend goes through an additional swing in phase angle through this band, dipping to a 5.7 Ohms minimum at 2.7kHz. Distortion is also higher — though not *high* — at 0.7 per cent in this lower-treble region. That's somewhat inferior to the exceptional 0.25 per cent achieved across the bass octaves at 96dBA. The useful 89dB sensitivity helps, inevitably.

The aluminium-domed treble unit cracks outside of the audioband at 24.9kHz, and the resonance looks very well controlled. More importantly, when viewed in third-octave bands (to give a better idea of the Ruby's overall balance), its response looks suitably flat and even between 500Hz-8kHz. There is some added emphasis to the upper treble and, in common with many three-way designs, a similar boost around 100-200Hz. Nearfield analysis shows the output of both (sealed) bass drivers to be accurately matched, peaking at 120Hz with -3dB points of 53Hz and contributing to a likely in-room extension of some 43Hz. *PMM*

HOW IT COMPARES 1 EASE OF DRIVE 35% **2** RELATIVE LOUDNESS -5% 3 MAXIMUM LOUDNESS 5% **4** AUDIBLE DISTORTION 55% **5** OFF-AXIS UNIFORMITY 65% 5 Worse Bette 4 3 2 1 IANUARY 1998 101

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ON TEST: SPEAKERS (£800-£1,200)

Kelly Transducers KT3

elly Transducers will be a new name to most readers, I daresay. Pioneer hi-fi engineer Stan Kelly has been more involved in professional audio than hifi these past couple of decades. Now Stan's in semi-retirement, his brand name has been purchased by Musical Fidelity boss Antony Michaelson, and is being used to launch a new range of speakers whose whole *raison d'être* is high sensitivity.

The £1,200 KT3 is the first to appear. I've seen two sample pairs thus far, but I'm assured they're representative of full-scale production. Caveat emptor in this respect. This is an extremely interesting design that makes a concerted effort to challenge familiar stereotypes.

What is sensitivity anyway, and does it matter? It's a measure of how loud a speaker will sound for a given electrical input, which in practice means that a high sensitivity model will use less amplifier power than a lower sensitivity model to create the same loudness. That much is fact.

The true value of high sensitivity is rather more a matter of debate, and has been since the transistor made high-power amps relatively affordable. For my part, I believe high sensitivity imparts audible advantages to a



loudspeaker design thus equipped — over and above the obvious increase in system headroom and loudness capability. I have held these views for some years, so it must be an amazing coincidence that I found myself on the receiving end of a Musical Fidelity charm offensive soon after the product was announced.

The key to the KT3's high sensitivity lies in its recipe of twin main drivers with ultralight Aerogel cones, a generous box and large-diameter port, crossing over to a single

horn-loaded tweeter. Those ample ports ensure sufficient bass output for free space siting, and good extension too, even if the room responses are a little uneven, with a pronounced down-turn above 800Hz.

The solid build quality is confirmed by a mass of 26kg — at the heaviest end of the test-group range. The visual presentation has a retro feel thanks to that Dan Dare badge, sharp-edged cabinet, lack of plinth, and suitably nostalgic wood stain. Bi-wire terminals are fitted, but I will reserve judgment about spike arrangements, as evidence from our two samples was ambiguous.

Sound quality

It's not often that the most expensive model in a group test tops the listening-test findings, but this was precisely the trick pulled off by the KT3, though there was one dissenter in the ranks. Subtle and articulate intelligibility is a major strength: singers sound believable and remain unusually consistent relative to background ambience. Several listeners commented on the impressive lack of strain and the noticeable ease with which musical messages came through the mix.

The slightly dull presence and top end proved a better tonal match with the Naim kit than the Krell amp in our listening tests

- the exception, not the rule. Also, I found the KT3 preferable with one of its ports blocked off. Whatever the cosmetics, this was the only speaker in the group with sufficient dynamic grip and tension to capture the full momentum of Chemical Brothers' *Dig Your Own Hole*.

Conclusion

Fine unsighted listening-test findings have only served to confirm my personal enthusiasm for genuinely high sensitivity designs like this Kelly. It's not cheap, and it's not perfect, but there's nothing comparable that matches its sensitivity, and the dynamic precision that comes as a result. That alone is ample justification for a Best Buy flag, despite occasional quirks elsewhere. The substantial boost in amp headroom is an additional bonus. Although the load is demanding, increased sensitivity is a more-

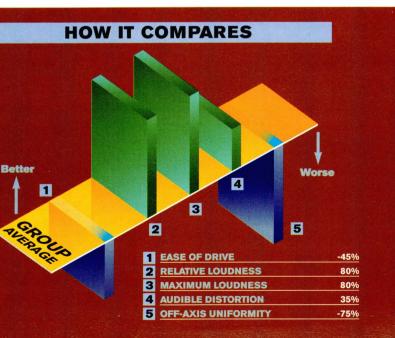
than-ample compensation. PMe

THE LAB REPORT

The most striking aspect of this speaker's performance is its sensitivity. It achieves 96.3dB/2.83V/1m where an average figure of 88-89dB would be deemed adequate for a modern floorstanding design. Substantial sound pressure levels may be achieved with relatively modest amplifiers — 113dBA (in-room) with peaks of 150W, for example. Meanwhile distortion remains very low at 0.5 per cent @ 96dBA between 20-200Hz, falling to just 0.3 per cent through the midband.

There is some penalty in terms of amplifier loading and off-axis uniformity, however. Impedance falls below 8 Ohms from 100Hz-1.45kHz, staying below 5 Ohms from 120-800Hz where the 3.5 Ohm minima occurs at 195Hz — coinciding with a severe pipe resonance. So the load is tough, but then its power demands are light.

The axial response is a trifle irregular but the averaged, third-octave trend is of reducing output from 800Hz-5kHz, after which the treble unit takes hold to peak at 14-15kHz. Off-axis, the averaged response shows a warm upper bass/lower midrange which sinks into a distinctly droopy mid and treble. Both reflex ports are accurately aligned, peaking at 38Hz to coincide with the impedance minima and null in bass driver output. The anticipated -6dB point, in-room, is calculated to be 25Hz. *PMi*







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ON TEST: SPEAKERS (£800-£1,200)

Musical Technology Condor

hough it's a relative newcomer on the UK speaker scene, Musical Technology has set out its stall with commendable consistency. Its broad range of models follows two specific, unique design ingredients: pentagonal plan enclosures, and proprietary thin-metal-diaphragm main drivers.

That's the basic recipe of models like the Kestrel and Harrier which *Choice* has already assessed (*HFC* 164, 152), and the £1,000 Condor is very much a refinement of the same formula. The enclosure, main driver and port are much the same size as those used in the considerably less expensive Harrier, so the loudness/bass extension performance envelope is going to be very similar. The interesting and value-adding bits come in the variety of unusual techniques employed to improve the overall dynamic range, as well as the strikingly attractive yew wood veneer applied to our samples (which costs £75 extra).

The box shape is basically pentagonal in plan, which makes good acoustic sense from several points of view. From the outside it aids wide lateral dispersion to help off-axis listening and stereo imaging, while on the inside it prevents the development of parallel-face standing waves and reflections.

The shape looks good too, with a heavily



chamfered top by way of a finishing touch, to emphasise the real-wood finish. Flushmounted drivers encourage use without a grille, and my only reservation is whether the two sets of 4x4mm bi-wire terminals protrude vulnerably at the back.

Why two sets? The Condor uses an external crossover, which comes in a deliberately loose-fitting box that sits below the enclosure but above the plinth, in a gap created by spacers. The whole unit is

epoxy-sealed, so the components should have unparalleled immunity from the pressures and vibrations generated by the speaker itself. The extra terminals are used primarily to connect this external crossover to the internal drivers, but permit the crossover to be bypassed if the owner wishes for an upgrade to active drive.

The main driver has a cast frame held by six tight bolts, while the diaphragm is a thin metal cone 125mm in diameter. The tweeter has a 25mm metal dome. The box is ported at the rear, quite near the floor, just above a damped epoxy/granite plinth, which ensures a measure of mass loading and good stability footprint.

Room measurements show pretty good bass behaviour when the speaker is mounted well clear of walls. It's interesting to compare the Condor with the Harrier. The new and much more upmarket model looks significantly smoother overall, and also shows a subtly different bass alignment, opting for a little more midbass and a little less low bass — the better to disguise the slightly uneven presence region perhaps.

Sound quality

Though it performed strongly in the unsighted listening tests, the Condor was neither an outright favourite nor a bête noir.

It delivers consistent and evenhanded results, and was praised for its orchestral reproduction.

Colorations are well controlled, and the midband is especially clean, clear and precisely focused. There's a little untidiness on voices, but the top end proper is unusually sweet and transparent. Timing is good, and an unusual freedom from congestion gives an impressively wide dynamic range with good consistency and level tracking, bringing some tension to the proceedings through precision, even if dynamic expression sounds limp.

Conclusion

You may enjoy more thrilling musical encounters with speakers from other manufacturers, but the Condor justifies its existence through subtlety, refinement, neutrality and consistency. The dynamic range is much more impressive than the dynamic tension, but the overall package is very lounge-friendly, and definitely most deserving of a Recommendation. *eme*

THE LAB REPORT

This unusual speaker has a slight sting in its tail, thanks to a rising treble that peaks some 3-4dB above the midband level at 13kHz. The midrange itself is reasonably uniform, save for a mild peak at 2.5kHz, near the 2kHz crossover frequency. This coincides with the 3.9 Ohms minimum on its nominal 6 Ohm impedance curve. This peak is exacerbated off-axis, though the bright-sounding upper treble does start to look a little more manageable. Swings and roundabouts, I'm afraid. Otherwise, the Condor proves fairly sensitive at a fraction under 88dB/2.83V/1m. It should be capable of stress-free musical dynamics reaching 105dBA with a decent 150W amplifier.

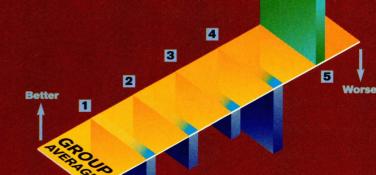
The spun-alloy bass/mid driver peaks around 200Hz, but has a -6dB point of 58Hz, just short of the maximum reinforcement provided by the offaxis port at 43Hz. Good bass extension down to 28Hz should be possible away from room boundaries. The port's output, meanwhile, is broad and very low-Q, but also betrays a column resonance at 156Hz that corresponds to a small notch in the Condor's axial response. Distortion varies through the bass region but is always dominated by a strong second harmonic, so values as high as 1-1.5 per cent at 96dBA should not sound as unpleasant or obviously coloured as the figures themselves might suggest. *PMM*

HOW IT COMPARES

CHARGE

RECOMMENDED

EASE OF DRIVE-25%2 RELATIVE LOUDNESS-25%3 MAXIMUM LOUDNESS-20%4 AUDIBLE DISTORTION-50%5 OFF-AXIS UNIFORMITY60%



Conclusions

his was a very interesting group of speakers. And as always, it was a valuable learning experience, since the final results in no way mirrored my preconceptions.

So what were my verdicts? You'll be disappointed if you were expecting a routine Best Buy from every price group in this test. In fact, I've picked three Best Buys from Group A, none from the middle group, and one from Group C. This might seem unorthodox, but loudspeakers are a special case, because they're the only hi-fi compo-



nents not to be supplied in a 19-inch-wide tin box. Quite the contrary, in fact: you'll find they come in such a wide variety of shapes, sizes and finishes (almost irrespective of price), that in their case, simple concepts of quality simply don't apply.

My three Group A Best Buys are so dissimilar — in size, layout, presentation and performance envelope — that comparing like with like was never an option. And the essential fact is that each Group A Best Buy outperformed rivals of equivalent size and type from Group B. Now read on...

GROUP A (BELOW £580)	
Castle Isis	from £579.90
Dali 606	£399.9 5
Dynaudio Audience 50	£577.00
Mission 752 Freedom	from £578.00
TOI DTI 3SE	£449.95

5

It's a big bruiser of a speaker at a very tempting price - and Dali's 'no-frills' 606 sounds a lot bigger than most alternative options at £400. Pretty it's not, but neither does it suffer from the sonic unruliness which frequently afflicts inexpensive floorstanding designs. In fact, it's quite polite, but can pack a punch when required.

Much the same is true of the £450 TDL RTL3SE, though it has a distinctly different

2 Heybrook Ultima

tonal balance from the Dali, and thus will appeal to different palates.

Dynaudio's Audience 50 (£577) doesn't look much of a big deal, but turned out to be one of the most effective giant-killers we've seen in years.

Mission's 752 Freedom (£578) exemplifies the delicate art of combining tasty presentation with a decent sound. It is a beautifully-judged compromise, with a notably lively midband.

The similarly-priced Castle Severn 2 adopts a rather smoother and more laid-back approach, which is especially effective through the midband. Its cabinetwork is as appealing as its sound.

GROUP B (£580-£800)

Heybrook Ultima	£649.00
Jamo 507A	£700.00
JBL SVA1500	£700.00
Monitor Audio 702PMC	from £599.99
Ruark Sceptre	£599.00

Graceful 'traditional' cabinetwork, with classy veneer and shiny gilt fixings, account for the Ruark Sceptre's £600 price-tag. However, its tonal balance proved very wayward: laid-back but with a sting at the top end.

The £650 Heybrook Ultima cannot equal the Ruark's décor-friendliness, but offers the sort of bass wallop that underlines its designaome cinema rôles.



Regrettably, it did not excite our listeners.

Like the Heybrook, Jamo's 507A (£700) didn't win many fans for its sound quality. But we take our hats off to the design team that came up with the super-slimline concept.

The JBL SVA1500's claim to fame is a proaudio-style 'bi-radial' horn-loaded tweeter. The cosmetic presentation is a bit tacky for a £700 standmount, but its sound is a lot of fun, in spite of — or because of — a juicy bass thump.

Monitor Audio's 702PMC (£600 in basic finish, or £700 in luxury veneer) offers a different experience. This is due to an intimatelyfocused midband that seems to be a special preserve of metal-cone main drivers.

rounder in the test, and its price has decreased to £1,000 (from £1,300). Twin metal-coned main drivers are deployed to great effect to improve dynamic performance and bass extension, but not at the cost of focus and precision.

However, if delicate transparency and smoothness are more important than dynamic drama, Musical Technology's £1,000 Condor offers an alternative, equally valid metal-cone experience — and exceptionally beautiful packaging to boot.

The £1,200 Kelly Transducers KT3 represents the other side of the coin by sacrificing smoothness on the altar of dynamic realism. To very good effect, in the opinion of our listeners!

tion	for	both	hi-fi	and	ho

GROUP C	(OVER £800)
AVI Posit	

AVI Positron	£899.00
B&W CDM7	£999.95
JPW Ruby 4	from £999.99
Kelly Transducers KT3	£1,199.99
MT Condor	from £999.95

Both physically and acoustically, the £900 AVI Positron is probably best suited to smaller rooms. This 'mini-floorstander' is capable of great precision and delicacy, but in a smallscale way. It could do with more welly and grip.

You'll get plenty of the latter with the B&W CDM7 (£1,000); only a fundamental lack of midband smoothness lets the side down.

JPW's Ruby 4 was arguably the best all-



Dali 600

BEST BUYS

f you only judge speaker value by size-

of-box-tobuck ratio, the £400 Dali 606 will command top billing on your shopping list. In a beauty contest, though, it wouldn't even qualify. Its massive success derives from avoiding some of the pitfalls that

beset big, cheap speakers. It still has the generous performance envelope of the large multi-way design and some of the hollow heaviness of a large box but its balance is well suited Kelly Transducers KT3



to the larger listening room, with an overall smoothness that belies

appearances. Dynaudio's £577 Audience 50 resembles the Dali only by virtue of Danish origin and vinyl finish. The rest is all contrast: a small, tough, stand-mount enclosure loads Dynaudio's exceptionally tasty and expensive drive units. This is the stand-mount that should make you question the floorstander concept.

When it comes to fashionable, loungefriendly presenta-

Mission 752 Freedom

tion, Mission's pretty little 752 Freedom (£580) takes a lot of beating. Clever bass

> re-tuning and a new tweeter improve both low and high frequency responses, while the Aerogel-coned midband driver offers a special kind of clarity and sensitivity.

You'll find more Aerogel cones in the Kelly Transducers KT3 $(\pounds 1,200)$. Here the emphasis is placed firmly on exceptionally high sensitivity. The results left our listening panel impressed, and happy to overlook the speaker's

'cosmetic' limitations. It must be said that the KT3 makes more of a statement about dynamic intent than cosy, wellbalanced all-round performance.



naudio Audience 50



ance is a bit wayward, with a rather sucked-out midband, but some of our panel rather liked that effect. And the fun factor is pretty

good, too, especially for bass freaks on a budget. Monitor Audio's £600

TDL RTL3SE

Neat Mystique 0



RECOMMENDED

702PMC (£700 in the tested luxury veneer) has the special midband intimacy that is a function of metal-coned main drivers. While it's a decent allrounder, some might argue it makes more sense to save

> money needed for stands, and divert it instead towards Monitor Audio's floor-

standing 703PMC. Striking a fine compromise at £1,000, the beautifully-balanced JPW Ruby 4 uses two metalconed drivers to



Musical Technology Condor

£660 £575 £410 £800 £400 £1,040 £899 £995 £450 £749 £649 £599 £1,000

£899 £1.195

improve dynamics and drive, without losing too much precision in the process. A difficult trick, subtly executed.

Musical Technology's **Condor** (£1,000) is a delightfully compact and exquisitely finished floorstander, that goes deep in a smooth and even manner, even though it won't play particularly loud. It's stuffed with all sorts of neat ideas designed to improve dynamic range, and these were amply vindicated during our listening.



Monitor Audio 702PMC

BEST OF THE REST

	Audio Gem Emerald	£540	Naim Intro
	Audio Note AN-J/D	£930	Neat Mystique
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	Epos ES14	£675	Rega XEL
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	Linn Keilidh	£750	Spendor 2030
	Mission 753 Freedom	£798	Tannoy D300
	Monitor Audio MA703PMC	from £800	TDL Studio 1M
	Musical Technology Harrier	£400	Totem Model One
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Five Stars

Paul Messenger explains why you should visit an independent

Why use a specialist hi-fi dealer? The short answer is because he knows one hell of a lot more about hi-fi than you do. And if you've gone to the trouble of picking up a specialist magazine on the subject, you're obviously interested in something rather more than a mini system from the nearest electrical superstore.

You've probably bought this magazine for one of two reasons. You're looking for advice (presumably unbiased and good) on choosing and using your hi-fi system, and/or you're checking out the ads to decide where to go and buy it.

The independent specialist dealer doesn't know everything, and he doesn't know much about you, but if music's an important part of your life, he's the only guy around who's able (and hopefully willing) to help you choose the equipment which will give you the best long term satisfaction.

Power of the Press

Dealers sometimes moan to me about the power of the press, and the disproportionate influence of its 'Best Buy' and multistar ratings. Well, I've been in the press for twentysomething years, and still feel more ignorant than powerful.

The more I mess around with hi-fi gear, the more I become aware of our lack of real understanding of the subtleties involved, and the more I appreciate the importance of the dealer's skills and experience, in bringing together components so that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

We hacks get paid to write words, often about components in isolation, because



individual product reviews are still the staple diet of the press. They can sometimes provide a useful guide to the way a product performs, but only under the particular circumstances in which the review was conducted.

The hi-fi reviewer attempts, with varying degrees of success, to evaluate a particular component, and find something interesting (and hopefully positive) to say about it. That's about the end of it, and it's on to the next product.

The magazine prints the review, and that very process magically confers a measure of authority. Experienced hi-fi enthusiasts, who read reviews over a period of years and try out various products themselves, soon start to realise the limitations of that approach. Some reviews are better than others, but none can get to grips with the real heart of the problem - whether a given product will improve your musical satisfaction, in your system and your room.

The Role of the Dealer

The dealer's role is very different, and potentially much more valuable. He has the chance to talk one-on-one. If he's good at his job, he'll use that opportunity to find out what you as an individual are looking (or listening) for.

His motivation is very different too. Sure he wants to make a sale. That's the

lifeblood of any shop. But he also knows that if something he sells really does deliver long term satisfaction, there's a very good chance you'll come back again to see if he can repeat the trick some time in the future.

If you go into a shop and demand a particular CD player, on the basis that it got seven stars (out of five) in last month's magazines, the shop will probably simply take the line of least resistance and sell it to you. (Or switch-sell you to a similar price alternative, if he's fresh out of stock of that particular flavour-of-themonth.)

If you go in and say you're looking for a CD player, and want his advice on what to choose, things are liable to become more interesting. The onus is now on the dealer to show what he can do. His first task is to ask the right questions to try and get some idea of what you might be after.

Asking the questions is the easy bit. The real skill comes in using the information to come up with a shortlist of likely contenders, and then conducting a demonstration so that you have a real chance to play a central role in the

For Value

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

decision making process.

Putting together a successful hi-fi system might not be as difficult as it was twenty or thirty years ago, but it's just as easy to make a mess of things. Put the 'wrong' combination of components together and it'll still sound a lot better



than any cute little mini system package. It might even rate a five star review. But it won't match the potential of a carefully balanced and properly installed system, and it certainly won't cater for your own particular preferences and personality.

We British are notoriously undiscriminating consumers, at a mass market level at least. The majority of the population don't even bother to drive a car they're thinking of buying, never mind take the trouble to listen to hi-fi equipment.

The majority will therefore end up with hyperstore mediocrity, and hi-fi that's about as tasty as supermarket bread. But if music is an essential ingredient in your daily diet, you owe it to yourself to become a member of the discriminating minority.

You know full well that your music collection is as individual as your wardrobe, and just as precious too, so it's worth taking the time and trouble to search out the dealer and equipment that will make that collection come alive, and give you a new buzz every time you play your favourite discs.

The independent specialist may not beat the chain store on price, but he continues to thrive in a hostile environment because real hi-fi is so much more than a matter of price. The people who work in these shops are themselves enthusiasts, often with many years of experience in meeting customer's needs, and the very necessary expertise to ensure that the whole thing is properly set up to deliver the best results.

The better the hi-fi, the more important it is to get the fine details right at the installation end of things, but even the least expensive equipment can be made to sound a whole lot better if good care is taken over the fine details - the support furniture, the cabling, the positioning of speakers and so on.

Without expert assistance even high class hi-fi can give mediocre results. With it you'll stand a very good chance of ending up with something rather more than a consumer durable - something which will be a source of considerable pleasure and genuine emotional satisfaction for decades to come.

I agreed to write this signed piece, irrespective of the specific sponsors, because I believe the independent specialist dealer plays a vital role in giving customers long term hi-fi satisfaction. "The views and opinions expressed

here are my own and not necessarily those of hi-fi choice." Paul Messenger

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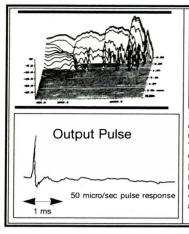
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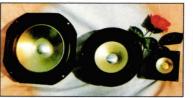
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THE DIRECTORY

Our Three Step Guide to Buying Hi-Fi

The legendary *Hi-Fi Choice* Directory is now simpler to use than ever before, but contains all the information you need to select and buy the perfect hi-fi system.

Discover which products fall within your budget by using our Price Guide (starts on the next page). This listing is updated bi-monthly and includes all hi-fi products currently available in the UK. It is organised by product type, then by price band, and is sorted alphabetically. Products whose names are printed in red are those that we have reviewed. Which leads us to...

Read about the hi-fi equipment that we have reviewed in the Directory (starts after the Price Guide). Here you will learn which items have been singled out for our famous Best Buy and Recommended awards that denote products of exceptional quality and value. The Directory is sorted by product type and listed alphabetically, and the beginning of each section provides essential information about each kind of hi-fi component.

Find your nearest hi-fi store in our Dealer Directory (at the end of the 'reviewed product' directory) to book a demonstration of the products you are interested in.

Best Buys and Recommendations

If you see a Best Buy (red) or Recommended (blue) flag at the beginning of an entry in our Directory of reviewed products, the item concerned is particularly deserving of your attention.

Red signifies the Best Buy swing-tag, which indicates products of the best quality and superb value for money in their price category. Blue Recommended products offer excellent quality and value, but not the same cost-effectiveness as a Best Buy. Please note that an expensive Recommended product will nearly always perform better than an inexpensive Best Buy.

Using Best Buys and Recommendations to buy hi-fi.

Do not commit the cardinal sin of dashing into your local dealer, magazine in hand, demanding to purchase Best Buy CD player A, Best Buy amplifier B and Best Buy speakers C. This

is unlikely to result in your long-term satisfaction. Our belief at *Hi-Fi Choice* is that you must consider the hi-fi system as a complete entity, not as a collection of components. While a superb system might well contain Best Buy and Recommended components, one cannot lump together Best Buys and Recommender



one cannot lump together Best Buys and Recommendations in the hope that they will automatically perform superbly. These ratings make a useful guideline for short-listing components worth trying, but only by hearing them for yourself can you draw meaningful conclusions about what suits your taste. Furthermore, don't panic if the

dealer offers you equipment that we have not tested. At the end of the day, what matters most is that your hi-fi system fits your tastes like a glove, and it is the dealer's challenge to ensure your satisfaction by any means – and components – necessary!

