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WORLD

NOVEMBER 1996 £2.30

For the love of music

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SPENDOR
SPEAKERS
WORTH £1600**

**WE PICK
THE BEST
SPEAKERS**



**KING
OF
BUDGET
SPEAKERS**



MISSION'S 731i

smooth and sleek

ORELLE'S PRE-1/POW-1 AMPLIFIERS

**BARGAIN HI-FI:
BIGGEST
CLASSIFIED
ADVERTS
SECTION**

USE CASSETTE ?



**THEN YOU NEED TO HEAR
KENWOOD'S KX-3080 DECK**

World Radio History



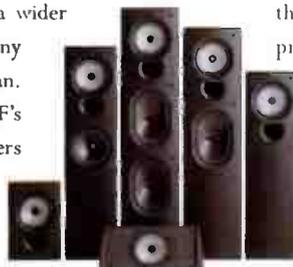
Clearly
better.



When one of the best loudspeaker engineering teams in the world advances its state-of-the-art technology, you'd expect the result to outperform the competition.

It does.

KEF's new Q Series, with its distinctive clear cone Uni-Q® drivers, delivers a more precise stereo image, over a wider listening area, than any conventional loudspeaker can. This latest advance in KEF's patented technology delivers even smoother midrange response and clarity that's simply stunning.



From bookshelf to 3-way floorstander, the entire range is magnetically shielded for Home Theatre use. And because aesthetics are integral to good design, the two largest models incorporate KEF's new 'racetrack' bass unit. With the performance of an 8 inch driver in the space of a 6 inch, it preserves the slim, elegant Q Series design.

With the new Q Series, the competition have been decisively out-classed.

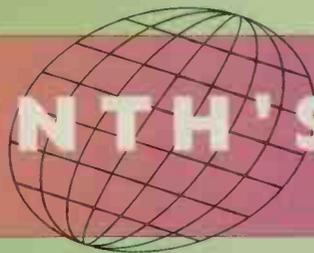
The difference is clear.

Q
SERIES



The experience
of sound

THIS MONTH'S WORLD



- If you want power to please and subtlety to tease, Orelle's Pre-I and Pow-I pre/power amplifiers could be just the ticket. Read about them on page 14.
- Mission have just updated their starter 'speaker to 'i' status. David Price, a fan of the original 73I, reckons the 73Ii is a step closer to the ideal - and it's on page 41.
- If you're one of us who enjoys cassette, at home, in the car or on the move, you should read about Kenwood's new KX-3080 cassette deck on page 56.
- In replacing the popular CD-63, can Marantz's CD-67 CD player continue to push sound quality forwards at a competitive price. Dominic Todd reckons so on page 33.
- Star Search: This month a group of seven loudspeakers are put through their paces. Only the fittest will survive to make it through to the systems round up next month.

The season's really flying now. Two of the market leaders have both launched their key products with impeccable timing. We've reviews on both Mission's 731i loudspeakers and Marantz's CD-67 CD player in this issue.

The biggest surprise though this month came from a pair of 'speakers that have survived in various guises since 1982. Heybrook's HB1s, now in S3 form, sat at the top of our group test this month alongside this year's latest models. I measured them, finding a very smooth frequency response, high sensitivity and smooth impedance, making them accurate and easy to drive. There is a rush on at the moment to search out new high performance cone materials, something I agree strongly with. But good engineering still reigns; it's one thing having the best materials, it's another knowing what to do with them.

Dominic Baker, Editor

TEST EQUIPMENT



- *Hi-Fi World* has its own advanced test laboratory and acoustically treated listening room. No other hi-fi magazine has the benefit of such facilities.
- *Hi-Fi World* has a dedicated in-house team of experienced listeners, and uses selected freelance professionals. We review thoroughly by extensive auditioning, rather than by quick-fire group listening tests.
- *Hi-Fi World's* engineering team designs a wide range of products in-house. No other hi-fi magazine is so expert and dedicated.

LISTENING ROOM

(TREATED BY RPG ACOUSTIC TOOLS)



IN THE DECEMBER ISSUE

IN THE DECEMBER ISSUE

Next month we celebrate the best of British Hi-Fi, with reviews on the latest equipment designed on home shores.



AUDIOLAB 8000CD CD PLAYER
Audiolab's first ever one box CD player gets an exclusive test in *Hi-Fi World*.

CYRUS CD PLAYER

Mission's first integrated CD player to join the Cyrus range.

ARCAM ALPHA 9 INTEGRATED AND ALPHA 9P POWER AMPLIFIER

We test Arcam's latest Alpha 9 integrated along with the Alpha 9P power amplifier to see what improvements bi-amping brings.

MERIDIAN 502 PRE AND 557 POWER AMPLIFIERS

We saw the prototype 557 power amplifier at the Cumberland Hi-Fi show last year and have been waiting in eager anticipation for its arrival. John Marks reckons it was worth the wait though.

CASTLE AVON LOUDSPEAKERS

Yet another first, Castle are using a carbon fibre drive unit in the new floorstanding Avon loudspeakers.

HARBETH HL-K6 LOUDSPEAKERS

Filling in between our fave miniature, the HL-P3, and the HL Compact 7, Harbeth's new HL-K6 continues the tradition.

BUILD A SYSTEM - PART 4

The finalé. Here's where three months of thorough testing culminate in our top three recommended systems for under £1,500.

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See page 89 for details

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THIS MONTH'S REVIEWS

AMPLIFIERS

ORELLE XTC PRE-I PRE-AMPLIFIER AND POW-I POWER AMPLIFIER 14

A class 'A' single-ended design, the PRE-I hopes to compete with the best valve designs. Find out with Dominic Baker if its marriage with the 175w POW-I power amp is a happy one.



AMC 3025 INTEGRATED 28

Fresh in this month from AMC is the £149.95 3025 integrated. David Price investigates how this slimline amplifier measures up.

COMPACT DISC

PIONEER PDR-05 CD-R 16

Yes, it's a CD player, and yes, it can record onto CD-R discs. But no, you don't have to own a studio to buy one. Find out if Pioneer have got recordable CD off pat with Jon Marks.

MARANTZ CD-67 33

Dominic Todd assesses Marantz's new £270 CD-67 to discover if it continues their tradition of producing high quality budget CD players.



VINYL

GRADO PRESTIGE BLACK CARTRIDGE 65

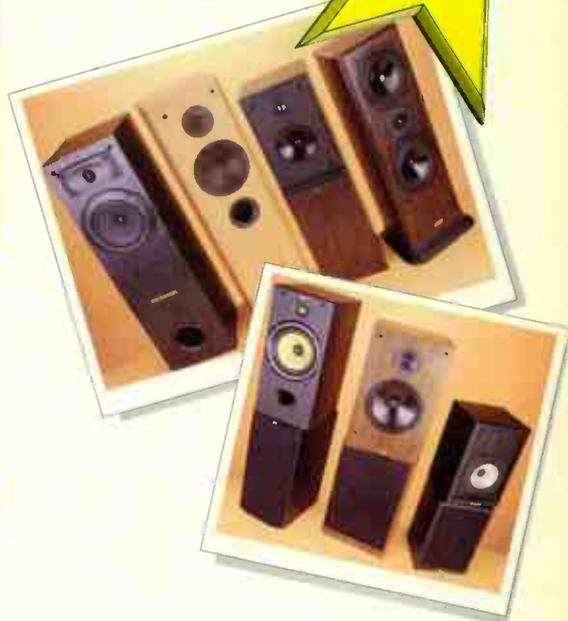
Dominic Baker wonders if Grado's new Prestige Black can fill the gap in the £50 quality cartridge

LOUDSPEAKERS

LOUDSPEAKER GROUP TEST 19

Having already announced our top-dog CD players and amplifiers, this month we turn our attention to the last link in the system, £200-£300 loudspeakers.

Celestion Impact 23
Mordaunt-Short MS25i
Tannoy Profile Plus 633
Eltax Symphony 6
B&W DM 602
Rogers LS33
Heybrook HB1 S3



TECHNICS SB-M1000 31

Towering over a metre tall and tipping the scales at a spine-bending 42kgs, is Technics' latest SB-M1000 floorstander. Jon Marks wonders whether it'd be £1,500 well spent.

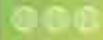
MISSION 731i 41

Is Mission's new 731i a case of 'i' for 'improved' or 'I don't think so'? David Price has all the answers.

WORLD VERDICT



OUTSTANDING - Superb sound, something we'd use ourselves.



GOOD - Has strong merit. Well worth an audition



ADEQUATE - Mediocre in vital areas. May be worth auditioning.



POOR - Seriously flawed. Not worth considering.

REGULARS

NEXT ISSUE

Sitting comfortably? Well, hi-fi as exciting as this should have you on the edge of your seat

NEWS

You won't need a snowplough to stay ahead in November, just a look at what the future holds for hi-fi.

READERS' LETTERS

Find out what's going on at the grass roots level with letters from across Britain and the globe.

COLUMNS

53, 61, 63

The world according to Noel Keywood, David Price and Dominic Todd.

HI-FI WORLD LIBRARY

If your designs are suffering from a data dearth, flicking through some of the pages in our library could plug the holes in your information banks.

SPECIALIST HI-FI DEALERS

Toil and trouble is how it can turn out, if your amplifier doesn't like your 'speakers. Get it right first time with the specialists.

MEET YOUR MAKER

'I got the music in me!' If this is what you find yourself singing, then thanks are due to the manufacturers.

WORLD AUDIO DESIGN

If you've ever had the urge to become a magician, you can start conjuring by turning a box of components into fully fledged hi-fi.

WORLD BUYING GUIDE

From a Garrard 301 to a pair of Tannoy's huge Westminster horns, if it's worth slotting into your system it will be on these pages.

DIAL-A-DEALER

Whether your mind's made up and a purchase is imminent, or you're in need of help, these dealers are on hand to serve.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

All it takes is a little form-filling to get your very own copy of Hi-Fi World delivered to your door.

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

Our sophisticated test equipment allows us to peer inside the heart of a component to find out exactly how it beats.

READERS' CLASSIFIED

6 pages of new and used bargains await your perusal - who knows, you might find the system of your dreams here. . .

ADVERTISERS' INDEX

FEATURES

JAPANESE HI-FI

What the Japanese themselves listen to at home is intriguing. Uncover some of the mysteries of the Orient with David Price.

BRITISH VINTAGE WIRELESS SOCIETY SWAPMEET

Join Noel Keywood for a stroll down memory lane amongst yesteryear's hi-fi components.

DIY SUPPLEMENT

There's a feature on the vintage Quad FMI tuner and how to bring it up to date with an outboard power supply, a design theory feature on a unique open baffle loudspeaker, our 20w K5881 valve amplifier gets a new triode input stage and more. . .

MUSIC

ROCK AND POP
RECORD OF THE MONTH:
Patti Smith: Gone Again 81

DANCE/AMBIENT
RECORD OF THE MONTH:
Empirion: Advanced Technology 84

JAZZ REVIEWS 87

CLASSICAL REVIEWS
RECORD OF THE MONTH:
Charles Camilleri: Morphogenesis 93

COMPETITION

PAGE 66

This month you could find yourself singing along to loudspeakers from Spendor as we give away a pair each of the 2020s, 2030s and 2040s, worth £1900 in total.



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perfect balance

The New Meridian 566

A DAC with the performance where it counts. Meridian's twin Phase-Lock Loop yields the lowest jitter whilst our 20 bit DAC offers a new benchmark in clarity and deep fulfilling bass.



The New Meridian 557

Balanced has never been so right. With balanced inputs and a dual mono design this 200W amplifier is the perfect finish to our balanced range. A unique ground balancing system gives you the highest performance in bridged mode without compromising the superb stereo at which Meridian amplifiers excel. Bridged output into 4 Ohms gives a massive 1000W.



The New Meridian 508.20

Taking CD replay to the edge with a new 20 bit converter and precision re-clocking used throughout. With the lowest jitter and pure Class A analogue balanced output the 508 reaches a performance level previously unheard.

The New Meridian 502

A Dual mono preamplifier design. Separating the channels onto individual boards gives Meridian a level of preamplifier performance to match our new 20 bit CD sources. With the highest quality components and Meridian's years of experience in preamplifier design we are now able to offer you a preamplifier that sonically disappears.

Meridian System Remote Control with audiophile quality balanced design from laser to loudspeaker.

What more could you ask?

BOOTHROYD STUART
MERIDIAN

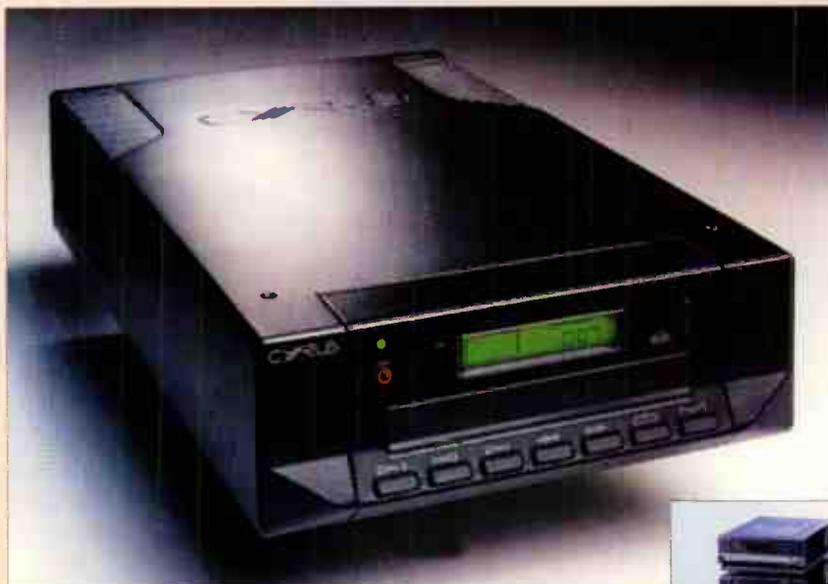
Meridian Audio Limited

Stonehill, Stukeley Meadows,
Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire PE18 6ED
Tel 44 (0)1480 434334
Fax (0)1480 432948

HARK THE NEW CYRUS

Joining Cyrus' dAD7 integrated CD player is the new dAD3. Lurking inside its die-cast alloy case is an 18-bit DAC, its implementation based on development work carried out for the top of the range Dacmaster CD convertor. According to Cyrus, this implementation, along with an ultra low jitter clock, gives better resolution of low level signals and, therefore, a more subtle, atmospheric presentation.

While the £598 dAD3 already has extensive inter-stage power supply decoupling to isolate digital and analogue signal stages, performance can be upgraded by adding a PSX-R external power supply. MC-BUS capability also allows a totally Cyrus system to be controlled from one remote control. Adding the final aesthetic and sonic touch to a Cyrus system is the new Hark rack. Suitable for either wall or floor mounting, prices start from £298 for a five shelf unit.



Mission Cyrus
Stonehill,
Huntingdon,
Cambs. PE18 6ED
Tel: 01480 451777

TECHNICS BAMBOOZLED

Claiming to have taken an important step closer to the true sound of nature, Technics have fitted their latest SU-A600MK3 and SU-A700MK3 integrated amplifiers with their Master Series capacitors. These feature a special Bamboo dielectric which, according to Technics, give the 37w '600MK3 and 45w '700MK3 improved dynamic range and a more life-like sound.

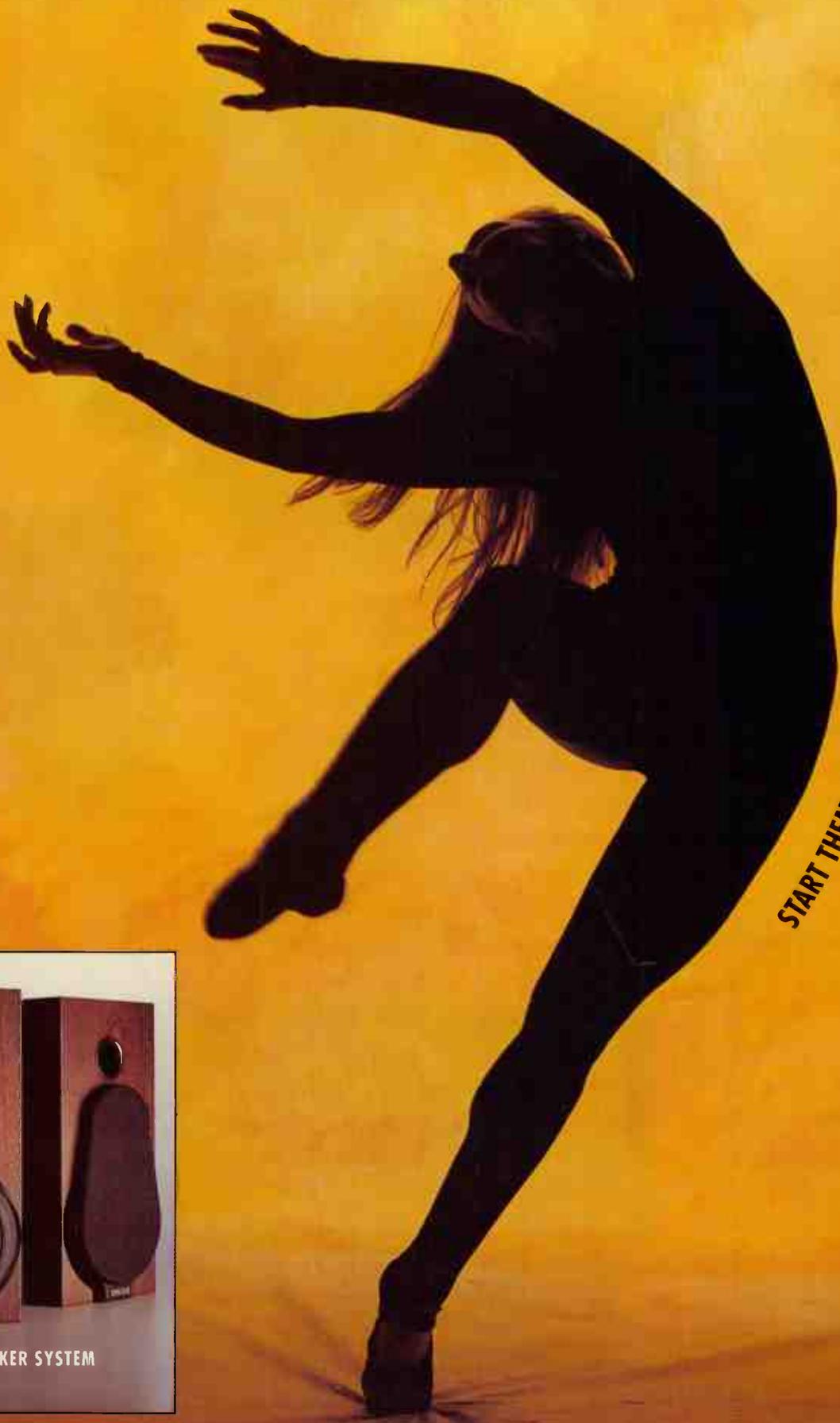
Technics have also kitted the new amps out with reduced flux-leakage R-core transformers, a volume control with gold-plated wiper contact and resistors with better temperature stability. All this will set you back £199.95 for the SU-A600MK3 and £249.95 for the SU-A700MK3.



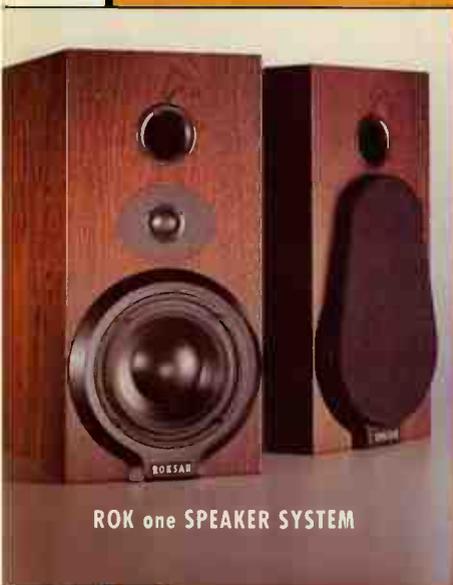
Technics
Willoughby Road,
Bracknell,
Berks. RG12 8FP
Tel: 01344 862444

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TURN IT ON



START THEM SWAYING



ROK one SPEAKER SYSTEM

ROKSAN

Stonehill, Huntingdon, PE18 6ED, England. Telephone: +44 (0) 1480-431577 Fax: +44 (0) 1480-432777

E mail: info@roksan.co.uk

World Radio History

TDL GET FRESH

TDL have decided it's upgrade time for their RTL range of loudspeakers. A new polypropylene-coned 172mm bass unit with a long throw, double-wound voice coil, and a 25mm soft dome tweeter are used in the latest RTL loudspeakers. TDL say this adds up to a 'speaker which has clearer treble and more extended bass. While the 90dB sensitive RTL 3 retains its £399.95 price tag, the 87dB RTL 2 sees its cost cut to £279.95.



TDL Electronics
 PO Box 98, High Wycombe,
 Bucks. HP10 9QR
 Tel: 01628 850111

HARBETH STAND TALL

Harbeth Acoustics, long known for their standmount loudspeakers, have finally broken with tradition to set foot in floorstander territory with their HL-S8. Like the recently revealed HL-K6, the HL-S8 uses Harbeth's 200mm RADIAL mid/bass driver (with its high temperature aluminium voice coil) and 19mm aluminium dome tweeter.

So that the HL-S8 can be tuned to match the room it's used in, a rear chamber can be filled with varying amounts of sand or lead shot. Bi-wire ready and with a sensitivity of 86dB, the new Harbeths will retail at £1895 clothed in standard veneer, and £2195 wearing something rather more exotic.

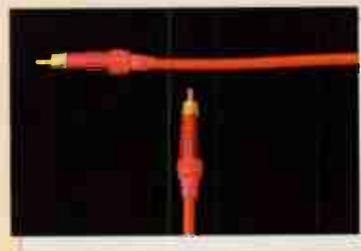


Harbeth Acoustics
 Unit 1 Bridge Road, Haywards Heath,
 W. Sussex RH16 1UA
 Tel: 01444 440955

THE MISSING LINK

According to SonicLink, interconnect cables made of copper, silver or carbon-fibre are old sonic hat. They claim that their listening tests have shown a substantially superior cable can be made from Titanium. Their new Vermillion cable therefore uses a solid core Titanium conductor and is available in 0.5m stereo pairs (£170) and 1m stereo pairs (£195), with greater lengths on request.

SonicLink
 15 Derwent Bus. Centre,
 Clarke Street,
 Derby DE1 2BU
 Tel: 01332 361390



TURNING THE TABLES

For all those music fans who have a rack bursting with equipment, an amplifier rapidly running out of inputs and no turntable, EDL of Bristol could have just what you need in their Inverse RIAA Converter Module. This novel filter is connected to an amplifier's MM phono stage, and attenuates and equalises a line level input signal so that the disc stage can be used for components like CD players, cassette decks and tuners. Claimed to be sonically transparent, the converter will sell for £16.80.

EDL
 17 Caledonia Place,
 Bristol BS8 4DJ
 Tel: 0117 974 1918

AUDIOPHILIA ON A BUDGET

Continuing Denon's ten-year tradition of carrying out key design work in the UK is the new £199.99 PMA-350SE integrated amplifier. The circuit is said to use low levels of feedback to improve tonal quality, treble clarity and amplifier stability. Audiophile components are also used at sound-critical points, including high grade screened cable for hard-wired connections and heavy duty power transistors. To help keep the price down, the PMA-350SE has been shorn of tone controls and a phono stage. But two options both costing £14.99 allow a phono stage and remote control to be added to the standard amplifier.

Denon
 Chiltern Hill,
 Chalfont St. Peter,
 Bucks. SL9 9UG
 Tel: 01753 888447



WILMSLOW'S MOVE

Wilmslow Audio have now settled at:
 50 Main Street, Broughton Astley, Leics.
 Tel: 01455 286603.

Is it intelligent to sit here?



SRS (●)[®]
Sound Retrieval System

At first glance, sitting in the path of a 2 mile high tornado isn't the smartest thing to do. Unless of course you're watching it on a Sharp SRS 3D Surround Sound T.V. Using the revolutionary 'Sound Retrieval System', the T.V. engulfs the room with vivid, 3D Surround Sound. And all from just two speakers. So, wherever you're sitting and whatever you're watching, the sound is so real it's like actually being there. There are 3 T.V.s with SRS available, each one providing an affordable alternative to home cinema systems. So do the intelligent thing. Surround yourself with sound, not speakers. Ask for a demo at any leading electrical store or call 0800 262 958 quoting SRS/HFW/T for further information.

SHARP
INTELLIGENT THINKING



World Radio History

CARBON CASTLE

Stepping in as a replacement for the Chesters is Castle's latest two way design, the Avon. What sets this new loudspeaker apart from its predecessors is its 6.5in. woven carbon-fibre mid/bass driver. Light, stiff carbon-fibre cones tend to give a more dynamic sound than more traditional materials and store less of the energy that colours sound quality. Both the mid/bass driver and 25mm soft dome tweeter have their voice coils wound on Kapton formers, and are joined by a 2nd order crossover (using polypropylene capacitors). The Avons are a reflex loaded design with a claimed 87dB sensitivity. £699 buys you a bi-wireable Avon in standard veneer, while Rosewood and Yew come in at £839.



Castle Acoustics
Shortbank Road, Skipton,
N. Yorks. BD23 2TT
Tel: 01756 795333

HEYBROOK ON THE MOVE

After 18 years of loudspeaker manufacture at its Plymouth factory, Heybrook has upped sticks and moved 12 miles into Cornwall to more modern, larger premises and the panoramic rural views needed to build 'speakers.



Heybrook Hi Fi
Clemo Road, Liskeard,
Cornwall PL14 3NH
Tel: 01579 342866

BORDER PATROL

In our September review of the Thomas Transducers' Accelerando horn loudspeakers, we mentioned a 300B amplifier from Border Patrol. Border Patrol is an independent company, and is not related in any way to Audio Innovations as stated in the review.

For more information call 01273 276716.

SENNHEISER CAN

Previously only available from Sennheiser's professional division, but now being sold to the public are the HD25 and HD25SP closed-back headphones. Both use neodymium-iron magnets, alloy voice coils and full size diaphragms, and servicing is easy thanks to their modular design. The HD25SP sells for £84.95, while the HD25, with its reversible earpieces, one-sided cable and higher power handling costs £159.95.

Sennheiser
3 Century Point, Halifax Road,
High Wycombe, Bucks. HP12 3SL
Tel: 01494 551551

SAVE AND SOUND

The fourth Singapore International Audio Video Exhibition (SAVE), incorporating HEX (the High End Exhibition) will be held from the 31st of October to the 3rd of November at the Raffles City Convention Centre and Le Meridien hotel. As well as the products, there will be manufacturers and hi-fi personalities in attendance, and show-goers can stay informed with a series of lectures open to all.

For more information, contact Inkwell Publications of Singapore on: 65 344-3866 (Phone) or 65 344-5880 (Fax).

THE 'A' TEAM

Celestion's new range of loudspeakers, the A Series, comes in three flavours - the A1, A2 and A3 - each featuring new drivers developed using laser interferometry. All of the models use a 25mm Titanium dome tweeter with Kapton voice coil former. The A1 standmounter uses a single 175mm injection moulded bass driver, the A2 floorstander a pair of 175mm drivers, whereas the A3 sports three 200mm bass units along with a 175mm driver to cover midrange. Prices are £699, £1199 and £1799 respectively for the standard Black/Cherry finish; a Rosewood veneer is also available.



Celestion
Foxhall Road, Ipswich
IP3 8JP
Tel: 01473 322222

GRIFFIN'S 40TH BIRTHDAY

Griffin Audio, who have been around since the days of the 78rpm record, are celebrating 40years of quality hi-fi retailing with a series of audio and visual demonstrations at the Hyatt Regency hotel, Birmingham. Due to start in October, demonstrations will include those from key manufacturers Linn, Quad, Naim and Arcam.

For details, Tel: 0121 622 2230

trade winds

Five Stars

Does the best price always mean the best deal?

“I thought I had this buying hi-fi business sorted out. I bought all the hi-fi magazines and read them thoroughly, because I reckoned their experts knew exactly what they were talking about - at least a lot more than I did! It was reassuring to see the same product names cropping up regularly and I figured the writers' experience and guidance would steer me straight to the system of my dreams. The trouble is I've ended up more confused than when I started.”



One reviewer said a product I fancied was absolutely brilliant but another said it was nothing special at all. How can that be? Surely one CD player is pretty much the same as another? And how can a loudspeaker that's one magazine's top recommendation not get so much as a mention in any of the others? And then there was the amplifier that was the best in the test six months ago, yet now I never see it mentioned. I don't mind admitting it, I'm completely lost.”

Plan B — I'm going for a deal

“So, I've decided to adopt plan B. I'm sure there can't be any really dramatic differences between all this gear and it's all bound to work together properly, so I'm going to check the price lists and the adverts and shop around for the best deal. I know getting the right hi-fi is important — hey, I'm as mad about music as anyone — but if I can get close to the mark and save a few quid, I'm sure I'll end up with a good system and be happy. I know there are specialist shops out there that do demonstrations and reckon they've got all the solutions but, to be honest, I'm a bit scared of going to one. I'd really welcome some advice and guidance but I don't know all the technical jargon and I'd feel daft sitting there trying to “hear the differences” if I couldn't. Anyway, a friend told me that these shops only sell the really expensive gear and that they're not interested if you don't have loads of money to spend.”

And so another hi-fi buyer starts his journey down the road to dissatisfaction, endless upgrades and a permanent overdraft.

There is only one way to buy a hi-fi system that will prove satisfying, reliable and deliver true value for money, and that's through a specialist hi-fi dealer. Let's face it, you wouldn't think about buying a car if you couldn't take it for a test drive. You wouldn't buy a house solely on the strength of seeing the estate agent's details and a photograph. Even if you're spending far less, say buying a jacket or a pair of shoes, you want to try them on to make sure they fit you.

Buying a hi-fi system is no different. It doesn't matter what the specifications say or what the “experts” think: if it doesn't measure up to what you want from a system, then it's not the right choice. Knowing that you've bought a room full of five-star favourites or best-buys is no consolation when you can't bear to listen to them for more than five minutes. Even that ten per cent discount on the price won't make them sound any better.

Buying or being sold to?

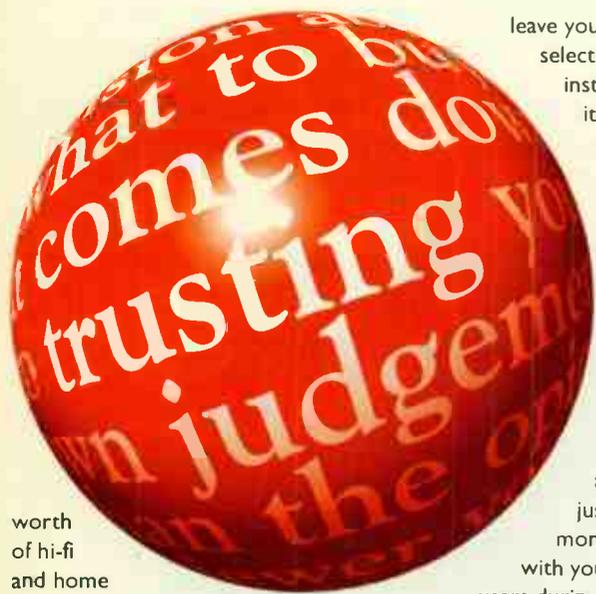
Mind you, most of us are easily suckered when it comes to buying hi-fi. Given the choice of venturing into the unknown territory of a specialist dealer's shop and exerting some influence over what we buy, or taking what looks like the easy route — having adverts and magazine reviews push us along a path sweetened with discounts and special offers — we opt for the latter. We don't buy a system, we allow ourselves to be sold one. We side-line our own ideas about quality and personal satisfaction and buy someone else's opinion of what's good for us and good value for our money.

Take control

Now there's a group of long-established, independent specialist dealers who are totally committed to putting the customer back in the driving seat. They're encouraging the buyer to take control ... with a little help and guidance provided where required. They know how difficult it can be to establish the true quality and

For Value

Ask the UK's top twenty specialist hi-fi dealers.



worth of hi-fi and home cinema systems. They know that without experiencing the performance of the systems they offer, you can't possibly assess the value of them. That's why their idea of "selling" is to 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. With the dealer's help and advice you will 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 problems you might encounter.

The story doesn't end there. These shops won't abandon you once you've put your hand into 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 that you're entirely happy with the way it works.

Why bother?

There is, of course, one question that hasn't been answered: why should you and these dealers go to all this trouble? Well, from your point of view maybe it's because a good deal is about a great deal more than just price. Unless you've got money to burn, you'll be living with your new system for years — years during which most of those five star products will probably stop shining quite so brightly.

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 on the right of this page are the best hi-fi shops in the country. They all have lots of stars. You'll find them on the shop floor: they're the people waiting to guide customers towards hi-fi for which the appeal won't fizzle out the next time you buy a hi-fi magazine.

Test results

| | |
|-----------------|--------|
| value for money | ★★★★★★ |
| service | ★★★★★★ |
| facilities | ★★★★★★ |
| verdict | ★★★★★★ |

THE 20 BEST HI-FI DEALERS IN THE UK

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>LONDON</p> <p>NI Grahams Hi-Fi 190a New North Road 0171 226 5500</p> <p>SW11 Oranges & Lemons 61/63 Webbs Road Battersea 0171 924 2040</p> <p>W4 Martin-Kleiser Ltd 108 Chiswick High Road 0181 400 5555</p> <p>SOUTH</p> <p>Ashford, Kent Soundcraft Hi-Fi 40 High Street 01233 624441</p> <p>Chelmsford Rayleigh Hi-Fi 216 Moulsham Street 01245 265245</p> <p>East Grinstead Audio Designs 26 High Street 01342 314569</p> <p>Kingston-upon-Thames Infidelity 9 High Street Hampton Wick 0181 943 3530</p> <p>Rayleigh, Essex Rayleigh Hi-Fi 44a High Street 01268 779762</p> <p>Southend-on-Sea Rayleigh Hi-Fi 132/4 London Road 01702 435255</p> <p>Uxbridge Uxbridge Audio 278 High Street 01895 465444</p> | <p>MIDLANDS</p> <p>Banbury Overture 3 Church Lane 01295 272158</p> <p>Birmingham Sound Academy 152a High Street Bloxwich 01922 493499</p> <p>Leicester Listen Inn 6 Hotel Street 0116 262 3754</p> <p>Northampton Listen Inn 32 Gold Street 01604 37871</p> <p>Shrewsbury Creative Audio 9 Dogpole 01743 241924</p> <p>NORTH</p> <p>Cheadle (Stockport) Audio Counsel 14 Stockport Road 0161 428 7887</p> <p>Oldham Audio Counsel 12/14 Shaw Road 0161 633 2602</p> <p>Sheffield Moorgate Acoustics 184 Fitzwilliam St 0114 275 6048</p> <p>SCOTLAND</p> <p>Edinburgh Russ Andrews Hi-Fi 34 Northumberland Street 0131 557 1672</p> <p>Glasgow Stereo Stereo 260 St. Vincent Street 0141 248 4079</p> |
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A NATURAL HIGH

XTC is the brand name used by Analogue & Digital Audio for their high-end range of audiophile electronics. They've already had success lower down the price scale with the Orelle brand; the SA-100 is one of the best £500 integrated amplifiers we've come across in recent months. So expectations were high as I unwrapped and installed the XTC Pre-1 preamplifier and Pow-1 power amplifier.

