

HI-FI CHOICE

PASSION FOR SOUND JANUARY 2006 £3.90 WWW.HIFICHOICE.CO.UK



WIN!
Focal-JMlab Profile 908 speakers worth £1,300!
See page 26

EXCLUSIVE! SUPER AUDIO DYNAMITE

Why you must hear Denon's new SACD combo

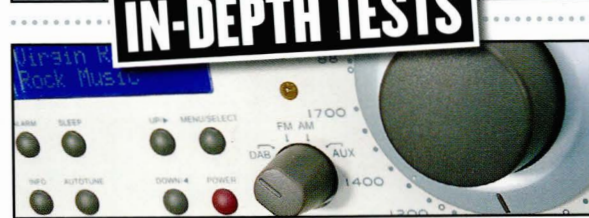


JANUARY 2006 £3.90
 9 770955 111076
 MEDIA WITH PASSION



> AVP700/P1000 multichannel amps from **Arcam**

> DI 150 integrated amp from **Gamut**



> Model DAB digital radio from **Tivoli**



> Stellar 1 speakers from **WEGG3**

FREE!
2nd hand hi-fi mini-mag!



HI-FI HOME CINEMA

ULTIMATE GROUP TEST >> SPEAKERS

- FEATURING**
- > ALR Jordan Classic 5
 - > Chario Cygnus
 - > Dali Ikon 7
 - > Epos M22
 - > JBL Studio L880
 - > PMC TB2+

BUYER'S BIBLE
World's best hi-fi rate





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 JANUARY 2006 ISSUE 275

Future Publishing Ltd, 99 Baker Street, London W1U 6FP ☎ +44 (0)20 7042 4520



Christmas, eh? In an age of bitrates, i-thingies and tiny, shiny speakers, those of us who care about music – and the way it's supposed to be heard – might wish that a winter of hibernation were a realistic option. At least until the inevitable seasonal gadget-fest has removed its cold, clammy hands from our throats – and its shrill, tinny sound from our ears...

Forget Christmas. Proper hi-fi has always been a specialist purchase for those who place importance on its musical values. And the hi-fi industry is still delivering the goods for people who care. This is evidenced by the standard of new components that *HFC* unearths in each and every issue, the one you now hold in your hands being a perfect example.

Our last edition carried *The Hi-Fi Awards*, the definitive annual tribute to the best in home audio. By way of congratulations, we invited all the winners to a special party held in their honour – to show our appreciation for the pleasure their products give us, day in, day out. Make no mistake, these are challenging times for the hi-fi industry. But in terms of product quality, we've never had it better.

Before I leave you to the rest of this issue, may I first draw your attention to the Music Awards voting form on p30 of our fabulous *50 Best Hi-Fi Test Discs...* supplement? I'll start you off. Best Album of the Year: *Silent Alarm* by Bloc Party. Disagree? Then get voting!

Tim Bower

Tim Bower 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*.



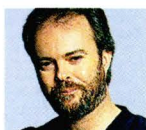
DOMINIC TODD

Like many industry types, Dominic started his hi-fi life working in the retail sector. But he is better known as a hi-fi reviewer, columnist and all-round audio journalist. He has been writing about his passion since 1993.



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.



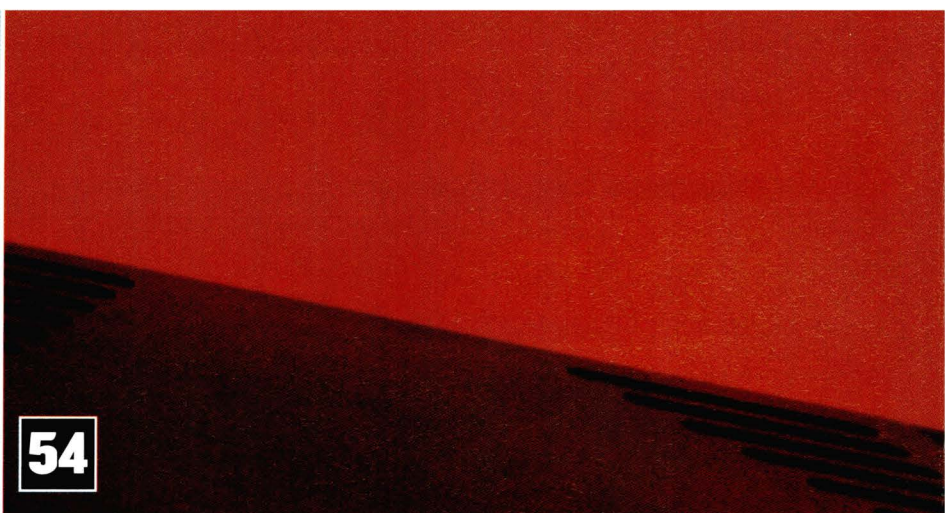
ALAN SIRCOM

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.



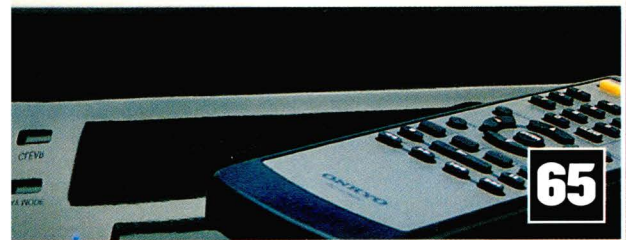
44



54



52



65



67



Contents

NEWS AND FEATURES

7 PRODUCT NEWS

The juiciest new fruit from the hi-fi tree

12 HAPPENINGS

Hot stories and events from around Planet Hi-Fi

14 DISPATCHES

Fresh opinion from the hi-fi commentators with clout

21 ESSENTIALS

Hot hi-fi accessories – tested just for you

25 MUSIC INTERVIEW

Icelandic strangeness from Sigur Rós

26 COMPETITION

Win a pair of fabulous Focal-JMLab Profile 908 loudspeakers, worth £1,300!

28 CHOICE CUTS

New music – rated by our experts for musical content and sonic brilliance!

31 CHOICE MAIL

A selection of your letters and emails

34 BEAUTIFUL SYSTEMS

A high-end set-up of genuine sonic beauty... This issue: Musical Fidelity and Acoustic Energy

EQUIPMENT REVIEWS

IN-DEPTH PRODUCT TESTS

- | | | | |
|----|--|----|--|
| 40 | Denon DCD-2000AE CD/SACD player and PMA-2000AE amplifier | 58 | Nbien NX-6 loudspeaker |
| 44 | Bryston B100 SST DAC integrated amplifier/DAC | 61 | Cambridge Audio Azur 540C v2 CD player |
| 48 | Arcam AVP700 processor and P1000 power amplifier | 62 | Audio Analogue Enigma CD player/receiver |
| 52 | WEGG3 Stelar 1 loudspeaker | 65 | Onkyo DV-SP503E universal disc player |
| 54 | Gamut DI 150 integrated amplifier | 67 | Tivoli Audio Model DAB radio |

ULTIMATE GROUP TEST

LOUDSPEAKERS £700-£1,200

- | | | | |
|----|----------------------|----|-----------------|
| 71 | ALR Jordan Classic 5 | 77 | Epos M22 |
| 73 | Chario Cygnus | 79 | JBL Studio L880 |
| 75 | Dali Ikon 7 | 81 | PMC TB2+ |

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

- 92 CD players
- 94 DVD players
- 96 Vinyl
- 99 Radio tuners
- 101 Digital recorders

AMPLIFIERS

- 108 Stereo amps
- 110 AV amps

LOUDSPEAKERS

- 112 Stereo speakers
- 116 AV speaker packages

ANCILLARIES

- 119 Headphones
- 121 Cables
- 123 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 | 89 | Back issues | |
| 84 | How to subscribe | 125 | Glossary |
| 86 | Choice Bits accessories shop | 130 | Dealer Guide |
| | | 136 | Dealer Directory |
| | | 138 | What's in next month's <i>Hi-Fi Choice</i> |

FREE MINI-MAG!

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

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



nbienTM
www.nbien.com

The new *Dx-5*
Series

with Fabric Ceramic Composite Technology



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.



PRO-JECT DEBUT SE TURNTABLE

▶ The Debut range of turntables from Pro-Ject is undoubtedly responsible in part for the vinyl resurgence of recent years. Few turntables have united beginner and audiophile alike and inspired so many 'me too' products. The latest 'SE' version has a quiet-running AC motor and three height-adjustable, damped, aluminium support-cones. Such refinements in a budget deck were unheard of just five years ago.

The deck is well designed too, with a sheet-steel platter that spins on a

chrome-plated, stainless-steel axle, which in turn runs on a polished ball-bearing. Adding further value, it comes pre-fitted with an Ortofon OM 510 cartridge that nicely complements the aluminium tonearm.

There's also high-grade flexible copper internal wiring from the headshell through to the connection cable, plus an external power supply to avoid external interference. All of which should make for smashing turntablism!

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

PRODUCT Pro-Ject Debut SE

TYPE Turntable, arm and cartridge

PRICE £200

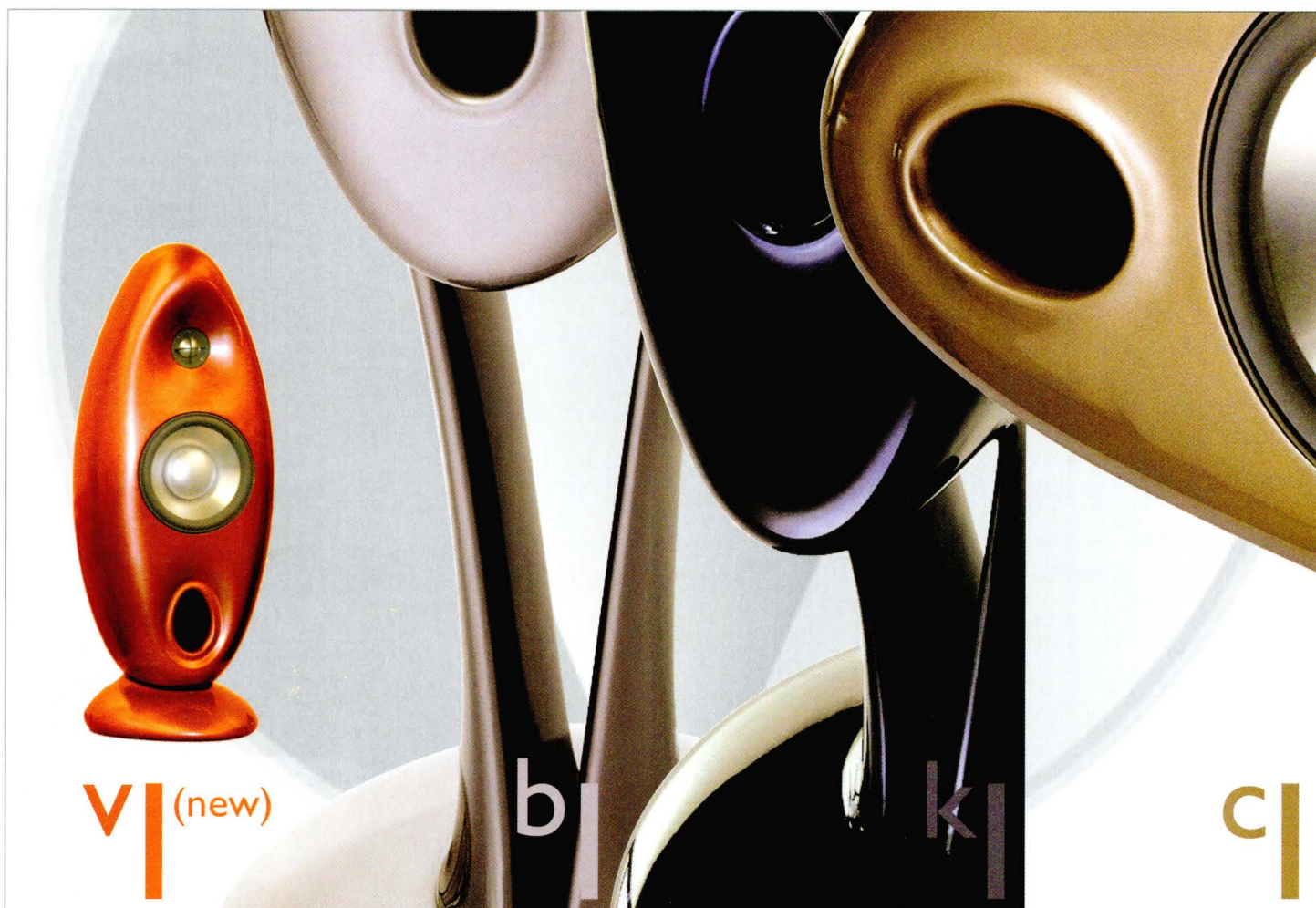
KEY FEATURES Quiet-running AC motor
▶ Ortofon OM 510 cartridge included ▶ External power supply ▶ Sheet-steel platter

CONTACT ☎ 01235 511166

🌐 www.project-audio.com

Vivid Audio

think outside of the square box



V | (new)

b |

k |

c |

To create ultimate detail in a range of monitor studio loudspeakers for the home, Vivid took a completely new and radical approach to their design...

...this meant surpassing existing speaker technology in order to reach a no compromise solution, giving unparalleled musical insight, resolution, speed, dynamics and tonal accuracy.



To arrange an audition please visit your local specialist

Tony Revelle
Audio Excellence
134/6 Crwys Road
Cardiff. CF24 4NR.
029 2022 8565

Matthew Hotchkiss
Glasgow Audio Ltd
135 Great Western Road
Glasgow. G4 9AH.
Scotland
0141 332 4707

Dom Peers
Cornflake Shop
37 Windmill Street
Tottenham Ct Rd
London. W1T 2JU.
020 7631 0472

John Jefferies
Metropolis Music
U2, Firgrove Business Park
Firgrove Park
Cross-In-Hand, Heathfield,
East Sussex. TN21 0QL.
01435 865212

Paul Goncalves
Rochester HiFi
30 High Street
Rochester
Kent. ME1 1LD
01634 880037

Robin Lambert
Sevenoaks HiFi
597-599 Mansfield Rd
Sherwood
Nottingham, NG5 2FW.
0115 911 2121

" 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



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

home cinema choice
Gold Star
Reference Status
Guarantee



Rowles Music Limited

For more information:
Tel 01903 530005
Mob 07950 274224
ray@rowlesmusic.co.uk
www.rowlesmusic.co.uk
www.vividaudio.co.uk

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

DENSEN B-200 AND B-310 PREAMP AND POWER AMP

➤ Densen hopes to BEAT the competition with this new pre/power combo that houses some of the Great Dane's very latest amplifier thinking. The "technically sophisticated" preamp routes the incoming signal through the bare minimum of relays before sending it direct to the first amplifier stage. From here, the signal interacts with the special volume potentiometer, before transferring to the final amp stages. The zero-feedback amp

also boasts connections for quad-amping, allowing it to drive up to eight monoblocks!

Partnering the B-200 is Densen's brand new B-310 power amp – an 80-watt beast that replaces the B-300. It features a socket to enable an upgrade to active speakers, plus two sets of terminals for easy bi-wiring. Densen claims "You won't find a more musical power amp at this price level". We shall see...

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

PRODUCT Densen B-200 and B-310

TYPE Preamplifier and power amplifier

PRICE (B-200) £1,100; (B-310) £1,200

KEY FEATURES (B-200) Four line inputs • CP Claire PRME 2005 mono relays • Special volume potentiometer • Teflon, double-sided PCB
 (B-310) 80 watts per channel • Massive power supply • SAXO active upgrade socket

CONTACT ☎ 01732 451938 🌐 www.densen.com



NEW PRODUCT HIGHLIGHTS



CREEK DESTINY

Higher-end hi-fi from Creek is just around the corner, with the launch of the Destiny Series. The new Destiny CD player and integrated amp join Creek's more affordable ranges, introducing advanced componentry and sophisticated design. The CD player has a specially designed PCB and master clock, plus 16 regulated, low-noise power supplies. Creek claims the player has "a truly stunning mains power supply," with three PCB-mounted toroidal transformers used to completely separate digital and analogue supplies. There's also extensive re-clocking circuitry to eliminate jitter, new casework with solid metal buttons and a 10mm aluminium front panel.

The matching 100-watt MOSFET amp has circuitry that builds and improves upon existing Creek designs, plus separated power supply and voltage referencing sections. It also uses a motorized ALPS pot for the volume control and has a new connector arrangement that allows the use of a plug-in phono board or DAC. The CD player and amp have been designed to work together.

Price CD player £1,200; amplifier £1,100 **Due** now
☎ 01442 260146 🌐 www.creekaudio.com



TEAC ESOTERIC UX-3

TEAC's Esoteric range has expanded to include four new high-end source components. Pictured above is the UX-3 universal player, a two-channel machine that also offers multichannel output via IEEE 1394 (FireWire) connection. It boasts TEAC's new VRDS-NEO mechanism, plus a separate word sync clock input and Faroudja DCDi video processing.

The expanded range also includes the D-01, a monaural DAC that entirely avoids channel cross-talk by giving each channel its own D-to-A conversion. It's partnered by the new P-01 SACD transport, and there's also a two-channel SACD player called the X-03. This features a specially designed DAC transformer to remove all noise generated from the already low-noise VRDS-NEO mechanism.

Price UX-3 £5,995 **Due** now
☎ 01727 865488 🌐 www.teac.com/esoteric



MARK LEVINSON NO.51

For the most demanding audio-and-videoophile, 2006 brings Mark Levinson's new No.51 'media player'. This no compromise source, which aims to provide ultimate sound and video quality, is described as 'two-products-in-one'. Essentially, the No.51 is a DVD player/processor for high-quality pictures, and a CD player/processor, "capable of music playback that exceeds that of high-end standalone players".

For audio, the player has a high-frequency reference clock, dedicated sample rate converter and multi-bit Sigma/Delta DACs. The transport is special too, with a cast aluminium frame, milled drawer, and custom-designed loader assembly. Video performance is derived from custom-calibrated scaling and de-interlacing, with 14-bit/215MHz video DACs. The player is also HDMI equipped and benefits from an upmarket 12-Bit ladder attenuator for the volume control, which is said to enhance resolution. The ultimate fusion of sound and vision? Expect the official HFC verdict soon...

Price £tbc **Due** April/May 2006 ☎ 01727 865488 🌐 www.marklevinson.com



PRO-JECT DEBUT III E

'Czech' out the first in a range of new turntables from Pro-Ject – the Debut III E. This is a new budget deck with automatic platter stop/start and an electronic sensor to determine the position of the stylus. As with most Pro-Ject turntables, the Debut III E comes pre-fitted with a cartridge (an Ortofon OM 5E) and also enjoys a quiet-running AC motor with an external power supply to avoid electro-mechanical interference. The E (for 'electronic') version of the Debut will lead the charge of new products from the Czech-based turntable specialist. The new range also includes the Debut SE (see page 7), which is reviewed next month.

Price £210 **Due** now
☎ 01235 511166 🌐 www.project-audio.com



CLASSÉ DELTA CDP-300

Canadian hi-fi specialist Classé has unveiled the latest products to join its multichannel range, including an upsampling CD/DVD-Audio player called the CDP-300. This reference-level player has a fascia-mounted LCD preview screen with touch screen control and utilises newly-developed video processing circuitry. It's also said to be the world's first high-end DVD player to offer HDTV resolutions, including 1080p, via HDMI.

The audio output is well catered for, too. It features three stereo DACs (with 8x filtering), upsampling to 24-bit/192kHz prior to D/A conversion and Classé's re-clocking circuit topology to eradicate jitter. Two other models based on the CDP-300 platform should be available soon – a DVD processor and digital disc transport.

Price £4,950 **Due** now ☎ 01903 221500 # www.classeaudio.com



B&W XT SERIES

In a move away from the traditional wood enclosure, B&W has implemented a curvaceous aluminium structure in its new XT loudspeaker series. The range comprises three slender models – a floorstander, standmount and matching centre, all constructed from aluminium extrusions. According to B&W, the extruded material is so stiff that a smaller cabinet can produce the same volume (loudness) as a much larger wooden enclosure. It goes on to note that the material has a characteristic "very quick and precise" low frequency performance. All models use the famous Nautilus Tapering Tube with 'refinements' from the 800 Series, plus a new 130mm Kevlar drive unit. The flagship XT4 additionally boasts twin 130mm bass drivers, said to extend to 34kHz, with its Nautilus tweeter in a separate pod on top of the cabinet. Expect a review soon.

Price XT4 £1,699 **Due** November
☎ 01903 221500 # www.bwspeakers.com



MERIDIAN 800 VERSION 4

Meridian's modular 800 Series DVD/CD player, has been transformed... again. Two flavours of the 800 version 4 player are available: an 800D with digital outputs, and an 800DAX, which adds six channels of analogue outputs processed with high-spec 24-Bit/192kHz DACs. Both models feature extensive new video features, too.

Price 800D £11,525; 800DAX £12,735 **Due** now
☎ 01480 455678 # www.meridian-audio.com



AUDIO ANALOGUE BELLINI/DONIZETTI CENTO

Audio Analogue's new Bellini preamp features an off-line Virtual Battery power supply, an MM/MC phono board and a bypass mode, which enables its inclusion into a multichannel system.

The matching Donizetti Cento stereo power amp is a dual mono design that delivers 70 watts per channel, with a separate power supply for each, plus audiophile-grade components throughout. Expect a review in *HFC* soon.

Price Bellini £1,795; Donizetti Cento £1,550 **Due** now
☎ 01753 652669 # www.audioanalogue.com

Soundbites

QED has launched a new speaker cable that brings X-Tube technology into a mid-priced product. The Silver Anniversary XT is an OFC, figure-of-eight layout cable, which is silver-plated with a clear polyurethane outer. Expect to pay £5.50 a metre.
☎ 01279 501111

DENON's second all-in-one AV system from the Smart Life range boasts a number of claimed 'world firsts' for a mini system. Among suggested exclusives, the new S-301 DVD system features HDMI connectivity, HDTV up scaling, iPod integration as standard and USB connectivity for other hard disk portables. The 70-watt, 2.1 system is supplied with Denon speakers and also offers SACD, DVD-A and MP3 playback.
☎ 01234 741200



IXOS has unveiled a new HDMI lead. Its XHT458 cable costs £80 for a one-metre length (with longer lengths available) and is built for high-definition video at 1080p. The cable will support high-definition 1080p signals for cable runs up to 7.5 metres, and is said to offer more defined images even at lower definitions.
☎ 01844 219 000

FOCAL has added a centre speaker and subwoofer to its Electra 1000 Be speaker range. The CC 1000 Be and SW 1000 Be are timbre-matched with the main speakers and use Focal's 'W' sandwich cone technology. The centre speaker also uses Focal's renowned Beryllium tweeter. Both newcomers are also voiced to compliment the smaller Utopia models such as the Micro, Diva or Alto.
☎ 0845 660 2680



MARK LEVINSON is in the news again this month with the announcement of an in-car surround system for the new Lexus IS vehicles. The optional multimedia pack consists of a 14-speaker, 300-watt system with an in-dash, six-disc DVD changer. And you thought mobile phones in cars were dangerous!
☎ 0845 278 8888

The Insider

THIS MONTH HFC TALKS TO...

KEN ISHIWATA

Job Title: Brand Ambassador
Company: Marantz



What's the future of hi-fi?

People have many different definitions of hi-fi, some even think of the iPod. We manufacturers must be aware of this and understand peoples' needs, tastes and values and create products that meet them. People will always listen to music, because music matters.

What's the most innovative product you've encountered recently?

The iPod. The way it has sparked the consumer's imagination is just incredible.

DVD-Audio or SACD - and why?

Both high-specification digital audio media are fine, but the majority of people believe CD is perfect. On top of that, there are very few DVD-Audio discs available on the market. SACD has quite few titles and I personally like the format, but CD will ultimately win against both DVD-Audio and SACD.

CD or vinyl - and why?

Both. There is so much music only available on LP or on CD. If you want to listen to music, you have no other choice other than using that particular format!

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

As I already mentioned, consumers will buy whatever product will best satisfy their N.T.V. (Needs, Tastes, Values).

Hi-Fi Diary

JANUARY

5-8 **2006 International CES**
Las Vegas, Nevada
www.ce.org

The world's biggest showcase for new consumer electronics technologies

FEBRUARY

12 **Audiojumble 2006**
The Angel Leisure Centre, Tonbridge, Kent
www.audiojumble.co.uk
Antiques Roadshow with valves

24-26 **Sound and Vision 2006**
Marriot Hotel, Bristol
www.bristolshow.co.uk
The UK's biggest hi-fi show

Music not dead

The BPI's third quarter report shows an impressive upturn in sales for British music artists, in the context of a slow period on the high street. Artists such as James Blunt – whose *Back to Bedlam* shipped over a million copies – Coldplay and Gorillaz have helped to produce an impressive 8.9% increase in sales.

The singles market, meanwhile, is in a state of transition, with a 21.8% drop in physical sales being compensated for by a 60% increase in single-track downloads. Weekly online sales regularly top half a million tracks, which has meant that this sector has grown by nearly 50%. The seven-inch single continues to thrive, with sales topping 800,000 for the format over the period.

In Japan, things aren't quite so rosy. Record companies are lobbying for a tax on the sale of all portable digital audio players such as the iPod. They claim that illegal file sharing is undermining revenue and are asking for a two to five per cent duty on portable hardware.



Gruvi baby



If CD wasn't having enough trouble fighting off downloads, it now has another competitor in the form of Flash memory card

manufacturer SanDisk's new TrustedFlash "format". This MicroSD flash card can be used to store pre-recorded media for playback in mobile phones, PDAs and other portable devices and is about the size of a thumbnail. TrustedFlash can store up to 2GB of data and – in its 'gruvi' form – can be sold complete with pre-recorded music. The tiny card is said to provide "superior security and digital rights management solutions" to traditional media.

TrustedFlash cards will also be available with the Yahoo! Music Engine, which is similar to iTunes in letting users manage their music collections, create playlists and purchase downloads.

The ultimate download

American valve amp specialist Wavelength Audio has come up with a way to enhance the sound of music streamed from a computer. The Brick is a USB digital-to-analog converter with a valve output stage. Designed to be the building brick of a computer-based audio system, its maker Gordon Rankin claims that "you can better the sound of your system with a \$1,000 computer as compared to one using a \$10,000 transport".

The Brick features a 12AU7A valve, "custom MagneQuest iron" and does not require any software or drivers. It can stream live music, internet radio stations or even run DVD movie sound tracks. It costs \$1,750.

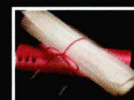


Plasma speakers

First we had plasma TVs, now Korean firm Mirae Plasma has developed the thinnest loudspeaker technology yet by using plasma technology. Mirae claims to be able to make a 0.5mm-thick plastic sheet produce sound quality that can compete with conventional cone technology.

The company does not explain how it achieves this breakthrough, but says that the system has advantages including the ability to be transparent or printed upon, "light like a vinyl" and capable for producing sound in 360 degrees. It is said to offer "best quality at high frequency region" and be simple to manufacture.

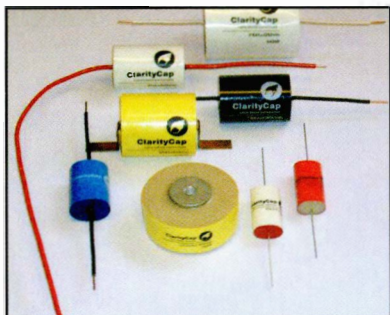
Meanwhile, flat speaker pioneer NXT has come up with some radical rethinking on the theme of cone speakers. By precisely attaching metal rings to conventional cones it has managed to iron out the resonances that traditionally beset them to the extent that it should be possible to produce single drive unit that is truly full range.



Cap conundrum

⊕ In what is a first for a manufacturer of passive components, ClarityCap – one of the UK's biggest manufacturers of capacitors for audio – has embarked on a Knowledge Transfer Partnership with the DTI and Salford University. When ClarityCap lost a valuable contract with a major loudspeaker manufacturer for sonic reasons, it realised that it needed to know more about the behaviour of capacitors in crossovers.

To this end, Paul Dodds – an electronics engineer with a background in research and instrumentation – has been acting as a bridge between the company and Dr Phillip Duncan at Salford University. Paul is taking capacitors to Salford for listening tests and returning to ClarityCap's headquarters in Wrexham, in order to develop methods for making components that both measure and sound good. Dodds hopes to pin down precisely what it is the makes a capacitor sound the way it does.



JIMMY'S TWEAKS #38

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



Balanced inputs and outputs

Quite a few upmarket amplifiers and CD players feature so-called 'balanced' inputs and outputs. Balanced operation is favourite in professional audio circles – recording studios and suchlike – for its improved sound quality and rejection of noise. With balanced working, the negative is 'active' and kept separate from ground or

earth. Usually, balanced connections are made using XLR plugs – so you'll need a set of cables terminated with XLRs to go balanced.

Both items being connected need to have balanced inputs/outputs. (You can't connect a balanced preamp to an unbalanced power amp and enjoy proper balanced operation!) And the benefits of balanced? An increase in gain (+3dB or +6dB), and a bigger more dimensional sound, with greater separation and improved fine detail. Balanced connecting cables don't come cheap, but if your pre/power amp and CD player offer balanced working, the extra cost will definitely be justified.

TOP 10 PRODUCTS FOR 2006 WE CAN'T WAIT FOR

- | | | |
|----|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 | Pioneer S-1EX | Beryllium-tweetered loudspeaker |
| 2 | Creek Destiny | CD player and integrated amplifier |
| 3 | NAD Masters Series | Amps and source components |
| 4 | Eclipse TD512 | Loudspeaker |
| 5 | Chapter Precis | Integrated amplifier |
| 6 | Classe CP500 | Stereo preamp |
| 7 | Densen B-150 | Integrated amplifier |
| 8 | Roksan FR5 | Loudspeaker |
| 9 | Brinkman Oasis | Turntable |
| 10 | Acoustic Energy AE1 Classic | Loudspeaker |



⊕ New Music

IN THE STUDIO

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



RICHARD ASHCROFT

Title: *tbc*
Release date: **spring 2006**

The former Verve singer has announced that his third solo album and the follow-up to 2002's *Human Conditions* is almost ready. He reckons it sounds like an amalgam of the Beatles, Stones and Dylan. He promises a combination of "beauty and lushness" and the "pretty raw and pretty heavy".

MASSIVE ATTACK

Title: *tbc*
Release date: **2006**

Nobody seems quite clear who's left in Massive Attack, but Robert Del Naja (aka 3-D) is definitely still there and has "almost completely written and recorded" the follow-up to 2003's *100th Window*. The album has a "gothic soul direction", he says and involves various collaborators, including reggae singer Horace Andy. What's not clear is if Massive founder member Daddy G has returned from his sabbatical to participate.

LEONARD COHEN

Title: *tbc*
Release date: **spring 2006**
Leonard Cohen took 12 years to make 2004's *Dear Heather*. The follow-up is due to appear with indecent haste, his hand forced by the fact that he needs the money. Now 71, he's suing his former manager for the theft of millions of dollars from his retirement fund and has had to mortgage his house to pay his legal fees.

MARK KNOPFLER & EMMYLOU HARRIS

Title: *tbc*
Release date: **Feb/ March 2006**
2005 marked the 20th anniversary of the biggest-selling British album of all time – Dire Straits' *Brothers In Arms*. Recent solo albums by the band's former leader Mark



Knopfler have favoured a more down-home style, while alt-country queen Emmylou Harris has hit something of a career high on her last couple of albums. Their Nashville recorded collaboration should be a treat.

RADIOHEAD

Title: *tbc*
Release date: **2006**

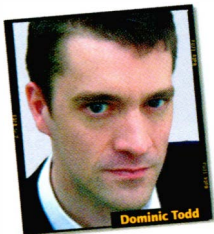
We've already reported here on the recording of Radiohead's seventh studio album, but progress is rapid. During October they were recording "a song a day" at their Oxfordshire studio. We even have titles, including *Pay Day*, *Burn the Witch*, *Down Is The New Up*, *Last Flowers*, *Skirting On The Surface* and *Morning Mi Lord*.

ALSO COMING SOON JAZZ/ CLASSICAL

Jamie Cullum *Mind Trick* (Nov); **Beady Belle** *Closer* (Nov); **Claudio Abbado** *Mahler: 4th Symphony* (Nov); **Maurizio Pollini** *Chopin: Nocturnes* (Nov)

SACD/ DVD-AUDIO

Andrew Cook Bach: *Cello Suites I, II and III* (DVD-A, Nov); **Crowded House** *Crowded House* (DualDisc, Nov); **Jackson Browne** *Running On Empty* (DVD-A, Nov); **Edgar Winter Group** *They Only Come Out At Night* (SACD, Nov); **Janine Jansen** *Vivaldi: Four Seasons* (SACD, Nov)



Dominic Todd

Predictaproduct

Not sure what to buy? Try being a planner

It can't be easy being a product planner for a hi-fi company. Just when you think you've got the next big thing on your hands, the market takes an expected twist and leaves the company either having to discount prices to shift stock, or doubling production in order to keep up with demand. A happy compromise is a rare thing indeed.

DAB radio is finally catching on, but it's taken longer than expected and still has nothing like the take-up rate, at least as far as separates goes, that had been predicted. We should be seeing sales of separate DAB tuners to be at an all time high right now, but the fact is they still straggle behind the likes of Denon's analogue TU-260L II, especially compared to its heyday in the late 1990s.

“The success of the iPod and other portable MP3 players exceeded the expectations of even the most optimistic product planners.”

Maybe the fact that the sound quality from DAB is less than convincing hasn't helped, but even so, there are some excellent hybrid tuners out there and they still don't sell in the numbers hoped for.

The success of the iPod and other portable MP3 players exceeded the expectations of even the most optimistic product planners. Although not really their 'bag', the hi-fi industry was compelled to sit up and take notice of the MP3 phenomenon. Although perhaps a little slowly, the market has responded – if not quite as successfully as many would have hoped for. The MP3 accessory market is just fine and some, such as Onkyo, are doing nicely with compatible remotes, docking stations and the like.

What has been rather less successful, at least so far, has been the idea of a separate sized MP3 player – otherwise known as a hard drive. At the high end, they are now commonly used in home installations. It's the middle and budget ground, though, which has yet to prove

itself. Right at the foot of the market is the Acoustic Solutions SP150. A £200 price tag should have made this fly out of the retailers, but it hasn't. Further up the price range, Perception's HD480 was never much of a goer either, although here the combination of dubious reliability and awkward operation did nothing to help. Of course, the product to really make the category come alive – and the one that everyone's waiting for – is the Cambridge Audio Azur 640H. The combination of a 160GB hard drive with audiophile touches such as a Wolfson DAC and toroidal transformer should prove to be a great draw. The trouble is, at the time of writing, we're still waiting for it, over a year after it was first previewed. Cambridge assures me that its release is imminent, but even if it is, will it really succeed? On paper, the 640H looks like having the makings of a blockbuster product that will really give life to the category.

In reality, though, I have to wonder if it has a large enough market. Although many will have

MP3 players, as lovers of music you'll probably rarely, if ever, listen to it through the hi-fi. In short, while the MP3 'style-fi' market is set to make a bomb out of the MP3/iPod format, consumers of hi-fi separates are still to be convinced. We audiophiles can be such an awkward bunch to predict sometimes!

Dominic Todd began his hi-fi career in the retail business and has been a freelance hi-fi reviewer and columnist since 1993



Bewildering brothers

Which hi-res brother is best?

The classic Dire Straits album, *Brothers in Arms* is one of the headline high-resolution titles of recent months, re-released 20 years after the original. The disc first put in an appearance in Europe, where it was released at the end of May as an SACD by Vertigo Records and Universal Music's Mercury Records imprint. A miniature tidal wave of publicity accompanied the launch, largely because it became the three-thousandth SACD title.

American listeners not willing to import had to wait until mid-August for a release on their side of the Atlantic, which came in the form of a DualDisc from Warner Music Group, complete with DVD-Audio content. The DualDisc really has no distinguishing features; aside from minuscule DVD-Audio and Advanced Resolution logos, the packaging is identical to that of a CD. So, when ordering, pay close attention to the catalogue number – the DualDisc is 49377-2.

If you're able to play both formats, which one should you choose – SACD or DualDisc?

Aside from a short, three page on-screen essay and lyrics, the DualDisc does not contain any supplementary material, so cannot be favoured for that reason. And in terms of audio, the two versions are similar, too. Despite what it incorrectly states on the packaging, the DualDisc plays four ways: there's the 16-bit/44.1kHz CD-DA side, a 448kb/s 5.1 Dolby Digital mix for DVD-Video players, a 24-bit/48kHz two-channel PCM track (compatible with DVD-Video and DVD-Audio machines) and a 24-bit/96kHz MLP surround mix. This gives a slight advantage to the DualDisc since the surround mix can be

R

RETRO

HI-FI REVISITED

PHILIPS SACD-1000 MULTICHANNEL SACD PLAYER



There's a curious symmetry in the evolution of the SACD market.

The first players were dedicated stereo-only players, which could cope with CD and SACD discs... and that was about it. Now, the stereo paradigm is in full flood once more, propelled apparently by a return to purist roots that started in the Far East. At the very highest of high-end, brands like Lindemann and TEAC Esoteric have produced stereo-only CD/SACD models that push the envelope of high-resolution sound. And very fine these products are too, matching the very best CD players with the humble compact disc, while showing how much better a well-produced SACD can sound.

This is very much at odds with the concept of universal players, which add a multichannel and DVD-Audio playing component, as well as good quality DVD-Video pictures and Dolby/DTS surround sound. Although many contend they are a Jack of All Trades, the universal player nevertheless accounts for the bulk of SACD and DVD-Audio players sold today, especially as they cover a broad spread from sub-£150 players to models costing more than 30 times as much (aside from high-end Meridian equipment, the combination of CD player with DVD-Audio/Video playback but no SACD has largely disappeared from view).

This leaves another group: multichannel music-only SACD players. These comparatively rare machines carry the high-definition middle market, and the model that started it all is the Philips SACD-1000, which first saw light of day in 2001. This was, in case you've forgotten, the first multichannel SACD player to reach the shops in the US and in Europe.

The SACD-1000 was also a DVD-Video player, and it was capable of playing Video CD and CD-R/RW discs too, which was by no means a given at the time. And it was made by Marantz – at the time, a Japanese-based subsidiary of Philips; now (alongside Denon) a lynchpin of D&M Holdings. The SACD-1000 appears to have been the last major collaborative project between the European multinational and the Japanese company, and it was quickly followed by Sony with its own,



“Most of all, it was a classy performer with SACD and quickly became something of a benchmark.”

more downmarket take on the multichannel SACD playback theme.

The SACD-1000 finally placed the SACD format on a level playing field with DVD-Audio, which had been available for some time in multichannel form. But it was significant in more ways than this. It was a particularly well-endowed and well sorted player featuring substantial power supplies, discrete HDAM output modules (a direct lift from the Marantz parts bin), but conversely a video section that now looks very dated, with RGB but no component option in PAL territories, still less progressive scan which was a novelty even for NTSC back then. A Dolby Digital decoder was built in, though.

It wasn't an exceptional video player then, but it was a more than serviceable one. Most of all, however, it was a genuinely classy performer with SACD. In fact, it quickly became something of a benchmark and remained so for a year or so, with a solid, yet transparent sound of considerable poise that was mirrored fairly closely in its CD performance. It was the first time for a long time that Philips had stretched its wings with a truly ambitious audio component, and until recently with the launch of the much cheaper but surprisingly talented DVP9000S, it has remained a high point for the brand. **HFC**

Alvin Gold

accessed even on DVD-Video players, unlike the multichannel content on its competitor, which requires SACD-compatible hardware.

The surround mix is identical on both discs; it was produced by Mark Knopfler and created by Chuck Ainlay, who slaved away for over three months at British Grove Studios preparing it for this release.

Brothers in Arms is renowned for being one of the finest early all-digital 16-bit/48kHz PCM recordings and is still used by many as a hardware audition piece. It was the first CD to put the format on the map, after all. Given that the native coding format of DualDisc is PCM rather than the DSD used on SACD, one would think the former would be closest to the original, but of course it's not as simple as that...

Most of the source elements for this release came from the album's multi-track masters, which were captured on a Sony 3324 – a DASH twenty-four track PCM recorder that used half-inch tape – with emphasis turned on. Emphasis is an early form of noise-shaping, so in order to match the filter as closely as possible and remove the emphasis when transferring from the master tapes, it was decided to capture the analogue outputs of a Sony 3348 HR player/recorder before PCM analogue-to-digital conversion at 24-bit/96kHz and transference to hard disk. "I thought it best, for archival purposes, to capture it at 96kHz, even though the original resolution was only 48kHz," Chuck explained. A few slaves from analogue were also captured at 24/96.

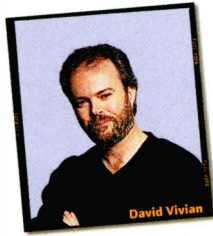
Why not convert everything from analogue directly to DSD, especially as that is the native format of SACD? "As far as the recording medium on the *Brothers...* SACD goes," Chuck told me, "we elected to mix directly to 24-bit/96kHz PCM after extensive evaluation of all the formats when mixing *Shangri-La*, Mark's most recent solo album."

The final surround mix was tracked in analogue and then concluded in the digital domain using the 24/96 PCM files and Steinberg's Nuendo software, before being committed to the DualDisc (with Meridian Lossless Packing), whereas the SACD version had to undergo yet another conversion to DSD for release.

If all of this sounds a bit confusing, the bottom line is that although neither stems from a 'pure' digital source, the release closest to the original recording and with the fewest conversions is the DualDisc and the fact that PCM is also the format favoured by Chuck Ainlay and Mark Knopfler himself must be the most compelling endorsement.

DualDisc it is then, but both versions are superb and highly recommended.

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



Digital radio ga-ga

DAB's had a bad press. Meet the exception

The radio? It's called 'Four'. News, plays, *Just A Minute*, *Dead Ringers*, John Humphries, *Book At Bedtime*... marvellous. Sounds as good on a ten quid Sony portable as it does in the car. Tried Classic FM once. It was hideous. Not the music (more accessible than on 'Three') but the terrible, excruciating, interminable adverts. So that's the radio: 'Four', portable, car, end of story. My hi-fi doesn't have one. But it just might one day soon.

You see, I thought I'd seen through the DAB (Digital Audio Broadcasting) hype, this supposed revolution in radio, this Utopia where hissy, crackly reception had been banished and everyone's listening requirements – from Nu-Metal to rolling news services in Urdu – were fulfilled. In glorious, CD-quality digital stereo. A digital free-for-all.

DAB hit the ground crawling in the late 1990s with specialist manufacturers such as

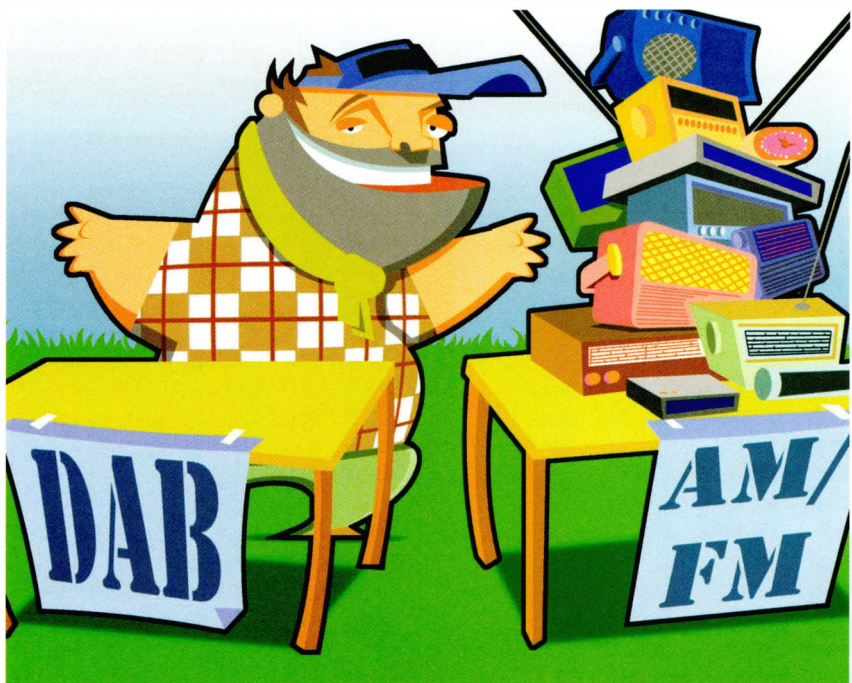
Arcam and Cymbol pitching the first DAB tuners in the 'expensive indulgence' zone, at just under a grand. Station choice was severely limited, coverage extremely patchy and sound quality seldom a match for FM.

The arrival of new-generation chipsets has sent prices plummeting and the consensus is that the performance of the hardware and service is moving steadily in the other direction. You don't even have to splash out on an expensive, roof-mounted antenna unless you live on the fringes. These days, most DAB tuners make a better fist of achieving interference-free reception with their supplied ribbon aerials than budget FM models ever did.

That said, DAB sound quality can still vary alarmingly. As the hardware gets better, its ultimate performance is inevitably capped by the spec of the broadcast: the higher the bitrate, the better. But, with the rapid proliferation of new stations, the bitrate of existing ones is having to be lowered to fit into the available bandwidth, effectively limiting DAB's sonic potential. It seemed to be bad news for audiophiles (who clung to FM as the better sounding medium) and good news for more casual listeners who wanted choice and a basically clear sound. So, the tide turned in DAB's favour: analogue radios look as dated as B*Witched T-shirts at car boot sales.

The fact remains that DAB is fundamentally a high-resolution digital system capable of very

"Analogue radios now look as dated as B*Witched T-shirts at car boot sales."



low distortion, no multipath nasties, excellent channel separation and a far better signal to noise ratio than FM. At its best – and that means several hundred pounds for the radio and a decent, roof-mounted aerial – sound quality definitely has the drop on FM and isn't a mile behind good CD.

Consider the much wider choice of stations and absence of co-channel interference and the results can be almost embarrassingly good. I'm getting one.

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



Final vinyl... no way!

Vinyl is off the endangered-species list

Record companies are generally happy to sell music on any format you want, so long as the market holds up. Which formats will survive the extermination process over time is not that easy to predict.

Just look at the vinyl story. With the rise of the CD, vinyl was once a threatened format. While many audiophiles still preferred the sound of their records, just as many had been seduced away by the new age promises made of CD audio. Records became something to be hidden in the attic, and CD became so dominant that around 1990 several big labels stopped pressing vinyl for many releases. At the same time, however, all underground music continued to be made on vinyl.

For independent labels, vinyl was cheap, quick and accessible. The rise of dance music from the late 1980s, plus an indie scene which threw up the likes of Coldplay, Oasis and Keane produced a wave of wannabe DJs and a new demand for records. Far from being endangered, vinyl has now become the format of contemporary cool. The latest official figures from the record companies body, the British Phonographic Industry, show that 800,000 seven-inch singles were sold between June and August this year – up a massive 80% on the same period last year.

The resurgence of vinyl has been surprising. Digital music services are still the hottest new thing, however. For music lovers and audiophiles, there's a trade-off to be made. Vinyl records offer unique tone of a kind not to be found in digital files. They also have ▶

MUSO

CLASSIC ALBUMS

THE GRATEFUL DEAD
LIVE/DEAD



From as early as 1967, legendary West Coast hippie band The Grateful Dead had been attempting to get their

alchemical sound onto record with little or no success. They tried eight-track studios but their demands to get "heavy and thin air" into the grooves drove more than one sensible producer from his chair. Then the group decided to combine live and studio tracks together on *Anthem Of The Sun*, hand-synching different gradations of multi-track tape in a studio in North Beach, San Francisco. The resultant 1968 album was dense and described by Jerry Garcia as "concrete music", a close relation to the *musique concrete* electronic music of the 1950s. Unfortunately, the Dead's multi-track tangling was just as unlistenable as Pierre Schaeffer's tape loop experiments of the previous decade!

The group persisted in the studio and produced *Aoxomoxoa* in 1969. Though it was a 16-track recording, the sheer density of the music and the amount of instruments (harpisichords, prepared pianos and so on) did little for sonic clarity. In effect, the group were making a soup of their music, a music that was famous for its detailed instrumental interplay. Legend had it that the sound of Phil Lesh's bass with Garcia's spiky cyclical guitar runs and Bob Weir's almost psychokinetic rhythm guitar was as close as one could get to audio LSD. The band decided to contact Alembic Recording Studios and persuade them to record entire concerts on 16-track, absolutely unheard of in 1969.

The gambit worked to perfection. Not only was *Live/Dead* the first great live rock album of the psychedelic era, it perfectly captured the Dead's genius for calligraphic music. *Dark Star*, the whole side centrepiece of the double Warner Brothers record, was incredible. From Lesh's bass opening (a modal series of notes that is attempting to find the D root, from which the actual riff emerges at 1:25) to Garcia's heavenly rippling Gibson (lead from 2:18 onwards) to the amazing rock and roll riffing of Bob Weir... in five minutes, the Dead set the standard for rock and roll head music.



"Listeners knew when they heard *Dark Star*, they were listening to 100 per cent proof psychedelia."

So impressed was film director Michelangelo Antonioni with this opening salvo that he used it to stunning effect in his 1970 film *Zabriskie Point*. When revolutionary student Mark Frechette steals a small plane and guns it over the Californian desert, the sense of hippie freedom is accompanied by Garcia and Co's spidery interplay of lysergic sound to create a memorable imprint of the 1960s. Though not a great chart hit at the time (the album failed to chart in the UK and only managed number 64 in the US charts) it went on to sell millions, because Deadheads and casual listeners knew that when they heard *Dark Star*, they were listening to 100 per cent proof psychedelia.

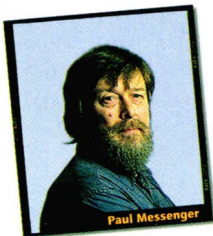
Live/Dead was the first Grateful Dead album to get the CD treatment and was remastered in 1989. Heaven knows why, but in 2001 (ostensibly for a Warners box set) they sanctioned another remix which set Garcia's vocals too far back in the mix. But every cloud has a silver lining. Grateful Dead fans are a tenacious and thorough bunch, making even Zappa obsessives seem mildly disinterested. The Dead organisation has just sanctioned a ten-CD box set of the Fillmore West concerts, from which the bulk of *Live/Dead* derives. Less obsessive fans can be content with a three-CD overview of proceedings from Warners sometime in 2006. **HFC**

Mark Prendergast

larger, more appealing artwork, greater tactility and a real sense of ownership as part of the package – three things which aren't well catered-for by digital music. Yet the advantages of digital are many: portability, browsability, transferability. For music use on the go, anything but a digital 'MP3' portable is a bind.

The sound quality remains poor, however, and market giant Apple is one of the worst offenders. It gets better if you use Apple Lossless Encoding, but music bought from iTunes is not likely to come up to scratch on serious hi-fi equipment. Many experts claim that Windows Media (.wma) files are actually of superior sound quality. These files are also available from virtually every download store, bar iTunes. Unfortunately Apple's iPod remains easily the sexiest and most easy-to-use portable device. You just can't have it both ways. If you want good quality and easy transferability, go for .wma files and a non-Apple player. If you want to be in the iPod club, you'll have to shop at iTunes. Perhaps the real question is what's more important: looking cool in your white headphones, or escaping into a world of superior sound?

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.recordingoftheday.com



The mains event

Power corrupts, power hedgehogs distribute

The whole issue of mains quality first surfaced more than 20 years ago, but there's still no consensus on what constitutes the best general solution to suit all applications. Some makes of equipment are more affected by changes in the mains electricity than others, and some locations have inherently cleaner mains than others.

I discovered very early on that the Naim kit I generally use is extremely mains-sensitive. A simple filter that I tried back in the mid-1980s might have cleaned up the mains, but it also messed up the equipment's music-making capabilities. Around the same time, I changed the mains spur fuse from 15A to 30A rating, and this very obviously improved the sound.

Since those heady times, the potential problems of mains pollution and RF interference have multiplied, while the



“A compact alloy tube ‘power hedgehog’, from which sprout numerous IEC-plug terminated leads that are used to power the system.”

resolution of hi-fi systems has improved dramatically. All of which considerably strengthens the case for taking the mains very seriously today. Commercial conditioners and purifiers have therefore proliferated, but my Naim kit still seems to prefer the direct approach, and the latest improvement only served to emphasise this.

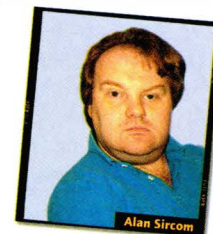
The Powerigel (pronounced power-eagle), made by Naim's German distributor Music Line, is simply a mains distribution system, but a very carefully researched one that I quickly discovered gave remarkably good results. The main thing that distinguishes it from most other distributors is that it connects the whole system to the mains via a single 13 amp plug. This takes the mains into a compact (23 x 9 cms) alloy tube 'power hedgehog', from which sprout, Medusa-like, numerous IEC-plug terminated leads that are used to power the system. Mine has eight of these, which is more than ample even for a reviewer, though six and eleven lead versions are also available.

It might not be the tidiest of solutions, for those that fuss about cable clutter, but the devil is in the detail here. The cables themselves have been carefully selected after extensive comparative listening tests, and each is exactly the same length, which is apparently important. Inside the tube, which sits on leaf-spring-decoupled spikes, the three groups of conductors are actually welded together. This eliminates numerous plugs, sockets and possibilities for contact corrosion, and ensures precise 'star earthing'.

As for performance, the sound became significantly tauter, tighter and more coherent, and complex music 'came together' in an obviously more believable way. Dynamics are sharper, better timed and more expressive. Although costly (from £525 for the six-outlet version, direct from Naim Audio), it's very good sonic value in a Naim system context.

One minor frustration is that the Powerigel is physically incompatible with the Vertex AQ Roirama mains leads I like to use. However, I'm still able to add mains RF cleaning by inserting a Silver Jaya in the adjacent wall socket.

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



The well-tempered noise

There's more to music than just sorted sound

I've been thinking about Dave Chesky's interview (HFC 273) for some time. He says things that throw the differences between the English audiophile and American high-enders into sharp focus.