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Kenwood KA-1080	0	60W	140	JoLida 20 LFD Integ
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ksan Caspian se Scion earne Phase 2 milliont SF60 k Electronics Storm 2 AC A-BX7R \$701 to £10 hemist Forseti Integrated dio Note Oto Line PP	© © © 00 ©	70W 65W 50W 60W 65W 50W	695 615 649 549 650 700 949 950
ksan Caspian se Scion aarne Phase 2 umfoort SF60 k Electronics Storm 2 AC A-BX7R COMBANE COMBANE AC A-BX7R COMBANE COMBANE AC A-BX7R COMBANE C	6 6 6 6 6 0	70W 65W 50W 60W 65W 50W	695 615 649 549 650 700 949
ksan Caspian se Scion bearne Phase 2 mimoort SF60 k Electronics Storm 2 CAC A-BX7R S701 to C10 hemist Forseti Integrated dio Note Oto Line PP S2000MI pland CSA8 sedo IMP702	6 6 6 6 00 6 6	70W 65W 50W 60W 65W 50W 100W 12W 100W	695 615 649 549 650 700 949 950 999 945 938
ksan Caspian se Scion aarne Phase 2 imfoort SF60 k Electronics Storm 2 CA-BX7R E-701 to E10 hemist Forseti Integrated dio Note Oto Line PP I S2000MI pland CSA8 ado IMP702 ado IMP703	6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6	70W 65W 50W 60W 65W 50W 100W 12W 100W 60W 70W 70W	695 615 649 549 650 700 949 950 999 945 938 1,000
ksan Caspian se Scion aarne Phase 2 imfoort SF60 k Electronics Storm 2 AC A-BXTR S701 to E10 hemist Forseti Integrated dio Note Oto Line PP IS2000MI pland CSA8 do IMP702 ado IMP703	6 6 6 6 00 6 6	70W 65W 50W 60W 65W 50W 12W 100W 12W 100W 60W 70W 70W 50W	695 615 649 549 650 700 949 950 999 945 938 1,000 995
ksan Caspian se Scion barne Phase 2 imfoort SF60 k Electronics Storm 2 AC A-BX7R SCO1 to E10 hemist Forseti Integrated dio Note Oto Line PP I S2000MI pland CSA8 sedo IMP702 do IMP703 ctrocompaniet ECI-2 bosure XV Super	3 5 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 7 6 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7	70W 65W 50W 60W 65W 50W 12W 100W 60W 70W 70W 50W 55W	695 615 649 549 650 700 949 950 999 945 938 1,000 995 800
ksan Caspian se Scion aarne Phase 2 imfoort SF60 k Electronics Storm 2 CA-BX7R ES701 to E10 hemist Forseti Integrated dio Note Oto Line PP I S2000MI pland CSA8 doi IMP702 edo IMP702 oosure XV Super se Evoluzione Performance 1.1	3 5 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 5 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7	70W 65W 50W 60W 65W 50W 12W 100W 12W 100W 60W 70W 70W 50W 55W 70W	695 615 649 549 650 700 949 950 945 938 1,000 995 800 790
ksan Caspian se Scion aarne Phase 2 imfoort SF60 k Electronics Storm 2 AC A-BX7R S701 to E10 hemist Forseti Integrated dio Note Oto Line PP S2000MI pland CSA8 do IMP702 do IMP703 ctrocompaniet ECI-2 oosure XV Super se Evoluzione Performance 1.1 se Evoluzione Performance 1.0	0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0	70W 65W 50W 60W 65W 50W 12W 100W 12W 100W 60W 70W 50W 55W 70W 60W	695 615 649 549 650 700 949 950 999 945 938 1,000 995 800 790 790
ksan Caspian se Scion aarne Phase 2 imfoort SF60 k Electronics Storm 2 CA-BX7R S701 to 210 hemist Forseti Integrated dio Note Oto Line PP I S2000MI pland CSA8 dol IMP702 edo IMP702 ossure XV Super se Evoluzione Performance 1.1 se Evoluzione Performance 1.0 Iden Tube Audio SI-50 (KK880	3 5 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 5 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7	70W 65W 50W 60W 65W 50W 12W 100W 12W 100W 60W 70W 70W 50W 55W 70W	695 615 649 549 650 700 949 950 945 938 1,000 995 800 790
ksan Caspian se Scion sanne Phase 2 umfoort SF60 k Electronics Storm 2 CA-BX7R S701 to E100 hemist Forseti Integrated dio Note Oto Line PP S2000MI pland CSA8 sodo IMP702 ado IMP702 dot IMP703 etrocompaniet ECI-2 oosure XV Super se Evoluzione Performance 1.1 se Evoluzione Performance 1.0 Iden Tube Audio SI-50 K HK680 o LE Integrated		70W 65W 50W 60W 65W 50W 12W 100W 12W 100W 60W 70W 50W 55W 70W 60W 50W	695 615 649 549 650 700 949 950 945 938 1,000 995 800 790 790 790 1,000 1,000
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ksan Caspian se Scion aarne Phase 2 imfoort SF60 k Electronics Storm 2 CA-BX7R SCOI to C10 hemist Forseti Integrated dio Note Oto Line PP I S2000MI pland CSA8 dol IMP702 edo IMP702 edo IMP703 etrocompaniet ECI-2 oosure XV Super Se Evoluzione Performance 1.1 se Evoluzione Performance 1.0 Iden Tube Audio SI-50 (H K680 D 0 LE Integrated in Majik (Phono) gium Class A SE		70W 65W 50W 60W 65W 50W 100W 12W 100W 12W 100W 70W 50W 55W 70W 60W 55W 70W 85W 85W	695 615 649 549 560 700 999 995 938 1,000 995 800 790 790 1,000 1,000 800 815
ksan Caspian se Scion aarne Phase 2 umfoort SF60 k Electronics Storm 2 CA-BX7R S701 ko E10 hemist Forseti Integrated dio Note Oto Line PP S2000MI pland CSA8 ado IMP702 ado IMP702 ado IMP702 dod IMP703 etrocompaniet ECI-2 oosure XV Super E Evoluzione Performance 1.0 iden Tube Audio SI-50 (KK680 D 0 LE Integrated In Majik (Phono) gnum Class A SE rantz PM-17		70W 65W 50W 60W 65W 50W 100W 12W 100W 12W 100W 70W 50W 55W 70W 60W 55W 70W 60W 85W 60W	695 615 649 650 700 949 950 999 945 938 1,000 995 800 790 1,000 1,000 799 1,000 1,000 815 900
ksan Caspian se Scion aarne Phase 2 imfoort SF60 k Electronics Storm 2 AC A-BX7R S701 to E10 hemist Forseti Integrated dio Note Oto Line PP S2000MI pland CSA8 do IMP702 ado IMP703 ado IMP703 ado IMP703 ctrocompaniet ECI-2 oosure XV Super se Evoluzione Performance 1.0 Iden Tube Audio SI-50 (H K680 D LE Integrated In Majik (Phono) gnum Class A SE irantz PM-17 ridian 551		70W 65W 50W 60W 60W 65W 50W 100W 100W 100W 70W 70W 70W 70W 55W 55W 85W 60W 55W 55W	695 615 649 549 650 700 949 950 999 945 938 1,000 995 800 1,000 790 1,000 799 800 815 900 795
ksan Caspian se Scion aarne Phase 2 imfoort SF60 k Electronics Storm 2 CA-BX7R ES701 to E10 hemist Forseti Integrated dio Note Oto Line PP I S2000MI pland CSA8 doi IMP702 edo IMP702 oosure XV Super se Evoluzione Performance 1.1		70W 65W 50W 66W 65W 50W 100W 12W 100W 60W 70W 70W 70W 70W 70W 60W 70W 60W 70W 85W 85W 60W 85W 60W 85SW	695 615 649 650 700 949 950 999 945 938 1,000 995 800 790 1,000 1,000 799 1,000 1,000 815 900
ksan Caspian se Scion sanre Phase 2 imfoort SF60 k Electronics Storm 2 		70W 65W 50W 60W 60W 65W 50W 100W 100W 100W 70W 70W 70W 70W 55W 55W 85W 60W 55W 55W	695 615 549 650 700 949 950 999 945 938 1,000 995 800 995 938 1,000 995 800 800 800 815 990 815 990 800
ksan Caspian se Scion asnre Phase 2 imfoort SF60 k Electronics Storm 2 CA-BX7R S701 to E10 hemist Forseti Integrated dio Note Oto Line PP I S2000MI pland CSA8 ado IMP702 ado IMP702 ado IMP703 etrocompaniet ECI-2 oscure XV Super se Evoluzione Performance 1.1 se Evoluzione Performance 1.1 den Tube Audio SI-50 (HK680 D 0 LE Integrated in Majik (Phono) gnum Class A SE rrantz PM-17 rridian 551 sromega Tempo 1 sromega Tempo 1 sterel Ultra Linear im Nait 3 R		70W 65W 50W 65W 50W 65W 50W 100W 12W 100W 60W 70W 55W 70W 55W 70W 55W 50W 85W 60W 85W 60W 55W 50W 85W 50W	695 615 649 650 700 949 950 999 945 938 1,000 995 800 800 800 800 815 900 750 950 900 9760
ksan Caspian se Scion senre Phase 2 imfoort SF60 k Electronics Storm 2 AC A-BX7R S701 to E10 hemist Forseti Integrated dio Note Oto Line PP S2000MI pland CSA8 add IMP702 addo		70W 65W 50W 60W 65W 50W 70W 70W 70W 70W 70W 70W 70W 70W 70W 7	695 615 649 549 549 550 999 945 950 999 945 800 995 800 790 1,000 790 800 790 790 790 800 790 800 790 790 790 790 790 790 790 790 790 7
ksan Caspian se Scion senre Phase 2 imfoort SF60 k Electronics Storm 2 		70W 65W 50W 66W 65W 50W 66W 12W 100W 60W 70W 70W 70W 70W 70W 70W 70W 70W 85W 60W 85W 60W 85W 60W 85W 60W 85W 60W 85W 60W 85W 60W 60W 60W 60W 60W 60W 70W 70W 70W 70W 70W 70W 70W 70W 70W 7	695 615 649 650 700 949 950 999 945 938 1,000 995 800 800 800 800 815 900 750 950 900 9760
ksan Caspian se Scion senre Phase 2 imfoort SF60 k Electronics Storm 2 AC A-BX7R S701 ko E10 hemist Forseti Integrated dio Note Oto Line PP S2000MI pland CSA8 add IMP702 add IM		70W 65W 50W 60W 65W 50W 70W 70W 70W 70W 70W 70W 70W 70W 70W 7	695 615 649 549 650 999 995 999 945 950 999 945 950 999 938 1,000 790 790 790 790 790 790 790 800 790 800 799 815 900 755 950 950 950 950 950 955 900 799
ksan Caspian se Scion senre Phase 2 umfoort SF60 k Electronics Storm 2 		70W 65W 60W 65W 50W 50W 12W 100W 60W 70W 50W 55W 50W 55W 50W 85W 60W 55W 50W 85W 85W 85W 85W 85W 60W 50W 50W 50W 50W	695 615 649 649 949 950 999 945 938 999 945 938 999 945 938 909 945 938 900 790 790 790 790 790 790 790 800 795 755 900 700 700 700 700 700 700 700 700 700
ksan Caspian se Scion senre Phase 2 imfoort SF60 k Electronics Storm 2 CA-BX7R S-701 to E10 hemist Forseti Integrated dio Note Oto Line PP I S2000MI pland CSA8 dol IMP702 ado IMP702 ado IMP703 etrocompaniet ECI-2 oosure XV Super se Evoluzione Performance 1.1 se Evoluzione Performance 1.0 iden Tube Audio SI-50 (HK680 0 0 LE Integrated in Majik (Phono) gnum Class A SE rantz PM-17 ridian 551 romega Tempo 1 cromega Tempo 1 sonserei Ultra Linear im Nait 3 R neer A-07 mare A20 ga Elicit earne Phase 2 Reference nneteer Alabaster imfoort S100		70W 65W 60W 60W 65W 50W 100W 70W 55W 70W 55W 70W 55W 70W 55W 70W 55W 70W 55W 70W 55W 70W 50W 85W 50W 85W 50W 75W 85W 60W 75W 75W 80W 60W 75W 80W 50W 75W 80W 75W 70W 50W 70W 50W 70W 50W 70W 50W 70W 50W 70W 50W 70W 50W 70W 50W 70W 50W 70W 50W 70W 50W 70W 50W 70W 50W 70W 50W 70W 50W 70W 50W 70W 50W 70W 70W 50W 70W 50W 70W 50W 70W 50W 70W 50W 70W 50W 70W 50W 70W 50W 50W 70W 50W 70W 50W 50W 70W 50W 70W 50W 50W 70W 50W 70W 50W 70W 50W 70W 50W 50W 70W 50W 70W 50W 50W 70W 50W 50W 70W 50W 50W 70W 50W 50W 70W 50W 50W 50W 70W 50W 50W 50W 70W 50W 50W 50W 50W 50W 50W 50W 50W 50W 5	695 649 549 549 549 550 999 945 50 999 945 50 999 945 800 790 790 790 790 800 800 799 800 815 900 795 755 900 760 81,000 81,000 81,000 81,000 800 795 800 795 900 800 795 900 81,000 800 81,000 81,000 800 81,000 81,000 800 81,000 800 81,000 81,000 81,000 800 81,0
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Credo LIM 703		1,249	Lumley PP70
EAR 834	G	40W 1,999	Lumley PP1
Graaf Venticinque	ø	20W 1,995	Magnum MP120
LFD Integrated 1	Ø	65W 1,099	Magnum MP660
Marantz PM-16	0	90W 1,700	Magnum MP330
Meracus Intrare	0	60W 1,095	Moth 30 Passive
Minstrel Partridge	0	26W 1,499	Moth 30 RIAA
Monrio MC-205	0	80W 1,545	Moth 30 Active
Musical Fidelity A1000	0	50W 1,500	Musical Fidelity X
Primare 301	0	80W 1,800	Musical Fidelity X
Rogers E-20a	0	20W 1,229	Musical Fidelity X
Rogers E-40a	0	40W 1,900	Musical Fidelity E
Sonic Frontiers Anthem Integrated	0	25W 1,295	Musical Fidelity F
T+A PA1200	0	90W 1,350	NAD 114
T+A R1200R	Θ	90W 1,495	NAD 116
T + A PA1500	Ø	135W 1,650	Naim Prefix
T+A R1500R	0	135W 1,895	Naim NAC92
Unison Simply Four P	ø	24W 1,555	Rega EOS
Unison Simply Four T	Θ	11W 1,595	Roksan Artaxerxes
Woodside ISA230 Line	Θ	30W 1,099	Rose RV-23
Woodside ISA230 Disc	0	30W 1,249	Rotel RC970BX MI
Over £200	0	Contraction of the	Talk Electronics H
Adyton Opera	0	50W 2,595	Technics SU-C100
Audio Note Meishu Line		9W 2,750	Trilogy 905
Audio Note Ongaku	•	26W 56,000	Trilogy 904
Audio Research CA50	Θ	3,990	Trilogy 900
Cary CAD-300SEI			
	0	11W 3,495	Unison Simply Pho
Conrad-Johnson CAV-50	ø	50W 2,495	
Conrad-Johnson CAV-50 EAR 859	-	50W 2,495 13W 2,499	Adyton Chorus
Conrad-Johnson CAV-50 EAR 859 Electrocompaniet ECI-1	ø	50W 2,495 13W 2,499 100W 2,195	Adyton Chorus Alchemist Kraken
Conrad-Johnson CAV-50 EAR 859 Electrocompaniet ECI-1 Gamma Rhythm	0	50W 2,495 13W 2,499 100W 2,195 18W 2,499	Adyton Chorus Alchemist Kraken Alchemist Forseti
Conrad-Johnson CAV-50 EAR 859 Electrocompaniet ECI-1 Gamma Rhythm	6 6 6	50W 2,495 13W 2,499 100W 2,195	Adyton Chorus Alchemist Kraken Alchemist Forseti Art Audio Headling
Conrad-Johnson CAV-50 EAR 859 Electrocompaniet ECI-1 Gamma Rhythm Gamma Moment 845	0000	50W 2,495 13W 2,499 100W 2,195 18W 2,499 20W 3,499 40W 19,999	Adyton Chorus Alchemist Kraken Alchemist Forseti Art Audio Headline Art Audio VPL
Conrad-Johnson CAV-50 EAR 859 Electrocompaniet ECI-1 Gamma Rhythm Gamma Rhythm Ref Gamma Moment 845 Jadis DA30	66660	50W 2,495 13W 2,499 100W 2,195 18W 2,499 20W 3,499 40W 19,999 30W 3,490	Adyton Chorus Alchemist Kraken Alchemist Forseti Art Audio Headline Art Audio VPL Art Audio Conduct
Conrad-Johnson CAV-50 EAR 859 Electrocompaniet ECI-1 Gamma Rhythm Gamma Rhythm Ref Gamma Moment 845 Jadis DA30 Jadis DA60	66660	50W 2,495 13W 2,499 100W 2,195 18W 2,499 20W 3,499 40W 19,999 30W 3,490 60W 5,750	Adyton Chorus Alchemist Kraken Alchemist Forseti Art Audio Headline Art Audio VPL Art Audio Conduct Art Audio VP1
Conrad-Johnson CAV-50 EAR 859 Electrocompaniet ECI-1 Gamma Rhythm Gamma Moment 845 Jadis DA30 Jadis DA30 Jadis DA60 Krell KAV300i	00000	50w 2,495 13w 2,499 100w 2,195 18w 2,499 20w 3,499 40w 19,999 30w 3,490 60w 5,750 150w 2,550	Adyton Chorus Alchemist Kraken Alchemist Forseti Art Audio Headlinn Art Audio VPL Art Audio VPL Art Audio VP1 Art Audio Conduct
Conrad-Johnson CAV-50 EAR 859 Electrocompaniet ECI-1 Gamma Rhythm Gamma Rhythm Ref Gamma Moment 845 Jadis DA30 Jadis DA50 Krell KAV300i Meracus Onesta		50w 2,495 13w 2,499 100w 2,195 18w 2,499 20w 3,499 40w 19,999 30w 3,490 60w 5,750 150w 2,550 75w 2,595	Adyton Chorus Alchemist Kraken Alchemist Kraken Art Audio Headline Art Audio Conduct Art Audio Conduct Art Audio Conduct Art Audio Conduct
Conrad-Johnson CAV-50 EAR 859 Electrocompaniet ECI-1 Gamma Rhythm Gamma Rhythm Ref Gamma Moment 845 Jadis DAS0 Jadis DAS0 Krell KAV300i Meracus Onesta Pioneer A-09		50W 2,495 13W 2,499 100W 2,195 18W 2,499 20W 3,499 40W 19,999 30W 3,490 60W 5,750 150W 2,550 75W 2,595 45W 4,000	Adyton Chorus Alchemist Kraken Alchemist Forseti Art Audio Headlind Art Audio VPL Art Audio Conduct Art Audio VP1 Art Audio Conduct Art Audio Conduct Audio Conduct Audio Note M1 Lin
Conrad-Johnson CAV-50 EAR 859 Electrocompaniet ECI-1 Gamma Rhythm Gamma Rhythm Ref Gamma Moment 845 Jadis DA30 Jadis DA30 Jadis DA50 Krell KAV300i Meracus Onesta Pioneer A-09 Tube Tech Unisis Sig. Int.		50W 2,495 13W 2,499 100W 2,195 18W 2,499 20W 3,499 40W 19,999 30W 3,490 60W 5,750 150W 2,555 45W 4,000 30W 2,300	Adyton Chorus Alchemist Kraken Alchemist Forseti Art Audio Headline Art Audio VPL Art Audio Conduct Art Audio Conduct Art Audio Conduct Audio Note M1 Lin Audio Note M1 RI/
Conrad-Johnson CAV-50 EAR 859 Electrocompaniet ECI-1 Gamma Rhythm Gamma Rhythm Ref Gamma Moment 845 Jadis DA30 Jadis DA60 Krell KAV300i Meracus Onesta Pioneer A-09 Tube Tech Unisis Sig. Int. Tube Tech Synergy PPS		50W 2,495 13W 2,499 100W 2,195 18W 2,499 20W 3,499 40W 19,999 30W 3,490 60W 5,750 150W 2,555 75W 2,555 45W 4,000 30W 2,300 150W 6,900	Alchemist Kraken Alchemist Forseti Art Audio Headline Art Audio VPL Art Audio Conduct Art Audio Conduct Art Audio Conduct Art Audio Conduct Audio Note M Llin Audio Note M Z Lin
Conrad-Johnson CAV-50 EAR 859 Electrocompaniet ECI-1 Gamma Rhythm Gamma Rhythm Ref Gamma Moment 845 Jadis DAS0 Krell KAV3001 Meracus Onesta Pioneer A-09 Tube Tech Unisis Sig. Int. Tube Tech Synergy PPS Unison Performance One		50W 2,495 13W 2,499 100W 2,195 18W 2,499 20W 3,499 40W 19,999 30W 3,490 60W 5,750 150W 2,550 45W 4,000 30W 2,300 150W 2,595 45W 4,000 30W 2,300 150W 6,900 25W 4,500	Adyton Chorus Alchemist Kraken Alchemist Forseti Art Audio VPL Art Audio Conduct Art Audio Conduct Art Audio Conduct Art Audio Conduct Audio Note M1 Lin Audio Note M1 Lin Audio Note M2 Lin Audio Note M2 Lin Audio Note Discov
Conrad-Johnson CAV-50 EAR 859 Electrocompaniet ECI-1 Gamma Rhythm Gamma Rhythm Ref Gamma Moment 845 Jadis DA30 Jadis DA60		50W 2,495 13W 2,499 100W 2,195 18W 2,499 20W 3,499 40W 19,999 30W 3,490 60W 5,750 150W 2,555 75W 2,555 45W 4,000 30W 2,300 150W 6,900	Adyton Chorus Alchemist Kraken Alchemist Forseti Art Audio Headline Art Audio VPL Art Audio Conduct Art Audio Conduct Art Audio Conduct Art Audio Conduct Audio Note M L Lin Audio Note M Z Lin

G - (etc) number of line-level inputs Ph - phono input fitted as standard (may be an option on some other models).