They are impressively built, as you'd expect for the £3,000 price tag the pairing demand.

Ours came in a sleek and stylish looking gloss black, but there is a black brushed aluminium finish for those who want something more conventional. Aluminium is used throughout the chassis of both units, reducing eddy currents to give a smoother, more natural sound.

XTC's Pre-1 is a single-ended MOSFET design, using a relatively simple circuit with a short signal path to preserve fidelity. A green light on the volume control lights after a 30second warm up period to indicate that it is ready to use. It has remote control for



You don't need ecstasy to enjoy life in the high end with XTC's new Pre-1/Pow-1 pre and power amplifiers, finds Dominic Baker.

input selection and volume, and the remote can also be used to control an XTC CD player (reviewed in our April '96 issue) and a tuner (can we presume that there will be an XTC tuner shortly?).

Weighing in at 25kgs, the Pow-I power amplifier is a solid beast.

Specified at 175watts per channel (we actually measured over 200watts), it's capable of driving most loudspeakers with ease. Unusually, it is a four channel

power amplifier, with several options for configuration. You can choose between 2-channel operation which delivers the highest power, 4-channel operation for bi-amping, where a single stereo pair of phono socket inputs drive four individual power amp. sections, and 4-channel independent mode, where each power amp. section can be accessed separately for an active or AV system.

I used both 2 channel operation and 4-channel independent mode for bi-amping, the latter giving the best results with the reasonably sensitive Heybrook Sextet II loudspeakers I used. I chose to use the 4-channel independent mode because it allowed me to use channel 1 inputs for bass, and channel 2 inputs for treble, which separates the two power supply sections between bass and treble. This I found gave a cleaner, more precise sound with greater dynamics and control.

First to greet me was the tightly controlled bass and wonderful articulation of bass guitar on the Counting Crows' 'Anna Begins'. Each plucked bass string led with a powerful, rounded punch loaded with natural reverb and character. The XTC was fast on the uptake, bringing a sense of pace and timing to the music that is rare.

But at the same time, the XTC revealed the beautifully wide and spacious acoustic on this album, which is one of the most naturally recorded rock albums I've come across in recent

years. Strings and percussion were crisp, sharp in their attack and soft in their decay. There was fine detail resolution in the lower treble, adding to the very convincing portrayal and allowing you to really drift deep into the music's envelope.

"the XTC had the ability to make music flow gracefully, whilst maintaining detail and attack. Its speed on transients was impressive, bringing tight control"

Whatever the style of music, the XTC had the ability to make music flow gracefully, whilst maintaining detail and attack. Its speed on transients was impressive, bringing tight control to the tempo and rhythm of each track, but it was done in a natural, unforced manner. Perhaps helping to keep the XTC smooth, whilst possessing such speed and detail, was a sugary sweet treble, a touch soft, but clean and extended to create a feeling of air and space.

Tracey Thorn's lush vocal on Massive Attack's 'Protection' was one of the best I've heard. It was super dry and clear, with so much presence and power behind every word it had me captivated. While listening to this album, I realised just how well the XTC combo. was separating individual instruments and vocals. It gave a wonderfully uncluttered and resolute presentation, revealing the true composition of a track.

A fast and dry balance on The The's 'Armageddon Days Are Here' had the XTC again showing its mettle. This track is formed from a complex mix of sounds, intertwining with each other in a manner that can confuse some amplifiers. Not here though; each was clearly separable and the whole sharply punctuated by a snare drum which had tremendous transient speed and attack.

'The Violence Of Truth', also a dryly balanced track, but with a punchy and quick moving bass guitar line, again oozed cool confidence. Notes were

perfectly formed and timing excellent, driving the rhythm forwards.

Moving towards a more refined and simpler style of music, the violin and piano of Andante Cantabile made a fine impression through the XTC. Piano was softly muted next to the wonderful string tone of Stradivari's Cremonese violin. It had quite a sharp tone, cutting cleanly through an atmosphere rich with lingering harmonics and the gentle in-takes of breath of the musicians. It gave

an amazing amount of feel for the recording location.

I must say that I was extremely impressed by the qualities of this combination. The preamplifier is one of the most detailed and spacious sounding designs around. And the power amplifier combines a silky smooth delivery with enough power to drive just about any 'speaker you care to connect to it. It was meant as a reference, and reference quality it is.

| | |
|------------------|---------------|
| XTC Pre-I | £1,000 |
| XTC Pow-I | £2,000 |

**Analogue & Digital Audio
Unit 12,
Imex House,
6 Wadsworth Road,
Perivale,
Middx.
UB3 7JS
Tel: 0181 810 9388**

WORLD VERDICT 
Preamplifier is highly detailed and spacious, power amplifier smooth and seductive. Use in bi-amp mode for a cleaner, more controlled sound.

Measured Performance
see p 103

BURNING DIGITS



Jon Marks finds how to zap CDs with a laser, harmless fun with Pioneer's PDR-05 CD-R recorder. This machine makes recording onto CD affordable - just.

Not being much of a tycoon, I haven't had a chance to get my hands on a 'consumer' CD-R machine because of their price tag. Costs have fallen though; owning and using a CD-R machine in your home is beginning to look acceptable. Pioneer's recent PDR-05 CD-R player, fitted with their stable platter mechanism and Legato Link S processing, costs a just-affordable (to me) £1300. Recordable 60 minute CDs too are now available at £7.95 each, maybe less if you're prepared to hunt around.

CD-R discs can be recorded once, and once only, so recording must be done with care. Currently, people tend to compile music onto CD-R and archive valuable LPs and such like.

SOUND QUALITY

Banco de Gaia's Live at Glastonbury CD does a good job of putting the listener up on stage along with the group, looking out across a sea of unwashed faces and tie-dyed T-shirts. Dropping the CD label side down onto the Pioneer's platter, sitting back and pressing play, I could see the crowd stretching back behind the front plane of the loudspeakers, murmuring and clapping.

Going hand in hand with the live feel provided by the crowd, was the flow of the music which made it easy to get into the free spirit of this recording. Pumping bass lines had powerful extension and electronic percussion was strong and clean, if a little forward.

The chanting that revolves in the background of 'Mafich Arabi' was smooth too, adding to the rhythm of this stomper of a track. The bass managed to differentiate between the two drum machine lines (the one taut and resonant, the other more artificially hard and weighty), but could sound a little soft at times.

The sun outside our listening room was beating down, so it was time to try a little Calypso courtesy of the Mighty Sparrow and his compilation CD, The Mighty Sparrow Explodes Into Calypso Time. While this CD is not the best quality, it makes up in sheer funkiness and joie de vivre what it lacks in recording prowess. Throughout this album, the PDR-05 produced funky bass lines graced by smooth horn sections

and vocals. It reproduced the care-free feel of this CD in a way that would have a beach barbecue glowing into the wee hours.

Continuing to mine an uplifting vein, I indulged myself in the Sons of Champlin's *Loosen Up Naturally* album. '1982-A', which opens the album, showed off the same smooth vocals that had been in evidence on *Mighty Sparrow's* compilation. Moving up a gear to the busier and more complex 'Hello Sunlight' posed no problems for the PDR-05, which was well able to separate the various layers in the mix.

Music of a more orchestral persuasion had immediacy and scale, with the overture of the *Flying Dutchman* opening to the impressive ebbing and flowing of the strings beneath the brass section. My torture CD, the *Archiv* recording of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, caused the Pioneer a little difficulty though - violins took up a rather prominent position at the front of the soundstage and had a slightly glassy sheen to them.

Replacing Pioneer's own transport with an *Audiolab 8000CDM* feeding its internal convertor produced a smoother, more detailed rendition that was generally better controlled and focused across the frequency range.

RECORDING QUALITY

Slotting a gunmetal grey recordable CD into the player's drawer, I set about finding out how the Pioneer handled its *raison d'etre*, making recordings. Hooking up our *Audiolab* transport to the PDR-05's digital input number one, I started feeding it digits from the likes of Vivaldi, Rimsky-Korsakov, Tori Amos and *Banco de Gaia*.

One immediately noticeable difference on the copy was that with Vivaldi, violins seemed to have taken a step back in the mix compared to the original played on the Pioneer. They also lost some of the glassiness that had been present earlier, coming across more sweetly. This was true of other copies made and then played back on the Pioneer; where the original had

HOW DOES CD-R WORK?

The Pioneer PDR-05 can record a digital signal from another CD transport or player (44.1kHz sampling frequency), a DAT machine (48kHz) or DBS (32kHz). Since the signal must be recorded at 44.1kHz to be read by a normal CD player, recording from DAT or DBS with their different sampling frequencies means that the input signal is first converted to 44.1kHz sampling frequency before being recorded.

Making copies from an analogue source involves a little more processing. Here, an Analogue to Digital Converter (ADC) within the recorder samples the analogue original and turns it into CD's standard 16-bit 44.1kHz digital code.

After processing the signal is fed to the record laser (a higher power version of the laser that reads a CD), which then burns the digital code into the surface of the CD-R as a series of pits.

The last step in the process to a finished disc full of recordings is Finalisation. When a disc is Finalised, a Table Of Contents is burned into the inner circumference of the disc, where track numbers, length etc are stored. Another track is burned into the outer, containing information to help put the laser back on track if it comes adrift during search mode.

possessed a forward midrange, the copy sounded slightly warmer, lacking so much midrange emphasis.

Playing the copy against the original on our *Audiolab 8000CDM* and *Pink Triangle Da Capo DAC* confirmed that the Pioneer was missing some of the sparkle of the original. Electric bass and drum beats on 'Talula' and 'Muhammad My Friend' had lost some of their impact and speed, sounding instead very slightly softer, as did *Banco de Gaia's* *Live At Glastonbury* album.

Similar, but more obvious characteristics emerged when it came to recordings made from an analogue source, in this case our *Garrard/SME 312/Goldring 1042*. Cymbals on *John Lee Hooker's* 'Boom Boom', for instance, didn't crash quite as explosively as they had on vinyl. The reverb on Hooker's vocals was diminished, his voice not spreading

quite so far out into the room as a result.

The playing of the *Dave Brubeck Quartet* on *Time Out* has a real feeling of refinement to it, with delicate cymbal brushwork and sax playing set in a sizeable soundstage. The CD-R version's double bass was softer and the performance happened in a smaller soundstage. Turning to Reggae found *Bob Marley's* vocals on his *Exodus* album less intimate than on vinyl, while the bass line's rhythmic drive was diminished.

CONCLUSION

Pioneer's PDR-05 wouldn't be out of place amongst players in the £5-600 bracket. Only the way it reproduces violins stops it from climbing further up the price scale. As a digital copier it works well - it took a lot of listening on our £1750 *Da Capo* and £1400 *Audiolab 8000CDM* to tell copy from original. The differences were a little more obvious when recording from analogue however. But if you're happy with £8 discs and only being able to record onto them once, then the PDR-05 is well worth a listen.

Pioneer PDR-05

£1299.95

Pioneer
Hollybush Hill,
Stoke Poges,
Slough,
Berks. SL2 4PQ
Tel: 01753 789789

WORLD VERDICT



Copying from a digital source works very well. A little more information is lost copying from analogue though. Replay is on a par with £5-600 machines.

Measured Performance
see PI 03

LOUDSPEAKER STAR★SEARCH



Jon Marks and Dominic Baker lend their ears to three standmount and four floorstanding loudspeakers to pick the candidates for December's systems.

September saw the Marantz CD-63mkII KI-Signature and Trichord Genesis taking the laurels in our CD player group test. They were joined by the Rotel RA-970BX, Mission Cyrus III and Pioneer A-400X amplifiers in October. November finds Hi-Fi World stalwarts Jon Marks and Dominic Baker investigating seven hopefuls in the £240-£300 loudspeaker market. You can find out in this penultimate instalment of our system building saga which 'speakers your wallet should be yearning after, before we go on to reveal our top systems in December's conclusion.

If it's a compact system to fill a bedroom or study you need, this month's standmounters could well be just what you're looking for. Larger rooms, however, need larger boxes for good levels, so we included four

floorstanders to cater for those with a bit more space available.

In the floorstander category we have Celestion's Impact 23 (originally reviewed and relished by Dominic Baker back in March '96), the Symphony 6 from Danish manufacturer Eltax (which Douglas Floyd-Douglass enjoyed in the September issue), Tannoy's new and improved 633 Profile Plus and Mordaunt-Short's smart and compact MS25i. Making up the standmounters are Rogers' LS33 (auditioned with the matching AB33 Auxiliary Bass unit stands by Haider Bahrani in April), B&W's DM602 and Heybrook's long-lived HBI, now in S3 guise.

Three to four years ago, this group test would probably have been made up almost solely of standmounters. That has changed though, through 'speakers

like TDL's RTL2, which showed that useful extra bass could be provided from a larger enclosure without compromising overall sound quality.

Up until recently, the bulk of the 'speakers in this group test would also have had simple fabric dome tweeters and paper mid/bass units joined by crossovers made up of industrial grade components. Nowadays, there are often metal dome tweeters and injection moulded, plastic cones (Kevlar, in the case of B&W's DM602) working through bi-wire crossovers that use audiophile grade capacitors. So if you've got the system-building or upgrade bug and £250-300 burning a hole in your pocket, then today's 'speakers offer real value for money.

DECEMBER ISSUE- Star Systems

£249.95

B&W DM602

With their yellow 7in. Kevlar cone mid/bass drivers, the DM602s certainly stand out from the loudspeaker crowd. B&W didn't choose Kevlar to turn heads though, but because it's light and stiff. The front-firing port, with its flared profile, is also designed to improve clarity in the bass. Providing the treble is a ferrofluid cooled aluminium dome tweeter, rolled-in through a simple first order crossover.

Sound Quality

Opening the proceedings was Moloko's 'Lotus Eaters'. Slow, seductive vocals emerged flanked by crisp, detailed electronic percussion and meaty drum machine beats, the track's spooky spirit intact. Percussion clarity was good on 'Dominoid' too, with a slightly forward presence that pushed it ahead of vocals in the soundstage. Leading edges in the bass line had real impact and speed throughout this album, and notes across the frequency spectrum flowed one into the next in a relaxed, natural way.

Rolling through The Cranberries CD had me again admiring their lucidity when dealing with cymbals and vocals. The only slight downside was a cold edge to Dolores' delivery and Fergal's percussion, obvious on tracks like 'Salvation' and 'When You're Gone'. Rhythmically, this CD came across as vibrantly as had Moloko, kick drum on 'Free To Decide' propelling the song with its nicely weighted, leathery slap, while the flow of the guitar riff that moves through 'Electric Blue' emphasised the grace of this number.

Dolores' dulcet tones were replaced by those of Tori Amos with the spartan 'Blood Roses'. Here, the inflexions in her singing and harpsichord playing were clearly revealed by the 602s, adding realism to the performance. The trade-off was a soundstage made less substantial by the loudspeakers' slightly

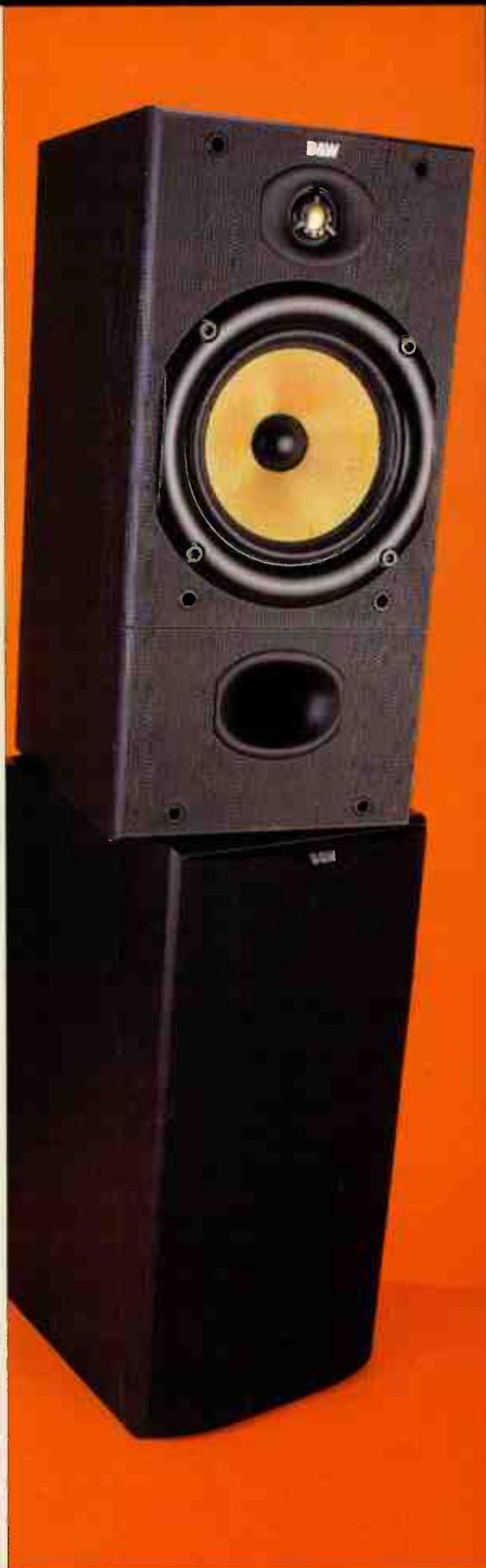
forward character. Songs like 'Professional Widow' and 'Caught A Lite Sneeze' with their more complex, bass-loaded arrangements redressed the balance somewhat, but still sounded lighter tonally than they really are.

With Vivaldi's Four Seasons, the 602s captured the music's refinement without losing its vitality. Their revealing nature brought out the subtleties of the players' bowing, helping to differentiate the individual instruments. The same was true of the voices of the Magnificat choir on The Golden Age, Vol. 1 CD, where the power and purity of the singing were well handled by the B&Ws.

Dominic Says

The DM 602s came as a very pleasant surprise. Whereas I've found B&Ws loose and waffly in the bass before, in the 602s they've got things just right; in fact considerably better than you'd expect from a reasonably compact box. They go very deep and are strong with it, better than several of the floorstanders in this test, although care is still needed if you have a small room/full sounding system. In the right set up, the combination of taut, tight bass allied to an unrestrained confidence make these one of the best bass blowers I've come across at the price.

But what of the rest? Midrange too was impressive, very pure and clear with little colouration. Female vocals benefited especially from this, showing real projection and an out of the box quality. Treble was recognisable for its metallic clink and monotonic tone. It was crisp and open and remained inoffensive throughout though. Sound staging wasn't especially expansive, but imaging first rate; precise and focused where many more expensive boxes fail.





The HBIs have quite a history behind them, stretching back to 1982 when production first started. Eight years down the line found the 'speakers evolving from S2 (tweaked crossover) to S3 with a fabric dome tweeter in place of the old plastic dome version alongside a 6in. paper mid/bass cone. At the same time a hard-wired split crossover (using polypropylene capacitors) was introduced to allow bi-wiring. The final touch to bring the 'speakers up to date with the information age was the addition of double magnets to give partial shielding for use near TV monitors.

Sound Quality

Right from the word go, the Heybrooks' presentation of Tori Amos' vocals was surprisingly convincing for a £300 loudspeaker - they were substantial and had a realistic tonal range. The HBI S3s avoided the twin pitfalls of sibilance and confusion even when the spittle was flying with the vehemence of the delivery on 'Blood Roses'. Further proof of their capabilities was furnished by 'Putting The Damage On', with its brass and piano combination - an attractive dash of tonal colour made it that much easier to believe that it was live music I was listening to, not a hi-fi system.

Swapping discs for The Cranberries' *To The Faithful Departed* found 'Hollywood' showing off Dolores' distraught yodellings to good effect, the Heybrooks overlaying her vocals on guitars and drums. Each transparent layer built on the next to form a soundstage of impressive depth. Rhythmically the Heybrooks were as sharp as a 40s' pin stripe zoot suit with their dry bass handling the frenetic moshing tempo of

'Salvation' and the finger-clicking Doo Wop of 'When You're Gone' with equal aplomb. The only small blot on the Heybrooks' copy book was a slight roughness on vocals here and on Eddie Reader's eponymous album.

Vivaldi was also favoured by the Heybrooks', their tonal resolution making easy work of separating violins from violas and giving the music a sense of verve and natural colour. The music moved with poise and purpose, whether the HBI S3s were dealing with the refinement of the first movement or the rage of Summer's storm.

Dominic Says

Heybrook's HBI S3s have impressive tonal qualities through the midrange, suiting acoustic guitar and violins particularly well. They have a naturalness to the way they reproduce strings that makes them cohesive and articulate. This is no doubt helped by the fabric dome tweeter's ability to reproduce upper harmonics in a smooth and extended manner - here they stand out from the group, along with the Eltax. A good quality fabric dome tweeter really does have a lot more to offer than metal domes at this price.

Vocals were projected well into the room, with just a slight emphasis on consonants removing smoothness. Bass wasn't quite so successful, being coloured by boxiness and sounding constrained in the lower octaves. It was tactile and articulate though, following upper bass lines well.

Imaging was impressively well portrayed, but the sound stage was squashed into a rather two dimensional plane. Their dry, crisp sound with a good range of tonal colour though makes them a fine choice for classical or acoustic based music.

£249.00

Stepping in to fill the boots of the LS2a II, the LS33 came upon an unsuspecting world less than a year ago. Its distinctive opaque, polypropylene mid/bass driver (with Kapton voice coil former) is loaded by the rear-firing port (flared to reduce distortion) which extends bass performance from its diminutive 11 litre cabinet. Joining in at 3kHz, through a crossover built up from close tolerance capacitors, is a 19mm soft dome tweeter with a vented voice coil, ferrofluid cooled and damped.

Sound Quality

With the LS33s' backs about 4in. from the wall to bolster bass, 'Patience Of Angels' from Eddi Reader's eponymous CD had her vocals clearly intelligible above the musical mix of the rest of the instruments. Accordion and guitar possessed good clarity, helped by the Rogers' upper midrange and treble which did a good job of revealing detail and adding sparkle to the performance.

The simpler, sparser 'Dear John' had the accordion notes, which waft through this song, taking up a position towards the front of the soundstage alongside vocals, with synthesisers and bass laid behind. While upper bass notes were well resolved, the Rogers didn't have quite the same kind of focus to their bass punch as a pair of floorstanders, and could blur notes in the lower registers.

Looking to stretch the 'speakers further dynamically, I brought Carl Orff's Carmina Burana to bear. Timpani fared well, with the LS33s' upper bass speed and detail managing to put together a credible impression of drums. Cymbals crashed cleanly and powerfully, fading from the soundstage as the baleful woodwind came to the fore. While the choir's voices and string section never

'shouted' or sounded excessively bright, there was no doubt their upper registers were being given a boost coming through the Rogers.

Detouring to some guitar grunge, The Cranberries put in an appearance with their CD *To The Faithful Departed*. The opening track, 'Hollywood', had the Rogers endowing the music with attractive scale, drums and guitars in particular sounding realistically substantial. Vocal clarity was good again, but there was a slight dryness to the delivery which sapped some of the sweetness from Dolores' voice.

The Rogers continued on their rhythmic roll with the highly processed sound of Moloko and their *Do You Like My Tight Sweater?* album. Booty-swinging bass lines, ably assisted by powerful, pungent synthesisers, punched the songs along.

Dominic Says

Bright, clear and detailed the LS33s sounded immediately impressive. I prefer 'speakers a touch on the bright side; it gives them a more open and incisive delivery. This the Rogers certainly had, being crisp, engaging and exciting to listen to. In a well balanced or softish system, the LS33s will balance well, but beware if you have sharp or bright ancillaries to start with.

Midrange was smoother than the B&Ws, but also lost a little detail and purity by comparison. They didn't project in quite the same way either, and imaging wasn't as precise, but the sound stage had realistic scale. With good upper bass punch the LS33s bounce along with rhythms, but they haven't really got the boots for real earth shaking stuff. They'd be ideal for someone wanting a lively, upbeat sound in a small room.



Rogers LS33



The MS25is are one of Mordaunt-Short's recently improved Music Series models, sitting between the standmounters and the larger MS40i and MS50i floorstanding loudspeakers. Fitted in the Mica-loaded front baffle are a 25mm ferrofluid-cooled aluminium dome tweeter (anodised gold) and a 165mm mid/bass driver, working through a hard-wired first-order crossover. The cone and surround of this driver are actually moulded as a single piece for a strong and smooth join between the two.

Sound Quality

Starting out with some Moloko showed the MS25is had a slightly forward character, the vocals and percussion of 'Day For Night' pushing to the front of the soundstage. This helped highlight detail, and gave the sound a crisp edge. Unfortunately, bass didn't have quite enough extension to realise this track's full driving, rhythmic potential, producing a performance that was more cerebral than visceral.

Moving on to The Cranberries found a slightly better balanced presentation, with the clarity of the treble helping to separate individual instruments in this thick, heavy mix. The soundstage was smaller than normal though, and the MS25is' lack of bass extension reduced the music's drive and power.

Things were looking up on John Lee Hooker's Boom, Boom CD. Here, while bass lines didn't have full, grinding power, the Mordaunt-Shorts did a good job of conjuring up the impression of extension, with bass guitar and drum kit helping to pump the proceedings along. The

flow of the music relayed by these 'speakers also made for enjoyable listening.

Vivaldi's Four Seasons brought the MS25is' lack of weight in the lower registers to the fore again. While the tweeter's smoothness helped the period violins to stay acidic without becoming brash, cellos lost some of their substance to the dry bass. Detail was good though, as evinced by Simon Standage's fiery bowing in the first movement. Switching to Magnificat confirmed the MS25is' treble purity, the voices emerging into the room impressively free from any sibilance or roughness.

Dominic Says

The 25is sounded a little small scale to me, even against some of the standmounters in this group. This applies to the B&Ws especially, which seemed to go deeper allied with greater power behind individual notes. But then they're very politely balanced without the upper bass punch and forward treble of some. Bass is certainly on the dry side, and not especially powerful. They did play deep bass lines well, but need to be close to a rear wall in a smallish room for best balance.

Treble quality was up with the best though, the metal dome tweeter being sweet and delicately detailed. It created a good sense of acoustic space, but ultimately the overall sound stage was restricted. Imaging was reasonable, placing performers well enough. Vocals were captured well by the MS25is, which apart from a slight plasticky cone colouration and a hollowness from the box, were smooth and well projected. Their polite, damped sound makes them more suitable to classical music; they're not really expressive enough for up-tempo tunes.

£299.00

Celestion Impact 23

The Impact 23's mid/bass driver, unlike many of the others in this group test, uses a paper cone. This is still one of the best choices of cone material for an affordable loudspeaker, having a high stiffness to weight ratio, which helps give high sensitivity. This 6in. driver is reflex loaded with a large port on the loudspeaker's front baffle. Treble duty is done by a 1in. fabric dome tweeter with a shallow horn to improve sensitivity.

Sound Quality

I got my first aural taste of the Impact 23s playing The Cranberries' album. The opening track, 'Hollywood', blasted out with real conviction and impact (sorry, couldn't resist it!) The mid/bass driver and large flared port were working together to come up with impressive power on drum beats and bass guitar notes. The soundstage spread invitingly wide and deep, allowing the music a tangible presence in the room and drawing me into the performance.

The depth-plumbing synthesiser note that starts off 'Electric Blue' filled the room with bass, demonstrating the weight and scale of the Celestion's lower end. This, in conjunction with the tweeter's clean, smooth treble made for a large, friendly sound with The Cranberries.

Suspecting this was a 'speaker for the blues, I slipped John Lee Hooker's Boom, Boom into the CD's drawer. The verve and atmosphere of the title track almost had me believing I was tucked away in a dark, smokey corner of a dingy, bourbon-soaked bar watching the great man himself at work. 'Bad Like Jesse James' with its menacing, gravelly vocals had me looking over my shoulder for the man in black who was going to fit my concrete shoes and

take me swimming. I had been a little worried that the 23s and the slow, plodding rhythm of 'Trick Bag (Shoppin' For My Tombstone)' wouldn't get on well together, but instead of dragging or slurring, the Celestions strode on through this song, capturing its relentless drive.

Their handling of the Four Seasons was pleasantly smooth and even-handed, with violins and cellos properly proportioned within the soundstage. However, tonally the performance wasn't on quite the same level - violins were a touch processed and sweet, and separation between violins, violas and cellos blurred at times. The 23s preserved the movement of the music, though, with the easy flow of individual notes.

Dominic Says

Celestion's Impact 23s are a very well balanced design, having abilities that make them suitable for a wide range of musical styles. With clear and well extended treble and deep, tight bass they create the impression of a true full range sound. Midrange is smooth, focused and tonally pure thanks to the paper cone used. It has been carefully used too, with little evidence of roughness or break-up. It projects well, giving an out of the box presentation without becoming hard.

At higher levels it is occasionally possible to detect a little upper bass boxiness, but it's not especially offensive even then. Where the Celestions, alongside the B&W DM 602s, really scored for me though was the level of excitement and energy they bring to music. There's plenty of detail and speed present making them lively and engaging to listen to. Musical and enjoyable.





With the 633 Profile Plus Tannoy have opted for the Infinite Baffle approach, unlike the bulk of the loudspeakers in this group test which are reflex loaded. Sitting in the front baffle of the trapezoidal cabinet is a pair of 160mm drivers (one working over midrange and bass while the other deals solely with the lower frequencies) flanking a gold anodised aluminum dome tweeter. Where the 'Plus' differs from its predecessor is in its re-optimised crossover, improved internal bracing and solid MDF top.

Sound Quality

Violins were smooth, detailed and attractively acidic in keeping with their period construction with Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*. The melody flowed easily from one note to the next, whether it was building to a crescendo or weaving delicately above the other instruments. Cellos drove the piece along, and while they might not quite have had their full, natural resonance, the Tannoys were still clear and controlled enough to stop them becoming blurred. The *Pastoral Dance* gave the 633s a chance to show what they could do with rhythm, and they obliged by combining the filting violins and purposeful cellos to produce a third movement full of pace and vitality.

Stepping off the middle of the musical road and heading out into badlands, I set off through Moloko's irresistible *Do You Like My Tight Sweater*. The slight bloom that had appeared on the cellos of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* added weight to this album's pungent bass lines - 'Fun For Me' nearly had me up and bouncing around the room. Vocals were impressively clear, set firmly at the centre front of the soundstage, unfazed by synthesisers and drum machines erupting around them.

Tori Amos' vocals were also well focused throughout *Boys For Pele*, sounding clean and powerful

on 'Talulah', where the Tannoys' bass passed the test of this track's conga beats by maintaining its control and poise. The slight bass bloom did, however, make its presence felt on Tori Amos' singing, which was a little 'dark' tonally. The sparser 'Putting The Damage On' had crisp, weighty piano set in a broad soundstage in front of a sombre brass section, the melancholy resignation of this song coming unalloyed through the Tannoys.

The floor boards in our listening room were looking a bit flaccid, so I gave them a work-out with The Cranberries' *To The Faithful Departed* album. Drums pounded out of the 633s, setting me and the floor boards in motion. Cymbals crashed alongside Dolores' heartfelt, high-volume vocals on 'Hollywood', while those on 'I'm Still Remembering' shimmered and decayed in a more gentle fashion.

Dominic Says

Tannoy's Profile Plus 633s have a powerful, full sound that gives a fine impression of scale. There's a touch of thickness to their upper bass, giving them a rich warmth. This is great for reggae, but not quite so subtle with cellos which tended to bloom a little. Coupled with a plasticky quality, this doesn't make bass the most neutral sounding, but it does suit rock/dance better, with a solid, characterful punch.

As with the 631LEs we reviewed recently, Tannoy seem to have cleaned up their midrange performance to good effect. They are clearer and project better than previous guises, with greater purity to vocals and strings. Sitting flat on the floor, there was little impression of real treble extension. Tilting them backwards on their spikes a touch brought about a far more spacious and atmospheric sound. In this position things gelled much better. Fine imaging within a large sound stage gives the 633 an impressive presentation.

£239.99

Eltax symphony 6

Another loudspeaker with a flared port, the Eltax Symphony 6 uses a specially coated 6.5in. driver with an inverted dust cap (giving a smoother cone profile) to cover the bass and midrange. Treble is handled by the ubiquitous Vifa 19mm dome tweeter, which has been used in more expensive professional as well as domestic designs.

Sound Quality

With Tori Amos' 'Caught A Lite Sneeze' from her Boys For Pele CD, the Symphony 6s put together a tidy performance. This track tests well a loudspeakers' ability to hold together a deep bass line, crystal clear vocals and piano without confusion. Bass guitar stayed resolutely clear of the drum machine, while piano and harpsichord tip-toed behind the crisp vocals.

Soundstaging was good, depth helped by the strong lower treble which highlighted vocals and strings. This lightened the tone of pianos and vocals, but didn't contain any distracting roughness.

Next stop was the unique musical world of Moloko's Do You Like My Tight Sweater? 'I Can't Help Myself' had all its customary bootie-boogie rhythm, synthetic bass pumping and swaying addictively through the 6s. While the bass was solid and focused, vocals, brightened by that emphasis, could occasionally seem a little insubstantial. The slower tempo of 'Lotus Eaters' caused the Eltaxes no problems - they even had a stab at reproducing the deep bass the song is built on. Though they didn't have sufficient extension to do this justice, they impressed by not producing sludgy lower bass.

Moving on to the Archiv production of Vivaldi's Four Seasons found the acidic tone of the period violins brighter than was strictly accurate.

However, the lack of roughness in the midrange and treble meant that the 6s never overstepped the line by sounding brash or harsh. Confirmation of this was provided by the soaring voices of Magnificat, Vol. 1, where separation and smoothness worked together to produce a very listenable result.

The bass player's manic string-plucking on The Cranberries' 'Forever Yellow Skies' (from their To The Faithful Departed CD) was every bit as manic as it should have been, its tautness and speed giving the song its headlong, frenetic rhythm. Even with the 'wall of sound' of this song, the 6s remained lucid, spreading clearly delineated images across a nicely proportioned soundstage.

