

# HI-FI CHOICE

PASSION FOR SOUND AUGUST 2006 £3.95 WWW.HIFIChoice.CO.UK



**WIN!**

Meridian M3100 active speakers worth £1,845! See page 22

**EXCLUSIVE TEST!**

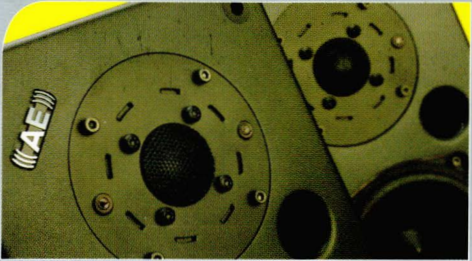
# LINN MAGIC

**Revealed:** Why the new Majik CD and amp combo puts us under its spell



AUGUST 2006 £3.95  
Future MEDIA WITH PASSION  
9 770955 111083 09>

**THE BEST RATED!**  
NEW HI-FI



**Acoustic Energy AE1 Classic**  
The return of a masterpiece



**Creek EVO CD and amplifier**  
The new budget benchmark?



**Sonus Faber Concerto Domus**  
Italian luxury you can afford

**FREE!**  
2nd hand hi-fi mini-mag!  
HI-FI HOME CINEMA

**ULTIMATE GROUP TEST >>>**  
**TUNERS**

- FEATURING**
- > Cyrus FM-X
  - > Denon TU-1800DAB
  - > Marantz ST7001
  - > Pure DRX-702ES
  - > Rega Radio 3
  - > T+A T1210R

**BUYER'S BIBLE**  
The world's best hi-fi rated



# 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](http://www.classeaudio.com) or experience the product range at one of the following authorised retailers.

**Acoustica**  
Chester  
01244 344227

**Holburn Hi-Fi**  
Aberdeen  
01224 585713

**Grahams Hi-Fi**  
Islington  
020 7226 5500

**The Audio Room**  
Hull  
01482 891375

**Infidelity**  
Kingston on Thames  
020 8943 3530

**Sound Gallery**  
High Wycombe  
01494 531682

**Cloney Audio**  
Dublin  
+353 1283 4887

**Robert Taussig**  
London  
020 7487 3455

**Phase 3 Hi-Fi**  
Worthing  
01903 245577

**Glasgow Audio**  
Glasgow  
0141 332 4707

**Sound Academy**  
Bloxwich  
01922 493499

# CLASSE

Welcome to the issue...

## HI-FI CHOICE AUGUST 2006 ISSUE 283

Future Publishing Ltd, 2 Balcombe Street, London NW1 6NW ☎ +44 (0)20 7042 4000



**My wife's not happy... and it has got nothing to do with the washing up that's still sitting in the sink. She's not happy because the summer has finally arrived, the sun has spread its golden glow across the garden at Bown Towers and yet I'm still sitting inside... glued to my beloved hi-fi.**

**She shouldn't complain. After all, it's the hi-fi that makes her Robbie Williams albums sound like she's standing in the front row at Knebworth with her ears grafted to the mixing desk. Clearly, it's not Robbie who's keeping me from the sunshine; so far it has been Sigur Rós, Boards of Canada and Grandaddy keeping me bonded to the sofa.**

**In the world of consumer electronics, nothing speaks to the emotions like good music on great hi-fi. But it's not only hi-fi's function that provides pleasure; the sheer joy of possessing a piece of high-quality engineering is as apparent at hi-fi's high end, as it is in the world of watches and cars. Who wouldn't enjoy owning, say, a phono cartridge with a tiny body fashioned from semiprecious stone, handmade by a master-craftsman in Japan? (Interested parties should seek out last month's special *The Collection* edition for details!)**

**This issue's varied gems include exclusive reviews of key newcomers from Linn, Creek and Sonus Faber, plus the return of an old favourite from Acoustic Energy. So... not much chance of a tan this summer, then!**

*Tim Bown*

**Tim Bown** Editor

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

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

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

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

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

Annotated shots show you what's really going on inside

Interviews with designers give you extra background information

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



## THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT 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*.



**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.



**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.

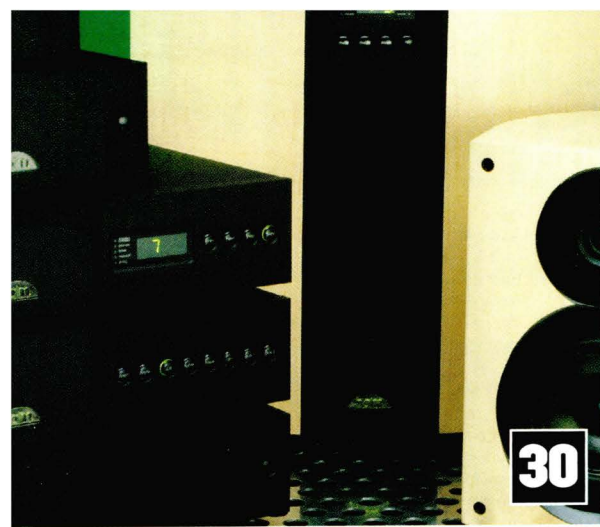


**JASON KENNEDY**  
Jason previously edited *HFC*, but can now be found in the wilds of Sussex indulging himself with the very best hi-fi money can buy. His own system is simply sensational and his love of music knows no bounds.



**JIMMY HUGHES**  
Jimmy got 'into' hi-fi in the 1960s and after ten years in retail, his first article was published in 1979. He's an avid tweaker and his 'first's' include solid-core cables and, er, listening to his speakers back to front – you can't win 'em all!

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.



30



59



51



55

40



# Contents

## NEWS AND FEATURES

### 7 PRODUCT NEWS

The juiciest new fruit from the hi-fi tree

### 12 HAPPENINGS

Hot gossip from Munich's High End Show

### 14 DISPATCHES

The hi-fi commentators with clout

### 21 MUSIC INTERVIEW

New Zealand's top songstress Bic Runga

### 22 COMPETITION

Win Meridian loudspeakers worth £1,845!

### 24 CHOICE CUTS

New music – rated by our experts

### 27 CHOICE MAIL

A selection of your letters and emails

### 30 BEAUTIFUL SYSTEMS

This issue: Naim Audio, stem to stern

## EQUIPMENT REVIEWS

### IN-DEPTH PRODUCT TESTS

36 Linn Majik CD player, preamp and power amplifier

40 Canto Vento Reference 5 DC loudspeaker

44 Creek EVO CD player and integrated amplifier

46 Acoustic Energy AE-1 Classic loudspeaker

48 Naim NA555ps power supply

51 Marantz PM7001 KI integrated amplifier

52 Sonus Faber Grand Piano Domus loudspeaker

55 Harman Kardon HD 970 and HK 970 Limited Edition CD player and integrated amplifier

56 Revel Concerta F12 loudspeaker

59 NAD C325BEE integrated amplifier

60 Custom Design SQ404 loudspeaker stand

60 Clearer Audio Copper-line Alpha loudspeaker cable

61 Ixos Ixotica IX1 interconnect cable

61 Oelbach Air Absorb isolating feet

63 Ixos Ixotica IX2 interconnect cable

63 Katli Audio stylus pressure gauge

## ULTIMATE GROUP TEST

### RADIO TUNERS £200-£1,000

68 Cyrus FM-X

69 Denon TU-1800DAB

71 Marantz ST7001

73 Pure DRX-702ES

75 Rega Radio 3

77 T+A T1210R

## 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

88 CD players

90 DVD players

92 Vinyl

95 Radio tuners

97 Digital recorders

### AMPLIFIERS

98 Stereo amps

100 AV amps

### LOUDSPEAKERS

106 Stereo speakers

110 AV speaker packages

### ANCILLARIES

113 Headphones

115 Cables

117 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

64 How to subscribe

80 Choice Bits accessories shop

82 Back issues

119 Glossary

124 Dealer Guide

128 Dealer Directory

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



## FREE MINI-MAG!

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

2 Guide to 2nd-hand kit – this issue, Thorens, plus DIY tips

3 Trading Pages

7 Reader Classified



# KRELLS ANGELS

## THE EVOLUTION CHAPTER

Since launching the legendary **KSA-50** amplifier a quarter of a century ago, **Krell** have established themselves as the absolute world leaders in the design of high end audio electronics, rocking the establishment over the years with novel technologies that have redefined the way we listen to music.

In 2005, chief designer Dan D'Agostino took the audio community by storm with the introduction of the stunning eight-chassis **Evolution One** and **Evolution Two** amplification systems, a creation that represented his ultimate strike of genius on the high end, and received accolades all over the world.

What's more, it doesn't stop there: this year sees the launch of a complete new range of **Krell Evolution** pre- and power amplifiers - plus two exciting source components and an extraordinary unique integrated amplifier.

Out go the sharp heatsinks, in comes the most beautiful casework ever seen, housing technology that delivers totally lifelike music, with nothing added and nothing taken away. Included in the line-up are the **Evolution 505** CD/SACD player, the **Evolution 525** audio-video source, the **Evolution 202** two-chassis preamplifier with the **Evolution 222** single case version, the **Evolution 402** stereo amplifier plus the incredibly powerful **Evolution 600** and **900** monoblocs.

For the home theatre, there is the powerful **Evolution 403** three-channel amplifier and the **Evolution 707** processor, a reference model that is without equal, and demonstrates Krells' passion for unparalleled performance and innovation.

Attracting huge interest and praise is the unique **FBI** Fully Balanced Integrated amplifier. Aimed at those who desire the superb performance of the long-established Class 'A' Krell **FPB** series in a single chassis, this is the true master of all integrated amplifiers.

**KRELL** THE LEADER IN AUDIO ENGINEERING the badge of prestige, passion and excellence. Call **Absolute Sounds** for full details.



EVOLUTION 402



EVOLUTION 505



EVOLUTION 222

**absolute sounds 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](http://www.absolutesounds.com) [info@absolutesounds.com](mailto:info@absolutesounds.com)





## DENON 700AE CD PLAYER AND INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER

Here's more fuel for the hi-fi resurgence fire – it's Denon's £250-per-piece, 700-Series models from the Advanced Evolution (AE) range. Yes, budget hi-fi Denon-style is back in the UK, after the company's sojourn in the world of raging home cinema sales. The new kit follows the delicious 2000AE and 1500AE hi-fi introduced recently and although the price has been driven down, Denon hasn't skimmed on quality. Both models enjoy a high standard of fit and finish that includes solid alloy fascia panels and 'heavyweight' power supplies.

Key to the DCD-700AE CD player is Denon's proprietary AL24 Processing, which takes CD's 16-bit digital data to higher sampling levels. Analogue conversion is then performed using an upmarket chipset as used in the more expensive models. Its partner in rhyme – the PMA-700AE stereo integrated amp – is a high current, push-pull design, packed with useful features such as a MM phono stage, preamp output and bypassable tone controls.

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

**PRODUCT** Denon 700AE

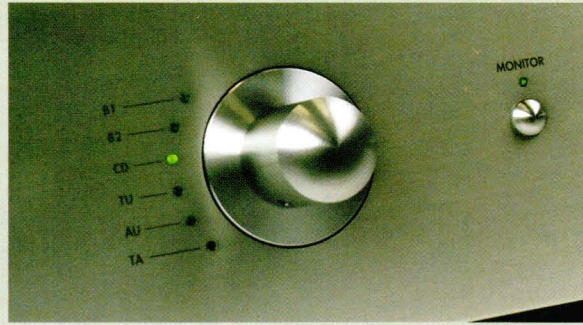
**TYPE** CD player and integrated stereo amplifier

**PRICE** £250 each

**KEY FEATURES** (CD player) AL24 Processing • 24-bit D/A conversion • pitch control • CD-R/RW and MP3/WMA playback • (Amplifier) Rated power: 50 watts • bypassable tone controls • MM phono stage • preamp output

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

# P R I M A R E



SCANDINAVIAN DESIGN

## I 130

"It has the kind of performance that products in the next price class upwards would envy, yet has sacrificed nothing in build, finish or usability in the process."

What Hi Fi? Sound & Vision Awards 2005



## I CD31

"If you want an elegant, superbly built top-end player, Primare's CD31 is an excellent place to start. It sounds fabulous and is built to sky-high standards."

What Hi Fi? Sound & Vision Awards 2005



## I SPA21

"If you're after the Holy Grail of home cinema amps – great sound with both music and movies – then the SPA21 is it. The queue to pay homage starts here."

What Hi Fi? Sound & Vision Awards 2005



Primare marries timeless Scandinavian design with impeccable build quality to deliver sound and vision as large as life itself from elegant, compact audio and video components that are as easy to install as they are to appreciate

Affordable high-end audio and video from Scandinavia

www.csesolutions.co.uk  
01423 359054



For further information please visit [www.primare.net](http://www.primare.net)



# ARCAM AVR350 MULTICHANNEL RECEIVER

▶ This is the all-new AVR350 receiver from Arcam, which replaces one of our favourite amps – the AVR300. It has been brought bang up-to-date with the latest video technology and “marked improvements in sound quality”, according to Arcam. It says the new receiver has been built for movies and tuned for music. There’s HDMI switching for Sky HD and high-def sources, plus HD-compatible component video switching.

Audio is well served too, with Crystal DSPs, Wolfson DACs and 100 watts across all seven channels. There’s also a huge new toroidal transformer for faster transients, a high quality preamp circuit derived from the flagship AVP700 processor, plus Arcam’s proprietary ‘Mask of Silence’ technologies, said to enhance high frequency clarity.

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

<b>PRODUCT</b>	Arcam AVR350
<b>TYPE</b>	Multichannel receiver
<b>PRICE</b>	£1,500
<b>KEY FEATURES</b>	100 watts (across seven channels) ◉ HDMI switching ◉ second room output ◉ Crystal DSPs and Wolfson DACs ◉ stereo direct mode
<b>CONTACT</b>	☎ 01223 203200 🌐 www.arcam.co.uk



## NEW PRODUCT HIGHLIGHTS



### MARANTZ WEAVE

Marantz's WEAVE (Wired Entertainment Accessible via Electricity) multiroom system uses your home's mains electricity wiring to transport hi-fi quality music to any room in the house.

Touted as a 'plug and play' solution and using 'Power Line Communication' technology, the ZC4001 receptor unit plugs directly into the mains and can deliver sound from your main system to its twin speakers and built-in amplifier. It also includes an RDS text display, clock, sleep and wake up timer. Up to six ZC4001 units can be used from one main system.

The catch is that your hi-fi system needs to include a Marantz amp featuring WEAVE technology. This is currently limited to the new ZR6001 receiver (£550), although all new Marantz hardware is promised to include the technology.

**Price** £200 **Due** now

☎ 01753 680868 🌐 www.marantz.com.



### CAMBRIDGE AUDIO 840C

Cambridge Audio's top-of-the-range upsampling CD player, the Azur 840C, joins the Azur 840A stereo integrated (tested in *HFC* 281) to mount a serious challenge to its mid-priced rivals. CD data gets upsampled to 32-bit/384kHz precision with Cambridge Audio's proprietary technology and is then decoded with high-quality Analog Devices DACs in dual-differential configuration.

It features two digital inputs too, so other sources can benefit from upsampling and has both RCA and XLR outputs as standard. There's also a recording digital output capable of feeding bit-for-bit, or upsampled data at 48, 96 or 192kHz to a suitable device. Expect a review soon.

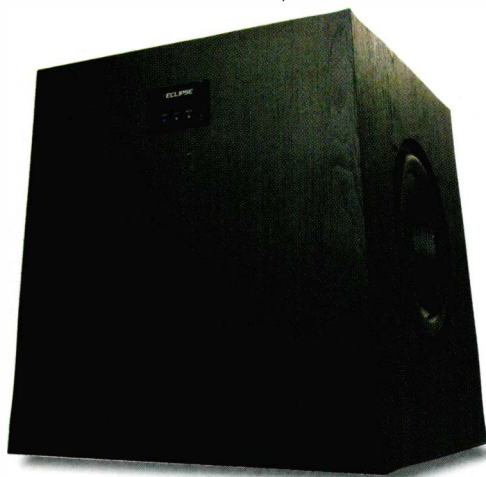
**Price** £750 **Due** now ☎ 0870 900 1000 🌐 www.cambridgeaudio.com

### ECLIPSE TD725SW

Eclipse's new high-end subwoofer has been specifically designed to speed-match its Time Domain loudspeakers. Described as ultra-fast, the 42.5kg monster has a 500 watt digital amplifier on board, which drives twin 'high-speed' 250mm drivers, mounted horizontally and back-to-back. The technique is said to match the air displacement of a 350mm driver. For rigidity, both drivers are mounted to an aluminium shaft, which acts as a ground anchor, increasing the drive units' radiated output.

**Price** £2,700 **Due** now

☎ 020 7328 4499 🌐 www.eclipse-td.com



### PMC WAFER-IW

The wafer-iw series of in-wall speakers from PMC expands the range of the company's ATL (Advanced Transmission Line) technology, hitherto only found in conventional speaker designs. The wafer2-iw sports a 150mm bass unit while the wafer1-iw features a 125mm version – the only difference between the two. Both models feature PMC's Twin Tweeter technology, which is said to offer flexible vertical placement with no loss of performance.

**Price** wafer2-iw £1,650 (each); wafer1-iw £1,150 (each)

**Due** now ☎ 0870 444 1044 🌐 www.pmc-speakers.com





## HARMAN KARDON DVD 47

US giant Harman Kardon has a new, entry-level, HDMI-equipped universal disc player. It's called the DVD 47 and boasts a number of audio and videophile features, including 24-bit/192kHz DACs and 720p/1080i upscaling. Harman Kardon points out that the player boasts pixel-by-pixel processing rather than line-by-line upconversion, to eliminate motion blur effects. There's also an 'audiophile grade' DSD chipset, audio control and bass management for SACD/DVD-Audio, plus updated components in the audio signal path. Expect a review in the October issue.

**Price** £400 **Due** now ☎ 01707 278100 🌐 www.harmankardon.com

## TRANSFIGURATION ORPHEUS MOON ANDROMEDA

The Transfiguration Orpheus is a yokeless moving coil cartridge that is said to simplify standard cartridge design in order to improve it. The new range-topping Orpheus cartridge uses extremely tight magnet-to-coil coupling and push-pull damping, thanks to a special compound that is impervious to temperature changes.

**Price** £2,750 **Due** now

☎ 01252 702705 🌐 www.audioreference.co.uk



New CD players are thin on the ground these days, but high-end audio manufacturer Moon, part of Canada's Simaudio group, has just released not one, but two new designs. The Andromeda offers 24-bit/705.6kHz internal upsampling, a digital clock with five parts per million accuracy and quad layer circuit boards. Its CD Pro 2 mechanism sits on gel-base 'Delt' suspension and there are separate power feeds for the digital and analogue circuitry. Moon also offers the SuperNova, which offers 24-bit/352.8kHz upsampling and costs far less.

**Price** Andromeda £9,990; SuperNova £4,500

**Due** now ☎ 0131 555 3922 🌐 www.simaudio.com



## O'HEOCHA D2 SATURN

Bearing a passing resemblance to the spheres and curves of O'heocha's earlier D2-XCT, the radical Irish designer's new speaker is said to boast improvements in almost every area, in order to deliver a wide-scale, realistic soundstage from the idiosyncratic design.

Each hand-made unit is crafted from aircraft-grade aluminium, with the whole structure stiffened by 10mm horizontal and vertical bracing rods. It features five drive units per speaker, with twin 275mm isobarically loaded subwoofers built into the bases, along with two gas-flowed bass reflex ports for even more of the low stuff.

There are also twin 155mm midrange drivers firing front and back from a spherical cabinet, that's designed to eliminate standing waves, plus a 28mm soft dome fabric tweeter. It's bi-wirable and compatible with O-Link wireless systems too.

**Price** £5,500 **Due** now

☎ 0035 391 558 030 🌐 www.oheocha.com



## Soundbites

**TEAC** has a new Reference 200 Series Model, the CR-H255 DAB/CD receiver. Features include a USB port on the front for playback from compatible MP3 players. The receiver also allows USB-equipped devices to record from its CD, AUX, AM/FM and DAB inputs. Expect to pay £270. ☎ 0845 130 2511



**WAVAC AUDIO LAB** is a Japanese, high-end valve amplifier specialist with UK distribution courtesy of Berkshire-based Audio Acoustics. The ten year-old esoteric manufacturer has a small range of tube-based equipment with aspirational price tags. Audio Acoustics will be shipping selected models from the range. ☎ 07968 388 118

**CRYSTAL AUDIO** the Athens-based loudspeaker specialist has a new subwoofer in development called Ballad – an eight foot tall, hand finished, solid wood design that takes its design lead from classical musical instruments. Ballad has a 30.5cm woofer, 200 watt amp and will cost £4,500. ☎ 020 7022 2970

**MORDAUNT-SHORT** has teamed up with the British Blind charity to auction a unique pair of Performance 6 loudspeakers. They usually go for £3,500, but this blue-tinted version (with the cross of St George next to the tweeter spike on the rear) is hoped to raise considerably more when they go on offer on eBay between 1-10 July. So get bidding! ☎ 01753 680868



**THE CHORD COMPANY** has two new speaker cables, the Epic Twin (dual-conductor, £39/m) and Epic Super Twin (twin dual-conductor, £78/m). In both cable designs, the conductors are twisted together, insulated by Teflon and then surrounded by a silicon jacket. Both feature extensive insulation and damping. ☎ 01980 625700

### The Insider

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

##### JOHN FRANKS

Job Title: Managing Director  
Company: Chord Electronics



#### What is your most exciting product in development?

We are developing three products currently and the most interesting is an advanced, upsampling CD player.

#### DVD-Audio or SACD – and why?

I feel that neither of those formats have a long-term future. Both failed to break into the mass-market.

#### Any great albums you've heard recently?

Oh, anything by The Feeling; I like the lyrics and the plaintive English style of singing is rather reminiscent of Robert Wyatt on the song *Ship Building* by Elvis Costello.

#### Are audio servers the source of the future?

Our experience with our high-end media server has taught us that you can capture and store data perfectly with the necessary processing and data conversion technologies. But, there will always be cost-reduced products. My only hope is that there will be room for products that have not cut corners.

#### Are we experiencing a two-channel resurgence?

Surprisingly yes. Especially with our style-led products such as the Aspire system. This may only be in our exalted price point where these systems are being sold to consumers often coming into high end hi-fi for the first time.

### Hi-Fi Diary

#### SEPTEMBER

1-6 IFA 2006  
Messe Berlin, Germany  
*Europe's biggest consumer electronics show*

22-24 The London Sound & Vision Show 2006  
Park Inn Hotel, Heathrow, London  
01829 740650  
*The new, independent London show*

23-24 The Hi-Fi & Home Entertainment Show  
Renaissance Hotel, Heathrow, London  
020 8726 8000  
*London's longest-running hi-fi show*

## SHOW REPORT

### High End 2006, Munich

May 2006: Jason Kennedy goes in search of the biggest and best audiophile show in the world. Taking a break between bratwursts, here's what he found!

Germans love big, shiny hi-fi! As a result, the annual High End show in Munich is a celebration of all things over the top. This is a big show, held in an exhibition centre with decent sized rooms – perfect for demonstrating extreme audio gear. No tiny hotel rooms here! The High End show is a hugely popular event, with thousands of visitors, in which you can find a huge selection of the most mouth-watering components.

Turntables are very big in all senses of the word, and few come bigger than **Transrotor's** range-topping Artus, a deck that sits in a high mass aluminium cradle on gimbals and has what can only be described as a pendulum hanging underneath. A snip at €118,000 (£81,000). From the UK, John Jeffries showed off the latest incarnation of his **Lumley** Stratosphere, that boasts a bearing that avoids metal-to-metal contact, extensive damping and a magnetic isolation system.

**Brinkmann** showed the long awaited Oasis, a less expensive variation on the La Grange covered in *The Collection* (HFC282) incorporating the same great standard of engineering. EMT, one-time maker of the



with a range of hybrid integrated amps. Its Reference, Signature and Statement all deliver 180 watts per channel and start at a £2,500.

It was also a treat to see some genuine **Luxman** kit too, in the form of the CL88 preamp, EQ88 tube phono stage and MQ88 power amp proving that the Japanese still have the edge when it comes to high quality engineering.

On the loudspeakers front, **Quad** showed the metal framed ESL 2805 and 2905 electrostatics. These are bigger and heavier than the existing models and offer improvements in bandwidth. **KEF** covered its 'engineering exercise' speakers with black cloth and

**“The variety and quality of kit on demonstration gives one hope for the high end. What's more, I didn't hear Hell Freezes Over in a single room!”**

ultimate professional turntables and cartridges, has risen again this time with the JPA-66 preamp, which has with four phono inputs, adjustable impedance, gain and RIAA equalisation. Final pricing is not set, but expect it to be in the stratospheric class. Closer to the real world is the beautifully veneered **Pro-Ject** Xpression Comfort, which will be available in apple, olive and wenge finishes.

On the digital front, SACD players were very popular. TEAC's high end **Esoteric** wing showcased the SZ-1 and matching AZ-1 digital amplifier with i.Link connection, alongside the new P-03/D-03 transport and DAC, this converts the PCM digital stream of CD to SACD's DSD standard, the first example we have seen of such extreme upsampling. Didier De Luca, of Helios fame, turned up with new CD player brand, **EERA**. Its shiny acrylic casework could have easily come off the Helios production line and with a bit of luck it should see UK distribution soon.

Amplifiers that caught our eye included a retro style beauty, the Japanese **Leben** CS300 integrated, designed by ex-Luxman employees using EL84 tubes. The **LSA Group** bridges the tube/transistor divide

powered them with a bank of **Chord Electronics** SPM14000 power amps to great effect (see *Dispatches*, p14). Along the hall, **B&W** unveiled an elegant floorstanding partner to its CM1. The new model, dubbed CM7, brings the surroundless FST driver technology to the sub-£1,000 price point at last. B&W's French rival **Focal** unleashed the Chorus 800V series, which features distinctive styling, a new aluminium/magnesium tweeter and for the floorstanders, a separate metal plinth. Focal's compatriot **Cabasse** made a big impression with La Sphère, which has four-way coaxial drivers and an outboard active crossover with EQ and phase delay. This kicks serious derrière for its €120,000 (£82,350) price.

Last, but by no means least, **Revolver** is getting ambitious with its Cygnis speaker, that has an isolated crossover, two separate enclosures and a curved top in carbon fibre producing a high efficiency design with great potential.

Munich is a tremendous show, the variety and quality of kit on demonstration giving one renewed hope for the high end. What's more, I didn't hear *Hell Freezes Over* in a single room! **HFC**

## New Music

### IN THE STUDIO

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



#### THOM YORKE

**Title:** *The Eraser*  
**Release date:** July

We've speculated before about Radiohead's work-in-progress but it seems it's finally on the way. During live dates in May, the band played eight new songs from the forthcoming record, including *4 Minute Warning*, *Bangers 'N' Mash*, *15 Step* and the instrumental *Spooks*. Before then, however, comes singer Thom Yorke's debut solo project *The Eraser*, a collection of nine songs produced by Nigel Godrich.

#### RAZORLIGHT

**Title:** *tbc*  
**Release date:** late July

The follow-up to Razorlight's 2004 top three album *Up All Night* is due before the end of July and they're working to a tight deadline for mid-May. Johnny Borrell briefly emerged from the studio to unveil the first single, *Somewhere Else*. "It was one of the first contenders for the album," he says, "so I suppose it's quite apt that it's the first one off the bat."

#### PUFF DADDY

**Title:** *tbc*  
**Release date:** Sept

"Diddy", as he now prefers to be known, was recently named one of America's 100 most influential people by Time magazine, which estimated his wealth at 315 million dollars. This may explain why at 36, he has announced his next album will be his last. Still untitled, it's slated to include collaborations with Mary J Blige, Christina Aguilera, Brandy, Busta Rhymes and Nas.

#### KILLERS

**Title:** *tbc*  
**Release date:** Sept

Never one for false modesty, Killers frontman Brandon Flowers has been talking up the follow-up to the band's debut *Hot Fuss*. "It's one of the best albums in the past



20 years. There's nothing that touches this album. That sounds like I'm being cocky, but I'm just excited." He describes the songs as "very optimistic about making it to the promised land."

#### THE LEMONHEADS

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

After Evan Dando put together a new version of the Lemonheads for live dates last year, the band are recording their first album since 1996's *Car Button Cloth*. Drummer Bill Stevenson and bassist Karl Alvarez complete the line-up and the trio have been working up new material at Stevenson's Colorado studio. Dando initially funded the recording, but the album has now been signed to Vagrant Records.

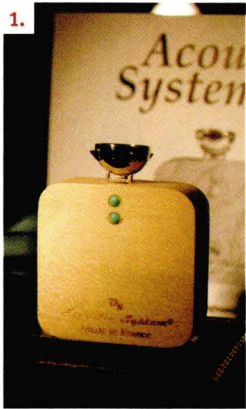
#### ALSO COMING SOON

##### JAZZ/ CLASSICAL

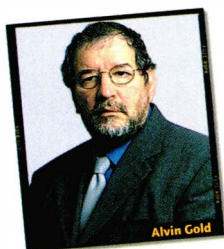
**Yolanda Kondonassis** *Breathe: The Relaxing Harp* (Jul), **Kunzel/ Cincinnatti Pops** Tchaikovsky: 1812 Overture etc (Jul), **Lang Lang** Mozart Sonata in C (Jul), **Eddie Henderson Project** *Precious Moment* (Jul)

##### SACD/ DVD-AUDIO

**Flaming Lips** *At War With The Mystics* (DVD-A, Sep), **LSO** Falla: *Three Cornered Hat* (DVD-A, Aug), **Little Richard** *Here Comes Little Richard* (SACD, Jun), **Jesus And Mary Chain** *Psychocandy* (DVD-A, Jul), **LA Phil** Stravinsky: *Le Sacre Du Printemps* (SACD, Sep)



1. Acoustic System Resonator 'room treatment'
2. Esoteric SZ-1 SACD player
3. Cayin SP105i radio
4. Luxman CL88 preamp
5. Haliaetus Firebird and booster speaker system
6. Cabasse La Sphère speaker
7. Quad GmbH's radically reworked ESL 57
8. Transrotor Artus turntable with two arms



## Mahlermania

*In praise of structurally dense music*

**W**hen my children were about three feet tall, I wanted to introduce them to the kind of music that I felt strongly about. After some consideration, I chose to expose them first to the music of Gustav Mahler – not obviously particularly tuneful, and hard going at times. But on a good day it is also rhythmic, compelling and almost infinitely varied. And it is the last quality in particular, that I thought would make it such a good choice. Of the four children who were subject to this treatment, two have become avid classical music lovers and concert goers, though I am glad to say their musical interests are by no means limited to this one genre. So far I haven't succeeded with the other two, but I live in hope.

**“When my children were about three feet tall, I wanted to introduce them to the kind of music that I felt strongly about.”**

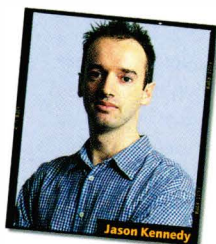
On one occasion, when asked by a hi-fi manufacturer to choose a Prom concert programme for a bunch of journalists they wanted to invite one year, I suggested Messiaen's *Turangalila Symphony*. It's an extravagant and at first apparently cacophonous creation, but again compelling in the same way that I imagine staring at a poisonous snake at close quarters would be compelling. It worked better than I could have hoped with the impromptu audience of about 10-15 invitees, few of whom had much affinity with classical music generally and not one of whom knew the work.

Part of the appeal is that these works engage with the world on a grand scale and there is something uniquely powerful in such an experience. There is clearly something going on here and I think it has a lot to do with sound quality. This at least is the opinion of others who have accompanied me on such jaunts, such as the other day, for example, to a concert given by the home town Philharmonic Orchestra which was laid on by a hi-fi

manufacturer for their guests during the Munich High End show. All enjoyed the Ravel and the Mozart part of the programme, but what triggered discussion and comment was the much less attractive and less immediately tuneful Schumann *Fourth Symphony* which was unfamiliar for all concerned.

The point here is that works like this, open a soundworld that is simply not available in any other form. Electronically aided music can in principle be reproduced well and relatively easily given a good hi-fi system. After all, the music was recorded and was meant to be reproduced electronically. But, there is no naturally acoustic Fender Strat. Acoustic music (meaning classical of course, but also jazz, folk and many other seemingly unrelated genres) is fundamentally harder to pull off and provides a unique insight into good sound. And this is where sometimes even the best high fidelity struggles to keep its head above water.

*Alvin Gold began writing about hi-fi more than 20 years ago and has since become one of the UK's most internationally renowned reviewers*



Jason Kennedy

## The cover up

*KEF shrouds its concept speaker in secrecy*

**T**he recent High End show in Munich (see our report on p12) was full of weird and wonderful kit. Loudspeakers in particular were found in almost every shape and material, from the glass and slate of Fischer & Fischer's elegant Dipole, to the glass fibre beach ball of Cabasse's impressive La Sphère. So, it came as quite a surprise to visit KEF's room and see that the company had covered up its groundbreaking new loudspeakers. All you could see in the gloom was an array of Chord Electronics power amps with their blue lights providing the visual focus.

It's not possible to separate the appearance of a product from one's visually-based expectations of its potential: by suspending tubes of black cloth around the speakers, KEF removed the visual cue usually given by the scale and design of a loudspeaker. This leaves the important bit (the sound) to one's perception alone – exactly like a blind listening test, in fact.

Under the black cloth tubes were some pretty big KEF speakers, about two metres tall and shaped like a slab with half column sides. The sort of speaker that one would expect to be blown away by, which puts it at an expectational disadvantage. Fortunately, the resulting sound was one of the best at this key show which gathers a great majority of the world's top hi-fi companies and thus one where sound quality is unusually high.

So why the cover up? KEF's senior acoustics engineer Steve Watson explained that this speaker was not a finished product and, much like a concept car, may never actually materialise. Unlike a concept car, this was not even a finished loudspeaker. It's not an exercise in styling, but in engineering. It sports an impressive driver array with four front-firing bass units and two at the rear, alongside a lower midrange in paper and a new version of the Uni-Q driver array. The rear mounted bass units form a cardioid system, a technique used in professional microphones and speaker systems for avoiding bass overkill by sending an out of phase signal to the rear drivers. This effectively reduces the low frequency output of the system as a whole. ▶



# RETRO

HI-FI REVISITED

TAG McLAREN DVD32R



It's a funny thing. There is probably more misunderstanding, mythology and downright misinformation about TAG

McLaren Audio and its CEO, Udo Zucker (whose personality and desires perfectly matched that of the company) than any other hi-fi manufacturer since the heyday of Linn Products. But TAG McLaren Audio does have special place in our industry, which is perhaps better appreciated in retrospect than it was at the time. Suffice to say that TAG McLaren Audio's goal was to design home cinema equipment that was as beautiful as it sounded, and that sounded as good as the best high-end stereo equipment. A typically ambitious goal, but undeniably worthwhile.

Let's not get into a navel gazing exercise about whether it succeeded or not, except to say that without a shadow of doubt, it got closer than most. Another misunderstanding concerns whether it was successful as a company. Of course we know the answer to that: TAG McLaren Audio was forced to sell out (to IAG, of Wharfedale and Quad fame) after a few short but brilliant years in the sun, though much of the factory, R&D equipment and so on is now in the hands of erstwhile competitor Meridian. But the real problem with TAG McLaren Audio wasn't the products or the prices, but a fatal lack of overseas distribution. It did also suffer poor early reviews of re-engineered Audiolab products being 'overpriced', where in hindsight, the problem was the first iteration of Audiolab was underpricing its range.

One of the specific claims we've heard of the impressive DVD32R, was that only a handful were ever made and that they were fearfully unreliable. Well there's some truth in the reliability issue. In particular, there was a problem with the motor drive for the sliding top plate which necessitated a redesign. But we have established that there were more loan players in circulation (for shows, reviewers and that like) than they were reputed to have made in total and that they actually sold more of the DVD32R than any other UK producer did of comparable high-end players.



**“Most of all however, the DVD32R was designed to be, and was, a truly excellent CD player.”**

In one sense, the DVD32R was not a DVD player at all, but a transport, as D/A conversion was performed externally – usually by the AV32R processor. This was the key component in the TAG McLaren gameplan and part of the strategy to facilitate easy and regular enhancements and upgrades.

The player's master clock could be synchronised with the one in the AV32R and of course, all TAG components could in effect be networked to synchronise display messages and the like using the innovative TAGtronic Communication Bus.

But the DVD32R was no afterthought and had a number of innovative features; the massive top cover, for example, was part of a sophisticated strategy to counter microphony. Most of all, however, the DVD32R was designed to be, and is, a truly excellent CD player, a claim that many have tried to live up to, but one in which few have succeeded.

TAG McLaren Audio sort of lives on in the reborn Audiolab product range, but sadly the DVD32R and similar groundbreakers are gone. Perhaps they'll return. Perhaps not.

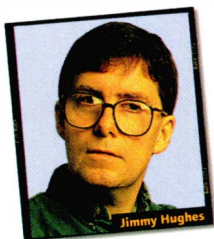
Products like the DVD32R remain a beacon of their time, and would not look out of place today, as it addressed a much wider audience than the core home theatre market. It was truly an object of desire. **HFC**

*Alvin Gold*

▣ The most radical aspect of this speaker, the new Uni-Q array, is also the element that will filter into production loudspeakers first, around this autumn. It has a shallower cone than its predecessor, which improves dispersion from the tweeter. In addition, the unit's dome is now made from two parts. KEF has also vented the pole piece to allow greater freedom of movement for the dome, a process that reduces magnet density and has been made up for by three neodymium rings. In terms of performance, these changes mean that the high frequency extension of the coaxial Uni-Q tweeter is now great enough to make the use of a separate super tweeter (seen on the current 2000 series) unnecessary.

This is undoubtedly the best sounding KEF we have heard. It's also the biggest, and it can't have been too much of a setback to have a pair of kilowatt Chord SPM 14000 monoblocks driving each channel. But this was in the challenging environs of a hi-fi show, so I have high expectations for the finished products that trickle down from this fascinating technology showcase.

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



## Ch-ch-changes!

*Turn and face the strain (of upgrading)*

It's not difficult to make changes to your hi-fi system and hear a difference. It's less easy to interpret the difference, and correctly decide whether or not the change represents a genuine improvement.

It's easy to be fooled. What seems 'better' in the heat of the moment can sound distinctly worse a week or two down the line – like meeting your 'perfect' partner, only to find you can't live with them on a day to day basis! So, when you make changes to your hi-fi system, evaluate the difference carefully. If the change strikes you as an improvement, go for it. Hi-fi is totally subjective; if it sounds better, it is better.

Nevertheless, there's a big difference between a change or upgrade that really improves the quality of the sound and one that merely alters things. How do you tell a real and

genuine improvement from one that's superficial? Here's a few pointers. A real improvement works across the board. It benefits all recordings and every type of music. Not only your best discs – those that always sound great – but also the ones that disappoint, or seem to have areas of weakness.

If every recording you play sounds better than ever, the change made was a real improvement. If you find you're now able to listen to (and enjoy or understand) music you never previously liked that much, the improvement is genuine. Another sign is when you play a recording of new music you don't know, and 'get it' first time. It demonstrates that your system's doing its job and communicating – your brain is having to do less processing work to make sense of everything. When you enjoy each album so much, you don't want it to end – your hi-fi system is working. Yet, it's one of hi-fi's paradoxes that (sometimes) the really big worthwhile improvements do not seem that significant at the time.

Sometimes, you make a change that represents a genuine leap forward, yet the improvement doesn't immediately strike home. It's not until you've lived with things

for a day or two that the penny drops. Then, when you go back to things as they were, the sound is awful.

One last tip; when you upgrade or tweak, don't worry too much about the technical/hi-fi aspects of the sound. Just listen to the music; the music tells you everything. If it sounds more real and communicative, more intense and personal, it's a genuine improvement. The opposite of this is when you make a change and the sound immediately impresses in hi-fi terms (deeper more powerful bass, sharper treble, crisper dynamics, etc). It all seems great. But, as the novelty wears off, and you listen more carefully, you find that the sound obtrudes over the music – your attention is drawn to the power and depth of the bass, or the bright immediacy of the treble, not the music itself.

Alas, too many hi-fi systems fall into this trap. They produce high quality sounds – great detail, wide dynamics, and a broad frequency range – yet fail to communicate and engage musically.

*Jimmy Hughes is one of the country's best known hi-fi experts.*

*His knowledge of tweaking and his record collection know no bounds*

## “What's 'better' can sound worse later – like meeting your 'perfect' partner, to find you can't live with them on a day to day basis!”







## Home hi-fi truths

What your partner really thinks about hi-fi!

**W**ell, no two ways about it, I'm a hi-fi anorak. Many years ago I realised that although we audiophiles are committed to our set-ups, most of the world ranks music systems on a par with toasters in a tastefully minimalist chrome finish and electrically-powered, flip-top bins. But why? I decided to take the unsettling step of venturing into the world of those exposed to hi-fi but immune to its charm – my other half.

'Long-suffering' probably best describes the apple of my eye and what she's had to put up with in terms of a steady flow of contemporary gear and 'classic' audio doorstops.

Well, the first step is always the hardest, so I thought I'd get it over with quickly:

"What do you like about hi-fi?"

"Mmmmm."

"Mmmmm?"

"That's a tough one. It's nice to be able to hear the music clearly, hear all of the various nuances of the tune. It's certainly better than my old midi system."

Pregnant pause. "Anything else?"

Another pause. "Nope."

I still couldn't fundamentally grasp the workings of the non-audiophile mind, so I plunged on recklessly:

"Then what is it you don't like about my equipment (ahem)?"

"Well, there's nothing I dislike about it really. It's just that I find it puzzling that men can get so enthralled by it. They say they can hear the differences between their various hi-fi systems. I don't think most people care – they don't ask for all these refinements that men want. I think that at the end of the day it's, 'My toy is better than your toy.'

Sigh. I could see the headlines in the local paper – there, in small print beneath, *Tabby rescued by fearless firemen!*, the forlorn headline, *Local audiophile succumbs to depression and throws self under Robin Reliant*. Something catchy like that.

"But what about the way the system looks, the superb build quality?"

"Yes, that's a problem too... it can ruin the ambience of a room pretty effectively, especially with all the ironwork and macho cables like hosepipes." ▣

# MUSO

CLASSIC ALBUMS

OGDENS' NUT GONE FLAKE  
SMALL FACES



When the Small Faces had been knocking out pop soul gems for Decca, they'd been expected to cut two sides after breakfast

(and have them mixed and finished before nightfall). But at Andrew Loog Oldham's Immediate Records and with pop being taken more seriously than ever, the boys – Steve Marriott, Ronnie Lane, Ian (Mac) MacLagan and Kenney Jones – were given almost unlimited studio time. The result was 1968's stunning, self-produced *Ogdens' Nut Gone Flake*, a dazzling slice of late 1960s whimsy.

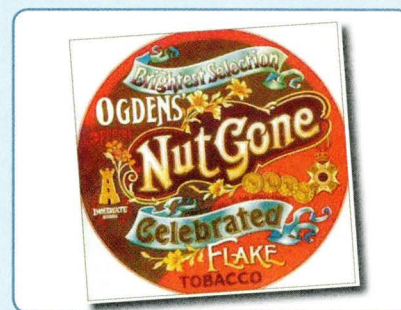
"We dreamt up the idea on a canal boat, Stevie Marriott, Ronnie Lane and myself," says keyboardist MacLagan now, "three mods on a boat!" Steve came up with a lot of the ideas. He and Ronnie were poets, you know?

Something that's still not appreciated even now. I mean, the lyrics to things like *Itchycoo Park*, they're brilliant, taking side-swipes at Oxbridge, while finding beauty in a patch of nettles in the East End!"

*Ogdens'* was the album follow-up to that *Itchycoo Park* hit, a pioneering track in itself with its phased guitar FX that took three tape decks to achieve and it didn't disappoint. Even as the pop mods started to embrace the new psychedelia, they still found room for great tunes, odes to dockside doxies, Dean Martin impersonations, whistles, fade-outs that faded back in and on side two, the concept section narrated by ex-BBC audio engineer and gobbledegook king, Professor Stanley Unwin.

And it worked, beautifully. Numbers like *Rollin' Over*, with its proto-punk guitars, rocked like there was no tomorrow, while noisy neighbour anthem *Lazy Sunday* was a bona fide Cockney classic and in the shape of Mac's *Long Ago And Worlds Apart*, they had an authentically haunting piece of romantic pop poetry that could put Nick Drake to shame.

"There's sounds on that track made with an instrument I still can't identify," Mac admits, "Same with the *Afterglow* song. We were allowed weeks in Olympic – a big orchestral studio and there was this wooden box that made this strange noise. Never seen or heard anything quite like it since!"



**"Taking side-swipes at Oxbridge, while finding beauty in a patch of nettles in the East End."**

It was all superbly recorded too, with crisp separation and wonderful layers of both vocals and early Mellotrons. *Ogdens'* reached No1 in both the US and UK and should have made the band a fortune, but the Small Faces received little or no recording royalties.

"Decca finally found £70,000 in some account in 1993, that was all we ever got apart from some gig payments," MacLagan insists now. "Steve and Ronnie were my brothers, musically speaking, and it annoys me that they got paid next to nothing while they were alive." Steve Marriott died in a house fire in 1991 and Ronnie Lane – who'd be diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in the late 1970s – died of pneumonia in 1997.

Such a financial mess made sure *Ogdens'* was the last Small Faces album before they split but their reputation has grown enormously over the years. Those influenced by the band who were Britpop before Britpop, include Paul Weller, The Sex Pistols, Supergrass, Blur, Arctic Monkeys and a host of others.

The eclectic *Ogdens'* has a few flaws, but like that last decade of genuine hope, it remains in so many ways, both charming and unbeatable.

A three CD edition of *Ogdens' Nut Gone Flake* is out now on Castle and Ian MacLagan's new album, *Spiritual Boy*, can be downloaded at [www.macpages.com](http://www.macpages.com) **HFC**

Phil Strongman

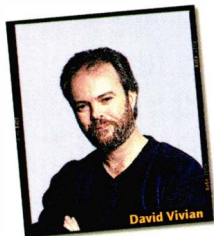
☑ That headline now reads *Hapless local audiophile throws partner and self under Robin Reliant*. Not much room under a Robin Reliant, I suppose...

"In that case, if you had to have hi-fi, how would it be designed?"

"Something unobtrusive – small would be good. And no spaghetti all over the place. Ideally, it should be heard but not seen."

My trip to the dark side of audiophobia may not have left me mentally scarred, but I do worry for my future. What does it hold for me? I can at least console myself with the thought that my hi-fi is my only gizmo at present – I feel no urge to purchase the latest executive pencil sharpener with speech recognition, thermonuclear heated toilet seat or microprocessor-controlled biscuit dispenser. No, I still have those to look forward to...

*Jon Marks has been happily addicted to hi-fi for 20 years, especially since becoming a member of the hi-fi press in the mid-1990s*



## No spleen unvented

*Angry manufacturer rant hits the right nerve?*

**T**here's a programme on BBC Radio 4 called *Heresy* that I usually listen to if I'm driving on a Wednesday afternoon. A panel show hosted by David Baddiel, it plays around with the idea that some of our most deeply held received opinions are plain wrong. As well as being funny, it gives the grey matter a rare old kicking – no bad thing in my case.

Someone who emails me on a fairly regular basis really should be on it. We'll call him Mr. Angry. He runs a small but well respected British hi-fi company. Railing against received opinion and breathing are one and the same for Mr. Angry, but recently, he sent me a broadside that knocked me off the sofa. It wasn't prompted by anything in particular but, working back from the thrust of its theme, we can construct the following piece of received opinion. People who want a music system in their lives should read a hi-fi magazine first.

This is the gist of his argument. "There is a very obvious change in attitudes towards purchasing a hi-fi. Magazines no longer reflect the requirements of the best customers. Instead they tend to titillate low-budget tweak artists. Our big sales come from dealers who



## "Railing against opinion and breathing are one and the same for Mr. Angry, but he sent a broadside that knocked me off the sofa."

have stalled on multi-room installations, because customers can't use it or it sounds poor, even to non-enthusiasts. They prefer simple, easy to use and good sounding kit.

"Magazines have been dismissive of computer-based music and then given complimentary reviews to hi-fi amps and CD players that are far worse. Many of our customers have found Mac computers have an extremely good line output. It may not be as good as the best CD players, but it's far from unpleasant and not particularly noticeable unless direct comparison is made.

"Fit an M-Audio 24/96 pro-audio sound card to a Dell computer and hook it to a pair of active speakers. Then use the Dell Media interface with iTunes or Windows Media Player and the results are better than can be achieved by most separates at the price (just under £2,000) and many that cost far more.

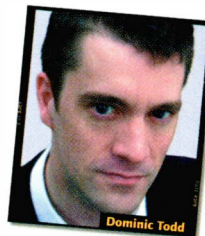
"Loads of people use a laptop with wi-fi to control the hi-fi. And people actually come to hear our stuff with everything in an iBook! The truth is that the market is probably splintering. Some want complex home automation, some want extreme hi-fi, some want basic multiroom and so on. They all want speakers and amps. Last year, we doubled speaker sales and saw a big rise in amplifier sales to people anxious to have a good sound but mistrusting magazines and this is a definite trend.

"You'd never believe how many people ring us because they want a complete one-make system. Most have burnt their fingers in the

past mix and matching and are delighted to find a company that makes a system. People buy three group test winners, hate the result and don't know which product is wrong."

I don't agree with all of this, but it undoubtedly touches a nerve. The way we listen to music is changing. Some of us may think it's not for the better, but we ignore it at our peril.

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



## Stability is good

*Who needs rapid technological change?*

**I**n the wider world of electrical equipment, the current state of hi-fi separates is, right now, a blissfully stable one. Past times have seen the steep decline of many a recording format. First open reel and then, I suppose around the same time, eight track bit the dust. One of the most popular formats of all time,

compact cassette, finally succumbed to the digital age, while even its digital descendants; DCC, MD and CD-R, have now all but vanished from the hi-fi separates world. Vinyl's not what it used to be, although in recent years, it has shown something of a rally. Still, despite the profits of doom predicting the death of CD, the format continues to be popular in the separates market along with good old vinyl and, of course, the radio – digital or otherwise.

In short, hi-fi retailers know exactly where they are with hi-fi separates. Computers and phones radically change at least once a year. With television there's a new connection, screen technology or definition always just around the corner. Even the multichannel world has to endure an annual launch of a new Dolby system or two, something from the rival (DTS) and a new format such as HD DVD on a regular basis. With stereo we've not really had anything 'new' since SACD and, before that, DAB. Yet really, I can't help but think that we're much better for it.

Electrical retailers who spread their net broadly are looking at the hi-fi separates market with either renewed interest or envy. They don't have to worry about format battles, unproven technologies or even the success or otherwise of the England football team, which undoubtedly shifts the fortunes of those who rely on flatscreen TV sales. Instead, hi-fi separates retailers have a sense of predictable foresight. With much component and even product manufacture now done in the Far East, the value of hi-fi separates is better than ever. This is right across the board, too. So whether you're selling a starter system or high-end extravagance, you can be confident your customer is getting decent value and longevity of format life.

Yet, just because the stereo market is stable right now, doesn't mean to say that is in any way stale. In fact, the very opposite is true. There are plenty of respected brands bringing new products and even new versions of existing technology, to the market. For proof of this you only need to look at Rotel. It's just launched an entire new 2006 range. Arcam too has been busy of late and Denon recently replaced the iconic TU-260L tuner with a new model – the superb TU-1500AE.

Perhaps most exciting of all for the hi-fi separates world, is the announcement of product such as the Cambridge Audio Azur 840A amplifier. This is not only a significant shift upmarket for a traditionally budget-end manufacturer, but also a showcase for an intriguing new technology – Class XD. Times may not be a changin' for hi-fi separates, but there are still plenty of reasons to be cheerful.

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



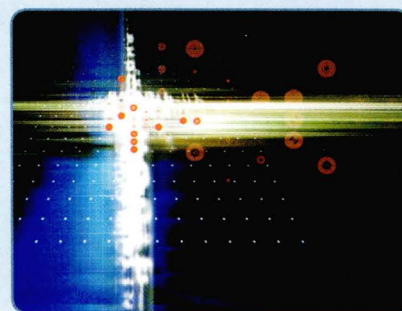
In late May, *Techno* visited Paris to read a paper at the Audio Engineering Society convention (the paper was on *Neglected Audio Distortions* and you've read most of it here already). These conventions are a chance for technical audio types to get together and present to each other the developments that will shape the future of sound.

As you'd expect, there was plenty of talk about more efficient ways to compress audio data for MP3 and suchlike schemes – 'efficient' meaning higher compression, or lower computing power, or quicker execution, or some combination. That's fascinating, but not the stuff of which audiophile dreams are made, and the same can be said for wireless audio, laptop computer sound and hearing aids.

Among the more intriguing presentations we encountered were one on computer simulation of valve amplifiers and another on an intriguing scheme for producing (slightly) more practical single-ended valve amps. If you've ever enjoyed the mellow sound of a valve amp, you'll doubtless be glad to know that their design is taken seriously enough to feature at an event like this.

A session on *Signal Processing and High Resolution Audio* brought forth some interesting papers on ways to improve the performance of 'digital' power amplifiers (as one paper title reminded us, *Some amplifiers are more analogue than others*). It's clear that this technology is being taken very seriously indeed. Given the decent, sometimes even impressive results we've already had with various digital amps, we look forward to this research bearing fruit.

Of course, the holy grail of digital audio is the true digital loudspeaker and a paper from Malcolm Hawksford of the University of Essex; a charming man who conceals a fearsome mathematical brain under characteristically eccentric headwear; discussed possible solutions to some of the many tricky problems in the way of this goal. It does look as if we'll be waiting a while for this one, though, so don't put off the purchase of those Wilson Alexandrias on that score!



**“Given the decent results we've already had with digital amps, we look forward to this.”**

Loudspeakers always generate a large amount of discussion within the AES, equalled only by their counterparts, microphones. We were particularly impressed by some of the loudspeaker testing methods under discussion, methods aimed at both improving intrinsic performance and ensuring consistent manufacturing quality.

A demonstration by Klippel GmbH showed that it is possible to detect a couple of grains of salt on a loudspeaker cone, with the testing performed in a noisy environment. This may sound irrelevant but is in fact representative of a very real problem in speakers, 'rub and buzz', which is traditionally a right pain to identify and hence to correct. Another interesting loudspeaker tack was high-efficiency speakers of poor linearity, which are linearised by digital signal processing: whether that will have any benefit for what audiophiles call sound quality is not yet obvious.

Finally the papers turned to surround sound, although there was surprisingly little discussion on this topic. There was, however, a particularly interesting tutorial on microphone techniques for surround, which did address it in detail. Ironically, a lot of the stuff covered in the session was just as relevant in the days of the first stereo recordings. Sometimes you have to keep running to stand still! **HFC**

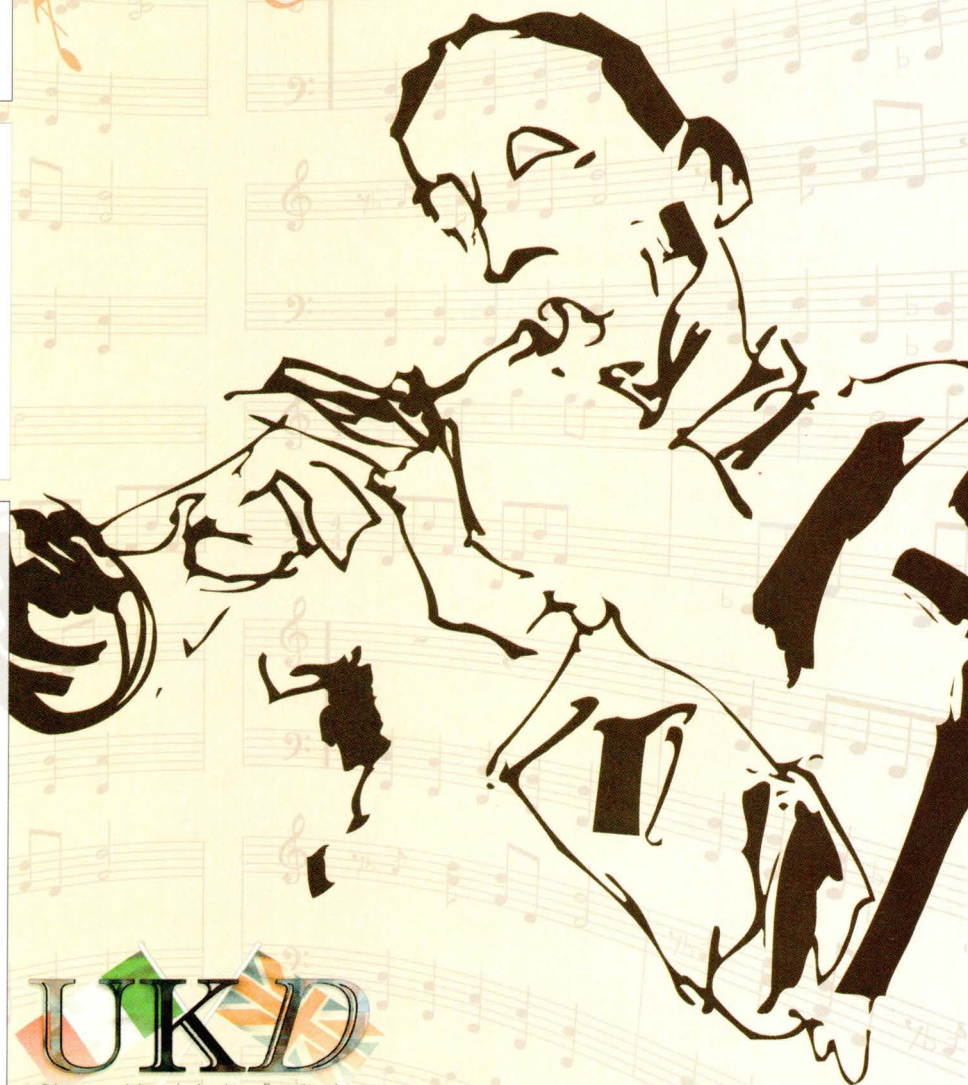
*Richard Black*

# Great Music - Italian Style



## Total bliss!

How wonderful to sit back and immerse yourself in your favourite music, with a luxurious audio system that looks as exciting as it sounds – thanks to Italian craftsmanship, style and flair. Opera, Unison Research, Audio Analogue, Pathos, GRAAF - these names are synonymous with the best sound quality and Italian styling and, most importantly, offer unsurpassed value for money. With UKD's comprehensive selection of respected dealers around the country you can choose from a whole range of beautiful hi-fi and home entertainment products from Italy. Contact us for your nearest retailer and start your very own Italian musical journey today...



