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# HI-FI CHOICE

PASSION FOR SOUND

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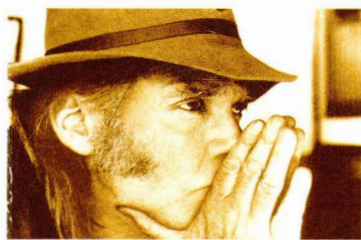
## RHYTHM KINGS

New entry-level pre and power amps from **Naim**



## DIGITAL DIVA

Stunning SACD playback from **Lindemann**



## EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

Why is **Neil Young** so excited about DVD-Audio?



# SPELLBINDING SPEAKERS

EXCLUSIVE! Musical magic from the **Triangle** Magellan Concerto

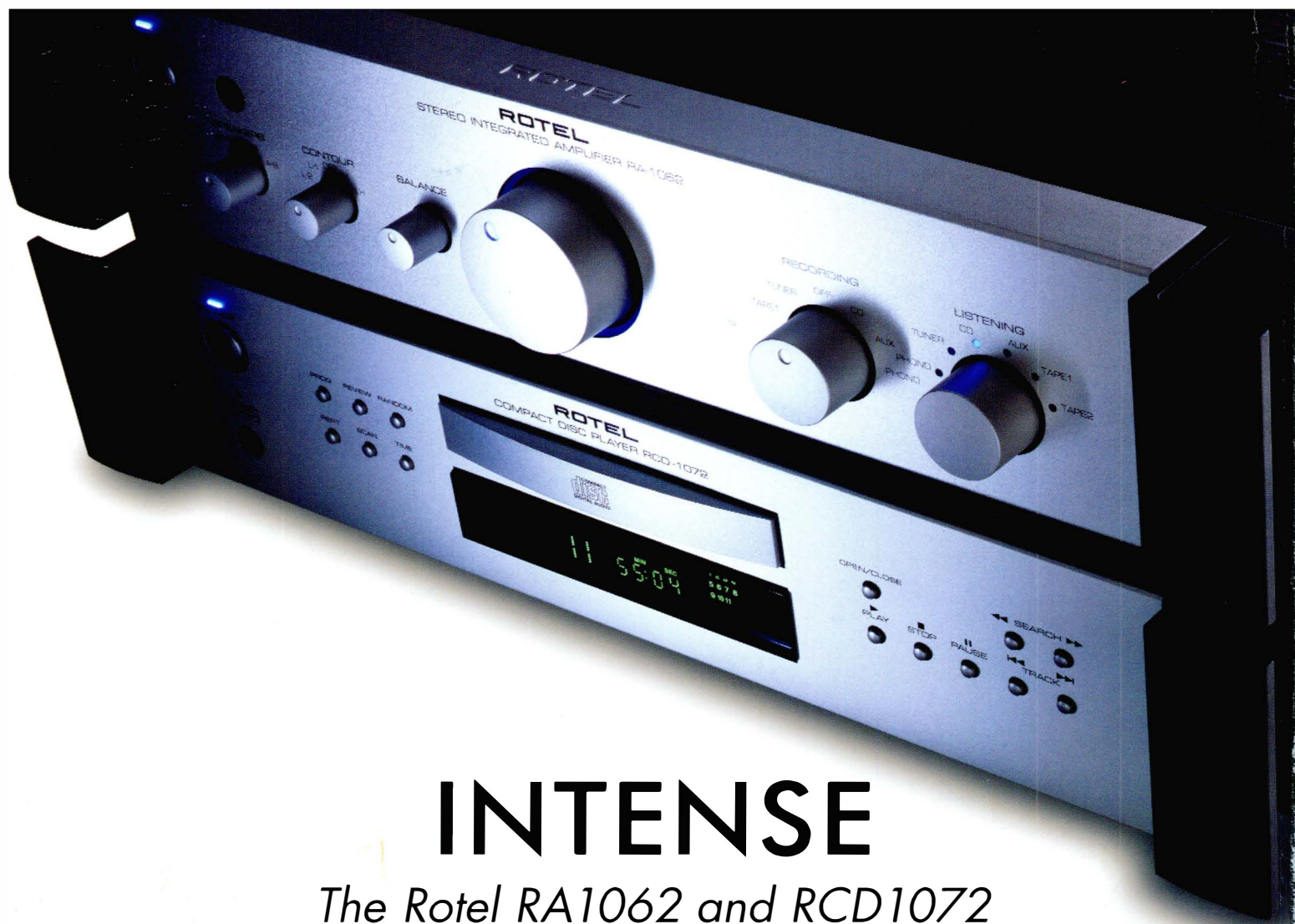
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Media with passion

**WIN!**  
A pair of Ruark Talisman III speakers worth £1,500!

## ULTIMATE GROUP TEST »» AMPLIFIERS

- FEATURING**
- > Cyrus 6vs
  - > Electrocompaniet ECI 3
  - > Exposure 2010 S
  - > Marantz PM7200 KI
  - > NAD C372
  - > Rega Mira 3





# INTENSE

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Individually, Rotel's latest CD player and amplifier will make a striking difference to the way you hear music. When they hook up with each other, though, it's a match made in hifi heaven. The chemistry is instant, thanks to a shared pedigree of meticulous component selection, painstaking refinement and balanced design by Rotel's award-winning team of engineers. It's an intense relationship, and a powerful listening experience. Get them connected.

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# HI-FI CHOICE

JANUARY 2005 ISSUE 262

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## WELCOME TO HI-FI CHOICE

To ensure you get the best information, opinion and advice, *Hi-Fi Choice*  
employs the most knowledgeable and experienced hi-fi writers in the business...



**"Music digs deep into our emotional core like no other art form. It touches the soul and makes grown men weep. Hi-fi is simply a means to a musical end – it provides the conduit for its energy and detail, delivers scale and space, ensures you get closer to the tone and impact of the original performance. It makes music seem more real and hence achieve its emotional goal. Quite simply, the music that moves you, moves you more."** Tim Bown, Editor



### PAUL MESSENGER

A former *HFC* editor, Paul has been writing about his beloved hi-fi hobby for nearly 30 years. In that time he has become one of the world's most respected sonic scribes and probably the UK's foremost loudspeaker reviewer.



### DAN GEORGE

Dan is a huge hi-fi nut whose dream came true when he became *HFC*'s reviews editor. Armed with a bristling contacts book and a pair of razor-sharp ears, he ensures that only the most interesting products make it into *HFC*.



### ALVIN GOLD

Alvin cut his hi-fi teeth in retail, and has been writing about his obsession for more than 20 years. In that time he has contributed his encyclopaedic knowledge to almost every hi-fi periodical you can think of (and several more besides).



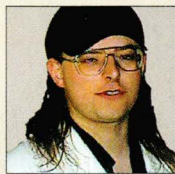
### NIGEL WILLIAMSON

One of the UK's foremost music journalists, Nigel's list of credits include biographies on the likes of Neil Young and Bob Dylan. As well as writing for *HFC*, he also works as contributing editor of leading music mag *Uncut*.



### RICHARD BLACK

Richard is a professional musician, an experienced recording engineer and a highly knowledgeable hi-fi analyst to boot. He has a particular knack for writing about complicated subjects in a comprehensible way – and he only writes for *HFC*.



### PAUL MARCHANT

Lab expert Paul is a senior engineer and lecturer at one of the UK's top broadcast colleges, and is often hidden behind a mountain of electronics test gear. Hi-fi started as a hobby nearly 20 years ago and has progressed to an obsession.



### JASON KENNEDY

Jason previously edited *HFC*, but can now be found swanning about the wilds of Sussex indulging himself with the very best hi-fi money can buy. His own system is simply sensational (trust us) and his love of music knows no bounds.



### ALAN SIRCOM

After a stint selling hi-fi, Alan began his journalistic career at *HFC* some 12 years ago. Now a successful freelancer, you too can benefit from his extensive hi-fi knowledge, from purist two-channel stereo to the latest multichannel gear.

## ESTABLISHED 1975

**HI-FI CHOICE** is your essential guide to audio excellence in the home, from vinyl records to the latest digital music formats. For 29 years, our unique tests have brought you the most thorough and reliable hi-fi journal around. And our mix of cherry-picked kit, rigorous group tests and in-depth equipment reviews continues to ensure that *HFC* is the magazine you can trust. Published 13 times a year, it's the smarter hi-fi read...



## HIGHLIGHTS INSIDE >>

### ULTIMATE GROUP TEST

Six of the best new integrated amplifiers, priced from £500 to £1,000, are placed under the *Hi-Fi Choice* microscope

### STRIKING SPEAKERS

Triangle's flagship Magellan loudspeaker is cut down to real-world size. We're impressed!

### SACD AND DVD-AUDIO

The stunning Lindemann 820 delivers the SACD goods, but Neil Young prefers DVD-A

### QUALITY QUAD QUARTET

Our *Beautiful System* this month is all Quad, including the brand's best-ever electrostatic

### AND MUCH, MUCH MORE...

The next issue of *Hi-Fi Choice* is on sale 16 December. Don't miss a thing – see p88 for our latest great subscription offer



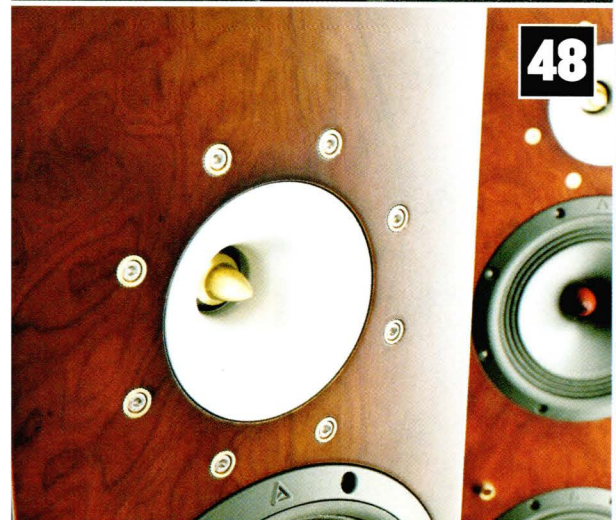
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## FREE MINI-MAG!

Inside your free 2nd-hand hi-fi mini-mag...

- 2 Guide to 2nd-hand kit – this issue, Celestion, plus DIY tips
- 3 Trading Pages
- 7 Reader Classified

# MAGELLAN concerto



front



rear

A no-compromise  
loudspeaker that  
takes you to the  
heart of the music.

With the new Magellan Concerto loudspeaker, Triangle has created a product for the most demanding of customers. Exquisite burr walnut cabinetwork, advanced technology and – most importantly – an astounding dynamic and realistic sound. All these are traits of this important design that sets a new standard for musical reproduction.

Taking its inspiration and technology from the flagship Magellan, the Magellan Concerto offers the best musical performance possible at its price point. Triangle has accumulated a wealth of knowledge and experience that comes from years of advanced research and development in the specialist audio field. This was called upon to create the Magellan Concerto. The result is a loudspeaker that simply astounds with its realistic dynamics and soundstaging, incredible bass extension and the all-important Triangle midrange, which is transparent and detailed to an amazing degree.

If you wish to encounter music as it is meant to be heard – involving, exciting and vibrant - you owe it to yourself to experience the Magellan Concerto.

For your first step to musical fulfilment, use the contact details below for further information and stockists.



**TRIANGLE**  
ELECTROACOUSTIQUE




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Thoroughbred Audio Products



## ARCAM FMJ DV29 DVD-AUDIO/VIDEO PLAYER

 We can't wait to bring you the full review of Arcam's new HDMI-equipped flagship DVD player – the FMJ DV29. This luxury player is said to offer Arcam's "best ever" DVD performance, with both audiophile sound and hi-res pictures.

It's predecessor, the DV27A, won acclaim in the form of our coveted Editor's Choice badge, and now Arcam has upped the stakes by adding HDMI (v1.1) connectivity to this disc-playing gem. Of course, it's not just

audio performance that's been keeping the engineers up all night – the DV29 boasts NTSC and PAL progressive scan pictures, the powerful Zoran Vaddis V MPEG decoding engine and no less than six video DACs. With HDMI's direct digital video delivery, plus up to six channels of hi-res DVD-Audio, the DV29 is an attractive proposition for audio/videophiles everywhere.

*To find out more, see our in-depth review in the next edition of Hi-Fi Choice*

**PRODUCT** Arcam FMJ DV29

**TYPE** DVD-Audio/Video player

**PRICE** £1,600

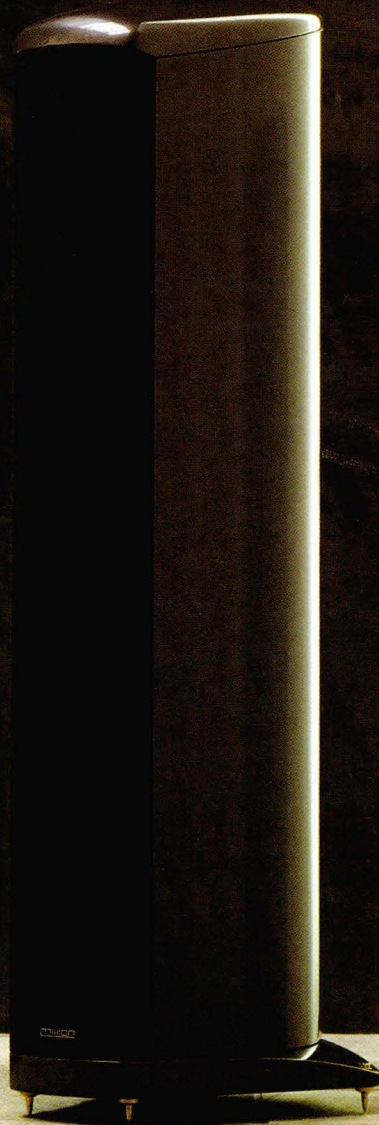
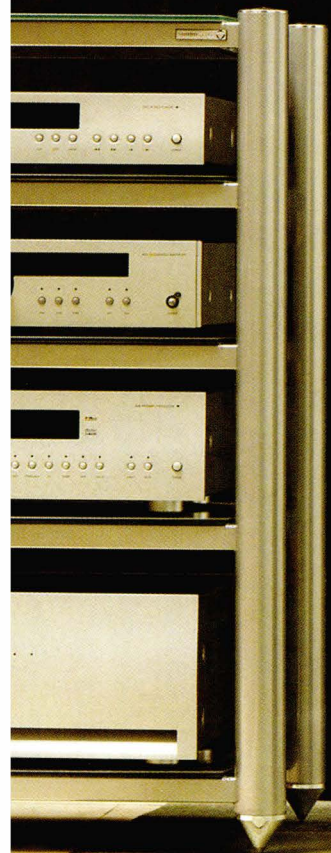
**KEY FEATURES** Arcam's best DVD player yet

- Plays DVD-Audio, DVD-Video and CD
- HDMI (v1.1) connectivity
- PAL/NTSC progressive scan video
- Zoran Vaddis V video decoding engine

**CONTACT** ☎ 01223 203200

🌐 [www.arcam.co.uk](http://www.arcam.co.uk)

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Holburn Hi-Fi, Aberdeen, Scotland  
James Morrow, Edinburgh, Scotland  
Glasgow Audio, Glasgow, Scotland  
Audio Excellence, Swansea, Wales

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01905 619059  
01484 544668  
0114 2756048  
01224 585713  
0131 2298777  
0141 3324707  
01792 474608





## DENON PMA-1500R II INTEGRATED STEREO AMPLIFIER

Here's a very exciting sneak preview of Denon's long awaited new integrated amplifier. The original PMA-1500 was reviewed in *Hi-Fi Choice* way back in September 1988, but the new version is supplied bang up to date. It features a new generation, high-current MOSFET output and a vibration-slaying heat-sink stabiliser. Denon also claims the amp boasts high power and low noise courtesy of the special configuration in which the twin transformers are mounted – effectively cancelling leaking magnetic flux.

For today's high resolution audio formats, Denon is offering frequency response to 100kHz from the amp, even at maximum volume. The official power figures state 70 watts into eight ohms, which Denon UK says is on the conservative side. We look forward to testing these claims over the coming month, especially as we hear that this is just the beginning of a new two-channel initiative from Denon in the UK.

*To find out more, see our exclusive in-depth review in the next edition of Hi-Fi Choice*

**PRODUCT** Denon PMA-1500R II

**TYPE** Integrated stereo amplifier

**PRICE** £500

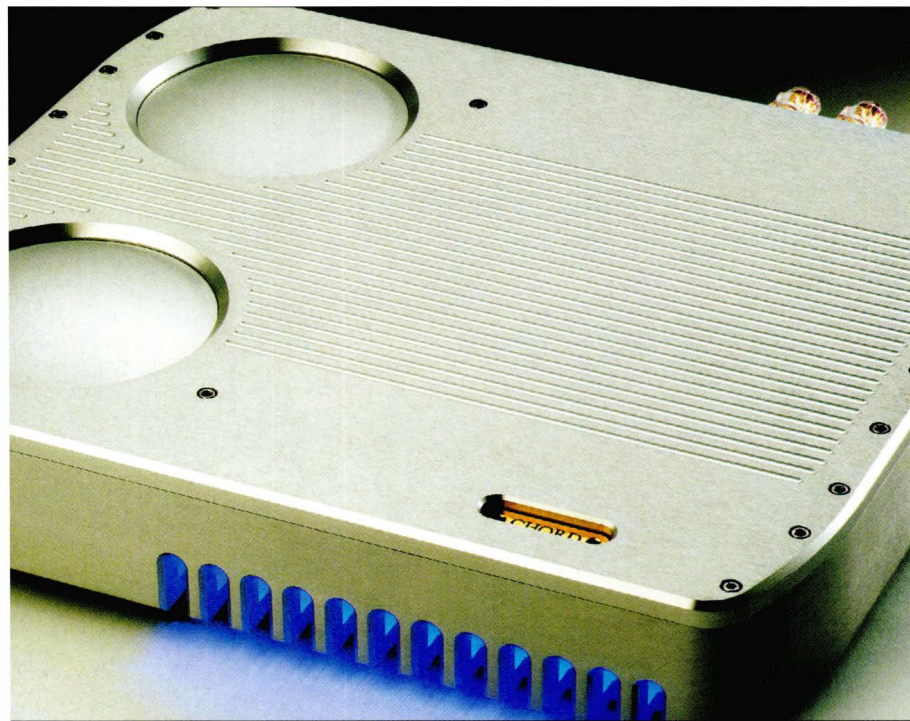
**KEY FEATURES** MOSFET output stage

- Heat-sink stabiliser
- Audiophile-grade circuit components
- Low-noise twin transformers
- Remote control
- Rated power: 70W/8 ohms

**CONTACT** ☎ 01234 741200

🌐 [www.denon.co.uk](http://www.denon.co.uk)

## NEW PRODUCT HIGHLIGHTS



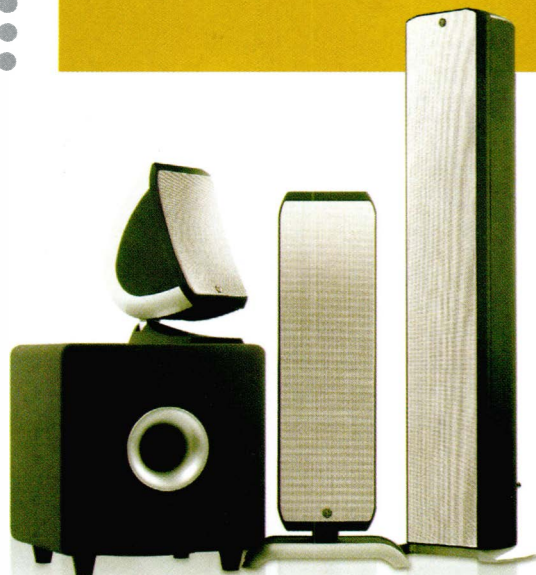
### CHORD MEZZO 140

Chord Electronics has expanded its strikingly compact Choral product range with the launch of a new power amp called the Mezzo 140. The amp has been developed from the original Chord Mezzo amplifier and includes four proprietary UHF power supplies, unique drive circuitry and a large additional bank of energy storage capacitors. The result, Chord claims, is "greater dynamic range and the ability to cope with demanding loudspeaker loads".

The Mezzo 140 is said to offer 120 watts into eight ohms, or 240 watts in bridged mono mode. As with all Chord products, it's hand built to order and beautifully finished.

**Price** £3,250 **Due** Now

☎ 01622 721444 🌐 www.chordelectronics.co.uk



### FOCAL-JMLAB SIB & CO

French speaker specialist Focal-JMLab has extended and re-launched its Sib & Cub sub/sat loudspeaker range under the new name, Sib & Co. The expanded line-up now comprises the familiar Sib compact satellite speaker and Cub 2 subwoofer, plus two larger yet still attractively slender models – the Sib XL and XXL. The Sib XL has been designed to work on stands or on the wall as a rear speaker, with the floorstanding Sib XXL performing front left and right duties. All Sib models sport 130mm polyflex main drivers, and may be bought in various configurations for stereo or multichannel use.

**Price** £240 to £620 per pair (plus sub) **Due** Now

☎ 08456 602 680 🌐 www.focal-jmlab.co.uk



### DENON AVC-A1XV

Denon has launched what it believes to be the most powerful and flexible multichannel AV receiver ever made. Its bold claims relate to the new AVC-A1XV flagship – a 16-channel, multi-zone receiver boasting 10 fully assignable amplifiers.

Denon's heavyweight can provide a number of configurations, including 9.1 surround, two 5.1 outputs (for different rooms) and a 7.1-plus-2.1 output. The feature-packed amp also boasts three HDMI (v1.1) inputs, plus DVI and FireWire connectivity. Its advanced Audyssey auto room EQ software is said to minimize unwanted room resonances for multiple listeners. Further features include a host of proprietary processing technology and Burr-Brown 24-Bit/192kHz DACs for all sixteen channels.

**Price** £4,000 **Due** Now

☎ 01234 741 200 🌐 www.denon.co.uk



### BOSENDORFER CLASSIC

Bosendorfer, the highly regarded Austrian piano manufacturer, has turned its expertise to hi-fi with a new range of exotically-priced speakers now available in the UK. This second-generation line-up includes three two-way floorstanders, a centre speaker and a pair of rears, all of which are available in a wide choice of luxury finishes.

Bosendorfer's range is distinctly different and exploits a vibrating cabinet as part of the acoustic design. The enclosures use a horn resonator vented at the rear and external acoustic soundboards to emphasise bass. Treble is provided from a soft dome tweeter and a carbon-coated paper cone is used for the bass/mid output. Bosendorfer's design ethos is based on the company's Acoustic Active principle where cabinet vibration is harnessed, rather than eradicated as is usually attempted in conventional loudspeakers.

**Price** £2,550 to £10,230 per pair **Due** Now

☎ 020 8241 9826 🌐 www.bosendorfer.com



## ONKYO DV-SP502E

As Denon pushes its 'universal' DVD-Audio/SACD disc player range upmarket, Onkyo is going the other way with its most affordable universal machine yet. The new DV-SP502E offers both DVD-Audio and SACD playback as well as compatibility with the DivX video format. Video facilities include PAL/NTSC progressive component output, as well as RGB on Scart and S-Video. Its aluminium fascia sports Onkyo's distinctive joystick-style control that allows you to carry out all of the functions of the remote control, while audio and video processing includes a 24-Bit/192kHz audio DAC, with 12-Bit/108Mhz video processing.

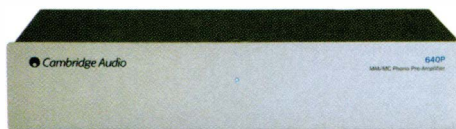
**Price** £300 **Due Now** ☎ 01494 681515 🌐 www.onkyo.co.uk



## MCA DIAZ

The brainchild of ex-Dolby and TAG McLaren engineers, high-end newcomer Marshall Choong Audio (MCA) has launched a new dipole loudspeaker called Diaz into its specialist product range. Diaz is a three-way dipole, which according to MCA delivers a true 25Hz-20kHz response. It employs an unusual membrane planar midrange and tweeter mounted on a lead-damped baffle, which is said to exhibit near perfect resistive impedance characteristics due to its low moving mass. Bass is supplied from more conventional units – two 220mm aluminium drivers that MCA says give equivalent performance to a single 305mm driver. Diaz has been designed to offer a wide horizontal and narrow vertical dispersion, to minimise room interaction.

**Price** £3,750 per pair **Due Now**  
☎ 020 8670 3770 🌐 www.design3dw3.co.uk



## CAMBRIDGE AUDIO AZUR 540P/640P

The latest additions to Cambridge Audio's highly regarded Azur range include two new phono stages – the 540P and 640P. The entry-level 540P, which is for moving magnet cartridges, embraces a proprietary short signal path design and subsonic filtering to eliminate unwanted noise commonly associated with budget turntables. The higher-spec 640P goes further to offer moving coil capability for more up-market cartridges and improved amp circuitry for even lower noise. Both models have a vibration absorbing chassis, aluminium faceplates and come supplied with external power supplies.

**Price** 540P: £40, 640P: £70 **Due Now**  
☎ 0870 900 1000 🌐 www.cambridge-audio.co.uk



## ARCAM DIVA AVR250

The latest multichannel receiver to join Arcam's mainstream DiVA range sports 7.1 channels, each said to deliver 75 watts. The intention, Arcam says, is to deliver audiophile-grade multichannel performance to those who cannot quite reach the excellent £1,300 AVR300 receiver. A new Crystal DSP chip lies at the product's heart, alongside Wolfson audio DACs. Support is offered for all the latest audio decoding formats and the receiver benefits from a source direct mode for stereo listening.

**Price** £1,000 **Due Now**  
☎ 01223 203200 🌐 www.arcam.co.uk

## Soundbites



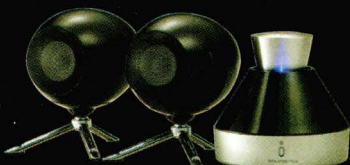
**NORDOST** has released a new mains distribution unit called Thor, in association with mains specialist IsoTek. The Thor is a six-way unit that features IsoTek's proprietary Polaris-X circuit that shunts mains-borne noise to earth. Thor is wired throughout with Nordost's Valhalla cable and uses a silver-plated copper circuit board. Prices start at £1,600.  
☎ 01352 730251

**QED** has unveiled a new speaker cable called the Silver Micro – a silver-plated, figure-eight design said to draw on the same technology as the Silver Anniversary cable. Its simple construction comprises two silver-plated OFC cables arranged side by side, from which QED claims low reactive capacitance and inductance. Expect to pay £3.50 per metre.  
☎ 01279 501111

**ETON** is a new name on the portable radio scene offering a range of radios including a DAB unit, two FM tabletop designs and a wind-up model. Eton is based in North America, where it holds 65 per cent of the market. The range will be available across the UK in hi-fi shops and larger department stores. Prices start from £25.  
☎ 023 9231 3093

**TEAC** has produced a new mini hi-fi system that looks set to rival the likes of Denon's much-praised UD-M31. The new Reference 300 MkII system replaces the original 300 series and now features a DAB tuner option (£200). The system can be bought complete for £480, or hand picked from the individual component selection.  
☎ 01923 819630

**ECLIPSE** has launched a new black version of its neat little TD 307PA amp and speaker system, intended to compliment the special-edition 'U2' Apple iPod – which, strangely enough, is also black! The egg-shaped desk-top speakers cost £400 per pair, with an 'audiophile' amp included. A sub is also available to augment the bass.  
☎ 020 7328 4499



### The Insider

#### THIS MONTH, HFC TALKS TO...

**GRAEME FOY**  
Job title: Head of  
Acoustic Engineering  
Company: Mordaunt Short



#### What's your most exciting product in development at the moment?

A digitally-powered, one kilowatt subwoofer from the upcoming Performance range. It is a mechanically balanced system with an isolated cabinet, featuring the latest generation of our 'Notch Filter' technology – to address individual room integration.

#### What's the future of hi-fi?

We've started to see a move away from the highly restrictive limitations of box speakers and hopefully you'll see some very radical solutions and much more room integration technology.

#### Is the universal disc player the future of CD playback?

Although high resolution formats have potential, it really depends on the quality and quantity of the software. Maybe the CD player is the future of CD playback!

#### What type of products will consumers be buying from you in five years time?

We expect more subwoofer and loudspeaker combinations – such as the Genie (see p71). It doesn't just have to stop at a 2.1 or 5.1 – I think a 2.2 system is an even more elegant solution than a 2.1 set-up.

### Hi-Fi Diary

#### JANUARY

6-9 Consumer Electronics Show 2005  
Las Vegas, Nevada, USA  
www.csweb.org  
*The ultimate resource for next years' toys*

#### FEBRUARY

13 Audiojumble 2005  
Tonbridge, Kent  
01892 540022  
*Find a home for that valve amp*  
25-27 Sound & Vision 2005  
Mariott Hotel, Bristol  
www.bristolshow.co.uk  
*The only show you shouldn't miss*

#### MAY

5-8 High End 2005  
Munich, Germany  
Glisovic@HighEndSociety.de  
*Indulge your senses – but remember to raise the limit on your credit card!*

## PMC survives Kling Klang test

German electro pioneers Kraftwerk have selected PMC monitors for their legendary Kling Klang studio in Düsseldorf, Germany. The 5.1 channel system utilises PMC IB25-A speakers with Bryston PP300 amplification, a system chosen by the four member of the band after extensive auditioning. According to PMC, "the world's five best-known studio monitor brands" were assembled and evaluated using a variety of musical genres, including Kraftwerk's current live material – a process which resulted in the untimely demise of the bass drivers in two of the alternatives!

The members of the band sit in a U-shape around the studio and frequently stand up and move around, so dispersion played a part in PMC's selection. As apparently did bass response and control, which are priorities for the band. Kraftwerk will be releasing a Live CD and DVD in early 2005.



## BPI cracks down on filesharing

The BPI (British Phonographic Industry) is taking legal action against 28 UK file-sharers. BPI chairman Peter Jamieson said, "We have been warning for months that unauthorized file-sharing is illegal. These are not people casually downloading the odd track. They are uploading music on a massive scale, effectively stealing the livelihoods of thousands of artists and the people who invest in them." It is targeting large scale 'uploaders' who use popular peer to peer websites including KaZaA, Grokster and WinMX.



The BPI and IFPI (International Federation of the Phonographic Industry) have also taken action against the Jetgroove.com website which has led to the removal of over 50,000 tracks which were being offered for sale without permission. Jetgroove claimed that it would pay royalties based on actual downloads but had not made any prior arrangement with the copyright owners involved. The site, which specialises in music from independent companies, claims that it had no intention of offering illegal downloads and has complied with the action.

## Talking Book

German record company Cybele has produced the first multichannel audio book on SACD. To celebrate its tenth anniversary, the firm has released *Tangogeschichten* (Tango Stories) by Katrin Dorn, spoken by Mirjam Wiesemann and with musical accompaniment by the duo Tango Amaratado. Cybele describe it as an "invisible movie, a film for the ears alone" and have selected literature which has a musical element.

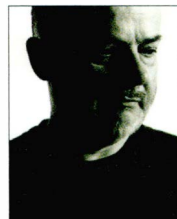
The company is even getting composers and writers to collaborate in producing future works for the series. For more info check out [www.cybele.de/hoerbuecher/index\\_eng.html](http://www.cybele.de/hoerbuecher/index_eng.html).



## John Peel RIP

Few DJs or broadcasters have their own

encyclopaedia entry. Even fewer deserve one. John Peel, who passed away recently, is the notable exception. A man for whom the term 'eclectic taste' could have been coined, John Peel played a diversity of music that has never been surpassed on national radio. Without John Peel's radio shows, Bowie and bands like T-Rex, The Undertones, Joy Division, Pulp, The White Stripes and The Smiths would have never received the same exposure. Heralded as one of the early advocates of punk, Peel (born John Ravenscroft in 1939) started out working for WRR radio in Texas in 1962. He joined BBC Radio 1 at its start five years later with *The Perfumed Garden*, a show that was very much of its era. He will be sadly missed by everyone that appreciates the full range of contemporary music.





## DAB on the net

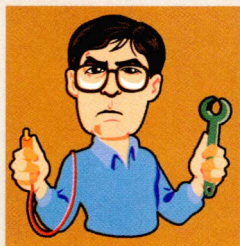
The Digital Radio Development Bureau (DRDB) has launched a newly designed website in response to the changes in the profile of DAB radio. DRDB's first site was launched two years ago. Since then, the amount of retailers selling DAB radios has grown ten-fold and there are now more than 400 services available.

The new site – [www.digitalradionow.com](http://www.digitalradionow.com) – features a 'definitive' DAB postcode checker for station availability, an up to date list of DAB hardware and a product picker micro-site designed to make it easy to find the perfect digital radio for your needs, assuming that the postcode picker finds in your favour!

The DRDB has also released its five year forecast. This forecast predicts that 28.7 per cent of British homes will have at least one DAB radio by 2008, up from only 3.8 per cent this year. Better delay that analogue switch off for a while longer then...

## JIMMY'S TWEAKS #28

HANDY HINTS FROM JIMMY HUGHES – HI-FI'S SUPER TWEAKER



### Cleaning turntable drive belts

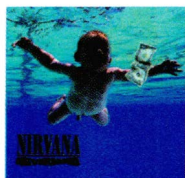
Every turntable can suffer from pitch wobble if the drive surfaces and rubber belt are not kept spotlessly clean. Trouble is, you need fingers to put the belt on and fingers are greasy. Rubber drive belts respond well to being washed in a mild detergent solution (like Fairy Liquid), then carefully rinsed clean and dried. But

only wash a one-piece moulded belt – a glued and spliced belt may come apart at the first hint of water. The metal motor pulley and turntable inner platter can be cleaned with isopropyl alcohol. But to maintain the ultimate cleanliness, don't thin protective gloves (cotton or latex) to avoid finger grease on the belt. Not only will the music be more stable in pitch terms, it will also sound more solid and focussed.

## TOP 10

ALBUMS TO ROCK YOUR HI-FI

- 1 **Nirvana** Nevermind
- 2 **Rage Against the Machine** Eponymous
- 3 **Megadeth** Countdown to Extinction (HDCD)
- 4 **Pink Floyd** Dark Side of the Moon (SACD)
- 5 **Deep Purple** Burn
- 6 **Led Zeppelin** Physical Graffiti (vinyl)
- 7 **Motorhead** Overkill (DVD-A)
- 8 **Metallica** Metallica
- 9 **AC/DC** Back in Black
- 10 **Linkin Park** Reanimation (DVD-A)



## New Music

### IN THE STUDIO

ARTISTS RECENTLY ABSENT FROM THE CUT AND THRUST OF SHOWBIZ HYPE DUE TO FINISHING THEIR LATEST ALBUMS

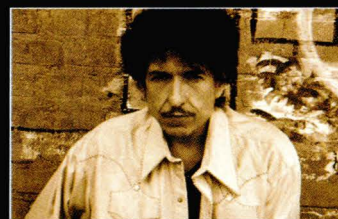


#### MERCURY REV

**Title:** *The Secret Migration*

**Release date:** Jan 24

American cult heroes Mercury Rev have already unveiled *Secret For A Song* as a download-only track from their new studio album and are currently previewing further new songs live on tour. The band claims *The Secret Migration* to be "a shifting, bubbling kaleidoscope of twilights and sunrises" on its website. Like its acclaimed predecessors, *Deserter's Songs* and *All Is Dream*, production is again by Dave Fridmann.



#### STEREOPHONICS

**Title:** *Language, Sex, Violence, Other*

**Due:** Spring 2005

The fifth album from Stereophonics is something of a crunch release for the Welsh trio. They've kept a low-profile since appearing at the Isle of Wight festival last summer and there were rumours that frontman Kelly Jones was planning a solo album. But according to bassist Richard Jones, the group has been enjoying "good nights" in the studio, laying down new tracks for a spring release.

he will deliver a new album in 2005. This would be his first since his 2001 *Love & Theft* release. Interviewed on the release of the book, Dylan claimed he had "six to eight" new songs and planned several more before going back on the road in October.

#### THE TEARS

**Title:** *tbc*

**Due:** 2005

From the ashes of Suede – arguably the band who launched Britpop with their 1993 Mercury Prize-winning debut – guitarist Bernard Butler and singer Brett Anderson have reunited in a new band, apparently named after a line in Phillip Larkin's poem *Femmes Damnées*. Their debut will appear on Independent Records.

#### ALSO COMING SOON

##### JAZZ/ CLASSICAL

**Pat Metheny** *This Way Up* (Jan), **Esbjörn Svensson Trio** *Viaticum* (Jan), **Three Tenors** *Christmas Concert* (Dec), **Willard White** *My Way* (Feb)

##### SACD/ DVD-A

**Snow Patrol** *Final Straw* (DVD-A DualDisc, Nov), **Diana Krall** *Girl In The Other Room* (DVD-A DualDisc, Nov), **Keane** *Hopes and Fears* (DVD-A DualDisc, SACD, Nov), **Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra** Mahler: *Symphony No. 9* (SACD, Jan), **Anne-Sophie Mutter, LSO** *Tchaikovsky & Korngold: Violin Concertos* (SACD, Jan)

#### BILLY CORGAN

**Title:** *tbc*

**Due:** Spring 2005

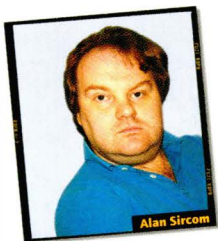
Former Smashing Pumpkins singer Billy Corgan is currently mixing his first solo release. "Fresh and vibrant" he says of the 15 new songs, squeezed in between the recent publication of *Blinking With Fists*, his first book of poetry, and beginning work on his debut novel for Faber & Faber.

#### BOB DYLAN

**Title:** *tbc*

**Release date:** 2005

With interest in Dylan high, following publication of his highly readable autobiography, expectations are high that



Alan Sircom

## Loud and proud?

*Change your habits, keep your hearing*

Look through the literature of most products and you'll find many companies act responsibly toward hearing and listening levels. Pioneer's manuals, for example, list a series of increasingly loud things. These vary from whispering in a quiet room to putting your ear to a jet engine, with a proviso that the louder the sound, the more havoc it will wreak to your hearing if listened to for extended periods. Very loud sounds are discussed in terms of 'exposure'... the Chernobyl of audio.

Our ears react to loud sounds, but the Threshold of Pain is not entirely arbitrary. It takes into account average nociception (perception of pain) of the average listener, and the dB figure takes an average of frequencies perceived by that average listener. There's a key word here... 'average'.

**“At high listening levels, our hearing’s distortion can be felt by our ears ‘relaxing’ between each loud beat.”**

Pain thresholds vary. Likewise, one's comfort zone of listening will vary, too. Some are perfectly happy playing music at high volumes that would be physically painful to another; others find quiet uncomfortable and want to play music at 'real world' listening levels.

The big problem is we humans are bad at determining how loud something really is. Our ears acclimatise to very loud (or very quiet) sounds quickly; a short-term gain, but a long-term problem. But there is another difficulty about the nature of loud sounds. We often evaluate the volume level by distortion, turning away from the loud sounds when either our hearing distorts or the sounds do. At high listening levels, our hearing's distortion can be felt by our ears 'relaxing' between each loud beat; mechanical or electrical distortion is more immediately recognisable.

But this is no safety mechanism. If your ears relax between notes, you are already playing at a volume level that damages hearing. And, if

you use the distortion of the system as an arbiter of danger volume levels, what happens if distortion only occurs at dangerously high listening levels? This is a problem that often faces listeners of high-end components with dangerously high volume ceilings; if your speaker can comfortably deliver a maximum sound pressure level in the 120dB+ regions with an amplifier that can pump hundreds of watts without complaint, it's entirely possible to create a system that will only distort at points when your hearing is being damaged. If you listen to this system for frequent extended listening sessions, using its distortion levels as a volume limiter, be prepared for serious hearing damage in later life.

Get a sound pressure level meter and let it survey your listening habits. Don't become an obsessive about listening levels, but become aware of the damage you can do – retraining your listening habits to make your comfort zone in the A-weighted 65dB-85dB region

(instead of the 85dB-105dB zone, or louder) will pay dividends in the long run. It also makes it more fun when you do wig out on occasion, and turn the volume dial up to 11. It's like those first few beers after some time on the wagon. Just don't make a habit of it.

*Alan Sircom began his journalistic career at HFC some 12 years ago. He has since become one of the hi-fi and AV industry's most respected scribes*



## Go for the burn

*Archive your vinyl and tape to DVD – today!*

People keep telling me how easy it is to make DVD-Audio discs at home. This should be the perfect way to archive those precious old tapes and LPs. So, I thought it time to investigate exactly what was involved. Assuming you've already got a computer with a DVD burner, the other requirements in the archival process are a method of recording the source material, a sound editor and an authoring program.

The first step is to convert those precious analogue recordings to PCM. Remember, this is where audio quality counts and is therefore the place to concentrate your funds. Keeping delicate audio circuits outside the PC is always a good idea for the serious user and E-MU Systems' 1820 Digital Audio System with its FireWire connectivity does just that; it uses a break-out box for its 192kHz A/D converters – the same as those in Digidesign's high-end ProTools HD interface – and even has a dedicated turntable input with RIAA pre-amp, all for under £300.

Once in the computer, manipulation of the audio signal is sometimes desirable. Adobe Audition 1.5 is an excellent sound editor for the beginner and serious enthusiast alike. Priced at £240, it can handle multichannel files at up to 32-bit resolution and fix many source material problems, such as tape hiss or vinyl surface noise. Just bear in mind that 192kHz audio takes up a lot of space and needs a fast computer to process in real time, but you can always leave your PC chewing on a file overnight. ▶

# R

## RETRO

HI-FI REVISITED

NAKAMICHI 600  
CASSETTE DECK



Nakamichi has featured once before in this column. In that case it was a cassette deck too (the Dragon), but in the heyday of cassette deck technology, Nakamichi was always Premiere Cru. I only recently discovered that at one time, the company was responsible for an extraordinary 70 per cent of all cassette deck sales in the United States, not just under its own name, but as an OEM source for such brands as Ampex, ELAC, Harman-Kardon, Fisher and KLH.

This time we're highlighting one of the less exotic Nakamichi designs, albeit one derived from the model 1000 cassette deck, which was a very early (1973) three-header. The 600 was introduced in 1975 and remained on the price list for four years – and in its way it's still a very impressive machine. Even now, its crisp styling is a revelation, with its beautifully finished extruded aluminium fascia. This was steeply sloped, possibly to help insinuate itself into studio environments.

By Nakamichi standards, the 600 was cheap (at 'just' £350) and technically not particularly sophisticated. But in common with all Nakamichi decks of the time, its was painstakingly executed and designed to lay the ghost that the compact cassette was not a serious high-fidelity carrier. The mechanism was a single capstan design and it employed two heads – a combination record playback head and an erase head. The state of the art even then was defined by dual capstan transports, which controlled the tape within a closed loop and with end points placed each side of the head block. In addition, three heads was the preferred solution, because each head could be optimised for its individual roles, and because it facilitated real-time tape monitoring. But the 600 made up for these omissions with the exacting engineering standards so typical of Nakamichi at the time.

The Nakamichi-designed heads and the associated amplifiers were capable of a response flat to 20kHz using chrome bias (70µs) tapes, and from memory pretty close to that even from good quality ferrics (120µs). But cassette decks needed to be carefully



**“A deck designed to lay the ghost that compact cassette was not a serious high-fidelity carrier.”**

aligned on a regular basis to ensure they continued to live up to their claims. Despite being a two-header, which slightly complicated the task of setting up, the 600 was equipped with a range of tools to help it stay in tune. Individual front panel bias and level presets were fitted for each channel and tape group, and a similar set was provided to minimise IM (intermodulation) distortion, using an on board oscillator. The 600 was not equipped for metals tapes, which were not generally available when the deck was designed, and noise reduction was limited to Dolby B (which Nakamichi was instrumental in developing in conjunction with Dolby Labs). Again, Dolby C lay in the future, but Nakamichi stood out against Dolby C on most of its later models, so the chances are that it would not have been supported anyway. An MPX notch filter was fitted to eliminate the 19kHz subcarrier of FM radio beating with subharmonics of the 600's own bias oscillator, but it could be switched out when recording from other sources.

Contemporary accounts of the 600 were that it was a crisp, lively and detailed sounding deck, with a deep, tuneful and well focussed bass, and a treble that was subjectively as well extended as any other source of its day. **HFC**

*Alvin Gold*



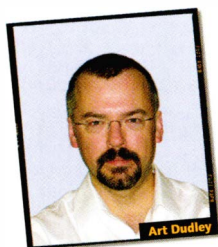
**“Most of all, the 4715 ‘Shigaraki’ gets the job done when it comes to letting the musical message connect with the soul.”**

At £55, Minnetonka’s DiscWelder Bronze is the most affordable DVD-Audio authoring software around and all that’s needed for basic stereo productions. It supports sample rates up to 192kHz and 24-bit word lengths – the highest possible two-channel fidelity. Multichannel 24-bit/48kHz PCM is possible in Bronze, but if 96kHz is what you desire, things quickly become expensive, because six channels of 24/96 exceeds the maximum allowable DVD data rate. The MLP processing software starts at £1,375 and on top of that you’ll need a program that can import MLP files, DiscWelder Steel for example, but it costs another £1,650.

The Bronze interface is simplicity itself. Just drag your files into the main assembly window and burn. The finished disc acts just like a CD, provided you have a DVD-Audio player. Bronze may well be too simple in a number of areas – for example, it can’t assemble files to a hard disk, so your drive must be supported otherwise the program won’t work. If you want to get fancy and create a DVD-Audio/Video hybrid, then a program such as DVDLab Pro (on the brink of release) can import the VTS files created by Bronze from a disc and it’ll even allow you to author a DVD-Video 24/96 two-channel track.

Presto, your very own 24-bit/192kHz archive! The whole process is just as easy as it sounds and produces startling results (sometimes superior even to the original) and can be obtained for a total outlay of less than £600. What better way to increase the number of DVD-Audio titles than by making your own!

*Stuart Robinson is editor and publisher of HighFidelityReview.com, a website dedicated to high-resolution digital sound*



**Zen in the art of DACery**

*Minimalist Japanese hi-fi is back!*

Not counting the tonearm or some of its screws, the new Rega P5 turntable comprises a total of 27 parts. And, as Jason Kennedy observed in the September 2004 issue, the P5 is a wonderfully effective product, offering a great deal of music for the money.

But what if I told you there’s a 16-bit DAC that offers similarly good value and performance to digital enthusiasts – and contains even fewer parts than a Rega P5?

The Model 4715 ‘Shigaraki’ DAC from Japan’s 47 Laboratory has been on the market for two years, and I’ve heard three different samples in that time. Each has done the same thing to my music, regardless of the transport in use. It made it sound purposeful, compelling and human, if not always sophisticated or refined in a strictly audiophile sense.

The design of this and other digital products from 47 Laboratory was inspired by a Japanese engineer named Ryohei Kusunoki, who suggests that oversampling leaves the datastream more vulnerable to jitter. On the other hand, Kusunoki says that the level of jitter in a properly executed non-oversampled 16-bit system is inaudibly low.

The 4715 breaks with convention in other ways. It not only lacks an oversampling digital filter, it’s devoid of analog filtering as well. 47 Laboratory says the only low-pass filter required is the one that’s built into our hearing. (This, of course, gives a whole new meaning to the concept of evolution in audio engineering).

Finally, the casework for the DAC and its outboard power supply are both made from a kind of ceramic called shigaraki – which is not only the source of its nickname but an apt metaphor for the what the thing does. The enclosure is just lumpy enough to remind you it’s made by a human and not a machine. Junji Kimura, who designs all of 47 Laboratory’s products, apparently sides with England’s Denis Morecroft – of DNM fame – on the deleterious effects of metal casework.

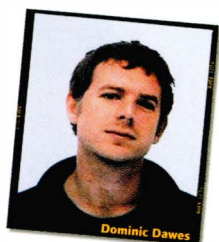
As with other unconventional products that have collected a following over the years – Decca pickups and Lowther full-range drivers come immediately to mind – the 4715 is something that convinces more with music than impressive sound. Its analog output isn’t quite as neutral as most, being somewhat midrange-y and distant. But it does the neat, Quad-like trick of sounding detailed and textured without being bright. Most of all, it gets the job done when it comes to letting the musical message connect with the soul.

Gergiev’s Tchaikovsky *Fifth Symphony* had my full and undivided attention, from start to finish. And a subversively sad little number called *Sadie* by singer/harpist Joanna Newsom (from a wonderful album titled *The Milk-Eyed Mender*) had me crying like a fool.

I love a good story as much as the next fellow, and I admit that 47 Laboratory’s rationale holds some appeal for me. (Objectivity is a harsh mistress – which is why I married someone else.) But after three dates, even I’m convinced: the 4715 ‘Shigaraki’ is the real deal.

*Art Dudley has written for Hi-Fi Heretic, Sounds Like and Listener. He lives in the US and works as Stereophile’s editor-at-large*





## Attack of the iPod people

Why doesn't hi-fi take a bite of the Apple?

Everywhere I look, it's the same: from bus shelter posters to magazine covers to people on the street – a small, white, rectangular device has made itself the technological purchase of choice for the new century. That's right, I can't seem to escape the Apple iPod.

And it irritates me. Not that I've got anything against Apple's brilliant little invention – I think it deserves its commercial success. My problem is that it raises, nay, screams the question: why isn't there a whole raft of hi-fi products on the market that offer the level of tactile pleasure you get from using an iPod?

The issue here isn't sound quality. We all know that compression (whether MP3, AAC or WMA) compromises the principle of 'high-fidelity'. No, this is simply a question of physical design. The iPod's touch-sensitive thumb wheel, its smart menus, the ease with which you access the music you want – all invite the question, 'why hasn't someone done this before?'

Frankly, I don't own a portable and have no intention of buying one. I spend so much time listening to or performing music that when I'm travelling from A to B I tend to want to give my ears a rest and open up a book. But, if we've learned one thing from the success of that little white box, it's that the public will happily buy into a new or advanced technology if, and only if, it offers more than technological sophistication. They will buy into it if it signifies the kind of life they want to live. Products succeed, basically, if people think they're sexy.

Do I detect an air of fatalism in the hi-fi industry? An acceptance that those of us who want to hear music in its full hi-fi glory are becoming an ever more exclusive and shrinking special interest club?

Let's not give in so easily. This is also an opportunity. There was a time when the only technological products to be seen in the average living room were the telly and the hi-fi. And of course, big ugly black metal boxes were something of a problem, showing as they did a resolute determination to look completely out of place next to an antique chest of drawers and the wife's carefully chosen wallpaper. ▶



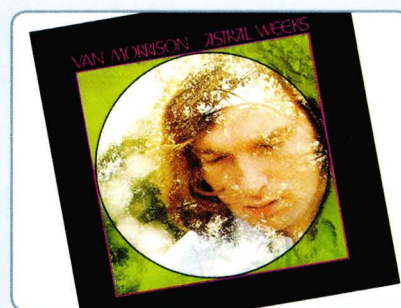
With *Astral Weeks*, Van Morrison transcended his showband/R&B past and entered the world of acoustic

jazz and folk. No squealing rock guitar nor thudding drums here – *Astral Weeks*, like Love's *Forever Changes*, was a suite of songs framed by beautiful orchestral arrangements.

The title *Astral Weeks* itself came from Morrison's Irish painter friend Cezil McCarney, who was interested in astral projection. Morrison wrote the bulk of the album between April and June of 1967 in his parents home at Hyndford Street, Belfast, on a rudimentary tape recorder. That year saw Van in New York cutting pop singles like *Brown Eyed Girl*, but the introverted Morrison hated the results. In early 1968, Morrison moved to Massachusetts and lost himself in alcohol. Stories of him smashing up clubs were rife. He was given one last chance to prove himself by Warner Brothers president, Joe Smith.

*Astral Weeks* was recorded in Century Sound Studios, in the Theater district of New York, over two evening sessions – 7pm to midnight, on 25 September and 15 October, 1968, with the final mixing of harpsichord and strings done on 22 October. In all, it took just ten hours to record. Lewis Merenstein produced the tracks with the best session musicians money could buy – Jay Berliner (Charlie Mingus' guitarist), Richard Davis (former bassist for Miles Davis and Billie Holiday), percussionist Warren Smith Jr and Modern Jazz Quartet drummer Connie Kay. Larry Fallon wrote the music charts while Van sat down and outlined the songs on acoustic guitar. Flautist John Payne even dropped out of Harvard to play on the album.

On the first night, *Cyprus Avenue*, *Beside You* and *Madame George* were finished in one incredible rush. Stories tell of Van covered in sweat, alone in the vocal booth, collapsing in an emotionally-drained heap after recording *Beside You*. At the end of the night, Payne pestered Merenstein to do one more song: the jaunty two-chord wonder *Astral Weeks*, with its guitar picking, shaker, plummy bass and an ecstatically happy Morrison vocal.



## “In early 1968, Morrison lost himself in alcohol – stories of him smashing up clubs were rife.”

The second evening produced *Sweet Thing*, *Ballerina*, *The Way Young Lovers Do* and *Slim Slow Slider*. The modus operandi was identical: long jams led by Van on vocal, which were later edited down. There's a frenetic quality to the 3/4 timed *Young Lovers Do*, in contrast to the bleak *Slim Slow Slider*, whose lyric talks of drug addiction, loss and death. Even today, Richard Davis can recall “the ambience of the dusk” that went through that track. The ebb and flow is added to by Payne's soprano saxophone, which works halfway between a horn and a flute and was intended to “sound like it's coming across a lake.”

*Astral Weeks* appeared in Nov 1968. It quickly sold 15,000 copies to hippie mystic-seekers and by 1975, it had sold half a million. For years, it topped rock lists as the most important album ever recorded. However, Morrison considered it “too samey” and vowed to make more commercial music like *Moondance* with the simple words: “One has to live.” And Morrison's dislike for the album holds to this day – when asked about a remastered version of *Astral Weeks*, a Warner Brothers exec's simple response was: “He'll never go back there. If we give him the master tapes we'll simply never see them again!” A shame indeed, as few albums are more deserving of a loving remaster than this. **HFC**

Mark Prendergast

# MUSO

CLASSIC ALBUMS

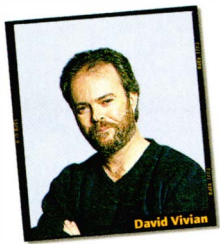
VAN MORRISON  
ASTRAL WEEKS

Times have changed. Walk into the average living room now and you'll see a plethora of technological devices – widescreen TVs, surround speakers, video game consoles, PDAs, mobile phones, PCs, and yes, probably an iPod lying around for good measure.

We need similar products that stir the imagination, stimulate the senses, and sound good to boot. We need high-quality hi-fi and home cinema kit that offers the user the kind of style and functionality that provides not just a means to the end of great performance, but is also an aesthetic and functional end in itself. We need high-quality hi-fi products that are as pleasurable to use as that irritatingly wonderful little portable, the iPod. We need, in short, products that are sexy.

*Dominic Dawes is a freelance writer and musician with a deep love of music and a corresponding passion for hi-fi*

Look into my eyes...you will buy this fine hi-fi!



## Look into my eyes...

*Is the power of suggestion a wonderful thing?*

We all like to think we believe our own ears, but I'd wager suggestion is a more powerful influence. How many parties have you been to where the stereo has been rubbish but you've felt compelled to dance? The urge has little to do with the music or the kit it's being played on and everything to do with the fact that everyone else is dancing.

And that's why people who want to signify the superiority of one product over another will become suitably animated at key moments. Some tweaking gurus are master manipulators, but it's also a useful technique for hi-fi retailers who, for whatever reason, want to sell one piece of kit rather than another. Just check out the activity of their right foot – it remains still during auditions of products they don't want you to buy and springs up and down like a March Hare with every beat when it's a product they are keen to sell.

Then there's the natural human desire to want to hear an improvement. The old proverb 'a change is as good as a rest' was coined for a good reason. If something sounds merely different rather than unmistakably worse, our

## “Some tweaking gurus are master manipulators, but suggestion is also a useful technique for hi-fi retailers.”

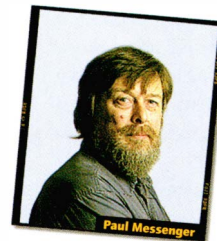
first instinct is to give it the benefit of the doubt and call it better. Our second instinct is usually more accurate; but only if we're granted the chance to exercise it. That's why A-B-A tests are essential when auditioning equipment. Simply walk away from any dealer who thinks otherwise.

To a certain but crucial extent, then, we hear what we want to hear. It therefore follows that we can be made to hear what other people want us to hear. Linn's Ivor Tiefenbrun realised this when he started to market the LP12 all those years ago. He insisted that, up to then, people had been listening to music in the wrong way, straining to hear if there was any rumble, wow or flutter in the signal instead of relaxing to the tempo, rhythm and timing.

On days when your hi-fi just doesn't sound much good – it happens – try a few suggestion tricks on yourself. Like playing the last track on an Anita Baker album. Very few turntables can track the Baker screech to the bitter end – anything you listen to after that will sound great. Second, play something you want to hear, not something to assess the system's performance and, to make this easier, arrange your CDs and LPs in such a way that all the good stuff is easy to grab. Third, get off your backside and dance.

If it still sounds lousy after that, go to bed.

*David Vivian has been wallowing in gorgeous hi-fi and then describing its virtues and vices in Hi-Fi Choice since 1990*



## Manger Madness

*Is a near full-range tweeter Overkill?*

I recently got to spend a few days with a massive (perhaps rather too massive) system from Overkill Audio, and while the system as a whole was a little too prototypical for a formal review, it did provide my first experience of a most interesting and entirely unique drive unit called Manger (pronounced like the loopy Japanese animation, not 'Away in a...')

Overkill's latest Encore speaker, which bears more than a passing physical resemblance to B&W's Nautilus 801, consists of a big and hefty bass unit with a 300mm driver known as the Predator. On top of this sits something that looks like an exceedingly large egg, albeit with a strange flat looking drive unit on the front. That's the Prey, fitted with its Manger driver.

This curious looking driver is not a brand new device. It first went into production in 1990, after nearly 30 years of development by German inventor Joseph Manger, and has

subsequently been further refined, using more powerful neodymium magnets in order to increase sensitivity. This driver is known as a 'bending wave' transducer, and its principle of operation makes no attempt to follow the usual stereotype of a stiff diaphragm executing pistonic motion. Although it follows the usual moving-coil drive method, the Manger's diaphragm is a thin, flexible flat disc, more like a drum skin than a rigid cone. High frequencies are radiated from the central portion, with lower frequencies being delivered from an increasingly greater proportion of the total area. The distinctive star-shaped section surrounding the diaphragm proper is a device to damp the edge of the diaphragm.

I've long had a soft spot for wide bandwidth drivers, because they avoid the usual distortions introduced by crossover networks, though my enthusiasm is tempered by the knowledge that some degree of compromise towards the frequency extremes is unavoidable. The Manger unit claims a bandwidth from 80Hz up to 35kHz, so there's no shortage of top end here, but a couple of octaves (at least) are missing from the bottom end.

Overkill uses a rather higher crossover frequency for its complete system (as indeed does Manger itself), but for various reasons I spent most of the time listening to the Prey units on their own, driven full range from my regular sources and amps. Since power handling is likely to be excursion-limited when driven full range, I restricted myself to low-level listening and accepted the lack of bass.

Mounted in Overkill's impressive anti-resonance 'self damping compound' sealed enclosures, with those bandwidth and power handling provisos, I found the sound of these drivers thoroughly beguiling. They show marvellous mid-to-treble delicacy, focus and coherence, and possibly the most natural voice-band presence I've ever encountered, with quite exceptional fingers-up-the-spine realism.

Given the size of the diaphragm, some treble beaming is perhaps inevitable, and for full openness, it's essential to listen directly on-axis. I wouldn't call it the smoothest sound around, and it doesn't quite match the vividness and focus I heard with the new Fujitsu Ten Eclipse TD712z – another single driver system I tried recently. Both these designs highlight the advantages that full-range operation has to offer, but where the Eclipse was dramatically 'immediate' and in-yr-face exciting, the Manger-equipped Prey gave a more easygoing and relaxing experience, and may therefore be found preferable for long term listening.

*Paul Messenger is a former editor of Hi-Fi Choice and has been writing about his favourite hobby for nearly 30 years*

# TECHNO

TECHNOLOGY EXPLORED

## WHAT IS RESONANCE?



Of the various definitions in Chambers Dictionary, the most useful for us is that referring to "large vibrations excited by a small stimulus at approximately the same frequency". A resonant object or system likes to vibrate at a certain frequency and will do so with the smallest provocation. A familiar example is the string of a guitar. The top string is tuned to E (330Hz) and will resonate at that frequency when you pluck it. It will also resonate if you play 330Hz at it from a loudspeaker or any other sound source. But play 300Hz at it (damping the other strings) and it won't take much notice.

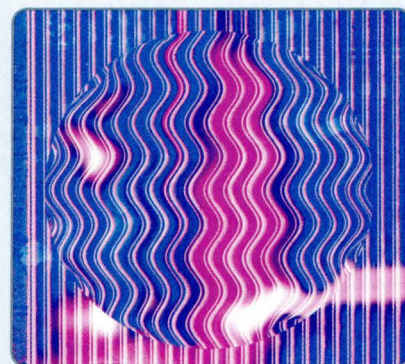
All sorts of physical objects have their own resonant frequencies – often several of them, more or less pronounced. So why is this a problem? Principally because of the intrinsic characteristic of a resonance involves not just vibration but *prolonged* vibration, after the stimulus has ceased. But in music, notes come and notes go and when they've gone we, don't want a 'memory' of them hanging around in the listening environment. That 'memory', in essence, is what a resonance gives.

Resonances also cause the basic frequency response of a system to be bumpy rather than flat; but that's probably a secondary effect in terms of audibility. Imagine a two-note chord on a piano. If one note is a couple of dB louder than the other it's no big deal, but if one rings on after the other, that will certainly be noticeable. Now imagine that note ringing on as the player strikes another, unrelated, chord. It will substantially alter the whole tonality.

So, extrapolate that to the complex system of resonances which is your hi-fi equipment and listening room and you'll soon see why we don't really want resonances in the way.

Actually, a note on a musical instrument is an extreme case and most 'accidental' resonances in loudspeaker cabinets, rooms, window panes and so on are less highly tuned and therefore ring on less long, but the principle is the same.

Resonances arise whenever a mass is restrained by a spring force, and their frequency is determined by the physical dimensions involved. They often involve



**“Guitar strings, for example, are resonant, but the guitar's body itself is reverberant.”**

harmonics, too, at multiples of the 'fundamental' frequency. These are more pronounced when regular shapes are involved – rectangular shapes, for example. Resonance is not eliminated in irregular shapes, just spread out across the frequency band less regularly. When resonances are very spread out, one can hardly distinguish them and then one talks about 'reverberation' rather than resonance. Guitar strings, for example, are resonant, but the guitar's body itself is reverberant.

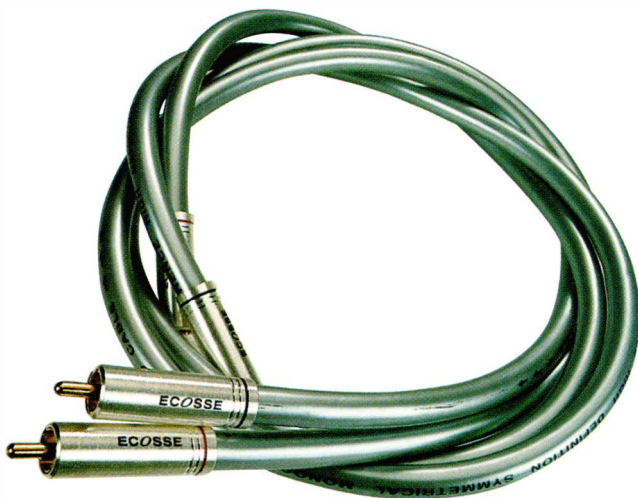
Resonances are best treated by damping, which means applying something that absorbs vibrational energy and turns it into heat, hence friction-based shock absorbers on a car. 'Mass damping' is a misnomer, for while adding mass can move a resonance out of the problem frequency range it usually increases the actual severity of the resonance at the same time. In fact, light objects are easiest to damp as they store the least vibrational energy.

In acoustical terms, resonance has no useful purpose in audio reproduction, and it is an enemy against which designers (mostly of loudspeakers) struggle incessantly. But it's not all bad – your CD player depends entirely for its function on a quartz oscillator, which is itself a mechanical resonator. **HFC**

*Richard Black*



## ESSENTIALS



### ECOSSE MASTER REFERENCE INTERCONNECT CABLE £305 (1M PAIR)

This thick and inflexible interconnect needs plenty of space behind equipment to curve gently away from the wall, but seems well put together. It's a low capacitance, pseudo-balanced type, fitted with good quality phono plugs. Sonically it's interesting, majoring on big soundstages and slightly less good on fine detail. Bass is extended and comfortable rather than analytical, while treble is for the most part sweet and open, if lacking a little of the sparkle that some cables preserve. If you like your music grand, you'll probably like this cable; but with works on a smaller scale, the lack of insight can be a distinct minus.

