

HI-FI CHOICE

PASSION FOR SOUND NOVEMBER 2005 £3.90 WWW.HIFICHOICE.CO.UK



IN-DEPTH TESTS

CLASS OF 2006

Reviewed inside – the cream of the new hi-fi crop

Arcam > Cyrus > Denon > Epos > KEF > Krell > Pioneer > Primare > Sony and more...



FREE! 2nd hand hi-fi mini-mag!
ULTIMATE GROUP TEST >>> AMPLIFIERS

- FEATURING**
- > Arcam DiVA A90
 - > Exposure 3010
 - > Micromega A-120
 - > Monrio MC 207
 - > Primare I21
 - > Rotel RA-03

NOVEMBER 2005 £3.90

Future MEDIA WITH PASSION

9 770955 111076

11 >



A different Classé

For more than 20 years Classé has been designing and manufacturing extraordinary audio equipment for enthusiasts who demand nothing less than the very best. Our engineers have a passion for what they create and it shows: engineering, style, user-interface, product reliability and performance are all second to none. The new Delta series is an inspired statement about the art of high performance design. Visit us at www.classeaudio.com or experience the product range at one of the following authorised retailers.

Holburn Hi-Fi Ltd
+ 44 (0) 1224 585 713
note@holburnhifi.co.uk

Hi-Fi Experience
+44 (0) 20 7580 3535
sales@hifilondon.co.uk

Sound Academy
+44 (0)1922 493 499
sales@soundacademy.co.uk

Acoustica
+44 (0) 1244 344 227
geoff.coleman@acoustica.co.uk

Robert Taussig
+44 (0) 20 7487 3455
sales@roberttaussig.co.uk

Cloney Audio
+353 (0) 1288 9449
sales@cloneyaudio.com

CLASSE

Welcome to the issue...

HI-FI CHOICE NOVEMBER 2005 ISSUE 273

Future Publishing Ltd, 99 Baker Street, London W1U 6FP ☎ +44 (0)20 7317 2600



Thank you for travelling with the good ship *Hi-Fi Choice*. We're here to help you traverse the hi-fi scene's choppiest seas, steering a steady path through the icebergs of 'home entertainment' journalism – telly tests and iPod widgets on one side, bland and stodgy hi-fi 'reviews' on the other – towards a destination worthy of the true, modern audio enthusiast.

For those who demand the best in music reproduction, this issue offers many delights. Our in-depth reviews serve up a number of stars among the autumn season's hi-fi firmament, all of which take pride of place amid their manufacturers' new line-ups for 2006. From purist stereo to high-quality multichannel, these components represent some of the best new products for the coming months and beyond...

Another special treat is the latest in our series of exclusive compilation CDs from The Naim Label. I do hope you enjoy this beautifully recorded music, just as you've enjoyed our other free discs in recent months – like our fantastic DualDisc sampler, our *System Tune-Up Disc* and the B&W DVD that we gave away with last month's special *The Collection* edition. It's our pleasure to offer these gifts to you, dear reader, as a 'thank you' for buying *Hi-Fi Choice*. And if you've missed any issues, it's about time you thought about subscribing – do so now and you'll get a free pair of Sennheiser headphones into the bargain (stocks permitting). So what are you waiting for? Turn to p86 pronto!

Tim Bown

Tim Bown Editor

WHY WE'RE NO.1 FOR HI-FI...

- Since 1975, *Hi-Fi Choice* has delivered the world's most thorough, no-nonsense guide to buying high-performance hi-fi.
- We now publish 13 issues a year, including two special editions: *The Collection*, an issue dedicated to the finest high-end components, and *The Hi-Fi Awards* – the most important annual awards in the hi-fi calendar.
- Every issue contains a potent mix of the latest hi-fi news, views, music, interviews and in-depth tests, brought to you by a prestigious team of expert writers from the UK and around the world.
- We only review the most interesting and worthy new hi-fi components – high-performance audio products across a wide range of price points. We obtain more genuine hi-fi exclusives than any other magazine – if it's worthy of your attention, you'll read about it first in *Hi-Fi Choice*.
- Our tests are the most rigorous in the business, conducted by the UK's most experienced team of hi-fi reviewers.
- Alongside in-depth component reviews and accessory round-ups, every regular issue of *Hi-Fi Choice* features an *Ultimate Group Test* on a core hi-fi product category – from source components to amps and speakers.
- Each *Ultimate Group Test* is conducted using a uniquely thorough three-step test regime. This consists of carefully controlled 'blind' and sighted listening sessions, a full set of laboratory tests and extended 'hands on' testing by the primary reviewer. No other magazine goes to such lengths to ensure accurate comparative reviews.
- Components that best meet our exacting standards are listed in the *Buyer's Bible* section – the world's most reliable reference guide for the hi-fi buyer.
- That's why *Hi-Fi Choice* is...
The Essential Guide To Audio Excellence In The Home

Beautiful in-house photography, so you see the product in all its glory

Cherry-picked kit – only the most worthy components make it into *Hi-Fi Choice*

Comprehensive in-depth reviews – we give you the full story

Annotated shots show you what's really going on inside

Interviews with designers give you extra background information

Carefully considered verdict scores, so you really know what we think of a product



THIS ISSUE'S WRITERS AND REVIEWERS INCLUDE...



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 scribes and probably the UK's foremost loudspeaker reviewer.



DAN GEORGE
Dan is a 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 interesting products make it into *HFC*.



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



ART DUDLEY
One of the most respected commentators on the American hi-fi scene, Art has written for *Hi-Fi Heretic*, *Sounds Like and Listener*. Among other things, he is currently US journal *Stereophile*'s 'editor-at-large'.



ALVIN GOLD
Alvin 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).



DAVID VIVIAN
An award-winning journalist, David's sharp ears and equally sharp powers of description are a valuable mix for *HFC*. He also writes about cars, but who needs the latest Lotus when you've got the finest hi-fi to test drive.

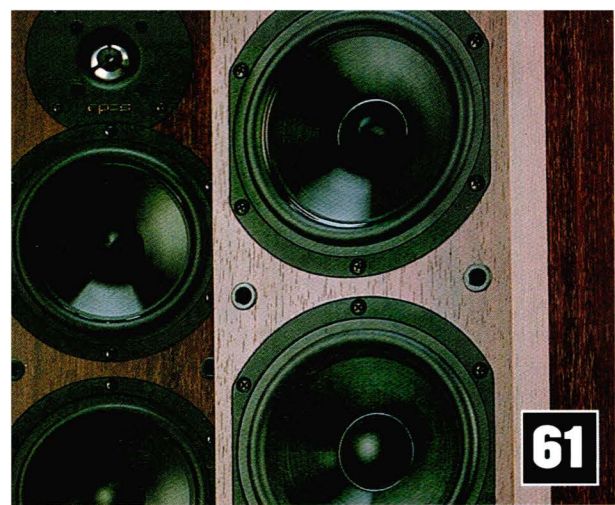


JASON KENNEDY
Jason previously edited *HFC*, but can now be found in the wilds of Sussex indulging himself with the very best hi-fi money can buy. His own system is simply sensational and his love of music knows no bounds.



ALAN SIRCORN
Alan began his journalistic career in the early 1990s. Now a successful freelancer, you too can benefit from his extensive hi-fi knowledge, from purist two-channel stereo to the latest multichannel gear... and beyond.

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.



61



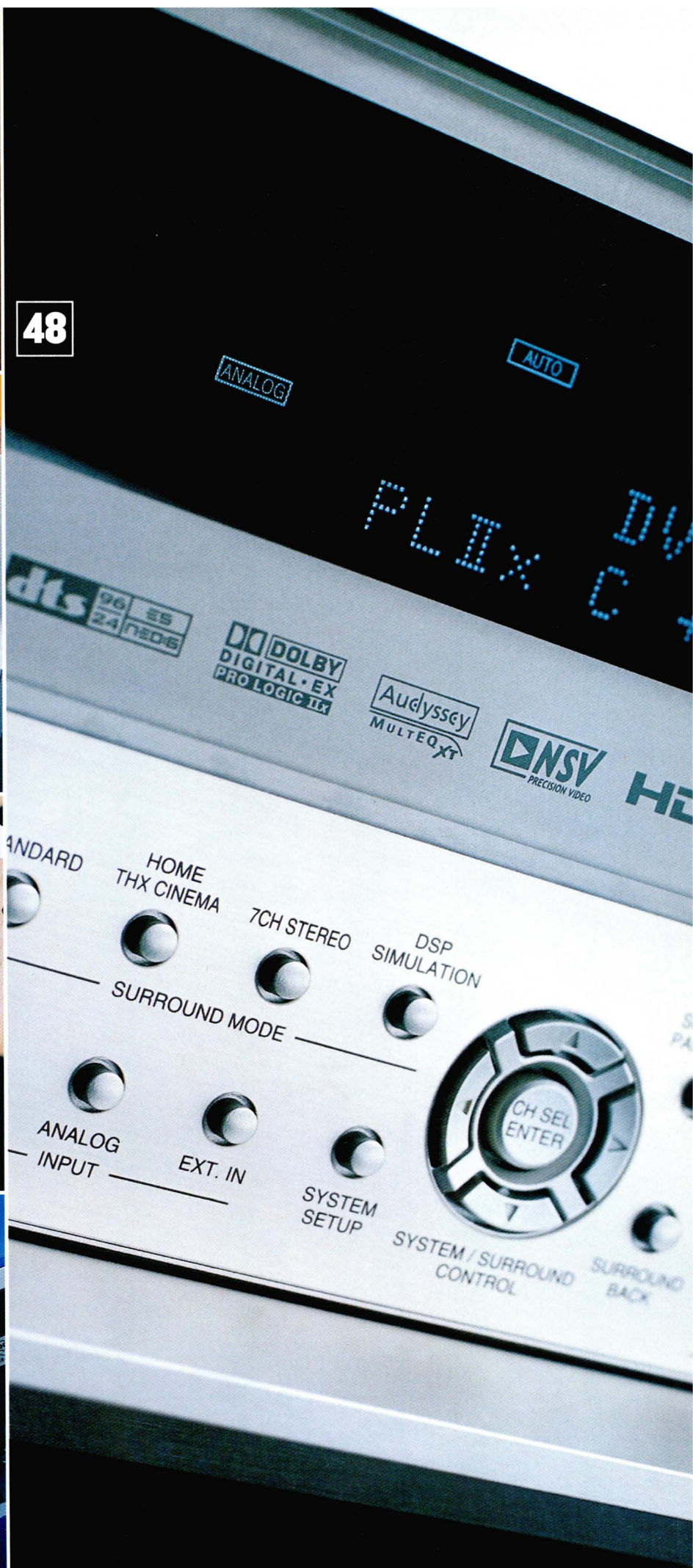
66



50



69



48

Contents

NEWS AND FEATURES

6 NAIM: THE HI-FI COLLECTION 3

All you need to know about your free CD from The Naim Label

9 PRODUCT NEWS

The juiciest new fruit from the hi-fi tree

14 HAPPENINGS

Hot stories and events from around Planet Hi-Fi

16 DISPATCHES

Fresh opinion from the hi-fi commentators with clout

22 ESSENTIALS

Hot hi-fi accessories – tested just for you

25 INTERVIEW

Audiophile recording guru David Chesky

26 COMPETITION

Win unique custom-finished Dali Helicon 400 loudspeakers, worth over £3,000!

28 CHOICE CUTS

New music – rated by our experts

31 CHOICE MAIL

A selection of your letters and emails

34 BEAUTIFUL SYSTEMS

A high-end set-up of genuine sonic beauty... This issue: Bladelius, Innersound and Focal-JMLab

EQUIPMENT REVIEWS

IN-DEPTH PRODUCT TESTS

40 Krell Resolution 2 loudspeaker

44 Onkyo C-733 CD player and A-933 amplifier

48 Denon AVC-A11XV multichannel amplifier

50 KEF iQ3 and iQ9 loudspeakers

54 Primare CD21 CD player

57 Sony STR-DB798 multichannel receiver

58 Arcam C31 preamplifier

61 Epos ELS 303 loudspeaker

62 Cyrus CD6s CD player

65 Townshend Audio VSSS equipment support

66 Yamaha DSP-AX757SE multichannel amplifier

69 Pioneer DV-585A-S universal disc player

ULTIMATE GROUP TEST

INTEGRATED AMPLIFIERS £450-£1,200

73 Arcam DiVA A90

75 Exposure 3010 Integrated

77 Micromega A120

79 Monrio MC 207

81 Primare I21

83 Rotel RA-03

BUYER'S BIBLE

The ultimate guide to high performance hi-fi and AV gathering together all our favourite products for your perusal. Your shortlist starts here...

SOURCE COMPONENTS

94 CD players

96 DVD players

98 Vinyl

101 Radio tuners

102 Digital recorders

AMPLIFIERS

110 Stereo amps

112 AV amps

LOUDSPEAKERS

116 Stereo speakers

120 AV speaker packages

ANCILLARIES

123 Headphones

125 Cables

127 Stands and supports

READER SERVICES

Our regular information service, including where to buy, how to get a back issue and our newly-expanded hi-fi accessories shop

86 How to subscribe

88 Choice Bits accessories shop

91 Back issues

129 Glossary

130 Dealer Guide

136 Dealer Directory

138 What's in next month's *Hi-Fi Choice*



FREE MINI-MAG!

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

2 A-Z Guide to 2nd-hand kit – this issue, Musical Fidelity, plus DIY tips

3 Trading Pages

7 Reader Classified

All you need to know about your exclusive Naim CD

You've heard the hi-fi, now hear the music! The latest in our series of exclusive free CDs holds another ten prime cuts from Naim Audio's record label, all beautifully recorded for your listening pleasure...



1. ANTONIO FORCIONE

Tears of Joy

Taken from the album *Tears of Joy* (Naim CD087)

The title track from Antonio's new album is classic Forcione. A joyful fusion of an elegant Spanish sound with the modern overtones that his quartet – cello, percussion, accordion and double bass – bring.



2. LAURENCE HOBGOOD TRIO

Prayer for the Enemy

Taken from the album *Crazy World* (Naim CD084) Skilled composer and improviser Laurence, full time pianist for US jazz vocal star Kurt Elling, recorded this beautiful track as part of the trio's debut album of shimmering arpeggios, fluid bass and elegant drumming.



3. REUBEN HOCH AND TIME*

Turnaround

Taken from the forthcoming album *Of Recent Time* (Naim CD088) Drummer Reuben Hoch, pianist Don Friedman and double bassist Ed Schuller re-interpret this Ornette Coleman track for their new album. The trio's name refers to the drummer's role as the keeper of time.



4. GEORGIO SERCI

Déjà Vu

Taken from the album *New York Sessions* (Naim CD082) Serci reveals his talent for composition via this gently atmospheric track taken from his debut album. Virginia Mayhew contributes a driving tenor saxophone solo with Harvie Swartz's double bass a terrific presence throughout.

WIN! THIS NAIM CD PLAYER



DON'T MISS YOUR CHANCE TO WIN A SUPERB CD5i!

Back in HFC 259, we declared Naim's CD5i CD player a firm *Best Buy*. To give yourself a chance of winning this excellent player worth £825, all you need to do is visit your nearest Naim dealer and ask to have your free *Naim: The Hi-Fi Collection 3* CD played on a Naim CD player. Then simply fill in the details below, including the serial number of the player you had demonstrated, and post this coupon to: [Hi-Fi Choice CD Competition, Naim Audio, Southampton Road, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP1 2LN.](#)

Title _____ First name _____ Surname _____

Address _____

Post code _____

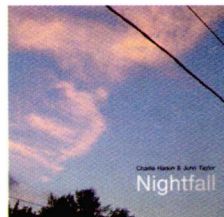
Email address _____

Shop where listened to sampler on Naim CD _____

Serial number of unit _____

Name of salesperson who gave demonstration _____

Please tick box if you do not wish to be added to our mailing list



7. CHARLIE HADEN AND JOHN TAYLOR

Chairman Mao

Taken from the album *Nightfall* (Naim CD077) Charlie Haden's eastern influenced composition gives John Taylor leave to strum and pluck the innards of the piano, an astonishingly harmonious and synergistic accompaniment to Charlie's hugely rounded bass tone.



8. JIM GAILLORETO*

Giant Steps

Taken from the forthcoming album *Shadow Puppets with Strings* (Naim CD090) Virtuoso Chicagoan reed player Jim Gailloroto takes a step on from his *Shadow Puppets* debut album for The Naim Label, having written a score for string quartet. This track is from his new album, *Shadow Puppets with Strings*.



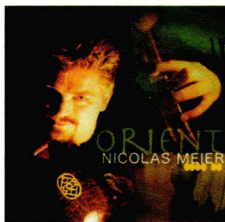
5. HELD LAMPI PROJECT Voices Across the Ocean

Taken from the album *Digital Dreaming* (Naim CR03) featuring vocals by Frank Yamma, Chapman Stick player Jim Lampi and producer Zeus B Held worked together to record this fabulous track, inspired by the Australian outback.



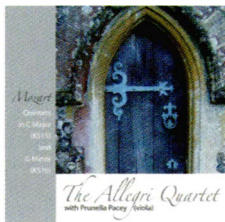
9. HAVARD GIMSE* Allegro from Piano Sonata No.60 in C major by Haydn

Taken from the forthcoming album *Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven Sonatas* (Naim CD089) Norwegian pianist Gimse delights again with his third album for The Naim Label – a beautifully played collection of piano sonatas by Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven.



6. NICOLAS MEIER Adiguzel

Taken from the album *Orient* (Naim CD091) A host of influences appear on this track taken from *Orient*, guitarist Nicolas Meier's debut for the label. The album is a series of acoustic jazz originals, and *Adiguzel* is delicately flavoured with flamenco, Latin and middle eastern music.



10. THE ALLEGRI QUARTET Allegro from Mozart Quintet in C major K515

Taken from the album *Mozart Quintets in C major and G minor* (Naim CD085) This brisk and breezy movement is taken from the last recording of The Allegri Quartet to feature Peter Carter as the leader, having now hung up his bow after 28 years.

naim UK DEALERS

LONDON

Audio T 190 West End Lane, W Hampstead, NW6
020 7794 7848
Billy Vee Sound Systems
248 Lee High Road, Lewisham, SE13 020 8318 5755
Cogent Audio Visual 558 Kings Road, SW6 2DZ
020 7751 3000
Cornflake.co.uk 37 Windmill Street, off Tottenham Court Road, W1 020 7631 0472
Grahams Hi-Fi Canonbury Yard, 190a New North Road, N1
020 7226 5500
Hi-Fi Experience 227 Tottenham Court Road, W1
020 7580 3535
Martin Kleiser 109 Chiswick High Road, W4
020 8400 5555
Oranges and Lemons 61-63 Webbs Road, SW11
020 7924 2040
The Studio 28 Aylmer Parade, Aylmer Road, N2
020 8348 0990

EAST

Audio File 27 Hockerill Street, Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire
01279 506576
Audio File 18c-18d Chesterton Road, Cambridge
01223 368305
Audio T 159a Chase Side, Enfield, Middlesex 020 8367 3132
Audio T 30 Crown Street, Brentwood, Essex
01277 264730
Basically Sound The Old School, School Road, Bracon Ash, Norwich, Norfolk 01508 570829
Rayleigh Hi-Fi 33 Sir Issacs Walk, Colchester
01206 577682
Rayleigh Hi-Fi 216 Moulsham Street, Chelmsford, Essex
01245 265245
Rayleigh Hi-Fi 44a High Street, Rayleigh, Essex
01268 779762
Rayleigh Hi-Fi 132-134 London Road, Southend-on-Sea, Essex 01702 435255
Signals 6 St Marys Park, Bucklesham, Ipswich, Suffolk
01473 655171
Tom Tom Audio 31 St Michaels Street, St Albans, Hertfordshire 01727 868659

SOUTH EAST

Audio Designs 7/9 Park Place, Horsham, W Sussex
01403 267766
Audio Designs 26 High Street, East Grinstead, W Sussex
01342 314569
Audio T 4 Albert Parade, Green Street, Eastbourne, E Sussex
01323 731336
Audio T 6 High Street, Tunbridge Wells, Kent 01892 525666
Audio T 15 Upper High Street, Epsom, Surrey 01372 748888
Audio T 69 London Road, Brighton, E Sussex
01273 609431
Infidelity Hi-Fi 9 High Street, Hampton Wick, Kingston-upon-Thames, Surrey 020 8943 3530
Norman Hobbs 13-15 Sussex Road, Haywards Heath, W Sussex 01444 413353
Phase 3 Hi-Fi 213-215 Tarring Road, Worthing, W Sussex
01903 245577
P J Hi-Fi 3 Bridge Street, Guildford, Surrey 01483 504801
Soundcraft Hi-Fi 40 High Street, Ashford, Kent
01233 624441
Kimberley Audio & Visual 352-354 Lower Addiscombe Road, Croydon, Surrey 020 8654 1231

SOUTH CENTRAL

Audio T 4 Feathers Lane, Basingstoke, Hants 01256 324311
Audio T 173-175 London Road, Camberley, Surrey
01276 685597
Audio T 2-12 Hursley Road, Chandlers Ford, Hants
023 8025 2827
Audio T 4 Queens Walk, Broad Street Mall, Reading, Berks
0118 958 5463
Audio T 60 Fleet Street, Swindon, Wilts 01793 538222
Audio T 29 London Road, Portsmouth, Hants
023 9266 3604
Audio T 19 Old High Street, Headington, Oxford
01865 765961
Martin Kleiser 9 London End, Beaconsfield, Bucks
01494 681300
Movement Audio 588 Ashley Road, Parkstone, Poole, Dorset
01202 730865
Music Matters 344 Uxbridge Road, Hatch End, Middx
020 8420 1925
Overture 3 Church Lane, Banbury, Oxford
01295 272158
Oxford Audio Consultants Cantay House, Park End Street, Oxford 01865 790879
Salisbury Hi-Fi 15 Catherine Street, Salisbury, Wilts
01722 322169
Sound Gallery 65 Castle Street, High Wycombe, Bucks
01494 531682

WEST

Audience 14 Broad Street, Bath, Somerset 01225 333310
Audio Excellence Independence House, The Trinity, Wors
01905 619059
Audio Excellence 65 Park Street, Bristol, Somerset
0117 926 4975
Audio Excellence 156 Sidwell Street, Exeter
01392 491194
Audio T 38 Winchcombe Street, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire
01242 583960
Mike Manning Audio 54 Bridge Street, Taunton, Somerset
01823 326688
Mike Manning Audio 110 Middle Street, Yeovil, Somerset
01935 479361
Sevenoaks Hi-Fi 28 Cowick Street, St Thomas, Exeter, Devon
01392 218895
Stone Audio UK Holmead Walk, Poundbury, Dorchester
01305 257555

MIDLANDS

Acoustica 114 Wolverhampton Road, Stafford
01785 258216
Castle Sound & Vision 48-50 Maid Marian Way, Nottingham 0115 958 4404
Cymbiosis 6 Hotel Street, Leicester
0116 262 3754
English Audio 37 Whitecross Road, Hereford 01432 355081
Frank Harvey Hi-Fi 163 Spon Street, Coventry, Warwickshire
024 7652 5200
Griffin Audio The Custard Factory, 3 Gibb Terrace, Birmingham 0121 224 7300
Music Matters 9 Market Street, Stourbridge, W Midlands
01384 444184
Music Matters 363 Hagley Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham
0121 429 2811
Music Matters 10 Boldmere Road, Sutton Coldfield, W Midlands 0121 354 2311
New Audio Frontiers 43 Granby Street, Loughborough, Leicestershire 01509 264002
Nottingham Hi-Fi Centre 120-122 Alfreton Road, Nottingham 01159 786919

NORTH WEST

Acoustica 17 Hoole Road, Chester, Cheshire
01244 344227
Adventures In Hi-Fi 5 Bishopgate, Wigan, Lancashire
01942 234202
Audio Counsel 26 High Street, Cheadle, Cheshire
0161 491 6090
Audio Excellence 86-90 Boughton, Chester, Cheshire
01244 345576
Creative Audio 9 Dogpole, Shrewsbury, Shropshire
01743 241924
Doug Brady Hi-Fi Kingsway Studios, Kingsway North, Warrington, Cheshire 01925 828009
Fortissimo 3-9 West Point, Duke Street, Manchester
07740 659086
Peter Martin Hi-Fi Showrooms 12a West Street, Congleton, Cheshire 01260 280017

NORTH EAST

Audio Images 284 Glossop Road, Sheffield, S Yorkshire
0114 273 7893
Audio Republic 78 Otley Road, Headingley, Leeds
0113 217 7294
Audio Room 2 George Street, Hedon, Hull, Humberside
0148 289 1375
Lintone Audio
8 The Arcade, Metro Centre, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear
0191 460 0999
Lintone Audio 7-11 Park Lane, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear
0191 477 4167
Moorgate Acoustics 184 Fitzwilliam Street, Sheffield, S Yorkshire 0114 275 6048
The Sound Organisation 2 Gillygate, York
01904 627108

WALES

Audio Excellence 134 Crwys Road, Cardiff
029 2022 8565
Audio Excellence 9 High Street, Swansea 01792 474608

SCOTLAND

Kevin Galloway Audio 11 Milton Road, Kilmarnock
01563 574185
Loud & Clear 26 Hamilton Place, Edinburgh
0131 226 6500
Loud & Clear 520 St Vincent Street, Glasgow
0141 221 0221
Robert Ritchie 102-106 Murray Street, Montrose
01674 673765

NORTHERN IRELAND & EIRE

Ainm A-V Limited 1 Church Road, Swords, Dublin
+ 353 (0)1 8137937

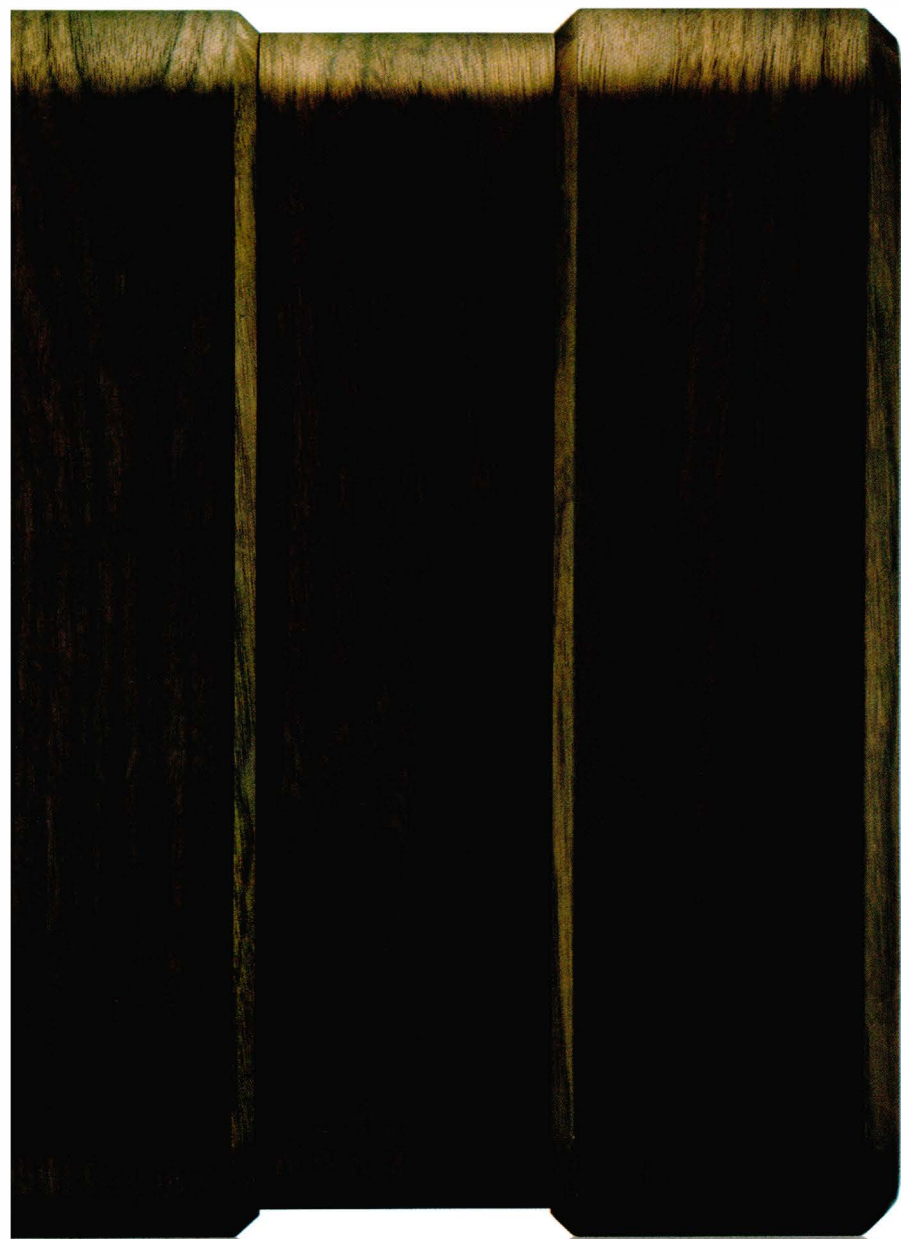
* Final artwork unavailable at time of going to press

nbienTM
www.nbien.com

nx-6
6 1/2" 2-WAY
LOUDSPEAKER

Classic Walnut

See You at . . .
Syndicate 17



Date : 23rd-25th September 2005
Venue : The Renaissance & Park Inn Hotels,
London, Heathrow.
Room : Syndicate 17

To experience how we can enhance your listening pleasure, visit your nearest dealer.
Details can be found on our website : www.nbien.com or you can email us at info@nbien.com.



AUDIO ANALOGUE ROSSINI AND VERDI SETTANTA CD PLAYER AND INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER

▶ These new Italian lovelies are fresh from the Audio Analogue factory door and are distinctly different from the company's usual fare as they both feature valves. The new Rossini and Verdi Settantanta form part of the Composer product range and use a hybrid valve circuit that's something of a new direction for the marque. The Rossini CD player has a valve section on the output stage, while the 70-watt Verdi Settantanta uses valves in the power circuit.

With emphasis on design and affordability, these new Composer line products are

effectively an expansion of the entry-level compact Primo products (see our review in *HFC* 255). The Verdi is the fourth 70-watt Settantanta amplifier from Audio Analogue of late, a policy that offers consumers the opportunity accurately assess differences between ranges with the same power output. Audio Analogue is one of a small number of hi-fi manufacturers introducing valve hybrid circuits in affordable equipment – it might just catch on...

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

PRODUCT Audio Analogue Rossini and Verdi Settantanta

TYPE CD player and integrated amplifier

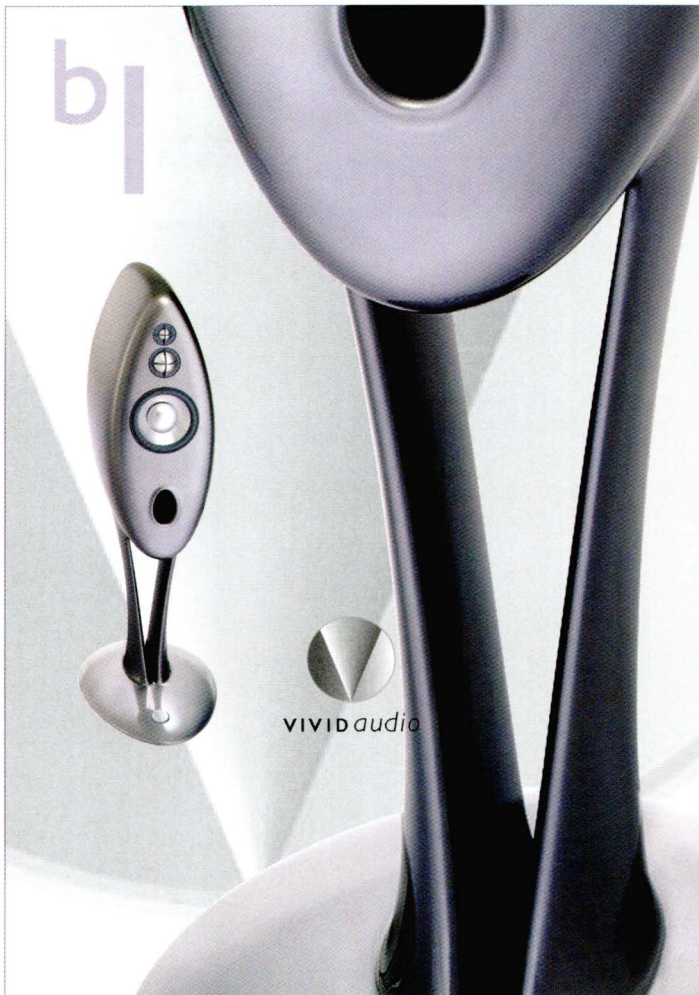
PRICE (Rossini) £625; (Verdi Settantanta) £625

KEY FEATURES (Rossini) VT valve hybrid circuit
▶ Aluminium chassis ▶ low-noise display
▶ (Verdi Settantanta) 70 watts per channel ▶ VT valve hybrid circuit ▶ Aluminium chassis

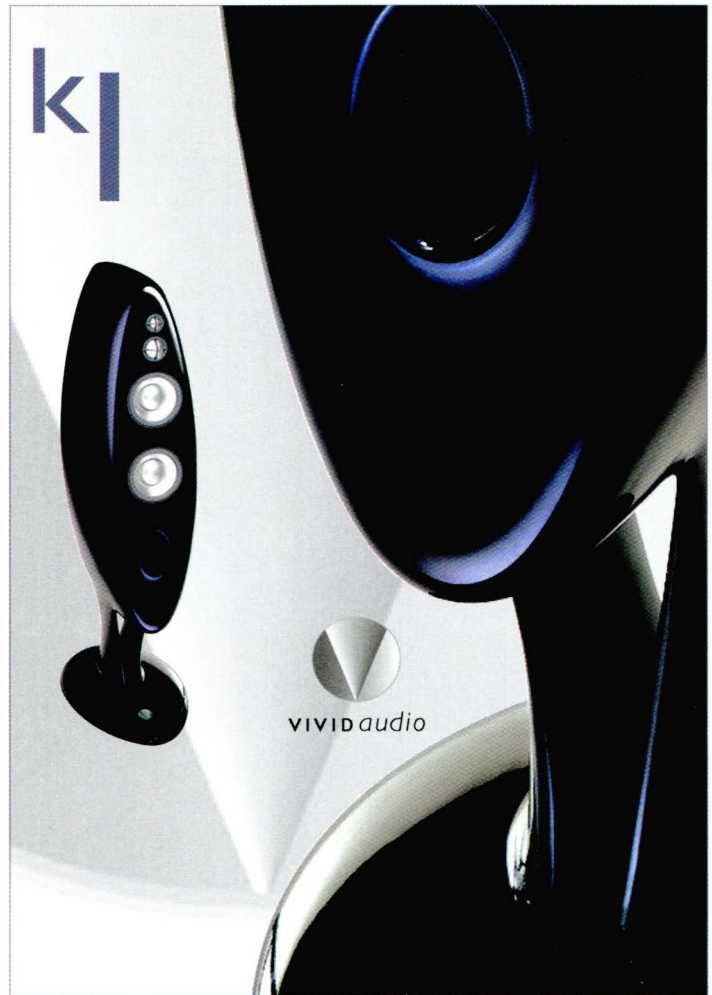
CONTACT ☎ 01753 652669

🌐 www.audioanalogue.com

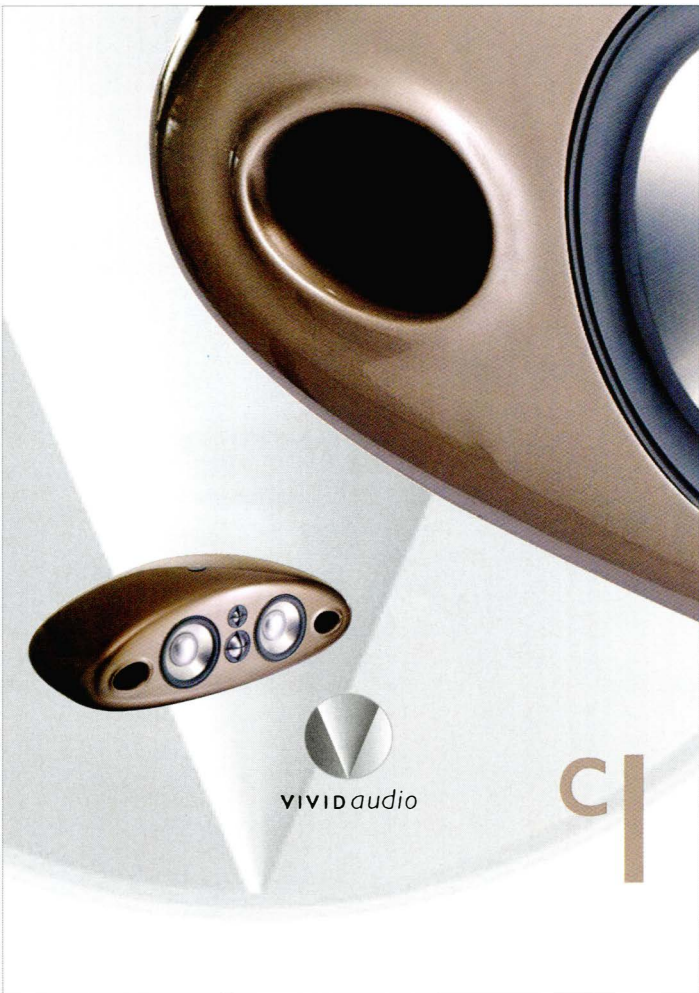
b1 shown in Silver (metallic) finish



k1 shown in Graphite (piano) finish



c1 shown in Sahara Beige finish



Vivid Audio

think outside of the square box

Dealer enquiries very welcome



Rowles Music Limited

For more information:

Tel 01903 530005

Mob 07950 274224

ray@rowlesmusic.co.uk

www.vividspeakers.com

" An extremely revealing and genuinely neutral loudspeaker with dynamic range, timing and imaging to die for.

A true world class loudspeaker from a brand that knows how to get results. "

Jason Kennedy, Hi-Fi Choice

Official HI-FI Loudspeaker Supplier To The 10th Anniversary 2005 MOBO Awards

home cinema choice
**Gold Star
Reference Status
Guarantee**

hi-fi+
Product Discovery
Of The Year
Annual Award 2004



MARANTZ DV7600 UNIVERSAL DISC PLAYER

With the sound quality gap between CD players and universal disc players dwindling, Marantz's brand new multiformat machine should raise a few eyebrows. With 24-bit/192kHz DACs across all six audio channels, plus Marantz's familiar HDAM modules, the new DV7600 should give sub-£500 CD players a run for their money.

It's not just an audio wizard. The DV7600 sports a new 12-bit/216MHz video DAC for superb picture quality, plus Marantz's proprietary NSV noise shaping technology. It also provides 10-bit progressive scanning for PAL and NTSC and is equipped with HDMI connectivity for high-resolution digital audio/video connection to the latest screens, projectors and AV amps.

In addition to SACD and DVD-Audio replay, the player is also compatible with a wide range of other formats, including DVD-R/RW and CD-R/RW, plus MP3 and JPEG encoded discs. Is it time to trade in your old CD and DVD players for this one-box wonder?

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

PRODUCT Marantz DV7600

TYPE Universal disc player

PRICE £600

KEY FEATURES 12-bit/216MHz video DAC
HDAM modules • CD, SACD, DVD-Audio and
DVD-Video playback • NSV noise shaping technology
• 10-bit progressive scanning picture on PAL and NTSC

CONTACT ☎ 01753 680868 🌐 www.marantz.co.uk

NEW PRODUCT HIGHLIGHTS



FOCAL-JMLAB PROFILE 900

Focal-JMLab's long-standing Electra loudspeaker range is to be replaced by the all-new Profile 900 series. The new range sits just beneath the flagship Utopia Be and new Electra 1000 Be models (see last month's *AudioFile*) and includes technology originally developed for these statement speakers.

The Profile 900 range features two floorstanders, the 918 and 928, plus the 908 standmount and a matching centre channel speaker and subwoofer. All models feature the latest version of Focal's proprietary 165mm 'W' cone drive units, plus a new aluminium/magnesium inverted dome tweeter, with suspension design borrowed from the up-market Utopia Be's beryllium unit.

The cabinet is also a departure from the norm and uses a radical elliptical shape with a sloped baffle. Focal-JMLab claims the shape offers optimum rigidity with natural attenuation of standing waves. The grille is an integral part of the design and is said to be best to keep it on for the optimum imaging and treble performance.

Price From £1,400 to £2,800 per pair **Due** now
 ☎ 0845 660 2680 🌐 www.focal-uk.com



DYNAUDIO FOCUS SERIES

New loudspeakers from Dynaudio are expected throughout dealers this month. The new Focus range uses Dynaudio's latest driver technology, plus a more traditional "Danish Aesthetic". Its new proprietary Esotec+ driver uses a magnesium silicate polymer (MSP) that is coupled with the brand's specially treated soft dome tweeter. This is said to offer ideal resonance control over a wide frequency range. Four models complete the line-up – two standmounts, the Focus 110 and 140, plus the 220 floorstander and 200 C centre speaker. The cabinets have a sloping back design and a chamfered baffle with the speaker grilles mounted away from it. A choice of natural wood finishes is available.

Price From £850 to £1,850 per pair **Due** now
 ☎ 020 7378 1810 🌐 www.dynaudio.com



MORPHY RICHARDS DAB EPG

More DAB product news, this time from Morphy Richards – the kitchen kings have delivered the world's first DAB EPG (Electronic Programme Guide) radio. EPG works similarly to Sky+ and allows consumers to browse forthcoming broadcasts and record them (to SD memory card) for later use, so you can listen to radio broadcasts at your own convenience. There's also the facility to 'rewind' live broadcasts, plus a DAB-updated clock and alarm function, all easily accessed via a large illuminated display.

Price £170 **Due** now
 ☎ 0870 060 2614 🌐 www.morphyrichardsaudio.com

BUSH PSDAB2004

A pocket-sized DAB tuner for under £60? That'll be the new Bush PSDAB2004 – a tiny new portable with the aerial cleverly hidden in the supplied in-ear headphones. The groundbreaking price doesn't mean a lack of features – the matt white player has a protective rubberised surround and a large multi-line LCD display, capable of showing scrolling radio text and associated DAB data. It features a ten preset memory, a central joystick controller and automatic tuning. Expect more affordable pocket DAB portables to rival this Bush soon.

Price £60 **Due** now ☎ 0870 873 0079
 🌐 www.bushdigital.co.uk





SONY DVP-NS9100ES

The DVP-NS9100ES is Sony's first SACD/DVD player to join its upmarket ES range. The advanced, feature-packed machine sports Sony's proprietary i.Link digital connection, plus HDMI. It also boasts comprehensive video technology, including Sony's proprietary Precision Cinema Progressive system, which features pixel-by-pixel conversion from interlace to progressive. Video processing is courtesy of a 14-bit/216MHz video DAC, plus there's also speaker time alignment and an audio-video sync feature built-in.

It's not just DVD that gets the all attention, however, as this up-market player also represents some of Sony's best audio expertise for both CD and high-resolution multichannel audio. As the HDMI output is currently not configured for SACD, Sony has made improvements to the analogue outputs to optimise linearity and reduce noise. The result, it says is, "unsurpassed music reproduction". See next issue for the definitive review.

Price £1,000 **Due** now ☎ 08705 111999 🌐 www.sony.co.uk



AUDIO ANALOGUE ENIGMA

Unlike its more upmarket rivals, like Linn's Classik and Arcam's Solo, the Enigma one-box system adds an Italian twist to its CD player, AM/FM tuner and integral 50-watt amp – it sports Audio Analogue's new VT valve-hybrid topology. The Enigma measures 37x9x45cm (WxHxD) and is scheduled for review in January's *HFC*.

Price £500 **Due** now ☎ 01753 652669 🌐 www.audioanalogue.com



TEAC DV-20D

TEAC's new DV-20D is one of just a handful of universal disc players priced at under £300.

The player goes head-to-head with Pioneer's even cheaper DV-585A (see p69) and Onkyo's new DV-SP503E, and offers a fluorescent dot-matrix display, progressive scan output and an aluminium front panel. Despite the low price, the player is compatible with the full gamut of disc formats, including rewritable CD and DVD discs. Dolby Digital and DTS decoding are onboard too.

Price £200 **Due** now ☎ 0845 130 2511 🌐 www.teac.co.uk

KEF KIT200

Looking dashing in high-gloss black, KEF's new KIT200 all-in-one multichannel system features a DVD player, five three-way satellite speakers and a subwoofer, plus all the necessary amplification. The satellites boast cast aluminium enclosures plus Uni-Q driver arrays with the tweeter set into a 75mm bass/mid cone. Desk and wall-mount brackets are supplied as standard, with the option of matching floor stands for an additional sum.

Price £1,500 **Due** October ☎ 01622 672261 🌐 www.kef.com



Soundbites



DENON has ploughed its DVD know-how into a new range of compact but upmarket home cinema systems called Smart Life. The first product from the S-Series has already been unveiled – it's the S-101 (above), a one-box DVD system complete with 2.1 speakers. It boasts iPod connectivity and flat panel speakers to compliment today's slim screens. The next system to follow will include SACD and DVD-Audio playback, HDMI connectivity and USB inputs. The S-101 is priced at £850. ☎ 01234 741 200

BLACK RHODIUM's new Rhapsody interconnect cable is priced at just £30 for a one-metre pair. The 24-strand, twisted pair cable has chrome plugs and is insulated with low loss silicone rubber. ☎ 01332 342233

T+A has revised its four-strong Talis slimline speaker range (right). The improvements include modifications to the cabinet, grille and plinth, plus a reinforced baffle. T+A has also implemented a new 'super high frequency' tweeter unit, with all drivers now sitting flush with the baffle for optimum dispersion characteristics. ☎ 01623 517000



NAD has a new slimline DVD/CD player priced at just £160. The T514 sports 24-bit/192kHz audio DACs, four video DACs and progressive scan. Dolby and DTS surround formats are supported as well as DVD-R/RW discs – depending on the brand and recorder, says NAD. A full compliment of audio and video connections grace the back panel. ☎ 01908 319360

MONSTER's forthcoming M500DVI DVI cable has conductors embedded in a nitrogen dielectric, which keeps wires in the exact centre of the cable. Monster claims it has more shielding than any other DVI cable. ☎ 01923 431 634

The Insider

THIS MONTH, HFC TALKS TO...

STEVE REICHERT

Job Title: PR Manager
Company: Armour Home Electronics



Who do you think is the leading hi-fi designer right now?

Chris Evans of Myriad. He is an electronics designer of outstanding talent, whose designs are at last receiving the universal acclaim they richly deserve.

CD or vinyl – and why?

Both. For the purists, vinyl is unsurpassable by digital formats. Frankly, I agree with them. Recently, a friend played me a Herbie Hancock album he bought in a junk shop. Played at disco volume levels, on his Koetsu-equipped turntable and Quad 989 speakers, the results were breathtaking. But for the other 99 per cent of us (including me), the convenience of CD wins the day.

What's a really great album that you've heard recently?

I bought the *Very Best of Jackson Browne* online recently. I'm ashamed to say that I hadn't previously realised that he wrote so many wonderful songs.

What's the future of hi-fi?

That's easy. The answer is built-in. More and more homes will have integrated audio and video (home entertainment) systems across the whole house. Like it or not, 'convergence' is coming fast. Freestanding loudspeakers will be a very rare sight in tomorrow's homes.

Hi-Fi Diary

OCTOBER

29-30 **Home Entertainment Show**
Renaissance Hotel, Manchester
01206 391001
Manchester's hi-fi and home cinema expo

NOVEMBER

4-6 **What Hi-Fi Sound and Vision Show**
Novotel, London
020 8267 8378
Third year for this new London show

FEBRUARY

24-26 **Sound and Vision 2006**
Bristol Marriot
www.bristolshow.co.uk
Arguably the UK's best-loved hi-fi show, back for its 19th year

Designer podcast

Audiophile accessories company Boston Audio Design is taking advantage of distinctly lo-fi podcast technology to broadcast interviews with the great and good in the world of hi-fi design. BAD's Austin Jackson has lined up three distinctly high-end designers: British turntable expert Simon Yorke (see turntable, right), plus the designers of 47 Laboratory and Avantgarde Acoustic. The public will post questions to be answered in a half-hour podcast to be made available this autumn. Boston points out that you don't need an iPod for a podcast and will be offering the interviews via RSS feeds or from the www.boston-audio.com website. You can even suggest companies for Jackson to line up for further questioning.



Ripper mate

High-street CD vendors Virgin and HMV are now delivering downloadable music content. Between them, the two offer more than two and a half million tracks in their catalogues, with downloads costing as little as 39p each, considerably less than Apple iTunes' 79p per track. HMV even offers a 50p per day short term download option, which gives unlimited access, but no permanent downloads.

If you have an iPod but no time to rip discs, www.cd4labs.co.uk can turn your existing CD collection into the format of your choice. This Essex-based



company can encode your music collection into MP3 or lossless FLAC format and then burn it to DVD or HD, so that you can load the encoded tunes onto your PC or Mac.

HD war?

US video industry expert Joe Kane has warned that with Blu-ray and HD-DVD, "the DVD business is in danger of repeating the same mistake the music industry made with Super Audio CD and DVD-Audio". He perceptively points out that "the winner of that battle was the iPod, because the CD business got stuck with old technology".

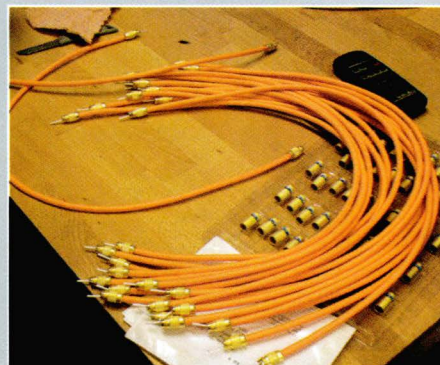
Meanwhile, rumours abound that the BBC will follow Sky in setting a date for HDTV broadcasts. Much of the BBC's new content is in HD, for the purpose of sales to foreign broadcasters. This would be a logical step and would make a strong incentive for terrestrial receivers to go digital, but is likely to make existing set-top boxes obsolete in the process.



Leadless leads

Cartridge and cable specialist van den Hul has announced that it has made the leap to lead-free solder in all its cable products. VdH is now using a 3.5% silver solder in place of lead solder, with the unexpected side effect of an apparent sonic improvement as well as, theoretically, reducing long term damage to the planet.

This is a move that will have to be replicated by anyone in the electronics business that wishes to continue trading from June 2006 when the RoHS (restriction of hazardous substances) directive becomes law and bans the use of lead. One irony of this, pointed out by Graham Slee Projects (maker of phono stages and cables), is that lead-free solder requires an extra 15 degrees of heat to use and thus will increase the production of greenhouse gases, which could be more detrimental to the planet overall.



Small but hard

⊕ The high capacity hard disk has migrated from multiroom sound servers to mini systems, courtesy of Hitachi's AX-M140 (£550, pictured right). This is a



move that could well indicate that hi-fi is also headed in the same direction. With its 40 gigabyte hard drive, this Hitachi is the first complete system to incorporate the ability to store MP3 and WMA files on hard disk, hooking up to a PC or personal MP3 via a USB connection. With the quality of compression systems on the up and the price of high-capacity hard drives coming down, HDD could well be the natural successor to CD in the home.

Rather higher up the hard disk quality chain, Imerge has merged with Linear of Carlsbad, California. Cambridge-based Imerge created the popular XiVa Link database software that's used by the majority of UK multiroom server manufacturers. Linear specialises in wireless residential security systems and has been expanding into consumer electronics.

JIMMY'S TWEAKS #36

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



Choral Music – The hi-fi killer

Each type of music has its own special requirements when it comes to being reproduced successfully. In the pioneering days of shellac 78s, the solo voice proved very compatible with the limitations of early discs and horn gramophones. By way of contrast, massed choral voices proved difficult and demanding, creating severe intermodulation distortion and unpleasant tonal 'hardening'. Although modern hi-fi systems cope much better, music that contains massed voices still poses a stiff challenge. The dynamic power of a large choir can be awesome, and the combination of lots of individual voices (each with slight pitch differences) can make all but the best systems sound congested and edgy. So, if your hi-fi system can reproduce choral music well, it'll cope with anything!



TOP 10 TOP TEN BEST SELLING SINGLES OF ALL TIME (UK CHARTS)

1	Elton John	Candle in the Wind (1997)	(4.86 million)
2	Band Aid	Do They Know It's Christmas?	(3.55m)
3	Queen	Bohemian Rhapsody	(2.13m)
4	Wings	Mull Of Kintyre	(2.05m)
5	Boney M	Rivers Of Babylon/Brown Girl In The Ring	(1.98m)
6	John Travolta & Olivia Newton-John	You're The One That I Want	(1.975m)
7	Frankie Goes To Hollywood	Relax	(1.91m)
8	The Beatles	She Loves You	(1.89m)
9	Robson & Jerome	Unchained Melody	(1.84m)
10	Boney M	Mary's Boy Child/Oh My Lord	(1.79m)

New Music

IN THE STUDIO

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



OUTKAST

Title: *My Life In Idlewild*

Release date: late autumn

The follow-up to 2003's *Speakerboxx/The Love Below* will double as the soundtrack to the hip-hop duo's first film. The movie is set for a January release, and will be preceded by the album before the end of the year.

According to OutKast's Big Boi, he and Andre 3000 have "80 per cent" finished the record, which will include songs that stand apart from the movie.

PIXIES

Title: *tbc*

Release date: 2006

After their successful reunion tour, The Pixies are preparing their first studio album since 1991's *Trompe Le Monde*. "We've enjoyed being together again, but if we just play the old songs, how are we going to do that without coming off as tacky?" the band's Frank Black says.

BLOC PARTY

Title: *tbc*

Release date: *tbc*

Hot on the heels of *Silent Alarm*, one of the most successful debuts of 2005, Bloc Party have already started work on the follow-up. "The album's already very old in our eyes. Even before it was out we were writing new stuff," says the band's Russell Lissack.

STEVIE WONDER

Title: *A Time 2 Love*

Release date: delayed

Stevie Wonder's record company took out ads to promote his first album in a decade back in May. The record then failed to



appear, apparently because Wonder decided to record several new songs. Allegedly, the revised version is now almost ready – but we'll still believe it when we hear it.

BRETT ANDERSON

Title: *tbc*

Release date: 2006

Fresh from his successful reunion with former Suede colleague Bernard Butler, Anderson is now recording his debut solo album. "I half-finished it over a year ago and I've been living with it since... we're just putting a few final touches to it," he says. A second album from The Tears is also in the works.

ALSO COMING SOON...

JAZZ/ CLASSICAL

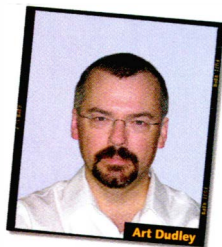
Billy Cobham Spectrum (Expanded) (Sep)

Rahsaan Roland Blacknuss (Sep)

SACD/ DVD-AUDIO

Auryn Quartet Auryn's Beethoven Volumes 2-4 (DVD-A, Sep), **Paul Weller** Studio 150 (SACD, Sep), **Stephanie**

Osborne A Victorian Christmas, (DualDisc, Oct), **Franz Ferdinand** You Could Have It So Much Better, (DualDisc, Oct)



Art Dudley

The mains event

Art's not charmed by the big power snakes

I have an open mind. I think Shun Mook Mpingo Discs have an audible effect on a home audio system (psychological though the basis of that effect may be, it's nonetheless an observable thing). Turntables sound better on some stands than others (and I like my Mana Reference Table more than the others I've tried). I can tell when a system's polarity is reversed, either because the preamp/amp has an odd number of gain stages or because polarity is 'wrong' on the recording (although that's not a gremlin I tend to chase down, owing to the fact that I'm not neurotic... honest). And I would even go so far as to agree that, yes, some record cleaning fluids do in fact make LPs sound better than others.

“Virtual Dynamics sent a whole box of them. Think of it... I could almost swap my mains snakes for a new Dodge Viper!”

But, to this day, I have yet to hear an expensive accessory AC cable that makes a performance difference I can hear (with the exception of those used with digital front ends, in which cases I've heard two cables that do in fact seem to lower the noise floor a bit). But manufacturers keep sending mains cables to me, so I keep trying them.

The latest one to cross my path was the Master Series Power Cable, manufactured by a Canadian company called Virtual Dynamics (www.virtualdynamics.ca). A 2.15m (that's seven feet long in old money) snake-like sample of this remarkably thick and impressive looking stuff, terminated with fittings that appear likewise serious, that sell for \$2,400 each (them's Yankee dollars, not Canadian ones) – and Virtual Dynamics sent me a whole box of them. Think of it... I could almost swap my mains snakes for a new Dodge Viper!

I tried two of them right off the bat, on devices that I thought would be supremely

revealing of AC cable differences, should such differences actually exist: my Quad ESL-989 electrostatic loudspeakers. But the Virtual Dynamics cables made no differences that I could detect whatsoever; no differences in imaging, frequency extension, texture, colour, or even anything that actually has anything to do with music, like pitch, rhythm, flow, or drama. They made no differences in the sense of air on top or the noise floor below. Not a damn thing.

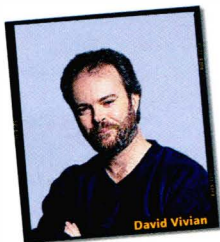
I was a bit disappointed, but I decided to give them one more listen, with one more record. I drew the curtains, I turned off the computer, I closed the windows, I asked everyone in the house to be quiet, and I even leaned forward a little. I still didn't think these cables performed the least bit differently to the ones that came with my Quads for free.

I very happily reverted to the latter. By now I was downright anxious to get the Virtual Dynamics Master Series Power Cables out of

my system, if only because they're so unwieldy, and they exert a tremendous amount of torque against whatever it is they're plugged into – in this case, my Quads at the one end and my poor defenseless AC receptacle at the other. That's right, even my PS Audio Power Ports, themselves the children of overkill, complained.

Proceed with caution, if at all.

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



Mac attack

Mr V swallows the Big Mac sound

Want to know what it's like to be mad? Ask an American audiophile. Does your system display the following symptoms when you whack it up? Hard, glassy treble, overblown vocals and bass that sounds more like someone kicking a cardboard box? The look you get back should give you a fair idea.

Don't know what it is about American gear but years of listening to the stuff has left me with one unavoidable conclusion: it's easier on the ear. It doesn't shout or squeal under pressure. Its attitude is more Burt Bacharach than The Beastie Boys. Nicely chilled. Which isn't to say it can't play the Beasties – and loud. The philosophy is that there should always be muscle to spare, a sufficiency of decibels. Musical muscle, of course; power with poise. Somehow, Stateside electronics don't seem to have that tense, edge-of-the-seat quality you get with some expensive hardware from other countries.

Big American amps are less fatiguing to listen to at high sound pressure levels for long periods. They sound effortless – even with the fiendishly demanding speaker loads beloved by compatriot speaker brands. The bass has natural weight and depth as well as structure and rhythm, the midrange smoothness as well as presence and intelligibility and the treble a sense of evenness and composure that doesn't spotlight detail. You hear a weightier, more rounded sound. A performance with a convincing sense of proportion that, at the same time, can confidently portray the dynamic ebb and flow of real music. ▣

R

RETRO

HI-FI REVISITED

COPLAND CTA 401
INTEGRATED VALVE AMPLIFIER



Defining every great hi-fi company is a great personality. Quad had Peter Walker, Linn has Ivor Tiefenbrum... the list goes on

and on. Copland's motive force is one Ole Møller, who heads up the Danish audio design consultancy responsible for the Copland brand. Ever since the company was founded in the early 1980s, its products have always been notable for their elegantly understated styling and execution. Ole's first projects were valve amps, and the CTA 401 was one of a handful of products that put Copland on the map.

One of my prized memories of the softly spoken Ole is of him holding court to an assemblage of scribes on what amounted to a large, inverted orange box that had been let loose to drift in the middle of a spectacularly beautiful pine-fringed lake in Sweden (adjacent to the Xena Audio factory, where Copland products were made at the time). By then, he had already made the transition from being a valve designer (a trade he leaned while working for Ortofon) to one who had become adept at the brasher arts of solid-state design. But as he said at the time, his concern was not the path he took to achieve a particular end, the enabling technologies if you like, but the end point itself. In his own words, from an interview conducted more than a decade ago, "it was never the case that I particularly favoured valves over transistors. It's just that valves are easier to work with, and easier to get good sound from without too much pain – or at least, that's what I thought at the time. Now I know better. The apparent simplicity of valve circuits is deceptive, but it is certainly the case then that valve amplifiers usually sound quite a lot better than their transistor equivalents".

The "at the time" referred to here is 1989, about the time the CTA 401 was launched. The amplifier itself was a 23kg integrated design, valve powered and rated at 26 watts per channel into four or eight ohms, with a modest overall negative feedback level of 12dB. At this power level, it was run in an enriched Class AB. It was possible to run the amplifier in near pure Class A by tweaking the



"The amplifier quickly established for Copland a reputation for elegance and understatement."

bias in the output stage, but power output would, of course, suffer. The specs were simple and to the point, but a moving magnet compatible phono input was included. The valve complement included ECC83 double triodes in the phono section and the line section of the preamp, plus ECC82 phase splitters and EL34 pentode power output valves in push-pull configuration. The output stage transformers were specifically designed by Copland.

The amplifier quickly established for Copland a reputation for elegance and understatement, not just aesthetically, but in the very musical nature of the sounds they made. It also established a benchmark for the brand, which later generations of hybrid and solid-state amplifiers have had to live up to. But the CTA 401, and its more powerful successor, the CTA 402, have always maintained a special cachet, and remain sought after to this day by discerning audiophiles. In fact, the CTA 402, released in 1998, was almost identical to the original, save for an extra valve in the input section, a stiffer power supply and attendant increase in power output to 35 watts per channel. The later amplifier also included a remote control... a shocking concession to modernity! Regardless, both Copland amps have become true design classics. **HFC**

Alvin Gold

Ask anyone with a McIntosh amp in their set-up. I heard my first one the other day and it blew me away.

So what about that fabled Big Mac sound. Clout, colour and control? Absolutely. Beefy? Damn right. And a whole lot tastier than that mayo-'n'-gherkin mess in a bun served up by the clown with the orange hair. Here's why. McIntosh made its first hi-fi amp in 1949 and has been assiduously 'evolving' it ever since. And as if often the case with hi-fi companies that have been getting their act together for longer – refining, resolving and honing – you can detect the 'maturity' in the sound.

As with big American cars, so with big American amps; there's no substitute for muscle. With so much grunt, grip and grace at your disposal, you have to steel yourself from winding up the wick until your trouser legs flap... and your ears, er, turn up their toes.

McIntosh's sumptuously specified and built domestic audio products are synonymous with ruggedness, long-term value and design integrity. But innovation figures, too. McIntosh has a patented circuit design that eliminates harsh clipping distortion on musical peaks without the sound staying soft in between. It works on demand by reducing the input level for thousandths of a second and then restoring full gain after the transient has passed. Neat.

What has the American audio industry ever given us? A sound that would melt the most jaded heart. Let's call it sonic Häagen-Dazs...

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



War benefits

The online music war could be a good thing

With the majority of online music stores, the files being offered for sale are clearly of inferior audio quality compared with CD. The serious audiophile has so far practically been excluded from the online music world for want of an adequately good product. There's new hope, however, that the sound quality of files at online music stores is about to improve markedly, thanks to a spot of rivalry.

High-street giants Virgin and HMV are locked in battle, having both launched their own UK online music services in early September. Both companies are throwing a major amount of investment behind their new music stores, called Virgin Digital (www.virgindigital.co.uk) and HMV Digital (www.hmvdigital.co.uk) respectively. The two retailers both want to attract the currently untapped download

markets. Crucially for the hi-fi enthusiast, we should be offered a better deal because both new platforms offer the potential for downloading better quality sound files.

These two stores will hopefully blow the lid off the current industry standard for sound quality. For Virgin, the improved quality of the files offered for sale is central to their marketing drive. Virgin Digital's president reminded me that there's a raft of variables which affect sound quality, other than the encoding rate. He bullishly asserted that Virgin's wholly self-designed platform will offer the best possible balance between sound quality and acceptable file sizes.

HMV Digital has also made moves that should see better quality music available for download. Using 128kbps and Dual Pass encoding technology, similar to Virgin's, HMV claims that its standard file will be equivalent to 160kbps. Significantly, HMV also told us that they have the ability in their store to host even better quality files. The company is aware of the demand for higher quality and said that it will be pursuing this option with record companies. Record companies too are realising that all sales are good sales and that audiophiles must be better catered for.

Another new UK online music service that is worthy of investigation is Playlouder MSP (www.playloudermsp.com). Also launching in

“Virgin and HMV are locked in battle, with both launching rival online music services.”



September, Playloder offers 1 meg broadband combined with unlimited, legal file-sharing. What's more, people will be able to opt to encode and share better-quality sound files, allowing for a range of quality options. Playloder hasn't yet got deals in place with all the major labels, but expect to hear lots about it over the next year.

None of the major players have yet taken a lead to design an online music store where audio quality is the unique selling point. Perhaps that's what we'd like best of all. In the meantime, however, browsing for music on the internet should now begin to deliver distinctly superior sound quality than has been the norm. It's also important to remember that even audiophiles can appreciate the usefulness of portable digital music players. For portable devices, there is a real need to keep file sizes within limits so that digital players can hold an extensive selection of songs. One thing is certain – these heavyweight new arrivals to the online music market are raising the bar.

David Balfour started in the music business doing PR for artists including the Spice Girls and The Verve. He is now editor of music trade bible www.recordoftheday.com.



High-end diversity

The high-end world has moved on at last

For last month's *The Collection* issue, we rounded up some of the most gorgeous kit that music lovers can buy. A varied and interesting bunch it was too, yet it has not always been that way in the upper echelons of the hi-fi world. There was a time when you weren't considered a man unless you had a top of the range Linn/Naim system. So powerful was this axis between the burghers of Glasgow and Salisbury that neither magazines nor retailers dared suggest that there was much else out there worth having for the dedicated nut-ball. This hair-shirt approach was not without appeal, but its dominance was so great that equally valid alternatives had to struggle for survival.