Dominic Says

Straight away the Eltax Symphony 6s hit you with strong, clear treble. They are definitely a touch bright, but firing straight down the room they balance well enough. Good thing is though that the treble is of a very high standard, clearly one of the best in the group with fine extension and crisp detail. Below this the midrange was too soft by comparison, holding back vocals and strings from taking centre stage with quite the authority they should have.

Image focus wasn't especially good, with a rather dispersed picture of the performers' locations being presented. Their sound stage was spacious though, with a good impression of depth. Bass was probably the deepest in the test, but slow with it. It lingered too long, wallowing rather than striking with impact in response to incoming transients. The Symphony 6s do have some fine qualities, but overall they sounded a bit messy and in-cohesive.



LOUDSPEAKERS CONCLUSION

One factor which emerged during the course of listening to these 'speakers was that, as with last month's amplifiers, a relatively small sum of money can go a long way sonically. None of these 'speakers disgraced themselves; while some were good, others were excellent.

THE FLOORSTANDERS

The metal dome tweeter of Mordaunt-Short's MS25is stood out as one of the best in this group test, producing treble with a smooth sweetness that the other metal domes missed out on. While the treble impressed, the dry bass and slightly plasticky midrange gave this loudspeaker a rather small scale, polite balance that had it favouring classical music over rock.

On a level with the MS25is were Eltax's Symphony 6s, which although bright, scored highly in the treble stakes through their clarity and power. By comparison, the midrange was rather soft and recessed, vocals especially sitting at the back of the soundstage. Bass was extended, but what it gained in depth it lost in speed, sounding slow next to the Celestions.

Taking second place were Tannoy's 633 Profile Pluses. Their weighty bass and rhythmic delivery worked well on Dance music like Moloko, but was less satisfying with Classical which had a plasticky feel to it. While images were firmly set in a large soundstage, tonally the Tannoys missed the mark, Tori Amos' vocals sounding uncharacteristically 'dark' with upper bass playing too large a part in the proceedings.

Celestion's Impact 23s emerged victorious amongst the floorstanders. They did a sterling job on bass lines, combining depth with speed and control, helping to fill out a large soundstage. Midrange tone and projection also impressed, vocals pushing free from the 'speaker cabinets with ease. The tweeter might not have been the sweetest in the group, but it never stood in the way of the Celestions' ability to make music exciting and involving, capturing and communicating its emotional essence.

THE STANDMOUNTERS

Rogers' LS33s demonstrated detailing and clarity, both aided by a forward midrange whose only failing was a roughness that made itself felt on

vocals. Upper bass carried a rhythm well, and while lower bass had good extension, it didn't plumb the depths to the same extent or with the same control that the DM602s displayed.

The other two floorstanders in this test, B&W's DM602 and Heybrook's HBI S3 both do things which few other 'speakers at the price do, although their strengths lie in different areas. For those who look for tonal colour in their music, the Heybrooks are far and away the best. Imaging was also among the best, with well detailed instruments securely located in a transparent, if slightly shallow, soundstage. Bass, although articulate, was dry and slightly boxy, predisposing the HBI S3s to use in a small room.

Where the Heybrooks were weakest in the bass, the DM602s (supplied by Musical Images, Tel: 0181 958 8777) excelled with a taut, hard-hitting and extended lower response whose dynamics set them apart from the rest. Midrange was similarly dynamic and uncoloured, although the metal dome tweeter bleached the treble, giving it a slightly cold, one-note quality. As an all-round performer that provides great bass suited to a medium size room, the DM602s are an audition must ●

Heybrook
Clemo Road,
Liskeard,
Cornwall
PL14 3NH
Tel: 01579 342866

Mordaunt-Short
3 Ricgeway,
Havant,
Hants.
PO9 1JS
Tel: 01705 407722

Eltax
4 Warren Yard,
Warren Farm,
Wolverton Mill,
Milton Keynes MK12 5NW
Tel: 01908 226464

Tannoy
Rosehall Ind. Est.,
Coatbridge,
Strathclyde
ML5 4TF
Tel: 01236 420199

B&W
Marlborough Road,
Churchill Ind. Est.,
Lancing,
W. Sussex BN15 8TR
Tel: 01903 750750

Celestion
Foxhall Road,
Ipswich
IP3 8JP
Tel: 01473 322223

Rogers
310 Commonsie East,
Mitcham,
Surrey
CR4 1HX
Tel: 0181 640 2172

**Don't miss next
month's system
finalé in the
December issue**

GETTING

THE BALANCE RIGHT

David Price finds a fine blend of talents
in AMC's 3025 budget integrated amp.

Sitting here, looking at AMC's 3025 budget amplifier, I'm getting the strangest sensation of déjà-vu. Even though the American-based AMC brand has only recently reappeared on these shores after an absence of several years (remember their hybrid valve/tube amplifier?), I'm sure I've seen this amp before. Well, I have and I haven't, if you see what I mean. On a superficial level, it shares an identical fascia layout, bar the control knobs, to Richer Sounds' Cambridge Audio A1, but when

you look round the back, and handling it in our (that's NAD's) workshop, it springs to mind.

AMC's design and international marketing office is based in America, under the name of Melronics Corp. The product itself though is cost-effectively built in the far East, much like NAD's co-operations. With styling and some dust-fighting at its core, it came as no surprise to find that AMC's electronics are built in the same factory as some of NAD's. With its sparse, dark grey fascia, paired to the bone controls and a couple of familiar

slide switches on the back panel, there is almost a family resemblance. First, given by the MMTC selector, more unusual on an entry-level model, and secondly the speaker impedance selector, switchable between a nominal four- and eight ohms for optimum load matching. Only a dials-free surface on NAD's 3020B! And like said Budget tapering, the 3025 enjoys unusually solid construction. Its dimensions aren't dissimilar to Aura's VA-80SE-X, yet it weighs in at a very respectable six kilos - not bad for a little chippy Warren.

Aside from the silly 'H.O.M.E. Automation' (you what?) legend on the AMC's fascia, all is neat and functional. The controls (double-ganged volume, input selection, tape monitor, bass, treble,





(mute/normal/source direct switch, and power) have a nice action and the amp doesn't feel like the budget design it really is. And thankfully the feeling that you're getting a lot for your money continues when you power it up.

Driving a pair of Sony SS86Es from a Marantz CD63SE, I couldn't believe the music coming from U96's 'Night in Motion' CD. I'd expected the usual weedy, shrill sound of a cheapo tranny amp straining as it tried to handle the track's low frequency action, but my ears were spared the ordeal. The AMC sounded big and bubbly with great tracts of bass pumping out in a relaxed but musical manner - almost as if someone had sneakily plugged in a REL subwoofer without telling me. Indeed, this was all eerily reminiscent of - yes, you've guessed it - the old NAD 3020.

After this pleasant surprise I gave the AMC some welly, a challenge which it met with an unexpectedly deep, wide soundstage imaging behind the line of the speakers. It showed bags of confidence too, keeping a firm grip on rhythms and sounding far less frigid than many other manufacturers' budget wares. I was impressed - big bass with good timing is a rare combination at any price. With Herbie Hancock's 'The

Prisoner' CD, it soon became obvious that the 3025 was more euphonic than it was detailed. It missed some of the recording's low-level atmospheric information, painting the main players with big, bold brush strokes rather than forensic detail.

For me, this amplifier's greatest strength was its rich palette of tonal colours which invested everything it played with a warm, autumnal glow. It wasn't quite in Quad II territory, but even cold, steely digital recordings came across with surprisingly little greyness, while old analogue waxings positively glowed. This warmth and colour was most obvious at the frequency extremes, particularly nice in the treble which gave a smooth, sumptuous feel to Herbie's hi-hats - safe enough even for the cheapo metal dome tweeters it's likely to be partnered with.

The 3025's phono stage wasn't half bad either - certainly no worse than that of a Pioneer A400X I had on hand. It was quite clean and clear, but the MC input was pushing things a bit - I got far better results with my Audio Technica OC9 through Ortofon T5 transformers going into the MM stage. Full marks for trying, but you can't help thinking the moving coil stage was designed with the marketing department in mind rather than the record collector.

As the volume control continued its clockwise journey, the little AMC began

to reveal its budget status a little more. Isaac Hayes' 'Life's Mood' sounded a little asthmatic with the volume much past two o'clock. It wasn't quite able to cope with some of the track's swingeing dynamics at lower levels either, tending to sit on peaks a little more than it should have. Imaging within its capacious soundstage wasn't as accurate as the Pioneer either, the AMC sacrificing precision for sheer size. The little amp's other failing was its treble quality, which although sweet could sometimes be a touch too woolly for some tastes.

All in all, the AMC 3025 survived my audio demolition derby surprisingly well. It's no match for the likes of Aura's VA80SE-x but you wouldn't expect it to be at £100 less. It simply makes a very good case for itself in its entry-level market niche ●

AMC 3025

£149.95

Home Entertainment Club UK
St. Giles House,
Narcot Lane,
Chalfont St. Giles,
Bucks HP8 4EU
Tel: 01494 874366

WORLD VERDICT



A lot for very little money - sweet sound and good build make the AMC 3025 a great starter amp.

Measured Performance
see PI 03

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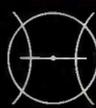
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Materialists should start forming a queue for a pair of Technics' new four way SB-M1000 loudspeakers right now. Considering the ingredients that go into these 'speakers' - a tweeter, upper as well as lower midrange drivers, four bass units along with their associated passive radiators and very heavily built cabinets - they are about as close as you'll get to a hi-fi give-away at £1499.95.

One of the novel features of the SB-M1000s is a 'Super Graphite' tweeter, made from a pressed, heat-treated polyimide film, which Technics claim runs all the way up to 80kHz (whereas most are already falling by 20kHz). Theoretically at least, this tweeter should produce very little distortion in the audible range, giving a cleaner, purer treble quality.

Once they had been manhandled into position, I settled back to the dulcet tones of Tori Amos and her Boys For Pele CD through our in-house Audiolab/Pink Triangle system. Vocals were clean and powerfully projected, weaving in and out of the suitably spiky harpsichord melody. Giving the bass drivers and passive radiators a chance to stretch their surrounds was 'Talulah', its huge conga beats rolling out into the room accompanied by snare drum and bass guitar. That wide-band tweeter certainly did its job as far as clarity and detail were concerned in the upper registers of vocals and percussion, which shared the same crisp insight.

Simpler still than Tori Amos' mix of vocals and piano was the 16th and 17th century polyphony of Magnificat: Volume 1, a good test of a 'speaker's ability to put together a convincing tonal performance. The Technics had little difficulty telling one voice from another here with their clarity. But a little more tonal colour and transparency would have made the individual voices more obvious still and given the performance a greater sense of involvement.

Technical Rendition



Technics' SB-M1000 loudspeakers make a technical assault on loudspeaker design with Dual Dynamic Drive bass and a Super Graphite tweeter. Is it music though, asks Jon Marks!

Some of the low level subtleties that add up to form the acoustic the music was recorded in also seemed to escape the 1000s. It left the choir in a slightly narrower and shallower soundstage than Heybrook's Sextets produce, for example.

John Lee Hooker's foot tapping on 'I'm Bad Like Jessie James' punctuated the track clearly, while his voice growled above. His vocal chords weren't quite as gravelly and menacing as they should be, but were still suitably fear-inducing. 'Trick Bag' possessed good weight in the bass, but like the previous track didn't quite have enough rhythmic drive or emotion.

The 1000s seemed to be more comfortable with Carl Orff's Carmina Burana and the flow of Vivaldi's Four Seasons. That familiar treble clarity unravelled the complexity of the string section to make individual instruments easily separable. Lower down the scale in the midrange, violins and violas sounded smooth in spite of an emphasis which gave them slightly too large a presence.

With a clean overall sound and impressive treble clarity that provides good separation, especially on vocals and strings, the SB-M1000s have their strengths. You get a lot of 'speaker for your money too, capable of driving a large room with ease. But ultimately I found them musically uninspiring ●

Technics SB-M1000 £1499.95

Technics
Willoughby Road,
Bracknell,
Berks. RG12 4PF
Tel: 01344 862444

WORLD VERDICT

Materially, excellent value. Sound clean and extended, but can lack involvement.

Measured Performance
see P103

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EVOLUTION THEORY



Dominic Todd studies the evolution of Marantz's CD-63mkII into the new £270 CD-67.

Evolution is the key to Marantz's latest CD player. You can't blame Marantz for being cautious; the CD-63 and CD-63mkII forerunners were both highly regarded. More importantly, on a commercial basis both were regularly top sellers in the budget/mid-price player market. So it's not surprising to see the CD-67 looking almost identical to the CD-63 before it. The only changes are slightly re-styled buttons and a wider front panel.

Under the lid the cautious approach is good news. The CD-63mkII was always one of the best sounding CD players at the price, so using its main PCB as a starting point for the CD-67 was a wise move. Improvements focus around a new Philips CD7 decoder, new servo and driver chips, and an improved transformer core.

Paul Weller showed off a Marantz hallmark of fine vocal projection, and each pluck of the guitar strings had fine definition and texture. Detail retrieval was generally better than average for the price too. While bass response was

good, it lacked a little control right at the bottom end. More expensive machines such as the NAD 514 or Marantz's own CD-63SE show how bass can be both deep and taut, but at the CD-67's price a compromise is inevitable. At the other frequency extreme, the treble proved smooth, but occasionally relentless, especially with brighter sounding ancillaries.

Another Marantz strength, that of vibrant brass portrayal, was highlighted by Van Morrison. Again, the main vocals were thrust clear of the backing mix and possessed rich tonal colour and body. While the CD-67 was slightly rough around the edges, it successfully communicated the spirit of the music and proved an involving listen.

Lifeforms, by The Future Sound of London, provided no shortage of bass. The Marantz captured the depth of sound, although the lowest frequencies once again provoked a slight softness. Ambient detail was excellent though, and the '67 had no problem in supplying a suitably silent backdrop for the

subtlety of musical effects. What makes the Marantz stand out from other machines at this price is that it succeeds in building real tension into the music through revealing delicate changes in tempo and volume.

Classical music isn't traditionally a great Marantz forte, and here the CD-67 showed its preference for Rock, Pop, Jazz and Dance. With Handel's Concerti grossi Op. 3, tension and emotion were present, but at the expense of clarity. Violins sounded slightly gritty, and there was some muddling of sound on crescendos. Although the sound was vibrant and lively, it lacked the sublime smoothness of competing Rotel and Sony machines.

Marantz have done well to leave the original CD-63mkII largely alone. The CD-67 improves on its strengths whilst managing to lose none of the original's verve and vitality. It has accurate instrumental timbre, good vocal presence, a fine sound stage and a generally seamless and unmechanical way of going about its business.

Its competition comes in the form of the NAD 512, Sony CDP 900 and Cambridge CD6 amongst others. But for the price, the CD-67 should be near the top of anyone's shortlist as a fine, all-around good egg.

Marantz CD-67 £269.90

Marantz
Padbury Oaks,
575-583 Bath Road,
Longfield,
Middx. UB7 0EH
Tel: 01753 680868

WORLD VERDICT

The CD-67 builds on the strengths of the CD-63mkII. Fine vocal projection, smooth treble and deep bass, if not that tight.

Measured Performance
see P103



MADE IN JAPAN

David Price looks at Japan's exciting hi-fi scene.

If there's such a thing as hi-fi heaven, Japan is it. Such is the size and dynamism of the country that the hi-fi scene stays buoyant regardless of changing fashions, economic tides or new fads in other areas of consumer electronics. It boasts a fiercely competitive retail sector with plenty of discounting, and a constant stream of new products and technological innovations as the big manufacturers scabble to outdo each other. Together with the high disposable income of the average Japanese hi-fi buyer, thanks to low income and purchase taxes and bi-annual company bonuses, you've got the world's best audio marketplace.

JAPAN'S HI-FI WORLD

The Japanese market is a law unto itself, with buyers uniquely receptive to new ideas and hyper-sensitive to fashion trends. Consumer snobbery is rife, with 'lifestyle' ingrained into every transistor of every consumer electronics product. Brand awareness isn't so much high as obsessive. Exotic foreign names from Meridian to Magneplanar speak for themselves, offering style and heritage by the bucketful. But not to be outdone, less prestigious Japanese companies have been known to indulge in a bit of image making, giving themselves foreign-sounding monikers in a bid for more status - top

Nakamichis become 'Dragons', TEACs 'Esoterics' and Pioneers 'Exclusive'. It's an old trick, but it works, just ask Lexus.

Badge engineering aside, Japanese high end has finally come of age, routinely giving expensive foreign imports a hard time in the sound quality stakes in magazine reviews. Still, one can't help thinking that aesthetics still weigh a little too high in the designers' priorities. The top products from the big names are presently looking back to the huge seventies behemoths for styling cues. High end Japanese amps are needlessly overgrown, conspicuous in their compulsory champagne-gold

brushed aluminium. For showroom purposes as much as anything, vast quantities of expensive components are laid out inside neater than a spread of top sushi. Product brochures are packed with inside shots of circuit boards brimming with exclusive transformers, custom capacitors, copper-plated chassis and Oxygen-Free Copper wires. Tweak fever is rife in Japan, for appearance's sake if nothing else.

THE GREAT DEBATE

In Japan the great digital versus analogue, CD versus LP, new versus old (and any combination thereof) debate continues in earnest, but with a unique twist. Japan was the first major market to wholeheartedly embrace the digital disc, but its innate diversity also meant it was the first to go 'retro-crazy'. In the late eighties, while major retail outlets were shifting vast quantities of silver disc players, specialist importers were buying Garrard 301s at car boot sale prices in Europe, only to sell them on to heritage-hungry vinyl nuts in Japan for upwards of £1000. There's no one universal format - CD is everywhere, but vinyl is mushrooming in popularity, and back in full view in all the big music software stores at last.

Another supposed blast from the

past has come back to haunt the Japanese too. Not for many years has the so-called 'vacuum power tube' been so much in the ascendant. Of course, hardened Japanese audionuts will tell you that valves have always reigned supreme - long after their occidental brethren were using stacks of tranny muscle amps - but 'tubes' are infiltrating the mass market with a vengeance again. Quite why they're back with such a bang is anyone's guess, but their style cachet must surely play a part, and there's also the fact that they work nicely with Japan's favourite speakers - enormous horn-loaded monsters. Still, as far as the big Japanese manufacturers are concerned the transistor reigns supreme - it is, after all, the totem of the country's industrial revolution.

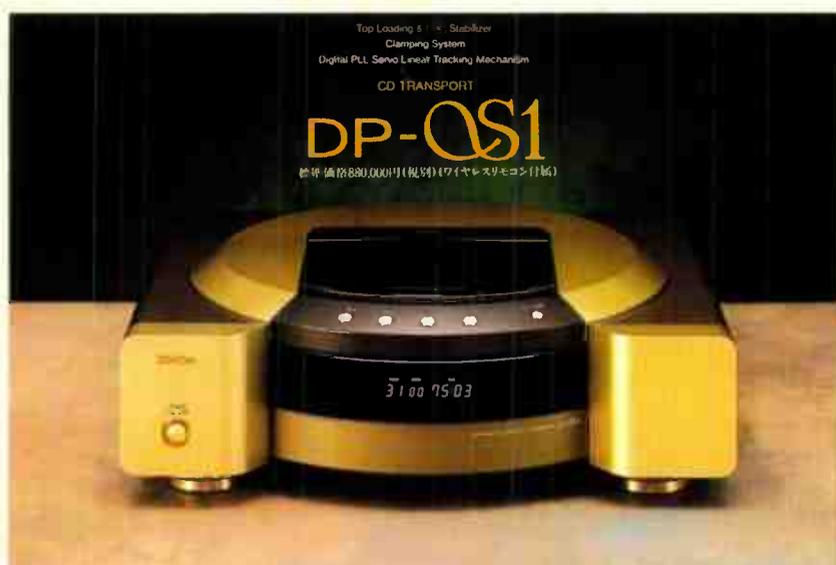
Another recurring theme in Japanese audio is the sense of technology-for-its-own-sake. While British speaker cones rarely strayed beyond doped paper 'til quite recently, the Japanese were routinely using exotic carbon fibre and beryllium drivers over two decades ago. At the same time, while the crude output stages of early British transistor amps were popping country-wide, Japanese engineers embraced MOSFETs and V-FETs in a bid for technological - if not sonic - supremacy. Nowadays, CD is the obvious candidate for technophilia, with

designers stuffing their products with any material or technology impressive enough to invent an acronym for. Elaborate metal diecast transport mechanisms and kilograms of copper plating are compulsory fitments to any silver disc spinner wanting to be noticed in the showroom, just as the heaviest of platters, the most accurate of servos, and the most exotic of plinth materials are de rigueur on top turntables.

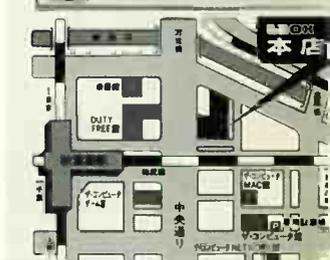
BUYING HI-FI IN JAPAN

Ask many Japanese what annoys them most about Japan and the chances are they'll bemoan the high price of imported foreign goods. Despite the government's cursory attempts to open up the markets, the feeling remains that Japan isn't terribly friendly to imports. Whether it's VW cars, New Zealand butter or Chanel perfume, imports aren't so much scarce as prohibitively expensive. It's the same with hi-fi too. Fancy a nice little budget amp, a £350 Aura VA100, perhaps? That'll be

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nearly a thousand pounds please. That's as good a reason as any why foreign hi-fi is seen as exclusive, and in turn, the thing to have. Fortunately for British hi-fi, its reputation for being sonically second-to-none makes the silly prices asked for it slightly more bearable. Here are some numbers to compare:

| MODEL | UK | JAPAN |
|--------------------|-------|-------|
| Aura VA100 | £350 | £970 |
| Marantz PM44SE | £200 | £225 |
| Marantz CD16 | £1400 | £1000 |
| Nakamichi DR1 | £1000 | £700 |
| NAD 302 | £200 | £400 |
| SME Series V | £1300 | £1700 |
| Sony TCD7 | £550 | £445 |
| TEAC V8030S | £650 | £580 |
| Unison Simply Four | £1495 | £1485 |

A TOKYO DEALER VISIT

As with any of the world's major cities, Japan's sprawling capital enjoys a number of small independent dealers much like our own. Selling expensive, mostly imported kit, they cater for specialist customers. Unique to Japan though is the number of megastores which offer serious competition to the specialists. Chain stores like Sakuraya, Jonandenki and Yodobashi Camera are all over Tokyo, and can not only get just about any hi-fi separate you could ever want, but also offer ten to twenty percent discount, after a few minutes of

heated negotiation and waving of calculators.

A trip to Akihabara, Tokyo's 'Electric Town' (as the tube station sign announces) reveals a host of British hi-fi. Enter Laox, a Nipponese seven storey skyscraper version of Dixons: the first two floors sell rice cookers, vacuum cleaners, air conditioners, then come TVs, videos and phones on floors three and four. Five is crammed with personal stereos and midi systems, while six sells quality Japanese separates. Here you can buy some beautiful kit at keen prices - Denon's giant alpha processing DCD-S1 CD player for £3000, Audio Technica's exotic ART1 cartridge for £300, and Sony's super sounding DAT2000ES DAT player for £1200.

But what lies on floor seven? Ascend the escalator to hi-fi heaven to find discrete little Linn and Naim black boxes, monster Tannoys and JBLs, Quad ELS63s, giant Krells, Audio Researchs, SME tonearms. Walk around this vast exotic emporium and you'll find new and vintage gear sitting together, displaying the same telephone number price tags - and with 123 million people in Japan, they have long telephone numbers. Then there's the listening room, like all Japanese listening rooms it's small but perfectly formed. Inside Laox's hi-fi inner sanctum, nothing less than Linn and Roksan turntables, Meridian and Aura

amplification and Epos speakers can be found - some things, it seems, are the same wherever you go! The salesmen are impeccably polite and courteous - one of the joys of this country - and despite their typically Japanese reluctance to opine on the relative merits of the products they sell, they seem extremely knowledgeable. When pressed, they'll generally say they prefer the expensive foreign imports to Japanese gear, but with those mark ups, they would, wouldn't they?

WHAT'S IN THE NAME

What those familiar Japanese words really mean.

| | |
|--------------|-------------------------------|
| 'Akai' |red |
| 'Denon' |electric sound |
| 'Hitachi' |sun |
| 'Kegon' |a famous waterfall |
| 'Ishiwata' |a stone across (a river) |
| 'Kiseki' |miracle |
| 'Matsushita' |under pine |
| 'Mitsubishi' |diamond-shaped |
| 'Nakamichi' |inside road |
| 'Ongaku' |music |
| 'Onkyo' |sound echo |
| 'Oto' |sound, noise |
| 'Saisho' |first |
| 'Sansui' |mountain and water |
| 'Seiko' |elaborate |
| 'Soro' |solo, single |
| 'Toshiba' |east lawn |

MADE IN JAPAN - The rise and rise of Japanese consumer electronics.

After the Second World War, Japan's industrial base lay in ruins, but the Allied administration worked with her major companies to get things going again. First came cheap, shoddily made electrical goods, but many companies, in awe of the quality of imported western equivalents, set about improving their products. Using the kaizan ('small steps') system of quality control, they steadily upped the quality until Japanese products began to get a reputation for longevity and durability. By the early

sixties, Japanese manufacturers were beginning to innovate, with companies like Sony using the new transistor technology to miniaturise radios and tape recorders. Compact stereo separates followed, which was just what the world was waiting for, and by the 1970s Japanese hi-fi was wiping out its foreign competition.

Digital audio gave fresh impetus to a Japanese industry tooled up for electronics mass production and was unstoppable until the late 1980s, with only expensive, high end foreign

products getting a look in. The end of the 'bubble economy' (so called because of its dramatic rate of ascent) in 1990 and an overvalued Yen was less fortuitous, leading to some large manufacturers slashing back R&D budgets and transferring production abroad. But things again look good for the Japanese hi-fi industry, with an increasingly diverse product range, a number of new formats in the offing, growing exports and the domestic economy on the rise once again.

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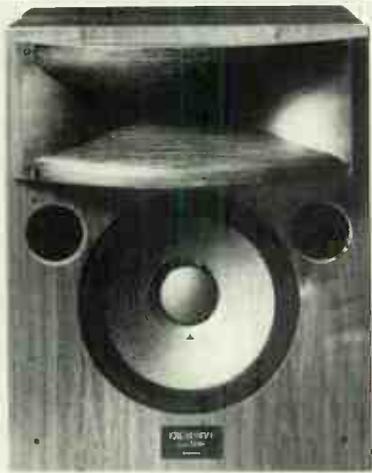
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設計者からのメッセージ。

「DRAGON」の名は、Nakamichiにとって特別な意味を帯びています。ビジネスを拡大し技術上のブレークスルーを遂げ、それを達成したとき初めて世に送り出したモデルにのみ与えられた称号がありました。CD時代「DRAGON」の名を復讐者から——それは思えばNakamichiのエンジニアにとって、困難なプロジェクトでした。技術チームは、振動、電磁誘導、高周波ノイズなどのあらゆる外乱を徹底的に排除するとし、完全密閉のオール樹脂筐体や、オイルダンパーによる多層のフローティング方式など、基本の根本から完璧を期して幾論的に進みました。DRAGON-CDのやや式作でユニークな外観は、外見をなすための名物のカタチであり、4重に厚み重ねられたピアノの超硬鋼の超精密加工されたサイドブロック、超精密加工の削り出しの基板など、あらゆる仕上げのメカニズムの塊でもあります。

カセットデッキ、クォンテプルの二つの「DRAGON」を設計したNakamichiの天才的な設計が、外見の美しさを取り去るまでも、音質が切れるようにまで磨き上げられた音が聞こえてきました。音楽は究極のびびり感のない音質を求めます。それは、音質を究極のびびり感のない音質を求めます。それは、音質を究極のびびり感のない音質を求めます。それは、音質を究極のびびり感のない音質を求めます。

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Nakamichi's high end Dragon brand name blesses this £5000 CD player, which looks scarier even than its mythical namesake. If it's not enough, you could always specify a matching DAC and the legendary cassette deck for real front end fireworks.

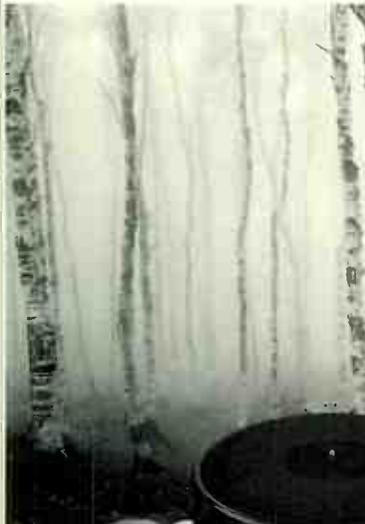
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〔未体験サウンド〕

FR-XLIはこのジャンルをいかに明確に定義しているかという点には、少なからず驚かされます。1969年、日本でC.E.C.を初めて開発した高崎浩二の天才的な発想が、同時にアナログオーディオの空間に貢献した高品質な技術の一つです。現在、非常に革新的なアナログ技術の結晶として、C.E.C.は、文字通り技術の結晶したベストインクラスのターンテーブルが誕生しました。その名もFR-XLI。それは、当時の常識を打ち破り、クォンテプルのシャフト、アームベース各部に、現在でも最高級の純銅特性を持つNFDとクォーツを使用し、これをフローティングするシステムには、スプリングと磁石を組み合わせて構成された、あらゆる方向からの振動をも吸収・遮断する独自の3次元方向ダンパーを採用し、ドライブは左右支持機構が備わって、内・外側に出る音の振動を完全に遮断します。この外音は見えませんが、極めて高品質な音質と、その音質の世界は、いかに音楽再生の型、あはれも「音」に忠実な「音」の結晶の結晶です。



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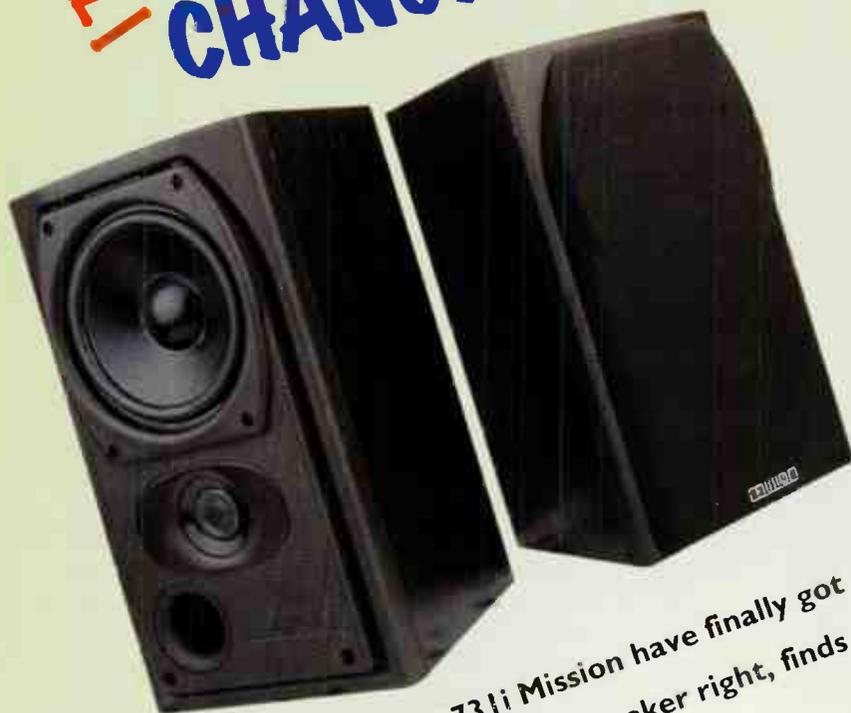
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IT'S TIME FOR A CHANGE

review



With the new 731i Mission have finally got their entry level loudspeaker right, finds David Price.

Why did KEF's pretty little Coda 7 wipe the floor with the competition in the budget loudspeaker market last year? Well, one reason is that it's a great little speaker. Another surely has to do with the weakness of the competition. It was launched at a time when Mission was in the process of replacing what was then the best budget mini-monitor of all time, the 760i. Unfortunately, its successor, the 731, didn't quite have the 760's all-round ability, and left a gap in the market that KEF obligingly plugged. Until now, that is, because Mission are back with a vengeance with the new, improved 731i, doubtless intent on doing unto others what was done to them!

As soon as they're out of their box, you can tell the 731i are going to be special thanks to their taut, cross-braced cabinets which display remarkable solidity for the money. They also boast a number of subtle improvements including the upgraded mid/bass driver first seen on the 731LE tested last autumn, featuring a stronger magnet and an improved cone surround. Unlike the

LE though, they lack the bi-wiring facility - no huge loss at this end of the market - and the fancy internal wiring.

Blu-tacked onto Atacama 24 inch stands and driven by a Pioneer A-400X, they proved at least as good as I remember the LEs. After a couple of days of running in, they were singing away merrily, radiating unholy amounts of bass for such a small speaker. In short, the 731i are little go-go machines, Mission's generic clean, punchy sound shining through. And unlike the old 731s, the 'is seem happier at high volumes, steadfastly refusing to flap their cones against the end stops.

Where the old 731s traded heavily on the boom-tizz factor - that all-important Saturday afternoon showroom appeal - the 731i are an altogether more rounded experience, displaying insight their predecessors lacked. The Beastie Boys' 'Namaste' is a sparse Hammond organ-based instrumental that needs subtlety to work properly, and here the new models shone. Rather than bluffing their way through with the artificial upper-bass peak that many small speakers use to push the song along, the Missions demonstrated control and grip.

My greatest gripe with the original 731s was the treble quality, which lacked the previous 760i's euphonic sweetness. Last year's 731LEs went a long way to assuaging my doubts, with revised internal wiring that gave a much smoother ride. Although the 'is don't enjoy this mod, the improvements lower down seem to have left the high frequencies less constrained and far better integrated, making for a sweet rendition of the looped hi-hats on Stereolab's 'Cybelle's Reverie'.

On olde worlde classic rock like America's 'Ventura Freeway', the 731i were as smooth as a Swiss train. Imaging has always been a Mission forté, and seemed better than ever here, giving a nice out-of-the-box sound when playing the original seventies' vinyl pressing. Indeed it took this rich old recording to highlight the Missions' only real drawback, their lack of tonal colour. The Beatles' sumptuous Abbey Road recordings sounded like the mastering wasn't on sumptuous old valve four tracks, but dull old digital. Oh well, you can't have everything for £130, I suppose.