To summarise what for me was the key point from Chesky's words, he said "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." This is a perfect justification for high-end electronics and the best quality recordings.

Yes, with all other things being equal, I would rather hear a good recording than a bad one; but if there is no good recording, I'll choose the bad one rather than no recording at all. This might allow MP3 and poor recordings in through the back door. But it also lets in a lot of good music that would otherwise fail to make the grade.

Imagine a scenario where there are just two versions of Bach's *Goldberg Variations*: an impassioned Glenn Gould rendition on a poor, low-fi bootleg recording, and a Richard Clayderman version, beautifully recorded but emotionally barren. Which one would you want to listen to? The ideal would be the Gould recording made in Clayderman's studio, but sometimes these things just don't happen.

Perhaps classical is not the best example, as there is always another recording of the most popular compositions. It's not as easy to do the same with specific live events that so typify jazz and rock recordings. I doubt many people would rate early Quintette du Hot Club de France recordings (on 1930s acoustic cutting gear) highly for their sound quality. Yet, without such recordings, we have to miss out on the wonders of Stéphane Grappelli and Django Reinhardt working together. And there isn't much to recommend the ping-pong stereo quality of some early multi-track recordings, but I'd rather that than lose *Electric Ladyland*.

The best example is one of the audiophile legends, Donald Fagen. His *The Nightfly* album suffers from some of the brightness of early digital recording quality, where the later *Kamakiriad* makes an intrinsically better sound. Unfortunately, the latter album isn't musically as interesting as the former, so *The Nightfly* remains the audiophile choice for most people.

Of course, we want it all. We want our recordings to be of the first water and the musical quality on the disc to be just as excellent. Sometimes, this is possible, and the world is a nice, safe, smiley place once again. Unfortunately, life's rarely that perfect and we make do – but wherever there is a chance to get the best recording, go for it. Don't get upset when a disc you acquire is musically brilliant, but the recording turns out to be less than sparkling. Just enjoy it for what it is – a fine piece of music.

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

TECHNO

TECHNOLOGY EXPLORED

ERGONOMICS



This month, a slightly different take on 'how things work': a look at how we interact with them.

The ergonomics, or user interface, in current jargon. Is it what it might be?

Is it heck. Frankly, it's generally rubbish. So, you now know where I'm coming from with this. That little outburst could have occurred at any time in the last 15 years really, but I'm becoming increasingly annoyed with the continuing failure of audio equipment across the board (but especially from specialists) to address some simple concepts of usability. Given the advances in price and performance over the years, what was once a mild irritation is bordering on the insultingly slack.

Look at the LP – I mean, actually look at one. You can see where each track begins and ends, and with only a little more squinting, you can see some salient features of the music. Specifically, you can see where it is louder or softer. I want to start playing at that big orchestral *fortissimo* about five minutes into Act One of such-and-such an opera: well, five minutes is a bit under an inch from the run-in, and look, there's the loud bit – let's lower the stylus just... there. Bingo!

On CD? Start playing, then hold the 'fast forward' button down for ages. CD players generally either advance at a steady rate, slow enough to induce paralysis of the thumb if you try to skip more than a couple of minutes, or accelerate so that all of a sudden minutes are skipping by like railway sleepers under a Pendolino or a good day for Virgin Trains. Stop! Back up! No, missed it again...

Suppose you're listening to a CD and the phone rings. Instead of pressing 'pause' you hit 'stop'. Phone call ended – where were you? Can you even remember which track, never mind where in it? Of course not! On LP? Raise the arm: it will fall again within a few seconds of the original interruption. Likewise cassette... you can even take a cassette out, put it on the shelf, record or play another tape entirely, put the original back and it's still at the right place.

Amplifiers aren't blameless either. Even assuming your amp has a nice, old-fashioned single-turn volume control mounted on it, how



"If we start a stir, the next big improvement could be in user-friendliness. Come on, let's do it!"

about the remote? Volume up/down buttons. Ugh! Okay, if the amp has the better sort of electronic volume control you do at least get repeatable-size volume steps, or you might if the step rate isn't too fast. And don't even get me started on control-surface typography...

The point I wish to make is that all this is addressable. A £20 CD-ROM drive with free operating software, running in a PC or Mac, will let you 'drop the laser' over any point on the disc. It's perfectly possible to make a remote control with a nice twiddly knob rather than horrid buttons (actually, I think Quad once did it). CD players could easily remember where you last stopped playback of a particular disc, just like DVD players. It just needs someone to programme this stuff in.

Then there's the Apple iPod. The potential for complexity is immense, yet that interface is so simple, few people ever need to consult the instruction manual more than once, if at all. We could all learn a great deal from the little white audiophile's nemesis.

This could all get a lot worse with multi-room installations and audio servers. But just think, audio equipment these days mostly works very, very well in simple sonic terms. A lot of it is über-smart. If we (press and public) start a stir, the next big improvement could and should be in user-friendliness. Come on, let's do it! **HFC**

Richard Black

TRUST YOUR SENSES



PURE INSTINCTS | PURE SOUND | NO DIRTY DIAPERS



*"This DALI speaker is brimming with talent and seduction."
"A new candidate in the world of top-of-the-range speakers
at competitive prices."*

Robert Lacramp & Jean Hiraga | Revue Du Son & Home Cinema | '04



Golden Eye Award - 2004
The Perfect Vision

*"In stereo configuration, the Helicon 400 ascended to the top
of a very short list of premium \$4k-per pair floorstanders."*

Neil Gader | The Perfect Vision | Nov/Dec '04



Golden Ear Award - 2004
The Absolute Sound







*"Imaging is superbly spacious and "out of the box",
with precise focus and good depth layering."*

Paul Messenger | Hi-Fi Choice | March '05

*"While this speaker's alluring good looks might make even
a super model green with envy, its sound is better still."*

Neil Gader | The Absolute Sound | Dec '04/Jan '05

FEATURES

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

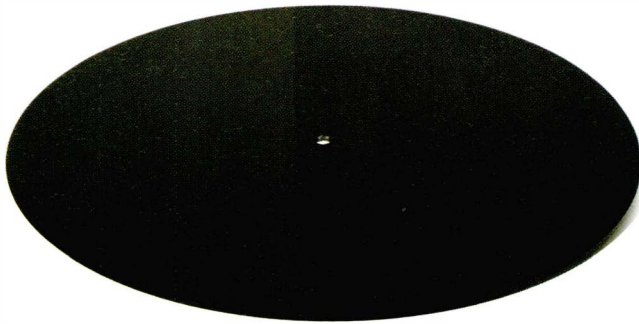
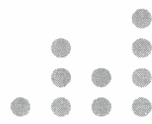


IN ADMIRATION OF MUSIC

DALI UK +44 (0)845 644 3537 ■ DALI USA +1 360 733 4446 ■ DALI Deutschland +49 6028 4390 ■ DALI Denmark +45 96 72 11 55



www.dali.dk



CUSTOM DESIGN iRAP LP PLATTER MAT £130

⊕ Made of Custom Designs' favourite 'Acoustic Steel', this is an impressively dead but impossibly heavy record mat. Impossible, that is, for suspended subchassis turntables. For solid decks, however, it is much more practical. It found its ideal home atop a nicely restored Garrard 401, on which it had entirely good effects, killing platter ringing with marked benefits for sonic precision. It's also worth a try on more modern decks, and we even liked its effect on a Rega. By replacing the felt mat, the iRap added to the sound's 'heft' and stability, though imaging both gained and lost, according to programme. Not compatible with MC cartridges, it gives no problems with moving magnet types.

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

IRIVER H10 PORTABLE MUSIC PLAYER/RADIO £159

⊕ 'MP3 isn't hi-fi'. A fair point, though it arguably does better than most cassette players ever did. But, you don't have to use MP3. Alongside MP3 and WMA, the iRiver H10 supports uncompressed WAV files. That means that you can load up to eight hours of music from your PC in genuine CD quality and enjoy it on the move from this attractive and tiny device. The headphone output is pretty decent, too, especially with suitable headphones replacing the supplied in-ear jobs (which are not bad, actually). This means you can have real hi-fi-on-the-go. It also picks up FM radio, can record from FM or a built-in microphone, and acts as a general-purpose data store, able also to display photos in surprisingly good quality on its colour screen. Nice to use, great to show off, and sonically rewarding: we like it!

🌐 www.iriver.com



STANDS UNIQUE CARBON FIBRE ISOLATORS £20 (PACK OF 3)

⊕ Among a multitude of equipment supports, these feet are particularly distinctive. Supplied in sets of three, each consists of a brass spike that engages in a little hole in the base of a pure graphite cross-piece, on which the equipment sits. This gives very little isolation at the low frequencies, where turntables are sensitive. However, other equipment can react to higher-frequency vibration, and in that case the extreme 'acoustic impedance mismatch' afforded by the assembly does indeed cut vibration transmission significantly. As with any support, placing is critical but we found this design to offer a consistently fast and open sound with excellent detail. Discreetly smart, too!

☎ 01933 412227 🌐 www.standsunique.com

D_SKIN DISC PROTECTOR £5 (PACK OF 5)

⊕ This looks like a solution looking for a problem, and in a way it is. The d_skin is a protective plastic sheet that is intended to cover the playing side of a CD. It's held in place by a simple clip-on ring which is easy to fit, and the sheet is sufficiently transparent for players to read right through it. The point is to protect the disc from scratches and dirt. Now, if you're a conscientious audiophile with good CD hygiene habits, you'll simply not need this. But there is a use for it if you ever put treasured discs in the car or lend them to friends of doubtful probity. Possibly not truly essential, but useful to know about!

☎ 01225 864999 🌐 www.dskin.net



PROVOnance



THE WILSON AUDIO
SYSTEM 7
HIGH-END PRODUCT OF THE YEAR



Provo, Utah's hi-fi artisans, the speaker builders of Wilson Audio, have now been at the top of the high-end tree for three decades. Recent recognition of their achievements tells us that complacency has yet to affect David A. Wilson's enthusiasm. As if challenged by rave reviews and countless awards, David has launched a new flagship to supplant the legendary WAMM – surely the longest-running, true high-end speaker design of all time. The Alexandria has already been acknowledged as the greatest cost-no-object speaker available today. Its sister speakers in the WATCH range achieve the ultimate in home theatre sound playback.

As the Alexandria paves the way for new and exciting advances in music reproduction, so, too, does the Wilson WATT Puppy System 7 remain the benchmark for consumers who desire compact speakers that demonstrate zero compromise. It is with great pleasure we note that the WATT Puppy, closing in on 20 years of production, was awarded the honour of High End Product of the Year 2003 by Hi-Fi News. Now that's what we call provenance.



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



GOLDEN DRAGON SMALL-SIGNAL VALVES FROM £7.25 EACH

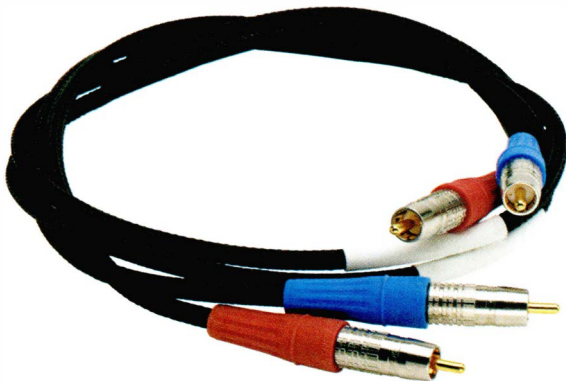
From the same supplier as the Ei Elite valves reviewed in last issue's *AudioFile Essentials*, these little bottles are made in China and offer an alternative of similarly high claimed quality. Indeed, the Golden Dragon range includes most popular audio valve types, right up to monsters like the famous 211. These are the bread and butter, though; as with the Ei Elites, we tried the ECC83 (12AX7) and ECC88 (6DJ8/6922). The ECC88s we found very slightly less solid-sounding than those from Ei Elite, though microphony was a touch lower and noise similar. Measured specifications were consistently good. The ECC83 turned out to be a star, with low noise of benign 'colour' and very low microphony.

☎ 0870 922 0404 🌐 www.tube-shop.com

FUNVIBES VIRTUOSA MUSIC DATABASE £24

The ability to catalogue your music collection (on PC) in a consistent and fully searchable manner, is something to be welcomed. Various bits of software exist to help one do this; Virtuosa is a little eccentric and takes some getting to know but it is, in fact, very flexible. Once one has properly investigated the possibilities afforded by integrating the music catalogue with the music itself, it's surprisingly hard to go back to searching through piles of CDs. Of course, 'ripping' from CD is supported, as are MP3 encoding and decoding (the quality-conscious will store files as uncompressed WAVs) and CD burning – even CD cover printing. And if you've ever fancied playing the DJ at a party, the ability to cross-fade between tracks will amuse you.

🌐 www.virtuosa.com



BRILLIANCE HI-FI SYNERGY ANALOGUE INTERCONNECTS £83 (1M PAIR)

While £83, isn't the cheapest price around for interconnects, these low capacitance cables are suitable for any source component, even elderly valve kit that can be fussy about such parameters. Synergy's sound is very clear and open with solid bass, though not quite as much weight in the lowest octaves as some cables can offer. However, imaging is good and image depth is very well portrayed, with considerable precision and a very long reach. The sound seems altogether agile and lively, and we liked these cables a lot. You may also wish to try the Deep Cryogenic Treated version, that costs approximately 50% extra.

☎ 07963 117341 🌐 www.brilliancehifi.co.uk

STANDS UNIQUE FLEX CABLE MANAGEMENT £40

If you've shelled out for a smart equipment rack to complement your decor, the last thing you'll want is spaghetti spilling out from the rear. Stands Unique comes to the rescue with this brilliantly conceived and efficiently executed cable conduit which, like a child's toy snake, comes in segments that can be removed to adjust length to requirements (as supplied it's 750mm long). Cables can be easily routed into and out of the snake and there's room inside for plenty of wires, both mains and signal. Keeping cables under manners in this way is good practice against both radio-frequency and hum-loop interference. It's simple to fit, too, and is compatible with most racks on the market.

☎ 01933 412227 🌐 www.standsunique.com



All you need to hear...



WHAT HI-FI?
SOUND AND VISION
AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
SPEAKER PACKAGES
MONITOR AUDIO RS6 AV



Silver **RS**

THE NEW SILVER RS LOUDSPEAKERS

WHAT HI-FI?
SOUND AND VISION



RS6, Sept 2005

"...the Silver RS6 is a success: dressed to kill, delivers plenty of detail and punches like a heavyweight."

WHAT HI-FI?
SOUND AND VISION



RS1, Oct 2005

"...good looking; well made, speedy, accurate sound; articulate and dynamic."

WHAT HI-FI?
SOUND AND VISION



RS1 AV, Nov 2005

"...in terms of outright resolution and its ability to uncover detail, the RS1 AV bosses the rest of this highly competitive field."

www.monitoraudio.co.uk

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

Sigur and spice

Iceland's Sigur Rós might have signed to EMI, but as their latest opus *Takk* proves, creativity and an obsession with sound still come before commercial compromise

Sigur Rós are four young men who share a common sense of beauty. Since the release of their debut album, *Von*, in 1997, they've embarked upon journeys in sound that have more in common with classical composer Górecki, than they do your average indie band. Their new album *Takk*, for example, channels reverberating bowed guitars, tender vocals, piano motifs, emotive strings and all manner of electronic and acoustic atmospherics, into expansive yet intimate expressions of beauty and power.

"It's the first album for a long time that we've been really happy with," states singer and guitarist Jónsi. "Sound wise too! We wrote it here, recorded and mixed it, all here."

We're seated in the kitchen area of their unique recording and rehearsal space – a converted indoor swimming pool – thirty minutes drive outside Reykjavik. And Jónsi might well be happy with the sound quality. *Takk* exudes a deliberately engineered warmth. Rather than opt for a totally digital recording option, the band recorded to tape, then imported parts and sections into Soundscape (mixing software) to be spliced, reversed, slowed down or otherwise modified, before being bounced back to tape.

"It is better sound-wise" explains Jónsi. "The last album was a lot more bassy and distorted, where this has more mid frequencies."

"Big sounds are better on tape, I think," adds keyboard and guitar player Kjartan. "Maybe if we'd recorded it digitally, it would sound more like how it's supposed to, but when you have tape, it adds a kind of juice to it. I think it's important for guitars and drums and bass."

Then there was the analogue power of a Neve mixing desk: "It's a big broadcasting desk

"The Tannoy speakers are good for really blasting and checking out bass drums and the bottom end. But the Dynaudios are the main speakers. The stereo is good for just checking to see what it sounds like on an ordinary hi-fi system."

The band then took the final mix to a number of mastering engineers, until they found Ted Jensen. He gave them the smooth, yet

"Maybe if we'd recorded digitally, it would sound how it's supposed to, but when you have tape, it adds a kind of juice to it."

from a friend's TV station," Jónsi reveals. "We got it quite cheap because everybody's changing to digital. It's quite old and there's lots of crackling. But sometimes that's nice, when channels crack up. Sometimes we'd want to capture that."

Add to that Sigur Rós's knack of using huge reverb effects and a compression ethos that doesn't gloss the soul out of every molecule, and you have a very expansive sound that needs to be harnessed rather than pacified. Hence, at the mixing stage, a range of speakers needed to be utilised to get the balance right.

"We always used Yamaha NS10 monitors, with Dynaudio and big Tannoy DMT speakers, and just an ordinary stereo too," Jónsi outlines.

aggressive sound that would, among other things, perfectly capture Jónsi's bowed guitar.

"It's like an untamed horse that you're trying to control," he smirks. "I use a cello bow because it's wider and longer, and I use resin on the bow to get it to work properly."

But despite their love of guitars, *Takk* blurs sound elements into an all-consuming whole, where instruments resemble each other. It's no surprise, then, that they feel a greater affinity with electronica acts like Boards Of Canada, than they do most guitar bands.

"We have been drawn to electronic music more than guitars," Kjartan admits. "It's all about interesting sounds."

Gal Detourn

SOUND AMBITIONS: Sigur Rós's four studio albums

Von (1997)

Sigur Rós's debut brought little attention. Darker and more fractured, it was nevertheless experimental, despite the newness of the band.



Agætis Byrjun (1999)

The breakthrough masterpiece. Strings, vocals and guitars fuse into extraordinary cinematic soundscapes.



() (2002)

The band didn't want to encourage preconceptions with a proper title. Musically, this saw Sigur Rós in a sombre, slower, sparser mood.



Takk (2005)

More song-based than previous outings, *Takk* is accessible, yet loses no grandeur, beauty or unfolding majesty.



WIN! FABULOUS FOCAL-JMLAB PROFILE 908 SPEAKERS WORTH £1,300!



For the hi-fi modernist, Focal-JMLab's Profile 908 demonstrates how traditional hi-fi sound can be successfully married to contemporary design. When we 'profiled' the stylish newcomer last month (in *HFC* 274), we were bowled over by the high-performance standmount, one of three new speakers that replace the brand's Electra range.

Key to the Profile 908's charm is the new driver complement, which includes a new 25mm aluminium/magnesium inverted-dome tweeter, plus the latest version of Focal's famous sandwich 'W' cone technology. Both units are a direct result of the developments made while creating the stunning and esoteric Electra Be speakers. Complementing the new driver array is a curvaceous, boat-tailed cabinet with a scalloped grille and sloping baffle that contributes significantly to the Profile 908's smooth and articulate midband. The speaker's uncanny sense of presence and notable dynamic ability earned the Profile 908 a Best Buy badge last month... and now a pair could be yours! For your chance to win a pair, simply correctly answer the question below. The lucky winner will be drawn at random.



CONGRATULATIONS...

...to our last winner, Linda Edge of Alresford in Hampshire, who wins a pair of the fabulous Dali Helicon 400 speakers worth £3,000!

QUESTION:

What compliments the new driver array?

- A:** A curvaceous, boat-tailed cabinet?
- B:** A curvaceous, boat-owning, millionaire?
- C:** A curvaceous, boat-repairing, pasty-lover called Miriam?

TO ENTER:

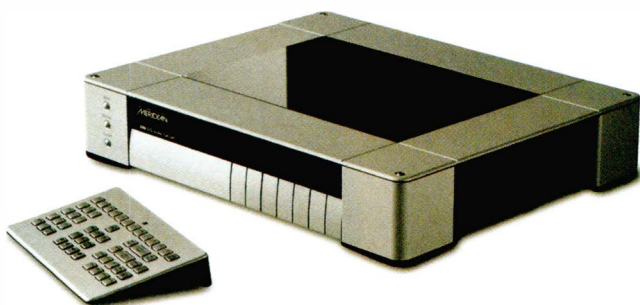
By Phone: Simply call **0905 053 3352** and follow the instructions (your call will cost 50p per minute and last no longer than 90 seconds).

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 C: A curvaceous, boat-repairing, pasty-lover called Miriam, then text HFC COMP1 C 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 14 December 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: 1 x 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

best picture. best sound.



For almost thirty years, the Meridian name has been held in high regard around the world. From acclaimed industrial design, to pioneering active loudspeakers, to the world's first audiophile CD player and digital Surround Controller—to the highest quality audio and video available today.

No surprise, then, to see our G98 DVD-Audio/Video player and 808i Signature Reference CD player pick up Hi-Fi Choice Gold Awards recently.

The G98 (above, left) offers superb audio performance, and plays almost any PCM disc format – exquisitely. The G98 now also includes stunning 1080p full-bandwidth High Definition video, taking your existing DVDs to cinema-screen quality.



Meanwhile, the 808 Signature Reference CD player (below, left) is, simply, the best-sounding CD player we've ever made. Each unit is signed individually by Bob Stuart and Allen Boothroyd, the founders of Meridian.

G98 and 808: just two more reasons why magazines and Meridian owners alike award us 'Best Sound' and 'Best Picture'. Contact us for details.



Best DVD Player over
£2,500:

Meridian G98

Best CD Player over
£5,000:

**Meridian 808i
Signature Reference**

BOOTHROYD STUART
MERIDIAN

Meridian Audio Ltd.

Latham Road, Huntingdon,
Cambridgeshire PE29 6YE, UK

T: +44 (0)1480 445678

F: +44 (0)1480 445686

E: info@meridian-audio.com

W: www.meridian-audio.com

ChoiceCuts

This month's varied musical morsels

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



AUDIOPHILE VINYL

MEMPHIS SLIM USA

Candid/Pure Pleasure
180g vinyl

Music: Born John Peter Chapman in 1915, Memphis Slim was a piano player and singer with a powerful and robust voice, honed by years of gigging across the length and breadth of the USA. He had over 500 records to his name, too. This 1961 album was produced by music critic Nat Hentoff and finds Slim alongside harmonica player Jazz Gillum and guitar player Arbee Stidham, both of whom contribute vocals. It soon gets down to business with some fine performances from all involved but there's no denying the driving force which is Slim's accomplishment on the mic and keyboard. ★★★★★

Sound: Nat Hentoff must have been a true hardcore audiophile, because the album notes specify the recording equipment and mastering lathe used. The gear certainly works, as the voice recording is some of the most dynamic on record. ★★★★★ JK

COLEMAN HAWKINS The Genius of Coleman Hawkins

Verve/Speakers Corner
180g vinyl

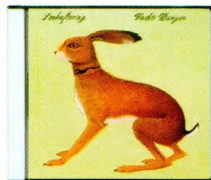
Music: Considered by many to have been the father of jazz saxophone, tenor player Coleman Hawkins played with pretty well all the greats of the jazz era. His style is precise and controlled but soulful; British musician Benny Green described him as "the first

jazz saxophone virtuosi with a technique equal to the task of playing anything his mind could conceive." On this 1957 recording, Hawkins imbues his playing with enough of his character to know who's blowing, but doesn't let that get in the way of the tune. ★★★★★

Sound: Audiophile vinyl specialist Speakers Corner reveals just how good the Verve engineers were in the early days of stereo with this impressive imprint. It has colour and depth of sound that you only get with the best musicians. Tube technology is a wonderful thing. ★★★★★ JK

These LPs were supplied by Speakers Corner and Pure Pleasure and can be purchased from Vivante: 01293 822186 www.vivante.co.uk

COMPACT DISC & VINYL

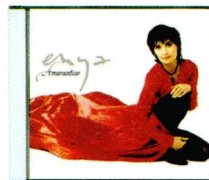


VASHTI BUNYAN Lookaftering

FatCat

Music: Folk chanteuse Vashti Bunyan last made an album in 1969. Persuaded to come out of retirement by celebrity fans such as new folk hero Devendra Banhart, who also guests here, she's resumed pretty much where she left off. The arrangements are sparse and quiet, and that ethereal, but very human voice floats in and out, like a ghost from another world. The lyrics are less stary-eyed than they were last time, but the mood is still one of a new world, half-glimpsed. Lovely. ★★★★★

Sound: Her unique voice is still intact and is complemented beautifully by delicate arrangements for her acoustic guitar, plus string quartet, oboe, glockenspiel and piano. Many of the initial tracks were initially laid down at her home and the production maintains that cosy, living-room feel. ★★★★★ DO

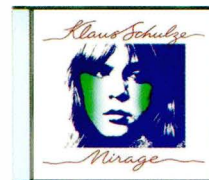


ENYA Amarantine

Warners

Music: Enya seemed to find her natural, hobbit-populated milieu singing the haunting theme on the soundtrack of *The Fellowship Of The Ring*. It helped her last album to a staggering 13 million sales and so it's no surprise that *Amarantine* offers more of the same. The Irish singer hates the term 'New Age', but it's hard to think what else you can call her quasi-classical melodies and ethereal vocals. She even sings three songs in an imaginary language called Loxian, invented by her lyricist Roma Ryan. As an oasis of calm in a world of noise and chaos, it's easy to understand her appeal. ★★★★★

Sound: Arranger Nicky Ryan builds elaborately constructed walls-of-sound behind her floating vocals. Yet despite the studio layering, the overall effect sounds remarkably organic. ★★★★★ NW



KLAUS SCHULZE Mirage

SPV Revisited

Music: *Mirage* is not only Klaus Schulze's most popular album, but also his best. Schulze's debt to Stockhausen and Ligeti comes over on *Velvet Voyage*, a huge sprawling "electronic winter landscape". On the sleeve, Schulze described music "as a dream without the isolation of sleep" and the dreamlike *Crystal Lake* is his tour de force – starting with minimalist bell tinkles, it builds to a crescendo of bass synths, Moogs, tape-delay effects and arctic soundscapes. Unrivalled in the electronic field to this day. ★★★★★

Sound: Schulze has carefully transferred the original analogue tapes and so the sound is warm and finely detailed. Check out the jaw-dropping bass synth on 4:36 of *Crystal Lake*. ★★★★★ MP

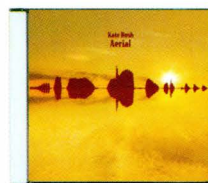


KATE BUSH Aerial

EMI

Music: A new Kate Bush album would have been a major event even if it hadn't been 11 years since the last one. Now, having taken time off to raise a son, she's finally delivered, and generally, delivered very well. The album sounds pretty much as one might have expected her next album to sound in the mid-1990s – there doesn't appear to be any extraneous influences other than those we've come to expect. Trickling piano, intelligent melodies, a smidge of Renaissance period instrumentation, bonkers lyrics and even the odd prog-lite interlude, though this time there's no Dave Gilmour to take the blame. It's pure, unadulterated Bush, and for that, there's a lot to be thankful for. ★★★★★

Sound: Painstakingly recorded and mixed at her own studio, the sound is beautifully judged throughout, skipping nimbly between full band and solo piano dynamics with equal alacrity. ★★★★★ DO



SCHUBERT

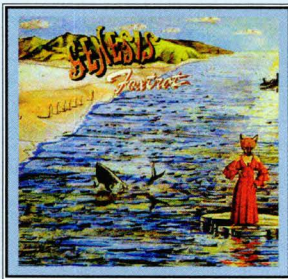
Schubert For Two

Gil Shanhán (violin), Goran Sollscher (guitar)

DGG471 568-2

Music: Schubert played guitar, and some of his music was published scored for guitar and violin. However, most of the music here was sensitively adapted for this combination. This is salon music of the highest quality, and includes well-known pieces such as *Valse noble* D969 No 4, the *Arpeggione* Sonata D821, *Moments musicaux* and *Ave Maria* D939 (Ellen's Song III). Schubert was an accomplished miniaturist – helpful with guitar music. ★★★★★

Sound: The performances are cool and controlled, and the two players mesh beautifully. The guitar sound in is excellent, but the violin sounds syrupy and overcooked as captured in the Glenn Gould Studios in Toronto. ★★★★★ AG

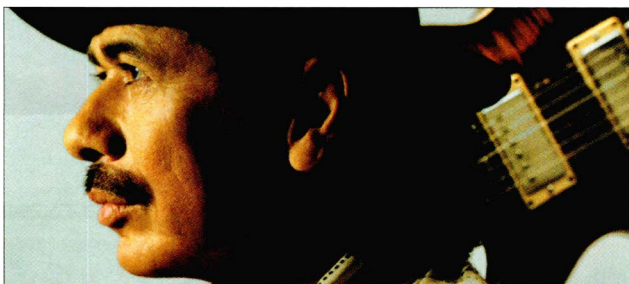


THIS MONTH'S CLASSIC HI-FI TEST DISC "A powerful and dense recording."

GENESIS Foxtrot Charisma

Music: *Foxtrot* was a landmark album both for Genesis and for progressive rock as a whole. Released in 1972 when Peter Gabriel was very much the driving force, *Foxtrot* consists of far too much material for a single vinyl LP, the remarkable *Supper's Ready* being a 23-minute epic of truly extraordinary ambition and achievement. The five songs on the first side include the warnings of *Watcher Of The Skies* and the 1960s social housing backlash *Get 'Em Out By Friday*, but despite

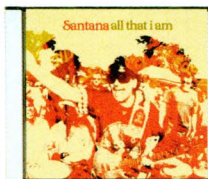
the quality of those, it climaxes with the bizarrely titled *Can Utility And The Coastliners* that depicts King Canute's shortcomings with considerable power. ★★★★★
Sound: A powerful and dense recording, second-hand vinyl copies tend to sound poor because they squeezed so much music onto each side that basic turntables couldn't cope. Classic Records has re-released it on 200g vinyl, however, and the CD remaster is none too shabby, too. ★★★★★ JK



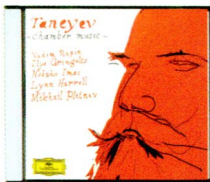
SANTANA All That I Am

Sony-BMG

Music: Just when his career seemed to have run out of steam, Carlos Santana cleverly reached out to a new audience on 1999's *Supernatural* by getting a bunch of popular contemporary artists to provide the inspiration, while he recycled his old guitar licks. The result was the biggest-selling album of his career, even surpassing milestones like his quadruple-platinum 1970 masterpiece, *Abraxas*. Santana's third similar release in this collaborative series presents another eclectic list of guest musicians including Aerosmith's Steve Tyler, Outkast's Big Boi, Mary J Blige, Joss Stone and Sean Paul. The problem is that too many tracks sound like they're lifted from those artists' own albums – with Carlos adding stinging guitar lines, as if he was the hired gun – and not the other way around. ★★★



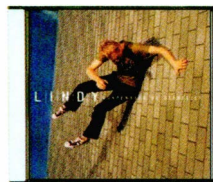
Sound: The finest moments come not from the stellar vocalists but on the guitar-drenched *Trinity* on which Santana trades licks with Metallica's Kirk Hammett and steel guitar virtuoso Robert Randolph. ★★★★★ NW



TANEYEV Chamber Music

Vadim Repin, Ilya Gringolts, Nobuko Imai, Lynn Harrell, Mikhail Pletnev
DGG 00289 477 5419

Music: Unjustly neglected, Taneyev's music has certain similarities with Scriabin and Rachmaninoff (his pupils at the Moscow Conservatory) and even to an extent Brahms. The music isn't on the same level as the best of Brahms, but there is a rugged passion about these two large-scale chamber works, which repay repeated listening. String advocacy from the players involved clearly pays a part here, too. ★★★
Sound: These are fine recordings, which respond well to the quality of the replay system. The acoustic (of the Vavay Theatre) sounds dry, and the instruments close miked, but the disc works well on a good system, preferably one with largish speakers. ★★★★★ AG



LINDY Suspension Of Disbelief

Orange Record Label

Music: Lindy is a blonde Canadian geezer who works the popular acoustic, post-Coldplay, singer-songwriter groove for all its worth. Mister L actually has stronger material than much of the aforementioned, as well as a voice that intrigues – and occasionally rocks – but never grates, a rarity amongst today's (pop) idle singers. *Important* with its subtle psychedelic undertones sounds, er, important, *Witness* is effortlessly enjoyable singalong stuff and *While We Were Waiting* evokes John Lennon without being a mere rip-off. Give this thing two or three plays and, disbelief suspended, you'll be hooked. ★★★★★
Sound: Crisp without being crackly, 'ever-present' vocals well recorded by Daryn Barry and Ken Friesen in the heart of darkest Ontario. ★★★★★ PS

DVD-AUDIO & SACD

CAN

Landed

SACD (stereo SACD plus stereo CD layer)

Spoon Records

Music: German prog-meisters Can re-released much of their back catalogue earlier in the year and took advantage of SACD in the process. 1975's *Landed* was the band's seventh album and brought the membership to close to its original line up of Holger Czukay (bass, vocal), Michael Karoli (guitar, violin, vocal), Jaki Liebezit (drums) and Irmin Schmidt (keyboards)... only vocalist Malcolm Mooney is missing. This is a crossover album taking in the progressive, *avant garde* style that the band made its trademark and mixing it with some near poppy tunes that bear a striking resemblance to the 'new wave' music that was to follow two or three years later. Propelled by Liebezit's drumming, there is always a groove, even when everything else is in free flow. ★★★
Sound: *Landed* clearly benefits from this SACD mastering. It sounds richer, clearer and yet more relaxed than CD remasters and brings out the qualities of the original 16-track recording to good effect. ★★★★★ JK



MAHLER

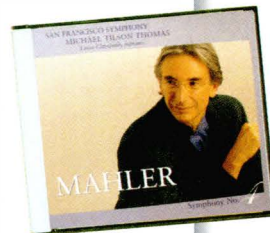
Symphony No. 4

Thomas (conductor) San Francisco Symphony, Laura Claycomb (soprano)

SACD (stereo/multichannel SACD plus stereo CD layer)

San Francisco Symphony 821936-0004-2

Music: One of the final releases in this Mahler cycle, all in multichannel SACD, the 4th is the shortest, simplest and the most transparent, though there are moments (as in all Mahler's work) of something much darker, a foreboding of tragedy and death. It ends in an exquisite song from his early *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* cycle, others of which are quoted in the 2nd and 3rd symphonies. The 4th is the most accessible of all Mahler's symphonies, and is matched here to beautifully articulated playing from the San Francisco orchestra and clear, luminous singing from Laura Claycomb, though the tempi (especially in the third movement) may strike some as slow. ★★★★★
Sound: This recording was made at the SF's home base, the impressive Louise M Davies Symphony Hall, whose acoustics were improved a few years ago, and which is shown to great effect, especially in DSD multichannel form. It was recorded live, though you might never know it until the end. ★★★★★ AG



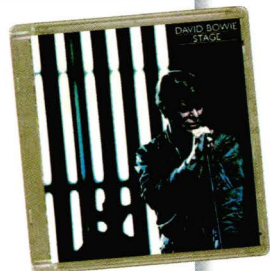
DAVID BOWIE

Stage

DVD-Audio (24/96 surround, DTS 5.1, PCM stereo)

EMI

Music: Some prefer Bowie's glam *Ziggy Stardust and The Spiders from Mars* phase. But for many, the Thin White Duke, with his razor-sharp style and bold new electronic sound, is Bowie's creative high-water mark. Originally a double album, *Stage* captures him on his biggest ever world tour (at that time) and features such hot tracks as *Heroes*, *Fame*, *Fiver Years and Station To Station*. He was just beginning to break America and musically he's at the top of his game, bursting with confidence and creativity and backed by a band to match, it's a prime example of Bowie at his best. ★★★★★
Sound: Bowie's favoured producer Tony Visconti took charge of the live recording and mixing and apparently went to great lengths to capture it, using separate on and off-stage mics to capture both band and ambience. He also oversaw the transfer to 5.1 and the result is a surprisingly full and involving sound. ★★★★★ DO



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.



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

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.

The SDA 2175 **Power** Amplifier offers:

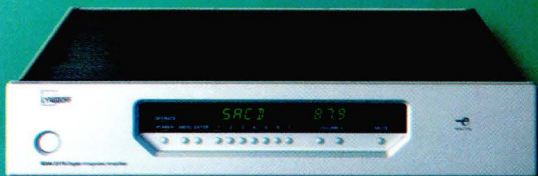
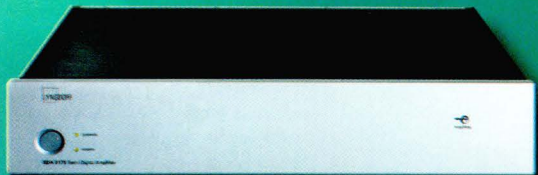
Balanced and single-ended analogue inputs. Treble is sweet and accurate. Bass is tight and controlled. Complete lack of noise. Advanced protection circuits. 200W/8 ohms, 375W/4 ohms. Vice-like control of speaker cones.

The SDAi 2175 **Integrated** Amplifier boasts the same impressive power engine and offers:

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

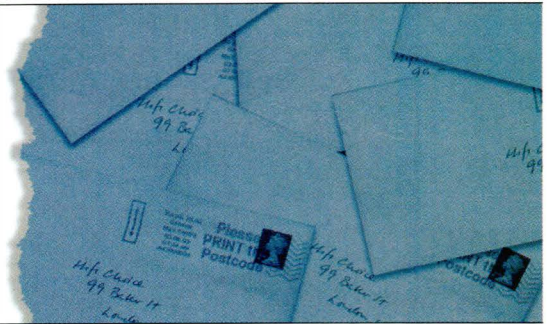
www.tactaudio.co.uk
www.lyngdorfaudio.co.uk

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

DVD... NOT FOR ME!

I was aghast to notice recently a large DVD-only retailer crop up in a prominent position on my local high street. This rang alarm bells with me, particularly after HMV announced that it had sold more DVDs than CDs (over a twelve months period) for the first time in its history. I worry about the fate of our passion. It is threatened with extinction from music downloads, convenience music playback and now the dominance of DVD.

Colin Riley via email

HFC It's a worrying trend no doubt, but there are millions if not billions of CDs out there... and people will need something to play them on for years. We can only hope that convergence technology will turn more on to music. Those people may, in turn, choose to seek higher fidelity for their favourite sounds.



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: Cyrus CD8x CD player

DUFF DISCS

I haven't had my Cyrus CD8x/8vs combo long, but I cringe when I hear a bad recording on CD. Yeah, okay, it still sounds good through the system, but just not as composed and dynamic as some CDs I own. There are plenty of badly recorded CDs out there, and that becomes even more apparent when you listen to quality albums. The problem is, I like listening to modern indie and rock... and a lot of it doesn't sound anywhere near as good as my earlier jazz and blues albums, especially when everything comes together. It's like it's compressed. Should you learn to live with the bad recordings, stop criticizing the quality and just listen to the music, or do you just put them to the back of the pile?

OldSkool HFC Online Forum

HFC Yours is not an uncommon complaint. We say it's all about the music and obsessing over quality is missing the point. Sure, it's frustrating to get a bad disc if you've been spoilt with some superb engineering in the studio, but it's the content that counts, not the production values. You could always use your amp's tone controls if it has them – perhaps that's why they're making a comeback?

MEASURE UP

I refer to *Techno* on the subject of high-end specifications in the October issue (HFC 272). I believe that there are specs and measurements, or combinations that can often provide significant insights into audio performance. That this is not always true, seems to have led to many audiophiles foolishly discounting the value of specifications. They entrust their own ears, often to the detriment of a more precise and repeatable understanding of the equipment we use. Although listening tests remain fundamental, we shouldn't discount measurement.

“Should you learn to live with the bad recordings, or do you just put them to the back of the pile?”

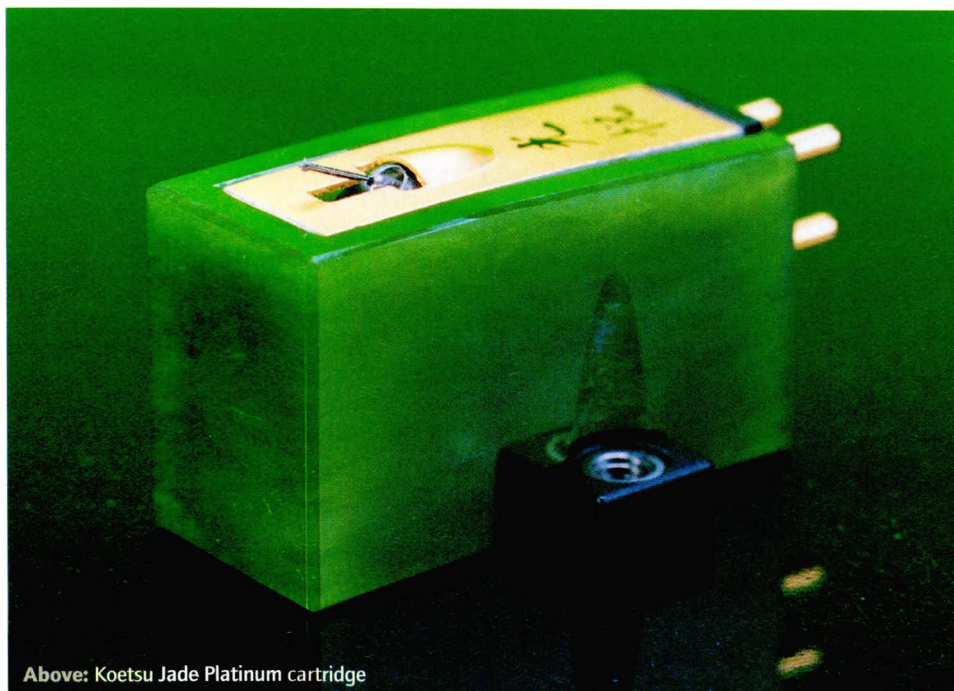
There are often ways to judge the performance, or aspects of the performance of audio gear scientifically, that correlate to listening. And we should be searching for more of these technical measurements with zeal. They are more precise, and point in the direction to further advancement than subjective methods, such as listening.

Allen Edelstein New Jersey, USA

HFC At *Hi-Fi Choice*, we understand the value of measured performance and every product featured in our monthly *Ultimate Group Test* has a full lab report to compliment the blind listening and subjective test element. There is, of course, a limit to how much emphasis can be put on measured performance. You mention how measured performance can correlate to listening, but such correlation is rarely consistent in our experience. This means products cannot be reliably evaluated using measurements alone. They can, however, be of supplementary use in subjective test programmes, and we will continue to use this extra dimension for all of our comparative tests.

TUNE-UP, TUNE-IN, NO MORE DROP-OUTS

I haven't stopped listening to my hi-fi since you cover-mounted the *System Tune-Up* disc with the ▶



Above: Koetsu Jade Platinum cartridge

❑ Summer issue (HFC 270). It really has sorted things out. I had an annoying problem with my power amp and was told this was caused by "static build-up in the output transformers". This became apparent after about two hours of playing, when the amp became quite hot. The result was a succession of quiet clicking noises every half second or so from the speakers. Nothing to worry about when playing music, but it was annoying if I wanted to leave my hi-fi on. After a burn-in session yesterday, I left my power amp on continuously for nine hours, playing all sorts of music with no issues. My system has never sounded so good!

Neil Hunter via email

HFC Glad you liked it, Neil. If you want to explore further the benefits of dedicated tune-up CDs, you may wish to check out the Isotek *Full System Enhancer Disc*, or Richard Black's *U.S.H.E.R. CD*. Both cost £15 and are available from Choice Bits (0870 240 7228). These discs contain comprehensive burn-in and demagnetization tracks, plus with Richard Black's disc, a hearing training section, designed to make you a more attentive and critical listener.

HIGH-END STYLE FILE

Paging through *The Collection 2005* (HFC 272), it appears that all these components have a 'look'. I will summarize the looks as follows:

- Cyborg/RoboCop look: Revel Ultima Studio, Wilson MAXX 2
- Star Wars look: Eclipse TD712z, B&W 800D, Avalon Eidolon Diamond
- Terminator 3/Liquid Metal look: Chord Choral system
- Suburban office building look: Theta Enterprise
- 1960s urban office building look: Audiostatic DCM5, Waterfall Victoria TWN
- Dowdy old look: Tannoy Yorkminster, Jadis DA88 Signature

"All these components have a 'look'... is this why wives hate audio but love plasma TVs?"

• Sex in the Orient look: Koetsu Jade Platinum
Is this what audiophiles want to see in their homes?
Or is this why wives hate audio but love plasma TVs?

Ali Elam New York, USA

SACD TO GO?

I am about to purchase a SACD player or music server (without SACD) and need to get an opinion on how big the SACD market will become. I will either buy the McIntosh MVP861 (DVD/CD player with SACD), or the MS300 Music Server (DVD and CD, but no SACD). The MS Music server, of course, stores music, but it does not have SACD, nor will it (I checked). I only have a few SACDs so far, but going forward, I expect my percentage of SACDs to grow substantially. Will SACD become commonplace? Would you go with the Music Server or the SACD player?

Scott Johnston via email

HFC If we could tell the future, we wouldn't be burning the midnight oil producing the UK's best hi-fi mag. But SACD has not been the commercial success its backers hoped for. Its impact on the UK mass-market has been non-existent, and while many audiophiles (including us) remain excited by the sound quality it can deliver, it's never likely to become anything more than a niche collector's format. Regardless, we'd still advocate buying the McIntosh MVP861 over a music server any day – its sound quality will win the day, whether you're playing SACD, DVD or good ol' CD.

HI-FI CHOICE
SUBS HOTLINE
0870 444 8650

when you subscribe to HI-FI CHOICE

HI-FI CHOICE

SEARCH [] Whole Site [] GO

HOME | 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...

• The world's most rigorous group test of pro-power amps, £600 to £2,000 – an in-depth comparison from Analogue Electronics, Ico, Primark, Quid and Radian
• Digital versus analogue: Flipping players from waacs (CD) and Chromasite (vinyl) demonstrate the state of the stereo art

SUBSCRIPTION OFFER
August 2004 Issue 236
In this issue Subscribe Now

SUBSCRIPTION OFFERS
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'm after some cable tubing. I've found that awful looking PC spiral tubing which really doesn't cut it in the looks department – does anyone know where I can get some nice tubing? Also I would like some black granite slabs to place my floorstanders on...

OldSkool

...Sure. For cable tubing, try the aquarium section of a pet shop, or an aquarium specialist. For the granite slabs, I'd suggest worktops/boards from Argos.

Dhammavijaya

I have a Linn system – Chakra 5100 and Linn Unidisc SC. I need a thin, flat cable to go under the carpet, any ideas..?

Kinjamin

...I have an all-Linn setup, and use QED Profile Silver 12 for its extreme skinniness (1.6mm), which allows me to fit two strips, side-by-side, under skinny Swiss skirting boards.

Still Tones

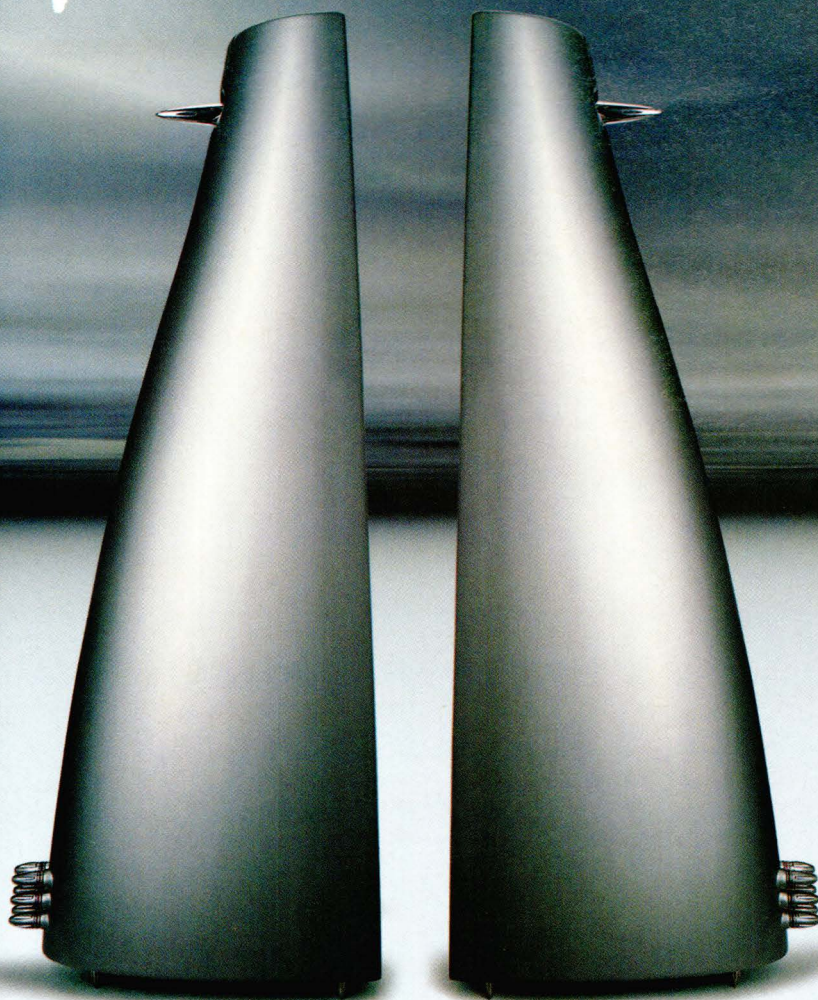
Does anybody have any experience with the Torlyte equipment platforms sold by Russ Andrews? I need a platform under my CD player and I'm thinking about this one, but don't have any idea whether it is worth the money..?

Dejan

...Personally, I would buy a granite chopping board from Argos for about £12 and spend the rest on music.

Miller-8

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.



"Tuneful, agile sound sets new standards in transparency... a truly ground-breaking speaker."

Hi-Fi Choice, December 2005



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

Hi-Fi World, April 2005



"The Performance 6s are sensational speakers."

What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision, December 2005



MORDAUNT-SHORT

www.mordaunt-short.com



MUSICAL FIDELITY kW SACD PLAYER | MUSICAL FIDELITY kW 500 INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER
ACOUSTIC ENERGY AE1 MK III LOUDSPEAKERS | £9,988

Off the scale

Small is all the more beautiful when teamed with the truly titanic. We could hardly believe our ears...

The cardboard box was on the large side. I knocked up my next door neighbour and asked him to guess what was inside. His answers ranged from a flat-pack sit-on lawn mower to the bendy Chinese circus gymnast George Clooney smuggled into the vault at Bellagio in *Oceans Eleven*. Then he suggested the entire contents of the vault at Bellagio, including Brad Pitt and Matt Damon dressed up as security guards. Or, maybe even half a Bling of Las Vegas showgirls.

You see, I could get my head around the identically-sized cardboard box sitting next to it and why it needed to be so big. It contained one of the most powerful integrated hi-fi amplifiers ever made and, well, if I attempted to pick it up by myself, it might just put my back right out. Was I feeling lucky? Well, was I? Uh, no.

But what about that other box? I was just about to reveal the shocking truth to my neighbour when it hit me. A humble SACD player? There was nothing 'humble' about it. Musical Fidelity – scourge of the American high-end, smug division – doesn't do humble. Antony Michaelson, MF's boss, doesn't do humble. Even his humbler products don't do humble. And with this giant integrated amp and vast SACD spinner we were a long, long way from Musical Fidelity's humbler products.

This is, quite simply, a sod the new kitchen, hang the holiday, you only live once £10k deal: the best music system you will ever own, the only one you will ever need.

SWEET ALLIANCE

And, if we say so ourselves, a sweet aesthetic alliance. We thought long and hard, but we simply couldn't come up with a pair of speakers that looked better with Musical Fidelity's silver 'n'

black flagship 'kW' electronics than Acoustic Energy's third generation silver 'n' black AE1s. Or, come to that, a pairing that made a more intriguing sonic collaboration, given the disparity in size in the context of their respective peer groups. Little 'n' Large? Yeah, and this time they'll make you smile.

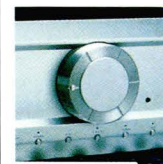
Partly, the decision to go with the AE1 MkIIIs was influenced by the successful partnership between the smallish, nominally bass-shy Focal-JMLab Utopia Micro Be and the massively powerful Innersound power amplifier, as forged in HFC 273's *Beautiful Systems*. The sheer muscle and control of the amplification made a bigger impact on the hitherto presumed innate lower octave and dynamic reticence than a Paul McKenna one-to-one with a smoker desperate to kick a 60-a-day habit.

Well, here we're pushing the boundaries of the idea further still: speakers that are half the size (and price) of the Utopias and an amplifier that may well be even more powerful than the incredible Innersound (and less than half the price). Michaelson assures us that the half-kilowatt output suggested by his monster integrated's 'kW' monicker is conservative and that slightly more than 600 watts a side is what the lab stats actually reveal. Why the gargantuan grunt? Well, partly it's to put the Stateside take on 'big' in perspective – you don't have to sell members of your family to afford an amplifier that can drive diabolical loads (such as the much-feared late 1980s speaker of doom, the Apogee Scintilla), with unburstable verve and confidence. But, more pragmatically, it addresses what the MF supremo sees as the malaise of much modern hi-fi: a fundamental mismatch between what is deemed to be 'acceptable' speaker sensitivity and



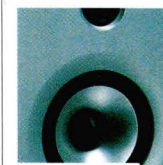
Musical Fidelity kW SACD player
£3,999

We're tempted to give it the award for the slowest disc reading since the dawn of CD, but it's this player's sonic brilliance that shines through. Sublime with SACD.



Musical Fidelity kW 500 integrated amplifier
£3,999

Integrated amp, with a separate power supply that weighs more than many power amps. Then again, over 500 watts per channel is no ordinary output. So effortless we need a new word.