Thankfully, times have changed and there are now a myriad different routes to sonic nirvana as a result of the huge range of truly sensational kit on the market. Every month, *HFC* features a *Beautiful System*, a name selected because while it may be a reflection

MUSO

CLASSIC ALBUMS

PINK FLOYD
WISH YOU WERE HERE

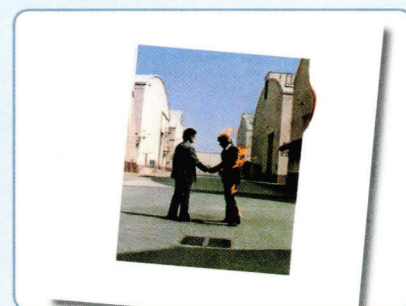


It's staggering to think that Pink Floyd's *Wish You Were Here* is now thirty years old. On its release, critics talked about the idea of 'sound painting' in rock for the first time and that the myriad of electronic and found sounds were more akin to environments than songs. In truth, *Wish You Were Here* was a grand album of textures – from silence to spatial guitar tones. Pink Floyd's 1975 opus would go on to become the definitive ambient rock experience.

Worn down by the stratospheric success of *Dark Side Of The Moon*, Pink Floyd arrived in Abbey Road's Studio 3 on 6 January 1975 in a state of "total physical and emotional exhaustion" according to Roger Waters. Eye contact was minimal, a state exacerbated by the isolated nature of the multi-track recording process. Now dealing with a new Neve mixing console that the EMI engineers couldn't operate properly and 24-track equipment, the group struggled to make something happen. Add to that two US tours and various personal issues, and it's a wonder the album ever appeared.

Recorded in two blocks over six months until 19 July 1975, progress was tortuously slow. On hearing a ringing Gilmour four-note guitar arpeggio, Waters was inspired to write the album's defining opus, *Shine On You Crazy Diamond* – a homage to lost Floyd leader Syd Barratt in nine parts, running to 26 minutes. It took six weeks to get right, an entire week spent on the drum sound alone! Problems with echo returns, over-spill and EQ nearly killed off the track, but the band persisted and created their most alluring and popular song. From its tinkling wine glass opening, MiniMoog synths sounding like horns, Gilmour's exemplary Fender guitar work, Dick Parry's sax and Rick Wright's jazzy Fender Rhodes ending, the track is a triumph. Divided over two sides, it takes eight minutes before the first vocal is heard and its ending sees Rick Wright pay homage to Syd with a *See Emily Play* rubato.

The album's effects, double-tracking/phasing are mostly down to tape manipulation. Bass, keyboards and synths were DI'd straight into the desk. The exception came with *Welcome To*



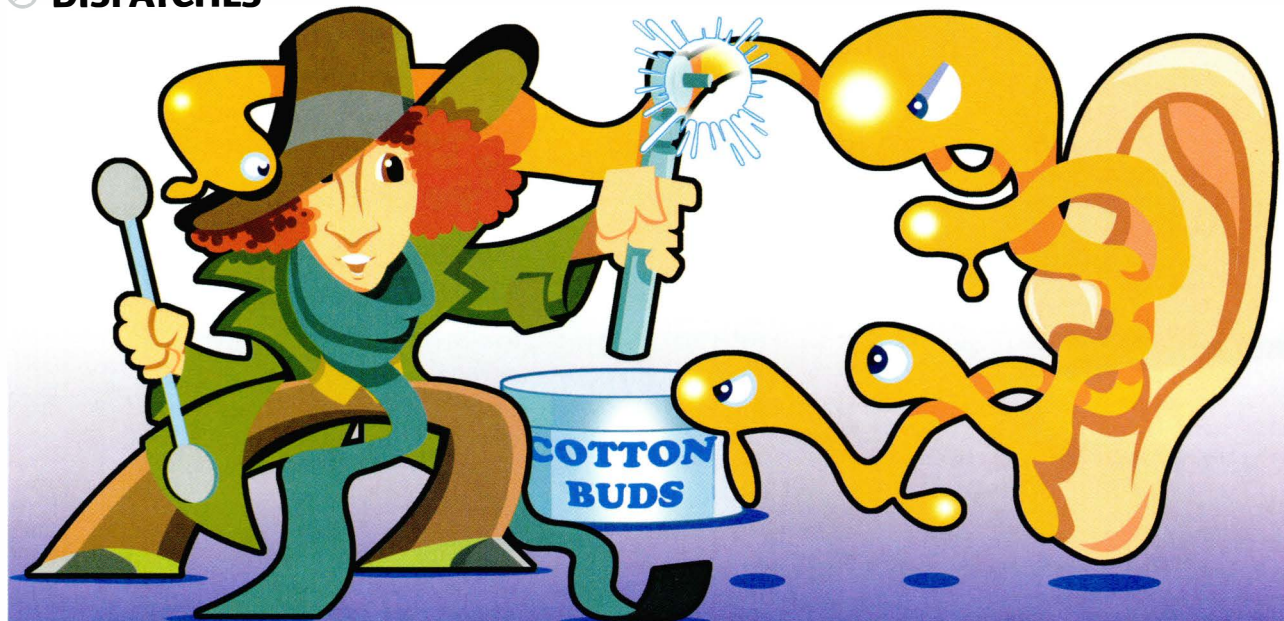
"Pink Floyd's 1975 opus would go on to become the definitive ambient rock experience."

The Machine, its scintillating electronica provided by a high-frequency MiniMoog and the relentless throb of a VCS3 synth's boom-echo repeat setting. But elsewhere, it's sound on sound – most famously, the effect of the finale of *Have A Cigar* being sucked into radio static, leaving the ghost of a lone guitarist in a room to begin the title track. *Cigar* was actually recorded live in the studio with cricket mate Roy Harper on vocals. Another surprising guest was Stephane Grappelli on violin for the end of *Wish You Were Here*, the song featuring Gilmour and Wright on vocals.

Everybody talks about a balding, Guinness-heavy Syd turning up on 5 June 1975 during the recording of *Shine On You Crazy Diamond*, but in reality the Floyd can't remember which song they were working on that day. What they do remember is that the album was mixed in a week. Storm Thorgerson's elemental sleeve design, with its famous burning-man handshake, was wrapped in opaque black cellophane on its release in September 1975. An automatic UK and US No.1, *Wish You Were Here* was released in quadraphonic sound a year later.

By the late 1990s, it was the Lynchpin album of ambient housers such as The Orb and now, thirty years on, it still sounds fresh and strangely mysterious. **HFC**

Mark Prendergast



of the system's appearance. It's essentially a description of its sound quality. The amount and variety of brands available in the UK is staggering – you can audition the finest components from all over the globe.

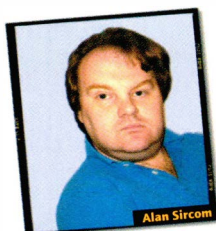
Add these to the wealth of world-leading UK brands such as dCS, SME, B&W and ATC (what is it with all these acronyms?), not forgetting our old friends Linn and Naim, who thankfully abandoned, long ago, the masochistic approach in order to make well-balanced and easy to use kit.

Of course, this vast array of fabulous gear does in some ways make it harder to pick a system that is itself well-balanced and in which all the elements pull in the same direction. Fortunately, there are different sonic philosophies that can be followed, which allow the reasonably well-informed 'phile to put together a stunning system. What's more, it's not very difficult to make a good sound with half decent kit. Complete mismatches are extremely rare and – so long as you don't try to combine a single figure wattage output SET (single ended triode) tube amp with speakers that need transistor-style grunt – then the mixing and matching process can be tailored according to taste.

This is where the assistance of a clued-up retailer with a demo room can come in handy. While it's possible to glean a lot from internet forums and reviews, there's no substitute for hearing the stuff first hand to establish which way your tastes lean – you might find triodes beguiling, as so many do, but equally their lack of grip might leave you craving the power of a big solid state amp. Whichever way you go, there's a fascinating sonic journey to be had just by looking for your listening a bit further a field than the high street.

Jason Kennedy began working on Hi-Fi Choice over 15 years ago, eventually rising to the position of editor. He's currently indulging his passion as a freelance hi-fi writer

“I like the Latin term 'cos it sounds like a sci-fi bad guy... think Dr Who and the Cerumen.”



Ear ear

Cerumen seems to be the hardest word

“**W**hat small canals you have!” I checked myself for red hoods and the nurse for lupine tendencies, but no. She really meant it: my ear canals are small. I'm still not sure if owning up to possessing a small anything is manly, but dainty ear canals sounds *chintzy*.

Age has its benefits – cheaper car insurance, a distinguished mien and no burning desire to appear on Big Brother all spring to mind – but improved hearing isn't on the list. A genetic trigger occurs in our middle years, around about the same time we begin to dance like a creepy uncle at weddings. Suddenly, hair that used to grow out of your head moves to other places, like your ears, nose and eyebrows.

For me, the combination of dinky canals and that middle-age hair relocation scheme has a nasty by-product: impacted cerumen (I prefer the Latin term to the more prosaic 'ear wax' simply 'cos it sounds like a sci-fi bad guy... think Dr Who and the Cerumen). Cerumen is usually a good thing – it coats the ear canal, trapping nasty little particles that could potentially damage the sensitive inner ear. Fine hairs (cilia) 'walk' dried-out nuggets of cerumen from the ear canal. Yum! Sadly, those with an overproduction of cerumen, pesky little

ear canals, too much ear-fur, a predilection toward pushing green M&M's into their ears or just weird lug 'oles, cannot remove the cerumen fast enough and it begins to impact in the sensitive last two-thirds of the ear canal. Pain, reduction in hearing, tinnitus (buzzing), earaches, that curious blocked feeling, even dizziness can all occur.

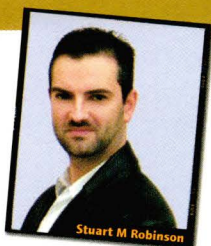
The trouble is, aural hygiene is a tough call. Too much ear cleaning is often worse than too little – your ears are left unprotected. And sticking anything smaller than your elbow into your ear usually impacts cerumen still further (if you can stick your elbow in your ear, I know a circus impresario who's keen to meet you).

As long as the tympanic membrane (the ear drum) isn't perforated, your GP's nurse can irrigate the ear with a low-powered water pick. Having your ears irrigated is uncomfortable, but the rewards are immense.

The world of sound is all fresh and new and intense for you and this immediate clarity lasts for hours. It's the worst time to buy hi-fi – you'll be impressed with everything – but a day later, you will discover your hi-fi system and your record collection anew.

Surprisingly, the ear can be substantially – but not totally – blocked and hearing can be impaired, but the listener adapts. Or at least, tries to adapt. This can cause people to become dissatisfied with their hi-fi system, unaware that the problem is an in-head one. Remember, the system you chose a few years ago was chosen for a reason... you liked it. If you now find it flawed, the cheapest way to set things right might be a visit to the water pick.

Alan Sircom began his journalistic career in the early 1990s. He has since become one of the hi-fi and AV industry's most respected scribes



Stuart M Robinson

Crack heads

DVD-Audio's cracks are (just) showing

In a recent column, we discussed secure methods record companies could use for distributing promo copies, one of those methods being DVD-Audio. No sooner had the issue hit the stands, than news began to surface about a suite of utilities that could crack DVD-Audio's copy protection.

The first thing to make clear, apart from the suite of programs not being really 'new', is that none of the programs 'crack' DVD-Audio's Content Protection for Pre-recorded Media (CPPM) encryption. Instead, in simple terms, they jump in-between WinDVD's playback software and the soundcard used to turn the bits of digital data to analogue signals.

This piece of sideways computer logic already has equivalents in the world of standalone hardware. The digital data between decoders and DACs within a Pioneer DV-563A universal player can easily be intercepted and, with the help of a Cirrus Logic CS8406, the Pioneer's own master clock and a few output transformers, six channels of high-resolution PCM or DSD can be obtained and transmitted via S/PDIF.

In fact, DVD-Audio's dual-stage encryption remains secure. CPPM's fifty-six bit keys, developed by IBM, Intel, MEI (Panasonic) and Toshiba, and the Cryptomeria Cipher that protects the content itself, both stand fast. Moreover, CPPM's Media Key Block can be used to revoke compromised systems, effectively preventing playback of subsequent releases without upgrading to a newer, uncompromised version.

So, what can be done with a massive 24-bit/192kHz wave file? What's hard to do is copy that file to another disc. This is where DVD-Audio's Verance watermarking comes into force: if the seventy-two bit CCI key within the watermark does not match the key of the disc, the audio will stop dead after thirty seconds. It's impossible to remove the watermark, so the only work-around is to limit the resolution of the source files to 96kHz and burn them to a two-channel DVD-Video disc, the playback of which isn't enforced by the CCI key.

However, the ability to 'rip' DVD-Audio content is a benefit to those who store audio on hard disk. There has been a resurgence of interest in DVD-Audio in recent weeks, as discs can now be used with media servers. How ironic that cracking could raise DVD-A awareness, rather than being its downfall.

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

TECHNO

TECHNOLOGY EXPLORED

EVEN AMPS GET THE JITTERS

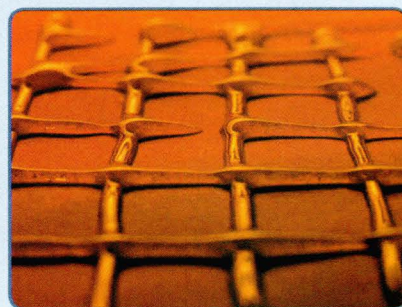


As this column has pointed out before, in the back of every audio tester's mind is the thought that some important parameter might be passing us all by. Occasionally such a parameter is discovered and is shown to have audible significance – probably the best known example in recent years is jitter in digital components, which was unknown in audio in the early 1980s but practically a household word in audio circles a decade or so later. We can now add a new one to the list... let's call it 'amplifier jitter'.

The name is slightly misleading, perhaps, but the fact is that amplifiers can actually cause what's technically known as 'phase modulation', of which jitter is a perfectly straightforward manifestation. Wow and flutter in analogue sources (tape and disc) is another example. There are some differences, notably that in amplifiers such jitter will always be accompanied by more familiar amplitude distortion. Amplitude distortion can exist on its own, phase modulation distortion can't. Also random phase modulation is unlikely to occur, unlike in digital components.

The logic behind amplifier jitter goes like this. Electronic components are not perfect, and many of them change their characteristics very slightly in the presence of a signal. Resistors and capacitors can both do this. One of the simplest electronic circuits is a two-component low-pass filter, which requires a resistor and a capacitor. It rolls off high frequencies and also delays the audio signal passing through by a small amount (which as it happens doesn't depend much on frequency). Suppose one of the two components changes value very slightly as the signal voltage changes, so that at maximum voltage the value is X and at minimum voltage it is a tiny bit more than X, let's say 0.1% more than X. This makes the time delay in the filter increase by 0.1%, too.

A small signal riding on top of the main voltage swing will suffer a 'jitter' of about 0.1% times the delay in the filter, which for a filter with a nominal cutoff frequency of 20kHz is about eight microseconds and 0.1% of that



"There's something funny going on here and it needs more investigation, which we're working on."

is eight nanoseconds. Now in audio terms, that's two-tenths of not very much (to be precise, it's one-seventeenth of a degree of phase shift at 20kHz, or the time it takes sound to travel 2.5 microns). But in terms of jitter specifications, it's quite a lot – subjective evidence suggests that the limit for jitter audibility may be 100 times lower than that.

Accompanying that jitter will be around 0.1% of 'regular' distortion, and if both components were resistors and one of them varied, the distortion would be of amplitude only. But again, there is subjective evidence to suggest that such levels of amplitude distortion are not very audible at all. However, the normal models of jitter audibility invoke the ear's sensitivity to amplitude distortion, giving absolute worst-case audibility of around 100 picoseconds but likely practical figures of more like tens of nanoseconds.

There's something funny going on here and it clearly needs more investigation, which we're working on at *Hi-Fi Choice*. But, just supposing it turns out that the ear is somehow directly sensitive to phase modulation in the nanosecond region, rather than to its side-effects in terms of sidebands generated by any kind of modulation... that could turn our whole understanding of ear-brain interaction upside down! **HFC**

Richard Black



ESSENTIALS



PURE EVOKE 2XT PORTABLE DAB/ FM RADIO £150

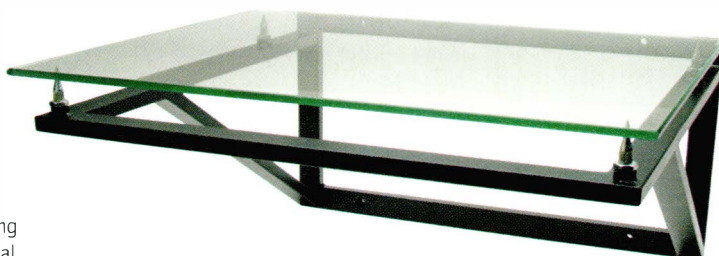
⌚ The Evoke 2 has been around for a while – on previous hearings, we thought it a little gutless sonically, though it's always been one of the best-equipped DAB portables around. The 2XT covers DAB and FM, and also offers an auxiliary input, headphone and digital output sockets, plus a USB socket for upgrading via a PC and Pure's website. Power is from the mains, single-use batteries or a rechargeable battery pack. Battery life is now improved to 25 hours from alkalines (which is less than one got from zinc-carbon batteries in a 1970s transistor radio, but such is progress). From an audio perspective, though, the best thing about this latest version is that sound has been improved with new speakers and filter circuits, and it sounds a lot gutsier than the Evoke 2. It's not perfect – FM tuning is extraordinarily slow, but on grounds of both sound and features, it's probably the all-round best of its breed at present.

☎ 01923 260511 🌐 www.pure.com

CUSTOM DESIGNS TURNTABLE WALL BRACKET £150

⌚ Wall-mounted turntable supports make good sense in many homes. If you have a suitable solid wall (brick or at least breezeblock), you may well find that the deck suffers less from loudspeaker-induced or footfall noise and general low-frequency background hash. It will also almost certainly eliminate 'needle skip' as you walk through the room and free up some space in your rack. This particular shelf is strong, neat and easy to fix, and gives a lively sound with plenty of 'zing'. That's in part due to its rather resonant nature, not absolutely ideal and something we could imagine improving with filler and a less resonant shelf. Custom Designs' own iRAP material is ideal for the latter, at added cost – glass does look nice though!

☎ 0191 262 4646 🌐 www.customdesign.co.uk



WIREWORLD LUNA 5 ANALOGUE INTERCONNECT £30 (1M PAIR)

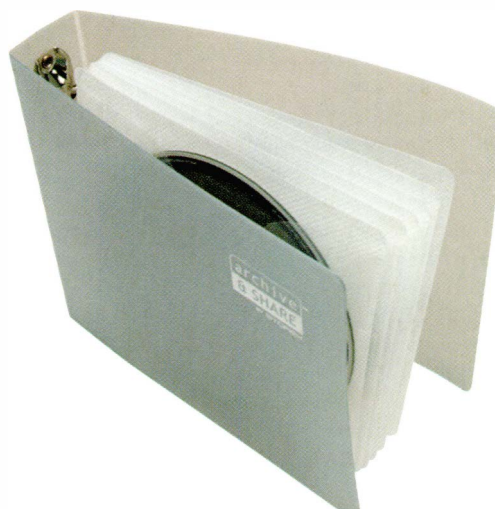
⌚ One of Wireworld's cheapest cables, this features not only the company's trademark 'symmetricoax' construction (basically a coaxial with a hollow centre conductor) but also 'gold tube' phono plugs. Understandably at this price, the plugs are actually gold-plated. It's a fairly thin cable that is easy to handle and the plugs are nicely grippy in any socket. It's also, we reckon, a bit of a bargain with sound that extends effortlessly into the far treble and notably authoritatively in the bass too. We tried it in various situations and it came out as a highly neutral and natural-sounding performer every time. Strongly recommended even for upmarket systems.

☎ 020 8991 9200 🌐 www.wireworldaudio.com

STOREX ARCHIVE & SHARE CD BINDER £6

⌚ If your CD collection is expanding like ours seem to, you'll need no persuading of the logic of space-saving storage. That's why we're taken with Storex's ring-binder solution. Each 'page' holds two CDs or one disc and its booklet, and you can get about a dozen pages in each binder, enough to save significant space (at least two-thirds saving compared with jewel cases) but in small enough units to be easily searchable. The CDs are cossetted (but at the same time firmly retained) in soft sleeves and the clever design of the sleeves allows CD removal without handling the playing side. Smart, practical and ingenious.

☎ 08702 420444 🌐 www.pcworld.co.uk





SENNHEISER PXC 300 NOISE-CANCELLING HEADPHONES £100

⊕ The idea here is that microphones concealed within the earpieces pick up external noise, which is phase inverted, amplified and played back through the earpieces to cancel out the original noise. Music is supposedly unaltered and can be listened to in comfort, even in noisy surroundings. It works reasonably well in practice, but don't expect miracles. Perhaps most importantly, the headphones work nicely with noise cancelling switched off, giving sound that's bass-light but highly informative and clear. Noise cancelling does alter the music, boosting bass and reducing stereo separation markedly, but it reduces low-frequency noise quite well, making a real and worthwhile difference. You won't be able to hear the finer details of string quartets on the Central Line, but you will at least know if your iPod is working!

☎ 0800 652 5002 # www.sennheiser.co.uk

WIREWORLD OASIS 5 ANALOGUE INTERCONNECT £100 (1M PAIR)

⊕ A few steps up the finely-graded Wireworld ladder from Luna, Oasis has many features in common, but retains the silver tube plugs and OCC copper wire. It's also larger and has rather higher capacitance, though still far from causing problems to any modern equipment. We came to some slightly surprising conclusions regarding it and Luna because, while Oasis is a capable wire, it seems to have rather more character than Luna and thus is perhaps not as universally applicable. There's plenty of detail and excellent imaging, but also a distinctly dark tonal character that is something of an acquired taste.

☎ 020 8991 9200 # www.wireworldaudio.com



ISOTEK NEOPLUG MAINS SUPPRESSOR £50

⊕ Neoplug is one of a selection of electronic devices that suppress mains noise. They are all connected across pairs of live, neutral and earth to short out high-frequency and impulsive interference on the mains, preventing corruption of the supply within your equipment. Dearer models like this simply feature more and/or better filtering components, in this case including capacitors of various kinds, gas discharge tubes and a metal-oxide varistor. In use, we found that it does have an effect on nearby equipment, not so much in reducing impulse noise (though it does seem to have some effect on that) but more in removing a little of the background mush that plagues all reproduced music to some extent. For killing switch thumps, however, we'd recommend the cheaper Isoplug, placed as near as possible to the offending switch.

☎ 01635 291357 # www.isoteksystems.com

LAST ALL-PURPOSE RECORD CLEANER £15

⊕ Over recent issues, we seem to have worked our way through most of the Last catalogue of vinyl cleaning (and sonically transforming) products, finishing here with the company's day-to-day LP cleaner. Apart from some rather zany instructions, it seems a typically sensible Last product that does exactly what's claimed for it. The fluid in the bottle is colourless and odourless, but a few drops of it on the supplied applicator suffice to loosen light dirt on a disc and help it from groove to felt pad, from which it can be removed by dry rubbing or washing in sudsy water. Slightly more trouble than a carbon-fibre brush, but more effective, too.

☎ 01234 741152 # www.britishaudio.co.uk





SOUND QUALITY



Creating a new reference

Materials science is critical in the search for perfect sound. Our patented W cone technology possesses vital characteristics required for unrivalled performance. Extremely light with superb internal damping and twenty times the rigidity of conventional materials of similar mass. Flexible sandwich construction allows each cone to be manufactured with a linear response curve, removing the need to add correction within the filter network. So technology allows a better application, setting a new reference for what can be achieved.



Chesky's moves

Best known for his New York-based audiophile label Chesky Records, musician and sound recording expert David Chesky has some very distinct opinions about the importance of good sound

David Chesky isn't happy about the way most people listen to music. But then the record label he started (with his brother Norman) in 1978 doesn't aim to please most people, either. Eschewing totally the standard multi-track recording process, he believes that the only way to record music accurately is to do it live, in a single room and with a single microphone. There are others who share a similar philosophy, but over the last 20 years, Chesky has taken it to a very advanced level. He has recorded everything from small acoustic groups to full orchestras and even electric jazz bands using this method with exemplary results, and continues to experiment with the surround possibilities of

SACD and DVD-Audio, and with future technologies such as Blu-ray and HD-DVD.

"We're a niche company for people who want excellence in their recordings. People like what they like, but if you want realism and you want reference, really our CDs are the ones. We're just about the only people on the planet who try to record live with a one-point microphone (a heavily modified SoundField model that's designed to record in 360 degrees), with super high-resolution digital converters... we build everything ourselves. But you have to educate people's palettes so that they appreciate it. We've created this artificial world of hi-fi that

has nothing to do with reality, and I find that many records sound hi-fi-ish, spectacular, with rising top ends – I've never heard an orchestra sound like this in my life.

"I believe that with all music you can capture it acoustically, provided you have competent musicians. If you're incompetent, it's a problem! But whether it's acoustic or electric, so long as you get the balance right, it's the only accurate way.

"When you review speakers, say, and you listen to a pop record recorded in a multi-track studio... First of all, that thing's gone through miles of cables, op-amps, cheap electronics – you have no idea what they're doing EQ-wise, so how can you use that as a reference tool because it's messed up to begin with? You may like it, but it's not accurate. With ours, we use real musicians in a live space

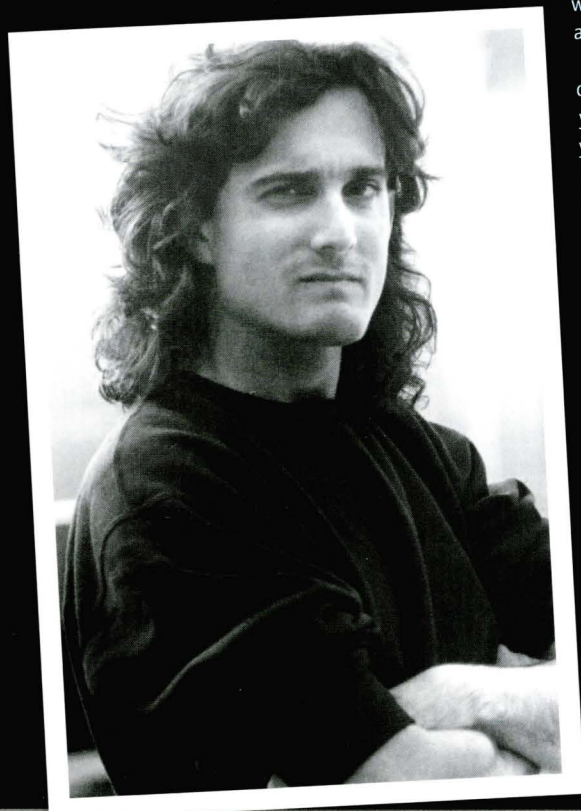
with a single point mike – it's accurate. So when we record a violin, it sounds like a violin.

"I'm tired of music magazines telling me the sound is not important, that it's really about the music. Well, you know something... it's really about the sound. Music is nothing but the organisation of sound. If I want to pick up a score and read the notes in my head I can, but the beauty of high-end recording is the tonality. If a guy's playing a £2m Stradivarius in the Royal Phil, you don't want it to sound like he bought it in a hardware store. So, if you can't capture the tonality of the orchestra, you miss the soul and the poetry of the music.

"We have two standards – if you went to the Royal Albert Hall and the London Symphony Orchestra sounded like some recordings, you'd pick up your chairs and throw them at the musicians. You'd boo 'em off the stage! But for some reason, it's considered acceptable to have recordings that sound atrocious. I'm simply saying we should have the same standard in the high-end recording world as we do in the live concert halls.

"We live in a world where people don't listen, and most people don't have good equipment. It's like going to good restaurants – you have to develop a palette. We've been eating canned peas so long that we've forgotten what fresh ones taste like. CD is inferior to vinyl, but SACD and DVD-Audio, done correctly with good DACs, can sound phenomenal. In the future, stereo is going to sound like mono does to us now. People will have multiple speakers that will be EQ-ed in their home – they'll be in a virtual concert hall." **HFC**

Dave Oliver



"We should have the same standard in the high-end recording world as we do in the live concert halls."

ESSENTIAL CHESKY SACD RECORDINGS

**1. David Chesky
 Area 31**

Hispanic rhythms, jazz phrasing and European orchestral traditions combine in an evocative smelting of Chesky's musical passions.



**2. McCoy Tyner Quartet
 New York Reunion**

Acoustic jazz has long been recorded in intimate spaces, but this recording by John Coltrane's one-time pianist puts the listener in the room.



**3. Marta Gomez
 Cantos De Agua Dulce**

The rich, expressive voice of this Colombian singer-songwriter is beautifully captured, and her band sound fabulous, too.



WIN! FABULOUS DALI HELICON 400 SPEAKERS WORTH OVER £3,000!



This month's prize is rather special. We're giving away a unique pair of Dali Helicon 400 loudspeakers, as featured last month's special *The Collection* edition of *Hi-Fi Choice*. These superb speakers from the Danish specialist are a special one-off and are not available to order. They feature a very special custom paint job – a luxury high-gloss black piano lacquer which makes this the only pair of its kind in the world.

The Helicon 400 is beautifully crafted and fashionably slim, with extensive scalloping to the rear, coupled with a sturdy, chamfered plinth. The unusual 'two-and-two-halves-way' configuration boasts four drivers, including a superb ribbon tweeter for sweet, smooth treble. Bass and midrange are provided by two substantial 125mm

cones that extend down to 32Hz, delivering deep and powerful bass. The speakers offer superbly spacious imaging straight from the box, with excellent high frequency detail and involving musicality. For your chance to win this limited edition pair, simply correctly answer the question below. The lucky winner will be drawn at random.

CONGRATULATIONS...

...to our last winner, Paul Joseph of Orpington in Kent, who wins a stunning Micromega Minium CD player, tuner and amp worth £1,500!

QUESTION:

What makes this pair of speakers a one-off?

- A:** The reflex ports also act as a special hamster run
- B:** They're blessed by Pope Benedict XVI
- C:** The luxury high-gloss black piano lacquer

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: The reflex ports also acts as a special hamster run, then text HFC COMP1 A to 83070.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Employees of Future Publishing (including freelancers) and their relatives and any agents involved are ineligible to enter. The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. Prizes cannot be exchanged for cash. Closing date for entries is 19 October 2005. The entries will be judged after the closing date and the winners will be notified by telephone within ten days of that date. Prizes will be sent out within 28 days of notification by the companies involved, not Hi-Fi Choice or Future Publishing. Entering costs – BY TEXT: 1x 50p (including VAT) for each entry plus your usual text message cost. This service is available to T-Mobile, Orange, Vodafone and O2 customers only. BY PHONELINE: Each call costs 50p per minute and last approximately 90 seconds. Please remember to get permission from the person who pays the bill before you enter. No purchase necessary. Alternatively, please send your name, address and telephone number with the correct answer to: Hi-Fi Choice, Future Publishing, 99 Baker Street, London W1U 6FP. If you have any problems making your call or sending your text, please contact the service provider. Tel: 0871 434 6460. Email: help@ukcustomersupport.com

TRUST YOUR SENSES



IKON 6

Have you ever heard a blade of grass crying out in fear of the oncoming mower, begging for a drop of water or a nurturing spread of fertilizer? To discover a world of details, we recommend that you hone your hearing by auditioning a pair of IKON 6 at your nearest DALI Embassy.

*"We've yet to come across a rival that can match the IKON 6's combination of full bodied midrange, treble sparkle and crisp timing."
"Verdict: The IKON 6's are great speakers."*

What Hi-Fi | September 2005

"Conclusion: A loudspeaker of exceptional resolve for the money, the IKON 6 will show what has been recorded in exquisite detail and with pin-sharp precision."

Alvin Gold | Hi-Fi Choice | September 2005



FEATURES

-  Wide Dispersion
-  3D Audio
-  Low Resonance Cabinets
-  Time Coherence
-  Hand Crafted
-  Amplifier Optimised

[5.1 SURROUND AVAILABLE]

IN ADMIRATION OF MUSIC



www.dali.dk

RYAN ADAMS

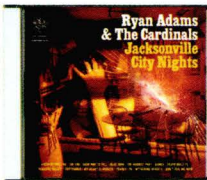
Jacksonville City Nights

Lost Highway

Music: In his solo career, Ryan Adams has gone out of his way to escape the 'alt-country' tag which his band Whiskeytown came to define.

Now with *Jacksonville City Nights*, his second of three planned solo releases in 2005, he's finally reverted to a full-on country sound with glorious results. It's an album over which the ghost of Gram Parsons clearly presides, but you can also hear the powerful influence of such country stalwarts as Steve Earle and Townes Van Zandt. Add in elements of blues, rockabilly and folk plus a lovely, bruised-and-battered duet with Norah Jones, and you have one of the most satisfying roots releases of the year. ★★★★★

Sound: Great ensemble playing, lots of aching pedal steel and a superb production that's polished but without hiding some delightfully rough edges. This might not be the sort of recording that everyone will use as a hi-fi demo disc, but the production is deft enough to exploit the nature of the band's performance perfectly. ★★★★★ NW



Music: A major SACD project, this four-disc box set covers all seven symphonies, but none of the shorter pieces often included in recorded Sibelius symphonic cycles. The predominantly bleak works are redolent of the icy beauty of the composer's homeland. His music was increasingly at odds with developments in classical music elsewhere, which was becoming dominated by the more astringent, less tonally centred music of Schoenberg and Stravinsky. Sibelius frequently conducted the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra, which brings an idiomatic serenity and poise to this music. ★★★★★

Sound: Recorded in the Gothenburg Konserthuset, the first and second symphonies are recorded live. This project is well served in its SACD sound, which has a radiance and beauty that draws in the listener in a way that the straight CD layer cannot. ★★★★★ AG

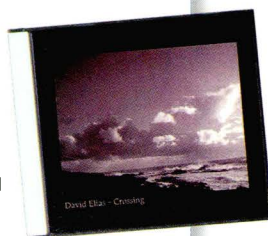
DAVID ELIAS

Crossing

SACD (stereo/multichannel SACD plus stereo CD layer)

Sketti Sandwich Productions

Music: This independent release is the second direct to DSD recording from US folkster David Elias. This ain't new folk but a folk album in the, by now, almost traditional west coast style, with a warm, laid back sound that is almost cossetting. Elias' band features players too numerous to mention playing all manner of acoustic guitars and mandolins, double bass, drums, percussion



ChoiceCuts



This month's varied musical morsels

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



AUDIOPHILE VINYL

NINA SIMONE

And Piano!

RCA/Speakers Corner
180g vinyl

Music: This 1969 solo outing from one of the most inventive and unusual female characters in jazz is hard hitting, despite normally mild-mannered standards as *Everyone's Gone to the Moon*, *The Human Touch* and *I Get Along Without You Very Well*. Bernstein's *Who Am I* was the source of the vocal sample in Kruder and Dorfmeister's track of the same title. On here, it is a rather more serious and soul searching tune that reflects the mood of the artist and much of this album. There are some less successful interpretations as well but also several fine tunes including *Nobody's Fault But Mine* where Simone's naked honesty is truly piercing. ★★★
Sound: This fine and totally silent pressing has a vivid sound that reveals both voice and piano in stark relief. It's a very clean, straight forward recording that Speakers Corner has reproduced to great effect. ★★★★★ JK

ABBEY LINCOLN

Straight Ahead

Candid/Pure Pleasure
180g vinyl

Music: Taken from the same label that unearthed the stunning Newport Rebels, this 1961 recording features many of the best



COMPACT DISC & VINYL



SMALL FACES

Small Faces

Immediate

Music: it's amazing to think that this debut album is 38 years old – especially as its pure pop sensibilities still shine through. Songs like the showbiz gripe *Talk To You*, the touching *Feeling Lonely* and the rocking (*Tell Me*) *Have You Ever Seen Me* show why this band influenced everyone from Blur to Paul Weller to the Sex Pistols. The soulful *Things Are Going To Get Better*, the spaced-out *Green Circles* and the brassy blue-eyed ska workout *Eddie's Dreaming* show the band's breadth – they demonstrate too why the albums of Steve Marriott's lads, while being specifically from the 1960s, are also timeless. ★★★★★
Sound: The sound quality here is surprisingly good considering that the boys were then busy discovering the dubious joys of *Turkish* cigarettes. Crisp as a new pack of Rizlas. ★★★ PS

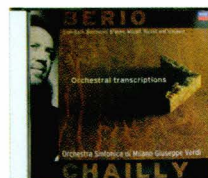


THE AMORPHOUS ANDROGYNOUS

Alice In Ultraland

EMI Harvest

Music: Amazingly, this is actually the Future Sound Of London's seventh album and what a weird one it is. Three years ago, Gary Cobain left Brian Dougans to his machines and went on a therapeutic voyage of discovery to India. And boy does it show here. The album is full of sitars and tambouras in a kitsch 1960s style with plenty of backwards guitars and phasing, but little or no actual songs. The album takes a turn for the better on *The Prophet* when it gets all Sly Stone and funky but that doesn't last. Credit to them for resurrecting the EMI Harvest label, but Pink Floyd they're certainly not. ★★★
Sound: In over 70 minutes of sound, almost every type of instrument is beautifully presented. A brilliant hi-fi test disc, no less. ★★★★★ MP



LUCIANO BERIO

Transcriptions of Bach, Boccherini, Brahms, Mozart, Purcell and Schubert
Riccardo Chailly (conductor), Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano Giuseppe Verdi
Decca 476 2830

Music: Best known as a member of the classical avant garde in the early post WWII years, Luciano Berio did not completely turn his back on the past, instead constructing a conversation between old and new. This recording includes some of his best orchestrations and three world premieres. The musical language is kaleidoscopic: Bach's *Contrapunctus XIX* is reprised and deconstructed here by an intense and colourful orchestration. ★★★★★
Sound: Recorded in 2004, the excellent sound serves the intense nature of much of the music particularly well, the sound swelling cleanly through the louder passages without obscuring detail. ★★★★★ AG

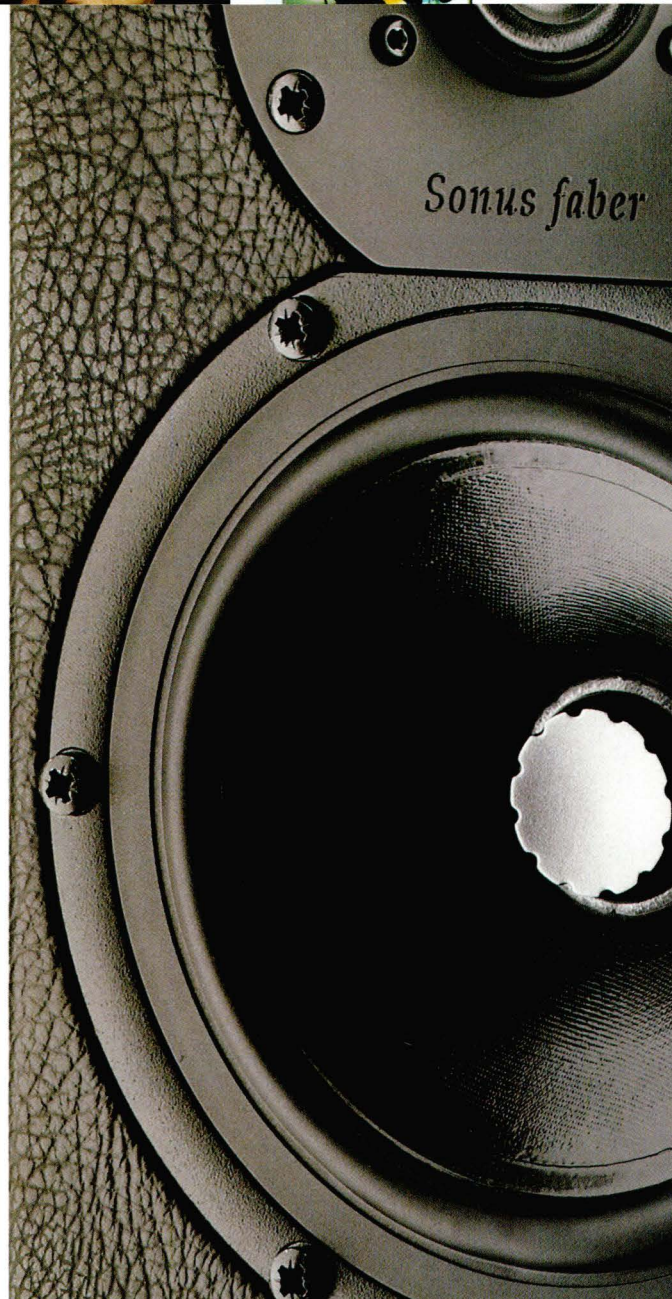


 *Sonus faber*®



Sonus Faber Grand Piano Domus

Sonus Faber Concertino Domus



For over two decades, Sonus faber have treated us to speakers so beautiful that they've revolutionised the entire industry. Where once there were only parallel sides, we now have curves. Where once we suffered poor veneers, we now savour finishes worthy of the finest furniture. From the exquisite Homage series, representing the ultimate in Sonus faber artistry, to the Cremona range,

TRUST YOUR SENSES



IKON 6

Have you ever heard a blade of grass crying out in fear of the oncoming mower, begging for a drop of water or a nurturing spread of fertilizer? To discover a world of details, we recommend that you hone your hearing by auditioning a pair of IKON 6 at your nearest DALI Embassy.

*"We've yet to come across a rival that can match the IKON 6's combination of full bodied midrange, treble sparkle and crisp timing."
"Verdict: The IKON 6's are great speakers."*

What Hi-Fi | September 2005

"Conclusion: A loudspeaker of exceptional resolve for the money, the IKON 6 will show what has been recorded in exquisite detail and with pin-sharp precision."

Alvin Gold | Hi-Fi Choice | September 2005



FEATURES

-  Wide Dispersion
-  3D Audio
-  Low Resonance Cabinets
-  Time Coherence
-  Hand Crafted
-  Amplifier Optimised

[5.1 SURROUND AVAILABLE]



IN ADMIRATION OF MUSIC



www.dali.dk

ChoiceCuts



This month's varied musical morsels

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



AUDIOPHILE VINYL

NINA SIMONE

And Piano!

RCA/Speakers Corner
180g vinyl

Music: This 1969 solo outing from one of the most inventive and unusual female characters in jazz is hard hitting, despite normally mild-mannered standards as *Everyone's Gone to the Moon*, *The Human Touch* and *I Get Along Without You Very Well*. Bernstein's *Who Am I* was the source of the vocal sample in

Kruder and Dorfmeister's track of the same title. On here, it is a rather more serious and soul searching tune that reflects the mood of the artist and much of this album. There are some less successful interpretations as well but also several fine tunes including *Nobody's Fault But Mine* where Simone's naked honesty is truly piercing. ★★

Sound: This fine and totally silent pressing has a vivid sound that reveals both voice and piano in stark relief. It's a very clean, straight forward recording that Speakers Corner has reproduced to great effect. ★★★★★ JK

ABBEY LINCOLN

Straight Ahead

Candid/Pure Pleasure
180g vinyl

Music: Taken from the same label that unearthed the stunning Newport Rebels, this 1961 recording features many of the best musicians in jazz at that time, with Eric Dolphy, Max Roach, Mal Waldron and Coleman Hawkins among them. Abbey Lincoln has a lot of the Billie

Holiday about her, but while her voice may not be as sweet, the ability to tap into raw emotion and a fearless attitude mark her out as a powerful character. Part of the movement that would become Black Power, she would fit in well with today's harder hitting rap MCs - Lil' Kim sounds almost sweet by comparison! ★★

Sound: Another fine Pure Pleasure pressing, this is open and the singing almost over exposed in its honesty. Hawkins' sax steals the show, but everything that went down at the Nola Penthouse Studios back in the day is loud and clear. ★★★★★ JK

These LPs are available from Vivante. ☎ 01293 822186 @ www.vivante.co.uk and Simply Vinyl: ☎ 020 8545 8580 @ www.simplyvinyl.com

COMPACT DISC & VINYL



SMALL FACES

Small Faces

Immediate

Music: it's amazing to think that this debut album is 38 years old - especially as its pure pop sensibilities still shine through. Songs like the showbiz gripe *Talk To You*, the touching *Feeling Lonely* and the rocking (*Tell Me*) *Have You Ever Seen Me* show why this band influenced everyone from Blur to Paul Weller to the Sex Pistols. The soulful *Things Are Going To Get Better*, the spaced-out *Green Circles* and the brassy blue-eyed ska workout *Eddie's Dreaming* show the band's breadth - they demonstrate too why the albums of Steve Marriott's lads, while being specifically from the 1960s, are also timeless. ★★★★★

Sound: The sound quality here is surprisingly good considering that the boys were then busy discovering the dubious joys of *Turkish* cigarettes. Crisp as a new pack of Rizlas. ★★★★★ PS



THE AMORPHOUS ANDROGYNOUS

Alice In Ultraland

EMI Harvest

Music: Amazingly, this is actually the Future Sound Of London's seventh album and what a weird one it is. Three years ago, Gary Cobain left Brian Dougans to his machines and went on a therapeutic voyage of discovery to India. And boy does it show here. The album is full of sitars and tambouras in a kitsch 1960s style with plenty of backwards guitars and phasing, but little or no actual songs. The album takes a turn for the better on *The Prophet* when it gets all Sly Stone and funky but that doesn't last. Credit to them for resurrecting the EMI Harvest label, but Pink Floyd they're certainly not. ★★

Sound: In over 70 minutes of sound, almost every type of instrument is beautifully presented. A brilliant hi-fi test disc, no less. ★★★★★ MP



LUCIANO BERIO

Transcriptions of Bach, Boccherini, Brahms, Mozart, Purcell and Schubert
Riccardo Chailly (conductor), Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano Giuseppe Verdi
Decca 476 2830

Music: Best known as a member of the classical avant garde in the early post WWII years, Luciano Berio did not completely turn his back on the past, instead constructing a conversation between old and new. This recording includes some of his best orchestrations and three world premieres. The musical language is kaleidoscopic: Bach's *Contrapunctus XIX* is reprised and deconstructed here by an intense and colourful orchestration. ★★★★★

Sound: Recorded in 2004, the excellent sound serves the intense nature of much of the music particularly well, the sound swelling cleanly through the louder passages without obscuring detail. ★★★★★ AG



ROLLING STONES

A Bigger Bang

Virgin

Music: They're still the greatest live rock'n'roll band in the world but the odds against the Rolling Stones ever making another decent studio album were long. Indeed, as the years passed since 1997's lacklustre *Bridges To Babylon*, many suspected they wouldn't even try and they'd simply settle for milking their enviable back catalogue in sold-out stadiums around the globe until they dropped. Instead, they've gone and made their most potent, visceral and satisfying album since 1978's *Some Girls*. There's hardly a dud among the 16 songs, Jagger's singing is less mannered than it's been for ages and Keith cranks out the riffs as if it were still 1972. One of the great comebacks of our time. ★★★★★

Sound: No messing with modernity, they've simply cranked up the guitars and gone for that earthy, primal sound that made *Let It Bleed* and *Sticky Fingers* so damn great. ★★★★★ NW



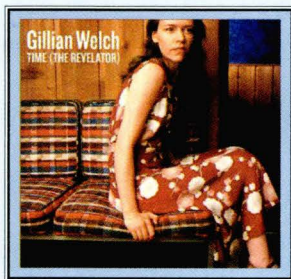
BEETHOVEN

String Quartets Op. 127, 132

Hagen Quartett
DGG 00289 477 5705

Music: The works in this disc were commissioned by Prince Galitzin from St Petersburg, who famously introduced himself in a letter simply addressed to "A Monsieur Louis van Beethoven, Viennes". These string quartets are among the most forward looking, and also least accessible in Beethoven's canon, but they are masterpieces that repay repeated listening. ★★★★★

Sound: The performances are striking - there is a youthful precision and dynamism about the playing that makes four players sound as though they are one. This is a very literal and disciplined interpretation, and in the content of the music, the recording works well thanks to its open, vivid quality. ★★★★★ AG



THIS MONTH'S CLASSIC HI-FI TEST DISC "An honest, rather than luxurious, recording."

GILLIAN WELCH Time (The Revelator) WEA

Music: Welch and long-time collaborator David Rawlings play music that is essentially from a bygone age. The duo play country and bluegrass for the most part, but bring it up to date lyrically. They also imbue the slower tracks with no little emotional power and deliver musical quality that reminds one of Joni Mitchell at her best (*Blue, Hejira*). She may have contributed old-timey tunes to the *O Brother Where Art Thou* original soundtrack (a classic hi-fi test disc

in its own right) but that's only one side of the coin; the other side is darker and deeper by far. ★★★★★
Sound: Recorded in a variety of situations, occasionally live with an audience but usually live in the studio and largely free of overdubs, this is an honest, rather than luxurious, recording. There are more obviously audiophile discs around, but there are few with this standard of musical content, too. ★★★★★ JK



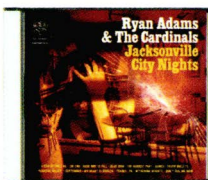
RYAN ADAMS
Jacksonville City Nights

Lost Highway

Music: In his solo career, Ryan Adams has gone out of his way to escape the 'alt-country' tag which his band Whiskeytown came to define.

Now with *Jacksonville City Nights*, his second of three planned solo releases in 2005, he's finally reverted to a full-on country sound with glorious results. It's an album over which the ghost of Gram Parsons clearly presides, but you can also hear the powerful influence of such country stalwarts as Steve Earle and Townes Van Zandt. Add in elements of blues, rockabilly and folk plus a lovely, bruised-and-battered duet with Norah Jones, and you have one of the most satisfying roots releases of the year. ★★★★★

Sound: Great ensemble playing, lots of aching pedal steel and a superb production that's polished but without hiding some delightfully rough edges. This might not be the sort of recording that everyone will use as a hi-fi demo disc, but the production is deft enough to exploit the nature of the band's performance perfectly. ★★★★★ NW

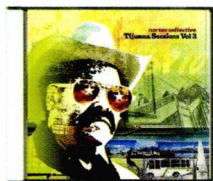


BIG STAR
In Space

Rykodisc

Music: One of the most legendary, but little-heard guitar bands of the 1970s has reunited (well, half of them anyway) to show their army of imitators how it's done. Big Star main man Alex Chilton has managed to revive that original fresh-faced but jaded magic that made the original band so special. It's a rock pop masterpiece that amazingly stands comparison with their first round of untouchable long players. *Dony's* ragged guitar chimes and *Lady Sweet's* bitter little minor chord change are highlights, but all of it reveals a long overdue return. ★★★★★

Sound: Though recorded primitively, with few overdubs and plenty of fluffed notes, the sound is warm and clear, with an earthy atmosphere that is entirely appropriate. ★★★ DO



NORTEC COLLECTIVE
Tijuana Sessions Vol 3

Nacional

Music: Tijuana's Nortec Collective blends electronic beats with Latin rhythms, strident horns and *vaquero* attitude. The band themselves describe it as a mix of all things techno and *norteño*, hence the name, and there's plenty of playful reinvention of electronic club styles and traditional live performance. The *guiro* and accordion combined with chill-out beats on *Olvidela Compa* are a particular delight, as are the full-on brass blazings emerging from the torpid rhythm of *Danny Del Sur*. ★★★★★

Sound: Blending acoustic instruments with electronics isn't always an easy feat and the Nortec Collective doesn't quite pull it off, with much of the album sounding unnecessarily compressed and shut in. ★★★ DO

DVD-AUDIO & SACD

SIBELIUS

The Symphonies

Neeme Jarvi (conductor), Gothenburg Symphony Orch.

SACD (stereo/multichannel SACD plus stereo CD layer)

DGG 00289 427 5688

Music: A major SACD project, this four-disc box set covers all seven symphonies, but none of the shorter pieces often included in recorded Sibelius symphonic cycles. The predominantly bleak works are redolent of the icy beauty of the composer's homeland. His music was increasingly at odds with developments in classical music elsewhere, which was becoming dominated by the more astringent, less tonally centred music of Schoenberg and Stravinsky. Sibelius frequently conducted the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra, which brings an idiomatic serenity and poise to this music. ★★★★★

Sound: Recorded in the Gothenburg Konserthuset, the first and second symphonies are recorded live. This project is well served in its SACD sound, which has a radiance and beauty that draws in the listener in a way that the straight CD layer cannot. ★★★★★ AG



DAVID ELIAS

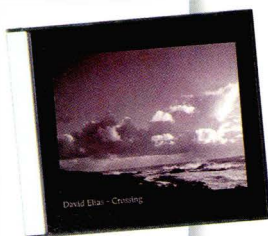
Crossing

SACD (stereo/multichannel SACD plus stereo CD layer)

Sketti Sandwich Productions

Music: This independent release is the second direct to DSD recording from US folkster David Elias. This ain't new folk but a folk album in the, by now, almost traditional west coast style, with a warm, laid back sound that is almost cossetting. Elias' band features players too numerous to mention playing all manner of acoustic guitars and mandolins, double bass, drums, percussion and organ. This mini orchestra drums up a rich, sonorous back drop to Elias' songs of transition to a higher place. This could well have been called *Zen and the Art of Ascendance via Audiophile Recording*, but that's a bit long-winded. While a little honeyed for some, others will find this a captivating disc full of heart and honesty. ★★★

Sound: Recorded primarily for surround reproduction using Sony's Sonoma workstation, this is a remarkably natural and relaxed-sounding disc in which the mostly acoustic instruments and voice are reproduced with a warmth that is almost super analogue in its smoothness. ★★★★★ JK



DAVID CHESKY

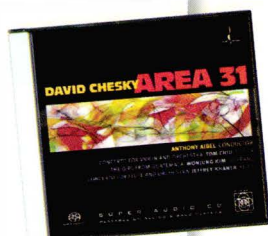
Area 31

SACD (stereo/multichannel SACD plus stereo CD layer)

Chesky

Music: As a musician and composer, David Chesky has long shown an interest in both jazz and classical idioms, flirting with Latin rhythms in both his playing and writing. Here he combines these three passions in an intense, avant garde merging of styles and attitudes. It's actually a collection of pieces, rather than a suite, including two orchestral concertos but all are linked by his interest in Hispanic rhythms, whether it be the Cuban *danzón* stylings of the violin concerto or the flamenco handclaps of the soprano song *The Girl From Guatemala* and the Brazilian rhythms of the Flute Concerto. Not always an easy listen, but its many layers build up over time and deliver a powerful punch. ★★★★★

Sound: Chesky as a label doesn't do basic, and everything about this record sounds sumptuous, even in basic CD mode. The SACD layer opens up the sound stage (technically 4.0 since there's no subwoofer and a phantom centre) and broadens the palette to create an extremely immersive sound. ★★★★★ DO



 *Sonus faber*®

Sonus Faber Grand Piano Domus



For over two decades, Sonus faber have treated us to speakers so beautiful that they've revolutionised the entire industry. Where once there were only parallel sides, we now have curves. Where once we suffered poor veneers, we now savour finishes worthy of the finest furniture. From the exquisite Homage series, representing the ultimate in Sonus faber artistry, to the Cremona range, offering the pleasure of Homage for a wider audience, Sonus faber has addressed the needs of the majority of music and cinema lovers. Now, the audience is wider still.

Imagine an affordable range of loudspeakers able to join the Homage and Cremona families. Imagine a full selection, from centre channel to main and surround speakers to subwoofer, floorstanding or shelf mounting, a complete selection of stands, with the unmistakable lute shape, leather details, fine woods, and - above all - deliriously musical, truly sublime sound quality. Imagine no more: Sonus faber offers you Domus.

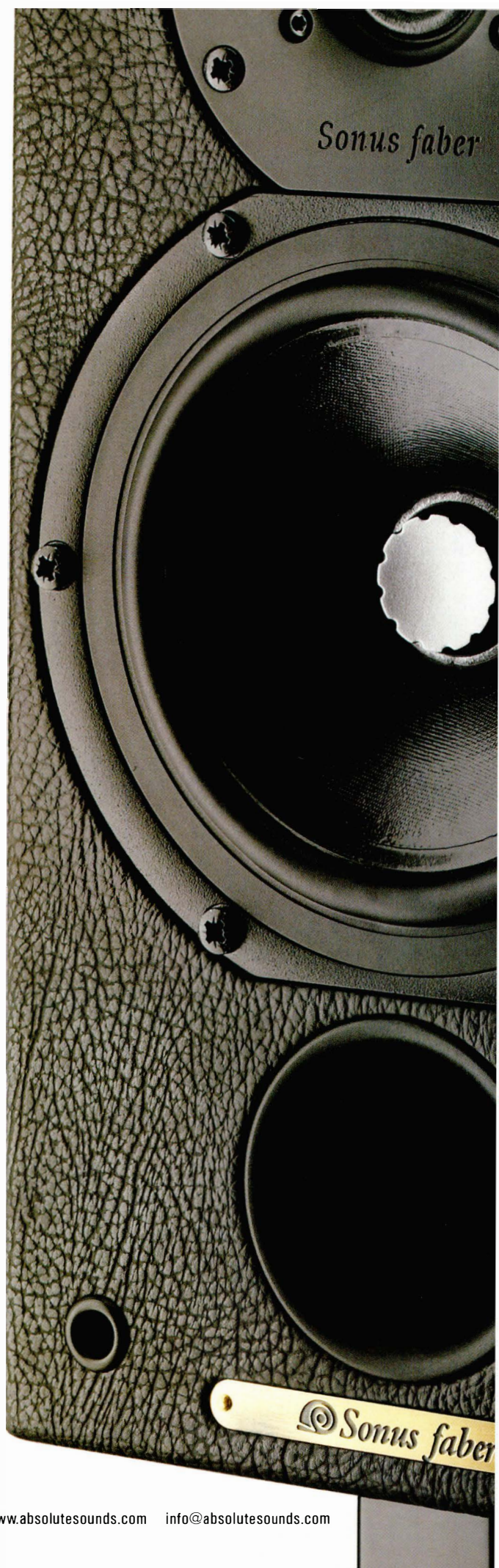
Sonus Faber Gravis, Center Domus



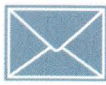
absolutesounds ltd.

58 Durham Road, London SW20 0TW T: +44 (0)20 89 71 39 09 F: +44 (0)20 88 79 79 62 www.absolutesounds.com info@absolutesounds.com

Sonus Faber Concertino Domus

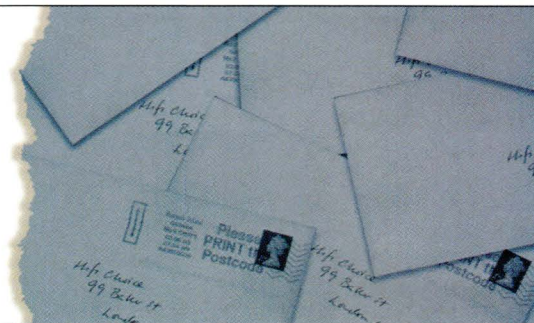


ChoiceMail



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

IN THE DOCK

Recently, I was horrified to notice a strange iPod-related contraption in the window of a Bose store. Knowing of the iPod's popularity, I could see why some consumers might think this idea is perfect for them. Imagine my horror then when I saw the 'docks' on the cover of a mainstream home cinema and hi-fi magazine. I hope *Hi-Fi Choice* doesn't follow suit.

Chris Levy via email

HFC iPod docks suit a particular kind of consumer, but are unlikely to proliferate in the pages of *Hi-Fi Choice*. However, many hi-fi brands are moved by the commercial potential of the iPod dock concept – Eclipse, Harman Kardon, JBL, Monitor Audio, Onkyo and Tivoli are all respected hi-fi companies with iPod-chummy devices on the market or set for launch soon.



WIN KIMBER TIMBRE INTERCONNECTS!

The author of our letter of the month receives a free pair of 0.5m-long Kimber Timbre interconnects worth £72, featuring a trio of hyper-pure copper conductors and Teflon insulation. So get writing! (250 words max please...)



Above: Krell KAV-400xi

I'M A BELIEVER

Today, for the first time, I heard a night and day difference between two speaker cables. I have a Krell KAV-400xi amp and get great bass, but only in the lower frequencies and it's hardly well controlled. I've been trying various cables for a while, recently trying the Nordost Red Dawn speaker stuff. It's a lot more expensive than my Transparent Audio wire, (£775 compared to £95), but the difference was immediate. Expensive, but immediate.

I played discs that I know boom in my room and got better results with all of them. This was the first proof for me about cables making a difference. Will I buy them? I don't know – £775 seems a lot for a speaker cable, but maybe someday.

Ibug via email

HFC It's great when you discover an ancillary component that really helps with a problem area of sound. Whether in your case you need to spend quite as much to eradicate your problem is questionable, although sometimes we forget that if the improvement in sound was justified in a more expensive CD player, why isn't it justified in a more expensive cable? However, it might be worth trying the excellent Townshend Isolda DCT speaker cable (£50 per metre) or the Electrofluidics 20/20 (£45). These are both fine wires that perform well with bass for a more earthly price.

FIGHT CLUB

I'm amazed at last month's provocative letter, *Fighting Talk* (HFC 272). The author commented that CDs sound better than turntables because of vinyl's clicks and pops – what clicks and pops? I have albums that sound better on my £450 turntable than

“It's a lot more expensive than my Transparent Audio wire, but the difference was immediate.”

my £2,300 CD player. He then said stands don't make a difference – what? My system sits on ball-bearing isolation and there is a huge difference when not isolated. Surely this is obvious to anyone?

And cables don't make a difference? Are we to say that cheap throwaway interconnects are the best there is and all replacement cables make no difference? I recently bought new BAT pre and power valve amps and borrowed a £1,300 pair of leads. I was so astounded by the improvement that I bought them. By the logic of the writer, £10 cables sound the same as £1,000 ones and that is rubbish. The writer needs to seek help with a serious hearing problem.

Paul via email

HFC The gloves are off. Battle lines are drawn. It's clear that people are divided about 'accessories' like cables and furniture. What do you think? Can a cable ever make that big a difference? What about placing your products on dedicated shelves and stands? Are we all being duped, or is there really something going on? And last, but by no means least, are turntables simply a romantic relic from a bygone age, or do they still really hold the key to the best possible hi-fi sound? You tell us! ▶



Above: CD quality... pot luck?

DODGY DISCS

A hi-fi is only ever as good as the quality of the recordings that are played on it. This is why, having recently spent over £2,500 on a new Cyrus/Roksan combination, I am becoming increasingly disappointed when listening to the majority of my CD collection. I find myself reaching for the recordings with the greatest production to show off my system at its finest.

The disparity between discs is so great it has become pot luck when purchasing CDs. I would love a list of exceptional-quality recordings from different musical categories – perhaps (with readers help) you could compile such a list. I feel this would also open up different styles of music to some of us who may wish to expand our musical tastes.

Paul Lewis West Midlands

HFC We know how you feel, Paul. Many a fine album has been mulled in the studio by a ham-fisted engineer. In fact, we ran a feature on exceptional hi-fi CDs back in 2003 – *The Top 40 Best Hi-Fi Test Discs Ever!* appeared in *HFC 243*, and we hope to create a bigger, more comprehensive free supplement to give away in two or three issue's time. Look out for it!

Playing discs purely for their high production values is inherently dangerous and the stuff of hi-fi shows, though. Be warned – you could end up playing Celine Dion, Jennifer Warnes and nothing else. We reckon you might need to learn to absorb the duff engineering and enjoy the music...

DAC'S THE WAY

I'm thinking of upgrading. I use a Roksan Kandy DVD player with an external Musical Fidelity X-DAC^{v2} that I'm driving through a Musical Fidelity A-308 amp. Should I get a used MF CD-308 player to match, or an MF Tri-Vista DAC? Any advice appreciated.

Dave Fowler via email

HFC For ultimate sound quality we'd have to suggest using the Musical Fidelity CD-308 over a DVD player with an external DAC. However, modern DACs are producing great results these

"I would love a list of exceptional quality recordings from different musical categories."

days. Our best advice is to try one on home demonstration, if possible. Have a look at the Stello DA220 (*HFC 271*) as well as the Tri-Vista.

FULL SERVICE HISTORY?

I have the Thorens TD-126 II turntable (rated as one of the best in its day), fitted with an Audio Technica AT-F5/OCC moving coil cartridge. The set up is driven by a NAD 370 into Tannoy TD8s. The turntable really needs a service, and this will be its first as I'm a believer in 'if ain't broke, don't fix it'. Since I've had it so long, finding a dealer who can genuinely do a service seems to be quite difficult in Staffs. Can you help?

Also, if the service does bring bad news, how do you think my 25-year old deck compares to modern turntables – am I missing out do you think?

Les Sims via email

HFC Forgive the pun, but twenty five years without a service could be some kind of record, Les. Finding a repair shop in your county may be tricky, such is the decline of the specialist repairer. You may have to pack it well and send it off to a national specialist. Give Technical and General a try on 01892 654534. T&G's in Crowborough and if it can't fix it, might know a man who can. If we had a pound for every, "Does my old hi-fi sound as good as the latest gear?" query we'd be buying Chelsea FC. The best person to judge is you – especially in your case, after 25 years listening. Treat yourself to a day out auditioning decks like the Pro-Ject RPM 9 X (£1,250 with arm/cartridge) and the Michell Tecnodec (£767 with arm) – it might enlighten you.

HI-FI CHOICE
SUBS HOTLINE 0870 444 8650

when you subscribe to **HI-FI CHOICE**

HI-FI CHOICE [search] [Whole Site] [log]

HOME | NEWS | REVIEWS | BUYERS GUIDE | FORUM | LINKS | THIS ISSUE | CONTACT US

IN THIS ISSUE

FANTASTIC NEW ISSUE OUT NOW!
Fresh off the press, the August issue of **Hi-Fi Choice** is packed full of exclusive in-depth tests of the latest high-performance kit, including...

SUBSCRIPTION OFFER
August 2004 Issue 256
In this issue Subscribe now

The world's most rigorous group test of amplifier amps, £200 to £2,500 - six critical combos from Aram, Esoteric, NAD, Premier, Quad and Roksan
Digital versus analogue: fighting players from Vaco (CD) and Clearaudio (vinyl) demonstrate the state of the art...

Get 13 issues of Hi-Fi Choice delivered directly to your home

@ ONLINE FORUM

A few choice comments plucked from our online forum. Join in the fun at www.hifichoice.co.uk

I borrowed my eldest daughter's iPod for a bit and, notwithstanding any issues about sound quality, I found the supplied headphones very uncomfortable. Can the sound really be improved by buying better cans? Is there something specific for the iPod..?

Strat Man

...A hammer?

KingsXfan

...Sennheiser has in-ear phones for the iPod or try the Etymotic Research 6i (£100). For best results, however, full-size cans such as Grado's SR-60 will empower your iPod.