> 0 Ph Ph Ph

0

0

000 Ph Ph

0

Ph Ph Ph Ph 0

Ph Ph

AMC CVT 1030A Art Audio Minuet

AudioInnov P1

Audio Note The M Beam-Echo PP-21 Bryston BP1

Carver CT-24 CR Dev Themis

Creek P43 Creek P52 Crimson CS610C EAR 834P

Electrocompaniet ECP-1 Fase Evoluzione Phonodrive 1.0 Henley HMC50 Henley HMC100

EAR 834L

Audio Analogue Bellini

1,198	Hi Q Sound LCP2			149
1,989	LFD Mistral Linestage	6		449
1,191	LFD LSO Linestage	6		499
1,249				
	Lumley PP70	0		345
1,999	Lumley PP1	O	100	345
1,995	Magnum MP120	G		330
1,099	Magnum MP660	G		500
1,700	Magnum MP330	G		500
1,095	Moth 30 Passive	0		149
1,499	Moth 30 RIAA		Ph	249
1,545	Moth 30 Active	0		349
1,500	Musical Fidelity X10-D	0		120
1,800	Musical Fidelity X-LP		Ph	130
1.229	Musical Fidelity X-PRE	0		200
1.900	Musical Fidelity E20	Ø	Ph	400
1,295	Musical Fidelity F2	0	Ph	500
1.350	NAD 114	õ	Ph	270
1.495	NAD 116	G	Ph	430
1.650	Naim Prefix			350
1,895	Naim NAC92	0		470
1,555	Rega EOS	0	Ph	398
1,595	Roksan Artaxerxes 10		Ph	395
1,099	Rose RV-23	0	Dh	450
1,249	Rotel RC970BX MkII	0	Fn	175
1145	Talk Electronics Hurricane 1	6		500
2,595	Technics SU-C1000	0	Ph	350
2,750	Trilogy 905	U	Pn	375
6,000	Trilogy 904		Dh	375
3.990	Trilogy 900	-	Ph	375 499
3,495		€	Ph	495 500
2,495	Unison Simply Phono £501 to £2	000	Ph	500
2,499	Advton Chorus		1000	1,995
	Alchemist Kraken Pre			
2,195		Θ		519
2,499	Alchemist Forseti Pre	0		919
3,499	Art Audio Headline Art Audio VPL	0		700 741
9,999				
3,490	Art Audio Conductor Phono			750
3,490 5,750	Art Audio Conductor Phono Art Audio VP1			750 952
3,490 5,750 2,550	Art Audio Conductor Phono Art Audio VP1 Art Audio Conductor	0		750 952 1,250
3,490 5,750 2,550 2,595	Art Audio Conductor Phono Art Audio VP1 Art Audio Conductor Art Audio Conductor Export	0		750 952 1,250 2,000
3,490 5,750 2,550 2,595 4,000	Art Audio Conductor Phono Art Audio VP1 Art Audio Conductor Art Audio Conductor Export Audio Note M1 Line	0		750 952 1,250 2,000 550
3,490 5,750 2,550 2,595 4,000 2,300	Art Audio Conductor Phono Art Audio VP1 Art Audio Conductor Art Audio Conductor Export Audio Note M1 Line Audio Note M1 RIAA	0	Ph	750 952 1,250 2,000 550 550
3,490 5,750 2,550 2,595 4,000 2,300 6,900	Art Audio Conductor Phono Art Audio VP1 Art Audio Conductor Art Audio Conductor Export Audio Note M1 Line Audio Note M1 RIAA Audio Note M2 Line	0	Ph	750 952 1,250 2,000 550 550 999
3,490 5,750 2,595 4,000 2,300 6,900 4,500	Art Audio Conductor Phono Art Audio VP1 Art Audio Conductor Art Audio Conductor Export Audio Note M1 Line Audio Note M1 RIAA Audio Note M2 Line Audio Note Discovery	0		750 952 1,250 2,000 550 550 999 999
3,490 5,750 2,550 2,595 4,000 2,300 6,900	Art Audio Conductor Phono Art Audio VP1 Art Audio Conductor Art Audio Conductor Export Audio Note M1 IIAA Audio Note M1 RIAA Audio Note M2 Line Audio Note Discovery Audio Note M2RIAA		Ph Ph	750 952 1,250 2,000 550 550 999 999 1,099
3,490 5,750 2,595 4,000 2,300 6,900 4,500	Art Audio Conductor Phono Art Audio VP1 Art Audio Conductor Art Audio Conductor Export Audio Note M1 Line Audio Note M1 RIAA Audio Note M2 Line Audio Note Discovery Audio Note M2RIAA Audio Rote M2RIAA Audio Research LS7	Ø		750 952 1,250 2,000 550 550 999 999 1,099 1,750
3,490 5,750 2,595 4,000 2,300 6,900 4,500	Art Audio Conductor Phono Art Audio VP1 Art Audio VP1 Art Audio Conductor Export Audio Note M1 Line Audio Note M1 RIAA Audio Note M2 Line Audio Note Discovery Audio Note M2RIAA Audio Research LS7 Audio Research LS3	6		750 952 1,250 2,000 550 550 999 999 1,099 1,750 1,997
3,490 5,750 2,595 4,000 2,300 6,900 4,500	Art Audio Conductor Phono Art Audio VP1 Art Audio Conductor Export Audio Conductor Export Audio Note M1 RIAA Audio Note M2 Line Audio Note Discovery Audio Note Discovery Audio Research LS7 Audio Research LS3 Audio Synthesis Pro Passion	6		750 952 1,250 2,000 550 550 999 999 1,099 1,750 1,997 595
3,490 5,750 2,550 2,595 4,000 2,300 6,900 4,500 1,995	Art Audio Conductor Phono Art Audio VP1 Art Audio Conductor Art Audio Conductor Export Audio Note M1 Line Audio Note M1 RIAA Audio Note M2 Line Audio Note Discovery Audio Note M2RIAA Audio Research LS3 Audio Research LS3 Audio Rynthesis Pro Passion Audio Synthesis Passion	6		750 952 1,250 2,000 550 550 999 999 1,099 1,750 1,997 595 695
3,490 5,750 2,550 2,595 4,000 2,300 6,900 4,500 1,995	Art Audio Conductor Phono Art Audio VP1 Art Audio VP1 Art Audio Conductor Art Audio Conductor Export Audio Note M1 Line Audio Note M2 Line Audio Note M2 Line Audio Note M2 Line Audio Note M2 RIAA Audio Research LS7 Audio Research LS3 Audio Synthesis Pro Passion Audio Synthesis Passion Audio Synthesis Passion 85	600000000000000000000000000000000000000		750 952 1,250 2,000 550 999 999 1,099 1,750 1,997 595 695 1,295
3,490 5,750 2,550 2,595 4,000 2,300 6,900 4,500 1,995	Art Audio Conductor Phono Art Audio VP1 Art Audio VP1 Art Audio Conductor Export Audio Note M1 Line Audio Note M1 RIAA Audio Note Discovery Audio Note Discovery Audio Note M2RIAA Audio Research LS7 Audio Research LS3 Audio Synthesis Pro Passion Audio Synthesis Passion 8S Audio Synthesis Passion 8M	8 8 0 0 0 5	Ph	750 952 1,250 2,000 550 999 999 1,099 1,750 1,997 595 695 1,295 1,695
3,490 5,750 2,550 2,595 4,000 2,300 6,900 4,500 1,995	Art Audio Conductor Phono Art Audio VP1 Art Audio Conductor Art Audio Conductor Export Audio Note M1 Line Audio Note M2 Line Audio Note M2 Line Audio Note M2 Line Audio Note M2 RIAA Audio Research LS7 Audio Research LS3 Audio Research LS3 Audio Synthesis Prassion Audio Synthesis Passion 8S Audio Synthesis Passion 8S Audio Synthesis Passion 8M Audio B 8000C	600000000000000000000000000000000000000	Ph Ph	750 952 1,250 2,000 550 999 999 1,099 1,750 1,997 595 695 1,295 1,695 580
3,490 5,750 2,550 2,595 4,000 2,300 6,900 4,500 1,995	Art Audio Conductor Phono Art Audio VP1 Art Audio Conductor Art Audio Conductor Export Audio Note M1 Line Audio Note M2 Line Audio Note M2 Line Audio Note M2 Line Audio Note M2 RIAA Audio Research LS3 Audio Synthesis Parsion Audio Synthesis Parsion Audio Synthesis Parsion 8S Audio Synthesis Parsion 8M Audiolab 8000C Audiolab 8000C	6 6 0 6 0 6 6 6	Ph	750 952 1,250 2,000 550 999 999 1,099 1,750 1,997 595 695 1,295 1,695 580 1,000
3,490 5,750 2,595 4,000 2,300 6,900 4,500 1,995	Art Audio Conductor Phono Art Audio VP1 Art Audio VP1 Art Audio Conductor Export Audio Note M1 Line Audio Note M1 RIAA Audio Note M2 Line Audio Note Discovery Audio Note M2RIAA Audio Research LS7 Audio Synthesis Passion Audio Synthesis Passion 8S Audio Synthesis Passion 8M Audiolab 8000C Audiolab 8000C	8 8 0 0 0 5	Ph Ph Ph	750 952 1,250 2,000 550 999 999 1,099 1,750 1,750 1,997 595 695 1,295 1,695 580 1,000 1,250
3,490 5,750 2,595 4,000 2,300 6,900 4,500 1,995 Duts. ard els).	Art Audio Conductor Phono Art Audio VP1 Art Audio Conductor Art Audio Conductor Export Audio Note M1 Line Audio Note M1 RIAA Audio Note M2 Line Audio Note M2 Line Audio Note M2RIAA Audio Research LS3 Audio Research LS3 Audio Synthesis Prassion Audio Synthesis Passion 8S Audio Synthesis Passion 8M Audiolab 8000C Audiolab 8000C Audiolab 8000Q Audiolab 8000Q Audiolab 8000Q	6 6 0 6 0 6 6 6 6 7 6 7 6 7 6 7 7 7 7 7	Ph Ph	750 952 1,250 2,000 550 550 999 999 1,099 1,750 1,997 595 695 1,295 1,295 1,695 580 1,000 1,250 700
3,490 5,750 2,595 4,000 2,300 6,900 4,500 1,995 0uts. ard els).	Art Audio Conductor Phono Art Audio VP1 Art Audio Conductor Art Audio Conductor Export Audio Note M1 Line Audio Note M2 Line Audio Note M2 Line Audio Note M2 Line Audio Note M2 RIAA Audio Research LS3 Audio Synthesis Passion Audio Synthesis Passion 8S Audio Synthesis Passion 8M Audiolab 8000C Audiolab 8000PA Audiolab 8000PA Audiolab 8000PA	6 6 0 0 6 6 6 6 6 6	Ph Ph Ph	750 952 1,250 2,000 550 550 999 1,099 1,750 1,997 595 695 1,295 1,695 5 800 1,250 700 949
3,490 5,750 2,595 4,000 2,300 6,900 4,500 1,995 9 uts. ard els). 400 499 475	Art Audio Conductor Phono Art Audio VP1 Art Audio VP1 Art Audio Conductor Export Audio Note M1 Line Audio Note M1 Line Audio Note M2 Line Audio Note M2 Line Audio Note M2 Line Audio Note M2 Line Audio Research LS7 Audio Synthesis Passion Audio Synthesis Passion Audio Synthesis Passion 8M Audiolab 8000PA Audiolab 8000PA	6 6 0 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6	Ph Ph Ph Ph	750 952 1,250 2,000 550 999 999 1,099 1,750 1,995 1,295 1,295 1,695 580 1,200 1,200 1,250 949 1,199
3,490 5,750 2,595 2,595 4,000 2,300 6,900 4,500 1,995 0 uts. ard els). 400 499 475 369	Art Audio Conductor Phono Art Audio VP1 Art Audio Conductor Art Audio Conductor Audio Note M1 Line Audio Note M1 Line Audio Note M2 Line Audio Note M2 Line Audio Note M2 Line Audio Note M2 Line Audio Research LS7 Audio Research LS3 Audio Synthesis Passion Audio Synthesis Passion 8S Audio Synthesis Passion 8S Audio Synthesis Passion 8M Audiolab 8000 Audiolab 8000 A		Ph Ph Ph	750 952 1,250 2,000 550 999 999 1,099 1,750 1,997 595 1,295 1,695 580 1,250 1,255 1,200 1,250 1,250 1,250 1,250 1,250 1,250 1,250 1,50 1,50 1,50 1,50 1,50 1,50 1,50 1,
3,490 5,750 2,550 2,595 4,000 2,300 6,900 4,500 1,995 1,995 1,995 1,995 1,995 1,995 1,995 1,995 1,995 1,995 1,995 1,995 1,995 1,995 1,995 4,000 4,500 2,300 4,500 2,500 2,595 4,000 4,500	Art Audio Conductor Phono Art Audio VP1 Art Audio Conductor Art Audio Conductor Autio Note M1 Line Audio Note M1 Line Audio Note M2 Line Audio Note M2 Line Audio Note M2 Line Audio Note M2RIAA Audio Research LS3 Audio Research LS3 Audio Synthesis Passion 8S Audio Synthesis Passion 8S Audio Synthesis Passion 8M Audiolab 8000C Audiolab 8000PA Audiolab 8000PA Bam-Echo SP-21 Bryston. 4		Ph Ph Ph Ph	750 952 1,250 2,000 550 999 999 1,099 1,099 1,750 1,997 595 695 1,095 1,695 580 1,255 580 1,250 700 949 9,1116 642
3,490 5,750 2,550 2,595 4,000 2,300 6,900 4,500 1,995 0,000 1,995 0,000 4,500 1,995 0,000 4,500 1,995 0,000 4,500 1,995 0,000 4,500	Art Audio Conductor Phono Art Audio VP1 Art Audio VP1 Art Audio Conductor Art Audio Conductor Export Audio Note M1 Line Audio Note M2 RIAA Audio Research LS3 Audio Synthesis Parsion Audio Synthesis Parsion 8S Audio Synthesis Parsion 8S Audio Synthesis Parsion 8M Audiolab 8000C Audiolab 8000C Audiolab 8000Q Auta CA-200 AVI S2000MP AVI S2000MP + P Beam-Echo SP-21 Bryston 4		Ph Ph Ph Ph	750 952 1,250 2,000 550 999 999 999 1,750 1,997 595 695 1,295 1,695 580 1,295 580 1,250 1,
3,490 5,750 2,550 2,300 6,900 4,500 1,995 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 5015 50	Art Audio Conductor Phono Art Audio VP1 Art Audio Conductor Art Audio Conductor Art Audio Conductor Export Audio Note M1 Line Audio Note M1 RIAA Audio Note M2 Line Audio Note M2 Line Audio Note M2 RIAA Audio Research LS3 Audio Research LS3 Audio Synthesis Prossion Audio Synthesis Passion 8S Audio Synthesis Passion 8S Audio Synthesis Passion 8M Audiolab 8000 Audiolab 8000 Audiol		Ph Ph Ph Ph	750 952 1,250 550 550 999 999 1,099 1,750 1,997 595 580 1,295 1,295 1,295 580 1,295 1,295 1,295 1,000 1,250 949 1,116 642 889 1,126
3,490 5,750 2,550 2,555 4,000 4,500 1,1995 400 409 400 499 475 369 350 369 350 409 438	Art Audio Conductor Phono Art Audio VP1 Art Audio Conductor Art Audio Conductor Export Audio Note M1 Line Audio Note M2 RIAA Audio Research LS3 Audio Research LS3 Audio Synthesis Passion 83 Audio Synthesis Passion 88 Audio Synthesis Passion 8		Ph Ph Ph Ph	750 952 1,250 550 550 550 999 999 1,099 1,750 1,997 595 605 1,295 1,695 580 1,255 580 1,255 1,000 1,250 700 949 1,116 642 889 1,126 1,250
3,490 5,750 2,595 4,000 4,500 1,995 4,500 1,995 4,500 1,995 4,500	Art Audio Conductor Phono Art Audio VP1 Art Audio VP1 Art Audio Conductor Art Audio Conductor Export Audio Note M1 Line Audio Note M2 Line Audio Research LS3 Audio Synthesis Passion Audio Synthesis Passion 8M Audio Synthesis Passion 8M Audiolab 8000C Audiolab 800C Audiol	6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6	Ph Ph Ph Ph	750 952 1,250 550 550 550 1,999 1,099 1,750 1,997 1,997 1,997 1,997 1,997 1,295 1,695 580 0,000 1,250 1,000 1,250 1,000 1,250 1,0000
3,490 5,750 2,550 2,595 4,000 1,995 4,500 1,995 4,500 1,995 4,500 4,500 4,500 4,500 4,500 4,500 4,500 4,500 4,500 4,500 4,99 4,38 4,99 4,38 4,99 4,38 4,99 4,39 4,99 4,39 4,99 4,39 4,99 4,99	Art Audio Conductor Phono Art Audio VP1 Art Audio Conductor Art Audio Conductor Art Audio Conductor Export Audio Note M1 Line Audio Note M1 RIAA Audio Note M2 Line Audio Note M2 Line Audio Note M2 RIAA Audio Research LS3 Audio Synthesis Passion Audio Synthesis Passion 8S Audio Synthesis Passion 8M Audiolab 8000C Audiolab 800C Audiolab 800C Au		Ph Ph Ph Ph Ph	750 952 1,250 550 550 999 999 1,090 1,090 1,090 1,099 1,090 1,0000 1,000 1,0000 1,0000 1,0000 1,000000
3,490 5,750 2,595 2,595 4,000 4,500 1,995 4,000 4,500 1,995 4,000 4,500	Art Audio Conductor Phono Art Audio VP1 Art Audio Conductor Art Audio Conductor Art Audio Conductor Export Audio Note M1 Line Audio Note M2 Line Audio Research LS3 Audio Research LS3 Audio Research LS3 Audio Synthesis Passion 8S Audio Synthesis Passion 8S Audio Synthesis Passion 8M Audiolab 8000C Audiolab 8000C Bryston BP2 Bryston BP2 Bryston BP20 Bryston BP20 Bryston SP-25 Cary SLP-50 Cary SLP-50 Cary SLP-74 Cary PH-301		Ph Ph Ph Ph	750 952 1,250 550 550 999 999 1,750 1,977 595 580 1,977 1,295 1,695 1,090 1,200 700 949 9,116 642 9,126 1,126 1,250 1,250 1,295 1,20
3,490 5,750 2,559 2,595 4,000 4,500 1,995 4,500 1,995 4,500 4,500 4,500 4,500 4,500 4,500 4,500 4,500 4,500 4,500 4,500 4,500 4,99 350 4,99 350 4,99 350 4,99 350 4,99 350 4,99 350 4,99 350 4,99 350 4,99 4,99 4,99 4,99 4,99 4,99 4,99 4,9	Art Audio Conductor Phono Art Audio VP1 Art Audio Conductor Art Audio Conductor Export Audio Note M1 Line Audio Note M1 Line Audio Note M2 Line Audio Research LS3 Audio Synthesis Passion Audio Synthesis Passion 8M Audio Synthesis Passion 8M Audiolab 8000C Audiolab 800C Audiolab 800C Audiolab 800C Audiolab 800C Audiolab 800C Audiolab 800C Audiolab 800C Audiolab 80	6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6	Ph Ph Ph Ph Ph	750 952 1,250 550 550 999 999 999 1,099 1,099 1,050 585 695 580 1,295 580 1,295 580 1,295 580 1,295 1,000 949 1,196 1,116 642 889 9,126 1,326 9,95 1,326 9,95 1,326 9,95 1,326 1,250 1,255
3,490 5,750 2,595 2,595 4,000 4,500 4,500 4,500 4,500 4,500 4,500 4,500 4,500 4,500 4,500 4,500 4,99 4,50 4,99 4,38 4,99 4,38 4,99 4,000 4,50 4,900 4,500 4,	Art Audio Conductor Phono Art Audio VP1 Art Audio Conductor Art Audio Conductor Art Audio Conductor Export Audio Note M1 Line Audio Note M1 Line Audio Note M2 Line Audio Note M2 Line Audio Note M2 Line Audio Note M2 Line Audio Research LS3 Audio Research LS3 Audio Synthesis Passion Audio Synthesis Passion 8S Audio Synthesis Passion 8M Audiolab 8000 Audiolab 8000 A		Ph Ph Ph Ph Ph	750 952 2,200 550 550 999 999 999 1,099 1,099 1,097 1,750 1,295 1,695 580 1,255 1,695 1,295 1,695 1,295 1,000 1,250 1,000 1,250 1,000 1,250 1,750 1,295 1,009 1,009 1,009 1,009 1,009 1,009 1,009 1,009 1,009 1,009 1,009 1,109 1,109 1,100 1,10
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Conrad-Johnson PF-2 Copland CSA303	0	Ph Ph	1,990 1,199	Unison Mystery One Unison Phono One	e	Ph	1,750 1,995	NAD 912 NAD 214	30W	200 370	Naim NAP140 Naim NAP180	45W	750
Copland CTA301 Mkll	0	Ph	1,399	Van Den Hul Pre-amp	0	-n	1,700	NAD 216THX	80 W 125W	470	Naim NAP135	60W 75W	1,060
CR Dev Carmenta	Θ		659	Wilson Benesch Stage One		Ph		Naim NAP90/3	30W	450	Naim NAP250	70W	1,655
CR Dev Argento Credo CMP004		Ph	699 1,246	Woodside SC27 Line	Θ		949	Rotel RB970BX MkII	60W	225	Papworth TVA50	50W	1,425
Credo CMP005		100	1,240	Woodside SC26 Line XTC PRE-1	G		1,557 1,250	Rotel RB980BX Shearne 3.5	120W	450 469	Prime Design P-150 Quad 77 Power	150W	650
Densen DM-20	0		1,200	Yamaha CX-2	0	Ph		Talk Electronics Tornado 1	35W 50W	409	Quad 707	85W 140W	600 800
DNM 3 Start	0		1,000	Over £20				Technics SE-A1000	70W	400	Rega EXS	70W	598
DNM 3A Start DPA Enlightenment pre	0		1,650	Adyton Temper			2,495	£501 to £:	2000	State of the	Rega Exon	125W	1,196
DPA DSP500S			795 2,000	Adyton Modus Alchemist The Alchemist pre	Θ		2,695 4,995	Alchemist Kraken pwr	60W	529	Roksan ROK-S1.5	70W	1,495
Dynavector L200	0		1,195	ATC SCA2			2,499	Alchemist Forseti Pwr AMC CVT 2100A	150W 80W	1,309 600	Rose RP-190 (Dual Mode) Rotel RB990BX	75W 200W	550 625
Dynavector P100		Ph	1,495	Audio Note M3Line			2,650	Art Audio Quintet	15W	1,393	Shearne Phase 3	200W	619
Dynavector L100	Ø		1,995	Audio Research LS15	Ø		3,399	Art Audio Quintet SE MB	-W	1,500	Shearne Phase 3 Reference	50W	729
Earmax Earmax Pre ECA Vista S	0		1,895 760	Audio Research LS22 Audio Research LS5 MkIII	0		4,391	Art Audio Concerto	50W	1,669	Shearne Phase 5 Mono	100W	1,500
ECA Vista HD	0		880	Audio Research REF 1	0		6,435 9,900	Audio Analogue Donizetti AudioInnov First Audio	60W 7.5W	575 1,749	Sonic Frontiers Anthem Amp 1 Sonographe SA250	40W	1,195
ECA Prisma		Ph	880	Boulder L3AE	G	10	2,100	AudioInnov Series 1000	50W	1,799	Sonographe SA400	125W 220W	1,195
Electrocompaniet EC-4.5			1,195	Boulder L5AE			3,400	Audio Note The P	40W	550	Sumo Polaris III	164W	950
Electrocompaniet EC-4R	0		1,495	Boulder L5M			3,800	Audio Note P0	9W	599	Sumo Model Five	60W	1,975
Electrocompaniet EC-4.6 Exposure XIX	G		1,750 800	Boulder 2010 Cary SLP-94L	G		19,995 2.095	Audio Note P1 Audio Note P1SE	12W	750 999	Sumo Andromeda III	240W	1,975
Exposure XVII	0	Ph	850	Cary SLP-98L	0		2,095	Audio Note P2	12W 20W	1,000	T+A A1200 T+A A1500	110W 140W	845 1.495
Fase Evoluzione Controlsource 2.0	O	Ph	625	Chord CPA 2200	G		2,355	Audio Note P2SE	18W	1,499	Talk Electronics Tornado 2	65W	600
Fase Evoluzione Controlsource 1.0			1,395	Chord CPA 2800	ø	Ph	3,246	Audio Note Conqueror	8W	1,599	Talk Electronics Tornado 3	100W	750
Golden Tube Audio SEP-1 Graaf WFB Two	0	Ph	990 1.195	Chord CPA 3200 Chord CPA 4000	G		3,320	Audiolab 8000SX Audiolab 8000PX	60W	550	Talk Electronics Tornado 4	110W	1,100
Graaf WFB One	0	Ph	1,195	Conrad-Johnson PF-R	0		6,210 2,490	Audiolab 8000MX	100W 125W	850 1,800	Technics SE-A2000 Thorens TTA-2000	100W 30W	1,100 599
Henley HMC200			750	Conrad-Johnson PV-12A	ē	Ph	2,590	Aura PA-100	12.5W	700	Trilogy 948	50W	1.895
Heybrook Signature II Pre	G		555	Conrad-Johnson Premier 15		Ph	3,995	Aura PA-200	110W	1,200	Tube Tech Syrinx	45W	1,150
Hi Q Sound MCB2 Hi Q Sound MCL2	-	Ph	545	Conrad-Johnson Premier 14	0		4,495	Aura PA-200 C	100W	1,250	Tube Tech Unisis Sig. Pwr	30W	1,900
Jadis DPL2	0		645 1.790	Conrad-Johnson Art CAT SL1 Sig. Mk2	0	Ph	14,995 6,500	AVI S2000MM Bryston 2B-LP	150W	1,399 750	Woodside SA240 Woodside MA100	40W	1,199 1,733
LFD MC1 Phonostage	9	Ph	949	CR Dev Kastor	0	-n	2,995	Bryston 3B-ST PRO	75W 150W	1,160	Woodside STA50	100W 50W	1,733
LFD LS1 Linestage	ø		999	Credo LPR 001			2,815	Bryston 3B-ST	150W	1,160	XTC POW-2	150W	1,450
LFD MC2 Phonostage LFD LS2 Linestage		Ph	1,499	DNM 3C Primus	0		2,550	Bryston THX3B	150W	1,262	Yamaha MX-2	150W	750
LFD LS2 Linestage	0		1,599	DNM 3C Twin DNM 3C Six	0		3,800 5,050	Bryston 7B-ST PRO Bryston 4B-ST PRO	500W	1,545	Over £20 Adyton Cordis 1.6		3,495
Linn Wakonda	0		750	EAR 802MC	0	Ph	2,599	Bryston 4B-ST PRU Bryston 4B-ST	-W 300W	1,756 1,756	Adyton Cordis 3.6	120W 280W	3,495
Linn Linto			850	EAR G88	ø	Ph	9,999	Bryston 7B-ST	500W	1,815	Alchemist The Alchemist pwr	220W	3,995
Linn Kairn	Θ		1,400	EAR P52	Θ	Ph	15,999	Bryston THX4B	300W	1,850	Alchemist The Alchemist mono	55W	8,995
Lumley LV1.5 Lumley LV1	6	20.	895 1.150	Gamma Era Ref Gamma Era Sig	0	Ph	7,999	Bryston THX7B Carver TFM-15CB	500W	1,886 599	Art Audio Tempo	30W	2,499
Lumley PV1.5	0	Ph	1,130	Graaf GM13.5B	0	Ph	3,950	Carver A-500X	100W 250W	949	Art Audio Quintet SE Art Audio Maestro	-W 100W	2,500 3,524
Lumley PV1	ø	Ph	1,700	Jadis DP60L	ø	E	2,800	Carver A-760X	380W	1,299	ATC SPA2-150	200W	2,500
Marantz AC-500		Ph	700	Jadis DPL	Ø		3,190	Cary SLA-70 II	30W	1,495	AudioInnov Ser 1000SE	50W	2,499
Marantz EC-500 Matisse Atom	0		900 1,000	Jadis DPMC		Ph	3,190	Chord SPM 400	100W	1,325	AudioInnov Second Audio	15W	3,299
Meracus Ingredi	0		925	Jadis JPL Jadis JPP200	Θ		4,720 4,998	Chord SPM 600 Conrad-Johnson MV-55	130W 50W	1,720 1,995	Audio Note P3 Audio Note Quest	9W 9W	2,150 2,750
Meridian 501	0		695	Jadis JP30MC	0	Ph	5,978	Copland CTA501	30W	1,750	Audio Note Yubi	18W	3,850
Meridian 562			765	Jadis JPS2	ø		7,900	CR Dev Amphion	12W	1,949	Audio Note Conquest	18W	4,450
Meridian 562V Meridian 502	-		995	Jadis JP80MC	Θ	Ph	11,989	Credo PMP 804		1,876	Audio Note Tomei	30W	8,500
Michell Argo	0		1,295 730	Krell KRC3 Krell KRC-HR	0		3,250 6,949	Creek A52SE Crimson CS630C	80W 100W	599 800	Audio Note Neiro Audio Note Ankoru	7W	11,360 14,500
Michi RHC-10			795	LFD Disc Preamp	e	Ph	4,499	Densen DM-30	100W	1,200	Audio Research D130	60W 130W	2,299
Michi RHQ-10		Ph	1,150	Marantz Model 7	G	Ph	3,500	DNM PA Start	45W	1,000	Audio Research VT60	35W	2,395
Michi RHA-10			1,150	Mark Levinson 25S		Ph	2,950	DNM PA1 Start	45W	1,650	Audio Research D300	300W	4,678
Micromega Tempo P Mission Cyrus Pre	0	Ph	1,250 648	Mark Levinson 380 Mark Levinson 380S	6		3,995 6,495	DPA Enlightenment pwr Earmax Earmax Power	100W	995 1,895	Audio Research VT100 Audio Research D400 MkII	100W	4,995
Monrio ADN	e	Ph	625	Matisse Fantasy	0		2,500	ECA Lectern S	25W 50W	880	Audio Research VT130 SE	400W 130W	6,850 8,500
Monrio Pluri-L	G		960	Matisse Reference	ø	Ph		ECA Lectern HD	50W	1,480	Audio Research VT150 SE	150W	17,000
Muse Model 3	Θ		1,990	Meracus Pretare	0	Ph	2,195	Electrocompaniet AW60B	60W	1,095	Audio Synthesis Desire Decade	200W	2,495
Musical Fidelity F25 NAD 118	Ø	Ph	1,500 1,000	Naim NAC82 Naim NAC52	0		2,160	Exposure XVIII Super Fase Evoluzione Powersource 2.0	70W	850	Beam-Echo DL7-35	30W	3,525
Naim NAC92R	0		630	Roksan ROK-L1.5	0		3,350 2,250	Fase Evoluzione Powersource 1.0	65W 100W	860 1,670	Border Patrol 300B SE Boulder 102AE	10W 100W	3,495 2,800
Naim NAC72	ø		725	Sonic Frontiers Line 2			2,995	Golden Tube Audio SE-40	40W	1,100	Boulder 102M	100W	3,100
Naim NAC102	Θ		1,050	Sonic Frontiers Line 3			4,995	Golden Tube Audio SE-300B Mkll	8W	1,490	Boulder 500AE	150W	4,995
Quad 77 Pre	0	Ph	850 998	T+A Pre DA3000			2,800	Golden Tube Audio SE-100	100W	1,995	Boulder 500M	150W	5,500
Rega Hal Roksan ROK-L2.5	6	Ph	1,250	Tesserac TAP-A Trilogy 918	0		5,300 2,775	Graaf Venticinque P Heybrook Signature II Pwr	25W 120W	1,250 1,045	Boulder 2060 Boulder 2050	600W	19,000 35,000
Rose RV-23S	0	Ph	525	Unison Dream	0	Ph	11,995	Hi Q Sound MCM	70W	715	Bryston THX8B	999W 150W	2,385
Shearne Phase 6 Pre	0		899	Woodside SC26 Line & Phono	Θ		2,233	Jadis DA5	40W	1,997	Cary CAD-572SE	20W	2,495
Shearne Phase 1 Pre Ref Sonic Frontiers Anthem Pre 1P	0	DL	1,399 895	POWER AM	PS			Lexicon 212 LFD PA1 Powerstage	120W	1,850 999	Cary CAD-300SE Cary CAD-805	12W	3,795
Sonic Frontiers Anthem Pre 1	0	Ph Ph	1,495	KEY				LFD PA1 Powerstage	60W 75W	1,599	Chord SPM 800	50W 160W	8,495 2,265
Sonic Frontiers Phono 1			1,995	and the second se	-		1	LFD PA2M Powerstage	90W	1,999	Chord SPM 1000B	200W	2,205
Sonic Frontiers Line 1	- (1,995				1	Linn LK100	50W	650	Chord SPM 1200B	250W	3,525
Sonographe SC26 Sumo Athena II Line	0		995	into nominal load of 8		5.		Linn LK240	120W	750	Chord SPM 1200C	315W	3,915
Sumo Athena II Line Sumo Athena IIB/II LS	0		767 987	Up to £50	10000		400	Linn AV5105 Lynwood Ruby	100W 120W	1,200 985	Chord SPM 1600 Chord SPM 1400B mono	200W	4,718 7,830
Sumo Athena III	0		987	AMC CVT 2030A Arcam Alpha 8P	30W 50W		400 250	Magnum MF330	120W	685	Chord SPM 5000	380W 415W	13,544
Sumo Artemis uP	Ø		1,595	Arcam Alpha 9P	50W		400	Magnum MF660	125W	825	Conrad-Johnson MF-2300A	250W	2,990
T+A P1200R Talk Electronics Hurricane 2	0		890	Arcam Delta 290P	75W		400	Magnum A500SE	200W	1,485	Conrad-Johnson Premier 11A	70W	3,500
Talk Electronics Hurricane 3	()		650 900	Carver TFM-6CB	65W		399	Magnum A50SE Meracus Ciere	200W 60W	1,595 1,095	Conrad-Johnson Premier 12 Conrad-Johnson Premier 8XS	140W	6,900 17,000
Talk Electronics Hurricane 4	G		1,550	Creek A43 Creek A52	50W 70W		399 499	Meridian 555	60W	750	Conrad-Johnson Premier 8A	150W 275W	17,000
Talk Electronics Hurricane 5	G		1,900	Crimson CS620C	70W		499	Meridian 556	100W	895	CAT JL1	200W	15,500
Technics SU-C2000 Tesserac TAADA		Ph	700	Earmax Earmax Headphone	0.1W		375	Meridian 557	200W	1,400	Copland CTA505	67W	2,099
Tesserac TALA	0		1,500 1,500	LFD Mistral Power	60W		449	Meridian 505 Michell Alecto Stereo	160W 50W	1,590 1,150	CR Dev Artemis Credo LPO 804	35W	4,995 2,456
Tesserac TAHA	0		1,800	LFD PAO Powerstage Magnum MF120	50W		499 365	Michell Alecto Mono	50W 100W		Credo PMP 155		2,456
Thorens TTP-2000F	0	Ph	699	Marantz MA-500	85W 125W		250	Michi RHB-05	100W	1,100	Credo LPO 455		4,975
Trilogy 901 Trilogy 906	0	-	750	Marantz MA-700	200W		400	Michi RHB-10	200W	2,000	Credo LPO 155		6,983
Trilogy 906 Trilogy 902	G	Ph	995 1,595	Mission Cyrus XPA	50W		298	Micromega Amp Monrio Cento	100W		DNM PA3 DNM PA3S	50W	2,500 3,750
Tron Retro	0		1,000	Mission Cyrus Power Moth 30 Series Power	50W		498 249	Monrio HP1	135W 135W		DPA DAP500S	23W 250W	3,750
Tron Nucleus Phono		Ph	2,000	Moth 30 Mono/40	30W 40W		469	Moth 60 Stereo	60W	599	Dynavector HX75	250W	2,195
Tron Nucleus Tube Tech Seer Line	0		2,000	Musical Fidelity X-CANS	0.1W		130	Moth 30 Mono/100	100W		Dynavector HX1.2	130W	3,995
Tube Tech Seer Line Tube Tech Mac Phono	ø	Ph	935 1,150	Musical Fidelity E30	100W		500	Muse Model 100 Musical Fidelity FX2	100W		EAR 861 EAR 509 Mk II	32W	3,299
Tube Tech Prophet	ø		1,150	Musical Fidelity X-A50 Myryad MA 120	50W		500 450	NAD 218THX	100W 200W		EAR 519	100W 100W	3,699 4,699
				mj1jau mn 120	60W		400		20011			10011	.,000
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EAR 549	200W	
Electrocompaniet AW100DMB	100W	
Electrocompaniet AW120DMB	120W	
Electrocompaniet AW250DMB Electrocompaniet AW180MB	250W 180W	
Exposure IV	80W	
Exposure XVI	125W	
Gamma Aeon	20W	
Gamma Space Ref	18W	
Gamma Aeon Ref	50W	
Graaf 5050	50W	
Graaf GM20 Graaf GM100	60W	
Graaf GM200	100W 200W	
Jadis DA8	80W	
Jadis DA7	100W	
Jadis JA30	30W	
Jadis JA300B Jadis JA80	10W	
Jadis JA200	60W 160W	
Jadis JA500	400W	
Krell KAV500/2	100W	
Krell FPB200	200W	
Krell FPB300	300W	
Krell FPB600	600W	
Krell KAS2	200W	
Lexicon 225 Lexicon 501	250W 500W	
Linn Klout	80W	
Lumley M125	120W	
Lumley M250	250W	
Magnum Class A mono	180W	
Magnum A200SE	275W	
Marantz Model 8 Marantz Model 9	35W 70W	
Mark Levinson 331	100W	
Mark Levinson 332	200W	
Mark Levinson 333	300W	
Mark Levinson 33H	150W	
Matisse Ref Monoblocks	180W	
Meracus Tentare Meracus Cantare	75W	
Muse Model 160 Ser. II	-W 160W	
Muse Model 150	125W	
Muse Model 175 Ser. II	175W	
Muse Model 300 Ser. II	300W	
Musical Fidelity F16	200W	
Musical Fidelity F19		
Panworth M100	300W	
Papworth M100 Papworth M200	100W	
Papworth M100 Papworth M200 Roksan ROK-M1.5	100W 200W	
Papworth M200 Roksan ROK-M1.5 Shearne Phase 1 Pwr Ref	100W	
Papworth M200 Roksan ROK-M1.5 Shearne Phase 1 Pwr Ref Sonic Frontiers Power 1	100W 200W 160W	
Papworth M200 Roksan ROK-M1.5 Shearne Phase 1 Pwr Ref Sonic Frontiers Power 1 Sonic Frontiers Power 2	100W 200W 160W 100W 55W 110W	
Papworth M200 Roksan ROK-M1.5 Shearne Phase 1 Pwr Ref Sonic Frontiers Power 1 Sonic Frontiers Power 2 Sonic Frontiers Power 3	100W 200W 160W 100W 55W 110W 220W	
Papworth M200 Roksan ROK-M1.5 Shearne Phase 1 Pwr Ref Sonic Frontiers Power 1 Sonic Frontiers Power 2 Sonic Frontiers Power 3 Sumo Model Ten/M	100W 200W 160W 100W 55W 110W 220W 240W	
Papworth M200 Roksan ROK-M1.5 Shearne Phase 1 Pwr Ref Sonic Frontiers Power 1 Sonic Frontiers Power 2 Sonic Frontiers Power 3	100W 200W 160W 100W 55W 110W 220W 240W 300W	
Papworth M200 Roksan ROK-M1.5 Shearne Phase 1 Pwr Ref Sonic Frontiers Power 1 Sonic Frontiers Power 2 Sonic Frontiers Power 3 Sumo Model Ten/M Sunfire Sunfire T+A A3000 Talk Electronics Tornado 5	100W 200W 160W 100W 55W 110W 220W 240W	
Papworth M200 Roksan ROK-M1.5 Shearne Phase 1 Pwr Ref Sonic Frontiers Power 1 Sonic Frontiers Power 2 Sonic Frontiers Power 3 Sum Model Ten/M Sunfire Sunfire T+A A3000 Talk Electronics Tornado 5 Tesserar TAMP-60	100W 200W 160W 55W 110W 220W 240W 300W 190W 200W 60W	
Papworth M200 Roksan ROK-M1.5 Shearne Phase 1 Pwr Ref Sonic Frontiers Power 1 Sonic Frontiers Power 2 Sonic Frontiers Power 3 Sumo Model Ten/M Sunfire Sunfire T+A A3000 Talk Electronics Tornado 5 Tesserac TAMP-60 Trilogy 958	100W 200W 160W 55W 110W 220W 240W 300W 190W 200W 60W 100W	
Papworth M200 Roksan ROK-M1.5 Shearne Phase 1 Pwr Ref Sonic Frontiers Power 1 Sonic Frontiers Power 2 Sonic Frontiers Power 3 Sumo Model Ten/M Sunfire Sunfire T+A A3000 Talk Electronics Tornado 5 Tesserac TAMP-60 Trilogy 958 Tube Tech Genesis Sig.	100W 200W 160W 55W 110W 220W 240W 300W 190W 200W 60W 100W	
Papworth M200 Roksan ROK-M1.5 Shearne Phase 1 Pwr Ref Sonic Frontiers Power 1 Sonic Frontiers Power 2 Sonic Frontiers Power 3 Sumo Model Ten/M Sunfire Sunfire T+A A3000 Talk Electronics Tornado 5 Tesserac TAMP-60 Trilogy 958	100W 200W 160W 55W 110W 220W 240W 300W 190W 200W 60W 100W 100W 150W	
Papworth M200 Roksan ROK-M1.5 Shearne Phase 1 Pwr Ref Sonic Frontiers Power 1 Sonic Frontiers Power 2 Sonic Frontiers Power 3 Sumo Model Ten/M Sunfire Sunfire T+A A3000 Talk Electronics Tornado 5 Tesserac TAMP-60 Trilogy 958 Tube Tech Synergy DMA	100W 200W 160W 55W 110W 220W 240W 300W 190W 200W 60W 100W	
Papworth M200 Roksan ROK-M1.5 Shearne Phase 1 Pwr Ref Sonic Frontiers Power 1 Sonic Frontiers Power 2 Sonic Frontiers Power 3 Sumo Model Ten/M Sunfire Sunfire T+A A3000 Talk Electronics Tornado 5 Tesserac TAMP-60 Trilogy 958 Tube Tech Genesis Sig. Tube Tech Genesis Sig. Tube Tech Genesis Sig. Tube Tech Synergy DMA Unison Smart 845 Unison Palladio	100W 200W 160W 55W 110W 220W 240W 300W 190W 200W 100W 100W 150W 24W 32W 65W	
Papworth M200 Roksan ROK-M1.5 Shearne Phase 1 Pwr Ref Sonic Frontiers Power 1 Sonic Frontiers Power 2 Somic Frontiers Power 3 Sumo Model Ten/M Sunfire Sunfire T+A A3000 Talk Electronics Tornado 5 Tesserac TAMP-60 Trilogy 958 Tube Tech Genesis Sig. Tube Tech Genesis Sig. Tube Tech Genesis Sig. Tube Tech Genesis Sig. Tube Stat Genesis Sig. Tube Tech Synergy DMA Unison Palladio	100W 200W 160W 55W 110W 220W 240W 300W 190W 200W 60W 100W 100W 150W 24W 32W	
Papworth M200 Roksan ROK-M1.5 Shearne Phase 1 Pwr Ref Sonic Frontiers Power 1 Sonic Frontiers Power 2 Sonic Frontiers Power 3 Sumo Model Ten/M Sunfire Sunfire T+A A3000 Talk Electronics Tornado 5 Tesserac TAMP-60 Trilogy 958 Tube Tech Genesis Sig. Tube Tech Genesis Sig. Tube Tech Genesis Sig. Tube Tech Synergy DMA Unison Smart 845 Unison Palladio	100W 200W 160W 55W 110W 220W 240W 300W 190W 200W 100W 100W 150W 24W 32W 65W	
Papworth M200 Roksan ROK-M1.5 Shearne Phase 1 Pwr Ref Sonic Frontiers Power 1 Sonic Frontiers Power 2 Sonic Frontiers Power 3 Sumo Model Ten/M Sunfire Sunfire T+A A3000 Talk Electronics Tornado 5 Tesserac TAMP-60 Trilogy 958 Tube Tech Genesis Sig. Tube Tech Genesis Sig. Tube Tech Genesis Sig. Tube Tech Synergy DMA Unison Smart 845 Unison Palladio	100W 200W 160W 55W 110W 220W 240W 300W 190W 200W 100W 100W 150W 24W 32W 65W	
Papworth M200 Roksan ROK-M1.5 Shearne Phase 1 Pwr Ref Sonic Frontiers Power 1 Sonic Frontiers Power 2 Sonic Frontiers Power 3 Sumo Model Ten/M Sunfire Sunfire T+A A3000 Talk Electronics Tornado 5 Tesserac TAMP-60 Trilogy 958 Tube Tech Genesis Sig. Tube Tech Genesis Sig. Tube Tech Genesis Sig. Tube Tech Synergy DMA Unison Smart 845 Unison Palladio	100W 200W 160W 55W 110W 220W 240W 300W 190W 200W 100W 100W 150W 24W 32W 65W	
Papworth M200 Roksan ROK-M1.5 Shearne Phase 1 Pwr Ref Sonic Frontiers Power 1 Sonic Frontiers Power 2 Sonic Frontiers Power 3 Sumo Model Ten/M Sunfire Sunfire T+A A3000 Talk Electronics Tornado 5 Tesserac TAMP-60 Trilogy 958 Tube Tech Genesis Sig. Tube Tech Genesis Sig. Tube Tech Genesis Sig. Tube Tech Synergy DMA Unison Smart 845 Unison Palladio	100W 200W 160W 55W 110W 220W 240W 300W 190W 200W 100W 100W 150W 24W 32W 65W	
Papworth M200 Roksan ROK-M1.5 Shearne Phase 1 Pwr Ref Sonic Frontiers Power 1 Sonic Frontiers Power 2 Sonic Frontiers Power 3 Sumo Model Ten/M Sunfire Sunfire T+A A3000 Talk Electronics Tornado 5 Tesserac TAMP-60 Trilogy 958 Tube Tech Genesis Sig. Tube Tech Genesis Sig. Tube Tech Genesis Sig. Tube Tech Synergy DMA Unison Smart 845 Unison Palladio	100W 200W 160W 55W 110W 220W 240W 300W 190W 200W 100W 100W 150W 24W 32W 65W	
Papworth M200 Roksan ROK-M1.5 Shearne Phase 1 Pwr Ref Sonic Frontiers Power 1 Sonic Frontiers Power 2 Sonic Frontiers Power 3 Sumo Model Ten/M Sunfire Sunfire T+A A3000 Talk Electronics Tornado 5 Tesserac TAMP-60 Trilogy 958 Tube Tech Genesis Sig. Tube Tech Genesis Sig. Tube Tech Genesis Sig. Tube Tech Synergy DMA Unison Smart 845 Unison Palladio	100W 200W 160W 55W 110W 220W 240W 300W 190W 200W 100W 100W 150W 24W 32W 65W	
Papworth M200 Roksan ROK-M1.5 Shearne Phase 1 Pwr Ref Sonic Frontiers Power 1 Sonic Frontiers Power 2 Sonic Frontiers Power 3 Sumo Model Ten/M Sunfire Sunfire T+A A3000 Talk Electronics Tornado 5 Tesserac TAMP-60 Trilogy 958 Tube Tech Genesis Sig. Tube Tech Genesis Sig. Tube Tech Genesis Sig. Tube Tech Synergy DMA Unison Smart 845 Unison Palladio	100W 200W 160W 55W 110W 220W 240W 300W 190W 200W 100W 100W 150W 24W 32W 65W	
Papworth M200 Roksan ROK-M1.5 Shearne Phase 1 Pwr Ref Sonic Frontiers Power 1 Sonic Frontiers Power 2 Sonic Frontiers Power 3 Sumo Model Ten/M Sunfire Sunfire T+A A3000 Talk Electronics Tornado 5 Tesserac TAMP-60 Trilogy 958 Tube Tech Genesis Sig. Tube Tech Genesis Sig. Tube Tech Genesis Sig. Tube Tech Synergy DMA Unison Smart 845 Unison Palladio	100W 200W 160W 55W 110W 220W 240W 300W 190W 200W 100W 100W 150W 24W 32W 65W	
Papworth M200 Roksan ROK-M1.5 Shearne Phase 1 Pwr Ref Sonic Frontiers Power 1 Sonic Frontiers Power 2 Sonic Frontiers Power 3 Sumo Model Ten/M Sunfire Sunfire T+A A3000 Talk Electronics Tornado 5 Tesserac TAMP-60 Trilogy 958 Tube Tech Genesis Sig. Tube Tech Genesis Sig. Tube Tech Genesis Sig. Tube Tech Synergy DMA Unison Smart 845 Unison Palladio	100W 200W 160W 55W 110W 220W 240W 300W 190W 200W 100W 100W 150W 24W 32W 65W	
Papworth M200 Roksan ROK-M1.5 Shearne Phase 1 Pwr Ref Sonic Frontiers Power 1 Sonic Frontiers Power 2 Sonic Frontiers Power 3 Sumo Model Ten/M Sunfire Sunfire T+A A3000 Talk Electronics Tornado 5 Tesserac TAMP-60 Trilogy 958 Tube Tech Genesis Sig. Tube Tech Genesis Sig. Tube Tech Genesis Sig. Tube Tech Synergy DMA Unison Smart 845 Unison Palladio	100W 200W 160W 55W 110W 220W 240W 300W 190W 200W 100W 100W 150W 24W 32W 65W	
Papworth M200 Roksan ROK-M1.5 Shearne Phase 1 Pwr Ref Sonic Frontiers Power 1 Sonic Frontiers Power 2 Sonic Frontiers Power 3 Sumo Model Ten/M Sunfire Sunfire T+A A3000 Talk Electronics Tornado 5 Tesserac TAMP-60 Trilogy 958 Tube Tech Genesis Sig. Tube Tech Genesis Sig. Tube Tech Genesis Sig. Tube Tech Synergy DMA Unison Smart 845 Unison Palladio	100W 200W 160W 55W 110W 220W 240W 300W 190W 200W 100W 100W 150W 24W 32W 65W	
Papworth M200 Roksan ROK-M1.5 Shearne Phase 1 Pwr Ref Sonic Frontiers Power 1 Sonic Frontiers Power 2 Sonic Frontiers Power 3 Sumo Model Ten/M Sunfire Sunfire T+A A3000 Talk Electronics Tornado 5 Tesserac TAMP-60 Trilogy 958 Tube Tech Genesis Sig. Tube Tech Genesis Sig. Tube Tech Genesis Sig. Tube Tech Synergy DMA Unison Smart 845 Unison Palladio	100W 200W 160W 55W 110W 220W 240W 300W 190W 200W 100W 100W 150W 24W 32W 65W	

	CABLES
ANAL	OGUE INTERCONNECTS
EV	Contract Contract 20 20 20

stranded construction. ٢ \bigcirc solid-core construction. Prices of interconnects are for a one-metre terminated pair.

