

HI-FI CHOICE

PASSION FOR SOUND APRIL 2008 £3.99 WWW.HIFICHOICE.CO.UK

KRELL'S ANGEL

KID GIVES IPOD HEAVENLY APPEAL

WORLD FIRST

WIN!
A PS Audio mains conditioner
See p27




THE ULTIMATE GROUP TEST

BETTER HI-FI NOW:
Know your way around cables
CLASSICAL MUSIC GUIDE
Ten albums worth seeking out



VALVE AMPS £1,500-£2,500



NAIM NAIT 5i
An all-rounder at last


GAMUT PHi5
Five-star looks and sound

techradar.com

APRIL 2008 £3.99 04 >

Future MEDIA WITH PASSION

9 770955 111090



Electra S



When Focal wanted to follow the success of the Electra Be range with a speaker line with similar attributes but at a substantially lower price, the challenge seemed at first very difficult.

After all, the Be has proved to be the perfect speaker for many music lovers -and altering a classic recipe does not always guarantee savoury results.

In the end, the answer proved very simple. Change very little.

A new tweeter; an AL/Mg alloy unit in place of the exotic beryllium dome, and a simpler finish choice of Classic (left) or Macassar Ebony.

And that's about it - apart from the smaller pricetag of course.

Simple.

Electra Be



Accept no compromise....

Electra 1037 Be

"A phenomenal balance of musical virtues".....

"Somewhere in the design process, someone wound the fun control round towards its end-stop".....

"The results are astounding".....

Hi-Fi + July 2007

"The Focal Electra 1037 Be offers superb measured performance.... That on-room response, one of the best I have encountered. Wow!"

"Transients were faster than sharp, approaching the ease, physicality and true speed that lets you know, even from down the block or round the corner, that you're hearing live music, not a recording".

Stereophile July 2007

Electra 1027 Be

"A beautifully sweet and sparkling top end, suffused with the finest and most delicate detail".....

"There's no shortage of deep bass weight or gravitas here"...

"It's a remarkable speaker for the money"...

Hi-Fi Choice Feb 2006 – Editor's choice award

Hi-Fi Choice July 2006 – Best buy

Hi-Fi Choice Sept 2006 – Component of the year < £5,000

Hi-Fi Critic Dec 2006 – Speaker of choice < £6000



FOCAL[®]
the Spirit of Sound

For full reviews please visit our website : www.focal-uk.com

3 very exciting new performers from... McIntosh



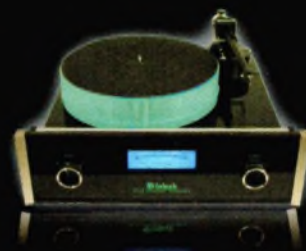
McIntosh is one of the worlds most revered brands and nothing else can compare with it's unique mixture of visual image and organic sound.

Already well established in the UK, the McIntosh brand is enjoying a remarkable renaissance partly due to it's exclusivity and part through new distribution and five star customer support. All McIntosh products are historically compatible and to this day, earlier models are still highly sort after.

Whether an existing or new customer to the brand, buy McIntosh with complete confidence now and for the future.

MT10 Precision Turntable

- Belt Drive
- Moving Coil Cartridge
- Precision Motor and Drive Electronics
- Illuminated Speed Meter



C2300 Tube Preamplifier

- Two Phono Inputs MM and MC
- Bass, Treble & Mono Settings Storable in Memory for Each Input
- Seven Inputs and Three Power Amps are Supported
- Angled Tubes are Visible from the Top Through a Window



MA7000 Integrated Amp

- Exclusive McIntosh Power Assurance System
- High Output Current Capability
- Wide Bandwidth
- Fiber-Optic Illuminated Front Panel
- 1/4" Headphone Jack



market leaders uk

McIntosh is distributed in the UK by **Market Leaders UK**.
Visit: www.marketleadersuk.org

Showtime
Experience McIntosh:
The Healthrow High Fidelity
Show '08, Park Inn, Heathrow,
20th - 22nd March '08

Welcome to the issue...

HI-FI CHOICE APRIL 2008 ISSUE 305

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



You're holding something of a landmark issue this month. For the first time in the magazine's history, *HFC* 305 includes a review for an iPod-related product! And who better to exploit the little music player than Krell? In our review on p40, Krell's UK distributor, Absolute Sounds, has partnered the new KID (Krell Interface Dock) with a pair of active MartinLogan electrostatics and the results are simply amazing. Whilst the ElectroKID system will never be the sole set-up in *Hi-Fi Choice* readers' homes, it makes a fascinating second system and challenges the tired belief that iPods have no relevance to the hi-fi connoisseur.

But, if you're the type who'll skip these four glorious review pages, there's plenty of purist content elsewhere in the issue to keep you happy. Highlights this month include Naim's NAIT 5i, which can finally be described as an 'all-rounder', making an excellent starting point in Naim ownership. Elsewhere, *HFC*'s own Paul Messenger has been rather taken with Gamut's new floorstanding Phi5. Waxing lyrical on this bold-looking newcomer, Paul has slapped five precious stars on the tempting tower, which is a no-nonsense performer of the highest calibre.

Finally, we've been heating up *HFC* towers with six of the world's finest valve amps in our *Ultimate Group Test*. If you've been tempted (again!) by the charm of tubes, turn straight to p64 to find out just who has the most to offer. Our blind listening panel's expertise has once again taken the legwork out of buying new hi-fi, follow our tips and you simply can't go wrong.

Dan

Dan George 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 a special edition, *The Hi-Fi Awards* – the most important annual awards in the hi-fi calendar. We also produce *The Collection*, a separate stand-alone special edition for the newsstand, dedicated to the finest hi-fi on the planet.
- 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*

Wooden it be nice?

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.



JIMMY HUGHES
With more than 40 years as an enthusiast under his belt, Jimmy is one of the country's best known hi-fi experts. His knowledge of system matching, hi-fi tweaking and record collecting is unmatched in the industry.



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*.



MALCOLM STEWARD
Former editor of *Hi-Fi Review* magazine, Malcolm was one of the best known and most outspoken reviewers of the 1980s and 1990s. He currently edits hi-fi industry bible *The British Audio Journal*.



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).



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.



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.



DOMINIC TODD
A highly experienced journalist, Dominic's sharp ears and retail experience are a valuable mix for *HFC*. Each month, Dom dispenses priceless second-hand buying advice that always comes in handy.

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.

SUBSCRIBE TO HI-FI CHOICE... THIS MONTH AND YOU'LL RECEIVE A FREE ISOTEK IEC MAINS CONNECTOR CALL 0844 848 2852 OR TURN TO P80 NOW



Contents

NEWS AND FEATURES

9 PRODUCT NEWS

The juiciest new fruit from the hi-fi tree

14 HAPPENINGS

Hot stories from around Planet Hi-Fi

16 DISPATCHES

The hi-fi commentators with clout

22 CLASSICAL THEMES

Some of classical's best on vinyl and CD

27 COMPETITION

Win A PS Audio Quintessence mains unit

28 CHOICE CUTS

New music – rated by our experts

31 CHOICE MAIL

A selection of your letters and emails

34 UNDERSTANDING... CABLES

The truth about wires

EQUIPMENT REVIEWS

IN-DEPTH PRODUCT TESTS

40 Absolute Sounds ElectroKID iPod system

44 Cairn Tornado CD player

48 GamuT PHI5 loudspeaker

50 Naim Nait 5i integrated amplifier

54 Sonus Faber Cremona Auditor loudspeaker

57 Townshend Audio Seismic Cradle

58 Systemline MusicServer music server

61 Etymotic ER-6ic earphones

ROUND-UP

PHONO STAGES

62 Cambridge Audio Azur 640P

62 Creek OBH-15

63 Heed Questar MC

63 Graham Slee Gram Amp 3 Fanfare

ULTIMATE GROUP TEST

VALVE AMPLIFIERS £1,500-£2,500

66 Ayon Spirit

67 Copland CTA405

69 Icon Audio Stereo 60 Mk2

71 Melody Astro Black 50

73 Pathos Classic One Mk3

75 Unison Research Preludio

BUYER'S BIBLE

Ultimate guide to high-performance hi-fi and AV equipment, gathering together all our favourite products for you. Your shortlist starts here...

SOURCE COMPONENTS

90 CD players

92 DVD players

96 Vinyl

99 Radio tuners

AMPLIFIERS

100 Stereo amps

102 AV amps

LOUDSPEAKERS

104 Stereo speakers

109 Subwoofers

ANCILLARIES

111 Headphones

112 Cables

113 Stands and supports

PRE-LOVED GEMS

Buy or sell your hi-fi in our special second-hand section...

123 2nd-hand shootout – this issue, loudspeakers under £3,000

128 Readers classifieds

READER SERVICES

Our regular information service, including our official accessories store and latest subscription offer

80 How to subscribe

82 Choice Bits accessories shop

87 Back issues

114 Dealer Guide

121 Dealer Directory

130 What's coming up in next month's

sounds of music

QUAD SPECIALISTS

We are the UK's
Quad Specialists,
with all models available
for demonstration.

CLASSIC HI-FI SERIES



QC-twentyfour
Valve line-only Pre amp



QC-24P
Valve phono stage



II-classic
15W Valve mono power amp



II-forty
40W Valve mono power amp

“ I know
of no other
speaker I'd
rather own,
regardless
of price. ”

— Sam Tellig
Stereophile Magazine

ESL-2905



FOR THE TRUE MUSIC LOVER...



Performance Series

For many customers, buying their first Quad product is a life-changing experience. Quite unlike most hi-fi companies, Quad products are designed to open a window on a recording – to reveal the natural texture and detail without imposing any character of their own.

Classic Series

This is no nostalgic nod to the past. Beneath the beautiful exterior of each product lies a powerful and superbly musical interior – critically acclaimed throughout the world as the finest in its class.

Reference Series

The new ESL-2805 and ESL-2905 Electrostatics are Quad's latest reference loudspeakers and like their predecessors should be regarded amongst the finest loudspeakers in the world today. In areas such as transparency, and lack of colouration, they are without peer.

QUAD

Tel: +44 (0) 1435 865 212, Fax: +44 (0) 1435 865 213, www.sounds-of-music.co.uk

Firgrove Business Park, Firgrove Road, Cross in hand, Nr Heathfield, East Sussex, TN21 0QL. By appointment only please.



ARCAM FMJ MS250 MUSIC SERVER

It has been four years in the making. The new MS250 from the FMJ series – the first-ever music server product from Cambridge-based hi-fi expert Arcam – must surely rank as one of the most significant product launches for the company since the Solo all-in-one system.

At the heart of the MS250 is essentially the meeting of audiophile-grade CD player with state-of-the-art music computer, complete with huge 400GB hard disk drive. That allows the server to swallow up to 640 uncompressed CDs, or as much as 80,000 songs in one of the many compressed audio

formats it supports. It even has the ability to simultaneously play in four zones, each one with its own independent music tracks.

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

PRODUCT Arcam FMJ MS250

TYPE Music server

PRICE £3,000

KEY FEATURES Audiophile-grade CD replay stage
400GB hard drive 640-disc storage capacity (uncompressed) 80,000 track capacity (with compression) Four zone Network support for PC/Mac Built-in DAB tuner

CONTACT 01223 203200 www.arcam.co.uk



A new star is born



Each year the European Imaging & Sound Association (EISA) assembles a panel of expert judges from some of the continent's leading hi-fi press to investigate the world's finest technology.

After rigorous evaluation they return to vote on one product in each category that they believe offers not only exceptional levels of performance but also provides incredible value. This year they chose the Cambridge Audio Azur 840A Class XD integrated amplifier.

"...a genuinely novel approach... a highly sophisticated, efficient and attractive-sounding amplifier" EISA citation



 **Cambridge Audio**



To find your nearest approved Cambridge Audio specialist, read extensive reviews and more, visit: www.cambridge-audio.com

NAD C355BEE INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER

▶ Shaking up the budget amp sector in the next issue of *Hi-Fi Choice* will be NAD's new £400 integrated, the C355BEE.

The new BEE newcomer (the suffix comes from Bjorn-Erik Edvardson, NAD's director of advanced development and designer of the classic 3020 amplifier) takes the strengths of the well received C352 amplifier and mixes in a sprinkling of the high-tech approach of the NAD Masters Series M3 amplifier. The result, it is claimed, delivers a upturn in performance that must be heard!

Turning in a healthy 80 watts per channel, the seven-line-input C355BEE also features

NAD's proprietary PowerDrive and distortion-cancelling circuitry.

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

PRODUCT NAD C355BEE

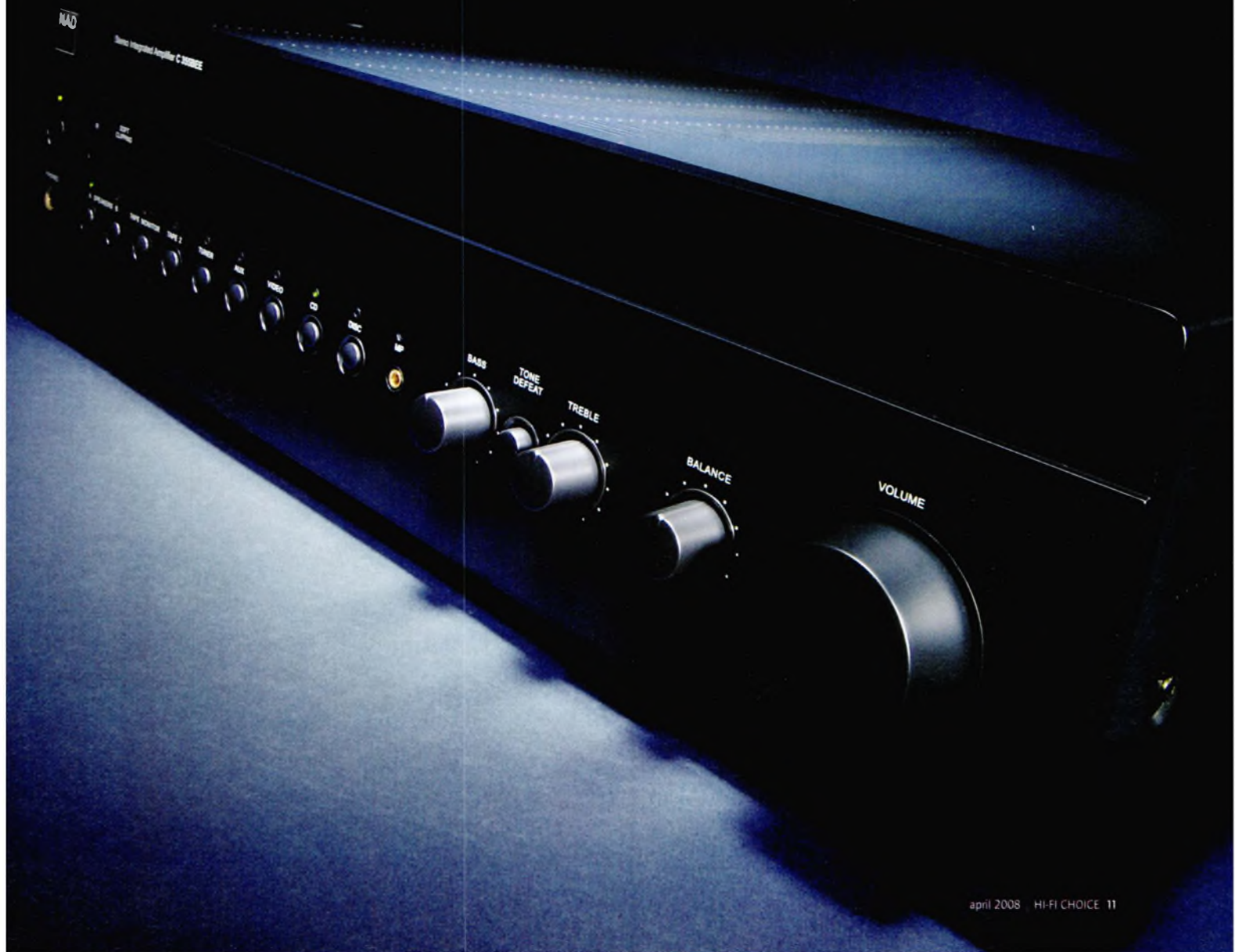
TYPE Integrated amplifier

PRICE £400

KEY FEATURES Seven line inputs • 80 watts per channel • Front panel 'media player' mini-jack input • Tone controls with full defeat switch • RS232 and other custom install connections

CONTACT ☎ 01279 501111

🌐 www.nadelectronics.com



NEW PRODUCT HIGHLIGHTS

RAYLEE REDKITE AND OTTER

Eccentric designer Hughley Dudwood has produced a range of custom-designed loudspeakers in the shape of classic sci-fi cyber-characters.

The new company – named after

Dudwood's two favourite dead guitarists, Stevie Ray Vaughan and Arthur Lee – are highly eco-friendly, being made of 100 per cent biodegradable bat guano (the products themselves are named after endangered species). The Raylee



Redkite (right) is a two-way standmount in the shape of the robot from *Lost In Space*, while the Raylee Otter (left) is an omni-directional Dalek-shaped floorstander, where each one of the small spheres contains a 75mm fabric dome midrange drive unit, arranged in the distinctive 2-4-5-T layout first used by guitar amp maker Orange.

Other projects in the pipeline include the R2-D2-shaped Vole subwoofer, the Corncrake centre channel speaker, which is claimed to look like the Huey, Dewey and Louie 'Drones' from cult eco-sci-fi 70s flick *Silent Running* and the Hippo surround speaker, that looks a lot like Jean-Claude Van Damme in *Universal Soldier*.

Price from £1,500 per pair **Due** now ☎ 020 7555 2368 🌐 www.tolodeabril.com

NAD VISO FIVE

In a bit of a departure for the brand, NAD has announced the Viso Five CD/DVD Surround receiver, or "command centre" according to the press release. The compact system combines CD/DVD player, AM/FM tuner, iPod and XM satellite radio connectivity and full 5.1 channel output. It can even upscale the DVD replay to 1080i high definition through its HDMI port.

Despite the small footprint, the Viso Five will feature full 24-bit/96kHz resolution DACs in all channels, with all the usual DVD-grade Dolby Digital and DTS decoders, plus NAD's exclusive EARS (Enhanced Ambience Retrieval System) mode, which enhances two-channel audio sources when played through a surround sound system.

The Viso Five also sports a module to accept XM Radio. Unfortunately, unless you live in North America, this is not much use. However, the Viso Five also accepts NAD's upcoming DB-1 DAB module (expected to cost £120) and also NAD's own iPod docking system, the IPD-1.

Price £900 **Due** now ☎ 01279 501111 🌐 www.nadelectronics.com



TEAC LP-R400

TEAC has reinvented the music centre with the £299 LP-R400 system. Combining turntable, CD recorder and AM/FM tuner, the LP-R400 even sports two 70mm 'full range' drive units, each powered by a 3.5-watt amplifier. Reminiscent of the Dansette player adorning every teenager's floor for a generation, the record deck section can play at 33, 45 and 78 rpm and the output of the vinyl spinner can be recorded through the CD section. The recorder also offers a useful track increment facility while recording, so no more having to stop the recording for every track. So far only seen in black, we'd love to see one in bakelite, cream plastic and red vinyl, with a gold grille, for that true 1950's appeal.

Price £299 **Due** now ☎ 01923 819630

🌐 www.teac.co.uk



EPOS MI SERIES

Epos Acoustics has revised its popular M series loudspeakers. Comprising two standmounts (the M5i and M12i), two floorstanders (the M16i and M22i, both with built-in plinths) and a centre speaker (the £350 M8i). The M subwoofer currently remains unchanged.

From the outside, the products have been subtly cleaned up to eliminate the grooves in the front baffle and large radius edges and the traditional metal grilles have been replaced with more sonically friendly cloth designs. Similar innovations have extended to the drive units, with an anodised silver tweeter replacing the gold of the previous series and improved voice coils, cones and surrounds, while the crossovers have been extensively redesigned and now sport all-film capacitors in the mid and treble sections. Even the input terminals have been improved. We hope to be testing Epos' new Mi models soon.

Price From £425 (M5i) to £1,100 (M22i) per pair **Due** now

☎ 01442 260146

🌐 www.epos-acoustics.com



BRENNAN JB7

The new JB7 music server from Brennan is a small music server that is designed to rip and store CDs without need to connect to a computer. Available with a 40GB or 80GB internal hard disk drive, the JB7 combines CD player, server and even alarm clock and a 60-watt amplifier. The JB7 is designed with the emphasis on ease of use, with one-touch MP3 encoding at 128, 192 or 320kbps. Lossless FLAC data compression is also available. At normal MP3 compression rates, the 80GB disc can hold up to 600 CDs. Despite having a footprint of just 16x22cm, the JB7 has a chassis made up of 1.6kg of steel and aluminium.

The Jukebox is available direct from the company's website and can also be supplied with a matching pair of BSP 50 standmount, two-way loudspeakers for an additional £59.

Price £299 (40GB) and £319 (80GB) **Due** now ☎ 01638 615117 🌐 www.3ga.org.uk



TANNOY REVOLUTION SIGNATURE

Tannoy's new Revolution Signature loudspeakers comprise two standmounts (the DC4 and DC6), two floor-standers (the DC4T and DC6T) and two centre channel speakers (the DC4 LCR and DC6 LCR). The principle difference between the DC4 and DC6 is that the DC4 uses 100mm (four-inch) drive units to the DC6's 150mm (six-inch) drivers.

Featuring Tannoy's Dual Concentric drive units with wideband titanium tweeters, the Revolution range utilise a new ultra-rigid, curved-wall cabinet. The slim profile cabinets – finished in Light Oak or dark Espresso veneers – house a cleverly designed crossover, oxygen-free wiring and that distinctive five-connector earthed bi-wire terminal block throughout.

Price From £600 (DC4) to £1,000 (DC6T) per pair

Due now ☎ 01236 420199

🌐 www.tannoy-speakers.com



WILSON BENESCH NANOTUBE ONE

Carbon fibre expert Wilson Benesch's latest tonearm uses carbon nanotubes in place of the regular fibres; sounding like something out of *Star Trek*, nanotubes are hollow cylindrical lattices of carbon atoms some 50,000 times thinner than a human hair, but with a tensile strength 50x greater than steel. Used as a tonearm tube, this is expected to offer improved stiffness and damping, which should make the arm less audible than previous designs. The Nanotube One also has a redesigned counterbalance to better accommodate the carbon nanotube arm technology. Wilson Benesch suggest this arm allows very high degrees of control, with VTA adjustments of as little as 1/100th of a millimetre.

Price £2,500 **Due** March ☎ 01142 852656



Soundbites

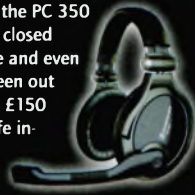
MAVROS interconnect and speaker cable system is the new flagship design from Atlas Cables. With about the purest copper you can find – 6N (99.9999% pure), which equates to one imperfection in every 700 feet of cable – Atlas claims best-ever high-frequency signal velocity and integrity. Prices start at £750 for a one metre pair of interconnects, while a 3m terminated pair of speaker cables will set you back £1,390.

☎ 01563 572666



YES it's pretty far from hi-fi, but if you have a local infestation of computer gamers, the endless walls, shotgun reports and cries of 'impressive' from their Quake-filled computer screens can get wearing. Here's the solution: Sennheiser has launched the PC 350 headset, which combines closed headphones, microphone and even noise cancellation, to screen out those who aren't playing. £150 buys the gamer in your life in-head entertainment.

☎ 01494 551551



NAD introduces its first 'custom dock' the IPD-1. Designed for the ubiquitous Apple iPod, the £70 IPD-1 features a universal iPod dock, which supports audio and video and can charge the iPod batteries. When connected to key NAD products, the IPD-1 allows iPod navigation on a TV screen through the NAD on-screen menu system. Currently, this works with NAD's T 785, T 775, T 765 and T 755 A/V Receivers, and T 175 Preamp-Tuner-Processor.

☎ 01279 501111



TANGENT has returned to the UK (thanks to Sennheiser) with its new Cinque table radio. Available in two versions – FM-only for £190 or DAB/FM for £240 – the Cinque includes a slot-loading CD drive and a 3.5mm socket for MP3 players. The unit comes in four colour solid wood sleeves (walnut or high gloss red, white or black) with a contrasting light or dark grey front panel.

☎ 01494 551551



MUSICAL FIDELITY A1

Miles Davis once released an album called *The Birth of the Cool*. Musical Fidelity could call this one 'The Rebirth of the Hot'. Yes, the Musical Fidelity A1 integrated amplifier is back after a long, hot holiday. This hot-running 30-watt Class A classic integrated amp now sports a USB input alongside the usual collection of line and MM phono sockets. It also now sports an LCD display and a remote control, and the company claims the build quality is a 'substantial step up' from the original A1. It shares the same classic Musical Fidelity case with bold, black lines, albeit in a refined, 21st Century form.

With Musical Fidelity's recent statements about power (the company has also announced a beefy 750K supercharger to work alongside the existing 550K), the website lists the A1 as being perfect with loudspeakers of 92dB or greater sensitivity. A matching CD player (the A1 CD Pro 2) is anticipated soon.

Price £999 **Due** April ☎ 020 8900 2866 🌐 www.musicalfidelity.com



ESCIENT's Vision VS2000 system is a new media server system, designed mostly for video work, but can be used as a massive audio storage system, too. The three black boxes comprise VS100 or VS200 CD/DVD server/player, the VC-1 networked zone player and the VX-600 media server, that can hold up to four 1TB drives in a RAID 5 configuration. Prices start from £1,499 for the VC-1.

☎ 01753 680023



The Insider

THIS MONTH, HFC TALKS TO...

DAVID PATCHING

Job Title: Director of Marketing (Hi-Fi)

Company: International Audio Group



What is your most exciting product currently in development?

The new Audiolab server. It has all the functionality of a full Media Centre, allowing you to store all your CDs, movies, home videos, digital photos, watch and record television – and with the quality you'd expect from a whole range of top-end sources.

What is the future of hi-fi in the home?

For some it will always be high quality two-channel analogue. It's a strong niche and gives great pleasure to the purist, but for the general market the future is most definitely based around a central server with client players networked around the home.

Can 'Generation iPod' be turned on to hi-fi?

Absolutely. For consumers, it was worth sacrificing the quality for the convenience – now there is no need to make the same compromise. It's an uphill battle though and really will only work once software vendors such as iTunes begin to positively promote uncompressed alternatives.

What type of products really excite you?

Without a doubt, it's the loudspeaker. True genius is evident in some of the world's best designs. Because of the huge variety of ways one can take electrical energy and change it to kinetic energy, it's the last refuge for the truly creative inventor.

Hi-Fi Diary

MARCH

29-30 High End Prague
Corinthia Towers, Prague
www.high-end-praha.cz
Leading Czech high-end show

29-30 The Heathrow High Fidelity Show
Park Inn, Heathrow
www.chestergroup.org
London's earliest Heathrow hi-fi show

APRIL

24-27 High End 2007
Munich Operating Centre, Munich
www.highendsociety.de
Euro high-end hi-fi show

Sleek's audio fingerprint

Sleek Audio has developed an in-ear monitor that it claims allows the user to customise the sound to suit their "audio fingerprint". By offering interchangeable treble and bass ports on the SA6 earphone, Sleek suggests that users can adjust tonal balance to suit the tastes of every end user. The company's premise is that everyone hears music differently, due to variations in the diameter and depth of the ear canal. So the SA6 combines loudspeaker and hearing aid technology in an effort to offer a better listening experience. The SA6 in-ear monitor is offered for \$250 a pair and has noise cancelling ESC (environmental sound control) properties, as well as detachable swivel cables.



The wrong profile

The first generation of Blu-ray players will not be able to access features being added to new and forthcoming discs. Things like PiP (picture in picture) and dual audio tracks for director's commentary are part of the new Profile 1.1, also dubbed BonusView and Full Profile, but existing players cannot be upgraded to this standard. There is also another standard on its way, Profile 2, which will add internet interactivity. The only current machine that will be able to take advantage of it, however, is Sony's PS3 games console, which was upgraded to Profile 1.1 in January. More interesting is a rumoured Profile 3.0 which will include the potential for uncompressed hi-res multichannel sound. All it needs is record company backing.



Lossless AAC

Fraunhofer IIS, the creator of MP3, has come up with a lossless variation of its AAC music storage format. HD-AAC is a means of storing 24-bit/96kHz bit music data, that remains compatible with AAC and can be played on MP3 personal stereos and HDD music servers. It will also allow PC users to back up entire music collections, without compromising sound quality. Other lossless systems currently exist, with Meridian's MLP being one of the better known, but they do not have the broad compatibility offered by HD-AAC's AAC-LC core layer.

HD-AAC also has the potential to offer download quality that betters CD, whether the record companies are willing to back such a move is of course another matter.



A true Reference

Reference Recordings, which pioneered the HDCD process, has launched an alternative means of getting higher quality digital audio to the computer oriented music lover. Its HRx format is a WAV file of a digit-for-digit copy of a Reference Recordings 176.4kHz/24-bit digital master. This is supplied on a DVD-R disc for the user to upload onto a music server. According to Reference Recordings VP Marcia Martin "...it has finally become possible, and practical, to offer the incredible sound we've been hearing all these years on the original masters."

As yet, no pricing details have been released for HRx discs and the option to offer the material as a download also remains on the cards. The company has not forgotten the analogue enthusiast, however, and is planning to issue vinyl records later this year.

176.4 kHz 24 BIT MUSIC **HRx**

AVAILABLE SOON FROM SELECTED AUDIO DEALERS!

HRx is a digit-for-digit copy of the original Reference Recordings 176.4 kHz / 24-bit digital master. This allows for fidelity for unadorned sound.

TECHNICAL NOTES:

- The HRx format requires a 24-bit/176.4 kHz WAV file.
- It is intended to play on computer-based music servers, and will not play on CD, SACD or DVD players.
- WAV files can be imported into many "consumer" digital music players.
- Be sure to check compatibility with your software and equipment.
- Your computer must be able to read DVD-R.
- These discs and associated card must be able to output 176.4 kHz, 24-bit audio files.
- For more information, visit www.reference-recordings.com or info@reference-recordings.com.
- These files require large amounts of disk storage space.
- To ensure the highest potential of these master recordings, we recommend using only high quality equipment with digital filters to avoid aliasing, setting the best possible sampling rate.

B&O boots CEO

⊗ Falling share prices and reduced profits at Bang & Olufsen have resulted in the company ousting its CEO Torben Sørensen. The Danish company stated that disappointing development of the Group's turnover had contributed to its decision to change top-level management. In fact, it suffered a 37 per cent fall in profits, resulting in nearly a third being



knocked off its market value. In the UK alone, sales dropped by six per cent, with Germany also down. It was only the home market that managed any increase. 50 year old Sørensen had been with B&O since 2001, after a stint at one of Denmark's biggest exporters, Lego. His successor has not been announced.

JIMMY'S TWEAKS #58

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



Dress those cables

The two most significant improvements can be heard by making sure your mains leads and interconnect cables are not close together (if their paths cross, make sure they cross at right angles, rather than having them intertwined) and preventing the speaker cables from forming small inductance loops.

As you should have the same length of speaker cable for both channels, you can often get one side with excess cable; carefully lay this in a figure-of-eight shape instead of a coil. You can secure it with a cable tie or two if you like. Granted, you need many, many metres of cable laid in a coil for its inductance to markedly influence the sound of your system, but on a more esoteric and subtle level, properly dressed cables don't just look good, but improve performance too.

TOP 10 CLASSIC ALBUMS FROM THE 1970s THAT YOU REALLY OUGHT TO OWN BY NOW

1. Pink Floyd - Dark Side of the Moon
2. Joni Mitchell - Blue
3. Led Zeppelin - Physical Graffiti
4. Television - Marquee Moon
5. Yes - Fragile
6. Stevie Wonder - Songs in the Key of Life
7. The Rolling Stones - Exile on Main St
8. The Clash - London Calling
9. Marvin Gaye - What's Going On
10. Mike Oldfield - Tubular Bells



New Music

IN THE STUDIO

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



U2

Title: tbc

Due: late 2008

Expect a few surprises on U2's follow-up to 2004's *How To Dismantle An Atomic Bomb*, according to Bono. After exploratory sessions in Morocco, the band has been recording in France with producers Brian Eno and Daniel Lanois. "There's some trance influences. But there's some very hardcore guitar. Real molten metal. It's not like anything we've done before," says the singer, who adds the band has enough material for two albums.

THE BLACK CROWES

Title: *Warpaint*

Due: March

The first album of new studio material in seven years from the American roots-rockers finds new recruit Luther Dickinson formerly of the North Mississippi Allstars on guitar. Recorded in Woodstock, the album is described as "a classic Crowes mix of rock, blues, country and soul," featuring ten new songs written by brothers Chris and Rich Robinson, plus a cover of the gospel standard *God's Got It*.

MARIANNE FAITHFULL

Title: tbc

Due: April/ May

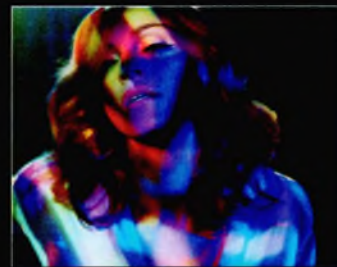
After making a full recovery from breast cancer, Faithfull went into a New York studio before Christmas to begin work on the follow-up to 2005's *Before The Poison*. Produced by Hal Willner, who helmed her 1987 album *Strange Weather* and featuring Marc Ribot on guitar, it's said to be a blues album - which given her ravaged tones makes perfect sense.

MADONNA

Title: *Licorice*

Due: April

Having signed a new 120 million dollar, ten year deal with Live Nation Inc, Madonna



has been in an LA studio working on tracks for her new album with a raft of heavyweight hip-hop collaborators including Kanye West, Pharell Williams of the Neptunes and Timbaland. "It makes the speakers bleed. It's hot," according to a somewhat over-excited Williams

BOB DYLAN & JACK WHITE

Title: tbc

Due: late 2008

Bob Dylan is reportedly coordinating the completion of a series of songs left unfinished by country legend Hank Williams. Among the musicians he's approached is Jack White, who has recorded a 'finished' version of the incomplete Williams song *You Know That I Know* at Nashville's Blackbird Studios. Sounds like it should be a treat.

ALSO COMING SOON...

JAZZ/ CLASSICAL

Hilary Hahn Sibelius/Schoenberg Violin Concerti (Mar), **McCreech/ Gabrieli Consort** Haydn The Creation (Mar), **Marian McPartland** Twilight World (Mar), **Karin Allyson** Imagina (Mar)

SACD/ DVD-A

Lisbeth Scott Charmed (DVD-A, Mar), **The Pixies** Doolittle (SACD, Mar), **Hugh Masekela** Hope (SACD, Mar), **Rickie Lee Jones** It's Like This (SACD, Mar), **Barb Jung** Just Like a Woman (SACD, Mar)



Seeing music

What does your sound look like?

One of the biggest differences between listening to music on a system and the live experience is purely visual. In the concert hall, you watch the musicians who are producing the music and make a subconscious link between what you see them do and what you hear. At home, there is only a space between the speakers that might be filled with a hi-fi system, a picture or maybe a window but nothing that resembles musicians playing.

This difference has to affect our perception of the sound and for that matter its ultimate quality. I personally find it quite distracting watching musicians and, to get the most out of the live experience, frequently close my eyes so that I can enjoy the audio in isolation. This is why so many people buy massive plasma screens but don't bother with similar quality sound systems, the picture is far more significant. On the other hand when there is a trailer on the TV for something disinteresting and they play great music behind it I get quite excited by the music and realise that I should

"I find it distracting watching musicians and, to get the most out of the live experience, frequently close my eyes so that I can enjoy the audio in isolation."

really be playing records and not watching some dross on the box. The BBC were using Led Zeppelin's *Misty Mountain Hop* for something recently, so it's amazing what a well received reunion gig can do!

But to get back to the point, what we see has a bearing on our experience and on the sound quality, so try dousing all the lights in the room to create a visually unstimulating environment in which to fully concentrate on the sound. I've tried this and it works, at least until you want to change the CD and trip over the cat on the way to the player. Low brightness, low level lighting seems the best compromise allowing you to find the next bit of software, while keeping visual stimulus to a minimum.

An alternative approach which seems to benefit musical appreciation is to do something mildly while listening. I find that I often hear the music better, because the sound quality is less of an issue. Being distracted by the quality may well be a result of my job, however, and hopefully not something that affects too many in the audiophile universe. Nowhere is it more apparent than in record shops, or at least those with decent enough systems to play the music reasonably loud without it sounding too painful. Of course, it won't necessarily be the same at home where the extra resolution and the heightened

concentration reveals less appealing qualities that were not obvious before.

What it all boils down to is try to see what you are hearing, if this comes naturally to you then think yourself lucky, the rest of us have to work at it.

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



Hearing pictures

Does being an Audiophile and a Music lover go hand in hand?

If you're interested in sound quality, you can't help but notice how things sound. It doesn't matter whether the sound is good or bad; the point is, it draws your attention. And this can act as a barrier to the music.

Of course, since the birth of hi-fi, there have always been plenty of people whose key interests have inclined more towards engineering and the technical aspects of sound reproduction, rather than listening to music for its deeper spiritual values.

Sir Thomas Beecham's famous *Bon Mat* about not appreciating music, but loving the noise it makes, sums up the matter perfectly. The aural illusion of being present at a live musical event in a large hall when you're actually at home sitting on your couch, is an amazing incredible experience. However, it's not quite the same as listening to music and losing yourself in it.

In order to do that, you have to 'forget' about sound altogether. As soon as you find yourself noticing things like stereo width and depth, or soundstaging, you're sunk. To become engrossed in the music you have to let go of all this stuff.

That new CD player or set of expensive loudspeaker cables you just bought might make a huge difference. But ask yourself; can you simply concentrate on the music rather than on how it sounds?

There's something of a paradox here. The more detailed and dynamic your hi-fi sounds – the wider the bandwidth, etc – the more likely your attention will be taken away from the music. The very qualities that result in better sound, also act as a distraction.

Speaking personally, I find something similar occurs when I read a book. At some point I cease reading words and 'see' pictures or images in my mind. If, however, the book has illustrations, this doesn't happen. Having pictures brings you back to the conscious reality of reading text.

Listening to music can do the same. And listening via hi-fi may bring you closer to the inner essence of the music than hearing it live. At a live event there are lots of visual and aural distractions – from someone coughing in the audience, to seeing things happening on stage – and these prevent you from having a spiritual one-to-one with the music.

For this reason, I often close my eyes at concerts to concentrate on the music better. Music and Performance are two separate things. Enjoying a performance is not the same as understanding music and penetrating its inner core.

Of course, good sound is very important. Bad sound can distract too. But how ironic that, as hi-fi gets better and more realistic, it also risks puncturing the very reality it seeks to create...

Jimmy Hughes is one of the country's best known hi-fi experts. His knowledge of tweaking and his record collection know no bounds ▶

R

RETRO

HI-FI REVISITED

LS3/5A
LOUDSPEAKER



The BBC has (well... had) an enviable reputation for churning out people from its Research and Design Departments that made a

name for themselves in the hi-fi industry. Spondor, Harbeth and, more recently, Leema are all companies founded by ex-BBC engineers. The same applies to BBC equipment with the most obvious connection to the Beeb being its LS3/5a speaker.

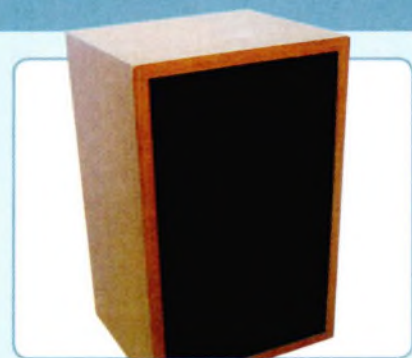
It was originally designed as a small monitor loudspeaker for outside broadcast trucks, because – something that seems remarkable today – no such product existed at the time.

The beauty of the LS3/5a was its interchangeability – the BBC demanded that the product be so tight on tolerance that if one loudspeaker was damaged, it could be replaced without any need for pair-matching. At the time, such consistency (matched to within 1dB against the reference pair) was unheard of. In essence, all mini-monitors, whether in studios or in living rooms, are mere footnotes to the LS3/5a. That said, there are some exceptional footnotes...

Although the LS3/5a brief was consistency, the speaker did not remain unchanged throughout its long life (the first models were released in 1974 and was still in production a quarter of a century later). The speaker's crossover was originally a 15ohm design, but this was soon changed to an 11ohm load. There were also slight variations in terms of the thin-wall cabinet material, with a handful of lacquered versions that technically put the speaker outside the original BBC specification.

Although subsequent speaker development highlighted some of the limitations of the design (it has a tendency to make a piano sound too rich, while deep bass and high volumes were never really possible), the LS3/5a was a paragon of neutrality at the time and still represents a tough act to beat, especially on vocals.

Attempts have been made to improve upon the LS3/5a basic design. Late in the day, Rogers developed a stand-cum-subwoofer, the AB1, that extended the bass, but arguably at the expense of the imagery.



“...the LS3/5a was a paragon of neutrality and still represents a tough act to beat...”

The LS3/5a loudspeaker is, perhaps, best associated with Rogers, which was said to have sold around 50,000 pairs. It was not the only company to produce the LS3/5a, however. Manufacturers bought a license to produce the loudspeaker from the BBC, and Audiomaster, Chartwell, Goodmans, Harbeth, KEF and Spondor also produced models.

Things have moved on a lot since 1974. The KEF T27 tweeter and B110 bass driver used in the LS3/5a are long gone, although the products can be reconed and repaired by specialists. Stirling Broadcast has produced an effective v2 (sanctioned by the BBC) that uses SEAS and ScanSpeak drivers in place of the KEF originals. And both Harbeth and Spondor (Dudley Harwood of Harbeth being one of the original design team) produce products that retain a lot of the original LS3/5a DNA.

For many though, the little LS3/5a remains unchallenged and the speaker still has a cult following. Products command high resale values to this day, with early Rogers models (that sport a little gold logo) and Chartwell models achieving remarkably high prices.

Back in 2005, a pair of the very rare rosewood Chartwell LS3/5a sold for £1,290 on eBay... not bad for a pair of speakers that originally sold for less than £170 per pair 30 years ago. **HFC**

Alan Sircom



Dominic Todd

By post

The dangers of buying your hi-fi via email

Browse almost any high-end hi-fi manufacturer's website and you'll find a warning. The warning is not that an addiction to high-end hi-fi can damage your wealth (which it can) but a warning of the perils of buying such hi-fi online. Whilst the cynics amongst us may feel that this is simply a ploy to ensure that price cutting non-authorized dealers are effectively demonised, the warnings really should be heeded.

I've heard first hand of people who've had their fingers burnt in trying to get hold of that high-end bargain. The usual problems stem from buying abroad using internet auction sites. You're likely to be hit either with an unexpected bill for import duty or the unit will be faulty in some way. I recently heard from a chap who thought he'd got a bargain when he

“Of course, as readers of this magazine, we'd all like to think that we'd be pretty weary of the perils of buying second-hand hi-fi.”

found a very prestigious second-hand DAC for £800 in America – around half the typical UK price. The DAC was shipped over only to be found faulty on receipt. A flurry of emails and calls followed only for the buyer to find he had very limited protection of around £150 as the postage hadn't been fully insured. Not surprisingly, the seller wasn't interested. Upon contacting the manufacturer, it was found that the necessary repair meant a new board and power supply that effectively meant the total cost of the DAC would now be slightly more than had it been bought from a UK dealer.

Of course, as readers of this magazine, we'd all like to think that we'd be pretty weary of the perils of buying second-hand hi-fi. Yet, the lure of a second-hand bargain should never be underestimated. I was recently reminded of this myself. The product in question was a slightly scruffy Linn Movie Classik of around 2003 vintage. It had cost around £2,000 new and, if memory served me right, was a sweet little thing let down only by its limited video outputs. OK, so it's not quite 'real hi-fi', but as

a second, sitting room system, it would be perfect – especially for the £100 being asked. So, I got the Linn and gave it a spin. All was well, until after a couple of CDs through, the fan cut in. Being such a compact device, the fan is a necessary evil. Yet the noise it made I found unacceptably distracting. There was no way I could relax with the Movie Classik as I'd be perched on the end of my seat just waiting for the fan to kick in! There was no other option; it had to go back. Fortunately for me, a return wasn't a problem. Had I bought from elsewhere, I may not have been so lucky.

The moral of the tale, was that I should have remembered the wise words of generations of hi-fi enthusiasts and listened to the hi-fi before buying it. No matter how simple the hi-fi may be, or how much of a bargain it is, a thorough demonstration is still the only way to guarantee peace of mind.

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



The heat is on...

Energy-guzzling hi-fi monsters

You may wonder what the threat of climate change can possibly have to do with the design of a hi-fi system, but if we are being forced to save a few watts from each of our light bulbs then sooner or later the low-energy spotlight will fall onto that stack of boxes in our listening rooms. Music systems have never had energy efficiency as a design criteria and, indeed, in the 1980s the Curtis household boasted a system comprised of three 100 watt Class A mono amplifiers for each channel and, in the philosophy of the time, these monsters were left constantly powered so that they would be temperature stabilised. This was one of my best ever designs and the sound was simply sublime, but each amplifier was constantly turning 600 watts of electricity into heat and so I had, in effect, a 3,500 watt electric cooker running constantly. It wasn't the electricity bills that did for the system, but the fact that the room became unbearably hot.

Back in the early days of hi-fi, amplifiers boasted output powers of 15 or 20 watts and, even when I was designing award-winning Rotel products, the typical output was still only 35 watts. Now most of us buy amplifiers rated closer to 100 watts. Why? Well the simple answer is, that loudspeaker efficiency has become lower. Before the advent of the first heavy plastic cones, an efficiency rating of 90dB was the norm. So a 30 watt amplifier would be enough to rattle the windows. Fast forward to today and, for reasons I won't bore you with, the true comparative loudspeaker efficiency is more like 84dB, so for the same loudness you'll need to pump-in nearly 130 watts. That's an extra 100 watts per channel. But there's more. Our amplifiers are far from efficient, converting half of the mains power into powering the loudspeakers.

Where does this leave the budding environmentalist? Well, there are lots of good engineering reasons why frugal low-energy electronics could out-perform many of today's offerings. Really high efficiency loudspeakers invariably need big magnets, and that makes them expensive to manufacture and doesn't do a great deal for their carbon footprint. What's more we've all got used to the ▶

M

MUSO

CLASSIC ALBUMS

JOHN MARTYN
SOLID AIR



John Martyn once quipped that Eric Clapton's cover of his song *May You Never*, had earned him more in royalties than the rest of

his recordings put together. The veracity of this is debatable; this is the man, remember, who's been known to alternate between speaking in a cockney accent and Glaswegian. But it's certainly one of his prettiest songs. Sung in an easy burr over casual, rhythmic acoustic guitar, it sounds like an old pal within seconds. It should have been a hit. In fact, why isn't he more famous?

In the 41 years since his debut album *London Conversation* though, Martyn's rarely done the expected. Having risen as a folk singer and guitarist, he was soon adding soul and jazz influences to his music, using his singing voice as a wordless instrument in itself and inventing his own guitar tunings. Then there was the drinking and drugging, the extreme behaviour, the alienated colleagues. Go back to *May You Never*, even, and we get talk about pub fights, sleeping rough, and back stabbers.

As Martyn's said himself, however, "If I could control myself more, I think the music would be much less interesting." So it is with *Solid Air*, an album which exists on the tantalising fault line where control and the lack of it meet. Even the recording started with an accident. Made in late 1972, to tie in with a tour of the US the following year, recording producer John Wood fell down the 'notorious' stairs of Sound Techniques studio in Chelsea and twisted his ankle.

The sessions were abandoned, meaning a new backing band were recruited for another try at Island label's Basing Street studios. Crucially, the group now included double bass player Danny Thompson, Martyn's favourite partner in inebriated crime and most productive musical foil, plus Daves Mattacks and Pegg of Fairport Convention as the rhythm section. Recorded live in just eight days, with minimal overdubs added later, the payoff was remarkable.

The title track is the most striking. Martyn's decision to include a song addressed to his



"Then there was the drinking and the drugging, the extreme behaviour, the alienated colleagues."

friend, the singer Nick Drake was, in light of the posthumous lionisation heaped upon him, uncannily prescient. Drake did not find fame in his lifetime, and *Solid Air* portrays a man who's so paralysed and removed from life he's almost left the material world.

Not that Martyn, just 24 at the time, was out of the woods himself. There may be an excess of beautiful music here – but the confessional lyrics suggest darker truths. Most suggestive of mental turmoil, though, is the cover of Skip James' *I'd Rather Be The Devil*. Starting as funky crime theme with Martyn slurring and hollering about evil, it ends in an elongated jam that gradually loses form, leaving an ambient murk of uncertainty.

Nonetheless, *Solid Air* sold an impressive 100,000 copies and would become the accepted fans' favourite, though Martyn would soon express dissatisfaction with the "rushed" album and followed up with the hard work of *Inside Out* a year later.

Though subsequent LPs such as *One World* and *Grace And Danger*, were successful, there are no great commercial heights in his story. The unrepentant singer now weighs upwards of twenty stone and had a leg amputated in 2004. Cancelled shows provoked excited hearsay that he was about to die. Just the contrary; Martyn lives on. **HFC**

Ian Harrison

◀ tremendous value that today's inexpensive loudspeakers represent. Some manufacturers are now offering digital-switching amplifiers, which are almost twice as efficient as some conventional amplifiers. As yet, they just don't seem to sound quite as good as their more profligate cousins. But then the first generation of CD players also sounded pretty average and look where we are now.

So, maybe there's an opportunity here for a manufacturer who dares to be different?

Stan Curtis was the founder-director of Cambridge Audio, Mission and IAG. A hi-fi visionary he is responsible for designing over 400 products.



Blow out!

Vinyl or CD? You decide...

I managed to put my LP player out of commission a little while back. I had been doing a little tweak to the power supply, and as I reassembled everything I did something so stupid that I can't quite bring myself to put it into words: suffice to say that no trained electronics repairer should ever have done it and it got me back by blowing up about half the components inside the supply.

As you might imagine, I was so irked that I put the supply on a shelf in my study and got on with listening to CDs – not such a hardship, I probably play two or three CD for every one LP these days anyway. Obviously I knew I would have to face the repair some time, but weeks stretched to a couple of months and then this month's round-up of phono stages loomed. That presented a deadline of sorts, so I switched on the soldering iron and made good with screwdriver, wire cutters and solder until the supply was its usual self again. Well, its 'tweaked' usual self.

And now I'm a happy bunny, with renewed access to my LP collection. It's not the largest collection in the world, about 1,200 discs at my last estimate, but there's very little there that I don't really, really love, with reasons. When I was a student I found it possible to buy discs cheaply in Oxfam shops and the like, then sell on the ones that I didn't want to keep at a profit, and well over half the discs I still own date from that period when I had time to scour shops (I was one of the last of the



“I switched on the soldering iron and made good with screwdriver, wire cutters and solder until the supply was its usual self...”

generation who didn't have to work evenings and weekends to pay university fees) and could effectively build a collection for nothing.

But a couple of months' enforced absence has significantly revived my interest in those old black discs. Recordings I certainly hadn't played in a decade were pulled off the shelf, carefully inspected for dust and mould, and brought back to life. It's a classic case of absence making the heart grow fonder. I could have played the records at any time, but while it was easy to do so I didn't. Then I couldn't and something inside me started really missing the whole LP shenanigans. With the possibility renewed, I was like the proverbial monkey in a banana plantation.

It's unlikely I'll get to give up CDs in a hurry – they are too much a part of my life. Never mind listening to them for pleasure, if I'm not using them to evaluate hi-fi for *Hi-Fi Choice* purposes I'm recording, editing or mastering them for release. In a way I quite fancy it, though. I think there is a lot in this business of, well, it's really fasting, isn't it? Voluntarily giving up something important for a period, the better to appreciate it later. Next time you get that familiar hi-fi unease (do I need a new turntable? are my cables good enough? is my recording collection fundamentally unsatisfying?) you might consider giving it all a rest for a month or two. Come back with appetite refreshed and see how it all tastes!

Richard Black is a professional musician, recording engineer and a highly knowledgeable hi-fi analyst to boot. He writes about hi-fi exclusively for HFC



Change for the better?

The price of progress

The words 'technological' and 'progress' fit together as snugly as salt and pepper or fish and chips and, while I'm a big fan of technology and all its benefits, I'm much less certain about the way it's so often automatically linked with progress. It is often said, probably quite correctly, that technology itself is neutral. But progress means different things to different people. Not only is it loaded with value judgements, the Law of Unintended Consequences also invariably comes into play.

I'm sure that many people think it's quite wonderful that they can keep their entire

music collection on something smaller than a pack of cigarettes; others are depressed that doing so is getting the world accustomed to compressed digital MP3 encoding. Progress is a double-edged sword. For every benefit, there always seems to be an accompanying handicap. When CD took over from vinyl, it was much more compact and convenient, but is still less musically satisfying than vinyl, to audiophile ears at least. The root cause is probably found in the true meaning of the word 'sophistication' – the tendency to make things increasingly complex, which is certainly an integral part of the marketing strategies of many brands.

Simplicity can be its own reward, as anyone who has investigated vintage hi-fi equipment will know. It would be naive to suggest that things haven't improved since the early days, but criteria like domestic acceptability, costs and measured performance have tended to take priority over more nebulous qualities like sound or musical quality.

Although many brands and customers seem happy enough to go along with the 'progress consensus', enthusiasm for vintage equipment has never gone away, as is obvious from the continuing availability of vinyl record players, valve amps and 1930s-style single-driver horn loudspeakers. And, although these components might have significant limitations compared to the evolving 'progress' agenda, their essential simplicity also confers real sonic benefits.

What applies to hi-fi is even more the case with our music sources. The music industry was founded by people that cared about music, but it's now run by accountants, lawyers and 'private equity' operations, who appear to be only interested in maximising profits (or minimising losses!) Does anyone care about the music and sound quality anymore? Judging by many (though not all) recent purchases, those who care are very much the minority.

CDs seem to be the worst offenders: a *Sergeant Pepper* I bought quite recently sounds truly execrable – no wonder EMI is in trouble. Indeed, the best sounding CD in my collection is Laurie Anderson's 1989 *Strange Angels* (a burglar took all my pre-'88 CDs). Recent vinyl is also often afflicted, albeit less seriously, but a lot of 1960s and '70s vinyl I've been playing recently sounds very good indeed and two of the very best records in my collection are Ella Fitzgerald and Buddy Holly monophonic examples from the 1950s.

Technology is certainly a good thing – we wouldn't have hi-fi without it – but 'progress' should always be taken with a soupçon of scepticism.

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

TECHNO

TECHNOLOGY EXPLORED

LITTLE TINY SIGNALS

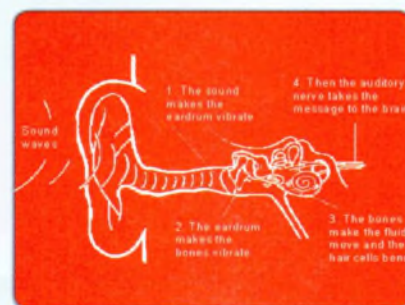


In this issue you will find a round-up group of phono amplifiers, units designed to boost the signal from an LP pickup cartridge to something that a typical integrated or preamplifier will understand. In some ways it's not a very hard job – I could sketch out a basic circuit for one on the top of a matchbox – but that's deceptive. In fact, it's one of the trickiest tasks in audio electronics, if one wants to do it really well.

The core of the problem is that the signal is pretty small. In voltage terms, it can be as low as one thousandth the output level of a CD player: in power terms (slightly harder to comprehend but actually more meaningful) that's about one billionth the power going into your loudspeaker. Why so small? Well, the physical signal level on a disc is not much, with a maximum modulation of tenths of a millimetre and, given the limitations of the material from which the disc is made, one simply can't get much power off the pickup however it's designed.

There are two kinds of cartridge in common use, moving magnet and moving coil. The former has a significantly higher output, in voltage terms, but again in power terms there's no vast difference. Conventional electronic amplifiers respond directly to voltage, not power, but the power is still important. Any electronic component, even a piece of wire or a cartridge, has a minute noise voltage across it, even when it is just sitting on a bench, due to random movements of electronic charges inside it. The higher the resistance of the component is, the higher the noise voltage, though the noise power is the same for any component.

Power is defined as voltage squared, divided by resistance. If noise power is constant, doubling resistance must increase noise voltage by a factor of 1.4. Cartridges vary, but as a rough rule of thumb moving magnet cartridges have ten times the output voltage and one hundred times the resistance of moving coil models. This means that their ratio of signal (off the disc) to noise (generated by their own resistance) is much the same.