HFC

Ikea has a dedicated hi-fi rack called Corras costing just £19. I would like to see this tested in *Essentials*. Quite a few of us on *The Forum* use them.

CJRoss

Can I use my TV aerial for DAB radio using an aerial splitter..?

Fatsculler

...Yes you can. However, you may need to boost the signal. Depends on how good reception is in your area.

Paul H

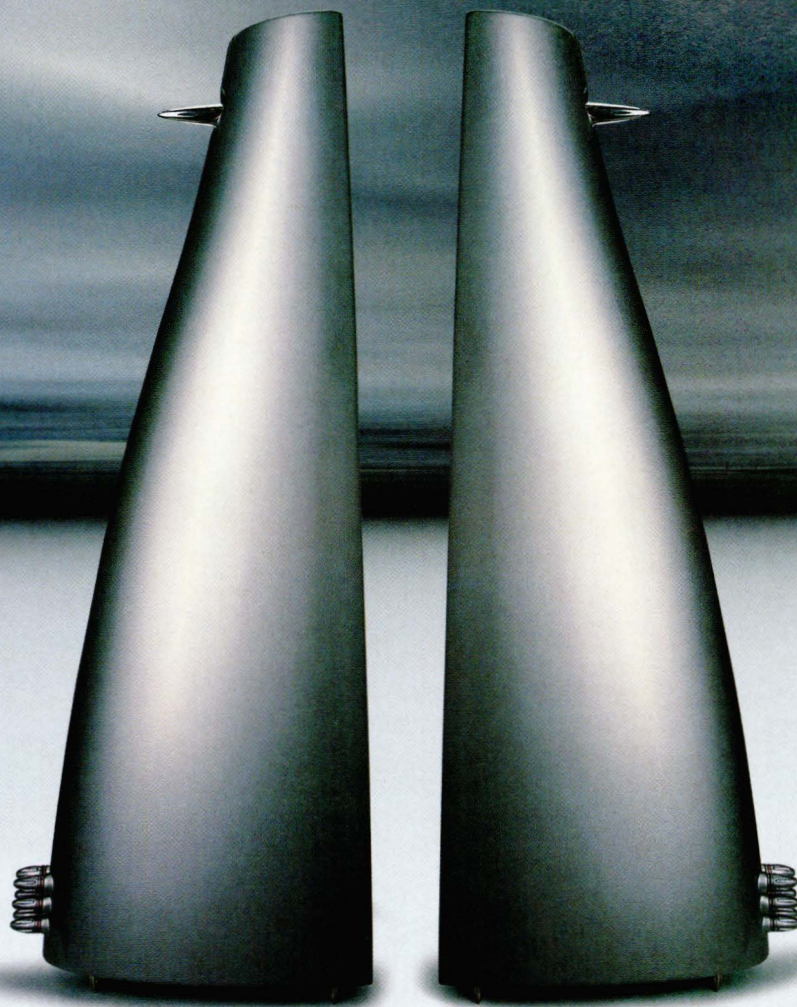
Is there a website where you can find out what the DAB reception is in your area..?

locky

...Sure, have a look at www.bbc.co.uk/digitalradio

Effem

Performance



Fire your imagination.

Performance is the result of a three-year research and development programme culminating in a number of major technological advancements. Recreating each and every musical nuance with incredible emotion, Mordaunt-Short's state-of-the-art loudspeaker range brings you as close as possible to the wonder of the original performance.



"This loudspeaker delivers a level of detail and transparency that is virtually unprecedented in a moving coil design... surely a classic in the making"

Hi-Fi Choice, March 2005



"Truly redefines the standard at this class... Superb value for money; a modern classic"

Hi-Fi World, April 2005

MORDAUNT-SHORT

www.mordaunt-short.com



BLADELIUS GONDUL LEVEL 3 UNIVERSAL DISC PLAYER | INNERSOUND DPR-500 REFERENCE
POWER AMPLIFIER | FOCAL-JMLAB MICRO UTOPIA BE LOUDSPEAKERS | £24,044

Impulse power

Sometimes when you see something you want so badly, you have to have it... even though it breaks the rules

Some *Beautiful Systems* come fully formed, a recognised alliance of talents held together by a nuclear bond it would be foolish to break. These are wheeled over to us, with great care, by the very specialist high-end dealers who used their enormous experience and expertise to conceive them.

Some *Beautiful Systems*, on the other hand, are constructed piece by auditioned piece and in a strict order. We've all built systems this way: start with a reputable source, add suitable amplification and speakers, fine-tune with deft choice of cables. With a little time and patience, it's hard to go wrong. And, with a light dusting of luck, you'll match the specialist dealers at their own game, concocting a synergistic box of delights that would be hard to better.

Just occasionally, though, it's good to live a little more dangerously and let logic be ruled by lust. The risks of blowing it are greater but so, potentially, are the rewards if you nail it. It involves kicking convention casually into touch and, well, as you might guess, having an awful lot of what you fancy. In our experience, the thought process starts when you see/hear/fondle a single component so utterly gorgeous, fascinating and desirable that you know, over the course of the next few nanoseconds, that you simply have to own it. It's bound to be expensive and impossibly demanding of its fellow components.

This is faintly ridiculous. You've given in to a massive impulse with absolutely no thought to context, balance, how you're going to afford the rest of the system or, indeed, what that system might be. But here's the good news: you now own, in exchange for £3,799 (£4,678 if you go for the dedicated stands), a pair of Micro Utopia Be speakers from France's Focal-JMLab. By reputation, these are

probably the best standmount speakers in the world. Don't feel guilty... monks have succumbed for less.

It would be possible to derive satisfaction from spending hours just looking at these speakers and pondering the meticulous methodology behind their design. Jacques Mahul (the JM in JMLab) expresses the lofty ambitions he has for his company through its flagship range of speakers, of which the Micro Utopia Be is the junior member. The Micro is as far away from your average compact two-driver box as Neptune is from Neasden – a fusion of advanced build, exotic materials and ingenious solutions that only serious investment can achieve and a substantial amount of money purchase.

TO BE OR NOT TO BE

The 'Be' part of the deal refers to the ultra-thin beryllium foil from which the inverted dome of its tweeter is made. It immediately puts the Micro in the superleague when it comes to high frequency reproduction. No other metal can hold a candle to beryllium's rigidity for a given mass, which makes it almost ideal material in tweeterworld, where everyone loves pure pistonic behaviour and abhors – though in most cases can't avoid – resonance. The beryllium tweeter in the Micro gives a flat response for five octaves, according to Focal-JMLab, covering the range from 2kHz to 40kHz. But isn't diamond (as used in B&W's latest 800 Series range, for example) even better? In rigidity yes, but its necessarily higher mass means that it doesn't respond to a signal with quite the lightning alacrity of beryllium. The bass/mid driver in the Micro isn't quite what it first seems, either. Its so-called 'W-cone' is a sandwich of woven glass tissues on a foam core, which is

“By reputation, these are probably the best standmount speakers in the world. Don't feel guilty... monks have succumbed for less.”



Bladelius Gondul Level 3 universal disc player

£9,350

It plays everything, but perhaps the most impressive thing is the way it plays CDs – with absolute conviction and no coloration.



Innersound DPR-500 Reference power amplifier

£10,895

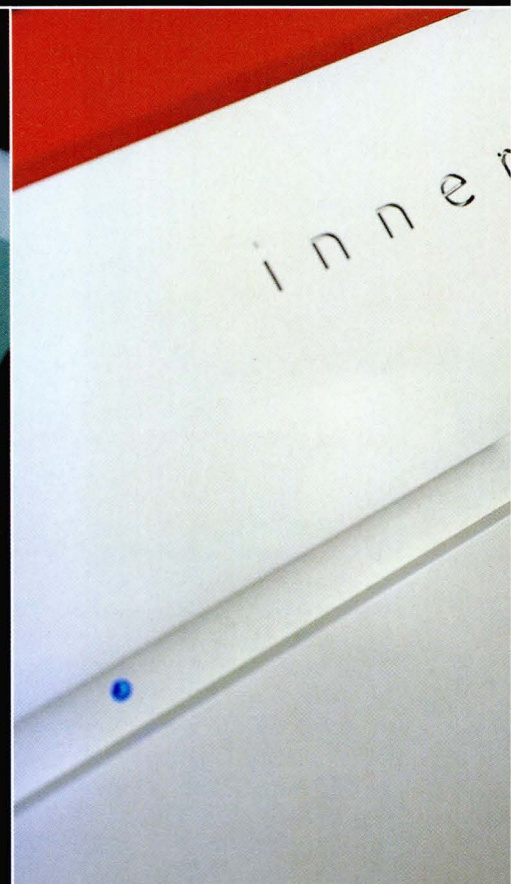
Not, perhaps, the biggest power amp ever to appear in *Beautiful Systems*, but certainly the heaviest and most powerful to date.



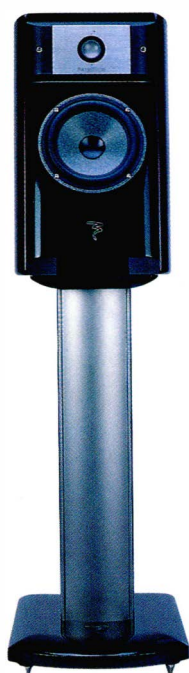
Focal-JMLab Micro Utopia Be loudspeaker

£3,799 per pair (stands £879)

Not just arguably the most revealing standmount speaker on the planet but almost certainly the fussiest. And here it does bass and dynamics, too!



□ said to have superior stiffness and more accurately controllable internal damping (depending on the thickness of the foam that varies across the area of the cone for optimum mechanical impedance matching). The curious petal-like configuration of its magnet assembly arises out of its multi-ferrite 'motor' design. Instead of using a single ring magnet, six small magnets are arranged around the voice coil with the aim of achieving better bonding with the pole piece, thus improving the linearity of flux. Focal-JMLab calls it Power Flower. Witty.



The weighty (17.5kg) cabinets are superbly constructed and finished. The basic structure incorporates individual enclosures for the tweeter and bass/mid drive unit, finished in a thoroughly macho high-gloss charcoal colour with curved, time-aligned baffles. The two driver enclosures are separated by a slot that delineates the gap between them and also serves as a reflex port for the lower one. Gorgeous veneered side panels balance the otherwise functional grey/silver aesthetics, but you won't be ashamed to pull these beefcake babies well away from the room boundaries, as Focal-JMLab recommends. There might be only one set of terminals round the back, but they're custom-made WBTs with locking collars and as good to use as they are to look at.

So you've gone and done it – bought these extraordinary boxes with their reputation for sensational transparency, warts 'n' all honesty and sublime sonic potential, but rather limited bass extension and dynamic expression. Conventional wisdom suggests that they should be used in a smallish room with electronics of exquisite quality that play to the design's strengths and accept their limitations. Possibly something involving valves.

INNERSOUND OUTTASIGHT

We say one audacious purchase deserves another. Indeed, we do want it all – the bass and the dynamics but without the hulking great cabinets of the larger models in the Utopia line-up. Can't be done? Say hello to the £10,895 Innersound DPR-500 Reference stereo power amplifier. There are really only four things you need to know about the heaviest amplifier I've ever humped up three flights of stairs. One, it's built in Boulder, Colorado by some of the most talented audio engineers in America, who draw even greater inspiration from the fresh air and stunning scenery. Two, its chassis is machined from 3/8ths inch thick aluminium billet, has no exposed external screws and has been specifically engineered to minimise the vibrations that can smear subtle musical detail. Three, DPR stands for Dynamic Power

Regulation, a proprietary power supply circuit design that allows the DPR-500 to deliver "unprecedented power, linearity and stability into demanding speaker loads". And four, that means 500 watts per channel into eight ohms, 950 watts into four ohms and unconditional stability into just 0.33 of an ohm. Just what the doctor ordered for bass-shy, dynamically reticent superstar standmount speakers.

There is, you'll be glad to hear, a matching preamp, but since we've embarked on a path dedicated to extracting maximum performance in all respects from the Micros, we've elected to feed the Innersound directly from the variable output of yet a third outrageous product – the Bladelius Gondul Level 3 universal disc player from Sweden. The Gondul (named after the Valkyrie goddess who was sent to earth to bring back the spirits of famous kings who fell in battle) plays all standard formats including CD, SACD, DVD-Audio, DVD-Video and MP3. Nothing too unusual there. The remarkable thing is that the Gondul has fully separate conversion for SACD, DVD-Audio and, indeed, all the other audio formats. It is fitted with no fewer than four selected 24-bit PCM 1704-k DACs from Burr-Brown, symmetrically configured in balanced mode. A large toroidal transformer sits at the heart of what



“Few combos that have passed through *Beautiful Systems* have told it like it is with quite the painful honesty of this one. The Bladelius multiformat disc spinner plays a crucial part here, of course.”

Bladelius describes as “a carefully designed power supply”. The player has an extremely high quality analogue volume control and caters for three digital inputs and three digital outputs.

Power is an underrated commodity. The Innersound power amp has enough to destroy the Micros. Therefore you could argue that at least 250 of the 500 watts available for each channel are wasted. But it doesn't work like that. It's the power behind the power that provides the magic, the fact that whatever the transient demands of the music, the amp has it covered, with muscle to spare. It's a phenomenon that can make small speakers sound like bigger speakers, good speakers sound like great speakers and the Micro Utopia Be sound, well, plain astonishing.

The beauty of this system is that it allows the Micro Be to do what it does best, arguably better than any rival, and sound phenomenally transparent with breathtakingly low levels of distortion and forensic levels of low-level resolution. But, at the same time, it imbues them with a sense of scale,

control and effortlessness that would be remarkable in a larger design. With less mighty amplification, this simply doesn't happen with these speakers.

CAN YOU HANDLE THE TRUTH?

What it most emphatically isn't is an easy listen. Few combos that have passed through *Beautiful Systems* have told it like it is with quite the painful honesty of this one. The Bladelius multiformat disc spinner plays a crucial part here, of course. In its unerring ability to be truthful and unearth detail right down to the inky black noise floor, it's a communicator on a par with the JMLabs. If a recording is less than masterfully produced you don't just know it, you know why. Imperfection is revealed just as starkly as genius; there's no veneer, no rose-tinted filter, no innate desire to butter things up. Sparkling excellence shines through undimmed, but then so do the rough edges.

That caveat dealt with, there's a huge amount to enjoy, not least the system's ability to project razor-sharp images into the room. Given a bit of space to breathe

(at least a metre from back and side walls, preferably more) soundscapes are well proportioned and as convincingly deep as they are wide. Musicians, singers and instruments can be located with pinpoint accuracy and, tonally, they sound nape-tinglingly real. A well recorded grand piano, in particular, has thrilling attack, harmonic richness and, yes, even lower octave power.

That's where the Innersound's sheer grip and grunt are most telling. Usually, the Micro Be's bass is considered to be a triumph of quality over quantity – fast, tuneful, well shaped and textured but lacking balls. Here, it retains those qualities but with enhanced weight and, I swear, extension. A better solution, for sure, than trying to rein in a fat, overblown bottom end.

Like we said at the start, the Focal-JMLab Micro Utopia Be may not be the most sensible foundation stone for a system. But let the sense of adventure and abandon that made you choose it in the first place take you all the way and you most certainly won't regret it. **HFC**

David Vivian



The colouration's in the finish



Not in the music



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

- 40 Krell Resolution 2 loudspeaker
- 44 Onkyo C-733 CD player and A-933 amplifier
- 48 Denon AVC-A11XV multichannel amplifier
- 50 KEF iQ3 and iQ9 loudspeakers
- 54 Primare CD21 CD player
- 57 Sony STR-DB798 multichannel receiver
- 58 Arcam FMJ C31 preamplifier
- 61 Epos ELS 303 loudspeaker
- 62 Cyrus CD6s CD player
- 65 Townshend Audio VSSS equipment support
- 66 Yamaha DSP-AX757SE multichannel amplifier
- 69 Pioneer DV-585A-S universal disc player



ULTIMATE GROUP TEST

INTEGRATED AMPLIFIERS £450-£1,200

- 73 Arcam DiVA A90
- 75 Exposure 3010 Integrated
- 77 Micromega A120
- 79 Monrio MC 207
- 81 Primare I21
- 83 Rotel RA-03



OUR RATINGS EXPLAINED

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

...nor an... we liked... point here is... to the job of... recommend you... are this with... 2800 player, the... 17 MkII FA, which has excellent build and... e a very good impression in HFC 243. At... same price there's also the Cyrus 7, a... ng all-rounder in a compact case... after trying the Heart with the standard... s we switched over to the Siemens... grade, a comparison somewhat muddled by... ie fact that it was a cold for hot swap – the... have had been on for several days with the... after a livelier... w tubes shone... through. The Siemens-equipped player has an... n snapper sound with better timing that... es with dense material with remarkable... fidence and ease. It even seems to be

Our overall conclusion

...through. The Siemens-equipped player has an... n snapper sound with better timing that... es with dense material with remarkable... fidence and ease. It even seems to be

You can find... crated 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

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...



EDITOR'S CHOICE

HI-FI CHOICE
magazine



Happy new Krell

January 1st is still way off, but legendary high-end brand Krell has already made its Resolution

PRODUCT Krell Resolution 2

TYPE Floorstanding loudspeaker

PRICE £6,497 per pair

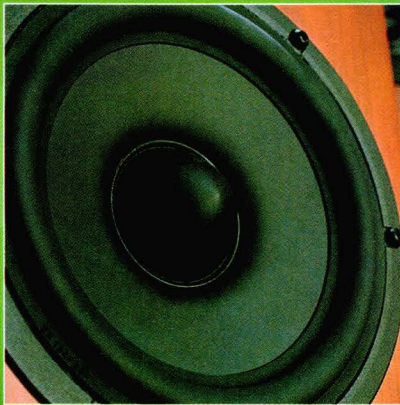
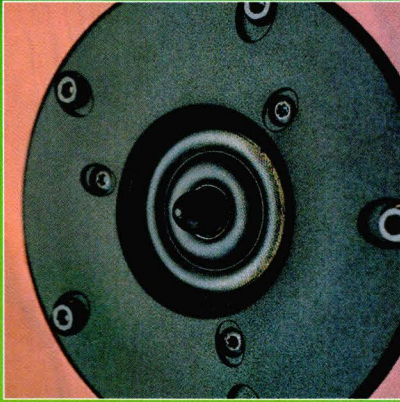
KEY FEATURES Size (WxHxD): 29.5x121.9x61cm

- Weight: 63.3kg each
- 25mm ring radiator tweeter
- 160mm midrange driver
- Two 200mm bass drivers
- Sensitivity/impedance: 89dB/4 ohms (nominal)

CONTACT ☎ 020 8971 3909 🌐 www.krellonline.com

Krell has been making high-performance loudspeakers for several years, most famously the truly aspirational LAT Series whose enclosures are fabricated from heavy duty aluminium panels. The Resolution line is more affordable, using drive unit and crossover technology scaled down from LAT, but housed in more affordable veneered MDF

enclosures. As a company spokesman put it, "Dan (D'Agustino, Krell's CEO) works... by building flagship product, in whatever category, and then finds ways to incorporate the designs and technologies into more affordable product. Speakers were no exception. He began by building the LAT Series. We first showed prototypes of the



“It may be simplified compared to the LAT range, but Krell really hasn’t spared the horses with the Resolution 2.”

Resolution Series loudspeakers at CES (the world’s biggest consumer electronics show in Las Vegas) in January 2003. Based on continued R&D, the Resolution 1 (the flagship floorstander) morphed from a three-way to a four-way and the cabinets were refined to more closely resemble their larger brethren.” The Resolution 2 is a slightly simplified version, in a somewhat smaller enclosure. But it’s worth noting that Dan didn’t start his career with the exotic, aluminium-clad LAT range. He was involved early in his career, with Dayton-Wright, arguably once the Quad of New England, so he already knew something about loudspeakers.

It may be simplified compared to the LAT, but Krell really hasn’t spared the horses with the Resolution 2. It’s a subtly shaped rectilinear box that stands more than 1.2 metres tall and is backbreakingly heavy. The basic construction is 25mm MDF, except for the double thickness baffle, and the enclosure is extensively stiffened internally using asymmetric braces. It’s even fitted with an internal mid-bass sub-enclosure. An externally plain box this size will often look rather crude, but while there’s no hiding its bulk, a combination of large radius verticals and an attractive grill cover consisting of full-length rubber strings – a design borrowed (with permission!) from

Sonus Faber – adds class and elegance, along with a visual simplicity missing from some of its closest rivals. It’s a big box, but the R2 somehow looks balanced and right.

The Resolution 2 is a three-and-a-half-way design. At its core is an inverted midrange/tweeter combination, the former a 25mm ring radiator unit and the latter a 160mm wood fibre cone (think of it as a variation on the pulp cone theme). The two are combined at 2.75kHz by third-order Butterworth crossover network. The bass system consists of two 200mm drivers with aluminium cones, one of which crosses over to the midband at 239Hz (using a

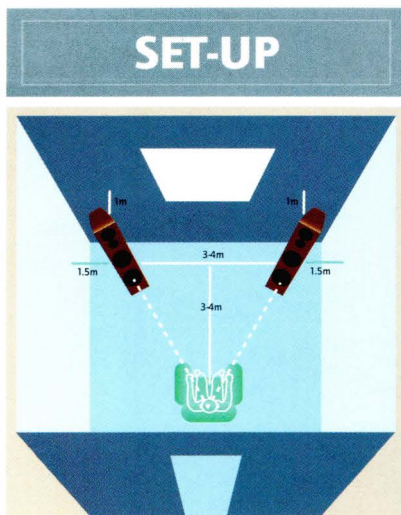
first-order Butterworth design), the second reinforcing the low end up to 150Hz (thanks to a second-order Chebyshev network). The bass is loaded by two rear-facing, deeply flared reflex ports. All drive units are from the Vifa stable, and customised to Krell’s specific requirements. Similarly, Krell does not make its own enclosures – instead, it has them custom built to its own set of specifications.

Sensitivity is 89dB, which is lower than average for larger speaker systems such as this, but even so, raw power is not the main requirement. This is not entirely true if you want to make full use of the speaker’s loudness capability, however, which is prodigious. Naturally, Krell’s own amplification is well suited to the Resolution range, but Krell’s advice is to bypass the Showcase electronics if possible, in favour of its better-specified pre/power amps.

Krell classifies the R2 as a nominal four-ohm load. In fact, Krell’s own impedance plot ▶

MAKING IT MULTICHANNEL

The Resolution series was conceived as a complete stereo and multichannel solution, though any Resolution-based multichannel system is inevitably going to take up a lot of real estate. A second pair of Resolution 2s could be used for the rear channels, and ditto for the side channels in a 7.1-channel system. Alternatively, the smaller but similarly voiced Resolution 3 (3,200 per pair), which is essentially an R2 chopped off at the knees, could serve for the side and rear channels along with the Resolution C (£2,980), a three-way centre speaker. An alternative surround speaker is available in the shape of the Resolution 4 (£2,498 per pair), an on-wall design. A dedicated subwoofer is also available: the Resolution Subwoofer (£4,495) is powered by a 700-watt Class AB (not Class D) amplifier. This is close to being a 60cm cube – a minnow by Krell standards, especially when compared to the vast 2.6kW Krell Master Reference Subwoofer, which is some 76mm deep and weighs in at a healthy 182kg.



POSITIONING

Krell suggests owners should not lose too much sleep over matters related to set-up. Nevertheless, it suggests optimum placement is 25-30cm from the back wall, with a toe-in angle of around five degrees. After some experimentation in the larger of our available listening rooms (6x6.5m), we settled for a little more distance from the back wall, and if you have room-boom problems you should try stuffing the lower ports with foam bungs. Very limited toe-in turns out to be fine, if only because the Resolution 2 is not particularly fussy about orientation, as long as you don't listen from wildly off axis. But if several people are listening together, adjust the toe-in so that the two forward axes cross over in front of the listening plane – a trick that works with many speakers.

SYSTEM MATCHING

Krell's advice (from email correspondence) is "the more and better power you can feed them, the better they will sound. You could run them with a Showcase amplifier or a KAV-400xi, but the amplifier we would recommend as a starting point would be the KAV-2250. If you can run them with a Full Power Balanced amplifier, you will really hear what the speakers are capable of reproducing!" We used both a KAV-400xi and a KAV-2250 and agree with every word. The greater gravitas and more anchored feel of the bigger amplifier, and perhaps most of all its greater dynamic range, really do pay dividends, but by one of those curious strokes of fate, there was no spare FPB series amplifier hanging around! The Theta Enterprise, with its greater warmth, also worked very well with the Krell. However, drier, tighter sounding amplification from Innersound led to a rather raw sound... and power output is not the issue here. Clearly the amplifier must offer good resolution, and be able to cope with comparatively difficult loads, but most reputable amplifiers in this neck of the woods should be beyond criticism in this respect, except (it almost goes without saying) low-power valve amplifiers.

☑ hovers between three and four ohms over the whole audio frequency band above 55Hz, with a dip to 2.5 ohms around 80-100Hz, an area where the speaker can pull a lot of current. This suggests a three-ohm impedance rating is more appropriate, which will not be a problem for Krell's own amplifiers and other well-endowed models, but there is the possibility of some response modification using amplifiers with a relatively high output impedance (valve amps typically, but some solid state designs too), depending on the cable types and lengths used. The Resolution 2 is supplied with well made adjustable spikes, plus glide feet to protect wood flooring, and speaker wiring is accommodated using two pairs of high-quality bi-wireable WBT terminals.

Build quality and cabinet finish are exactly what you'd expect of a premium brand like Krell – superb down to the finest detail.

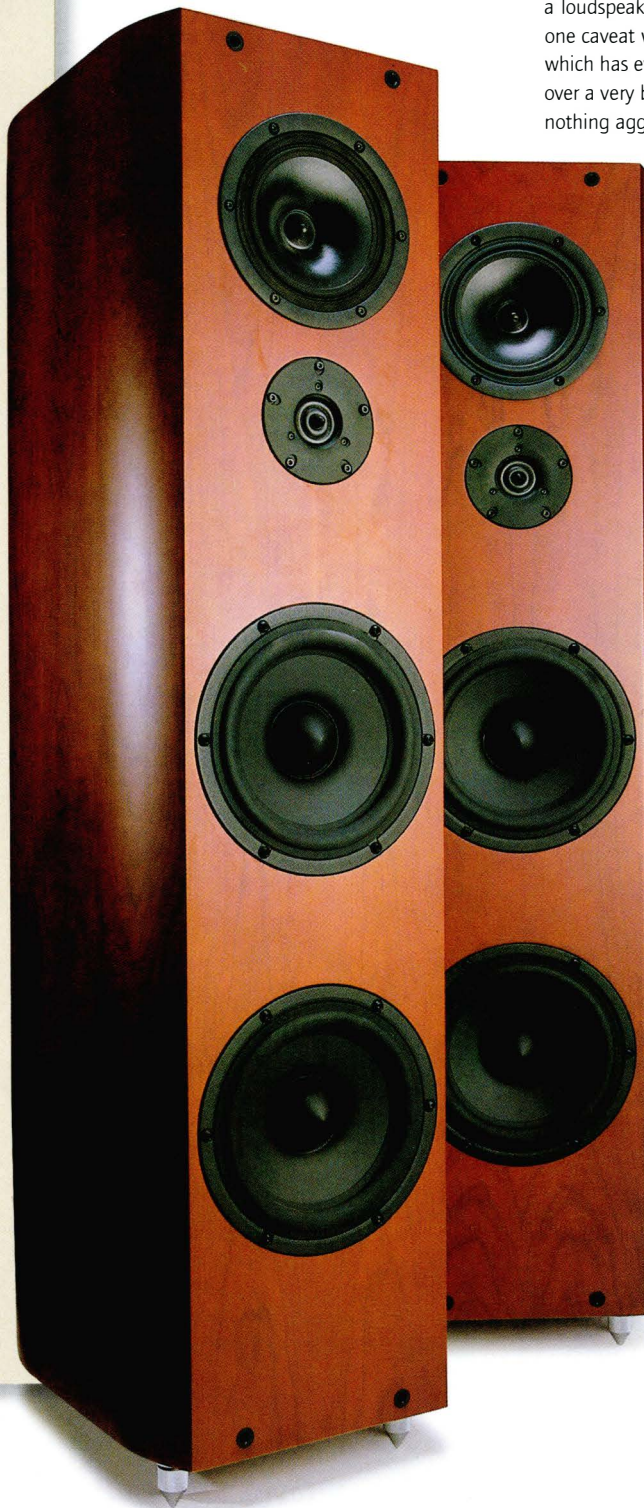
SOUND QUALITY

Some loudspeakers are about exotic enclosures, others about drive units with hi-tech diaphragms. If Krell brings one special skill to the party, it is knowledge of amplifier design. This throws useful light on the design of crossover networks, which in Krell speakers are meticulously designed – and the Resolution 2 is no exception.

Tested with Krell's own KAV-280p preamp and KAV-2250 power amp, and using CD and SACD source material (from players like TEAC's superb Esoteric X-01 SACD player), the result is a loudspeaker with exceptional tonality (with one caveat which we'll come to later), and which has even more exceptional consistency over a very broad dynamic range. There's nothing aggressive about the Resolution – it is

cleanly and meticulously voiced. Vocal intonation is pure and surprisingly natural, the kind of natural you normally only hear from very small loudspeakers, or the best electrostatic panels. The enclosure has been forced to stay quiet in this design; there is very little overhang or identifiable boxiness, but at the same time it all gels with a rare sense of conviction. Similarly, instrumental tone is expressed with subtlety and yet with considerable force and traction. Woodwind, expertly played and well recorded, as in an old Gervase de Payer recording, has the forcefulness and the edgy, almost anharmonic complexity (a real clarinet never sounds completely in tune) and brute force of a real instrument, without any sense of exaggeration or excess.

The Resolution 2 sounds smooth and pure and doesn't pin you to the back wall when the volume is turned up – it doesn't shout or hurt as so many competing systems do at high volumes. It is certainly true that the tweeter doesn't have quite the refinement and sophistication of B&W's diamond, or Focal-JMLab's beryllium, but the essentially ordinary drive units that Krell uses are allowed space to breathe in this design. This is a loudspeaker voiced by an expert, in which the ingredients are allowed to deliver their best.



The net result is a devastatingly, almost awesomely solid and powerful sound for a speaker this size – at once expansive and disciplined in almost any terms, so we're talking bass that is genuinely large in scale and truly authoritative. But there is a hint of US West Coast in the bass. To UK ears listening in predominantly smaller brick-built listening rooms, the Resolution 2 may end up sounding overblown. You need to allow the speakers room to breathe, with plenty of air both at the sides and behind. Adequate room in front is useful too, which rules out small rooms – as if the very physical presence of the Resolution 2 wasn't enough. Given these prerequisites, and following the other points in the *Set-Up* sidebar, there is no hint of dynamic compression, and the speaker tends not to dictate a preferred volume level to the extent that many others do.

Over a period of some weeks, once the speakers had been set up properly, we found the Resolution 2 to be a remarkably colourful and dynamic yet unfatiguing loudspeaker. Given the right kind of material – chamber, small scale jazz, or solo vocal material, such as Suzanne Vega in one memorable example – it has the best qualities of a meticulously designed compact: the speed and impact, the precise and focused imagery, the transparency and turn-on-a-sixpence agility. But when called for by a big symphonic work or full-on rock – the Krell doesn't favour either over the other – all the benefits of a really big speaker capable of moving substantial quantities of air, and of delivering forceful and extended low-end grunt, are there for the asking.



“Vocal intonation is pure and surprisingly natural, the kind of natural you normally hear from very small loudspeakers.”

In the Resolution 2, Krell has managed to engineer a truly wide-bandwidth loudspeaker that is capable of high output levels and is essentially free of obvious voicing or artifice (aside from the extreme bass, for the reasons

already given). This is a loudspeaker that can reproduce virtually any kind of music at low or high volumes, delivering superb levels of detail (if not quite up to MartinLogan Summit electrostatic standards). If you were to look for its best points, you might be drawn to its ability to reproduce a wide dynamic range, from whisper quiet to the kind of levels that upset neighbours. It also produces a consistent sense of solidity, power and presence, even at moderate volume levels. However, you will need a fair amount of space for it to breathe and it is electrically demanding – it requires plenty of power from an amplifier that is capable of driving difficult loads. **HFC**

Alvin Gold



VERDICT	
SOUND >> 93% 	PRO Although essentially conventional in design, the Resolution 2 is extremely well executed and packaged. First-rate dynamics matched by excellent solidity, too.
EASE OF DRIVE >> 58% 	CON Not an easy load to drive, the R2 is also a speaker that is a little fussy about the shape and size of the listening room. Slightly drab looking.
BUILD >> 94% 	
VALUE >> 84% 	
CONCLUSION Impressive introduction to the mid/upmarket area. Although it lacks the tweeters developed for the LAT range, Krell's choice of customised Vifa drivers is hard to fault, and the same applies to its engineering and development prowess.	
HI-FI CHOICE OVERALL SCORE >> 89%	

Compact and bijou

All style and no substance? These new Onkyo components are more serious than you might think

PRODUCT Onkyo C-733 and A-933

TYPE CD Player and integrated stereo amplifier

PRICE (C-733) £400; (A-933) £500

KEY FEATURES (CD-733) Size (WxHxD): 27.5x10.3x30.4cm • Weight: 4.5kg • Single disc CD player • VLSC curve smoothing algorithm • Analogue phono outputs plus two optical digital outputs • (A-933) Size (WxHxD): 27.5x10.3x32.8cm • Weight: 7.5kg • PWM digital mode amplifier • Five line-level inputs plus MM phono stage • Tone controls

CONTACT ☎ 01494 681515 🌐 www.onkyo.co.uk

On a recent trip to Onkyo's Japanese HQ, we were surprised on walking into a large listening/conference room to discover a pair of B&W's flagship 800D speakers wired up to the very CD player and amplifier you see on these pages. The mismatch was obvious, especially when taking into account the massive space involved, the

price differential and the fact that the 800D is a punishing load by any standard. However, it is not unusual for manufacturers to attempt to display the strengths of their products this way, partly because of a misplaced belief in their own handiwork, and because virtually anything heard in such a context is a result of sorts.

The proof of the pudding as always is in the eating... er, listening... and although there were obvious limitations with the Onkyo hardware in charge, it really didn't sound bad. Later on, in a more conventional listening room which is part of the R&D department, where the Onkyo was linked with speakers much closer to what most would regard as reasonable, the combination really impressed. Again there were criticisms to be made, but at the very least, the Onkyo combination sounded in charge, and it gave a good account of the wide range of recorded material that was available.

The subject of this event was Onkyo's A-933 amplifier and matching C-733 CD player that together sell for around £900. These are compact designs that side by side take up just 55cm of shelf width – wider than one standard 44cm component, but not by much.

From the operational point of view, the two are straightforward. The C-733 is a single disc player with typical programming, disc navigation and repeat options. The only mild idiosyncrasy is that there are two optical digital outputs, but no electrical equivalent. Design features include what Onkyo describes as a 'super-precision' internal clock, a high rigidity, low resonance chassis and Onkyo's favoured VLSC (Vector Linear Shaping Circuitry), a kind of curve smoothing algorithm.

The amplifier is a much more unusual proposition. A two-channel integrated design, it is equipped with five line-level inputs and a





moving magnet phono stage, plus a 'preamp input' so it may be configured to work solely as a power amp. Outputs are provided from the single tape circuit and two sets of 4mm binding post speaker terminals. A further welcome addition is a subwoofer output for a 2.1 channel system.

Power output is rated at 80 watts per channel DIN, and 110 watts per channel into eight ohms, but these are dynamic power ratings and would equate to around 70 watts or so on a more useful 'continuous RMS' basis. This is still a lot of power from such a compact amplifier, and one moreover that runs fairly cool under most conditions. And it's this cool-running design that is a key to why this amplifier is so unusual.

Power without excess heat in a small case is possible because the A-933 is a digital PWM (Pulse Width Modulation) design. The circuit operates at better than 90% efficiency, which means relatively little energy is dissipated as heat, but for Onkyo, efficiency is only a secondary advantage. The real goal was improved sound quality, which Onkyo's engineers have pursued by sophisticated power supply design (Sony does something similar with its top digital AV amplifier) based on two large capacity toroidal transformers which dominate the internal space. PWM was chosen for its great efficiency, lower digital noise and low negative feedback requirements compared to PDM (Pulse Depth Modulation), the obvious alternative technology. Finally, the Vector Linear D-to-A converter stage is an attempt to reduce noise and other

“It’s not the most sophisticated-sounding amp around, but somehow it still manages to convey the essence of the music.”

nonlinearities from this source, using a noise cancelling architecture reminiscent of balanced-mode analogue signal transmission.

Onkyo has perhaps missed a trick by not providing a digital input to bypass the A-to-D converter stage and offer better quality still from CD players and the like. Otherwise, this is a clean implementation, with a single, attractive interface, and minor controls being hidden away behind a front panel flap.

SOUND QUALITY

Onkyo makes some pretty bold claims about the performance of the amp in particular, saying it stands comparison with some well-known products at much higher price points. To test these claims, we made comparisons with amps at various price points, right up to Krell's £2,698 KAV-400xi. We were also able to draw comparisons with a forthcoming Denon CD/SACD player and amp combination at a very similar price point to the Onkyo pair (an exclusive *HFC* review is due in the issue after next).

The C-733 is a good CD player, but not in the same class as the forthcoming Denon model used for comparison. The Denon also had the advantage of being able to play SACD discs in stereo, at a significantly higher quality

level than the Onkyo CD player on hybrid discs – and for very little additional outlay. But the CD replay of the Onkyo offers plenty of detail, and a tonal balance that is near neutral, and there are no identifiable distortion artefacts either. It really is a decent player, but it lacks a certain something... and that something is not merely the ability to play SACDs. Compared to the best of its CD-only peers it still falls a little short. It sounds a touch raw by the very best standards, and neutral as it very nearly is, there is a slight lack of weight – a dryness in the lowest registers that, if anything, is highlighted by the amp.

Talking of which, the A-933 is highly creditable, with a clean, lively and punchy sort of sound. It's not perfect – it has an upper midband that is on the shiny side of neutral, and a treble that is a shade rough. In addition, though its bass has a pleasingly rounded quality, it also sometimes sounds like it's striving to achieve something not yet reached – like the Onkyo is winging it, rather than dealing with music in a calm, measured fashion.

But despite these shortcomings, we ended up liking the A-933 a great deal. It's not the most sophisticated-sounding amp around, but somehow it still manages to convey the essence of the music, bringing it to life. When playing ▶

Q & A

We spoke with Mamoru Sekiya, Onkyo's designer in chief, about the innovative design techniques implemented in the C-733 CD player and A-933 integrated stereo amplifier



HFC: What efforts do you make to enhance the analogue output stages in your CD players?

MS: One of the main points about our players, including the CD-733, is the VLSC (Vector Linear Shaping Circuit). This filters the output based on a moving average of the signal, which has the effect of canceling much of the noise that would otherwise pollute the output. Conventional low pass filters that follow digital converters need to be high-order networks that cause group delay, which affects the audio frequency band.

What are the advantages of Class D 'digital' amplification?

If properly designed, and if the power supply is good enough – something we take great care over – a digital amplifier should have better 'grip' than an analogue equivalent. This is because the current needed to drive the load is delivered very quickly with no time constants due to reactive loading. The power supply transformers in our A-933 have a much higher capacity than they strictly need on the basis of the usual calculations, and we have found this makes a difference too.

What challenges does an engineer face when designing Class D amplifiers?

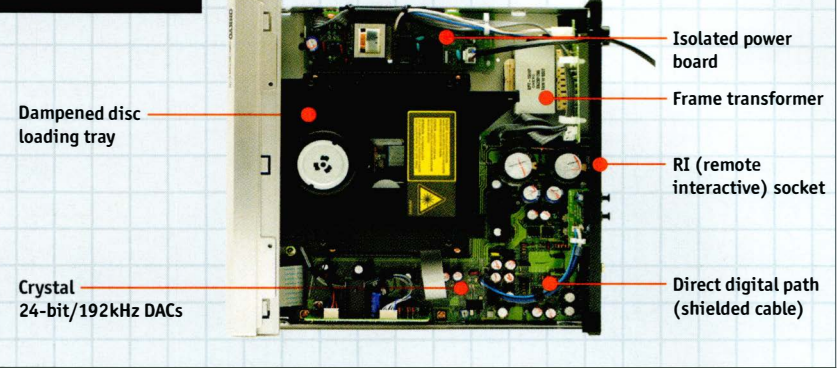
Dealing with pulse noise, which is endemic in digital circuits, can be a problem. You also need to know how to deal with the problems that afflict analogue amplifiers, since any digital amplifier operates at least partly in the analogue domain. In the case of the A-933, my design converts analogue to digital by integrating the voltage over successive sampling points. If executed properly, the pulse noise which would otherwise pollute the analogue stages is averaged away, and it ceases to be an issue. I also use a noise-canceling architecture throughout the design.

Did you need to employ any other special techniques to get the A-933 sounding right?

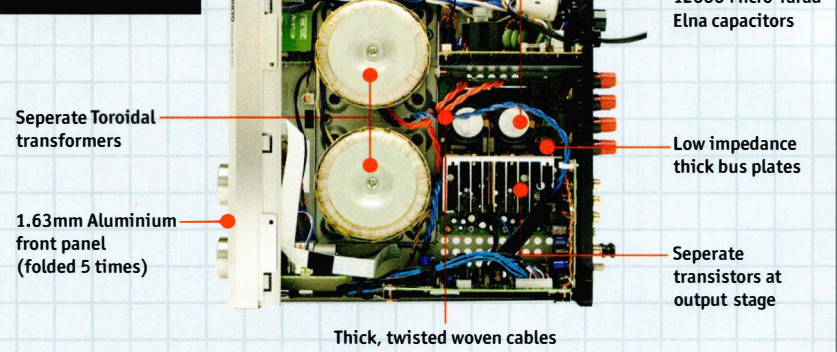
In general, analogue-to-digital conversion circuitry converts analogue values at pre-determined sampling points. However, in my designs, I convert the analogue signals to the timing axis by integrating between sampling points. Using this method, pulse noise radiated into analogue signals is averaged and largely removed. Noise generated in the power supply section is also eliminated by noise-canceling circuitry.



Detail – C-733



Detail – A-933



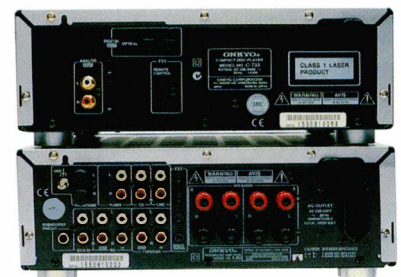
▶ a disc of Haydn piano concertos, the music flows, the orchestra ebbs and swells, and the whole effect is completely engaging. It's almost like a case of mind over matter – in this case, the Onkyo amplifier (and yes, it is mainly the amp) can be criticised objectively on a number of levels. Other amps at similar price points may sound sweeter, more precise and more articulate. And yet, the A-933 is so lively, so engaging and ultimately so transparent that you can almost hear around each and every note.

The size and style of these components mean they will likely be used in tandem. Potential buyers will decide for or against on the basis of their perceptions of the amp, and the CD player will no doubt be accepted as simply part of the package. In some ways that's a shame – the CD-733 is a decent enough machine, but the A-933 is good enough to be considered as a 'mix 'n' match' partner for a good many highly respected players in the sub-£1,000 category.

There really is something rather special about Onkyo's diminutive digital amplifier. It may

have its rough edges sonically, but when it comes to music its heart is in the right place. Somehow it seems worth just that bit more than the sum of its parts. **HFC**

Alvin Gold



VERDICT – CD-733

SOUND >> 76%



FEATURES >> 74%



BUILD >> 85%



VALUE >> 80%



CONCLUSION

The player is good, but ultimately less interesting than the partnering amplifier. Against this it is reasonably priced, but why no CD Text?

HI-FI CHOICE
>> **78%**

VERDICT – A-933

SOUND >> 82%



FEATURES >> 85%



BUILD >> 85%



VALUE >> 85%



CONCLUSION

A digital amplifier aimed at hi-fi's mid-market – compact, powerful and cool running, with a slightly rough yet musically enjoyable sound.

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

audiolab

Have you been
missing something?



audiolab 8000 series

The original 8000 series from Audiolab started something of a revolution in value and performance. When they disappeared from the market, the hi-fi world lost a well-loved and reliable friend.

Now, the new 8000 series marks a strong return to the original brand values and philosophy. These famous products have been re-engineered to create a complete two channel range, including the famous 8000S, 8000Q, 8000M and 8000P models as well as an all new CD player.

7.1 channel pre and power amplifiers have been added to create a series of building blocks capable of meeting your system needs now and for the future.

The new 8000 series offers a definitive and genuine hi-fidelity performance from a no-nonsense approach to engineering

**Audition them now and find out
just what you've been missing.**

audiolab

Sovereign Court, Ermine Business Park,
Huntingdon, Cambs, PE29 6XU

www.audiolab.co.uk

Tel: +44 (0)1480 447700

Fax: +44 (0)1480 431767

Trickle-down titan

Denon's latest multichannel amp uses the best bits of the beefy AVC-A1XV flagship

PRODUCT Denon AVC-A11XV

TYPE Multichannel amplifier (7.1)

PRICE £2,500

KEY FEATURES Size (WxHxD): 43.4x17.8x50cm
• Weight: 23.6kg • 7.1-channel amplifier • Power rating: 140 watts per channel • Three floating point 32-bit DSPs • 24-bit/192kHz DACs • AL24 curve smoothing algorithm • Comprehensive bank of hi-res digital links • Three-zone multi-room support

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

This innocent-looking multichannel amplifier is hiding a secret: the AVC-A11XV is the offspring of the real flagship of the Denon range, the AVC-A1XV. If you don't remember that model by name, you may remember the product, which was featured in *HFC* 266. That flagship behemoth is the amplifier that weighs a practically unheard of 44kg, stands a definitively unheard of 28cm high and can drive two complete 5.1 channel systems in different rooms and from different sources at loudspeaker level. The AVC-A11XV calls upon much the same technology as is crammed into its sibling, but it is more conventional looking and will be much easier to accommodate.

If the AVC-A11XV passes on some of the AVC-A1XV's party tricks, it doesn't lack for much else. It is still a massively well-endowed, 7.1-channel, THX Ultra2-certified multichannel amplifier rated at 140 watts per channel, and which has every significant sound processing algorithm under the sun. What sticks out when first getting to grips with the Denon, however, is that as well as a full range of analogue audio and video inputs of the usual kinds, and a raft of S/PDIF coaxial and optical digital inputs and outputs, there is an unprecedented concentration of hi-tech digital interfaces.

The list includes three v1.1 HDMI inputs, each of which can be fed with composite, S-Video or component video, so that the display screen can be connected using a single cable. DVI-HDCP encrypted inputs and outputs are also available, and can talk directly to HDMI sources and displays, using adaptors. FireWire, also known as IEEE 1394 or i.Link (audio only – PCM and DSD) is also available. An Ethernet port is fitted for IP Protocol and software upgrades, and an RS232 connection can be used to plumb in external controllers from AMX and Crestron. The Denon is also the first amplifier to boast the new SACD/DSD

compatible 3rd Edition Denon Link. Without a similarly equipped source available, it was not possible to test Denon's assertion that SACD sound quality is better through this interface than via i.Link, but on paper, Denon Link's superiority is beyond doubt.

Other highlights include a sophisticated control system which includes a programmable electroluminescent remote control, a very comprehensive on-screen set-up display system and the jewel in the crown – the MultEQ XT room measurement and calibration algorithm. Not just another microphone-driven set-up process, MultEQ XT is an a uniquely comprehensive scheme that does everything from detecting what speakers are available, their size and phase, setting levels, crossover frequencies, distances and the like, to optionally providing nine-band room EQ, and making adjustments for a number of different listening positions.

SOUND QUALITY

It is hard – perhaps impossible – to conceive of a single system which makes use of all, or even most of the interconnection possibilities available here. But this is missing the point.



The flexibility is there to provide multiple options in the present, and to provide flexibility for the future by anticipating forthcoming hardware trends.

All the component video and digital video connections are fully HD compliant. From next year, when Sky goes live with HD broadcasting, video will cease to be the video equivalent of medium-wave radio that it is right now. Of course, the Denon will not bring you HD video by itself, but provides the mechanism by which HD become useable in the home, as soon as HD sources go on sale, and as long as you use an HD plasma or other display. A brief word of warning here: many displays being sold as HD ready are standard displays with HDMI (or even DVI) inputs. Don't be conned as so many already have!

Similarly with audio, i.Link and Denon Link 3 interfaces provide a virtually transparent transmission path for high-resolution audio, the latter being significantly superior to the former in principle. Using either means, the conversion to analogue takes place as close to the loudspeaker as can be contrived, bypassing as much of the front-end analogue circuitry as possible. This is always a good thing in the electrically noisy environment of a complex multichannel amplifier like this one.

Even using only the analogue inputs, the Denon is a very impressive amplifier. It is genuinely powerful, with over a kilowatt available for a multichannel system – the stereo or front main speakers may be biamped, with further improvements in performance, if the rear back speakers are sacrificed. For audio-only sources and in particular when working in stereo, the Denon has some powerful and effective bypass options that can also shut down the video circuit when not required.

With music, the result is an unusually transparent, well disciplined and highly detailed sound. The bass is deep and tuneful and has much, though not all, of the solidity and inevitability of a good stereo amplifier. Stereo imagery is precise with two-channel sources, displaying highly localised placement of individual instruments and voices. The overall balance remains marginally lightweight under most circumstances, and although it is always possible to apply some equalisation to the sound via tone controls, you may find the results a little disappointing. Perhaps this is because of the subtle group delay that even relatively minor variations in low frequency voicing can cause. In many ways, the overall character of the AVC-A11XV is reminiscent of Denon's own PMA-S1 stereo amp, a £5,500 beast with a similar lightness and transparency. But the AV amp



“The Denon is a very impressive amplifier. It is genuinely powerful, with over a kilowatt available for a multichannel system.”

doesn't offer the same subtle nuances, or the finesse with which the more costly stereo amp addresses complex recordings. And at the price, nor should it.

As a home cinema amplifier, using the internal processors, the Denon is as close to state of the art as can be achieved at this price level. With the usual caveat about the superiority of DTS over Dolby Digital (where the choice is available), the Denon is expressive, fluid and very articulate, with first rate dialogue reproduction, and devastating authority on high-octane soundtracks.

The operative word with this remarkable *tour de force* is flexibility. It provides a hugely comprehensive toolkit for making the most of your source components, of almost any kind, but with particular relevance to digital audio/video source components, while being a superbly transparent window able to drive high performance projectors and plasma displays. It

also supports high-resolution audio (and video) formats of all kinds. Last but not least, it offers superior legacy support for analogue source components. In all, it's a highly sophisticated multichannel amp that's brilliant with movies – and impressive with music too. **HFC**

Alvin Gold



VERDICT

SOUND >> 88% <small>>> SUB RATINGS STEREO 83% MULTICHANNEL 93%</small>	PRO The flexibility of this model's own internal resources, rather than promised future enhancements, is astonishing and hard to better with most multichannel solutions.
FEATURES >> 96% 	CON Inevitably there is some trade-off of audio purity, especially from stereo sources, but less so than with most other AV amps.
BUILD >> 89% 	
VALUE >> 90% 	

CONCLUSION
 Tremendously flexible audio and video tool kit with a sound that almost always rises impressively to the occasion. Few integrated solutions come close to fusing movies and music together so seamlessly – hence the Editor's Choice badge.

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

Q-ing for attention

There's plenty of clever thinking in KEF's new iQ range, as these two models prove

PRODUCT KEF iQ3 and iQ9

TYPE Standmount and floorstanding loudspeakers

PRICE (iQ3) £280 per pair, (iQ9) £800 per pair

KEY FEATURES (iQ3) Size (WxHxD): 22x37x33cm

• Weight: 6.7kg • Two-way design, with single Uni-Q driver • (iQ9) Size (WxHxD): 22x94x33cm
• Weight: 16.6kg • Three-way design • Separate sub-enclosure for each driver • (Both speakers) Flared front port integrated with driver trim • Continuously curved enclosure sides and back • Twin terminal pairs

CONTACT ☎ 01622 672261 @ www.kef.com

KEF, one of Britain's best known and longest established brands, was founded back in the 1960s. The initials stand for Kent Engineering Foundries, and the company headquarters is still based in Maidstone, even though it is now owned by Chinese interests and has its main manufacturing base in China.

In recent years, the company has enjoyed particular success with the compact

egg-shaped KHT satellites that are aimed primarily at the home cinema sector. Yet the brand has also continued to make a major contribution to the stereo hi-fi scene, its most successful hi-fi ranges being its upmarket Reference and 'budget-plus' Q-series models.

The latter have just undergone major revisions, and the two models here form a part of the extensive new iQ range that directly replaces its Q-series predecessors. The new iQ range encompasses no fewer than eight new models: five stereo pairs, supplemented by three home cinema oriented models, all of which share a number of common ingredients.

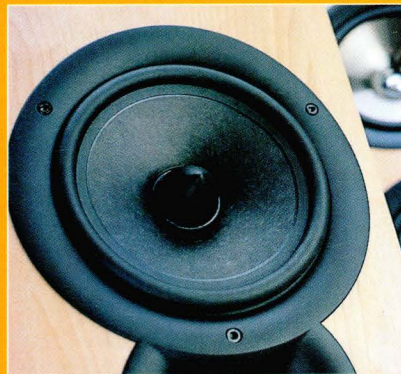
The stereo pairs comprise two standmounts and three floorstanders, designated in odd numbers only from the compact £230 iQ1 up to the considerably more substantial £800 iQ9. The two models under scrutiny here are the larger of the standmounts, the £280 iQ3, and the largest of all, the iQ9. Both use the same 165mm Uni-Q drive unit – an exclusive

KEF co-axial design – to deliver the midrange and treble, and also the bass from the little two-way iQ3. The floorstanding iQ9, however, uses two extra bass drivers, each in its own ported section of the much larger main enclosure – so the Uni-Q driver is only used for midrange and treble duties in this tall, slim top-of-the-line model.

Like their immediate predecessors, both models feature enclosures with beautifully curved and tapered sides. These not only look unusually attractive, but should also improve overall stiffness and avoid the focusing of internal lateral standing waves that rectilinear boxes create. The shape is echoed in a very gently curved front panel, and both speakers are available in a choice of maple, walnut, dark apple or black ash vinyl woodprint, or alternatively in silver. Further decoration is provided by a moulded black 'bump' that covers much of the top surface, matching the curve of the Uni-Q driver frame.

Much of the difference between the old Q-series and the new iQ-series lies in improvements made to the drive units. The new Uni-Qs now feature die-cast frames – 165mm in diameter for the examples used here – plus stiffer, titanium coated 125mm plastic cones, longer throw suspensions,

“The real advantages of the larger model are found in a sound that is significantly smoother and more even overall.”



copper-plated flat aluminium wire voice-coils, and elliptical-profile tweeter domes. All of these changes are claimed to have reduced distortion and improved loudness capability.

The clever bit about the Uni-Q is that a small 19mm tweeter is mounted on top of the pole-piece that protrudes from the middle of the main cone, and is actually placed at the 'acoustic centre' of the main cone. This makes it very easy to accomplish a smooth crossover transition. Also, because the transitions are as smooth off-axis as they are on-axis, the far-field power response should be smooth too.

The solitary Uni-Q in the iQ3 is reflex-loaded by a large, flared front port. The iQ9's Uni-Q operates into a sealed box section of the enclosure, while each of the 165mm plastic cone bass drivers has its own ported sub-enclosure, and the whole speaker sits on 8mm spikes. Both models are equipped with twin terminal pairs, which are connected together by wire links if bi-wiring is not adopted, and optional port-blocking foam bungs are supplied. This could well be useful if the speakers are placed close to a wall.

SOUND QUALITY

The larger iQ9 delivers a superior measured performance to its smaller sibling, and happily there's no excessive bass here either. In fact, both these speakers show good control through the bass region, though both are best kept clear of walls.

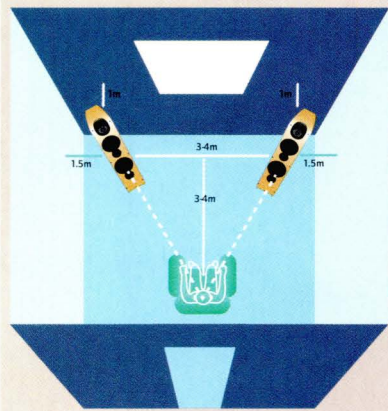
It's no surprise to find that the iQ9 has the superior bass extension, especially since its ports are tuned to a low 35Hz (against 48Hz for the

iQ3). Even so, output is quite restrained below 40Hz, registering an in-room far-field response of -6dB at 25Hz, against 35Hz for the iQ3. However, the real advantages of the larger model are found elsewhere – in a sound that is significantly smoother and more even overall, especially through the upper bass and lower midband, and a sensitivity that registers at least 2dB higher. Although the iQ3 also delivers a balanced measured response, it lacks smoothness and can over-emphasise the midband.

This is a speaker that leads with its midband, giving strong and lively voice projection though not without a touch of 'hollow' or 'cupped hands' coloration. This is made all the more audible because of the mid forwardness. That said, cabinet coloration as such is clearly very low, and the dynamic range wide, as the enclosure itself is very rigid and well controlled. ▶



SET-UP



POSITIONING

Both these speakers give best results when they're positioned in free space, though the iQ3 can use foam bungs to improve the bass alignment near walls. The downside is that midband reflections will increase coloration here, as it tends to create a rather obvious peak around 700-900Hz.

In free space, the iQ9 has a beautifully judged bass alignment, and should therefore be kept clear of walls as far as possible. Close-to-wall siting is not really an option here, even if the ports are blocked with the supplied bungs, because the ports here give peak output at around 35Hz, while wall reinforcement tends to occur around 50-100Hz. Experiment with the speakers, using bass-rich material, in order to find the positions that give the smoothest and most even bass delivery.

SYSTEM MATCHING

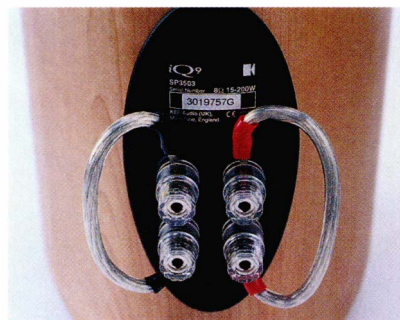
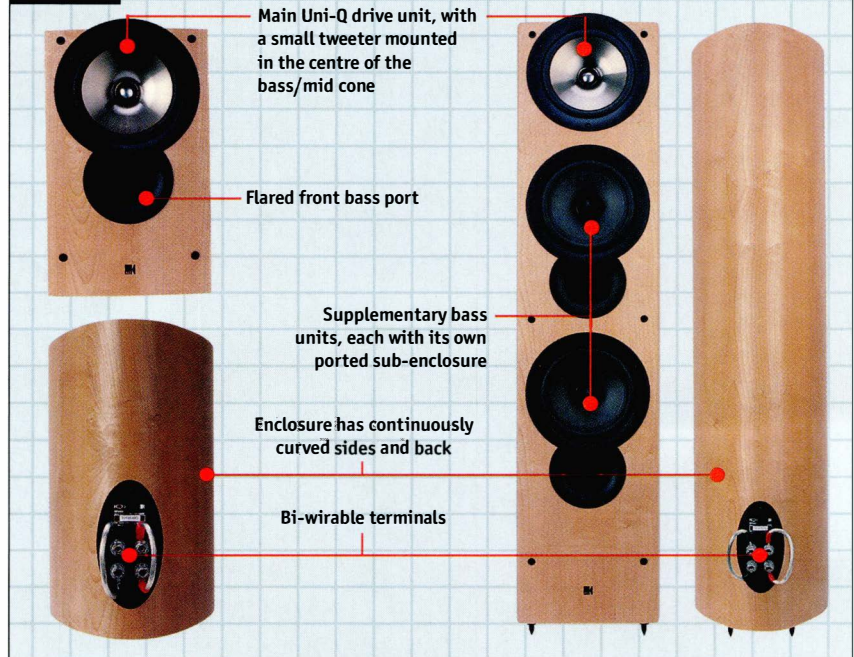
Both speakers have decent enough sensitivities, and should give good loudness with all normal amplification. Our findings agree with KEF's ratings of 89dB for the iQ3 and 91 dB for the iQ9. A factor not revealed in the maker's specification is that the iQ9 is a more demanding load. This is normal with multi-way speaker systems, but it does tend to cancel out any sensitivity advantage.

In fact, the impedance of both speakers dips to around four ohms close to 200Hz, but in the case of the iQ3 this is a short-lived dip against an average load of around eight ohms, whereas the iQ9 stays around four ohms through much of the upper bass and lower

midband, from 80Hz up to 500Hz, and has an average impedance around 5.5 ohms. This will not pose a great challenge to most modern amplifier designs, especially those that normally partner a £300 or an £800 speaker.



Detail



There's some lack of warmth and weight here, but again that's partly a function of the excellent control through the whole bass region. Percussion is crisp, clean and punchy, if a shade dry, and while the bass is understated, that's preferable to a fat, thumpy character that obscures midband detail. This dry bottom end is artfully balanced by a presence and top end that are also a little restrained. The Uni-Q's off-axis consistency is well appreciated as one moves around the room, though the top end does lack a little sweetness.

If the iQ3 is a very respectable performer at its modest price, the iQ9 represents a substantial improvement that answers many of the limitations of its smaller sibling. The sound is beautifully balanced top-to-bottom, with obviously superior bandwidth, smoothness and neutrality, and lower coloration too.

Despite the much larger enclosure, there's no real evidence of significant cabinet coloration here, so clearly the substantial bracing is working well. While the overall sound is impressively neutral, there is a slight emphasis in the lower midband that can bring a touch of thickening to male speech, for example. But it's not a serious problem.

The Uni-Q driver plays its part in generating precise imaging, because of its superior on and off-axis consistency. At the same time, the tweeter is somewhat recessed within the midrange unit and the cone shape itself will restrict treble dispersion. This in turn will limit the room reflections, tending to improve the stereo focus, albeit with some loss of 'air'. As with the iQ3, the top end isn't that sweet, but it delivers good coherence and detail.

The strength of the iQ9 lies in its all-round competence, and an ability – all too rare in modestly priced floorstanders – to make the best possible use of a generous enclosure and driver array. Wide bandwidth and dynamic range, plus superior neutrality and sensitivity, all come together to create a very tempting prospect for music replay, though movie fans will want to add a subwoofer. **HFC**

Paul Messenger

VERDICT - iQ3	
SOUND >> 75%	CONCLUSION Shapely, solid standmount sounds lively and dynamic, but midband is a little strong and the whole sound could be smoother and sweeter.
EASE OF DRIVE >> 86%	
BUILD >> 85%	HI-FI CHOICE >> 80%
VALUE >> 84%	

VERDICT - iQ9	
SOUND >> 88%	CONCLUSION Generous shapely and solidly built floorstander combines a wide bandwidth and dynamic range with superior neutrality and sensitivity.
EASE OF DRIVE >> 84%	
BUILD >> 85%	HI-FI CHOICE >> 88%
VALUE >> 89%	

Worth The Wait...

The long-awaited versatile CD-1 transport/player is coming...

User-selectable upsampling (48khz, 96khz, 192khz - 24 bits).
Reclocking on output stage, minimizing jitter and improving detail, timing, dynamics, imaging and soundstage.
Optimized musical Philips transport mechanism.
High quality DAC can be switched off to maximize performance when used as dedicated transport.
Linear power supply - with low noise local regulators on critical circuits and optimized regarding EMC/EMI performance.
Matches rest of Lyngdorf Audio range.



This new CD player extends the Lyngdorf Audio range of products that offer high performance, value and versatility.



At £2150, the TDA 2200 True Digital Amplifier offers:

The functionality of a DAC, pre and power amplifier. Simply connect a CD transport to obtain pure music. Optional analogue inputs available. Parametric and voicing equalizers, subwoofer DSP crossovers. Ready to accept the new room correction module. 200W/8 ohms, 375W/4 ohms.



At £775, the SDA 2175 Power Amplifier offers:

Balanced and single-ended analogue inputs. Treble is sweet and accurate. Bass is tight and controlled. Complete lack of noise. Advanced protection circuits. 200W/8 ohms, 375W/4 ohms. Vice-like control of speaker cones.



At £1095, the SDAi 2175 Integrated Amplifier shares the same impressive power engine as its brother and includes the following main features:

6 RCA inputs + 1 XLR balanced input. Tape Out. Pre-amp output balanced and single-ended. Programmable attenuation, level and balance for each input. IR remote control. RS 232 connection for software upgrades.



Millennium True Digital Amplifier:

Our statement amplifier.
The world's first true digital amplifier, now in its 3rd generation.

"Supremely smooth and well balanced in every respect, this amplifier starkly shows what other solid-state does wrong. Brilliantly engineered, it's nothing less than an epoch-making product.

VERDICT – Outstanding."

SDA review, Hi-Fi World, June 2005

LYNGDORF

0870 9 100 100

www.tactaudio.co.uk
www.lyngdorfaudio.co.uk



Växjö victorious

A spanking new entry-level CD player from Sweden's most umlaut-infested town

PRODUCT Primare CD21

TYPE CD player

PRICE £800

KEY FEATURES Size (WxHxD): 10x43x38.5cm

• Weight: 10kg • RS232 and IR socketry • Coaxial S/PDIF, Toslink optical, XLR AES/EBU digital outputs • Burr-Brown PCM 1738 DAC

CONTACT ☎ 01423 359054 🌐 www.primare.net

Primare Systems is based in the Swedish town of Växjö, not a name you want to be trying to pronounce after a night on the *aquavit* with a Swedish hi-fi designer. Luckily, it's not necessary to get to grips with so many umlauts in order to enjoy the company's latest entry-level CD player, the CD21. A direct replacement for the similarly priced D20, this player was designed by a new man on the Primare team, Bjorn Holmqvist, who produced the CD31 that *Hi-Fi Choice* tested in *HFC* 270.

The CD21 is a stunning looking machine with build quality that would not seem out of place on a machine twice the price. Its aesthetic appeal is enhanced by the lozenge-shaped display and disc drawer, plus the simple selection of keys that flank them. The remote, by contrast, is a busy, utilitarian system-running affair, which did its best to

flummox us by requiring a stab at the CD button before it would send any data that the player could understand. In a full Primare system, you might have a DVD player as well, so this source of potential confusion is hard to avoid. Another minor irritation is the player's tendency to turn itself off given a ten minute break – although this saves the planet and reduces electricity bills, it also means you need to give the player a half-hour spin-up, playing a disc before it comes on song. Another blot on the copybook is the slow reaction time of the eject button. It needs a few seconds constant pressure to illicit a response, and this is true of both player and handset.