☎ 0141 353 0509 # www.ecossecables.co.uk

### BIB CD RESTORER DVD/CD REPAIR KIT £5

All sorts of techniques have been suggested for repairing scratched CDs, including abrasive polishes like Brasso. We had expected this might be similar, but in fact it's a gooey clear liquid which is applied with a soft cloth and rubbed well in, then buffed off. Presumably, it works by partly filling scratches – but work it does. It renders unplayable discs playable and visibly reduces the severity of scratches and marks. It also removes fingerprints and other deposits. It's not a miracle cure and there are limits, but it seems highly effective and is simple and safe to use. Agreeably cheap, too!

☎ 01689 848535 # www.b-tech-int.com



### WIREWORLD OASIS 5 DISCRETE BI-WIRE SPEAKER CABLE £38/ M (TERMINATION £70)

Here's an oddity – a 'bi-wire' speaker cable supplied 'shotgunned', with single connectors on each end. It is in fact available with the connectors you'd expect for bi-wiring (single one end, double the other) but there is a logic to supplying it single wired, which is simply that two separate parallel cables give advantages over a single cable. The sonic justification for the bulk and expense seems strong – sound is full-bodied and clear, with bass that digs deep but never lacks for control when required. Midrange and treble are singularly free of coloration, among the best we've heard, and imaging is very precise with excellent depth. This is a high capacitance cable so the usual caveat about Naim and a handful of other (mostly older) amps applies, but otherwise it's strongly recommended.

☎ 020 8991 9200 # www.wireworldaudio.co.uk



### AVID PLATFORM ISOLATION PLATFORM £175

Nothing too unusual here. The imaginatively-named 'Platform' is a wooden shelf on four Sorbothane feet, which gives a degree of isolation from the environment for vibration-sensitive hi-fi equipment. With turntables clearly in mind, it sports a miniature spirit level, but there is no provision for adjusting level. It's not entirely non-resonant, but the Sorbothane does a lot to damp vibrations and it gives worthwhile help to unsuspended turntables (Regas for example), especially atop a solid rack, providing a measure of isolation from structure-borne resonance and feedback. It's attractively finished, also available in black, and does a basic job in a basic manner at a fair price.

☎ 01480 457300 # www.avidhifi.co.uk

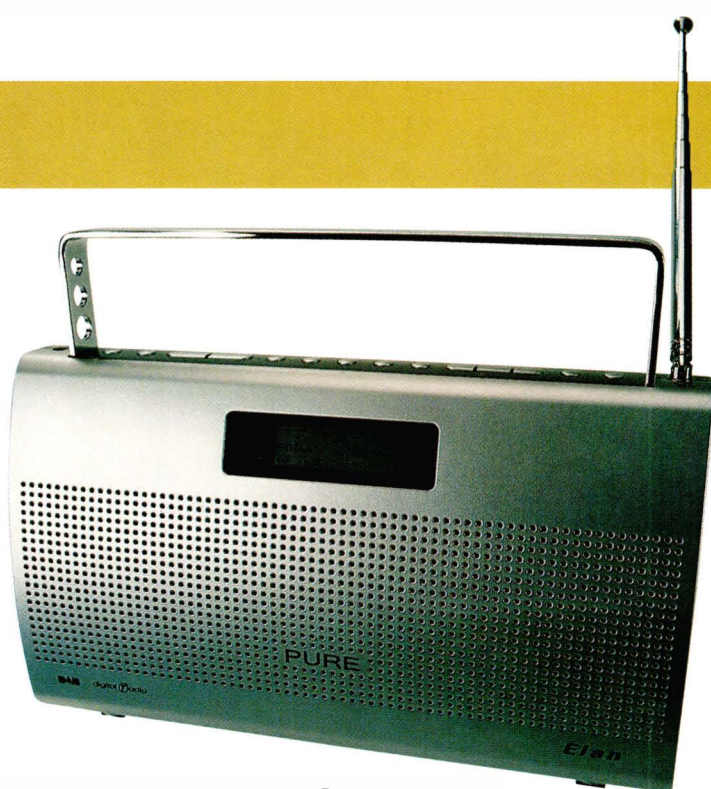
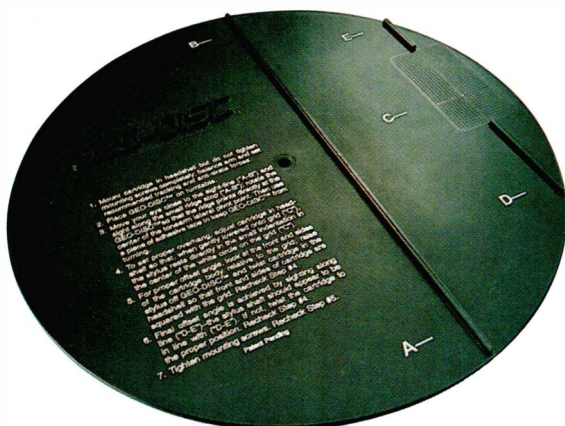


## PURE ÉLAN DAB/ FM PORTABLE TUNER £80

➤ Handbag-shaped and silver, this tuner features the latest-generation DAB and FM reception, assuring usability in almost any location. Operation is entirely by push-button, which can be a pain on DAB, but is salvaged by the station ordering options including 'Fav station' – most frequently-listened-to at the top of the list.

Sound is, in truth, far from the best we've heard. The FM section seems a little insensitive and was noisy on many stations, but the DAB bit worked okay and merely showed off the amp and speakers for the underpowered combination they are. And bright, too, emphasising the dreaded DAB 'twitter' and extreme treble break-up. But, the justification for this radio is that it gives cheap, portable access to DAB-only stations.

☎ 01923 260511 🌐 www.puredigital.com



## MOBILE FIDELITY GEO-DISC CARTRIDGE ALIGNMENT DISC £40

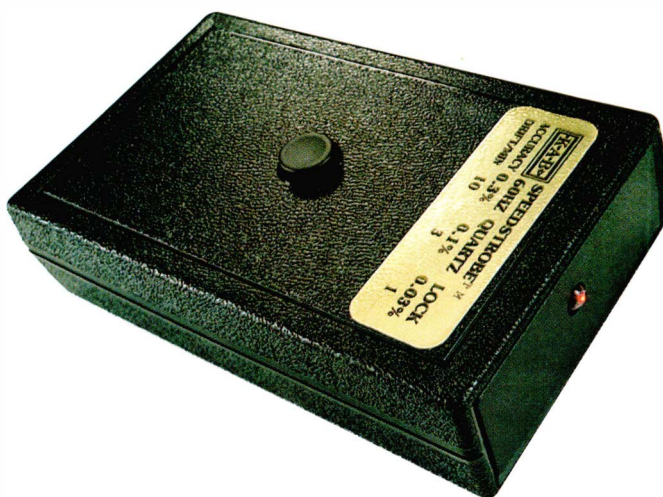
➤ There have been many, many cartridge alignment gauges and protractors over the years and, with care, most of them give perfectly good results. So, what's particularly clever about this relatively expensive one? For a start, the instructions are printed on it so you can't lose them. Thoughtful. And then it is actually very accurate in use, allowing correct setting of overhang and offset – as long as you can physically see the tonearm's pivot point, which isn't always obvious. It takes a bit of practice and the instructions aren't immediately obvious, but for the true LP enthusiast the Geo-Disc is heartily recommended.

☎ 01234 741152 🌐 www.britishaudio.co.uk

## KAB SPEEDSTROBE LP STROBOSCOPE AND LIGHT £80

➤ The regular way of checking LP disc speed is by relying on the mains-frequency flicker of a normal domestic light, which should show no drift on a standard 50Hz stroboscopic disc. This is accurate, but this nifty device avoids 50Hz/60Hz confusions and is a darn sight easier to see, since the LED in the hand-held strobe light flashes more distinctly than a normal light bulb. There are instructions for measuring speed inaccuracy, too. It's nicely printed, the light is well made, the instructions are well written and all things considered it's a highly worthwhile purchase if you care about vinyl replay. Of course, you may end up having to buy a variable-speed turntable supply...

☎ 0870 241 2469 🌐 www.choicebits.co.uk



## BEYERDYNAMIC DTX900 HEADPHONES £65

➤ Similar to the cheaper DTX700 and '800, this model features higher-spec drivers, mounted in open-back enclosures. Sound is remarkable, principally for its treble extension, achieved without the excessive brightness that plagues cheaper cans. Here, it is nicely integrated with a powerful (if a touch lumpy) bass and natural midrange. There's plenty of detail to the sound too and imaging is good. On some music, dynamics can seem compressed and there's a trace of harshness, but neither is a major drawback. This is a very honest headphone which doesn't offer the silky smoothness of upmarket models, but makes for relaxed and informative listening in the short and long term.

☎ 01235 511166 🌐 www.beyerdynamic.co.uk



*for the love of music...*



MD-108 FM Hybrid Tuner



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MD-106T FM Valve Tuner



MD-90 FM Tuner



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**AUDIOFREAKS**

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# Forever Young

Rock Legends aren't supposed to be concerned with audiophile sound. In a rare, exclusive interview, Neil Young talks to Nigel Willamson about his passion for DVD-Audio

**Y**ou would imagine that releasing a greatest hits package was a relatively simple affair. Not if you're Neil Young. "We started with a long list of tracks. Then we took all the information we could gather, based on sales, airplay and downloading, to came up with something that would fit. Then I spent months working real hard on the sound and I'm really high about the quality. It's amazing," he enthuses.

A long-time fan of analogue and a trenchant critic of CD sound, Young reckons he has finally found a modern digital format to meet his exacting standards. The object of his enthusiasm is DVD-Audio, particularly in stereo. "Sound quality hit the dark ages in the early 1980s. But it's starting to come back thanks to super-saturated DVD-stereo," he says. "There's just no comparison between DVD-Audio and a regular compact disc or even 5.1 multichannel sound. It's the difference between a true reflection of the music and a mere replica."

His *Greatest Hits*, which includes songs such as *Heart of Gold*, *Like A Hurricane* and *Rockin' In The Free World*, appears in both standard CD and DVD-Audio in stereo. But he's also remastered all 16 tracks for vinyl release – he's particularly enamoured with the vinyl sound on *Cowgirl In The Sand*, *Down By The River* and *Cinnamon Girl*, the three guitar-heavy tracks which kick off the hits collection and which all originally appeared on 1969's *Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere*.

"I just listened to the vinyl masters we did for the greatest hits. And those tracks kick ass so much better than the original vinyl versions of those things," he says.

"I don't know what's happened. It's the signal path and the type of wiring we use now and the care that's taken in making everything transparent. It has evolved so greatly that it's amazing. The analogue records always sounded better than anything else to me. But I compared the new vinyl versions, which are



**"Sound quality hit the dark ages in the early 1980s. But it's starting to come back."**

taken from a first generation analogue master copy, and the best just got better. It's a really good feeling."

The *Greatest Hits* collection is intended as a curtain-raiser to the long-anticipated multi-CD *Archives* box set, a treasure trove of unreleased material ranging back over his entire career that Young has been promising for several years. The set is finally "big and real near," he promises. "The hits album sets the bar for *Archives* so people know what to expect in terms of sound quality."

Young's other recent concern has been playing a series of concerts in support of the Democratic candidate John Kerry in the US presidential election. "What musicians have to say maybe isn't going to change your mind. But it's going to reinforce what you feel if someone whose music you relate to agrees

with you. It can be a very effective thing if people go and vote for whatever they feel the music says."

He even employed George Bush's arch-critic Michael Moore to create a four minute video to accompany *Rockin' in The Free World*, a song that became something of an anthem on the recent *Vote For Change* tour.

Young once sang that it was "better to burn out than to fade away". Next year, he's 60 and he seems to have successfully avoided both fates. "Dylan said 'don't look back' and I can only play the old songs if I'm also writing new material. Otherwise I'd just be replicating myself, travelling round the world doing things I'd already done. Which would be very depressing and probably life-threatening." **HFC**

*Neil Young's Greatest Hits is released on Reprise on 22 November*

## Essential Neil Young

**1. *Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere* (1969)**  
The template for the Crazy Horse guitar sound that has served him so well for 35 years.



**2. *Harvest* (1972)**  
A bed-sit classic that saddled him with an image as a mellow troubadour that he then spent years trying to shed.



**3. *Tonight's The Night* (1975)**  
Harrowing listening at its uneasy best, inspired by drug-related deaths of friends and colleagues.



**4. *Harvest Moon* (1992)**  
Twenty years on, a bitter-sweet return to the gentle style of his best-selling album.



# WIN!

## RUARK'S STUNNING TALISMAN III FLOORSTANDING LOUDSPEAKERS WORTH £1,500

The legendary Ruark Talisman from 1989 was one of the defining speakers of the era, so we were delighted to discover that the latest MkIII incarnation (tested in HFC 259) remains a rather gorgeous purist design. Ruark has made several key changes, including a larger main driver and tweeter unit, both of which contribute to the improved 150 watt power handling. The enclosure is critically damped with a reinforced, non-symmetric brace and with scope for mass loading of the base section. Further intelligent engineering is evident from the sloping baffle to the manipulated cabinet, with its lack of parallel sides.

The mix of ingredients is spot on – the third-generation Talisman sings with vigour, delivering a bold, clean presentation that gives music a real sense of presence. Its soundstage is articulate with a treble output that's balanced to perfection – an ideal tonic for the demanding audiophile.

For your chance to win a pair, simply answer the question below. The lucky winner will be drawn at random.



### CONGRATULATIONS...

to our last winner, Mr Esmond of North Holmwood. He receives a superb Townshend TA 565 universal disc player!

#### QUESTION:

**What does the Talisman do with vigour?**

**A:** Take a walk with TV's Des O'Connor

**B:** Sing

**C:** Whisk an omelette in the pouting style of Nigella Lawson

#### TO ENTER:

**By Phone:** Simply call **0905 053 3352** and follow the instructions (your call will cost 50p per minute and last no longer than 90 seconds).

**By Text:** Send the text message **HFC COMP1** with the answer A, B or C to **83070**. For example, if you think the answer is A: Take a walk with TV's Des O'Connor then text HFC COMP1 A to 83070.

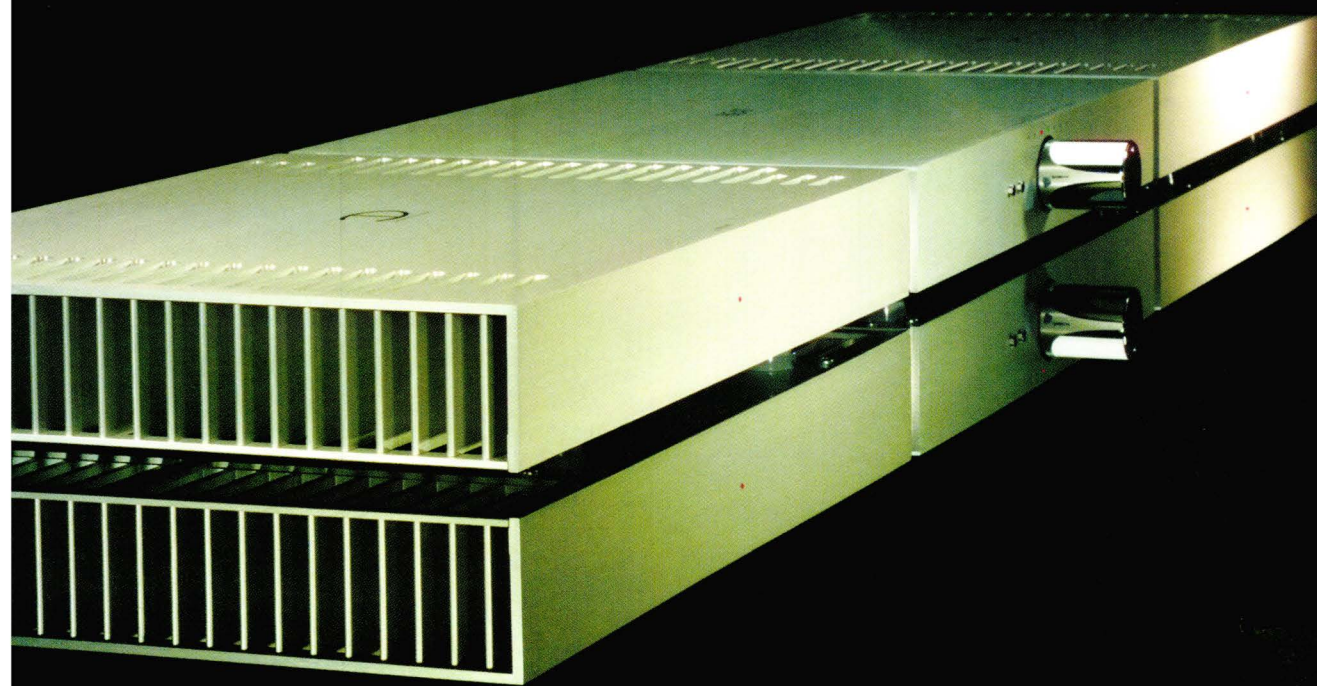
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# Densen

LIFE IS TOO SHORT FOR BORING HI-FI



## The new Densen B-350 monoblock

For all at Densen the birth of the B-350 is a significant moment. For Densen the B-350 has for several years been the internal reference, and therefore is a pleasure to be able to show audiophiles all over the world the true musical world of Densen. The design process has taken a staggering 4-5 years. And in periods Thomas Sillesens insisting on a true breathtaking product has delayed the process, which has been further enhanced by the fact Thomas seemed more interesting in listening to the B-350 than finish it for production.

The B-350 is build using surface mounting techniques, and the components are mounted with a precision of 0,02mm (!) using silver solder. All solderings are made in an artificial atmosphere, consisting of nitrogen, to avoid oxidation of the solderings. The powersupply is massive and consist of a 750VA transformer and a storage capacity of 100.000uF with 4 separate rectifiers of which the 2 of them are capable of 3.000VA. All resistors are laser trimmed metalfilm from Vishay with a precision of 0,1%. The B-350 delivers 125W at 8 ohm and 250 W in 4 ohm.

The B-350 also represents a new direction in cabinet design at Densen. It is the first time the heatsinks of a Densen products are visible. They integrate with the cabinet, and allow perfect cooling of the outputstages.

The B-350 will be retailing for GBP 2500/per unit.

Like all Densen products the B-350 comes with lifetime warranty.

Densen • Lundevej 10 • 6705 Esbjerg Ø • Denmark  
Phone: (+45) 75 18 12 14 • E-mail: mail@densen.dk • www.densen.com

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GRANDE UTOPIA BERYLLIUM : A WORLD REFERENCE

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A remarkable *tour de force* - *Hifi News* magazine, UK.

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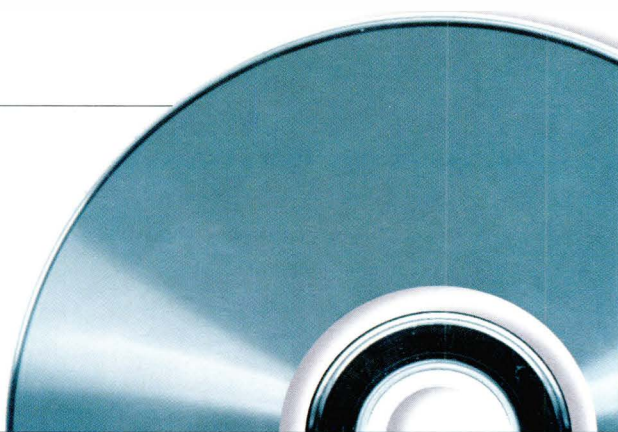


# ChoiceCuts



This month's varied musical morsels

Reviews by Dan George, Alvin Gold, Jason Kennedy, Dave Oliver, Mark Prendergast, Phil Strongman, Nigel Williamson



## AUDIOPHILE VINYL

### GRANT GREEN

The Final Comedown

Blue Note/Pure Pleasure 180g vinyl

Music: Blue Note's first soundtrack was for this blaxploitation movie from

1972, and the album also marks guitarist Grant Green's first foray into the genre. While Green's playing was generally of a laid-back, non-chordal variety, this album finds him mixing it up in a rather more upbeat and funky flava. There's

variety in pace and mood, as you'd expect with a soundtrack – this comes from the era when the music was made to fit the film rather than selected because the director likes it. The title track is excellent, as is *Battle Scene* which builds up the tension in no uncertain terms. Elsewhere the use of strings is a little syrupy, but overall this is all high-quality funk. If you like Acid Jazz, this could be your bag. ★★★★★

Sound: While the overall sound lacks the transparency of modern recordings there's plenty of timbral detail and some lovely, rubbery bass lines. It also has a surprising amount of energy at times. ★★★★★ JK

### ANTONIO FORCIONE

Dedicato

Naim 180g vinyl

Music: One of Naim's first recordings was this 1998 album by guitar maestro

Antonio Forcione. This year, it has been released alongside four other titles on 180g virgin vinyl. It's an instrumental album of original compositions mixed with classics such as *I Heard It Through The Grapevine* and the Beatles' *Come Together*.

The acoustic guitar playing and low-key accompaniment is impressive throughout. It's occasionally reminiscent of Michael Hedges, but the production is more natural than Hedges' reverb-powered work. The familiar tunes are the strongest but the originals feel like they could become equally appealing. ★★★★★

Sound: This superb piece of vinyl does the music a whole heap of favours, giving the guitar its full body and timbral range while digging deep for the occasional double bass. Much more natural than many so-called 'audiophile' recordings. ★★★★★ JK

These LPs are available from Vivante: ☎ 01293 822186 @ www.vivante.co.uk and Naim Audio: ☎ 01722 332266 @ www.naim-audio.com

## COMPACT DISC & VINYL



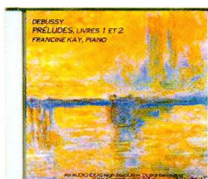
### CREAM

Disraeli Gears (De-Luxe CD Edition)

Universal

Music: Miffed by Hendrix's psych/blues epiphany *Are You Experienced*, Eric Clapton knew in the 1967 Summer of Love, he'd have to create something different. Clapton, Ginger Baker and Jack Bruce thus conspired to make one of funniest British psychedelic albums ever, replete with music hall laments and cod blues. From its dizzying cover to the core contents of *Sunshine Of Your Love*, the brilliant *Tales Of Brave Ulysses* and *We're Going Wrong*, the trio came back from New York's Atlantic eight-track studio with one of the truly defining albums of the psychedelic era. ★★★★★

Sound: The album comes in stereo and mono versions with out-takes, demos and BBC sessions, featuring sonic quality from the compressed to the gloriously remastered. ★★★★★ MP



### DEBUSSY

Preludes, Books 1 & 2

Francine Kay (piano)

Audio Ideas AI-CD-006/6

Music: The *Preludes* are among the most reflective, intimate and personal in Debussy's oeuvre. The musical language, on the cusp of a new, postmodern age, is ambitious and often chord-based, with silences that are almost as telling as the notes that space them out, and with the kind of density and structure that invokes a curiously bell-like quality. ★★★★★

Sound: Francine Kay brings real beauty and intelligence to these fine works, and she is well served by the engineering. Played on an uncharacteristically soft and warm-sounding Steinway, this is a fine purist recording made with just a pair of Sony C48 microphones direct to CD-R, in what is described as a small church in Elora, Ontario. ★★★★★ AG



### MASSIVE ATTACK

Danny the Dog

EMI

Music: Massive Attack's latest, *Danny the Dog*, is a superbly dark instrumental soundtrack, for Luc Besson's new martial arts film. The fully-charged techno/electro opener is leagues apart from the moody, atmospheric ambience that underlines the bulk of the album. There are plenty of up-tempo surprises to break the listeners' trance, and lots of digital effects to keep things exciting. Relish the frequent minor keys and you too could find light from this superbly dark soundtrack. ★★★★★

Sound: It's a marvel of modern-day hi-fi electronica – full of clean, dynamic effects that probe the capabilities of your hardware. The haunting ambience, however, sounds luxuriously full and enchanting. The inconsistent tempo leaves the listener slightly on edge, but this isn't a bad thing. ★★★★★ DG



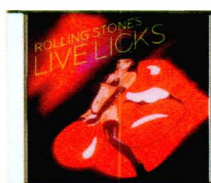
### KT TUNSTALL

Eye To The Telescope

Relentless

Music: At the death of the year comes an album that – had it appeared earlier – would surely have been a contender for many 'best of 2004' lists. Don't be confused by the radio-friendly opener, *Other Side Of The World*, which Tunstall's record company hopes will persuade you that she's the new Dido. There's much more to this Scottish singer than that, for at her best she displays a passion reminiscent of early Sinead O'Connor. Blessed with a rich melodic gift, her debut is brimful of accessible but mature pop songs that begin to sound like old friends the instant you hear them, but also conceal surprisingly dark and delicious twists. ★★★★★

Sound: From the polished pop sheen (which her record company probably favours) to the earthier acoustic honesty (that one suspects is her own preference), the production is diverse without ever sounding schizophrenic. ★★★★★ NW



### ROLLING STONES

Live Licks

Virgin

Music: It's hard not to get cynical about the marketing exercise the Stones have become. On the other hand, anyone who caught them on their monumental 2002/03 *Licks* world tour will no doubt be glad of a souvenir – especially one as potent as this. As the band played a different set list every night, there was plenty to choose from and the selection cleverly balances one disc of classics (*Brown Sugar/Satisfaction/Honky Tonk Women*) with a second of lesser-known album tracks and covers appearing on a live recording for the first time. ★★★★★

Sound: The Stones pride themselves on the best stadium sound around. But the sickness here suggests some post-production work to smooth over any rough edges. ★★★★★ NW



## THIS MONTH'S CLASSIC HI-FI TEST DISC "There is genuine anguish in the music."

**MASSIVE ATTACK** *Mezzanine* Circa Records 2x180g vinyl

**Music:** Described by some as so dark that it's light-absorbing, Massive Attack's 1998 outing made a distinctly subterranean contrast to the albums that preceded it. Combining heavy dub beats with slashing guitars and some fine vocal performances, *Mezzanine* paints a powerful picture of turn-of-the-century bleakness. At its best this is MA's strongest work, and songs like *Angel*, *Inertia Creeps* and *Teardrop* combine with others to make for an engrossing if

less than rose-tinted listening experience. This is the album that effectively fragmented the people who made it. Yet it's perhaps because of this that the album has such power. There is genuine anguish in the music. ★★★★★  
**Sound:** Originally released as a double 180g pressing with, of course, no mention of the fact on the sleeve, this is a physically heavy album too and one which will push your bass cones 'til they hurt. ★★★★★ JK

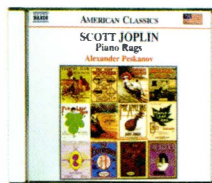
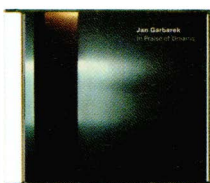


### JAN GARBAREK In Praise Of Dreams

ECM

**Music:** Norway's premier jazz figure is often criticised as much as praised for his icily clear, long and drawn-out saxophone lines, supposedly evocative of the fjords and mountains of his homeland. But for this album – his first under his own name for six years – he's warmed up his arrangements and let his hair down for a set of songs that impress with their richness and variety. Assisted by long-time accompanist Manu Katché on drums and Kim Kashkashian on viola, plus Garbarek's own occasional synthesiser and drum loops accompanying his tenor and soprano saxophones, he's found a near-perfect showcase for his carefully enunciated tones, while thawing out some of his customary chill. ★★★★★

**Sound:** While retaining acres of space in his traditionally sparse sound, Garbarek concentrates on song melodies from sources as diverse as Scottish folk, blues and tango, with the interplay between saxophone and violin producing a distinctly European, contemplative groove. ★★★★★ DO



### SCOTT JOPLIN

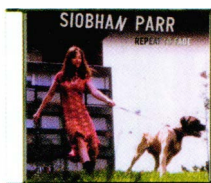
Piano Rags

Alexander Peskanov (piano)

Naxos CD 8.559114

**Music:** A budget Joplin recording, which also features excellent sound and (mostly) lively, vital playing. All the usual favourites are here in fine fettle, including a very vital account of *Maple Leaf Rag* and, of course, *The Entertainer*. Some of the variations of tempo may take you off guard, but it's great, uncomplicated fun. ★★★★★

**Sound:** The feel of the performances is of spontaneity and life, though a few of the rags are performed slow – *Solace* and *Bethena* for example – but this gives the disc a varied feel. The piano is not identified, but the recording makes it sound relatively light, if not perhaps the kind of upright on which these works were usually performed when they were newly minted. ★★★★★ AG



### SIOBHAN PARR

Repeat To Fade

Independent Records Ltd

**Music:** In the Bermuda Triangle that is Emmylou Harris, Eva Cassidy and Chrissie Hynde lies one Siobhan Parr, a young British singer-songwriter whose efforts on this debut combine wit, melody and drive. The description 'free-wheeling country' sounds like a cliché but it genuinely does apply here, and songs like the opening *Lose My Dress* and the exhilarating *Another Love* cry out for sunshine, convertibles and an open road. There's also a fair amount of soul and a fistful of dynamite choruses, as well as some nice keyboard playing in there too. Way above par. ★★★★★

**Sound:** Very clean lines, and just the right amount of warmth around the Hammonds – delivered by co-producers John Reynolds and Alan 'The Mix' Branch. ★★★★★ PS

## DVD-AUDIO & SACD

### SIBELIUS/ SINDING

**Sibelius:** Violin Concerto, Serenade in G minor  
**Sinding:** Violin Concerto No. 1, Romance in D major

Bjarte Engeset (cond), Henning Kraggerud (violin), Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra  
DVD-Audio (24/96 surround, 24/192 stereo, DTS, Dolby Digital)

Naxos 5.110056

**Music:** The excellent Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra has a long and distinguished history with Scandinavian music generally, and Sibelius in particular, and this performance of the powerful *Violin Concerto* is idiomatic from first to last. The rarely performed (and quite possibly not previously recorded) Sinding is a more mainstream, romantic piece, but it's thoroughly engaging and enjoyable and, it has to be said, quite unjustly neglected. ★★★★★

**Sound:** Recorded in the BSO's current home base, the Lighthouse Centre For The Arts in Poole, the sound is less than the best from the usually excellent Naxos team. The violin is too sharply highlighted, and the orchestra sounds metallic and edgy during crescendi, especially in the finale of the Sibelius. ★★★ AG



### YO MILES

Sky Garden

SACD (stereo/multichannel SACD plus stereo CD layer)

Cuneiform Records

**Music:** Yo Miles is a collaboration between 'avant rock' guitarist Henry Kaiser and jazz trumpeter Wadada Leo Smith – musicians whose enthusiasm for the work of Miles Davis led them to form a collective band in 1998 to explore his late sixties/early seventies material. This was the period that Miles started to break away from his jazz roots and explore a fusion with rock. It spawned some powerful albums such as *Live Evil* and *Bitches Brew*. There is not enough Kaiser on here for his fans but Smith's playing is very good, clearly influenced by Davis but with his own style. This is jazz-rock fusion with the emphasis on jazz but one that's interspersed with lighter moments such as when tabla maestro Zakir Hussain joins the band for a superb duet with Smith. Gratifying stuff. ★★★★★

**Sound:** Winner of the 2004 Surround Music Award for hi-res stereo recordings, this direct to DSD is one of the best-sounding discs we've heard. If only more musicians would take this much trouble. ★★★★★ JK



### LARS DANIELSSON

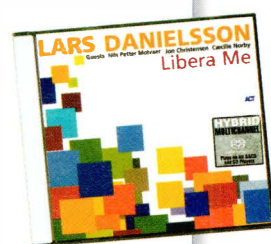
Libera Me

SACD (stereo/multichannel SACD plus stereo CD layer)

ACT

**Music:** This classically trained double bassist from Sweden tries out many disciplines on his latest album. As well as electrified double bass, he also plays guitar, cello and piano, backed by the Danish Radio Concert Orchestra, for whom he wrote and orchestrated the sweeping string backing of many of the tunes. There's also accompaniment from sax, trumpet, occasional vocals and samples. What could have been a hotchpotch of styles instead gels with remarkable fluidity to produce a series of songs (including a bass-led version of Joni Mitchell's *Both Sides Now*) that is expressive, involving and moving, and a world away from bland hi-fi show-style melodic jazz. ★★★★★

**Sound:** There's a terrific ambient warmth to this record that invites you in and suggests you turn off your phone for the next hour or so. The subtly tweaked SACD track adds some extra depth and range to the dense, though never overpowering orchestrations, which owe something to the romantic genius of *Les Parapluies De Cherbourg* composer Jacques Demi. ★★★★★ DO

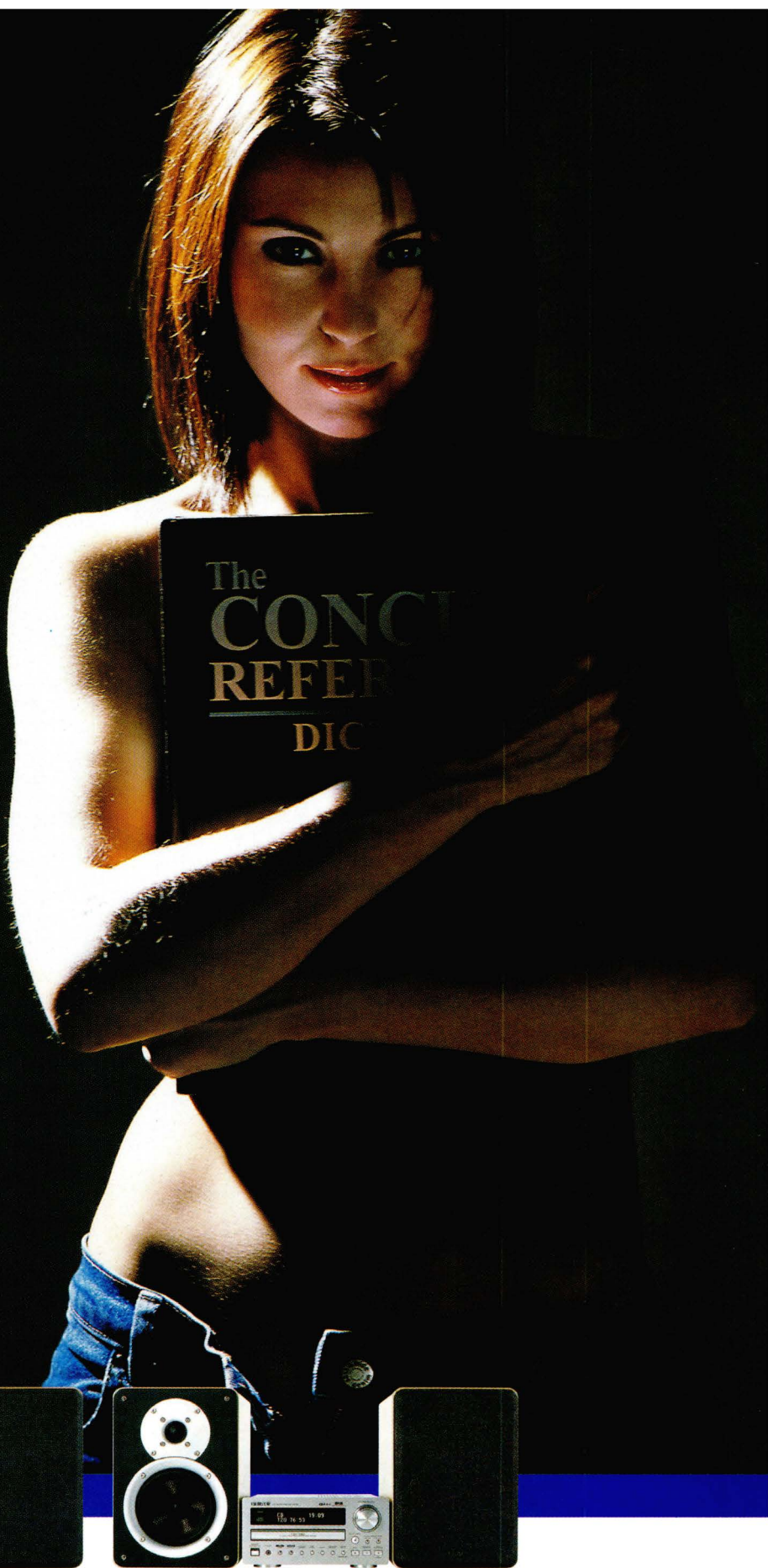


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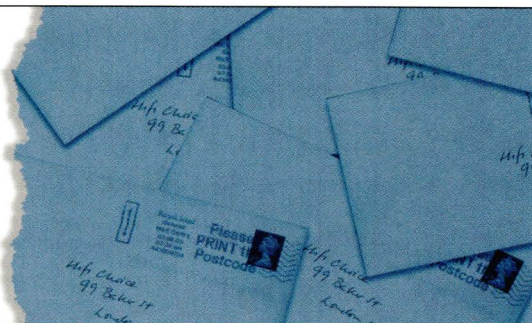
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# ChoiceMail



The pick of this month's best letters

Write to: Hi-Fi Choice, Future Publishing Ltd, 99 Baker Street, London W1U 6FP. Or email your letters to dan.george@futurenet.co.uk



## ★ LETTER OF THE MONTH

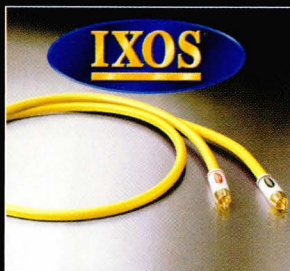
### GREAT HAUL OF CHINA

I live in China and never see my local brands reviewed in your magazine. It's frustrating buying products that haven't been previously tested. China is a great place for hi-fi lovers – there are stores with brands like Linn, Naim and Mark Levinson, plus local brands like Korsun (OEM for Red Rose) or Zhongshen (OEM for Inca Designs).

In China you don't buy hi-fi like in Europe – there are no appointments, stores are open seven days a week from 9am to 10pm, and every price must be negotiated! But, our dealers struggle to give good advice and there is almost no after sales service. Could you review some of those local famous Chinese brands?

**Stephane Moreau** China

**HFC** If a product is available in the UK and looks promising, we'll review it! Check out the Chinese-made Vincent CD player and amp on p68.



WIN IXOS INTERCONNECTS!

The author of our letter of the month receives a free pair of Ixos XHA606 interconnects worth £60, featuring Gamma Geometry and silver plated OFC conductors for superior sound. So get writing! (250 words max please...)



Below: Pioneer DV-868AVi

### UNIVERSAL APPEAL

I am using a Lexicon MC-8 as the processor/preamp in a 5.1 system that I aim to get good two-channel music from. What standard of DVD-A/SACD player do you need to get good quality audio? DVD players often appear to be compromised in CD replay terms compared with stand-alone CD players. Is it better to use two or even three machines? What would be your suggestion for a DVD player and an SACD/CD player that would again meet or exceed the minimum quality bar?

**David Turner** via email

**HFC** Despite the rapid advance in audio quality from today's universal DVD players, the ideal set up for the audiophile is to use a dedicated CD player for two-channel, plus a universal player for multichannel and high-resolution stereo audio, alongside video. Ultimately, going the three player route is best of all, but is also kinda nuts! We've had good results from sub-£1,000 universal players such as Denon's £900 DVD-3910 (*HFC* 260) and Pioneer's DV-868AVi (around £1,000 or less). This level of performance will impress, and should you spend the same on a new CD player you'll be a step closer to audiophile heaven. Our recent favourites include Naim's CD5i (£825), Roksan's Caspian M Series player (£1,100) and the new Cyrus 8vs (£1,000), which becomes truly excellent with the optional £400 PSX-R power supply.

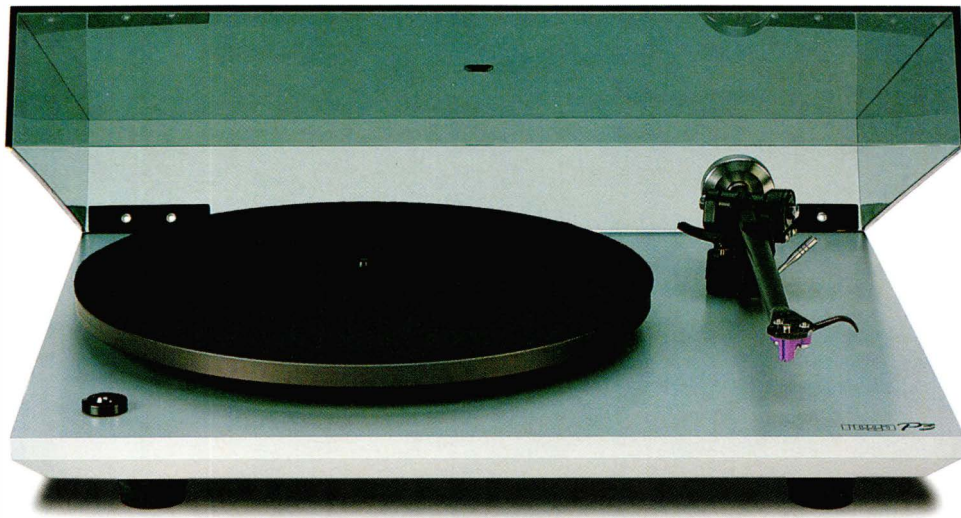
**"I still run the same system I bought in 1988 and can't decide whether modern stuff would be a revelation."**

### GRUMPY OLD MEN

We all like gadgets, especially shiny new ones. And probably most of us are willing victims of the notion that every succeeding generation of kit is better than the last. So, it was surprising in *HFC* 260 that the Spondor BC1 has set the standard to beat for 30 years. Does this mean the intervening 300-odd reviews of newer alternatives have all been pointless? Couldn't someone just have written "Don't bother – still not as good as the Spondor"? Have I been watching too much *Grumpy Old Men*?

I still run the same system I bought in 1988 and can't decide whether the countless new standards claimed since mean a modern system would be a revelation. Checking old stuff against newer gear is hard, however, unless you have a budget big enough to make home demos worthwhile. I'll bet lots of your readers are in the same boat.

**K Dalglish** via email



Above: Rega P3

## "In reality, it has turned out to be as dear as CD, only with the worries about condition."

**HFC** The Spendor BC1 was always a great speaker in many respects, and as we said in the article to which you refer, it is "still held by some to set the standard for midrange accuracy some 30 years on". But it's not without shortcomings, notably its low efficiency and outdated dimensions – though deserving of its classic status, many modern speakers deliver a more complete package overall.

With regards to your late 1980s system, it's likely that technology – especially CD technology – has come on enough to highlight its weaknesses, but whether it needs replacing is something only you can decide. If travelling to a dealer is tricky, try and get a feel for the market at the various hi-fi shows – it won't be long until the unmissable 2005 Bristol show, on the 26th and 27th of February.

### CHOICE CONVERSION

I have recently switched from another specialist hi-fi magazine to *Hi-Fi Choice* and welcome the quantity of reviews as well as the refreshing mix of realistically priced equipment. I also enjoy the technical descriptions of the equipment and the lid-off annotated shots you provide – excellent!

**Neil Eccleston** Warrington, Cheshire

### TURNTABLE TURN-OFF

I have decided that vinyl's only advantage isn't enough to warrant the considerable cost, so my Rega Planar 3 is up for sale on eBay. The whole thing turned out to be a white elephant what with the cost of it all – turntable, cartridge, not to mention a decent phono preamp and the crap LPs that I bought from eBay. I was under the illusion that vinyl could be snapped up for pennies. In reality, it has turned out

to be as dear as CD, only with the worries about condition and playability. Sorry if this sounds like a whinge, but I feel that, despite vinyl's warmth, the time and effort required isn't worth it.

**Pioneer31** via email

**HFC** We'll forgive the whinging if you consider persevering with vinyl a little longer. Despite the range of records sold on eBay, it's not the best place to shop for a bargain. Pocket-money vinyl is best bought using a careful eye at boot fairs, charity shops and garage sales nationwide. There's also a plethora of recordings that still haven't made it to CD, albeit many obscure ones that are best left alone. Our advice would be to hang on the Planar 3 and rummage around like David Dickinson, only without the enhanced tan.

### TWO TON FIVE-ONE

The Missus is keen on a new mini system for the front room, costing around £200. I have also been thinking about splashing the money on a 5.1 system. Do you have any suggestions? I am trying to keep with hi-fi sound, as I need reasonable audio playback to keep both the wife and I happy.

**Blogger** via email

**HFC** Considering your budget, it's hard to beat Denon's superb D-M31 CD/receiver system, which is cool, compact and more than competent. It's available both with and without speakers, and we've seen the latter version in the shops for as little as £180. Given your budget, a 5.1 system is likely to disappoint with music, so steer clear.

Below: Denon D-M31



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## @ ONLINE FORUM

A few choice comments plucked from our online forum. Join in the fun at [www.hifichoice.co.uk](http://www.hifichoice.co.uk)

I want to buy a second hand Naim Nait amp, but there are so many variants. Which one do you prefer – the Nait 1, 2 or 3...?  
**Dzigi**

...Go with the Nait 3 – it is better for rock and dance music. Also, since the 3 is newer than the 1 and 2, you probably won't need to get it recapped for a couple of years.  
**Whodatfineho**

I bought four granite chopping boards from Argos, stuck two together with silicone sealant, then drilled four dents in the top for speaker spikes. Bass seems slightly better defined and it looks nice. It also prevents her indoors from bashing the speakers with the bloody vacuum!  
**Analoguekid**

I hear everywhere that you can't enjoy movies at home as much as you do in the cinema. But I think even my stereo setup gives a lot better sound than any movie theatre...  
**IBug**

...With the cinemas I've been to I have been very disappointed with the sound. Can't beat the big screen, though.  
**Mraps**

SACD and DVD-Audio – yawn. I'm bored hearing about it now. No one is interested in it and you can't even buy discs in the shops. Let's look forward to what Blu-ray can do for us.  
**Cremerulee**



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# Changing Rooms

*Richard Black uncovers the art and science behind turning your room into an audio paradise. It could be the best system upgrade you'll ever make...*

**F**or anyone who ever listens to music through loudspeakers, the room is a part of the sound system. There are no ifs and buts about that statement – no handy get-out clause, no way round it. Every sound you hear in any space bears the sonic imprint of that space.

On the other hand, there is no get-out clause for equipment manufacturers, either. Anyone who blames a room entirely for poor sound should bear in mind the wise words of veteran loudspeaker designer Ted Jordan, who said, many years ago, something along

the lines of: "Live music never sounds less than live in any space: we should expect no less from hi-fi".

## **WHY BOTHER?**

So why worry about the listening space? Because even when music sounds essentially live, there can still be plenty wrong with it. Sit in the wrong seat in London's much-loved Royal Albert Hall and you'll have trouble picking out some of the finer details of the orchestra, which may be little more than 20 metres from you. Similarly, a vocal soloist in a

heavily draped recital room with a low ceiling will sound exceptionally detailed, but the sound will likely have an edge to it that you won't enjoy.

Acousticians are aware of this, and there's big business in treating the acoustics of studios and venues. But how does all this apply to domestic sound reproduction? In this feature we look at some of the ways in which acoustics can be optimised for the 'listening experience', plus a subtly different approach – how the acoustics can be made to work in harmony with the equipment.



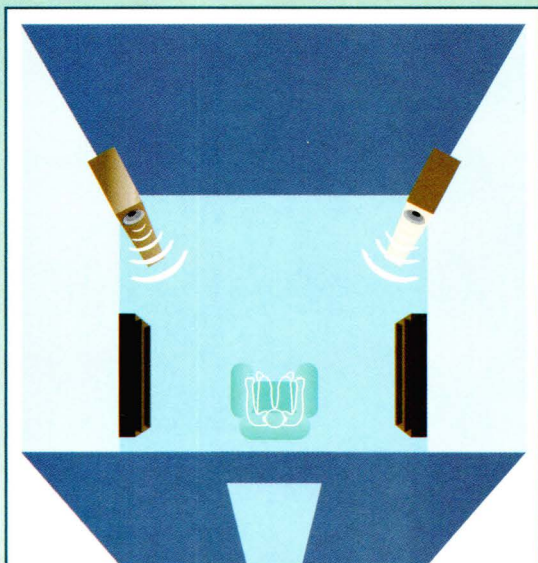
By 'equipment', we pretty much exclusively mean loudspeakers. Amplifiers and source components have a more tightly defined job and are much less affected by the environment. Speakers, by contrast, have to move air and that air is contained within the listening space. The sound emitted by the speakers is not all beamed forward, and any sound sent out to the side or the rear is liable to be reflected (quite possibly more than once) before it arrives at the listener. Clearly, then, two speakers that happen to sound similar in

an anechoic chamber (where there are no reflections) may sound utterly unlike in a real room where the different side and rear radiation of each speaker becomes part of the equation.

This business of sound being reflected is the crux of the matter. So, should we listen in an anechoic chamber, then – or attempt to approximate one? No, if only because such an environment is highly unsettling all round, unpleasant and completely impractical. What's more, normal recordings are made with real listening environments in mind and have

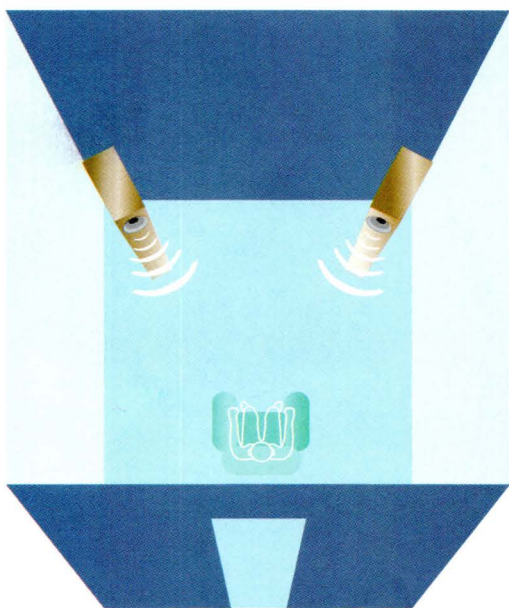
been carefully mastered to sound right in a somewhat reverberant room.

So, if some reflections are acceptable, when do they become a problem? Most obviously, when the wavelength of the sound creates a 'standing wave' in the room. Reflections from opposite walls add in phase to the original wave and the result is a large degree of amplification of certain frequencies, usually in the bass. This can be unpleasant and, even in small amounts, tends to kill detail and precision. The most obvious symptom ►



**FIG.1 SQUARE ROOM**

Square (or nearly square) room tends to cause bass 'boom' due to standing waves (resonances)



**FIG.2 BARE ROOM**

Bass is not too bad but reflective bare walls all round give excessive midband reverberation

has a graphically descriptive name: 'lumpy bass'. If you've ever heard it, you'll know why the name is apt.

#### TICKLING THE ROOM

Fortunately, you can do plenty about lumpy bass without spending much time or any money on tweaking the system. Repositioning the speakers, for example – many listeners are suffering sub-optimal sound, which could be cured by moving their loudspeakers just a few centimetres. In fact, this is one of the most important acoustical things you can do. At low frequencies, the sound emitted by a speaker goes out in all directions and reflections from the wall behind the speaker play a major part in balancing the overall sound.

Of course, all this interacts with speaker-to-listener distance, image width and so on, so you're always listening for an ideal compromise. There's some element of taste involved and you'll also have to trust one or two recordings (at least) to be tonally natural – if you have a good pair of headphones you may wish to use those as a tonal reference. And don't forget that moving your habitual listening chair a few centimetres can be beneficial, too.

What if your room still sounds boomy or generally over-resonant? Once again, you can rely on the human voice to help illustrate problems. Get a male friend with a good clear singing voice to stand somewhere in the room – slightly away from the centre is best – and sing a few

## “Bass is harder to deal with as, unlike higher frequencies, it's not so easily absorbed or diffused.”

It's easy to demonstrate this. Get someone to speak to you while moving closer and closer to a wall. As they approach the wall, you'll hear a lift in the low frequency components of their voice. As they approach the corner where two walls meet, the bass will rise again. This is not directly related to standing waves, but the interaction between your speakers' position relative to back and side walls tickles standing waves into life, so moving speakers is definitely the place to start.

To be scientific about it, begin with the speakers close to the back wall and move them forward an inch or two at a time. With some speakers (particularly small ones, balanced with a nearby back wall in mind), the optimum setting is near the wall. Others will sound much less lumpy in the bass up to a metre away. Then, if the speakers are nearer than a metre or so to the side walls, but two metres (or more) apart, experiment with moving the speakers closer together.

slow gliding tones from top to bottom of his range. You'll probably both feel stupid, but it can be an informative experiment. If the voice also sounds lumpy, you are definitely looking at a room problem quite apart from anything directly related to the speakers. If not, you may simply have a pair of lumpy-bass speakers, in which case changing them is obviously an option. Borrowing some different speakers can be another invaluable diagnostic exercise, as can shifting the entire system temporarily into another room – any problems that move with the equipment are more likely to be problems of the equipment itself.

At this point, we need to be a little more definite about what's wrong with the room. If we are going to consider spending a little money – possibly, quite a lot of money – on improving room acoustics, we must have a good idea of the frequencies we are trying to address. Most of the above discussion has been about low frequencies, but higher ones can be troublesome too for slightly different reasons. In the treble, sound is easily absorbed by furnishings and so on, and one needs to find a balance between too little and too much absorption. Reducing absorption typically means taking up a carpet, for example, while adding it may involve putting down a carpet or rug, or hanging drapes on the walls or windows.

In the midband, sound can be coloured not only by reflections but by sympathetic resonance of walls, windows and other objects in the room. It can be desirable to

## COMPUTERS TO THE RESCUE

There are various bits of software you can buy, some surprisingly cheaply, that will help you improve your listening room. They allow you to input a plan of the room and will then simulate its response and highlight problems. You can then change things on the plan and find out what the effects will be without actually moving anything physically. One of the best we've seen is Computer-Aided Room Acoustics (CARA) from speaker maker Elac – find details (and other useful stuff) at [www.cara.de](http://www.cara.de). It's astonishingly capable if you only have the patience to input all the data, and it will even automatically optimise speaker placement for you. We can recommend it unequivocally with the proviso that what you get out of it depends on what you put into it and sketchy input can give significantly inaccurate output.

add some diffusion, which is a sort of halfway house between reflection and absorption – sound is reflected in various directions, making for less 'beaming' and hence smoothing the sound. In the bass, however, diffusion doesn't really do much in typical-size listening rooms, while in the treble the sound doesn't get reflected enough times for it to make a very big difference.

To test for midband and treble room problems, simple sounds like handclaps work well. If there's a coloured ringing in the room for a fraction of a second after a handclap, you've got a midrange problem. If the ringing sounds really sharp, there's probably some treble resonance going on as well.

### RESONANCE REMEDIES

We've already given the basic tips for treble treatment. It's relatively easy to do, and it's also easy to gauge its effectiveness. Midrange treatment is slightly trickier, but diffusion is often the best thing to try. You can buy diffuser panels and they're very effective, but a few bookcases or record shelves can do much the same and all the better if the books are not all the same size or not all pushed right up to the wall. In fact, a little clutter in a listening room is no bad thing at all – just think of the acoustics in a room ready to be decorated, with furniture and carpets removed, to remind yourself what happens when there's nothing to absorb or diffuse the sound.

Bass is harder to deal with as, unlike higher frequencies, it's not so easily absorbed or diffused by everyday objects or simple rugs and so on. As a rule, you'll have to buy something specially designed for the purpose, or get out the saw and hammer and make something. One of the most useful bass treatments is the 'tube trap', which is either a freestanding or corner-mounting object, typically cylindrical in cross-section and a few feet high – expect to pay a couple of hundred pounds upwards. Quite a lot of money, admittedly, but these things can be impressively effective in subduing the bass resonances of problem rooms.

You can also buy purpose-made midrange and treble treatments, both absorptive panels (as a rule, the thicker they are, the lower the frequency to which they'll work) and diffusers. There is at least one company marketing this stuff specifically for home use, which means it is a little more 'socially acceptable' than pro-oriented stuff. French manufacturer Hociinema offers a range of bass, midband and treble-specific products, and although not distributed in the UK as yet, these are well worth a look (see

over for the website address). Sensibly, the company points out that the requirements of music and surround-sound home cinema are slightly different, but in any room with real problems, it's definitely a case of 'anything is better than nothing'. Egg boxes stuck to the wall are a classic DIY solution – but apart from the hideous appearance, it's a fire risk you may prefer to avoid!

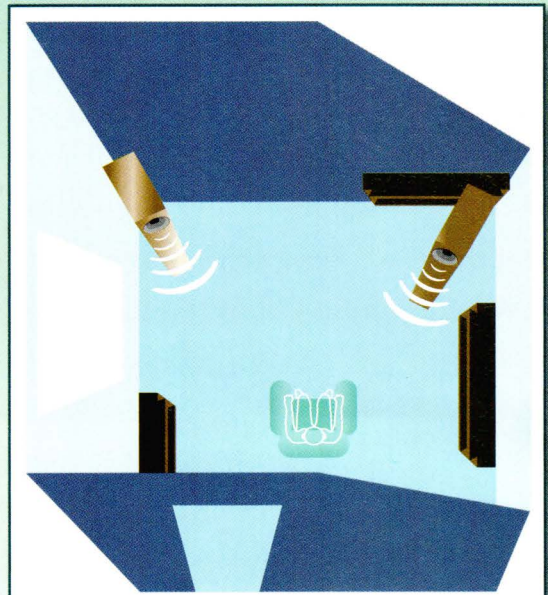
### ACTIVE CORRECTION

All the techniques and tips mentioned so far are essentially passive. What about active acoustic correction? You can hardly have failed to notice that several manufacturers now offer systems which claim to 'correct' for your speakers and your listening room using sophisticated digital filters. But how do these work?

There are two approaches possible, here. We can dispose of the more sophisticated one quickly, because it's not actually available in any domestically realistic form at present. This system uses multiple microphones and loudspeakers distributed around the listening space. These collect, process and reproduce sound in real time with appropriate amplification and delay to simulate pretty much any acoustic required. You may even have heard this complicated system in action in one or two concert halls, but it's hard to imagine it ever being applied to a domestic situation, barring the odd cost-no-object custom installation.

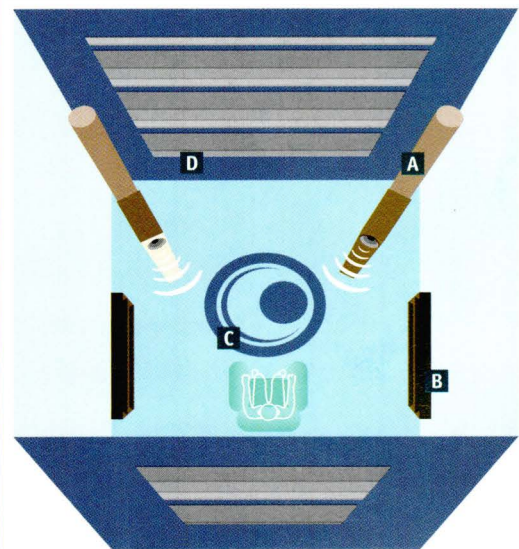
What's rather simpler is to measure the response of the entire system – amplifier, speaker, room and all – and simply flatten it out with a suitable filter. This is pretty much what currently available systems from TaCT, Pioneer, Infinity, Bang & Olufsen and others do, though all in slightly different ways. It's an attractive scheme because on the face of it all it needs is a microphone and a digital filter bank, plus a bit of computing power – not in itself a very expensive commodity.

The big problem is that frequency response is a bit like the coastline of Britain: the closer you look at it, the



**FIG.3 ASYMMETRIC ROOM**

Bass may be okay and overall midband reverberation not too bad, but images will be unstable, even in mono



**FIG.4 IDEAL ROOM**

A) Bass trap in each corner; B) Bookcase or diffuser on each side wall; C) Rug in centre of floor; D) Absorbent wall treatment, front and back

## STOP THAT NOISE!

Background noise also contributes significantly to our listening pleasure. Why do you think sound quality varies with time of day? Mains quality may have a part in it, but the greater level of background noise is surely a more likely culprit. So it can be highly beneficial to cut out background noise as far as possible. Double glazing (with good quality, thick glass) can help a lot, as can well-sealed door and window frames. Shutting the door of the listening room not only reduces the acoustical signature of the hallway but cuts out noises from domestic appliances. Studio-type practices including secondary interior walls, floating floors and so on can also help, and will of course also keep your music from disturbing neighbours and sleeping children... at an astronomical cost!

## TOP 10 TIPS TO GET YOUR ROOM RIGHT

1. Experiment with loudspeaker positioning, especially the distance from the back wall
2. Fit a draught excluder strip on old windows (saves on fuel bills too), and on loose-fitting doors
3. Try to avoid putting resonant items near the speakers – keep that guitar in its case!
4. Untidy-looking book and record shelves can serve an acoustical purpose, acting as sound diffusers
5. Given the choice, use free-lying rugs rather than fitted carpets
6. Hanging rugs or tapestries on walls can help out midband and high frequency absorption
7. Mirrors don't just reflect light – they do a good job of reflecting sound, too
8. Buy (or make, if you're handy) a couple of Tube Traps or similar
9. Consider commissioning an acoustics consultant to check out your listening room
10. Try to locate a dealer demonstrating both active and passive room correction systems

more wiggly it seems. What's worse, it varies quite profoundly from one position in the room to another, so where do you conduct the measurement? Even at the listening position, you can't guarantee a flat response at both ears simultaneously and you could end up making things worse than before at another point in the room. The fact that most systems try to correct phase as well as amplitude response only compounds the problem.

The trick is to put some limits on how closely the system tries to mimic a flat response. Some systems only work on the bass, others cover the full range. Some use filters of arbitrary complexity to achieve the ends, others use relatively simple filters that attempt to mimic the real-world behaviour of rooms in reverse. B&O's system, for instance, only works on the bass and measures response relatively close to the drive unit, which gives a good balance between too little and too much input from the room.



However it's done, active response correction of this kind can achieve astounding results. There's something really quite special about the sound of a system that has been accurately equalised flat. But where it falls down is in trying to correct for rooms with bad resonance problems. In fact, probably the ultimate approach is to apply a mixture of passive and active correction. Address serious resonances across the board with passive means and then use active compensation to trim things up.

Even if digital equalisation of this kind only works on the speaker 'in isolation' (as near as can be achieved), there are limits. You can push the bass response down as far as you like at infinitesimal input levels, but if you end up boosting 20Hz by 30dB you'll need a few kW of amplification and your bass driver will fry anyway. Decent speakers plus decent room are always the way to go before you start getting too clever.

### IMPLEMENTATIONS

Currently available systems vary in conception, aims and use. Almost certainly the simplest to use is B&O's. The measurement microphone is contained within the Beolab 5 loudspeaker, and when required it pops out on a short arm, the computer within the speaker oversees all the relevant measurements, the mic retracts and the filter is designed, all automatically. The system is called 'Adaptive Bass Control', making it quite clear that it doesn't attempt to flatten response at higher frequencies. Quite wonderful, and some distance from TacT's approach in the RCS (Room Correction System) series where,

by contrast, a PC is called into play and the user can not only view the original room response but specify a target curve. This gives you the freedom to demand quite unrealistic responses but the idea is good and offers great flexibility.

Other systems are targeted principally at surround-sound home cinema installations, though they'll benefit music too. Pioneer's Multi-Channel Acoustic Calibration System (MCACC), in its full automatic incarnation, is concerned not only with speaker/room tonality but with level balance and time delays between speakers. This is something we take for granted with stereo speakers which are invariably supplied in (hopefully matched) pairs and positioned equidistant from the main listening position. In home cinema, level balance and speaker distance need careful attention with surround systems if there is to be any hope at all of achieving a realistic result with up to seven full-range speakers and a subwoofer or two dotted around the room. As with other systems, MCACC plays various test tones and clicks while a microphone picks up the results. The onboard computer in the amplifier examines the result and programs its filter banks accordingly. Cyrus, Denon and Yamaha have all adopted similar automated calibration systems in home cinema processors... and more are set to follow.