“There are two kinds of cartridge in use, moving magnet and moving coil.”

However, within phono amplifiers other mechanisms generate noise and it is usually possible to deal better with a higher resistance and higher voltage. Most decent moving magnet phono amps, in fact, approach the theoretical noise floor of the cartridge itself quite closely, but this is not by any means true of moving coil amps. It is not at all trivial, with currently available electronic devices to make a moving coil amp that adds less noise than the cartridge itself has already generated – adding literally no noise, you'll already have guessed, is a physical impossibility, but we can in theory get pretty close.

An alternative approach that has long been employed successfully is to use a 'matching transformer' to boost moving coil voltages to moving magnet levels. A transformer is basically an equal-power device so this can work pretty well, but good transformers use expensive materials and are tricky to make. They also have a nasty habit of picking up hum which is very hard to screen out.

On top of all this, a phono amplifier must apply the 'RIAA' equalisation curve and ought ideally to be compatible with the full range of cartridge output levels and capable of accommodating sudden high input levels, due to scratches on the disc, without overload. Small wonder the world's finest designers scratch their heads over this one! **HFC**

Richard Black

Classical Themes



From Bartok to Mahler and Milhaud to Tchaikovsky, classical music has much to offer, says HFC's Richard Holliss

Although there's a real concern that orchestral music is losing the battle against the cultural changes in the music business, there is no real evidence to substantiate this claim. In fact, record numbers of people are attending live classical concerts, with the BBC Proms more popular than ever, thanks in part to television and special open-air events around the UK.

Of course, audiophiles have recognised the importance of classical music for some years now. In fact, there's nothing better than a Vaughn Williams concerto for violin and orchestra to perfect your

amplifier's attention to detail, or Tchaikovsky's cacophony of cannons and bells to test your speaker's mettle. Classical music offers a wide variety of moods and expressions that are more than adequate to test-drive the latest CD players, turntables, valve amps and speaker systems.

The following selection is not a Top Ten, or Best of. It doesn't pretend to be a definitive list. It's an eclectic mix that will, hopefully, suit all tastes. After all, the truly wonderful thing about classical music is its diversity, it's ability to appeal to all palettes. This is just a taster...

BARTOK (BELA)

Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta Herbert Von Karajan conducting the Berlin Philharmoniker (Karajan Collection) EMI (CD)

Karajan was often criticised for the workman-like approach he took to Bartok's music. In fact, the great conductor only ever recorded two works by the Hungarian composer, including the haunting *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta*. Written in 1936, it's a highly atmospheric piece with the third movement (the Adagio) mystical sounding and yet, unsettling in its execution. With the ability to evoke a strong emotional reaction in the listener, it's certainly not a piece to cure melancholia.

EMI has done a wonderful job with the remastering of this CD and the stereo effect is sharp and detailed.



BEETHOVEN (LUDWIG VAN)

The Nine Symphonies Otto Klemperer conducting the Philharmonia Orchestra HMV (nine record boxset, vinyl)

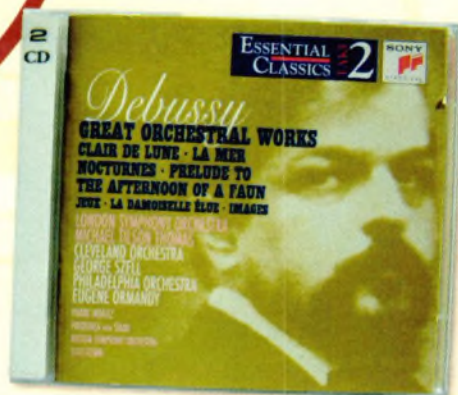
Otto Klemperer's unrivalled recordings of Beethoven's *Nine Symphonies* are still considered by many audiophiles as the crown jewels of classical music. There have, of course, been some fine versions of, particularly the

6th and 9th symphonies, since these classic HMV recordings were made between 1958 and 1961.

Klemperer avoids the theatrics of conductors like Wilhelm Furtwengler or Leopold Stokowski and presents a performance that's still as fresh today as it was forty years ago. These

recordings are now a rarity, even on CD, but the original vinyl recordings are fine, sharply tuned interpretations that combine a sense of wonder and technique. The 'ode to Joy' from the *Ninth* has seldom been performed elsewhere with the same amount of confidence and imagery.





DEBUSSY (CLAUDE)

Prelude à l'après-midi d'un Faune, Clair de Lune Michael Tilson Thomas conducting the London Symphony Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy conducting the Philadelphia Orchestra (Essential Classics) Sony (CD)

Debussy's beautiful tone poems are unhurried and subtle in shape and form. They embrace the listener with melodies of striking resonance and emotion. Whether played on solo piano or, as in the case of this fine recording by two world famous orchestras, the tranquillity and genius of pieces such as *Clair de Lune* (part of the *Suite bergamasque*, 1890) and *Prelude à l'après-midi d'un Faune*, are on a par with music such as Vaughn Williams' *The Lark Ascending* or Edward Elgar's *The Enigma Variations*.

FANTASIA

All the music from the soundtrack, Leopold Stokowski conducting the Philadelphia Orchestra Buena Vista (vinyl)

Scorned at by the purists, Walt Disney's 'Concert Feature', as the movie was called during pre-production, has introduced more people to classical and orchestral music than many care to admit. For this reason alone, it shares some of the kudos afforded to Benjamin Brittain's *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra* or Sergei Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf*.

Under the baton of the flamboyant conductor Leopold Stokowski, the nine pieces of classical music in *Fantasia*, that accompanied some of the most innovative and controversial animation the studio ever produced, were severely edited. So much so, that Russian composer Igor Stravinsky later complained. There are numerous soundtrack versions of *Fantasia*, but one of the finest is still the two-disc vinyl edition that was first released in the UK in 1970.

Arranged in a different running order to that of the film, the recording has a sweet, melodic style that closely resembles the film's pioneering stereo soundtrack (called *Fantasound*) than the later remastered CDs.



MAHLER (GUSTAV)

Symphony No 8 Georg Solti conducting the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, with the Chorus of the Vienna State Opera, Singverein Chorus and The Vienna Boys Choir Decca (vinyl/CD)

Mahler said of his *8th symphony* 'Try to imagine the whole universe beginning to ring and resound'. Perhaps, that's because this amazing 80 minute work requires an orchestra and choir totalling something in the region of a thousand performers to do it justice. From the opening chords of *Veni Creator Spiritus* to the crescendos that mark the climax of both the first and second movements, this epic work is gargantuan in every sense of the word. Later this year it will be performed in St Pauls' Cathedral (an ideal venue given its sheer immensity in musical energy), but there are some fine recordings with which to compare. Sadly Wyn Morris' 1972 flawed, but powerful IWR recording has only had a very limited release on CD, so for sheer magnitude and unrivalled spectacle, veteran conductor Georg Solti's version is the benchmark.

MILHAUD (DARIUS)

L'Homme et son desir, Maurice Abravanel conducting the Utah Symphony Orchestra Vanguard Classics (CD)

In his *Dispatches* column (on p16), Jimmy Hughes comments on Sir Thomas Beecham's *Bon Mot* about 'not appreciating music, but loving the noise it makes'. One wonders what sort of comment Beecham would have made on the work of Darius Milhaud, whose divisions of the instruments anticipated (by half a century) the stereophonic styling of composers like Karlheinz Stockhausen. (When Beecham was asked if he'd heard any music by Stockhausen, he replied 'No, but I believe I have trodden in some.'). Maurice Abravanel's recording of *L'Homme et son desir* is breathtaking, capturing Milhaud's description of the 'Brazilian forests at night and the mystical forces therein' to perfection.





WAGNER (RICHARD)

Der Ring des Nibelungen, includes Das Rheingold, Die Walkure, Siegfried and Gotterdammerung Georg Solti conducting the Vienna Philharmonic Decca (22-record boxset vinyl), (14-CD boxset)

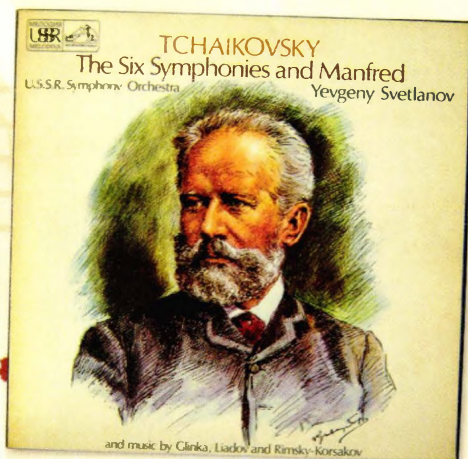
To many audiophiles and music lovers alike, Richard Wagner's music is often described as impenetrable. Perhaps, it's the length of his epic operas, such as the four-part *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (15 hours), that puts people off? The composer has also, unfairly, been linked to German fascism (thanks in part to the composer's descendents befriending high-ranking Nazis). But, then it's the Germanic power of *The Ring* that sets it aside from all else. From the overly commercialised *The Ride of the Valkyries* to the grand climax of *Gotterdammerung* (*The Twilight of the Gods*), Wagner's music is brash, loud and extremely melodic.

Recorded over an eight-year period between 1958 and 1966, Georg Solti's recordings are still the finest to date. So much so, that they were the subject of an extremely rare in-depth BBC documentary, that followed the rehearsal and recording of this unique work.

TCHAIKOVSKY (PETER)

The Six Symphonies Yevgeny Svetlanov conducting the USSR Symphony Orchestra, Melodiya HMV/EMI (seven-record boxset, vinyl)

Very few complete recordings of Tchaikovsky's *Six Symphonies* can, for sheer energy and brash accomplishment, compete with Russian conductor Yevgeny Svetlanov's performances. Originally available in a handsome vinyl boxset on the EMI/Melodiya label, Svetlanov leads his musicians into battle with fast and breathtaking renditions of the *Symphonies* 2 and 4. Very seldom has the composer's tortured-soul been heard so expertly through his music. But there's also time for clarity and melancholia and the *Sixth symphony* (*Pathétique*) is one of sublime beauty and anguish. As befits Russian recordings, this set (originally recorded in 1967/68) is stunning and there's little to distinguish between the CD and the vinyl. Both of which are first-class masterings.



VAUGHN WILLIAMS (RALPH)

Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis Sir Adrian Boult conducting the London Philharmonic Orchestra Decca Eclipse (vinyl)

With the exception of Sir Edward Elgar, Ralph Vaughn Williams is, without doubt, the most popular of all 20th Century British composers.

Like Sir William Walton and Sir Arthur Bliss, he dabbled in the film industry as a composer, but it's his orchestral work for the concert hall for which he's best remembered. First performed in 1910, for a double-string orchestra and string quartet, *Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis* feels as old as the Earth itself thanks to its massive, but spacious sound. It's a glorious blend of spiritual strength and physical exaltation. For exquisite timing and an understanding of the work, Decca's 1971 vinyl recording with Sir Adrian Boult conducting the New Symphony Orchestra, has to still to be surpassed.



STRAVINSKY (IGOR)

Le Sacre du printemps Igor Markevitch conducting the Philharmonia Orchestra (Music for Pleasure) EMI (vinyl)

The striking image of Ayres Rock, that adorns the sleeve on the original Music for Pleasure recording of Igor Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du printemps* (*The Rite of Spring*) beautifully conjures up the primitive brutality of this 20th century orchestral masterpiece. Stravinsky saw his composition as a musical description of ancient tribal dances (the choreographed version ended in a full-scale riot when it made its debut in Paris in 1913). There are two movements; *The Adoration of the Earth* and *The Sacrifice*. Each is a captivating assault on the senses, with a discordant mix of solo bassoon, trombones and timpani. Better still, Igor Markevitch's interpretation still remains one of the definitive versions of this amazing work. **HFC**

Richard Holliss





“And the Award goes to ...”



PM6002
March 2008

PM6002 (Group Test Winner)

“Celebration time for Marantz: The PM6002 is a great example of a budget hi-fi component – grab one fast.”

“The Marantz is built like a brick outhouse, and sounds a real treat”



PM6002
January 2008

PM6002 (5 Star Review)

“Sturdy feel and looks: full spec: vivacious, animated sound, especially with voices!”

“A superb amp for the money that’ll provide you hours of music fun.”



CD PLAYER
BEST CD PLAYER UNDER £300
MARANTZ CD6002

Awards Edition

CD6002 (Best CD Player under £ 300)

“Price, and the ability to entertain with all music make the CD6002 king.”

Everybody loves the iPod, yet its ability to play back music to audiophile standards has never been one of its strengths. As the dominant music carrier of the 21st Century, it's ripe for upgrading ... but you won't access the iPod's magic with the cheap docks or headphones that have proliferated in its wake. They simply cripple the sound of music.

Absolute Sounds, established for 30 years as the reference importer of the highest quality audio equipment, presents the ElectroKID system to iPod users everywhere. It has been assembled from components manufactured by two of the greatest names in high-end audio.

Fortunately for music lovers around the world, Krell recognised the iPod's potential and created a suitable platform to enable true music lovers to enjoy its performance at a level never before achieved. The KID is Krell's take on what an iPod dock should do: retrieve the musical signal, handle it with respect and reproduce it with levels of sound quality that will delight the most critical listener.

But that's not all. Martin Logan - purveyors of the prettiest electrostatic loudspeakers on the market today - were thinking along similar lines, eager to create a turnkey system that would deliver all the joys of high-end audio without the pain. The Purity is the first-ever Martin Logan with built-in amplification. Bye-bye speaker wires!

Take one KID and a pair of Purity speakers, and all-of-a-sudden, 1+1 equals a million dollars! The 'ElektroKID' is the world's simplest, most accessible entry into high-end musical bliss: functional, compact, stylish, affordable. Connect the KID to the Purity, slip in your iPod. No adjustments, no headaches, no weeks with owner's manuals.

A simple system delivering superb sound. Kid's stuff, really.

ElectroKID

KID'S STUFF



Contact us for the location of your nearest audio installer



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 info@absolutesounds.com

COMPETITION

WIN!

A PS Audio Quintessence mains conditioner worth
£999!



Ask any audiophile and the biggest grumble they have is likely to be the state of the mains supply. We can fix the performance of CD, buy the best amp in the business and connect it to the finest speakers in Christendom, but if that Alternating Current isn't up to snuff, you'll never hear music at its best. Which is where PS Audio's excellent Quintessence mains conditioner comes into its own. And PS Audio knows a lot about mains; the company also produces a full mains regenerator, which reconstructs the ultimate AC signal from the existing mains supply. The Quintessence is an amp-sized filtration unit. It sports five AC mains outlets, as well as TV and aerial sockets, all of which feature high-grade voltage surge protection to prevent problems from lightning strikes on power lines. PS Audio has taken the 'less is more' approach by only using the best possible filtration products in as delicate an arrangement as possible, which means low internal losses at the all-important 50Hz level. In our test in *HFC 303*, we awarded the PS Audio Quintessence a *Best Buy* on the basis of its ability to combine a 'dark' background and a precise treble, all without the imprecision such a combination usually produces. There are also improvements to be had in the tautness of bass notes. In short, this is one of the few mains filtration units that can be used with high-end components, without holding back the performance. Best of all, though, is that you can win this mains miracle-maker for the cost of a phone call.

For your chance to win, either: (a) call **0906 5852158** and follow the instructions, leaving your selected answer **(A, B or C)** and your details where prompted or (b) send the letter of your selected answer **(A, B or C)** by email, including your name, address and a daytime telephone contact number to: hifcomp@futurenet.co.uk

QUESTION:

What does AC stand for when discussing mains supply?

A: Alternating Current **B:** Average Compression **C:** Allied Command

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Answers must be received between 6 March 2008 and 2 April 2008. The winner will be selected at random from all correct entries received between the relevant dates and will receive a PS Audio Quintessence mains conditioner free of charge. The winner will be notified within 28 days of the closing date and will be required to give details of a delivery address in the UK to which the conditioner should be sent. Telephone calls will be charged at 60p per minute.

By taking part in a Competition, you agree to be bound by the Competition Rules, which are summarised below but can be viewed in full at www.futurenet.com/futureonline/competitionrules.asp. Late or incomplete entries will be disqualified. Proof of posting (if relevant) shall not be deemed proof of delivery. Entries must be submitted by an individual (not via any agency or similar) and, unless otherwise stated, are limited to one per household. The Company reserves the right in its sole discretion to substitute any prize with cash or a prize of comparable value. Unless otherwise stated, the Competition is open to all GB residents of 18 years and over, except employees of Future Publishing and any party involved in the competition or their households. By entering a Competition you give permission to use your name, likeness and personal information in connection with the Competition and for promotional purposes. All entries will become the property of the Company upon receipt and will not be returned. You warrant that the Competition entry is entirely your own work and not copied or adapted from any other source. If you are a winner, you may have to provide additional information. Details of winners will be available on request within three months of the closing date. If you are a winner, receipt by you of any prize is conditional upon you complying with (amongst other things) the Competition Rules. You acknowledge and agree that neither the Company nor any associated third parties shall have any liability to you in connection with your use and/or possession of your prize.

CHOICE CUTS



This month's varied musical morsels

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

AUDIOPHILE VINYL



DUKE ELLINGTON

Meets Coleman Hawkins

Impulse/Speakers Corner 180g vinyl

Music: This session features Johnny Hodges and Ray Nance from Ellington's big band. Between them, they produce some occasionally wacky – *Limbo Jazz* – but generally inspired tunes, including an unusual version of *Mood Indigo*. Swing may have been on the way out by the sixties, but this didn't stop these masters at work from making one of the best collaborative works of the genre.

Sound: Speakers Corner has done its usual impeccable job with a largely dual mono original and produced a sweet cut with exquisite tone. **JK**

Music **★★★★★**
Sound **★★★★★**



CLIFFORD BROWN, MAX ROACH

Study In Brown

EmArcy/Speakers Corner 180g vinyl

Music: Trumpeter Brown and drummer Roach had produced two albums prior to this, so it is perhaps natural that they should show such impressive rapport. They play jazz with energy and ease, with Brown's style owing much to Dizzy Gillespie. Roach is a truly dynamite drummer, whose speed and ability shaped a whole generation. As a pair they combine virtuosity and musicality to an uncommon degree.

Sound: This is an early mono recording – while bandwidth is limited, this does little to impair the dynamics. **JK**

Music **★★★★★**
Sound **★★★★★**

These LPs were supplied by Pure Pleasure
www.purepleasurerecords.com

COMPACT DISC & VINYL



MARY J BLIGE

Growing Pains Universal

Music: Since sorting her famously turbulent life out in the early 00's MJB's delivered a consistently impressive body of work that shows up many of her high-selling contemporaries for the pretty, but ineffectual slackers they are. Mary's soaring, powerful voice makes it distinctive and in the melisma-filled world of RnB, there aren't many who can convey the soul of Aretha Franklin without descending into meaningless whittering.

Sound: The sound is taught and crisp with that precise, no-frills concision that you know took hundreds of man-hours to perfect in the studio, but leaves nothing that isn't essential. **DO**

Music **★★★★★**
Sound **★★★★★**



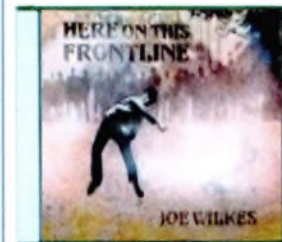
ELBOW

The Seldom Seen Kid Fiction

Music: It's easy to dismiss Elbow as part of the same cleverly calculated, post-U2, stadium rock movement that gave us the grandiose, faux-melancholic anthems of Snow Patrol and Keane. Yet their fourth album proves there's far more to them. The melodies are full of unexpected complexities, their prog-rock pretensions are balanced by an earthier humanity and in Guy Garvey they have a songwriter who favours genuine emotion over singalong sentiment.

Sound: Garvey's voice is a dead ringer for Peter Gabriel, while the band revel in an old-fashioned rendering of space-rock tapestries, twisted beats and gossamer elegance. **NW**

Music **★★★★★**
Sound **★★★★★**



JOE WILKES

Here On This Frontline VMC

Music: Joe Wilkes' first album was a musical breath of fresh air and this follow-up, is just as strong. With an accordion intro that conjures up visions of the tumultuous Paris of 1968, this is a truly atmospheric set. *Garden of The Night* and *If I Could Change Everything*, are both soaked in the singer/songwriter's unique charm with the latter effortlessly, tunefully soaring into all-out rock. Only the words – tilting at the usual targets – let a few of the songs down. Wilkes is still deserving of the spotlight, even on the frontline.

Sound: The blend of acoustic and electric instruments are mixed with no little panache. **PS**

Music **★★★★★**
Sound **★★★★★**



AMSTERDAM

Arm In Arm CIA Recordings

Music: Their debut was rated by various superstars as demonstrating that Amsterdam were The Next Big Thing. The poignantly soulful *Hey Hilary* and the rolling, bittersweet love-gone-wrong epic that is the title track are the undoubted high points of a set that's easy to listen to. This Liverpool band have shown us that they're no mere one-off act.

Sound: Louie Nicastro has produced this with just the right amount of space around the vocals. A blizzard of clarity. **PS**

Music **★★★★★**
Sound **★★★★★**



GOLDFRAPP

Seventh Tree Mute

Music: Alison Goldfrapp certainly doesn't believe in standing still. She followed her first album of moody electronica by stomping into a glorious

riot of camp glam, since copied wholesale by the likes of Madonna and Kylie. But her latest finds her in more contemplative, with subtle electronic touches augmenting the acoustic guitars. There's plenty of echoes of *The Wicker Man* soundtrack and the folktronica movement that's been bubbling under for some time now.

Sound: Mostly recorded in a Somerset cottage, the gentle tones of the album come as a relief after the high-heeled overkill of *Supernature* – a very English pastoral reverie. **NW**

Music **★★★★★**
Sound **★★★★★**





THIS MONTH'S CLASSIC HI-FI TEST DISC

"Quite simply, no rock collection is complete without it."

LED ZEPPELIN Physical Graffiti Swan Song

Music: If you wondered why the recent reunion was such a success, just listen to this. *Physical Graffiti* was the Zep's most grandiose overture, a paean to excess which delivered some of their most anthemic works with *In My Time of Dying* and *Kashmir* on one disc and yet produced delicate folk rock classics

like *Bron-Yr-Aur* on the other. The drum sound alone makes it essential even before you add the majesty of Jimmy Page's compositional talent and his army of guitars. Quite simply, no rock collection is complete without it

Sound: Classic Records' 200g reissue raises the stakes for a slightly thick

sound that nonetheless delivers detail, power and energy to a degree that reinvigorates the music. There's a lot going on here, but it's what great systems are for. **JK**



BILLY BRAGG

Cooking Vinyl

Music: Bragg is never going to abandon his soapbox, but on his first album since 2002's *England, Half-English*, he sounds almost mellow. The opener *I Keep Faith*, a gently rolling mid-tempo ballad of which Springsteen would have been proud, could be both a reaffirmation of his radical views and an elegy to a loved one. The politics are more overt on *Sing Their Souls Back Home*, but the messages are balanced by the likes of *You Make Me Brave* and *If You Ever Leave*, as tender a pair of love songs as you'll hear this year.

Sound: The Dagenham street urchin tones have been banished, in favour of a more conventionally pleasing singing voice. Musically, his group The Blokes offer a highly convincing imitation of The Band. **NW**



THE ORB

U.F. Orb (Deluxe Edition)

Island/Universal

Music: This ambient house opus from 1992, has weathered the decades far better than Primal Scream's *Screamadelica*. With sampled animal sniffs, plastic microphones used as reverbs and loads of drop-outs à la dub reggae, Dr Alex Paterson and 'Thrash' Weston spent five months in a Fulham studio with Jah Wobble (rumbling bass) and Steve Hillage (glissando guitar) fashioning a number one smash record.

Sound: Dubbed the 'Pink Floyd' of the house generation Orb remastering makes your system sound like something from outer space. **MP**



ECKI

Mono Product Records

Music: Ecki is a singer and rock photographer from Suffolk and his second outing is oddly reminiscent of *Counting Crows* with a different singer. He sounds distinctly British, but there is more than a little of 'complaint rock' in the way he shares his struggle to make it in the cut and thrust of the modern music business. But Ecki sings well and has a natural way with words. On this album he is clearly sharing personal truths and doing it well.

Sound: Unsurprisingly, the title does not refer to the recording which features reasonably solid vocals over warm backing, a good result for a living room studio. **JK**



HIGH-QUALITY AUDIO

CHRIS GESTRIN

After The City Has Gone: Quiet

Songlines

SACD (stereo/multichannel hybrid plus stereo CD)

Music: Chris Gestrin is not the sort of piano player to sit down at the keyboard with prepared compositions, he's the sort that will open the lid and let his imagination run free. When teamed up with a bunch of his fellow Vancouver improvisers on instruments including shakuhachi (Japanese bamboo flute), trombone and cello this makes for a musical voyage of considerable variety. Sometimes things get a little too abstract, but at others it coalesces to form beautiful sounds. These musicians are skilled at both 'inside' and 'outside' playing - sometimes it works for you and others you have to work for it.

Sound: Recorded live and direct to DSD, this sounds pretty damn real with vanishing noise levels and a clarity rarely encountered. **JK**



PROKOFIEV

Lieutenant Kijé Suite, Symphony No5

Paavo Järvi (cond), Cincinnati SO

SACD (stereo/multichannel hybrid plus stereo CD)

Music: The title is much less famous than the *Troika* (Sleigh Ride) movement from Prokofiev's film score about a heroic, but fictitious lieutenant created to please the Tsar, composed after his return to Russia in 1934. It has appeared in numerous films since, but the rest of the piece is no less engaging, painting the story of Kijé's birth, career, marriage and death in deft, pithy strokes. The darker *Fifth Symphony* survived the many Soviet arts purges of the forties and fifties by virtue of its melodic development and its popular appeal, eschewing as it does, much of the dissonance of Prokofiev's works written outside the USSR.

Sound: There's never any feeling that the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra's is overstretched and this recording is a powerful addition to their catalogue. **DO**



FIONA MACKENZIE

Elevate

Linn

SACD (stereo/multichannel hybrid plus stereo CD)

Music: This may be the first solo album from the Scottish singer/songwriter, but she already has quite a pedigree in her recorded output with Celtic bands Seelhyoo and Anam, and with two of her sisters in the singing trio MacKenzie. Singing in both English and Gaelic, this album retains much of the traditional influences of her past, but also introduces myriad new flavours, echoing the likes of Kate Bush and Björk with occasionally expansive lyrical passages and the odd excursion into tasteful electronica.

Sound: Impeccably recorded at Carlekemp Lodge, the album retains a beautifully rich textural depth, that rewards repeated listens without sacrificing the passion or commitment in MacKenzie's impeccable phrasing. **DO**



GENETIC EVOLUTION



79 SERIES

Mission 7 series loudspeakers have always been afforded the highest respect, both in critical listening tests and for their iconic style.

The new 79 series embraces this tradition with aplomb, elevating the performance and design standards to new heights – a symbiosis of form and function building on over 30 years at the forefront of acoustic design.



MISSION

IAG House Sovereign Court
Ermine Business Park Huntingdon
Cambridgeshire PE29 6XU

T 01480 447700
F 01480 431767
www.mission.co.uk



CHOICE MAIL



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 hifmail@futurenet.co.uk

EBAY GUM

I've been a hi-fi enthusiast (to say the least) for a number of years now and long admired the Audio Notes and MartinLogans of this world (although very much out of my reach, unfortunately). Recently a good friend of mine went totally against his usual principles and bought a Chinese integrated valve amp off eBay for an astounding 99p! Okay, so it might have cost him £128 to get it here, but

the fact is that for under £130, he's got a really sweet sounding valve amp. Surely it's only a matter of time until all audio is sold this way?

Rob Maddison Oldham

HFC The problem with eBay purchases like this is you can never, ever be wholly sure what you will end up with. On the one hand, you could bag a bargain, on the

“He bought a Chinese integrated valve amp off eBay for an astounding 99p.”

other, you could end up with a complete dog. The same's broadly true of anything you buy off eBay, be it a valve amplifier or a two-year old Jag (see *Dispatches*, p18). We hope your pal got something that's electrically safe and works within the Euro CE specifications, and not an amplifier that pumps static into the radio of every copper in a 10-mile radius every time he turns it on. But there's no guarantees if you buy a pig in a poke.

USHER BUY BABY

I would like to upgrade my speakers, but am unsure which to buy. My current system is Creek A50i, Usher CD1, AVI S2000MT tuner (bought used) and Mission V60 speakers. My difficulty is in deciding whether to buy speakers that match the price of my amp/CD player – about £500 – or whether it would be better to 'plan ahead' and buy speakers which stand at the next level? (Admittedly, I'm not sure where this is, perhaps £750- ▶



Above: The Pure Sound A30 integrated valve amp. Chi-fi done right!

LETTER OF THE MONTH



GOING FOR THE BURN

My hi-fi took a turn for the worse recently. I'm not really sure what happened, but one minute my amplifier was working fine, the next there was an acrid smell, followed by a small plume of smoke. Fortunately, I was able to turn it off at the mains before anything caught fire.

Okay, my amplifier was getting on in years, but if I hadn't been in the room when it happened, it could have been serious. So, why do hi-fi companies still recommend leaving their equipment switched on all the time?

Michael Dumont Herts

HFC Sorry to hear about your amplifier's self-destructive tendencies. It sounds as if one of the capacitors went South in a catastrophic manner. However, such dramatic events are surprisingly rare; cold comfort when faced with a smoking amp ruin, but statistically you are more likely to be abducted by lottery-winning aliens on the way to buy a replacement than actually buying a second dodgy amplifier. Thanks to such a good track record of audio safety, manufacturers can suggest leaving solid-state CD players and preamps permanently powered up.



WIN CRYSTAL CABLE PICCOLO INTERCONNECTS!
☎ 020 8971 3909 # WWW.CRYSTALCABLE.COM

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...)

£1,000?) Then the amp etc. can be upgraded to speaker level. Any suggestions on both problems?

Bert Halliday Glasgow

HFC We aren't *au fait* with the Usher CD player, but the system appears reasonably well balanced. A good pair of loudspeakers would improve matters, but you might want to look nearer the £1,000 mark than the £500 end if you want to get good speaker sound that improves on your V60. A lot depends on your room size and your personal taste in music, but you might enjoy speakers like the PMC TB2 (recently boosted to 'i' status) or – if you have a larger room – the DALI Ikon 6. Both speakers will set you up for better amplifiers later. You will likely need to spend £1,000 or more on the 'next levels'.

GREEN HAND GANG

I'm a fan of your magazine – the excellent editorial and the Lab Tests especially. However, in the middle of the magazine lurks a little parade of horrors – the 'Audiofile Industry Profile' or rather the infeasibly bad portraits of leading industry lights. For example, in the February issue (HFC 303) I'd be interested to know what *Hi-Fi Choice* has against Nick Green's right hand? Unceremoniously amputated, not once, but twice! Furthermore, Does Nick regularly balance picture frames on his head or was this merely a spontaneous act for the shoot? No-one expects your journalists to be Lord Lichfield, but with some careful shots, the world of portrait photography (and people with eyes) will thank you.

Glen Kemp Kent

HFC Malcolm 'amputator' Steward and his pet DSLR are to blame for this one. As you said, not everyone can be a Patrick Lichfield. However, Malcolm's pictures are thrown up into sharp repose, because most of the photography commissioned by *HFC* is of an exceptionally high quality.

HI, NO SILVER LINING

Listening to my few, but excellent quality DVD-Audio and SACD titles, I wonder if I will be able to even play them in the future? I have given up on significantly expanding my collection. I am thinking of moving to Blu-Ray /HD-DVD, which would mean giving up my Marantz universal player (unless I keep it just to be able to play a handful of records!). With Sony dropping SACD and Panasonic dropping DVD-Audio from their Blu-Ray players, is

"I'd be interested to know what *Hi-Fi Choice* has against Nick Green's right hand."

there any hope for a future 'universal' player including support for these formats? It is ironic that increasing adoption of HD video and (movie) audio leads to further nails in the coffin of high-resolution music!

Dr Christos Proukakis London

HFC We think the chances of a hi-res music format (like SACD or DVD-Audio) making it onto hi-res video formats is slim at best. There may be support, if it's felt that either format would be a good selling point for these players. Even so, any such support will never be as good as a dedicated SACD or DVD-Audio player.

This need not spell the end of the high-resolution music format, though. Just as mainstream music is migrating from CD to online delivery systems, so those who appreciate well-recorded music in high-resolution are discovering the joys of downloading from the likes of Linn.

NOISE IN THE 'HOOD

After 15 years living in my house, a problem has surfaced. The problem is, that the vibration from the speakers (Yamaha NS1000M) to the stands and then to the floor, now shakes up my neighbour. My stands are made of square hollow section steel, welded together and filled with sand. The speakers have Blu-Tack under them, but a lot of vibration seems to pass through them, first to the floor and then to my neighbour's wall. Would making wooden stands, filled with sand help in any way?

Victor Vella via email

HFC Noise can transmit from room to room by a number of methods. It can be simply down to you playing music too loud, transmitting the musical energy to the next room, or it can be due to one floorboard beneath the speakers rebroadcasting portions of your hi-fi sound into next door. The first is harder to correct, as you need to soundproof your room... and this

is extremely expensive. The second could be as simple as repositioning the loudspeakers, or placing the speakers on an intermediary to block this direct transmission (try resting your speaker stands on a sandwich of two marble chopping boards separated by a layer of neoprene). It's worth trying to find the offending frequencies by listening to the sound from the other party's end – if you play music in your room, while listening in theirs, you get a good idea of how bad the problem actually is.



Above: Nick Green of UKD has two hands, apparently

F80

BOOTHROYD STUART
MERIDIAN

The Meridian F80. Simply beautiful sound.

In 2005, Meridian Audio began a unique collaboration with Ferrari to develop a range of products that would reflect the qualities of both companies: performance, innovation and bold product design.

The result is the Meridian F80 – a complete home entertainment system that combines Meridian's legendary expertise in digital audio with Ferrari's world-leading reputation in materials technology.

Featuring CD and DVD-Video playback, a AM/FM/DAB tuner and a 2.1 digital active loudspeaker system, the F80 is compact, complete and incredibly powerful. No wonder *What Hi-Fi? Sound & Vision* recently referred to the F80 as "a work of genius".

For more information and to find your nearest retailer, visit www.thef80.com

Meridian Audio Ltd.
Latham Road, Huntingdon
Cambridgeshire PE29 6YE, UK
+44 (0)1480 445678

Ferrari
OFFICIAL LICENSED PRODUCT

All trademark rights reserved. Produced under licence of Ferrari SpA. FERRARI, the PRANCING HORSE device, all associated logos and distinctive designs are trademarks of Ferrari SpA.

Understanding: Cables

The cables you use to hook up your hi-fi are just as important as the gear itself

In a typical hi-fi system, sounds are stored in analogue or digital format on a disc of some sort, from which they are retrieved by a stylus, laser or magnetic head. They are amplified in an amplifier and turned into sound in a loudspeaker. And that, in essence, is that. Simple!

But, what is often overlooked is just how important the audio cables that connect all these items together are. For cables are electrical components too, with their own properties that can affect the sound and the performance. According to hi-fi legend, it was some time in the late 1970s, that a few audiophiles began to realise the key part that cables played in hi-fi and how they had their own sound. Their discoveries spawned a gigantic industry that has resulted in the specialist A/V cabling manufacture we know now.

The first extensive application of audio cables was of course telephony. By 1900, telephone cables spanned the globe and scientists and engineers had developed a pretty good understanding of them and their limitations. It was well known that cables, unless carefully made and matched to the circuits at each end, could distort a speech signal beyond recognition. Articles in the deservedly famous *'Bell System Technical Journal'* attest to intensive work on cables for use in audio applications.

What was taken for granted at that time was that, where lengths of cable were of the order of a few feet, quality was 'good enough' with any old bit of wire connected any old how. With the rise of professional audio electronics in recording and broadcasting studios, the definition of 'good enough' became more stringent and such luxuries as twisted/shielded cables (better for rejecting interference) became the norm.

But the rise of 'audiophile' cable had more to do with a general realisation that the ear's resolving power was greater than had been previously assumed, than with any sudden 'Eureka!' moment about what cables could do to signals. Most of that had been known for decades. It's true that some areas of cable technology are still misunderstood (the jury is still out, for instance, on how, why, and indeed, to what extent, Deep Cryogenic Treatment, is beneficial). But despite some manufacturers' blustering, most of the science of cables was familiar to our grandparents' generation.

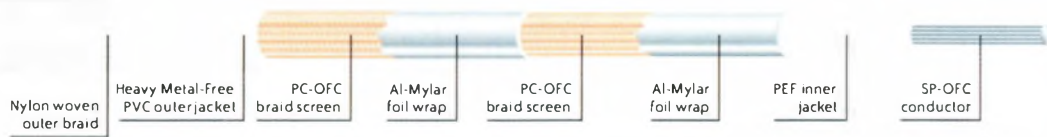
WIRED FOR SOUND

At the most basic level, a cable provides a path for current to flow from one audio component to the next. Electric current is well disposed to travel along wires made of metal, which have a low resistance. In general, current likes to circulate, so all practical cables include two or more conductors which carry current, one in one direction, one the opposite, with a voltage between them: to prevent this voltage causing current flow simply from one conductor to the other (a 'short circuit'), some kind of insulator is put between them.

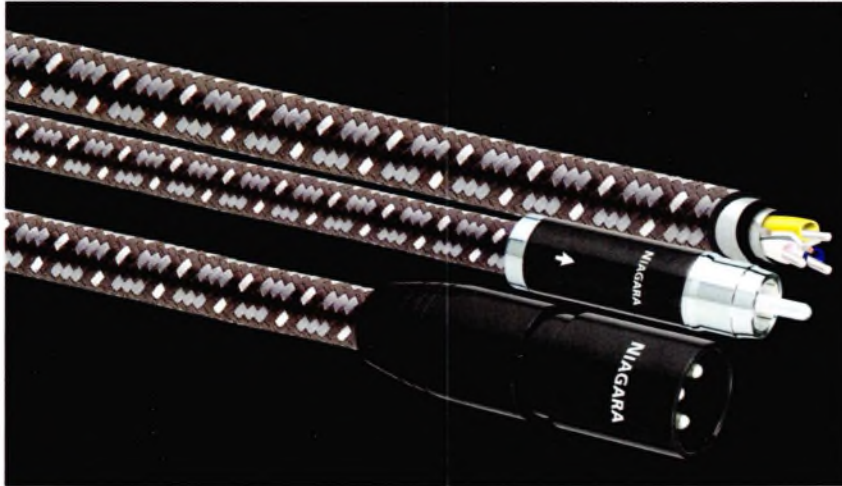
“...cables are electrical components too, with their own properties which can affect the sound and the performance.”



Pic: Crystal Cable Connect Piccolo interconnect



Above: Ixos XHV904 interconnect



Above: AudioQuest Niagara interconnects

That's all straightforward, but in the real world there are various complications. First, normal metals have a very low resistance to electric current, but not zero. This means that a small voltage must exist between one end and the other of any piece of wire carrying a current. Second, audio signals are 'alternating current' (AC), which means that the direction of current flow reverses from one moment to the next and, in general, both current and voltage are time-varying quantities. This means that other characteristics of the cable construction become important (increasingly so as frequency rises) and these are inductance (resistance to a changing current) and capacitance (tendency to 'swallow up' a changing voltage). A third characteristic called 'skin effect' can also be significant, though in most audio applications it is very much dwarfed by inductance.

What this all means, is that it is very much an approximation to say that what goes into a cable will necessarily come out unaltered. Or to be strictly accurate, what goes in usually will come out, but the cable itself can affect what we thought we were putting in, and there can be odd delays between input and output. It is an invariable property of electrical circuits including resistance and capacitance or inductance (or both), that they have both an amplitude response that varies to some extent with frequency, and also a phase response that varies in a related manner, and phase response is just another way of saying 'time delay'.

CABLE TALK

How these various factors affect cables depends on application, so we'll take in turn the commonest in domestic audio; loudspeaker cables, analogue and digital interconnects.

Speaker cables don't look very mysterious. The relatively high voltages, and positively huge currents, involved make hum pickup a non-issue and you simply seem to need two conductors with some basic insulation. But the sheer amount of current flowing means that resistance in the cable can be significant, so you need quite a lot of metal in there to keep resistance low. In addition, inductance can become a serious issue at high audio frequencies. Apart from anything else, resistance and inductance can significantly lower the effective damping factor of the amplifier, decreasing control of the drive units.

Analogue interconnects operate at lower voltages and very much lower currents, and are most often shielded to prevent hum and other interference from getting in. Resistance and inductance are much less important here, but capacitance between the conductors is an issue, and if it's too high it can cause audible treble loss. Shielding, or screening, is effective against electric hum pickup, because it surrounds the 'hot' conductor completely with the one at 'earth' potential, preventing electric fields from affecting it. However, hum can also be induced by magnetic fields and these are not blocked by such screening. Twisting two conductors together is the most useful measure against magnetic hum, but keeping cross-sections small also helps. That means less conductor and higher resistance, which makes the screen less effective against electric hum... We're simplifying a bit, but you'll see how there's no obvious, easy answer to some of these problems! ☺



Picture: Kimber 8PR speaker cable

RADIO GA-GA

Apart from good old-fashioned hum, radio waves are the other source of interference in audio cables. Radio signals are at very high frequency and cables can behave as quite effective aerials, picking up RF in unpredictable ways and guiding it inside the equipment where it typically causes a subtle increase in the noise floor. Good cables, carefully terminated to good connectors, can minimise this, though there's never any guarantee.

[Feature] Understanding Cables

⊖ Digital interconnects operate at frequencies up to a thousand times higher than analogue audio and, as such, are normally 'impedance matched', a rather tricky concept which, fortunately, one doesn't need to understand to use. Basically, inductance and capacitance are balanced with the impedance at the end of the cable, so that performance is very nearly constant with frequency. Only very nearly, though, because resistance still queers the pitch, as does 'capacitance loss factor' and simple inaccuracy in inductance and capacitance values. Phase distortion is important here; if it's bad it can cause jitter to occur, which translates to potentially audible distortion in the output.

Those are the most widely accepted kinds of distortion in cables. Others have been proposed but never directly proven, for instance, some kind of noise caused by

Below: Clearer Audio Copper-Line Alpha



“Digital interconnects operate at frequencies up to a thousand times higher than analogue audio...”



Above: Townshend Isolda DCT speaker cable

currents skipping from strand to strand in multistranded cable (multiple thin conductors bunched together). The suggestion is that minute differences in the resistance of each strand causes minute voltages to appear between strands, so electric charges jump from one strand to another where they contact – but because this contact is imperfect a noise is produced

each time this occurs. We're not entirely convinced and it's very hard to find strictly comparable samples of stranded and single-strand cables to assess subjectively, where all significant parameters and dimensions are identical or at least very nearly so.

However, if you've stayed with us this far you'll see why such a diverse range of cables exists. Differences in dimensions all give

differences in electrical parameters and we've not yet even touched on the question of conductor material (different resistances again) and insulator or 'dielectric' material (differences in capacitance and loss factor). Even without invoking dodgy science, it's not hard to see that subtle differences are bound to occur between any two cables. Not too surprisingly, real audiophile cables deviate both sides of typical cheap/giveaway examples, both towards theoretically better performance and away from it, in which case they are arguably tuning devices. The simple fact is sound depends on cables and they should always be considered an integral part of a good hi-fi system. **HFC**

Richard Black



Above: AudioQuest SKY interconnect

TYPES OF DISTORTION

Resistance, inductance and capacitance, and indeed skin effect, cause what's called 'linear distortion' in cables – frequency-dependent amplitude and phase changes which are in principle reversible. This contrasts with the non-linear distortion familiar from amplifiers etc., which causes generation of harmonics. However, the latter can arise due to the finite resistance of loudspeaker cables in conjunction with the non-linear properties of real loudspeakers, as I showed in an Audio Engineering Society paper a while back. Non-linear distortion due to analogue interconnects has never been demonstrated. **RB**

DEFINITIVE AUDIO



Main image: KSL Kondo Gakuon valve amplifiers.



L to R: 1. Kuzma Stabi XL 2. Art Audio Concerto Stereo Amplifier (GE) 3. Living Voice IBX R2 (Burr Oak) 4. SME 10 / SME V
5. Living Voice OBX RW (Santos) 6. KSL Kondo Ongaku Integrated Amplifier 7. Magnum Dynalab 106T Valve Tuner
8. KSL Kondo Gakuuh Mono Amplifiers 9. Resolution Audio Opus 21 CD Player 10. KSL Kondo V-z (1m) Interconnect

SME

The way to play vinyl

Model 10A



Model 20/2A



Model 20/12A



Model 30/2A



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.uk or visit our website www.sme.ltd.uk

1/2 price sale

iCube™

stackable vinyl storage

The ultimate vinyl storage system. Simply unpack and stack. Ready-made natural 18mm mdf with stylish contoured edges.



7" iCube
was £37.95
now only
£18.95

Buy 7
Get 1
FREE!

12" iCube
was £57.95
now only
£28.95

Also in black

p&p only
£4.95

Orderline 01328 730405

Open 7 days a week from 9AM-9PM. Call now.



Coming Soon

A picture can say a thousand words so we let them do most of the talking

www.tell.uk.com
Technology let loose

REVIEWS

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



EQUIPMENT REVIEWS

- 40** Absolute Sounds ElectroKID iPod hi-fi system
- 44** Cairn Tornado CD player
- 48** GamuT PHi5 loudspeaker
- 50** Naim NAIT 5i integrated amplifier
- 54** Sonus Faber Cremona Auditor loudspeaker
- 57** Townshend Audio Seismic Cradle
- 58** Systemline MusicServer music server
- 61** Etymotic ER-6ic custom earphones



ROUND-UP

PHONO STAGES

- 62** Cambridge Audio Azur 640P
- 62** Creek OBH-15
- 63** Heed Questar MC
- 63** Graham Slee Gram Amp 3

ULTIMATE GROUP TEST

VALVE AMPLIFIERS

£1,500-£2,500

- 66** Ayon Spirit
- 67** Copland CTA405
- 69** Icon Audio Stereo 60 Mk2
- 71** Melody Astro Black 50
- 73** Pathos Classic One Mk3
- 75** Unison Research Preludio



OUR RATINGS EXPLAINED

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

Our overall conclusion after a live listen... The Siemens equipped player has an snappier sound with better timing that es with dense material with remarkable confidence and ease. It even seems to be

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

Jason Kennedy

VERDICT	
SOUND ★★★★	PRO Good build and open, lively sound from a valve DAC with plenty of inputs. Transients also great value for money.
FEATURES ★★★★	CON DAC doesn't engage as well as the transport with loss of weight and power through the bass unless you price the quality. Cables cost extra and competition from single-chassis designs won't help.
BUILD ★★★★	
VALUE ★★★★	
CONCLUSION Advance Acoustic is being very ambitious producing a two-bay player of this build quality and price. Something just has to give and it's the DAC, which can't do justice to the transport's efforts.	
HI-FI CHOICE OVERALL SCORE ★★★★★	

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 four stars may qualify for an HFC Award Badge

OUR AWARD BADGES EXPLAINED



Best Buy

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



Editor's Choice

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

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

EDITOR'S CHOICE
HI-FI CHOICE
magazine
★



KIDs are alright

Can Krell and MartinLogan raise the iPod to audiophile standards? Alan Sircom seems to think so

PRODUCT Absolute Sounds ElectroKID

TYPE iPod hi-fi system (dock and active electrostatics)

PRICE £1,350 (KID); £2,390 per pair (ML Purity)

KEY FEATURES (Krell KID) **o** iPod preamplifier **o** Balanced and single-ended audio outputs **o** S-Video and composite video outputs **o** Class A architecture (MartinLogan Purity) **o** Active hybrid electrostatic **o** Built-in 200-watt amplifier **o** Sensitivity: 95dB/0.1v (at line-level) **o** Impedance: 14,000 ohms (at line-level)

CONTACT **o** 020 8971 3909 **o** www.absolutesounds.com

Depending on your viewpoint, the £3,740 ElectroKID system is either a serious and successful attempt at wringing the best possible sound out of an Apple iPod, or a rich audiophile's folly. Actually, it's both, and we should love it for being both.

The ElectroKID is formed of two products from two different American high-end manufacturers – Krell and MartinLogan. The connection is Absolute Sounds, the UK distributor for both products. Ricardo Franisovici, *Grande Fromage* of Absolute Sounds, realised that the combination of iPod 'interface' and active loudspeakers could deliver the sort of sound quality that even Apple might not have expected from the ubiquitous iPod. And so, the ElectroKID was born.

The name itself is a portmanteau of 'electrostatic loudspeaker' (the MartinLogan Purity) and 'KID', which is itself an acronym for 'Krell Interface Dock'. Technically, it should be 'KIDelectro', but that sounds way too 1980's! Incidentally, if you type 'electrokid' into Google on the interweb, you get a lot of DJs before you get to this system.

The Krell Interface Dock was the big audiophile controversy of 2007, because it was the first iPod-related product from a big name high-end brand. And, like all controversy, it has set the trend; at the CES 2008 we saw products like the Wadia 170 iPod transport follow in the footsteps of the KID. The £1,350 Krell Interface Dock is essentially an iPod dock combined with line preamplifier. It has both balanced and single-ended inputs, a composite and S-Video connection for video, and an RS232 port for those using high-end Crestron/AMX-style remote control systems. It also has an auxiliary line-level input mini-jack on the front panel, for those wanting to use a digital audio player that is not of the iPod family.

Krell has been canny with the universal docking connector. Inset into a silo on the top of the KID, this has four little clear Perspex rods that wheel back and forth to make a snug fit for the iPod. So, you can guarantee an iPod Nano will sit just as robustly as an iPod Classic.

The KID does not crack the digital code within the iPod, but instead has mild filtering in post processing to help give the signal the best possible start in life (there's also subtle treble and bass tone controls, which are useful

Source in issue 303. You could be forgiven for expecting the only difference between the two speakers to be the amplifiers, given that they were launched so close to one another. In fact, the two have significant differences, especially in the bass. Yes, both share the same CLS Generation 2 electrostatic treble/midrange panel, housed in ML's rigid 'AirFrame' curved aluminium housing, and both have a broadly similar footprint, but where the Source features a single 200mm bass driver, the Purity sports a

"The name is a portmanteau of 'electrostatic loudspeaker' and KID, which is itself an acronym for Krell Interface Dock."

when trying to improve a lot of compressed audio sources). Strangely, given the fact that every single company in the audio industry has latched onto the iPod as potential saviour of their business, precious few exploited the fact that the iPod actually delivers a differential output. This means it's a doddle to run balanced outputs from the Apple player, but the KID is the first product to take advantage of this. Applause for Krell and dumb points all round to everyone else for missing an obvious trick. Krell runs its differential amplifier circuitry in Class A, so the KID runs warm – not hot enough to reach for the Calpol, though. Incidentally, Krell is considering a second iPod product – a full preamp with docking capability, called Papa Doc, although presumably not named after the possibly insane mid-20th Century Haitian dictator, Francois 'Papa Doc' Duvalier.

The KID is joined by the MartinLogan Purity loudspeaker, to form the ElectroKID system. Last year, MartinLogan launched two entry-level speakers – the passive Source and active Purity – and *HFC* tested the

pair of 165mm units, driven by a built-in 200-watt amplifier.

There's a three-position bass control at the rear of both speakers, for +3dB, flat and -3dB, and its best to experiment. There's even a set of speaker terminals for those who want to drive the stators from an amplifier and that turns the internal amp into a subwoofer driver, although that's effectively irrelevant in this case. As ever with MartinLogan speakers, the Purity needs a lot of air – a good metre from the rear wall and half a metre from the sides.

As a high-end partnership, the two fit snugly together, although there's one small sacrifice in reality – the MartinLogan speakers don't accept a balanced input, so although the Krell KID takes advantage of the differential output of the iPod, that advantage is not passed on here. Still, unless you have to use more than 5m runs of interconnect cable 'twixt KID and Purity, it's doubtful you would gain much by going balanced anyway. **o**



Q&A

Ricardo Franisovici of Absolute Sounds discusses how two disparate products came together to form the ElectroKid.



HFC How did the ElectroKID system come about?

RF The ElectroKID concept was developed because we distribute both Krell and MartinLogan. These two products happened to be released at around the same time, and given their attributes, it seemed a pretty obvious thing to put them together to deliver a complete system concept as an option.

There have been other iPod systems before. Aside from the price tag, what makes this one so different?

This system excites my passion about music and the way it should be heard. Something had to be done; given that the iPod is now such a universally popular way of listening to music, I was determined to deliver a genuinely high-end solution for those who wish to use their iPods – and the music stored within – as a source component at home. The ElectroKID is the result: simple, stylish and, I think, utterly brilliant!

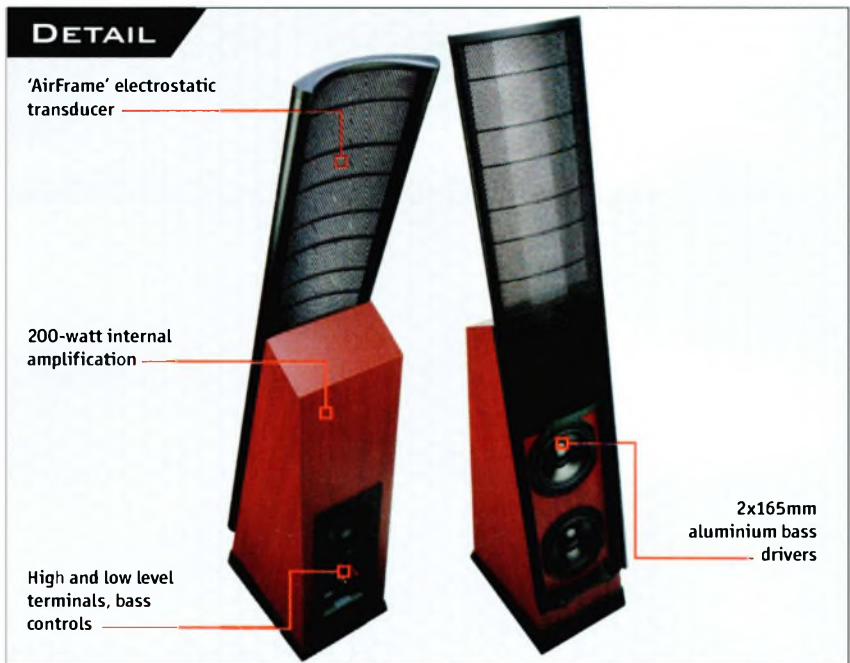
The critical bit is the iPod interface itself, which is unique and enables maximum audio quality to be transferred. It proves that the iPod can be used as a high-end music source, particularly if the music is stored in uncompressed form.

Are you intending the ElectroKid as a standalone hi-fi system?

Of course, you can add other source components to this system, or even amp components if you so wish, but the beauty is that it's the first genuine high-end solution that harnesses the convenience of the iPod as a source, with the minimum number of boxes (albeit relatively large ones!). And with MartinLogan electrostatics to boot.

The ElectroKID is called an Absolute Sounds system. How did you get that past Krell and MartinLogan?

You have to be more than simply a distributor of these brands – you have to be a trusted colleague, a consultant on an international level and an entrepreneur all in one.



❑ SOUND QUALITY

Part of the issue with any dock is the quality of the recordings made to your iPod. These can be so variable that they can make or break a sound, and many's the time low-fi systems actually do better than their high-end brethren in this context because small, cheap speakers are less demanding and thus, do not highlight the parts where data has been sacrificed at the altar of disk space. In contrast, a full-range audiophile-grade system can throw the limitations of data compression into sharp focus.

So, if you are planning to use a take-no-prisoners replay system, you need to be just as resolute in your choice of format; AIFF or WAV give you bit-for-bit transfers, but with the concomitant disk-eating properties of storing 650MB or more per CD, Apple Lossless (as the name suggests) works like a zip compressor and does not interpolate the music itself. You are still looking, however, at nigh on 300MB per CD.