The Finest Italian Hi-Fi

tel : 01753 652 669 | email : [info@ukd.co.uk](mailto:info@ukd.co.uk) | web : [www.ukd.co.uk](http://www.ukd.co.uk)

# For the Birds

All of her records are multi-platinum in her New Zealand homeland and she's gaining popularity here, but singer songwriter **Bic Runga** just wants to write good songs

The gentle melodies and songs of love lost and found have led to her being called the Kiwi Dido, but there's much more to her than just a pretty voice and face. Bic Runga (Briquette Kahbic Runga to her Chinese mother, her Maori father died last year) started playing drums when she was 11 and later took up guitar and keyboards, as well as singing in local jazz groups. She was just 21 when her debut album hit the shops in 1997 – it went to number one in New Zealand and stayed there for almost a year.

Her second album sold even better, but for her third album, *Birds*, she chose to get out of the studio and record in Monte Cecilia, a 150-year-old house in Auckland that has the reputation of being haunted. Accompanied by a group made up mostly of friends from the NZ pop scene – including long-time collaborator Neil Finn, who contributes piano backing vocals and some string arrangements – she brought in some recording equipment and set to work.

"It's a spooky old house that's been used as a film set. It was in *Narnia* and some others too I think. It was a Catholic girls' school for a while and we recorded in the chapel so there was a lot of vibe, a lot of history.

"I wanted to make something really dark, but I guess I'm not really as dark as I like to think I am. I just wanted to make a record that's not trying to break radio and that could be just atmospheric. Trying to appease radio was going to do my head in.

"It was pretty much played live, so it took quite a while to get it set up to start with. We spent days getting the balance right in the room, so the vocals weren't too far away from the drums and with three backing vocalists working together, the blend in the room was crucial. Once we'd got that right, it was pretty much just free recording.

"It might seem like a lot of hassle, but there aren't actually that many good recording studios in New Zealand and I wanted to be in



**"I'm sick of the concept of production. It's really contrived and everything gets squashed to death for the sake of radio."**

the same room with the musicians – I didn't want to be singing in an isolation booth with headphones on. We didn't use headphones at all actually – we were all listening to what was happening around us – you can blend better. It's more immediate and makes you feel that you're playing the music, rather than just doing something technical. It doesn't feel like music when you're recording in a booth.

"I've produced my last three records and I'm sick of the concept of production. It's really contrived and everything gets squashed to death for the sake of radio. In a perfect world, you would just present the song in a natural

way and try to capture its atmosphere; let it breathe and let it have a rawness and actually capture the essence of what the song is.

"I learnt production from hearing people do that sort of thing. When you're signed to a major label as a 21-year-old, they put you with a producer and hope for a hit. I picked it up as I went along. I was always around these guys who tried to hold their position by trying to make me feel like I didn't know what I was doing, it was just bluff. I'd be saying 'no I think I'll just play my song, let's just record!'" **HFC**

Dave Oliver

*Birds is out now on Columbia*

## ESSENTIAL BIC RUNGA

### Drive (1997)

Bic wrote the songs, played guitar and xylophone and ended up producing her debut pop and rock-themed album. Includes the perfect pop track *Sway*, that deserves more attention.



### Beautiful Collision (2002)

More ambitious in scope and content, the songs rely less on traditional pop arrangements and reach for something more classic, foregrounding Bic's deceptively childlike voice.



### Birds (2005)

The latest album has less hooks and catchy phrases, but is a rich and rewarding record with great depth and emotional range. A darker, but more mature and cerebral work.



**WIN!**

A PAIR OF  
**MERIDIAN M3100**  
 ACTIVE LOUDSPEAKERS  
 WORTH £1,845!



**A**s a world authority on digital audio processing, Meridian knows a thing or two about sound. And as its superb £1,845 M3100 active loudspeaker proved in our June issue (*HFC* 280), it's not just the company's electronics that are superior; its speakers are a class act too. In fact, the gorgeous standmount with its electronic crossovers and 75 watts of on-board amplification, makes a convincing case for going active.

The Cambridge stalwart has been making active speakers since the 1970s, and was the first (and still the best) company to marry active speaker technology with DSP processing to outstanding effect. The M3100 flaunts carbon fibre drive units and Meridian's own doped fabric tweeter, all encased in a luxurious aluminium-clad box. Each driver has its own bi-polar power amp and each speaker is supplied with a Meridian-branded, five-metre van den Hul interconnect cable for easy installation.

The results are spectacular. They couple low coloration with high neutrality, making the M3100 an obvious choice for our coveted Best Buy award.

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, Mr. P. Joseph of South-East London who wins a superb Arcam FMJ CD36 CD player worth £1,400.

**QUESTION:**

**What does Meridian know a thing or two about?**

**A:** Sound?

**B:** Zero longitude?

**C:** Early English church music?

**TO ENTER:**

**By Phone:** Simply call **0906 403 1013** and follow the instructions (maximum cost of call: £1.50).

**By Text:** Simply send the text message **MERIDIAN** (followed by a space) with the answer A, B or C to **80889**. For example, if you think the answer is B: Zero longitude, then text **MERIDIAN B** to 80889.

**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 26 July 2006. The entries will be judged after the closing date and the winners will be notified by telephone within ten days of that date. Prizes will be sent out within 28 days of notification by the companies involved, not Hi-Fi Choice or Future Publishing. Entering costs – BY TEXT: 1x 50p (including VAT) for each entry plus your usual text message cost. This service is available to T-Mobile, Orange, Vodafone and O2 customers only. BY PHONELINE: Each call costs a maximum of £1.50. 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, 2 Balcombe Street, London NW1 6NW. If you have any problems making your call or sending your text, please contact the service provider, Opal Telecom. Tel: 0845 330 5002. Email: futuresupport@opaltelecom.co.uk

Ayre

The shape of things to come....

For over a decade Ayre has pioneered zero-feedback, fully balanced, linear power supply audio designs. Leading the way once again, Ayre will change the way you listen to music with ThermalTrak, EquiLock, Isola and opto-isolated AyreLink technologies.

Experience the MX-R mono amplifiers. Summer 2006.

 symmetry

t: 01727 865488

e: [info@symmetry-systems.co.uk](mailto:info@symmetry-systems.co.uk)

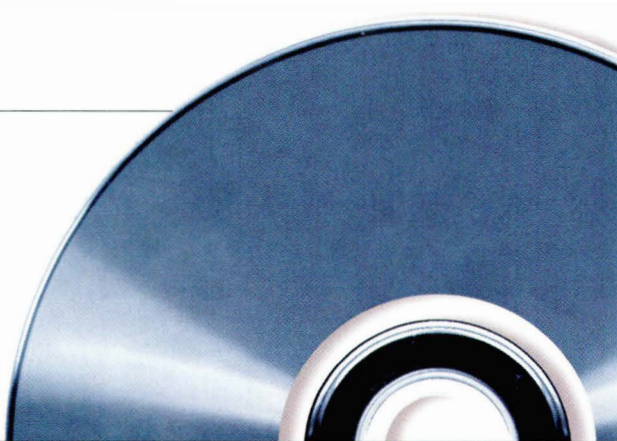
w: [www.symmetry-systems.co.uk](http://www.symmetry-systems.co.uk)

# ChoiceCuts



This month's varied musical morsels

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



## AUDIOPHILE VINYL

### JOHN FAHEY The Yellow Princess

Comet Italy/Vanguard  
180g vinyl

**Music:** Recorded in 1968, this is John Fahey going further with the acoustic guitar than anyone had done before and very few have managed since. The contrasts and

depths he plumbs in tracks like *Irish Setter* have a poignancy and beauty which has rarely been evoked by a single instrument. This man was the John Coltrane of the guitar – the fact that he didn't achieve the same fame was largely a personal choice and perhaps, a reflection of the status of the acoustic guitar in era of the electric guitar hero. Technically and emotionally this is a powerful LP, treat with due reverence. ★★★★★

**Sound:** While it's a luxury to be able to get a new copy of this album, the quality of this pressing is not always that great. It occasionally sounds as if it was dubbed from an original LP rather than master tapes, but perhaps we got a bad sample. ★★★ JK

### BUDDY GUY & JUNIOR WELLS

Going Back To Acoustic

Pure Pleasure  
180g vinyl

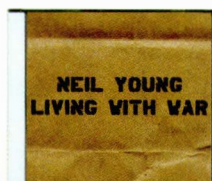
**Music:** Guitar player and singer Buddy Guy is best known for his electric playing and Junior Wells (who also sings) is first and foremost a harp player. But on this

1984 recording, we find both men keeping things very simple with renditions of their own tunes, and those of their mentors such as John Lee Hooker and Muddy Waters. The result is not so far from Waters' country blues in feel and quality. The guitar playing is relaxed, but right on the money and the singing clearly that of genuine feeling. ★★★

**Sound:** What marks this album out is its combination of original country blues playing with clean, open recording quality, something you won't find with the previous generation's output. The lack of distortion may be all that keeps it from sounding like its antecedents. ★★★★★ JK

LPs were supplied by Edward's Music & Pure Pleasure.  
☎ 020 8723 7297  
🌐 www.purepleasurerecords.com

## COMPACT DISC & VINYL



### NEIL YOUNG Living With War

Reprise

**Music:** George Bush may be an easy target, but Young strikes with unerring accuracy on ten of his most visceral and vital songs in years. Written and recorded in just two weeks, even by his own standards the results are spontaneous and raw. The lyrics favour sloganising over analysis ("let's impeach the president") but he's reviving the almost-forgotten art of protest and the direct simplicity of the message is what makes *Living With War* so immediately arresting. Indeed, it's hard to remember when Young last sounded this committed. ★★★★★

**Sound:** A dense fudge of snarling guitars, pitched somewhere between *Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere* and *Mirrorball*, but lifted by such sonic surprises as trumpet solos and a top ramshackle choir. ★★★★★ NW

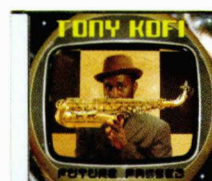


### COCTEAU TWINS Lullabies To Violaine (Vols 1 & 2)

4AD

**Music:** Robyn Guthrie and Liz Fraser formed a trio with Simon Raymonde that embarked on the most ravishing journey in sound from any British indie band in history. The 12in single and EP was their form of choice and always allied to an equally ravishing sleeve by Vaughan Oliver. Favouring Guthrie's processed guitars and the coloratura vocalese of Fraser, the experiment reached a zenith on *Tiny Dynamite/Echoes In A Shallow Bay* in 1985, possibly the most arresting, original, *avant garde* and downright genius music to ever come out of the punk movement. ★★★★★

**Sound:** Compiled and remastered by Guthrie himself, now we can hear all the details. Just listen the guitars on *Plain Tiger* to be knocked into the ground. A miracle! ★★★★★ MP



### TONY KOFI Future Passed

Specific

**Music:** This West African-born, Nottingham-based saxophonist was associated with one of the UK's finest jazz bands, the Jazz Warriors, in the early 1990s and has played with lots of bigger names including Courtney Pine, Branford Marsalis and Donald Byrd. This trio with drummer Robert Fordjour, Hammond organist Anders Olinde and occasional guests features quotes aplenty from Monk, Mingus, Davis and Coltrane (especially Coltrane), all nicely offset by the soulful, bluesy tone of the Hammond B3, which can't help but conjure up the spirit of Mose Allison on occasion. Radical no, but as a lesson in the art of swing, it's a joy. ★★★★★

**Sound:** Warm and immediate, in contrast to the clean sound of many modern jazz records, it's a little gem of small group grooving. ★★★★★ DO



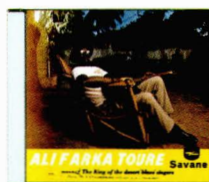
### ALI FARKA TOURE

Savane

World Circuit

**Music:** Ali Farka Toure finished his final, and ultimately posthumous, album just a few weeks before he died of cancer in March this year. But, he had at least, the satisfaction of knowing that he was signing off with his magnum opus. *Savane* is a remarkable final chapter to the Malian guitarist's extraordinary career and the most blues-drenched record he ever made. Hypnotic guitar riffs and deep-throated vocals of defiant power and conviction conjure up a primeval profundity that recalls the unearthly quality of Robert Johnson or the early recordings of Muddy Waters. If the world's ethno-musicologists ever needed proof that the blues came from Africa, it's here in every last supreme note. ★★★★★

**Sound:** Scratchy traditional African instruments mix seamlessly with Little George Sueref's blues harp and Pee Wee Ellis's tenor sax, while Ali serenely holds the bridge. ★★★★★ NW



### WAGNER

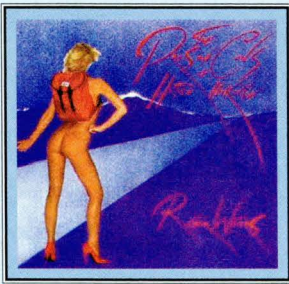
Parsifal

Plácido Domingo, Christian Thielemann (conductor), Choir and Orchestra of the Vienna State Opera  
DGG 00289 477 6006

**Music:** Thielemann brings a rare understanding to this long, complex and moving work. Of course, it helps that Domingo's soul really belongs to Parsifal, plus the special affinity that the Vienna State Opera has with the music. The performance is truly magisterial, with rare concentration and passion, speeds that just sound unarguably right and a complete sense of conviction. ★★★★★

**Sound:** The recording was made live at the Vienna Staatoper and reproduces with great clarity and with a strong sense of presence. If ever a recording called out for release in multichannel SACD sound, this is it. ★★★★★ AG





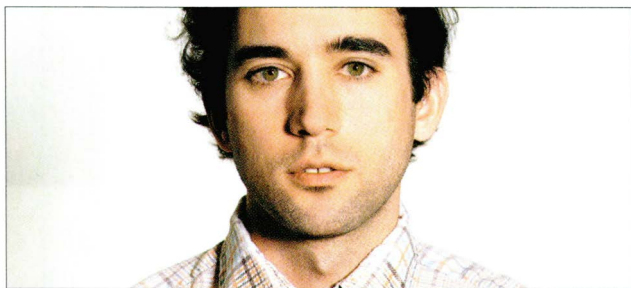
## THIS MONTH'S CLASSIC HI-FI TEST DISC "Don't turn the quiet bits up too high!"

### ROGER WATERS The Pros and Cons of Hitchhiking Harvest

**Music:** Although not a big commercial success, former Floyd linchpin Roger Waters' 1984 solo album is still worthy of note because of its high style and impressively polished playing. It's something of a rock opera: the track titles start with 4.30 AM and finish with 5.11 AM and describe a complex and detailed dream story in condensed form. As one expects of Waters, this is no easy ride. There are the usual nightmarish scenes, but these are interspersed with lighter

passages. Waters may use music making as therapy, but he does it in a unique and inventive style that can sound stunning on a decent system. ★★★★★

**Sound:** Rarely has a rock album been made with the bandwidth and dynamic range on offer here. The combination of field recordings and close-miked whisperings contrast with big band crescendos to startling effect. Don't turn the quiet bits up too high! ★★★★★ JK

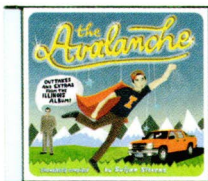


### SUFJAN STEVENS The Avalanche

Rough Trade

**Music:** Part two of Sufjan Stevens' musical map of the USA came out last year. He's writing one album for each state, although there have been contradictory statements about the project from his US record label, Asthmatic Kitty. Presumably, this is because Stevens discovered there wasn't much of an album to be had regarding the potatoes of Idaho. Regardless, it turns out that *Illinois* was originally conceived as a double album, and this record of odds and sods is effectively disc two. With a history like that it's hard to escape the feeling that this is second best, but the 21 tracks include all his usual hallmarks – quietly keening chamber orchestra, plaintive banjo, quirky woodwind, contrapuntal horns, choral interludes and Stevens' own, quietly unprepossessing voice. It may be an also-ran, but this is a beautiful album in its own right. ★★★★★

**Sound:** Never sounding polished or slick, most of the tracks have a low-fi but intimate feel, like a sort of folksy Stereolab, with oodles of charm. ★★★★★ DO



## DVD-AUDIO & SACD

### VANTAGE POINT

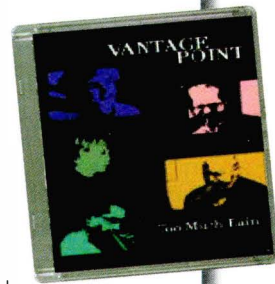
Resolution

DVD-Audio (24/96 stereo and surround, DTS-Audio, Dolby Digital)

AIX

**Music:** This DVD-Audio title takes the comprehensive approach to content, with almost every format option that the medium will support on board the double-sided disc. Session drummer supreme Simon Phillips (the man who replaced Jeff Porcaro in Toto), is joined by Jeff Babko on piano, Brandon Fields on tenor, Walt Fowler on trumpet and Alphonso Johnson on double bass. Their sound is rhythmically strong and energetic, the latter largely provided by Phillips without whom the band would have more of a 1950s jazz sound. As it is, this is straight-ahead stuff with impressive playing on all seven self-penned tunes. ★★★★★

**Music:** Choose between 'audience' and 'stage' mixes in Dolby Digital and DTS respectively whilst watching the HD video, or take the purist option and play the full 24/96 multi and two-channel mixes. It all sounds good. ★★★★★ JK



### MOZART

Wind Concertos: Flute Concerto in G, Bassoon Concerto in B Flat, Clarinet Concerto in A

Alexander Janiczek (dir), Scottish Chamber Orchestra SACD (stereo/multichannel SACD plus stereo CD layer) Linn CKD 273

**Music:** The Scottish Chamber ensemble is particularly appropriate for this repertoire. Not so small it sounds lightweight or lacking in body and not so large that it is staid or lacking in vitality. Their accomplishment adds to the strength of a Mozart disc that really has wings.

Nevertheless, the clarinet concerto featuring Maximiliano Martin is the work that has the strongest impact here. The two earlier works are excellent, familiar fare, but somehow lack the Clarinet Concerto's depth and passion. What really makes this recording fly, however, is the security of the soloist's delivery. Martin's playing has the easy virtuosity that only top class musicians can achieve. ★★★★★

**Sound:** The clarinet can often sound subtly out of tune, which has something to do with the physical qualities of the instrument, but here it sounds bright and clean, and always on top of intonation issues in this warmly attractive recording made in Edinburgh's Usher Hall. ★★★★★ AG

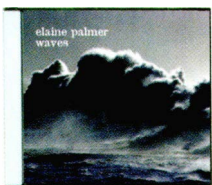


### MOZART

Die Zauberflöte (The Magic Flute) Dorothea Röschmann, Claudio Abbado (conductor) Arnold Schoenberg Choir, Mahler Chamber Orchestra DGG 00289 477 5789

**Music:** Surprisingly, this marks the first time Abbado has committed *The Magic Flute* to disc. He and the Mahler Chamber Orchestra bring verve and litheness to the work, and the soloists add a brilliance and passion often missing from this Mozart landmark. The recording is notable for its colour and range, transparency, naturalness and lightness of touch. ★★★★★

**Sound:** Recorded in Modena, the recording is every bit as fresh and lively as the performance, which makes this a standout among recent versions with modern sound. Voices are naturally spotlit, and it has the vitality and coherence of a real event. ★★★★★ AG



### ELAINE PALMER

Waves

Cosmos Recordings

**Music:** With a tough but tender voice – both sultry and intelligent – and some great acoustic songs of her own creation, Elaine Palmer has a fine original talent. Older listeners will find echoes of Rebecca Pidgeon, Melanie and even Joni Mitchell in some of these eleven tracks but Palmer's skill lies in effortlessly fusing such iconic sources into a total, and mostly innovative, whole. The tuneful, bittersweet *Terease*, the forceful *In Your Company* and the gentle *In My Dream* are perhaps the best numbers here but, honestly, they're all very strong. The perfect soundtrack for a memorable night in. ★★★★★

**Sound:** Well recorded – with rounded edges that are never flabby – by Julie McLaren at Madchester's Analogue Catalogue studio. ★★★★★ PS

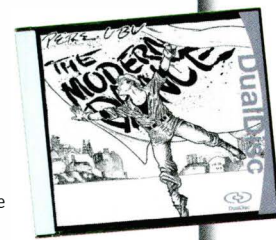
### PERE UBU

The Modern Dance

DualDisc: (one side CD stereo, one side DVD-Audio 5.1) Immergent

**Music:** Of all the weird shapes thrown in the wake of punk, one of the most enduringly odd was surely Cleveland's Pere Ubu. Led by portly bleater David Thomas, their angular, experimental blend of rock rhythms and *avant garde* sensibilities fitted well into the 'anything goes' climate of the late 1970s, bridging the gaps between Captain Beefheart, The Stooges, industrial noise and free jazz. Their 1978 debut album's opener, *Non-Alignment Pact* was probably about as traditionally 'rock' as they ever got, and they soon left conventional song structures and conventions behind, (basically on side two), but their influence spread wide, to Joy Division, Wire and the Comsat Angels in the UK and later US groups like Sonic Youth. ★★★★★

**Sound:** The original was recorded on a budget and wisely, the DVD-Audio version does nothing to hide its origins, the rough and ready sound adding to the atmosphere. The DVD also includes an interview with main man David Thomas. ★★★★★ DO



# The New Gold Standard



## *Gold Signature*

### The Power of a Thousand Small Impressions

The radiating surface of Monitor Audio's innovative RST<sup>®</sup>2 drivers, used exclusively by the new Gold Signature speakers, is patterned with hundreds of concentric dimples, meticulously fashioned to preserve cone geometry at all volume levels. This means you'll enjoy smoother, distortion-free sound however hard you play music and film.

With a choice of slender stand, floor, centre and surround speakers, expertly engineered in beautiful real wood and lacquer finishes, the new Gold Signature range will make a big impression all round.

For details of the new GS Series please visit:

[www.monitoraudio.co.uk](http://www.monitoraudio.co.uk)

mail: [info@monitoraudio.co.uk](mailto:info@monitoraudio.co.uk)

or call free on: 0800 0352032



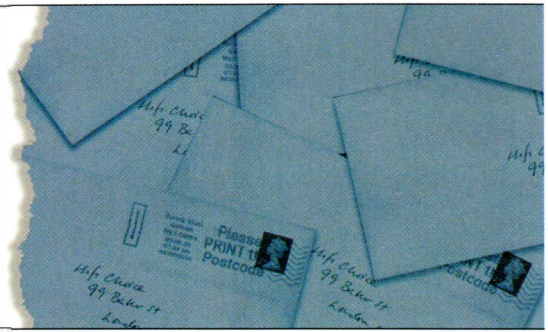
 MONITOR AUDIO

# ChoiceMail



The pick of this month's best letters

Write to: Hi-Fi Choice, Future Publishing Ltd, 2 Balcombe Street, London NW1 6NW. Or email your letters to dan.george@futurenet.co.uk



## QUANTITY VERSUS QUALITY

At present there appears to be a tension of opposites shaking the hi-fi industry. These opposites are 'quantity' – as personified by the hard disk recorders with their large gigabyte memories – and pure sound 'quality', typified by Super Audio CD players and highly detailed recordings. Why can't we have both?

So, my question is: does any company yet possess the technology to create one machine that can burn SACDs and save the results onto a hard disk drive?

**Conrad Nell** Netherlands

**HFC** The short answer is no. Home SACD recorders won't appear because of copyright restrictions. For the same reason, you can't extract the raw data from SACD and save it

to a hard disc. It is, however, possible to create DVDs on a PC or Mac and if you've a real hunger for home recording quality, this is probably the way to go.

## BURNING BRIDGES?

It's one thing to virtualise CDs, but it's hardly wise to then dispose of the originals as Alan Sircom's friend did, *Dispatches* (HFC 281). Hard drive storage is fragile, whereas CDs are robust and electrically and mechanically inert.

Someone with an IT background should know that the average life of a hard drive is a risible three to five years and any hard drive can expire without warning at pretty much any time. Should you therefore constantly back up your library onto another equally unpredictable hard drive? Or perhaps onto recordable discs,

## “Does any company create a machine that can burn SACDs and save them?”

thus defeating the purpose of disposing of the (sonically superior) originals?

**Roger Thomas** via email

**HFC** We would tend to agree with you, Roger, although Alan's pal apparently retains several hard drive back-ups of his departed discs, to guard against degeneration and loss. We're also assured that much of his music is 'less than timeless' and that he doesn't necessarily intend to keep it forever. Each to his own...

## NO SUPPORTS

Am I the only hi-fi enthusiast with a smallish listening room where speaker stands are not a practical option? Is there nothing that I can do to improve my listening experience when circumstances force me to place my speakers on shelves (fixed into alcoves – shock! horror!). I appreciate that with bookshelves, there is a limit to how far from room boundaries speakers can be placed. ▶



Above: Cambridge Audio Azur 640H hard disk

# Letter of the month

## SONY'S FOLLY?

I am perplexed by Sony's efforts to promote the DualDisc format. Why is Sony doing this, when a brilliantly reasonable solution to the competing format war is already here? The recent excellent special editions of Goldfrapp's *Supernature* and Depeche Mode's *Violator* (offering both SACD and DVD-Audio) have all the benefits of DualDisc and give better value via the choice of either format in one neat case!

For universal disc player owners who already own the original CDs, it's an

incentive to buy the title again and with the extra perceived value given by the discs, everyone is happy.

**Roy Li** via email

**HFC** Like you, we're sad at HFC that SACD has never had the push it really deserves. But, given the choice of a hi-res alternative to CD, or none at all, we would still give our backing to DualDisc. We still make every attempt to pick up SACD and DVD-Audio discs when we can.



## WIN CRYSTAL CABLE PICCOLO INTERCONNECTS!

The author of our letter of the month receives a one-metre pair of Crystal Cable Connect Piccolo interconnects worth £260, featuring a silver/gold conductor with Kapton insulation, plus a transparent Teflon jacket. So get writing! (150 words max please...)



Above: Sendor S9e loudspeakers

My Neat Critiques are about a foot from the back wall, standing on wide, solid-pine shelves. I would greatly appreciate recommendations about shelf materials, speaker supports, wall treatments or other tweaks, as well as suitable alternative speakers if necessary, to go with my Sugden A21a amp and Meridian 506/24 source. I mainly listen to classical music.

**Peter Pienkowski** Exeter

**HFC** The two main attributes of speaker stands are isolation and rigidity. You can improve the sound of bookshelf speakers by packing them in with books (sounds daft, but this will help to dampen any inherent

micro-movements caused by the speaker driver's pistonic action) and/or sticking them down with Blu-tack.

You could also try wall supports, which are becoming more popular thanks to the increasing popularity of home cinema. Steer clear of the really cheap ones and try the quality products available from Omnimount, AVF and others, which can do the job well.

**SMALL WORLD**

Hi-Fi Choice is a good magazine. However, your obvious tendency towards British products – cool as it may seem – makes your magazine useless to the reader who wants to choose his next components wisely. Why, one look at your *Buyer's Bible* is enough to understand that it's biased and hence unhelpful. For example, in your May issue, 18 out of 22 turntables you list are from English manufacturers.

With today's global economy being what it is and the fact that great audio products are made everywhere, not only your readers outside England, but even your local ones, do not get the coherent, unbiased advice they expect.

**Eyal** Israel

**HFC** We hear you Eyal, although much of the kit purportedly made by UK manufacturers is in fact manufactured in China these days. We have to reflect the main market for the magazine, which of course is the UK and while it's certainly possible to obtain products from just about anywhere in the world, we naturally focus on products that are available through UK dealers. After all, we advise our readers to use their own ears. Things are different in the UK high-end market, though; only 12 of the 57 products tested in *The Collection 2006* (HFC 282) were from the UK.

**“How far up the cost ladder will I need to go to realise an improvement?”**

**ALMOST THE REAL THING**

Having had my present equipment (Audio Precision Eikos CD player, John Shearman Phase 6 preamp with two Phase 3 Reference power amps, Living Voice Auditorium speakers) for some seven or eight years, I am in a position where I can afford an upgrade.

The problem I have is that £1,000-£1,500 amps and CD players have become so good, according to your editorials that is, how far up the cost ladder will I need to go to realise a significant improvement? I presently find the upper register of female voices quiet strident and prominent. More air, space and delicacy would be desirable, with a more natural sound. Your thoughts would be appreciated.

**John Langley** via e-mail

**HFC** Ah, the old system fatigue. Your system is in a price range where money won't necessarily buy you an equivalent improvement in sound. In fact, you may find that even substituting some elements of your system for similarly priced components may produce the desired effect, without a huge spend.

The sound from your system should be very clean and precise – but without making female vocals hard to enjoy. If you're really keen to make radical change, start with the speakers; exchanging the highly efficient Auditoria for something that offers a fuller and more rounded output, such as Sendor's delightful S9e (HFC 256)

**Onlineforum**

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



It's interesting that people accept that a high quality record player can make poorly recorded records more listenable, yet find it difficult to fathom that CD players are guilty of making a CD sound like a poor recording.

**Sastusbulbas**

...It's a good point. I think some of the problem

stems from magazines that test using 'audiophile' recordings – plinky-plonk jazz and other unlistenable nonsense – and then hold up 'detailed' and 'revealing' as the be-all and end-all of CD reproduction. One of the bigger titles is particularly guilty of this.

**Meninblack**

How long would you expect on average a CD player to last and what will most often fail?

**Kit cat man**

...Old ones, which were made better, might last longer. Newer ones, maybe about 15 years average. It's the laser mechanism that fails first.

**Emperor**

Modern manufacturers advertise their advances in electronics, materials and construction techniques, but have speakers really changed that much? After all, it's just a box with a magnet and simple cone in it...

**Rockmonkey**

...Progress has been made in technology for both

driver materials and cabinet design. This makes most modern speakers more accurate than their older counterparts (although paradoxically, this also often makes them less enjoyable to listen to, but I guess that's probably a matter for an entirely different topic).

**Beobloke**

# Announcing RoomPerfect™

our most exciting technology yet!



## **TDA2200 True Digital Amplifier**

A truly versatile system offering digital & optional analog inputs, DSP crossovers, parametric EQ, analogue outputs and available with RoomPerfect.



## **CD1 Versatile CD Player/Transport**

Superb sound quality and value, an ideal match for any system seeking a high-performance source. Stunning reviews.



## **Millennium Mk4 Reference Digital Amplifier**

The world's first and best fully digital amplifier is even better with the release of the Mk4.



## **SDA2175 Semi-Digital Power Amplifier**

Awarded 'Power Amplifier of the Year' by Hi-Fi World, this fully balanced 200W unit offers superb sound quality and value.



## **SDAI2175 Semi-Digital Integrated Amplifier**

Fully balanced 200W amplifier with 6 RCA and 1 XLR inputs. Amazing value for money.

## **What is RoomPerfect™?**

RoomPerfect™ is the eagerly awaited room correction system, developed and patented by Lyngdorf Audio.

RoomPerfect™ conceptually and effectively removes the negative influence of your room from the music, allowing the system to sing as designed.

The performance of the RoomPerfect™ system is outstanding, obtaining a new level of performance in your listening room.

The system is easy to set up and requires no room acoustic knowledge or even a computer.

## **Why use RoomPerfect™?**

The quality of your CD player, amplifier and speakers might be exemplary, but the system may still not be cutting it at home. It's often the case that even highly acclaimed speakers sound great in some rooms, and disappoint in others.

Your speakers are not at fault.

The performance of a speaker is known to be highly dependent on the acoustics of the room and relative positions of the speaker and listener.

## **Innovative technology**

The unique RoomPerfect™ system measures both the listening position(s) and a number of other room positions, mapping a 3-dimensional sound-field of your room.

The RoomPerfect™ system is then capable of combining the listening position(s) information with the sound-field information in a wholly new and innovative way, ensuring that you achieve superior sound, irrespective of your room, speaker and listening position.

## **Simple to use**

The RoomPerfect™ system is very advanced, but easy to use. A computer is not required. The calibration procedure will guide you through setting up the supplied microphone in a number of positions, each measurement taking a few seconds. The system evaluates and displays the quality of the sound-field, to help you optimise the results.

## **And the results...?**

Sweet, dynamic, detailed, coherent and musical performances free from booming, smearing, congestion, shouting and other room-induced distortion.

## **First product available!**

The first implementation of the RoomPerfect™ system is an integrated module for our True Digital Amplifier (TDA2200), offering a great leap in performance for a modest outlay.



The TDA2200 becomes a single high performance unit replacing a DAC, room correction system and pre/power amplifier – a truly scalable, versatile product.

Lyngdorf Audio UK distribute the ground-breaking Lyngdorf digital products, together with ExactPower conditioners, Stillpoints and AudioDeskSysteme CD enhancers.

**LYNGDORF**

tel: 0870 9 100 100  
www.lyngdorfaudio.co.uk



NAIM CDX2 CD PLAYER | NAC202 PREAMPLIFIER | NAIM NAP200 POWER AMPLIFIER  
NAIM HI-CAP POWER SUPPLY | NAIM n-SAT/n-SUB SPEAKER SYSTEM | £9,145

# Naim-plan

*There is an easy route to the high-end and Naim knows what it is*

**H**i-fi, eh? What a can of worms. Don't you wish you could say 'pah!' – to hell with it all. Just give me some boxes that plug together and play music. But, it goes against hi-fi's enshrined mix 'n' match principles. What about the endless hours of separates auditioning, head scratching and crises of confidence? What about the cabling conundrums, the snake oil, the infinite finessing, the angst? Isn't it all just a part of hi-fi's rich tapestry?

Maybe. And maybe we should all buy a Naim system and have done with it. Now, I know what you're thinking. Why Naim? There are any number of reputable manufacturers out there, many British, that will sell you an entire, grown-up, aesthetically-matched, zero-hassle stereo system. We can think of a few – Meridian, Linn, AVI – whose products might just hit the sweet spot straight out of the box and kill the yearning for 'that little bit more' stone dead.

Then again, ingrained audiophile instincts die hard; deny them altogether and the buzz you get from owning a real hi-fi rig can perish too. And it's here, as a one-stop brand, that Naim makes the difference. What Naim offers, from an affordable starting point, is a perfectly choreographed, cost-effective route through evenly spaced performance gateways. No blind alleys, no tantalizing diversions, no exotic cables (well, unless you insist) and no snake excretions.

It's one of the reasons (that stark, dark industrial design being the other) that Naim Audio – while relatively small and still operating out of Salisbury, Wiltshire where it was founded by the late Julian Vereker – is arguably the most famous hi-fi brand in the world. And probably the coolest. Whereas other producers of audio hardware have customers, some inevitably casual, Naim has acolytes.

They've bought the kit but, more importantly, they've bought into the belief system.

Boxes you plug together that play music – that's the essence of the thing. With the emphasis firmly on the music. It sounds obvious – the kind of philosophy you'd expect a hi-fi manufacturer to have – but, for Naim, communication of the music takes on an almost religious dimension. It's born out of a respect for musicians and a disdain (even mistrust) of the conventional tenets of hi-fi. For example; it's a music system's ability to nail the quality of a performance that is the true measure of its worth. Real music is made by real people; the best hi-fi should have that 'human' quality, too. For this reason, very little hi-fi does 'excitement' and 'presence' quite as well as a Naim system. And this one's a corker.

## RUN SILENT, RUN DEEP

First, there's no need to rub your eyes: that is a subwoofer you can see. And yes, a pair of bijou satellite speakers barely taller than the hi-fi. You were expecting something a little more audiophilic, a little less audio visual. Big, bold, deep-chested cabinets in the spirit of the company's famous DBL and SBL behemoths, perhaps. Well, here's the thing. Generally, I don't much care for Naim's current line-up of loudspeakers. Yes, it's personal but, in my experience, on the end of Naim electronics, they can sound in-ye-face, dry and overly taut. And while Naim might argue that these are largely 'hi-fi' issues and have little to do with communicating the musical message (true enough), it's equally true that Naim systems, in the past at least, often sound their best with music that generates much of its impact from pace, rhythm and timing. Hence a question

**“Whereas other producers of audio hardware have customers, Naim has acolytes. They've bought into the belief system.”**

### Naim CDX2 CD player £2,925

The upgradable CDX2 runs the same decode and control software as the flagship CDS3.

### Naim NAC202 preamplifier £1,500

An extremely fine preamp, even by Naim's exacting standards. With plenty of 552 DNA.

### Naim NAP200 power amplifier £1,475

A power amp very much in the mould of the legendary the NAP250. Claimed power is 70 watts, but sounds more.

### Naim HI-CAP power supply £985

Latest HI-CAP has anti-vibration and anti-magnetic chassis, but remains the power supply of choice for many.

### Naim n-SAT/ n-SUB speaker system £2,260

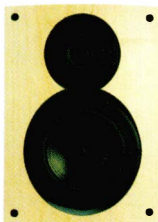
Quite simply, one of the best sub/sat combos around, and probably the very best for music.



◀ we've posed before here at *Beautiful Systems*. How do you preserve all that excitement, drive, verve and vitality and at the same time, stay a few inches back from the ragged edge?

Until a year or so ago, you looked for your speakers elsewhere. For our last Naim *Beautiful System*, we chose Wilson Benesch Arcs (great). Scottish speaker maker ART is reported to be doing brisk business to Naim owners, too. But Naim's PR man assured me that, with Naim's own n-SAT/n-SUB system, the yearning to search outside the Naim box would stop. I didn't believe that it would. But it did. More on that in a moment.

First, the front end. This £6,885 CD, pre/power, power supply combo checks in a couple of rungs above the entry-level Naim kit, but still leaves plenty of room for future Naim-style upgrading. The £2,925 CDX2 is the current update of the original CDX. Both the swing-drawer transport with its disc-stabilising magnetic puck and the chipset have been upgraded, the latter to include an HDCD decoder/digital filter. Eight-times oversampled data is sent to two (one per channel) Burr-Brown PCM mono D/A converters. A separate, fully optimised master clock controls all main digital functions, while the clock configuration and layout are engineered to minimise jitter.



A seven-pole analogue filter follows the DAC to remove spurious noise. In addition to a clearer back-panel layout, RC5 and optional RS232 ports have been fitted, so that the CDX2 can be integrated into home installations.

All the main control functions are handled by a microprocessor running Naim-written software. Every aspect of the SAA 7376 servo controller/decoder functionality is under software control: Naim-written codes maximise performance in all areas. For example, the transport parameters are optimised for each disc as it is loaded. Confidence inspiring. As is the build quality. Archeologists will be digging up the black metal CDX2s in thousands of years time, delighted to discover they can still slide open the disc drawers to extract the priceless Antonio Forcioni CDs.

#### FIRST PRINCIPLES

The £1,500 NAC202 preamp combines Naim's first-principles approach – exceptional overload capabilities over the whole audio bandwidth, perfect stability under all working conditions, no switched filters or tone controls – with trickle-down features from its flagship NAC552, as well as the pragmatic option of using two sets of phono sockets and interconnect cables of your own choosing alongside the usual (and in Naim's view, superior) DINs, making

six inputs in all. Low-resonance, star-earthed circuit boards, anti-vibration chassis feet and carefully matched precision rotary potentiometers with precious metal wipers to ensure stability also reflect Naim's high-end-down philosophy. And the NAC202's 'silent' chip – that controls all aspects of the preamp – 'sleeps' during listening to maximise sound quality. Another tactic for extracting more music is keeping the power supply outboard. In a basic configuration, the NAC202 would take its power from the matching £1,475 NAP200 amplifier, but Naim promises audible benefits (improved timing, dynamic range, clarity and order) if your use one of its separate ultra low-noise power supplies to feed the analogue audio and digital control circuits – in this system, that duty falls to the mid-priced HI-CAP.

Naim makes one of hi-fi's great statements about its power amplifiers; they can easily deal with any impedance from zero ohms to infinity without damage or signs of instability. In the light of which, the NAP200's fairly modest-sounding 70 watts assumes rather more authority. Like Naim's £10k flagship NAP500 power amp, the NAP200 uses a new circuit design with improved earthing arrangements built on a very high quality, anti-resonance main audio





## “It is the kit’s abundant musical skills that hold you in their thrall, though. None more than its way with tempo and rhythm. It’s a Naim system, what did you expect?”

circuit board, while separate windings provide dedicated left and right channel rectified supplies with two smoothing capacitors per channel.

And so to the speakers, or rather the speaker package. As well as forming part of Naim’s 5.1 channel n-System, the E735 n-SAT speakers are two-channel mini monitors in their own right, featuring a 130mm pulp cone main driver with low-loss suspension and phase plug, plus a 19mm annular radiator tweeter, mounted in a separate sealed enclosure. The curved-back, five-litre cabinets boast mass-damping and heavy duty internal wiring. Naim recommends its own E205 n-STAND which has a three-point, minimal contact speaker interface and includes cable management for a tidy installation.

The £1,525 n-SUB is based around a 250mm long-throw driver and a 350 watt integral amplifier (housed in a separate compartment) and has three inputs to allow easily selectable stereo or multichannel LFE options. But the flexible nature of the beast doesn't stop there. Its low pass filter has 22 positions,

and six set-up configurations for music, and movies can be preset into memory for recall from the remote handset.

### DESCRIBE AND PREJUDICE

The beauty of systems that get it right is that they're easy to describe. And despite the perhaps inevitable prejudice that sub/sat systems don't sit comfortably in purist stereo kit, this one gets its right straight out of the box – even the sub's default setting is spot on for music. The first thing that hits you is intelligibility. The system is easy to listen to because it's so easy to understand. It still puts the music ahead of traditional hi-fi considerations such as imaging and neutrality, but it sounds as if the real thing is in the room: palpable, tactile, full of texture, colour and life.

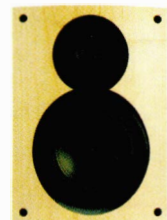
Judged by hi-fi criteria, the system clearly has formidable resolving power and precision and a beautifully open, expressive and lucid midband. And there's a soundstage that extends well behind and to the sides of the speakers; a little sat/sub magic. The sub's contribution is seriously deep and

powerful. Its seductively sumptuous quality is justification enough for its inclusion, but it's also agile and tuneful; musical without a doubt. The clean, extended upper frequencies are naturally textured and free from grain, gloriously detailed yet unforced.

It is the kit's abundant musical skills that hold you in their thrall, though. None more than its way with tempo and rhythm. It's a Naim system, what did you expect? The deftest shifts in timing – a dragged beat, a subtle change of emphasis – are faithfully captured. There's speed without the edgy transients Naim products were once criticised for. Rock thunders out with breathtaking energy and drive, sounding improbably massive given the diminutive size of the speakers. But small acoustic ensembles are reproduced with just as much enjoyable honesty tingle factor.

So here it is, the Naim system that does it all. Speed and timing, bass and brio, scale and dynamics (without the large boxes). And with all types of music. Honestly, it doesn't get any better. **HFC**

*David Vivian*



# the audio room

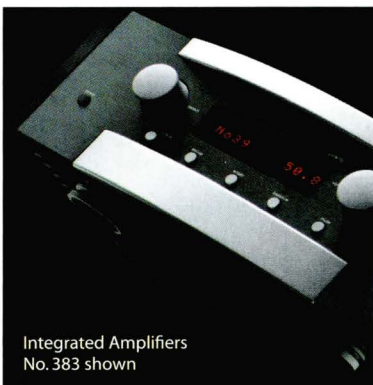
high-end specialist

Interest Free Credit / Credit Terms / Part Exchange  
Dedicated 2-channel & Home Cinema Suites / Home Demonstrations

2 George Street - Hedon - Hull - East Yorkshire - HU12 8JH.  
Tel - 01482 891375 Web - [www.theaudiroom.co.uk](http://www.theaudiroom.co.uk)



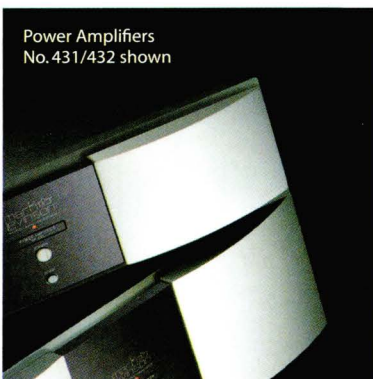
Disc Players  
No. 51 shown  
(available soon)



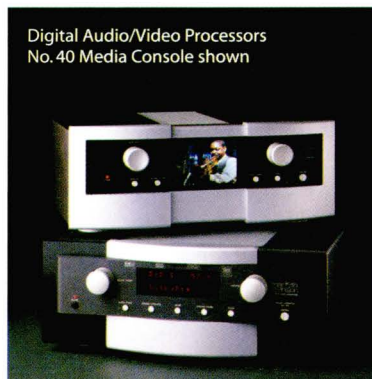
Integrated Amplifiers  
No. 383 shown



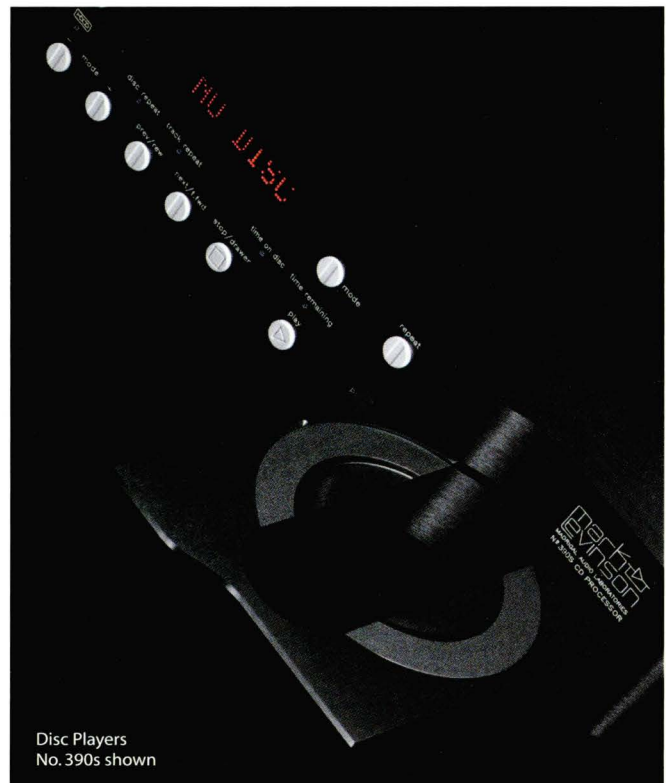
Pre-amplifiers  
No. 32 shown



Power Amplifiers  
No. 431/432 shown



Digital Audio/Video Processors  
No. 40 Media Console shown



Disc Players  
No. 390s shown

For expert advice on **Mark Levinson**  
call 'the audio room': 01482 891375

**Digital Audio/Video Processors**  
No. 40 Media Console

**Disc Players**  
No. 390s  
No. 51 (available soon)

**Integrated Amplifiers**  
No. 383

**Pre-amplifiers**  
No. 320s  
No. 326s  
No. 32 Reference (2-box)

**Power Amplifiers**  
No. 431 Two-channel  
No. 432 Two-channel  
No. 433 Three-channel  
No. 434 Monoblock pair  
No. 436 Monoblock pair  
No. 33h Monoblock pair

**mark levinson**  
MADRIGAL AUDIO LABORATORIES

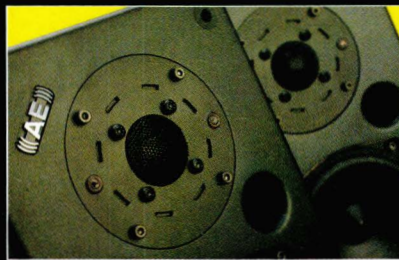
# REVIEWS

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

- 36** Linn Majik CD player, preamp and power amp
- 40** Canton Vento Reference 5 DC loudspeaker
- 44** Creek EVO CD player and integrated amplifier
- 46** Acoustic Energy AE-1 Classic loudspeaker
- 48** Naim NA555ps power supply
- 51** Marantz PM7001 KI integrated amplifier
- 52** Sonus Faber Grand Piano Domus loudspeaker
- 55** Harman Kardon HD 970 and HK 970 Limited Edition CD player and integrated amplifier
- 56** Revel Concerta F12 loudspeaker



- 59** NAD C325BEE integrated amplifier
- 60** Custom Design SQ404 loudspeaker stand
- 60** Clearer Audio Copper-line Alpha loudspeaker cable
- 61** Ixos Ixotica IX1 interconnect cable
- 61** Oehlbach Air Absorb isolating feet
- 63** Ixos Ixotica IX2 interconnect cable
- 63** Katli Audio stylus pressure gauge

## ULTIMATE GROUP TEST

### RADIO TUNERS £200-£1,000

- 68** Cyrus FM-X
- 69** Denon TU-1800DAB
- 71** Marantz ST7001
- 73** Pure DRX-702ES
- 75** Rega Radio 3
- 77** T+A T1210R



## OUR RATINGS EXPLAINED

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

...nor an... we liked... point here is... to the job of... recommend you...  
 ...ate units with Marantz's £800 player, the 17 MKII M, which has excellent build and a very good impression in HFC 243. At same price there's also the Cyrus 7, a ring all-rounder in a compact case.  
 ...ter trying the Heart with the standard... s we switched over to the Siemens grade, a comparison somewhat muddled by the fact that it was a cold for hot swap – the... had been on for several days with the...

Our overall conclusion

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

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

**VERDICT**

**SOUND >> 83%**

**FEATURES >> 85%**

**BUILD >> 85%**

**VALUE >> 85%**

**CONCLUSION**

**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...**



# Black Majik boxes

*Who knows the secret of Linn's new high performance three-box stereo music system?*

**PRODUCT** Linn Majik CD, Majik Kontrol and Majik 2100

**TYPE** CD, preamp and power amp

**PRICE** (CD) £1,950; (Kontrol) £1,950; (2100) £1,950

**KEY FEATURES** Size (WxHxD): 38.1x8x35.5cm (each)

• (Majik CD) Weight: 4.9kg • Compatible with CD, CD-R/RW, DTS Audio, MP3, HDCD disc formats

• (Majik Kontrol) Weight: 4.9kg • Six line inputs

• Two line inputs/outputs • Includes optional MM/MC phono stage • (Majik 2100) Weight: 5.2kg

• Power output: 56 watts per channel (eight ohms)

• Aktiv upgrade options

**CONTACT** ☎ 0141 307 7777 🌐 www.linn.co.uk

**W**e don't think Linn ever lost the taste for music that was embodied in Sondek LP12 turntable. But the last few years have seen much of the company's energies and resources devoted to the development of multichannel and multiroom capabilities, and this new Majik system marks a public 'return' to Linn's two-channel roots.

The three components involved in this system are all new, though all have engineering links to previous Linn components. The Majik CD

player is a development of the Ikemi, with lessons learned with the top-of-the-line Sondek CD12. The Majik Kontrol preamp has its roots in the longstanding Kairn, but has also benefited from Klimax architecture. And the Majik 2100 power amp is based around Linn's patented Chakra output stage.

All three components are compact and lightweight. The reason is that all three use Linn's proprietary switch-mode power supply, which operates at very high frequencies above

## LAB REPORT

## CD PLAYER

The CD player is almost beyond reasonable reproach on technical grounds. Distortion, noise and jitter are all good enough to make measuring them with certainty a difficult task, which means you are guaranteed a clean 90-odd dB dynamic range. It's 2.0 volt output is absolutely fine, too. The only measurement we might quibble over is of frequency response, which as in most CD players is flat to 20kHz, but doesn't roll off fast enough. This allows some aliasing near half the sampling frequency. It's a small point, but there is some evidence that faster-attenuating filters can sound better. Otherwise, the Majik CD's measured performance is exemplary.

## AMPLIFIERS

Linn's Majik Control amplifier is pretty much exemplary, too. It has vanishing distortion (better than 0.001% under most conditions), low output impedance, low noise via both line and phono inputs, and flat response across the audio band. The power amplifier delivers 50 watts into eight ohms and 95 watts into four, one or both channels driven. However, it has quite high distortion by present-day standards. This is around the 0.02% mark in the midband and nearer 0.1% at high frequencies, with a residual and associated spectrum reminiscent of crossover distortion. The level of this distortion doesn't depend much on loading, though higher harmonics are more visible under heavily-loaded conditions. Noise is good and frequency response gently tailored to -1 dB at 23kHz. **HFC**

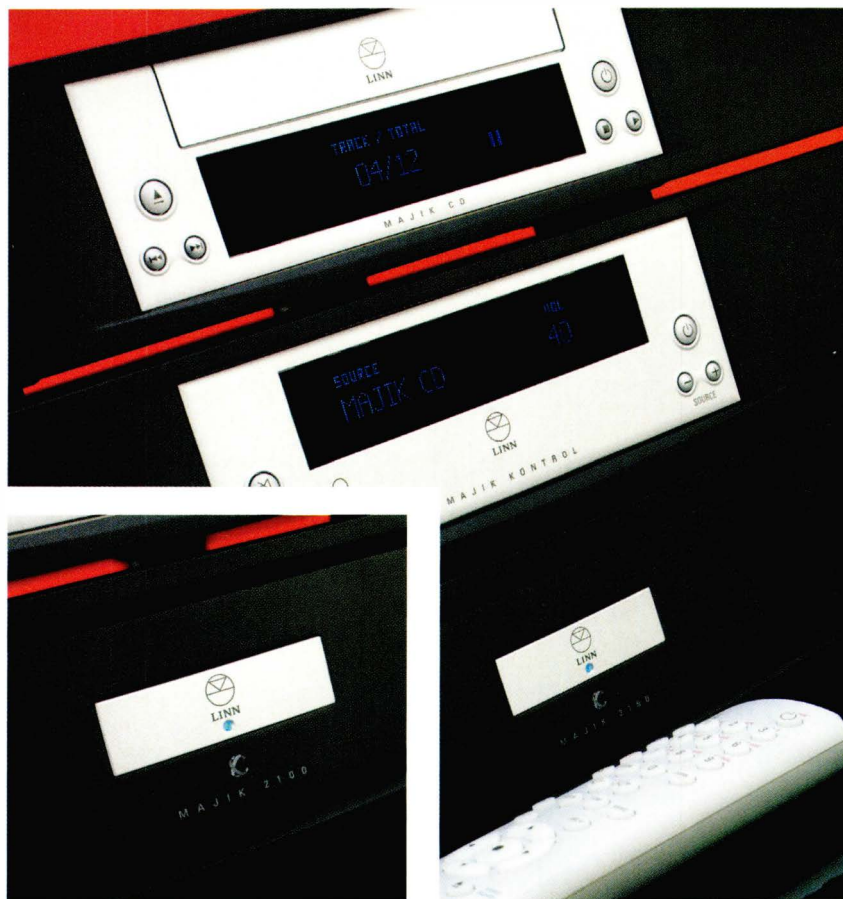
Richard Black

the audio band and therefore needs only a small and light mains transformer.

All three share similar casework and styling; with nicely bowed convex front panels with softened edges and corners, some 5cm narrower than 'standard' 43cm components. Our samples had dark grey matt casework, enlivened by a silver and slightly recessed central section. Fashionable all-silver versions are also available.

Both the Majik CD and Majik Kontrol pre have decent size display panels and just six buttons; additionally the CD player has a front-loading drawer, while the preamp has a 3.5mm socket. The power amp looks rather different, with a grey central section with silver badge flanked by cooling vents that are also found in the top panel. All three have steel-wrap casework, perhaps parsimonious at the price.

The Majik CD player is primarily intended for regular stereo CD replay, but it also supports a number of other two-channel optical disc formats, including CD-R, RW, DTS Audio, MP3 and HDCD. Other features are also very comprehensive. Socketry includes two pairs of analogue output phono pairs, optical and electrical digital outputs, plus Linn KNEKT and RS232 control sockets. All the usual disc



**“Most users will settle for the default options, but the sheer flexibility will make it very handy in multiroom settings.”**

navigation functions are available, though the scan only operates at twice normal speed. A wide variety of display and user-configuration options are also available.

Although both may be operated via their front panel buttons, in reality, the supplied remote handset will be doing the work. Although usefully slim for one-handed operation, it's not a particularly inviting device, with more than fifty tiny buttons. Yes, it does support a range of products and it does all the necessary functions with a bit of practice; but, it's not ergonomically friendly.

The Majik Kontrol preamp is the most complex component, partly because it includes the necessary socketry for integrating with Linn's multi-room KNEKT system, over and beyond its standalone stereo capabilities. As a stereo preamp, it has eight phono pairs, clustered rather too close together for some of the bulkier plugs around these days. Two pairs cover line and tape outputs, while the six input pairs provide for plenty of sources. One of these inputs allows re-positioning of an internal 'piggy-back' board for three alternative configurations – matching high output (MM), low output (MC) phono cartridges, or an additional line level source.