When the original 731s appeared, I still felt the classic 760is they replaced were the better loudspeaker. But the 731i have reversed the situation, sounding faster, stronger, tighter and more subtle by comparison. At last, they've become musical little beasts that work well regardless of what's thrown at them. A great little speaker able to take on all-comers ●

Mission 731i £130

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WORLD VERDICT

Mission's new babies are a truly worthwhile improvement on the old 731s. Back at the top of the class.

Measured Performance
see P103

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THE HOLE IN THE MIDDLE

This letter should have been written five years ago when Vinyl came up for air one last time with the launch of Linn's Lingo power supply. I am not going to enter the Vinyl vs CD war of words here (suffice to say that I listen to my music on a Linn/Naim/Rega vinyl-playing system), but I would like to raise an issue which, in my nine years of following the hi-fi press on and off, I have never seen mentioned.

I am referring to the humble hole in the middle of my cherished medium, and how its all too frequent misalignment can swamp the gains to be had from a high quality turntable motor supply. Certainly, the platter has to rotate at a constant angular

velocity, regardless of the dynamics of the groove. But the rate at which the stylus follows the modulation depends on its relative linear speed, and this, as anyone with a fundamental physics background will agree, is a function of not only the angular velocity, but also the radius of rotation ($v=2\pi r$).

Some simple calculations illustrate the effects of hole mis-alignment. Assuming a perfect turntable (Ha!) with a platter rotating at a constant angular velocity, a centre hole offset by 1mm (and I have encountered several) will cause the perceived pitch of a sustained note on the outer edge of a 12in. record to vary by 0.7% over half a revolution (approx. 1sec.), which my ears can definitely detect. This is

the best case - at the inside edge where the radius drops to around 65mm, the same 1mm offset will cause the pitch to vary by a truly enormous 1.5%.

I find it hard to believe that the effects of hole mis-alignment have been neglected in the various hi-fi debates over the years, although I'm sure that those involved in making quality pressings, including Linn themselves, ensure that the hole ends up in the correct place; they do after all, expect customers to part with £680 for a Lingo which, as shown, is only half way to solving the speed stability problem.

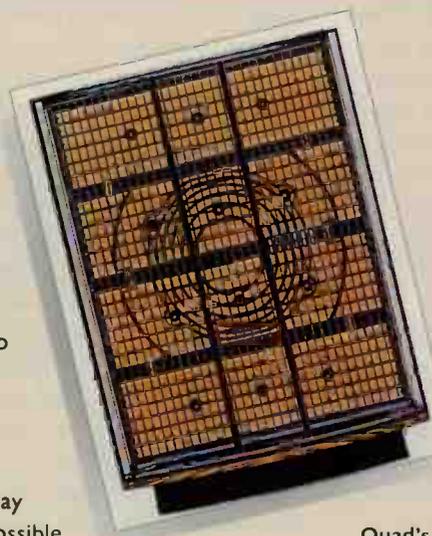
In passing, I would also like to add that, despite my experiences as an electronics engineer in audio and radio-

LETTER OF THE MONTH

ACOUSTIC ANTICS

I should like to raise an issue which relates to Psycho-Acoustics and to which there may not be a right answer.

The ultimate aim one wishes to achieve when setting up an audio system at home (given a large and dedicated listening room with the right acoustics) is to reproduce, or should I say simulate, as closely as possible the sonic effects experienced during a live concert hall performance or the acoustic and ambience of the venue/recording studio.



Quad's ESL-63s are class leading in terms of imagery, capable of producing a wide spread of sound with musicians accurately located.

The best systems I have had the opportunity to listen to fall broadly into two categories. In the first, the sound is projected forward, sometimes even with some exaggeration in an 'in the face' manner. Although the central image is quite strong, you are more aware that the sound is all the same coming from the speakers. The initial impression can be quite staggering, but over time you can experience listening fatigue. In the second system, although the central image is also well located, the sound does not seem to come from the speakers at all, but rather well beyond them in space. The sound is more laid back and appears to come

frequency fields, I have to concede total defeat in my attempts to comprehend how anyone can claim to make directional audio cables. Directional microwave ferrites? Sure. Directional audio transmission lines? What, at frequencies where the skin-depths are a few mm? Surely such a characteristic runs counter to the requirements of AC current flow?

P.S. No, I do not own a Lingo, just a small rat-tail file.
**Peter Walker
Beverley,
East Yorkshire.**

The diameter of the LP centre hole is standardised in British Standard BS1928: 1965 at 0.2885in. (7.33mm) maximum and 0.2850in. (7.24mm) minimum. There's only 3.5thou difference here -

it's a very tight spec. Your 1mm is an error of 40thou. which is considerably different in scale from the tolerancing levels used. An error of 10thou maximum is more usual, according to spindle diameter. An LP such as the one you mention would simply be faulty.

With a rotational speed of 33.3rpm, LP eccentricity produces a low 0.55Hz cyclic frequency change. The ear is not especially upset by this. It results in the slightly mellifluous temporal quality that characterises and 'softens' LP. CD sounds rhythmically tighter than LP because it lacks this low rate change of pitch, but some feel it is also less temporally 'relaxed', shall I say.

The ear is more sensitive to variations from 3Hz-6Hz, especially when not as smoothly sinusoidal as LP eccentricity effects. Providing normal manufacturing standards are maintained, eccentricity isn't a major problem.

Others have thought differently, to their cost. Nakamichi once produced a massive "computing" turntable, the TX-1000, to counteract LP eccentricity. This extraordinary device measures "concentricity



To correct for eccentric centre holes in LPs, Nakamichi came up with the micro-computer controlled TX-1000 turntable.

error" and "shifts the record's axis of rotation to perfectly cancel the error". Unfortunately, Nakamichi failed to consider that all this complexity only minimised one minor technical problem, 0.55Hz

... 44 ▶

from different planes behind the speakers with a wide and deep three-dimensional soundstage with each and every instrument tightly located in space. In the second case the listener is more easily drawn into the music without the latter becoming fatiguing.

How do you explain this difference in sound perception? Is it the equipment, the way it is set-up or the room, or a combination of all three? Psycho-acoustics plays a great part in home music reproduction. Where does the truth lie? At the end of the day personal preference will be the deciding factor,

but although I could be mistaken I do believe the second scenario represents the best choice. After all, fidelity is the name of the game, is it not?

**Alain G. Lefebure
Forest Side,
Mauritius.**

There are a number of factors that explain what you are hearing, and it is well within the scope of a good loudspeaker engineer to design in either of the sound characteristics you describe. We're concerned with two key areas here, the on-axis frequency response, or how the loudspeaker has been

balanced, and its dispersion characteristic. I think the differences you are hearing can be broadly explained in terms of frequency response, assuming that we compare designs that show good integration between drive units in terms of frequency response and phase.

If a loudspeaker has a good phase characteristic, it tends to image well. Quad's ESL-63 is a fine example, with an extremely linear phase response. As the loudspeakers you have heard both appear to image well, they have probably been engineered

so that the drivers are in close phase alignment.

The difference between a forward sound and one that is more laid back is almost certainly due to how the frequency response behaves between 1-5kHz. Many two way designs have a shallow dip around their crossover region, typically 3kHz, which does give a more laid back and warmer sound - Mission's 752s are a good example. Their drivers are tightly in phase though, so they image well. Our own KLS3 is very flat through the crossover

... 44 ▶

wow, that was subjectively innocuous compared to a whole host of other more intrusive phenomena. NK

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WAKING UP THE NEIGHBOURS

I am currently the proud (honestly) owner of a system gradually accumulated over the years as finances allowed. A Rotel 965BX CD (sentimental value - very precious) feeds Naim 32/110 amplification with Rogers LS3/5a 'speakers on Foundation stands (Naim cable). Interconnects are Chord. A Sugden T48 tuner completes the set-up.

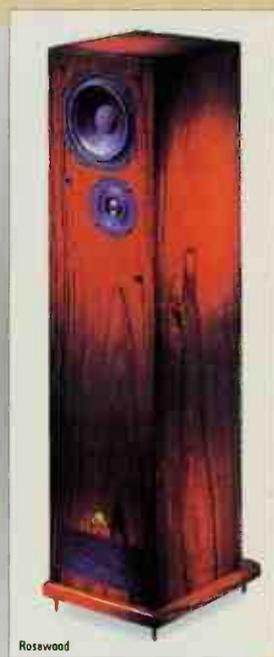
I understand that the Naim/Rogers combination is well thought of. However, I have a problem.

The sound can be breathtaking in terms of

information and imaging (if a tad clinical), but unfortunately requires high volume levels to realise this potential. The sound is large, but sadly, so are the neighbours.

Would a change to more sensitive 'speakers provide a way of obtaining a similar sound at more 'acceptable' (i.e. teeth friendly) levels, or am I doomed to a future of solitary confinement by headphones?

Mission's 753s and Keswick floorstanders have



Rosewood

A change to Castle's Chesters will give you a larger sound at low levels than your LS3/5as.

been suggested. I like the look of Castle's Chesters, but am unsure of their compatibility with the Naims, which I am keen to retain.

I would welcome your advice and observations regarding this dilemma and possible options.

**Bill Ingram
Walsall,
W. Midlands.**

The Naims will drive just about anything, so have no fears on this matter. However, there is the more delicate matter of subjective matching, where taste drifts into the picture, often looming large. Naims are pretty hard 'n' fast, great for grip and speed, if less well endowed in terms of delivering tonal colour.

Your LS3/5as would be a match in terms of adding colour, shall I say (ahem!), but as you have found out, their sensitivity is atrocious, being a throwback to the late 1970s when 'speaker engineers decided that power was cheap and this could be exploited to yield healthy bass from a small cabinet. However, these insensitive 'speakers do seem to die at low levels.

Unfortunately, the human ear also changes its characteristics at low sound pressure levels, losing sensitivity at frequency extremes. I feel you need a sensitive 'speaker with healthy, if not overly emphasised, bass and treble. The Chesters certainly fit this bill - they're great loudspeakers with stunning bass. You might also like to consider the Tannoy D100 (93dB SPL for 1watt) and the super Tannoy 631SEs. Missions are also a good bet for your situation. Do listen first of course, because loudspeakers differ so much. NK

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region, and some people do find it a little forward, but it's accurate and doesn't become hard. Putting in a little midrange lift, centred around 3kHz, will give a harder, more forced sound, as you've heard.

Dispersion is another factor that will affect what you hear from a 'speaker. A wide dispersion loudspeaker will have a more open and spacious sound, reflections from side walls and ceilings creating

an impression of space and acoustic. The more reflected energy, the less frontal energy you hear, so the main source becomes more distant, again creating the illusion of space and atmosphere.

But a narrow dispersion design has its benefits too. Because the reflections depend strongly on the room size and surfaces, their effect is variable. A narrow dispersion loudspeaker

will tend to be more consistent and have a more precise, focused sound, being affected less by reflected energy from the room. Because you are hearing more of the frontal response of the 'speaker, i.e. what the engineer intended, you get a flatter, smoother response that is more accurate.

There are a myriad other factors - I've only touched on a few of the arguments about

loudspeaker design here. I would point you towards a good book for further reading, but there is little available. The Loudspeaker and Headphone Handbook, which is edited by John Borwick, but contains some brilliant chapters from Laurie Fincham, ex-Chief Engineer at KEF, Stan Kelly to name but two, is a fine read, but there's little direct discussion about these areas. DB

SEEKING ENLIGHTENMENT

My hi-fi system consists of a Kenwood DP-X9010 transport, DPA Bigger Bit DAC, Naim 72 pre-amp, 180 power amp and Acoustic Energy AE2A speakers on personalised stands using Naim NAC5 speaker cable. The room is 15ft. x 11.5ft. approximately.

Although I am very pleased with the overall performance of the system, I feel it is probably time to upgrade the front end. I have considered keeping the Kenwood transport which is about four years old but little used, and having the DAC upgraded to an Enlightenment DAC. Alternatively, I could replace the front end with a suitable integrated CD player.

Could you please advise me on the best upgrade for my system within a budget of about £1500. In the longer term, I am considering replacing the 72 with an 82 pre-amp.

**N. J. Balsdon
Combe Down,
Bath.**

The Bigger Bit is a great converter, ahead of most today. Only an Enlightenment could

supercede it, with a presentation that is almost too spectacular to be true. It's a great converter that I heartily recommend. NK



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Try connecting your Enlightenment/Kenwood combination to the 72 with this Chord Cobra interconnect.

HEADING FOR THE HIGH END

May I reinforce the opinions of many of your readers by giving a big thumbs up to vinyl.

I have recently purchased a Linn LPI 2/Ittok LVII/Valhalla with a Goldring 1022GX MM cartridge. The sound I now get through my nine-year-old Mission Cyrus One amp and Linn Index 1 speakers is simply beautiful. All the facets of sound are presented and balanced in a seamless and yet realistic picture. I listen to

a variety of music from Jazz, Soul and Gospel up to Rap, Swing and Hip-Hop. I personally found the deck responded more favourably to the former, leaving my Micromega Stage One CD to handle the more up-to-date stuff.

I chose the Linn and Stage One for many reasons, but both possess an upgrade path without the loss involved when selling on. I now wish to consider a change of amp and speakers, but am unsure of direction. My lounge is 26ft. long by 11ft. wide, i.e. long and narrowish.

I was impressed by the Lumley ST-70, Crimson pre-amp and Ruark Crusaders I auditioned, but would appreciate some advice.

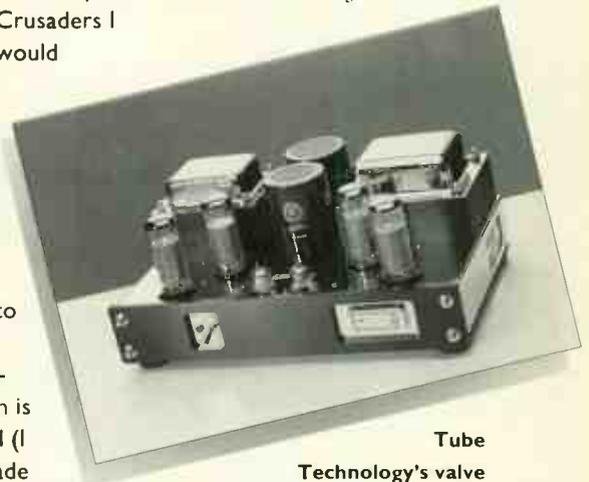
I am more than willing to purchase used, as my Linn purchase was. This allows me to move gently toward the high-end arena, which is my ultimate goal (I think?) An upgrade path is not essential, but would influence me.

**P. S. Williams
Essex.**

When I measured the Lumley amplifier it slewed at high frequencies, doubtless due to excess reactance (leakage inductance or distributed capacitance) in the output transformer. We asked for another sample but it never arrived, so you will have to make your own mind up over this one, since we have not had the opportunity to update our view. You might like to consider Tube Technology products, which are beautifully made and offer a faster sound, as valve amps go, by adding some

third harmonic distortion. If you are happy with the Cyrus though, why not try a Cyrus 3, or possibly a Sugden A21a. Both are low/medium power, high quality designs.

I'm reminded too that a long, narrow room is electrostatic territory, should you ever be interested. They should be placed about one third up, edge-on to the side walls. Get an audition first if possible, because electrostatics are so different, and give yourself plenty of time to acclimatise. See what you think when they



Tube Technology's valve amps, like the Genesis monoblocks, have a fast sound and are beautifully built.

go and are replaced by a box. This for most people is crunch time - and I know the experience. NK



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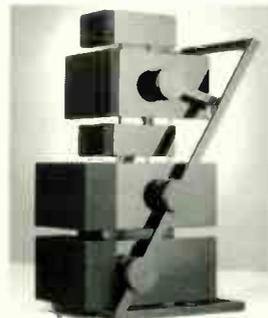
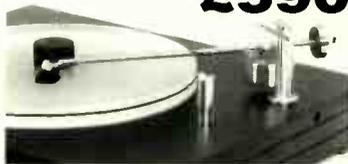
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CD CATCHES VINYL!

I currently use a Pink Triangle LPT/Roksan Tabriz/Corus Black with Audiolab 8000A and Linn Keilidhs, bi-wired with K400. I've been reasonably happy with this set-up, but since replacing my old CD player with a Naim

(Ouch - the costs do escalate in this game, don't they?)

The remaining problem would be amplification. I'd like to go remote control, and the Audiolab 8000S sounds like a significant improvement over the 8000A, but of



A vinyl step-up in the right direction - Michell's Gyrodec turntable with a Rega RB300 arm.

CD3, for the first time CD now sounds better than vinyl. Also, the fact that my current stylus is past its best (though not significantly worn) makes it an appropriate time to think of an upgrade.

Of course, there are lots of non-fundamental upgrades I could make, most of which would be difficult to audition since the LPT is no longer available (eg. GTI PSU, Tabriz-Zi arm cable, MC cartridge). On the other hand, if the LPT itself is likely to severely limit the potential of such upgrades, I might do better to trade it in and go for a deck with more potential, such as a PT Export, Anniversary or Michell Gyrodec with QC PSU.

I have to come clean here - although I have always chosen with my ears, ever since I set eyes on a Gyrodec I've wanted one, purely for its looks! I'd probably use this with something like an SME IV, but what cartridge? Denon 304? Various Ortofons? Lyra Lydian?

course I'd need a phono stage. The 8000PPA is probably over the top - would the Michell Iso be appropriate? Alternatively, I suppose I could go for Naim amps which still come with a decent phono stage, but I just can't imagine blowing £3000 on



Bi-amping the Keilidhs with your existing 8000A and a new 8000S will give you a cost effective upgrade.

an 82/180 unless the improvement is going to be really dramatic.

One final point - the 8000A also drives a pair of remote JPW Sonatas through the switched terminals, for occasional use only. One of the attractions of the 8000S

is that I could presumably keep the 8000A and use its power amps dedicated to the Sonatas.

Over to you - all suggestions gratefully considered!

**Robert Tuson
Bromley,
Kent.**

The combination of a slightly worn cartridge and a very good CD player source is probably why you're finding CD more enjoyable than vinyl. I'd purchase a new stylus for the Corus Black; Goldring's excellent 1042 stylus fits this body and has a super sound; deep, punchy bass and detailed, clean midrange and treble.

Get your dealer to check the set-up, bearing oil, etc. to make sure everything is in tiptop condition. Then, with the new stylus in place, your vinyl should be back up level with the CD3.

A decision to upgrade your vinyl front end shouldn't be taken lightly; improving your turntable now may push its performance high enough for you to become dissatisfied with the CD3.

Here's what I'd consider. Michell's Gyrodec is indeed a beautiful piece of engineering; I completely understand your

feelings towards it. More importantly from an audiophile point of view, it has a fine sound with deep, taut bass and a neutral, open tone through midrange and treble which is class-leading. In other words, if you want to

upgrade, this is a sensible choice.

Leave the Tabriz arm on the LPT as this combination performs well and should reach a good price second-hand. Partly to limit outlay and also to keep things nicely in balance, I'd use an RB300 tonearm on the Gyrodec. Although the SME IV is undoubtedly superior, it will only really come into its own with a high-end MC, something like the Lyra Lydian you mention. The Gryodec/RB300/1042 combination feeding a Michell Iso should bring such a strong improvement to your system that I'm sure you'll be more than satisfied with the results.

Keeping the 8000A a good idea. You could use it to drive the JPWs you have, but also use it in combination with an 8000S to bi-amp the Keilidhs - you already have two sets of cable after all. Use one stereo power amp section, say the 8000S', to drive the bass and the other from the 8000A to drive treble. The 8000A will still be able to drive your JPWs by switching the outputs as you do now.

This is the most cost effective route I can see for your upgrade. Find a good dealer and they will be able to demonstrate the above equipment and wire up the two Audiolabs for you if you're unsure. Good luck. DB

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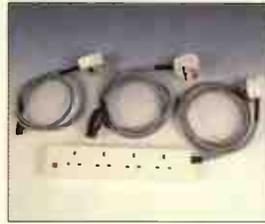
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Vintage Wireless Society Summer Swapmeet



Noel Keywood visits Southboro for the Vintage Wireless Society's Summer Swapmeet and finds an Aladdin's cave of vintage audio.

It looks like tat, but they thought that about the Leak TLI2 once upon a time. Now, mint condition TLI2s, like the one Graham Tricker had on display at this year's Vintage Wireless Society Swapmeet, are changing hands at £1000 each. Destination? - America or Japan.

The Vintage Wireless Society's Summer Swapmeet, held this year on Sunday 14th July, yielded up a bigger haul of treasure from lofts and garages around Britain than ever before. There was tat everywhere, to the untrained eye that is. Some of it will become tomorrow's collector items.

As always the weather was fine as I motored down to Southboro, Kent, where the Swapmeet is held in a small hall. Once, radios dominated, but nowadays vintage hi-fi makes a strong showing. And as always there were treasures. From a garage in Kingswood,



In the amplifier competition, 3rd prize went to Roy Marsh for this twin-807 single-ended design with home wound output transformers.



Leak Troughline tuners are piled high on the floor and the white Bakelite knobs (2nd from left) belong to a very early Leak preamplifier, a collectors item. This amazing haul came from a Bristol garage and filled a transit van.

Bristol, Chris Johns brought in an astonishing collection of old, unrestored Leak amplifiers and tuners. Bought as bankrupt stock from a local second-hand dealer for whom he used to work, a lot of the items needed serious repair, but nearly every unit was intrinsically valuable. I spotted one of Leak's first preamplifiers, marketed around 1947, plus some of their first tuners. Since the matching power amplifier is now worth a cool grand, you can imagine what these partnering items may be worth in mint condition.

"Mint" in this case means fully working and with original components though, which is how the Far East demands them; quick tosh jobs are unacceptable. It takes a pile of Leaks to yield up enough original components to get just one up and working properly, and such a pile was staring me in the face. I spent a long time wondering how long it would take to restore one of those preamps before deciding time was a commodity I didn't have enough of in this case.

There were Garrard turntables everywhere, sparkling 301s and 401s

sitting in sturdy plinths, most fitted with SME3009 Series III arms. Quad 33/303 amplifiers (tomorrow's classic) and Quad FMI tuners were plentiful, and even a complete Quad 22/II system with tuner in superb condition was for sale. Nowadays a Quad 22/II system in good nick looks handsome and is desirable.

Whilst Leak, Quad, SME and Garrard are currently the names in

I saw my first ever pair of DA30s, an early GEC power triode. Rarer than hen's teeth, more fragile than Princess Di, these headed floorward too I was told, after the bench they were sitting on collapsed under the weight of the amplifier housing them. Which brings me on to the next event: a home-built amplifier contest of which I was the judge (no, those DA30s didn't shatter).

THE HOME-BUILT COMPETITION

As a side-show, organiser John Howes last year decided to run a competition of home-built valve amplifiers. This year he repeated the event and yet again I was impressed by the specialised nature of the entries. I awarded third prize to Roy Marsh, from New Romney, Kent, for an unusual circuit arrangement using two 807 power tetrodes connected in parallel single-ended mode to get 8watts per channel. Roy wound the output transformers himself, for which he earned oodles of Brownie points from me. The chassis were prototypes though, standard of finish letting him down. But I had to admire his determination to tackle transformer design and construction.

Second prize went to Mike and Craig McDowell for a beautifully styled and finished pair of "modern" valve amps, using 6J5, MHL4 and PP5/400



This monster, using original old components, won Chris Johns first prize in the amplifier competition. Later, the table under it collapsed with the weight.



Stainless steel trims, a shiny blue chassis and very old PP5/400 output valves netted Mike and Craig McDowell second prize.

vogue, because of their superb engineering and fascinating history, others brands are gaining recognition. Rogers valve amplifiers and tuners in good condition were on display too I noticed.

Not all old kit is British. I spotted a superbly built Sansui valve receiver under the bench of Alan Jones (my motto: always look under the benches, 'cos that's where they put the things they don't want you to see!). It was in superb condition and I was tempted, but it had already been sold.

Valve prices went up immediately as a pair of KT66s hit the floor and shattered, reducing the world's precious supply of originals. There was no Shadenfrude about this accident. Golden Lion KT66s are rare and valuable. Everyone looked a little glum and someone cried into his pint that night!



The underside of Chris Johns' amplifier houses numerous transformers, for D.C. heaters and such like, as well as dry capacitors, rheostats and many other parts not seen nowadays.

valves. With silver wiring, Cerafine electrolytics and other specialist parts, they were a visual wonder.

Even though its chassis was not finished, I had to award first prize to an astonishing beast built by Chris Johns of Bristol, he with the garage full of Leaks (some people got it bad!). His amplifier was a monster, so big and heavy it took three men to lift it for photography. Its transformers looked like they'd been pilfered from Battersea power station and there were banks of original paper-in-oil dry capacitors in their grey steel cans. Varley nameplates gleamed and underneath we all gasped at huge rheostats and yet more transformers. The centre pieces were those priceless DA30 output valves.

However, I was glad to have left by the time they fired it up. Why? Every component in there was original, most being at least 30years old. With an H.T. line running at 1100 volts, if there was going to be a bang I wanted to be up on the M25 heading in the other direction fast!

"All I need is the right lead..."

- Sam Spade-Connector during his undercover investigations into the Mystery of the Lost Chord. He subsequently solved the case by utilizing a pair of ORTOFON SPK100 speaker cables.

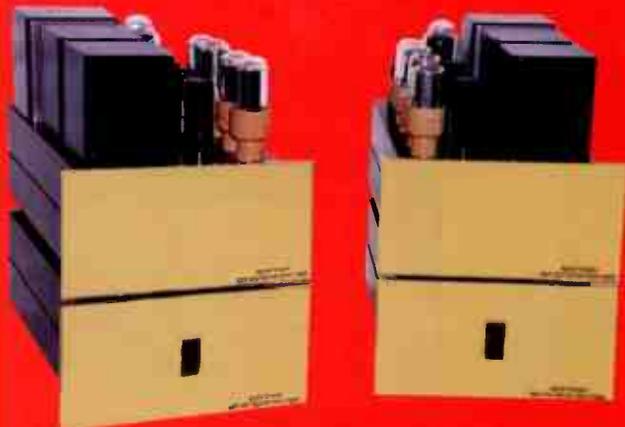
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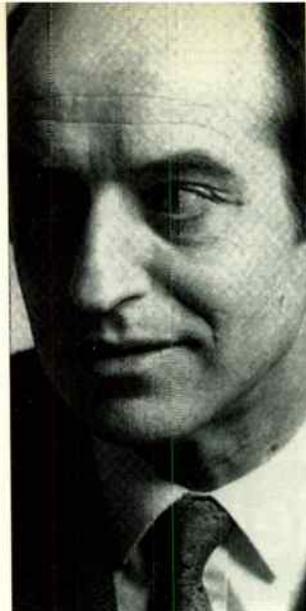
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Mysteries from Noel Keywood



Electronic leviathans - they make my eyes pop in amazement, but sadly not desire. I'm talking about giant power amplifiers, the sort America specialises in, where there's still a market for such things - or there was.

The basic notion that the bigger and more expensive something is, the better, doesn't work too well in audio. Looking back, nowadays I take the view that all this is throwback stuff, to the seventies when solid-state was finally made 'perfect' by the Japanese. Then, giant amplifiers were the logical end-piece to any model range, the ultimate expression of power coupled to apparent performance. I say "apparent" deliberately, because I never became convinced that these leviathans really had a role they could convincingly justify, let alone an assured future.

In the UK the eighties saw an end to such things. Philips told us that in the list of people's buying priorities, hi-fi had slipped from third place, behind a house and car, to eighteenth place. Most people had decided that a new pair of trainers were more important than a hi-fi system. In this new world, giant domestic power amplifiers that couldn't deliver on apparent promise faded away.

I'm using the giant power amplifier as a metaphor for decline here. Once upon a time I used to harbour as much desire for such things as anyone; now these leviathans have become dinosaurs.

I've never come across a solid-state mega-amp. that made a convincing case for its existence. Recently I've heard costly Krell and McIntosh amplifiers, both respected examples of the breed, and neither sounded convincingly better than a top Naim, Linn or Meridian amplifier. And a really good valve amplifier (too many are bad, some awful) offers such a radically different perspective that, past a certain price point

it's more rewarding to turn to valves in the pursuit of sound quality.

It isn't just the lack of fulfilled promise that concerns me about solid-state dinosaurs. It's also the general example they set of an industry that sailed itself into the buffers of excessive technology - technology for its own sake. People didn't buy it - they turned to trainers instead. Even designer sunglasses: I wandered into a swish Bayswater shop on an excessively bright sunny Saturday recently. Feeling I needed a pair of cool shades to complement a toy scooter I've bought to beat the jams, I was asked for £99. I'll stay uncool instead.

I'm not sure this makes any less sense than a £5k power amplifier that sounds little better than one at a fraction of the price. Worse, a giant power amplifier is visually intrusive, generally ugly and seems as outdated as a Ford Granada. Makes those shades seem like a bargain.

Huge domestic power amps demand the use of huge, lavishly equipped preamps. - and this is where things really go awry. As an approach it's all wrong. Preamps play a very peculiar role in audio. Their effect is both subtle yet influential. At worst they can throttle an amplifier completely. The easiest way to do this is to make the preamplifier excessively complex. Years of experience tells me the best preamps are

minimalist types, possessing as few active devices as possible in the signal path. This prerequisite excludes those £5k wonders designed to feed their dinosaur chums.

As I said earlier though, I'm using the leviathan power amp as a metaphor for all that has gone wrong with hi-fi. By the end of the seventies it had outgrown itself in complexity, cost and accessibility. Then it failed to fulfil its promise of nirvana, no matter how much that expression and others were used by the audio business to drum up interest. Trainers offered more for less.

Perhaps it's no coincidence that the excessive growth of the late eighties was fuelled by home buying and home making and could have carried hi-fi with it. But it didn't. People turned away from the ugliness and intrusiveness of this technology, rejecting monster power amplifiers and gargantuan loudspeakers in favour of - oh lord! - a stack system. And a home computer of course.

What's wrong with a stack system? Everything! Except the price and the fact that if you've got to suffer a pile of black boxes in the home, smallness and cheapness become sensible parameters on which to base choice.

I feel that companies like Quad and B&O could have cleaned up in the late eighties, but both had their

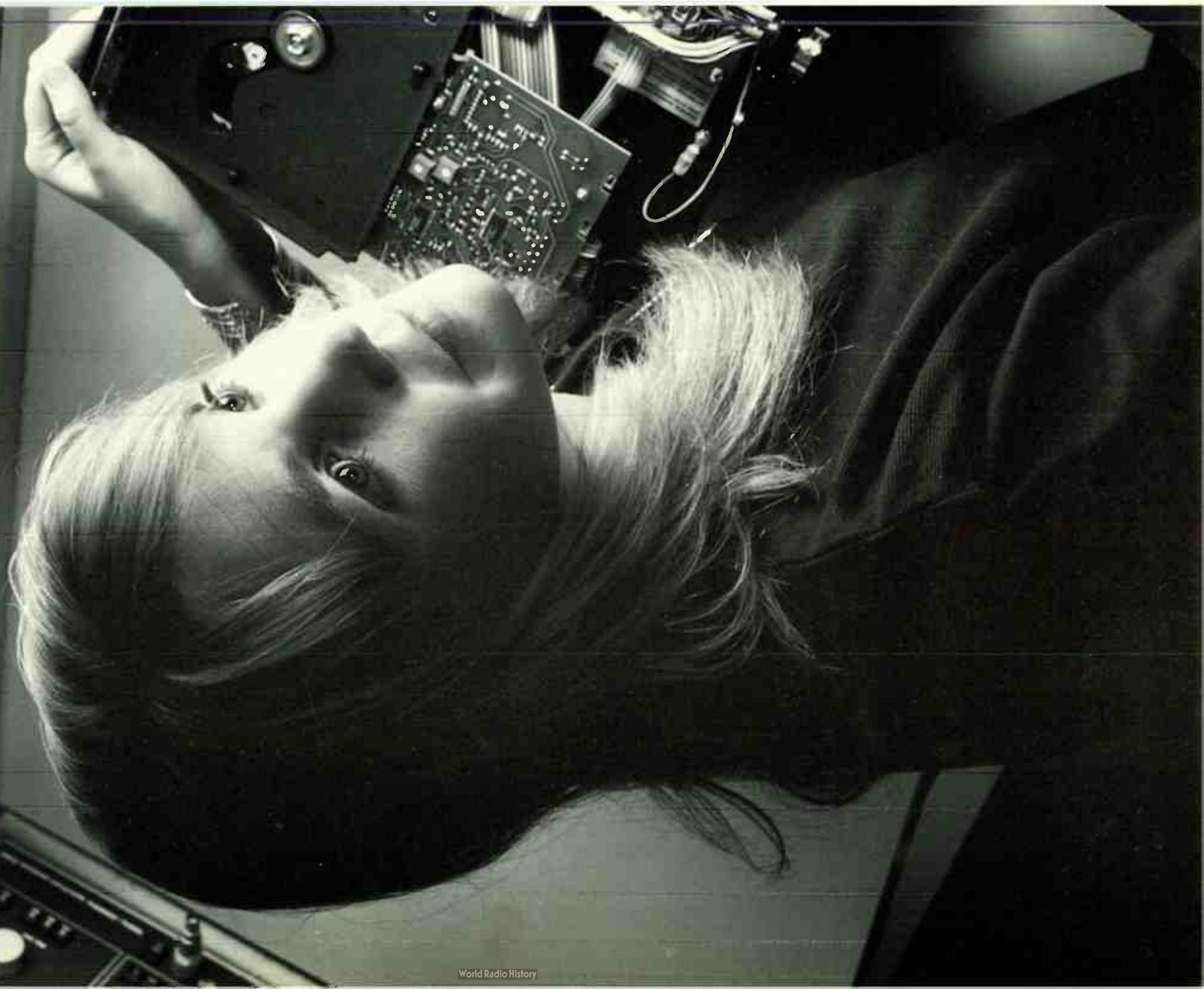
own problems and failed to take advantage. They still don't understand how to produce a stylish, integrated yet technologically attractive system for the home.

Does anybody? By and large UK hi-fi manufacturers produce first rate products that are keenly priced. But I don't believe this is enough any more. The game has changed. It's a simple fact that these days a complete 'hi-fi' can be bought for £600-£1000 in any high street store and it looks very similar: a stack of black boxes. Trouble is, these stacks come in one hi-fi religion free package; consequently they can be set up in minutes. You don't need an MSc and ten miles of special cable from NASA.