Then, there's AAC and MP3; consider 160kbps AAC and 192kbps MP3 files as a bare minimum for use with the ElectroKID and if you can go higher (both go up to 320 kilobits per second), do so. You still get hundreds of

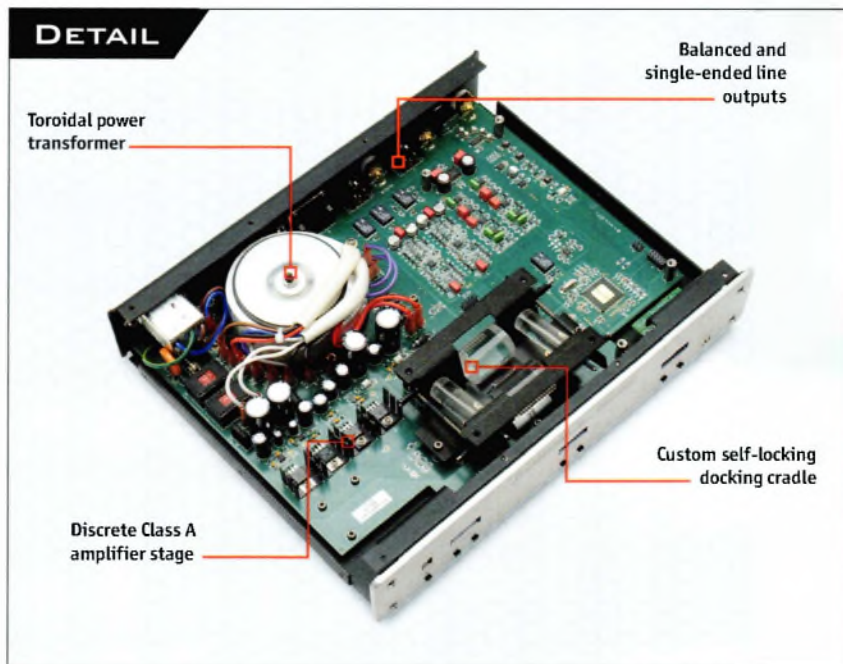
hours on a single iPod (400 hours of music on a 60GB model sounds about right), but at least they are all listenable.

There's even the choice of iPod to consider. Naturally, your iPod has to be second generation or later to sport a docking port. But there are also some who reject the iPhone and iPod Touch on audio grounds.

There's a symbiosis between the two non-Apple products that bespeaks quality. In other words, the KID and the Purity sing together beautifully. The Krell KID is more of a preamp than a dock and the improvement that it brings to the Apple sound is quite remarkable. You get a vivid, exciting and clean sound with a surprisingly fine soundstage... something far better than the flat, pinched 2-D sonic disappointment that comes when you usually hook your iPod to the hi-fi. All this without even tangling with digital code must mean Krell is doing something right. The sound is perhaps drier than typical Krell products, but is still an excellent presentation.

The MartinLogan side of things is not too dissimilar from the performance heard in the Source loudspeaker we recently tested. The extended, smooth treble, the open mindrange, that effortless sense of





disappearing loudspeakers and the well-integrated dynamic bass are all re-issued here. The big difference between this speaker and the passive version is even better bass control, depth and integration; having that 200 watts on tap really brings the speaker to life and helps bring out the best in the KID. It gives the iPod sound a cohesiveness that it seems to so sorely lack in other settings.

Even the bass and treble controls – usually so alien to any Krell-loving audiophile – have a place here. Unlike most modern CD recordings, it seems that those squeezed into the iPod comfort zone are compressed at the bottom end and over-emphasised at the top. Worse, this seems to have become the norm for modern pop and rock releases, perhaps to make them sit more comfortably in tinny little iPod headphones. The mild degree of tone shaping that goes on thanks to the

KID helps shape this. That the iPod can be controlled by the credit card remote is good, but the logic driving the remote is pure Krell – it's not confusing, but neither is it the genius iPod interface.

We've heard many aspiring high-end iPod-based systems, but this is the best of them (it's also currently the most expensive of them too, these things may be related). In some respects the Purity speakers are perfectly made for the iPod, if using good-quality sound files – the openness of the midrange and smooth, clean and extended treble fit the Apple sound perfectly, where cone-and-dome systems (especially metal dome tweeters) can sound brash and hard. Also, because electrostatics take the emphasis off dynamic range, this helps take the edge off very mild compression, which always sounds too compressed on dynamic box speaker systems

The Purity designs do have a dynamic bottom end and that also fits the iPod profile.

If there's a limit, it's in the video output. In fairness, this is as much the fault of the Apple device as it is from the Krell KID, but composite and S-Video connections are relatively weak in today's HDTV world. Others have shown (although not, as yet, launched) upscaling docks that bring the iPod video quality a nudge toward DVD-grade video goodness, but here the picture quality is indistinct and blocky, on both outputs.

We want to ask whether this system makes you reach for the off switch on your CD player, but this is wholly the wrong question. We doubt this will be the only system for those who invest in it, and many will be considering the ElectroKID as a useful adjunct or complement to their existing high-end hi-fi. In that context, the ElectroKID is a remarkable pairing. **HFC**

Alan Sircom



VERDICT	
SOUND ★★★★★	PRO The ultimate in specialist systems, these two products raise the iPod to audiophile standards, with a clarity that's uncanny
FEATURES ★★★★★	
BUILD ★★★★★	CON Not the primary hi-fi for most people, which makes it an expensive second system. Remote seems to have its own logic, loosely related to the iPod. Video quality so-so.
VALUE ★★★★★	
CONCLUSION We can see the ElectroKID springing up in the playgrounds of the well-heeled, who want their commuting music buddy in the home too. That it delivers, via the iPod, genuine hi-fi sets it head, shoulders and a fair amount of torso above the rest.	
HI-FI CHOICE OVERALL SCORE ★★★★★	



Whirlwind romance

Can Cairn's £850 Tornado CD player whip up a mid-market storm?

PRODUCT Cairn Tornado

TYPE CD player

PRICE £850

KEY FEATURES Size (WxHxD): 43 2x9 2x24 5cm
● Weight: 7kg ● Variable volume ● SOFT 24/192 upgradeable ● Digital outputs: optical, electrical

CONTACT ☎ 01422 372110 🌐 www.icairn.com

In the January issue (*HFC 302*), we took a closer look at Cairn's obscurely named Fog 3 CD player. Manufactured in France, it had its fair share of Gallic charm and provided more thrills than we've encountered in digital audio for some time. Now we have the first sample of its new stablemate, the

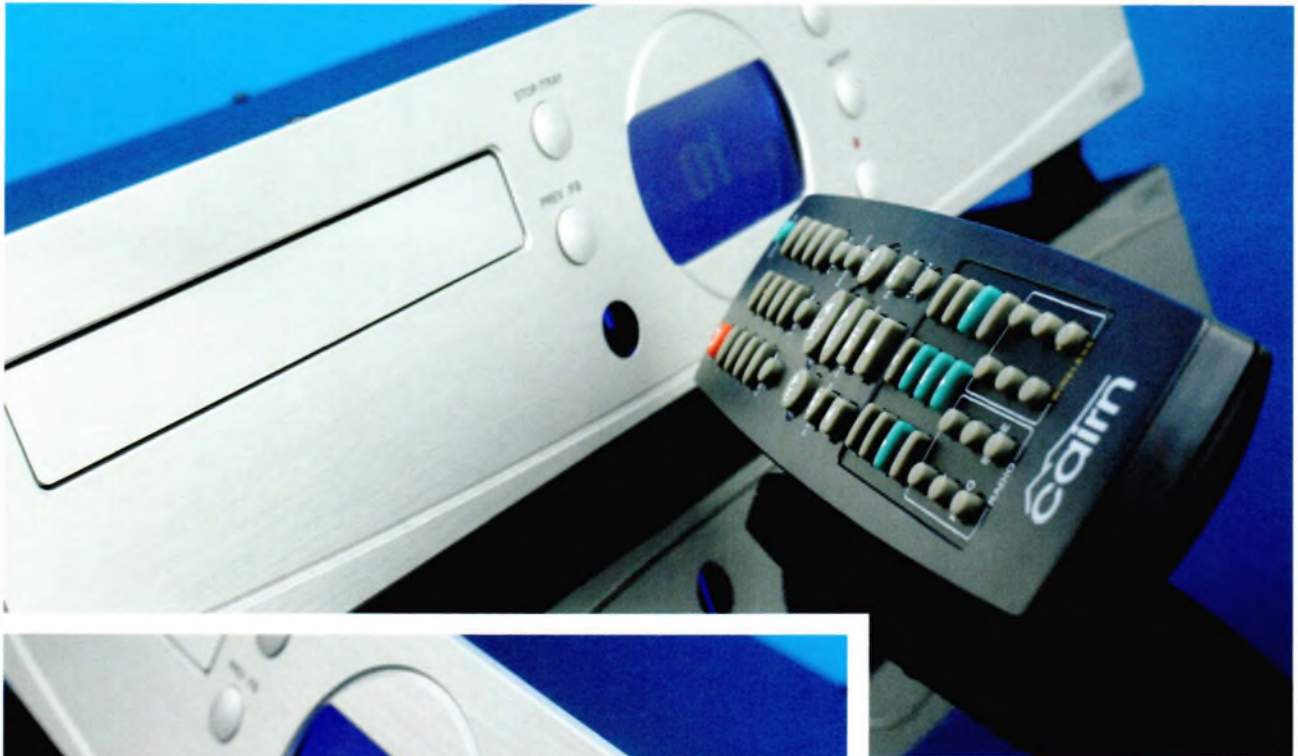
Tornado – a similarly designed player that manages to bring the price down quite dramatically by cutting back on luxuries. While the Fog 3 will set you back over two grand, the Tornado is only £850.

The Tornado is the base disc player in Cairn's small, but attractively formed range (there are two further one-box players, including the aforementioned Fog 3 and the Via, which is only available built to order).

Described as a simplified version of the Fog 3, the Tornado is smaller and is less lavish; the former's attractively ventilated silver casework being replaced with a standard black finish behind a 5mm front panel. It is not quite

as smart as the Cambridge 840C, but is very much on a par with most of the competition.

Inside the box, savings have been made by shaving off the XLR output and the digital inputs. More significant, perhaps, is the change of DAC board, with the Tornado having a standard 24-bit/96kHz chipset and filtering. The four filter settings on the Fog 3 offer a broad range of sound tailoring, far wider than the filters we've tried on players in the past, with everything from relatively smooth and relaxed all the way up to 'in yer face'. So the way that Cairn has set the filter on the Tornado will probably have a distinct impact on the impression it makes.



“Cairn offers an optional 24-bit/192kHz upsampling board called SOFT for £250, which is featured in the £2,000 Fog 3.”

The analogue output stage is a Fog-like bipolar design that runs in class A and is devoid of negative feedback, an approach much vaunted by the valve amp designers.

But Cairn is also an amplifier maker with three integrations and a pre/power on its roster, so the chances are that it has its own ideas in this department.

For the newcomer, the Fog 3 had some peculiar operating procedures and the Tornado is no exception. Opening the disc tray or playing a disc, requires holding in the operation button for a longer period of time. Turning the unit on requires you to double click the on/off button. Nonetheless, the remote handset now has a conventionally arranged numerical keypad and once you've located the 'tray' and rotate symbols for 'open' and 'repeat', it's not so hard to find them a second time.

The Tornado boasts a simple socket layout, with analogue outputs on RCA phono and digital outputs on coax and Toslink connectors. There's even one extra phono socket for wired remote operation.

Cairn offers an optional 24-bit/192kHz upsampling board called SOFT for £250, which is featured in the £2,000 Fog 3.

As standard, the Tornado is supplied with a 24-bit/96kHz Crystal CS 4398 DAC with fixed filtering. The SOFT board not only ups the sample rate, it also offers the four filter settings that allowed us to tailor the sound on the Fog 3 to quite a significant degree.

The question, of course, remains as to whether adding this board to the Tornado gives you Fog 3 sound at nearly half the price, Cairn calls SOFT “the magic bullet”, claiming that it “intensifies all the qualities and brings a refinement that you find sometimes only in

very high-end stuff.” But, of course, they're naturally biased!

SOUND QUALITY

In action, the Tornado is extremely reminiscent of the Fog 3 in its F3 filter setting. It has the same highly detailed midband and a tendency to emphasise instruments in the upper midrange and treble. Cymbals and percussion instruments are a little more obvious with this player and it doesn't quite put the music in the room to the extent that its sibling does. But it does have a very engaging presentation, which takes a well-tempered system to keep from getting too close to the edge.

We used the Tornado in two set ups (Classé /B&W and Border Patrol/ATC active), and found it more revealing than we would expect at this price point. But, in neither instance was it out of its depth, so long as the output level was reduced accordingly. We set its output to match a Cambridge Azur 840C (which meant reducing it by 2.5dB) and this took away a slight edginess from the sound, probably produced by high output discs overdriving the input on the preamps in use. In less revealing or warmer systems, this is probably not necessary, but if your amplifier and speakers are already on the lean or bright side it could be essential.

Heard after the 840C with its 24-bit/384kHz oversampling, the Tornado produces an electric result that's significantly sharper and more crisp. It lacks the sophistication of the more affordable Cambridge, but trades ▶

Q&A

We talked to Cairn's founder Gilles Belôt about the Tornado CD player.



HFC Where is the Tornado made, is it Chinese or French?

GB All our products are handmade in France

along with all the mechanical parts. The PCBs are assembled in China, but we supply all critical or specific components (ICs, transistors) that we buy in Europe or in the USA and Canada

Does it use a bit-reducing digital volume control, where the quality of the signal is reduced because there were fewer bits available?

Yes, when you reduce the digital level you reduce the digital resolution and the sound quality.

Can the differences between a Tornado/SOFT and a Fog 3 be measured? if so, what are they?

I have a PhD in acoustics and Fabrice Maupin the software/ hardware designer is an electronics engineer. I have around 20 years experience in design, but most of the time we don't know how to measure a difference between two solutions, even if we spend (too much) money on measurement systems. We choose different components and we can hear the difference, but we cannot measure it. Bad measurement gives bad sound quality, good measurement does not give good sound, but it is necessary.

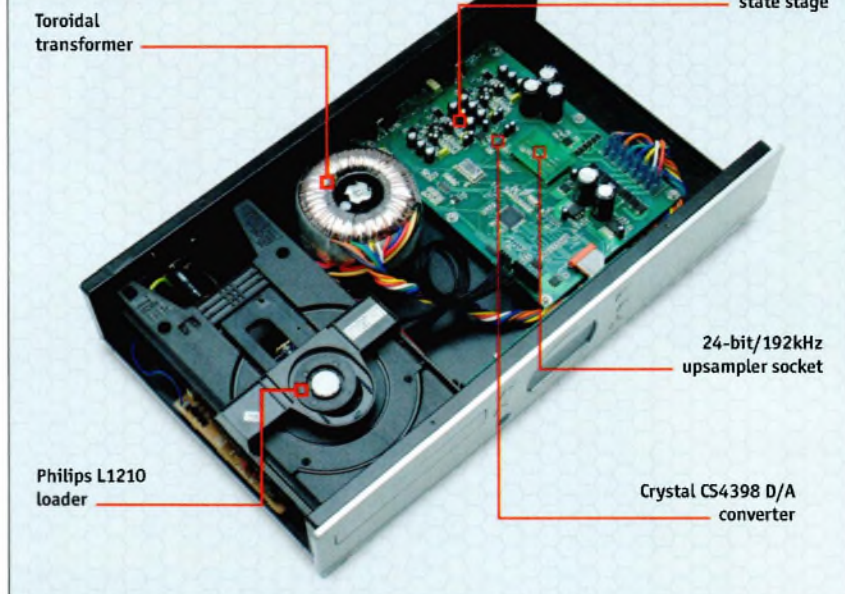
Does the Fog 3 sound better than a Tornado/SOFT and if so why?

In the Tornado we use a different circuit diagram than the Fog 3. The sound is different using two different layouts and different PCB quality (especially copper thickness). Most products use a 35µ copper PCB, whereas the Tornado and Fog 3 use 70µ.

The position of the tracks on the top and bottom layers are also very important. SMD [surface mount] components are very helpful because we can design short tracks, small size circuit with the same temperature behaviour and good grounding and shielding.

Noise can also be kept very low and the same in both channels. So, even with the SOFT digital filtering, the Tornado is not better than the Fog 3. Although, this is the third upgrade since Fog first appeared in 1999 and improvements have been made on a step-by-step basis.

DETAIL



▣ this for a level of realism and excitement that is enthralling. Timing isn't quite as poised from the French machine, but it does dynamics to greater effect. With a good recording – such as Manu Katche's *Playground* on ECM – the Cairn puts the musicians right there in the room with you. Some of the polish and finesse is missing, but what you get in exchange seems remarkably real. We wondered if this magnification of the sound might be a little too much for lesser discs and so put on Grace Jones' *The Collection*. The bass sounds great, chiselled and taut, but the eighties style electronic percussion is a little bit busy and hard-edged.

So the differences in recordings are pretty obvious. But you'll want this from a hi-fi component, so long as it's not achieving the result by colouring the tonal balance. In this instance, there are other factors at work. This is an extremely nimble player that lets you follow what the various contributors to a musical piece are doing. It does this by being more sensitive to the dynamics and timing than the timbral qualities of the voices and instruments. The Fog 3 is better balanced in this respect and it's possible that the SOFT board upgrade would bring the Tornado closer to that result.

What you can't help but be impressed by, is the way that singers like Rickie Lee Jones are seemingly placed in the room by this player, a trick it pulls off with greater skill than we've previously encountered near this price point. There's an element of 'seat of your pants' to the experience, but that is part of the thrill.

The Tornado will not be to all tastes, but it does deliver an awful lot of detail for the money. This places more emphasis on the smoothness of the recording than usual, but has the potential to deliver results that would usually cost much more. It's a bit like a supercar – you don't expect an easy ride but you do get carried away with the adrenalin it produces. So the question is, are you ready to listen in the fast lane? **HFC**

Jason Kennedy



VERDICT

SOUND



PRO

High-intensity, electric sound that's big on detail, timing and dynamics. Can be upgraded to an upsampling player for a £250 supplement. Volume control is useful.

EASE OF DRIVE



BUILD



CON

It can sound a little bit exposed and over sharp with less refined discs. Some polish and finesse is a little lacking. French ergonomics.

VALUE



CONCLUSION

The Tornado is a bit like a Caterham – a full on experience that shuns compromise and delivers intensely real sound for its price. It will be too exciting for some and needs good system matching, but there's no denying its appeal.

HI-FI CHOICE
OVERALL SCORE



the
HEATHROW
HIGH FIDELITY
show

park inn

2008. 29 - 30 March
2008. 29 - 28 March

Tel: 0208 759 6611
UB7 0DU

Tel: 01829 740650
justin@chestergroup.org

CHESTER GROUP
the sign of a good show

Show Menu

Sample the finest **Hi-end Hi-Fi**
- **together** in one unique show at the
Park Inn, Heathrow (29th / 30th March '08)

[Full details can be found at the bottom of this page]

Starter

Ingredients

Prices

Free Show Guide :-

Free Magazine :-

An appetiser of what's to come...

Upon your arrival at the show, you will receive a FREE full-colour Show Guide with our compliments. The Show Guide contains detailed information about each Exhibitor, what you can expect to discover in each room and a clear floor plan showing where each Exhibitor is. FREE magazine also included.

Main Course

A true recipe for success!

Exhibitors :-

Brands :-

Over 31 [as of 05/02/2008].

Over 72 [as of 05/02/2008]. Inc: Audio Note, Eben, HRS, Rockport,

Ypsilon, Amphion, H-CAT, Lavardin Technologies, Jorma Design, Marten Design, Music First Audio, VPI Industries, Red Wine Audio, Almarro, Artisan Audio, Aspara, Cambridge Audio, Mordaunt-Short, Gale, TDL, Focal JMLab, Esoteric, Bel Canto, Heco, Townshend Audio, Audio Physic, Pure Sound, Diverse Vinyl, Avantgarde Acoustic, Jan Allaerts, Lindermann, Schroder, Tron, Tannoy, IUS, Uvem, Sparta Cables, Icon Stands & Mounts, projectiondesign, IUS Screens, True Colours, McIntosh, Meridian Audio, Lovington, Music Matters, Audiostatic, Atma-sphere, Coincident, EMM Labs, Pass Laboratories, Symposium, Zu, Slim Devices, Stereonow, The Sound Practice, Phasonics, PS Audio, Stamford Audio, Noteworthy Audio, Naim, VWest, Audio Analogue, Diapason, Final Sound, Graaf, Hidiamond, Kemp Electronics, Opera, Pathos, Thorens, Triangle, Unison Research and many more.

Dessert

Hungry for more?

Competitions :-

Shop :-

Refreshments :-

Look out for exciting competitions for show visitors

Why not treat yourself at the show to some CD's / Vinyl

Relax at the bar with a drink, or with tea/coffee in the lounge

Park all day for just £6 at Heathrow Park Inn.

(see Privileged Ticket for details)

Easy access! All Exhibitors on one level!

Privileged Ticket valid for both days.

Pay £10

[on the day]

Pay Just £7

[with our Privileged Ticket. No ticket? Simply visit our web site and register to download your Privileged Ticket today]

Pay just £6

[with our Loyalty Card, save £4. No card? Simply visit our web site and register, e-mail or call to apply for a Loyalty Card today. **Note: Loyalty Cards are despatched by post and the latest requests must be received not less than 5 working days before each of our shows.**]

SAVE £3 NOW!

Download your Privileged Show Ticket from www.chestergroup.org or alternatively complete the form below and bring this page with you. **NOTE:** Photocopies of this page will be accepted, but please ensure to include your details in the space provided below.

Name

Address

Post Code

Show Date:

29 - 30 March 2008

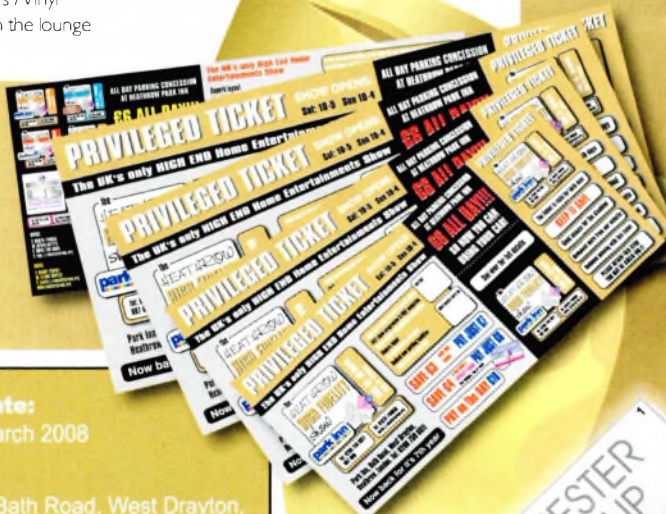
Event:

Park Inn, Bath Road, West Drayton, Heathrow, London
(visit web site for full directions and map)

Show Times:

Saturday: 10am - 5pm

Sunday: 10am - 4pm



Phi5 stars

This slim floorstander from Denmark is stuffed with smart engineering ideas



PRODUCT Gamut Phi5

TYPE Floorstanding loudspeaker

PRICE £2,550 per pair

KEY FEATURES Size (WxHxD): 17x100x24cm

• Weight: 19kg • Three-way floorstander • Three 150mm paper bass/mid drivers • 25mm soft dome tweeter • Sensitivity: 88dB • Impedance: 4 ohms

CONTACT ☎ 01252 702705 # www.gamutaudio.com

EDITOR'S CHOICE

HI-FI CHOICE
magazine



Gamut is one of the smaller and more specialist Danish operations, but no less interesting for that. Founded decades back by Ole Lund Christensen, the original company became known for a classically simple, but powerful amplifier. After several ups and downs, it evolved into a full-line brand, including a CD player, several amplifiers and even more loudspeakers. Gamut is now run by ex-ScanSpeak psychoacoustics engineer Lars Goller, who also heads up a new drive unit operation called Scandinavian Audio Research (ScAR).

The Phi series is the newer and less costly of Gamut's two speaker ranges. It consists of three stereo pairs, plus a multi-purpose AV speaker (a subwoofer is also promised). All share similar drive units, albeit in different configurations and enclosures. This £2,550 per pair Phi5 is the middle model and the smaller of the two floorstanders.

And why Phi? Well, it's the Greek letter used to express the golden ratio (1.618) – a mathematical number that Goller utilised when positioning the interior reinforcement and the outer groove in the speaker cabinet. It defines the weak spot in the structure and, thereby, controls the break-up pattern of the enclosure side walls. For example, the length from the outside of the cabinet to the back to the groove, divided by the total depth of the cabinet is 0.618 (Phi).

The Phi5 is a three-way design, using three 150mm cone drivers with 90mm wood pulp (paper) cones. These have barely visible, curved radial marks, presumably to help control break-up modes, while the solitary tweeter has a 2.5cm fabric annulus (ring) diaphragm.

The two cone drivers below the tweeter operate in parallel in the bass region, with further assistance from a rear port, while the apparently identical midrange driver is mounted above the tweeter at the top of the

column, loaded by its own sealed sub-enclosure. The midrange driver is located around ear height (from a sitting position) and the tweeter a little below that.

The fashionably slim enclosures are elegantly finished in real wood veneer. Our samples (pictured) came in a rather extreme Zebrano veneer, giving a heavily striped horizontal pattern. More discreet and sober alternatives are also available and a slightly over-size grille is quite effective in minimising the speaker's apparent bulk. The carcass is high-pressure MDF, reinforced by bracing and carefully applied damping. On an internal inspection, the most obvious visual feature is a deep, wide black-painted groove all around the periphery, separating the front and back sections of the enclosure by a recessed insert which is clearly designed to help control enclosure vibrations.

Another interesting feature concerns the floor coupling arrangements. These are complex metal affairs which use top-adjustable ball-bearings to bear down on levers that extend out to contact the floor and improve the stability footprint. This proves an excellent technique for a wooden floor, but might not penetrate deep-pile carpet as effectively.

The tweeter has a central stainless steel wave-guide spike to improve directivity, a die-cast front plate and a low distortion magnet system. The main drivers have a new long-throw, low-loss suspension, a machined pole-piece wave-guide and aluminium ring inserts to minimize current distortion.

Fed from twin terminal pairs, that are linked by brass strips, the so-called NRLi crossover technology allegedly includes a DC-coupled network. Feeding the midrange, it sounds radical and innovative, but might also contribute to the rather low impedance we measured throughout the bass region.

SOUND QUALITY

With the speakers kept well clear of walls, the averaged in-room, far-field response measurement is very impressive indeed, essentially holding within +/-3dB across most of the audio band with only minor extra excursion at low frequencies. Room mode excitation notwithstanding, this is one of the smoothest and best-controlled in-room responses we've ever encountered.



“With the speakers kept well clear of walls, the averaged in-room, far-field response measurement is very impressive...”

Rather less impressive, are the impedance traces, which not only show a demanding load that reaches a three ohm minimum and stays below four ohms through most of the bass and midrange, but also show a significant discrepancy between our left and right samples (pair-matching ought to be better at this price point). Although the sensitivity is a respectable 88dB, the more so because the bass extends well down to 20Hz (-6dB) under in-room conditions, an amplifier with good current capability and low resistance speaker cables are both desirable.

Given good quality sources and amplification, this speaker is capable of quite superb results, with an overall evenhanded neutrality, alongside an exceptionally wide dynamic range. Clearly the efforts made to control cabinet vibrations are largely effective. Although some ‘woody’ coloration is audible (for example; when compared to a ‘boxless’ panel speaker), it in no way intrudes or masks low level detail and the general impression is of a notably ‘quiet’ box contribution throughout the entire low frequency region.

Imaging is interesting. The soundstage is very well focused, but the sound stays within the plane of the speakers, rather than filling the space around and above the speakers in the manner of a more omni-directional design.

Neither approach is right or wrong, but rather there’s a trade-off: the Phi5’s relatively low set tweeter provides superior focus but less ‘air’.

This speaker does so many things so well, it’s quite difficult to criticise. While it doesn’t quite have the dynamic tension of a high-sensitivity horn system, the drivers and enclosure ensure an impressively wide dynamic range with fine resolution of low level sounds.

While the midrange and treble are sweet, clean and very well judged – open and explicit yet entirely free from any aggressive tendencies – it’s the bass end that’s truly exceptional here. It goes satisfyingly deep, right down to the very limits of audibility, yet it also stays free from any excess and unwanted thickening up in the midbass region, and avoids ‘thinning out’ the lower midband character.

Acoustic material, such as Tunng’s *Comments of the Inner Chorus* is reproduced with marvellous dexterity, the acoustic guitars showing great delicacy and subtlety, while the more curious percussion sounds are appropriately realistic and surprising. Yet it also knows how to rock and roll, handling the unusual and complex time signatures on Beefheart’s *Clear Spot* album very convincingly, and delivering a superbly deep and clean bottom end beneath Robbie Robertson’s *Down the Lazy River*.

The Phi5 combines top class Danish drive unit technology with some very clever ideas on enclosure engineering and support. Put together with great subtlety and sensitivity, the end result is an outstanding loudspeaker that fully validates its upmarket pricetag. **HFC**

Paul Messenger



VERDICT	
SOUND ★★★★★	PRO Brilliantly smooth, even and neutral with a very impressive dynamic range and superior coherence, all wrapped in an attractive suit of clothes with clever floor coupling arrangements.
EASE OF DRIVE ★★★★	
BUILD ★★★★★	CON Low impedance means an amp with good delivery is desirable. Pair matching should have been better.
VALUE ★★★★★	
CONCLUSION Smart slim floorstander using top class Danish drive unit technology, plus clever crossover, enclosure and support arrangements gives excellent dynamic range, coherence and neutrality. Needs a good-quality amplifier.	
HI-FI CHOICE OVERALL SCORE ★★★★★	



The 'i's have it

A subtle name change signals a major update for the NAIT 5i

PRODUCT Naim NAIT 5i

TYPE Integrated amplifier

PRICE £725

KEY FEATURES Size (WxHxD): 43.2x7x30.1cm

• Weight: 6.4kg • Inputs: four line level (two with DIN and RCA sockets) plus one auto switching • iPod connection • Outputs: one pair loudspeaker outputs (through 4mm sockets), one tape output (on RCA phono connectors) • Power output: 50 watts (into 8ohms)

CONTACT ☎ 01722 426600 # www.naimaudio.com

The original Naim NAIT 5i, has earned a formidable reputation as a class-leading, 50-watt integrated amplifier offering outstanding musical performance. It's also credited with the ability to deliver levels of

communication beyond that of most entry-level amplifiers. It wasn't without its faults, of course. If you cranked up the volume (through difficult loudspeakers) and played some challenging music, then the amplifier would show signs of discomfort. So, for listeners who preferred a smooth hi-fi type presentation, the NAIT with its warts-and-all honesty was never going to be a front-runner.

Now there is a much improved replacement for the NAIT 5i: the NAIT 5*i*, with an italic 'i' as opposed to the mark one version (hardly the most attention grabbing change of nomenclature). The exterior is equally undemonstrative, with the addition of a tiny,

auto-switching input socket on the fascia for connecting an iPod or MP3 player.

As one would expect, the changes that significantly affect the NAIT's performance are mostly hidden from view. So, you could be forgiven for buying the NAIT 5i, under the impression that it's identical to the non-italic version it replaces. That is, until you switch it on and play the first track through it.

The enhanced performance comes from (in typical Naim fashion) an evolution of the original. Here, the audible result turns out to be greater than the sum of the parts might lead you to believe. For example, the new 5i features ceramic heat sink material, which



“...you could be forgiven for buying the NAIT 5*i*, under the impression that it’s identical to the non-italic version it replaces.”

delivers better efficiency and far lower capacitive coupling of the transistors to the chassis. Restructured wiring improves the isolation of the PCBs, the overall feedback has been reduced to lower transient intermodulation distortion (improving stability into difficult loads) and, finally, the passive preamplifier stage now benefits from improved RF filtering.

One hidden element in the design of the NAIT 5*i* and, indeed, many of the company’s other electronics, is the way in which Naim controls and directs resonance and vibration. The loose fitting mains input and audio connections are not faults, but intentional design measures that aim to prevent spurious vibrations being transmitted through the system’s cabling to the amplifier circuit boards. The boards themselves are decoupled to combat the effects of any external vibration

that does manage to find its way inside the 5*i*’s sturdy aluminium casework.

There is little else to say about the NAIT 5*i*. It features four line-level inputs: all of which have RCA phono connections, while the CD and tuner inputs are duplicated with DIN connectors. The remaining connections are tape – in and out – and AV; which can be configured as a unity gain input if the user wishes to integrate the 5*i* into a home cinema system. The final connection is the 3.5mm stereo jack on the fascia. Plug your iPod into this and the amplifier automatically switches to it: remove the connection and the amplifier reverts to whichever input you were using previously.

The NARCOM 4 remote handset is also compatible with the CD5*i*, CD player. This is an extremely palatable combination and one that (naturally) Naim strongly recommends. In fact,

the company partnered these two for the NAIT 5*i*’s original debut in November 2007, along with a pair of Naim n-SAT loudspeakers.

SOUND QUALITY

With no n-SATs to hand, a pair of Shahinian Compass speakers were pressed into service as they were already set up in our listening room. While the Compass wouldn’t be everyone’s ideal choice when it comes to an inexpensive integrated, it is an unusual and sophisticated loudspeaker that retails at over £3,000 a pair. The NAIT 5*i* works surprisingly well with the revealing Compass, but we switched to the more price-appropriate and conventional Neat Motive 1 for the bulk of the review.

There’s little or no reason to analyse a track through the NAIT 5*i* and the Neat Motive 1 speakers, because this amplifier appears to do very little other than amplify. It somehow steps aside and lets the music do the talking, without trying to manipulate or modify it.

The NAIT5*i* and Neat combination sounds perfectly balanced and wonderfully expressive on the Doctor John album *Duke Elegant*: David Barard’s bass displays the ideal amount of presence in the mix. Assertive and tuneful, with excellent leading edge attack, it never imposes on the proceedings, although it does add plenty of ‘pure fonk-i-fication’, to paraphrase the good Doctor. Throughout this collection of Duke Ellington compositions, the musical brilliance and sheer empathy that Doctor John brings to transcribing them for his much smaller band, its different, more ▶

Q&A

Hi-Fi Choice spoke with Naim's audio guru Doug Graham.



HFC Why wasn't there a bigger change in the nomenclature to match the dramatic improvement in performance that the new amplifier offers?

DG It was really difficult for us to re-name a very successful version of the NAIT. The original "i" series sold incredibly well, but we still felt that there was more we could offer at this competitive price point. Certainly a degree of flexibility was required, hence the 3.5mm jack on the front panel. Out of this addition – an interface for iPods and suchlike – we wanted to keep the "i". The new NAIT 5i is distinguishable from the previous incarnation, not only by the front panel socket, but through the obvious performance benefits too.

From its earliest incarnation the NAIT was always an idiosyncratic 'love it or leave it' design. Was there a conscious effort to make the 5i more acceptable to a broader audience?

Without a doubt the new NAIT is more acceptable to a wider range of buyers. Given that it's more flexible in terms of connectivity and more tolerant of different speaker cable it's less idiosyncratic than the original design. We still wanted, though, to deliver a product with Naim values and we've done that. It's a grown-up integrated now!

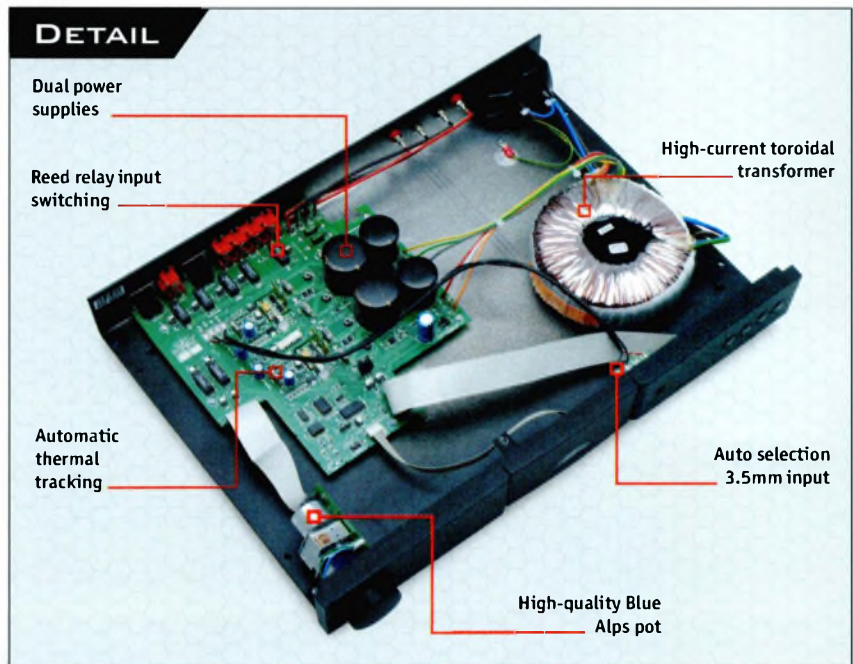
The most important thing we did while developing it, was to try it outside the context of a Naim system and use it with other people's products to understand how and what the performance would be for a first time buyer who perhaps had "other" inputs. This proved really successful with a variety of CD player and loudspeaker combinations.

What's the reason for the seemingly tremendous synergy between the CD5i and NAIT 5i?

It's hugely important that all of our products work at their best with others in the range. There has been a shift in the audio enthusiast's habits with most consumers today preferring physically matching components that interface well. So we designed the CD5i and the NAIT 5i at the same time, which entailed extensive listening over a period of months. During this process, a product develops a "finger print" sound signature that, if the consensus is there, you adopt. It was really tough to improve on the previous incarnations, but we managed it!



DETAIL



modern instrumentation and his individual style of delivery, are abundantly clear through the Naim. It's fair to say that we've heard this album through a great many systems, yet few (even the most expensive) have conveyed this element quite so strikingly. There seems to be something about the way in which this amplifier is designed that allows it to be so informative without it having the blatant detail and transparency of some more effusive, but ultimately less communicative designs.

To see how the amplifier fared with extreme dynamics, we switched to multi-instrumentalist, the classically trained, ex-Velvet Underground member John Cale and his album *Fragments of a Rainy Season*. On many tracks, in particular *Fear [Is a Man's Best Friend]*, Cale's voice and piano explore both ends of the dynamic register – both overtly and subtly – to great dramatic effect. When Cale switches to acoustic guitar, it merely restates just how fast this amplifier is: its leading edge definition is astounding, but doesn't dominate proceedings. When, for example, Cale plays a Jazz chord, you hear the notes ring, albeit briefly. When he plays in a tuning that allows open strings you can distinctly appreciate the switch in timbre and note-envelope.

The NAIT 5i performs as succinctly with more densely layered, orchestral music, portraying its mechanical structure as convincingly as it does its musical beauty. Nowhere was this better felt than in the second movement of Villa Lobos' *Bachianas Brasileiras No 1*, played by the English Chamber Orchestra and led by Rostropovich.

As well as successfully capturing and recreating the recorded acoustic and ambience, along with the sumptuous tonality of the strings, the sheer magnificence of the composition and the playing were undeniable.

Proof, indeed, that after 25 years in the business, the idiosyncratic NAIT has finally matured and become a genuine all-round proposition. **HFC**

Malcolm Steward



VERDICT

SOUND



FEATURES



BUILD



VALUE



PRO

A versatile amplifier, whose performance belies its entry-level status. It excels with music's fundamentals, but it also handles the cosmetic niceties equally well.

CON

Capable of dealing with challenging loudspeakers, we'd still recommend setting your sights on a price-appropriate models.

CONCLUSION

The strength of the NAIT amplifier was always its ability to accurately convey music's primary building blocks – pace, rhythm, timing and pitch – perhaps to the exclusion of some hi-fi qualities. A true all-rounder.

HI-FI CHOICE
OVERALL SCORE



ISOtek®

www.isoteksystems.com

"Excellent build quality, protection circuits, a fully adaptive filtration circuit and stunning performance make the Sigmas a true bargain." HI-FI NEWS, BEST ACCESSORY 2006



"IsoTek is the UK's biggest name in filtration...this year we hail a new product, the Sigmas." HI-FI CHOICE, BEST MAINS CONDITIONER 2006 & 2007

WHAT HI-FI?
★★★★★

EDITOR'S CHOICE
HI-FI CHOICE
Magazine

Accessories
IsoPlug, DeMag CD, etc...

Multi-Ways
Available in 4, 6 or 8 sockets

Solus

WHAT HI-FI?
★★★★★

GII Mini Sub & Vision

2007

WHAT HI-FI?
★★★★★

Orion & Gemini
Two levels of high quality filters.

WHAT HI-FI?
★★★★★

BEST
WINNER
2006

Sigmas

GOLD

Nova

WHAT HI-FI?
★★★★★

Product of the year
2005

Titan

Mira
Dedicated TV filter

IsoTek is committed to the creation of truly cutting edge designs through the development of unique proprietary technologies. Every product is designed and developed in the England and hand assembled in their factory in Hampshire.

Only the finest quality components are used, and many of these are uniquely developed and built to 'Military Of Defence' specifications.

IsoTek has consistently established a class leading reputation, a fact that has been proved by numerous reviews throughout the world and over 21 industry awards.

For your free brochure, or to locate your nearest dealer please call Activ Distribution on 01635 291357.

Activ Distribution

Tel: 01635 291357 • Fax: 01635 291356
E-Mail: isotek@activdistribution.com • www.activdistribution.com
www.isoteksystems.com



EDITOR'S CHOICE

HI-FI CHOICE
magazine



Dial 'M' for Magnifico

The new Cremona Auditor M may not look that different on the surface, but underneath...

PRODUCT Sonus Faber Cremona Auditor M

TYPE Standmount loudspeaker

PRICE £2,690 per pair

KEY FEATURES Size (WxHxD): 20.2x35.3x36.5cm
• Weight: 18.4kg • Two-way rear ported loudspeaker
• 25mm ring radiator tweeter • 150mm coated paper cone bass unit • Sensitivity: 88dB • Impedance: four ohms

CONTACT ☎ 020 8971 3909 🌐 www.sonusfaber.com

Sonus Faber is a bit like a swan: refined and graceful on the outside, these Italian products are subtly different from generation to generation. Yet, underneath, there's a lot of paddling going on, because the changes to the sound are huge. And so it is with the new Cremona Auditor M (for Modified) standmount speaker.

If you put the new Cremona Auditor M up against its predecessor, you can see where the differences are almost immediately. The angles behind the grille are sharper, the bass driver is different and the base of the dedicated speaker stand (which is good but £575) is now V-shaped. The back of the speaker is very different, too. But principally, the two share a lot in common.

In fact, all of the Sonus Faber speakers share a lot of the same DNA. Scratch the surface (not recommended – the finish is way too pretty to do that) and you'll find ideas developed in models like the Elipsa, which are in turn derived from the Stradivari Memento; you'll also find concepts hewn from the Guarneri Memento. Naturally, this is only to be

expected – the Sonus Faber design school doesn't re-invent the wheel every time a new speaker is announced, but the closeness of the designs means the products have a distinct *suono della famiglia* (family sound). And it's a sound that's changing.

As it was with the Cremona Auditor, the Auditor M is a two-way standmount box loudspeaker, with a rear-firing port. The 'box' itself is a tapered lute-shaped sandwich and gorgeously finished. The sandwich construction features hand selected, top-grade layers of maple, designed to keep resonance and standing waves at bay – and to look fantastic, too. The rear port and terminator block is finished in piano-gloss black, the front is in black leatherette and what's in between is

either finished in natural maple or light graphite-coloured lacquered wood. Combine the finish with the elegant styling exercise and you have a speaker that's as far removed from regular standmounts as the Connolly leather interior of a new Jaguar is from the torn-up insides of an eight-year-old Nissan minicab. Little wonder then, that the speakers come supplied in their own cloth protective bag.

The 25mm modified Scanspeak ring radiator tweeter, with its distinctive pointy waveguide, is retained from the last version of the speaker, but the bass driver is all new. It's a 150mm (six-inch) black wood fibre cone, treated (presumably with carbon fibre) to control break-up and features the Symmetric Drive motor system first seen in the Cremona speakers. Symmetric drive means three copper rings in the motor to keep the inductance of the voice coil even throughout its travels. This drive unit is exclusive to Sonus Faber, although



the electrostatics. The disappearing act that the Cremona Auditor did so well in the first iteration isn't only repeated here, it gets to be

“...you have a speaker that's as far removed from regular standmounts, as the interior of a new Jaguar is from the inside of a Nissan.”

it's made by the Tymphany group (which makes Vifa, Scanspeak and Peerless drivers)

Sonus Faber has gone for a smooth approach to crossover manufacture, with a first-order network producing a mild 6dB per octave roll-off, from the crossover point of 2.5kHz. The company still claims an effective frequency response of 50Hz-30kHz, including the tuning ports, but this is still impressive for what is essentially a small-box speaker in free space. The speaker has a natural backward tilt, which should provide a degree of time-alignment in and of itself, but the crossover network is also both time and phase aligned.

The speakers are designed for free space use – a good metre or so from rear and side walls – and, ideally, on the specialist stands supplied. A cat's cradle of loosely tensioned black strings, which act as sort of speaker grille – complete the elegant appearance.

SOUND QUALITY

The sound of older designs being slowly replaced with something altogether more modern and accurate could spell disaster with lesser speakers, and we've all heard modernist revisions of classic designs that end up sounding unnecessarily bright and brash. Fortunately, that's not the case here. What you get instead, is an extended, clean and yet not hard treble sound, allied to a midrange so detailed and so natural, you'll be looking for

even more invisible than before. Slip a piece of plastic on the CD, close your eyes and you cannot locate the speakers in space. While your eyes are shut, try and determine the size of the speakers... you'll think they are twice as large as they really are. I'm sure there will be Sonus Faber dealers leading blindfolded customers into the listening room before long.

Sonus Faber has pulled off a neat trick. The Cremona Auditor M gets surprisingly close to the sound of the Guarneri Memento, in many respects. It manages to throw out a huge soundstage, producing an openness and accuracy that will keep musicologists happy and a bass depth that will have amateur speaker designers scratching their heads. And it's musical, too. It's not a Guarneri, though; where the two differ is that the Homage series model makes everything sound sumptuous.

As such, there will be those who will prefer the Cremona Auditor M over the Guarneri Memento. This is, perhaps, the more accurate of the two speakers, in that it doesn't make Television or The Clash sound smoother than they really were. Don't think this means the Cremona Auditor M somehow pulls back from sounding musical, though. It manages to combine that accuracy and fine detailing with a fine sense of musical entertainment.

Another neat trick, the Cremona Auditor M is less amp and room fussy than before. No, you cannot just plonk them down in the living

room and hooking these babies up to some hoary old amp that was already well past its sell by date in 1976, is a recipe for disaster.

Are there any negatives? Not really, other than the obvious physical limitation of small speakers (don't expect deep-deep bass or use it in big-big rooms) and there is a warming and blurring of upper bass notes that is mild by comparison to most ported speakers, but is noticeable thanks to that disappearay midband.

In the main, though, we like what Sonus Faber is doing to its speakers. What began with the original Guarneri Homage has made the speakers far more approachable to more audiophiles. We thought a lot of the original Cremona Auditor, but this raises the game substantially. **HFC**

Alon Sircom



VERDICT

SOUND



EASE OF DRIVE



BUILD



VALUE



PRO

Accurate, honest and musical, the little high-end speaker that is better than ever and will give any similar design a run for its money. Easier to integrate than ever, too.

CON

You cannot change the laws of physics and the quality of the mid and treble can highlight the limitations of the bass, especially in big rooms.

CONCLUSION:

If it sounded as good as it looked, the Cremona Auditor M would take the high-end world by storm. Fortunately, it does. Those after top-notch audio performance in small rooms should start raiding piggy banks now.

HI-FI CHOICE ★★★★★
OVERALL SCORE

PLATINUM



Sprezzatura

Famous for his 'Il Libro Del Cortegiano' (The Book of the Courtier, 1528), Renaissance humanist Baldesar Castiglione coined the word 'sprezzatura' to describe the ideal for courtly behaviour. He insisted that in order to be worthy, exceptional virtuosity should be conveyed with an unaffected, effortless dignity. In essence, sprezzatura is the art of making something difficult look easy.

Created from the finest materials and complex technologies, our superlative Platinum loudspeakers are a sophisticated blend of craftsmanship and science, making music so gracefully that it sounds naturally effortless.

Please visit, monitoraudio.co.uk

 **MONITOR AUDIO®**



The cradle will rock

Shake, rattle and roll with Townshend's seismic speaker stands

PRODUCT Townshend Audio Seismic Cradles

TYPE Loudspeaker support system

PRICE £980 per pair

CONTACT ☎ 020 8979 3787 🌐 www.townshendaudio.com

First he did it with air, now it's springs, so just what is Max Townshend up to this time? Actually, he's continuing the good work of decoupling, that has been at the heart of his products since the Rock turntable hit the scene with its vibration-damping trough of silicone. The latest idea, is a spring suspension system that can be adjusted for loudspeakers of, more or less, any shape or size.

This is the third incarnation of the Seismic speaker stand, the first was a flat platform with a pneumatic isolator that worked well, but lost air over time with heavy speakers. This was followed by a sprung system with one cradle per speaker of a fixed width, which made it difficult for Townshend to have a stand for all speakers in stock at any given time.

The Seismic Cradle, however, can be supplied with a variety of alternative crosspieces to suit all manner of loudspeakers.

Working in pairs, the cradle suspends the speaker on a spring in each cylindrical post. These springs can be adjusted for tension, with a nut atop each one so that a range

of weights can be accommodated. You also need to specify the speaker weight, so that the spring is not too weak or too strong. This is important in allowing the speaker to be properly decoupled from the floor.

Why decouple a speaker in the first place? Because when it's standing on the floor (and more than likely spiked in position) it will dissipate a lot of its energy downwards, transmitting vibration back to both the source and the amplification, which seriously undermines performance. It also resonates the floor to such an extent, that the sound can be more easily heard by your long-suffering neighbours.

SOUND QUALITY

We tested the cradles under Bowers & Wilkins' 802D speakers, the latter's 80kg weight putting them right at the limit of this particular cradle. Once you have adjusted the width, it's just a matter of placing them under the front and rear speakers and then adjusting the springs to compensate. You can put speaker stands on the cradles, but would probably be better off using Townshend's suspended stands.

The reward for the efforts, is a significant increase in openness, realism and presence that is most apparent with voices. Imaging

is also greatly improved with a degree of holographic realism being added to the better recordings,

The high price of a set of Seismic Cradles dictates their exclusive use with high-end speakers and systems. But for those who already have everything else in place, then they free up a system to fulfil its potential (as well as keeping the neighbours happy) which can't be a bad deal. **HFC**

Jason Kennedy

VERDICT

SOUND



FEATURES



BUILD



VALUE



CONCLUSION:

This is an ultimate audio product, one for those looking to open up the sound of an already top-notch system. They will improve any system, however, but the cost is a deciding factor and they perform better under big speakers.

HI-FI CHOICE
OVERALL SCORE





Get connected

Systemline's Musicserver does exactly what it says on the tin

PRODUCT Systemline Musicserver

TYPE Music server

PRICE £1,200

KEY FEATURES Size (WxHxD): 44x1.5x34cm
• Weight: 9kg • Audio outputs: three independent analogue RCA phono plus digital (optical) • Audio inputs: digital (electrical and optical), two analogue RCA
• Video outputs: composite, S-Video, VGA
• Connections: Ethernet, USB, RS232 • 160GB capacity

CONTACT ☎ 01279 501111 🌐 www.systemline.co.uk

Music servers are coming thick and fast at the moment and the Systemline, from a part of the Armour Home Electronics empire, seems like a typical enough example. It has a CD drive, an internal hard disc and just enough buttons and front-panel display to make operation possible without attaching a TV (or VGA) monitor, or using the remote control (though employing both those devices will make life much easier).

Like models from Imerge, but in contrast to the Escient Fireball (which we reviewed in *HFC 303*) and the Cambridge Audio Azur 640H, this server has three multiple outputs. The ability to play separate streams to separate zones is surely a prerequisite for a server to be useful in a full-on multi-room installation, so three seems a sensible number. Significantly,

all three on this unit are both analogue and digital, so an installation with a local DAC in each zone is a possibility, though you might need to convert the optical output to electrical first.

The usual server features apply, too: the basic idea is that you load your CDs on to the hard disc using the CD drive, which is a speedy computer type, and access them quickly from there by title, genre or artist. Thanks to the usual Ethernet connectivity, you can hook up the server to your broadband modem and the unit seamlessly accesses an online database and loads album details for you. This all works very nicely and you can also set the drive to load CDs to disc automatically upon insertion, without interrupting whatever you happen to be listening to. It's not quite as fast as we'd like, though. Despite making a noise like a jet engine, the CD drive took nearly six minutes to load *Dark Side of the Moon* (approx 45 minutes), while our PC with a Plector reader did the same in two minutes, 20 seconds.

If you think you may never wish to listen to a disc again, you can play it direct from the drive, and the unit's Internet connection allows you to access online radio stations. You can also

load your collection of LPs, cassettes and other analogue recordings via the line inputs at the rear (two pairs!). And finally, you can connect additional Systemline servers, home computers and portable audio devices either via wired Ethernet or a wireless adaptor, making for a nearly limitless system.

Assuming you don't go to such lengths, the main limit of this system is the built-in hard disc. For reasons which elude us, the only size of drive currently available is 160GB. If you are going to store music compressed in MP3 format that's pretty big, but if you share our inclination to preserve quality by storing it uncompressed, that's only about 240 hours, which is pretty borderline for most serious collections. There's no lossless compression option either, which would have doubled that figure. At the time of writing, a 500GB drive costs about £25 more than 160GB. We'd rather see a £50-£100 hike in the server's price and the ability to swallow over 1,000 CDs in full quality – Escient at least can offer that.

One aspect of the Musicserver, which we're in no mood to criticise, is its physical construction. It's built to a very high standard from thick sheet steel and is very neat inside,



“The assumption tends to be that CD players are top of the heap in terms of quality, while servers are well down at the bottom.”

with decent-quality audio parts on the relevant circuit board. It's also well provided with connections: we've mentioned the audio side but there are also composite video outputs (one for each audio output), S-Video, VGA, three USB sockets (one of them on the front), RS232 and even a PC keyboard socket, plus the Ethernet we referred to above.

SOUND QUALITY

As we've come to expect from modern servers, initial setting up is pretty painless. That said, we ended up a little disenchanted with the remote control. It has a tendency to skip two or three lines on a menu when we only wanted one and reaction from the server can be surprisingly slow.

In terms of basic sound quality, we were definitely impressed. The assumption tends to be that dedicated CD players are top of the heap in terms of quality, while servers and multi-format players are well down at the bottom. Well, it isn't always the case and this machine puts on a performance that wouldn't in any way shame a £300 CD player. Sadly, a drawback it shares with all the other servers we've encountered is the mechanical noise it makes from hard disc and multiple internal fans. For our most critical

listening, therefore, we put it outside in the hall and used long interconnects, but, of course, the remote control doesn't work through a wooden door! A glass-fronted hi-fi cabinet could be a partial solution, but we're waiting eagerly for the first silent, or truly whisper-quiet server.

Unwanted noise dealt with and there's some real class to the sound. By contrast with the Escient, for instance, it's much the same sound from hard disc or CD direct. For a start, there is no sign of noise breakthrough from computer circuits or the switch-mode power supply and the tonal balance seems nice and natural. The sound has a pleasing clarity and crispness and, as one listens to more and more tracks, it becomes clear that there's an admirable degree of detail in evidence, too.

Even stereo imaging is good, with a clear and stable lateral spread and fair-to-decent coverage of depth. To be picky, there's a little coloration in the midrange which contributes some chestiness to male voices and a little extra 'quack' to larger saxophones. But bass is really very well controlled and nicely extended, with a good combination of rhythmic precision, while the treble is clear and open and only a little short of the standard achieved by good

CD-only players. In short, this is a fine

bit of audio performance, confirmed by lab measurements that look a lot like those we expect from competent CD players. Unfortunately, with this server we can't see the blueprint for the perfect device, either in a hi-fi separates system or an installation. In the case of the latter, it can be assumed that MP3 will be used and the capacity isn't an option, but we don't see why full CD-quality shouldn't be available. 240 hours may be an average collection for most but not, we strongly suspect, for the readers of this magazine. And the noise is a real nuisance if the Musicserver is to be primarily the heart of a 'real' hi-fi. What's more, £1,200 buys quite a nice laptop PC, that does everything the Musicserver does and more, very conveniently... **HFC**

Richard Black



VERDICT	
SOUND ★ ★ ★ ★	PRO Sound quality is among the best of the breed, while three independent outputs, all analogue and digital, make for great flexibility. Well built and simple to use.
EASE OF DRIVE ★ ★ ★ ★ ★	CON Capacity is not ideal for serious collections in uncompressed format, and noise makes remote sitting almost inevitable.
BUILD ★ ★ ★ ★ ★	
VALUE ★ ★ ★ ★ ★	
CONCLUSION: We really like the general idea of the music server and this is quite a nice example of the breed, but we've still got some boxes to tick before we think we've found our perfect example. Yet, at the affordable end of hi-fi servers, this is a good attempt.	
HI-FI CHOICE OVERALL SCORE ★ ★ ★ ★ ★	

Designed and built in Britain



The Master Series

In a nutshell. A stunning new AV system delivering captivating images and astonishing audio quality.