Microprocessor control – via an elaborate series of menus and sub-menus – allows a huge number of user-adjustable features. Some are more useful than others, but all of them taken together make for a rather daunting prospect. To explain all the options would use up all the space available for this review. The short version includes a range of display options covering brightness, content, 'time out' and 'sleep'; inputs can be assigned names, selected directly and adjusted for relative volume; the rate of volume change, muting, maximum, relative headphone and start-up levels. Then there are numerous others, rather more obscure – indeed often very obscure – options, but most users will settle for the default settings here, but the sheer flexibility over the operation of the preamp will make it very handy in multiroom settings.

Last comes the power amp. The Chakra output configuration consists of a central IC module surrounded by an array of bi-polar 'boosters' that come into operation as power requirements are increased. Power output is always the headline-maker for power amps, and here it's a relatively modest but entirely adequate 2x 56 watts into eight ohms. In addition to the two phono inputs and **▶**

## Q&A

Ian Wilson is Linn's principal design engineer in the company's electronics division. He was particularly closely involved with the *Kontrol* preamp and came up with the idea for its clever multi-purpose phono stage.



**HFC** Linn is a strong proponent of switch-mode power supplies. Is this merely because their small transformers are less costly?

**IW** Actually they're rather more costly to implement, because of all the extra high quality silicon (electronics) – the high-speed diodes and low impedance FETs we have to use. The reason we use them is that they make the products immune from variations in mains power. Our power amps will give a consistent specified power output across a mains voltage range from 90V to 264V, so they can cope with problem mains conditions anywhere in the world – even with the diesel generators used in yachts.

**What particular factors do you need to employ to use switch-mode supplies?**

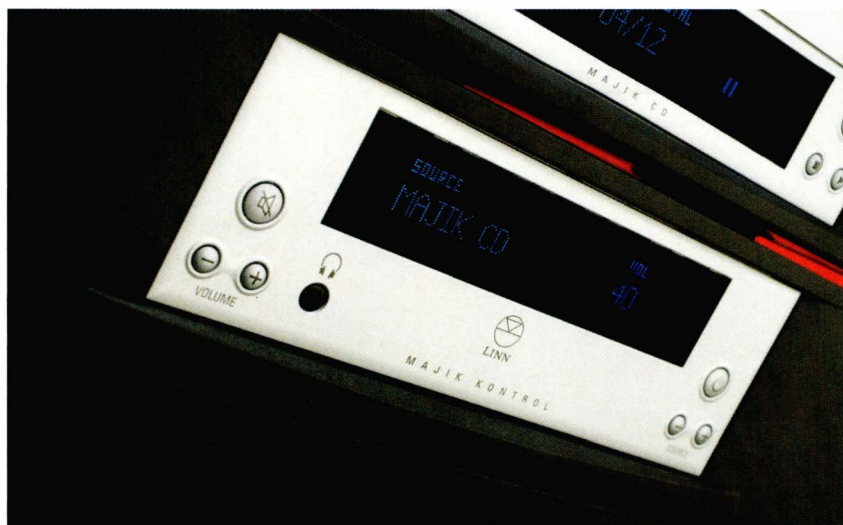
The fast (75kHz) switching waveforms have to be completely isolated from the devices themselves, from the signal path and from the mains network. And, if you're good at stopping stuff getting into the mains, you're also good at avoiding it coming in and causing problems. You'll have noticed how many mains conditioning devices have appeared in recent years; these are completely unnecessary with our switch-mode supplies.

**What influence have your top-of-the-line Klimax models had on the Majik components?**

It's long been our policy to 'work down' the technology developed for our top models to those lower down the range. The architecture of the Majik Kontrol, for which I was responsible, is based heavily on that used in the Klimax Kontrol. And the lessons in clocking and data manipulation learned with the Sondeck CD12 are found in the Majik CD.

**What is the best upgrade path for owners of the new Majik system?**

We've always recommended focusing first on the source components, so upgrading the Majik CD to a Unidisk 1.1 would make a lot of sense. It's not only a better CD player, it also handles SACD, which is significantly more transparent to the music than CD. Then you could go Aktiv, either with extra Majik 2100 power amps, or go for a multichannel Chakra model instead.



two pairs of socket/binder speaker output terminals, a pair of audio output terminals is also provided to drive subwoofers. An interesting feature is the ability to retrofit active filter modules, so the amplifier can operate alongside additional power amps as part of a Linn Aktiv system. Auto-sensing is also fitted – the amplifier reverting to stand-by if no signal is received for twenty minutes.

### SOUND QUALITY

Wiring up the system took very little time and involved no aggravation, though the 'default' condition for the display brightness differs

**“One thing stands out: the overall character of the components of this system remains impressively consistent throughout.”**

between the CD player and the preamp. The former comes out the box set to full brightness, the latter to 'Auto'.

With everything up and running, using Linn's mains cables and interconnects and placing each component on its own separate glass shelf, the power amp was connected to a pair of massive B&W 800Ds, via my usual Vertex AQ Moncayo speaker cable. The speakers are

clearly rather over-specified and overpriced for the electronics here, but their wide bandwidth and prodigious dynamic range are very useful in assessing the quality of the driving system.

Now, it was time to settle down and enjoy the music – and enjoyment is very much the word here. An afternoon was spent spinning a variety of different discs, some familiar, others much less so. Live rock recordings, including the Grateful Dead in a stadium concert and Hot Tuna in a clubland setting were equally well handled. Coming a little more up-to-date, the guitar duo Rodrigo y Gabriele put in a captivatingly percussive performance.

The Majik system has a lightness of touch, because the bass registers sound uncommonly clean and free from any resonance or overhang. Indeed, first impressions were that it sounded a little bass-light, but that thought was quickly quashed when the first track with serious bass content came along and the Majik responded with considerable enthusiasm and power, and not a little poise.

The overall character is just slightly cool and if the weight is ample, warmth seems a little shy, and there's a slight tendency to emphasise the upper registers of the voice band. The sound is a little upfront and the presence zone notably well presented, projecting plenty of important detail and information – though the top end as a whole might have been a little sweeter and more delicate. Playing some vintage classical material, recorded originally with simple mike techniques, highlighted some limitations in stereo depth and focus, with some loss of coherence and spaciousness in the concert hall acoustic. And the system as a whole seemed to lose a little of its incisiveness and



authority when asked to play at very quiet late-into-the-night levels,

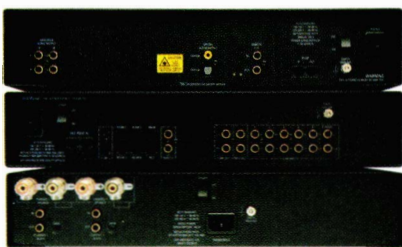
Of the three components here, the Majik CD player is the stand-out performer, delivering its music with fine pace and urgency and decent dynamic drive and enthusiasm. While it doesn't entirely transcend the innate artificiality of the medium, nor deliver the quietest backgrounds, it does communicate the musical messages with fine clarity and aplomb.

Although most of the reviewing was done using the system as supplied, along with other line-level sources, the vinyl options were also explored and found to be well up to scratch. Using a Linn Sondek LP12 with Ekos tonearm, a Rega Exact moving magnet type performed admirably enough within the limitations of this type of cartridge. The internal sub-board was realigned and a Linn Akiva fitted to check compatibility and performance with a low output moving-coil device. This amply showed why demand for vinyl remains healthy.

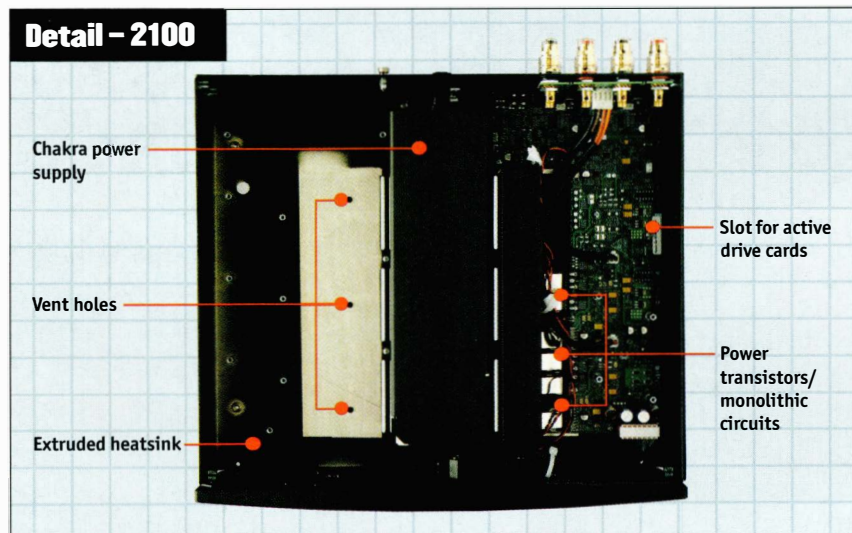
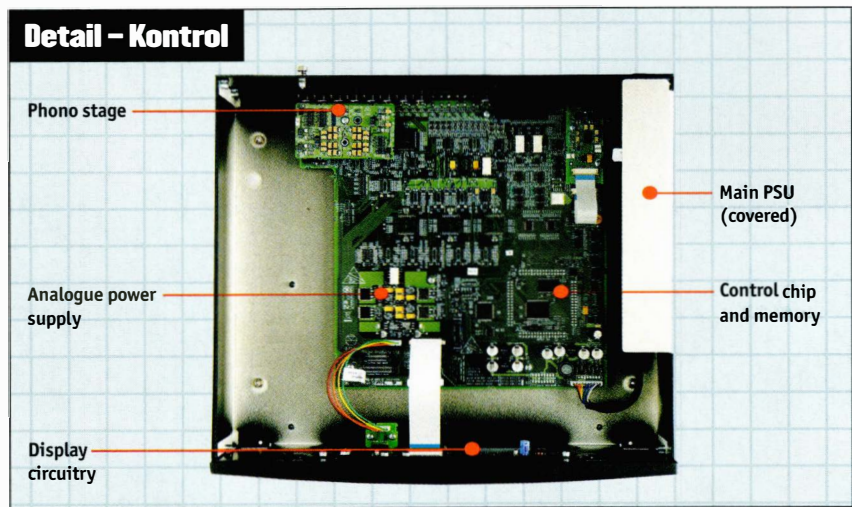
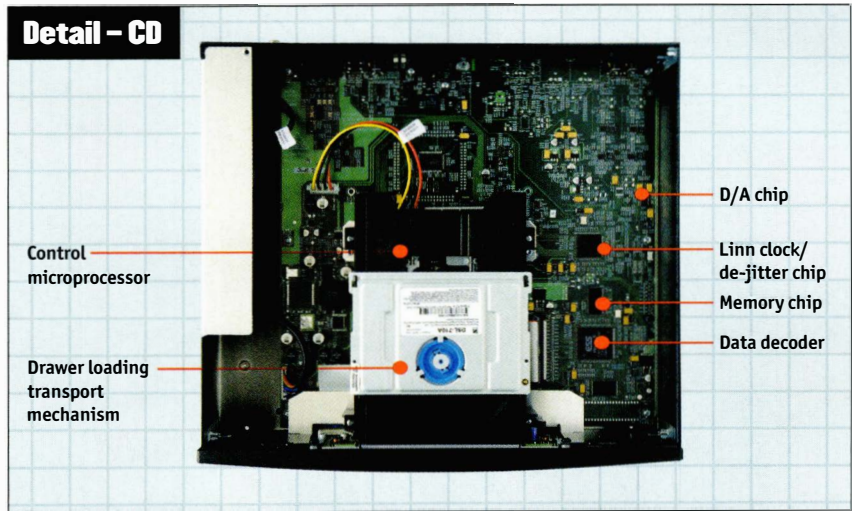
Direct comparison of LP and CD can never be entirely valid, because of the very different mastering processes involved, but sometimes it's irresistible. We compared both versions of Christine Collister's *Love* album, which clearly demonstrated the extra coherence, warmth and sheer humanity of the vinyl version, using an admittedly significantly more costly record player. The Kontrol's vinyl stage is clearly a facility that's worth taking seriously.

One thing that particularly stands out, is that the overall character of the components of this system remains impressively consistent throughout. It has a bright, light and notably open balance, with a very dry, clean bass end that's unusually free from any thickening. The result might be a little cool for some tastes perhaps, but detail is uncommonly clear and well projected. Styling is particularly neat and compact, though the ergonomics could certainly benefit from some simplification – perhaps the inevitable consequence of its very comprehensive roster of features. **HFC**

*Paul Messenger*



VERDICT – MAJIK CD	
<b>SOUND</b> >> 87%	<b>CONCLUSION</b> This very flexible CD player communicates music with skill and aplomb, and usefully delivers its sound with fine pace and enthusiasm.
<b>FEATURES</b> >> 85%	
<b>BUILD</b> >> 82%	
<b>VALUE</b> >> 82%	
<b>HI-FI CHOICE</b> >> <b>86%</b>	



VERDICT – MAJIK KONTROL	
<b>SOUND</b> >> 77%	<b>CONCLUSION</b> Enormously flexible preamp to suit individual preferences. The sound is dry and well timed but could be sweeter and more transparent.
<b>FEATURES</b> >> 90%	
<b>BUILD</b> >> 82%	
<b>VALUE</b> >> 75%	
<b>HI-FI CHOICE</b> >> <b>77%</b>	

VERDICT – MAJIK 2100	
<b>SOUND</b> >> 83%	<b>CONCLUSION</b> This lightweight unit has the flexibility to accommodate active filters. Bass delivery is clean and dry, though the top end might have been sweeter.
<b>FEATURES</b> >> 80%	
<b>BUILD</b> >> 82%	
<b>VALUE</b> >> 80%	
<b>HI-FI CHOICE</b> >> <b>82%</b>	



# Silver surfing

*This luxury variation on the Vento 809 theme sports numerous engineering and style enhancements*

**PRODUCT** Canton Vento Reference 5DC

**TYPE** Floorstanding loudspeaker

**PRICE** £3,500 per pair

**KEY FEATURES** Size (WxHxD): 25x112x35cm  
● Weight: 30kg ● 25mm aluminium/manganese dome tweeter (with short horn loading) ● 180mm midrange driver with 115mm aluminium dish diaphragm ● Twin 200mm bass units with 130mm aluminium dish diaphragms ● Sensitivity/Impedance: 88.5dB/4-8 ohms

**CONTACT** ☎ 02392 501888 # www.canton.de

In *HFC 267* we reviewed a loudspeaker called the Vento 809 DC, from Germany's leading speaker brand Canton. The £1,800 model did very well, earning itself a Best Buy primarily because it delivered a lively and dynamic sound alongside an excellent overall balance in our listening room. The discovery that Canton had a more luxurious, more costly and higher performance model called the

Vento Reference 5 DC, based on very similar driver configuration and dimensions, made this an obvious candidate for a one-off review.

Canton makes two such Reference Ventos, this £3,500 per pair Reference 5 DC based closely on the 809, and also a significantly larger and more costly £10,000 Vento Reference 1 DC, featuring two 300mm bass drivers, rather than the 2x200mm arrangement used here. It may well be that the larger model is better still, but past experience has shown that this is not always the case.

There's a widespread tendency to assume that the largest and most costly loudspeaker in any manufacturer's range is necessarily the best. While that may well sometimes be true, it's also important to achieve a good match between bass output and room, and in many cases the largest model in a range will only achieve this when used in a very large room, or one with walls, floor and ceiling that tend to

absorb low frequency energy. Although the room used for our reviews is a good size by UK standards, measuring 4.3x2.6x5.5m, it's not as large as those typically found elsewhere in the world, such as the US. It also has more solid plaster-on-brick walls, rather than the energy absorbing plasterboard-on-stud construction. And since the 809's bass alignment had worked very well in our room, it seemed probable that the Reference 5 DC would, too.

Which is not to say it's small. By any standards, this is a generously proportioned floorstander, standing 112cm tall and weighing a hefty 30kg. It's a full three-way design with four drivers on board. A pair of 200mm units, each with 130mm diameter metal 'dish' diaphragms and supplemented by a reflex port, handle the bass. A 180mm midrange driver, placed above the tweeter at the top of the enclosure, has a 115mm aluminium dish diaphragm. And the tweeter has a 25mm



aluminium-manganese alloy dome under a moulded phase compensator.

The Reference 5 DC might look very like an 809, but there are numerous subtle

examination of the measurements, however, reveals some subtle but significant differences between the two models, so this is clearly a quite separate design.

damped, generating little if any thickening or overhang, the relatively high port tuning frequency of 48Hz does rather limit the genuinely deep bottom-octave bass on offer here, while the mid-bass output is correspondingly a little strong. The result is a touch lacking in the sort of scale that can make the ambience of choral music in a gothic cathedral sound totally spine-tingling, while the dead-weight atonal slap of a kick drum is a little less convincing than tuned tympani.

The midband is where this speaker really shines, showing marvellous voice rendition, whether speech or song, solo or in harmony, and the believable way in which it rendered the subtle textures of instruments was a regular source of delight. An ancient recording from the very late and even more lamented Buddy Holly sounded eerily ▶

## “A very good speaker indeed, but one that succeeds more through subtle understatement than any overt charms.”

under-the-skin improvements. According to Canton, copper rings within the magnet poles of both midrange and bass drivers have substantially reduced asymmetric inductance distortions. The efficiency of the midrange driver has been improved, assisting the crossover transition to the tweeter and giving a better impulse response. The woofer voice coil has lower inductance and improved excursion linearity, reducing distortion and improving power handling and loudness capabilities. The tweeter has better distribution characteristics, and superior quality components are used throughout the crossover network.

The enclosures of our samples were beautifully finished in a deep-lacquer-finish silver, which contrasts very effectively with the black frames and much shinier diaphragms, though traditionalists might prefer the maple or cherry real-wood veneer options. Curved sides taper towards the back, an arrangement that has several distinct benefits, adding considerable extra stiffness, helping avoid the focusing of internal standing waves and dispersing reflections. On the Reference 5 DC, these are manufactured by laminating together multiple layers of thin fibreboard, giving a very superior combination of stiffness and damping. Grilles are supplied, and their mounting lugs are cleverly integrated into the driver frames. Furthermore, the drive units are properly flush-mounted, so this speaker looks very good if the grilles are left off.

The whole thing is mounted on small shock absorbing feet that separate the enclosure proper from a chunky black MDF plinth. The simple stud-like spikes supplied are clearly intended to avoid damaging wooden floors, and are probably insufficiently sharp to pierce carpets. There's no lock-nut provision to facilitate height adjustment here either, but it should be easy enough to substitute regular 6mm spikes instead if desired. Perhaps Canton might consider including regular (sharp) spikes for those with fitted carpets. Twin terminal pairs are fitted, nice and close to the floor, so it will be easy enough to keep the cables tidy.

### SOUND QUALITY

Unfortunately, because of sample availability it wasn't possible to carry out a direct side-by-side (or sequential) subjective comparisons between the Vento R5 DC and the superficially very similar Vento 809. Close

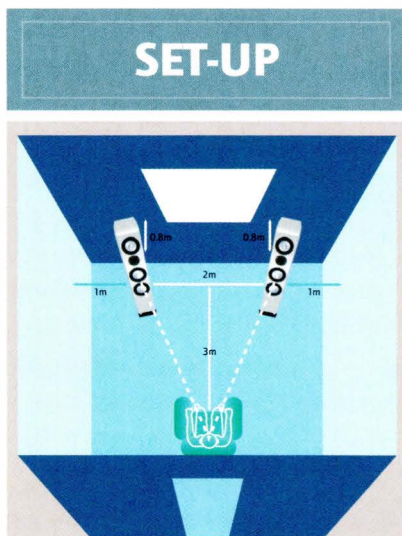
Indeed, the in-room measurements did indicate that the Reference 5 DC is not quite as smooth or flat as its junior 809 range-mate. But it's still an exceedingly well balanced design, with a studied neutrality and very little real character of its own. Entirely free from any warm, cuddly tendencies, it's not a design that immediately impresses at first listen – instead it's a rather cool customer that goes about its business in a matter-of-fact, understated sort of way. But after a short period of acclimatisation one starts to appreciate that this is actually a very good speaker indeed, but one that succeeds more through subtle understatement than any overt charms.

One of its major strengths is that it manages to sound open through the voice band without any obvious aggressive tendencies: the sound is bright, for sure, but clean and clear with it. Even more impressive is the way the speaker maintains excellent linearity, fine clarity and superior communication skills even when operating at the sort of low levels that are necessary to avoid disturbing the rest of a household at 3am.

The bass might have been better aligned for our room. Although the bass delivery is generally crisp, clean and very well



# [Review] Canton Vento Reference 5 DC loudspeaker



## POSITIONING

Low bass is a little lacking here, thanks to a port tuning frequency around 48Hz, which is relatively high for such a large loudspeaker; output falls rather quickly below 40Hz, and the 20Hz level under our far-field in-room conditions registered around -14dB ref the midband. There's little that can compensate for this, as wall reinforcement tends to boost the mid-bass, 50-100Hz, and output from 50Hz upwards is quite full even with the speakers well away from the room walls.

Every room has its own, often unpredictable, characteristics, so try moving the speakers around while playing music with plenty of bass content. However, our tests do indicate that this speaker is likely to work best with clear space all around it, and that close-to-wall siting is likely to result in excessive mid-bass output.

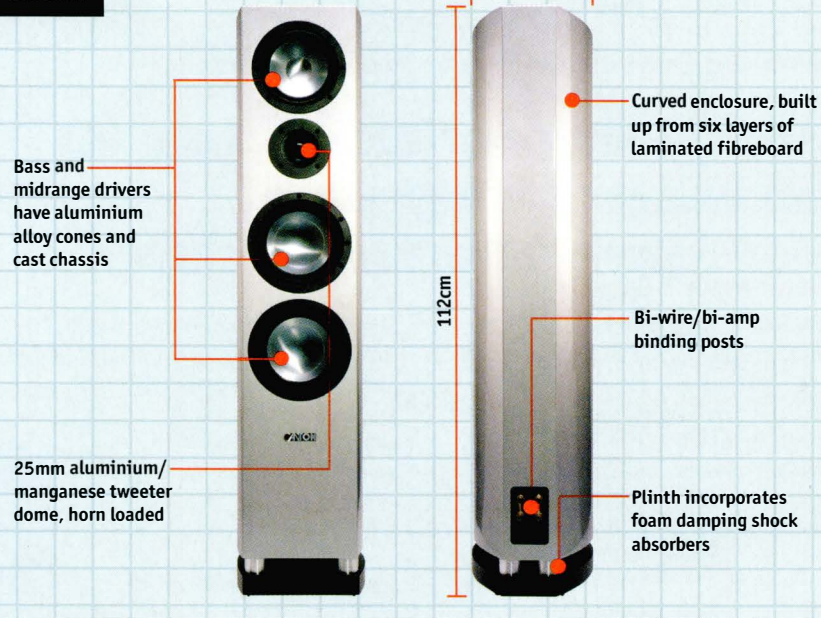
The Cantons came supplied with blunt studs without lock-nuts – not good for penetrating a deep-pile carpet. Dealers should be able to find a set of sharp spikes, with lock-nuts to assist levelling. However, do carry out positioning experiments prior to fitting the spikes. If close-to-wall siting is considered aesthetically important, and it gives a heavy and thickened mid-bass, it may be worth trying port blocking.

## SYSTEM MATCHING

Sensitivity here is a generous 92dB under our measurement regime – 3.5dB above the manufacturer's claim, and 2dB more than the Vento 809, thanks to stronger midband. However, the load is quite demanding, with three distinct 3.3-ohm minima through the bass region. Furthermore, over its actual impedance, the complexity of the load is unlikely to make life easy for a driving amplifier. A high quality amplifier, supplying generous quantities of electrical current, is clearly indicated here, though it needn't be a particularly powerful design in the usual sense as the voltage sensitivity is well above average.



## Detail



realistic, while it was fascinating to pick out the harmonising layers in a multi-tracked Simon and Garfunkel duet.

Brass instruments are always tricky, either losing their rasp altogether or delivering it with too much 'edge', yet the Canton judges this beautifully, with an open realism that is thoroughly convincing. Orchestral strings also have a tendency to 'clump together' into a homogenous mass, yet here it was easy enough to gain some idea of the size of the orchestra that was playing, and take note of the texture of the instruments themselves.

Some of this speaker's subtle midband discrimination might have been

attributed to the improved CD sound brought about by upgrading the Naim CDS3's power supply from XPS2 to 555ps (as reviewed on p48). But the observation wasn't limited to CD sources alone. Much the same was true when vinyl was being used, and when the Magnum Dynalab MD102 FM tuner was doing its thing.

Imaging is precise and well focused, giving a nice impression of height, though depth perception did seem a little constrained. In addition, the very low cabinet coloration right across the band ensures superior dynamic

range, but mild time-smear slightly reduces the impact of dynamics. In the final analysis, the Reference 5 DC could perhaps sound sweeter, but it's a clean, crisp and unfailingly honest high-performance loudspeaker. And that makes it well worth investigating. **HFC**

*Paul Messenger*



## VERDICT

**SOUND >> 89%**



**EASE OF DRIVE >> 72%**



**BUILD >> 90%**



**VALUE >> 81%**



### PRO

This beautiful speaker has a cool and subtle sound with fine neutrality and delightful powers of midband analysis throughout an exceptionally wide dynamic range.

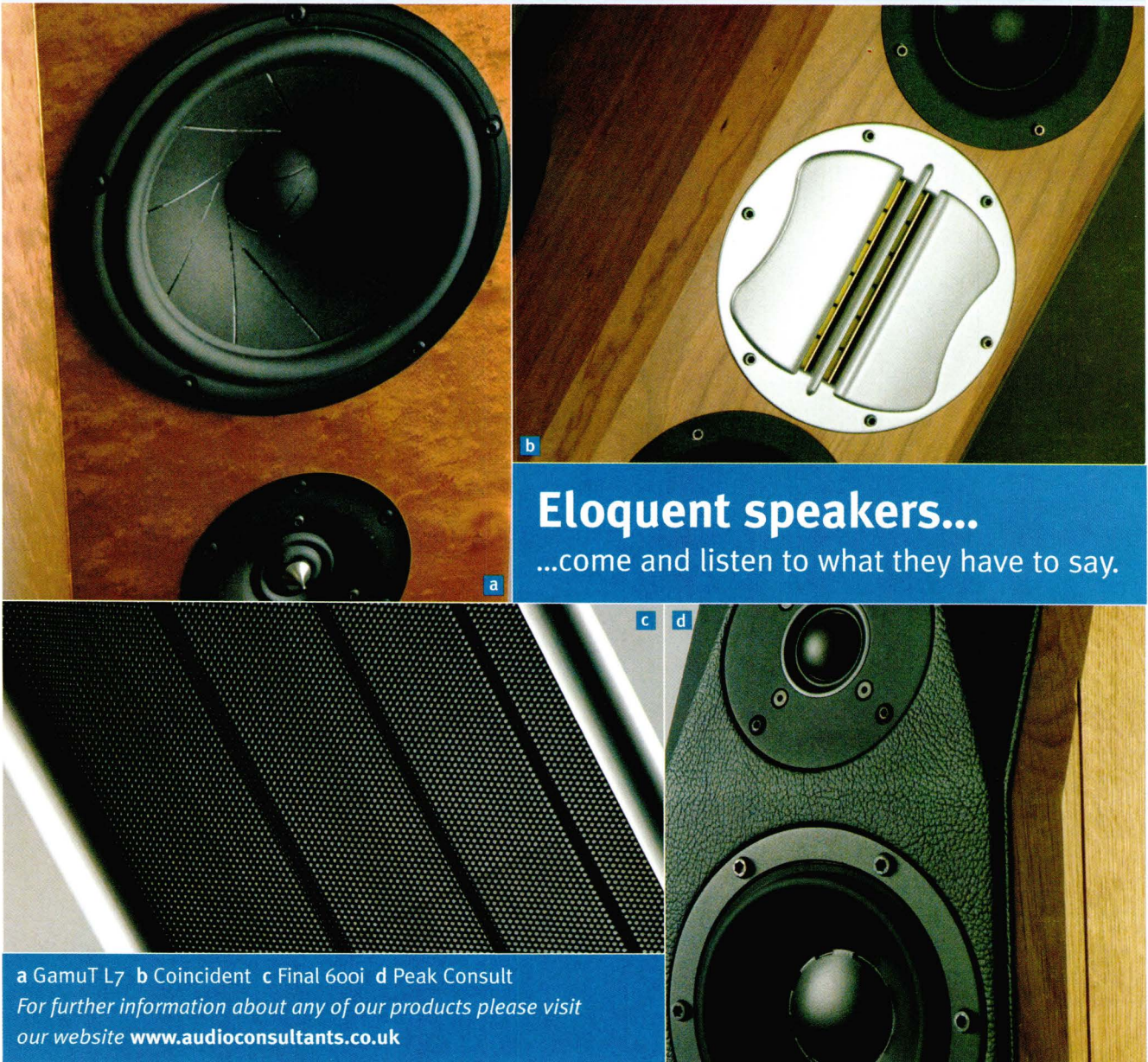
### CON

Bass lacks output in the lowest (20-40Hz octave) leaves the sound lacking in ultimate scale and weight. Sound might be sweeter.

### CONCLUSION

Handsome lacquer-on-silver finish highlights a superior speaker with a cool, dry and neutral tonal balance, combined with delightful midband analysis across an exceptionally wide dynamic range. Bass could go deeper to some advantage.

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



**Eloquent speakers...**  
...come and listen to what they have to say.

a GamuT L7 b Coincident c Final 600i d Peak Consult

For further information about any of our products please visit our website [www.audioconsultants.co.uk](http://www.audioconsultants.co.uk)

ACCUPHASE ▶ AESTHETIX ▶ AMPHION ▶ AUDIO AERO ▶ AUDIO ANALOGUE ▶ AUDIO PHYSIC ▶ AVALON ▶ AYRE ACOUSTICS ▶ BEL CANTO  
BENZ-MICRO ▶ CARDAS ▶ CLEARAUDIO ▶ COINCIDENT ▶ DALI ▶ ECLIPSE-TD ▶ ESOTERIC ▶ FINAL ▶ FINITE ELEMENTE ▶ FUTUREGLASS  
GAMUT ▶ GRAAF ▶ GRAND PRIX AUDIO ▶ LYRA ▶ MONO PULSE ▶ NAGRA ▶ NORDOST ▶ NOTTINGHAM ANALOGUE ▶ PAGODE ▶ PASS LABS  
PATHOS ▶ PEAK CONSULT ▶ QUADRASPIRE ▶ ROGUE AUDIO ▶ SHUN MOOK ▶ SME ▶ STAX ▶ STEREOVOX ▶ SYSTEM AUDIO ▶ THIEL  
TRANSFIGURATION ▶ 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](http://www.audioconsultants.co.uk)



# Will EVO stick?

*Creek's new entry-level CD player and matching amp kept us glued to our listening seat!*

**PRODUCT** Creek EVO

**TYPE** CD player and integrated stereo amplifier

**PRICE** (CD) £495; (amp) £495

**KEY FEATURES** Size (WxHxD): 43x8x34cm (each)  
 • (CD player) Weight: 6kg • Single unbalanced audio output • Electrical and optical digital outputs  
 • (Amp) Weight: 8.6kg • Power output: 85W (eight ohms) • Five line inputs, optional phono • Headphone output • Preamp out • One set of speaker terminals

**CONTACT** ☎ 01442 260146 🌐 www.creekaudio.co.uk

kind of extra-thick front panel (12mm of solid aluminium) that traditionally graces expensive exotica. We like it!

What will cause a few raised eyebrows and nostalgically sad smiles, however, is the revelation that Creek has joined many of the old-time UK names and gone overseas for manufacturing of this range, the economics clearly having become irresistible. Still, at least, as the front panel proudly proclaims, the stuff is 'designed in the UK'.

There's a family resemblance to Creek's top Destiny range (which is still manufactured in the UK, incidentally), from which we reviewed the amp and CD player in *HFC 277*. That's mostly an external likeness though, for the circuits seem to have little in common.

The CD player starts with a dedicated CD-Audio transport (in contrast, Destiny uses a DVD-ROM drive) which is controlled by an all-in-one chip from Philips. It's typical of the way Mike Creek designs, though, that the DAC part of this chip is neglected in favour of a higher quality specialised chip, one we've seen

in a few products lately including multi-format disc players. In turn, its analogue output is fed to top quality audio op-amps, which perform filtering and buffering functions before a further pair of 'Audio' capacitors isolate the output sockets from any residual DC voltage. Power is derived from an 'R-core' mains transformer of moderate capacity and the whole assembly is very neatly laid out and assembled, as indeed is the amplifier.

While the Destiny amplifier uses a cunning output configuration based on MOSFETs – which has become something of a Creek trademark – the EVO has an altogether simpler and more traditional bipolar transistor circuit.

'Simpler' maybe, but there's plenty going on inside that amp. In the usual fashion, it has an internal heatsink carrying the output transistors, while a chunky toroidal transformer steps down the mains voltage. An unusually generous allocation of power supply capacitors filters the output from a pair of rectifiers, one for each channel and the large main circuit board is well filled with discrete transistors and

Creek's reputation as a budget specialist is, we fear, not long for this world. It's not so much that these units aren't really at the budget end of things any more (although more of that later), it's just that they don't look the part. Creek started out making dinky little boxes with plain black paint, distinctive green legends and some distinctly ho-hum plastic push-buttons which fell off after a few years. Now compare that with the current offerings, heavyweight boxes smartly and fashionably decked out and featuring the



**“Creek has sensibly avoided making EVO a pale imitation of Destiny and instead aimed at a more lively, energetic presentation.”**

a few good quality op-amps. Oh, and a ‘programmable gain amplifier’, otherwise known as an electronic volume control, replaces the traditional mechanical potentiometer. This particular type is new to us but looks from its data sheet like a suitably high grade part. It has been configured by Creek to give 0.5dB steps over the top 15dB or so of its range, 3dB steps at the bottom and 1dB over the most-used part of the range in between. Input switching is carried out by relays. Components are all ‘through-hole’ types rather than the more modern surface-mounted variants and there is a sprinkling of specialist ‘For Audio’ capacitors at critical points. The amp can be supplied with phono replacing one of the five line inputs, too.

A new EVO remote control is supplied, which operates both units. It looks reminiscent of the Destiny remote, but is not compatible.

**SOUND QUALITY**

The thing we liked most about the Destiny amp was its sonic sophistication. Creek has sensibly avoided making EVO a pale imitation of Destiny and instead aimed at a more lively, energetic musical presentation.

Of the two EVO components, the CD player has less of an obvious character – if you prefer, it’s more straightforward and honest. It is not

boring and is an ideal match for the amp, but we think some may demand more than the EVO’s ability to present the musical facts efficiently and without artifice. There are limits to its resolution and also to its low-level detail in the high treble (which tends to ‘dry out’ subtle acoustics just a shade), but by the standards of £500 CD players, it’s a very fine machine with excellent bass, good imaging and neutral tonality.

Some may remember Creek amps started off as the ‘poor man’s Naim’ – or at least quite a few dealers seemed to present them as such. Naim is probably the first, er, name people think of when ‘lively and energetic’ amps are mentioned, or certainly when ‘rhythmic’ qualities are invoked in an amplifier. So has Creek come full circle and emulated the minimalists from Salisbury? Not consciously is our guess and indeed while there is something of the vintage Naim about the EVO amp, it is rather more general-purpose in the way it also makes the most of more laid-back tones.

It’s not quite as overtly rhythmic as older Naims tended to be, but it does seem to be biased in favour of the toe-tapping school of hi-fi. In addition though, it has a nice mellifluous touch, which means that in a way it presents the best of both worlds. Okay, a good bit of two possible worlds. There’s no getting

away from the fact that what we’re really talking about here is sonic character, which is intrinsically at odds with ultimate accuracy. But, in this case the deviation from accuracy is very small and the gain in involvement and enjoyment is more than compensation.

Creek has produced an amplifier which gets on well with many recent recordings. Damien Rice was one such that we found, the relatively simple musical textures yet quite ‘heavy’ recording benefiting from EVO’s combination of drive and charm. Classic rock did well too, jazz only slightly less so and classical moderate to well depending on the forces involved: we particularly liked solo piano, but were less convinced about it handling a full orchestra.

Neither product will please everyone, but we feel both will find a lot of very happy fans. As a pair they work very well, offering a different ‘take’ on sound from the average. **HFC**

*Richard Black*



**VERDICT – EVO CD PLAYER**

**SOUND >> 86%**

**FEATURES >> 82%**

**BUILD >> 87%**

**VALUE >> 87%**

**CONCLUSION**  
 As good as any CD player at the price. Limitations are minor and the character (or lack of it) is a good foil to the rather more individual amp.

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

**VERDICT – EVO AMPLIFIER**

**SOUND >> 88%**

**FEATURES >> 80%**

**BUILD >> 87%**

**VALUE >> 87%**

**CONCLUSION**  
 We find the distortions of this amp entirely lovable, even if they are a departure from pure hi-fi. It’s tuneful, energetic and communicative.

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

# Roots revival

*Although other variations have appeared, AE has gone back to its roots with this Classic AE1*

**PRODUCT** Acoustic Energy AE1 Classic

**TYPE** Standmount loudspeaker

**PRICE** £845 per pair

**KEY FEATURES** Size (WxHxD): 18x29.5x25.5cm

● Weight: 8kg ● 25mm magnesium dome tweeter

● 90mm aluminium bass/mid driver on 110mm surround

● Sensitivity/Impedance: 88dB/8 ohms (nom)

☎ 01285 654432 🌐 www.acoustic-energy.co.uk

It was 18 years ago that the first Acoustic Energy AE1 made its debut. The launch caused a stir, and a positive reaction among reviewers who got their hands on early samples. Way back in *HFC* 59 (1988), Alvin Gold described it as: "the most awesomely articulate and dynamic miniature ever made".

The original AE1 broke fresh ground. It invented the concept of the high performance miniature, where there was virtually no relationship between size and price, and where at least as much effort was expended on engineering the enclosure as the drive units.

We reviewed an evolved version of the same speaker in 1991 with somewhat more equivocal results. But in the mid-1990s Acoustic Energy upped the ante by introducing a Signature variation, which cost £2,000 in 1995. Whereas the original AE1 had been finished in the rugged textured black that is regarded as mandatory by professional users, the Signature added 'luxury finish' to its 'high performance' characteristics. That Signature formed the basis of a formal MkII version of the AE1, which ran from 1996 until a new and considerably revised MkIII appeared in 2003.

While the original AE1 initiated the modern trend towards

high performance miniature monitors in the late 1980s, it wasn't without some precedents – one can point towards the remarkable Goodmans Maxim from the 1960s, or the legendary BBC LS3/5a, based on carefully selected KEF drive units, in the 1970s. While the LS3/5a was popular with broadcast engineers and hi-fi enthusiasts, modest power handling and loudness capabilities kept it out of the recording studios. These were effectively the key ingredients that the AE1 brought to the party – the specification claims suitability for use with amplification capable of 200 watts per channel.

One contributing factor in the enhanced power handling was the use of a metal cone for the main bass/mid drive unit. Indeed, the use of metal diaphragms for both of the drive units was another of the AE1's more influential innovations. We'd seen metal diaphragms used previously for tweeters (Celestion etc), and for full-range drivers (Jordan, Bandor). But the AE1 might well have been the first traditional two-way, and certainly inspired brands like Monitor Audio to follow suit.

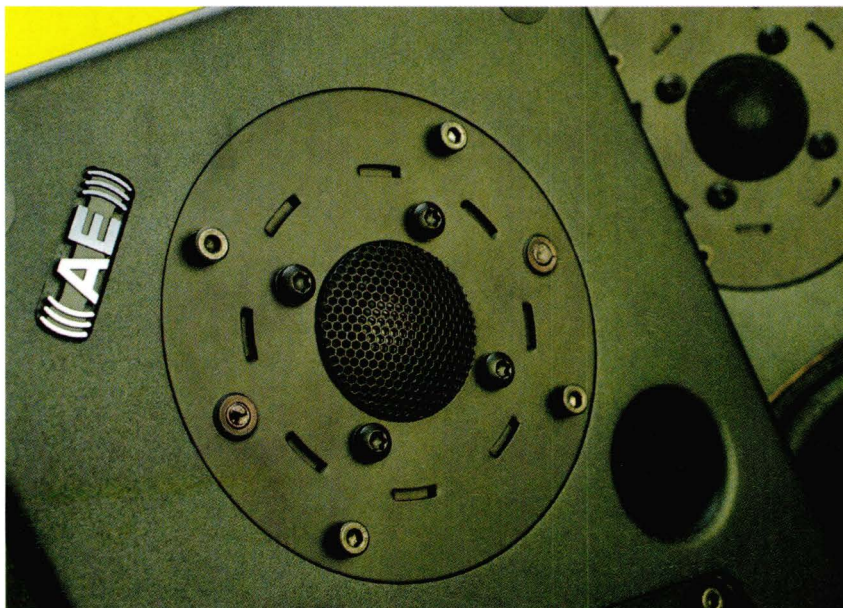
That original AE1 cost £700 per pair in

1988, in an era where most miniatures from most leading brands

cost £99 or even £79. Eighteen years of inflation would probably take the equivalent price today up to or beyond £2,000 (which is roughly what AE charges for its current AE1 MkIII, reviewed in *HFC* 281), so it's all the more credible that this replica costs an inflation-busting £845 per pair.

Every effort has been made to create an accurate replica of the original, and to these eyes it looks as good today as it did back then.

There might be customers who prefer fancy real wood veneers covered in layers of lacquer, or high gloss piano black, but the Pro-look textured matt black has an understated power and a persuasive purposefulness all of its own.



**“The AE1’s elaborate enclosure engineering creates an exceptionally ‘quiet’ box with very little sonic signature of its own.”**

Both drivers are neatly flush-mounted, and separated by attractively symmetrical twin flared ports, and all the cabinet edges are slightly rounded. The only asymmetry is the badge, fixed across a top corner, and this is mirror imaged between the two samples of a pair. The main driver has a 110mm pressed steel frame and a deep-anodised 90mm aluminium cone, stiffened by an oxide skin, while the tweeter uses a 25mm magnesium dome. The crossover network, fed from a single terminal pair, uses symmetric third-order slopes. The wood-based enclosure is actually made in Malaysia by AE’s parent, but all the rest of the manufacture is carried out in Britain. The most interesting feature of the latter is that the insides have a sort of plaster (polymer composite) lining.

**SOUND QUALITY**

The specification claims a sensitivity of 88dB, which is at least 2dB more optimistic than the figure indicated by our own far-field in-room findings. Our rating of 85dB is below average, though not unexpectedly so for a system with such a small main driver, especially since the impedance is very benign, staying comfortably above eight ohms throughout. The twin port

arrangement is tuned to 55Hz, ensuring reasonable bass output down to around 45Hz, though the impedance does show a slight discontinuity at around 5.5kHz.

The in-room far-field tonal balance response trace in free space shows the expected shortfall at the bass end of things, with output starting to roll off below 70Hz. However, from 80Hz upwards, the curve looks very well balanced, holding within the tightly specified +/-3dB limits even under in-room conditions. The modest bass extension suggests close-to-wall bass reinforcement might prove beneficial, and the speaker is likely to work best in smaller rooms, but achieving a good alignment is not guaranteed. If one’s prepared to sacrifice bass weight and extension, though, the AE1 seems likely to fill a nearfield monitor role rather well.

Placed on Partington Heavi stands and connected to the end of a Naim-based system, this little speaker immediately demonstrated both the advantages and the disadvantages of its miniature dimensions. It goes without saying that there’s not going to be much in the way of low bass going on here, and this is an obvious candidate for subwoofer reinforcement. But its fine coherence and impressive freedom from boxy effects provide very fair compensation.

A small box is nearly always associated with low cabinet coloration and sharp, precise imaging, and the AE1’s elaborate enclosure engineering really pays off here by creating an exceptionally ‘quiet’ box with very little sonic signature of its own. The consequence is a beautifully spacious image with fine focus alongside a broad and deep spread.

Superior midband neutrality and a very even balance are both on the agenda here, going a long way towards justifying this speaker’s monitoring status. This is further strengthened by the notably wide dynamic range and very low level of background ‘grunge’ created by that remarkably well controlled enclosure, even though the degree of dynamic expression seemed a little muted.

The top end is bright and obvious, maybe because it lacks the treble sweetness of the latest tweeter designs. To some extent, the original AE1 design is starting to show its age, but at the same time it’s a fun product that goes a long way towards justifying its ‘classic’ status as a high-quality compact monitor. **HFC**

*Paul Messenger*



VERDICT	
<b>SOUND &gt;&gt; 83%</b> [Progress bar]	<b>PRO</b> This classic replica delivers a beautifully balanced midband with an impressively wide dynamic range and freedom from boxiness.
<b>EASE OF DRIVE &gt;&gt; 82%</b> [Progress bar]	<b>CON</b> Bass is weak and the top end is rather obvious, in relative level and some lack of sweetness compared to more recent tweeters. Could be more dynamically expressive.
<b>BUILD &gt;&gt; 88%</b> [Progress bar]	
<b>VALUE &gt;&gt; 82%</b> [Progress bar]	
<b>CONCLUSION</b> Sharply priced classic replica looks good and does most things well, though more bass is needed to compensate for the strong treble. But this genuine monitor delivers a beautifully balanced midband with wide dynamic range and little boxiness.	
<b>HI-FI CHOICE OVERALL SCORE &gt;&gt; 83%</b>	

EDITOR'S CHOICE

HI-FI CHOICE  
magazine



# PS: we love you

*Developed alongside Naim's new flagship CD player, this top-notch power supply is a brilliant upgrade*

**PRODUCT** Naim NA 555ps

**TYPE** CD player power supply

**PRICE** £3,995

**KEY FEATURES** Size (WxHxD): 43x9x32cm

• Weight: 14kg • Power supply compatible with CD555, CDX, CDS2, CDS3 CD players • Tryptich styling with central illuminated badge • Cast alloy casework

**CONTACT** ☎ 01722 426600 🌐 [www.naim-audio.com](http://www.naim-audio.com)

Perhaps the most exciting new product to make its debut at the Autumn 2005 Heathrow hi-fi show was Naim's new range-topping CD555 CD player. It's built to survive a nuclear strike, gorgeously styled with a hefty central loading bay, and priced at an intimidating £14,295.

That's the short and superficial version of the story. The CD555 might have been the sexy looking visual statement into which one places and plays CDs, but lurking a few shelves down on the same Fraim rack was the less glamorous but equally useful NA 555ps.

This similarly massive unit is an external power supply. It's an essential partner to the CD555, and included in its £14,295 price, but it can also be purchased separately for £3,995. It has an equally important role as an upgrade to the XPS and XPS2 power supplies, for those using earlier Naim CD players such as the CDX, CDX2, CDS2 or CDS3 models. Furthermore, at the time of writing some hundreds of 555ps units have already been built and sold –

reputedly, a number sold to Naim dealers for their own personal use – while first examples of the more complex CD555 have only just started to trickle out of the factory.

Indeed, one could argue that the 555ps supply is the more interesting component from a practical rather than a glamour perspective, because of its applicability to provide upgrades for a substantial and well-established customer base. Naim has used similar strategies before. The (original) XPS first appeared as an upgrade option to the original one-box CDX, and was then supplied as the standard outboard power supply with CDX2. An improved and restyled XPS2 was introduced as an upgrade option with CDX2, again appearing some time before it came as part of the CDS3 package. Furthermore, in our reviews of those various components and combinations, although both player and power supply upgrades were significant, the supply upgrades often gave the greater improvements.

Naim has long practised the 'upgrade via the power supply' technique, in the first instance with its preamps back in the 1970s. It was a relative latecomer to CD, only introducing the original CDS in 1991, and this two-box player followed that same Naim tradition of packaging its power supplies separately. In so doing it flew in the face of the then 'accepted' architecture for a two-boxer, which housed the disc drive mechanism in one unit and the digital-to-analogue conversion (DAC) electronics in the other.

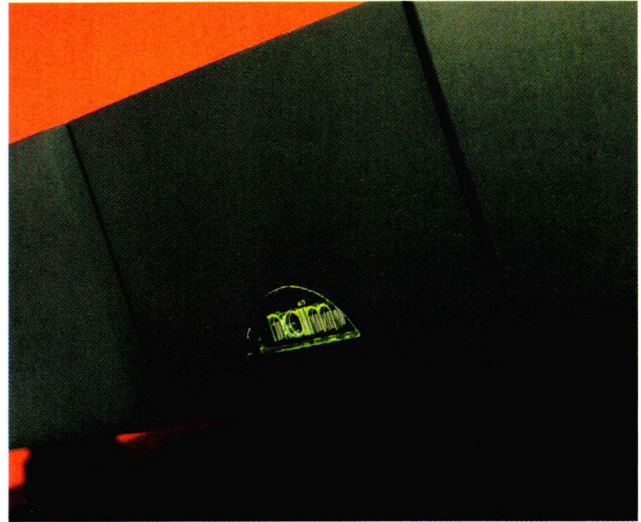
Naim's justifications were partly that it keeps mains voltages and transformers well away from the player proper, feeding a number of low-voltage supplies to the player via a hefty multi-way connector. No less important, it allows a parallel connection from the drive to the DAC to be used, avoiding the S/PDIF connection. Keeping drive and DACs close together allows a much faster data transfer as the digital signals only travel a few millimetres.

The new 555ps looks very like an XPS from the front, apart from the silkier, shinier surface finish reserved for 500-series components, though there are a number of important differences from the earlier unit. For starters, XPS remains available at £2,550, while 555ps costs £3,995. From the rear it can be seen that 555ps now has two chunky multi-way Burndy sockets, so that separate hawser-like leads are used to connect the analogue and digital supplies to CD555; only one combined lead is used to connect to CDS3, CDX2 *et al*. The transformer of the 555ps is 40 per cent larger than that used in XPS, and this is very evident when you try to pick it up. Internally it uses seven separately regulated supplies, with five secondary windings on the transformer. Particular care has been taken to isolate the ultra-quiet master clock supply from the rest.

## SOUND QUALITY

Nearly all the auditioning was done using Naim NAC 552 preamp, NAP 500 power amp





and B&W 800D speakers, linked using a mixture of Naim and Vertex AQ cables. Substituting a 555ps for an XPS2 in powering a CDS3 CD player took no time at all. It didn't take very much longer to hear the substantial improvement in sound quality that changing the power supply had wrought. The change was not subtle, and anyone who takes time out to audition the comparison will find it very difficult to resist this new power supply.

Information deep in the mix is clearer and easier to make out, which makes familiar recordings more explicit, interesting and involving. The real delight comes in slipping on a CD unplayed for a year or so, and discovering new and previously unsuspected subtleties well down in the mix, simply because of the superior low-level resolution.

Lambchop's *Is a Woman* was one such example, the title track revealing the subtle interplay of the guitars much more clearly than had been audible before. Indeed, from a musical analysis (though not a sweetness) point of view, the CD supplied greater detail and clarity than the vinyl version, which came as something of a surprise.

We also subsequently managed to borrow a CDX2 for a brief listening test, and this brought a broader perspective to the whole

**“On balance the superior power supply with the inferior player was most preferable, demonstrating impressive dynamic range.”**

upgrade scenario. The CDX2 (£2,925) comes complete with a modest built-in power supply, and on its own puts in an entertaining performance, albeit with a rather matter-of-fact 'plinky plonk' presentation, lacking the sense of scale and space generated when the accessory power supplies are used.

Adding an XPS2 (total cost £5,475) immediately added substantial extra poise, space, air, and gave the sound a much more out-of-the-box character. However, neither authority nor dynamic range seemed fully developed here, and the sonic character might have been a little sweeter. Replacing the XPS2 with a 555ps (total cost £6,920) took the performance comfortably up to the level of an XPS2/CDS3 combo (total cost £7,875) – indeed, on balance the superior power supply with the inferior player was most preferable, demonstrating very impressive dynamic range, quiet backgrounds, extra authority, better distinction between voices in a choir, and extra

sweetness, too. That said, it never sounded as relaxed as the CDS3/555ps combo (total cost £9,320), which definitely brought a better sense of flow and coherence, with greater security in low-level resolution.

The one negative I could find with the 555ps is that some mechanical hum was occasionally audible (presumably responding to minor vagaries in the quality of the mains waveform or voltage), usually in the wee small hours when background noise was at its lowest. This was never the case with the XPS, and is presumably because the bigger a toroid, the more it is inclined to hum if the mains voltage drops or its waveform becomes distorted. However, this should not detract from an otherwise brilliant upgrade from Naim. **HFC**

*Paul Messenger*

**THE CDX2 AND CDS3 CD PLAYERS**

Both the £2,925 CDX2 (HFC 238) and £5,325 CDS3 (HFC 258) use basic Philips-sourced 'building blocks' – the VAM1250 drive mechanism and the DAC chip sets. The differences lie in the implementation.

The front-loading CDX2 features a non-resonant tray with mechanical decoupling for the disc drive mechanism, hinged at one point. The player also incorporates its own modest on-board power supply. The top-loading CDS3 sits on three hard feet, and both the internal main circuit board and the disc drive are spring-decoupled. The drive is suspended on a wire and leaf spring suspension, carefully tuned to take account of the motor torques, and all relevant surfaces have a light-absorbing coating. All the analogue electronics use discrete circuitry, and the player employs extra jitter reduction techniques and more separately regulated supplies than CDX2.



**VERDICT**

**SOUND >> 94%**



**PRO**

A very persuasive upgrade for any owners of existing upmarket Naim CD players, giving a significant boost in perceived bandwidth and low-level detail resolution.

**FEATURES >> 50%**



**CON**

The use of a larger mains toroidal transformer does lead to some increase in the tendency to generate mild mechanical hum.

**BUILD >> 90%**



**VALUE >> 82%**



**CONCLUSION**

Brings a considerable improvement to existing upmarket Naim CD players (CDX, CDX2, CDS2 and CDS3), enhancing perceived bandwidth at low and high frequencies, and making low-level detail sound much clearer and more coherent.

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

# Exceeding expectations....



surround yourself with perfect sound

Corvus SINGLE CHANNEL AMPLIFIER



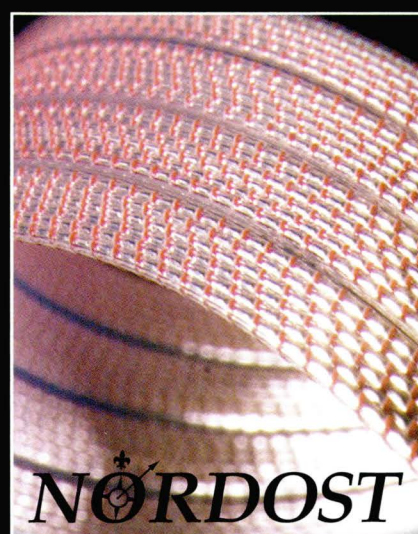
Hydra SLAVE AMPLIFIER



Tucana STEREO AMPLIFIER



Cygnus ADVANCED PRE-AMPLIFIER



## Activ Distribution - Distributors of fine audio & life style products

For more information or to request a brochure please call: 01635 291357 or visit one of our many dealers through the UK.

<b>Analogue Seduction:</b> Cambridgeshire	01733 341883	<b>Lintone Audio Ltd:</b> Gateshead	0191 4774167	<b>Sevenoaks S &amp; V:</b> Chelsea	0207 352 9466
<b>Audio Design:</b> Horsham	01403 252255	<b>Loud &amp; Clear:</b> Edinburgh	0131 226 6500	<b>Sevenoaks S &amp; V:</b> Guildford	01483 536666
<b>Audio Destination Ltd:</b> Devon	01884 243584	<b>Music Matters:</b> Middlesex	0208 420 1925	<b>Sevenoaks S &amp; V:</b> Hull	01483 587171
<b>Audio Venue:</b> Ealing	0208 567 8703	<b>Marquee Home Ltd:</b> Egham, Surrey	07004 567888	<b>Sevenoaks S &amp; V:</b> Lincoln	01522 527397
<b>Audio Venue:</b> Maidenhead	01628 633995	<b>MAX:</b> Belbroughton, W. Midlands	01562 731100	<b>Sevenoaks S &amp; V:</b> Sevenoaks	01732 459555
<b>Audio Excellence:</b> Bristol	01179 264975	<b>Musical Images:</b> Beckenham	0208 663 3777	<b>Sevenoaks S &amp; V:</b> Staines	01784 460777
<b>Audio Excellence:</b> Cardiff	02920 228565	<b>Musical Images:</b> London	0207 497 1346	<b>Sevenoaks S &amp; V:</b> Swindon	01793 610992
<b>Audio Excellence:</b> Swansea	01792 474608	<b>Music Matters:</b> Solihull	0121 742 0254	<b>Sevenoaks S &amp; V:</b> Tunbridge Wells	01892 531543
<b>Cheshire Audio:</b> Cheshire	01270 580734	<b>Music Matters:</b> Stourbridge	01384 444184	<b>Sevenoaks S &amp; V:</b> Witham	01376 501733
<b>Coolsgales:</b> Bath	01225 478400	<b>Moorgate Acoustics:</b> Sheffield	0114 2756048	<b>Sevenoaks S &amp; V:</b> Yeovil	01935 700078
<b>Cornflake Ltd:</b> London	0207 631 0472	<b>Noteworthy Audio:</b> Aylesbury	01296 422224	<b>Shadow Audio:</b> Glenrothes, Fife	01592 744779
<b>Doug Brady Hi-Fi:</b> Warrington	01925 828009	<b>Phase 3:</b> Southampton	023 8022 8434	<b>SMC:</b> Shrewsbury	01743 232065
<b>Global Hi-Fi Centre:</b> Newcastle	0191 2303600	<b>Phase 3:</b> Worthing	01903 245577	<b>Soundcraft:</b> Ashford, Kent	01233 624441
<b>Gloucester Hi-Fi:</b> Gloucestershire	01452 382222	<b>PJ Hi-Fi Ltd:</b> Guildford	01483 504801	<b>Sounds Expensive:</b> Rugby	01788 540772
<b>High End Cable:</b> Lincolnshire	01775 761880	<b>Progressive Audio:</b> Rainham	01634 389004	<b>Stone Audio:</b> Dorchester	01305 257555
<b>Hi-Fi Sound:</b> Darlington	01325 241888	<b>Rayleigh Hi-Fi:</b> Colchester	01206 577682	<b>Swifts of Wilmslow:</b> Wilmslow	01625 526213
<b>Home Media Ltd:</b> Maidstone, Kent	01622 676703	<b>Rayleigh Hi-Fi:</b> Rayleigh	01268 779762	<b>The Sound Gallery:</b> High Wycombe	01494 531682
<b>Horsham Hi-Fi:</b> West Sussex	01403 272931	<b>Sevenoaks S &amp; V:</b> Bristol	0117 9238298	<b>Videotech:</b> Huddersfield	01484 516670
<b>James-Morrow:</b> Edinburgh	0131 2298777	<b>Sevenoaks S &amp; V:</b> Bromley	0208 290 1988	<b>Worcester Hi-Fi:</b> Worcestershire	01905 612929
<b>KJ West One:</b> London	0207 486 8263			<b>Zouch Audio:</b> Ashby-de-La-Zouch	01530 414128



# You're spoiling us

Marantz astounded us with the PM7001 amp. Now it has been tweaked by the brand ambassador...