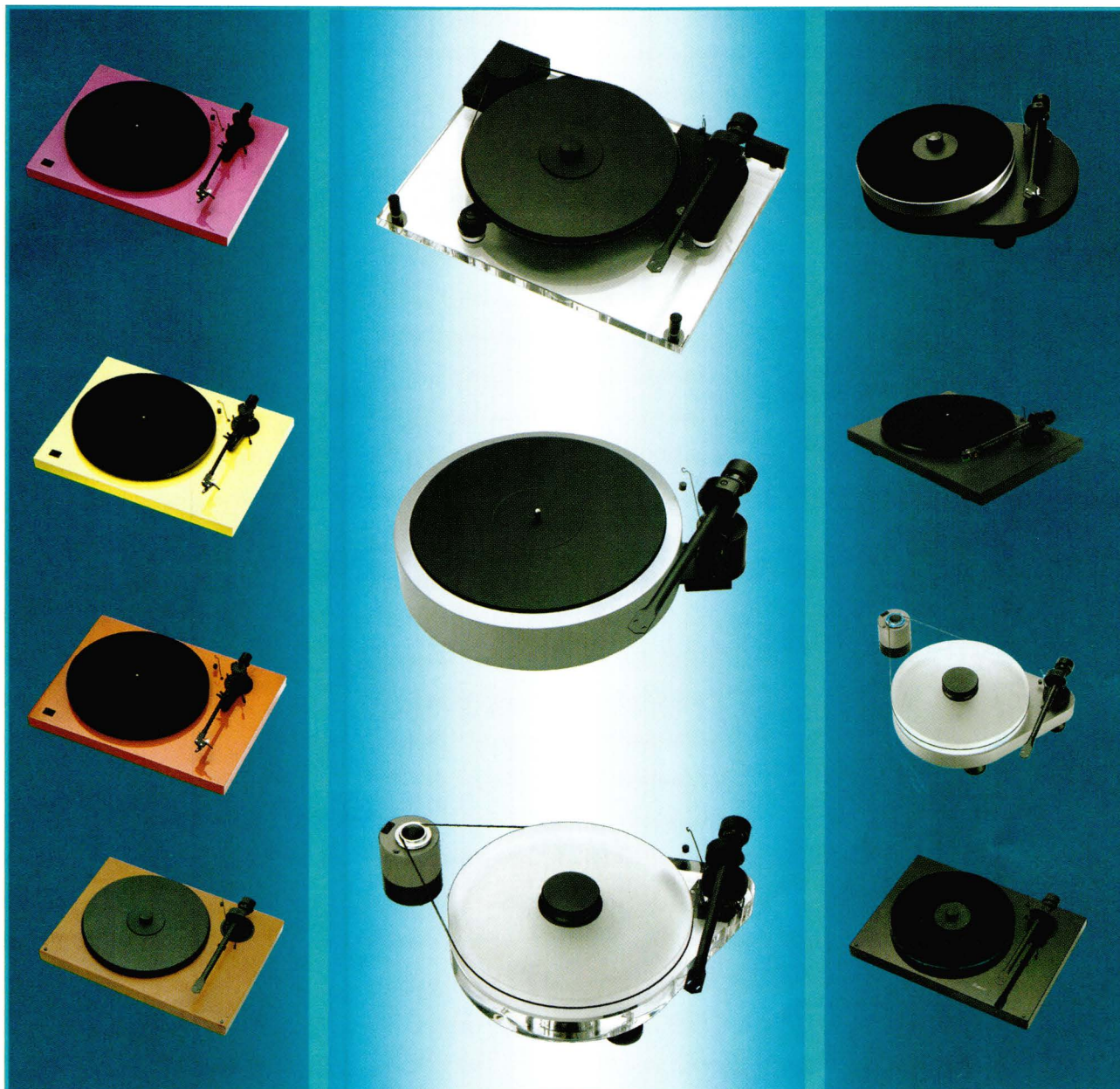
Infinity's 'Room Adaptive Bass Optimization System' (RABOS) relies on a sound pressure level meter operated by the happy owner, cutting out the measurement microphone and computer part. The idea is similar in the end, though. Frankly you could use an analogue spectrum analyser and a graphic equaliser – and people have, in the past, done exactly that.

The fact is that, while many people get pretty good sound in whatever surroundings they have arrived at by chance, interior design and inspired acoustical guesswork, there's almost always something that can be done with active or passive acoustic treatment to improve things. It needn't be expensive, though if you want to spend money you certainly can. But it can, at best, be one helluva step forward for an already good sound system. Give it a try! **HFC**

### REFERENCES FOR FURTHER READING, AND SOURCES FOR ACOUSTICAL PRODUCTS

- [www.canford.co.uk](http://www.canford.co.uk) Ilsonic/Sonex wall tiles, panels etc.
- [www.studiospares.com](http://www.studiospares.com) Auralex wall panels, freestanding acoustic screens, bass traps.
- [www.tubetrap.com](http://www.tubetrap.com) The original ASC Tube Traps, plus new goodies for domestic use.
- [www.ethanwiner.com](http://www.ethanwiner.com) Follow links to articles on making your own bass traps, and much more.
- [www.realtraps.com](http://www.realtraps.com) More bass traps, designed by Ethan Winer, and distributed in the UK.
- [www.hocinema.com](http://www.hocinema.com) Full range of acoustic treatments (French website).

# Not for conservatives



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QUAD 99 CD-P CD PLAYER | QUAD 99 PREAMPLIFIER | QUAD 909 POWER AMPLIFIER  
QUAD ESL-989 LOUDSPEAKERS | £7,650



# Quadrophenia

*Quad has been producing world-class systems since the dawn of hi-fi. And they just keep on getting better, as this set-up proves*

**H**ow big? "About the size of a door, if you're a well-built Hobbit", said Jules Maddock of Quad. The phone fell from my ear. The Tolkeinesque thumbnail of Quad's ESL-989 full-range electrostatic speakers had hit the alarm button. Even if we managed to get them up the second flight of stairs, the biggest electrostatics Quad has ever made simply weren't going to sit comfortably in my new loft listening room by the seaside.

Seemed to me, we had two options. Either downsize the speakers to the more modestly dimensioned (though still far from svelte) ESL-889s, or upsize the listening room. Fortunately, as if purely for the sake of preserving this month's all-Quad *Beautiful System* as its maker intended, the housing market had just stopped being as buoyant as a helium-filled balloon and was now heading south with the urgency of a blacksmith's anvil. Therefore not only was the spacious, newly decorated lounge in my very realistically priced, two-bedroom apartment in Maidstone not filled with prospective purchasers, it was unusually free from clutter of any kind and thus a perfect venue for the big panels and the contrastingly bijou 99-series electronics. I booked myself an appointment and gave Jules from Quad – who'd hired a van to transport the speakers in their scarily large cartons – the new directions.

It's only right we afford the lion's share of respect to the speakers this month. Be in no doubt, we are in the presence of true legends. It's debatable, of course, but I very much doubt if there is a more famous or important component in the history of British hi-fi than the Quad, the longest surviving domestic electrostatic speaker in the world. Although a comparatively new product, the ESL-989 basically began its commercial career 47 years ago. In its original incarnation, as

the ESL-57, it satisfied demand for the first quarter of a century. And little wonder. Quad's radical electrostatic technology used a "constant charge" to distribute electrons across its entire Mylar diaphragm. The result was unprecedented imaging, transient accuracy, speed and transparency. Balanced, it had to be said, by limited loudness and next to no bass.

Quad founder designer Peter Walker didn't exactly address the problems in the next generation design – the ESL-63 – but he did make it sound even better where it was already brilliant. The ESL-63 featured clever delay electronics that allowed the flat diaphragm to radiate the sound first at the centre and last at the periphery, mimicking a radiating sphere – the ideal shape for approximating sound emanating from a point source 300cm behind the panels. Other improvements followed over the years (higher power handling, better protection circuitry, improved frame rigidity) and sturdier professional versions were produced. But, essentially, the Quad ESL didn't change.

## CLASSIC EVOLUTION

It wasn't until 1998, when Quad became part of the International Audio Group (having been bought by the Verity Group in 1995), that arguably the most revered speaker in all hi-fi finally started to evolve in the true Darwinian sense. IAG's idea was to redesign the classic ESL-63 using modern methods and materials. The ESL-988 was just that – a replacement for the ESL-63 that retained all its original features. Frame strength and wiring were improved and 95 per cent of the components upgraded. At the same time, a five degree backtilt was introduced to avoid unwanted floor reflections.

But the real Great Leap Forward was the ESL-989, which had 50 per cent more radiating area than the ESL-63

**"It's debatable, of course, but I very much doubt if there is a more famous or important component in the history of British hi-fi than the Quad."**



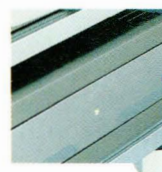
**Quad 99  
CD-P CD player**  
£1,000

Not just a great CD player but the hub of the 99 system, capable of driving the 909 power amp directly.



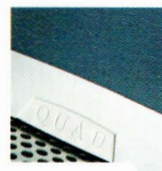
**Quad 99  
preamp**  
£750

Well built and flexible, with a neutral sound – very fine value.



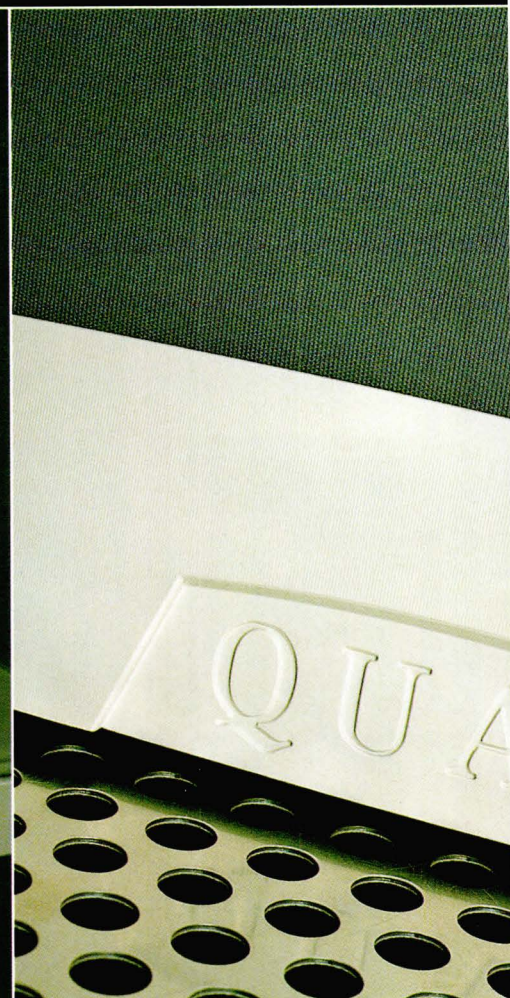
**Quad 909  
power amp**  
£900

A high achiever on a bang-for-buck reckoning, the 909 marries grip with real finesse and subtlety.



**Quad ESL-989  
loudspeaker**

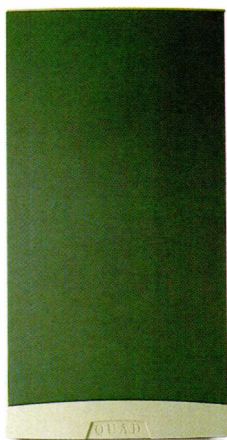
**£5,000 per pair**  
One of the world's great loudspeakers. Will shock anyone who hasn't heard a pair before.



and was nearly 16 inches taller, but weighed just 5kg more. It introduced a dimension of real bass at last, thanks to two additional radiating panels. Quad claims -6dB at 30Hz against the ESL-988's 35Hz. Power handling was also beefed up, particularly in the deepest bass region.

However, the £5,000 ESL-989 is still a classic dipole, radiating as much sound behind as in front (though hardly any laterally, making placement and room matching more critical than usual). And, like other electrostatics, the ESL-989 must be plugged into the mains to charge the diaphragms. It's good to know the step-up transformers, located in the rear of the plinth, have fuses to protect the speaker's internal power supply from extreme voltage surges.

Imposing they may be, but the ESL-989s are also remarkably elegant in their simplicity. They make a statement but it isn't a brutal one, looking like the sort of thing the Star Trek props department would knock up if the Enterprise ever needed room dividers. As well as the pale blue of the test pair, the wrap-around cloth grilles also come in black and grey. Can't help thinking black is to be avoided, despite costing £4,600.



Blue works well with the semi-gloss grey casing and satin-silver faceplates of the 99-series CD player and pre-amp. At about 30cm square and 5cm tall apiece, these aren't quite as compact as Cyrus components, but extremely neat nonetheless. And if 'neat' is an overriding priority, there's a matching 99 power amp, too. If you're serious about getting the best out of the ESL-989s, though, Quad recommends the altogether more brick-like 909 current dumping power amp, which is also about 30cm wide, but only 25cm deep and a comparatively lofty 13cm high. It all looks great so long as you don't try to stack it.

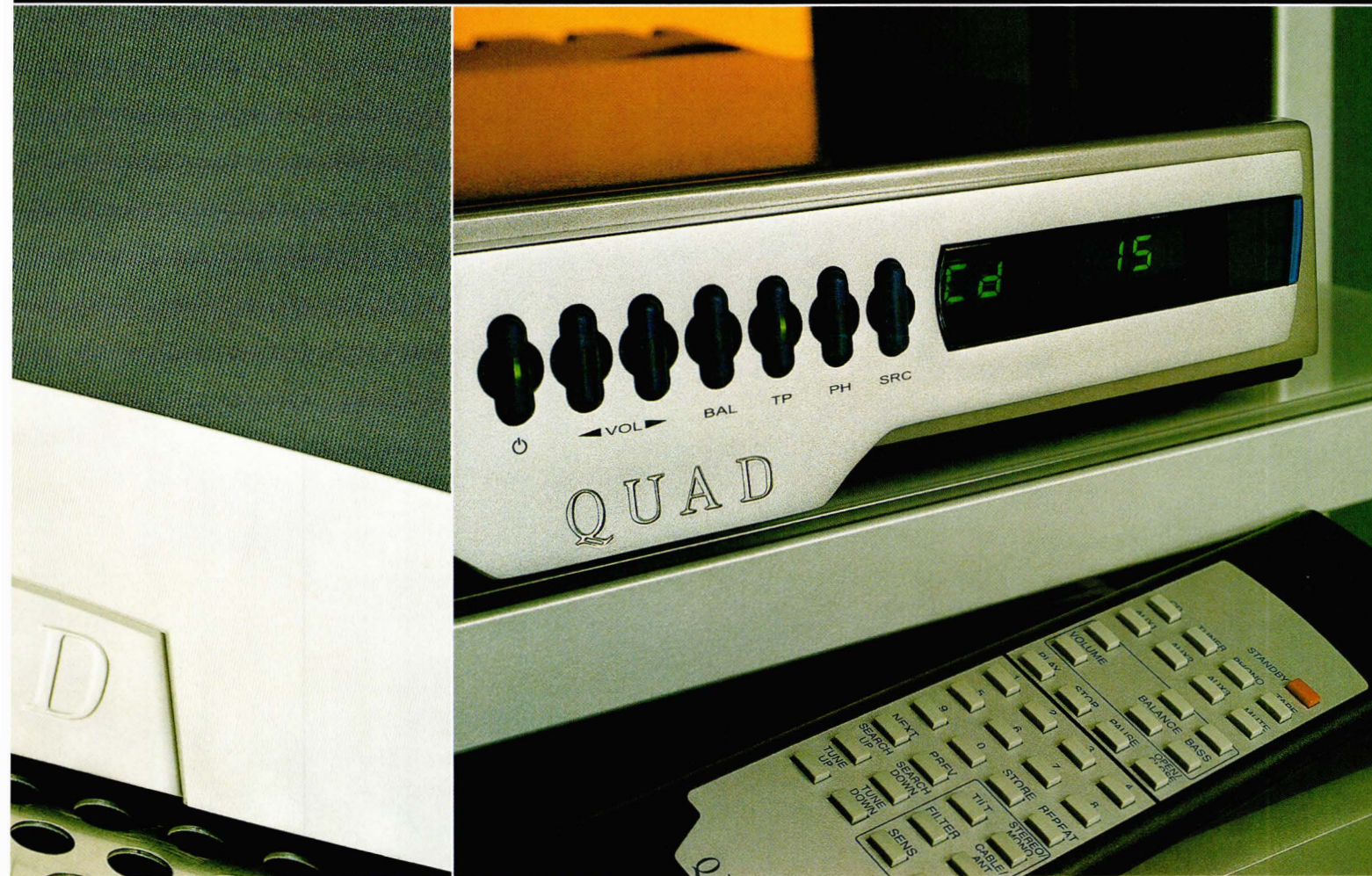
#### QUAD 99 IS FAR FROM FLAKY

The first CD player to wear the 99 badge was, by most accounts, a rather lacklustre affair sonically. Its replacement, the £1,000 99 CD-P, was designed by Jan Ertner, of Quad 67 fame (one of the more musical early CD players) and is right back on the pace. It uses Philips' latest three-laser transport, Crystal's top-of-the-range DAC (with 24-bit/192kHz upsampling), Class A op-amps and a generous application of regulated power supplies. The back panel has six digital inputs (three

coaxial, three optical), an optical digital output, the useful but no longer obligatory Quadlink connectors and single-ended RCAs for fixed and variable outputs. Rather like Naim, Quad has acknowledged audiophiles rather like to use their own fancy interconnects.

The big news is that the 99 CD-P is more than just a CD player. Equipped with a very high quality remote volume control and all those digital inputs, not only can it be hooked directly to the power amp (by-passing the £750 99 preamp altogether) but its upsampling DAC will improve the performance of any DVD player, DAB tuner, or digital television receiver you care to plug in.

As for the preamp itself, it's fully remote with Quadlink inputs for the CD player and, if so required, a 99 series FM tuner. It also boasts a large green fluorescent display. The on-board phono stage accepts MM and MC inputs; to switch between them you simply press and hold the PH input button for five seconds. In addition, there are three line inputs and one tape loop. As well as the proprietary AmpBus output connector, a single pair of RCA preamp outputs are provided. The usual Quad tone and 'tilt' functions and filters can be bypassed if preferred and all



**“Most hi-fi systems paint a sonic picture, but I’ve never heard one with as broad a spectrum of shades in its tonal palette... the Quad combo gets to grip with the architecture of a performance.”**

the standard inputs (line, tape, phono) can be adjusted for sensitivity – there are three settings to choose from.

The chunky £900 909 power amp is a direct descendant of the Quad 405 – the first amp to use current dumping techniques. The power amp’s input and output are fed into a bridge circuit. The bridge produces the difference between the two signals (input/output) – the difference being the distortion. This distortion is then phase inverted and fed back as a correcting signal to the power amp’s input. The end result is that distortion is removed from the signal – effectively a distortion cancellation circuit. This allows powerful and efficient output transistors to be used. Hence, a big, powerful transistor can be used without worrying about increased distortion levels (because the distortion will be cancelled out later). If you’re using low impedance speakers like the ESL-989s, current dumping is of

particular benefit. The 909 is rated at 140 watts RMS into eight ohms, rising to 250 watts RMS into four ohms.

#### LUMINOUS SOUND

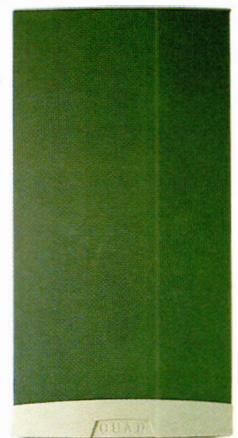
Most hi-fi systems paint a sonic picture, but I’ve never heard one with as broad a spectrum of shades in its tonal palette. Not only that, the Quad combo gets to grip with the architecture of a performance better than most, and the big ELS-989s – confounding the assertion that, without assistance from a subwoofer, electrostatics don’t do bass – really do seem to motor all the way down to 30Hz as claimed. In a nutshell, what we have here is a system capable of projecting the big picture and presenting music in a fashion so focused and coherent that you feel you could reach out and touch the musicians.

Some have said the ESL-989s lack a little air and sparkle. And it’s true, this is the initial impression. But it isn’t an

abiding one. It’s soon replaced by thoughts of an entirely natural-sounding balance, devoid of edginess and blessed with astounding levels of musical insight. Jazzer Chris Botti’s soulful trumpet has a luminous sonority imbued with just the right degree of bite. Bass is fast and uncoloured but surprisingly full. In fact, every style of music is faithfully served by the Quad system, from Norah Jones to N.E.R.D. It cuts to the heart of the music without being obviously forensic. Stereo perspectives are superbly handled with almost uncanny reproduction of acoustic cues.

All right, you can’t play it at gale force levels. And amazing as the bass is by electrostatic standards, your trouser legs will remain unflapped. But if it’s hi-fi with the purity of distilled water you’re looking for, you’re unlikely to hear music as unsullied this side of a live performance. **HFC**

*David Vivian*



# TANNOY®

**Arena is a radical new home theatre system from Tannoy. Blending form and function, this beautifully crafted audio system offers much more than gorgeous styling. Exceptional acoustic performance combines with application flexibility to deliver a system that defines the category.**

The system comprises four satellite loudspeakers, a dedicated centre channel loudspeaker and an active subwoofer. Accessories such as grilles, spikes, spike protection boots for use on polished surfaces, and 20 metres of speaker cable are provided, and stand options are available.

Featuring a technological breakthrough from Tannoy, the satellite speakers bring together the company's renowned WideBand™ expertise into a brand new miniature (5") version of their world famous point source Dual Concentric™ drive unit. A single Dual Concentric™ driver is integrally moulded into the baffle of the organically styled satellite speakers. Offering the acoustic benefits of excellent dispersion characteristics and imaging, inherent in Tannoy's point source Dual Concentric™ design, the new 'Dual' goes even further with its built-in super tweeter. Extending the bandwidth effectively provides a more focussed sound stage, with vocals and instruments clearly more separate and distinct. Percussive sounds have more reality and impact.

Catering for the specific audio requirements of the centre channel in a home theatre system, the dedicated centre channel speaker has been equipped with a supplementary bass driver to augment power handling. The rigid acoustic shell of the satellite and centre channel speakers, robustly constructed in cast aluminium, provides full acoustic optimisation of the drive units. The centre channel and satellite speakers are magnetically shielded to eliminate colour fringing effects when placed close to a television.

Arena's versatile platforms enable a variety of room integration solutions. Table stands for the satellite and centre channel speakers are fitted with a swivel mechanism allowing precise adjustment. The same stands are also equipped with a wall mounting plate and a carefully designed cable management system. An elegant floor stand option is also available.

Arena's powerful 300 Watt active subwoofer delivers tremendously controlled low frequency acoustics and integrates impeccably with the satellites to present an outstanding home theatre performance. The BASH® amplifier technology utilised, is a patented high efficiency power amplifier circuit topology that has taken the best of Class D and Class AB and created a new Class of its own. The power amplifier with its patented switch mode power supply delivers exceptional performance and excellent bandwidth with long-term reliability.

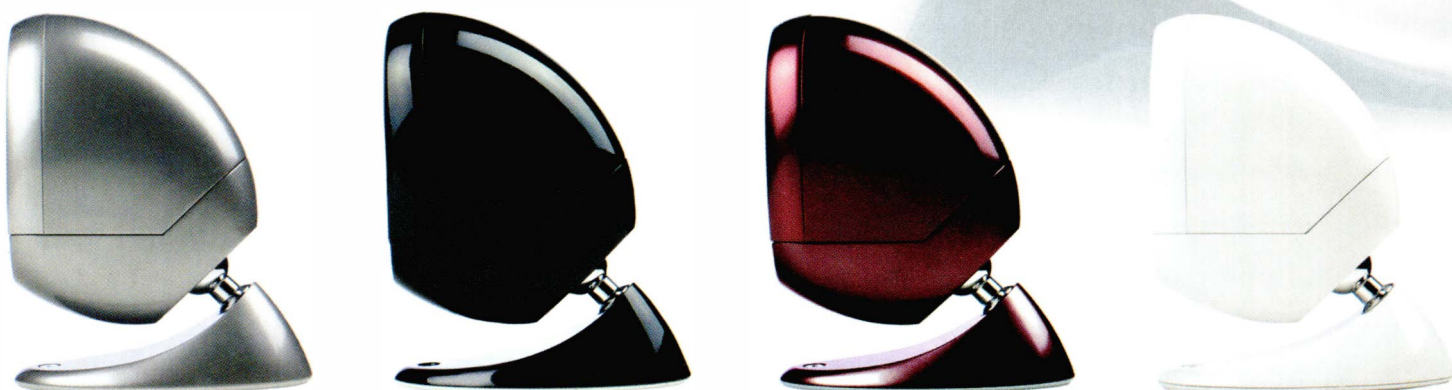
An external control allows the low frequency extension to be adjusted manually from around 60Hz down to the unit's lowest operating frequency. This useful feature ensures the optimum settings for music or home cinema listening, adjustment to match the relative level of the main speakers, or just setting to personal taste.

Lavishly finished, the Arena system is available in a choice of magnificent high gloss colours - bronze, silver, white or black.

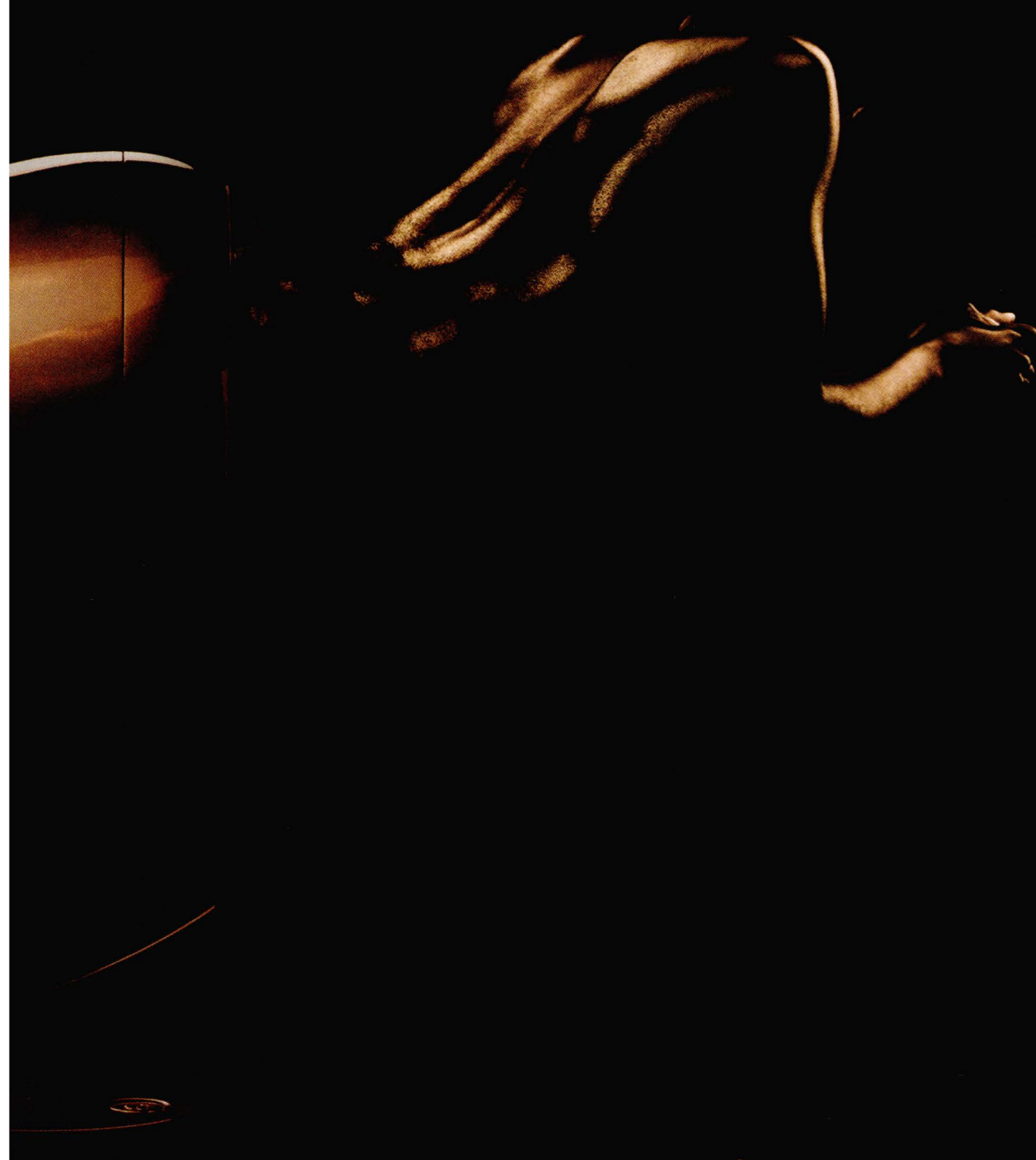
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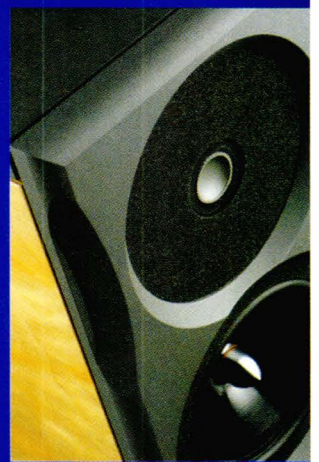
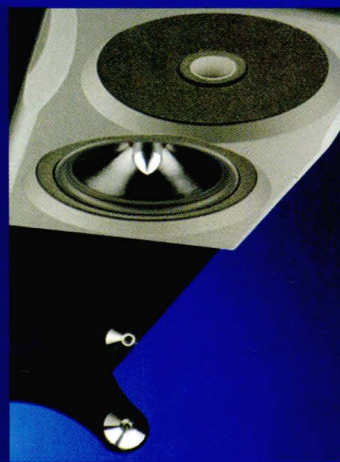


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# REVIEWS

Welcome to the HFC hardware reviews section – the only place for definitive tests of the latest hi-fi components. Our unique combination of extensive listening, unsighted comparisons and scientific lab reports, conducted by the UK's most experienced set of reviewers, ensures you're holding the most comprehensive and reliable guide to high performance hi-fi in the world.

## EQUIPMENT REVIEWS

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- 52** Lindemann 820 CD/SACD player
- 56** ELAC BS 203.2 loudspeaker
- 58** Denon DVD-2910 universal disc player
- 60** Naim NAC 112x preamp and NAP 150x power amp
- 64** Waterfall Victoria loudspeaker
- 67** Marantz SR4320 stereo receiver
- 68** Vincent CD-S1.1 CD player and SV-121 integrated stereo amplifier



**71** Mordaunt-Short Genie sub/sat loudspeaker system

## ULTIMATE GROUP TEST

### INTEGRATED AMPLIFIERS £500-£1,000

- 75** Cyrus 6vs
- 77** Electrocompaniet ECI 3
- 79** Exposure 2010 S
- 81** Marantz PM7200 KI
- 83** NAD C372
- 85** Rega Mira 3



## OUR RATINGS EXPLAINED

Percentage ratings for various different criteria, like sound quality and value for money

Our overall conclusion

after a livelier tubes shone through. The Siemens-equipped player has an snappier sound with better timing that es with dense material with remarkable fidelity and ease. It even seems to be

You can find more civilised players for the money. But few combine dynamics with fine timing skills as effectively as this. **HFC** Jason Kennedy

**VERDICT**

**SOUND >> 83%**

**FEATURES >> 85%**

**BUILD >> 85%**

**VALUE >> 85%**

**CONCLUSION**

This is a highly entertaining and colourful player at a competitive price. The build quality is good and the feature list is strong – it's not the most subtle of DVD players but if you're looking for a player to excite you it could prove a bargain.

**HI-FI CHOICE OVERALL SCORE >> 84%**

The things we like most about the product

The things we think could be better

The product's final score. All criteria are taken into account but the emphasis is on performance. Components scoring more than 85% may qualify for an HFC Award Badge

## OUR AWARD BADGES EXPLAINED



### Best Buy

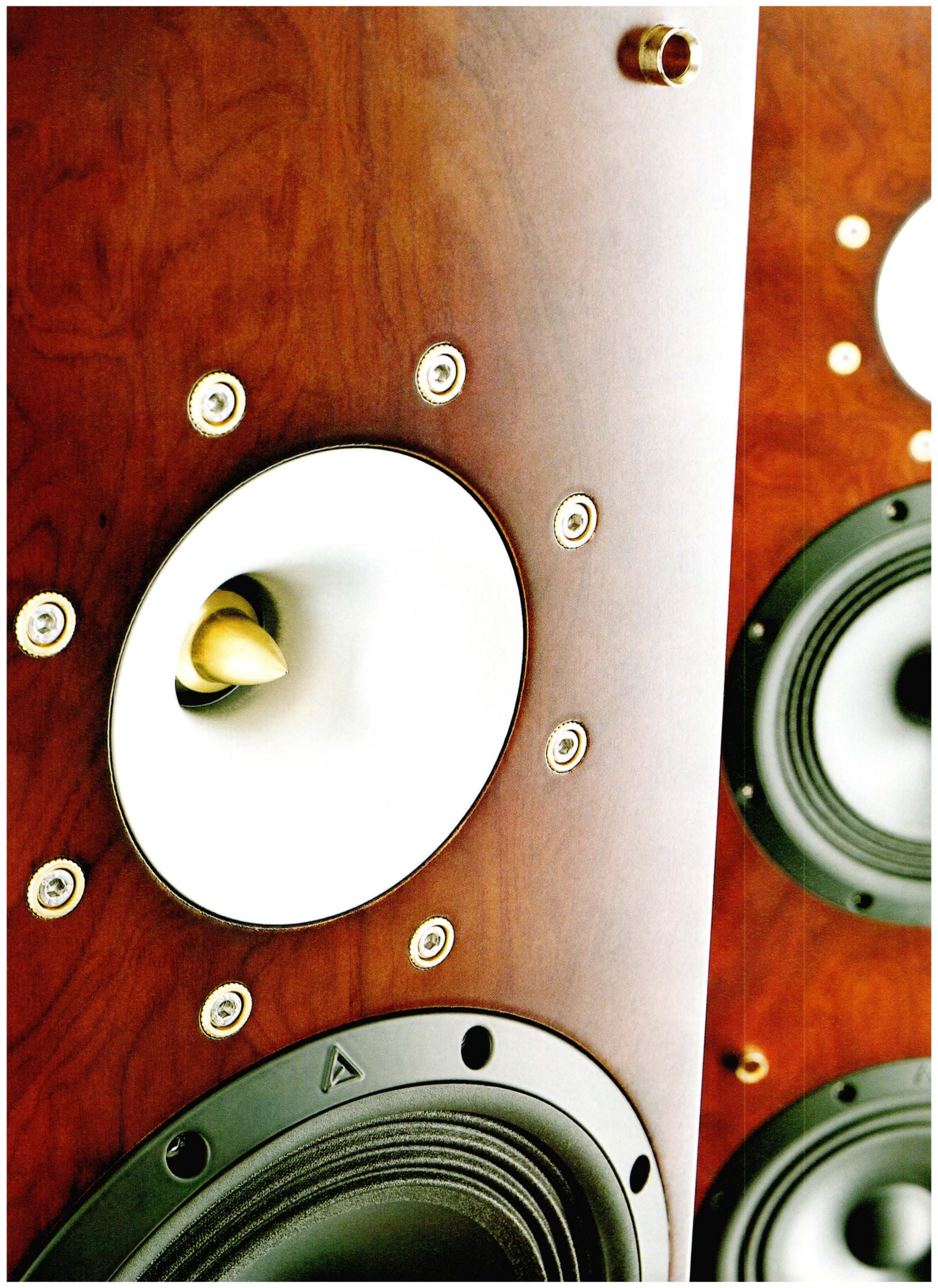
A component receiving the coveted Hi-Fi Choice Best Buy Badge has been judged to deliver excellent performance at its price point, thereby offering outstanding value for money.



### Editor's Choice

This Badge is awarded only to those components that are judged to deliver reference-standard performance, regardless of cost. These products may be considered among the very best of their kind.

Turn the page for the most rigorous tests of serious hi-fi in the business...





# French resolution

Triangle's Magellan is an awesome beast. Now meet its more practical 'little' brother...

**PRODUCT** Triangle Magellan Concerto

**TYPE** Floorstanding loudspeaker

**PRICE** £9,995 per pair

**KEY FEATURES** Size (WxHxD): 28x149x34cm

• Weight: 55kg each • Twin horn-loaded compression tweeters (front/rear) • Twin 165mm paper-cone midrange drivers (front/rear) • Three 165mm paper-cone bass drivers • Sensitivity/impedance: 93dB/3 ohms (min)

**CONTACT** ☎ 01753 652669 # www.triangle-fr.com

**F**rench speaker specialist Triangle made a rather impressive splash in UK waters last year when it launched the Magellan as its new flagship. While some of the firm's products have fared notably well in HFC group tests in the past few years, this new high-end model was something else entirely, and for many listeners this was the first time the brand had appeared on the critical radar. But...

Each Magellan speaker consists of three separate enclosures. These stand on each other's shoulders to form a complete assembly that's an intimidating 2.18 metres tall. This mechanical complication is one reason why it costs a cool £20,000 per pair – not exactly cheap, then...

The new Magellan Concerto is a more practical follow-up to the original full-monty design. It still carries the Magellan name, emphasising that it's part of the same family,

resonance control package. Most of the internal surfaces are not parallel; this is good because curved panels are stiffer than flat ones. Further mechanical control is exercised by internal MDF shelf braces.

External construction, too, is extremely impressive. The Concerto stands nearly 1.5 metres tall, but its slender lines and rounded side panels mean it doesn't impose in quite the way you might expect. The only listed finish is burr walnut, but it looks fabulous, and common loudspeaker weak points – like the construction of the bi-wire terminal block, for example – are custom made to the very highest standards.

Likewise, the base is a complex design, with a rubber isolated overhanging plinth for stability and a three part footing arrangement. A single spike takes most of the downward pressure, with the option of a metallic cup placed just below the spike to protect the floor surface. The hardware used to support the column is adjustable, robust and beautifully made from brass. High-grade passive components and Triangle-branded Silver Ghost silver/oxygen-free copper cabling is employed internally.

What really sets the Concerto apart from its competition is the drive unit complement, which is entirely home grown. This is a three-way system, with a forward facing tweeter, a 160mm

achieved by mirroring the front-facing midrange unit and tweeter array on the rear. This broadens the dispersion of the speaker and also appears to make it less sensitive to room placement (see Set-Up panel overleaf).

Crossover points are at 350Hz and 3.5kHz, with fourth order (24dB/octave) slopes, partly to help shrink down the overlap regions, and to minimise phase distortion. The tweeter is also time-aligned with respect to the midrange driver. The system has a nominal eight-ohm impedance with a three-ohm minimum, but the two figures may be contradictory – if the latter is true, the nominal impedance should be less than six ohms. The most striking figure from the specification sheet, however, is the 93dB system sensitivity figure, which combined with the 300 watts power handling suggests that amplifier power output is almost immaterial. And this is how it works out in practice. ▶

**“The Magellan Concerto stands nearly 1.5 metres tall, but its slender lines and rounded side panels ensure it doesn't impose.”**

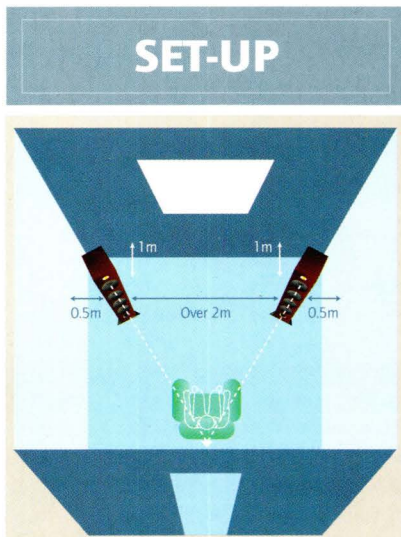
but it's built into a more compact single box (albeit still a very tall one). The price is just short of £10,000 a pair – high end, but a lot more bank account friendly than the senior model. The Concerto was given its first public airing at September's Heathrow hi-fi show, where its ability to live with the vagaries of hotel bedroom acoustics and still make good put it in select company – of about three by our reckoning!

The commonality of design shared by both the junior and senior Magellans is obvious from the outset. The driver complement, though involving fewer bass units, is otherwise similar – both use Triangle's instantly recognisable horn-loaded tweeter with its deep, pointed phase plug. The Concerto model also has an enclosure with a Magellan-like cross-section and profile, featuring deeply curved side panels. These are intended to help dispersion and also act as part of the

midrange driver and three 160mm bass drivers working in parallel to make up for their relatively small cone areas. As already noted, the tweeter is the most striking of the three designs – a horn-loaded compression unit equipped with a 25mm titanium dome and an elaborate horn and phase plug arrangement, the exact profile of which is said to have been the subject of a great deal of design effort. The motor system is massive and powerful, and the tweeter is loaded by a large back chamber to avoid compression effects. It's a high-power design and also a sensitive one – even without the horn, it's rated at 91dB sensitivity and rises to 98dB in its fully configured state. The mid and bass drivers are a little less elaborate – equipped with treated paper cones, they're designed to maximise power handling and improve impulse response.

One other unusual feature of the Concerto is its symmetrical bipolar diffusion pattern,





### POSITIONING

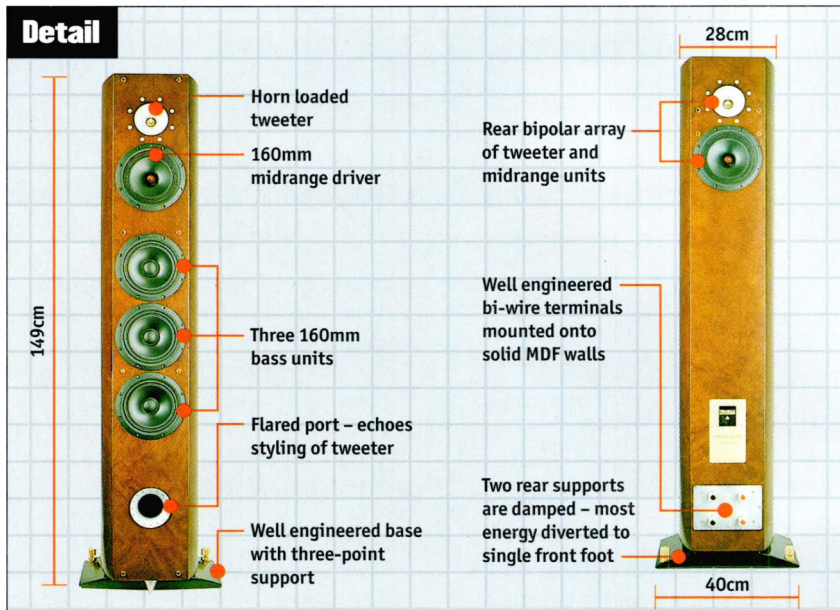
Making the Concerto work in a real-life listening room is similar to working with more conventional direct-radiating speakers, but there are differences. The speaker's bipolar radiation pattern extends over much of the audio band (the bass is largely omnidirectional anyway, and has little need of the mirror arrangement used for the mid and treble). This has the effect of broadening the area over which the speaker delivers good quality stereo and a consistent tonal balance.

According to Triangle's own methodology, there are specific rules to follow. First, the speakers should be at least two metres apart. Then, the listener should also be sitting at least two metres from the speakers, and the speakers should be at least 40cm from the walls (it doesn't specify which wall, but Triangle's diagrams imply 40cm from both rear and side walls). As to toe-in, there are two diagrams in the manual showing different extremes – from firing straight down the room to having the 'beam' of the tweeter cross just in front of the listener's nose. Triangle also warns users against installing the speakers in a reverberant room.

In our test listening room, most of the slightly Franglais manual made sense, but if you have the room for it, give the speakers more distance from the rear and side walls than the 40cm recommended by Triangle. Because of the rear-radiating drive units, it's also important to ensure that the distances between the rear and side walls are significantly different (one metre and 50cm respectively worked well in our room). Toeing the speakers in so that the tweeter axes crossed just behind the listening plane also proved effective (see diagram above).

### SYSTEM MATCHING

A principle quality of the Magellan Concerto is transparency, and it requires an amplifier which is itself transparent enough to sustain the exposure the speaker provides. But power is another issue entirely – although the Concerto spent much of its time with Krell's addictively excellent KAV-400xi integrated amp, whose rated output is 200 watts per channel, it was perfectly happy being driven by some quite modest integrated and home cinema amplifiers. Except in the largest rooms, the decision to be made is which amplifier sounds best, not which ones have enough grunt to stoke it into life.



## “Chamber music sounded wonderfully bold and vivid, with stereo imagery that was often practically holographic.”



### ☐ SOUND QUALITY

One popular idea surrounding loudspeaker behaviour is that as they become more expensive and hopefully approach perfection (whatever that is), their performance tends to converge. By this reckoning, ultimately, all true high-end speakers would sound much the same.

If so, someone forgot to tell Triangle. The Magellan Concerto is different – but then different is the norm for this speaker brand, whose other models from the Magellan down are nothing if not idiosyncratic. The Concerto's balance could not be described as completely neutral, and by definition this should be a bad thing. Yet this is a speaker that auditions to the highest standard.

A short diversion. The author has recently reviewed a loudspeaker with a tweeter that has a reputation for outstanding performance, and whose frequency balance is, by common consent, extremely accurate. Ruler straight in fact. To these ears, however, this particular

speaker has a compressed, grainy textured treble which very quickly becomes tiring. Yet the treble of the Magellan Concerto is clearly not neutral. It is classically bright, but not edgy. Contrast this with the previously unnamed speaker, where the treble sticks out even though it is not bright, because of an inherent underlying character that is simply inconsistent with the rest of the speaker.

This is where the Concerto scores, as the treble blends in seamlessly even though it is not strictly accurate. As far as can be judged by ear, the tweeter has a significantly rising response up to the highest audible frequencies, but paradoxically it is the treble that is the making of the Concerto. It's worth noting that its balance is slightly masked, as it is positioned significantly above a seated listening axis. But, even on axis, there's nothing aggressive or spiky about it. So just what is going on?

The best way to interpret the behaviour of the Triangle tweeter is that its character is in keeping with the rest of the audio band. It is distinguished by the same kind of transient response, and more important still, it responds dynamically in the same way as the midband. This is quite unusual. As the frequencies go higher, there is normally a difference in the way that musical dynamics are expressed, which has a defining influence on the voicing of the speaker. This is not often discussed when loudspeakers are measured, perhaps because any measured parameter that it corresponds to is too subtle to correlate with what is heard. But the effect is unmistakable. The Magellan Concerto has a vitality and consistency across the frequency band that is

quite unusual, and distinct from the characteristic quality of many other speakers with a similar tonal balance.

If the Concerto has a limitation, it's in the bass. Again, it's entirely in character with the rest of the band – unmistakably 'quick', with musical timing that's right on the ball and a responsive sense of pitch (some speakers with an extended bass may have a leaden quality with poorly defined pitch). What it doesn't really do is to convey power to quite the extent that you might expect from a speaker of this size. It's certainly full-range in normal terms, but in a run through of the shattering finale from Mahler's *Eighth (Symphony of a Thousand)* in the under-valued Sinopoli version on DGG, the organ that underpins the final section lacked the power and the almost visceral trembling on the air that might have been present.

Ironically for such a large loudspeaker, this is a design that could even benefit from an external subwoofer. A year ago, I recall that one was under development for the Magellan, which would presumably be wholly appropriate for this model too. Triangle tells us that it will finally be available in March 2005, under the name Magellan Grande Concert.

The slight sense of lightness at low frequencies is something that is not often an issue, and even then only under extreme musical duress. In every other respect, the same Mahler recording sounded magnificent, and could be played at very high levels with no audible compression. Chamber music also sounded bold and vivid, with stereo imagery that was often practically holographic, and which incidentally held up from well off-axis too. Well-recorded material in other genres, from Suzannah McCorkle and Sabina Sciubba (there does seem to be a special affinity with female voice) to Mark Knopfler and Roger Walters provided equally great musical experiences.

In fact, there were many impressive and above all *expressive* moments during the Magellan Concerto's sojourn in our listening room. We shall miss its speed, clarity and energy greatly – few speakers are blessed with such vitality. **HFC**

*Alvin Gold*




<b>VERDICT</b>	
<b>SOUND &gt;&gt; 94%</b> [Progress bar]	<p><b>PRO</b> Airy, agile and tuneful, with strong presence, clean and expressive transparency and bold, colourful tonality.</p> <p><b>CON</b> Excellent quality bass but ultimately slightly lacking in depth. Treble can present as bright, though this never sounds uncouth.</p>
<b>EASE OF DRIVE &gt;&gt; 87%</b> [Progress bar]	
<b>BUILD &gt;&gt; 92%</b> [Progress bar]	
<b>VALUE &gt;&gt; 87%</b> [Progress bar]	
<p><b>CONCLUSION</b> A superb high-end speaker that needs room, but which can be driven by any good amplifier, almost irrespective of power output, and which conspires to make the best of a vast range of music genres. All-in-all, a thoroughly engaging listen.</p>	
<p><b>HI-FI CHOICE OVERALL SCORE &gt;&gt; 91%</b></p>	



EDITOR'S CHOICE

HI-FI CHOICE  
magazine



 LINDEMANN.

# Sweet soul music

*This heavyweight CD/SACD player-plus-preamp sounds sweet, full-bodied and captivatingly musical*

**PRODUCT** Lindemann 820

**TYPE** CD/SACD player (stereo-only)

**PRICE** £6,999

**KEY FEATURES** Size (WxHxD): 44x13x34cm

• Weight: 13.2kg • Full preamp functionality • Digital inputs: 3x coaxial, 1x AES/EBU • Digital outs: coaxial, AES/EBU • Analogue outs: single-ended RCA, balanced XLR • External power supply for analogue electronics

**CONTACT** ☎ 01895 833099

🌐 www.lindemann-audiotechnik.de

Lindemann is a small German electronics specialist, founded a dozen years ago by Norbert Lindemann. The company started out making an integrated amplifier and CD player and has since branched out into loudspeakers, which have something of Audio Physic's style in their slim baffles with side-mounted bass drivers.

Three years ago, Norbert built the first German CD/SACD player, the D680, which was well received by the press over there and

saw limited distribution in the UK. In April this year, Lindemann launched this successor to that noble line at the Munich high end show. The 820 is a stereo-only player that imitates Wadia's top-of-the-line CD machines by including a preamplifier section with four digital inputs and the ability to accept sample rates up to 192kHz. The player lacks the requisite FireWire/i.Link socketry to input this maximum sampling rate (the maximum offered by DVD-A) but even if it did there would undoubtedly be protocol issues with the few players that offer such an output.

Unlike the Wadia 861, however, the preamp functions are a standard feature of the 820 and not something you have to pay extra for – if you have other digital sources and a separate power amp, it represents a realistic alternative to a separate preamplifier. If you haven't got a separate power amp, however, Lindemann has a matching unit called the 850 offering 140 watts per channel.

Unlike some DAC/preamps, the 820's on-board facility features controls for balance, mute and phase as well as offering the ability to put names to each of the three coaxial and single XLR inputs. Audio output is via either single-ended RCA phonos or balanced XLRs, the latter offering the option of a 'direct' connection that bypasses the volume control. This control differs from that found on Wadias by being an analogue device, rather than a bit reduction system. Other unusual features include four levels of display dimming, half-decibel volume steps with a numerical display (-95.5dB to 0dB) and defeatable digital outputs.

Inside the very high quality, Mark Levinson-esque casework lies a Sony OM2 SACD disc drive mounted on a low resonance suspension system. You have to remove a chunky transit bolt before the machine will run – not something you find on many players these days. The digital-to-analogue converter sits on a four-layer PCB which offers very short



**“The Lindemann produces an atmospheric, weighty and dynamic performance that is strong on resolution of reverb.”**

signal paths and uses “inductive isolation techniques to separate noisy digital sections from the converter and output stages” (see the Q&A panel overleaf for more on this). Lindemann uses low-loss foil and Black Gate capacitors and makes its contacts using high-silver-content solder.

The balanced operation of the player extends to the volume control and the differential op amps, in order to minimise noise in the system. The converter is a Burr-Brown PCM1792/SRC4192 from which the user can select oversampling rates up to 176.4kHz (4x44.1kHz).

In use, the 820 proves to be a smooth operator – the drawer mechanism has a reassuring purr of luxury, closing with the least possible sound and shutting itself if you leave it open for a few minutes. If the player is sited below hip level, there is a slight inconvenience in having control buttons underneath the drawer. But there's always the remote, and the gap between drawer and buttons is pretty big.

On the rear panel, there are a couple of unusual connections alongside the phonos and XLRs – a pair of computer style sockets marked ‘syscom’ (a bus system for linking a Lindemann system) and an SCSI socket for an external power supply. This is a power supply for the analogue section of the player – essentially the output stage – and it has its own beautifully finished case, so you'll have to find a little bit

more shelf space somewhere to squeeze it in. But if you can afford a player like this in the first place, that shouldn't be too big a problem!

#### SOUND QUALITY

Having let the 820 warm up and settle in for a few days, the first foray was using it in standard player mode with the single-ended outputs connected to a Border Patrol Control Unit and S20 SE valve pre/power amplifier, plus Living Voice Avatar OBX-R speakers. In this capable company the Lindemann produced an atmospheric, weighty and dynamic performance that is strong on resolution of reverb, effects and space – qualities it found on Beck's *Sea Change* SACD in entirely effortless fashion. The latest Bugge Wesseltoft album *Film'ing* sounded appealingly muscular and full-bodied on CD and Janos Starker playing Bach's *Cello Suites* (Mercury Living Presence SACD) revealed the rich tone of the instrument, along with the musician's breathing and the space in the studio – however, it's the music that's truly captivating. Pity you can't play the three-channel stereo cut on this dedicated stereo machine.

Changing the rest of the system over to a Bryston BP25 preamp and the awesome ATC SCM150A SL active speakers made a revealing platform with which to compare the Lindemann to some alternative players. On the CD front, Resolution Audio's excellent Opus 21

(a £2,850 dedicated CD player) initially seemed to have the upper hand with its impressive dynamics, depth of bass and all round energy. However, we noted that the Opus 21 has a higher output than the 820 and once level-matched the result was less clear cut, the German machine offering more body and a smoother, possibly finer version of events. For a while it seemed as if the 820 might be adding a warm atmospheric ‘blanket’ to everything it played – bass certainly seems a little lacking in pace and voices are possibly too rich, albeit with tremendous presence. It wasn't until the outboard preamp was removed from the chain and the player's own preamp plugged directly into the ATC speakers that its real strengths shone through. Gone was the sense that the machine might be ‘elaborating’ with a euphonic smoothing and in comes a full-bodied, rich and vibrant quality that is undeniably musical.

Level-matching the Resolution Audio and Lindemann without a preamp made the former sound a little lean; it times better in the bass and has a spring in its timing step that the 820 perhaps misses, but the more expensive player makes up for this with tremendous presence to instruments and voices.

Comparisons playing SACD with a Townshend TA 565 universal player had to be made via the Bryston preamp, the TA 565 not having ▣

**Q & A**

Norbert Lindemann, the firm's chief engineer and founder, talks about the innovations within the 820



**HFC:** What are "inductive isolation techniques"?

**NL:** The 820 uses this new technique to achieve total isolation between digital signal processing and D/A conversion. It is two components in one enclosure – a CD-drive and a D/A converter. Using an external power supply for the converter means both functions are completely separate. The main advantage is the absence of any ground current between digital signal processing and D/A conversion. These high frequency but also low frequency (drive servo) currents are a big problem in any CD player, because it is very difficult to get a 'clean' ground. You can look at the 'i-coupler' as an inductive transmitter for very high speed signals. It is much better than any external connection like AES or S/PDIF with respect to jitter behaviour and signal accuracy.

The spec mentions HiDRA resampling, can you explain what this is?

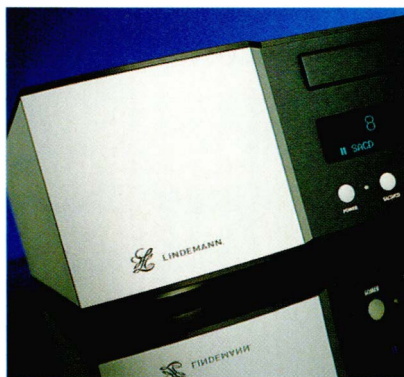
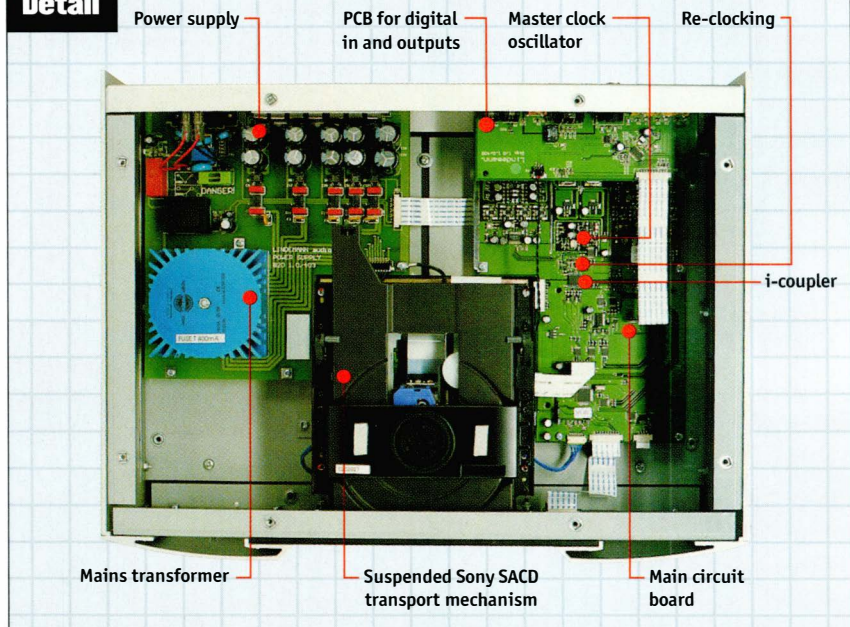
HiDRA is a technique for creating a very high accuracy data signal at the input of the D/A converter by using the resampling feature of a sample rate converter and relocking with very high speed, very low noise D-flops. This is subsequently all driven by one high quality master clock. We use the asynchronous data resampling from the SRC and combine it with a strictly synchronous relocking to present data with very low jitter to the D/A converters.

Why produce a stereo-only SACD player?

We do not think that multichannel SACD is necessary to the enjoyment of music. Most recordings are based on two or three-channel equipment only and multichannel is nothing more than an effect. Don't forget that SACD multichannel is not compatible with standard home cinema equipment. You should have a system with five identical channels using full range speakers. If you do not have all this, I think stereo is more satisfying.

Another problem is that most multichannel player makers use the same budget or less for six channels that we use for two channels. The result is poor signal quality deriving from cheap converter chips and simple analog output stages. We intended to create the maximum possible quality today for two channels without any compromise.

**Detail**



its own volume control. In this company the 820 once again seems a little lacking in low-frequency definition, the Townshend bringing a grip and depth to the bass that pepped up a track like *Any Colour You Like* from *Dark Side Of The Moon*. But the Lindemann does a fine job in the mid and treble, revealing more emotional depth in Eleanor McEvoy's voice than the relatively sparse Townshend. At over twice the price, this is a case of 'should hope so too' – but it's not always so, the TA 565 having seen off some pretty expensive competition in the past.

Using the Lindemann's digital input with output from the Townshend produced a surprisingly distinctive and possibly better sound than that made by the Lindemann alone. This was a more muscular, better timed and tighter rendition that contained a lot of the cheaper player's strengths but also enjoyed the finesse of the 820.

Ultimately these two players offer different versions of events, both of which are highly persuasive and extremely entertaining. If you want a rich, full-bodied sound the Lindemann offers a very engrossing result. It clearly suits the warts-and-all presentation of the ATC speakers because its sound is so clean, open

and relaxed. That's the word, relaxed, yet resolute with it. And very happy to be used sans preamp with top-notch power amp and speaker combinations to boot. **HFC**

Jason Kennedy



**VERDICT**

**SOUND >> 93%**



**FEATURES >> 92%**



**BUILD >> 96%**



**VALUE >> 82%**



**PRO**  
Rich, smooth and detailed sound that produces solid imagery and uncanny presence plus build quality of the highest order and a practical preamp.

**CON**  
Those looking for a snappy rhythmic sound may be less impressed by the fullness of the bass. Stereo-only SACD – no multichannel.

**CONCLUSION**

A CD and stereo-only SACD player with luxury build and a sumptuous sound. The onboard analogue volume control is of the highest quality and the multiple digital inputs are very useful if you don't need vinyl or FM radio.

**HI-FI CHOICE OVERALL SCORE >> 90%**

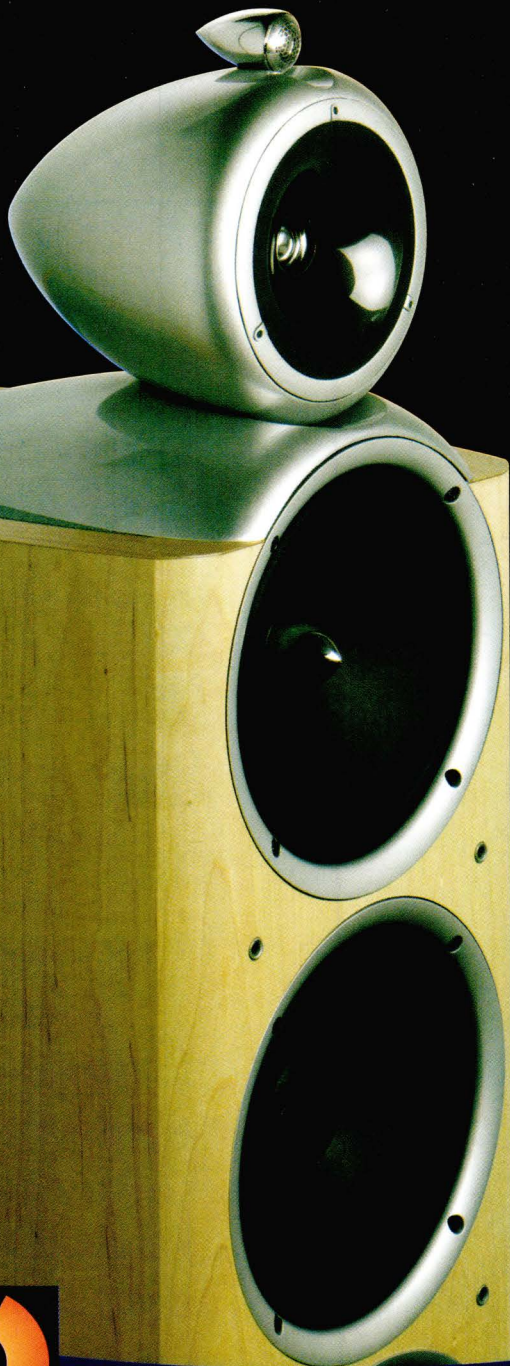


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KEF REFERENCE SERIES



# Join the jet set

This compact Elac is the least expensive route to the brand's JET ribbon tweeter, but is it supersonic?

**PRODUCT** Elac BS 203.2

**TYPE** Standmount loudspeaker

**PRICE** £599 per pair

**KEY FEATURES** Size (WxHxD): 17x29x22cm

● Weight: 5kg ● JET III ribbon tweeter ● 150mm bass/mid driver with paper and aluminium cone

● Sensitivity/impedance: 85dB/4 ohms (nom)

**CONTACT** ☎ 01494 551551 🌐 www.elac.com

This neat little speaker has a sweet and sparkling trick up its sleeve. Instead of a conventional dome, it proudly sports Elac's third-generation JET tweeter – a folded ribbon design that claims a phenomenal 50kHz high frequency extension. It uses neodymium magnets to move the ribbon in concertina fashion and is said to be able to produce frequencies higher than the resonance of the material itself without distortion – hence the 50kHz extension figure.

Such technological innovations are a regular fixture of Elac's history. The German brand dates back to 1926, its name being a diminution of 'electroacoustics'. However, the company's initial aim was not to make domestic audio equipment, but to investigate into the field of underwater acoustics – investigations that ultimately gave us sonar.

After the second world war, the company turned its attention to audio and by 1948, production had started on what was to become a run of five million turntables. In the mid-fifties, Elac patented a design for an "electromagnetic pick-up for two-channel record modulation". This formed the basis of the moving magnet cartridge, still in use today.

Elac turned its attention to developing loudspeakers, after acquiring the Axiom speaker brand in 1984. It developed the 4Pi tweeter, a revolutionary omnidirectional drive unit that used ribbon technology to disperse sound in 360 degrees, winning the company accolades all over the world. Then in 1993, Elac took over the ARES loudspeaker company and 'perfected' the Heil Air Motion Transformer high frequency drive unit, which ultimately gave rise to the BS 203.2's JET III tweeter.

The speaker's bass/mid driver consists of a 150mm chassis with a sandwich diaphragm made of a paper cone bonded to a 0.2mm, concave aluminium outer skin. In order to achieve the ambitious 45Hz claimed low frequency extension this unit has a long 30mm throw. Both these drive units are made by Elac and you will be hard pressed to find a tweeter remotely similar to the JET III anywhere near this price point.