On the back panel, there are a couple more connections than you usually get at this price point. The most unusual is an XLR socket for a digital output. This AES/EBU socket delivers a 110-ohm electrical signal and suits high-end DACs, such as the Stello DA220 tested in *HFC* 271. There are also the usual coaxial and Toslink digital outputs and standard RCA phono analogue connections, alongside an RS232 connector for use by service engineers and multiroom installers. There's also a remote IR connector, useful if you plan on hiding this attractive player inside a cupboard.

Under the casework, the CD21 features a number of well-tested techniques for making the most of the humble compact disc. It uses a DVD-ROM transport mechanism that Primare dubs DVS; while slow-loading, this is very fast at accessing tracks. Its bitstream output is sent to a DIR1703 receiver that was selected for its jitter-suppression skills. Unlike many other new players, this one does not use upsampling and the press release goes so far as to suggest that such a process introduces its own form of coloration. Presumably, this is a coloration that Primare was able to counteract in its D31, which does upsample.

The converter itself consists of a pair of 24/192 capable PCM1738 DACs per channel, with this balanced topology being used for maximum noise rejection prior to output. Current to voltage conversion combines op-amps and MOSFETs with the signal remaining balanced right up to the output stage, which is actively driven by a MOSFET transistor. Primare uses SMD (surface mount device) circuitry to keep signal paths short.

The power supply utilises an R-core transformer with eight separate windings for the various elements in the player, each supply being regulated in ten steps. The supply to the



analogue output is claimed to have 'ultra-fast' discrete regulation, in order to provide enough power "for even the deepest sonic transient", according to Primare's blurb.

SOUND QUALITY

In our quest to find the "deepest sonic transient", we discovered in the CD21 a capable and entertaining player with few apparent shortcomings at its price point. You have to push it very hard through a system of considerably higher resolution than would normally be used in order to highlight its limitations. It's pretty successful in all important respects, but especially in its sense of solidity that comes from good stereo separation. This player is capable of producing large-scale imaging in all dimensions. The degree to which this is apparent depends on the quality of recording being played but, on pretty well everything we tried, it managed to eke out the shape and placement of the instruments and voices. As a result, discs sound more realistic and you get a stronger sense that the musicians are playing in the room... albeit somewhat more quietly than they would really be.

It proved equal to the task of extracting energy too. Jaga Jazzists' latest disc *What We Must* is a dense and powerful recording of ten musicians laying down intense grooves – the Primare delivered them in apparently full effect, extracting the light and shade as well as the glory of their climaxes. It also made sense of tracks that can often sound overpopulated with sounds; on some players, it seems that there are almost too many notes. but the

“We discovered in the CD21 a capable and entertaining player with few apparent shortcomings at its price point.”

Primare allows you to listen into the recording and make sense of the steamroller drumming.

Gillian Welch's simpler arrangements are equally well-handled and, if her voice is smoother and sweeter than usual through the CD21, that actually enhances the power of her songs. There was a strong sense of presence, the harmonic overtones of the guitars recreating the acoustic space of the studio while the thumping foot of her accompanist fleshed out the scale of the room. This proved a difficult album to eject, but we managed to find something equally engrossing to follow it with in the form of The Be Good Tanya's second album, *Chinatown*. This collection of emotionally captivating songs is seldom reproduced with this much clarity, the kick drum on *Waitin' Around to Die* managing to sound menacing despite its softness.

Occasionally, there is a slight sense of extra fullness to the upper bass with the CD21, but this only brings out the best in instruments like double bass and drums. It might be why the top-end sounds sweet as well, the extra girth below acting as a sort of filter to high frequency edginess. There was only one occasion when we managed to push this player to its edge and that was when playing some less than smooth live recordings from

Frank Zappa as loud as the system will go. That the Primare copes with this onslaught without undue distress is remarkable; the players that typically live up to this sort of exposure cost at least three times as much.

This is clearly a capable and highly engaging player, one that is well-equipped to take on the best of the competition thanks to its strong sense of sonic physicality. It has a good if not dramatic sense of timing and responds positively to pretty much every disc you give it, and you can't ask much more of an affordable and attractively built CD player than that.

Oh, and one final note... it's pronounced 'vecks-yer!' **HFC**

Jason Kennedy



VERDICT	
SOUND >> 85% [Progress bar]	PRO Solid and three dimensional sound with great image scale and depth and a nice sense of timing. Great build for the money and nice styling.
FEATURES >> 84% [Progress bar]	CON Mildly irritating eject button and busy system remote, slow disc reading, not so clever with abrasive recordings and an annoyingly enthusiastic auto switch-off.
BUILD >> 90% [Progress bar]	
VALUE >> 87% [Progress bar]	
CONCLUSION This is a very easy player to enjoy – it's competent in all areas and its rendering of musical energy is ahead of the game in the sub £1,000 arena. If you appreciate an organic and engaging sound, it's more than worthy of a good, long audition.	
HI-FI CHOICE OVERALL SCORE >> 86%	

Supersonic



Silver **RS**

THE NEW SILVER RS LOUDSPEAKERS

The matching C-CAM® drivers of the new Silver RS loudspeaker systems are made from a material originally developed by the aerospace industry for jet-engine blades. They operate with piston-like accuracy over a greater frequency range than ordinary drivers and they don't distort.

This means you'll enjoy more accurate sound, wider bandwidth and precise imaging from multi-channel music and film recordings.

What's more, the slender, matching RS designs, expertly rendered in a choice of five real-wood veneers, will blend smoothly with any interior and look as good as they sound.



For details of your nearest Monitor Audio dealer visit our website at:

www.monitoraudio.co.uk

T. +44(0)1268 740580 E. info@monitoraudio.co.uk



Pimp my receiver

Sony's new budget multichannel receiver comes custom-tuned for Blighty

PRODUCT Sony STR-DB798
TYPE Multichannel receiver (7.1)
PRICE £250
CONTACT ☎ 08705 111999 🌐 www.sony.co.uk

Sony has a long record of producing successful products, specially tuned by UK ears, for UK ears. The subject of this test – the STR-DB798 – was directly anticipated by another UK tuned model, the STR-DB790. The two share the same architecture, X-Ground earthing system and the use of Block capacitors and low noise Schottky barrier diodes.

Improvements to the new model include a higher spec power transformer and up-rated PSU capacitors, which spell a power output increase. There are also some minor changes to the user features, such as the addition of AV sync. This is a delay line to pull audio and video into step – now a common feature, due to poor synchronisation from DVD and satellite sources. The STR-DB798 also acquires a detachable IEC mains lead, and the layout of the amplifier has been improved with shorter signal, ground and power supply path lengths. A preset FM-RDS/MW tuner is included, and the unit will upconvert composite video to S-Video, but not to component video. The latter just qualifies for HD (High Definition) purposes, with its specified 80MHz bandwidth.

This budget 7.1 channel receiver is a basic design, with a 32bit Fujitsu DSP engine that performs spatial processing, including Dolby Pro Logic IIx and the usual flavours of Dolby and DTS processing, including DTS ES and 96.24. Weighing in at 13.5kg, the 100-watt per channel Sony is not exactly heavy, and it doesn't stretch to currently fashionable features such as microphone-driven set-up. But you still can't beat a carefully conducted manual installation, as front/rear balance will often need to be tweaked from disc to disc. This is especially true when switching from home cinema to multichannel music, a fact never allowed for by auto install systems.

SOUND QUALITY

We were taken aback, in the best possible sense, by this amplifier. But, unfortunately, the set-up routine is about as opaque as can be, and you have to wrestle with this nightmare install process to reveal the receiver's charms.

Musically though, the STR-DB798 helps make up for the lack of ergonomic niceties. It's not the 'grippiest' or most analytical amplifier around, but it is a clean, open and transparent sounding design playing CDs. It even showed more than a hint of improvement when playing stereo SACDs, and multichannel is a different world again (or can be, on the right day, and with the wind blowing from the right quadrant).

Despite this positive showing, the Sony is more about good basic home cinema than multichannel music. In fairness though, Dolby and DTS are unwrapped with care, conviction and surprising precision in both planes.

This is a fine, competent AV receiver at a bargain price that does a nice line in stereo CD replay, and can even sing with some conviction to high-grade audio sources like SACD. Just remember to use the direct bypass – and take the trouble to set the thing up properly. Once installed, you'll find the STR-DB798 delivers some remarkable sonics for the money. **HFC**

Alvin Gold

VERDICT

SOUND >> 74%

▶▶ SUB RATINGS
 STEREO 69% MULTICHANNEL 78%

FEATURES >> 82%

BUILD >> 80%

VALUE >> 95%

PRO

Cost effective package for those who want a decent home cinema amplifier that will also do real justice to an existing audio disc collection.

CON

Slightly more directed toward home cinema. Obscure, badly designed set-up interface needs a complete makeover... and this isn't helped by a deadpan manual.

CONCLUSION

Set-up quibbles aside, this a well-built and remarkably fine-sounding budget multichannel receiver. Few AV products at this price point make it into HFC, but this is recommended for its all-round sonic standard at an entry-level price.

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

Simply the best

Arcam's new range-topping preamp does very, very little – just as it should!

PRODUCT Arcam FMJ C31

TYPE Stereo preamplifier

PRICE £1,200

KEY FEATURES Size (WxHxD): 43x11x37cm

• Weight: 9.3kg • Seven line inputs, phono (MM/MC) option • Three main outputs (direct, buffered, balanced) • Two tape, headphone outputs • 4V max input level

CONTACT ☎ 01223 203200 🌐 www.arcam.co.uk

This isn't the first preamp that Arcam has ever made, but it is surely the best.

Taking pride of place in the company's upmarket FMJ range, it replaces the previous C30, which was identified as the weaker model in Arcam's flagship stereo pre-/power amp system (alongside the P1 monoblocks). The new preamp was designed from the outset to do without superfluous features like tone controls in favour of maximising the sound quality. It's not entirely stripped to the bone – there is the option of a phono stage – but the review sample was line-level only.

For CD-only systems, a minimalist line-only preamp may seem almost a pointless luxury – a power amp with a volume control will do perfectly well. Okay, a preamp can usefully add gain, but most preamps spend much of their life using little – if any of that gain advantage.

This is because while CD players have an output of around 2V, power amps tend to deliver full output for around 1V and the majority of CDs are mastered so that the loudest bits reach full level. Therefore, any preamp gain setting higher than 0.5 (2:1 attenuation) will overload the amp and genuine gain is definitely not required. Gain is useful for those odd moments when you want to listen to a quiet passage unrealistically loud, say (just what does the vocalist whisper as the track fades at the end?), or when you want to replay some old cassette of sentimental value that was recorded at far too low a level. And while most modern source components will drive reasonably long interconnects without getting too distressed, on the whole decent preamps are better equipped to feed long cables at high quality.

Arcam's new preamp is a fine example of how a good line-level preamp should be done. For a start, it sports a frankly lovely user interface. The more we use recent Arcam products, the more we like their approach. A nice old-fashioned volume knob of sensible size operates a very high-quality electronic attenuator in precise steps, of reference (0.5dB), fine (1dB) or standard (2dB over most

of the range) size. A dedicated button for each input does source selection – none of that pesky clicking through a list to get from input one to input five. The amp remembers its last state before being put to sleep and on reawakening fades up to that level.

Arcam is changing its FMJ products to feature the new 'Stealth Mat' system of vibration reduction, supposedly using material taken from stealth fighters. Not having access to stealth technology (*Hi-Fi Choice* is still visible to radar), we have to assume the claims of noise, hash and sibilance reduction are grounded in fact.

The use of an electronic volume control affords the possibility of having a preset gain trim for each input, the better to match levels when switching from, say, tuner to CD, and also setting balance. Like all functions on the preamp, these actions can be performed from either the front panel or the remote. In terms of connectivity, there are sockets for seven line inputs and two 'tape' outputs, plus 'direct' and 'buffered' unbalanced outputs and a pair of balanced outputs. Arcam reckons that 'direct' connection offers some sonic advantage when short (3m or less) interconnects are used, but 'buffered' gives more grunt. While we could





“Feed the C31 a source full of subtle tonal colours, clear imaging cues and detail and it will pass the lot, almost totally unsullied.”

measure differences between them in terms of load-driving ability, in typical realistic situations there wasn't much in it and sonically we couldn't hear a lot either...

SOUND QUALITY

Which bring us to the crucial question – what does this preamp do sonically? As far as we can tell, precious little. It's possible to be unusually dogmatic about this, because a preamp that accepts a line-level signal and outputs the same can be tested relatively simply in bypass mode – listen without it, then put it in circuit and listen for the difference. To achieve this, we used a familiar pair of EAR 519 monoblocks, in place of the impressive P1 amps supplied with the C31 for test. By using the EARs' volume control, it was possible to make adjustments so that a range of input, output and gain conditions could be accommodated on the C31.

Arcam has never espoused the 'do something nice to the sound' philosophy of audio. If you've just been enjoying the larger-than-life vocal presentation of certain valve designs, you might wonder on first hearing a C31 where the spark has gone. But once things are rendered back to their natural size, the relation between them becomes clearer. A lone voice or guitar is slightly magnified, but take a bunch of them and within the stereo image something has to give. Larger-than-life can be great fun, but it is incompatible with true precision.

Feed the C31 a source full of subtle tonal colours, clear imaging cues and a multiplicity of foreground and background details and it will pass the lot, almost totally unsullied. There is a minute amount of veiling and curtailment in the lowest bass, but we've heard bigger effects from changing interconnects.

In a sense, then, this review should be much more about what the C31

doesn't do. It doesn't smudge things tonally, spatially or temporally. It doesn't blur the distinction between a violin and a viola, or between lead guitar and rhythm. It doesn't coarsen the treble, nor does it allow the bass to waft uncontrolled around the soundstage. It doesn't even squash images towards the centre, nor restrict their depth, or not by more

than the tiniest degree – and image depth is probably the hardest trick in the book for a hi-fi designer to get right.

We could waffle on about the preamp's character, but that would be intellectually dishonest, because it implies that this amplifier has a character. And as we already said, it doesn't. It may not, if one is really to split hairs, be the most revealing – but you'll have to spend more than twice the price to prove the point, and possibly barely do so even then.

Arcam's C31 is very, very good, impeccably built and technically so assured that we couldn't with confidence quote specs for it ('around the measurement limit' for most of them). It's also nice to use and well-specified within the confines of its design brief. If you can see the point of a preamp which does no more to the precious music signal than switching it, controlling its level and injecting it into the next component in the chain, you may have just talked yourself into buying a C31. **HFC**

Richard Black

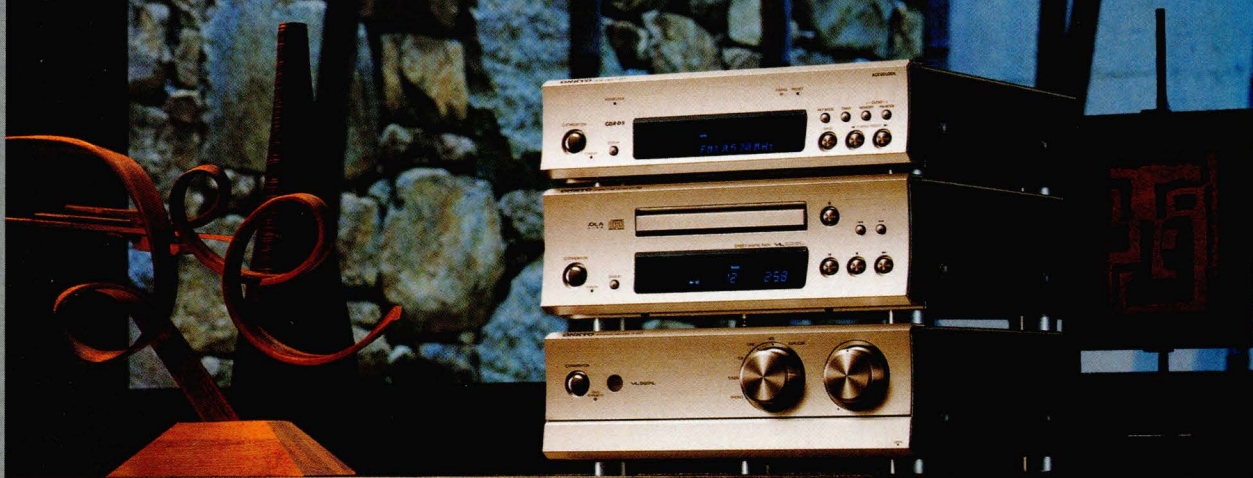


Above: Arcam's C31 with matching P1 mono power amps



VERDICT	
SOUND >> 93% [Progress bar]	PRO Beautifully detailed, superbly neutral and impeccably mannered. Very nice to use too – and a highly capable headphone output is icing on the cake.
FEATURES >> 85% [Progress bar]	CON Careful A/B testing reveals the slightest hint of veiling and frankly nit-picking limitations on bass extension and image depth.
BUILD >> 91% [Progress bar]	
VALUE >> 88% [Progress bar]	
CONCLUSION Does exactly what a preamp should – routing, boosting and attenuating signals without otherwise impeding them. It's a near-ideal component at a real world price. To improve upon the C31 even fractionally will cost you a good deal more.	
HI-FI CHOICE OVERALL SCORE >> 91%	

PURE HI-FI, PURE SOUND, PURE ONKYO



www.onkyo.co.uk
Tel. 01494-681515

ONKYO
IMAGINATIVE SIGHT & SOUND

Onkyo, a brand with over 50 years of audio heritage, proves that Audiophile components can look as good as they sound with the new 275 series. Call us to arrange a demonstration at a dealer near you and discover the Pure Onkyo experience for yourself.

Do more with your iPod with Onkyo's optional DS-A1 Remote Interactive Dock.



Audio and Photo Playback



Control From Afar



Charged and Ready to Go

* iPod is trademark of Apple Computer, Inc.

Big brother

The excellent ELS 3 has finally spawned a floorstanding sibling. Will it enjoy the same success?

PRODUCT Epos ELS 303

TYPE Floorstanding loudspeaker

PRICE £399 per pair

CONTACT ☎ 01442 260146

🌐 www.epos-acoustics.com

Long respected as one of specialist hi-fi's 'no compromise' brands, Epos was purchased by Creek Audio in 1999, making a fine and successful partnership with Creek's well regarded electronics. While real wood finish has long been its stock in trade, early in 2003 Epos introduced a new vinyl-finished

budget range, code-named ELS (but having nothing whatsoever to do with electrostatics).

The miniature ELS 3 standmount, rated Best Buy in HFC 241, was first to appear, and was quickly partnered by matching centre channel and subwoofer models for multi-channel users. Now – rather more than two years later – this £399 per pair ELS 303 is joining the fray, adding an extra bass-only driver and operating in a floorstanding enclosure.

It's a very compact and elegant little speaker, notwithstanding the rather anonymous vinyl woodprint finish – dark cherry for our samples, with light cherry and black ash options. The slim appearance is further enhanced by a heavily chamfered front panel. This shape is echoed in an attractive and functional plinth that provides fine stability, and is equipped with well-seated 6mm carpet-piercing spikes.

The 25mm aluminium dome tweeter and 130mm cast frame bass/mid driver are borrowed from the ELS 3. They operate as a two-and-a-half-way here, augmented by a new bass-only driver using the same chassis and operating up to 100Hz. Both these drivers use plastic cones that are 100mm in diameter, but with different damping and dust-dome arrangements. The lower, bass section of the enclosure is loaded by a rear port, tuned to 47Hz, while the bass/mid driver operates into its own sealed-box section of the enclosure. Twin terminal pairs separate the bass driver from the other two.

SOUND QUALITY

The specified sensitivity of 87dB is comfortably met. Indeed, perhaps this figure is rather conservative – we certainly wouldn't have disputed 88dB. However, the accompanying load is quite demanding at low frequencies where the two cone drivers are working together, dipping under four ohms below 50Hz. The port output appears to be well damped.

It's suggested that the speaker should be positioned 20-50cm from

a wall, though under our conditions a rather larger gap of around 80-90cm gave the smoothest and most even bottom end, with decent in-room extension down to 30Hz. Apart from a minor peak at 1.2kHz, the midband is impressively even and well balanced up to 2.5kHz. Above that point, a significant presence dip is followed by a notably restrained treble.

While it doesn't set any records for dynamic excitement, the 303 has a beautifully ordered and engagingly coherent midband, and that alone singles it out as a very superior performer in the budget sector. The top end is perhaps a little too restrained and polite, so that fine detail is a little suppressed, but this should help to keep things sounding sweet and unobtrusive, even when used with the most modest ancillaries.

Bass is delivered with good weight and agility, even though serious dynamic grip isn't really on the agenda here. The sound as a whole has very little coloration or boxiness through the broad bass and midband, but speech does show a degree of nasality. Stereo imaging is precise, showing good focus and impressive 'out-of-the-box' ability, alongside a fine sense of space and air.

The Epos ELS 303 might be a very inexpensive speaker, but it doesn't need to make many excuses. True, the vinyl finish isn't going to get anyone excited, but in other respects, the presentation is very neat and attractive. And, if the sound lacks a little drama and excitement, it's beautifully spacious and even-handed, with a particularly well judged midband. In all, this is something of an object lesson in how to create a budget floorstander with genuine quality. **HFC**

Paul Messenger



VERDICT	
SOUND >> 81% [Progress bar]	PRO Neatly styled floorstander with a beautifully smooth and well balanced midband, fine spacious imaging, and good bass alignment and agility.
EASE OF DRIVE >> 77% [Progress bar]	CON Vinyl finish looks rather anonymous, and the sound lacks some dynamic drive and grip. Treble is arguably a little too restrained and speech has some nasality.
BUILD >> 80% [Progress bar]	
VALUE >> 93% [Progress bar]	
CONCLUSION Few sub-£500 floorstanders measure up sonically, but this new Epos is a class act. The midband is impressively smooth, even and coherent, and though the sound lacks some dynamic grip and top-end incisiveness, it is very well balanced overall.	
HI-FI CHOICE OVERALL SCORE >> 87%	



Hit for six

The newly upgraded CD6 packs plenty of musical punch into its diminutive frame

PRODUCT Cyrus CD6s

TYPE CD player

PRICE £650

KEY FEATURES Size (WxHxD): 21.5x8x36cm

- Weight: 3.1kg • Twin analogue (unbalanced) outputs
- Toslink digital output • MC-Bus comms link
- Die-cast casework

CONTACT ☎ 01480 435577 🌐 www.cyrus.co.uk

CD replay is a mature technology and Cyrus has been making CD players for years. Its models have been praised in *HFC*, especially the CD8 (now in 8x form) that, at £1,000, we've found to be a leader in its class. It's hard to make revolutionary CD player improvements, but Cyrus has 'trickled down' technology from the CD8 to improve the CD6, an evolutionary process which the company claims has made significant improvements to the player.

Apart from upgrades to a few components, Cyrus is particularly keen to emphasise changes that have been made to the filtering. Indeed, this is one of the most critical parts of any CD player and changes to it can have a substantial effect on the sound. In all oversampling/upsampling players, filtering is carried out partly digitally and partly in the analogue domain, and both parts of the

process are sonically significant, as Cyrus is clearly aware. Indeed, many of the differences ascribed to upsampling devices are almost certainly the result of different digital filter characteristics, and these can be surprisingly hard to quantify. That would appear to tie in with changes to bring the CD6 up 's' specifications, as the product information guides for 6 and 6s models are near identical!

Naturally, the 6s is housed in the universal Cyrus 'singing shoebox' die-cast case, with a plastic bottom panel. The innards are neatly filled with a CD transport (not a CD-ROM, which makes for rapid disc loading, but CD-RW discs are not playable), a toroidal transformer and two circuit boards. One of these boards – if we're not mistaken – is of far-Eastern origin while the other, bearing familiar-looking components from AKM and Burr-Brown, is Cyrus's own.

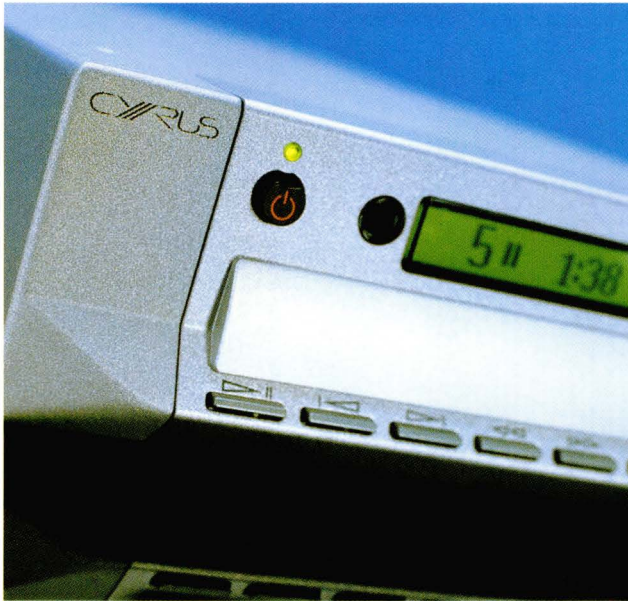
The whole assemblage is thoroughly business-like, with one exception – the mains transformer had worked slightly loose on its mounting, a fault that seems a little too common in recent Cyrus kit that we've seen. We're tempted to suggest that anyone buying Cyrus should ask the dealer to unbox the unit and turn it upside down – if you can feel something heavy shifting inside, ask for another one!

Facilities are pretty simple, but with a couple of nice touches such as the provision of two pairs of outputs and a phase (polarity) inversion facility. Digital output is available on Toslink only, while remote control is via handset or Cyrus's 'MC-Bus' link.

We couldn't resist having a quick scan of the CD6s in the lab, and while the usual caveats apply about relating measurements to sound, there did appear to be some correlations between meters and ears. Specifically, we suspect that the player's relatively high levels of HF distortion and jitter are audible and related to some of the player's lively nature and its concomitant lack of subtlety. On the whole, though, it measures very well, with near-vanishing distortion in the bass and midband, good noise performance and digital filtering which, if not perfect, is broadly similar to the majority of players at most prices.

SOUND QUALITY

We had some jolly times with this player. It's predominantly lively and fun, with a good deal of get-up-and-go about it, and it really enjoys a few party tunes or indeed high-octane entertainment in any musical style. It has a good, strong bass department with plenty of kick, and even though there could at times be



“Some of the carefully-layered detail was slightly obscured, but the raw power of full-on rock was terrifically well portrayed.”

a little more control in the nether regions, there's a fair degree of precision down below and excellent timing. If anything, bass actually seems a touch tighter in timing terms than we remember from the CD8x. As a result, pretty much any kind of music with a rhythm section, from synthesised bass to orchestral timpani, sounds urgent and forceful. We surely won't be alone in appreciating that aspect!

In terms of tonality, the midrange is almost completely neutral. We couldn't help suspecting that there is a hint of subjective enhancement in the upper midrange which slightly colours the sound, making it a little more 'present' and marginally favouring voices over accompaniment. But this is not a problem unless you are trying to partner the player with presence-rich speakers, which might get a bit much. Treble, meanwhile, is well extended but seems a touch less open than on the CD8x, it being neither as pure nor as stratospheric, but it would be mean to complain too harshly.

Where the biggest difference shows up between this and its dearer sibling is in the matter of detail resolution and clarity. The CD6s is not really the subtlest thing in the world and in all honesty, if anything has trickled down from the CD8x, it isn't that player's sense of refinement and insight. There's no question about the basics of a musical event being there, and even a fair amount of intricate background, but the saving in cash brings about a loss of some

of the CD8x's particularly fine way with inner voices, stereo imaging clues and general information about the acoustic in which the recording was made.

For example, one of our longest-standing test tracks is a bit of opera from a remarkably natural direct-to-stereo recording, which shows up fine detail and imaging like anything. It's also quite lively and dynamic. Without a shadow of doubt, the CD6s mastered those last two aspects with aplomb, maintaining a good sense of urgency and giving plenty of scale to the climax of the track. But on the detail and imaging front, it was significantly less assured; the ensemble of instruments and singers was reduced in size and it was getting tricky to distinguish between them at times, both tonally and spatially.

A selection of classic Pink Floyd, tried initially on a whim, successfully illustrated both strengths and weaknesses of the player. Some of the carefully-layered detail in *The Wall* was slightly obscured, but on the other hand the raw power of the band's full-on rock moments were terrifically well portrayed. Similarly, that classic audiophile favourite, Miles Davis's *Kind of Blue*, suffered a little grain on both trumpet and saxophone, but conveyed the rhythm section beautifully.



Turning to modern synth-based music, we found this a real strength of the player. On the whole, such musical fare doesn't have the same kind of fine detail as recordings made with microphones, but on the other hand a little bit of added life from the replay equipment can work wonders in providing the impetus that makes it 'read' for the listener.

If you value excitement over refinement, you'll probably love it to bits, but if your main criterion is detail resolution it won't make the top of your shortlist. The weaknesses are avoidable, we'd say, without dipping the hand any deeper into the pocket. However, the strengths are unlikely to be found in a more all-round performance without spending considerably more. We can imagine the CD6s appealing strongly to many listeners and we are happy to recommend it for audition. **HFC**

Richard Black



VERDICT

SOUND >> 83%



FEATURES >> 80%



BUILD >> 83%



VALUE >> 84%



PRO

Great sense of energy and urgency which will have you tapping your foot with vigour. Especially good for synth and dance music replay. Fuss-free, brisk operation.

CON

A little more detail insight would sometimes not go amiss, and sound can become a little hard when there's a lot of high treble around.

CONCLUSION

A nicely made player which will never be all things to all men but can give plenty of musical pleasure as long as you're not strongly inclined to listen analytically. If you want an exciting, energetic CD sound, the CD6s deserves a listen.

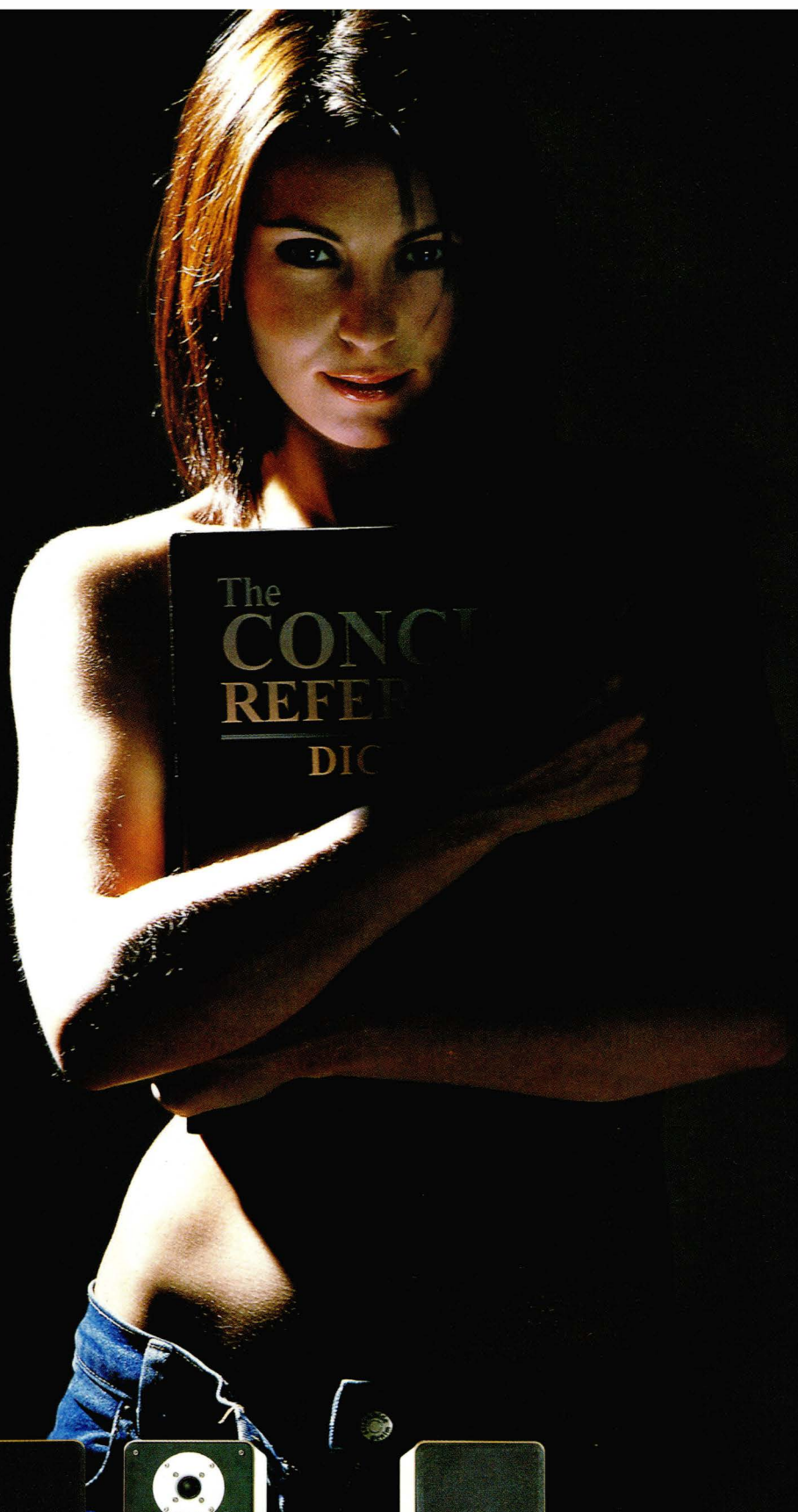
HI-FI CHOICE >> **83%**
OVERALL SCORE

Character Reference

Introducing the new Reference Series 250 System and Reference 300 Mk. II. Following the stunning success of the original award winning Reference Series, TEAC is proud to announce these brand new products. Both feature DAB tuner, beautiful silver finish and offer high quality hi-fi performance in a micro/mini sized package. Ease of use comes naturally with a full function remote control.

**The new Reference Series -
the new reference point for
all mini systems.**

For an audition at your nearest retailer
contact TEAC on 0845 130 2511
or at info@teac.co.uk



Reference 300 Series Mk. II



Reference CR-H250 System

Reference 250
The New Reference 300 Mk. II

Reference 300 System
The Award Winner



TEAC
www.teac.co.uk

Good vibrations

Freedom from vibration never looked so good, as Townshend's Seismic Sink Stand goes Versatile

PRODUCT Townshend Audio Versatile Seismic Sink Stand

TYPE Equipment support

PRICE From £1,000

CONTACT ☎ 020 8979 2155

🌐 www.townshendaudio.com

There's been a definite evolution in the Townshend Seismic Sink concept. The initial idea – essentially a bike-wheel inner tube sandwiched between two bits of steel – may have evolved. But the theory – the creation of what is essentially a low-pass filter, to reduce ground-borne vibrations drastically – remains the same. This is like a car switching from petrol to diesel and yet getting exactly the same performance.

The new Versatile Seismic Sink Stand does away with the air pockets... and the bicycle pump. Instead, the base of the stand has four dual-tensioned polymer load cells, and the rest of the stand rests on this base, with two uprights holding all the shelves in place. This also means the shelves no longer need to be thick black or silver affairs, and are now elegant glass, clamped in place with vibration-absorbing pads to eliminate any form of ringing. The whole affair sits on four adjustable cupped feet.

Although the chassis still uses thick brushed aluminium tubes to support the shelves, the move from air suspension does make the stand look less like an oil-rig these days and the individual shelves are height adjustable. This is a bonus for high-enders, because our bottom shelves often contain a double-height power amplifier or maybe a valve device that needs more breathing space than a slight, solid state power amp. The shelves can take a 70kg load too, although heavier products are best placed at the bottom of the stand. Assembly is straightforward, although all that Allen keying means you should hold a black belt in Ikea.

Of course, these are custom made devices and the prices do increase radically as the size goes up. The base price is for a stand that can cope with midi-sized components, the likes of Quad and Linn devices. The one tested – Four Tier, Size Two, suitable for 50cm wide components – costs nearer £1,350.

SOUND QUALITY

Place a product on the VSSS and you can instantly hear the change, just like the SSS before it. The bass on any 'sunk' product is both tighter and deeper, the integration across

the frequency range is better and the overall coherence of the sound is transformed.

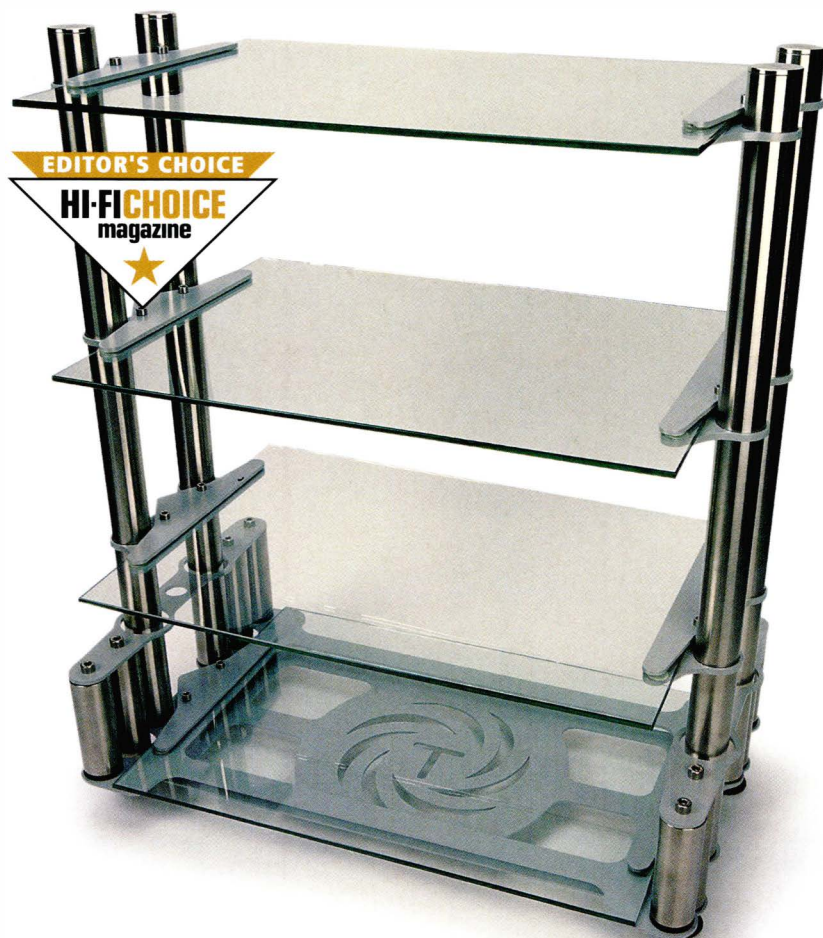
How this presents itself is by sorting out the soundstage, bringing new depth and height to the image and considerably more space around the instruments. Even lo-fi recordings just sound like they've been remastered for the better. This is an exceptionally neutral presentation, showing exactly what your electronics are capable of.

For all this extra uncluttered bass, the VSSS seems to speed up the presentation of most electronics (usually more bass translates to less speed). Perhaps it's this speedy bass that makes some insist the Seismic Sink's neutrality is arch – a bit like the LS3/5a's rendition of piano sound seems more 'real' than the sound of a piano itself. If you are one of these folks, the move from SSS to VSSS will not disabuse you of this feeling. There are also some products that perform better on other supports; Naim on Fraim or Mana, high-end Americana on BCD Engineering or Finite Element stands and so on. But, in the main, the Townshend stand remains a superb option for most listeners.

How does the VSSS compare to the original Seismic Sink Stand? The freedom from worrying that the air-bag has deflated, the improved styling and the flexibility of shelf placement all add up to a better overall stand. The sound is slightly tighter and has greater solidity than before, too. Those who already have an SSS may not rush to upgrade, but eventually the change will come.

In the 1990s, the Seismic Sink set a reference point for equipment support. Now, a decade later, Townshend Audio is setting standards once again. **HFC**

Alan Sircom



VERDICT	
SOUND >> 95% [Progress bar]	PRO Stunningly neutral sound that brings out the best of your equipment, seemingly regardless of price. Beautiful engineering and for once the Townshend Seismic Sink needn't look like an oil rig.
FEATURES >> 90% [Progress bar]	CON Some will (erroneously) think it an expensive stand, others will (erroneously) think its neutrality has been enforced.
BUILD >> 88% [Progress bar]	
VALUE >> 84% [Progress bar]	
CONCLUSION This brilliant equipment support can lift the sound of any high-quality system, minimising the deleterious influence of the environment and leaving you with pure music. Not cheap but well worth the price – and maintenance free, too!	
HI-FI CHOICE OVERALL SCORE >> 90%	



Yamaha-ha-ha

The 'affordable' DSP-AX750SE multichannel amp gets an upgrade and the change keeps us happy

PRODUCT Yamaha DSP-AX757SE

TYPE Multichannel amplifier (7.1)

PRICE £500

KEY FEATURES Size (WxHxD) 43.5x17.1x 4.2cm

• Weight: 12.5kg • 7.1-channel amplifier • Power rating: 100 watts per channel • YPAO parametric room acoustic setup system • Video up-conversion

CONTACT ☎ 01923 233166 🌐 www.yamaha-uk.com

At *Hi-Fi Choice*, we keep more than a watching brief on the development of multichannel equipment, which is inextricably intertwined with the development of stereo replay. They're not antagonists as some seem to think, and are often designed by teams who work in both fields, with very similar performance targets in mind. But we do have a particular interest in equipment that can straddle the divide, especially the products that can play music from stereo and multichannel sources with similar aplomb.

After a fallow period for music replay that ended about three years ago, Yamaha has become one of the more active and successful brands in combining its home cinema prowess with more than respectable stereo sound. Arguably its most impressive introduction so far – partly because it was a mainstream product that many people could afford – was the UK-tuned DSP-AX750SE AV amplifier,

which sold for a princely £500. This new model is a reworking of the same recipe: an ostensibly conventional mid-market multichannel amplifier very similar in many ways to the current (and only slightly cheaper) RX-V657 receiver, except that the audio circuits have been upgraded, and there is no tuner.

Although it has the usual roster of optical and electrical S/PDIF sockets, the DSP-AX757SE is a conservative design, with no HDMI and no i.Link digital connections. But it's not *that* conservative – it's a 7.1 channel model, with 100 watts available from each of the power amplifiers, plenty of inputs including a moving magnet phono stage, a powerful range of customisable DSP soundfield options (a Yamaha speciality) and a full house of all the usual Dolby and DTS codecs. Yamaha also uses some of the internal DSP horsepower to generate cinema-type acoustics, specifically designed to enhance the Dolby and DTS experience. Other features of note include video up-conversion of composite and S-Video to component, which can simplify system wiring requirements, and various direct and bypass audio-only options. It has to be said that the user interface is unnecessarily messy and complicated, though; this is especially true of the remote control with its multiplicity of tiny multi-function control buttons.

The DSP-AX757SE is also home to Yamaha's in-house auto calibration and room/speaker equalisation routine, YPAO. This is a sophisticated and complex pack of tricks that works in conjunction with a supplied microphone, and in practice it does a competent and repeatable job. However, those who want the very best should persevere with a full manual set-up, especially in systems that include a subwoofer, thanks to YPAO's propensity for setting too high a crossover frequency. The optional speaker equalisation that is part of YPAO uses a better conceived routine than its counterparts in other similarly priced amplifiers, but as usual a well-matched and properly designed speaker system is likely to work better without this kind of electrical sticking plaster.

What marks this model out as different from the RX-V657, which can be thought of as the base model, is that there have been a number of enhancements, mainly to the power supply. There are also various bypasses in the DSP-AX757SE that can be engaged when using sources with no video content (such as CD or SACD). The specific enhancements included in the '757SE over the preceding '750SE include further upgrades to the power supply, which boasts faster recovery times after delivering peak demands, and some detail

changes to the layout of the amplifier, for better impedance matching between gain stages and improved earthing. It also features upgraded capacitors and op-amps.

These changes have all been driven by the intention of enhancing sound quality, especially with music sources, be they stereo or multichannel. There have also been minor changes to the auto set-up system firmware.

SOUND QUALITY

As promised, in audio mode the Yamaha is very impressive, with real improvements in key areas. Yamaha makes one specific claim: that dynamic behaviour is improved, with more stable imagery as the music changes, where the previous model (the DSP-AX750SE) tended to loosen its grip. Without the benefit of a direct comparison, it is impossible to say definitively whether this is so, but certainly the new Yamaha does sound stable and solid under such circumstances.

What was most obvious, however, was the Yamaha's extraordinary ability to cope with very complex recordings without sapping detail, or losing separation. It didn't even fall into the trap some lesser AV amplifiers do, which is to give music a cartoon cut-out quality, sharpening leading edges where major musical transitions occur, while smothering very fine background detail. The Yamaha is also very responsive to the behaviour of the bypasses available for pure audio sources, and in this it follows hard on the heels of the previous model, and the comments made here mostly apply whether listening to stereo or discrete multichannel audio sources.

After this excellent showing, multichannel DVD-Video playback through the Dolby or DTS decoders, or the very extensive and highly customisable DSP section, could easily have been an anticlimax. In fact, it wasn't. While recognising the clear superiority of the discrete audio modes, the DSP-AX757SE remains an excellent home cinema amplifier. Certainly, the work done on the power supply pays dividends here, and so does the lack of distraction in the specifications – the absence of a radio tuner is probably instrumental. It is simply a first rate amplifier at a reasonable price, with a solid and enveloping sound, and its musical resolution is more than enough to show the inherent superiority of DTS over the flatter-sounding Dolby Digital. This is something that doesn't always show itself with low cost AV amps.

As luck would have it, a sample of the 'base' RX-V657 (which is a receiver, remember, so it has a built-in radio tuner) was on hand during our test period. This meant it was possible to compare the two directly, and the difference is almost shocking. The RX-V657



“The Yamaha has an extraordinary ability to cope with very complex recordings without sapping detail, or losing separation.”

becomes harder as it goes louder, lacking the essential consistency that any really capable amplifier requires. It is in this sense that the base model betrays its lack of dynamics. It is not that it won't go loud, but simply that it changes in sound as it does so, which in effect means you can hear it 'breathing' as it works – it isn't properly transparent. The DSP-AX757SE, meanwhile, is a much more consistent platform, and for this reason it's clearly more transparent in its sound. The 'character' of its performance is also improved – it is more detailed and expressive, without the rather 'horny', hard-edged signature of the receiver, and the result is naturally more open, detailed and relaxed across all audio sources.

£500 is not a lot to pay for a 'serious' multichannel amplifier, but this one offers exceptional value for money. It has real talent when reproducing music in all modes, but especially in stereo or multichannel (from

SACD or DVD-Audio) with the various bypasses engaged. Ergonomics may not be one of the Yamaha's strengths, and the YPAO audio set-up feature has its drawbacks, but there is little else to criticise at the price. **HFC**

Alvin Gold



VERDICT

SOUND >> 81%
 >> SUB RATINGS
 STEREO 75% MULTICHANNEL 86%

FEATURES >> 86%

BUILD >> 84%

VALUE >> 94%

PRO
 Bold sound and stable imaging – an affordable AV amp with real musical ability alongside a strong home cinema performance.

CON
 Though exceptional for a £500 AV amp, two-channel sound still can't match a good stereo amp at the price. Remote control ergonomics could do with some work.

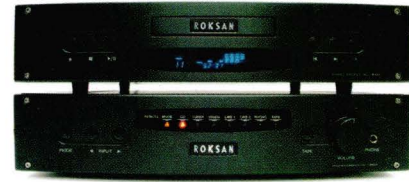
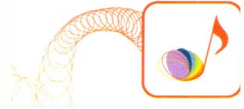
CONCLUSION
 A clear class leader in the £500 multichannel amplifier area. You're paying just enough here to achieve some sort of equality, or near equality with good budget stereo amplifiers, but with more power on tap, and all benefits of multichannel.

HI-FI CHOICE OVERALL SCORE >>> 88%

The best of

ROKSAN

Technology



NEW Maths !!!
£650 + £ 0 = £1000

Maths - Illogical

Saving - Colossal

Experience - Emotional



AWARDS



CD player INTEGRATED amp

Kandy MkIII integrated amplifier
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION **Winner 2004 Awards**

Kandy MkIII CD
HI-FI CHOICE **Bronze award 2004 Awards**

Kandy MkIII integrated amplifier
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION **Winner 2003 Awards**

Kandy MkIII integrated amplifier
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION **Winner 2002 Awards**

Kandy MKIII integrated amplifier
Five Stars
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION **October 2003**

Kandy CD
Five Stars
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION **First test July 2003**

Kandy MKIII integrated amplifier
Five Stars
2003 SUPERTEST WINNER (5 Star Gold)
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION **May 2003**

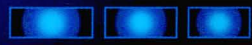
Kandy Integrated amplifier
Five Stars
2002 SUPERTEST WINNER (5 Star Gold)
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION **Feb 2002**

Kandy CD player, Amplifier & Speakers
Five Stars
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION **January 2001**

Kandy Integrated amplifier
Five Stars
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION **April 2000**

Kandy CD
Five Stars
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION **March 2000**

TWIN PACK
TWIN PACK
TWIN PACK
TWIN PACK
TWIN PACK



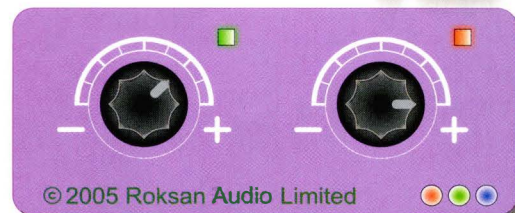
CD player
INTEGRATED amp



HENLEY DESIGNS
Tel: 01235 511 166
www.henleydesigns.co.uk

KANDY

For everyone



© 2005 Roksan Audio Limited



Slimline tonic

Pioneer's cheap and cheerful 'universal' DVD player covers all the bases at an extremely low price

PRODUCT Pioneer DV-585A-S
TYPE Universal disc player
PRICE £130
CONTACT ☎ 01753 789500 🌐 www.pioneer.co.uk

This is the latest and greatest über-affordable universal player from the company that more or less invented the species. The slimline Pioneer DV-585A (our review sample's 'S' suffix indicates that it has a 'silver' finish) can cope with stereo CD, DVD-Video, DVD-Audio and SACD (in stereo and multichannel). In addition, it will play discs using DivX compression. DivX is a flavour of MPEG4, a video compression format that is more lossy than MPEG2 – the standard for DVD-Video – but is favoured for downloading films and other video material from the web. Typically, DivX will produce files as small as one tenth of that required for MPEG2, which means that whole films can be recorded onto CD media. Oh, and the Pioneer will also play MP3 CDs, and discs with WMA and JPEG files.

Supporting its DVD-Video capabilities, the Pioneer also has on-board Dolby Digital and DTS decoders, and can deliver audio to the outside world through stereo and six channel analogue outputs. Other interconnection possibilities include electrical and optical digital outputs, and video can be extracted from the composite and S-Video connectors, or RGB via Scart, while a progressive output (in PAL and NTSC) is also available from a trio of component video phono sockets. Pioneer is famous for its early advocacy of digital video and audio interfaces even on inexpensive players, but the DV-585A doesn't stretch to i.Link or HDMI. Maybe next year...

Included in the box is a simple, but well laid out and comprehensively equipped remote control which works with the player's menu system. This is a version of Pioneer's easily understood and colourful graphical user interface that has now been standardised across the range, and that allows easy access to speaker management settings.

SOUND QUALITY

The Pioneer turns in an honest, if modest, performance across all formats. CDs sound crisp and open in the midband, and treble behaviour is also good, if undistinguished. The bass, however, has an unexpectedly woolly quality, and dynamics are not handled in the way that more ambitious designs do. Somehow when the volume is raised, the whole dynamic window is pulled up almost intact, leaving the difference between the quietest and loudest sounds relatively narrowly spread, where what should happen is that louder passages expand while quiet stay much as they were.

In effect, the Pioneer reduces the dynamic range of recordings, especially those with a wide inherent dynamic range of their own – the recently reviewed Abbado *Mahler 6* is a good example. With SACD, much the same happens. The sound becomes broader and a little smother and more organic, but it would be hard to say that there was much real benefit over compact disc. If anything – and this is something that has been noted before with relatively inexpensive universal players – DVD-Audio generally manages to sound sharper and more consistent in sound, perhaps related somehow to the fact that the DV-575A is fundamentally a DVD player, with DSD (SACD's coding system) in some senses a bolt-on function.

The DV-585A is genuinely superior in all respects to the upper end of the supermarket DVD specials. It gives a taste – though it is only a taste – of the world of good CD replay and high-resolution audio. **HFC**
Alvin Gold

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	✓

VERDICT

SOUND >> 67%

▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬
 >>> SUB RATINGS
 CD 59% SACD 65% DVD-A 76%

VISION >> 68%

▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬
FEATURES >> 85%

VALUE >> 92%

▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬

PRO

Overall this new cheapie from Pioneer does it pretty well as a DVD player, and it passes muster as a high-resolution audio player too.

CON

SACD replay not quite as sharp and articulate as DVD-Audio, and generally audio-only replay from audio sources is a little crude compared to dedicated audio-only players.

CONCLUSION

Universal disc replay for peanuts... Sure, it's no better than competent in any of its playback roles, but aside from being a decent DVD player, it also offers a universal toe in the water for those who want to try SACD/DVD-Audio with minimum outlay.

HI-FI CHOICE >>> **78%**
OVERALL SCORE

GROUP TEST AND LAB REPORTS: RICHARD BLACK

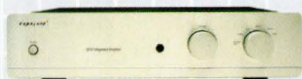
AMPLIFIERS

Home cinema rules the roost? Not cluckin' likely! This sextet of spring chickens and ever-popular integrated amps shows there's still life in stereo hi-fi

ON TEST



Arcam DiVA A90
£850



Exposure 3010 Integrated
£1,000



Micromega A-120
£899



Monrio MC 207
£1,195



Primare I21
£750



Rotel RA-03
£499

If you happen to read one of the many opinion pieces in audio industry journals, it might seem that stereo hi-fi is in the twilight home of consumer electronics gadgetry. The implication of that would seem to be that the half-dozen stereo amps we've collected together here are dinosaurs, the *demier cri* of a soon-to-vanish kind of home entertainment.

As *Private Eye* would say, surely shome mishtake? No one is denying that making and selling stereo hi-fi is hardly the license to print money that it was (or rose-tinted hindsight has made it seem) in the 1980s, but stereo is a thriving entity. How else would you explain the fact that we can gather amplifier groups like this together several times a year, plus individual reviews alongside, and still wish we had more room for them? What's more, although manufacturers certainly recycle elements of circuit designs from generation to generation, there's continual evidence of evolution among the amps we get to see. And the evolution is not merely aesthetic.

It simply doesn't wash to claim that this is a dying market. There is choice, there is development, there is quality and there is value. These six amps represent differing approaches to design and to features and cover a fairly broad price range, from almost budget to moderately upmarket, and each has something to offer. They are all pretty powerful, but apart from that, they have relatively little in common. Some have distinctly more features than others – one even dips a toe into the multichannel ocean with a six-channel input and matching line output.

At this sort of price level, many sales are likely to be to folks upgrading a

basic system. As our own internet forum will confirm, one of the most often-asked questions about hi-fi is which bit to upgrade. Obviously there's no invariable answer, but it must often seem that the amp is not the most important part – aren't even budget amps these days of more-than-adequate quality?

In many ways they are, but there is a lot to be gained by moving up through the ranks of mid-market amps. Units such as these can offer considerably higher levels of performance than budget models in terms of detail, stereo imaging, bass control and extension. This in turn leads to more inviting and involving music-making. We invite you to partake... **HFC**

EQUIPMENT USED

- Ⓢ ATC SCM20 loudspeakers
- Ⓢ Arcam FMJ CD36 CD player
- Ⓢ dCS Elgar DAC
- Ⓢ Kimber, Furukawa and Bespoke Audio hi-fi cables
- Ⓢ Pink Triangle PT TOO turntable with SME309 arm and Highphonic MC-A3 phono cartridge
- Ⓢ EAR 'The Head' step-up phono cartridge transformer

MUSIC USED

- Ⓢ Michael Jackson *Thriller*
- Ⓢ Guzmán *Ambrosio*
- Ⓢ Penguin Café Orchestra *Concert Programme*
- Ⓢ Damien Rice *O*
- Ⓢ Heinrich von Herzogenberg *Piano Works*
- Ⓢ Little Feat *Feats Don't Fail Me Now*

EARS USED

- Ⓢ Geoff Meads (Arcam)
- Ⓢ Steve Reichert (Armour Home Electronics)
- Ⓢ Ed Selley (Cambridge Audio)



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.

AB TESTS

The amplifiers were measured with a variety of equipment, including a Hameg distortion measuring set and also items of audio equipment (ADCs and DACs) adapted to lab duty and reporting data for analysis to Cool Edit and Mathcad on a PC. This approach enabled us to build up a picture of the amplifiers' performance under different conditions of frequency, level and load. This allows truly accurate assessment of published amplifier specifications and precisely determines the amplifier's characteristics under real-world conditions.

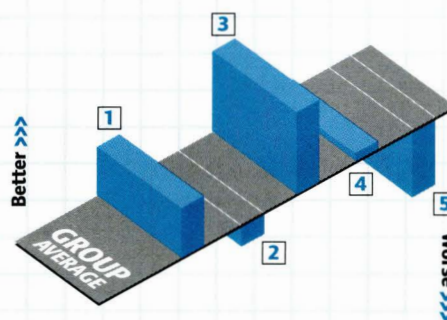
No other magazine offers an equivalent test and listening programme for comparative reviews.

LAB REPORTS: THE BAR GRAPH

Our unique 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 parameters are:

- 1) Dynamic power:** This reflects an aggregate of continuous and peak (instantaneous) power, giving an indication of power available under realistic conditions.
- 2) Frequency response:** This is a measure of how smooth the frequency response is within the audio band and defines the upper frequency (-3dB point) limit.
- 3) Dynamic range:** An indication of the background hiss level, as compared to maximum power output.
- 4) Distortion:** An aggregate figure of measurements at different frequencies and levels.
- 5) Output impedance:** A measurement of how tight a grip the amplifier has upon the loudspeaker cones.

OUR BAR GRAPHS: AN EXAMPLE



radfords

"The finest place in the South West to purchase hi-fi..."

Radfords, founded in 1973, has always been one of the best places to buy hi-fi. Based on the principles of listening to a client's needs, a visit to Radfords is a rewarding experience. With demonstration rooms, a specialist workshop, a wide and varied selection of two channel and multi-channel equipment, a home demonstration service, unrivalled expertise, and a policy of keeping our prices as low as possible, we're sure you'll enjoy your visit!

EXCLUSIVE DEALERS FOR:



PLUS:

- Monitor Audio
- Arcam
- Rega
- Audiolab
- SME
- Michell Engineering
- Pathos
- Audion
- Roksan
- Chord Company
- Nordost Reference
- Pro-Ject
- Denon
- Pioneer
- Yamaha
- Artcoustic
- Sennheiser
- REL



Mention this advert 'HFC01' to receive a **10% discount** on any purchase over £250

Demonstrations by appointment.
Open Monday to Saturday 9.30am to 6pm.
Ex-demo and second hand equipment listed on our website.

In Bath: 12 James Street West, Bath BA1 2BX. Telephone: **01225 446 245** or email: bath@radfords.co.uk
In Bristol: 10-12 Gloucester Road, Bristol BS7 8AE. Telephone: **0117 944 10 10** or email: bristol@radfords.co.uk

For directions and more information, please see: www.radfords.co.uk

Just what you would expect from


epos

Style, Quality & Power



★★★★★ February 2005 - What Hi-Fi
Epos M5 Speaker
Supertest Winner

★★★★★ March 2005 - What Hi-Fi
ELS Subwoofer
5 Star rating

 April 2005 - Hi-Fi Choice
Epos M12.2 Speaker
Best Buy Award

★★★★★ June 2005 What Hi-Fi
Epos M22 Speaker
5 star rating

★★★★★ July 2005 - What Hi-Fi
M12.2 Speaker
Group Test Winner

 August 2005 - Hi Fi Choice
Epos M5 Speaker
Best Buy

Epos Ltd. 12 Avebury Court, Mark Rd, Hemel Hempstead, HP2 7TA.
T 01442 260 146 **F** 01442 243 766
E info@epos-acoustics.com **W** www.epos-acoustics.com



£850 ☎ 01223 203200 🌐 www.arcam.co.uk

ARCAM DiVA A90

Arcam shows that features and good sound need not be enemies

This is officially part of Arcam's DiVA series, which sits beneath the flagship FMJ components and is touted as a 'home entertainment' range. Despite that, what you get here is basically a good old-fashioned stereo amp. Well, not all that old-fashioned – it's sophisticated and well specified, and looks the part for modern systems, too.

Arcam has really cracked the business of combining high-tech flexibility with ease of use. Input switching and volume control are all handled by a microprocessor, but you'd hardly notice, as the neat selector buttons and chunky volume knob make operation as simple as any minimalist model from the 1980s. On the other hand, with a little perusing of the manual or experimenting with button pressing, you'll find that various nifty extras are built in. Tone controls, for a start: pretty basic, but sometimes handy. Balance control, too... and then the real niceties, including preset sensitivity for each input and adjustable size of volume control steps. You can even preset tone controls for each input.

Plenty of inputs, two tape loops (with the option to record one source while listening to another), two switchable sets of speaker terminals, the choice of separate pre/power operation and the option of adding an internal phono stage – it's hard to think of much one might sensibly add to the list. Rated power output is 90 watts per channel and the unit is very well assembled, inside and out. In terms of electronics content for the money, it probably beats any product in the group. Component quality is good and the large internal heatsink and power transformer suggest that the power rating is expected to be used to the full.

SOUND QUALITY

The Arcam proved quite a hit with our 'blind' listening panel. It was praised for its big, bold sound and indeed, combing through their notes, it proved hard to find any criticism. One listener thought it very slightly bright but still



very listenable, while another thought it a little unexciting with the Penguin Cafe Orchestra – fair enough, since the recording suffers a touch from that. Perhaps the nearest thing to negativity was a suggestion that its talents in the midrange don't match those in the treble and bass... but then the same person who wrote that also liked the "smooth but foot-tapping sound", so it clearly can't be too bad.

Several referred to a natural, authoritative way with dynamics, which we found later to be a particular strength of the A90. Imaging is also very good. It had a happy knack of presenting groups of musicians in a believable array in front of the listener, where some of the other amps tended to reduce the band to a huddle in the middle. Image depth is good by the standards of the group, and while better can be found, we'd struggle to suggest many amps at similar prices that offer it.

Overall, this amp is a great all-rounder. Its bass extends to great depths with good control, treble is clear and open but never aggressive or hard, general tonality is honest and there's barely a trace of congestion in complex and/or loud music. It's as comfortable playing quietly in the background as booting around some heavy rock or Mahler, and however you look at it, it's a fine product and even finer value. **HFC**

VERDICT

SOUND >> 88%



FEATURES >> 91%



BUILD >> 86%



VALUE >> 91%



Very well specified, well built, a delight to use and capable of giving great pleasure under any circumstances, this amp's a winner. It may sound bright or bland with the wrong partners, however.

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

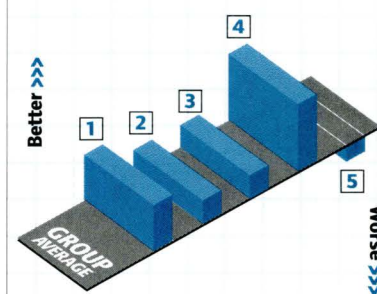


LAB REPORT

104W into 8 ohms is right on the money, while single-channel output rises to about 112W on one channel (just shy of 200W into 4 ohms), with the usual dB or so available on brief peaks of around 10-20ms. More to the point, all that power is delivered very cleanly, with distortion of any kind and at any level kept well at bay – worst case figures were obtained at a few watts output at high frequency, and 'worst' is still only around 0.01%.

Under most conditions, that figure is bettered by a factor of three or more, which is an excellent result. Output impedance is low (damping factor about 120 midband), and noise is equal lowest of the group at about 101 dB. A suitably wide bandwidth, within 1dB to 80kHz and below 2Hz, negligible DC offset at the output and a good input overload margin complete the picture of a highly competent amplifier in all departments. It's measurements match the design and build quality.

HOW IT COMPARES



- 1] Dynamic power >> +40%
- 2] Frequency response >> +20%
- 3] Dynamic range >> +20%
- 4] Distortion >> +60%
- 5] Output impedance >> -15%

SPECIFICATIONS

Measurement	Rated	Actual
Power output (8 ohms)	90W	104W
Distortion (1kHz/8 ohms)	0.008%	0.003%
Frequency response (20Hz-20kHz)	-	+0.1dB



- | | | | | |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------|-----------------|
| ART Audio | Border Patrol | JAS Audio | Ortofon | TacT Audio |
| ART Loudspeakers | Custom Design | JungSon | Pathos | Triangle |
| Audio Analogue | Croft | Living Voice | Project | Trichord |
| Aurum Cantus | Eastern Electric | Lumley | QED | Townshend Audio |
| Audio Physic | GamuT | McIntosh | Qinpu | Unison Research |
| Audionet | Goldring | Micromega | Ref 3a | Wadia |
| ATC | Craaf | Musical Fidelity | Resolution | Whest |
| AVI | Hovland | Musical First | Roksan | Wilson Benesch |
| Bel Canto | Hyperion | Nordost | Shanling | Vertex AQ |
| Black Rhodium | Isol-8 | Opera | Soundstyle | |
| Blue Note | IsoTek | Origin Live | Stello | and many more. |

ATC

with our unique 30-day money back guarantee* there is no better time to enjoy the best in passive/active home monitors!

The entry-level passive models consist of two superb bookshelf models, the SCM7 (£499) and larger SCM12 (£999). Easy to drive, easy to place the SCM7 and 12 are ideally suited to smaller rooms whether you are at home or in the studio. For larger rooms there is the SCM35 3-way floorstanding speaker. A serious combination of dynamics, scale, and resolution that almost defies belief. At £1999, the SCM35 has no equals!

Why Active? The advantages of the active approach are well known and ATC are true pioneers in this area. Because the Amplification is built into the speakers all you need to is add a Pre-amplifier and Source. Imagine ATC speakers connected straight to a CD Player (built

in volume control) - arguably one of the most sonically superior two-box solutions in the world! We have the Active SCM10-2 (£1,978), SCM20-2 (£3,251) and for the ultimate installations: SCM50 ASL at £7,652.