**PRODUCT** Marantz PM7001 KI  
**TYPE** Integrated stereo amplifier  
**PRICE** £550  
**CONTACT** ☎ 01753 680868 🌐 www.marantz.com

**B**ack in *HFC* 279, we enthused over Marantz's new amplifier, the PM7001. So the 'KI Signature' version ought to make it one of the year's hottest amps. 'KI', of course, is Ken Ishiwata, 'brand ambassador' for Marantz and an infectiously enthusiastic individual whose input guides the basic design of many Marantz products. He also applies further audiophile-type tweaks for the special edition versions that will bear his moniker.

In this case, those tweaks cover a wide range. Most obvious to the user is the addition of copper-plating to the case (inside and out) and gold-plating to the phono sockets, the former to improve interference rejection and the latter to enhance conductivity and reliability of the connections. Inside, while the basic amplifying circuit is essentially unchanged, the mains transformer has been swapped for a toroidal type with a substantial screening band round it. Also, individual copper-plated screens have been attached to significant transistors and diodes, and the main power-supply capacitors have been upgraded both in value and in type.

Various other components have been changed too, parts with the same basic values but higher performance in other ways. This

may sound a bit 'snake-oily' but there is a body of evidence that suggests not all capacitors of X value and Y working voltage give exactly the same performance in every way – one may be more stable than another, or give lower distortion, or have lower stray inductance and so on. That doesn't automatically mean they will sound different, but hey, they might...

Finally, the phono board has been substantially altered with an improved circuit of all-round higher performance. And just to recap the outline specification: 70/88 watts (its claim/our measurement) per channel, phono plus five line-level inputs, separable pre and power amplifier sections, twin speaker outputs and, by our measurements, stunningly good lab performance which falls just slightly short of the basic PM7001.

## SOUND QUALITY

The general performance of the KI is clearly in the same ballpark as regards musical energy, detail and neutrality – in short, damn fine.

Our very few reservations regarding the PM7001 included a slight lack of authority in its handling of bass. Mr Ishiwata has been able to wring a touch more class out of the 7001 circuit, for the KI has more bass grip and came close in its degree of control to some quite expensive amps we tried.

We were also particularly impressed by the way it can simultaneously control bass and do the subtlest things with the treble. Music doesn't so often demand this, luckily, for not

that many amps can really bring this off, but the 7001KI showed itself particularly adept in preserving delicacies like the decay of small percussion instruments while there's lots going on in the bottom octaves.

We continue to rate the excellent stereo imaging and clean, open and silky treble, both uncolored (barring some slight chestiness that was also present in the original 7001) and full of detail and insight, and the general way in which the amp can grab the listener's attention and hold it without discomfort for long periods. The phono input is clearer, too.

That Ken Ishiwata knows his stuff! **HFC**  
*Richard Black*

<b>VERDICT</b>	
<b>SOUND &gt;&gt; 87%</b> 	<b>PRO</b> Builds on the manifold strengths of the original amp, giving a real taste of high-end performance with superb bass extension and control and bags of detail.
<b>FEATURES &gt;&gt; 88%</b> 	<b>CON</b> The toroidal mains transformer seems slightly noisier, mechanically, than that in the plain 7001, but it's only audible within 1m or so.
<b>BUILD &gt;&gt; 83%</b> 	
<b>VALUE &gt;&gt; 93%</b> 	
<b>CONCLUSION</b> The standard PM7001 is a truly superb amp at £350 and for an extra £200, the KI version adds a little more refinement and better bass. Judged purely on value for money, the standard amp perhaps has the edge, but the PM7001 KI is still a stonker!	
<b>HI-FI CHOICE OVERALL SCORE &gt;&gt; 90%</b>	

# Pianissimo!

*At the top of Sonus Faber's entry-level Domus range, the Grand Piano makes sweet music*

**PRODUCT** Sonus Faber Grand Piano Domus

**TYPE** Floorstanding loudspeaker

**PRICE** £2,498 per pair

**KEY FEATURES** Size (WxHxD): 20.5x106x31cm

◉ Weight: 26kg each ◉ 25mm ring radiator tweeter

◉ 150mm doped paper midrange cone ◉ 2x180mm

doped paper woofer cones ◉ Real leather trim

◉ Overhanging steel plinth ◉ Sensitivity/Impedance

90dB/4 ohms (nominal)

**CONTACT** ☎ 020 8971 3909 🌐 www.sonusfaber.com

**W**ithout doubt, Sonus Faber is the most prestigious and best known of all the high-end Italian loudspeaker brands.

The company is particularly and justifiably renowned for superb construction and finish and also the musical qualities of most of its speakers, which in some cases are little short of legendary. Domus is the entry level Sonus Faber range and the Grand Piano is the top model from the line-up.

It is a four-driver, three-way, floorstanding column. The tweeter is Sonus Faber's customised 25mm ring radiator unit, with a prominent central diffuser. The two identical bass units are 180mm doped paper cone drivers and the midrange is a smaller version of the same thing, this time with a 150mm cone and a nominal coverage between 400Hz-3.6kHz. This means that the whole of the midband in effect is covered by a single unit. It is quite common for three-way systems to use a much lower treble crossover frequency, so the upper midband will to some extent be disturbed by the treble crossover, depending in part on crossover design. In this case, the crossover uses compound slopes – first order initially, though the final attenuation rate is not specified in this instance.

The real head turner, however, is not the drive unit complement, or the large front mounted reflex port – used to tune the enclosure somewhere around 32Hz by our reckoning. Instead, it's the enclosure itself, which is a typically extravagant, Sonus Faber creation. Although this model is from the entry level range, we are dealing with a beautifully constructed, heavy enclosure with a cross section said to mirror that of a lute – it is wider

at the front, narrow at the back and has outward bowed side panels. The front, top and rear panels are covered in real black leather (not leatherette as in some accounts), which is used to apply surface damping and helps control diffraction with its textured surface. It also serves yet another purpose by helping guarantee a good pneumatic seal around the drivers. The sides consist of what appear to be resiliently mounted panels. These use horizontally arranged staves of wood, which are glued together and then highly polished.

Our test pair were supplied in the teak option with a horizontal grain structure, but there's also a nice piano black lacquer finish available.

The enclosure sits on an overhanging steel plinth which provides the wide wheelbase required for stability and of course, anchor points for carpet piercing spikes. These have enough adjustment available for some useful tweaking of the speaker's angle of attack.

What you end up with is an unusually elegant tall column, with no hard edges and a very organic shape, enhanced more than a little aesthetically by the unusual grain orientation of the side panels and by the leather trim. But this is not a loudspeaker that sets out to give the user an easy ride....

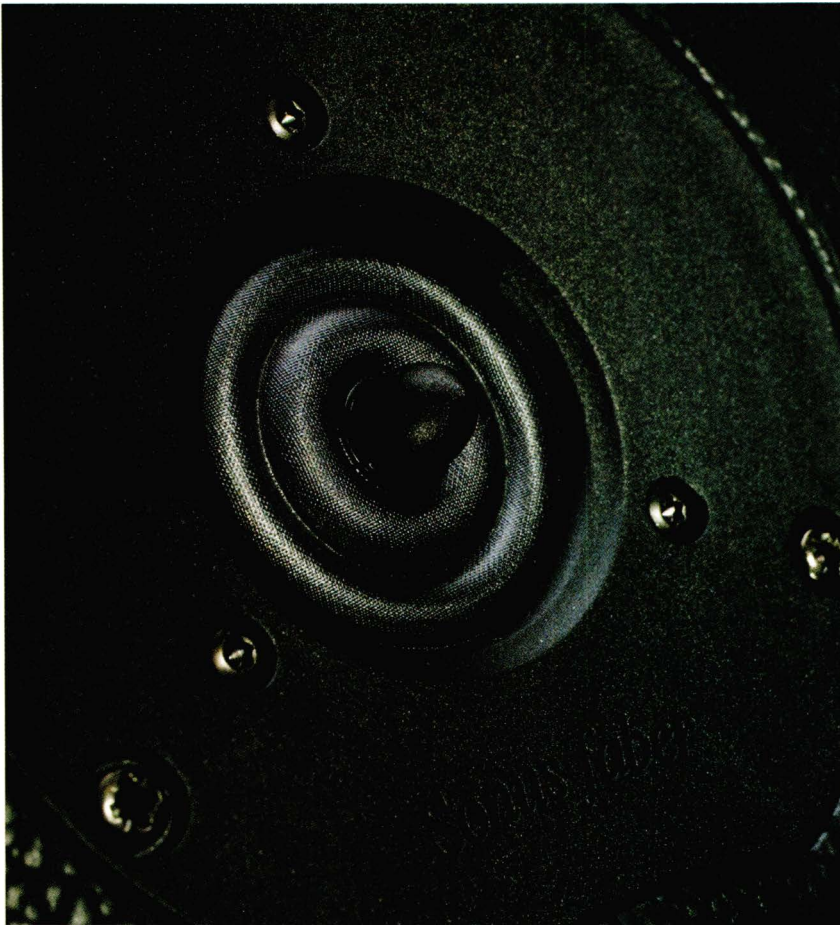
## SOUND QUALITY

This is in most respects an utterly wonderful and beguiling loudspeaker, but it is not without foibles and criticism. It's not too hard to see just which strings are being pulled and how.

First and foremost, we had some difficulty in determining appropriate positioning. Used with a wide baseline, the speaker sounded phasey and back near a rear wall, the sound was soft and recessive. The optimum turned out to be with the speakers pulled well forward from the back wall, relatively close together and toed-in so that they were pointing directly at the listening hotseat. Vertical orientation is possible using the adjustable feet, and this should also should be tweaked with some care.

The speakers will need to be extensively run-in and for a considerable period. Straight from the box, or after an extended period of inaction, we found the speaker sounded congested and lacking in 'air'. But, after a couple of hours under drive and sometimes with a slightly higher than normal volume setting (which turns out to suit the balance of this speaker) it wakes up noticeably. The right choice of amplifier and also speaker cable is key to this design. It doesn't need – in fact cannot realistically cope with – enormous quantities of power, but it does need a replay chain that is lean, crisp and detailed if the aim is to avoid playing to the Sonus Faber's weaknesses. Experimentation here will pay dividends and we'd avoid valve amplifiers that sound too much like valve amplifiers.





**“The common factor in each case is the Sonus Faber’s natural grace, harmonic complexity and tonal beauty.”**

All of this effort still doesn't deliver a sound that could be described as completely neutral. In fact, the Grand Piano Domus has a highly distinctive and unusual balance which we cannot believe is inadvertent. It is almost as though the design was conceived from the outset as a special case of a musical instrument. What has been delivered is a speaker with a slightly woofy bottom end.

It doesn't go particularly deep, though it matches other speakers of similar overall proportions. However, it seems to compensate, or over compensate, with what is best described as an inherent loudness contour – a warm and somewhat waffly mid and upper bass that projects the sound of those instruments within its compass; cellos, basses, the lowest octave of the piano for example – forward of the enclosure.

Pulling the speaker forward of the rear wall has a similar effect on the midband, which is perhaps why it works so well. The treble meanwhile is clean, detailed and extremely sophisticated, with many of the qualities that we have learned to associate with ring radiating tweeters – a kind of dry, tightness.

It's all there, but there's nothing demonstrative about this unit. Having adapted to the peccadilloes of this almost wilfully idiosyncratic loudspeaker, we had a great deal of thoroughly musical pleasure from this entry-level model, whose musical attributes are an excellent match for its stunning aesthetic qualities.

You'll not be surprised though to hear that it favours certain types of music over others. It was least convincing with driving rock and pop, where bass lines would sometimes overwhelm the sound. The rich, resonant upper bass gave rock material an overcooked quality. It was much better with orchestral music and best of all with small-scale material, chamber or otherwise.

It has a particular affinity for voice, acting as an excellent advocate for the likes of Beth Nielsen, Madeleine Peyroux, Herbie Hancock (an excellent track with Christina Aguilera – you couldn't make it up!) and Liz Wright. It was pure magic with the Bach *Goldberg Variations* played by Ito Ema. The common factor in each case is the speaker's natural grace, harmonic complexity and tonal beauty. It has an unusual clarity and in so many ways

it really does sound more like a musical instrument than just another box that's good for reproducing music.

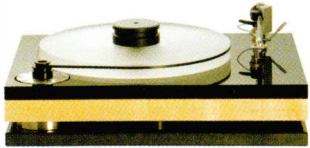
The Grand Piano Domus fits neatly into the familiar strand of upper-class Italian hi-fi. It is meticulously voiced and rather than attempt to be all things to all listeners, it concentrates its talents on being a superb match for small to medium scale acoustic material. There's enough raw power and bandwidth available too for forays into full scale orchestral and choral music. And for once, it is real furniture you will not want to hide. **HFC**

*Alvin Gold*

<b>VERDICT</b>	
<b>SOUND &gt;&gt; 87%</b> [Progress bar]	<b>PRO</b> Lean, agile speaker with voicing that is particularly well adapted to showcasing the beauty of human voice and acoustic instruments.
<b>EASE OF DRIVE &gt;&gt; 80%</b> [Progress bar]	<b>CON</b> Doesn't set out to do everything equally well. It's no pile driver, and the bass balance can sound clumsy and heavy handed, especially with heavy, driving rock.
<b>BUILD &gt;&gt; 94%</b> [Progress bar]	
<b>VALUE &gt;&gt; 90%</b> [Progress bar]	
<b>CONCLUSION</b> Exquisitely contrived, if specialised upper mid price speaker. Looks superb, can sound the same way, if care is taken with setup and system matching. Bass tuning can let it down and a foam port bung (sadly not supplied) might help.	
<b>HI-FI CHOICE OVERALL SCORE &gt;&gt; 88%</b>	



Audio Research - CD7 CD Player  
(a reference digital tour-de-force)



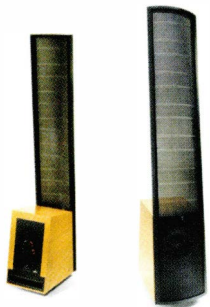
DPS - DPS3 Turntable  
(voted best sound at Munich 2006 show)



ECS Pre - Preamplifier  
(a true god among preamplifiers)



Krell FBI - Integrated Amplifier  
(brings new meaning to the term battleship!)



Martin Logan - Vantage Loudspeaker  
(the stunning new affordable electrostatic)



Wilson Audio  
Duette (NEW)

## Wilson Audio Duette

The engineering team at Wilson Audio were challenged to design a loudspeaker that could work in hostile environments. That didn't mean "work acceptably." With Duette, the goal was to create a product that would produce the signature Wilson sound in those settings: a wide, deep soundstage in which instruments and voices occupied discrete, three-dimensional space. Voices would sound real, tonally accurate, and coherent from top to bottom. Percussion would explode from a deep, grain-free background with believable dynamics and speed.

At Wilson Audio, the size of a speaker is irrelevant to the care given to its design and manufacture.

## Guildford Audio

demonstrations by appointment  
new & used high-end audio  
informative web site

[sales@guildfordaudio.co.uk](mailto:sales@guildfordaudio.co.uk)  
[www.guildfordaudio.co.uk](http://www.guildfordaudio.co.uk)

01483 537 577

# Strictly limited

At last, 'Limited Edition' with meaning. Time is running out to snap up this tempting package

**PRODUCT** Harman Kardon HD 970 and HK 970 Limited Edition

**TYPE** CD player and integrated amplifier

**PRICE** £650

**CONTACT** ☎ 01707 278100  
 www.harmankardon.com

Harman Kardon is so huge that when it ploughs its sizeable resources into two channel gear, we listen. This pairing is bonded together at the point of sale and earns its Limited Edition certificate by only being sold that way. The HD 970 CD player and HK 970 amplifier can be purchased separately, for £300 and £350 respectively, but not in the sublime 'Limited Edition' black.

You might not expect it at the price, but the HD 970 CD player offers all manner of features, including MP3 playback with the ability to show file and folder names as well as the data rate. It also handles CD-Text where it is available. Under the lid the player upsamples to 24-bit/384kHz and in a bid to keep analogue filtering 'minimalist', uses Harman Kardon's proprietary real time linear smoothing (RLS). It also offers a coaxial digital input too, enabling you to upsample digital sources such as DAB tuners, or digital set-top boxes, for improved analogue conversion and a more detailed sound. A digital output is also fitted, also a coaxial electrical type.

The HK 970 amplifier is said to deliver 80 watts a side into eight ohms and 120 watts for a four ohm load, yet the manual suggests that it will increase its output right down to a one ohm load. The amp has an impressive number of inputs including phono, some attractive and chunky, gold-plated terminals for two pairs of speakers and a variable level (+/- 3dB) preamp output for bi-amping – which is unusual. 'Digital tone controls' are available, but also avoidable with the 'source direct' mode and headphone users will be pleased to see a proper 6mm jack on the front panel.

## SOUND QUALITY

The duo put on an up-front and lively show. If you avoid revealing or forward sounding speakers, it's convincing and enthusiastic. While low bass is not the tightest around, it's not thick or lacking control. The midrange is clearly more forward than average, which emphasises dynamics and brings out the excitement in the music. The treble meanwhile adds a degree of shine to the proceedings.

There is an edginess about the sound that can be unforgiving at high levels, but when played moderately, gives a greater sense of detail; it's a bit like a loudness contour effect. Again with relaxed speakers, this aspect will make the sound more engaging and the power of the system allows it to play loud with ease.

Individually, both components reveal a similarly energetic character that makes competing alternatives sound relaxed by comparison. Similarly priced rivals can produce a smoother sound, albeit not with the power or feature count on offer here.

As always with systems, it's the amplifier/speaker interface that has to be most carefully matched. This Limited Edition combo will suit a warmer sounding speaker, making the Harman Kardon's an exciting and exclusive choice. Be quick. **HFC**

Jason Kennedy

## VERDICT

**SOUND >> 76%**



**PRACTICALITY >> 88%**



**BUILD >> 80%**



**VALUE >> 80%**



### PRO

Impressive facilities, slick styling, plenty of power and an energetic sound. A genuine limited edition run of an already good hi-fi pairing.

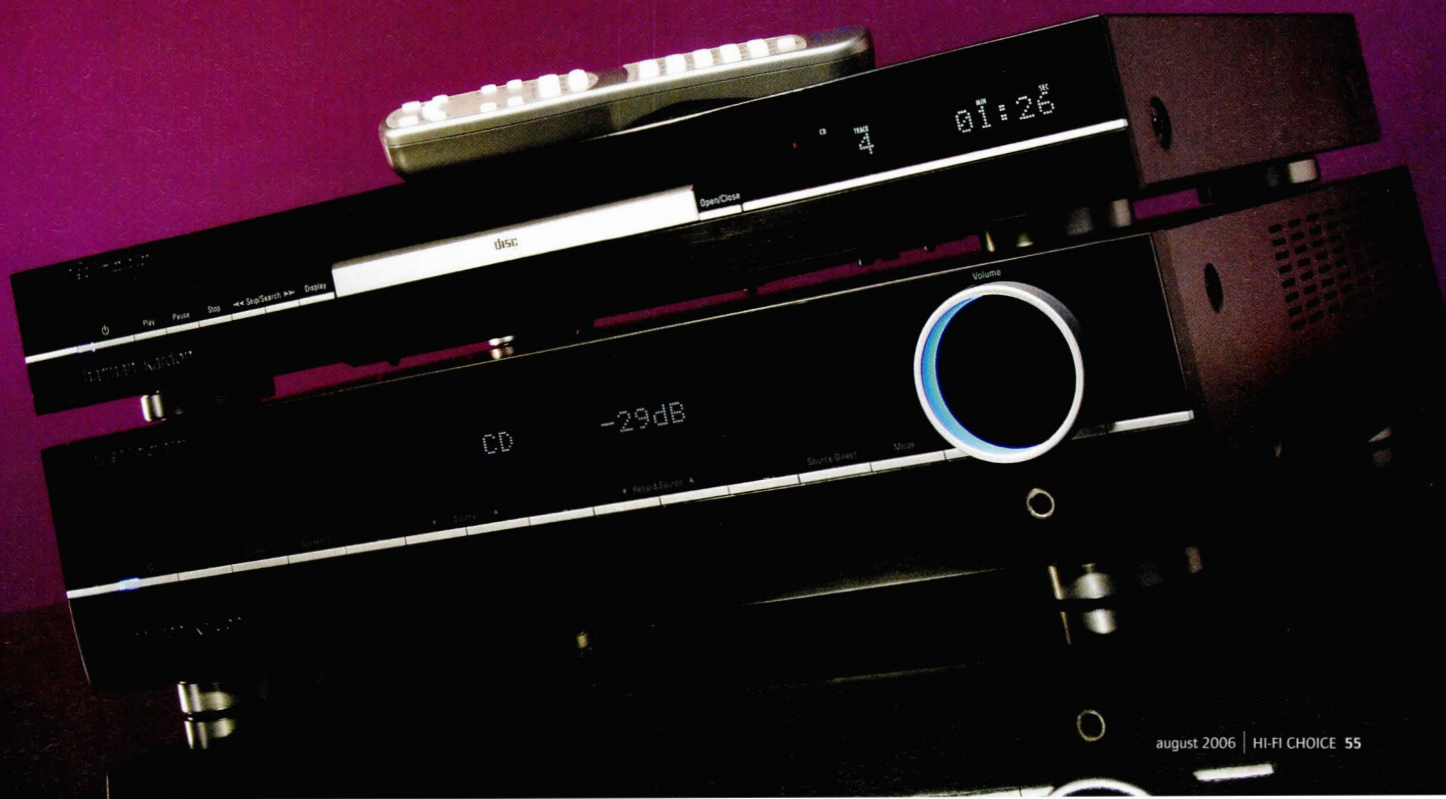
### CON

A bit too energetic and forward sounding for some tastes. Get them while they last – this limited edition will stop after only a few hundred pairs are sold.

### CONCLUSION

If you are looking for a powerful, energetic and engaging sound that keeps you interested at lower levels, it's hard to beat. The combination of exclusivity, features and power on offer makes for a tempting package.

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



# Revel rebel

*Revel liberates itself from high-end bondage*

**PRODUCT** Revel Concerta F12

**TYPE** Floorstanding loudspeaker

**PRICE** £900 per pair

**KEY FEATURES** Size (WxHxD): 24.8x107.4x36.3cm  
• Weight 28.4kg • 25mm organic ceramic composite (OCC) dome tweeter • 130mm OCC midrange cone  
• Twin 200mm OCC bass cones • Sensitivity/Impedance: 90.5dB/6 ohms • Magnetically shielded

**CONTACT** ☎ 01423 359054 🌐 www.revelspeakers.com

Until recently, Revel – the flag carrier of LA-based Harman Specialty Group – had its focus set exclusively on the high end of the speaker market. Its Performa range was the mainstay, and the Ultima series existed at the bleeding edge. Concerta, a radical departure for Revel, is a range of more affordable loudspeakers.

The range includes stereo models, and some designed specifically for home cinema use – namely a dedicated surround speaker, a centre speaker and a powered subwoofer. The Concerta F12 is the largest of the stereo models, a substantial floorstander at a price well below normal Revel levels. At £900 per pair, it is not just affordable by Revel standards, it is well priced by any standards for a speaker this size.

How has this pricing been achieved? The speakers are built in Mexico, which means lower manufacturing costs, and the F12 has a straightforward rectilinear enclosure. It's big enough to imply a strong, well-extended bass, but it doesn't boast cost-consuming angled side panels like the equivalent Performa F32, or the rounded construction used for the Ultima models.

Another cost saving measure is the use of vinyl wrap, where the senior ranges use wood veneers or piano gloss. But despite the simplifications, the internally braced, 28.4kg MDF enclosure is solid and well made, and not that hollow sounding when rapped. The vinyl wrap is good enough to pass for the real thing at first sight, too.

The active hardware has not been short-changed. This is a three-way system with a 130mm midrange cone and doubled-up 200mm cone bass drivers, all of which feature die-cast frames and Organic Ceramic Composite cones. OCC is a proprietary technology, with high-current voice coils, butyl rubber surrounds and flat high excursion spiders (all designed in house). The tweeter is a 25mm OCC dome unit







**“Bold and muscular, the Revel Concerta F12 is also low in coloration and has the quality of invisibility or transparency.”**

with a neodymium magnet set in a deep, computer-optimised waveguide designed to match the dispersion (axial and off-axis) to the adjacent midrange unit. Magnet and voice coil design are optimised for minimum dynamic compression. The crossover uses high-tolerance components and high order (24dB/octave) slopes to minimise overlap, with crossover points set at 575Hz and 3kHz. The speaker has a very flat claimed midrange response (58Hz-8kHz +/-1dB), bass output said to extend to 52Hz (-3dB) or 28Hz (-10dB) and an impressive rated sensitivity of 90.5dB/W/m.

**SOUND QUALITY**

The F12 is rear vented, which reinforces the need for room behind so that the speaker can ‘breathe’. The cabinet is fitted with rubber feet, which means they can be placed directly on the floor, but threaded inserts allow the use of spikes. These will be preferable in most circumstances, though we would have been happier if they had been designed for more sturdy 8mm spikes.

The Concerta F12 is sensitive enough to cope with a relatively low-power amplifier, but you will need one that offers good control, and a speaker cable that allows good damping – on balance, this is not a loudspeaker that suggests itself for use with many valve amps. At the same time, it is capable of handling quite a lot of power without distress or dynamic compression (manifest as a change in sound quality with level), and this points to a good amplifier match somewhere in the 100-200 watts per channel area. We found an ideal match in the 200-watt Krell KAV-400xi. This has the necessary power, authority and control

and a relatively lean, dry balance. This helps offset the F12’s native balance, which is on the warm side of neutral.

It turns out that bass extension is not as extended as might have been anticipated from such a large enclosure, albeit one that consumes less than one square foot of floor space. For normal stereo listening (as opposed to special effects in film soundtracks) the F12 should cover 95 per cent of what is required. 32 foot organ pipes are a little short changed, but that’s about it, and with the Felix Hell organ disc (reviewed in *HFC* 280) the Revel was in its element, generating a sound with a limpid, yet atmospheric quality and the truly compelling tactile authority of a steam hammer. What the Concerta does deliver is a full, muscular bass, and as long as the speakers are positioned clear of reflecting surfaces (which puts the limited floor space utilisation into perspective), and the amplifier exerts proper control, the Revel’s bass is also tuneful and quick.

The mid and top are excellent. This is a speaker in which the treble is seamlessly integrated into the midrange on a direct forward axis that is clean, sparkingly detailed and open. It also appears to have neutral tonality. Off axis, the extreme treble output falls off exactly as expected, the sound remaining pure and clean. There is little evidence of the peakiness that you will experience with some competitors. Stereo imagery is stable and large in scale, though correspondingly not quite as pin sharp as you will hear from some loudspeakers.

We had some great musical experiences with this loudspeaker. Bold and muscular, it is also low in coloration and has the quality of

invisibility or transparency. That is, it is in no sense intrusive, and the midband in particular has an almost electrostatic purity, yet it does music justice even with difficult material. It reproduced the quality of rapt concentration with Arvo Part, the sense of occasion and the scale of Mahler symphonies, and the vocal purity of Strauss’ *Four Last Songs*, which generates a kind of impassioned, full-on communicativeness that is too easily lost in the reproduction. The F12 also delivers full value with well-recorded rock material. It’s good enough to respond well to Radiohead and Marc Cohn, for example, while having enough resolution to show just how grubby bands like Arctic Monkeys sound when reproduced by a well-endowed, high-resolution hi-fi system.

This is a big, muscular loudspeaker which does just about everything and does it well. If it doesn’t have quite the finesse or articulation you’ll find in the more costly Revel ranges, it readily outperforms just about anything in its price range, even leaving the extended LF bandwidth aside. By any standards, it’s great value for money. **HFC**

*Alvin Gold*

VERDICT	
<b>SOUND &gt;&gt; 87%</b> [Progress bar]	<b>PRO</b> The task of making a big loudspeaker is addressed here perfectly – even budgetary constraints are not allowed to intrude sonically.
<b>EASE OF DRIVE &gt;&gt; 88%</b> [Progress bar]	<b>CON</b> Plain, space-consuming enclosure profile; bass control can be upset by poor positioning or amplifier match; bass not as extended as the size suggests.
<b>BUILD &gt;&gt; 84%</b> [Progress bar]	
<b>VALUE &gt;&gt; 91%</b> [Progress bar]	
<b>CONCLUSION</b> High-value design that harnesses sophisticated design skills in a loudspeaker that covers all the bases. The Concerta F12 gives the market leaders like B&W a run for their money and can form part of an excellent multichannel solution, too.	
<b>HI-FI CHOICE OVERALL SCORE &gt;&gt; 89%</b>	



For all things analogue...



www.audioreference.co.uk  
info@audioreference.co.uk

AUDIO REFERENCE  
SUPPLIERS OF FINE AUDIO EQUIPMENT

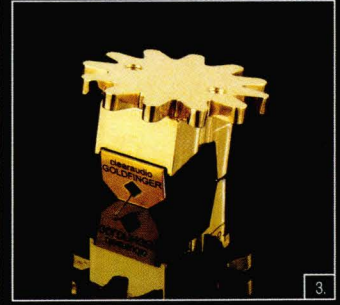
01252 702705



1.



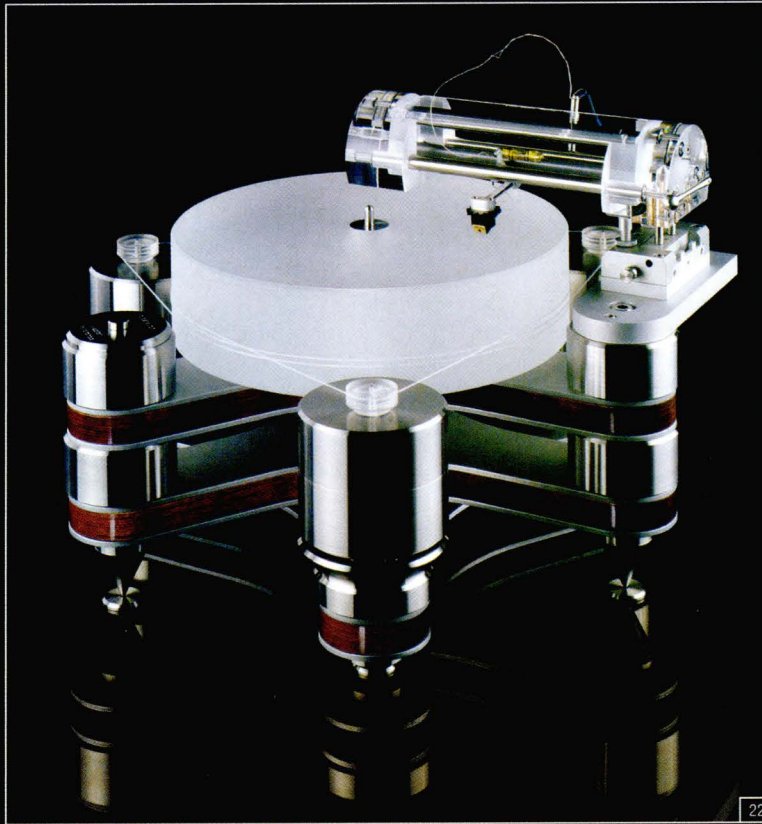
2.



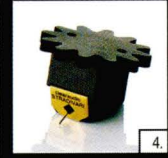
3.



21.



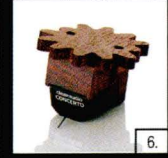
22.



4.



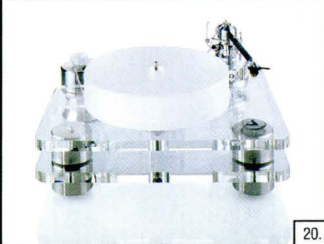
5.



6.



7.



20.



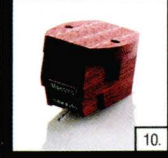
8.



9.



19.



10.



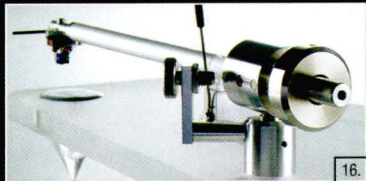
11.



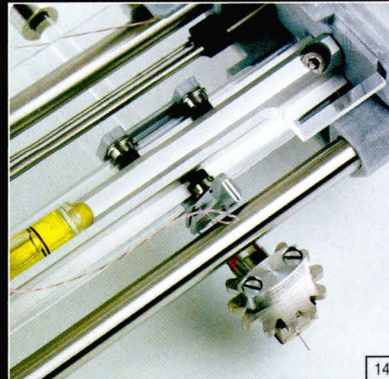
12.



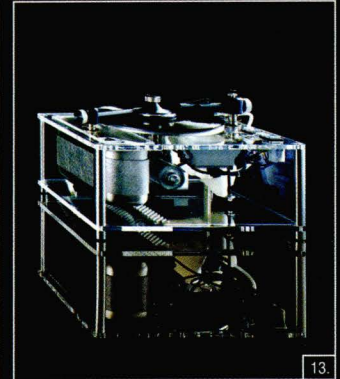
18.



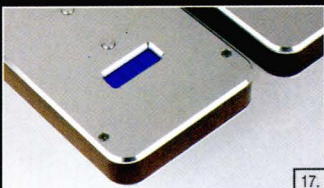
16.



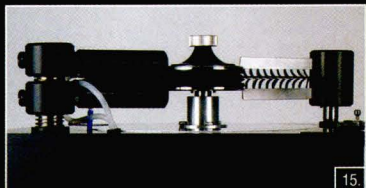
14.



13.



17.



15.

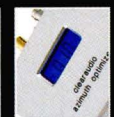
1). APG Accurate Power Generator 2). Balanced Reference Phono-stage 3). New Generation 24k Goldfinger MC Cartridge 4). Stradavari MC Cartridge 5). Titanium MC Cartridge 6). Concerto MC Cartridge 7). Symphony MC Cartridge 8). Melody MC Cartridge 9). Maestro Steel MC Cartridge 10). Maestro Wood MC Cartridge 11). Aurum Alpha Wood MM Cartridge 12). Syncro PSU 13&15). Matrix Record Cleaning Apparatus 14). Master T-QI Parallel Tracking Tonearm 16). Clear Emotion Turntable Package 17&18). Ambient Turntable 19). Avantgarde Magnum Turntable 20). Champion Level 2 Turntable 21). Maximum Solution Turntable 22). AMG Master Reference Turntable 23 to 25). Clearaudio accessories. For further products visit: [www.audioreference.co.uk](http://www.audioreference.co.uk)



23.



24.



25.

# BEE here now

The replacement for the C320BEE has just walked off the designer's catwalk

**PRODUCT** NAD C325BEE

**TYPE** Integrated stereo amplifier

**PRICE** £250

**CONTACT** 01908 319360

www.nadelectronics.com

**N**AD is proud of its designer, Bjorn Erik Edvardsen. So proud, his initials adorn the amplifiers he designs. Justifiably proud? He certainly did the business on the C320BEE, one of the best-loved budget amplifiers ever. But how will his input on its replacement – the C325BEE – stack up?

At the very least, he's packed a lot of components into a neat and attractively priced box. The majority of the amplification is carried out by discrete components and NAD has incorporated a couple of little modules into each channel. These are matchbox-size boards, densely populated with components and just one of many clues to cost-conscious thinking under the lid. Others include the use of cheaper passive components. The savings allowing for the use of a decent toroidal transformer with a metal screen, unusually large reservoir capacitors and an above average motorised potentiometer for the volume control.

The basic specification is pretty typical, with seven line-level inputs including two 'tape' loops, external linking of preamp and power sections and defeatable tone controls. There's also a thoughtful extra socket mounted on the

front panel, for portable music devices. NAD's ever-present 'Soft clipping' is included, too. NAD quotes a continuous output power of 50 watts, which is really conservative: we obtained a value of very nearly 80 watts with short-term peaks in excess of 100 watts, so it's hardly gutless. Within that nominal 50 watt envelope, distortion is held very low, barely exceeding 0.01 per cent at high frequencies, less than half that in the midband and vanishing altogether below a couple of watts output.

## SOUND QUALITY

We've found some evidence of a 'house sound' among recent NAD amps, with a lively but not always amazingly sophisticated presentation. On the whole, this model fits that bill, but there are some notable specifics. First of all, we must congratulate NAD on a remarkably fine bass performance, well beyond normal expectations of a £250 amplifier. Not only does the bass extend convincingly into the seismic reaches, it has a combination of tunefulness and attack that is seriously reminiscent of high-end amplification. The only budget giveaway is a slight lack of control at times. But even here the C325BEE gives little or no leeway to any other competing amp we can think of. Classy bass like this is of obvious benefit to bass-rich music, but in many ways is even more useful with classical, jazz and generally mellower tones. Such music often relies in less overt ways on the bass, but really appreciates confident underpinning.

The midrange and treble are not quite so starry. There's a little midrange coloration, a slight 'quack' that occasionally becomes audible on instruments like sax or trumpet, while the treble is not as open and clear as its best rivals can manage. All the same, it is well extended, has good detail to it, and stereo imaging is quite impressively precise laterally, if sometimes rather vague in terms of depth.

Although intensive listening can become wearing, it's impressive with high-octave music. Horses for courses, then, but there's plenty in the C325BEE's favour and we do advise giving it a listen if you can. **HFC**

Richard Black

## VERDICT

**SOUND >> 82%**



**PRACTICALITY >> 80%**



**BUILD >> 80%**



**VALUE >> 87%**



### PRO

Sound is lively and immediate and bass is impressively out-of-class, with the best combination of pitch and rhythm we've heard at – or even near – the price.

### CON

Upper frequencies lack a little precision and sophistication, with a little coloration and as a result, sound can become wearing with time.

### CONCLUSION

Clearly this is the amplifier to go for if you adore high-grade bass in your system. The compromises up top are not for everyone, but are also not at all beyond the pale. For many listeners this will prove a most pleasing amplifier.

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



# Custom Design SQ404

**TYPE** Loudspeaker stand

**PRICE** £200 per pair

**CONTACT** ☎ 0191 262 4646

🌐 www.customdesign.co.uk

This is a considerably bulkier-looking stand than the RS300 that we reviewed in *HFC* 281 and with four columns, it takes a bit more putting together, but it's well worth the bother. It's supplied in two heavy packages; one containing the ironware and the other; eight bags of 'Inert' filler to damp the square-section columns. 'Inert' is supplied as standard and don't even think about saving the trouble of using it – just do the job outside, as it's fiddly stuff to clear up after a spill. Without it, the stands will ring and resonate in a most unbecoming fashion. With it, and the 'acoustic steel' top plates, they are among the most completely dead stands we've yet encountered.

As a result, the sound of loudspeakers we tried on these stands is particularly clear and crisp, with a welcome freedom from coloration. We all pay lip service to the importance of getting speaker positioning right, but the fact is that standmount speakers are nearly

impossible to position effectively while they're mounted on resonant stands. With really stable, 'sound-less' stands like these, it's so much easier to hear differences from one position to another. The net result is that not only do coloration levels drop but, because the positioning can now be properly optimised, you will benefit also from improved stereo imaging and focus. Relatively large, heavy standmount speakers and small lightweights seemed equally at home on the SQ404s and we've no hesitation in calling this design one of the best speaker stands currently available. **HFC**

*Richard Black*



EDITOR'S CHOICE

HI-FI CHOICE  
magazine



## VERDICT

### CONCLUSION

Any half-decent standmount speaker will be improved by this efficient stand, giving clearer sound in every way.

HI-FI CHOICE  
>> 92%

# Clearer Audio Copper-line Alpha

**TYPE** Loudspeaker cable

**PRICE** £10 (per mono metre, terminations extra)

**CONTACT** ☎ 01702 543981 🌐 www.cleareraudio.com

This is not a discreet cable – its 9x18mm size does not go under carpets! The bulk is not entirely occupied by copper: Clearer Audio employs a rather complex arrangement of conductors and insulating cores in an attempt to maximise the dielectric properties of polythene and PTFE, though the use of a PVC overall insulation does compromise things to some extent. The conductors are high-purity copper, totalling some three square mm, giving low resistance and the geometry gives low capacitance.

The review set was supplied terminated with Eichmann 4mm plugs, adding £70 to the cost, plus an additional £50 termination charge. The latter may seem a bit steep, but it does include treatment of all connector mating surfaces with Caig contact enhancer and a 72-hour burn-in. This should eliminate waiting for days to hear what your new cable is doing.

On that score, we were left in little doubt. This cable has quite a pronounced character

that we liked with some reservations. The latter concern the treble, which we thought was just a little more shut in than we would have liked.

The bass, however, is rather magnificent – strong and ringing, with both good tuning and real attack. Tonality is neutral and detail good for the price, though imaging we thought only fair. Still, you don't expect to cover all bases for a tenner a metre and this loudspeaker cable

represents a perfectly valid set of (minor) compromises. **HFC**

*Richard Black*



## VERDICT

### CONCLUSION

While it may not establish any new references, this gives a good, distinctive performance at a sensible price.

HI-FI CHOICE  
>> 84%

# IXOS Ixotica IX1

**TYPE** Interconnect cable

**PRICE** £200 (1 m pair)

**CONTACT** ☎ 01844 219000 # www.ixos.co.uk

Ixos has been around as a cable brand for a few years now and its trademark Gamma Geometry has become a familiar sight. The essence of Gamma is that the two signal-conducting cores of the cable (be it interconnect or speaker cable) are twisted with a third, non-conducting, core in such a way that the conductors cross at right angles. These are held further apart than usual in a basic twisted-pair geometry, where of course they are basically in contact along their length.

While we can't entirely endorse all the technical claims made by Ixos for this arrangement, it's clear that it is a cunning way of reducing capacitance without significantly worsening the excellent interference rejection of twisted pair cable. In this particular embodiment, the cheapest of the relatively new and upmarket Ixotica range, the stranded conductors are individually insulated with a coating Ixos calls Aptimus. This prevents any imperfect conduction between strands.



We found the sound of this cable neutral and clean, with a rather unusual quality to the bass. This seems full, but just a touch more present than we're used to. It's not blowsy or out of control, but tonally a little forward and as a result the overall sound of the cable is very appealing, particularly so at low listening levels. Bass lines are easy to follow and because the treble is

nice open everything is very relaxing to listen to. Not utterly truthful, perhaps, but delightful in its own way. **HFC**

*Richard Black*

## VERDICT

### CONCLUSION

This may be an easy listening cable, but it's still detailed enough to make analytical listening very rewarding.



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

# Oehlbach Air Absorb

**TYPE** Isolating feet

**PRICE** £40 (set of four)

**CONTACT** ☎ 020 8863 8979 # www.oehlbach.de

Though primarily a cable vendor, Oehlbach does offer a small range of support products, including these vibration absorbing feet. The name is possibly slightly misleading as, while we're quite sure there is air inside the feet, the structure contains enough rubber and metal to ensure that there remains physical continuity between top and bottom surfaces, so any isolation will be a function principally of the rubber's inherent springiness.

It is springy, though, and usefully grippy too. This ensures that kit mounted on the feet won't slide around without severe provocation. Suggested applications includes CD players and amplifiers and also loudspeakers. This may be anathema to some but there is growing awareness that rigid coupling of speakers to their stands or the floor is not always the most efficient way of eliminating spurious vibration. It's often quite the opposite.

The load rating of these feet, 70kg per set of four, is enough for most equipment and we



had plenty of fun trying different items and also different foot configurations (three or four). On the whole, despite the theoretical problem on instability, we found four the most useful number with speakers, which benefitted across the board in terms of improved focus and clarity, with some gain in the depth of stereo imaging and – in some instances, at least – a perceived increase in bass extension. If there's a downside, it's a slight loss in

'speed'. Under electronic components benefits are less marked, but we're taken with these as a general-purpose loudspeaker foot. **HFC**

*Richard Black*

## VERDICT

### CONCLUSION

These feet look the absolute business and contribute in terms of clarity to a variety of speakers.



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

# A thing of beauty is a joy forever

“ I know of no other speaker  
I'd rather own, regardless of  
price.” - *Sam Tellig - Stereophile magazine*

A single 'point-source' driver, so incredibly linear  
and cohesive that nothing can prepare you for  
the revelation that will unfold. No colouration,  
no distortion, no artefacts – just brilliant, natural,  
breathtaking detail and realism.



## QUAD

*...the closest approach to the original sound*

# IXOS Ixotica IX2

**TYPE** Interconnect cable

**PRICE** £300 (1m pair)

**CONTACT** ☎ 01844 219000 🌐 www.ixos.co.uk

This is Ixos's top Gamma Geometry cable, the big brother of IX1. The two share many features, including proprietary Aptimus-coated conductors and the geometry, but IX2 naturally differs in several ways from its cheaper stablemate.

Most noticeably, while IX1 is screened, IX2 uses an earth drain wire and as a result has significantly lower capacitance. In principle, it also has higher susceptibility to interference, but in practice we found no sign of that, and it should be suitable for long runs if the price isn't a barrier! Conductors are of oxygen-free copper and insulation is foamed polythene.

Clearly one would hope to find this cable superior to the cheaper IX1, but we weren't quite sure whether we preferred it in every way. The bass, yes, that is an improvement, combining the tunefulness and extension we found in IX1 with a more neutral, less overt, presentation. In fact if anything, the extension seems slightly better but there wasn't much wrong with IX1 in that department anyway.



Midrange is also neutral, but we have some reservations about the treble, which is extended but does seem a little dry at times. As a result, there's not quite so much 'air' in the sound, less of a sense of real live performing acoustic and, almost certainly linked to that, there's less precision in the stereo imaging. By most standards, these criteria would be considered good: but in a £300 cable, we would really like them to be excellent. We did enjoy this cable, but can't quite allay some doubts about its value. **HFC**

*Richard Black*

## VERDICT

### CONCLUSION

Fine lower and middle parts of the spectrum, let down by constricted treble: delicate sounds can get closed in.

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

# Katli Audio

**TYPE** Stylus pressure gauge

**PRICE** £75

**CONTACT** ☎ 0870 240 7228 🌐 www.choicebits.co.uk

For any lover of LP, stylus force is one of the major bugbears. It is essential to get right because it directly affects tracking and stylus wear, and interacts strongly with vertical tracking angles. This is why one can spend forever fiddling with stylus force. The ideal setting is not necessarily exactly the notional value published by the cartridge manufacturers, for all sorts of reasons. So the value of a really good stylus pressure gauge is not principally in allowing one to set 1.7g downforce, just because that's 'what the book suggests'. Optimisation is always by ear.

No, the true benefit of an accurate gauge is only appreciated when for whatever reason a cartridge has to be disturbed from its mounting, or the tracking force re-adjusted for some reason (cleaning and servicing or simply trying a new cartridge). You spend ages tweaking downforce to perfection – and then lose the setting and have to start all over again. Except that with a high-accuracy gauge



like this you don't: you just make sure to measure downforce before changing anything, then when you restore original conditions, you know you can get at least that parameter back exactly where it was.

This is by far the best gauge we've tried, with repeatable resolution to a very few milligrams. Admittedly it took ages to calibrate (better instructions and/or internal software would be welcome!) but after that, it was simple and effective. It may seem expensive, but it's actually cheaper than some less-good gauges.

As it's apparently robust and impervious to being moved between measurements, it's a godsend. **HFC**

*Richard Black*

## VERDICT

### CONCLUSION

If you play LPs, you need one. Share the cost with friends if it seems a lot of money for something used occasionally!

**HI-FI CHOICE**  
 >> **88%**

# FREE IXOS CABLES

Subscribe to **HI-FI CHOICE** today for just £44.96 – a saving of 11% off the cover price. Plus, if you subscribe by Direct Debit, you'll also receive a free pair of Ixos interconnect cables worth £40! So, what are you waiting for? Subscribe to **the UK's fastest growing hi-fi magazine** today!

**HURRY!**  
LIMITED OFFER SO  
**ACT NOW!**

**SUBSCRIBE  
& SAVE 11%**  
AND GET A FREE PAIR OF IXOS  
INTERCONNECT CABLES  
**WORTH  
£40**



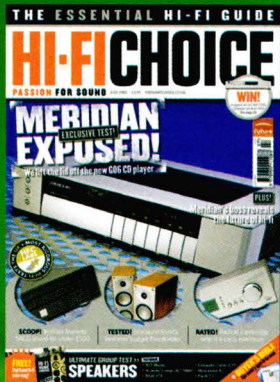
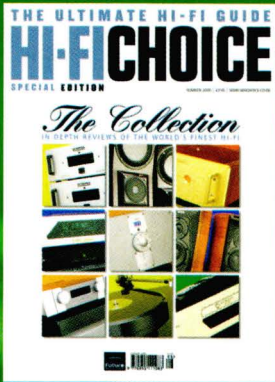
**IXOS**

**ORDERING IS EASY**

Order online at: [www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/HFC/P018](http://www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/HFC/P018)



# WHEN YOU SUBSCRIBE TO HI-FI CHOICE NOW!



## SUBSCRIBE TO HI-FI CHOICE:

- The UK's most rigorous hi-fi tests
- News, views and expert advice
- Verdicts you can trust
- A saving of 11% off the cover price
- 13 issues a year delivered direct to your door
- No more missed issues

### UPGRADE YOUR SUBSCRIPTION! PAY VIA DIRECT DEBIT TO RECEIVE YOUR FREE IXOS INTERCONNECTS WORTH £40!

When you subscribe to HI-FI CHOICE by Direct Debit, you don't just get a hefty discount off the normal shop price: this month you'll also receive a free pair of Ixos XHA406 interconnects worth £40 into the bargain!

This superb cable utilizes Ixos' patented Gamma Geometry construction, which optimises signal bandwidth without noise distortion. It does this by using a unique Inductance Control Core, woven between the positive and negative conductors. This technique gives the cable all of the performance advantages of a parallel pair configuration, whilst rejecting noise and distortion like a twisted pair.

Ixos is one of the world's leading innovators in the design and manufacture of specialist audio and video cables and the XHA406 superbly utilises its Gamma Geometry know-how. But stocks are limited – so hurry!

For further information on the Ixos XHA406 interconnect:

☎ 01844 219000 🌐 www.ixos.co.uk

**OVERSEAS SUBSCRIPTIONS:** Please contact us for the latest prices

☎ +44 1858 438749

www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/HFC/PO18

# I WOULD LIKE TO SUBSCRIBE TO HI-FI CHOICE & SAVE 11%

### UK PRICING

- I'd like a year's subscription (13 issues) to HI-FI CHOICE for £44.96 – saving 11%  
 I'd like to pay £11.24 quarterly by Direct Debit and receive my FREE GIFT

### PERSONAL DETAILS

Title ..... Forename .....

Surname .....

Address .....

Postcode .....

Telephone .....

If you'd like to receive emails and SMS from HI-FI CHOICE and Future Publishing and its group companies containing news, specials offers and product and service information, please include your email and mobile no. below.

Email .....

Mobile no. ....

Please tick here if you are happy for us to pass your details to carefully selected companies so they can send you relevant information about their products or services by email  or SMS

### PAYMENT DETAILS

- I would like to pay by quarterly Direct Debit (UK only) and receive my FREE Ixos XHA406 interconnect cables. Please complete the Direct Debit form.

(I understand that £11.24 will be debited from my account every quarter)

	Originator's Identification Number <b>768195</b>	
Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay Direct Debits		
<b>To the Manager (Bank name)</b> .....		
<b>Address</b> .....		
<b>Postcode</b> .....		
<b>Name(s) of account holder(s)</b> .....		
<b>Branch sort code</b>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Bank/ Building Society account number</b>	<input type="text"/>	
Ref No (Office use only) <input type="text"/>		
<b>Signature(s)</b> .....		
<b>Date</b> .....		
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.		

- I would like to pay by cheque – saving 11%  
 (to be made payable to Future Publishing Ltd. Sterling cheques drawn on a UK account)

**I would like to pay by Credit/ Debit card – saving 11%**

- Visa  Mastercard  American Express  Switch/ Maestro

ISSUE NUMBER   (SWITCH/MAESTRO ONLY)

CARD NUMBER

VALID FROM DATE   /   EXPIRY DATE   /

SECURITY CODE    (FOR ADDED SECURITY PLEASE FILL IN THE LAST THREE DIGITS FROM THE SIGNATURE STRIP ON THE REVERSE OF YOUR CARD)

Signature ..... Date .....

### POST YOUR ORDER

**RETURN THIS FORM FREEPOST TO:**

HI-FI CHOICE subscriptions,  
 Freepost RLSC-SXSE-SKKT,  
 Unit 4, Tower House, Sovereign Park,  
 Market Harborough, Leicestershire,  
 LE16 9EF

**OFFER CODE P018**

**OFFER ENDS 31 JULY 2006**

**TERMS AND CONDITIONS:** You will receive 13 issues per year. Minimum subscription term is 12 months. (Gifts are subject to availability. We reserve the right to send you an alternative gift if this gift runs out. Please allow 28 days for delivery of gifts.) This is a UK only offer and the gift applies only to those paying via Direct Debit. Your subscription will start with the next available issue. If at any time during the first 60 days you are dissatisfied in any way, please notify us in writing and we will refund you for all unmailed issues. Please tick here if you do NOT wish to receive relevant information about products or services from Future Publishing or any of its group companies by post  or telephone  Please tick here if you do NOT wish us to pass your details to carefully selected companies to enable them to contact you about their products or services by post  or telephone  Details of Direct Debit guarantee available on request.

# Or call: 0870 837 4722

Quote offer code: P018

GROUP TEST AND LAB REPORTS: RICHARD BLACK

# RADIO TUNERS

With DAB/FM tuners offering two-for-one convenience, can FM-only tuners compete?

## ON TEST



Cyrus FM-X (FM)  
£500



Denon TU-1800DAB (DAB/FM)  
£250



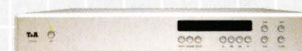
Marantz ST7001 (DAB/FM)  
£300



Pure DRX-702ES (DAB/FM)  
£210



Rega Radio 3 (FM)  
£398



T+A T1210R (FM)  
£1,000

Apparently it's official: FM will be switched off one day. Supposedly. The estimated time of arrival of that day is put by some as early as 2012, though few industry insiders put any store by that. At worst, then, a new FM tuner has six years of life in it, and probably a good deal more.

Meanwhile, DAB has certainly taken off in terms of the range and number of stations available, or at least it has if you're in a heavily-populated area. Reports from the hills and dales suggest that FM can often be a better bet in such areas.

FM still rules the airwaves when it comes to in-car, too. Although of little direct bearing on the home hi-fi system, the continued support of FM by car manufacturers and in-car entertainment installers – because of in-car DAB systems being plagued with constant retuning issues – will only serve to lengthen FM's lifespan.

Don't discount digital radio though. DAB can be very attractive to city slickers, offering clear reception where FM is plagued by multipath distortion, which is much worse for those urban flat-dwellers who are often unable to erect an outdoor antenna.

On the hardware side, the arrival of good quality, sensibly-priced dual-mode (analogue and digital) tuners has done a good deal to make the question a moot point, but it's still worth posing: FM or DAB?

We've long made no secret of our dislike for the sound quality of most DAB broadcasts. The UK has just about the lowest average bitrate of any country to operate the system, and as a result the majority of stations sound spitty and synthetic – really quite nasty

much of the time. Other supposed advantages of DAB, including wider dynamic range and extra text information, are frequently not put into practice by broadcasters. So often, all else being equal, there's actually not a lot going for it.

But all else may not be equal, as many new stations are on DAB only. And Radio 3 continues to fly a lonely flag for sound quality, with higher bitrates than any other station and impressive dynamics, too. Nevertheless, if you listen mainly to non-classical radio and can receive decent FM at your home, we have no hesitation in recommending a good FM tuner as today's quality option.