Acoustic Energy AE1 MkIII speaker
£1,990 per pair

We thought the AE1 was special before, but now we know differently. Entrusted to the tender charms of the colossal kW 500, it redefines what compact speakers can do. Just extraordinary.

“A humble SACD player? There was nothing ‘humble’ about it. Musical Fidelity – scourge of the American high-end – doesn’t do humble.”



ample' amplifier power. The two simply don't add up. Michaelson points out that even with speakers that boast 90dB sensitivity, you need at least 500 watts to even get close to reproducing the loudness and dynamics of live music realistically. And that's assuming they can handle the power, which many can't.

ESTATE OF THE ART

So let's officially roll the credits. Taking up an unfeasible amount of top-shelf real estate is the kW SACD player. It's as huge as the integrated amp, stereo only and upsamples the digital signal stream from its two Burr-Brown 1792 converter chips. These are configured in dual-differential mode, to 24-bit/192kHz, so that the DAC runs fast enough to allow mild subsequent filtering. In fact, the kW SACD has four stereo DACs in total – two for SACD replay and two for CD with separate attendant circuitry.

After all, it's not exactly cramped inside the casing. Indeed, there's enough room in the case for the SACD and CD circuits to have their own choke-regulated power supply. So, in the true spirit of high-end overkill, they do. And here's real luxury: two Class A, low-impedance, low-noise analogue stages to choose from, too. One is solid-state, using paralleled op-amps, the other employs a military spec mu-vista 6112 valve. If each is meant to argue the

case for its respective camp, tube fans should be delighted. The solid state output, while fine, doesn't come close to matching the transparency and lucidity of the valve alternative.

Amplification actually occupies the next two, preferably reinforced, shelves. The kW 500 might be big and heavy but it isn't nearly as big and heavy as it would have been, had the power supply not been split off and housed in a smaller – but still wincingly weighty – box, connected to the mothership by three cables. Together, they weigh a barely believable 45 kilogrammes. Five line inputs are provided (complete with tape monitoring) plus one for the moving magnet phono stage. Again, 6112 mu-vista tubes make an appearance, this time in the gain stage, and there are eight output devices per channel. For the muscle-flexing record, Musical Fidelity 'conservatively' claims 770 watts into four ohms and peak current delivery of 160 amps. Frankenstein should have been so lucky.

SMALL SPEAKER, BIG EVOLUTION

Last, but by no means least, are the AE1 MkIIIs, the latest evolution of probably the second most famous small speaker in the world. Considerably younger and more energetic than the granddaddy of classy compact monitors – the BBC-inspired LS3/5a – the AE1 in

its original form took the pro and audiophile worlds by storm, mostly because it excelled where the seductively mid-neutral LS3/5a was most obviously compromised – namely bass, speed, loudness and dynamics. With its spun, anodized alloy bass/mid cone and alloy dome tweeter, it was designed for hard driving. In short, what the LS3/5a was to classical music, the AE1 was to rock. That it was also exquisitely articulate, beautifully voiced and could image in 3D only added to the legend.

Unlike the underachieving MkII, the MkIII is very much the spiritual successor of the original AE1. It's slightly larger and the two front-firing reflex ports have been replaced by a single vent on the back panel. And where the original was impressively solid, the III is positively rock-like with steel cladding on the internals walls, steel cross bracing and an aluminum billet covering the baffle. The rap of knuckle on cabinet is met with the dullest of thuds, an outcome not entirely unrelated to the fairly outrageous 11kg weight.

There's an all-new 120mm anodized alloy bass/mid driver with a 'curvilinear' variable thickness cone from DST. This is also the source for the new fabric ring tweeter. The crossover is a third-order, 14-element design, while amplifier input is provided by a single pair of WBT terminals. Bi-wiring is





“When it comes to reproducing music, two channels are, and always will be, best. Stereo is awesome and you’re looking at the reason: a big, bold, brutal, beautiful (and *bijou*) celebration of the high end.”

patently out of fashion among high-end speakers these days – interesting, because the original AE-1 was one of the very first speakers to make a big issue of bi-wiring.

IMMACULATE FRESHNESS

Imagine a sound so immaculate, so fresh, so finely resolved that it’s as if you’re hearing it for the first time, despite familiarity with the music. Imagine winding up the volume and preparing for the inevitable and unmistakable moment when what you’re hearing hardens and is no longer comfortable to listen to. It never comes. Your thirst for loudness is completely sated before any sign of strain sets in. Imagine the look on people’s faces when they realise that so much scale, air, perspective and palpable, room-filling presence is being generated by two tiny, shiny black boxes.

All right, the little AEs – power hungry at 87dB – give up before the kW 500 has even thought about breaking into a jog, despite a healthy capacity to soak up watts for its relatively diminutive

stature. But then true-to-life sound pressure levels and dynamics were never, and could never be, part of the AE1 MkIIIs’ job description. That they punch so far above their weight in these areas with merely powerful amplification (say 100-200 watts) is amazing enough. With more than double that on tap, they defy all reason. And, as we discovered with the Innersound/Utopia combo, it isn’t an SPL thing... it’s a grip, control and composure thing. Without resorting to artificial midrange emphasis and treble lift to enhance presence and sparkle, here’s a presentation that’s beguilingly natural and coherent with a solid, rhythmic bass, spacious soundstage and stunning image solidity and depth.

The bottom line is that this MF/AE combo has compelling clarity, grip, dynamics and enormous musical insight. It brings life, structure, texture, colour and, above all, emotional depth to CDs like little else we’ve heard. And with the right SACD (James Taylor’s *Hourglass*, for instance) it’s simply sublime. It doesn’t matter whether the music is soulful and

seductive or raw and raucous, this system blitzes just about every high-end benchmark there is, save for really deep, gut-churning bass.

This is statement hi-fi in the truest sense. The statement is this: do not apologise for hi-fi... it’s fabulous. It may not be a 52-inch high-definition plasma telly. It may not fill your room with earthquake-emulating special effects. It may have only two channels. But, when it comes to reproducing music, two channels are, and always will be, best. Stereo is awesome and you’re looking at the reason: a big, bold, brutal, beautiful (and *bijou*) celebration of the high-end. It’s also one of the most potent arguments yet that, pound-for-pound, Britain makes some of the very best hi-fi on the planet. If you have a standard sized equipment rack, it will flinch when it sees the kW equipment coming. So, get a bigger rack. Put it where everyone can see it. Shine a spotlight on it. Invite the whole street round for the inaugural switch on. They will thank you, they will envy you, it will change their lives. **HFC**

David Vivian



"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

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



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

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

absolute sounds specialist



Pro Logue PL1* (integrated)



Pro Logue PL2* (integrated)



Pro Logue PL3* (pre-amp)



Pro Logue PL4 (power amp)



Pro Logue PL5 (power amp)

*internal MM phono preamp can be fitted

PrimaLuna

For expert advice on the complete range of affordable PrimaLuna Pro Logue Integrated, Pre and Power Amplifiers call Guildford Audio today. We have the complete range in stock!

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| audio analogue | opera |
| audio research | pathos |
| copland | primaluna |
| dream vision | qed |
| ecs | sonus faber |
| epos | stands unique |
| grado | sunfire |
| harmonic | t+a |
| hyperion | theta |
| jadis | townshend |
| koetsu | transparent |
| krell | unison research |
| magnum dynalab | wadia |
| martin logan | waterfall |
| goldring | wilson audio |
| myryad | & many more.. |

Guildford Audio

demonstrations by appointment
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

01483 537 577

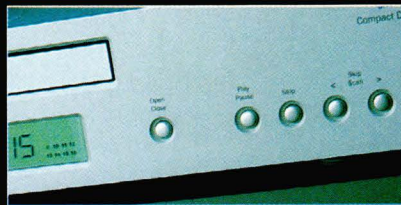
REVIEWS



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** Denon DCD-2000AE SACD player and PMA-2000AE integrated amplifier
- 44** Bryston B100 SST DAC integrated amplifier/DAC
- 48** Arcam AVP700 processor and P1000 power amplifier
- 52** WEGG3 Stelar 1 loudspeaker
- 54** Gamut DI 150 integrated amplifier
- 58** Nbien NX-6 loudspeaker
- 61** Cambridge Audio Azur 540C v2 CD player
- 62** Audio Analogue Enigma CD player/receiver
- 65** Onkyo DV-SP503E universal disc player
- 67** Tivoli Audio Model DAB digital radio



ULTIMATE GROUP TEST

LOUDSPEAKERS £700-£1,200

- 71** ALR Jordan Classic 5
- 73** Chario Cygnus
- 75** Dali Ikon 7
- 77** Epos M22
- 79** JBL Studio L880
- 81** PMC TB2+



OUR RATINGS EXPLAINED

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

Our overall conclusion

Through the Siemens-equipped player has an snappier sound with better timing that is with dense material with remarkable confidence and ease. It even seems to be

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

VERDICT

SOUND >> 83%

FEATURES >> 85%

BUILD >> 85%

VALUE >> 85%

PRO
Well built and fully featured, with a snappy, open and dynamic sound.

CON
Externally it's a £300 Marantz – no bad thing in itself, but it's better than it looks!

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...

It's all in the detail

Denon's new hi-res, hi-tech stereo duo amazes us with its astonishingly detailed sound

PRODUCT Denon DCD-2000AE and PMA-2000AE

TYPE Stereo CD/SACD player and integrated stereo amp

PRICE £1,200 each

KEY FEATURES (DCD-2000AE) Size (WxHxD): 43.4x13.7x33.5cm • Weight: 13.3kg • CD/SACD stereo-only disc player • Compatible with CD-R/RW • (PMA-2000AE) Size (WxHxD): 43.4x18.1x48cm • Weight: 24kg • Six line-level inputs plus phono

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

Since Denon and Marantz got together as the two main pillars of D&M Holdings, there has been a lot of investment in what is officially one of the UK's 'coolest brands' (according to the Superbrands Cool Council – we kid you not). This has been focused in two main areas, first of which was

the range of multichannel amps/receivers and DVD players, including a number of market-leading universal machines. More interesting still, this was followed by a return to purist stereo roots, at a time when many of their opposite numbers have been becoming less and less reliant on what is often perceived to be a shrinking market segment.

Earlier this year, the fruits of Denon's purist labours were rather spectacularly realised in the DCD-SA1 and PMA-SA1 – a high-grade, stereo-only SACD player and matching 50-watt integrated amp, both superbly built and well specified. These two components sell for around £10,500 together, but are worth every penny, setting new standards for products of their type.

Using much of the technology developed for the two range-topping components, Denon has

now decided to go more 'real world'. There are now two new components that mirror the capabilities of the DCD-SA1 and PMA-SA1, but for less than a quarter of the price. The similarities are apparent from the outset, as they share something of the same design focus and simplicity. But, of course, the budget simply isn't there to offer the same level of build quality, and the specifications are necessarily downgraded. For example, the balanced internal architecture and interfaces have gone by the wayside, and there are many other differences too. But these are still impressively specified products when measured against their prices... and their rivals.

The DCD-2000AE disc player looks very straightforward with a minimum of controls that, in common with the amplifier, is



augmented by a new remote control with an excellent operational feel, and a limited number of well-separated and signposted control buttons. The SVH SACD-compatible mechanism is made by Denon itself, and is closely related to the mechanism used in the DCD-SA1, with a lot of attention paid to the mechanical design and to the suppression of vibration. The low jitter master clock is also carried across from the senior model.

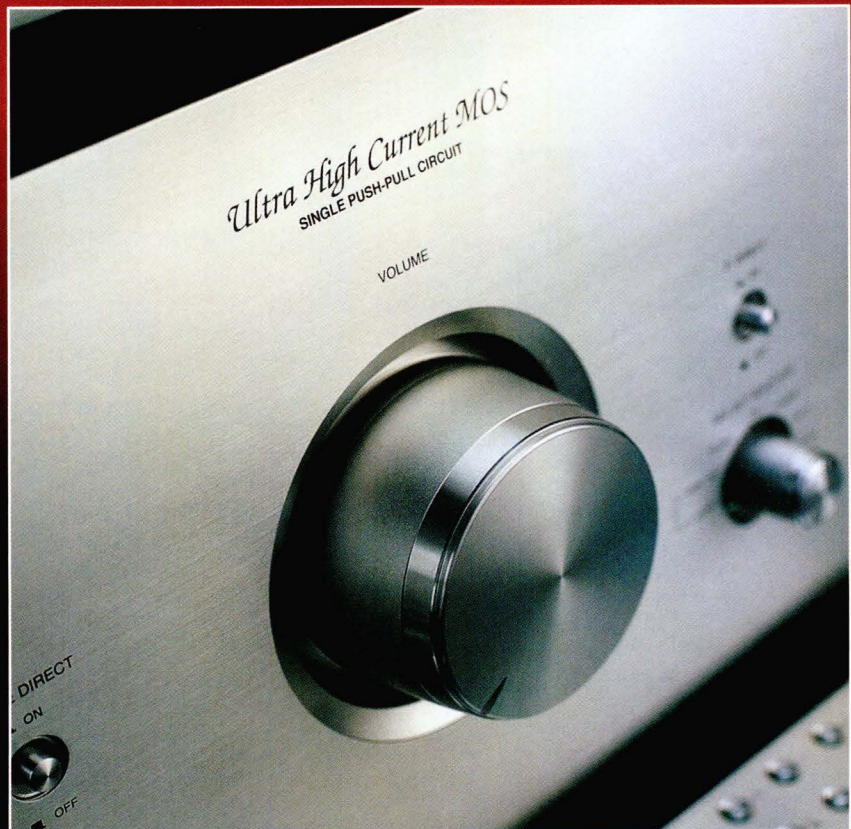
The relatively simple D-to-A converter stage uses Burr Brown DSD-1790 DACs for CD and SACD processing in a dual differential configuration, with an analogue FIR filter in the output stage. The proprietary Denon AL24 curve is used; a version of this circuit has long been Denon's preferred means of eliminating zero cross (quantisation) distortion in the least significant bit.

Its matching PMA-2000AE amp is nominally more powerful than the flagship. It delivers 80 watts per channel into eight ohms, which is backed by enough current to double its output to 160 watts into four ohms, though composite loads below four ohms are not recommended. Note that although two pairs of speaker outputs are available for each channel, they are always connected and there is no loudspeaker switching. Again in common with the flagship models, the amplifier's output stage is powered by Ultra High Current (UHC) MOS output devices, chosen primarily for their high current yield and the simple circuit topology that they facilitate. The power amplifier is designed and built internally as twin monoblocks, each with its own power supply, and power level stages are mounted in their own screened chambers.

Common to both new components are several features, including a low microphony aluminium construction, with a triple-layer top plate and twin-layer bases, sides and backplates. In the player, the mechanism has been mounted in a way calculated to reduce internal vibration transmission. The player design also aims to minimise interactions between digital and analogue circuits, with independent power transformers for analogue and digital duties. Similarly, the amplifier's two independent parallel-connected mains transformers are mounted in a flux-leakage cancelling arrangement. This reduces noise, which is also addressed in both cases using carefully designed anti-vibration mounts for the transformers. The power supply sections also use high-current, low-noise, high-speed Schottky barrier diodes in the bridge rectifier section, again with the overriding aim of reducing noise. Both products incorporate various high-quality specialist components, including film and electrolytic capacitors, resistors, inductors and OFC internal wiring in crucial circuit areas. In each case, displays can be turned off. In addition, the digital outputs can be switched off in the player, and the preamplifier outputs can be disconnected in



“The power amplifier is designed and built internally as twin monoblocks, each with its own power supply.”



Q & A

We spoke to Roger Batchelor, Denon UK's marketing and training officer, about the development of the new 2000-series stereo hi-fi components



HFC How do the 2000-series products relate to the flagship 'SA1' components?

RB The 2000 series, which like the flagship models is the work of a dedicated stereo design team, was developed from the SA1 products. SA1 epitomised our no-compromise approach, except of course that the amplifier is integrated, and so is the player, rather than being a mechanism and separate D/A converter – and the same applies with the 2000s.

Why choose integrated models over, say, preamp and power amp systems?

Because it's a more realistic option. Of course, there are some compromises, but there are also benefits, too. Separate transports and D/A converters introduce clock synchronisation issues, and similarly with amplifiers, a single unit mitigates problems associated with interfacing two units. In addition, single units are more accessible and easier to house.

Having established the SA series, the next logical development was a product range which would be more practical and flexible, and which would offer better value for money.

What do you mean by more practical and flexible?

There is no cluttering the products with features that are not necessary, but we were able to relax the requirements a little with the 2000s. For example, both units are remote controlled – the SA amplifier has no remote control – and input flexibility has been increased: an MC phono input had been added, and the PMA-2000AE also offers a preamp output and power amp input.

A key difference between the two is that whereas the SA series uses a balanced internal topology, the 2000 series is entirely single ended, which results in a considerable cost saving.

What features of the 2000-series relate directly to the flagship models?

A number of key design ideas built into the SA series have been carried across. For example, they both place great emphasis on mechanical construction, and the reduction of vibration using a multi-layer case construction.

Both electrical and mechanical isolation are priorities, with careful layout of the power supplies, dual and triple (amplifier) transformers, and even the mechanical isolation of the transformer mounts.



the amplifier. Pure Direct mode turns off the display and the digital outputs, for optimum audio performance.

For most of the test period, the two Denon components were used together, although third-party players and amplifiers were also used to confirm how they performed in synergy and as standalone products. This is an important test, even though it's more likely than not that the two will be used as a complete one-brand package.

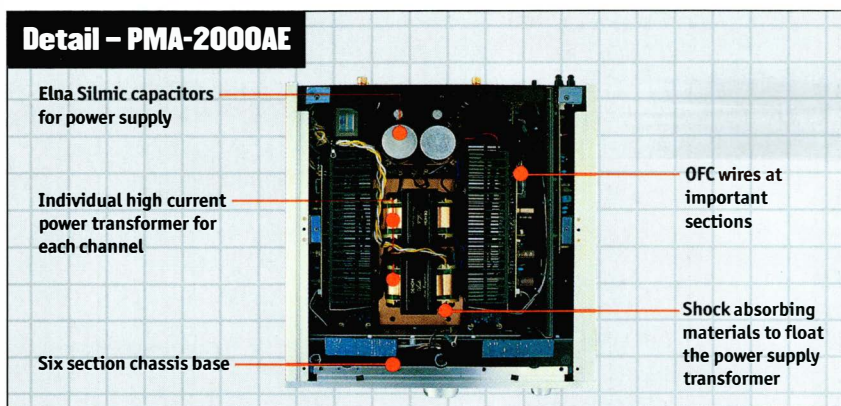
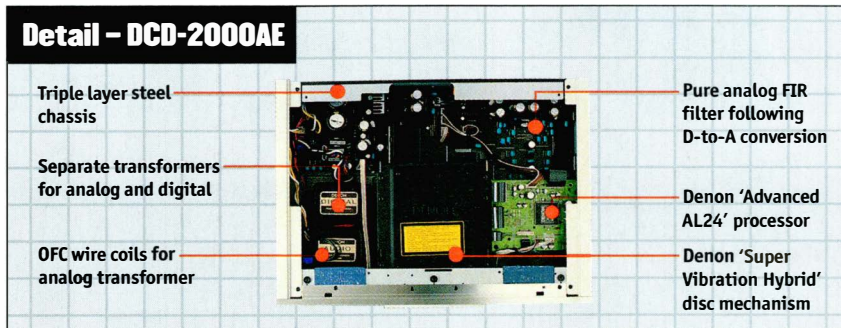
SOUND QUALITY

There is a hint of character from both components, more so than is apparent from the DCD-SA1 and PMA-SA1, but it is broadly the same character in both cases. Indeed, the

DCD-2000AE and PMA-2000AE work very well together, with a real synergy when driving a wide range of speakers. During our test period, these included the Audio Acoustics Foundation, a costly floorstander built around Focal drive units, and the Dali Euphonia MS5, a very different kind of floorstander. On balance, the match to the Dali, a crisp and detailed-sounding speaker, was more successful than to the Audio Acoustics, but this was no surprise. The Foundation turns out to be a fine, musical loudspeaker, but a demanding one, and no comparably priced amplifier available during the test period did as well as the Denon.

It may be fanciful to suggest that these new products sound like their more expensive siblings, but there is a certain similarity. They





err (if that's the word) on the side of being 'maximum information' designs. The amplifier, in particular, is strikingly direct in its appeal. It is more than capable of reproducing a wealth of fine detail, to an extent we found surprising and gratifying when playing known recordings. This was noticed mainly with very subtle recordings – those with low-level recorded ambience, for example, which the Denon amplifier helps bring to life. The exquisite unaccompanied vocal *Da Pacem Domine* from Arvo Pärt on ECM is a perfect example (see this month's free *50 Best Hi-Fi Test Discs of All Time* supplement for details).

Conversely, we found that Denon's approach also paid dividends with very complex recordings, such as large scale orchestral music.

“It may be fanciful to suggest that these new products sound like their more expensive siblings, but there is a similarity.”

Here, the effect was to allow access to the inner parts of the mix that might otherwise sound smeared into ill-differentiated sound. We were especially impressed by the new Simon Rattle Debussy *La Mer* on EMI, and also by the Scherzo from Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with Valery Gergiev conducting the World Orchestra for Peace (reviewed last issue in *Choice Cuts*). It was not just the level of detail, and the transparency of the sound that makes the greatest impact with these latter two pieces; it was the precision and discipline of the sound, that helps heighten the thrill, and make it possible to believe that the composer's and the performer's intentions

can be read in the texture of the sound.

The disc player has a similar appeal. Again, it is very open and explicit sounding, but with CD the effect was initially rather raw, with a hint of a metallic quality. This began to fade after the player had been used for a week or so. Switching to SACD, however, has the desired effect. The sound becomes more detailed, but also sweeter and more organic. This is not necessarily a given with all SACD players that sometimes sound 'more' in various respects, but not necessarily 'better'. This is a player that really does show that SACD is a higher quality medium, or at least it is when it is done right... and the amplifier is complicit in this. With both player and amplifier together, the sound was notable for its speed and good

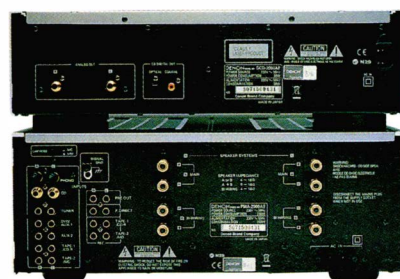
timing, and for the way it clearly highlights pitch information, but above all for the homogeneity of the bass with the midband.

These components are all about analysis, clarity and transparency, which makes them more than usually dependent on the rest of the system. Are they also powerful and muscular? Yes, but that is not the first message that you will take home. Rather, it is the astonishing clarity; you might find that stereo mixes can sound completely unfamiliar when listening off axis, as sounds from the two channels mesh in new and unfamiliar ways.

This is always the case with good stereo, making this an intelligently-conceived pairing

that makes real sense in a high-resolution stereo system. You need to be canny when selecting cables and speakers, as they should have similar qualities to the player and amp. Regardless, this duo proudly proclaims SACD as the digital standard for audiophiles. **HFC**

Alvin Gold



VERDICT – DCD-2000AE

SOUND >> 90%
 >> SUB RATINGS
 CD 87% SACD 93%

FEATURES >> 88%

BUILD >> 90%

VALUE >> 90%

CONCLUSION
 High class player can be OTT in unfavourable circumstances, especially on CD. But detail retrieval is first rate, and with the right partners it can sound stunning.

HI-FI CHOICE >> 90%

VERDICT – PMA-2000AE

SOUND >> 90%

FEATURES >> 88%

BUILD >> 88%

VALUE >> 90%

CONCLUSION
 High-resolution amp needs handholding – a thorough warmup and neutral, detailed speakers – but it replays the investment in spades.

HI-FI CHOICE >> 90%

DAC's a great amp!

Is it a DAC that amplifies, or an amplifier that converts digital? Bryston's flexible friend does it all

PRODUCT Bryston B100 SST DAC

TYPE Integrated stereo amplifier (plus on-board DAC)

PRICE £3,850

KEY FEATURES Size (WxHxD): 43x12.1x40.6cm
Weight: 13.6kg • Six line-level inputs • Rated power: 100W per channel (eight ohms) • Built-in D-to-A converter (optional) • DAC has four digital inputs (two electrical, two optical)

CONTACT ☎ 0870 4441044 🌐 www.bryston.ca

As Canada's most down to earth consumer electronics brand, Bryston likes to take things at a measured pace. The company builds solid – if not exactly sexy – amplifiers for the domestic and professional markets. Recently, though, things have improved a little on the aesthetic front with its C Series, and you can now see radiused edges where once there were sharp angles, so progress is being made.

The company has applied this new sense of style to what is only its second integrated stereo amplifier in 32 years. The other model, the B-60 integrated, was reviewed in *Hi-Fi Choice* many moons back... it held its own, but

didn't quite make the top rank against truly fierce competition from local brands.

The substantially more expensive B100 SST is in another price league to most integrated amplifiers and has the unusual option of an on-board DAC with four digital inputs. This carries an additional £1,000 charge, but does offer the potential to upgrade both your amplifier and your digital sources simultaneously. This is rare stuff indeed: German high-ender Brinkmann offers a similar (and similarly priced) integrated amp and DAC combination and Cyrus has its DAC XP that has on-board conversion, but this is only a preamp; adding Cyrus' best power amp package would bring the price into the same arena as the Bryston, albeit in up to six boxes.

The B100's back panel suggests a comprehensive approach to dual mono construction. The inputs are not paired left and right, but arrayed either side of an imaginary centre line; all the left-channel sockets are on the left as you look over from the front of the amp, while the right-channel sockets reside on the other side. One pair has the option of being an MM phono input (if you splash out a

further £450), while another pair becomes two S/PDIF coaxial digital inputs in the DAC model. So, what starts out as a six-input line integrated can end up with only four line inputs, but extra functionality. The DAC version, reviewed here, also has a pair of Toslink optical inputs in the central zone of the back panel.

Other socketry includes switched pre-out and main-in phonos. This means the B100 could act as just a preamp or a power amp if required, although a more likely use would be to bi-amp with a second power amp. There is also a pair of 12volt output triggers (one programmable) and an RS232 connector for external control and software upgrades. On the front you'll find a headphone jack, which you don't see on much high-end gear these days.

The remote is also an optional extra, and a costly one at £450. This is from the 'hewn from solid...' school and offers all the usual functions, plus the ability to be programmed to disable its motion-sensing illumination ability or set the pass-through mode to allow the TV input to operate in unity gain. This latter option means the B100 can act as a power amp for front left/right channels in a home cinema system.



EDITOR'S CHOICE
HI-FI CHOICE
magazine
★

As you'd expect from Bryston, all these facilities are backed up by some serious engineering under the lid. There are three ultra-low-noise mains transformers, one for each analogue channel and another for the digital section, with fully discrete components effectively acting as Class A op-amps (instead of conventional ICs) and separate ground planes for analogue and digital sections.

Like the company's power amps, this is an SST design, which uses "incredibly linear" Motorola transistors that are claimed not to require compensation for the perennial problem of distortion rising with frequency. The device is also said to be extremely rugged and capable of surviving short circuits. This must be useful for Bryston, as it offers a 20 year warranty on everything but the digital circuitry, and even that is covered for five years.

SOUND QUALITY

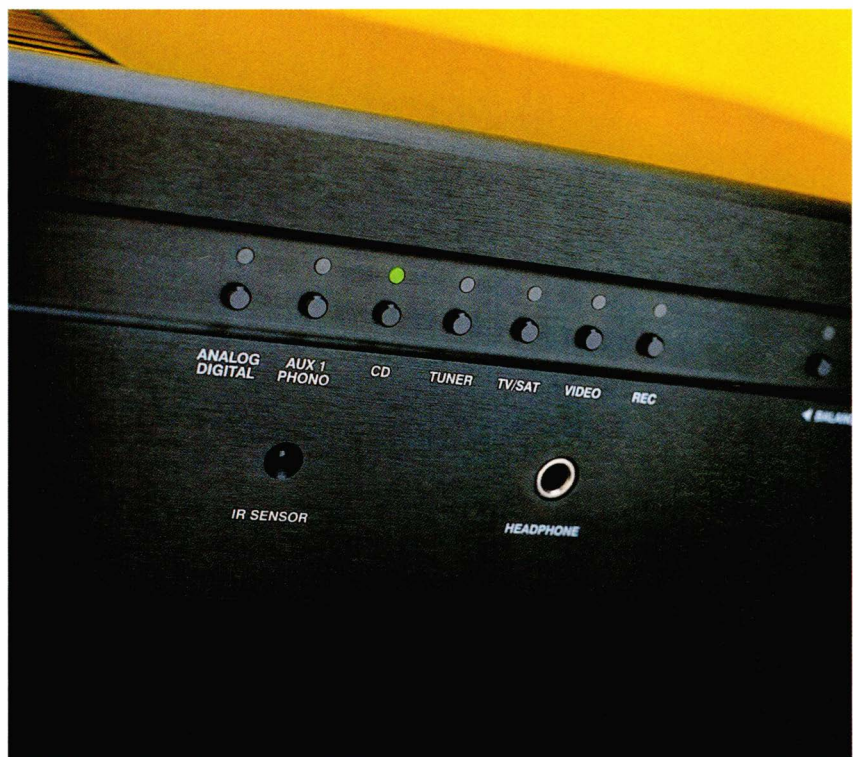
The B100 is a fine and open-sounding transistor amplifier with plenty of power: we tried it with a number speakers, including Revel M22s, Living Voice OBX-Rs and B&W 802Ds and it had no trouble driving any of them. The word 'transistor' is included because it's not the sort of amplifier that you'd be likely to mistake for a valve design, whatever speaker you put it with. Compared to the best that valves can offer, it's not especially open, dynamic or sweet at high frequencies, but it delivers plenty of humanity and warmth when the music demands it. In fact, it delivers a lot of what the music demands, even considering its price and breadth of capability.

As a digital amplifier, it clearly improves the performance of CD players such as Primare's CD21, delivering a considerable increase in transparency, greater depth of tone and a stronger sound than the line output of the player itself. Likewise, with Sony's SCD-XA555ES SACD player, which has a rather etched top-end on its own, it gains warmth and body via the S/PDIF input on the Bryston, albeit without being able to play SACDs this way.

You need a truly excellent CD player for the B100 not to offer an increase in quality, the Townshend TA 565 CD being one such example. It delivers a more natural and relaxed presentation on its own, but admittedly costs nearly as much as the Bryston in its own right.

At the other end of the scale, we tried some web radio streams straight out of iTunes on an Apple Mac G5 via a Toslink lead. Though obviously limited in fidelity terms, these managed to sound entirely listenable and occasionally engaging through the Bryston.

Next to another substantial integrated, the ATC SIA2-150 (£2,000), the B100 delivers a less weighty but more organic and relaxed sound. Here, the 'weight' factor is probably due to the lower power, but also possibly due to a smoother overall sound. This tends not to delineate bass, but is more natural and true. The significantly dearer, analogue-only Gamut



“It clearly improves the performance of many CD players, delivering an increase in transparency and greater depth of tone.”

DI 150 has the upper hand in all important respects, but the only area where the Bryston could be really significantly criticised by comparison is at high frequencies, where there is a slight sense of fine grain. This is not

obvious, however, and only exposed by highly transparent speakers and for that matter cables, but some might find it an issue.

Using the preamp section, with a Gamut D200 power amp, proved that this part

Q & A

We asked Chris Russell, CEO of Bryston, a few questions about the new B100 SST DAC integrated amplifier, including how it differs from other amplifiers in the Bryston stable



HFC: Why has Bryston decided to make the B100 SST DAC?

CR: First, there are a number of competing formats out there, which are presently confusing the market as to which to select for the system's high-end player. Bryston's DAC option allows the listener to turn any standard CD player with digital output into a high-end product, in terms of digital converter technology. Second, we found that in comparison to higher-level CD players, listeners were telling us that Bryston's DAC option sounded wonderful. Even in comparison to many expensive stand-alone DAC units, it wins listening tests. Third, this relatively affordable and compact module is upgradeable with future technology, to allow the user to go with whatever format leads the way.

What type of digital converters does the B100 SST DAC use and how has the digital section been implemented?

The incoming signal is reclocked to 24-bit/96kHz using an asynchronous clock, to eliminate source and interconnect jitter. A Crystal CS-43122 DAC then converts this signal to a balanced stereo audio signal, which is buffered by fully discrete Class A amplifier stages.

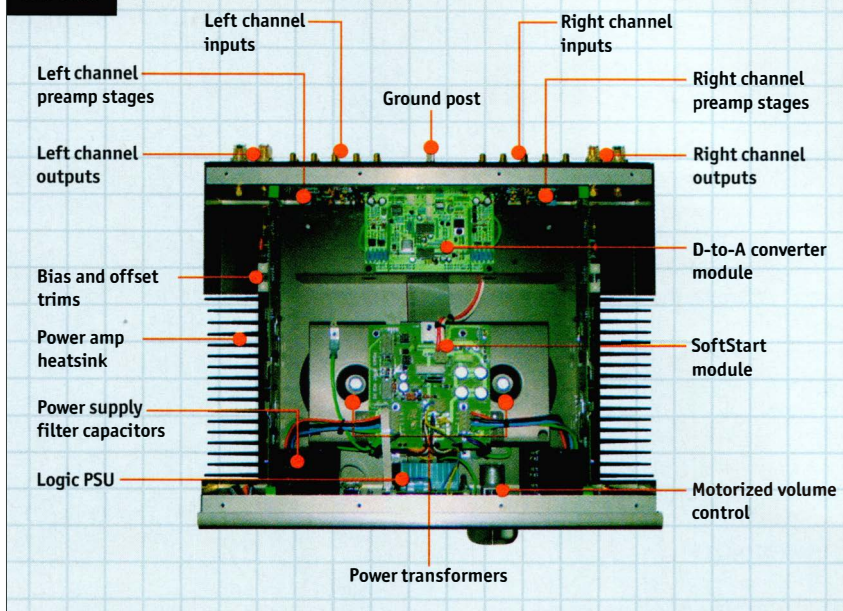
Does the amplifier design differ from your existing models? If so, how, and is this a dual mono design?

The amplifier design in the B100 is the same as used in all Bryston power amplifiers. The output stage is not as large or as complex as those used in the far more powerful 4B SST or 7B/14B SST, but is similar in topology as all are true dual-mono designs, with separate power supplies for each channel (including the preamplifier section).

Why is the remote handset so expensive?

The remote handset is a proprietary module, made to last 20 years, with aerospace-quality parts and an enclosure milled from a solid block of aluminium. We feel this befits a high-quality product like the B100. Of course, not everyone need buy the remote. The codes we use are freely downloadable from Bryston's website, for those who wish to use a programmable handset, or intend to control the B100 with a complex third-party control system, like those developed by Crestron or AMX.

Detail



of the B100 is no slouch, the resulting sound delivering life, space and a great sense that the music is breathing in the room. In other words, it's not constricted. Comparing this preamp stage with an older Bryston BP25 standalone preamp revealed that the B100 had a slightly warmer and more wholesome sound. Given that the BP25 is one of our regular 'reference' amps, that says a lot!

As a one-box amplification solution, this Bryston has an awful lot to offer the music lover. It delivers plenty of power and will happily drive all but the most absurd of speaker loads. Better still, it resolves timing, detail, tone colour and energy with all the finesse that you'd expect of a pre./power combo at the same price (but without a DAC).

Plus of course, you can upgrade your digital sources at the same time, which has got to be a pretty good thing in itself. It's not the smoothest or sweetest amp at the price; instead, it has a distinctly 'studio'-style balance that tells it like it is. It's not quite a 'warts 'n' all' presentation, but the sound is extremely honest and accurate.

If you want a romantic sound, you'll have to buy a more cozy amplifier – or some Johnny Mathis records – but if you want to hear the nitty gritty of what's in those CD 'pits' and 'lands', or even that long, wiggly groove that spirals around your vinyl, then this Bryston will be very useful. For digital listeners in particular, the addition of a very fine DAC may make this the ideal 'two for one' upgrade to your system, and the perfect way to pep up an aging but otherwise excellent CD player. **HFC**

Jason Kennedy



VERDICT

SOUND >> 89%



FEATURES >> 90%



BUILD >> 92%



VALUE >> 87%



PRO
Solidly built and solid sounding but with no shortage of sensitivity to the finer things in music. Optional on-board DAC is excellent.

CON
Remote is on the dear side but very chunky. Those who are looking for a richly romantic musical presentation may not love the studio-like detail on offer here.

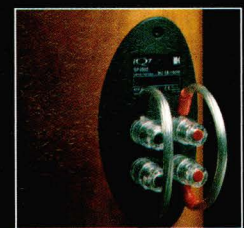
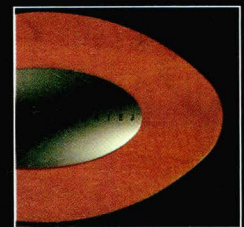
CONCLUSION

This is a very capable amplifier, enhanced by the inclusion of an on-board DAC that's good enough to clearly improve already great-sounding CD players. As a two-in-one amp/DAC upgrade for digital stereo sources, it's an unusual and excellent buy.

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



KEF®



“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 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.

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.

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'.



Game of two halves

Arcam has launched a new, more affordable processor and power amp. But are they a perfect match?

PRODUCT Arcam AVP700 and P1000

TYPE Multichannel preamp/processor and seven-channel power amplifier

PRICE (AVP700) £1,400; (P1000) £1,600

KEY FEATURES (AVP700) Size (WxHxD):

43x14.5x43.3cm • Weight 6.4kg • 7.1-channel

preamp/processor • One 7.1-channel input plus seven

two-channel inputs • Built-in FM/AM tuner with RDS

• (P1000) Size (WxHxD): 43x14.5x45.3cm • Weight:

19.3kg • 7.1-channel power amp • Rated power: 135W

per channel • Balanced or single-ended connection

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

Appearances often serve to deceive. These two components look like close relations of Arcam's flagship AV8 processor and P7 multichannel power amp, and the resemblance is clearly more than just a matter of house style. Without X-Ray vision to see what's going on inside, you might describe them as 'AV8 & P7 lite'. Combined, the AVP700 and P1000 cost nearly 50 per cent less than their bigger siblings, but they're still hardly cheap and they're intended to do a

similar kind of job. But, despite their job descriptions and appearance, they are not variations of the familiar flagship models. Instead, the two are completely new and largely unrelated designs.

The AVP700 processor traces its origins back to the AVR300 receiver, with the power amp section removed. Performance benefits are attributable to the fact that the power amplifier is completely separate, and to the use of a much smaller toroidal transformer with a reduced electromagnetic field for less interference with the rest of the circuit. Other internal improvements include a balanced-mode output stage and quieter op-amps, and there are some changes to the level of gain available to suit external power amplification.

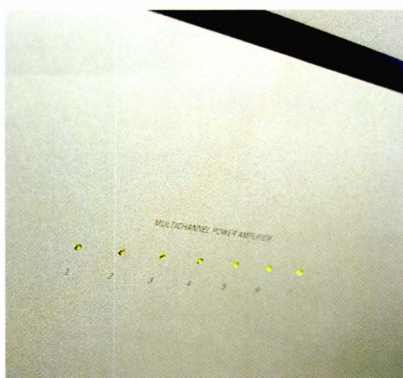
The P1000, on the other hand, is an entirely new multichannel power amplifier based around Class H power supply technology. Class H uses HT power rails that are set dynamically to one of three different voltage levels, according to the power required at the output. This topology allows it to generate very high

power levels with a high level of electrical efficiency. The outcome is that a seven-channel power amplifier, rated at an impressive 135 watts per channel, can be accommodated in a housing that's the same size as the processor. It also means the housing is not ridiculously heavy, compared to its rivals. A similar idea has been used by Carver and by Krell, and perhaps elsewhere too, so there is some track record.

Another difference between the P1000 and the P7 is that the new model lacks the digital housekeeping of the more costly power amp. You'll know this the moment you switch on by the hefty instantaneous draw that it places on the mains, though it stopped short of blowing mains fuses on test.

The fixtures and fittings are impressive in many ways. The processor and power amps can be linked by single-ended or balanced mode interconnects, but as the internal architecture is single-ended in both cases there is no obvious (or audible) advantage in the balanced provision. The only situation in which balanced mode operation might provide an advantage is





over very long cable runs where the much superior common mode rejection will reduce interference and hum pick-up.

More significant for some will be the on-board HDMI v1.1 switching. This can be used to channel the HDMI output of an Arcam DVD player through to the display device. The HDMI link also will transfer full-bandwidth DVD-Audio, and to be best of Arcam's belief, it should also transmit DSD data from an HDMI v1.2 equipped SACD player, but in the absence of a suitably equipped player, this remains conjecture. If you really need to know the answer, check with your dealer.

The processor features three HDTV compatible component video inputs as well as two switchable HDMI-HDCP encrypted input channels. Full support is available for multiroom installations with a bi-directional RS232 port (which also facilitates firmware upgrades), a second zone audio and video output and composite and S-Video upconversion to component or RGB (but not HDMI) to reduce the spaghetti around the back of the system. Componentry includes a Crystal CS9400 DSP for spatial processing, Wolfson 24-bit/192kHz DACs, ADCs and precision electronic volume controls, and a raft of high-grade passive components. Crossover switching can be set in 10Hz steps between 40Hz-130Hz, which is enough for any high-quality application, but a little too restricted at the top end for some of the very tiny sub/sat speaker packages, which to be fair are probably not in Arcam's sights.

In each case, construction is simpler than the AV8/P7. There is no air scoop on the power amplifier, for example, as the P1000 doesn't generate as much heat. But it still makes

“Instrumental and vocal material is nicely textured, and it has a precise, articulate feel with both stereo and multichannel music.”

extensive use of non-magnetic aluminium body panels, and both the new products are generally built to standards that are closer to component hi-fi practice than lesser home cinema-oriented fare.

SOUND QUALITY

The AVP700 feels like it is on familiar Arcam territory. It was quick to come on song, though the test units appear to have been previously used, so run-in from cold cannot be determined with accuracy. Set-up is easily arranged using the comprehensive multi-page on-screen menu system and the excellent CR80 handset, introduced with the AV8. Missing from the AVP700, however, is any form of microphone-driven audio set-up. This will certainly weigh heavily with some users, but as auto set-up (in the forms in which it currently exists) promises more than it generally delivers, a full-on manual setup is invariably required in the end. The Arcam provides equalisation settings for each channel, but only of a rudimentary kind. But, given the theoretical and practical pitfalls that manifest when equalising speakers in practice, this feature should usually be avoided.

Once past this hurdle, the AVP700 performs well. It is open, spacious and airy in feel, and very 'out of the box' sounding. Instrumental and vocal material is nicely textured, and it has

a precise, articulate feel with both stereo and multichannel music. Movie soundtracks are deftly handled and image steering (using the Dolby and DTS processors) is impressively slick, as you would expect from a modern implementation using sufficient high-speed digital clockwork – especially when it comes from a company with as much expertise in the area as Arcam. It cannot be ignored, however, that the 'stereo direct' mode offers greater transparency still, and is to be preferred for straight two-channel material.

We are less convinced about the transparency of the P1000 power amp, which in many ways seems like the weaker of the two components. Incidentally, this appears to take a lot longer to warm up. There is plenty of power on tap: open the throttles with high-octane multichannel material and you'll quickly discover that the P1000 is a bit of an animal, and it's hard to imagine what kind of system will not get sufficient sustenance from this beast. But there were still features of the sound that left us uncomfortable or at least unmoved. It goes loud, but it does so in a rather hard, even brash way, though we should stress that there was no obvious switching effect associated with the Class H power rail transitions. It stopped short of being obviously grainy, but as the volume level was increased the sound appeared to change and ▶

Q & A

We discussed the development of Arcam's latest processor and power amp combination with Geoff Meads, the company's brand manager



HFC How did the requirement for the AVP700 and P1000 arise?

GM Arcam's first major thrust into home cinema was with the AVR100 and 200 receivers. These were focused primarily on sound quality, but they didn't include all the features that many people were looking for. Later, these were followed with the AVR250 and 300, which were aimed at the heart of the home cinema market, with the right features at the right price. They have been very successful.

How do the AVP700/P1000 relate to these earlier models?

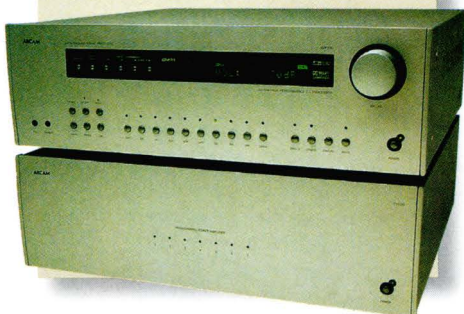
We identified a need for a product similar to the AVR250 and 300 that could act as a step-up for use in bigger rooms. The AVR700/P1000 slots in well below the cost of the AV8/P7, but includes the latest features, including HDMI switching. The requirements of the custom install market have also been taken into account. Custom install systems often feature active speakers, or place the power amplification close to the speakers, so the idea of a separate power amplifier (or Arcam monoblocks), and the XLR balanced interface played an important part in our thinking.

Why is HDMI audio extraction not supported by the AVP700? Or video upsampling to HDMI?

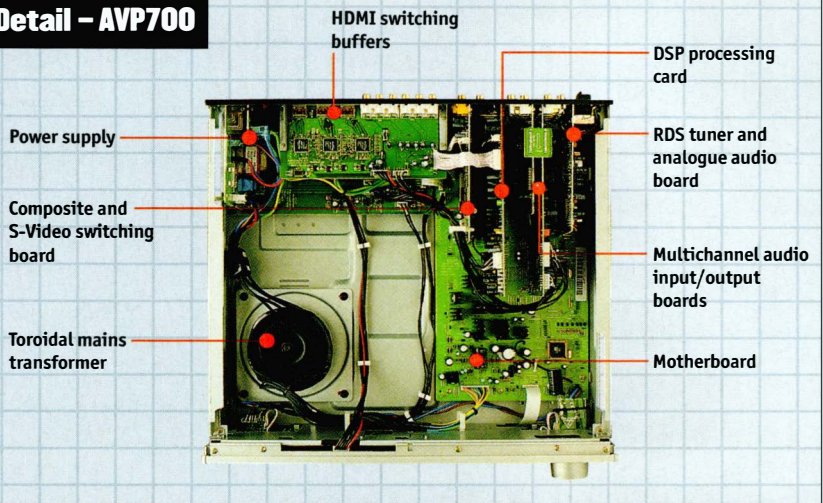
The jury is still out about high-performance audio over HDMI. There are few chipsets available at present, and there are issues concerning audio quality. Video upsampling is not easily accomplished at present either. But in a way, Arcam regards HDMI audio as the solution to a problem that should not exist. S/PDIF is a perfectly good solution for Dolby Digital and DTS. If the analogue audio is looked after properly by the DVD player and the amplifier, without unnecessary digitisation of the signal, an all-analogue signal chain is a very good solution. Even if HDMI was better – and as I say the jury is out on this – it would have meant a very much more expensive product.

Why haven't you included a microphone-driven auto set-up feature?

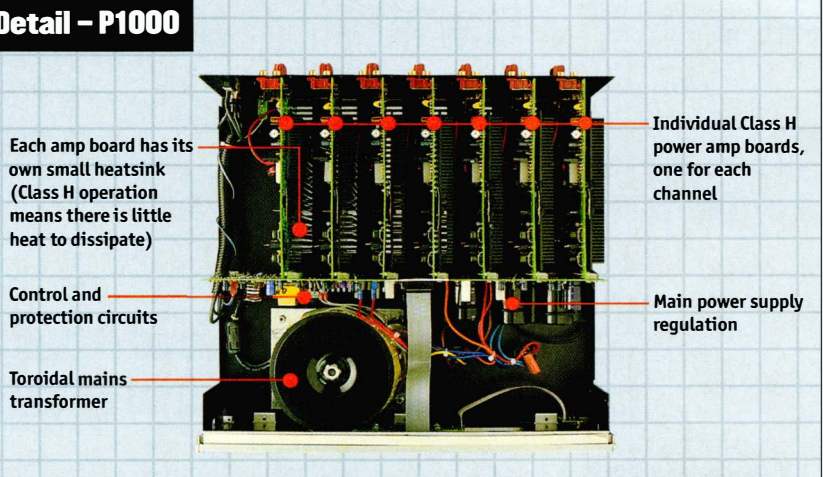
For the very good reason that after long experimentation, Arcam feels they just don't offer the level of performance we are looking for. An accurate manual set-up is always required in the end – ideally, in my experience, one that follows ITU recommendations.



Detail – AVP700



Detail – P1000

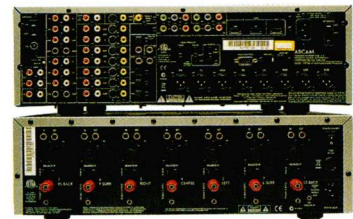


become less transparent – clearly different from the replay quality available at low levels, where the system sounded more obviously cleaner, more transparent and with less artifice.

This is a power amp that somehow falls into the trap of sounding rather obviously solid state. It lacks the usual Arcam smooth, easy voicing, which is available from the AVP700, and tonally too it seems to be presence band led, lacking the solid, expansive architecture of the best power amps at the price. The P7 is a much more measured and open-sounding amplifier – but then again, it does cost a grand more.

Here is a slightly oddball combination where the individual capabilities of the two components don't seem to be completely in sync. The P1000 is a thoroughly admirable power amp, with plenty of grunt on tap, but it is not especially likeable under some conditions of use. The AVP700, however, is a very impressive preamp/processor, and from experiments with other power amps on hand during our test (from Krell, Denon and ECS), it can be stretched further than the P1000 can manage. For that reason, the pairing falls just short of an official Best Buy, but the AVP700 is itself worthy of the accolade. A game of two halves, then, and it's the processor that scores the winner. **HFC**

Alvin Gold



VERDICT – AVP700

SOUND >> 86%

>> SUB RATINGS
STEREO 83% MULTICHANNEL 89%

FEATURES >> 86%

BUILD >> 88%

VALUE >> 87%

CONCLUSION

A highly competent processor with a decent FM radio attached. It has that unique Arcam sound – civilised, airy, refined and with good long term listenability.

HI-FI CHOICE
>> 87%

VERDICT – P1000

SOUND >> 78%

>> SUB RATINGS
STEREO 73% MULTICHANNEL 83%

FEATURES >> 84%

BUILD >> 88%

VALUE >> 80%

CONCLUSION

This an is undeniably good value, but more transparency and consistency would have made it better still. It's more of a home cinema amp than a purist hi-fi one.

HI-FI CHOICE
>> 79%

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.

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

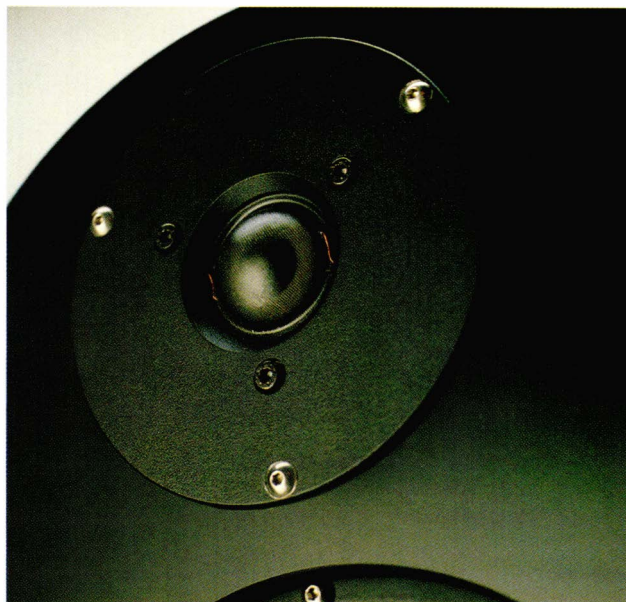
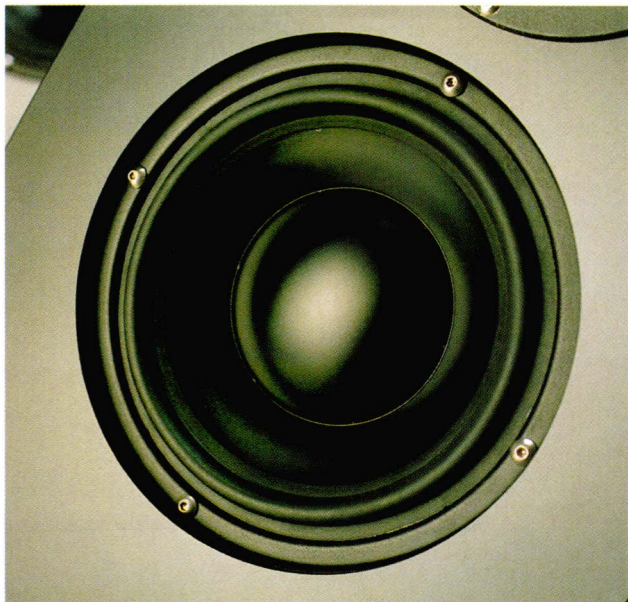
**The new 8000 series offers a
definitive and genuine hi-fidelity
performance from a no-nonsense
approach to engineering**

audiolab

Sovereign Court, Ermine Business Park,
Huntingdon, Cambs, PE29 6XU
www.audiolab.co.uk

Tel: +44 (0)1480 447700

Fax: +44 (0)1480 431767



Seeing stars

WEGG3's star-struck Stellar 1 floorstander forms the basis of Absolute Sounds' new Studio line

PRODUCT WEGG3 Stellar 1

TYPE Floorstanding loudspeaker

PRICE £4,995 per pair

KEY FEATURES Size (WxHxD, including base): 35x96.5x44.5cm • Weight: 35kg • 30cm fabric dome tweeter • 153mm midrange cone • Aluminium bass cone • Sensitivity/impedance: 97dB/3.6 ohms (min)

CONTACT ☎ 020 8971 3909 # www.wegg3.com

Ricardo Fransavici is a not a name that most readers will recognise. But if you own – or aspire to own – some high-end kit from the likes of Krell, Sonus Faber or MartinLogan, he's the man that makes it happen. His company, Absolute Sounds, is responsible for distributing some of the world's most prestigious imported hi-fi components throughout the UK. But recently, he decided to get his teeth into something new.