An ATC Active Speaker requires the very best in sources components and Pre-Amplifiers, which is why ATC developed the SCA2 Pre-amp (£3,929). The SCA2 is simply breathtaking. Shadow Audio has the complete range available for demonstration.

A wide choice of real wood veneers, professional and piano finishes are available. For many models, custom colour finishes to match room interiors are also available.



Hyperion 938

we are so confident that you will love these Loudspeakers, we even give you our peace of mind, unique 30-day money back guarantee*



When a product wins this many awards in a single year, you know to expect something pretty special!

No matter what your expectations are, nothing will prepare you for your first encounter with the Hyperion 938 loudspeaker.

The beautiful piano high gloss finish and attention to detail can hardly fail to impress but its noise this speaker makes that will leave most speechless. Listen to other speakers and in most cases you'll find one aspect, one area that you wish you could change to create that perfect loudspeaker. Listen to the Hyperion 938 and the first thing you'll ears will tell you is just how balanced the 938 is. You really cannot fault its performance in any area.

A duo-cabinet design has been created for this full-range 3-way speaker. With a dedicated cabinet for the bass, two 8" S.V.F. woofers are used instead of a larger size woofer for truly amazing bass speed, resolution, coherence and impact. The New HPS-938 is your answer to a new level of audio experience.

The piano high gloss black version sells for £3,750 and birds-eye maple version for £4,500. Reviewers/customers are comparing the Hyperion 938 to speakers costing three or four times the price.

This high-efficiency loudspeaker (90db) can be driven by both valve and solid-state amplifiers with ease. Contact Shadow Audio for more information and to arrange an audition of these next generation loudspeakers!



*conditions apply

Nordost

try the worlds best cables for 30-days with our unique 30-day money back guarantee*

THOR (new) - £1599 (shown on the right)

Shadow Audio are a Valhalla Reference Dealer

The Thor project has been a joint collaboration between Nordost and UK mains power specialist IsoTek. Thor is an elegant, full rack width, 6-way AC mains power distribution unit featuring sophisticated circuitry for dealing with mains noise and voltage spikes without limiting dynamic headroom. The unit is wired throughout with award winning Nordost Valhalla power cable to achieve optimum signal transfer and performance. The unit also

features IsoTek's Polaris-X circuit technology which eliminates product cross contamination, effectively offering any hardware plugged into the unit a clean power supply. This proprietary system shunts AC mains borne noise to Earth without compressing the dynamics of the music. This design also isolates each piece of equipment electrically, effectively giving each one a separate AC mains spur line. Other innovations such as sophisticated silver plated copper circuit paths and the use of silver solder throughout the system also improve overall performance. Thor also has full surge protection.

In addition Thor uses Quantum Resonance Technology (QRT) treated circuit boards.

This technology aids the transfer function of conductive materials.

The Nordost Thor is an upgradeable solution to AC mains power distribution. By systematically improving the quality of the input and output power cords the performance of the unit increases dramatically. Upgrading through the range of Nordost cables, utilising Shiva, Vishnu and Valhalla, prioritising the input cable first will offer major performance enhancements.

The Thor offers an unparalleled solution to advanced power distribution. Thor is available with three different socket versions, with US AC sockets with UK mains sockets and with European mains sockets.



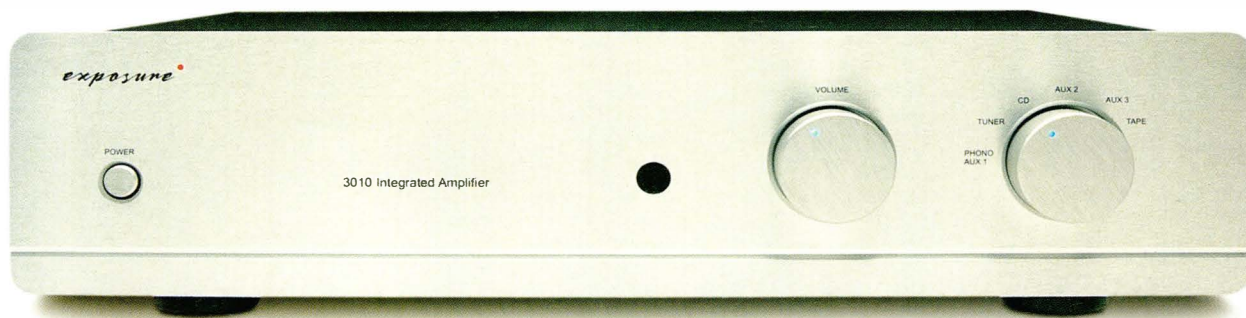
SELECTED PRODUCTS COME WITH A NO RISK 30-DAY MONEY BACK OPTION* *(CONDITIONS APPLY)

Best Part-Exchange Prices

For full details of our extremely comprehensive range of products, our extensive used listing, links to reviews, technical information and much more, visit www.shadowaudio.co.uk



Shadow Audio Consultants, 21 - 22 Cadham Centre, Glenrothes, KY7 6RU, Scotland
tel: 01592 744 779 | fax: 01592 744 710 | info@shadowaudio.co.uk | www.shadowaudio.co.uk



£1,000 ☎ 01273 423877 🌐 www.exposurehifi.com

EXPOSURE 3010 INTEGRATED

A no-nonsense amp that's optionally adept at exposing LP's strengths

Exposure started life many moons ago as a manufacturer of distinctly minimalist products. Today, the company is generally regarded as a maker of no-nonsense stereo amps and CD players that offer thoroughly modern performance and minimum pain of ownership. The 3010 Integrated is a case in point, producing 100 watts of clean, stable power from a neat and unfussy box with only enough features to do the job... no more.

By that, we mean precisely two controls – for source selection and volume – and at the rear, nine sets of phono sockets and twin speaker outputs (not switched). There's no remote control wiring for home installations, but you do get a cordless remote that is as sonically unintrusive as can be, thanks to motorised mechanical volume and selector controls. Of those nine sockets, six are inputs, one is a 'tape out' and two are preamp outputs, for Exposure is a long-standing fan of bi- and tri-amping.

In standard form at £1,000, this amp is a line-level unit but the review sample came with the optional £200 phono stage fitted. In this guise, the insides are pretty well filled with circuit boards, for even in line-level form there's a two-tier arrangement occupying the right-hand half of the insides (the left being full of mains transformer and heatsink), and the phono stage adds a third deck to the pack. Traditional through-hole components are used with an emphasis on discrete transistors rather than integrated circuits, and twinned pairs of high speed output trannies handle the output. Assembly is neat and robust, though we could imagine that keeping the top of the case clean may be a trial thanks to its textured paint.

SOUND QUALITY

We've had a run of good performance from Exposure models of late. So, it was all the more perturbing to discover that, as we ended the 'blind' listening session and began to compare notes, there seemed to be some pretty serious issues with this model. At least, there seemed



to be issues for two of our listeners; the third was much more taken with it. This looked set to be an enduring puzzle but measurements, taken days later, revealed that the review sample had an intermittent fault that showed up as a small but audible dip in the high treble frequency response. It's more than likely that this fault (that seemed to show up in the unit after some hours of operation, as was the case in the panel listening session) was present, making panel conclusions unreliable.

In the circumstances, we can fall back on earlier findings. On past occasions, the 3010 family sound was thought to possess good rhythmic drive, substantial bass weight and an admirable ability to adapt and suit a multitude of musical styles. Exposure immediately sent us a replacement unit after we found the fault, and that confirmed that this amp can play rock, jazz, string quartets and audiophile spectaculars with admirable aplomb. It also allowed us to confirm that the optional phono board is particularly capable – low on noise and with an unusually detailed and open sound for such a modestly priced upgrade.

Lacking the panel's authoritative stamp we can't really mete out an official badge, but we'd still encourage audition of this likeable and clearly competent amp. **HFC**

VERDICT

SOUND >> 86%



FEATURES >> 78%



BUILD >> 85%



VALUE >> 84%



Despite missing out on our panel session, due to problems only discovered at the last minute, this likeable amp appears to offer full-bodied and detailed sound. The phono stage is unusually good.

HI-FI CHOICE OVERALL SCORE 85%

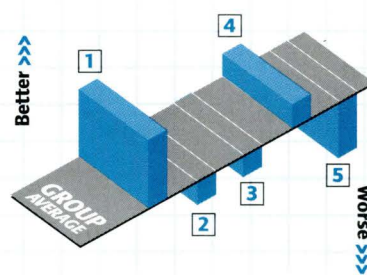


LAB REPORT

Our sample fell all of 2W short of Exposure's 100W rating into 8 ohms, but cheerfully belted 120W into a single channel and 200W into 4 ohms. Dynamic headroom is the usual 1dB or so, but its duration is a little longer than average. Exposure tends to favour limiting ultrasonic response, and the amp's -1dB limit of 27kHz is a perfectly sensible figure – possibly just audible in A/B tests against wideband competition, but not a real issue in the long term.

Bass is very extended, though the phono stage has a narrower bandwidth at both ends. Output impedance is higher than average (damping factor about 36) which leads to slightly higher measured distortion with a real loudspeaker load – we're currently trying to assess the true significance of this. Distortion into the usual 8-ohm resistor comfortably better 0.01% in the bass and midband, rising to a fraction over 0.01% in the high treble. No alarm bells ring in the lab over this amp!

HOW IT COMPARES



- 1] Dynamic power >> +60%
- 2] Frequency response >> -20%
- 3] Dynamic range >> -20%
- 4] Distortion >> +20%
- 5] Output impedance >> -50%

SPECIFICATIONS

Measurement	Rated	Actual
Power output (8 ohms)	100W	98W
Distortion (1kHz/8 ohms)	0.03%	0.008%
Frequency response (20Hz-20kHz)	±0.5dB	±0.4dB

JungSon Audio

the spirit of the gong, the pure essence of song

Introduction

Since its introduction in 1993, JungSon series rise to prominence has been nothing short of astonishing! Never before has a range of high-end products in China been so quickly embraced by listeners and critics alike.

More than 10,000 units of JungSon's JA-1/JA-99c Class A amplifiers have been found homes of hi-fi enthusiasts and music lovers. The length of sold JungSon cables would coil the Earth more than once along its equator.

Even with the numerous number of most prestige awards, JungSon Engineers never cease in pushing forward further technical innovations. By working with some of the top world-class manufacturers such as SONY, SanKen and Noritake ItronAnd, the next generation of JungSon products have been born. Products

such as the spectacular JA-2/JA-100 and JA-10/JA-200. These are Reference amplifiers, that have been named as the King of hi-fi amplifiers in China (Super AV Magazine-Hong Kong).

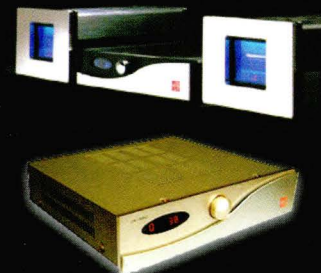
JungSon believe that the pursuit of perfection is relentless, even excellence itself must be exceeded!

It has been a long wait, but Shadow Distribution are very proud to now introduce the range of JungSon products to the UK market.

We are very excited and we think when you take the time to listen you will be to!

For more information contact Shadow or visit www.jungson.com

Dealer enquiries are always very welcome.



Qinpu

the heart of any system is the amplifier - a good one never misses a single beat!

Amplifier Bargains of 2005?

What to look at first? The specifications, the build or how about the price?

Remember the effect that the Pioneer A400 had in the UK when it was first released? Reviewers and customers alike just sat down in shock and disbelief at what they were hearing for the price.

Qinpu is going to do the same in the UK with both the A-1.0x and A-8000 Mk II - just watch! At £299 and £995, we have never heard products like it, or another product that comes even close and its a very clear sign of the times! Both Amplifiers comfortably deliver 100wpc and will happily partner speakers costing 10 times as much!

Quite simply the bargain of 2005? We think so! Don't just take our word for it, why not call and arrange an audition! For more information contact Shadow or visit www.shadowdistribution.co.uk

Dealer enquiries are always very welcome.



Qinpu A-1.0x integrated amplifier

Outstanding Features:
All metal chassis with thick aluminium face panel, Innovative Class AB circuitry, ALPS motorized potentiometer, Matched Toshiba and Hitachi transistors, Star grounding, Toroidal transformer, R/C function

Specifications:
Output: 100wpc (8 ohms)
Dimensions (L x W x H): 400 x 430 x 110 mm
MSRP £299.00



Qinpu A-8000 Mk II integrated amplifier

Outstanding Features:
Rugged and beautiful aluminium chassis, Innovative Class A-AB circuitry, Sanken A1215/C2921 output transistors, Burr-Brown OPA604 op amp, ALPS volume control

Specifications:
Output: 100wpc (8 Ohms)
Dimensions: (L x W x H): 482 x 300 x 196
MSRP £995.00

Micromega

high-end high fidelity handcrafted in france since 1987

Introduction

Micromega have had many firsts in the Hi-Fi Industry and continue to leave people scratching their heads wondering just how they produce products of this quality for the price!

Determination, passion and a love for music are the guiding principles that ensure every Micromega product offers truly exceptional performance in its class.

For more information contact Shadow or visit www.micromega.co.uk. Dealer enquiries are always very welcome.

CD	CD Player	£399
CDSE	CD Player	£599
CDI32	CD Player	£699
Aria	CD Player(NEW)	£2150
SACD REF	Reference SACD Player	£2790
FM	Tuner	£349
DVD	DVD Player	£699
DVDSE	Universal Player	£849
DVD REF	(DVD,DVDA,SACD,CD)	
A60	Reference DVD Player	£2790
A80	Integrated amp	£399
A120	Integrated amp	£659
PRE	Integrated amp	£899
AVP	Pre-amp	£699
S120	AV Processor	£899
T120	2-chan power amp	£829
	3-chan power amp	£899



NEW Micromega ARIA Reference CD Player



painting with music

CYRUS

www.cyruslink.co.uk | www.cyrusaudio.com



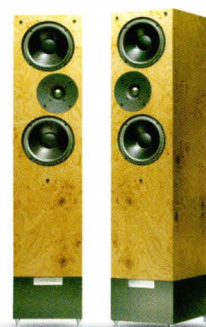
A gift to music.

Definitive Audio offers you a fresh and focused way of choosing a sophisticated sound for your home.

Our service is bespoke, our philosophy is unique and our reputation is peerless. The results we achieve are skilfully tailored to fulfill the desires of the most ambitious and discerning music lovers. Our systems are infused with an illusive 'x-factor' that will stimulate your passions and broaden your musical horizons.

We use a judicious selection of the worlds most artful and ingenious creations, including the uncanny and beguiling OBX R2 Loudspeaker from Living Voice.

LIVING VOICE
OBX R2





£1,195 ☎ 01753 652669 🌐 www.monrio.com

MONRIO MC 207

A weighty box with weighty sound and no fear of tough speakers

This smart and chunky unit comes from a manufacturer with a good track record for CD players and amplifiers. The MC 207 is a development of an established model, the MC 205, which seems to go back quite a way. The basic specification is pretty much your standard 2005-vintage integrated stereo amp, though some may wish for one or two more inputs than the available four... it does feature a 'direct' mode for power amp duty, however. Looks are nicely distinctive and the standard of finish is good.

Inside the heavy-gauge steel case, the amp is a dual mono design with separate mains transformers for each channel and, for good measure, a third (smaller) one feeding the logic and control sections. Input switching is by relays, while a conventional volume control is mounted where it's needed, keeping signal paths short at the cost of a long steel rod to the front panel knob. It's a very high-quality potentiometer but it's not motorised – so no remote control!

There are clear signs of individual thinking in the design, including a generous three pairs per channel of output transistors (in 'quasi-complementary' configuration) and a vast number of very high speed rectifier diodes, a high-end touch intended to minimise internal interference problems from the power supply. Power rating is typical at 80 watts per channel, but Monrio claims the model is particularly confident with tricky loudspeaker loads, thanks to the plentiful output devices. It's well protected against abuse, and no combination of awkward loads and tricky (music) CDs we could throw at it caused the slightest distress.

SOUND QUALITY

Overall, we had slightly modified rapture with this amplifier. At best it has, as one listener put it, a happy knack of getting the sound "out of the speakers", and it presents music in a lively and engaging manner. However, while its retrieval of detail is pretty good, it never quite



shakes off a feeling of congestion that somewhat mars the listener's involvement, especially with multi-stranded music, which makes much more demands on both replay equipment and listener.

Tonally, the sound is full and rich. There's no obvious sense of bass lift as such, but there's certainly no lack in that department. Just occasionally the bass seems a little short on control, which may be the real key, and this is both a blessing and a curse depending on the nature of the recording and the partnering speakers – a pair of small Spondors proved rather partial to this characteristic, but it might become a bit much with some larger models.

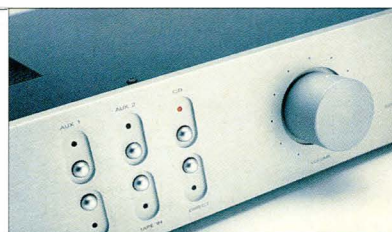
Treble didn't get a single explicit mention from our listening panel, which is almost certainly a good thing. In terms of particular musical genres or styles, solo voices seemed to be the forte of the MC 207, which consistently gave them good, clear rendition. However, any backing along with those voices often suffered from the congestion already mentioned and also rather more image compression than one might hope for. Solo piano held up reasonably well, but didn't entirely satisfy our panel, who found it colored in the bass and lacking detail.

In general, this is a good amplifier. But not, it seems, a great one. **HFC**

VERDICT

SOUND >> 84% <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100%; height: 10px; background: linear-gradient(to right, orange 84%, white 84%);"></div>	An essentially lively character promises much but is slightly undermined by a degree of congestion. The treble performance is notable by not drawing attention to itself. Lack of remote may bother some.
FEATURES >> 62% <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100%; height: 10px; background: linear-gradient(to right, orange 62%, white 62%);"></div>	
BUILD >> 87% <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100%; height: 10px; background: linear-gradient(to right, orange 87%, white 87%);"></div>	
VALUE >> 75% <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100%; height: 10px; background: linear-gradient(to right, orange 75%, white 75%);"></div>	

HI-FI CHOICE
79%
OVERALL SCORE

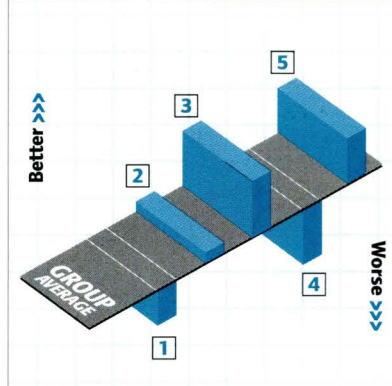


LAB REPORT

Our review sample comfortably exceeded the notional power rating, nearing 100W into 8 ohms and 160W into 4. Bandwidth exceeds the basic audio requirement by over an octave at each end, too. Despite those funky rectifier diodes mentioned, the MC 207's biggest weakness seems to be hum – both straight 50Hz and harmonics and hum modulation. Although the level of both is not frightening, it does at times reach the sort of level where it may just contribute and it could be behind the congestion our listeners identified.

Distortion is slightly below par for the group too, hovering around 0.03% at high and medium power, though it drops off below about 1W output. This is thanks not least to the unusually high standing current that puts the amp into Class A mode for rather more than the usual few milliwatts. Noise (hum apart) is low and dynamic headroom is slightly higher than typical.

HOW IT COMPARES



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

SPECIFICATIONS

Measurement	Rated	Actual
Power output (8 ohms)	80W	95W
Distortion (1 kHz/8 ohms)	0.03%	0.02%
Frequency response (20Hz-20kHz)	±0.01dB	±0.1dB



T 01224 585713
F 01224 584194

441 Holburn Street
Aberdeen AB10 7GU

www.holburnhifi.co.uk

Ex display

CD Players / CD-R Recorders / Hard Disc Recorders

Arcam FMJ CD33 CD Player (Silver)	1349.90	...999.00
Arcam Diva CD93 CD Player (Silver)	979.90	...750.00
AVI Lab Series CD CD Player	1400.00	...1150.00
Classé CDP-100 CD Player	2950.00	...2350.00
Quad 99 CD-P Upsampling CD/DAC	1000.00	...749.00
Wadia 301 CD CD Player /Digital Pre (Silver) ...	3650.00	...2750.00
Wadia 861 CD CD Player /Digital Pre (Black)	7950.00	...6350.00

Amplifiers

Arcam FMJ A32 Amplifier (Silver)	1199.90	...950.00
Classé CA201 Power Amplifier	3195.00	...2500.00
Cyrus Q Power Power Amplifier (Black)	500.00	...380.00
Samuel Johnston PPA100 Power Amplifier	2585.00	...1450.00
Meridian G51 Stereo Receiver	1995.00	...1596.00
Quad 99 Pre Amplifier	749.99	...599.99
Quad 99 Power Amplifier	549.99	...439.99
Quad 909 Power Amplifier	899.99	...799.99

Tuners

Arcam T61 FM /AM Radio(Silver)	229.90	...179.00
Cyrus FMX FM Tuner (Black)	500.00	...400.00

Loudspeakers

Dynaudio Audience 42W Wall Mount Speakers	500.00	...350.00
Dynaudio Audience 72SE Speakers	1750.00	...1550.00
Cyrus CL570 Loudspeakers	850.00	...600.00
Mission 782SE Loudspeakers	899.90	...750.00
Mission Elegante	POA	
Quad 12 Loudspeakers (Birdseye Maple)	499.95	...425.00

DVD Players

Cyrus DVD8 DVD Player (Silver)	1200.00	...950.00
Denon DVD-A1 DVD Audio/Video Player	2499.99	...1249.99
Harman Kardon DVD 2550S DVD Player(Silver)	350.00	...250.00
Harman Kardon DVD 506 LE DVD Player(Silver)	350.00	...250.00
Pioneer DVD656 DVD/DVD-A/SACD (Silver)	399.00	...185.00
Pioneer DVD 747 DVD/DVD-A/SACD (Silver)	950.00	...500.00

AV Amplifiers, Receivers & Processors

Denon AVC-A11SR A/V Amplifier (Gold)	1799.99	...999.99
Denon AVC-A1SR A/V Amplifier (Gold)	2999.99	...1999.99
Harman Kardon AVR 4550 A/V Amplifier (Black)	800.00	...575.00

Audio Visual Loudspeakers

Mission V6c Centre (Cherry)	199.90	...150.00
-----------------------------------	--------	-----------

Home Cinema Projectors

Yamaha LPX500 LCD Projector	3300.00	...1995.00
-----------------------------------	---------	------------

Secondhand

Classé CAP151 Integrated Amp	2195.00	...1200.00
Meridian 588 CD Player	2100.00	...1100.00
Meridian M33 Active Speakers	1560.00	...850.00

Cyrus 7 Integrated Amplifier New Boxed NOW 350.00
Was 700.00
Available from all three Outlets While Stocks Last



NEW

**B&W 800 Series in Stock Ready for
Demonstration at Glasgow Audio**

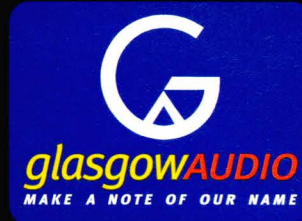
A|V accessorySHOP

HIGH PERFORMANCE HI-FI & HOME THEATRE CABLES & ACCESSORIES

361 Holburn Street
Aberdeen AB10 7FQ

T 01224 585771
F 01224 213492

Buy on line @ www.avaccessoryshop.co.uk



T 0141 332 4707
F 0141 332 0122

135 Gt Western Road
Glasgow G4 9AH

www.glasgowaudio.com

Ex display

CD Players / CD-R Recorders / Hard Disc Recorders

Quad 99 CD CD Player	650.00	...485.00
Quad 99 CD-P Upsampling CD/DAC	1000.00	...749.00
Yamaha CDR-HD1300 mk2 CD Recorder HDD	600.00	...499.00

Amplifiers

Cyrus Pre X Preamplifier (Silver)	1000.00	...745.00
Meridian G51 Stereo Receiver	1995.00	...1596.00

Loudspeakers

Dynaudio Audience 52SE Speakers (Cherry)	950.00	...825.00
Meridian DSP5000 Mk2 (Rosewood)Digital Active	4540.00	...3750.00
Mission Elegante	POA	
Rega Alya Floorstanding Loudspeaker (Cherry) ...	525.00	...325.00

Subwoofers

REL Q400 Subwoofer (Maple)	1100.00	...749.00
REL Studio 3 (Walnut)	4500.00	...2500.00

DVD Players

Arcam DV 88 DVD Player (Silver)	1000.00	...549.00
Harman/Kardon DVD 21 DVD Player	250.00	...175.00
Harman/Kardon DVD 2550S DVD Player	350.00	...249.00
Harman/Kardon DVD 30 DVD Audio	450.00	...345.00
Meridian G91DH DVD Audio AV Controller	3895.00	...3116.00

AV Amplifiers, Receivers & Processors

Arcam AVR 200 DD/DTS AV Receiver (Black)	800.00	...449.00
Cyrus AV8 DD/DTS AV Processor (Silver)	1100.00	...850.00
Denon ADV-1000 DD/DTS AV Receiver /DVD	700.00	...449.00
Denon AVR 3802 DD/DTS AV Receiver (Black)	850.00	...499.00
Harman/Kardon AVR 230 DD/DTS AV Receiver	500.00	...399.00
Harman/Kardon AVR 430 DD/DTS AV Receiver	800.00	...639.00
Harman/Kardon AVR 630 DD/DTS AV Receiver	1000.00	...749.00
Meridian G68ADV Surround Controller	4995.00	...3996.00

Audio Visual Loudspeakers

Mission M5ds (black/boxed)	200.00	...149.00
Mission M7ds (black+silver/boxed)	180.00	...139.00

Home Cinema Projectors

Sim2 Domino 20 DLP Projector (Black)	3750.00	...2700.00
--	---------	------------

Secondhand

Cyrus Pre X Preamplifier (Silver)	595.00	
---	--------	--



£750 ☎ 01423 359054 🌐 www.primare.net

PRIMARE I21

Primare apes its own upmarket models, externally at least...

Primare, the Swedish maker of highly stylish audio electronics, must have worked hard at the new I21. It's physically the largest of the amps in this group, with great looks very much in the family mould, but it comes in at a price that's comfortably lower than all bar the Chinese-built Rotel. Granted, it's pretty sparse on the features front (four inputs, although that will probably satisfy the majority of potential users) but it's as well put together as any here, and is simple to operate, too. Primare also seems to have found just the right feel for the volume control, which is reassuringly robust to the touch.

Looking inside yields a few clues as to how pennies have been shaved off the price, with a low-cost industrial part looking after input switching – without any ill effects that we could discern. The volume control is also electronic, a common enough part being used there which also allows for balance control, while the pair of op-amps are well regarded audio types. Most components are discrete and surface-mounted, with output current passing through a pair of bipolar transistors mounted on a large internal heatsink. A single mains transformer is used, but it appears to have separate windings for each channel, making the amp very nearly true dual mono. The display can be dimmed via the remote control.

SOUND QUALITY

Illustrating, not for the first time, that there is always room for personal taste, even with such apparently 'simple' devices as stereo amplifiers, this one caused something of a division among our listening panel. One listener found it a shade passionless and slightly short on detail, while the other two were more inclined to place it among the top two or three of the group. Taking the known preferences of said listeners into account, this is an amp that will tend to please you better if you value liveliness and energy above intimate detail and insight. It's not that it's badly lacking in the latter



department, but at least a couple of the alternatives here can better it in those terms.

For instance, it was praised in the Michael Jackson track above any of the others for its involvement and its ability to bring on a smile. In the Damien Rice track its vocal prowess was liked by one and all, though there was a general feeling that the bass seemed a little loose or boomy. Here, however, the biggest discrepancy came to light between descriptions of the musical communication, varying from highly favourable to rather unimpressed. In our opera excerpt, with its multi-layered detail, the chorus was felt to be pretty well portrayed as a whole, though a little lacking in the individualisation of the singers. Solo piano fared well too, with all listeners thinking it sounded natural, though here again there was some variation – one listener described it as subdued, while another liked it best of the bunch.

Tonally this amp seems to have no specific flaws, with bass and treble both cleanly extended, while soundstaging is secure, just lacking a little in beyond-the-speaker extension. We also felt that performance with tricky speakers transcended expectations and all things considered this Primare amp, while not perfect, comes with a very strong recommendation. **HFC**

VERDICT

SOUND >> 86%	Despite some slight reservations regarding ultimate levels of detail, the generally lively character of this amp can easily endear it, especially if you value energy over insight. Great looks and build quality, too.
FEATURES >> 75%	
BUILD >> 89%	
VALUE >> 90%	

88%
OVERALL SCORE

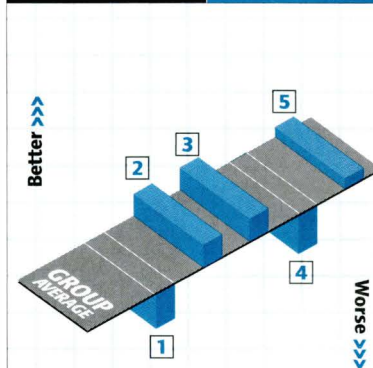


LAB REPORT

Primare's rating is 75W into 8 ohms, which seems fair – in fact, we got 81W. The increase when only one channel is driven is minimal, but into 4 ohms power very nearly doubles, and surprisingly there seems to be no dynamic headroom available, suggesting clipping is determined upstream and not at the output.

Bandwidth extends upwards to over 60kHz and downwards below 3Hz for tight 1dB limits. The electronic switching and volume controls will happily handle inputs to at least 4V, the highest we've seen from sane single-ended sources. Distortion is pretty low if not vanishing, while hum can be a problem with some sources, suggesting a minor grounding problem with the amp. Interestingly, intermodulation distortion shows next to no phase modulation. This is a new test of as yet uncertain correlation (see *Techno*, p21) but it's always nice to know things at least might be correct!

HOW IT COMPARES



- 1] Dynamic power >> -30%
- 2] Frequency response >> +20%
- 3] Dynamic range >> +20%
- 4] Distortion >> -35%
- 5] Output impedance >> +10%

SPECIFICATIONS

Measurement	Rated	Actual
Power output (8 ohms)	75W	81W
Distortion (1 kHz/8 ohms)	0.05%	0.015%
Frequency response (20Hz-20kHz)	-	±0.1dB



a Eclipse-TD 7122.

These unusually shaped loudspeakers produce imaging and soundstaging that can equal that achieved with the best speakers costing several times their price. Very sharp focus, very fast and probably the best transients we have heard. Virtually no colouration, a most revealing loudspeaker. With their custom stand £4000 a pair.

b Ayre Acoustics K-1 and V-1.

This pre-power combination offers an exceptionally high level of transparency and deep soundstage for the price. With a characteristically sharp focussed image, the fully balanced circuits offer a very neutral tonal balance. On a par with the best amplifiers we have heard. K-1 pre-amplifier £4995. V-1 power amplifier (200wpc) £6495.



c Conrad-johnson ACT 2 and Premier 350.

This combination offers an exceptionally transparent and natural sound producing a very 3 dimensional, large soundstage. A reference system. ACT 2 valve pre-amplifier £13000. Premier 350 power amplifier (350wpc) £8000.



d Thiel 2.4 loudspeakers.

This speaker is rapidly becoming one of our best selling components. A very coherent sound producing a realistic, large soundstage. Tonal balance is very natural. Dynamics, at both macro and micro level, are accurately reproduced. An innovative design with a beautiful finish. Standard wood veneers £3495.



e At last we have heard some universal disc players that perform well and without compromise to the standard CD replay. The 3 units we have on offer will compare extremely favourably with any regular CD-only player at their respective price points. The extra replay formats available, DVD, DVD-A, SACD, MP3, etc, can be counted as a bonus. *Top to bottom:*

Ayre C-5xe. A universal stereo player, 2-channel only. By avoiding any video replay in the circuits, this results in a no compromise universal audio player that has an exceptional sound. Extremely natural tonal balance with a very focussed, deep soundstage. Up with the very best CD players we have heard, a remarkable achievement at £4495.

McCormack UDP-1. This player offers full multi-channel outputs as well as 2-channel replay. A neutral to warm sound with a big soundstage. Exceptional value at £3200.

Bel Canto Player PL-1. A high performance universal player. Leaving aside the universal bits, this is one of the best sounding CD players we have heard. It produces a large, believable soundstage and has extremely good bass character. Player PL-1 Audio £6990. DCDi and high performance DVI, SDI available as options at extra cost.

AMPHION ▶ AUDIO PHYSIC ▶ AVALON ▶ AYRE ACOUSTICS ▶ BEL CANTO ▶ BENZ-MICRO ▶ CARDAS ▶ CLEARAUDIO ▶ CONRAD-JOHNSON ▶ DALI ▶ EAR/YOSHINO ▶ ECLIPSE-TD
FINAL ▶ GRAAF ▶ LYRA ▶ MCINTOSH ▶ MONO PULSE ▶ NORDOST ▶ NOTTINGHAM ANALOGUE ▶ PAGODE ▶ PATHOS ▶ QUADRASPIRE ▶ RESOLUTION AUDIO ▶ ROGUE AUDIO
SME ▶ SHUN MOOK ▶ SUGDEN ▶ THIEL ▶ TRANSFIGURATION ▶ UNISON RESEARCH ▶ VELODYNE ▶ VIRTUAL DYNAMICS ▶ WADIA ▶ WHEST AUDIO

Located approximately 15 minutes drive from either M4/Junction 12 or M3/Junction 6 with free and easy parking outside the building.

We have a home evaluation scheme for those who might find this method more convenient.

7 Comet House
Calleva Park
Aldermaston
Reading
Berkshire RG7 8JA

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: www.audioconsultants.co.uk



£499 ☎ 01903 221800 🌐 www.rotel.com

ROTEL RA-03

A plucky oriental contender, punching above its weight

We reviewed this amp on its own back in *HFC* 265, when we found plenty about it to like – but that was in the context of £500 amps. Here, it's up against models costing several hundred pounds more. Slightly unfair, perhaps... but life's like that! Joking apart, do the economies that come with Far Eastern manufacture allow a bigger player like Rotel to blow away dearer competition? It's a question we were keen to answer.

With the proliferation of things to twiddle on the front panel, the looks are decidedly mass-market, as is the relatively flimsy case. As before, we're not keen on the minute knobs on the speaker switch and tone controls, the only salvation being that one is unlikely to use them often. Minor irritations like that aside, the overriding impression is that Rotel has taken care to build an amplifier that meets the expectations of the keen modern audiophile. Good quality components, plentiful power on tap (properly supported by twinned output transistors and plenty of heatsink area), decent socketry – it's all there. Two sets of speakers can be independently switched, while inputs run to five at line level plus a moving-magnet phono stage.

Input switching is electronic, while the volume control is a motorised mechanical potentiometer. A single large toroidal mains transformer runs it all, with considerably enhanced power supply capacitance compared with most mass-market amps.

SOUND QUALITY

There was very little disagreement between our listeners with regard to what this amplifier sounds like, though the extent to which its characteristics appealed varied a little. In essence, it is clearly a relatively forward and upfront amp with a great sense of fun. All our listeners appreciated that fact, while noting that in terms of retrieval of fine detail, there was some room for improvement if the RA-03 was fully to rival the best in the group.



If you like big-scale rock and party sounds, you'll love the RA-03. There's plenty of dynamic contrast on tap and a nice big scale, as long as you don't object to the music occasionally seeming to spill forward from where one expects the image to be. If, however, you worry about tonal accuracy and differentiation between instruments, you may find this Rotel frustrating.

There's a lack of openness, a small residual veiling of fine details, and some thickness in the upper bass, which combine to lessen its musical communication. None of these is terribly serious, but it does seem that the saving in cash is not completely cost-free in performance terms. For whatever reason, recordings with a natural acoustic space around the instruments seem the most obviously compromised, while those employing studio tricks benefit from the amp's energy.

Stereo imaging is not quite perfect, noticeably compressed front-to-back and a little squashed sideways too. Note, by the way, that the phono stage (often an integrated's Achilles heel) is considerably better than average – nicely clear and detailed compared with most. We wouldn't want to condemn this amp but, while it performs honourably, it doesn't leap ahead of its competition. **HFC**

VERDICT

SOUND >> 81% 	The significantly lower price is reflected in performance that has limitations in tonal accuracy and imaging, but this amp is capable and remains good value. This may not be the amp for the refinement freak, though.
FEATURES >> 85% 	
BUILD >> 80% 	
VALUE >> 86% 	

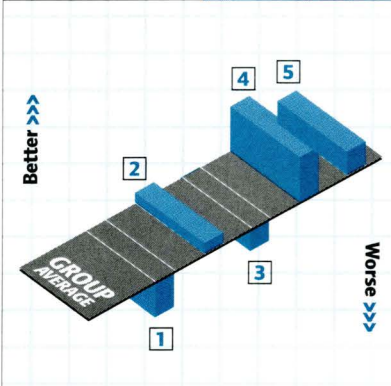
HI-CHOICE
OVERALL SCORE 83%



LAB REPORT

The 70W rating is – just – the lowest in the group, but measured power of 80W only lags behind the highest-rated by about 1dB and single-channel output reaches 95W (150W into 4 ohms). Treble extension is beyond reproach, with a drop of less than 1dB at 100kHz – the notional upper limit of SACD – while bass reaches to 5Hz. The phono stage manages 15Hz-40kHz, with a small lift in the bass. DC offset is higher than most at about 30mV, just bordering on the level where it can affect the performance of some speakers. Output impedance is very low, giving a midband damping factor of about 250, while noise is moderate. Hum is very low, but hum modulation is not quite vanishing in level and includes a degree of phase modulation. Distortion is among the best of the group, barely reaching 0.01% under worst-case conditions and more like 0.02% in the midband. Distortion into a real loudspeaker is also exceptionally low.

HOW IT COMPARES



- 1] Dynamic power >> -30%
- 2] Frequency response >> +10%
- 3] Dynamic range >> -20%
- 4] Distortion >> +40%
- 5] Output impedance >> +20%

SPECIFICATIONS

Measurement	Rated	Actual
Power output (8 ohms)	70W	81W
Distortion (1 kHz/8 ohms)	0.03%	0.005%
Frequency response (20Hz-20kHz)	-	±0.2dB

CONCLUSIONS

This mid-market line-up shows greater diversity of performance than more up-market groupings

Our last amplifiers group, in HFC 266, ended on a very upbeat note. This time round, there's a little more variation between them.

They all put out a healthy dose of power under real-world circumstances and they all address the basic sonic criteria with confidence. It's just that differences are more obvious, revealed not least by a greater degree of unanimity between members of our 'blind' listening panel. If three experienced listeners all hear the same characteristics in an amp,

unprompted, they're probably not imagining it!

That means that there's all the more to be gained by examining our conclusions and then having a listen for yourself. Find out how the various subtle foibles of each model strike your ear – do you really miss excitement in the Micromega, or do you find it the epitome of civilised sound? Does the Monrio's bass excite you beyond words, or do you find its congestion a major annoyance?

Chances are, your reactions won't be quite that strong, but it's

sometimes surprising how forcefully a small deviation from perfection can affect one's listening pleasure. We had some very enjoyable times with all of these amps, but in the end found the Arcam and Primare perhaps the most all-round satisfactory, even while recognising a slight lack of precision in the latter.

The Exposure was a hit as part of a pre-/power duo in an earlier group test and receives an honourable mention here. Sadly, it was handicapped by an odd bit of electronic bad temper this time.

The Micromega, too, turned in a more than competent performance and has a trump card in terms of its multichannel ability, a useful add-on which could aid in trying to integrate 'proper' audio with home cinema. It's small and neat for the power rating too. Monrio's MC 207 left us unmoved despite an essentially lively manner, but it's still well worth a try if you've no need for more than a basic feature set, while the Rotel RA-03 made a highly creditable showing in company of models up to 140 per cent above its modest price. **HFC**

TRY THEM WITH THESE

CD PLAYERS

CAMBRIDGE AZUR 640C £250

This budget player offers some real sophistication and insight.

ARCAM CD36 £1,400

This recent arrival has near-perfect neutrality and astonishing detail.

SPEAKERS

PMC GB1 £995

The uncoloured sound of this small floorstander could be an ideal match.

SPENDOR S6E £1,495

A satisfyingly big sound but with more finesse than one might at first expect.

HINTS AND TIPS

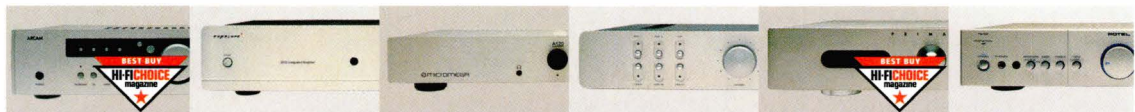
» Don't stack equipment on an amplifier – you could end up with overheating problems.

» Use decent cables in and out, and make sure that speaker cables are not frayed. Tighten screw-down speaker terminals from time to time.

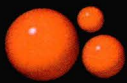
» Use standby in preference to the mains switch, unless the amp will be off for a couple of days at least.

» Amps are seldom electrically microphonic, but the casework can resonate audibly. A few damping devices can work wonders.

INTEGRATED AMPLIFIERS AT A GLANCE



MAKE MODEL	Arcam DiVA A90	Exposure 3010 Integrated	Micromega A-120	Monrio MC 207	Primare 121	Rotel RA-03
PRICE	£850	£1,000	£899	£1,195	£750	£499
SOUND						
FEATURES						
BUILD						
VALUE						
OVERALL						
CONCLUSION	A great sonic all-rounder with handy features, smart looks and good build – can't lose!	Full-bodied and enjoyable sound. Phono stage well worth the extra £200.	Small, neat and very well-specified, with detailed though slightly restrained sound.	Basically lively but a little prone to congestion and occasional bass looseness	Energetic sound, with just a little veiling of detail at times. Sounds much like its bigger brother for less.	Does all the basics commendably, only losing out in imaging and fine detail to dearer competition.
KEY FEATURES						
LINE INPUTS	7	5	7	5	4	5
TAPE OUTPUTS	2	1	1	1	1	1
PHONO INPUT	Optional	Optional	Yes (MM)	No	No	Yes (MM)
SIZE (WxHxD)	43.5x10x34cm	44x11.5x 0cm	43x7x30cm	43x9.5x33.5cm	43x10x38.5cm	43.5x9x34cm
WEIGHT	9kg	11kg	8kg	12kg	13.5kg	7.7kg
REMOTE CONTROL	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
BALANCED INPUT	No	No	No	No	No	No
LAB CONCLUSIONS E = EXCELLENT • G = GOOD • A = AVERAGE • P = POOR						
CLIP POINT (8 OHM)	29V G	28V G	28V G	27.5V G	25.5V A	25.5V A
FREQUENCY RESPONSE	±0.1dB E	±0.4dB G	±1dB A	±0.1dB E	±0.1dB E	±0.2dB G
DYNAMIC RANGE	101dB E	97dB G	92dB A	103dB E	101dB E	97dB G
DISTORTION	0.003% E	0.008% E	0.015% G	0.02% G	0.015% G	0.005% E
OUTPUT IMPEDANCE	0.07 ohm G	0.25 ohm A	0.045 ohm G	0.02 ohm E	0.04 ohm G	0.03 ohm E

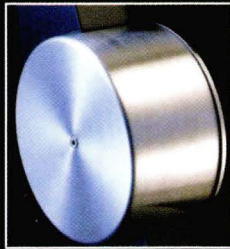


ANTHONY GALLO
ACOUSTICS

The new Reference 3 with CDT II™ Tweeter Technology

Anthony Gallo isn't one to follow the crowd, a characteristic he shares with the people who buy his loudspeakers.

His latest speaker design, the Reference 3, is rewriting the price versus performance equation. So much so in fact that influential U.S. publication *The Absolute Sound* have bestowed on it their ultimate honour - product of the year.



"Gallo's Reference 3's are rewriting the book on value in high-end loudspeakers, making accessible a level of performance that might previously have been far beyond the reach of most of us."
The Absolute Sound

For further information or to locate your nearest dealer, please visit our website

www.anthonygallo.co.uk

tel. 0870 350 1348

nonconformist

adj. an individual who does not comply with conventional norms or socially approved patterns of behavior or thought

Reference 3 - Stainless Steel
suggested price £2400 per pair

DIRECT DEBIT

just **£7.41** every 3 months!

For the latest overseas subscription offers go to:
www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/HFC/P010

PRIORITY SUBSCRIPTION ORDER FORM



I WOULD LIKE TO SUBSCRIBE TO HI-FI CHOICE MAGAZINE BY DIRECT DEBIT AND CLAIM MY FREE SENNHEISER HD 465 HEADPHONES

YOUR DETAILS (BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE)

Title _____ First Name _____ Surname _____

Address _____

Post code _____ Country _____

Tel no. (inc. code) _____

Email address _____

Please indicate if you do NOT wish to receive relevant information about special offers or products/services from *Hi-Fi Choice*, Future Publishing or any of its sister companies by post or telephone Please indicate if you do NOT wish us to pass your details on to other carefully selected companies to enable them to contact you about their products/services by post or phone

We will use the contact details supplied to communicate with you about your *Hi-Fi Choice* subscription. We'd also like to keep you up to date with any special offers or new products/services that may be of interest. If you're happy for *Hi-Fi Choice*, Future Publishing and its sister companies to contact you by email, indicate here: If you're also happy for us to pass your details on to carefully selected companies so they can send you relevant information about their products/services by email, please indicate here:

Terms and conditions: In the event that stock runs out, *Hi-Fi Choice* magazine reserves the right to send an alternative gift to the same value or extra issues of the magazine to the value of the gift. Offer for UK subscribers only. This is a UK direct debit offer only.

Media Code: P009 Offer ends: 19/10/2005

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay Direct Debits.



Future Publishing Ltd,
Cary Court, Somerton,
Somerset TA11 6BR



Originator's Identification Number

7 6 8 1 9 5

Please send this form to address shown

1. Name and full postal address of your bank or building society branch

To: The Manager _____
_____ Bank/Building Society
Address _____
_____ Post code _____

2. Name(s) of account holder(s) _____

3. Branch sort code (from the top right-hand corner of your cheque) _____

4. Bank or building society account number _____

5. Instruction to your bank or building society

Please pay Future Publishing direct debits from the account detailed on this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Future Publishing and if so, details will be passed electronically to my bank or building society.

Signature(s) _____ Date _____

Ref No (Office use only) _____

Banks and building societies may not accept direct debit Instructions for some types of account.

BENEFITS

- ▶ Save £1.62 off the shop price of every issue!
- ▶ Get your FREE pair of Sennheiser HD 465 headphones worth £50 when you subscribe! HURRY! This offer is limited!
- ▶ 13 issues a year delivered direct to your door – no hassle!
- ▶ Free P&P in the UK!

HOW TO SUBSCRIBE

- ▶ Call **0870 837 4722** quoting code P009
- ▶ Go online to: www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/HFC/P009 for overseas go to: www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/HFC/P010
- ▶ Complete the form opposite and send to:
**Hi-Fi Choice Magazine,
Future Publishing Ltd,
FREEPOST RLSC-SXSE-SKKT,
Unit 4, Tower House,
Sovereign Park,
Market Harborough,
Leicestershire, LE16 9EF**

When you subscribe to **HI-FI CHOICE** you don't just get a hefty discount off the normal shop price – this month you'll also receive a free pair of Sennheiser HD 465 headphones worth £50! This open-back design delivers pin-sharp sound from 18Hz to beyond 21kHz, yet they weigh just 220g, ensuring your ears' long-term comfort. As you'd expect from Sennheiser, these are 'phones with real hi-fi credentials, perfect for plugging yourself into your own private musical universe at home. And they make a fantastic upgrade for music on the move too. In short, they could be the answer to your headphone prayers, but stocks are strictly limited – so hurry!

For further information:

☎ 01494 551551 🌐 www.sennheiser.co.uk

GREAT SUBSCRIPTION OFFER!

SAVE 36%

**AND GET A FREE PAIR OF
SENNHEISER HEADPHONES
WORTH £50!**

HURRY!
LIMITED OFFER SO
ACT NOW!

**ORDER
HOTLINE**
0870 837
4722

HD 465

SENNHEISER

SENNHEISER

Choice Bits is the easy way to buy the best audio accessories available today. Simply pick up the phone, order online, drop us an email or fill out the order form opposite and pop it in the post. It couldn't be simpler!

Welcome to our new, expanded Choice Bits accessories shop. Every month, our highly-trained audio experts trawl the world of hi-fi for the freshest goodies and the finest accessories, all perfect to help bring the most out of your system and each one ready to be delivered straight to your door.

This issue we're featuring the brilliant SID (Sound Improvement Disc) as our special *Star Buy*, along with a further nine *Best Buy* recommendations for the discerning audio enthusiast. For our full selection of high-quality hi-fi accessories, visit our dedicated website: www.choicebits.co.uk.



SID – Sound Improvement Disc

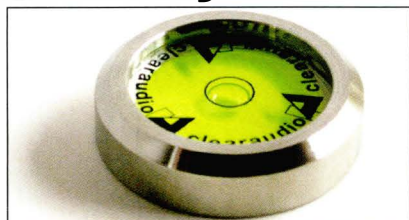
The less a CD player's error correction circuitry is used, the 'truer' the signal. The Sound Improvement Disc aids CD replay in several ways. First, it acts as a stabilising mat – CDs are not always pressed perfectly,

so when discs spin at high-speed, there can be a slight 'wobble'. By damping this wobble, the CD player's laser reader does not have to continually re-focus on a disc. Secondly, it cancels out refracted laser light to provide an even intensity of light.

There are two versions of the Sound Improvement Disc. SID 14 suits draw-loading Philips-based transports, while SID 15 suits Pioneer 'turntable' transports, Meridian 505 and 508 players and most top loaders. These include models by CEC, Theta, Spectral, Jadis JP1, Einstein, Berendsen CD1 and the Cambridge Audio D300 and D500 players.

ONLY £17.95

Best Buy Accessories



Clearaudio Deluxe Bubble Level

Use Clearaudio's high-quality stainless steel bubble level to ensure your turntable is lined up.

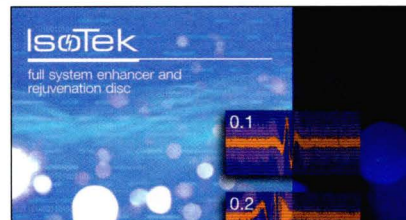
Price: £21.95



Clearlight Audio RDC Cone Cups

Made from the revolutionary RDC compound, use the Cups to improve spike and cone sound.

Price: £19.95 (set of four)



Isotek Full System Enhancer Disc

Our top-selling burn-in and demagnetisation disc is a must-have for any CD or DVD-based system.

Price: £14.95



L'Art du Son Cleaning Liquid

Alcohol-free record cleaning fluid. This biodegradable solution will clean 500 records.

Price: £27.95



Furutech IEC Power Connector

Simply adding this connector to your mains leads improves the sound of your system.

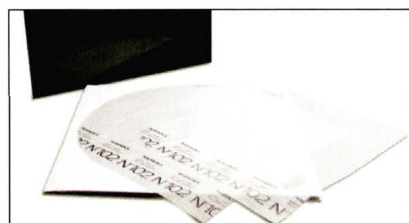
Price: £59.95



Disco Antistat Record Cleaner

Transform your dusty LPs with this classic wet cleaning system. Highly recommended.

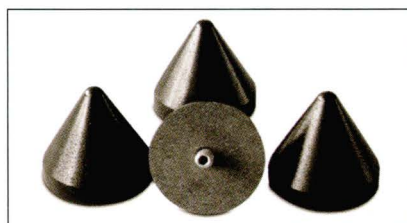
Price: £44.95



Nagaoka Anti-Static Record Sleeves

Quite simply, the best LP inner sleeves made. The audiophile's choice. Sold in packs of 50.

Price: £14.95 (pack of 50)



Clearlight Audio RDC 2 Cones

Used under CD players, RDC cones are the perfect balance of size, cost and performance.

Price: £29.95 (set of four)



LAST Stylus Cleaner

Discs sound better and are less likely to be damaged if your stylus is completely clean.

Price: £19.95

ANALOGUE ACCESSORIES

Cardas 180g Frequency Sweep LP	£21.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clearaudio Stroboscopic Test Record	£24.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clearaudio Stroboscopic Light	£69.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clearaudio Deluxe Bubble Level	£21.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clearaudio Clever Record Clamp	£12.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clearaudio Quadra Record Clamp	£69.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clearlight Audio (RDC) Record Puck	£54.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
KAB Strobe Disc & Light	£79.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Loricraft Record Mat	£49.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Michell Engineering Record Clamp	£22.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Michell Universal Dust Cover	£44.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Michell Techno Weight	£67.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Milty Zerostat	£37.50	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mobile Fidelity GeoDisc	£44.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ortofon T Force Tracking Force Gauge	£7.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pebbles 'The Weight' Rega Modification	£67.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Polaris Plus Stylus Alignment Gauge	£5.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pro-Ject Bubble Level	£14.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ringmat's How to Set Up A Turntable	£7.50	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ringmat Developments The Ringmat	£49.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ringmat Anniversary Ringmat	£69.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shure Stylus Force Gauge	£24.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
'The Producer's Cut' Test LP	£24.95	<input type="checkbox"/>

AUDIO BOOKS

The Complete Guide To High-End Audio	£24.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
How To Set Up And Fine Tune A Turntable	£7.50	<input type="checkbox"/>
The LP is Back	£9.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Home theatre For Everyone	£19.95	<input type="checkbox"/>

DIGITAL ACCESSORIES

Allsop DVD Optimiser/Laser Lens Cleaner	£19.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
AudioPrism CD Blacklight(tm)	£39.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
AVIA Home Theatre Set-Up & Calibration	£34.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
A-Z CD Clips	£7.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bedini Hand Held Clarifier MkII	£69.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Compact Dynamics CD Plus	£14.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Compact Dynamics CD UpGrade	£14.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Densen DeMagic CD	£11.95	<input type="checkbox"/>

Digital Video Essentials (PAL) DVD Set-Up Disc	£19.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Furutech RD-2 Disc Demagnetizer	£199.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lasertrack CD2000 Set-Up Disc	£19.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marigo Orpheus CD Crossbow Mat	£79.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mobile Fidelity ULTRADISC CD-R (Qty 5)	£14.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opus3 Showcase (HDCD)	£14.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Richard Black's U.S.H.E.R. CD	£14.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
IsoTek System Enhancer, DeMag & Burn-In CD	£14.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Order both the above discs for only	£21.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ringmat The Statmat MkII	£19.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sound Improvement Disc (Model 14/ 15)	£17.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ultra Burn-In CD3000	£24.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
XLO Reference Test & Burn-In CD	£24.95	<input type="checkbox"/>

CARE/ CLEANING PRODUCTS

Allsop Carbon Edge Laser Lens Cleaner	£14.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Allsop CD & DVD Fast Wipes	£4.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Allsop CD Scratch Repair Kit	£12.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Allsop Radial CD Cleaner	£10.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clearaudio Carbon Fibre Record Brush	£13.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
DeoxIT Contact Cleaner (200ml)	£13.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Goldring Exstatic Deluxe Record Brush	£14.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Goldring Exstatic Record Sleeves	£11.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Knosti Disco Antistat Record Cleaner	£44.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Okki Nokki Vacuum Record Cleaner	£225.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
I'Art du Son Record Cleaner (5Litres)	£27.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Last All-Purpose Record Cleaner	£39.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Last Record Preservative	£39.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Last Stylus Cleaner	£19.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Last Stylus Treatment	£29.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lyra SPT Stylus Cleaner	£24.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nagaoka Antistatic Record Inner Sleeves (50)	£14.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Optrix CD Cleaner & Clarifier	£16.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
ProGold Contact Enhancer (ProGold 20ml)	£13.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unbranded Inner Sleeves (Qty 100)	£24.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Walker Audio Super Silver Treatment	£59.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nordost Black Knight 0.6M RCA Interconnect	£49.00	<input type="checkbox"/>

ISOLATION RACKS AND CONES

Clearlight Audio RDC Aspekt Rack Black 4 Shelf	£549.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clearlight Audio RDC 1 Cones (Qty 4)	£39.95	<input type="checkbox"/>

Clearlight Audio RDC 2 Cones (Qty 4)	£29.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clearlight Audio RDC Cone Cups (Qty 4)	£19.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clearlight Audio RDC 3 Cones (Qty 4)	£44.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clearlight Audio RDC 5 Cones (Qty 4)	£19.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clearlight Audio RDC Combi Base (Qty 4)	£49.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clearlight Audio RDC SPP Platform	£109.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
IXOS Sorbothane Feet (Qty 4)	£19.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nordost Pulsar Points (Aluminium) (Qty 4)	£54.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spectral FoculPods Support Systems (Qty 4)	£14.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spectral Polipods Support Systems (Qty 8)	£14.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Townshend 3D Seismic Isolation Platform	£234.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Voodoo AIRTEK (430x360mm/20kg)	£234.95	<input type="checkbox"/>

MAINS CABLES AND CONDITIONERS

IsoTek Premium Mains Cable (1.5M)	£49.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
IsoTek Elite Mains Cable (1.5M)	£79.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
IsoTek Optimum Mains Cable (1.5M)	£129.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nordost Shiva Mains Cable (2.0M)	£220.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nordost Vishnu Mains Cable (2.0M)	£450.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nordost Brahma Reference Mains Cable (2.0M)	£895.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nordost Valhalla Reference Mains Cable (2.0M)	£1750.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
Furutech Ultimate Rhodium Fuse	£32.50	<input type="checkbox"/>
Furutech FI-15 IEC Connector (24ct Gold)	£19.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Furutech FI-11 Round Bodied IEC (24ct Gold)	£29.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Furutech FI-1363 IEC Connector (24ct Gold)	£59.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
IsoTek IsoPlug	£29.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
IsoTek NeoPlug	£49.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
IsoTek GII Solus	£295.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
IsoTek GII Multi-4-Way	£155.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
IsoTek GII Multi-6-Way	£185.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
IsoTek GII Multi-8-Way	£220.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
IsoTek GII Gemini-6-Way (distribution strip)	£260.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
IsoTek GII Mini Sub/Vision	£495.00 / £549.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
IsoTek GII Titan	£1425	<input type="checkbox"/>
IsoTek GII Nova	£1495	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kemp Electronics Power Strip 4-Way	£324.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kemp Electronics Power Strip 6-Way	£375.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kemp Electronics Power Strip 8-Way	£424.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nordost THOR by IsoTek	£1595.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
V.D.H. Polarity Tester	£17.50	<input type="checkbox"/>
WattGate 320 IEC Connector (Black)	£18.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
WattGate 320I HC (16Amp)	£28.95	<input type="checkbox"/>

 **0870 240 7228**  **www.choicebits.co.uk**

ORDER FORM

Orders can also be placed online: www.choicebits.co.uk

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____ Tel: _____

Cheque/postal order enclosed for £ _____ made payable to Choice Bits

Or please charge my Visa/Mastercard/Amex/Switch Card number:

Signature _____

Valid From _____ Expires _____ Issue number (Switch) _____

How to order:

Simply complete this order form, fill in your details and send it to: P.O. Box 5996, Newbury RG20 4XH

Alternatively: give us a call on: 0870 240 7228

email: orders@choicebits.co.uk

Order online: www.choicebits.co.uk

UK postage:

Postage is £2.00 for the first item and £1.00 thereafter. All Prices include VAT at 17.5%.

European/ International sales:

Overseas sales are welcome – please call for a postage quotation. Sales outside the EU are VAT exclusive.

This service is operated by hififorsale.com Ltd (registered address) trading as Choice Bits under license from Future Publishing Ltd. Your order will be fulfilled by hififorsale.



HOME ENTERTAINMENT SHOW

RENAISSANCE MANCHESTER HOTEL

Opposite No1 Deansgate

**The North of England's LARGEST
Sound & Vision Show**

Retail sponsor

Practical Hi-Fi

In association with



SEE IT • HEAR IT • BUY IT

Saturday 29 Oct 9.30am-5.30pm

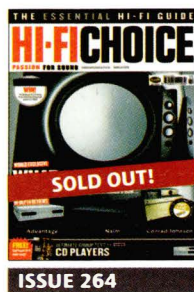
Sunday 30 Oct 10.00am-5.00pm

Adults £6 • Children FREE (with a paying Adult)

www.home-entertainment-show.co.uk

**Featuring: PIONEER • DENON • PANASONIC
SONY • ACOUSTIC ENERGY • HARMAN
KEF • SHARP • FUJITSU • YAMAHA • TEAC
CYRUS • AUDIOLAB plus many more**

HI-FI CHOICE BACK ISSUES



YOUR DETAILS

Name _____
 Address _____

 _____ Postcode _____
 Email address _____
 Card number _____
 Expiry date _____
 Signature _____

SEND YOUR ORDER TO

UK READERS: Hi-Fi Choice back issues, FREEPOST BS4900, Somerton, Somerset, TA11 6BR
 OVERSEAS READERS: Hi-Fi Choice back issues, Cary Court, Somerton, Somerset, TA11 6TB, UK

WHICH ISSUE(S) DO YOU REQUIRE?

MONTH & YEAR	ISSUE NUMBER	AMOUNT

HOW WILL YOU BE PAYING?

Make cheques/POs payable to Future Publishing Ltd. (PLEASE TICK RELEVANT BOX)

CHEQUE
 MASTERCARD
 MAESTRO
 VISA
 POSTAL ORDER

HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

UK £4.00 (per issue), Overseas £6.95 (per issue)

BACK ISSUES

Back issues are available by mail order (as long as stocks remain). They cost £4.00 (UK) or £6.95 (overseas). Both prices include p&p. You can order by phone on 0870 444 8650 – we accept Mastercard and Visa credit cards, and Maestro debit cards. Alternatively, send a cheque or PO made payable to Future Publishing Ltd. Please fill in your details on the left of this form.

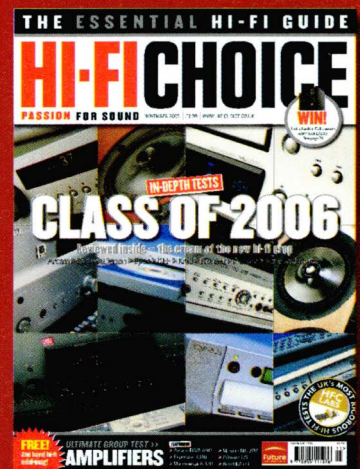
ORDER A REVIEW REPRINT

If you're interested in an HFC review of an older component and the back issue has sold out, we can usually send photocopies of individual reviews to any UK address for a flat fee (inc. p&p) of £5 per review. You must know in which issue the original review appeared; we are unable to search back issues for old reviews.

Please send a written request, enclosing a cheque for £5 made payable to Future Publishing Ltd, to:
 Hi-Fi Choice Reprint Service,
 Future Publishing, 99 Baker Street,
 London, W1U 6FP.

PLEASE NOTE: THIS SERVICE IS ONLY FOR OTHERWISE UNOBTAINABLE REVIEWS

Why not subscribe to Hi-Fi Choice?



See page 86 for more details...

emotion

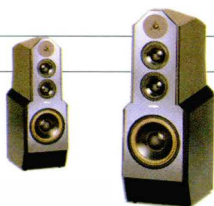
the long-awaited new loudspeaker

art loudspeakers

tel/fax +44 (0)1292 319 416 | contact@loudspeaker-art.com | www.loudspeaker-art.com

EGGLESTON WORKS

The underlying goal of all EgglestonWorks loudspeakers is to strike a powerful, emotional chord naturally present in live music performance. To accomplish this, EgglestonWorks takes a rather unusual approach that relies to a lesser extent on engineering measurements and mathematical equations. At the core of their innovation is a process passed down through two generations which focuses on understanding how sound created by live musical instrumentation can be used as a tool in the critical stages of loudspeaker design.



ANDRA II

The original Andra speaker system not only won the coveted "Speaker of the Year" by Stereophile in 1997, it also created a new awareness that music reproduction systems have to be engineered with "emotion" as a design target, not just "hard" specifications.

The forward-thinking R&D program here at EgglestonWorks has brought several important advances to the design and sound of the Andra, which is so remarkably improved that it has earned a MK II designation

The final result is an instrument crafted to play music like no other speaker on earth...

ANDRA II.



Audiophilia are exclusive UK distributors for:

Cable Tower supports
Jeff Rowland amplifiers
Magan Cables
Walker Audio turntable & acc.

Dealer enquiries
very welcome

0208 286 8555
info@audiophilia.co.uk
www.audiophilia.co.uk



Monkey says visit:



Droplet CDP 5.0

www.acacoustics.co.uk
for the fullest range
of Consonance audio
products on permanent
demonstration in
London.



Tempest pre-amplifier

www.odysseyaudiogb.com
for American solid
state amplification with
transparent pricing
available nationwide.

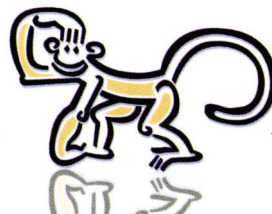
Please call or email to
arrange a demonstration.

"Great Sound From Neasden"

acacoustics
47 Chartley Avenue
Neasden
London
NW2 7QY

020 8830 6509

andrew@acacoustics.co.uk
www.acacoustics.co.uk



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 multichannel gear you can buy. Here, you'll find our favourite current products listed under easy to use categories, plus 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 stringent 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.

SOURCE COMPONENTS

- 94 CD PLAYERS
- 96 DVD PLAYERS
- 98 VINYL
- 101 RADIO TUNERS
- 102 DIGITAL RECORDERS

AMPLIFIERS

- 110 STEREO AMPS
- 112 MULTICHANNEL AV AMPS

LOUDSPEAKERS

- 116 STEREO SPEAKERS
- 120 MULTICHANNEL SPEAKER PACKAGES

ANCILLARIES

- 123 HEADPHONES
- 125 CABLES
- 127 STANDS AND SUPPORTS
- 129 GLOSSARY

DEALER CLASSIFIED

- 130 DEALER GUIDE
- 136 DEALER DIRECTORY

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 to 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 192 kHz.

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.



Cyrus CD8x £1,000

The latest diminutive CD spinner from Cyrus is an absolute stunner. Highly detailed and supremely musical, it's more than a match for many more outwardly exotic machines.