Apertura Model B	٢	260.00
Apertura Model A	٢	469.00
Art Yam Church 5000	٢	515.00
Audio Note AN-A	0	18.00
Audio Note AN-C	0	35.00
Audio Note AN-S	0	99.00
Audio Note AN-V	0	179.00
Audio Note AN-Vx	٢	450.00
Audioquest Jade	٢	30.00

6.499	Audioquest Turquoise 2
2,095	Audioquest Topaz 2
2,695	Audioquest Ruby 2
3,995	Audioquest Quartz
4,595	Audioquest Opal
2,199	Audioquest Emerald
4,000	Audioquest Lapis
4,999	Audioquest Diamond
7,999	Cable Talk Improved 2/CD
39,999	Cable Talk Advanced 2
2,150	Cable Talk Monitor 2.1
2,750	Cable Talk Improved 2/Tape
4,490	Cable Talk Studio 2
8.000	Cable Talk Professional 2
3,333	Cable Talk Broadcast 2
5,290	Cable Talk Reference 2
Total Contractor	
5,980	Cable Talk Signature 2 Gold
9,000	Cambridge Atlantic
9,912	Cambridge Arctic
15,518	Cambridge Pacific
21,500	Cambridge Studio Reference
3,485	Cardas Audio 300B-Microtwin
6,490	Cardas Audio Quadlink-Five
9,500	Cardas Audio Cardas Cross
12.900	Cardas Audio Hexlink-Five C
20,000	Cardas Audio Hexlink Golden-5 C
2,500	Cardas Audio Golden Cross
5,000	Connections UK Ultra
2,400	Connections UK Midas
3,750	Connections UK HD
7,500	DNM-Reson TCC75
2,450	DPA Slink
3,750	DPA White Slink
3,500	DPA Black Slink
4,000	Expressive Tech IC-1
4,495	Gamma Wow Balance
6,495	Goertz Interconnect
8,495	GT Audio Intercon
19,395	
	Henley HSP10
8,000	Henley HSP50
2,245	Henley HSP100
8,995	Henley HSP200
2,290	Heybrook Black Flash
2,690	Insert Audio Focus 1.2
3,490	Insert Audio IC100 Mk II
3,990	Insert Audio Status 3.4
2,500	lxos 104
4.000	Ixos 1003
2,645	Ixos 1003
3,825	lxos 103
2,250	txos 102
2,199	Ixos 101
2,495	Ixos 100.XO3
4,995	Kimber PBJ
9,995	Kimber KC1
4,200	Kimber Hero
2,170	Kimber Silver Streak
3,000	Kimber KCAG
2,100	Kimber KCTG
7,350	Kronos Konnekt 3
3,395	Kronos Konnekt 2
4,700	Kronos Konnekt 1
6.400	LAT International IC-50
3,250	LAT International IC-80
11,995	LAT International IC-100-D
2,500	LAT International IC-200 Mk II
2,250	Lieder Chanson
	Lieder Lek
	Lieder Het Lied
	Lieder Song
1000	Lieder Maas
	Lieder Rijn
	Lieder Waal
14-15-1	Lumley Silver 12/2
E KE	Lumley Silver 14/4
A STREET	Moth Leyline Black
	Moth Leyline Grey
100-10	Nordost Magic
	Nordost Black Knight
	Nordost Blue Angel
	Nordost Blue Heaven
	Nordost Red Dawn
Carlo and	Nordost SPM
	Ortofon 7N interconnect
S	Precious Metals Silver Signal 35
S. States	Precious Metals Silver Signal 50
	Precious Metals Silver Signal 52
	Precious Metals Silver Signal 53
	Precious Metals Silver Signal 100
	Precious Metals Silver Signal 102
	Precious Metals Silver Signal 103
	Precious Metals Silver Signal 104
	Precious Metals Silver Signal 200
260.00	Precious Metals Silver Signal 202
469.00	Precious Metals Silver Signal 203
515.00	Precious Metals Silver Signal 204
18.00	QED P2 Gold
35.00	QED Incon P2 Screened
99.00	QED Incon P1 Screened
179.00	QED Qnect 2
and the second second	QED Qnect 4
450.00	Roksan ROK-Intercon
30.00	Siltech MC2-12

40.00	Siltech MC4-24S	٢		400.00
60.00	Siltech FTM-3S	٢		730.00
80.00	Silver Sounds SS2	٢		99.00
120.00	Silver Sounds SS1	0		199.00
189.00	Silver Tone Ex-Static	0		35.00
249.00	Silver Tone Sci-Fi	•		95.00
399.00	SME S2LB-4	٢		
		٢		46.18
549.00	SME S3LB-4	٢		52.06
26.00	SME 4900A	٢		76.83
35.00	SME 5900A	٢		102.57
50.00	Sonic Link Bonus	٢		15.00
50.00	Sonic Link Red	٢		25.00
65.00	Sonic Link Silver pink	Ö		35.00
85.00	Sonic Link Black	0		49.00
	Sonic Link White			65.00
100.00		٢	-	
150.00	Sonic Link Brown		0	70.00
300.00	Sonic Link Violet	٢		85.00
10.00	Sonic Link Maroon	٢		125.00
20.00	Sonic Link Blue Nickel		۲	150.00
30.00	Sonic Link Vermillion		0	195.00
40.00	Sonic Link Red earth		۲	300.00
115.00	Sonic Link Black earth		0	450.00
200.00	Sonic Link Blue earth		0	695.00
			-	
360.00	Sonic Link Black Rhodium	-	۲	995.00
530.00	ChordCo Chrysalis	٢		33.00
600.00	ChordCo Cobra	٢		50.00
700.00	ChordCo Siren	٢		65.00
28.00	ChordCo Chameleon	٢		85.00
39.00	ChordCo Solid			99.00
46.00	Transparent Cable Musichord Int	٢		48.00
34.00	Transparent Cable The Link	0		92.00
41.00	Transparent Cable Music Link			C
		٢		119.00
75.00	Trichord Pulsewire 75		0	169.00
245.00	Vampire Wire CC	٢		24.00
700.00	Vampire Wire CCC/II	٢		58.00
799.00	Vampire Wire SC/II	٢		98.00
148.00	Vampire Wire SC/IV	٢		144.00
130.00	Vampire Wire AI/2	٢		259.00
20.00	Vampire Wire SL	٢		412.00
35.00	Van Den Hul Storm			25.00
65.00	Van Den Hul Source HB	-		50.00
	Van Den Hul D102 IIIHB	0		
95.00		٢		70.00
49.95	Van Den Hul Thunderline HB	٢		130.00
21.50	Van Den Hul First	٢		210.00
46.95	Van Den Hul Second	٢		240.00
160.00	Van Den Hul MC Gold	٢		400.00
20.00	Van Den Hul MC Silver IT	٢	1	,240.00
		<u>v</u>		
30.00	Van Den Hul MC Silver IT Bal	(iii)	1000	560 00
30.00	Van Den Hul MC Silver IT Bal		1	560.00
40.00	XLO Type 150	0		50.00
40.00 45.00			۲	
40.00 45.00 60.00	XLO Type 150		•	50.00
40.00 45.00 60.00 100.00	XLO Type 150		•	50.00
40.00 45.00 60.00 100.00 150.00	XLO Type 150		•	50.00
40.00 45.00 60.00 100.00 150.00 68.00	XLO Type 150		•	50.00
40.00 45.00 60.00 100.00 150.00 68.00 96.00	XLO Type 150		•	50.00
40.00 45.00 60.00 100.00 150.00 68.00	XLO Type 150		•	50.00
40.00 45.00 60.00 100.00 150.00 68.00 96.00	XLO Type 150		•	50.00
40.00 45.00 60.00 150.00 68.00 96.00 110.00	XLO Type 150		•	50.00
40.00 45.00 60.00 150.00 68.00 96.00 110.00 180.00 390.00	XLO Type 150			50.00
40.00 45.00 60.00 150.00 68.00 96.00 110.00 180.00 390.00 720.00	XLO Type 150			50.00
40.00 45.00 60.00 150.00 68.00 96.00 110.00 180.00 390.00 720.00 49.00	XLO Type 150			50.00
40.00 45.00 60.00 100.00 150.00 68.00 96.00 110.00 180.00 390.00 720.00 49.00 99.00	XLO Type 150			50.00
40.00 45.00 60.00 150.00 68.00 96.00 110.00 180.00 390.00 720.00 49.00 99.00 199.00	XLO Type 150			50.00
40.00 45.00 60.00 150.00 68.00 96.00 110.00 180.00 390.00 720.00 49.00 99.00 199.00 37.00	XL0 Type 150 XL0 Type 0.1			50.00
40.00 45.00 60.00 100.00 150.00 68.00 96.00 110.00 180.00 390.00 720.00 49.00 99.00 199.00 37.00 60.00	XL0 Type 150 XL0 Type 0.1			50.00
40.00 45.00 60.00 100.00 150.00 96.00 110.00 180.00 390.00 390.00 49.00 99.00 37.00 89.00	XLO Type 150			50.00
40.00 45.00 60.00 100.00 150.00 68.00 96.00 110.00 180.00 390.00 720.00 49.00 99.00 199.00 37.00 60.00	XLO Type 150 XLO Type 0.1			50.00
40.00 45.00 60.00 100.00 150.00 96.00 110.00 180.00 390.00 390.00 49.00 99.00 37.00 89.00	XL0 Type 150 XL0 Type 0.1			50.00
40.00 45.00 60.00 100.00 150.00 96.00 110.00 180.00 390.00 49.00 99.00 199.00 37.00 60.00 89.00 151.00	XLO Type 150 XLO Type 0.1			50.00
40.00 45.00 60.00 100.00 68.00 96.00 110.00 390.00 720.00 99.00 37.00 60.00 89.00 151.00 340.00				50.00
40.00 45.00 60.00 150.00 68.00 96.00 180.00 390.00 720.00 99.00 37.00 99.00 37.00 60.00 89.00 151.00 340.00	XLO Type 150 XLO Type 0.1	©	•	50.00
40.00 45.00 60.00 150.00 68.00 96.00 180.00 390.00 720.00 99.00 199.00 37.00 60.00 89.00 151.00 340.00 420.00		©	•	50.00
40.00 45.00 60.00 150.00 150.00 68.00 96.00 110.00 180.00 390.00 49.00 49.00 49.00 49.00 49.00 57.00 60.00 89.00 151.00 420.00 420.00 580.00 620.00	ALO Type 150 ALO Type 0.1	©	•	50.00
40.00 45.00 60.00 150.00 68.00 96.00 110.00 180.00 720.00 49.00 99.00 199.00 37.00 60.00 151.00 340.00 420.00 420.00 580.00 620.00	ALO Type 150 RLO Type 0.1	© NNNE tion. ction. are	CTS	50.00
40.00 45.00 60.00 100.00 150.00 68.00 96.00 110.00 180.00 390.00 720.00 49.00 99.00 199.00 37.00 60.00 89.00 151.00 340.00 420.00 420.00 580.00 580.00 620.00 580.00 620.00 620.00 600.00	ALO Type 150 RLO Type 0.1	© NNNE tion. ction. are	CTS	50.00
40.00 45.00 60.00 100.00 150.00 68.00 96.00 110.00 180.00 390.00 720.00 49.00 37.00 37.00 49.00 37.00 49.00 151.00 340.00 420.00 420.00 580.00 620.00 60.00 60.00 60.00 60.00 60.00 60.00 60.00 60.00 60.00 151.00 60.00 60.00 151.00 60.00 60.00 199.0	ALO Type 150 ALO Type 0.1	© NNNE tion. ction. are	CTS	50.00
40.00 45.00 60.00 100.00 150.00 68.00 96.00 180.00 720.00 720.00 720.00 720.00 199.00 37.00 60.00 89.00 151.00 340.00 420.00 580.00 620.00 620.00 620.00 115.00	ALO Type 150 TLO Type 0.1	© NNNE tion. are ated p	CTS	50.00
40.00 45.00 60.00 100.00 150.00 68.00 96.00 110.00 180.00 390.00 720.00 49.00 99.00 199.00 37.00 60.00 89.00 151.00 340.00 420.00 420.00 580.0	ALO Type 150 XLO Type 0.1	© NNNE tion. are ated p	CTS	50.00
40.00 45.00 60.00 100.00 150.00 68.00 96.00 110.00 180.00 390.00 720.00 49.00 37.00 37.00 37.00 37.00 37.00 49.00 151.00 340.00 420.00 420.00 420.00 620.00 115.00 115.00 115.00 115.00	XLO Type 150 XLO Type 0.1	© NNNE tion. are ated p	CTS	50.00 180.00 139.00 139.00 255.00
40.00 45.00 60.00 100.00 150.00 68.00 96.00 180.00 720.00 49.00 99.00 199.00 37.00 60.00 89.00 151.00 340.00 420.00 620.00 620.00 620.00 175.00 175.00 175.00 100.00 200.00	XLO Type 150 XLO Type 0.1	© NNNE tion. are ated p	CTS	50.00
40.00 45.00 60.00 100.00 150.00 68.00 96.00 110.00 390.00 720.00 49.00 99.00 199.00 37.00 60.00 89.00 151.00 340.00 420.00 420.00 420.00 580.00 580.00 580.00 580.00 115.00 175.00 175.00 175.00	ALO Type 150 TLO Type 0.1	© NNNE tion. are ated p	CTS	50.00 180.00 139.00 139.00 255.00
40.00 45.00 60.00 100.00 150.00 68.00 96.00 180.00 720.00 49.00 99.00 199.00 37.00 60.00 89.00 151.00 340.00 420.00 620.00 620.00 620.00 175.00 175.00 175.00 100.00 200.00	XLO Type 150 XLO Type 0.1	ONNE tion. are ated p	CTS	50.00 180.00 190.00 139.00 139.00 255.00 20.00
40.00 45.00 60.00 100.00 150.00 68.00 96.00 110.00 390.00 720.00 49.00 99.00 199.00 37.00 60.00 89.00 151.00 340.00 420.00 420.00 420.00 580.00 580.00 580.00 580.00 115.00 175.00 175.00 175.00	ALO Type 150 TLO Type 0.1	ONNE	CTS	50.00 180.00 139.00 139.00 255.00 20.00 20.00 20.00 20.00 20.00 20.00 20.00 275.00
40.00 45.00 60.00 100.00 150.00 68.00 96.00 110.00 180.00 390.00 720.00 49.00 37.00 37.00 37.00 49.00 37.00 49.00 151.00 340.00 420.00 420.00 420.00 580.00 200.00 115.00 175.00 300.00 35.00 60.00 98.00	XLO Type 150 XLO Type 0.1	S NNE ated 1 S S S S	CTS	50.00 180.00 139.00 139.00 255.00 20.00 30.00 275.00 30.00
40.00 45.00 60.00 100.00 150.00 68.00 96.00 110.00 390.00 720.00 49.00 99.00 199.00 37.00 60.00 89.00 151.00 340.00 420.00 420.00 420.00 420.00 580.00 115.00 175.0	XLO Type 150 XLO Type 0.1	ONNE	CTS	50.00 180.00 139.00 255.00 20.00 20.00 275.00 0.00 0.00 0.00
40.00 45.00 60.00 100.00 150.00 68.00 96.00 110.00 180.00 390.00 720.00 49.00 37.00 60.00 89.00 151.00 37.00 420.00 420.00 420.00 420.00 620.00 620.00 115.00 115.00 115.00 115.00 115.00 200.00 98.00 145.00 285.00	XLO Type 150 XLO Type 0.1	ONNE tion. are ated p	CTS	50.00 180.00 139.00 255.00 225.00 225.00 20.00 275.00 30.00 275.00 30.00 50.00
40.00 45.00 60.00 100.00 150.00 68.00 96.00 110.00 180.00 720.00 49.00 99.00 199.00 37.00 60.00 89.00 151.00 340.00 420.00 580.00 620.00 100.00 125.00 100.00 35.00 60.00 98.00 35.00 60.00 98.00 35.00 200.0	XLO Type 150 XLO Type 0.1	S NNE ated 1 S S S S	CTS	50.00 180.00 139.00 255.00 255.00 20.00 30.00 30.00 30.00 90.00 90.00 90.00
40.00 45.00 60.00 100.00 150.00 68.00 96.00 110.00 390.00 720.00 49.00 99.00 199.00 37.00 60.00 89.00 151.00 340.00 420.00 420.00 420.00 420.00 580.00 155.00 175.00 175.00 175.00 175.00 175.00 200.00 89.00 145.00 285.00 285.00 250.00	XLO Type 150 XLO Type 0.1	ONNE tion. are ated p	CTS	50.00 180.00 139.00 255.00 20.00 20.00 275.00 20.00 275.00 0.00 0.00 0.00 0.00 0.00 0.00 0.00
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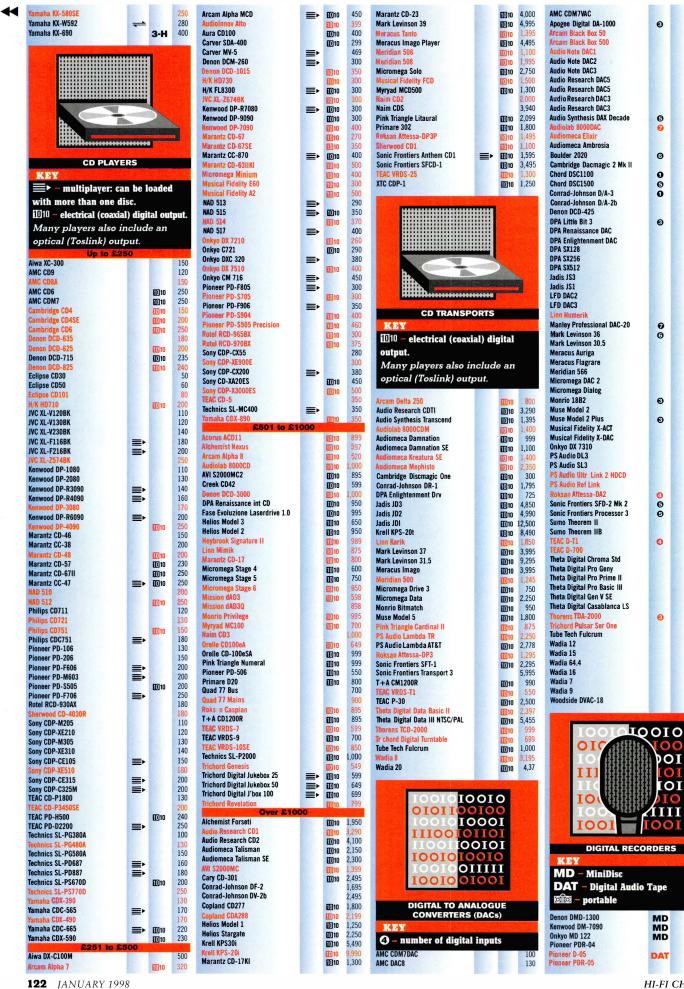
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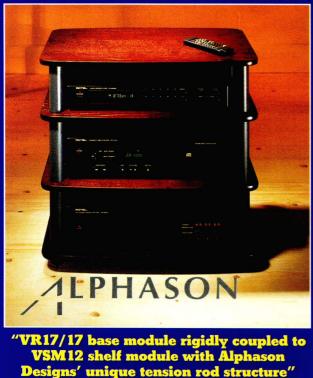


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-	D	101	50	Royd Royd	55	99	
8	D		50	SD Acoustics SD Alexandra	50	369	
	D	-	60	Silverado Silverado 1 Stand	60	350	
	D		70	Sonus Faber Ironwood Sonus Faber Stonewood		475	
8	D		70	Sound Org Z037		497	
1	D	20	80 90	Sound Org 2027		55	
8	D	-10	110	Sound Org Z026		55	
	D	-10	120	Sound Org Z518	45	65	
	D	20	140	Soundstyle X6118	42	100	
	D		140	Stands Unique Speaker support	59	159	
				Stands Unique Tuned Spkr Support	59	220	
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				Alphason VSM17	1	85	
				Alphason GSM17	1	85	
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an	ds			Alphason R17/17	3	120	
			-	Alphason GMH1P	1	150	
				Alphason GR17/17 Alphason VP17/17	3	150 190	
				Alphason VR17/17 Audiophile Base 01	3	79	
	60		47	Audiophile S4T120	4	280	
	60		49	Audiophile S4T120P	4	560	
	120		49	BCD Model 1006/8	1	795	
	60		59	BCD Model 1000	3	1,250	
	60		84	Custom Design G3	3	130	
	60		85	Custom Design Aspect 650	4	240	
	60		125 80	Custom Design Aspect 500AV Custom Design Aspect 850	3	270 270	
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Fi-Rax R4	6	399	Projekt B4
Frameworks H175	1	130	Projekt B Multi
Frameworks FS1		150	Projekt B3ii
Frameworks FT2		285	Projekt C3
Frameworks FT3		350	Projekt D3
Frameworks H700		355	Projekt C3i
Frameworks H900		389	Projekt B5
Frameworks H500/H175	3	404	Projekt C3iii
Heybrook Stand-Signature	4	249	Projekt C3ii
Impulse Iso-plate		190	Projekt D3i
JPW 3 Tier	3	80	Projekt C4
JPW 5 Tier	5	100	Projekt C3iv
Kudos Audio Corinthian	5	600	Projekt D3ii
Linn K3000		85	Projekt C Multi
Mana Sound Frame		125	Projekt D4
Mana Mini Table		150	Quadraspire Q4S mini shelf
Mana Power supply table		150	Quadraspire Q4S shelf
Mana Reference flat top		150	Quadraspire QKS Cabinet shelf
Mana Sound Shelf	100	175	Quadraspire QAV shelf
Mana Sound Base		175	Quadraspire Q4M mini table
Mana Sound Stage		200	Quadraspire Q4 table
Mana Sound Table		235	Quadraspire QAV table
Mana Ref Shelf		325	Quadraspire Q4SP Table
Mana Reference Table		350	Quadraspire QAVSP Table
Mana 2 Tier Amp stand		375	Quadraspire QK Cabinet
Mana 3 Tier Amp Stand		450	Reson DOMOPS
Mana 4 Tier Amp Stand		450	Reson DOMOWS
Mana 5 Tier Amp Stand		600	Sound Org Z022
Mana 6 Tier Amp Stand		700	Sound Org Z021
Mission Hark		298	Sound Org Z030
Optimum G2	2	69	Sound Org Z060
Optimum G2/Pedestal	2	99	Sound Org 2038
Optimum G4/Pedestal	5	130	Sound Org Z540
Optimum OPT 3406	3	149	Sound Org Z545
Optimum G5/Pedestal	6	150	Sound Org Z560
Optimum OPT 4906	4	199	Sound Org Z530
Optimum OPT 6606	5	249	Soundstyle X300
Optimum OPT 340	3	249	Soundstyle X305
Optimum OPT 490	4	299	Soundstyle X053
Optimum OPT 440	4	299	Soundstyle X050
Optimum OPT 10206	6	299	Soundstyle X6300
Optimum AV 300	3	329	Soundstyle X100
Optimum OPT 700	5	349	Soundstyle X6110
Optimum OPT 610	5	349	Soundstyle X058
Optimum OPT 660	5	349	Soundstyle X310
Optimum OPT 1020	6	399	Soundstyle X105
Optimum OPT 1190	7	450	Soundstyle X6053
Projekt A3	3	145	Soundstyle X6100
Projekt A4	4	190	Soundstyle X6310
Projekt A5	4	235	Soundstyle X6058
Projekt B3	5	255	
Projekt A6		233	Soundstyle X6105
Projekt B3i	6	300	Soundstyle Finewoods W105
FIUJORE DOI	6	300	Stands Unique Isolation Platform

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Stands Unique Sound Support	4	249
Stands Unique Sound Tower	5	289
Stands Unique Compact Sound Su	pp 4	315
Stands Unique Sound Support 10	4	315
Stands Unique Sound Twr Cabinet	5	369
Stands Unique Ref Wall Support	1	550
Stands Unique Ultimate Tower	10	689
Stands Unique Ref Floor Support	6	799
Target B5	5	175
Townshend Seismic Sink 1-CD		110
Townshend Seismic Sink 1-3D		400
Townshend S/Sink Stand 1-4	4	999
Townshend Seismic Sink 3-4	4	1,250
Wilson Benesch Standard Shelf	1	130
Wilson Benesch Mono Block	1	265
Wilson Benesch Kevlar Shelf	1	270
Wilson Benesch Asside Basic		590
Wilson Benesch Asside	4	720
Wilson Benesch Triptych	1	990
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2 – stand mount; smaller models
designed to be raised above the floor.
→ – wall mount; designed to be hung
on the wall or mounted in-wall.
2 – box type, including infinite baffle,
reflex and transmission line types.
\square - horn type; mostly large and very
efficient.
— panel type, including electrostatic

and planar magnetic types.

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Allison Micro Monitors	E	
Allison Mini References	E	
Celestion 12i	Ē	0
Denon SC-M2	Ē	
Gale Mini Monitors		
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Jamo Cornet 25	8	
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Jamo SAT-170	<u> </u>	
Jamo Studio-110	8	
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Jamo Artina		
Jamo D-115	E	
Jamo 28		
JBL TLX111	P	
JPW Mini Monitor	9	
JPW ML110	8	0
JPW Gold Monitor		
JPW ML210		0
JPW ML310	Ē	0
JPW ML410	Ē	0
JVC SX-SC1VBK	Ē	
JVC SP-V50		
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ake it to 11 Captain! The Jeff Rowland entra amp on

HI-FI CHOICE

HX Citation 7.4 Infinity SSW-10 Jamo SB0SW Jamo SW303E Jamo SW303E Jamo SW305E Jamo SW500E JBL SW600E JBL CM6 JBL PSW300 JBL SW100 JBL PSW1200 JBL PSW1200 JPW SW60 JPW SW60 JPW SW60 JPW SW60 JPW SW60 JPW SW6120B KEF Model 20B

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Moth Mk I	0	
Moth MKIII Stainless	٢	
Moth Mk III Tungsten	٢	
Moth Moth 900	٢	
Naim ARO	0	
N'ham Space	0	
N'ham Paragon 3	0	
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Rega RB300	٢	
Rega RB900	0	
Rockport Series 7000	8	
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SME Series IV	0	
SME Series V	0	
Wheaton Music Tri-Planar 4i	0	
Wheaton Music Tri-Planar 5i	0	
Wilson Benesch Act 0.5	0	
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Wilson Benesch ACT2	0	
Zeta AS	0	
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	#	550	Denon TU-260L
	#	800	Denon TU-215RD
0		800	Denon TU-425RD
0		1,100	H/K TU930
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0		109	Kenwood KT-2080
0		174	Kenwood KT-3080
0		598	Linn Kudos
	#	6,000	Linn Kremlin
0		320	Magnum Dynalab FT11
0		420	Magnum Dynalab FT-101A
0		895	Magnum Dynalab Etude
0		309	Magnum Dynalab 108
0		338	Marantz ST-57
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۲		526	Marantz ST-17
0		565	Meridian 504
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٢		705	Micromega Minium FM Mk2
٢		802	Micromega Tuner
0		983	Mission Cyrus FM7
0		1,461	Musical Fidelity E50
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0		795	NAD 710
0		950	NAD 712
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Arcam Alpha 8 alta 280 olab 8000T

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TT430	01		70
a Lab-710	0	-	60
a Lab-810	01	-	70
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Mycro			435
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Interspace			500
PL-J2500-C	01	-	80
PL-990	01	-	130
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t 1/510	01		200
t 2/520	01		300
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dek IIX/900	01		230
dek 1/920/Moth	O		235
dek IIXE/900Ap	U		388
dek 960			500
dek 2X2			500
s SL-J110D	01	-	120
s SL-BD20	0	-	160
s SL-BD22	O	-	180
s SL-1210Mkll	0		400
s SL-1200Mkll	O		400
TD-180 AT91	0	-	190
TD-280 IV/UK	01	-	210
TD-166 VI/UK/RB	0		400
TD-318 III TP50	0		500

	10000	Recting 1	
dio Note AN-TT 2			995
dio Note AN-TT 3			1,995
diomeca Romance	01		1,895
diomeca J1			3,500
sis 2001			2,750
sis Ovation II			4,800
sis Debut Gold Std III			7,200
sis Debut Gold Vacuum			9,250
antry QT Level 2 paraudio Evolution	0		705 1,790
araudio Reference	O	-	3,990
M-Reson Rota 1	01	-	3.900
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pulse Moskito	01		695
zma Stabi			1,950
zma Stabi Reference			3,750
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chell Orbe			1,950
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nam Mentor			2,600
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ga Planar 9	O	-	1,598
son RS1M	O		600
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ckport Capella II	01		7,000
ckport Sirius III	01		50,000
ksan Xerxes 10			1,295
ksan TMS			2,750
IE Model 20/2			3,403
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ratosphere ST1	01		6,500
chnics SL-1200LTD	01		700
orens TD-146 VI TP50	O		550
orens TD-2001 TP90	OI		700
orens TD-520 SME			1,050
ell Tempered Record Player	01		1,850
Il Tempered Classic	01		2,980
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Ison Benesch Full Circle	01	-	1,995
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Remember that all entries printed in **RED** refer to hi-fi products that we have reviewed. Turn to page 130 for a full summary of test results!



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P24

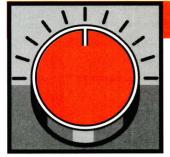
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AMC T7 Arcam Alpha 7



kamichi...ortofon...project...quad...roksan...rogers...rotel...sennheiser...sony...sumiko...systemdek...target...tdl...tube technology...



Amplifiers Brought to you in association with

he amplifier sits at the heart of the system, processing the outputs from the various music sources as necessary and then driving the loudspeakers. These two (quite separate) functions are integrated into a single box at the low-to-middle price points, but become separated into preamps and power amplifiers. Even separate power supplies become increasingly common as one moves upmarket. Bear in mind that output power and sound quality are not necessarily

he amplifier sits at the heart of the system, processing the outputs from the various music sources as necessary and then driving the loudspeakers. These two (quite separate) functions are achieve loudness aplenty.

Power output is equally no indication of sound quality.



KEY

LINE INPUTS: Amount of input sockets for non-vinyl sources such as CD players, tuners and cassette decks. MM PHONO INPUT: If an amp has a vinyl phono input for moving magnet (normal output) cartridges. MC PHONO INPUT: If an amp has a vinyl phono input for moving coil (low output) cartridges. REMOTE CONTROL: If amp is couch potato ready. HEADPHONE SOCKET: If an amp is can friendly. POWER OUTPUT (W): Lab tested power output in Watts per channel. RECEIVER: If an amp has a built in radio tuner FACTSBACK NUMBER: The Factsback reference for ordening a fax copy of the review. Use the contents page to find the Factsback information page. **ISSUE NUMBER:** The issue of *Hi-Fi Choice* in which the original review appeared.