As far as driveability goes, this is a stiffer than average load, hence the recommendation for amplifier power up to 150 watts. It combines an 85dB sensitivity with four-ohm nominal/3.2-ohm minimum impedance – you don't get low bass out of small boxes without paying the price somewhere down the line and this is the tried and tested route travelled here.

The speaker's enclosure is smartly built and the rear baffle features high-quality bi-wire terminals with insulated bridges for single wiring. These bridges are slimmer than some designs and therefore possibly less ugly sounding, but wherever possible we recommend you bridge between the terminals with your speaker cable rather than gold plated strips, as these do the signal few favours whatsoever. The terminals connect to separate crossovers for woofer and tweeter with a crossover point at 2.4kHz. The speaker comes supplied with foam bungs which can be used to tune the bass for near-wall placement.

## SOUND QUALITY

Supported by IF speaker stands and bi-wired using Townshend Isolda DCT cables, a pair of these compact Elacs put in a lively and revealing performance with pretty well everything we threw at them. The JET driver makes for an open, engaging presentation – it's clearly very capable and makes metallic sounds such as cymbals sound unusually real.

We kicked off the listening with Abdullah 'Dollar Brand' Ibrahim's *Africa, Tears And Laughter* album of acoustic jazz, and the way the speaker compressed the low notes clearly betrayed the fact that the bass was being produced by a medium-sized driver in a compact box. There was decent depth and weight for a speaker of this size but it didn't have the freedom that you get with bigger boxes or drivers – you can't get something for nothing where physics are involved. That said, you do get fine definition of low notes, and the double bass on this album provided a solid rhythmic foundation behind the lead piano.

Timing is a distinct strength, whatever the material, and percussive beats are rendered with a genuine sense of tension. You urge the music along because you can feel the build up and can't wait for the climax, which is as much to do with dynamic range of the speaker as a whole as the nimbleness of the drivers. Level is very precisely delivered which on occasion can encourage wick tweaking.

This speaker is highly revealing of well-recorded music, and it knows a good slab of vinyl when it encounters it too. The timbre of instruments on Tom Waits' *Swordfishtrombones* album rang out rich and true, and despite the Elac's size it has little difficulty in producing a full-scale image when the material has it to offer – the kettle drum was delivered with something akin to slam in the midst of the





**“Timing is a distinct strength, whatever the material, and percussive beats are rendered with a genuine sense of tension.”**

dirge-like *Underground*. The next track *Shore Leave* was likewise superb, pure pulp fiction in music with great sounding acoustic instruments and a theatrical Waits laying it on just as thick as it needs to be.

An older LP, John Fahey's *Requiem*, revealed the relatively noisy state of its surface but more importantly it clearly delivered the character of the instrument and quality of the playing. There was plenty of energy from the speaker and a strong insight into the artistry of the man.

Richard Thompson's *Old Kit Bag* is a spectacular piece of recording work with, luckily, some great musicianship too, and it sounded as crisp and brilliant as ever through this slick little speaker. The midrange was expansive and clear, allowing full appreciation of the many facets of high-quality tunes like *First Breath*.

At the time of testing, the closest competitor we had to hand for direct comparison with the Elac was the Cyrus CLS50 – a little bigger and

25 per cent less expensive, but it put the Elac's qualities into perspective. The latter sounded dynamic, lively and timbrally more revealing, reinforcing the fact that the Cyrus is a relatively laid back speaker. Out of interest, we also tried a single speaker comparison – an approach that brands such as Revel and Infinity find to be more revealing. The difference was indeed amplified, with the Elac producing a less box-bound sound and a generally more forward balance.

Back in stereo operation, we gave the massive treble extension a spin with some SACD courtesy of Arvo Pärt's *De Profundis*, which didn't really work as well as it can, probably due to the very strong bass content from a church organ and massive drum. McCoy Tyner's *Land Of Giants* on the other hand proved very much up the Elac's alley, the presence of a strong rhythmic line playing very much to its strengths.

A highly competent and professionally built loudspeaker with a revealing mid and treble, the BS 203.2 possesses some very impressive

attributes for the money. If you're looking for a compact design and appreciate a lively, light-footed sound with a crisp, extended treble, you really should give it a spin. **HFC**

Jason Kennedy

## VERDICT

**SOUND >> 83%**



**EASE OF DRIVE >> 58%**



**BUILD >> 90%**



**VALUE >> 87%**



### PRO

A crisp and lively sounding speaker with many impressive qualities including great build, timing and dynamic range.

### CON

Bass can sound compressed on occasion and struggles with heavy material.

### CONCLUSION

This well-engineered speaker is ambitious for a compact design. It fares better at higher than lower frequencies and is less suited to bass-heavy material, but with lighter music styles and vocals it offers lively communication and terrific insight.

**HI-FI CHOICE** >> **85%**  
OVERALL SCORE



# Do-it-all Denon

*Denon rewrote the rules for universal players with the DVD-3910. Will its cheaper brother follow suit?*

**PRODUCT** Denon DVD-2910

**TYPE** Universal disc player

**PRICE** £600

**KEY FEATURES** Size (WxHxD): 43x10x32cm

Weight: 5.5kg • Plays DVD-A, DVD-V, SACD, CD and more • HDCD decoding • HDMI v1.1 digital audio/video output • Progressive scan picture • Pure Direct mode • dual-layer chassis

**CONTACT** ☎ 01234 741200 🌐 www.denon.co.uk

**D**enon is keen to push the 'universal' disc player concept upmarket. At the moment there are just two universals in the Denon range – the stunning £900 DVD-3910 and its new little brother, tested here. If other models follow, they will be positioned further upmarket – none will be cheaper than the £600 DVD-2910.

On the face of it, the two are remarkably similar, as befits products from the same stable. The DVD-2910 is thinner and lighter, of course, but from a specification standing, that's about it. Both players support DVD-Audio and SACD, alongside CD, DVD-Video and the rest, and both include an HDMI (version 1.1) multichannel audio/video

digital output. Both also feature dual 12-bit/216MHz video DACs.

Drill deeper into the specification sheet and there are some differences, but the similarities are more immediately striking. There are even unusually comprehensive bass management options on both players – a rarity at this price point. And like the DVD-3910, the less costly model processes DVD-Audio and SACD as separate entities, instead of trying to shoe-horn SACD signals through the DVD processing, thus spoiling the SACD sound from the outset. To a large extent, the DVD-2910 appears to be a '3910 with some of the twiddly bits left off.

The Devil's in the details, they say. You really have to look closely at the two players to see where the compromises are made. But the compromises are crucial. The processing chips for SACD and the 24-bit/192kHz DACs are different (PCM-1791s in place of 1796s), and Denon's AL24 digital audio processing is missing. Then there's the lack of Denon Link or i.Link connections for hi-res digital audio link-ups to similarly-equipped amplifiers. Although the HDMI connection looks set to

replace practically every audio and video link in home cinema, that technology is still in its infancy and not enough home cinema amplifiers and receivers support it as yet.

Shaving a lot off the weight of the DVD player means the anti-vibration system deployed within the DVD-3910 is slightly foreshortened. Both the transport mechanism and the chassis are less powerfully designed in the DVD-2910. The transport is still centre mounted and solid, but has nothing on the extremely solid enclosed mech from the bigger player. Likewise, the '2910's chassis is a dual bottom affair, double-skinned to help reduce resonance effects; impressive, but not when compared to the modular chassis of the '3910. Even the remote control is slightly scaled down compared to the one supplied with the bigger player.

Most of the immediate differences between the two players are based in the video section. The bigger player has possibly the most extensive video processing and modification on the planet – no other DVD player is so infinitely adjustable. And that includes the DVD-2910. The lower-priced player still has good picture modification options, but no

more than most players in this class. This could possibly be a good thing, however – more picture processing often equates to poorer sound quality. Both players include a Pure Direct option that switches off the video and display circuits when you're playing audio-only discs.

The simpler video adjustment does make for easier installation compared to the more complex DVD-3910, and the on-screen menu system and overall ergonomics make day-to-day use straightforward. In absolute terms, doing without the gamma correction on the video processing circuit has little direct bearing on the player's everyday functionality.

**SOUND QUALITY**

We'll kick things off with some multichannel music – first up DVD-Audio, which sounds full and entertaining on the DVD-2910. There's no direct digital connection for DVD-A or SACD, of course, yet it scarcely matters when the analogue outputs sound this good – a testimony to the quality of the audio DACs. Perhaps it's not as strikingly detailed as the best DVD-Audio players, but it covers its tracks brilliantly by injecting a bit of euphonic romance into the sound. This works with the likes of *Hotel California* by The Eagles – where the softer edges actually benefit the ethereal quality of the album – but the sharper, more modern sound of Missy Elliot or Linkin' Park seems a little soggy by comparison.

This warm sound also extends to SACD replay – it's smooth and upbeat rather than bright. However, while the DVD-3910 combines a similar warmth with strong detail, its little brother seems to gloss over that last scintilla of information. It's less apparent with *Dark Side of the Moon*, which was replayed on test with good dynamic range and fine image placement around the room. However, the more frail voice of Dylan in emotional meltdown on *Blood on the Tracks* lost some of the anguish in the process. But in fairness,

**FORMAT COMPATIBILITY**

DVD-AUDIO	✓	DVD+R	✓
DVD-VIDEO	✓	DVD-RAM	✗
SACD	✓	MP3 AUDIO	✓
CD	✓	WMA AUDIO	✓
HDCD	✓	AAC AUDIO	✗
CD-R/ RW	✓	VIDEO CD	✓
DVD-R/ RW	✓	JPEG PICTURES	✓



**“It’s not as detailed as the best DVD-A players, but it covers its tracks brilliantly by injecting a bit of euphonic romance into the sound.”**

SACD sounds generally impressive, unless you compare the player to something more exotic.

With CD, the DVD-2910 tries to reproduce the solidity and directness of the format at its best, but just falls short. Compared to a good dedicated CD player in the £500 to £1,000 region it sounds rather flat at undynamic – it manages to stay just the right side of musical, but it's no king of rhythm. Let's be fair to the player, though – alongside the vast majority of DVD-compatible players press-ganged into stereo CD use, the '2910 has a good sense of pace and always sounds attractive and open.

Sonically-speaking, CD replay is perhaps most noticeably. The DVD-3910 manages to reproduce a three-dimensional soundstage that extends well beyond the boundaries of the front speakers. In contrast, the '2910 leaves the soundstage flatter and locked to the speakers, and less engaging as a result.

**VIDEO PERFORMANCE**

DVD-Video replay is extremely good. The DVD-2910 cannot be so readily fine-tuned to the monitor as its bigger brother, but the player still turns in a crisp and cinematic performance. In particular, the great image depth with loads of picture detail, almost no grain and a tendency toward naturalistic, but

well-saturated colours make this one of the most watchable players at the price. Black levels are similarly well portrayed, giving a depth to the picture on all screens. DVD-Video soundtracks are also very competently delivered, with crisp, focused sounds delivered to each speaker precisely and excellent vocal articulation. Bass management can deliver an intelligent cinema sound with a degree of subtlety – or alternatively, deep bass madness!

The Denon DVD-2910 delivers what would have been a staggeringly good performance on all discs only a year ago. These days, although to an extent it's in the shadow of its bigger brother, it remains a very strong all-rounder at the price. Buy this and a good CD player and you have a tough combination to beat. **HFC**

*Alan Sircom*



**VERDICT**

**SOUND >> 78%**  
 Delivers much of the DVD-3910's audio and video performance for just two-thirds of the cost. Good all-round music and movie performance at the price.

**VISION >> 90%**  
 It must be hard not to throw the baby out with the bathwater. Denon mostly succeeds, but CD and SACD sound suffer in the price cuts.

**FEATURES >> 93%**

**VALUE >> 89%**

**CONCLUSION**  
 Demonstrating how rapidly the multifORMAT playback scene moves on, this player would have been the world's best a year or two ago. A strong player at a good price, the DVD-2910 is the best of its peers, but still overshadowed by its £900 sibling.

**HI-FI CHOICE OVERALL SCORE >> 86%**





# Change your Naim

*Naim has substantially reworked its entry-level pre/power. Is this the Naim of a new generation?*

**PRODUCT** Naim NAC 112x and NAP 150x

**TYPE** Stereo preamplifier and power amplifier

**PRICE** (NAC 112x) £680, (NAP 150x) £795

**KEY FEATURES** (NAC 112x) Size (WxHxD): 43x5 8x30cm • Six line-level inputs, two tape loops • Two switchable DIN/phono inputs • Power supply upgradable with FlatCap 2 • (NAP 150x) Size (WxHxD): 43x7x30cm • Rated power: 50W/channel (8 ohms)

**CONTACT** ☎ 01722 332266  
🌐 [www.naim-audio.com](http://www.naim-audio.com)

**B**ack in the old days, Naim Audio's entry-level pre/power amplifier was often overshadowed by the Nait integrated. In part, this was because the Naim pre/power product essentially was the Nait integrated, split across two boxes. Although the separation of the preamp and power stages in different boxes improved the performance over the basic integrated chassis, the difference between this duo and 'real' Naim pre/powers was pretty sizeable and most people either

went for the little integrated or selected more up-market products from the catalogue.

Those days are gone. Great though it is, the current Nait 5i integrated amp is a very different animal to the new NAC 112x preamplifier and NAP 150x power amp. Instead of beefing up the basic integrated design, the two products take their cues from Naim's top-flight preamps and power amps, scaling back the performance slightly. This fits perfectly with Naim's new line of entry-level components – as well as the CD5i and Nait 5i starter products, the range includes the new CD5x CD player and Ariva loudspeakers. You could also add the existing NAT 05 tuner, Naim Fraim equipment support and FlatCap 2 power supply.

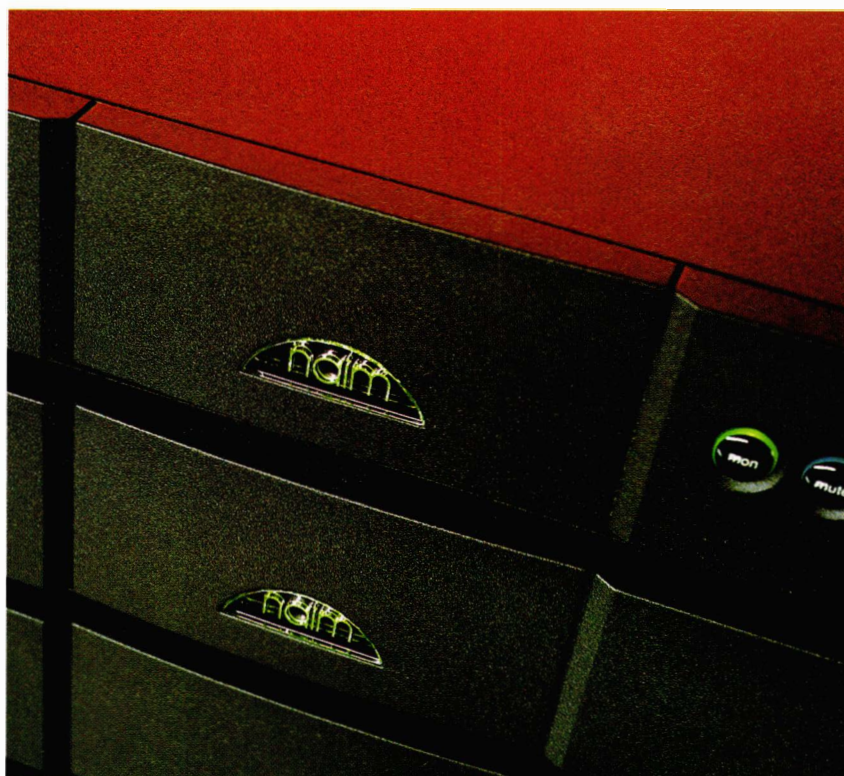
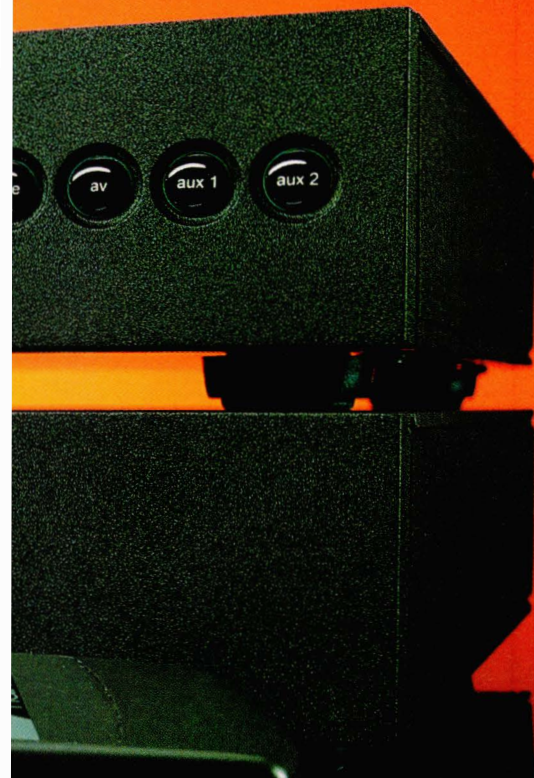
Let's start with the NAC 112x, a six-input line level preamplifier sporting new main and display boards (the latter featuring surface-mount components to help keep noise at bay). Naim has also made concessions for multiroom use – RC5 and (optional) RS232

connections are provided to integrate the preamp with custom installed solutions.

Despite costing just £680, the NAC 112x eschews a traditional volume potentiometer (or volume chip) in favour of a series of discrete resistor ladders. Not only does this mean a more precise and open sound, it also allows the user to preset the levels of each input source. Factor in time-aligned filter networks to keep stray high frequencies at bay, plus extensive star-earthing, and it's more like a NAC 552 in microcosm.

Like all Naim preamps, the NAC 112x has no built-in power supply. It needs to be fed, either from the power amp or (ideally) from a separate power supply, like the FlatCap 2. Also, Naim has included two sets of phono sockets for connection alongside the locking DIN plugs it rates so highly, allowing you to compare the two. Guess what? Naim were right all along – DIN sounds better after all!

If the NAC 112x is a scaled-down NAC 552, then the partnering 50-watt NAP 150x is a



**“If you’re the type that gets lost in music, stretching sessions into evening-long affairs, then you’ll want to hear amps like these.”**

tiny NAP 500, as it uses a variant of the power amp circuit featured in Naim’s flagship model. Compared to the previous NAP 150, there’s a new toroidal transformer for improved regulation, with separate windings for left and right channels plus the power feed for the preamplifier (the old model combined the windings for both audio channels). The preamp power feed has been improved too, thus raising the performance of the power amp’s natural partner in the process.

Like all Naim power amps, the NAP 150x is a negative feedback design with bipolar transistors in the output stage. To keep it ‘fast and musical’ it’s an open loop design, without parallel output devices, but the amp works in a ‘quasi-complementary’ manner. This means it retains Naim’s traditional speed but also improves the protection stage, meaning a wider range of loads can be utilised. Translating this from Modern Geek, the NAP 150x is unconditionally stable into any load and is happier being partnered with speaker cables that aren’t NAC A5, although it does make the more capacitive cables like Kimber 8TC sound ‘puffy’ and slow.

Of course, these amps work best on a Naim Frain rack, but their non-magnetic casework, decoupling feet and non-clamping circuit board mounts all help to eliminate stray vibration and electromagnetic energy from the room.

**SOUND QUALITY**

Naims need running in. All products do to an extent, but these amps – and the preamp in particular – make it a mandatory exercise. It’s a three-day process, minimum. Day one – soft, yet musical. Day two – musically as ugly as a sack of hammers. Day three – back to life. After this, the products come on song. The downside is that if you turn off the power for more than a couple of hours, you have to go through the whole process again. Of course, a FlatCap 2 means you can turn off the power amp (which warms up inside of an hour) and still keep the preamp powered, but ideally you should keep the whole system switched on and ready to role.

These amps may be less cable-fussy than traditional Naims, but they remain deeply pragmatic. Naim cables (or their familiars) still sound better than most others here, in part because they are so un-exotic. Even the mains cables supplied seem to sound better than a lot of the fancy, expensive designs. You might want to consider adding a separate mains spur or £1,500 worth of Fraims, though.

This may sound extreme for what is essentially £1,500 worth of amplification, but it’s the sort of amplification that drives you to make such changes, because the sound quality is so damn musical. This is very much in line with Naim’s current sound – brighter and less distinctive than traditional Naim electronics

(making it more in line with modern CD sound and modern hi-fi), but no less musical and with better stereo imagery than ever before.

What you get here almost seems to bypass all the usual hi-fi nicities – you don’t feel the need to discuss the dynamic range, the inner detail or the transient response with this combination. All of these are actually remarkably well-covered by the Naim duo, and are not rendered unimportant. It’s just that musical entertainment is so to the fore here, the things we normally cling to (in order to justify hi-fi sensibilities) cease to be so vital.

There seems to be a perceptual shift when referring to a Naim set-up. You move toward the existential; you cease to discuss your hi-fi in ‘hi-fi speak’ and start to talk in impassioned terms about the system as if it were a great meal or a good night out down the pub. It’s the fun aspect of music that is uppermost in the Naim sound – if you’re the kind of person who listens to small passages of discs to highlight individual aspects of the hi-fi system, Naim may not appeal, but if you’re the type that gets lost in music, stretching listening sessions into evening-long affairs with one disc after another, then chances are you’ll want to hear amps like these.

It seems almost trivial to reduce this to hi-fi terms, but the amplifiers are keenly dynamic and extraordinarily detailed, with a brisk ▶

**Q & A**

Roy George, Design Team Leader at Naim Audio, tells us what went into making the new Naim pre/power amp combination



**HFC:** What was the motivation to develop the NAC 112x/NAP 150x combo? Did the improvement to the Nait 5i signal the end of the original NAC 112/NAP 150?  
**RG:** It's true the Nait 5i has raised the bar for our entry-level products, but also the 202 preamp and 200 power amp are significantly better than their predecessors. We felt the 112 and 150 combination had to be improved to sit comfortably in our product range.

**How much of the design of these products has trickled down from the larger amplifiers?**

The new power amplifier topology originated for the NAP 500 is now used in all power amplifiers down to the 150x. Similarly, the core circuit elements of the 112x are the same as those used in the NAC 552. There are differences in complexity and some parts across the range, but the same good engineering practices related to power supplies, earthing, parts, microphonics and so on are applied throughout.

**The new amplifiers are more forgiving of non-Naim cables. Why?**

We still believe that power amplifiers perform best without an output inductor and so all of ours still don't have one. The ability of the new Naim amplifiers to drive a greater range of cables than the older ones results from the new circuit topology and careful fine tuning of values to give a much greater stable operating envelope.

**How do you make these amplifiers more universal, yet still retain musicality?**

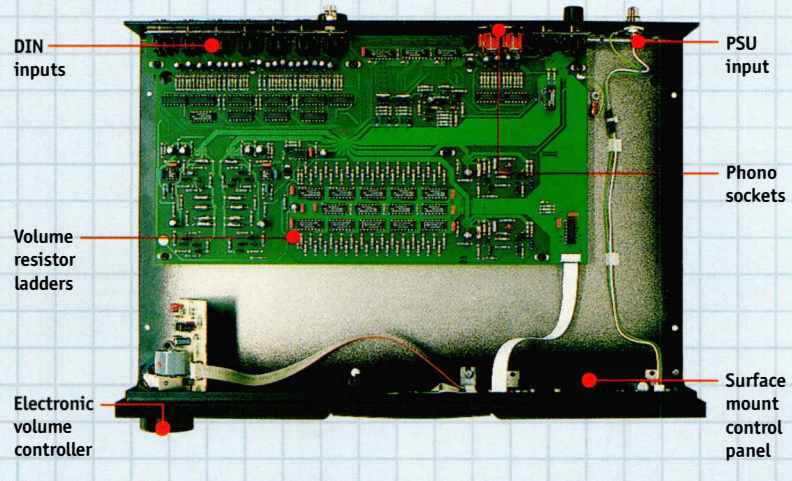
There is no magic. We have found that better audio engineering leads to more musicality. If other characteristics of our electronics, such as imaging, have also improved then that's great.

**How important is vibration control and isolation in an amplifier, especially given the Frain?**

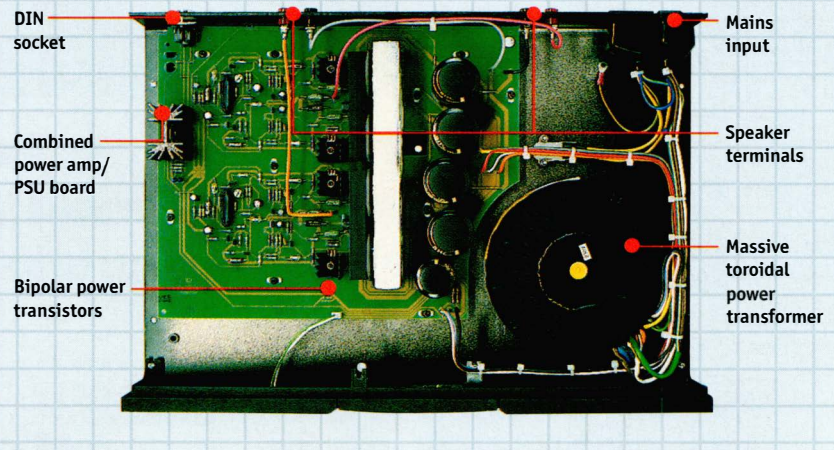
All mechanical interfaces in a hi-fi product can strongly influence sound quality and our understanding of these issues has a significant effect on the sound quality our products achieve. The Frain gives you another level of vibration control and our experience is that the effects are additive. For best results you need both.



**Detail – NAC 112x**



**Detail – NAP 150x**



■ brightness that really highlights the rock end of the spectrum. But even this is too reductive – partner the Naims with a pair of Harbeths and you have a classical music master-system, with enough grace to cope with the most genteel of string quartets playing softly, plus the drive to cope with balls-out Rachminov at full tilt.

And then there's the added bonus of the FlatCap 2 upgrade, a power supply feeding the 112x and freeing up the power drain from the 150x. This, too, takes a while to run in and then the sound becomes all the more musical, but also more transparent and faster in the process. But, none of this matters – the most direct way to understand the FlatCap 2 upgrade is the amount of music you'll end up listening to. You see, if you commonly listen to three discs in a row through the 112x/150x, you'll listen to six through the 112x/FlatCap 2/150x... and still be hungry for more.

Ultimately, that's what hi-fi should be about, at least in NaimWorld. If this means Naim doesn't obey all the rules of how hi-fi should sound, then maybe those rules are wrong. **HFC**

Alan Sircom



**VERDICT – Naim 112x preamp**

**SOUND >> 87%**  
**FEATURES >> 77%**  
**BUILD >> 90%**  
**VALUE >> 90%**

**CONCLUSION**  
 An extremely musical introduction to Naim's direct and engaging sound, with a built-in upgrade path via the optional FlatCap 2 power supply.

**HI-FI CHOICE >> 89%**

**VERDICT – Naim 150x power amp**

**SOUND >> 87%**  
**FEATURES >> 69%**  
**BUILD >> 90%**  
**VALUE >> 86%**

**CONCLUSION**  
 Don't let the 50-watt power rating put you off – this is a powerful, confident and consummately musical performer. More flexible than previous Naims... just!

**HI-FI CHOICE >> 87%**



"Best New Analogue Component Award" Hi-Fi News, UK

"Best Buy" Hi-Fi Choice, UK

"Highly Recommended" Audio & Video, Brazil

"Brilliant" Hi-Fi World, UK

"Fantastic" Image Hifi, Germany

"Best New Record Player & Arm" Stereo Sound, Japan

"Excellent" Hi-Fi review, Hong Kong

# ROKSAN

## RADIUS5



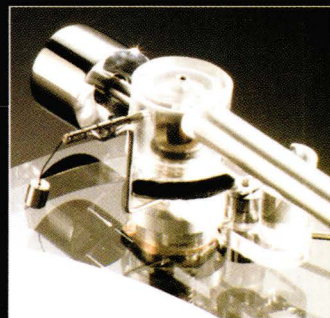
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# Now you see it...

*To make a loudspeaker disappear, why not make it out of glass? But is the Victoria merely eye-candy?*

**PRODUCT** Waterfall Victoria TWN

**TYPE** Floorstanding loudspeaker

**PRICE** £2,000 per pair

**KEY FEATURES** Size (WxHxD): 22x100x22cm

⊕ Weight: 15kg ⊕ Glass enclosure ⊕ Plinth houses port and crossover ⊕ 2x150mm main drivers ⊕ 25mm metal tweeter ⊕ Sensitivity/impedance: 89dB/4 ohms (min)

**CONTACT** ☎ 020 8863 9117

🌐 www.waterfallaudio.com

It takes some bottle to build speakers out of glass. The aesthetic payoff is clear – a speaker with a tendency to disappear, though the practical constructional difficulties look decidedly daunting. As for the sonic implications, we'll get onto those in due course.

Waterfall is a French loudspeaker brand, located in the sunny south not far from Nice. It was founded, conceptually at least, about ten years ago, though it took a few years to iron out the manufacturing difficulties and actually get production under way. Processes were developed in conjunction with glassmakers to enable the sheets of glass to be sliced with sufficient precision and accuracy to ensure all the joints are properly sealed.

The complete current range consists of three stereo pairs, plus a centre speaker, a subwoofer and a satellite, many featuring glass enclosures in one form or another. The model under scrutiny here is the top-of-the-line Victoria TWN, a compact two-and-a-half-way floorstander that replaces the original Victoria we tested back in *HFC* 225.

Irrespective of the sonic characteristics of glass, creating a transparent enclosure imposes

a number of unusual constraints that don't apply if the box is conventionally opaque. You can't simply stuff the enclosure with damping material, because that would defeat the object of the glass design. Likewise, the internal wiring must be handled with due care and sensitivity, so that it remains unobtrusive.

These potential difficulties – and also the location of the crossover and the port – have all been handled with cunning creativity. Although the enclosure proper remains entirely undamped, a foam pad is fitted within a short cylinder attached to the driver frames immediately behind the cones. This provides a degree of resistive damping and absorption, while keeping everything neat and tidy. The cabling to the drivers is particularly neatly handled, consisting of six flat-section wires, evenly spaced and tensioned just behind the front panel. They look like a decorative motif, not cabling. The port and the crossover network are both concealed within a chunky little plinth, along with a single pair of gold-plated terminals. One small criticism, however, is that there's no spike provision here, and no real attempt to ensure secure floor coupling.

The glass panels used are 6mm thick – much thinner than those used by wood-based enclosures, but then glass is a lot denser than MDF and an all-up weight of 15kg is not too different from what one would expect from a conventional speaker of similar size. Glass also has the advantage of being notably stiff, and that is further enhanced by an additional and rather thicker bevelled-edge section fixed to the front baffle under the drivers. Though

indisputably elegant, glass does have rather sharp corners, and also a strong tendency to show up sticky fingerprints. Those with small children should perhaps look elsewhere.

The Victoria's drivers consist of two 150mm devices sourced from Triangle, one operating as a bass/mid unit, the other just augmenting the bass region. Both are apparently identical, and also somewhat unusual, in that they're significantly smaller than typical 165mm drivers, with paper cones just 85mm in diameter. Both also use wide-pleated fabric surrounds, rather than the much more common synthetic rubber roll. These two factors will both tend to favour the midband over the bass, and speed over coloration. The tweeter here has a small 20mm metal dome, with a short horn flare.

## SOUND QUALITY

The measured performance is in many ways impressive, if different from the norm. Under our regime, sensitivity registers an entirely respectable 89dB, which is just 1dB shy of the manufacturer's claimed 90dB, while the accompanying four-ohm load claim is fully justified, and actually represents the minimum, so this speaker should be easy enough to drive. The impedance trace reveals that the port output here is very well damped, and tuned to around 45Hz. Elsewhere, there's an obvious resonance at 190Hz (probably due to the enclosure acting as a tuned column), and minor unevenness around 400-800Hz (perhaps due to cone surround effects).

The averaged far-field in-room response is both impressive and revealing. Sited clear of walls, the bass alignment suited our listening room very well indeed, giving even and quite smooth bass down to below 40Hz. The total tonal balance is unusually flat overall, and despite some unevenness, it holds within impressive +/-3dB right up to the upper limits of audibility – all bar a significant notch centred on 800Hz, presumably due to reflection cancellation from the inside surface of the back panel, and the lack of enclosure damping. The majority of speakers show loss of presence zone energy in the far field, but the reverse is the case here, the small main driver contributing to quite strong output at 2-3kHz.

That is certainly one reason why this speaker makes voices – and especially speech – sound unusually open and explicit. The result is particularly convincing and effective when operating at low levels, giving unusually clear enunciation to lyrics. However, there is the corresponding downside that material recorded



**“The result is an overall crispness and clarity that is rarely matched by conventional wood-bodied speakers.”**



with a forward and/or aggressive balance and mix can sound uncomfortable and edgy when the volume is turned up loud.

That measured midband dip does contribute a degree of coloration, which was most noticeable when the speakers were initially connected up. Whether ears were adjusting, or the speaker itself was running in, is hard to say, but by day three, any coloration seemed largely irrelevant and the true strengths of this speaker came shining through.

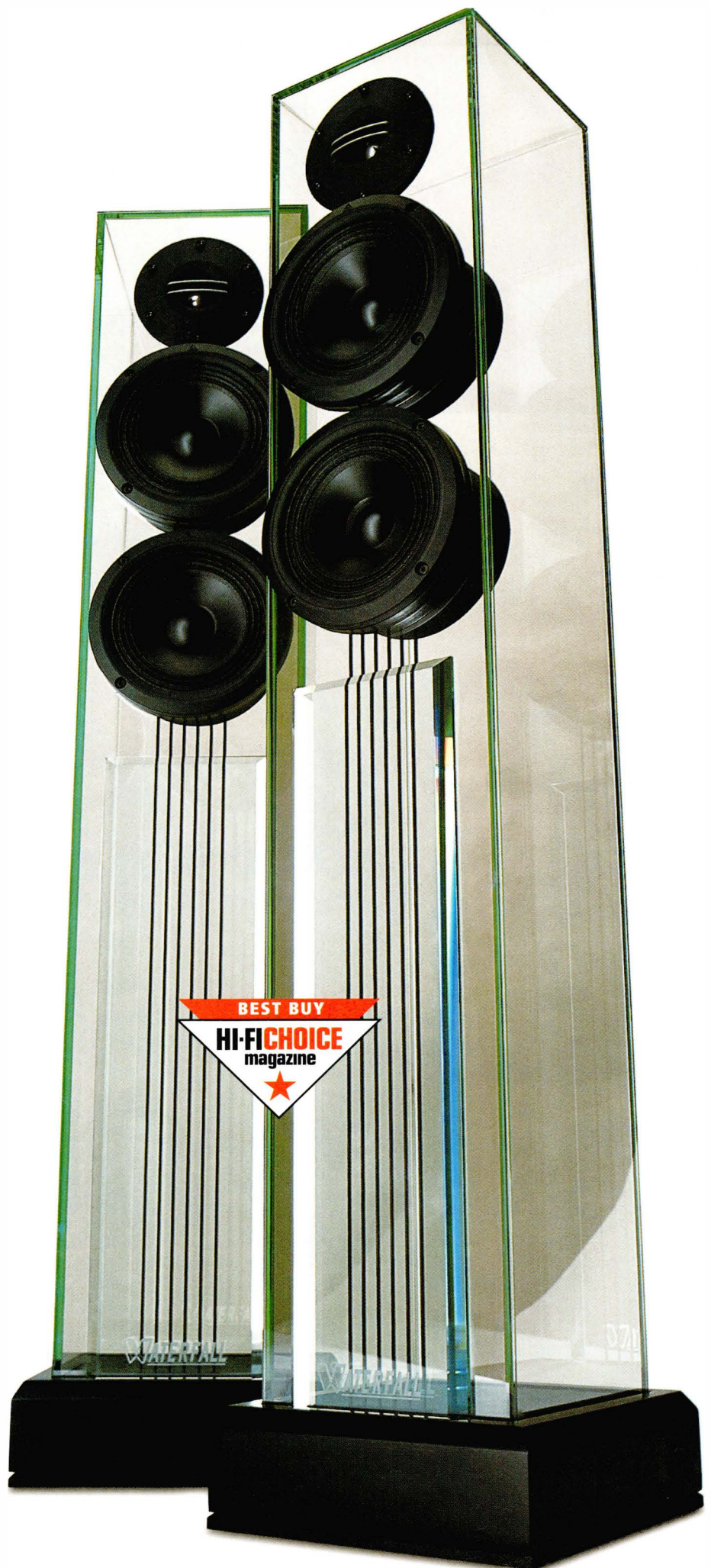
Above all, the Victoria is exceptionally 'fast' and largely free from timesmear and overhang. The result is unusually good dynamic expression, plus an overall crispness and clarity that's rarely matched by conventional wood-bodied speakers. The lack of damping – and the glass itself – play a big part in this crispness.

It's difficult to pinpoint any specific character that the glass enclosure brings to the party, because it seems to have very little in the way of identifiable 'signature'. There's no boxiness here, and absolutely no tendency for the sound to cluster around the speakers themselves. Stereo imaging is consequently very impressive, as the speakers seem to 'disappear' sonically, leaving just the image, precisely focused and convincingly spread between and behind the speakers themselves.

The first reaction on seeing this speaker is to assume that the glass is primarily a cosmetic gimmick, with eye-candy appeal to the designer generation and its loft apartments. While we daresay such consumers will form part of its constituency, this is nevertheless an exceptional speaker in its own right, well capable of doing justice to serious hi-fi equipment. Glass has long since proved its sonic effectiveness in support furniture, and it is clearly well able to work some magic at the speaker end of the chain.

While the Victoria TWN might not match the sheer muscle and weight of some of its immediate competition, it more than makes up for this with fine agility and timing, plus good dynamic range and expression. Its exceptionally pretty face might first grab the attention, but this is a real sonic performer too. **HFC**

*Paul Messenger*



VERDICT	
<b>SOUND &gt;&gt; 87%</b> [Progress bar]	<b>PRO</b> Beautiful glass enclosure, with a crisp, lively and engaging performance. Impressive timing and imaging, too.
<b>EASE OF DRIVE &gt;&gt; 85%</b> [Progress bar]	<b>CON</b> Sharp corners and fingerprint susceptibility are not exactly child-friendly, and floor coupling could be improved. Sound could have more weight and welly.
<b>BUILD &gt;&gt; 93%</b> [Progress bar]	
<b>VALUE &gt;&gt; 85%</b> [Progress bar]	
<b>CONCLUSION</b> Stunning see-through glass enclosure, and this crisp, lively and thoroughly engaging performer has a delightfully open neutrality. It's a little lacking in ultimate grunt, and not kind to aggressive recordings, but has notably impressive timing.	
<b>HI-FI CHOICE OVERALL SCORE &gt;&gt; 87%</b>	

**"A little champ of price/quality ratio:  
available at an affordable price, especially for a  
tube amplifier of more-than-usual power."**

AUDIO REVIEW Italy, July 2004, Claudio Checchi

**"PrimaLuna ProLogue One is now my  
'affordable reference amplifier'. With  
apologies to various British and Italian  
geniuses, this amplifier has to my ears  
no equals at its retail price."**

HI-FI NEWS and record review, July 2004, Ken Kessler

**"A refreshing change from the transistor  
competition with a captivating presentation.  
Excellent finish and build quality makes  
for a package strong on value."**

HI-FI WORLD, August 2004, Dominic Todd



# PrimaLuna

Music is universal gift, a pleasure that should not be denied to anybody. So, too, the beauty of music reproduced by valves.

To make available to a wider audience the seductive, silky sound of the vacuum tube, PrimaLuna has developed a range of all-valve amplifiers with the construction, power and sonic performance of high-end electronics, but with one unique, inimitable feature: prices that can only be described as 'entry level'!

Since the arrival last year of the ProLogue One, the audio community has been unable to contain its joy nor reign in its praise, because PrimaLuna has revolutionized the whole concept of 'affordable audio.' Commencing with a pair of integrated amplifiers with prices more typical of mundane, solid-state products, PrimaLuna has shown other manufacturers that compromises in fit and finish, styling and facilities are unnecessary. And PrimaLuna has shown the music lover that 'high end' performance and pride of ownership can be made available to aficionados on a budget. But don't take our word for it. Audition either the ProLogue One or ProLogue Two at the **PISTOL Music** dealer of your choice. And prepare your wallet for a pleasant surprise.

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**PISTOL MUSIC** is a division of Absolute Sounds Ltd

# The receiving end

Marantz has scored numerous hits with its amplifiers, but can a budget stereo receiver still compete?

**PRODUCT** Marantz SR4320

**TYPE** Stereo receiver (AM/FM)

**PRICE** £250

**CONTACT** ☎ 01753 680868 🌐 www.marantz.com

The receiver is a funny beast. It had a brief popularity in the 1970s, but it's hard to find one today – unless you're looking for AV receivers. AV receivers seem to do everything anyway, and there's no harm in adding FM and AM reception to the list. But this new model, standing alone in Marantz's current range, is a good old-fashioned stereo receiver. All right, it nods to the AV world with three video inputs, which just get routed to a couple of outputs, but basically it's a stereo integrated amp with a tuner module added on.

If you're familiar with Marantz's popular integrated amps, you'll see some external similarities (not least the distinctive champagne finish – black is also available) but internally there's nothing immediately 'Marantz' on show – no 'HDAM' modules, for instance. The circuitry is based on discrete transistors, at least for the power amplifier section, though evidently integrated circuits handle volume and tone control functions. The volume knob operates a rotary encoder which adjusts volume in 1dB steps, while tone and balance functions are operated from the 'jog wheel' on the left. A pity the same wheel couldn't tune in radio stations too, but otherwise it's straightforward enough to operate, and including the video routing makes good sense.

Specifications are pretty generous, with seven inputs (including phono) in addition to the

internal RDS tuner, three tape outputs and even pre out/power in sockets, normally linked with a little jumper plug. Two sets of independently switched speaker terminals add flexibility. Power is rated at 80 watts per channel and distortion at 0.08%, the former very slightly cautious and the latter considerably so – the 0.02% (worst case at high frequency) distortion we found would do credit to an amplifier at twice this price. Encouraging!

## SOUND QUALITY

To say we were impressed by the unit would be something of an understatement. Quite frankly, as a bog-ordinary 50-watt integrated amp it would have sounded more than decent, so the extra power, the AV features and the radio reception are pretty much the icing on the cake. Royal icing, at that, since the FM reception is perhaps the receiver's most impressive feature. It may only be a single, 75mm square circuit board but the tuner carries some recent and sophisticated circuits that do seem to offer an advantage over the familiar parts found in most tuners of the last few years. As a result, FM sound is commendably clear, detailed, open and free of interference and other FM nasties.

The amplifier section is very capable too. It doesn't have the precision of Marantz's best integrated amps, but it still has a neutral tonal balance with particularly sweet and extended treble, and it chucks out the watts with real gusto. In more intimate musical moments, it

doesn't impose its own character and whatever the material, it makes a good fist of presenting believable stereo images and preserving the natural acoustic of the recording space. And it doesn't get flustered, but just hangs together through thick and thin; something one can't always take for granted even with upmarket amps. Even the phono stage is respectable.

In terms of absolute detail retrieval there are still gains to be made, and there is a slight synthetic 'sheen' over bright and complex sounds like orchestral violins. Overall, though, the Marantz SR4320 is a very satisfying receiver, offering a range of useful features and unquestionably excellent value for money. **HFC**

Richard Black

## VERDICT

**SOUND >> 76%**



**FEATURES >> 93%**



**BUILD >> 83%**



**VALUE >> 93%**



**PRO**  
Excellent FM reception with plenty of body and clarity. Amp offers clean, extended and powerful sound with admirable coherence.

**CON**  
Occasional mild synthetic quality. Tone controls should be avoided.

## CONCLUSION

Really makes the case for saving a box and putting radio reception in the same housing as amplification, doing both to a high standard. It may not be a giant killer, but it's neat, flexible and excellent value for money.

**HI-FI CHOICE** >> **86%**  
**OVERALL SCORE**





# Chinese crackers?

*Hailing from China, this CD player and amp seem to offer an awful lot for the money...*

**PRODUCT** Vincent CD-S1.1 and SV-121

**TYPE** CD player and integrated stereo amplifier

**PRICE** (CD-S1.1) £455, (SV-121) £495

**KEY FEATURES** (CD-S1.1) Size (WxHxD): 43x12.5x33cm  
 • Weight: 8.5kg • HDCD decoding • 6N16 processing valve • Philips VAM 1202/12 transport • (SV-121) Size (WxHxD): 43x9.3x38cm • Weight: 10kg • Rated power: 2x80W (4 ohms) • Remote control • Balanced inputs

**CONTACT** ☎ 01892 539245

🌐 www.metropolis-music.co.uk

**M**ore and more hi-fi is coming out of China these days, and not just at the cheap end of the hi-fi market. Thanks to the low cost of labour in China, the specification is often extremely high, too, whatever the price-tag. Some well-known manufacturers are out-sourcing their manufacturing to China to keep costs competitive, but many more are entirely new names. Vincent is typical of this new wave of hi-fi; in this case, the product is truly global. It's designed in the West, built in the East and distributed in England direct... via the German importers. But how do these components compare with more home-grown products?

Although Vincent makes some relatively esoteric equipment, it's the more affordable CD-S1.1 CD player (£455) and SV-121 amp (£495) that we're interested in here. Despite the comparatively low price of the pairing, there's more than a hint of Scandinavian-brand Primare in the way it's styled. Certain aspects are reminiscent of well-known UK and US builders, too. But though the styling may be derivative, it's generally cohesive and easy on the eye. This much style doesn't come cheap... at least, not when it's connected to a bigger name than Vincent.

Build quality is also highly impressive at the price – both products are well finished, weighty and professionally produced. Although not in the Naim league, the way the lid wraps around the underneath of the casing is impressive, and no one could argue with the quality of the solid aluminium front panels. Curiously, though, the CD player boasts an 8mm front panel, while the amp's is only 5mm thick. Our only small gripe related to some flaking paint around the screw holes, but as most users will sensibly leave these well alone, this shouldn't be an issue.

Lifting the respective lids, the Vincent duo continue to impress. The CD player uses Philips' excellent VAM1202/12 transport alongside an equally renowned 24-bit/96kHz DAC with HDCD decoding from Burr-Brown. Few surprises there then until, that is, you look a little closer. Hiding at the back of the case is a tiny 6N16 valve. This is used in the output stage, with the intention of contributing to a smoother, more 'organic' sound. It reminds us of the Luxman amplifiers from the early 1990s that used a similar ploy, albeit with the valves far more ostentatiously mounted in the front panel. Musical Fidelity, Shanling and Cary Audio, to name but three, have also used valves in the output stages of their CD players.

Valves aside, Vincent's CD player has plenty of fine attention to detail. The oversized toroidal transformer is fully shielded, the lid is damped and the outputs include a set of balanced XLR sockets. Twin RCA phono analogue outs and a coaxial digital connection are also included although not, it should be noted, an optical one.

One look at the amplifier's hefty toroidal transformer and it's hard to believe that the quoted power output is 'only' 80 watts into



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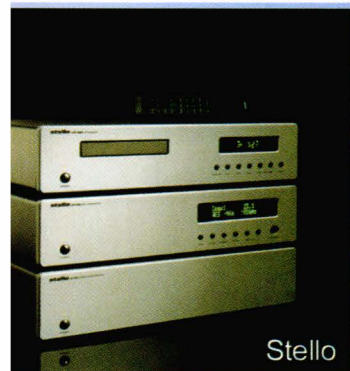


AudioValve  
Baldur 70 Stereo

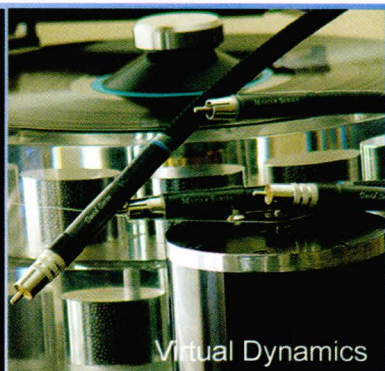
Baldur 70  
Award Winner  
2004



AudioValve  
RKV1 Headphone Amplifier



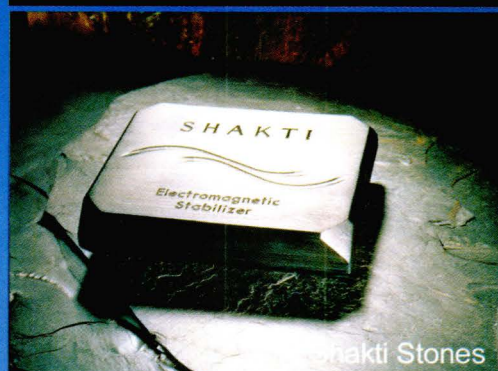
Stello



Virtual Dynamics



Acapella



Shakti Stones

ACCUSTIC ARTS ACAPELLA AUDIOVALVE CAT CLEARAUDIO GAMUT GRAHAM HALCRO SHAKTI SHUN MOOK STELLO TRANSGURATION VIRTUAL DYNAA

AudioValve Baldur 'Best Valve Amplifier 2004'

# A touch of genius

In a market awash with sub/sat systems, we put Mordaunt-Short's Genie under the lamp... er, spotlight

**PRODUCT** Mordaunt-Short Genie

**TYPE** Sub/sat loudspeaker system

**PRICE** 2.1 system: £450, 5.1 system: £800, 7.1 system: £1,000

**CONTACT** ☎ 0207 940 2200  
# www.hello-genie.com

There's an obvious appeal to systems that combine discrete little satellite speakers with subwoofers for bass – you get full-range sound from a neat, decor-friendly package, which may be particularly useful if you're trying to squeeze in five or more channels in a surround sound system. This is something that KEF famously recognised when it launched its KHT 'egg' speakers a few years back, and given their enormous success it's not surprising that many more well-established brands are now chasing a share of the spoils.

The latest of these is Mordaunt-Short, whose Genie package (like KEF's) features cute aluminium-cased satellites and a chunky, cube-shaped sub. Each of these incorporates one of M-S's sleek Continuous Profile Cone (CPC) drivers, while the satellites also include a liquid-cooled aluminium dome tweeter. For space-saving home cinema the attraction is clear, but M-S reckons that the Genie can also challenge similarly-priced conventional, integrated speaker systems sound-for-sound. There's no better way to test this claim than to run a two-channel set on the end of a good hi-fi system – so that's exactly what we've done here.

Aside from their stylish, wall-mountable aesthetics, the satellites' shield-like shape also serves to reduce internal reflections on paralleled surfaces. The sub is a little less avant-garde – it's a ported cube, packing a 250mm CPC driver, a 200-watt amp and a variable notch filter. This effectively allows limited attenuation of low-frequency room resonance by applying a filter with a gentle slope to the sub's output at the offending frequency. Better still, M-S supplies a CD with a range of bass test tones and a sleek sound pressure meter to assist the operation.

## SOUND QUALITY

Integration is the key to producing a competent sub/sat package and Genie's is unusually seamless. With minimal tweaking of the sub's cut-off and gain controls, it's possible to achieve a mid-bass response flat enough to embarrass



plenty of floorstanding speakers. Close your eyes and it's hard to tell this is a three-box system.

There's a tight dynamism and an energetic attitude to the lower registers. The system goes plenty loud, fairly deep (around 40Hz) and there's very little chuffing noise thanks to clever port flaring. The bass errs towards effect-laden home cinema in its balance, favouring impact over articulation, but it remains communicative with all but the most bass-critical material.

Bass-EQ is a black art and M-S's single frequency notch filter is like trying to smooth out a lumpy duvet with a pointed stick. That said, if you have just one major problem frequency (and most rooms have) it does an excellent job of decreasing bass boom.

But the real magic of the Genie package is its silky smooth treble. There is not even a hint of the cuppy sound that can afflict small-box satellites and there is naturalness to the HF response that is wholly infectious.

On test, Jonte Short's awesome voice on Fried's first album sounded searingly soulful, and tracks like *Love is a Stranger* produced a liberal wash of goose-bumps. Even getting frisky with the volume failed to rattle M-S's tweeter, although there was increased congestion in the midrange as the sound pressure rose.

There's no doubt that the Genie's primary appeal is as a discrete, stylish and very capable surround sound package. But while we'd still recommend integrated speaker systems on sonic grounds for general hi-fi use, the Genie is a remarkably capable (and unusually musical) example of the sub/sat breed. Stereo or multichannel, it's an impressive compact solution for when space is at a premium. **HFC**

Richard Stevenson

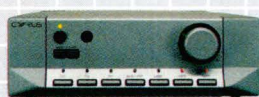
VERDICT	
<b>SOUND &gt;&gt; 74%</b> [Progress bar]	<b>PRO</b> Impressive integration between the subwoofer and satellites and M-S's sweet dome tweeter make for a superbly coherent sub/sat speaker system.
<b>PRACTICALITY &gt;&gt; 94%</b> [Progress bar]	<b>CON</b> Inevitably there remain sonic compromises compared to a good pair of integrated full-range speakers – though impressively few at the price.
<b>BUILD &gt;&gt; 88%</b> [Progress bar]	
<b>VALUE &gt;&gt; 89%</b> [Progress bar]	
<b>CONCLUSION</b> The Genie is smooth as silk on the ear, pleasing on the eye and friendly on the wallet. Mordaunt-Short has finally toppled KEF's three year reign at the top with this great sounding, stylish and affordable sub/sat speaker system.	
<b>HI-FI CHOICE OVERALL SCORE &gt;&gt; 85%</b>	

GROUP TEST: RICHARD BLACK LAB REPORTS: PAUL MARCHANT

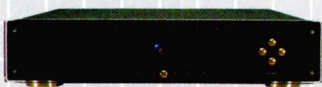
# AMPLIFIERS

You get something for everyone when you spend £500-£1,000 on an integrated amplifier. But do these six amplifiers have everything for that certain someone – you?

## ON TEST



Cyrus 6vs  
£600



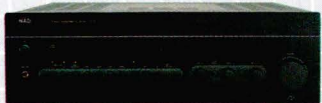
Electrocompaniet ECI 3  
£999



Exposure 2010 S  
£599



Marantz PM7200 KI Signature  
£500



NAD C372  
£500



Rega Mira 3  
£598

The £500-£1,000 integrated amplifier arena is where it all happens. Below the £1,000 mark, integrated amp designs pretty much rule the roost. This is because building separate preamp and power amplifier boxes, each with their own mains transformers and other expensive parts, leaves so little budget for the electronics that two-box combos are not generally sensible for less than a grand.

But integrated amps need no apology, especially in these days of line-only amplifiers. A modern integrated model is often scarcely more than a power amp with slightly higher sensitivity, a selector switch, a volume control and a few extra sockets. As such, you can get some nifty electronics and/or smart visuals for very sensible sums of money. You can't get everything, however, and the different ways in which manufacturers balance the budget lead to a satisfyingly diverse market, with – in principle at least – something for everyone.

We've assembled a pretty good cross-section of that market here. All the amps claim decent sound, but beyond that they vary widely. The Cyrus plays a strong visual suit, being part of one of the most attractive one-make systems currently available. The NAD offers huge power and a healthy range of features. The Exposure puts sound unequivocally to the fore in a conventional case, while the other three by and large sit between these extremes.

In the end, only you can decide just how to prioritise those various facets. We help provide some guidance as to each model's success in achieving its aims, particularly sonically. From here, a good dealer can help evaluate your particular requirements in terms of power (taking into account your listening environment, tastes and partnering equipment) and general sonic characteristics. The dealer can then match those properties to

available products. If you want to take best advantage of both our contribution and that of the dealer, you'll have to put in your own effort in terms of listening and looking – if one can call something that much fun an 'effort'!

It's worth mentioning that most integrated amps on the market today provide an upgrade path through the addition of one or more extra boxes. A separate power amp can often be added, either as just an amplifier in its own right, or additionally aiding the integrated's own power sections in a bi-amping configuration. Also, if you wish to play LPs, a phono box can be added – few integrated amps now include a phono input as standard. You can't upgrade any of these amps to multichannel music replay, though.

So, let's integrate! **HFC**

## EQUIPMENT USED

- ⦿ ATC SCM20 loudspeakers
- ⦿ Pioneer PDR-609 CD recorder/player
- ⦿ Chord DAC64 digital-to-analogue converter
- ⦿ Kimber, Furukawa and Bespoke Audio audio cables
- ⦿ Pink Triangle PT T00 turntable with SME 309 arm and Highphonic MC-A3 phono cartridge

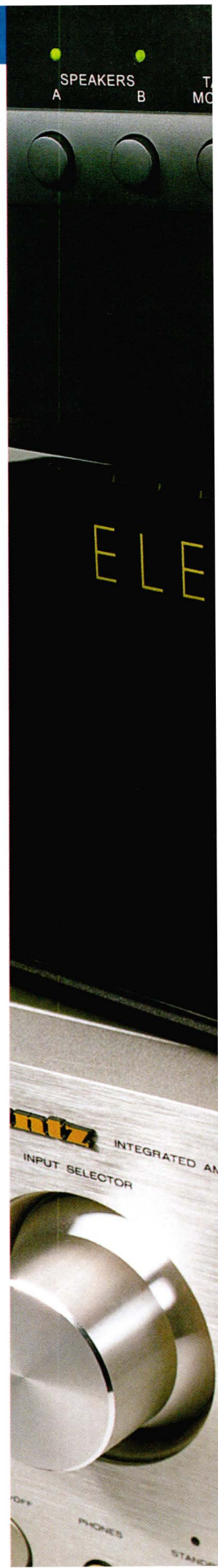
## MUSIC USED

- ⦿ Michael Jackson *Thriller*
- ⦿ Dvorak *Carnival Overture*
- ⦿ Guzmán *Ambrosio*
- ⦿ Pink Floyd *The Wall*
- ⦿ Miles Davis *Kind of Blue*

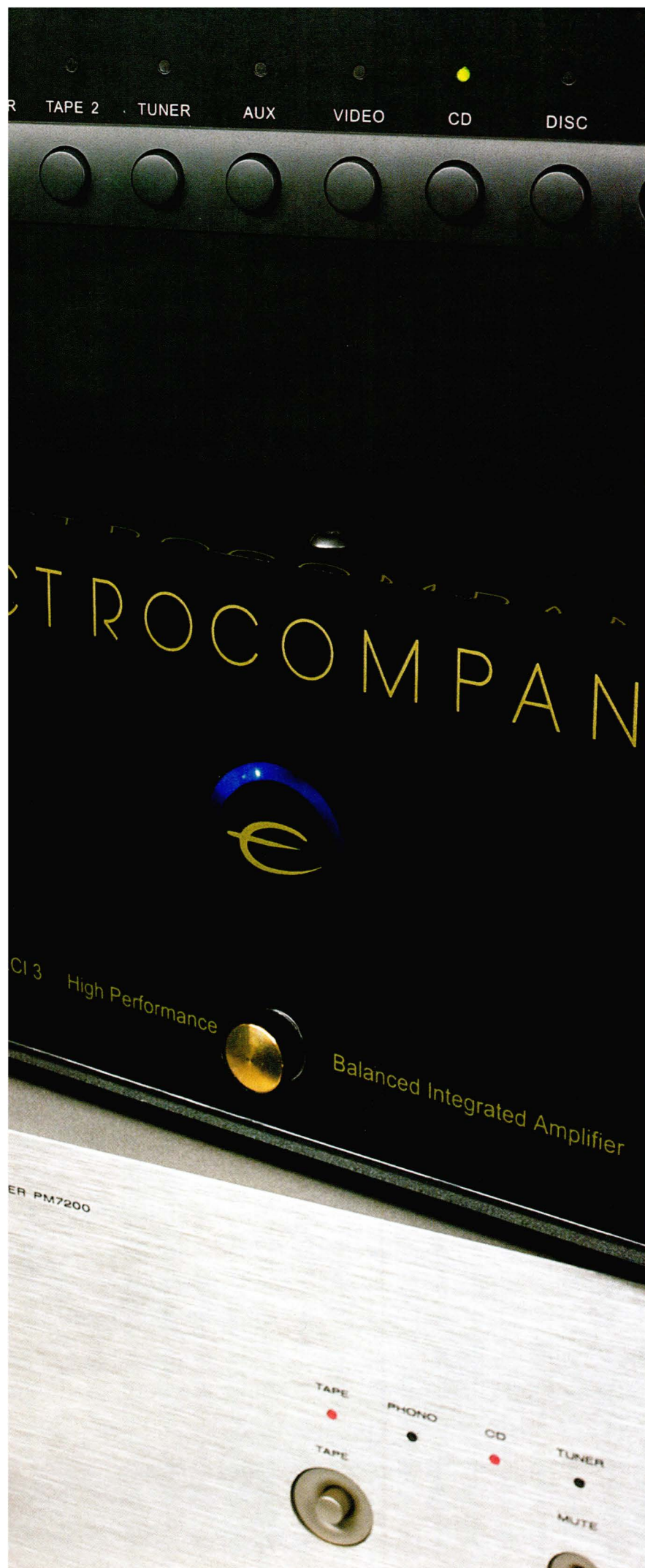
## EARS USED

The following exemplary human beings were kind enough to donate their time and listening prowess to our blind listening sessions... thanks, chaps!

- ⦿ Steve Harris (PR for Naim, Castle Acoustics, Chord Company etc.)
- ⦿ Keith Martin (hififorsale.com)
- ⦿ Ed Selley (Cambridge Audio)







IR SOFT CLIPPING

BASS

## LISTENING TESTS

In classic *HFC* fashion, the centrepiece of the listening was a 'blind' presentation of each amp to a panel of expert listeners, in an attempt to remain free of prejudices and preconceptions. Listening levels were matched and the same programme of music was played through each amp with minimal distractions. In addition, each amp was auditioned more informally, at different listening levels to suit the particular character of each amp under test.

## LAB TESTS

The amplifiers were measured with a computer-controlled Audio Precision System One audio test system for signal generation and injection, with a variety of dummy loads to simulate loudspeakers at the speaker terminals. A custom test-jig was produced to allow truly accurate assessment of current output, and to precisely determine other amplifier characteristics under real-world conditions.

**No other magazine offers an equivalent test and listening programme for comparative tests.**

## LAB REPORTS: THE BAR GRAPH

Our 3D bar graphs are a simple way of showing how the products compare across five technical parameters. In each case, a percentage is given that falls above or below the group average. In this test, the five parameters are:

**1] Dynamic power:** Three separate measurements were taken – voltage clipping (loaded 8-ohm and unloaded) and current clipping/limiting to give an indication of total power available under realistic conditions.

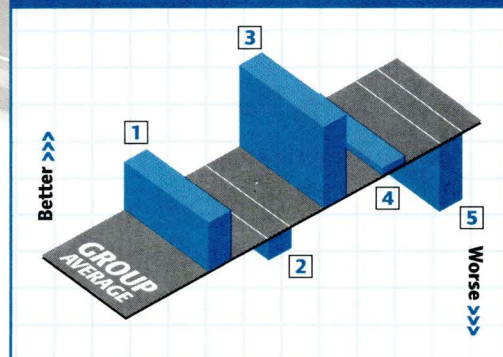
**2] Frequency response:** This is a measure of precisely how smooth and linear the frequency response is within the audio band, and what the upper frequency response (-3dB) limit is.

**3] Dynamic range:** An indication of the background hiss level of the amplifier, as compared to its maximum power output.

**4] Distortion:** Total Harmonic Distortion measured at a nominal 10W/8 ohms, thereby providing a realistic representation of normal use.

**5] Output impedance:** A measurement of how tight a grip the amplifier has upon the loudspeaker cones.

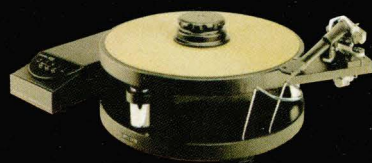
## OUR BAR GRAPHS: AN EXAMPLE



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## of Winchester and Taunton

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### AUDIO RESEARCH CD3 Mk II

The CD3 Mk 2II is said by many, including ourselves, to be the finest CD player at any price - and at little over £5000, that says a lot. No upsampling or over sampling, just the basics taken to the highest level. It shows what can and should be done.

### DREAMVISION

Yes, we do cinema as well - but we do it the French way with Dreamvision projectors and plasmas. No, it isn't mainstream, but if it didn't perform and look better than anything else we've seen, we wouldn't touch it.