Our favourite CD PLAYERS

BB BEST BUY **EC** EDITOR'S CHOICE

Audio-only CD and SACD players

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS						ISSUE NUMBER
				SACD COMPATIBLE	ELEC DIG OUT	OPT DIG OUT	CD-RW COMPATIBLE	CD TEXT	BAL ANALOGUE OUT	
UP TO £1,000										
BB	Arcam DIVA CD73T	400	Refined and articulate, smooth and dynamic – a finely judged balance for budget to mid-price systems	●	●	●	●			247
BB	Arcam DIVA CD192	850	Beautifully built, well featured player with clear, open and involving sound	●	●	●	●			264
BB	Consonance CD120	795	Fine performance in all areas with the possible exception of slight treble harshness	●				●		269
BB	Cyrus CD8x	1,000	Impressive mix of detail, musicality, analysis and appearance. Even better with the PSX-R power supply (£400)	●	●					270
BB	Exposure 2010 S	599	Highly communicative sounds with good bass, though not always the most analytical	●	●	●				264
BB	Marantz CD7300	350	Astonishingly capable sub-£500 player with effortless bass, detailed mid and treble and vast soundstages	●	●	●	●		●	250
EC	Naim CD5i	825	As idiosyncratic as ever, but sonically the CD5i is the definitive player at the price			●				259
	Quad 99 CD-P	1,000	Good but not outstanding player that also doubles as a preamp, with digital inputs and volume controls			●	●			259
BB	Roksan Kandy MkIIID	650	Clean, tidy and expressive player – a more than worthwhile improvement on previous versions							259
BB	Sony SCD-XA3000ES	800	A revised and refined version of the SCD-XA333ES that provides almost holographic sound	●	●	●	●	●		248
ABOVE £1,000										
BB	Arcam FMJ CD36	1,400	Deeply revealing player that tells it like it is: if you can stand the unvarnished truth, you'll love it		●	●	●	●		271
BB	Audio Analogue Maestro	1,650	The new Maestro 192/24 delivers a sound that's slightly rosy yet always musical and thoroughly enjoyable		●		●		●	257
	Audia Flight CD One	4,500	Sumptuously built toploader capable of real world dynamics with great recordings. Two digital inputs		●				●	269
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
BB	Copland CDA823	1,750	Its ability to resolve micro dynamics and acoustic space is second to none.		●				●	267
	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 SACD player and an excellent CD player at what by Krell standards is a relatively affordable price	●	●	●	●		●	251
EC	Lindemann 820	6,999	Stereo SACD player with sumptuous build and sound, onboard analogue volume control and multiple digital inputs	●	●				●	262
BB	Marantz SA-11S1	2,000	A stereo player for audiophiles – lack of DVD and multichannel SACD lead to subtle, highly focussed sound	●	●	●	●	●	●	265
	Meridian G07	1,595	Immaculately conceived and executed player with a softly-spoken voice. Needs careful system matching		●	●	●		●	259
EC	Meridian 808i Signature	8,250	Stunning CD player with added preamp functions. Versatile and quite delightful		●	●	●	●	●	263
BB	Myryad MXC6000	1,400	A highly listenable player with excellent tonal balance and very fine detail		●		●			270
BB	Naim CD5x	1,450	A genuinely engaging CD player with remarkable musical grip and coherence							264
EC	Naim CDX2	2,700	Fine quality one-box CD player, but its best feature is upgradeability via outboard XPS supply				●			238
	Primare CD31	1,500	A well made player that may not appeal to timing freaks but does lovely things with large musical forces		●	●	●		●	270
EC	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
BB	Sugden CD21SE	1,395	Delivers its particularly musical touch brilliantly and warrants the attention of all true music lovers		●					271
BB	Shanling CD-T100	1,650	Stunning-looking player that offers various operating modes: in any, sound is clear and assured		●				●	270
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.



Copland CDA823 £1,750

This distinguished, yet minimalist Scandinavian CD player combines a real ear for detail with full-scale dynamics and an effortless musical style. A genuine hi-fi star.



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.

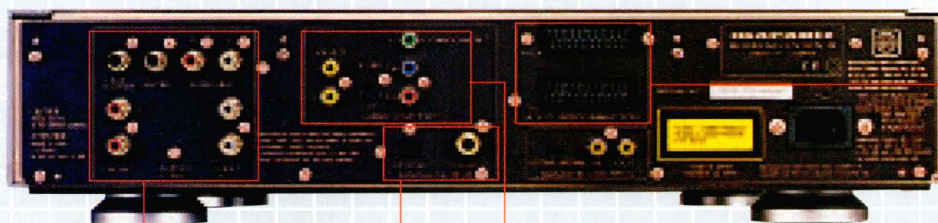
DO I NEED A MULTICHANNEL AMP TO USE A DVD PLAYER?

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

BB BEST BUY **EC** EDITOR'S CHOICE

Audio/Video disc players

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS					
				DVD-A COMPATIBLE	SACD COMPATIBLE	ELEC DIG OUTPUT	OPT DIG OUTPUT	HEADPHONE SOCKET	ISSUE NUMBER
UP TO £1,000									
BB	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
BB	Denon DVD-2910	600	Denon's entry-level universal player lives in the shadow of the '3910, especially on CD, but is a fine overall model	●	●	●	●		262
BB	Denon DVD-3910	900	Exceptionally well-specified universal player with a performance to match. A true class-leader	●	●	●	●		260
BB	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
BB	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
BB	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
ABOVE £1,000									
EC	Advantage S12.3	9,350	Adaptable ultra-high grade player with built-in preamp functionality that can be extended further. Unusually strong with CD	●	●	●	●		264
BB	Arcam FMJ DV29	1,600	An excellent DVD player, very fine with both CD and DVD-Audio music discs and superb in its video role	●		●	●		263
	Cyrus DVD8	1,200	An impressive step up from the DVD7+, which includes component video outputs			●	●		238
EC	Denon DVD-A1XV	2,500	Sophisticated universal player with state of the art video processing, high class disc replay, especially SACD	●	●	●	●	●	266
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	Meridian G98	3,625	Meridian's most widely compatible G-Series DVD player – groundbreaking DVD-Audio replay and a fine CD player too	●		●	●		265
EC	Meridian 800	10,805	The ultimate in DVD replay, modular construction, buffered ROM drive, upsampling and high-res digital outputs	●		●		●	230
EC	Naim DVD5	2,565	Naim's first DVD player is a real success, notable for its class-leading sound with CD and (optional) multichannel DVD-Audio	●					263
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 CD	3,000	A universal machine that excels with music and is quite exceptional with good ol' stereo CD	●	●	●	●		270

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



BEST BUY
HI-FI CHOICE magazine

Pioneer DV-575A £150
DVD-Audio and SACD playback at an astonishing price – and very decent DVD-Video too!



BEST BUY
HI-FI CHOICE magazine

Denon DVD-3910 £900
New-generation Denon is currently the most complete universal player below £1,000.



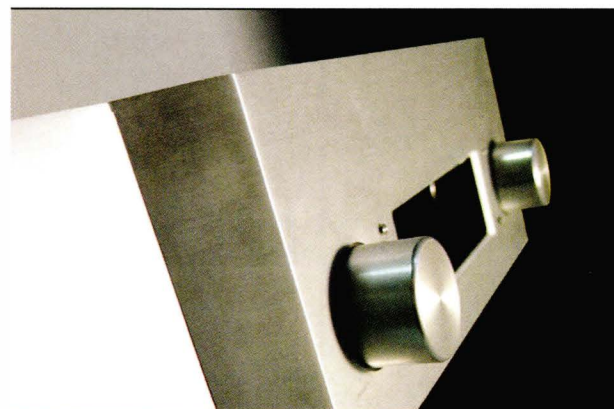
BEST BUY
HI-FI CHOICE magazine

Arcam FMJ DV29 £1,600
Arcam's best DVD player yet – a world-class, HDMI-equipped audio/video feast.



EDITOR'S CHOICE
HI-FI CHOICE magazine

Townshend Audio TA 565 CD £3,000
Others may have the edge with video, but sound is extraordinary for a multiformat player.



The new **Primo, Composers** and **Maestro Series** from **Audio Analogue** offer elegance, classic Italian styling, excellent value and a natural, musical sound.

Already gaining plaudits and **Best Buy awards** throughout the globe, they are simply among the finest audio products available.

For information, brochures and dealers contact:

UKD Ltd

Tel: 01753 652 669
info@ukd.co.uk
www.ukd.co.uk
www.audioanalogue.net

AUDIO ANALOGUE
soundpleasure

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.



Michell
 Tecnodec £767

A distillation of all the good things from some of Michell's past masters, all knitted together beautifully. Understated looks and a full-bodied sound make this a star.



Clearaudio
 Champion £1,475

Current king of acrylic, the Clearaudio deck, arm and cartridge combination turns in a beautifully well-balanced delivery, but choose your support wisely.



Avid
 Volvere Sequel £3,500

Avid has been one of the most impressive exponents of the vinyl arts in recent years, and this mid-range deck is a stunning example of analogue engineering.

Our favourite BB BEST BUY EC EDITOR'S CHOICE

TURNTABLES

Record players

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS				
				SPEEDS	SUSP SUBCHASSIS	SWITCHABLE SPEED CHANGE	SUPPLIED WITH ARM	ISSUE NUMBER
BB	Avid Diva	1,100	A solid and powerful sounding deck with fine build, requires a smooth, relaxed cartridge for best results	33/45	●			247
EC	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
EC	Clearaudio Ambient	2,285	Innovative use of materials leads to a fast, precise and thrilling sound (tonearm extra)	33/45		●	●	271
BB	Clearaudio Champion	1,475	Smart, practical and good-sounding, with impressively 'dead' arm. Isolation recommended	33/45			●	268
BB	Goldring GR2	265	Nicely finished Rega-manufactured deck with RB250 arm and an open, engaging sound quality	33/45			●	266
BB	Michell Gyro SE	1,058	New DC motor-equipped Gyro offers great looks and even better sound. Price includes RB300 arm	33/45	●		●	239
EC	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
BB	Michell Tecnodec	767	Simple and smartly understated, performs above expectations – full-bodied and highly detailed	33/45			●	268
	NAD C 555	250	An excellent budget turntable with plenty of potential for cartridge upgrades. Shames many comparable CD players	33/45			●	271
BB	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
	Pro-Ject Debut/Phono SB	180	Combined turntable and phono stage provides a neat solution for plug and play convenience	33/45		●	●	271
BB	Pro-Ject 1 Xpression	210	Well designed and executed budget deck with an entertaining and revealing sound	33/45			●	248
	Rega P3/RB300	298	Updated Planar 3, building on the strengths of the P2 with added subtlety and detail	33/45			●	214
BB	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
BB	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
EC	Rega P9/RB1000	2,498	Exceptionally elegant hi-tech player with complex outboard supply, ceramic platter and wonderful RB1000 tonearm	33/45		●	●	228
BB	Roksan Radius 5/Nima	850	Sophisticated design with accomplished sound quality, excellent imagery and good isolation (acrylic version tested)	33/45	●		●	248
EC	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
EC	SME Model 10A	3,411	Elegant and extremely capable design, tested here with Series V/309 hybrid arm	33/45	●	●	●	195
EC	SME Model 20.2A	5,274	Beautifully built, extremely neutral damped and suspended deck with superb sound. Inc V arm	33/45/78	●	●	●	186
EC	T+A G10R/PH-G10MC	2,550	Style meets substance in a highly credible complete package, with integral phono step-up	33/45		●	●	261
EC	Townshend Rock Anniversary	4,900	If you want to get to the meat and bones of the music this is a great tool for the job (price inc. Excalbur arm)	33/45	●		●	259

Our favourite BB BEST BUY EC EDITOR'S CHOICE

PHONO CARTRIDGES

MM and MC cartridges

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS			
				MM	MC	REPLACEABLE STYLUS	ISSUE NUMBER
BB	Cartridge Man MM III	625	The MM III challenges MCs at twice the price, it produces detail, space and energy and has stunning resolve in the right arm	●			266
	Grado Prestige Black	40	Offers admirable detail and treble extension, with good bass and ambience too	●		●	214
BB	Grado Prestige Gold	110	Produces rich, open and expansive music with the minimum of fuss	●		●	235
EC	Lyra Helikon	1,095	Highly capable and highly neutral, this is a cartridge for all seasons, albeit fussy about vinyl quality	●			215
BB	Sumiko Blue Point Spec Evo III	239	High output MC with refinement at high frequencies and a nimble, articulate and revealing sound		●		270
BB	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
EC	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
EC	van den Hul Condor XCM	2,400	A stunning cartridge with stereo imaging, dynamics and detail resolution to die for		●		265
EC	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 BB BEST BUY EC EDITOR'S CHOICE

PHONO STAGES

Phono stages

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS				
				MM PHONO INPUTS	MC PHONO INPUTS	ADJ GAIN	ADJ IMPEDANCE	ISSUE NUMBER
	Clearaudio Smart-Phono	250	Minute and very practical unit with slightly bright, but very detailed and low-noise, sound	●	●			268
BB	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
BB	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
EC	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
BB	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.

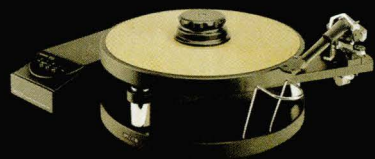
CARTRIDGE SPECS KEY **MM** Moving magnet cartridge – see amp and phono stage features to match this type. **MC** Moving coil cartridge – see amp and phono stage features to match this type.

REPLACEABLE STYLUS Some cartridges have separate styli for ease of replacement, but it compromises sound quality.

SME

The way to play vinyl ...

Model 10



Model 20/2



Model 30/2



Series M2



Series 300



Series IV



Series V



Ask for details of this superb range:

SME LTD · STEYNING · SUSSEX · BN44 3GY · ENGLAND

tel: +44 (0)1903 814321 · fax: +44 (0)1903 814269

email: sales@sme.ltd.co.uk

or visit our website www.sme.ltd.uk

PINEWOOD MUSIC

*Leading the way with personal service and
the finest demonstrations*

AMATI ANNIVERSARIO

Almost beyond words. If you aren't moved by this inspirational creation from Sonus faber, then you've just got no soul. Stick to knitting and beekeeping instead. Sorry, but it has to be said. Now call Brian Rivas or Alison Holmes for a demonstration of a sublime classic.

JADIS



JADIS DA88 Signature

No one ever regrets owning - or being owned by - a Jadis amplifier. These beautiful French designs have built up a legendary following over more than 20 years and now lead the tube army in sheer and almost overwhelming musical enjoyment.

KRELL RESOLUTION 2

Read the reviews, then telephone for a demonstration of this outstanding loudspeaker that, like Sonus faber, puts musical values at the forefront. Impeccable build, terrific value - and real fun!

Agencies: Krell, Audio Research, Sonus faber, Wilson Audio, Jadis, Unison Research, Pathos, Lyra, Koetsu, Copland, Martin Logan, Dreamvision, Synergistic Research, Transparent, Chord Company, Prima Luna, BCD Engineering, Futureglass

THE PINEWOOD MUSIC COMPANY

Somerset: 01460 54322

Hampshire :01962 776808

Mobile: 07860 351113

e-mail: brianriv@mac.com

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 now said to be available to more than 80 per cent of the population and the long-term plan is to switch public broadcasting over to digital entirely, 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 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
FM TUNERS										
	Creek T50	499	Very fine results indeed with precision, polish and insight added to excellent basics	FM,M,L	128	●	●	●	●	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	●			●	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	●	●	257
	Magnum Dynalab MD 102	2,200	Superb remote control analogue FM tuner delivers a superbly transparent sound that makes radio fun	FM	5		●	●	●	241
	NAD C422	180	Admirably free of roughness or other obvious nasties, with just a slight lack of clarity	FM,M	30	●		●		250
	NAD S400	600	One of the best around – bass and treble are both well extended and detail is excellent	FM	30	●	●	●		230
	Primare T21	600	Identical to NAD S400 and likewise a very fine tuner	FM	30	●		●		230
	Rega Radio 3	398	Unpretentious unit which does what it claims, very well. Unusually fine FM sound in all areas	FM,M	20		●			242
	Rotel RT-02	279	A highly competent tuner which always sounds appealing and fuss-free	FM,M	30	●	●	●		242
DAB TUNERS										
	Arcam DIVA DT91	450	As good as any on DAB, with serviceable FM, this one-box solution offers good build and value	DAB,FM	16		●	●	●	269
	Cambridge Audio DAB500	150	Very good sound, plus optional response tweaks, and slickest operation yet	DAB	10		●	●	●	248
	Cambridge Azur 640T	200	Slightly ahead of the pack in DAB performance, though FM is never better than decent	DAB,FM	60	●	●	●		260
	Pure Digital DRX-701ES	250	A good introduction to DAB – fine value and simple to use	DAB	99		●	●	●	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	●	●	●	●	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	●	●		●	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 multidisc 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

Multidisc 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			ISSUE NUMBER
				DECKS	HD CAPACITY (GB)	ELEC IN/OUTPUTS	
CD-R/RW RECORDERS							
	Denon CDR-1000	400	A respectable player and recorder, though some midband congestion was noted when recording	1		● ●	218
BEST BUY	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
BEST BUY	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
BEST BUY	Philips CDR951	380	An improvement on previous models, it delivers the musical goods in some style	1		● ●	205
BEST BUY	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
MD RECORDERS							
	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
HDD RECORDERS							
	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
BEST BUY	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.

Brands:

Artcoustic	NAD
Audio Aero	Naim
Audio Analogue	Nordost
Audio Research	Opera
Avid	Opus
Blok	Parasound
Bose	Pathos Acoustics
Burmester	Pioneer
Canton	Prima Luna
Copland	Projekt
darlZeel	Pure
Denon	Quadraspire
Dreamvision	REL
Fujitsu	Sennheiser
Anthony Gallo	Sharp Aquos LCD
Graaf	SME
Harman Kardon	Sonus Faber
Hitachi plasma	Speakercraft
I-scan	Spectral tables
Isoblu	Stax
Isotek	Stewart Screens
Jadis	T & A
Jamo	Tannoy
Kef	Teac
Koetsu	Theta
Krell	Tivoli
Loewe	Transparent cables
Lyra	Unison Research
Marantz	Triangle
Martin Logan	Vogel
Michell	Whest Audio
Mission	Wilson Audio
Musical Fidelity	Wireworld
	Yamaha

resolution the krell way



Krell produce a wide range of reference loudspeakers and electronics for both two-channel and home cinema systems.

The Krell Resolution Series of loudspeakers utilise the very finest standards of engineering in the world today.

Re-writing the rules, Krell has developed loudspeakers that resolve the smallest detail with pinpoint accuracy.

Suitable for both music and movies, the Resolution Series are no-compromise reference loudspeakers for the finest systems.

RESOLUTION 2

Smaller only in physical stature, the Resolution 2 delivers the same high intensity experience as the Resolution 1. The tweeter is identical to that used in the Resolution 1, while the Resolution 2 employs a single custom-designed 6.5-inch (18cm) midrange drive unit. The tweeter is positioned above the woofer but below the midrange drive unit in order to optimize high-frequency dispersion characteristics and minimize diffraction effects. The two woofers are custom-designed 8-inch (22cm) versions of those employed in the Resolution 1.

Oxford Audio Consultants Ltd

WE LOVE TO LISTEN

Cantay House
Park End Street
Oxford
OX1 1JD

Opening Hours
mon-fri: 10am - 6pm
(closed thursday)
sat: 10am - 5pm

Tel 01865 790 879
Fax 01865 791 665
info@oxfordaudio.co.uk
www.oxfordaudio.co.uk

(visit our web site for the latest information on new/used equipment)

There is a NuForce of Amp in the UK

THIS IS NOT A DIGITAL AMP

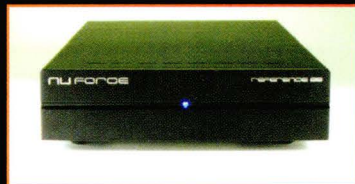
NuForce introduce a revolution in switching amplifier design that rivals and surpasses most linear and vacuum tube amplifiers (www.nuforce.com)

Ideal for two-channel or Home Cinema solutions.

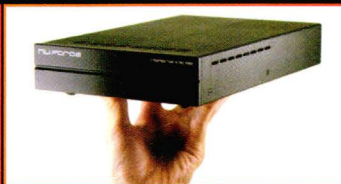
Monoblock (each):
Reference 8 : £549.00
Reference 8b: £631.00
Reference 9: £799.00

5 channel system packages:
HT Ref Pack 1 : £2836.00
HT Ref Pack 2 : £3393.00

www.nuforce.com



"...I consider the Reference 8b a standard-setter equal to the Mark Levinson ML2 of the 1970s or the Bel Canto eVo2 of the 1990s..."
Soundstage AV



"...The NuForce Reference 8 amplifiers have solidly met all my criteria for a true breakthrough product. Namely, they perform better than any other amplifiers I've tried in my system..."
Stereo Times



"...With the latest upgrade, we just have to purchase the reviewed amplifiers. At the moment it is our new reference power amplifier"
Component, Sweden

We are exclusive UK Distributors for the following esoteric products:

NuForce Amplifiers, The Cain And Cain Co, IsoClean Power, ModWright, Quantum, QRT, R S Audio Cables, Sound Engineering Turntables, Vivid Audio Cables, Xtreme and Quicksilver Paste

01923 352 479 | www.angelsoundaudio.co.uk

HI-FI CHOICE

PASSION FOR SOUND

TO ADVERTISE HERE, PLEASE CALL ADVERTISING ON: 020 7317 2600

SEVENOAKS

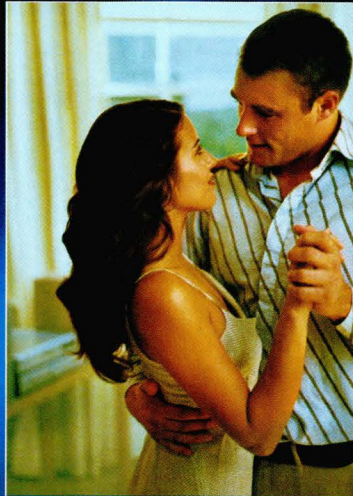
SOUND & VISION

With over 30 years experience, **SEVENOAKS SOUND & VISION** is one of the largest and most respected Audio/Visual 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 recorders, widescreen plasma televisions and projection systems.

Our fully trained installation experts can neatly and seamlessly integrate a home cinema or hi-fi system into your home. All electronics can be hidden away, speakers discreetly mounted either in the wall or ceiling and the complete system operated via remote control.

Whatever your requirements, Sevenoaks Sound & Vision has a diverse range of products and the expertise to advise, demonstrate and guide you through the home entertainment jungle.



Specialist hi-fi & home cinema

Contemporary hi-fi is constantly setting new standards in sound reproduction and design. Whatever you listen to, Sevenoaks can recommend separate components that will bring your music collection to life and complement your home. We're enthusiasts and experts, passionate about helping you build (or upgrade) a system that will delight for years to come.

The recent growth of DVD has led to a huge rise in demand for home cinema equipment - DVD players, AV receivers, projectors and plasma screens but, with so many options, it's not easy to know which ones will suit your needs. Indeed, in the face of this quickly evolving and often bemusing array of products, we aim to assist you in assembling a home cinema system to be proud of - one that achieves outstanding picture and sound quality.

NEWS

NEW STORES

We are pleased to announce that new stores will be opening shortly in the following locations - **SUBJECT TO LEGAL COMPLETION.**

- **YEOVIL**
- **LOUGHTON**

HOMEBUILDING & RENOVATING SHOW

ExCel London • Smart Home Zone
30th September - 2nd October 2005

Sevenoaks Sound & Vision will be exhibiting together with Living Control in the **Smart Home Zone** at the Homebuilding and Renovating Show at London's ExCel. There are 200 exhibitors from around the UK including, experts from the Homebuilding & Renovating Magazine and a free seminar programme, which covers many areas of self-build and renovation.



RA-03 AMPLIFIER "If you're after an amp, you must hear it."

Rotel

The **02 Series** is Rotel's entry-level range. The RCD-02 CD player combined with either an RA-01, RA-02 or RA-03 integrated amplifier represents true audiophile performance at an affordable price. For increased high-end performance, the RC-03/RB-3 pre/power amplifiers are available. The RT-02 tuner completes the range.



2 XPERIENCE TURNTABLE

Roksan

Roksan designs and manufactures some of the most acclaimed hi-fi equipment currently available. All Roksan products are carefully evaluated by experienced engineers at every stage of the design process with the emphasis on performance and build quality.

Audiolab **NEW** 8000 Series

Audiolab's new 8000 series offers a definitive and genuine hi-fidelity performance from a no-nonsense approach to engineering. These famous products have all been re-engineered to create a complete two channel range, including the 8000S, 8000Q, 8000M and 8000P models plus a all new CD player. A 7.1 channel pre and power amplifier completes the range.



Project

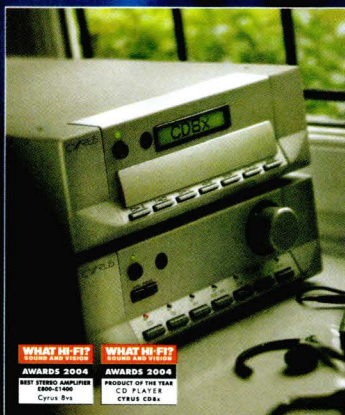
Project is currently one of the world's leading suppliers of turntables, with a range of models designed to satisfy all levels of expectation and budget. The range is simple to use, maintenance free and will function for a lifetime.



B&W

The focus of Bowers and Wilkins Loudspeakers has always been to offer the best possible musical experience. With a combination of the latest R&D techniques and a passion for music, B&W produces a diverse range of products befitting the largest audio manufacturer in the UK.

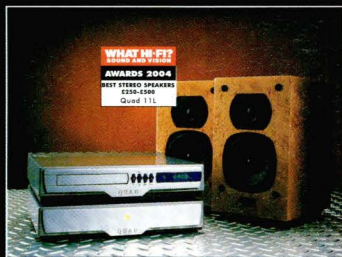
B&W MINI THEATRE MT-20 "Looks and sounds fantastic - a sensational package."



Cyrus

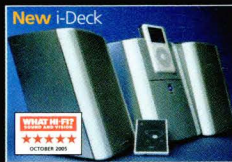
If you've enjoyed listening to music before, try listening to it through a Cyrus system. With every product tuned by ear, Cyrus represents a quality of sound, which is rare at any price. Invest in a Cyrus system and you'll be rewarded with a wealth of sound you wouldn't have thought possible.





Quad

Founded in 1938, Quad's history is one of audio excellence. Today's range includes both electronics and speaker systems.



Digital Radio

With Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB) capability, these high-quality tuners deliver more stations and offers pure, distortion-free, CD-like sound, while providing useful radio and data services.

Monitor Audio

Since 1972 Monitor Audio has been developing and perfecting the implementation of metal drivers, innovative crossovers, and exemplary speaker cabinet construction and finish to further the ideal of achieving sound which is to the original "as close as it gets". The range includes - **GOLD, SILVER RS, BRONZE** and **RADIUS** speakers, plus the exciting new **i-Deck** docking station, an excellent any-room companion for your iPod.



Musical Fidelity

Musical Fidelity's New A3.5 Series amplifier, using circuitry closely related to A5's, and upsampling CD player combine high end performance, visuals and finish at a competitive price.

NEW A3.5 SERIES



KEF

Replacing the highly successful Q Series, KEF's New iQ line-up comprises eight models from the entry-level iQ1 bookshelf to the impressive iQ9 floorstander. All models incorporate KEF's Uni-Q driver technology and are available in a variety of finishes.



Other KEF ranges include XQ, KHT and the Award-winning KIT100 Home cinema system.

KEF KIT100 "Creating a virtual surround sound experience has never been simpler or more effective, thanks to this two speakers plus subwoofer concoction from KEF."

Acoustic Energy

Established in 1987, Acoustic Energy is one of Britain's premier loudspeaker manufacturers offering one of the most targeted range of hi-fi and home cinema loudspeaker systems on the market today.

"The legendary AE1 lives on in this groundbreaking new version... It sets a new standard for small speakers."



Arcam

Arcam has spent more than a generation building some of the finest high-fidelity products the world has ever seen. Whether you're interested in two-channel or a complete multi-channel AV system, the Arcam DiVA series offers the music and movie lover the most complete range of high-performance home entertainment solutions from any specialist manufacturer.



Arcam Solo Music System "Excellent all-round sound combined with the convenience of a one-box product."

Marantz

Marantz is introducing a host of new products ranging from high-end hi-fi to HD-ready DVD players and AV receivers. The two main products groups are the 'premium' and 'range' series.

The SR9600THX Ultra2 AV receiver offers seven channels, each 140w, and features HDMI inputs. The groundbreaking DV9600 is one of the first DVD players capable of upscaling images to 1080p and is fully prepared for the high-definition future.



Essential Accessories

The right accessories can make or break your system. Our carefully selected range, including **QED, SOUNDSTYLE** and **GRADO**, will ensure you get the very best performance from your system.

Teac

TEAC's all-new Reference Series offers innovation in audio-visual technology. The CR-250 DAB CD Receiver is a superb one-box unit which, when linked to a pair of speakers, makes for a cracking music system. While the Reference 300 Series T-H300DAB Mk II DAB/AM/FM tuner, when matched with the new 300 Series Mk II amplifier and CD player, forms another outstanding system.

Also available, the beautifully styled, award-winning Legacy systems, offering DVD with satellite speaker home cinema excellence.



PLEASE NOTE Some products/brands are not available at all stores. Please call to confirm or visit our website before travelling.
*Added Value Offers - From range available in-store. Not in conjunction with any other offer. ADVERT VALID UNTIL AT LEAST 20/10/2005, E&OE.



Denon

Denon, Japan's oldest audio company, has established an enviable reputation for the performance of both its hi-fi and home cinema products, winning numerous awards and accolades over the years. Its stylish systems have succeeded in becoming the benchmark by which all other are judged.



DHT-500SD "Great performance, build and looks; well equipped, and offers 6.1 upgrade path." **WHAT IF FIT? ★★★★★**

DVD-A1XV "The most obvious winner of any category this year has to be Denon's evolutionary step in DVD deck design, the landmark DVD-A1XV... An astonishing piece of kit that has no equals." **AVC-A1XV** "It's not often we can't find fault with a product, but as we said in our review, "It not only expands the home cinema envelope, it shreds it and then nukes it for good measure." **HOME CINEMA CHOICE • AWARDS 2005**



Yamaha

Yamaha is recognised as a world leader in the fields of musical instruments and audio equipment, and in more recent years, home cinema. New models for 2005 include upgraded A/V receivers, amplifiers, and DVD players plus the innovative YSP-1 virtual surround speaker.



NEW RXV-657 AV RECEIVER

Pioneer

Pioneer has introduced three new DVD players. The super-slim (49.5mm high) DV-2850, DV-380 and DV-585A. All models are DivX compatible and deliver exceptionally high-quality pictures using a 108 MHz/12-bit Video D/A Converter. The **DV-585A** (Below) is a universal player, compatible with both DVD-Audio and SACD music discs.



REL

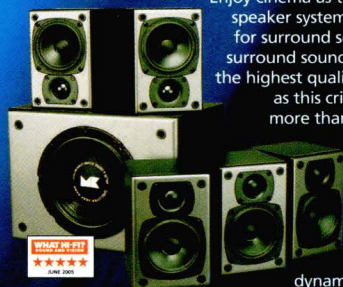
In a market packed with subwoofers claiming to deliver the ultimate bass experience, only one brand of sub-bass system can prove its supremacy. With a record of review success stretching back over a decade, REL is acknowledged as the leading provider of deep, clean bass frequencies.



M&K KS "Wonderful surround sound performance, agile and deep subwoofer."

M&K

Enjoy cinema as the director intended with a speaker system that is genuinely designed for surround sound. Every Miller & Kreisel surround sound system is designed around the highest quality centre speaker available, as this critical speaker will reproduce more than 70% of a film soundtrack.



Partnered with two identical main speakers, this produces seamless panning across the front soundstage, combined with the remarkable clarity and effortless dynamics that has made M&K the first choice in recording studios worldwide.

DVD Recorders

Although making digital recordings of TV broadcasts isn't new, the choice, versatility and quality of recorders keep getting better. Our product selection includes both DVD only, hybrid DVD/hard-disk and multi-format models.



ESSENTIAL ACCESSORIES

The right accessories can make or break your system. Our carefully selected range, including QED, Soundstyle and Grado, will ensure you get the very best performance from your system.

£ 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.

Mordaunt Short Genie

"Ever since Mr Mordaunt met Mr Short and the conversation turned to hi-fi, the company has churned out world class loudspeakers. But the latest creation is unlike anything that has gone before. The Genie system is a remarkable blend of style, innovation and application... The most accomplished small sub/satellite in its class." **HOME CINEMA CHOICE • AWARDS 2005**



FLEXIBLE FINANCE OPTIONS*

Spread the cost of buying. Flexible finance options* are available on the majority of products we stock.

*Written details on request. Licensed credit brokers. Minimum balance £400. Subject to status.

PLEASE NOTE

Some products/brands are not available at all stores. Please call to confirm or visit our website before travelling. *Added Value Offers - From range available in-store. Not in conjunction with any other offer. ADVERT VALID UNTIL AT LEAST 20/10/2005, E&OE.



Specialist home cinema

At the heart of any home cinema is its screen: Sevenoaks Sound & Vision can put you in the picture with a selection of flat-panel displays and projection systems. LCD and plasma screens are just a few centimetres thick and come in sizes from a 13inch portable to over 60inches.



Sharp Aquos

Only Sharp Aquos LCD TV offers so much perfection. With supreme styling, the appeal of the Aquos range is obvious. The Titanium Series combines Sharp's sixth-generation LCD panel with stunning, angular-styling, titanium colour-finish and superb build quality to produce a premium class of LCD idTVs

TITANIUM SERIES LC-45GD1E LCD TV with integrated FREEVIEW

"Sharp's mammoth 45in LCD TV is a testament to the growing viability and performance of large-scale LCD. Its 1,920 x 1,080 resolution panel allows high-definition pictures to be viewed without compromise and when exploited to its full potential, the results could see this screen hung in a gallery. Images are so crisp and sharp, it almost makes reality look dull. We think it's inspirational. Go pay homage." HOME CINEMA CHOICE • AWARDS 2005

FREEVIEW channel and service subject to coverage. Aerial upgrade may be required.

SEVENOAKS

SOUND & VISION

Panasonic Viera

There seems little doubt that the future of television is flat, and the future of flat is the award-winning VIERA range from the world leaders in screen technology, Panasonic. The VIERA range consists of both LCD and Plasma televisions. New additions to the range include 37, 42 & 50in PV500 models with support for both high-definition and MPEG-4 recording.

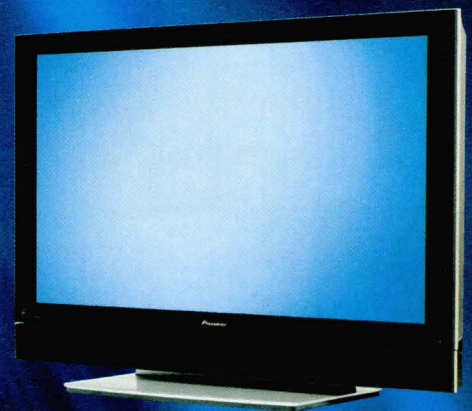


TH42PV500 PLASMA TV

"All told, Panasonics new TH42PV500 is a stunning set that's clearly the new class leader."

Pioneer

Following its highly successful '5' series, Pioneer has unveiled its sixth generation of plasma TVs. The 43" PDP-436XDE and 50" PDP-506XDE models include built-in digital tuners plus dual HDMI inputs. The PDP-436FDE and PDP-506FDE come without a digital tuner and only one HDMI input. All models are HD-ready.



Fujitsu

P50XHA40
50" Plasma Screen

"For those investing in a screen to take them into the high-definition future, it boils down to a choice between sets with either an HDMI or a DVI connection - but this new monster from Fujitsu is one of the very few plasmas equipped with both. The company's reputation for producing high-end screens means that it is yet to make its mark on the mass market, but that could be about to change..."

Images are solid and coherent and noiseless. This is plasma at it's best."

WHAT PLASMA • ISSUE 12



Hitachi

PLATARA 42PD7200 42" PLASMA TV

"Alright, we admit it, we rather like this screen. In fact, it's very difficult to find a reason why anyone hankering for a 42in plasma shouldn't go out and buy one. Five stars for Hitachi and a new standard for affordable excellence for everyone else." WHAT VIDEO • ISSUE 294

Toshiba Stasia

37WL56 37" LCD TV

Boasting HDMI connectivity, this new model also features Toshiba's impressive Active Vision LCD picture processing technology, whereby detail is improved by increasing the pixel count of the screen by three times that of a conventional LCD TV.



"Fine picture with both DVD and High-Def imagery; good with off-air TV, too... A very solid LCD buy - and fine value."





Projection

If you'd prefer to measure your screen-size in feet, how about one of the new generation of projectors? The latest designs are delivering superb results at increasingly affordable prices - and they're more home friendly than previous projectors, too.

ScreenPlay

From the worldwide leader in digital projection technology and solutions, InFocus® ScreenPlay® DLP™ projectors are changing the face of home cinema offering market-beating performance, specification and value at every price point.



WHAT IS IT? ★★★★★

SP7210

"The new projector's picture is just phenomenal... Looks like ScreenPlay's success story is set to continue."



SP4805

"Another stunning success from ScreenPlay - there's never been a better time to take the big-screen plunge."

WHAT IS IT? ★★★★★

AWARDS 2004

BEST PROJECTOR UNDER £1500

ScreenPlay 4805

Sim2

Sim2 Multimedia is a world-leading manufacturer at the forefront of home cinema technology and a name synonymous with high-end home cinema projection.



Best Value BUY

HT300E "Spectacular, in a word... Another terrific projector from Italy's finest."

WHAT VIDEO • ISSUE 292

Themescene

Since its launch, the multi-award winning ThemeScene™ brand has rapidly established a five-star reputation for uncompromised image quality.



Best Value BUY

H30A "There are so many good points it's hard to know where to start... Just how much better can budget DLP projectors get?!"

WHAT VIDEO • ISSUE 292

£ 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.

FLEXIBLE FINANCE OPTIONS*

Spread the cost of buying. Flexible finance options are available on the majority of products we stock. *Written details on request. Licensed credit brokers. Minimum balance £400. Subject to status.

PLEASE NOTE

Some products/brands are not available at all stores. Please call to confirm or visit our website before travelling. *Added Value Offers - From range available in-store. Not in conjunction with any other offer. ADVERT VALID UNTIL AT LEAST 20/10/2005. E&OE.

Product Selection

Listed below is a small selection of our extensive product range. Please note: Some products/brands are not available at all stores. Please call to confirm or see the brand locator at www.ssav.com before travelling.

TURNTABLES

Goldring GR1	£ CALL	£ CALL
Linn RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Michell RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Project RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Roksan Radius 5	£ CALL	£ CALL

TUNERS

Arcam RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Cyrus FM X	£ CALL	£ CALL
Denon TU260L MKII	£99.95	£99.95
Harman Kardon RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Linn RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Marantz ST4000	£99.95	£99.95
Pure DRX-701ES DAB	£179.95	£179.95
Pure DRX-702ES DAB/FM	£229.95	£229.95
Rotel RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL

CD PLAYERS

Arcam RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Audiolab RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Cyrus RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Denon DCD485	£119.95	£119.95
Linn RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Marantz CD5400	£179.95	£179.95
Meridian RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Musical Fidelity RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
NAD RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Quad RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Roksan RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Rotel RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL

CD RECORDERS

Yamaha CDR-HD1500	£469.95	£469.95
-------------------	---------	---------

AMPLIFIERS

Arcam RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Audiolab RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Cyrus RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Denon PMA355	£159.95	£159.95
Linn RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Marantz PM4400	£139.95	£139.95
Marantz PM7200	£239.95	£239.95
Meridian RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Musical Fidelity RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
NAD RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Quad RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Roksan RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Rotel RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Yamaha AX396	£169.95	£169.95

HI-FI SPEAKERS

Acoustic Energy Aegis Evo One	£119.95	£119.95
Acoustic Energy Aegis Evo Three	£229.95	£229.95
Acoustic Energy Aelite RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Acoustic Energy AE1 MKIII	£ CALL	£ CALL
AVI Neutron IV	£ CALL	£ CALL
B&W RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
KEF RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Linn RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Meridian RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Mission RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Monitor Audio RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Quad RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Ruark RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Wharfedale RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL

HI-FI SYSTEMS

Arcam Solo Ex Speakers	£ CALL	£ CALL
Denon RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Denon D-M33 Ex Spks	£189.95	£189.95
Denon D-M35DAB Ex Spks	£249.95	£249.95
Linn Classik Music Ex Spks	£ CALL	£ CALL
Monitor Audio I-Deck	£249.95	£249.95
Onkyo CR505DAB Ex Spks	£ CALL	£ CALL
Teac RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Yamaha CRX-M170 Ex Spks	£ CALL	£ CALL

DVD SYSTEMS

Denon DHT-500SD Inc 5.1 Spks	£429.95	£429.95
Denon DHT-550SD Inc 5.1 Spks	£599.95	£599.95
KEF KIT100 Inc Speakers	£ CALL	£ CALL
Teac RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL

MULTI-ROOM AUDIO

Cyrus Link RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Living Control RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Yamaha MusicCast RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL

DVD PLAYERS

MAKE & MODEL	REGION 2	MULTI REGION
Arcam RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Cyrus RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL

Denon RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Denon DVD-A1XV	£ CALL	£ CALL
Harman Kardon RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Marantz RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Meridian RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Panasonic RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Pioneer RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Samsung DVD-HD945	£129.95	£129.95
Toshiba SD350	£79.95	£89.95
Yamaha RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL

DVD RECORDERS

MAKE & MODEL	REGION 2	MULTI REGION
Panasonic RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Pioneer RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL

A/V AMPLIFIERS & RECEIVERS

Arcam RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Audiolab RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Cyrus RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Denon AVC-A1XV A/V Amplifier	£ CALL	£ CALL
Denon RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Harman Kardon RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Lexicon RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Marantz RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Onkyo RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Pioneer VSX-1014s A/V Receiver	£399.95	£399.95
Pioneer VSX-2014i A/V Receiver	£499.95	£499.95
Pioneer VSX-AX5Ai A/V Receiver	£749.95	£749.95
Pioneer VSA-AX10Ai A/V Amplifier	£1799.95	£1799.95
Rotel RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Yamaha DSP-AX757SE A/V Amplifier	£399.95	£399.95
Yamaha RX-V357 A/V Receiver	£149.95	£149.95
Yamaha RX-V557 A/V Receiver	£299.95	£299.95

A/V SPEAKERS & PACKAGES

Acoustic Energy Evo 3B	£679.95	£679.95
Artcoustic RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Audica RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
B&W RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
B&W Mini Theatre RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
KEF KHT1005	£299.95	£299.95
KEF KHT2005.2	£599.95	£599.95
KEF Q7 AV	£ CALL	£ CALL
M&K RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Mission M Cube	£ CALL	£ CALL
Mission Elegante RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Monitor Audio RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Mordaunt Short Genie	£649.95	£649.95
Quad L-Series	£ CALL	£ CALL
Wharfedale Diamond 9 HCP	£ CALL	£ CALL
Yamaha YSP RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL

SUBWOOFERS

B&W RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
M&K RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
MJ Acoustics RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Monitor Audio RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Quad L Series	£ CALL	£ CALL
REL RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Wharfedale Diamond SW150	£ CALL	£ CALL

PLASMA

Fujitsu RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Hitachi RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
LG RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Loewe RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Panasonic RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Pioneer PDP435XDE 43" (Ex Display)	£1999.95	£1999.95
Pioneer PDP505XDE 50" (Last Few)	£2999.95	£2999.95
Pioneer PDP436XDE 43"	£ CALL	£ CALL
Pioneer PDP506XDE 50"	£ CALL	£ CALL

LCD TV

Hitachi RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
LG RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Loewe RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Panasonic RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Sharp Aquos RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Toshiba RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL

PROJECTORS

Optoma RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
ScreenPlay RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
ScreenPlay SP5700 (Factory Refurbished)	£1499.95	£1499.95
Sharp RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Sim 2 RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Sim 2 C3X	£ CALL	£ CALL
ThemeScene RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL

ACCESSORIES

We have a wide range of Accessories from QED, Soundstyle, Grado, Goldring and more...

Who are Sevenoaks?

Established as Sevenoaks Hi-Fi in 1972, we have grown steadily onto one of the leading independent home entertainment specialists in the UK, earning a reputation for outstanding service, choice and value for money. In 1995, reflecting our commitment to the emergent new technologies in home cinema, our name was changed to Sevenoaks Sound & Vision. We now have 50 stores across the land stocking a broad range of exceptional equipment and accessories.

How to shop at Sevenoaks

When it comes to making big decisions about what to buy, there's no substitute for actually road-testing your prospective purchases - seeing, hearing and experiencing the products in action, with the benefit of our expert knowledge and guidance to help you choose. To get the most from your Sevenoaks Sound & Vision experience, simply follow this checklist:

- **ESTABLISH YOUR AIMS** - Are you tweaking an existing system to improve sound or picture quality, or are you looking for a more fundamental and comprehensive upgrade?
- **BRING YOUR FAVOURITE DISCS WITH YOU** - To ensure you get the most from the music and movies in your collection, it pays to test equipment using those very same discs or records, that way you can readily compare levels of performance. However, if you prefer, we can supply a selection of demo discs - current mainstream entertainment that serves to highlight the capabilities of the equipment.
- **JUST ASK** - If you are unsure of any aspect of the products or technologies available, or would like more information about installation options, simply let us know and our staff will be happy to help you out.
- **TAKE YOUR TIME** - We want you to be as happy as possible with your choices, so please take as much time as you need to determine which products are right for you.

WITH OUR CUSTOM DESIGNED INSTALLATIONS, your home entertainment choices become as convenient as they are clever. We can help transform every room and every home, whatever your requirements and budget.

Our installation experts are trained to the highest standards in all areas and provide a prompt, reliable and totally professional service. Rest assured also that our commitment to service doesn't end once your equipment is in place. Sevenoaks staff will continue to support you and your kit long after your initial visit to one of our stores.



Custom Installation

Sevenoaks Website

The Sevenoaks Sound & Vision website has news and information on the Sevenoaks group and detailed pages to help you locate your nearest store. In addition, there are hundreds of **SPECIAL OFFERS** and **STOCK CLEARANCE** items available from our stores nationwide - many with savings of up to 50%. To view our regularly updated product lists, visit www.ssav.com and click on **special offers**



Hi-Fi & Home Cinema Guide 2005 EDITION

Pick-up a copy of our **72 Page Guide** at your nearest Sevenoaks Sound & Vision store or order a copy via our Website. The brochure will be posted to you (UK mainland addresses only) **FREE OF CHARGE**.

SEVENOAKS

SOUND & VISION

NATIONWIDE STORE GUIDE

- ABERDEEN** 01224 252797
● 57 CROWN STREET *OPEN SUNDAY*
- BEDFORD** 01234 272779
● 29-31 ST PETERS STREET
- BIRMINGHAM** 0121 233 2977
● ARCH 12, LIVERY STREET
- BRIGHTON** 01273 733338
● 57 WESTERN ROAD, HOVE
- BRISTOL** 0117 974 3727
● 92B WHITELADIES ROAD, CLIFTON
- BROMLEY** 020 8290 1988
● 39A EAST STREET
- CAMBRIDGE** 01223 304770
● 17 BURLEIGH STREET
- CARDIFF** 029 2047 2899
● 104-106 ALBANY ROAD
- CHELSEA** 020 7352 9466
● 403 KINGS ROAD
- CHELTENHAM** 01242 241171
● 14 PITTVILLE STREET
- CRAWLEY** 01293 510777
● 32 THE BOULEVARD
- CROYDON** 020 8665 1203
● 369-373 LONDON ROAD
- EALING** 020 8579 8777
● 24 THE GREEN *OPEN SUNDAY*
- EDINBURGH** 0131 229 7267
● 5 THE GRASSMARKET
- EPSOM** 01372 720720
● 12 UPPER HIGH STREET *OPEN SUNDAY*
- EXETER** 01392 218895
● 28 COWICK STREET
- GLASGOW** 0141 332 9655
● 88 GREAT WESTERN ROAD
- GUILDFORD** 01483 536666
● 73B NORTH STREET
- HOLBORN** 020 7837 7540
● 144-148 GRAYS INN ROAD
- HULL** 01482 587171
● 1 SAVILE ROW, SAVILE STREET *OPEN SUNDAY*
- IPSWICH** 01473 286977
● 12-14 DOGS HEAD STREET
- KINGSTON** 020 8547 0717
● 43 FIFE ROAD *OPEN SUNDAY*
- LEEDS** 0113 245 2775
● 62 NORTH STREET *OPEN SUNDAY*
- LEICESTER** 0116 253 6567
● 10 LOSEBY LANE
- LINCOLN** 01522 527397
● 20-22 CORPORATION STREET *(OFF HIGH STREET)*
- MAIDSTONE** 01622 686366
● 96 WEEK STREET
- MANCHESTER** 0161 831 7969
● 69 HIGH ST, CITY CENTRE
- NEWCASTLE** 0191 221 2320
● 19 NEWGATE STREET
- NORWICH** 01603 767605
● 29-29A ST GILES STREET
- NOTTINGHAM** 0115 911 2121
● 597-599 MANSFIELD ROAD
- OXFORD** 01865 241773
● 41 ST CLEMENTS STREET
- PETERBOROUGH** 01733 897697
● 36-38 PARK ROAD
- PLYMOUTH** 01752 226011
● 107 CORNWALL STREET
- POOLE** 01202 671677
● LATIMER HOUSE, 44-46 HIGH STREET
- PRESTON** 01772 825777
● 40-41 LUNE STREET *OPEN SUNDAY*
- READING** 0118 959 7768
● 3-4 KINGS WALK SHOPPING CENTRE
- SEVENOAKS** 01732 459555
● 109-113 LONDON ROAD
- SHEFFIELD** 0114 255 5861
● 635 QUEENS ROAD, HEELEY *OPEN SUNDAY*
- SOLI HULL** 0121 733 3727
● 149-151 STRATFORD ROAD
- SOUTHAMPTON** 023 8033 7770
● 33 LONDON ROAD
- SOUTHGATE** 020 8886 2777
● 79-81 CHASE SIDE
- STAINES** 01784 460777
● 4 THAMES STREET *OPEN SUNDAY*
- SWINDON** 01793 610992
● 8-9 COMMERCIAL ROAD
- SWISS COTTAGE** 020 7722 9777
● 21 NORTHWAYS PDE, FINCHLEY RD *OPEN SUNDAY*
- TUNBRIDGE WELLS** 01892 531543
● 28-30 ST JOHN'S ROAD
- WATFORD** 01923 213533
● 478 ST ALBANS ROAD
- WEYBRIDGE** 01932 828525
● 43 CHURCH STREET, THE QUADRANT
- WITHAM (ESSEX)** 01376 501733
● 1 THE GROVE CENTRE
- WOLVERHAMPTON** 01902 312225
● 29-30 CLEVELAND STREET
- YEovil** 01935 700078 *OPENING SOON
● 14 SILVER STREET *SUBJECT TO LEGAL COMPLETION

OPENING HOURS: PLEASE TELEPHONE OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE
E-MAIL: [insert store location]@ssav.com



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 transistors can't replicate. If you want to play your music loud, use transistors; 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.

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.

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-AMPLING?

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.

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!



Exposure 2010 S £599

Another cracking integrated from the Exposure stable – admirable musical insight and communication at a thoroughly sensible price. Top stuff.



Naim NAC 112x/NAP 150x £1,475

Naim's new entry-level pre/power amp is a fabulously engaging combo. As you'd expect, rhythm and timing are to the fore, with a healthy dollop of finesse to boot.






























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 STEREO AMPLIFIERS

 BEST BUY  EDITOR'S CHOICE








Integrated amplifiers

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS					
				LINE INPUTS	PHONO INPUT	REMOTE CONTROL	HEADPHONE SOCKET	POWER OUTPUT (W)	ISSUE NUMBER
UP TO £1,000									
	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
	Cyrus 6vs	600	Best seen in a Cyrus rack but capable of sweet sounds elsewhere too. Impressively clean and agile but lacking musical grunt	7		●	●	40	262
	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
	Electrocompaniet EC13	999	Large and fairly powerful, with individual looks and very refined sound	6		●		70	262
	Exposure 2010 S	599	Beneath the unassuming exterior lurks a very capable performer that's passionate about music	6	opt	●		75	262
	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
	Musical Fidelity X-80	600	The entry-level to Musical Fidelity's amplifier range sounds both powerful and refined	4		●		55	255
	Naim Nait 5i	699	A trade-off of more power and better connectivity against less inputs works surprisingly well in a grumpy, musical manner	4		●		50	252
	Rega Mira 3	598	Lively sound with good timing and frequency extension, if not quite as detailed as some	5	●	●	●	60	262
	Rotel RA-03	499	Gutsy amp that's equally happy belting out anthems and whispering romantic secrets. Good phono stage too	5	●	●		70	265
	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
ABOVE £1,000									
	Arcam FMJ A32	1,200	Ultra-civilised amp with plenty of features that's also highly revealing and musical	7	●	●	●	100	266
	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 VS155	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
	Exposure XXXV	1,599	Musical, powerful, tuneful and controlled, though not always the most analytical	6	opt	●		80	271
	Krell KAV-400xi	2,698	The best integrated Krell yet is quick, agile, solid and finely detailed	5		●		200	247
	McIntosh MA2275	5,400	A valve amplifier that doesn't patronise. It's not soft-centred and it understands dynamics	5	MM	●		75	271
	Marantz PM-11S1	2,500	A good-looking, well-endowed, high-quality amp that's a great match for the impressive SA-11S1 stereo CD/SACD player	6	●	●	●	100	265
	Moon i-3	1,595	Powerful Canadian amp whose lively presentation is particularly suited to big-scale music	6		●		100	265
	Primare I30	1,500	A smooth, sophisticated yet agile performer, and beautifully built too	6		●		100	267
	Sugden A21SE	1,995	Hot-running Class A amplifier that sounds more delicious than most. A definite step up from the classic A21a	4		●		40	268
	Unison Research Unico 200	3,000	Hybrid integrated with high power/quality low power modes combines much of the best of solid state and valve design	5			●	200	269

Our favourite STEREO AMPLIFIERS

 BEST BUY  EDITOR'S CHOICE

Pre/power amplifiers

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS						
				PRE-AMPLIFIER	POWER AMPLIFIER	LINE INPUTS	PHONO INPUT	REMOTE CONTROL	POWER OUTPUT (W)	ISSUE NUMBER
UP TO £2,000										
	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
	Cyrus DAC XP	2,200	A knockout DAC/pre with naturalness and resolution to die for and six digital inputs for signals up to 96kHz	●		2		●		266
	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
	Densen Beat B-250/B-350	8,200	Upgradeable to surround, with sweet preamp and slightly coloured power amp, but sound is big and assured	●	●	6		●	125	270
	Exposure 2010 S Integrated/Power	1,098	Bi-amping with the additional power amp increases the musical communication of an already fine integrated	●	●	6		●	75	264
	Naim NAC 112x/NAP 150x	1,475	Up-rated entry-level Naim pre/power is a master of musical communication	●	●	6		●	50	262
	Quad 99/909	1,650	Well thought out and well executed, with good strong sound and just a little veiling	●	●	5	●	●	136	256
ABOVE £2,000										
	Border Patrol P20	6,750	Muscular 300B push-pull 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

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					
				PREAMPLIFIER	POWER AMPLIFIER	LINE INPUTS	PHONO INPUT	REMOTE CONTROL	POWER OUTPUT (W)
EC	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
EC	Chord Prima/Mezzo 140	6,100	Small, muscular, beautifully made and styled and sounds like a dream	●	●	5	●	120	269
EC	Conrad-Johnson ACT2/Prem 350SA	20,000	Valve preamp and solid-state power deliver some of the most transparent and naturally dynamic sounds around	●	●	5	●	350	264
	EAR 864/534	4,156	Valve combo delivers fine measured and subjective performance and inspires great confidence	●	●	6	●	50	254
EC	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
EC	Gamut D3	3,430	Creamy smooth, yet lets you hear all the fine detail that goes to making a tonally rich, dynamically strong sound	●		5	opt		265
EC	Gamut D200 Mk3	3,950	A great power amp that's now even better – one of the best regardless of price		●			200	247
EC	Halcro dm10/dm68	25,550	Extravagant, extreme and massive amp combo will probably polarise opinions, but delivers stunning midrange clarity	●	●	5	●	225	243
EC	Hovland HP-100/RADIA	12,745	Uncommonly musical valve/transistor hybrid transcends stereotypes, one of the genuine high achievers	●	●	9	opt	125	250
EC	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
EC	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 NAC 202/NAP 200	2,720	More sophisticated than its forebears with a fleet-footed sound that draws you into the music	●	●	8	●	70	241
EC	Naim NAP 500	11,875	Wonderful neutrality, bandwidth and dynamic range, plus Naim's traditional leading-edge definition		●			140	208
EC	Naim NAC 552	12,100	Extremely expensive preamp, but still solid value. Magnificent sound with fine flexibility and convenience	●		6	●		233
EC	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

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 is 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 built-in amplification 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, such as i.Link connectivity.



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

BT BEST BUY **EC** EDITOR'S CHOICE

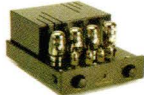
Multichannel amplifiers

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS				
				RECEIVER	LINE INPUTS	7.1 COMPATIBLE	5-CHANNEL POWER (W)	ISSUE NUMBER
MULTICHANNEL INTEGRATED AMPS								
BT	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
BT	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-A1XV	4,000	Inelegant, but powerful and effective tool with excellent auto set-up and capable of driving two 5.1 systems simultaneously		●	●	170	266
EC	Lexicon RV-8	5,000	Classy multi-zone receiver lacks high tech digital attributes (HDMI etc) but majors on very effective audio engineering	●	10	●	140	267
	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 gimmickry	●	3	●	160	255
EC	Pathos Cinema-X	4,750	No processing, just sexy Italian style, a sextet of valves and the chance of 450 watts in stereo! Cultured sound, too		5		110	270
BT	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
BT	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
MULTICHANNEL PREAMPS/PROCESSORS AND POWER AMPS								
BT	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
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
BT	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.



Pro Logue PL1* (integrated)



Pro Logue PL2* (integrated)



Pro Logue PL3* (pre-amp)



Pro Logue PL4 (power amp)



Pro Logue PL5 (power amp)

*We have the complete PrimaLuna (above) range

*Internal MM phono preamp can be fitted

*Buy EAT valves for the ultimate cost effective upgrade!

Guildford Audio

call **01483 537 577**

Demonstrations by appointment
Home demonstrations
New & used high-end audio

Please visit our web site for
latest product information
and used products listing

sales@guildfordaudio.co.uk
www.guildfordaudio.co.uk

audio analogue
audio research
copland
dream vision
ecs
epos
finite elemente
grado
harmonic
hyperion
jadis

koetsu
krell
magnum dynalab
martin logan
goldring
myrad
opera
pathos
primaluna
qed
s nus fiber

stands unique
sunfire
t+a
theta
townshend
transparent
unison research
wadia
waterfall
wilson audio
& many more...

AUDIO T & AUDIO EXCELLENCE are two of the UK's leading retailers of hi-fi and home cinema equipment and specialists in the design and installation of complete home entertainment systems. Whether you need a two channel stereo system or a ten room distributed audio and video system, we have the expertise to do the job.

We have over 63 years experience, fully trained staff and are members of the British Audio-Visual Dealers Association which means we are able to specify the best sounding products. We will even come round to your house and install the system for you to make sure it's working at its best.

For more information please visit our websites.

audio T

www.audio-t.co.uk

Visit Audio T in: BASINGSTOKE BRENTWOOD
BRIGHTON CAMBERLEY CHELTENHAM
EASTBOURNE ENFIELD EPSOM HIGH WYCOMBE
LONDON: W. HAMPSTEAD OXFORD PORTSMOUTH
READING SOUTHAMPTON SWINDON
TUNBRIDGE WELLS

audio X
EXCELLENCE

www.audio-excellence.co.uk

Visit Audio Excellence in: BRISTOL
CARDIFF CHESTER SWANSEA
WORCESTER



Experience...



FREE GUIDE

The 2005 edition of "Music and Movies at Home – the Ultimate Guide" is waiting in store for you now.

To get your FREE copy call in at your local store or freephone 0500 101501 (quote HFC05j)
www.music-at-home.co.uk



the experience

www.lektropacks.co.uk



PREMIUM QUALITY AUDIO, VIDEO & PC ACCESSORIES DIRECT

Lektropacks

Unit 6, Metro Industrial Centre,
St. Johns Road, Isleworth, Middx. TW7 6NJ.
email: info@lektropacks.com

High End Cable
Your Friendly Cable Store



Stereovox SEI 600II Reference interconnects



Stereovox HDXV Digital interconnect



Nordost THOR power distribution



Nordost TYR also Frey & Heimdall



Chord Signature speaker and interconnect cables



IsoTek TITAN

FREE DELIVERY WORLDWIDE ON ALL INTERCONNECTS
For many more money saving offers and information please visit
www.highendcable.co.uk
or call Dave on 01775 761880

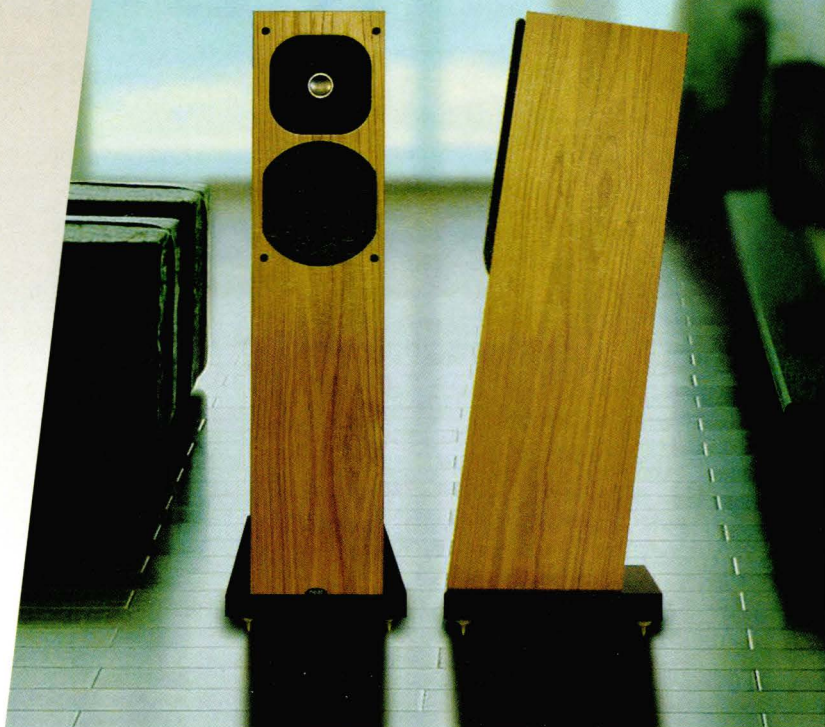
neat acoustics

We're about
to reveal
our Motives

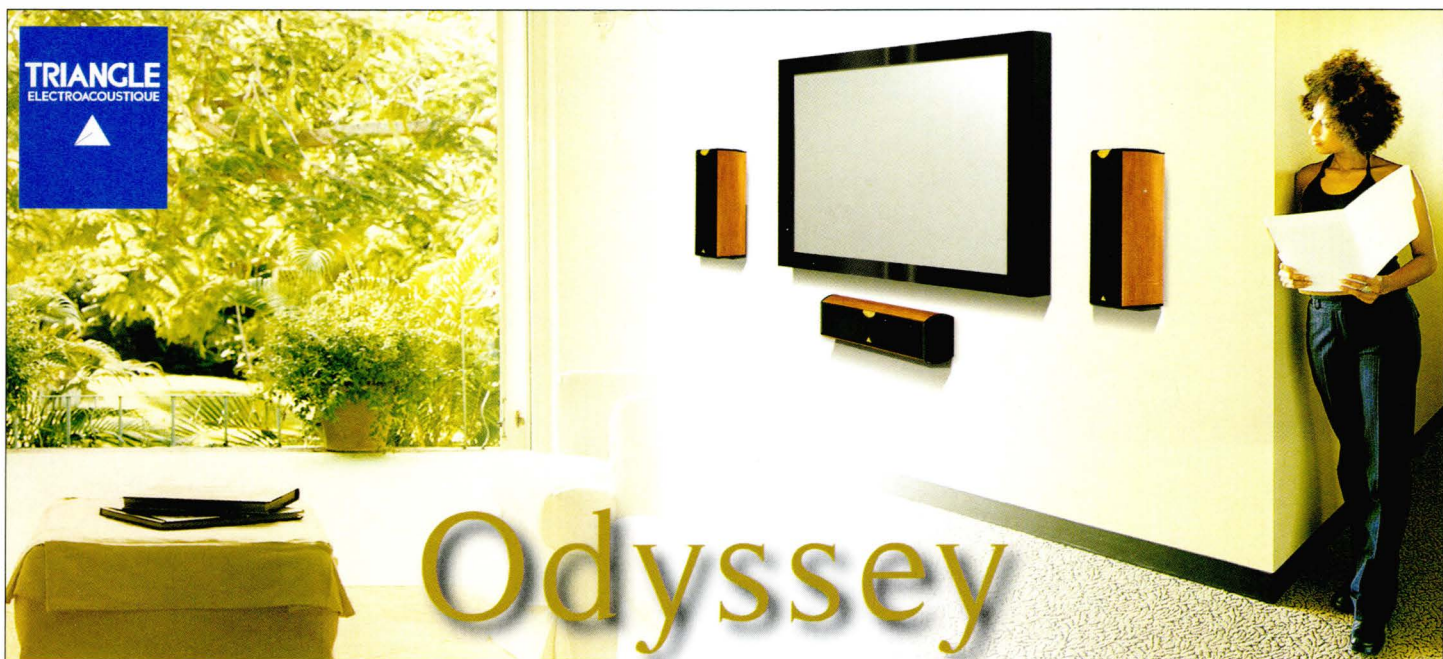
neat

www.neat.co.uk

01833 631021



TRIANGLE
ELECTROACOUSTIQUE



Odyssey



Designed and developed to the strict criteria imposed by Triangle, the new Odyssey is a highly flexible loudspeaker system that offers the perfect match of elegance, functionality and performance. Available in various packages with a choice of two Meteor subwoofer models, the system can be utilised in a variety of ways, including secure wall mounting, for optimum interior matching. Equally impressive in either a stereo or multichannel

application, the Odyssey delivers a truly excellent sound that meets the demands of the most discerning customers in a stylish, slimline design. This combination results in a sound reproduction system perfect for today's customers, who require their speakers to not only perform to the highest standards at the price but to also look the part. Try the Odyssey out for yourself and see exactly what we mean...