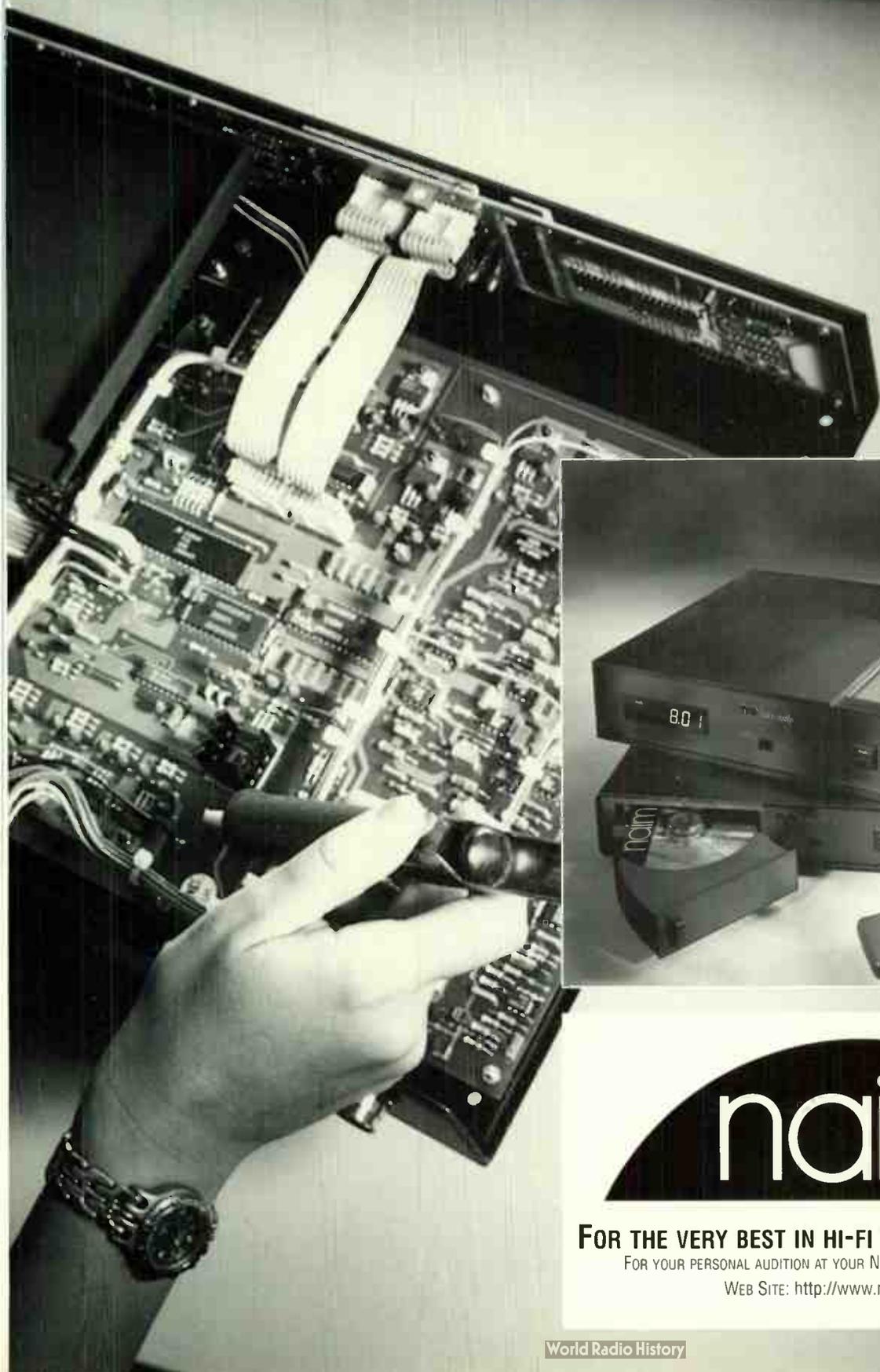
I've got no problem with the idea of reproducing music well, as you might expect. Music sales just climb and climb. People love music and always will. It's great to hear it properly on a good system. But a good system doesn't have to be large, ugly, excessively expensive and - worst of all - as visually intrusive in the home as one of those giant power amplifiers.

Quite the reverse. It should be as stylish as a Quad or B&O, of better sound quality, laden with some convincing technologies, easy to set up and offered at an affordable price. Then people might look again and be tempted to buy ●

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Choosing to cut through the red tape and get straight to the basics, Kenwood's latest KX-3080 cassette deck uses a remarkably good head and transport in a simple deck. Noel Keywood likes the approach.

Kenwood's KX-3080 cassette deck plays poor cousin to the more lavishly equipped KX-5080S. That's the impression I got from the handbook, which alludes to the £170 '3080 tested here by what it doesn't have, rather than what it does. I've learnt over the years, however, not to ignore poor cousins. Manufacturers aim to make money on their upmarket models by incorporating cheap-to-produce features with a hefty price hike. The base model may lack the frills, often of little importance in daily use, but it will possess the same basic bits at a lower price. That's what I found with the KX-3080; by any standard it's got a great performance at what is, these days, a give-away price.

In fact, the KX-3080 measured so well I had to keep checking my measurements and test equipment. That's rare nowadays. Cassette decks commonly measure poorly against standards of a few years ago, due to the rise of the yen, the appearance of Dolby S and the decline of cassette sales. Manufacturers have been unwilling to invest as a result.

Head quality has suffered most. Few decks can these days record onto metals without overloading and distorting at, or even before, 0VU. Gone are the days, when Nakamichi's

were still available, that decks hit +8 or even +10 on their record level displays (transfer this sort of recording to your Walkman and it would catch alright). The view now is you buy a cheap ferric or chrome and let Dolby S do the rest, from banishing hiss to preventing overload.

The KX-3080 doesn't have Dolby S, only B and C. But it does have a superb head that gives high level, low distortion recordings. Don't ask me why or how the KX-3080 is so unusually good in this respect; generally speaking Japanese companies differ little in quality and pricing. Perhaps Kenwood are at the forefront of a new trend to restore cassette quality.

So the KX-3080 can be pushed well into the red when recording, which improves dynamic range by up to +6dB over budget rivals, making hiss less obvious by the same amount. This is quite a substantial gain. For comparison, Dolby B offers 10dB hiss reduction, Dolby C 20dB and Dolby S 26dB. You could say that by having a head with a +6dB advantage, and Dolby C, the KX-3080 offers Dolby S performance (20dB+6dB).

I wasn't only surprised by the head either. This deck has a high quality transport, albeit of simple single-capstan variety. So the costly and difficult

mechanical bits in this deck were of surprisingly high quality. How about the facilities then?

What facilities? The handbook tells me this deck doesn't have Dolby S, automatic tape tuning, index scan and repeat A-B. That leaves it only with a powered cassette door. Otherwise, the KX-3080 possesses all the usual functions expected these days, but no extras. All the same, it was easy enough to use and worked smoothly; I had no gripes here, except one: it's just about impossible to see a tape through the smoked acrylic door. An easy to read fluorescent tape counter helped, but it doesn't even have zero-stop. That's cheese paring for you.

SOUND QUALITY

The KX-3080 sounded as good as it measured; I was taken aback! I cranked heavy dance with pounding bass, like the Beatmasters 'Hey DJ I Can't Dance To That Music', onto metal tape and there was little sign of distress or distortion. The Kenwood has solid bass, unlike so many cassette decks, plenty of it, and can record way into the red. My recordings peaked occasionally on maximum (+7) and they sounded fine. That's a gruelling test of any deck, the sort of thing only a Nakamichi could sail



through. I used only Dolby B, which degrades sound quality very little, and hiss was all but inaudible using TDK MA. With a smooth, natural tonal balance, clean treble and a nice general air of tidiness and clarity (low wow and flutter) I could tell this deck was doing fine.

TDK SA-X is a dual layer ferric/chrome that few decks match. Curiously, the KX-3080 has been set up for it, rather than TDK SA, a more popular conventional 'chrome'. Recording Ashkenazy playing Rachmaninov up to +5 or so using Dolby B hiss was again virtually inaudible. SA-X has a small treble peak on this deck, which counters to some degree the dulling caused by saturation when really pushing up levels with Rock. Being super quiet and very smooth sounding, TDK SA-X is fine for classical recordings in particular. As always I checked for stability on long piano sustains and never heard a murmur in this respect; the transport was very stable.

The deck has been set up to match high coercivity ferrics. It sounds soft and warm with TDK AR but AD gave perfect tonal balance. Again, I found I could record Rock like Fleetwood Mac's 'Monday Morning', which has plenty of bass, without running into intrusive head overload problems, like wallowing lows. As expected though, hard hit cymbals were dulled and there was some general treble muddle. Some hiss was noticeable with Dolby B because ferrics are more hissy than chromes and metals.

Unfortunately, most pre-recorded tapes sounded a little dull and generally I left Dolby B out and put up with extra hiss to ameliorate the problem. However, I was struck by the Kenwood's solid, clean bass which gave piano scale and power, where often I'm confronted by a tinkling sound. This feature helped Rock recordings too.

The KX-3080 is an expensive recorder stripped down it seems to me. Kenwood have removed as much as possible, even a counter zero-stop in

cheese paring desperation, but they have had to stop short of re-engineering the deck, so a powered door stays. So does an excellent all-round performance, with solid bass, minimal hiss and excellent tape matching. At the price this deck is a bargain ●

Kenwood KX-3080

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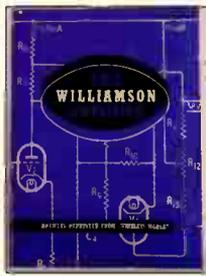
WORLD VERDICT

A high quality head and transport give this deck an unusually high level of performance at the price. A bargain buy not to be missed.

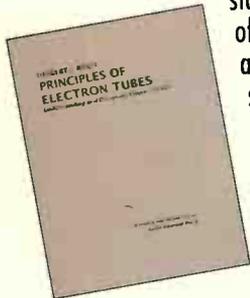
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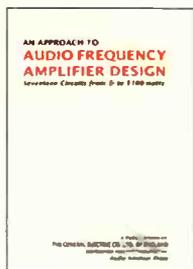
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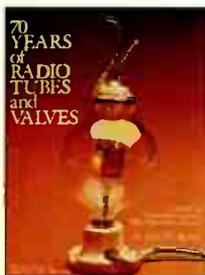


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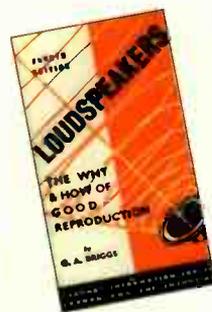


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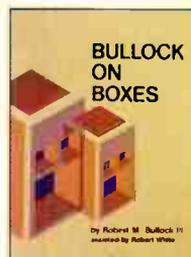
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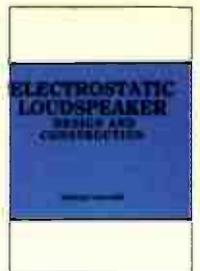
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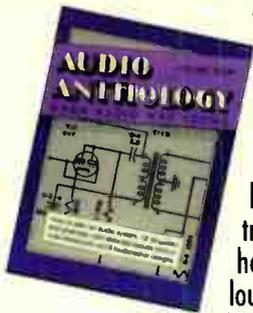
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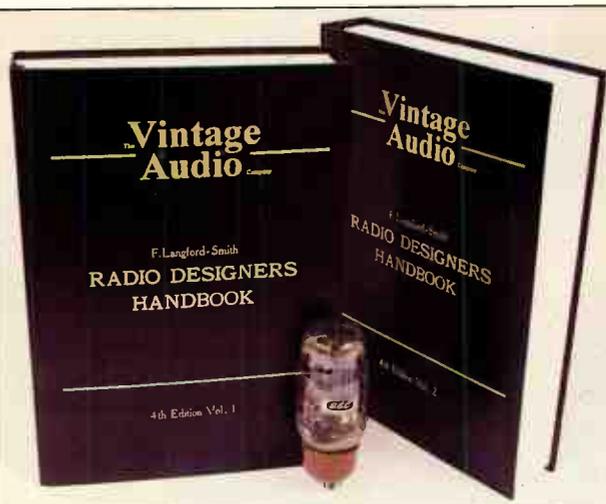


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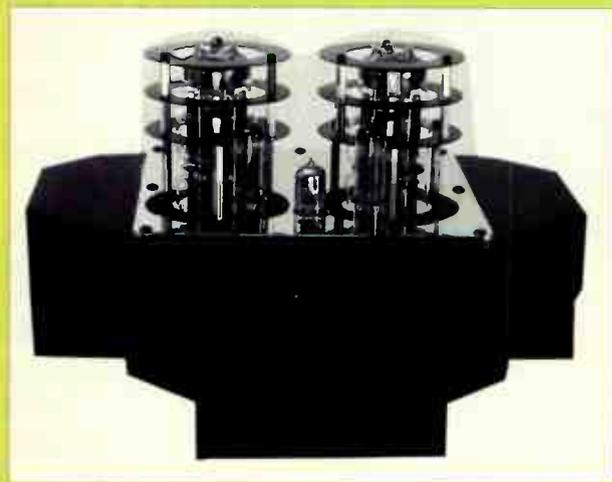
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Every Sunday morning at an ungodly hour, thousands of strangely attired people across the country can be seen making a pilgrimage to their local Mecca. Bleary eyed, they dutifully file into the building to pay homage to their God. But these devotees aren't interested in matters religious, they're far too unbalanced for that. They are vinyl junkies attending their local record fair. They can smell hot wax in the air, and intend to buy as much of it as is humanly possible, before the digital disc kills it forever.

The serious record collector hears vinyl speak to him, shouting, "buy me, I'm a rare first edition pressing and you'll never find another like me". These voices in his head wail like Banshees 'til he just can't ignore them anymore. He suddenly finds himself forced to part with fifteen pounds for a ragged pressing of Curtis Mayfield's 'Superfly' lest it be the last one he'll ever see. Enamoured of his momentary fix, the collector nips out to the cashpoint for more vinyl vouchers, just in case he comes across another long-lost rarity he'll never meet again.

Inigorated by his first purchase, our hero elects to 'suss out the fair' and goes for a look around before the place gets too busy. The first stalls to hit are the private collectors selling their once-cherished record collections because "CD's the thing to have nowadays", or so their friends tell them. Little do they know how much their collection is really worth - the records are immaculate, their jackets perfect; no cheap reissues or compilations here. Our hero makes the seller a cruelly low offer, looking at the next stall as he does it. The seller nods and the cash is handed over before he can change his mind. Bingo. Time to

audiophilia

David Price



have a roll-up and take stock of what he's got - The Doors' first album, original imprint on Elektra - that's £15 in the shops, The Beach Boys' Pet Sounds original mono on Capitol, Badfinger's first on Apple - all twenty pounds a go - and he's got the lot for ten

second-hand shop for half that - if they'd only bother to look. Then there are the rarities - old EMI promos of Queen's 'A Night at the Opera' signed by Freddie's hairdresser, that sort of thing, for silly money. Nope, he gives them a wide berth. The really cheap stuff

price of a 'Now 36' double CD from Smiths, our friend won't be in need of another fix until - at least tomorrow. Why, oh why do people buy CDs, he muses, when there's so much treasure to be found on vinyl?

Well, I can see myself in that little cameo, and it frightens me. Yes, I too scour record fairs like I'm on an archaeological dig, know all the tricks and look disdainfully at people who buy chart compilation CDs. But I'm trying to remember

The serious record collector hears vinyl speak to him, shouting, "buy me, I'm a rare first edition pressing and you'll never find another like me"

pounds, the price of a chart CD.

Next, our man 'does the dealers', where there's still plenty of new vinyl to be had, like ex-chart stuff shipped from the States where it's not in so much demand. Here he finds new, shrink-wrapped indie albums for a pound a time. Our man takes six and waves a fiver under the dealer's nose, and he takes it. Time now for the used bargain racks. Notice that our collector walks past all the specialist dealers' stalls without a second glance. These guys sell recent techno, funk and acid jazz to trendy students willing to pay twenty spons for an Orb album that's in the local

at record fairs can be fun. If you're wondering where the world's supplies of Kajagoogoo and Imagination twelve inch singles have got to, look no further. Yes, they're tatty, but look inside the sleeve and you'll find the records themselves are unplayed - unsold stock (surprise, surprise) that's been sitting in a warehouse for years. And our vinyl junkie knows that in-between distressed copies of 'Agadoo' and 'Rock Me Amadeus' lurk early chart gems from the likes of Kate Bush and XTC, now very collectable. Again our man strikes it lucky. Time to go now, quit while he's ahead. With a bag full of collectable vinyl for the

that it all smacks of knowing the price of everything and the value of nothing.

When music starts to play second fiddle to the equipment it's played on is when we should all start worrying. And that's something hi-fi buffs have in common with hardcore vinyl junkies - the anti-digital brigade is just as bad as the 'serious' record collector when it comes to mistaking the medium for the message. Maybe we should all forget the much talked about 'format wars' and remember that music comes first. Still, what I wouldn't do for an original, non-digitally remastered Japanese EMI pressing of Revolver... ..



As part of our fortieth anniversary celebrations we are presenting a demonstration of three fabulous new products from our good friends at Naim Audio.

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"offers something far beyond the standards I have come to expect from Hi-Fi. The result is staggering..." Hi-FiChoice. April '96. £14,750

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| Sale Items | Sale | List | Sale Items | Sale | List |
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| Impulse H2 Oak - Late pair, as new..... | £1700 | £2250 | Snell Type K (original) Walnut with 2 leg Pirate stand | £375 | £750 |
| Rotel Michi RHQ 10 phono..... | £450 | £995 | Alphason Sonata Turntable / Atlas PSU / HR100MCS..... | £600 | £1500 |
| Border Patrol 300B SE (special) -chrome / met' blue - | | | Monarchy M18 DAC New Excellent | £600 | £795 |
| Outboard PSU (choke regulated input filter) - Serious..... | £3000 | £4500 | Krell Reference 4 box pre-amp | £3500 | £13000 |
| HÖRNING Agathon - Silver Signature (PM2)..... | £2950 | £3800 | Garner Rigid Six Wheeler | £ Sold | subject to contract |
| HÖRNING Aristophane - Bronze..... | £1600 | £2600 | Vitavox 15 cell dispersive mid-range horn (pair)..... | £POA | |
| Huygens 'Chapel of Rest' (Voyd turntable support)..... | £275 | £450 | Vitavox AK 157 Alnico 15" bass drivers (pair)..... | £950 | |
| Audio Innovations S. 1000 Mono..... | £900 | £1750 | Danemann 6" Concert Grand, Oak, Paris Schwander action | £4000 | |
| Arcam Delta 70.3..... | £325 | £750 | Various High End i/c cables..... | £POA | |

You are probably in possession of one of the most accurate, involving pieces of hi-fi around. Imaging is consistent and controlled, and fine detail, lost on lesser hi-fi, is always to the fore. I'm talking about your much undervalued and underrated headphones. Despite this, they are, at this very moment, sitting at the bottom of a cluttered drawer, cable irretrievably knotted and largely forgotten about. They're probably not too clever either. Even the most dedicated hi-fi enthusiast rarely gets beyond a pair of fifty quid Sennheisers, which are used to accompany the Walkman on those rare and tiresome journeys via public transport.

Right, so now that I've got your attention, here's the reason we should all give the humble headphone a second hearing. Even basic hi-fi 'phones which cost between £40 and £60 have star qualities. As we know, when connected to a decent Walkman, such as a Sony Pro, they make a superb travel aid, easily bettering the majority of boom 'n' tizz car stereos. Yet basic models, mainly from Beyer or Sennheiser, have several advantages over any domestic loudspeaker. They offer near total consistency, with the only real variable being the amount of background noise and, sometimes, the shape of your head.

But just look at the variables 'speakers are faced with. First, there's placement - distance apart, distance from the rear and side walls, toe angle and tilt angle can all make huge differences to the overall sound. Then there's the room itself. It's only recently that the true importance of room tuning has come to light. Everything resonates at some frequency or other and this has to be minimised, which basically means rearranging all your furniture around your system. Rather than there

being 'a place for the hi-fi', the hi-fi dictates 'a place for everything else'.

Speaker stands are often necessary too. And when choosing, it's not just the way they look that's important, but also their height and sound quality. Finally, there's all the stress involved in finding an amplifier that will drive your 'speakers properly. With headphones, all you need is to find an amp with a good headphone stage and sit back (anywhere you

"Is spending a thousand pounds on a pair of headphones an act of sheer lunacy?"

like, of course, as there's no listening 'hotspot').

As good as a pair of £50 headphones are, they do have their limits. You need to spend between £100 and £130 to get something truly transparent. Bass depth and quality also usually improve at this price point. There's a smattering of eccentric designs at this stage along with the more widespread Sennheiser, Beyer and Sony models. Old-fashioned looking they may be, but Grado's latest 'phones, for example, give the more contemporary rivals a run for their money. Don't forget Jecklin Floats either, which are not so much a pair of headphones, but a pair of miniature loudspeakers suspended on both sides

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of your head. Provided your head's not too narrow, they sound great!

Which brings me on to sound quality in general. This category of headphone competes head on with entry level budget 'wonder' loudspeakers such as the Mission 731i and Mordaunt Short MS10i. Yet, it's in this price range that the gap between headphones and 'speakers is at its greatest. Headphones can offer far greater detail, superior instrumental and vocal

Stax headphones (or many other electrostatics) is a truly revelatory experience. The imaging is incredible, with effects being created not just between the 'phones but, in effect, off stage. It's more than mere novelty too. You don't get the integration problems that occur with loudspeakers that have more than one drive unit. The frequency response is seamless and instrumental timbre more accurately captured. Listening to your favourite piece of music on decent electrostatics can be truly beguiling.

Is spending a thousand pounds on a pair of headphones an act of sheer lunacy? Those who are fortunate enough to own a pair of Sennheiser HE60/HEV70s obviously think not. They have all the benefits of electrostatic headphones allied to a superb balance of alacrity and warmth. The rhythmic control is sharp enough to cut yourself on, yet they always remain tireless and comfortable to listen to. And when you consider that the Sennheisers do the job of a power amp, 'speakers, stands and all the cables needed to connect them, they don't seem poor value.

There is one major problem with headphones, of course. If there's more than one person who wants to listen to music then you've got a problem. But perhaps we could all keep a pair of cheap loudspeakers tucked away in a drawer

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LL,SS, JGH would all argue for class A rating for the 500 AE (M).

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MAKING THE GRADO

Pushing for a greater presence in the UK market-place, Grado have recently introduced a new cartridge, the £49 Prestige Black. It usefully fills a gap between Ortofon's super £10 VMS2E and Goldring's £79 1012, two of our favourite sub-£100 MMs. The Black uses an elliptical stylus and Optimised Transmission Line technology, where the resonances between stylus, cantilever and magnet junctions are carefully controlled.

First on the platter to find out if OTL is more than just an acronym, was Crescendo's 12in. 'Are You Out There?' I was greeted by a deep, driving bass line, which sounded a touch thicker than I'm used to from my moving coil cartridge. But compared to our in-house reference Goldring 1042 MM, the difference wasn't great.

Vocals and synths were deliciously smooth but softly recessed, and never really opened out to convey the power of this track. In the lower treble the Grado had more bite, giving it a stronger presentation with more authority. There wasn't, however, much of a feel for true extension, harmonics dying away swiftly, their decay blunted.

Primal Scream's 'Don't Fight it, Feel it' again brought the Grado's bass to the fore, so much so I decided a change was necessary. I'd started my audition with EAR's 834P, a valve phono stage that uses its warp filter to add a little bottom end boost, creating the impression of powerful, solid bass lines. But although super smooth and musical, this bass lift in combination with the EAR's softly blurred sound was stifling the Grado.



Wheeling in a Marantz PM-43 brought about a notable improvement to the sound balance, with a faster, tauter bass quality and more open treble. The Grado's traits were still there - rich bass and curtailed treble - but balanced to better effect.

Jamiroquai's 'Half The Man', a track I'd brushed to one side earlier, was now a far more enjoyable experience, with enough atmosphere and space around the performance to make it musically convincing. This recording has a rich texture, layered with detail that's not always apparent on a first audition. But here, the Grado did a fine job, with percussion, crisp and deliberate in its attack, leading the tempo.

Kurt Cobain's strained, chesty vocal on 'Heart Shaped Box' packed most of the emotional punch in this track. Grunge guitars didn't grate and generally the tone and detail here were first rate. The only slight drawback was the softened metallic shimmer that robbed cymbals of some of their character. A little more body and

Can Grado's £49 Prestige Black make the grade in the moving magnet cartridge market, asks Dominic Baker?

power would have helped create a more impressive sense of scale with greater depth, but for £50 you can't have everything.

A dryer bass and more of a midrange emphasis on REM's 'Find the River' recording gave a very nice balance with the Grado. Without such vibrant treble there was less spit lower down and a more open structure to harmonics above. Vocals and lead guitars could still have done with stepping further forward in the mix, but all in all this was a very complete performance, up alongside the best at this price.

The crunch though is Goldring's 1012, which although £30 more is a notable step up the sonic scale. Its bass is a touch dryer, but deeper and tighter with it. It also has a stronger midrange that reveals a greater range of tonal colours and a more extended treble that adds to the impression of acoustic space. Its cheaper sibling, the 1006, at just £10 more than the Grado is more of a sideways step, producing a rather vaguer sound. If budget limits are strict, the Grado makes a fine choice ●

Grado Prestige Black £49

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WORLD VERDICT

On a par with its adversary the Goldring 1006, next to which it represents fine value. £30 extra for a 1012 is money well spent though.

Measured Performance
see P103

SPENDOR LOUDSPEAKERS

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This month we have three loudspeakers from Spendor's 2000 Series to give away - one pair each of the £899 2040 and £599 2030 floorstanders as well as the £399 2020 standmounter.



Spendor was established in 1969 by Spencer and Dorothy Hughes (SPENcer DORothy). Until that time, Spencer had been working in the BBC's Engineering department on a new studio monitor, and building loudspeakers based on this monitor in his garage. In true cottage industry style, the first step on the road to success was taken when an owner took a pair to a hi-fi dealer in Merrow, Guildford. The dealer felt they were good enough to be sold commercially.

After the company was formed production continued in the garage. The range expanded to include the famous BCI, built around Spencer's own 8inch bass driver and a Celestion tweeter. Rising demand led to the first factory being set up at Kings Mill near Redhill in Surrey. Even this proved too small after four years of growth so 1973 saw a move to larger premises in Hailsham, Sussex.

Spencer and Dorothy's son, Derek, started assuming greater responsibility for the commercial and design areas of the business, and became Technical Director

COMPETITION ENTRY QUESTIONS

Cut out and affix to the back of a sealed envelope

- 1) When was Sendor established?
 A. 1969 B. 1996 C. 1973 D. 1805
- 2) Who set the company up?
 A. Derek and Clive B. Spencer and Dorothy C. Bonny and Clyde D. Pontius Pilate
- 3) Which famous Sendor 'speaker used an 8in. driver?
 A. BC1 B. AD1 C. 32BC D. AC69
- 4) Where did Sendor move in 1973?
 A. Hailsham B. Watford C. Mongolia D. Tooting
- 5) Where does the elliptical driver cross over?
 A. 6GHz B. 3.2Hz C. 5kHz D. 33MHz

TIE BREAKER (obligatory)

Complete the following in less than 30 words

*A bright young couple called Hughes
 Had the sound quality blues
 So they set up the company Sendor*

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COMPETITION RULES AND CONDITIONS

- [1] Only one entry per household. Multiple entries will be automatically disqualified.
- [2] In the event of more than one entrant submitting all-correct answers, the winner will be picked from the tie-breaker by the Editor. We will endeavour to publish the results in the second issue following the closing date.
- [3] Purchase of the magazine is not a precondition of entry.
- [4] No correspondence will be entered into; the Editor's decision is final.
- [5] No employees of Audio Publishing Ltd. or of any companies associated with the production or distribution of the prizes may enter.

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alongside Dorothy as Managing Director after Spencer's death in July 1983. Dorothy herself retired in 1992 and ownership of the company was transferred to a manufacturer of professional mixing desks. Derek stayed on as Technical Director, guiding the company's development of new ranges like the 2000 Series, which use a custom made elliptical mid/bass driver.

Sendor have employed this driver to raise the 'break up' frequency, the point at which a driver's response starts to become erratic and uneven. This problem afflicts mid/bass drivers in particular because of the wide frequency range they have to cover. This necessitates crossing over at

3kHz, the point at which the human ear is most sensitive to phase and amplitude distortion - an unfortunate conflict.

The short sides of Sendor's elliptical cone are stiffer than the long sides which helps to reduce 'break up'. Surface wave reflections are staggered by the different distances to the edge of the cone also. This allows the crossover point to be moved up to 5kHz, where its effects are less obvious.

When Dominic Baker reviewed the 2030s, in June, he found their smooth, coherent delivery and deep taut bass made time fly when listening to music.

For your chance to win a pair of 2000 Series loudspeakers, all you have

to do is complete the questions and tie-breaker opposite.

Please send in your entry on a postcard or the back of a sealed envelope to reach us no later than 4th November. Post to:

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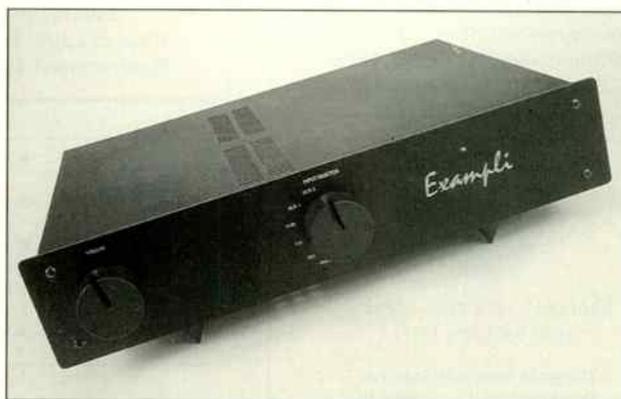
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Valves and the CD medium

Of all hifi magazines I suppose Hi-Fi World includes more than most on valve amplifiers including home-built kits. Certainly, there can be no doubt that there has been an amazing resurgence in valve amplifiers and the main reason I believe lies in it's ability to tame some of the nasties of the CD medium, or at least make them more palatable. Another reason is the comparative simplicity of manufacture and far too many valve amps are simple rehashed old designs put into pretty boxes, that don't sound all that special! You won't find many references in my adverts about valves as the systems we put together using solid state equipment sound perfectly acceptable even with CD, so we don't feel the need to get too involved with valves, which always raise the problem of reliability and valve replacement. A number of valve amps are too low powered for most of the speakers we recommend, and mean we are restricted to highish efficiency units by Triangle, Heybrook and possibly The Alon 1. We do like powerful, dynamic valve amps such as the Primary Acoustics Cadence 100watt (£2.2k) monoblocks, which will drive any speaker we sell, including even the difficult ATC 10's, 20's and 50's (Passive). As they don't now make a matching preamp, we usually front the monoblocks with the AVI preamp, but that's not unusual!

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Mesa Baron

Last week however we auditioned another valve power amp from America by Mesa Engineering, namely the Baron, which was very favourably reviewed by Ken Kessler in Hi-Fi News. This amp unusually can be operated in either triode mode at 55 w/ch and in various mixtures of triode and pentode until full pentode operation at 150 w/ch. Although expensive at just under £4K, it impressed enough in 30 minutes, mainly in pentode, for me to include it in this advert. The amount of feedback is also adjustable, but I suspect that zero feedback would generally be preferred. The triode option gave a slightly softer focus which might be preferred on some systems, but as the Ruark Accolade and Alon II's were used, the pentode operation sounded sweet and dynamic. If of any interest do give us a ring. It's fun watching those

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Designed for long life and excellent sound quality, K5881 can be used with a simple passive pre-amp or one of our own pre-amplifiers, and it matches modern loudspeakers well.

300B VALVE AMPLIFIER KIT **SALE £765** **£850**
This is a specialised 28watt amplifier based on the highly linear 300B triode valve. Our 300B runs in Class A, giving one of the most sweet, open and neutral sounds possible today. Matched with good loudspeakers, it is unsurpassed. All parts are included in the kit, except valves since different 300B makes are available.



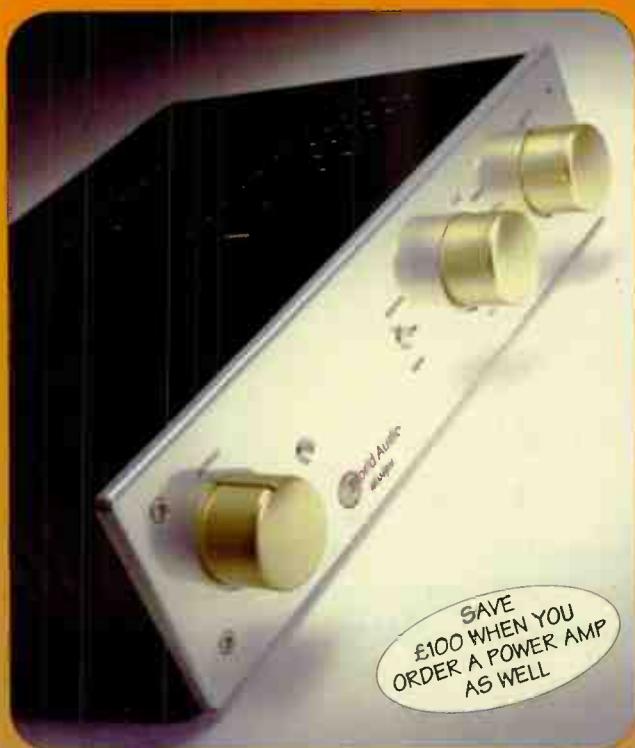
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BEEN SO GOOD!



KLPP1 VALVE PHONO PREAMPLIFIER

£495

KLPP1 has five line inputs, a tape input with monitor, and a unique low noise valve MM/MC phono stage. There is a switchable subsonic filter to prevent output transformers of valve amplifiers saturating. The line stage has gain, so it will drive any power amplifier. Audio grade components are used and many parts are custom made for highest quality.

KLPP1 has a super clear sound, sweet and detailed through line and phono inputs.



KLP1 VALVE LINE PREAMP

£345

The KLP1 line level preamplifier uses one of the simplest and most elegant circuits to give a sound with remarkable clarity and detail. The components are all high quality and include Sovtek valves, Alps volume control, polypropylene signal capacitors, silver plated wire etc.

HIGH TECH AUDAX DRIVE UNITS

We offer a range of the highest quality drivers. Cone drivers include High Definition Aerogel (HDA), carbon-fibre and high sensitivity paper. There are four superb soft dome tweeters as well as the HD-3P oval gold dome piezo-electric tweeter, which comes complete with matched crossover.



KLS3 THREE WAY CARBON-FIBRE DRIVER LOUDSPEAKER

KLS3 uses extremely light and stiff carbon-fibre cone drive units for a fast and accurate sound. A dedicated 4inch carbon-fibre midrange drive unit provides the cleanest, smoothest and most detailed midrange characterised by superb projection. Its high 90dB sensitivity and near flat 8ohm impedance make it one of the easiest loudspeakers to drive. An ideal loudspeaker for high-end valve amplifiers.