Ricardo has launched an offshoot he calls Ricardo's Studio – a range of new-to-the-UK products that sits outside the Absolute Sounds portfolio. His idea was to source one product per category – CD player, amp, speakers and so on – from unusual manufacturers; components that, when put together, would form a formidable system. The product we're reviewing here is the speaker that Ricardo has hand-picked for this project: the Stellar 1 from WEGG3.

WEGG3 is the brainchild of William Eggleston III, of Eggleston Works speaker fame, and son of the legendary colour photographer William Eggleston. He left Eggleston Works in 1998, heading for California and a wholly new project.

WEGG3's range includes multi-tweetered home cinema speakers and flat, powered subwoofers, but the Stellar 1 is something else – the first of what it calls the 'Usonian' series.

The Stellar 1 comprises tweeter, midrange and bass unit, with the treble and midrange drivers stepped back in a tilted front baffle to aid time-alignment. The 30mm fabric dome tweeter is a Dynaudio design, with the rear loading customised by WEGG3, so that the tweeter dome vents directly out of the pole piece and into a damped chamber. This is allied to a Moral USA midrange driver, with a cone diameter of 153mm and 75mm voice coil to back it up.

energy of the woofer. At the rear of the cabinet is a small port, a mechanism for the aperiodic loading of the midrange. This increases the mechanical choke (or becomes more restrictive on airflow) as the frequency decreases. What this means to the midrange is that for frequencies above 300Hz, the driver feels like it is in 'free air', or a heavily-vented enclosure. But as it gets down to 100Hz and below, it feels like a sealed box with limited excursion. This is a further desirable element in controlling the full-range input that the midrange receives.

Like most US high-end loudspeakers these days, bi-wiring is no longer an option. Instead,

“Just when you are ready to give up, you find the perfect place in the room – the Goldilocks position, where everything's just right.”

There's no crossover network in the midrange section, and just hard-wired crossover components for the treble and bass units. Of course, this only works if the midrange unit has a good natural roll-off. The Californian-designed bass driver is made to WEGG3's specs, featuring a high-excursion, aluminium cone and mounted in a ported box that's tuned down to 29Hz.

The black, piano gloss cabinet is made from 25mm medium density fibre board with vertical and horizontal bracing throughout. The midrange driver and tweeter each have their own enclosures, isolated from the acoustic

the screw-down speaker terminal block is perfect for spade-lugs and bare wire, but 4mm banana plug users need to look elsewhere. This is no great failing, as this uniquely American screw-in terminal block makes a stiffer connection than most, and will make you think the spade lug is the right way to connect things, after all.

Also like most high-end US speakers, the Stellar 1 can handle a stack of power, with claimed 300-watt continuous and 600-watt peak figures. Factor in a sensitivity rating of 87dB and a reasonably punishing 3.6-ohm minimum impedance, and it's clear that this

speaker needs more than a five-watt valve amp to drive it. Fortunately, the Dartzeel amp selected for Ricardo's Studio is a truly impressive match. Similarly energetic amplifiers with 100 watts or more on tap should likewise turn in a good performance, and the Stelar 1 has been heard (at US shows) making a very fine sound with Stello equipment, so this is not an 'only one amp for me' product. Nothing in high-end hi-fi is that monogamous.

SOUND QUALITY

The initial listening test wasn't promising. The Stelar 1 had a bass-light sound that was closer to a transistor radio than a five-grand speaker. Some more investigation was in order.

First, the choice of amplifier was essential. Ricardo has chosen well with the Dartzeel amplifiers in the chain, although it's not the loudest

combination on the planet (though in most rooms where this system works well, it raises the roof effectively). Also, hours of running in – using the *Hi-Fi Choice* tune-up disc that was given away with issue 270 – helped greatly.

The final critical factor was positioning. With no instructions to hand (these were the first Stelar 1s in the land), we were flying blind, and in this case flying in the wrong direction. Too far into the room and the speakers turn shrill; too close and the midrange bloats. But then, just when you are almost ready to give up, you find the perfect place in the room – the Goldilocks position, where everything's just right. It all

comes together perfectly and the sound undergoes a magical change

of heart. This means, of course, that the point where the speakers sound happiest is limited and there's not a great deal of wiggle-room on behalf of the listener's position, either. But if you want genuine high-end sound from relatively compact speaker, this is one of the few that really introduces you to the lower registers.

We think it must be something to do with that alloy-cone bass unit. When it comes together, the claim that the Stelar 1 reaches down to 28Hz in room doesn't seem so crazy. In fact, it seems entirely right and proper. But there is also a speed to the bass that's uncanny. Play the deepest notes and the speaker responds lightning-fast, but with a sense of depth and rhythm that is hard to match. Often, you get either faster, lighter bass or deeper, slower bass. Here, you get both.

There's no sense of pretty sheen to the sound of the Stelar 1. It's no romantic, rose-tinted view of music, but neither is it a cold, eviscerating, autopsy of sound. Music played through the Stelar 1 is exciting and detailed. Yet despite all that analysis, the sound is highly musical, too.

With rough and ready recordings, the speaker's brutal honesty can prove uncomfortable. The sound of Big Star's *Radio City* (featuring an album cover photograph by William Eggleston II... this stuff isn't just thrown together, you know) pushes the speaker into brightness. The speed is still there, but the raw 1970s mix is just too edgy. Exciting, open and analytical – but edgy. In fairness, the speaker is merely reproducing the nature of the recording, but as rock recordings are often brash, this may gravitate you toward jazz and classical.

But, when properly set up and fed with a good recording of any kind, the Stelar 1s sound great. You get a performance that's exciting and dynamic, with exceptional image depth, terrific bass and an accurate tonal range – all from a pair of pleasingly compact foorstanders. This is ultimately what transforms the Stelar 1 into something truly high-end in intent. It manages to squeeze the quart into a pint pot, and does it with such ease and charm you'll soon forget the labour pains of setting the speakers up. **HFC**

Alan Sircom



VERDICT	
<p>SOUND >> 90%</p> <p>Progress bar: 90% filled</p>	<p>PRO Potentially fantastic method of getting full-range sound from a small speaker in a small(ish) room. Fast and agile sound that's very revealing of the recording, yet still musical and dynamic.</p> <p>CON Needs careful installation and intelligent equipment partnering. Can sound brash with rougher recordings.</p>
<p>EASE OF DRIVE >> 58%</p> <p>Progress bar: 58% filled</p>	
<p>BUILD >> 89%</p> <p>Progress bar: 89% filled</p>	
<p>VALUE >> 79%</p> <p>Progress bar: 79% filled</p>	
<p>CONCLUSION It's no mean feat breaking the laws of physics. Bass this deep should not be possible from a small speaker, but the WEGG3 does it. The trade-off is the amount of care (and good amplification) needed to get that sound out of the speakers.</p>	
<p>HI-FI CHOICE OVERALL SCORE >> 85%</p>	

Two become one

What happens when you mix the essence of a Gamut D3 preamp and D200 power amp?

PRODUCT Gamut DI 150

TYPE Integrated stereo amplifier

PRICE £5,700

KEY FEATURES Size (WxHxD): 43x15.5x44.6cm

• Weight: 31kg • Inputs: four single ended, two balanced, tape loop • Balanced and single-ended pre-outs • Power output: 180W per channel (eight ohms)

CONTACT ☎ 01252 702705 🌐 www.gamutaudio.com

Gamut recently branched out into loudspeakers, to run alongside its range of high-end electronics (see *HFC 274* for a review of the L5). Now, Gamut has decided to combine two of its finest amplifiers into one and produce its first integrated design. In doing so, it follows some of the most

respected names in the business into one-box terrain. This is a place where even the most die-hard audiophile is being forced to visit, now that big ain't domestically so beautiful anymore. Let's face it, it never was... but they didn't have so many home interior make-over programmes in the 1980s, so we could get away with a bit more than we can today.

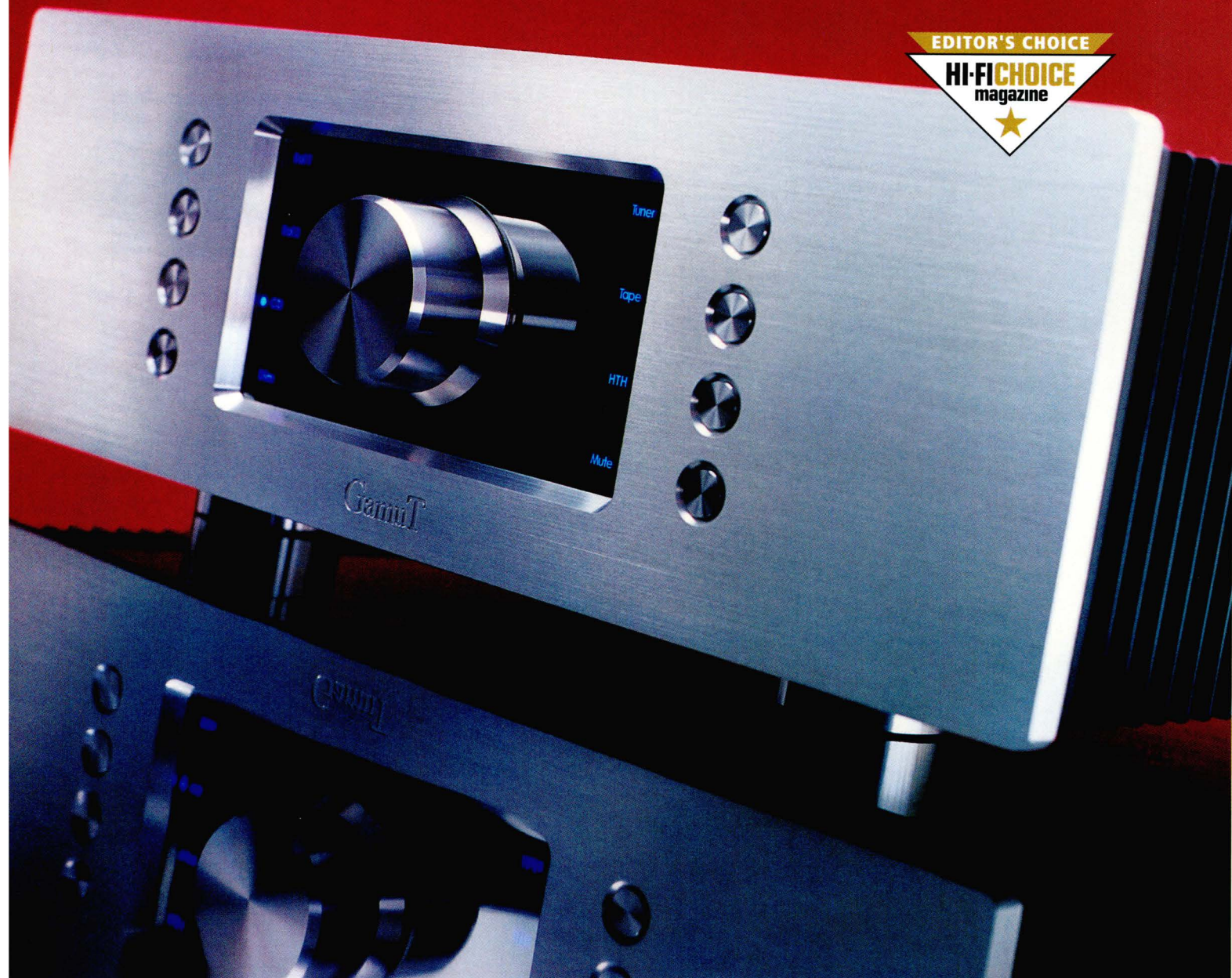
The DI 150 was created in an attempt to build a lower-priced amplifier that retained the Gamut sound. By their own admission, Gamut's designers failed in one respect – this is far from being a lower-priced amp – but they felt the result was exciting enough to put on the market nonetheless. Apparently, a genuinely more affordable Gamut integrated is planned, although it's unlikely that Gamut will produce

an amplifier that takes on the likes of Creek, or Arcam's entry level. 'Affordable' here is relative, like the 'affordable' Porsche Boxster.

The DI 150 is based on the circuitry found in two existing Gamut products: the D3 preamplifier and the D200 MkIII power amplifier (reviewed in *HFC 265* and *247* respectively). Those two components combined would set you back £7,440, so this £5,700 integrated is a bargain, in purely relative terms, although we admit it's a tough call trying to claim nearly six grand of amp a bargain. Regardless, it certainly feels as substantial as a D200 and has almost as many features and in and outputs as a D3, but it looks quite different to both in all but the heat sinking that flanks the casework.

EDITOR'S CHOICE

HI-FI CHOICE
magazine





The front panel is stylish and colourful if you have the input names illuminated, or stylish and relaxed if you don't. The odd thing is that at night you don't see the mirror effect on the central panel, regardless of whether the 'dim' button has been used. Unfortunately, the remote – which is of the prosaic system operating variety – does not have individual inputs upon it, so you need to use up down arrows and squint at the display. One nice touch is that volume is indicated by a light behind the panel rather than the usual indent, so the level is always clearly shown.

As with the D3 preamp, the DI 150 has an HTH (home theatre) bypass input. This is a means of using the power amp section in the context of a multichannel system, with a surround sound processor. So you can use the DI 150 and the speakers connected to it for your stereo listening, and also use those two channels as part of a 5.1 (or more) system. This input can also be switched to operate as a normal line input, but be very careful – a line level signal without a volume control is a dangerous thing for ears and speakers, too.

One oddity with the volume control is that it seems to operate in a non-logarithmic way and it's difficult to make small changes to level with the remote. Apparently, this is due to a small mistake on the first batch of amplifiers that makes the volume knob spin too fast. It has now been rectified.

“The Gamut delivers a level of insight that can transform a decent recording into a gripping musical journey.”

The range of socketry on this amp's broad back includes four RCA phono inputs and two XLR inputs alongside pre-outputs in both single-ended and balanced varieties. Speaker cable connectors are chunky WBT devices with the ability to take spade lugs, banana plugs or bare wire. The power on/off switch is nowhere to be seen, but those familiar with another Scandinavian electronics brand, Primare, will soon find the rocker switch under the front panel. It must be a design thing, over there.

SOUND QUALITY

We used this Gamut with a pair of B&W 802Ds, a speaker design that is in some respects the antithesis of the speakers that Gamut makes, and as such possibly not the perfect partner. It's the approach to midrange drivers that varies between these two brands and you can hear that the DI 150's midband would probably benefit from a more obviously 'open' mid than that offered by the big B&W.

Nonetheless, the Gamut/B&W pairing sounded damn fine and extremely revealing. Transparency is the word here. Recordings are

laid bare for better or worse, so you can appreciate how well the dynamics are captured or compressed, how wide a bandwidth there is and how much acoustic is present.

The contrast between albums has rarely been as clear as it is through this amp – ECM's Keith Jarrett recordings sound simply magical in their sense of the occasion and atmosphere, whereas older albums such as Captain Beefheart's *Clear Spot* could definitely be more, er, clear. But, the important aspects of that album are plain to hear. The Gamut may highlight recording quality, but the great sense of timing and quality of musicianship, not to mention the lyrical surrealism, of the Beefheart album shines through.

Other recordings give up a whole stack of detail that is usually not apparent. We were taken aback at how much is going on; tunes that usually roll along in a vaguely entertaining way suddenly turn in an energetic and engaging performance when played through the DI 150. You get a level of insight that can transform a decent recording into a gripping musical journey, thanks to a ▶

Q & A

We spoke to Frederik Johansen, Gamut's electronics project manager, to find out more about the design innovations that went into the new DI 150 integrated amplifier



HFC: Why did you decide to build your first integrated amplifier now?

FJ: First and foremost, the basic idea was to bring the Gamut 'sound' down in price and to offer a single box solution. Secondly, we wanted to bring the appearance to a level that matches the sound quality that Gamut amplifiers are known for.

This amp is based on the D3 and D200 models, but apart from the slight drop in output, what are the main differences in approach?

The DI 150 is basically built around the input stage of the D3 preamp and the output stage of the D200 power amp. The main difference is the compromise of having small signals in the same 'room' as high power signals and power supplies. On the other hand, this solution makes a number of cable and solder connections unnecessary. This counterbalances some of the compromise.

The slight drop in output power is caused by the less powerful power transformers, enabling lower noise, but also a little less power compared to the D200 power amplifier.

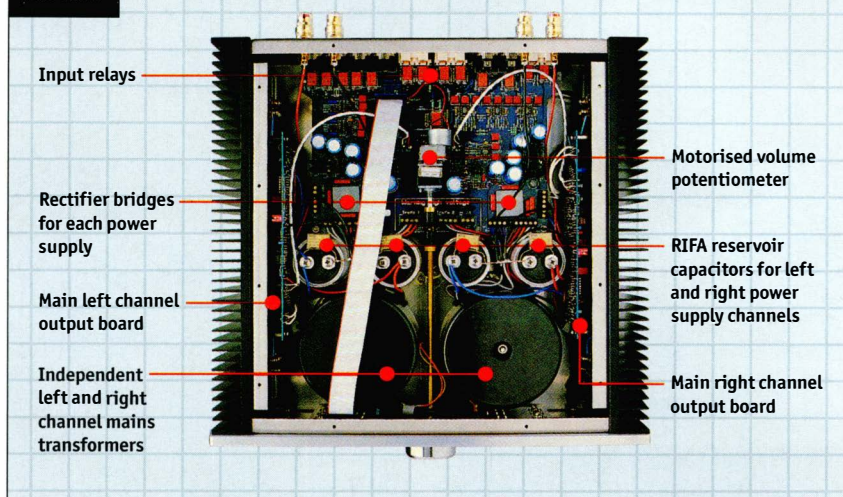
Does the DI 150 use a single pair of output devices like the original D200?

This amplifier uses the same very high power MOSFETs as the D200. The output stage is made from two identical N channels formed in a special push-pull coupling. In more common MOSFET amplifiers, one N and one P channel (or more) is used for making the push-pull output stage. However, it is very difficult to make two very different MOSFETs operate identically. This means that you do not have a symmetrical handling of the positive and negative side – not a good thing!

Is the DI 150 dual mono or is there a shared mains transformer?

The DI 150 is a true and all-the-way-through dual-mono construction. From the input stage to the output stage, the signal is fed by power that is specified for that particular channel and stage. Each of the encapsulated transformers has special windings for the low power and high power signals.

Detail



combination of acute sensitivity to timing, timbre/tone colour and detail.

Acoustic guitar sounds particularly rich with microdynamic variation, each string plucked that much harder or softer than those around it. This, combined with the depth of tone and buzz of new steel strings, makes for an engrossing experience.

The bottom end is equally ear-pleasing, allowing bass lines to lock the tempo down superbly. The nature of the bass is a little softer and more rounded than that produced by our D200 Mk1 power amp, and in some instances during our test period the D200's more taut bottom end had the upper hand. But the integrated has the edge in the mid and high frequencies, where its clarity and lack of mechanical edge mean you hear more of the recording and less of the electronics.

There is also no shortage of weight and texture at low frequencies. Even with largely acoustic material, the bass grumbles in highly distinctive fashion. The D200 has a very mild tendency to add its own bite to the proceedings, which can help mediocre recordings, but it's not necessarily as true to the original signal as the DI 150.

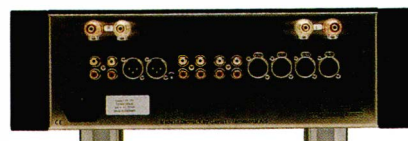
This integrated amplifier can sound soft and warm with one disc and then hard edged with the next. It's a very clean and smooth design, but that doesn't mean that it always sounds that way – it's all down to the recording.

The DI 150's grasp of timbral subtlety and dynamics became immediately apparent when our vdH Condor's stylus dropped into the groove of *Drummer Man*, a Gene Krupa mono LP recently reissued by Speaker's Corner. Freed from the strictures of stereo, the energy and vibrancy of the brass section sounded remarkably real. And when Anita O'Day started singing, we were back there in the day.

This is clearly a gorgeous amplifier. It has its ergonomic peccadilloes, but these can be forgiven, simply because of that sound quality delivered from a single, rather attractive box.

The Gamut is an undeniably expensive design, but you're effectively getting a dual-mono preamp and a 180-watt power amp of equally stunning transparency to timing, imaging, timbre and all-round detail. It's a pairing that seriously challenges the notion that you have to split an amp into separate boxes to achieve the best results. **HFC**

Jason Kennedy



VERDICT

SOUND >> 95%



FEATURES >> 82%



BUILD >> 93%



VALUE >> 87%



PRO

All-round transparency to the source and plenty of musical power. Attractive and solid build, plus the practicalities of a one-box approach.

CON

Remote feels a little cheap by comparison to the sheer quality of the amplifier itself. There's no digital input option and input names can be tricky to read at a distance.

CONCLUSION

A serious contender for the best integrated amp ever, the DI 150 will take on pre/power combos of at least equal price on their own terms and win. Cast aside your prejudices and revel in genuine high-fidelity amplification.

HI-FI CHOICE OVERALL SCORE **>> 91%**

In a world where so much looks the same,
we take pride in being different !



Authorised dealers:

Acoustic Arts, Watford, Tel. 01923 245250 - Adams & Jarrett, East Sussex, Tel. 01 424 437165 - Glasgow Audio, Glasgow, Tel. 01413 324707 - HI-FI Studios, Doncaster, Tel. 01302 725550 - Holburn HI-FI, Aberdeen, Tel. 01224 585713 - Kevin Galloway Audio, Kilmarnock, Tel. 01563 574185 - Midland Audio Exchange, Belbroughton, Tel. 01562 731100 - Mike Manning, Taunton, Tel. 01823 326688 - Mike Manning, Yeovil, Tel. 01935 479361 - New Audio Frontiers, Loughborough, Tel. 01509 264002 - Phonography, Ringwood, Tel. 01425 461230 - Practical HI-FI, Lancaster, Tel. 01524 39657 - Practical HI-FI, Manchester, Tel. 01618 398869 - Practical HI-FI, Warrington, Tel. 01925 632179, R.J.F. Cornwall, Tel. 01209 710777 - Sound Seduction, Sevenoaks, Tel. 01732 456573 - VideoTech, Huddersfield, Tel. 01484 516670

D e n s e n B - 1 5 0

The new reference integrated amplifier from Densen is perhaps the most advanced integrated amp on the market. It is filled with advanced solutions, which all share the goal of giving you even more musicality and flexibility. The B-150 is a downscaled version of the reference B-250 pre amp and B-350 mono amps.

The B-150 employs a true attenuator, while everybody else uses potentiometers or cheap digital volume IC's. Densen use a sophisticated microprocessor controlled attenuator; this is the reason for the distinct click you hear as you adjust the volume and it is a definitive sign that Densen use the advanced relay driven attenuator instead of cheap inferior technologies, which substantially downgrade sound quality. The click is your assurance that Densen does not compromise!

The power amp stage has a tremendous grip on even the most difficult loads which it handles with an ease and musicality that beguiles even the most discerning listener. Lifetime warranty.

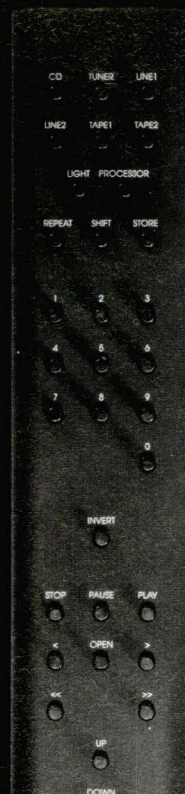
Features:

- Upgradeable with external power supply
- Ready for SAXO electronic crossover
- Ready for remote control and phonos stages
- Ready for multiroom systems
- Ready for Bi-amping and Tri-amping
- Upgradeable with plug-in 7.1 surround board that only requires an universal player or a DVD player with a built-in decoder.

B-150 2x100w 8 ohms / 2x200w 4 ohms - GPB 3000

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

The sexy Gizmo system remote





Back to the future

A 'retro-modern' standmount from a new brand that's determined to make its mark in the UK

PRODUCT Nbien NX-6

TYPE Standmount loudspeaker

PRICE £799 per pair (walnut veneer)

KEY FEATURES Size (WxHxD): 21x 38.5x30cm

• Weight: 12kg • 20mm silk dome tweeter • 165mm bass/mid driver with doped paper cone and metal phase plug • Sensitivity/impedance: 88dB/8 ohms (nominal)

CONTACT ☎ 029 2064 1005 🌐 www.nbien.com

Newcomer Nbien currently has two speaker ranges in production. There are two other 'NX' models that sit alongside the NX-6 we're featuring here – the 6T floorstander (£1,350) and 6C centre speaker (£500), with a rear speaker following presently. Then there's the DX range, which starts at £350 for a pair of DX-5s. The company will shortly be launching a range-topper called the 3E, which is a genuine behemoth weighing 108kg and standing 1.5m high. It's a great piece of sculpture, too. Nbien also has a whole

new range – the GX – in the wings, intended to slot in between the DX and NX ranges.

Clearly, Nbien is not a speaker company to take a laid-back approach to product design.

The NX-6 is an impressive bit of cabinet work, with a walnut veneer on all of its many facets. You could have piano black or silver lacquer for an extra £100 if you prefer, but this real-wood finish has a attractively contemporary style that suits the overall design. Nbien calls it 'retro-modern', which is a descriptive enough label, though some may think it a little pretentious.

The cabinet has a slot-shaped reflex port that is said to operate "like a transmission line", as it continues inwards and eventually upwards within the box. It also has a radiused opening to avoid turbulence. The cabinet is constructed from a combination of 25mm and 18mm thick MDF and is extensively braced and damped in order to minimise resonance.

The cabinet houses an unusual pair of drive units, including a bass/mid driver that uses what Nbien describes as a "part-pressed pulp cone". This is driven by an edge-wound, copper-clad aluminium voice coil in a cast aluminium chassis. The literature says that the cone is a blend of materials, including fibrous wool that "helps to create a warm sound"... cosy.

Rather than a dust cap, it sports a metal phase plug designed to minimise midrange nasality. B&W's 800D range has a similar shaped metal phase plug, but only on midrange drivers – B&W claims that it's possible to get audible air noise at low frequencies on a bass/mid unit such as this.

The main driver hands over to a smaller than average 20mm tweeter at 2.5kHz, and this high-frequency unit has a silk dome and neodymium magnet. The tweeter is offset on the baffle, which means that there are two set-up options, depending on whether you

want a wider soundstage or more focused imaging. We set them up firing straight out from the wall with a gap of 30cm behind and the tweeters on the inside. This seemed to produce a good combination of stage width and image depth.

Good quality bi-wire connections provide access to the time-aligned third-order crossover and thence the drivers via Acoustic Zen internal cabling, the latter being silver plated for the tweeter link.

SOUND QUALITY

Early samples of the NX-6 were too much on the bright side for our tastes, a finding backed up by the UK dealers that Nbien visited. So Nbien's designers went back to the crossover kitchen and cooked up a smoother top end. The result is rather more in tune with UK tastes of the post-Kan era; anyone who heard Linn's legendary compact speaker from the early 1980s will know the meaning of the term 'paint-stripping treble', but hey, it sold.

The NX-6 is now a tight and precise-sounding speaker that has more treble bite than average, but is not aggressive or piercing unless something in the chain encourages it. That something inevitably includes the software, and if a recording has a hard edge, it can be rather more apparent than usual. The combination of strong treble and the solidity of the enclosure helps to deliver well-defined images, and the cabinet's construction ensures it is unusually 'quiet' for its size, so it gets out of the way of the music. In turn, this lets the NX-6 paint good, strong brush strokes of sound and deliver precisely located instruments and voices in the soundstage.

The speaker also reproduces a good sense of acoustic space, as long as it's on the recording – on test, Third Face's *Topics in Practical Science* disc sounded as gritty as ever, but the speakers delivered much of the reverb and grunt on the disc, too. You can also crank the system to gratifying effect without getting the impression that the speaker is struggling to cope. There's a reassuring solidity to the sound that gives you the confidence to turn up the volume, but it might not be wise with a lower powered amp, as that could easily descend into potentially speaker-killing clipping.

Tonally, the NX-6 is rich and, while not exactly warm-sounding, it's certainly able to deliver the character of warm instruments, such



“The NX-6 paints good, strong brush strokes of sound and delivers precisely located instruments and voices in the soundstage.”

as double bass, in a convincing manner. The bottom end is more natural than is often found in smaller enclosures; there seems to have been no attempt to squeeze extra extension out by cranking up the crossover, so while not super deep, the bass is tuneful and coherent. There are some smaller boxes that give you more 'oomph', but usually at the expense of evenness and driveability.

Dynamics are at the level you'd expect given the driver array and the 13litre cabinet volume, so you do have to turn up the level to get some real room-driving energy, but fortunately the speaker is comfortable at higher levels. The NX-6 is also capable of a good turn of speed when the slap of a plucked double bass comes along. The sense of timing is good, if not especially impressive, but the stiff box does inspire the term 'nimble' with regard to the lower frequencies, and that is a positive thing.

Voices, while highly intelligible, can get a little edgy if they are of the high, female variety, but the sound is always open and spacious, which is the flip side of slightly obvious treble.

It's a balance that will suit more relaxed ancillary components. These may not always be the ones that win the group tests, but they come up from time to time in the mid-price arena and can be very useful in some systems. Looking at our last amplifier group, for instance, Exposure's 3010 is has the sort of balance that would suit the NX-6. It's not too

forward and is strong on dynamics, which are obviously complementary characteristics.

This is also a speaker where taste will be a distinct factor. As we mentioned, the Linn Kan was a successful speaker and many enjoyed the edge of the seat experience it provided on the end of a Linn/Naim system. The Nbien does not have such a strong character and it does bass properly too, which is always a bonus. As such, the Nbien may prove to be more attractive to modern ears; it'll never be the mainstream choice, but a fine alternative to the regular loudspeaker names. **HFC**

Jason Kennedy



VERDICT	
SOUND >> 82% [Progress bar]	PRO Solid stereo imaging and good coherence, with decent power handling and a very fine sense of 'space'. Cabinet is distinctive and well built.
EASE OF DRIVE >> 78% [Progress bar]	CON Treble is rather 'obvious' at times and bass extension is limited. The distinctive sound produced by this speaker will divide opinion – careful auditioning is recommended.
BUILD >> 87% [Progress bar]	
VALUE >> 77% [Progress bar]	
CONCLUSION This is a very nice piece of cabinet work for the money and a very decent-sounding speaker, too. Its sound won't suit all and some may find the treble bothersome, but it's well worth an audition if you're looking for an open and lively standmount.	
HI-FI CHOICE OVERALL SCORE >> 80%	

Brands:

- Anticoptic
- Audio Aero
- Audio Analogue
- Audio Research
- Avid
- Blok
- Bose
- Burmester
- Canton
- Copland
- darTZeel
- Denon
- Dreamvision
- Fujitsu
- Anthony Gallo
- Graaf
- Harman Kardou
- Hilachi plasma
- Hicar
- Isoblu
- Isotek
- Jadis
- Jamo
- Kef
- Koetsu
- Krell
- Loewe
- Lyra
- Marantz
- Martin Logan
- Michell
- Mission
- Musical Fidelity

- NAD
- Naim
- Nearfield
- Opera
- Orms
- Parasound
- Pathos Acoustics
- Pioneer
- Prima Luna
- Projekt
- Pure
- Quadraspire
- REL
- Sennheiser
- Sharp Aquos LCD
- SME
- Sonus Faber
- Speakercraft
- Spectral tables
- Stax
- Stewart Screens
- T & A
- Tannoy
- Teac
- Thelma
- Tivoli
- Transparent cables
- Unison Research
- Triangle
- Vogel
- Whest Audio
- Wilson Audio
- Wireworld
- Yamaha



call or visit us today and you will be smiling too!

Oxford Audio Consultants Ltd

WE LOVE TO LISTEN

Established in 1988. Today we are one of the leading specialists in audio, home cinema, audio-visual and multi-media installations.

You can be 100% sure of exceptional service, backup, long-term support and a wide-selection of many of the worlds most famous and renowned hi-fi products.

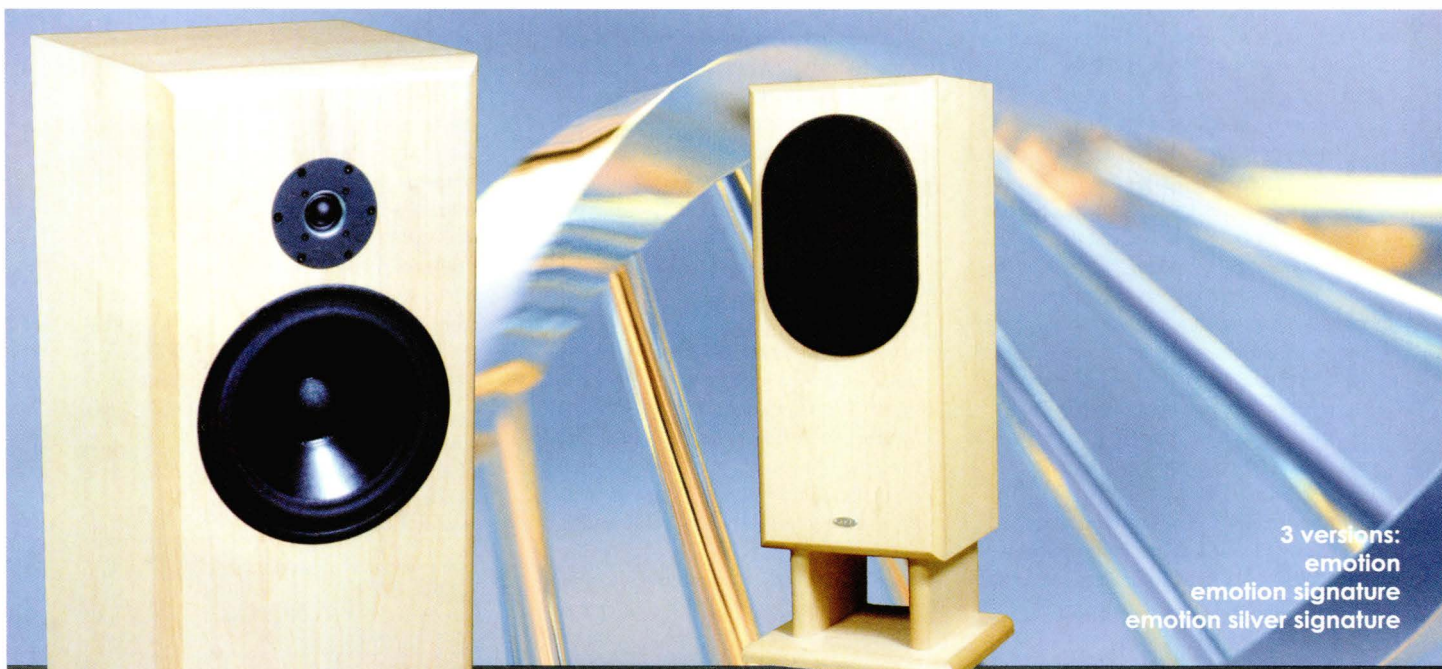
From a single component to a complete system, Oxford Audio Consultants have the answers and just as important, the solutions.

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)



3 versions:
emotion
emotion signature
emotion silver signature

emotions revealed

art loudspeakers

tel/fax +44 (0)1292 319 416 | contact@loudspeaker-art.com | www.loudspeaker-art.com

Azur like it!

High-quality CD replay doesn't get much cheaper than the new Azur 540C v2 from Cambridge Audio

PRODUCT Cambridge Audio Azur 540C v2
TYPE CD player
PRICE £200
CONTACT ☎ 0870 900 1000
 🌐 www.cambridgeaudio.com

This is the middle model in the Cambridge Audio Azur range of CD players made by Audio Partnership, the hi-fi/AV electronics manufacturer that grew from the Richer Sounds retail chain. Audio Partnership also produces Mordaunt-Short and Gale loudspeakers, using facilities in China.

The original Azur 540C was first seen two years ago, so it is ripe for a bit of revision to keep its competitive edge nice and sharp. This is exactly what Cambridge has done, but curiously the name on the front panel remains the same. It's referred to as 'version 2' practically everywhere else, from box to store to website, and the differences to the LCD clearly mark out new from old. But if you were looking for a shiny new aesthetic, guess again – Cambridge has worked on the all-important circuitry and not gone for cosmetic 'upgrades'.

Like the £250 640C v2 we reviewed last issue, the new 540C v2 benefits from engineering advances that were discovered during research and development work on the forthcoming, range-topping 740C CD player. In the case of the 540C, these include a new toroidal mains transformer said to reduce noise and thus distortion, and a revised, gratifyingly legible LCD that can be dimmed or defeated.

The main difference between the 540C v2 and the more costly 640C v2 is that the former only has a single digital-to-analogue converter and thus doesn't benefit from the 640C v2's

balanced topology. What it does have is a Wolfson 24-bit/192kHz DAC and a three-pole 'double virtual earth balanced' filter. This means it has an 18dB/octave roll-off and the DAC's complementary outputs are summed to cancel noise. 'Virtual earth' is a proprietary Cambridge Audio technique that is claimed to reduce harmonic distortion.

The transport mechanism on the Azur players is Cambridge's own and uses a Sanyo laser block and the industry-standard Mabuchi motor. Connections include the usual digital and analogue varieties alongside a control bus input and output and an IR emitter input for multiroom set-ups.

SOUND QUALITY

The Azur 540C v2 is a surprisingly assured and natural-sounding disc player for its asking price. Put on a decent recording, such as the Be Good Tanya's *Chinatown*, and it delivers a good sense of presence and acoustic. The atmosphere of the recording is clear and you are encouraged to listen further, even though as a reviewer, that is an indulgence too far.

In rhythmic terms, it's in the middle ground. You are neither driven along by the beat nor bored by its absence; few CD players have a great sense of timing, but this one is as responsive as most. It's better at reproducing the sense of a live event, but female voices, while not as tightly focused as heard on dearer machines, are still clear and vibrant. The Cambridge is distinctly more neutral and even-handed in its delivery than many budget models or discounted older players, making most of the cheapies seem heavy handed.

Compared with its more expensive sibling, the dual-DAC'd 640C v2 tested last month,

the 540C v2 is dynamically challenged and relatively coarse in its presentation of detail. It's no slouch, though, and the cheaper model still presents a coherent and engaging sound. But overall, the 640C v2 is worth the extra £50, because of the extra precision and dynamics it brings to the party. It is also better equipped to cope with the exposure that a better amp and speakers would deliver if you plan to upgrade in future.

The 540C v2's imaging could be more precise and the dynamic drive could have greater subtlety, but both of these important sonic bonuses are within the purview of the £250 640C v2 – a better bet for audiophiles on a budget. And yet, if £200 is your price ceiling, the 540's poise and articulation at all frequencies encourage you to listen more than virtually anything else at the price. And that's what you buy a CD player for, after all. **HFC**

Jason Kennedy

VERDICT	
SOUND >> 74% 	PRO Natural and relaxed presentation makes for easy listening. Nice remote handset and good build for the price.
FEATURES >> 80% 	CON A slight lack of focus and dynamics and a lower level of detail resolution by 640C v2 standards. That extra £50 off the price does have a negative sonic influence.
BUILD >> 78% 	
VALUE >> 93% 	
CONCLUSION You get an awful lot of up-to-the-moment CD player technology with the 540C. It's inevitably a little unrefined, but doesn't grate in any way and is capable of providing hours of musical entertainment. The remote is rather nice too.	
HI-FI CHOICE OVERALL SCORE >> 84%	



BEST BUY

HI-FI CHOICE
magazine



Fancy an Italian?

Audio Analogue's Enigma adds a dash of Latin charm to the one-box system concept

PRODUCT Audio Analogue Enigma

TYPE Integrated CD player/receiver

PRICE £850

KEY FEATURES Size (WxHxD): 37x10x44.5cm

• Weight: 9.5kg • One-box CD player, amp and FM/AM tuner with 30 presets • Rated power: 54W per channel (eight ohms) • ECC88 valve in output stage

CONTACT ☎ 01753 652 669

🌐 www.audioanalogue.com

Audio Analogue traditionally christens its products with names associated with great classical music composers. In the past, we've had Paganini, Puccini and Donizetti for a CD player, integrated amplifier and power amp respectively. So, you can imagine our concern when we first heard about the Enigma. Not, as you might expect, because the classy Italian manufacturer has followed Linn and Arcam down the 'audiophile' one-box system route, but because for some reason it

has decided to name its debut product in this arena after one of the worst musical atrocities of recent times: Enigma, that hybrid mix of new-age nonsense and soft dance music of the very worst kind.

The Enigma (the hi-fi product, that is) offers that mini-system holy trinity of CD player, amplifier and radio tuner. Unlike the similar Arcam Solo, the tuner here is an FM/AM model, and not a DAB unit. Anyway, whatever this system contains or lacks, it performs its tasks with a subtle, audiophile twist.

Importantly for this kind of product, the Enigma, in our subjective opinion at least, beats both its British competitors in terms of looks and style. It sports a highly attractive 'shoe-box' case, fronted with some very high-grade aluminium polished to give a highly attractive sheen. The build quality is also considerably better than that of Arcam's Solo, with an incredibly solid aluminium front panel and extremely responsive controls,

including a very nice volume knob and an array of stainless steel buttons. The volume knob doesn't turn: it 'jogs' one way or the other to increase or reduce the level. All this is no mean feat, considering the asking price is some £150 less than Arcam's offering. Also, it shouldn't be forgotten that this piece of kit isn't bolted together in China, but instead is designed and constructed in Audio Analogue's Italian factory – which makes the price even more impressive.

As is often the case, build quality also has an effect on sound quality, and Audio Analogue claims that the fairly deep body – in relation to the width and height of the unit – allows the company to place sonically vital components away from each other, while still allowing the Enigma the benefit of a slim (ish) profile.

There is, however, one point of contention on the features front: the remote control. Basic at best, the supplied controller doesn't look as though it was conceived to partner the rest of

The colouration's in the finish



Not in the music





One size plays all

Onkyo's new universal player delivers a fine picture and good sound without costing a fortune

PRODUCT Onkyo DV-SP503E
TYPE Universal disc player
PRICE £300
CONTACT ☎ 01494 681515 🌐 www.onkyo.co.uk

If the idea of a £300 disc spinner that can cope with just about every audio and video disc under the sun sounds appealing, the Onkyo DV-SP503E could be just the ticket.

Differences from the DV-502E, its immediate predecessor, appear to be limited to unspecified enhancements to the player's mechanism, which is sourced from Pioneer. But there wasn't much missing from the original. As well as PAL/NTSC progressive scan, DVD-Audio and SACD multichannel, and compatibility with a host of lesser formats, the Onkyo will play DivX CDs – DivX is the data compression format that you can download from the 'net, which preserves much of the quality of the MPEG2 data on DVD.

The DV-SP503E also sports on-board Dolby Digital and DTS decoders. The player passes PLUGE (below black) levels, which makes it a good proposition with modern TV displays. The audio DAC is a 12-bit/192kHz part, and the video DAC is 12-bit/108MHz. With a full set of multichannel analogue audio and digital outputs available alongside component, composite and RGB (via Scart), all video outputs are available simultaneously. This means DVD content may be displayed in several rooms.

SOUND QUALITY

Without the benefit of a side by side comparison, there's not much to distinguish between the sound one hears from this player

and the performance of the DV-SP502E that preceded it. One of the qualities of that prior model was that SACD and DVD-Audio quality were perceptibly different where any kind of comparison was possible: DVD-Audio was crisper and more dynamic; SACD was smoother, less 'hyper' and slightly distant. This is exactly what showed up on this occasion too, though other low-cost universal players show a similar tendency. What is obvious, however, is that although the DV-SP503E doesn't set new standards, it is a very respectable player. It makes a good fist of playing CDs, and occasionally – with similar material – appeared to work well outside its class, with something approaching real passion and commitment from the performers.

With the high-resolution music formats, the Onkyo went that extra mile, though as usual with the limited range of DVD-Audio material at our disposal, it was not often in practice that DVD-Audio convincingly outperformed CD in absolute terms. SACD is in a better position from the software availability viewpoint, and we found it easy to find recordings that have that extra touch of class, of malleability and expressiveness in the sound that CD often just misses.

VIDEO PERFORMANCE

The Onkyo's picture quality via component video hook-up approaches 'very good'. Because of the ability to pass below nominal black level, it was easy to set up for good picture quality with the test display (an InFocus 7210 DLP projector). The onboard Dolby and DTS decoders are limited in their set-up options, but this is par for the course.

Ultimately, the Onkyo DV-SP503E is not strongly differentiated from other low-cost alternatives, but it makes up for this by working well in every department. You'll need to go as high as Pioneer's DV-868AVi with its plethora of digital outputs before you kind something convincingly better all round. **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 >> 81%
 >> SUB RATINGS
 CD 77% SACD 83% DVD-A 84%

VISION >> 84%

FEATURES >> 87%

VALUE >> 90%

PRO
 Good one-stop-shop for shiny silver disc replay, with decent picture and sound all-round. All video outputs are available simultaneously and the menu set-up is attractive and well-endowed.

CON
 Some audible voicing differences between SACD and DVD-A, no high-resolution digital outputs.

CONCLUSION
 Onkyo has hitched its wagon to the best of the OEM suppliers and produced a final product that is well-endowed, with no obvious weaknesses. It doesn't break new ground with either audio or video, but it's a good all-rounder at an attractive price.

HI-FI CHOICE OVERALL SCORE >> 86%

audiolincs

ACOUSTIC SIGNATURE

Simplicity, it's a virtue and winning formula.

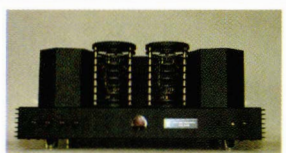
The Acoustic Signature Mambo turntable exemplifies meticulous German engineering, superb materials and massive construction to offer class leading performance with style.

Simplicity to set up, we believe the range of Acoustic Signature turntables also offers outstanding value.



MF AUDIO

Despite having no valves, despite being passive, despite 'manual' control, our customers very often prefer the superb MF1 to other pre-amps costing very much more!



KR AUDIO

The internationally acclaimed VA340 employs 300BXL5 valves to deliver higher than average power for a single ended integrated amplifier of this type. If you're genuinely sensitive to music (rather than hi-fi) you'll appreciate the exquisite subtlety and near tangible presence offered by this amazing amplifier.



HORNING

Our reference speakers demonstrate how an effortlessly natural sound quality proves music reproduction is an achievement which transcends mere hi-fi.

EX-DEM & PREVIOUSLY OWNED

AUDIOSTATIC DCI Wing Loudspeakers (£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
B&W DM603 Mk2 Speakers Black Ash	As new, boxed	£395
CASTLE Stirling Mk3 Speakers Cherry	As new	£395
CARDAS Golden Cross 1mtr RCA	Unmarked	£345
CARY 300B SE Monoblocks (£2,750+)	Mint, boxed	£1995
CONRAD JOHNSON EF1 Phono-stage (£2000)	Mint, boxed	£895
CONSONANCE Ref 1.3 Pre-amp (£2,995)	Ex-dem, boxed	£1995
CROFT Charisma 'X Spec' Pre-amp. Upgraded.	Mint, boxed	£1795
DENSEN Beat 400XS CD Player with Gizmo	Very little use, boxed	£1795
GRAAF GM50B Integrated Amp	As new, boxed	£2895
HORNING Agathon in oak	Beautiful	£2795
HORNING Zeus in cherry (£2,000)	Ex-dem, few hours only	£1395
KIMBER Kabel Type 8ag 1.6mtr (£3,000)	Unmarked	£895
LINN SONDEK LP12 (Trampolin) Fully serviced and offered complete with a brand new Origin Live Ultra DC motor drive, and a brand new origin Live Conqueror arm. (Circa £4,500)	Mint	£2,995
QUAD ESL 57 (Very late serial numbers)	Unmarked	£795
QUAD ESL 57 (Brand new panels)	Unmarked	£1295
MANTICORE Mantra + Musician Tonearm	Superb	£425
PAPWORTH M200 Monoblocks 2004 (£4995)	Mint, boxed	£2995
PROAC Response 1SC	Unblemished	£745
SOUNDLAB A3 Oak - fabulous speakers	Coming shortly	
UNISON S2K Integrated valve amp.	Beautiful, boxed	£895
XTC CDT1LE CD Transport Remote control.	As new, boxed	£495

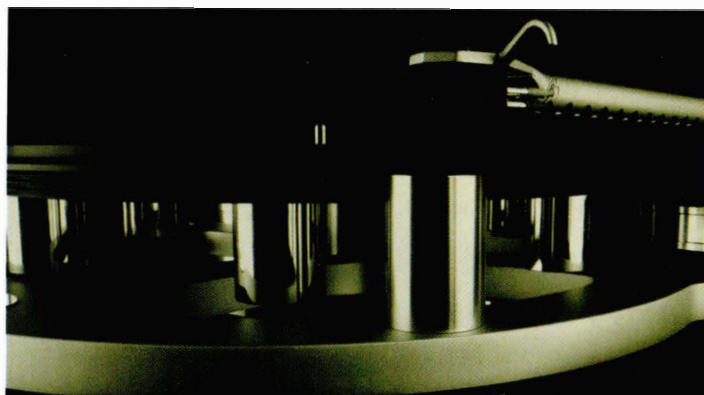
PHONE:

078 2192 5851
01476 591090

www.audiolincs.com

GRANTHAM (A1) LINCOS

PART-EXCHANGE HIGH-END REPAIRS COMMISSION SALES VALVE SPECIALISTS



BRITISH DESIGN AND ENGINEERING AT ITS BEST

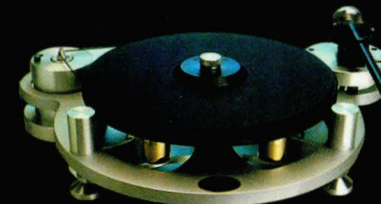
After 35 years, Michell is still a family run business with a team of dedicated and proud craftsmen, producing quality turntables and accessories

Orbe SE



The Michell flagship for music lovers who are not prepared to compromise

Gyro SE



The classic Michell turntable, refined over many years of development to its current level of performance.

TecnoDec



Entry level turntable incorporating features from the classic Gyro



MICHELL ENGINEERING

J A Michell Engineering Ltd
2 Theobald Street, Borehamwood,
Hertfordshire, England, WD6 4SE

Telephone: 020-8953-0771
Fax: 020-8207 4688
michell-engineering.co.uk

Turning the tables

Is the creator of our favourite table-top analogue radio now a DAB hand at digital too?

PRODUCT Tivoli Audio Model DAB

TYPE Table-top DAB/FM/AM radio

PRICE £230

CONTACT ☎ 01702 601410 @ www.tivoliaudio.com

The late Henry Kloss revitalised the table-top radio with his Tivoli Audio Model One, an analogue FM/AM unit of exceptional quality. Now, to reflect the increasing interest in digital 'DAB' radio, the Model One has spawned a digital sibling – the £230 Model DAB.

The unit combines a five-preset DAB radio, the usual Tivoli dial-based FM/AM tuner and alarm clock-radio functions in one. It can be configured in stereo as well as mono, thanks to a tidy, built-in 20-watt amp. It can also form the centrepiece of a complete Tivoli system, with the addition of a matching CD player, extra speakers and even a subwoofer. It's more button-filled than its beautifully simple analogue-only counterpart, but not unnecessarily so.

Anthropomorphising inanimate objects is generally a bad thing, unless you're making a Disney movie, but it's hard to resist here. Plug the white power supply into the back of the Tivoli 'talking noisy box' and the tiny sprites inside make a little squawk. Pull said PSU nozzle out from the Tivoli's flange at a later date and they chirp before falling asleep. There's an almost irresistible temptation to repeatedly plug and unplug the thing, just to

see what kinds of interesting squeaks you can make, but we recommend you resist... it's possibly a great way of blowing fuses.

SOUND QUALITY

There's something inherently great about the Tivoli Audio sound. It's not Roberts-esque warm and romantic, nor is it Pure-like clean and bright. Instead, it covers the middle ground perfectly, which makes it perfectly musical in the process. If anything, it errs on the side of warmth – the sound is slightly more rose-tinted than the original Model One.

When it comes to DAB, this is largely a strength – it smooths over some of the flaws of this increasingly bandwidth-compromised digital radio format. If you play a heavily data-compressed talk radio station through a stereo system, it sounds like voices are being faxed to you, but through the Tivoli, the drop in sound quality is less dramatic. It's not the lowest common denominator of audio, but it does make the difference between 56kbps mono speech and 128kbps stereo music seem less marked, which ultimately makes DAB's station proliferation that bit more entertaining.

Of course, no-one expects deep bass or soaring treble from a table-top radio, but Tivoli Audio always tries its level best at making you think you can squeeze a sonic quart into an aural pint pot. No change here, although the unit's analogue radio sound is flatter and more muddy sounding than the original Model One.

It's impossible not to compare the Model DAB to Pure's market-leading Evoke portfolio, which is curiously squaring the circle as the Evoke's original look is very Tivoli Model One. The Model DAB is essentially a little fuller and more comfortable on the ear, while the Evoke sound is generally sharper and brighter. Overall, we'd go for the Tivoli on sound alone – indeed, it's probably the best DAB radio of its kind right now. But it's also very expensive, and it's questionable whether the inherent quality of the DAB format warrants this kind of outlay on a table-top radio. But if you really want the best, we guess the answer's 'yes'. **HFC**

Alan Sircom

VERDICT

SOUND >> 82%



FEATURES >> 88%



BUILD >> 85%



VALUE >> 78%



PRO

Warm and full-sounding radio with an ingenious upgrade path to an almost 'separates' system. Great leveller of good and bad DAB sounds.

CON

It's expensive for a table-top radio, and if you don't need DAB the original Model One is a better buy. Some may find the sound a little too warm and smooth.

CONCLUSION

The Model DAB isn't cheap, and for FM/AM sound alone the still-current Model One is a better bet. But if you're desperate for table-top DAB and you're willing to shell out for the best, the Model DAB is just about as good as it gets.