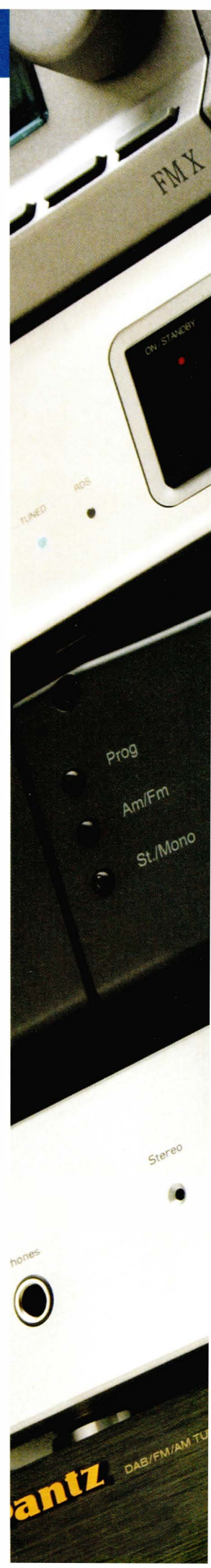
FM is a mature technology and there's some clever engineering to be had for very friendly prices. We enjoyed testing this group of tuners and were reminded just how much free aural entertainment is on the airwaves. Per hour of pleasure it can give you, a decent tuner (DAB or FM) is a very cheap luxury! **HFC**

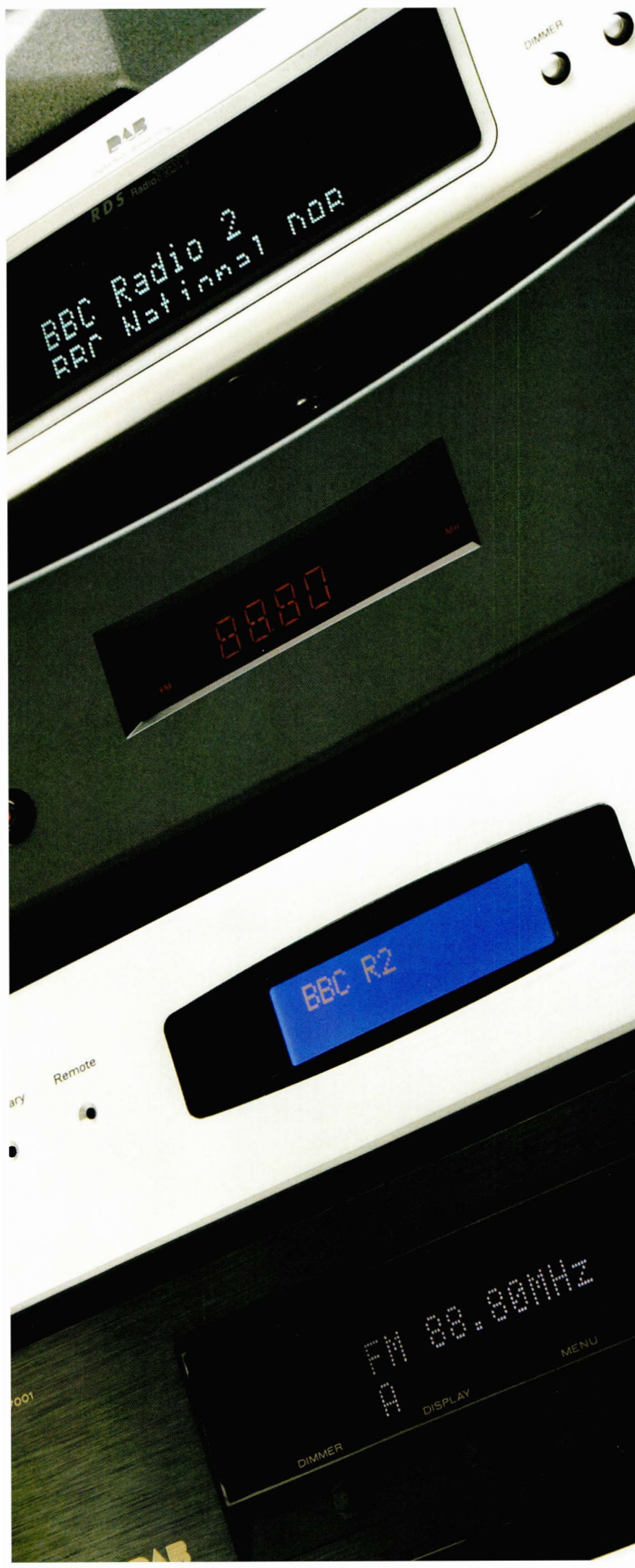
## EQUIPMENT USED

- ⊕ EAR 802 preamp and 519 power amps
- ⊕ Exposure 3010 integrated amp
- ⊕ ATC SCM20 loudspeakers
- ⊕ Sound technology 1000A FM generator
- ⊕ Rotel RCD-971 CD player
- ⊕ Cables by Kimber, Bespoke and van den Hul

## MUSIC USED

- ⊕ Live classical broadcasts on Radio 3 *Radio 2 and 4*
- ⊕ Various commercial stations
- ⊕ Michael Jackson *Thriller*
- ⊕ Donald Tovey *Symphony*
- ⊕ Dick Hyman *Plays Fats Waller*





## LISTENING TESTS

The live, and ever-changing nature of radio makes it ill-suited to our usual listening panel tests, which were therefore dispensed with on this occasion. The majority of listening was carried out at a venue in inner London, where a number of FM stations can be clearly received thanks to a large rooftop antenna mounted on a rotator – the radio junkie's ultimate. DAB reception at the same location is essentially error-free with even the crudest indoor antenna. A brief period was also spent with each tuner connected to a local FM generator fed from CDs, to check performance under artificially high and low signal conditions.

## LAB TESTS

Each tuner was measured with a variety of equipment, including the Sound Tech FM generator plus a Hameg distortion measuring set, and also items of audio equipment (ADCs and DACs) adapted to lab duty and reporting data for analysis to Cool Edit and Mathcad on a PC. This approach enabled us to build up a picture of the tuners' performance under different conditions both RF and audio, simulating the extremes of the real world. DAB performance was measured inferentially, by comparison with output from a known high quality DAC, while receiving real broadcasts.

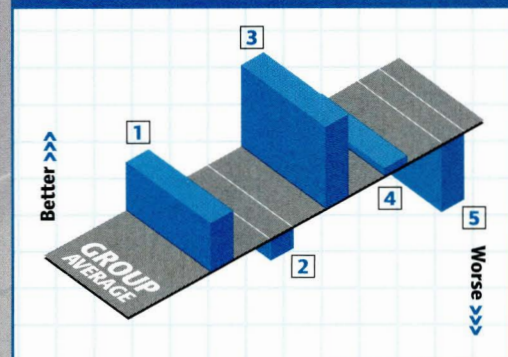
**No other magazine offers an equivalent test and listening programme for comparative tests.**

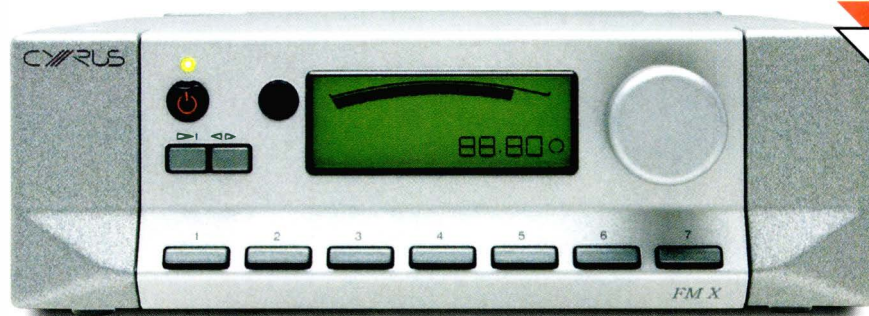
## LAB REPORTS: THE BAR GRAPH

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

- 1] Noise floor:** This reflects not only the absolute level of residual noise but also how the spectrum of that noise influences its audibility.
- 2] Distortion:** Measured at various frequencies and levels, this shows how 'clean' the demodulation and audio circuits in the tuner are.
- 3] Stereo separation:** A measure of how much left channel leaks into the right, and vice versa. This can affect stereo imaging precision.
- 4] Sensitivity:** High sensitivity means that a tuner can work well with low received signals. However, this has no direct correlation with sound under good signal conditions.
- 5] Frequency response:** FM radio is limited by design to a 15kHz bandwidth. Our measurement relates to flatness below that limit.

## OUR BAR GRAPHS: AN EXAMPLE





**£500 (FM)** ☎ 01480 435577 🌐 www.cyrusaudio.com

# CYRUS FM-X

*The FM-X tuner has an ace up its small alloy sleeve... it's upgradable!*

**C**yrus offers only one tuner in its current range, and here it is. It fits neatly into that range both physically and conceptually, claiming fuss-free performance based on traditional sonic virtues, at a sensibly middling price.

Most manufacturers generally buy in sub-assemblies for use in their tuners. Cyrus is no exception; the FM-X features a pretty familiar selection of chips for the various decoding functions. But, the way in which these sub-assemblies are all used together has a few nips and tucks beyond the basic 'application note' circuit and the neat and efficient layout is also Cyrus's own.

In addition, this tuner offers a truly unique feature in its compatibility with Cyrus's PSX-R external power supply. It's not required for basic operation, but it can be added as an upgrade, supposedly bringing sonic improvements. Other features include fine-step tuning, with 10kHz increments (rather than the more common 25kHz) and seven, one-touch presets. Plus one of the nicest signal-strength meters we've seen in a while, with lots of segments and 'full strength' for once indicating more than just so-so reception.

## SOUND QUALITY

First impressions of this tuner were of a lively and communicative sound, free from any obvious nasties. But, it wasn't until we'd had a really good chance to listen to it under varying conditions and in direct comparison with its competitors, that we realised just how good it is. There are limitations: the treble is not quite as open and detailed as the very best tuners we've heard and stereo imaging depth is likewise slightly compromised. One or two currently available models will give just a shade more insight into really low-level details of live BBC Radio 3 broadcasts and other demonstration-quality transmissions.

But that's nit-picking. What we heard from the FM-X, consistently over different music



types and in two locations with differing reception conditions, convinced us that it's a lot more than just a pretty face. For a start, it has truly excellent bass. Tuners usually measure flat in the low frequencies but don't always sound it, finding it hard to tread the line between leanness and flab. In this case, we'd say the line is marked out with precision, the sound possessing plentiful depth but never straying into vague woofiness. On the contrary, it's tuneful, clear and that old favourite of plucked double bass is admirably easy to pick out and follow.

The midrange, meanwhile, is largely free of colorations with just the occasional trace of perceived lift on female voice, spoken and sung. It's detailed, too, resulting in unusually good imaging – good width and decent depth with it. And treble is free of congestion and unnatural sibilance too, all adding up to sound that is both involving and analytical. Only under really demanding reception conditions (such as bad multipath distortion) does audio really suffer in comparison with more comprehensively equipped tuners. If you can get a good FM signal at your location, this is something of a radiophonic bargain. **HFC**

### VERDICT

**SOUND >>> 87%**

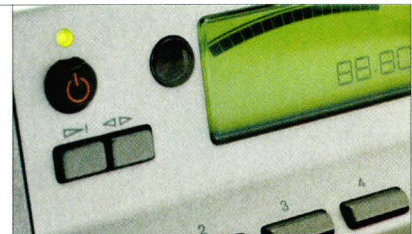
**FEATURES >>> 80%**

**BUILD >>> 88%**

**VALUE >>> 87%**

Smart, simple, very well built and with a select but well-considered set of features, this tuner achieves particularly gratifying sonic results. The PSX-R upgrade potential is the icing on the cake.

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

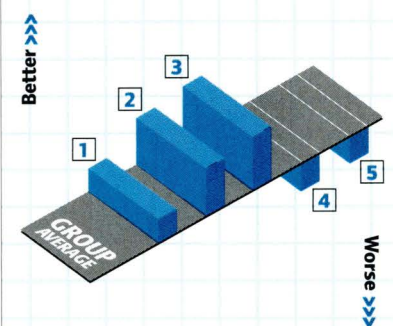


## LAB REPORT

Cyrus has opted for a fairly low audio output level. But, don't be put off! The FM-X's measured performance underlines the high standard of sonic achievement with distortion that's actually better than the limits quoted for our measuring test set. The frequency response is not the flattest in the group, but it's still only 1dB shy at 15kHz – probably audible in A/B comparisons, but certainly not worrying.

Crosstalk performance is exemplary at better than 40dB over a wide frequency range, and noise with a good strong signal is well suppressed, as are the 19kHz pilot tones and the intermodulation distortion that invariably accompanies it. With weak incoming RF, noise does climb somewhat and it's evident that this tuner is not optimised for marginal reception conditions, but if that's the price one pays for excellent audio performance we're happy to accept it.

## HOW IT COMPARES



- 1] Noise floor >>> +20%
- 2] Distortion >>> +40%
- 3] Stereo separation >>> +50%
- 4] Sensitivity >>> -20%
- 5] Frequency response flatness >>> -20%

## SPECIFICATIONS

Measurement	Rated	Actual
Output level (FM, max)	-	0.7V
Distortion (FM, 1kHz)	0.08%	0.08%
Frequency response (FM, 20Hz-15kHz)	-	±1.0dB



£250 (DAB/FM) ☎ 01234 741200 🌐 www.denon.co.uk

# DENON TU-1800DAB

Denon's always near the top of the tuner tree. Now it bears DAB fruit

**W**e reviewed this tuner on its own in HFC 274 and on that occasion, hailed it as the first DAB/FM model we'd come across that broadly equalled the performance of decent FM-only alternatives. Whatever the outcome, as it faces two head-on competitors in this group, nothing can detract from its smart and user-friendly manner. It's moderately well featured, with a few touches we particularly appreciate on DAB, including a 'Bit Error Rate' (BER) display which gives ultimate confidence that reception is digitally perfect as it falls to zero and Dynamic Range Control. On FM, there's less to fiddle with, but that's probably little or no loss in most installations. 100 presets per band strikes us as more than one could possibly ever want.

FM and DAB sections are completely separate as far as the analogue output stage, with each handled by a highly integrated module. The FM/AM part is from Kwang Sung and is basically a complete FM tuner, from RF input to audio output. The DAB module is from TBK, with D-A conversion of DAB signals being carried out on Denon's main circuit board by a chip from Analog Devices. Build quality is decent rather than outstanding, with respectable commercial-grade components all round and the medium-size frame type mains transformer is a pleasant surprise in a tuner.

Outputs are provided from the usual phono sockets, plus both flavours of digital (DAB only, of course). There's also a Radio Data Interface.

## SOUND QUALITY

Comparing audio performance between DAB models is generally not a particularly edifying exercise: on the whole most tuners are so much more capable than the broadcast system as an overall entity (including MPEG data-reduction coding) that differences border on the imperceptible. In this case, adopting as a reference the digital output of this, or any other tuner via some of the finest external DACs available, the sound is ever so slightly



veiled but we're not inclined to worry about it. What DAB does well – like quiet backgrounds and deep bass – you'll enjoy to the full through this model and what it does badly won't irritate you significantly more or less than any other.

FM, by contrast, remains one of domestic audio's tougher challenges and while this isn't the last word in what can be achieved, we continue to be impressed by the FM quality of the TU-1800DAB. It comfortably meets the basic criteria of decently low noise and lack of break-up in the sound at high levels and reaches beyond that to offer a good taste of the proper hi-fi FM experience, with good solidity to the sound and some good imaging too. Voices are natural and not unduly sibilant and music is appealingly vibrant and rhythmic.

There are still clues that this is after all a budget tuner – for instance, in the way it lacks the last smidgen of noise-floor suppression. It's not so much that the noise level is obviously higher than say, the T+A, more that the Denon's noise seems grainier and hence more intrusive. Bass is not as assured as some and treble a touch harsh. But all the same, by any sane standards, at this attractive price, the TU-1800DAB is a mighty capable component and a worthy successor to the long-standing and justly famous TU-260L. **HFC**

VERDICT	
<b>SOUND &gt;&gt; 84%</b>	FM performance is lively and informative if not truly high end, but with a little grain audible under some conditions: DAB is about as good as it gets. Factor in the good price and this is a great all-rounder.
<b>FEATURES &gt;&gt; 86%</b>	
<b>BUILD &gt;&gt; 83%</b>	
<b>VALUE &gt;&gt; 88%</b>	
<b>HI-FI CHOICE OVERALL SCORE 86%</b>	

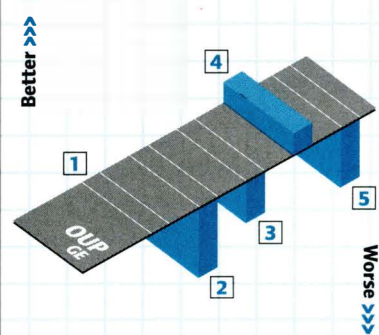


## LAB REPORT

DAB performance seems absolutely fine, with the usual low levels of distortion and dead flat frequency response extending further than the broadcasts. On FM, the basics are good, with pretty low distortion and just a little treble roll-off. Two factors of interest turned up, however. First, distortion rises considerably when only one channel is carrying an audio signal (because of the way stereo FM is encoded, this situation always causes somewhat worse distortion than when left and right channels are identical. But in this case, it's more pronounced than usual. Second, there's quite a lot of 'modulation noise' – the noise floor rises by around 7dB when the audio level is high.

With little doubt, these two factors contribute to the tuner's sound and probably largely account for the slight lack of subtlety. There are worse things that can happen to a tuner, though, and the overall picture is good.

## HOW IT COMPARES



- 1] Noise floor >> 0%
- 2] Distortion >> -40%
- 3] Stereo separation >> -20%
- 4] Sensitivity >> +10%
- 5] Frequency response flatness >> -30%

## SPECIFICATIONS

Measurement	Rated	Actual
Output level (FM, max)	–	1.0V
Distortion (FM, 1kHz)	0.3%	0.3%
Frequency response (FM, 20Hz-15kHz)	–	±1.0dB



# June 2006 marks the launch of some long-awaited products.

**INTRODUCTION** After almost three decades in this industry I have some perspective, and I can say that the high-end is not a shrinking industry; and in terms of quality and value we are living in the Golden Age of Hi-Fi! Real Hi-Fi has always been the pursuit of the enlightened and minority; today's iPods are bought by yesterday's owners of rack systems. What I find surprising is the commercial success in Britain of the usual suspects. If you look just a little beyond the magazines and the High Street, the same money buys crafted and calibrated products with pride of possession, long-term currency, value and most of all pleasure.

We are very happy to offer a premium no-frills mail-order service; indeed we think ours is the best in the land: with no grey imports, no phantom products, six month guarantees on Hi-FiShop.com, what you see is what you get. Two floors up from our bargain basement, (or clearance cellar!) The Audio Salon's spacious Victorian Drawing Room people travel from near and far to hear; for example, the fabulous Gryphon Poseidon system, which redefines the state of the art.

In Tom Brown's schooldays, six of the best was to be avoided at all costs. This month we proudly debut Hi-Fi that redefines investment opportunities, and getting in before the rest!

**ATC SCM-40** Launched in May 2006 at £1,999, this speaker by ATC asks (if there is anybody out there; yes Pink Floyd are among ATC users) why spend two grand on a hyped or second-hand loudspeaker when you can cut to the chase and hear your music the same way most musicians heard their recordings in the studio.



**Esoteric X-03se** TEAC decided to keep UK customers waiting for the special edition at no extra price for the stiffened power supply and other refinements. It has been worth the wait. This is a combination of VRDS precision engineering and painstaking audiophile refinement. At £4,995 it has to be the high-end bargain of the decade.



**Ayre Acoustics MX-R** There is a well-founded rumour that Charles Hansen knows a thing or two about amplifier design, and when his amps outperform behemoths costing more than double, you wonder what his forthcoming £11,590 monoblocks will do. At a product launch in Amsterdam, a Hi-Fi manufacturer said to Hansen, "These are simply the best amps I have heard." And he has heard most. The MX-R revises what you expect from amplifiers. And yet it is so small...



**JPS Labs** Jilt your girlfriend, divorce your wife if she moans about "a bit of wire that costs two grand." Is she deaf or something? The Aluminata range from JPS reflects the company's commitment to spend less than 5% revenue on advertising (ie. your money) and avoid off-the-shelf materials which make an ordinary product. The new SC-3 interconnect is available on sale-or-return; a nasty trap for the unwary. Barely legal.



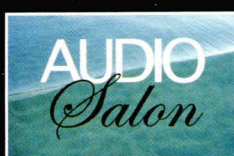
**Brinkmann Oasis** Mr Brinkmann has come up the fast lane to produce turntables with a vengeance and a long waiting list too! They are the best. And untypically they are affordable, but now they are a bargain. The Oasis at £3,495 (launched in May 2006) employs the same precision engineering but without the costs of belt drive. This new revolution (intentional pun) has been made possible by a wholly new motor which redefines direct drive. Do not expect quick delivery. Do not buy anything else.



**Pathos Endorphin** And then there comes along the long-awaited Italian CD player and it gives you the goose bumps. Comparisons with Alfa Romeos and Ferraris convey the excitement that a product of passion; stimulating and absolutely sensational. Do not waste £4,500 on ... What you were about to buy!!!

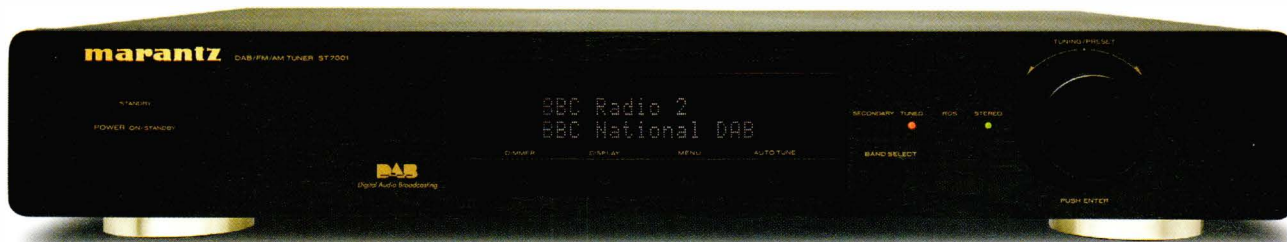


**To find out more - call the Audio Salon on 0845 4000 400 today!**



4 Park Circus, Glasgow, G3 6AX, Scotland  
0845 4000 400  
info@audiosalon.co.uk  
www.audiosalon.co.uk

**We sell products that are worth that little bit of extra effort...**



£300 (DAB/FM) ☎ 01753 680868 🌐 www.marantz.com

# MARANTZ ST7001

*Two from the same stable, but is this a horse of a different colour?*

Now that Marantz is run under the same umbrella company as Denon (D&M Holdings, which also owns McIntosh, Boston Acoustics and Snell loudspeakers), one might perhaps expect some commonality of components and design between this and a similarly-specified Denon tuner. Indeed, the specifications list of this model looks very similar to that of the TU-1800DAB. And under the hood? Well, the same DAB tuner module resides in each, the same DAC, the same FM tuner module, the same mains transformer... and very nearly the same circuit board. It's not quite identical – the odd component here and there seeming unique to one model or the other – but the similarities are marked to say the least.

Basic specs are exactly the same too – DAB, FM, MW, electrical and optical digital output from DAB, RDI, RDS on FM and squillions of presets. Build quality is respectable and the unit occupies a considerably larger case than the Denon, with slightly more fresh air inside. It's nice to use too, with manual tuning aided by the swift-responding rotary knob.

So should we expect the same performance? We don't want to jump the gun on our conclusions, but in the course of conducting the lab tests, we did find some component changes in the FM module that have some marked effects. By the way, almost all our listening was carried out before we realised quite how similar the two units were.

## SOUND QUALITY

In the event, comments on the ST7001's sound tallied broadly with those on the TU-1800DAB but varied in enough specifics to suggest that the technical differences between the pair may not be so very trivial after all. That's on FM, anyway: DAB seems frankly indistinguishable in every way. But analogue radio, while it comes in loud and clear with considerable gusto and insight, has its own particular characteristics.



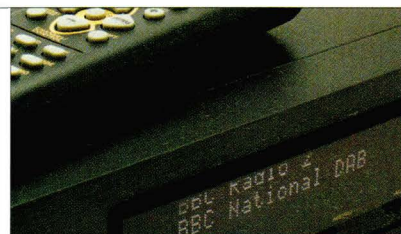
Most noticeable is the bass, which seems a touch more present through the ST7001. It's not any deeper, nor is its level obviously higher, but it seems a little more palpable and if anything, a shade more tuneful too. The extent to which this is obvious depends quite strongly on musical material and it's not that marked on most commercial pop radio. Subtler classical and jazz tones show it up much more, however.

In the midband, we thought the present contender behind the TU-1800DAB on detail and imaging, but no less lively. In some situations it can come across as more energetic, which we assume is due to the difference in the bass. Meanwhile, the treble is basically clean, but once again lacks some of the clarity and openness that the very best FM tuners can achieve.

As a result of those differences, admittedly not vast in the great scheme of things, we found this tuner to be more immediately appealing than the Denon, but not necessarily more involving to listen to in the long run. With most pop music styles it scored about the same, but for classical, all things considered, it seemed a touch less convincing. All the same, it's clearly a perfectly decent budget tuner and a safe purchase for most lovers of the airwaves. **HFC**

### VERDICT

<p><b>SOUND &gt;&gt; 83%</b></p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100%; height: 10px; background: linear-gradient(to right, orange 83%, white 83%);"></div>	<p>Sharing a great deal with the Denon, this tuner seems similarly lively on FM, but it offered slightly less detail and insight. As a result, it was less engaging in the long run. DAB performance is good.</p>
<p><b>FEATURES &gt;&gt; 86%</b></p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100%; height: 10px; background: linear-gradient(to right, orange 86%, white 86%);"></div>	
<p><b>BUILD &gt;&gt; 83%</b></p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100%; height: 10px; background: linear-gradient(to right, orange 83%, white 83%);"></div>	
<p><b>VALUE &gt;&gt; 86%</b></p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100%; height: 10px; background: linear-gradient(to right, orange 86%, white 86%);"></div>	<p><b>HI-FI CHOICE</b> <b>OVERALL SCORE 84%</b></p>

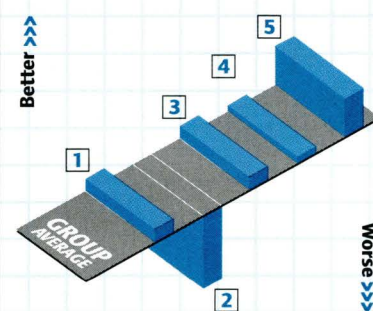


## LAB REPORT

The most obvious difference between this and the TU-1800DAB is in output level, which at 1.6V is higher by some 4dB. It was this that alerted us to the changes within the FM module, which we assume are also responsible for the slight, but quite possibly significant, difference in distortion between the two units. Under most conditions the ST7001's distortion is a little higher, third harmonic reaching the sort of level (just under 0.5%) where it can cause subtle coloration-like effects: this may well account for the bass differences noted.

There's also a difference in frequency response between the tuners, but this may be indicative of no more than component tolerances and about half a decibel brighter treble is not a make-or-break difference by any means. Overall, though, the picture is the same, with a similar tendency for noise floor to rise in the presence of loud audio. This allows single-channel distortion to dominate. A generally good set of results.

## HOW IT COMPARES



- 1] Noise floor >> +10%
- 2] Distortion >> -50%
- 3] Stereo separation >> +10%
- 4] Sensitivity >> +5%
- 5] Frequency response flatness >> +30%

## SPECIFICATIONS

Measurement	Rated	Actual
Output level (FM, max)	-	1.6V
Distortion (FM, 1kHz)	0.5%	0.4%
Frequency response (FM, 20Hz-15kHz)	-	±0.3dB

# EVO .... A New Beginning

Renowned for the quality of its entry level products, Creek Audio is set to recapture the hearts of first time buyers with its exciting new line - EVO.

Initially comprising a matching integrated amplifier and CD player, EVO products represent extraordinary value for money.

In true Creek tradition Creek's EVO range provides exceptional sound quality at affordable prices.

Available in both silver and black, the EVO range picks up where Creek's hugely popular 43 series left off in 2002!



Creek Audio Limited  
12 Avebury Court, Mark Road, Hemel Hempstead HP2 7TA  
Telephone: +44 (0) 1442 260146 Fax: +44 (0) 870 622 0846  
Email: [info@creekaudio.com](mailto:info@creekaudio.com) Web: [www.creekaudio.com](http://www.creekaudio.com)



## Sssh.

Hundreds of amazing reductions across all the best personal audio, hi-fi and home cinema brands. For a limited time only. The little-known sale at Practical Hi-Fi is now on. If we were you, we'd try and keep it that way.

**Practical Hi-Fi** Obsessive about hi-fi.

[www.practicalhifi.co.uk](http://www.practicalhifi.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





£210 (DAB/FM) ☎ 01923 260511 🌐 www.pure.com

# PURE DRX-702ES

*DAB's leading light in the UK hasn't abandoned FM yet*

**W**e reviewed this tuner back in *HFC* 242 and we thought it would be interesting to see how this – one of the early DAB/FM models – stacks up against recent models. The price has come down a fair chunk and the unit remains competitive on a specs/price basis at least.

The specs are rather good. On this occasion, we are considering the basic model with unbalanced outputs, but balanced signals via XLR sockets are an option and naturally there are also digital outputs (both flavours) active when DAB is being received. Also on the hardware front, there is a Radio Data Interface and a USB socket for firmware upgrades.

On the software side, things are interesting. Pure started out in DAB tuners and came to FM later, a career which is unusual or possibly unique and thus it thinks in DAB terms. As a result, there are no conventional FM presets. Instead the tuner features autotune on FM just as on DAB, scanning the band to find receivable stations and storing them by RDS name or frequency (you can also add names manually) in memory. This makes finding an FM station as simple as on DAB – just scroll through an alphabetical list of names.

Nothing seems to have been missed off the DAB features list. Dynamic Range Control is implemented with three settings (off, half and full), there's a good signal quality indicator and you can get full text information, though the display is looking a little dated alongside some on the market. FM information is similarly displayed, with an optimistic signal strength meter. Overall it's a well thought-out device, though, with a neat and tidy internal layout.

## SOUND QUALITY

As in most of its recent hi-fi component DAB tuners, Pure has included PAC ('Psychoacoustic Correction') into the DRX-702, making DAB sound immediately distinctive in any direct comparison with other models. There's nothing mysterious about this: it's a fairly simple filter



which cuts the level of treble output by a couple of dB, ostensibly in order to lessen the 'birdies' and other MPEG coding artefacts which afflict practically all DAB broadcasts. While we appreciate the point, we're not convinced that 2dB is really enough to make much of a difference to that, but on the other hand, it is certainly an audible tonal change from regular DAB tuners.

That apart, DAB reception is much of a muchness with most other tuners and via the digital outputs, there's nothing in it at all. FM is a different matter and in fact we found ourselves liking that side of things better than three years ago. It could simply be that this sample was better aligned than the earlier one, but, however it came about, we enjoyed a lively and upbeat performance from the unit with low levels of noise and audible distortion.

In the end though, FM sound is not quite as clear as we heard from the Denon and Marantz models. There's a persistent mild grain and veiling that bothered us across a range of programmes and was less than conducive to extended listening. The basic tonality is good in the bass and a little bright in the treble and performance is average under marginal reception conditions, but we can't help feeling there is more detail in the aether than the DRX-702 seems inclined to extract. **HFC**

**VERDICT**

**SOUND >> 80%**

**FEATURES >> 88%**

**BUILD >> 88%**

**VALUE >> 86%**

Basically decent FM sound is plagued by persistent slight veiling which comes between the listener and true involvement in the music. DAB sound is distinctly mellower than most thanks to PAC.

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

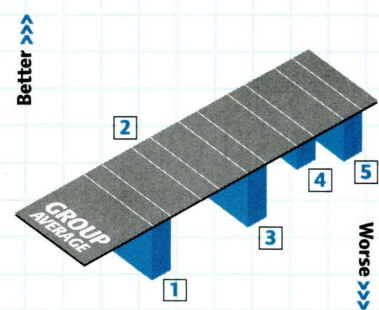


## LAB REPORT

DAB performance is dominated by PAC, which gives a total cut of about 2.5dB at highest frequencies and around 2dB over most of the treble range: otherwise there's nothing much to comment on. On FM, there's some quite impressive performance, particularly in decoding signals on only one channel, where distortion is held to a commendably low level, barely more than when the signal is identical on left and right.

Response is a touch lifted in the treble, which is not always welcome given how 'spitty' many broadcasts are already, but half a dB isn't too frightening. Noise is somewhat below par for the course: it varies little with audio signal level, but rises more than most with low RF signal levels, suggesting a slightly noisy input stage. The 19kHz stereo pilot tone and the intermodulation artefacts near it are less well suppressed than in the other tuners here, and this may well account for the grainy sound noted.

## HOW IT COMPARES



- 1] Noise floor >> -50%
- 2] Distortion >> 0%
- 3] Stereo separation >> -50%
- 4] Sensitivity >> -20%
- 5] Frequency response flatness >> -35%

## SPECIFICATIONS

Measurement	Rated	Actual
Output level (FM, max)	—	1.2V
Distortion (FM, 1kHz)	0.3%	0.2%
Frequency response (FM, 20Hz-15kHz)	—	+0.7dB

# Classic in every sense of the word

In recent years there have been three exceptional Creek products which have time and again been the recipient of awards for excellence.

Rather than see them give way to new models, all three have become Creek 'Classics'.

The 5350SE integrated amplifier, CD50mk2 CD player and T50 tuner make up this legendary range. A power amplifier is being added to complement Creek's 'Classics'.



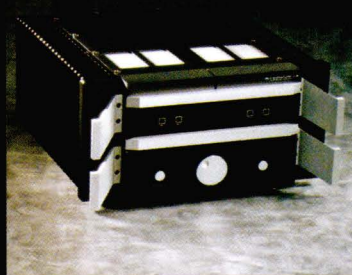
Creek Audio Limited  
 12 Avebury Court, Mark Road, Hemel Hempstead HP2 7TA  
 Telephone: +44 (0) 1442 260146 Fax: +44 (0) 870 622 0846  
 Email: [info@creekaudio.com](mailto:info@creekaudio.com) Web: [www.creekaudio.com](http://www.creekaudio.com)



## DK Design Signature Amp LSA1 Statement Speaker

These products on their own are products not to be taken lightly. Put them together and you have the makings of a system far greater than the sum of its parts. Metropolis Music and its Dealers will be running a special promotional offer, which gives you not only your dream system but a large saving as well.

This truly astonishing combination at **£11,500** is available at the **special price of just £9995**. That is a **saving of £1505**. Call your nearest Dealer (below) to arrange an audition now.



bat



boulder



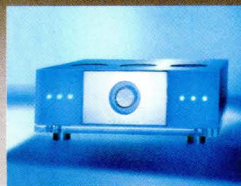
copulare



dynamic precision



hansen



hovland



kharna



lumley



mastersound



music tools

### metropolis music

[www.metropolis-music.co.uk](http://www.metropolis-music.co.uk)  
 tel: 01435 867 438

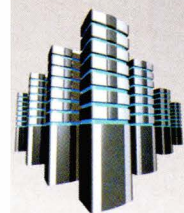
please call for additional product information and literature.

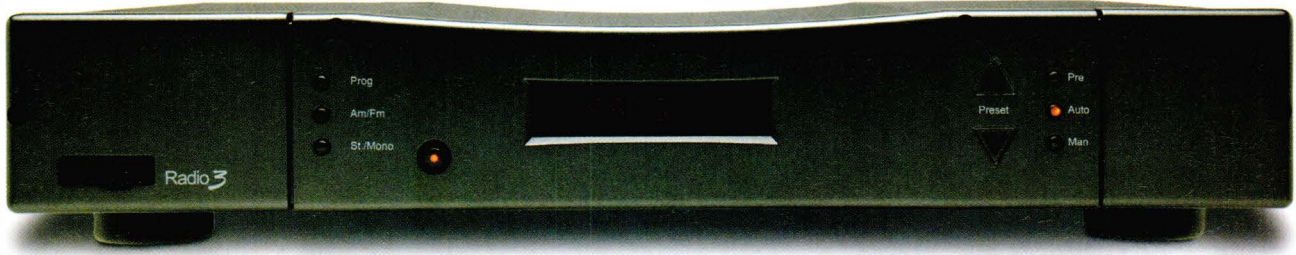
### brands

- Bladelius
- Boulder
- BAT
- Copulare
- DK Audio
- Dynamic Precision
- Hansen
- Hovland
- Innersound
- Kharna
- Lumley
- Mastersound
- Music Tools
- Sound Lab

### dealers

- Audio Images
- Cloney Audio
- Lintone Audio
- Kronos Hi-Fi
- Rochester Hi-Fi
- Sounds of Music
- Zouch Audio
- (t) 01502 582853
- (t) (+353-1) 288-9449
- (t) 0191 477 4167
- (t) 028 8775 3606
- (t) 01634 880 037
- (t) 01435 865 212
- (t) 01530 414 128





£398 (FM) ☎ 01702 333071 🌐 www.rega.co.uk

## REGA RADIO 3

Rega's long-standing FM tuner is a minimalist's dream

Another established model, also tested in HFC 242, the Radio 3 remains one of the most competitively priced tuners from any of the UK hi-fi specialists. Externally, it's absolutely Rega – the design and construction being quite distinct from anything made by other brands. Unless you've a passion against plastic front panels, it's eye-catching and practical. The minimalist control make the unit slightly trickier to use than some, but one can soon learn to live with that.

At the rear is the minimum number of connectors for aerials and audio – none of your fancy remote control connections or USB here! All the money has gone inside the case, where one finds a tuner head from Kwang Sung (who seems to have nearly monopolised the market for such things, replacing the familiar names of old, Alps and Mitsui) followed by three well-established chips from Sanyo that do most of the decoding work. The output buffers use discrete transistors, while the power supply is based on a small toroidal transformer. Passive components throughout the unit are of good commercial quality and the general theme is clearly thoughtful design of circuitry for performance to a budget.

Tuning is in half-step increments (25kHz) and there are the usual automatic scan-tuning and presets to speed things up, but no RDS, and no signal strength indicator either. Even the remote control is an optional extra – since it controls a complete Rega system, many purchasers will presumably have one already.

### SOUND QUALITY

What this tuner lacks in features it comfortably makes up for in performance. In a group extending to over twice its price, it shouldn't be the outright best and it isn't, but in terms of value it's as attractive as any. Just as on the last occasion we heard it, we continue to be impressed by its natural and extended bass – ultimately it's not quite as solid as that of the Cyrus but it is certainly more than passable,



with real presence and a convincing way of following low-lying melodic lines and percussion alike.

In the midrange, there isn't quite the transparency that the very best in FM tuners can offer, but there is a commendable level of detail. There's also mild coloration that affects the high midrange, just slightly adding a bloom to high-lying melody instruments. It's not unpleasant, but if one's being really picky it isn't quite accurate. Above it, however, the real treble has a nice relaxed quality to it which is just occasionally compromised by a hint of 'boxiness', closing in slightly on high harmonics and their decay into ambience.

If this sounds like pretty picky criticism for a tuner, that's a fair point. Overall, we were impressed by the musical and communicative qualities of the Radio 3. It is not fussy about musical styles and indeed handles spoken voice just as confidently and such sins as it possesses are minor ones mostly of omission rather than commission – it hasn't quite the authority of real high-end wireless nor the purity of treble, but it adds little signature of its own and strongly resists obvious distortion. Under poor reception conditions it does about as well as any 'no-frills' tuner we can recall, too and we've no hesitation about giving it a high recommendation. **HFC**

### VERDICT

SOUND >> 85%

FEATURES >> 75%

BUILD >> 82%

VALUE >> 87%

A classic low-feature-count audiophile product from a hi-fi legend, with FM sound that's strong in the bass, clear in the treble and detailed in the midrange. It's always plenty of fun to listen to.

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

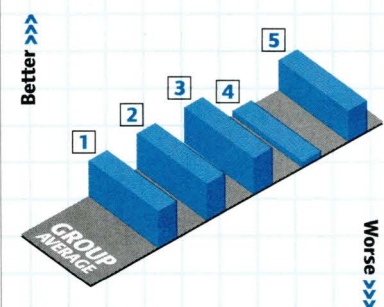


### LAB REPORT

In almost every area, measured performance of the Radio 3 is middling to good. Distortion particularly is better than many, but not as good as some, with a marked increase when only one audio channel is transmitted. Noise is about par for the course, too, but what may be significant is that it has a distinct 'colour' compared with the group average, with a slightly lower level in the psychoacoustically significant band from 2kHz to 5kHz but a minor lift above 6kHz.

Differences are slight, not much more than 1dB, but it's probably not fanciful to relate this to the slightly closed-in treble. Pilot suppression is good and the intermodulation artefacts in the band above 15kHz are kept to a remarkably low level, which can only help keep the sound clean as they represent highly unnatural, anharmonic distortion which tends to be very unpleasant. As with all the tuners in this group, distortion basically vanishes into noise for levels below -20dB.

### HOW IT COMPARES



- 1] Noise floor >> +30%
- 2] Distortion >> +30%
- 3] Stereo separation >> +30%
- 4] Sensitivity >> +5%
- 5] Frequency response flatness >> +25%

### SPECIFICATIONS

Measurement	Rated	Actual
Output level (FM, max)	—	0.7V
Distortion (FM, 1kHz)	0.1%	0.13%
Frequency response (FM, 20Hz-15kHz)	±0.5dB	±0.3dB

# As fate would have it.....

It was inevitable that in time, Creek would produce a superior range of products that would completely captivate the imagination of lovers of music - young and old.

Appropriately named Destiny, the latest products to emerge from Creek Audio leave no doubt that, given the available resources, Creek can produce outstanding high end products.

Destiny proves yet again that Creek designs exceptional products at a price that continues to astound.



Creek Audio Limited  
12 Avebury Court, Mark Road, Hemel Hempstead HP2 7TA  
Telephone: +44 (0) 1442 260146 Fax: +44 (0) 870 622 0846  
Email: [info@creekaudio.com](mailto:info@creekaudio.com) Web: [www.creekaudio.com](http://www.creekaudio.com)



EW KNWO TAHT ORU COMETIPTINO  
CNA OTFNE LEVEA YUO FELEGIN  
COFNDUSE... WE WON'T!

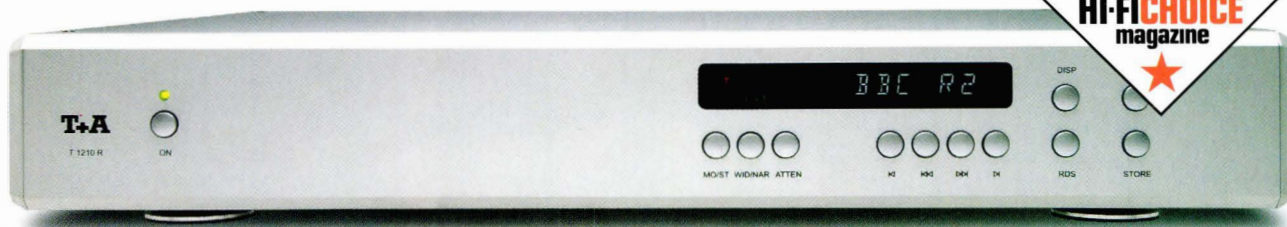


Oxford Audio Consultants Ltd  
WE LOVE TO LISTEN

CANTAY HOUSE, PARK END STREET, OXFORD OX1 1JD  
MON-FRI: 10AM - 6PM / SAT: 10AM - 5PM (CLOSED THURSDAY)

TEL 01865 790 879 / FAX 01865 791 665  
[INFO@OXFORDAUDIO.CO.UK](mailto:INFO@OXFORDAUDIO.CO.UK) / [WWW.OXFORDAUDIO.CO.UK](http://WWW.OXFORDAUDIO.CO.UK)

VISIT [WWW.OXFORDAUDIO.CO.UK](http://WWW.OXFORDAUDIO.CO.UK) FOR THE LATEST INFORMATION ON NEW/USED EQUIPMENT



£1,000 (FM) ☎ 01623 517000 🌐 www.taelektroakustik.de

# T+A T1210R

T+A's high end FM tuner is built to last

**W**e've been impressed by one or two T+A products recently, which tend to present a singularly hi-tech face to the world and contain some impressive engineering. This tuner is no exception. Fit and finish are superb and the unit has a very professional air all round. It's simple and pleasant to operate, with the exception of manual tuning, which we found a bit of a bore. But, once you've loaded your favourite stations into the presets, it's all quick and easy. RDS helps keep track of stations, too.

Within the case, construction is as smart as on the outside. The circuit board carrying the main RF and audio blocks is positioned away from the back panel and linked to it by cables of a few inches length – we've some slight reservations about the use of a phono connector on the link from the aerial socket! This board is quite small, very neat, and loaded with a tuner head from Kwang Sung and chips from Sanyo and Philips, the latter decoding RDS while the former handle audio.

The power supply features a generous mains transformer shielded in copper-plated steel, but otherwise is typical of those fitted to the other tuners in the group. Electronically then, this looks quite similar to the other models in the group, but it does have two features on the RF side that can help optimise reception under marginal conditions. First, a bandwidth control that when set to 'Narrow' can help exclude interference from nearby stations or multipath distortion, plus an attenuator which helps prevent overload if there is a strong station nearby. Both useful with crowded airwaves.

## SOUND QUALITY

This tuner faces some stiff competition in the group from cheaper models, but although it didn't blow away the Cyrus and Rega offerings, the T1210R did put in a performance which equalled either of them in any area and bettered them both in some. For a start, its bass is really very solid and extended, reaching



the lowest frequencies but always immaculately controlled and as a result taut and rhythmic when need be.

Treble is clean and nicely open too, with a good deal of air around delicate sounds, but the real deciding factor in this tuner's favour is its midband, which is by a small but significant margin the clearest and most detailed of the group. It is not absolutely devoid of coloration – on occasion we heard hints of lower-mid hollowness – but it's pretty close and it offers some of the best detail and imaging we've heard from the airwaves. Just now and then Radios 2, 3 and 4 particularly, will put out a broadcast with some fine imaging depth and frankly there aren't many tuners that can make the most of that.

Depth, after all, is a hard trick for CD players and amplifiers to get right and on FM there's arguably a good deal more to go wrong. Even so, this one makes a very good stab at it, surpassed only by a couple of reference tuners (both expensive, long out of production and somewhat tweaked) in our cupboard. At the same time, the essentials for listener involvement are well provided for, with good rhythmic drive and lack of any obvious grain or excess spit in the sound. We have no hesitation in pronouncing it a grand grand's-worth. **HFC**

### VERDICT

**SOUND >> 88%**  
[Progress bar]

**FEATURES >> 82%**  
[Progress bar]

**BUILD >> 87%**  
[Progress bar]

**VALUE >> 84%**  
[Progress bar]

A classy-looking bit of kit which sounds similarly upmarket, with assured detail and imaging and some real polish to the overall presentation. Useful control over the dread multipath nasties, too.

88%

OVERALL SCORE

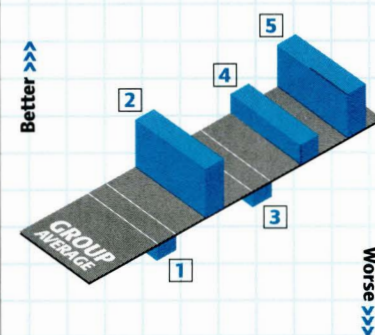


## LAB REPORT

In no one area is this tuner obviously superior to the others, but on the whole it equals or exceeds all of them in each detail. Distortion is low under any conditions, rising by a modest amount when only one channel is driven and noise is really much of a muchness with most of the others in terms of both level and spectrum. Meanwhile, suppression of pilot tone and distortions above 15kHz is good but not devastatingly better than the rest can manage.

Channel separation is weak by modern standards, but while we're used to seeing very high figures for this from CD players, LP never managed to beat even a so-so FM tuner and still achieved good imaging, so it's probably not a real limitation. Frequency response is very flat; within two tenths of a dB to 10kHz and less than 0.5dB out at 14kHz. Finally, the 'Narrow' tuning mode gives less increase in distortion than is often the case, making it more generally applicable.

## HOW IT COMPARES



- 1] Noise floor >> -10%
- 2] Distortion >> +45%
- 3] Stereo separation >> -10%
- 4] Sensitivity >> +15%
- 5] Frequency response flatness >> +40%

## SPECIFICATIONS

Measurement	Rated	Actual
Output level (FM, max)	1.0V	1.3V
Distortion (FM, 1kHz)	0.1%	0.07%
Frequency response (FM, 20Hz - 15kHz)	+1.5dB	+0.2dB

# CONCLUSIONS

Anyone expecting DAB to have eclipsed FM by now is in for a big surprise

This has been an interesting group for several reasons – not least because it shows how much life there still is in FM. As far as DAB is concerned, the outlook from the hi-fi buyer's point of view seems pretty simple; there just ain't much between tuners in performance terms, apart from some super-cheap models we've seen. So, if a tuner takes your fancy on grounds of looks or user interface, don't waste time agonising.

With FM though, the situation is completely different. There's plenty of reason to choose carefully between models.

Of those models tested in this issue, none is actually bad or indeed anything very close to it. We derived particular pleasure from listening to the T+A, which shows just what can be done with 'wireless' when cost isn't too tightly reined-in. It has all the hallmarks of fine audio kit from any category – good bass extension and control, clean treble and detailed midrange, plus that essential civilised quality that makes for relaxed yet insightful long-term listening. If you want to enjoy what may be the twilight years of FM in style, it's an excellent choice.

At around half the T+A's price, the Cyrus and Rega models run it surprisingly close and in value terms, we're very taken with them. Neither is ideally suited to poor reception conditions, but then you'll never get a true hi-fi experience unless the RF signal is reasonably decent – put your money into an aerial! Assuming that's sorted, either model will very likely give lasting pleasure. The Cyrus is slightly more refined, but we'd recommend having a listen to both if possible.

Pure's DRX-702 scores highly on versatility, build quality and price and is strongly recommended if

you're likely to listen more to DAB than FM. If the reverse is true though, you may find its FM performance less involving than that of the Denon and Marantz models. These two – closely related internally, but sounding only moderately similar – both offer good FM sound in most areas. But while we enjoyed the Marantz's bass, we thought its level of detail retrieval was a shade behind that of the Denon.

Given that the latter is significantly cheaper, we have little hesitation in awarding it the highest points for value among the group. **HFC**

## TRY THEM WITH THESE

**AMPLIFIERS**  
**CAMBRIDGE AUDIO AZUR 640A** £300  
A perfect example of a budget amp masquerading as upmarket kit.

**ARCAM A90** £950  
A highly civilised amplifier that's at home with any style of music.

**LOUDSPEAKERS**  
**EPOS M12.2** £450  
A standmount model that offers particularly fine tonal balance.

**ATC SCM35** £1,999  
Floorstander that offers astonishing levels of insight into familiar recordings.

## HINTS AND TIPS

» Most important: for FM, use the best aerial you can accommodate unless you can see the transmitter from your window. It's money well spent!

» If you suffer occasional noise breakthrough, try a ferrite ring or two on the aerial cable.

» Use decent cables and keep them short – tuners are not always too keen on driving long cables.

» Tuners can be slightly microphonic: try some vibration-absorbing feet.

» Check your postcode with a dealer for DAB reception before you buy.

## RADIO TUNERS AT A GLANCE

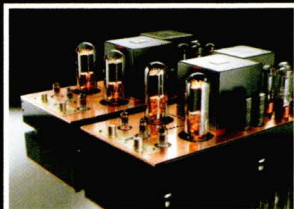
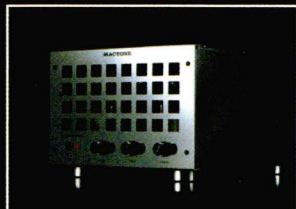
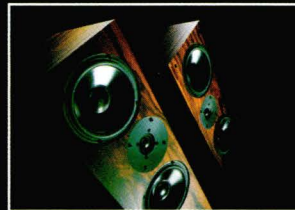


MAKE MODEL	Cyrus FM-X	Denon TU-1800DAB	Marantz ST7001	Pure DRX-702ES	Rega Radio 3	T+A T1210R
<b>PRICE</b>	£500	£250	£300	£210	£398	£1,000
<b>SOUND</b>						
<b>FEATURES</b>						
<b>BUILD</b>						
<b>VALUE</b>						
<b>OVERALL</b>						
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	Smart and simple, this tuner achieves particularly gratifying sonic results.	Very good on DAB: FM performance is lively and informative with little grain.	Again, good DAB, but FM seems to lack a little detail and insight.	DAB performance a touch mellower than most: FM a little rough at times.	Classic minimalist, British hi-fi stuff, with an energetic and lively sound.	Very sophisticated, combining useful features at the RF end with true high-end sonic virtues.
<b>KEY FEATURES</b>						
<b>SIZE (WxHxD)</b>	38x75x21.5cm	43.5x7x27cm	44x7x34cm	43x6.5x27cm	43x8x27cm	44x7x37cm
<b>WEIGHT</b>	2kg	2.5kg	2kg	3kg	2kg	4kg
<b>BANDS</b>	FM	DAB/FM/MW	DAB/FM/MW	DAB/FM/MW	FM/MW	FM
<b>DIGITAL OUTPUT</b>	No	Elec, Opt (DAB only)	Elec, Optical (DAB only)	Elec, Optical (DAB only)	No	No
<b>REMOTE CONTROL</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Opt	Opt
<b>BALANCED OUTPUTS</b>	No	No	No	Opt	No	No
<b>LAB CONCLUSIONS</b> E = EXCELLENT • G = GOOD • A = AVERAGE • P = POOR						
<b>NOISE FLOOR</b>	-77dB <b>E</b>	-76dB <b>G</b>	-76dB <b>G</b>	-72dB <b>A</b>	-77dB <b>E</b>	-75dB <b>G</b>
<b>DISTORTION</b>	0.08% <b>E</b>	0.3% <b>A</b>	0.4% <b>A</b>	0.2% <b>G</b>	0.13% <b>G</b>	0.07% <b>E</b>
<b>CHANNEL SEPARATION</b>	50dB <b>E</b>	40dB <b>A</b>	42dB <b>G</b>	35dB <b>A</b>	48dB <b>E</b>	41dB <b>E</b>
<b>SENSITIVITY (SODB S/N STEREO)</b>	45µV <b>G</b>	36µV <b>G</b>	38µV <b>E</b>	44µV <b>A</b>	38µV <b>G</b>	34µV <b>G</b>
<b>FREQUENCY RESPONSE</b>	±1.0dB <b>A</b>	±1.0dB <b>A</b>	±0.3dB <b>E</b>	±0.7dB <b>G</b>	±0.3dB <b>E</b>	±0.2dB <b>E</b>

# DEFINITIVE AUDIO



**Main image:** Limited Edition KSL Kondo 'Shinden' 211 Mono Valve amplifiers. £76,000.00 per pair.



**Left to right:** 1. KSL Kondo Gakuoh Valve Mono amplifiers 2. Art Audio Concerto Stereo Amplifier (GE) 3. SME 10A Turntable 4. KSL Kondo Neiro Integrated Amplifier  
5. Living Voice OBX R2 Loudspeaker System 6. Mactone 300B Valve Stereo Power Amplifier 7. Magnum Dynalab 106T FM Valve Tuner  
8. KSL Kondo 'Shinden' 211 Mono Valve Amplifiers 9. Resolution Audio Opus 21 CD Player 10. KSL Kondo M1000 Ultimate Valve Preamplifier

# 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!

**W**elcome 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, the ultimate gadget for the serious vinyl user. Katli Audio's excellent stylus pressure gauge brings precision cartridge set-up to the vinyl enthusiast, without the need to spend hundreds of pounds. Just see p63 for our review! For our full selection, visit our dedicated website: [www.choicebits.co.uk](http://www.choicebits.co.uk)



### KATLI AUDIO STYLUS PRESSURE GAUGE

The standard stylus pressure suggested by a cartridge manufacturer is just that – a suggestion. In reality, any LP enthusiast worth their weight in 180g vinyl knows that the best way to good sound is to experiment.

This poses a problem. What happens when you get the perfect stylus downforce and then have to remove the cartridge? Without a precision gauge to measure your ideal settings before removal, you'll be back to square one and a lot of experimentation. A good gauge changes all that – just measure the downforce, then make sure you get exactly the same figure when refitting the cartridge.

Good, accurate stylus pressure gauges are thin on the ground. They are also punishingly expensive, often costing hundreds of pounds. Like the expensive gauges, the Katli measures down to thousandths of a gram, but it's...

**ONLY £74.95**

## Best Buy Accessories



### Clearaudio Deluxe Bubble Level

Use Clearaudio's high-quality stainless steel bubble level to ensure your turntable is lined up.