MM PHONO HOLMO CONTROL SOCKET NUMBER

<u>audio resea</u>

INTEGRATED AMPLIFIERS

	Sector Sector		-						
	11 IS	Comments		52					
Alchemist Maxim	319	Vivid and colourful sounding amp that's just too bold and brassy	5	•				30	1737 1
Alchemist Nemesis	700	Good if ultimately undistinguished amplifier whose strengths include warmth, authority and distinctive aesthetics	6		-			80	ŀ
AMC 3025a	130	Surprisingly potent and easy on the ear, if not especially analytical. Classic bargain basement material in fact.	4	•	•	•	•	30	1
AMC 3050a	170	Tremendous value for money, and a full, big, if rather uninformative sound	4	•	•	•	•	45	1
AMC CVT3030a	400	Beer-budget valve amp, with quintessentially valve-like virtues (euphony with dynamics) and vices (system dependency, noise)	6	•			•	30]
Arcam Alpha 7	250	Decent, if slightly system-fussy amplifier that generally pulls all the right strings	5	•		1	•	40	1
Arcam Alpha 8	350	Enjoyably soft-centred amp, won't frighten the animals. Upgradeable via preamp output, and R/C (not supplied)	5	٠			•	50	1853
Arcam Alpha 9	500	Not quite as much a star as the Alpha 9/9P combo, the solo integrated is nevertheless colourful and explicitly detailed	7			•	٠	70	
Audio Innovations Alto	300	Probably because of a lack of deep bass, this stylish amp sounds open, natural and relaxed	6	-				35	1540
Audio Note Ongaku	56,000	A single-ended, zero negative feedback triode, line-level amplifier and a half. Probably the best amplifier in the world	3					26	
Audio Note Oto SE	1,200	Transparent, dynamic, clear and subtle, but limited power	4					24	
Audiolab 8000A	550	The 8000A remains a highly disciplined and mature-sounding amp	5	•	•		•	60	1581
Audiolab 8000S	750	Informative in every sense, only a slight lack of bite detracts. Perhaps Audiolab's best yet!	6			•	•	60	1740
Aura VA100 II	350	Big and smooth, yet slightly disjointed sound was equally familiar	5	•			•	70	1541
Cambridge Audio A3i	200	Maximum information design, with plenty of usable and reasonably refined power. A snip	4	•				60	
Copland CSA8	945	Sophisticated yet transparent, this is one of those amplifiers that sounds good even when the gloss has worn off	5			8	1	60	
Copland CSA14	1,199	Great sound and looks, but watch out for high capacitance cables	4	•		1		60	1416
Creek 4330	279	Compact, even pretty, but sounds dark and uninviting, with coarse treble and woompy bass	5		8	2		40	
Denon PMA-250SE	160	This amp can sound rough when extended, but within its limits it is open, detailed and likeable	5		2	-	•	30	-
Denon PMA-350SE	200	Reinvented in the minimalist tradition, the new SE model is a control freak, but can sound wonderful	5		-	2	•	50	1856
	230		3	•				45	1050
Denon PMA-425R	350	Well-equipped and generally enjoyable but slightly ragged performer. You can do better	5	•	•	•	•	4J 97	1802
Denon PMA-725R:		Warm, bold, up-front presentation, but musically unexciting	-	•	-	-	-		
Densen Beat B-100	600	Low feedback amp with passive internal preamp gives a bold, pacey and thoroughly involving sound. Phono option listed	5		-	-		60	1855
DPA Renaissance	595	DPA's first integrated amp is typically innovative, but a little too 'crisp 'n dry' for our tastes	5	•	-	-	•	40	1582
EMF Audio Sequel	450	Relaxed and restrained design from Mike Creek	5	•		-	•	50	
Exposure XX Super	700	Rather transistorised, unexciting sound. Good coherence and rhythm. Best played loud	6	2		2		55	1743
Gamma Acoustics Gemini	699	Genuine single-ended triode design, but low power, mundane sound and poor build	3		-	-		12	1416
Harman/Kardon HK610	180	Lively and friendly sound, but could prove too exciting for the faint hearted	6	•			•	30	1465
Harman/Kardon HK620	250	Capable and musical amplifier which is among the nicest available at the price. Optional add-in MM/MC board available	6	2		•	•	40	1858
Harman/Kardon HK640	400	Breezy, nimble sounding amp, lacks grip and fortitude – it can sound artificial and insubstantial	6				•	55	1542
JoLida 202	695	Well-built and technically accomplished, affordable valve integrated with subtle and refined, if not quite gripping sonic performance	4					40	
JVC AX-V4	200	Respectable performance for a Pro-Logic AV amplifier. Lacks resolution and sparkle, though	5	•		•	•	63	1805
JVC AX-R5	200	Versatile, and lots of even-handed, articulate detail; but let down by superficiality	5	•	8	•	•	45	1466
Kenwood KA-3020SE	200	Not a brilliant phono stage, but this is a lively, exuberant sounding amp via CD	5	•	1		•	50	1130
Kenwood KA-5090R	300	Large, well equipped and high tech integrated, but TRAITR output still gives a harsh, unsubtle performance	5	•	•	•	•	65	
Krell Digital KAV-300i	2,550	EISA Award winner with balanced inputs and AV friendly outlook, sound is confident and three-dimensional (Statements)	5		1	1	1	150	1825
LFD Integrated Zero	549	Lively and brisk, but at the same time cold and unsympathetic	6		1			50	1584
Linn Majik (Phono)	800	The cornerstone of Linn's modular hi-fi system is innovative, but sounds vague and confused	5	•	•	1		33	1013
Magnum IA120	265	Mirror finish amplifier with a bold, colourful delivery, but needs careful system matching to avoid loss of focus and clarity	6	-	-	1	•	65	1010
Magnum IA170	330	Gives a realistic sense of instruments playing within a very believable acoustic, preserves colour and dynamics well	6		8	8		96	1260
Magnum IA-200	495	Sweet, valve-flavoured solid state amplifier flatters where it doesn't cast light. Note: power output listed is peak	7		-	-		100	1860
Magnum Class A	690	Lashings of rich and compelling music, but the Class A trades lushness for accuracy	4	•	•		-	60	1000
Conceptual de la concep				-	-				-
Marantz PM-57	200	Well equipped but ultimately anodyne amplifier which lacks for nothing but star quality	5	•	2	-	•	50	
Marantz PM-66SE	230	A bit lush, and power output is limited, but it communicates well and gives airy, large-scale music. An excellent budget buy	5	•		•	•	50	-
Marantz PM66 KI-Signatur		An amplifier that knows how to rock and roll with holographic detail and stereo, but prefers small/medium scale acoustic material	5	•		•		50	1000
Micromega Minium Amp	350	Excellent musical performance but doesn't like high levels or low impedance speakers	6	•		•	•	40	1806
Mission Cyrus Illi	500	Beautifully presented, but mid-dominated balance and other anomalies were not liked. Upgradeable using PSX unit PSU	6	•		•	-	50	1854
Mission Cyrus SL	398	Sharp, articulate amplifier, and superb, outgoing midband with lean though well-extended bass – and build quality to die for	6				2	50	
Musical Fidelity A2	499	Lucid, transparent midband and a full upper bass are provided by this highly proficient A1 replacement	5	٠			5	25	1862
Musical Fidelity A220	700	Powerful, authoritative and well turned-out amplifier that is easy to match with comparably priced speakers and source components.	5	٠	2		-	50	
Musical Fidelity E1	199	Vivid, richly flavoured tonality and realistically scaled imagery distinguish this new entry level Richer Sounds special	6					30	
Myryad MI 120	530	Despite an ultra-modern appearance, the old-fashioned cold, dry transistor sound	5			•	٠	60	1747
NAD 310	100	Fleet and sure of foot, it seems likely to set all appendages tapping with its blend of enthusiasm and artfulness	5					20	1468
NAD 312	200	Another great budget price NAD, and a worthy all-round successor to the 302	6	•		2	•	25	
				-	1000	10.	Contra la	allowed a set of	

		AMPLIFIERS	, v,	HEADI EMOTE CU IO INPUT	.02	WER DUTP SOCKET	FACTSBACK RECEIVE	NUMBER	BER
Product F Naim Nait 3	Price(₤) 575	Comments Distinctive and highly musical sounding integrated amp. Perhaps too distinctive for some tastes	5		4		30	1748	
relle SA-100	449	A musically rewarding amplifier that grows on you. Trace of coarseness in treble	5				50	1740	
ioneer A-204R	160	The A-204R makes no special claims beyond being well equipped and cheap, but it displayed unexpected talent on test	5	•			Barrow Barrow		171
ioneer A-300R	200	Its bright and breezy sound is a natural tonic to those of us worn down by the ongoing stress of life	5	•	(• •	50	1469	149
ioneer A-400X	300	On second audition, this amp was tonally unchanged but less compelling	6	• •		•	50	1545	-
ioneer A-300R Precision	400	Sophisticated, breathed-on variant of the A-300R. Not an obvious winner, but will slowly win you over with its subtle charms	5	•		• •	-	1863	
ioneer A-605R	400	Intriguing technology, but execution is certainly impeded by excessive gadget count	5	•	-	••	80		168
rime Design A-100 ro-ject Model 7	650	Dynamic but somewhat aggressive powerhouse with limited stereo interest (either MM or MC phono)	4	•	•		100 40	1264	168
uad 77 Integrated	300 700	A minimalist amplifier brimming with good intent, but too quirky for its own good. Either MM or MC Compact and sophisticated Quad system amp, limited range of inputs when used with 'foreign' components (optional system remote)	3	-			84		142
ega Elex	398	Minimalist amplifier derived from Elicit, is a little uninspiring, though at least it is not badly behaved	4	•			50	1865	
oksan Caspian	695	Well-built, open and articulate amplifier, which is also consistent from system to system, and well built	6				70		168
ose Scion	615	Unique two-box integrated gives real subtlety and low level resolution, but the sound lacks scale and weight	5	•	•		65		168
otel RA-931	150	Rather dry and unforgiving sound from this internally well specified and attractively priced amplifier	4	•		•	35		171
otel RA970BX	250	Lively, fresh and perky with plenty of power, but not so clever with complex recordings	6			•	60	1546	138
ony TA-F246E	200	Relaxed quality that seduces with its guile and subtlety, MM input is a bit laconic but CD is very tidy and composed	3	•		•	40	1471	
ony TA-F448BE	250	Classic minimalist interface is matched to carefully considered circuit to broadly satisfactory effect - but keep the volume in check	5	•		•	1000		171
alk Electronics Storm 1	500	Good soundstaging and strong detail are provided by this unassuming and not especially powerful model	6				50	1868	
EAC A-BX7R echnics SU-A700 Mk 3	700 250	Characterful balance mars an otherwise meticulously designed amplifier. Includes a balanced input, optional MM/MC stage	5	•		•	50 45	1869 1870	
loodside ISA230 Disc	1,249	Fully equipped, high-tech amplifier ultimately fails the 'is it Stork?' test, and can sound messy and inarticulate Smooth and inoffensive valve amplifier, though it lacks the sparkle and euphony required for a truly entertaining sound	3			-	30	-	116
amaha AX-592	280	Fine, middle ranking amplifier, with a detailed, dynamic midband, and some performance falloff at the frequency extremes	5		• •		100	821	171
Preamplifiers	200								
curus RL11	899	Well-featured US preamp with plenty of grunt and depth when used with the A150 power amp (Sessions)	6		(•		1624	151
MC CVT1030A	400	Budget valve preamp, modest build and a bit noisy, with fair sound	6	•		•			165
udio Innovations L1	369	Reviewed with S800 Anniversary - explicitly detailed, conveys the message of the music as a whole	4					1300	145
udiolab 8000C	550	Distinctive, stark neutrality that will not appeal to all. Good value engineering	5	• •	•	•			97
udiolab 8000Q	1,100	Tested with 8000M monoblocks	6			• •		1301	-
ura GA200	700	Flexible, well designed – can sound slightly aggressive, but it's fast, clean and dynamic, and makes compelling listening	10	•		• •			165
	1,295	Beautiful imaging, superb detail, plenty of gain on the phono input; classy build too. Tested in Sessions	4			_		1560	
opland CTA-301Mkll yrus Pre	1,399 650	Sweet sounding – but never gets bogged down in audio treacle Tested with Cyrus Power. High-tech design, punchy, light-footed character with a sense of substance and natural warmth	4 5	•				1630	151
ensen DM-20	1,200	Stylish Danish preamp with a pair of huge knobs and effortless resolution and a slightly dark balance (Statements)	6					-	155
AR 802MC	2,599	Tested with 509 Mk II - see comments in power amp section	4			-			63
CA Vista	760	Wind up the volume and blow a breath of fresh music into your system (tested with Lectern)	5					1302	-
kposure XVII	849	Superbly rhythmical; maybe a bit overpowering in the midband. Tested in Sessions with XVIII Super	5	• •	•			-	142
dis JP-30MC	5,978	French tubes, JP-30MC has beautiful build, nostalgic styling and delightful midrange. (tested with JA30)	5	•					60
FD Mistral Linestage	499	Strong ergonomics, generally decent sound, but a little lacking in detail	6						165
leridian 501	695	Tight, positive sound, but dispassionate; intense at high levels. Tested with 555	5	•		•		1303	145
leridian 562V	995	Transparent and capable preamp, also features six digital inputs	9	•		• •			140
leridian 502	1,295	Extremely sophisticated analogue controller with tremendous flexiblity and a fast and tidy presentation (Statements)	7		•			-	162
loth 30 Passive	149	Modular system gives cracking results. Passive preamp and power amp warrant Best Buy (tested with 30/Stereo 60)	4			_			109
loth 30 Active Line Stage	349	Excellent sounding ultra-simple miniature preamp	4					and the second s	165
luse Model Three	1,990	Natural sounding tranny preamp with useful audiophile features. Works beautifully with 160 power amp (tested in Statements)	5		-	•		6. <u>200</u>	166 165
usical Fidelity F2 AD 114	500 270	Subtle, sweet-sounding preamp with strong presence Beer-budget preamp, sounds focused, detailed and consistent	6			•			165
aim NAC92R	599	Upgradeable preamp uses proprietary socketry, etc. See NAP90 power amp for comments	5			•		Calco -	165
uad 77 Pre	850	Sophisticated design with 2-way remote control console; open colourful sound and very flexible	4						165
ega Hal	998	Dedicated to Exon power amps – passive line stages	6	• (-	165
ose RV-23	450	You can pay more to get a more transparent sound, but it's hard to criticise at the price	3	•					77
otel RC970BX MkII	175	Confident, consistent sound. reviewed (in Sessions) with RB970BXMkII power amps	5			•		- 200	144
umo Athena IIB	767	Tested with Polaris III. Big, natural and tidy-sounding with very natural reproduction of acoustic and electric instruments	6		1			1305	
alk Hurricane 2L	649	Design of integrity which gets to the heart, if not the soul, of the music	6			_		-	165
horens TTP2000F	699	Glamorous, shoebox-format, minimalist pre with fine detail and some granularity	3 5	•	•	•	-	-	165 100
loodside SC26 Phono	2,233	Synergistic with STA35, with a cool, controlled sound, good focus and transparency (tested with STA35)	5						100
Power amplifiers curus A150	899	Tested with RL11 preamp. Powerful remote-control US combo with a slightly forward inclination	1				150	1624	151
Ichemist Kraken/Pwr	529	Hardly accurate, but entertaining nevertheless	1				60	1000	124
MC CVT2100A	600	Astonishing value valve/MOSFET hybrid with KT88 output, but lacks the magic of the best valves	1				80		165
rcam Alpha 9P	400	Clear, colourful and well-disciplined, the Arcam is a strong all-rounder that can compete with conviction	1						165
rt Audio Quintet	1,393	Switchable triode, ultralinear output stage. In triode mode, these are 15 of the sweetest Watts around. Surprisingly gutsy	1				15		109
ura PA100	700	Can sound slightly aggressive, but it's fast, clean and dynamic, and makes compelling listening	1				100	-	165
udiolab 8000M	800	Strong, controlled sound; confident bass, but colourless. Tested with 8000Q	1				125	1301	-
udio Research VT60	2,395	Ranks as 'must try' American cultural item (tested in Statements). Tube design	1				35	1179	
opland CTA-505	2,099	Grown-up amplifier with a refined, yet never over-civilised air	1				67	1630	
yrus Power	498	Tested with Cyrus Pre. Punchy, light footed character with a sense of substance and natural warmth (bridgeable)	1 2			-	50 100	200	155 164
ensen DM-30 AR 509 Mk II	1,200 3,699	Fluid,valve-like power amp with effortless resolution and a slightly dark balance (Statements) Combining sonic strengths of transistors and valves, this amp warrants attention (tested with 802)	1				100		164 63
CA Lectern	3,099 880	Tested with Vista. Wind up the volume and blow a breath of fresh music into your system	1				50	1302	-
	000	social man metal mind up the relation and block a broach of near music into Job System	A 1	10 B	1 M	A Share		1002	-
xposure XVIII Super	849	Slight dullness and hardness, but great 'boogie factor'	1				70		142

POWER AMPLIFIERS (CONTINUED)

POWER A	MP	LIFIERS (CONTINUED)	MM PHONO INPUT	TPUT(W)	ISSUE NUMBER VER
Product	Price(£)	Comments			
Meridian 555	750	By providing an open window on the music, this amp is wide open to RF and low level IM distortions	1	60	1303 14
Meridian 557	1,400	Hefty British lump with balanced inputs and a transparent, nimble sound with no shortage of power (Statements)	1	200	16
Michell Alecto	1,150	Open, well focused imagery with natural, refined textures	1	50	16
Moth 60 Watt Stereo	599	Miniature power amp lacks control and finesse, not comfortable with difficult speaker loads	1	60	16
Moth 30 Series Monobloks	879	Tested with Active Preamp. While demonstrating solid, even balance it proved adept at delivering vital musical qualities	1	100	15
Muse Model 160	2,290	Transparent muscle amp with minimal character and a natural performer in both scale and tone (tested in Statements)	1	160	16
Musical Fidelity FX2	800	Quality build and imposing presentation is married to strong power yield, tonal colour and finesse	1	100	16
Myryad MA120	450	Based in MI120 integrated - see for comments, but sounds significantly better when bi-amped with MI120	1	60	16
NAD 214	370	A little lightweight, but detailed, consistent sound quality, and excellent value for money	1	80	16
Naim NAP90	450	Power amp from a Nait integrated with some improvements	1	30	16
Quad 77 Power	600	Open, bold and colourful, with mild compression	1	85	16
Rega Exon	2,194	Monoblock, priced each, dedicated for Hal preamp. Bold, outgoing, in-command kind of sound	1	125	16
Rotel RB-970BX MkII	225	Tested with RC970BX MkII in Sessions (see preamp section)	1	60	14
Rotel RB-980BX	475	Tames enthusiastically recorded material with a laid-back and occasionally smeared sound (tested with RC980BX)	1	120	15
Sumo Polaris III	950	Tested with Athena IIB. Big, natural and tidy-sounding with very natural reproduction of acoustic and electric instrumen	ts 1	164	1305 14
Talk Tornado 2	599	Good, but slightly retiring sound which lacks the authority to stand out in a crowd	1	65	16
Thorens TTA2000	599	Low power shoe-box format, but gutsy and surprisingly subtle and articulate	1	30	16

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HIGH DEFINI



Cables

ables are not just accessories, but an integral part of a system. Inevitably some cables are better than others. The best cable for your system will only be found through trial and error, but by combining our recommendations with those of a dealer, you will end up with something suitable. Generally speaking, budget to spend about 10 per cent of the total system cost on cables.

Analogue interconnects are the leads that connect source components to amplifiers and pre to power amps. The cables in this section are priced for a one-metre terminated pair.

■ Digital interconnects connect CD transports to DACs, and are traditionally coaxial with a 75 Ohm impedance. They come in optical and electrical varieties, the former being made of plastic or glass. The prices shown are for a terminated linear metre.

Speaker cables are used between the amplifier and speaker. Our prices are per unterminated metre. Termination (plugs and soldering) costs vary with brands



KEY

SYMMETRICAL: A twisted pair of conductors COAXIAL: A central 'hot' conductor and a shield that carries the ve signal. STRANDED: Multiple strands with no intervening insulation.

SOLID CORE: Single or multiple, individually insulated strands. COPPER: Material used for conductor. SILVER: Material used for conductor DIG CABLE TYPE: 0 - optical digital, E - electrical digital,

FACTSBACK NUMBER: The Factsback reference for ordering a fax copy of the review. Use the contents page to find the Factsback information page.

ISSUE NUMBER: The issue of *Hi-Fi Choice* in which the original review appeared.

CABLES

								ACTSP	. /80	
CABLES			MMETRIC	COAXIA	RANDED	CORE	PER	CABL	ICK NUMBER	UMBE
Product	Price(£)		Seat Sea		$\mathbf{\nabla}$					
Analogue Interconnects										
Audio Note AN-A	29.50	Not especially impressive, warm but well-rounded balance that restricts 'air' but is not unclear		•	•		•			108
Audio Note AN-C	59.50	Neutral but lacking in subtle texture and unable to distinguish fine detail				•	•		1687	131
Audio Note AN-S	139	Up-beat and enthusiastic sound with satisfyingly deep and grumbly bass		•		•		•	1687	131
Audio Note AN-V	219	15 individually insulated silver strands make up this very clean and dynamically unchallenged cable		•	•			•	1687	131
Audioquest Turquoise	40	A 'fit and forget' cable that sounds distinctly lazy		•	•		•			160
Bandridge AL421	5	Light and airy sound lacks authority, splashy treble			• •		•		1688	131
Bandridge AL426G	10	Gold-plated plug OFC version of AL421 with same ineffectual sound quality		1	• •		•		1688	131
Bandridge SG AL4720	13	4N OF copper, full smooth balance but a little plodding and relentless, lacks panache			• •		•		1688	131
Bandridge SG+ AL4820	25	4N OF copper, distinctly teutonic, thrusting detail forward but still plodding and relentless			• •		•		1688	131
Bandridge ProfiGold PG301	65	A perfect cable for enlivening a system, but too cold for most systems					•	le le		160
Cable Talk Studio 2	65	A first-class performer from tonal, dynamic and rhythmic standpoints		•	•		•	-		160
Cambridge Audio Studio Ref	f 40	Dynamic cable with strong soundstaging and only a slight lack of detail					•			160
Chord Chameleon	68	Anomalous treble with a dry but vaguely sibilant quality, sometimes sounds smooth, sometimes harsh!		E.	•		•	8	14 B.S.	108
Chord Solid	99	Thin but very stiff with excellent resolution of subtle timbral detail and fine dynamics			•	٠	•	8		108
Connections Midas HD	39	Canary yellow cable with excellent plugs and an open sound. Slight treble glare		•	•		•	1		160
DNM TCC75	34	Price for 0.75m length. High resolution cable, but best in short runs due to higher than average series impedance		2				1	1690	131
DPA Slink	41	Slightly bright and zingy sound with flat soundstaging and hollow sounding bass, vocals and strings sound convincing t	hough			•	•		1690	131
DPA White Slink	75	Highly expressive, very easy on the ear and attractively detailed though not entirely characterless at high frequencies				•			1691	131
DPA Black Slink	220	Initially dark and meaty but becoming lucid and transparent with running in. Quad geometry, Gore-tex dielectric		•		٠	•		1691	131
Ixos 104	20	Open and detailed presentation, full bass and silky if overly smooth treble				2			1692	131
Ixos 103	40	Even-handed and generous sound, bass has a well-rounded, bouncy quality		1	• •	2	•		1692	131
Ixos 102	60	A bit bright and undynamic, this cable is nevertheless a good all-rounder, whose faults are largely subtractive			• •		•			160
lxos 101	100	A cable with personality, its veiled and shut in quality brings an earthiness to vocals and rhythm guitar alike			• •	0	•	•	1693	131
LFD Spirolink I	35	Price for 0.7m length. Dynamic but smoothly detailed performance, but gives the impression of looking down on the mu	isic		2131	•	•	1	1694	131

	CABLES (co	NTINUED)	RICAL	OAXIA	TRANL	SOLID DED	CORE	DIPPER	G CABL	ACK NUM TYPE	E NU BER
F	Product P	rice(\$	2) Comments			V	V				V	V
1	.FD Spirolink II	70	Price for 0.7m length. Strong and confident sound enhancing bass depth and subtlety, concentrates on the meat of the music								16	94
	.FD Trilink	150	Price for 0.7m length. Warm and luxurious sound but a little too fruity in balance, treble is a little subdued, bass detached			-	8		-	-		95
-	inn Phono to Phono	47	Encourages a delicate performance underpinned by a strong and authoritative bass		-			-		-		95
-	Nonster Interlink 200	20	Colourful in an appealing rather than contrived sense, bass is slightly over-blown, large and ingratiating sound stage		•	-		-		1	for for	96
	Aonster Interlink 300	30	Richer, smoother more civilised sound than 200 with improved articulation and reduced sibilance							2		96
	Aonster Interlink 400	40	Compromised by a grainy top end, treble and vocal range sound particularly sharp and untidy				-					97
	Aonster Interlink 500	50	Sounds rather good, providing a livelier and more interesting account of music than most sub £100 cables			-		1		1	10	57
	Aonster Interlink 800	80	Not as bright or aggressive as the 400 but treble is strangely lumpy, muted and manipulated - odd cable							2	16	97
	Aonster Interlink Reference 2	100	Easy on the ear but rather contrived, slightly clanky treble fails to integrate with the smoother but splodgy midband							-		97
-	Noth Ley Line Black	100	Offers a full and big sound, neutral yet very solid and confident in delivery. Expansive imaging retains music's energy				-	-		•	10	31
	Noth Ley Line Grey	200	Detailed enough but there's a sense of distance between the music and the listener, vox are coarse rather than liquid			-		-				
-	lordost Black Knight	55	Flat black cable that is distinctive but slightly coloured – but not in a wholly negative manner					-		-		-
	Panasonic RP-CA910	50		-		-	-			-		-
	ilvertone Ex-Static	35	Uncongested and even handed balance if slightly flat imagewise, retains impact but has a vaguely untransparent quality Pleasantly unfatiguing and competitively priced cable that lacks detail and insight	-	-	-	-			-		-
-	SonicLink Silver Pink	35				-	-	-	-	•		_
	onicLink Black	35 49	Dynamically sensitive and muddle-free. Unsure about the flesh-coloured finish though	-	-	-	-		-		10	99
-	ara Labs Prism 11	49	Encourages an upbeat and snappy sound that's driven by leading edges, full and rumbustious bass maintains an even temp Very compatible cable that wins through with a naturally balanced and realistically dynamic sound. 6N purity copper		•	-	-		•	-		99 99
÷	ara Labs Prism 22		Delivers a fresh and detailed sound with clear and bright treble giving it a free, quick and dynamic character	8		-		-		-	Corr Barry	
-	ara Labs Quantum CD	56 75			•	-		-	100	-	1/	00
	ara Labs Prism 33	90	Lacking in obvious vices, neutral and transparent, there's also a good solid bass. Vox are not always as intimate as possible		•	-	8	-			17	00
-	ransparent Audio Music Link		A pedestrian cable that sounds lively but muddled. Quite dynamic, quite rich, quite smooth but also quite indistinct		-	-	-	-	•		-	
÷			No aggressive nasties to tax the ears, neither does it sparkle with inspirational detail. Only suited to low output impedances		-	-	•		•		- C-1	01
	an den Hul The Storm	25	Price for 0.8m length. Rich and warm but bass is rolled off, however there's plenty of drive and high frequencies are clean			-	-	•	•		1/	01
-	an den Hul Source HB	50	Price for 0.8m length. Hybrid carbon-fibre/copper cable that is a paragon of naturalness. Airy and well controlled	- 2		-	-		•		17	00
-	an den Hul The First	210	Using 12,000 carbon fibres, a gentle and subtle sounding cable that conveys oodles of information but lacks dynamic punch			•	-					02
	an den Hul The Second	225	Wonderfully open and relaxing but also intimately detailed, slightly softens percussive dynamics		•	-		-	•	•	the second	02
	LO Type 150	50	A restrained but useful cable for taming lively CD players, dynamics lack freedom, treble lacks clarity			•	•	-	•			03
1	LO Type 0.1	180	Unusual but highly expressive and detailed with a hint of graininess on powerful vocals					•	•		17	03
	Digital Interconnects	110						•			F 17	0.4
	udio Note AN-V	110	Ostensibly an analogue cable but gives a meaty and natural performance when used for digital duty				2	•	-	•		04
	udioquest Optilink Z	120	Good level of midband detail but frequency extremes lack depth and extension			-		-	-		0	
0	udioquest Digital Pro	100	A silver cable with all the drive of Video Z but lacking its clear cut transparency	- 2		•	•	_	-	2	E	0.5
	andridge AL4900G	40	Lacks deep rounded bass and treble is coloured with a spittiness, a little rough and ready	- 8		-	•	-	•		E 17	05
	hord Codac	32	A connection with a stranded inner core and a sound that lacks integration	- 6		-	•	-		•	E	0.0
-	hord Prodac	50	Price for 0.6m length. Lively detailed treble, drives music along confidently with no hint of fizz	- 1		•		•	•		E 17	06
-	PA Opti-link	20	Very similar to Bandridge AL560; sound is lacklustre	- 2		_		-	-	-	0	
-	PA Digi-link	28	Can seem slightly impassive but there's no avoiding its exceptionally detailed sound	- 2		•	•		•		E	
	tos 105	25	Extended but soft-edged treble that's mercifully free of fatigueing colourations, plenty of weight, smooth vox	-		•	2	•	•	-	E 17	07
	imber Kable Opti-link	50	Appears to be a bog-standard PMNA fibre, yet sounds a little brighter and livelier than most	5							0	0.0
	FD Digilink Copper	30	Slightly grainy highly compatible cable with coherent and forward dynamic quality			•		•	•		E 17	80
	toth Leyline Datalink	140	A thin, coaxial version of Leyline Black with a rather hard and unforgiving character. Too expensive	- 8		•	•	•	•	-	E	
	ED Digiflex	20	A top performance, low-loss 750hm coax with a very open, almost liquid quality	- 8		•	•	•	•		E	
-	iltech HF-6	150	Sounds detailed, very clean and very extended, but bass is less well resolved - a treat for high-end systems	- 6		•		•		•	E 17	
	onicLink Green	60	Spacious, positive and engaging if a bit over crisp at times, very compelling however	1		•		•	•	•	E 17	
-	an den Hul MC Videolink 75		An AV-cum-digital cable that nearly beats QED's Digiflex, but emphasises sibilants			•					E	
Va	an den Hul The First	120	Exceptionally natural albeit slightly dark or cautious compared to some, plenty of subtle information and beautiful integration			•	•				E 17	10
	oudspeaker Cables			100								
**	udio Note AN-D	4.50	Supplied in linear, non-polarised lengths that should be twisted into stereo pairs. Sounds rather grippy and forward					•	•	-		
	udio Note AN-B	16.50	Well suited to valve systems, elastic bass, methodical but unintrusive and musical				•		•		-	11
	udio Note AN-L	29.50	Fruity bass and expressive vocal rendition was appreciated by the panel which was happy to accept its foibles				£	•	100	•	- 17	12
-	udio Note AN-SP	125	A calm and civilised presentation, very quiet in the way it reveals subtle low level detail. Great poise and clarity	•			1	•		•		
	udioquest F-14	1.95	Ideal for laying under carpets, F-14 encourages a slightly warm and vibrant sound	5			_	•	•			
A	udioquest Type 4	4.95	Four 18-gauge OFHC copper conductors wound in a Litz-type fashion increases capacitance but restrains the cable's 'bite'				٠		•			
	udioquest Cobalt 2	45	A rather polite and anaemic sound that bubbles gently with detail and is largely uncoloured and cautiously spacious				-		-			



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CABLES (CONTINUED)

FACTSBACK ^{ISS}UE NUMBER DIG CABLE TYPE ER ^{SILVER} 168 Audioquest Crystal 18 Neutral balance is spoiled by some graininess and smearing . . 1713 133 Bandridge SF LC1070 42n Basic figure 8 bellwire, lightweight balance and a softness that dilutes even the strongest bass . -. 4 **Bandridge SF LC1259** Fresh and open, bubbly and naturally colourful soundstage that's neither forced or unduly edgy. Treble is slightly messy . ^ Bandridge LC7409 3 85 Detailed and un-heat cable. A bit too steely for classical strings . 1800 157 Cable Talk Talk 3.1 -4 2.25 Quite well-balanced but tends to lose bass lines in complex music 168 157 Cable Talk 4 1 4 25 Smooth and cultured sound that lacks fine detail and is a bit too restrained . 1800 **Chord Myth** 5 95 . . 168 Light and airy tonality may please, but bass is recessed and detail not outstanding DNM LSC350 . . 168 6.95 Majors on midband and lower treble lucidity at the expense of bass and extreme treble extension . 1 **DNM LSCB500** High impedance can influence the treble response, but this was a winner on sound per pound. Bi-wire 1717 133 90 A **DPA Black Sixteen** Unflappable resolution of fine musical details, there's no dampening of dynamics, simply oodles of taut information -. 142 Electrofluidics Monolith 20/20 40 One of the best cables available, incredible bass, imaging and resolve in a high capacitance, flat, Goertz style design (Sessions) ● . . Gale XL189 99p Slightly bright and not that subtle, but a perfectly acceptable cable for any starter system 168 1800 157 4 Gale XI 315 A little lacking in detail but plenty of life and excellent value Gale XL160-2 Rhythmic and bouncy-sounding bi-wire cable. Can be slightly manipulative 1800 157 2.50 R Remarkably detailed, smooth, neutral and with excellent bass; check amplifier compatibility . . 168 Goertz M2 20 109 . **Heybrook Heywire** 4 This well-meaning facsimile of earlier ribbon cables ends up sounding lumpy and uneven 4 **Ixos 603** Big and expansive-sounding cable, full and engaging while retaining a high degree of neutrality 1718 Ixos 604 5 Midrange is detailed and surprisingly smooth but treble is hard and synthetic and the bass no better . . 1719 133 Kimber 4TC 19 68 168 А A well-balanced cable with good performance in all areas Kimber 4TC Double-wire 40 A variation on a Kimber classic which produces a rich and weighty sound, but isn't quite as transparent as single runs 133 7 90 1722 133 **Mission Quartet** Mixed, inoffensive sound, adds guttural resonance to vocals and could be generally more coherent. Bi-wire . Monster Cable XI 1.50 XP offers plenty of slightly soft bass and a slightly rounded treble, a relaxed cable whose indiscretions are not bothersome • 1723 133 Naim NACA 5 5.11 Described as a 'dinosaur of a cable', this stiff wire rod doesn't belong outside Naim systems. But it works a treat in them 109 . Nordost Octava 2 95 168 Fair bass but confused treble and some coloration . Ortofon SPK100 3 Grey-sounding and strips instruments of their natural richness and resonance, a bit bass shy too -133 Ortofon SPK300 8 133 . Tremendously open and atmospheric with robust full blooded bass, and dynamic too if slightly bright at times Puresonic 7845 1 95 Big, weighty sound — but too messy and bloated for its own good . 1800 157 Puresonic 7891 2.85 Chunky cable design, shame about the sound quality . 1800 157 . . 2 50 1800 157 OFD Qudos Despite high-tech design and excellent Air-Loc plugs, the music failed to get . . **QED** Profile 9 Good midrange and treble balance, but bass is rather slack and detail not outstanding 168 **QED** Profile 8 157 5 Sophisticated flat cable that lacks decent bass and get up and go . . 1800 Silver Sounds 12 gauge 12 Basic 'homemade' construction gives fairly neutral sound, though not outstandingly competitive . . 168 Sonic Link \$300 18 Happiest with simple music; tends to smudge detail in complex pieces . . . 168 SonicLink AST50 1.95 1800 157 1 It may look like hell-wire, but AST50 sounds detailed, ordered and balanced • . R Transparent Audio Musichord 11.42 Sweet, open and refined treble, a bit of breathy exuberance and can sound slightly lackadaisical • . 1728 133 • Very close to the sound of 'no cable', one of the very best. Slightly softens treble detail . 1728 133 **Transparent Audio Wave** 22.84 Tech+Link OFC79 Bargain basement cable that sounds cosy, but suffers from a wobbly bass . . 1800 157 1 van den Hul The Clearwater 6 Despite its evocative title, the Clearwater turns out to be a disappointingly murky-sounding cable • . 109 van den Hul CS122 19 Smooth and articulate with superb focus and control, its sheer coherence makes it a winner (tested in Sessions) . . 153 van den Hul The Magnum 31 Touted as vdH's most prestigious twinlead cable, Magnum sounds soft and old fashioned . . -109 35 . Λ van den Hul The Wind 'The Wind' kicks up a storm with its lush midrange and bone-crunching bass! . 109 van den Hul Revolution 64 Silver-plated OFC combined with carbon fibre prompts a sombre character with an easy and relaxed treble • . 1726 133 XLO Pro Type 625 4 Lively but natural and relaxed-sounding but a hint of congestion at frequency extremes . . 1726 133



16 60

Cartridges

Basically neutral tonality but can become aggressive and two-dimensional

artridges fall into two groups: high output MM (moving magnet) models, capable of working directly into most phono inputs; and generally more expensive low and very low output MC (moving coil) models. MC cartridges usually have better mechanical integrity, tighter tolerances and give better performance. Many amplifiers are no longer equipped with the necessary phono input for a cartridge, and a separate phono stage is necessary. Phono input equipped valve designs need a

transformer to cope with MC cartridges.