→ the essence of musical luxury, defined by Cyrus

**WHAT HI-FI?
SOUND AND VISION
AWARDS 2007**

CD PLAYER
BEST CD PLAYER £750-£1500
CYRUS C08x

**WHAT HI-FI?
SOUND AND VISION
AWARDS 2007**

STEREO AMPLIFIERS
BEST STEREO AMPLIFIER £1500+
CYRUS PRE v2/8 POWER/PSX-R

**WHAT HI-FI?
SOUND AND VISION
AWARDS 2007**

STEREO AMPLIFIERS
BEST STEREO AMPLIFIER £750-£1500
CYRUS 8vs2

CYRUS

For latest news on products or to download a brochure, please visit www.cyrusaudio.com

Tailor-made

Custom-fit earphones are no longer just for musicians

PRODUCT Etymotic ER-6ic

TYPE Custom ear-canal earphones

PRICE £150

CONTACT ☎ 0845 005 0005 ☎ www.customearphones.co.uk

Ear-canal headphones are nothing new, but Etymotic – who was the first company to develop commercial in-ear products back in 1984 – offers an appealing custom-moulded version of its popular ER-6i, tailor-made for *your ears*. The advantages of custom-moulded earphones are highly attractive – they offer unmatched all-day comfort, as well as significant 'natural' noise cancelling and, as a result, they can help protect your hearing by enabling far lower volume levels.

Etymotic has teamed up with a company called ACS – a supplier of custom-fit hearing protectors and monitors for the music industry. Together, they've created a package that consists of the ER-6ic earphone, with a tailor-made earpiece all for £150. When you buy a pair of ER-6ics direct from one of Etymotic's suppliers, they send you the headphones complete with a voucher for your custom fitting session at an audiologist near you (customearphones.co.uk has a locator search).

The moulding itself takes less than five minutes and your new custom-fit ear-pieces should follow 14 days later. When your new moulds arrive, you simply remove the old 'universal' adaptors and slip on your custom jobbies. It's worth noting here that ACS makes each piece by hand from medical-grade silicon and its customers include U2!

Admittedly, the moulds take a while to get used to, and the correct insertion technique takes a few attempts to master. The 'proper' seal only comes through practice and experience, but once in, the fit is beyond compare. The ER-6ic unit itself is tiny: smaller than most rivals, for example, and about the size of a baked bean! But despite the compact dimensions, flyweight 30-gram mass and tiny drive units, Etymotic suggests the ER-6ic extends down to 50 Hz, and up to 16 kHz.

Whilst this is clearly not up to audiophile standards, the product has, in fairness, been specifically designed for the less discerning portable user.

SOUND QUALITY

Correctly fitted, the drop in ambient noise is startling: it's like wearing well-fitting earplugs and it's immediately obvious that lower listening levels are possible – around one-third less in our testing. This direct connection between driver and ear canal is impressive – free from external influence, the ER-6ic is able to directly deliver the drivers' output to the ear.

But, there is a distinct lack of bass, which some people will find unacceptable. Etymotic emphasizes that the correct fit – the 'seal' between the earphone and the ear is crucial to bass performance, but even with ACS's custom-fit ear moulds (which aren't the culprit), the bass is disappointing. However, the ear quickly papers over the cracks and the 'benefits' become clear.

Although lean, the ER-6i delivers impressive clarity. The moulds enable the units to reveal detail without being influenced by ambient noise. The effect gives a level of insight that's pleasing with music on the move. With bass held back, there is greater opportunity to hear into the music more, but your tolerance of this obvious sacrifice, will depend on your musical tastes. Forget dance.

Overall presentation is a little thin, too, and you can't help but feel shortchanged compared to similarly priced models from Shure and even cheaper ear-canal models from Sennheiser and Denon. The saving grace of the package is,

undoubtedly, ACS's custom ear moulds (which incidentally can be made for other brands). The comfort, natural noise cancelling and value for money offered from the moulds is exceptional and the package is only held back by the limitations of the earphone itself.

That said, and despite having a number of 'on the go' headphones of all types available to test here at HFC towers, the ER-6ics remain alluring. They block out the world in a way that powered noise-cancellers can only dream of. And although they're certainly not hi-fi, we seem strangely drawn to them. **HFC**

Dan George



VERDICT

SOUND

★★★★

FEATURES

★★★★★

BUILD

★★★★★

VALUE

★★★★★

CONCLUSION

The ER-6ic has plenty to offer and whilst not strictly hi-fi, the advantages of custom fitting outweigh the limitations in sound quality. But be warned, the noise cancelling is so good you might not hear your keys falling from your pocket into the street.

HI-FI CHOICE
OVERALL SCORE



Cambridge Audio Azur 640P

TYPE Phono stage

PRICE £60

CONTACT ☎ 0870 900 1000 🌐 www.cambridgeaudio.com

With its successful Azur series of integrated amps all being line-level-only, Cambridge had good reason to produce a matching phono stage. Indeed it produces two: the cheaper 540P handles moving magnet cartridge only, while this one also caters for moving coil types. The price is modest, but we were frankly astonished at the amount of circuitry inside, integrated circuits and discrete transistors aplenty, plus decent-quality passive components. Power is from the usual 'wall wart'. There's even a switchable subsonic filter, which is more sophisticated than most and works well and practically inaudibly.

We were most impressed by this unit. It is subjectively very quiet with both cartridge types and never fails to produce a very clean and well-defined sound. It seems particularly good at extracting detail from the upper treble, giving excellent sweetness on bright



instruments (like violins) and maintaining a good standard of stereo imaging even in complex multi-layered music. Bass is assured and controlled and midrange uncoloured. There's, perhaps, not quite the rhythmic excitement and attack that we have heard from upmarket phono stages, but at this price it would be unfair to demand it and results are really more than satisfactory. Measured figures for noise, response flatness and distortion are all typical of much dearer phono amps and

headroom before overload is very good indeed. Capable of extracting the most from even quite fancy cartridges, this is a starter phono stage that you can expect to rise to the challenge as you upgrade the system around it. **HFC**

VERDICT

A bargain that is likely to fetch up in budget systems and can confidently survive upgrades to both preceding and following parts of the chain.



Creek OBH-15

TYPE Phono stage

PRICE £220

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

Creek's range of OBH units is intended to serve simple functions conveniently. This small, but smart and robust phono stage certainly fits that bill and offers compatibility with both moving coil and moving magnet cartridges, amplifying the signal from each with discrete transistors and op-amps. Gain from the moving coil input is relatively low, suiting cartridges of moderate output (true 'high output' types go into the moving magnet input), but the unit is available to order with higher gain for low-output cartridges. The supplied power supply was a switch-mode type compatible with all mains voltages and, thanks to a range of supplied adaptors, most of the world's wall sockets.

Although the frequency response of this unit is quite accurate, the subjective balance seems slightly on the mellow side, which we found not at all unpleasant. It helps, of course, that detail is well defined and indeed the separation of musical strands is a particular strength of the OBH-15. Without unduly



dissecting the music, it is able to dig deep and present each instrument as a distinct entity, making analytical listening not merely possible, but a pleasure. Slightly surprisingly, though, stereo imaging isn't quite as good as the best, with a little front-to-back compression and some restriction laterally, too. This may well be related to the noise level, which is a little higher than the Cambridge and Heed (mc)

units manage. Overall, we had good results with both cartridge types: perhaps slightly better on mm than mc. **HFC**

VERDICT

A practical and highly compatible unit with decent results from budget and mid-price cartridges of all types.



Heed Questar MC

TYPE Phono stage

PRICE £225

CONTACT ☎ 01452 858260 # www.heedaudio.hu

Based in Hungary, Heed produces a nice line of products with a distinct slant towards the world of vinyl disc replay. The Questar is the basic phono stage of the range and is available in high gain (moving coil) and low gain (moving magnet) versions, each having specifically designed circuitry entirely based on discrete transistors. Gain is suitable for quite low-output cartridges, even at a pinch very low-output types, and the noise floor is low enough to get away with that. As usual, the power supply is remote – in this case a small box with captive leads at both ends. The Questar itself has a locking socket for the power input.

We found this the most lively and rhythmic of the four phono stages in this little group. It really enjoys a good rock'n'roll thrashing and does bass timing with great aplomb. That's not to say it's coloured or, at least, not obviously so. There's a trace of upper-bass lift, both subjective and measured, but it's not enough to intrude and in more laid-back classical

music, for instance, the sound comes across as very neutral. Detail is also good, with quite precise imaging in both directions and rather impressive insight into the acoustic properties of the recording venue, the kind of thing that is all too easily lost in amplifying the minute and fragile signal off a cartridge. We definitely found the most musically satisfying results were with quite upmarket cartridges, suggesting that this amplifier's natural home is in refined and capable systems. In a budget context its advantages over, for instance, the Cambridge 640P are much harder to perceive. **HFC**



VERDICT

Partnered with a good turntable and cartridge, the Questar can give surprisingly high-end sound with fine rhythm and timing.

HI-FI CHOICE



Graham Slee Gram Amp 3 Fanfare

TYPE Phono stage

PRICE £245

CONTACT ☎ 01909 568739 # www.gspaudio.co.uk

Graham Slee does make other products, but is best known for phono stages of which, there is quite a variety available. This is the cheapest moving coil unit, just £40 dearer than the company's basic moving magnet model. Dearer models in the range include some with switchable equalisation, a boon for collectors of pre-1956 discs. The circuit is based on a high-performance op-amp, carefully partnered with just enough passive components to do the job. We were told our sample would be supplied with the new 'green' switch-mode power supply and were amused to find that this device was basically identical to that supplied by Creek. Two minds, one thought...

Despite good experiences in the past with Slee products, we found the sound of the Gram Amp 3 to be something of a paradox. Starting with the obvious, it is not as quiet as the Cambridge and Heed models, roughly on a par with the Creek. A little background noise is not the end of the world but can easily

compromise imaging to some extent and that seems to be the case here. Detail is pretty good, however, and tonal neutrality is not in doubt. Rhythm is good when it needs to be and the bass is generally solid and energetic. And yet, despite all those boxes ticked, we never found ourselves quite carried away by the music in the way that can happen with the finest hi-fi, including (on at least some occasions) the other phono stages in this group. One can hear quite effectively into the music, but it just doesn't quite gel. **HFC**

Richard Black



VERDICT

Good basic performance, with just a little more noise than some. Doesn't seem to translate into entirely convincing musical involvement.

HI-FI CHOICE



GROUP TEST & LAB REPORTS: RICHARD BLACK

VALVE AMPS

Here are six good reasons why valve amps are still the tops in audio entertainment

ON TEST



Ayon Spirit
£1,745



Copland CTA405
£2,498



Icon Audio Stereo 60.2
£1,499



Melody Astro Black 50
£1,845



Pathos Classic One MkIII
£1,535



Unison Research Preludio
£1,825

Invented roughly a century ago, valves were the first electronic amplifying technology. Superseded by the smaller, more efficient and more flexible transistor, they were considered obsolete in audio products such as amplifiers by 1970. But, here we are in 2008, and valve amps are once again one of the hottest categories in audio products.

A significant part of valve appeal lies in the appearance, not only of the valves themselves, but of the finished product. Visual perceptions and general pride of ownership are more important than ever these days. There's also nothing like the satisfaction of turning on a smart and impressive amp, like one of the following half-dozen beauties, for putting you in a good frame of mind to enjoy music. Even if valves functioned identically to transistors – in terms of the movement they excited in the loudspeaker – they would still sound different.

They certainly have their own unique sound, which can be demonstrated by blind listening and lab tests. Valve amps are actually less faithful to the original signal than most transistor models. But the ear is a funny thing and the deviations from perfection with valve amps is not necessarily bothersome, while those of transistors can be surprisingly disturbing.

Although valves have a reputation for being unreliable, with a high maintenance ratio, this is not always the case. While there is a finite life in valves, it's actually quite a long one and replacement is usually simple to carry out. All that's probably needed is

a quick plug-in job, followed by a screwdriver adjustment of operating conditions, as per the instruction manual, and job done.

For the rest, modern valve amps are no more likely to pack-up prematurely than solid-state models. And the standard of construction on all six of the units featured in the following group test, proved to be very high, which added to our confidence in them. **HFC**

EQUIPMENT USED

- Ⓢ Living Voice Auditorium loudspeakers
- Ⓢ Pioneer PDR-609 CD recorder (as CD transport)
- Ⓢ dCS Elgar D/A converter
- Ⓢ Chord DAC64
- Ⓢ Supra, Black Rhodium, Kimber and Bespoke Audio cables

MUSIC USED

- Ⓢ Michael Jackson *Thriller*
- Ⓢ Miles Davis *Kind of Blue*
- Ⓢ Pallavicino *Madrigals*
- Ⓢ Rachmaninov *Symphonic Dances*

EARS USED

- If you want proof of valves' enduring appeal, the unusual alacrity with which industry insiders responded to our appeal for listeners should convince you! We are as ever immensely grateful to all who replied and particularly those who attended on the day:
- Ⓢ Ed Selley (Audio Partnership)
 - Ⓢ Steve Reichert (Armour Home Electronics)
 - Ⓢ Geoff Meads (Arcam)

LISTENING TESTS

In classic *HFC* fashion, the centrepiece of the listening was a 'blind' presentation of each amp to a panel of expert listeners, in an attempt to remain free of prejudices and preconceptions. Listening levels were accurately matched and the same programme of music was played through each amp with minimal distractions. In addition, each amp was auditioned on its own more informally, to get the fullest picture of the character of each.

LAB TESTS

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

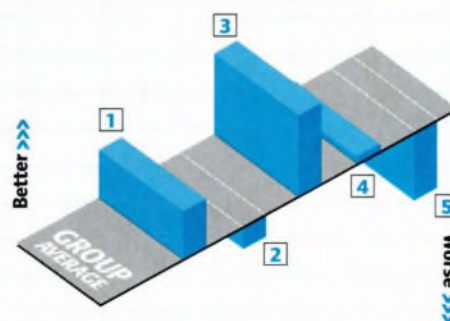
No other magazine offers an equivalent test and listening programme for comparative tests.

LAB REPORTS: THE BAR GRAPH

Our 3D bargraphs are a simple way of showing how the products compare across five technical parameters. In each case, a percentage is given that falls above or below the group average: higher percentage means better performance (e.g. lower distortion, lower noise, flatter response). In this case, the parameters are:

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

OUR BAR GRAPHS: AN EXAMPLE





£1,745 ☎ 01435 867438 # www.living-sound.com/ayon

AYON SPIRIT

Can this amp's performance match its good looks?

We reviewed this amplifier as a stand-alone, as recently as *HFC 303*, but thought it interesting enough to pitch it against a few of its illustrious peers. It's an impressive beast for sure (the picture will only give a true idea of its size if you're already familiar with the KT88 valve). Those chromed transformer covers must cost a pretty penny and the all-aluminium case is no budget affair. So you're getting plenty of amplifier for the money.

In fact, you almost get two amplifiers, as the output stage is switchable between triode and 'pentode' operation (to be strictly accurate it's ultralinear tetrode operation, but we won't argue the point). The latter offers more power, but the former is often found to sound sweeter and that was certainly Malcolm Steward's experience in *HFC 303*. Both modes are push-pull, by the way, not single-ended as we accidentally managed to imply last time.

As tends to be the way with many current valve amps, facilities are on the basic side with just four inputs (all line-level) and single loudspeaker outputs. These are tapped for four or eight ohm speakers – so our advice is adjust to suit your taste. The remote control simply adjusts the volume, the actual control being a motorised potentiometer. Internal circuitry is, for the most part, mounted on a printed circuit board, with the sockets for the output valves hard-wired. Components are good-quality and assembly is very neat and tidy.

SOUND QUALITY

Following Malcolm Steward's lead, we presented this amp as a triode model, though a brief spell with it in pentode mode gave an interesting hint of a slightly less laid-back character on offer. It's clear from our listeners'



notes that it is more of a specialist than an all-rounder and what it does well it does very well. Into that category falls music that relies more on gentle 'rise and fall' than sudden stop-start stuff, so you'll gather at once that we're not really looking at a rock'n'roller here. It's not that dynamics are lacking: indeed, everyone felt that there was plenty of dynamic variation. It's just that the kick of a drum is not best served by the Spirit's unhurried way with the bass.

However, there's more to this than just the type of music. Slowly-changing music (the *Pallavicino madrigal* being a perfect example) still has plenty of rapid attack and release. It's just on a smaller and less obvious scale. If you are the sort of listener who latches on to that you may find this amp disappointing.

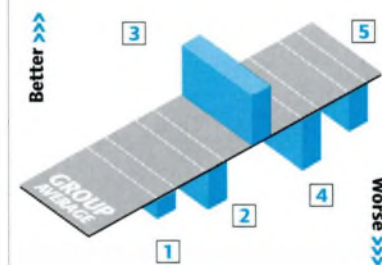
In terms of hi-fi basics the sound has decent tonality with, perhaps, slightly bright treble and extended bass, while imaging is very spacious. Sometimes it even seems a touch exaggerated, but in the real world that's hardly a problem since everything from recording to listening environment tends to limit it and a little bit of excess from an amp simply offsets that to some degree. Detail is actually pretty good, but one must listen out explicitly for it, in order to determine whether it's good or not. One of our listeners absolutely hated it, the others were more measured in their comments, but if you think you might like a smooth sound you owe yourself a spell with this amp. **HFC**



LAB REPORT

Valve amplifier power figures are a little vague because most amps overload relatively gracefully and the power specification depends on how one defines 'overload'. By our conservative measures, this amp is good for about 25W in triode mode, 43W in pentode, with around 10W (either mode) at the frequency extremes. At lower outputs, however, the frequency response is admirably flat, just 0.2dB shy at 20kHz and 0.5dB at 20Hz. By transistor amp standard, output impedance is ridiculously high and, indeed, at five ohms (triode) or 12 ohms (pentode) is it high even for a valve amp. In fact, the difference between the two will cause noticeable frequency-response differences with most loudspeakers, whatever other effects may occur within the amp when mode is changed. Distortion is also a little high, but falls away obligingly at low outputs.

HOW IT COMPARES



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

SPECIFICATIONS

Measurement	Rated	Actual
Power output (8 ohms)	30W	25W
Distortion (1kHz/ 8 ohms)	-	3%
frequency response (20Hz-20kHz)	±0.7dB	±0.5dB

VERDICT

SOUND



PRACTICALITY



BUILD



VALUE



If the idea of an ultra-detailed solid-state amp sends you running for cover, this could be the amp for you. Sound is so smooth it's the sonic equivalent of Glayva (whisky). Detail is decent and tonality good.





£2,498 ☎ 020 8971 3909 🌐 www.copland.dk

COPLAND CTA405

Widely accomplished amp with a performance to match

Very much the elder statesman in present company, Copland is one of a handful of companies worldwide who've been making valve amps pretty much since their resurgence following the technology's near-abandonment in the 1970s. The company's range is small and has changed slowly over the years, but does include such modern devices as a digital room correction unit alongside this amp. The CTA405 itself, is a classic bit of Copland understatement with nothing obvious (except, after a few minutes, the heat!) giving away the presence of valves.

In fact there are four KT88s under the hood, operating in tetrode mode and run well within their ratings for a notional output of 50 watts. Even so, they generate a lot of heat in a relatively small space and the whole unit runs warmer than those with no valve cage – this one if anything needs even more room to breathe. Small-signal valves are similarly familiar, a pair of high-current 12BH7 and one 12AX7, while the all-valve phono stage (which we were surprised, but delighted to find on board) uses two each of 12AX7 and 6922.

Even the output transformers are inside the case, alongside the toroidal mains transformer. All of the circuitry, including valves, is mounted on printed circuit boards, so in most respects, this is a thoroughly modern amplifier with such refinements as relay-switched inputs and a motorised volume control. The latter is marked in dBs and, although we found the markings hopelessly inaccurate, they're useful as a reference. The amp's remote control also works with Copland's other components and, far more than with any other amp here, we get the feeling that this is an amplifier that just happens to use valves rather than be a valve statement.



SOUND QUALITY

This is definitely one of the most widely accomplished amps in the group. Hardly an area of its performance was not praised at one point or another by our listening panel, with only mild criticism. Perhaps the most telling comment referred to the orchestral track (by Rachmaninov), in which the multiple violins seemed to work together as a unified body without losing their individual existence. That, in a sense, is what music-making is all about and it's very much to Copland's credit that it is so clearly audible through this amp.

The CTA405 also makes a good impression for its sharp, but realistic attack on leading edges of all kinds, from bass drum to piano to vocals. This makes the music really live and keeps the listener's mind alert and, when appropriate, his foot tapping. Tonally, it is very even with an extended and very sweet treble, which was particularly noticeable in the Miles Davis track.

In fact, this is very much a musical rather than technical amplifier. There's good coverage of areas like detail, imaging and rhythm, but overall one's attention is drawn to the music rather than the equipment, which is all to the good. If you are one of those souls who likes their music presented with clinical precision, you may find this amp short-changing you, but we found a lot to like in its balance of detail, tonality and overall listener involvement.

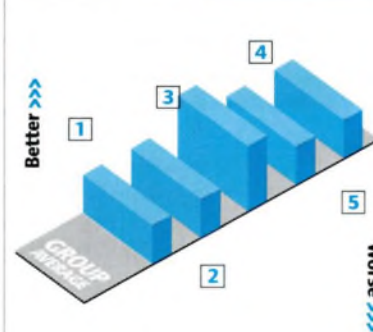
HFC



LAB REPORT

Output comes to just on 50W and only falls to 40W at 20Hz – an excellent result. At 20kHz there's about 15W available, which is fine – real music just doesn't demand full power at such frequencies. Small-signal frequency response is as flat as most solid-state amps we can recall, within two tenths of a dB at most from 20Hz to 20kHz, while the output impedance of 0.9 ohm is low enough to ensure a reasonably flat response into most loudspeakers. Distortion is the lowest in the group in numerical terms under the usual conditions, but seems to fall away a little more slowly with signal level than some and also contains an unusually high level of hum modulation. Noise is very good: despite some preconceptions out there, valves can do well at this and the CTA405's figure is good by any standards. Power consumption is the highest (just) of the lot, roughly £160 a year if left on continuously – so make good use of standby!

HOW IT COMPARES



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

SPECIFICATIONS

Measurement	Rated	Actual
Power output (8 ohms)	50W	50W
Distortion (1 kHz/ 8 ohms)	0.2%	0.7%
Frequency response (20Hz-20kHz)	±0.3dB	±0.2dB

VERDICT

SOUND ★★★★★	Saying that this is a musical and involving amplifier is not a backhanded compliment to its resolving power: it also had considerable insight and is user-friendly by valve amp standards.
PRACTICALITY ★★★★★	
BUILD ★★★★★	
VALUE ★★★★★	HI-FI CHOICE OVERALL SCORE ★★★★★☆☆

shadow audio



T: 0844 800 0073 or 74
e: info@shadowaudio.co.uk
www.shadowaudio.co.uk

Subject to conditions*



(NEW) ATC - EL 150 SLP
ATC have just launched this incredible new loudspeaker. If you want the best - you have just found it!

Highlights include:

- ATC SM-150s Soft Dome Mid driver
- ATC Super Linear 375mm Bass driver
- Massive hand made motor assembly
- Wide dispersion for perfect imaging
- Cabinet designed to eliminate edge diffraction and internal resonance
- Original owner, lifetime guarantee
- Any veneer to order
- Featured veneer: burr magnolia.



(Musical Fidelity - Coming Soon)
A1 Integrated Amplifier & CD PRO 2

The A1 Integrated Amplifier will be available from mid April 2008.

The matching A1 CD PRO 2 uses the Philips CD PRO 2 top loading mechanism (generally regarded as the best in the world), and has state of the art electronics. The A1 CD PRO 2 will be available late May 2008.

Together they sound incredible, and better still make a perfect driving system for Superchargers. Call Shadow for more details.

Used Listing

Our list changes daily, so please visit web site for latest up-to-date list.

DIGITAL

Ahl Njoe Tjoeb 4000 (£1050)	£399
Krell KPS 20i/L (£12500)	£2495
McIntosh MCD201, CD/SACD (£3400)	£2695
Musical Fidelity KW 2505 (£4999)	£2995
Musical Fidelity DM25 DAC and Transport (£4000)	£2895
Shanling CDT300 Omega Drive CD player (£4000)	£2295
Stello CDA 220 dac + CDT 200 cd transport	£1485
Wadia 302 CD player, silver (£3995)	£2750

AMPLIFIERS

Accuphase E408 Integrated (£5000)	£3495
Anatek CM 0.5 pre amp (£1400)	£795
Audio Zone AMP 1 dual mono integrated (£1595)	£1295
Audionet SAM V2 Integrated (£2400)	£1295
Bel Canto S300i Integrated (£1799)	£1495
Cairn 4810 integrated (£2700)	£1295
Copland CTA 520 stereo power amp (£1900)	£1195
Eastern Electric Minimax Power Amp (£995)	£649
Flying Mole PA-51 Digital Pre (£999)	£595
Gamut D200 MkI (£3500)	£1395
KR Audio Products VA320 Power Amplifier	£1495
Krell Pam 1 dual mono preamp	£295
McIntosh MA6500 integrated amplifier (£4850)	£1995
McIntosh C2200 pre (£4850)	£3695
Meridian G02 balanced dual mono preamp	£995
Musical Fidelity A5 Pre (£1499)	£795
Musical Fidelity 550K Supercharger (£2998)	£1995
Papworth TVA-8 Class a integrated (£2000)	£1195
Qinpu A1.0x integrated (£300)	£230
Qinpu A-8000 MK II integrated (£1295)	£795
Tact SDAi 2175 (£1245)	£749

LOUDSPEAKERS

Acoustic Energy AE1 Classic (£845)	£650
Acoustic Zen Adagio Loudspeakers (£3995)	£2795
ART Emotion Monitor (£4000)	£3250
ART Loudspeakers Expression V6 (£3500)	£1995
AVI Pro Nine Plus Standmount Speakers (£890)	£695
Dali Helicon 400 (£2995)	£2250
JAS Audio - Plato Reference (£13995)	£9995
JAS Audio - Orior (£2300)	£1495
JAS Audio - Orsa (£1399)	£1095
JAS Audio - Supertweeters (£649)	£449
Leema Acoustics Xone (£2245)	£1695
Monitor Audio GR20 (£1500)	£795
Monitor Audio GS60 (£2000)	£1395
PMC FB1+ (£1695)	£1095
PMC GB1 Exdem	£795
Soundlab Millennium M3 Electrostatics (£8995)	£2795

ACCESSORIES

Origin Live Aurora Mk1 T.Table + Origin Live Silver tonearm	£995
Pro-Ject Experience "X-Pack" (£750)	£495
SME 20/2A (£6300)	£4495

MISC

Hovland Reference Speaker Cable (£1200)	£795
Isotek Nova (£1750)	£1295
Isotek Gil Minisub (£545)	£399
Nordost Blue Heaven Speaker Cable (£695)	£349
Nordost Thor Mains Conditioner (£1650)	£1095

Shown: SA-11S2 / SC-11S1 / SM-11S1



NEW Marantz Premier Series

The NEW Legendary Series is based on the Premier Series, but costs incredibly, half the price!

Consisting of a Pre-amplifier, Power-amplifier and CD/SACD Player, each is beautifully built and delivers a sonic performance that is simply astounding.

Marantz is really raising the performance bar with the Premier Series - competition take note!

"...it was the combination of SC-11S1 and the SA-11S2 that I found utterly beguiling. There is something very special about these two line-level components."

Alvin Gold, HFC March '08

FREE UK delivery*

Chord Cables
Full range available

For the latest news and special offers - sign-up to the FREE shadow audio weekly newsletter (visit shadow audio home page)

design: www.audiography.co.uk

Specialist Brands include:

Apollo, ART Loudspeakers, Audio Zone, Audio Physic, ATC, AVI, Bel Canto, Bryston, Chord Cables, Creek, EAR/Yoshino, Eastern Electric, Epos, Gamut, Hovland, Hyperion, IsoTek, JAS Audio, JungSon, Manley Labs, Marantz Legendary, McIntosh, Musical Fidelity, Musical First, Music Tools, Nordost, Opera, Origin Live, Pathos, PMC, Project, Resolution Audio, Shanling, SME, Tannoy Prestige, Unison Research, Vertex AQ, VPI, Wadia, Wilson Benesch and many more.



£1,499 ☎ 0116 244 0593 🌐 www.iconaudio.co.uk

ICON AUDIO STEREO 60 MK 2

Keenly priced amp that gives the competition a run for its money

Based in Leicester, Icon is a small valve-amp specialist with quite a variety of models in its line-up, including headphone and phono units. This new model is moderately bulky and quite weighty, thanks to the transformers which are well specified for the rated 60W maximum output.

There's the familiar handful of KT88 valves, but they're preceded by some less common types, larger and older in origin than the ubiquitous ECC8x series (and international equivalents) that grace most valve amps these days. Many valve diehards swear by these and it's evidently thanks to their advocacy that they are back in production.

Icon manages to offer two modes of operation, but Icon trumps this with four. Not only is the output switchable between triode and ultralinear connection, but the gain is adjustable via a switch at the rear, giving high gain for 'integrated' and low gain for 'power' mode. Because Icon has implemented this by adjusting the overall circuit feedback, it is reasonable to expect a noticeable difference in sound between the modes, after adjusting for the gain difference with the volume control. There is also a standby switch, which keeps the valves warm but cuts the high-voltage supply to the output, prolonging valve life.

Construction is based entirely on hard-wiring, with the exception of the remote control receiver board. Despite this, assembly is as neat as most PCB-based amps, each piece of wire and component laid out to millimetric precision. Signal wiring uses screened, PTFE insulated cable.

SOUND QUALITY

In the expectation that this model will most often be used in triode mode with gain set to



'integrated', that's how we presented it to our listening panel. Previous experimentation had in any case suggested that it was generally most mellifluous in that setting, though the ultralinear mode can deliver slightly more kick at the expense of subtlety.

But it certainly seemed to go down well as a triode amplifier. It has a distinctly large sound - in scope and scale, bearing in mind that overall output level was matched to the other amps to high precision. This served Michael Jackson and his team well, making the most of both sound effects and backing in *Thriller*.

Our other test tracks were enjoyed for overall effect, though again it seemed that detail and its cousin, precise imaging, were a little behind the best. But it's worth noting that the degree of musical connection did vary, with our most 'rhythm-conscious' listener less satisfied than his more melodically inclined colleagues. Rhythm is OK, but we would tend to agree that it doesn't quite drive the music along in the way it sometimes can and, if that aspect of music is absolutely critical to you, may not be your perfect amplifier.

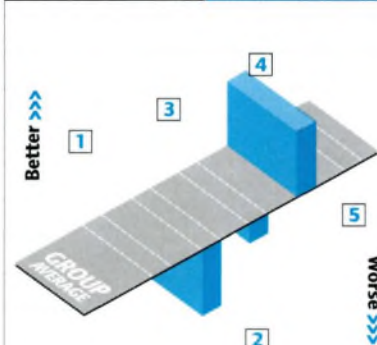
Still, there is a very nice tonal balance in evidence, perhaps a touch generous with the bass (but nothing alarming) and high treble that's very sweet in a classic 'valve' sort of way. This makes for a very inviting sound across a broad range of music and we found long listening sessions enjoyable, particularly late-night ones at modest volume settings. **HFC**



LAB REPORT

The number 60 in the model name refers to output, but in ultralinear mode, which we confirmed exactly. Under triode conditions the claimed 30W is also just met. Most other parameters vary with mode and with gain (feedback) setting: figures given below and in the conclusion are for triode, integrated, but under other conditions distortion varies down to 0.5% (triode, power), output impedance down to 0.8 ohms (UL, power), response flatness down to 0.6dB (UL, power) - you can see why drawing conclusions about which mode sounds best and why is not straightforward! Nevertheless, under the conditions used for the critical listening, this is a capable amp with generally good performance, the only apparently weak area of frequency response being perfectly acceptable in practice.

HOW IT COMPARES



- 1] Dynamic power >> 0%
- 2] Frequency response >> -40%
- 3] Dynamic range >> -10%
- 4] Distortion >> +40%
- 5] Output impedance >> 0%

SPECIFICATIONS

Measurement	Rated	Actual
Power output (8 ohms)	30W	30W
Distortion (1kHz/8 ohms)	0.1%	0.9%
Frequency response (20Hz-20kHz)	+0.5dB	+2.0dB

VERDICT

SOUND
★★★★★

PRACTICALITY
★★★★★

BUILD
★★★★★

VALUE
★★★★★

Sound does tend to vary noticeably between operating modes and the amp's ability to 'tune to taste' merely adds to what is already an attractively melodic and well-balanced sound.

HI-FI CHOICE OVERALL SCORE
★★★★★

THE MISSING LINK

BUY ANY TWO SEPARATES AND GET A MATCHING QED INTERCONNECT FOR FREE! SEE IN-STORE FOR DETAILS.

Offer applies to in-store customers only. Expires March 31st 2008. Not in conjunction with any other offer/promotion. While stocks last.



HI-FI AND HOME CINEMA SPECIALISTS

Acoustic Energy, Apollo, Apple, Arcam, Archos, Atacama, Audiolab, B&W, Beyerdynamic, Creative, Creek, Denon, Epos, Grado, Helios, Humax, iRiver, KEF, Linn, Marantz,

Mission, MJ Acoustics, NAD, Onkyo, Panasonic, Pioneer, Pro-Ject, Pure, Q Acoustics, QED, Quad, Roksan, Rotel, Samsung, Sennheiser, Sonos, Sony, Soundstyle, Tannoy,

Topfield, Wharfedale, Yamaha and many more top brands. Not all products are available from all outlets; please call, or check online at www.superfi.co.uk

Superfi

SPEAKERS

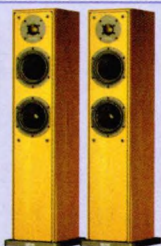
EPOS

EPOS M16

- Elegant floorstanders with an impressive, 3-dimensional image
- Brilliant with hi-fi separates or partnered with the M8 centre speaker for AV
- Choice of black, dark or light cherry real wood veneer

WAS: £799.95
SAVE: £300

£499.95



EPOS M5

- Compact stand-mount design with a punchy performance
- Dark cherry real wood veneer

WAS: £349.95
SAVE: £100

£249.95



"A SMALL BOX CAPABLE OF GENUINE MUSICAL EXCITEMENT"
HI-FI CHOICE

WHAT HI-FI? AWARDS 2007
FEBRUARY 2005 AUGUST 2005

AMPLIFIER

MARANTZ PM6002

- Useful features, proven performance, great value
- Remote control, 2 x 45 watts
- Black or silver

"A SUPERB AMP FOR THE MONEY...GRAB ONE FAST"
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND & VISION

HIGH FIDELITY LOW PRICE
£269.95



WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION
MARCH 2008
WINNER
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION
MARCH 2008
★★★★★

DAB/WI-FI/FM RADIO

REVO BLIK RADIOSTATION

- At last, the best of digital, analogue and Internet radio, in one
- Also streams music from local computers

REVO-LUTIONARY
£149.95



DAB/ALARM RADIO

PURE TEMPUS TXT

- DAB/FM reception
- Multiple alarms and timers
- B Grade - fully guaranteed for 12 months

WAS: £99.95
SAVE: £40
£59.95



NETWORK AND REMOTE

LOGITECH SQUEEZEBOX DUET

- Stream music around your house
- Handset features large, colour display, gyroscopic controls and docking station/charger
- Remote control doubles as second network client for portable streaming



SET YOUR MUSIC FREE
£279.95



TURNTABLE

PRO-JECT GENIE

- Includes factory-fitted Ortofon cartridge
- Easy to set up and use
- Space-saving design

"AS FINE A DECK AS YOU'LL GET FOR THIS MONEY"
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND & VISION

WHAT HI-FI? AWARDS 2007

DELIGHTFUL VINYL SPINNER
£124.95



MICRO HI-FI

ARCAM SOLO MINI

- CD/MP3 player, DAB/FM tuner and amp in one
- Front USB in and optional iPod control
- Full alarm functions and custom install compatibility

LAY YOUR HANS ON A SOLO
£649.95



CD PLAYER

NAD CS15BEE

- Budget, audiophile bargain
- CD/R-RW, MP3 and WMA playback
- Graphite or titanium finish

AUDIOPHILE BARGAIN
£164.95



SPEAKERS

B&W 685

- On demonstration today
- Choice of four finishes
- In-store exclusive

WHAT HI-FI? AWARDS 2007
SEPTEMBER 2007



IN STOCK NOW
£379.95

IPOD DOCK AND AMP

FATMAN iTUBE

- Striking design, stunning performance
- Brings MP3 to life like no other dock/amp can

WHAT HI-FI? AWARDS 2007
WAS: £299.95
SAVE: £100
£199.95



FIVE REASONS TO CHOOSE SUPERFI

Real Hi-Fi
Quality turntables, CD players, hi-fi amplifiers and speakers always in stock and available to demonstrate

Latest technology

Hard disk, HD-DVD and Blu-Ray, MP3, DAB, PVR and multi-room products - all available to demonstrate

Official UK models
Fully-guaranteed, genuine UK products

0% credit available
Ask in-store for details and a quotation

Free parking
See www.superfi.co.uk/ freeparking for details

STORES - EACH BRANCH OFFERS EXPERT DEMONSTRATION AND INSTALLATION

Birmingham
67 Smallbrook, Queensway
0121 631 2675

Coventry
2 Corporation St
024 7622 3254

Derby
22 Sadler Gate
01332 360303

Lincoln
271a High Street
01522 520265

London
2-4 Camden High St
020 7388 1300

Manchester
54 Bridge Street
0161 835 1156

Nottingham
15 Market Street
0115 941 2137

Stockport
68-70 Lower Hillgate
0161 429 9080

BUY ONLINE NOW
WWW.SUPERFI.CO.UK



£1,845 ☎ 01900 813064 🌐 www.melodyvalvehifi.com

MELODY ASTRO BLACK 50

Kit from down under has a distinctly classical bent

Melody trades from Australia, but manufactures its products in China. A fact that can't do any harm when it comes to turning out equipment with such a luxurious finish at this kind of price. The paintwork on the chassis, transformer covers and valve cage is absolutely superb and we find this a class-looking unit, unless, of course, you've an aversion to black, which is admittedly, slightly unremitting.

Following something of a theme among this group of amps, output is courtesy of KT88 valves, a pair per channel in tetrode connection with conditions set for 50-watt notional output. Like Icon, Melody has opted for 'old-time' small-signal valves, 6SN7 in this case, but has rather overshadowed them by using a single 101D triode, a great bulbous thing, as a power supply regulator valve.

Also like Icon, Melody has completely hard-wired this amplifier with the only circuit boards being one per channel for the bias adjustment function (accessible through the side panels in such a way as to make it for once completely obvious which adjuster relates to which valve) and one connecting input wiring to the selector switch. But in terms of retro appeal, this is probably the top model in present company, as internal wiring is mostly run in fabric-insulated solid core. Inside, there are green ceramic resistors abound, while capacitors in the signal path are Jensen paper types in a metal can. Ceramic tagstrips support components and wires, too.

A balanced input is a nice luxury, coupled to the main circuit via transformers. There's even a stepped attenuator for a volume control instead of the usual potentiometer, but we found this a slight irritation; at everyday volume settings the steps are distinctly on the



coarse side. They are much smaller around full volume, but with a typical CD player you'll never have the volume up there anyway!

SOUND QUALITY

This is perhaps the most likely amp among present company to reinforce valve stereotypes. It's good at voices, good at bass extension, sweet in the treble, but a little short of bite and attack and not always fully detailed. All the same, it was quite a success in the blind listening session and was felt to be a good musical communicator.

Very complex textures are not quite so well served, however, and the multi-layered Rachmaninov score was not the Melody's biggest hit. In particular, imaging was somewhat compressed in that track and while the big picture was still pretty clear the details within it were noticeably less easy to follow.

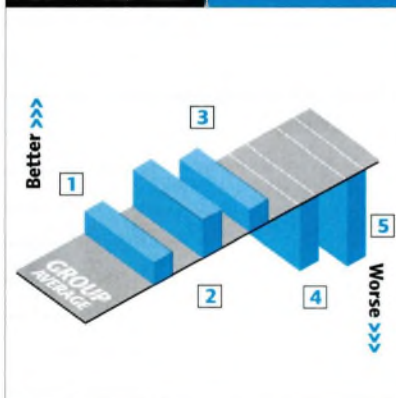
But probably the biggest weakness is rhythm and, in particular, its relation to melody. There's a very slight laziness to the upper bass and this makes the rhythm seem to lag the melody; which is all very well for Frank Sinatra and other music from the cocktail hour, but not so great when the mood strikes for rock, high-energy pop or, indeed, quite a lot of classical music. Yet again, we're forced to issue a qualified recommendation with distinct respect to musical taste – cocktails, classical chamber music and simple vocal tracks do suit rather charmingly. **HFC**



LAB REPORT

The most obviously unusual figure among this amp's measurements is output impedance, which is about the highest we can recall from our own, or any other tests we've seen. Frequency response will be a strong function of loudspeaker impedance and it would clearly be a major leap of faith to buy this amp before hearing it with the intended speakers. That said, the impedance curve of most modern speakers follows a familiar trend, so the sound will have Melody's own character. That character must owe something to the relatively high distortion (as much as 1% even at 1W output). We also found quite a high degree of dynamic compression following momentary slight overload. Many valve amps do that but this one does it more than most and also adjusts its gain as signal is applied well inside the overload envelope. Noise is good, but overall this is a very characterful and likeable performance indeed.

HOW IT COMPARES



- 1] Dynamic power >> +10%
- 2] Frequency response >> +20%
- 3] Dynamic range >> +10%
- 4] Distortion >> -40%
- 5] Output impedance >> -60%

SPECIFICATIONS

Measurement	Rated	Actual
Power output (8 ohms)	50W	45W
Distortion (1 kHz/ 8 ohms)	1%	5%
Frequency response (20Hz-20kHz)	-	±0.2dB

VERDICT

SOUND ★ ★ ★	Rhythm is not its greatest strength, but if you value realistic integration between instruments highly, you will be well placed to enjoy the extended bass and stress-free presentation on offer with the Melody
PRACTICALITY ★ ★	
BUILD ★ ★ ★ ★ ★	
VALUE ★ ★ ★	
HI-FI CHOICE OVERALL SCORE ★ ★ ★ ★ ★	

High End Cable

www.highendcable.co.uk

For the best prices telephone Dave Jackson on **01775 761880**
Free P&P worldwide on all interconnects

Analysis Plus
Audience
Chord Company
Ecosse
Furutech
Hovland
Nordost
MIT
Oehlbach
Purist Audio Design
Stereovox
Townshend
True Colour Industries
van den Hul
Wyrewizard
IsoTek

Cable Tower
Oehlbach Accessories

Bel Canto
Project Turntables
Audio Physic Speakers
STAX headphones
Tannoy
Echo Busters
Arye CD - IsoTek CD
Lyra Moving Coil
Ortofon Moving Coil
Sumiko Moving Coil

Component cables
Digital Cables
HDMI
Optical Cables
S video
SCART

Firewire
XLR cables
Sub woofer cables
Chord iPod cables
Nordost iPod cables
Din cables
Chord cables for Naim
Mains & Power cables
Jumpers
ONLINE SHOP



NORDOST



TOWNSHEND AUDIO



analysis plus

Purist Audio



audience



van den Hul
A Sound Connection

ISOteK



FURUTECH
DeSat and DeMag



TRUE COLOURS INDUSTRIES
PURES WITHOUT COMPROMISE



Upto 25% OFF
when you trade in
your old cable

Chord HDMI 1.3 Silver plus

Up to 25% Trade in allowance on your old cables

Please visit www.highend-hifi.co.uk

Previously owned cables. Reference cables include free Burn In.



SERIES

HAS ARRIVED



OB*i* DB*i* GB*i* TB2*i* FB*i*

The product of obsession

PMC Ring your dealer

Aberdeen	Sevenoaks S&V	01224 252797	London W5	Audio Venue	0208 567 8703
Ashford	Soundcraft	01233 624 441	Leeds	Audio Republic	0113 217 7294
Bath	Paul Green Hifi	01225 316 197	Leeds	Sevenoaks S&V	01132 452775
Bournemouth	Suffons Hifi	01202 555 512	Malden	Home Media	01622 676703
Bristol	Sevenoaks S&V	0117 9743727	Maidenhead	Audio Venue	01628 633995
Cambridge	Audiophile	01223 368 305	Market Harborough	Divine Audio	01858 432999
Chester	Adventures in Hifi	01244 345576	Milton Keynes	Technosound	01908 604949
Edinburgh	Sevenoaks S&V	0131 229 7267	Norwich	Basically Sound & Vision	01362 820800
Gateshead	Linton Audio	0191 477 4167	New Malden	Unilet Sound & Vision	0208 942 9567
Glenrothes	Shadow Audio	0844 800 0073	Swansea	Audio Excellence	01792 474 608
Hatch End	Music Matters	0208 4201925	Warcester	Warcester Hifi	01905 612 929
Kingston	Infidelity	0208 9433530	Yeovil	Sevenoaks S&V	01935 700078
London SW11	Oranges & Lemons	0207 924 2040			

www.pmc-speakers.com/i-series

Sumptuous

SOLOEX™ HF

New PMC LF

New crossover



Custom Installation Specialists

Professional Custom Installation & Intelligent Lighting Solutions

No twenty-first century home should be without it. A bespoke entertainment and lighting system remotely controlled from wherever you choose throughout your home, designed specifically to your budget and aspirations.



Ortons
AUDIO:VISUAL

6-8 Bancroft,
Hitchin SG5 1JQ
T: 01462 452248

www.ortonsaudiovisual.com

richard's
AUDIO:VISUAL

85 St. Peters Street,
St. Albans AL1 3EG
T: 01727 868700

www.richardsaudiovisual.com



£1,535 ☎ 01753 652669 🌐 www.pathosacoustics.com

PATHOS CLASSIC ONE MK 3

Affordable hero fares well against its higher-priced competitors

There are valve amps and there are solid-state amps and there are hybrids, which combine both technologies. Pathos specialises in the last type and while the company's proprietary 'INPOL' configuration is reserved for upmarket models, this more modest unit still combines small-signal valves with power MOSFET, not to mention bipolar transistors in between. There are plenty of unexplored possibilities in this direction and we're happy to see people investigating some of them.

The appearance has plenty of old-style valve amp about it, and we find those little cages over the two valves rather charming, but the overall effect can seem a little fussy. Behind the red capacitors, a slotted metal cover distinctly reminiscent of a valve cage covers a heatsink which carries, on its bottom face, one pair per channel of MOSFETS. They and the rest of the circuitry, are attached to a circuit board, which occupies most of the internal space with a small separate board carrying input and output sockets and also the input selection relays.

Uniquely in this group, the Classic One uses an electronic attenuator for volume control, giving accurate half-dB steps from full volume down to inaudibility. It makes volume adjustment a little slow, but the digital display means you can find your preferred setting easily. That display is shared by the input selector and, in normal use, there's nothing to show which input is in fact active. One of the five inputs is balanced.

Although components are not extravagant, there are some nice touches in this unit such as the use of non-magnetic stainless steel for the chassis and a pair of very upmarket op-amps in the circuit.



SOUND QUALITY

Few of the comments on this amp suggest that it is qualitatively different from the others in any particularly solid-state way. On the contrary, its big sound picture and generally smooth presentation are very much classic valve characteristics. Although its attack was thought to be among the best, it was not necessarily the very pinnacle of the group (according to our 'blind' listeners) and bass control attracted a little mild criticism.

Perhaps the treble is the most 'transistorised' area. It is just a touch bright, but its extension is welcome and gives a good shimmer to delicate sounds like small percussion instruments and a real sense of acoustic 'air' to well-miked recordings.

Very low bass is good, extended and tuneful and this served the orchestral track well and also the Miles Davis. The bass control issues apply mostly to the higher bass regions, making rhythm occasionally a little unclear.

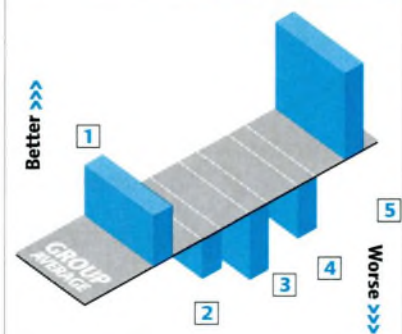
Detail is also among the best of the group. In fact, we were very taken with the way the Classic One presents detail; unfussy and, on the whole, playing second fiddle to the overall musical picture. Imaging is broad but not ultra-precise, a trade-off we found pleasant. Pathos does indeed seem to have achieved a marriage between valves and transistors which is sonically biased towards the former. **HFC**



LAB REPORT

That this amp should have something of a valve sound will be no surprise if you believe, as we do, that distortion measurements have at least something to do with sound perception. This is by no means the lowest-distortion amp in the group and it puts out quite a rich spectrum of distortion down to less than 1W output. Where it does show its solid-state nature is in the output impedance, which is by a factor of nearly 20, the lowest in the group and will, at least, make for a loudspeaker-invariant frequency response. Noise is the weakest of the group, but the figure is still decent enough by the general standards of current amplifiers. And, of course, output power is higher than any of the all-valve models, with considerably greater dynamic power into low impedances thanks again to the low output impedance.

HOW IT COMPARES



- 1] Dynamic power >> +30%
- 2] Frequency response >> -20%
- 3] Dynamic range >> -40%
- 4] Distortion >> -30%
- 5] Output impedance >> +60%

SPECIFICATIONS

Measurement	Rated	Actual
Power output (8 ohms)	70W	69W
Distortion (1 kHz/ 8 ohms)	0.05%	1.5%
Frequency response (20Hz-20kHz)	-	+0.5dB

VERDICT

SOUND ★★★★★	Marrying all the strengths of classic valve and solid-state amps would be a tall order, but this attractive amp gets close, offering beautifully musical presentation with good tonality and detail. Warmly recommended.
PRACTICALITY ★★★★★	
BUILD ★★★★★	
VALUE ★★★★★	
HI-FI CHOICE OVERALL SCORE ★★★★★	

PATHOS

Digit CD Player



Classic One MK III Amplifier



A Winning Combination

This beautiful Pathos set delivers breathtaking performance. Small in size yet great in musical enjoyment, the Pathos Digit and Classic One - a winning combination.

tel : 01753 652 669 | e-mail : info@ukd.co.uk | web site : www.ukd.co.uk





Sound Fantastic

Olsons new *Sound Fantastic* range of units are specifically designed for both the home and professional hi-fi audio markets.

Each unit is fitted with a 10A mains R.F.I. filter with earthline choke and transient suppressor, designed to filter mains-borne transients, switching surges, R.F. interference, intermittent spikes and other disturbances.

- ✓ Robust steel construction
- ✓ 13A Sockets
- ✓ 10A Panel Mount Fuse
- ✓ RFI 10A Mains Filter & Surge Suppressor
- ✓ External Earth Stud
- ✓ 2m x 1.5mm Screened Cable
- ✓ UK Plug - 10A Fuse Fitted
- ✓ Colour Black
- ✓ Specials to order

TYPE NO.	NO. OF SOCKETS	OVERALL LENGTH	PRICE
HF 4	4	446mm	£83.72
HF 6	6	557mm	£92.47
HF 8	8	670mm	£98.70

Call 020 8905 7273

Home Entertainment — **POWER VERDICT UP** 

Home Entertainment, May 2001




FROM
£83.72
inc. VAT & p&p

24 HOUR SERVICE. VISA, MASTERCARD AND SWITCH ACCEPTED





OLSON ELECTRONICS LIMITED
OLSON HOUSE, 490 HONEYPOT LANE,
STANMORE, MIDDX HA7 1JX
TEL: 020 8905 7273 FAX: 020 8952 1232
email: sales@olson.co.uk www.soundfantastic.co.uk

HI-FI CHOICE

PASSION FOR SOUND

**To advertise
please contact the Sales Team on
0207 042 4255**



£1,825 ☎ 01753 652669 🌐 www.unisonresearch.com

UNISON RESEARCH PRELUDIO

An intriguing blend of old and new, but is that enough?

We've seen quite a few products from Unison over the years and the family likeness is not hard to find. That classic Italian love of medium-dark hardwood, for a start, and the proud way in which the valves stand alone. Like many other Unison Research products, this is a single-ended amplifier, using just one valve for the output stage of each channel.

Most amplifiers, both valve and solid-state, use push-pull pairs of output devices for reasons of efficiency, but single-ended operation has always had its advocates who cite its very simplicity as a major reason why it will (when done well) always sound better than push-pull. There's a lot more to amplifier design than the output configuration, of course. But with its use of a single KT88 in ultralinear configuration, this amp does make a very interesting comparison with the others in the group that use the same valve and the same basic configuration in push-pull.

The downside is output power – the rating being only around 14 watts – but based on years of experience, we've no hesitation in saying that suitably partnered, 14 watts can make for a very satisfying system that will play loud with no special pleading required.

There's an intriguing blend of old and new in this amp, single-ended being the earliest amplifier configuration, while the KT88 is a relatively modern valve and the internal assembly uses a very modern circuit board and integrated circuit regulators for parts of the power supply, plus surface-mounted components in the remote control receiver section. There's even an op-amp in there, though as far as we could see it's simply buffering the subwoofer output signal. Build quality is very good and yes, the wood is solid and luxurious, too.



SOUND QUALITY

If the Ayon is more an amp for lovers of melody than of rhythm, this is in many ways its antithesis. Belying any expectation one might have born of power ratings, physical size or mode of operation, the sound seemed to our listeners to be outstandingly rhythmic and lively, with excellent articulation and a very good sense of being there.

There are limitations, mostly in respect of detail and large-scale dynamics. Rhythm is largely about small-scale dynamics, of course, but over spans of seconds to minutes this amp seems a little less assured and can develop a trace of hardness in loud passages that seems to restrict dynamics a little.

There are some slight deviations from tonal accuracy, most notably a lack of really low bass. Heard in isolation this might indeed pass muster, but in the company of a bunch of its peers, mostly well-endowed in that region, the Preludio comes across as a shade light.

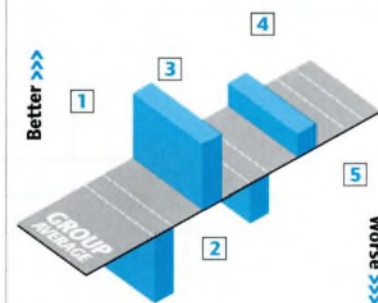
Detail is good, especially in quiet passages of music, while imaging has excellent depth and pretty good lateral extension and definition. Despite some specific deviations from most people's idea of 'valve sound', this amp perhaps comes closest to embodying the valve ideal of musical involvement above all else. If hi-fi specifics mean a lot to you, you may yet do better elsewhere, but this is undoubtedly a very musical amp. **HFC**



LAB REPORT

Single-ended amplifiers are not noted for high output power and the Preludio's 13W is reasonably generous for the breed. It's achieved with less distortion than some of the push-pull models, and Unison Research also deserves congratulations for the amazingly flat frequency response of this amp, not such an easy thing to achieve with this type of circuit. Output power falls off at 20Hz to about 3W: ideally, we'd like to see half-rated power at this frequency, but in most real recordings there's relatively little power below 50 or 60Hz, so it's not a serious drawback. The distortion spectrum is interesting in that it very closely resembles most of the push-pull models' in shape and rate of fall-off as signal level drops, while output impedance is also similar. If there is truly some magic science to single-ended, we can't spot it here!

HOW IT COMPARES



- 1] Dynamic power >> -40%
- 2] Frequency response >> +40%
- 3] Dynamic range >> -20%
- 4] Distortion >> +10%
- 5] Output impedance >> 0%

SPECIFICATIONS

Measurement	Rated	Actual
Power output (8 ohms)	14W	13W
Distortion (1 kHz/ 8 ohms)	-	2%
Frequency response (20Hz-20kHz)	-	±0.1 dB

VERDICT

SOUND



PRACTICALITY



BUILD



VALUE



A rhythmically confident amp, which may lack a little bass and absolute power, but makes up for it in liveliness, control and imaging. Strong on detail, this amp gets close to the valve ideal.