For further details contact:

UKD Ltd
01753 652 669
info@ukd.co.uk
www.ukd.co.uk



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.

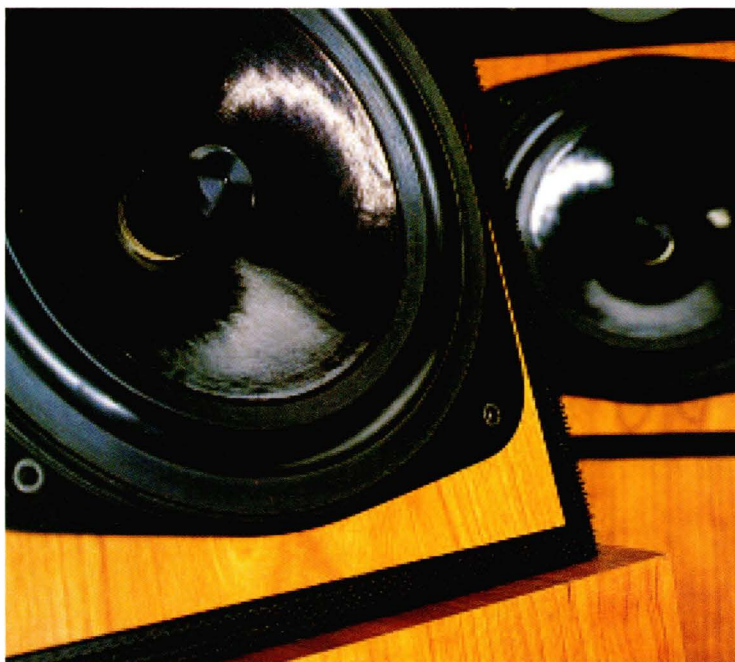
Box speakers are either designed to stand on the floor (floorstanders) or on a stand (stand or shelfmounts). Floorstanders have greater internal volume which can translate into greater efficiency and/or bass extension, but less substantial designs also introduce cabinet resonance and thus distortion. 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
805S £1,600

A superbly well-engineered standmount that's capable of delivering magnificent musical communication, alongside superior subtlety and delicacy.



Mordaunt-Short
Performance 6 £3,500

This extraordinary speaker stands at the pinnacle of Mordaunt-Short's current range. State of the art resolution and imaging are among its many attributes.

Our favourite STEREO SPEAKERS

BB BEST BUY EC 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
UP TO £1,000										
BB	AcousticEnergy 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
BB	ATC SCM12	999	Magnificent main driver confers great authority, grip and smoothness, though upper bass a little lean	22,39,26	A-	55		●		253
BB	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
BB	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
BB	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
BB	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
BB	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
BB	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
BB	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
BB	Dali Ikon 6	899	Needs care with setup, but rewards you with impressively transparent and almost obsessively detailed sound	19,100,33	●	A	37	●		271
BB	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
BB	Epos ELS3	200	Few affordable speakers sound as clean and convincing while taking up so little real estate	18,27,19	A-	60	●			241
BB	Epos M5	349	Gorgeous miniature works well close to wall. Could be smoother but communicates with authority	18,33,21	A-	40		●		269
BB	Epos M12.2	450	A true classic stand-mount with lovely presentation, fine sound balance, superior coherence and low coloration	20,37,25	A-	40	●			265
BB	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
BB	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
BB	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	●		22
	Harbeth NRG2	650	Strikingly styled standmount majors on dynamic excitement at some expense in smoothness and coloration	19,34,29	A+	42		●		263
	Monopulse 42A	995	Uniquely different in style and sound, midband time-coherence is magnificent but treble is too restrained	26,110,25	●	A+	28	●		271
BB	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
BB	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
BB	Naim n-SATS	695	Very discreet and informative, if a bit lean and forward. Just add an n-SUB for excellent all round results	20,29,21	A	50		●		268
	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
BB	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
BB	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
BB	ProAc Tablette Ref Eight	699	Stunning standmount with electrostatic-like imagery. Its Signature brother costs £200 more and is even better!	15,27,23	A+	40				267
BB	Quad 21L	695	Elegant lacquer finish floorstander has a smooth, well balanced sound, even bass and good detail projection	21,80,26	●	A+	25	●		263
BB	Rega R1	298	Cute baby sounds busy, coherent and involving, if a touch thin. Sweet and delicate treble with even bass	15,32,24	A	50		●		269

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).

Bosendorfer Loudspeakers,

by the company who built arguably the best pianos in the world. since 1828

distributed in the UK by AUDUSA

HiFi News and Record Review May 2005...*The sound is extraordinary in its overall balance. The VC7's are capable of exceptionally fine detail and dimensionality. In terms of the sensible compromises, the sheer musicality and sense of being there, the VC7 is masterpiece. The Bosendorfer VC7 is for me a dream come true*

Best Loudspeaker 2004 - Wallpaper Magazine

See it, hear it, experience it, at

KJ West

26 New Cavendish Street

London W1G 0AN Tel: 020 7 486 8262/3



HiFi Choice April 2005
Editors Choice Gold Star

Le Festival Son et Image de Montréal 2004.... *It was also perfectly in tune with the Bosendorfer loudspeakers had a more expansive dimension of piano music that I have ever heard. Seeing the quality of the piano in the same room as the loudspeakers, I was impressed, but not surprised. They obviously knew what they were doing when they built these beauties.....*

the VC7's performance in the front/rear and left/right dimensions is expansive and three-dimensional. Even subtle details are reproduced in a magnificently rich sound. Flute tones are soft and delicate while cembalo is well defined even in very quiet passages.. Even when the music becomes louder, reaching dynamic peaks, the VC7 retains its effortlessness.

Marco Kolks - Horerlebnis

also at the Design Centre,
Chelsea Harbour, Chelsea, London

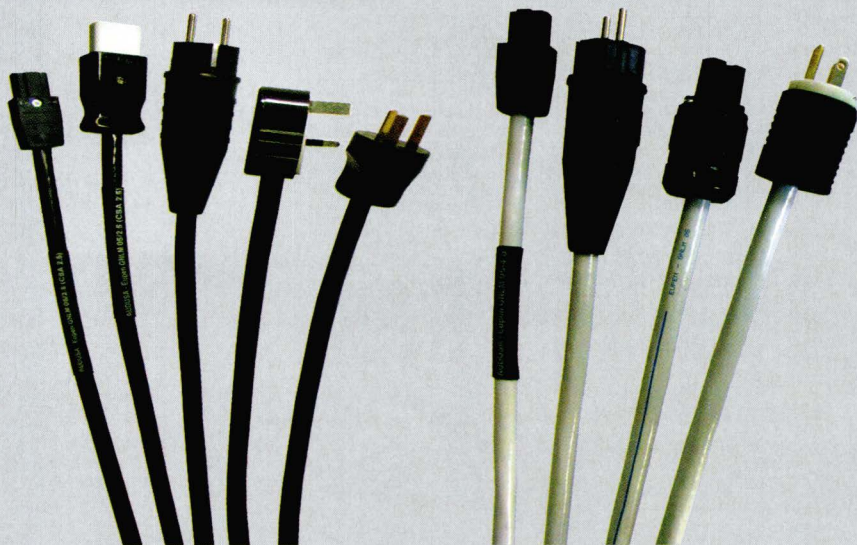
AUDUSA

AUDUSA EUPEN

The world's only true Ferrite technology

cables - a high quality ferrite is extruded over the conductor strands. Power Cords - GNLM 5/2.5 (CSA 2.5) and GNLM 05/04. From £48 for a 1m power cord terminated with an IEC and MK tough plug. Also available are the CMS Analog, Digital and Video Interconnects with RCA, XLR or BNC connectors.

A must for all digital products - CDP, DAC/Transports, DVD, Sat/Cable receivers, Digital power and pre amp etc. Equally effective on TV's - CRT/Plasma/TFT



AUDUSA OOM

products include ceramic speaker cable isolators from the USA, MK Tough plugs, IEC's, Wattgate 320L IEC and USA Plugs with silver plated contacts. Locking banana and RCA connectors with silver plated pins. New in stock are 13 amp fuses with silver plated end caps.

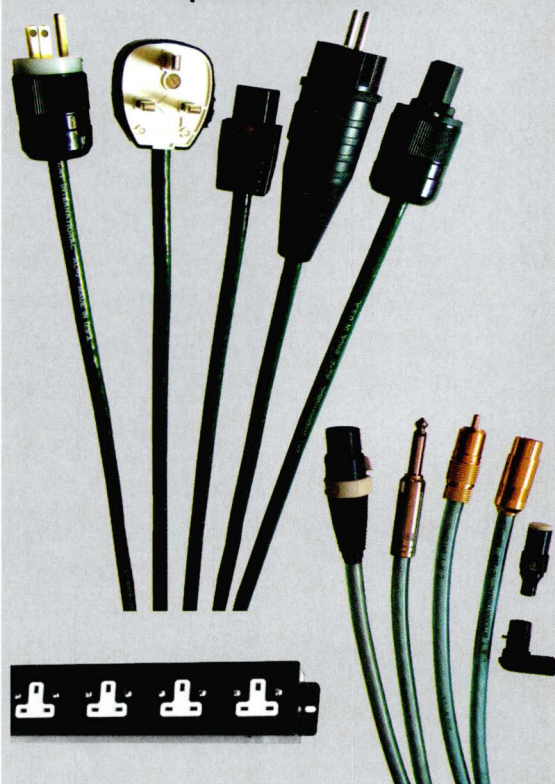
LAT INTERNATIONAL - USA

Power, Analogue, Tonearm, Digital, Video interconnects and single and biwire speaker cable.

Silverfused wire technology.

NEW FOR 2005

IC 300 Analog and DI-30 Digital Interconnects, AC-2 MKII Power cord, SS800 and SS1000 MKII Speaker cables.



WWW.AUDUSA.COM

T: 020 8241 9826, 020 8264 0249 F: 020 8241 0999 E: sales@audusa.com

Our favourite BEST BUY EDITOR'S CHOICE **STEREO SPEAKERS** *continued*

Stereo speakers

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS					
				SIZE (WHD) (CM)	FLOORSTANDER	EASE-OF-DRIVE	BASS FROM (HZ)	FREE SPACE	CLOSE TO WALL
	Rega R3	448	Discreet, pretty and fine value. A little lightweight but impressively open, it delivers music with great agility	20,76,28	●	A	40	●	265
	Tannoy Fusion 4	350	This big d'Appollo twin two-way has fine coherence and dynamics. A neutral and even all-rounder	21,97,29	●	A	20	●	255
	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
	Triangle Antal ES	975	Neither pretty nor smooth but a very exuberant and involving communicator, with plenty of scale and expression	20,108,34	●	A	20	●	263
	Triangle Titus ES	370	Not pretty but busy, coherent and involving, if a little thin. Sweet and delicate treble with even bass	18,37,30		A-	40	●	269
	Triangle Comete ES	500	Bulky standmount lacks style but delivers engrossing musical coherence and vivid dynamics	20,42,34		A	40	●	265
ABOVE £1,000									
	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
	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
	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
	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
	Audio Physic Spark 3	1,499	Classy and discreetly laid back floorstander has delightfully neutral balance and surprising bass weight	15,98,22	●	A+	27	●	271
	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
	Audiovector Mi 3 Super	1,596	Dynamically very expressive, clear and intelligible voices, arguably even better value than the Signature version	20,100,29	●	A	20	●	267
	Aurum Cantus Leisure 3SE	1,200	Fabulous lacquer finish and a classy ribbon tweeter. Sounds smooth and sweet, if a touch laid back	25,40,30		A	28	●	263
	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
	B&W 802D	8,000	Great timing, superior dynamics and a sweet top end all enhance musical communication. Makes sweet music	37,115,56	●	A	<20	●	267
	B&W 805S	1,600	Classy standmount with excellent coherence and imaging. Can sound laid back but otherwise a real delight	24,39,33		A	25	●	271
	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
	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
	Bosendorfer VC 7	4,745	Unique design delivers superior dynamics that sound particularly convincing with acoustic and classical music	19,5,135,40	●	A	37	●	265
	Canton Vento 809DC	1,800	Quick, lively and agile, with fine overall coherence and expressive dynamics. A thoroughly impressive allrounder	25,112,35	●	A	30	●	267
	Dali Helicon 400	3,300	Advanced drivers and enclosure give a generous sound with wide dynamic range and no boxiness	22,103,46	●	A	20	●	264
	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 Lulët 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
	Elac FS 607 X-Jet	5,000	Highly revealing and capable, the mid/tweeter provides impressive detail and depth of soundstage	29,108,33	●	A	28	●	269
	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
	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
	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
	Gamut L5	5,900	Impressive build and sophisticated driver design make the L5 a stunning speaker with rare transparency levels	20,115,8,43	●	A-	32	●	271
	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

"It is, quite simply, the most impressive mains filter we've ever heard."

Hi-Fi News, GII Titan

"...one of the most cost-effective home cinema and Hi-Fi upgrades there is."

What Hi-Fi, GII Vision



IsoTek[®]
www.isoteksystems.com

"It is one of the most effective units I have had the pleasure of using."

Hi-Fi News, GII Mini Sub

"The Gemini is a stunning performer giving a good overall tonal balance."

What Hi-Fi, GII Gemini

IsoTek power conditioners start at just £30.00.

2003 2004 2005

2003 Hi-Fi Choice Editors Choice IsoTek Mini Sub	2003 What Hi-Fi? Category Winner IsoTek Mini Sub	2003 Hi-Fi Choice Category Winner IsoTek Mini Sub	2003 Hi-Fi News Category Winner IsoTek Mini Sub	2004 What Hi-Fi? IsoTek GII Vision	2004 Hi-Fi Choice Category Winner IsoTek GII Mini Sub	2004 Hi-Fi Plus Category Winner Nordost Thor by IsoTek	2005 What Hi-Fi? IsoTek Gemini-0-Way	2005 Hi-Fi Choice Editors Choice Nordost Thor by IsoTek	2005 What Hi-Fi? IsoTek Titan

Our favourite BEST BUY EDITOR'S CHOICE
STEREO SPEAKERS continued

Stereo speakers

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS					
				SIZE (W/H/D) (CM)	FLOORSTANDER	EASE-OF-DRIVE	BASS FROM (H/Z)	FREE SPACE	CLOSE TO WALL
EC	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
BB	MartinLogan Clarity	2,498	Relatively affordable and easy to live with electrostatic hybrid with class-leading resolving power	26,135,31	●	A-	46	●	245
EC	Mordaunt-Short Perf 6	3,500	Revolutionary enclosure design and aspirated tweeter make for a fast, hi-res ride	24,121,37	●	A-	35	●	264
	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
EC	Naim SL-2	4,995	Delivers magnificent musical analysis and communication skills in a notably discrete physical package	28,103,33	●	A-	20	●	232
BB	Neat Elite SE	1,499	Smooth and natural performer with notably expressive midband. Fine voice articulation and unusual sweetness	20,90,18	●	A	25	●	267
EC	Neat Ultimatum MFS	2,995	Wonderful five-driver standmount sounds bigger than it looks. Very spacious and informative	22,38,37		A+	25	●	241
BB	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
EC	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
EC	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
BB	Rega R7	1,498	Super-slim and super-smooth floorstander has fine agility with a slightly bright overall character	27,98,35	●	A	25	●	271
BB	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
EC	Revel F32	3,200	Meticulously balanced, tonally neutral design makes for a taut, well disciplined sound	22,105,39	●	A	30	●	265
BB	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
EC	Sonus Faber Concerto Domus	1,799	Great choice, especially for acoustic material, which performs significantly above its price level	21,99,31	●	A	35	●	270
BB	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
EC	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
BB	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
EC	Triangle Magellan Concerto	9,995	Scintillating midrange and treble, with tuneful, well-timed bass - a thoroughly engaging musical ride	28,149,34	●	A	35	●	262
BB	Usher Compass CP-6381	2,500	Lots of speaker for your money, with plenty of deep bass, unusual styling and massive build	35,127,65		A	20	●	270
EC	Vivid Audio B1	6,590	Impressive cabinet design combined with hi-tech drivers to make truly world class speaker	27,110,38	●	A-	40	●	261
EC	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
EC	Wilson Benesch ACT	8,400	Superb enclosure gives uncanny freedom from 'boxiness'. Well balanced, but top end might be sweeter	23,108,36	●	A	20	●	252

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



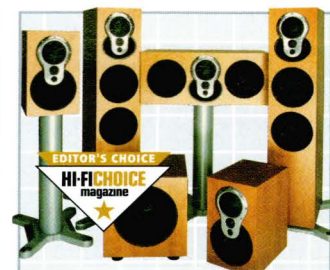
B&W
600 S3 package £900
Incorporates 602s, 601s and an LCR 600 centre speaker. Great in both stereo and multichannel surround modes.



Naim
n-SAT/CENT/SUB £3,385
Five n-SATs, and n-CENT and an n-SUB make a highly engaging and (for Naim) discreet multichannel package.



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 BB BEST BUY EC EDITOR'S CHOICE AV SPEAKER PACKAGES

Multichannel speakers

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS					
				EASE OF DRIVE	NUMBER OF SPEAKERS	BASS FROM (Hz)	FREE SPACE	CLOSE TO WALL	ISSUE NUMBER
BB	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
BB	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
EC	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
BB	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 Genie	800	A prince among sub/sat packages – good integration and impressively little compromise compared to full-size models	A-	6	38		●	262
	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
BB	Naim n-SAT/n-CENT/n-SUB	3,385	Priced here as a 5.1 package, Naim's neat n-SATs and matching sub/centre make an exceptional compact ensemble	A	6	20		●	268
	Tannoy Arena	1,200	Fabulously stylish sub/sats with Dual Concentric drivers. Unusually revealing for the breed, but sub lacks refinement	A	6	29		●	269

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 BB BEST BUY EC EDITOR'S CHOICE SUBWOOFERS

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
EC	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
BB	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
BB	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 Storm 5	1,000	Well engineered, good bass depth, appropriate for mixed hi-fi & home cinema/multichannel systems	34,52,37	200	15	267
EC	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...?

Do you live in GUILDFORD...?

.....or Addlestone, Aldershot, Ashford(Middx), Ashstead, Bagshot, Basingstoke, Bracknell, Bookham, Bramley, Camberley, Chertsey, Chipstead, Chobham, Cobham, Cranleigh, Crowthorne, Dorking, Epsom, Esher, Farnborough, Farnham, Fleet, Frimley, Godalming, Hartley Wintney, Hampton, Haslemere, Hook, Horsham, Kingston, Liphook, Leatherhead, Liss, Molesey (East&West), New Malden, Odiham, Petersfield, Reading, Reigate, Redhill, Richmond, Shepperton, Virginia Water, Walton-on-Thames, West Byfleet, Weybridge, Windsor, Woking, Wokingham, Yateley .

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.

Specialist set up services: **ISF Display Calibration**.

Nobody else in the area offers you a "One Stop Solution" to all of your home entertainment requirements, as we are also Custom Installation experts. Discuss your requirements with us and we can survey, design, install, commission, and maintain full Sound and Audio-Visual distribution, and automated lighting around your home.

Visit us first and you won't need to go anywhere else.

We have superb demonstration rooms for both Hifi and Home Cinema, and we will deliver and install.

We are a **Mountainsnow** dealer, and members of **BADA**, so you can trust us to look after your every need.



P.J.hi-fi

The only **real hi-fi** shop in **Guildford**

Guildford's only REAL Hifi and Home Cinema store

Open 9-6 Monday to Saturday (later by appointment)

3, Bridge Street, Guildford, Surrey GU1 4RY (opposite Wetherspoons)

01483 504801 and 01483 304756

www.pjhifi.co.uk email:info@pjhifi.co.uk.

".....it's hifi for fun's sake....."

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

BEST BUY EDITOR'S CHOICE

Stereo headphones

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS							
				ELECTROSTATIC	SUPRA-AURAL	CIRCUM-AURAL	OPEN BACK	CLOSED BACK	WEIGHT (g)	3.5MM JACK ADAPTOR	ISSUE NUMBER
	AKG K44	20	Lively, enjoyable and remarkably detailed: a bargain			●	●	●	190	●	219
	AKG K270 Studio	129	Pro oriented design which is very transparent and great with acoustic material			●	●	●	270	●	230
	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
	Beyerdynamic DT990	160	Impeccable balance, very extended bass and treble, and bags of detail place this model ahead of the pack			●	●		250	●	245
	Grado SR-60	90	For sheer musical enjoyment these are hard to beat. Retro styling may not be to everyone's taste		●		●		200	●	194
	Grado SR325i	300	Highly sophisticated and detailed sound with great extension: check for comfort		●		●		200	●	270
	Philips HP890	70	A remarkably sophisticated and very comfortable headphone			●	●		330	●	219
	Sennheiser HD595	150	Technology from upmarket HD650 model makes this a very revealing headphone that's also extremely comfortable			●	●		270	●	266
	Sennheiser HD650	300	Astonishing resolution and hardly less impressive tonal balance make this a true hi-fi experience			●	●		260	●	252
	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
	Stax SR-001 Mk II	239	Expensive and power hungry, but this electrostatic drags personal stereo into the world of high fidelity	●	●		●		280	●	268

SPECS KEY **ELECTROSTATIC** Uses electrostatic film instead of more common cone or dome dynamics. **SUPRA-AURAL** Earpads sit on ear rather than around it. **CIRCUM-AURAL** 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.

Sound Fantastic

Olsons new *Sound Fantastic* range of units are specifically designed for both the home and professional hi-fi audio markets.

Each unit is fitted with a 10A mains R.F.I. filter with earthline choke and transient suppressor, designed to filter mains-borne transients, switching surges, R.F. interference, intermittent spikes and other disturbances.

- Y Robust steel construction
- Y 13A Sockets
- Y 10A Panel Mount Fuse
- Y RFI 10A Mains Filter & Surge Suppressor
- Y External Earth Stud
- Y 2m x 1.5mm Screened Cable
- Y UK Plug - 10A Fuse Fitted
- Y Colour Black
- Y Specials to order

TYPE NO.	NO. OF SOCKETS	OVERALL LENGTH	PRICE
HF 4	4	446mm	£83.72
HF 6	6	557mm	£92.47
HF 8	8	670mm	£98.70

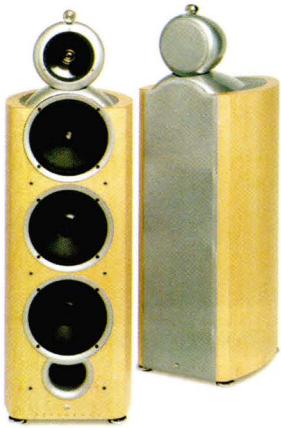
FROM
£83.72
 inc. VAT & p&p

Call 020 8905 7273

OLSON ELECTRONICS LIMITED
 OLSON HOUSE, 490 HONEYPOT LANE,
 STANMORE, MIDDX HA7 1JX
 TEL: 020 8905 7273 FAX: 020 8952 1232
 email: sales@olson.co.uk www.soundfantastic.co.uk

24 HOUR SERVICE. VISA, MASTERCARD
 AND SWITCH ACCEPTED

HEAR! HERE!



KEF



Bryston



Marantz



Wilson Benesch



Quad



Michell



Roksan



Musical Fidelity



PMC



Arcam



Chord



Spendor

If you don't want to go to the ends of the earth to find the right product and you don't want to pay the earth, maybe you should take a trip to New Malden in Surrey

For 30 years or more we've been stocking, demonstrating and advising on the very best hi-fi equipment.

STOP searching
LOOK at our website
LISTEN in our demo rooms

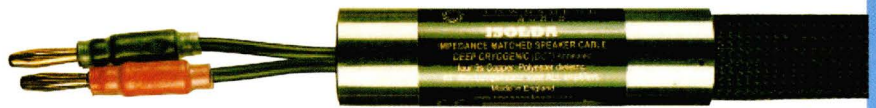
www.unilet.net



Unilet Sound and Vision Ltd.
35 High Street, New Malden,
Surrey KT3 4BY
Tel: 020 8942 9567
Fax: 020 8336 0820



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 **EC** EDITOR'S CHOICE

				SPECIFICATIONS					
BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	STRANDED	SOLID CORE	COPPER	SILVER	DIGITAL CABLE TYPE	ISSUE NUMBER
INTERCONNECTS AND SPEAKER CABLES									
ANALOGUE INTERCONNECTS									
	Black Rhodium Illusion	77	An upfront, lively, exciting cable which still manages subtlety when needed. Slight coloration though						248
EC	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
BB	Chord Company Chorus	200	Very even-handed balance with notably extended bass						259
BB	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
BB	Kimber Timbre	83	Typical Kimber construction with ditto sound – clean, extended and detailed						248
BB	Monster Interlink 400 Mk2	70	Really lively and enjoyable sound at a sensible price						224
BB	Townshend DCT100	100	Unusual construction with copper strip conductors, giving very detailed sound, but just an occasional hint of hardness						241
EC	Townshend Isolda DCT	300	Unusual construction and cryogenically treated too: whatever the reason, a remarkably capable wire						234
BB	van den Hul The Bay C5	45	Terrific detail, nice balance – a great cable						224
BB	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
BB	van den Hul D102 Mk III	79	Hybrid conductors (carbon and copper) and intelligent construction give strong bass and excellent detail						234
BB	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
DIGITAL INTERCONNECTS									
BB	Black Rhodium Polar Scherzo	135	Highly detailed sound with notably solid and stable stereo imaging					E	270
EC	Kimber Select KS2020	629	Provides a subtle but rewarding lift in musicality with any DAC, justifying the price					E	260
EC	QED Qunex Signature 75	80	First-rate balance and imaging – ever so nearly as good as it gets at any price					E	265
BB	QED Qunex SR75	50	Lots of bass and good clear midrange and treble at a sensible price					E	234
BB	Supra ZAC	32	High grade fibre and quality plugs add up to a noticeable improvement over giveaway optical leads					O	259
BB	van den Hul Optocoupler II	49	Noticeably has the edge over other optical leads, but still second best to electrical types					O	234
SPEAKER CABLES PRICE PER METRE									
	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
EC	Electrofluidics 20/20	45	Excellent bass extension and very fine performance elsewhere – one of the best all-round cables available						241
BB	Kimber 8VS	18	Beautifully full, open and transparent sound right across the board						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
BB	Kimber 8TC	39	Very capable in all areas, particularly good at imaging and with firm bass. Price for 5m terminated pair						203
BB	QED Silver Anniversary	5	A few minor flaws, but overall performance is very assured for this price						192
BB	QED X-Tube XT300	10	A natural and well controlled sounding cable that's cost effective for mid-priced systems						234
EC	Townshend Isolda DCT	50	Cryogenically treated 'impedance matched' cable with stabilising components added: great sound all-round						241
	Wyrewizard Spellbinder	5.50	Sold off the reel, this entry-level cable is a surprisingly purist performer, lean yet powerful, with good detail resolution.						267
BB	Wireworld Terra 5	5	Deep powerful bass, clear treble and very solid imaging add up to above-class performance						261
BB	Wireworld Solstice 5	20	Unfriendly to handle, but makes up for it with very assured sound – heaps of bass and great insight						248
BB	Wireworld Oasis 5 Biwire	38	Full-bodied and precise sound across the board – an excellent performer in bi-wire or single-wire mode						262

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.

GIFT VOUCHERS

FOR EVERY HUNDRED POUNDS YOU SPEND IN SUPERFI, WE'LL GIVE YOU £10 IN VOUCHERS TO SPEND ON HARDWARE OF YOUR CHOICE!

In store customers only, excluding clearance or sale lines. Not in conjunction with any other offer or promotion. Hardware is any hi-fi separate or system and does not include headphones below the value of £100, or accessories. Vouchers valid until 31st March 2006.



HI-FI AND HOME CINEMA SPECIALISTS

Acoustic Energy, Apollo, Arcam, B&W, Creek, Denon, Elac, Epos, Grado, Humax, KEF, Linn, Marantz, Mission, MJ Acoustics, NAD, Panasonic, Pioneer,

Pro-Ject, QED, Rotel, Sennheiser, Sony, Sound Organisation, Soundstyle, Tannoy, Topfield, Wharfedale, Yamaha and many more top brands.

Not all products are available from all outlets: please call, or check online at www.superfi.co.uk

Superfi

SPEAKERS

MISSION VOLARE

- Real-wood veneer
- High-class cabinet construction
- Quality drivers and electronics



V60 bookshelf **Our Price £99.95** Was £249.95 Save £150
 V61 bookshelf **Our Price £149.95** Was £349.95 Save £200
 V62 floorstanding **Our Price £199.95** Was £499.95 Save £300
 V63 floorstanding **Our Price £399.95** Was £599.95 Save £200

HI-FI SEPARATES SYSTEMS

MARANTZ CD5400 CD + MARANTZ PM4400 OSE AMP + MISSION V60 SPEAKERS

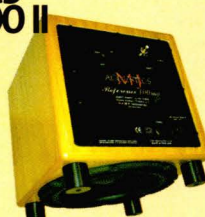
- Marantz CD5400 CD player (gold) £149.95
- Marantz PM4400 OSE amplifier (gold) £249.95
- Mission V60 speakers (choice of three finishes) £249.95
- **Sizzling separates system £399.95 (Was £649.95, Save £250)**

SUPERFI'S SIZZLING SEPARATES SYSTEMS
OUR PRICE £399.95



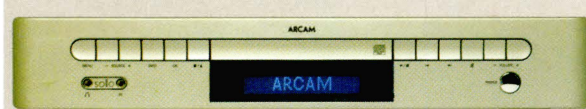
SUBWOOFER MJ ACOUSTICS REFERENCE 100 II

- New 250cm (10") driver
- Remote control
- Less than 30cm² footprint
- **£399.95**



SYSTEM ARCAM SOLO

- CD, DAB radio and amplifier in one
- True hi-fi performance
- Front input for personal audio player or laptop
- **£999.95**



OUR PRICE £999.95

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION
 ★★★★★
 MARCH 05

HEADPHONES SENNHEISER HD650

- "Impeccably balanced"
- Open-back design
- HiFi Choice Best Buy April 2004
- **£199.95 (Was £299.95, Save £100)**



OUR PRICE £199.95

DVD/HD RECORDER SONY RDRHX510

- "Sony have served up something special again"
- We enable multi-region DVD playback
- **£399.95**



OUR PRICE £399.95

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION
 ★★★★★
 SEPTEMBER 2005

COMPACT HI-FI DENON DM35DAB

- DAB/FM/AM tuner
- CD/MP3 player
- Non-DAB version also available
- **£379.95 including speakers**

OUR PRICE £379.95



MAIL ORDER AND WEBSITE

MAIL ORDER HOTLINE 0800 7311 821

BUY ONLINE NOW AT WWW.SUPERFI.CO.UK

Our website contains extensive product specifications, useful product guides and full order tracking.

STORES – EACH OF OUR BRANCHES HAVE EXCELLENT DEMONSTRATION FACILITIES

Birmingham
 67 Smallbrook, Queensway
 0121 631 2675

Coventry
 2 Corporation St
 024 7622 3254

Derby
 22 Sadler Gate
 01332 360303

Leeds
 7 King Edward St
 0113 244 9075

Lincoln
 271a High Street
 01522 520265

London
 2-4 Camden High St
 020 7388 1300

Manchester
 54 Bridge Street
 0161 835 1156

Nottingham
 15 Market Street
 0115 941 2137

Stockport
 68-70 Lower Hillgate
 0161 429 9080

Stoke on Trent
 51 Piccadilly, Hanley
 01782 265010

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 EQUIPMENT SUPPORTS

BB BEST BUY **EC** EDITOR'S CHOICE

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
BB	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
BB	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
EC	Custom Design Icon 400	599	Beautifully built, conveniently adjustable and with little sound of its own, a very classy rack	75	57, 41		5	Glass	263
BB	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
BB	Custom Design Vantige	449	'Acoustic Aluminium' shelves plus steel supports equal practicality plus musical satisfaction: just a shade bright	62	49,44		4	Metal	271
EC	Naim Fraim	1,825	Pricey but very classy looking and sounding, with modular flexibility	96	45,34		5	Glass	232
	Isoblu 'The Stand'	460	Attractive modular design that's as easy on the ear as on the eye	47	48,40		4	MDF	247
	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
BB	Sound Organisation Z560	195	Excellent value rack, five shelves too! Well balanced and under 200 quid!	92	50,40		5	Glass	217

Our favourite SPEAKER STANDS

BB BEST BUY **EC** EDITOR'S CHOICE

Speaker stands

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS					
				HEIGHT	TOP PLATE SIZE (CM)	FILLABLE	WELDED	NUMBER OF LEGS	ISSUE NUMBER
BB	Atacama Nexus 6	60	An excellent all-round performer and a genuine hi-fi bargain	60,50	14,5,18	●		3	202
	Custom Design PS 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
BB	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
BB	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.

Billy Vee

SOUND SYSTEMS

SAVE UP TO 50% ON EX-DISPLAY BARGAINS

SOME AS NEW (MARKED*) WITH 2 YR WARRANTY 24HR DEL ONLY £5. CHECK STOCK BEFORE ORDER
CALL SALES: (020) 8318 5755 or 8852 1321 - 248 Lee High Road, London, SE13 5PL
 Credit options are available for purchases exceeding £660, please call for details. S/H = Pre-owned unit, £80E

Arcam DV88+ DVD Player S/H (1Yr G/tee)(999.00)	£349.00	Linn 5125 Power Amplifier (2Yr G/tee)(1800.00)	£1095.00
Arcam DV89* DVD-A Player New (2Yr G/tee)(1299.00)	£589.00	Linn 2250 Power Amplifier (2Yr G/tee)(1995.00)	£1195.00
Arcam AVR 200 AV Receiver (2Yr G/tee)(799.00)	£449.00	Naim Headline H/Phone Amplifier S/H (2Yr G/tee)(295.00)	£195.00
Arcam A85 Amplifier S/H - Black (1Yr G/tee)(849.00)	£349.00	Naim NAC102 Preamplifier S/H (1Yr G/tee)(1175.00)	£699.00
Arcam DT81 DAB Digital Tuner (2 Yr G/tee)(649.00)	£349.00	Naim NAC 252 Preamplifier S/H (1 Yr G/tee)(4100.00)	£2890.00
Arcam FMJ CD33 CD Player (2Yr G/tee)(1349.00)	£945.00	Naim NAP 180 Power Amplifier S/H (1Yr G/tee)(1200.00)	£695.00
Arcam FMJ AV8 Preamp/THX Ultra (2Yr G/tee)(3149.00)	£2190.00	Naim Flatcap 2 Power Supply S/H (2Yr G/tee)(550.00)	£395.00
AVI S21 Lab Series CD Player (2Yr G/tee)(1400.00)	£989.00	Naim Ariva Speakers - Maple (2Yr G/tee)(1250.00)	£795.00
Denon AVR 2803 AV Amplifier (1Yr G/tee)(649.00)	£359.00	ProAc Studio 125 Speakers Maple (2Yr G/tee)(999.00)	£699.00
Linn Genki CD Player - Black (2Yr G/tee)(1100.00)	£859.00	Sugden Ampmaster Bijou Preamp (1Yr G/tee)(689.00)	£485.00
Linn Karik CD Player S/H (1Yr G/tee)(1850.00)	£499.00	REL Q100e Sub Woofer S/H (1Yr G/tee)(559.00)	£219.00
Linn Kairn Pro Preamplifier S/H (2Yr G/tee)(1400.00)	£649.00	Sugden A21p Power Amplifier (1Yr G/tee)(823.00)	£575.00
Linn 5103 AV Processor - Silver (2Yr G/tee)(4500.00)	£1995.00	Vibe Zeta SubWoofer (2Yr G/tee)(600.00)	£399.00

For more information regarding our pre-owned and ex-display bargains please visit the marketplace section of our new website at billyvee.co.uk.



Scottish Sound & Vision

The Quality Consumer Event of the Year

New Technology Experts on Hand

October 8-9 2005
Radisson SAS, Glasgow

Sat. 8th Oct. 10 - 5
Sun 9th Oct 10 - 4

NOW BACK TO GLASGOW FOR 2005

(Formerly the Scottish Hifi & Home Cinema Show)

DON'T MISS IT

NOW AT THE 5 STAR RADISSON SAS HOTEL
RIGHT OPPOSITE CENTRAL STATION (Argyle Street)

35 EXHIBITORS + SEVERAL DEALERS

INCL: Audio with Vision, Hifi Corner, Loud & Clear, Shadow Audio, Stereo Stereo, The Media Factory

SEE , HEAR & BUY

Get your hands on some PRIVILEGED TICKETS

In conjunction with
AVForums
www.AVForums.com the UK's most popular AV website



Available from any of the above dealers or direct from our website or pay on the day

Organised by
Chesterfield Communications

All intellectual rights reserved



T: 01829 740650 F: 0845 280 0065 E: roy@chestergrp.fsnet.co.uk www.chestergroup.org

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 – '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 drive unit 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 217.5-230MHz band. 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 (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 4:1 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 driving it.

JITTER An insidious distortion specific to digital audio caused by imprecision in the clock, used to regulate the conversion of data into analogue audio.

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 complex 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), measured 1m from the speaker.

THX Standards system for home cinema set-ups which includes amplifier power and speaker dispersion characteristics. The latest THX Ultra 2 standard 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.

ADAMS & JARRETT

0800 146569

Music Fidelity

Cyrus

Denson

Rel

Kef

Isotek

Audio Quest

Audio Vector

Nad

Marantz



**NORMAN ROAD, ST LEONARDS-ON-SEA, EAST SUSSEX
Tel: 01424 437165 Fax: 01424 444148**

"Xen is the most impressive micro monitor I have ever heard."
Hugh Robjohns - Sound On Sound

"Sonically the Xen is a joy... it must surely be recognised as one of the finest mini monitors around."
Paul Messenger - Hi-Fi Choice

"Under in room conditions, the averaged response trace held within quite remarkable +/- 2dB limits from 200Hz to 7Khz, tighter limits than any other example I've encountered in fifteen years of regular speaker reviewing. The crossover point is so seamless, it's entirely invisible on the overall trace."
Paul Messenger - Hi-Fi Plus

"Like Ockham's razor, the Xen seems to cut away dressing, getting at the principle melodies of the music."
Andrew Harrison - Hi-Fi News

"Superb build and attention to detail are blended with eminently natural voicing that is true to the studio monitor roots of Leema Acoustics. Such is the level of transparency here, that the move from a domestic vinyl release to a 200gm Quiex pressing demanded an adjustment of VTA."
David Allcock - Hi-Fi News

"I was utterly slapped in the face at just how awesome these small no-compromise speakers really were. This set of smallies is actually suitable for home cinema hooligans as well as audiophiles."
Adam Rayner - Home Cinema Choice

Leema Acoustics...
Hear it Feel it Live it



Proudly Hand-Crafted in Wales, United Kingdom

Leema Electro Acoustics Limited, Telephone: +44 (0)1650 521882 email: info@leema-acoustics.com web: leema-acoustics.com

SUFFOLK

signals
hi-fi for grown-ups

- >hardware
- atc
- epos
- harbeth
- in-focus
- lexicon
- michell
- mj acoustics
- naim audio
- neat
- primare
- sme
- trichord
- >cartridges
- goldring
- lyra
- ortofon
- sumiko
- >cables
- chord company
- nordost
- dnm
- >headphones
- grado
- beyer
- stax

l p s w i c h
(01473) 655171
fax (01473) 655172
email: enq@signals.uk.com
www.signals.uk.com

LONDON

ORANGES & LEMONS



Hi-Fi, Home Cinema & Multi-room Specialists

020 7924 2040

www.oandlhifi.co.uk

61 Webbs Road, Battersea SW11 6RX

email: oranges.lemons@virgin.net



www.hifichoice.co.uk

YORKSHIRE

Audio reflections Limited
REAL HI-FI SYSTEMS

For friendly advice or to arrange your demonstration of some of the World's finest audio equipment contact JOHN BLEAKLEY on LEEDS (0113) 204 9458 (evening calls welcome). Generous part exchange allowance always available. Agencies include: ATC, AVI, Bryston, Chord, Gamut, Nordost, Primare, REL, Wilson Benesch, The Professional Monitor Co, Wadia and many more.

Wadia • CHORD • Wilson benesch

Phone: LEEDS (0113) 204 9458
Fax: LEEDS (0113) 253 3098
Email: info@audioreflexions.co.uk
Website: www.audioreflexions.co.uk

LINCOLNSHIRE

Lend us your ears and we'll blow your mind . . .

Arcam, ATC, B & W, Celestion, Denon, Kef, Marantz, Meridian, Mitchell, Mission, NAD, Pioneer, Panasonic, Quad, Rotel, Ruark, Sony, Tag McLaren, Tannoy, Teac, Technics, Yamaha and more.

Audition the very best at Lincolnshire's premier Hi-Fi dealer . . .

MANDERS HI-FI LTD.

2-4 EDWARD STREET (Off Pasture St.) GRIMSBY. TEL: (01472) 351391

SOUND IMPROVEMENTS

Is This Your Problem?



Here's Your Answer



It's a common problem. The usable range on the volume control is all down at the bottom end and fine control at low listening levels is either difficult or impossible. The noise floor may be audible too. There is now a simple and effective solution - the Rothwell In-Line Attenuators. They can be used with pre/power or integrated amps to cure the problems of excess gain and bring sonic benefits even with the most expensive equipment.

Hand-made by Andrew Rothwell himself. Beware of imitations!

The cost is only £39 per pair delivered. To order, call 01204 366133 or visit www.rothwellaudioproducts.co.uk

Excellent reviews in Hi-Fi Choice, Hi-Fi World, Hi-Fi Plus, What Hi-Fi and www.tnt-audio.com

NOTEWORTHY AUDIO

hi-fi by enthusiasts

BELOW IS A SMALL SELECTION FROM OUR RANGE OF CAREFULLY CHOSEN EQUIPMENT

Audio Note lo 1 MC cartridge. Surely one of the best cartridges in existence, the lo uses Alnico magnets and pure silver coils to extract everything from your LP's in the most musical way possible: £1,595.



Note products cables Exciting new range of high quality cables which starts with the £350 InterNote (pictured left) and extends to the PurerNote at £750. These cables use only the finest materials including pure silver conductors and natural cotton insulation.

The Something Solid XR has become our reference equipment support, its novel use of balsa end grain shelves and tensioned shelf suspension give it a neutral presentation that lets equipment perform without added artifice. 4 tier version available from £600. (Stop press: new 'Economy' version now available from just £300).



Clearaudio Emotion The Clearaudio Emotion turntable package includes the Satisfy tonearm and the Classic cartridge for just £655 and offers astonishing value for money.

Audion Silver Note One This is a specially commissioned amplifier exclusive to Noteworthy Audio. It uses a single 2A3 directly heated triode per channel in an ultra purist single ended zero feedback design. It produces 4 of the finest watts available, if you have high efficiency speakers you need to hear this remarkable amplifier: £2,500.



Music first Audio TVC pre amplifier Instead of using resistors to control the volume the TVC uses stepped transformers. Incredible transparency without any of the dynamic compression found in conventional passive preamplifiers. Copper wired version: £1,500. All silver wired: £2,750.

Opus Continuo Reference turntable with Cantus parallel tracking tonearm. Designed to compete with a master tape the Opus sounds exceptionally musical. Combination pictured costs £3,200 including The Cartridge Man Music Maker 3.



Noteworthy Audio

36 Buckingham Street, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP20 2LH. Tel: 01296 42224
www.noteworthyaudio.co.uk



www.avihifi.com



Tel: 01453 752656 AVI International Ltd
Fax: 01453 752777 Suites 6 & 7 Lightpill Mill
www.avihifi.com Bath Rd Trading Estate
sales@avihifi.co.uk Stroud, Gloucestershire
GL5 3QF

MAIL ORDER

IAN HARRISON HIFI

SALE NOW ON!

Mail order supplier of Hi-Fi for 17 years

Michell, Clearaudio, Graham, SME, Hadcock, Transfiguration, Denon, Koetsu, Trichord, EAR, Tom Evans, Stax, Harbeth, Epos, Gamut, Graaf, Pathos-Acoustics, Unison Research, Van den Hul and many more.

All goods are brand new and fully guaranteed. Goods are not supplied on approval. Free UK delivery.

Details and prices from: Ian Harrison, 7 Mill Hill, Repton, Derby DE65 6GQ, UK. Tel: 01283 702875 9am-9pm inc Sundays

BIRMINGHAM



Tues - Sat 10.00am - 5.30pm
Free Car Parking

- ACOUSTIC ENERGY •
- CHORD CO • CREEK • EPOS • EXPOSURE
- HARMAN KARDON • INFINITY • LINN • LOEWE • MARANTZ
- MONITOR AUDIO • MORDAUNT SHORT • NAD • ORTOFON
- PROJECT • PURE • REL • ROKSAN • VAN DEN HUL

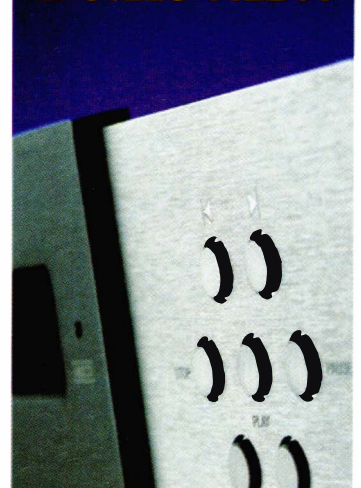
Wide selection of HiFi furniture and accessories
Finance Facilities

37 High Street, Aldridge. 01922 457926
www.soundcinergy.co.uk

HI-FI CHOICE

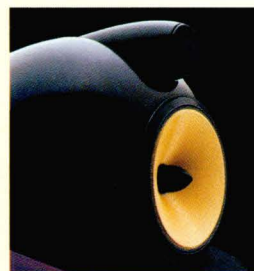
TO ADVERTISE HERE CALL
BEVAN WALSH ON

01225 442244





- Amphion • Arcam • ART • Audiolab • AVID • Ayre • B&W •
- Classé • Focal.JM Lab • Linn Products • MJ Acoustics • Monitor Audio •
- Naim Audio • Nautilus • Primare • Quadraspire • Rega • REL • Rotel •
- Shahinian • Spendor • Sugden • Thiel • Wadia •



B&W Nautilus 800 launch event
 Thursday 27 October 2005. Chester shop – call for details

Acoustica
 17 Hoole Road
 CHESTER CH2 3NH
01244 344227
www.acoustica.co.uk

Acoustica
 114 Wolverhampton Road
 STAFFORD ST17 4AH
01785 258216
www.acoustica.co.uk

Griffin Audio
 3 Gibb Terrace, Gibb St
 BIRMINGHAM B9 4AA
0121 224 7300
www.griffinaudio.co.uk

www.hifichoice.co.uk

- Atacama
- Audio Lab
- Audio Quest
- Castle
- Cyrus
- KEF
- Marantz
- Meridian
- Michell
- M. J. Acoustics
- Monitor Audio
- Mordaunt-Short
- NAD
- Nordost
- Origin Live
- Ortofon
- Pathos
- Pickering
- Primare
- Pro-Ac
- Project
- QUAD
- Roksan
- Shanling
- SME
- Stands Unique
- Sugden
- Tannoy
- TEAC
- Trichord
- Unison Research
- Van Den Hul
- Wharfedale
- Yamaha
- & Lots more...

Award Winning Retailers...

Vickers Hi-Fi

The North of England Hi-Fi Specialists



- ▶ Quality Hi-Fi separates from £100 to £10,000
- ▶ Widest choice in the area ▶ Independent advice
- ▶ Consumers Choice Gold Award Winners
- ▶ Over 35yrs experience ▶ Qualified staff
- ▶ Comfortable dem rooms ▶ Superb showrooms
- ▶ Main road location ▶ Major car parks nearby
- ▶ Insurance estimates ▶ Service Dept.
- ▶ Up to 3 years Interest Free Credit* only 20% deposit
- ▶ Carriage Free Mail Order (inc. credit) *subject to status
- ▶ Delivery & installation
- ▶ Part Exchange
- ▶ Open 10:30am - 5:30pm 6 days: Mon. to Sat.
- ▶ Visa, Mastercard, Switch etc.

24 Gillygate, York YO31 7EQ

Tel: 01904 629659

www.Vickers-HiFi.co.uk

Specialists in high fidelity sound reproduction - since 1967

SALES & SERVICES

REVOX SERVICE THE MANUFACTURERS' APPOINTED SERVICE COMPANY **REVOX SERVICE**

Correct Revox Spare Parts Pricing
24 Hour Estimation procedure
Manufacturer Upgrades and Advice
Delivery and Collection Service
Comprehensive Guarantees

Factory Trained Engineers
Rapid Response Turnaround
Full Revox range serviced
Written Technical Reports
Late Evening Opening

THE AR TECHNOLOGY LIMITED

TTL House, Sheeptick End, Near Lidlington, Bedfordshire, MK43 0SF
Telephone 01525 841999 Facsimile 01525 841009

HI-FI CHOICE
TO ADVERTISE HERE CALL
BEVAN WALSH ON
01225 442244

Naim...Meridian...Arcam...Tag McLaren...
Teac...Mission...Stands Unique...
and much, much more.

152a High Street, (Sharing ASDA Car Park) Bloxwich, Walsall

01922 493499

0121 321 2445

QUALITY HI-FI for the midlands

• 3 Hi - Fi Studios • Home Trials • Home Cinema Theatre •
• In House Service Department • Mail order available •

and NOW AT 111 The Parade, Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham

Interest Free Credit available
(On Selected Items, subject to 20% deposit. Written details on request)

MUSIC MATTERS
THE AUDIO SPECIALISTS

Our extensive range of products includes the very finest hi-fi and home cinema from Arcam, Audio Research, B&W, Chapter Audio, Chord, Cyrus, Denon, Dream Vision, Dynaudio, KEF, Krell, LAMM, Marantz, Martin Logan, Meridian, Michell, Mission, Monitor Audio, Musical Fidelity, Naim, Nordost, Panasonic, Pioneer, Project, Pure, Quad, REL, Rotel, Sennheiser, Sim2, SME, Sonus Faber, TEAC, Technics, Theta, Wharfedale, Wilson Benesch and Yamaha.

INTEREST FREE CREDIT ON SELECTED ITEMS APR 0%. Written details on request. Licensed Credit Broker.
Open Tuesday to Saturday 10.00 - 5.30. Late night (not Stourbridge) Wednesday until 6.30
www.musicmatters.co.uk

363 HAGLEY ROAD, EDGBASTON, BIRMINGHAM B17 8DL. TEL: 0121-429 2811 FAX: 0121-434 3298	93-95 HOBS MOAT ROAD, SOLIHULL, WEST MIDLANDS B92 8JL TEL: 0121-742 0254 FAX: 0121-742 0248	9 MARKET STREET, STOURBRIDGE, WEST MIDLANDS DY8 1AB TEL: 01384 444184 FAX: 01384 444968	10 BOLDMERE ROAD, SUTTON COLDFIELD, WEST MIDLANDS B73 5TD TEL: 0121 354 2311 FAX: 0121 354 1933	344 UXBRIDGE ROAD, HATCH END, MIDDLESEX HA5 4HR TEL: 020 8420 1925 FAX: 020 8420 1928
---	---	---	---	---

www.hifichoice.co.uk

2 CHANNEL SPECIALISTS

simaudio moon
47 laboratory
avid
shahinian
lavardin
electrofluidics
living voice
sonneteer
border patrol
neat acoustics
isoblu
resolution audio
tom evans audio
dnm/reson
lfd audio
audio physic
slinkylinks



thesoundpractice
stalbans: 01727 893 928
www.thesoundpractice.com

NAIM SPECIALISTS

tom tom audio

OFFICIAL AGENTS FOR THE ENTIRE NAIM AUDIO RANGE

see new website @
www.tomtomaudio.com
st albans 01727 86 86 59



Naim audio designed to thrill and built to last.
Hear it's music sing at..

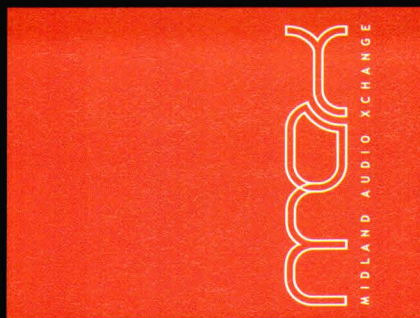


THE SOUND GALLERY

01494 531682

65 Castle Street, High Wycombe, Bucks
www.soundgallery.co.uk

www.hifichoice.co.uk



dCS

www.midlandaudiox-change.co.uk

dCS LA SCALA UPSAMPLING TRANSPORT

SACD/CD Upsampling (to DSD) Transport high quality dual laser mechanism Low jitter on-board clock Clock sync function with dCS Elgar Plus and dCS Delius D/A converters DSD digital output via IEEE1394 interface using CD or Super Audio CD material 16 bit 44.1kS/s output via AES interface

dCS ELGAR PLUS D TO A CONVERTER

The dCS Elgar Plus is the most advanced audiophile D/A converter in the world. It is an evolution of our now legendary dCS Elgar. This is the digital interface that Sony will use to transfer DSD data between its audiophile products and it will therefore become the standard consumer DSD digital interface. The Elgar Plus uses the IEEE1394 interface to accept DSD data from the dCS Verdi SACD/CD Transport when it is playing the high resolution layer of SACDs and from the dCS Purcell when it is upsampling CDs to DSD. The advanced technology employed in the Elgar Plus makes it possible to give the user a very wide range of additional features and functions beyond that found in ordinary audiophile D/A converters.

ENQUIRIES: T. 01562 731100
F. 01562 730228

THE OLD CHAPEL, FORGE LANE,
BELBROUGHTON, DY9 9TD
sales@midlandaudiox-change.co.uk

ELECTRONICS

Accuphase, Audio Analogue, Audio Research, Belcanto, Conrad Johnson, Copland, Creek, Densen, DCS, Electrocompaniet, Krell, Lavardin, Magnum Dynalab, Nagra, Orpheus, Pathos, Primare, PS Audio, Reson/Resolution Audio, Spectral, Sugden, Trichord, Verity Research, Wadia, 47 Laboratory.

LOUDSPEAKERS

Audio Physic, ATC, Avalon, JM Labs, Konus Audio, Pen Audio, Proac, Peak Consult, Martin Logan, REL, Sonus Faber, Velodyne, Verity Audio.

CABLES / SUPPORTS / ACCESSORIES

Cardas, Clearaudio, Eichman, Finite Elemente, Furatec, Grand Prix Racing, Nordost, Quadraspire, Siltech, Shakti, Shun Mook, Transparent, Van de Hul.

TURNTABLES / CARTRIDGES

Avid, Benz Micro, Dynavector, Koetsu, Kuzma, Lyra, Michell, Rega, Roksan, RS Labs, SME, Triplanar, VPI.

DEALER DIRECTORY

Choosing a good hi-fi dealer is the most vital step in acquiring the system that is right for you. This unique directory gives full information on dealers able to help in your area.

BATH/BRISTOL

THE RIGHT NOTE, tel: 01225 874728. Give your ears a new reference point for the best sounds at any price. Forget reviews and trying to put together a system like a patchwork quilt with the 'best' bits around. It's our job to do the assessing, you judge the results. Come here, or we'll come to you, and plan a system for the future, even if you spread the purchases. Leave "upgrade-itis" behind, save money and enjoy music. Just listen, and you'll know. CD: Accuphase, Advantage, Audio Synthesis, Balanced Audio Technology, dCS (Elgar etc), Meracus, Pass, Sugden, Wadia. Vinyl: Audio Synthesis, Basis, Clearaudio, DNM, Graham, (The) Groove, Lehmann (Black Cube), Michell, Sumiko, Transfiguration. Amps: Accuphase, Advantage, Balanced Audio Technology, CAT, DNM, Gamut, Lumley, Meracus, Michell, Nagra, Pass, Sonneteer, Spectral, Sugden. Speakers: Audio Physic, BKS, Ethos, Harbeth, Lumley, Magneplanar, NEAT, Totem, Verity Audio. Tuners: Accuphase, Magnum Dynalab. Cables: Argento, Chord Co, DNM, Hovland, Nordost, SonicLink, Siltech, Yamamura Churchill. Mains: Accuphase.

CHESHIRE

ACOUSTICA, 17 Hoole Rd, Chester CH2 3NH. www.acoustica.co.uk. Tel: 01244 344227. All that's best in Hi-Fi and Home Cinema from quality manufacturers including Amphion, Arcam, ART, Audiolab, Ayre, B&W Nautilus, Classe, Focal/JM Lab, Monitor Audio, Naim Audio, Primare, Rega, REL, Rotel, Spondor, Sugden, Thiel, Wadia. We offer friendly, helpful advice, interest-free credit and trade-in facilities, and deliver and install systems throughout Cheshire, Merseyside and North Wales. Open Tues. - Sat. 10-5.30, evenings by arrangement.

ACTON GATE AUDIO, 4 Ruabon Rd., Wrexham. Tel: 01978 364500. Audio Visual specialists. AAD, Arcam, Audio Analogue, Bose, Celestion, Castle, Denon, Harman- Kardon, Jamo, JBL, Marantz, Michell, Mission, Musical Fidelity, NAD, Onkyo, Pure Digital, Quad, REL, Roksan, Ruark, Tannoy, Teac, UKD, Unico, Vibe, Yamaha. Demonstration room, installation service. Easy parking and motonway access. Mastercard, Visa etc.

NORTH WEST

DOUG BRADY HI-FI, Kingsway Studios, Kingsway North, Warrington WA1 3NU. Tel: 01925 828009. Email: doug.brady@dougbradyhifi.com. Website: www.dougbradyhifi.com. For the widest range of high quality hi-fi in the Northwest. Family business est. 45 years. 3 demo rooms, inc. home cinema, home trials; deliveries throughout NW; Mastercard, Visa, credit facilities - Interest Free Credit! Open 10.30 - 6. Send for free map. **BADA**

HI-FI SHOWROOMS, 12a West St, off West St car park, Congleton, Cheshire. CW12 1JR. Tel: 01260 280017. Email: mail@hifishowrooms.co.uk. Web: www.hifishowrooms.co.uk. Carefully selected audio range, including Naim, NAD, Roksan, Michell, Harman, Primare, Castle, Vienna, JM Labs, Neat Acoustics, Ruark, Audion Valve amps, Project, Goldring, Monitor Audio. Also the best in AV from Harman, Onkyo, Lexicon, M&K, Primare, Parasound, Naim, SIM2, Vutec, Da-lite, REL, MJ Acoustics, definitive. Demonstration by appointment. Open Tuesday - Saturday.

COUNTY DURHAM

MUSIC MATTERS, 17 Coniscliffe Road, Darlington, County Durham DL3 7EE. Tel: 01325 481 418. Tues - Sat 10.00-5.30 Weds 10.00-6.30 www.musicmatters.co.uk **BADA**

DORSET

MOVEMENT AUDIO, 588 Ashley Road, Parkstone, Poole. Tel: 01202 730865/380018. www.movement-audio.co.uk. Arcam, Audio Vector, B&W, Castle, Chord Electronics, Cyrus, Denon, Densen, Lavidarin, Marantz, Mission (inc. FS series), NAD, Pioneer, Roksan, REL, Rotel, Tannoy (inc. Dimension), Yamaha. 3 demo rooms, Hi Fi and Home Cinema specialists, easy parking on site, high quality used equipment, massive range of audio and video leads and connectors etc. Credit facilities. Open Tues-Sat 10-5.30. **BADA**

MOVEMENT AUDIO, 926 Wimborne Road, Moordown, Bournemouth, Dorset. Tel: 01202 529988/ 520066. www.movement-audio.co.uk. Arcam, B&W, Celestion, Denon, KEF, Marantz, Michell, Musical Fidelity, NAD, Opera, Pioneer, Project, Quad, REL, Roksan, Rotel, Tannoy, Teac,

Yamaha. Home cinema and Hi Fi specialists, full demo facilities, friendly expert advice, home demo and installation, easy parking, credit facilities, Visa/Mastercard. Open Tues-Sat 9.30-5.30.

WEYMOUTH HI-FI, 33-35 Maiden Street, Weymouth. Tel: 01305 785729/766345. www.movement-audio.co.uk. Arcam, B&W, Castle, Celestion, Denon, KEF, Meridian, Mission, Musical Fidelity, Panasonic, Pioneer, Project, Quad, Rotel, Technics, Yamaha plus large range of PA. and DJ audio and lighting, multi room and commercial installation specialists, Home Cinema and DVD, Projection TV and plasma, 2 demo rooms, credit facilities, Visa/ Mastercard. Open Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30

LANCASHIRE

ADVENTURES IN HI-FI, 5 Bishopsgate, off Hallgate, Wigan WN1 1NL. Tel: 01942 234202. For the best hi-fi and home cinema products from quality manufacturers including B&W, Royd, Bryston, Neat, Michelle, Naim, Rega, Cyrus, NAD, KEF, Denon, Dynavector, Shahinian, JM Lab, PMC, Project, Quadraspire. We offer friendly advice, excellent demonstration facilities, 0% finance, free delivery and installation throughout the North West. Opening hours 10.00 - 5.30 Tuesday to Saturday, evenings by appointment. **BADA**

ROMERS HIFI, 11 Lomax Street, Great Harwood, Nr Blackburn, Lancs. BB6 7DJ. 01254 880220 Mon-Sat 9-5. The Northwest's premier HiFi and Home Cinema dealer - full demonstration facilities, featuring the following brands: Electronics: Arcam, Cyrus, Denon, Exposure, Quad, Lexicon, N.A.D., Pioneer, Roksan, Sony, Moon. Speakers: Focal, JMLabs, Quad, Monitor Audio, Totem, Wharfedale. Subwoofers: Velodyne, REL, MJ Acoustics. Plasma - LCD & Projectors: InFocus, Pioneer, Sony. Furniture: Atacama, Partington, Optimum, Sonus, Soundations. Cables: Nordost, Chord, QED, Van Den Hul, TCI.

And many more leading brands, in all fields. Come down and see our expert, friendly staff with any of your problems, be it a first time purchase or upgrading your current system. **BADA**

LEICESTERSHIRE

LEICESTER HI-FI CO, St Martins Square Leicester LE1 5EW. Tel: 0116 253 9753 Fax: 0116 262 6097 Website: www.leicesterhifi.co.uk Email: shop.leicesterhifi@btconnect.com Acoustic Energy, Arcam, Atacama, Audica, AVID, B&W/Nautilus, BenQ, Chord Electronics, Creek, Crimson, Cyrus/CyrusLink, Denon, Epos, Greig IK Loudspeakers, Marantz, Michell, Mission, Mordaunt-Short MP3 Players, Musical Fidelity, NAD, Optimum, Pioneer, ProAc, Project, Pure, Quad, REL, Rotel, Sennheiser, Sharp, Teac, Totem, Yamaha, and more. 4 Listening areas/rooms over 3 floors. We can Demonstrate, Deliver and Install. HiFi/Home Cinema/Multi-room Audio/Plasma/LCD/Custom Installation/Design. Bargain Bin on Website. Open Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 **BADA**

DIVINE AUDIO, The Courtyard, Bennett's Place, High Street, Market Harborough, LE16 7NL **01858 432999** Leicestershire's freshest hi-fi and home cinema retailer, offering a service that you expect in an environment that will excite you. Stunning cinema and two channel demonstration facilities, comfy chairs, and coffee! We get outstanding results from Arcam, Art Loudspeakers, Audio Analogue, Beyerdynamic, Custom Design, Chord Company, Draper Screens, Ergo, Exposure, Focal/JMLab, Infocus, Isobule, Kube Design, Metz televisions, NAD, Nottingham Analogue Studio, Opera, Oray Screens, Partington, Pathos, PMC, ProAC, Pro-Ject, Quadraspire, Revolver, Ruark, Sonus, Sugden, Tivoli, Triangle, Unison Research and a few other surprises. We are open Tuesday - Saturday 9.30 - 5.30 and by arrangement. Free parking outside the courtyard. All normal methods of payment accepted. **01858 432999** WWW.DIVINEAUDIO.CO.UK, INFO@DIVINEAUDIO.CO.UK

LIVERPOOL

ACOUSTICA, 17 Hoole Rd, Chester CH2 3NH. Tel: 01244 344227. See our main entry under Cheshire.

LONDON

CORNFLAKE.CO.UK, 37 Windmill Street, London W1T 2JU. Tel: 020 7631 0472, fax: 020 7436 7165. E-mail: help@cornflake.co.uk. Open Tues-Sat 10-6, Thurs 10-7. The specialists in high quality sound, be it for one room or many more. They offer friendly advice, and a full delivery and installation service is available. Two listening rooms with full A/V facilities demonstrating Arcam, ATC, AVI, Bryston, Dynaudio, Isotek, Mark Levinson, Lexicon, Naim, Origin Live, Proceed, PMC, Rega, Totem, Yamaha and more. Service department. Amex, Mastercard, Switch, Visa and worldwide mail order service. Still the coolest Hi-Fi shop in London. www.cornflake.co.uk

GRAHAM'S HI-FI, Canonbury Yard, 190a New North Road, London N1. Tel: 020 7226 5500. www.grahams.co.uk 'One of the 5 best hi-fi shops in the world'. Arcam, Linn, Meridian, Naim, Rega, and more... Home cinema and whole house custom installed solutions. Free parking, 4 demo rooms, service dept, open Tues-Sat. Ring for appointment. **BADA**

GREATER MANCHESTER

ADVENTURES IN HI-FI, 5 Bishopsgate, off Hallgate, Wigan WN1 1NL. Tel: 01942 234202. See main entry under Lancashire

MUSIC MATTERS, 344 Uxbridge Road, Hatchend, Middlesex HA5 4HR. Tel: 020 8420 1925. Arcam, Audio Research, B & W, Chapter Audio, Chord, Cyrus, Denon, Dream Vision, Dynaudio, KEF, Krell, LAMM, Marantz, Martin Logan, Meridan, Michel, Mission, Monitor Audio, Musical Fidelity, Naim, Nordost, Panasonic, Pioneer, Project, Pure, Quad, REL, Rotel, Sennheiser, Sim2, SME, Sonus Faber, TEAC, Technics, Theta, Wharfedale, Wilson Benesch, Yamaha. Excellent demonstration and home trial facilities. Free installation. Customised multi-room systems. All major credit cards accepted. Full credit facilities available. Tues - Sat 10.00-5.30, Weds 10.00-6.30. www.musicmatters.co.uk **BADA**

Members of the British Audio dealers Association are able to offer:

- Two year guarantee, transferable to another BADA dealer should the purchaser move more than 30 miles from his/her original address
- low cost five year guarantee option
- proper demonstration facilities
- seven day exchange or refund scheme if the dealer's advice is taken on product selection
- fully guaranteed service work
- customer complaints procedure in the event of problems

For more information contact **BADA** on

0870 126 9137



INDICATES MEMBERSHIP OF THE BRITISH AUDIO DEALERS ASSOCIATION



BADA
BRITISH AUDIO DEALERS ASSOCIATION
the symbol of security

**INDICATES MEMBERSHIP
OF THE BRITISH AUDIO
DEALERS ASSOCIATION**

WEST MIDLANDS

ACOUSTICA, 114 Wolverhampton Road, Stafford ST17 4AH. Tel: 01785 258216. See our main entry under Cheshire.