Drive Unit & Crossover kit etc £350
Drive Unit Pack £230

KLS4 TWO WAY CARBON-FIBRE DRIVER LOUDSPEAKER

A two way standmounter using stagger-tuned reflex loading for good bass, plus light and fast carbon-fibre drivers.

Drive Unit & Crossover kit etc £230
Drive Unit Pack £120

KLS6 ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY THREE WAY LOUDSPEAKER

KLS6 uses the HD-3P gold piezo-electric dome tweeter and High Definition Aerogel (HDA) midrange and bass drivers. The midrange driver is mounted on an open baffle for a transparent and open sound. With 89dB sensitivity KLS6 can be easily driven with amplifiers capable of producing 20watts or more.

Drive Unit & Crossover kit etc £825
Drive Unit Pack £640

KLS7 TWO WAY CARBON-FIBRE DRIVER FLOORSTANDER

Compact and affordable two way reflex loudspeaker. KLS7's slim dimensions make it easy to accommodate, but it uses top quality carbon-fibre drivers, so performance isn't compromised. An audiophile bargain.

Drive Unit & Crossover kit etc £195
Drive Unit Pack £110

KLS8 TWO WAY HIGH SENSITIVITY LOUDSPEAKER

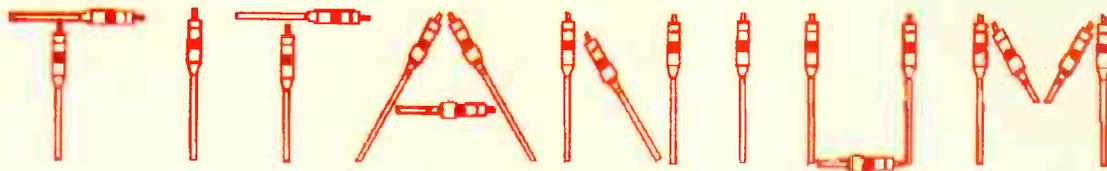
With a sensitivity of 94dB, KLS8 needs very little power to drive. Its 10in. professional bass driver and horn loaded tweeter give it a powerful sound too. Ideal for low power amplifiers or for high level listening.

Drive Unit & Crossover kit etc £260
Drive Unit Pack £175



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EXPORT DISTRIBUTION

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SonicLink is seeking to appoint companies with a proven record of succesful sales of quality products to high end retailers to distribute SonicLink cables in their home market. Applications are invited from all countries in which SonicLink is not represented.

SonicLink

The Derwent Business Centre, Clarke Street, Derby, DE1 2BU
Tel; +44-1332-361390/674929 Fax; +44-1332-298836

World favourites guide

COMPACT DISC PLAYERS

QUAD 67 **second-hand**

One of Quad's best products for a long time, the 67 is warmer and smoother than most, yet is highly musical and revealing. Good enough to frighten many rivals.

DENON DCD-315 **£150**

Real hi-fi and real music for a mere £150. Achieves a good semblance of orchestral dynamics and acoustic space.

NAD 510 **£200**

A competent all rounder with lifelike soundstaging and impressive treble clarity.

NAD 512 **£250**

Its smooth sound and fine treble extension make the 512 something of a rarity at the price. For the money rivals are few.

ARCAM ALPHA ONE **£300**

An excellent entry-level player from Arcam that's far better than equivalently priced Japanese machinery.

MARANTZ CD-63 Special Edition **£350**

A superb budget buy. Addressing the problems of the CD-52II SE, its detailed and musical sound embarrasses many expensive players.

NAD 514 **£350**

The 514 conveys deep bass notes with conviction and weight. A supremely relaxing player to listen to with fine build quality.

MARANTZ CD-63MKII KI-SIGNATURE **£500**

Similar to the CD-63SE but with more powerful and authoritative bass and an all-round smoother sound.

TRICHORD GENESIS **£549**

Conveys music in a powerful and dramatic fashion. Smooth and sweet, with a good sense of depth. Maybe a little soft sounding though.

DPA RENAISSANCE **£895**

Words cannot describe its infinite variety, but suffice to say you'll love it or hate it. Highly emotional, involving presentation with not a hint of self-doubt.

MARANTZ CD-16 **£1399**

An extremely neutral CD player, smooth and reserved in its performance. Beautifully built too.

LINN KARIK 3 **£1600**

Superb one-box player. Its supremely rhythmic, musical sound with delicacy and finesse puts it up with the best of the rest.

NAIM CDI **£1600**

This single box 16-bit player sounds very engaging compared to your average bitstreamer. Has that vital tingle factor of the larger, two-box CDS.

MCINTOSH CDM7009 **£2635**

A thoroughly inspiring machine. One of the most musical CD players around; sweet, open and detailed.

COMPACT DISC TRANSPORTS

TEAC VDRS-T1 **£550**

Not as substantially built as its chunky looks suggest, the T1 is nevertheless a good entry-level transport with a warm, expansive sound.

AUDIOLAB 8000CDM **£1300**

Beautifully built and finished, the CDM is packed with sensible features and performs superbly, day-in day-out.

CD CONVERTORS

DPA LITTLE BIT III **£300**

A lot more weight at frequency extremes than the II and far better control. For £300 there's nothing to beat it.

THORENS TDA2000 **£700**

Used with the TCD2000 as a transport, the TDA2000 produces a sound that is focused, detailed and spacious. Good value.

DPA ENLIGHTENMENT **£795**

Some believe this to be the best convertor around. A truly charismatic performer, it dives into rock music with rare passion.

PINK TRIANGLE ORDINAL **£837**

Pure, smooth sound free from hardness. One of the best at any price, losing little to the big guns.

PINK TRIANGLE DA CAPO **£1450+**

Offers a choice of filter modules, all up there with the best. The Da Capo is superb in many respects, but can sound a touch polite on rock.

DPA 1024 **£6000**

Proof positive that today's CDs needn't sound CD-like! Uses an in-house discrete convertor, and DPA haven't skimped on the build either!

TURNTABLES

GARRARD 401 **second-hand**

In a decent plinth with an arm of SME309 calibre, the 401 has a highly authoritative overall sound with the most solid, expressive bass in the business. Very musical, but treble isn't up to modern standards.

THORENS TD124 **second-hand**

One of Thorens' best-ever turntables. Needs a modern plinth to give of its best. Duly installed, it's good enough to face off the Garrard 401, swapping some of its bass power for a more delicate, incisive treble.

SYSTEMDEK IIX900/RB250 **£330**

A fine all rounder and easy to upgrade. Brings more depth and breadth than a Rega 3.

SYSTEMDEK 2X2 **£499**

Although tuneful, bass isn't as deep as some rivals. More than makes up for it though with neutral and precise midrange and treble.

RESON rs1 **£600**

A lean, yet vibrant sound quality that really draws the listener in. With good detail and rhythmic integrity this is an impressive turntable package.

MICHELL GYRODEC **£800**

Stunning looks, build and engineering, and don't underestimate the sound. Standard PSU and Rega arm gives a detailed, architectural, if undynamic sound. With QC PSU and SME V, its scale and insight kills the competition at the price.

PRO-JECT 6.1SA **£999**

The Pro-ject places the listener in the best seat in the control room. Outrageous dynamics and a punchy, seriously deep bass. Comes with Sumiko arm and Ortofon MC30 Supreme.

LINN SONDEK LPI2 **£840 - £1530**

Cirkus bearing puts it back up with the best. Superbly beguiling, rhythmic sound that plays jazz like few others, but lacks the Gyrodec's detail or imaging. With a Lingo PSU and EKOS tonearm, you'll forget CDs were ever invented.

PINK TRIANGLE ANNIVERSARY **£1200**

One of the finest-sounding turntables around, the Anniversary takes the listener nearer the recording studio than almost any other deck. Works with Rega, Linn and SME arms alike.

MICHELL ORBE **£1950**

The Darth Vader of analogue, the Orbe builds on the strengths of the Gyrodec. An ultra-tuneful, expansive sound.

SME MODEL 20 **£2495**

Including the excellent SME V tonearm, the Model 20 is possibly the last great turntable, unless you've got £11,000 for the Model 30, that is.

TO NEARMS

REGA RB300 **£130**

Supremely capable at the price, but not quite humankind's salvation as has been suggested. Detailed, tight, rhythmic sound but tonally rather grey and cold-sounding.

LINN AKITO **£300**

A well made entry-level tonearm which works especially well with the LPI2, but struggles to match the RB300 on other decks.

SME 3009SII **£375**

This Paleolithic device doesn't bother with frequency extremes or detail, but its legendary serviceability makes it a cult in Japan. Oh death, where is thy sting?

SME309 **£570**

A down-market version of the IV and V with aluminium armtube and detachable headshell. Tight, neutral sound with good tonality, but lacks the IV's pace and precision.

SME IV **£850**

A Series V with lower toleranced bearings, cheaper cables and no damper. Still vastly over-engineered and almost capable of its bigger brother's sonic fireworks. SME's best value product.

SME V **£1235**

A masterpiece of precision engineering with a cohesive, ultra-transparent sound. A dream to set up and use.

LINN EKOS **£1400**

A thunderous battleship of an arm, with a very impressive sound, masses of detail and dynamics, but lacks the SME V's cohesion and musicality.

CARTRIDGES

ORTOFON VMS-2E £110

Warm, full-bodied, punchy and fast. Not to be sniffed at for a tenner. Can be upgraded with a better stylus at a later date.

GOLDRING 1012GX £60

An accomplished MM with a solid bass, slightly forward midband and clean transients. £20 buys the faster, more dynamic 1022GX.

GOLDRING 1042 £100

The best moving magnet available. Has an extremely cohesive sound that's warm but highly involving. Deliciously delicate treble and strong, powerful bass.

ORTOFON MC15 SUPER II £110

An excellent budget moving coil with a smooth, polished, detailed sound. Tracks superbly but verges on the analytical at times. A bargain.

ORTOFON SUPREMES £225-£450

The MC10, MC20 and MC30 Supremes all offer superb sound and value for money, with a distinctively rich, smooth and detailed musical performance. The valve brigade love them.

LINN KLYDE £450

The Klyde's soft treble and prodigious bass mean it's tonally unbalanced, but it's still a real music-maker that many will love in the right system.

ORTOFON MC2000 £650

We came across this one in an SME IV on a Garrard 401; it duly gave one of the best results we've ever heard.

ORTOFON ROHMANN £1000

In a way it's MC2000 meets MC7500 with all the tonal strengths and dynamo sound Ortofon has been putting into its best moving-coil cartridges of late.

LYRA LYDIAN £649

A truly musical, sophisticated device that makes most other MCs sound frigid.

VAN DEN HUL MC-10 £840

Fluid bass, finely etched treble and highly tuneful in between. The MC10 is honey, pure and simple.

ORTOFON MC7500 £2000

Conclusive proof that there's hope for humankind. Makes music of enormous scale and vibrancy. CD lovers would die if they heard it.

INTEGRATED AMPLIFIERS

NAD 3020 second-hand

Classic sweet sounding, punchy budget super-amp with strong phono stage. Able to embarrass many modern budget amps.

NAD 310 £130

A real hi-fi amplifier at a bargain price. Forms the heart of a separates system that will murder any midi system at twenty paces. No phono stage, but you can't have everything at this price.

NAD 312 £200

Smooth, clear and dry. Fine detailing with little to complain about at the price. Good facilities.

ARCAM ALPHA 5 £230

A well-engineered budget amplifier with a bold, exciting presentation. Plenty of power and facilities, but lacks subtlety.

ROTEL RA-970BX £250

With its smooth and powerful sound, the Rotel sings a seductive song with all types of music. Powerful enough for most 'speakers too.

AURA VA-80 £280

The VA-80 is superb for the price with a confident, powerful sound. One of the smoothest around, it is capable of embarrassing more up-market competition.

ORELLE SA-100 £449

Clean, open, active sound. Smooth and detailed with good punch too. One of the best at the price.

AUDIOLAB 8000A £500

A jack-of-all-trades whose facilities, build, power and top-rate phono input make it a steal. Sound is good, but less involving than the Naim Nait 3.

NAIM NAIT 3 £500

A taste of high-end audio. The most involving, musical design at the price, but low power. Superb phono stage is £100 extra.

MISSION CYRUS 3 £500

Superb engineering, a solid cast chassis and a clear, spacious sound. Phono stage could be better.

SONNETEER CAMPION £579

An amplifier that delivers near studio definition along with exemplary timing. Utterly gripping.

DPA RENAISSANCE £595

Rich and smooth, the Renaissance is one of the sweetest amps around, if lightweight.

AUDION STERLING ETSE £600

Economically but well built single-ended valve amplifier. Wonderful clarity with vocals. £600 with 1 line input, £800 with 5.

SUGDEN A21a £640

Class A transistor amp. Rich, crisp, deep, tight sound and it images well too. Wonderful.

AUDIOLAB 8000S £650

Fast, clear, crisp sound with a wide-open sound stage. One of the best at the price.

MERIDIAN 551 £795

Beautifully-built integrated with a sweeter, clearer sound than mid-price alternatives. Plenty of facilities and remote controllable.

UNISON SIMPLY 2 £995

This single-ended valve amplifier is smooth, sweet and open. An extremely musical amplifier.

UNISON SIMPLY 4 £1495

Sonically similar to the Simply 2, but with more power and control.

AUDIONOTE OTO SE £1500

Ten watts of the sweetest sound around. Use sensitive speakers though, because it's unlikely to crack windows or trigger earthquakes.

McINTOSH MA6800 £3735

The MA6800 not so much plays music as takes control of it, with effortless bass drive and a three-dimensional sound stage.

PRE-AMPLIFIERS

NAIM NAC32.5 second-hand

Naim's one-time top preamp is still a force to be reckoned with thanks to its precise, fast sound and excellent phono stage.

ROTEL RQ-970BX £130

Superb value entry-level phono stage with audiophile quality components and clear sound.

DPA DSP2005 £495

Not quite the 50S, but there's little to match it at this price if outright sound quality is your priority.

ROSE RV23-S £495

This interesting valve/transistor hybrid has a smooth, rich, spacious sound.

AUDIOLAB 8000C £520

Versatile with superb phono input. Can sound sterile, but latest version is much improved.

MICHELL ISO/HERA £530

This phono stage has fine midband and treble detail, with taut bass. The £850 ISO/HR brings more of everything, and for many people is the last word on the subject.

AUDIO INNOVATIONS P2 £749

Fantastic bass and super insight make this one of the best phono stages around. One for vinyl lovers.

AUDIOLAB 8000Q £995

Excellent line-level only preamp, greatly improves on 8000C with a more fluid, musical sound and greater grip. Remote control.

NAIM NAC82 £1945

This remote control preamp thrusts detail forth in true Naim fashion.

POWER AMPLIFIERS

QUAD II second-hand

Classic valve monoblock with many thousands still in use around the world. Archetypal warm, smooth valve sound, although not the last word in detail or dynamics.

LEAK STEREO 20 second-hand

The Stereo 20 can sound impressively up-to-date, although power and detail are ultimately limited.

QUAD 405II second-hand

Solidly built, but lifeless sounding, power amp which can be substantially improved by a Quad factory service.

MISSION CYRUS POWER £450

This power amplifier is a honey. Rich and smooth, but with a firm grip; a fine blend of properties.

ROSE RP190 £495

Used with the partnering preamp it gives 70watts of smooth, relaxing sound.

SUGDEN AU41P £530

Extremely competitive at the price with 100W of unusually smooth, full-bodied sound.

SHEARNE PHASE 3 £619

A neutral, highly dynamic and thoroughly exciting amplifier. A sonic bargain.

World favourites guide

QUAD 60611 £675

Quad's latest 140W powerhouse is smooth and civilised, but engagingly musical. Legendary back-up service.

DPA DPA200S £750

Better than anything else at the price. Not as dry as the 50S.

NAIM NAPI80 £900

Partnered with a NAC82, this has classic Naim control, making for a superbly rhythmic presentation. A touch lean for some tastes.

MICHELL ALECTO STEREO £1300

A refined transistor amplifier with valve-like transparency and a full, warm, easy-going sound. The £1800 Alecto monoblocks have rare lucidity and three dimensional realism.

AUDIOLAB 8000M £1500

Beautifully built, powerful amps that will drive anything you care to throw at them. Detailed, analytical sound, but a touch grey compared to valve rivals.

CHORD SPM 1200 £2995

This is one of the best solid-state power amps around, with a massively powerful, dynamic and detailed sound.

TUNERS

LEAK TROUGHLINE second-hand

Our favourite way of listening to the wireless. A deliciously smooth, mellifluous sound that will have you junking your transistor radio in seconds. Ergonomics are crude, and you'll need a decent aerial and stereo decoder.

NAD 412 £190

The 412 is remarkably musical and natural sounding. Rich sound and full bass are a rarity. Unbeatable at the price

KENWOOD KT-6050L £300

Very, very tuneful and as clear and detailed as CD. Tuners like this have you sitting in your seat wondering at the sheer wealth of music out there.

MISSION CYRUS FM7 £300

Clear and lucid sound that puts it up with the best regardless of price. Superb build and superior ergonomics to the NAD.

ROTEL RT990BX £500

High quality Michi-based tuner with a sophisticated, forward sound with great imaging and soundstage. Sensible facilities and remote control.

NAIM NAT03 £500

The NAT03 is further proof of Naim's proficiency with tuners, with a warm, easy sound and a good sense of atmosphere.

FANFARE FT-1 £1350

In its native US the FT1 is no mere tuner but a 'broadcast monitor' no less, a task at which it acquits itself well, with a clear and powerful sound.

NAIM NAT01 £1380

The best solid-state tuner available. For better radio, live in the studio.

CASSETTE DECKS

AIWA AD-S750 £150

Sonically a very decent machine. For the price there's nothing better. With Dolby B, C and S

DENON DRM-650S £230

Forget metal tapes, but sound quality with ferrics and chromes makes it a bargain.

PHILIPS DCC 730 £250

Digital playback gives a good 'analogue' presentation and analogue playback is reasonable too. A DCC bargain.

AIWA AD-S950 £300

A stable transport, superb head and Dolby S make this an excellent recorder.

PIONEER CT-S740S £430

A great piece of engineering from Pioneer, a bit complex, but a first rate sound on playback and recording. Dolby S included.

NAKAMICHI DR2 £600

Where serious cassette decks start. The DR2 pushes recordings to the limit, remaining unflustered at all times.

NAKAMICHI DRI £850

Better still than the DR2, with manual head azimuth adjustment to boot.

NAKAMICHI CR7 £1500

Kills every other cassette deck and stamps on their graves.

LOUDSPEAKERS

MISSION 731i £130

A truly worthwhile improvement on the old 731s, sounding faster, stronger, tighter and more subtle. Able to take on all comers.

MISSION 731 LE £149

An extensive reworking of Mission's entry level 'speaker, much tighter on transients and more refined treble. Neutral and revealing.

TANNOY 631 SE £170

Great bass extension, super open and focused midrange and fine detail up-top. Work best on filled dedicated stands; unmatched at the price.

B&W DM601 £200

Tight, solid and tuneful bass with a clean and pure tonal quality. Midrange is a little laid back, but sound stage is wide and open.

HEYBROOK HBI S3 £269

Fine tonal resolution through midrange and a smooth and extended treble make the HBIs ideal for classical/acoustic music. Bass is a little boxy and constrained though.

CELESTION IMPACT 23 £299

Smooth and even handed. Clear and well extended treble and deep, tight bass. Midrange is focused and pure with plenty of detail and speed.

B&W DM 602 £300

Deep and strong bass, pure, projected and uncoloured midrange. Treble quality a little metallic, but imaging precise. A lively, enjoyable sound.

REL Q-BASS £350

Few subwoofers match the Q-Bass at the price. The tuning controls can be a bit of a fiddle, but once set up the rest is pleasure.

EPOS ES12 £495

Strong, punchy bass is allied to detailed and articulate midrange and treble. Above all, these 'speakers are thoroughly musical.

REL STRATA £500

The Strata is not a toy. Offers superb, true hi-fi bass depth and power.

MISSION 752 £500

More capable than many twice the price. Using advanced High Definition Aerogel drivers, the 752s are clear, crisp and focused. Good sensitivity makes them easy to drive.

TANNOY D100 £650

This small dual-concentric loudspeaker produces believable three dimensional imaging.

PROAC STUDIO 100 £700

Excellent monitors with detailed, natural sound and plenty of atmosphere.

HARBETH HL-P3ES £799

A fine example of good loudspeaker engineering. The top of the mini-monitor league.

KEF REFERENCE SERIES ONE £995

The KEF's combine pin-point imagery and detail with a smooth and polite balance. Good, agile bass too.

HEYBROOK SEXTET II £1129

Heybrook have retained the strengths of the original Sextet, whilst improving on bass extension and smoothness. Treble and imaging still up with the very best.

MISSION 754 FREEDOM 5 £1299

Highly articulate and informative sound with fine imaging and tight, deep bass extension. Uses silk dome tweeter, High Definition Aerogel midrange and bandpass loaded 8" driver for bass.

HARBETH HL COMPACT 7 £1329

Dry and analytical, but truthful and uncoloured with it. A cohesive sounding top class monitor.

EPOS ES25 £1505

Epos' best. Combines near-uncoloured tonality with characteristic fireworks in the rhythm department. Superb by any other name.

SPENDOR SP7/I £1970

This big Spendor is very appealing thanks to its lucid sound and valve-friendly load.

TANNOY AMS8 £2700

Bold sounding professional active monitor with solid bass, clearly focused midrange and delicious treble. Built-in amplification.

QUAD ESL-63 £2860

A reference against all other loudspeakers, with superb imaging qualities and genuine transparency. Earlier ESL model is an excellent second-hand buy; both enjoy legendary Quad service back-up.

KEF REFERENCE SERIES FOUR £3099

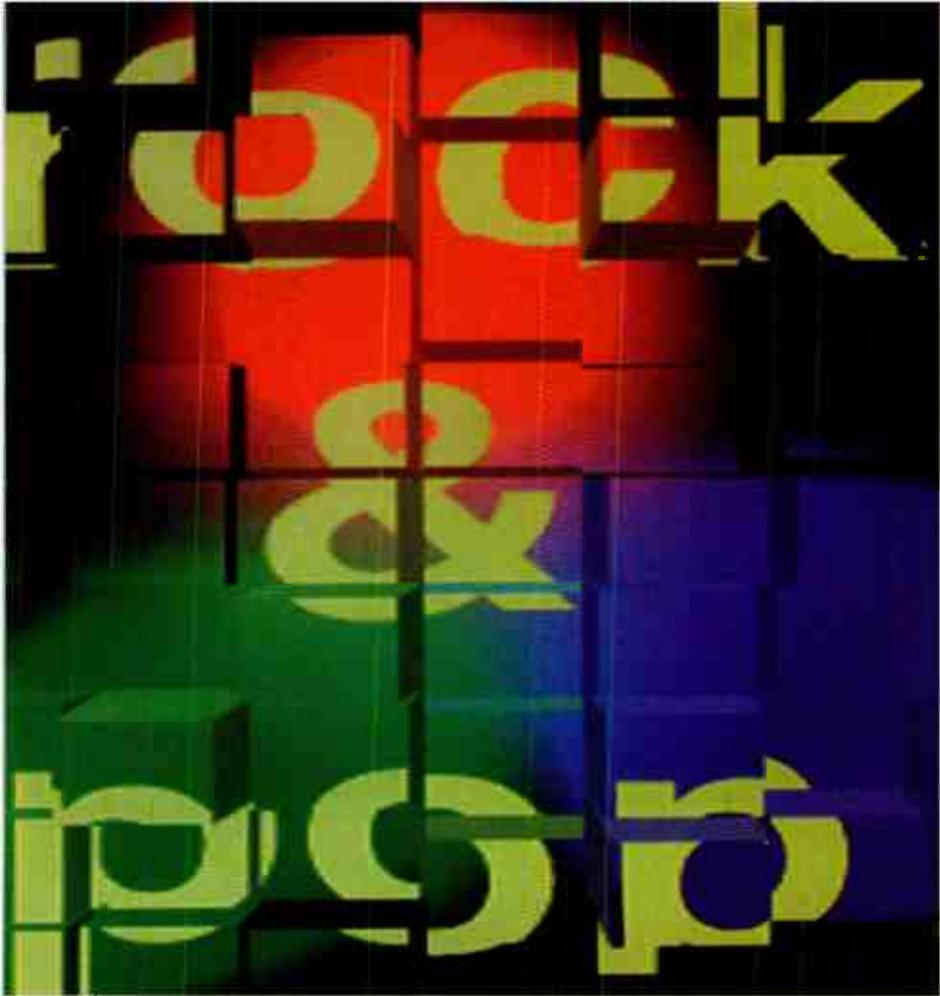
Superb bass and near-electrostatic soundstaging make these involving loudspeakers a reference to others. Need a strong amplifier though.

JBL S2600 £3500

Smooth, detailed and spacious with great dynamics and fine imaging. Capable of producing a superb performance when used in a big room.

TANNOY WESTMINSTER ROYAL £10,000

An incredibly dynamic, detailed full-range horn design with a rich sound. Its high sensitivity predisposes it to valve amplification.



MUSIC REVIEWS

I N D E X

ROCK & POP81

Giovanni Dadomo
Jon Clarke

DANCE & AMBIENT84

Viv Craske

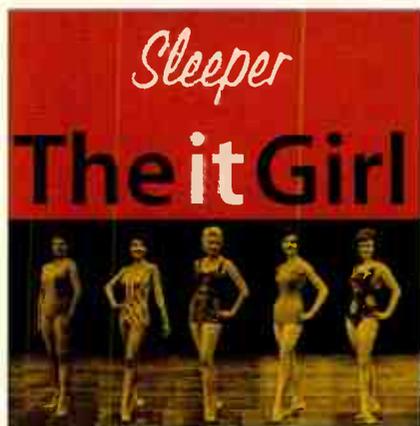
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Dadomo*



SLEEPER
THE IT GIRL
SLEPCDO12

Being on the wrong side of the big two-one (you'll know it when you hit it, chaps) means, among other things, that you get choosy. So when I say it's a rarity for this boy to pay the usual costly amount for a single by a previously unheard combo, as this here dude done with the first Sleeper 45, 'In Betweenies', it's not trash I'm talkin' (and a fiver for the first reader to guess the group obliquely referred to here. And the catalogue number, of course.)

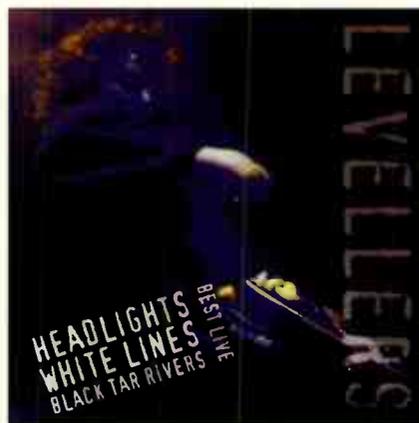
Trash talkin' done - and that be clue number two - we'll get to an albeit delayed listen to the second longplayer from the sexiest, possibly most talented front-person this side of

Chrissie Hynde in Jehovah knows how many years. If the debut big record was a mite uneven after that excellent debut single, then its promise is more than amply fulfilled by The It Girl. Louise Wener may not have the broadest vocal range, but this hardly caused problems for many of the rock greats. 'Dress Like Your Mother' or 'Statuesque' are perfect for Wener's snottily wicked vocal delivery and the echoes of Debbie Harry at her best (there are always echoes of past major talents, aren't there?) make you feel super rather than stupor.

And as for 'Glue Ears', which must be one of the oddest titles this side of Syd Barrett or Julian Cope at their crankiest, it has a most arrestingly jagged chorus and melodic breaks that frequently take your breath away. 'Nice Guy Eddie' you may recall as a hit single, but no matter how often I hear it, I never fail to crack up when she sings "We'll spend all night making love on the sofa/And it may sound funny but he wasn't supposed to". Ditto 'Sale Of The Century' with its "Let's take a photograph/We'll burn all the negatives" - about as saucy as saucy gets, don't you think.

Sleeper wouldn't be Sleeper without Wener (why do I always think Weiner when I read that? Bad American/Yiddish joke No. 1,362) but all credit too to the boys in the band -

Andy Maclure, John Stewart and Diid Osman, percussion, guitar and bass in that order, not to mention contributions from Stephen Street and John Green whose electro bits and pieces fill out the sound with taste, subtlety and vigour. Viva Sleeper!



THE LEVELLERS
BEST LIVE: HEADLIGHTS, WHITE LINES, BLACK TAR RIVERS
WOL CD1074

You either love or hate these deliberate professors of weirdness, but it's hard to be cynical about their sense of purpose and equally difficult not to tap at least your big toe to much of their music. Like Motorhead (with whom no other comparisons can be made, swear to God)

this is one of many bands who've built up their (Urgh! I cannot believe I'm going to use this awful term), er, fanbase largely through continual and ever improving live work, which is no mean feat - take it from someone who's tried and failed. Cut live in Europe last and this year, this album contains such fave staples as 'England My Home', 'Carry Me' and the positively ironic 'Sell Out'. I've a soft spot for them, but it doesn't hurt so much as glow ●

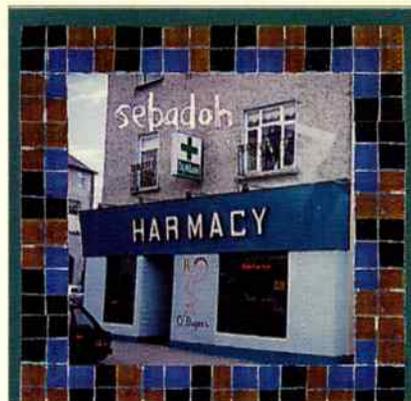
N. W. A
GREATEST HITS
 CDPTY 126

A brief but influential career from these bad mofos from Compton, who not only introduced the notorious Ice Cube to the world, but were probably largely responsible for introducing the PARENTAL ADVISORY sticker as well. I dare not even print most of the titles, let alone the lyrics. Suffice to say they were deliberately provocative almost every second of the record.

Blatantly racist, sexist to excess and packed with extremely rude words, I still prefer Ice T, but there's no denying this remains some of the

hardest, heaviest rap ever cut. And it's true they reflected the language and feel of the ghettos ultra-mean streets with scary accuracy. The words are spat rather than sung, the music mostly sparse but aptly thunderous. As one of my favourite talk-in DJs would say, "I am often outraged", but then, like the best punk, this was precisely their intention. On the other hand, they were often pretty funny in a Richard-Pryor-live sort of way.

While perhaps no way as musically inventive as Public Enemy, they're an essential inclusion in any serious collection of rap and its development. The sleeve notes are copious and there's plenty of unreleased material too. I still wouldn't want to run into young Cube, MC Ren, Eazy E, Yella and Dr. Dre on a dark backstreet, but this one is positively a keeper, yo



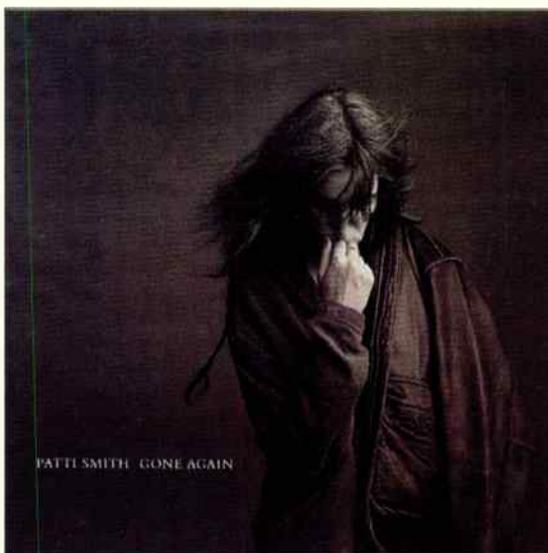
SEBADOH
HARMACY
 DOMINO WIGCD28

I'd hate to make these guys sound a mite passe by describing them as a grunge outfit, but originator and main man Lou Barlow did pay his dues playing bass for Dinosaur Jr. Their virtues include a pee-take of that very style for a start, 'Gimme Indie Rock', and much more. Barlow's writing shows a rare delicacy and insight, while its counterpoint comes via the more tigerish work of bassman Jason Loewenstein. This makes for an unexpected, but remarkably effective melange - compare 'Beauty Of The Ride' with the blazing 'Mind Reader' for starters only. There are two astonishing things about this band (apart from their musical magic that is) and they are: (a) they've made six albums and (b) they remain a well kept secret. One secret that more than deserves to be discovered ●

rock & pop record of the month

PATTI SMITH
GONE AGAIN
 ARISTA/BMG 07822 18747 2

La Smith happens to be one of the few artists unbeaten in terms of passion, and possesses a spirit that can only be described as driven. You may or may not be aware of the fact that, like the hugely talented Mr Lennon, the former and fabled mop-top, Ms P. S. took the larger part of a decade off ('79 to '88, to be precise) while she settled down to raise a family together with Fred 'Sonic' Smith (no former relation and previously of the justly legendary Detroit hard-rock



politicos, the MC5).

Tragedy followed tragedy though. Fred, her elder brother, not to mention one of this century's greatest shutterbugs, Robert Mapplethorpe, both bit the dust. Now if there is feeling and a vast sense of loss and sadness on 'Gone Again' (Patti's tribute to Kurt Cobain is as moving as Neil Young's, it must be said) then this column is no place to dwell on it - I can't write as well as either of them. But my respect for Patti is nothing if not increased by this singular recording. May she live to be a hundred, as my Italian brothers and sisters say. Dio te benedica!

Jon Clarke



DODGY

FREE PEACE SWEET

A&M 540573-2

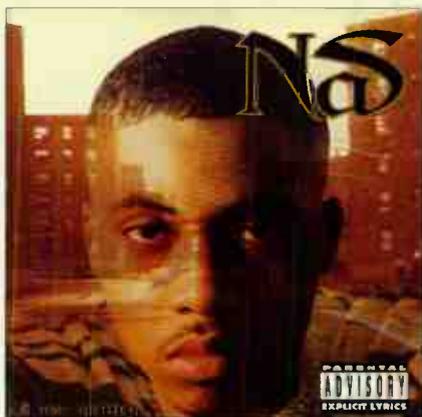
Ugly they certainly are, but hey, it's the music that matters and this is the album of the moment. With *Free Peace Sweet*, Dodgy have almost single-handedly made up for the lousy summer. By ploughing a furrow between the two giants of rock, Oasis and Radiohead, Dodgy have tuned into the nation's collective psyche.

Looking like a bunch of anarcho-punks (still do), the boys met in 1988 and soon pooled their huge record collections to start a club in Kingston Upon Thames called the Dodgy Club. The heavily Northern Soul influenced club soon spawned the band and off they set to cruise the country.