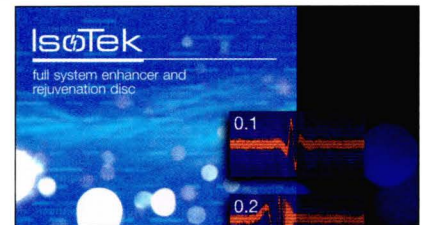
**Price: £21.95**



### 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.

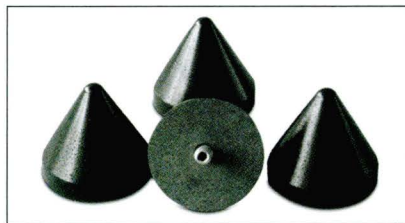
**Price: £44.95**



### 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	☐
Clearaudio Stroboscopic Test Record	£24.95	☐
Clearaudio Stroboscopic Light	£69.95	☐
<b>Clearaudio Deluxe Bubble Level</b>	<b>£21.95</b>	☐
Clearaudio Clever Record Clamp	£12.95	☐
Clearaudio Quadra Record Clamp	£69.95	☐
Clearlight Audio (RDC) Record Puck	£54.95	☐
KAB Strobe Disc & Light	£79.95	☐
<b>Katli Audio Stylus Pressure Gauge</b>	<b>£74.95</b>	☐
Loricraft Record Mat	£49.95	☐
Michell Engineering Record Clamp	£22.95	☐
Michell Universal Dust Cover	£44.95	☐
Michell Techno Weight	£67.95	☐
Milty Zerostat	£37.50	☐
Mobile Fidelity GeoDisca	£44.95	☐
Ortofon T Force Tracking Force Gauge	£7.95	☐
Pebbles 'The Weight' Rega Modification	£67.95	☐
Polaris Plus Stylus Alignment Gauge	£5.95	☐
Pro-Ject Bubble Level	£14.95	☐
Ringmat's How to Set Up A Turntable	£7.50	☐
Ringmat Developments The Ringmat	£49.95	☐
Ringmat Anniversary Ringmat	£69.95	☐
Shure Stylus Force Gauge	£24.95	☐
'The Producer's Cut' Test LP	£24.95	☐

## AUDIO BOOKS

The Complete Guide To High-End Audio	£24.95	☐
How To Set Up And Fine Tune A Turntable	£7.50	☐
The LP is Back	£9.95	☐
Home theatre For Everyone	£19.95	☐

## DIGITAL ACCESSORIES

Allsop DVD Optimiser/Laser Lens Cleaner	£19.95	☐
AudioPrism CD Stoplight	£19.95	☐
AVIA Home Theatre Set-Up & Calibration	£34.95	☐
A-Z CD Clips	£7.95	☐
Bedini Hand Held Clarifier MkII	£69.95	☐
Compact Dynamics CD Plus	£14.95	☐
Compact Dynamics CD UpGrade	£14.95	☐
Densen DeMagic CD	£11.95	☐

Digital Video Essentials (PAL) DVD Set-Up Disc	£19.95	☐
Furutech RD-2 Disc Demagnetizer	£199.95	☐
Lasertrack CD2000 Set-Up Disc	£19.95	☐
Marigo Orpheus CD Crossbow Mat	£79.95	☐
Mobile Fidelity ULTRADISC CD-R (Qty 5)	£14.95	☐
Opus3 Showcase (HDCD)	£14.95	☐
Richard Black's U.S.H.E.R. CD	£14.95	☐
<b>IsoTek System Enhancer, DeMag &amp; Burn-In CD</b>	<b>£14.95</b>	☐
Order both the above discs for only	£21.00	☐
Ringmat The Statmat MkII	£19.95	☐
Sound Improvement Disc (Model 14/15)	£17.95	☐
Ultra Burn-In CD3000	£24.95	☐
XLO Reference Test & Burn-In CD	£24.95	☐

## CARE/ CLEANING PRODUCTS

Allsop Carbon Edge Laser Lens Cleaner	£14.95	☐
Allsop CD & DVD Fast Wipes	£4.95	☐
Allsop CD Scratch Repair Kit	£12.95	☐
Allsop Radial CD Cleaner	£10.95	☐
Clearaudio Carbon Fibre Record Brush	£13.95	☐
DeoxIT Contact Cleaner (200ml)	£13.95	☐
Goldring Exstatic Deluxe Record Brush	£14.95	☐
Goldring Exstatic Record Sleeves	£11.95	☐
<b>Knosti Disco Antistat Record Cleaner</b>	<b>£44.95</b>	☐
Okki Nokki Vacuum Record Cleaner	£225.00	☐
<b>L'Art du Son Record Cleaner (5Litre)</b>	<b>£27.95</b>	☐
Last All-Purpose Record Cleaner	£39.95	☐
Last Record Preservative	£39.95	☐
<b>Last Stylus Cleaner</b>	<b>£19.95</b>	☐
Last Stylus Treatment	£29.95	☐
Lyra SPT Stylus Cleaner	£24.95	☐
<b>Nagaoka Antistatic Record Inner Sleeves (50)</b>	<b>£14.95</b>	☐
Nordost Eco 3 Static Inhibitor Spray	£24.95	☐
Onzow Zerodust Stylus Tip Cleaner	£29.95	☐
Opatrix CD Cleaner & Clarifier	£16.95	☐
ProGold Contact Enhancer (ProGold 20ml)	£13.95	☐
Unbranded Inner Sleeves (Qty 100)	£24.95	☐
VPI HW16.5 Record Cleaning Machine	£475.00	☐
Walker Audio Super Silver Treatment	£59.95	☐

## ISOLATION RACKS AND CONES

Clearlight Audio RDC Aspekt Rack Black 4 Shelf	£549.95	☐
--	---------	---

Clearlight Audio RDC 1 Cones (Qty 4)	£39.95	☐
<b>Clearlight Audio RDC 2 Cones (Qty 4)</b>	<b>£29.95</b>	☐
<b>Clearlight Audio RDC Cone Cups (Qty 4)</b>	<b>£19.95</b>	☐
Clearlight Audio RDC 3 Cones (Qty 4)	£44.95	☐
Clearlight Audio RDC 5 Cones (Qty 4)	£19.95	☐
Clearlight Audio RDC Combi Base (Qty 4)	£49.95	☐
Clearlight Audio RDC SPP Platform	£109.95	☐
IXOS Sorbothane Feet (Qty 4)	£19.95	☐
Nordost Pulsar Points (Aluminium) (Qty 4)	£54.95	☐
Spectral FoculPods Support Systems (Qty 4)	£14.95	☐
Spectral Polipods Support Systems (Qty 8)	£14.95	☐
Townshend 3D Seismic Isolation Platform	£234.95	☐
Voodoo AIRTEK (430x360mm/20kg)	£234.95	☐

## MAINS CABLES AND CONDITIONERS

IsoTek Premium Mains Cable (1.5M)	£49.95	☐
IsoTek Elite Mains Cable (1.5M)	£79.95	☐
IsoTek Optimum Mains Cable (1.5M)	£129.95	☐
Nordost Shiva Mains Cable (2.0M)	£220.00	☐
Nordost Vishnu Mains Cable (2.0M)	£450.00	☐
Nordost Brahma Reference Mains Cable (2.0M)	£895.00	☐
Nordost Valhalla Reference Mains Cable (2.0M)	£1750.00	☐
Furutech Ultimate Rhodium Fuse	£32.50	☐
Furutech FI-15 IEC Connector (24ct Gold)	£19.95	☐
Furutech FI-11 Round Bodied IEC (24ct Gold)	£29.95	☐
<b>Furutech FI-1363 IEC Connector (24ct Gold)</b>	<b>£59.95</b>	☐
IsoTek IsoPlug	£29.95	☐
IsoTek NeoPlug	£49.95	☐
IsoTek GII Solus	£295.00	☐
IsoTek GII Multi-4-Way	£155.00	☐
IsoTek GII Multi-6-Way	£185.00	☐
IsoTek GII Multi-8-Way	£220.00	☐
IsoTek GII Gemini-6-Way (distribution strip)	£260.00	☐
IsoTek GII Mini Sub/Vision	£495.00 / £549.00	☐
IsoTek GII Titan	£1425.00	☐
IsoTek GII Nova	£1495.00	☐
Kemp Electronics Power Strip 4-Way	£324.95	☐
Kemp Electronics Power Strip 6-Way	£375.95	☐
Kemp Electronics Power Strip 8-Way	£424.95	☐
Nordost THOR by IsoTek	£1595.00	☐
V.D.H. Polarity Tester	£17.50	☐
WattGate 320 IEC Connector (Black)	£18.95	☐
WattGate 320I HC (16Amp)	£28.95	☐

☎ **0870 240 7228** 🌐 **www.choicebits.co.uk**

## ORDER FORM

Orders can also be placed online: [www.choicebits.co.uk](http://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](mailto:orders@choicebits.co.uk)

**Order online:** [www.choicebits.co.uk](http://www.choicebits.co.uk)

### UK postage:

Postage is £2.00 for the first item and £1.00 thereafter. All Prices include VAT at 17.5%.

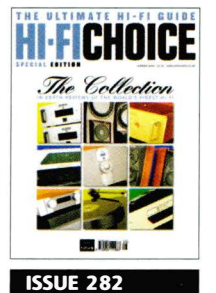
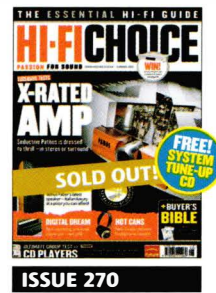
### European/ International sales:

Overseas sales are welcome – please call for a postage quotation. Sales outside the EU are VAT exclusive.

This service is operated by hifforsale.com Ltd (registered address) trading as Choice Bits under license from Future Publishing Ltd. Your order will be fulfilled by hifforsale.



# HI-FI CHOICE BACK ISSUES



## 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 £5.95, EU €6.95, Outside EU €7.95 (per issue)

## BACK ISSUES

Back issues are available by mail order (as long as stocks remain). They cost £5.95 (UK), €6.95 (Europe) or £7.95 (rest of the world). All prices include p&p. You can order by phone on 0870 837 4773 – 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.

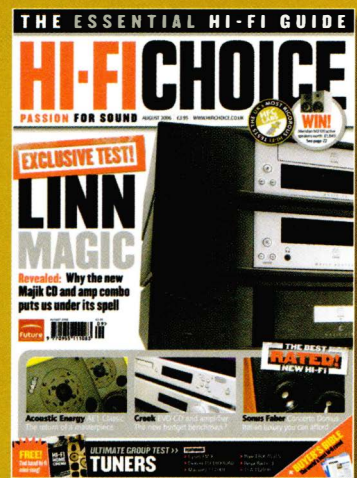
## ORDER A REVIEW REPRINT

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, 2 Balcombe Street,  
 London, NW1 6NW.

PLEASE NOTE: THIS SERVICE IS ONLY FOR OTHERWISE UNOBTAINABLE REVIEWS

## Why not subscribe to Hi-Fi Choice?



See page 64 for more details...

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 - 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

## The New Densen B-110

The B-110 is the successor to the B-100, which became the most sold high-end amplifier ever from a Scandinavian audio manufacturer. The reviews have confirmed the quality of the "old" B-100 by awarding the B-100 a string of very favourable reviews: "You just can't beat it", "rhythmic magic" and "build quality that should embarrass everyone fighting in this price category" - words that tell you it is time to open your ears and listen! Even so the B-110 is in all aspects a giant step forward in terms of musicality, features, user friendliness and upgradability. This completely new design is simply sonically superior because of the high-end details and features it inherits from its close relation to the B-150. The B-110 even comes with lifetime warranty.

The B-110 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!

**Features:**

- Upgradeable with external power supply
- Ready for SAXO electronic crossover
- Ready for remote control and phono stages
- Ready for multiroom systems
- Ready for Bi-amping and Tri-amping
- Upgradeable with plug-in 7.1 pass-through surround board



The B-150 has already been awarded Best Integrated Amp of the year in Portugal. The B-110 is a down-scaled version of the B-150, so it is a real High End killer!

B-110 2x60w 8 ohms / 2x120w 4 ohms - £ 1,000  
B-150 2x100w 8 ohms / 2x200w 4 ohms - £ 3,000

Densen Audio Technologies - Phone: (+45) 75 18 12 14 - E-mail: mail@densen.dk



Sound escaping !

Captured by Crystal Cable

Crystal Cable

**absolute sounds ltd**

58 Durham Road, London SW20 0TW

T.: +44 (0) 20 89 71 39 09

[www.absolutesounds.com](http://www.absolutesounds.com) [info@absolutesounds.com](mailto:info@absolutesounds.com)



## New Crystal Ultra

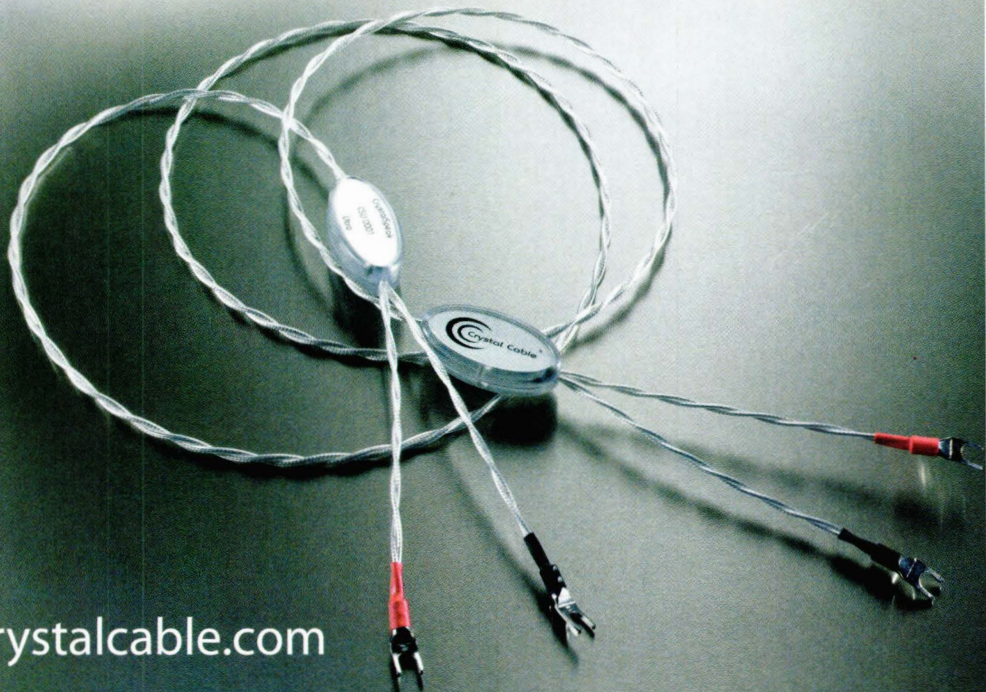


This means ultra-thin silver conductors with gold infusions to fill molecular gaps.

This means helically wrapped Kapton film for the toughest, most impervious insulation on the market, far ahead of the ubiquitous Teflon used by competitors.

This means extremely flexible, easy to route, barely visible, consumer friendly cables with peak performance, transparent and musical sound.

This means advanced metallurgy perfected at famous German and Dutch laboratories using the most sophisticated test equipment in Europe.



# Minimalist masterpieces!



STUNNING SOUND QUALITY AND CAPTIVATING GOOD LOOKS  
CREATE A STRIKING IMPRESSION IN ANY ENVIRONMENT.

WHEN YOU STRIVE FOR PERFECTION IN YOUR WORK,  
WHY ACCEPT ANYTHING LESS IN YOUR HOME?

SIMPLE TO USE AND DESIGNED WITH THE FUTURE IN MIND

ONLY THROUGH HEARING WILL YOU TRULY BELIEVE. TO LOCATE YOUR  
NEAREST DEALER CALL ACTIV DISTRIBUTION ON 01635 291357  
OR LOG ON TO [WWW.LEEMA-ACOUSTICS.COM](http://WWW.LEEMA-ACOUSTICS.COM)



Visit: [www.leema-acoustics.com](http://www.leema-acoustics.com)  
Phone: +44 (0)1938 811900  
Email: [info@leema-acoustics.com](mailto:info@leema-acoustics.com)

BEAUTIFULLY ENGINEERED SOUND

Corvus SINGLE CHANNEL AMPLIFIER



Hydra SLAVE AMPLIFIER



Tucana STEREO AMPLIFIER



Cygnus ADVANCED PRE-AMPLIFIER



# 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 considered for inclusion in the *Hi-Fi Choice Buyer's Bible*. Any Best Buy or Editor's Choice Badges awarded are also displayed.

## SOURCE COMPONENTS

- 88 CD PLAYERS
- 90 DVD PLAYERS
- 92 VINYL
- 95 RADIO TUNERS
- 97 DIGITAL RECORDERS

## AMPLIFIERS

- 98 STEREO AMPS
- 100 MULTICHANNEL AV AMPS

## LOUDSPEAKERS

- 106 STEREO SPEAKERS
- 110 MULTICHANNEL SPEAKER PACKAGES

## ANCILLARIES

- 113 HEADPHONES
- 115 CABLES
- 117 STANDS AND SUPPORTS
- 119 GLOSSARY

## DEALER CLASSIFIED

- 124 DEALER GUIDE
- 128 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 44.1kHz to 192kHz.

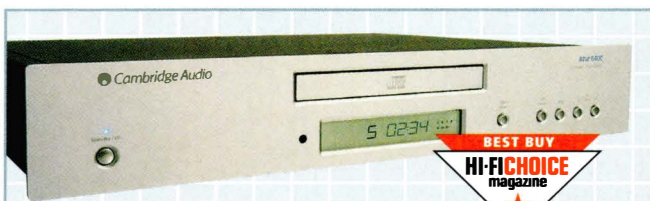
### CAN I PLAY SACDS ON A NORMAL CD PLAYER?

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 BEST BUY 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	
<b>UP TO £1,000</b>											
<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">BEST BUY</span>	Arcam DiVA CD73T	400	Refined and articulate, smooth and dynamic – a finely judged balance for budget to mid-price systems	●	●	●	●				247
<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">BEST BUY</span>	Arcam DiVA CD192	850	Beautifully built, well featured player with clear, open and involving sound		●	●	●	●			264
<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">BEST BUY</span>	Cambridge Azur 640C v2	250	Does most things extremely well and has a remarkably good sense of poise for the money		●	●					274
<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">BEST BUY</span>	Cyrus CD6s	650	Small, efficient and cheerful, with plenty of energy and just the smallest lack of detail			●				●	276
<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">BEST BUY</span>	Cyrus CD8x	1,000	Impressive mix of detail, musicality, analysis and appearance. Even better with the PSX-R power supply (£400)		●	●					270
<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">BEST BUY</span>	Exposure 2010 S	599	Highly communicative sounds with good bass, though not always the most analytical		●	●	●				264
<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">BEST BUY</span>	Marantz SA7001	430	Easy, relaxed sound arguably lacks true grit, but is extremely listenable from CD and SACD	●		●		●		●	281
<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">BEST BUY</span>	Naim CD5i	825	As idiosyncratic as ever, but sonically the CD5i is the definitive player at the price				●				259
<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">BEST BUY</span>	Rega Apollo	500	Outstanding top-loader has sweet, clean top end that makes voices magical and difficult discs listenable		●		●	●			279
<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">BEST BUY</span>	Sony SCD-XA3000ES	800	A good, if not truly great, all-rounder with CD and fine multi-channel SACD performance	●	●	●	●	●	●		276
<b>ABOVE £1,000</b>											
<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">BEST BUY</span>	Arcam CD36	1,200	Fine detail, extension, dynamics and neutrality: 'bland' or 'honest' according to listener taste!		●	●	●	●			280
	Audio Flight CD One	4,500	Sumptuously built toploader capable of real world dynamics with great recordings. Two digital inputs		●				●		269
<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">EDITOR'S CHOICE</span>	Audio Research Ref CD7	8,000	Top of the CD playing tree, with a sound as open and musically accomplished as you'll ever find from the format		●	●				●	279
<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">BEST BUY</span>	Ayre CX-7e	2,195	If you want a clean-sounding, revealing and entertaining player with fabulous build this is a strong contender		●					●	281
<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">BEST BUY</span>	Copland CDA823	1,750	Don't let the laid-back character fool you - this player has plenty of insight too		●		●		●		280
	Creek Destiny	1,200	Our listeners failed to connect intimately with this player, though essentials all seem excellent		●	●	●	●			280
<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">BEST BUY</span>	Cyrus CD Xt/DAC X	1,900	Greater resolve than the single box competition, and DAC X has six digital inputs for whole system conversion		●	●	●		●		279
<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">EDITOR'S CHOICE</span>	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
<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">BEST BUY</span>	Marantz SA-15 S1	1,200	Some inconsistency over imaging, but enjoyable performance, strong on detail	●	●	●	●				276
<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">BEST BUY</span>	Meridian G06	1,695	Great combination of all-round attainment with superb looks and build quality, plus superb remote control		●	●	●	●			281
<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">EDITOR'S CHOICE</span>	Meridian 808i Signature	8,250	Stunning CD player with added preamp functions. Versatile and quite delightful		●	●	●	●	●	●	263
<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">BEST BUY</span>	Myryad MXC6000	1,400	A highly listenable player with excellent tonal balance and very fine detail		●		●				270
<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">BEST BUY</span>	Naim CD5x	1,450	Unique design nicely complements a sophisticated and highly capable performance				●				280
<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">EDITOR'S CHOICE</span>	Naim CDX2	2,800	Fine quality one-box CD player, but its best feature is upgradeability via outboard XPS supply				●				238
	Primare CD31	1,500	A well made player that may not appeal to timing freaks but does lovely things with large musical forces		●	●	●		●		270
<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">EDITOR'S CHOICE</span>	Resolution Audio Opus 21	2,850	Dynamic, well timed and 3D performance with an analogue volume control and digital input for a second source				●			●	244
	Roksan Caspian M Series-1	1,100	The newly tweaked Caspian remains a smooth, cohesive and informative player		●	●	●				278
<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">BEST BUY</span>	Sugden CD21SE	1,395	Delivers its particularly musical touch brilliantly and warrants the attention of all true music lovers		●						271
<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">BEST BUY</span>	Shanling CD-T100	1,650	Stunning-looking player that offers various operating modes: in any, sound is clear and assured		●					●	270
<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">BEST BUY</span>	T+A CD1230R	1,500	Filter options make this a player for all tastes, aided by top quality engineering			●					280
<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">EDITOR'S CHOICE</span>	Wadia 302	3,999	A dynamic and gripping player, with bass to die for and resolution to change your listening habits		●	●	●		●	●	253
<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">EDITOR'S CHOICE</span>	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.



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

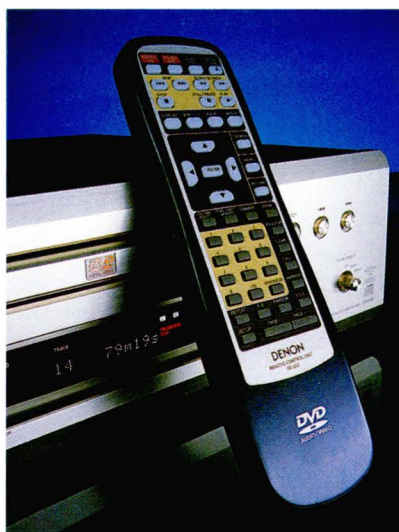
# DVD PLAYERS

*Disc players for audio and video*



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

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



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

## 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.

## DVD-AUDIO

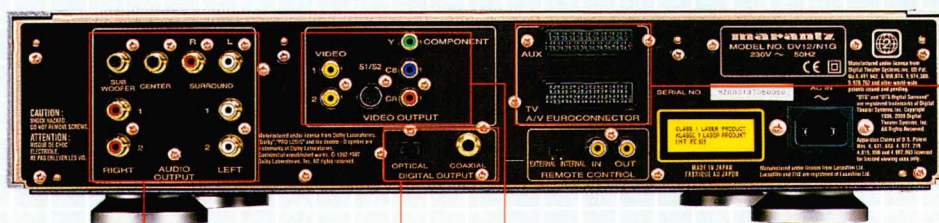
DVD-Audio is a high-resolution format that offers multichannel, stereo and Dolby Digital tracks on dedicated DVD-A discs. The discs can be played on any DVD player, but the CD-beating high-fidelity sound can only be appreciated with a DVD-A player.

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.



## 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	DVD-A COMPATIBLE	SACD COMPATIBLE	ELEC DIG OUTPUT	OPT DIG OUTPUT	HEADPHONE SOCKET	ISSUE NUMBER
<b>UP TO £1,000</b>									
	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
	Denon DVD-1920	250	Respectable (if unexciting) and flexible audio player, but something of a star from its HDMI equipped upsampling video subsystem						276
	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
	Marantz DV7600	600	A mid-market cracker, with sound and picture quality that generally exceeds expectation						274
	Onkyo DV-SP503E	300	Budget Onkyo universal player is a straightforward Pioneer based implementation, which performs well with audio and video						275
	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
	Sony DVP-NS9100ES	1,000	Video playback is foremost, with the iLink delivering significantly better sound than the analogue counterparts						274
	Yamaha DVD-S2500	700	Universal player, slightly stronger with video than audio, but well turned out with a wide range of analogue and digital in and outputs						280
<b>ABOVE £1,000</b>									
	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
	Marantz DV9600	1,500	With excellent, next-generation picture and impressive sound quality on CD and SACD, this sets a very high standard to beat						280
	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
	T+A SACD 1245 R	2,000	Dedicated stereo only/SACD/CD player avoids the usual compromises. It does a limited job, but it does it with fine fidelity						279
	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.

**BEST BUY**  
**HI-FI CHOICE**  
magazine



**Marantz DV7600 £600**  
A universal player that's strong with all formats, including music on CD/SACD/DVD-A.

**BEST BUY**  
**HI-FI CHOICE**  
magazine



**Arcam FMJ DV29 £1,600**  
Arcam's best DVD player yet – a world-class, HDMI-equipped audio/video feast.

**BEST BUY**  
**HI-FI CHOICE**  
magazine



**Meridian G98AH £3,625**  
A digital *tour de force* – as exceptional with both audio and video as you'd expect.

**EDITOR'S CHOICE**  
**HI-FI CHOICE**  
magazine

# www.HIFIFORSALE.com

• buy • sell • wants •

**NO commision fee • NO charge • completely FREE**

over 70000 adverts have been placed online since the site was launched.  
www.hififorsale.com, the webs favourite dedicated HiFi sales site.

# 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 Technodec** £767

A distillation of all the good things from some of Michell's past masters, all knitted together beautifully. Understated looks and a full-bodied sound make this a star.



**Clearaudio Champion** £1,475

Current king of acrylic, the Clearaudio deck, arm and cartridge combination turns in a beautifully well-balanced delivery, but choose your support wisely.



**Avid Volvere Sequel** £3,500

Avid has been one of the most impressive exponents of the vinyl arts in recent years, and this mid-range deck is a stunning example of analogue engineering.

## Our favourite BB BEST BUY EC EDITOR'S CHOICE

# TURNTABLES

### Record players

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS				
				SPEEDS	SUSP SUBCHASSIS	SWITCHABLE SPEED CHANGE	SUPPLIED WITH ARM	ISSUE NUMBER
<span>BB</span>	Avid Diva	1,100	A solid and powerful sounding deck with fine build, requires a smooth, relaxed cartridge for best results	33/45	●			247
<span>EC</span>	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
<span>BB</span>	Clearaudio Champion	1,365	Smart, practical and good-sounding, with impressively 'dead' arm. Isolation recommended	33/45			●	268
<span>EC</span>	Clearaudio Ambient	4,220	Innovative use of materials leads to a fast, precise and thrilling sound (tonearm extra)	33/45		●	●	271
<span>EC</span>	EAR Disc Master	7,695	Combines new 'no contact' drive technology and high quality materials to bring state of the art resolution	33/45/78	●	●	opt	276
<span>BB</span>	The Funk Firm Funk	450	You won't find another turntable at the price that can touch the Funk for dynamics, tone colour or detail	33/45		●	opt	279
<span>BB</span>	Goldring GR2	265	Nicely finished Rega-manufactured deck with RB250 arm and an open, engaging sound quality	33/45			●	266
<span>BB</span>	Michell Tecnodec	767	Simple and smartly understated, performs above expectations – full-bodied and highly detailed	33/45			●	268
<span>BB</span>	Michell Gyro SE	1,058	New DC motor-equipped Gyro offers great looks and even better sound. Price includes RB300 arm	33/45	●		●	239
<span>EC</span>	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
<span>BB</span>	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
<span>BB</span>	Pro-Ject Debut SE	200	The best Debut has a quality cartridge and easy upgrade arm cable, it delivers a scale, energy and resolve with ease	33/45			●	276
<span>BB</span>	Project RPM 5	400	Great looks plus an on the ball, engaging sound that puts it in the serious league, needs good isolation for best results	33/45			●	279
<span>BB</span>	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
<span>BB</span>	Rega P3/RB300	298	Updated Planar 3, building on the strengths of the P2 with added subtlety and detail	33/45			●	214
<span>BB</span>	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			●	257
<span>BB</span>	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			●	257
<span>EC</span>	Rega P9/RB1000	2,498	Exceptionally elegant hi-tech player with complex outboard supply, ceramic platter and wonderful RB1000 tonearm	33/45		●	●	228
<span>BB</span>	Roksan Radius 5/Nima	850	Sophisticated design with accomplished sound quality, excellent imagery and good isolation (acrylic version tested)	33/45	●		●	248
<span>EC</span>	SME Model 10A	3,411	Elegant and extremely capable design, tested here with Series V/309 hybrid arm	33/45	●	●	●	195
<span>EC</span>	SME Model 20.2A	5,274	Beautifully built, extremely neutral damped and suspended deck with superb sound. Inc V arm	33/45/78	●	●	●	186
<span>EC</span>	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	
<span>BB</span>	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
	Grado Prestige Gold	110	Produces rich, open and expansive music with the minimum of fuss	●		●	235
<span>EC</span>	Lyra Helikon	1,095	Highly capable and highly neutral, this is a cartridge for all seasons, albeit fussy about vinyl quality	●			215
<span>BB</span>	Sumiko Blue Point Spec Evo III	239	High output MC with refinement at high frequencies and a nimble, articulate and revealing sound		●		270
<span>BB</span>	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
<span>EC</span>	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
<span>EC</span>	van den Hul Condor XCM	2,400	A stunning cartridge with stereo imaging, dynamics and detail resolution to die for		●		265
<span>EC</span>	Wilson Benesch Naked Analog	1,450	With its smooth clean highs, transparent midband and nimble bass, this is a lot of performance for the money		●		253

## Our favourite BB BEST BUY EC EDITOR'S CHOICE

# PHONO STAGES

### Phono stages

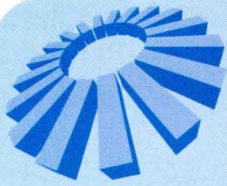
BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS				
				MM PHONO INPUTS	MC PHONO INPUTS	ADJ GAIN	ADJ IMPEDANCE	ISSUE NUMBER
<span>BB</span>	Cambridge Audio 640P	60	Tested with the almost-as-good £40 540P, this remarkable phono stage brings refinement and bass weight to budget vinyl	●	●			277
	Clearaudio Smart-Phono	250	Minute and very practical unit with slightly bright, but very detailed and low-noise, sound	●	●			268
<span>BB</span>	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
<span>BB</span>	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
<span>EC</span>	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
<span>BB</span>	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.



**b:h:e**  
**Brighton hi-fi exchange**

Visit our web site for complete list of brands stocked.

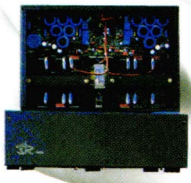
e-mail **dave@hifiguy.co.uk** telephone **01580 878 101**  
 web **www.hifiguy.co.uk** mobile **07734 436 180**

## asr amplifiers



**emitter I** : The Emitter I is the entry model, offering all the qualities of the Emitter- family. Separate power supply are keeping electro-magnetic fields and vibrations away from the control unit.

**emitter 2** : The sovereign entrance into the class of our large integrated amplifiers. The Emitter II was developed in order to drive the most pretentious loudspeakers with ease of power.



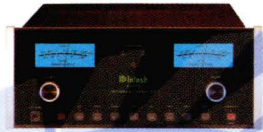
**akku** : For a perfect sound and musical picture, an amplifier has to be supplied with a very clean and stable supply voltage to the input stage. This is of the up-most importance. You have the option to supply the input stage of the Emitter with a perfect voltage, achieved with a separate accumulator power unit.

## mcintosh



**ma2275** : Combines the world class performance characteristics of our highly acclaimed tube control and power amplifiers into one, compact chassis. Created to make the most of both new and venerable technology, the MA2275 relies on vacuum tubes for all signal amplification, with incredible results.

**ma6300** : The MA6300 is the latest integrated amplifier, rich with all the premium technologies that McIntosh is famous for, including Power Assurance System and Silent Electromagnetic Switching. With 100 watts per channel at 8 ohms and 160 watts into 4 ohm loads, the MA6300 can effortlessly power virtually any speaker.



**mc501** : The MC501, 500 watt mono block amplifier has a new and bold, yet unmistakably McIntosh look. It features 3-dimensional glass and new cool-running, ultra long life, fiber optic LED lighting. The extraordinary quad-differential amplifier design reduces noise and distortion to record low levels.

**mcd201** : The MCD201 will play your CDs, CD-R, CD-RW, SACD and MP3. Utilizing a purpose-designed transport that spins CDs at 4 times normal read speed and SACD discs at 2 times normal read speed gives the laser multiple chances to extract and refocus through imperfect discs resulting in fewer errors. A stunning CD/SACD Player.



# HI-FI CHOICE

PASSION FOR SOUND

**For a more consultative approach to your advertising needs, please contact me, Brad Francis on 0207 042 4255 Brad.francis@futurenet**

# 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](http://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

**BB** BEST BUY **EC** EDITOR'S CHOICE

### FM & DAB HI-FI SEPARATES

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS						
				WAVEBANDS	PRESETS	RDS	REMOTE CONTROL	SIG. STRENGTH METER	ROT. TUNING KNOB	ISSUE NUMBER
<b>FM TUNERS</b>										
<b>BB</b>	Creek T50	550	Very fine results indeed with precision, polish and insight added to excellent basics	FM,M,L	128	●	●	●	●	251
<b>BB</b>	Denon TU-1500AE	130	Well attuned to the crowded modern FM band, this tuner produces clear, detailed sound with plenty of gusto	FM,M,L	100	●			●	281
<b>EC</b>	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
<b>EC</b>	Magnum Dynalab MD 102	2,200	Superb remote control analogue FM tuner delivers a superbly transparent sound that makes radio fun	FM	5		●	●	●	241
<b>BB</b>	NAD C422	180	Admirably free of roughness or other obvious nasties, with just a slight lack of clarity	FM,M	30	●		●		250
<b>BB</b>	Primare T21	600	A very fine tuner – bass and treble are both well extended and detail is excellent	FM	30	●		●		230
<b>BB</b>	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
<b>DAB TUNERS</b>										
<b>BB</b>	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
<b>BB</b>	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
<b>BB</b>	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.

# FREE TICKETS FOR ONE WEEK ONLY!!

For your chance to secure a free ticket valid both days - Email or call us between 9.00am 1.7.06 - 5.00pm 8.7.06. We'll then despatch to you in August.



## Show Highlights

- Your own Hospitality Lounge
- All day experts Clinic
- Ticket valid both days
- Audio & AV in their own space
- Only high quality products
- All day dedicated car-parking - just £5
- Two free magazines & programme
- Your own post show forum
- Quarterly magazine with free classifieds
- Loyalty tickets to our other shows
- Group Factory Visits
- Expert advice all year round
- Shuttle bus from Airport/rail to venue
- Refreshment concessions
- Meet the press
- Group trips to overseas shows

## Show Competitions

Competitors and prizes are synonymous with shows but all too often they are limited in quantity, not so this time.

We want everyone of our visitors to have a real chance of winning something.

Prizes are already coming in and the first comes from McIntosh of America in the shape of the wonderful Classic MC275 (shown below).



## Centre of Excellence

As part of our plans to heighten awareness for our new show and also help broaden interest we are adopting a 'Centre of Excellence' theme. The current crop of high quality Audio & AV equipment has reached quite stunning levels and the 'London Sound & Vision Show' will have much of it on show. Special consultants, show features, clinics and unique demonstrations will all contribute to a very special weekend. Full details as they unfold will be on our website or in our advertising.

## Future Shows you won't want to miss!



## Total exhibitors now = 52

See our website 1.7.06 for the latest list of exhibitors and of course the full summary of brands.



# the LOWDOWN

# SOUND & VISION

park ins Show'06

22, 23, 24th Sept 06

PRIVILEGED TICKET



Don't forget to download your privileged tickets from [www.chestergroup.org](http://www.chestergroup.org)

listening is **feeling** *live*  
seeing is **believing**  
*audio visual*





# 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.

**Yamaha CDR-HD1500** £599

Combining hard disk with CD-R adds flexibility to digital audio recording.

**Cambridge Audio Azur 640H** £600

Rip and store CD tracks on hard disk, create playlists, connect to a PC and more.

**Hermstedt Hifidelio Pro** £850

160GB hard disk and CD-R/RW drive in a box – as music servers go, this is a cracker.

## Our favourite DIGITAL RECORDERS

BT BEST BUY EC EDITOR'S CHOICE

### CD-R/RW, MD and HDD recorders

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS			
				DECKS	HD CAPACITY (GB)	OPTICAL IN/OUTPUTS	ELEC IN/OUTPUTS
<b>CD-R/RW RECORDERS</b>							
	Denon CDR-1000	400	A respectable player and recorder, though some midband congestion was noted when recording	1		● ●	218
<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">BT</span>	Marantz DR6000	400	No frills, but in its fundamentals this is one of the finest CD recorders on the market	1		● ●	233
	NAD C660	500	Audiophile twin deck offering high-speed copying, HDCD replay and notably fine recording from analogue	2		● ●	243
<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">BT</span>	Philips CDR802	300	Tacky looks and build notwithstanding, this is a well-equipped and technically sound 3-to-1 autochanger/recorder at a good price	2		● ●	233
<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">BT</span>	Philips CDR951	380	An improvement on previous models, it delivers the musical goods in some style	1		● ●	205
<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">BT</span>	Pioneer PDR-609	270	Classic CD recorder with outstandingly good sound for the money on both record and replay	1		● ●	243
	Pioneer PDR-W839	350	Good-quality twin CD burner makes recordings that can be hard to distinguish from the original. Good value too	1		● ●	218
<b>MD RECORDERS</b>							
	Pioneer MJ-D508	200	Well equipped, but musically sleep-inducing that receives its recommendation owing to the price	1		● ●	205
	Sony MDS-JE480	130	Straightforward and effective, but the three real killer features are price, price and price	1		●	233
<b>HDD RECORDERS</b>							
<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">BT</span>	Cambridge Audio Azur 640H	600	Not so much a HDD recorder, more a complete audio computer and nerve centre in one useful box. Complex, but worth it	1	160	● ●	276
<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">BT</span>	Hermstedt Hifidelio Pro	850	Can be used as a CD player, but also as a recorder, and can encode MP3, play AAC and form the heart of a distributed audio system	1	160	● ●	280
<span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">BT</span>	Yamaha CDR-HD1500	599	Great for archiving a music collection or making compilations without compromising on flexibility or sound quality	1	250	● ●	278

**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.

# 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.

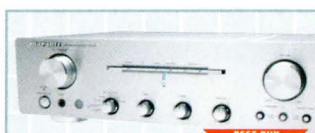
### WHAT IS BI-WIRING AND BI-AMPING?

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



### Marantz PM7001 £350

If you thought the PM7200 was a great budget amp, just wait until you hear this! Its sound is so detailed and involving, you'll think it costs twice the price.



### 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
<b>UP TO £1,000</b>									
	Arcam A65 Plus	400	Occasionally a touch bright, but a good all-rounder with decent detail and plenty of life	5	●	●	●	40	278
	Arcam DiVA A80	600	A very competent mid-range amp with a sophisticated control system and crisp, detailed sound	6	●	●	●	90	251
<span>BB</span>	Arcam DiVA A90	850	Very well specified, well built, a delight to use and a real musical all-rounder	7	opt	●	●	90	273
<span>BB</span>	Cambridge Audio 640A V2	300	Nasty-feeling controls are the only real downside to this powerful and lively little amp	6		●	●	75	279
<span>BB</span>	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
<span>BB</span>	Cambridge Audio Azur 840A	750	A very fine amplifier, practical, smart and well made: offers some of the best sounds we've heard at this price	7		●	●	120	281
	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
<span>BB</span>	Denon PMA-1500AE	500	Well set up to make the most of big-scale music, with copious power and drive, though slightly bright	5	●	●	●	70	278
<span>BB</span>	Marantz PM7001	350	Detailed and highly communicative amp with fine treble and good bass extension – exceptional value for money	5	●	●	●	70	279
<span>BB</span>	NAD C352	350	A dynamic and musical amp at a bargain price – another budget classic from NAD	7		●	●	55	253
<span>BB</span>	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
<span>BB</span>	Onkyo A-933	500	Puts the music first, with sound that delivers the basics correctly but above all involves the listener	5	●	●	●	80	278
<span>BB</span>	Primare I21	750	A confident and energetic amp, with just a touch of veiling at times. Great build quality	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
<span>BB</span>	Roksan Caspian M Series-1	1,000	Improved version is as involving as ever but now with added focus and bass depth	5		●		85	278
<span>BB</span>	Sugden A21a	899	This single-ended, Class A transistor amp has exquisite resolving ability and presence – an authentic classic	5				25	224
<b>ABOVE £1,000</b>									
<span>BB</span>	Arcam FMJ A32	1,200	Ultra-civilised amp with plenty of features that's also highly revealing and musical	7	●	●	●	100	266
<span>EC</span>	Audia Flight TWO	2,500	Quirky, but musically highly effective model which is expressive and analytical, with some minor operational quirks	8		●		100	280
<span>EC</span>	Bryston B100-SST DAC	3,850	A remarkable amplifier which is greatly enhanced by the inclusion of an impressive onboard DAC	6	●	●	●	100	275
<span>EC</span>	Chapter Précis	3,995	Tight, nimble and dynamic across the board and unusually articulate in the bass, but the ergonomics could be refined	6		●		130	281
<span>BB</span>	Copland CSA29	1,900	A hybrid valve/solid state amplifier that gets close to offering the best of both worlds	6	opt	●		85	255
<span>BB</span>	Creek Destiny	1,100	Adds impressive high-end virtues to the excellent basic performance we've come to expect from Creek	6	opt	●		100	277
<span>BB</span>	Denon PMA-2000AE	1,200	Unusually refined and detailed medium power design with the attributes necessary for good stereo only SACD replay	5	●			80	275
<span>EC</span>	Densen Beat B150	3,000	Gorgeous bass: slight treble dryness detracts only a little. Good sense of scale and rock-steady rhythms appeal too!	6	opt	opt		100	277
<span>BB</span>	Exposure XXXV	1,599	Musical, powerful, tuneful and controlled, though not always the most analytical	6	opt	●		80	271
<span>EC</span>	Gamut DI 150	5,700	Serious contender for the best integrated amp ever. The DI 150 takes on pre/power combos on their own terms	6		●		180	275
<span>EC</span>	Krell KAV-400xi	2,698	The best integrated Krell yet is quick, agile, solid and finely detailed	5		●		200	247
<span>EC</span>	McIntosh MA2275	5,400	A valve amplifier that doesn't patronise. It's not soft-centred and it understands dynamics	5	●	●		75	271
<span>BB</span>	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
<span>BB</span>	Primare I30	1,500	A smooth, sophisticated yet agile performer, and beautifully built too	6			●	100	267
<span>EC</span>	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
<span>EC</span>	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						
				PRE-AMPLIFIER	POWER AMPLIFIER	LINE INPUTS	PHONO INPUT	REMOTE CONTROL	POWER OUTPUT (W)	ISSUE NUMBER
<b>UP TO £2,000</b>										
<span>BB</span>	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
<span>EC</span>	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
<span>EC</span>	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
<span>BB</span>	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
<span>BB</span>	Naim NAC 112x/NAP 150x	1,475	Upated entry-level Naim pre/power is a master of musical communication	●	●	6		●	50	262
<span>BB</span>	Quad 99/909	1,650	Well thought out and well executed, with good strong sound and just a little veiling	●	●	5	●	●	136	256
<b>ABOVE £2,000</b>										
<span>BB</span>	Arcam FMJ C31	1,200	Professionally presented, beautifully built and exceptionally revealing, this preamp achieves much by doing little	●		5	opt	●		273
<span>EC</span>	Border Patrol Control Unit	2,995	Bluff looking valve preamp, with one of the most neutral yet dynamic sounds around	●		5	opt			277
<span>EC</span>	Bryston BP26 DA/2B SST	5,550	Bryston's top preamp is now a serious competitor. The power amp reveals a lot of signal and delivers serious grunt	●	●	6	opt	●	100	278

**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
MB	Densen Beat B-200/B310	2,300	Lively, energetic combination that bring a great sense of scale to familiar recordings	●	●	8	opt	80	276
	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
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
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
MB	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**  
**FMJ AV8/P7** £5,750  
 A fantastic achievement from this respected UK brand – a top-ranking AV processor and seven-channel power amp.

## Our favourite BT BEST BUY EC EDITOR'S CHOICE **AV AMPLIFIERS**

### Multichannel amplifiers

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	RECEIVER	LINE INPUTS	7.1 COMPATIBLE	5-CHANNEL POWER (W)	ISSUE NUMBER
<b>MULTICHANNEL INTEGRATED AMPS</b>								
<small>EC</small>	Arcam DiVA AVR300	1,300	Cracking all-round music and movie ability sets the Arcam apart from the AV crowd	●	8	●	100	257
<small>EC</small>	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
<small>EC</small>	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
<small>EC</small>	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
<small>EC</small>	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
<small>EC</small>	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
<small>EC</small>	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
<small>BT</small>	Sony STR-DB798	250	Cheap but effective, and passably good with pure audio sources, but control system messy	●	7	●	100	273
<small>BT</small>	Sony STR-DB795	300	A superb value little amplifier, well appointed technically and successfully tuned for UK ears	●	7	●	100	260
<small>EC</small>	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
<small>BT</small>	Yamaha DSP-AX757SE	499	Exceptional sounding budget/mid price receiver offers brilliant sound per pound; ergonomics could be better	●	9	●	100	273
<b>MULTICHANNEL PREAMPS/PROCESSORS AND POWER AMPS</b>								
<small>BT</small>	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
	Arcam AVP700/P1000	3,000	Cutting-edge processor/tuner with HDMI sounds great, but the matching Class H power amp lacks finesse to match its power	●	8	●	135	275
<small>EC</small>	Arcam FMJ AV8/P7	5,750	High-quality preamp/processor (£3,150) and seven-channel power amp (£2,600). An excellent fusion of stereo and surround sound		7	●	180	235
<small>EC</small>	Classé SSP-600/ CA-5200	11,900	Subtle, exacting sound, tremendous flexibility and high power audiophile standard amplifier - lacks hi-tech digital interfaces		11	●	200	278
<small>EC</small>	Copland CVA306/CVA535	3,748	Tube analogue six-channel pre transforms multichannel audio from a novelty into a genuine advance for the high fidelity art		5		125	236
	Cyrus AV8/3x Smartpower	2,900	Classic Cyrus sound translated to a multichannel arena, limited features and power, but civilised sound		3		105	238
	Linn Exotik	1,750	Is hi-fi ready to make the jump to multichannel music? Linn think so with this musical preamplifier		4			260
<small>EC</small>	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
<small>EC</small>	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
<small>BT</small>	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

# hificables.co.uk

interconnects, speaker cables and accessories



**Expert advice**  
**Exceptional prices**  
**Excellent Service**  
**FREE UK Delivery**



Allsop, Black Rhodium, B-Tech, Chord, Creek, Densen, DNM, Eichmann, Grado, Graham Slee, Isotek iXOS, Nordost, QED, RDC, Ringmat, Sennheiser, Supra, Tannoy, Van Den Hul, Vibrapod, Wireworld

Phone orders: 01273 464447

**online shop for cables & accessories**

# SEVENOAKS SPECTACULAR SUMMER SALE

1ST JULY - 29TH JULY 2006

Pay less for your home entertainment in the Sevenoaks Spectacular Summer Sale. We've lowered prices on a host of award winning home cinema and hi-fi products. Some of these offers are unrepeatable and stock is very limited, so don't miss out, call us today.



**SALE**  
**25% OFF**  
OUR NORMAL COMBINED PRICE

## MASSIVE SAVINGS

ON THESE SELECTED SYSTEMS FROM  
CYRUS & MONITOR AUDIO



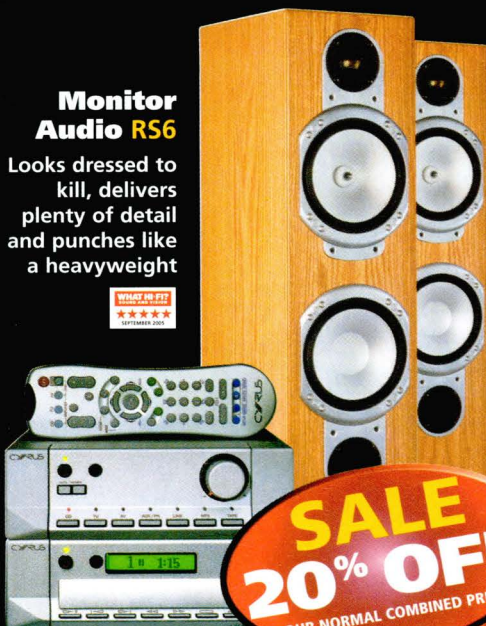
**Cyrus CD8x CD Player, 8vs Amplifier Plus  
Monitor Audio Silver RS8 Speakers**



"The CD8x is a brilliant player that still beats all-corners at this price"

LIMITED STOCK

**£1995**  
WAS £2635 SAVE £640



### Monitor Audio RS6

Looks dressed to kill, delivers plenty of detail and punches like a heavyweight



**SALE**  
**20% OFF**  
OUR NORMAL COMBINED PRICE

**Cyrus CD6s CD Player, 6vs Amplifier Plus  
Monitor Audio Silver RS6 Speakers**

"Astonishing performer for the money with the usual Cyrus advantage of easy upgradability and fine build"

LIMITED STOCK



**£1495**  
WAS £1885 SAVE £390

# LEADERS IN QUALITY HI-FI

EXPERTS IN HI-FI COMPONENTS  
AND SYSTEMS

# SEVENoaks

SOUND & VISION



## Teac REFERENCE 300DAB II

- System Comprises:  
T-H300DAB MkII DAB/AM/FM Tuner  
A-H300 MkII Amplifier  
PD-H300 MkII CD player
- Supports CD, CD-R/RW Discs
- 35W+35W RMS Output Power
- Silver Finish
- Full Function System Remote

**£395**  
WAS £495 SAVE £100

**SAVE  
£100**  
OFF OUR NORMAL PRICE WHEN  
YOU BUY ALL 3 COMPONENTS

## Arcam Solo plus Alto

FOR GREAT SOUNDING MUSIC

- Amazing Sound from an Integrated System
- With Exceptional Quality CD, FM and DAB Digital Radio
- Integrated iPod Connection - Hear How Good Your iPod Can Sound
- From Arcam, a Great British Company

WHAT HI-FI?  
SOUND AND VISION  
AWARDS 2005  
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR  
ALL IN ONE SYSTEM  
ARCAM SOLO



Arcam Solo Music System  
Plus Arcam Alto Speakers  
**£1395.00**

LIMITED STOCK

**FREE**  
IPOD NANO & R-LEAD  
WORTH £170

# SALE

## Primare

### CD31 CD PLAYER PLUS I30 AMPLIFIER

Primare has built a worldwide reputation for producing innovative audio and video products that challenge convention. With a unique blend of sophisticated Scandinavian design, class-leading build quality, and proprietary state-of-the-art technological advance, they build elegant, reliable, easy-to-use systems that promise years of high quality performance.

WHAT HI-FI?  
SOUND AND VISION  
AWARDS 2005  
CD PLAYER  
BEST CD PLAYER £1000-2000  
PRIMARE CD31

WHAT HI-FI?  
SOUND AND VISION  
AWARDS 2005  
STEREO AMPLIFIERS  
BEST STEREO AMPLIFIER £2000-3000  
PRIMARE I30

**£2590**  
WAS £2990 SAVE £400

**SAVE  
£400**  
OFF OUR NORMAL PRICE  
WHEN YOU BUY BOTH



VISIT YOUR LOCAL STORE FOR FURTHER SALE OFFERS

# MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICE

MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICE TO ENHANCE YOUR LISTENING PLEASURE



**SAVE  
£175**

OFF OUR NORMAL PRICE  
WHEN YOU BUY BOTH

## Denon

DVD-3910 DVD PLAYER  
PLUS AVR-3806 AV RECEIVER

Denon 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.



**SAVE  
£200**

OFF OUR NORMAL PRICE

## Pioneer

PDP4365XE 43" PLASMA TV

- Class Leading Picture Quality
- Twin HDMI sockets
- Wall or Stand Mount
- Integrated Freeview Tuner
- **What Hi-Fi Award-Winner**



**£1995**

WAS £2195 SAVE £200



## Soundstyle

ST310 EQUIPMENT RACK  
Silver/Aqua Green Glass

**£315**

WAS £395 SAVE £80

**MORE FANTASTIC ACCESSORY OFFERS AVAILABLE IN-STORE**

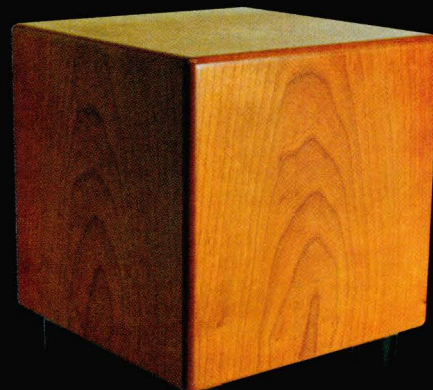
**SALE  
20% OFF**

OUR NORMAL PRICE

## REL QUAKE SUBWOOFER

(WOOD FINISH)

"Produces prodigious bass considering its diminutive stature."



LIMITED STOCK

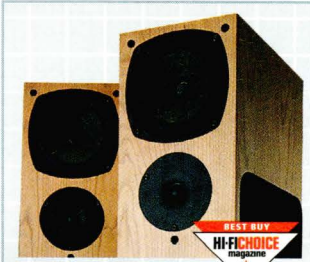
**SALE  
£350**

WAS £425.00 SAVE £75

BLACK BRITTEX FINISH  
ALSO AVAILABLE  
**£295.00**  
(WAS £350 SAVE £55)



## 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 BB BEST BUY ED 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
	Acoustic Energy Linear 1	250	Not at its best with classical but a well integrated, involving, timed aligned speaker nevertheless	19,36,26		A+	50	●		277
<small>BB</small>	ALR Jordan Entry L	500	Not the most pretty speaker but a sonic triumph, with a beautifully judged balance and impressive transparency	20,86,29	●	A	23	●		279
<small>BB</small>	ATC SCM12	999	Magnificent main driver confers great authority, grip and smoothness, though upper bass a little lean	22,39,26		A-	55		●	253
<small>BB</small>	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
<small>BB</small>	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
<small>BB</small>	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
<small>BB</small>	B&W CM1	500	Luxury miniature has neutral, laid back sound, with low coloration, fine imaging but weak dynamics	16,5,28,28		A-	40	●		279
<small>BB</small>	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
<small>BB</small>	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
<small>BB</small>	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
<small>BB</small>	Castle Compact Column	550	Compact, not so much that you need a sub to back up the bass, an elegant and engaging speaker for its size	14,87,5,16	●	A-	50	●		280
<small>BB</small>	Dali Ikon 6	899	Needs care with setup, but rewards you with impressively transparent and almost obsessively detailed sound	19,100,33	●	A	37	●		271
<small>BB</small>	Dali Ikon 7	999	Bulky vinyl floorstander has high sensitivity and a bright sound with superior coherence, delicacy and transparency	20,114,34	●	A+	22	●		275
<small>BB</small>	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
<small>BB</small>	Dynaudio Audience 52	557	Brilliant neutrality, though a little understated dynamically (wood veneered version, as tested - £647)	20,33,26		A-	30	●		250
<small>BB</small>	Dynaudio Focus 110	850	Luxury real wood miniature with tapered enclosure sounds punchy, sweet and avoids boxiness	17,30,28		A-	38	●		279
<small>BB</small>	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
<small>BB</small>	Epos ELS3	200	Few affordable speakers sound as clean and convincing while taking up so little real estate	18,27,19		A-	60	●		241
<small>BB</small>	Epos M5	349	Gorgeous miniature works well close to wall. Could be smoother but communicates with authority	18,33,21		A-	40		●	269
<small>BB</small>	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
<small>BB</small>	Epos M22	949	Very classy floorstander has a tricky bass and an edgy top, but a very smooth and even midband	20,88,25	●	A-	25	●		275
<small>BB</small>	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
<small>BB</small>	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
<small>BB</small>	Harbeth NRG2	650	Strikingly styled standmount majors on dynamic excitement at some expense in smoothness and coloration	19,34,29		A+	42		●	263
<small>BB</small>	JBL Studio L880	700	Good value floorstander with neutrality, massive headroom and plenty of punch. Could be more transparent	22,99,37	●	A	25	●		275
<small>BB</small>	KEF iQ9	800	Shapely and solid floorstander has wide bandwidth and dynamic range with superior neutrality and sensitivity	22,94,33	●	A	25	●		273
<small>BB</small>	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
<small>BB</small>	Monitor Audio Bronze B4	350	A beautifully balanced loudspeaker with fine overall dynamic range and good imaging	19,85,26	●	A	23	●		255
<small>BB</small>	Monitor Audio Silver RS8	800	Bold, dynamic sound marks it out from the crowd, and it's an easy load that works well in larger rooms	9,18,27	●	A	33	●	●	276
<small>BB</small>	Mordaunt-Short Avant 906i	350	The generous, well balanced sound shows good enclosure control, could do with more grip and better spikes!	165,85,29,5	●	A	40	●		281
<small>BB</small>	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
<small>BB</small>	Nbien NX6	899	Very nice cabinet work for the money and a decent speaker it makes too with good imaging and low noise	21,38,30		A	46	●		275

**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).

**IXOS** IXOTICA

# King of cables

"...an extremely transparent, almost 'glass clear' cable that scythes through the mix with tremendous alacrity...Overall, an absolutely super product that's ideal for those with smooth systems, and want to get to the heart of musical matters."