•

SYMMETRICAL COAXIAL

STRANDED

SOLID CORE COPPER

Cartridge/amplifier interfacing can be very subtle, but even basic high output MM designs benefit in overall balance from optimised amplifier capacitance loading.



KEY

XLO Pro 600

MM: Moving magnet cartridge with a normal output suitable for all vinvl disc amplifier inputs. MC: Moving coil cartridge with a low output only suitable for hig

sensitivity vinyl disc amplifier inputs REPLACEABLE STYLUS: Most MM cartridges have a stylus that can be removed and replaced.

OUTPUT (MV): Cartridge output in millivolts. MASS (g): Cartridge mass can affect arm choice FACTSBACK NUMBER: The Factsback reference for ordering a fax

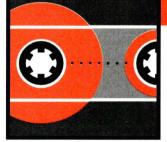
copy of the revie ISSUE NUMBER: The issue of HI-Fi Choice in which the original review appeared.

CARTRID	GES		REPLAU MM	EABLE SI MC	DUTPUT VILUS	MAS MAS	K NUMB	NUMBER
Product	Price(£)	Comment					V	
Audio Note Io IIV	1,695	One of the best, giving an extraordinarily relaxing midrange clarity. Needs a transformer		•		0.1		100
Audio Technica AT-95E	19	Clear and dynamic, though richly balanced			•	2.8		48
Audio Technica ART-1	944	This is a delicate and very fluid-sounding MC that tracks well		•		0.4	9	72
Denon DL110	70	A fine all-rounder, this high output MC model is likely to perform well		•		1.0	6	48
Denon DL160	90	Although listeners just preferred the 110, its brother here survived lab tests and is still 'thoroughly competent'		•		0.1	6	43
Denon DL103	100	Good performance in bass and good 'life'. Is seriously let down by its spherical stylus which kills subtle detail		•		0.1	6	103
Denon DL304	200	Uncoloured, detailed, tracks superbly. Top notch altogether and a bargain too						103

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THE DIRECTORY

		S (CONTINUED)	ĥ	MM MM	BLE STY	FACTSB DUTPUT MA LUS (MV)	ACK NUM SS (g)	UE NUMBER
	Price(&						F 80	
Dynavector Karat 17D2 mk2	-	Clean and controlled sound with taut, tuneful bass. Detailed and musically cogent		-	•	0.15	5.3	158
Dynavector XX-1L	998	Very clear, very detailed; a response lift around 20kHz seems to do no harm			•	0.25	12	84
Dynavector XX-1	998	Good, but not immensely competitive at the price, and not helped by comparison with the low output version		-	•	2.0	12	84
Goldring Elan	19	A lightweight and frisky-sounding MM apparently based on Nagaoka MM4 body		•		• 5.0	7	67
Goldring 1012GX	79	Slightly harsh but plenty of life and detail. Some high frequency colouration apparent			-	 6.5 	7	85
Goldring 1022GX	99	As with 1012, a touch harsh; detail and transient purity improved		•	E	• 6.5	7	85
Goldring Eroica LX	110	Not the most subtle cartridge in the world: can sound edgy at times, but lively and informative		-	•	0.5	8	84
Goldring 1042	120	Not terribly subtle, and not such good value alongside 1012 and 1022. Quite lively though		•	-	• 6.5	6	91
Goldring Elite	220	The basics are right, and it will cheerfully tackle any source material, but its sound has a certain dirtiness			•	0.5	8	103
Grado Prestige Gold	150	Rich sounding with an unusually refined top-end for a moving magnet-type cartridge		•		• 4	6	158
Linn K9	125	Linn improved this model by beefing up the Basik's bodywork and adding a super stylus		•		• 4.5	5	Col
London Decca Maroon	259	Now manufactured under the London brand name, this Decca cartridge isa s iconoclastic as ever		٠		5.0	6	67
London Decca S Gold	339	Immediate and detailed, but coloured, nonlinear with a questionable effect on records		•		5.0	6	84
Lyra Lydian	649	Superbly capable all-round musical performer that improves markedly when its body cover is removed			•	0.3	7	158
Lyra Clavis Da Capo	995	A stable tracker, and one of the finest cartridges we've heard			•	0.1	7	143
Ortofon 510/P	38	For the price, a good blend of virtues – weight, clarity and neutrality		•	1	• 3.0	5	85
Ortofon 520/P	65	Sensitive to load capacitance, the 520/P has a lively, effervescent sound		٠		• 3.0	5	67
Ortofon MC10 Super	100	"What a delightfully sweet-sounding cartridge this is" we said			•	0.3	7	48
Ortofon MC3 Turbo	130	The 3 Turbo is bright, cheerful and bouncy, but unsubtle - take it as it comes			•	3.3	4	103
Ortofon MC15 Super II	130	A good all-rounder, with outstanding resolution, if slightly bright and close up			•	0.35	7	103
Ortofon MC25E	180	An excellent upgrade for a mid-price turntable			•	0.5	11	139
Ortofon MC25FL	249	A bit too stark and honest, but faithful to what's on the LP			•	0.5	11	139
Ortofon MC30 Supreme	525	Highly detailed and even-sounding cartridge that has a special affinity with female vocal recordings			•	0.5	10.7	158
Ortofon MC3000II	1,100	A real eye-opener. Nothing to criticise anywhere, one of the very best			•	0.12	10	84
Ortofon MC5000	1,500	Limited tracking ability, bright and forward sound, but good stereo			•	0.12	10	91
Rega Bias	39	Difficult to mount in some arms due to its shallow build, the Bias offers a gentle, refined sound		•		• 5	4	67
Rega Elys	85	Clearly superior to the Bias, the Elys is more detailed, accurate and convincing		•	1	• 5.0	5	67
Roksan Corus Black	130	Recognisably related to the Corus Blue, but smoother and more civilised		•	-	6.5	5	91
van den Hul MM-1	250	If woody midrange could be tamed, imaging and security would pull it through		•		• 5.5	6	103
van den Hul DDT-II	699	Outstanding stereo imaging and neutral balance are appealing, but rhythmically the DDT-II is a bit lazy			•	0.35	7.6	158
van den Hul MC-10	799	A neutral, balanced performer, gives fine depth and focus and a firm, extended bass		1	•	0.4	6	60
van den Hul MC-One	999	This extended all the positive qualities of the 10, but added greater authority and scale – worth all the extra money			•	0.4	6	60
van den Hul MC-Two	1.349	MC-Two rewards with a highly detailed yet fluid and musically convincing portrayal		1	•	0.4	6	72
van den Hul G' hopper IIIGLA	2.999	Undoubtedly one of the finest cartridges available, it has tremendous bandwidth, energy and finesse			•	0.4	6	122
Wilson benesch Matrix	786	Extraordinarily well balanced cartridge: neutral and detailed yet lively and rhythmically assertive				0.58	6	158



Cassette Decks

he compact cassette is still the world's most versatile and ubiquitous music storage medium. Buffs may wrinkle their noses, but they all use it.

There should be no problems in connecting a cassette deck to any normal amplifier, but some care needs to be taken in choosing the best tapes for a specific machine. (Trial and error is one effective technique, but many decks have manual bias adjustment and some match up to the tape automatically.)

Twin decks offer the option to dub tapes and play two cassettes sequentially. Autoreverse is a useful feature, but usually implies some mechanical compromise. Useful facilities include tape monitor switching and Dolby S.



KEY

DOLBY C: A rather extreme noise-reduction system not usually associated with high sound quality DOLBY S: A desirable derivative of the Dolby SR professional noise-reduction system.

DOLBY HX-PRO: System designed by B&O to extend headroom

for cassette recording. 3-HEAD: If you want to monitor a recording while you are making it, a third head is essential. TWIN DECK: Contains two decks for dubbing and continuous play. In most instances only one deck will record.

AUTOREVERSE: Automatically plays both sides of the cassette. AUTO CALIBRATION: The deck will automatically set up bias and EQ for anytape ADJUSTABLE BIAS: Bias can be manually set to suit the tape

being used.

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CASSETT	E DE	CKS	DOLBY C	BY HX PR	3-HEAD	AUTO CALIL AUTOREVERSI HEAD	IUSTABL BRATION	TSBACK N E BIAS	UE NUM	BER
Product	Price(£)	Comments						$\mathbf{\nabla}$		
Aiwa AD-F450	120	Basic but well-designed budget deck, astonishing value; only the poor metering gives the game away	•	1	•			•	1513	136
Aiwa AD-WX727	170	High-class twin for those who want bells, whistles - and music			•			•	1377	146
Denon DRM-550	160	There are some technical limitations, but this remains a fine sounding deck, and excellent value			•			•		158
Denon DRW-580	200	Twin deck: OK for casual use, but will quickly pall with more quality critical applications	•		•	• •		•		171
Denon DRS-640	200	Draw-loading deck, with simple facilities and smooth, well-adjusted sound	•		•			•	1591	140
Denon DRM-650S	230	An all-round improvement on predecessors, offers a wide-ranging, disciplined sound. Dolby S is not the best feat	ure 🔵	٠	•		•	•		164
Denon DRM-740	270	Breathed-on DRM-710, with good external treatment, offers good, if somewhat detached sonics	•		•	•		•	1514	136
Denon DRS-810	310	Draw-loading deck, carefully designed yet lacking in subtlety on audition	•		•	•				127
Harman/Kardon TD420	250	Minor inconsistencies detract from a well-conceived, minimum features design	•		•	•			1592	140
Harman/Kardon TD450	350	Draw loader with poor tape navigation features; good midband but shallow bass	•		•	•		•		164
JVC TD-R472	200	Excellent auto-reverse deck which doesn't suffer the usual disadvantages and is very sharply priced	•		•			•		158
JVC TD-V562BK	220	Ultra-sophisticated transport at a silly price; sound quality is stable but slightly opaque		1	•	•		•		123
JVC TD-V662BK	270	Assured, clean and agile sounding recorder, if not quite the most refined in its class			•			•	1380	146
JVC TD-W718	300	Twin deck. Good for creative live recording, but no timer standby. Respectable though not earth-shattering perform	ance 🔹	-	•		•			171

AUTO CALIDISTADLE NUMBER AUTO CALIDISTADLE NUMBER VTOREVERSE NELL AUTOREVERSE TWIN HEAD OLBY HX PRO 3-HEAD DOLBYC DOLBYS **CASSETTE DECKS (CONTINUED)** Kenwood KX-W6080 200 Modestly decent sounding twin deck, with some transport instability and ragged bass. The features list is also strong 4 -. NAD 613 230 Rough and ready, but enjoyable sound, though marred by mechanical motor noise NAD 616 300 Primitive twin deck with basic features. No Dolby setting memory, transports are too unstable for serious quality first use. . Onkyo K-611 460 Cute drawer loading mini-size component with 3-heads and dual capstan transport . **Pioneer CT-S550S** 250 Great features, good with cheap low bias tapes, but slightly synthetic sound quality

661 01-33303	230	dieat reatures, good with cheap low blas tapes, but signify synthetic sound quality	-	-	-	•		•	8.	
eer CT-W806DR	300	Had it not been for the iffy transport quality, this ultra-sophisticated twin would have been recommended.	•		•		• •	•		
eer CT-S830S	500	High-class mechanism, if lacking in battleship externals, and superb sound	•	•	٠			•	•	
TC-KE600S	300	Mild setting-up problems notwithstanding, this UK-tweaked design has a smooth, open and un-cassette-like sound	٠	•	٠	•		•	•	
nics RS-AZ6	230	For those who can't afford the RS-AZ7; exquisite clarity over the widest bandwidth thanks to AZ thin-film head	•		•	•		•		
nics RS-AZ7	300	Thin-film head gives a solid, almost CD-like bass and midrange. A clear advance in the state-of-the-art	•		•					
aha KX-490	199	Electrifyingly transparent and capable deck whose only flaw is a trace of audible wow and flutter	•		•			•	•	
aha KX-580SE	250	Subtle, engaging and transparent sounding deck, with a lightweight tonality, but good stability and strong detail	•	•	•			•	•	

CD Players brought to you in association with

II CD players offer a basic selection of facilities, and some can Λ keep you entertained for hours as you programme in disc names and track orders. All but the excessively inexpensive feature remote control. Most CD players can be upgraded by adding an outboard DAC (see below). To do this the player needs a digital output of either electrical or optical persuasion; sonically the former is preferable. A CD player can be split into two basic components: the disc drive or

transport, and a device which turns the digital bitstream coming off the disc into an analogue audio signal. This is called a digital to analogue convertor, or DAC. Although most players are contained in a single box, expensive players are usually two-box affairs.



DAC

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ELECTRICAL DIGITAL OUTPUT: For electrical connection to an outboard DAC.

AES/EBU ELEC DIG OUTPUT: Balanced digital output to be used with similarly equipped DACs. OPTICAL DIGITAL OUTPUT: For optical connection to an outboard

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AT&T OPT DIG OUTPUT: High-speed optical output to be used with similarly equipped DACs. BAL ANALOGUE OUTPUT: Balanced analogue output for amplifiers equipped with balanced inputs. HEADPHONE SOCKET: For can users VARIABLE OUTPUT: Remotely adjustable, volume-

controlled output.

MULTI-DISC: Equipped with a carousel or multi-tray system for continuous play of multiple discs DAC TYPE: Digital to analogue convertor: BS - Philips Bitstream, MB - multibit, Hyb - hybrid of multibit and bitstream technologies. 1bit - single bit types such as MASH.

Best buy Recommended



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CD PLAYERS

Product Price(3 Alchemist Nexus APD32A 597 Accurus ACD11 899 Arcam Alpha 7 320 Accustic Precision Eikos 1,850 AMC CD8A 150 Arcam Alpha 8 520 Audio Innovations Alto 399 Audio Innovations Alto 399 Audio B 8000CD 1,000 Audio Research CD1 3,291 AVI S2000MC Reference 1,392 Cambridge Audio CD4 150 Cambridge Audio CD4 200 Cambridge Audio CD4SE 200 Cambridge Audio CD5 250 Copland CDA-288 2,193 Denon DCD-625 200 Denon DCD-1015 350 Denon DCD-1015 350 Denon DCD-635 180 Eclipse CD101a 80 Harman/Kardon HD710 200 Harman/Kardon HD730 300 Jycx X-V3848K 120	Refined treble, constrained yet capable bass and attractive all-round presentation distinguish this player from the crowd First-rate if costly player from the US, which combines a delightful transparency with an uncontrived naturalness Very detailed for a budget player with a slick and free sense of dynamics, needs careful ancillary matching Seriously customised Pioneer with extraordinary resolution and world beating imaging and bass (Statements) Has balanced output, but is otherwise rather grey and unremarkable Refined, intricately detailed but a little cautious, this should be broadly compatible with a variety of amps Refreshing piece of audio sculpture belies inconsistent audio behaviour Developed according to the Green Cross Code of digital audio with an elegant but safe musical presentation Suspends disbelief with a frighteningly real yet obviously coloured sound. A rare proposition among CD players Lean, dry, high resolution player, built to outlast most of us, and a fine performer in a sympathetic system Basic appearance and sluggish track access/track search belies its up and at 'em sound quality Among the best players we have encountered at the price, considerably more refined and convincing than CD4 A sharp, lively and articulate player, a real thoroughbred in fact, perhaps too sharp and lively for some systems			•	•		Hyb 1bit Hyb 1bit BS BS	1872 1873 1635	
Acurus ACD11899Arcam Alpha 7320Acoustic Precision Eikos1,850AMC CD8A150Arcam Alpha 8520Audio Innovations Alto399Audiolab 8000CD1,000Audio Research CD13,291AVI S2000MC Reference1,395Cambridge Audio CD4150Cambridge Audio CD4250Copland CDA-2882,193Denon DCD-625200Denon DCD-1015350Denon DCD-635180Eclipse CD101a80Harman/Kardon HD710200Harman/Kardon HD730300	First-rate if costly player from the US, which combines a delightful transparency with an uncontrived naturalness Very detailed for a budget player with a slick and free sense of dynamics, needs careful ancillary matching Seriously customised Pioneer with extraordinary resolution and world beating imaging and bass (Statements) Has balanced output, but is otherwise rather grey and unremarkable Refined, intricately detailed but a little cautious, this should be broadly compatible with a variety of amps Refreshing piece of audio sculpture belies inconsistent audio behaviour Developed according to the Green Cross Code of digital audio with an elegant but safe musical presentation Suspends disbelief with a frighteningly real yet obviously coloured sound. A rare proposition among CD players Lean, dry, high resolution player, built to outlast most of us, and a fine performer in a sympathetic system Basic appearance and sluggish track access/track search belies its up and at 'em sound quality Among the best players we have encountered at the price, considerably more refined and convincing than CD4 A sharp, lively and articulate player, a real thoroughbred in fact, perhaps too sharp and lively for some systems A gentle giant of a player that errs in favour of pastel shades rather than bold daubs of colour, one for refined tastes DCD-615 replacement is generously equipped but lacks sophisticated sound of its forebear				•	• •	1bit Hyb 1bit BS BS	1873	2
Arcam Alpha 7320Acoustic Precision Eikos1,850AMC CD8A150Arcam Alpha 8520Audio Innovations Alto399Audiolab 8000CD1,000Audio Research CD13,299AVI S2000MC Reference1,395Cambridge Audio CD4150Cambridge Audio CD4SE200Cambridge Audio CD6250Copland CDA-2882,193Denon DCD-625240Denon DCD-1015350Denon DCD-635180Eclipse CD101a80Harman/Kardon HD710200Harman/Kardon HD730300	Very detailed for a budget player with a slick and free sense of dynamics, needs careful ancillary matching Seriously customised Pioneer with extraordinary resolution and world beating imaging and bass (Statements) Has balanced output, but is otherwise rather grey and unremarkable Refined, intricately detailed but a little cautious, this should be broadly compatible with a variety of amps Refreshing piece of audio sculpture belies inconsistent audio behaviour Developed according to the Green Cross Code of digital audio with an elegant but safe musical presentation Suspends disbelief with a frighteningly real yet obviously coloured sound. A rare proposition among CD players Lean, dry, high resolution player, built to outlast most of us, and a fine performer in a sympathetic system Basic appearance and sluggish track access/track search belies its up and at 'em sound quality Among the best players we have encountered at the price, considerably more refined and convincing than CD4 A sharp, lively and articulate player, a real thoroughbred in fact, perhaps too sharp and lively for some systems A gentle giant of a player that errs in favour of pastel shades rather than bold daubs of colour, one for refined tastes DCD-615 replacement is generously equipped but lacks sophisticated sound of its forebear	• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •			•	••	Hyb 1bit BS BS	1873	
Acoustic Precision Eikos1,856AMC CD8A150Arcam Alpha 8520Audio Innovations Alto399Audiolab 8000CD1,000Audio Research CD13,290AVI S2000MC Reference1,395Cambridge Audio CD4150Cambridge Audio CD4250Copland CD4-2882,193Denon DCD-625240Denon DCD-635180Eclipse CD101a80Harman/Kardon HD730300	 Seriously customised Pioneer with extraordinary resolution and world beating imaging and bass (Statements) Has balanced output, but is otherwise rather grey and unremarkable Refined, intricately detailed but a little cautious, this should be broadly compatible with a variety of amps Refreshing piece of audio sculpture belies inconsistent audio behaviour Developed according to the Green Cross Code of digital audio with an elegant but safe musical presentation Suspends disbelief with a frighteningly real yet obviously coloured sound. A rare proposition among CD players Lean, dry, high resolution player, built to outlast most of us, and a fine performer in a sympathetic system Basic appearance and sluggish track access/track search belies its up and at 'em sound quality Among the best players we have encountered at the price, considerably more refined and convincing than CD4 A sharp, lively and articulate player, a real thoroughbred in fact, perhaps too sharp and lively for some systems A gentle giant of a player that errs in favour of pastel shades rather than bold daubs of colour, one for refined tastes DCD-615 replacement is generously equipped but lacks sophisticated sound of its forebear 	• • • • • •			•	••	1bit BS BS	1873	?
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Cambridge Audio CD4 150 Cambridge Audio CD4SE 200 Cambridge Audio CD6 250 Copland CDA-288 2,19 Denon DCD-625 200 Denon DCD-625 240 Denon DCD-1015 350 Denon DCD-3000 1,000 Denon DCD-635 180 Eclipse CD101a 80 Harman/Kardon HD710 200	Basic appearance and sluggish track access/track search belies its up and at 'em sound quality Among the best players we have encountered at the price, considerably more refined and convincing than CD4 A sharp, lively and articulate player, a real thoroughbred in fact, perhaps too sharp and lively for some systems A gentle giant of a player that errs in favour of pastel shades rather than bold daubs of colour, one for refined tastes DCD-615 replacement is generously equipped but lacks sophisticated sound of its forebear	•			8.8		BS	1875	j
Cambridge Audio CD4SE 200 Cambridge Audio CD6 250 Copland CDA-288 2,19: Denon DCD-625 200 Denon DCD-625 240 Denon DCD-1015 350 Denon DCD-3000 1,000 Denon DCD-635 180 Eclipse CD101a 80 Harman/Kardon HD710 200	Among the best players we have encountered at the price, considerably more refined and convincing than CD4 A sharp, lively and articulate player, a real thoroughbred in fact, perhaps too sharp and lively for some systems A gentle giant of a player that errs in favour of pastel shades rather than bold daubs of colour, one for refined tastes DCD-615 replacement is generously equipped but lacks sophisticated sound of its forebear	•					MB		
Cambridge Audio CD6 250 Copland CDA-288 2,19: Denon DCD-625 200 Denon DCD-825 240 Denon DCD-1015 350 Denon DCD-3000 1,000 Denon DCD-635 180 Eclipse CD101a 80 Harman/Kardon HD710 200	A sharp, lively and articulate player, a real thoroughbred in fact, perhaps too sharp and lively for some systems A gentle giant of a player that errs in favour of pastel shades rather than bold daubs of colour, one for refined tastes DCD-615 replacement is generously equipped but lacks sophisticated sound of its forebear					•	Hyb	1268	3
Copland CDA-288 2,19: Denon DCD-625 200 Denon DCD-825 240 Denon DCD-1015 350 Denon DCD-3000 1,000 Denon DCD-635 180 Eclipse CD101a 80 Harman/Kardon HD710 200 Harman/Kardon HD730 300	A gentle giant of a player that errs in favour of pastel shades rather than bold daubs of colour, one for refined tastes DCD-615 replacement is generously equipped but lacks sophisticated sound of its forebear						BS	1877	i
Denon DCD-625 200 Denon DCD-825 240 Denon DCD-1015 350 Denon DCD-3000 1,000 Denon DCD-635 180 Eclipse CD101a 80 Harman/Kardon HD710 200 Harman/Kardon HD730 300	DCD-615 replacement is generously equipped but lacks sophisticated sound of its forebear				•		BS		
Denon DCD-825 240 Denon DCD-1015 350 Denon DCD-3000 1,000 Denon DCD-635 180 Eclipse CD101a 80 Harman/Kardon HD710 200 Harman/Kardon HD730 300		s •		•			MB	1880	J
Denon DCD-825 240 Denon DCD-1015 350 Denon DCD-3000 1,000 Denon DCD-635 180 Eclipse CD101a 80 Harman/Kardon HD710 200 Jarman/Kardon HD730 300		•				•	MB	1269	9
Denon DCD-1015 350 Denon DCD-3000 1,000 Denon DCD-635 180 Eclipse CD101a 80 Harman/Kardon HD710 200 Harman/Kardon HD730 300	DESDIRE EXTENSIVE LEVISIONS, THIS IDDEST DIDATED STILL SUTHAN THE A TADICAL TO-DIT DETION, WHICH IS NO DAU THINK!	•		•		•	MB	1531	í
Denon DCD-3000 1,000 Lenon DCD-635 180 Sclipse CD101a 80 Harman/Kardon HD710 2000 Jarman/Kardon HD730 3000	Excellent, mid-range player – fast, fluid and lean		-	•		•	-	1599	
Denon DCD-635180Eclipse CD101a80Harman/Kardon HD710200Harman/Kardon HD730300					11		MB	1881	
Eclipse CD101a80Harman/Kardon HD710200Harman/Kardon HD730300	Modest presentation gives little clue to the thoroughbred electronics ticking away inside					•	MB		-
Harman/Kardon HD710 200 Harman/Kardon HD730 300	If you want to know the sound of high order distortion, this is probably as good a place to start as any	2					MB		
larman/Kardon HD730 300		•			1 8	•	1bit		
					20		BS	-	
	Excellent budget player, well presented, a tad opaque but its heart is in the right place.						1bit		
VC XL-V284BK 140		•		•				1270	0
IVC XL-Z574 250	2.000.0403	-	0.0				1bit	1270	1
IVC XL-2674BK 300	Even-handed, but glosses over the most intimate moments	•		•	6 6	•		1637	7
Kenwood DP-3080 170	Bold, dynamic and outgoing sound, though somewhat aggressive. Poor build quality and finish	-					1bit	1037	1
(enwood DP-4090 250					-		1bit	-	
(enwood DP-7090 400		-				•••	1100	1885	ē
Krell KPS 20i 9,99	A lively and compelling performer with an even-handed and coherent disposition Forthright, edge-of-the-seat sound with outstanding bass performance (tested in Statements)	-					MB MB		
Linn Mimik 875			-	•••			and the second second		
		-				_	-	1762	1
	It's the quintessential sound of Marantz – warm, open, and smooth almost to a fault		-	•		•	Hyb	-	
Marantz CD-67 270		•		•		•••	1bit	-	
Marantz CD-67SE 350		•		•	2	•••	BS	-	
Marantz CD-48 200		•				••	1bit	-	
Marantz CD-17 800	Fabulous packaging and an excellent all round performer: smooth, detailed and consistent	•					-	1763	5
Meracus Tanto 1,39 Meridian 508 (20-bit) 1,68		-			•		DS BS	1886	

THE DIRECTORY

		(CONTINUED)	ELEC DIG DI	BAL ANAL OPT DIG O GITAL OUT	OGUE O	VARIABLE OU HONE SOCKET	FAC, MULTI-DI, TPUT	TSBACK NU DAC TVPE	SSUE NUL IMBER	NBER
	- 14 M) Comments						1		12
Mission Cyrus dAD3Q	898	Lucid, transparent and uncontrived sound quality, superb build, and readily upgradeable			•			MB	-	169
Monrio Privilege	995	Costly and well-engineered, but ultimately rather heavy-handed and dull, if refined player	•		-			MB		166
Musical Fidelity E60 Musical Fidelity A2	299 499	This entry-level player lacks proper stereo localisation and clarity	•		•			BS BS		166
Musical Fidelity FCD	1,500	Warm (too warm), attractive and open player, a great improvement on (related) E60 A forward disposition makes this perfect for Fenders but less appropriate to Guarneris			-	•		BS	6	163
Myryad MC100	700	A loward disposition makes this period for enders but less appropriate to dual liefs A little extra get-up-and-go wouldn't go amiss, but its sheer maturity and composure ensure listenability				-		BS	1889	163
NAD 510	200	Pale version of NAD's senior CD players with a stripped down feature count	-					1bit	1005	172
NAD 512	250	Simple, well-focused presentation, and articulate with it, though hard-nosed quality is not everyone's cup of te	a 🔸					1bit		159
NAD 514	370	Boisterous sound, but undeniably attractive				•		BS	1639	-
Naim Audio CD3	1,000	The idiosyncratically packaged CD3 is solid and highly articulate. Always has its feet on the ground though						MB	1765	-
Naim Audio CD2	2,000	Provides bags of detail with a solid stereo focus but not all the romanticism we know to be possible						MB	1890	-
Onkyo DX-7210	260	Well-bred CD player features an unusual digital filter, is smooth and cultured without appearing grey or boring	•		•	•		BS	1273	14
Onkyo DX-7510	400	Strongly flavoured, assertive sound	•					BS	1640	22
Orelle CD-100EA	649	Excellent imagery, timing and transparency, and readily upgraded or reconfigured	•	•	•		1 8	MB		16
Philips CD-721	130	Surprisingly well-sorted, articulate if slightly glossy and attractively presented sound. Captive signal lead						1bit		159
Philips CD751	150	Inconsistent and occasionally opaque and scrawny sounding cheapie	•					1bit	6	172
Pioneer PD-204	150	Generally easy on the ear, but can bite back, especially with complex high-frequency music content. Well endow	100	1			•	1bit	1	159
Pioneer PD-S705	300	A dichotomy, this machine was loved by some for its articulacy and disliked by others for sounding too impress		-	•			BS	1891	163
Pioneer PD-S904	400	Too much legato – literally – in sound, but a very smooth performer	•		•			1bit		151
Pioneer PD-S505 Precision	400	Assured, fluid-sounding player, with great spatial coherence			-			1bit	1041	16
Quad 77	900	A true thoroughbred combining a penetrating insight into detail with poise rarely found at the price	-					Hyb	1893	163
Roksan DP3P	1,495		•					BS	1895	200
		Dramatic and compelling, classical listeners should be ready to 'air conduct' when auditioning this player	-					-	1090	-
Roksan Caspian	895	Solid, articulate, and fundamentally well-engineered player, but with some subtle low-level limitations	•					Hyb	1007	169
Rotel RCD-970BX	375	A combination of solid build, useful facilities and an attention grabbing sound make this a winner	•		-			BS	1897	163
Sherwood CD-4030R	180	Easy on the ear, smooth-sounding player, with limits set by the slightly soft, compressed quality – and messy f	1000		•	•	•	BS		159
Sherwood CD1	1,100	A very neutral, even handed sounding player with a rather flat, lifeless sound. Beautiful construction	•		•			BS	1899	163
Sony CDP-XE510	180	Souped up CDP-XE500 which tells a rather bland and unengaging story			•	•	•	1bit		172
Sony CDP-XE900E	300	Refined and analytical disc scavenging tool, but there are some distinctive colourations making auditioning vita			•			BS		159
Sony CDP-X3000S	500	Shoebox format player, with looks to die for, and switchable digital filters to tweak the already excellent sound	•		•			BS		169
Teac 3450SE	200	For once a budget player where the gadgets take second place to respectable, budget amplifier-friendly sonics			•	•		1bit		166
Teac CD-5	350	Bright, breezy and up-beat – but short in the trouser department	•		•	•		BS	1643	151
Teac VRDS-7	599	Although bold and outgoing, this player can sound both intrusive yet lacking in fine detail	•		•		6	BS	1769	155
Teac VRDS-10SE	850	Superbly built and presented, but rather leaden bass, with an over-prominent and not ideally refined mid/top	•		•			BS		169
Teac VRDS-25	1,300	A solid player in all respects combining powerful sound with state-of-the-art technology	•		•			MB	1903	163
Technics SL-PG480A	140	Full driving sound, but somewhat uneven in balance with a unsubtle, slightly harsh top end					•	1bit		159
Technics SL-PS770D	250	High tech and well built technology battleship which smoothes the rough edges off the music	10		•		•	BS		172
Trichord Genesis	549	Breathed-on Pioneer is warm and mellifluous, but ultimately lacks drive and authority.	•			•	•	Hyb	-	169
Trichord Revelation	-	Well-ordered and clean sound that may be a little too refined for some, images well	•					1bit		166
Yamaha CDX-390	130	Well endowed entry level unit, with inconsistent sound that can be harsh in extremis						1bit		172
Yamaha CDX-490	1	Big, blowsy sound, is undermined by lack of precision and focus			•	•		1bit	-	159
Yamaha CD-X890	-	Clearly a quality product in every sense, the Yamaha provides a spacious, refined and tuneful account of the mi	isic •		•			BS		166
TRANSPORTS	330		1310	-				00		100
Arcam Delta 250	800	Arcam's best effort yet is a new design based on Philips CDM9 transport. Specification includes Sync Lock facil	ity •		•	•	N 10		1491	130
Audiolab 8000CDM				•		-	8 8		1451	162
New York Concerning of the Con		Super-slick transport and basically very honest sound, but lacking the last degree of fine detail		-	-			MB		-
Audiomeca Kreatura SE	-	Superb combo for those who like the sound of valves (tested with Elixir DAC in Sessions)		-	•			fere is	1220	141
Audiomeca Mephisto		Tested with Trichord Pulsar, the duo provides a highly composed and tactile sound	•		•			-	1320	
Linn Karik	-	Based on early Linn transport, the Karik is dry but very positive, detailed and engrossing	•	- B	•		10 B	-	1323	
Meridian 500		Used with the 563 DAC, the combination is thin, brash and uncomfortable	•	- P	•			-	1103	
PS Audio Lambda	-	With Ultralink Two, sound positively sparkles with colour and resonant detail	•	-	•			-	1106	14-1-
Roksan Attessa ATT-DP3	1,295	Not the most detailed or refined but capable of good excitement with the right material	•		•			1bit		162
Teac VRDS-T1	550	Superb quality engineering is mated to tidy and composed sound (tested with D-T1)	•		•			-	1325	
Theta Data Basic II	2,397	Uses a Philips CDM-9 Pro mechanism and works a treat with more lively DACs	•					-	1494	130
Thorens TCD2000	999	Lively and up-front presentation not helped by rather loose bass and splashy treble	•		•			-		162
Trichord Digital Turntable	699	Very detailed, precise, controlled yet involving; a first-rank performer	۲		•			-		162
Wadia 8	3,195	Budget version of Teac's VRDS mechanism in a fancy case; just too expensive for the performance on offer	•	•	•	•			1495	130
DACS										
Arcam Black Box 50	480	Measured and sophisticated sound from a DAC that leaves plenty in reserve for future upgrades						Hyb	1506	133
Arcam Black Box 500	750	Sophisticated unit with sync lock and discrete DAC						BS	1519	136
Audio Note DAC1		Oddball DAC with manual de-emphasis switch. Needs a high preamp input impedance or bass will suffer		1	1		1	MB	5	127
Audiolab 8000DAC	-	Basically very honest sound, but lacking the last degree of fine detail						BS		162
Audiomeca Elixir		DAC was tested with Kreatura SE – see above						BS		141
Linn Numerik	-	A new 20-bit DAC and revised Karik transport have cleaned up; but sounds a bit dry and humourless	-					MB	1323	
PS Audio UltraLink 2 HDCD	-	With Lambda transport, the sound positively sparkles with colour and resonant detail								133
PS Audio OltraLink 2 HDCD PS Audio Reference Link					-	•		MB		133
		Consolidates reputation of PS Audio for high performance digital electronics			-	-			1003	
Roksan Attessa ATT-DA2/DS5	-	Not the most detailed or refined but capable of good excitement with the right material						1bit	1225	162
Teac D-T1		Teamed with VRDS-T1 for test, this superb quality unit is tidy and composed						BS	1325	144
	600	With P-700, the D-700 may lack the resolution, but is bubbly and entertaining						MB		120
Teac D-700			100	100						
Thorens TDA 2000 Trichord Pulsar Series One		Lively and up-front presentation not helped by rather loose bass and splashy treble Very detailed, precise, controlled yet involving; a first-rank performer. Switchable phase, dither etc						BS Hyb	1	162 162

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Digital Recorders

igital recorders come in a variety of different guises, but have yet to make much of an impact on the domestic market. At present there are three types to choose from: DAT (digital audio tape), MD (MiniDisc), and CD-R (CD Recordable). MD's claim to fame is its optical disc format, which offers instant track access and can't be worn out like a tape. DAT has been on the market for quite some time now, but has never really 'made it' as a consumer medium due to the dearth of pre-recorded material. However it has begun to carve itself a

ADC TYPE: Analogue to digital convertor types as per DACs.