Seven years on and the Brummie trio have already had two albums, the debut *Dodgy Album* and the well received *Homegrown* of last year. With this latest offering they've reached maturity in a joyous celebration of mood and melody.

A classically British album, *Free Peace Sweet* is a heavily '60s influenced pastiche of rock styles. The 14 tracks are a series of well crafted pop tunes, rock numbers and acoustic anthems with a decent dollop of the Who, a whiff of Pink Floyd and a large dose of their own cheerful pop wizardry mixed in to good effect.

With the season's catchiest single 'Good Enough' ("If it's good enough for you, it's good enough for me") and a storming appearance at Reading Festival, Dodgy could soon be up with the Britpop heavyweights.



NAS

IT WAS WRITTEN

COLUMBIA CK67015

So damn laid back he could almost be in bed, Nas is nonetheless making ever bigger waves on the rap pond. His new album, *It Was Written*, is as crucial as the 22-year-old Afro-American's crewcut and moves the current vogue in rap back to its stripped down Old School basics. With an emphasis largely on lyrics and beats, it is a simple, downbeat, but ultimately talented release.

Coming from the tough housing projects of Queensbridge, on Long Island, Nas has been brought up with the harsh street politics of poverty. *It Was Written* is a close reflection of this gritty upbringing, which first found Nas rapping with the infamous Main Source and the Large Professor on the track 'Live At The BBQ', in the late '80s. His reputation soon found him teaming up with another cool rap genius, MC Serch from the brilliant Third Base. Things mushroomed and he was signed up within months.

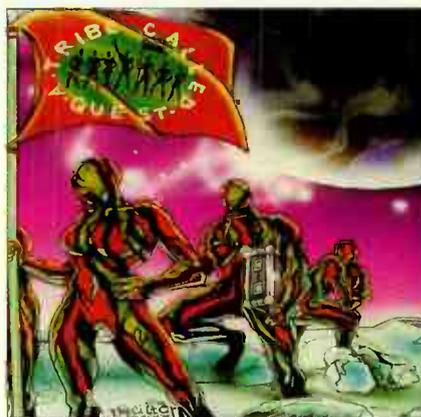
Comprising a range of surprisingly poppy samples - even including the Eurythmics' 'Sweet Dreams' - Nas's second long player is a pleasantly commercial affair. It doesn't try to be controversial, doesn't aim to offend and above all puts paid to the current and extremely pathetic East/West American rap music war. Truth is, Nasir Jones seems, quite rightly, to be concerned with little more than rhyming.

Featuring 14 tracks stylishly mixed by a variety of producers, including Dr Dre and DJ Premier, *It Was Written* carries on from where the rapper's highly-acclaimed three-year-old debut album *Illmatic* left off. The New Yorker's clever rhyming skills shouldn't be underestimated, and when Nas gets going, on tracks like 'Take It In Blood' and 'Live Nigga Rap', it can only be described as poetry in motion.

And at his very best with the help of

Dr Dre, on 'Nas Is Coming', we have the colourful and mysterious lines: "Mad smoke makes me able to quote, soliciting, images of that murder" and "In the black limo, Jack Daniels seen through the cracked window, I spot the fake, red dot on his face, like a hindu." Spooky stuff.

Nas is once again rising with *It Was Written*, a talented and flying second LP.



A TRIBE CALLED QUEST

BEATS, RHYMES AND LIFE

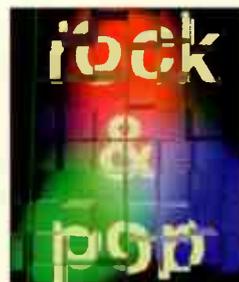
JIVE CHIP 170

The world's best rappers are back with another storming album. Since their debut, *People's Instinctive Travels and Paths of Rhythm* in 1990, the Tribe haven't put a foot wrong. This, the fourth album from Ali, Phife and Q-Tip, is another step into credibility.

Beats, Rhymes And Life is a cool, stylish and groovy LP, with an astute selection of obscure samples and low-down dirty beats. Nowhere is this better heard than on 'Jam', a simple but jazzy, swinging track with an infectious chorus.

And that's what the Tribe is about - hitting the turntables with a jazzy sound and a slick, crisp dance beat. In short, the art of moving butts. And it works, as both singles off the album, 'Once Again' and 'Stressed Out', have demonstrated in the clubs this summer.

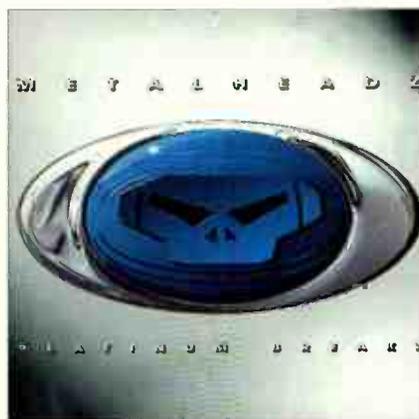
Three years older and wiser since their last release, *Midnight Marauders*, the Tribe have lost none of their magic.



rock & pop reviews

dance & ambient

*Viv
Craske*



METALHEADZ
PLATINUM BREAKS
METALHEADZ 828 783.2

There's so much tosh around at the moment that is attempting to pass itself off as drum 'n' bass. Just switch on the radio and it's there - an endless stream of club anthems and old tunes re-mixed for '96 with a cheap breakbeat rhythm. Or switch on the TV and it's still there, complete with opinion formers looking cool or garish graphics coming at yer. If this is your sole experience of jungle so far, then let the Metalheadz crew tempt you with the real thing.

I'm not going to patronise you by giving it the ole "This is music from the streets, from reality today, the gritty, futuristic now". Suffice to say that Goldie's Metalheadz label has been putting out some fine 12"s over the last couple of years.

The double CD kicks off with Goldie's own 'VIP Riders Ghost', before running through a who's who of drum 'n' bass - Peeshay, Doc Scott, Photek, Alex Reece. You see, these

guys know it's more than a syncopated beat and a spine-tingling snare. There's a beauty, melody, space and density that places drum 'n' bass somewhere between a jazzy, funky groove and perfect crossover dance. If you don't believe me, just check out Doc Scott's 'Far Away' with samples from Goldie's own Timeless LP, or Alex Reece's 'Pulp Friction'.

All that's asked of you is to love music and have an open mind, it's that simple. In return you'll get beautifully layered soundscapes and complex drum patterns peppered with hazy melodies and vocal samples. And a definitive collection of what cutting-edge dance music is all about, on one of the most forward thinking labels of the '90s. A fair deal in my book.



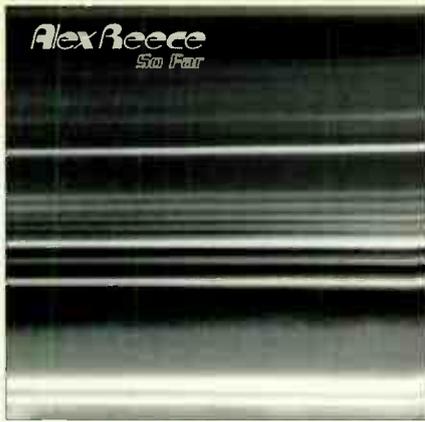
WINX
LEFT ABOVE THE CLOUDS
XL CD119

This is, if you haven't guessed it, Josh Wink. Yes, the one responsible for

the most ear-splitting mad-for-it tune of '95 - 'Higher States Of Consciousness'. Yes, the one that goes "do-do do-do do do do-do do" in a tweeter-bashing, high-pitched squeal. But proving to be no one-hit wonder, he made the top 40 on two other occasions last year, with 'Hypnotizin' (the one that goes "Hypnotising, hypnotising") and 'Don't Laugh' (the one that goes "Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha").

So what might you expect from the full length Josh Wink debut? Eight more funky club tunes, a couple more chart hits? Well, the answer is... poetry. The spoken word of the Winkster graces a few tracks here in a sort of 'I wish I was Jim Morrison' way. You also get 28 tracks. Wow, 28 tracks! However, the concept of 'track' to the Winkster can be 5 to 30 seconds worth of spoken poetry, man, to a full on seven minute tune. Hmm. Well, this is the man who says things like "Don't you think it's strange that we're the only species who drinks another species' milk?". Nice one, Josh.

Still, what about the music? The last three singles were not a smidgen less than banging. Newwie, 'You Are The One' isn't a bad tune, but doesn't measure up to his previous high standard. But then there's 'Topfe and Pfannen', a glorious breakbeat opus, a track Goldie would probably be proud of. There are other biggies too - 'How's The Music' is a funky club pumper, while 'Path Towards Mountain Green' is warm, luscious ambience. But why the ego, why the 28 tracks, why the talkie bits, and why talkie bits in songs ('Warm Wet Sand') that sound like a relaxation tape?



ALEX REECE

SO FAR

FOURTH AND BROADWAY

BRCD621/524265-2

Drum 'n' bass, blah, blah, blah. . . No, wait a minute. This is drum 'n' bass, but if you're not a convert, this is how to get into it. Even if you're really a bit iffy on that whole breakbeat thing, this is a good place to start. This is accessible.

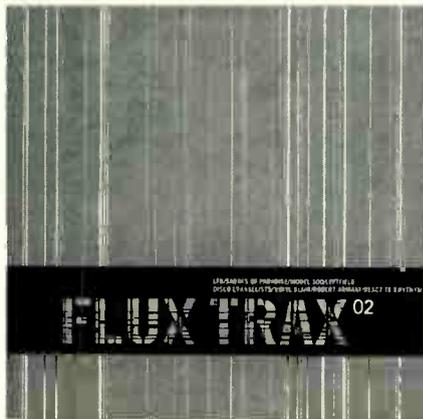
Alex has had two top 30 hits for a start. But what sets him apart is that he's chucked in about twice as much melody as many drum 'n' bass producers would even think of. Hence, what you get is the lilting vocals and bouncy bass of the single 'Feel The Sunshine', the funky, jazzy, cool inner workings of 'Jazz Master' and the

trumpet-totting sexiness of 'Pulp Friction'.

And that's the great thing about this album, the variety, the thought and the attention to making a top tune. Instead of relying on the bland "bom, bom, bom-bom, tsk" of bass and snares, Alex has made an album of dreams and desires, an imparting of emotion and mood.

And just to prove to you that drum 'n' bass has really crossed over into the mainstream, there's Reece's last single, 'Candles', a daytime radio sunny song, a real song complete with tender female vocals.

It's soft, it's sweet, and full of crunchy gems. And unlike some other breakbeat, it doesn't grate your nerves after a couple of hours. It's accessible. Access it.



VARIOUS

FLUX TRAX TWO

EXP CD003

Going out for a top night out? Maybe you're thinking of largin' it, 'aving a blinder and going for it big style. This, then, is the album to have. Forget the glistening sleekness of those superclub compilations, this is a no-frills party tune album. No fancy mixes and no top mixer stamped on the sleeve like a brand name.

They did it once before with Flux Trax, a compo of classic techno and house from the likes of Joey Beltram, Empirion, Jam & Spoon and Underworld. A veritable music lover's feast, and now a complete nostalgia buzz. So to prove that a sequel can be as good as the original, EXP have done it all over again, putting together a selection of the most danceable house and techno of the last couple of years. There's the classic 'LFO', Leftfield's 'Song Of Life', 'Age Of Love' and the dreamy 'Vernon's Wonderland'.

So what if you've heard 'Smokebelch II' and LSG's 'Fragile' a hundred times. This action-packed double album takes a stroll through dreamy house and stomps its feet to techno. There's no big concept, just a wide mix of needle-in-a-haystack golden anthems ●

dance & ambient record of the month

EMPIRION

ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY

XL CD117

They're mates with The Prodigy, they're on the same label as The Prodigy, they're from Essex like The Prodigy, they have the same type of visceral, brain-pounding techno on offer as The Prodigy. Empirion are hard, they're not afraid of chucking everything into the mix, and they're going to be big. That may be a bit of an oversimplification, but it's basically all true.

But that's where The Prodigy comparisons end. Whereas The Prodigy attacked techno from the cheesy, pop-tastic end of dance and matured from there, Empirion's sound is fully grown and building in

strength all the time. Take the title track for instance, with its relentless beat, air raid siren melodies and subtle, squeaky 303s. Or try some of

the other singles for size. 1994's 'Quark' is a blaze of sound, a sweeping mass of heavenly electronic choirs complete with Bladerunner

atmospherics to die for. Then there's 'Ciao', a spacey, no-compromise butt-kicker of a tune.

And that's before I've even mentioned 'Narcotic Influence'. This was a classic slice of techno with funky pace and "Drugs - taking their lives away" loop. But best of all is 'Jesus Christ', a wall of sound so impenetrable that even Black and Decker wouldn't know what to do with it.

Empirion epitomises all that's good and virtuous about British techno. Thoroughly nasty, thoroughly beautiful, destined to fill floors and empty wallets. Lovely stuff, in'tit geezer ●



EMPIRION

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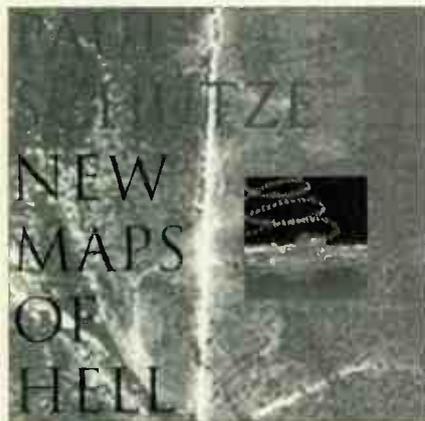
Jazz

Simon Hopkins

PAUL SCHUTZE

NEW MAPS OF HELL

BIG CAT RECORDS ABB104CD



A couple of months back we looked at Site Anubis, the latest in a considerable and increasingly lauded body of work by the ex-pat Australian keyboardist and composer, Paul Schutze. That album - a mesmerizing and at times exhausting hour of full-on jazz-rock and dense, alarming electronic and musique concrete textures - was actually the final part of a trilogy, whose first two parts are now reissued in remastered form, with new and very beautiful artwork.

New Maps of Hell was the first of Schutze's albums I heard. As an unrepentant fan of jazz-rock, who believed that Miles Davis' 1970s work - and that of his alumni - roughly mapped out territory which depressingly few musicians have gone on to detail since, I was thrilled that here a musician was doing just that. Thematically, New Maps, and the rest of the trilogy to follow, is an evocation of a city, any city, in a state of turmoil. This isn't necessarily cataclysmic turmoil, but the kind of everyday turmoil that all cities

experience (the cities of both the Tropics and the Pacific Rim in particular) tweaked up just enough to prophecy disaster. (Schutze's central image for the trilogy's closing Site Anubis is of a city spontaneously throwing up a giant basalt pagan statue in its midst).

Musically, to summon up this phoetid, polyglot, 24-hour, polluted world, New Maps plundered the very best strains of '70s jazz-rock - as I said Agharta-period Miles Davis, Julian Priester's Love Love, Mwandishi-period Herbie Hancock - and used them as the launch pad for hyperdense textures and explosive improvising hung around hugely propulsive rhythms. For Schutze, though a keyboardist, trained as a percussionist; his rhythm programming is the most organic and tactile that I have ever come across.

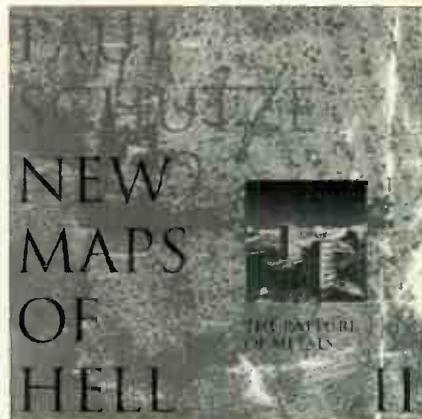
While Site Anubis featured a host of 'name' jazz musicians - Bill Laswell, Raoul Bjorkenheim, Lol Coxhill and so on - none of the players on New Maps is particularly known, but then that misses the point. This music isn't about star solos or virtuosic showmanship, or even particularly about group interplay. Instead, Schutze's role - perhaps more akin to film editing than to traditional composing and arranging - is to construct a framework for musicians to work around and then, crucially, to take their contributions and breath new life into them by radically editing them, changing their contexts, and piling them up against each other in a way that would be impossible in a real-time performance.

Ultimately, Site Anubis has even more textural density than this, but nonetheless, some years on from its original release, New Maps of Hell remains genuinely shocking, and genuinely brilliant.

PAUL SCHUTZE

NEW MAPS OF HELL II THE RAPTURE OF METALS

BIG CAT RECORDS ABB105CD



The Rapture of Metals, the still, small point of calm at the centre of this trilogy, has perhaps less place here than its predecessor, but needs mentioning nonetheless. By virtue of both being performed solo and in drawing more overtly on the musics which Schutze knows intimately - the folk and classical musics of Bali and Java - The Rapture of Metals is possibly more representative of the music for which Schutze is better known, music erroneously, or at any rate misleadingly, labelled 'ambient'.

The album remains though, to my mind, some of the most eerily beautiful electronic music ever recorded. A much-needed respite from New Maps' implosive extremity, the album nonetheless weaves its own threatening spells, picturing another side of the phantom city's madness: a world of decayed architecture overgrown with voracious tropical vegetation. Essential.

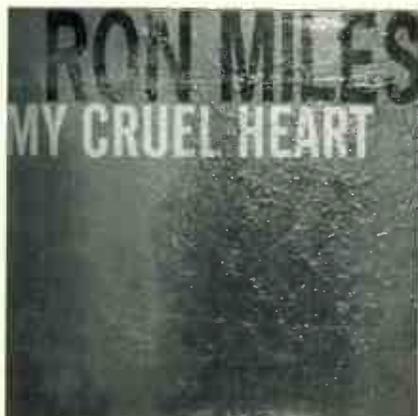
Simon Cooke



RON MILES

MY CRUEL HEART

GCD 79510



From the evidence on this disc, it appears that Miles is suffering less from cardiac cruelty than diversity. Alright, so the opening track is pinned out firmly by the down-and-dirty electric guitar and spitting drum line - all in all pretty cruel and vicious - but Miles has a sweet tone on the trumpet, contrasting and diverging from the hardness of the other parts.

That just about sets the scene for the entire album, with Miles' sweetness and purity of tone - even in his more abrasive moments - countering the hard, driving backing to produce a kind of post-bebop-meets-grunge fusion. But it's not all psycho-killer stuff by a long way. There are passages of sheer beauty where either the whole band or even just a couple of players will suddenly combine to form a synergy in this hard-working stream of consciousness and

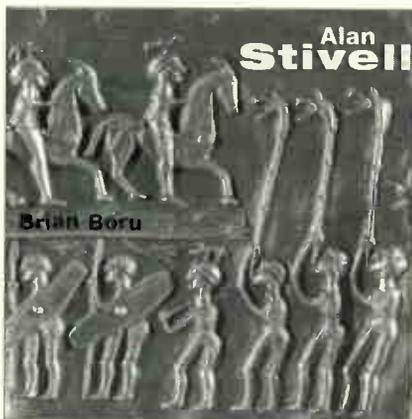
transmute the track into something new and exquisite before taking off after their own lights once again. Wonderful stuff.

The ten tracks are all written by Miles, and the core of the backing is provided by Artie Moore on bass and Rudy Royston on drums. Through the course of the ten tracks, band numbers vary from these three up to eleven, including flautist Kari Miles, Fred Hess on tenor sax, Al Moore on Hammond organ, and Eric Moon on piano, with varied guitarists, synth. and samples men in there too. Technically it's well recorded, but may make some systems sound worried and fuzzy due to the complexity of some of the pieces. But if you think your system can stage it adequately, and you like your jazz hard-bitten, this is your kind of music.

ALAN STIVELL

BRIAN BORU

FDM 36208-2



I recently reviewed Dick Heckstall-Smith's Celtic Steppes and Tommy Smith's Beasts of Scotland. Perhaps now is the time to compare these with some 'real' Celtic music. But why review traditional music under the jazz banner?

Jazz music relies as much on innovation as reiteration and reinvention of past motifs, phrases, and themes. This fundamentally describes Stivell's work of revitalising the extinct Breton harp to a point where it may be used in the modern concert and recording context, yet still retain its subtle and intimate aura. Effecting this has required Stivell to work new forms of music for other instruments - such as bagpipes - for the harp.

Bringing the harp (and other Breton instruments like the bombard) up to date has required the inclusion of modern instruments such as electric guitars and synthesisers. These complement a melting-pot of traditional instruments - bouzouki, bohran, bongos, etc. - so the album's ten tracks reflect many styles; the sweet harp-and-vocal 'Mna na hEireann' ('Women of Ireland'), the rocking beat poem 'Let the Plinn', a neo-brutalist 'Sword Dance', and the final 'Lands of my Fathers' (complete with the home contingent of Cardiff Arms Park in rousing vocal form).

So it's an album in common with the B&W Outernational Meltdown series; traditional music given a fresh, modern twist to widen its appeal. Yet it retains its relevance to a particular cultural or social group, in this case north-west Europeans.

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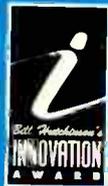
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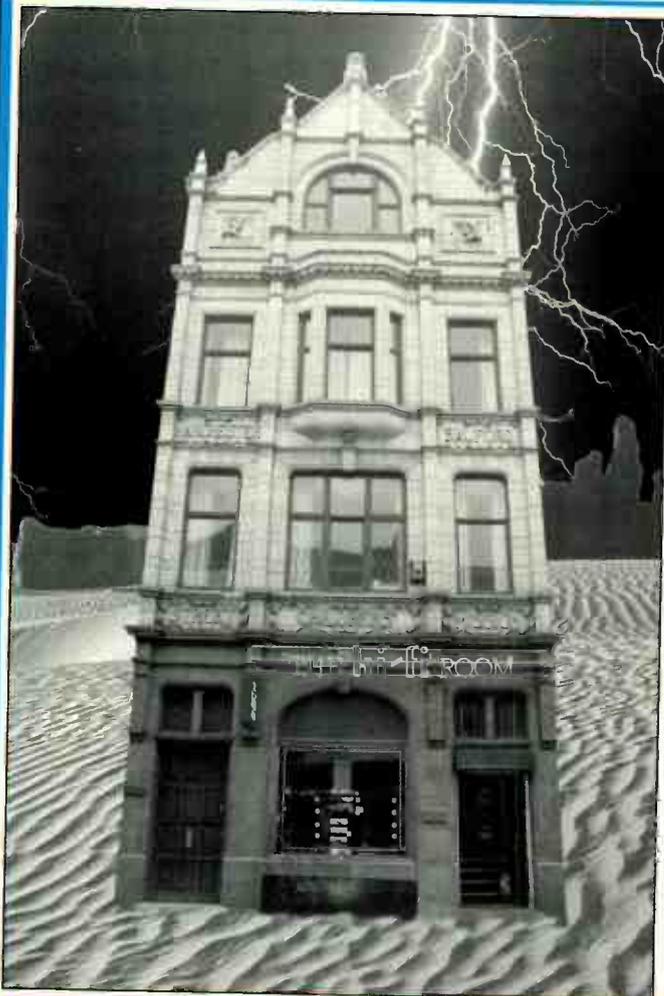
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Naim CD010 (ADD/55.56)

If ever a recording had a story to tell, it has to be this recent chamber music issue from Naim Audio, including as it does a work which has even eluded the compilers of the normally infallible Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians. What is more extraordinary is that it is not a work by an obscure composer from the beginnings of musical history, but a composition from our own century and by a composer whose name will be known to all music lovers, if just for one or two works.

The story began with an amateur chamber ensemble based in Herefordshire, one of whose members turned up with a set of parts for a string quintet in A Minor by the German-born Max Bruch. David Beeching, violist with the ensemble, asked his son Christopher to help find a recording of the work, and there began a mission which saw Chris Beeching contacting recording

companies and record dealers worldwide, checking with the Performing Rights Society and its overseas equivalents, and finally striking lucky with the BBC, which had recorded the work in 1988 to mark the one hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of Bruch's birth.

However, the BBC had not kept a tape of the broadcast, but suggested that the National Sound Archive may have recorded the concert off-air. Much to Chris Beeching's delight, the NSA had done just that, and a cassette was supplied for study purposes. But that still left a full score to be sourced somewhere and a trawl through Europe's top music dealers found just one who knew of the work and was able to order a set of parts and a score. Some even suspected the whole thing was a spoof!

So the groundwork was laid for this first-ever commercial recording of Bruch's A minor String Quintet, one of two he composed in the last years of his life, in the case of the A minor, in November 1918. The manuscripts of both works were lost during the Second World War, but Bruch's daughter-in-law, Gertrude, had taken the trouble to copy out the score and parts at some point and it was these that turned up - by means which remain a mystery - in the BBC's Music Library, and which permitted a first broadcast performance by an augmented Schwiller Quartet in 1957.

Chris Beeching has to be congratulated on a fine piece of musical sleuthing, but does the end result justify the effort? The quintet is an anachronism, containing not a hint of the musical and social upheavals that were taking place at the time of its composition. As with all Bruch's music, it

is overtly romantic, richly textured and luxuriantly lyrical, a product more of the world of Tchaikovsky, Brahms and Dvorak than Stravinsky, Berg and Debussy. Accept it on those terms, and the glorious ebb-and-flow of melody is hugely enjoyable. It is certainly difficult to envisage a performance of greater conviction than that given here by the immensely experienced Allegri Quartet, who are reunited with their one-time violist, Patrick Ireland, to complete the quintet.

The very apt coupling is the G Major quintet of Brahms, itself seldom recorded, which makes this warmly expressive and cogent performance all the more welcome. Here, you are left feeling, is a work these players have in their blood, and the spontaneity of the playing has been well caught by Ken Christianson's 'minimalist' recording: just two AKG microphones feeding into a Nagra IVS analogue recorder - 72ips and no noise reduction. Digital post-production for CD was undertaken by Naim Audio, and if the sound has the occasional rough edge, it mercifully lacks the superficial metallic sheen which characterises many chamber music recordings.

It is worth adding that much of the proceeds from this recording will be going to Jackdaws, a charitable educational trust of which the aforementioned Chris Beeching is an active member. Its aim is to promote music-making at many levels, and for all ages, with a wide range of courses. Perhaps one of the new courses likely to be offered will be devoted to the greater appreciation of the music of Max Bruch? It would seem the Bruch expert at Grove's Dictionary could do with a bit of a refresher.

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Conifer Records 'Happy Days' 75605 52390
(2 CD set) (ADD/150.44)

Eric Coates has rightly been described as the 'uncrowned king of light music' and, especially during the twenties, thirties and forties, the Nottinghamshire-born composer was responsible for a wealth of suites, songs and signature tunes. His music was unashamedly aimed at popular taste, but it was unfailingly well-crafted and never pompous or vulgar. Most of all, though, Coates was a peerless tunesmith, with the emphasis always on gaiety rather than gravitas.

As well as being a prolific composer, Eric Coates also regularly visited the studios to make recordings of his own music, which he conducted with great skill and panache (composers do not always make the best interpreters of their own works!) He was able to commit to disc performances of some of his finest and most durable works, the evergreen *Three Elizabeths*, *Jester at the Wedding* and *From Meadow to Mayfair* suites, for example (Coates clearly had a flair for titles, too), and what sparkling performances they are.

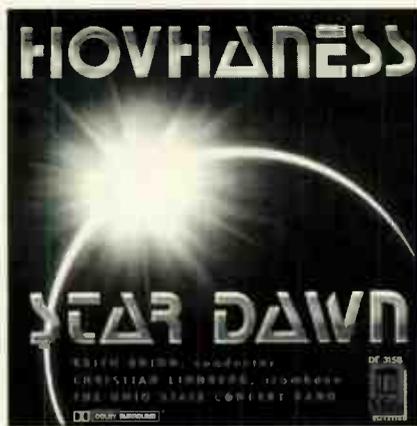
The *Three Elizabeths* suite, from which this new two-CD compilation takes its title, was a wartime work first performed under the baton of the composer on Christmas Eve 1944. Its three movements, each an exquisite miniature, show Coates at his best, eschewing the obvious pageantry that these royal 'portraits' would suggest and

instead reflecting the radiant femininity of his subjects. He wrote nothing better.

Another of Eric Coates' finest orchestral suites, *Four Centuries*, introduces the second disc in this set, the second survey of Coates' music to appear on Conifer's 'Happy Days' label. Here, the composer offers 'impressions' of dance music from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries, with delightful pastiches of the hornpipe, pavane, tambourin and waltz, and concluding with the American-flavoured rhythms of his own time.

The recording here was made by the composer in the Kingsway Hall in November 1944 and, thanks to the efforts of remastering engineer Ted Kendall and the CEDAR process, it has emerged with remarkable clarity and freshness in this transfer. Most notably perhaps, the 'cleaning up' process has retained the atmosphere of the original, and this is generally true of all the tracks in this compilation, including the four examples of Eric Coates the songwriter. Some famous names grace these recordings - John McCormack, Joan Hammond - and the results prove that Coates' talents were not confined to orchestral music.

An engaging, entertaining and generously-filled package therefore, and for those of us of a 'certain age', oh so redolent of childhood days spent in front of the valve wireless set. By no means does all of the music here share the same level of inspiration, but equally it frequently transcends the 'light music' tag, as a piece such as the phantasy *The Selfish Giant* amply testifies.



ALAN HOVHANESS

**Symphony No29 for Baritone
Horn or Trombone and Band
Op289**

**Symphony No53 Op377 'Star
Dawn'
The Flowering Peach - suite
Op125 Grand Final
Processional from Symphony
No20 Op223 'Three Journeys
to a Holy Mountain'
Christian Lindberg, trombone;
The Ohio State University
Concert Band; conductor, Keith
Brion**

Delos DE3158 (DDD/61.21)

This is a consummate single-CD portrait of the music of Alan Hovhaness, the prolific (by twentieth century standards) American-born composer. It is also a useful introduction to the influences which have shaped his considerable musical output (over three hundred works with opus numbers): the exploration of space, the awesome majesty of nature, in particular the mountains of America's north-west, and what might be described as the 'mysticism of sound', this last fuelled by early exposure to the music of the east (Hovhaness is part-Armenian).

The problem is that foreknowledge of such influences poses a dilemma for the listener. Do you - at least initially - overlook the elaborate descriptions and analyses accompanying the recording and listen 'blind', so forming your own interpretations? Or do you carefully digest the 'programme' and use it as a musical guide? Here, I confess, rightly or wrongly I adopted the first approach, although the subtitle of the opening work, 'Star Dawn', was inescapable, being emblazoned across the CD insert cover.

Hovhaness's music proved immediately accessible - he eschews atonality, describing it as "against nature" - and the sonorities he employs are utterly seductive: solemn, soaring chorales intoned on the brass, eerie percussion effects and haunting solos on the winds. But, even without an awareness of the 'programme', it is overwhelmingly apparent that these are not empty effects devoid of purpose. Hovhaness, who at one point of his career studied under the exiled Bohuslav Martinu, is a deft and perceptive deployer of orchestral colour and a composer for whom clarity of texture is paramount.

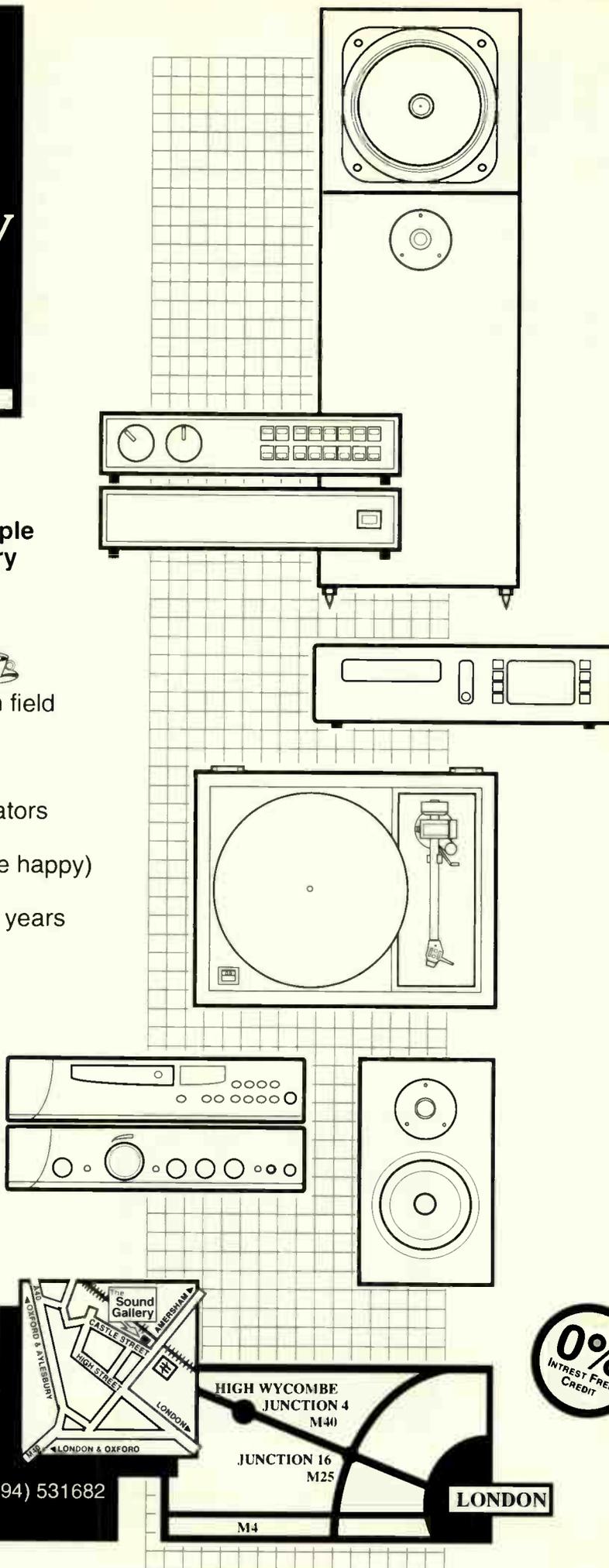
After exploring Hovhaness's music for the first time, it was reassuring to discover, upon finally tackling the introductory notes, that the mental images it created were not all that wide of

classical reviews

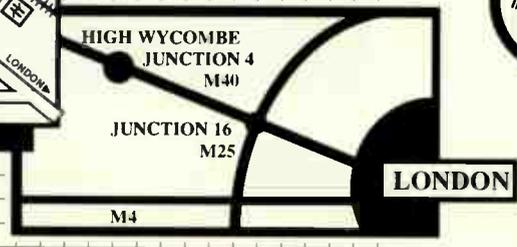
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RECORD OF THE MONTH

CHARLES CAMILLERI

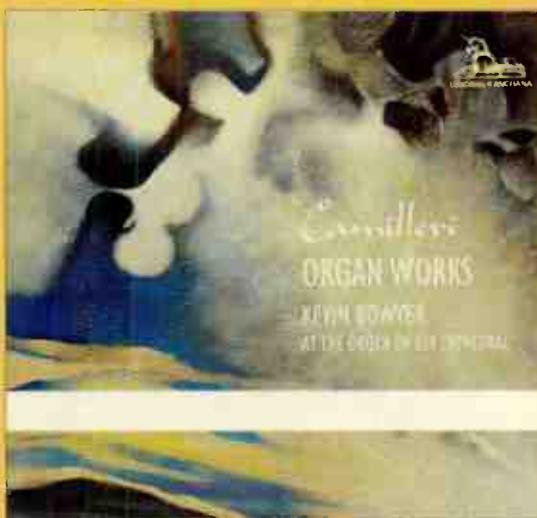
Morphogenesis/Wine of Peace/L'Amour de Dieu/Invocation to the Creator **Kevin Bowyer, organ**

Unicorn Kanchana DKP(CD)9151
(DDD/58.17)

"French" would be the conclusion of most lovers of organ music upon hearing the first notes of Charles Camilleri's *Morphogenesis*, someone strongly influenced by the music of Jehan Alain and Olivier Messiaen and fully schooled in the Gallic tradition that extends back through Durufle, Langlais, Dupre, Tournemire, Vierne and Franck. Surprisingly, however, Camilleri hails from a very different, and wholly unexpected musical culture. He was born on the Mediterranean island of Malta in 1931 and showed an early aptitude for music. His father played several instruments and the young Charles was quick not only to learn but to improvise upon them. His early efforts at composition were inspired by the island of his birth - a *Malta Suite* appeared in 1946 - but, as far as his family was concerned, their son was destined for a career in law.