CONCLUSIONS

Our valve amps have it all; good looks, absolute power and high performance levels

As the temperature in our listening room cools back to normal after the climatic assault of all those valves, what conclusions can we draw? First and foremost, given the competition, valves are clearly a viable and valid amplifying technology. It's even more significant that all our 'blind' listeners were regulars and the notes they left behind were not remarkably different in tone and content from those left after a morning auditioning transistor models. In other words, if sound is your only criterion, then the simple presence or absence

of valves may in the end be something of a red herring.

There is such a thing as a valve sound stereotype, though, and if we heard it from any of these amps it was the Melody that provided it. Big and strong on generalities, it's a bit thin on real insight, rhythmic precision and involvement. It has its place certainly, but didn't really press our buttons. For us, the Ayon seemed more successful, giving a good measure of itself, but maintaining rather more of the detail and attack within the music. Both models look a million dollars, especially with the Melody's valve

cage removed, and will give you audiophile cred in spades!

If it's sheer class you're looking for, then it's probably no accident that the two Italian jobs win the day (both also sound very appealing in their different ways). The Pathos seems to be a marriage of both convenience and real affection between valves and transistors. With solid-state control and valve euphony (to the extent these vast generalisations are valid), it boasts a useful power output that makes choosing speakers a little easier than some other lower-powered all-valve

models demand. If power really isn't an issue, the Unison Research Preludio is very much an all-rounder with a very appealing presentation and grasp of contrasted musical styles.

Which leaves Icon and Copland, both also very capable. The Copland is great for people who aren't valve aficionados as such, while the Icon is (almost) the ultimate tweaker's amplifier – four subtly different sounds in one chassis. We enjoyed this group a lot. When all's said and done, there is something peculiarly appealing about valves... **HFC**

TRY THEM WITH THESE

CD PLAYERS

REGA SATURN £1,298

One of the best-integrated sounds from a sensibly priced player.

TOWNSHEND TA565 £3,000

A player that's well equipped to make the most of CD and high-res discs.

LOUDSPEAKERS

LIVING VOICE AUDITORIUM £1,700

This floor-stander has a nicely open balance and very good musical insight.

QUAD ESL 2805 £4,500

The ESL was designed to partner a 15-watt valve amp and still sounds lovely.

HINTS AND TIPS







>> Valve amps run hot and need lots of space around and especially above them. A little added floor clearance does no harm either.

>> Never mind saving electricity, switching off when not in use for an hour or more will prolong valve life.

>> Most valve amps have outputs for four and eight ohm speakers. The only way to find which is best in practice is trial and error.

>> If some way of checking and adjusting bias is provided, do it roughly monthly for best sound and longevity.

VALVE AMPS AT A GLANCE

						
MAKE MODEL	Ayon Spirit	Copland CTA405	Icon Stereo 60 Mk2	Melody Astro Black 50	Pathos Classic One Mk3	Unison Research Preludio
PRICE	£1,745	£2,498	£1,499	£1,845	£1,535	£1,825
SOUND	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆
FEATURES	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★☆☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆
BUILD	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆
VALUE	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆
OVERALL	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆
CONCLUSION	The antithesis of solid-state muscle amps: sound is super-smooth, but actually detail is decent and tonality good	A musical and involving amplifier which also has considerable insight and is user-friendly by valve amp standards	The ability to 'tune to taste' merely adds to what is already an attractively melodic and well-balanced sound	Rhythm is not a strength, but integration between instruments is excellent and sound generally stress-free	An attractive amplifier offering beautifully musical presentation with good tonality and detail, plus looks to die for	A rhythmically confident amp, it lacks absolute power, but makes up for it in liveliness, control and imaging
KEY FEATURES						
LINE INPUTS	4	5	4	5	5	5
TAPE OUTPUTS	0	1	1	0	1	1
PHONO INPUT	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
SIZE (WXHXD)	46x25x35cm	43x19x40cm	42x20.5x35cm	43x22x34cm	23x15x47cm	38x18x33cm
WEIGHT	28kg	21kg	28kg	26kg	9kg	18kg
REMOTE CONTROL	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
BALANCED INPUT	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
LAB CONCLUSIONS E = EXCELLENT • G = GOOD • A = AVERAGE • P = POOR						
CLIP POINT	14V A	20V G	15.5V A	19V G	23.5V G	10V P
FREQUENCY RESPONSE	±0.5dB BG	±0.2dB E	±2.0dB A	±0.2dB E	±0.5dB BG	±0.1dB E
DYNAMIC RANGE	108dB E	109dB E	102dB BG	105dB E	99dB BG	101dB BG
OUTPUT IMPEDANCE	5 ohm P	0.9 ohm A	1.5 ohm A	14 ohm P	0.05 ohm G	1.5 ohm A
POWER CONSUMPTION	165W/-	180W/1.5W	160W/62W	160W/-	37W/-	135W/-

Audio Destination

Tiverton, Devon
01884 243 584

Brighton Hi-fi

Filmwell, East Sussex
01580 878 101

Divine Audio

Market Harborough, Leicestershire
01858 432999

Doug Brady Hi-fi

Warrington, Cheshire
01925 828009

Loud & Clear

Bonnington Mill, Edinburgh
0131 555 3963

Loud & Clear

Finnieston, Glasgow
0141 221 0221

Mike Manning Audio

Yeovil, Somerset
01935 479 361

Music Matters

Solihull, Birmingham
0121 742 0254

O'Brien Hi-fi

Wimbledon, London
0208 946 0331

Progressive Audio

Rainham, Kent
01634 389004

sound proof

Moon Electronics by Sim Audio, manufacturers of high end audio since 1980.

Multi award winning CD Players, Integrated Amplifiers, Pre-amplifiers, Power Amplifiers available only from specially selected dealers.



redline



Velodyne



ABBEY ROAD CABLE

Distributed in the UK by Redline T: 0131 555 3922 E: info@red-line.co.uk www.red-line.co.uk

Want the best?



Atlas Equator MkII – the best just got better.

Winner of two consecutive What HiFi Best Buy Awards, the original Atlas Equator was tough to beat. But, we did it. Meet the Equator MkII - What HiFi Best Stereo Interconnect 2007.

The use of superior materials in the Equator MkII allows an improved signal path that lets more information through, while ensuring that unwanted frequencies are kept well under control.

Listen for yourself at one of our carefully selected retailers, visit our website or call 01563 572666 for more information.

Plug in, sit back and enjoy the experience.

ATLAS Cables
atlascables.com

AWARDS



INTERCONNECTS
Atlas Equator • August 2002
Atlas Explorer • July 2002
Atlas Voyager • April 2002



SPEAKER CABLE
Atlas Equator
HIFI Interconnects 2002 & 2003



HIFI CHOICE
★★★★★
SPEAKER CABLE
Atlas 1.25 • October 2003



5 VIDEO CABLE
Atlas Vector • August 2002
COMPONENT VIDEO CABLE
Atlas Element • May 2004

ATLAS RETAILERS

London & South East England

- Ashford (Kent)** Soundcraft Hi-Fi
01233 624441 www.soundcraft.hifi.com
- Aylesbury** Noteworthy Audio
01296 422224 www.noteworthyaudio.co.uk
- Harrow** Harrow Audio
020 8863 0938 www.harrowaudio.com
- Hitchin** Orton Audio Visual
01462 452248 www.ortonaudiovisual.co.uk
- London N7** Bartletts Hi-Fi
020 7607 2148 www.bartlettshifi.co.uk
- London SW11** 1st Stop Audio Visual
020 7978 6262 www.1ststopav.com
- London W1** Hi-Fi Care at Shasonic
0845 634 0340
- Sevenoaks** Sound Seduction
01732 456573 www.soundseduction.co.uk

South West England

- Bournemouth** Suttons Hi-Fi
01202 555512 www.suttonshifi.co.uk
- Bournemouth** Movement Audio
01202 529988 www.movement-audio.co.uk
- Poole** Movement Audio
01202 730865 www.movement-audio.co.uk
- Salisbury** Salisbury Hi-Fi
01722 322169 www.salisburyhifi.co.uk
- Weymouth** Weymouth Hi-Fi
01305 785729 www.weymouthhifi.co.uk

North Wales

- Wrexham** Acton Gate Audio
01978 364500 www.acton-gate.com

Central England

- Banbury** Overture
01295 272158 www.overture.co.uk
- Birmingham** Music Matters
0121 429 2811 www.musicmatters.co.uk
- Solihull** Music Matters
0121 742 0254 www.musicmatters.co.uk
- Stourbridge** Music Matters
01384 444184 www.musicmatters.co.uk
- Sutton Coldfield** Music Matters
0121 354 2311 www.musicmatters.co.uk
- Wilstead** British Audio Products
01234 741152 www.britishaudio.co.uk
- Market Harborough** Divine Audio
01858 432999 www.divineaudio.co.uk

North England

- Huddersfield** Huddersfield Hi-Fi
01484 544668 www.huddersfieldhifi.co.uk
- Hull** A. Fanthorpe Ltd.
01482 223096 www.fanthorpes.co.uk
- Gateshead** Lintone Audio
0191 477 4167 www.lintone.co.uk
- Gateshead (Metro)** Lintone Audio
0191 460 0999 www.lintone.co.uk
- Sheffield** Moorgate Acoustics
0114 275 6048 www.morgateacoustics.co.uk

Scotland

- Aberdeen** Holburn Hi-Fi
01224 585713 www.holburnhifi.co.uk
- Glasgow** Glasgow Audio
0141 332 4707 www.glasgowaudio.com

The experts in home entertainment

Sevenoaks Hi-Fi began life in 1972 as a small, specialist independent hi-fi retailer based in Sevenoaks, Kent growing strongly with a host of new shops throughout the next two decades. In 1995 the company name was changed to Sevenoaks Sound & Vision, reflecting our changing range of products as well as growing consumer interest in home cinema. Today, Sevenoaks has over 40 retail stores nationwide and has recently launched a new national network of Custom Installation Centres. Fuelled by the stratospheric rise of interest in flatscreen TVs, these CICs specialise in the creation and installation of bespoke home entertainment systems, across a wide range of budgets.



Mr R of Surbiton Lounge AV System

"Many thanks to you, Ed and the team for all the help you have given with me purchasing my TV and Home Entertainment system. The service was very good indeed"
Paul Epsom Store

Sevenoaks philosophy

The philosophy behind Sevenoaks Sound & Vision is simple, customer-focused and hasn't changed since the day the company started. When you shop at Sevenoaks we guarantee you:-

- ▶ Superb customer service, including after-sales care and attention to detail.
- ▶ An unrivalled product range, with every leading manufacturer in stock and impartial advice on offer.
- ▶ Knowledgeable staff that are highly trained, dedicated to customer service and have a genuine passion for home entertainment.
- ▶ Demonstration facilities in every store, offering pleasant and comfortable surroundings to test high-performance products in a home-like environment. Sevenoaks demonstration rooms are soundproofed and acoustically designed so that visiting a store is the closest you can get to sampling the products in your own home.
- ▶ Competitive prices across the whole range of products stocked.
- ▶ Leading edge expertise in Custom Installation via our associated network of nationwide Sevenoaks Custom Installation Centres.

Ultimately, our stated aim is quite simple... to offer a total home entertainment solution, no matter what the customer's need.



01



02



03



04

INFOCUS
IN81/IN82

SIM2
GRAND CINEMA HT380

- 01 **Pioneer KURO**
Plasma TV - 42, 50 & 60 inch models.
HD ready.
- 02 **Panasonic Viera**
Plasma TV - 37 & 42 inch models.
HD ready.
- 03 **Samsung Tulip Series**
Full 1080p HD ready LCD TV.
32, 37, 40, 46 and 52" inch models.
- 04 **DLP Projectors**
Choose full 1080p HD ready models from
InFocus and Sim2.

5 Year Warranty
included with all Plasma and
LCD televisions purchased at
our normal selling price*
Choose models from Loewe, Panasonic,
Pioneer, Samsung, Sharp and Sony
with a 26" screen or larger.
*Sevenoaks Retail Price (NICWAOO)

Home Cinema Speakers

05

06

Home Cinema

From a straightforward high definition flatscreen TV to a 1080p projector, from a DVD Recorder to a complete Blu-Ray or HD-DVD based solution, we can offer every conceivable flavour of Home Cinema.

When it comes to surround sound we know exactly how to help you achieve the effects you're after within the budget you've got.

Want a system that can be hidden away while it's doing its thing? No problem... we have a dedicated Custom Installation division that is second to none... just ask for details.

DVD & BLU-RAY DISC PLAYERS

Includes the award-winning Denon DVD1940 upscaling DVD player and Pioneer BDP-LX70A Blu-ray player.

AV RECEIVERS • ONKYO

This impressive range includes no less than three award-winners - TX-SR875, TX-SR605 and the entry-level model TX-SR505.

07

08

05 **KEF KHT3005SE**
Upgraded 5.1 speaker package
available in black or silver.

06 **REL R-Series Subwoofers**
Ideal for both hi-fi and home cinema
applications.

07 **Yamaha YSP400**
Digital sound projector - surround sound
from one speaker - ideal for 42" screens
- just add a DVD player.

08 **B&W MiniTheatre MT30**
Award-winning 5.1 speaker system
available in silver, black or white.

SEVENOAKS HOME CINEMA RANGE INCLUDES

ARCAM • B&W • DENON • INFOCUS • KEF • LOEWE • MARANTZ
MONITOR AUDIO • PANASONIC • ONKYO • PANASONIC • REL • SAMSUNG
SHARP • SIM2 • SONY • SPENDOR • TOSHIBA • YAMAHA

All Sevenoaks Stores:

- ▶ are staffed by experts in home cinema and hi-fi
- ▶ stock leading brands to offer a range of high quality products
- ▶ offer impartial and personal service
- ▶ have home cinema and hi-fi demonstration rooms

Come and visit us

Aberdeen
01224 252797
Bedford
01234 272779
Brighton Hove
01273 733338
Bristol
0117 974 3727

Bromley
020 8290 1988
Cambridge
01223 304770
Chelsea
020 7352 9466
Cheltenham
01242 241171

Ealing
020 8579 8777
Edinburgh
0131 229 7267
Epsom
01372 720720
Exeter
01392 218895

Glasgow
0141 332 9655
Guildford
01483 536666
Holborn
020 7837 7540
Hull
01482 587171

visit www.ssav.com for the latest news ▶ information ▶ offers and more

SEVENOAKS

SOUND & VISION

Hi-Fi & Home Cinema All-In-One Systems



Denon S-52DAB

Combines a CD player, FM/DAB radio and iPod dock. It can even stream internet radio wirelessly and play back MP3 or WMA files from CD, or stored on a USB device plugged directly into the unit.



Both 2-channel hi-fi and full multi-channel home cinema systems are available. Our comprehensive range has models to suit all your sound and vision needs.



Arcam Solo New
Separates performance from these award-winning systems. Available as Solo Music, Movie 5.1 or Movie 2.1 and New Mini.

B&W Zeppelin New
Hear just how good your iPod can sound.

This new iPod docking station ticks all the boxes: it's beautiful, solid as a rock and sounds amazing!



Can't find what you're looking for?

Come and visit the new website and see what's new in sound and vision.

- ▶ The latest news and information
- ▶ Comprehensive product range
- ▶ Nationwide stores
- ▶ Outstanding website only offers
- ▶ Free monthly competition
- ▶ Massive savings on end-of-line stock clearance

CUSTOM INSTALLATION CENTRES

just click www.ssav.com today!



Marantz CD6002 & PM6002

This CD and amplifier package gives excellent performance and offers exceptional value for money.



Roksan Kandy LIII

Sets a new standard for affordable hi-end amplifiers in its class.

11 Rotel & B&W RA04, RCD06, 685
B&W's 685 speakers complement Rotel's acclaimed CD and amplifier combination.

12 Pro-Ject Turntables
Revive your irreplaceable records with Pro-Ject turntables. The range includes the award-winning RPM1 Genie which comes complete with cartridge.

13 Monitor Audio
With a choice of sizes, ranges and finishes, there's a Monitor Audio speaker to complement any system.

14 KEF iQ Series
KEF's iQ series speakers includes bookshelf and floorstanding models.

15 Spendor New S3/SR
A substantial revision of Spendor's multi-award-winning S3/S mini-monitor. These versatile speakers, available in 5 real wood finishes, perform with a wide range of systems and separates.

Hi-Fi
Music, when conveyed through a well-sorted, high-quality audio system, has the power to move the human soul like nothing else. Choosing components/systems that will 'gel' together correctly in your home is no easy task but our vastly experienced staff do it day in, day out so let us help...



Multi-Room Audio
This multi-room digital music system from Sonos lets you play your favourite tunes all over the house – and control them from the palm of your hand. You can even play different songs in different rooms.



Don't forget! Accessories make the difference

The quality of sound and vision a system produces is determined as much by its accessories as its main components.

At Sevenoaks, accessories are not an afterthought - our staff can demonstrate the difference the right accessories can make to your home entertainment experience.

SOUNDSTYLE

GRADO

QED



Kingston
020 8547 0717

Leeds Wetherby
01937 586886

Leicester
0116 253 6567

Lincoln
01522 527397

Loughton
020 8532 0770

Maidstone
01622 686366

Manchester
0161 831 7969

Norwich
01603 767605

Nottingham Sherwood
0115 911 2121

Oxford
01865 241773

Peterborough
01733 897697

Plymouth
01752 226011

Poole
01202 671677

Preston
01772 825777

Reading
0118 959 7768

Sevenoaks
01732 459555

Sheffield
0114 255 5861

Southampton
023 8033 7770

Southgate
020 8886 2777

Staines
01784 460777

Swindon
01793 610992

Swiss Cottage
020 7722 9777

Tunbridge Wells
01892 531543

Watford
01923 213533

Weybridge
01932 828525

Witham Essex
01376 501733

Wolverhampton
01902 312225

Yeovil
01935 700078

FREE £50 ISOTEK IEC MAINS CONNECTOR

Subscribe to **HI-FI CHOICE** for just £3.74 a month and get a £50 IsoTek IEC mains connector completely

FREE!

isoTek®
www.isoteksystems.com

"Now you can improve upon your existing mains cables, with the Deep Cryogenically Treated (DCT) IEC mains connector. These clever connectors extract every last ounce of performance from the cables you already own". Dan George, HFC



Order online at...
www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/hfc/p041

SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

WHY SUBSCRIBE TO HI-FI CHOICE?

- › Pay just **£3.74** per issue
- › **13 issues** a year delivered direct to your door
- › Save money compared to the shop price
- › You'll never miss an issue
- › Ordering is easy and only takes a minute
- › **PLUS!** Subscribe to Hi-Fi Choice this month and you'll also receive a free Isotek IEC mains connector!

HOW TO SUBSCRIBE

- › Call **0844 848 2852** (quote offer code p041)
- › Or visit: www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/hfc/p041
- › Or complete the priority order form (right) and pop it the post



OVERSEAS SUBSCRIPTIONS

If you live outside the UK, please call **+44 1858 438794** for our latest prices

PRIORITY ORDER FORM

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 £3.74 monthly by Direct Debit and receive my FREE IsoTek mains connector

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 monthly Direct Debit (UK only) and receive my FREE IsoTek IEC mains connector (please complete the Direct Debit form below)

(I understand that £3.74 will be debited from my account every month)

	Originator's Identification Number 768195
--	---



Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay Direct Debits

To the Manager (Bank name)

Address

Postcode

Name(s) of account holder(s)

Branch sort code

Bank/ Building Society account number

Ref No (Office use only)

Signature(s)

Date

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 P041

OFFER ENDS 05 APRIL 2008
Direct Debit and free gift offer only available to UK subscribers

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

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!

Most turntables are pretty far from sounding their best. Even some extremely well-designed high-end turntables can sound mediocre, thanks to poor installation and set-up. That's where Michael Fremer's excellent *Practical Guide to Turntable Set-Up* DVD comes into its own.

It's common knowledge in the hi-fi world that correct set-up of cartridge/arm/turntable is essential; not only for high quality audio performance, but also to extend the life of your records and your stylus. Vinyl expert, Michael Fremer (of *Stereophile* magazine fame) takes you through the complete process, step by step, from basic cartridge alignment to optimising Azimuth, stylus rake angle, overhang, anti-skate, etc. The DVD also shows

Michael demonstrating the most popular set-up tools, with hints and tips to ensure they produce the best results. Add to this a feature on George Marino, senior mastering engineer at Sterling Sound in NYC and you have an essential purchase for any LP enthusiast.

The DVD is presented in the American NTSC TV format, with no regional coding. This means it will play on virtually any DVD player, although people using older equipment should check that their player and television set support NTSC pictures.

ONLY £29.95



Best Buy Accessories



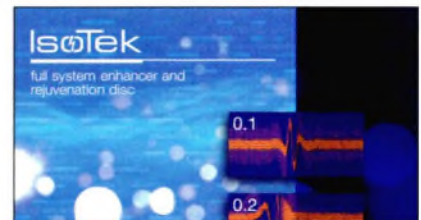
Clearaudio Deluxe Bubble Level

Use Clearaudio's high quality stainless steel bubble level to ensure your turntable is lined up.
Price: £22.95



IsoTek Sigmas Mains Conditioner

Your mains supply is polluted and that is ruining your hi-fi's performance. This is the cure.
Price: £995.95



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



Shure Stylus Force Gauge

This classic balance-style gauge is remarkably effective and accurate. A vinyl must-buy!
Price: £24.95



Kraستي Disc 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)



Funtech PC-Z Disc Treatment

Clean away the dirt, grease and goo that covers the pits and lands of your CD and DVD discs.
Price: £24.95



LAST Stylus Cleaner

Discs sound better and are less likely to be damaged if your stylus is completely clean.
Price: £19.95

ANALOGUE ACCESSORIES

Art Vinyl LP display mount (single)	£29.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Art Vinyl LP display mount (pack of three)	£69.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cardas 180g Frequency Sweep LP	£21.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clearaudio Diamond Stylus Brush	£9.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clearaudio Harmo-Nicer LP Mat	£34.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clearaudio Stroboscopic Test Record	£29.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clearaudio Stroboscopic Light	£81.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clearaudio Deluxe Bubble Level	£22.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clearaudio Clever Record Clamp	£12.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clearaudio Quadro Record Clamp	£73.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
KAB Strobe Disc & Light	£79.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Katli Audio Stylus Pressure Gauge	£74.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Loricraft Record Mat	£49.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Michael Fremer Turntable Setup DVD	£29.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Michell Engineering Record Clamp	£23.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Michell Universal Dust Cover	£46.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Michell Techno Weight	£67.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Milty Zerostat	£39.50	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mobile Fidelity GeoDisca	£44.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ortofon T Force Tracking Force Gauge	£7.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Polaris Plus Stylus Alignment Gauge	£5.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Project Bubble Level	£14.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Project Record Puck	£39.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ringmat's How to Set Up A Turntable	£7.50	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ringmat Developments The Ringmat	£49.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ringmat Anniversary Ringmat	£69.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shure Stylus Force Gauge	£24.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
'The Producer's Cut' Test LP	£24.95	<input type="checkbox"/>

AUDIO BOOKS

The Complete Guide To High-End Audio	£24.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
How To Set Up And Fine Tune A Turntable	£7.50	<input type="checkbox"/>
The LP is Back	£9.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Home theatre For Everyone	£19.95	<input type="checkbox"/>

DIGITAL ACCESSORIES

Allsop DVD Optimiser/Laser Lens Cleaner	£19.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
AudioPrism CD Stoplight	£19.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
AVIA Home Theatre Set-Up & Calibration	£39.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bedini Hand Held Clarifier MkII	£69.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Compact Dynamics CD Plus	£14.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Compact Dynamics CD UpGrade	£14.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Densen DeMagic CD	£12.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Digital Video Essentials (PAL) DVD Set-Up Disc	£19.95	<input type="checkbox"/>

Lasertrack CD2000 Set-Up Disc	£19.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marigo 3D CD/DVD Mat	£59.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mobile Fidelity ULTRADISC CD-R (Qty 5)	£14.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Richard Black's U.S.H.E.R. CD	£14.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
IsoTek System Enhancer, DeMag & Burn-In CD	£14.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Order both the above discs for only	£21.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ringmat The Statmat MkII	£19.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sound Improvement Disc (Model 14/15)	£17.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ultra Burn-In CD3000	£24.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Walker Audio ERS Paper (8" x5")	£14.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Walker Audio ERS Paper Self Adhesive (8" x5")	£19.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
XLO Reference Test & Burn-In CD	£24.95	<input type="checkbox"/>

CARE/ CLEANING PRODUCTS

Allsop Carbon Edge Laser Lens Cleaner	£14.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Allsop CD & DVD Fast Wipes	£4.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Allsop CD Scratch Repair Kit	£12.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Allsop Radial CD Cleaner	£10.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Buggtussel Vinyl-Zyme Gold (2oz)	£12.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clearaudio Stylus Tip Brush	£9.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clearaudio Carbon Fibre Record Brush	£13.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
DeoxIT Contact Cleaner (200ml)	£13.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Furutech PC-2 CD/ DVD cleaning agent	£24.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Goldring Exstatic Deluxe Record Brush	£14.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Goldring Exstatic Record Sleeves	£11.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Knosti Disco Antistat Record Cleaner	£44.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Knosti Disco Replacement Brushes (pr)	£7.50	<input type="checkbox"/>
L'Art du Son Record Cleaner (5Litre)	£27.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
L'Art du Son CD/DVD Cleaner	£39.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Last All-Purpose Record Cleaner	£39.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Last CD/DVD cleaner	£19.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Last Record Preservative	£39.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Last Stylus Cleaner	£19.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Last Stylus Stylus Treatment	£29.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lyra SPT Stylus Cleaner	£29.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nagaoka Antistatic Record Sleeves (50)	£14.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nordost Eco 3 Static Inhibitor Spray	£24.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Onzow Zerodust Stylus Tip Cleaner	£34.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Optrix CD Cleaner & Clarifier	£16.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
ProGold Contact Enhancer (ProGold 20ml)	£13.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unbranded Inner Sleeves (Qty 100)	£24.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
VPI HW16.5 Record Cleaning Machine	£475.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
Walker Audio Super Silver Treatment	£59.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Walker Audio Ultra Vivid CD/DVD Enhancer	£119.95	<input type="checkbox"/>

ISOLATION RACKS AND CONES

IXOS Sorbothane Feet (Qty 4)	£19.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nordost Pulsar Points (Aluminium) (Qty 4)	£69.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nordost Titanium Pulsar Points	£249.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nordost Quasar Points	£119.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Project T/Table Wall Mount	£74.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Project T/Table Platform	£224.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spectral Foculpods Support Systems (Qty 4)	£14.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spectral Polipods Support Systems (Qty 8)	£14.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stillpoints Cones (Qty 3)	£244.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stillpoints Risers (Qty 3)	£84.95	<input type="checkbox"/>

MAINS CABLES AND CONDITIONERS

24ct Gold Plated UK Plug	£19.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Furutech FIUK G	£54.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Furutech Silver Rhodium 13A Fuse	£39.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hi-Fi Tuning Silver/Gold 13A Fuse	£19.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
IEC - Figure 8 Adaptor	£9.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
IsoTek 24ct Gold IEC Connector	£49.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
IsoTek Premium Mains Cable (1.5M)	£59.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
IsoTek Elite Mains Cable (1.5M)	£89.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
IsoTek Optimum Mains Cable (1.5M)	£149.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nordost Shiva Mains Cable (2.0M)	£220.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nordost Vishnu Mains Cable (2.0M)	£450.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nordost Brahma Reference Mains Cable (2.0M)	£949.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nordost Valhalla Reference Mains Cable (2.0M)	£1924.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
IsoTek IsoPlug	£29.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
IsoTek NeoPlug	£49.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
IsoTek GII Solus	£349.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
IsoTek GII Multi-4-Way	£199.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
IsoTek GII Multi-6-Way	£224.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
IsoTek GII Multi-8-Way	£259.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
IsoTek GII Gemini-6-Way (distribution strip)	£299.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
IsoTek GII Mini Sub/Vision	£594.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
IsoTek Sigmas	£999.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
IsoTek GII Titan	£1649.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
IsoTek GII Nova	£1749.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kemp Electronics Power Strip 4-Way	£324.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kemp Electronics Power Strip 6-Way	£375.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kemp Electronics Power Strip 8-Way	£424.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nordost THOR by IsoTek	£1649.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
V.D.H. Polarity Tester	£17.50	<input type="checkbox"/>
WattGate 320 IEC Connector (Black)	£18.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
WattGate 320I HC (16Amp)	£28.95	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wyrewizard Magus 1.5m	£124.95	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

ORDER FORM

Orders can also be placed online: www.choicebits.co.uk

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____ Tel: _____

Cheque/postal order enclosed for £ _____ made payable to Choice Bits
 Or please charge my Visa/Mastercard/Amex/Switch Card number

□□□□ □□□□ □□□□ □□□□ □□□□ Signature _____

Valid From _____ Expires _____ Issue number (Switch) _____

How to order:

Simply complete this order form, fill in your details and send it to: Unit 16 Plantagenet House, Kingsclere Park, RG20 4SW
Alternatively: Give us a call on 0870 240 7228
email: orders@choicebits.co.uk
Order online: www.choicebits.co.uk

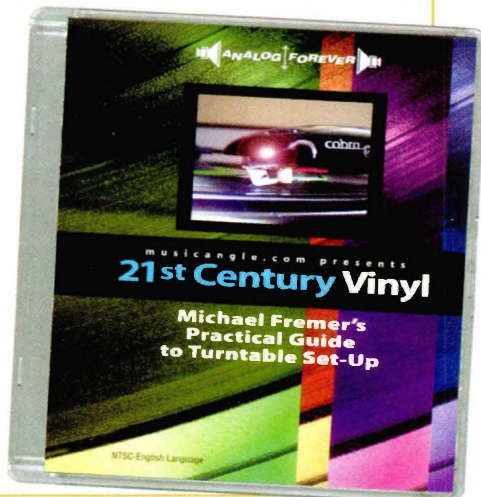
UK postage:

Postage is £2.00 for the first item and £1.00 thereafter. All Prices include VAT at 17.5%.

European/ International sales:

Overseas sales are welcome - please call for a postage quotation. Sales outside the EU are VAT exclusive.

This service is operated by hifisale.com Ltd (registered address) trading as Choice Bits under license from Future Publishing Ltd. Your order will be fulfilled by hifisale.



Specialist items at great prices with

Atacama

£ CALL NOW



HIFI BASE
Equinox 2

INFORMATION

Combining high performance with practicality and good looks, the Equinox Series offers a flexible approach to Hi-Fi equipment rack design. The Equinox has the unique ability to grow with your Hi-Fi system by allowing you to begin with a 2 shelf base module, you then simply stack on top individual single shelf modules to create a 3, 4 or even a 5 shelf rack.

Pro-ject

CHECK ONLINE



TURNTABLE
RPM1 Genie

INFORMATION

The Pro-Ject Genie turntable offers exceptional sound and exceptional quality. This award winning manual turntable is fitted with a Ortofon OM 3E cartridge and with it's stunning design will without a doubt be the envy of your friends.

Planar

£ CALL NOW



HOME THEATER
PROJECTOR
PD7130

INFORMATION

With a 4500:1 contrast ratio, 900 lumens, and native 720p HD resolution, this projector will make your eyes dilate and your heart race. Especially when you factor in the integrator-friendly features, such as horizontal and vertical lens shift, DLP's DarkChip technology, ample connectivity, and menus that don't require an engineering degree. Up until this projector, the wow factor had never officially been located.

> Products, technology and irresistible prices

FREE DELIVERY

PRE-AMPLIFIER WITH POWER AMPLIFIER

The PRE30 employs a Class A coupled, discrete fully balanced circuit topology utilised for the best possible signal-to-noise ratio and audio fidelity. This combined with the A30.2 Dual Mono Power Amplifier produces music and movie sound as vibrantly as at the moment it was recorded.

PRE30/A30.2



BUY NOW-PAY
AUTUMN
2008

Primare

CHECK ONLINE



INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER

The new L.III Kandy integrated benefits from totally revised amplifier internals. The mains transformer and the AC circuitry are now moved to one side away from the amplifier main circuits thus dramatically reducing AC noise interference. After rectification circuitry, the power supply layout, distribution and tracking to different sections of the amplifier have been greatly improved.

Kandy L.III Integrated Amplifier MkIII

Roksan

5.1 HOME CINEMA SPEAKER PACKAGE
M-Cube 5.1

IKON AV SPEAKER PACKAGE
Ikon AV Speaker Package

AV PACKAGE
CS SYSTEM 3

5.1 SPEAKER SYSTEM
Xeno

£ CALL FOR PRICE

£ CALL FOR PRICE

£ CALL FOR PRICE

£ CALL FOR PRICE



BUY NOW-PAY
2008

MISSION

INFORMATION

Mission's Stunning M-Cube consists of an active 250W subwoofer with 2x200mm (8") bass driver, magnetically shielded centre and satellite speakers and 5 Wall brackets.



DALI

INFORMATION

This five star What HiFi award winning speaker package comprises of 2 Ikon 6 floor standing speakers, 1 Ikon Vokal 2 centre, 2 on wall rear speakers and the Dalli Ikon subwoofer. All of which are also available individually with free QED speaker cable.



Audica

INFORMATION

The Audica range of speakers sound as good as they look. Each speaker is constructed from extruded high grade aluminium. Its section is shaped in such a way as to cancel rearward firing waves from the driver, thus increasing driver efficiency and decreasing cabinet resonance.



MJ Acoustics

INFORMATION

This amazing new XENO system features High Grade crossover, ability to be fed with a full range signal, Bass driver technology, Tweeter employing soft dome technology and Boundary effect rear ports to enhance the refraction effects from the lower frequencies.

CHECK ONLINE FOR MORE PRODUCTS & PRICES

Pioneer

CREEK
AUDIO LIMITED

MONITOR AUDIO

polkaudio
The speaker specialists

Wharfedale

audio pro

Terms and Conditions: All offers, prices and stock are subject to availability with change. All goods remain the property of HiFi Bitz until paid in full. In line with the Distance selling regulations 2000 you may cancel your order within seven working days. This must be done in the form of a letter, fax or email; a telephone call does not constitute cancellation. All goods accepted for return under this regulation must be in their original box and packaging and returned through your own courier. We expect such goods to be brand new with all accessories in pristine condition. Goods that are not kept in this manner will be subject to a handling fee of 25% of the purchase price. We deliver in the mainlands UK only.

free delivery



HiFiBitz

> **Cutting-edge HiFi Specialists with thousands of high-end products available**

With over 130 brands offering awe-inspiring products from hard-to-find to more popular items, few can match our experience, range and stockholding.

Free delivery, excellent after-sales support and tempting finance options ensure you will come back for more.

WWW.HiFiBitz.CO.UK 08700 276 888

£ CALL FOR PRICE

CHECK ONLINE

£ CALL FOR PRICE

CHECK ONLINE

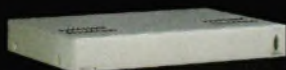


AV 7.1 SURROUND RECEIVER

The AVR-1508 packs the power to drive seven speakers and all the surround decoding you'll need to turn every source in your audio/video system into convincing surround sound. 75 full-bandwidth-rated watts x 7 channels of high-current Denon amplification ensure powerful home theatre thrills.

AVR-1508

Denon



STEREO POWER AMPLIFIER

The 8000P is a classic two channel power amplifier, delivering over 100W per channel and featuring a frequency response of 0.1 Hz - 75 kHz.

8000P

Audiolab



CD PLAYER

Continuing with Denon's multi-bit philosophy, the DCD-700AE features the latest version of its renowned LAMBDA converter which virtually eliminates zero cross distortion and incorporates the latest AL24 processing. This circuitry delivers a fast dynamic sound, with a very low noise floor and excellent low level linearity.

DCD-700AE

Denon



7.1 AV AMPLIFIER

With the TX-SR505E HDMI transport enabling pass-thru sources up to 1080p and component video supporting 720p and 1080i sources, this AV receiver is a fine investment for those who want the best of what is available today and tomorrow.

TX-SR505

Onkyo

Onkyo



BUY NOW-PAY AUTUMN 2008

A FUSION OF ROCK-SOLID POWER AND HI-DEF PRECISION

FOR MORE 5 STAR DEALS VISIT WWW.HiFiBitz.CO.UK

HD 7.1 AV AMP TX-SR875

Exceeding even the highest expectations, the TX-SR875 AV surround sound receiver deserves all the accolades it gets. The foundations of the TX-SR875 are its isolated power amplifier block (which supports a dual push-pull amplification design) and preamplifier. You'll also find a blend of onboard technologies to prime your home theatre for high-definition playback. You're looking at the first HDMI equipped Onkyo receiver to take up to four components with 1080p video and master-quality audio capabilities. Also available in black.

Denon

CHECK ONLINE

IPOD DOCK ASD-3W



INFORMATION

The multi-media ASD-3N from Denon is not just your basic iPod dock. When connected to the internet wirelessly the dock can access up to 7,000 internet radio stations to be played through your mini or micro system. When linked to your PC or laptop the ASD-3N can work within Windows Media to play the tracks you have stored on your computer. This iPod dock is a great addition to any AV or hi-fi system.

Polk

£ CALL FOR PRICE

IN-CEILING SPEAKER SC80



INFORMATION

SCI Series In-Wall/In-Ceiling Loudspeakers have been designed from the ground up to be our best entry level custom install product. Several of the SCI Series speakers share cut-out sizes and accessories with other products for the utmost in install flexibility and performance compatibility, another way Polk Audio combines performance and value.

Fatman

What Hi-Fi 5 Star Award

VALVE AMPLIFIER ITUBE



INFORMATION

Want to be able to listen to your iPod in style? Want that luscious warm analogue sound combined with the ease of use of digital technology? Just for that reason we present the Fatman iTube Valve Dock from TLA Audio. This unit features a docking station that is compatible with all iPods (except Shuffle).

InFocus

TEAC



MISSION



Finance options available through V12 Finance

Full terms and conditions of the sale are available at www.hifibitz.co.uk/terms.asp. The terms of sale do not affect your statutory rights. Finance options are available on all items priced over £290 e.g. Buy Now Pay May 2008. All calls are recorded for training purposes.

FANCY WINNING THE ULTIMATE GAMING PACKAGE?

WE ARE GIVING YOU THE CHANCE TO WIN ALL 3 NEXT GENERATION GAMES CONSOLES

1/NINTENDO WII CONSOLE

The Wii console and its revolutionary motion-sensitive controller, the Wii Remote, have been designed so that anyone can enjoy games, whatever their ability or experience.



2/MICROSOFT XBOX 360 ELITE CONSOLE

Xbox 360™ Elite is the newest addition to the Xbox family that includes a huge 120GB hard drive, a high-definition multimedia interface (HDMI) cable, and a premium black finish.

HOW TO ENTER

Simply Call **0845 357 3637**
(Local Rate)

& tell us which of these Original consoles was released in the UK first?

3/SONY PLAYSTATION 3 40GB CONSOLE

The PlayStation 3 is the most advanced console from Sony yet! More than just an ordinary games machine, a built in 40Gb hard drive stores all of your music, videos and games downloaded through Sony's online services.

HOME CINEMA

HI-FI CHOICE

T3

WHAT SATellite AND DIGITAL TV

What Video High Definition TV

XBOX 360

Nintendo

PLAYSTATION 3

Wii

TERMS & CONDITIONS

By entering you agree to these conditions. Please see our website for more details of future offers and promotions from Future Publishing Limited. If you do not want to receive information relating to future offers and promotions, please state this in the call. No purchase necessary. Call within 48 hours of your local rate or mobile rate may apply. Entry must be received on or after 11th July 2008 and the winner will be notified by telephone as soon as possible. There is a limit of one entry per person. Entry strictly limited to one entry per individual unless otherwise stated. Entry will be void if it is made through a company or agency which is not qualified. The winning entry will be selected at random. There will be one winner and the prize will be a Sony PlayStation 3 40GB, Xbox 360 Elite and Nintendo Wii. All entrants except that if they win Future Publishing Limited will have the right, without additional payment or permission, to use their name, toward residence and address for the purposes of announcing the winner of this competition and for related promotional purposes. Prize draw not valid in countries where it is illegal. For more information, please send a stamped address envelope with your request to: Subscriptions Department, Future Publishing, The Future Publishing Plc, 30, Monmouth Street, Bath, Only UK residents aged 16 years and over may enter this competition. No responsibility for entries and no prize is payable to the employee of any entity that has been involved with the administration of this competition or any member of their households may enter this competition. member of their households may enter this competition.

*Calls cost up to 2p/min plus a 6p set up fee from a BT landline. Mobile and other providers' charges may vary.

HI-FI CHOICE BACK ISSUES



ISSUE 287



ISSUE 288



ISSUE 289



ISSUE 290



ISSUE 291



ISSUE 292



ISSUE 293



ISSUE 294



ISSUE 295



ISSUE 296



ISSUE 297



ISSUE 298



ISSUE 299



ISSUE 300



ISSUE 301



ISSUE 302



ISSUE 303



ISSUE 304

YOUR DETAILS

Name _____
 Address _____

 Email address _____
 Card number _____
 Expiry date _____
 Signature _____

SEND YOUR ORDER TO

UK READERS:
 Hi-Fi Choice Back Issues
 Unit 4 Tower House
 Sovereign Park
 Market Harborough, Leics
 LE16 9EF

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 £5.90, EU £6.90, Outside EU £7.90 (per issue)

BACK ISSUES

Back issues are available by mail order (as long as stocks remain). They cost £5.90 (UK), £6.90 (Europe) or £7.90 (rest of the world). All prices include p&p. You can order by phone on 0844 848 2852 or +44 1858 438794 (overseas readers). We accept Mastercard and Visa credit cards, and Maestro debit cards. Alternatively, send a cheque or PO made payable to Future Publishing Ltd. Please use 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, NW6 6NW.

PLEASE NOTE: THIS SERVICE IS ONLY FOR OTHERWISE UNOBTAINABLE REVIEWS

Why not subscribe to Hi-Fi Choice?

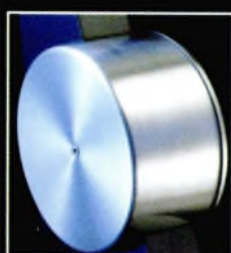
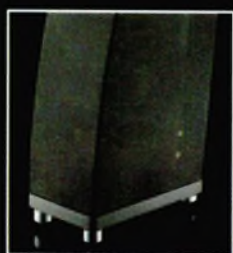


See p80
 for more details...

The new Reference 3 with CDT II™ Tweeter Technology

Anthony Gallo isn't one to follow the crowd, a characteristic he shares with the people who buy his loudspeakers.

His latest speaker design, the Reference 3, is rewriting the price versus performance equation. So much so in fact that influential U.S. publication *The Absolute Sound* have bestowed on it their ultimate honour - product of the year.



"Gallo's Reference 3's are rewriting the book on value in high-end loudspeakers, making accessible a level of performance that might previously have been far beyond the reach of most of us."
The Absolute Sound

For further information or to locate your nearest dealer, please visit our website

www.anthonygallo.co.uk

tel. 0870 350 1348

nonconformist

adj. an individual who does not comply with conventional norms or socially approved patterns of behavior or thought

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 four stars 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

- 90 CD PLAYERS
- 92 DVD PLAYERS
- 96 VINYL
- 99 RADIO TUNERS

AMPLIFIERS

- 100 STEREO AMPS
- 102 MULTICHANNEL AV AMPS

LOUDSPEAKERS

- 104 STEREO SPEAKERS
- 109 SUBWOOFERS

ANCILLARIES

- 111 HEADPHONES
- 112 CABLES
- 113 STANDS AND SUPPORTS

DEALER CLASSIFIED

- 114 DEALER GUIDE
- 121 DEALER DIRECTORY

CD PLAYERS

Audio disc players for music only



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

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

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



again before being amplified and sent to the output sockets.

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

SUPER AUDIO CD



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

Q&A

WHAT'S A DAC?

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

WHY HAVE SEPARATE TRANSPORTS & DACS?

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

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

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

DO I NEED DIGITAL CABLES FOR A CD PLAYER?

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

WHAT IS OVERSAMPLING/UPSAMPLING?

Oversampling involves multiplying the sampling frequency by a whole number, usually between four and 32, but sometimes higher, and is designed let the DAC to work in a more linear fashion.

Upsampling is where the data stream is stretched out by interpolation and is typically used to refer to large changes in sampling rate such as from 44.1 kHz to 192kHz.

CAN I PLAY SACDS ON A NORMAL CD PLAYER?

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

CAN I PLAY DVDS ON A CD PLAYER?

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

TOP BUYS



Rega Apollo £498

Rega's latest entry-level player is a splendidly musical performer, given its modest price. Bass is good, midrange is great and high frequencies are truly exceptional.



Cambridge Audio Azur 840C £750

Sitting at the top of Cambridge Audio's Azur range, the 840C is a technically innovative player with a sound that belies its sub-£1,000 price – open, subtle and refined.

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	
UP TO £1,000											
🏆	Arcam DIVA CD73	450	Neatly built and well presented player that's especially good at bass and timing, with detail hardly less assured	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	301
🏆	Audio Analogue Rossini	850	Valve-sporting player delivers a warm, engaging sound, but mediocre remote and no optical out may limit appeal	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	299
🏆	Cambridge Audio Azur 640C	250	If you value the effortless flow of musical information, you should certainly hear this player	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	285
🏆	Cambridge Audio Azur 740C	500	Very flexible, this innovative upsampling player sounds exceptionally neutral and highly informative	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	293
🏆	Cambridge Audio Azur 840C	750	Purposefully undemonstrative, combining neutrality, detail and timing: enhanced by flexibility as a DAC	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	291
🏆	Creek Evo	495	A minute treble lift, otherwise this is a very capable player that offers fine value	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	285
🏆	Denon DCD-500AE	160	Cheap, well built and good, if slightly soft-edged sound quality	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	295
🏆	Denon DCD-700AE	250	Excellent entry level quality CD player lacks for nothing. Musicians please note: even has variable speed replay	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	284
🏆	Marantz CD6002	280	A hint of treble unevenness is the only specific flaw: performance is class-leading in most areas	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	301
🏆	Naim CD5i	825	Bass has great extension but lacks control, slightly. Tonal neutrality higher up is excellent, however	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	291
🏆	Quad 99CD-S	650	Revels in big music thanks to fearless presentation: smaller-scale works can lack focus	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	291
🏆	Rega Apollo	498	Unless you can't abide top-loaders, check this out: musically it's a highly praiseworthy performer	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	285
🏆	Sony SCD-XA3000ES	800	A good, if not truly great, all-rounder with CD and fine multi-channel SACD performance	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	276
🏆	Vincent CD-S6 MkII	999	With its tube output stage, a beguiling midrange, sweet highs and attractively figured lows plus fine dynamics	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	287
ABOVE £1,000											
🏆	Bryston BCD-1	2,050	Not as open as some but rather more timely than most, it sounds a lot more gripping than it looks	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	300
🏆	Carm Fog 3	1,995	Ergonomically challenged, high energy player with Gallic charm and digital preamp on board	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	302
👑	Chord Red Reference CD	13,345	The definitive statement in Red Book CD playing, this player's look and sound places it at the top of the tree	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	299
🏆	Classé CDP-102	3,000	Rich, dynamic CD/DVD player with a full bottom end, impressive dynamics and a luxurious yet revealing balanced	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	286
🏆	Classé CDP-202	4,750	CD/DVD-A player with brilliant sound, if sophistication is your bag. Includes S-video and composite outputs	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	284
🏆	Copland CDA823	1,750	Don't let the laid-back character fool you - this player has plenty of insight too	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	280
🏆	Cyrus CD8X/PSX-R	1,400	Lightness of touch is the key here, but there is also good bass and some very fine detail on offer too	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	295
🏆	EMM Labs CDSA	6,995	Classy, stripped down to basics SACD/CD player with some excellent engineering below decks	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	302
🏆	Esoteric X-03SE	4,995	Resolution and musicality close to the top of the game. For out and out transparency and build quality it's hard to beat	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	285
🏆	Gamut CD3	3,500	Superb resolve of fine detail combined with a perfectly judged balance and an ability to draw you into the music	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	289
🏆	Krell Evolution 505 SACD	8,777	Brilliant replacement for SACD Standard, superb musical discrimination. No high-res digital output	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	289
🏆	Leema Antlia	2,495	Musically engaging player that will have you going through your CDs afresh. Balanced connection is best	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	291
🏆	Linn Majik	1,950	Compact and capable of most CD formats, it's musically communicative with fine pace and enthusiasm	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	283
🏆	Marantz SA-7S1	5,000	Something of a bargain even at this price, the SA-7S1 sets the benchmark for CD/SACD players of its ilk	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	297
🏆	Marantz SA-11S2	2,500	Superb value for money, this well-balanced player features various filter settings to customise performance	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	304
🏆	Meridian G06	1,695	Highly refined player with a combination of analysis and self-effacing response to musical demands	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	295
🏆	Moon Supernova	4,500	Refined, high-performance player offers tremendous transparency and includes coaxial digital input	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	296
🏆	Musical Fidelity X-RAY v8	1,098	Accurate, yet musical performer. £799, but requires £299 TRIPLE-X power supply outside of X-T100 system	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	288
🏆	Rega Saturn	1,298	Good detail, lively natural bass, and good integration of musical strands without losing their individual character	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	295
🏆	Unison Research Unico CD	1,495	Strong timing and rhythm, this player is well equipped for more melodic music, with good detail resolution	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	295

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.



Esoteric X-03SE £4,995

Esoteric's entry-level CD/SACD player delivers astonishing sonic detail and precision, coupled with a gorgeous sense of musical structure. Truly, it's brilliant.

DVD PLAYERS

Disc players for audio and video



Although players featuring both DVD-Audio and DVD-Video are thin on the ground, the universal disc player (that also supports SACD and CD alongside the DVD formats) continues to dominate the worlds of audio and video alike. In fact, it's rare to find a DVD player that doesn't support DVD-Audio and SACD these days.

So, what advantages do universal disc players hold over traditional CD players?

Put simply... choice. A DVD player or universal offer the listener the chance to use far more than just your CDs and build up a wider collection of music and video, all played through one device. The technology has matured now, and the performance of all formats played through these devices gets surprisingly close to dedicated players these days. The same cannot be said of Blu-ray or HD DVD players, many of which are not yet good enough to play CD well.



DVD-AUDIO, HD DVD AND BLU-RAY

DVD-Audio is a high-resolution music format that offers multichannel, stereo and Dolby Digital tracks on dedicated DVD-A discs.



The discs can be played on any DVD player, but can only be appreciated at their best with a DVD-A or universal disc player. In fairness, the DVD-Audio format has not proved to be a resounding success, and SACD discs are more readily available.

The two new kids on the block are HD DVD and Blu-ray. Both the same physical size as the CD and DVD disc, these formats offer even more data storage capacity than DVD (up to 50GB instead of DVD's 8.5GB). However, these formats are the exclusive domain of home cinema and gaming fans. Sadly, the possibility of super-high-resolution music-only Blu-ray or HD DVD discs remains distant at best.

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 HDMI, then component video, followed by RGB Scart. All these are 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.

WHAT IS 1080P?

HDTV is defined by the number of lines the picture creates and whether it's interlaced (like old TV) or progressive scan (like a PC monitor).

CONNECTIONS



HDMI LINK: A flat, multi-pin socket that carries digital audio and video, like a digital SCART lead. Arguably the best choice for HDTV pictures.

VIDEO CONNECTIONS: Yellow socket is composite; red, green and blue sockets are for component; the small black multipin socket is S-Video; the big one is SCART.

DIGITAL OUTPUTS: For Dolby Digital, DTS and PCM audio bitstreams.

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

Our favourite BT BEST BUY EC EDITOR'S CHOICE DVD PLAYERS

Audio/Video disc players

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS					ISSUE NUMBER
				DVD-A COMPATIBLE	SACD COMPATIBLE	ELEC DIG OUTPUT	OPT DIG OUTPUT	HEADPHONE SOCKET	
UP TO £1,000									
	Arcam DiVA DV135	900	Unchanged looks and stereo-only DVD-A/SACD, but the overall performance is great across all formats. Stunning picture, too	●	●	●	●	●	296
	Denon DVD-1920	250	Respectable (if unexciting) and flexible audio player, but something of a star from its HDMI equipped upsampling video subsystem	●	●	●	●	●	276
	Marantz DV7001	600	Enhanced model based on DV6001, but with various improvements, including superior CD replay capabilities	●	●	●	●	●	296
	Marantz DV7600	600	A mid-market cracker, with sound and picture quality that generally exceeds expectation	●	●	●	●	●	274
	NAD T585	800	Easy to live with universal player that shows clear signs of rejuvenation of the Classic range	●	●	●	●	●	294
	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
	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
ABOVE £1,000									
EC	Accoustic Arts Surr Player 1	4,495	A very high-quality Pioneer-based machine, excellent sound from both hi-res and regular formats	●	●	●	●	●	299
	Arcam DiVA DV137	1,250	Good overall audio performance and excellent upscaling HDMI DVD-Video player, but stereo-only SACD playback at time of writing	●	●	●	●	●	285
	Denon DVD-3930	1,100	Well engineered universal player with useful bypass facilities for pure audio, and unusually powerful video image processing	●	●	●	●	●	287
EC	Linn Akurate CD	3,985	This highly engaging multiformat non-video player doesn't have huge transparency or a fancy box, but is musically addictive	●	●	●	●	●	299
	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
EC	Meridian G98AH	3,625	Meridian's most widely compatible G-Series DVD player – groundbreaking DVD-Audio replay and a fine CD player too	●	●	●	●	●	265
EC	Naim DVD5	2,565	Naim's first DVD player is a real success, notable for its class-leading sound with CD and (optional) multichannel DVD-Audio	●	●	●	●	●	263
	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
EC	Townshend TA 565 CD	3,000	A universal machine that excels with music and is quite exceptional with good ol' stereo CD	●	●	●	●	●	270

SPECS KEY **DVD-A COMPATIBLE** Plays high-resolution DVD-A discs in two and multichannel modes. **SACD COMPATIBLE** Plays high-resolution SACD discs in two and multichannel modes.
ELEC DIGITAL OUTPUT Electrical coaxial output for digital connection to a multichannel amplifier or receiver. **OPT DIGITAL OUTPUT** Optical Toslink output for digital connection to a multichannel amplifier or receiver.
HEADPHONE SOCKET Quarter inch (6.3mm) headphone jack fitted to the DVD player

TOP BUYS



Marantz DV7600 £600

A universal player that's strong with all formats, including music on CD/SACD/DVD-A.



NAD T585 £800

This universal player borrows from NAD's Masters Series to make a cracking all-rounder.



Arcam DiVA DV135 £900

Stereo-only SACD and DVD-A, but excellent performance with audio and video.



Meridian G98AH £3,625

A digital *tour de force* – as exceptional with both audio and video as you'd expect.

ONE CATALOGUE . . .

So how do you get your hands on this catalogue?
Simply give us a call on **0870 241 2469**, it's yours **FREE!**

What's more you'll join our database and get our free quarterly newsletters featuring product reviews, offers, group tests, etc... absolutely free. It is the best way to keep up-to-date with the latest and greatest audiophile accessories and latest industry news.

Visit www.hifisale.com to advertise online totally **FREE** of charge. After a few simple steps your advert will be posted online. Users can also change and update their listing in real time. Each month www.hifisale.com has **over 50,000 visitors**, and to date over **100,000** adverts have been placed online!

. . . 1000s of answers!

richer SOUNDS

THE UK'S HI-FI, HOME CINEMA & FLAT PANEL TV SPECIALISTS!

**BIGGEST BRANDS, BEST PRICES, EXPERT ADVICE
& TAKE IT HOME TODAY!**

INCREDIBLE NAD & TANNOY SYSTEM DEAL



**JUST ADD
iPOD**
FEATURES
LINE-IN
SO YOU CAN
MAKE YOUR IPOD
SOUND AMAZING

**WHAT HI-FI?
SOUND AND VISION**
★★★★★
AWARDS 2007

**FREE
TANNOY F1
CUSTOM SPEAKERS
WORTH £100**
when you buy this
CD Player &
Amp together

CD PLAYER

NAD C515BEE

"This is the only sub-£200 player we've that's capable of wringing the very last drops of expression from a Nina Simone vocal." - WHF? S&V magazine

Usual Price £159.95

AMPLIFIER

NAD C315BEE

"Indeed, with no hesitation, I think it deserves to win every Product of the Year award available to a two-channel component." Hi-Fi News magazine.