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



GROUP TEST & LAB REPORTS: PAUL MESSENGER

LOUDSPEAKERS

Moving well beyond budget fare, these six speakers are impressively varied

The six loudspeakers in this test group sit squarely in the middle of the mainstream speaker marketplace, costing between £700 and £1,200 per pair. While it's certainly possible to spend much more, this sort of money does pay for considerably more than the budget basics, resulting in an impressively varied group of speakers. This is also one of the most hotly contested parts of the loudspeaker market, a factor that additionally makes for interesting variations on the theme.

However, some cost constraint compromises are evident, like the vinyl woodprint rather than real wood veneer finish used on the two large multi-driver floorstanders from JBL and Dali. That said, both these speakers look fine engineering value for money, not only because of their elaborate driver arrays, but also because they have extra feet to improve the physical stability. Both the Chario and the Epos also have separate plinth arrangements, but not the ALR Jordan. (The standmount PMC doesn't need one, of course.)

Defining the nationality or country of origin of a speaker has become next to impossible in our increasingly globalised international economy. The PMC and Epos are both nominally British, and were certainly designed by British teams, though the Epos is actually manufactured in China. Chario is an Italian brand, Dali is Danish and ALR Jordan comes from Germany, even though drive-unit legend Ted Jordan lives in Pembrokeshire. JBL originally came from the US. It still has its research facilities in California, but as part of the Harman group, it's the most multi-national of all speaker brands, operating from a number of locations all over the planet.

All but one are floorstanders, and all but two have real wood finish – solid lumps of it in the case of the Chario. All have ports that take advantage of the rearward radiation of the bass drivers. Most are simple ports, though the PMC has a rather more elaborate folded transmission line. This variation in design reflects the price point in some

respects – freed from the strictures of producing budget speakers, the designer has some room for innovation, here. **HFC**

EQUIPMENT USED

- ▶ Naim CDS 3 CD player
- ▶ Burmester 001 CD player
- ▶ Linn Sondek LP12 turntable
- ▶ Rega RB1000 tonearm
- ▶ Linn Akiva cartridge
- ▶ Magnum Dynalab MD 102 tuner
- ▶ Naim NAC552 preamplifier
- ▶ Naim NAP500 power amplifier
- ▶ Yamaha MX-D1 power amplifier
- ▶ Cables from Vertex AQ, Chord Company, Harmonic Technology and Naim

MUSIC USED

- ▶ Alabama 3 *Exit on Coldharbour Lane*
- ▶ Alison Krauss + Union Station *Live*
- ▶ Nitin Sawhney *Beyond Skin*
- ▶ Arcade Fire *Funeral*
- ▶ Laurie Anderson *Life on a String*
- ▶ BPO Karajan *Wagner Tannhauser Overture*
- ▶ BBC Radios 3 and 4 were also used throughout the test

ON TEST



ALR Jordan Classic 5
£1,200



Chario Cygnus
£1,200



Dali Ikon 7
£999



Epos M22
£949



JBL Studio L880
£700



PMC TB2+
£850

PMC

LISTENING TESTS

Loudspeaker listening poses more complex problems than those involved in assessing other components. Speakers vary greatly and interact strongly and often unpredictably with the room. The difficulty facing sequential unsighted loudspeaker presentations is the strong tendency to judge each example according to how its balance differs from the model that preceded it. Accordingly, extended hands-on listening sessions were adopted for this group, giving scope to adjust to the changes in balance and to experiment with positioning.

LAB TESTS

The speakers were tested under in-room conditions, to best represent real-world conditions. The test equipment used included a Neutrik Audiograph analogue signal generator with synchronised pen recorder, used to plot the far-field in-room averaged response traces and impedance plots. Pair-matching was also checked at one metre.

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

LAB REPORTS: THE BAR GRAPH

Our 3D bar graphs are a simple way of showing how the speakers compare across quantitative and qualitative measures. Individual parameters are assessed and shown as better or worse than the group average.

1] Sensitivity: Sensitivity measures how loud a speaker will go for a given voltage from the amp. It's scaled to 2.83V at 1m (one watt of power for an eight-ohm load). This figure can be misleading, as sensitivity varies significantly and as lower-impedance speakers extract more current and hence power from an amplifier than higher-impedance ones.

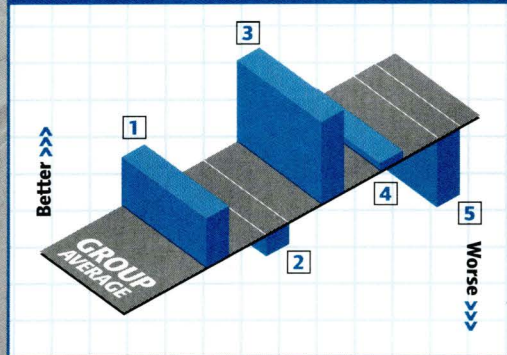
2] Bass extension: A speaker's bass is heavily modified by the room. To replicate 'real world' conditions, our figure represents the averaged bass roll-off frequency at -6dB with reference to the broad midband, measured across the far field for a stereo pair in a 4.3x2.6x5.5m room.

3] Ease of drive: The lower the impedance, the more current it extracts from the driving amp for a given volume. Lower impedance designs have higher sensitivities, reducing voltage requirement for given loudness levels.

4] Overall frequency balance: Overall broad frequency response trends do much to define the character of a speaker, although true neutrality is the obvious goal.

5] Response smoothness: The small scale smoothness of a speaker has much to do with the delicacy of the sound, and its ability to deliver subtle harmonic shading.

OUR BAR GRAPHS: AN EXAMPLE



FINE TWO CHANNEL AUDIO SYSTEMS



a



b

a Ayre C-5xe Universal Stereo Disc player.

This player will play any format in stereo only. As there is no video circuitry included, there is no downgrade of the audio signal. The exceptional quality of sound on standard CD replay alone justifies its price. It has the typical high performance that Ayre has become known for; very smooth, correct tonal balance, excellent transparency and detail. It creates a very layered soundstage with precise focus of imaging within that stage. £4495.

d Conrad-Johnson PV14L-2/MV60SE.

This classic valve pre and power amplifier combination has always produced an excellent, natural sound and is one of the best valve designs available today. Currently there is an opportunity to purchase this pair at a combined price of £4500, a saving of £495. Individual prices; PV14L-2 pre-amplifier £2395 and MV60SE power amplifier (65wpc) £2500.



c

c Gamut L5 loudspeakers.

A very high quality loudspeaker from this well known amplifier manufacturer. A very transparent sound stage with precise imaging. The cabinet work and build quality is of the highest order and would enhance any domestic environment. £5950.

d Nottingham Analogue Space Deck.

With the new, thicker platter and upgrade kit it produces an even more neutral and stable image. £1417.



d



e

e Rogue Audio Metis/Atlas.

The latest products from this fine valve amplifier manufacturer. A remarkably good sound at an affordable price. Designed and built in the USA, a quality combination that should be auditioned with only the best ancillary components. Metis valve pre-amplifier £995; Atlas valve power amplifier (55wpc) £1195.

f System Audio loudspeakers.

These very slim speakers produce an astonishingly good sound for their price. A very 3-dimensional soundstage and a full sound for their size. Being very musical, they deserve to be heard with well balanced components. Models shown right SA 1530 £495; left SA1730 £695.



f

AMPHION ▶ ART ▶ AUDIO AERO ▶ AUDIO ANALOGUE ▶ AUDIO PHYSIC ▶ AVALON ▶ AYRE ACOUSTICS ▶ BEL CANTO ▶ BENZ-MICRO ▶ CARDAS ▶ CLEARAUDIO ▶ CONRAD-JOHNSON ▶ DALI ▶ EAR/YOSHINO ▶ ECLIPSE-TD ▶ FINAL ▶ GAMUT ▶ GRAAF ▶ GRAND PRIX AUDIO ▶ LYRA ▶ MCINTOSH ▶ MONO PULSE ▶ NORDOST ▶ NOTTINGHAM ANALOGUE ▶ PAGODE ▶ PATHOS ▶ QUADRASPIRE ▶ ROGUE AUDIO ▶ SME ▶ SHUN MOOK ▶ SYSTEM AUDIO ▶ THIEL ▶ TRANSGURATION ▶ 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

£1,200 per pair ☎ 01730 261924 🌐 www.alr-jordan.com

ALR JORDAN CLASSIC 5

A handsome floorstander from a German brand with British links

ALR Jordan is a German speaker brand with close connections to British drive unit specialist Ted Jordan, pioneer of metal diaphragm technology, and one of the most experienced men in the hi-fi industry. With his background, it's perhaps no surprise that metal diaphragm main drivers form the basis of ALR Jordan's numerous models.

The Classic series sits between the Entry and the Note ranges, and comprises four models: a Classic 2 standmount, a Classic Center, a Classic Sub, and this Classic 5 floorstander. All feature high-quality real wood veneer, in the smooth and rather bland style with a lack of visible grain that is normally favoured by mainland European manufacturers. And all bar the subwoofer are based on the same magnetically shielded 140mm bass/mid drive unit, plus a 25mm tweeter with a pre-coated polyester fabric dome and neodymium magnet.

The Classic 5 is a tall, slim loudspeaker with two small 140mm bass/mid drivers, each with

100mm metal cones loaded by a generous port-loaded enclosure. These drivers are flush-mounted into the narrow front panel and sited above and below the tweeter, operating in tandem up to the crossover point in the so-called d'Appolito arrangement.

Bungs are available to block the ports, which might be useful if the speakers need to be sited close to a wall. Spikes are supplied too, but the narrow enclosure and absence of any plinth or outrigger arrangement leaves lateral stability compromised. Twin terminal pairs are located close to the floor, and are fixed directly through the enclosure, deliberately avoiding the use of a plastic terminal block.

SOUND QUALITY

Sited well clear of walls, the bass alignment worked fine without any need to use the port bungs, and indeed the bass region is notably well ordered with good articulation and a wide dynamic range. The Classic 5 has an impressively even and attractively warm tonal balance, albeit one that might be on the laid-back side for some tastes. Certainly, speech does sound a little 'shut in', but the speaker's impressive overall coherence ensures fine musical communication without any tendency to force the issue or hype up the detail.

Even relatively aggressive recordings are rendered very listenable here, yet the degree of restraint never seems sufficient to mask the subtle details. This is largely because the top end is notably sweet, smooth and well extended, without ever becoming unduly obvious. And, while it's true that the tonal balance encourages playing the system at higher levels, low-level intelligibility seems in no way compromised.

It's no great bass excavator or powerhouse, to be sure, and in some respects the Classic 5 delivers the sort of performance one would normally associate with a large, high-quality standmount – an observation that is intended as a compliment, not a criticism. If the ultimate weight is a little lacking, there's fine agility and poise here, with a good sense of purpose in the way the music is driven along.

Imaging is a particular forte, with superior focus, good depth perspectives and fine freedom from any unwanted boxiness. This is further assisted by the way the very clean sound and wide dynamic range through the bass region convincingly reproduces low level ambient information. The Classic 5 might err on the side of understatement, but it does so with considerable class and charm. **HFC**

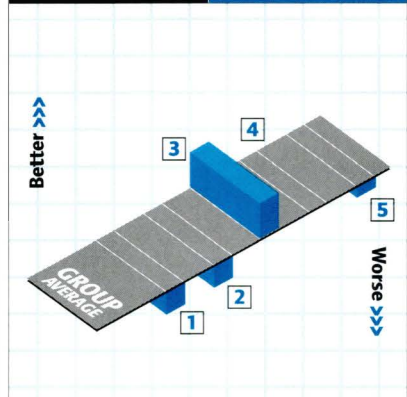


LAB REPORT

The manufacturer's specification quotes a sensitivity of 90dB alongside an 8-ohm impedance, and while we certainly agree with the latter – indeed the load is unusually benign, staying comfortably above 8 ohms all the way up to 3kHz – our far-field assessment of the sensitivity is a rather more modest 87dB. Even so, that's a respectable enough figure, given the ingredients and the undemanding load. The bass alignment is well suited to free space siting, although the absolute extension is somewhat limited because the reflex port is tuned to 45Hz.

The bass and midrange hold within very respectable limits from 40Hz up to 900Hz, measured under far-field in-room conditions. Output drops somewhat above 900Hz, but the presence and treble are above that point is impressively flat and smooth, while the actual crossover transition close to 3kHz is effectively seamless and invisible.

HOW IT COMPARES



- 1] Sensitivity >> -20%
- 2] Bass extension >> -20%
- 3] Ease of drive >> +40%
- 4] Overall frequency balance >> 0%
- 5] Response smoothness >> -10%

SPECIFICATIONS

Measurement	Rated	Actual
Sensitivity @ 1m/283V	90dB	87dB
Impedance (nominal/minimum)	8/- ohms	8/7 ohms
Estimated bass extension (-6dB)	-	28Hz

VERDICT

SOUND >> 88%

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

PRACTICALITY >> 87%

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

BUILD >> 89%

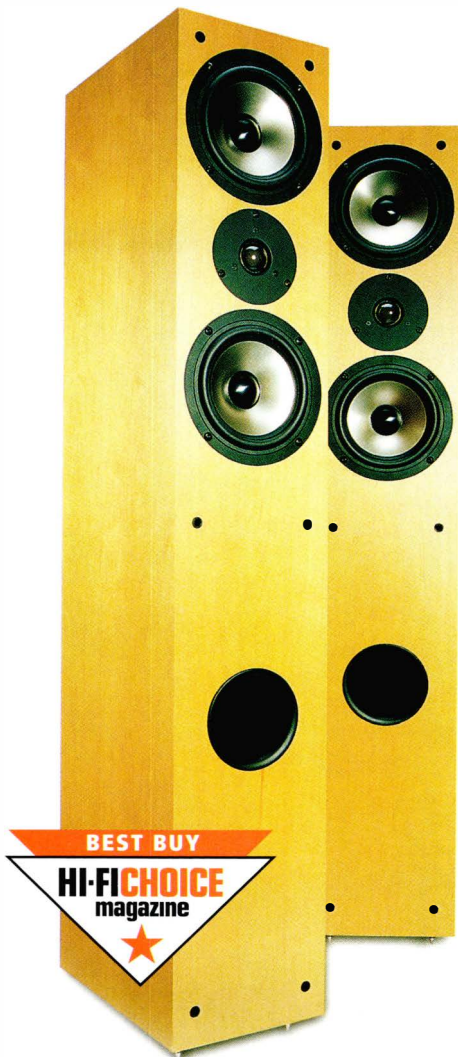
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

VALUE >> 87%

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

German floorstander with metal cone main drivers. The sweet, lively sound has delightful top-to-bottom coherence, a notably wide dynamic range and pin-point imaging. A wider stability footprint would be welcome.

HI-FI CHOICE **88%**
OVERALL SCORE





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

ART Loudspeakers

we think the sound is truly jaw-dropping and the emotion is without doubt a must hear speaker!



The long-awaited new Loudspeakers from ART Loudspeakers are finally here and it's all about emotion. Designed by Derek / Ramsay Dunlop, the Emotion loudspeaker is without doubt their finest creation to date and they are rightly very proud of this speaker – it took us at Shadow less than 5 minutes to see and hear why!

Many of you will have noticed on all the popular Hi-fi Forums, the number of people talking about the Emotion loudspeakers and everybody is saying the same thing. No matter what you have to do, what you have to sell, you just have to buy the Emotion loudspeaker because nothing else comes even close! For those of you not convinced by the hundreds of forum posts,

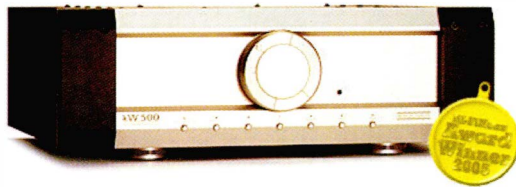
call us to arrange a demonstration and hear for yourself what all the fuss is about....

We at Shadow think the sound is – staggering, awesome, jaw-dropping and it's a speaker that no one can afford not to hear!

If £9,000 is more than your budget allows, all is not lost for those clever people at ART have designed three Emotion loudspeaker models: Emotion (£5,000), Emotion Signature (£9,000) and Emotion Silver Signature (£TBA). Even more clever is the fact that the Emotion and Emotion Signature can both at a later date be upgraded to the next model(s) – truly ingenious!

Musical Fidelity kW Series

the kW 500 / kW SACD are limited production and may be getting low on stock. Remember we give you a 30-day money back guarantee* on both the kW 500 / SACD!



kW 500 Integrated Amplifier - £3995

It's really simple the kW 500 is virtually indistinguishable from the monster-killer kW monoblocs. The kW 500 is one of the best five amplifiers in the world regardless of price. It has super technical performance, loads of power (more than 500 wpc). The preamp stage is super quality and can withstand comparison with the best available. All in all the kW 500 is just about as good as you can get except it doesn't cost the earth. When you listen to the kW 500 it's easy to understand what all the fuss is about. Beautiful, neutral, limpid sound with no coloration and virtually limitless power. In MF tests nobody could reliably tell the difference between a kW 500 and the kW monsteramps. The kW 500 is a limited edition of 500 pieces.

kW SACD Player - £3995

The kW SACD has a meltingly beautiful sound. It doesn't really sound like other disc players. Its sound is most reminiscent of a really good analog system but with no noise or dynamic range problems. Once you've heard the kW SACD you just can't forget that crystalline clarity coupled with a delicacy and softness which give a palpable real feel to the sound. You've got to give this one a listen it's quite outstanding.

We have the full kW Range on Demonstration.

IsoTek

for the best free advice and 30-day money back guarantee* on IsoTek mains conditioning products...

IsoTek Special Offers

On the following IsoTek mains filtration systems:

- NOVA (new) £1495
- Titan (new) £1425
- Gill Minisub £495
- Gill Solus £295

FREE delivery, FREE IsoTek mains cable worth £49 and a 30-day money back guarantee*.



Gill Solus



Titan



NOVA



Gill Minisub



NEW IsoTek NOVA

(shown on the left)

Following the renowned Titan mains conditioner, comes the new NOVA.

Similarly styled to the Titan, the NOVA is intended primarily for lower power source components. Like the Titan it has high current capability (3860 watts). This makes it suitable to run complete modestly sized systems. Each of the six outlets has individual filtering. Adaptive Gating senses components power requirements and adjusts filtering and power to suit.

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

£1,200 per pair ☎ 01942 790600 🌐 www.chario.it

CHARIO CYGNUS

Beautiful cabinetwork from Chario's Constellation range

It's more than four years since *Hi-Fi Choice* last looked at a Chario loudspeaker, but this well established Italian brand – founded in 1975 and therefore currently celebrating its 30th birthday – is now coming to the UK through a new distributor, Audio Classics of Bolton.

Although this is the sixth Chario to come in for our scrutiny, rather surprisingly it's also the first floorstander and the first three-way – not that the latter is obvious at first inspection. The Constellation range comprises five stereo pairs, and the Cygnus sits right in the middle of the line-up, though it does have much in common with the little Lynx standmount that we reviewed back in 1999. In fact, it's essentially a floorstanding version of the Lynx, sharing similar drive units for midrange and treble duties, but augmenting them with a bass unit cunningly secreted in the base panel, alongside twin ports. This arrangement is spaced away from the floor by a very chunky HDF base. The



latter provides secure accommodation for 6mm spikes, with a decent enough footprint to give the speaker good stability.

Gorgeous cabinetwork is part of the Chario culture, and the Cygnus has elegantly sculptured sides built up from thick staves of solid walnut with rounded edges, sandwiching a dark grey matt vinyl covering front, top, back and base panels. Although the sides and back are vertical, there's asymmetry elsewhere, with the front and top both angled away from the rectangular box shape. That, in turn, should help spread out the internal standing waves and reflections, and the whole thing feels exceptionally solid.

Both the bass and midrange drivers have 130mm cast frame and small 85mm doped paper cones, while the tweeter uses a much larger than usual 38mm soft fabric dome, the latter permitting a lower than usual mid-to-treble crossover, at 1.5kHz. A single terminal pair is mounted high up on the rear, and proved a rather slack fit with Furukawa 4mm plugs, with no option to use a bare-wire hole either.

SOUND QUALITY

Our experience of the Lynx was not particularly positive, the tonal balance suffering from an excess of midbass alongside insufficient upper midband and presence energy. Something of the same was probably inevitable when the Cygnus was brought into the listening room, and this did initially prove to be the case: the bottom end tended to thump, and the presence was rather too laid back. There's not much one can do about the lack of presence, but it did prove possible to adjust the bass alignment, the better to suit our listening room, by the simple expedient of blocking one of the two ports.

This wrought a substantial improvement, completely removing the 'thump' and actually increasing the impression of weight. And, while the overall tonal balance of this speaker remains rather laid back, it has a number of strengths to whet the enthusiasm.

Boxiness is exceptionally well controlled, partly because of the very solid enclosure, and partly no doubt due to its asymmetry too. The midrange shows fine delicacy and agility, and the top end is well judged, smooth and clean, both contributing to very superior out-of-the-box stereo imaging. The bass is even and well controlled, if a little reticent in supplying the shape and intentionality of the musical argument. **HFC**



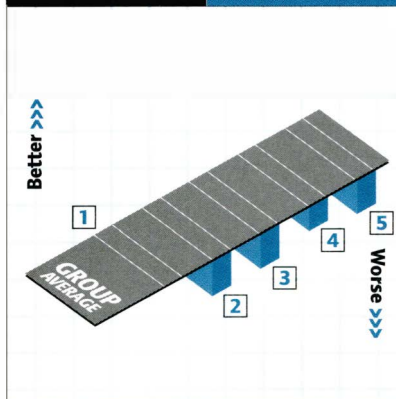
LAB REPORT

In an unusually comprehensive specification, Chario quotes a sensitivity rating of 87dB, which was comfortably met under our measurement regime. That said, this is not a particularly generous figure in the context of the 4-ohm load, especially as the bass rolls off rapidly below 50Hz.

However, bass alignment is a function of the interaction of the speakers with the particular modes that exist within the listening room. With its twin port arrangement tuned to 48Hz, the Cygnus showed a considerable (+7dB) peak around 54Hz. Blocking either one of the ports re-tuned the porting to 37Hz, which gave a much better alignment under our conditions, removing the peak and extending the bass to around 30Hz.

That issue aside, the broad midband has an even balance and is relatively smooth up to 1kHz, but the broad treble, again smooth, is somewhat depressed from 1.8kHz up to a minor recovery centred on 9kHz.

HOW IT COMPARES



- 1] Sensitivity >> 0%
- 2] Bass extension >> -30%
- 3] Ease of drive >> -30%
- 4] Overall frequency balance >> -20%
- 5] Response smoothness >> -30%

SPECIFICATIONS

Measurement	Rated	Actual
Sensitivity @ 1m/2.83V	87dB	88dB
Impedance (nominal/minimum)	4/- ohms	4/3.3 ohms
Estimated bass extension (-6dB)	45Hz	28Hz

VERDICT

SOUND >> 80%

Beautiful cabinet includes solid walnut side panels, plus an elegant plinth. Port tuning proved inappropriate, but was easily and effectively rectified. The laid back sound has delicacy, imaging and refinement.

PRACTICALITY >> 75%

BUILD >> 92%

VALUE >> 80%

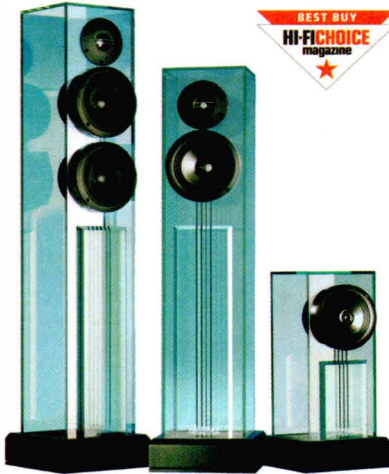
HI-FI CHOICE
OVERALL SCORE **80%**


WATERFALL
AUDIO

"The result is an overall crispness and clarity that is rarely matched by conventional wood-bodied speakers."
Hi-Fi Choice, Jan 2005

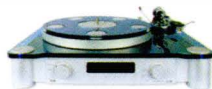
"I soon came to appreciate the intrinsically musical character here and found myself listening at great length."
Hi-Fi News July 2005

"They succeed by being beautiful both inside and out, combining elegance and superlative engineering rigorously as an aesthetic expression."
Hi-Fi World, June 2005



VERDICT 
V10 Integrated Valve Amplifier
Hi-Fi World, November 2005
"REAL AUDIO DYNAMITE"

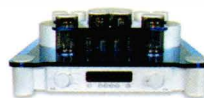
T+A



G10



D10



V10

"A Certifiable Masterpiece. This is to debut amplifiers what LED Zeppelin 1 was to debut LP'S."
Ken Kessler, HiFi News, February 2004

Authorised Dealers:

Unique Sound & Vision
266 Seven Sisters Road
London, N4 2VY
Tel: 020 7272 0922

Guildford Audio
180 Epsom Road
Guildford
Surrey, GU1 2RR
Tel: 01483 537577

Sounds of Music
Fir Grove Business Park
Fir Grove Road
Cross in Hand
Near Heathfield, Kent
TN21 0QL
Tel: 01892 545688

TechnoGnosis
38 Markhams Chase
Basildon
Essex, SS15 5JY
Tel: 07770 851445

The High End
5 Rocks Lane
Barns
London, SW13 0DB
Tel: 020 8876 3355

Laser Vinyl
90 Royal Worcestershire
Crescent
Bromsgrove, B60 2TA
Tel: 07976 544236

Home Networks Sound & Vision
1045 Stratford Road
Hall Green
Birmingham, B28 8AS
Tel: 07785 241478

Videotech
14 Cross Church Street
Huddersfield
West Yorks, HD1 2PT
Tel: 01484 516670

Midland Hi Fi Studio
9 Finchfield Road West
Wolverhampton, WV3 8AY
01902 380083

Music Unlimited
The Old Barn
Main Road, Leverton
Boston, PE22 0AU
Tel: 01205 871699

Audience
14 Broad Street
Bath
Tel: 01225 333310

Alto AV
Unit 29
Tariff Road
Tottenham
London, N17 0DY
Tel: 0845 456 9614

Transparent Distribution Ltd
Coxmoor Road, Sutton in Ashfield, NG17 5LA, UK

(tel/fax) 01623 517000
info@transparentdl.co.uk
www.transparentdl.co.uk



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

HI-FI CHOICE

to advertise here contact **advertising on**

☎ 0207 317 2600



£999 per pair ☎ 0845 6443537 🌐 www.dali-uk.co.uk

DALI IKON 7

Can this big brother of the Best Buy Ikon 6 repeat the same trick?

Dali's new mid-price Ikon series made its debut with the Ikon 6, which we reviewed and rated as a Best Buy in HFC 271. This Danish-made Ikon 7 is very similar indeed to that model, using most of the same ingredients, the essential differences being the addition of an extra bass driver, an extra 14 centimetres on the height, and an extra £100 on the pricetag.

In fact, there are nine Ikons in total, several specifically oriented towards multichannel 'home cinema' applications, but also four stereo pairs – one standmount and three floorstanders – of which this £999 Ikon 7 is the largest and most costly. Judged by height, it's also comfortably the largest speaker in this group test, standing 114cm tall. It's one of the heaviest too, at a smidgeon under 23kg.

The five-driver line-up looks both impressive and complex, though don't be misled by the latter. At heart, this is actually a relatively simple two-way design, albeit with a couple of extra 'half-ways' tacked on to help out at the frequency extremes.

Though undoubtedly imbued with a powerful sense of purpose, it isn't, in truth, the prettiest speaker around. The box is square edged all round, with vinyl woodprint covering all but the silver-painted front, and some internal bracing. The front panel is constructed as a sandwich of two layers of MDF, bonded by a lossy glue that affords some damping, and facilitating flush-mounting the drivers.

The bass and midrange are handled by three apparently identical 165mm cast frame units with dish-shaped diaphragms 115mm in diameter, made from a combination of wood fibres and paper pulp. The lower two only operate through the bass region, while the uppermost one handles both bass and midrange duties. The latter then crosses over to Dali's proprietary 'hybrid tweeter module'. Similar to those found in the company's more upmarket models, this combines a 28mm fabric dome tweeter that starts operating around 3.2kHz, plus a 17x45mm ribbon unit, which starts coming in at around 10kHz.

SOUND QUALITY

Big multi-driver speakers are expected to deliver a big and lively sound, and normally to do so when placed well clear of walls. Both those factors were certainly true of the Ikon 7, which should be kept at least a metre out from the nearest walls to give a smooth and extended bass delivery.

Unlike many large speakers, it also shows superior transparency and a lovely coherence, perhaps reflecting the fact that this is essentially a two-way, albeit with additional augmentation at the frequency extremes.

There are obvious similarities to Dali's more costly and luxuriously finished Helicon 400. One could say this Ikon 7 offers a very healthy proportion of the H400's performance at a very much lower cost. The sound does lack some of the smooth sophistication of its senior sibling, and you don't get the luxury lacquered wood finish, nor the cunning shape. But, from a value for money perspective, the Ikon 7 is an obvious front-runner.

Criticisms are minor. The twin-tweeter treble module undoubtedly sounds smooth, sweet and open, but is perhaps just a shade too strong, bringing a slight coldness and clinical character to the proceedings. This is compounded by some hyping in the upper midband, reflected in the measured balance, which tends to exaggerate detail somewhat, and can make the speaker sound a little aggressive on poor quality recordings. **HFC**



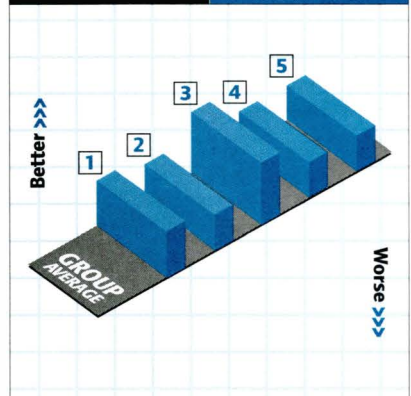
LAB REPORT

The manufacturer claims a sensitivity of 92dB, alongside a 6 ohm impedance, and this corresponds quite well with our own measurement findings, which record a generous 91dB sensitivity plus an impedance that stays comfortably between 5 ohms and 8 ohms across the band (ignoring the bass peaks). It's a combination which should ensure that this speaker is particularly easy to drive.

The bass extension is impressive, registering -6dB at 22Hz under in-room conditions, and because the port is tuned to 35Hz there's no mid-bass peak to get in the way of things – indeed the in-room response stays within a very impressive +/-4dB right across the whole audio band.

That said, a broad peak centred on 800Hz is certain to be subjectively audible, and there's some unevenness through the presence zone too. While the treble proper is beautifully smooth and extended, it's also a little stronger than average.

HOW IT COMPARES



- 1] Sensitivity >> +40%
- 2] Bass extension >> +30%
- 3] Ease of drive >> +50%
- 4] Overall frequency balance >> +30%
- 5] Response smoothness >> +30%

SPECIFICATIONS

Measurement	Rated	Actual
Sensitivity @ 1m/2.83V	92dB	91dB
Impedance (nominal/minimum)	6/-	7/5 ohms
Estimated bass extension (-6dB)	-	22Hz

VERDICT

SOUND >> 88%

■■■■■■■■■■

PRACTICALITY >> 88%

■■■■■■■■■■

BUILD >> 85%

■■■■■■■■■■

VALUE >> 91%

■■■■■■■■■■

This substantial multi-driver floorstander has high sensitivity, wide bandwidth, and is an easy load. Furthermore, the sound has superior coherence, delicacy and transparency, with a bright but sweet top end.

HI-FI CHOICE 90% OVERALL SCORE



THE
BIG
Used Items Sale
Quote HFCJ06

Shadow
Audio Consultants

Starts 9am, 21st November 2005
Ends 5pm, 26th November 2005

Get 10% off the previous price on any of the items below and give your Hi-Fi System a new lease of life in time for Christmas!

CD Players

Primare D30.2 boxed (£1595)	£795	£715.50
Cyrus Discmaster CD Transport, Black	£349	£314.10
Naim CD5i, boxed as new	£625	£562.50
Theta Cobalt 307 DAC, boxed in black as new	£185	£166.50
Audio Synthesis DAX Discrete in Black (£4000)	£2195	£1975.50
EAD DSP 9000 Pro S3 DAC pre	£995	£895.50
Wadia 302 CD player (£4000)	£2995	£2695.50
Musical Fidelity Nu-Vista CD Player	£1495	£1345.50
Shanling CDT-100 (3D acoustics UK model) - £1600	£990	£891.00
Audio Analogue Paganini (£950)	£695	£625.50
Musical Fidelity A308 CD player	£995	£895.50
Roksan Kandy MKIII silver/black ex-dem	£450	£405.00

Amplifiers

Naim Hi Cap, boxed as new.	£550	£495.00
Naim 102 Pre amplifier, boxed as new condition	£495	£445.50
Naim 250 power amplifier, box in as new condition	£559	£503.10
Roksan Caspian M1 pre + 2xM1 Mono blocks (£3500)	£1995	£1795.50
Jeff Rowland Model One power amplifier	£1295	£1165.50
YBA 2 Pre-amp, exceptional value (£3000)	£995	£895.50
Graaf GM50, 2 months old, boxed (£4000)	£2995	£2695.50
Meridian 557 Power amplifier, boxed, one owner excellent.	£795	£715.50
Cyrus 8VS integrated, in black, boxed as new	£589	£530.10
Nagra VPA mono blocks, 8 months old (£10500)	£6399	£5759.10
Rotel 1062 Amplifier, boxed as new	£375	£337.50
Jeff Rowland Concentra mkII, boxed (£10000)	£3695	£3325.50
AVI Lab Series Integrated amplifier (£1500)	£949	£854.10
Conrad Johnson PV14L pre, 2yrs old (£2300)	£1250	£1125.00
Unison Research SR-1 integrated (£1325)	£699	£629.10
BAT VK 250 BAT PAK power amplifier (£4995)	£2495	£2245.50
Pathos Classic One mkII (£1400)	£950	£855.00
Classe CP 47.5 reference pre amp	£1295	£1165.50
ES Lab DXS4 digital amplifier	£1295	£1165.50
Croft TS1 with Epoch Pre (£3000)	£1795	£1615.50
ART Conductor Pre-amp	£895	£805.50
Conrad Johnson 16LS pre-amp (£8000)	£3450	£3105.00
Audio Analogue Puccini Settanta (£950)	£795	£715.50
Sugdren Masterclass Mono blocks (£6600)	£3895	£3505.50
Musical Fidelity X-150 v3 (£799)	£650	£585.00
Hovland HP100 pre+built in phstage (£5350)	£3595	£3235.50
Hovland Radia Power amplifier (£7995)	£4995	£4495.50
Hovland HP200 + phono stage (£7325)	£4995	£4495.50
Audio Analogue New Maestro (£1750)	£1255	£1129.50
Audio Analogue Primo Setanta	£325	£292.50
Roksan Kandy MKIII (silver or black)	£450	£405.00

Loudspeakers

Naim SBL Speakers in black ash, boxed	£495	£445.50
ATC SCM-50ASL finished in Yew (£7947)	£4995	£4495.50
Tannoy Dimension TD10 speakers (£5000)	£2395	£2155.50
B&W Signature 30 loudspeakers (£8000)	£3295	£2965.50
ATC SCM 20 SL, non active, finished in yew	£1295	£1165.50
Klipsch Klipschoms. Orig boxes/packing, walnut (£8000)	£2495	£2245.50
ART Audio Skibo Speakers+matching ART stands (£1100)	£595	£535.50
Wilson Benesch Curve speakers (£5000)	£3495	£3145.50
Triangle Titus ES stand mount (£370)	£269	£242.10
Dali Helicon 400 (£3300)	£1995	£1795.50
Audio Note AN-ED speakers	£695	£625.50
Mission 780 SE, boxed	£185	£166.50
LivingVoice Avatar II, finished in cherry (£2700)	£1595	£1435.50
Nola (Alon) Elite Signature speakers (£8000)	£3595	£3235.50
Ref 3a Dacapo i, maple (£2700)	£1650	£1485.00
JM Lab Cobalt 816s (£999)	£595	£535.50
Triangle Heliade, Champagne finish (£595)	£395	£355.50
Wilson Benesch ARC's with stands (£2500)	£1699	£1529.10
Triangle Australe in cherry (£3300)	£1995	£1795.50
LivingVoice Avatar OBX-R in Cherry	£2895	£2605.50
Wilson Benesch Discovery (£5700)	£3895	£3505.50
Quad 989 ESL Vintage, new £5000	£3600	£3240.00
Quad 988 ESL in Nouveau, cost new £3750	£2999	£2699.10
Audio Physic Spark3, Cherry or light maple	£1250	£1125.00
Audio Physic Tempo 3i, Cherry or light maple	£1395	£1255.50
Audio Physic Tempo3i SE, Cherry/light maple	£1799	£1619.10
Audio Physic Virgo III, Cherry	£2895	£2605.50

Analogue

Pro-Ject RPM4 Turntable, boxed as new (£350)	£195	£175.50
Rega P25 with Super Elys Cartridge	£450	£405.00
Audio Synthesis Passion Phono stage, unused, (£1295)	£695	£625.50
Ortofon Jubilee, very low hours, boxed as new, be quick!	£595	£535.50
SME 10, boxed AS NEW (£2800)	£1895	£1705.50
Audio Synthesis Passion Phono stage MM/MC	£795	£715.50
SME 20/2a + SME V tonearm (£5695)	£3695	£3325.50
Wilson Benesch Full Circle+Ply Cart (£2100)	£1495	£1345.50
Musical Fidelity M1 turntable, boxed as new	£1990	£1791.10
Michell Orbe SE boxed as new	£1595	£1435.50
SME 10A, boxed	£2495	£2245.50
Nottingham Analogue Spacedec	£695	£625.50
Trichord Dino - silver front	£199	£179.10

Miscellaneous

Naim Hi Cap, boxed as new	£550	£495.00
Nordost Vishnu 2m mains lead, as new (£450)	£349	£314.10
PS Audio P600 power plant (£2895)	£1595	£1435.50
Townshend Super Tweeters in Titanium matt	£650	£585.00



For 6 days only!

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

£949 per pair ☎ 01442 260146 🌐 www.epos-acoustics.com

EPOS M22

A clever combination of British design and Chinese manufacture

Epos has been enjoying healthy growth since it teamed up with Creek Audio a few years back, and has proved particularly successful in refining the art of combining British design expertise with economical Chinese manufacture.

The M22 looks very similar to the M15.2 that we reviewed in *HFC* 253, and indeed shares the same width and depth dimensions. However, this rather more costly model is taller, and operates in a two-and-a-half-way configuration, with an extra main driver that's active just through the bass region, loaded by a port on the rear close to the floor.

It's a particularly handsome and discreet loudspeaker, finished in an attractive real wood veneer with neatly rounded front edges. Finish options include light, dark or black cherry wood veneer, and the whole thing feels very solid, the use of 25mm MDF throughout confirmed in a total weight of 17kg. All the drivers are flush-mounted, and although a grille is supplied, its use is not encouraged.

The speaker comes with a very smart and substantial chamfered plinth, which not only improves the appearance but, by considerably enlarging the footprint, also ensures fine

overall stability. That said, the spike sockets could certainly have been better tolerated and founded: this gave some trouble during installation, and would seem to negate some of the benefits of spike coupling.

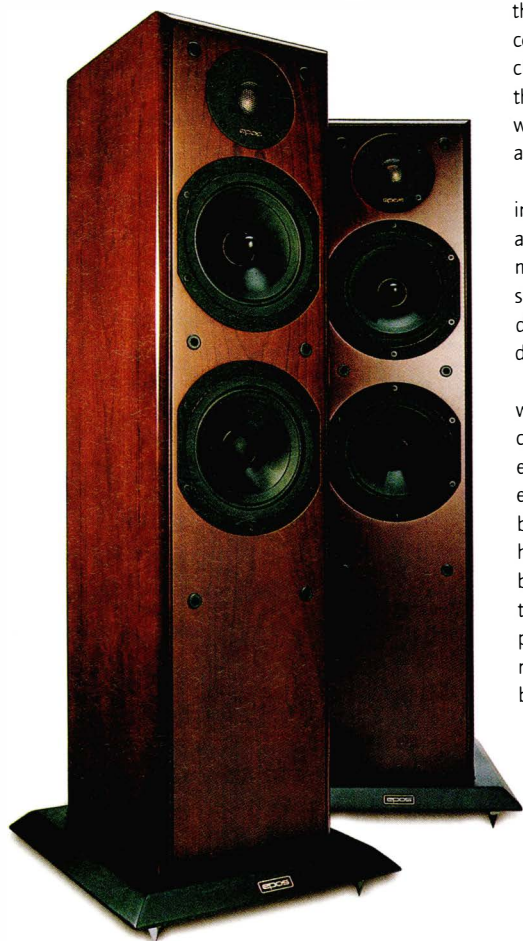
Epos has its own particular way of doing things, and that includes moulded flared plastic driver cones and minimalist crossover networks with 6dB/octave slopes. Both the bass/mid and bass-only drivers have 150mm cast alloy frames and 115mm diameter cones: though similar, they're not identical, as the upper one, covering the midrange as well as the bass, has a fixed phase plug protruding from its central polepiece. Unusually – though entirely appropriately – three pairs of terminals are fitted, giving individual access to all three drive units if desired; using the supplied links, any combination of single-, bi- or tri-wiring, or even bi- or tri-amping is feasible.

SOUND QUALITY

Room measurements, confirmed by listening, indicate that the M22 should definitely be kept well clear of walls. Even then, the mid-bass proved a shade strong under our room conditions, with a mild tendency to thump when provoked by appropriate musical content. This effect will vary according to the characteristics of the listening room, and there's always the option of blocking the port, which will probably make sense if the speakers are placed closer to a wall.

Bass alignment aside, the broad midband is impressively smooth and well ordered, bringing a natural even-handedness to the music making. Indeed, this is a very well balanced speaker for the most part, albeit with a delivery that seems rather gentle from a dynamic point of view.

Voices carry precisely appropriate weight and warmth, but there is also some nasal coloration here, giving a slightly pinched effect, and rather more than a touch of edginess, too. The latter initially seemed beneficial, because of the way it helped to highlight detail. But over the longer haul it began to pall, adding a touch of hardness that tended to become wearing especially when playing the music loud. This may well be related to the significant overlap between bass/mid and treble drivers, as both supply more or less equal output between 3.5kHz and 6kHz. But if that is the M22's weakest link, there are many positives in the smooth midband, solid build and very attractive cabinetwork. **HFC**



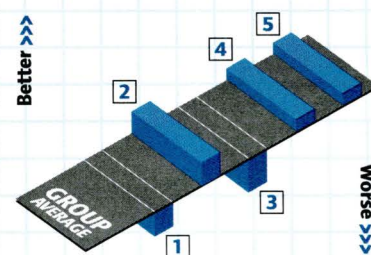
LAB REPORT

Sensitivity is quoted at 87dB, alongside a nominal 6-ohm impedance, which is pretty close to our estimate of 86dB. However, that is a rather low figure, comfortably below average, especially so since the impedance drops down to around 4 ohms in the bottom octave (20-40Hz), and therefore doesn't present a particularly easy amplifier load.

Despite the fact that the port appears to be tuned to a lowish 38Hz here, bass alignment proved somewhat problematic in our test room, with too much output at around 50Hz. Port blocking could be an option, especially if combined with some close-to-wall reinforcement, but it still proved difficult to achieve an ideal alignment.

The broad midband is impressively smooth and even, though output tails off a little above 2kHz prior to recovering again at 5kHz. This latter peak owes as much to output from the unfiltered bass/mid driver than the tweeter proper.

HOW IT COMPARES



- 1] Sensitivity >> -20%
- 2] Bass extension >> +20%
- 3] Ease of drive >> -30%
- 4] Overall frequency balance >> +10%
- 5] Response smoothness >> +10%

SPECIFICATIONS

Measurement	Rated	Actual
Sensitivity @ 1m/2.83V	87dB	86dB
Impedance (nominal/minimum)	6/- ohms	6/4 ohms
Estimated bass extension (-6dB)	40	25Hz

VERDICT

SOUND >> 78%

PRACTICALITY >> 74%

BUILD >> 88%

VALUE >> 81%

This classy looking compact floorstander has real wood finish and a stylish plinth. Bass alignment proved a little problematic but the broad midband is beautifully smooth and even, while the top end is edgy and hard.

HI-FI CHOICE
OVERALL SCORE **80%**

ROKSAN

Technology



NEW Maths !!!
£650 + £650 = £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 SUPERTTEST WINNER (5 Star Gold)
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION **May 2003**
- Kandy Integrated amplifier**
Five Stars
2002 SUPERTTEST 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

£700 per pair ☎ 020 8731 4670 🌐 www.jbl.com

JBL STUDIO L880

A substantial floorstander from the world's biggest speaker brand

JBL is probably the largest, best-known speaker brand on the planet. It has been part of US multi-national Harman Industries for many years, and has a presence in virtually every marketplace where speakers are found, from large scale PA rigs and studio monitors via in-car and computer peripherals to domestic hi-fi systems. While the research and design work is mainly carried out at the company labs in Northridge, California, manufacture is widely distributed around the globe – this particular speaker was made in Mexico, for example.

The Studio L series is a brand new range of vinyl-covered, value-oriented stereo and home cinema models. This £700 per pair L880 is the middle of three stereo pairs and the smaller of two floorstanders. Stressing the good material value for money on offer here, it's also the least expensive, yet at the same time is the heaviest, most complex and one of the largest speakers in this *Ultimate Group Test*.

Vinyl woodprint has got pretty good these days, and it certainly facilitates covering the nicely radiused vertical edges. As the 24.5kg weight suggests, construction is very solid indeed, and the deep enclosure, combined with four little feet fixed to the sides, ensures fine overall stability and good spike security.



The row of drive units with their silver-coloured diaphragms and cast alloy frames and chassis that occupy the front panel look most impressive, though complexity in speakers is not necessarily beneficial. The cone diaphragms might have a silver finish, but in fact this 'PolyPlas' composite is a polymer surface laminated onto a paper pulp substrate.

The result is essentially a three-and-a-half-way design – a three-way with an additional super-tweeter. The bass is handled by twin 150mm drivers backed up by a large front port, while midrange duties (700Hz-5kHz) are consigned to a 100mm driver with an 85mm cone. The main tweeter, meanwhile, operates above a high 5kHz and has a 25mm titanium dome and short horn waveguide. The 19mm horn-loaded super-tweeter has a plastic diaphragm and only comes in at 20kHz, around the limit of human hearing. Twin terminal pairs feed what JBL calls a "straight-line signal path network".

SOUND QUALITY

Given the size of both the enclosure and the driver array, it's only to be expected that this is a free-space design, intended to be kept well clear of walls. First impressions are of a sound that is exceptionally solid and unusually neutral, and those characteristics remained obvious throughout the listening sessions.

There's a warmth and richness here which one rarely encounters in more compact loudspeakers, and a cogent impression of power with more than ample reserves of headroom. Even when playing the system at high levels, these speakers never show any evidence of strain and give vivid expression to dynamic contrasts.

Voices and especially speech sound delightfully open, with easy intelligibility. If it doesn't have the sweetest sound around, it's always busy and delivers bags of explicit detail. Depending somewhat on the quality of the specific recording, there were times when the sound could be a little unforgiving, bordering on aggressive, especially with heavily compressed pop/rock material.

Coherence is good for a multi-way speaker, if a little less than that achieved by simpler designs, and transparency seemed mildly compromised through the top half of the audio band. But this is a speaker that really knows how to rock, delivering its music with considerable authority and plenty of punch and drive. Given the relatively modest price, that's some achievement. **HFC**



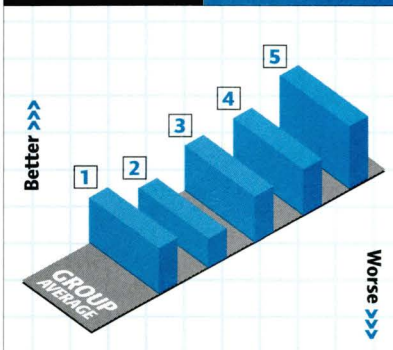
LAB REPORT

JBL claims a sensitivity of 91dB alongside an impedance of 8 ohms for the L880. This is perhaps a shade optimistic, though close enough to our findings of 90dB sensitivity with a 7-ohm nominal impedance. This falls to around 4.5 ohms through the lower midband, which is unlikely to pose any problems for the driving amplifier, while upper mid and high frequencies are easier still.

The port is tuned to 38Hz, giving good in-room output down to 25Hz. While the bass region isn't as even as some, the average level looks well judged.

Above 250Hz, output holds within impressively tight limits right across the band, with seamless transitions through the various crossovers, and a very gentle and entirely appropriate downtilt through the treble region. The only perturbation in an otherwise smooth and flat response is a slight peak centred on 800Hz, which will probably serve to over-emphasise detail a little.

HOW IT COMPARES



- 1] Sensitivity >> +30%
- 2] Bass extension >> +20%
- 3] Ease of drive >> +30%
- 4] Overall frequency balance >> +30%
- 5] Response smoothness >> +50%

SPECIFICATIONS

Measurement	Rated	Actual
Sensitivity @ 1m/2.83V	91dB	90dB
Impedance (nominal/minimum)	8/- ohms	6/4.5 ohms
Estimated bass extension (-6dB)	28Hz	25Hz

VERDICT

SOUND >>> 84%



PRACTICALITY >>> 86%



BUILD >>> 85%



VALUE >>> 90%



This great-value, multi-driver floorstander has a beautifully open sound, excellent neutrality, massive headroom, plenty of punch and loads of welly. Could be more transparent, but there's subtlety and imaging here.

HI-FI CHOICE
OVERALL SCORE 87%

Shadow

Distribution

The Hi-Fi industry spans the whole of the world and their are so many wonderful products, designed by truly passionate individuals or groups that just never reach these shores...

With that thought in mind, Shadow Distribution was born to create a bridge if you like between the UK and Rest of World. A bridge for those manufacturers designing products that are more than just a little special.

Only products that pass a very stringent set of requirements, which include extensive listening tests are chosen and distributed by Shadow. These are products at the top of their class, true excellence, sonic nirvana and at a price that seems almost unbelievable when compared to the competition.

As the choice of Hi-Fi products ever grows so to does customer confusion as to what to buy. **Shadow Distribution makes choosing the right product simple and with our 30-day money back scheme you can be assured of the very best long-term care and service.**

For further information please call or visit www.shadowdistribution.co.uk

eastern electric

great things can indeed come in small boxes...



Eastern Electric is a joint venture between US-based Bill O'Connell and Hong Kong-based electrical engineer Alex Yeung, which began when O'Connell met Yeung in the cyber world and eventually ordered one of his 5wpc MA-1 amps with RGN2504 rectifier and 6L6 output tubes. The rest as they say, is history..... and the results speak for themselves!

Eastern Electric consists of a range of five valve products, all of which have won numerous awards across the world from the likes of sixmoons.com, enjoythemusic.com, renowned reviewers and customers alike.

The level of construction, quality components, engineering and care that has gone into each component is quite simply staggering for the price. Product size leaves most people speechless for these products are some of the smallest in the world allowing for a reference system that needs very little space in your listening room. In fact while it would be a true shame to do so, an Eastern Electric System can easily be hidden away from sight but not from mind.

Designer Alex Yeung is known in Hong Kong as the 'Golden Ear' and when you sit down and listen to any Eastern Electric product its very easy to hear and understand why! You never get tired of listening or rediscovering your music collection all over again.

Finessa, adaptability & build quality:

Minimax Pre-amp

Ultimate affordable tube system:

Minimax CD Player, Pre-amp, Power Amp



Unique 30-day money back scheme*

*subject to certain conditions

jas audio

where beauty and sound reside in total harmony with one another



Combining exceptional workmanship and the highest quality components, JAS Audio brings to the world the 2-way speaker Orsa and Orior.

Both the Orsa and Orior are designed to deliver precise acoustic and vocal as well as rich tonal balance. The deep soundstage and extended frequency response are excellent for the enjoyment of HDCD and SACD.

It is widely believed that stand mount speakers cannot produce depth, scale and deep bass. Listen to any JAS Audio Model and think again...

Every model is hand-crafted with quality and details that are seldom found in speakers at any price. For instance, inside the cabinet, pure natural wool is used for efficient damping/tonal signature and top grade heavy gauge silver interconnecting wire is used for signal fidelity. The authentic wood veneer and 14 coats of piano lacquer finish simply gives a JAS speaker the elegant look to match its exquisite timbre.

Most of all, its price/performance ratio is without peer, an achievement that JAS Audio are rightly very proud of.

jungson

the spirit of the gong, the pure essence of song



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 IronAnd, 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!

We cannot disagree...

micromega

high-end high fidelity hand-crafted in france since 1987



Micromega have had many firsts in the Hi-Fi industry and continue to do so always managing to stay one step ahead of the competition. They delight in leaving people scratching their heads wondering just how they produce products of this quality and standard 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.

You can build a Micromega System to suit any budget, any application and add additional components at a later date if required.

Its musical building blocks with total flexibility – now and for the future.



85% Hi-Fi choice

qinpu

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



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.

The same is going to happen with Qinpu in the UK with both the A-1.0x and A-8000 Mk II models – just watch! At £299 and £1295, we have never heard products like it, or another product that comes even close.

Hidden within each beautiful all metal chassis is Innovative Class A/AB circuitry, ALPS motorized potentiometer, Matched Toshiba / Hitachi transistors, Star grounding, and High-Current Toroidal transformer to handle the most awkward speaker loads.

What is most unusual for a product at this level is the many hours of intensive listening and fine-tuning by ear to find the very best components working in true harmony with one another.