Agents for: Krell, Audio Research, Jadis, Sonus faber, Martin Logan, Koetsu, Copland, Prima Luna, Dreamvision, Pathos, Oracle, Lyra, Unison Research, Transparent, The Chord Company, finite-elemente, BCD Engineering, Futureglass

You are invited to contact Brian Rivas or Alison Holmes for a discussion or demonstration

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e-mail: [brianriv@mac.com](mailto:brianriv@mac.com)



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## CYRUS 6VS

*Small yet perfectly formed – but does the sound impress similarly?*

Cyrus has got good mileage out of its clever die-cast case design, for the perfectly good reason that it was brilliantly thought out in the first place. Current models ring the changes in terms of colour (they are fashionably silver) and evidently the internals have evolved in various ways. Otherwise, it's the same inverted case construction where the 'lid' is actually the plastic base and the stuff inside can be various amplifiers, a disc player, a tuner and so on. This makes the competition look downright industrial. If looks matter to you, take note.

With such limited acreage to play with, the back of the unit looks a little alarming – not least because Cyrus has included such luxuries as bi-wiring outputs, a headphone socket and a preamp output for bi-amping. There are seven line inputs (including 'MP3' – is this a first for hi-fi separates?) and two tape outputs, so little likelihood of running out.

The hard work is performed by a selection of predominantly surface-mounted components on a compact circuit board, with a single pair of output transistors per channel. Input selection is via an electronic selector and the volume control is also electronic. This allows Cyrus to offer adjustable sensitivity for each input as well as a balance control, with no extra audio circuit complications. The volume control is even velocity-sensitive. The mains transformer and supply capacitors are not of great size but adequate for the modest claimed power of 40 watts. If you find you need more power later, you can upgrade the unit to Cyrus 8vs (70 watts) specification.

### SOUND QUALITY

After the eulogy to its looks, how is the sound? In the context of this group it failed to score a stand-out success, being criticised by the panel principally for sounding a little 'over-fast' in its presentation. That may seem odd, but essentially it seems to highlight a subtle tonal effect – a degree of brightness (despite a



fundamentally flat response) that can make the musicians sound like they are falling over themselves in a hurry. Densely layered music sounded ragged in places and there was less clarity than with the best in the group.

Two listeners commented on the amp's unexceptional timing, and it does demonstrate that the 'foot tapping' aspect of music is not its forte. But it's by no means all doom and gloom. There was praise for the cohesive nature of the sound in a couple of extracts, and clarity of instrumental delineation in the Miles Davis track in particular was thought good.

Subsequent sighted listening confirmed the panel's comments to some extent, but was also able to establish that, given the high standard of the group as a whole, the Cyrus 6vs sounds very satisfactory. What you get with the Cyrus 6vs is a competent, moderately-powered amp which will generally sound respectable, if a little short on raw excitement. It's well balanced and polite, capable of driving loudspeakers in typical rooms to satisfying levels without upset.

The Cyrus 6vs looks a million dollars and offers a significant upgrade on pretty but sonically limited all-in-one systems. On its own terms, a real success, if not an outright winner on pure sound quality among this group. **HFC**

VERDICT	
<b>SOUND &gt;&gt; 81%</b>	An unusually smart unit with plenty of features and good upgradeability. It offers good sound too, even if it's not absolutely class-leading. Perhaps best appreciated as part of a complete Cyrus system.
<b>FEATURES &gt;&gt; 85%</b>	
<b>BUILD &gt;&gt; 88%</b>	
<b>VALUE &gt;&gt; 84%</b>	
<b>HI-FI CHOICE OVERALL SCORE 84%</b>	

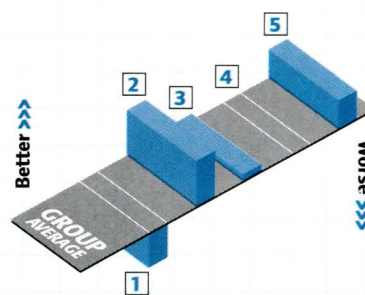


### LAB REPORT

This compact offering from Cyrus scores pretty well in the power-to-size rankings. Despite relatively understated continuous power (in the context of this group), it managed a very credible 250W peak output from one channel into our stress-testing rig – notably greater than was anticipated from its size. The relatively high current capacity indicates that it can manage a 2-ohm load if pushed to its limits. Further testing revealed a reassuringly low level of distortion at reasonable (10W) listening levels.

The Cyrus came third in dynamic range testing, mostly due to its low level of background noise. Our measurements indicated that the amp had a respectably low output impedance, putting it in the position where it was definitely controlling the speaker, not the other way around. The upper limit to frequency response was found to be around 86kHz – more than four times that required for CD playback, but not quite up with the upper limits of SACD.

### HOW IT COMPARES



- 1] Dynamic power >> -30%
- 2] Frequency response >> +40%
- 3] Dynamic range >> +5%
- 4] Distortion >> 0%
- 5] Output impedance >> +25%

### SPECIFICATIONS

Measurement	Rated	Actual
Power output (8 ohms)	40W	46W
Distortion (1 kHz/8 ohms)	0.003%	0.007%
Frequency response (20Hz-20kHz)	n/s	+/- 0.1dB

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# ELECTROCOMPANIET ECI 3

*Sophisticated style and sonic assurance, Scandinavian style*

**E**lectrocompaniet has been seen before in these pages, but not since 2001.

Surprisingly for a brand with a substantial worldwide following, it lacked UK distribution for several years, until Castle Acoustics picked up the reins recently.

The ECI 3 integrated amp is one of two currently available; the other Electrocompaniet model offering nearly double the power. Both share some visual characteristics with the rest of the EC range, the basic look being at once distinctly retro and aesthetically pleasing – a design that stands the test of time.

Power is typical of the group at 70 watts, as is the provision of six line inputs (though the one balanced pair is unique), two tape outputs, a preamp out (for bi-amping) and remote control. In contrast to many remote-controlled amps, volume control is handled by a good ol' potentiometer, so there's no balance control or input sensitivity adjustment. You still have to use push-buttons to adjust volume though, as the control is internal and not accessible – but in a nice touch its shaft is extended to the front panel and a blue LED indicates volume setting.

Internal construction is likewise not unusual, though it's certainly smartly and professionally done. Most of the donkey-work is performed by discrete transistors with only a small handful of integrated circuits in evidence. On the operation front, the only beef is that the unit defaults on power-up to the balanced 'CD' input, though it remembers its volume setting.

## SOUND QUALITY

On two separate presentations to the listening panel, this amp made a fine impression. Apart from a lone complaint about a slightly dead presentation in the Miles Davis track, it attracted almost uniformly favourable comments compared to the other contenders. It had, our panel judged, good bass weight and presence, good imaging and a good line in detail, too. There was also plenty of life, attack and a fearless, clear-sighted approach to



complex music. It captures subtleties and gives an excellent sense of the air and space surrounding a musical performance.

Listening over a more relaxed time-span confirmed all that... and added some further insights into what is with little doubt a highly capable amp. There's some real insight in its musical outpourings, and detail that could teach some much dearer pre/power separates a thing or two. There's also a distinctly laid-back character, not so much in any direct tonal sense but in the way the amp presents the information at its disposal. Recordings are not thrown at you – they are served with great refinement and an absolute absence of overstatement. This could count as criticism to listeners who rate raw excitement highly, but makes for pleasant long-term listening. In fact, exciting recordings are presented as such; it's just that slightly dull ones get no help.

In the end, it's probably true that this isn't an amp for all tastes. It suits classical music very well, especially when playing through refined, neutral speakers. It can give an excellent account of jazz but its performance with rock may leave some listeners cold. Nevertheless, it is a fine example of musical truth and accuracy and in addition is well made and smart. It well deserves a Best Buy. **HFC**

### VERDICT

<p><b>SOUND &gt;&gt; 88%</b></p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100%; height: 10px; background: linear-gradient(to right, orange 88%, white 88%);"></div>	<p>The considerable size and retro looks may be a drawback for some, the impeccable manners for others. But on the whole this amp scores very highly for natural, uncoloured and informative music-making.</p>
<p><b>FEATURES &gt;&gt; 82%</b></p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100%; height: 10px; background: linear-gradient(to right, orange 82%, white 82%);"></div>	
<p><b>BUILD &gt;&gt; 86%</b></p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100%; height: 10px; background: linear-gradient(to right, orange 86%, white 86%);"></div>	
<p><b>VALUE &gt;&gt; 86%</b></p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100%; height: 10px; background: linear-gradient(to right, orange 86%, white 86%);"></div>	

**HI-FI CHOICE**  
OVERALL SCORE **87%**



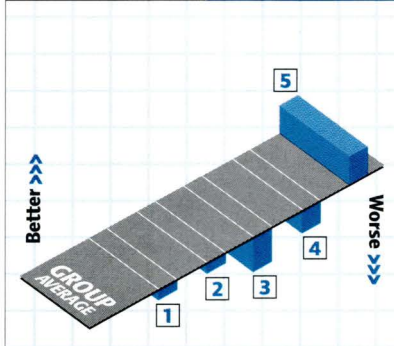
## LAB REPORT

Though beaten over certain parameters by others in this strong test group, this amp presented generally convincing measurements overall. The power supply measures very well, producing a maximum output of 22A into our stress-testing jig, with voltage clipping taking place at 23V (8-ohm simulated load).

The indications from this are that it should be capable of driving a two-ohm load quite competently, showing signs of stress only when the volume is set at its very highest – the very low output impedance (0.032 ohms) further reinforces these measurements.

The frequency response measurement figures cast a slight shadow over things, with variations of up to 0.4dB having been measured. This is tempered slightly, however, by the fact that the deviation from perfect is fairly smooth, without any peaks or spikes in the readings. The upper frequency response limit measures at 72kHz, more than sufficient for CD replay and almost up to SACD's upper limits.

## HOW IT COMPARES



- 1] Dynamic power >> -10%
- 2] Frequency response >> -10%
- 3] Dynamic range >> -30%
- 4] Distortion >> -20%
- 5] Output impedance >> +25%

## SPECIFICATIONS

Measurement	Rated	Actual
Power output (8 ohms)	70W	64W
Distortion (1 kHz/8 ohms)	0.006%	0.009%
Frequency response (20Hz-20kHz)	n/s	+/- 0.4dB

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# EXPOSURE 2010 S

*Beauty is a lot more than skin deep with this revamped classic*

Exposure has never been much of a brand for visually remarkable hi-fi. But 'slightly unadventurous' is not the same as 'ugly' and, in fact, this silver-fronted box is highly presentable. On closer inspection, the 2010 S has some deceptively attractive touches, such as the small chamfer surrounding the knobs. Indeed, the general standard of fit and finish is high, this having evidently been a priority in Exposure's overhaul of the original 2010 range. A new 2010 system remote control is also now available. The most obvious internal change to the amp is an increase of nominal output power from 50 to 75 watts.

The box's contents bear witness to thoughtful, cost-conscious design. A relatively meaty power supply bodes well, as does the near-exclusive use of discrete transistors and uniformly good quality passive components. Both the volume control and the selector switch are good old-fashioned mechanical parts, but motorised to allow remote operation. There's no attempt at a heatsink, merely a thick metal bar to distribute heat evenly over the base; this should allow plenty of margin even for party use, although unrealistic sinewave testing could cause some awful hot running.

Facilities are basic, with six line inputs (one can optionally be turned into a phono input) plus tape and preamp out, and twin sets of terminals for bi-wiring. Set against the more fully-featured Marantz and Cyrus, this clearly sets out its stall in terms of sound first and foremost.

## SOUND QUALITY

It had better sound good, then! And rest assured, it does. Even from cold (our sample arrived just before the test began), it managed to put in a performance which was generally considered equal best, tied with the (dearer) Electrocompaniet. Listeners enjoyed its bass weight, which added depth not just in terms of frequencies but in musical interpretation. And it's not just weighty, but punchy and agile too, with no trace of flab or waffle.



Allied to that is a high standard of imaging depth and precision, with the various groups within an ensemble clearly and stably positioned. Rhythmic drive also impressed at least one listener considerably, and in the end the feeling was that there was an essential, highly enjoyable 'rightness' to the sound.

Again, this was borne out in extended listening. One of the greatest and most subversive hi-fi evils is the effect of making real acoustic instruments sound like synthesised versions, and while none of the amps in this group suffered badly from that, the 2010 S was notably far from it. It has a high credibility factor, if you like – there is a real woody weight and resonance to piano, for instance, and properly reedy saxophones.

Compared with the Electrocompaniet, the 2010 S is more forward in its presentation and some listeners may find its balance less comfortable in the long run. That's largely a matter of taste, however – after all, to many people 'comfortable' is a term of hi-fi abuse. We'd rather not be pedantic on the subject. Rather, suffice it to say that this amp gives an admirable degree of musical insight and communication, and altogether fulfils the criteria of high-fidelity sound. All-in-all, a clear Best Buy. **HFC**

### VERDICT

<b>SOUND &gt;&gt;&gt; 88%</b>	A fine example of how a hi-fi amp should be – it doesn't draw attention to itself, it just gets on with its job and does it very well indeed. Unless you seek vast power or flashy looks, this is a prime contender.
<b>FEATURES &gt;&gt;&gt; 78%</b>	
<b>BUILD &gt;&gt;&gt; 85%</b>	
<b>VALUE &gt;&gt;&gt; 92%</b>	

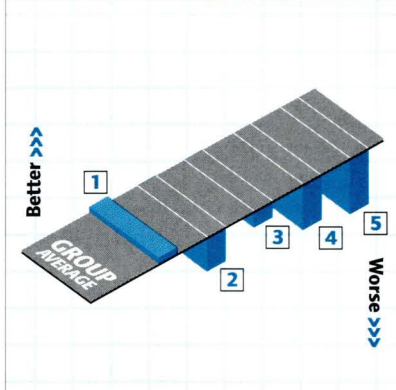


## LAB REPORT

This amplifier's nominal power rating seems right on the money, our measured figure of 2x74W before clipping agreeing closely with the manufacturer's figure. Peak power is nearer 100W, a very healthy figure, and the specified peak current output of 12A is fairly conservative – our testing indicates that the protection circuitry limits out at exactly 15A.

The frequency response is flat in the bass but slightly rolled off in the treble, 0.8dB down by 20kHz (-3dB at 45kHz). Many manufacturers prefer to limit frequency response a little for various reasons, and this amount of roll-off is often just about audible in side-by-side comparisons, slightly sweetening the sound. It's short of SACD's enormous bandwidth but not worryingly so. Likewise, the distortion and output impedance figures, unimpressive by this group's standards, are still fine in the general scheme of things.

## HOW IT COMPARES

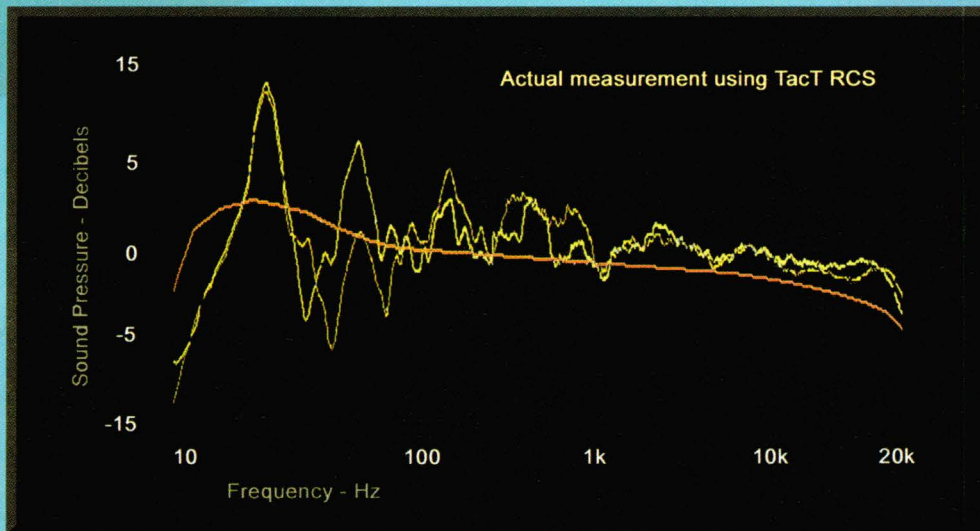


- 1] Dynamic power >>> +5%
- 2] Frequency response >>> -30%
- 3] Dynamic range >>> -15%
- 4] Distortion >>> -40%
- 5] Output impedance >>> -50%

## SPECIFICATIONS

Measurement	Rated	Actual
Power output (8 ohms)	75W	74W
Distortion (1kHz/8 ohms)	0.3%	0.016%
Frequency response (20Hz-20kHz)	+/- 0.5dB	+/- 0.8dB

# Rooms Exposed



## **The problem:**

This is a typical measurement of speakers' frequency response in a listening room. The yellow lines represent left & right speakers. These lines should trace identically and form a gentle downward slope similar to the red line. They obviously do not and will not in any room other than a perfect listening room - which is virtually impossible to build.

## **Read on if you dare...**

The big bumps at 25 & 70Hz are caused by a typical room length and height of 22 & 8 feet. A typical 'bump' measured in a room will have 10 to 20 times the height (sound energy) than it should do. Not only does this cause familiar booming, but will also cause smearing of voices as this very bump can take up to a second to dissipate.

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# MARANTZ PM7200 KI

Two operating modes and a full feature set – does it all add up?

This is by no means the first time this amp has graced the pages of HFC. It first appeared in plain, non-signature guise and we liked it (enough to earn it a gong in our recent Awards). We then tried this KI Signature variant and found it a touch better – if not quite such excellent value for money. But now it stands head to head with a group of the very latest challengers. How does it compare?

From the outside, rather well. It's good-looking in a very Marantz kind of way, with its distinctive champagne finish (it's also available in black). And its considerable bulk looks less threatening than it might first seem, thanks in part to the careful and symmetrical layout of the controls. The feature count is high too, with seven inputs including phono (for once!), two tape loops, processor loop, tone controls, balance control and the amp's own particular novelty, switchable Class A/Class AB operation. We found that the modes were hard to distinguish, so we left it in the more powerful Class AB operation for most of the listening, but it's fun to experiment.

The copper-plated chassis (inside and out) is gorgeous and the substantial toroidal transformer found inside is rather impressive, but most of the construction otherwise is more down to earth. All the same, components are of decent quality and touches like input switching relays and doubled pairs of output transistors show clearly that real attention has been paid to sound quality – this stuff costs money!

## SOUND QUALITY

This amp probably divided opinions more than any of the others in the group. On the whole, criticisms were concentrated on the PM7200 KI's sound seeming less natural than the best of the group. One listener spoke of instruments being crammed together, with less acoustic and air round them – indeed, when compared to the naturalness of the Electrocompaniet, one could see the point. Another listener complained of mild coloration on voices.



Against that, all agreed that bass was weighty and tuneful, with well-judged control that doesn't veer towards dullness or thudding. There was also general agreement that the amp's basic delivery is lively and bright, though some liked this more than others. Summarising the comments, it seems this amp puts all the music across, but interposes just a little more of a veil than the best amps in the group – 'less real' was a comment that popped up more than once.

Later sighted listening was particularly interesting in the light of previous experiences of the amp. It was easy to hear mild limitations in the sound, but we would still stand by our original assertions that this is a highly capable amp for its price. One particular factor was necessarily overlooked in the formal listening, because these are conducted at matched levels. The output power, higher than all but the NAD, is delivered with great assurance and loses nothing in precision right up to the point of obvious overload. That in itself is praiseworthy, high power with control being something of a costly commodity, and indeed the PM7200 KI is never happier than when blasting something energetic – be it classical, rock or any other style – from a pair of power-hungry speakers. **HFC**

### VERDICT

**SOUND >> 83%**

**FEATURES >> 90%**

**BUILD >> 82%**

**VALUE >> 87%**

While it can be beaten on sonic purity by some less highly featured amps, this powerful and assured Marantz performer has a lot to offer, especially at the discounted prices we've seen around lately.

**HI-FI CHOICE**  
85%  
**OVERALL SCORE**

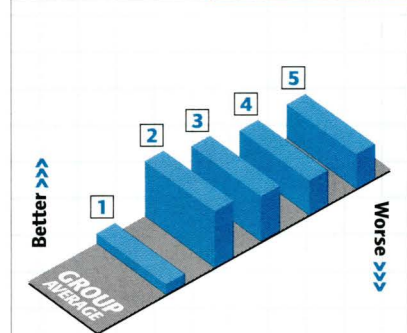


## LAB REPORT

This Marantz proved to be a very impressive beast on the test bench. Our measurements suggest that it would almost manage a 1-ohm load, giving 22A maximum and voltage clipping at 25V (8-ohm load). Continuous power output with both channels driven was a little below the Marantz's 95W rating (unlike the non-KI version, which exceeded it). But this unit's uprated mains transformer gives it better current delivery and hence an edge with sub-8-ohm loads.

Clipping waveforms looked very smooth, and measurements of harmonic products indicate that even when pushed hard, the PM7200 KI should sound clean and smooth. The output impedance was low at 0.032 ohms, well below the recommended maximum of 1% of loudspeaker impedance, suggesting that the amp will always have a firm grip on speaker cone movements. While it doesn't have the brute-power output of the NAD C372, it certainly won't be lacking in output under normal use.

## HOW IT COMPARES



- 1] Dynamic power >> +10%
- 2] Frequency response >> +50%
- 3] Dynamic range >> +40%
- 4] Distortion >> +30%
- 5] Output impedance >> +30%

## SPECIFICATIONS

Measurement	Rated	Actual
Power output (8 ohms)	95W	78W
Distortion (1kHz/8 ohms)	0.03%	0.005%
Frequency response (20Hz-20kHz)	n/s	+/- 0.025dB

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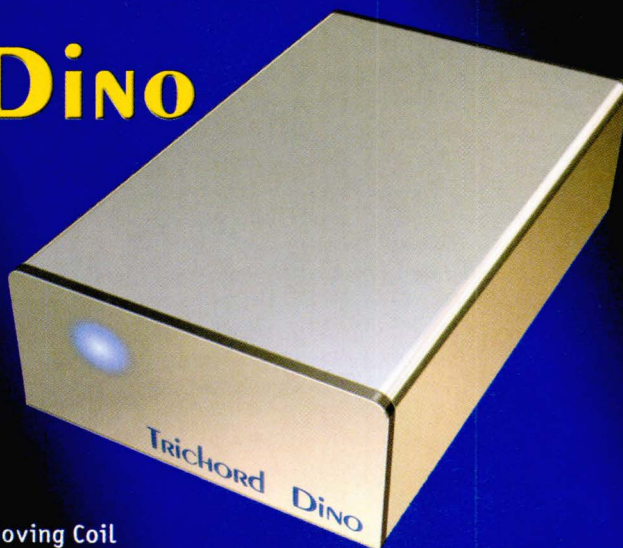


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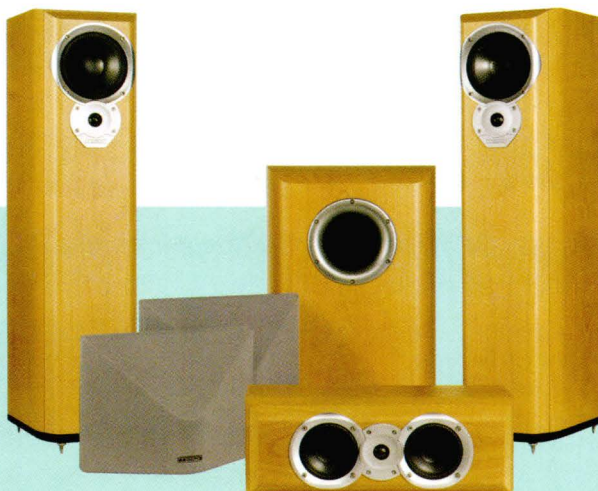
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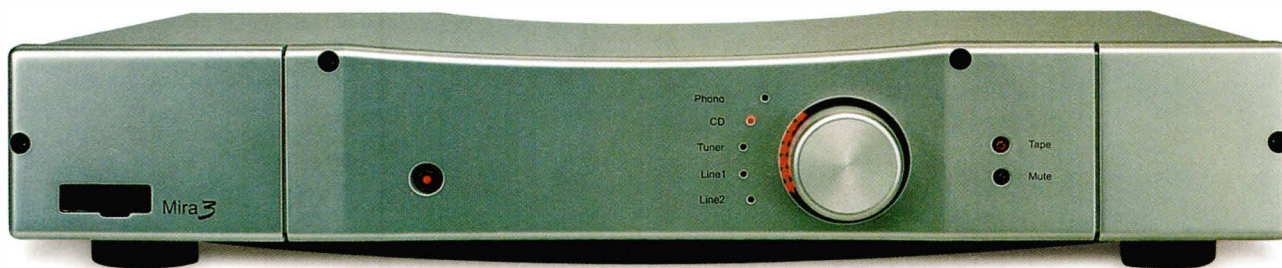
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## REGA MIRA 3

*Beneath Rega's distinctive styling lies a clever, tuneful performer*

**D**on't pick this amp up with your hands under the front and back edges – the cast edges on those heatsinks can hurt! Putting the heatsink underneath does, however, solve the problem of how to dump waste heat from an amp without unsightly metalwork and/or dust-admitting holes. Airflow underneath is restricted, but this should do the job adequately. It's typical of Rega's original – read 'quirky' – approach to aesthetics.

One of the company's smarter features is the single knob on the front. Normally it's a volume control, but press it and it becomes an input selector – after all, no one ever needs to use both features simultaneously. It's a neat and ingenious solution, and perfectly natural to operate after the first couple of tries. The volume control is wholly electronic, using a very high spec new part from Wolfson (the DAC people), while inputs are switched by relays. Talking of inputs, there is a phono input (as you would expect from Britain's most prolific turntable manufacturer) plus six line inputs. There are also preamp output and power amp input sockets, though to separate the two requires getting inside the case, which is not a job for the inexperienced. Construction is good and sturdy, and the circuitry uses a mix of discrete transistors and integrated circuits.

### SOUND QUALITY

Occupying a distinctly middling position within the group, the Mira 3 attracted both praise and criticism. Notably, it was felt by one listener in particular to time better than the others – the business of music 'timing' is subjective to the point that some don't even acknowledge the existence of such an effect, while others find its absence excruciating, so if you're among the latter, you'll want to investigate this amp. It was also felt to be lively and dynamic, with generally neutral tonality and a suitable sense of drama in the right kind of music.

Against that were a number of accusations that the overall scale of things seemed a little



small, with images slightly compressed and lacking in body. Its control of the speakers was decent but not outstanding, while its slight reluctance to plumb the greatest bass depths gave it something of a breathless feeling not wholly unlike that of the Cyrus amp. Its detail was judged good, though not quite equal to that of the Electrocompaniet, for example, and the ambience surrounding the musicians was felt not to be quite as palpable.

On the whole, solo listening confirmed the panel's findings, but it also showed that long-term listening can be a little wearing with this amp. Despite its flat measured response (for both line and phono), it sounds a touch bright and this can lead to fatigue after a while, detracting from listening pleasure. That apart, there is plenty to admire and indeed the levels of detail the Mira 3 brings out are commendable, arguably on a par with any of the similarly-priced amps in the group. Overall, its sound is perhaps a matter of taste and it could also probably benefit from sympathetic partnering with laid-back speakers and source components. The phono input, by the way, is a cut above those on most integrated amps these days and for LP-based listeners this amp is a stronger proposition. For the rest, then, a cautious recommendation in context. **HFC**

### VERDICT

**SOUND >> 81%**

**FEATURES >> 84%**

**BUILD >> 83%**

**VALUE >> 83%**

**HI-FI CHOICE**  
**OVERALL SCORE 82%**

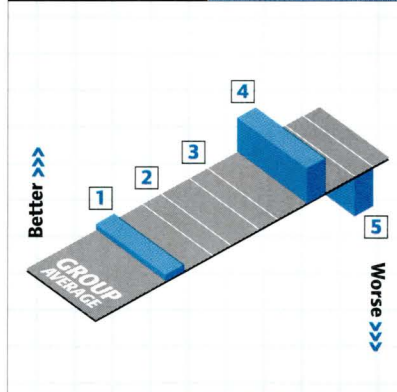


### LAB REPORT

This Rega offering presents itself pretty well in the lab. Power output of 2x66W into 8 ohms is a little above the manufacturer's 2x60W rating, and more than enough to drive most modern speakers at realistic levels. This unit is also capable of almost enough current output to drive a 4-ohm load into voltage clipping, which would give it a flat-out maximum power of nearly 190W (short-term).

The initial good impressions were reinforced by a very flat 20Hz-20kHz frequency response, deviating from the ideal by no more than 0.2dB, with an upper limit (-3dB) of 91 kHz – almost as high as the upper limits of SACD and DVD-A. Dynamic range measurements were among the best on-test at 100dB, and distortion at normal listening levels was very low. There are some odd distortion characteristics which creep in when the amp is pushed far harder than its makers intended, but its behaviour at sensible levels is very good indeed.

### HOW IT COMPARES



- 1] Dynamic power >> +5%
- 2] Frequency response >> 0%
- 3] Dynamic range >> 0%
- 4] Distortion >> +30%
- 5] Output impedance >> -35%

### SPECIFICATIONS

Measurement	Rated	Actual
Power output (8 ohms)	60W	66W
Distortion (1 kHz/8 ohms)	0.008%	0.005%
Frequency response (20Hz-20kHz)	n/s	+/- 0.2dB

# CONCLUSIONS

*This batch of amps shows the level of quality currently available the mid-market stereo arena*

**T**he winner is great and the loser's rubbish, right? Absolutely wrong! To give a little perspective to this group, we added to it a veteran Harman-Kardon of late-1980s vintage. Originally priced at £370, in its day, this was an exceptionally good, high powered (70-watt), well featured and great-sounding amp, that did well in the lab, too.

Every amp in this group trounced the 1980s design completely. They all had better bass and clearer treble, they varied between similar

and considerably improved levels of detail, and they all measured better in almost every way. Which just goes to show that even the less highly praised models here are still rather good.

But you want the best, yes? In that case, from the perspective of sound quality alone, Exposure and Electrocompaniet lead the pack. There are differences between them (and between them and other top-notch models we've seen lately, such as the Myryad MXI2080) so presumably they

can't both be perfect, but they both present music in a captivating, involving and lively way. It's just the manners that differ; the Electrocompaniet is more genteel, the Exposure more informal. No criticism implied of either – it's your choice. However, it's undeniable that the Exposure's price is the more attractive if budgets are tight.

The Marantz PM7200 KI is a horse of a different colour, with its greater emphasis on features, but it remains a very capable amp, if

not as revealing as the previous two. The standard PM7200 (which costs just £330) has a very similar performance for less money and may prove more attractive. NAD's C372 is distinctly less refined, but still competent and hard to beat in terms of watts per pound.

Finally, Rega's and especially Cyrus's offerings are both likely to be bought as part of complete one-make systems. But both will work with other brands and hence make a good point of entry into each firm's range. **HFC**

## TRY THEM WITH THESE

### SPEAKERS

**B&W 705 £900**

A highly revealing speaker that is also involving and fatigue-free in the long term.

**PMC DB1+ £625**

Small it may be, but it creates a disproportionately full-bodied sonic image. Appreciates hard driving.

### CD PLAYERS

**CAMBRIDGE AUDIO AZUR 640C £250**

Detail, extension, solidity and polish that seriously belie the price.

**SONY SCD-XA3000ES £800**

The height of hi-tech (it also plays SACDs), but it will also tell you all about your favourite Compact Discs.

## HINTS AND TIPS

» Don't stack equipment on an amplifier – you could end up obstructing airflow and causing overheating problems.

» Use decent cables in and out, and make sure that speaker cables are not frayed or contacting the chassis at any point. Tighten screw-down speaker

terminals from time to time.

» If an amp has a standby function, use that in preference to the mains switch unless it will be off for a couple of days at least.

» Beware of creating a short circuit between red and black speaker terminals. This can kill amplifiers.

## AMPLIFIERS AT A GLANCE



MAKE MODEL	Cyrus 6vs	Electrocompaniet ECI 3	Exposure 2010 S	Marantz PM7200 KI	NAD C372	Rega Mira 3
<b>PRICE</b>	£600	£999	£599	£500	£500	£598
<b>SOUND</b>						
<b>FEATURES</b>						
<b>BUILD</b>						
<b>VALUE</b>						
<b>OVERALL</b>						
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	Best seen in a Cyrus rack but capable of sweet sounds elsewhere too. Upgradeable.	Large and fairly powerful, with individual yet classy looks and very enjoyable, refined sound.	Beneath the unassuming exterior lurks a very capable performer that's passionate about music.	Smart and fully-featured, with sound that's full-bodied and confident at high levels.	Immensely powerful and versatile too, with some sacrifice in sonic refinement.	Lively sound with good timing and frequency extension, if not quite as detailed as some.
<b>KEY FEATURES</b>						
<b>LINE INPUTS</b>	7	6	6	6	7	6
<b>TAPE LOOPS</b>	2	2	1	2	2	1
<b>PHONO INPUT</b>	No	No	Optional	Yes (MM)	No	Yes (MM)
<b>SIZE (WxHxD)</b>	21.5x7.3x36cm	48.3x11.5x41cm	44x9x30cm	44x15.9x37.5cm	43.5x13.2x35cm	43.5x8.5x28cm
<b>WEIGHT</b>	3.7kg	12kg	6.5kg	12.3kg	12kg	5kg
<b>REMOTE CONTROL</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>BALANCED INPUT</b>	No	Yes (1)	No	No	No	No
<b>LAB CONCLUSIONS</b> E = EXCELLENT • G = GOOD • A = AVERAGE • P = POOR						
<b>CLIP POINT (8 OHM)</b>	19.2V <b>A</b>	22.6V <b>A</b>	24.3V <b>G</b>	25V <b>G</b>	40V <b>E</b>	23V <b>A</b>
<b>FREQUENCY RESPONSE</b>	+/- <0.1dB <b>E</b>	+/- 0.4dB <b>G</b>	+/- 0.8dB <b>A</b>	+/-0.025dB <b>E</b>	+/-0.105dB <b>E</b>	+/- 0.2dB <b>G</b>
<b>DYNAMIC RANGE</b>	100dB <b>G</b>	97dB <b>A</b>	98dB <b>A</b>	103dB <b>E</b>	99dB <b>A</b>	100dB <b>G</b>
<b>DISTORTION</b>	0.007% <b>G</b>	0.009% <b>G</b>	0.016% <b>G</b>	0.005% <b>E</b>	0.007% <b>G</b>	0.005% <b>E</b>
<b>OUTPUT IMPEDANCE</b>	0.032 ohm <b>E</b>	0.032 ohm <b>E</b>	0.244 ohm <b>A</b>	0.014 ohm <b>E</b>	0.04 ohm <b>E</b>	0.1052 ohm <b>G</b>

[ HIGH PERFORMANCE AUDIO EQUIPMENT ]

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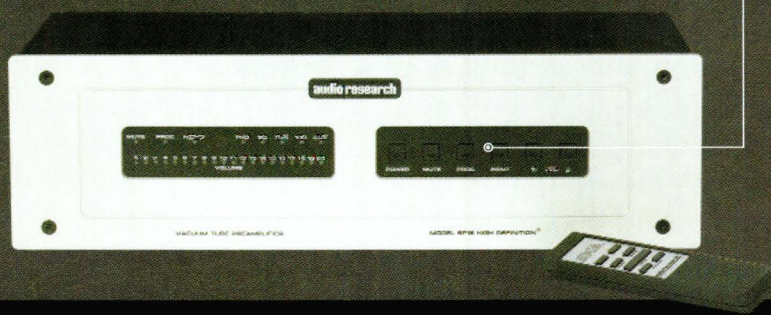
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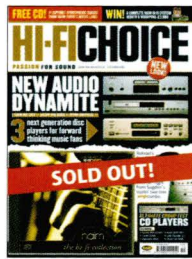
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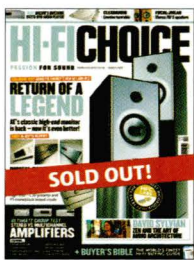
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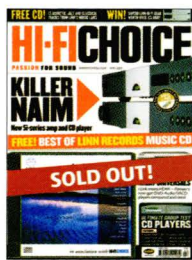
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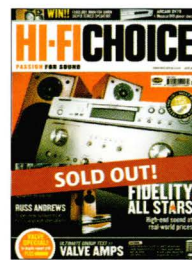
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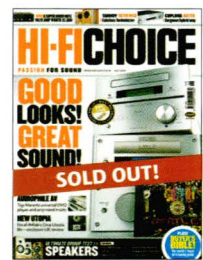
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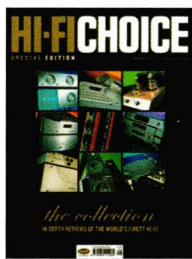
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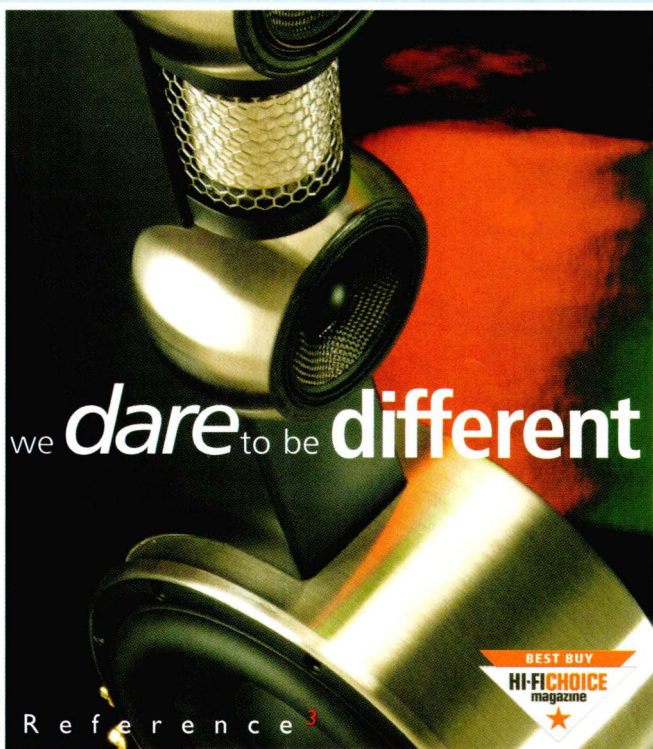
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# HI-FI CHOICE BUYER'S BIBLE



Welcome to the *Hi-Fi Choice Buyer's Bible* – the ultimate guide to the very best high performance hi-fi and AV gear you can buy. Here, you'll find all our favourite current products listed under easy to use categories, together with useful information on what to look for and how to get the most from your components.

## Reviews you can trust

Our test results are the most reliable in the business. We employ the most experienced reviewers and use the most thorough techniques to ensure our ratings are the ones you can trust. All the equipment we rate most highly is contained within these pages, from CD and vinyl to the latest multichannel disc players. Whether hi-fi stereo or high performance surround and vision, these components will take you a step closer to reality.

## How to use this guide

The *Hi-Fi Choice Buyer's Bible* is the best way to make a shortlist of components for your system. Pick the ones that best suit your taste and budget, then use our *Dealer Classified* section to find specialist outlets where you can audition these components with your favourite discs.

Products that score more than 80 per cent overall are automatically featured in the *Hi-Fi Choice Buyer's Bible*. Any Best Buy or Editor's Choice Badges awarded are also displayed.

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# CD PLAYERS

*Audio disc players for music only*



Despite the emergence of new formats and the resurgence of an old one (vinyl), CD is still the king of formats if you require breadth of choice. And despite the fact that other sources will play CDs, if you want to hear your discs at their best there's little substitute for a dedicated CD player.

It's also the most enduring format on the market. Despite high-resolution contenders like SACD and DVD-Audio, nothing has been able to undermine this universally popular format.

CD players work by reading a stream of 1s and 0s off a disc that spins at a constantly changing speed (to counteract the increasing length of 'groove'). This bitstream is then digitally filtered before undergoing digital-to-analogue conversion in the DAC (D-to-A convertor). Thereafter, the signal is filtered



again before being amplified and sent to the output sockets.

The processes of reading the disc and converting the data are sometimes split between a CD transport and separate DAC in so-called two-box players. A popular approach with very high-end kit, this separates the electronically noisy elements from the sensitive analogue stages, but can introduce timing errors known as jitter, therefore one-box players usually offer best results where budget is a consideration.

## SUPER AUDIO CD



SACD or Super Audio CD is a relatively new audio-only format introduced by Sony and Philips. It offers higher resolution than CD in the form of considerably greater bandwidth and improved dynamic range. It also has the potential for uncompressed surround sound using up to six channels, and most new discs take advantage of this. SACD discs are usually hybrids and will play on normal CD players, but you won't be able to appreciate their highest quality or their multichannel capability without an SACD-compatible player. Some SACD players also play DVD and even DVD-Audio – these are listed in our DVD section.

## Q&A

### WHAT'S A DAC?

A DAC or digital-to-analogue convertor is a fundamental part of any CD player and converts the digits read from the disc into an analogue music waveform which is amplified to line level.

### WHY HAVE SEPARATE TRANSPORTS & DACS?

Discs are read by a transport or disc drive, which creates radio frequency 'noise'. Separating the DAC means the conversion can be done with less interference.

### CAN I USE AN OUTBOARD DAC WITH MY INTEGRATED CD PLAYER?

Yes, if it has a digital output – and most do.

### DO I NEED DIGITAL CABLES FOR A CD PLAYER?

No. All analogue cables are suitable for connecting a CD player to an amp. Digital specific cables with 75ohms impedance are useful when connecting the player to a digital recorder or DAC.

### WHAT IS OVERSAMPLING/UPSAMPLING?

Oversampling involves multiplying the sampling frequency by a whole number, usually between four and 32, but sometimes higher, and is designed let the DAC to work in a more linear fashion. Upsampling is where the data stream is stretched out by interpolation and is typically used to refer to large changes in sampling rate such as from 44.1 kHz to 192kHz.

### CAN I PLAY SACDS ON A NORMAL CD PLAYER?

Yes. The vast majority of SACD discs are hybrids, with a CD layer that all CD players can read.

### CAN I PLAY DVDS ON A CD PLAYER?

No, the same applies to DVD-As. But you can play CDs and DVD-As on normal DVD players.

## TOP BUYS



### Marantz CD7300 £350

The latest in a long line of highly successful sub-£500 CD players from Marantz is an absolute beauty. Engaging and sonically refined, there's little to touch it at the price.



### Naim CD5i £825

If you're looking for sub-£1,000 CD player, park your ears here. Naim's entry level beauty combines the brand's traditional rhythm and timing with considerable poise and panache.

## Our favourite CD PLAYERS

SB BEST BUY EC EDITOR'S CHOICE

### Audio-only CD and SACD players

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SACD COMPATIBLE	ELEC DIG OUTPUT	OPT DIG OUTPUT	CD-RW COMPATIBLE	CD TEXT	BAL ANALOGUE OUT	HEADPHONE SOCKET	VARIABLE OUTPUT	ISSUE NUMBER
<b>UP TO £1,000</b>												
SB	Arcam DiVA CD73T	400	Refined and articulate, smooth and dynamic – a finely judged balance for budget to mid-price systems	●	●	●	●					247
SB	Arcam DiVA CD192	850	Contemporary below the lid upsampling player with articulate, if slightly understated sound quality		●	●	●					260
SB	Cambridge Audio Azur 640C	250	This elegant little player can hold its own in very elevated company – a budget system will barely do it justice	●	●	●						249
	Exposure 2010 S	600	Bespoke mechanism makes for a thoroughly involving listen. Not the most rounded, though	●	●	●						261
	Marantz CD5400 OSE	200	Nicely thought out player with useful features and good sound, though some mechanical noise		●	●	●	●		●		256
SB	Marantz CD7300	350	Astonishingly capable sub-£500 player with effortless bass, detailed mid and treble and vast soundstages	●	●	●	●			●		250
SB	Musical Fidelity X-RayV3	900	Think of this as an A3.2 CD player in a smaller, cheaper box. Great, earthy CD sound for the money		●	●	●					255
SB	Naim CD5i	825	As idiosyncratic as ever, but sonically the CD5i is the definitive player at the price				●					259
SB	Roksan Kandy MkIID	650	Clean, tidy and expressive player – a more than worthwhile improvement on previous versions	●	●	●			●			259
	Rotel RCD-02	375	Against some strong competition in the same price area, this Rotel generally holds up well		●		●					231
SB	Sony SCD-XA3000ES	800	A revised and refined version of the SCD-XA333ES that provides an almost holographic sound	●	●	●	●	●	●			248
<b>ABOVE £1,000</b>												
SB	Audio Analogue Maestro	1,650	The new Maestro 192/24 delivers a sound that's slightly rosy yet always musical and thoroughly enjoyable		●		●			●		257
EC	Audionet ART V2	2,300	Built to last forever, this CD has a dark natural sound with excellent bass and would be cheap at twice the price!		●		●					231
EC	Ayre CX-7 CD Player	2,950	Superbly built and natural sounding player that will win you over with its range of capabilities and transparency		●		●			●		251
EC	BAT VK-D5SE CD Player	5,495	Superb valve CD player that is smooth and refined but with real guts that doesn't conform to valve stereotypes		●	●	●			●		251
SB	Cyrus CD8x	1,000	Strong in terms of timing, imaging and resolution. Adding the £400 PSX-R power supply makes it stronger still		●							261
	Exposure 3010	1,195	What this player lacks in immediacy and punch is offset by its sparkling sense of occasion and musical tension		●	●	●	●				246
	Exposure XXII	1,395	Natural sounding player, great with voices and acoustic instruments and makes for engaging listening		●	●	●					238
	Hegel CDP2A	1,500	A technically proficient and masterly-sounding player built by people who clearly know what they are doing		●		●			●		252
EC	Krell SACD Standard	4,244	A landmark SCD player and an excellent CD player at what by Krell standards is a relatively affordable price	●	●	●	●			●		251
	Meridian G07	1,595	Immaculately conceived and executed player with a softly-spoken voice. Needs careful system matching		●	●	●			●		259
EC	Musical Fidelity Tri-Vista	4,000	Limited edition stereo-only SACD/CD player that is simply the best player MF has ever made	●	●	●	●	●				237
EC	Naim CDX2	2,700	Fine quality one-box CD player, but its best feature is upgradeability via outboard XPS supply				●					238
	Orelle CD100evo2	1,299	Relaxed, but strong on refinement and detail. An intelligent choice, particularly strong with acoustic music		●	●	●					259
SB	Primare D30.2	1,500	Superb high-resolution player gives a strong taste of musical structure and physicality		●					●		226
	Quad 99 CD-P	1,000	Good but not outstanding player that also doubles as a preamp, with digital inputs and volume controls			●	●					259
SB	Resolution Audio Opus 21	2,850	Dynamic, well timed and 3D performance with an analogue volume control and digital input for a second source				●			●	●	244
	Roksan Caspian M Series	1,100	An enjoyably dynamic-sounding player featuring a positively unique choice of digital components		●		●					252
EC	Sony SCD-XA9000ES	2,400	State-of-the-art CD and SACD player with full SACD bass management and i.Link-encrypted digital output	●	●		●	●	●		●	253
EC	Wadia 302	3,999	A dynamic and gripping player, with bass to die for and resolution to change your listening habits		●	●	●			●		253
EC	Wadia 861se	9,999	Stunning player with a full digital preamp and an all-revealing sound that'll keep you up all night		●	●	●			●	●	256

**SPECS KEY** **SACD COMPATIBLE** Plays high-resolution SACD discs in multichannel and/or two-channel mode. **ELEC DIGITAL OUTPUT** Electrical coaxial output for digital connection to a DAC or digital recorder. **OPT DIGITAL OUTPUT** Optical Toslink output for digital connection to a DAC or digital recorder. **CD-RW COMPATIBLE** Will play CD-RW (rewritable) discs, most CD players can cope with CD-Rs. **CD TEXT** Will display album and track titles from inserted disc. **BAL ANALOGUE OUT** Balanced XLR output connections for similarly equipped amplifiers. **HEADPHONE SOCKET** Quarter inch (6.3mm) headphone jack fitted to the CD player. **VARIABLE OUTPUT** Player features both fixed level and variable, volume adjustable outputs.



**Audio Analogue Maestro 192/24** £1,650  
A beautifully crafted CD player that brings many traditional 'analogue' qualities to digital replay. If you want your CDs to sound natural, detailed and dynamic, this is a fine buy.



**Resolution Audio Opus 21** £2,850  
This player is king of subtlety. Outwardly, the music sounds dynamic and well-scaled, but it's the level of inner detail resolved here that is truly outstanding.

# DVD PLAYERS

*Disc players for audio and video*



DVD has proved a phenomenal success in commercial terms and has virtually extinguished the market for budget CD players – you can't really beat a multiformat player when it comes to features. Early DVD players were not particularly good CD spinners because of the enormous amount of RF interference produced by video circuits, but as this problem has been identified manufacturers have begun to tackle it. Nowadays, most DVD players are competent CD players and a few are very good – often as not they are the ones that play DVD-Audio discs as well.

The great advantage of DVD is that it offers sufficient capacity to hold a feature length movie or music concert *and* discrete multichannel sound on a disc the size of a CD. In the case of plain DVD-Video discs, the audio is encoded in either the Dolby Digital or DTS format, both of which use 'lossy' compression to fit the audio onto the disc alongside the video data. You can use



a DVD player with your stereo system by connecting the stereo outputs, though this won't give the surround sound benefits that the format specialises in.

## DVD-AUDIO

DVD-Audio is a high-resolution format that offers multichannel, stereo and Dolby Digital tracks on dedicated DVD-A discs. The discs can be played on any DVD player, but the CD-beating high-fidelity sound can only be appreciated with a DVD-A player.

While offering similar benefits to SACD, it has the advantage of on-screen display for information – lyrics, images and so on. To save

you having to decide which format to go for, a few brands are bringing out universal players to cover SACD and DVD-A, alongside CD and DVD-Video – a neat and relatively future proof route into high-resolution multichannel music. Higher-end models featuring high-bandwidth compatible digital audio links are now also appearing, enhancing DVD-A/SACD sound when used with similarly equipped amps.



## Q&A

### WHICH AUDIO OUTPUTS GIVE THE BEST QUALITY?

Use the analogue outputs for CD, DVD-A and SACD, and the coaxial digital output for DTS and Dolby Digital movie soundtracks.

### WHICH VIDEO OUTPUTS GIVE THE BEST QUALITY?

The best connection is component video closely followed by RGB Scart, which is clearly superior to S-video and the basic composite video option.

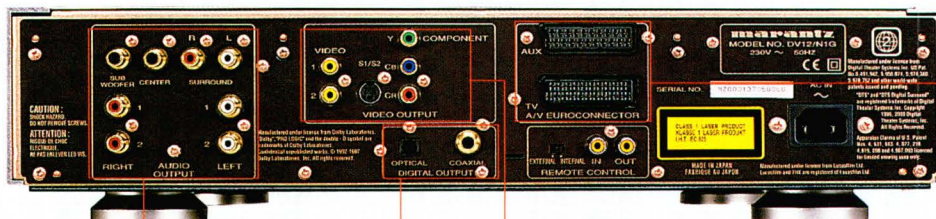
### DO I NEED A MULTICHANNEL AMP TO USE A DVD PLAYER?

Only if you want to hear music and movie soundtracks in multichannel surround. DVD players can be used with stereo amps and just two speakers to great effect, but you'll only get stereo, not surround sound.

### DO I NEED PROGRESSIVE SCAN VIDEO?

It's worthwhile for the very best picture quality, but make sure your DVD player and display device support PAL progressive.

## CONNECTIONS



**ANALOGUE AUDIO OUTPUTS:** For stereo and multichannel connections, use these for best results with DVD-Audio, SACD and CD.

**DIGITAL OUTPUTS:** For Dolby Digital, DTS and PCM audio bitstreams.

**VIDEO CONNECTIONS:** Yellow sockets are composite; red, green and blue sockets are for component which gives best results, while the black multipin socket is S-video, which sits qualitatively between the two.

**SCART CONNECTIONS:** These are a good-quality option for video, especially ones that output RGB.



## Our favourite DVD PLAYERS

BBB BEST BUY EC EDITOR'S CHOICE

### Audio/Video disc players

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	DVD-A COMPATIBLE	SACD COMPATIBLE	ELEC DIG OUTPUT	OPT DIG OUTPUT	HEADPHONE SOCKET	ISSUE NUMBER
<b>UP TO £1,000</b>									
BBB	Arcam DiVA DV78	700	Imagine almost all of the DV88 Plus at a knock-down price. Top picture and sound performance for the money						254
	Cambridge Audio Azur 540D	200	Very respectable and well presented DVD-Audio player at a knockdown price						257
BBB	Denon DVD-3910	900	Exceptionally well-specified universal player with a performance to match. A true class-leader						260
	Marantz DV6400	400	Good starter universal player with decent CD replay quality, but slightly disappointing SACD performance						254
BBB	Pioneer DV-575A	150	A universal player for peanuts! CD ain't great, but it's decent with DVD and allows you to try DVD-A/SACD at very little cost						261
BBB	Pioneer DV-668AV	600	HDMI-equipped universal player without i.Link audio output, but still absurdly well equipped and highly capable for the price						252
BBB	Pioneer DV-868AVi	1,000	State of the art universal player with next-gen digital outputs – HDMI for video and i.Link for high-resolution audio						252
	Primare V25	1,000	Bold pictures on screen are matched to easy, likeable sound quality and a huge range of outputs						237
<b>ABOVE £1,000</b>									
	Cyrus DVD8	1,200	An impressive step up from the DVD7+, which includes component video outputs						238
EC	Denon DVD-A11	1,700	Refinement and clarity are hallmarks of this player, which is also as close to being future-proof as they come						250
EC	Denon DVD-A1	2,500	A convincing case for the DVD-A format, battleship construction combined with sonic and visual finesse						230
EC	Linn Unidisk SC	2,995	Groundbreaking universal player with built-in preamplifier, with excellent picture for home cinema and sound for hi-fi						259
EC	Marantz DV-12S2	2,000	A universal player for audiophiles, with top-notch video playback too. Sonically refined and enjoyably understated						255
EC	Meridian G91	3,000	A DVD-AV player, preamp/processor and tuner combined – great as a two-channel player, or in a complete Meridian rig						260
EC	Meridian 800	10,805	The ultimate in DVD replay, modular construction, buffered ROM drive, upsampling and high-res digital outputs						230
EC	Primare DVD30	2,000	A universal player for audiophiles – no wideband digital outputs but masterful with music and a good picture too						253
EC	Townshend TA 565 MkII	2,995	If you care more for results than aesthetics it's unbeatable. This is probably the best universal player on the planet						259

**SPECS KEY** **DVD-A COMPATIBLE** Plays high-resolution DVD-A discs in two and multichannel modes. **SACD COMPATIBLE** Plays high-resolution SACD discs in two and multichannel modes. **ELEC DIGITAL OUTPUT** Electrical coaxial output for digital connection to a multichannel amplifier or receiver. **OPT DIGITAL OUTPUT** Optical Toslink output for digital connection to a multichannel amplifier or receiver. **HEADPHONE SOCKET** Quarter inch (6.3mm) headphone jack fitted to the DVD player.

### TOP BUYS



**Arcam DiVA DV78 £700**  
Arcam's entry-level machine combines great video quality with impressive CD sound.



**Denon DVD-3910 £900**  
New-generation Denon is currently the most complete universal player below £1,000.



**Pioneer DV-868AVi £1,000**  
Pioneer's HDMI/i.Link-equipped universal flagship packs an amazing hi-tech punch.



**Townshend Audio TA 565 MkII £2,995**  
This player builds on Pioneer essentials to deliver breathtaking sound across all formats.



**Billy Vee**  
SOUND • SYSTEMS

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 Please call for details on deferred 0% APR for purchases of more than £660. S/H = Pre-Owned unit. E&OE

<p><b>Arcam DV89*</b> DVD-A Player New (2Yr G/tee) .....(1299.00)</p> <p><b>Arcam DV27A FMJ</b> DVD Player (2Yr G/tee) .....(1899.00)</p> <p><b>Arcam CD62T</b> CD Player S/H Blk (1Yr G/tee) .....(369.00)</p> <p><b>Arcam CDS2T</b> CD Player - New (2Yr G/tee) .....(599.00)</p> <p><b>Audiolab 8000A</b> Amplifier (1Yr G/tee) .....(500.00)</p> <p><b>AVI Pro 9 Plus</b> Speakers - Cherry (2Yr G/tee) .....(799.00)</p> <p><b>Denon AVR 2803</b> AV Amplifier (1Yr G/tee) .....(649.00)</p> <p><b>Linn Majik</b> Phono Amplifier S/H (1Yr G/tee) .....(945.00)</p> <p><b>Linn Kolektor</b> Preamplifier S/H (1Yr G/tee) .....(575.00)</p> <p><b>Linn Movie Klassik</b> DVD/CD System S/H (1Yr G/tee) .....(1995.00)</p> <p><b>Linn Kaim Pro</b> Line Preamp S/H (1Yr G/tee) .....(1400.00)</p> <p><b>Linn Klout</b> Power Amplifier S/H (1Yr G/tee) .....(1600.00)</p> <p><b>Linn Trikan</b> Centre Spkr - maple (2Yr G/tee) .....(549.00)</p> <p><b>Linn Ekwall</b> Centre - maple (2Yr G/tee) .....(795.00)</p> <p><b>Linn Espek</b> Speakers - maple (2Yr G/tee) .....(2800.00)</p>	<p><b>£619.00</b> <b>Linn Keltik</b> Spkrs - Wal inc Aktive Cards (2Yr G/tee) ..(6000.00)</p> <p><b>£1195.00</b> <b>Naim CDS2/XPS</b> Player &amp; P/Supply S/H (1Yr G/tee) ..(6265.00)</p> <p><b>£209.00</b> <b>Naim CD5</b> CD Player (1Yr G/tee) .....(1150.00)</p> <p><b>£449.00</b> <b>Naim NAC 112/150</b> Pre-Power S/H (1Yr G/tee) ... (1455.00)</p> <p><b>£195.00</b> <b>Naim NAC 102</b> Preamp S/H (1Yr G/tee) .....(1210.00)</p> <p><b>£569.00</b> <b>Naim NAP 180</b> Power Amp S/H - (1Yr G/tee) ... (1225.00)</p> <p><b>£399.00</b> <b>Naim Hi-Cap 2*</b> P/S - old casework (2Yr G/tee) ... (930.00)</p> <p><b>£625.00</b> <b>Naim XPS2*</b> Power Supply .....(2369.00)</p> <p><b>£345.00</b> <b>Naim Supercap*</b> Power Supply .....(2775.00)</p> <p><b>£1295.00</b> <b>Naim NBL</b> Speakers - Beech (2Yr G/tee) .....(7700.00)</p> <p><b>£599.00</b> <b>Pioneer DVD656S</b> Multiplayer (1Yr G/tee) .....(349.00)</p> <p><b>£895.00</b> <b>Pioneer DVR3100*</b> DVD Recorder/Player (1Yr G/tee).....(349.00)</p> <p><b>£299.00</b> <b>PMC DB1</b> Speakers - Cherry (2Yr G/tee) .....(555.00)</p> <p><b>£559.00</b> <b>PMC TB2</b> Speakers - Cherry S/H (1Yr G/tee) .....(695.00)</p> <p><b>£1985.00</b> <b>Vibe Zeta</b> Subwoofer (2Yr G/tee) .....(600.00)</p>	<p><b>£2195.00</b></p> <p><b>£2995.00</b></p> <p><b>£795.00</b></p> <p><b>£985.00</b></p> <p><b>£695.00</b></p> <p><b>£795.00</b></p> <p><b>£639.00</b></p> <p><b>£1775.00</b></p> <p><b>£2065.00</b></p> <p><b>£3795.00</b></p> <p><b>£219.00</b></p> <p><b>£219.00</b></p> <p><b>£399.00</b></p> <p><b>£459.00</b></p> <p><b>£469.00</b></p>
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# VINYL

*Turntables, cartridges and phono stages*



Record players or turntables offer the digital revolution serious competition when it comes to sound quality. Even a modest model can turn musical tricks that most CD players struggle with. Some call it vinyl warmth, but in reality it's a lack of digital hardness that makes the format so engaging. True, the software requires a bit more care, but even a knackered LP is more playable than a scratched CD.

Record players are made of three, perhaps four, fundamental parts. The turntable is the plinth and platter, usually also containing the motor and any suspension system. A tonearm sits on the plinth and allows the cartridge to trace the vinyl groove by pivoting or parallel tracking over the record. The cartridge contains the means of turning the mechanical movement of the groove wall into an electrical signal.

A fourth element is an amp dedicated to the delicate job of amplifying and equalising the cartridge's insubstantial output. This is called a phono stage and can be found in some integrated amplifiers and preamps, but is increasingly purchased separately for use with line-only amps.



## TURNTABLE SET-UP

Setting up a turntable varies from model to model, but the general principle is to level the platter by adjusting the suspension or, as with solid platters, the surface it sits on. Sprung suspensions sometimes require a bit of fine-tuning to sound their best, but the principle is to achieve a smooth, pistonic bounce. Cartridge set-up is even more critical, as the angles at which the stylus traces the groove affects its tonal balance and levels of distortion. A good alignment protractor is essential if you are intending to set up your own cartridge, as is a degree of patience. In essence, there are two angles you need to get right: the tracing angle as the cartridge crosses the record if you are looking from above, and the vertical tracking angle (VTA), which is adjusted by raising or lowering the arm base to bring the arm parallel with the record surface.

There are two types of phono cartridge: moving magnet (MM) and moving coil (MC), and with a few exceptions the latter outperforms the former. But MCs produce a lower output and require better-quality amplification to be heard at their best. As a general rule, MCs offer a broader bandwidth, greater dynamics and more detail, but the better moving magnets do most things well enough to distract you from your CD collection.

## TOP BUYS



**Pro-Ject**  
 1 Xpression £210

The latest model from Czech turntable specialist Pro-Ject is remarkable value for money – an Ortofon OM10 cartridge and carbon fibre arm are included in the price.



**Rega**  
 P5 £698

Rega's latest is a non-suspended design with a highly entertaining sound and a great sense of musical 'timing'. The new RB700 arm is included in the price.



**Roksan**  
 Radius 5 £850

A beautiful mid-price turntable with an impressively well-sorted sound from low bass to high treble. Price includes matching Nima tonearm.



**Michell**  
 Orbe SE £2,015

A fine example of the turntable art, the stripped down SE version of Michell's flagship now features a DC motor. Does justice to the best arms and cartridges.