Usual Price £179.95

BOOKSHELF SPEAKERS

Tannoy F1 Customs (Pair)

"A great budget speaker - whether on the end of a micro system or budget separates" - WHF? S&V magazine

Usual Price £99.95

SYSTEM USUALLY £439.85

**SAVE
£100** **£339.95**

5Yr Guarantee Only £33.95

SAVE £500 ON 'BEST BUY' CAMBRIDGE/KEF SYSTEM



**JUST ADD
iPOD**
FEATURES
LINE-IN
SO YOU CAN
MAKE YOUR IPOD
SOUND AMAZING

CD PLAYER

Cambridge Audio Azur 740C

"Very flexible, this innovative upsampling player sounds exceptionally neutral and highly informative." - Hi-Fi Choice magazine

Usual Price £499.95

AMPLIFIER

Cambridge Audio Azur 740A

"Excellent treble, very good imaging and a real sense of musical involvement are all well above the class average." - Hi-Fi Choice magazine

Usual Price £499.95

FLOORSTANDERS

KEF iQ7 (Pair)

KEF speakers are world renowned for their quality and innovation and, with speakers like the iQ7, it's easy to see why.

Usual Price £499.95

SYSTEM USUALLY £1499.85

**FREE
KEF iQ7
SPEAKERS
WORTH £500**
when you buy this
CD Player &
Amp together

**WHAT HI-FI?
SOUND AND VISION**
★★★★★

**BEST BUY
HI-FI CHOICE
magazine**

**SAVE
£500** **£999.95**

5Yr Guarantee Only £99.95

**WE ARE OPEN ON
BANK HOLIDAYS
BETWEEN 12-4PM**

**WE'LL BEAT ANY PRICE
'TIL IT HURTS... EVEN THE WEB & GIVE YOU UP TO £100**
SEE WEBSITE OR ASK IN-STORE FOR DETAILS

**WE WILL PAY
YOUR PARKING!**
SIMPLY ASK IN-STORE

Some of these offers are exclusive to Hi-Fi Choice Magazine readers. Please quote this ad when calling. While stocks last. Available from 4TH MARCH - 7TH APRIL 2008. All trademarks are acknowledged. E&OE

Some offers may be for in-store callers only. All stock is brand new in sealed containers and fully guaranteed for one year unless clearly stated otherwise. 1000s MORE BARGAINS IN-STORE!

TSP = Typical Selling Price (TSPs are based on information supplied by WHF? S&V magazine, manufacturers, Hi-Fi Choice, Home Cinema Choice, T3, What Video, What DVD, Digital Home, Total DVD and DVD Buyer. Further information available on request)

It might be Richer Sounds' 30th birthday this year, but we're giving you all the presents!

Check out this month's goodies - there's a deal to suit every budget and all tastes in hi-fi, home cinema and flat screen televisions, with love from us to you...

Unlike some people, we're not having a 30th birthday mid-life crisis - we're as dedicated to bringing you the very best audio visual equipment at the keenest prices as we were back in 1978. Technology-wise things have certainly moved on since then, but the top 5 reasons for shopping at Richer Sounds still remain the same:

1. We have friendly, knowledgeable sales people, trained to help you find the perfect set-up or component for your needs.
2. We welcome talking to people of all levels of expertise about getting the best for less.
3. We believe in a low-pressure sales environment - we're happy to let people shop around or walk away and think. In fact, we encourage it.
4. We operate a 14-day exchange policy, so you can test kit in your own surroundings.
5. Our price challenge means you can shop with us in total confidence of getting the best deal - even in the unlikely event that you find a web price lower!

WE HOPE TO SEE YOU SOON!

MS SPEAKERS

AVANT 900i RANGE

The Mordaunt-Short Avant 900i Series is a sophisticated and striking line-up which look like standard box speakers but refine existing and proven speaker technologies as well as introducing a raft of pioneering new materials and technologies.

AVANT 902i BOOKSHELF SPEAKERS FOR ONLY £119.95

AVANT 906i FLOORSTANDERS FOR ONLY £249.95

PRICES FROM £119.95 PAIR

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★

PRO-JECT TURNTABLE

MODEL: RPM1 GENIE

"This is another budget champ from Pro-ject: the Genie is as fine a deck as you'll get for this money." - WHF? S&V magazine

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★

ALSO PRO-JECT DEBUT 3 FOR ONLY £159.95

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2007 ★★★★★

LOWEST PRICE GUARANTEED

£124.95

5Yr Guarantee Only £12.95

MARANTZ CD PLAYER

MODEL: CD6002

"Factor in excellent build, finish and ease of use - think quick, slick transport, clear display and fine remote handset - and you have a formidable proposition." - WHF? S&V magazine. TSP £269.95

ALSO MARAN Z PM6002 AMPLIFIER FOR ONLY £229.95

SAVE £40 £229.95

Stocks Erratic

5Yr Guarantee Only £22.95

DENON MINI STEREO SYSTEM

MODEL: DM35DAB

Add in first rate build quality, with aluminium front panel and volume knob, and it's clear to see that the Denon DM35DAB is a cut above the rest. TSP £299.95

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★

SAVE £70 £229.95

5Yr Guarantee Only £22.95

MEZZO SPEAKERS

MS RANGE

In 2004, Mordaunt-Short produced the award-winning Performance model which re-wrote the rule book

Many of Performance's most significant features have now trickled down to the company's new range - Mezzo. All this means that true hi-fi bliss is available to a wider audience, most notably you and all at a phenomenally affordable price

Comprising a full loudspeaker series and a blend of scintillating sound and truly graceful aesthetics, Mezzo affords you the opportunity to experience music and movies as those involved intended, and what can be better than that?

MEZZO 2 BOOKSHELF SPEAKERS FOR ONLY £449.95

MEZZO 6 FLOORSTANDERS FOR ONLY £799.95

Other models available are the Mezzo 1, 5, & 9. Please ask in-store for price details

PRICES FROM £449.95 PAIR

KEF FLOORSTANDERS

MODEL: iQ5

"The KEFs are among the tidiest floorstanding designs we've seen... The standard of build and finish is well up to KEF levels and the Uni-Q tweeter arrangement makes for intriguing looks... these perform in spades." - WHF? S&V magazine. TSP £399.95

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★

SAVE £100 £299.95 PAIR

5Yr Guarantee Only £29.95

ONKYO AV RECEIVER

MODEL: TXSR605

"This Onkyo just doesn't put a foot wrong. It has set rivals a dizzyingly high standard." - WHF? S&V magazine.

ALSO ONKYO XSR875 AV RECEIVER FOR ONLY £999.95

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2007 ★★★★★

PRODUCT OF THE YEAR MULTICHANNEL RECEIVERS ONKYO TX SERIES

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★

Also available in Black

LOWEST PRICE GUARANTEED £399.95

5Yr Guarantee Only £39.95

CAMBRIDGE AUDIO AMPLIFIERS

AZUR RANGE

AZUR 640A v2 AMPLIFIER FOR ONLY £299.95

AZUR 840A v2 AMPLIFIER FOR ONLY £749.95

All Azur components come in black & silver. Ask in-store for more details of the Azur range

Rather than just taking our word for how great the Azur range of electronics is, take the words of some experienced, independent experts. You'll find, just as they did, that the new line-up is the best we have ever stocked

Of the Azur 640A v2 Hi-Fi Choice Magazine said: "POWERFUL, LIVELY AND MUSICAL, TOO."

Of the Azur 840A v2 What Hi-Fi Sound & Vision Magazine said: "A BIG, BOLD AND ENTERTAINING SOUND; GOOD LEVEL OF CLARITY... PLENTY TO WORRY THE CLASS-LEADERS"

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★

EISA Best Product 2007-2008

2-CHANNEL AMPLIFIER Cambridge Audio Azur 840A

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★

BUY NOW! EXCLUSIVELY FROM RICHER SOUNDS

PRICES FROM £299.95

VIP CLUB

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO BECOME A MEMBER OF OUR VIP CLUB FOR FREE AND TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OUR EXCLUSIVE MEGA-BARGAINS, VISIT OUR WEBSITE AND REGISTER YOUR DETAILS.

www.richersounds.com

VISIT OUR WEBSITE OR CALL FOR NATIONWIDE STORE DETAILS ON: 0845 900 1230

VINYL

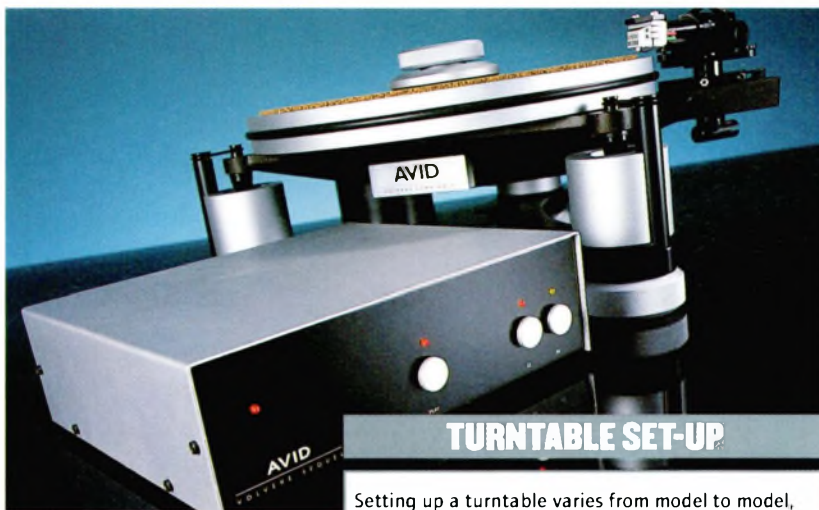
Turntables, cartridges and phono stages



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



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.

increasingly purchased separately for use with line-only amps.

There are two types of phono cartridge: moving magnet (MM) and moving coil (MC), and with a few exceptions the latter outperforms the former. But MCs produce a lower output and require better-quality amplification to be heard at their best. As a general rule, MCs offer a broader bandwidth, greater dynamics and more detail, but the better moving magnets do most things well enough to distract you from your CD collection.

TOP BUYS



Pro-Ject RPM 5 £400

Pro-Ject's entry-level RPM deck is a good-looking, great-sounding package that delivers terrific value for money. A class act and no mistake.



The Funk Firm Funk V £760

The more costly of two turntables from The Funk Firm, the Funk V builds on its sibling's virtues to deliver a sound of sheer class – dynamic, detailed and refined.



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 BEST BUY EDITOR'S CHOICE **TURNTABLES**

Record players

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPEEDS	SUSP SUBCHASSIS	SWITCHABLE SPEED CHANGE	SUPPLIED WITH ARM	ISSUE NUMBER
EC	Avid Volvere	2,750	A combination of a heavy platter with a sprung suspension that makes the vinyl it spins sound powerful and solid	33/45				298
EC	Avid Volvere Sequel	3,500	Heavyweight turntable that will deliver more of what's in a vinyl groove than most of the competition	33/45				229
	Clearaudio Champion	1,365	Smart, practical and good-sounding, with impressively 'dead' arm. Isolation recommended	33/45				268
	Clearaudio Performance	1,670	Ceramic magnetic bearing spells a surprisingly uncoloured performance. Good arm and cartridge	33/45				295
EC	Clearaudio Ambient	4,220	Innovative use of materials leads to a fast, precise and thrilling sound (tonearm extra)	33/45				271
EC	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
	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
	The Funk Firm Funk V	750	Vector drive brings a refinement to the standard Funk that increases resolution. For high-class analogue sound, it's a killer	33/45		opt	opt	284
	Goldring GR2	265	Nicely finished Rega-manufactured deck with RB250 arm and an open, engaging sound quality	33/45				266
BB	Michell Tecnodec	767	Simple and smartly understated, performs above expectations – full-bodied and highly detailed	33/45				268
EC	Michell Orbe SE	2,015	A superb turntable, able to mix it with the best at virtually any price. Now features new DC motor	33/45				235
	Pro-Ject Expression II	250	A smooth and engaging turntable with the ability to revel in the glory of vinyl, with upgradable arm cable	33/45				289
	Pro-Ject 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
	Pro-Ject RPM 6 1	550	With its minimal chassis and huge platter this is a steady design that's capable of fine results with a decent cartridge	33/45/78				294
	Pro-Ject RPM 9 X	1,000	A gorgeous turntable that sounds as good as it looks – vital and transparent! Price includes carbon-fibre arm	33/45				268
	Rega P3-24	398	Very competent, uncoloured and musical, much improved by £148 outboard electronic power supply	33/45		opt		298
	Rega P5/RB700	698	Combines a great sense of timing with market-leading resolution and a phenomenal tonearm – a hard act to beat	33/45		opt		257
	Rega P7/RB700	1,298	A highly capable player that could hold its own in the most exalted company – a vivid and natural performer	33/45		opt		257
EC	Rega P9/RB1000	2,498	Exceptionally elegant hi-tech player with complex outboard supply, ceramic platter and wonderful RB1000 tonearm	33/45				228
	Roksan Radius 5/Nima	850	Sophisticated design with accomplished sound quality, excellent imagery and good isolation (acrylic version tested)	33/45				248
EC	SME Model 10A	3,411	Elegant and extremely capable design, tested here with Series V309 hybrid arm	33/45				195
EC	SME 20/12A	11,133	Brings a calmness and precision to vinyl replay that we have rarely encountered, build quality is second to none	33/45/78				293
EC	Townshend Rock Anniversary	4,900	If you want to get to the meat and bones of the music this is a great tool for the job (price inc Excalibur arm)	33/45				259

Our favourite BEST BUY EDITOR'S CHOICE **PHONO CARTRIDGES**

MM and MC cartridges

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	MM	MC	REPLACEABLE STYLUS	ISSUE NUMBER
	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
	Denon DL-103R	200	Adds refinement to basic DL-103, at a price. One of the best rock'n'roll cartridges around				285
	Grado Prestige Gold	110	Produces rich, open and expansive music with the minimum of fuss				235
EC	Lyra Helikon	1,095	Highly capable and highly neutral, this is a cartridge for all seasons, albeit fussy about vinyl quality				215
	Ortofon Salsa	200	Despite a touch of midrange coloration, this cartridge really involves the listener with good extension and a clean, agile sound				290
	Sumiko Blue Point Spec Evo III	239	High output MC with refinement at high frequencies and a nimble, articulate and revealing sound				270
	van den Hul MC One Special	699	A gorgeous cartridge that's worth the price every time you hear a familiar track in a whole new light				235
EC	van den Hul Concor XCM	2,400	A stunning cartridge with stereo imaging, dynamics and detail resolution to die for				265
EC	Wilson Benesch Naked Analog	1,450	With its smooth clean highs, transparent midband and nimble bass, this is a lot of performance for the money				253

Our favourite BEST BUY EDITOR'S CHOICE **PHONO STAGES**

Phono stages

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	MM PHONO INPUTS	MC PHONO INPUTS	ADJ GAIN	ADJ IMPEDANCE	ISSUE NUMBER
	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
	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
	Tom Evans Microgroove	400	For dynamics and real bass extension with good tonal colour this is the one to beat. The Plus version (£700) is even better!					234
EC	Tom Evans The Groove	1,800	Plenty of detail, excellent imaging and almost flawlessly neutral: a good choice for maximum information retrieval off any LP					201
BB	Trichord Dino/Dino+	498	Relaxed yet resolute with very good image depth and natural balance, not to mention great flexibility					234

TURNTABLE SPECS KEY **SPEEDS** Speeds offered in rpm. **SUSP SUBCHASSIS** Turntables with a sprung or suspended support for the platter and arm. **SWITCHABLE SPEED CHANGE** Some decks require manual lifting of the belt from one pulley to another to change speed, but not these ones. **SUPPLIED WITH ARM** Deck is supplied complete with tonearm – some require a separate purchase in this department, but the dealer will fit it for you. **SUPPLIED WITH CARTRIDGE** Some decks are supplied with a starter cartridge and this is included in the price shown.

CARTRIDGE SPECS KEY **MM** Moving magnet cartridge – see amp and phono stage features to match this type. **MC** Moving coil cartridge – see amp and phono stage features to match this type. **REPLACEABLE STYLUS** Some cartridges have separate styli for ease of replacement, but it compromises sound quality.

CLEARANCE 70%

▶ SAVE UP TO

There is up to an incredible 70% off the original RRP on these end-of-line* hi-fi and home cinema separates, speakers and accessories. Stock is limited and when it's gone, it's gone so don't miss a chance to pick up a bargain!

BRIGHTON 01273 733336

Arcam DIVA AVR250 AV Receiver.....	£449.00
Arcam DIVA AVR300 AV Receiver.....	£599.00
Arcam DIVA DV135 DVD Player.....	£499.00
Arcam DIVA DV79 DVD Player.....	£499.00
Arcam FMJ 7:1 C30 Pre Amplifier.....	£749.00
KEF PSW3500 Sub Woofer.....	£299.00
KEF PSW4000 Sub Woofer.....	£794.00
KEF PSW5000 Sub Woofer.....	£1,599.00
KEF Reference 204c Centre Speaker.....	£994.00
KEF XQ1 Speakers.....	£394.00

BROMLEY 020 8290 1936

Arcam DIVA DV79 DVD Player.....	£399.00
Cyrus CDXT CD Transport.....	£399.00
Cyrus LinkPower Power Amplifier.....	£299.00
Denon AVR3806 AV Receiver.....	£599.00
Fujitsu P50XHA58EB Plasma Monitor.....	£1,999.00
KEF KHT1005 5.1 AV Speaker Package.....	£1,199.00
Panasonic DMREX85 DVD / HDD Recorder.....	£249.00
Primare CD21 CD Player.....	£639.00
Primare I21 Amplifier.....	£599.00
Sim2 Domino D35 DLP Projector.....	£1,499.00

EXETER 01392 218895

Avid Sequel Turntable.....	£2,599.00
M&K K5 Surround Speaker.....	£74.00
M&K KX12 Sub Woofer.....	£354.00
M&K Xenon LCR36 Surround Speakers.....	£619.00
Meridian G51 Receiver.....	£1,299.00
Monitor Audio BLCR Centre Speaker.....	£84.00
Naim Arriva Speakers.....	£874.00
Roksan FRC Centre Speaker.....	£299.00
Ruark Crusader 3 Speakers.....	£1,399.00
Sim2 Domino 35 DLP Projector.....	£1,949.00

GUILDFORD 01483 536666

Denon AVR1907 AV Receiver.....	£229.00
Linn Klassik Music CD System.....	£799.00
Linn Komponent 5.1 Speaker System.....	£1,699.00
Marantz DV9600 DVD Player.....	£779.00
Musical Fidelity A5 Amplifier.....	£999.00
Musical Fidelity A5 CD Player.....	£999.00
Musical Fidelity A5 Pre Amplifier.....	£999.00
Philips SBRCRU1000 iPronto Learning Remote.....	£299.00
Pioneer DVR440HXS DVD / HDD Recorder.....	£219.00
Samsung BDP1000 Blu-Ray Player.....	£279.00
Sim2 C3X Lite DLP Projector.....	£6,499.00

MANCHESTER 0161 831 7969

Audica CS-Sub 8 Sub Woofer.....	£114.00
Denon AVR2807 AV Receiver.....	£394.00
Fujitsu P42HTS40GS Plasma Monitor.....	£849.00
KEF HTS5001 Speaker Stands.....	£114.00
M&K KX10 Sub Woofer.....	£294.00
Monitor Audio GS10 Speakers.....	£374.00
Primare DVD26 DVD Player.....	£394.00
Revel S12 Surround Speakers.....	£214.00
Yamaha DSPAX861SE AV Amplifier.....	£364.00
Yamaha RXN600D AV Receiver.....	£299.00

NOTTINGHAM 0115 911 2121

Harman Kardon HS500 AV Speaker Package.....	£974.00
KEF KIT100 DVD System.....	£599.00
M&K Surround 55 Surround Speakers.....	£399.00
M&K VX860 Sub Woofer.....	£499.00
Quad 11L Speakers.....	£389.00
Sim2 D10 DLP Projector.....	£1,299.00
Sonance The Sub Sub Woofer.....	£424.00
Yamaha DVDS1700 DVD Player.....	£199.00
Yamaha MCAX10 MusicCAST Client.....	£299.00
Yamaha MCX1000 MusicCAST Server.....	£799.00

SEVENOAKS 01732 488555

Arcam Alto Speakers.....	£199.00
Arcam DIVA AVR250 AV Receiver.....	£399.00
Arcam DIVA DV78 DVD Player.....	£349.00
Audica CS1 5.1 Speaker System.....	£359.00
Cyrus 6VS Amplifier.....	£349.00
Cyrus DVD8 DVD Player.....	£399.00
Denon S301 DVD System.....	£499.00
InFocus SP5700 DLP Projector.....	£499.00
Philips LC6131 LCD Projector.....	£299.00
Pioneer DV989 DVD Player.....	£499.00

SOUTHAMPTON 023 8033 7770

B&W XT4 Speakers.....	£1,269.00
KEF KHT Two Model 11 Surround Speakers.....	£709.00
Marantz ST15 S1 DAB Tuner.....	£454.00
Marantz VP11 S1 DLP Projector.....	£6,499.00
Sim2 C3x T2L Link DLP Projector.....	£5,999.00
Yamaha DSAX861SE AV Amplifier.....	£449.00
Yamaha DVDS1700 DVD Player.....	£259.00
Yamaha DVDS2700 DVD Player.....	£649.00
Yamaha MCX1000 MusicCAST Server.....	£699.00
Yamaha TX761 DAB Tuner.....	£249.00

▶▶ Can't find what you're looking for?
Visit www.ssav.com for more amazing clearance offers!

CAMBRIDGE 01223 304770

Cyrus AV8 AV Processor.....	£714.00
Marantz DVD4100SE DVD Player.....	£199.00
Mission E80 Speakers.....	£299.00
Monitor Audio Gola Centre Speaker.....	£324.00
Roksan Kangy Tuner.....	£249.00
Rotel RT02 Tuner.....	£194.00
Teac AGL800 AV Receiver.....	£389.00
Yamaha MCXA10 MusicCAST Client.....	£389.00
Yamaha MCX100 MusicCAST Server.....	£1,039.00
Yamaha YSP1 Sound Projector.....	£449.00

EALING 020 8579 8777

AVI Labs Series Amplifier.....	£1,099.00
Epos M22 Speakers.....	£699.00
Harman Kardon AVR347/DVD 37 AV Package.....	£699.00
In Focus IN81 DLP Projector.....	£1,999.00
Q Acoustics 1000 Sub Woofer.....	£125.00
Q Acoustics 1000s Centre Speaker.....	£75.00
Roksan Caspian M1 Series Package.....	£2,479.00
Spendor S8 Speakers.....	£1,499.00
Yamaha DSPXV759 AV Amplifier.....	£299.00
Yamaha DVDS1700 DVD Player.....	£299.00

EPSOM 01372 720720

Arcam DIVA AVR350 AV Receiver.....	£1,004.00
Arcam DIVA DV137 DVD Player.....	£844.00
Audiolab 8000S Amplifier.....	£324.00
B&W FPM4 Flat Panel Speaker.....	£704.00
B&W XT4 Speakers.....	£1,104.00
B&W XTC Centre Speaker.....	£354.00
Dali Mentor 5 Speakers.....	£1,234.00
KEF KHT2005 2 AV Speaker Package.....	£389.00
Spectral Closed CL1565-AL Equip Rack.....	£1,624.00
Yamaha DVDS2700 DVD Player.....	£649.00

HOLBORN 020 7637 7540

Denon AVR2807 AV Receiver.....	£399.00
Denon DVD3930 DVD Player.....	£499.00
i-Scan VP30 Line Scaler.....	£749.00
Marantz DV9600 DVD Player.....	£779.00
Marantz SR7001 AV Receiver.....	£584.00
Screen Play SP7210 DLP Projector.....	£1,299.00
Yamaha DSPZ9 AV Amplifier.....	£1,399.00
Yamaha DVDS1700 DVD Player.....	£199.00
Yamaha DVDS2700 DVD Player.....	£499.00
Yamaha RXN600D AV Receiver.....	£299.00

KINGSTON 020 8547 0717

Arcam AWP700 AV Processor.....	£939.00
Audiolab 8000CD CD Player.....	£389.00
Audiolab 8000S Amplifier.....	£324.00
Denon AVR3806 AV Receiver.....	£724.00
Denon DVD2910 DVD Player.....	£299.00
M&K Xenon AV Speaker Package.....	£1,559.00
Marantz SR7001 AV Receiver.....	£499.00
Quad L-Centre Speaker.....	£299.00
Primare SPA21 AV Amplifier.....	£1,299.00
Sim2 Domino 35 DLP Projector.....	£1,949.00

MAIDSTONE 01822 896386

Arcam DVA P90 Power Amplifier.....	£384.00
Arcam FMJ C31 Pre Amplifier.....	£624.00
Arcam FMJ T31 Tuner.....	£249.00
M&K K4 Surround Speaker.....	£174.00
M&K K5 Surround Speaker.....	£79.00
Marantz RC9500 Universal Remote Control.....	£399.00
Mirage Uni-Theatre Surround Speaker.....	£399.00
Pioneer DCS370 DVD System.....	£174.00
Yamaha DVDS2700 DVD Player.....	£499.00
Yamaha RXN600D AV Receiver.....	£299.00

OXFORD 01865 241773

Artcoustic Diablo Surround Speakers.....	£454.00
Epos M15.2 Speakers.....	£454.00
Loewe Xelos A37 LCD TV.....	£1,399.00
Loewe Centros 1102 DVD Recorder.....	£224.00
Loewe Centros 2102 DVD/HDD Recorder.....	£324.00
Metz 30" LCD TV.....	£899.00
Musical Fidelity X-System.....	£1,104.00
Pioneer PDP5000EX Plasma Monitor.....	£2,999.00
Meridian G91 DVD Controller / Tuner.....	£2,534.00
Yamaha DVD2700 DVD Player.....	£584.00
Yamaha YSP1100 Sound Projector.....	£844.00

PETERBOROUGH 01733 897697

Harman Kardon AVR745 AV Receiver.....	£849.00
Marantz SR8001 AV Receiver.....	£599.00
Meridian DSP5200 Active Speakers.....	£3,994.00
Meridian G68ADV Surround Controller.....	£3,244.00
Meridian G91 DVD Controller / Tuner.....	£2,534.00
Meridian G98DH DVD Audio Transport.....	£2,174.00
Pioneer VSLX50 AV Receiver.....	£374.00
Pioneer VSX1017 AV Receiver.....	£239.00
Planar X-Screen 80" Projection Screen.....	£699.00
Runco CL610 DLP Projector.....	£2,999.00

PRESTON 01772 825777

Arcam DIVA DV137 DVD Player.....	£844.00
Arcam DIVA DV135 DVD Player.....	£584.00
Arcam DVA AVR280 AV Receiver.....	£779.00
Denon DVD3930 DVD Player.....	£799.00
Loewe Mmo LCD TV.....	£844.00
Meridian G91 DVD Controller / Tuner.....	£2,534.00
Musical Fidelity A5 CD Player.....	£974.00
Musical Fidelity A5 Pre Amplifier.....	£974.00
Musical Fidelity A5 Power Amplifier.....	£974.00
Project Perspective Turntable.....	£699.00
Yamaha MCX1000 MusicCAST Server.....	£1,039.00

SWINDON 01793 610992

Dali Helicon 400 Speakers (Cherry).....	£1,499.00
Dali Helicon 400 Speakers (Rose).....	£1,499.00
Dali Helicon 800 Speakers.....	£1,999.00
KEF PSW3500 Sub Woofer.....	£389.00
KEF Reference 204c Centre Speaker.....	£999.00
Marantz SR7001 AV Receiver.....	£584.00
Rotel RT02 Tuner.....	£179.00
Toshiba 37WL168 LCD TV.....	£714.00
Yamaha DVDS1500 DVD Player.....	£259.00
Yamaha DSP29 AV Amplifier.....	£1,649.00

TUNBRIDGE WELLS 01892 531543

Denon AVR4306 AV Receiver.....	£899.00
Denon DVD2910 DVD Player.....	£299.00
Panasonic TH42PX600PEE Plasma TV.....	£799.00
Philips 42PF9731D LCD TV.....	£999.00
Pioneer PDP5000EX-T Plasma Monitor.....	£2,599.00
Pioneer PDP607KD Plasma TV.....	£3,749.00
Sharp LC46XD1E LCD TV.....	£949.00
Sharp LC52XD1E LCD TV.....	£1,249.00
Samsung LE40F71BX LCD TV.....	£639.00
Samsung LE46F71BX LCD TV.....	£959.00

YEovil 01935 709078

Arcam FMJ A32 Amplifier.....	£845.00
Cyrus C06 CD Player.....	£419.00
Cyrus CD8x CD Player.....	£649.00
Denon DCD1500AE CD Player.....	£324.00
Denon PMA1500AE Amplifier.....	£324.00
Musical Fidelity X-Ray V8 CD Player.....	£519.00
Musical Fidelity X-T100 Amplifier.....	£584.00
Pioneer VSX1017 AV Amplifier.....	£354.00
PMC FB1+ Speakers.....	£1,104.00
PMC CB1 Speakers.....	£744.00

RADIO TUNERS

FM and DAB hi-fi separates



Radio is a fantastic musical resource that's in danger of being taken for granted, but whatever your tastes there's someone out there catering for it. If you haven't got a decent tuner hooked up to your hi-fi already, you're missing out!

DAB or FM?

Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB) is now said to be available to more than 80 per cent of the population and the long-term plan is to switch public broadcasting over to digital entirely, but hardware prices have yet to come down to a point where this would be acceptable. Its advantages over FM include hiss-free reception, the potential for a wider range of stations and the ability to display comprehensive programming information. FM's RDS system means that station name and occasionally track titles are displayed, but the range of information is fairly limited.

Where FM scores over DAB is in the lower

cost of hardware and the greater reception area. It can also provide higher sound quality if reception conditions are favourable. Absolute sound quality judgements are muddled by the fact that you are listening to different forms of compression and processing at the studio for each station.

What is clear, however, is that there are more and more radio stations broadcasting on DAB that aren't available on FM. So if it's variety of programming you're after, they have a lot to offer.

RECEPTION

The quality of signal you feed a tuner will dictate its sound quality. So serious FM listeners should get a decent external aerial and connect it with as few junctions and splits as possible. Every time you split the cable (ie take a feed for another tuner) you halve signal strength! With DAB the same applies but get a DAB-specific aerial. See www.bbc.co.uk/digitalradio for details.

TOP BUYS



Denon 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.



T+A T1210R £1,000

This FM tuner looks, feels and sounds top-notch – great detail and imaging.



Magnum Dynalab MD 90T £1,195

FM tuner with valves – 'affordable' for an MD, but still streets ahead of most radios.

Our favourite TUNERS

BEST BUY EDITOR'S CHOICE

FM & DAB HI-FI SEPARATES

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	WAVEBANDS	PRESETS	RDS	REMOTE CONTROL	SIGNAL STRENGTH METER	ROTARY TUNING KNOB	SCALE NUMBER	
FM TUNERS											
	Creek T50	550	Very fine results indeed with precision, polish and insight added to excellent basics	FM,M,L	128					251	
	Cyrus FM X	500	A classic no-nonsense FM tuner that achieves gratifying sonic results. Upgradable with PSX-R power supply	FM	7					283	
	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	
	Denon TU-1800DAB	250	There's a little grain on FM, but the decent performance on both bands makes this a great dual-band choice	DAB,FM,M	200					283	
	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	
	Marantz ST7001	300	FM reception could offer a little more detail and insight. DAB is fine, but near-identical Denon 1800 is cheaper!	200						283	
	NAD C422	180	Admirably free of roughness or other obvious nasties, with just a slight lack of clarity	FM,M	30					250	
	Primare T21	600	A very fine tuner – bass and treble are both well extended and detail is excellent	FM	30					230	
	Pure DRX-702ES	210	Apparently good value is restricted by persistent veiling on FM: 'PAC' on DAB mellows sound a little	DAB,FM,M	99					283	
	Rega Radio 3	398	Strong bass, clear treble and a high enjoyment factor make this an appealing FM performer	FM,M	20					283	
	Rotel RT-02	279	A highly competent tuner which always sounds appealing and fuss-free	FM,M	30					242	
	T+A T1210R	1,000	High-end looks are matched by the sound, which is detailed and sophisticated, with useful features too	FM	100					283	
DAB TUNERS											
	Arcam DVA DT91	450	Some grain at low levels, but sound is lively, large in scale and tonally very natural. Very smart!	DAB,FM	16					299	
	Cambridge Audio DAB500	150	Very good sound, plus optional response tweaks, and slickest operation yet	DAB	10					248	
	Denon TU-1800DAB	200	Very good detail and a highly believable impression of real musicians playing. Imaging can be a little constricted	DAB,FM,M	200					299	
	Marantz ST7001	250	Midband detailed and precise: treble can be thick but bass is extended, and sound generally energetic	DAB,FM,M	200					299	
	NAD C445	300	FM is laid-back despite bright balance, but has good detail. DAB slightly livelier than most	DAB,FM	30					299	
	Onkyo T-4555DAB	350	Admirably free of grain or obvious tonal blemishes, this tuner achieves a high standard in all areas on	DAB,FM	40					299	

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.

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.

Q&A

SHOULD I LEAVE MY AMP ON ALL THE TIME FOR BEST RESULTS?

All audio electronics perform better when they are warmed up, and this is particularly the case when it comes to amplifiers. If there's no way that you can leave it on all the time, make an effort to switch it on at least 20 minutes before listening.

WHAT IS BI-WIRING AND BI-AMPLING?

Bi-wiring is when you run separate cables to the treble and bass/mid terminals on the speaker. In most instances, this improves sound quality so long as identical cables are used. Bi-amping is using two stereo amps to drive one pair of speakers, using one amp to drive the treble and the other for the bass/mid sections of the speakers.

WHY DO VALVE AMPS HAVE SO LITTLE POWER?

Valve amps are inherently low powered in absolute terms – at least when you compare them to their transistor-based cousins. But when partnered with high-sensitivity loudspeakers, they are quite capable of producing perfectly adequate head-banging levels.

HOME CINEMA STEREO

Stereo amps can be used in home cinema set-ups as well. You don't get the surround and centre channels, but well set-up stereo speakers do a remarkably good job of creating atmosphere for movies. Stereo amps

tend to be better at reproducing music as they don't have the (electrical) noise-inducing digital processing of AV amps. AV amps cost three to four times as much as stereo models of a similar quality.

TOP BUYS



Marantz 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.



Cyrus 6vs2 £600

The latest 'singing shoebox' from Cyrus is an absolute peach! Strong rhythmic flow, tunefully extended bass and excellent stereo imaging are among the highlights.



Primare I30 £1,500

Are you looking for an amp that combines weight and musical gravitas with rhythm, detail and subtlety, with gorgeous build quality to boot? In that case... here it is!



Copland CTA405 £2,498

This amp's massively enjoyable musicality is hard to beat: all the effusiveness of a great valve amp and none of the stereotypical softness. Brilliant!

Our favourite BEST BUY EDITOR'S CHOICE STEREO AMPLIFIERS

Integrated amplifiers

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	LINE INPUTS	PHONO INPUT	REMOTE CONTROL	HEADPHONE SOCKET	POWER OUTPUT (W)	ISSUE NUMBER
UP TO £1,000									
BEST BUY	Arcam DIVA A70	500	A smart and practical amp offering good snap and pace, with natural dynamics and good detail	6	MM			60	289
	Adv. Acoustic MAP305DA II	600	A lot of amplifier for the money and capable of revealing and exciting sound in the right company. Includes 4 digital inputs	5				100	300
	Arcam DIVA A90	850	Practical, affordable and impressively flexible amp with a laid-back approach but plenty of insight too	7	opt			100	303
	Cambridge Audio 640A v2	300	Slightly cheap-feeling controls are the only real downside to this powerful and lively little amp	6				75	279
	Cambridge Audio Azur 740A	500	Ticks all the boxes for bass, clarity, imaging etc. and invites the listener into the music with uncommon grace	6				100	294
	Cambridge Audio 840A v2	750	The biggest differences between this and most amps at twice its price are in looks and show-off factor. Powerful and detailed	8				120	299
	Creek Evo	500	Not the most accurate, strictly, but it's lively, energetic musical presentation is entirely lovable	5	opt			85	283
	Cyrus 6vs2	600	Spunky little amp that reproduces instrumental timbres and acoustic spaces well, with real musical involvement	7				40	293
	Denon PMA-700AE	250	One of a growing number of new low cost amps, it offers good timing and analysis at up to moderately high volume levels	4	MM			50	284
	Marantz PM7001KI	550	A self-effacing amplifier which serves the music admirably with fine bass, sweet treble and unforced detail	5	MM			70	289
	Musical Fidelity X-T100	899	By separating amp and TRIPLE-X power supply, this deceptively powerful valve-sporting amplifier is both enticing and musical	3				70	288
	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
	Onkyo A-933	500	Puts the music first, with sound that delivers the basics correctly but above all involves the listener	5				80	278
	Pioneer A-A9	600	Takes on the mantle of the legendary A400. Not as cuddly, but very resolute and revealing for the money. Has USB input	4				80	296
	Unison Research Unico P	795	Sound belies indifferent measured performance with good detail, balance and flowing melodic quality	5	MM			50	293
	Vincent SV-236	999	Valve hybrid whose sound is as idiosyncratic as its styling, short on neutrality but high on sparkle	6				100	295
ABOVE £1,000									
EDITOR'S CHOICE	AMR AM-77	4,400	A thrilling amplifier that brings you the dynamics of valves with the power of transistors in a substantial but well featured design	6				180	299
	Ayon Spirit	1,745	Pentode or triode operation is available at the flick of a switch with this muscular integrated	4				50	303
BEST BUY	Boulder 865	7,750	Extremely transparent to detail but less revealing of energy, high power, superb build but only balanced inputs	4				150	303
	Copland CTA405	2,498	Avoids pitfalls of many valve amps, yet retains the euphony typical of the best of breed	6	MM			50	286
	Creek Destiny	1,100	A highly assured performer that doesn't superimpose its personality on the music	6				100	286
	Densen Beat B110	1,200	Great bass provides firm underpinning for involving and enjoyable listening - real 'smile factor'	6	opt			60	292
	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
EDITOR'S CHOICE	Lyngdorf TDA 2200	3,875	Sophisticated modular all-digital amp with room EQ, capable of adapting to the listening environment	4				200	289
EDITOR'S CHOICE	Moon Evolution i-7	4,750	Sophisticated, with an elegant build and sound quality, very limited features, even by high-end standards	5				150	288
EDITOR'S CHOICE	Musical Fidelity A1008	2,999	With DAC, phono stage and built-in valve buffer, this powerhouse amp can really grab hold of a loudspeaker	4				250	295
	Mystère ia 11	1,250	Small, deceptively powerful integrated valve amp with a crisp, pacy sound	4				40	302
	NAD M3	1,899	Massive and flexible, it goes very loud with fine authority and dynamic range, but lacks some sparkle	7				180	285
EDITOR'S CHOICE	Naim SuperNait	2,350	Serious communicative ability meets convenience in this sophisticated and powerful integrated design	6				80	294
	Primare i30	1,500	A smooth, sophisticated yet agile performer, and beautifully built too	6				100	267
	Pure Sound A30	1,100	Valve integrated, with the accent on music rather than rhythm. Needs more inputs, though	3				30	298
	Sugden A21aL Series 2	1,299	Lovely solid-state Class A amplifier, sweet as a nut and more powerful than its predecessor	5	opt			21	296
	Unison Res. Unico Secondo	1,200	Very good detail and coherence. Tonality is natural, imaging precise and deep, and dynamics are wide and unforced	6	opt			110	297
EDITOR'S CHOICE	Unison Res. Performance	5,500	Massive and bulky valve amp sounds brilliant, with good power for a single-ended design, wide bandwidth and fine neutrality	5				40	287
EDITOR'S CHOICE	Unison Research P70	3,495	Delightful valve amplifier with fine neutrality, sweet midband, impressive bandwidth and ample power	4				70	302

Our favourite BEST BUY EDITOR'S CHOICE STEREO AMPLIFIERS

Pre/power amplifiers

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	PRE-AMPLIFIER	POWER AMPLIFIER	LINE INPUTS	PHONO INPUT	REMOTE CONTROL	POWER OUTPUT (W)	ISSUE NUMBER
UP TO £2,000										
BEST BUY	Arcam FMJ C31	1,200	Professionally presented, beautifully built and exceptionally revealing, this preamp achieves much by doing little			5	opt		273	
	Croft Precession I/Polestar I	1,400	Compact pre/power combo with battery preamp and hybrid power, with freedom from timesmear, bass could be firmer			6			25	290
	Cyrus Pre Vs2/6 Power	1,000	Pre offers stunning resolution and feature count for the money and power is subtle, open and musical						50	290
EDITOR'S CHOICE	Naim NAC 122x/NAP 150x	1,575	Musically rewarding with outstanding sophistication, grip and insight for such a modestly priced design			6	opt		50	287
	Quad 99/909	1,650	Well thought out and well executed, with a strong, engaging sound and just a little veiling			5			136	256
	Rotel RC-06/RB-06	598	A capable and surprisingly powerful-sounding combination which offers real value			5			70	285
	Russ Andrews HP-1/PA-1	1198	Simply featured, but sounds appealingly realistic and solid. Highly capable in all areas design			2			50	303
ABOVE £2,000										
	Border Patrol Control Unit	2,995	Bluff looking valve preamp, with one of the most neutral yet dynamic sounds around			5	opt		277	

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	PRE-AMPLIFIER	POWER AMPLIFIER	LINE AMPLIFIER	PHONO INPUT	REMOTE CONTROL	POWER OUTPUT (W)	ESSE NUMBER
EC	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
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	Classé CP-700/CA-M400	13,350	Pre plus mono power combo with superb build, huge power and enormous flexibility. Sounds stunning, too	●	●	●	6	opt	400	293
EC	Cyrus DAC XP	2,200	A knockout DAC/pre with naturalness and resolution to die for and six digital inputs for signals up to 96kHz	●	●	●	2	●	266	
	Densen Beat B-200/B310	2,300	Lively, energetic combination that bring a great sense of scale to familiar recordings	●	●	●	8	opt	80	276
EC	Densen Beat B-250/B-350	8,200	Upgradeable to surround, with sweet preamp and slightly coloured power amp, but sound is big and assured	●	●	●	6	●	125	270
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	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	Marantz SC11S1/SM-11S1	5,000	Preamp and power amp duo delivers high resolution and is consistent with different loudspeaker loads	●	●	●	6	●	220	304
EC	Naim NAP 500	11,875	Wonderful neutrality, bandwidth and dynamic range, plus Naim's traditional leading-edge definition	●	●	●			140	208
EC	Naim NAC 552	12,100	Extremely expensive preamp, but still solid value. Magnificent sound with fine flexibility and convenience	●	●	●	6	●	233	
	Primare PRE30/A30.2	2,400	Smart kit that lives up to the visual promise with gorgeous sound – a really musical performer	●	●	●	7	●	128	256

AV AMPLIFIERS

Surround sound amps for music and movies



The multichannel, surround sound or AV amplifier is a popular option, thanks to the success of the DVD player and home cinema. Now you can buy five channels or more of amplification for the price of two. Now that multichannel music is also on the agenda, there's a lot to be said for a good AV amp or receiver (an amp with a radio tuner built in).

So if you fancy hearing what DVD-Audio, SACD or even music DVD-Video can do, then check out a multichannel amp and speaker set-up – they're stunning with movies and none too shabby with music.

AV amps are usually designed primarily for movies and come with digital processing for the various soundtrack formats – Dolby Pro-Logic (analogue), Dolby Digital and DTS, which offer discrete surround sound in 5.1 and 7.1 channel formats. More ambitious designs also offer THX post processing, designed to emulate the sound of the mixing theatre at home.

Processing in AV amps is needed because the surround formats on DVD-Vs are



compressed, limiting their high-fidelity potential. This is why new formats SACD and DVD-A, which don't use 'lossy' compression, were created for music.

All this processing power can take its toll on analogue formats. The best multichannel amps for music are often the simplest, but any that offer a complete bypass option with six-channel input are suitable. It's also worth looking at real power – five or seven channels of amplification are not easy to produce with a feeble power supply, and the cheaper amps in particular often fail to live up to the claims.

Q&A

HOW MANY CHANNELS?

Depends on how many speakers you want. Multichannel music discs come with six or 5.1 channels, but for new movies, 7.1 is where it's at. 7.1 set-ups also mean you have speakers directly behind you – preferable for music discs.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A PROCESSOR AND AN AV AMP?

Processors don't have built-in amplification and you need separate power amps. AV amps and receivers have processing and amps in the same box.

WHAT DOES THE .1 IN 5.1 STAND FOR?

This is the LFE (low frequency effects) or bass channel that is reproduced by a subwoofer.

HI-FI MEETS SURROUND SOUND

With DVD-Audio and SACD offering high-quality multichannel music, surround sound is no longer just a home cinema thing. An increasing number of people want to build a multichannel system that will do their music as well as their movie

DVDs justice, and the number of AV products delivering sufficient quality is on the increase. But most aren't cheap – building a top-quality system with five or more channels is inevitably more expensive than sticking with stereo. There

are some very decent integrated options below £1,000, though the best (and most costly) route is to buy a separate processor and power amp(s). Or you can add AV amplification to a stereo model you can't bear to part with.

TOP BUYS



Yamaha
DSP-AX759SE £550

If you're looking for an affordable multichannel amp that's good with music as well as home cinema, this is a top buy.



Arcam
Diva AVR350 £1,500

Arcam's latest receiver offers a good helping of processing and connection options, with exceptionally musical sound.



Denon
AVC-A11XVA £2,500

A splendid 7.1-channel amp that packs in the latest digital links and processing formats without sacrificing sound quality.



Classe
SSP-600/CA-5200 £11,900

Anyone seeking a high-end multichannel solution that's equally adept with music and movies should park their ears here.

Our favourite AV AMPLIFIERS

BEST BUY EDITOR'S CHOICE

Multichannel amplifiers

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	RECEIVER	LINE INPUTS	7.1 COMPATIBLE	5-CHANNEL POWER (W)	ISSUE NUMBER
<input type="checkbox"/>	Arcam Diva AVR350	1,500	Sets the standard for music and movie performance at the price, although features count low and HDMI limited	●	7	●	100	284
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cambridge Audio Azur 640R	600	Simple and elegant receiver. Attributes that reflect in good sound quality without the distracting toys you'll find elsewhere	●	7	●	100	292
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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
<input type="checkbox"/>	Marantz SR-12S1	3,000	A multichannel amp that can be taken seriously in stereo too. Resources are in the engineering rather than the gimmicky	●	3	●	160	255
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sony STR-DB798	250	Cheap but effective, and passably good with pure audio sources, but control system messy	●	7	●	100	273
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sony STR-DB795	300	A superb value little amplifier, well appointed technically and successfully tuned for UK ears	●	7	●	100	260
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yamaha DSP-AX759SE	500	More a stereo amp with basic multichannel thrown in, but a great performer with music at this price	●	6	●	100	287

MULTICHANNEL PREAMPS/PROCESSORS AND POWER AMPS

<input type="checkbox"/>	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
<input type="checkbox"/>	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
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Classe 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
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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
<input type="checkbox"/>	Linn Exotik	1,750	Is hi-fi ready to make the jump to multichannel music? Linn think so with this musical preamplifier	●	4	●		260
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Linn Exotik + DA	3,245	Good analogue preamplifier with multichannel in/out up to 7.1 and a home cinema processor of quality combine to make a tempting package	●	8	●		291
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Meridian 861	9,833	Powerful surround processor with flexible modular construction, marvellous versatility to drive any speaker configuration	●	6	●		230
<input type="checkbox"/>	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
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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
<input type="checkbox"/>	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.



After 5 years in production, the Dino is still one of the most popular phono stages around. Highly versatile with accessible switches on the baseplate to facilitate a wide range cartridges.

'Never Connected' power supply technology virtually removes all incoming mains noise allowing only the music to be heard.

Visit our website to learn more about this exciting product and the high performance Diablo phono stage.

Trichord Research

Tel: +44 (0)1684 311600
sales@trichordresearch.com

Fax: +44 (0)1684 311928
www.trichordresearch.com

Dino Phono Amplifier



BEST BUY
HI-FI CHOICE
magazine

STEREO SPEAKERS

Speaker pairs for stereo sound



While loudspeakers are relatively straightforward in construction, they have one of the most difficult jobs in hi-fi – turning an electrical signal into an acoustic one. Most consist of two or more drive units in a box that usually has a port in it to make life easier for the cone in your mid and/or bass driver. Alternatives to this arrangement include panel speakers, which use electrostatic or ribbon technology, and horns, which use drive units in complex cabinets that greatly improve efficiency.

Box speakers are either designed to stand on the floor (floorstanders) or on a stand (stand or shelfmounts). Floorstanders have greater internal volume which can translate into greater efficiency and/or bass extension, but less substantial designs also introduce cabinet resonance and thus distortion. But they don't need stands and therefore have the aesthetic edge. Standmounts have less cabinet to vibrate and often score in terms of imaging and timing, but need good stands to work well.

Positioning

The closer the speaker is to a wall, the greater the reinforcement of bass. As all rooms differ, there's no simple formula for placement and experimentation will yield the best results. Altering the angle at which the speakers face the listener can also make a difference to balance and stereo image.

Going multichannel

Many stereo speakers can be augmented with centre and surround channels from the same brand to create a multichannel system. The most important element is a centre channel, which needs to match the stereo pair as closely as possible. For the best musical results, surrounds should be as per the front left and right channels, but if space or funds don't permit, smaller designs can be used quite effectively.



Choosing speakers

Because speakers and the rooms they are used in vary so much, choosing a pair tends to be quite subjective. To find some that will suit you, try to listen to a good variety to hear how they differ, and if possible, audition some at home. Tonal balance tends to vary the most, but is less important than more subtle factors such as timing and dynamics. Finally, listen with your ears not your eyes – great-looking speakers aren't necessarily great sounding.

Spikes

Floorstanding speakers and stands have threaded inserts for spikes that allow rigid coupling with the floor. These have the advantage of draining resonance from the speaker and giving tighter bass, but can result in more vibration getting back to the electronics and often cause the floor to resonate as well.

POWER

Though some speakers have a power rating, this isn't as informative as a rating for how difficult they are to drive, nor does it indicate wattage extremes for the partnering amp. In practice, an amplifier cannot be too powerful. Our listings quote ease of drive to indicate how much power

your amp needs to avoid a mismatch. An above-average (A+) speaker will work with amps rated at 25W plus, while an average (A) speaker will need 50W or more, and a below average (A-) speaker could require 100W plus to sound its best. These are guidelines rather than rules.

Q&A

IF SPEAKERS ARE RATED AT 75 WATTS, DOES THAT MEAN I NEED A 75 WATT AMP?

No, see the box on power for the full story.

WHICH SPEAKERS ARE BEST FOR SMALL ROOMS?

Those designed to work close to the wall will be smoother in confined spaces. Speakers that have relatively dry, tight bass will also sound better.

WHICH SPEAKERS ARE BEST FOR BIG ROOMS?

Big, efficient, easy-to-drive designs are more likely to be able to fill a room better than compact models.

DO I NEED TO BUY CENTRE AND SURROUND CHANNELS FROM THE SAME BRAND AS MY STEREO SPEAKERS?

Yes, assuming that you're wanting to create a homogenous surround sound experience, where voices don't change when they move from one channel to another.

TOP BUYS



Tannoy
Mercury F4 £350
Tannoy's Mercury speakers have a long history of 'quality' sound at low prices, and the latest range is no exception – this floorstander is thoroughly engaging.



DALI
Ikon 6 £899
Complete with a ribbon super-tweeter, this is an exceptionally capable floorstander for the money, delivering a highly detailed and truly engrossing sound.



B&W
805S £1,600
A superbly well-engineered standmount that's capable of delivering magnificent musical communication, alongside superior subtlety and delicacy.



Mordaunt-Short
Performance 6 £3,500
This extraordinary speaker stands at the pinnacle of Mordaunt-Short's current range. State of the art resolution and imaging are among its many attributes.

Our favourite **STEREO SPEAKERS**

HI-FI CHOICE
BEST BUY EDITOR'S CHOICE

Stereo speakers

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SIZE (WxD) (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
<input type="checkbox"/>	Acoustic Energy Aegis Neo 3	370	Pretty, neutral floorstander sounds open with wide dynamic range and good bass weight	20,90,5,24	A	24				294
<input type="checkbox"/>	Acoustic Energy Aelite 3	750	Wood-veneered all-rounder has exceptional neutrality with deep smooth bass	20,103,39	A	22				292
	Acoustic Energy AE1 Classic	845	Sharply priced classic replica has a beautifully balanced midband, wide dynamic range and little boxiness	18,29,5,25,5	A-	45				283
<input type="checkbox"/>	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
	ALR Jordan Note 3	1,350	Costly but clever; adjustable ABR gives much of the weight of a floorstander with the agility of a standmount	245,37,31,5	A	26				288
<input type="checkbox"/>	ATC SCM11	849	A very fine little speaker that's at its best with good, natural recordings where it adds little and reveals much	21,38,25	A-	55				293
<input type="checkbox"/>	Aurousal A1	450	Single-driver system is coloured but wonderfully coherent and very effective at communicating emotions	20,5,36,27	A	40				299
<input type="checkbox"/>	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
<input type="checkbox"/>	B&W DM303	180	Chunky looking and lively sounding, with deep bass, a fine midband and a restrained top end	30,33,23	A	23				226
<input type="checkbox"/>	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
<input type="checkbox"/>	B&W 683	899	A fine all-round performer with high-class drivers at a very realistic price	20,99,34	P	20				304
<input type="checkbox"/>	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
<input type="checkbox"/>	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
<input type="checkbox"/>	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
<input type="checkbox"/>	DALI Monitor 1	1,000	Beautiful miniature with advanced drivers sounds marvellously coherent with fine vocal expression	16,32,24	A	40				296
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dynaudio DM 2/10	775	Unfashionably bulky standmount has fine dynamics, grip, bass and headroom and is delicate and well mannered	27,5,45,35	A	22				299
<input type="checkbox"/>	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
<input type="checkbox"/>	Epos M5	349	Gorgeous miniature works well close to wall. Could be smoother but communicates with authority	18,33,21	A-	40				269
<input type="checkbox"/>	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
	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
<input type="checkbox"/>	Focal Chorus 816 V	1,000	Fine, warm balance, superior dynamics, and a sweet top end, but could be smoother	28,100,37,5	A+	20				288
<input type="checkbox"/>	Heco Celan 300	595	Does tone colour, dynamics and detail with aplomb and communicates superbly in its +2dB mode. Sensitive, too	23,36,33	A+	40				301
<input type="checkbox"/>	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
<input type="checkbox"/>	KEF iQ3	280	Shapely, vinyl-covered stand mount has lively dynamics and fine imaging, but could be smoother and sweeter	22,37,33	A+	40				284
<input type="checkbox"/>	KEF iQ9	800	Shapely and solid floorstander has wide bandwidth and dynamic range with superior neutrality and sensitivity	22,94,33	A	25				273
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mission elan e34	400	A return to form for Mission with a pacey, vibrant sound matched to good looks	35,96,34	A+	48				298
	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
<input type="checkbox"/>	Monitor Audio BR2	200	Good looking standmount has a muscular sound with superior coherence	18,5,35,25	A-	30				294
<input type="checkbox"/>	Monitor Audio BR5	400	Not the best dressed in its class, but detailed, bold sounding, good value and an easy electrical load	17,85,25	A-	36				293
<input type="checkbox"/>	Monitor Audio GS10	800	More neutral tonally than some recent MAs. Quality stereo design which takes up little room and is easy to drive	20,36,27	A-	40				284
<input type="checkbox"/>	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	90,18,27	A	33				276

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 walls. **CLOSE TO WALL** The speakers will work best when up against a wall (but avoid corners).



Get the best

“ Isn't it easy to buy a new system? You read the magazine product reviews, you find out who sells the recommendations, five-star favourites or best buys at the cheapest price, you order the system, get a friend who knows his onions to install it – and live happily ever after. ”

This is a fairly well-trodden path but it leads to dissatisfaction, endless upgrades and a lot of wasted money. It's likely that the system will help you lose interest in music pretty rapidly. The problem is that there are more myths about hi-fi than Aesop's Fables. CD gives you perfect sound. All CD players sound the same. A £50 CD player plays high fidelity music. All magazine reviewers are experts. Big speakers are always better than small ones. More watts per channel is everything. MP3 format gives you high quality. A collection of 'Best Buy' components will be a great system. And so on and so on... ALL MYTHS!