The A-1.0x and A-8000 Mk II are truly an astonishing achievement. JungSon believe that the pursuit of perfection is relentless, even excellence itself must be exceeded!

info@shadowdistribution.co.uk | www.shadowdistribution.co.uk
Dealer enquiries very welcome

21 - 22 Cadham Centre, Glenrothes, KY7 6RU
tel: 01592 744 779 | fax: 01592 744 710

£850 per pair ☎ 08704 441044 🌐 www.pmc-speakers.com

PMC TB2+

This superior standmount packs in transmission line bass loading

PMC – the initials stand for The Professional Monitoring Company – was founded by two ex-BBC engineers round about 1990, and has subsequently grown into one of Britain's most successful speaker companies. Unusually, its transmission line loaded designs prove popular in both professional and domestic audio circles. Transmission lines are used in all PMC speakers, and commonly feature in Rega designs, though in the past, IMF and TDL were the acme of transmission-line development.

The only standmount in this *Ultimate Group Test*, the TB2+ provides a useful contrast with the five floorstanders. Introduced just over a year ago, when we reviewed it in a joint test alongside its baby DB1+ sibling, the TB2+ can trace its ancestry back to 1996, and each iteration has performed well under *Hi-Fi Choice* scrutiny. It's one of PMC's least costly models, and also one of the less costly in this test group too (though naturally additional funds may be required for a pair of stands).

A two-way design, the enclosure incorporates a folded transmission line some 1.5m long to load the rear of the bass drivers, despite its modest dimensions. Similar in some ways to reflex loading, with a port at the end of the line providing some bass reinforcement, the internal panels that form the line provide enclosure stiffening, and careful line damping absorbs and controls rearward radiation from the main driver cone, ensuring fewer reflections than usually found in simple box enclosures.

The 15-litre enclosure sports neatly rounded front edges and a choice of real-wood veneers

that includes black ash, oak and cherry. The main driver has a 170mm cast frame and 125mm diameter doped paper cone. The latest '+' modifications include a superior 27mm dual-chamber soft dome tweeter, improvements to the crossover including a carefully selected Solen capacitor, and a new type of damping foam. Twin terminals facilitate bi-wiring or bi-amping. Owners of existing 'non +' TB2s may purchase an upgrade kit for £249.

SOUND QUALITY

The TB2+ is probably best kept clear of walls, though its relatively dry bass alignment could well tolerate – and indeed benefit from – a little extra bass assistance from wall proximity. Best advice here is to experiment in situ, as no two rooms are the same.

Its sound as a whole is notably restrained through the presence region, which does tend to compromise voice intelligibility when playing the system at low 'late-night' levels. But the treble proper is quite strong, so there's no lack of fine detail, and an obvious 'plus' is that the speakers may be played quite loud without becoming aggressive. One might wish for more bass authority and drive, but that is par for the standmount course (it has very good bass, compared to other standmounts), and the relatively small box, mounted with plenty of air all around, brings its own delicacy and lightness of touch to the party.

The TB2+ really scores in its broad midband clarity and freedom from coloration. There's no 'shouty' tendency here, the speaker doing the business through subtlety, low coloration and a wide dynamic range. The result is expressive, natural and unexaggerated, with good stereo image perspectives and fine freedom from

boxiness. One is rarely conscious of the specific locations of the speakers themselves – all you hear is the soundstage spread out across the area in front of you, which is as it should be. Dynamics might not match the capabilities of much larger designs, but the TB2+ nevertheless brings good expression to the proceedings, along with its fine midband and treble subtlety and sophistication. **HFC**

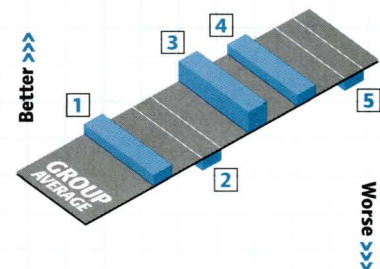


LAB REPORT

PMC quotes a 90dB sensitivity for the TB2+, which is 2dB stronger than the 88dB achieved using our in-room far-field approach. That's still a decent enough figure in the context of a genuine 8-ohm load, and bass that still gives worthwhile extension down to 30Hz under in-room conditions.

Placement will require some experimentation, for while the speaker works perfectly well when clear of walls, the average bass level is rather dry. This means some wall assistance might be deemed preferable. Although there's a degree of unevenness that's bound to introduce an identifiable character to the presentation, the tonal balance holds within good +/-4dB limits under in-room conditions right across the band. The most obvious characteristic is a loss of output of around 3dB through the presence region, 2-4kHz, which should tame any aggressive tendencies. The treble proper, above 4kHz, is a little stronger than average.

HOW IT COMPARES



- 1] Sensitivity >> +10%
- 2] Bass extension >> -10%
- 3] Ease of drive >> +20%
- 4] Overall frequency balance >> +10%
- 5] Response smoothness >> -10%

SPECIFICATIONS

Measurement	Rated	Actual
Sensitivity @ 1m/2.83V	90dB	88dB
Impedance (nominal/minimum)	8/- ohms	8/6 ohms
Estimated bass extension (-6dB)	40Hz	28Hz

VERDICT

SOUND >> 86%



PRACTICALITY >> 88%



BUILD >> 90%



VALUE >> 85%



A real-wood standmount that features transmission line bass loading. The sound has superior midband transparency, restrained presence and a bright, clean top end. Bass is dry and light but notably tuneful.

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



CONCLUSIONS

This impressive group shows just how far mid-market hi-fi speakers have come

As a breed, loudspeakers are, without question, steadily improving. This makes the reviewer's task of picking the best out of any given group all the more difficult. That was certainly true of this particular group of six, all of which showed considerable charm and were capable of delivering fine entertainment. At the same time, each of the different models has its own distinctive character, rendering direct comparisons that much harder. You see, getting paid to sit round and listen to music all day isn't that easy and it does have its drawbacks, after all.

The difficulty in drawing comparisons is aptly illustrated by two of this group's stand-out models. The ALR Jordan Classic 5 and the Dali Ikon 7 are both very impressive performers, but represent opposite ends of the tonal balance spectrum. Overlay the two pen charts, so that the bass ends of both speakers more or less line up and the ALR Jordan has 2-4dB less relative output through the upper mid and treble than the Dali. This is subjectively very significant and clearly heard in listening tests. But these differences in character are not

intrinsic limitations in sound. You will likely prefer one approach over the other, but that does not mean the other is fundamentally wrong.

Comparing like-for-like examples in the group can be equally instructive. The Dali and the JBL have considerably more in common than their five driver line-ups. Both have broadly similar bandwidths and tonal balances, and if the Dali has the edge in sweetness and transparency, it's arguably less attractively styled and carries a 40 per cent price premium.

Likewise, the ALR Jordan and the Chario have similar tonal

presentations, and while the former undoubtedly has the edge in sound quality, there's no denying that the Chario has much the prettier styling and cabinetwork overall.

If there is a lesson to be drawn from this impressive and varied group, it must be that simplicity is a virtue. Three of the four Best Buys, from ALR Jordan, Dali and PMC, are at heart two-ways (albeit augmented in the Dali's case), while the JBL succeeds through a combination of very strong value for money alongside high-class engineering. **HFC**

TRY THEM WITH THESE

AMPLIFIERS

ARCAM FMJ A32 £1,200

A very civilised all-rounder with a revealing and thoroughly musical sound.

AUDIO NOTE OTO LINE SE £1,599

Very limited power, but a delightful example of a single-ended valve amp.

CD PLAYERS

ORELLE CD100evo2 £1,299

Naturally sweet, unusual combination of fine transparency and superior timing.

NAIM CDSX £1,450

Simple player with grip and coherence; engaging and musically involving.

HINTS AND TIPS

» Floor-coupling spikes should have tight lock-nuts, but don't over-tighten these or you'll strip the socket threads.

» Finding the right place to put the loudspeakers acoustically is very important. Do take the time and trouble to experiment.

» Moving a speaker from a free space location until it's close to a wall will substantially boost the mid-bass.

» Expect speakers to improve steadily over the first 100 hours or so.

» Use decent speaker cable, if you want your system to perform at its best.

LOUDSPEAKERS AT A GLANCE

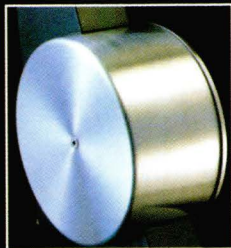
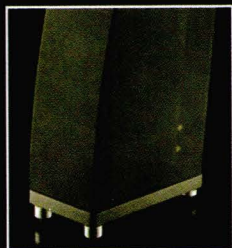


MAKE MODEL	ALR Jordan Classic 5	Chario Cygnus	Dali Ikon 7	Epos M22	JBL Studio L880	PMC TB2+
PRICE	£1,200	£1,200	£999	£949	£700	£850
SOUND						
PRACTICALITY						
BUILD						
VALUE						
OVERALL						
CONCLUSION	Slim, laid back floorstander has a sweet sound with fine coherence, imaging and dynamic range.	Beautiful solid walnut sides. Port tuning suspect but laid back sound has fine delicacy, imaging and refinement.	Bulky vinyl floorstander has high sensitivity and a bright sound with superior coherence, delicacy and transparency.	Very classy floorstander with tricky bass, an edgy top, but a very smooth and even midband.	Good value floorstander has excellent neutrality, massive headroom and plenty of punch. Could be more transparent.	Classy transmission line standmount has superior midband, restrained presence and a bright, clean top end.
KEY FEATURES						
SIZE (WxHxD)	17x99x26cm	20x96x27cm	20x114x34cm	20x88x25cm	22x99x37cm	20x40x30cm
DRIVER CONFIG	2-way	3-way	2+2x0.5-way	2.5-way	3.5-way	2-way
MAIN DRIVER SIZE(S)	2x140mm	2x130mm	3x165mm	2x150mm	2x150mm, 1x100mm	1x180mm
STAND/ FLOOR?	Floor	Floor	Floor	Floor	Floor	Stand
CABINET FINISH	Real wood	Vinyl/solid wood	Vinyl	Real wood	Vinyl	Real wood
BI-WIRE?	Yes	No	Yes	Yes (tri)	Yes	Yes (tri)
LAB CONCLUSIONS E = EXCELLENT • G = GOOD • A = AVERAGE • P = POOR						
SENSITIVITY	87db P	88db A	91db G	86db P	90db G	88db A
EST. BASS EXTENSION	28Hz A	28Hz A	22Hz G	25Hz G	25Hz G	28Hz A
IMPEDANCE (NOM/ MIN)	8/7 ohms G	4/3.3 ohms P	7/5 ohms A	6/4 ohms A	6/4.5 ohms A	8/6 ohms G
OVERALL FREQ. BALANCE	0% A	-20% P	+30% G	+10% A	+30% G	+10% A
RESPONSE SMOOTHNESS	-10% A	-30% P	+30% G	+10% A	+50% G	-10% A

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

PRIORITY SUBSCRIPTION ORDER FORM

I WOULD LIKE TO SAVE 40% ON HI-FI CHOICE MAGAZINE

YOUR DETAILS (BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE)

Title _____ First Name _____ Surname _____

Address _____

Post code _____ Country _____

Tel no. (inc. code) _____ Email address _____

THIS IS A GIFT SUBSCRIPTION – PLEASE START IT WITH THE FIRST ISSUE AVAILABLE IN JANUARY 2006 AND SEND ME A GIFT CARD TO GIVE TO THE RECIPIENT

GIFT RECIPIENT DETAILS (IF APPLICABLE)

Title _____ First Name _____ Surname _____

Address _____

Post code _____ Country _____

Tel no. (inc. code) _____ Email address _____

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:

I WOULD LIKE TO PAY BY:

Direct Debit – just £7.41 every 3 months!

Cheque or Credit Card (UK – £29.64)

Overseas readers: visit www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/HFC/z416 for our latest offers

Please make cheques payable to Future Publishing Ltd. Cheques must be drawn on a UK bank account.

Mastercard Visa American Express

Switch Issue no/valid date

Card no.

Expiry date Signature _____

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

Media Code: z416 Offer ends: 31/01/2006

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay Direct Debits.



Originator's Identification Number

7 6 8 1 9 5

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.

Amazing

BENEFITS

- ▶ Save 40% off the shop price! You won't find a better offer*
- ▶ A great gift – it lasts all year PLUS a free gift card to give to your recipient
- ▶ Every copy delivered direct to your door
- ▶ Free P&P in the UK!

* Saving is based on UK and new subscriptions only
Gift offer starts from first available issue in January 2006

HOW TO SUBSCRIBE

- ▶ Go online to:

www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/HFC/z416

- ▶ Call 0870 837 4722 quoting code z416

- ▶ Complete the form opposite and send to:

Hi-Fi Choice Magazine,
Future Publishing,
FREEPOST RLSC-SXSE-SKKT,
Unit 4, Tower House, Sovereign Park,
Market Harborough,
Leicestershire, LE16 9EF

Your free giftcard

How to Contact us: _____

POST: Future Publishing Subscriptions Ltd.
FREEPOST RLSC-SXSE-SKKT,
Unit 4,
Tower House,
Sovereign Park,
Market Harborough,
Leicestershire,
LE16 9EF

EMAIL: future@subscription.co.uk

PHONE: 0870 837 4722

WEBSITE: www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk

BACK ISSUES HOTLINE: 0870 837 4722

Dear _____

HAPPY CHRISTMAS!

You are now a subscriber to _____ magazine, starting with the _____ issue.

Enjoy your subscription.

from _____



Christmas offer!

**SAVE
40%**

When you subscribe today



HURRY!
LIMITED OFFER SO
ACT NOW!


**ORDER
HOTLINE**
0870 837
4722

www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/HFC/z416

HI-FI CHOICE ACCESSORIES SHOP

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 present the perfect audiophile Christmas stocking filler – the Optrix CD Cleaner and Clarifier – as our special *Star Buy*, along with a further nine *Best Buy* recommendations for the discerning audio enthusiast. For our full selection, visit our dedicated website: www.choicebits.co.uk.



OPTRIX CD CLEANER AND CLARIFIER

The remarkable Optrix cleaning fluid can be used on CDs, DVDs, SACDs or just about any audio or video disc. This magic fluid will

dramatically improve sound and picture on all systems. It prevents CDs skipping and improves the optics of all CDs and DVDs by removing dust and grease. It's easy to use – simply spray on and wipe off. One bottle should be enough to transform 100 discs!

"Every once in a while, a reviewer comes across an accessory that is a must-have. Fortune must be smiling on me... This product is nothing short of sensational, and markedly improved the sound of both CDs and DVD-audio discs. A bottle of this belongs in every audiophile's kit bag." Myles B. Astor, *Ultimate Audio*.

ONLY £16.95

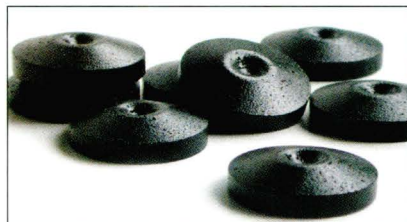
Best Buy Accessories



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 Record 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



Knosti Disco Antistat Record Cleaner

Transform your dusty LPs with this classic wet cleaning system. Highly recommended.

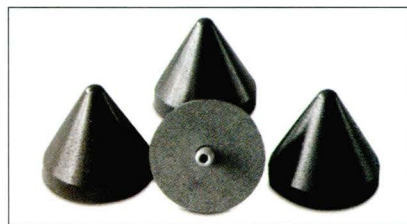
Price: £44.95



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 CDE	£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"/>
Golding Exstatic Deluxe Record Brush	£14.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Golding 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"/>
L'Art du Son Record Cleaner (5Litre)	£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 Stylast 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"/>
Oprix 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 Gil Solus	£295.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
IsoTek Gil Multi-4-Way	£155.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
IsoTek Gil Multi-6-Way	£185.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
IsoTek Gil Multi-8-Way	£220.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
IsoTek Gil Gemini-6-Way (distribution strip)	£260.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
IsoTek Gil Mini Sub/Vision	£495.00 / £549.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
IsoTek Gil Titan	£1425	<input type="checkbox"/>
IsoTek Gil 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:

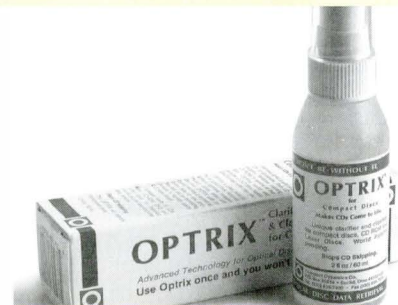
Simply complete this order form, fill in your details and send it to: P.O. Box 5996, Newbury RG20 4XH
Alternatively: give us a call on: 0870 240 7228
email: orders@choicebits.co.uk
Order online: www.choicebits.co.uk

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.



AUDIO T & AUDIO EXCELLENCE have been selling hi-fi and home cinema equipment for over 63 years between us so there's no better place to go for unbiased advice and unrivalled expertise. 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.

As members of the British Audio-Visual Dealers Association we have fully trained staff and always specify the best sounding products. We can 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

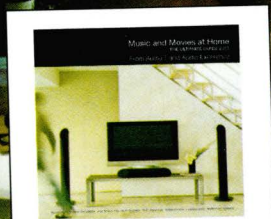
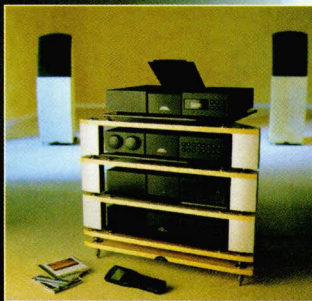
audio X
EXCELLENCE

www.audio-excellence.co.uk

Visit Audio Excellence in: BRISTOL
CARDIFF CHESTER SWANSEA
WORCESTER



Experience... the 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



Brands include: Arcam, Audiolab, Audiovector, B&W, Chord, Cyrus, Denon, Dynaudio, Focal, KEF, Linn, Meridian, M&K, Monitor Audio, NAD, Naim, Pioneer, PMC, ProAc, Quad, Rega, Rotel, Spondor, Tannoy, Totem Acoustic, Velodyne, Wilson Benesch, Wharfedale, and Yamaha and many more.

Our Motives are clear



www.neat.co.uk

01833 631021

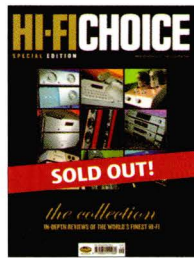
neat acoustics

music sounds better neat

HI-FI CHOICE BACK ISSUES



ISSUE 257



ISSUE 258



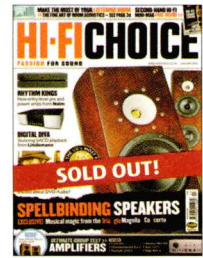
ISSUE 259



ISSUE 260



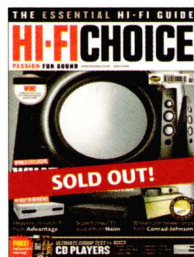
ISSUE 261



ISSUE 262



ISSUE 263



ISSUE 264



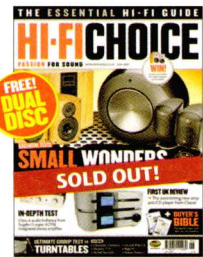
ISSUE 265



ISSUE 266



ISSUE 267



ISSUE 268



ISSUE 269



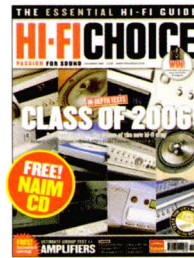
ISSUE 270



ISSUE 271



ISSUE 272



ISSUE 273



ISSUE 274

YOUR DETAILS

Name _____
 Address _____

 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 837 4733 – 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 84 for more details...

Make sure a BADA member is on your short list.

You've set your budget, read the reviews, and prepared your short-list.

Now you're ready to listen! Your local BADA accredited dealer will be only too happy

to help - with relaxed demonstration rooms, choice from the best products available

and the knowledge to ensure you build your perfect system - you won't be crossing us off!



ABERDEEN	HOLBURN HI-FI	01224 585713	LONDON	BILLY VEE	020 8318 5755
ASHFORD	SOUNDCRAFT HI-FI	01233 624441	LONDON	GRAHAMS HI-FI	020 7226 5500
BANBURY	OVERTURE	01295 272158	LONDON	ORANGES & LEMONS	020 7924 2040
BASINGSTOKE	AUDIO T	01256 324311	NEW MALDEN, SURREY	UNILET	020 8942 9567
BIRMINGHAM	MUSIC MATTERS	0121 429 2811	NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE	GLOBAL HI FI	0191 230 3600
BISHOPS STORTFORD	AUDIO FILE	01279 506576	NORWICH	MARTINS	01603 627010
BOURNEMOUTH	MOVEMENT AUDIO	01202 529988	NOTTINGHAM	NOTTINGHAM HI FI	0115 9786919
BOURNEMOUTH	SUTTONS HI-FI	01202 555512	OXFORD	AUDIO T	01865 765961
BRACON ASH, NORFOLK	BASICALLY SOUND	01508 570829	OXFORD	OXFORD AUDIO	01865 790879
BRENTWOOD	AUDIO T	01277 234730	POOLE	MOVEMENT AUDIO	01202 730865
BRIGHTON	AUDIO T	01273 609431	PORTSMOUTH	AUDIO T	023 9266 3604
BRISTOL	AUDIO EXCELLENCE	0117 9264975	RAYLEIGH	RAYLEIGH HI-FI	01268 779742
CAMBERLEY	AUDIO T	01276 685597	READING	AUDIO T	0118 9585463
CARDIFF	AUDIO EXCELLENCE	029 2022 8565	SALISBURY	SALISBURY HI-FI	01722 322169
CHANDLERS FORD, HAMPSHIRE	AUDIO T	023 8025 2827	SHEFFIELD	MOORGATE ACOUSTICS	0114 2756048
CHELMSFORD	RAYLEIGH HI-FI	01245 265245	SOLIHULL	MUSIC MATTERS	0121 742 0254
CHELTHENHAM	AUDIO T	01242 583960	SOUTHAMPTON	PHASE 3 HI FI	023 8022 8434
CHESTER	AUDIO EXCELLENCE	01244 345576	SOUTHEND-ON-SEA	RAYLEIGH HI-FI	01702 435255
COVENTRY	FRANK HARVEY HI-FI	024 7652 5200	STOURBRIDGE	MUSIC MATTERS	01384 444184
DARLINGTON	MUSIC MATTERS	01325 481418	SUTTON COLDFIELD	MUSIC MATTERS	0121 3542311
EAST GRINSTEAD	AUDIO DESIGNS	01342 314569	SWANSEA	AUDIO EXCELLENCE	01792 474608
EASTBOURNE	AUDIO T	01323 731336	SWINDON	AUDIO T	01793 538222
ENFIELD	AUDIO T	020 8367 3132	TUNBRIDGE WELLS	AUDIO T	01892 525666
EPSOM	AUDIO T	01372 748888	WARRINGTON	CHRIS BROOKS AUDIO	01925 261212
EXETER	AUDIO EXCELLENCE	01392 491194	WARRINGTON	DOUG BRADY HI-FI	01925 828009
GLASGOW	GLASGOW AUDIO	0141 332 4707	WEYMOUTH	WEYMOUTH HI-FI	01305 785729
GUILDFORD	P J HI-FI	01483 504801	WORCESTER	AUDIO EXCELLENCE	01905 619059
HAMPOLE, YORKSHIRE	HI-FI STUDIOS	01302 725550	WORTHING	PHASE 3 HI FI	01903 245577
HARROW	HARROW AUDIO	020 8863 0938			
HATCH END, MIDDLESEX	MUSIC MATTERS	020 8420 1925			
HEREFORD	ENGLISH AUDIO	01432 355081			
HIGH WYCOMBE	AUDIO T	01494 558585			
HORSHAM	AUDIO DESIGNS	01403 267766			
HOVE	POWERPLANT (HI-FI)	01273 775978			
KINGSTON-ON-THAMES	INFIDELITY	020 8943 3530			
LEEDS	IMAGE AUDIO	0113 2789374			
LEICESTER	CYMBIOSIS	0116 2623754			
LEICESTER	LEICESTER HI-FI	0116 253 9753			
LONDON	AUDIO T	020 7794 7848			
LONDON	BARTLETTS HI FI	020 7607 2148			



BADA members are bound by a strict code of practice, ensuring the best possible service & value.

To find out more visit:
www.bada.co.uk
 or call 020 8150 6741

painting with music

CYRUS

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

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

- 92 CD PLAYERS
- 94 DVD PLAYERS
- 96 VINYL
- 99 RADIO TUNERS
- 101 DIGITAL RECORDERS

AMPLIFIERS

- 108 STEREO AMPS
- 110 MULTICHANNEL AV AMPS

LOUDSPEAKERS

- 112 STEREO SPEAKERS
- 116 MULTICHANNEL SPEAKER PACKAGES

ANCILLARIES

- 119 HEADPHONES
- 121 CABLES
- 123 STANDS AND SUPPORTS
- 125 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 let the DAC to work in a more linear fashion. Upsampling is where the data stream is stretched out by interpolation and is typically used to refer to large changes in sampling rate such as from 44.1 kHz to 192kHz.

CAN I PLAY SACDS ON A NORMAL CD PLAYER?

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

CAN I PLAY DVDS ON A CD PLAYER?

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

TOP BUYS



Cambridge Audio Azur 640C v2 £250

The old 640C was a fantastic low-cost CD player, and its new 'v2' replacement is even better – an extraordinarily graceful and dynamic-sounding player for the money.



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 BB BEST BUY EC EDITOR'S CHOICE

CD PLAYERS

Audio-only CD and SACD players

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS							ISSUE NUMBER
				SACD COMPATIBLE	ELEC DIG OUTPUT	OPT DIG OUTPUT	CD-RW COMPATIBLE	CD TEXT	BAL ANALOGUE OUT	HEADPHONE SOCKET	
UP TO £1,000											
	Arcam DIVA CD73T	420	Refined and articulate, smooth and dynamic – a finely judged balance for budget to mid-price systems	●	●	●	●				247
	Arcam DIVA CD192	850	Beautifully built, well featured player with clear, open and involving sound	●	●	●	●				264
	Cambridge Azur 640C v2	250	Does most things extremely well and has a remarkably good sense of poise for the money	●	●						274
	Consonance CD120	795	Fine performance in all areas with the possible exception of slight treble harshness	●					●		269
	Cyrus CD8x	1,000	Impressive mix of detail, musicality, analysis and appearance. Even better with the PSX-R power supply (£400)	●	●						270
	Cyrus CD6S	650	Much better at excitement and urgency than analysis, this player can nevertheless give pleasure		●						273
	Exposure 2010 S	599	Highly communicative sounds with good bass, though not always the most analytical	●	●	●					264
	Marantz CD7300	350	Astonishingly capable sub-£500 player with effortless bass, detailed mid and treble and vast soundstages	●	●	●	●		●		250
	Naim CD5i	825	As idiosyncratic as ever, but sonically the CD5i is the definitive player at the price				●				259
	Roksan Kandy MkIIID	650	Clean, tidy and expressive player – a more than worthwhile improvement on previous versions								259
ABOVE £1,000											
	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
	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
	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
	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
	Myryad MXC6000	1,400	A highly listenable player with excellent tonal balance and very fine detail	●			●				270
	Naim CD5x	1,450	A genuinely engaging CD player with remarkable musical grip and coherence								264
EC	Naim CDX2	2,800	Fine quality one-box CD player, but its best feature is upgradeability via outboard XPS supply				●				238
	Primare CD21	800	If you appreciate an organic and engaging sound it's more than worthy of a good long audition	●	●						273
	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
	Sugden CD21SE	1,395	Delivers its particularly musical touch brilliantly and warrants the attention of all true music lovers	●							271
	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	9,995	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.

BEST BUY
HI-FI CHOICE
magazine



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.

EDITOR'S CHOICE
HI-FI CHOICE
magazine

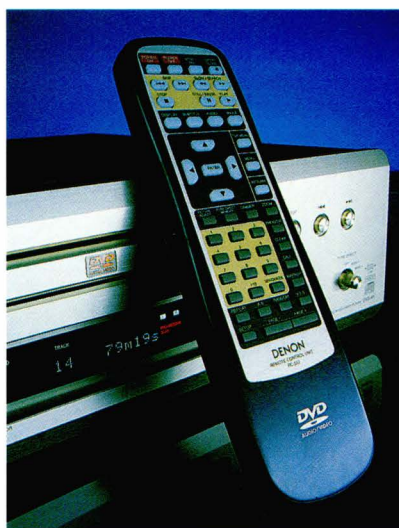
DVD PLAYERS

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 multifunction 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.

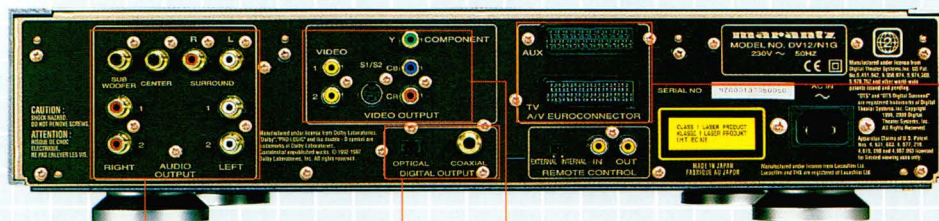
DO I NEED A MULTICHANNEL AMP TO USE A DVD PLAYER?

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

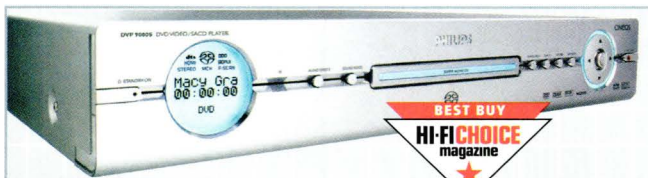
🏆 BEST BUY 🏆 EDITOR'S CHOICE

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									
🏆	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
🏆	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
🏆	Denon DVD-3910	900	Exceptionally well-specified universal player with a performance to match. A true class-leader	●	●	●	●		260
🏆	Marantz DV7600	600	A mid-market cracker, with sound and picture quality that generally exceeds expectations	●	●	●	●		274
🏆	Philips DVP9000S	400	Philips proves it hasn't lost its touch with mid market DVD players. Includes SACD and HDMI for quality video, and it's a star		●	●	●		274
	Pioneer DV-585A	150	Don't expect tip-top performance for this kind of money – the fact that it's a competent universal player is impressive enough!	●	●	●	●		273
🏆	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
	Sony DVP-NS9100ES	1,000	Video playback is foremost, with the i.Link delivering significantly better sound than the analogue counterparts			●	●		274
ABOVE £1,000									
🏆	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
🏆	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
🏆	Denon DVD-A1XV	2,500	Sophisticated universal player with state of the art video processing, high class disc replay, especially SACD	●	●	●	●	●	266
🏆	Linn Unidisk SC	2,995	Groundbreaking universal player with built-in preamplifier, with excellent picture for home cinema and sound for hi-fi	●	●	●	●		259
🏆	Meridian G98AH	3,625	Meridian's most widely compatible G-Series DVD player – groundbreaking DVD-Audio replay and a fine CD player too	●		●	●		265
🏆	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
🏆	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



Philips DVP9000S £400

An attractive and well designed DVD player with a great picture and good CD/SACD sound.



Marantz DV7600 £600

A universal player that's strong with all formats, including music on CD/SACD/DVD-A.



Arcam FMJ DV29 £1,600

Arcam's best DVD player yet – a world-class, HDMI-equipped audio/video feast.



Meridian G98AH £3,625

A digital *tour de force* – as exceptional with both audio and video as you'd expect.

"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 is available from over 150 UK stores
 Call: 01635 291357 for your FREE brochure

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	2004 Hi-Fi Choice Category Winner IsoTek GII Vision	2004 What Hi-Fi? Category Winner IsoTek GII Vision	2005 Hi-Fi Choice Category Winner Nordoff T10r by IsoTek	2005 What Hi-Fi? Editors Choice Nordoff T10r by IsoTek

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



Goldring
 GR2 £265

This Rega-derived design is stunning value for money. Supplied with an RB250 arm and Goldring 1012GX cartridge, it'll blow most budget CD players into the weeds.



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	SUPPLIED WITH CART	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	Avid Acutus	6,000	Extremely capable design with no apparent shortcomings. Don't sell you vinyl 'til you've heard it on this!	33/45	●	●			194
BB	Clearaudio Champion	1,365	Smart, practical and good-sounding, with impressively 'dead' arm. Isolation recommended	33/45			●		268
BB	Clearaudio Ambient	4,220	Innovative use of materials leads to a fast, precise and thrilling sound (tonearm extra)	33/45		●	●	●	271
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	A good 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
BB	Pro-Ject 1 Xpression	210	Well designed and executed budget deck with an entertaining and revealing sound	33/45			●	●	248
BB	Pro-Ject RPM 9 X	1,000	A gorgeous turntable that sounds as good as it looks – vital and transparent! Price includes carbon-fibre arm	33/45			●		268
	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	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. Excalibur 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	AOL GAIN	AOL 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.

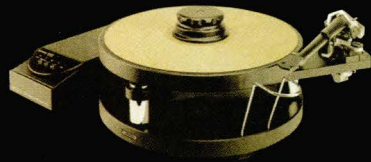
SUPPLIED WITH CARTRIDGE Some decks are supplied with a starter cartridge and this is included in the price shown.

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

Untouchable excellence

...mimetism...

...darTZeel...

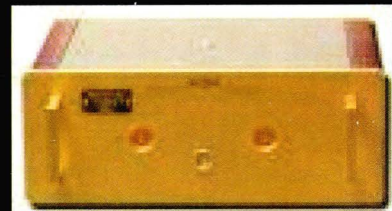


Mimetism 20.1 CD player

Strange names to you? They won't be for long - not if you're excited by the thought of something a little different, something out there on the edge, something from new designers with new ideas.

These are two names that you can find only at a small number of specially selected Absolute Sounds dealers who are partners in Ricardo's Studio.

If you would like to know more about how these names can take you to the heart of your music, please get in touch with Brian Rivas or Alison Holmes at Pinewood Music.



darTZeel NHB-108 stereo amplifier

AMATI ANNIVERSARIO

Ask yourself this: when did you last find yourself smiling when you listened to your music? When did you last find yourself moved to the core? Well, here's the way to both emotions. Similar in technology to the Stradivari it may be, but the Sonus faber Amati Anniversario sounds nothing like it. Neither does it sound like the original Amati Homage. This latest transducer from Sonus faber is a revelation, it is like a living thing. A day at Pinewood Music listening to it will not be wasted.

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, finite-elemente

THE PINEWOOD MUSIC COMPANY

Telephone: 01460 54322

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 FM/AM tuners, with great sound and features.



Denon TU-1800DAB £250

Combines DAB with FM/AM reception and good all-round design at a tempting price.



Creek T50 £550

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

FM & DAB HI-FI SEPARATES

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS						
				WAVEBANDS	PRESETS	RDS	REMOTE CONTROL	SIG. STRENGTH METER	ROT. TUNING KNOB	ISSUE NUMBER
FM TUNERS										
BB	Creek T50	550	Very fine results indeed with precision, polish and insight added to excellent basics	FM,M,L	128	●	●	●	●	251
BB	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
EC	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
EC	Magnum Dynalab MD 102	2,200	Superb remote control analogue FM tuner delivers a superbly transparent sound that makes radio fun	FM	5		●	●	●	241
BB	NAD C422	180	Admirably free of roughness or other obvious nasties, with just a slight lack of clarity	FM,M	30	●		●		250
BB	Primare T21	600	A very fine tuner – bass and treble are both well extended and detail is excellent	FM	30	●		●		230
BB	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										
BB	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
BB	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
BB	Denon TU-1800DAB	250	DAB reception is as good as any and FM performance clearly benefits from Denon's long experience	DAB,FM,M	200	●	●	●	●	274
	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.

let us make it affordable for you...



Pioneer 435 XDE

SRP £3500
Deposit £1500
Monthly **£200**
over 10 Months



Runco CL 510

SRP £6000
Deposit £1500
Monthly **£375**
over 12 Months



Pioneer PDP 615 EX

SRP £11500
Deposit £2500
Monthly **£500**
over 18 Months



Arcam DV79 & AVR 300

SRP £2300
Deposit £500
Monthly **£180**
over 10 Months



Lexicon MC 8 B

SRP £5750
Deposit £1250
Monthly **£250**
over 18 Months



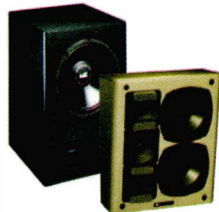
Meridian G 68 D Processor

SRP £3895
Deposit £895
Monthly **£300**
over 10 Months



Audica CS 3 System

SRP £1100
Deposit £200
Monthly **£90**
over 10 Months



MK 150 & MK MX 350 THX & MK CS 22

SRP £5665
Deposit £1165
Monthly **£250**
over 18 Months



Sunfire True EQ Subwoofer

SRP £1695
Deposit £495
Monthly **£100**
over 12 Months

FINANCE AVAILABLE. SUBJECT TO STATUS

Selection of our partners... Anthony Gallo • Arcam • Artglass • Artcoustic • Atacama • Audio Analogue • Audio Research • BenQ • BCD Engineering • Beyerdynamic • Blok • Bryston • Bose • Cabasse • Chord Cables • Clearaudio • Copland • Crestron • Definitive Technology • Denon • Final • Grado • Harman Kardon • Infocus • Isotek • Krell • KEF • Lexicon • Linn Classic • Living Control • Loewe • Lutron • Meridian • Michell Engineering • Miller & Kreisel • Monitor Audio • Moore Medio • Musical Fidelity • Martin Logan • Nad • Nordost • Onkyo • Opera • Ortofon • Panasonic plasma • Parasound • Pioneer • Proac • Primare • Project • QED • Quadraspire • REL • Roksan • Runco • Screen Research • Sennhesier • Sherbourn • Sim 2 • SME • Soundations • Soundstyle • Sonus Faber • Stands Unique • Stewart Screens • Straightwire • Sugden • Sumiko • Systemline • Townshend Audio • Theta • Transparent Audio • Triad • Unison Research • Vienna Acoustics • Vutec Screens • WBT • Wilson Audio and other leading components and accessories.

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		
				DECKS	HD CAPACITY (GB)	ISSUE NUMBER
CD-R/RW RECORDERS						
	Denon CDR-1000	400	A respectable player and recorder, though some midband congestion was noted when recording	1		218
	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
	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
	Philips CDR951	380	An improvement on previous models, it delivers the musical goods in some style	1		205
	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
	Yamaha CDR-HD1300	600	Superb combination of high-speed CD-RW drive and hard disk, adding editing flexibility to CD recording	2	80	243

SPECS KEY **DECKS** Amount of drive mechanisms on board – twin-deck recorders use one to play while the other records. **HD CAPACITY** Amount of gigabytes of storage capacity, for HD only. **OPTICAL IN/OUTPUTS** Optical Toslink in and outputs for digital connection to a CD player or DAC. **ELEC IN/OUTPUTS** Electrical coaxial in and outputs for digital connection to a CD player or DAC.

SEVENOAKS

SOUND & VISION

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.

NEW STORES

LOUGHTON & YEovil

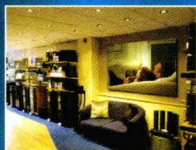
We are pleased to announce that these new stores are now open:-

LOUGHTON*

7-9 GOLDINGS HILL • 020 8532 0770

YEovil

14 SILVER STREET • 01935 700078



*DUE TO OPEN 19TH NOVEMBER 2005



WHAT HI-FI?
SOUND AND VISION
AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
BEST CD PLAYER
ROTEL RA-02

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.



WHAT HI-FI?
SOUND AND VISION
AWARDS 2005
TURNTABLES
BEST TURNTABLE UNDER £100
PROJEC DEBUT II

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.

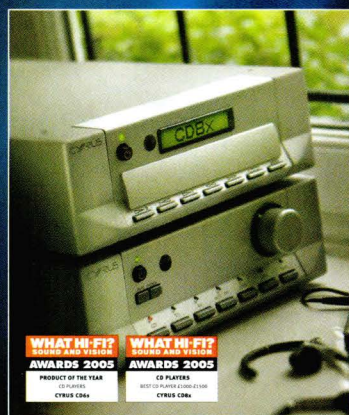
Audiolab NEW 8000 Series

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 includes the Award-winning Debut (pictured left), Xpression II, Perspective and RPM Series.



WHAT HI-FI?
SOUND AND VISION
AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
BEST CD PLAYER
CYRUS C04

WHAT HI-FI?
SOUND AND VISION
AWARDS 2005
CD PLAYERS
BEST CD PLAYER UNDER £100
CYRUS C04

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.



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.

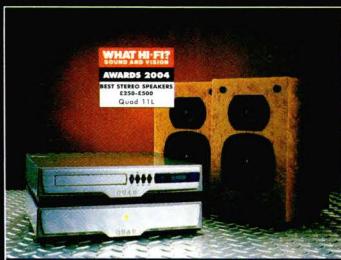


B&W MINI THEATRE MT-30

WHAT HI-FI?
SOUND AND VISION
AWARDS 2005
SUBWOOFERS
BEST SUBWOOFER UNDER £100
B&W PV1

WHAT HI-FI?
SOUND AND VISION
AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
BEST COMPACT SPEAKER PACKAGE
B&W MT-30

WHAT HI-FI?
SOUND AND VISION
AWARDS 2005
COMPACT SPEAKER PACKAGES
BEST COMPACT SPEAKER PACKAGE
B&W MT-30



WHAT HI-FI?
SOUND AND VISION
AWARDS 2004
BEST STEREO SPEAKERS
Q258-C500
Quad 115

Quad

Founded in 1938, Quad's history is one of audio excellence. Today's range includes both electronics and speaker systems.

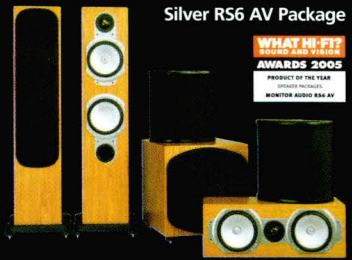


i-Deck

WHAT HI-FI?
AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
BEST PORTABLE & ACCESSORIES
MONITOR AUDIO I-DECK

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.



Silver RS6 AV Package

WHAT HI-FI?
SOUND AND VISION
AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
BEST HOME CINEMA
MONITOR AUDIO SILVER RS6



Silver RS1

WHAT HI-FI?
SOUND AND VISION
★★★★★
OCTOBER 2005

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.



Pure DRX702ES & NEW Denon TU-1800DAB

WHAT HI-FI?
SOUND AND VISION
AWARDS 2005
RADIO
BEST DIGITAL TUNER
DENON TU-1800 DAB

Wharfedale

Diamond 9.1

"Wharfedale has been updating and tweaking its Diamonds for 20 years - and rough they're not! Tight bass, clear midband, and sparkling treble for not a lot of cash."



WHAT HI-FI?
SOUND AND VISION
AWARDS 2005
STEREO SPEAKERS
BEST STEREO SPEAKERS UNDER £100
WHARFEDALE DIAMOND 9.1



Diamond SW150

"Considering the price, the detail and definition to the bass are controlled and cohesive - equally adept with movies and music."

WHAT HI-FI?
SOUND AND VISION
AWARDS 2005
SUBWOOFER
BEST SUBWOOFER UNDER £100
WHARFEDALE DIAMOND SW150

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.



WHAT HI-FI?
SOUND AND VISION
AWARDS 2004
BEST HOME CINEMA IN A BOX OVER £1000
KEF KIT 100

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."



WHAT HI-FI?
SOUND AND VISION
AWARDS 2004
BEST STEREO SPEAKERS OVER £200
Acoustic Energy AE1



KEF iQ5

"The iQ5s are little stars, providing stunning scale and authority from discreetly sized towers..."

The iQ5s are fully deserving Products of the Year."

WHAT HI-FI?
SOUND AND VISION
AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
STEREO SPEAKERS
KEF iQ5



KEF KHT1005

"The KHT1005 is an ideal first-time buy, and will suit those looking to 'downsize' to a more living-room friendly style of speaker."

WHAT HI-FI?
SOUND AND VISION
AWARDS 2005
COMPACT SPEAKER PACKAGES
KEF KHT 1005



WHAT HI-FI?
SOUND AND VISION
AWARDS 2005
DVD PLAYER
BEST DVD PLAYER £700-£1000
ARCAM DIVA DVD

WHAT HI-FI?
SOUND AND VISION
AWARDS 2004
BEST MULTICHANNEL RECEIVER £750-£1000
ARCAM AV250

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."

WHAT HI-FI?
SOUND AND VISION
AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
ALL-BOX SYSTEMS
ARCAM SOLO



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.

WHAT HI-FI?
SOUND AND VISION
AWARDS 2005
BEST HI-FI EQUIPMENT
GRADO SR8

WHAT HI-FI?
SOUND AND VISION
AWARDS 2005
CABLES
BEST CABLES OVER £100
QED QUINCY VSM-P

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.

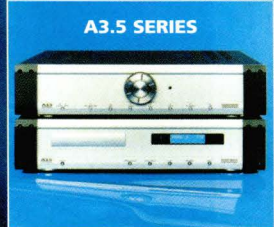


NEW MARANTZ SR9600 AV RECEIVER

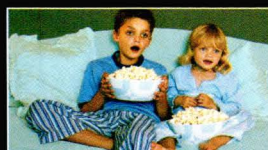
HOME CINEMA
Best Buy
★

Musical Fidelity

Musical Fidelity's 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.



A3.5 SERIES



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 15/12/2005, E&OE.

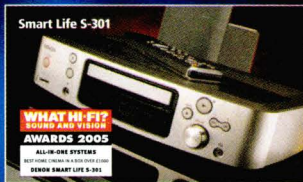
Denon

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.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
DENON DVD-1920

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
SOUNDTRACK AMP/RECEIVER
BEST SURROUND RECEIVER
DENON AVR-1924

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
TECHNOLOGY
BEST DVD
DENON DVD-ALTY & DVD-ALTY



Smart Life S-301

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
ALL-IN-ONE SYSTEM
BEST DVD PLAYER & RECEIVER
DENON SMART LIFE S-301



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

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
TECHNOLOGY
YAMAHA DIGITAL SOUND PROJECTORS



Yamaha

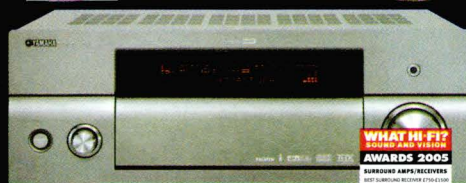
Yamaha is recognised as a world leader in the fields of musical instruments and audio equipment, and in more recent years, home cinema. New models for 2005 include upgraded AV receivers, amplifiers, and DVD players plus the innovative YSP-1 virtual surround speaker.



WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
DVD PLAYER
BEST DVD PLAYER
YAMAHA DVD-S2500



WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
SOUNDTRACK RECEIVER
YAMAHA DSP-AX757SE



WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
SOUNDTRACK RECEIVER
BEST SURROUND RECEIVER
YAMAHA RX-V4600

YAMAHA'S DVD-S2500, DSP-AX757SE & RX-V4600

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.



WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2004
BEST SUBWOOFER
£200-£400
REL Stampede

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.



WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
★★★★★
£100-£200

Harman Kardon

Harman's 7.1-channel DPR 2005 and DPR 1005 digital path receivers take Harman's groundbreaking digital path receiver platform to new levels of performance and functionality utilising a fully digital signal path from input to output, along with advanced features and technologies.



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 DVD only, hybrid DVD/hard-disk and multi-format models.



WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
DVD & HARD-DISK RECORDER
BEST DVD RECORDER
PANASONIC DVD-DR504

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.



WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
CABLES
BEST TO SERIAL CABLE
QED CINEMA TV

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
CABLES
QED SILVER UNIVERSAL BT

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
ALL-IN-ONE SYSTEM
BEST DVD RECORDER
QED CR-505A

£ 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 15/12/2005, 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.

Loewe

Concept L32 32" LCD TV

With its minimalist, functional design, slim profile and ease of operation, the Concept L32 exudes all of the classic Loewe virtues.

"This HD Ready set boasts 1366x768 resolution and plenty of inputs, including HDMI, component video and two Scarts. It also packs an integrated digital TV tuner, and - as ever with Loewe sets - its speaker set-up is a cut above most rivals... The Concept L32 is immensely attractive: it deserves to sell very well indeed."



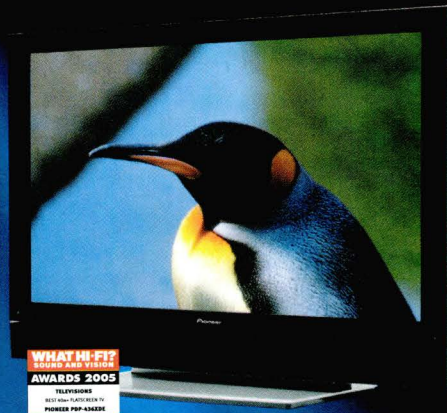
Hitachi

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**

SEVENOAKS

SOUND & VISION



Pioneer

Following its highly successful 'S' 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.

PDP-436XDE PLASMA TV

"Pioneer's latest is also its greatest: this is a truly wonderful HD-Ready TV."



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

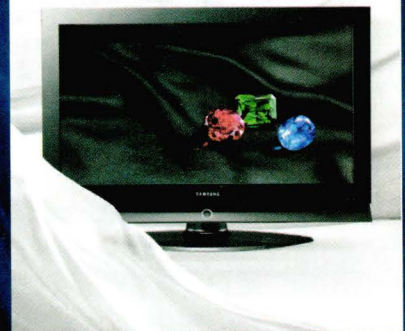
"All told, Panasonic's new TH42PV500 is a stunning set that's clearly the new class leader."



Samsung

Milano LE40M61B 40" LCD TV

Samsung's New 40" LCD TV (LE40M61B) was honored with an EISA award for its premium display technology in terms of contrast ratio (5000:1), color expression (6.44 billion colors, 92% color gamut for NTSC), viewing angle (178°) and response time (8 ms). Also the model's simple body design focuses the viewer's attention on the screen. On the front of the minimalist design, the speakers are hidden from view in the bottom bezel and nothing distracts from the superb image quality





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.



WHAT HI-FI? AWARDS 2005
PROJECTORS
BEST PROJECTOR UNDER £1000
SCREENPLAY 7210

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."

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.

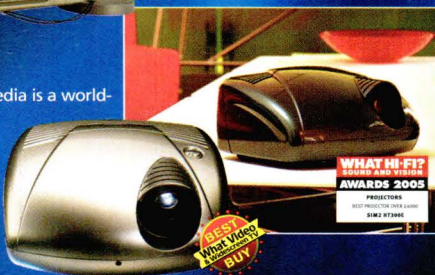


WHAT HI-FI? AWARDS 2005
PROJECTORS
BEST PROJECTOR UNDER £1000
SCREENPLAY 4805

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.

HT300E "Spectacular, in a word... Another terrific projector from Italy's finest."
WHAT VIDEO • ISSUE 292



WHAT HI-FI? AWARDS 2005
PROJECTORS
BEST PROJECTOR UNDER £1000
SIM2 HT300E

Themescene

Since its launch, the multi-award winning ThemeScene™ brand has rapidly established a five-star reputation for uncompromised image quality.

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



BEST Value for Money BUY



The **iScan™ VP30** is a high-definition video processor and AV hub that converts standard or high definition from your DVD player, VCR, PVR, HD set top box, game console, or PC to any output resolution between 480p and 1080p, including popular HDTV resolutions such as 720p and 1080i.

£ 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 15/12/2005, 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 GR2	£ 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	£ CALL
Harman Kardon RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Linn RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Marantz RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Pure DRX-701ES DAB	£179.95	£ CALL
Pure DRX-702ES DAB/FM	£229.95	£ CALL
Rotel RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL

CD PLAYERS

Arcam RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Audiolab RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Cyrus RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Denon DCD485	£119.95	£ CALL
Linn RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Marantz RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
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	£ CALL
-------------------	---------	--------

AMPLIFIERS

Arcam RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Audiolab RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Cyrus RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Denon PMA355	£159.95	£ CALL
Linn RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Marantz RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
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	£ CALL

HI-FI SPEAKERS

Acoustic Energy Aegis Evo One	£119.95	£ CALL
Acoustic Energy Aegis Evo Three	£229.95	£ CALL
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
Linn Klassik Music Ex Spks	£ CALL	£ CALL
Monitor Audio i-Deck	£249.95	£ CALL
Onkyo CR505DAB Ex Spks	£ CALL	£ CALL
Teac RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Yamaha CRX-M170 Ex Spks	£ CALL	£ CALL

DVD SYSTEMS

Denon RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
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-HD950	£ CALL	£ CALL
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 AV 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 AV Receiver	£399.95	£ CALL
Pioneer VSX-2014i AV Receiver	£499.95	£ CALL
Pioneer VSX-AX5Ai AV Receiver	£749.95	£ CALL
Pioneer VSA-AX10Ai AV Amplifier	£1799.95	£ CALL
Pioneer NEW RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Rotel RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Yamaha DSP-AX7575E AV Amplifier	£399.95	£ CALL
Yamaha RX-V357 AV Receiver	£149.95	£ CALL
Yamaha RX-V557 AV Receiver	£299.95	£ CALL

A/V SPEAKERS & PACKAGES

Acoustic Energy Evo 3B	£679.95	£ CALL
Artcoustic RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Audica RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
B&W RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
B&W Mini Theatre RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
KEF KHT1005	£299.95	£ CALL
KEF KHT2005.2	£599.95	£ CALL
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	£ CALL
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 PDP43GXDE 43"	£ CALL	£ CALL
Pioneer PDP50GXDE 50"	£ CALL	£ CALL
Samsung RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL

LCD TV

Hitachi RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
LG RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Loewe RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Panasonic RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Philips RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Samsung RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Sharp Aquos RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Toshiba RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL

PROJECTORS

Optoma RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
Screenplay RANGE	£ CALL	£ CALL
ScreenPlay SP5700 (REFURBISHED, LAST FEW)	£1499.95	£ CALL
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 49 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
- 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 BURLLEIGH 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 *OPEN SUNDAY*
- 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*
- 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*)
- LOUGHTON** 020 8532 0770 **NEW**
● 7-9 GOLDINGS HILL (*DUE TO OPEN 19 NOVEMBER*)
- 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, SHERWOOD
- OXFORD** 01865 241773
● 41 ST CLEMENTS STREET
- PETERBOROUGH** 01773 897697
● 36-38 PARK ROAD *OPEN SUNDAY*
- 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*
- SOLIHULL** 0121 733 3727
● 149-151 STRATFORD ROAD
- SOUTHAMPTON** 023 8033 7770
● 33 LONDON ROAD *OPEN SUNDAY*
- SOUTHGATE** 020 8886 2777
● 77 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 JOHNS 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 **NEW**
● 14 SILVER STREET

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-AMPING?