## Our favourite BEST BUY EDITOR'S CHOICE **TURNTABLES**

### Record players

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS					
				SPEEDS	SUSP. SUBCHASSIS	SWITCHABLE SPEED CHANGE	SUPPLIED WITH ARM	SUPPLIED WITH CART	ISSUE NUMBER
<small>BB</small>	Audio Note TT1/ARM1	728	Simple and unpretentious, it delivers a real taste of true high-end performance at an affordable price	33/45	●	●	●		203
<small>BB</small>	Avid Diva	1,100	A solid and powerful sounding deck with fine build, requires a smooth, relaxed cartridge for best results	33/45	●				247
<small>EC</small>	Avid Volvere Sequel	3,500	Heavyweight turntable that will deliver more of what's in a vinyl groove than most of the competition	33/45	●	●			229
<small>EC</small>	Avid Acutus	6,000	Extremely capable design with no apparent shortcomings. Don't sell your vinyl 'til you've heard it on this!	33/45	●	●			194
<small>EC</small>	Clearaudio Master Reference	12,610	Revealing and exciting turntable that revels in the fine details (reviewed with Master TQ-I arm/Accurate cartridge)	33/45		●	●	●	256
<small>BB</small>	Goldring GR1/RB250	140	The best value 'Rega' yet and a new benchmark for budget turntables. Vinyl nirvana on a shoestring	33/45			●	●	252
<small>BB</small>	Michell Gyro SE	1,058	New DC motor-equipped Gyro offers great looks and even better sound. Price includes RB300 arm	33/45	●		●		239
<small>EC</small>	Michell Orbe SE	2,015	A superb turntable, able to mix it with the best at virtually any price. Now features new DC motor	33/45	●				235
<small>BB</small>	Nottingham Analogue Horizon	529	A fluid midrange and nimble but rich bass are two of the many attributes of this bargain deck (price inc RB250 arm)	33/45			●		253
<small>BB</small>	Pro-ject Debut III	120	Superb budget deck offering fine build and performance	33/45			●	●	261
<small>BB</small>	Pro-ject 1 Xpression	210	Well designed and executed budget deck with an entertaining and revealing sound	33/45			●	●	248
<small>BB</small>	Rega P2	198	Updated Planar 2: just as much fun as ever and now even better value as the competition falls away	33/45			●		214
<small>BB</small>	Rega P3/RB300	298	Updated Planar 3, building on the strengths of the P2 with added subtlety and detail	33/45			●		214
<small>BB</small>	Rega P5/RB700	698	Combines a great sense of timing with market-leading resolution and a phenomenal tonearm – a hard act to beat	33/45			●	opt	257
<small>BB</small>	Rega P7/RB700	1,298	A highly capable player that could hold its own in the most exalted company – a vivid and natural performer	33/45			●	opt	257
<small>EC</small>	Rega P9/RB1000	2,498	Exceptionally elegant hi-tech player with complex outboard supply, ceramic platter and wonderful RB1000 tonearm	33/45		●	●		228
<small>BB</small>	Roksan Radius 5/Nima	850	Sophisticated design with accomplished sound quality, excellent imagery and good isolation (acrylic version tested)	33/45	●		●		248
<small>EC</small>	Roksan TMS2/Artemiz	7,500	Typical Roksan sound, but better: pitch-accurate, lean, detailed and controlled, without the 'bloat' of lesser designs	33/45	●	●			246
<small>EC</small>	SME Model 10A	3,411	Elegant and extremely capable design, tested here with Series V/309 hybrid arm	33/45	●	●	●		195
<small>EC</small>	SME Model 20.2A	5,274	Beautifully built, extremely neutral damped and suspended deck with superb sound. Inc V arm	33/45/78	●	●	●		186
<small>EC</small>	T+A G10R/PH-G10MC	2,550	Style meets substance in a highly credible complete package, with integral phono step-up	33/45		●	●	●	261
<small>EC</small>	Townshend Rock Anniversary	8,000	If you want to get to the meat and bones of the music this is a great tool for the job (price inc. Excalibur arm)	33/45	●		●		259

## Our favourite BEST BUY EDITOR'S CHOICE **PHONO CARTRIDGES**

### MM and MC cartridges

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS			ISSUE NUMBER
				MM	MC	REPLACEABLE STYLUS	
	Goldring Elite	250	A remarkably subtle and persuasive design that should tempt anyone		●		235
	Grado Prestige Black	40	Offers admirable detail and treble extension, with good bass and ambience too	●		●	214
<small>BB</small>	Grado Prestige Gold	110	Produces rich, open and expansive music with the minimum of fuss	●		●	235
<small>EC</small>	Linn Akiva	1,800	With fine dynamic expression and a wide bandwidth, what you hear sounds very close to master tape		●	●	242
<small>EC</small>	Lyra Helikon	1,095	Highly capable and highly neutral, this is a cartridge for all seasons, albeit fussy about vinyl quality	●			215
<small>BB</small>	Sumiko Blue Point Special	250	A no-nonsense performer with engaging musical properties – one of the best around for less than £300		●		192
<small>BB</small>	Van den Hul MC One Special	699	A gorgeous cartridge that's worth the price every time you hear a familiar track in a whole new light		●		235
<small>EC</small>	van den Hul Colibri XGP	2,699	Phenomenal resolution, custom building to suit hard and software, but needs 500 ohm loading and is vulnerable to damage		●		244
<small>EC</small>	Wilson Benesch Naked Analog	1,450	With its smooth clean highs, transparent midband and nimble bass, this is a lot of performance for the money		●		253

## Our favourite BEST BUY EDITOR'S CHOICE **PHONO STAGES**

### Phono stages

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS				
				MM PHONO INPUTS	MC PHONO INPUTS	AU. GAIN	AU. IMPEDANCE	ISSUE NUMBER
	Musical Fidelity X-LPSv3	249	Simple, well turned out valve-driven phono stage lacks adjustability, but sounds sweet, open and well-behaved	●	●			248
<small>BB</small>	NAD PP2 phono stage	50	A fine buy for turntable users on a tight budget – open tonality and clarity is distinctly impressive for the money	●	●			245
<small>BB</small>	Tom Evans Microgroove	400	For dynamics and real bass extension with good tonal colour this is the one to beat. The Plus version (£700) is even better!		●			234
<small>EC</small>	Tom Evans The Groove	1,800	Plenty of detail, excellent imaging and almost flawlessly neutral: a good choice for maximum information retrieval off any LP		●			201
<small>BB</small>	Trichord Dino/Dino+	498	Relaxed yet resolute with very good image depth and natural balance, not to mention great flexibility	●	●	●	●	234

**TURNTABLE SPECS KEY** **SPEEDS** Speeds offered in rpm. **SUSP. SUBCHASSIS** Turntables with a sprung or suspended support for the platter and arm. **SWITCHABLE SPEED CHANGE** Some decks require manual lifting of the belt from one pulley to another to change speed, but not these ones. **SUPPLIED WITH ARM** Deck is supplied complete with tonearm – some require a separate purchase in this department, but the dealer will fit it for you.

**SUPPLIED WITH CARTRIDGE** Some decks are supplied with a starter cartridge and this is included in the price shown.

**CARTRIDGE SPECS KEY** **MM** Moving magnet cartridge – see amp and phono stage features to match this type. **MC** Moving coil cartridge – see amp and phono stage features to match this type.

**REPLACEABLE STYLUS** Some cartridges have separate styli for ease of replacement, but it compromises sound quality.

# the AUDIO CONSULTANTS

FINE TWO CHANNEL AUDIO SYSTEMS



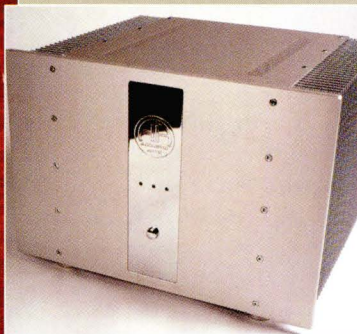
### McIntosh 275 valve amplifier

This modern reissue of their classic 1969 amplifier has robust, full bodied sound with smooth high frequencies. A healthy 75wpc will drive most speakers easily and can be bridged to give a conservative 150wpc. £2750



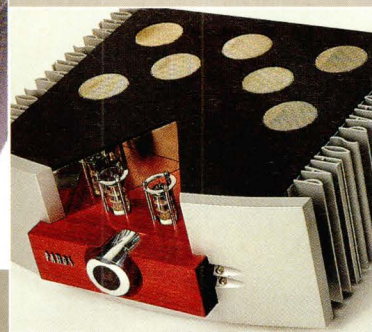
### Dali Helicon 400 loudspeaker

A 2 1/2 system with unique ribbon/soft dome tweeter arrangement. Easy to drive, capable of producing a big soundstage and a very open top end. Excellent appearance and cabinet quality. £3310



### Acoustic Arts AMP 2

Dual mono power amplifier 200wpc. An elegant sound from this quality manufacturer from Germany. £5375  
RCA output, £5820 genuine balanced output.



### Pathos Logos integrated hybrid amplifier

A popular amplifier with great looks and sound. £2750



### Sugden Masterclass CD player

A sophisticated sound as you would expect from this UK manufacturer. A very layered soundstage and non aggressive presentation. £2750



### Nottingham Analogue Space Deck

With the new, thicker platter and upgrade kit it produces an even more neutral and stable image. £1417

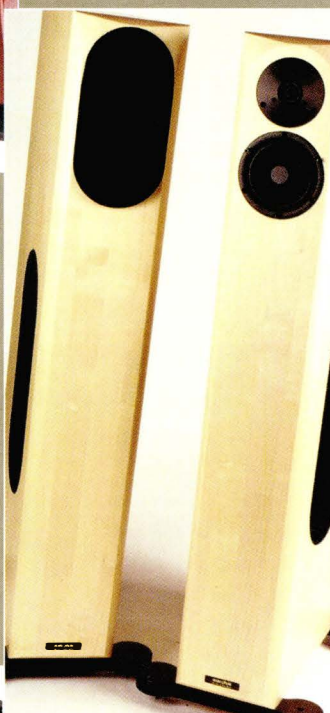


### Bel Canto Pre 2 & eVo2 amplifier

A very transparent sound with good tonal balance and precise imaging. Although a digital amplifier, the sound is reminiscent of their valve heritage. Pre 2 £3999. eVo2 £2899. Also on demonstration, we have their integrated amplifier **eVo2i** at a remarkable £2799

### McIntosh MA6900 solidstate integrated amplifier

This solid state amplifier with transformer coupled output has sound that is close to their classic valve amplifier designs. The very reasonable 200 wpc output will drive into any speaker load. An all-in-one solution with a high-end sound. £4240



### Audio Physic Loudspeakers

We are please to be demonstrating the new range from this highly respected manufacturer. Very accurate imaging and tonal balance with great styling. Virgo 3 (shown above) £3999, Tempo £2199, Yara £999.



### Resolution Audio Opus 21 CD player

The improved sound with the new drive is astonishing. £2950



ACCUSTIC ARTS ▶ AMPHION ▶ ART ▶ AUDIO PHYSIC ▶ AVALON ▶ BEL CANTO ▶ BENZ-MICRO ▶ CARDAS ▶ CLEARAUDIO ▶ CONRAD-JOHNSON ▶ DALI ▶ EAR/YOSHINO  
EXPOSURE ▶ ISOL - 8 ▶ LEEMA ACOUSTICS ▶ LYRA ▶ MCINTOSH ▶ MONO PULSE ▶ NORDOST ▶ NOTTINGHAM ANALOGUE ▶ OPERA ▶ PAGODE ▶ PATHOS  
QUADRASPIRE ▶ ROGUE AUDIO ▶ SME ▶ SHANLING ▶ SHUN MOOK ▶ SUGDEN ▶ TRANSFIGURATION ▶ UNISON RESEARCH ▶ VIRTUAL DYNAMICS ▶ WADIA

Conveniently located between Reading and Basingstoke, we are approximately 15 minutes drive from either Junction 12 on the M4 or Junction 6 on the M3. Free and easy parking, outside the building. We have a home evaluation scheme for those who might find this method more convenient.

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E info@audioconsultants.co.uk

[www.audioconsultants.co.uk](http://www.audioconsultants.co.uk)

*Demonstrations by appointment,  
Mondays to Saturdays 10:00 to 18:00.  
It is advisable to call us before visiting.*

*Part exchange welcome. Ex-demonstration and  
previously owned equipment listed on our website.*

# RADIO TUNERS

*FM and DAB hi-fi separates*



Radio is a fantastic musical resource that's in danger of being taken for granted, but whatever your tastes there's someone out there catering for it. If you haven't got a decent tuner hooked up to your hi-fi already, you're missing out!

### DAB or FM?

Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB) is said to be available to 80 per cent of the population and the long-term plan is to switch public broadcasting over to digital, but hardware prices have yet to come down to a point where this would be acceptable. Its advantages over FM include hiss-free reception, the potential for a wider range of stations and the ability to display comprehensive programming information. FM's RDS system means that station name and occasionally track titles are displayed, but the range of information is fairly limited.

Where FM scores over DAB is in the lower cost of hardware and the greater reception

area. It can also provide higher sound quality if reception conditions are favourable. Absolute sound quality judgements are muddled by the fact that you are listening to different forms of compression and processing at the studio for each station.

What is clear, however, is that there are more and more radio stations broadcasting on DAB that aren't available on FM. So if it's variety of programming you're after, they have a lot to offer.

### RECEPTION

The quality of signal you feed a tuner will dictate its sound quality. So serious FM listeners should get a decent external aerial and connect it with as few junctions and splits as possible. Every time you split the cable (ie take a feed for another tuner) you halve signal strength! With DAB the same applies but get a DAB-specific aerial. See [www.bbc.co.uk/digitalradio](http://www.bbc.co.uk/digitalradio) for details.

### TOP BUYS



#### Denon TU260L II £130

The benchmark for all other budget AM/FM tuners, with great sound and features.



#### Cambridge DAB500 £150

A low-cost DAB radio that gets very close to much more expensive digital models.



#### Creek T50 £499

A thoroughly accomplished AM/FM tuner with a substantial and detailed sound.



#### Magnum Dynalab MD 90T £1,195

FM tuner with valves – 'affordable' for an MD, but still streets ahead of most radios.

## Our favourite TUNERS

BEST BUY EDITOR'S CHOICE

### FM & DAB HI-FI SEPARATES

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	WAVEBANDS	PRESETS	RDS	REMOTE CONTROL	SIG. STRENGTH METER	ROT. TUNING KNOB	ISSUE NUMBER
	Creek T50	499	Very fine results indeed with precision, polish and insight added to excellent basics	FM,M,L	128	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	251
	Denon TU-260L II	130	The return of the all-time favourite, now enhanced with RDS and sounding as fine as ever	FM,M,L	40	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	193
	Magnum Dynalab MD 90T	1,195	No remote or presets as standard, manual everything and valves... but its sound is simply sublime	FM	opt		opt	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	257
	Magnum Dynalab MD 102	2,200	Superb remote control analogue FM tuner delivers a superbly transparent sound that makes radio fun	FM	5			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	241
	NAD C422	180	Admirably free of roughness or other obvious nasties, with just a slight lack of clarity	FM,M	30	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		250
	NAD S400	600	One of the best around – bass and treble are both well extended and detail is excellent	FM	30	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		230
	Primare T21	600	Identical to NAD S400 and likewise a very fine tuner	FM	30	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		230
	Rega Radio 3	398	Unpretentious unit which does what it claims, very well. Unusually fine FM sound in all areas	FM,M	20		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		242
	Rotel RT-02	279	A highly competent tuner which always sounds appealing and fuss-free	FM,M	30	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		242
<b>DAB TUNERS</b>										
	Arcam DiVA DT81	650	A very smart and polished DAB performer	DAB	16		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	221
	Cambridge Audio DAB500	150	Very good sound, plus optional response tweaks, and slickest operation yet	DAB	10		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	248
	Cambridge Azur 640T	200	Slightly ahead of the pack in DAB performance, though FM is never better than decent	DAB,FM	60	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		260
	Pure Digital DRX-701ES	250	An excellent introduction to DAB, fine value, simple to use and feature loaded	DAB	99		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	234
	Pure Digital DRX-702ES	330	Very flexible DAB (inc L-band) and FM tuner. DAB is good, FM a touch disappointing	DAB,FM,M	99	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	242
	Sony ST-SDB900	200	Nicely designed UK-tuned model is a touch bright with both DAB and FM but generally insightful and clear	DAB,FM,M	60	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	259

**SPECS KEY** **WAVEBANDS** Which bands are supported: FM, M – medium wave, L – long wave, DAB – digital audio broadcasting. **PRESETS** How many stations can be stored in memory. **RDS** Radio Data System – station names and program titles can be displayed among other facilities (FM only, DAB has more comprehensive display potential). **REMOTE CONTROL** For the couch potato. **SIGNAL STRENGTH METER** Useful for setting up an aerial. **ROTARY TUNING KNOB** An ergonomic alternative to buttons.

# DIGITAL AUDIO RECORDERS

CD, MiniDisc and hard drive recorders



## MiniDisc

MD's strength is versatility. You can record and then re-record many times over. Editing facilities are second to none – you can erase mistakes, name tracks and re-order a disc's contents with a few simple button pushes, making it ideal for building compilations. They're pretty robust too.

Sound quality is below that of CD-R/CD-RW. The format uses a Sony-developed compression technology called ATRAC, which discards part of the data in order to squeeze it on the disc. If you're copying from CD to MD, the result tends to sound a little cold in comparison, lacking a degree of detail and ambience. But to most people it still sounds light years ahead of cassette – clean and hiss-free.

## Recordable CD

With recordable CD you have a choice of two disc types: CD-R discs are the cheapest, but you can only record once; and CD-RW discs are a little more costly, but you can re-record on them *ad infinitum*.

Though the latest machines incorporate some useful editing facilities, CD-R/RW is not as flexible as MD. However, sound

quality is higher – if you're recording from a CD, the best models will give you a copy that is very close to the original. In terms of compatibility, most CD players will play back a CD-R disc, but older models might have trouble with CD-RW (though you can, of course, play the disc back on your own recorder). If you want to play a CD-R/RW on a DVD player, check for compatibility.

## Hard drive

The latest contender on the digital recording scene is also the most flexible. Some HDD (hard disk drive) recorders can store whole music collections if you use a compression format such as MP3. HDD recorders are taking over from multisc CD changers as sound servers in multiroom installations, where their ability to play more than one piece of music at a time is a great boon. HDD also offers impressive editing facilities on a par with MD, and they can also record from CD (or to CD-R/RW) at high speed.

At present, sound quality isn't the driving force behind the format – flexibility and storage capacity being bigger issues – and a plain CD-R/RW machine will outperform an HDD recorder in fidelity terms.

TOP BUYS



**Philips CDR802** £300

Multisc recorder that's slick and capable, albeit with a slightly flaky build.

---



**Marantz DR6000** £400

Quality in a box – it eschews gimmickry, but it does a simple job very well.

---



**Yamaha CDR-HD1300** £600

Combining hard disk with CD-R makes CD recording a whole lot more flexible.

---



**Imerge S2000** £1,599

Impressively flexible hard disk music server for multiroom applications.

Our favourite BEST BUY EDITOR'S CHOICE

## DIGITAL RECORDERS

CD-R/RW, MD and HDD recorders

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS			
				DECKS	HD CAPACITY (GB)	OPTICAL IN/OUTPUTS	ELEC IN/OUTPUTS
<b>CD-R/RW RECORDERS</b>							
	Denon CDR-1000	400	A respectable player and recorder, though some midband congestion was noted when recording	1		● ●	218
<span style="font-size: 0.8em;">BEST BUY</span>	Marantz DR6000	400	No frills, but in its fundamentals this is one of the finest CD recorders on the market	1		● ●	233
	NAD C660	500	Audiophile twin deck offering high-speed copying, HDCD replay and notably fine recording from analogue	2		● ●	243
<span style="font-size: 0.8em;">BEST BUY</span>	Philips CDR802	300	Tacky looks and build notwithstanding, this is a well-equipped and technically sound 3-to-1 autochanger/recorder at a good price	2		● ●	233
<span style="font-size: 0.8em;">BEST BUY</span>	Philips CDR951	380	An improvement on previous models, it delivers the musical goods in some style	1		● ●	205
<span style="font-size: 0.8em;">BEST BUY</span>	Pioneer PDR-609	270	Classic CD recorder with outstandingly good sound for the money on both record and replay	1		● ●	243
	Pioneer PDR-W839	350	Good-quality twin CD burner makes recordings that can be hard to distinguish from the original. Good value too	1		● ●	218
<b>MD RECORDERS</b>							
	Pioneer MJ-D508	200	Well equipped, but musically sleep-inducing player that receives its Recommendation owing to the price	1		● ●	205
	Sony MDS-JE480	130	Straightforward and effective, but the three real killer features are price, price and price	1		●	233
<b>HDD RECORDERS</b>							
	Imerge S2000	1,599	Intended as the centrepiece of a multi-room installation, this three-output server combines flexibility with good sound	2	80	● ●	243
<span style="font-size: 0.8em;">BEST BUY</span>	Yamaha CDR-HD1300	600	Superb combination of high-speed CD-RW drive and hard disk, adding editing flexibility to CD recording	2	80	● ●	243

**SPECS KEY** **DECKS** Amount of drive mechanisms on board – twin-deck recorders use one to play while the other records. **HD CAPACITY** Amount of gigabytes of storage capacity, for HD only. **OPTICAL IN/OUTPUTS** Optical Toslink in and outputs for digital connection to a CD player or DAC. **ELEC IN/OUTPUTS** Electrical coaxial in and outputs for digital connection to a CD player or DAC.

# Sevenoaks SOUND & VISION



**Sevenoaks Sound & Vision** stocks a wide range of Hi-Fi separates, DVD players, amplifiers, speakers, plasma screens, LCD televisions and projection systems from all the leading manufacturers.

From starter systems to custom designed multi-room and home cinema installations, our friendly staff are available in all stores to advise, demonstrate and guide you through the home entertainment jungle. If you're interested in home entertainment and want to avoid the confusion, contact your local Sevenoaks Sound & Vision store and **experience more.**

0% interest free option\* is available on most products.

\*Written details on request. Licensed credit brokers. Minimum balance £400. Subject to status.



## CUSTOM INSTALLATION

Modern home entertainment doesn't have to be intrusive.

A carefully considered installation of home cinema with distributed audio and video and easy lighting control can give you all the sound and vision performance you could ever dream of - enhancing your lifestyle and your home.

Our custom install services range from the most simple, affordable solutions to the most grandiose. We can help transform every room and every home, whatever your needs and budget.

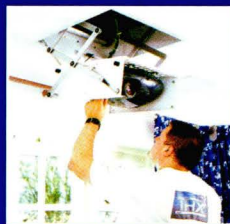
Want to know more?

Why not pay us a visit and pick up a copy of our **FREE Custom**

**Installation Guide, available now, from your local store.**



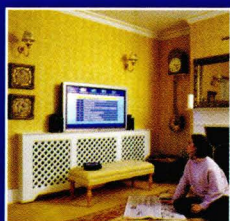
Enjoy the freedom to listen to the music of your choice or watch TV independently from other rooms in the home



Our installation experts are fully trained to the highest standards and will continue to support you and your equipment long after your first visit to one of our nationwide stores



Flush-mounted in-wall speakers can give you all the sound you can handle, but won't eat into your floor space or clash with your decor



## NEWSNEWSNEWS



NEW DENON AVR-1905 - AVAILABLE IN SILVER OR BLACK

## DENON AVR-1905 & 2105 7.1 HOME CINEMA RECEIVERS

The AVR-1905 and AVR-2105 are two new Denon 7.1 channel receivers that offer astonishing value for money.



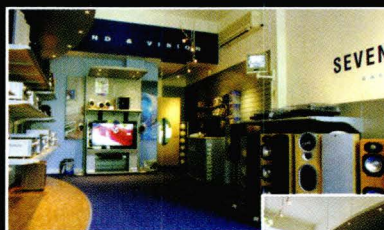
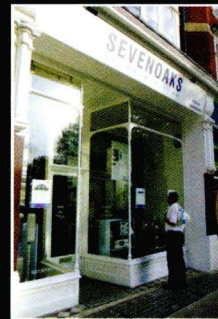
Features include the latest 32 bit audio decoding, 96kHz processing on all surround formats and a high current power supply. The '1905 delivers a healthy 80 watts per channel (8

ohms) while the '2105 delivers 90 watts and also includes auto set-up and calibration.

## NEW EALING STORE

The long-awaited store in Ealing is now open.

Part of a newly developed parade in the heart of town close to Ealing Broadway tube and on the fringe of the Ealing Broadway Shopping Centre, the store offers an unrivalled experience to shoppers searching for the best in audio and video equipment.



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020 8579 8777

OPEN  
MONDAY-SATURDAY 10:00-6:00  
SUNDAY 12:00-4:00



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BRISTOL  
BROMLEY  
CAMBRIDGE  
CARDIFF  
CHELSEA  
CHELTENHAM  
CRAWLEY  
CROYDON

EALING (NEW)

EDINBURGH  
EPSOM  
EXETER  
GLASGOW  
GUILDFORD  
HOLBORN  
HULL  
IPSWICH  
KINGSTON  
LEICESTER  
LEEDS  
LINCOLN

MAIDSTONE  
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STAINES

SWINDON (NEW)  
SWISS COTTAGE  
TUNBRIDGE WELLS  
WATFORD  
WEYBRIDGE  
WITHAM (ESSEX)  
WOLVERHAMPTON

PLEASE SEE PAGE 7  
FOR ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE  
NUMBER DETAILS

[www.sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk](http://www.sevenoakssoundandvision.co.uk)

# Sevenoaks

## SOUND & VISION

"A perfect combination of early Arcam refinement and subtlety, combined with new-found vitality and freshness." DIVA CD192

**Arcam DIVA  
CD192 CD Player £849.95  
A90 Amplifier £849.95**



**WHAT HI-FI?** SOUND AND VISION  
NOV 04  
★★★★★

**HI-FI SEPARATES**

### Roksan Caspian M Series-1 CD Player £1099.95 Amplifier £999.95

"A real class-contender, the new M Series-1 is a canny piece of kit and well worth the money." M SERIES-1 CD PLAYER

"A fine piece of equipment." M SERIES-1 AMPLIFIER



**FREE**

**FREE GRADO SR60 HEADPHONES WORTH £90**  
WHEN YOU PURCHASE AN AMP AND CD TOGETHER FROM ONE OF THE FOLLOWING MANUFACTURERS - ARCAM, CYRUS & ROKSAN\*

### Pro-ject Debut III Turntable (Black) £129.95 (Colours) £144.95

"Building on the Award-winning design of its predecessors, the new Pro-ject Debut III delivers a thrillingly good sound for the money... Products like this should really reinvigorate your interest in hi-fi."



### Marantz CD5400 CD Player £119.95

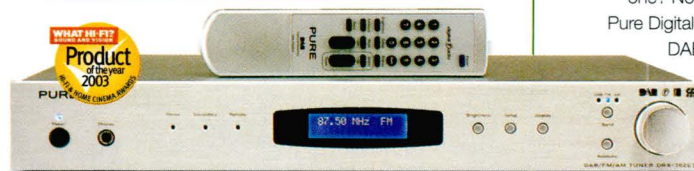


"This is a remarkable player for the money, with superb sound, looks and feel, which give you no clue as to the budget price... A very solid buy - and a lot of fun."



### Sony ST-SDB900 Digital/Analogue Tuner £ CALL

"The Sony ST-SDB900 is a great tuner for the money, and is definitely capable of giving our current Award-winner, the excellent DRX-702ES, a run for its money."



### Pure Digital DRX702ES Digital/Analogue Tuner £279.95

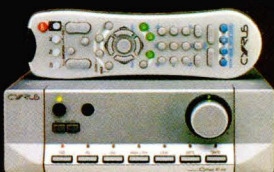
"So do you buy a digital tuner? Or an analogue one? Now you don't have to pick: just buy Pure Digital's DRX-702ES! Whether on FM or DAB, this tuner sounds superb... The overall balance is powerful, clean and crisp, making this a fine tuner by any standards, and a superb buy given its excellent flexibility."

### Cyrus 8vs Amplifier £799.95 CD8 X CD Player £999.95

Cyrus has been developing high performance hi-fi systems for over 20 years. Today their upgradeable, modular product range includes multi-room systems, home cinema and some of the world's finest hi-fi systems. The new 'VS' preamp circuitry, incorporated in the 6vs and 8vs amplifiers, has dramatically improved their performance while the CD8 X is a heavily revised version of the CD8.

"Here's a machine that advances the ability of its excellent predecessor by an almost absurd degree. The Cyrus 8vs is an absolute superstar."

"The added 'X' factor brings a level of CD playback previously unheard at this price." CD8 X



### Cyrus 6vs Amplifier £599.95

"A significant upgrade to what was already an impressive amp - Cyrus' new entry-level integrated is a peach"

**WHAT HI-FI?** SOUND AND VISION  
OCT 04  
★★★★★



experience more

# experience more

# experience more



**FREE QED CABLE WORTH £60**

### KEF Q4 Speakers £399.95

The Q4 is one of the latest additions to KEF's acclaimed Q Series. At the heart of this floorstander lies the Uni-Q driver array - a 130mm die-cast chassis housing a long throw cone and coincident mounted 19mm aluminium dome HF unit. This driver arrangement makes

the speaker much easier to place in the room and alleviates the 'sweet spot' found on 'ordinary' speakers. This has been combined with a dedicated 130mm LF unit for extended bass output which belies the size of its diminutive cabinet.

### FREE QED SPEAKER CABLE WORTH

WITH ALL HI-FI SPEAKER PAIRS OVER £299\*

£60 WITH SPEAKERS OVER £299  
£80 WITH SPEAKERS OVER £499  
£120 WITH SPEAKERS OVER £999



### Musical Fidelity X-80 Amplifier £399.95 X-150 Amplifier £799.95 X-Ray<sup>3</sup> CD Player £899.95

The 40 wpc, **X-80** and the 80wpc **X-150** amplifiers are part of Musical Fidelity's revamped X-Series. Both models feature a dual-gang analogue volume control and high-output transistors for each channel. The X-150 also includes a high quality phono stage.

The **X-Ray<sup>3</sup>** CD player, replacement for the legendary X-Ray, uses the same DAC and upsampling principles as the acclaimed Tri-Vista SACD player.



**FREE QED CABLE WORTH £60**

### Quad 11L Speakers £379.95

"The wonderful Quad 11Ls continue to defy all known laws of value: they have a real wood-veneer finish with piano-gloss lacquer - unheard of at the price. Yet nothing sonically has been sacrificed... The Quads are amazing value for money - no rival speakers come close."



**WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISUAL AWARDS 2004 BEST STEREO SPEAKERS £350-£500 Quad 11L**

### Wharfedale Diamond 9.1 Speakers £179.95

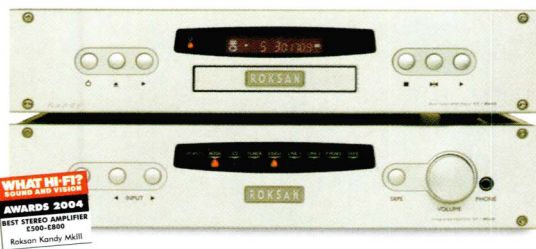
"The overall balance of the speakers is their finest characteristic. Thanks to near-perfect driver integration, music sounds wonderfully natural and transparent... This is a bar-raising effort from Wharfedale: these are ridiculously good speakers at the budget price level."

### Roksan Kandy

**KD1/III CD Player £649.95**

**KA1/III Amplifier £649.95**

"Timing and rhythm are excellent. DJ Shadow is delivered with clarity and a tight bass, while at the other extreme the treble is sweet and detailed, getting the most from Wagner's *Ride of the Valkyries*. The result is a breathtaking Best Buy amplifier that betters its competition with ease." **KANDY KA1/III AMPLIFIER - AWARDS 2003**



**WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISUAL AWARDS 2004 BEST STEREO AMPLIFIER £500-£800 Roksan Kandy MIII**

"The Kandy **KD1/III** CD player offers a great array of talents - team it with its amp stablemate and you have something close to the ideal visual and sonic combination."

**WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISUAL AWARDS 2004 PRODUCT OF THE YEAR STEREO SPEAKERS WHARFEDALE DIAMOND 9.1**

**WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISUAL AWARDS 2004 PRODUCT OF THE YEAR STEREO SPEAKERS WHARFEDALE DIAMOND 9.1**



**FREE**

**GRADO SR60 HEADPHONES WORTH £90** WHEN YOU PURCHASE AN AMP AND CD TOGETHER FROM ONE OF THE FOLLOWING MANUFACTURERS - ARCAM, CYRUS & ROKSAN\* NOT IN CONJUNCTION WITH ANY OTHER OFFER OR PROMOTION



### PRICING POLICY

We always try to ensure our prices are highly competitive. In the event you can find the same products and excellent service at a lower price, please bring it to our store managers' attention.



### FINANCE OPTION\*

Spread the cost of buying. 0% finance option is available on the vast majority of products we stock. \*Written details on request. Licensed credit brokers. Minimum balance £400. Subject to status.

**PLEASE NOTE: SOME PRODUCTS MAY NOT BE AVAILABLE AT ALL STORES. PLEASE CALL BEFORE TRAVELLING.**

**\*ADDED VALUE OFFERS - FROM RANGE AVAILABLE IN-STORE. NOT IN CONJUNCTION WITH ANY OTHER OFFER. ADVERTISEMENT VALID UNTIL AT LEAST 15/12/04, E&OE.**



### Rotel 10 Series RA-1062 Amplifier £594.95 RCD-1072 CD Player £594.95

"At the heart of the 60-watt **RA-1062** is a toroidal transformer and a power supply, which Rotel claims, helps the amp maintain performance even at high volumes... Crank up the volume and, as promised, the Rotel keeps its composure and balance... If you want a £600 integrated, be sure to audition the RA-1062.

First impressions of the **RCD-1072** are excellent. This is the slickest machine in this group: the casework feels solid and the finish exceptional at the price... On its own terms it remains an enjoyable and informative CD player."

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION • SEPTEMBER 2003

### Acoustic Energy Aelite Three Speakers £749.95

"Acoustic Energy's new Aelite Threes weigh in at a hefty 18kg a piece, and their curved, real wood finished cabinets both look handsome and make good acoustic sense... So how do they perform... Give them a big room and position them in free space and they'll deliver great things... If you want a big sound for sensible money, don't hesitate to audition the Aelite Threes."

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION  
Sept 04  
★★★★★



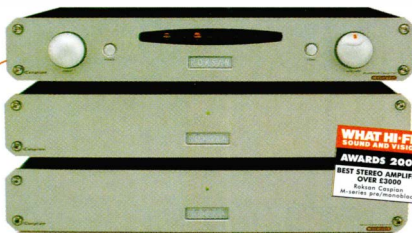
FREE QED CABLE  
WORTH £80

### Yamaha CDR-HD1300/II CD Recorder £ CALL



WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION  
AWARDS 2004  
BEST CD/HDD RECORDER  
Yamaha CDR-HD1300/II

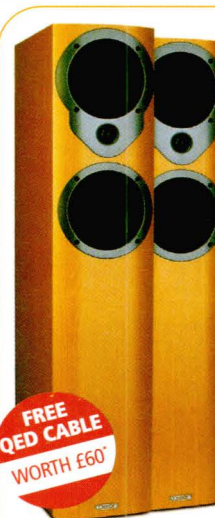
No more wasted CD-Rs: in a stroke of genius Yamaha had the idea of combining a CD recorder with a hard drive, enabling you to edit your music before you burn. The CDR-HD1300/II is the upgraded version of the Award-winning 'HD1300 offering even greater disc capacity."



WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION  
AWARDS 2004  
BEST STEREO AMPLIFIER OVER £2000  
Roksan Caspian M-Series 2x Monoblocks

### Roksan Caspian M-Series Preamp/2 x Monoblocks £3449.95

"This Roksan is an excellent buy that puts most of the opposition to shame when it comes to sonic ability... If you want the most honest-sounding amp you can get for your money, this combo can't be ignored."



### Mission m34i Speakers £329.95

"The original m34s impressed us with their easy-going bass, but had an undynamic and uninvolved balance. Not the m34is: they're refined and enjoyable... You'll be hard pressed to find a better balance of talents anywhere else for this amount of money."

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION  
Oct 04  
★★★★★

FREE QED CABLE  
WORTH £60

### Mission m31i Speakers £139.95

"Overall, the little m31i speakers are great, and the team at Mission should consider this upgrade job well done. The 'i' in the model name stands for 'improved' and these speakers fully deserve the suffix."

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION  
Nov 04  
★★★★★



FREE QED CABLE  
WORTH £120

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION  
AWARDS 2004  
BEST STEREO SPEAKERS OVER £2000  
Acoustic Energy AE1 MKIII

### Acoustic Energy AE1 MKIII Speakers FROM £1699.95

"The legendary AE1 lives on in this groundbreaking third version... The Mk IIIs are worthy of the AE1 name, taking small-speaker performance to another level."

### B&W 704 Speakers £1399.95

The 704 speakers are part of B&W's new 700 series. These floorstanding, two-and-a-half-way, vented box speakers are available in a variety of attractive finishes. In a recent What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision group test the 704 offered "Remarkable openness and clarity that is unrivalled at this price."

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION  
Mar 04  
★★★★★



FREE QED CABLE  
WORTH £120



WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION  
AWARDS 2004  
BEST HI-FI MICRO SYSTEM OVER £150  
Denon D-M31

### COMPACT SYSTEM

### Denon DM31 UD-M31 CD Receiver £189.95

When purchased with speakers over £99\*  
When purchased on its own £199.95

"The D-M30 was exemplary, as its three What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision Awards clearly show. The D-M31 is even better, making it phenomenal value for money."

NB - DENON DM31 PRICE EXCLUDE SPEAKERS

PLEASE NOTE: SOME PRODUCTS MAY NOT BE AVAILABLE AT ALL STORES. PLEASE CALL BEFORE TRAVELLING.

\*ADDED VALUE OFFERS - FROM RANGE AVAILABLE IN-STORE. NOT IN CONJUNCTION WITH ANY OTHER OFFER. ADVERTISEMENT VALID UNTIL AT LEAST 15/11/04, E&OE.

experience more

experience more  
experience more

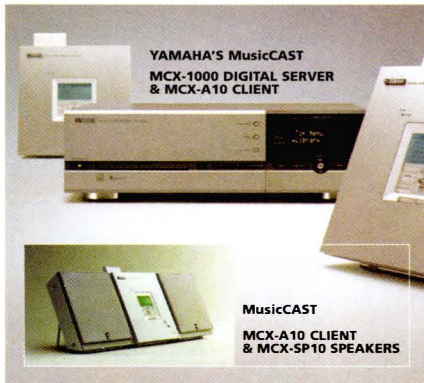


WIRELESS NETWORKING

## MUSIC ALL AROUND THE HOME



You've heard of hi-fi – now welcome to the world of wi-fi! Wi-fi devices allow you to network a range of devices together – from your music system to your PC – without the wires. For example, a multiroom server like Yamaha's MusicCAST server device can wirelessly send music to up to five 'client' playback systems dotted around your home. That music could be stored on the MusicCAST server device or other sources – existing hi-fi kit, maybe, or an internet radio station or MP3 files from your PC: plug-in adapters make it easy to wi-fi-enable products.



YAMAHA'S MusicCAST  
MCX-1000 DIGITAL SERVER  
& MCX-A10 CLIENT

MusicCAST  
MCX-A10 CLIENT  
& MCX-SP10 SPEAKERS



- YAMAHA MusicCAST**
- MCX A10 .....£599.95 (MusicCAST Client)
  - MCX 1000.....£1799.95 (MusicCAST Server)
  - MCX-SP10 .....£99.95 (MusicCAST Speakers)
- CYRUSLINK**
- Linkserver 160 .....£2999.95 (Four Zone HD Server 160Gb Drive)
  - Linkserver 250 .....£3499.95 (Four Zone HD Server 250Gb Drive)
  - Linkport .....£649.95
  - Linkwand.....£199.95

Cyruslink  
AVAILABLE AT SELECTED SEVENOAKS SOUND & VISION STORES

## SUGGESTED HI-FI SEPARATE SYSTEMS

Sevenoaks has carefully chosen three hi-fi separate systems. All components have been selected for their performance, reliability and compatibility.

These systems represent superb value for money with massive savings on the individual component prices.

Simply add speaker and interconnect cables and other accessories from our extensive range available in-store.



**Rotel**  
RCD-02 CD Player  
RA-02 Amplifier

**Monitor Audio**  
Bronze B2 Speakers

£799.95 SAVE £129

PRICE EXCLUDES CABLES & STANDS

HI-FI SYSTEM 1 - NOT IN CONJUNCTION WITH ANY OTHER OFFER OR PROMOTION

1  
Hi-Fi SYSTEM



**Arcam**  
CD73T CD Player  
A65 Plus Amplifier

**KEF**  
Q4 Speakers

£999.95 SAVE £149

PRICE EXCLUDES CABLES & STANDS

HI-FI SYSTEM 2 - NOT IN CONJUNCTION WITH ANY OTHER OFFER OR PROMOTION

2  
Hi-Fi SYSTEM



**Roksan**  
Kandy KD1/III CD Player  
Kandy KA1/III Amplifier

**Monitor Audio**  
Silver S6 Speakers

£1889.95 FREE SOUNDSTYLE RACK WORTH £300

PRICE EXCLUDES CABLES

HI-FI SYSTEM 3 - NOT IN CONJUNCTION WITH ANY OTHER OFFER OR PROMOTION

3  
Hi-Fi SYSTEM

# Sevenoaks SOUND & VISION



## PRODUCT RANGE

An outstanding selection of products are on display and available for demonstration at all Sevenoaks Sound & Vision stores.

However, some products may not be available at all stores. Please call to check availability before travelling.

## TURNTABLES

<b>Goldring</b> GR1	£139.95
<b>Michell</b> Gyro SE/RB300 £50 GOLDRING CARTRIDGE	£1049.95
<b>Michell</b> TechnoDec (Ex Arm)	£574.95
<b>Project</b> Debut Phono SB	£169.95
<b>Project</b> Debut III (Black)	£129.95
<b>Project</b> Debut III (Colours)	£144.95
<b>Project</b> 1 Xpression	£209.95

## TUNERS

<b>Arcam</b> DIVA T61	£229.95
<b>Cyrus</b> FM X	£499.95
<b>Denon</b> TU260L MKII	£99.95
<b>Harman Kardon</b> TU970 DAB/AM/FM	£299.95
<b>Marantz</b> ST4000	£99.95
<b>Pure</b> DRX-701ES DAB	£199.95
<b>Pure</b> DRX-702ES Analogue/DAB	£279.95
<b>Roksan</b> Kandy KT1 MKIII	£549.95
<b>Sony</b> ST-SDB890	£ CALL

## CD PLAYERS

<b>Arcam</b> DIVA CD73T	£399.95
<b>Arcam</b> DIVA CD192	£849.95
<b>Arcam</b> FMJ CD33T	£1349.95
<b>Cyrus</b> CD6	£599.95
<b>Cyrus</b> CDB X	£999.95
<b>Cyrus</b> DAC X	£1099.95
<b>Denon</b> DCD485	£119.95
<b>Linn</b> Genki	£1099.95
<b>Linn</b> Ikemi	£2199.95
<b>Marantz</b> CD5400	£119.95
<b>Marantz</b> SA11 S1	£1999.95
<b>Musical Fidelity</b> X-Ray 19	£899.95
<b>Musical Fidelity</b> A3.2	£999.95
<b>Musical Fidelity</b> A308 <sup>PM</sup>	£1999.95
<b>Quad</b> 99 CD-P	£999.95
<b>Roksan</b> Kandy KD1 MKIII	£649.95
<b>Roksan</b> Caspian M	£1099.95
<b>Rotel</b> RCD02	£379.95
<b>Rotel</b> RCD1072	£594.95

## CD RECORDERS

<b>Pioneer</b> PDR609 CD-RW	£199.95
<b>Sony</b> RCD-W100	£ CALL
<b>Yamaha</b> CDR-HD1300/II	£ CALL

## AMPLIFIERS

<b>Arcam</b> DIVA A65 Plus	£389.95
<b>Arcam</b> DIVA A80	£599.95
<b>Arcam</b> DIVA A90	£849.95
<b>Arcam</b> FMJ A32	£1199.95
<b>Cyrus</b> Bvs	£599.95
<b>Cyrus</b> Bvs	£799.95
<b>Cyrus</b> Pre X vs Pre	£1099.95
<b>Cyrus</b> Mono X Power	(Each) £1199.95
<b>Denon</b> PMA355	£179.95
<b>Linn</b> Kolektor Pre	£574.95
<b>Linn</b> LK85 Power	£544.95
<b>Marantz</b> PM4400	£149.95
<b>Marantz</b> PM7200	£249.95
<b>Marantz</b> PM11 S1	£2499.95

<b>Musical Fidelity</b> X-80	£399.95
<b>Musical Fidelity</b> X-150	£799.95
<b>Musical Fidelity</b> A3.2	£979.95
<b>Musical Fidelity</b> A3.2 Pre	£999.95
<b>Musical Fidelity</b> A3.2 Power	£999.95
<b>Musical Fidelity</b> A308	£1999.95
<b>Quad</b> 99 Power	£549.95
<b>Roksan</b> Kandy KA1 MKIII	£649.95
<b>Roksan</b> Caspian M	£999.95
<b>Roksan</b> Caspian M Pre	£1249.95
<b>Roksan</b> Caspian M Monobloc Power	(Each) £1099.95
<b>Rotel</b> RA-01	£249.95
<b>Rotel</b> RA-02	£349.95
<b>Rotel</b> RA-1062	£594.95

## SPEAKERS

<b>Acoustic Energy</b> Aegis Evo One	£139.95
<b>Acoustic Energy</b> Aegis Evo Three	£259.95
<b>Acoustic Energy</b> Aelite Two	£449.95
<b>Acoustic Energy</b> Aelite Three	£749.95
<b>Acoustic Energy</b> AE1 MKIII (From)	£1699.95
<b>AVI</b> Neutron IV	£499.95
<b>B&amp;W</b> DM601 S3	£249.95
<b>B&amp;W</b> DM602 S3	£299.95
<b>B&amp;W</b> 704	£1399.95
<b>B&amp;W</b> 705	£899.95
<b>KEF</b> Q1	£249.95
<b>KEF</b> Q4	£399.95
<b>KEF</b> XQ1	£749.95
<b>Linn</b> Katan	£649.95
<b>Mission</b> m311	£139.95
<b>Mission</b> m341	£329.95
<b>Mission</b> 780SE	£349.95
<b>Mission</b> 782SE	£899.95
<b>Monitor Audio</b> Bronze B2	£199.95
<b>Monitor Audio</b> Silver S1	£299.95
<b>Monitor Audio</b> Silver S6	£599.95
<b>Monitor Audio</b> Silver S8	£799.95
<b>Monitor Audio</b> Gold Reference 10	£799.95
<b>Monitor Audio</b> Gold Reference 20	£1499.95
<b>Quad</b> 11L	£379.95
<b>Quad</b> 12L	£499.95
<b>Quad</b> 22L	£894.95
<b>Ruark</b> Epilogue II	£344.95
<b>Ruark</b> Talisman III	£1499.95
<b>Ruark</b> Sabre III	£899.95
<b>Wharfedale</b> Diamond 9.1	£179.95
<b>Wharfedale</b> Pacific Evolution 30	£649.95

## HI-FI SYSTEMS

<b>Denon</b> 201 Ex Speakers	£499.95
<b>Denon</b> DF101 Ex Speakers	£299.95
<b>Denon</b> DM31 Ex Speakers	£199.95
<b>Linn</b> Classic Music Ex Speakers	£849.95
<b>Teac</b> Legacy 600 Ex Speakers	£199.95

## DVD SYSTEMS

<b>Denon</b> ADV-M71 Inc SC-M51 Speakers	£499.95
<b>Denon</b> DHT-500SD Inc 5.1 Speaker Package	£ CALL
<b>Denon</b> DVD-770SD/AVR-770SD Ex Speakers	£ CALL
<b>Jamo</b> DVR50/A305PDD Inc Speakers	£649.95
<b>Jamo</b> DVR50/A355PDD Inc Speakers	£899.95
<b>KEF</b> KIT100 Inc Speakers	£199.95
<b>Linn</b> Classic Movie Di Ex Speakers	£2299.95
<b>Teac</b> Legacy 700LS-L800 Inc Speakers	£799.95

## MULTI-ROOM AUDIO

<b>Cyrus</b> Linkserver 160	£2999.95
<b>Cyrus</b> Linkserver 250	£3499.95
<b>Cyrus</b> Linkport	£649.95
<b>Cyrus</b> Linkwand	£199.95
<b>Yamaha MusicCast</b> MCX A10	£599.95
<b>Yamaha MusicCast</b> MCX 1000	£1799.95

## DVD PLAYERS

MAKE & MODEL	REGION 2	MULTI REGION
<b>Arcam</b> DIVA DV78	£699.95	£699.95
<b>Arcam</b> DIVA DV79	£999.95	£999.95
<b>Arcam</b> FMJ DV29	£1599.95	£1599.95
<b>Cyrus</b> DVD8	£1199.95	£1199.95
<b>Denon</b> DVD-1710	£ CALL	£ CALL
<b>Denon</b> DVD-2200 Universal	£ CALL	£ CALL
<b>Denon</b> DVD-2900 Universal	£ CALL	£ CALL
<b>Denon</b> DVD-2910 Universal	£ CALL	£ CALL
<b>Denon</b> DVD-3910 Universal	£ CALL	£ CALL
<b>Denon</b> DVD-A11	£ CALL	£ CALL
<b>Harman Kardon</b> DVD22	£299.95	£299.95
<b>Harman Kardon</b> DVD31	£399.95	£399.95
<b>Marantz</b> DV4500	£199.95	£199.95
<b>Meridian</b> G98	£3349.95	£3349.95
<b>Pioneer</b> DV370	£ CALL	£ CALL

<b>Pioneer</b> DV575A Universal	£ CALL	£ CALL
<b>Pioneer</b> DV668Av Universal	£ CALL	£ CALL
<b>Pioneer</b> DV868Av Universal	£ CALL	£ CALL
<b>Toshiba</b> SD240E	£ CALL	£ CALL
<b>Toshiba</b> SD340E	£ CALL	£ CALL
<b>Yamaha</b> DVD-S540	£ CALL	£ CALL
<b>Yamaha</b> DVD-S550	£ CALL	£ CALL

## DVD RECORDERS

MAKE & MODEL	REGION 2	MULTI REGION
<b>Panasonic</b> DMR-E55 DVD-RAM	£ CALL	£ CALL
<b>Panasonic</b> DMR-E65 DVD-RAM	£ CALL	£ CALL
<b>Panasonic</b> DMR-E75 DVD-RAM	£ CALL	£ CALL
<b>Panasonic</b> DMR-E85 DVD-RAM	£ CALL	£ CALL
<b>Panasonic</b> DMR-E95 DVD-RAM	£ CALL	£ CALL
<b>Pioneer</b> DVR-520H HDD/DVD-RW	£ CALL	£ CALL
<b>Pioneer</b> DVR-720H HDD/DVD-RW	£ CALL	£ CALL
<b>Pioneer</b> DVR-920H HDD/DVD-RW	£ CALL	£ CALL
<b>Sony</b> RDR-HX900 DVD-RW/4-RW	£ CALL	£ CALL

## A/V AMPLIFIERS RECEIVERS & PROCESSORS

<b>Arcam</b> AVR250 AV Receiver	£999.95
<b>Arcam</b> AVR300 AV Receiver	£1299.95
<b>Arcam</b> AV8/P7 AV Pre/Processor/Power	£5749.95
<b>Cyrus</b> AV8 AV Processor	£1099.95
<b>Denon</b> AVC-A1SRA AV Amplifier	£ CALL
<b>Denon</b> AVR1705 AV Receiver	£ CALL
<b>Denon</b> AVR1905 AV Receiver	£ CALL
<b>Denon</b> AVR2105 AV Receiver	£ CALL
<b>Denon</b> AVR2805 AV Receiver	£ CALL
<b>Denon</b> AVR3805 AV Receiver	£ CALL
<b>Harman Kardon</b> AVR330 AV Receiver	£599.95
<b>Harman Kardon</b> AVR630 AV Receiver	£999.95
<b>Harman Kardon</b> DPR2005 AV Receiver	£1299.95
<b>Marantz</b> SR4500 AV Receiver	£349.95
<b>Marantz</b> SR5500 AV Receiver	£449.95
<b>Onkyo</b> TX-NR801E AV Receiver	£ CALL
<b>Pioneer</b> VSX-D812 AV Receiver	£ CALL
<b>Pioneer</b> VSX-D814 AV Receiver	£299.95
<b>Pioneer</b> VSX-AX3 AV Receiver	£ CALL
<b>Pioneer</b> VSX-2014i AV Receiver	£ CALL
<b>Pioneer</b> VSX-AX5i AV Receiver	£ CALL
<b>Pioneer</b> VSX-AX5Ai AV Receiver	£1199.95
<b>Pioneer</b> VSA-AX10Ai AV Amplifier	£ CALL
<b>Pioneer</b> RSX1067 AV Receiver	£1799.95
<b>Rotel</b> RSP1066/RMB1075 AV Pre/Power	£1799.95
<b>Rotel</b> RSP1098 AV Processor	£2294.95
<b>Sony</b> STR-DB795 AV Receiver	£ CALL
<b>Yamaha</b> DSP-AX750SE AV Amplifier	£ CALL
<b>Yamaha</b> DSP-29 AV Amplifier	£ CALL
<b>Yamaha</b> RX-V550 AV Receiver	£ CALL
<b>Yamaha</b> RX-V650 AV Receiver	£ CALL
<b>Yamaha</b> RX-V1400RDS AV Receiver	£ CALL
<b>Yamaha</b> RX-V1500RDS AV Receiver	£ CALL
<b>Yamaha</b> RX-V2400RDS AV Receiver	£ CALL
<b>Yamaha</b> RX-V2500 AV Receiver	£899.95

## A/V SPEAKERS & PACKAGES

<b>Acoustic Energy</b> Evo 3B	£699.95
<b>Acoustic Energy</b> Aego P5/II	£499.95
<b>Acoustic Energy</b> Aelite 5.1	£1894.95
<b>Arctoustic</b> Diablo	£994.95
<b>B&amp;W</b> VM1/AS1	£849.95
<b>B&amp;W</b> DM300 AV	£899.95
<b>Castle</b> Compact CC3	£999.95
<b>KEF</b> KHT1005 £100 FREE QED CABLE*	£499.95
<b>KEF</b> KHT2005.2 £150 FREE QED CABLE*	£799.95
<b>KEF</b> KHT5005 £200 FREE QED CABLE*	£1199.95
<b>KEF</b> Q7 AV £300 FREE QED CABLE*	£2199.95
<b>M&amp;K</b> K5 £250 FREE QED CABLE*	£1699.95
<b>M&amp;K</b> K3	£1894.95
<b>M&amp;K</b> Xenon 25	£2249.95
<b>M&amp;K</b> 850/CS35/A850	£3899.95
<b>Mission</b> M30 AV Pack	£449.95
<b>Mission</b> Elegante e82 7.1 Package	£3989.95
<b>Monitor Audio</b> Bronze B2 AV	£799.95
<b>Monitor Audio</b> Bronze B4 AV	£949.95
<b>Monitor Audio</b> Radius 270	£499.95
<b>Monitor Audio</b> Radius 5.1	£999.95
<b>Mordaunt Short</b> Genie	£799.95
<b>Quad</b> L-Series	£1899.95
<b>Wharfedale</b> Diamond 9 HCP	£499.95

## SUBWOOFERS

<b>B&amp;W</b> PV1	£949.95
<b>MJ Acoustics</b> Pro 50 (Black) £60 QED CABLE*	£299.95
<b>MJ Acoustics</b> Pro 100 (Black) £60 QED CABLE*	£599.95
<b>MJ Acoustics</b> Ref 100 (Blk) £60 QED CABLE*	£349.95
<b>MJ Acoustics</b> Ref 1 MkII (Black) £60 QED CABLE*	£699.95
<b>Quad</b> L Series	£699.95
<b>REL</b> L1050E MKII (Brittex Black) £100 QED CABLE*	£499.95

<b>REL</b> Q201E (Brittex Black) £100 QED CABLE*	£724.95
<b>REL</b> Q400E (Brittex Black) £100 QED CABLE*	£999.95
<b>REL</b> Quake (Brittex Black)	£349.95
<b>REL</b> Stampede (Black) £100 QED CABLE*	£549.95
<b>REL</b> Strata 5 (Brittex Black) £100 QED CABLE*	£699.95
<b>Wharfedale</b> Diamond SW150	£249.95

## PLASMA

<b>Fujitsu</b> P42HHA30 42"	£ CALL
<b>Fujitsu</b> P50XHA30 50"	£ CALL
<b>Hitachi</b> 32PD5200 32"	£ CALL
<b>Hitachi</b> 42PD5200 42"	£ CALL
<b>Hitachi</b> 55PMA550TE 55"	£ CALL
<b>Panasonic</b> TH42PW7B 42"	£ CALL
<b>Panasonic</b> TH37PE30B 37"	£ CALL
<b>Panasonic</b> TH42PE30B 42"	£ CALL
<b>Panasonic</b> PDP434HDE 43"	£ CALL
<b>Panasonic</b> PDP435XDE 43"	£ CALL
<b>Panasonic</b> PDP435FDE 43"	£ CALL
<b>Panasonic</b> PDP504HDE 50"	£ CALL
<b>Panasonic</b> PDP505XDE 50"	£ CALL
<b>Panasonic</b> PDP505HDE 50"	£ CALL
<b>Sony</b> KDE-P37X51 37"	£ CALL
<b>Toshiba</b> 42WP36F 42"	£ CALL
<b>Yamaha</b> PDM4210 42"	£ CALL

## LCD TV

<b>Hitachi</b> 28LD5200 28"	£ CALL
<b>Panasonic</b> TX22LX2 22"	£ CALL
<b>Panasonic</b> TX26LXD1 26"	£ CALL
<b>Panasonic</b> TX32LXD1 32"	£ CALL
<b>Philips</b> 32PF9986 32"	£ CALL
<b>Sharp Aquos</b> LC-20S1E 20"	£ CALL
<b>Sharp Aquos</b> LC-20AD1 E 20"	£ CALL
<b>Sharp Aquos</b> LC-22AD1E 22"	£ CALL
<b>Sharp Aquos</b> LC-26GA3 26"	£ CALL
<b>Sharp Aquos</b> LC-32GA3 32"	£ CALL
<b>Sharp Aquos</b> LC-32GD1 32"	£ CALL
<b>Sharp Aquos</b> LC-37GD1 37"	£ CALL
<b>Sharp Aquos</b> LC-37GA3 37"	£ CALL
<b>Sony</b> Selected Models Available	£ CALL

## PROJECTORS

<b>Marantz</b> VP-1253 DLP	£8499.95
<b>NEC</b> HT1000 DLP	£ CALL
<b>Screenplay</b> SP4805 DLP	£1299.95
<b>Screenplay</b> SP5700 DLP	£2199.95
<b>Screenplay</b> SP7205 DLP	£4999.95
<b>Sharp</b> XV-Z91 E DLP	£ CALL
<b>Sharp</b> XV-Z200 DLP	£ CALL
<b>Sharp</b> XV-Z2000 DLP	£ CALL
<b>Sharp</b> XV-212000 DLP	£ CALL
<b>Sim 2</b> Domino 18 DLP	£2849.95
<b>Sim 2</b> Domino 20 DLP	£3499.95
<b>Sim 2</b> Domino 20-H HDMI DLP	£3999.95
<b>Sim 2</b> Domino 30-H HDMI DLP	£5999.95
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• 01902 312225 *OPEN SUNDAY*

### WHO ARE SEVENOAKS?

Founded in 1972, Sevenoaks Sound & Vision is one of the largest and most successful hi-fi and home cinema retailers in the country.

Each Sevenoaks Sound & Vision store stocks a wide range of quality products, covering all categories of specialist home entertainment, from Hi-Fi separates and systems to DVD players, widescreen plasma televisions and projection systems, all at highly competitive prices.

Friendly staff are available in all stores to advise, demonstrate and guide you through the home entertainment jungle.

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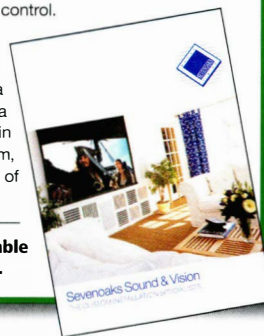


### CUSTOM INSTALLATION

Sevenoaks Sound & Vision's Custom Installation Service enables the integration of a home cinema or hi-fi system into your home as neatly and seamlessly as possible. All electronics can be hidden away, speakers discreetly mounted either in the wall or ceiling and the complete system operated via remote control.

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# STEREO AMPLIFIERS

*Integrated and pre/power amps*



Amplifiers come in two basic forms: integrated and preamplifier (pre) plus power amp combinations. Integrated simply means that both pre and power sections are in one box. There are definite advantages to separating the low level, delicate signals in the preamp from the radiations of a power amp, so the more ambitious designs come in two or more cases. In some cases, each channel has its own power amp called a monoblock.

Amplifiers use two basic technologies: transistors or valves. Transistors are popular because of their practical and technical advantages, but valves – aka tubes – live on owing to aspects of sound quality that trannies can't replicate. If you want to play your music loud, use trannies; if you appreciate acoustic music, try valves.

The fundamental of amp/speaker interfacing is power rating and speaker sensitivity. You can drive a high-sensitivity speaker with a ten watt valve amp, but it takes a 200W behemoth to get the best out of speakers which present a difficult load. As a rule, you can't have too much power.

### How to choose an amp

The main areas in which amps vary are: timing, dynamics, stereo imaging and transparency. Timing is the ability to present the attack and decay of each note precisely; amps with strong timing have a snap and coherence that is very appealing.



Dynamics is a general term for the ability to portray variations in level between individual notes and is different to dynamic range (the difference between the loudest and softest notes). Dynamically strong amps tend to have more life and energy.

Stereo imaging is how solid or three-dimensional an instrument or voice sounds. The point of having two rather than one speaker is to make it possible to recreate the soundstage of the original recording, thus amps that have strong imaging skills can create a sonic space that seems to extend the room.

Transparency of detail is the most obvious difference between amps. One amp will present more subtlety than another, but the drawback with using this as your main criterion is that a forward or 'bright' sounding amplifier will emphasise detail at the expense of overall musical coherence.

### Q&A

#### SHOULD I LEAVE MY AMP ON ALL THE TIME FOR BEST RESULTS?

All audio electronics perform better when they are warmed up, and this is particularly the case when it comes to amplifiers. If there's no way that you can leave it on all the time, make an effort to switch it on at least 20 minutes before listening.

#### WHAT IS BI-WIRING AND BI-AMPING?

Bi-wiring is when you run separate cables to the treble and bass/mid terminals on the speaker. In most instances, this improves sound quality so long as identical cables are used. Bi-amping is using two stereo amps to drive one pair of speakers, using one amp to drive the treble and the other for the bass/mid sections of the speakers.

#### WHY DO VALVE AMPS HAVE SO LITTLE POWER?

Valve amps are inherently low powered in absolute terms – at least when you compare them to their transistor-based cousins. But when partnered with high-sensitivity loudspeakers, they are quite capable of producing perfectly adequate head-banging levels.

### HOME CINEMA STEREO

Stereo amps can be used in home cinema set-ups as well. You don't get the surround and centre channels, but well set-up stereo speakers do a remarkably good job of creating atmosphere for movies. Stereo amps

tend to be better at reproducing music as they don't have the (electrical) noise-inducing digital processing of AV amps. AV amps cost three to four times as much as stereo models of a similar quality.

### TOP BUYS



**Marantz**  
PM7200 £330

A true budget belter from Marantz – power and finesse in equal measure, plus the ability to switch between Class A and Class AB operation. Giant killing amps are back!



**Roksan**  
Caspian M Series £1,000

The latest version of Roksan's long-running mid-market amp is a truly expressive performer, good enough to pick up a gong in our 2003 Awards.



**Quad**  
99 Pre/909 £1,650

This neat pre/power combo is much more engaging than stereotypical Quads of old, yet retains their purposeful, no-nonsense appeal. A great value two-box option.



**Primare**  
PRE30/A30.2 £2,400

Beautifully made and with a sound to match, this Scandinavian pre/power combines warmth and body with energy and detail – a truly musical performer.