HI-FI WORLD  
IXOTICA IX1 REVIEW

MAY 2006

[www.ixos.co.uk](http://www.ixos.co.uk)



Only available through the following specialist Retailers:

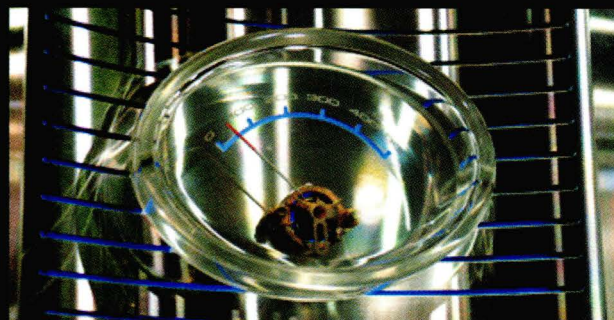
Dealer Name  
Audio Excellence  
Sony Centre

Town  
Bristol  
Leamington Spa

Tel:  
0117  
01927

# PINEWOOD MUSIC

HOW THE HIGH END  
SHOULD BE DONE



**Widest range of Absolute Sounds products in the UK, from Prima Luna to Krell Evolution**

**Oldest and finest Absolute Sounds dealer in the country**

**Warm personal service and support from Brian Rivas and Alison Holmes**

**Quiet and peaceful listening rooms and home demonstrations virtually anywhere**

With names that include **KRELL, JADIS, WILSON AUDIO, DarTZeel, SONUS FABER** and **MARTIN LOGAN**, our experience in presenting the very finest that two-channel has to offer is matchless - and we're proud of it. So if you are interested in reaching for the stars, or even that first intoxicating rung of the high end ladder, then please call us.

*krell, audio research, jadis, sonus faber, martin logan, copland, wilson audio, darTZeel, mimetism, koetsu, prima luna, pathos, unison research, synergistic research, chord cable, transparent, yter, bcd, futureglass, finite elemente*

Tel: 01460 54322

Mobile: 07860 351113

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

Our favourite **BEST BUY** **EDITOR'S CHOICE**

# STEREO SPEAKERS *continued*

## Stereo speakers

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS					
				SIZE (WHD) (CM)	FLOORSTANDER	EASE OF DRIVE	BASS FROM (Hz)	FREE SPACE	CLOSE TO WALL
	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
<b>EC</b>	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
<b>BB</b>	PMC TB2+	795	Classy transmission line stand-mount has superior midband, restrained presence and a bright clean top end	20,40,30		A	28	●	275
<b>BB</b>	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
<b>BB</b>	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
<b>BB</b>	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
<b>BB</b>	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
<b>BB</b>	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
<b>BB</b>	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
<b>EC</b>	Triangle Comete ES	500	Bulky standmount lacks style but delivers engrossing musical coherence and vivid dynamics	20,42,34		A	40	●	265
<b>ABOVE £1,000</b>									
<b>BB</b>	A2T Mezzo	2,000	Seamless overall coherence, with persuasive monitoring capabilities. Sounds a little mid-forward. Top could be sweeter	27.5,40,26		A+	40	●	281
	Acoustic Energy AE1 MkIII	1,900	Luxury miniature has a laid back but bouncy sound, fine dynamic range and very superior imaging	18.5,31,25		A-	30	●	281
<b>BB</b>	ALR Jordan Classic 5	1,200	Slim, laid back floorstander has sweet sound with fine coherence, imaging and dynamic range	17,99,26	●	A	28	●	275
<b>BB</b>	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
<b>BB</b>	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
<b>BB</b>	Audiovector MI 3 Signature	2,320	Smooth and beautifully balanced with superb neutrality, wide dynamic range and a warm, sweet character	20,100,29	●	A-	24	●	260
<b>BB</b>	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
<b>BB</b>	Aurum Cantus Leisure 3SE	1,200	Fabulous lacquer finish and a classy ribbon tweeter. Sounds smooth and sweet, if a touch laid back	25,40,30		A	28	●	263
<b>BB</b>	AVI Duo	1,299	Sophisticated floorstander, a natural partner for AVI's electronics. Unusually clean and honest musical presentation	19,77,28	●	A	50	●	280
<b>BB</b>	B&W 704	1,400	Cleverly tapered enclosure and external tweeter delivers superior bass and treble, with a laid-back midband	22,96,32	●	A	20	●	257
<b>EC</b>	B&W 802D	8,000	Great timing, superior dynamics and a sweet top end all enhance musical communication. Makes sweet music	37,115,56	●	A	<20	●	267
<b>EC</b>	B&W 805S	1,600	Classy standmount with excellent coherence and imaging. Can sound laid back but otherwise a real delight	24,39,33		A	25	●	271
<b>BB</b>	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
	B&W XT4	1,800	Gorgeous, silver, super-slim floorstander has notably clean bass, but sounds a little too polite and lacks dynamic grip	15.2,114,20	●	A-	25	●	281
	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
<b>BB</b>	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
	Chario Cygnus	1,200	Beautiful solid walnut sides. Port tuning suspect, but laid back sound has fine delicacy, imaging and refinement	20,96,27	●	A-	28	●	275
<b>EC</b>	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
<b>BB</b>	Dynaudio Focus 220	1,850	Cleverly tapered floorstander has a brilliantly smooth, neutral balance and very sweet treble. Could be more dynamic	20.5,98,29.5	●	A-	<20	●	281
<b>EC</b>	Eclipse TD510	1,200	Replacement for the TD512 does astonishing things with musical timing. £600 floor stands also recommended	24,36,26		A	45	●	277
	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
<b>EC</b>	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
<b>EC</b>	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
<b>EC</b>	Focal-JMLab Electra 1027 Be	4,000	Outstanding mid and top with fine delicacy and low coloration, but lacks some bass grip and drive	26.5,111,35	●	A-	25	●	276
<b>EC</b>	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
	Focal-JMLab Profile 908	1,300	Open and revealing especially of spatial and atmospheric detail, makes up for its bass restraint with joy de vivre	23,39,27.5		A	50	●	274
<b>EC</b>	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
<b>EC</b>	Jamo Reference R909	7,500	Top model (in a class of one) is open, full and easy on the ear, and surely a classic in the making	48,127,54	●	A-	25	●	280
<b>EC</b>	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
	MartinLogan Mosaic	1,799	Curious hybrid construction marries many panel speaker-like attributes with moving coil simplicity	24,102,30	●	A-	46	●	257

## The world's leading Audio & Video cables

WireWorld covers all home theatre and music system applications with cables that utilise the finest materials and connectors available at each price level.

The combination of these features and the unique ability of the Symmetricoax™ cable design to minimise electromagnetic losses, produce cables of superior performance and value.

Tel: 020 8991 9200  
[info@wireworldaudio.co.uk](mailto:info@wireworldaudio.co.uk)  
[www.wireworldaudio.co.uk](http://www.wireworldaudio.co.uk)

**WIREWORLD®**  
CABLE TECHNOLOGY

Our favourite  BEST BUY  EDITOR'S CHOICE

# STEREO SPEAKERS continued

## Stereo speakers

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS						
				SIZE (HxWxD (cm))	FLOOR/FINDER	EASE OF DRIVE	BASS FROM (Hz)	FREE SPACE	CLOSE TO WALL	ISSUE NUMBER
	MartinLogan Clarity	2,498	Relatively affordable and easy to live with electrostatic hybrid with class-leading resolving power	26,135,31	●	A-	46	●		245
	Meridian M3100	1,850	Attractive and capable active (125w) with great imaging and strong bass. High neutrality and good power handling	19,39,25		ACT	45	●	opt	280
	Monopulse 82	2,495	Could be more neutral, but excellent coherence, lively dynamics, fine imaging and a wide dynamic range	27,110,25	●	A	<20	●		281
	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
	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
	Neat Motive 1	1,200	Beautifully neutral balance sounds open without aggression. Fine midband but could be more authoritative	16,92,5,20	●	A-	20	●		276
	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 IB2	6,150	Stunning in an understated way, this speaker creeps up on you and hooks you with its transparency and power	33,74,47		A-	25	●		237
	ProAc Response D25	2,995	The traditional ProAc high-end detail mixed with greater efficiency and more pace - a splendid speaker	22,107,25	●	A+	20	●		254
	Rega R7	1,498	Super-slim and super-smooth floorstander has fine agility with a slightly bright overall character	27,98,35	●	A	25	●		271
	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
	Revel F32	3,200	Meticulously balanced, tonally neutral design makes for a taut, well disciplined sound	22,105,39	●	A	30	●		265
	Revel M22	1,800	A remarkably clean and revealing speaker with superb tonal and microdynamic capabilities	22,37,30	●	A-	48	●	●	274
	Roksan Caspian FR-5	1,995	Sharp looking speaker sounds exceptionally open and lively without aggression. Could be warmer	20,100,25	●	A	<20	●		279
	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
	SonusFaber Concerto Domus	1,799	Great choice, especially for acoustic material, which performs significantly above its price level	21,99,31	●	A	35	●		270
	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
	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
	Totem Model 1 Signature	1,595	Expensive, but very seductive miniature delivers a beautifully smooth and balanced midband	17,31,23		A	35	●		277
	Triangle Cellius ESW	1,395	Not the smoothest sound around, but has great vigour and enthusiasm, plus good scale and weight	20,117,34	●	A	22	●		277
	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
	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
	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
	WEGG3 Stellar 1	4,995	A full-range sound from a small(ish) box is possible, but only if you are very careful about set up, room and amps	35,97,45	●	A-	28	●		275
	Wilson Benesch Curve	5,000	Much (but not all) of the ACT's performance in a much more compact and affordable package	23,91,37	●	A	28	●		254
	Wilson Benesch 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 AV SPEAKER PACKAGES

**BB** BEST BUY **EC** EDITOR'S CHOICE

### Multichannel speakers

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS					
				EASE OF DRIVE	NUMBER OF SPEAKERS	BASS FROM (Hz)	FREE SPACE	CLOSE TO WALL	ISSUE NUMBER
	ATC Concept 3	4,877	Extremely engaging, revealing and musical multichannel system providing 360 degrees of full-on entertainment	A-	6	12	●	opt	255
	B&W 300 package	900	An excellent compromise between the requirements of music and those of home cinema (inc. subwoofer)	A	6	27	●		241
<b>BB</b>	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
<b>EC</b>	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
<b>BB</b>	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
<b>BB</b>	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 SUBWOOFERS

**BB** BEST BUY **EC** EDITOR'S CHOICE

### Bass speakers

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS			
				SIZE WxHxD (CM)	POWER (W)	BASS FROM (Hz)	ISSUE NUMBER
<b>BB</b>	B&W PV1	950	Gorgeously styled sub shakes the air but not the floor, delivering a very clean sound with negligible coloration	29,34,35	500	20	259
<b>EC</b>	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
<b>BB</b>	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
<b>BB</b>	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
<b>EC</b>	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

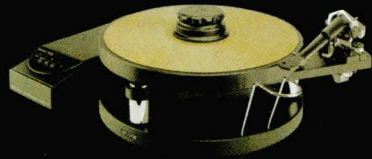
**SPECS KEY** **SIZE WxHxD (CM)** Width, height and depth of one cabinet in centimetres. **POWER (W)** How many watts the onboard amplifier of active models delivers.

**BASS FROM** How low the sub goes, the smaller the number the deeper the bass.

# 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



one of the hi-fi industry's best kept secrets - ask why !!

03



£1,995

Droplet CDP 5.0 Reference CD Player

- 24/192 Upsampling
- Super clock
- Choke regulated power supply
- Balanced pair of 6H30 triodes in the output stage
- Weighs a hefty 28KG's

" I still haven't come across anything at this price that I'd recommend instead. "

" If you want the subtle infusion of valves; if you want to be able to eliminate a preamp from the equation; if you value not just sonics but pride of ownership from massive construction and unusual cosmetics - the Droplet CD player from Opera Audio is the one. "



Srajan Ebaen  
6moons.com

## acacoustics

47 Chartley Avenue  
Neasden  
London, NW2 7QY

Tel 020 8830 6509

info@acacoustics.co.uk  
www.acacoustics.co.uk



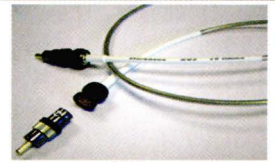
30-day money back\*  
\*subject to conditions

## High End Cable

Visit [www.highendcable.co.uk](http://www.highendcable.co.uk)  
or call Dave on 01775 761880



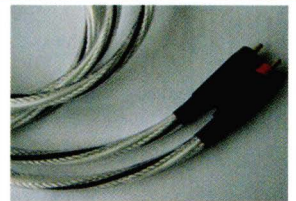
THE CHORD COMPANY  
New EPIC Speaker Cable



XV2  
STEREOVOX



OEHLBACH



ABBAY ROAD CABLE



ECOSSE  
REFERENCE CABLE



ISOtek  
Orion - Gemini

Chord | Abbey Road Cable | Stereovox | Nordost UK | van den Hul | IsoTek  
Ayre | STAX | Ortofon | Ecosse | Oehlbach | Second Hand

Free Delivery Available Worldwide. Trade in your old cables

# 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

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS					ISSUE NUMBER		
				ELECTROSTATIC	SUPRA-AURAL	CIRCUMAURAL	OPEN BACK	CLOSED BACK		WEIGHT (g)	3.5MM JACK ADAPTOR
<b>BB</b>	AKG K44	20	Lively, enjoyable and remarkably detailed: a bargain			●		●	190	●	219
<b>BB</b>	AKG K270 Studio	129	Pro oriented design which is very transparent and great with acoustic material			●		●	270		230
<b>EC</b>	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
<b>BB</b>	Beyerdynamic DT990	160	Impeccable balance, very extended bass and treble, and bags of detail place this model ahead of the pack			●	●		250	●	245
<b>BB</b>	Grado SR-60	90	For sheer musical enjoyment these are hard to beat. Retro styling may not be to everyone's taste		●			●	200	●	194
<b>BB</b>	Grado SR325i	310	Highly sophisticated and detailed sound with great extension: check for comfort		●			●	200	●	270
<b>BB</b>	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
<b>EC</b>	Sennheiser HD650	300	Astonishing resolution and hardly less impressive tonal balance make this a true hi-fi experience			●	●		260	●	252
<b>EC</b>	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
<b>EC</b>	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.

# HI-FI CHOICE

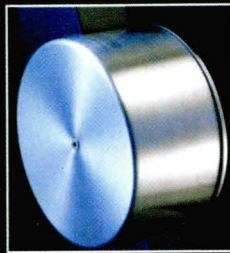
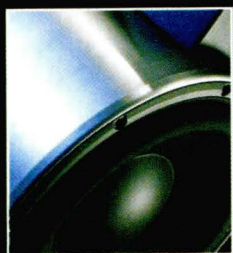
PASSION FOR SOUND

**To advertise  
please contact the Sales Team on  
0207 042 4255**

## 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](http://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



# CABLES



## Wires to hook your system together



Hi-fi cables come in two varieties: interconnects and speaker cables.

Analogue interconnects come in preset lengths, generally with RCA (phono) plugs attached, though some equipment uses XLR connectors for balanced connection – this can be sonically advantageous, especially over longer runs. Speaker cable is commonly sold by the metre and can be used without plugs or can

be fitted with screw or solder-on types.

Choosing cables is not quite as straightforward as it might seem. One problem is that components interact with the cables you use and this often results in audible effects, but there are few cables that are fundamentally incompatible with any components, and we recommend the advice of a good dealer. In any case, you should look to spend as much as you can afford.

Digital cables come in two flavours: electrical and optical. In most instances electrical varieties sound better than optical, given the choice, but optical cables may be a better bet over long runs (10m+). Optical inputs/outputs usually use Toslink connectors, while most electrical types use RCA plugs, but some opt for BNC connection instead – check your components before you buy.

## Our favourite CABLES

**BB** BEST BUY **EC** EDITOR'S CHOICE

### Interconnects and speaker cables

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS					
				STRANDED	SOLID CORE	COPPER	SILVER	DIGITAL CABLE TYPE	ISSUE NUMBER
<b>ANALOGUE INTERCONNECTS</b>									
<b>EC</b>	Black Rhodium Concerto	225	This DCT cable from the Polar range gives a distinctively dark timbre, rich in detail, with low subjective noise	●		●			270
	Brilliance Hi-Fi Synergy	83	High quality materials help give this cable fine imaging: bass not as extended as some	●		●			275
	Chord Company Signature	499	Silver plated, triple screened. Some granularity but great resolving ability, a good match for Chord Signature loudspeaker cable		●	●			255
<b>BB</b>	Chord Company Chorus	215	Very even-handed balance with notably extended bass	●		●			259
<b>BB</b>	Clearer Audio Silver-Line	244	Complex, well-screened cable which offers good sound all round with exceptional bass - at a price!	●		●			279
	Kimber Silver Streak	242	Not the cheapest around, but more than justifies itself with terrific poise and balance of virtues	●		●			241
<b>BB</b>	Kimber Timbre	89	Typical Kimber construction with ditto sound – clean, extended and detailed	●		●			248
<b>BB</b>	Monster Interlink 400 MkII	70	Really lively and enjoyable sound at a sensible price	●		●			224
<b>BB</b>	Monster M350i	45	Few cables at this price reveal so much about the recording space. Clear treble, too	●		●			281
<b>EC</b>	Nordost Heimdall	370	Micro-monofilament cable, silver plated more affordable alternative to Valhalla, sounds transparent, detailed and neutral	●		●			278
<b>BB</b>	Oehlbach NF214	63	The bass is a matter of taste, but suits many smaller speakers. Very good mid and treble	●		●			281
<b>BB</b>	Oehlbach Silver Express +	70	Good, firm bass is accompanied by clear treble and well defined stereo imaging	●		●			280
<b>EC</b>	Townshend DCT300	300	DCT wire with hum-busting ferrite sleeves. Packed with enough detail to make rivals sound flat		●	●			234
<b>BB</b>	TCI Viper SE	70	A well-made cable which excels at separating and defining instruments within an image	●		●			200
<b>BB</b>	van den Hul The Well	85	Hybrid cable with carbon-fibre conductors added. Very slight bass coloration does little to detract from fine performance	●		●			241
<b>BB</b>	van den Hul D102 Mk III	79	Hybrid conductors (carbon and copper) and intelligent construction give strong bass and excellent detail	●		●			234
<b>BB</b>	Wireworld Luna 5	30	Authoritative bass and clear treble outperform many cables at twice the price	●		●			273
<b>BB</b>	Wireworld Solstice 5	70	A cable with all-round appeal – treble is slightly 'dark' but bass is excellent and the overall balance very good indeed	●		●			259
<b>DIGITAL INTERCONNECTS</b>									
<b>EC</b>	Clearer Audio Silver-line	125	Very satisfying performance with finely-etched detail and sweet treble	●		●		E	278
<b>EC</b>	Kimber Select KS2020	629	Provides a subtle but rewarding lift in musicality with any DAC, justifying the price		●	●		E	260
<b>EC</b>	QED Qunex Signature 75	80	First-rate balance and imaging – ever so nearly as good as it gets at any price			●		E	265
<b>BB</b>	QED Qunex SR75	50	Lots of bass and good clear midrange and treble at a sensible price	●		●		E	234
<b>BB</b>	van den Hul Optocoupler II	49	Noticeably has the edge over other optical leads, but still second best to electrical types					O	234
<b>EC</b>	Wireworld Starlight 5	90	Clear gains in detail and imaging precision are this cable's main strengths: good value and near-high-end performance	●		●		E	279
<b>SPEAKER CABLES PRICE PER METRE</b>									
	Chord Odyssey 4	34	This biwire version of Odyssey offers excellent speed and impact, with low listener fatigue	●		●			258
<b>BB</b>	Kimber 8VS	18	Beautifully full, open and transparent sound right across the board	●		●			227
<b>BB</b>	Monster MCX-1s	8	Notable for its bass, which is perhaps a touch overdone at times but could be a good foil to small speakers. Good mid and treble	●		●			280
<b>EC</b>	Nordost Heimdall	162	Alternative to Valhalla, silver plated, micro-monofilament construction, low colouration, high res and suitable for exacting systems	●		●			278
	QED Silver Anniversary XT	5.50	Full bass and nicely detailed treble combine with good imaging - a budget bargain	●		●			276
<b>BB</b>	QED X-Tube XT300	10	A natural and well controlled sounding cable that's cost effective for mid-priced systems		●	●			234
<b>EC</b>	Townshend Isolda DCT	50	Cryogenically treated 'impedance matched' cable with stabilising components added: great sound all-round		●	●			241
	van den Hul The Bridge	6	Lively, energetic and possessed of fine midrange detail and imaging	●		●			277
	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
<b>BB</b>	Wireworld Terra 5	5	Deep powerful bass, clear treble and very solid imaging add up to above-class performance	●		●			261
<b>BB</b>	Wireworld Solstice 5	20	Unfriendly to handle, but makes up for it with very assured sound – heaps of bass and great insight	●		●			248
<b>BB</b>	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.

# ≈ COOL GALES

At [www.coolgales.com](http://www.coolgales.com), we believe that buying hi-fi gear should be a breeze.

Check out the **reviews and brochure downloads** on our product listings. Read how the Aesthetix Rhea phono stage has "a sense of palpability and immediacy that recalls the magic of live music" (*The Absolute Sound*).



Give us a **free call on 0800 043 6710** if you need more info. We'll tell you how we've been blown away by the Leema Acoustics electronics range, including the sensational Tucana integrated amp.

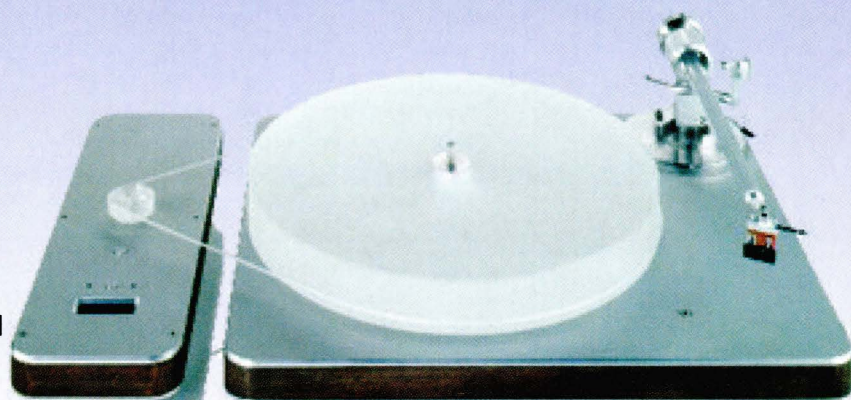
**Free delivery** on all orders over £100, including Supra Sword speaker cables, "more than a match for most of the highly touted (and highly priced) cables out there" (*Hi-Fi Plus*).



**A 30-day money-back guarantee** on most products (details on our website), including the Nordost Thor mains conditioner—"taking it out means no music—it's as simple as that." (*Hi-Fi Plus*).



A huge selection of **hi-fi components with style**, like the Clearaudio Ambient. "With its high quality of build and great looks, you'll be hard pressed to find a stronger sonic and visual aesthetic" (*Hi-Fi Choice*).



Cool Gales, hi-fi made easy.  
Give us a click. Give us a call.

[www.coolgales.com](http://www.coolgales.com)  
0800 043 6710

The Victoria School House ≈ Henrietta Road ≈ Bath BA2 6LU

# 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 (CM)	TOP PLATE SIZE (CM)	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
<span>EC</span>	Audiophile Base	615	Price is justified by its earth-shattering sonic abilities – a worthy upgrade	82	43		4	MDF	193
	Avid Isoschelf	1,100	An enthusiast's equipment support stand free from coloration, if a little fiddly to set up	87.5	48		5	MDF	193
<span>BB</span>	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
<span>BB</span>	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
<span>BB</span>	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
<span>BB</span>	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
	Partington Minim	389	Looks good, sounds good and is impressively flexible to boot	75	45,36		5	Glass	261
<span>EC</span>	Naim Fraim	1,825	Pricey but very classy looking and sounding, with modular flexibility	96	45,34		5	Glass	232
	Quadraspire Q4 Reference	480	Excellent performance from the school of wobbly racks. Natural sounding and plenty of detail	51.5	49,39.5		4	MDF	217
	Russ Andrews Torlyte Rack	988	Attractive modular system made of very light Torlyte: a touch of added warmth is its only vice	68	54,49		4	Torlyte	240
<span>BB</span>	Sound Organisation Z560	195	Excellent value rack, five shelves too! Well balanced and under 200 quid!	92	50,40		5	Glass	217
<span>EC</span>	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 (CM)	TOP PLATE SIZE (CM)	FILLABLE	WELDED	NUMBER OF LEGS	ISSUE NUMBER
	Alphason Aragon AG60	80	Good separation and imaging, with just a little coloration and bass looseness	60	16,14.5	●		3	280
<span>BB</span>	Custom Design RS300	110	An attractive stand whose lack coloration and ringing makes suits it to high resolution systems, at a tempting price	56	16.5,18	●		1	281
<span>EC</span>	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
<span>BB</span>	Kudos S50	159	Formidable bass with real authority, and a wide dynamic range across a broad bandwidth	61	15, 20	●		1	220
<span>BB</span>	Partington Ansa 60	99	Elegant flat-packer 'disappears' sonically; restrained but neutral and coherent	62	18,15	●		4	232
<span>EC</span>	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
<span>EC</span>	Russ Andrews Torlyte	299	Very relaxed sound from this metal-free design, with excellent imaging too	60,50	15,21			3	280
<span>EC</span>	Townshend Seismic Sink	499	Unique inflatable plinth that works wonders with decent floorstanders, as well as standmounted speakers	4	38,48			0	202

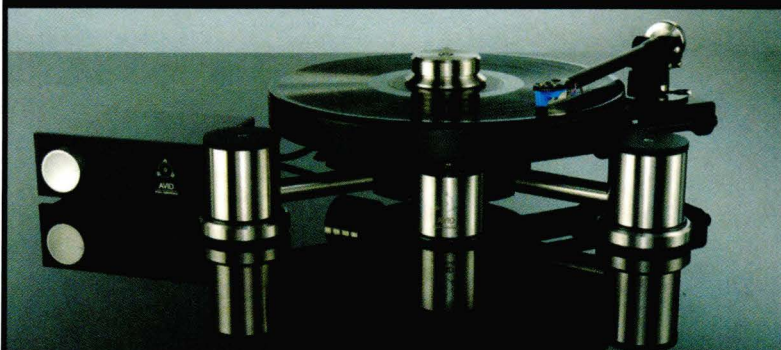
**EQUIPMENT SUPPORTS SPECS KEY** HEIGHT Of complete stand. TOP PLATE SIZE (CM) Width by depth of the supporting platform(s). Single figures indicate a square platform

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](http://www.avidhifi.co.uk)  
Contact us for your nearest dealer

# leben

a small range of beautiful valve amplifiers from famous luxman designer: Taku Hyodo



UK Distributor: RT Services, Oxfordshire  
 Tel: +44 (0) 1235 810 455 . Fax: +44 (0) 1235 810 324  
 E-mail: [info@rtsaudio.co.uk](mailto:info@rtsaudio.co.uk) . Web: [www.rtsaudio.co.uk](http://www.rtsaudio.co.uk)

## For more information contact:

The Audio Consultants  
 7 Comet House  
 Calleva Park  
 Aldermaston, Reading  
 Berkshire RG7 8JA  
 Tel: 0118 981 9891  
 email: [info@audioconsultants.co.uk](mailto:info@audioconsultants.co.uk)

Audio Republic  
 78 Otley Road  
 Headingley  
 Leeds, LS6 4BA  
 Tel: 01132 177294  
 email: [andrew.jules@virgin.net](mailto:andrew.jules@virgin.net)

The Audio Room  
 2 George Street  
 Hedon  
 Hull, HU12 8JH  
 Tel: 01482 891375  
 email: [hifi@theaudiroom.co.uk](mailto:hifi@theaudiroom.co.uk)

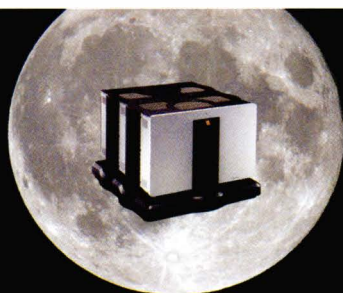
The Audio Works  
 14 Stockport Road  
 Cheadle  
 Cheshire, SK8 2AA  
 Tel: 0161 4287887  
 email: [larry@theaudioworks.co.uk](mailto:larry@theaudioworks.co.uk)

Grass Dance Audio  
 Crieff, PH7 4AB  
 01764 650 573  
 email: [roderickbowers@grassdance.demon.co.uk](mailto:roderickbowers@grassdance.demon.co.uk)

Hazlemere Audio  
 High Wycombe  
 Tel: 01494 865829  
 email: [info@hazlemereaudio.co.uk](mailto:info@hazlemereaudio.co.uk)

## RT Services Distribute:

Accuphase, DaVinci Audio Labs,  
 Leben, Nagra, Peak Consult, Siltech  
 Spectral and others. Please visit  
[www.rtsaudio.co.uk](http://www.rtsaudio.co.uk) for the full list of  
 brands and further information.



## full moon at audio destination...



browse  
 relax  
 sit back  
 listen  
 choose  
 simple

**Audio Destination**

> devons audio specialists

Stockists of:  
 Analysis Plus  
 Audia  
 Audio Physic  
 Avid  
 Ayre  
 Bel Canto  
 Chapter Audio  
 Cairn  
 Chord

Grand Prix Audio  
 IsoTek  
 Leema Acoustics  
 Lexicon  
 Lyra  
 McIntosh  
 Monitor Audio  
 Moon  
 Nordost  
 Primare

Project  
 Roksan  
 Stax  
 Tannoy Prestige  
 Teac Esoteric  
 Thiel  
 Totem Acoustics  
 VDH  
 VPI Turntables  
 and many more.

**Call 01884 243 584**

Open mon - sat : 9am - 5pm  
 Audio Destination, Tiverton, Devon  
[info@audiodestination.co.uk](mailto:info@audiodestination.co.uk) | [www.audiodestination.co.uk](http://www.audiodestination.co.uk)



20 - 22 Cadham Centre  
Glenrothes KY7 6RU, Scotland  
tel: 01592 744 779 | fax: 01592 744 710  
info@shadowaudio.co.uk  
www.shadowaudio.co.uk

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

- 30-day money back guarantee\***
- free next day UK delivery, Mon - Fri\***
- free mains cord\***
- free interconnect cable\***
- free pair of speaker stands\***

### Bryston B100 SST

This new amplifier from Bryston is only their second integrated amplifier in 32 years. Not only will this 100wpc Amplifier bring your speakers to life but your CD Player and any other digital sources as well with its stunning optional onboard D/A Converter (4 inputs).

Was it worth the wait? You bet! Don't just take our word for it - come and listen for yourself!



### Wilson Benesch

Wilson Benesch products are unique in every detail.

Show on the right is the Curve. The Curve borrows much of its design elements from the fabulous A.C.T. loudspeaker but is available at almost half the price. In terms of height it is smaller than the diminutive two way Arc but remains capable of achieving 200 watt peak program.

The A.C.T. and the Curve are the most accurate loudspeakers that the company has ever released. The Structural elements are all drawn from engineering materials more commonly seen in advanced engineering systems and include advanced composite structures, steel, Neodymium Iron Boron Motors and unique polymer diaphragms. The structural integrity of the Curve is another benchmark and provides a clarity and precision that would be impossible to achieve with conventional loudspeaker materials technology. Stunning in every respect!



### Super Scoutmaster Signature

A direct development of both the state of the art VPI TNT HR-X and the Scout entry level turntable.

The standard Scout uses an all acrylic platter, this one uses a composite platter manufactured from two slabs of acrylic, sandwiching a steel plate.

The bearing is the same design as used throughout the VPI range and is very much at the heart of the Scout's design. Harry Weisfeld has taken the drive system already used in the awesome HR-X.

Ships with a JMW - 9 Signature Tone Arm, critically acclaimed Worldwide and is wired with Nordost Valhalla Micro Monofilament tonearm cable.

The performance of the VPI Super Scoutmaster truly challenges the very best available.



### Hyperion 938

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



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



### Manley Labs

#### Award-winning Products

The Manley Labs range has won so many awards that there simply isn't enough room to list them all here!

Visit [www.shadowaudio.co.uk](http://www.shadowaudio.co.uk) or [www.manleylabs.com](http://www.manleylabs.com) for further product information. On each web site you can read the many wonderful reviews from the most famous reviewers and enthusiasts on the planet!

Manley Labs build products with a love and passion that is nothing short of inspiring...

The end result? Hi-Fi that really does stimulate the senses!

### Stingray

(£1,895) - Integrated Amplifier

Using the brilliant EL84 tube for the output stage means Stingray can be factory configured for either 25 watts of TRIODE or 50 watts of Ultra Linear mode push-pull operation. (UL Mode is the Standard Configuration.)

This little amplifier swims with the sharks: fast, agile, fluid, and with consummate authority.

Exceptional value for money, it should definitely be added to your short list if you are looking for a new valve integrated amp.



### Acoustic Energy

Return of the ultimate mini-monitor.

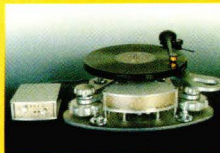
It's 18 years since the AE1 Reference first wowed reviewers and became the audio-industry benchmark for compact loudspeaker design. To celebrate the AE1 is back for 2005/6 in its completely original form. Designed from the outset as a semi-professional monitor, painstaking attention to detail in the design and construction of cabinets, crossovers and baffles ensure the new AE1 Classic reproduces complex, dynamic material as faithful as the award winning original.

We also have the incredible AE1 Mk III on demonstration as well !!



### EAR/Yoshino

Shadow Audio are very excited and pleased to represent EAR/Yoshino in Scotland.



All EAR amplifiers are truly original, including the custom transformers, metal work, printed circuit board. All the work of Tim de Paravicini.

Tim works by a simple premise: If he designs it, it must be a better design than anything else, or he will not manufacture it. His sole goal is taking audio to the furthest possible point of development. Current research is taking him further along this path than any single competitor.

We have the full-range of products on demonstration and the following will be arriving shortly:

- Master Disk Turntable.**
- Primary Drive Loudspeaker.**
- Acute Valve CD Player.**



# 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 compressed digital audio format that typically contains five or more entirely discrete channels, eg 7.1 EX where side and rear channels are used.

**DOLBY PRO-LOGIC, DPL** Forerunner to DD that 'steers' information to the front L/R, centre and mono surround channels via an analogue matrix.

**DRIVE UNIT/DRIVER** A transducer which converts electrical energy into acoustic energy, eg bass driver, tweeter.

**DSD** (direct stream digital) The coding format used for SACD offers a frequency response of over 100kHz and a dynamic range over 120dB. It has over four times the data capacity of CD.

**DSP** (digital signal processor). Integrated circuit that handles the decoding of digital audio streams. In 5.1 processors, it separates the left from right and front from rear, while managing the various bass options.

**DTS** or Digital Theatre Sound. Competitor to Dolby Digital with a reduced 4:1 compression ratio that, ostensibly, promises higher quality.

**DVD-AUDIO** High-resolution variant on DVD offering up to 192kHz bandwidth and 24-bit dynamic range. Discs are compatible with standard DVD players.

**ELECTRICAL DIGITAL** Any digital connection that uses an electrical cable rather than optical. Includes the balanced (AES/EBU) interface.

**FILTERS** Filters are intrinsic to digital audio, both analogue and digital. These are often very sophisticated in design, and in total they probably have rather more to do with the 'personality' of CD player sound than most other factors.

**FREQUENCY RESPONSE** The range of frequencies, from low to high, which a loudspeaker will reproduce.

**IMPEDANCE** With speakers, the complex electrical load that a loudspeaker presents to the amplifier driving it.

**JITTER** An insidious distortion specific to digital audio caused by imprecision in the clock, used to regulate the conversion of data into analogue audio.

**KBPS** (Kilobits per second) Digital data rate measurement system used primarily with highly compressed formats such as MP3, DAB etc. The higher the amount, the better the quality.

**LINE LEVEL** Practically every modern source component (except phono cartridges) gives an output in the region of 1-2V, referred to as 'line level'. It follows that all inputs labelled 'CD', 'tuner', 'aux' or 'tape' are designed for this input level and are thus interchangeable.

**LOSSLESS COMPRESSION** A method of reducing the number of data bits (density) without corrupting the original description of the musical signal.

**LOSSY COMPRESSION** Reduction in data density by recourse to a complex psycho-acoustical model that predicts what is, and what is not, 'audible' within a sequence of music.

**MIDRANGE** The middle three or so octaves of the audio band, where the ear

is most sensitive, covering the approximate frequency span from 160Hz up to 3kHz.

**MP3** (MPEG layer 3) Lossy compression format for digital audio that drastically reduces data content in order to squeeze music through internet connections or allow hundreds of CDs to be stored on a hard disc.

**OUTPUT IMPEDANCE** A measure of resistance to alternating current, a source with low output impedance (below 100 ohms) helps ensure compatibility with most amplifiers, even with long interconnect cables

**PCM** (pulse code modulation) The digital coding system for analogue waveforms used for CD and DVD. Quality is limited by the oversample and bit rates used – CD is 44.1kHz/16-bit while DVD-A is capable of 192kHz/24-bit

**PRESENCE BAND** Critical section of the audio band at the point where midrange and treble meet.

**QUANTISATION NOISE** A form of distortion or noise resulting from errors in the description of the musical signal by the digital code.

**SACD** (Super Audio CD) was launched in 1999 and is a Sony/Philips format based on DSD coding that offers high resolution stereo and multichannel sound from hybrid discs that can also be played on ordinary CD drives.

**SAMPLE RATE** The rate at which the musical waveform is sliced up into discrete chunks. For CD, this is 44.1kHz or once every 0.023msec. DVD will also support 48kHz and 96kHz.

**SENSITIVITY** The relative loudness that a speaker generates for a specific voltage input. Expressed in decibels per watt (dB/W), measured 1m from the speaker.

**THX** Standards system for home cinema set-ups which includes amplifier power and speaker dispersion characteristics. The latest THX Ultra 2 standard is more stringent than THX Select.

**TOSLINK** The proprietary name given by Toshiba to the optical fibre signal transmission system it invented for consumer applications.

**TRANSISTOR/MOSFET** The two main types of power semiconductor used in solid state amplifier output stages.

**TREBLE** High frequencies, the top end of the audio band, ie above 3kHz.

**TWEETER** Treble driver.

**TWO/THREE-WAY** Loudspeaker crossovers split the signal into two or three frequency bands, a two-way speaker can have more than two drive units.

**WATTS** (per channel) The watt is the unit of electrical power and the WPC rating is the maximum average undistorted power that an amp can deliver to a typical speaker. However, speaker sensitivity variations can make more difference than amplifier output.

**WOOFER** Bass driver.

## DESCRIPTIVE TERMS

**AGGRESSIVE** Forward and bright sonic character.

**AMBIENCE** The impression of an acoustical space, such as the performing hall in which a recording was made.

**ANALYTICAL** Highly detailed.

**ARTICULATE** Intelligibility of voice(s) and instruments and the interactions between them.

**ATTACK** The leading edge of a note and the ability of a system to reproduce the attack transients in music.

**BALANCE** Essentially tonal balance, the degree to which one aspect of the sonic spectrum is emphasised above the rest. Also channel balance, the relative level of the left and right stereo channels.

**BODY** Fullness of sound, with particular emphasis on upper bass. Opposite of thin.

**BOXY** The sound of a loudspeaker with audible cabinet resonances.

**BRIGHT** A sound that emphasises the upper midrange/lower treble.

**DARK** A tonal balance that tilts downwards with increasing frequency. Opposite of bright.

**DECAY** The fadeout of a note, it follows the attack.

**DEFINITION** (or resolution) The ability of a component to reveal the subtle information that is fundamental to high fidelity sound.

**DEPTH** (of image) The perception of music being reproduced behind the loudspeakers and inhabiting a reproduction of the acoustic space of the original recording.

**DETAIL** The most delicate elements of the original sound and those which are the first to disappear with lesser equipment.

**DRY** A sound that is devoid of 'juice', which usually comes across as fine-grained and lean. Also a loss of reverberation as produced by a damped environment.

**DYNAMIC** The suggestion of energy and wide dynamic range. Related to perceived speed as well as contrasts in volume both large and small.

**EUPHONIC** An appealing form of distortion that generally enhances perceived fidelity, often ascribed to the harmonic elaborations of some valve amps.

**FAST** Good reproduction of rapid transients which increase the sense of realism and 'snap'.

**FOCUS** A strong, precise sense of image projection.

**FORWARD(NESS)** Similar to an aggressive sound, a sense of the image being projected in front of the speakers and of music being forced upon the listener.

**GRAINY** A slightly raw, exposed sound which lacks finesse.

**GRIP** A sense of control and sturdiness in the bass.

**GRUNT** See grip.

**HARD** Uncomfortable, forward, aggressive sound with a metallic tinge.

**HARSH** Grating, abrasive.

**IMAGING** (stereo) The sense that a voice or instrument is in a particular place in the room.

**JUICY** Sound that has joie de vivre, energy and life.

**LOW-LEVEL DETAIL** The quietest sounds in a recording.

**MUSICAL** or musicality. A sense of cohesion and subjective 'rightness' in the sound.

**NATURALNESS** Realism.

**OPAQUE** Unclear, lacking transparency.

**OPEN** Sound which has height and 'air', relates to clean upper midrange and treble.

**PACE** Often associated with rhythm, a strong sense of timing and beat.

**PRESENCE** A sense of an instrument or voice occupying a place in the listening room.

**PRESENCE RANGE** The upper midrange.

**SEISMIC** Very low bass that you feel rather than hear.

**SIBILANCE** An emphasis of the 'S' sound, often heard on radio.

**SNAP** A system with good speed and transient response can deliver the immediacy or 'snap' of live instruments.

**SPEED** A fast system with good pace gives the impression of being right on the money in its timing.

**STURDY** Solid, powerful, robust sound.

**THICK** A lack of articulation and clarity in the bass.

**THIN** Bass light.

**TIMBRE** The tonal character of an instrument.

**TIMING** A sense of precision in tempo. See speed and pace.

**TRANSIENT** The leading edge of a percussive sound. Good transient response makes the sound as a whole more live and realistic.

**TRANSPARENCY, TRANSPARENT** A hear-through quality that is akin to clarity and reveals all aspects of detail.

**TWEAK** To tune a system or component in an attempt to get the best performance from it.

**TWEAKER** Someone who enjoys this process.

**VEILED** Loss of detail due to limited transparency.

**WARM** A fullness in the lower midrange/upper bass.

**WEIGHT** A sense of substance and underpinning produced by deep, controlled bass.



## Best Part-Exchange Prices anywhere

Visit [www.shadowaudio.co.uk](http://www.shadowaudio.co.uk). Don't forget our classified listing at the back of this magazine!



## (FREE) Shadow Audio Newsletter

Send an email to [info@shadowaudio.co.uk](mailto:info@shadowaudio.co.uk) with the words 'ADD ME' as the subject line and we will add you to our NEW email newsletter list.



## New Web Site Coming Soon!

For the last few months we have been very hard at work building a new web site... watch this space!



## Can't go the distance? (30-day money back\*)

Many customers would like to come and see us but they are just so far away... the solution: 30-day Money Back Scheme\*

\*subject to conditions



**30-day money back guarantee\***



**free next day UK delivery. Mon - Fri\***



**free mains cord\***



**free intercnt cable\***



**free pair of speaker stands\***



### VERDICT

#### JungSon JA-88D

"tune your system around this amplifier and you'll get startling results..."

"...you have here before one of the best budget audiophile buys in a long time. Power, pace, punch, clarity and insight - it has them all - and for just £899. Enough said."

David Price, Hi-Fi World, May 2006  
JungSon JA-88D Amplifier



### McIntosh

For more than 55 years, they have earned a supreme reputation for performance and reliability. The exceptional longevity of McIntosh products owes to a design philosophy established with the very first McIntosh amp: that every component will be created with capacity so great that it will never be operated at or near its stress point.

McIntosh is one of our best selling brands and its easy to hear why...



ORSA



### JAS Audio Loudspeakers

Can you buy a better range of speakers even at twice the price??

"In some ways it always feels more rewarding to review a product that punches above its weight and this is a special little speaker that sets a price/performance yardstick that is hard to beat."

Chris Thomas, JAS Orsa, Hi-Fi+ Issue 42

### NEW Models Now Available!

JAS Audio have just introduced new models, all of which are floorstanders. Orsus (£2,299), Orior Grand (£2,995), Odin (£4,495) and the truly magnificent Plato (£13,995).

Twin ribbon tweeter technology gives you electrostatic speed and transparency coupled with ultra fast-bass units for unheard levels of depth/scale. Beautiful cabinets complete what are astonishing loudspeakers.



Orior Grand (NEW)

Odin (NEW)



### MiniMax Valve CD Player

"For what it costs, this player is no less than brilliant; it's a fantastic 'do-it-all' package that delivers swingeing body blows to all other machines here in the midband."

### VERDICT



### IsoTek / Nordost Special Offers

On the following IsoTek/Nordost mains filtration systems:

IsoTek NOVA	£1695
IsoTek Titan	£1495
IsoTek Sigmus (NEW)	£995
IsoTek GII Minisub	£545
IsoTek GII Solus	£325
Nordost THOR	£1599



FREE delivery, FREE Iso8/IsoTek mains cable worth £49 and a 30-day money back guarantee\*.

### Nordost THOR

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



GII Minisub



Titan



Sigmus (NEW)



Nova



### Eastern Electric M520

"In action, it's a terrifically musical amp, painting a solid, authoritative sonic picture, finessed by a high level of detail."



WHAT HI-FI, March 2006  
Eastern Electric M520



*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](http://www.pjhifi.co.uk) email:info@pjhifi.co.uk.**

*".....it's hifi for fun's sake....."*

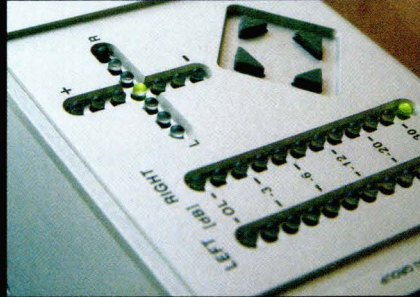




### MPA 250W AMPLIFIER

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.

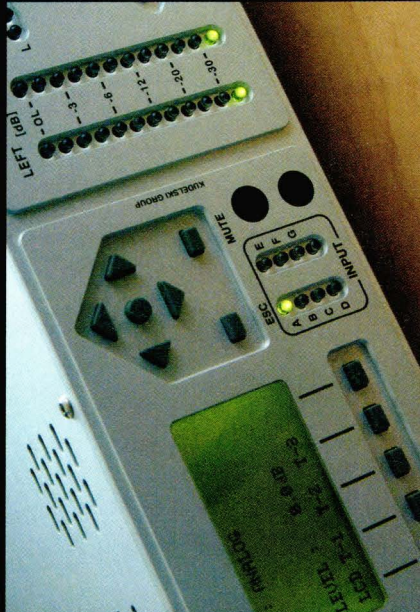
The MPA stands to convince you that a MOSFET based amplifier can convey the emotion and warmth of tubes, in exactly the same way we proved that digital and analogue were not antagonist concepts when serving musicality.



### 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.

#### 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

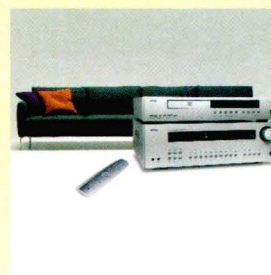
Avid, Benz Micro, Dynavektor, Koetsu, Kuzma, Lyra, Michell, Rega, Roksan, RS Labs, SME, Triplanar, VPI.

ENQUIRIES: T. 01562 731100  
F. 01562 730228

THE OLD CHAPEL, FORGE LANE,  
BELBROUGHTON. DY9 9TD  
sales@midlandaudiox-change.co.uk



- Amphion • Arcam • ART • Audiolab • AVID • Ayre • B&W •
- Classé • Focal.JM Lab • Linn Products • MJ Acoustics • Monitor Audio •
- Naim Audio • Nautilus • Primare • Quadraspire • Rega • REL • Rotel •
- Shahinian • Spondor • Sugden • Thiel • Wadia •



**Call us to dem the stunning NEW  
Arcam DV-137 DVD player & AVR350 AV receiver**

Acoustica  
17 Hoole Road  
CHESTER CH2 3NH  
**01244 344227**  
[www.acoustica.co.uk](http://www.acoustica.co.uk)

Acoustica  
114 Wolverhampton Road  
STAFFORD ST17 4AH  
**01785 258216**  
[www.acoustica.co.uk](http://www.acoustica.co.uk)

Griffin Audio  
3 Gibb Terrace, Gibb St  
BIRMINGHAM B9 4AA  
**0121 224 7300**  
[www.griffinaudio.co.uk](http://www.griffinaudio.co.uk)

- Alacama
- 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](http://www.Vickers-HiFi.co.uk)

**Specialists in high fidelity sound reproduction - since 1967**

**SUFFOLK**

devil's  
in  
the  
detail  
signals  
hifi for grown-ups

l p s w i c h  
(01473)655171  
f a x ( 0 1 4 7 3 ) 6 5 5 1 7 2  
e m a i l e n q @ s i g n a l s . u k . c o m  
w w w . s i g n a l s . u k . c o m  
world class audio and a/v from:  
arcam atc castle creek epos grado  
harbeth infocus m+k lexicon  
naim audio neat nottingham nordost  
lyra origin live ortofon primare  
runco sme sumiko stax trichord

**LINCOLNSHIRE**

**Lend us your ears and we'll blow your mind . . .**

Arcam, ATC, B & W, Denon, Kef, Marantz, Meridian, Mitchell, Mission, NAD, Pioneer, Panasonic, Rotel, Sony, 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

**BOLTON**

**Is This Your Problem?**

**Here's Your Answer**

Loud Too Loud Way Too Loud

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](http://www.rothwellaudioproducts.co.uk)

Excellent reviews in Hi-Fi Choice, Hi-Fi World, Hi-Fi Plus, What Hi-Fi and [www.tnt-audio.com](http://www.tnt-audio.com)

**ORANGES & LEMONS**



**020 7924 2040**  
[www.oandlhifi.co.uk](http://www.oandlhifi.co.uk)  
61 Webbs Road, Battersea SW11 6RX  
email: [oranges.lemons@virgin.net](mailto:oranges.lemons@virgin.net)

CEDIA BADA

**IAN HARRISON HIFI**

**SALE NOW ON!**  
Mail order supplier of Hi-Fi for 17 years

Mitchell, Clearaudio, Graham, SME, Hadcock, Transfiguration, Denon, Koetsu, Trichord, EAR, Tom Evans, Stax, Harbeth, Epos, Gamut, Graaf, Sumiko Ortofon, Creek, 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

**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](http://www.thecartridgeman.com)

[www.hifichoice.co.uk](http://www.hifichoice.co.uk)

**NOTEWORTHY AUDIO**

hi-fi by enthusiasts

BELOW IS A SMALL SELECTION FROM OUR RANGE OF CAREFULLY CHOSEN EQUIPMENT

**Audio Note Io 1 MC cartridge.** Surely one of the best cartridges in existence, the Io 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**.



**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 stock of pre-loved Naim Audio equipment on the planet

- Part exchanges very welcome
- Friendly help and advice

Tel • St Albans 01727 86 86 59



**New!**

**Naim Audio Parts & Accessories Online Shop**  
See [www.tomtomaudio.com](http://www.tomtomaudio.com) for details

**Noteworthy Audio**

36 Buckingham Street, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP20 2LH. Tel: 01296 422224  
[www.noteworthyaudio.co.uk](http://www.noteworthyaudio.co.uk)



Vinyl Storage

# CUBES



Sturdy 25mm construction  
Horizontal or Vertical  
Holds 600 Records  
Wenge/Beech/Black Ash  
Next Day Delivery  
107.5 x 73 x 40 cm

£89.00

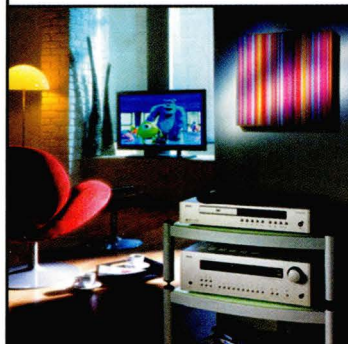


01702 343734

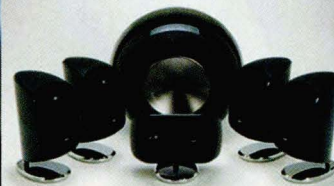
[www.chapelandchapel.co.uk/cubes](http://www.chapelandchapel.co.uk/cubes)

# Soundstage

Home Hi-fi Home Cinema Multi-room Est: 1978



Award Winning Products  
Lowest Price in Hertfordshire



Home Cinema & Hi-fi Specialist  
Demo Room for Private Audition

**Pioneer**  
Plasma Centre



**BOSE**

**ARCAM**

**MERIDIAN**

**B&W**

**KEF**

**DENON**

**Panasonic**

**LOEWE**

253 High Road Broxbourne Hertfordshire EN10 6PZ

Tel: (01992) 440549 or 303353

Email: [info@soundstage-av.co.uk](mailto:info@soundstage-av.co.uk)

Web: [www.soundstage-av.co.uk](http://www.soundstage-av.co.uk)

KENT

## Rochester Hi-Fi

30 HIGH STREET, ROCHESTER, KENT, ME1 1LD - 01634 880037

[www.rochesterhi-fi.co.uk](http://www.rochesterhi-fi.co.uk)



ADVANTAGE, ARCAM, ATACAMA, AUDION, AVI, BASE, CHORD, CAIRN, CLEARAUDIO, CREEK, CYMBOL, DALI, EPOS, JMLAB, GAMUT, GOLDRING, GRADIENT, GRADO, GRAHAM SLEE, GRAVES AUDIO, HADCOCK, MERLIN, NAD, NOTTINGHAM ANALOGUE, NU FORCE, OPTIMUM, ORIGIN LIVE, PARTINGTON, PIEGA, PURE, QUADRASPIRE, RENAISSANCE, SENNHEISER, STELLO, STIRLING, LS35/a, TIVOLI, TRANSFIGURATION, USHER, VINCENT, VIVID.

CHORD SPM 14000 ON DEMONSTRATION

[www.hifichoice.co.uk](http://www.hifichoice.co.uk)

# PROJECTORS ARE US

- ★ HOME CINEMA SPECIALISTS
- ★ SIM2 UK'S TOP INDEPENDENT DEALER
- ★ EXPERT ADVICE & INSTALLATIONS

PREMIER SIM2 GRAND CINEMA DEALER 



**SIM2 C3X**

SIM2'S BRAND NEW 3 CHIP PROJECTOR HAS ARRIVED AND IS AVAILABLE AT AN UNBELIEVABLE PRICE. SEEING IS BELIEVING.

- CONTRAST RATIO 6500:1
- BRIGHTNESS 2500 ANSI LUMENS

FROM **£10,995**

**SIM2 DOMINO 35H £2995 SIM2 HT305E £4995**  
NOW ON DEMONSTRATION  
**SIM2 HT3000 £9995**

DOMINO 35H



HT3000



True High Definition Projector  
Resolution 1920X1080

Check our website for latest deals and special offers

[www.projectorsareus.co.uk](http://www.projectorsareus.co.uk)



[projectorsareus@btinternet.com](mailto:projectorsareus@btinternet.com)

Tel: 01403 272931

**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 Lidlinton, Bedfordshire, MK43 0SF  
Telephone 01525 841999 Facsimile 01525 841009

**BIRMINGHAM**

**sound cinergy**  
*specialists in home entertainment*

Tues - Sat 10.00am - 5.30pm  
Free Car Parking  
CHORD CO. CREEK • EPOS • EXPOSURE  
HARMON KARDON • INFINITY • JINN  
MARANTZ • MONITOR AUDIO • MORDAUNT SHORT  
NAD • ORTOFON • PROJECT • PURE • REL • ROKSAN  
THEMESCENE • TRICHORD • VAN DEN HUL  
Wide selection of HiFi furniture and accessories  
Finance Facilities  
37 HIGH STREET, ALDRIDGE. 01922 457926  
www.soundcinergy.co.uk



**MUSIC MATTERS**

**THE AUDIO SPECIALISTS**



Our extensive range of products includes the very finest hi-fi and home cinema from Arcam, Audio Research, B&W, Chapter Audio, Chord, Cyrus, Denon, Dream Vision, Dynaudio, KEF, Krell, LAMM, Marantz, Martin Logan, Meridian, Michell, Mission, Monitor Audio, Musical Fidelity, Naim, Nordost, Panasonic, Pioneer, Project, Pure, Quad, REL, Rotel, Sennheiser, Sim2, SME, Sonus Faber, TEAC, Technics, Theta, Wharfdale, 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

**O'Brien Hi-Fi**

ARCAYOIS • AUDIO NOTE • AUDIO RESEARCH • AUDIO TECHNICA • AVID • BEYER • CABLETALK • CHORD • CREEK • DIAPASON • DYNAVECTOR • EPOS • GOLDRING • JADIS • JEKLIN • MICHELL • MOON • 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	Was	Now
ATCSIA2 amplifier (sh)	£2500	£1150	NAD 7760	Offers
Audio Analogue Donizetti Stereo power (sh)	£595	£350	Onix-various models	please enquire
Exposure 3010 amp (ex-demo)	£1000	£749	Onix A60MK11 (new)	£795 £375
Garrard Zero 100S (78 rpm) (sh)	£—	£75	Onix A120MK11 (new)	£995 £495
Krell KAV3000 (sh)	£2900	£995	Prologue 3 and5 (ex-demo)	£1898 £1600
Martin Logan Aeriuss (sh)	£3150	£1750	REL Strata ST111 (sh)	£700 £295
Martin Logan Aeon (sh)perfect	£3150	£1395	Sonus Faber Domus sub (ex-demo)	£1290 £995
Monrio Asly amp (ex-demo) black	£450	£229	Sugden Masterclass CD (new)	£2700 £2200
Moon 5080 (i3) (ex-demo)	£1950	£895	Sugden Masterclass Amplifier (new)	£3150 £2250
Moon Equinox (ex-demo)	£1950	£1650	Theta Data 11 CD (new mech)	£1500 £600
Moon (i5) amplifier (ex-demo)	£2650	£2150	Theta Data Basic1+Pro Prime (sh)	£— £699
Moon Orion CD/DVD (ex-demo)	£2859	£1450	Waterfall Iguascu (ex-demo)	Now price changedto £995
Musical Fidelity T11tuner (sh)	£500	£95		



**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 Wimbledon, London SW20 0TW**  
Tel: (020) 8946 1528/0331 Email: shop@obrienhifi.com  
Open 9.30-5.30 Tuesday-Saturday

Audio from people who love Music

Hear what you have been missing, with a British hi-fi. Experience the sound of the Bowers & Wilkins 802D's.