Bi-wiring is when you run separate cables to the treble and bass/mid terminals on the speaker. In most instances, this improves sound quality so long as identical cables are used. Bi-amping is using two stereo amps to drive one pair of speakers, using one amp to drive the treble and the other for the bass/mid sections of the speakers.

WHY DO VALVE AMPS HAVE SO LITTLE POWER?

Valve amps are inherently low powered in absolute terms – at least when you compare them to their transistor-based cousins. But when partnered with high-sensitivity loudspeakers, they are quite capable of producing perfectly adequate head-banging levels.

TOP BUYS



NAD
C352 £350

NAD made its name building world-beating budget amps, and the C352 continues that tradition in style – powerful, dynamic and thoroughly enjoyable with all music types.



Arcam
DiVA A90 £890

Top dog in Arcam's DiVA range is this excellent integrated amp. Its strengths include a slick, flexible user interface and beautifully smooth and detailed sound.



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 BB BEST BUY EC EDITOR'S CHOICE

STEREO AMPLIFIERS

Integrated amplifiers

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS					
				LINE INPUTS	PHONO INPUT	REMOTE CONTROL	HEADPHONE SOCKET	POWER OUTPUT (W)	ISSUE NUMBER
UP TO £1,000									
BB	Arcam DIVA A65 Plus	400	Highly articulate and fluent – offers unusual insight for the price	7	opt	●	●	40	232
	Arcam DIVA A80	600	A very competent mid-range amp with a sophisticated control system and crisp, detailed sound	6	●	●	●	90	251
BB	Arcam DIVA A90	850	Very well specified, well built, a delight to use and a real musical all-rounder	7	opt	●	●	90	273
BB	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
BB	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
BB	Electrocompaniet ECI3	999	Large and fairly powerful, with individual looks and very refined sound	6		●		70	262
	Exposure 3010I	1000	Full-bodied and enjoyable sound: phono stage well worth an extra £200	5	opt	●		100	273
BB	Exposure 2010 S	599	Beneath the unassuming exterior lurks a very capable performer that's passionate about music	6	opt	●		75	262
BB	Marantz PM4400 OSE	250	Highly competent and well specified – a lively performer that makes great music	5	●		●	50	256
BB	Musical Fidelity X-80	600	The entry-level to Musical Fidelity's amplifier range sounds both powerful and refined	4		●		55	255
BB	NAD C352	350	A dynamic and musical amp at a bargain price – another budget classic from NAD	7		●	●	55	253
BB	Naim Nait 5i	699	A trade-off of more power and better connectivity against less inputs works surprisingly well in a grunty, musical manner	4		●		50	252
BB	Primare I21	750	Energetic sound, with just a little veiling of detail at times: confident with tricky loads	4		●		75	273
	Rotel RA-03	499	Does all the basics commendably, only losing out to dearer competition in imaging and fine detail	5	●	●	●	70	273
BB	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
BB	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									
BB	Arcam FMJ A32	1,200	Ultra-civilised amp with plenty of features that's also highly revealing and musical	7	●	●	●	100	266
BB	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
BB	Audio Research VS155	2,895	Superb all-rounder provides the delights of valve amplification without sacrificing convenience	5		●		50	254
BB	AVI Laboratory Series	1,399	Terrific power, control and resolution – effortlessly musical and fine value	6	opt	●		200	241
BB	Copland CSA29	1,900	A hybrid valve/solid state amplifier that gets close to offering the best of both worlds	6	opt	●		85	255
BB	Exposure XXXV	1,599	Musical, powerful, tuneful and controlled, though not always the most analytical	6	opt	●		80	271
EC	Krell KAV-400xi	2,698	The best integrated Krell yet is quick, agile, solid and finely detailed	5		●		200	247
EC	McIntosh MA2275	5,400	A valve amplifier that doesn't patronise. It's not soft-centred and it understands dynamics	5	●	●		75	271
BB	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
BB	Moon i-3	1,595	Powerful Canadian amp whose lively presentation is particularly suited to big-scale music	6		●		100	265
BB	Primare I30	1,500	A smooth, sophisticated yet agile performer, and beautifully built too	6			●	100	267
EC	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
BB	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 BB BEST BUY EC EDITOR'S CHOICE

STEREO AMPLIFIERS

Pre/power amplifiers

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS						
				PREAMPLIFIER	POWER AMPLIFIER	LINE INPUTS	PHONO INPUT	REMOTE CONTROL	POWER OUTPUT (W)	ISSUE NUMBER
UP TO £2,000										
BB	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
EC	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
EC	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
BB	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
BB	Naim NAC 112x/NAP 150x	1,475	Upgraded entry-level Naim pre/power is a master of musical communication	●	●	6		●	50	262
BB	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										
EC	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
BB	Arcam FMJ C31	1,200	Professionally presented, beautifully built and exceptionally revealing, this preamp achieves much by doing little	●		5	opt	●		273

SPECS KEY **LINE INPUTS** Input sockets for source components with a line level output: CD players, DVD players, tape decks, tuners, phono stages etc. **PHONO INPUT** Input sockets and onboard phono stage for a cartridge. Either MM (moving magnet) or MC (moving coil), occasionally both. **REMOTE CONTROL** A remote control is supplied with the amplifier. **HEADPHONE SOCKET** To drive your cans with. **POWER OUTPUT** Manufacturer's rated output in watts per channel.

Our favourite BEST BUY EDITOR'S CHOICE
STEREO AMPLIFIERS continued

Pre/power amplifiers

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS					
				PRE-AMPLIFIER	POWER AMPLIFIER	LINE INPUTS	PHONO INPUT	REMOTE CONTROL	POWER OUTPUT (W)
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
	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

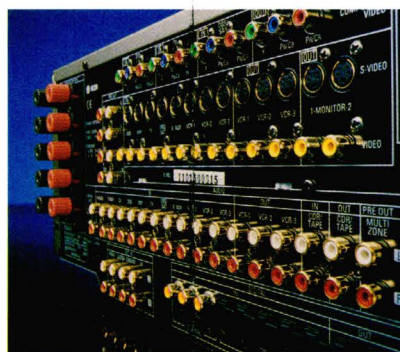


The multichannel, surround sound or AV amplifier is a popular option, thanks to the success of the DVD player and home cinema. Now you can buy five channels or more of amplification for the price of two. Now that multichannel music is also on the agenda, there's a lot to be said for a good AV amp or 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



Yamaha
DSP-AX757SE £499
 If you're looking for a multichannel amp that's good with music as well as home cinema, this is your best bet below £500.



Arcam
DiVA AVR300 £1,300
 Here's one for those who value great sound over numerous gizmos and gadgets – an integrated AV amp for audiophiles.



Denon
AVC-A11XV £2,500
 A splendid 7.1-channel amp that packs in the latest digital links and processing formats without sacrificing sound quality.



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

BB BEST BUY **EC** EDITOR'S CHOICE

Multichannel amplifiers

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	RECEIVER	LINE INPUTS	7.1 COMPATIBLE	5-CHANNEL POWER (W)	ISSUE NUMBER
MULTICHANNEL INTEGRATED AMPS								
BB	Arcam DiVA AVR300	1,300	Cracking all-round music and movie ability sets the Arcam apart from the AV crowd	●	8	●	100	257
EC	Denon AVC-A11XV	2,500	Sensible, real world derivative of AVC-A1XV, but still immensely flexible, and well endowed with digital i/o	●	11	●	140	273
	Denon AVR-2803	650	Merely 'average' sound but it's impossible to argue against the flexibility and value of its engineering	●	9	●	130	251
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
BB	Pioneer VSA-AX5Ai	1,200	A well specified receiver with a powerful, upfront sound. Includes i.Link digital interface and MCACC auto set-up	●	11	●	100	248
EC	Pioneer VSA-AX10Ai	3,000	State of the art one-box amplifier with enhanced sound quality, auto set-up and other enhancements	●	10	●	150	260
BB	Sony STR-DB798	250	Cheap but effective, and passably good with pure audio sources, but control system messy	●	7	●	100	273
BB	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
BB	Yamaha DSP-AX757SE	499	Exceptional sounding budget/mid price receiver offers brilliant sound per pound; ergonomics could be better	●	9	●	100	273
MULTICHANNEL PREAMPS/PROCESSORS AND POWER AMPS								
BB	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 FMJ 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
	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	7,500	Powerful and flexible processor/power amp combo with impressive sound. Excellent value – processor includes onboard screen	●	11	●	250	243
BB	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

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 DV89 DVD-A Player New (2Yr G/tee)	(1299.00)	£499.00	Linn 5103 AV Processor - Silver (2Yr G/tee)	(4500.00)	£1995.00
Arcam AVR 200 AV Receiver (2Yr G/tee)	(799.00)	£399.00	Linn Majik Amplifier - Blk S/H (1Yr G/tee)	(945.00)	£375.00
Arcam FMJ DV27 Player S/H - Silver (6 Mth G/tee)	(849.00)	£349.00	Linn LK100 Power amplifier S/H (1Yr G/tee)	(650.00)	£325.00
Arcam DT81 DAB Digital Tuner (2 Yr G/tee)	(649.00)	£299.00	Linn 2250 Power Amplifier Silver (2Yr G/tee)	(1995.00)	£1195.00
Arcam FMJ CD33 CD Player (2Yr G/tee)	(1349.00)	£845.00	Linn Trikan Centre Spkr - Maple (2Yr G/tee)	(495.00)	£249.00
Arcam Alpha 7 CD Player (2Yr G/tee)	(349.00)	£129.00	Naim 112 Preamplifier S/H (1Yr G/tee)	(660.00)	£445.00
AVI Amp Lab Series Integrated (2Yr G/tee)	(1400.00)	£849.00	Naim NAC102 Preamplifier S/H (1Yr G/tee)	(1175.00)	£499.00
AVI Pro 9 Speakers - Cherry (S/H) (2Yr G/tee)	(799.00)	£445.00	Naim NAP 180 Power Amplifier S/H (1Yr G/tee)	(1200.00)	£695.00
Denon AVR 3805 AV Amplifier (1Yr G/tee)	(999.00)	£599.00	Naim Ariva Speakers - Maple (2Yr G/tee)	(1250.00)	£595.00
KEF KHT 1005 Sub - Sat System (2Yr G/tee)	(299.00)	£199.00	Rotel RA-01 Amplifier (2Yr G/tee)	(249.00)	£159.00
KEF Q4 Speakers (Cherry) (2Yr G/tee)	(399.00)	£249.00	REL Q100e Sub Woofer S/H (1Yr G/tee)	(559.00)	£199.00
Linn Unidisk SC M/format Player Silver (2Yr G/tee) (2995.00)		£2249.00	Sugden A21p Power Amplifier (1Yr G/tee)	(823.00)	£495.00
Linn Kairn Phono Preamplifier S/H (1Yr G/tee)	(2200.00)	£859.00	Yamaha HD1300 H/Disk CD Player (1Yr G/tee)	(599.00)	£429.00

For latest addition to our pre-owned and ex-display bargains please visit the marketplace section of our new website at billyvee.co.uk.

january 2006 | HI-FI CHOICE 111

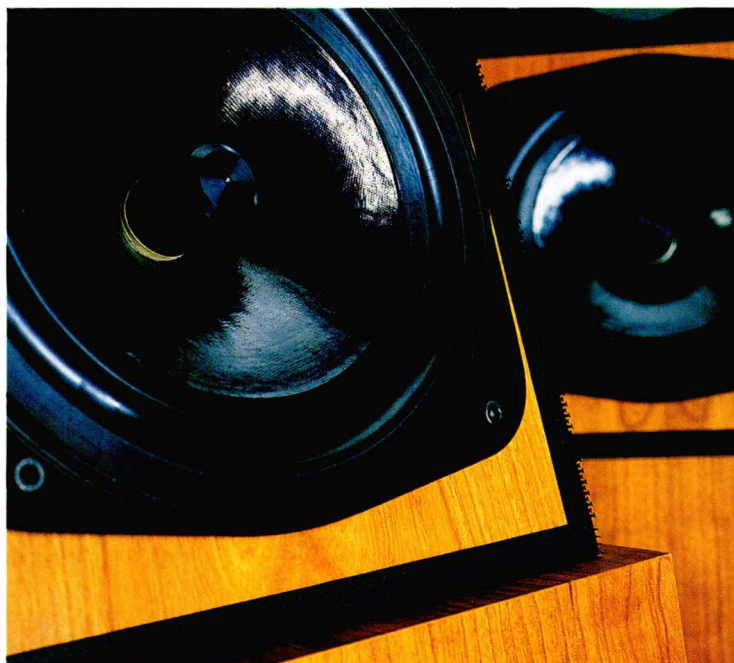
STEREO SPEAKERS

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



Rega
R3 £448

A neat little floorstander that really knows how to communicate with music. Its sound is crisp and agile, and what it lacks in sheer bass weight it makes up for in energy.



KEF
iQ9 £800

This superbly judged floorstander delivers a clean, powerful and transparent sound, with impressively taut bass. A very fine all-rounder for the money.



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 BEST BUY EDITOR'S CHOICE STEREO SPEAKERS

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	Acoustic Energy Aegis Evo 1	180	An unusually classy and sophisticated performer for the price; laid-back sound and good looks too	19,36,24		A	30	●		226
EC	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
EC	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	Nears 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 ELS 303	399	Midband is impressively smooth, even and coherent, but the sound lacks some dynamic grip and top end detail	18,85,20	●	A-	28	●		273
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
EC	Epos M5	349	Gorgeous miniature works well close to wall. Could be smoother but communicates with authority	18,33,21		A-	40		●	269
EC	Epos M12.2	449	A true classic stand-mount with lovely presentation, fine sound balance, superior coherence and low coloration	20,37,25		A-	40	●		265
EC	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	●		242
	Harbeth NRG2	650	Strikingly styled standmount majors on dynamic excitement at some expense in smoothness and coloration	19,34,29		A+	42		●	263
BB	KEF iQ9	800	Shapely and solid floorstander has wide bandwidth and dynamic range with superior neutrality and sensitivity	22,94,33	●	A	25	●		273
	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

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).

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....."

Our favourite BEST BUY EDITOR'S CHOICE **STEREO SPEAKERS** *continued*

Stereo speakers

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS					
				SIZE (WxHxD) (CM)	FLOORSTANDER	EASE-OF-DRIVE	BASS FROM (Hz)	FREE SPACE	CLOSE-TO-WALL
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	
BB	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	
BB	Tannoy Fusion 4	350	This big d'Appollito twin two-way has fine coherence and dynamics. A neutral and even all-rounder	21,97,29	● A	20	●	255	
BB	Tannoy Sensys DC1	449	Modest sensitivity but beautifully balanced with fine authority at a very realistic price	21,41,29	● A	40	●	245	
	Tannoy Eyriss 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 Eyriss 2	999	This super-slim and cutely different-looking floorstander is very communicative, despite weak treble	17,91,26	● A	20	●	231	
BB	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	
BB	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	
BB	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									
BB	Acoustic Energy AE1 MkII	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	
BB	Anthony Gallo Nucleus Ref	2,400	Occasionally raw, but engaging and capable beyond its physical stature	20,89,41	● A	34	●	257	
BB	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	
BB	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	
BB	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	
BB	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	
BB	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	
BB	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	
BB	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	
EC	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	
BB	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	
BB	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	
	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	
EC	Bosendorfer VC 7	4,745	Unique design delivers superior dynamics that sound particularly convincing with acoustic and classical music	20,135,40	● A	37	●	265	
BB	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	
EC	Dali Helicon 400	2,999	Advanced drivers and enclosure give a generous sound with wide dynamic range and no boxiness	22,103,46	● A	20	●	264	
	Dynaudio Contour S 1.4	1,850	Sound has fine mid-to-treble coherence and neutrality, though port tuning was ill-suited to our room	19,40,36	● A-	28	●	260	
	Eclipse TD Lulét 307/316	1,250	Extraordinary satellite plus sub solution sounds a cut above other sub/sats. Can be expanded to multichannel	12,16,16	act	40	●	247	
	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 Profile 908	1,300	Open and revealing especially of spatial and atmospheric detail, makes up for its bass restraint with joi de vivre	23,39,27.5	● A	50	●	274	
EC	Focal-JMLab Micro Utopia Be	3,799	New 'Be' version is clearly an exceptional standmount, capable of revealing the innate quality of the music	25,42,5,38	● A	50	●	245	
EC	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	
EC	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	
EC	Gamut L5	5,900	Impressive build and sophisticated driver design make the L5 a stunning speaker with rare transparency levels	20,116,43	● A-	32	●	271	
EC	Krell Resolution 2	6,497	Large., but good looking with Sonus Faber type elasticated front. Musically a great full bandwidth all-rounder	122,29,61	● B	28	●	273	
EC	Revel M22	1,800	A remarkably clean and revealing speaker with superb tonal and microdynamic capabilities	22,37,30	● A-	48	●	274	



Audio Analogue has brought over ten years expertise in audio design to the exciting new **Enigma**.

The perfect one-box solution for today's space and style conscious customer, **Enigma** boasts a high quality 50 watt integrated amplifier, CD player and AM/FM tuner in a single compact and elegant package.

Add valve technology for smooth clarity and a price tag of **£850** and you have the perfect recipe for success. **Enigma** is incredibly versatile, making

it ideal for a main or second system in studio, bedroom or office.

Advanced in design but easy to use, the only mystery about **Enigma** is how **Audio Analogue** has managed it at such an affordable price!

For information, brochures and dealers contact:

UKD Ltd
Tel: **01753 652 669**
info@ukd.co.uk | www.ukd.co.uk

The not-so-puzzling solution for music lovers of all ages...

Our favourite BEST BUY EDITOR'S CHOICE
STEREO SPEAKERS continued

Stereo speakers

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS						
				SIZE (W x D x H) (CM)	FLOORSTANDER	EDGE OF DRIVE	BASS FROM (Hz)	FREE SPACE	CLOSE TO WALL	ISSUE NUMBER
	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
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
IB	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
IB	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
IB	PMC FB1+	1,695	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
IB	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
IB	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
IB	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
IB	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
IB	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
IB	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
IB	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	7,750	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.

GIVE YOUR EARS A BREAK!

GET YOUR HANDS ON SOME OF THESE....



PRIVILEGED TICKET



YOUR ALL IN ONE SAVER!!
Northern Sound & Vision Show
Now back for It's 7th year.

SAVE £3 ON YOUR ADMISSION (£8 on the day)

ALL DAY PARKING CONCESSION

YOUR EXCLUSIVE SHOWSHOP PASS

FREE MAGAZINE & PROGRAMME

SHOW TIMES
Sat 28th Jan: 10.00 - 5.00
Sun 29th Jan: 10.00 - 4.00

AV/HOME CINEMA
HIFI, Popstar & High End
CUSTOM INSTALL
SHOWSHOP
PC MEDIA
GARDEN SOUNDS
INCAR HIFI
MUSIC MARKET
ACCESSORIES
LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Venue: Radisson SAS Hotel, Manchester Airport, J5/M56. Follow signs for T2. Hotel: 0161 490 5000.

GREAT ACCESS. Shuttlebus from Show Carpark, 2 minutes walk from Rail & Coach Terminal, all undercover. Direct access from Terminals 1-3.

Ref:

PRIVILEGED TICKET

SAVES YOU £3



This ticket is valid for both days
KEEP THIS STUB SAFE
Good access for the disabled
MORE TICKETS?
Call us, email us, download from our website, call at any participating dealer, avforums or even photocopy.

ALL DAY PARKING CONCESSION

JUST £5

See over for full details

CAR PARKING TICKET



Not valid unless stamped

SHOWSHOP

SAVE £100
Building on the success of our unique 'Showshop' in 2004 - 2005 it's now even bigger with a huge range of absolute bargains.
Forget the selective sales you see on the high street or bought in affairs - everything here is discounted heavily and most products are well known brands.
There are end of season lines, clearance items, ex demo stock, accessories in fact something for everyone. See over.



Northern 2006 Sound & Vision

The Quality Home Entertainments Show
Radisson SAS, Manchester Airport

28 - 29 January 2006

The Northern Sound & Vision Show

28-29 January 2006

7th YEAR

The only UK venue with direct undercover access by Plane, Train & Coach.

Plus 2 minute shuttle bus service from our reserved carpark.

The biggest show outside of the South.
Mega Showshop, Best Sounding Hotel, Everything that's high quality Home Ents.

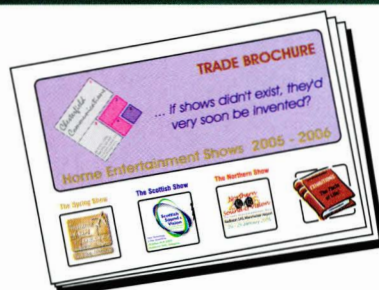


The UK's only High End Show
NOW IN ITS 6TH YEAR



New Technology
2 Day ShowShop
October 7-8 2006
Radisson SAS, Glasgow

Scotland's own show
NOW IN ITS 5TH YEAR



TRADE ENQUIRIES?

At the time of going to press there was a very limited amount of space remaining - ring us immediately for details.



Chesterfield Communications

T: 01829 740650 F: 0845 280 0065

E: roy@chestergroup.fsnet.co.uk www.chestergroup.org

* From most sponsoring dealers, our website, email, fax us or the dog & bone.

As many as you want - bring a friend - tickets valid for both days.

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

BB BEST BUY **EC** EDITOR'S CHOICE

Stereo headphones

BADGET?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS							
				ELECTROSTATIC	SUPRA-AURAL	CIRCUMAURAL	OPEN BACK	CLOSED BACK	WEIGHT (g)	3.5MM JACK ADAPTOR	ISSUE NUMBER
BB	AKG K44	20	Lively, enjoyable and remarkably detailed: a bargain			●		●	190	●	219
BB	AKG K270 Studio	129	Pro oriented design which is very transparent and great with acoustic material			●		●	270	●	230
EC	AKG K1000	650	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
BB	Beyerdynamic DT990	160	Impeccable balance, very extended bass and treble, and bags of detail place this model ahead of the pack			●	●		250	●	245
BB	Grado SR-60	90	For sheer musical enjoyment these are hard to beat. Retro styling may not be to everyone's taste		●		●		200	●	194
BB	Grado SR325i	310	Highly sophisticated and detailed sound with great extension: check for comfort		●		●		200	●	270
BB	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
EC	Sennheiser HD650	300	Astonishing resolution and hardly less impressive tonal balance make this a true hi-fi experience			●	●		260	●	252
EC	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
EC	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. **CIRCUMAURAL** Earpads rest on the head around the ears. **OPEN BACK** Vented capsules let sound in and out. **CLOSED BACK** Sealed capsules. **WEIGHT** In grams. **3.5MM JACK ADAPTOR** Allows connection to personal stereos, computers etc.



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.

- ✓ Robust steel construction
- ✓ 13A Sockets
- ✓ 10A Panel Mount Fuse
- ✓ RFI 10A Mains Filter & Surge Suppressor
- ✓ External Earth Stud
- ✓ 2m x 1.5mm Screened Cable
- ✓ UK Plug - 10A Fuse Fitted
- ✓ Colour Black
- ✓ Specialists 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

Call 020 8905 7273

Home Entertainment — **POWER VERDICT UP** 

OLSON ELECTRONICS LIMITED
OLSON HOUSE, 490 HONEYPOT LANE,
STANMORE, MIDDX HA7 1JX
TEL: 020 8905 7273 FAX: 020 8905 1283
email: eslee@olson.co.uk www.soundfantastic.co.uk



FROM

£83.72

inc. VAT & p&p

40 YEARS
1961-2001

24 HOUR SERVICE. VISA, MASTERCARD AND SWITCH ACCEPTED



Bosendorfer

Renowned for the skill and craftsmanship in building the finest traditional concert grand pianos, Bosendorfer has now created a line of loudspeakers using a new design radically different from those of the past. Going against the usual conventions of loudspeaker construction, Bosendorfer's cabinet design is a living, resonating body not an inert 'dead' shell. This creates a sound stage which comes significantly closer to the live experience than is achievable by conventional loudspeaker systems.

Musical sounds are formed by a complex blending of the fundamental tone, formants and overtones. The formants are primarily responsible for voice recognition because they determine the timbre: their frequencies remaining constant even when the overall tone changes. This basic musical principle, along with the consideration of high pulse dynamics, makes music come to life.

See it, hear it, experience it, at
KJ West One

26 New Cavendish Street
London W1 Tel: 0207 486 8262/3



In the expert opinion of leading acousticians, the critical parameters for authentic sound reproduction include extremely low levels of modulation distortion in frequency, amplitude, pulse, time-base, phase and inter-modulation-loudspeakers that function **three-dimensionally, as only Bosendorfer's do**, satisfy these requirements. These parameters are especially important for reproduction of tones such as vibratos, violin tones or the human voice, which are themselves a kind of frequency modulation. Additional modulation caused by electronic intervention or use of filters only leads to a distortion and misrepresentation of the original sound.

Since Bosendorfer loudspeakers were designed without losing sight of this 'law of tonality', they are capable of producing live music of every genre with incredible accuracy. In this way, sound quality, recording quality and musical expression can all be heard to their full advantage.

**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



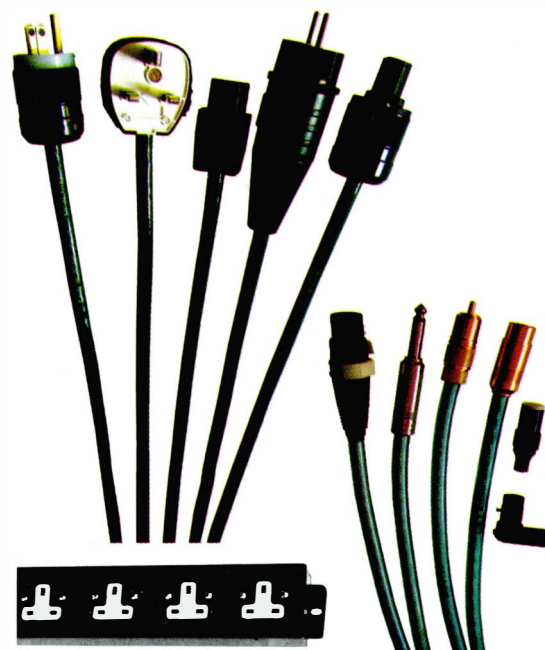
LAT INTERNATIONAL - USA

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.



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.

WWW.AUDUSA.COM

T: 020 8241 9826, 020 8264 0249 F: 020 8241 0999 E: sales@audusa.com

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

BEST BUY EDITOR'S CHOICE

Interconnects and speaker cables				SPECIFICATIONS					
BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	STRANDED	SOLID CORE	COPPER	SILVER	DIGITAL CABLE TYPE	ISSUE NUMBER
ANALOGUE INTERCONNECTS									
	Black Rhodium Illusion	77	An upfront, lively, exciting cable which still manages subtlety when needed. Slight coloration though		●	●			248
	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
	Chord Company Chorus	215	Very even-handed balance with notably extended bass	●			●		259
	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
	Kimber Timbre	89	Typical Kimber construction with ditto sound – clean, extended and detailed	●			●		248
	Monster Interlink 400 Mk2	70	Really lively and enjoyable sound at a sensible price	●			●		224
	Townshend DCT100	100	Unusual construction with copper strip conductors, giving very detailed sound, but just an occasional hint of hardness		●	●			241
	Townshend Isolda DCT	300	Unusual construction and cryogenically treated too: whatever the reason, a remarkably capable wire		●	●			234
	van den Hul The Bay C5	55	Terrific detail, nice balance – a great cable	●			●		224
	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
	van den Hul D102 Mk III	79	Hybrid conductors (carbon and copper) and intelligent construction give strong bass and excellent detail	●			●		234
	Wireworld Luna 5	30	Authoritative bass and clear treble outperform many cables at twice the price	●			●		273
	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									
	Black Rhodium Polar Scherzo	135	Highly detailed sound with notably solid and stable stereo imaging	●			●	E	270
	Kimber Select KS2020	629	Provides a subtle but rewarding lift in musicality with any DAC, justifying the price			●	●	E	260
	QED Qunex Signature 75	80	First-rate balance and imaging – ever so nearly as good as it gets at any price				●	E	265
	QED Qunex SR75	50	Lots of bass and good clear midrange and treble at a sensible price	●			●	E	234
	Supra ZAC	32	High grade fibre and quality plugs add up to a noticeable improvement over giveaway optical leads					O	259
	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
	Black Rhodium Disco	4	Lively and energetic with pretty good detail, if a touch bass-light	●			●		274
	Chord Company Signature	117	Dynamic, solid sounding cable, but it's bulky and not very tractable	●			●		255
	Electrofluidics 20/20	45	Excellent bass extension and very fine performance elsewhere – one of the best all-round cables available		●	●			241
	Kimber BVS	18	Beautifully full, open and transparent sound right across the board	●			●		227
	Kimber BPR	21	Bass very full, just occasionally a touch flabby, but detailed and sweet upper frequencies make this a good value cable	●			●		241
	Kimber BTC	39	Very capable in all areas, particularly good at imaging and with firm bass. Price for 5m terminated pair	●			●		203
	QED Silver Anniversary	5	A few minor flaws, but overall performance is very assured for this price	●			●		192
	QED X-Tube XT300	10	A natural and well controlled sounding cable that's cost effective for mid-priced systems		●	●			234
	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
	Wireworld Terra 5	5	Deep powerful bass, clear treble and very solid imaging add up to above-class performance	●			●		261
	Wireworld Solstice 5	20	Unfriendly to handle, but makes up for it with very assured sound – heaps of bass and great insight	●			●		248
	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.

LEEMA ACOUSTICS

Hear it Feel it Live it



"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 Qualex 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

Loudspeakers and Electronics - Proudly Hand-Crafted in Wales, United Kingdom

STANDS AND SUPPORTS

Equipment racks and speaker stands



If you want to get the most from your source and amp components, it's important to consider good quality support. Dedicated equipment supports are racks and tables made specifically to hold hi-fi gear, and the best can have a profoundly positive effect on sound

because, for example, they can help to isolate kit from ground-borne vibrations and mechanical or electrical interference. Equally, if you own a pair of small 'bookshelf' or 'standmount' speakers, it's important to place them on good quality, purpose-built speaker stands.

Our favourite BB BEST BUY EC EDITOR'S CHOICE **EQUIPMENT SUPPORTS**

Equipment supports

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS						
				HEIGHT	TOP PLATE SIZE (CM)	FILLABLE	WELDED	NUMBER OF SHELVES	SHELF TYPE	ISSUE NUMBER
	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
EC	Audiophile Base	615	Price is justified by its earth-shattering sonic abilities – a worthy upgrade	82	43			4	MDF	193
	Avid Isosshelf	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	650	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
BB	Custom Design Icon 400	600	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
	Isobue '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
EC	Townshend VSSS	1,300	The Seismic Sink goes all glassy and attractive, yet retains the same excellent vibration-killing sound quality	76	35,50			4	Glass	273

Our favourite BB BEST BUY EC EDITOR'S CHOICE **SPEAKER STANDS**

Speaker stands

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS						
				HEIGHT	TOP PLATE SIZE (CM)	FILLABLE	WELDED	NUMBER OF LEGS	ISSUE NUMBER	
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 RS 300 MkII	100	A solid stand improving on the original, with better focus and detail	61,56,51	16.5, 18	●		2		202
EC	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
BB	Partington Ansa 60	99	Elegant flat-packer 'disappears' sonically; restrained but neutral and coherent	62	18, 15	●		4		232
EC	Partington Dreadnought BS	249	The Dreadnought Broadside is a superb stand for high-class standmount speakers – and it looks great too!	61	17, 15	●	●	5		261
	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
EC	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.

AVID DIVA - AFFORDABLE HI-END



HFC "Best Buy"
HFC "Product of the Year"

Call us to listen.
tel: 01480 457300

www.avidhifi.co.uk
Contact us for your nearest dealer

SEASON'S GREETINGS

HUNDREDS OF SUPERB GIFT IDEAS,
AVAILABLE IN-STORE AND ONLINE NOW
WWW.SUPERFI.CO.UK/CHRISTMAS

AMPLIFIER
NAD C352CT
OUR PRICE £349.95

- "The added grunt makes the revised amp keep up with the Joneses. Or the Marantz. And it succeeds. Brilliantly"
- 80 watts x 2 (RMS 8 ohms)
- £349.95



SAVE UP TO 10% OFF
HI-FI CHOICE

HI-FI AND HOME CINEMA SPECIALISTS

Acoustic Energy, Apollo, Arcam, Audiolab, B&W, Creek, Denon, Elac, Epos, Grado, Humax, KEF, Linn, MJ Acoustics, Marantz, Mission, NAD, Onkyo, Panasonic,

Pioneer, Pro-Ject, QED, Quad, Rotel, Sennheiser, Sony, Sound Organisation, Soundstyle, Tannoy, Topfield, Wharfedale, Yamaha and many more top brands.

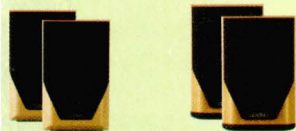
Not all products are available from all outlets: please call, or check online at www.superfi.co.uk

Superfi

SPEAKERS

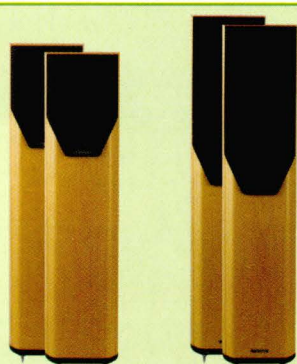
MISSION VOLARE

- Choice of real-wood finishes
- 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

MICRO HI-FI

ONKYO CR505DAB

OUR PRICE £219.95

- DAB/FM/AM tuner
- CD with MP3 playback
- 2 x 20 watts with independent bass/treble controls
- £219.95



TURNTABLE

GOLDRING GR2

- "Good all-round value"
- Goldring G1012GX Gyger 2 cartridge included
- £239.95 (Was £264.95, Save £25)

OUR PRICE £239.95

WAS: £264.95
SAVE: £25.00



FREEVIEW PVR

TOPFIELD TF5800PVR

OUR PRICE £289.95

- Record and watch a combination of up to four channels simultaneously
- Twin tuners with twin modulated outputs
- New 'Black Panther' model out now
- Too many features to list – see www.superfi.co.uk/toppy



DVD/HD RECORDER

SONY RDRHXD710

OUR PRICE £429.95

WAS: £499.95
SAVE: £70.00

- Freeview tuner with
- 160GB hard disk
- Multi-region playback and DVD recording
- £429.95 (Was £499.95, Save £70)



SPEAKERS

EPOS M5

OUR PRICE £349.95

- "A small box capable of genuine musical excitement"
- Choice of real-wood finishes
- £349.95



SUBWOOFER

MISSION MS10

- Built-in 150 watt amplifier
- Speaker level and line level inputs
- 10" bass driver
- £149.95 (Was £249.95, Save £100)



DAB RADIO

PURE DIGITAL EVOKE 1XT

OUR PRICE £99.95

- Maple or cherry wood
- Built-in alarm clock
- Stereo line output
- £99.95



DAB TUNER

DENON TU1800DAB

OUR PRICE £199.95

WAS: £249.95
SAVE: £50.00

- DAB/FM/AM coverage
- RDS and DAB text services
- Black or silver. All metal case and aluminium fascia
- £199.95 (Was £249.95, Save £50)



HEADPHONES

SENNHEISER HD650

- "Impeccably balanced"
- Open-back design
- £199.95 (Was £299.95, Save £100)



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 offers 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

GLOSSARY

TECHNICAL TERMS

S.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 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 surround 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.

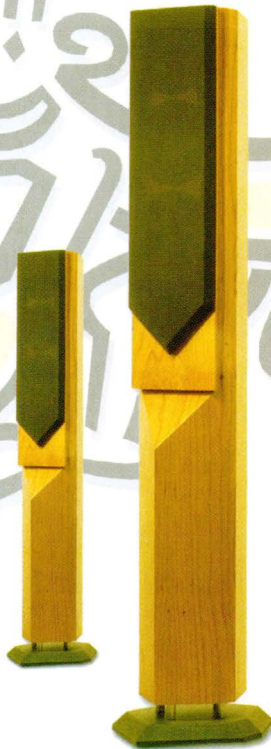
VEILED Loss of detail due to limited transparency.

WARM A fullness in the lower midrange/upper bass.

WEIGHT A sense of substance and underpinning produced by deep, controlled bass.

Monkey says:

You should definitely visit www.odysseyaudiogb.com for a taste of what true America esoterica can do at a truly transparent price.



acacoustics, 47 Chartley Avenue, Neasden, London, NW2 7QY
Tel 020 8830 6509 | info@odysseyaudiogb.com | www.odysseyaudiogb.com

High End Cable

Your Friendly Cable Store



Chord Signature Reference interconnects



Stereovox HDXV Digital interconnect



Chord Power Cable



Stereovox HDX2 110 ohm digital designed by Chris Sommovigo



Nordost Valhalla



Nordost Tonearm Cables
TYR FREY HEIMDALL

Chord | Acoustic Zen | Stereovox | Nordost UK | van den Hull | Iso Teck Black Rhodium DCT | Ayre | STAX | Ortofon | Turbosound | Secondhand

Free delivery worldwide on all interconnects
www.highendcable.co.uk

or call Dave on 01775 761880

“ Music is the art which is most nigh to tears and memory ”

Oscar Wilde

R.T. Services was established in 1986 by Robert Pumell. His love of music and belief that music can be accurately/faithfully reproduced in the home was the driving force behind R.T. Services. His search across the world revealed some of the finest Hi-Fi Products and most to this day have remained part of R.T. Services product portfolio. All of these Products have been chosen for their ability to recreate the music played on them as closely as possible to the original. Music lovers are able to hear the music as its maker intended time and time again.

For music lovers to truly enjoy these products, R.T. Services

hand-picked a group of specialist Hi-Fi Dealers throughout the UK to represent them. A group who share the same passion and love of music as Robert Pumell. It's a relationship built over time and a common understanding of what makes a product or system work to its fullest potential so that you the listener hear your music in all its form and glory.

R.T. Services
32 Rawthey Avenue
Didcot, OX11 7XN

Tel: +44 (0) 1235 810 455
Fax: +44 (0) 1235 810 324

Email: info@rtsaudio.co.uk
Web: www.rtsaudio.co.uk

To request a brochure, arrange a demonstration or to find out more please contact your nearest specialist Hi-Fi Dealer below:

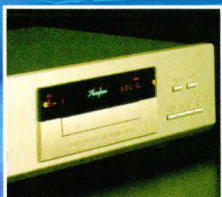
The Audio Works
14 Stockport Road
Cheadle
Cheshire, SK8 2AA
Tel: 0161 4287887
email: larry@theaudioworks.co.uk

Audio Republic
78 Otley Road
Headingley
Leeds, LS6 4BA
Tel: 01132 177294
email: andrew.jules@virgin.net

The Audio Room
2 George Street
Hedon
Hull, HU12 8JH
Tel: 01482 891375
email: hifi@theaudiroom.co.uk

Hazlemere Audio
High Wycombe
Tel: 01494 865829
email: info@hazlemereaudio.co.uk

HMF Audio
London
Tel: 02084 065699
Mob: 07768 654088



Accuphase
Origin: Japan
Established: 1973



Nagra
Origin: Switzerland
Established: 1951



Peak Consult
Origin: Denmark
Established: 1996



Spectral
Origin: USA
Established: 1977



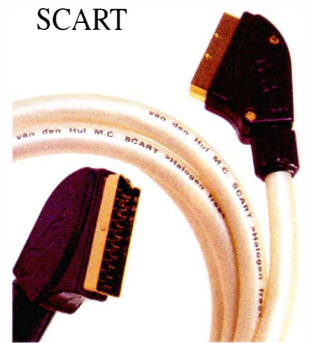
Siltech
Origin: The Netherlands
Established: 1983

Other products include:
Da Vinci Audio Labs • Harmonic Resolution Systems • Leben HiFi •
Orpheus Laboratories • T.W. Acoustic • Viola Audio Labs

...listen to the best

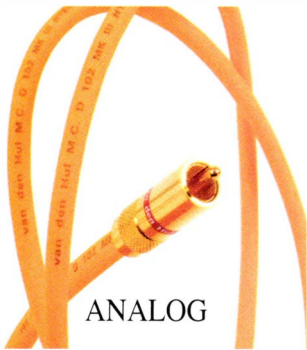


HDMI



SCART

SOURCE



ANALOG

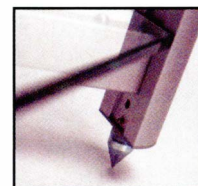


VIDEO

Distributed in the UK by:

Henley Designs, 01235 511166
www.henleydesigns.co.uk

When detail matters.....



The new MR5 equipment support from
Henley Designs, serious about sound!

 Henley Designs 01235 511166
www.henleydesigns.co.uk



“Cheers!”

All The Latest Audio and Visual Technology Online!

Click or call for the very latest prices

directlinx “To instantly find these offers online, enter the code into the directlinx box on our website.”

PLASMA SCREENS

MAKE MODEL

Hitachi	32PD5200	Sharp	LC26GA3E
Hitachi	42PD5200	Sharp	LC20SH1E
Hitachi	42PD5300	Sharp	LC32GD1E
JVC	AV42B50	Sony	LC37GD1E
LG	RZ42PX11	Sony	KLV17HR3B
Panasonic	TH37PE30B	Sony	KLV20S3S
Panasonic	TH37PW7B	Sony	KVL23M1SI
Panasonic	TH42PE30B	Sony	KVL23M1B
Panasonic	TH42PW7B	Sony	KLV21SG2
Panasonic	TH50PV30B	Sony	KVL23M1SI
Philips	37PF9946	Sony	KVL32M1B
Philips	42PF9966	Sony	KDL32MRX1
Philips	42PF9986	Sony	KDL42MRX1
Pioneer	PDP435XDE	Toshiba	14VL44B
Pioneer	PDP435FDE-TE	Toshiba	17WL46B
Pioneer	PDP505XDE	Toshiba	17WL46
Pioneer	PDP503MXEV	Toshiba	23WL46
Samsung	PS42V4SX	Toshiba	27WL46B
Samsung	PS50P3HXX	Toshiba	30WL46B
Sharp	LC37GD1E	Toshiba	32WL48P
Sony	KDEP42M1SI		
Sony	KEP37M1S		
Sony	KDEP37XS1		
Sony	KDEP42SX1		
Sony	KDEP42MRX1		
Vision	PM4230		
Toshiba	42WP46B		

A/V SYSTEMS

MAKE MODEL

Aiwa	AVJX33
Denon	DHT500SD
Denon	DHT550SD
JVC	THS3
JVC	THS5
JVC	THSW8
JVC	THA75R
JVC	QPA12AL
JVC	QPF30AL
JVC	QPF70AL
JVC	QPF90AL
LG	LHT6740
Panasonic	SCHT520
Panasonic	SCHT05
Panasonic	SCHT870
Panasonic	SCHT25R
Panasonic	SCHT1500
Panasonic	SST1S
Panasonic	SCHT37R
Philips	LX3900SA
Pioneer	DCS222
Pioneer	DCS323
Pioneer	DCS222MR
Pioneer	HC51S
Pioneer	DCS424
Pioneer	NSDV1000
Sony	DCTS780
Sony	DAVD150
Sony	HTP1200
Sony	DAVSB200
Sony	HTDDW860
Sony	DAVSB300
Sony	DAVSR1
Sony	DAVSB500W
Sony	DAVSR3
Sony	DAVSR2
Sony	HTR6100
Sony	DAVSR4W
Sony	DAVLF1
Thomson	DPL15VD
Toshiba	SD44HK
Yamaha	DVXS100
Yamaha	DVXS120

LCD TELEVISIONS

MAKE MODEL

DMTech	DML4117WD
DMTech	DML4120SD
Hitachi	17LD4220
Hitachi	28LD5200
JVC	LT17250
JVC	LT17D50
JVC	LT23C50
JVC	LT26D50S
JVC	LT32D50S
LG	RZ15LA70
LG	RZ20LA70
LG	RZ17L240
LG	RZ26L250
Loewe	MIMO15C
Panasonic	TX20LA2
Panasonic	TX22LX2
Panasonic	TX26LXD1
Panasonic	TX32LXD1
Philips	15PF8946
Philips	17PF9946
Philips	23PF8946
Philips	23PF9946
Philips	30PF9946
Philips	32PF9976
Philips	23HM8821
Philips	32PF9986
Philips	37PF9986
Philips	42PF9986C
Samsung	LE15E31SX
Samsung	LW20M11CX
Samsung	LW17N23NX
Sanyo	27LC3
Sanyo	30LD3
Sharp	LC15SH1E
Sharp	LC15L1E

We also stock the very latest in hi-fi systems and separates, in-car, photography, personal computers and much, much more...

ALL PRICES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

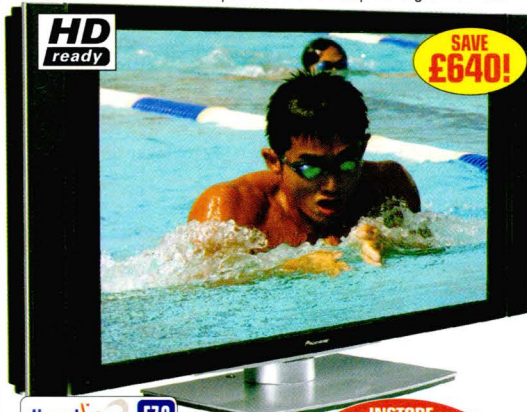
HD ready What Is HDTV?

HDTV is touted as the biggest jump in television broadcasting technology since the advent of the colour TV. Having proved itself for years in the USA and Japan, it is due to hit the UK, through BSkyB, sometime in 2006.

Skipping the technical jargon, HDTV will essentially increase the picture detail by approximately 4 times of that currently seen in current analogue and digital broadcasts, whilst providing full Dolby Digital 5.1 surround sound on certain broadcasts, such as movies.

Pioneer 50" Widescreen Plasma

Accepts 1080i and 720p HD Signal Formats



directlinx F79

• 1280 x 768 Pixel Resolution • Comes with Media Box and Speakers • 2x HDMI Digital Link for Improved Pictures and Sound • 4000:1 Contrast • 3x SCART Sockets Model No. PDP506XDE

INSTORE PRICE: £3819.99
£3179.99 INC VAT
MAINLAND DELIVERY £30

Panasonic 32" Widescreen LCD TV

with 20w Total Audio Output



directlinx F7B

• 1366 x 768 Pixel Resolution • Viera Colour Management System • High Definition Ready • Built-in Tuner, Speakers and Table Top Stand • SD Memory Card Slot Model No. TX32LXD500

INSTORE PRICE: £1999.99
£1499.99 INC VAT
MAINLAND DELIVERY £20

HITACHI 42" Widescreen Plasma

with Nicam Stereo Sound System



directlinx F78

• 1024 x 1024 Pixel Resolution • HDMI and DVI Connections • Built-in Tuner, Speakers and Table Top Stand • Fastext • 3x SCART Sockets • On-Screen Display Model No. 42PD7200

INSTORE PRICE: £2499.99
£2179.99 INC VAT
MAINLAND DELIVERY £30

SAMSUNG 26" Widescreen LCD Television

with Built-in Tuner, Speakers and Stand

• 1366 x 768 Pixel Resolution • High Definition Ready • 170 Degree Viewing Angle (Hor/Vert) • SRS TruSurround XT • Nicam Stereo • PC Input (D-Sub) Model No. LE26R41B

directlinx F7A

INSTORE PRICE: £799.99
£599.99 INC VAT
MAINLAND DELIVERY £15



TOSHIBA Ultra Slimline DVD Player

with HDMI Connection Facility



directlinx F7C

• Built-in Dolby Digital and DTS Decoder • DVD-R(RW), CD-R(RW), VCD, DivX, MP3 and JPEG CD Playback • Supports Interactive Disc Features • PAL and NTSC Playback (Region 2 Only) Model No. SD350E

INSTORE PRICE: £99.99
£74.99 INC VAT
MAINLAND DELIVERY £4.99

DENON Super Audio CD/DVD Player

HDMI Multi Channel Audio Ready



directlinx F7D

• Dual Format DVD, CD-R(RW), (i)SACD, WMA, MP3 and JPEG CD Playback • 6 Channel Audio Output • Pure Direct Mode • SRS TruSurround • Squeeze Mode • HDCD Decoding • Bass Management Model No. DVD2910

INSTORE PRICE: £599.99
£469.99 INC VAT
MAINLAND DELIVERY £4.99

JVC**DVD Home Cinema Kit**
with "Hand-Clap" Surround Set-Up**SAVE £55!**directlink **F80**

- 810w Max. Output Power • 5.1ch Dolby Digital, Dolby Pro-Logic, DTS Decoders • DVD-RAM, DVD-R(RW), CD-R(RW), (S)VCD, MP3, WMA and JPEG Playback • Ultra-Hi Performance AV Decoder **Model No. THS66**

INSTORE PRICE: £329.99
£274.99 INC VAT
 MAINLAND DELIVERY £10
Pioneer**DVD Home Cinema Kit**
with On-Screen Display Facility**SAVE £83!**directlink **F81**

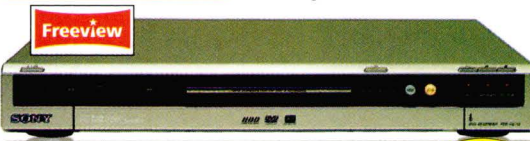
- 600w Max. Output Power • Ultra Slim Subwoofer with Horizontal or Vertical Placement • CD-R(RW), MP3, WMA, DivX and JPEG Playback • Dolby Pro-Logic II Surround • Tuner with RDS Facility **Model No. DCS340**

INSTORE PRICE: £349.99
£266.99 INC VAT
 MAINLAND DELIVERY £10

An Extensive Range Of The Very Latest in DVD Technology Available Online!

Panasonic**DVD/Video Recorder**
with Multi-Format Compatibilitydirectlink **F7E**

- Multi-Format Recording and Playback • 1 Second Quick Start for Recording • PAL Progressive Scan • 2 x LP Horizontal Resolution (500) • Q-Link and Show View Functions **Model No. DMRES30V**

INSTORE PRICE: £319.99
£249.99 INC VAT
 MAINLAND DELIVERY £4.99
SONY**250Gb DVD Recorder**
with Integrated 'Freeview' TV Tunerdirectlink **F7F**

- Dual RW Recording • Dolby Digital, DTS and Dolby Pro-Logic 2 Decoder • Precision Cinema Progressive Scan • D-Matrix Noise Reduction • Pause Live TV • Dual DVD, CD-R(RW), MP3 & JPEG Playback **Model. RDRHX910**

INSTORE PRICE: £699.99
£579.99 INC VAT
 MAINLAND DELIVERY £10

...Plus We've An Unbeatable Range Of Very Latest in Home Cinema Separates!

YAMAHA**Home Cinema Amplifier**
with 7 Channel Surround Sounddirectlink **F82**

- 7 x 100w • Digital ToP-ART / High Current Amplification • Quad-Field CINEMA DSP & 14 Surround Modes • HDTV Compatible • Dialogue Lift and Lip Sync **Model No. DSPAX757**

INSTORE PRICE: £499.99
£434.99 INC VAT
 MAINLAND DELIVERY £4.99
SONY**Home Cinema Amplifier**
with 7 Channel Surround Sounddirectlink **F83**

- 7 x 135w • Dolby Digital, EX DTS, NEO:6 & Dolby Pro-Logic II Decoders • RDS Tuner with 30 Presets • Full Digital Cinema Sound • Component Video Output **Model No. STRDB798S**

INSTORE PRICE: £299.99
£224.99 INC VAT
 MAINLAND DELIVERY £4.99

It's not just our website that makes us No.1!

THE UK'S NUMBER ONE

With over 1 million customers and 10,000 items in stock, we're No.1 online in the UK

ALL THE INFO YOU'LL EVER NEED!

Online Product Brochures, View Products in 3D and Super Close-Up, Product Guides - How to use your Equipment, Independent Reviews from Customers, Jargon Buster...

...AND MANY MORE FEATURES ONLINE NOW!**PAY UP TO 30% LESS**

We check online and in-store to guarantee our prices are always up to 30% lower

LOWEST PRICE GUARANTEE

Find it cheaper and we'll beat the price by 20% of the difference!*

AWARD WINNERS

Empire Direct are winners of the National E-Commerce Award, as well as being ranked a Hitwise Top 10 Website and 'Boys Toys' Top 100 Worldwide website

NATIONWIDE DELIVERY

All orders are normally delivered within 2 days to any address on the UK mainland

7 DAYS PEACE OF MIND

Our Price Guarantee extends up to 7 days after you purchase your goods

ALL THE TOP BRANDS

From Aiwa to Zanussi you'll find all the best brands at Empire Direct

..WIN..WIN..**A SUPERB 5.1 MEGAPIXEL SONY DIGITAL STILL CAMERA TO BE WON EVERY MONTH ON-LINE!**

No purchase necessary, simply register on-line!

CAN'T FIND WHAT YOU WANT?Visit www.empiredirect.co.uk where we have over 10,000 top brand electrical products online now!

empiredirect.co.uk

...just a click away!

Order On-Line at
www.empiredirect.co.uk
Order By Phone: 0870 835 1943
 Mon - Fri: 9am - 8pm Sat: 9am - 6pm Sun: 10am - 5pm
APR 29.99%
* Example - Cash Price £449.99. Pay nil deposit and nothing for 6 months. Then either pay the cash price of £449.99 by the due date with nothing further to pay, or by 42 monthly instalments of £21.92 per month. Total payable £920.84 APR 29.99%. Finance is subject to status. Written quotations available on request. The in-store price is the price of the product in our Roundhay Road Store, Leeds as of 16/10/2005. All prices are inclusive of VAT but exclude delivery. Stocks subject to availability. **Low Price Guarantee applies providing the item is identical, brand new and in stock - see website for terms and conditions of price guarantee.