## Our favourite BEST BUY EDITOR'S CHOICE STEREO AMPLIFIERS

### Integrated amplifiers

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS					
				LINE INPUTS	PHONO INPUT	REMOTE CONTROL	HEADPHONE SOCKET	POWER OUTPUT (W)	ISSUE NUMBER
<b>UP TO £1,000</b>									
	Arcam DIVA A65 Plus	370	Highly articulate and fluent, offers unusual insight for its price	5	●	●	●	40	232
	Arcam DIVA A80	600	Arcam's most successful mid-range amp to date – sophisticated control system and crisp, detailed sound	6	●	●	●	90	251
	Arcam DIVA A90	850	Enhanced replacement for A85, convertible to 7.1 sound with the addition of an add-on module and extra P90 power amps	6	opt	●	●	90	250
	Audio Analogue Primo	475	Small, stylish amp with a smooth and beguiling sound. Makes a fine partner for AA's equally compact Primo CD player	5	opt	●		70	255
	Cambridge Audio Azur 540A	200	A well built and fully featured amplifier that costs this little should not sound this revealing	6	opt	●	●	50	255
	Cambridge Audio Azur 640A	250	Cambridge has a powerful weapon in the battle for budget amp supremacy, it's a lot of musical entertainment for the money	5	opt	●		65	250
	Cyrus 6vs	600	This neat little amp sounds clean and agile – undoubtedly superior to its predecessor	7		●	●	40	261
	Cyrus 8vs	800	Slightly inferior to Cyrus 6vs, but the tables are turned with the add-on PSX-R power supply – in that form it's a real Best Buy	7		●	●	70	261
	Exposure 3010 Integrated	1,000	A mix of old and new, combining greater power with Exposure's traditionally sweet and enthralling sound	6	●	●	●	120	244
	Marantz PM4400 OSE	250	Highly competent and well specified – a lively performer that makes great music	5	●		●	50	256
	Marantz PM7200	330	High power, plenty of features and remarkably clear and informative sound with lots of impact	6	●	●	●	105	248
	Marantz PM7200 KI	500	Slightly more refined version of the already very fine PM7200, though perhaps not quite such excellent value for money	6	●	●	●	95	254
	Musical Fidelity X-80	600	The entry-level to Musical Fidelity's amplifier range sounds both powerful and refined	4		●		55	255
	NAD C352	350	Dynamic and musical sounding update on what was already a star product	7		●	●	80	253
	Naim Nait 5i	699	A trade-off of more power and better connectivity against less inputs works surprisingly well in a grunty, musical manner	4		●		50	252
	Primare I20	750	An amplifier with attitude: punchy fast and secure sounding, with excellent build quality for the money	4		●		70	239
	Roksan Caspian M Series	1,000	Improved mid-range model from Roksan is a fine, expressive amplifier – right at the top of its class	6		●		85	248
	Rotel RA-02	349	Agile and capable slimline design with an engaging sound that draws you into the music	4	●	●	●	40	232
	Rotel RA-1062	595	A great value amp with a detailed and engaging sound, and the ability to drive almost any speaker in its path	5	●	●		95	251
	Sugden A21a	899	This single-ended, Class A transistor amp has exquisite resolving ability and presence – an authentic classic	5				25	224
<b>ABOVE £1,000</b>									
	Arcam FMJ A32	1,150	Remarkably flexible and well-featured, with excellent sound quality for the price	7	●	●	●	100	228
	Audio Note Oto Line SE	1,599	Single-ended valve amp lacks power but sounds remarkably delicate and coherent	5	opt			10	254
	Audio Analogue Maestro S.	1,750	The beautifully made Maestro Settanta sounds fast, deep and very smooth, though perhaps not the most dynamic	5	●	●		70	257
	Audio Research Vsi55	2,895	Superb all-rounder provides the delights of valve amplification without sacrificing convenience	5		●		50	254
	AVI Laboratory Series	1,399	Terrific power, control and resolution – effortlessly musical and fine value	6	opt	●		200	241
	Copland CSA29	1,900	A hybrid valve/solid state amplifier that gets close to offering the best of both worlds	6	opt	●		85	255
	Karan KA-i180	3,900	Lean, sharp and articulate, this impressively constructed heavyweight is almost up there with the audiophile pre/power elite	4		●		180	236
	Krell KAV-400xi	2,698	The best integrated Krell yet is quick, agile, solid and finely detailed	5		●		200	247
	Myryad MXI2080	1,100	A sound of great assurance and clarity – perhaps a touch bass-light at times, but otherwise superb for the money	7		●		80	260
	Primare A30.1	1,500	Smooth, detailed singing quality, elegant appearance and a healthy power yield	6		●		100	214
	T+A V10	4,000	Complex but well engineered, stylish and genuinely innovative high power integrated valve amp	5		●		80	261

## Our favourite BEST BUY EDITOR'S CHOICE STEREO AMPLIFIERS

### Pre/power amplifiers

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS						
				PREAMPLIFIER	POWER AMPLIFIER	LINE INPUTS	PHONO INPUT	REMOTE CONTROL	POWER OUTPUT (W)	ISSUE NUMBER
<b>UP TO £2,000</b>										
	Arcam FMJ A32/P35	1,980	One of the few correctly matched integrated/power combinations, the sound has real gravitas and sophistication	●	●	7	●	●	100	227
	Croft Vitali/Series 5C	2,000	Oddball retro style and ergonomics, but truly magical voice coherence and projection, great transparency	●	●	3	●		30	216
	Densen Beat 200/300	1,985	Classy jet black cast boxes pack plenty of punch with good total musical coherence (remote £300 extra)	●	●	6	opt	opt	100	216
	Exposure 3010 Integrated/Power	1,800	Simple units with various connection options which give very satisfying sound in all areas	●	●	6	opt	●	116	256
	Quad 99/909	1,650	Well thought out and well executed, with good strong sound and just a little veiling	●	●	5	●	●	136	256
<b>ABOVE £2,000</b>										
	Border Patrol P20	6,750	Muscular 300B P-P design with fluidity and dynamics to match the best	●	●				20	231
	Bryston BP25/4BSST	4,000	Extremely transparent, high-power combo, you'll listen louder and longer because you can	●	●	8	opt	●	300	241
	Chapter Preface/II+	9,800	Among the finest amps available, the resolution of this preamp and power amp challenges the best at any price	●	●	6		●	300	249
	EAR 864/534	4,156	Valve combo delivers fine measured and subjective performance and inspires great confidence	●	●	6	●		50	254

**SPECS KEY** **LINE INPUTS** Input sockets for source components with a line level output: CD players, DVD players, tape decks, tuners, phono stages etc. **PHONO INPUT** Input sockets and onboard phono stage for a cartridge. Either MM (moving magnet) or MC (moving coil), occasionally both. **REMOTE CONTROL** A remote control is supplied with the amplifier. **HEADPHONE SOCKET** To drive your cans with. **POWER OUTPUT** Manufacturer's rated output in watts per channel.

Our favourite BEST BUY EDITOR'S CHOICE

## STEREO AMPLIFIERS *continued*

### Pre/power amplifiers

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS						
				PRE-AMPLIFIER	POWER AMPLIFIER	LINE INPUTS	PHONO INPUT	REMOTE CONTROL	POWER OUTPUT (W)	ISSUE NUMBER
<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">EC</span>	ECS EA-1	6,000	Understated monoblocks with real transparency to the fine detail, passion and energy in your record collection	●	●				180	253
	Exposure XXIII/XXVIII	2,790	Highly natural and dynamic amplifier that offers the fluidity and energy of valves via transistors	●	●	6	opt	●	70	241
<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">EC</span>	Gamut D200 Mk3	3,950	A great power amp that's now even better – one of the best regardless of price		●				200	247
<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">EC</span>	Halcro dm10/dm68	25,550	Extravagant, extreme and massive amp combo will probably polarise opinions, but delivers stunning midrange clarity	●	●	5		●	225	243
<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">EC</span>	Hovland HP-100/RADIA	12,745	Uncommonly musical valve/transistor hybrid transcends stereotypes, one of the genuine high achievers	●	●	9	opt		125	250
<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">EC</span>	Krell FPB 700cx	14,998	Reference class amplifier may represent overkill in many systems, but when no compromise is called for, this is it		●				700	234
<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">EC</span>	Linn Klimax Kontrol	6,000	Beautifully executed example of Scots audio art, sounds as clean as it looks and is a lot more transparent than most	●		4		●		238
	Naim NAC202/NAP200	2,720	More sophisticated than its forebears with a fleet-footed sound that draws you into the music	●	●	8		●	70	241
<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">EC</span>	Naim NAP500	11,875	Wonderful neutrality, bandwidth and dynamic range, plus Naim's traditional leading-edge definition		●				140	208
<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">EC</span>	Naim NAC52	12,100	Extremely expensive preamp, but still solid value. Magnificent sound with fine flexibility and convenience	●		6		●		233
<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">EB</span>	Primare PRE30/A30.2	2,400	Smart kit that lives up to the visual promise with gorgeous sound – a really musical performer	●	●	7		●	128	256
<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">EC</span>	Quad QC-24/II-40	4,007	Big, muscular valve sound that's smooth and easy on the ears, plus solid engineering with good power delivery	●	●	7			40	254
	Roksan Caspian M Series pre/pwr	2,050	Confident and highly enjoyable sound with lively music, perhaps a little less sure with subtler, complex scores	●	●	6		●	78	256
<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">EB</span>	Stello DP200/S200	2,990	Flexible preamp with purist leanings, plus classic stereo power amp offer great value by high-end standards	●	●	3		●	200	259
<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">EC</span>	Sugden Masterclass AA	5,600	Yorkshire's finest Class A kit. Dynamic and tonally rich, this gives even valve amps a run for their money	●	●	7		●	35	246
<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">EC</span>	Unison Research Unico Pre/DM	2,590	Hybrid designs with a rich powerful performance that makes a fine balance between valve and solid state sound	●	●	3		●	150	242

# AV AMPLIFIERS

*Surround sound amps for music and movies*



The multichannel, surround sound or AV amplifier is a popular option, thanks to the success of the DVD

player and home cinema. Now you can buy five channels or more of amplification for the price of two. Now that multichannel music is also on the agenda, there's a lot to be said for a good AV amp or receiver (an amp with a radio tuner built in)

So if you fancy hearing what DVD-Audio, SACD or even music DVD-Video can do, then check out a multichannel amp and speaker set-up – they're stunning with movies and none too shabby with music.

AV amps are usually designed primarily for movies and come with digital processing for the various soundtrack formats – Dolby Pro-Logic (analogue), Dolby Digital and DTS, which offer discrete surround sound in 5.1 and 7.1 channel formats. More ambitious designs also offer THX post processing, designed to emulate the sound of the mixing theatre at home.

Processing in AV amps is needed because the surround formats on DVD-Vs are compressed, limiting their high-fidelity



potential. This is why new formats SACD and DVD-A, which don't use 'lossy' compression, were created for music.

All this processing power can take its toll on analogue formats. The best multichannel amps for music are often the simplest, but any that offer a complete bypass option with six-channel input are suitable. It's also worth looking at real power – five or seven channels of amplification are not easy to produce with a feeble power supply, and the cheaper amps in particular often fail to live up to the claims.

### Q&A

#### HOW MANY CHANNELS?

Depends on how many speakers you want. Multichannel music discs come with six or 5.1 channels, but for new movies, 7.1 systems are where it's at. 7.1 set-ups also mean you have speakers directly behind you – preferable for music discs.

#### WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A PROCESSOR AND AN AV AMP?

Processors don't have amplification on board and you need separate power amps. AV amps and receivers have processing and amps in the same box.

#### WHAT DOES THE .1 IN 5.1 STAND FOR?

This is the LFE (low frequency effects) or bass channel that is reproduced by a subwoofer.

### HI-FI MEETS SURROUND SOUND

With DVD-Audio and SACD offering high-quality multichannel music, surround sound is no longer just a home cinema thing. An increasing number of people want to build a multichannel system that will do their music as well as their movie

DVDs justice, and the number of AV products delivering sufficient quality is on the increase. But most aren't cheap – building a top-quality system with five or more channels is inevitably more expensive than sticking with stereo. There

are some very decent integrated options below £1,000, though the best (and most costly) route is to buy a separate processor and power amp(s). Or you can add AV amplification to a stereo model you can't bear to part with.



## TOP BUYS



**Sony**  
STR-DB795 £300  
Sony's latest little box of AV tricks is astonishingly good for the money – great with cinema and unusually fine with music.



**Denon**  
AVR-3805 £1,000  
Combines admirable sound across all music and movie formats with features like full auto set-up, i.Link and the latest surround formats – a class act at £1,000.



**Pioneer**  
VSA-AX10Ai £3,200  
An astoundingly thorough multichannel *tour de force*, stuffed with features and impressive in both stereo and full surround – state of the integrated AV amp art.



**Arcam**  
AV8/P7 £5,750  
A fantastic achievement from this respected UK brand – a top-ranking AV processor and seven-channel power amp.

## Our favourite AV AMPLIFIERS

BBB BEST BUY EC EDITOR'S CHOICE

### Multichannel amplifiers

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	RECEIVER	LINE INPUTS	7.1 COMPATIBLE	5-CHANNEL POWER (W)	ISSUE NUMBER
<b>MULTICHANNEL INTEGRATED AMPS</b>								
	Arcam AVR200	800	Upgraded AVR100 with Dolby Pro-Logic II and some bass management. Great for stereo, a bit bass-light for multichannel	●	6		70	229
BBB	Arcam AVR300	1,300	Cracking all-round music and movie ability sets the Arcam apart from the AV crowd	●	8	●	100	257
	Denon AVR-2803	650	Merely 'average' sound but it's impossible to argue against the flexibility and value of its engineering	●	9	●	130	251
BBB	Denon AVR-3805	1,000	Upgraded sound, new processing algorithms and a great remote control make this a superb mid-market multichannel buy	●		●	120	256
EC	Denon AVC-A1SRA	3,000	An AV amp with genuine high-res hi-fi credentials. Feature set now upgraded to the AVC-A1SR'A'		8	●	170	232
	Marantz SR9300	2,000	Not a high flyer, just a thoroughly enjoyable, warm and attractive sounding receiver with music and film soundtracks alike	●	8	●	105	252
	Marantz SR-12S1	3,000	A multichannel amp that can be taken seriously in stereo too. Resources are in the engineering rather than the gimmicky	●	3	●	160	255
BBB	Pioneer VSA-AX5i	1,200	Standard setter in its price category, with i.Link digital interface and MCACC auto set-up	●	11	●	100	248
EC	Pioneer VSA-AX10Ai	3,200	State of the art one-box amplifier with enhanced sound quality, auto set-up and other enhancements		10	●	150	260
BBB	Sony STR-DB795	300	A superb value little amplifier, well appointed technically and successfully tuned for UK ears	●	7	●	100	260
EC	Sony TA-DA9000ES	2,600	Arguably the first convincing fully digital amplifier, an excellent match for players with i.Link encrypted outputs	●	10	●	200	253
<b>MULTICHANNEL PREAMPS/PROCESSORS AND POWER AMPS</b>								
BBB	Arcam A90+7.1 mod, P90/3	1,920	Add Arcam's multichannel module and a P90/3 power amp to the A90 stereo integrated and you've got got superb purist 5.1		8	●	90	250
EC	Arcam AV8/P7	5,750	State-of-the-art processor (£3,150) and seven-channel power amp (£2,600). An excellent fusion of stereo and surround sound		7	●	180	235
EC	Copland CVA306/CVA535	3,748	Tube analogue six-channel pre transforms multichannel audio from a novelty into a genuine advance for the high fidelity art		5		125	236
	Cyrus AV8/3x Smartpower	2,900	Classic Cyrus sound translated to a multichannel arena, limited features and power, but civilised sound		3		105	238
EC	EAD TheaterMaster 8800	4,500	One of the most 'musical' sounding AV processors to date – great with the matching PowerMaster 8300 multichannel power amp		9	●		242
	Linn Exotik	1,750	Is hi-fi ready to make the jump to multichannel music? Linn think so with this musical preamplifier		4			260
BBB	Marantz PS-17/2x SM-17	3,400	Classy and capable system, great steering, warm solid sound and high detail resolution, and some great gadgets		10	●	60	238
EC	Meridian 861	9,833	Powerful surround processor with flexible modular construction, marvellous versatility to drive any speaker configuration		6	●		230
	Naim AV2/NAPV175/NAP150	4,175	First truly credible multichannel system from Naim is idiosyncratic but offers excellent basic sound with modest spatial steering		5	●	50	238
EC	Parasound Halo C1/A51	8,500	Powerful and flexible processor/power amp combo with impressive sound. Excellent value – processor includes onboard screen		11	●	250	243
BBB	Primare SP31.7/A30.5	4,200	Great all-round system which brings the qualities of good stereo high fidelity to a multichannel world		5	●	120	238

**SPECS KEY** **RECEIVER** Integrated multichannel amp with built-in radio tuner. **LINE INPUTS** Input sockets for source components with a line level output: CD players, DVD players, tape decks, tuners, phono stages etc. **7.1 CHANNEL COMPATIBLE** The amp either has seven-channel in and outputs or in some instances is equipped with seven channels of amplification. **5-CHANNEL POWER (W)** Power output in watts per channel of all channels driven by the amp.

# Sound Fantastic

Olsons new *Sound Fantastic* range of units are specifically designed for both the home and professional hi-fi audio markets.

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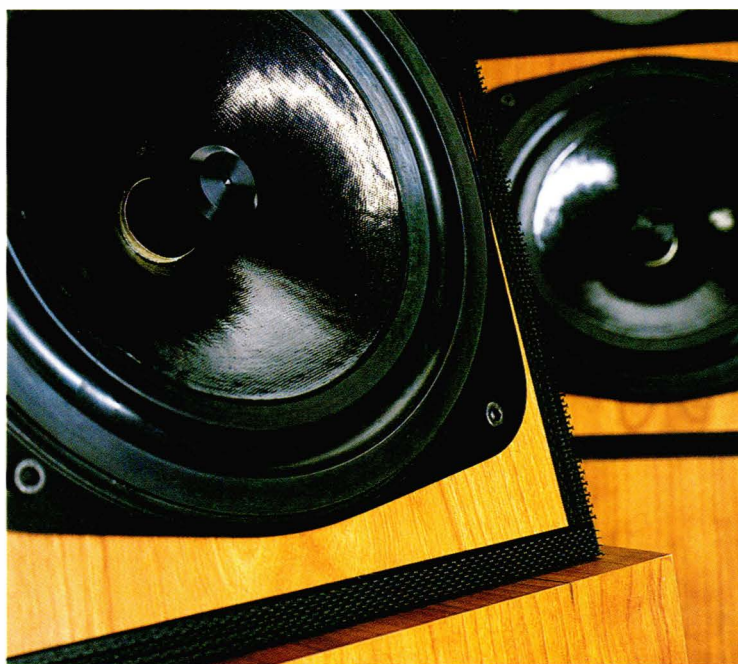
# STEREO SPEAKERS

*Speaker pairs for stereo sound*



While loudspeakers are relatively straightforward in construction, they have one of the most difficult jobs in hi-fi – turning an electrical signal into an acoustic one. Most consist of two or more drive units in a box that usually has a port in it to make life easier for the cone in your mid and/or bass driver. Alternatives to this arrangement include panel speakers, which use electrostatic or ribbon technology, and horns, which use drive units in complex cabinets that greatly improve efficiency.

Box speakers are either designed to stand on the floor (floorstanders) or on a stand (stand or shelfmounts). Floorstanders have greater internal volume which can translate into greater efficiency and/or bass extension, but less substantial designs also introduce cabinet resonance and thus distortion. But they don't need stands and therefore have the aesthetic edge. Standmounts have less cabinet to vibrate and often score in terms of imaging and timing, but need good stands to work well.



## Positioning

The closer the speaker is to a wall, the greater the reinforcement of bass. As all rooms differ, there's no simple formula for placement and experimentation will yield the best results. Altering the angle at which the speakers face the listener can also make a difference to balance and stereo image.

## Going multichannel

Many stereo speakers can be augmented with centre and surround channels from the same brand to create a multichannel system. The most important element is a centre channel, which needs to match the stereo pair as closely as possible. For the best musical results, surrounds should be as per the front left and right channels, but if space or funds don't permit, smaller designs can be used quite effectively.

## Choosing speakers

Because speakers and the rooms they are used in vary so much, choosing a pair tends to be quite subjective. To find some that will suit you, try to listen to a good variety to hear how they differ, and if possible, audition some at home. Tonal balance tends to vary the most, but is less important than more subtle factors such as timing and dynamics. Finally, listen with your ears not your eyes – great-looking speakers aren't necessarily great sounding.

## Spikes

Floorstanding speakers and stands have threaded inserts for spikes that allow rigid coupling with the floor. These have the advantage of draining resonance from the speaker and giving tighter bass, but can result in more vibration getting back to the electronics and often cause the floor to resonate as well.

## POWER

Though some speakers have a power rating, this isn't as informative as a rating for how difficult they are to drive, nor does it indicate wattage extremes for the partnering amp. In practice, an amplifier cannot be too powerful. Our listings quote ease of drive to indicate how much power

your amp needs to avoid a mismatch. An above-average (A+) speaker will work with amps rated at 25W plus, while an average (A) speaker will need 50W or more, and a below average (A-) speaker could require 100W plus to sound its best. These are guidelines rather than rules.

## Q&A

### IF SPEAKERS ARE RATED AT 75 WATTS, DOES THAT MEAN I NEED A 75 WATT AMP?

No, see the box on power for the full story.

### WHICH SPEAKERS ARE BEST FOR SMALL ROOMS?

Those designed to work close to the wall will be smoother in confined spaces. Speakers that have relatively dry, tight bass will also sound better.

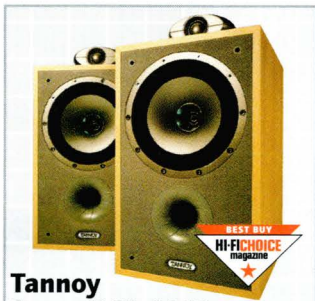
### WHICH SPEAKERS ARE BEST FOR BIG ROOMS?

Big, efficient, easy-to-drive designs are more likely to be able to fill a room better than compact models.

### DO I NEED TO BUY CENTRE AND SURROUND CHANNELS FROM THE SAME BRAND AS MY STEREO SPEAKERS?

Yes, assuming that you're wanting to create a homogenous surround sound experience, where voices don't change when they move from one channel to another.

## TOP BUYS



**Tannoy**  
Sensys DC1 £449  
A new dual-concentric main driver plus super-tweeter in a solid standmount box results in a neutral yet expressive speaker at a very tempting price.



**PMC**  
GB1 £995  
An attractively compact floorstander with a beautifully articulate sound and remarkable freedom from boxiness. A great buy if you've just under a grand to spend.



**B&W**  
703 £2,000  
A hi-tech, three-way floorstander sporting a 'surroundless' midrange driver. Delivers a thoroughly engaging sound with great bass and an expressive midrange.



**Focal-JMLab**  
Micro Utopia Be £3,500  
The smallest model in the top-end Utopia Be range is a remarkable piece of speaker engineering, complete with beryllium tweeter and a highly revealing sound.

## Our favourite STEREO SPEAKERS

BEST BUY EDITOR'S CHOICE

### Stereo speakers

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SIZE (WxHxD (CM))	FLOORSTANDER	EASE OF DRIVE	BASS FROM (Hz)	FREE SPACE	CLOSE TO WALL	ISSUE NUMBER
<b>UP TO £1,000</b>										
	Acoustic Energy Aegis Evo 1	180	An unusually classy and sophisticated performer for the price; laid-back sound and good looks too	19,36,24	A	30	●		226	
	ATC SCM12	999	Magnificent main driver confers great authority, grip and smoothness, though upper bass a little lean	22,39,26	A-	55		●	253	
	AVI Neutron IV	499	A great example of what can be done with a genuinely small speaker, but the warts-and-all balance won't suit all	15,27,21	A-	65	●		260	
	B&W DM303	180	Chunky looking and lively sounding, with deep bass, a fine midband and a restrained top end	20,33,23	A	23		●	226	
	B&W DM602 S3	300	Old-fashioned size/shape, but this timeless design has a rare combination of grip, authority and headroom	24,49,29	A	25	●		234	
	B&W DM603 S3	600	Excellent all-rounder, smooth for its price with fine bass and mid, though top might be more refined	20,91,29	● A-	25	●		231	
	B&W 705	900	Deft, delicate and delightful, if a little bass light, with clever enclosure and driver engineering	22,42,29	A	35	●		253	
	Castle Richmond 3i	320	Does most things well and the most important thing - musical communication - remarkably well for the price	17,33,23	A	60	●		260	
	Castle Conway 3	930	Lovely real wood finish and a beautifully balanced sound, fine dynamics and transients, but might have more 'air'	22,91,27	● A+	30	●		237	
	Castle Harlech S2	1,000	Improved Harlech is slightly aggressive, but lots of fun, and very good-looking too	20,96,33	● A	50	●		219	
	Dynaudio Audience 42	400	An aristocrat of the vinyl-covered miniature breed. A terrific small speaker for the price	17,29,24	A	40	●		215	
	Dynaudio Audience 52	557	Brilliant neutrality, though a little understated dynamically (wood veneered version, as tested - £647)	20,33,26	A-	30	●		250	
	Dynaudio Audience 62	729	Pricy but cute vinyl floorstander that is a class act sonically - lightweight, but clean and dextrous	20,86,26	● A	30	●		231	
	Epos ELS3	200	Few affordable speakers sound as clean and convincing while taking up so little real estate	18,27,19	A-	60	●		241	
	Focal-JMLab Chorus 707 S	350	The size and shape might be unfashionable, but this is an outstanding all-round performer at a very sharp price	24,49,30	A	25	●		251	
	Focal-JMLab Chorus 716 S	550	Not the smoothest around, but combines coherent voicing with fine dynamic expression and real authority	22,95,30	● A	20	●		250	
	Focal-JMLab Chorus 726 S	780	Big generous sound with good dynamic freedom, hampered by some voice-band congestion	22,100,32	● A+	55	●		253	
	Focal-JMLab Cobalt 816 S	999	Great all-rounder - lively and dynamic, smooth and neutral, marred only by a slight treble 'sting'	22,98,31	● A-	25	●		242	
	Jamo E 700	150	Superb staging and detail for the price, but needs a sub to deliver real bass	14,24,20	A-	60		●	260	
	KEF Q1	250	Stylish if slightly small-sounding stand-mount with fine midband coherence; works well close to a wall	22,35,30	A	30		●	234	
	KEF Q4	400	Beautiful, bijou three-way floorstander lacks some bass weight but has a lovely midband with low coloration	18,82,25	● A	38		●	255	
	Leema Xen	1,000	A true micro-mini-monitor with remarkable powers of analysis and great musical insight, if a touch forward	14,22,23	A-	50		●	245	
	Mission m35	400	Very good material value - a big speaker with ample bass and a notably open yet also rather bright top end	26,103,37	● A	23	●		255	
	Monitor Audio Bronze B2	200	A lively and entertaining speaker with tight, controlled bass and a pronounced midband	19,35,25	A	42		●	238	
	Monitor Audio Bronze B4	350	A beautifully balanced loudspeaker with fine overall dynamic range and good imaging	19,85,26	● A	23	●		255	
	Monitor Audio Silver S8	800	A thoroughly impressive all-rounder, notable for its wide dynamic range, excellent imaging and fine neutrality	19,90,27	● A	20	●		237	
	Monitor Audio Silver S10	1,000	Timing might be less than the best, but the full balance and fine dynamic range deliver plenty of detail	20,100,27	● A+	20	●		242	
	Mordaunt-Short Avant 906	350	Capable and engaging, this neat design will complement the majority of sub-£500-per-component systems	18,85,27	● A	45	●		254	
	Neat Petite III	845	The treble is peaky, but this is still one of the most coherent and communicative miniatures around	20,31,20	A	30		●	211	
	PMC DB1+	625	Now with sweeter treble, this fun-size tiny lacks some weight and authority, but is beautifully balanced	16,29,24	A	50		●	261	
	PMC TB2+	795	This fine allrounder has a lovely laid-back neutrality, fine transparency, low coloration and a sweet treble	20,41,31	A	30	●		261	
	PMC GB1	995	Ultra-compact floorstander is beautifully clean, articulate and free from boxiness, with a notably delicate top end	16,92,24	● A+	30	●		257	

**SPECS KEY** SIZE WxHxD (CM) Width, height and depth of one cabinet in centimetres. **FLOORSTANDER** Speakers that don't require stands. **EASE OF DRIVE** How much power the amplifier needs (approximately) to drive the loudspeaker effectively. **A+** 25 watts plus **A** 50 watts plus **A-** 100 watts plus **ACT** Active - the speaker has its own in-built amplifier. **BASS FROM** How low the speaker goes - the smaller the number the deeper the bass. **FREE SPACE** The speakers work best away from wall(s). **CLOSE TO WALL** The speakers will work best when up against a wall (but avoid corners).

# AUDUSA

## AUDUSA EUPEN CSA 2.5 AUDIO AC POWER CORD

**GNLM 05/04 and GNLM 05/2.5 ( CSA 2.5) Cable with FERRITE TECHNOLOGY** - A polymer material mixed with a considerable quantity of homogeneously fine high quality ferrite powder is extruded around the copper conductors. GNLM cables are further protected with a foil shield and a drain wire, specifically manufactured for High End audio use.

**NEW for 2004 CSM Analog, Digital and Video Interconnects, with extruded ferrite - RCA or XLR, £75 for 1m pair.**

Power cables are fitted with IEC (Martin Kayser) and MK Tough plug. Cable is also available with our all steel 4, 6 and 8 way distribution blocks. We can rewire the distribution blocks with Eupen cable as an extra cost option. Refer to our web site for details.

**AUDUSA - OOM Silverlink OCC balanced speaker cable** stranded, silver on OFHC plus three strands of OCC for improved bass performance. Mylar infill and with designed in protection against RF and EMI.

### GNLM 05/2.5 (CSA2.5)

£48 for 1.0m, £58 for 1.5m, £68 for 2.0m.

### GNLM 05/04

£58 for 1.0m, £72 for 1.5m, £86 for 2.0m. Both GNLM cables are available off the reel and for export.

## ACOUSTIC SOLID



Small Royal, 60cm aluminium platter, topped with a 6mm acrylic platter and leather mat. Nylon thread belt - weight 25kg, rrp £1280 without tone-arm



**LAT INTERNATIONAL Inc USA - Analogue, Digital and Video interconnects and Speaker cable better than most at double the price.**

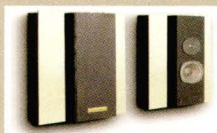
We have developed a cabling (weaving) pattern along with an unusual shielding/filtering system that gets rid of the garbage that contaminates your components. The difference you hear with our cord is astounding. Our power cord takes advantage of silver in its design through use of our proprietary Silverfuse conductors. The conductors are 10 gauge and with PTFE; the best insulation available. Fitted as standard with IEC / MK Toughplug. . 60cm £62, 90cm £75, 1.2m £88, 1.5m £101, 1.8m £112 etc Other lengths available and off the reel. **4, 6 and 8 way all steel mains distribution blocks fitted with UK, Schuko or USA sockets.** CE tested & approved mains distribution units manufactured of heavy gauge steel, finished in black and fitted with highest quality 13amp sockets. It has no filters, circuit breakers, surge protection, transformers, resistors, capacitors, LED's, on/off switches, chokes, regulators, just fitted with 1m of AC-2 mains cable. From £166 for 4 way, £198, 6 way, £229 for 8 way. Interconnects IC-200, IC-100, IC80, IC50, Video Vi-6, Vi-6 Component, Digital -DI-20, Speaker SS800 and SS1000



LAT AC-2 Power cord compare with products costing ten times as much, then decide



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Stasis pre amp

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## Our favourite BEST BUY EDITOR'S CHOICE **STEREO SPEAKERS** *continued*

### Stereo speakers

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS					
				SIZE (WHD) (CM)	FLOORSTANDER	EDGE OF DRIVE	BASS FROM (Hz)	FREE SPACE	CLOSE TO WALL
	Quad 22L	895	Lovely lacquer finish over birds-eye maple veneer, with a sound that's more open and forward than usual	21,87,28	●	A	25	●	257
<span style="font-size: x-small;">EBC</span>	Rega Ela	749	Might have more grunt, but few can match its impressive agility, delicacy, and superior musical communication	23,89,30	●	A	28	●	250
	Spendor SR5	1,000	This wall-mount very cleverly avoids the usual colorations, delivering a very dynamic if rather dry sound	31,31,18		A+	50	●	240
<span style="font-size: x-small;">EBC</span>	Tannoy Fusion 4	350	This big d'Appolito twin two-way has fine coherence and dynamics. A neutral and even all-rounder	21,97,29	●	A	20	●	255
<span style="font-size: x-small;">EBC</span>	Tannoy Sensys DC1	449	Modest sensitivity but beautifully balanced with fine authority at a very realistic price	21,41,29		A	40	●	245
	Tannoy Eyris 1	600	Pricy but very cute standmount miniature; oddball, but has marvellous midband subtlety and delicacy	17,35,26		A+		●	227
	Tannoy Sensys DC2	649	Has impressive scale and weight with fine stereo imaging, but is also rather laid back, lacking easy agility	21,97,29	●	A	20	●	250
	Tannoy Eyris 2	999	This super-slim and cutely different-looking floorstander is very communicative, despite weak treble	17,91,26	●	A	20	●	231
<b>ABOVE £1,000</b>									
<span style="font-size: x-small;">EBC</span>	Acoustic Energy AE1 MkIII	1,690	Luxury miniature has a laid-back but bouncy sound, a marvellous dynamic range and very superior imaging	19,31,25		A-	30	●	251
	Acoustic Energy AE3 MkII	4,490	A beautifully neutral speaker with very wide dynamic range and superior imaging, plus lovely Art Deco styling	19,99,29	●	A	20	●	251
<span style="font-size: x-small;">EBC</span>	Anthony Gallo Nucleus Ref	2,400	Occasionally raw, but engaging and capable beyond its physical stature	20,89,41	●	A	34	●	257
	ATC Active 10	1,269	Stylish, active powerhouses with plenty of subtlety when required (balanced connection only)	23,39,31	act	45	●		221
<span style="font-size: x-small;">EBC</span>	ATC SCM35	1,999	If you want to hear the uncoloured truth about your record collection in all its glory, this is a speaker to treasure	23,88,30	●	A-	48	●	250
<span style="font-size: x-small;">EBC</span>	ATC Active 20	2,538	30k + 300W equals resolution and bass that most amp/speaker combinations dream about – a bargain	56,28,36	act	45	●		240
<span style="font-size: x-small;">EBC</span>	ATC SCM50 ASL	7,255	350W of power combine with superb drive units and a 48kg cabinet to provide alarming resolution	35,72,48	act	38	●		218
<span style="font-size: x-small;">EBC</span>	Audio Note AN-E/LX	2,650	Though not very pretty, this is a thoroughly entertaining speaker with great dynamic subtlety and integrity	36,79,27	●	A+	22	●	256
<span style="font-size: x-small;">EBC</span>	Audiovector MI 3 Signature	2,320	Smooth and beautifully balanced with superb neutrality, wide dynamic range and a warm, sweet character	20,100,29	●	A-	24	●	260
	B&W Nautilus 805	1,400	A small-sounding loudspeaker dynamically, but very stylish, clean and 'unboxy', delivering loads of detail	24,42,31		A	28	●	199
<span style="font-size: x-small;">EBC</span>	B&W 704	1,400	Cleverly tapered enclosure and external tweeter delivers superior bass and treble, with a laid-back midband	22,96,32	●	A	20	●	257
<span style="font-size: x-small;">EBC</span>	B&W 703	2,000	Bass is immensely powerful and even, and the overall sound is lively and dynamic, though not overly smooth	23,101,36	●	A-	20	●	260
<span style="font-size: x-small;">EBC</span>	B&W Signature 805	2,500	Gorgeous standmount sounds delicately transparent and laid back with very superior resolution and imaging	24,42,34		A	30	●	247
<span style="font-size: x-small;">EBC</span>	BC Acoustique ACT-A1	1,195	Exceptional focus, dynamic coherence and expression through the voice band, but bass could be more even	21,90,33	●	A+	25	●	257
	Beauhorn B2.2 Revelation	3,984	Magnificent midband and fine overall balance but limited bass is best with small-scale material	34,130,75	●	A+	80	●	244
	Dali Helicon 300	1,980	Lively and essentially sweet sound is beautifully free from boxiness, if a little lean and forward overall	21,44,36		A	24	●	260
<span style="font-size: x-small;">EBC</span>	Dynaudio Audience 82	1,460	Bulky, with vinyl finish, but offers exceptional neutrality, bass extension, power handling and loudness potential	22,106,36	●	A	30	●	229
	Dynaudio Contour S 1.4	1,850	Sound has fine mid-to-treble coherence and neutrality, though port tuning was ill-suited to our room	19,40,36		A-	28	●	260
	Eclipse TD Lulét 307/316	1,250	Extraordinary satellite plus sub solution sounds a cut above other sub/sats. Can be expanded to multichannel	12,16,16	act	40	●		247
<span style="font-size: x-small;">EBC</span>	Ferguson Hill FH001	6,853	Looks and sounds wonderful, with realistic dynamic expression, but needs careful amp matching and sub(s)	90,166,80	●	A+	180	●	242
<span style="font-size: x-small;">EBC</span>	Focal-JMLab Alto Utopia Be	11,000	Attractive and beautifully balanced, with fine bass alignment and focus, low coloration and very clean top end	37,121,53	●	A-	20	●	248
<span style="font-size: x-small;">EBC</span>	Focal-JMLab Diva Utopia Be	7,599	Lovely slimline speaker combines remarkable transparency with fine dynamics and gorgeous bass	25,110,53	●	A+	30	●	255
<span style="font-size: x-small;">EBC</span>	Focal-JMLab Micro Utopia Be	3,500	New 'Be' version is clearly an exceptional standmount, capable of revealing the innate quality of the music	25,42,5,38		A	50	●	245
	Harbeth Super HL5	1,699	Looks old-fashioned, but classic monitor combines authority and transparency with good neutrality	33,64,31		A	30	●	233
	Living Voice Auditorium	1,700	Gloriously coherent and dynamic midband, though the top end is restrained and bass was uneven in our room	22,86,28	●	A-	30	●	247
<span style="font-size: x-small;">EBC</span>	Living Voice Avatar	2,700	Dynamic and highly resolved, yet physically discreet design with a relaxed balance	22,104,27	●	A+	40	●	218
<span style="font-size: x-small;">EBC</span>	Living Voice Avatar OBX-R2	4,000	Has Dynamics, tonal colour, detail, space and time resolution in spades. External crossovers require extra cabling	22,100,27	●	A+	35	●	244
	MartinLogan Mosaic	1,799	Curious hybrid construction marries many panel speaker-like attributes with moving coil simplicity	24,102,30	●	A-	46	●	257
<span style="font-size: x-small;">EBC</span>	MartinLogan Clarity	2,498	Relatively affordable and easy to live with electrostatic hybrid with class-leading resolving power	26,135,31	●	A-	46	●	245
<span style="font-size: x-small;">EBC</span>	Mission Elegante e83	1,990	Uncommonly clean, agile and refined floorstander, and as elegant as the name	33,111,36	●	A-	44	●	257



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Our favourite  BEST BUY  EDITOR'S CHOICE

# STEREO SPEAKERS

 continued

## Stereo speakers

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS						
				SIZE (WHD) (CM)	FLOORSTANDER	EDGE-OF-DRIVE	BASS FROM (WZ)	HFE SVCS	CLOSE TO WALL	ISSUE NUMBER
	Naim Ariva	1,275	Cute and discreet floorstander has superb bass and a wide dynamic range, but it could be smoother and sweeter	23,88,31	●	A	25	●	259	
	Naim SL-2	4,995	Delivers magnificent musical analysis and communication skills in a notably discrete physical package	28,103,33	●	A-	20	●	232	
	Naim NBL	6,925	Elegant, large floorstander is exceptionally informative, with an awesome dynamic range and dry, forward balance	29,116,47	●	A-	20	●	200	
	Neat Ultimatum MFS	2,995	Wonderful five-driver standmount sounds bigger than it looks. Very spacious and informative	22,38,37		A+	25	●	241	
	Neat Ultimatum MF9	8,500	Superb musical communicator with splendidly deep and agile bass and fine open neutrality	22,150,40	●	A-	20	●	226	
	PMC LB1	1,150	Still fully competitive eight years after our original review, this genuine compact monitor is now a modern classic	18,53,26		A-	40	●	199	
	PMC FB1+	1,625	Nicely proportioned floorstander has a sweet top and a beautifully natural, open and restrained midband	20,100,30	●	A	20	●	260	
	PMC OB1	2,450	Genuinely deep bass and lovely overall neutrality, though mid could have more tension and bass more punch	20,103,33	●	A	20	●	243	
	PMC IB2	6,150	Stunning in an understated way, this speaker creeps up on you and hooks you with its transparency and power	33,74,47		A-	25	●	237	
	ProAc Response D25	2,995	The traditional ProAc high-end detail mixed with greater efficiency and more pace - a splendid speaker	22,107,25	●	A+	20	●	254	
	Rega R9	2,498	This subtle, laid back but very informative performer has a very superior dynamic range, especially in the bass	17,103,39	●	A	20	●	256	
	Ruark Talisman III	1,499	No bass demon, but a sophisticated and agile speaker epitomising Ruark's design ideals	22,84,31	●	A	22	●	259	
	Sonus Faber Cremona A.	2,149	Standmount 'Auditor' version of the Cremona makes a soundstage bigger and better than its size suggests	19,35,32		A	48	●	246	
	Spendor S6e	1,495	Combines deep, powerful bass with an attractively open midband, but perhaps too much restraint up top	30,88,19	●	A+	23	●	257	
	Spendor S9e	2,895	An improvement on the original S9 - very entertaining at high levels with a fabulously open and weighty bass	24,101,38	●	A+	40	●	256	
	Tannoy Dimension TD8	4,000	This stylish speaker is a splendid all-rounder, with fine dynamics, precise imaging and minimal coloration	31,86,30	●	A-	25	●	240	
	Tannoy Dimension TD10	5,000	Extremely competent and rhythmic speaker, a futureproof supertweeter and detail to die for	35,101,37	●	A-	38	●	215	
	Tannoy Dimension TD12	6,500	Art Deco-inspired style, plus magnificent headroom and genuine monitoring neutrality - a tour de force	42,126,41	●	A-	23	●	225	
	Tannoy Yorkminster	9,000	Deliciously delicate and expressive at low listening levels, it still has massive headroom when your in the mood	62,102,45	●	A+	20	●	255	
	Totem Hawk	1,900	Beautifully refined compact floorstander. Smooth and transparent, but dynamics might have more grip	17,91,25	●	A-	20	●	260	
	Totem Forest	2,390	Low sensitivity but wonderfully open neutrality, at heart a beautifully communicative and musical loudspeaker	20,90,27	●	A	25	●	247	
	Triangle Naia	1,900	Exciting, vivid and communicative, but also a bit untidy and uneven, the Naia is a whole lot of fun	23,119,32	●	A-	25	●	247	
	Vandersteen 2Ce Signature	1,990	Very superior midband neutrality, impressive freedom from boxiness and splendid stereophony. A classic	41,109,26	●	A-	30	●	229	
	Vivid Audio B1	6,590	Impressive cabinet design combined with hi-tech drivers to make truly world class speaker	27,110,38	Y	A-	40	Y	N	261
	Wilson Benesch Curve	5,000	Much (but not all) of the ACT's performance in a much more compact and affordable package	23,91,37	●	A	28	●	254	
	Wilson benesch Discovery	5,500	Innovative three-way with built-in stand, combines great subtlety with weight and headroom	23,47,38	●	A-	45	●	212	
	Wilson Benesch ACT	8,400	Superb enclosure gives uncanny freedom from 'boxiness'. Well balanced, but top end might be sweeter	23,108,37	●	A	20	●	252	
	Wilson Benesch Chimera	15,000	Elegant with lovely sonic delicacy and plenty of weight too. Works best at low levels, but a difficult load to drive	24,145,55	●	A-	20	●	234	

# AV SPEAKERS

## Speaker solutions for multichannel surround sound



Multichannel speaker systems have a front left/right (L/R) stereo pair, a centre or dialogue channel, two (5.1) or four (7.1) surround speakers and often a subwoofer. For best results, each of these speakers bar the sub should be identical. The problem is that few surround systems are dedicated to music and perform a home cinematic role as well, meaning the centre speaker has to sit above or below a video

monitor. Centre channels are usually wide and short for this reason.

This should not be a barrier to great surround for music and movies however, as many brands make centre channels with a very close sound to their L/R designs.

### Music vs movies

High-resolution SACD and DVD-A music recordings tend to be mastered with

surround speakers in the ITU standard position which is as far behind the listener as the front channels are in front. 5.1 movie soundtracks tend to place surround channels not so far behind and to the side of listeners. Usually, practical limitations will dictate a limited range of placement options, but if you are a dedicated music fan, check out the ITU set-up regulations in the booklet supplied with SACD discs.

### SET-UP

Ideally you should set up surround speakers with as much care as you would stereo systems, but practical issues tend to have a significant bearing on surround and centre speaker placement. Surround channels can be floorstanding or wallmounted, and centres usually have to perch on the TV or underneath it. Given these limitations, adjust your L/R front

speakers to give the best tonal match with the centre. If there's more than just you listening, 'toe in' the speakers so that their axis crosses in front of the listening position - this gives a wider stereo image. And if there's a subwoofer it should be placed near the front speakers. Use a sound pressure metre (available from Tandy among others) to accurately set levels.

### SUBWOOFERS

Subs start working where stereo speakers run out of steam at low frequencies. The idea is to create deeper, better-controlled bass rather than more of it. They usually have onboard amplification (active) and connect to either the LFE (Low Frequency Effects) channel in a home cinema set-up or the speaker terminals in a stereo set-up.

## TOP BUYS



**B&W**  
600 S3 package £900  
Incorporates 602s, 601s and an LCR 600 centre speaker. Great in both stereo and multichannel surround modes.



**KEF**  
Q AV7 £1,300  
With the latest Uni-Q refinements, this system is astonishingly accomplished and amazing value.



**ATC**  
Concept 3 £4,877  
It might not look as flashy as some, but the quality of engineering in this ATC package ensures superb all-round performance.



**Linn**  
Akurate package £13,750  
Linn has worked wonders with its new multichannel speaker system – it's not cheap, but its performance is breathtaking.

## Our favourite AV SPEAKER PACKAGES

BEST BUY EDITOR'S CHOICE

### Multichannel speakers

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS				
				EASE-OF-DRIVE	NUMBER OF SPEAKERS	BASS FROM (HZ)	FREE SPACE	CLOSE TO WALL
	ATC Concept 3	4,877	Extremely engaging, revealing and musical multichannel system providing 360 degrees of full-on entertainment	A-	6	12	opt	255
	B&W 300 package	900	An excellent compromise between the requirements of music and those of home cinema (inc. subwoofer)	A	6	27		241
	B&W 600 S3 (602/601/LCR 600)	900	Unquestionably delivers the sonic goods. High-quality drivers in standmount enclosures	A	5	22		224
	Castle CAV Sterling	1,250	Lovely real wood veneers. Sound has fine dynamic drive and expression, but can sound a little hard	A	5	28		224
	Dynaudio Audience 42 package	1,142	Multichannel package for hi-fi purists with real authority and imaging, but needs subwoofer for full-bore movie sound	A-	5	53		241
	Final Sound Electrostatic system	4,875	Slim, attractive, electrostatic panels have clever connections, limited loudness but a breathtaking transparency	A-	6	20		251
	Focal-JMLab Electra package	3,017	Bold, solid system, tremendous consistency and easy to expand with an added subwoofer	A	5	50		232
	KEF Q AV7	1,300	With latest Uni-Q refinements, this system is astonishingly accomplished and amazing value	A+	5	35		232
	Linn Akurate (242/212/225/221)	13,750	An extremely capable system that offers new insights into the potential for multichannel audio	A-	6	18		253
	Mirage Omni 2	2,650	Dark tonality, but superb imagery makes this an excellent all-round choice	A	5	30		232
	Mission m5 package	1,450	Main m52 is a clean, attractive full-range stereo speaker, while the m5as sub does big bass for movie fans	A	6	28		241
	Mordaunt-Short Declaration 500	1,600	Good value vinyl THX Select package with Power Towers. Good authority, but must be 5.1-connected	A	5	25		210
	PMC FB1/TB2	2,485	Classy, if bulky and pricey, package has good transparency, coherence and weight	A	5	20		210
	Rega Jura/Ara/Senta	938	Classy real wood package does a good all-round job, but sounds bright and might have more surround weight	A	5	25		210

**SPECS KEY** **EASE OF DRIVE** How much power the amplifier needs (approximately) to drive the loudspeaker effectively: **A+** 25 watts plus **A** 50 watts plus **A-** 100 watts plus.

**NUMBER OF SPEAKERS** The amount of individual loudspeakers in the package. **BASS FROM** How low the speaker goes, the smaller the number the deeper the bass.

**FREE SPACE** The speakers work best away from wall(s) **CLOSE TO WALL** The speakers will work best when up against a wall (but avoid corners)

## Our favourite SUBWOOFERS

BEST BUY EDITOR'S CHOICE

### Bass speakers

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS			
				SIZE (WxHxD) (CM)	POWER (W)	BASS FROM (HZ)	ISSUE NUMBER
	B&W PV1	950	Gorgeously styled sub shakes the air but not the floor, delivering a very clean sound with negligible coloration	29,34,35	500	20	259
	B&W ASW850	2,000	Does all the things subwoofers should do with music and movies alike, but transparently and seamlessly	53,56,52	1000	18	246
	Monitor Audio ASW100	300	For the price, this compact subwoofer performs particularly well	32,32,34	120	27	225
	REL Q150E	500	Great value compact 'cube' sub adds genuine weight and drive thanks to superior filtering	29,32,33	150	20	239
	REL Stampede	550	Few subs at this price match the Stampede's subtlety and ease of integration. Much more hi-fi than AV	28,40,29	100	18	257
	REL Strata 5	700	Highly musical sub that integrates well but the REL Stampede offers near-identical performance for less money	32,46,33	150	18	257
	REL Storm III	900	Excellent sub with powerful, detailed and deep bass. Comprehensive facilities, including flexible filter adjustment	42,62,33	150	18	225
	REL Stadium III	1,500	It's a bulky piece of furniture, but offers superior filtering as well as an ability to delve deep into the bass nether regions	59,56,39	200	16	217
	Titan Saturn	800	Very bulky sub has curious styling, but decent filtering gives good weight and headroom	72,48,72	200	20	239

**SPECS KEY** **SIZE WxHxD (CM)** Width, height and depth of one cabinet in centimetres. **POWER (W)** How many watts the onboard amplifier of active models delivers.

**BASS FROM** How low the sub goes, the smaller the number the deeper the bass

*Do you want to choose your hifi or home cinema system, in a comfortable and relaxing environment...?*

*Do you want friendly and impartial advice ( and a cup of tea) ...?*

*Do you want to buy your system based on what you hear, and see, and not what somebody tells you...?*

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**Nobody else** in these areas carries all the following major hifi brands:

Apollo, Arcam(Diva/FMJ), Ash Design, Atacama, **Atlas** (spkr cables & interconnects) B&W, **Chord Company**, **Creek**, **Cyrus**, Denon, Epos, **Exposure**, **Genelec**, **Anthony Gallo Acoustics**, Harman Kardon, Infinity, Iso Tek, KEF (including **Reference**), Linn Products(including Knekt), **MJ Acoustics**, Meridian, Michell, **Mirage**, Mission, Musical Fidelity, NAD, **Naim**, Ortofon, Pioneer, **PMC**, **Primare**, **Proac**, Project, Pure, QED(including Systemline), Quad, Quadraspire, REL, Rotel, Sennheiser, Soundstyle, **Spendor**, Stands Unique, **Tag McLaren**, Wharfedale, Yamaha.

**Nobody else** in these areas carries all the following major Home Cinema products:

DVD players: Arcam & **FMJ**, **Cyrus**, Denon, Harman Kardon, Meridian, Rotel, **Tag McLaren**, Yamaha,

Processors: **Arcam FMJ AV8**, **Cyrus**, **Lexicon**, Linn, Meridian, Rotel, **Tag McLaren**.

Amplifiers: Arcam/FMJ, **Bryston**, **Cyrus**, Denon, Harman Kardon, **Lexicon**, **Naim**, Rotel, **Tag McLaren**, Yamaha.

Display devices: Plasma screens from Loewe, Panasonic, Pioneer and **Yamaha**. Televisions/LCD: Loewe.

Projectors: **Barco(CRT/DLP)**, **Sim (DLP)**, **Yamaha(DLP/LCD)** Screens: **Stewart/Draper/Vutec** ,

Video Processing: **Faroudja**, **I-Scan**, **Key Digital**, **Lumagen**, **Tag**. Control systems: **Crestron**, Lutron lighting.

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# HEADPHONES

*For your ears only*



Headphones come in several varieties and some are designed for particular usage. The majority of 'cans' use dynamic cone and coil-type drive units and can be used with anything from a personal stereo to a dedicated amplifier. Other types also exist, most significantly electrostatics that use a charged panel membrane to produce a distinctly refined sound. These are supplied with their own dedicated amplifiers, which tends to increase the price.

Cans are split into several types. There are open and closed-back designs, the latter being best for noisy (or noise sensitive) environments as they minimise leakage and intrusion. Open-back types tend to have a more open, less 'in-head' sound. There are also three variants of earpad design: circumaurals enclose the ear and press on your head, supra-aurals press on

the ear and intra-aurals sit in the ear and are particularly popular with personal stereo users.

### Getting the best from your cans

Getting a good result with headphones is not quite as straightforward as it should be. Merely plugging them into the output on your CD player or amp will not give particularly engaging results unless you are very lucky. If you are planning on serious listening, invest in a dedicated amp – the increase in dynamics is not in the least bit subtle. A variety of models are made and prices start at around £80 for a QED, a little more for designs from, say, Creek or Musical Fidelity. And if you're really into cans, look up the valve-powered Earmax.

## Our favourite HEADPHONES

BBB BEST BUY EEC EDITOR'S CHOICE

### Stereo headphones

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS							
				ELECTROSTATIC	SUPRA-AURAL	CIRCUMAURAL	OPEN BACK	CLOSED BACK	WEIGHT (g)	3.5MM JACK ADAPTOR	ISSUE NUMBER
BBB	AKG K44	20	Lively, enjoyable and remarkably detailed: a bargain			●		●	190	●	219
BBB	AKG K270 Studio	129	Pro oriented design which is very transparent and great with acoustic material			●		●	270		230
EEC	AKG K1000	600	Neutral, analytical and completely out of the head sound, suitable for connection to speaker outputs only				●		270		244
	Audio Technica ATH-D40fs	105	Detailed and involving sound with a professional 'studio' quality appeal			●		●	250		194
BBB	Beyerdynamic DT990	160	Impeccable balance, very extended bass and treble, and bags of detail place this model ahead of the pack			●	●		250	●	245
HHI	Grado SR-60	90	For sheer musical enjoyment these are hard to beat. Retro styling may not be to everyone's taste		●		●		200	●	194
HHI	Grado SR-80	110	Not perhaps as neutral as some but they communicate well and that's the point of the exercise		●		●		200	●	230
HHI	Philips HP890	70	A remarkably sophisticated and very comfortable headphone			●	●		330	●	219
HHI	Sennheiser HD590	160	Assured and confident headphone with very low coloration and great comfort			●	●		270	●	205
EEC	Sennheiser HD650	300	Astonishing resolution and hardly less impressive tonal balance make this a true hi-fi experience			●	●		260	●	252
	Sony MDR-CD480	40	Generally neutral and nicely detailed – comfortable too			●	●		250	●	219
EEC	Stax SRS-2020 Basic Sys. II	349	Luxury option at its price, but the sound delivery is five-star quality all the way	●					295	●	205

**SPECS KEY** **ELECTROSTATIC** Uses electrostatic film instead of more common cone or dome dynamics. **SUPRA-AURAL** Earpads sit on ear rather than around it. **CIRCUMAURAL** Earpads rest on the head around the ears. **OPEN BACK** Vented capsules let sound in and out. **CLOSED BACK** Sealed capsules. **WEIGHT** In grams. **3.5MM JACK ADAPTOR** Allows connection to personal stereos, computers etc.

# PATHOS

*'The Classic One is one of the finest amps I have ever heard, of any era, from anywhere. . .'* Sam Tellig, *Stereophile*



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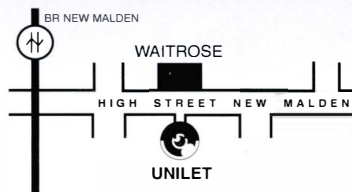
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# CABLES



## Wires to hook your system together



Hi-fi cables come in two varieties: interconnects and speaker cables.

Analogue interconnects come in preset lengths, generally with RCA (phono) plugs attached, though some equipment uses XLR connectors for balanced connection – this can be sonically advantageous, especially over longer runs. Speaker cable is commonly sold by the metre and can be used without plugs or can

be fitted with screw or solder-on types.

Choosing cables is not quite as straightforward as it might seem. One problem is that components interact with the cables you use and this often results in audible effects, but there are few cables that are fundamentally incompatible with any components, and we recommend the advice of a good dealer. In any case, you should look to spend as much as you can afford.

Digital cables come in two flavours: electrical and optical. In most instances electrical varieties sound better than optical, given the choice, but optical cables may be a better bet over long runs (10m+). Optical inputs/outputs usually use Toslink connectors, while most electrical types use RCA plugs, but some opt for BNC connection instead – check your components before you buy.

## Our favourite CABLES

**BB** BEST BUY **ED** EDITOR'S CHOICE

### Interconnects and speaker cables

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS				ISSUE NUMBER	
				STRANDED	SOLID CORE	COPPER	SILVER		DIGITAL CABLE TYPE
<b>ANALOGUE INTERCONNECTS</b>									
<b>ED</b>	Avid Black Reference SCT	700	Rich, slightly dark sound that is beguiling and highly informative		●				256
	Black Rhodium Illusion	77	An upfront, lively, exciting cable which still manages subtlety when needed. Slight coloration though		●	●			248
<b>ED</b>	Black Rhodium Opera	297	Very open, clear and detailed sound, with excellent extension at frequency extremes			●	●		260
	Chord Company Signature	499	Silver plated, triple screened. Some granularity but great resolving ability, a good match for Chord Signature loudspeaker cable		●	●			255
<b>BB</b>	Chord Company Chorus	200	Very even-handed balance with notably extended bass	●		●			259
<b>BB</b>	Ecosse The Composer	30	A high degree of realism and delicacy, and a fantastic price (0.8m)	●		●			211
	Ecosse The Diva	100	Very good performance in all areas, with particularly fine, tuneful, bass (0.8m)	●		●			224
	Kimber Silver Streak	242	Not the cheapest around, but more than justifies itself with terrific poise and balance of virtues	●		●			241
<b>BB</b>	Kimber Timbre	83	Typical Kimber construction with ditto sound – clean, extended and detailed	●		●			248
<b>BB</b>	Monster Interlink 400 Mk2	70	Really lively and enjoyable sound	●		●			224
<b>BB</b>	Townshend DCT100	100	Unusual construction with copper strip conductors, giving very detailed sound, but just an occasional hint of hardness		●	●			241
<b>ED</b>	Townshend Isolda DCT	300	Unusual construction and cryogenically treated too: whatever the reason, a remarkably capable wire		●	●			234
<b>BB</b>	van den Hul The Bay C5	45	Terrific detail, nice balance – a great cable	●		●			224
<b>BB</b>	van den Hul The Well	85	Hybrid cable with carbon-fibre conductors added. Very slight bass coloration does little to detract from fine performance	●		●			241
<b>BB</b>	van den Hul D102 Mk III	79	Hybrid conductors (carbon and copper) and intelligent construction give strong bass and excellent detail	●		●			234
<b>BB</b>	Wireworld Solstice 5	70	A cable with all-round appeal – treble is slightly 'dark' but bass is excellent and the overall balance very good indeed	●		●			259
<b>DIGITAL INTERCONNECTS</b>									
<b>ED</b>	Kimber Select KS2020	629	Provides a subtle but rewarding lift in musicality with any DAC, justifying the price		●	●		E	260
<b>BB</b>	QED Qunex P75	25	A superbly capable interconnect that's highly detailed and well balanced			●		E	207
<b>BB</b>	QED Qunex SR75	50	Lots of bass and good clear midrange and treble at a sensible price	●		●		E	234
<b>BB</b>	Supra Trico	40	Very well made digital/video cable which noticeably improves the sound of a cheap DAC	●		●		E	241
<b>BB</b>	Supra ZAC	32	High grade fibre and quality plugs add up to a noticeable improvement over giveaway optical leads					O	259
<b>BB</b>	van den Hul Optocoupler II	49	Noticeably has the edge over other optical leads, but still second best to electrical types					O	234
<b>SPEAKER CABLES PRICE PER METRE</b>									
	Black Rhodium S300	18	Tight, precise and extended bass makes this a great cable for rock 'n' roll	●		●			241
	Chord Company Signature	117	Dynamic, solid sounding cable, but it's bulky and not very tractable	●		●			255
	Ecosse Reference MS2.3	23	Favours excitement over refinement: can be slightly bass-shy, but plenty of life	●		●			227
<b>ED</b>	Electrofluidics 20/20	45	Excellent bass extension and very fine performance elsewhere – one of the best all-round cables available		●	●			241
<b>BB</b>	Kimber 4PR	5	Considering the price, this cable's very slight dryness is forgivable when everything else is so right	●		●			192
<b>BB</b>	Kimber 8VS	18	Beautifully full, open and transparent sound right across the board. Price for 1m terminated pair	●		●			227
	Kimber 8PR	21	Bass very full, just occasionally a touch flabby, but detailed and sweet upper frequencies make this a good value cable	●		●			241
<b>BB</b>	Kimber 8TC	39	Very capable in all areas, particularly good at imaging and with firm bass. Price for 5m terminated pair	●		●			203
<b>BB</b>	QED Silver Anniversary	5	A few minor flaws, but overall performance is very assured for this price	●		●			192
<b>BB</b>	QED X-Tube XT300	10	A natural and well controlled sounding cable that's cost effective for mid-priced systems		●	●			234
<b>ED</b>	Townshend Isolda DCT	50	Cryogenically treated 'impedance matched' cable with stabilising components added: great sound all-round		●	●			241
<b>BB</b>	Wireworld Terra 5	5	Deep powerful bass, clear treble and very solid imaging add up to above-class performance	●		●			261
<b>BB</b>	Wireworld Solstice 5	20	Unfriendly to handle, but makes up for it with very assured sound – heaps of bass and great insight	●		●			248

**SPECS KEY** **STRANDED** Cable has a number of (usually) twisted strands to conduct the signal. **SOLID CORE** Cable has one or more individually insulated strands to conduct the signal. **COPPER** Material used to form the conducting element of the cable. **SILVER** Alternative material used to form the conducting element of the cable. **DIGITAL CABLE TYPE** E – electrical, O – optical. Cables are one metre length unless otherwise stated.

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# STANDS AND SUPPORTS

## Equipment racks and speaker stands

➤ If you want to get the most from your source and amp components, it's important to consider good quality support. Dedicated equipment supports are racks and tables made specifically to hold hi-fi gear, and the best can have a profoundly positive effect on sound

because, for example, they can help to isolate kit from ground-borne vibrations and mechanical or electrical interference. Equally, if you own a pair of small 'bookshelf' or 'standmount' speakers, it's important to place them on good quality, purpose-built speaker stands.

## Our favourite BB BEST BUY EC EDITOR'S CHOICE EQUIPMENT SUPPORTS

### Equipment supports

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS					
				HEIGHT	TOP PLATE SIZE (CM)	WELDED	NUMBER OF SHELVES	SHELF TYPE	ISSUE NUMBER
	Aavik Furniture A4	350	Good sound and stylish Scandinavian looks at an affordable price	80.5	47		4	MDF	193
	Alphason A5-G	399	Nice looking, very solid and practical with a pretty well balanced sound, but lacks a little detail	80	66,46		5	Glass	247
	Atacama Equinox	280	Stable, modular design with style. Excellent bass transients and a fresh design concept	81	50,50	●	4	Glass	217
<small>BB</small>	Audiophile Base	615	Price is justified by its earth-shattering sonic abilities – a worthy upgrade	82	43		4	MDF	193
	Avid Isoschelf	1,100	An enthusiast's equipment support stand free from coloration, if a little fiddly to set up	87.5	48		5	MDF	193
<small>BB</small>	Clearlight Audio Aspekt	600	Stunning neutrality and detail from a well-damped design. Its performance makes the price tag good value	75	53,5,45		4	MDF	217
	Custom Design Aspect 650	270	Smart looks and practical thanks to adjustable shelves. Sound is fair with some loss of detail	66	46	●	4	Glass	206
<small>BB</small>	Custom Design Concept 400	700	Slightly drab looks, but great sound and efficient use of space ('Acoustic' version tested – standard version £300)	74	48,40		4	Metal	247
	Isobue 'The Stand'	460	Attractive modular design that's as easy on the ear as on the eye	47	48,40		4	MDF	247
<small>EC</small>	Naim Fraim	1,825	Pricey but very classy looking and sounding, with modular flexibility	96	45,34		5	Glass	232
	Quadraspire Q4 Reference	480	Excellent performance from the school of wobbly racks. Natural sounding and plenty of detail	51.5	49,39,5		4	MDF	217
	Russ Andrews Torlyte Rack	988	Attractive modular system made of very light Torlyte: a touch of added warmth is its only vice	68	54,49		4	Torlyte	240
<small>BB</small>	Sound Organisation Z560	195	Excellent value rack, five shelves too! Well balanced and under 200 quid!	92	50,40		5	Glass	217
<small>BB</small>	Standesign Design 4	190	An all-in-one support at a budget price, with good sonic performance	88.5	50.8	●	4	Glass	193
<small>EC</small>	Townshend Seismic Stand 2/5	1,100	Multi-shelf air-suspension support which isolates like few others. Recommended	92	58,45		5	MDF	24

## Our favourite BB BEST BUY EC EDITOR'S CHOICE SPEAKER STANDS

### Speaker stands

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS					
				HEIGHT	TOP PLATE SIZE (CM)	FILLABLE	WELDED	NUMBER OF LEGS	ISSUE NUMBER
<small>BB</small>	Atacama Nexus 6	60	An excellent all-round performer and a genuine hi-fi bargain	60,50	14,5,18	●		3	202
	Custom Design RS 300 MKII	100	A solid stand improving on the original, with better focus and detail	61,56,51	16,5,18	●		2	202
	hne Cableway	395	Looks great, sounds great, so start saving! Clean and sweet, and neutrality is exceptional with orchestral material	63	17,20	●		1	220
<small>BB</small>	Kudos S50	159	Formidable bass with real authority, and a wide dynamic range across a broad bandwidth	61	15,20	●		1	220
	Partington Ansa 60	90	Elegant flat-packer 'disappears' sonically; restrained but neutral and coherent	62	18,15	●		4	232
<small>BB</small>	Partington Dreadnought	100	Fully welded high-class engineering gives a very clean, open sound at a sharp price	61	17,15	●	●	5	220
	Sound Organisation Z522	95	Very hefty build for the price helps to deliver a solid sound with good authority and drive	60	16	●		4	220
	Townshend Seismic Sink	499	Unique inflatable plinth that works wonders with decent floorstanders, as well as standmounted speakers	4	38,48			0	202

**EQUIPMENT SUPPORTS SPECS KEY** HEIGHT Of complete stand. TOP PLATE SIZE (CM) Width by depth of the supporting platform(s). Single figures indicate a square platform.