OPTICAL IN/OUTPUTS: Digital socketry for optical cable.

stereo size.

PORTABLE: Can be run off batteries but not necessarily personal

niche in the top end of the market, replacing reel-to-reel as the audiophile's tape based medium. Home CD-R is coming into its own with Pioneer's PD-R05 machine attempting to set a trend.



review appeared.

ISSUE NUMBER: The issue of Hi-Fi Choice in which the original

KEY

FORMAT: Type of recorder, see above for descriptions DAC TYPE: Digital to analogue convertor: BS - Philips Bitstream. MB - multibit, Hyb - hybrid of multibit and bitstream technologies, 1bit - single bit types such as MASH, bitstream, PWM etc

DIGITAL RECORDERS

DIGITAL	RECO	DRDERS	FORMAT	ADC 1 VPE	PTICAL PORTA VPE	TRICAL IN/DUT	ACTSBA IN/OU PUTS	CK NU PUTS	SSUE NUMBER
Product	Price(£)	Comments		•		•		V	
Pioneer PDR-04	700	Scaled down version of the 05 with auto level setting but all the socketry and features you need to make your own CDs	CD-F	BS	BS		•	•	171
Pioneer D-05	900	Second generation 96kHz DAT recorder can offer startling realism with the right software - ie first generation	DAT	BS	BS		•	•	1652 152
Pioneer PDR-05	1,000	CD recorder that uses domestic blanks only (limited to 74 minutes), write once but excellent sound quality	CD-R	BS	BS		•	•	1652 152
Pioneer D-C88	2,000	State-of-the-art portable 96kHz DAT recorder, the size of a lap-top computer this Nagra country on the cheap	DAT	BS	BS	٠	•	•	1431 150



Brought to you in association with SENNHEISEI Headphones

here are a variety of different approaches to headphone design. Among the more expensive models, electrostatic drivers are used in open-backed phones. Most models feature dynamic (moving coil) drivers in circular, open or closed-back designs. The advantage of open backs seems to be a correspondingly open sound, but one can also hear external noise, of course. Closed-back designs are useful in situations where it is necessary to block out noise.

There are three styles of headphone: circumaural models enclose the ear; supra-aural designs feature a flat pad which presses on the outer ear; and intra-aurals (in-ear) rest inside the ear itself, à la personal stereos. For best results a separate headphone amplifier is recommended.



CLOSED BACK: Keeps out external noise. TYPE: Operating principle: D - dynamic, E - electrostatic amplifier output. SUPRA-AURAL: Style where a flat pad presses on the outer ear WEIGHT (G): Mass in grams CIRCUMAURAL: Style which encloses the ear. **IMPEDANCE** (Ω): Load offered to the headphone amplifier. All else being equal, the lower the impedance the louder the sound for a given OPEN BACK: Offers an open sound but lets in noise

3.5MM JACK ADAPTOR: Can be used with mini-jack-equipped components such as personal stereos. FACTSBACK NUMBER: The Factsback reference for

ELECTRICAL IN/OUTPUTS: Digital socketry for electrical cable.

ordering a fax copy of the review. Use the contents page

FACTSBACK NUMBER: The Factsback reference for

to find the Factsback information page.

ordering a fax copy of the review. Use the contents page to find the Factsback information page. ISSUE NUMBER: The issue of Hi-Fi Choice in which the original review appeared.

HEADPH	ON	ES	SUPRA-A	CUMA URAI	OPEN BA	SED B	3.5mm JA IMPEDAN WEIGHT(g)	FACTSL ICK ADA	ACK NU	SSUE NUN IMBER	BER
Product	Price	(£) Comments				2		V			
AKG K1000	700	One of the best dynamics on the market, hooks directly into speaker outputs	D		• •		270	120			9
Audio Technica ATH 910PRO	90	The closed back 910s are an improvement on the 909s, with a nice rhythmic quality rarely found with headphones	D	•		1	• 280	40			1
Beyer DT100	152	Rugged, modular professional design, but bass is woolly and treble lacks detail	D		•		• 350	600			1
Beyer DT311	57	Uncharacteristically tight, unrefined sound quality from this otherwise well engineered 'phone	D	•	(124	40	•	1098	1
Beyer DT331	82	Tonally bright and deficient in bass, but exceptionally comfortable, articulate, detailed and refined	D		• •		210	40	•	1801	1
Beyer DT411	69	A reasonable but not very thrilling headphone that doesn't really offer enough at the price	D	•			120	250			1
Beyer DT511	117	Superb midband clairy and speed slightly at odds with soft bass. High tingle factor even so	D		•		200	250			1
Beyer DT531	135	A good buy for serious, heavy-duty music making	D		• •		245	250	1		1
Beyer DT911	235	Probably too revealing for many headphone amps, these are very subtle and fine, if expensive cans	D		• •		275	250	6		1
Denon AH-D550	80	A competent 'phone with integrity, but little panache or charisma. Hard headband causes brain strain	D		•		• 200	35	•	1801]
Denon AH-D750	130	Loud and gutsy, meaty bass, good with rock and dance. Can sound thick and clumsy	D		•	8	• 250	30	•		1
Grado SR-40	45	Cheap and nasty appearance largely redeemed by cheerful, up-beat sound. Very comfortable	D	•			120	32	•		1
Grado SR-80	100	Clear, open and dynamic with pedantically open mid-band. Crude physical design, rough frequency extremes	D	•			60	8	•	1801	1
Grado SR-225	200	Warn, darkly-coloured tonally and ultimately lacking in clarity, but true to the spirit of the music if not the letter	D	•			200	32	8-	1883	1
Jecklin Float Model 1	79	While very unusual in appearance, the Floats give remarkable sound quality and openness at a reasonable price	D		•		400	200			
Jecklin Float Model 2	99	Helmet shaped, but open sounding and comfortable in the long term, despite lack of adjustment	D		•		400	200			
JVC HA-D910	65	Broadly acceptable if unexciting design with low level losses and some colourations	D	•			• 220	32	•		
JVC- HA-W60	49	Remarkably lack of interference and hiss makes adequate sound seem even better than it is	D	•			• 165	I/R	•		1
Kenwood KH-1000	20	First step-up from a true mini: a near miniature which is cheap, comfortable and inoffensive	D	٠			30	32	•		
Maxell HP-3000	30	Solid, smooth-sounding supra-aural headphone, but congested and undynamic. Includes in-lead controls	D	•			120	32	•	1099	
Precide Ergo Model 2	140	Still has much of the spaciousness and detachment of the Float from which it is derived, but has a coarse mid/top	D				380	100		1892	
Philips SBC 3396	70	Remarkably airy for closed-back designs. Fine tonal balance, punchy delivery. Amazing for money	D		•		• 255	32	•		
Philips SBC HP900	90	Sharper, snappier midrange than 3396 initially impressive but blows the balance and listenability	D		•		• 200	32	•]
Ross RDH-300CD	17	In-lead controls are the highlights of this shoddy, sometimes aggressive-sounding design	D	٠			• 155	8	٠		1
Sennheiser IS 380	55	As close as you'll get to real hi-fi with IR phones at this price. Inevitable hiss spoils the illusion	D	٠			• 192	I/R	٠		
Sennheiser HD 455	55	Inoffensive, if nondescript sound, modular, but can become dislodged from head	D	٠			185	60	•	1801	1
Sennheiser HD 475	80	Elegant, uncluttered sound and very comfortable but lean bass saps satisfaction	D	•			120	60	•	6	
Sennheiser HD 545	125	Fine all rounder that takes all styles of music in its stride. Ear-clamping headband	D		•		255	150	٠		

THE DIRECTORY

3.5mm JACK SDACK NUL IMPEDANCE(S) FACTSBACK ISSUE NU ISSUE NUMBER IPRA-AUMAURAL BACK WEIGHT(U) **HEADPHONES** (CONTINUED) nnheiser HD 565 Ovation 150 1 Wide bandwidth design which is refined, expressive and extremely comfortable 157 255 150 1801 D Sennheiser HE 60/HEV70/UK 998 Very nearly a superb electrostatic, with an achingly pure midband, but top end is sibilant and edgy E . . 260 n/a 1898 163 Sony MDR-CD770 100 Neutrality and comfort make the Sony easy to live with Technically correct-sounding too, yet musically unrewarding D . . 1801 157 . Sony MDR-CD1700 199 Astonishingly detailed, uncoloured and free of the usual artefacts from a sealed back headphone. Tremendous value D 325 32 . 1901 163 Sony MDR-F1 D 300 12 172 100 Natural, easy-going sound teamed with great looks and comfort. Shame about the lightweight bass . Technics RP-DJ1200 130 Functional design with head-pulping bass and muggy tonal balance. Good job they're sweat-proof D 230 32 . 172 Stax Lambda Nova Basic 449 Refined, articulate, yet with real presence - and a notable bargain by electrostatic standards E 347 n/a 1902 163 Technics RP-HT700 70 Well-finished but physically crass and grubby sounding D . 1801 157 . 255 . -Consistently musical and easy going. Doesn't reach for sonic heights so hiss is less bothersome Vivanco IR5800 50 D . 1/2 226 I/R . 172 Vivanco SR650 1 50 Unusually comfortable 'phone with excellent detail resolution but aggressive, thanks to tweeter resonance D • 175 . 1801 157 -Vivanco SR750 60 Cossetting physical design, attractive sound an pricing, though suffers overhang and lacks ultimate dynamics D 188 . 1801 157 -Vivanco IR7100 120 Infra-red phones that work well but suffer from the limitations of the medium ie compression and hiss (Sessions) D • 265 149 210 FM ● Vivanco Cyberwave FMH3000 80 The only cordless headphone that offer genuine walkabout freedom. But it sounds like a cheap FM tuner D 172

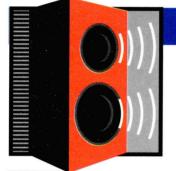
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reproduce, based on in-room measurements.

FREE SPACE: Speakers should be placed away from walls

placed close (between 3 and 12cm) to the rear wall.

CLOSE TO WALL: It is recommended that these speakers be



Hi-Fi Loudspeakers

s the last item in the hi-fi chain, the loudspeaker is merely the Δ slave of what has gone before; it is only as good as the signal it is fed. Nevertheless, the distortions introduced by loudspeakers (and rooms) tend to be the most obvious.

The average loudspeaker consists of an enclosure plus a couple of drive units behind a removable grille. Inside the box lurks a simple electrical circuit known as a crossover, which divides the incoming (full range) signal into the right bits for the drivers to handle. The designer's primary

IMPEDANCE (O). Measured in Ohms immedance it is a measure

of how hard a loudspeaker is to drive: the lower the number the

BASS FROM (Hz): The lowest frequency that a speaker can

more powerful the amplifier needs to be.

association with task is to balance the 'sensitivity' of the loudspeaker (how loud it goes for a given electrical input) against the bass extension (how low it goes),

Brought to you in

for the given box size. Subwoofers augment the bass and come in passive and amplified active form. They are less sensitive to placement than regular speakers.



original review appeared.

FACTSBACK NUMBER: The reference for ordering a fax copy of the

review. Use the contents page to find the Factsback page

ISSUE NUMBER: The issue of Hi-Fi Choice in which the

KEY

SIZE WxHxD (cm): Width by height by depth in centimetres. FLOORSTANDER: As opposed to requiring a dedicated stand. SENSITIVITY (dB/W): Efficiency: how much volume you get for a given input; the higher the louder

HI.FI I OUDSDEAKERS

HI-FI LOUD	SP	EAKERS	FLOORSTANDL	IMPL TV(dB)	BASS DANCE W	FROM	FREE SI (HZ)	ACTSBACK SE TO WAL	NUMBER	UM.
Product P	rice(£)		V		V	V	V			
Acoustic Energy AE109	350	Lots of mass-loaded twin-driver speaker for the money, especially for loud, driving bass	18,90,25	•	88	4	25	•	1904	1
Acoustic Energy AE120	500	Attractive presentation and good sonic headroom, but a heavy, uneven overall balance, and a difficult amp load too	18,98,28	٠	89	4	25	•		
Acoustic Precision Eikos FR1	800	Lightweight single cone design with state-of-the-art midrange resolution, speed and imaging (Statements)	17.4,25,28		86	8	65			
ATC SCM20	1,599	Massively built, invariably informative but the rather forward presentation can be uncomfortable	24,44,31		83	8	28			
Audio Gem Emerald	540	Pretty compact floorstander with lively if lightweight sound	18,94,21	٠	87	6	40	•	1905	j
Audio Note AN-J/D	930	Light damping and local unevenness add some colouration, but don't spoil the speaker	38,58,25		93	8	25			
Audio Note AN-E/D	1,520	Coherent, dynamic and transparent, with extended bass and high sensitivity - but ugly!	36,84,28	•	94	8	20			
Audio Physic Tempo	1,999	Tall and unusually-styled floorstander has stunning stereo but suspect bass tuning	22,107,47	•	88	8	28	• •	1344	4
AVI Positron	900	Suited to smaller rooms, this 'mini-floorstander' is capable of great precision and delicacy, but in a rather small scale way	17.5,25,7784	•	85	6	40	•		
B&W DM302	150	Highly competent and neutral all rounder; clever Prism enclosure	19,32,22		88	4	45		1778	3
B&W DM601	200	Great main driver for the price, entertaining dynamics	20.5,35.5,23		88	6	30	•	1779	J
B&W DM602	300	Prefers tall stands and space, but offers impressive midband dynamics and musical tension	24,49,31		90	8	30		1654	ī
3&W 305	350	Ridged paper cone gives lively sound, clever box, but a little uneven	22,87,31	•	89	4	40	•	1908	3
B&W 603	500	Squat floorstander with decent dynamics and well-judged, restrained balance; bass could go deeper	23.5,88,29	•	89	7	45	•		
B&W P4	675	Strikes a nice balance between all-out studio monitor sound and bass-filled crowd pleaser (tested in Sessions)	20,81,25.6	٠	88	8	50	•		
B&W CDM1	600	Gorgeous stand-mount delivers unusually good bass for its size	22,38,28		88	6	30	•	1818	3
B&W CDM7	1,000	A combination of serious welly and physical elegance, a basic lack of midband smoothness rather let the side down	22,97,29	•	90	4	22	•	2	
3&W Matrix 805 V	1,095	Stylish, remarkable imaging, good balance and low colouration	33,33,21		87	8	30			
B&W Matrix 804	1,695	A great all-rounder which combines exceptional bass extension with fine sensitivity	26,96,26	•	88	4	20	•		
B&W Matrix 801S3	3,995	Lacks transparency and the drama of the best dynamics, but acoustically a tour de force	44,100,56	٠	87	8	20			
B&W Nautilus	35,000	Radical design results in one of the finest loudspeakers available. Active x-over needs 4 power amps (Statements)	42,105,90	٠	87	4	10	•	5	
Cadence ES	3,500	Hybrid electrostatic/dynamic design from India that excels with classical material (Statements)	33,108,37	٠	91	8	35	•	1798	3
Castle Isis	250	A great miniature at a very competitive price. Sound is lightweight but very coherent, with a fine overall balance	17, 35.5,21		87	8	45	•		
Castle Severn 2	580	Carbon fibre cone gives lovely, subtle midband but treble is a bit dull and bass a bit thumpy; lovely cabinetwork	21,84,25	٠	87	8	30	•		
Castle Avon	730	Lovely box and lovely voices from carbon-fibre composite cone	22,91,28	٠	85	8	22	•	1909	J
Castle Harlech	880	Handsome big-sounding floorstander, great value and dynamic midrange	20,96,33	٠	88	8	28	•	1820)
Castle Howard S2	1,200	Ably fills the gap between Chester and Winchester; has a rich, laid-back balance	26,104,41	•	90	8	40	•	1078	3
Celestion A1	899	Rich, warm and laid-back, but a true quality sound; lovely build	24,41,35		88	6	25	•	1910	j
Cerwin-Vega VS10	350	Not all that refined but ballsy as heck, these rock boxes have no shortage of gung-ho	33,70,29	٠	95	6	37	•	1758	3
Chario Syntar 100	250	Pretty with a pleasantly easygoing balance, but not the most communicative or exciting sound around	18,32,27		87	6	45	•		
Dali 104B	370	Lively, rich sounding and communicative. Shame about bland styling and dull balance	22,86,27	•	93	4	28	•	1657	í
Dali 606	400	A big bruiser at a tempting price, Dali's 'no-frills' 606 sounds refined and polite, but also packs some punch	22,97,32	•	91	4	25	•		

This compact stand-mount doesn't look big, but sound quality can match many models at twice the price

Dynaudio Applause 50

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20,33,25 86 4 30 •

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HI-FI LOUDSPEAKERS (CONTINUED)



		EARERS (CONTINUED)	(CM)	ER					L "DER	
	rice(£) 1.842	Comments	21,95,29		60	4	20			1
ynaudio Contour 1.8 Iectrofluidics Sonolith 2.2xi		Wonderful voice-band delicacy and loads of deep bass from a very elegant and compact box Polymer concrete cabinet with aluminium cones produces world class imaging and very serious bass (Statements)	38.95.42.5			4	20 n/a	•	-	1
pos ES12	500	High quality luxury stand-mount has great midband and stereo imaging and very sensus uass (statements)	20,38,25		85	8	45	•	1823	-
pos ES12	675	Substantial stand-mount delivers delightful midrange focus and delicacy with good bass control	23,49,29		87	8	25	•	1025	1
os ES22	1,185	Elegant floorstander with 'safe' balance that can be enlivened with the right cable and energetic material (Sessions)	21,88,25	•		6	58	•	1629	
	1,655	Handsome floorstander with a rather uneven and bass heavy balance	24,90,35	•		6	22		1346	-
pos ES25	445	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	25,27,46	-	90	4	48	•	1540	-
araday Siren	-	High mass concrete cabinet is let down by imbalance of ageing driver combination		-	-	4				1
ale 2i	140	Unspectacular sound and appearance fail to help this solid little miniature stand out from the crowd	22,40,27		88		40	-		-
LL Imagio IC130	500	Lots of speaker for the money, but sound is decidedly dull and shut in	22,112,29	•	-	4	20	•	1824	-
larbeth BBC LS3/5A	699	Still a classic miniature, though not to every taste, and none the better for the recent update	19,30,18	2	82	10	80	•	-	_
leybrook Prima	159	Fine pace and timing, but balance is forward and bass is tight	20,29,18		87	6	50	•		
leybrook Heylette	269	Attractive traditional-style near-miniature has fine bass-to-mid integrity, but dull and shut-in top end	19.5,30,20		89	6	45	•	-	
leybrook Heylios	389	Great all-round performance in a pretty package at a sharp price	24,36,27		87	6	25	•		
leybrook Heylo	439	Good vocal reproduction, but sounds thin and bass seems an afterthought	23,73,19	•	88	8	30	•	1658	5
leybrook Quartet	649	Solidly large bookshelf model with good sensitivity and a lively, forward sound	24,41,22		90	8	48	•		
leybrook Ultima	650	Has the bass wallop to justify its dual hi-fi/home cinema roles, but didn't get our listeners particularly excited	22,97,29		89	6	45	•		
leybrook Sextet	1,299	Coherent and highly analytical, partly due to distinct upper-mid forwardness	27,90,20			8	25	•		
nfinity Reference 1i	150	Although not to our tastes, this is a competent speaker, and decent material value	20,34,20		89	6	50	•	1403	1
amo BX100A	350		31.5,54,28		91	8	40	•	1758	
		A cracking output for their size, these rock boxes can be a bit bright but have decent bass		-	Contract of the local division of the local		28		1659	
amo Classic 8	400	A lot of speaker for the money; good when playing quietly, but boom 'n tizz character sounded crude	22,90,29	•	0	4		•	Contract of Contra	
amo 477A	500	Very prettily styled, but build and sound quality are disappointing at the price	19,77,28	•	-	4	40	•	1549	
amo 507A	700	Exceptionally imaginative styling keeps the front view super slim yet still packs a punch. Glass top is a neat extra touc		•	-	3	40	•		
amo Concert 8	1,300	Employing a die cast magnesium cone with a charming open and detailed midband (Statements)	24.5,38,31	-	90	4	38	•	182	2
BL LX2	250	Lively and invigorating, if a touch crude, this good-hearted speaker reproduces music with considerable enthusiasm	22,40,27		87	8	40	•		
3L L20	700	Pricey, heavy and a bit laid back, but this is a fine rock'n'roller which is dynamic and communicative	26,42,28		86	8	30	•	155	(
BL SVA1500	700	A distictive Pro-style bi-radial horn tweeter, and the sound is quite a lot of fun, enlivened (?) by a juicy bass thump	17.5,51,31		86	8	40	•		
BL L40	1,000	Classic, large, stand-mount 3-way is full of vim and vigour, with a superb sense of balance	30,65,31	1	88	4	23	•		
BL L90	1,500	A classic monitor which communicates with gusto and enthusiasm, though it can sound a bit crude	24,94,35		-	6	23	•	134	5
			28,38,21	-	86	8	50			
ordan Watts JH400	565	Piano-finish hexagon has controversial sound, with uneven balance but delightful mid			10.00				-	1
PW Mini Monitor	60	Ultra-cheap miniature works well in a limited way	18,27,17.5	1	86	8	50		178	
PW Gold Monitor	80	More informative than Mini Monitor - but fiercer too	18,27,17.5		86	8	50	(ee - 6e -	178	4
PW ML510	140	Lots of good-quality speaker for the price, but not an ideal match for cheap budget components	20,34,22		88	5	50	•		
PW ML1010	400	A seriously substantial speaker for the price, and an obvious choice for those who like their music loud	22.5,115,40		91	6	25	•		
PW Ruby 1	400	Very pretty but pricey luxury metal-cone miniature has good, if slightly edgy balance	19,32,21		87	6	55	•	157	2
PW Ruby 4	1,000	Twin metal-cone main drivers improve the dynamic performance and bass extension, with little sacrifice in focus precisio	n 22.94.26		88	8	25	•		
EF Coda 7	130	Lovely open voice reproduction, but bass could be tauter; build tougher	18,30,23		88	6	50		178	
EF Coda 8	190	Outstandingly well-balanced, bass is deep but a little vague	20,32.5,29	1	86	6	28		178	
				•		6	30	•	178	
EF Coda 9	300	Uneven budget 3-way floorstander with poor bass definition	20,86,28		-		-			•
EF RDM One	500	Cute and tiny, nice midband but lack of bass warmth and weight	23,30,24	-	88	6	70	100	•	
(EF Reference Model 2	1,599	Classy, large floorstander that has massive headroom and clean mid-to-treble, but limited deep bass for size	23,103,34	•	-	4	30	•		
Kelly KT3	1,200	Super high sensitivity, this hefty floorstander sacrifices smoothness to dynamic realism - to very good effect	25,95,36		95	4	28	•		
(eswick Audio Aria II	379	Confident and dynamic sound, if a little crude and shut in	21,42,24		89	8	20	•	140	
eswick Audio Torino	999	Good value, lively contender with distinctive shape and styling. Goes loud and deep but could be smoother	18-26, 93,2	8	90	4	20	•		
inn Keilidh Passive	750	Stunning timing and coherence, and awesome bass drive	20,83,28		87	4	22		• 155	ľ
inn Kaber Passive	2,000	Dry, bright balance emphasises dynamics and transients, but can sound unforgiving	20,90,28		87	4	25			
iving Voice Airscout	19,500	You want dynamics? Get a horn, get a very, very good horn. This is a very, very good horn. Tested with RW24 horn sub		7		-	60	•		
	10	, ,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,		12.1	-	a desident of the second se				
iving Voice Air Partner S	37,200	Outstanding transparency and dynamics from remarkably solid and fast mega horn	64,160,90	100	-	1	40	8. H	•	
leridian DSP6000	9,400	Sophisticated digital design, with a wide-ranging, refined and detailed sound. Has on-board amplification	28,133,43	-	-	-	35	•	122	
lission 731 PRO	140	Cautious balance makes a fine match with budget equipment. A classy baby for smaller rooms	17.5,31.5,2	0	89	8	55	2		
lission 733i	330	New tweeter gives this floorstander a more open sound; a good all-rounder that doesn't sound as big as it looks	20.5,88,30	(88	8	45	•		
lission 752 Freedom	580	A beautifully judged compromise in the art of combining presentation with a decent sound, and a lively midban	d 20,90,25		89	8	45	•		
lission 753 Freedom	798	Great styling. New, more restrained tweeter reveals fine midband dynamics	21,90,31		89	4	40	•		
lission 754 Freedom 5	1,298	Tall but exceptionally elegant floorstander gives fine midband projection; goes loud but limited deep bass for size	22,111,31		88	4	40	•		
Ionitor Audio Monitor 3	400	An exceptionally discreet floorstander; sonically uneven, it's capable of fine results if used in a sympathetic system	16,91,21		88	5	30		•	
Ionitor Audio MA700 PMC	600	Good-looking luxury compact with all-metal diaphragms, lovely midrange, but occasionally edgy	22,35,26		89	8	45	•	166	ĥ
Ionitor Audio 702PMC	700	A good all-round stand-mount with that intimate midband focus which seems the preserve of metal cone main drive	070	-	87	8	30	•		
	1000				-		1000	1000	10	2
Ionitor Audio MA703 PMC	800	Lovely but pricey floorstander has up-front, coherent 'shiny' sound	20,89,27		88	8	50	•	182	
Ionitor Audio Studio 12	1,000	A real looker, but sound and content are a bit on the small side for the price	17,92,20	•		8	28	•	134	
lordaunt-Short MS10i	140	Up front, bouncy and a whole lot of fun	18.5,30.5,2	0	86	8	50		• 178	
lordaunt-Short MS30i	275	Slightly shut-in and coloured quality is compensated by fine bass and impressive communication	25,43,28		90	8	28	•	166	ò
fordaunt-Short Perf 860	1,895	Although a very neutral loudspeaker it can, with the right ancillaries, pack a serious punch (Statements)	26,86,35	•	90	6	35	•	136	ò
Ausical Technology Kestrel S	E 300	Brighter and drier-sounding than the standard Kestrel (and not the better for it)	20,84,19	(84	5	50	•		
Ausical Technology Condor	1,000	Lots of clever ideas in a compact floorstander, which places transparency and smoothness ahead of dynamic drama			85	-	28	•	1	
Ausical Technology Harrier	400	Very pretty package, good measured performance and even sound. Sensitivity is low, and dynamics limp	25,80,23	_	86	8	25	•	166	ì
Vaim Intro		Great dynamic range and info retrieval, but thin, lacks warmth	Contract of the second s		89	6	30		100	ر
	660		24,89,27	-	-	Contract of the local division of the local	-	-		
Naim SBL Passive	1,970	Lively and punchy – smoother but more upfront than before	27,89,27	-	88	6	25		• 135	
Neat Mystique	575	Elegant compact floorstander has good all-round sound and value	20,85,18		84	8	25	•	182	•
Neat Petite II	745	Compact design now utilising ribbon tweeter with a fine sense of timing and surprising musicality (tested in Sessions)	and a second		86		33		•	
Neat Petite II/Gravitas	2,000	Beautifully presented miniature/subwoofer combo with ribbon tweeter gives smooth, laid-back sound	23,105,40		85	6	25	•		
NHT SuperOne	358	A fine compromise between size and performance, though sensitivity and loudness capability is modest	18.5,29.5,2	3	85	8	30	•		
	1,650	Chunky floorstanding 3-way has lovely cabinetwork and lively sound, but limited deep bass	24,94,27		88	-	30	•		
rigin Live Conqueror	1.0.10									