Music - the real aim

Our aim must be to buy a hi-fi system that will prove musically satisfying, reliable and deliver true value for money. If the system doesn't excite you musically you've wasted your money. What is even worse is that you may not even realise you've bought a bad egg – you'll just switch the TV on instead and your desire to listen to music will gradually diminish. Have you ever been in a pub or club where you realise it's very difficult to conduct a conversation, even to the extent of being really tiring? A poor quality system continuously distorts but I don't mean it necessarily reaches the point of audibly breaking up. With a top quality system you can play music very loudly and still hold a conversation because it's free of distortion. A poor system is tiring to listen to even when it's played at low volume. If you want proof, go into a shoe or clothes shop where they play background 'music' and try to enjoy listening. It's odds on you'll fail.

What and Where to buy

The system you think you want may not be right for you. – So where do you start? Here's an important tip... don't start with WHAT, start with WHERE.

There is only one way to give yourself the best chance of getting it right first time, and that's through a specialist hi-fi dealer. Now it's likely you have preconceived ideas that may put you off visiting one. Although you would welcome the advice and guidance, you don't know the technical jargon. You don't want to be talked down to. Your friend has said they only sell expensive gear and they're not interested if you don't have a big budget. They're expensive. Again, just myths. Most specialist hi-fi dealers are running their business because, above all, they love music. They spend a large portion of their time listening to music and comparing systems to get the best possible result. They know the component combinations which don't gel together and, conversely, they know the combinations which give the best performance within a given price range. But they all also know the system must suit you.

STAR QUALITIES

VALUE FOR MONEY



SERVICE



FACILITIES



VERDICT



Hi-Fi for your money....

Buying or being sold to?

Now there's a group of long-established specialist dealers who are totally committed to putting the customer first. Their idea of 'selling' is to discuss your requirements, offer their advice, give you the best options, then play the systems for you and allow you to be the judge.

Listening to your choice of music in a peaceful, well organised demonstration room, you may be surprised and, almost certainly, relieved to discover how easy it is to hear the differences between components and between systems. You'll be able to make a clear and informed decision about what to buy. It comes down to trusting your own judgement rather than the opinion of a reviewer you've never met... and who won't refund your money if you're not satisfied or be at the end of a phone to sort out any problem you might encounter.

The story doesn't end there. These shops won't abandon you once you've put your hand in your pocket. They won't leave you to set up the system you've selected as best you can. They'll install it in your home, make sure it sounds great, and make sure you're entirely happy with the way it works. Why? Because a high proportion of these dealers' custom comes through people who have bought from them before, either directly or by commendation. It's vital to them to get it right for you.

Getting the best deal

Oscar Wilde wrote "...too many people today know the price of everything and the value of nothing." Specialist retailers know that not all potential purchasers will seek them out. They tend to attract the more discerning, thoughtful customers. Let's face it, a good deal is about more than just a good price. After all, unless you've got money to burn, you'll be living with your new system for years. Most of these dealers offer much longer equipment guarantees than provided by the manufacturer, a very worthwhile benefit, but it also makes it in the dealer's interest to ensure high build quality and reliability. Maybe you could save a few pounds by buying piecemeal but you'll lose out on the overall package. As far as the dealers are concerned, maybe they believe that taking care of their customers properly is a nicer way of doing business than just handing over boxes.

Listed below are **20 OF THE BEST HI-FI SHOPS IN THE COUNTRY**. They have been selected because they are known to do an excellent job in guiding customers towards hi-fi that will give them years of musical enjoyment and total satisfaction.



... Ask our Top 20 UK Hi-Fi Dealers

LONDON

N1
GRAHAMS HI-FI
190a New North Road.
020 7226 5500

SW11
ORANGES & LEMONS
61/63 Webbs Road,
Battersea.
020 7924 2043

SOUTH
Aldermaston, Berkshire
HIFICINEMA
Mars House, Calleva Park.
0118 982 0402

Ashford, Kent
SOUNDCRAFT HI-FI
40 High Street.
01233 624441

Brighton
THE POWERPLANT
40 Church Road, Hove.
01273 775542

Chelmsford
RAYLEIGH HI-FI
216 Moulsham Street.
01245 265245

Colchester
RAYLEIGH HI-FI
33 Sir Isaac's Walk.
01206 577682

Kingston-upon-Thames
INFIDELITY
9 High Street Hampton Wick.
020 8943 3530

Rayleigh, Essex
RAYLEIGH HI-FI
44a High Street.
01268 779762

Southeast-on-Sea
RAYLEIGH HI-FI
132/4 London Road.
01702 435255

Southampton
PHASE 3 HI-FI
37 Bedford Place.
023 8022 8434

Worthing
PHASE 3 HI-FI
213-217 Tarring Road.
01903 245577

SOUTH WEST
Bath
AUDIENCE
14 Broad Street.
01225 333310

MIDLANDS
Banbury
OVERTURE
3 Church Lane.
01295 272158

Birmingham
SOUND ACADEMY
152a High Street, Bloxwich.
01922 493499

Birmingham
MUSIC MATTERS
363 Hagley Road, Edgbaston.
0121 429 2811

Coventry
FRANK HARVEY
163 Spon Street.
024 7652 5200

Leicester
CYMBIOSIS
6 Hotel Street.
0116 262 3754
Nottingham
CASTLE SOUND & VISION
48/50 Maid Marian Way.
0115 9584404

Stafford
ACOUSTICA
114 Wolverhampton Road.
01785 258216

NORTH
Cheadle
THE AUDIO WORKS
14 Stockport Road.
0161 428 7887

Chester
ACOUSTICA
17 Hoole Road.
01244 344227

Sheffield
MOORGATE ACOUSTICS
184 Fitzwilliam St.
0114 275 6048
York
SOUND ORGANISATION
2 Gillygate. 01904 627108
Gateshead
LINTONE AUDIO
7-11 Park Lane, Gateshead.
0191 477 4167


SCOTLAND
Edinburgh
LOUD & CLEAR
Bonnington Mill,
72 Newhaven Road.
0131 555 3963
Glasgow
LOUD & CLEAR
520 St Vincent St, Finnieston.
0141 221 0221

N. IRELAND
Belfast LYRIC HI-FI
429-431 Lisburn Rd.
028 90 381296

Our favourite BEST BUY EDITOR'S CHOICE
STEREO SPEAKERS continued

Stereo speakers

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SIZE (WxDxH) (CM)	FLOORSTANDER	EASE OF DRIVING	BASS FROM (Hz)	FREE SPACE	CLOSE TO WALL	ISSUE NUMBER
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mordaunt-Short Avant 906i	350	The generous, well balanced sound shows good enclosure control, could do with more grip and better spikes!	16,5,85,295		A	40			281
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q Acoustics 1010	99	Neatly styled miniature has limited bass and power handling but fine midband voicing at a very sharp price	15,21,5,19,5		A	48			286
<input type="checkbox"/>	Q Acoustics 1050	330	Great value, the sound lacks smoothness but has fine dynamics and impressive transparency	19,5,97,5,30		A+	28			284
<input type="checkbox"/>	Quadral Pico	849	Could be more muscular, but neutral and open with spacious imaging and little coloration	19,34,26		A-	30			292
<input type="checkbox"/>	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
<input type="checkbox"/>	Revel Concerta F12	900	Massive multi-driver floorstander is not pretty, but has great headroom, bass weight and impressive neutrality	25,108,36		A	22			296
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ruark Sabre III	799	Straightforward engineering combined with high finish quality that delivers a beautifully timed and engaging sound	20,33,5,27		A-	50			289
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tannoy Mercury F4	350	Floorstander has an engrossing sound with good dynamics and a warm, restrained output	20,5,97,29		A+	24			294
<input type="checkbox"/>	Totem Rainmaker	795	Standmount has a big sound, with a smooth midband and bright top. Could have more punch and warmth	17,35,5,23		A	25			291
<input type="checkbox"/>	Triangle Antal Esw	995	Smoother than its predecessors, with a beautifully balanced bass and midband, though the top end is uneven	20,108,34		A	20			288
<input type="checkbox"/>	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
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Triangle Comete ES	500	Bulky standmount lacks style but delivers engrossing musical coherence and vivid dynamics	20,42,34		A	40			265
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wharfedale Opus2-M1	1,000	Elegant mid to compact three way, a new direction in recent years for Wharfedale	23,51,36		A-	42			302
ABOVE £1,000										
<input type="checkbox"/>	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
<input type="checkbox"/>	Amphion Prio 520	1,600	Gorgeous styling and a lively sound with good voice band integrity and a sweet top end	16,104,22		A	40			302
<input type="checkbox"/>	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
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ATC SCM16A	2,203	Makes a great case for the active speaker. Good value, including built-in amps, and fuss-free	27,45,33		ACT	42			300
<input type="checkbox"/>	ATC SCM19	1,499	Super linear motor system, heavy weight construction and fabulous veneer that makes the ATC a pro favourite	22,44,31,5		A-	54			285
<input type="checkbox"/>	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
<input type="checkbox"/>	AVI ADM9	1,000	Active mini-monitors that are exceptionally accurate and dynamic, and they give good iPod, too	20,30,26		ACT	60			301
<input type="checkbox"/>	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
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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
<input type="checkbox"/>	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
<input type="checkbox"/>	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
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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
<input type="checkbox"/>	Focal Chorus 826 V	1,250	Times nicely, goes loud with ease and will produce precise imaging if appropriately set up.	28,104,37,5		A	45			287
<input type="checkbox"/>	Focal Chorus 836V	1,549	Bulky, sharply priced three-way could be prettier. Has good bass with genuine grip, but top could be sweeter	28,115,38		A	28			290
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Focal 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
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Focal Diva Utopia Be	7,599	Lovely slimline speaker combines remarkable transparency with fine dynamics and gorgeous bass	25,110,53		A+	30			255
<input type="checkbox"/>	Free FS1	3,000	An elegant active design for anyone after the minimum of wiring. Wireless with Sonos or Airport Express	16,87,27		ACT	35			301
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	KEF Reference Model 2012	3,500	Very classy but costly three-way stand-mount with much improved Uni-Q; could be more transparent	25,42,41		A	30			298
<input type="checkbox"/>	Kudos Cardea C1	1,450	A very pretty compact standmount with a delightfully subtle and delicate sound quality	20,35,27		A	40			304
<input type="checkbox"/>	MartinLogan Source	1,599	Careful install needed, but capable of remarkable transparency at an extremely competitive price	24,120,37		A	42			303
<input type="checkbox"/>	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
<input type="checkbox"/>	Monopulse 42A	1,495	Oddball styling, fine bass-to-mid balance and dynamics, and superb voice coherence, but untidy treble	26,110,25		A	25			302
<input type="checkbox"/>	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




Solutions for better music & movies™

To request a FREE catalogue pack go to www.russandrews.com/catalogue or phone us on 0845 345 1550

Mail Order Direct • 60 Day Cable Home Trial •

Updated and improved PowerMax Plus™ mains cable

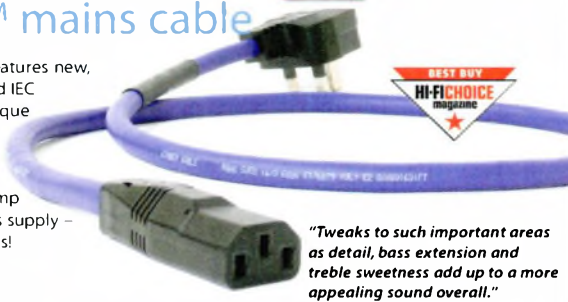
NEW!  **Exclusive UK distributor**

Our new PowerMax Plus™ mains cable features new, custom designed nickel-plated mains and IEC connectors, and we've perfected a technique of mechanically attaching the cable to the plugs. **PowerMax Plus™** helps improve the performance of your CD or DVD player, and Hi-Fi or Home Cinema amp by improving its connection to the mains supply – resulting in even better music and movies! www.russandrews.com/powermax

PowerMax Plus™ £29.95 for 1m

Cable Upgrade Scheme • Free Delivery (orders over £100 within UK Mainland)

“Tweaks to such important areas as detail, bass extension and treble sweetness add up to a more appealing sound overall.”
Original PowerMax™ cable, Hi-Fi Choice, issue 288



Our favourite BEST BUY EDITOR'S CHOICE STEREO SPEAKERS *continued*

Stereo speakers

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SIZE WxHxD (CM)	FLOORSTANDER	EASE OF DRIVE	BASS FROM Hz	FREE SPACE	CLOSE TO WALL	SCALE NUMBER
EC	Monitor Audio PL300	5,000	Completely new level of sophistication from a brand best known for mainstream, cost effective designs	41,111,47		A-	28			301
EC	Mordaunt-Short Perf 6	3,500	Revolutionary enclosure design and aspirated tweeter make for a fast, hi-res ride	24,121,37		A-	35			264
EC	Neat Elite SE	1,499	Smooth and natural performer with notably expressive midband. Fine voice articulation and unusual sweetness	20,90,18		A	25			267
EC	Neat 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
EC	Neat Momentum 3i	1,745	Sounds a lot bigger than it looks, with good coherence and an impressively wide dynamic range	22,38,27		A-	23			302
EC	Opera Seconda	1,295	Classy cabinetwork plus beautifully judged neutrality with crisp, clean and deep bass	24,102,5,31,5		A-	20			297
EC	PMC Wafer 2	1,650	Clever 'hang-on-wall' speaker has minimal sonic compromises. Smooth midband delivers impressive stereo imaging	33,55,7,5,10		A+	45			285
EC	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
EC	PMC EB1	5,950	The best argument for large speakers that we've heard in a long time	29,120,46,5		A-	19			292
EC	ProAc Response D25	2,995	The traditional ProAc high-end detail mixed with greater efficiency and more pace - a splendid speaker	22,107,25		A+	20			254
EC	Quad ESL 2805	4,500	Uniquely wonderful natural realism, exceptional imaging, coherence and low level detailing	70,107,38,5		A-	45			294
EC	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
EC	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	25			271
EC	Revel F32	3,200	Meticulously balanced, tonally neutral design makes for a taut, well disciplined sound	22,105,39		A	20			256
EC	Revel M22	1,800	A remarkably clean and revealing speaker with superb tonal and microdynamic capabilities	22,37,30		A-	48			274
EC	Roksan Caspian FR-5	2,000	Sharp looking speaker sounds exceptionally open and lively without aggression. Could be warmer and richer	20,100,25		A	22			290
EC	Ruark Talisman III	1,499	No bass demon, but a sophisticated and agile speaker epitomising Ruark's design ideals	22,84,31		A	22			259
EC	Sonus Faber Concerto D.	1,799	The Concerto Domus performs significantly above its price level, especially with acoustic material	21,99,31		A	35			270
EC	Sonus Faber Grand Piano D	2,498	The Grand Piano Domus has a fabulous physical appearance and delivers a clean, refined sound	21,106,31		A-	32			283
EC	Tannoy Dimension TD8	4,000	This stylish speaker is a splendid all-rounder, with fine dynamics, precise imaging and minimal coloration	31,86,30		A-	25			240
EC	Tannoy Glenair 10	2,999	With a 250mm dual concentric driver this is a generously proportioned, highly engaging speaker for a good price	36,100,35		A+	38			295
EC	Totem Model 1 Signature	1,595	Expensive, but very seductive miniature delivers a beautifully smooth and balanced midband	17,31,23		A	35			277
EC	Triangle Genese Quartet	1,895	Great material value and a solid all round sonic performance with great loudness potential	23,117,37		A	25			302
EC	Triangle Celius 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
EC	Triangle Magellan Concerto	14,750	New 'sw2' version is less immediate than its predecessor, but it's easier to live with and remains highly entertaining	60,160,45		A-	32			290
EC	Usher Compass CP-6381	2,500	Lots of speaker for your money, with plenty of deep bass, unusual styling and massive build	35,127,65		A	20			270
EC	Vivid Audio B1	7,750	Impressive cabinet design combined with hi-tech drivers to make truly world class speaker	27,110,38		A-	40			261
EC	Wilson Benesch ACT	8,400	Superb enclosure gives uncanny freedom from 'boxiness'. Well balanced, but top end might be sweeter	23,108,36		A	20			252
EC	Wilson Benesch Curve	5,000	Much (but not all) of the ACT's performance in a much more compact and affordable package	23,91,37		A	28			254
EC	Wharfedale Airedale Neo	9,000	Expansive yet relaxed sounding, the Neo is a coloured but surprisingly musical and enjoyable speaker	52,115,45		A-	25			296
EC	Yamaha Soavo 2	1,200	Cunningly crafted stand-mount with a beautiful balance that always sounds lively, open and involving	22,38,35		A	28			296

Our favourite BEST BUY EDITOR'S CHOICE SUBWOOFERS

Bass speakers

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SIZE WxHxD (CM)	POWER (W)	BASS FROM Hz	SCALE NUMBER
EC	B&W PV1	950	Gorgeously styled sub shakes the air but not the floor, delivering a very clean sound with negligible coloration	29,34,35	500	20	259
EC	B&W ASW850	2,000	Does all the things subwoofers should do with music and movies alike, but transparently and seamlessly	53,56,52	1,000	18	246
EC	Eclipse TD725sw	2,700	Delivers solid meaningful bass, but with unusual tunefulness, speed and articulation	52,47,50	500	40	287
EC	Monitor Audio ASW100	300	For the price, this compact subwoofer performs particularly well	32,32,34	120	27	225
EC	REL 305	795	Landmark mid-price sub, works particularly well with low crossover frequency, looks great too	32,36,34	300	25	284
EC	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
EC	REL T1	595	Standard setter at the price: flexible, easily set up and packs quite a punch	36,40,420	300	25	291
EC	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
EC	REL Storm III	900	Excellent sub with powerful, detailed and deep bass. Comprehensive facilities, including flexible filter adjustment	42,62,33	150	18	225
EC	REL Storm 5	1,000	Well engineered, good bass depth, appropriate for mixed hi-fi & home cinema/multichannel systems	34,52,37	200	15	267
EC	MartinLogan Dynamo	449	Refined, compact sub brings established MartinLogan virtues to a new price and size point	29,35,32	200	25	301
EC	Velodyne SPL-800R	699	Powerful, highly configurable sub with auto setup feature and attractive, compact packaging	26,27,33	1,000	28	286
EC	Wilson Benesch Torus	5,200	Amp and sub package built like a sophisticated pile driver, with deep, state of the art performance	45,33,45	1,000	10	290

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.

How the new 550K Supercharger from Musical Fidelity turns most hi-fi systems into 550w dynamic power houses.

The new 550K Supercharger is a low gain power amp that is connected to the system just before the loudspeakers.

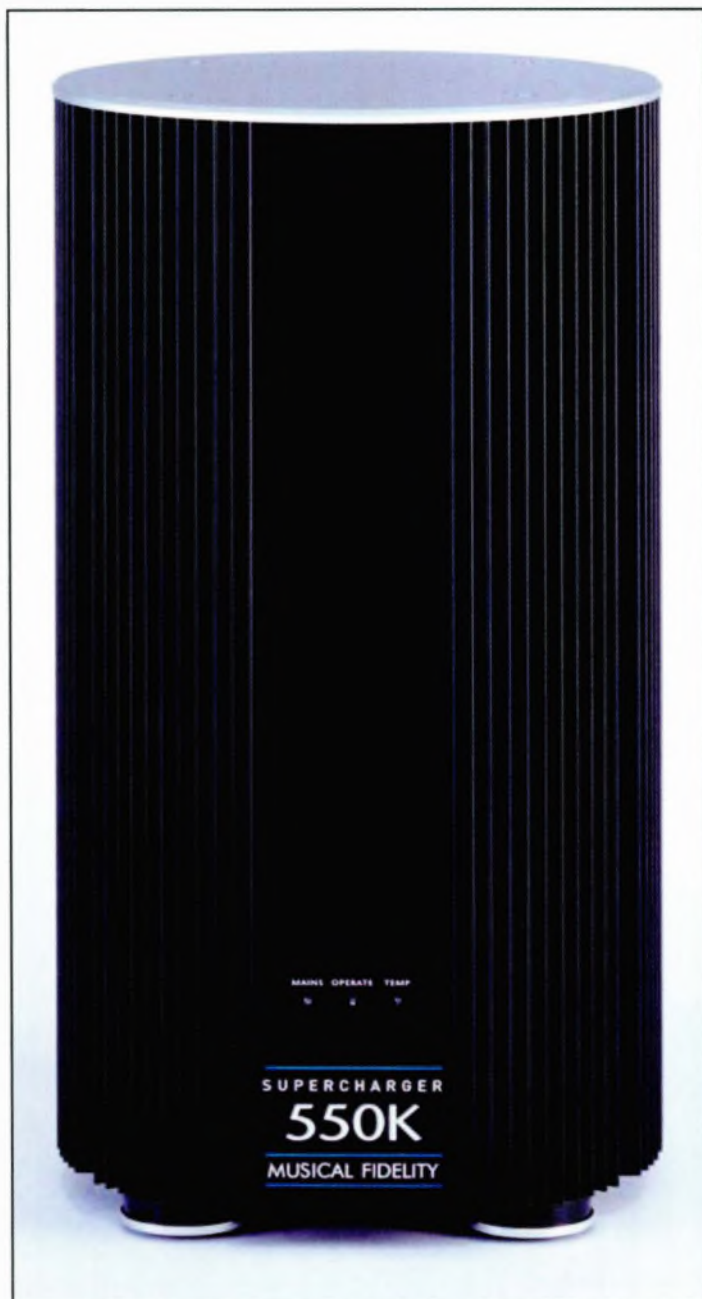
Used in a system with an amp rated between 50 and 200 watts, it will increase its power to 550 watts, and improve the system almost beyond recognition.

It dramatically increases dynamic range and enables the amplifier already in the system to function perfectly.

The 550K turns even a modest integrated amp into a state-of-the-art amplification system.

It works with any make of amp, and it works with valve amps, transistor amps and hybrids.

Visit musicalfidelity.com to find out more about the 550K Supercharger, or contact your audio dealer for an audition.



MUSICAL FIDELITY

Hearing is believing.

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 you particularly engaging results unless you are very lucky. If you are planning on serious listening, invest in a dedicated amp – the increase in dynamics is not in the least bit subtle. A variety of models are made and prices start at around £80 for a QED, a little more for designs from, say, Creek or Musical Fidelity. And if you're really into cans, look up the valve-powered Earmax.

Our favourite HEADPHONES

BEST BUY EDITOR'S CHOICE

Stereo headphones

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	AKG K270 Studio	129	Pro oriented design which is very transparent and great with acoustic material
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	AKG K1000	650	Neutral, analytical and completely out of the head sound, suitable for connection to speaker outputs only
<input type="checkbox"/>	Audio Technica ATH-W1000	400	Superbly comfortable and very revealing. Long listening sessions are a pleasure with new musical insights
<input type="checkbox"/>	Beyerdynamic DT770	190	A touch coloured in the mid, but less than most closed cans: detailed and with excellent bass
<input type="checkbox"/>	Beyerdynamic DT880	200	Informative, neutral and surprisingly close to good loudspeakers. Good for occasional and long-term listening alike
<input type="checkbox"/>	Grado SR225	180	Tonally shows the way to Grado's amazing GS1000 flagship, but detail and soundstage are not truly class-leading
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Grado SR325i	310	Highly sophisticated and detailed sound with great extension; check for comfort
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Grado GS1000	995	One of the finest transducers on the planet, with detail to die for
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sennheiser HD485	65	A great all-round headphone for occasional or even heavy use, refined in sound and comfortable, too
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sennheiser HD595	150	Technology from upmarket HD650 model makes this a very revealing headphone that's also extremely comfortable
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sennheiser HD650	300	Astonishing resolution and hardly less impressive tonal balance make this a true hi-fi experience
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sennheiser PXC450	299	Noise-cancelling model: as good as it gets for making the most of listening in planes, trains and automobiles
<input type="checkbox"/>	Shure SE420	240	Expensive and no replacement for top conventional 'phones, but streets ahead of most in-ears with real refinement
<input type="checkbox"/>	Shure E500PTH	420	Sophisticated in-ear design with three drivers, plus switchable 'voiceover' mic in the lead; high-quality stuff
<input type="checkbox"/>	Stax SR-001 Mk II	239	Expensive and power hungry, but this electrostatic drags personal stereo into the world of high fidelity
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Stax SRS-2020 Basic Sys. II	349	Luxury option at its price, but the sound delivery is five-star quality all the way

SPECIFICATIONS		3.5MM JACK ADAPTOR	SCALE NUMBER			
ELECTROSTATIC	SUPRA-AURAL	CIRCUMAURAL	OPEN BACK	CLOSED BACK	WEIGHT (g)	
					270	230
					270	244
					250	304
					290	287
					205	300
					200	300
					200	270
					250	288
					220	296
					270	266
					260	252
					240	302
					15	295
					20	285
					280	268
					205	295

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.



JOIN US FOR A LINN AKURATE OPEN DAY

CALL SALES: (020) 8318 5755 or 8852 1321 - 248 Lee High Road, London, SE13 5PL

0% APR Credit options are available for purchases of New products exceeding £900, please call for details. E&OE

The future is right here, right now!



Linn Akurate DS Music processor



Linn Akurate Music Server

Experience the Akurate Music System on 29th March

We invite you to join us to experience the new Akurate DS and the Akurate Music Server sources which will not only enhance the performance of your system, but transform it into a music system for the future. Please visit our website for more information. Akurate DS plays the highest quality open audio formats and we will be demonstrating the DS and Music server along with the complete Akurate system. (Inc improved speakers) Both products can be added to enhance your systems capability and expansion and we will show how the entire Akurate system can be accessed and controlled through a hand-held wireless touchscreen, PC, laptop or IR handset.

With top Linn technical personel on hand to assist and answer any questions this is a day not to be missed. Please RSVP to Ian Ridge via telephone or on the events page of our website at www.billyvee.co.uk to reserve your place.

CABLES



Wires to hook your system together



Hi-fi cables come in two varieties: interconnects and speaker cables.

Analogue interconnects come in preset lengths, generally with RCA (phono) plugs attached, though some equipment uses XLR connectors for balanced connection – this can be sonically advantageous, especially over longer runs. Speaker cable is commonly sold by the metre and can be used without plugs or can

be fitted with screw or solder-on types.

Choosing cables is not quite as straightforward as it might seem. One problem is that components interact with the cables you use and this often results in audible effects, but there are few cables that are fundamentally incompatible with any components, and we recommend the advice of a good dealer. In any case, you should look to spend as much as you can afford.

Digital cables come in two flavours: electrical and optical. In most instances electrical varieties sound better than optical, given the choice, but optical cables may be a better bet over long runs (10m+). Optical inputs/outputs usually use Toslink connectors, while most electrical types use RCA plugs, but some opt for BNC connection instead – check your components before you buy.

Our favourite CABLES

BEST BUY EDITOR'S CHOICE

Interconnects and speaker cables

BADGE?	PRODUCT	PRICE	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS				
				STRANDED	SOLID CORE	COPPER	SILVER	DIGITAL CABLE TYPE
ANALOGUE INTERCONNECTS								
<input type="checkbox"/>	Atlas Questor	70	Very open and informative at high and mid frequencies, with slightly dry bass. Imaging particularly fine					295
<input type="checkbox"/>	Audioquest Sidewinder	45	A lively and detailed cable, with fine tonality and excellent rhythm. Slight added upper-bass warmth does little to detract					297
<input type="checkbox"/>	Black Rhodium Prelude	80	Practical and sensibly priced all-rounder that seems happily compatible with a wide range of kit					293
<input type="checkbox"/>	Black Rhodium Coda	150	Superb bass and excellently neutral and detailed midrange: treble generally sweet with occasional slight constriction					299
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Black Rhodium Concert	255	This DCT cable from the Polar range gives a distinctively dark timbre, rich in detail, with low subjective noise					270
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cambridge Azur Reference	50	Performance wouldn't shame a cable at twice the price: especially adept in the treble with no trace of dryness					296
<input type="checkbox"/>	Clearer Audio Copper-Line Alpha	50	Sounding like something a good deal dearer, this cable offers near high-end detail and seems highly compatible too					295
<input type="checkbox"/>	Clearer Audio Silver-line	244	Complex, well-screened cable which offers good sound all round with exceptional bass – at a price!					279
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CrystalCable Piccolo	260	Thin cable, but tougher than it looks, Piccolo has some qualities of a solid core type generically – notably resolution, focus and articulation					294
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ikos Ikonica X1	200	Notable for its relaxing sound, this cable still presents plenty of analytical detail					283
<input type="checkbox"/>	Monster M350i	45	Few cables at this price reveal so much about the recording space. Clear treble, too					281
<input type="checkbox"/>	Monster M1000i	200	Very capable, with only a hint of bass dryness to set against excellent results elsewhere					284
<input type="checkbox"/>	Nordost WyreWizard Dream	95	Slight lack of precision in extreme treble, otherwise detailed and neutral with authoritative bass					303
<input type="checkbox"/>	Oehlbach NF214	63	The bass is a matter of taste, but suits many smaller speakers. Very good mid and treble					281
<input type="checkbox"/>	ProTigold PGA3000	60	Not the ultimate for lovers of clinical precision, its character is engaging and detail and extension are good					299
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Supra Sword-ISL	379	Unusual inductance-free design, beautifully built, with bold, finely detailed and outgoing sound quality and excellent discipline					292
<input type="checkbox"/>	Townshend Isolda DCT100	99	Silky-smooth treble, with remarkably good detail too: midrange and bass also very fine					303
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Vanden Hul MC Silver IT MkIII	2,250	Incredibly resolute and low distortion cable that makes the alternatives sound crude, pity about the price					289
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wireworld Luna 5	30	Authoritative bass and clear treble outperform many cables at twice the price					273
DIGITAL INTERCONNECTS								
<input type="checkbox"/>	Atlas Compass	50	Slight improvement in detail over giveaway cables, plus distinctly more tuneful bass and more open treble, make this fine value					E 289
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Clearer Audio Silver-line	125	Very satisfying performance with finely-etched detail and sweet treble					E 278
<input type="checkbox"/>	Supra AnCo	80	This cable can give a useful filip to a good transport/DAC combination, even in a high-end context					E 304
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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
SPEAKER CABLES PRICE PER METRE								
<input type="checkbox"/>	Atlas Hyper 1.5	10	Don't look to this cable to beef up the bass, but its performance at higher frequencies is revelatory at the price					299
<input type="checkbox"/>	Atlas Ascent 2.0	55	A highly analytical cable, with more bass extension than at first appears and very fine detail across the board					294
<input type="checkbox"/>	Chord Epic Twin	40	Good all rounder, which generally sounds relaxed and musical, and a full bass that stops the right side of sounding blowsy					287
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CrystalCable Piccolo	1,480	Tougher than it looks, Piccolo has some of the qualities of a solid core type generically – notably resolution, focus and articulation					302
<input type="checkbox"/>	Kimber 8PR	12	A cable that really enjoys the music, also admirable for the levels of analytical detail it allows through. Excellent value					299
<input type="checkbox"/>	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
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Nordost Heimdall	162	Alternative to Valhalla, silver plated, micro-monofilament construction, low colouration, hi-res and suitable for exacting systems					278
<input type="checkbox"/>	QED Silver Anniversary XT	5.50	Full bass and nicely detailed treble combine with good imaging – a budget bargain					276
<input type="checkbox"/>	QED X-Tube XT300	10	A natural and well controlled sounding cable that's cost effective for mid-priced systems					234
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Supra Sword	116	Zero inductance construction, medium resolution cable that has an excellent midband and is fundamentally musical					287
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Townshend Isolda DCT	50	Cryogenically treated 'impedance matched' cable with stabilising components added: great sound all-round					241
<input type="checkbox"/>	van den Hul The Bridge	6	Better bass than treble, with good detail though a touch of constriction at times					291
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wireworld Luna 16/4	5	Budget biwire cable offering tuneful and extended bass, good treble, and midrange with just a little lack of detail					292

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.

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 BEST BUY 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
<input type="checkbox"/>	Audiophile Base Std Supp't	900	Not cheap and quite bulky, but it's all worth it as sound is unusually detailed and resonance-free	57	46,35		3	MDF	302
	Custom Design Icon Signature	330	Gorgeous wood and glass looks: sound lacks a little detail but is nicely lively	75	56,37		4	Glass	286
	Custom Design XL4	380	Simple construction pays off in smart looks. Sound contribution is minimal and largely harmless	65	60,42		4	Glass	293
<input type="checkbox"/>	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
<input type="checkbox"/>	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
	Custom Design Milan	449	Respect is due to any stand that looks this good with nothing more to complain of than slight muddying of detail	57	48,39		4	Glass	302
<input type="checkbox"/>	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	420	Adds its own character to the benefit of rock most particularly, but slightly to the detriment of acoustic sounds	78	45,37		5	Glass	302
	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
<input type="checkbox"/>	RA Torlyte Platform	130	This unassuming platform can be a godsend, cleaning away mid/treble muddle from the sound	8	48,36		1	Torlyte	302
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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 BEST BUY EDITOR'S CHOICE SPEAKER STANDS

Speaker stands

BADGE?	PRODUCT	£	COMMENTS	SPECIFICATIONS					
				HEIGHT (CM)	TOP PLATE SIZE (CM)	FILLABLE	WELDED	NUMBER OF LEGS	ISSUE NUMBER
	Anvil Sound Display Stand	226	A variety of smart looks available - sound is clear and precise	50	20,17			1	293
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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
	Custom Design SQ402	100	More a range than a model, capable of fine results especially with Acoustic Steel top plates	62	18,16,5			2	299
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Custom Design SQ404	200	Robust four-pillar design gives very low coloration and maximises performance of speakers great and small	61	18,16,3			4	283
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Partington Ansa 60	99	Elegant flat-packer 'disappears' sonically; restrained but neutral and coherent	62	18,15			4	232
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Partington Heavi II	399	Robust to the nth degree, this stand helps produce very taut, precise bass and detailed upper frequencies	53	31,22			6	287
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Russ Andrews Torlyte	299	Very relaxed sound from this metal-free design, with excellent imaging too	60,50	15,21			3	280

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

Equipment Racks

www.standanddeliver.com



Stand & Deliver

The Home Of Audio Visual Furniture

The UK's AV Furniture Superstore
24 Hour Despatch

Plasma Stands
LCD Stands
TV Stands
Hi-Fi Stands
Speaker Stands



www.standanddeliver.com

Equipment Racks

Speaker heaven!



Monopulse



Zingali Cinema



Audiophysic



Zingali



Anniversary Series



Italy Series



Razor

Client Name

audioboffs

Home Demonstrations by appointment

Check out our website for the full product range.

Email: info@audioboffs.co.uk
www.audioboffs.co.uk
 Tel: 020 8177 4095

Atacama
Audio Lab
Audio Quest
Castro
Cyrus
KEF
Marantz
Meridian
Michell
M. J. Acoustics
Monitor Audio
Mordaunt-Shoob
NAD
Nordost
Origin Live
Ortofon
Pathos
Pickering
Primare
Pro-Ac
Project
QUAD
Roksan
Shanling
SME
Stands Unique
Sugden
Tannoy
TEAC
Trichord
Unison Research
Van Den Hul
Wharfedale
Yamaha
& Lots more...

Award Winning Retailers...

Vickers Hi-Fi

The North of England Hi-Fi Specialists

- ▶ Quality Hi-Fi separates from £100 to £10,000
- ▶ Widest choice in the area ▶ Independent advice
- ▶ Consumers Choice Gold Award Winners
- ▶ Over 35yrs experience ▶ Qualified staff
- ▶ Comfortable dem rooms ▶ Superb showrooms
- ▶ Main road location ▶ Major car parks nearby
- ▶ Insurance estimates ▶ Service Dept.
- ▶ Up to 3 years Interest Free Credit* only 20% deposit
- ▶ Carriage Free Mail Order (inc. credit) *subject to status
- ▶ Delivery & installation
- ▶ Part Exchange
- ▶ Open 10:30am - 5:30pm 6 days: Mon. to Sat.
- ▶ Visa, Mastercard, Switch etc.

24 Gillygate, York YO31 7EQ

Tel: 01904 629659

www.Vickers-HiFi.co.uk

Specialists in high fidelity sound reproduction - since 1967




Is this your problem? Here's your answer



loud too loud way too loud

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 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 with even the most expensive equipment.



"this accessory is heartily recommended" Gramophone

£39/pair - post free
01204 366133 www.rothwellaudioproducts.co.uk

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

www.hifichoice.co.uk



Outstanding music and video systems from a retail shop established for over 40 years.
Come and enjoy your favourite discs and a cup of coffee with our relaxed team.
Every brand we sell is chosen for its spectacular quality, performance and reliability.

O'Brien Hi-Fi

60 Durham Road - London - SW20 0TW
020 8946 1528 or shop@obrienhifi.com
Tuesday to Saturday from 9am until 6pm
www.obrienhifi.com



EXCELLENCE IN SOUND AND VISUAL



- Specializing in bespoke solutions from the worlds leading manufacturers to suit your lifestyle and budget.
- Visit our new showroom to experience the ultimate in hi-fi, home cinema and multi room

Tel.01872 273 215
www.audio-cinema.co.uk
16-17 Lemon Street, Truro, TR1 2LS



ORANGES & LEMONS



Hi-Fi, Home Cinema & Multi-room Specialists

020 7924 2040
www.oandlhifi.co.uk
61 Webbs Road, Battersea SW11 6RX
email: oranges.lemons@virgin.net




Analogue Seduction

where music is our passion



Analogue Seduction are dedicated towards two channel Hi-Fi, specialising in vinyl replay.

As well as our on-line shop we have dedicated demonstration retail facilities based in Peterborough, Cambridgeshire and we can offer our customers home demonstrations.

We stock the finest in amplification, analogue, digital replay and speakers. We also specialise in a cable termination and cable burn in service.

Please visit our website www.analogueseduction.net to browse or purchase products that are not easily available elsewhere.

New vinyl records now stocked

Tel: +44 (0)1733 344768

Hi Fi Separates are redundant!

AVI's ADM9 monitors are a complete Hi Fi System in one pair of Compact speakers.

They comprise: A high performance Burr-Brown DAC, a remote controlled two input preamp (one USB DAC and one Analogue), 4th order electronic crossovers and two high speed, linear, bipolar power Amps (250 and 100 watts) in a pair of 6.5" two-way Loudspeakers Measuring 31 x 20 x 26cms.

And there is an optional dedicated 10" Subwoofer if you need it!



ADM9s plug into the USB port of any computer to turn it into one of the best Hi Fi systems you will hear at a fraction of the cost of traditional separates.

The analogue input can be for TV or satellite sound.

You save money and space as well as getting much better Sound Quality.

One day all Hi Fi systems will be built this way.

Retail price: £1000 per pair.
www.avihifi.com

REVOX SERVICE

THE MANUFACTURERS' APPOINTED SERVICE COMPANY

REVOX SERVICE

Correct Revox Spare Parts Pricing
24 Hour Estimation procedure
Manufacturer Upgrades and Advice
Delivery and Collection Service
Comprehensive Guarantees

Factory Trained Engineers
Rapid Response Turnaround
Full Revox range serviced
Written Technical Reports
Late Evening Opening

THE AR TECHNOLOGY LIMITED

TTL House, Sheeptick End, Near Lidlington, Bedfordshire, MK43 0SF
Telephone 01525 841999 Facsimile 01525 841009

IAN HARRISON HIFI SALE!
Tel: 01283 702875

MICHELL ORBE	£2000.
MICHELL TECNOARM A	£355.
DENON DL 304	£175.
CLEARAUDIO CONCERTO	£800.
EAR MASTER DISK	£POA.
AUDIO TECHNICA ATHW 1000	£POA.
AUDIO TECHNICA AT OC9ML2	£225.
TRANSFIGURATION AXIA	£715.
TRANSFIGURATION PHOENIX	£1100.
TRICHORD DINO MK2	£279.
TOM EVANS GROOVE PLUS	£3050.
WHEST AUDIO PS30R	£POA

All goods are brand new and fully guaranteed. Goods are not supplied on approval. Free UK delivery

I also supply: NU FORCE, THORENS, HARBETH, USHER, AUROSAL, FINAL, OPERA, TRIANGLE, DIAPASON, EPOS, GAMUT, CREEK, GRAAF, AUDIO ANALOGUE, SUGDEN, ORTOFON, ZYX, VAN DEN HUL, CARTRIDGE MAN, SUMIKO, STAX, GRADO, SME, BLACK RHODIUM, SUPRA, BEYER and many more.

Details and prices from: Ian Harrison, 7 Mill Hill, Repton, Derby DE65 6GQ, UK. Tel: 01283 702875 9am-9pm inc Sundays

To advertise here please call
Ben Keightley on
0207 042 4262

Look,
Listen,
Experience...



Offering you the very best in audio and visual system solutions.

- Two Channel Audio
- Home Cinema
- Multi Room Installation
- Turntable Workshop



ARCAM

regal



epos



kudos
...and others



Visit our showroom at:
Calveley Court, Southburgh Road,
Reymerston, Norfolk. NR9 4QD
tel: 01362 820800
email: enquiries@basicallysound.co.uk
www.basicallysound.co.uk



ArcamDV79£449!

An exclusive Sound Gallery offer..

The DV79 incorporates fantastic CD playback, matching the quality of Arcam's own CD73T CD player.

Producing a stunning picture and sound from DVD's, makes the DV79 a great choice for music and films. Save a massive £551 today! Normal price £1,000.



www.soundgallery.co.uk
65 Castle Street, High Wycombe, Bucks
O1494 531682

Rochester Hi-Fi

30 HIGH STREET, ROCHESTER, KENT, ME1 1LD - 01634 880037

ORACLE AUDIO



Raysonic



UK DISTRIBUTOR FOR ALL RAYSONIC & ORACLE PRODUCTS.

ANATEK, ARCAM, ATACAMA, AUDIOPHILE BASE, AVI, CHORD COMPANY, CHORD ELECTRONICS, CLEARAUDIO, CREEK, DALI, EPOS, EUPEN, EXPOSURE, FOCAL JMLAB, GAMUT, GRAHAM SLEE, LAT, METRONOME, NORTHSTAR, NOTTINGHAM ANALOGUE, NU FORCE, OPTIMUM, ORIGIN LIVE, ORACLE, PARTINGTON, PROJECT, QUAD, QUADRASPIRE, RAYSONIC, RESOLUTION AUDIO, RENAISSANCE, TANNOY PRESTIGE, USHER.

www.rochesterhi-fi.co.uk



Rock Solid Sound Systems

Vivid Audio
Audiostone
Electrocompaniet
Astintrew
dCS
VTL
Verity Audio
True Colours Industries

Shop Now Open...

www.rocksolidsounds.co.uk

atc
creek
arcam
dynavektor
epos
focal
grado
infocus
kudos
lexicon
lyra
naim audio
neat acoustics
nottingham
ortofon
roksan
sim2
something solid
stax
sumiko
trichord



what goes round,
comes round

refreshing honesty, every time



hi-fi for grown-ups

ipswich (01473) 655171
www.signalsuk.com



The only Focal Utopia
full surround system in the UK

Suspend disbelief as never before

Fidelity uncompromised. 

www.coherent-systems.co.uk 01684 310849



Bringing it all together

From two to seven channels.
Integrate your senses.



Naturally cinematic.

www.coherent-systems.co.uk 01684 310849

MUSIC MATTERS

HI-FI & HOME CINEMA

New Store Now Open

**10a Chapel Street
Stratford-Upon-Avon
Warwickshire CV37 6EP
01789 414 533**

We offer custom installation of complete systems integrating hi-fi, home cinema, multi-room and lighting.

Home trials are available for many products.

Our extensive range of products includes

- Arcam ● Apollo ● Anthony Gallo ● Atacama
- Atlas ● Base ● Bose available at SOLIHULL ● Bowers & Wilkins
- Rega and Nautilus Diamond available at EDGBASTON ● Chapter Audio ● Chord Company ● Chord Electronics ● Cyrus
- Denon ● Dream Vision ● Dynaudio
- Dynavector ● Epos ● Grado ● Infocus
- KEF ● Krell ● LAMM ● Marantz ● Meridian
- Michell ● Mission ● MJ Acoustics ● Monitor Audio ● Musical Fidelity ● NAD ● Naim
- Nordost ● Ortofon ● Panasonic ● Pioneer
- PMC ● Project ● Pure ● QED ● Quad
- REL ● Rotel ● Sennheiser ● Sim2
- SME ● Sonus Faber ● Tascam ● Teac
- Wharfedale ● Wilson Benesch ● Yamaha

OPEN TUES - SAT 10:00 - 5:30
LATE NIGHT AT BIRMINGHAM AND SOLIHULL WEDNESDAY TIL 6.30PM
Interest free credit on selected items ● 0% APR
Written details on request ● Licensed credit broker



www.musicmatters.co.uk

- EDGBASTON
363 Hagley Road,
Birmingham B17 8DL
0121 429 2811
- SOLIHULL
93-95 Hobs Moat Road,
West Midlands B92 8JL
0121 742 0254
- STOURBRIDGE
9 Market Street
West Midlands DY8 1AB
01384 444 184
- SUTTON COLDFIELD
10 Boldmere Road,
West Midlands B73 6TD
0121 354 2311
- HATCH END
344 Uxbridge Road,
Pinner, Middlesex
HA5 4HP
020 8420 1925
- DARLINGTON
17 Coniscliffe Road
County Durham DL3 7EE
01325 481 418



marantz

PREMIUM

because music matters



Sound Hi Fi



USHER



Usher Class A



Usher Be-718

Usher, Marantz, Goldring, Audio Technica OC9, Acoustic Solid, NuForce, Black Rhodium, Graham Slee, Hadcock, Clearaudio, 78rpm reproduction, QED, Timestep, DC and much more.

All demonstrated in a relaxing setting with river views! Very high part exchanges & mail order.

Sound Hi Fi Dartmouth Devon 01803 833366 web www.SoundHiFi.com

Coming Soon

A picture can say a thousand words so we let them do most of the talking



www.tell.uk.com
Technology let loose

Storage Solutions

Hi-Fi, CD, LP, DVD & Books



ALL UNIQUE - MADE TO YOUR VERY OWN SPECIFICATIONS

SAVE 20%



www.iansbespokefurniture.co.uk
CALL 01423 500442

The Old Chapel
282 Skipton Road, Harrogate
North Yorkshire, HG1 3HE
email. info@iansbespokefurniture.co.uk
EST. SINCE 1970



IAN EDWARDS
BESPOKE HANDMADE FURNITURE

ASTLEY AUDIO LTD

SE

3 Marketplace, Wallingford,
Oxfordshire OX10 0EG

☎ 01491 839305

🌐 www.audioimages-hifi.com

ACOUSTICA

EM

114 Wolverhampton Road, Stafford,
Staffordshire ST17 4AH

☎ 01785 258216

🌐 www.acoustica.co.uk

ACOUSTICA LTD

NW

17 Hoole Road, Chester, Cheshire
CH2 3NH

☎ 01244 344227

🌐 www.acoustica.co.uk

GRAHAMS HI-FI

GL

Canonbury Yard, 190a New North Road,
London N1

☎ 020 7226 5500

🌐 www.grahams.co.uk

BADA

DIVINE AUDIO

EM

The Courtyard, Bennett's Place, High Street,
Market Harborough, Leicestershire LE16 7NL

☎ 01858 432999

🌐 www.divineaudio.co.uk

AUDIO COUNSEL

NW

26 High Street, Cheadle, Cheshire
SK8 1AL

☎ 0161 491 6090

🌐 www.audio-counsel.co.uk

BADA

INFIDELITY

GL

9 High Street, Kingston-upon-Thames,
Surrey, KT1 4DA

☎ 020 8943 3530

🌐 www.infidelity.co.uk

BADA

NOTTINGHAM HI-FI CENTRE

EM

120-122 Alfreton Road, Nottingham,
Nottinghamshire NG7 3NR

☎ 0115 9786919

🌐 www.nottinghamhifi.co.uk

BADA

DOUG BRADY HI-FI

NW

Kingsway Studios, 15a Kingsway North,
Warrington, Cheshire WA1 3NU

☎ 01925 828009

🌐 www.dougbradyhifi.com

AUDIOBOFFS

GL

338 Shenley Road, Borehamwood,
Herts WD 1TP

☎ 020 8177 4095

🌐 www.audioboffs.co.uk

CREATIVE AUDIO

WM

9 Dogpole, Shrewsbury, Shropshire
SY1 1EN

☎ 01743 236055

🌐 www.creative-audio.co.uk

SYNERGY AV HI-FI

NW

12a West St, Congleton, Cheshire
CW12 3JB

☎ 01260 280017

🌐 www.synergyav.co.uk

AUDIO AND CINEMA

SW

Norfolk House, 16-17 Lemon Street,
Truro, Cornwall TR1 2LS

☎ 0870 458 4438

🌐 www.audio-cinema.co.uk

SOUND CINERGY

WM

37 High Street Aldridge
WS9 8NL

☎ 01922 457 926

🌐 www.soundcinergy.co.uk

ACTON GATE AUDIO

W

4 Ruabon Rd, Wrexham,
Clwyd LL13 7PB

☎ 01978 364500

🌐 www.acton-gate-audio.co.uk

MIKE MANNING AUDIO

SW

110 Middle Street, Yeovil, Somerset
BA20 1NE

☎ 01935 479361

🌐 www.mikemanningaudio.com

MIKE MANNING AUDIO

SW

54 Bridge Street, Taunton, Somerset
TA1 1UD

☎ 01823 326688

🌐 www.mikemanningaudio.com

THE RIGHT NOTE

SW

56 High Street, Saltford, Bristol
BS31 3EJ

☎ 01225 874728

🌐 www.loissoftware.co.uk/rightnote/home.asp

AUDIO IMAGES

E

128 London Road North, Lowestoft, Suffolk
NR32 1HB

☎ 01502 582853

🌐 www.audioimages-hifi.com

HI-FI CHOICE

To advertise in the dealer directory,
Please contact
Ben Keightley +44 (0) 20 7042 4262
bkeightley@futurenet.co.uk



SE - South East, GL - Greater London, SW - South West, E - East,
EM - East Midlands, WM - West Midlands, NW - North West, W - Wales.

2nd-hand shootout

Surround yourself with speakers with our guide to what's hot for three grand!

If you're in the market for a high-end speaker, there are few safer places to put your money than on a pair of Quad ESLs. For transparency, staging and the ability to sound most un-hi-fi like, the ESLs are among the best in the business. Our £3,000 budget would buy us a choice of models, but we've settled on the ESL989. Launched in 2002, the 989 was larger than previous electrostatics. This gave it crucial extra bass extension that some had thought lacking in previous models. As with any electrostatic speaker, a few additional checks should be made when buying second-hand. Drive the speakers to normal and high listening levels and check that the protection circuits do not operate (if a spark is detected then the speaker reduces volume and adds distortion that lasts for approximately four seconds). This normally indicates a faulty element. With no input signal and ear close to the speaker, listen over the entire cloth area for discharge noises. Any fizzing, ticking or popping sounds could also indicate a troublesome element. A faulty element can be replaced, but with our budget the speakers should be mint. Quad recommends that if faulty elements are encountered, then these should be replaced with new ones. Their experience, as well as customer feedback tells them



Above: B&W 802 (pre-Diamond)

that refurbished elements don't last very long. Quad's product backup is legendary and they now offer a 'same day service'. By appointment, a customer can deliver a pair of speakers for service before 10.00am and collect them between 3.00 and 4.00pm. For something with equal status but a little more

conventional, B&W's Nautilus 802's are well worth hunting out. Built between 1998 and 2004, these quasi-studio speakers cost £6,000 when new. Featuring twin 20cm woofers, as opposed to the 801's single 39cm driver, the N802's were always supposed to be the more domestic friendly version. That having been said, a large, well-damped room is still required to get the best out of them. Considering the original price of the speakers, parts prices are reasonable. £147, £70 and £57 are the amounts needed to buy replacement woofer, mid-range and tweeter units respectively. Provided they've not been thrashed, a pair of N802s should prove to be supremely reliable. When new, these handmade speakers came complete with a demonstration disc, cleaning cloth and speaker grill brush. If the owner still has these then the chances are they've been cherished. With regards to condition, tatty cosmetics could indicate that the speakers haven't been well looked after and may even have spent time in a studio. As B&W's warranty isn't transferable, our advice is to buy as late as

“...tatty cosmetics could indicate that the speakers may have spent time in a studio.”

possible and preferably from a dealer for added piece of mind.

If the above both seem a little predictable, then the exotic Sonus Faber Cremona could prove tempting. Arguably the best looking of the lot, this Italian gem uses 32 sections of solid maple shaped into a boat tail cabinet design. It's as much a piece of furniture as it is hi-fi. That said, the sound's pretty impressive, too. In many respects the antithesis of the Quad, the Cremona has a surprisingly urgent and unrestrained delivery. I say, "surprisingly", as other Sonus Faber speakers tend to sound more refined. Sonus Faber are distributed by Absolute Sounds in the UK and they report no reliability issues with this speaker. Parts aren't cheap, however. A tweeter costs £210, with £270 needed for a woofer. The original Cremona was built between 2002 and 2007 with later models still covered by the three-year guarantee. Although £5,000 new, the recently launched 'M' model has meant there's a bigger



Above: Sonus Faber Cremona

supply at slightly cheaper prices. Our budget should be just enough for a perfect pair from a reputable source.