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



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 •
AVI • Wilson benesch

Phone: LEEDS (0113) 204 9458
Fax: LEEDS (0113) 253 3098
Email: info@audioreflections.co.uk
Website: www.audioreflections.co.uk

www.hifichoice.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.

AUDIO • TV • VIDEO & SATELLITE SALES

2-4 EDWARD STREET (Off Pasture St.) GRIMSBY. TEL: (01472) 351391

SOUND IMPROVEMENTS

Is This Your Problem?



Here's Your Answer



Hand-made by Andrew Rothwell himself. Beware of imitations!

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.

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

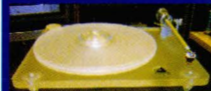
BELOW IS A SMALL SELECTION FROM OUR RANGE OF CAREFULLY CHOSEN EQUIPMENT

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 422224
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

CHORD CO
CREEK • EPOS • EXPOSURE
HARMON KARDON • INFINITY • LINN
MARANTZ • MONITOR AUDIO • MORDAUNT SHORT
NAD • ORTOFON • PROJECT • PURE • REL • ROKSAN
THEMESCENE • TRICHORD • VAN DEN HUL

Wide selection of Hi-Fi 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

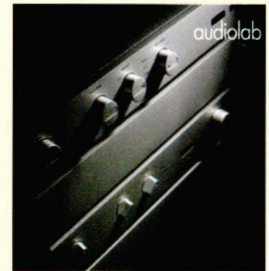
01225 442244





- 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 •
- Shalinian • Spendor • Sugden • Thiel • Wadia •

Audiolab – Now Available
The full Audiolab range now available at all branches



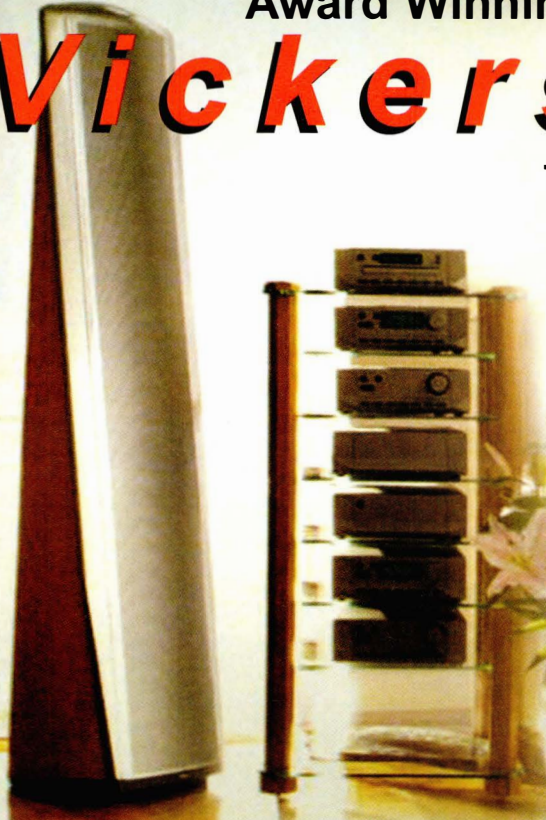
Acoustica
17 Hoole Road
CHESTER CH2 3NH
01244 344227
www.acoustica.co.uk

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

- 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

O'Brien Hi-Fi

ARCAYDIS • AUDIO NOTE • AUDIO RESEARCH • AUDIO TECHNICA • AVID • BEYER • CABLETALK • CHORD • CREEK • DIAPASON • DYNAVECTOR • EPOS • GOLDRING • JADIS • JELKIN • MICHELL • MGDN • NAD • NAIM • ONKYO • OPERA • OPTIMUM/SPECTRUM • QED • REGA • RESON • SENNHEISER • SME • SONNETER • SONUS FABER • SUGDEN • TEAC • THORENS • TRANSPARENT CABLES • UNISON RESEARCH • ORIGIN LIVE • TRIANGLE • WATERFALL • WILSON
Clearance/Secondhand/Ex Demo Equipment • Details on Request

	Was	Now
Audio Analogue Bellini Pre (s/h)	£625	£395
Audio Analogue Donizetti Mono (pr) (s/h)	£1050	£495
Audio Analogue Donizetti Stereo power (s/h)	£595	£350
Audio Analogue Maestro CD (new)	£1150	£895
Audio Analogue Paganini CD (ex-demo)	£895	£395
Audio Analogue Puccini SE (ex-demo)	£895	£495
Exposure 3010 amp (ex-demo)	£1000	£749
Garrard Zero 100S (78 rpm) (s/h)	£—	£75
Garrard 401 (s/h)	£—	£POA
Martin Logan Aeon (s/h) perfect	£3150	£1395
Monrio Asty amp (ex-demo) black	£450	£229
Moon 5080 (13) (ex-demo)	£1550	£895
Musical Fidelity T1 tuner (s/h)	£500	£395
Onix-various models	please enquire	
Onix A60MK11 (new)	£795	£375
Onix A120MK11 (new)	£995	£495
Sugden Masterclass CD (new)	£2700	£2200
Sugden Biouz system (new)	£2647	£1650
Sugden Masterclass Amplifier (new)	£3150	£2250
Theta Data 11 CD (new mech)	£1500	£600

AUDIO ANALOGUE

COPLAND

KRELL

0% Instant Finance Available - Written details on request
Demonstration room • Free car parking • Major Credit Cards
Personal Export • Mail Order • Installation Service • Repair facilities

• 5 mins walk Raynes Park BR20 mins Waterloo
• 5 mins from A3 (Raynes Park B282 exit) • 25 mins M25 Junc 10

60 Durham Road, West Wimbeldon, London SW20 0TW
Tel: (020) 8946 1528/0331 Email: shop@obrienhifi.com
Open 9.30-5.30 Tuesday-Saturday

SPEAKER KITS FROM I.P.L. ACOUSTICS

The IPL range now includes six superb biwired Transmission Lines using top quality drive units and components to achieve sound quality and bass extension equivalent to speakers costing in the range of £800 to £3,000. The Plus Kits include all that is required apart from the woodwork, but plain or veneered cabinet kits are available. Please see website, or send for catalogue for full details.

KIT	SPEAKER UNITS	CAB SIZE mm	PLUS KIT	P&P
M3tl	5" Morel, 1" Seas treb	810 x 191 x 261	£226.00	£9.50
S3tl	6.5" IPL PP, 1" Seas treb	903 x 230 x 350	£200.00	£10.00
S3tlm	6.5" IPL metal, 1" Seas treb	903 x 230 x 350	£248.00	£10.00
S3tlm Rib	6.5" IPL metal, Ribbon treb	903 x 230 x 350	£403.00	£10.00
S4tl	8" VIFA, 1" Seas treb	960 x 276 x 400	£258.21	£11.00
S5tl	10" IPL, 3" dome, 1" treb	1080 x 320 x 400	£378.00	£12.00

Send cheque (or postal order) made payable to Mr I. P. Leslie at IPL ACOUSTICS, Chelsea Villa, Torrs Park, Ilfracombe, Devon EX34 8AY. 01271 867439.

Alternatively visit our website at iplacoustics.co.uk or send a 47p SAE for catalogue detailing Transmission line, Hi Fi, and AV kits, including: Active subwoofers, drive units, Silver PTFE cables, and Quality Accessories.

www.iplacoustics.co.uk

Rochester Hi-Fi

30 HIGH STREET, ROCHESTER, KENT, ME1 1LD

01634 880037

info@rochesterhi-fi.co.uk



ARCAM, ADVANTAGE, ATACAMA, AUDION, AUDIOPHILE BASE, AVI, BAT, BOULDER, CAIRN, CLEARAUDIO, CYMBAL, DALI, JMLAB, GAMUT, GOLDRING, GRADIENT, GRADO, GRAHAM SLEE, GRAVES AUDIO, LOEWE, LUMLEY, MERLIN MUSIC MAKER, MUSIC TOOLS, NAD, NOTTINGHAM ANALOGUE, OPTIMUM, PARTINGTON, PURE, QUADASPIRE, STELLO, TIVOLI, TRANSGURATION, USHER, VINCENT

CALL NOW TO UPGRADE YOUR SYSTEM

LONDON

Front End Problems?

contact:

The Cartridge Man

It doesn't have to cost an arm and leg to get the best
- listen to my Koetsu - and - Decca - eater.
Also agents for Croft, Moth, Hadcock & Mitchell & E.A.R. Graham Slee projects.
Valve equipment re-build service available.

- Plus cartridge re-tipping service

020 8688 6565

Website: www.thecartridgeman.com

DEVON



mike & caroline

Services:

Free Advice in a relaxed & friendly atmosphere
0% Finance Available
2 Demonstration Rooms
Childs Play Area
Out of Hours Appointments
Home Demonstrations
Mon - Sat : 9am - 5pm

info@audiodeestination.co.uk
www.audiodeestination.co.uk

Stockists of:

Analysis Plus, Audia, Audio Physic, Avid, Ayre, Bel Canto, Cairn, Chapter Audio, Chord, Grand Prix Audio, Inca Design, Lexicon, Micromega, Monitor Audio, McIntosh, Moon, Musical Fidelity, Nordost, Primare, Roksan, Ruark, Stax, Tannoy Prestige, Thiel, Totem Acoustics, Van Den Hul, Velodyne & many more.

Audio Destination 01884 243 584

32B Bampton Street, Tiverton, Devon, EX16 6AH

HI-FI CHOICE

To advertise here call Stuart Harris or Bevan Walsh on 01225 442244 or email stuart.harris@futurenet.co.uk or bevan.walsh@futurenet.co.uk

"We have been more than pleased with the advertising that we have done recently with your magazine and have had very positive returns from buyers (and sellers, as it happens...we were recently contacted by a seller offering us a large amount of stock at a very good price...the seller found us in HI-FI CHOICE). The advertising works and we enjoy dealing with you. As always, it is a pleasure to communicate with you...many thanks for your genuinely friendly attitude, help, consideration and very professional courtesy."

Very Best Wishes.....Jan and Mark, The Missing Link"

Ortons AUDIO:VISUAL

- Apollo
- Arcam
- Audica
- B&W
- Bose
- The Cord Company
- Cyrus
- Denon
- Epos
- Exposure
- IsoTek
- Loewe
- Mission
- PMC
- Pioneer
- Pro-Ject
- Ruark
- Spondor
- Wharfedale
- WireWorld
- Yamaha
- & Many more

- MULTI ROOM SYSTEMS • CUSTOM INSTALLATIONS
- COMFORTABLE DEMONSTRATION ROOMS
- SERVICE DEPARTMENT

email: doav@btconnect.com

OPEN MON-SAT 9am - 5.30pm

6-8 BANCROFT, HITCHIN, HERTS.

01462 452248

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

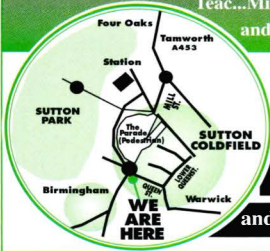
TO ADVERTISE HERE CALL
BEVAN WALSH ON

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

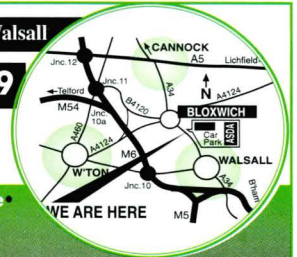
and NOW AT 111 The Parade, Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham

QUALITY HI-FI for the Midlands

- 3 Hi - Fi Studios • Home Trials • Home Cinema Theatre
- In House Service Department • Mail order available •

Interest Free Credit available

(On Selected Items, subject to 20% deposit. Written details on request)



MUSIC MATTERS
THE AUDIO SPECIALISTS



BADA
Hi-Fi Audio Dealers Association
the symbol of security

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



A New Dawn for Naim and Tom Tom Audio...
...the only dealer in the world specialising
purely in these world class products

Extensive selection of current Naim Audio product range on
demonstration and the largest selection of pre-loved
Naim Audio equipment on the planet

- Part exchanges very welcome
- Friendly help and advice
- Open 7 days till late
- Compare current with previous Naim ranges

See the new website at www.tomtomaudio.com
Telephone • St Albans 01727 86 86 59



www.hifichoice.co.uk

HI-FI CHOICE

TO ADVERTISE HERE CALL **BEVAN WALSH**

01225 442244

E-mail bevan.walsh@futurenet.co.uk



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

THE SOUND GALLERY

Now exhibiting the fantastic B&W 800 range.



01494 531682
65 Castle Street, High Wycombe, Bucks.
www.soundgallery.co.uk

Audio Visual World

	WAS	NOW
PS Audio		
Classic 250 Amplifier 400 watts per Channel dual mono	£4,200.00	£2,500.00
Ultimate Outlet Standard Mains Filter	£340.00	£250.00
Ultimate Outlet Standard Mains Filter	£385.00	£280.00
P500 Power plant (Mains Regenerator)	£2,400.00	£1,850.00
P300 power plant (Mains regenerator)	£1,745.00	£1,300.00
Speaker cables, interconnects- 40% off	POA	
Multiwave upgrade for P500		£80.00
Edge Amplifiers		
NL10 Power Amplifier - 220 watts	£10,800.00	£6,500.00
Signature Pre-amp - Battery Powered	£8,950.00	£5,000.00
AV6 Home Theatre Amplifier - 120watts 3 Channel	£3,450.00	£2,200.00
G Series	POA	
Silverline loudspeakers		
Corona	£4,100.00	£2,000.00
Panatella	£1,500.00	£800.00
SR17	£2,200.00	£1,100.00
SR15	£1,700.00	£900.00
SR12	£900.00	£500.00
Forsell		
Statement Power Amplifier - Dual Mono	£25,000.00	£12,000.00
Forsell transport and DAC	POA	
Perpertual Technology		
P1A Upsampler, P3A & Monolithic Power Supply	£1,500.00	£900.00

CLEARANCE SALE

40% off Sale for PS Audio speaker cables, interconnects and digital cables. Also end of range equipment to clear on a first come first served basis. Please Call us on

020 8457 7069

www.audiovisualworld.co.uk

RECENTLY DIVORCED GENTLEMAN

◆ **GENUINE, HARD WORKING,**
sales assistant in North West Hi-fi
chain seeks companionship, fun and
conversation about film, music, hifi
and home cinema, how to achieve the
best audio fidelity, ways to improve
bass response, the advantages of LCD
versus plasma, enhancement of
dynamic range, choosing the perfect
mix of separates, speaker positioning,
valve amplifiers, minimising loss of
fidelity with your interconnects, the
in which

Practical Hi-Fi Obsessive about hi-fi.

www.practicalhi-fi.co.uk

65 Bridge Street
Manchester
M3 3BQ
0161 839 8869

88 Bridge Street
Warrington
WA1 2RF
01925 632179

43 Friargate
Preston
PR1 2AT
01772 883958

81 Whitegate Drive
Blackpool
FY3 9DA
01253 300599

33/35 Knowsley St
Bolton
BL1 2AS
01204 395789

84 Penny St
Lancaster
LA1 1XN
01524 39657

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 through Cheshire, Merseyside and North Wales. Open Tues. - Sat. 10.0-5.30, 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 motorway 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.

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, Isoblu, Kube Design, Mew 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, A/V, Brylston, 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

GRAHAMS 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, 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** **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



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, Bracon 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. **BADA** 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 **BADA**

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 & styli etc. **BADA**

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, Michel, 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, Meridan, Michel, Mission, Monitor Audio, Musical Fidelity, Naim, Nordost, Panasonic, Pioneer, Project, Pure, Quad, REL, Rotel, Sennheiser, Sim2, SME, Sonus Faber, TEAC, Technics, Theta, Wharfdale, 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**

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 **BADA**

MUSIC MATTERS, 9 Market Street, Stourbridge, W. Midlands B98 1AB. Tel: 01384 444184. Tues - Sat 10.00-5.30 Weds 10.00-6.30 www.musicmatters.co.uk **BADA**

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 **BADA**

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. **BADA**

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@thefiistudios.freeserve.co.uk. Web: thefiistudios.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 Electrostatics, 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. **BADA**

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 276 ⊕ FEBRUARY 2006 ⊕ ON SALE 15 DECEMBER

In-depth reviews of the most vital new kit, including...

- ⊕ EAR Master Disk turntable
- ⊕ Monitor Audio Silver RS8 loudspeaker
- ⊕ Denon DVD-1920 universal disc player
- ⊕ Densen B-200 preamp and B-310 power amp
- ⊕ Focal Electra 1027 Be loudspeaker
- ⊕ Cambridge Audio Azur 640H music server
- ⊕ Neat Motive 1 loudspeaker

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

ULTIMATE GROUP TEST >> CD AND SACD PLAYERS

The latest CD and SACD players are subjected to our uniquely rigorous group test regime, including...

- ⊕ Cyrus CD6x
- ⊕ Denon DCD-200AE
- ⊕ Marantz SA-15S1
- ⊕ Micromega CD132
- ⊕ Primare CD21
- ⊕ Sony SCD-XA3000ES



HI-FI CHOICE

JANUARY 2006 ISSUE 275

Future Publishing Ltd, 99 Baker Street, London W1U 6FP
Tel: +44 (0)20 7042 4520 Fax: +44 (0)20 7042 4529

EDITORIAL

Tim Bowers **editor**
tim.bowers@futurenet.co.uk
Dan George **reviews editor**
dan.george@futurenet.co.uk
Benny Benson **art editor**
benjamin.benson@futurenet.co.uk

CONTRIBUTORS

David Balfour, Richard Black, Alvin Gold,
Stuart Harrison, Jimmy Hughes, Jason Kennedy,
Paul Messenger, Dave Oliver, Mark Prendergast,
Stuart M Robinson, Alan Sircom, Phil Strongman,
Dominic Todd, David Vivian, Nigel Williamson

PHOTOGRAPHY

Adrian Lyon

ADVERTISING

Matthew Tasker **head of sales**
020 7042 4263 matthew.tasker@futurenet.co.uk
Fiona Beech **advertising manager**
020 7042 4258 fiona.beech@futurenet.co.uk
Brad Francis **senior sales executive**
020 7042 4255 brad.francis@futurenet.co.uk
Simon Abbott **senior sales executive**
020 7042 4266 simon.abbott@futurenet.co.uk
James Rhodes-Baxter **sales executive**
020 7042 4260 james.rhodes-baxter@futurenet.co.uk
Bevan Walsh **classified sales executive**
01225 442244 bevan.walsh@futurenet.co.uk
Nick Weatherall **inserts and direct marketing manager**
020 7042 4155 nick.weatherall@futurenet.co.uk

HFC ONLINE

www.hifichoice.co.uk
Mike Cooper **online editor**
mike.cooper@futurenet.co.uk

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Tel: +44 (0)870 837 4722
Email: hifichoice@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

Tim Hudson **head of international licensing**
tim.hudson@futurenet.co.uk
Nicola Hensman **senior promotions executive**

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**
Simon Wear **international 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 Ingham **chief executive**
John Bowman **group finance director**

☎ +44 (0)1225 442244 🌐 www.futureplc.com
Bath • London • Milan • New York
Paris • San Diego • San Francisco

THE ESSENTIAL HI-FI GUIDE



SUBSCRIBE! TO HI-FI CHOICE SEE PAGE 84 FOR DETAILS

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*



2ND HAND HI-FI & HOME CINEMA BUYER

FREE! 8 PAGE MAGAZINE
WITH THE JANUARY ISSUE OF HI-FI CHOICE



A-Z GUIDE TO SECOND-HAND KIT

#17 NAIM AUDIO

Like Arcam, Linn Products, Quad and SME, Naim Audio is one of those brands that is synonymous with the UK hi-fi industry. Also, like the others, this may mean steep second-hand prices. What you won't find then, is a bargain Naim product that time and punters have forgotten about. Nevertheless, there's still plenty to recommend from Salisbury's Finest. There are many excellent products to choose from, and a few clunkers too, but here we're going to take a look at the best of Naim – some of the true classics.

Naim began by manufacturing amps and although it makes CD players, tuners, speakers and even stands – it's still very much what the company is best known for today. If you want to sample the Naim sound – tight, cohesive and tuneful – at its best, then look no further than a NAP250 power amp. Launched in 1975, it has had just three major upgrades since then. It's a robust device, which probably also explains why it's a popular choice with the BBC. Such robustness, of course, also makes it an excellent second-hand purchase. There's more good news for second-hand buyers, too. Along with Quad, Naim has a peerless reputation for service backup.

Even the oldest NAP250 can be serviced and, amazingly, even changed to bring it almost up to speed with current models – botox for hi-fi! On an age/price ratio, we would recommend a late-1980s model. These can be had for around £500-£800 – much less than the re-cased post-1989 version. If this

sounds expensive, then at least some comfort can be taken from the price of a matching preamp. It's imperative that Naim pre/power amps are used together, because they take their power from a separate power supply, or the power amp itself in some cases. This is

“Even ten years on, it still sounds great, with body and kick in the upper bass range.”

often why solo preamps sell for a song. From this vintage, we'd recommend the NAC32.5 preamp, with a HI-CAP power supply, if used with the NAP250 power amp (the preamp can be used on its own if partnered with a Naim NAP90 or NAP140 power amp). Although the preamp and power supply cost nearly £500 apiece new, these now go for as little as £120-£170 each, and the older, smaller SNAPS power supply costs even less. The only problem to watch for concerns the select switch ribbons, although faulty ones can still be replaced.

Naim's first CD player was the CDS. It ran from 1991 to 1998 and used a classic Philips swing-arm transport and 16-bit DAC. As with later Naim products, what really made the CDS special was the attention given to the power supply – it was housed within a separate box.

This top-loading player was one of the first to really convince the vinyl elite that CD may just be a musical format after all. Even ten years on, it still sounds great, with body and kick in

the upper bass range that many of today's players lack. This piece of audio history can be yours for between £400 and £700 for the very best, refurbished examples, but they don't hang around for long. Using such an elderly mechanism means replacement parts don't

come easily, but Naim told us that they can supply re-conditioned mechanism units – thus making the whole player fully serviceable.

Naim has always divided opinion when new. What can't be denied, however, is that although not the cheapest, it makes an excellent and safe second-hand purchase. **HFC**

Dominic Todd
Next month: Quad



Above: Naim Audio's CDS CD player

DIY CORNER SPEAKERS

Part 17 Exotic tweeter designs

The vast majority of tweeters consist of dome diaphragms of various materials, driven at their edge by lightweight voice coils held within a magnetic field. There are, however, numerous alternatives.

Ribbon tweeters have become particularly fashionable lately. Essentially, the diaphragm of a ribbon tweeter and its voice 'coil' are the same thing, as the conductive 'coil' is actually formed into a ribbon shape that is held within a powerful magnetic field. Alternatively, the metallic ribbon is strengthened by being bonded to plastic film.

The advantages of the ribbon are that there's no need to make a mechanical coupling

between the voice coil and a diaphragm, and the whole of the ribbon diaphragm is under magnetic control and drive. The disadvantage is that the magnetic gap needs to be wider than the ribbon. This requires powerful magnets, or sensitivity is compromised.

This need for high power magnets probably explains why ribbons are usually restricted to tweeters, where the diaphragm – and hence the magnet – is relatively small. Large ribbons do exist, but they're rare, costly and radiate inconveniently powerful stray magnetic fields.

For practical reasons, the ribbon tweeter is normally very narrow, to maintain a decent diaphragm area. It also has to be rather taller

than a conventional tweeter. The consequence is excellent lateral distribution, but some beaming in the vertical plane, so the ribbon needs to be close to seated ear height. **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: Other exotic tweeter designs

hifisound by enthusiasts, for enthusiasts

30b Larchfield St, Darlington, County Durham DL3 7TE. Tel: 01325 241888 Email: choice@hifisound.co.uk

The amazing USHER AUDIO DANCER Be loudspeakers on dem . . .

. . . the most beautiful loudspeaker you are ever likely to hear!!..

Acoustic Energy, Apollo, Atacama, Audio Analogue, Creaktiv, Chord Cable, Custom Design, Grado, Isotek, Nbien, Neat, Opera, Pathos, Pure, Revolver, Roksan, Shanling, Standesign, Teac, Triangle, Unison Research, Usher Audio, Van Den Hul and more!

www.2ndhandhifi.co.uk



...what are you up for?

Digital	Amplifiers	Speakers	Analogue
AHI Njoe Tjoeb 99 nr mint boxed	199 Albarry AP4 Preamp, Active/Passive	249 Acoustic Energy AE1 ex	399 Alchemist Bragi Phono stage c/w Forsetti p/s
Arcam CD82T as new	399 Arcam AB5 Integrated, nr mint boxed	419 Acoustic Energy AE1 Mk2 vgc	449 Audio Research PH3SE, nr mint boxed
Arcam CD72T	199 Arcam Alpha 9 Preamp, remote, nr mint, boxed	249 Acoustic Energy AE1mk3 ex dem	Call Chord Phono stage, ex boxed
Arcam Alpha 7SE nr mint boxed	Call Arcam Alpha 9 Poweramp nr mint boxed	299 Acoustic Energy AE2, ex black	149 Heybrook TT2, boxed
Arcam CD33T, nr mint boxed	749 Arcam Alpha FMJ C30 Preamp	Call Acoustic Energy AE505 nr mint boxed	349 JBE SlateSeries 3/Mission774 rare as..
Audiolab 8000CDM and DAC	699 Audio Analogue Maestro, 150w Reference, nr mint crate	999 ATC Anniversary 50s Limited edition as new SOLD OUT!!!	899 Kinshaw Perception phono stage and p/s
Audiomeca Obsession ex, boxed	399 Audiolab 8000 Monoblocks	799 ATC SCM20, Piano black, vgc, boxed stands	1099 Linn LP12/Syrinx PU3 ex afromosia
Marantz DV41000SE	129 Audiolab 8000A Integrated	249 AudioNote ANJ-SPE ex, boxed	Call Linn LP12/Lingo/Ekos ex black
Marantz CD63K1 Signature, ex remote	199 Audiolab 8000P Power ex boxed	Call AVI Positron, burr finish, ex	1599 Linn LP12/Lingo/Ekos, afromosia, boxed
Marantz CD17 Kl nr mint	499 Audiolab 8000C Preamp ex boxed	749 B&W CDM7NT, ex, boxed	199 Linn LP12/Vahalla/Akito
Marantz CD60000SE LTD Edition version	149 AudioNote OTO, nr mint a steal at	599 B&W 801S3 Matrix Floorstander REDUCED BARGAIN!!!	1699 Linn Bask, Bask Plus
Marantz SA1 vgc boxed	2399 Audio Research VT100 Power	Call B&W CDM1 marked	199 Linn Ekos, nr mint boxed
Mendian 208, ex 209 remote and phono stage	349 Audio Research LS25 Preamp/Amplifier	249 Castle Eden, ex boxed	149 Michell Gyrodec Export
Mendian 200 Transport, ex remote	299 AVI S2000M Integrated fair	899 Dynaudio Contour 1.3 Mk2, vgc	Call Michell Reference Hydraulic/Fluid arm
Mendian 263 DAC	Call Cain MEA Monoblocks, as new, Class A yum	749 EPOS M15, Dark Cherry, vgc boxed	299 Michell Focus One/Mission 774LC arm
Micromega Stage 1	179 Chord SPM 1000B,	1199 KEF Reference 1.2 nr mint boxed	599 Michell Gyrodec SE nr mint boxed
Micromega Stage 2 and matching DAC	399 Creek 4330Mk2r Integrated, remote as new boxed	249 KEF RDM1 nr mint boxed, superb bookshelf	299 Michell Tecnoarm/Tecnoarm A from
Micromega T-dine and T-dac nr mint boxed	799 Crimson 610C/630D Pre/Monos, nr mint boxed	599 Mission 752 Floorstander ex	299 Michell Mycro RB300 Incognito rewire, ex
Micromega Duo CD3/BS2 nr mint boxed	129 Croft Linestage Preamp	499 NEAT Petite 3, Cherry mint boxed	449 Michell Iso/Hera
Micromega Optic bargain intro to Micromega	149 Cyrus Power, ex boxed	299 Proac Studio 125, ex boxed	Call Nottingham Analogue Spacedeck/Arm ex
Monarchy DIP vgc	179 Cyrus 7 Integrated, nr mint boxed	279 Proac Tablette 50, nr mint boxed	599 Oratic Delphi V, full version, as new
Musical Fidelity XPSU v3 as new	Call Cyrus 3 Integrated, ex boxed	179 Proac Tablette 2000, nr mint boxed	2999 Origin Live fully modded OL, as new only a few months old
Musical Fidelity CDT	399 Denon P0A6600 Monoblocks, ex boxed	Call QUAD ESL63 Floorstander, Quad serviced 2005 REDUCED!!!	429 Origin Live Silver as new
Musical Fidelity A3CD, nr mint boxed	2999 I.T. M480/MA100/MA100 Pre/Power x2 lovely combo	279 QUAD 11L Standmount, boxed	Call Ortofon Kontrapunkt A
Musical Fidelity KW SACD as new	Call Marantz FM7200, nr mint boxed	899 QUAD 12L Standmount as new	299 Ortofon MC20 Supreme ex dem
Mynydd T20 nr mint boxed	199 Mendian 555 power	Call REL Q50 Subwoofer	399 Pink Triangle LP17/RB250, the best I've seen
NAD C5411 nr mint boxed	1749 Mendian 505 Monoblocks, ex boxed	199 Sonus Faber Electa Amator 2, nr mint boxed c/w stands	379 Project Phono box LE boxed certificate
NVA Transparent Statement, ex, crated	999 Micromega Tempo 2	299 Tandberg Studio Monitor Large!	Call Rega Planar 2/RB250, good
Pass Labs D1 DAC ex, cost \$5000 new	699 Musical Fidelity 3a Preamp/P150 Power, ex	649 Tannoy Chatsworth Floorstander	399 Rega Planar 2/RB250, ex boxed
Proceed PDT2, nr mint boxed	499 Musical Fidelity A1000 Integrated nr mint boxed	279 Tannoy DC100 Standmount	649 Rega Planar 3/RB300
QUAD 99CDP as new	349 Musical Fidelity X80, as new	449 TDL Studio 1 ex	199 Roksan Xerxes/Tabriz Zi
Roksan Caspian, nr mint	Sold Musical Fidelity A3 Integrated	299 Triangle Arrial ES ex dem	749 Roksan Radius 5/Nima ex dem
Shanling SCD200 nr mint boxed 9 months old	549 Musical Fidelity Pre/Typhoon	799 Wharfedale Diamond series, various	Call Rotel RB970
TEAC T1/D1 ex	179 Odyssey HT3, 3 Channel 180w power amp	699 Wharfedale Evo 30, nr mint boxed	299 SME 1V nearly new, nr mint boxed etc
Sony XA20ES	599 Odyssey Stratios, nr mint stereo power	499 Wilson Benesch Orator, ex	999 Thorens T124Mk2/SME3009, superb condition
Theta Data Basic 2 Transport, nr mint boxed	399 Odyssey Khartago, nr mint stereo power	549 Wilson Benesch Curve Floorstander, as new	Sold! Thorens TD160b/Mission 774 vgc
Theta DS Pro Progeny	499 NAIM 62/140 Pre/Power, nr mint!	1599 Arcam T61 nr mint boxed	249 Thorens TD160b/Mayway vgc
Theta Pearl Transport, nr mint boxed	Pathos Logos, just back from UKD service, ex boxed remote	149 Arcam 4030 Great FM tuner	499 Townshend Elite Rook Mk2/Mission 774LC
	Call Quad 405 and 405/2 Power various from	249 Denon DRS810 3 head drawer loader nr mint boxed	799 Transcriptors Skeleton/Vestigal
	399 Quad 44 Preamp ex boxed	Call Marantz ST4000 ex	349 Transcriptors Hydraulic Reference
	299 Quad 77 Integrated ex	Call Myryad T30 nr mint boxed	749 Transcriptors Saturn, vgc
	379 Quad 707 Power, ex	Call Nakamichi DR2 ex	199 Transfiguration Spirit 3, 50 hours max
	999 Quad 909 ex, boxed	299 Nakamichi 1.5 ex	379 Tinchord Research Dino/Dino+ p/s nr mint boxed
	1149 Roksan Caspian M Pre/Monos x/dem	Call Quad FM2 the favourite hybrid, Quad serviced 2005	199 Voyd Vaid/Hellus Scorpio, fair
	Call Roksan Caspian Integrated, original series, remote	649 Quad FM4 ex boxed	199 Whesl Audio Phono Stage
	349 Roksan Caspian Power original series	Call Sumo Artemis/Andromeda 3 Pre/Power, ex boxed	849 Williams Hart two box phono stage
	449 Roksan Kandy Mk3 ex dem	449 Unison Research Mystery One Preamp	Call Wilson Benesch Act/Act 2 arm ex
	449 Sumo Artemis/Andromeda 3 Pre/Power, ex boxed		2499 Wilson Benesch Full Circle ex dem
	449 Unison Research Mystery One Preamp		1399 Wilson Benesch Full Circle ex dem

Special pre Christmas deals in RED ... Tel 0845 6019390 lo-call, or email choice@2ndhandhifi.co.uk

Quality hifi equipment always required for cash ... Call us before you trade in... Commission Sales too

VISIT OUR WEBSITE, OR CALL TO SPEAK TO A REAL PERSON TUESDAY TO SATURDAY 10 TO 5-ISH

turntableworld!

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, Whesl 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

brighthton hi-fi exchange

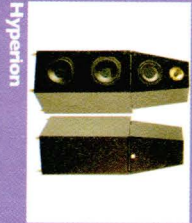
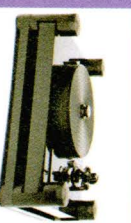
email
dave@hifiguy.co.uk
web
www.hifiguy.co.uk

telephone
01424 201 157
mobile
07734 436 180

- > WHO?**
- > brightest hi-fi exchange is run by people who are very passionate about hi-fi
 - > we are the South Coasts leading stockists of: new, used, ex-clean specialist hi-fi equipment.
 - > every product is thoroughly inspected and tested
 - > every product is sensibly priced so that you will not find the same product cheaper anywhere

- > SERVICES**
- > we will travel anywhere in the country to pick up your equipment
 - > we will travel anywhere in the country to deliver your equipment
 - > expert and friendly advice
 - > no pressure to buy
 - > audition products in the comfort of your own home before buying
 - > world-wide shipping, please call for a quote

- > WEB SITE**
- > visit www.hifiguy.co.uk
 - > view our complete product list online
 - > product list updated daily
 - > description and product images for most products
 - > visited by hundreds of people on a daily basis
 - > be quick as products are sold very quickly
 - > visit regularly to avoid disappointment!



Just In

We buy, sell and consider trade-ins on the following used equipment from these Manufacturers and many more:

- Acoustic Signature
Acoustic Zen
Airtight
Amphion
Audience
Audio Valve
Basis
BAT
Border Patrol
Boulder
Cabbase
CEC
Clearaudio
Garrut
Graham
Halcro
Howland
Hyperion
Lavardin
Orade
Pass Labs
Pillitus
PS Audio
Reference 3A
Rogue Audio
S.P.J Record Players
Transfiguration
Vincent
& Many More...

- ATC SPK100P SPEAKERS
ATC SPK110 SPEAKERS
BAYVAXS POWERAMP [X DEM]
CONRAD JOHNSON PREMIER 8X MONOBLOCKS
GRYPHON REFERENCE ONE MONOBLOCKS
MCINTOSH MC2000 POWERAMP
MICHEL ORBE SE NC PULITO MONTHS OLD]
NO LA ELITE SIGNATURE SPEAKERS
NOTINGHAM ANALOGUE HYPERSPACE TRIPLANER
PNC 58B SPEAKERS
ROWLAND STEREO PREAMP
SPECTRAL 30SL PREAMP
WILSON WATT/PUPPY 5.1

- Current**
ACCPHASE C2000 PREAMP [LATEST]
ACCPHASE DR-6TL TEST
ACCPHASE PS500 POWER CONDITIONER
AIRIGHT ATN-2 [SUPER AMPIFIER]
AUDIO ARTISTRY DVOXAK SPEAKERS
AUDIO NOTE ANE-SP [ECHO FINNISH]
AUDIO RESEARCH L16
AUDIO RESEARCH PH3 PHONOAMP
AUDIO RESEARCH HV70 POWERAMP
AUDIO RESEARCH CLASSIC 120 MONOBLOCKS
AUDIO RESEARCH HTT150 MONOBLOCKS
AUDIO RESEARCH REFERENCE 600 MONOBLOCKS
AUDIO RESEARCH LSI 6mk2
AUDIO STANTHEIS DAX DECADE DAC PRE
AUDIO VALVE BALDUR 70 MONOBLOCKS
B&W NAUTILUS 80's
BASIS DEBUTE GOLD STANDARD SNEV
BOULDER PHONO STAGE
CADENCE ANINA SPEAKERS [NEW]
CANARY AUDIO CANTO MONOBLOCKS
CANTO CAD300 SIGNATURE SE AMPS
CASTLE HOWARD S2 SPEAKERS [OK]
CLEARAUDIO MASTER REFERENCE [MASTER TOI ARM]
CONRAD JOHNSON 2 PREAMP
CONRAD JOHNSON PREMIER 8A MONOS
CONRAD JOHNSON PREMIER 2 PREAMP
COPULARE 4 TITER STAND
CRUS PRE X [SILVER]

- GAMMA 2111 MONOBLOCKS £2,500 £8,000
GAYLUT CD2 £895 £1,900
GRAHAM 2ARY [BOXED] £1,800 £2,500
HALCRO DM38 £7,000 £18,000
INNER SOUND 1300 POWERAMP £7,000 £27,000
JMLABS CORALIT 807 SPEAKERS £5,995 £14,000
JEFF ROWLAND CONCENTRA MK2 [BOXED AS NEW] £1,200 £2,400
KONDO [AUDIO NOTE JAPAN] KASSA SILVER POWERAMP £4,250 £8,000
LINN SONDER LP12/OKT/CIRCUSTAMPOLIN £2,000 £5,500
LINN SONDER LP12/BASIK PLUS £4,995 £5,000
LINN BEKIN FVAM £1,800 £12,000
LIMLET STVO VALVE POWERAMP £5,995 £18,000
MARANTZ CD31 [VER RARE] £4,800
MARK LEVINSON ML380 PREAMP £4,500
MCINTOSH HA 6850 INTEGRATED £4,000
MUSE 18 SUBWOOFER [with active cards] £8,000
MUSICAL FIDELITY DVD £2,995 £6,500
NAVI NARNOVA C62K PREPOWER £1,400 £2,800
ORACLE ALEXANDRIA ARM £3,500
PASS LABS X150 POWERAMP £2,800
PROAC D15 SPEAKERS £4,000
PLINUS 350 POWERAMP [FLER] £1,250 £4,000
PLINUS CD LAD MK2 PREAMP £2,995 £14,000
PS AUDIO 600 MAINS CONDITIONER £3,750 £3,750
ROKSAN XERXES 10 TURNTABLE + 1.5 [PU] [AS NEW] £3,250 £3,000
ROWLAND CONCENTRA 2 £1,100 £3,100
SVE 20S [SVE] £2,400 £8,500
SNELL TYPE A TYPE 2 SPEAKERS £3,750 £11,000
SOUND BAR AI SPEAKERS [VERY LATEST] £7,000 £7,000
TALON KHORUS X MK II SPEAKERS £1,900 £4,500
TANNY CANTERBURY'S £2,950 £8,000
TOM EVANS GROOVE PHO INOSTAGE £2,950 £5,500
TRANSPARENT ULTRA 6V PAIR £1,500 £4,000
WADA 2707Z DAC TRANSPORT [LATEST MODEL] £3,500 £14,000
WEISS MEDIA DAC £5,500 £14,000
WILSON BENESCHACTOR £7,995 £18,000
WILSON SYSTEM 7 WATT/PUPPY [LATEST] £1,800 £4,000
WORD REFERENCE CYCLEN [AUDIO NOTE TO LTD] [KONDO] £12,995 £22,000
LIST CHANGES DAILY SO BE SURE TO VISIT OUR WEB SITE REGULARLY £5,500 £14,000



3^B system

if you know what hi-fi you want go to 2

1 ▶ Browse

www.shadowaudio.co.uk

- ▶ One of the largest dedicated web sites for specialist hi-fi in the UK
- ▶ Wide range of specialist hi-fi products from some of the most renowned hi-fi manufacturers in the world
- ▶ Comprehensive product information, which includes: descriptions, images specifications and reviews
- ▶ Extensive collection of used & ex-demo products at sensible prices
- ▶ Used & ex-demo list changes daily
- ▶ Dedicated purpose built listening suites
- ▶ For additional information just call 01592 744 779 where you will always receive a nice welcome and free helpful advice that's tailored to you

if you have no hi-fi to trade-in go to 3

2 ▶ Barter

www.shadowaudio.co.uk

- ▶ We offer the fairest and best part-exchange prices*
- ▶ We can sell your products for you*

buying from us gives you total peace of mind!

3 ▶ Buy

www.shadowaudio.co.uk

- ▶ 6-month warranty on used equipment
- ▶ new products come with 24 months minimum warranty
- ▶ unique 30-day money back guarantee on many new items*
- ▶ Next-day UK delivery for most items (monday - friday)
- ▶ World-wide shipping available on used items, please call or email for a quote

*subject to certain conditions

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

STOCK CLEARANCE

Due to amicable agreement, Henley Designs are no longer the distributors for Vienna Acoustics and Chapter. This gives us a great opportunity to offer a few customers some really special bargains as we sell off our demonstration models at stunning prices.

Vienna Acoustics
Chapter Audio
most models available

HALF PRICE

Call us for details and visit us for a demonstration in Oxfordshire.

01235 511166

www.henleydesigns.co.uk

All items will include warranty and Henley are happy to continue to service existing owners products

Great Bargains - New, S/H & Ex-Demo

Last month we spoke about the excellent value AVI equipment, and the Nola range of speakers from America. I didn't mention the range of speakers from AVI, which include two stand speakers, namely the Neutron IV and the Pro-Nine Plus, now being joined by the Duo floorstander at around £1500, plus of course the excellent Trio and Brio, which are proving to be very popular, in spite of no reviews and their higher price (£3000+/4000+), as of course they work superbly with the AVI electronics. Also worth a mention is the Electrocompaniet range of CD player, pre-amps and power amps which are again excellent value. The AW220 power amp although only 70-w/ch stereo, can bridge up to 220 watts in mono, providing an easy upgrade path, for a mere £1400. Do ring and consider saving even more money using the bargains below! Please ring/email for full details.

SALE ITEM	NORMAL PRICE	SALE PRICE
ATC SCM50SL (BLACK)	£5500	£2500
ATC SCM20SL (WALNUT) + STANDS	£2600	£1400
RUARK SOLSTICE (OAK) NEW	£4000 +	£2500
RUARK CL10 (OAK)	£1200	£600
RUARK BROADSWORDS (ROSEWOOD)		
One damaged cabinet	£750	£200
AVI BIGATRON(CHERRY)	£600	£350
CHORD 800 POWER AMP	£2000	£900
ALON PETITE SPEAKERS (WALNUT)	£1200	£600
ECA VISTA PRE/POWER	£1600	£800

MUSIC AND HOME CINEMA CAN GO TOGETHER

V'AUDIO 0117 968 6005

36 Druid Hill, Stoke Bishop, Bristol BS9 1EJ
Email: icvhifi@yahoo.co.uk

HOME CINEMA & HI-FI CONSULTANTS



NAGRA

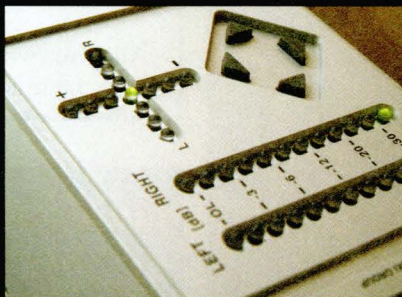
www.midlandaudiox-change.co.uk



MPA 250W AMPLIFIER

For audiophiles and tube-lovers who need a tremendous power, the MPA will deliver 250 Watts of clear and pure audio. The MPA remains, since its introduction in 2000, an innovative product based on a specific Nagra design.

The MPA stands to convince you that a MOSFET based amplifier can convey the emotion and warmth of tubes, in exactly the same way we proved that digital and analogue were not antagonist concepts when serving musicality.



HIGH DEFINITION DAC

The DAC has inherited the fabulous electronic design of the Nagra D and Nagra V digital recorders used by the most prestigious music companies and recording engineers in the world. These exceptional machines have convinced the engineers that digital audio could convey the emotion and warmth of analog tape recorders and long play disks that they miss with other digital formats.

The DAC was designed with the same ingredients and philosophy to provide you with state-of-the-art technology respecting your music.



PL-P PREAMPLIFIER

The PL-L is a Pure Class A vacuum tube line pre-amplifier, based on the proven design concepts of the world-renowned PL-P. The jewel-like machined anodized aluminum case features input source selection, balance and volume controls, as well as a precision modulator for system level matching. The PL-L is designed to provide the highest quality audio performance in an ultra-high-resolution audio system.

The PL-L uses three high-grade vacuum tubes and Nagra-made transformers to provide a variety of operating options. Each vacuum tube used in the PL-L has been burned-in for 12 hours and thoroughly tested to ensure the highest level of performance. The PL-L is designed in a pure audiophile approach of both quality and simplicity in signal's path.

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, Unison 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, Furatech, 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.

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 C31 preamp (latest), mint, boxed, (£1,200) £850. 01491 613760 (Oxford)

ARCAM CD93 silver, mint, unmarked, as new, £600 (includes postage and insurance), hardly used. 01934 647875 (Weston-Super-Mare).

AUDIO RESEARCH LSS1, fully balanced in/out, (£5,290) £1,890. ATC 20TASL, (£4,800) £2,400, part exchange welcome. 020 8504 1638 (Essex).

AUDIO SYNTHESIS Desire Decade power amplifier. 175 watts per channel, transparent, neutral sound. Hardly used and in mint condition. Complete with original box. Can dem, £1,500. Jim Boswell on 020 7351 8669 or 07736 339194. (London)

AUDIONOTE ANJ/ B speakers. Highly efficient, natural sounding, (£795) £395.

Dedicated Huygens/Target stands heavy, spiked, (£190) £120. Buy together for £495, all good condition. Please call John 01253 886609 (Lancs).

B&W704 walnut, four months old, too big for bedroom. Boxed as new, £995. Demo welcome, collection only. 07729 458836 (N.Ireland)

CASTLE RICHMOND 3I speakers, black, brand new, boxed, (£200), surplus to requirements. Paul 01773 860776 (Notts/Derby).

CHORD CO. CHORUS one metre balanced (XLR) interconnect, £80. Chord Co. Solid 0.5m interconnect, £20. Audioquest Indigo 2x5m bi-wire speaker cable, £60. Audioquest Jade 1m interconnect, £25. QED Qunex 1m optical interconnect cable, £20. Call 07787 126639 (Scotland)

CHORD CPA4000E preamp, (£7,615) £4,950. SPM1200E power amp, £3,800 (£5,765), both in silver with black letters and rods, two years old, boxed, mint. Beautiful combo. 07768 811275 (Reading).

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)

DALI CONCEPT sub, centre, Concept 1 surrounds. All new, never used and factory sealed. Will courier free anywhere in mainland UK. Offers around £400. 01208 79065 (Cornwall).

DYNAUDIO CONTOUR S5.4 rosewood speakers. 18 months old, mint condition, complete with boxes. Bargain at £2,900. 07900 248604 (Gloucester).

DYNAUDIO CONTOUR 1.3 MkII speakers. Detailed, superbly musical sound. Mint condition, boxed, can demo, £700. 07736 149781 (Southampton).

DYNAVECTOR DV10X5 MC cartridge. A superb real world moving coil cartridge, absolutely unused, (£250) £200. Thierry (eves) 07905 303718 (London).

ELECTROCOMPANET AW120DMB power amplifier, dual mono, balanced, 2x120 watts. Latest model, reviewed in Hi-Fi Choice, excellent condition, boxed, manual, (£2,400) £1,050. Cardas Cross power cord, £135. Soniclink (Black Rhodium) 0.5m XLR interconnect, £100. 01234 302769 (Beds).

EPOS M5 speakers, light cherry real wood veneer, mint condition. Complete with original box,

packaging and manual, excellent reviews in all hi-fi magazines, (£350) £200. Wharfedale Diamond 8.1 speakers, maple. Mint condition, (£120) £50. Lee 01384 412234 (West Midlands).

ISOTEK 2K QUBE silver finish, (£1,450), £1,000ono. Michell Gyrodek, Rega RB300, ATOC5 MC cartridge, QC power supply, £1,050. Apogee Stage full-range ribbon loudspeakers, VGC, black grills and mahogany frames. Buyer collects (sorry, no boxes), (£3,000) £1,250ono. 02476 462193 (Coventry).

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-R, black, boxed, three months old, (£1,200) £750. 07821 863950 (Devon).

KEF REFERENCE SERIES model 104/2 speakers, rosewood finish. Immaculate condition, superb sound quality, £450ono. 01494 445005 (High Wycombe).

KRELL CD player KAV-250 CD/2 excellent condition, £2,000. PS Audio pre/power, 150 watts, good condition with biwired speaker cables, £1,000. 07989 598890 (London). ▶

WANTED

CREEK A43 power amp, plus individual capable of servicing a Blaupunkt 13952 series U valve receiver and Sony Betamax SLC7UB. 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

LINN IKEMI CD player. Mint, boxed, little use, £750. 01384 894284 (W.Mids).
LIVING VOICE AUDITORIUM Beautiful floorstanding loudspeakers in real wood cherry veneer. Award-winning model badged in both Hi-Fi Choice and Hi-Fi Plus. Mint, boxed £1,700 (£1,100) 07899 808918 (Kent)
MARANTZ CD7300 CD player perfect, as new condition, (£350) £200ono. Marantz CD63, VGC, perfect working order, £50. Can post either player by courier of your choice. 01384 412234 (West Mids).
MARANTZ CD6000 OSE, boxed, £80. Cambridge Audio DACmagic 1, £40. Technics power amp SE A800S, £40. 01943 879030 (Leeds).
MARANTZ KI SIGNATURE 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).
MERIDIAN DSP5000 Mk1 loudspeakers in immaculate condition. All cables, boxes manuals and remote. No timewasters please, 01383 413695 (Dunfermline).
MISSION 752F rosewood speakers, £280. DNM speaker cable, £3.75 per metre. TCI viper interconnect cable £25. 01582 724414 (Luton).
MUSICAL FIDELITY A3.2 CD boxed as new, very little use, (£1,000) £450, no offers. Darran 07968 764294 (Huddersfield).

MUSICAL FIDELITY X-DAC V3 £300. Price includes a £200 Chord Signature digital cable. ATC SCM7 speakers in cherry, £200. Including Atacama stands all mint condition. 07941 174804 (Berks).
MUSICAL FIDELITY A3 CD and amplifier, £375 each. Dynaudio Contour 1.8MkIIs 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).
NAIM CDS1 2004, mint, boxed as new, £600. Stuart 07729 458836 (Co.Down).
NAIM CDS1, 16 months old. Mint, boxed, can demo, £525. 01273 385209 (Brighton).
NAIM NAP500 power amp, nine months old, perfect condition, boxed, £8,500. 01285 862539 (Gloucs).

PASS X-350 stereo amplifier. Silver finish and mint condition. (£10k), £4,300ono. Drives any speaker superbly but weighs 150lbs. 01926 653421 (Warwickshire).
PERIGEE FK1 floorstander, hybrid design well regarded in Hi-Fi Plus issue 34. Piano black, (£5,000) £2,895 07905 338232 (Essex).
PMC FB1 in oak finish for sale in absolutely mint condition, boxed, hardly used, a bargain at £900ono. Buyer collects only, 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).
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, Chorus MM cart, Rega Elys cart, Sennheiser PXC250 cans. All boxed and unused 07879 650913 (London).
SONUS FABER Grand Pianos speakers in Piano Black. Original type with granite plinths, Immaculate with original packing, dust covers and manual, £900. 01223 204934 days 01487 840659 eves (Camps).
STANDS UNIQUE CD racks. 180 capacity, in wonderful Mahogany finish. Excellent condition, £100 each. Audioquest Python interconnects, 0.75m, hardly used, original box. Excellent condition, £125. Ray 01900 606650 (Cumbria).
SYSTEMEK IIX900/RB250/G1006, £150. Audiolab 8000A grey, £120. Cambridge Audio DAC Magic 2, £50. Marantz CD84, £40. John 07855 121587 (W.Yorks).
T+A V10 valve integrated amplifier, 80wpc, titanium finish, mint, boxed, two months old, five year warranty, read the reviews, you won't be disappointed, (£4,000) £2,600ono. Paul 07765 001550 (Gloucester).
TEAC X1000 open reel deck. Ten 1/2" reels, seven 1/2ips and three 3/4ips. Quarter track. DBX, tape bias and mic/line mixing, serviced. Beautiful analogue recorder. Silver, manuals and schematics, £300. 07836 248063 (Stokesley).
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).
WILSON BENESCH ACT, Birds Eye Maple (Gloss), purchased April 2005, excellent condition, latest spec, with original boxes, manual etc, £6,750ono. 020 8868 7835 (Middx).
XLO 5.1 SIGNATURE, six foot, bi-wire speaker cables, amazing soundstage and detail, with banana plugs, Stereophile recommended, (£1,350) accept £500. e-mail pazmar@supanet.com (Mids).



Above: T+A V10 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.



The new Artikulat Loudspeaker System. Gorgeous.



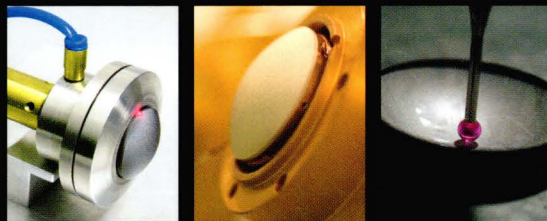
Linn Products Limited.
For more information or a demonstration call 0500 888 909 www.linn.co.uk



LINN

B&W Bowers & Wilkins

The new B&W 800 Series
Diamond Tweeter Technology



> 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.