	HI-FI LOU	DSP	PEAKERS (CONTINUED)	FLOORSTAND	IMPL IV(dB)	BASS DANCE W)	FROM	FREE (HZ)	ACTSBACK OSE TO WA SPACE	NUMBER	UMBER
	Product	Price(£)	Comments			V		V			V
	PMC TB1	410	Superb transparency, subtle laid-back sound, well worth seeking out	20,40,31		87	8	45		1830	160
R	PMC LB1	935	Delightful smoothness and transparency, though bass and treble are both limited	18,53,25		89	4	33	•		110
	PMC AB1	1,496	Lovely panel-like transparency, slightly shut-in balance, needs a big room	26,79,43		89	6	22	•	191	114
	Polk LS50	800	No enthusiast tweaks here, but powerful and beautiful balance	27,83,29	•	89	8	25	•	100	5 138
	Polk RT16 Polk LS70	800	Bass rich, lively and powerful, but suspect top end; big and not very pretty	22,105,39	•	91	4	22	•	-	160
	Proac Response 2.5	1,200	High sensitivity, but balance has too much midbass boom; mid-top is laid back	31,94,37 22,107,25	•	90 86	8	22 30	•	100	132 149
4	QLN Qubic 222	400	For aspirant high-enders looking for seriously good conventional boxes, this speaker should be first port of call Ugly but good value floorstander with loads of bass and a smooth balance	21,87,29	•	88	6	25		-	149
-	QLN Signature	1,000	Attractive pyramidal stand-mount with heavy, laid- back balance but remarkably unboxy sound; superb stereo	27,37,36	•	83	4	25		1052	167
	Quad ESL-63	3,450	Classic electrostatic lacks punch, but has strengths some can't live without	66,93,27	•	86	8	34	•		60
4	Rega Kyte	198	Has splendid timing and coherence, sounds very explicit and informative	19,31,19		87	8	50	-		114
4	Rega EL8	298	Kyle drivers in compact floorstander gives more bass but less coherence	17,72,20	•	86	8	55	•		122
	Rega ELA Mk II	498	Pretty and smooth, the latest incarnation has a superb midband and excellent communicative skills	30,80,20	٠	87	8	40	•	1578	139
R	Rega XEL	1,040	Looks and sounds great: balance bright but even, with delightful coherence and timing	20,82,30	٠	89	6	40	•	1083	132
R	Rehdeko RK 115a	1,700	Single-driver system has limited bandwidth and obvious coloration, but wondrous dynamic and temporal coherence	34,42,27		95	8	55	•	•	167
	Revolver Beretta	100	Great bass for the price, a bit crude further up	19,35,22		87	8	45	•	1790	156
R	Revolver Colt	139	A good all-rounder, if a little bland, and excellent value for money	30,19,22		88	6	48	•	1407	148
	Revolver 250	250	A nice price for a floorstander, but over-bright sound balance has potentially fatiguing consequences	21,85.5,25	•	87	8	22	•		170
	Revolver 260	350	A no-nonsense presenter of rock with plenty of dynamics, not too refined (tested in Sessions)	21.5,91.6,30	•	89	6	40	•	1731	154
	RMS Revelation Series 1	1,300	Innovative metal-box compact with integral port/stand – clean with good timing but very laid-back balance	20,99,24	•	81	8	22	•	1.000	167
	Rogers LS1	149	High grade miniature	20,20,30		87	6	45	•	- Contraction	143
	Rogers dB101 Rogers Studio 3	250 499	Style par excellence, this shapely sub-miniature is fast and agile but lightweight and forward: great voices; lacks bass	Concerne and	-	88	6	45		-	170
	Rogers LS3/5A	699	Pricey LS3/5A derived miniature, excitingly coherent if lightweight, can't go loud Clever AB1 stand/subwoofer helps the classic 3/5A monitor give its best shot	19,30,16 19,31,17	•	85 82	8 12	30 45	•	1254	118 143
4	Rogers Studio 5	699	Luxury finish bookshelf-size model has genuine monitoring capabilities	25,25,48	•	89	8	45		-	143
4	Rogers Studio 7	899	Latest variation on classic BBC-monitor theme has beautifully voiced, laid-back sound	30,63,30		90	8	30	•	1550	122
4	Rogers C6/28	1,399	Large floorstander with carbon-fibre tweeter. Sounds much better than it looks, especially through the midband	25,103,29	•	88	6	20	•	-	167
-	Roksan ROKone	595	Large stand-mount is musically very communicative if a little coloured	21,45,33		89	6	30		1834	160
	Roksan Ojan 3 Black	795	Squat, stylish and black, great bass extension and somewhat uneven balance	28,76,46	•	88	8	20	•		132
4	Roksan OJ3X Black	995	Innovative low-line, 2-way floorstander with decoupled tweeter; great bass and fine dynamic range	28,79,46	•	84	8	20	•	1001	167
8	Royd Minstrel	275	Not much wellie or loudness but fine coherence and timing, a bit bright	18,69,12		86	8	30	•	1167	135
B	Royd Doublet	485	Great value compact floorstander; lively and very informative, if a little uneven	18,93,19	٠	90	4	28	•	1835	160
	Royd The Sorcerer	595	Extremely musical and communicative speaker that's fun to listen to. Aesthetics could use improving though	20,31,18		86	8	35	•		139
	Royd Abbot	695	Dynamic and fine transient qualities are hampered by a rather coloured mid-forward balance	20,81,30	٠	90	8	43	•		118
	Ruark Sceptre	600	Graceful 'traditional' cabinetwork with classy veneer and shiny gilt fixings, hampered by a rather wayward sound balance	21,38,31		87	8	40	•	de la	174
4	Ruark Talisman II	749	Less ideologically committed than some, strength lies in fine all-round coherence	23,84,32	•	88	8	30	•	6	118
	Ruark Crusader	1,600	Elegant luxury 3-way with wonderfully even-handed, if rather laid-back balance	24,94,31	•	85	6	22	•		167
	Ruark Equinox	1,849	The primary strength of this speaker is its ability to remove itself from the picture	25,88,34	•	88	6	45	•	1227	140
4	SD Acoustics SD3R	649	New SD3 has the agility and charm of a quality miniature, good bass and low sensitivity	20,38,30		87	8	25	•	1001	106
4	SD Acoustics SD5 SD Acoustics SD1E	1,549	Bass suspect but forward midband is delightfully smooth. Has ribbon tweeter	20,110,30	•	88	8	30	•	1081	132
		2,995	Two-part design with four rear firing bass drivers that has vibrancy, transparency and energy (Statements)	25,120,40	•	90	6	25	•	-	159
4	Sequence 400 Shahinian Arc	330 1,875	Clever hang-on-wall panel is well voiced, though bass isn't too great Occasionally wonderful small floorstanding omni; brightb ut coherent and revealing	25,100,7 35,69,25	-	86 88	8	45 24	•	,	164 110
	Silverado Raider	695	Beautifully built audiophile compact, neutral if bright, tough work for amps	20,40,25		83	3	30	•		164
	Sonus Faber Concerto	1,098	Beautiful Italian bookshelf design with superb midrange but limited loudness capabilities (Statements)	22.5,36,34		87	8	45		-	165
	Spendor 2020	399	Utilising an oval drive unit in a stylish cabinet, this is a neutral design with AV inclinations (tested in Sessions)	18,34,26		87	8	ŦJ	•	1756	155
4	Spendor 2030	599	Discreet slimline floorstander with delicately coherent, laid-back sound	18,89,27	•	87	8	30	•	1836	
1	Tangent Monitor 5	80	An uneven performer best suited to small rooms and generous volume levels	17.5,27,18		83	8	55		-	169
	Tangent Monitor 9	150		19.5,75.5,22.5	•	90	6	45	•	1	165
	Tannoy Mercury M2	140	A fine all-rounder with big box and deep bass for the price; could be sweeter and tighter	20.5,38,28		87	8	25	•	-	169
	Tannoy Mercury M3	230	Good-looking fine value floorstander is very neutral and evenhanded, with fine midband but weak dynamics and drive	20.5,87,28		87	7	20	•		170
R	Tannoy D300	1,000	Gorgeous-looking compact floorstander. And a fine all-round performer too	16-24,85,23	٠	87	6	26	•	2	167
	Tannoy D500	1,999	Plenty of muscle and stereo, but short of poise and delicacy. Hard work for amps	31,93,34	•	91	6	20	. •	1355	143
	Tannoy Westminster TW	6,600	These awesome horn-loaded speakers are remarkably controlled and impressive	large	٠	99	8	38	•	•	C93
	TDL RTL2	280	Spacious, weighty and enveloping sound if you can accept the laid-back balance	20,73,22		87	8	25	•	1412	148
-	TDL RTL3	400	Bargain-price floorstander has rich, heavy and bright sound with a good scale	20,90,37	•	90	8	25	•	Degis	126
	TDL RTL3SE	450	A touch of boom'n'tizz might be to taste, but this is a lot of box for the money, with floor-shaking bass capabilities	20,91,39	•	89	6	22	•	-	174
	TDL T-Line 3	700	Plenty of bass and treble, but broad midband is rather repressed	20,97,38	•	86	8	20	•		164
R	TDL Studio 1m	899	Transmission line helps bring the best from metal cone driver	23,77,34		86	8	20	•		118
	Technics SB-M20	200	Well-balanced with natural perspectives and fine midband coherence, but bass is a bit boxy and uneven	20,32,23	_	70	8	50	•	1413	1000
	Technics SB-M500	450	This model offers a clean, open sound, offset by midbass, heavy balance and low sensitivity	25,78,37	•	100	8	25	•	1666	
	Totem Model One	1,195	Utterly delightful but exasperatingly expensive luxury miniature sets the benchmark for its size	17,31,23		87	4	28 23	•	255	122
	Vandersteen 2Ce Wharfedale Diamond 7.2	1,395	Elegant staggered baffle contributes to a refreshing freedom from boxiness	41,101,27 19,29.5,23	•	88 88	7	23 45	•		86 169
	Wharfedale Valdus 400	140 199	A good-hearted, lively and up-front performer that's a little lacking in subtlety and smoothness Goes very loud with a minimum of amplification, but the sound is very thick and uneven, with a heavy upper bass	19,29.5,23	•	88 91	4	45 30	•	1414	-
	Wharfedale Valdus 500	299		25,80,26	•	91	4	40	•	1414	-
	Wharfedale MFM-3	350	Smooth broad midband gives fine voice rendition; bass could be better	22,89,28	•	87	8	40	•		164
					-	1.4	-	1.0			

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HI-FI LOUDSPEAKERS (CONTINUED)

HI-FI LOI	JDSF		FLOORSTAND	IMPL ITV(dB)	BASS	FROM	FREE S	SE TO W	NUMBER	UM
Product	Price(£)	Comments		H I		~?) \		V	~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~	
Wilson benesch ACT1	6,400	Stylish, technically advanced and sonically as clean as a whistle, this is truly a high-end loudspeaker (Statements)	23,108, 37	•	89	6	40	•	1852	2
ZYP AI	199	Cute metal cased micro-miniature is quite coloured but great fun	14,22,12		88	8	30	•		
SUBWOOFERS										
B&W AS6	500	Good material value with a fair amount of low bass from 100W active design	45,51,45.5	٠	1		30		1736	;
Celestion CS135	139	Compact hideaway passive sub lacks deep bass for high sensitivity speakers	52,19,34	•	86	8	45		•	
Jamo SW600	530	Has some neat styling touches and remote control but deep bass is limited (active)	38,41,53	•		1	30		1736	ì
KEF Model 30B	500	Commendably discreet with good sense of timing but limited extension (active)	38.5,37,43	•	20		45		1736	3
KEF AV1	2,500	Works well, looks great, shakes the windows but costs a lot and is bulky	56,43,50	•		8	45		10	
Living Voice RW24	11,500	The only horn subwoofer on the UK market brings new meaning to low frequency energy, speed and resolution	146,84,59	•	104	8	40		•	
M&K VX-7B	450	Baby of a big range this active design delivers deep, plenteous bass albeit lacking in transparency	35,25,37	٠			40		1736	i
Rogers AB1	549	Subwoofer-cum-stand designed as partner for LS3/5a or similar miniatures	19.57.16	٠	82	8		•	1354	ŧ



Stands & Supports

i-fi furniture is more important than you might imagine. The effect it can have on the sound of your system is far from subtle. Hi-fi furniture can be split up into two categories equipment supports and loudspeaker stands.

It is not entirely clear what makes a great equipment support, but some are definitely more equal than others. There's a variety of approaches and materials used, including particle board, glass and all manner of steel tube and section.

Speaker stands come in a variety of sizes and styles to suit different models. Use dealer or manufacturer recommendations to narrow down the choice, but as a rule you want the tweeter at ear height.



HEIGHT (CM): Height of stand or equipment shelf.	lead to increase mass, which affects sound.	rack or support.	copy of the review. Use the contents page to find the Factsback
TOP PLATE SIZE (CM): Dimensions of top plate on speaker stand	WELDED: The better stands and supports are welded rather than	SHELF TYPE: Material that shelves are made of on an equipment	information page.
or equipment support.	bolted together.	rack. Wood generally means MDF.	ISSUE NUMBER: The issue of Hi-Fi Choice in which the
FILLABLE: Some speaker stands can be filled with sand and/or	NUMBER OF SHELVES: The amount of tiers on an equipment	FACTSBACK NUMBER: The Factsback reference for ordering a fax	original review appeared.

STANDS &	S	UPPORTS	DP PLATE SIZE EIGHT(CM)	NUM FILLABL	BER OF SH WELDED	FACTSBI SHELI SHELI VELVES	ACK NUMBER	IBE
Product P Equipment Supports	rice(£	2) Comments						A
Audiophile Furniture Base	480	Easy to set up, well-ordered sound	40			4	Wood 1633	15
Custom Design Classic Four	270	Glass-shelved stand with octagonal wooden uprights with upward facing spikes isolating the top shelf, adjustable shelf height	81	46,37		4	Glass	16
Fi-Rax R4	250	Lively, exuberant sound, slightly weak bass				5	Glass 1633	15
Frameworks H500/H175	404	Two-shelf stand and isolation platform combo in tubular steel that made a spectacular impression on audition	70	52,34	•	3	Glass 1	16
Mana Acoustics Ref. Table	350	King of its type, angle iron, chipboard and glass combined to make a significant difference to sound quality			•	1	Glass	14
Mana 5 Tier Sound Table	600	Infinitely upgradeable. Persuasive and thrilling glass and angle iron design that adds speed and bandwidth to components upon	it		•	5	Glass 1633	15
Optimum Int 2000 OPT490	350	25kg stand with shelves sandwiched between variable height tubular uprights. Sounds smooth and relaxed with sturdy bass	50	60.40		4	Glass	16
Quadraspire Q4	200	Easy to live with, and tonally neutral				4	MDF 1633	15
Sound Organisation Z038	130	Too lively and lacking order – but cheap	50	84.40	•	5	Wood 1633	15
Sound Organisation Z560	150	A mix of welded and bolted members gives good structural integrity. While performance is not up with the best, it's great value	90	46,36	•	5	Wood	16
Soundstyle Select 6105	280	Respectable sonics, structurally solid and smart					Glass 1633	1
Soundstyle Finewoods W105		Veneered shelves clamped between tubular uprights that delivers with classical material	82	48,27		4		1
Stands Unique Sound Tower	249	Wooden uprights combine with glass shelves to provide a fresh, forward sound, but bass could be quicker	81	72,42		5	Glass 1633	
Target B5	175	Free of colorations, fine grip and good value			•	5	Wood 1633	1
Speaker Stands								Î
Alphason NC I	45	Filled single-column design without threaded spike holes that's appropriate for non-critical applications	40-60	16,16	•		1373	1
Alphason NCII	80	Tall, slim and elegant, though sound and value are unexceptional		17,17				1
Alphason Titan	120	Excels in the midband and allows voices to come across in a detailed and expressive fashion	40-60	16,16	• •		1373	14
Apollo AZ6	80	Fine engineering value, but sound unexceptional and top-plate small	66	15.13	15-2			1
Atacama BD21	55	Good-looking and good value but doesn't match the SE24's sound quality	56	15,17				1
Atacama SE24	70	Stands out from the budget crowd because of the consistency and overall quality of the performance	61	19.5.17	Contra Carlos		1373	1
AVF Tower 400	35	Ridiculously cheap and much better than no stand at all	54	17.20				1
Ixos Deadrock 903	50	Smooth and tonally even but short on definition. Deep bass is soft which doesn't help timing	60				1373	÷
Gale Reference 600	60	Smooth sounding with impressive bass well suited to less civilised speakers		-			1373	ī
Kudos S50	100	Better sound than the budget stands, particularly at the bottom end	60	15,21	•			1
Kudos S100	270	The best all-round stand around Probably	63	15,21	•			1
Mana Soundframes	125	For use under floorstanders and equipment racks, these make music effortless and natural, can be stacked for greater effect	5		•		1373	1
Partington New Merlin	60	Although light in weight, the stand's performance seemed remarkably muscular but musical rendering lacked a little precision					1373	1
Partington Discovery	80	The depth and substance of the presentation truly added to the convincing nature of the system's portrayal					1373 1	
Partington Trophy	100	Four-column design with damped top and base plates, sound is tight and cogent with smoothly integrated detail					1373	1
Revolver RS1	70	A good blend of performance and appearance for the price	53	18,18	•			1
RMS/Stands Unique Vivus	550	Pricey carbon fibres give ultra-clean sound with exceptional voices	50	N/A				1
Soundstyle 124	100	Big, shiny and solid, with fine midband projection	65	17,16				1
Stands Unique HP	220	Real wood disguises high performance tuned technology	59	22,23		100	10 10 1	1
Target R1	280	Truly high-mass four-pillar design with superb weight and speed, giving music delicious attack and outstanding imagery	53	ROCULAR R	• •	-	1373	
Target TR60	68	Lively, dynamic midrange and detailed treble from a less-than audiophile oriented twin column design	60	15,15	and the second	6	1373	



Tonearms

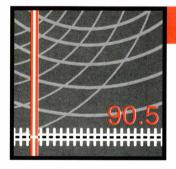
urntables at the cheaper end of the market tend to be supplied with a matching tonearm, and often include a 'starter' cartridge. Still better quality is found at higher prices among the separate motor units and tonearms. Careful partnering and set-up is essential for these components.

Although the turntable is the most important part of a record player, the tonearm is the second most important, and the quality of its construction and design have a significant bearing on sound quality. There are three basic types of arms listed in the key and each has its strengths, but pivoted designs are the most popular, for reasons both practical and economical.



EFFECTIVE MASS: This relates to cartridge compliance. Generally	track the disc in a linear fashion.	two planes.	FACTSBACK NUMBER: The reference for ordering a fax copy of the
high mass arms are suitable for low compliance cartridges and	PIVOTED: Arms which allow the cartridge to describe an arc as	EFFECTIVE LENGTH (cm): Length of arm from bearing to	review. Use the contents page to find the Factsback.
vice versa.	they traverse the record.	cartridge mounting.	ISSUE NUMBER: The issue of Hi-Fi Choice in which the
PARALLEL TRACKING: An arm which allows the cartridge to	UNI-PIVOT: Pivoted arms with a bearing that allows movement in	ADJUSTABLE HEIGHT: Important for accurate cartridge set-up.	original review appeared.

TONEAR	MS		EFFECTIVE MASS	FECTIVE LEI UNI-PIVI VOTED	VISTABLE HEL NGTH(cm)	K NUMB	NUMBER
Product	Price(£)	Comments					
Alphason HR100S	490	S-shaped arm sounds smooth, but nevertheless reproduces transients with fine attack	Medium	•	229	•	86
Kuzma Stogi Ref	1,000	Large, solid and well-made arm, gives exceptionally clear sound with just a hint of brightness	High	•		•	79
Linn Ekos	1,297	Superb, state-of-the-art design which builds significantly on predecessor's strengths	Medium	•	229	•	6
Moth Arm	95	The ultimate budget arm? Refined, sweet, detailed and natural	Low	•	237		60
Rega RB300	139	Despite its modest price it sets exceptional standards and could be used on many high-end turntables	Low	•	237		60
Roksan Tabriz Basic	275	Targeted at the Xerxes, this is a good alternative to the Rega arm in many cases – a touch bright though	Low	•	240	•	91
SME Series 300-309	657	Beautifully made and finished: fully adjustable and a highly neutral performer	Low	•	238	•	79
SME Series IV	936	Superb engineering and finish with a finely balanced sound, impressive stereo focus and low coloration	Low	•	233	•	60
SME Series V	1,391	Excellent in all respects, this arm arguably sets the standards for pivoted arms, regardless of price	Low	•	233	•	60



Tuners

he radio medium operates at a lower profile than TV, but in areas outside pop music the BBC service is the envy of the world. Live concerts rival all other sources from a hi-fi perspective.

Though tuners might seem something of a hi-fi afterthought, the task they discharge is far from simple, since it requires the skills of RF (reception) and audio (signal processing) engineering. The importance of the former will depend on reception conditions, but a high-quality aerial system is

well worth having. Tuners come in two basic types. Analogue models tune gradually and can have analogue or digital displays; they are often preferred for sound quality. Digital tuners offer convenient automatic tune facilities and pre-set memories.



KEY

applications. Basically RDS tuners can identify and display the	aerial, useful for aligning your 'twig' during installation	to find the Factsback information page
name of the radio station being received, but they offer a variety	ROTARY TUNING KNOB: The ergonomically attractive approach to	ISSUE NUMBER: The issue of Hi-Fi Choice in which the original
of other features as well	dial-surfing.	review appeared.
REMOTE CONTROL: Couch-potato friendly.	FACTSBACK NUMBER: The Factsback reference for	
SIGNAL STRENGTH METER: Indicates strength of signal from	ordering a fax copy of the review. Use the contents page	
	name of the radio station being received, but they offer a variety of other features as well REMOTE CONTROL: Couch-potato friendly.	name of the radio station being received, but they offer a variety of other features as well REMOTE CONTROL: Couch-potato friendly. RECONTROL: Couch-potato friendly. RECONTROL: Couch-potato friendly.

Tuners					SIGNAL STREAM FACTSBACK ISSUE NUMBER REMOTE CONFIT TUNNE KNUB WAVEBANDS RESETS RDS					
Product	Price(£) Comments		V					N	
AMC T7	130	Performance adequate but price is sharp, especially with remote control. Some hum	FM, M	30	•				166	
Arcam Alpha 7	230	Indifferent RF performance but a touch of audiophile sound quality with clean, strong signals	FM,M,L	24					166	
Arcam Delta 280	399	Fine sound quality marred by mild synthesiser whine; RF performance only average. Remote £60 extra	FM	20		•			12	
Audiolab 8000T	750	Unusual combination of fine sound quality and RF performance (inc AM), and superb ergonomics	FM,M,L	39		•	•	1254	14	
Denon TU-260L	120	Careful minimalist design promises a surprisingly open and vivacious sound	FM,M,L	20					93	
Denon TU-425RD	200	A fine all-rounder with advanced RDS, good RF performance and decent sound. Remote extra	FM, M	40	•				16	
Harman/Kardon TU950	200	Bulky but effective, delivering fine RF performance and good sound for the price	FM,M,L	30	•		•		166	
Linn Kremlin	2,600	Controversially good sound at a very high price. The reviewer's saving up but you should check it out for yourself	FM	80	•	٠		254	142	
Magnum Dynalab FT101	825	Although fairly expensive given its minimum set of facilities, its excellent sound provided ample compensation	FM						7	
Micromega Tuner	700	Has digital output but even without the Micromega DAC, this provides exceptional sound quality. Looks good too	FM	39	•	•		810	157	
Mission Cyrus FM7	400	Open, generous soundstaging gives the music plenty of foundation, if a touch shut-in at the top	FM	29	•	•	•	1254	14	
Musical Fidelity E50	300	Sounds involving if coloured and with a subjectively larger-than-life presentation	FM	20				1810	157	
Naim NAT01	1,645	There may be better sounding tuners in the world, but we have yet to hear one	FM				1	254	142	
Pioneer F-504RDS	250	Cable-friendly with advanced RDS and excellent RF performance, slightly disappointing sound	FM,M	40	•	•	•		166	
Rotel RT-935AX	160	Good ergonomics and sound quality at a realistic price, but limited features and RF selectivity	FM,M	20					166	
Sony ST-SA3ES	250	Clean, lean presentation but needs a quality aerial to perform at its best	FM,M,L	30	•	٠	•	810	157	
Technics ST-GT350L	150	Decent RF performance is offset by sound quality more typical of a mini/midi system	FM,M,L	30	•		•	254	142	
Thorens TRT2000	450	Not exactly neutral sounding, it nonetheless makes listening fun	FM,M	59	• •	•	•	810	157	

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Turntables

pecialist turntables are what high fidelity sound is all about. CD players may offer silent backgrounds and flat frequency responses, but they can't match the dynamics and superlative timing that serious turntable users take for granted. Turntables at the cheaper end of the market tend to be supplied with a matching tonearm, and often include a 'starter' cartridge. Still better quality is found at higher prices among the separate motor units

and tonearms. Careful partnering and set-up is essential for these components, but many so-called 'sympathetic' combinations exist.

Because turntables are mechanical devices that are designed to retrieve modulations as small as a micron, engineering quality is of paramount importance. It is also the reason why turntables cost as much as they do, and require high quality support systems.



KEY

MANUAL: You do it all: put the needle on the record and take it off. AUTO: The record player does it all. SEMI-AUTO: You share the work: you put it on, it takes it off. SPEEDS: In RPM to correspond with your platters. SUSPENDED SUBCHASSIS: Sprung suspension to minimise structural interference EXTERNAL PSU: Outboard power supply; generally it indicates high quality

SUPPLIED WITH ARM: Many turntables require a separate arm to be fitted; if not, this tells you so.

SUPPLIED WITH CARTRIDGE: Most turntables do not come supplied with a needle FACTSBACK NUMBER: The Factsback reference for ordering a fax copy of the review. Use the contents page to find the Factsback information page.

Factsback

ISSUE NUMBER: The issue of Hi-Fi Choice in which the original review appeared

TURNTAB	LES		MANUAL	SUSPENDED SUPPLIED WIT SUSPENDED SUPPLIED WIT SEMI-AUTO AUTO SPEEDS SUSCISSION PS	FACTSBACK ^{ISSUE} NUM H CARTRIDGE H ARM
	Price(£)		V		
Alphason Sonata	835	Good sound in all areas - bass, clarity and neutrality all in top class (tested with HR100S MCS)	•	33 •	
	2,500	Opulent beast tested with Souther TQ-1 arm. Tends to gloss over detail with a fizzy character but is quite bold	•	33/45	1328 1
DNM Rota 2	4,800	Tonally slightly bleached, but extracts detail like few others. Works well on own table	•	33/45 •	• • 1328 1
Dual 505-4 UK	200	Consistent sounding and well isolated turntable. It is slightly lacking in oomph	_	• 33/45 •	•• 1
Kuzma Stabi/PS	1,200	(Tested with Stogi Reference) Solid oak plinth; sound is very clear, detailed and extended	•	33/45	
Linn LP12 Basik	1,050	Trails the full LP12 significantly, but pace, rhythm, timing etc still top rank	•	33 ●	• 1
Linn LP12 Lingo	1,750	The classic reference is improved by the Lingo, but charming character remains	•	33/45 •	
Michell Gyrodec	765	Sweet and natural-sounding player, well matched to Rega RB300 arm	•	33/45 •	
Moth Kanoot	329	Rather coarse-sounding deck that requires decent isolation and comes with a Rega RB300 arm	•	33/45	• 1
Notts Analogue Spacedeck/Art	m1,125	No frills, just a first-rate, outstandingly natural-sounding deck that will last forever	•	33/45	• • 1
Pink Triangle Anniversary	1,980	Possibly the most detailed, clear and neutral-sounding deck around. Likeness to master tape is uncanny	•	33/45 •	
Pro-ject 2	299	Remarkably effective at the price with decent timing and a generally well defined sound		33/45	•• 1
Pro-ject 6/Sumiko	699	Don't think of this as a mid-price deck with a good arm, but as a scaled-down Oracle Delphi – it's that good	•	33/45 •	•• 1
Rega Planar 2	214	A remarkable product at the price, surprisingly articulate and confident	•	33/45	•
Rega Planar 3	274	The '3 sounds musical in a balanced and coherent manner, needs decent isolation and suffers a little pitch instability	•	33/45	• 1
Rega Planar 9	1,598	Featuring the RB900 arm and a ceramic plinth, this deck puts Rega into contention with the best decks available	•	33/45	• 1
Reson RS1	675	Supplied set-up and ready-tuned, this unconventional deck is packed with mid-band detail		33/45	• • 1
Rivelin Eclipse	1,100	Tested with SME 309. Tends to simplify things and add a slightly ragged edge to the proceedings	•	33/45	1328 1
Roksan Radius 3/Tabriz zi	890	Elegant-looking turntable with a tidy, ordered sound. Bright and breezy if a shade lightweight	•	33/45	
SME Model 20A	4,631	Supplied with Series V arm. Engineered to last a lifetime, giving excellent stereo and detail retrieval	•	33/45/78 •	
Systemdek I/920/Moth	235	The motor is derivative of the Rega Planar 2 with a Moth arm. Up-tempo, even bright at times but never lacks enthusiasm	•	33/45	•• 1
Systemdek 2X2	499	Neutral, flexible and dynamic deck that begs to be used with a good arm and cartridge		33/45	
Systemdek 2X2 Thorens TD166 VI/UK/RB	300	Refined and solid sound with well-focused imagery; suitable for use with good MM and budget MC cartridges		33/45	••
Thorens TD2001	700	Balances convenience and sound well, but deck lacks detail and bass could be better controlled		● <u>33/45</u> ●	•
Well Tempered Record Player	1.800	Intriguing and challenging. Musically it is not ideal, but has a limpid quality and a lack of artificiality that sets standard	s 🔹	33/45	1180 1
Wilson-benesch TT/Act 2 arm		Carbon fibre is extensively used in this neutral and well-resolved turntable with its fabulous unipivot tonearm (Statement		the later in the later	 1775 1

ver wanted to look back at a Hi-Fi Choice review or needed some sound independent advice to make up that 'Best Buy' system? Factsback is a personal service designed to help you navigate the ever-increasing list of available products. Now, our reprints are instantly available to you via your fax (or fax/modem) 24 hours a day. You get the review you need, just when you need it. International readers can order copies of reviews (£1.50 per page with a credit card) by calling Starcomm on +44 1132 940600.

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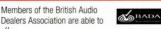
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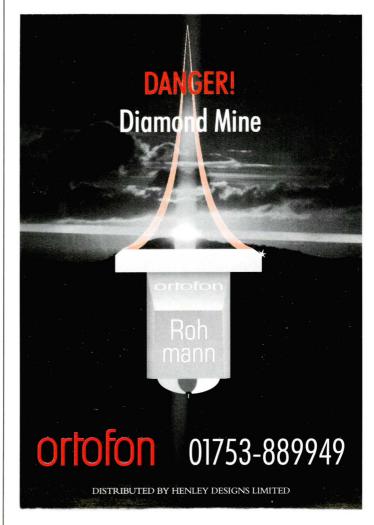
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Rogers CD2 transport/DAC.

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THE FEBRUARY 1998 EDITION OF HI-FI CHOICE WILL BE ON SALE THURSDAY JANUARY 15, 1997. DON'T MISS IT! My name is **David**, and I am a cable-o-holic. The man **Vivian** comes clean about his fixation with interconnects and speaker wires.



here's a scene in Quentin Tarantino's film *Pulp Fiction*, where hit-man Vincent Vega (John Travolta) visits the home of drug dealer Lance (Eric Stolz), to buy some high-quality heroin.

I'm struck by Lance's appearance. He's young, wraithishly thin and pale, has wild hair and a wispy beard. He wears a red flannel shirt over a "Speed Racer" T-shirt. People who look like this have been selling me mood altering substances my entire adult life, too. Unlike the characters in Tarantino's film, my

habit comes from listening to the products involved, rather than consuming them physically. But we share an addiction to stuff that comes in variously-coloured plastic sheaths, has stupid names and costs serious money. More and more serious as time has gone by.

If you haven't guessed, we're talking about wire. Tarantino's Lance reminds me of the bloke you'll find lurking in the shadows of any tweaky specialist hi-fi den, itching to sell you a line of exotic interconnect or speaker cable. A metre of Goertz, a bubble pack of Silver Streak, a bundle of PBJ. £300, £1,000, whatever you can afford.

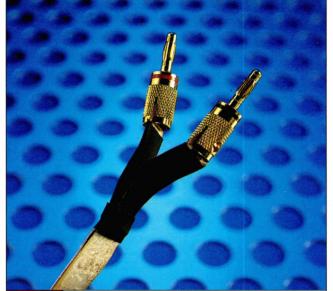
Wire is what binds the hi-fi experience together — both literally and figuratively. It resides at the very heart of the pursuit's addictive culture. Without it the hardware won't

work. But with the right stuff (we're told) it will work as never before. And there's so much of the right stuff. The technical ideal, of course, is that cables are sonically invisible, that they add nothing to the signal and take nothing away. Fit 'em and forget 'em. Most claim nothing less.

The reality is that all cables do something different to the sound of a system. Sometimes the difference is subtle, sometimes it's dramatic. There is a distinct possibility that some brands are truly transparent or "distortion free", and that their version of "different" is actually what the system sounds like. But how can you tell? You can't. At least not unless you have a pair of revealing, truthful loudspeakers. And to the best of my knowledge, they haven't been invented yet.

Besides, the interconnect and speaker cable market wouldn't exist if it merely served people who need to plugtogether the various parts of their hi-fi. In one sense, cables are tone controls for people whose amplifiers don't have any. They can give you more bass, a crisper mid-band or smoother treble. Or a leaner bass, less exposed midband and brighter treble. More warmth, less grain, more definition, less congestion. You name it — there's a cable out there that will quick-fix, modify, massage, manipulate, moisturise, exfoliate, tauten and rejuvenate the sound of your rig.

Some audiophiles turn their backs on all this, for a very good reason. What starts out



M2 David could get hooked on this Class A audio narcotic.

a simple, well-meaning experiment can suck you in and become an expensive obsession. For every hi-fi buff who elects to stick with "an old faithful" (Naim NACA5 users spring to mind) there must be at least three who use cables as a narcotic to stave off major upgrading pangs. At any one time, they'll have five or six examples lying around. It's a powerful, maybe chronically compelling idea that you can work magic on the sound of your system merely by changing the interconnect.

Resisting the upgrade urge

Sane souls tell you this is fundamentally wrong-headed, that you cannot improve the performance of a component with a cable. This is logical, but fails to take into account the intriguing possibility that you can alter the whole character of your system with a fifty quid interconnect. I can't be the only addict who thinks like this. So I've been on a bit of a cable binge, and have surrounded myself with seductive strands from van den Hul, Straight Wire, Audioquest, Musical Fidelity, Goertz, Electrofluidics Monolith and Kimber. I've worn my fingers raw swapping them around. And, boy, was it fun.

Perused all the accompanying bumf, too. Persuasive arguments? Plenty. But there's so much conflicting pseudo-scientific mumbo jumbo, I refuse to believe any of it. I'd much rather trust my ears.

First, it's usually better to buy interconnects and speaker cable from the same brand. This might be psychological but, generally, the results seem to be more coherent, fluent and holistic. Not always, though. Straight Wire Rhapsody interconnect and Audioquest Indigo speaker cable are natural soul mates. Second, and again this is a generalisation, American cables (Audioquest, Straight Wire, Monster Cable) seem to have a characteristically more muscular (yet laid-back) sound than their European and Japanese counterparts: warm, expansive, easy going. The exception to this is Kimber Kable, which has a leaner, lighter balance that won't fail to make a dull system sound livelier. more detailed and dynamic. File under sonic tonic. Musical Fidelity's reasonably-priced X-

Linx interconnect lives up to its "no-nonsense" billing by being basically clear, evenhanded, consistent and enjoyable. Buy with confidence. Ditto vdH's interconnects, which seem to work a little magic with any system, especially the all-carbon-fibre, remarkably unmanipulative The Second.

There was no doubt about the most interesting and exciting wires I tried. These were the broad strips of solid copper made by 'phase linear' champions Electrofluidics (Monolith 20/20) and Townshend Audio's Swiss-sourced Goertz M2. These sound really different to the stranded alternatives, seeming to offer greater resolution and a lower noise floor. In fact I'm still using them. "The reason is obvious," say their makers. "They tell the truth". Maybe so. But I'm itching to have another go at the vdH; cables have no cure. It might be Christmas, but I'm not ready for cold turkey...



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