B&W Nautilus Pure AVi Grado JmLab Lutron Rega Sim Linn Denon M&K Fujitsu Arcam Fmj Nevo Attacama IsoTek Chord co Project Stax Triad Pioneer Goldring Systemline Quadraspire Beyer Vogel Mission and More..  
Quality service Since 1985

**THE SOUND GALLERY**

65 Castle Street, High Wycombe, Bucks  
www.soundgallery.co.uk  
01494 531682



**SOUND ACADEMY**

25 Years of Audio Visual Perfection  
152a HIGH STREET BLOXWICH WALSALL  
Late night Thursday 9am - 7pm

**01922 493499**  
www.soundacademy.co.uk

**MULTIROOMAUDIO, VIDEOSATELLITE ANDRFDISTRIBUTIONFORSOUNDANDSCREEN**



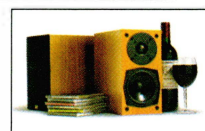
**HI-FI CHOICE**  
PASSION FOR SOUND

To advertise please call Kim Holtham  
**020 7042 4037**

**www.avihifi.com**



**AVI Ltd.**  
Tel: 01453 752656  
www.avihifi.com  
sales@avihifi.co.uk



8-10,000 people visit this site each month, because it's worth a visit!!

# 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.

## 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, Michell Engineering, Monitor Audio, Naim Audio, Primare, Quadraspire, 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. 10.5-3.0, evenings by arrangement.

## NORTH WEST

**DOUG BRADY HI-FI**, Kingsway Studios, Kingsway North, Warrington WA1 3NU. Tel: 01925 828009. Email: doug.bradyl@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.com. Carefully selected audio range, including Naim, NAD, Roksan, Michell, Harman, Sugden, 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.

## 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, Lavardin, 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 10.5-3.0. **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.

## LANCASHIRE

**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 exceptional results from Arcam, Arcam FMJ,

Art Loudspeakers, Beyerdynamic, Chord Cables,

DNM Cables, Exposure, Focal/JMLab, InFocus,

Isoblu, Kube Design, Loewe televisions, Merlin

Cables, NAD, Nottingham Analogue Studio, Opera

Loudspeakers, Partington, Pathos, PMC, ProAc,

Pro-lect, Pure, Quadraspire, REL, Sennheiser, Screen

Int., Sonus, Sugden, Tivoli, and Unison Research.

We are open Tuesday - Saturday 9.30 - 5.30

and by arrangement.

Free parking outside the courtyard.

All normal methods of payment accepted.

**01858 432999**

**WWW.DIVINEAUDIO.CO.UK,**

**INFO@DIVINEAUDIO.CO.UK**

## LIVERPOOL

**ACOUSTICA**, 17 Hoole Rd, Chester CH2 3NH. Tel: 01244 344227. See our main entry under Cheshire.

## LONDON

**CORNFLAKE.CO.UK**, 37 Windmill Street, London W1T 2JU. Tel: 020 7631 0472, fax: 020 7436 7165. E-mail: help@cornflake.co.uk. Open Tues-Sat 10-6, Thurs 10-7.

The specialists in high quality sound, be it for one room or many more. They offer friendly advice, and a full delivery and installation service is available. Two listening rooms with full A/V facilities demonstrating Arcam, ATC, AVI, Bryston, Dynaudio, Isotek, Mark Levinson, Lexicon, Naim, Origin Live, Proceed, PMC, Rega, Totem, Yamaha and more. Service department. Amex, Mastercard, Switch, Visa and worldwide mail order service. Still the coolest Hi-Fi shop in London. www.cornflake.co.uk

## 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.

www.falcon-acoustics.co.uk

**BADA**

## NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

**CLASSIC HIFI**, School Lane, Kettering, Northamptonshire NN16 0DH. Tel: 01536 310855. Kettering's specialist hi-fi and home cinema specialist, dealing in: Spondor, PMC, Sugden, Marantz Premium, Mordunt-Short, Exposure, Mission, Creek, EPOS, Castle, Harman-Kardon, Monitor Audio, Pioneer, Yamaha, Fujitsu and more. Opening hours Mon-Sat 09.30-5.30

## 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**

### 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**

## 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, Beamax, BenQ, Cyrus, Dali, Denon, InFocus Screenplay projectors, JM Labs, KEF, Mission, MJ Acoustics, NAD, Naim, Onkyo, Optimum, Optoma Themescene, Partington, Pioneer, Project, Q Acoustics, QED, Roksan, Soundstyle, Stands Unique, Velodyne, 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](http://www.creative-audio.co.uk)

## SOMERSET

**MIKE MANNING AUDIO**, 110 Middle Street, Yeovil, Somerset BA20 1NE. Tel: 01935 479361 54 Bridge Street, Taunton. Tel: 01823 326688. www.mikemanningaudio.com.

The HiFi and A/V specialists.

The best in HiFi and Home Cinema from: AUDION VALVE, B&W, MILLER & KREISELL, DENON, DYNAVECTOR, DENSEN, FOCAL (JM Lab), HARMON KARDON, SIM Projectors and screens, HITACHI (Plasma and LCD), KEF, NAIM AUDIO, NAD, PIONEER (Plasma and AV) REVOLVER, REGA, ROTEL 02 & 10 Series, ROYD, SHAHINIAN, SPENDER, TEAC, WELL TEMPERED turntables, YAMAHA. Dedicated Demonstration lounges for relaxed and unpressured demonstrations. Home installations on most systems. Full service department. Mastercard, Visa, Instant Credit. Closed Mondays (Yeovil) - Tuesdays (Taunton)

## SOUTH WEST

**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: Argentio, Chord Co, DNM, Hovland, Nordost, SonicLink, Siltech, Yamamura Churchill. Mains: Accuphase.

## 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@audiomages-hifi.com - www.audiomages-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

**ACOUSTICA**, 114 Wolverhampton Road, Stafford ST17 4AH. Tel: 01785 258216. See our main entry under Cheshire.

**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.

**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**

## WIGAN

**ADVENTURES IN HI-FI**, ishopsigate, Crawford Street, Wigan, WN1 1NL. Tel: 01942 234202 or www.adventuresinhifi.com

For the best hi-fi and home cinema products from quality manufacturers including ARCAM, Bryston, Neat, Michelle, Naim, Rega, Cyrus, NAD, Quad, Dynavektor, Resolution Audio, Sugden, Shahinian, Castle, Focal JM Lab, PMC, Project, Roksan, Spondor, Hutter, Quadraspire, Chord Company, InFocus. 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

## DONCASTER

**THE HI-FI STUDIOS**, The Long Barn, Wakefield Road, Hampole, Doncaster DN6 7EU. Tel: 01302 727274 / 725550, fax: 01302 727274. Email: info@thehifistudios .freeserve.co.uk. Web: thehifistudios.co.uk

Hi-Fi, Home Cinema and Multi-Room experts. Musical Fidelity, Tag McLaren, Wadia, Anthony Gallow, ProAc, Ruark, Castle, Teac, Unison Research, Impulse Horns, Monitor Audio, Harbeth, NAD, Michell Turntables, Audio Analogue, Living Voice, Exposure, Densen, Lynwood Electronics, Opera, Trichord Research, Nordost, Stands Unique, Stax 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. 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.

To advertise in the  
**HI-FI CHOICE** Dealer Directory,  
Call Kim Holtham  
on 0207 042 4037 now!

# Next month

ISSUE 284 ⊕ SEPTEMBER 2006 ⊕ ON SALE 27 JULY

## In-depth reviews of the most vital new kit, including...

- ⊕ Denon 700AE CD player and integrated amplifier
- ⊕ Classé CDP-202 CD player
- ⊕ The Funk Firm Funk Vector turntable
- ⊕ Monitor Audio GS10 loudspeaker
- ⊕ Marantz SA7001 KI CD/SACD player
- ⊕ Ayre AX-5e integrated amplifier
- ⊕ McIntosh MCD201 CD/SACD player



## Plus...

Our regular round-ups of accessories and music, not to mention the latest news, views and features from hi-fi's smartest grapevine... And much, much more!

**BE SURE NOT TO MISS BRITAIN'S MOST RELIABLE GUIDE TO REAL HI-FI**

## ULTIMATE GROUP TEST >> LOUDSPEAKERS

The latest loudspeakers are subjected to our uniquely rigorous group test regime, including...

- ⊕ Canton Ergo 6020
- ⊕ Castle Richmond 3i
- ⊕ KEF iQ3
- ⊕ Mordaunt-Short Avant 908i
- ⊕ Nbien DX-5
- ⊕ Q Acoustics 1050



# SUBSCRIBE! TO HI-FI CHOICE SEE PAGE 64 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

# HI-FI CHOICE

AUGUST 2006 ISSUE 283

Future Publishing Ltd, 2 Balcombe Street, London NW1 6NW  
Tel: +44 (0)20 7042 4000 Fax: +44 (0)20 7042 4529

### EDITORIAL

Tim Bower **editor** tim.bower@futurenet.co.uk  
Dan George **reviews editor** dan.george@futurenet.co.uk  
Benny Benson **art editor** benjamin.benson@futurenet.co.uk

### CONTRIBUTORS

Richard Black, Alvin Gold,  
Stuart Harrison, Jimmy Hughes, Jason Kennedy,  
Jon Marks, Paul Messenger, Dave Oliver,  
Mark Prendergast, Stuart M Robinson, Alan Sircorn,  
Phil Strongman, Dominic Todd, 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 advertising executive**  
020 7042 4255 brad.francis@futurenet.co.uk  
James Rhodes-Baxter **display sales executive**  
020 7042 4260 james.rhodes-baxter@futurenet.co.uk  
Sophie Adams **display sales executive**  
020 7042 4269 sophie.adams@futurenet.co.uk  
Mo El Mouden **display sales executive**  
020 7042 4272 mo.elmouden@futurenet.co.uk  
Kim Holtham **classified sales executive**  
020 7042 4037 kim.holtham@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 £44.96 (or £11.24 quarterly Direct Debit), Europe £58.58, rest of the world £82.47

### BACK ISSUES

Tel: +44 (0)870 837 4773  
Prices: UK £5.95 per issue, EU £6.95 per issue

### MARKETING & LICENSING

Tim Hudson **head of international licensing**  
tim.hudson@futurenet.co.uk  
Antonio Goard **marketing manager**

### PRODUCTION & DISTRIBUTION

Luke Bilton **circulation manager**  
Clare Scott **production manager**  
Roberta Sanders **production controller**  
Alexa Cuthell **ad coordinator**

### PUBLISHING & MANAGEMENT

Andy Ford **group publisher**  
andy.ford@futurenet.co.uk  
Nick Merritt **group senior editor**  
Dom Beaven **publishing director**  
Clare Dove **advertising director**  
Jim Douglas **editorial 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 2006. 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)

Stevie Spring **chief executive**

Roger Parry **non-executive chairman**  
John Bowman **group finance director**

+44 (0)1225 442244 www.futureplc.com  
Bath • London • Milan • New York  
Paris • San Diego • San Francisco



The text paper in this magazine is totally chlorine free. The paper manufacturer and Future Publishing have been independently certified in accordance with the rules of the Forest Stewardship Council.



When you have finished with this magazine please recycle it.





2ND HAND  
**HI-FI** & 3  
**HOME  
CINEMA  
BUYER**

**FREE! 8 PAGE MAGAZINE**  
WITH THE AUGUST ISSUE OF HI-FI CHOICE



cambridge audio

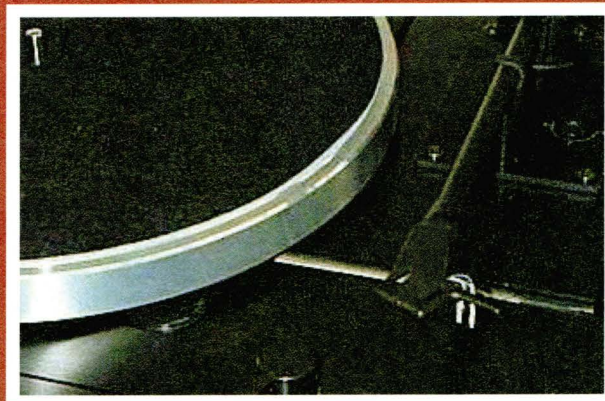
DIGITAL TUNE

# A-Z GUIDE TO SECOND-HAND KIT #25 THORENS

In the year 2000, after more than 100 years of trading, Thorens of Germany went out of business, a victim of the reduced demand for turntables. Happily, the company has since been resurrected, but spares aren't necessarily available for pre-2000 models. In fact, with the exception of belts and power supplies, you'd be hard pushed to find much from the Thorens of today to support the Thorens of old – even photographs! Yet, as Ian Dury would have said, there are still plenty of reasons to be cheerful. First, many user and service manuals are available at [www.thorens.com](http://www.thorens.com). Armed with these, there are also a good number of turntable specialists that could help you out should disaster strike.

Another reason why Thorens decks are a great second-hand buy is because of the build quality. The company has an excellent reputation for reliability. Without going to the rarefied extremes of the Prestige model, the most recent models that best demonstrate this are probably the TD3001 and TD520.

24-pole synchronised motor, real wood veneered plinth and an upgraded version of the TD90 tonearm. Not exactly the last word in transparency, the sound has an involving, big-boned presentation, not too dissimilar to a Linn LP12. Second-hand, it makes a great buy for a number of reasons. The first is that, at around £200-£350, it's cheap for the quality offered. Secondly, reliability is excellent with their being no known problems with either deck or tonearm. Finally, it's upgradeable, so that if the power supply is broken or has gone missing, you can always upgrade it to a Thorens TPN2000 (around £165) or something similar. Various upgraded plinths are also on the market.



Above: Thorens TD3001 turntable

312 and it shows the sort of dynamic clout, control and accuracy that only comes from that crucial extra 75mm on the tonearm. Made from 1986-89 and then 1989-99 in MKII form, the TD520 doesn't come cheap. Many found second-hand will come complete with the above SME arm and so will set you back around £1,000. Get (very) lucky though and you may find one for considerably less than this. Find one finished in one of the wackier woods, such as the zebra stripe rosewood and you'll also have one of the few decks with more room presence than a Michell Gyrodec. Perhaps not one of the best audio bargains in these pages then, but certainly one of the most covetable. Buy with your heart. **HFC**

*Dominic Todd*

*Next month: Yamaha*

## “Thorens decks are a great second-hand buy because of the build quality.”

Launched in 1990, the TD3001 is one of the last of the previous generation. At the time, it was one of Thorens's most prestigious models and sold for over £600. Based on the more common TD2001, it came with a 3.3kg balanced aluminium platter, a superb quality

In rather a different ball-park, but still a fine buy, is the TD520. This awesome deck is the size of a sideboard with a lid so large it requires three hinges. Its main advantage, however, is the TD520's ability to accept a 12" tonearm. Equip it with something like an SME

# DIY CORNER SPEAKERS

## Part 25 Enclosure Subtleties (part 6)

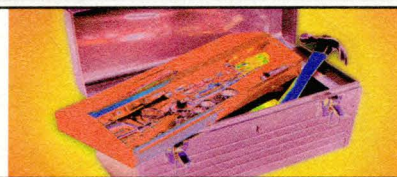
Techniques for treating the inside of a speaker enclosure vary so widely, it's impossible to lay down any specific rules. Even the most sophisticated manufacturers rely on an 'suck-it-and-see' approach to finalising a given design.

There are two distinct forms of damping: one type is used to try and control the vibrations that are generated in the panels which make up the enclosure; the other tries to control and absorb sound waves – especially the standing waves – generated within the enclosure.

The problem with using damping techniques on either acoustic or panel vibrations is that although a damping medium can absorb some

of the vibrational energy, it can also store and re-radiate some of it at a lower level. This adds an element of time-smear.

The real trick with damping materials is to use as little as you can get away with. Enclosure panel damping is rarely encountered these days and manufacturers control panel resonances by building relatively stiff enclosures. Two basic approaches of damping enclosure volumes are used: one lines the inside walls of the enclosure with an absorbing material (such as 'egg-box' foam or thick felt); the other fills the bulk of the volume with a lossy lightweight wadding, either synthetic or long-hair wool.



The key to getting best results is to try alternatives, making mono comparisons by adjusting the damping of one speaker and comparing it to the other. **HFC**

*Paul Messenger*

### DIY CONTACTS

**FALCON ACOUSTICS** ☎ 01493 751100  
🌐 [www.falcon-acoustics.co.uk](http://www.falcon-acoustics.co.uk)

**WILMSLOW AUDIO** ☎ 01455 286603  
🌐 [www.wilmslow-audio.co.uk](http://www.wilmslow-audio.co.uk)

**IPL ACOUSTICS** ☎ 01271 867439  
🌐 [www.iplacoustics.co.uk](http://www.iplacoustics.co.uk)

**NEXT MONTH:** More on Enclosure Subtleties



b:h:e

**brighton hi-fi exchange**

Visit our web site for complete list of brands stocked.

e-mail [dave@hifiguy.co.uk](mailto:dave@hifiguy.co.uk) telephone **01580 878 101**  
web [www.hifiguy.co.uk](http://www.hifiguy.co.uk) mobile **07734 436 180**

**Just a few of our latest used bargains...**

Acoustic Signature Analogue One	£5000	£2995
Audiomeca Obsession	£1400	£800
Audio Artistry Dvorak Speakers	£2950	£2500
Audio Note JSP Speakers	£2000	£550
Audio Research VS55	£3700	£1800
Audio Research VT200 MK III	£12000	£5995
Audio Research VS50	£3000	£1200
AVI Preamp	£N/A	£295
AVI Integrated Laboratory Model	£1500	£700
AVI Pro 9 Plus Speakers	£N/A	£350
CadenceArca Speakers	£11000	£2750
Chord 1200E Poweramp (3yrs old)	£5750	£2800
Clearaudio Master Reference	£8500	£4500
Conrad Johnson Premier 8A Monoblocks	£20000	£5500
Cyrus DAC-XP/PSX-R	£2700	£1600
Cyrus DAC-XP	£2200	£1400
Jadis JPS-2 Pre-amplifier	£11000	£2800
Krell FPB250 Monoblocks	£3800	£4500
Krell KAV300IL Integrated Amplifier	£3900	£1700
Lumley Lampros 200	£4000	£1200
Marantz PM17 Integrated Amp	£1700	£800
Mark Levinson 360S DAC	£N/A	£2500
Mark Levinson 383 Integrated Amplifier	£6000	£2800
Meridian G08	£2200	£1400
Meridian S6000 Speakers	£N/A	£1900
Musical Fidelity CDPRE	£2000	£995
Musical Fidelity A5 Pre and Power (each)	£1500	£995
Pass Labs DAC I	£N/A	£995
Pink Triangle Dacapo DAC	£N/A	£450
PMC BB5 Speakers	£12000	£4500
Reference 3a Veena	£exd	£2200
Resolution Audio CD55	£2500	£995
Sonus Faber Extrema	£N/A	£2800
Sound Lab A1 Speakers	£19000	£6500
Tannoy Canterbury	£9500	£4995
Tenor 300HP Hybrid Monoblocks	£30000	£12000
Tube Technology Prophet Signature	£2100	£750
Tube Technology Synergy	£8500	£3750
Transparent Ultra 8ft speaker cable	£N/A	£900
Trichord Research Pulsor	£1900	£600



We have an extensive range of used hi-fi equipment. Shown on the right is just a small sample of the products we have.

Visit our web site: [www.hifiguy.co.uk](http://www.hifiguy.co.uk) as the list changes daily.



Services include **collect your hi-fi / deliver your hi-fi home installation / trade-in / part-exchange / commission sales**

**Now in its 10th Year in the UK**

"As the importer of JPS for almost ten years, I would like to sincerely praise the quality and integrity of this company and all products. Build quality and consistency are not an issue with JPS. Each model is carefully refined before it is launched and some are even abandoned. Each product really delivers the promise, converts sceptics, delights everyone in search of music that speaks to the soul but must travel electronically and then through the human hearing physiology."

**Jack Lawson, Audio Salon**

**(NEW) Superconductor 3**

The SC3 is absolutely amazing: even well-experienced audiophiles have been surprised and find it very hard to explain just how great is the improvement to their system.

To celebrate the launch of this exciting cable, a small collection of JPS cables are now available for home approval.

**Ultra Conductors**

Our entry point range says a great deal about what JPS is all about. Budget products really can deliver the performance of a high-end system.

**FX Series**

Replacing the highly acclaimed SuperConductor+ with a flexible slim wire and no price increase was a major turning point for JPS. For quarter the price of the magazines' acclaimed products, you can let others become the victims of marketing.

**SuperConductor**

SuperConductor-2 was the new flagship line for many years, and it still outperforms the competition. In a major leap forward, era three begins. The measurements prove the performance, but SC3 is simply magic. In my experience, Kapton as an insulator is leagues ahead of anything else. Can't live without it.

**Aluminata**

These employ a quad twist of flexible Alumiloy with the world's finest shielding. In audio systems of high resolution, typically with excellent loudspeakers, the high cost of Alumiloy products is immediately apparent and deeply satisfying in the long term.

**Audio Salon**

4 Park Circus, Glasgow, G3 6AX, Scotland  
t : 0845 4000 400

e : [info@audiosalon.co.uk](mailto:info@audiosalon.co.uk)  
w : [www.audiosalon.co.uk](http://www.audiosalon.co.uk)  
w : [www.jps-labs.com](http://www.jps-labs.com)

**JPS Labs**

now you can try before you buy!



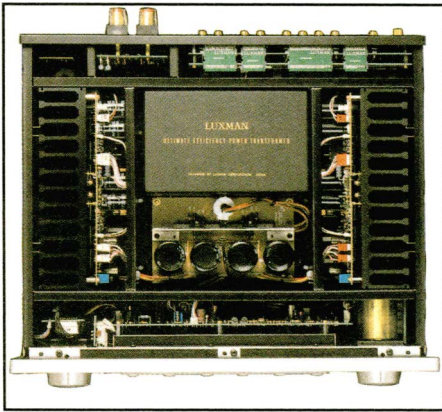
# audiolincs

## LUXMAN

Integrated amplifiers  
Incomparable build quality is a Luxman trade-mark and their latest range of integrated amplifiers extend the company's reputation for outstanding reliability.

Superior sound quality is a given, Luxman amplifiers are frequently the reference products in countries where audiophiles' performance criteria always transcend British 'value for money' compromises.

Prices start at £2293



## AUDIO DESK

The amazing CD lathe is as vital for CDs as a disc cleaner is for vinyl collectors. Check the web for full details and reviews - it never fails. In stock now: £320



## KR AUDIO

The KR Audio Antares VA340 is a naturally musical integrated amplifier. Featuring the powerful KR300BXL variant of the 300B output valve, it recreates all types of music with effortless authority and realism, restoring that vital emotional connection between recordings and listeners. £4995.



## HORNING

Rear mounted, 12" bass drivers of our reference Horning Agathons deliver deep, tight bass while Lowther midrange driver and Lotus tweeter offers valves a dream coupling.

LIKE NEW ...  
... NOTHING  
LIKE THE  
PRICE!

ACOUSTIC ZEN Hologram Mk2 Bi-wire (12ft)	Mint	£795
ACOUSTIC ZEN Hologram Mk2 Single wire (6ft)	Mint	£595
ART ST1 Floorstand (Black/slate top & bases)	Mint	£895
AUDIO INNOVATIONS 500 Integrated amp	New valves	£475
AUDIOSTATIC DCI Wing Loudspeakers (£5,000)	Mint, boxed	£2795
AUDIO RESEARCH D130 Power Amplifier	Nr mint, boxed	£895
BAT VK-5i Pre-amp (£3,495)	Mint, boxed	£1595
BAT VK-150SE Monoblocks (£15,500)	Mint, flight cases	£6995
BOW Wazoo XL SS Integrated	Mint, boxed	£1695
CARDAS Golden Reference 1mtr RCA	Superb	£595
CARDAS Quad Link 12" bi-wire, spades	Superb	£795
C.A.T. SLI Ultimate Pre-amp + phono stage (£7000)	Mint, boxed	£3695
CONRAD JOHNSON PL14LS pre-amp	Mint, boxed	£895
CONSONANCE REF.8.8 Integrated Valve Amp (£1995)	Ex-dem	£1495
CUSTOM DESIGN Icon hi-fi rack (£599)	Ex-dem, mint	£350
CYRUS CD6 CD Player	Mint	£495
DENON CD6000 OSE CD Player	Mint, boxed	£125
EPOS M12 Loudspeakers (Cherry)	Mint, boxed	£295
KUZMA Stabi S (Brass)	Mint, boxed	£750
LINN SONDEK LP12 c/w New Origin Live Ultra DC motor	Mint/new	£1,195
MF1 Passive Pre-amp (Our own demonstrator)	Mint, boxed	£1295
ORIGIN LIVE Aurora t/t with Silver Mk2 arm (£1595)	New	£1295
ORTOFON MCA76 MC transformer - 2 Gain Levels	Superb	£125
PRECIOUS METALS SS202B (Balanced)	Excellent	£249
REFERENCE 3A Veena (Floor standing) (£3000)	Ex-dem, boxed	£2295
SHANLING CD-T100 CD Player	Ex-dem, boxed	£1295
SME IV Tonearm (Less than 12 hrs use)	Mint, boxed	£895
SUMO Gold Valve Pre & 300B Push/Pull monoblocks	Serviced	£1995
THE HEAD Phono-stage	Excellent	£349
TRANSFIGURATION Esprit (Very few hours only)	Mint, boxed	£450
UNISON RESEARCH Mystery Pre-amp	Excellent	£799

PHONE:

078 2192 5851  
01476 591090

[www.audiolincs.com](http://www.audiolincs.com)

GRANTHAM (A1) LINCS

NATIONWIDE DELIVERY DAILY EXPORT  
PART-EXCHANGE MOST CREDIT CARDS

# Heatherdale

audio limited

202 Findon Road  
Worthing, West Sussex  
BN1 4 OEJ

Web; [www.hifi-stereo.com](http://www.hifi-stereo.com)  
E-mail; [heatherdale@hifi-stereo.com](mailto:heatherdale@hifi-stereo.com)  
Telephone 01903 872288  
Mobile 07860 660001  
Fax 01903 872234

## Speakers:

Thiel 2.3 speakers with Transparent cable	£1795
Origin Live OL-2 speakers	£250
Spica TC-50 speakers	£275
Kef Concord speakers	£150
BKS Hybrid 107 Supreme speakers	£1495
Mordaunt Short MS815 speakers	£150

## Pre-amps:

Mark Levinson 26 pre-amp (balanced)	£1250
Musical Fidelity 3A pre-amp	£175
Conrad Johnson MC 10 FET Pre-amp	£395
Naim Nac 92 with Nap 90/3 amp	£595
Proceed PAV pre-amp	£1395
Rotel RC-995 pre-amp	£295

## Amplifiers:

Mark Levinson 27.5 amplifier	£1695
Jeff Rowland Model 5 power amp	£1995
Cyrus 2 integrated amp	£175
Mark Levinson 431 Amp (ex demo)	£3850
Audio Research D130 power amp	£995
Audionote Neiro mono-blocks	£5495
Parasound HCA 1000A amp	£345
Audionote Kegen mono's (new)	£11995
Advantage integrated amp	£1495
Perreux 200ip int. amp	£1095
Denon POA-T3, three ch. Amp	£275
Mark Levinson ML383 integrated amp	£2995
Classe CA201 amp	£1995

## CD Players, Transports & DAC's:

Mark Levinson 31.5 CD transport	£3995
Sonic Frontiers Transport 3 (5K new) only	£1995
Counterpoint DA-10E DAC	£395
Roksan Atessa with ROC DA1 dac & PSU	£695
Denon DCD 590 CD Player	£60
Sony CDP M41 CD player	£60
Pioneer PD-S502 CD player	£95

## Miscellaneous:

Hitachi FT5500 Mk11 tuner	£125
Sony ST-SE570 Tuner	£60
Accuphase DS 1200V Power supply	£3495
Technics ST-GT550 Tuner	£65
Winds ALM-01 stylus Gauge (NEW)	£525

## Turntables, Cartridges & Tonearms:

Blue Pearl with Graham Phantom arm	£9995
Audio Tekne Cartridge with step-up transformer	£2495
My Sonic Eminent cartridge (new)	£2750
Project 9c S carbon fibre silver wired arm	£375
Linn LP12 with Akito/K9	£295
Rega Planar 2 with Rega arm	£125
Trichord Delphini with power supply	£595

## Main Dealer for:

**Mark Levinson, Ayre Acoustic, Tannoy Prestige speakers, Thiel speakers, Audionote, Esoteric, Bolzano Villetti speakers, SME, Stax, Cello, Lyra, My-Sonic, Revel, Audio Tekne, Michell.**

# hifisound by enthusiasts, for enthusiasts in the North East

Acoustic Energy, Apollo, Atacama, Audio Analogue, AVI, Ayre Acoustics, Chord Cable, Consonance, Creaktiv, Custom Design, Esoteric, Grado, Isotek, Monitor Audio, Nbien, Neat, Opera, Pathos, Pure, Resolution Audio, Revolver, Roksan, Shanling, Standesign, Sugden, System Audio, TEAC, Triangle, Unison Research, Usher Audio, Van Den Hul, Wadia and more!  
**hifisound, 30b Larchfield St, Darlington, County Durham, DL3 7TE. Tel: 01325 241888 Email: choice@hifisound.co.uk**

www.2ndhandhifi.co.uk



## ...what are you up for?

Digital	Amplifiers	Speakers	Analogue
Arcam CD72T, black or silver 379	Arcam Alpha 8 Integrated 379	Acoustic Energy AE1 ex, in beautiful rosewood 549	Audio Research PH3SE, nr mint boxed 1249
Arcam Alpha 9, DCS Ring DAC, v nice indeed! 779	Arcam Alpha FMU C30 Preamp ex boxed 299	Acoustic Energy AE1 fair in black grittex 299	Audio Technica AT1120 tonearm, excellent! 129
Arcam DV79 Call	Arcam AVR200, ex boxed 399	Acoustic Energy AE1mk3 ex dem 649	Clearaudio Emotion package, ex dem 499
AudioAnalog Maestro 192/24 ex dem 799	Audio Innovations, 200/500 pre and power, ex, boxed 799	Acoustic Energy AE2, ex black 649	Clearaudio Champion Level 2, ex boxed 1499
Audiomeca Mephisto transport, ex boxed remote 479	Audio Innovations, 400 Integrated, excellent condition Call	Acoustic Energy Aegis EVO 3 in Maple as new 1699	Electrocompaniet Phono stage, mm/mmc, Lyrwood p/ls 359
AVI Laboratory Series, ex boxed 349	Audiolab 8000A Integrated in black 249	Audiovector M3 Sig, active crossovers, new £4k+, amazing 299	Golding G52 Call
AVI 2000 Reference CD player 899	Audiolab 8000C ex boxed in black 599	AVI Neutron, cherry, ex 299	Golding P42 Phono as new 379
AVI 2000 DAC very rare off board unit 899	AudioNote OT0, nr mint a steal at 599	AVI Positron Mk2 in Walnut Burr 299	Graham Slee Era Gold, as new 379
Consonance Reference 2.2, ex dem, smooth as... 449	Audio Research D70 Power, ex 579	AVI Duo ex dem as new 149	Hadcock Integra, excellent unipivot, boxed (£750 new) 399
Copland CD266, ex remote new laser 379	Audio Research SP12 Pre, as new boxed 499	B&W 802S3, vgc 349	JBE StateSeries 3Mision0774 rare as... 349
Cyrus Quatra, c/w tuner module, NR HALF PRICE! 379	AVI S2000 Integrated, fantastic one box solution 799	B&W 802S, boxed in cherry 349	Kinshaw Perception phono stage and p/ls 479
Cyrus CD3Q, ex, boxed 279	AVI S2000 Pre/Monoblocks, fantastic combination 499	B&W CDM7NT, ex, boxed 749	Linn LP12, early, RB300 379
Cyrus PSXR, ex, boxed 299	Carm Ion T2 Monoblocks, mint in black 749	Celestion SL6S, excellent example of seminal standmount 349	Linn LP12, Valhalla, ItokVL9, K9 ex 799
Esoteric DV50S new, full warranty, LAST ONE! Call	Carm Ion T2 Monoblocks, mint in black 749	Epos ES22, ex in cherry 1599	Linn LP12, CL, advanced DC Kit Call
Harmon Kardon DV22, New 629	Carm Ezo Nanda pre and K1 monos new £4000, now 1799	JM Lab Elektra 936, ex signature finish, superb 749	Linn LP12, early model, fair condition 199
Linn Genk, nr mint boxed 199	Conrad Johnson Sonographe SA250 599	KEF Reference 2 nr mint boxed Call	Linn LP12, Lingo, Ekos 2, ex, boxed 1799
Marantz CD6SK1 Signature, ex remote 499	Creek 4330Mk2r Integrated, remote as new boxed 199	LEAK 2075 Call	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 549
Marantz CD17 nr mint boxed 399	Cyrus 7 Integrated, nr mint boxed 2499	Mirage FR9, boxed in beech c/w active subs, megal 499	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399
Marantz SA8400, nr mint boxed 2499	Cyrus 5 Integrated, ex boxed 349	Mission 752, in Rosewood 249	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399
Marantz SA1, vgc boxed 279	EAR 509 Mk2 monoblocks, superb boxed 1999	Mission 753, in Rosewood 249	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399
Meridian 200 Transport, ex remote 249	Exposure XIX Preamp, nr mint boxed superb Call	Mission 753, in Rosewood 249	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399
Meridian 206, ex remote 129	ITL M400M100M100 Pre/Power x2 lovely combo 1249	Mission 753, in Rosewood 249	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399
Meridian 203 DAC, ex 499	Krell KAV300, ex boxed 599	Mission 753, in Rosewood 249	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399
Meridian 518, as new boxed 799	Linn Kaim Pro, just back from Linn 599	Mission 753, in Rosewood 249	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399
Micromega T-drive and T-dac nr mint boxed 129	Linn LK100 power, ex boxed 299	Mission 753, in Rosewood 249	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399
Micromega Optic bargain intro to Micromega 149	Linn Majik, ex, c/w remote, bargain Linn introduction 299	Mission 753, in Rosewood 249	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399
Monarchy DIP vgc 249	Lumley Reference 120 Monoblocks mega bargain at 1499	Mission 753, in Rosewood 249	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399
Musical Fidelity X24K 379	Meridian PM66SE K1 Signature, excellent with remote 179	Mission 753, in Rosewood 249	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399
Musical Fidelity XDACV3 as new boxed 399	Meridian 518, as new boxed 499	Mission 753, in Rosewood 249	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399
Musical Fidelity X-Ray, excellent, boxed 349	Meridian 205 Monoblocks 499	Mission 753, in Rosewood 249	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399
Musical Fidelity X-Ray, excellent, boxed 349	Meridian 501/555 ex, boxed with MSR system remote 799	Mission 753, in Rosewood 249	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399
Musical Fidelity X-AS100, ex boxed 349	Musical Fidelity X-80, as new boxed 349	Mission 753, in Rosewood 249	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399
Musical Fidelity 3a Preamp/P150 Power, ex 299	Musical Fidelity X-AS100, ex boxed 349	Mission 753, in Rosewood 249	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399
Musical Fidelity A120 Integrated, boxed - like new! 349	Musical Fidelity 3a Preamp/P150 Power, ex 299	Mission 753, in Rosewood 249	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399
Musical Fidelity A3 Integrated, ex, boxed 349	Musical Fidelity A120 Integrated, boxed - like new! 349	Mission 753, in Rosewood 249	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399
Musical Fidelity Pre/Typhoon 399	Musical Fidelity A3 Integrated, ex, boxed 349	Mission 753, in Rosewood 249	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399
NAIM 72/180 pre/power combo 799	Musical Fidelity A3 Integrated, ex, boxed 349	Mission 753, in Rosewood 249	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399
NAIM 92/90 pre/power combo, ex boxed 399	Musical Fidelity A3 Integrated, ex, boxed 349	Mission 753, in Rosewood 249	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399
NAIM NAC202NA/P200, as new boxed, 6 months old 1999	Musical Fidelity A3 Integrated, ex, boxed 349	Mission 753, in Rosewood 249	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399
NAIM NAC23.5 pre 179	Musical Fidelity A3 Integrated, ex, boxed 349	Mission 753, in Rosewood 249	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399
NAIM NAP140 Olive, boxed 399	Musical Fidelity A3 Integrated, ex, boxed 349	Mission 753, in Rosewood 249	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399
Numance preamp c/w off board p/ls, beautiful 249	Musical Fidelity A3 Integrated, ex, boxed 349	Mission 753, in Rosewood 249	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399
Quad 44 Preamp, 405 and 405/2 Power amps from 299	Musical Fidelity A3 Integrated, ex, boxed 349	Mission 753, in Rosewood 249	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399
Quad 707, ex 549	Musical Fidelity A3 Integrated, ex, boxed 349	Mission 753, in Rosewood 249	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399
Quad 33/303, vgc for year fully serviced 199	Musical Fidelity A3 Integrated, ex, boxed 349	Mission 753, in Rosewood 249	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399
Radford STA25mk4, excellent 999	Musical Fidelity A3 Integrated, ex, boxed 349	Mission 753, in Rosewood 249	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399
Rega Mira Integrated, ex boxed 199	Musical Fidelity A3 Integrated, ex, boxed 349	Mission 753, in Rosewood 249	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399
Roksan Caspian M Series Poweramp mint unused 449	Musical Fidelity A3 Integrated, ex, boxed 349	Mission 753, in Rosewood 249	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399
Roksan Caspian M Series Pre/Monos 5 Star BARGAIN!!! Call	Musical Fidelity A3 Integrated, ex, boxed 349	Mission 753, in Rosewood 249	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399
Rotel RC995 superb preamp with system remote 299	Musical Fidelity A3 Integrated, ex, boxed 349	Mission 753, in Rosewood 249	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399
Rotel RA03 Integrated, ex boxed 349	Musical Fidelity A3 Integrated, ex, boxed 349	Mission 753, in Rosewood 249	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399
Rotel RMB1066, ex boxed 349	Musical Fidelity A3 Integrated, ex, boxed 349	Mission 753, in Rosewood 249	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399
Suno Artemis remote preamp, balanced options 299	Musical Fidelity A3 Integrated, ex, boxed 349	Mission 753, in Rosewood 249	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399
Unison Research S6 Integrated, mint boxed in cherry 189	Musical Fidelity A3 Integrated, ex, boxed 349	Mission 753, in Rosewood 249	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399
Arcam T61 nr mint boxed 159	Musical Fidelity A3 Integrated, ex, boxed 349	Mission 753, in Rosewood 249	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399
AVI S2000 Tuner vgc boxed 299	Musical Fidelity A3 Integrated, ex, boxed 349	Mission 753, in Rosewood 249	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399
Harman Kardon TU670 DAB/FM New 199	Musical Fidelity A3 Integrated, ex, boxed 349	Mission 753, in Rosewood 249	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399
Marantz ST4000 59	Musical Fidelity A3 Integrated, ex, boxed 349	Mission 753, in Rosewood 249	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399
Meridian 604, ex 399	Musical Fidelity A3 Integrated, ex, boxed 349	Mission 753, in Rosewood 249	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399
Nakamichi CR1E 99	Musical Fidelity A3 Integrated, ex, boxed 349	Mission 753, in Rosewood 249	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399
Quad FM3 ex 149	Musical Fidelity A3 Integrated, ex, boxed 349	Mission 753, in Rosewood 249	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399
Rega Radio Call	Musical Fidelity A3 Integrated, ex, boxed 349	Mission 753, in Rosewood 249	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399
Sony JB920, ex v decent minidisc 199	Musical Fidelity A3 Integrated, ex, boxed 349	Mission 753, in Rosewood 249	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399
Sony MDSJ330, excellent bargain minidisc 89	Musical Fidelity A3 Integrated, ex, boxed 349	Mission 753, in Rosewood 249	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399
Sony JAS0E5, top flight minidisc 349	Musical Fidelity A3 Integrated, ex, boxed 349	Mission 753, in Rosewood 249	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399
TEAC RWD280, Twin deck CD recorder 189	Musical Fidelity A3 Integrated, ex, boxed 349	Mission 753, in Rosewood 249	Linn LP12, Akitu, Valhalla, boxed 399

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...  
 Aesthetix, Clearaudio, Decent Audio, Dynavector, Tom Evans, Goldring, Grado, Hadcock, Lyra, Michell, Moth, Nottingham Analogue, Origin Live, Ortofon, Project, Roksan, Graham Slee, Shure, SME, Sumiko, Transfiguration, Trichord, Whest Audio and Wilson Benesch and VPI.

...there is no better analogue decision

turntableworld! is at 30b Larchfield St, Darlington DL3 7TE

Tel 01325 241888 or email choice@turntableworld.co.uk

# 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 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](mailto:dan.george@futurenet.co.uk). Or mail to: **Reader Classified, Hi-Fi Choice, Future Publishing, 2 Balcombe Street, London NW1 6NW**. Please note that this service is open to private advertisers only.

## FOR SALE

**ARCAM A85** amp, silver, mint cond, boxed, all manuals, hardly been used, immaculate, £400. Pete 01980 843102 (Wilts)

**ARCAM CD192** boxed, mint, (£850) £500. Marantz PM17MkII Kl Sig, platinum, boxed, mint, (£1,500) £800. Quad 11L light maple, mint, (£380) £260. Partington Super Dreadnought speaker stands, (£180) £85. 07840 756855 (Bolton).

**AVI TRIO** floorstanding speakers, superb 3D stereo image, very detailed and natural sound, Oct 04, Series nr 13-07, orig boxes, guarantee until Oct 06, perfect, cherry, £1,850, transport not inc. 0039-02-2150930, fedepenzo@hotmail.com (Italy).

**B&W DM601S3** speakers, light wood, unmarked as new cond, superb value, £210. Inc Apollo Olympus stands, boxed, etc. Marantz CD 7300 CD player in gold, unmarked as new, box, remote, etc £199. Will post. Chris Anelay 01766 781211 (Gwynedd).

**CHORD DAC 64 MK1** version Mint condition, (£1,995) £999. 07748 485668 or email Paul pbjernkl@yahoo.co.uk (London).

**CYRUS DAD 1.5** CD player, as new cond, boxed with instructions and remote. Great sound, (£400) £180. Please call for details +386 40 457712, igorkoprivsek@gmail.com (Slovenia).

**CYRUS PRE X VS** preamp and PSX-R power supply. Six months old, boxed with guarantee, (£1,500) £600ono. 07766 415325 or 02476 667877 (Coventry).

**CYRUS SMARTPOWER** as new condition. Original packing, leads and instructions. Silver finish. Upgrade forces sale. £375ono. 01344 776329 (Berks).

**DALI SUITE 7.1** AV speakers – 2.8 fronts, C0.8 centre, R0.8 and R0.7 rears/surround, S1.2 sub, brand new, (£2,800) will accept £1,400ono. 07764 600546 (North East).

**DALI EUPHONIA RS3** rear speakers (cherry) plus stands £1,000. TacT W210 corner woofers (cherry) £600. TacT SDA2175 power amplifier (silver) £300. 01926 315981 (Warks).

**DYNAVECTOR DV10X5** superb, real-world, moving coil cartridge, absolutely unused, (£250) £200. Thierry, evenings 07905 303718 (London).

**EPOS M5** loudspeakers in light cherry real wood. Absolutely pristine with original box, packaging and instructions. Six months old, (£350) £220. ST35 stands in black, purpose made for M5, (£99) £60. Nick 07802 202469 (Warks).

**EXPOSURE XXV RC** integrated amp, £300. Excellent condition plus original packaging (can demo). Four metres AudioQuest bi-wire and plugs, £50. Steve 01482 887409 (Beverley).

**HI-FI CABLES** all half price. Chord Carnival Silver Plus 2m pair air-loc plugs, (£31). QED Qunex 2, (£15). QED Qunex 3 1m (£20) Kimber Tonik (£22). All in original boxes and perfect. The lot £70. Lee 01384 412234 (W Mids).

**JAMO CONCERT 11** loudspeakers (£2,500). Roksan integrated amp (£1,000). Pioneer DVD/CD player (£700). Sturdy welded metal stand with five smoked, blue glass shelves (£400) and mains conditioner (£300). All finished in black, speakers finished in American Cherry. Sell £2,800. 07623 928984 (Gwent).

**KEF 105MK1** £250. Tannoy Cheviot MK1, £250. Oracle Paris turntable, £200. Meridian 602/606 CD, £400. Quad ESL 57 boxed with literature, £250. 01843 221664 (Kent).

**KENWOOD DP-7090** CD player 32fs fine drive. Gold terminals, copper encased electronics, aluminium top plate. Excellent condition, boxed, remote and instructions, £145ono. 01270 765933 (Cheshire).

**LINN 5103** processor, latest model, DTS, blue display, boxed, as new, £995. Classe 25 preamp, boxed and mint £750. Linn Aktiv crossover, Dirak PSU, cables, £275 +003531 2954076 (Dublin).

**LINN KARIK I** CD player (plus remote), £200. Balanced Audio Technology valve balanced line preamp VK3i (plus remote) £600. Shanling valve CD player, CD-A10T (plus remote), £125. Andrew 07889 840724 (Kent)

**LINN KEOSA** speakers, maple bi-wired boxed as new, £265. Naim NAC102 preamp plus NAPSC power supply, no phono boards, boxed, £550. NAP180 power amp boxed exc, £595. Call for more 023 8076 8510 (Southampton). ▣

## WANTED

**APOGEE STAGE** speakers, ribbons and electronics must be A1 appearance, reasonable or better. Steve 01761 434651 or email s.clements@homecall.co.uk (Bath).

**ARCAM ALPHA 10** tuner must be good cond. Karl 01942 234927 karl138ufft@msn.com (Wigan).

**ATLAS OR NORDOST** Red Dawn interconnect. 07810 1039008 (Yorks).

**B&W NAUTILUS HTM1** centre speaker, any finish considered, discontinued model required 01782 256087 (Stoke-on-Trent).

**GOODMANS MAGISTER** Will pay good price, but must be working. 01280 860221 (Bucks).

**JECKLIN FLOAT** headphones, prefer Float Two, but any Jecklin or Ergo considered. John 07855 121587 or email john.boys444@ntlworld.co.uk (W Yorks).

**LEAK STEREO 70** amplifier working or needing attention. 01938 553559 (Welshpool).

**LOWTHER ACOUSTA** twins 1960s and scrap PM7A 020 8220 0380 (Essex).

**SONY SCDXA3000ES** SACD player, must be unmarked as new cond. Good money for mint. 01766 781211 (Porthmadog).

## 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 LK100** power amp boxed, mint, £250. Hi-fi support Target four shelf, black, vgc, £25. 01226 391531 or 07836 784579 (Barnsley).

**LINN UNIDISK 1.1** updated firmware, £5,500. B&W 803s cherry, new, £2,500. Naim NAP 250 power amp, £900. Arcam AV65 stereo amp, £250. Marantz RC9200 colour remote, new, £320. 07740 285087 (London).

**LYNGDORF SDA2175** black power amp 200 wpc, £650. One metre balanced Blue Heaven, £60. One metre RCA Blue Heaven, £50. Blue Heaven 2m speaker cable, £100. Primare PRE30, £500. Power 30.2, £500. 01803 523553 (Devon).

**MARANTZ CD63 MKII KI SIG** CD player, exc cond. Boxed with instructions, remote. Late 1999. £180 (cash please), can deliver within easy distance of M1 junctions 1-28. 0115 9268177 (Notts).

**MARTIN LOGAN AERIUS I** oak trim, £650. REL Stadium II, rosewood, £350. Paul Pascoe, 01743 289240 (Shrewsbury).

**MCINTOSH MCD201** SACD/CD player. Mac's latest, just eight weeks old, mint, boxed, as seen in *HFC* May - review coming soon. (£3,400) £2,300. 01904 708382 or 07716 141986 (York)

**MERIDIAN 507** 24-bit CD with MSR £675. 501 preamp, £395. 556 Amp (100w), £425. All in superb, mint condition with original manuals, leads and boxes. Steve 07963 232638 (Herts).

**MICROMEGA STAGE 6** CD player, perfect cond, £350, with remote, owner manual and original packing. Ken 0141 571 0851 (Glasgow).

**MONITOR AUDIO RS8** floorstanders, as new, cherry veneer, reviewed *HFC* 276. Selling to upgrade, £495. 01462 680262 (Herts)

**MUSICAL FIDELITY X-A1** mint and X-80 brand new. Both with original packing and instructions. £250 and £380. 01407 711612 or email ls.faulkner@virgin.net (N Wales).

**NAD C660** compact disc recorder (twin deck) as new with remote, manual, original box, £150ono. 01257 266010 (Preston, Lancs).

**NAIM CD3.5** CD player exc cond, boxed with leads remote and instruction, £400. Gary 01582 765301 or 07970 484298 (Luton).

**NAIM NAC82** (1999) with latest style black NAPSC, exc cond, with leads and box. £1150ono 07973 785360 (W Sussex)

**NAIM NAIT 51** amplifier, £450. Naim CD5i CD player, £500. Naim speaker cable 10m terminated, £50. All in A1 condition, boxed with manuals and remote controls. 0151 348 1781 (Wirral).

**NEAT ACOUSTICS** Ultimatum MF5 black, (£5,000) £2,800 and MFC Centre Figured Birch, (£2,700) £1,600 ono. Rod on 0800 672493 (work) or 020 8689 8750 (home) (London).

**PHILIPS CD100** £40. Spondor Preludes, £75. Transcriptors Saturn Turntable, £200. Cambridge original P50 amp/T55 tuner, £75 pair. Nytech CA252 amp (MC), £45. All vgc. 01832 270071 (Oundle)

**PMC AM11** active standmounts with dedicated stands. Briston circuits inside same as 3B-SST, 2B-SST, 10B crossover. 28Hz-25kHz. Best regardless of price. (£3,800) £2,200. email simon@kentuk.net (Kent)

**PMC MB2** in oak plus stands, (£8,750) £4,750 pair. Pair Briston 4BST and pair 7BST, (£3,000) £1,250 each. Pair PMC XBD2A in black finish, (£3,250) £1,600 each. email: nmfrancis@btinternet.com (London).

**PRIMARE A30.1** amp with remote (mint, boxed), £750. Townshend Isolda (cryogenic) 3m pair speaker cable, £200. Chord Chorus 1m Interconnect, £100. Van den Hul Ultimate 0.5m interconnect, £100. Soundstyle five-tier rack (racing green) with matching glass shelves, £50. 01495 752200 (S Wales).

**PROAC TABLETTE REF 8** Mahogany, £400. Castle Isis speakers also in Mahogany, perfect, £100. Atacama stands, black, £25. 01977 618403 (Pontefract)

**QED** silver anniversary speaker cable, 3m pair, as new, £10. Monitor PC, 5m gold plated phono to phono lead, £5. 01766 781211 (Porthmadog).

**QUAD 33** preamp, serviced by Quad - with paperwork, includes nice cables. Adapter board updated by Quad for CD input, £120. jery@dircon.co.uk (Devon).

**ROKSAN CASPIAN** amp, £600. Jamo Concert 11 speakers, £1,200. Pioneer 565 DVD/CD player with upgrade, £400. QED Genesis speaker cable 1m and 3m, (£447) £175. Mr GA Weaver 07623 928984 (S Wales).

**ROTEL RCD-02** CD player and RA-01 amp, (£778 with cable) £399. In silver, fully boxed. With free Atlas Hyper 2.0 speaker cable worth £148. Professionally fitted by Atlas with Atlas bananas. Both items immaculate. Lee 01384 412234 (W Mids).

**SONY STRDB790** AV receiver, unused, *HFC* Best Buy, £150. Sony TAF3000ES amplifier, (£500) £200. Sony MDSJ3000ES MD recorder (£600) £200. Rod, 01706 345418 or email hfc@rodtheobald.force9.co.uk (Sheffield)

**SPENDOR S8E** loudspeaker, maple, boxed, (£1,895) £850ono. Arcam FMJ A32 integrated amp, as new, boxed, (£1,200) £750ono. Musical Fidelity E100, refurbished by MF December 2005, £150. 01491 613760 (Henley).

**TRANSCRIPTOR** turntable circa 1960s. Original arm. Good cond, but requires slight attention, £120 ono. Celestion Ditton 25 speakers, £50 ono. 01462 456952, 07710295100 (Herts).

**VALVE** preamp with phono, £300. Linn LP12, Afrosomia, SMEIISs, Ortofon VMS20EII, £320. Pioneer PDS801 CD player, £150. Technics RSAZ7 cassette deck, mint, boxed, £160. Ray 07708 431963 (Cheshire).

**WILSON AUDIO** 5.1 speakers. Immaculate black finish. All six, £7,750. (01926) 653421 (Warks)



Above: Arcam FMJ A32 integrated 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 insert my advert for:  1 issue

**PLEASE SEND YOUR ADVERTISEMENT TO:**

Reader Classified, *Hi-Fi Choice*, Future Publishing, 2 Balcombe Street, London NW1 6NW.





## REDISCOVER MUSIC

Rediscover music with the new MAJIK System from Linn: a dedicated stereo music system designed for those truly passionate about music.

The MAJIK System is the result of more than 30 years of Linn's experience in developing systems to recreate the emotion of a live performance in your home.

The MAJIK system comprises the MAJIK CD player, MAJIK KONTROL pre-amplifier and MAJIK 2100 power amplifier. Individually, each component is designed to deliver exceptional sound quality from stereo music, and working together as a complete system, offer a leap in performance that simply cannot be ignored.

Through its simplicity and focus on delivering the most musical performance, the new MAJIK System will have you rediscovering favourite CDs and cherished vinyl recordings.

To experience the system for yourself, visit your Linn retailer, or reserve your place at one of our forthcoming MAJIK Musical Evenings listed opposite.

For more information visit our website or call us on 0500 888 909

5th July 2006, Chris Books Audio, Warrington, Tel. 01925 261212

6th July 2006, The Audio Works, Cheshire, Tel. 0161 428 7887

6th July 2006, Ideas, Cardiff, Tel. 0845 890 3001

7th July 2006, Martin Kleiser, Beaconsfield, Tel. 01494 681 300

18th July 2006, Audio 7, Horsham, Tel. 01403 754 754

20th July 2006, Audio-T, Brighton, Tel. 01273 609 431

20th / 21st / 22nd July 2006, Superfi, Manchester, Tel. 0161 835 1156

26th July 2006, Audio-T, Eastbourne, Tel. 01323 731 336

26th July 2006, Flamingbox, Wiltshire, Tel. 01985 845 440

28th / 29th July 2006, Audio Designs, East Grinstead, Tel. 01342 314 569

28th / 29th July 2006, Audio Designs, Horsham, Tel. 01403 252 255

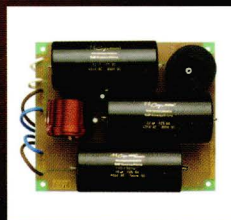
22nd September 2006, Studio, Eton, Tel. 01753 631 000



**THE NEW MAJIK SYSTEM FROM LINN: REDISCOVER MUSIC**  
[www.linn.co.uk](http://www.linn.co.uk)

**B&W** Bowers & Wilkins

The new B&W 800 Series  
Incorporating B&W crossover technology



> **CLEANSED**

Audio signals are like spring water. The further they flow from their source, the greater the risk to their natural purity and vitality. Like a glass of cool, clear water, fresh from the stream, nothing compares to hearing music with the cleansing clarity it was created with.

At B&W, we like to get listeners as close to the source as possible. The signal path in an 800 Series speaker couldn't be any shorter, simpler or sweeter. By optimising, in every detail, the mechanical design of the drive units, we minimise the need for extra electrical components in the crossover. Less quantity, more quality. Every component we do use is handpicked after painstaking listening tests. Together in the 800 Series crossover, they deliver sound with every original nuance and texture intact.

Not all water tastes the same. No other speakers sound like the 800 Series.

[www.bw800.com](http://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