NORFOLK

BASICALLY SOUND, The Old School Rd, Bracou Ash, Norwich NR14 8HG. Tel: 01508 570829.

Audio Analogue, Beyer, Bryston, Chord Cables, Creek, Denon, Dynavector, Epos, Goldring, Grado, Isoblu, Naim, ProAc, PMC, Rega, Soundstyle, Thule, Unison Research.

2 comprehensive demo rooms. Home Trial. Free installation. Visa, Mastercard.

0% Finance. Tues-Fri 9.30-1, 2-5.30.

All day Sat.

www.falcon-acoustics.co.uk



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

NOTTINGHAM HI-FI CENTRE, 120-122 Alfreton Road, Nottingham. Tel: 0115 978 6919. www.nottinghamhifi.co.uk. We are the area's leading specialists. Relax in our superb demonstration rooms and enjoy the very best in Hi-Fi, multi-room and home cinema solutions. Our outstanding customer service means a two-year parts and labour guarantee, an on-site service department and a full delivery and installation service. Home trials and free easy parking are also available. Established in 1968, we have been giving sound advice for over 30 years. Open Mon-Sat 9 - 5.30.



OXFORDSHIRE

ASTLEY AUDIO LTD, 3 Marketplace, Wallingford OX10 0EG. Tel: 01491 839305, fax: 01491 825024. Founded 1975. Great deals on B&W, Denon, KEF, Marantz, Mission, Panasonic, Pioneer, Project, Sony, Technics, Yamaha. Home trial, installation and delivery service. Service dept on site. 2 yr guarantee on most products. Interest free credit on selected items. 1 home cinema room, 2 listening rooms. Mastercard, Visa, Amex, Diners. Instant credit. Tues-Fri 9-5.30, Sat 9-5. CDs and DVDs stocked.

SHROPSHIRE

CREATIVE AUDIO, 9 Dogpole, Shrewsbury SY1 1EN. Tel: 01743 236055. Email sales@creative-audio.co.uk, www.creative-audio.co.uk.

Internet prices - from a specialist shop!

One of the largest ranges of Hi-Fi/Home Cinema equipment outside London. Massive world-famous website, featuring huge savings on all the popular brands. Acoustic Energy, Alphason, Arcam, Atacama, Cabletalk, Celestion, Chord, Cyrus, Denon, Draper screens, InFocus Screenplay projectors, JM Labs, KEF, Mission, MJ Acoustics, NAD, Naim, NEC Projectors, Onkyo, Optimum, Oray screens, Partington, Pioneer, Pioneer Plasma, Project, Pure DAB radios, QED, Roksan, Soundstyle, Stands Unique, Wharfedale, Yamaha.

Staff so experienced they are old enough to be carbon dated, comfortable dem room with plasma and projector (and freshly ground coffee!), expert installation, specialist workshop, free 2 and 5 year guarantees, custom cable manufacture, quality used bargains etc etc - in fact everything you would expect from one of Europe's leading audio specialists.

See for yourself - visit www.creative-audio.co.uk

STAFFORDSHIRE

ACOUSTICA, 114 Wolverhampton Road, Stafford ST17 4AH. www.acoustica.co.uk Tel: 01785 258216.

All that's best in Hi-Fi and Home Cinema from quality manufacturers including Arcam, ART, Audiolab, Ayre, B&W, Focal/JM Lab, MJ Acoustics, Monitor Audio, Naim Audio, Primare, Rega, REL, Rotel, Spondor, Sugden, Thiel, Wadia, Yamaha Pre Eminent. We offer friendly, helpful advice, interest-free credit and trade-in facilities, and deliver and install systems throughout Staffordshire and the Midlands. Opening hours Tues. - Sat. 10.30-6.00, evenings by arrangement.

SUFFOLK

EASTERN AUDIO, 41 Bramford Rd, Ipswich IP1 2LU. Tel: 01473 217217. Email: HiFi@eastern-audio.com. Giving sound advice for over 25 years. Parking. Demo room. Lots of free advice. Arcam, Meridian, Denon, Quad, NAD, B&W, Celestion, Project, KEF, Castle, Technics, Top Tape, plus all the usual and unusual leads, cables, stands, racks, headphones, cartridges & stylis etc.



AUDIO IMAGES, 128 London Road North, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR32 1HB. 01502 582853 info@audioimages-hifi.com - www.audioimages-hifi.com THE Hifi & Home Cinema shop.

From the smallest item to the largest custom install. Fully remote lighting systems.

A refreshingly different selection with Valve amps to transistor, Cartridges to headphones & Turntables to Projectors. Helpful, friendly people to deal with.

Synthesis, Rothwell, Shinpy-audio Volta, Sugden, Triangle, Castle, Michell, ScreenPlay, Lumley, Harman Kardon, Project, Rako, Sim2, Onkyo, Velodyne, Vincent, Stax, Grado, Pathos, JM Labs, Pioneer, Mirage, Hovland, Boulder, Tom Evans Audio Design, Isol-8, Ortofon, Goldring, Van den Hul, Townshend, Vifa & many others to list.

All full dealer facilities with separate dem room, repairs and servicing.

SUSSEX

POWERPLANT, 40 Church Road, Hove BN3 2FN. Tel: 01273 775978. E-mail: sales@powerplant.co.uk Whatever your budget we can help you choose from our carefully selected range of today's finest hi-fi, home cinema and multi-room equipment. Recommended agencies include Arcam, Bose, B&O, Cyrus, Epos, Isotek, Linn, Loewe, Michell, M&K, PMC, ProAc, Runco, Stewart, Triad, Velodyne and Yamaha. Excellent demonstration facilities, knowledgeable and friendly staff. Cedia member.

Open Tues-sat 10.30am - 5.30pm.

All major credit cards. Full credit facilities.

WEST MIDLANDS

GRIFFIN AUDIO, 3 Gibb Terrace, Gibb Street, Birmingham B9 4AA Tel: 0121 224 7300 www.griffinaudio.co.uk

Birmingham's specialist hi-fi and home cinema consultancy. A select range of quality equipment from Arcam, ART Loudspeakers, Audiolab, Focal/JM Lab, Linn, Naim, Rega, Shahinian, Spondor & Sugden. Accessories from Quadraspire, The Chord Co, Harmonic Technology and MusicWorks. Come and listen to just how good music can sound. Call us to arrange your personal demonstration.

MUSIC MATTERS, 363 Hagley Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham B17 8DL.

Tel: 0121 429 2811. Arcam, Audio Research, B & W, Chapter Audio, Chord, Cyrus, Denon, Dream Vision, Dynaudio, KEF, Krell, LAMM, Marantz, Martin Logan, Meridian, Michel, Mission, Monitor Audio, Musical Fidelity, Naim, Nordost, Panasonic, Pioneer, Project, Pure, Quad, REL, Rotel, Sennheiser, Sim2, SME, Sonus Faber, TEAC, Technics, Theta, Wharfedale, Wilson Benesch, Yamaha. Excellent demonstration and home trial facilities. Free installation. Customised multi-room systems. All major credit cards accepted. Full credit facilities available.

Tues - Sat 10.00-5.30, Weds 10.00-6.30.

www.musicmatters.co.uk



MUSIC MATTERS, Hobbs Moat Road, Solihull, W. Midlands B92 8JL.

Tel: 0121 742 0254. Tues - Sat 10.00-5.30 Weds 10.00-6.30 www.musicmatters.co.uk



MUSIC MATTERS, 9 Market Street, Stourbridge, W. Midlands B92 1AB.

Tel: 01384 444184. Tues - Sat 10.00-5.30

Weds 10.00-6.30 www.musicmatters.co.uk



MUSIC MATTERS, 10 Boldmere Road, Sutton Coldfield, W. Midlands B73 5DT.

Tel: 0121 354 2311. Tues - Sat 10.00-5.30 Weds 10.00-6.30 www.musicmatters.co.uk



WILTSHIRE

SALISBURY HI-FI, 15 Catherine Street, Salisbury. Tel: 01722 322169/330841. www.movement-audio.co.uk. Arcam, Audio Analogue, B&W, Celestion, Chord Company, Denon, Harmon Kardon, KEF, Marantz, Meridian (inc. Digital theatre), Mission, Michell, Musical Fidelity, NAD, Nordost, Opera, Project, QED, Rotel, REL, Teac, Yamaha. Home Cinema and Hi Fi specialists, multi room and commercial installation specialists, service dept. on site, high quality used equipment, projection TV and plasma. 2 demo rooms, credit facilities, Visa/Mastercard. Open Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30.



YORKSHIRE (EAST)

THE AUDIO ROOM, 2 George Street, Hedon, Hull, HU12 8JH. tel 01482 891375. www.theaudiroom.co.uk. High quality two channel and home theatre needs catered for. Authorised agents for Linn Products, Naim Audio, Spectral, Accuphase, Krell, Audio Research, Cyrus, Nagra, Sugden, Rega, Unison Research, Pathos, Rotel, Bowers and Wilkin, Focal JM Lab, Proac, Spondor, Pen Audio, Sonus Faber, Koetsu, Lyra, Ortofon, Grado, Stax, Audiophile Base, BCD, Hutter, Quadraspire, Stands Unique, Nordost, Siltech, The Chord Company, Townshend. We travel throughout the UK, and believe we offer the most comprehensive range of quality products available and a service that is unbeatable. Open Mon - Sat, 9am - 6pm (later by appointment). Credit facilities and home demonstration available. Free and easy car parking available as well as a relaxed and comfortable environment assured. The North's friendliest and most complete dealer.

YORKSHIRE (SOUTH)

DONCASTER

THE HI-FI STUDIOS, The Long Barn, Wakefield Road, Hampole, Doncaster DN6 7EU. Tel: 01302 727274/ 725550, fax: 01302 727274. Email: info@thehifistudios.freemove.co.uk. Web: thehifistudios.co.uk

Hi-Fi, Home Cinema and Multi-Room experts. Musical Fidelity, Tag McLaren, Wadia, Anthony Gallow, ProAc, Ruark, Castle, Teac, Unison Research, Impulse Horns, Monitor Audio, Harbeth, NAD, Michell Turntables, Audio Analogue, Living Voice, Exposure, Densen, Lynwood Electronics, Opera, Trichord Research, Nordost, Stands Unique, Stax Electrostats, Ortofon, Project, Goldring, REL Subwoofers, Tag McLaren, SIM 2 & Denon Home Cinema products, plus others. Viewing and demonstration by appointment. Home trials and free installation on hi-fi equipment. Credit card and finance facilities. Phone for more information. 10am-6.30pm Tues-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat. Closed Sunday & Monday.



WALES

NORTH WALES

ACOUSTICA, 17 Hoole Rd, Chester CH2 3NH. Tel: 01244 344227. See our main entry under Cheshire.

ACTION GATE AUDIO, 4 Ruabon Rd., Wrexham. Tel: 01978 364500. Demonstration room, installation service. Easy parking and motorway access. Mastercard, Visa etc. See main entry under Cheshire.

To advertise in the
HI-FI CHOICE Dealer Directory,
Call Bevan Walsh
on 01225 788255 now!

Next month

ISSUE 274 ⊕ DECEMBER 2005 ⊕ ON SALE 20 OCTOBER

THE HI-FI AWARDS

...Our unmissable round-up of the year's best hi-fi

- ▶ Celebrated CD players
- ▶ Astounding amplifiers
- ▶ Spectacular speakers
- ▶ Terrific turntables
- ▶ Dynamic DVD players
- ▶ Top tuners, classy cables, righteous racks and more



ALSO IN THE ISSUE...

In-depth tests of the most vital new kit, including...

- ▶ Audio Analogue Rossini CD player and Verdi Settanta integrated amplifier
- ▶ Marantz DV7600 universal disc player
- ▶ Revel Performa M22 loudspeaker
- ▶ Sony DVP-NS9100ES DVD/SACD player
- ▶ Cambridge Audio Azur 640C V2 CD player



Plus...

Our regular round-ups of accessories and music, not to mention the latest news, views and features from hi-fi's smartest grapevine... And much, much more!

BE SURE NOT TO MISS BRITAIN'S MOST RELIABLE GUIDE TO REAL HI-FI

Give this form (or a photocopy) to your local newsagent to guarantee your own copy of Hi-Fi Choice reaches you every month

PLEASE RESERVE ME A COPY OF HI-FI CHOICE EVERY MONTH

Name

Address

Postcode

Contact telephone no

To the newsagent: Contact your magazine wholesaler to order Hi-Fi Choice

HI-FI CHOICE

NOVEMBER 2005 ISSUE 273

Future Publishing Ltd, 99 Baker Street, London W1U 6PP
Tel: +44 (0)20 7317 2600 Fax: +44 (0)20 7317 2686

EDITORIAL

Tim Bower **editor**
tim.bower@futurenet.co.uk
Dan George **reviews editor**
dan.george@futurenet.co.uk
Benjamin Benson **art editor**
benjamin.benson@futurenet.co.uk

CONTRIBUTORS

David Balfour, Richard Black, Art Dudley, Colette Fahy, Alvin Gold, Stuart Harrison, Jimmy Hughes, Jason Kennedy, Paul Messenger, Dave Oliver, Mark Prendergast, Alan Sircom, Phil Strongman, Dominic Todd, David Vivian, Nigel Williamson

PHOTOGRAPHY

Adrian Lyon

ADVERTISING

Matthew Tasker **head of sales**
020 7317 2604 matthew.tasker@futurenet.co.uk
Fiona Beech **advertising manager**
020 7317 2693 fiona.beech@futurenet.co.uk
Brad Francis **senior sales executive**
020 7317 2415 brad.francis@futurenet.co.uk
Simon Abbott **senior sales executive**
020 7317 2656 simon.abbott@futurenet.co.uk
James Rhodes-Baxter **sales executive**
020 7331 1120 james.rhodes-baxter@futurenet.co.uk
Bevan Walsh **classified sales executive**
01225 442244 bevan.walsh@futurenet.co.uk

HFC ONLINE

www.hfichoice.co.uk
Mike Cooper **online editor**
mike.cooper@futurenet.co.uk

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Tel: +44 (0)870 837 4722
Email: hfichoice@subscriptions.co.uk
Prices (13 issues): UK £31.65 (or £7.91 quarterly Direct Debit), Europe £45.39, North America \$52.77, rest of the world £65.44

BACK ISSUES

Tel: +44 (0)870 837 4722
Prices: UK £4 per issue, overseas £6.95 per issue

MARKETING & LICENSING

Chee-Mann Chan **marketing manager**
Nicola Hensman **senior promotions executive**
Simon Wear **licensing director**
simon.wear@futurenet.co.uk

PRODUCTION & DISTRIBUTION

Paul Burden **circulation manager**
Clare Scott **production manager**
Katty Pigott **production controller**
Helen Ramjuttan **ad coordinator**

PUBLISHING & MANAGEMENT

Andy Ford **publisher**
andy.ford@futurenet.co.uk
Nick Merritt **group senior editor**
David Fernando **advertising director**
Dom Beaven **publishing director**
Robert Price **managing director**

Distributed by Marketforce (UK) Ltd, 5th floor, Low Rise Building, Kings Reach Tower, Stamford Street, London SE1 9LS. Tel: 020 7633 3300

All contents © Future Publishing 2005. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form without the express permission of the publisher. While we make every effort to ensure that everything we print in Hi-Fi Choice is factually correct, we cannot be held responsible if factual errors occur. Advertisements are accepted by us in good faith as correct at the time of going to press.



Future Publishing Ltd is part of Future plc. Future produces carefully targeted special-interest magazines for people who share a passion. We aim to satisfy that passion by creating titles offering value for money, reliable information, smart buying advice and which are a pleasure to read. Today we publish more than 150 magazines in the UK, US, France and Italy. Over 100 international editions of our magazines are also published in 30 other countries across the world. Future plc is a public company quoted on the London Stock Exchange (symbol: FUTR).

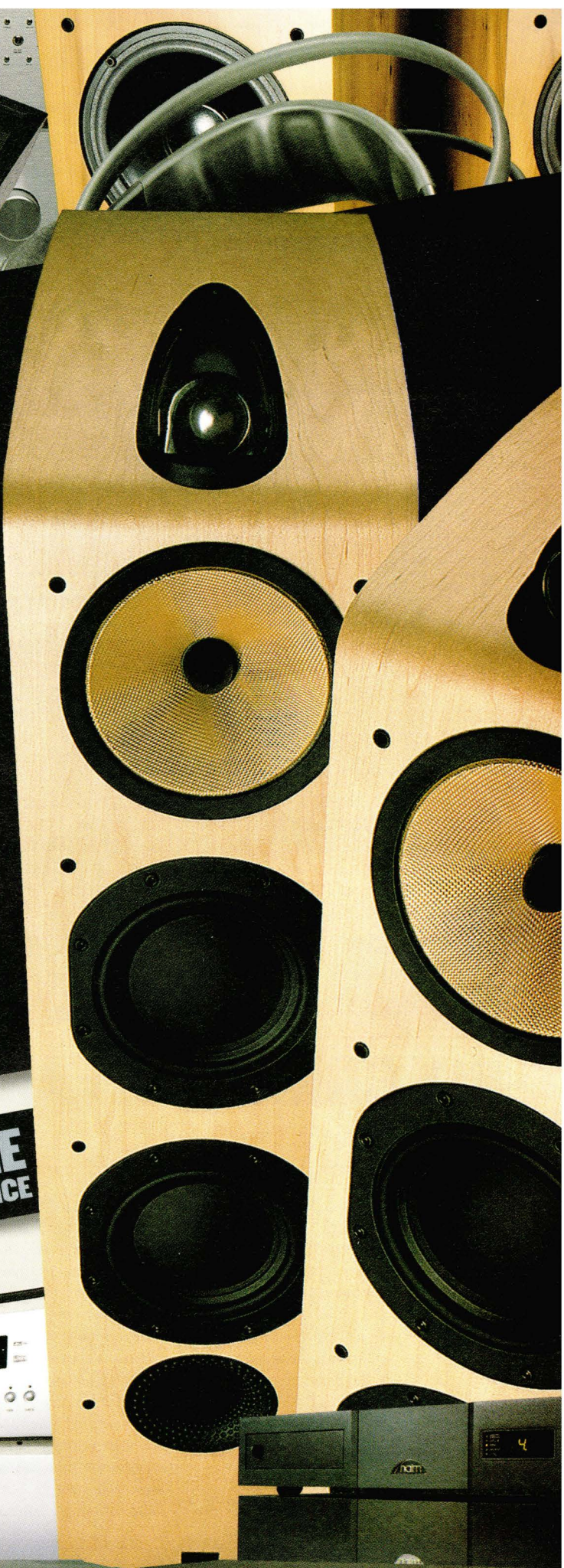
Roger Parry **non-executive chairman**
Greg Ingram **chief executive**
John Bowman **group finance director**

+44 (0)1225 442244 www.futureplc.com
Bath • London • Milan • New York
Paris • San Diego • San Francisco



2ND HAND HI-FI & HOME CINEMA BUYER

FREE! 8 PAGE MAGAZINE
WITH THE NOVEMBER ISSUE OF HI-FI CHOICE



A-Z GUIDE TO SECOND-HAND KIT

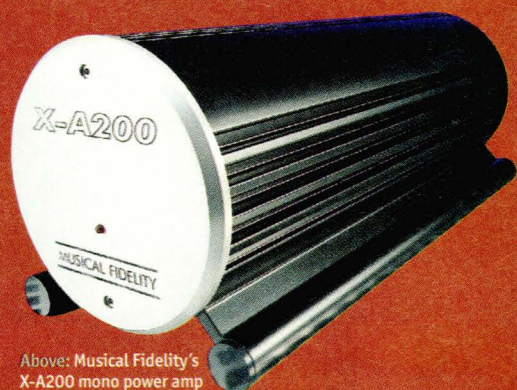
#15 MUSICAL FIDELITY

Musical Fidelity is one of those companies that has produced so many memorable products that it's hard to pin down just a handful of classics. Once best known for its Class A A1 integrated amp, the brand is probably better remembered these days for its range of tubular shaped products. Known as the X-Series, the product that opened the X-Files was a valve output device known as the X-10D. Still rather quirky today, it was one of those unusual products that simply caught the public's imagination. Sadly, as CD players improved, its advantages, rather like the once-popular add-on DACs, became less apparent and therefore it became less saleable. Still, if you have a CD player with a bit too much bite, then this could be just the job. Available now for between £40-£75, it's also a good way to make your hi-fi look 'tweaky' without spending a mint.

Intriguing as the X-10D was, it was by no means the finest X-Series tubular product. For our money, that accolade lies with 1998's X-A200 power amps. Still housed in tubes – albeit especially long ones – these 200 watt monoblocks have a real taste of high-end transistor heaven about them. For around £1,000, these monoblocks had the kind of dynamic ability and composure that you'd expect from amps costing twice the amount at the time. They also had great timing, timbre and staging. This remains the case today and, combined with an ability to happily partner a wide range of preamps, makes them a top

used buy. Build quality is superior to the MF stuff of the 1980s, so you shouldn't have any problems there. If you do have a problem, though, it's good to know that MF still stocks all the spares, and is happy for units to be sent back to its Wembley HQ. Second-hand, these amps are rarer than you might think and their popularity has pushed prices up. Nevertheless, at between £500-£750, they still make an excellent powerhouse duo.

Go back to 1993, and Musical Fidelity had just launched another very fine amp indeed. The A1000 is about as different from the



Above: Musical Fidelity's X-A200 mono power amp

“The sumptuous sound still makes many of today's amps seem thin and stilted.”

X-A200 as you can get, but none the worse for it. The casing was more conventional, but beautifully finished in a deep gloss black. At the time your £1,400 bought you 50 watts of pure Class A refinement. With a separate twin power supply box, the A1000 followed Naim thinking on the advantages to had from separating the PSU from the main amp sections. Although Naim-like in conception, the sound could hardly have been more different. The sumptuous sound still makes many of today's amps seem thin and stilted. As with the X-A200s, it works best with classical music, but for different reasons. It might not be as dynamic as the X-A200s, but for orchestral

voicing, few can beat it at this level. Although reliability is generally good, the heavy control knobs can easily break the switches from the board if abused – so do check your knobs! Otherwise, all parts are still available, with a typical output transistor costing around £9. Again, this is another amp with near cult status, so if you like the look and sound, then be prepared to pay for it. Once available for around £400-£500, really good examples now fetch up to £850, which just goes to show that occasionally you can even make money from your hobby! **HFC**

*Dominic Todd
Next month: NAD*

DIY CORNER SPEAKERS

Part 15 Soft domes or hard?

Most tweeters have dome-shaped diaphragms for maximum inherent stiffness. But, opinion is divided between those that use hard metal dome tweeters, and those with for soft doped-fabric diaphragm types.

Hard domes create a diaphragm stiff enough to act as a rigid piston across the operating range – stiffness pushes its first resonance above human hearing – and therefore accurately mimics the applied signal. The domes have to be light, while high rigidity means that there is little self damping.

Most hard domes use aluminium alloys, usually combined with a small magnesium

content, anodised to prevent corrosion. Titanium and beryllium are also popular, if expensive. Ceramics – specifically sapphire and diamond crystal structures, grown artificially – are even stiffer than metals, but also heavier.

In contrast, the soft dome approach doesn't have the rigid piston quality of the hard dome, but does have superior self-damping characteristics and is physically much more rugged. It typically has a diaphragm made from lacquered woven silk, though soft moulded plastics are also common.

Diaphragm materials matter, and grab the marketing headlines, but they're only a part of what makes up a high quality tweeter.



Surround and suspension arrangements, motor and back-chamber design are all equally important in determining the quality of the end result. **HFC**

Paul Messenger

DIY CONTACTS

FALCON ACOUSTICS ☎ 01493 751100
🌐 www.falcon-acoustics.co.uk

WILMSLOW AUDIO ☎ 01455 286603
🌐 www.wilmslow-audio.co.uk

IPL ACOUSTICS ☎ 01271 867439
🌐 www.iplacoustics.co.uk

NEXT MONTH: Tweeter engineering



21 - 22
Cadham Centre
Glenrothes
KY7 6RU
Scotland
 tel: 01592 744 779
 fax: 01592 744 710
 info@shadowaudio.co.uk
 www.shadowaudio.co.uk

Pre-owned Hi-Fi Equipment

Our list of pre-owned equipment is changing all the time so you really should check back on this page whenever you can - you never know, you might just pick up a bargain.

Digital

- Audio Synthesis Transcend ASL model transport (£4800) **£2495**
- Audio Synthesis DAX Discrete in Black (£4000) **£2195**
- Marantz SA-1, boxed, manuals, perfect condition (£5500) **£2695**
- Meridian G08 CD player, one owner, boxed as new. (£2250) **£1495**
- Accuphase DP67 CD player (£4500) **£2995**
- EAD DSP 9000 Pro S3 DAC pre **£1495**
- Wadia 302 CD player (£4000) **£2995**
- Musical Fidelity Nu-Vista CD Player **£1695**
- DCS Verdi latest spec **£3495**
- DCS Verdi La Scala Transport (£9499) **£6895**
- Shanling CDT-100 (3D accoustics UK model) - £1600 **£990**
- Audio Analogue Paganini (£950) **£795**
- Musical Fidelity A308CD player **£995**
- Roksan Kandy MKIII silver/black ex-dem **£450**

Amplifiers

- Musical Fidelity Tri-Vista 300 amplifier (£4000) **£1995**
- AVI Lab Series Integrated amplifier (£1500) **£949**
- Conrad Johnson PV14L pre, 2yrs old (£2300) **£1250**
- Unison Research SR-1 integrated (£1325) **£699**
- BAT VK 250 BAT PAK power amplifier (£4995) **£2495**
- BAT VK-200 power amplifier **£995**
- Parasound Halo JC-1 mono blocks (£5600) **£2995**
- AVI S2000M mono blocks (£2000) **£595**
- Boulder 1012 DAC pre (£12950) **£6595**
- Musical Fidelity A3 CR pre-amp (£1000) **£395**
- ART Diavolo Power Amplifier (£5402) **£1795**
- Pathos Classic One mkII (£1400) **£950**
- Moon 15 integrated amplifier (£2695) **£1695**
- Classe CP 47.5 reference pre amp **£1295**
- ES Lab DXS4 digital amplifier **£1295**
- Croft TS1 with Epoch Pre (£3000) **£1795**
- ART Conductor Pre-amp **£895**
- Conrad Johnson 16LS pre-amp (£8000) **£3450**
- Musical Fidelity A3er pre amp **£395**
- Sugden Masterclass Mono blocks (£6600) **£3895**
- Audio Note Soro SE + built in phono stage **£995**
- Graaf GMS0, award winning KT88 valve amplifier (£4000) **£2995**
- Musical Fidelity X-150 v3 (£799) **£650**
- Hovland HP100 pre+built in pstage (£5350) **£3595**
- Hovland Radia Power amplifier (£7995) **£4995**
- Hovland HP200 + phono stage (£7325) **£4995**
- Audio Analogue New Maestro (£1750) **£1255**
- Audio Analogue Primo Setanta **£395**
- Unison Research SR 1 **£895**
- Roksan Kandy MKIII (silver or black) **£450**

Loudspeakers

- Wilson Benesch Curve speakers (£5000) **£3495**
- Triangle Titus ES stand mount (£370) **£269**
- Thiel CS6 boxed in superb condition, Morado mahogany (£8700) **£3995**
- Quad 989 ESL, boxed as new (£5000) **£2895**
- Proac Response 2 speakers, rosewood (£1695) **£695**
- Dali Helicon 400 (£3300) **£1995**
- Audio Note AN-ED speakers **£695**
- Mission 780 SE, boxed **£185**
- Living Voice Avatar II, finished in cherry (£2700) **£1595**
- Nola (Alon) Elite Signature speakers (£8000) **£3595**
- Living Voice Auditorium mkII speakers (£1900) **£795**
- Diapason Karis III speakers + matching stands **£995**
- Ref 3a Dacapo I, maple (£2700) **£1650**
- JM Lab Cobalt 816s (£999) **£595**
- Triangle Heliade, Champagne finish (£595) **£395**
- ATC SCM-50ASL, Yew (£7947) **£4995**
- Wilson Benesch ARC's with stands (£2500) **£1699**
- Triangle Australe in cherry (£3300) **£1995**
- Living Voice Avatar OBX-R in Cherry **£2695**
- Wilson Benesch Discovery (£5700) **£3895**
- Quad 989 ESL Vintage, new £5000 **£3600**
- Quad 988 ESL in Nouveau, cost new £3750 **£2999**
- Audio Physic Spark3, Cherry or light maple **£1250**
- Audio Physic Tempo 3i, Cherry or light maple **£1395**
- Audio Physic Tempo3i SE, Cherry/light maple **£1799**
- Audio Physic Virgo III, Cherry **£2895**
- Wilson Benesch ACT 1, Cherry **£3595**

Analogue

- EAR 834P deluxe, boxed, mint, one owner. (£895) **£495**
- Audio Synthesis Passion Phono stage, boxed unused, (£1295) **£695**
- Michell Gyrodec Bronze edition, absolutely mint condition with full Origin. Live Modified RB300 (Structural, end stub etc) Boxed, manual etc. **£995**
- Ortofon Jubilee, very low hours, boxed as new, be quick! **£595**
- SME 10, boxed AS NEW (£2800) **£1895**
- Audio Synthesis Passion Phono stage MM/MC **£795**
- SME 20/2a + SME V tonearm (£5695) **£3695**
- Wilson Benesch Full Circle-Ply Cart (£2100) **£1495**
- Musical Fidelity M1 turntable, boxed as new **£1990**
- Michell Orbe SE boxed as new **£1595**
- SME 10A, boxed **£2495**
- Nottingham Analogue Spacedec **£695**
- EAR 834P de-luxe phono stage **£250**
- Trichord Dino - silver front **£199**

Misc

- PS Audio P600 power plant (£2895) **£1595**
- Townshend Super Tweeters in Titanium matt **£650**

definitive audio



Definitive Audio creates a quality of musical experience that is peerless. Our service is bespoke, our philosophy is unique and our results are celebrated the world over.

We use a selection of the most artful and ingenious creations, including the emotionally persuasive and sublimely beautiful KSL Kondo amplifiers and Living Voice loudspeakers.

- Living Voice - full product range
- KSL Kondo - full product range
- Resolution Audio Opus 21
- Magnum Dynalab
- Kuzma, including Airline and XL
- SME including Model 30

Finite Elemente including Pagode HD Reference Series
 New Western Electric 300B valves available from stock.

Sale of part exchanged and ex-dem items	Sale	New
Naim CDS - 2003 - mint - manual - boxed	£795	
Naim NAC 112 - 2003 - mint - manual - boxed	£395	
Naim NAP 150 - 2003 - mint - manual - boxed	£445	
Naim Flatcap - 2003 - mint - manual - boxed	£345	
Border Patrol Control Unit - line pre-amp	£1000	£1700
Audio Note Japan M7 pre-amp - line only	£3000	
Musical Fidelity A2 Integrated - very nice	£250	£500
Art Audio PX25 - 5watts - Single ended flea power for the sensitive type	£3000	£4000
Krell KAV-300iL	£1900	£3000
AudioNote (UK) Ltd P.Zero pre + monos - perfect condition	£400	
Sugden Masterclass integrated - nearly new	£2500	£3300
Helios Model 1 CD player	£700	£1300
Benz Micro LP phono cartridge - 5 minutes use - perfect	£1400	£1900
AVI S.2000 M1 integrated amp	£400	£1000
Border Patrol P21 - mahogany - integrated - 11 months	£3800	£4800
Audio Mecca Mephisto CD transport	£1200	£2500
Canary 608 (blue) line integrated - great sound for low dough	£1900	£3000
Canary 303 [110v] - new - fillet mignon	£3800	£7200
Canary 309 - very nearly new - beef wellington	£4800	£10000
Canary 801 [110v] line pre-amp - lemon torte	£2500	£4500
Cyrus CD8 CD Player - 2 years old	£600	£1000
Aloia pre-amp - very new - very good condition - beautifully made - OK	£900	£2800
Thomas Sheu turntables (80mm platter with 12" arm)		ring for details
(50mm platter with 9" arm)		
Sugden A21a - titanium - classic integrated	£600	£1050
Vitavox RH330 Mid range horn - pair	£400	
Revolver 45 loudspeaker - cherry - unused	£500	£1200
Revolver 45 loudspeaker - grey + maple	£400	£900
Kimber Select inter-connect - 0.75m - new - in elaborate plastic box	£250	£500

Tel: 0115 973 3222

Fax: 0115 973 3666

Internet: www.definitiveaudio.co.uk
email: shout@definitiveaudio.co.uk

Call 01592 744 779 for the best Part Exchange prices!



01376 521132

07709 260221

E-MAIL soundstage@netlineuk.net

www.sound-stage.co.uk

BY APPOINTMENT ONLY

PRE-OWNED EQUIPMENT

AUDIO INNOVATIONS SERIES 800 4-BOX PRE/POWER/PS/PHONO STAGE.....	£1295
BOSE 901 SERIES VI WITH ACTIVE EQUALISER.....	£595
CASTLE HARLECH FLOORSTANDING LOUDSPEAKERS BLACK OR CHERRY.....	£399
COUNTERPOINT SA100 POWER AMP VALVE/TRANS HYBRID BLACK BOXED.....	£595
DENON DVD-5000 BLACK WITH MULTI REGION CHIP FITTED-SUPERB MACHINE.....	£495
EPOS ES14 BLACK SINGLE WIRE.....	£329
EPOS ES12 LIGHT CHERRY BOXED AND SUPERB.....	£299
GARRARD 301/SME 3009/SHURE MM CARTRIDGE ON HARD BOARD.....	£599
KEF 103/3 ROSEWOOD WITH KEF KUBE EQUALISER AND INTEGRAL STANDS.....	£399
LFD PA2 POWERSTAGE POWER AMP GREY MARBLE EFFECT.....	£649
LINN SONDEK LP12 NORTON AIR POWER ITTOK TROIKA WALNUT SUPERB.....	£1295
LINN KAIRN PRE AMP MM/MC PHONO STAGE BOXED AND SUPERB.....	£695
LINN SARA 9 BI-WIRE WALNUT BOXED AND STUNNING WITH STANDS.....	£499
LINN SONDEK LP12 VALHALLA BASIK K9 AFRO BOXED VGC.....	£499
LOEWE ACONDA 32" WIDESCREEN FLAT SCREEN SILVER + GLASS STAND.....	£895
MERIDIAN 606 DAC BLACK/GOLD BOXED AND IMMACULATE.....	£495
MERIDIAN A500 BLACK ASH LOUDSPEAKERS LOVELY CONDITION.....	£399
MERIDIAN 605 MONOBLOCKS BLACK PAIR.....	£795
MICROMEGA DVD PREMIUM-MULTI REGION.....	£395
MICROMEGA DRIVE 3/DAC BOXED AND IMMACULATE.....	£995
MICROMEGA STAGE 5 CD PLAYER IMMACULATE.....	£349
MICROMEGA TRIO 3 BOX CD PLAYER BLACK BOXED SUPERB.....	£1695
MISSION 753 BLACK ASH FLOORSTANDERS.....	£449
MONITOR AUDIO MA1800 REFERENCE GOLD LOUDSPEAKERS-BOXED.....	£495
NAIM FLATCAP 2 POWER SUPPLY SUPERB.....	£429
NAIM NAIT 51 MINT AS NEW WITH BOX AND ALL ACCESSORIES.....	£595
NAIM NAP140 OLD STYLE BOXED SUPERB CONDITION.....	£349
NAIM NAC 92 PRE AMP BOXED AND IMMACULATE.....	£279
NAIM NAIT3/PRE OUT MODIFICATION BOXED AND IMMACULATE(1999 MODEL).....	£399
NAIM IXO 2-WAY ACTIVE X-OVER WITH VARIABLE FREQUENCY.....	£349
NAIM NAPV 175 3 CHANNEL POWER AMP LATE 2004 AS NEW.....	£975
NAIM NAP 135 POWER AMPLIFIERS PAIR CHROME BUMPER SUPERB BOXED.....	£1495
NAIM INTRO BLACK ASH LOUDSPEAKERS BOXED AND SUPERB CONDITION.....	£329
NAIM CDSX MINT AS NEW WITH BOX AND ALL ACCESSORIES.....	£1195
PRIMARE D.20 24 BIT CD PLAYER BOXED AND IMMACULATE.....	£495
PROCEED PCD SERIES 3 CD PLAYER (£3500 NEW).....	£1495
QUAD FM4 TUNER DIN BOXED AND LOVELY CONDITION.....	£249
REGA PLANAR 3/RB300/ROKSAN CORUS BLACK MM FIXED POSITION MOTOR.....	£249
RUARK TALISMAN MK2 ROSEWOOD VGC.....	£349
TOTEM MODEL ONE SIGNATURE BLACK BOXED AND MINT-FEW MONTHS OLD.....	£1195

PROFESSIONAL RECORD CLEANING SERVICE - KEITH MONKS MACHINE
PLEASE RING FOR FURTHER DETAILS AND PRICES. THREE MONTH WARRANTY ON ALL ITEMS

www.sound-stage.co.uk

RETRO REPRODUCTION

28a, HADDINGTON PLACE, EDINBURGH, EH7 4AF

0131 558 9989

RETRO.REPRODUCTION@VIRGIN.NET

SUPPLIER OF SPECIALIST NEW AND QUALITY PRE-OWNED HI-FI
MAIL ORDER NO PROBLEM, GENEROUS TRADE -IN'S

AUDIO RESEARCH SP9 MK2, BLACK FINISH, BOXED.....	£795.00
AUDIO RESEARCH LS 3 PRE AMP, BLACK FINISH, BOXED.....	£595.00
AUDIO RESEARCH D130 SOLID STATE POWER AMP, 100W PER CHANNEL + BALANCED INPUTS & SINGLE ENDED, GREAT FOR DRIVING MARTIN LOGANS & QUADS.....	£895.00
MUSICAL FIDELITY NU-VISTA 300, 2 BOX POWER AMP WITH SPARE SET OF NU-VISTA VALVES. NUMBER 002 OF LIMITED RUN. EFFORTLESS POWER DELIVERY WITH NONE OF THE FATIGUE ASSOCIATED WITH LARGE POWER OUTPUT.....	£2195.00
KRELL KSA 100 POWER AMP, LEGENDARY POWER AMP RECENTLY RANKED IN THE TOP 20 ALL TIME HI-FI GREATS, WILL NOT DISAPPOINT, 100 SUPERB WATTS IN CLASS A, BEAUTIFUL CONDITION.....	£1495.00
KRELL KSP-7B PRE AMP WITH MM/MC PHONO STAGE, EASILY RIVALING THE BEST SOLID STATE PHONO STAGES UP TO £1000. OUTBOARD PSU, BALANCED OUTPUTS, HI & LO GAIN SETTINGS, AS NEW CONDITION.....	£995.00
NAIM CDX CD PLAYER, SERIAL NO. 147481, MINT, BOXED.....	£1295.00
NAIM CD1 CD PLAYER, SERIAL NO. 85175, MINT, BOXED, WITH NAIM SERVICE RECORDS & RECEIPTS.....	£695.00
NAIM 72 PRE WITH PHONO BOARDS. OLIVE GREEN, MINT, BOXED.....	£195.00
NAIM 140 POWER AMP, OLIVE GREEN, MINT, BOXED.....	£350.00
HOVLAND HP200 VALVE PRE AMP, PROBABLY THE BEST PRE-AMPS IN THE WORLD, BALANCED REMOTE ATTENUATOR, 8 WEEKS OLD, MAKE YOURSELF A SERIOUS SAVING, NEW £6500.00.....	£POA
VARIOUS LINN LP12'S.....	FROM £395.00

GOOD SELECTION OF SPEAKERS, PRO AC, QUAD, MARTIN LOGAN, APOGEE,
NEAT ULTIMATUM MFS, NEAT VITO SE'S WITH ULTIMATUM UPGRADES.

audiolincs



ACOUSTIC SIGNATURE

Simplicity is a virtue as well as a winning formula. The Acoustic Signature Mamba turntable embodies meticulous German engineering, superb materials and massive construction to offer world class performance with style and, in today's terms, outstanding value. The heart (and soul) of our current vinyl reference system.

HORNING

Even with its twin, rear mounted twelve inch Beymer bass drivers, a Lowther midrange unit and Horning tweeter, the mighty Horning Agathon is designed for corner or near wall placement, delivering an effortlessly natural sound performance which demonstrates that real music reproduction transcends mere hi-fi.



KR AUDIO KRONZILLA

A valve specifically designed for high-end audio has 'raised the bar' for lovers of 300B, 211 and 845's. KR Audio's gracefully powerful 1610 output valve (larger than a wine bottle!) is the driving force of our new single ended reference amplifiers, the truly awesome KR Audio Kronzilla DM monoblocks. Once again, it's valves that restore emotion to music reproduction.



SHANLING CD-T300

When a respected reviewer decides to buy this fabulous CD player, even the extremely limited UK allocation sells out quickly! Our own reference for months and now destined to be a highly sought-after classic, we have only one left. And of course, that one could be sold by the time this magazine appears on the news stands!



REFERENCE 3a

Many small speakers 'interpret' music in much the same way we read text books. So if you'd prefer to experience a more interesting story with characters, drama, pace, rhythm, just take a listen to Reference 3a loudspeakers. Small speakers that create a big picture. Dulcet and MM de Capo i models in stock.



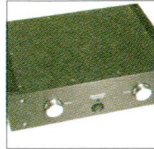
MUSIC FIRST AUDIO

A pre-amp that destroys all preconceptions. We've been converted! Despite having no valves, despite being passive, despite 'manual' control, we just love it! What's more, whenever we use the Music First as our reference pre-amplifier, it's very often preferred to equipment costing many times the price.



LAVARDIN

Never underestimate the Lavardin IT integrated amplifier! Where some solid state amps are phenomenally detailed but ultimately fatiguing, and others are 'gently rounded' but lack dynamic conviction, the Lavardin delivers everything you'd expect and, best of all, you can enjoy your favourite music tirelessly, disc after disc after disc!



EX-DEM & PREVIOUSLY OWNED

47 LAB 4700/4706/4707 Amplifier (£3,800)	Mint, boxed	£2395
AUDIOSTATIC Loudspeakers 2004 (£5,000)	Mint, boxed	£3495
BAT VK-51SE Pre-amp (£7,995)	Mint, boxed	£3995
BAT VK-150SE Monoblocks (£15,500)	Mint, flight cases	£8995
BAT VK5 Phono stage	New, boxed	£1395
CARY 300B SE Monoblocks (£2750)	Mint, boxed	£1995
CARDAS Golden Reference 1mtr RCA	As new	£595
CONRAD JOHNSON PV-14L Pre (New £2250)	Mint, boxed	£1395
CONRAD JOHNSON EFI Phono-stage (£2000)	Mint, boxed	£895
CROFT Charisma 'X Spec' Pre Upgraded	Mint, boxed	£1795
HORNING Agathon in oak	A bargain at	£2795
HORNING Perikles in cherry	So close!	£2395
HORNING Zeus in cherry (£2,000)	Ex-dem, few hours only	£1395
LINN SONDEK LP12 (Trampoline) Fully serviced and offered complete with a brand new Origin Live Ultra DC motor drive, a brand new Conqueror arm and a brand new Transfiguration Esprit cartridge.	Mint	£3,495
LUMLEY Reference Stereo 70 Power amp	Like new	£795
PAPWORTH M200 Monoblocks 2004 (£4995)	Mint, boxed	£2995
UNISON S2K Integrated valve amp	Beautiful, boxed	£895
XTC CDT1LE CD Transport Remote control.	As new, boxed	£495

GRANTHAM
(A1) LINC'S
078 2192 5851
01476 591090

www.audiolincs.com

PART-EXCHANGE
HIGH-END REPAIRS

COMMISSION SALES
VALVE SPECIALISTS

hifisound by enthusiasts, for enthusiasts

Part exchange upgrades a speciality –
Try us, you might be surprised!

hifisound, 30b Larchfield St, Darlington, County Durham, DL3 7TE. Tel: 01325 241888 Email: choice@hifisound.co.uk

turntableworld!

is THE place to make your next analogue choice

Our Dem facilities offer a wide selection of all types of analogue equipment from all the best brands including...
Clearaudio, Dynavector, Tom Evans, Goldring, Grado, Hadcock, Lyra, Michell, Moth, Nottingham Analogue, Origin Live, Ortofon, Project,
Graham Slee, SME, Sumiko, Transfiguration, Trichord, Whest Audio and Wilson Benesch

...there is no better analogue decision

turntableworld! is at 30b Larchfield St, Darlington, DL3 7TE. Tel 01325 241888 or email choice@turntableworld.co.uk



...what are you up for?

Digital - CD, DVD etc

AHT Njoe Tjeb	99
Arcam	Alpha 1
Arcam	CD82T
Arcam	Alpha 3
Arcam	CD7ZT
Arcam	Alpha 7SE
Audio Analogue	Paganini/ix dem
Audiolab	8000DAC
Audiolab	8000CDM and DAC
Audiomeca	Obsession
Cairn	Fog V2 24/196
DPA	Renaissance
Marantz	DV4100DSE
Marantz	CD17MK2
Marantz	CD17 KI
Marantz	CD6000DSE
Marantz	SA1
Meridian	208
Meridian	508/20
Micromega	Stage 1
Micromega	Stage 2
Micromega	T-drive and T-dac
Micromega	DuoCD3852
Micromega	Opic
Mission	Dad5/Dac5/looplat
Musical Fidelity	XPSU
Musical Fidelity	XDAC
Musical Fidelity	XPSU v3
Mynrad	CDT
NAD	T20
NAD	CS41
NWA	Transparent Statement
Pass Labs	D1 DAC
Pioneer	PS-S904
Proceed	PDT2
QUAD	99CDP
Resolution Audio	Opus 21
Roksan	Caspian
Roksan	KandyMK3 ex dem
Roksan	Caspian M series ex dem
SAT	CD Fix
Sony	MD P900
Sony	XA20ES
Sony	CDP940

Systems, Cables etc

Audio Analogue	Primo - CD and Amp	649
JPW	204/200/208 - 5.1 Speakers	399
QUAD	33/303/FM3 with sleeve	299
QUAD	99CD P1909	1149
QUAD	34/306 FM4 Pre/Power/Tuner	499
TEAC	A1/D1/T1 - Amp/CD/Tuner	449

Amplifiers

GTP500I	GFA545II Pre/ Power	399
	2445 Power	199
	A85 Integrated	419
	A75+ Integrated	249
	Pucci/ Seltana/ix dem	749
	800 O Monoblocks	799
	800QA Integrated	249
	800P Power	429
	LS7 Preamp	699
	PA200 Power	299
	S200M Integrated	399
	S200MP Preamp	279
	S200MM Monoblocks	699
	S2000M/PM Pre/Monos	899
	4808A	Call
	4810	Call
	4330M/2r Integrated	249
	510/520 Pre/Power	199
	610C/630D Pre/Monos	599
	Linestage Preamp	499
	7 Integrated	399
	3 Integrated	229
	POA600 Monoblocks	699
	MAB0M/100M/1100 Pre/ Power x2	349
	ST70 Valve Power	699
	MP300M F125 Pre/Monos	599
	MA120 Integrated	149
	605 Monoblocks	799
	505 Monoblocks	899
	205 Monoblocks	599
	Tempo 1	449
	3a Preamp/P150 Power	Call
	3cr Pre/Power	Call
	912 Power	119
	C340	119
	621/40 Pre/Power	549
	A20 Integrated	379
	405 Power	from 149
	44 Preamp	249
	405/2	from 199
	33/303 Pre/Power	199
	77 Integrated	299
	909	699
	Bno Integrated	129
	Luna Integrated	179
	CaspianM Pre/Monos ex dem	Call
	Caspian Integrated	349
	Caspian Power	299
	KandyMK3 ex dem	479
	RC995 Preamp	249
	Phase 2 Integrated	279
	Phase 2 Integrated	299
	Andromeda Power	299
	Artemis/Andromeda III Pre/ Power	Call

Speakers

AE1 Standmount	399
AE105 Floorstander	449
AE106 Floorstander	119
AE1mk3Standmount	Call
Aelite 3 Floorstander	549
AE2 Standmount	899
AE505 Floorstander	349
Xenon Floorstander	1299
602S3 Standmount	249
603S3 Floorstander	349
801S3 Matrix Floorstander	1999
M5 Standmount ex dem	279
M15 Floorstander	279
Epos ES11 Standmount	Call
HB100 Standmount	79
200 Standmount new	79
204 Floorstander new	269
Q10 Standmount	89
Shearwater Hotrod Floorstander	999
753 Floorstander	349
752 Floorstander	249
Silver/S8 floorstander	from 449
Silver/S5 Floorstander new	349
Silver/S8 Floorstander	349
Silver LCR Centre new	149
912 Standmount	149
Mystique 2	349
VT2 Floorstander	449
ESL63 Floorstander	1299
ESL53 Floorstander	699
12L Standmount new	449
12L Standmount/ix dem	399
Q50 Subwoofer	199
Templar - ex. box ed	199
Studio Monitor large standmount	399
Chatsworth Floorstander	649
DC100 Standmount	119
Revolution3 Floorstander	99
Studio1 Floorstander	199
RTL3 Floorstander	179
Antal ES Floorstander	749
Diamond9.4	Call

Tuners and Tape

T61	159
T61	159
DRS810	99
S14000	99
T30	79
FM2	149
FM2	149
66 FM	379
66 FM	from 199

Analogue

Bragi Phono stage cw Forsetti p/s	399
RD80/Hadcock228	249
PPA PhonoStage	449
834P PhonoStage	379
PhonoStage	999
TT2	149
SlateSeries3/Mission774	349
Perception phonoStage and p/s	479
LP12/Syrinx PU3	549
LP12/Lingo/Ekos	1499
LP12/Vahalla/Akito	399
Basik, Akito	229
Basik (no arm)	99
Akis, Akto	299
IttoK12*	999
Tempo/Datumarm	149
Gyrodex Export	699
Reference Hydraulic/Fluid arm	699
Reference Electronic/ SME3009	599
Prisma/AT arm	999
Focus One/ Focus arm	379
Gyrodex SE	Call
Tecnosarm A	Call
Iso/Herz	299
OrbeSE	1399
The Source	499
Hyperspace/Mentor arm	1399
The Foot/Teosarm	599
RP1-XG	499
LP17/RB250	379
Xpression 1	149
Phonobox LE	59
Planar2/RB250	149
Planar2/RB250	149
Planar3/RB300	179
Planar 78/RB250 Mono Cart	175
Xenex/Tabriz Zi	429
RadiusS/Tabriz	429
RadiusS/Nima ex dem	679
RQ270	79
Era Gold ex dem	299
Era Gold/Elevatorex dem	729
309	499
TD160b/Mission 774	249
TD160b/Mayware	249
Skeleton/Vestigal	799
Hydraulic/Reference	649
Satum	199
Dino	199
Validi/Hellus Scopio	599
Vaid/IRB300	599
Act/Act 2 arm	2499
Full Circle ex dem	1399

VISIT OUR WEBSITE, OR CALL 0845 6019390 TO SPEAK TO A REAL PERSON TUESDAY TO SATURDAY 10 TO 5-ISH

0845 6019390 or choice@2ndhandhifi.co.uk

Quality hifi equipment always required for cash. Call us before you trade in. Commission Sales too.

READER CLASSIFIED

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,

remembering to include your name, phone number and home town or county. The simplest way to send your ad is via email – send to: dan.george@futurenet.co.uk. Or mail to: **Reader Classified, Hi-Fi Choice, 99 Baker Street, London W1U 6FP**. Please note that this service is open to private advertisers only.

FOR SALE

ARCAM ALPHA 9 integrated amplifier including phono stage, £200. Three Alpha 9P power amplifiers, £175 each. Sony MOD-RF1 Laserdisc RF Demodulator, £30. All boxed with manuals. 07768 923766 (Hanworth, Middlesex).

ARCAM CD82T silver, little use, as new, boxed, (£600) £430. 01493 665761 (Norfolk)

ARCAM FMJ C30 preamp. Two 7.1 multichannel inputs. As new condition 20 months old. Five year warranty, black, (£1,500) £975ono. Jason. 07941 074878 (Kent).

AUDIOLAB 8000Q preamp, (£1,000) £450. Rotel RB991 power amp, 200 watts, (£600) £300. Rotel 1070 CD player, (£525) £275 all excellent, boxes, remote, etc. 01782 256087 (Stoke-on-Trent).

B&W P4 compact floorstanding speakers in black ash, mint, (£695) £195. Boxed, Dave 01752 790419 (Plymouth).

BEOCENTER 3500 plus pair Beovox 3702 in Rosewood, £75. Pioneer CT-400 tape deck, £15. 01709 814531 (Notts).

CABASSE IROISE 2 loudspeakers. Large three-way with coaxial HF/Mid driver, 94dB efficient. Wild Cherry finish. New and boxed, (£2,950) £1,400ono. Tony 01420 521035 or 07802 885272 (Alton).

CYRUS 8 amplifier with PSX-R. DVD 8 plus QDAC Module (and PSX-R). System remote, smooth black finish, 18 months old and in excellent condition, (£2,900) £1,550ono. Martin 07843 211082 or 01883 374430 (Caterham).

CYRUS PSX-R silver, as new, £250 07753 625783 (Kent)

CYRUS SYSTEM DAD3q, preamp, power amp, PSX-R, FM7, Hark stand plus Castle Avon speakers, (£4,000) £2,000. 07971 214712 (Dorset).

DALI SUITE 7.1 speaker system, 2.8 fronts, 7&8 rears, 8 centre, 12 sub, new, boxed, (£2,750) offers. 07764 600546 (North East).

DYNAUDIO CONTOUR 1.3 MkII speakers. Detailed, superbly musical sound. Mint condition, boxed, can demo, £700. 07736 149 781 (Southampton).

DYNAVECTOR DV10X5 MC cartridge. A superb real world moving coil cartridge, absolutely unused, (£250) £200. Thierry (eves) 07905 303718 (London).

GAMMA ACOUSTICS Era valve pre and Space Reference single ended triode power. Gamma speakers, Copland CDA288 CD player, (£11,000) offers please. 020 8861 0841 (Harrow).

GRYPHON The Black Exorcist MM/MC cartridge demagnetiser, (£100) £60. Unwanted prize, Stuart 01384 394441 (West Mids).

JM LAB Cobalt 815 speakers, black, three months old, £475. Roksan Caspian tuner, £275. Cyrus CD7Q black, matching PSX-R, (£1,380) £650. Cyrus 8vs amp and PSX, black, boxed, three months old, (£1,200) £750. 07821 863950 (Devon).

KIMBER MONOCLE X speaker cable, ten-foot, excellent high end speaker cable, refined, fast, dynamic and open sounding, (£650) £400. Thierry (eves) 07905 303718 (London).

KEF MODEL 203 in cherry veneer, latest model, four year guarantee remaining, (£3,000) £2,300. 01782 256087 (Stoke on Trent).

KEF REF 1.2 rosenut, £675. Sennheiser HD650, £150. Ortofon MC30 Supreme cartridge, £350. All mint, boxed. World Audio KL59 speakers, call. 0115 9754070 (Notts).

KOETSU BLACK MC cartridge. Brand new (0 hours use). Still in wooden box, (£1,200) £775. Email only please alan395shona@btinternet.com (Scotland)

KUZMA STABI XL turntable plus Stogi reference arm. Boxed, manuals, (£10,500) £5,000. 020 7622 5420 (London).

LINN KELTIKS black ash, with latest tweeters and Ku-stone stands, Linn TuneBox Active crossover, two Exposure VIII and Exposure IV single regulated power amps, £2,500. Lecson HL1, very rare and classic horn-loaded speakers, original instructions and brochure, in brown 1970s hessian. Amazing sound, very efficient, £350. Phone 07968 796490 (Newport, Wales).

LINN KOLECTOR/LK85 pre/power, black, boxed excellent condition, £600 per pair, or separate. Marantz CD63 MKII Kl Sig CD player, boxed, remote, manual, superb, £200. 020 8476 1416 (Heathrow). ▣

WANTED

CREEK A43 power amp, plus individual capable of servicing a Blaupunkt 13952 series U valve receiver and Sony Betamax SL7UB. Nathaniel 07880 985842 (Yorks).

DUNLOP SYSTEMDEK II Biscuit tin version, must be in good condition, also Pro-Ject RPM 4 turntable, again in good condition. 07932 330269 or email m.golden1@ntlworld.com (Lancs).

MARANTZ CDR6000 (gold), DR6000 or DR17MkII 01732 863918 (Kent).

MUSICAL FIDELITY A308CR power amp wanted. Call Andy 0115 9126424 (Mids).

NAIM NAIT 2 Rega Kyte speakers. Linn Kans. All in good condition please. 07810 103908 (W.Yorks).

RDC ASPEKT rack. Please call with details on 01766 781211 (Porthmadog).

ROYD MINSTREL loudspeakers any finish considered but must be in perfect working order. Alternatively, new main driver units welcome. John 0161 439 5122 (Stockport).

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

MARANTZ CD6000 OSE, boxed, £80. Cambridge Audio DACmagic 1, £40. Technics power amp SE A800S, £40. 01943 879030 (Leeds).
MARANTZ KI SIGNATURE CD, PM7200 amplifier in gold, boxed, certificate, unmarked as new, superb value, £299. Marantz CD7300 in gold, includes quality interconnect £219. QED Silver Anniversary cable 3m pair £15. 01766 781211 (N.Wales).
MARANTZ CD17 KI SIG, Champagne gold, £300. Gordon 07941 463474 (Ayr).
MARANTZ CD6000 KI SIG OSE, Sony tuner and MiniDisc, Yamaha cassette deck, B&W 602 S2 speakers, Atacama stands, NAD C70 amp, Sound Organisation stand, £500. 01827 251282 (Tamworth).
MARANTZ CD84 (two of), Cambridge Audio DacMagic 2, Dynalab 2.8 SDA speakers (boxed), Bush MTT1 record player. Pioneer TX950L tuner, £250 ono. John 07855 121587 (W.Yorks)
MARANTZ CD94 professionally modified to highest spec (Reference standard), £695. QED X-Tube 400 cable, 3.5 metre pair, £75. Sentec PP9 phono preamp, MM/MC, £75. 020 8951 3178 (Middx).
MARANTZ PM8200 amp and CD 7300, (£800) £450 prestige condition or £225 each. 07903 613418 (London).
MERIDIAN DIGITAL THEATRE: 500 transport, 568 processor, 518 anti-jitter device, pair DSP5500s, pair DSP5000s, DSP5000C. Excellent condition,

black speakers. All boxes, manuals, cables and remote, £10,000. 07720 770717 (Essex).
MISSION M73 floorstanders in black ash. Complete with grills and in superb condition, £100 07899 808918 (Kent).
MONARCHY SM70 Class A, zero feedback power amp, £375. Pioneer 565 Universal, £195. Linn Kolektor preamp with remote, £295. All mint boxed 01243 863371 (W.Sussex).
MONITOR AUDIO SILVER S6 in oak, excellent condition, £200. 01242 703721 (Cheltenham).
MUSICAL FIDELITY A3 CD and amplifier, £375 each. Dynaudio Contour 1.8MkIIIs speakers, £850, immaculate all round condition. Please call 07985 935277 (Manchester).
MYRYAD MT100 tuner silver, boxed as new (£600+). Hovland 1.5 metre Gen 3 interconnect (£400), £400 the pair. Acoustic Zen Hologram II 6ft bi-wire speaker cable as new, (£800) accept £350. Chris 07753 742021 (Essex).
NAD 3020A amplifier MM/MC, £60, or swop for tuner. 01656 657484 (S.Wales).
NAIM CD5 excellent condition, complete with box and manual,

£800ono. 07808 900043 (Cleveland).
NAIM NAP500 power amp, nine months old, perfect condition, boxed, £8,500. 01285 862539 (Gloucs).
NORDOST SUPER FLATLINE 3m biwire cable with banana plugs, boxed, mint, (£215) £90 Russ Andrews Classic Power Kord with Whatt Gate 320 IEC (1.5m), (£95) £55. Both include postage. 01268 415 017 (Essex).
PHILIPS SACD 1000 CD/DVD high end player, (£1,050) £395, brand new, boxed. 020 8951 3178 (London).
PIONEER 505 PRECISION CD player (£420), very little use, boxed, £160. Sennheiser HD580 headphones, (£200) £70. Both mint condition, could post. 01278 782622 after 7pm (Bridgwater).
PMC FB1 speakers, black ash, £750. Musical Fidelity X-Ray V3 CD player, £600. NAD S400 tuner, £350. Terry 020 8482 0363 (Enfield).
PMC FB1 in oak veneer, absolute mint condition, boxed, hardly used, £900ono. Buyer collects, Paul 07793 764436 (Peterborough).
PROAC RESPONSE 3.8 yew finish, excellent condition, superb

sound, original boxes and manual approx five years old. Comes with additional granite bases, £1,950ono 020 8868 7835 (Middx).
PS AUDIO PCA2 pre, two HCA powers, 15 months old, £1,600 or £800 each, boxes, pristine. 020 8689 1188 (Surrey).
QUAD 306 stereo power amp, boxed, as new £168. Steve 01932 242083 (Surrey).
QUAD 44 MC phono module (Type C) complete in box with instructions and schematic diagram, £30. 01740 651637 or email jwdavison@breathemail.net (Sedgefield).
ROKSAN TABRIZ tonearm, (£449) £150. Roksan Corus MM cartridge, (£145) £50. Rega Super Elys MM cartridge, (£148) £50 plus Elys MM cartridge, (£98) £35, or £250 the lot, all boxed and unused. Sennheiser PXC250 NoiseGuard headphones, (£100) £50. 07879 650913 (London).
RUSS ANDREWS Classic Powercord, three feet, silver. Terminated in 16 amp IEC, (£500) £325 Michael 01772 752379 (Preston).
SONY DVD recorder RDR GXD500, one month old. Superb picture, built in tuner, (£400) £300 plus good quality Panasonic VHS for free. 01526 320513 (Lincs).
STEREO MIXER XR684, JVC Video/CD player (XL-SV22BK), two Smart series speakers (one needs attention) with stands, complete with mike, mike stand, disco lights and manuals. All for £1,000. 07958 207041 (Staines, Middx).
THORENS TD160 super record deck (inc. cover), Audio Technica AT 1120 arm with Linn K9 MM cartridge, part used. Original packaging, literature and accessories, £100ono. Hugh 07905 224156 (Newbury).
TRANSPARENT CABLE Music Wave Plus, late XL version, 35 ft pair, bought ex-demo six months ago, (£1,514) £750. 07968 972445 (Stourbridge).
ZETA BATTLESHIP arm plus three Decca cartridges £450. Thorens TD 124 transcription deck, £150. 07799 893409 (Herts/Essex).



Left: Naim NAP 500 power amplifier

HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR FREE ADVERTISEMENT

To submit your advert to us instantly please email dan.george@futurenet.co.uk or alternatively, use the postal form below. Please limit ads to a maximum of 30 words, ensuring all details, model names etc are correctly stated. Kindly also include your telephone number and home town or county. We regret that we cannot take adverts over the phone.

Name _____ Advertisement _____

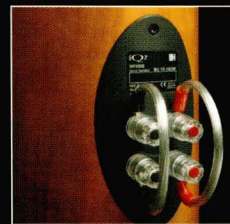
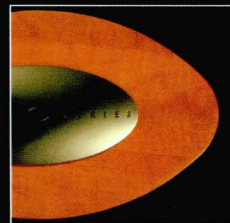
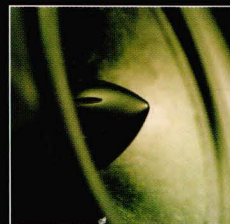
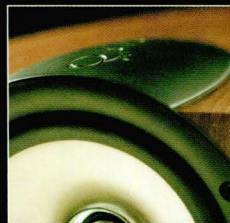
Address _____

Daytime telephone _____

Date _____

PLEASE SEND YOUR ADVERTISEMENT TO:

Reader Classified, Hi-Fi Choice, Future Publishing, 99 Baker Street, London W1U 6FP.



WHAT HI-FI?
SOUND AND VISION



"They produce stunning scale and authority"



Q SERIES Acoustic intelligence

You don't have to be a genius to understand why the new Q Series speakers sound so good. The clue's in the name: iQ.

Drawing heavily on research carried out for our legendary Reference Series, each and every component has been completely redesigned.

New long-throw bass units with more than double the excursion, delivering far greater output and much lower distortion.

New wide dispersion Uni-Q arrays with extended bandwidth tweeter for SACD and DVD audio.

New fully-shrouded binding posts with oxygen-free copper wiring. And new super-rigid curved cabinets engineered from higher density material, with a choice of stunning new finishes.

All these performance enhancements make the new Q Series the best ever value speaker range from KEF – and that's exactly what we mean by 'Acoustic Intelligence'.

KEF



B&W Bowers & Wilkins

The new B&W 800 Series Diamond Tweeter Technology



Diamond
At Work

> RELEASED

The mark of a truly great tweeter – one that can release all the vivid detail in your music – is what's called 'perfect piston behaviour'. As long as the tweeter dome is vibrating rigidly, like a piston, its delivery will be accurate. The higher the frequency, though, the harder that becomes. The materials most resistant to 'break-up' combine lightness and stiffness. And there's one that does that better than anything else on earth.

The new B&W 800 Series feature tweeter domes of pure, ultra-hard diamond. It may seem extravagant, but nothing gets closer to the behaviour of a hypothetical 'perfect tweeter' – one with infinite stiffness. Our diamond dome carries on vibrating like a piston well beyond the range of human hearing, and delivers audible sound with unheard-of clarity.

www.bw800.com

Visit our website and order your free DVD
Call +44 (0)1903 221 500



Only 800 Series models with this symbol use
B&W diamond tweeter technology.