WELDED As opposed to bolt-together construction. NUMBER OF SHELVES To put your kit on (different configurations are often available). SHELF TYPE Material that shelves are made of.

**SPEAKER STANDS SPECS KEY** HEIGHT Of each stand, not including spikes. TOP PLATE SIZE (CM) Width by depth of platform. Single figures indicate a square platform. Speakers generally overhang top plates.

FILLABLE The stand can be mass-loaded with sand and/or lead to stop ringing. WELDED As opposed to bolt-together construction. NUMBER OF LEGS That support the stand.



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# GLOSSARY

## TECHNICAL TERMS

**5.1-CHANNEL AUDIO** Six discrete channels, typically front left and right, centre, surround left and right, and LFE (Low Frequency Effects) for a subwoofer.

**BALANCE** Most loudspeakers have a characteristic frequency balance resulting from emphasising parts of the audio range and/or de-emphasising others.

**BASS** The lowest three octaves of the audio band – hence 'low bass' refers to the bottom octave (20-40Hz); 'mid-bass' the middle octave (40-80Hz); and 'upper bass' the top octave (80-160Hz).

**BI-AMP** (sometimes tri-amp) Loudspeakers equipped with separate access terminals to each drive unit can be driven by separate (matching) power amplifiers for each driver.

**BI-WIRE** (sometimes tri-wire) Loudspeakers with separate access terminals to each driver can be driven by separate cable runs between the amp and each driver.

**CD-R** Recordable CD that cannot be erased, though discs that have not been completely filled can have tracks added until the disc is finalised.

**CD-RW** Re-writable or re-recordable CD, incompatible with older CD players.

**CLASS A** The operation of an amplifying stage or device in which current always flows, as opposed to Class B, where some of the devices are effectively turned off some of the time. Class A tends to have the advantage of offering lower distortion while Class B tends to generate less heat.

**CLASS AB** Most practical amps operate in Class A for the first fraction of a watt and Class B thereafter.

**CLIPPING** An amplifier's output waveform is 'clipped' if the volume is advanced too far and no more 'volts' are available to sustain ever-increasing power levels. Distortion increases dramatically at this point.

**CLOCK** Any electronic oscillator that is used to generate a timing reference signal. Used to synchronise the data being taken from a disc.

**CROSSOVER** A simple electrical network which divides the full bandwidth signal received from the power amplifier, apportioning appropriate parts of the spectrum to the various drive units.

**DAB** (digital audio broadcasting). Digital radio using frequencies in the band 217.5 - 230MHz. Broadcasters use varying degrees of compression and offer a broad range of programming.

**DAC** or Digital-to-Analogue Converter. The stage in any digital component at which incoming digital data is used to reconstruct a recognisable analogue (music) waveform.

**DOLBY DIGITAL** A compressed digital audio format that typically contains five or more entirely discrete channels, eg 7.1 EX where side and rear channels are used.

**DOLBY PRO-LOGIC, DPL** Forerunner to DD that 'steers' information to the front L/R, centre and mono surround channels via an analogue matrix.

**DRIVE UNIT/DRIVER** A transducer which converts electrical energy into acoustic energy, eg bass driver, tweeter.

**DSD** (direct stream digital) The coding format used for SACD offers a frequency response of over 100kHz and a dynamic range over 120dB, it has over four times the data capacity of CD.

**DSP** or Digital Signal Processor. Integrated circuit that handles the decoding of digital audio streams. In 5.1 processors it separates the left from right and front from rear while managing the various bass options.

**DTS** or Digital Theatre Sound. Competitor to Dolby Digital with a reduced 41 compression ratio that, ostensibly, promises higher quality.

**DVD-AUDIO** High-resolution variant on DVD offering up to 192kHz bandwidth and 24-bit dynamic range. Discs are compatible with standard DVD players.

**ELECTRICAL DIGITAL** Any digital connection that uses an electrical cable rather than optical. Includes the balanced ('AES/EBU') interface.

**FILTERS** Filters are intrinsic to digital audio, both analogue and digital. These are often very sophisticated in design, and in total they probably have rather more to do with the 'personality' of CD player sound than most other factors.

**FREQUENCY RESPONSE** The range of frequencies, from low to high, which a loudspeaker will reproduce.

**IMPEDANCE** With speakers, the complex electrical load that a loudspeaker presents to the amplifier which is driving it.

**JITTER** An insidious distortion specific to digital audio caused by the clock used to regulate the conversion of data into analogue audio, being imprecise.

**KBPS** (Kilobits per second) Digital data rate measurement system used primarily with highly compressed formats such as MP3, DAB etc. The higher the amount, the better the quality.

**LINE LEVEL** Practically every modern source component (except phono cartridges) gives an output in the region of 1-2V, referred to as 'line level'. It follows that all inputs labelled 'CD', 'tuner', 'aux' or 'tape' are designed for this input level and are thus interchangeable.

**LOSSLESS COMPRESSION** A method of reducing the number of data bits (density) without corrupting the original description of the musical signal.

**LOSSY COMPRESSION** Reduction in data density by recourse to a psycho-acoustical model that predicts what is, and what is not, 'audible' within a sequence of music.

**MIDRANGE** The middle three or so octaves of the audio band, where the ear

is most sensitive, covering the approximate frequency span from 160Hz up to 3kHz.

**MP3** (MPEG layer 3) Lossy compression format for digital audio that drastically reduces data content in order to squeeze music through internet connections or allow hundreds of CDs to be stored on a hard disc.

**OUTPUT IMPEDANCE** A measure of resistance to alternating current, a source with low output impedance (below 100 ohms) helps ensure compatibility with most amplifiers, even with long interconnect cables.

**PCM** (pulse code modulation) The digital coding system for analogue waveforms used for CD and DVD. Quality is limited by the oversample and bit rates used – CD is 44.1kHz/16-bit while DVD-A is capable of 192kHz/24-bit.

**PRESENCE BAND** Critical section of the audio band at the point where midrange and treble meet.

**QUANTISATION NOISE** A form of distortion or noise resulting from errors in the description of the musical signal by the digital code.

**SACD** (Super Audio CD) was launched in 1999 and is a Sony/Philips format based on DSD coding that offers high resolution stereo and multichannel sound from hybrid discs that can also be played on ordinary CD drives.

**SAMPLE RATE** The rate at which the musical waveform is sliced up into discrete chunks. For CD this is 44.1kHz or once every 0.023msec. DVD will also support 48kHz and 96kHz.

**SENSITIVITY** The relative loudness that a speaker generates for a specific voltage input. Expressed in decibels per watt (dB/W).

**THX** Standards system for home cinema set-ups which includes amplifier power and speaker dispersion characteristics. THX Ultra is more stringent than THX Select.

**TOSLINK** The proprietary name given by Toshiba to the optical fibre signal transmission system it invented for consumer applications.

**TRANSISTOR/MOSFET** The two main types of power semiconductor used in solid state amplifier output stages.

**TREBLE** High frequencies, the top end of the audio band, ie above 3kHz.

**TWEETER** Treble driver.

**TWO/THREE-WAY** Loudspeaker crossovers split the signal into two or three frequency bands, a two-way speaker can have more than two drive units.

**WATTS** (per channel) The watt is the unit of electrical power and the WPC rating is the maximum average undistorted power that an amp can deliver to a typical speaker. However, speaker sensitivity variations can make more difference than amplifier output.

**WOOFER** Bass driver.

## DESCRIPTIVE TERMS

**AGGRESSIVE** Forward and bright sonic character.

**AMBIENCE** The impression of an acoustical space, such as the performing hall in which a recording was made.

**ANALYTICAL** Highly detailed.

**ARTICULATE** Intelligibility of voice(s) and instruments and the interactions between them.

**ATTACK** The leading edge of a note and the ability of a system to reproduce the attack transients in music.

**BALANCE** Essentially tonal balance, the degree to which one aspect of the sonic spectrum is emphasised above the rest. Also channel balance, the relative level of the left and right stereo channels.

**BODY** Fullness of sound, with particular emphasis on upper bass. Opposite of thin.

**BOXY** The sound of a loudspeaker with audible cabinet resonances.

**BRIGHT** A sound that emphasises the upper midrange/lower treble.

**DARK** A tonal balance that tilts downwards with increasing frequency. Opposite of bright.

**DECAY** The fadeout of a note, it follows the attack.

**DEFINITION** (or resolution) The ability of a component to reveal the subtle information that is fundamental to high fidelity sound.

**DEPTH** (of image) The perception of music being reproduced behind the loudspeakers and inhabiting a reproduction of the acoustic space of the original recording.

**DETAIL** The most delicate elements of the original sound and those which are the first to disappear with lesser equipment.

**DRY** A sound that is devoid of 'juice', which usually comes across as fine-grained and lean. Also a loss of reverberation as produced by a damped environment.

**DYNAMIC** The suggestion of energy and wide dynamic range. Related to perceived speed as well as contrasts in volume both large and small.

**EUPHONIC** An appealing form of distortion that generally enhances perceived fidelity, often ascribed to the harmonic elaborations of some valve amps.

**FAST** Good reproduction of rapid transients which increase the sense of realism and 'snap'.

**FOCUS** A strong, precise sense of image projection.

**FORWARD(NESS)** Similar to an aggressive sound, a sense of the image being projected in front of the speakers and of music being forced upon the listener.

**GRAINY** A slightly raw, exposed sound which lacks finesse.

**GRIP** A sense of control and sturdiness in the bass.

**GRUNT** See grip.

**HARD** Uncomfortable, forward, aggressive sound with a metallic tinge.

**HARSH** Grating, abrasive.

**IMAGING** (stereo) The sense that a voice or instrument is in a particular place in the room.

**JUICY** Sound that has joie de vivre, energy and life.

**LOW-LEVEL DETAIL** The quietest sounds in a recording.

**MUSICAL** or musicality. A sense of cohesion and subjective 'rightness' in the sound.

**NATURALNESS** Realism.

**OPAQUE** Unclear, lacking transparency.

**OPEN** Sound which has height and 'air', relates to clean upper midrange and treble.

**PACE** Often associated with rhythm, a strong sense of timing and beat.

**PRESENCE** A sense of an instrument or voice occupying a place in the listening room.

**PRESENCE RANGE** The upper midrange.

**SEISMIC** Very low bass that you feel rather than hear.

**SIBILANCE** An emphasis of the 'S' sound, often heard on radio.

**SNAP** A system with good speed and transient response can deliver the immediacy or 'snap' of live instruments.

**SPEED** A fast system with good pace gives the impression of being right on the money in its timing.

**STURDY** Solid, powerful, robust sound.

**THICK** A lack of articulation and clarity in the bass.

**THIN** Bass light.

**TIMBRE** The tonal character of an instrument.

**TIMING** A sense of precision in tempo. See speed and pace.

**TRANSIENT** The leading edge of a percussive sound. Good transient response makes the sound as a whole more live and realistic.

**TRANSPARENCY, TRANSPARENT** A hear-through quality that is akin to clarity and reveals all aspects of detail.

**TWEAK** To tune a system or component in an attempt to get the best performance from it.

**TWEAKER** Someone who enjoys this process.

**VEILED** Loss of detail due to limited transparency.

**WARM** A fullness in the lower midrange/upper bass.

**WEIGHT** A sense of substance and underpinning produced by deep, controlled bass.



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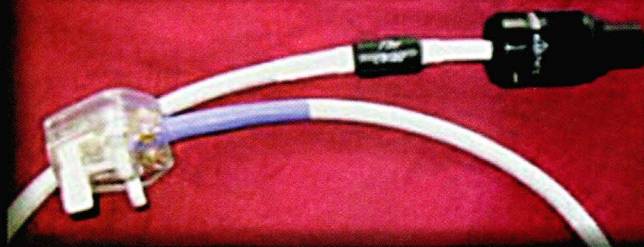


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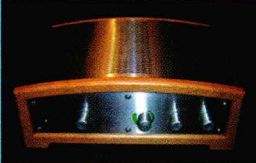
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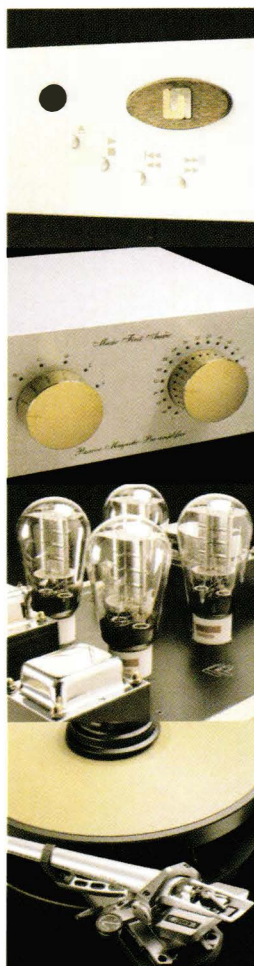
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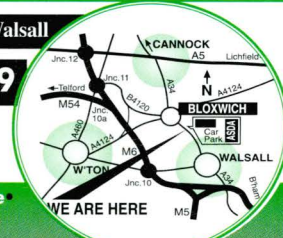
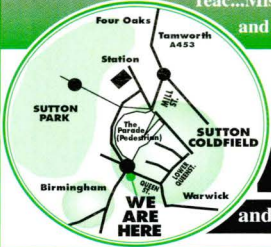
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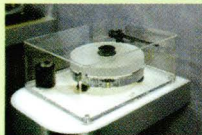
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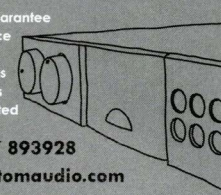
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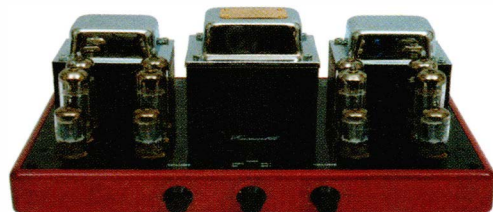
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**Hi Fi Myth Exposed (part 2)** The most important sound on the CD of your favourite singer is the voice of your favourite singer. Our **£250 valve amplifier** + hilariously priced £250 "3 way" speaker + good "live" recording will trick you into believing that the singer is in the room with you! Our £1,400 "High End" valve amplifier will do this trick, with 10% to 20% of studio recording. **We challenge you to do this trick with transistor amp or transistor / valve hybrid amp, £250 cable, £250 of modification with £10 volume control, capacitors, etc.** We also promise huge reduction of irritating sibilance (e.g. "his" sound like "hisssssk"), even with **£250 valve amp!**

**Hi Fi Myth Exposed (part 3)** Most people will prefer our **MODIFIED IN ENGLAND** valve amplifiers (from £600+) to most transistor amplifiers, most valve amplifiers like TAC 34, TAC 88, TAC 834, Roger Cadet, £4,000 power amplifier and £25,000 monoblocks. **There is a difference between "High Price" and "High End"**

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HUGE expensive "High End" "potted" transformers

KT88 valves are more expensive than 6550 valves

Unbelievably huge transformers

American 5670 valves

expensive non-magnetic stainless steel chassis

Ultra Linear £1,050 £1,150

Triode Connection £1,250 £1,400

Compare our HUGE powerful "potted" transformers, with £4,000 amplifiers

Reliable valves have 2 years guarantee, and NOT the "typical" 90 days guarantee

Looks like Euro 2,000 (about £1,500), TAC 834

£1,000  
80 watts + 80 watts

Larger transformer

Distortion matched famous Russian Svetlana EL34 valves

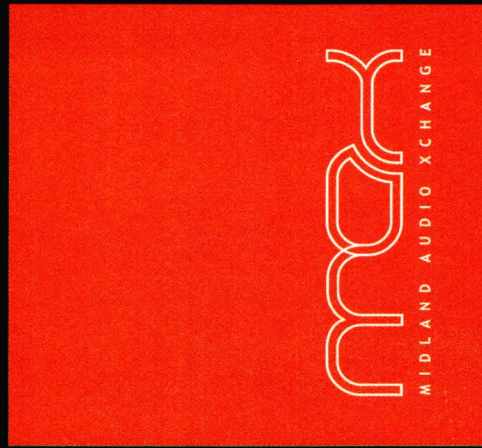
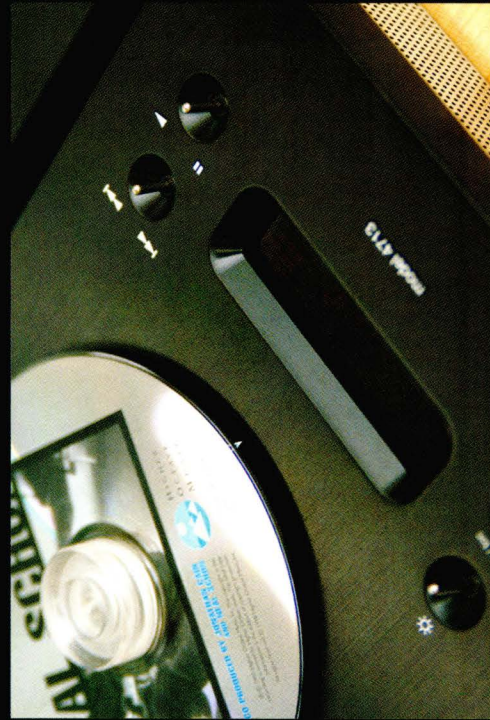
40 watts + 40 watts

American 5670 valves

Upgradeable to £1,000

KT88 Triode Connection + £50 for carriage + £50 for used valves

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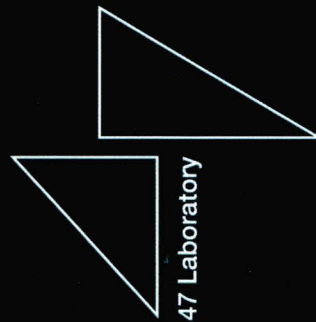
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Call it what you will, but at the end of the track, it's all about trusting your ears. About letting the simplicity of design, the energy and flow of the music carry you away. Small in size, big on sound, and more music than mere audio jewels, 47 Lab distills technology down to its simplest, purest form. And when you listen you'll know that this path - your path - is the one to follow. Why?

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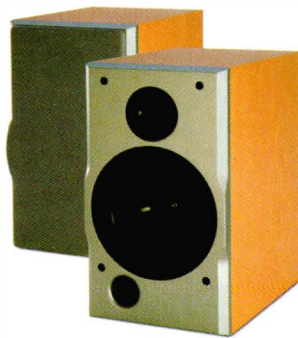
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# A-Z GUIDE TO SECOND-HAND KIT

## #04 CELESTION

**T**ake a look at the Celestion range today and it's all very style-led, yet not bad sounding either. But what today's Celestion fails to do is capture the audiophiles' attention like the brand once did. Go back to the Harrogate Hi-Fi show of 1981, though, and Celestion shook the hi-fi establishment with its launch of the legendary SL6 loudspeaker. This was a compact monitor with a PVC cone and copper tweeter that changed the way speakers were designed thereafter.

The SL6 and later S and Si models are, even today, fine and balanced-sounding loudspeakers. They need a lot of heft, but most modern amps will deliver. The bad news is that Celestion no longer keeps any parts for them. However, they are nearly indestructible and fairly cheap to buy. That PVC cone may be horribly inefficient, but it does at least last well, and the rubber surround doesn't deteriorate like foam ones from contemporary models do. Expect to pay from £25 for a tatty pair to no more than £125 for some mint examples. Better yet is the Celestion SL600 – this used the same drive units as the SL6, but with an honeycombed Aerolam aluminium cabinet, taken from the

aerospace industry. The sound is wonderfully open, and was even compared to the Quad electrostatics in its day. Sadly, like the SL6, parts are no longer available. They do, however, last extremely well, but just make sure that expensive cabinet isn't damaged – it's quite soft, and not

Celestion A-Series. To date, this is the last range of 'serious' loudspeakers that Celestion produced and you may even find a pair still under the original five year guarantee. The A1, A2 and A3 are all superb speakers with a full, punchy and dynamic sound that's thoroughly entertaining. Although they aren't as

**"Lack of cult status means there are some true bargains out there."**

something you can fix with plastic wood! Pay up to around £250 for these classics.

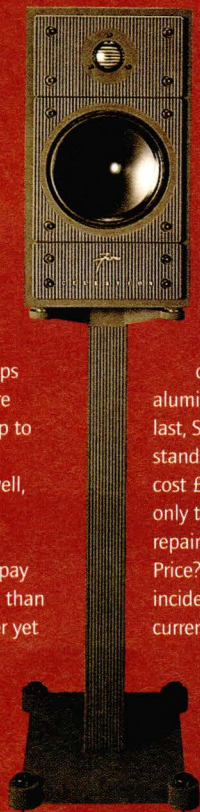
Best of the bunch has to be the SL700. The replacement of the copper tweeter with one made from aluminium made for more treble detail. The last, Special Edition, models came with stands included and even over ten years ago cost £1,400 new. Although Celestion claims only to keep spares for seven years, a tweeter repair kit is still available for the SL700. Price? A bargain £14.31. The bass unit, incidentally, is not available, but that is currently under review by Celestion. Anyone owning a pair of these stalwarts, begin lobbying Celestion hard to restart production. The top price you should pay for a pair of SL700SEs is around £650.

Rather more recent is the

iconoclastic as the SL range, the Faraday ring technology makes them rather livelier. At between 89-90db efficiency (compared to a truly shocking 82db for most SL models) they are also a good deal easier to drive. Although our favourite would probably be, for its speed of response, the stand-mountable A1, the floorstanding A2 and A3 are just as impressive. Very little goes wrong, and drive unit prices are reasonable. Expect to pay £23 for a tweeter and £39 for a bass unit for the A2 model. Prices range from £250-£350 for an A1, around £100 more for an A2 and no more than £1,000 for the A3s.

Whether choosing the Celestion SL or A-series, buying one of these loudspeakers should provide you with a rewarding listen. Do look around, though – lack of cult status means there are some true bargains out there. **HFC**

Dominic Todd  
Next month – Creek



Right: Celestion SL700 loudspeaker

## DIY CORNER SPEAKERS

Part 4 Just who makes drive units for the DIY scene?

**T**here are plenty of drive unit manufacturers, but only a few make their units available to the DIY scene. It is, after all, a relatively small part of the total speaker business, and won't offer a great deal in terms of either turnover or prestige.

Back in the 1970s, brands like KEF and Wharfedale were happy selling raw drivers, crossover networks and kits to home speaker builders. Today, however, British-made drivers are rare – ATC and Volt are the most obvious, with top quality reputations, but both are Pro-oriented companies that focus on particular niches. France has long been a source of more mainstream raw drive units, notably through the

large Audax range, but also with Focal-JMLab. However, there are rumours that both may be planning to get out of the business.

Scandinavia is a major supplier. Brands like Scanspeak, Vifa and Peerless all fall under the DST (Danish Sound Technology) banner, while Norway is home to SEAS. Germany's Visaton and Israel's Morel are also significant players.

The above brands all produce premium price and quality drive units. Much less costly drivers are made in huge numbers in India, China and other Far Eastern countries, but these are not normally available to individual purchasers. It may well be that these might have some impact in the future, but those I spoke to in

the business of supplying the DIY user, and who have tried some of these sources, remain sceptical about quality and consistency available at present. **HFC**

Paul Messenger



### DIY CONTACTS

**FALCON ACOUSTICS** ☎ 01493 751100  
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**NEXT MONTH:** Understanding crossover networks





DEMONSTRATOR AND USED ITEMS

FRONT END/PLAYBACK

Copland CDA266 HDCD Player S/H	1399	599
Cyrus DAD3 24Q CD Player S/H	N/A	399
dCS Delius 24/192 DAC Non Firewire S/H	5999	2995
dCS Purcell Upsampler Non Firewire S/H	2999	1695
dCS Verdi SACD/CD Transport x-dem	9000	5995
Mark Levinson No 360s x-dem	7495	3999
Sudgen CD21 CD Player Black S/H	1099	650
Theta Generation V Balanced S/H	6290	2499
Theta Pro Basic II DAC with Oscom/Balanced S/H	2990	1195
Wadia 301 Silver CD player 8 months old S/H	3499	2395
Clearaudio Unify Unipivot Tonearm New & Boxed	795	599
Clearaudio Accurate MC x-dem	2800	1699
Clearaudio Victory MC New & Boxed	1030	699
Koetsu Rosewood Re-tipped Low Hours S/H	N/A	599
Kuzma Stabi/Stogi S Turntable New & Boxed	N/A	1399
Linn LP12/Syrinx PU2 Valhalla S/H	N/A	399
Linn LP12 Cirkus Black S/H	N/A	399
Linn Lingo S/H	N/A	599
Linn LVII Tonearm S/H	N/A	479
Lehmann Audio Black Cube SE New & Boxed	650	449
McCormack Phono Stage New and Boxed	650	399
Rega Planar 3/Heed PSU/Bias S/H	630	239
Systemdek X II900/RB250/Denon 103	N/A	250

AMPLIFICATION

Audio Analogue Bellini Remote Preamplifier x-dem	625	499
Audio Research LS22 Valve Preamplifier S/H	4499	2300
Audio Research LS2 Hybrid Preamplifier S/H	2289	749
Audio Analogue Corelli Stereo Power Amplifier x-dem	695	479
Audio Analogue Donizetti Mono Power Amplifiers x-dem	1050	729
Arcam Diva A85 Integrated Amplifier Black S/H	800	499
Arcam Diva P85 Power Amplifier Silver S/H	800	449
Cyrus 7 Integrated Black S/H	N/A	395
Cyrus PSX-R Black S/H	N/A	249
Krell KAV300i Integrated S/H	2590	1399
Mark Levinson 431 Dual mono Amplifier S/H	6500	3795
Nagra VPA Mono 845 Valve Amplifiers S/H	10K	7495
Sudgen A21a Line Graphite S/H	995	599
Red Rose Sprit Integrated x-dem	1000	649

SPEAKERS

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Martin Logan Aerius I Hybrid Electrostatics Oak S/H	2389	1299
Naim Audio Intro Black Ash S/H 875	875	499
Peak Consult Incognito Rosewood x-dem 7500	7500	5799
Rel Acoustics Studio II Oak Subwoofer S/H	4500	1995
Rega Jura Floorstanding Black Ash S/H	450	199
Rega ELA Cherry X-dem	749	579
Verity Fidelios Brand new Black Lacquer	8000	4499

CABLES & TABLES

Cardas Neutral Reference 1m RCA-BNC S/H	550	375
Cyrus Hark Floorstand Black S/H	N/A	250
Madrigal CZ Gel 1.5m Balanced new & boxed	599	299
Madrigal MDC 2 1m Fatboy Digital cable new & boxed	319	159
Madrigal MDC 2 0.5m Fatboy Digital cable new & boxed	279	139
QED QNEXII 1m RCA-RCA Interconnect S/H	N/A	22
Siltech SQ58G3 2x4m Balanced Interconnect x-dem	2370	1499
Siltech Signature G5 1m AES/EBU 110 ohm Digital S/H	625	449
Siltech SPX10 0.5m mains cable new & boxed	105	55
Spectral MH-330 15ft Interconnect RCA-RCA x-dem	800	499
Spectral MH-750 15ft Interconnect RCA-RCA x-dem	1400	799
Spectral MI-350 20 ft Speaker cable x-dem	2100	1199

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Linn	LP12/Lingo/Itok/LVII/Asaka - nr mint, rosenut, boxed	1199
Linn	LP12/Valhalla/Itok/LVII - nr mint, black, boxed	699
Linn	LP12/Armageddon/Nima - ex, black	1199
Linn	LP12/Valhalla/Akito - vgc, black	599
Linn	LP12/Valhalla/LVX - vgc, black	479
Linn	Basik, LVX - vgc, black	199
Linn	Axis, Basik plus - vgc, black	249
Michell	Gyrodec/RB300 - vgc, gyropower ps, Orbe platter, smoked case	999
Michell	Gyrodec SE/RB300 - ex, brand new arm	699
Michell	Orbe/RB300 - ex/ex, boxed	1399
Michell	Orbe - ex, smoked	1199
Michell	Orbe/SME309 - ex/ex, boxed	1699
Michell	Orbe/Wilson Benesch Act 2 - nr mint, boxed ... Stunning!	1949
Michell	<b>All Models - Best trade ins</b>	<b>ON DEM</b>
MTM	The Source - ex, mahogany	599
Origin Live	<b>Rega Arm models - Best Trade Ins</b>	<b>ON DEM</b>
Odyssey	RP1-XG - ex, the prettiest arm ever?	1499
Pink Triangle	LPT/RB250/Reson - ex/ex	379
Project	Debut - ex display, black, boxed	89
Project	Classic - ex display, cherrywood plinth, boxed	299
Rega	Planar 2/RB250 - ex/ex	149
Rega	Planar 3/RB300 - vgc/ex	179
Roksan	Nima - nearly new, boxed	279
SME	309 - nr mint	449
SME	V - nr mint boxed	299
Trichord	<b>DinoPlus - Best Trade Ins</b>	<b>ON DEM</b>
Wilson Benesch	Act/Act 2 - the best ever? Rare as ...	1499
	<b>Digital - CD, DVD etc</b>	
	Many more inexpensive CD players in stock	
Arcam	Alpha 8 - nr mint, remote	199
Arcam	Alpha 8SE - nr mint, remote	349
Arcam	Alpha 9 - nr mint, remote	249
Arcam	CD72 - nr mint, silver, remote	279
Audiolab	8000 Transport and DAX - ex	799
Cambridge Audio	Discmagic/Dacmagic - ex, nice combo for peanuts	199
Cyrus	PSX-R - nr mint, black	249
Krell	CD-DSP - ex, clear and smoked lids, remote, stunning	1499
Marantz	DV4100 - nr mint, remote, boxed	99
Meridian	200 transport and matching dac - ex, superb combination	449
Meridian	200 transport - ex, Trichord mod, excellent	349
Micromega	Trio - ex, the ultimate Micromega	1449
Micromega	Stage 1 - ex, great intro to the Micromega sound	179
Micromega	Stage 5 - ex, sweet sounding player from renowned French manufacturer	249
Micromega	T-drive and T-dac - vgc, boxed, remote, superb sound, £1000s new	799
Musical Fidelity	X100 - nr mint	119
Nyriad	T20 - black, nr mint, boxed, remote, bargain!	249
Naim	CD1 - ex, remote	699
NVA	The Transparent Statement - vgc, crated, remote ... ultimate NVA	1749
Quad	67 - ex, sweet sounding player, much better than 66	499
Rega	Planet - ex, black, well reviewed	249
Roksan	Caspian - nr mint, silver, boxed, remote	449
Rotel	RCD991AE - ex, great piece of kit	449
Teac	CDP4500 - ex, remote	99
	<b>Amplifiers</b>	
Arcam	Alpha 7R - ex, as above with remote	149
Arcam	Alpha 9 - ex, boxed with remote	249
Arcam	Alpha 10 integrated - ex, boxed	299
Arcam	Alpha 10 power - nr mint, boxed	349
Arcam	A65 - nr mint, boxed, remote, silver	179
Arcam	A65+ - ex display, boxed, remote, silver	199
Arcam	A85 - ex, remote, silver	425
Arcam	P75 - ex display, remote, silver	199
Audio Analogue	Puccini - ex, silver	299
Audiolab	8000A - ex, black, boxed	249
Audiolab	8000S - nr mint	329
Crimson	510/520 - ex, boxed, battery pre, lovely combo	279
Linx	Vega - ex, pre/power, gloss black	299
Meridian	605s - ex pair boxed monoblocks	795
Meridian	505s - ex, pair monoblocks	949
Meridian	205s - ex, pair monoblocks	599
Michell	Alceto - ex, pair monoblocks	899
Mission	Cyrus Two and PSX - gc, nextel finish	229
NAD	352 - ex display, boxed, titanium	249
NAD	304 - nr mint, great value	99
Primare	A30.1 - nr mint, boxed	799
Primare	A20 - nr mint integrated	379
Quad	405/2 - good, brown	225
Quad	405 - nr mint, early brass heatsink version	199
Quad	66pre and system remote - ex	399
Quad	605 power - vgc	299
Roksan	Caspian - nr mint, silver, boxed, remote	399
Rotel	RB03 power - ex display, boxed, silver	199
Rotel	RB981 - ex, black powerhouse, 2 available for monoblock setup	225
Rotel	FC995 - ex, pre with remote	199
Shearman	Phase 2 - nr mint, boxed, blue marble styling	279
Sony	STR-DB940 av amp - vgc, DTS 5.1 etc	199
Sugden	AU41 pre/power - ex, black	499
Trichord	L07C and 2 x L07M monos - superb	749
	<b>Speakers</b>	
Acoustic Energy	AE505 - ex display, superb floorstander	249
Acoustic Energy	AE505 - new sealed box, superb floorstander, were £800!!	299
Acoustic Energy	AE1 - new tweeters, scruffy grilles	279
Acoustic Energy	AE100i - ex, rosewood	129
ATC	SCM20 - ex, premium wood finish	799
Castle	Kendal - nr mint, new model in light ash	195
Epos	M15 - nr mint, light cherry, boxed	449
Epos	ES14 - nr mint, boxed 80s classic c/w dedicated stands	325
Gallo	5.1 - ex display, boxed, gorgeous!	999
Mission	763i - ex, black floorstander, boxed	119
Mission	70 centre - ex display, boxed	69
Mission	77ci - ex display, boxed	99
Mission Cyrus	781 - ex, black larger bookshelf	99
Monitor Audio	S6 - nr mint, boxed	299
Monitor Audio	Studio Centre - ex display, boxed	299
Monitor Audio	R700MD - nr mint, black	149
Monitor Audio	Bronze B2 - nr mint, cherry, boxed	129
Monitor Audio	Silver S2 - nr mint, mahogany, boxed	199
Mordaunt Short	912 - ex display, boxed	149
Mordaunt Short	914 - ex display, boxed	199
NEAT	<b>Petite - Best trade ins</b>	<b>ON DEM</b>
QED	Aria - ex display, boxed mint surrounds	39
QUAD	ESL63 - nr mint, unused since Quad service with new boxes	1499
Rega	EL8 - fair, wood floorstander	119
REL	Q50 - ex, black	199
REL	Strata - ex, black	299
Tannoy	R2 - good, boxed, slim cherry floorstander	199
Wharfedale	Pacific P130 - nr mint, boxed, light cherry, excellent	299
	<b>Turners and Tape</b>	
Arcam	Alpha 7 - ex display, boxed, rare black	149
Audiolab	8000T - vgc, rare item	329
Cyrus	FM7.5 - nr mint, silver, digital, presets, boxed	279
Denon	TU260L tuner - ex, black, digital, presets	49
Quad	66FM - ex	379
Quad	FM4 - vgc	225
Rotel	RT02 - ex display, boxed, silver	199
TAG McLaren	T20 - ex display, boxed	699
Teac	TX3000 tuner - ex, digital, presets	69
Teac	V1010 cassette - ex, 3 head	75
	<b>Systems, cables and miscellaneous</b>	
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Beyer	DT231 galactic - new	30
Ixos	1014 - new 1m interconnect	15
Ixos	1014 - new 5m interconnect	25
Mission	Stance - ex display, silver	49
Quad	66/67 system - 67 CD, 66 Tuner, 66 Pre, 606 Power and system remote	1199
Stax	Lambda Nova Signature - nr mint, superlative quality	699

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<b>Clearaudio TQI</b> tonearm massive acrylic linear tracking device - unusual opportunity - spotless and as new - no box	£2000	£3860
<b>Merlin Music Systems</b> VSM/M loudspeaker. Obscure here, popular there - unusual US design with cult following - includes BAM bass module	£2500	\$9000
<b>Living Voice Avatar II</b> - cherry - 12 months old, nearly spotless - lovely finish	£2000	£2700
<b>Altoa PST 11.01i</b> Hi-end 2 box pre-amp - slick and stylish Italian. 12 months old - boxed - perfect	£1500	£2800
<b>Pro Ac Studio 200</b> - yew - nice - vgc	£800	£2150
<b>Pro Ac Supertower</b> - big bruiser - black. At least 10 years old, very loved and dog-eared. Great sounding den/party speaker - good working order	£300	
<b>Lyra Titan mono</b> - cartridge with kudos in a hairshirt style - 40 hours	£1900	£2795
<b>Dynavector 507</b> tonearm - strange device seeks strange owner	£1500	£3000
<b>Art Audio PX25</b> - 5 watt stereo power amp - big with Lowther fans	£2500	£4500
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<b>Tom Evans Groove plus</b> - phone stage with external Lithos PSU	£2500	£3500
<b>Tom Evans Vibe Pulse</b> - line stage with external Lithos PSU	£3200	£4800
<b>Tom Evans Micro Groove Plus</b> - moving magnet	£500	£800
<b>Tom Evans micro Groove</b> - moving magnet	£300	£400
<b>Tom Evans micro Groove</b> - moving coil [1K]	£300	£400
<b>Sugden Masterclass Stereo AA</b> power-amp with matching pre - beefy class A solid state - ex-dem - boxed - light use	£3750	£5600
<b>Revolver R33</b> bookshelf speakers - new - boxed	£300	£600
<b>Naim 42.5 plus</b> Hi-Cap plus 135 monos - 19 year old job lot - including rabbit droppings - giveaway	£1000	
<b>Roksan Xerxes Cognoscenti</b> turntable - SME cutout - firewood	£100	
<b>Linn Isobarik</b> - dinosaur design at dinosaur price	£250	
<b>CR Developments Romulus</b> line integrated - as new but hums - giveaway	£300	
<b>Quad FM4</b> tuner - no comment	£90	
<b>ATC SCM7</b> - cute mini-monitors on saucy bright finish Partington stands	£450	£700
<b>Eastern Electric Mini-Max</b> - super cute line pre-amp with valve rectification and hard wiring. New and boxed	£500	£800
<b>Epos ES30</b> loudspeaker - substantial floorstander - some marks - giveaway	£650	
<b>Cargas Neutral Reference 2.5m</b> speaker cable with spade term - new	£500	£775
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ACUSTICS ARTS AMP 2.200 WPC POWER AMP	5375		LYRAHELIXON SL MC CARTRIDGE NEW	1249	
ALDIA PST 11.01 PREAMP/RC REMOTE CONTROL	2565		LYRA DORIAN MC CARTRIDGE NEW	495	
ALDIA ST15.01 POWER AMP 60 WPC	2600		MICHELL DCPSU NEW	440	440
ALPHASON AKROS 2 SPEAKER STANDS BOXED MINT	60	30	EXIMUS DP1 DAC/PRE 24/192 BALANCED CLASS A	2531	
AUDIONOTE MESHU LINE INTERGRATED AMP NEW	3350		MICHELL GYROSER/RS300 ARM	1083	1083
ACUSTICS ARTS POWER 1 INTERGRATED AMP 130WPC	3690		MICHELL ORBE SME BOARD NEW	2298	2298
AURUM CANTUS MUSIC GODDESS FLOORSTANDING SPKS NEW	2500		CLEARAUDIO BLUEMOTION TURNTABLE 3 YEARS WARRANTY	665	
AURUM CANTUS LEISURE 2SE SPEAKERS NEW	900		CLEARAUDIO EMOTION TURNTABLE 3 YEARS WARRANTY	655	
AUDIONOTE M3 LINE PRE AMP NEW	3550		MICHELL TENODEC WITH RB 300 ARM NEW	700	
ACUSTICS ARTS PRE AMP 1 INC REMOTE CONTROL	2350		MICHELLUSO AHERA MC PHONO STAGE/USED	600	295
AUDIONOTE M2 LINE PRE AMP	1499	1499	TRANSFIGURATION ARIA MC CARTRIDGE 0.36 MV	690	
AUDIONOTE CONQUEROR SINGLE ENDED CLASS A NEW	1999		TRANSFIGURATION TEMPER MC CARTRIDGE 0.38 MV	2250	
AUDIO VALVE/CLIPSE PREAMP BALANCED	2100		STELLO P200PRE AMP PCB/BALANCED	1195	
AUDIO VALVE ASSISTANT 20S INTERGRATED AMP	1500		STELLO DAI320 INTERGRATED AMP	1885	
AUDIONOTE OTOPHONO INTAMP NEW	1899	1899	STELLO DP 200 DAC/PREAMP PCB/BALANCED	1495	
AUDIO VALVE AWALON MONO POWER AMPS	2450		STELLO S200 STEREO POWERAMP 200WPC	1495	
CLEARAUDIO SYMPHONO PHONO STAGE MIC	770		SHAHJIAN SUPERLEF SPEAKERS INC STANDS BOXED	1600	895
ACJUSTICARSATS DAC 1 32/38KHZ DAC/CONVERTER	2900		VIRTUAL DYNAMICS POWER 3 CABLE 0FT LONG	125	
EXIMUS SI POWER AMP 200WPC PCB/KXLR INPUT	2531		VIRTUAL DYNAMICS DAVID RCA 1 MTR PR	380	
ACUSTICS ARTS PLAYER 1 2495	2895		ORRELECA100SP100 PRE POWER NEW	1999	POA
AVI LAB SERIES NEW POWER AMP 200WPC	1299		ORRELE SS SPEAKER SYSTEM +SUB NEW	975	POA
AUDUSAEUPENPOWER CABLES/FULL RANGE	POA		ORRELE 100 EVOCD PLAYER EX DEM	1499	1199
AVI NEW LAB SERIES PRE AMP OPTIONAL PHONO/DAC	1399		ORRELE SA100EV0INT AMP 80WPC IVC NEW	1199	POA
AVI LABSERIES MICRO PLAYERS/SUPER NEW	1399	1399	ORIGIN LIVE AURORA GOLD TURNTABLE NEW	1470	1470
AUDIOLAB 800S EXCELLENT CONDITION	329		ORIGIN LIVE ENC COUNTER TONE ARM NEW	970	970
AVI LAB SERIES INTERGRATED AMP 200 WPC NEW STUNNING	1499	1499	ORIGIN LIVE ILLUSTRIOUS TONE ARM NEW	1570	1570
BLUENOTE BALDINOTTI MC CARTRIDGE	1400		ORIGIN LIVE RESOLUTION TURNTABLE NEW	1970	1970
BLUENOTE BORROMEO TONEARM	999		PLINIUS 9100 INT AMP 240WPC/04HMS EX DEM	1700	1250
BLUENOTE DUAL REFERENCE QUALITY BOOKSHELF SPEAKERS	1800		PLINIUS PB POWERAMP 200WPC/04HMS	2250	
BLUENOTE BELLAVISTAS/STATIONARY TURNTABLE	1900		PLINIUS MB PREAMP INC REMOTE CONTROL	2250	
BLACK RHODIUM SYMPHONY 1 MTR PR INTERCONNECTS	95	70	PRIMARE A10 INT AMP EXCELLENT CONDITION BOXED	275	
BLACK RHODIUM CONCERTO 1 MTR PAIR NEW	135	95	PSB ALPHA 6 ACTIVE SUBWOOFER AS NEW	500	225
BLACK RHODIUM SYMPHONY 2 MTR PAIR NEW	150	135	RUARKPROLOGUE ONE SPK ROW FINISH BOXED/USED	995	450
BLACK RHODIUM HARMONY 1 MTR PAIR NEW	60	37	RUARK VITA 100 5 1 SPK SYSTEM INC RUARK ACTIVE SUB	1695	750
CROFT EPOCH PRE AMP NEW	1500		RUARK VITA 120 5 1 SYSTEM NEW	1695	1500
BLACK RHODIUM ORATORIO 1 MTR PAIR NEW	597	375	RUARK PELLUDE 1 NEW	900	800
CROFT VITA PREAMP	990		QED FULL RANGE	POA	
CROFT TWIN STAR POWER AMPS NEW FROM	1500		RUARKPROLOGUE 11 LOUDSPEAKERS NEW	1250	
CROFT DAKSHINI ALL WAVE POWER AMP NEW	3600		SENNHEISER RS85 WIRELESS HEADPHONES NEW	159	
CROFT GCI INTERGRATED AMP 40WPC NEW	3600		SME MODEL 10 TURNTABLE NEW	2643	
BLACK RHODIUM REQUIEM 1 MTR PAIR NEW	1247	800	SME SERIES IV ARM BOXED UN/USED	1126	1000
DENSON D30 POWER AMP 200WPC/04 OHMS STUNNING	1500	595	SME SERIES V ARM NEVER USED/MINT	1615	1400
BLACK RHODIUM ORATORIO 1 MTR DIGITAL NEW	297		SME 202A TURNTABLE INC SERIES V ARM	5273	
CLEARAUDIO CHAMPION TURNTABLE	810		SME V ARM EXCELLENT CONDITION BOXED	995	
CLEARAUDIO MATRIX RECORD/CLANER MACHINE	1490		WIREWORLD ECLIPSE REFERENCE INT 1 MTR NEW	499	
CLEARAUDIO MICROBASIS/PHONO STAGE/M/M/MC	230		WIREWORLD ALANTIS 5 1 MTR INTERCONNECTS NEW	149	
EAR 324 TRANSISTOR PREAMP NEW	2400		SOUND ORGANISATION FULL RANGE	POA	
EAR 509 ANNIVE RSARY MONOBLOCKS GOLD/DR CHROME	POA		WIREWORLD/DEQUINOX 5 FOR NAIM OWNERS/D/INOIN	109	
EAR 834 INTAMP BOXED NEW	2440		STAXSR 007-SRM007 EARSPEAKERS NEW	2495	
EAR 834P CHROME DELUXE M/M/MC PHONO NEW	975		STAX SR5 2020 MK2 EARSPEAKERS NEW	349	
EAR 834P M/M/MC PHONO STAGE NEW	715		STAXSR 4040 SYSTEM SIGNATURE 2 NEW	995	
EAR 890 POWER AMP 70 WPC CLASS A NEW	3075		SUMIKO BLACKBIRD MC CARTRIDGE NEW	589	
EAR 899 INTIPRE AMP 70 WPC/CLASS A NEW	3250		SUMIKO PEARL MM CARTRIDGE NEW	65	
EAR 816 INTREGRATED/PREAMP AMP NEW	2690		SUMIKO BLUE POINT SPECIAL EVO 111 MC NEW	239	
EAR HEADPHONE AMP HP4 NEW	2275		SUMIKO BLUE POINT SPECIAL EVO 111 MC NEW	239	
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ELAC CL310.2 JET SPEAKERS NEW	799		WIREWORLD FULL RANGE OF AWARD WINNING CABLES		
ELAC 203 ESPACTIVE SUBWOOFER NEW	799		WIREWORLD STARLIGHT 5 HDMI 1 MTR CABLE	199	
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ELAC CL 3301 JET INC STANDS NEW	2499		TRICHORD DELPHINI MK2 NEVER CONNECTED PS/NEW	1270	
GAMUT 1 MTR TEFLON COATED INTERCONNECTS PCB/KXLR	195		TRICHORD DINO/PSU NEW	299	
ELAC P20 CINEMA SPEAKERS FREESTANDING/GLASS BASE	499		TRICHORD RESEARCH 500 POWER/BLOCK NEW	315	285
GAMUT D3 PRE AMP BALANCED IN/OUT	3430		TRICHORD RESEARCH DELPHINI MK2 PHONO - LARGE/SUNEW	995	900
GAMUT D200 MK3 POWER AMP NEW 200WPC	3990		QUADESL 63 SPEAKERS QUADSERVICE BOXED	1499	
GAMUT M200 MONOBLOCKS 200WPC	6100		V0H PB 5 B MTR INTERCONNECT NEW	35	20
GRADO RS1 HEADPHONES NEW	750		V0H THE SOURCE/EB 0.8 METRE NEW	65	35
HALCRODM8 PREAMP PCB/BALANCED	9480		VIVANCO DX 400 HEADPHONES NEW	29	20
HALCRODM 38 STEREO AMP 180WPC	13550		VIVANCO FIM/800 FM HEADPHONES NEW	99	69
HALCRO MCA 70 7 CHANNEL POWER AMP	5100		WIREWORLD SOLSTICE 5 SPK CABLE AWARD WINNER	FROM £132	
LYRAARGO MC CARTRIDGE NEW	795		WIREWORLD EQUINOX 5 INTERCONNECT 1 MTR PR	149	
LYRAHELIXON MC CARTRIDGE NEW	1145		WIREWORLD RAINBOW 5 INTERCONNECT	149	

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AUDIO RESEARCH LS16 MK2	£2,200	£3,700
AUDIO RESEARCH VSI 10	£2,500	£4,000
AUDIO RESEARCH VT150 MONOBLOCKS	£2,995	£14,000
AUDIO RESEARCH DAC 1	£695	£2,500
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CONRAD JOHNSON PV8 PREAMP	£500	£2,000
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HOVLAND RADIA POWERAMP	£4,250	£8,000
JEFF ROWLAND 8TI POWERAMP	£5,995	£14,000
JEFF ROWLAND SYNERGY PREAMP	£1,900	£5,500
JEFF ROWLAND CONCENTRA mk2 [INT AMP]	£3,250	£6,995
KRELL FPB 300CX [3WKS OLD]	£5,500	£9,800
LAMPROS 200 mk2 SPEAKERS [LATEST ONES]	£1,700	£3,500
LINN KATAN SPEAKERS	£350	£600
LUMLEY ST70 VALVE POWERAMP	£650	£2,450
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MARANTZ MA24 MONOBLOCKS	£1,200	£2,800
MARK LEVINSON 383 INTEGRATED	£3,500	£6,000
MARK LEVINSON ML335 POWERAMP	£3,750	£8,000
MARK LEVINSON ML380 PREAMP	£2,250	£4,500
MARK LEVINSON ML360S DAC	£2,995	£7,995
MARK LEVINSON ML33 REF MONOBLOCKS	£17,000	£40,000
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MICHELL ALECTO MONOBLOCKS	£895	£2,000
MUSICAL FIDELITY DVD 1	£850	£1,500
NAIM NAP90/NAC62K PRE/POWER	£395	£1,200
NAIM NAIT 3 INTERGRATED	£325	£N/A
NORDOST VALHALA 4M SPEAKER CABLE [BOXED]	£3,995	£7,000
NORDOST VALHALA 1.5M SPEAKER CABLE [BIWIRE]	£1,700	£4,000
PROAC POINT FIVES	£1,800	£3,500
REFERENCE 3A ROYAL VIRTUOSOS	£2,450	£4,400
REVEL F50 SPEAKERS	£3,850	£6,500
SONUS FABER GUARNERI [9 MONTHS OLD]	£2,995	£5,250
TOM EVANS THE GROOVE PLUS	£2,650	£3,850
WADIA 7&9 REFERENCE 4 BOX CD PLAYER	£6,500	£23,000
WILSON SYSTEM 7 [AS NEW]	£14,000	£22,000
WILSON MAXX	£19,000	£38,000
VAESSEN B.O.X SPEAKERS	£1,300	£2,800
VTL 85 VALVE POWER AMP	£850	£1,850
ZINGALI OVERTURE 2s	£1,000	£2,495

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**Welcome** to *Hi-Fi Choice Reader Classified*, the UK's first and best free private ads service for second hand hi-fi. These pages are a must-read if you're thinking about buying used kit, and if you want to sell something it's definitely the place to be. It's free to place an advertisement – simply submit your ad of up to 30 words,

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## FOR SALE

### ACOUSTIC ENERGY AE1 MK1

speakers with stands, £300. AVI S2000 MI amp, £250. Sony tuner, £30. Sony VHS, £30. All good condition. Grant 07843 498048 or 01474 35708 (Kent)

**ARCAM A80** integrated amp and Arcam P80 power amp, black boxed, (£1,000) £500. 07891 533084 (Swansea).

**ARCAM ALPHA 8** tuner, mint, all packaging, £100. Yamaha DSP-E800 home cinema processor, manual and remote, £100. Toshiba SD220E DVD player, £30. 07966 057648 (Bournemouth).

**ARCAM ALPHA 8SE** CD player. As new condition. Boxed with manuals, £150. Andrew 01905 770810 (West Midlands).

**ARCAM ALPHA 7** CD player, alpha 7 amp and 8P power amp, £250 or near offer. 01902 733821 (Wolverhampton).

**ARCAM FMJ DVD27A** 11 months old, as new, boxed, black, £1,000. KEF reference model 1.2, cherry finish, as new, boxed, £400. 07771 690031 (Kent)

**AUDIO SYNTHESIS DAX** Discrete variable DAC. Upsamples to 706K, SACD and DVD-A compatible, 18 months old, mint, (£6,000) £3,000. Ian 07941 424322 (Warwickshire)

**AUDIO RESEARCH LS5** full balanced in/out, excellent condition, (£5,290) £1,650 ono. Theta Pro Basic 2, excellent condition, (£2,299) £790 ono. 07812 465326 or 020 8505 9092 (Essex)

**AUDIOLAB 8000** transport and DAC, complete, boxed, £845. Lumley reference preamp, boxed, £275. Arcam Delta 290P, £195. All good condition. 07905 338232 (Essex).

**AVI S2000** amps, S2000 preamp, £975, AVI S2000 CD player, £385. All purchased new, three years ago, mint, with boxes. Julian 07795 671932 (Nuneaton).

**B&W LCR 6** centre speaker in cherry, plus DS6 surround speaker. Very good condition, only 18 months old, £400 ono. 01225 443163 (Bath).

**B&W P6**, cherry, £300. Chord Odyssey 4 cable, three metre pair terminated, £100. Meridian 200 CD transport. All good condition. 01438 743807 (Herts).

**CAMBRIDGE R50 MONITOR** speakers each with bass, mid, treble and tweeter. Excellent sound and condition, £400 01793 700569 (Swindon).

**CYRUS PSX-R** x2, black, boxed with manual, good condition, £230 each or £450 for both. Bob 07721 726996 (Dorset).

**DENON 3801** AV amplifier, excellent condition, £200 ono. 01223 240794 (Cambridgeshire).

**ELECTROCOMPANET** AW60FTT power amplifier, immaculate, used for 10 months from new. Upgrade forces sale, hence £550 ono. 07803 277701 (Manchester).

**HEYBROOK DUET** standmount speakers in Rosewood. Perfect condition, boxed and complete with grilles etc, (£825) £395 ono. 07753 625783 (Kent).

**ISOTEK SUBSTATION** 11 months old, as new. 2x600 VA, 2x300, and 2x150 VA. 01524 61903 or email [stephen@hennefer.fsworld.co.uk](mailto:stephen@hennefer.fsworld.co.uk) (Lancaster).

**KEF 104.2** good condition, £300. Acoustic Energy AE2A speaker stands less than half price, one year old, (£530) £230.

Andy 0115 9126424 or 07815 194772 (Midlands).

**KEF MODEL 4** speakers as new, £1,500. Lexicon MC1 processor, £2,000. Parasound MCS2205A power amp, £1,200. Tahir 07879 456452 (Aberdare)

**KEF Q35** floorstanding speakers in black ash, (£350) £100. NAD 540 CD player, £100, both as new 01784 255163 (Surrey).

**KEF Q35** speakers, floor standing, 100w RMS, cherry, excellent condition, £135. 01908 640803 (Milton Keynes).

**LINN CLASSIK** silver, boxed, one year old, £645. Usher CP311 floorstanders, two months old, £1,100 ono, bargain. Julian 07795 671932 (Warwickshire).

**LINN IKEMI** CD £1,000. Naim 102 preamp with NAP SC supply, £700. Naim 250, £900. Naim Hicap, £350. Naim SBL speakers, £850. 01482 656611 (Hull).

**LINN UNIDISK 1.1** black 18 months old, £5,500. Kisto system controller silver, £6,995. 020 8529 2261 (London, E4).

**LINN LP12 EKOS** 1987 model, Lingo'd model, Trampoline in excellent condition, Dynavector DV XX1 cartridge (18 months old), £1,500 01524 61903 (Lancaster).

## WANTED

**AUDIOLAB 8000P.** Karl 07743 483571 (Manchester).

**B&W HTM 2** centre speaker in red cherry finish. Alan 0121 742 8351 (Birmingham).

**PMC DB1** speakers in oak. Arcam A200/300/CD93 etc or Denon AV3805/DVDA1/A11 etc in black. 01962 764839 day or 023 80611519 eves. (Hants).

**PRO AC STUDIO 100** speakers in perfect sonic condition. Good price paid. 01353 659807 or email [gjh29@cam.ac.uk](mailto:gjh29@cam.ac.uk) (Ely).

**SHARP GF-777** radio twin cassette player, four speaker stereo system from the eighties. Must be in excellent condition and not damaged. Offering £400 01895 378578 evenings or email [fiskallen@aol.com](mailto:fiskallen@aol.com) (Oxfordshire).

**MARANTZ CD17KI** Signature, £650. Sony SACD XA777 ES, £950. Trichord DAC4 plus PSU, £950. Michell Alecto power amps, £950 pair. Rega 3 inc. new Elys cart, Dino phono, £400. All mint. 01442 214936 (Hemel Hempstead). 📧

## BUYING TIPS

Buying second-hand can be a great way to pick up a bargain. A formerly expensive second-hand component might well prove a better long-term bet than a brand-new product if the price is right.

Do some research on which brands have a good service back-up, so if something does go wrong, you can get it fixed. Unless you purchase from a dealer, you're unlikely to get any warranty, so it's up to you to ensure the fitness of any gear that you buy.

Usually, speakers should be less prone to breakdown than amps, and amps should be more reliable than CD players. But any abused component could be trouble – have a proper dem, and judge the seller as well as the goods!

**FOR SALE**

❑ **MERIDIAN DSP5000 MKI** speakers. Immaculate in black. Five years old. Huge extension and soundstage. Even work in small rooms. Mint, originals with boxes, packaging, cables/MSR, £2,250 ono. 07753 959582 (Birmingham).

**MICRO SEIKI DDX 1000** for sale ex-shop display model. Untouched for 10 years. Two tonearms fitted; one knackered ADC, other unidentified, with no headshell or cartridge. Comes complete with controller and original box. No instruction manual. Offers 07790 305942 or 01753 621664 (Slough).

**MORDAUNT SHORT MS40** classic speakers vgc, (£500) £180. 01269 851633 (W.Wales).

**MUSICAL FIDELITY E600** CD player, £150. MF E50 tuner, £100 or £225 the pair, must sell. Rega EL8 floorstanding speakers, £75. Dali SWA12 sub, new, £225. Yello power chords 2x1m, £20 each. Sonic Link power chord 1m, £40. Nordost Solar Wind 1m, £30, Nordost Flatline speaker cable, 2x5m, £50. Andrew 020 7663 1264 (Romford).

**MUSICAL FIDELITY TRI-VISTA** 21 DAC, £800. As new, (No.1235). MF A3.2CR power amp as new, £650. Kimber 4 TC 2.5m speaker cable, £120. Terry 020 8482 0363 (Enfield)

**NAD 5411** CD player, Sony TAF-3940 amplifier, Mission 780 speakers, VDH 102 silver anniversary cables. Russ Andrews feet and cables. Excellent condition, all for £350 cash. 01262 670835 (E.Yorkshire).

**NAIM IBL** speakers, Naim 62, Naim 140, Meridian CD player 206, Linn Sondek, Linn Ekos arm, Linn Trioka cartridge, (£6,200) £1,750 ovno. Can demo, boxed. 01204 493016 (Bolton, Lancs).

**NAIM NAC 112** preamp, £425. Naim NAP 150 power amp, £525. Both two years old, boxed, mint. Steve 01278 653283 or email trelfas@bridgwater.ac.uk (Somerset).

**NAIM NAC102** preamp, £250. Rega Planet CD player, £150. Rega headphone amplifier, £40. Grado SR60 headphones, £30. All in perfect condition. 01604 414216 (Northampton).

**QED XT400** speaker cable, six months old, excellent condition. 01792 517755 (Swansea)

**QUAD 33** £80. Quad 303, £95. FM3 tuner, £60. All with cables. 01793 700569 (Swindon).

**QUAD 33** preamp, power amp, FM3 tuner, rarely used. Sensible offers please. Derek 0118 934 1482 (Berks).

**QUAD** preamp, type 44 plus Quad power amp type 303. Grey, mint. The pair for, £325. 01590 643701 (Hampshire).

**RESOLUTION AUDIO OPUS 21** CD player, HFC Editors Choice.

Going vinyl – either swap for Mitchell Orbe plus tonearm in mint condition or sell. This player is unused and is in its wooden crate, (£2,895) £2,000. Dale 01915 120310 (Tyne and Wear).

**ROTEL RB-03** power amp. Black, only 30 hours use, all receipts and packaging. 07843 012061 (Derby).

**ROTEL RCD-02** CD player, remote, manual, leads, original packaging. In perfect working order 11 months old, black/silver colour, £225. At this price no offers please. 01384 379128 (Stourbridge).

**ROYD APEX** floorstanders (black), £175. Moth Phono, passive pre and Stereo 30 amps, £200. Creek OBH12 passive pre/remote, £100. Rega Planar 3/Roksan cartridge, £75. 01789 841765 (Warwicks).

**RUARK SCEPTRE** speakers, 2-way standmount monitors, mint condition, cherry veneer, (£600) £300. Also, custom built polished granite stands by HNE, beautiful, (£500) £200. Colin 01869 320375 (Oxon).

**RUSS ANDREWS KIMBER** KCAG silver interconnect 0.5m. Five pin DIN connection for Naim

equipment. Mint, boxed with receipt, £85. 01752 695295 (Plymouth).

**SENNHEISER HD650** reference headphones, boxed, £150. Keith 07891 533084 (Swansea).

**SLATE AUDIO GARRARD 301** SME 3012, Ortofon MC10EmkII cartridge. All mint, offers in excess of £800. Mr.Crombie 01727 845454 (Herts).

**SONY CDP101** classic player from 1982, £800. Manual and remote, excellent condition, £75. 01278 782622 (Somerset).

**SONY SCDXE680** SACD player, lovely player, silver, boxed, (£300) £100. No offers please. Eight track Amerex ACD 301C with solid state tuner, auto record player (inc. 78s), £40 ovno. 07795 484664 (Birmingham).

**SPENDOR SP2/2 MONITOR** speakers, walnut, mint condition, boxed, £275. Sony CDP-XE210 CD player, mint, boxed, £35. 01403 255153 (West Sussex).

**SUGDEN A21 AL** amplifier. Bought new a few weeks ago, (£949) £795. Arcam A85 MM/MC phono, £495. 01493 665761 (Gt.Yarmouth).

**TALK ELECTRONICS** Hurricane 3/Tornado 2, remote control, (£1,500) £595. Marantz CD17, gold, no remote £325. Linn stratos preamp, £125. Cambridge Audio Discmagic transport, £100. 01621 772884 or email i\_greenslade@hotmail.com (Essex).

**TANNOY CHEVIOT** speakers, 12" HPD315A dual cone driver. Reconned by Tannoy in 1997. Teak finish with brown grille. Very good condition, £500. 01324 556522 (Central Scotland).

**TDL RTL2** loudspeakers (pair) look and sound as new, £65. Kenwood receiver amplifier KR-V7040 (unmarked) includes Dolby Pro Logic decoder and surround sound amplifiers, £55. Michael 01494 711960 (Bucks).

**THORENS TD150MKII**, SME 3009, and ADC XLM mkII m/c cartridge. Teak plinth and cover. Excellent condition, £100 ono. 07768 552395 (N.Yorks).

**YAMAHA CDX-530E** CD player, black. Supplied with universal remote. Classic equipment, plays CD-R/RW discs, £40 no offers. Ken 01268 415017 (Essex).



Above: Linn Klassik

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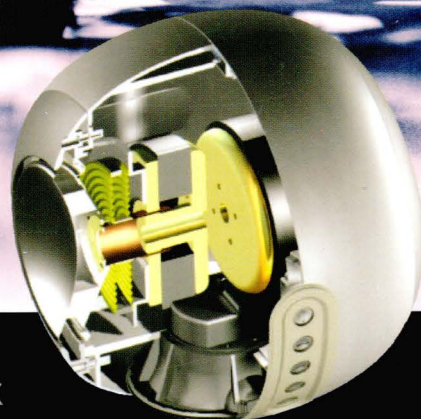
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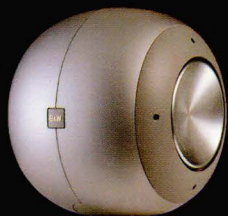


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