Tannoy's late-20th Century dual concentric speakers provide a vintage sensation. Essentially, the Tannoy's are known more by their drive unit's names than cabinets. Drivers made from the late-1940s are 'Silvers', followed by 'Reds' and then, finally, the 'Golds'

of the 1970s. The colour, incidentally, comes from the magnet cover. Driver size is 30cm or 39cm. In order to get the best from these dynamic drives units its best to get the largest cabinets you possibly can. Although our budget probably wouldn't stretch to the real biggies, it is enough for the third-up in the range – the Canterbury. These hefty corner units have a charming 1950s wireless look about them, yet won't invade on space quite so much as the larger York and GRF do. Obviously, speakers this old won't have new parts available, although there are plenty of specialists out there willing to service them. The most likely problem with speakers of this age is cone surround deterioration. A recone is straight forward, although for our budget the drivers should be perfect. £3,000 is just about right for a pair of Canterburys with a nice pair of reconditioned 'Red' 30cm speakers. **HFC**

Dominic Todd
Next month: Subwoofers

DEFINITIVE AUDIO

Sale of part exchanged and ex-dem items

ITEM DESCRIPTION	SALE	NEW
Hovland Pincus 1m interconnect	£450	--
Hovland G.8 2m interconnect	£700	--
XLO/PRO 100 Low impedance 1m interconnect	£250	--
Siltech MXT professional 1m interconnect	£250	--
Finite Elemente Pagode wall shelf. Black/high polish. Boxed.	£550	--
Transparent MusicWave Ultra XL speaker cable, 8ft. Terminated with spade connectors. Boxed.	£750	£2300
Living Voice Auditorium II Maple. New but slight cosmetic imperfection.	£1500	£2100
Tannoy Kensington. Mahogany. 2 yrs old, perfect cond, as new.	£4000	£6500
AN UK DAC 4.1 balanced. 4 yrs old	£3500	--
Mactone XMII - Exotic Japanese 6550 Integrated amplifier	£4000	--
Magnum Dynalab MD101 Tuner	£600	--
Magnum Dynalab MD10 Surround Decoder	£200	--
Bryston SP1.7 Surround processor/preamp with remote	£2000	--
Canary 309 Monos 50w parallel push/pull 300B's - Boxed	£4000	£10K+
Audio innovations L2 preamp - standard unit - serviced	£450	--
Audion Sterling KT88 S.E - boxed - VGC. Bargain	£450	--
Border Patrol 300B SE with Western Electrics - 4 weeks use	£3750	£5750
Canary 608 integrated amp with comprehensive Living Voice upgrade	£2500	£4000
Cairn 4808 integrated amp with remote control - boxed - as new	£550	£1200
PS. Audio power supply	£400	--
Monopulse 42A Floorstanding loudspeakers - Caramel. Boxed - VGC	£600	£1495
Stax headphones	£200	--
Quadraspire 4 level equipment table - cherry	£180	--
JPS Superconductor 1m set	£500	--
JPS Superconductor Petite 2m set	£200	--
VDH Various MC cartridges - Frogs, Grasshoppers, Calibris. 10 - 150 hrs use		please call
Hovland HP100 pre-amplifier - factory updated - loved and spotless	£2700	--
Kuzma Airline tonearm - Kondo silver internal and external lead - ouch	£3500	£7500
Canary 303 monos 22 watts 300B with Living Voice upgrade	£3500	£7500
Lavardin PE Reference line pre-amplifier - 1 lady driver - perfect	£1500	£2400
Audionet Art V2 CD player - perfect, as new - 6 months old	£1500	£2500
Audionet SAM integrated amplifier - perfect, as new - 6 months old	£1500	£2500
Sugden A21 Poweramplifier - class A - solid state	£500	£950
EAR 534 50W EL34 / EAR 864	£2750	£4800

T. +44 (0) 115 973 3222 E. shout@definitiveaudio.co.uk
www.definitiveaudio.co.uk



Heatherdale audio limited

202 Findon Road Worthing, West Sussex BN14 0EJ

Web: www.hifi-stereo.com

E-mail: heatherdale@hifi-stereo.com

Telephone: 01903 872288

Mobile: 07860 660001 Fax: 01903 872234

Speakers

Nola Viper 11 speakers NEW	£9995
Acoustic Zen surround system, new (£7845) only	£5875
Quad 21L speakers, floor standers	£350
New Acoustic Zen Adajio speakers	£3995
New Alamarro M3 speakers	£2695
Hales Transcendence 5 speakers	£2895
Dynaudio Audience 7 speakers with stands	£395
Mordaunt Short Avant 902 speakers with stands	£125
Mordaunt Short MS5-40 speakers	£99
Acoustic Zen Adajio Junior speakers + stands, new	£3400
Acoustic Zen Adajio center speaker + stand	£1625

Pre-Amps

Wavac PR-T1 3 box pre amp brand new. (£23500)	£10750
Mark Levinson ML26S balanced pre-amp	£2495
Proceed PAV pre-amp	£695

Amplifiers

Wavac MD- 805M monos (£16500) NEW only	£7950
Goldmund Mimesis 330 Int' amp (£4395) new	£2995
Goldmund SRM-250 mono's (£6590) new	£4995
Mark Levinson ML436 monoblocks	£4250
Audio Research VT 60 power amp	£995
John Shearman Phase 2 integrated amp	£395
Denon AVC-A10SE 5ch' amp/processor (£1800)	£600
ASR Emitter 1 Exclusive amplifier (new)	£5995
Kora triode 100SB mono power amps (pair)	£3495
Nakamichi amp 1 cass'deck 2 with CD 3	£795

CD Players & DAC's

Weiss Jason transport with Media DAC (£20,000) NEW	£8995
Esoteric X-01 Ltd CD/SACD player mint/boxed	£4995
Audio Note CDT 2 CD transport	£795
Audio Note DAC 4 Signature	£2995
Goldmund Eidos 18 CD/SACD player (£3195) NEW	£2495
Wadia 21 CD player	£895
DCS Purcell	£795
Marantz CD-873 CD player	£65
Sony CDP M41 CD player	£60

Miscellaneous

Zen Acoustics Ref 3mtr' pair speaker cable	£795
Transparent Music Wave Super 10' pair speaker cable	£895
Isoclean Power 50A 111 US power block/filter, new	£850
Sony FM/AM ST-SE370 tuner	£75
Aiwa AD-F450 cassette deck	£45
Technics ST-610L tuner	£65
Sony ST-SE570 tuner	£60
Winds electronic stylus gauge	£425

Turntables and associated gear

Michell Gyrodeck SE with rega arm (free Dynavector)	£895
Kuzma Airline arm, silver wired. Brand new (£4800)	£3500
Dynavector 507 Mk. 2 arm (new)	£1995

Main Dealer for:

Mark Levinson, Ayre Acoustic, Tannoy Prestige speakers, Thiel speakers, Audionote, Esoteric, Bolzano Villettri speakers, SME, Stax, Cello, Lyra, My-Sonic, Revel, Audio Tekne, Michell.

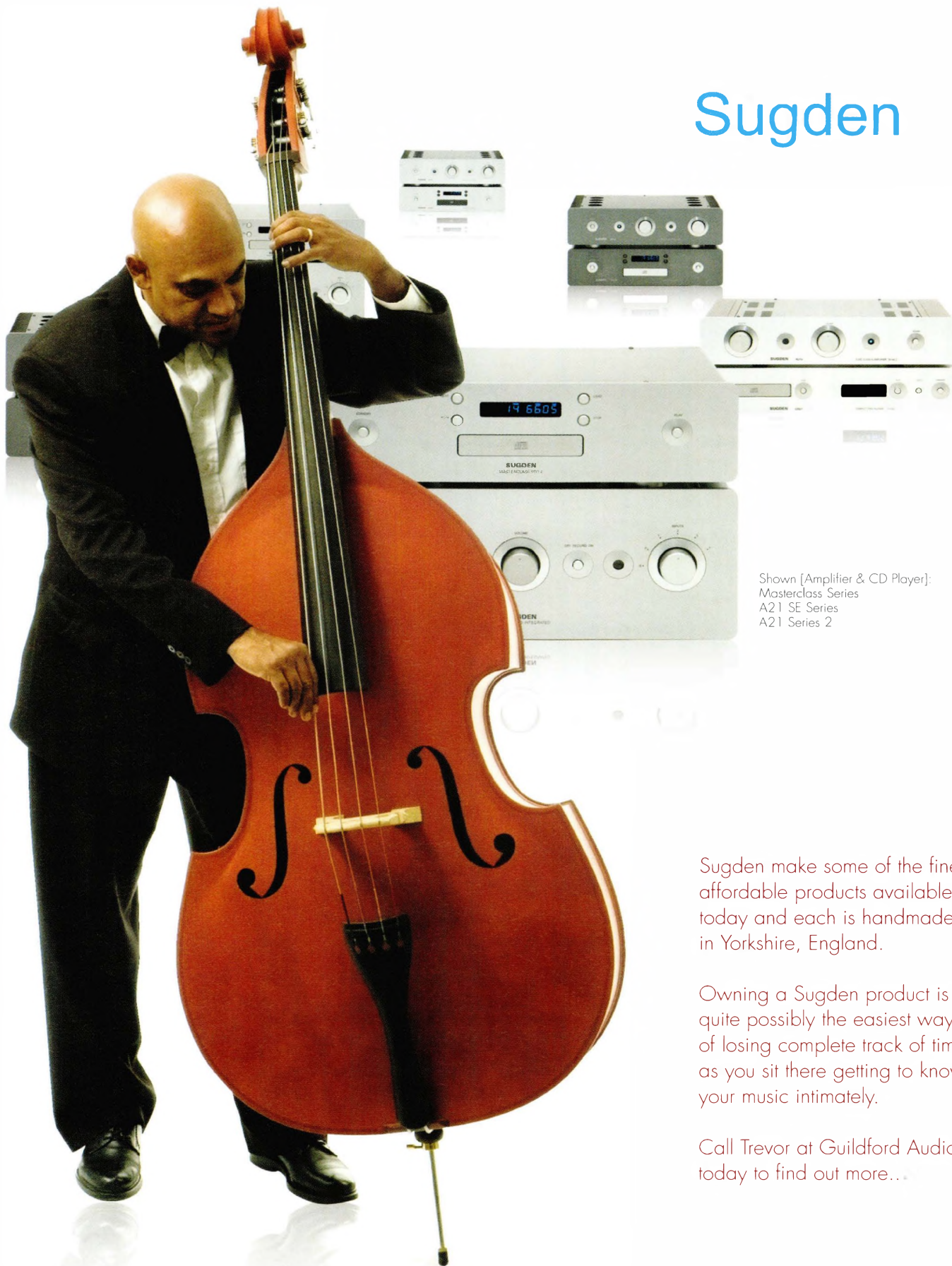
Guildford Audio

sales@guildfordaudio.co.uk
www.guildfordaudio.co.uk

01483 537 577

Run by professionals - for professionals

Sugden



Shown [Amplifier & CD Player]:
Masterclass Series
A21 SE Series
A21 Series 2

Sugden make some of the finest affordable products available today and each is handmade in Yorkshire, England.

Owning a Sugden product is quite possibly the easiest way of losing complete track of time as you sit there getting to know your music intimately.

Call Trevor at Guildford Audio today to find out more...



tel: 0845 6019390

Sensible offers welcome! Sale ends 31st March!!

Analogue

Ariston RD80, ex condition
Acos Lustre
AR Legend, Linn Basik LVX
AVID Acutus, ex demo as new in Chrome
Clearaudio Evolution with parallel tracking arm
Garrard 301, SME3009, Behrens Plinth
Goldring GR2 inc 1012GX Cartridge
Haddock 228E, excellent boxed
Heybrook TT2 c/w Linn Basik LVX
Image/Das, Das deck, early Tom Fletcher design
Linn Isobarik Active Xover box
Linn LP12, Lingo2, Akito 2, Klyde
Linn LP12, Itok LV11 and Sumiko BPS really pretty example
Linn LP12, Valhalla, Akito, in lovely Rosenut plinth
Linn LP12, OL DC Kit
Linn Itok in rare black
Linn Itok 12", VERY VERY RARE ITEM
Michell Focus One, Focus arm, excellent
Michell Iso c/w Hera p/s
Musical Fidelity XLP ex
Musical Fidelity XLP5V2 ex boxed monoblock phonostage & p/s
NAD (Rega Planar 2), RB250
Nottingham Analogue Spacedeck, AceSpacearm, excellent
Origin Live Ultra deck with off board p/s, SME cut NOW
ProjectTubebox, excellent
Rega Planar 2, RB250, vgc
Rega Planar 3, RB300, vgc
SME 3, lovely
SME 3009, excellent
Systemdek II X900, dfboard p/s, acrylic platter and RB250
Systemdek II (biscuit tin), ADC arm, vgc
Technics SL10, good working order
Thorens TD125/SME3009
Townshend Elite Rock, Excalibur arm, Merlin p/s, plinth & lid

Speakers

Audio Pro Bravo FX04 in piano black, bargain
AVI Pro Nine Plus Actives, less than 6 months old
AVI Tno, reasonable order, complete steal at
Epos ES14 c/w matching stands
Jamo Concert 11, boxed
JR149, lovely little LS3/5 derivatives
Linn Tukan, excellent boxed
Linn Sara, excellent boxed with Sara stands
Linn Isobarik DMS or FMS/Xoverbox/Dirak
Magneplanar - call for details, major bargain
Meridian DSP5000, excellent
Meridian M2500, nr mint mega sub - bargain!!!
Meridian DSP5000C, excellent
Mordaunt Short, Performance 860, ex boxed
Mordaunt Short, Premiere 5.1 package with rear stands, mint
Neat Acoustics Petite 3 SE c/w Ultimatum bass drivers NOW
Opera Duoetto, superb little standmount
Peak Consult Princess & Stands, ex boxed
Proac Tablette 2000
Quad ESL989, excellent boxed BARGAIN!
Quad ESL63, excellent
Q Acoustics 1050, ex display
JM Reynaud Offrande, boxed superb c/w matching stands
Revolver RW16, brand new last pr
Roksan FR5, ex display, slight mark, Piano black
Ruark Sabre, vgc, nice mid sized standmount
Spendor S8e, excellent in cherry
Tannoy DC3000, M3, M2.5R
TDL RTL2 and 3
Triangle Titus 202, c/w Tristands
Triangle Comete ES, ex demo nr mint boxed
Triangle Antal ES, nr mint boxed

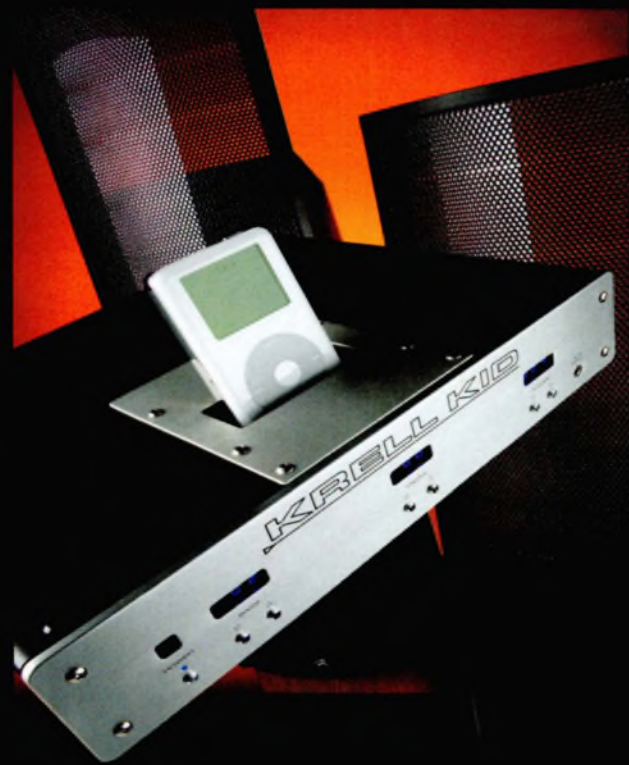
Amplification

Offers Arcam AVR200, ex boxed, REDUCED
Offers Arcam P75, great power amp 225
149 Audio Analogue Primo, mini size integrated Offers
4500 Audio Analogue Maestro Settarita Offers
Offers Audio Innovations Series 700 integrated, excellent boxed 499
799 Audiolab 8000/8000X7, as new processor/7 channel amp Offers
Call Audiolab 8000A, vgc boxed 179
Offers Audiolab 8000Q, excellent original boxed 349
Offers Audiolab 8000P, excellent original grey version boxed 149
Offers Audio Innovations Series 700 integrated, excellent boxed 499
Offers AVI S2000 integrated Call
1599 Cairn Ion T2, one only 50w monoblock Offers
899 Cyrus Pre XVS, nr mint boxed Offers
599 Cyrus 7, ex boxed Offers
Offers Cyrus PSXR, various from 749
399 Exposure 3010, as new boxed with £200 mm phono stage 599
Offers IITL MAB0MA100/MA100 Pre/Power x2 lovely combo NOW Offers
299 Linn Majik Integrated 299
Call Linn Kolektor ex boxed 329
99 Linn Klassik K with onboard tuner, as new boxed Offers
299 Linn Majik Integrated 299
Offers Linn Kolektor ex boxed 329
999 Linn Klassik K with onboard tuner, as new boxed Offers
Offers Musical Fidelity S200, vgc Offers
Offers Nad C325BEE, excellent boxed display 199
Offers NAIM NAC62/INAP140, excellent boxed pre/power 599
Offers NAIM 32/90 pre/power, cute chrome bumper pair 299
Offers NAIM NAC112, current style preamp Offers
Offers NAIM NAC42.5, excellent chrome bumper Offers
379 NAIM NAC72 excellent in olive 299
249 Pathos Classic One Mk2, ex boxed Offers
119 Quad 77 Integrated with full remote Offers
299 Quad 44 Preamp, 405 Power amps NOW from Offers
749 Quad 33/303, vgc for year fully serviced Offers
Call Quad 405/2, ex boxed Call
Offers Radford STA25 Renaissance and SC25 Pre/Power, excellent Offers
Roksan Kandy Mk3 power 399

Digital

199 Arcam DV79, bargain REDUCED Offers
Offers Arcam DV89, bargain REDUCED Offers
249 Arcam DV88, bargain REDUCED Offers
299 Arcam DV27, excellent in black Offers
299 Arcam Alpha 7, excellent Offers
Offers Arcam Alpha 5+, excellent 149
Call AVI Lab Series, mint boxed used bargain 799
1199 Cairn Fog v2, absolute steal, was £1250 ex demo Offers
499 Consonance Droplet, ex dem bargain - WOW! Offers
749 Consonance CD120L, ex dem HiFi Plus award winner Offers
599 Cyrus Quattra, c/w tuner, UNDER HALF PRICE! Offers
299 Cyrus CD8, boxed ex c/w remote Offers
399 DCS Elgar DAC/Pre, a taste of the high life! Offers
Offers DCS Purcell Upsampler, bargain upgrade Offers
2499 Heart Audio CD6000, valve output, Trichord clock Offers
299 Linn Numerik, vlate version 399
1999 Meridian 500 Transport, excellent remote 499
599 Meridian G91 DAB CD, Tuner, Processor Offers
199 Meridian 200 Transport, excellent boxed Offers
Offers Meridian 203 DAC, excellent Offers
249 Micromega Stage 1, excellent 99
1399 Musical Fidelity A308CR CD, excellent, remote, box 799
Offers Musical Fidelity Nu Vista CR CD player, excellent, boxed 999
1199 NAIM CD2, ex boxed 599
Offers NAIM CDS1, boxed, p/s, new burndy 1199
Offers TEAC DV20, superb progressive scan etc 99
249 TEAC VRDS10, good condition, boxed remote 399
329 TEAC P30, excellent, remote 1199
599 Wadia 302, as new boxed Offers

no kidding



hifisound

01325 241888

30b Larchfield st, Darlington

(up north)

Tel 0845 6019390 Tues to Sat 10 til 5
or email choice@2ndhandhifi.co.uk

SERIOUS CYRUS SPECIAL OFFERS!!

Call today, whilst
stock lasts.....

▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶ **P.J.hi-fi**
The only **real hi-fi** shop in **Guilford**

Guildford's only REAL Hifi and Home Cinema store
Open 9-6 Monday to Saturday (later by appointment)
3, Bridge Street, Guildford, Surrey GU1 4RY (opposite Wetherspoons)
01483 504801 and 01483 304756
www.pjhifi.co.uk email: info@pjhifi.co.uk
".....it's hifi for fun's sake....."

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: hificlassifieds@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

ACCUPHASE T108 tuner, one of the best around, excellent condition, boxed 01332 843758 (Derbys).

ARCAM AVR 300 AV Receiver, silver, brand new, boxed, unopened, £750 no offers. Val 01908 661094 (Milton Keynes).

ARCAM DV79 DVD player, HDMI interface, black, mint, boxed, £495. Ixos 105 digital interconnect, custom made, 6m, WBT locking RCA plugs, £45 01772 745553 (Lancs).

ATACAMA R724 speaker stands, £80. High quality Nordost Blue Heaven interconnect, excellent, £65. Andrew 01484 427426 (W Yorks)

ATACAMA AUDIO EQUINOX hi-fi rack. Black, modular five-shelf design, various shelf heights. (HFC winner). (£500) £200. 07899 808918 (Kent)

cherry finish, (£2,195) £1,300. 01491 614325 (Oxon)

AUROUSAL A1 loudspeakers, piano black, as new condition, boxed. Bargain at £275.

01903 774255 (Sussex)
AVI pre/power amplifier, 215 wpc S 21 MA V 2.0, Brand new line from AVI, almost new. perfect, original boxes. guarantee, only £1,600. Contact fedepenzo@hotmail.com. 0039-02-2150930 (Italy).

BORDER PATROL 300B SE power amplifier, £1,700. Border Patrol Control Unit line stage pre-amplifier, £1,400. Both items boxed and in superb condition. 0141 6411371 (Glasgow).

CYRUS DVD8-Q plus PSX-R Quartz Silver Cyrus DVD8 Q with silver PSX-R. Upgraded QDAC fitted. Immaculate condition and will include spare DAC. £600 07734 325 260 (Glasgow).

speakers. Brand new, with receipt and full manufacturers warranty, (£150) £120. Lee, 01384 412234 lee-t@lycos.co.uk. (West Midlands).

EXPOSURE XVII preamp and XVIII mono amps, recently overhauled and updated by Exposure, £600. Bryston BP20 preamp with MM/MC phono, £600. All boxed and in very good condition. 0151 334 1964 (Merseyside).

JEFF ROWLAND CONCERTO & 501's. Lovely, compact pre-power 500 watt combo – superb sounding with tremendous build. Compact and beautiful, in excellent condition, £5,700 ono. j_rooprah2001@yahoo.co.uk (Middx)

KEF Q35 speakers, UniQ technology and performance at a bargain price. Wonderful imagery, depth and coherence.

WANTED

CAN ANYONE HELP? Wanted. Small handheld CB transceiver with flexible aerial. 07833 751800 (Lancs)

CELESTION SL6, 600 or 100 loudspeakers, good condition, unmarked preferred, good price paid, private buyer, will collect 01946 862815 (Cumbria)

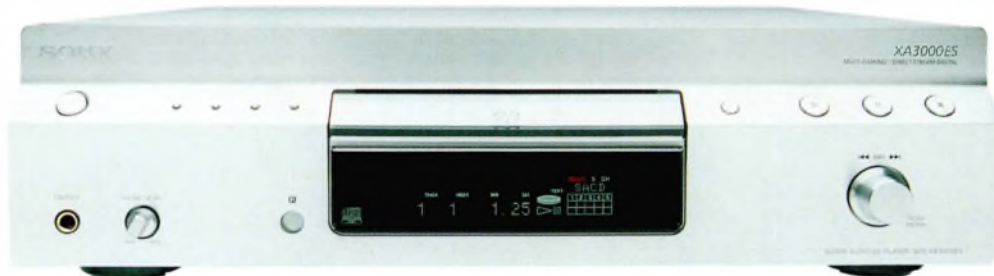
GRAHAM 2.2 ceramic armwand wanted, in good condition. Contact irvose@yahoo.com.

MERIDIAN 502 or similar preamp wanted. Must have remote control. Also want Quad 405. 01277 219639 (Essex)

PIONEER A300R precision amplifier. 1970's Sugden A21a Onyx OA21, Naim Nait amp. Inca Tech Claymore Sonneteer Champion amp 07810 103908 (West Yorkshire)

WANTED tonearm lead with straight DIN plug. Cardas, Transparent, Nordost or similar. Quality headphones; AKG, Beyer, Grado etc. 07973 220663 (Leics)

WANTED top quality separates and complete systems – Naim, Linn, Cyrus, Meridian, etc. Fast, friendly response and willing to travel/pay cash. Please call John on: 0781 5892458



Above: Sony SCD-XA3000ES

AUDIOLAB 8000A integrated amplifier, good working order, boxed, £100. Ted, 020 8449 9648 (N London)

AUDIOLAB 8000S amp, £250. Rotel RQ970BX phono, £40. Soundstyle hi-fi separates stand, £100. All in very good condition, buyer to collect. 01603 483274 (Norfolk)

AUDIO PHYSIC TEMPO speakers, mint condition, boxed,

EPOS M12.2 black, mint condition £275ono. Arcam CD192 CD player, £475 ono, DT91 tuner, £325ono, A90 amp, incl phono £575ono, P90 power amp, £350ono, all black, mint condition and boxed. Philip 0208 923 9757 (London).

EPOS M5 speakers in dark cherry, boxed as new, (£350) £225. QED XT speaker cable, brand new 2m pair with air-loc plugs (£62) £40. Wharfedale Diamond 9.1

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

Totally reliable. Good condition. Black ash finish floorstanders. £90. 01395 264868 (Devon)

KIMBER 4TC jump leads, terminated both ends with PM25 spades, £25. Boxed, unused. QED Silver Anniversary bi-wire 2x5m, £60. Buyer collects. 01323 487640 (East Sussex)

LINN GENKI CD Player, Grey case, excellent condition with Linn interconnects and original packaging, £550 ono. 0114 2507866 (Sheffield)

LINN KANS MK 1, £150, Rega EL8, £125, Marantz CD62SE, £75. Also, Cambridge CD4SE CD player wanted. 07810 103908 (E. Yorks).

LOWTHER PM 6 pair of drive units. Buyer arranges collection or delivery. 0191 214 0473 (Newcastle upon Tyne).

MARANTZ CD17 black, £450. Musical Fidelity amp with separate power supply, £350. Nordost Solar Wind interconnect, £45. Owned from new, excellent. 07787 166713 (London).

MARTIN-LOGAN SEQUEL 2 hybrid electrostatic speakers. Six feet tall. Ten inch bass. Fantastic Sound. Excellent condition. Circumstances force sale. Real High-End quality. Only £995. 07853 498379 (Brighton).

MICHELL QC power supply (for Gyrodec or Orbe with AC motor) £100. Robert 07900 320318 (London/Kent).

MISSION 782SE in beech veneer, not a mark on them, comes with box and packaging,

very rare. 02392 465647 (Hampshire).

MUSICAL FIDELITY A308CR pre and power, excellent condition, boxed, manuals etc. Fantastic sound. £3,900 new, sell for £1,950 ono including interconnects. Andy 0115 912 6424 (Notts)

NAIM CD51 CD player, as new, mint, boxed, (£850) accept £450 07891 533084 (Swansea).

NAIM NAP 250 Power Amplifier, Olive case in original packaging, excellent condition with Russ Andrews Power Kord but no interconnects, £750 ono. 0114 2507866 (Sheffield).

OPERA PLATEA floorstanders, SEAS drivers, antiresonant marble plates, one year old, like new, original boxes. (£1,100) £750. Contact (+40) 743 943 994, atlas_and_axis@yahoo.com (Romania)

PASS LABS X-350 stereo amplifier £2,950. Apogee Duetta Signature speakers £1,950. Both vgc 01926 653421 (West Midlands).

PURE SOUND A30 valve amplifier, as ne, boxed (£1,195) £760. Weight 20kg so buyer collects. 01491 614325 (Oxon)

PRIMARE 30.1 amplifier, excellent cond., boxed with instructions, £450. KEF 104/2 Reference Loudspeakers, v.g.c., with Kube and instructions, £100. (01255) 675115. (Essex)

QUAD ESL 63 electrostatic loudspeakers for sale, tub radiators gone in each, offers around £200 for pair, buyer collects. 01634 631322 (Devon)

QUAD 405-2 amplifier, upgrade by Lucid Designs, mint, £350. PMC TB-2 speakers with stands, as new, boxed, £450. AVC amp, KT88s, as new, £395. 01487 814015 (Cams)

QUAD CDP CD player, 15 months old, excellent condition, demo if required £525 07779 615774 (Derby)

REVOX G36 valve quarter track 10.5in cap tape recorder. Replacement capstan assembly, hand book etc. fine example of machine £300. Leak valve Troughline 3 FM stereo tuner £50. 01782 256087 or mobile 07791 048621 (Stoke-on-Trent)

ROTEL RA-05 amplifier, Rotel RCD-06 CD player, (£700) £400. Both items 14 months old, boxed & mint. Wharfedale Diamond 9.1 speakers, rosewood, one month old, boxed as new with receipt (£150) £90. Kimber Timbre interconnect 0.5m boxed as new (£76) £45, QED XT speaker cable 2m pair with aircloc plugs, (£62) £40, brand new & mint with receipt. lee-t@lycos.co.uk 01384 412234 (W. Mids)

TEAC A450 cassette deck. Very rare, never used, still in box. Battleship build quality. Offers over £250. 0161 865 9607 (Manchester)

THETA INTREPID five-channel amp, rarely available, £3,000. Martin 0207 845 1193 (SW London).

THORENS 160BC MK II turntable, Hadcock 228 unipivot super arm, Ortofon M20S cartridge. Boxed, one owner,

£225. Marantz CD60SE, £70, Rotel RCD-965BX discrete CD player, £85. All excellent condition. 01722 334694 (Wilts)

SOMETHING SOLID speaker stands. Fully welded construction. Black. 63cm height. Mass filled. Spiked feet. Photo available. Ring for other dimensions. Quality stands. VGC, £80 01582 423791 (Beds)

SONY DAT RECORDER, DTC-60ES, ES Range, £195. Musical Fidelity CDPre24, CD Player/Pre-Amp/Multi Input DAC, (£2,000) £595. JVC HM-HDS4EK, 80Gb HDD/S-VHS Video Recorder, New & unused (£700) £95. 01424 442802 (Sussex)

SONY SCD-555ES Super Audio CD player, excellent condition, boxed, £275 ono. Bryan 07866 3670060 or 01302 327513 (Doncaster)

SONY SCD-XA3000 ES, Super Audio CD player, black, excellent condition, 2005, £350, any trial 01302 538027 (Doncaster).

SONY SCD-XA9000 ES, Super Audio CD player, champagne gold finish, manual, mint condition, (£2,000) £900. 01243 528010 (West Sussex).

SOWTER OUTPUT transformers 9593, 9066t, 9508, 9521 (mains). Two of each and one mains. High spec. Excellent bass extension. Suitable for parallel push-pull. Simon 07895 197571 saselec2000@yahoo.co.uk (Cambridge).

SPENDOR CLASSIC Series SP2/3E speakers, rosewood, (£2,000) £650 ono. Suitable Acoustic Energy mass-loaded stands available, (£600) £200. QED Genesis Silver Spiral speaker cable 5m+7m lengths (£400) £150, 023 8073 8935 (Hants)

TRICHORD DINO phono stage and Dino+ power supply, both in black and like new with instructions, just no box. £250 the pair. Mark C, 07976 406313 (London)

VITA R1 DAB/FM Radios. Gloss Red or Grey, £90. Walnut or Cherry £80. Vita R2 Walnut. 07949 910455 (Essex)

HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR FREE ADVERTISEMENT

To submit your advert to us, please email hificlassifieds@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 county. We regret that we cannot take adverts over the phone.

Name _____ Advertisement _____
 Address _____

 Daytime telephone _____
 Date _____

PLEASE SEND YOUR ADVERTISEMENT TO:

Reader Classified, *Hi-Fi Choice*, Future Publishing, 2 Balcombe Street, London NW1 6NW.

Next month

ISSUE 306 ➤ MAY 2008 ➤ ON SALE 03 APRIL

In-depth reviews of the most vital new kit, including...

➤ Arcam FMJ MS250 music server

➤ KEF XQ20 loudspeaker

➤ Leema Stream/Pulse CD and amp

➤ NAD C355BEE integrated amplifier

➤ PMC GB1i loudspeaker

➤ Pioneer DV-LX50 universal disc 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 >> CD PLAYERS

The latest CD players are put through our rigorous Ultimate Group Test regime, including...

➤ Arcam CD192

➤ Cambridge Audio 840C

➤ Consonance 2.2 linear

➤ Cyrus CD8x

➤ Edgar CD1

➤ Shanling CDP-100



THE ESSENTIAL HI-FI GUIDE



SUBSCRIBE!
TO HI-FI CHOICE
SEE PAGE 80 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

APRIL 2008 ISSUE 305

Future Publishing Ltd, 2 Balcombe Street, London NW1 6NW
☎ +44 (0)20 7042 4000 Fax +44 (0)20 7042 4529

EDITORIAL

Editor Dan George, dgeorge@futurenet.co.uk
Art Editor Conn Skeggs, cskeggs@futurenet.co.uk
Production Editor Richard Holliss, rholliss@futurenet.co.uk
Operations Editor Alan Sircorn, hifisub@futurenet.co.uk

CONTRIBUTORS

Richard Black, Alvin Gold, Stuart Hamson, Jimmy Hughes, Jason Kennedy, Paul Messenger, Dave Oliver, Mark Prendergast, Malcolm Steward, Phil Strongman, Dominic Todd, Nigel Williamson
Photography Adnan Lyon
Group Senior Editor Nick Merritt
Group Art Editor Ian Miller
Creative Director Robin Abbott
Design Director Matthew Williams
Editorial Director Jim Douglas

ADVERTISING

Ad Director Matthew Tasker, 020 7042 4263, mtasker@futurenet.co.uk
Senior Advertisement Manager Angela Brown, 020 7042 4253, abrown@futurenet.co.uk
Account Manager Brad Francis, 020 7042 4255, brad.francis@futurenet.co.uk
Classified Sales Executive Ben Keightley, 020 7042 4262, bkeightley@futurenet.co.uk
Inserts and Direct Marketing Manager Nick Weatherall, 020 7042 4155, nick.weatherall@futurenet.co.uk
London Sales Director Malcolm Stoodley, mstoodley@futurenet.co.uk

MARKETING

Marketing Manager Libby Latter, llatter@futurenet.co.uk
Brand Marketing Director Matt Woods, mwoods@futurenet.co.uk

CIRCULATION

Circulation Manager Simon Nicoll, snicoll@futurenet.co.uk
Circulation & Trade Marketing Director Chrs Spratling, cspratling@futurenet.co.uk

PRINT & PRODUCTION

Production Manager Ralph Stringer, rstinger@futurenet.co.uk
Production Coordinator Roberta Sanders, rsanders@futurenet.co.uk
Senior Ad Production Coordinator Gemma O'Riordan, gorordan@futurenet.co.uk
Head of Production Richard Mason, rmason@futurenet.co.uk

LICENSING

Head of International Licensing Tim Hudson, +44(0)1225 442244, thudson@futurenet.co.uk

FUTURE PUBLISHING LIMITED

Group Publisher Andy Ford, andyford@futurenet.co.uk
Chief Operating Officer Simon Wear
Chief Executive Robert Price

SUBSCRIPTIONS

☎ UK hotline on +44 (0)870 837 4722
Subscribe online at www.myfavourite magazines.co.uk

BACK ISSUES

☎ +44 (0)870 837 4722
Prices: UK £5.95 per issue, Europe €6.95 per issue, rest of the world £7.95 per issue

Distributed in the UK by Seymour Distribution Ltd, 2 East Poultry Avenue, London EC1A 9PT. Tel: 020 7429 4000

Future produces carefully targeted special-interest magazines, websites and events for people who share a passion. We publish more than 170 magazines and websites and 100 international editions of our titles are published worldwide

Future plc is a public company quoted on the London Stock Exchange (symbol:FLTR) @ www.futureplc.com

Chief Executive Stevie Spring
Non-executive Chairman Roger Parry
Group Finance Director John Bowman
☎ +44 (0)20 7042 4000 (London)
☎ +44 (0)1225 442744 (Bath)



*Future Publishing 2008. All rights reserved. No part of this magazine may be reproduced without the written permission of the publisher. Future Publishing Ltd is a registered company (2028883) registered in England and Wales. The registered office of Future Publishing Ltd is at Balcombe Court, 20 Balcombe Street, Bath, BA1 2BN. All information contained in this magazine is for information only and is not for use as an advertisement. Future cannot accept any responsibility for errors or inaccuracies in such information. Readers are advised to contact manufacturers and retailers directly with regard to the price of products advertised in this magazine. If you submit unsolicited material to us, you understand that your name is entered in our database in order to publish your submission in whole or in part in all editions of the magazine, including printed editions worldwide and in any physical or digital format throughout the world. Any material you submit is sent at your own risk and, although every care is taken, neither Future nor its employees, agents or subcontractors shall be liable for loss or damage.

Want to work for Future?
Visit www.futurenet.com/jobs

techradar.com

recycle



When you have finished with this magazine please recycle it.

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.

*the sound
of beauty*



New
Naim Slide



AVID

main dealers

Analogue Seduction (Peterborough)	01733 344768
Bradys HiFi (Warrington)	01925 828009
O'Brien HiFi (London)	0208 9461528
Oxford Audio Consultants (Oxford)	01865 790879
Progressive Audio (Kent)	01634 389004
Tom Tom Audio (St. Albans)	01727 893928
Turntable World (Darlington)	01325 241888

www.avidhifi.co.uk



We're not trying to give the most. We're trying to lose the least. That was John Bowers' philosophy 40 years ago, and it lives on in our new 600 Series. Speakers that neither add to, nor take away from, the original sound. That requires world-class science – and extremely experienced ears. Because once we've selected exactly the right components, we begin the long, careful process of tuning. Listening and refining, over and over. Until the frequencies combine to conjure a sound so true, so alive, you want to reach out and touch it. *Dr John Dibb, Senior Development Engineer and Fellow of the Society of Sound, on the new 600 Series.*

Visit the Society of Sound at www.bowers-wilkins.com

B&W Bowers & Wilkins

Listen and you'll see

TAKE PART IN THE 2008 HI-FI CHOICE READER SURVEY

and you could win a pair of PL100 speakers and stands worth £2,850 courtesy of Monitor Audio

Hi-Fi Choice is your magazine and we want to hear what you have to say about it. Whatever your opinion, please let us know by completing our survey. Whether you're a regular or occasional reader, we'd like to hear your views good or bad, and to say thanks we'll automatically enter you into a superb prize draw to win a pair of Monitor Audio PL100 speakers and stands worth £2,850!



Closing date: 17th April 2008

Please note that you can also enter this survey online, at: www.hifichoice.co.uk/survey



ABOUT HI-FI CHOICE

Q1. How did you obtain this copy of Hi-Fi Choice?

- Subscription 1
- Bought at a local newsagent 2
- Bought at a high street chain 3
- Bought at computer store 4
- Supermarket 5
- Passed on to me 6
- Other not listed 7

Q2. How long have you been reading Hi-Fi Choice?

- This is my first issue 1 1-2 years 4
- 6 months or less 2 3-4 years 5
- 7-11 months 3 5 or more years 6

Q3. How long have you spent/ will you spend reading this copy of Hi-Fi Choice?

- Under 30 minutes 1 5-7 hours 5
- 30-60 minutes 2 8-10 hours 6
- 1-2 hours 3 Over 10 hours 7
- 3-4 hours 4

Q4. How many people, including yourself, will read this copy of Hi-Fi Choice?

- Just me 1 2-3 2 4-5 3 6-9 4 10 or more 5

Q5. What are the main reasons why you buy Hi-Fi Choice? (Please tick all that apply)

- To keep up to date with product releases 1
- To use as price/equipment buying guide 2
- To help me decide which hi-fi equipment/products to buy 3
- A particular feature or cover story caught my attention 4
- To browse the advertisements 5
- Loyalty - I always buy Hi-Fi Choice 6
- Other 7
- If other, please specify

Q6. Did you buy Hi-Fi Choice...?

- For work/business interest 1
- For your own personal interest/hobby 2
- Both 3

Q7. How enjoyable did you find the following sections in this issue of Hi-Fi Choice?

Please leave blank if you did not read or use the feature

(CONT'D ABOVE)

	Very Enjoyable	Enjoyable	Not very enjoyable	Not at all enjoyable
News and Features	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Equipment Reviews	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Round-Up	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Ultimate Group Test	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Hi-fi features	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Buyer's Bible	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Reader Services	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4

Q8. Would you like to see more, the same amount, or less in Hi-Fi Choice?

	More	Same	Less
News and features	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Lab reports on all reviews in Hi-Fi Choice	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Buyer's Bible	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Reviews of low priced/budget products	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Reviews of premium/high-end products	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Information about building own hi-fi setup	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Group Tests	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Competitions	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Interviews	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Music reviews	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3

Q9. Which price range of hi-fi equipment would you like to read most about in Hi-Fi Choice?

- Under £800 1
- Between £800 and £1,499 2
- Between £1,500 and £1,999 3
- Between £2,000 and £2,999 4
- Between £3,000 and £4,999 5
- Products priced £5,000 or more 6

Q10. Which of the following is closest to describing your opinion about the level of technical content in Hi-Fi Choice?

- There is too much technical content 1
- The level is about right 2
- There is not enough technical content 3

Q11. Hi-Fi Choice currently retails at £3.99 per

(CONT'D ABOVE)

issue. How do you rate Hi-Fi Choice in terms of value for money?

- Excellent value for money 1
- Good 2
- Fair 3
- Not very good 4
- Poor value for money 5

Q12. If the price of Hi-Fi Choice was increased to £4.50, to provide more reviews of hi-fi products, how would this affect your frequency of buying the magazine?

- I would buy Hi-Fi Choice more often 1
- It would not affect how often I buy Hi-Fi Choice 2
- I would buy Hi-Fi Choice less often 3

Q13. Is there anything specific that you particularly like about Hi-Fi Choice?

.....

.....

.....

Q14. Is there anything specific that you particularly dislike about Hi-Fi Choice?

.....

.....

.....

Q15. Which hi-fi brands would you most like to read about in HFC?

- 1
- 2
- 3

Q16. What action(s) have you taken as a result of advertisements and/ or articles in Hi-Fi Choice in the last 12 months? (Please tick all that apply)

- Bought products or services advertised, on the internet 1
- Bought products or services advertised, in-store 2
- Recommended purchasing products/services 3
- Referred or discussed an ad/article with someone else 4
- Requested additional information from a company 5
- Visited a company's website 6
- None of these 7



Q17. How often are you asked for or do you offer advice to friends and family on hi-fi equipment?

- Frequently 1
- Occasionally 2
- Rarely 3
- Don't know 4

YOUR HI-FI EQUIPMENT

Q18. Which of the following do you use for researching hi-fi equipment purchases? (Please tick all that apply)

- Superstores 1
- Independent Dealers 2
- The internet 3
- Exhibition/trade show 4
- Mail order 5
- Specialist magazines (e.g. Hi-Fi Choice) 6
- General men's lifestyle magazines (e.g. FHM) 7
- Word of mouth 8
- High Street Store 9
- Other 10

Q19. Which of the following websites do you visit when you research hi-fi products and services online? (Please go to Q20 if you do not use the internet to research hi-fi purchases)

- Manufacturer websites 1
- Retailer or suppliers websites 2
- Magazine websites 3
- Price comparison sites e.g. Kelkoo 4
- Buying guide websites 5
- Search engines 6

Q20. When deciding on a product to buy, which factors are most important to you? (Please tick all that apply)

- A product's specification 1
- Manufacturer 2
- Price 3
- Reviews in Hi-Fi Choice 4
- Reviews in other magazines 5
- Reviews on the internet 6
- The opinion of a salesperson 7
- The opinion of friends/family 8
- Other 9

Q21. Which of the following outlets do you normally use for purchasing hi-fi equipment? (Please tick all that apply)

- Superstores 1
- Independent dealers 2
- High Street stores 3
- Internet/online store 4
- Mail order (by telephone or post) 5
- Second-hand through small ads 6
- Second-hand through eBay 7
- Other 8

Q22. Which of the following hi-fi equipment do you own? (Please tick all that apply)

- Same brand separates 1

(CONT'D ABOVE)

- Different brand separates 2
- Subwoofer 3
- Speaker cables 4
- Interconnect cables 5
- Turntable 6
- Radio tuner 7
- Mains conditioner 8
- Stereo amplifier 9
- Turntable cartridge/stylus 10
- Stereo loudspeakers 11
- Headphones 12
- Multichannel/AV amplifier 13
- Multichannel loudspeakers 14
- None of these 15

Q23. Which of the following brands of hi-fi equipment do you own? (Please tick all that apply)

- Bowers and Wilkins 1
- Denon 2
- Musical Fidelity 3
- Focal 4
- Naim 5
- Monitor Audio 6
- Cyrus 7
- Wharfedale 8
- Marantz 9
- Quad 10
- Linn 11
- Audiolab 12
- KEF 13
- Avid 14
- Cambridge Audio 15
- DALI 16
- Meridian 17

Q24. How much have you spent on hi-fi equipment in the last 12 months?

- Nothing 1
- £1-£99 2
- £100-£499 3
- £500-£999 4
- £1,000-£1,999 5
- £2,000-£4,999 6
- £5,000-£9,999 7
- £10,000+ 8

Q25. Do you connect your TV to your hi-fi, giving you a single set-up for your TV and hi-fi system?

- Yes 1
- No 2
- Not at the moment, but I intend to in the future 3

Q26. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements:

- | | | | | | |
|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree |
| I am really interested in understanding how hi-fi technology works | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| The pace of change in technology is too fast for me | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| I am interested in all aspects of consumer electronics, not just hi-fi equipment | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |

(CONT'D ABOVE)

- I like to buy the latest hi-fi equipment as soon as it becomes available 1 2 3 4 5
- I like talking to my friends about technology 1 2 3 4 5
- I prefer to buy CDs rather than download music 1 2 3 4 5

Q27. Which of the following equipment do you intend to buy in the next 12 months? (Please tick all that apply)

- Same brand separates 1
- Different brand separates 2
- Speaker cables 3
- Interconnect cables 4
- Turntable 5
- DAB radio 6
- Radio tuner 7
- Wireless surround speaker system 8
- Stereo amplifier 9
- Active studio monitors 10
- Stereo loudspeakers 11
- Mains conditioner 12
- Multichannel/AV amplifier 13
- Turntable cartridge/stylus 14
- Multichannel loudspeakers 15
- Headphones 16
- Subwoofer 17
- I do not plan to buy any hi-fi equipment in the next 12 months 18

Q28. If you are not planning to buy any hi-fi equipment in the next 12 months, what are your reasons for this? (Please tick any that apply)

- I cannot afford to buy any more equipment 1
- I do not have the space for any new equipment 2
- I already have the hi-fi equipment that I need 3
- I am waiting for new products to be released that are not available yet 4
- Other 5
- If other, please specify

Q29. How much do you plan to spend on hi-fi equipment in the next 12 months?

- £1-£99 1
- £100-£499 2
- £500-£999 3
- £1,000-£1,999 4
- £2,000-£4,999 5
- £5,000-£9,999 6
- £10,000+ 7
- Nothing 8
- I don't know 9

THE INTERNET

Q30. How often do you read the following magazines? (Please leave blank if you never read a magazine)

- | | I subscribe | Regularly (4-6 out of every 6 issues) | Occasionally (1-3 out of every 6 issues) |
|--------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| Hi-Fi Choice | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 |
| Hi-Fi + | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 |

(CONT'D ABOVE)

- Hi-Fi News 1 2 3
- Hi-Fi World 1 2 3
- What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision 1 2 3
- Home Cinema Choice 1 2 3
- T3 1 2 3
- Metal Hammer 1 2 3
- Classic Rock 1 2 3
- Q 1 2 3
- NME 1 2 3

Q31. If you read more than one hi-fi magazine, why is this?

Q32. Which of the following magazines do you consider to be your primary source of hi-fi information?

- Hi-Fi Choice 1
- Hi-Fi + 2
- Hi-Fi News 3
- Hi-Fi World 4
- What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision 5
- Home Cinema Choice 6
- T3 7
- I do not consider **any** magazine to be my primary source of hi-fi information 8

Q33. Which of the following magazines do you read regularly? (i.e 4-6 out of every 6 issues. Please tick all that apply)

- Classic Cars 1
- Esquire 2
- What Car 3
- The Economist 4
- Which? 5
- Golf Monthly 6
- Total Film 7
- National Geographic 8
- Empire 9
- Q 10
- Edge 11
- Runner's World 12
- SFX 13
- Home Cinema Choice 14
- GQ 15
- None of these 16

THE INTERNET

Q34. How often do you access the internet, in any location?

- Several times per day 1
- Once a day 2
- Several times per week 3
- Once a week 4
- A few times per month 5
- About once per month 6
- Never 7

(CONT'D ABOVE)

Q35. How do you access the internet?

(Please select all that apply)

- Personal connection at home - broadband (fixed line) 1
- Personal connection at home - broadband (wireless) 2
- Personal connection at home - dial-up 3
- At work 4
- At school 5
- Internet cafe 6
- Wireless locations (e.g. airports) 7
- Other (not listed) 8

Q36. What do you use the internet for?

(Please tick all that apply)

- Email 1
- Look for/apply for jobs 2
- Downloading music 3
- Download videos/films 4
- Visited social networking sites (e.g MySpace, Facebook) 5
- Uploading, storing digital photos 6
- Downloading free/shareware software 7
- For publishing my own web pages/blogs 8
- Online poker or gambling 9
- To visit auction sites (e.g ebay) 10
- Online sports betting 11
- Listening to radio 12
- To visit chat rooms/forums/noticeboards 13
- Reading newspapers/magazines 14
- Research holidays/short breaks 15
- Shopping 16
- Playing online games alone 17
- Play online games with others 18
- To read customer reviews 19
- Making phone calls over the net 20
- Banking 21

Q37. Approximately how many songs do you download per week? (Please go to Q40 if you do not use the internet to download music). Please do not include downloads from P2P or filesharing websites.

- 1-10 1
- 11-19 2
- 20-29 3
- 30-50 4
- More than 50 5
- I do not download music 6

Q38. If you download music, which sites do you use? (Please do not include downloads from filesharing websites). (Please tick all that apply)

- iTunes 1
- bandwagon 2
- emusic 3
- napster 4
- 7 Digital 5
- HMV 6
- Woolworths 7
- Tesco 8
- Mycokemusic 9

(CONT'D ABOVE)

- mp3.com 1
- Virgin Digital 2
- Other 3

Q39. If you download music, how often do you play it through your hi-fi system?

- Very often/frequently 1
- Quite often 2
- Not very often 3
- Hardly ever 4
- I never play downloaded music through my hi-fi system 5

YOUR LIFESTYLE

Q40. Which of the following interests or activities do you regularly take part in?

(Please tick all that apply)

- Console/computer gaming 1
- Performance/modified cars 2
- Listening to music 3
- Motorcycles 4
- Music making/playing an instrument 5
- Cycling/mountain biking 6
- Watching films/DVDs 7
- Adventure sports 8
- Digital photography 9
- Health/fitness 10
- Home computing 11
- Needlecrafts/knitting 12
- Gadgets/new technology 13
- Papercrafts/card making 14
- Online gambling/betting 15
- Genealogy 16
- Cars/motoring 17
- DIY/home improvements 18

Q41. Which genres of music do you particularly enjoy? (Please go to Q44 if you do not listen to music.

Please tick all that apply)

- Rock 1
- Blues 2
- Country 3
- Classical 4
- Dance 5
- Folk 6
- Funk 7
- Indie 8
- Jazz 9
- Metal 10
- Pop 11
- Punk 12
- Reggae/Ragga 13
- Soul 14
- Other 15

Q42. Who are your three preferred musical acts? (i.e artists, bands, performers)

- 1
- 2
- 3

Q43. Approximately, how often do you go to live gigs or concerts?

- At least once a week 1
- Several times per month 2
- About once a month 3
- Every two to three months 4
- Once every three to six months 5
- I never usually go to gigs/concerts 6



HI-FI CHOICE

Q44. Are you planning to attend a hi-fi exhibition over the next 12 months? (Please go to Q46 if you are not planning to attend an exhibition)

Yes _1_ No _2_

Q45. Which events are you planning to attend?

Q46. Approximately, in an average month, how much do you spend on the following? (Please leave blank if you have spent nothing on an item)

	E1-10	E11-19	E20-E49	E50-99	E100 or more
Cinema tickets	<input type="checkbox"/> _1_	<input type="checkbox"/> _2_	<input type="checkbox"/> _3_	<input type="checkbox"/> _4_	<input type="checkbox"/> _5_
Film DVDs	<input type="checkbox"/> _1_	<input type="checkbox"/> _2_	<input type="checkbox"/> _3_	<input type="checkbox"/> _4_	<input type="checkbox"/> _5_
Music CDs	<input type="checkbox"/> _1_	<input type="checkbox"/> _2_	<input type="checkbox"/> _3_	<input type="checkbox"/> _4_	<input type="checkbox"/> _5_
Music DVDs	<input type="checkbox"/> _1_	<input type="checkbox"/> _2_	<input type="checkbox"/> _3_	<input type="checkbox"/> _4_	<input type="checkbox"/> _5_
Going out (pubs, restaurants etc)	<input type="checkbox"/> _1_	<input type="checkbox"/> _2_	<input type="checkbox"/> _3_	<input type="checkbox"/> _4_	<input type="checkbox"/> _5_
Toiletries/grooming products	<input type="checkbox"/> _1_	<input type="checkbox"/> _2_	<input type="checkbox"/> _3_	<input type="checkbox"/> _4_	<input type="checkbox"/> _5_
Clothes and trainers	<input type="checkbox"/> _1_	<input type="checkbox"/> _2_	<input type="checkbox"/> _3_	<input type="checkbox"/> _4_	<input type="checkbox"/> _5_
Alcoholic drinks for home consumption	<input type="checkbox"/> _1_	<input type="checkbox"/> _2_	<input type="checkbox"/> _3_	<input type="checkbox"/> _4_	<input type="checkbox"/> _5_
Music downloads	<input type="checkbox"/> _1_	<input type="checkbox"/> _2_	<input type="checkbox"/> _3_	<input type="checkbox"/> _4_	<input type="checkbox"/> _5_

Q47. Which of the following items do you own?

(Please tick all that apply)

- Desktop PC _1_
- Laptop PC _2_
- Plasma TV _3_
- Projector _4_
- Media centre PC _5_
- PDA _6_
- Digital compact camera _7_
- Mac desktop _8_
- Digital SLR camera _9_
- Mac laptop _10_
- Digital camcorder _11_
- Camera phone _12_
- 3G phone _13_
- Other mobile phone _14_
- Dab radio _15_
- Bluetooth headset _16_

(CONT'D ABOVE)

- Sat Nav system _17_
- iPod _18_
- Other MP3 player _19_
- Speed trap detector _20_
- In car stereo _21_
- Sky+ _22_
- Sky HD _23_
- Virgin V+ _24_
- Blu-Ray disc Player _25_
- HD DVD player _26_
- Other mobile phone _27_
- Freeview digital TV recorder (hard disc or DVD) _28_
- Flatscreen TV 37in or under _29_
- Flatscreen TV over 37in _30_
- Wireless home network _31_
- PS3 _32_
- Xbox 360 _33_
- Media centre PC _34_
- None of these _35_

Q48. Which of the following items do you intend to buy in the next 12 months?

(Please tick all that apply)

- Desktop PC _1_
- Other MP3 player _2_
- Laptop PC _3_
- Speed trap detector _4_
- Plasma TV _5_
- In car stereo _6_
- Projector _7_
- Sky+ _8_
- Media centre PC _9_
- Sky HD _10_
- PDA _11_
- Virgin V+ _12_
- Digital compact camera _13_
- Blu-Ray disc Player _14_
- Mac desktop _15_
- HD DVD player _16_
- Digital SLR camera _17_
- Freeview digital TV recorder (hard disc or DVD) _18_
- Mac laptop _19_
- Flatscreen TV 37in or under _20_
- Digital camcorder _21_

(CONT'D ABOVE)

- Flatscreen TV over 37in _21_
- Camera phone _22_
- Wireless home network _23_
- 3G phone _24_
- PS3 _25_
- Other mobile phone _26_
- Xbox 360 _27_
- Bluetooth headset _28_
- Media centre PC _29_
- Sat Nav system _30_
- None of these _31_
- iPod _32_
- About You _33_

Q49. Are you...

Male _1_ Female _2_

Q50. What is your age? (Please enter as number e.g 25 in italics)

Q51. What is your working status?

- Work full-time _1_ Student (Further/Higher education) _5_
- Work part-time _2_ Unemployed _6_
- Work from home/freelance _3_ Retired _7_
- Still at school _4_ Other _8_

Q52. Are you employed in the hi-fi (or a related) industry?

Yes _1_ No _2_

Q53. What is your annual personal income before tax?

- Under £10,000 _1_ £30,000-£39,999 _6_
- £10,000-£14,999 _2_ £40,000-£49,999 _7_
- £15,000-£19,999 _3_ £50,000-£79,999 _8_
- £20,000-£24,999 _4_ £80,000+ _9_
- £25,000-£29,999 _5_

Q54. What is your annual household income before tax?

- Under £10,000 _1_ £30,000-£39,999 _6_
- £10,000-£14,999 _2_ £40,000-£49,999 _7_
- £15,000-£19,999 _3_ £50,000-£79,999 _8_
- £20,000-£24,999 _4_ £80,000+ _9_
- £25,000-£29,999 _5_

Thank you for your time in completing this survey. Please now complete the following details to be entered in the prize draw. Closing date: 17th April 2008

Name Address

Postcode Telephone number Mobile number

Email address Would you be prepared to take part in further research for Future Publishing? Yes No

Please indicate if you are happy to receive information about special offers or products/ services which we believe may interest you.

Future Publishing and its sister companies By email By mobile **Other carefully selected companies** By email By mobile

Please indicate if you do NOT wish to receive relevant information about special offers or products/ services from Future Publishing or any of its sister companies

Future Publishing and its sister companies By email By mobile **Other carefully selected companies** By email By mobile

Now, please return your questionnaire by April 17, 2008 to the following FREEPOST address: Ian Burdin (HFC), Future Publishing Ltd, Freepost, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2XF.

Please tick this box to confirm you have read and accept these Terms and Conditions.

Terms and Conditions. By taking part in a Prize Draw, you agree to be bound by the Prize Draw Rules which are summarised below but can be viewed in full at <http://survey.futurenet.com/prizedrawandcs2007>. Late or incomplete entries will be disqualified. Proof of posting (if relevant) shall not be deemed proof of delivery. Entries must be submitted by an individual (not via any agency or similar) and, unless otherwise stated, are limited to one per household. The winner(s) will be selected at random after the specified closing date. Winner(s) will be notified by email or telephone within three months of the closing date. The Company reserves the right in its sole discretion to substitute any prize with cash or a prize of comparable value. Unless otherwise stated, the Prize Draw is open to all GB residents of 16 years and over, except employees of Future Publishing and any party involved in the competition or their households. By entering a Prize Draw you give permission to use your name, likeness and personal information in connection with the Prize Draw and for promotional purposes. If you are a winner, you may have to provide additional information. Details of winners will be available on request within three months of the closing date. If you are a winner, receipt by you of any prize is conditional upon you complying with (amongst other things) the Prize Draw Rules. You acknowledge and agree that neither the Company nor any associated third parties shall have any liability to you in connection with your use and/or possession of your prize.