All that changed when, at the age of eighteen, Charles Camilleri visited London and heard a *Promenade Concert* for the first time. The experience so enthused him that he abandoned his law studies and resolved to make a life in music. He

then began to travel widely, studying for a time at Toronto University and producing music programmes for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. A comfortable existence in North America beckoned, but Camilleri was not prepared to settle for that. He continued his explorations - geographical, musical and philosophical - and these brought him into contact with the music of Africa, Arabia and India, and with the writings of the Jesuit philosopher, Teilhard de



Chardin. These influences, and hearing the organ music of Messiaen, inspired Camilleri to write his first major work for the instrument, the *Missa Mundi* of 1972.

As with Messiaen, Camilleri seeks spiritual goals through music, but seemingly without the theological certainties. *Morphogenesis* (1978) is a

five-part work lasting some thirty-five minutes which seeks to identify the human condition and place it in relation to the vastnesses in which our 'spaceship earth' navigates its course. It makes for compelling listening, fully exploiting the potential of the instrument, in this case the magnificent organ of Ely Cathedral. How well Camilleri deploys the rich variety of flutes, strings and mutations, the gradations of pitch and power, the soft and loud reeds, and the

overwhelming majesty of sound. It is music of extraordinary contrast, often mysterious and meditative, sometimes offering a glimpse of the infinite, and on other occasions peering into the abyss.

Kevin Bowyer, who combines virtuosity and understanding in communicating Camilleri's vision, completes his recital with three works which complement *Morphogenesis*. In *Wine of Peace*, a slow melody unfolds against plain chords to hypnotic effect while in *L'Amour de Dieu*, the composer brilliantly weaves together three interdependent strands of melody to magical effect. *Invocation to the Creator*, written in 1976, is the stepping stone between the *Missa Mundi* and *Morphogenesis*, an ascent from darkness into light, culminating in the apotheosis of a blazing D Major chord on the full organ. Truly thrilling music, and captured in all its detail and scale in Geoffrey Addis's atmospheric recording ●

the mark. 'Star Dawn' - the title derives from Dante's *Divine Comedy* - is a voyage, spiritual and physical, through space (Hovhaness is convinced mankind will be forced eventually to colonise another planet, Mars being the most likely candidate). It suggests a dawning not only of the next planet on the horizon, but of the next level of our own enlightenment. As sonic odysseys go, it is both concise and compelling.

Some seven years before 'Star Dawn', in 1976, Hovhaness produced a symphony for trombone (or baritone horn) and orchestra. The following year

he made a revised version employing just a wind accompaniment, and it is this score which is played quite brilliantly here, with the players of the Ohio State University Concert Band accompanying the Swedish-born Christian Lindberg, arguably the finest trombone soloist on the circuit. The stentorian tones of the trombone are employed to powerful and often awe-inspiring effect, most notably in the finale where, to my ears, Bach encounters Byzantium.

The programme, atmospherically and impressively recorded by the Delos engineers using the Dolby surround

sound system (mightily effective on conventional stereo), is completed with Hovhaness's highly descriptive incidental music to Clifford Odets' play *The Flowering Peach*, a serio-comic retelling of the story of Noah's Ark, and by the third movement from *Symphony No. 20*, a kind of pilgrims' march in the form of a chorale prelude. This gravely beautiful music - not dissimilar to Vaughan Williams' in character - supplies a fitting conclusion to this valuable survey of the work of one of the most distinctive voices in American music ●

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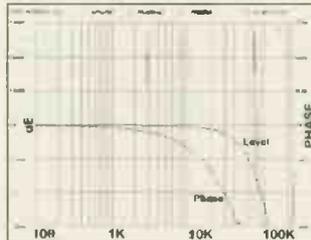
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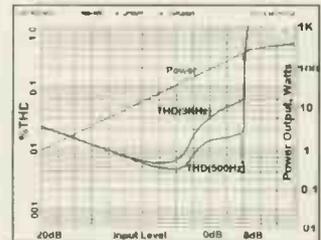
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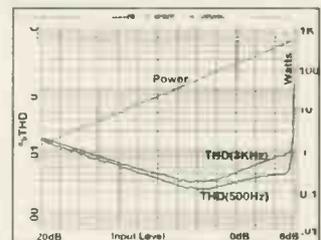
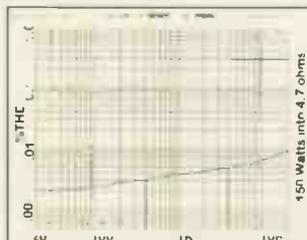
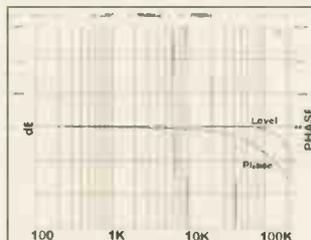


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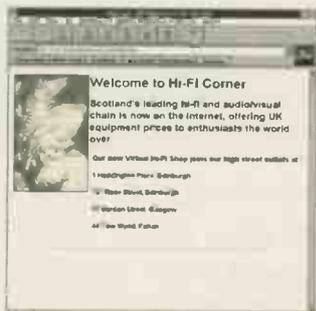
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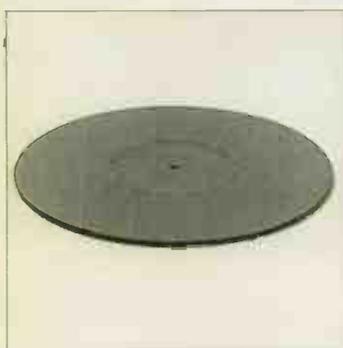
Dear Mr. Soper.

Thanks for sending me the plinth for my Garrard 401. I must confess, that I was a bit sceptical about it, when I ordered one - after all, I bought it, without the possibility of listening to it first. But the results I get are really unbelievable. There is no rumbling, instead deep, deep bass and an authority, I never heard before from my records. And believe me, I tried some of the best turntables around (Linn LP 12, Roksan Xerxes). Now I'm waiting for the forthcoming power-supply. The day I place my order for it, I will do so without being a bit sceptical. Thanks again for a marvellous piece of art.

MR TEILINGNER - AUSTRIA



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World Radio History

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

AMPLIFIERS

XTC AMPLIFIER

The XTC power amplifier produces no less than 200watts into a standard 8ohm load, so its got plenty of power for big rooms and insensitive loudspeakers. This power amp can handle low loads well too. It upped its output to an impressive 324watts into 4ohms and since many loudspeakers these days dip low to gain sensitivity it's useful to have some grunt in reserve. The XTC has.

Frequency response via CD measured 12Hz - 66kHz, a normal enough performance. The XTC goes low enough to reproduce CD subsonics, but not so low as to suffer DC drift. It did, however, exhibit power supply rectifier spikes in its noise floor, although at full clip there was little power supply modulation.

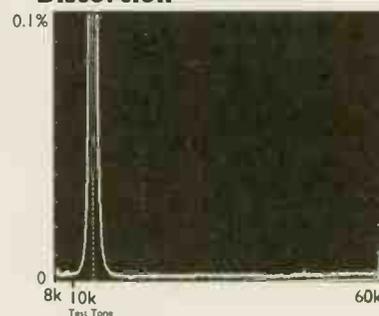
Most impressive was the full power high

frequency (10kHz) distortion residual. Most amps start to look a bit rough when asked to perform this trick; the XTC turned out just 0.03% second harmonic - impressive.

The XTC was well engineered and powerful. It should have smooth sounding treble and plenty enough welly for insensitive speakers and big rooms. NK

| | |
|--------------------|------------|
| Power | 200watts |
| CD/tuner/aux. | |
| Frequency response | 12Hz-66kHz |
| Separation | 52dB |
| Noise | -94dB |
| Distortion | 0.003% |
| Sensitivity | 280mV |
| dc offset | 2mV |

Distortion



AMC 3025

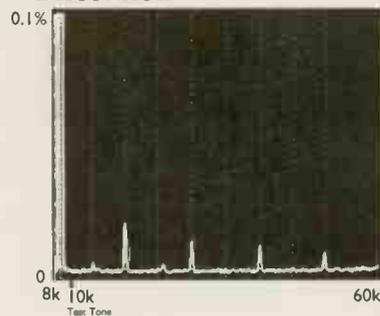
The AMC3025 is a modestly powered amplifier that produces 40watts into 8Ω, rising to 64watts into 4Ω. Via CD it has a flat frequency response across the audio band, reaching down usefully to a low 10Hz. High frequency response has been rolled off at 41kHz, which should give clean treble, not too bright. Noise was low and sensitivity usefully high at 180mV. Distortion was primarily second harmonic at low levels, third becoming dominant at higher levels. The presence of third suggests some hardness or incision may be audible.

The disc stages were reasonably well tailored, but the MC stage is really a x10 add-on gain stage suffering the not uncommon problem of being noisy. It had little more bass cut than MM too, introduced by warp filtering (MM=30Hz, MC=48Hz, -1dB). Hiss will be noticeable with low output MC cartridges, so even though plenty of gain is available high output types are most suitable. NK

| | |
|--------------------|------------|
| Power | 40watts |
| CD/tuner/aux. | |
| Frequency response | 10Hz-41kHz |
| Separation | 72dB |
| Noise | -95dB |
| Distortion | 0.01% |
| Sensitivity | -5/-6mV |
| dc offset | 1mV |

| | |
|--------------------|------------|
| Disc (MC) | |
| Frequency response | 48Hz-54kHz |
| Separation | -55dB |
| Noise | -62dB |
| Distortion | 0.01% |
| Sensitivity | 0.25mV |
| Overload | 15mV |

Distortion



| | |
|--------------------|------------|
| Disc (MM) | |
| Frequency response | 30Hz-56kHz |
| Separation | -69dB |
| Noise | -79dB |
| Distortion | 0.01% |
| Sensitivity | 2.5mV |
| Overload | 150mV |

CARTRIDGE

GRADO PRESTIGE BLACK

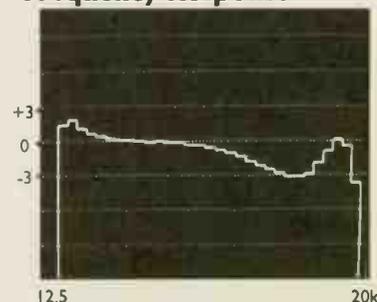
The Grado Black tracked well, especially in the mid-band, so it will handle loud vocals. Its frequency response suffers a substantial mid-range droop, however, which will make the sound very warm, at best. It may even sound dull and slow. The elliptical stylus tracked inner grooves well, suffering little tracing loss, a good sign. It suggests the stylus has been well honed and will deliver detail.

Vertical tracking angle was too high, measuring over 30degrees (it should be 22degrees). As a result distortion on vertical modulation, which affects left and right stereo images, was high at 6%. This led to a poor overall average distortion value of 3.7% being produced.

Grados have always been a bit iffy in terms of measured performance. Little has changed. NK

| | |
|--------------------------|------------|
| Tracking force | 1-2gms |
| Weight | 5.5gms |
| Vertical tracking angle | >30degrees |
| Frequency response | 20-20k |
| Channel separation | 24dB |
| Tracking ability (300Hz) | |
| lateral | 16μm |
| vertical | 12μm |
| lateral (1kHz) | 22cms/sec. |
| Distortion (45μm) | |
| lateral | 1.4% |
| vertical | 6% |
| Output (5cms/sec rms) | 5mV |

Frequency Response



Campion

by

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| | E77, E77 Mg | N/A | £36.00 | R20 XE, DLM, 3/4, 3/6, XLM III | £13.50 |
| | P77, P77 Mg | N/A | £48.00 | Aiwa AN 5/11/30/60/8745 | £9.00 |
| Audio Technica | AT 95E | £21.00 | £12.50 | AN 2/50/70/77/DI4932/8743 | £11.00 |
| | AT 110 E | £25.00 | £13.00 | RS 33/35/38/84/85/90 | £9.00 |
| | AT OCS | £280.00 | £210.00* | SP 8/9/12A | £25.00 |
| | AT 120ET | £45.00 | £31.50 | BSR ST 14/15/16/17/19/21 | £3.00 |
| | AT 311 EP (T4P) | £25.00 | £13.00 | Dual DN 145/155/165/E DN 149 S | £13.50 |
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| | AT 440 ML | £81.00 | £63.00 | G800 Sup E | £13.50 |
| | AT 450 E | £63.00 | £33.00 | Hilachi DS-ST 7/12/14/15/26/30/35/102 | £9.00 |
| | ATML150 | £187.00 | £128.00 | DS-ST 5/16/23/24/25/55/103/104 | £11.00 |
| | DL 110 | £70.00 | £36.00 | DT 33/35/36/45/55/60/65, DT Z1 S | £9.00 |
| Denon | DL 304 | £190.00 | £160.00 | N 47/48/51/53/60/61/63/66/72 | £9.00 |
| | ELECTRA | £26.00 | £17.00 | N 36/37/43/45/56/59/62/67/69 | £11.00 |
| Goldring | 1006 | £33.00 | £34.00 | National (Technics) EPS 4/5/2/7/5/76/ STSD, P30/33 D | £9.00 |
| | 1012 GX | £70.00 | £46.00 | P30 E (upgrade), EPS 205/207 E | £13.50 |
| | 1022 GX | £90.00 | £57.00 | FF 15A/RMS 10/20 EII, DM/P 20 | £13.50 |
| | 1042 | £105.00 | £70.00 | GP 371/400/780/400 III/III | £9.00 |
| | ERDICA (LX/H) ELITE | £187.00 | £122.00* | GP 330/370/401/401 II/412 II | £11.00 |
| Grado | Prestige black | £44.00 | £24.00 | PN 210/220/240/K65/250/295T | £9.00 |
| | Prestige green | £53.00 | £29.00 | SN 27/28/29/33/34/37/41/50/80/101 | £9.00 |
| | Prestige Blue | £62.00 | £34.00 | ST 8D1/0D1/5J/66/613 | £9.00 |
| | Prestige Red | £90.00 | £49.00 | STY 104/11/11/116/117/118/123/124 | £9.00 |
| | Prestige Silver | £107.00 | £59.00 | N 75-6/CG, N 91 G, SS 35 C | £9.00 |
| | Prestige Gold | £134.00 | £74.00 | N 44 E, N 70 E/J, N 75 ED/EJ T2 | £11.00 |
| | ZF1+S | N/A | £34.00 | N 55 E, N 95 ED/EJ, N 97/105 ED | £13.50 |
| | M44GX | £TBA | £TBA | VN 15E, VN 35E (V 15 IIIE) | £16.50 |
| | M447X | £TBA | £TBA | VN 95/97 HE, VN 35 HE | £22.00 |
| | M70BX | £TBA | £TBA | Sony ND 133/134/142/150/155/200 G | £9.00 |
| Shure (new range) | SC35X | £TBA | £TBA | ND 115/143/148/153/220/250 G | £11.00 |
| | M82E (1/2"/T4P) | £TBA | £TBA | Toshiba N 53/55/60 DY, N 62/292, N 71/290 | £9.00 |
| | M111E (1/2"/T4P) | £TBA | £TBA | | |
| | ME 95 E | N/A | £26.00 | | |
| | N 78 S | (new range) | £TBA | | |
| | VN 35 MR | (V15 III) | £63.00 | | |
| | VN 45 MR | (V15 IV) | £89.00 | | |
| | VN 5 MR | | £265.00 | £134.00 | |
| | 500 AL Disco | | £30.00 | £18.00 | |
| | 680 ALX Disco | | £46.00 | £36.00 | |
| 680 ELX Disco | | £57.00 | £41.00 | | |
| Trackmaster | | £99.00 | £41.00 | | |

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CD PLAYERS

PIONEER PD-R05

With a very flat frequency response, showing a gentle lift in the bass and roll-off in the treble, I'd expect a smooth, full and balanced sound from the PDR-05. Distortion was very low at all levels too, another good sign.

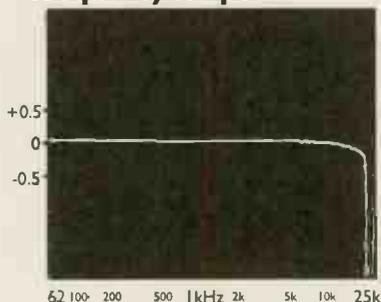
Elsewhere the Pioneer continued its exemplary performance, with low noise, wide separation and output usefully above the 2V standard, allowing extra headroom with passive preamplifiers. A fine piece of engineering. DB

| | | |
|--------------------|-------------|-------|
| Frequency response | 4Hz-21.5kHz | |
| Distortion (%) | | |
| -6dB | 0.006 | 0.007 |
| -30dB | 0.005 | 0.005 |
| -60dB | 0.41 | 0.39 |
| -90dB | 29.2 | 28.3 |

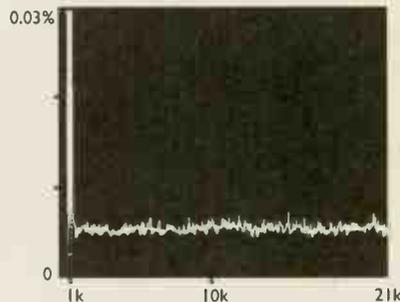
| | | |
|-----------------|------|-------|
| Separation (dB) | left | right |
| 1kHz | 117 | 114 |
| 20kHz | 93 | 88 |

| | |
|---------------|--------|
| Noise | -112dB |
| with emphasis | -115dB |
| Dynamic range | 110dB |
| Output | 2.65V |

Frequency Response



Distortion



MARANTZ CD-67

For an affordable player, the CD-67 turns in an impressive performance. Frequency response show a subtle lift in the bass and gently falling treble, ensuring a smooth and full sound. Also suggesting a clean sound is the low distortion at all levels.

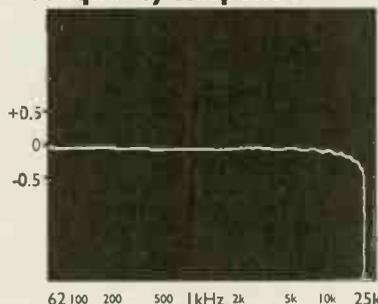
Separation was extremely wide, even at high frequencies, suggesting good isolation between channels. Noise was low too, and output above the Philips standard at 2.4V. A fine performance for the price. DB

| | | |
|--------------------|-------------|-------|
| Frequency response | 4Hz-20.8kHz | |
| Distortion (%) | | |
| -6dB | 0.006 | 0.006 |
| -30dB | 0.004 | 0.004 |
| -60dB | 0.57 | 0.58 |
| -90dB | 29.3 | 29.8 |

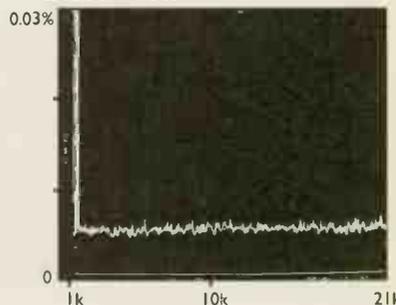
| | | |
|-----------------|------|-------|
| Separation (dB) | left | right |
| 1kHz | 133 | 138 |
| 20kHz | 128 | 128 |

| | |
|---------------|--------|
| Noise | -116dB |
| with emphasis | -116dB |
| Dynamic range | 105dB |
| Output | 2.4V |

Frequency Response



Distortion



CASSETTE DECK

KENWOOD KX-3080

This deck was a surprise. It's head measured so well I had to repeat and check my results. It appears that this deck is a cut-down expensive model, since its head is far more resistant to overload than rivals, accepting an impressive +5.5dB/+1dB (MOL315/SAT10k) onto metal tape, for example. Taken in conjunction with an unusually flat, smooth frequency response characteristic, as our analysis shows, Kenwood seem to have gone to some expense in this important area. The head offers excellent results, its only minor drawback being a lumpy bass response below 100Hz, due to contour effects.

The transport similarly worked very well, holding speed tightly. The total weighted Wow & Flutter figure of 0.06% is suitable testament to this. The KX-3080 will sound clean and tonally stable as a result.

Replay frequency response fell a little toward high frequencies and this will make prerecorded tapes sound a little dull, especially with Dolby B engaged since this amplifies errors.

Kenwood have accurately adjusted the deck to give flat frequency response, when recording, onto TDK AD, TDK SA-X and TDK MA. Note that the deck will sound a

little dull with ordinary TDK-SA: few decks are set up to match SA-X, like this one.

This is an unusually well engineered deck. NK

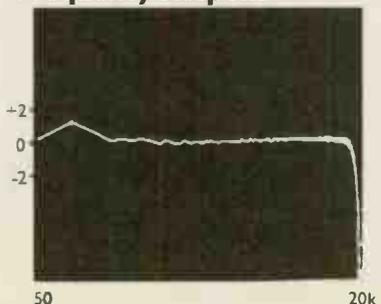
TEST RESULTS

| | |
|----------------------------|------------|
| REPLAY (prerecorded tapes) | |
| Frequency response (-2dB) | 30Hz-15kHz |
| Speed accuracy | +0.6fast |
| Hiss (70uS, Dolby out) | -61dB |

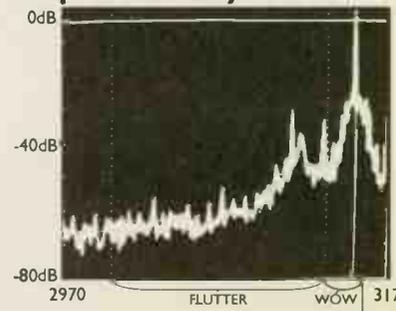
RECORDING (blank tapes)

| | |
|--|------------|
| Frequency response (IEC Primary Refs.) | |
| ferric (IECI) | 20Hz-10kHz |
| chrome (IECII) | 20Hz-15kHz |
| metal (IECIV) | 20Hz-16kHz |
| Separation (1kHz) | 56dB |
| Distortion (315Hz) | 0.3% |
| Hiss (70uS, Dolby out) | -55dB |
| Speed variations (DIN total) | 0.06% |
| Flutter/satur (3-3.13kHz) | -25dB |
| MOL/SAT (IEC Refs) | 315/10k |
| IEC I (ferric) | 4dB/-9dB |
| IECII (chrome) | 3dB/-3dB |
| IECIV (metal) | 5.5dB/1dB |

Frequency Response



Speed Stability



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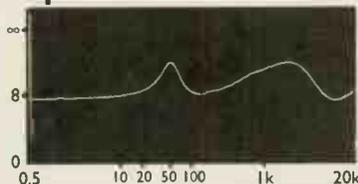
HEYBROOK HB1 S3

Age matters not, it would seem in the case of Heybrook's HB1, which has been around in various forms since 1982. It is an extremely well engineered loudspeaker, with a smooth frequency response and good phase alignment, which should ensure a balanced sound with fine focus. A rising treble and falling bass may make them sound a little thin, if insightful, but near wall placement should at least bolster bass.

The HB1s are sensitive too, producing 89dB SPL at 1m from a nominal watt (2.83V)

pink noise signal. This coupled with a smooth impedance curve averaging out at 8.2Ω will make them very easy to drive. Fine engineering. DB

Impedance



Frequency Response



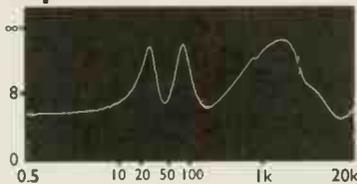
B&W DM602

B&W's DM602s had a smooth frequency response that showed good phase alignment, which normally ensures a focused sound with fine imaging. Treble output is a little high, but I suspect it will be just enough to provide extra insight and detail without becoming too sharp. There is a little upper bass lift too, which should give a good impression of speed and punch.

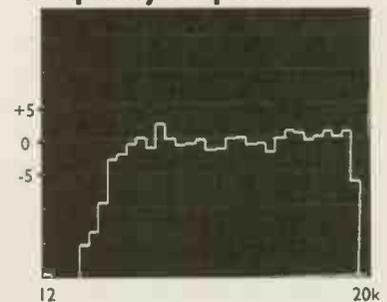
With a highish sensitivity of 88dB at 1m for a nominal watt (2.83V) pink noise signal, the B&W's should go loud with few watts. Overall impedance is 7.2Ω, but they are

strongly reactive, described by the sharp changes in the impedance curve. Most modern amplifiers should be able to cope with this well enough though. DB

Impedance



Frequency Response



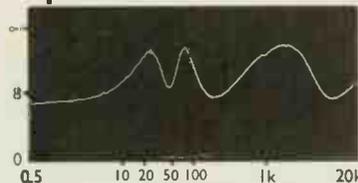
CELESTION IMPACT 23

Celestion's Impact 23 has been very carefully engineered, the frequency response being especially flat. There are some subtle trends though, including a peak in the bass around 160Hz which will help to give them good punch and speed. Through the midrange there is a very shallow dip above which treble gently rises again. This should ensure a smooth midrange and good insight respectively.

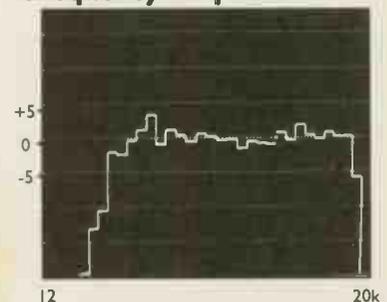
With a sensitivity of 89.5dB at 1m for a nominal watt (2.83V) pink noise signal and an overall impedance of 9.3Ω, the Impact 23s will not only go loud with few watts, but won't

draw strong current either. Any amplifier of around 20watts should be more than capable of driving Celestion's Impact 23s. DB

Impedance



Frequency Response



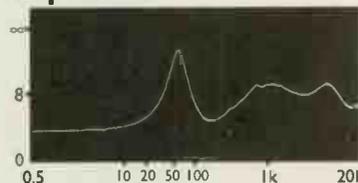
TANNOY 633

Tannoy's 633s show fine integration between midrange and treble, which will give them a balanced sound here. There is a plateau lift that extends from low bass through a large portion of upper bass though, which may thicken cellos for example. They were a bit phasey too, so the sound may be a little dispersed.

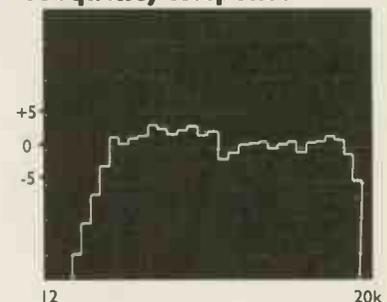
With good sensitivity of 87dB at 1m for a nominal watt (2.83V) pink noise signal, the 633s should go loud with few watts. Overall impedance was low though at 5.1Ω, echoed by a low slung impedance curve that dropped

to 3Ω in the bass. An amplifier capable of good current delivery will be needed for best results. DB

Impedance



Frequency Response



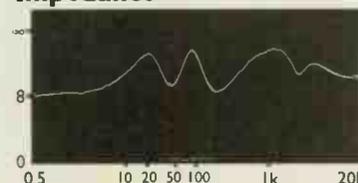
ROGERS LS33

Rogers' LS33s have a smooth enough response, but a slight peak in the treble will inject some brightness. This may be heard as extra insight or detail, rather than sharpness, if the tweeter is good. Through the midband the response is smooth, which normally ensures an even and neutral balance.

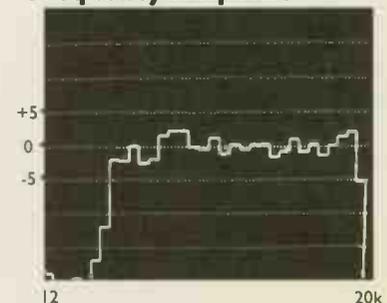
The impedance curve is smooth, rising through the midband and treble to give an overall figure of 12.2Ω. This is typical of British loudspeakers, and means that the Rogers won't demand high current to drive

them properly. Sensitivity was around average at 86dB, so the LS33s are easy enough to drive. DB

Impedance



Frequency Response



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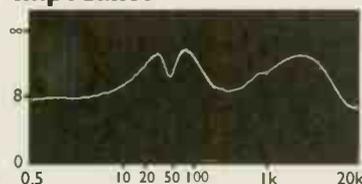
MORDAUNT-SHORT MS25I

Mordaunt-Short's MS25is have a very smooth and flat response (grilles off), but with some trends that I expect will colour their sound. Although the two drivers, bass/midrange and tweeter, are themselves very flat, they mis-align at the crossover point, treble level around 1dB below the rest right the way across its range. Although 1dB is not a lot in terms of level, losing 1dB across a wide range from 1-2kHz to 20kHz is a large loss in energy, which may be heard as a lack of detail/insight or a muddiness as lower midrange dominates.

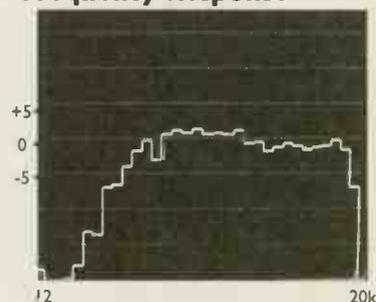
Producing just 84dB SPL at 1m for a nominal watt (2.83V) pink noise signal, the

MS25is are going to need a healthy supply of volts to go loud. Overall impedance was 9Ω, and the impedance curve stayed above 5Ω across the band, so they won't load an amplifier heavily all the same. I'd recommend 50-60watts for best results. DB

Impedance



Frequency Response



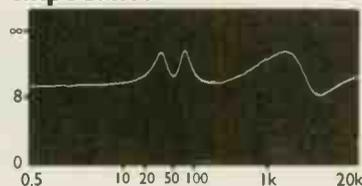
ELTAX SYMPHONY 6

With their thick MDF grilles in place the Eltax Symphony 6s suffered. The tall, hard walls the grilles place around the drivers cause reflections resulting in a strong peak at 1kHz and a dip just above. Removing the grilles removed much of this problem and luckily treble level stayed the same; I was worried that it might have increased even further. As it is, they are still going to sound bright due to the plateau lift in the treble. Best results are likely to be with them firing straight down the room - slightly off-axis upper treble will roll-off. Bass went deep and was tuned low, so I'd expect impressive depth from these mid-size floorstanders.

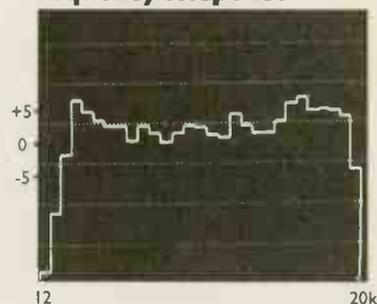
At 85.5dB sensitivity the Symphony 6s are about average, and a high overall impedance means they won't place too

demanding a load on partnering amplifiers. The sharp changes in the impedance curve indicate they are a reactive load, but nothing most modern amplifiers shouldn't be able to cope with. I'd recommend amplifiers in the region of 30-50watts. DB

Impedance



Frequency Response



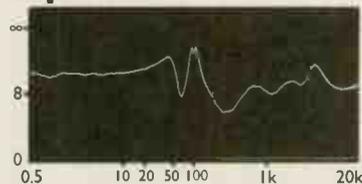
TECHNICS SB-M1000

Being a four way system with the drivers spaced some distance apart, measuring the SB-M1000s was not an easy task. Looking at each driver in turn I found that they were all smooth and flat, but our plot shows a rather lumpy result as the differing distances between the individual drivers and the microphone cause phase differences. Overall though, there is a smooth spread of energy across the band, so I'd expect a balanced result.

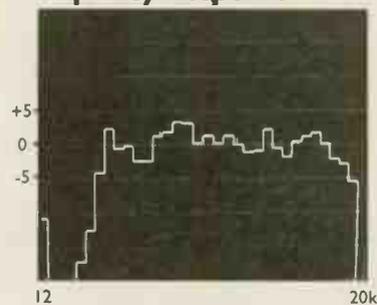
With average sensitivity of 87dB and an

overall impedance of 7.8Ω, the SB-M1000s should be easy enough to drive too. DB

Impedance



Frequency Response



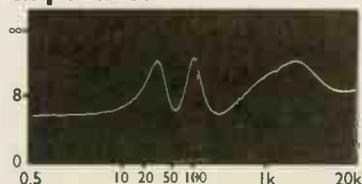
MISSION 73 II

Mission seem to have a knack for getting things spot on with their budget loudspeakers, and the 73IIs are no exception. The response is very well engineered and tailored to give an impressive and exciting sound. It is smooth through the midband, ensuring good balance, but a slight treble rise for insight and detail and a lift in the bass for punch will make them stand out above the crowd in a demonstration. Phase alignment was good too, so expect good image focus.

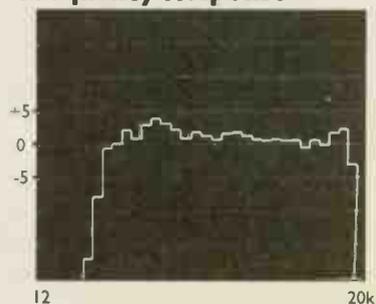
A sensitivity of 86dB and overall

impedance of 7Ω means any modern amplifier should drive them with ease. Once again, Mission's budget 'speaker sets the standard. DB

Impedance



Frequency Response



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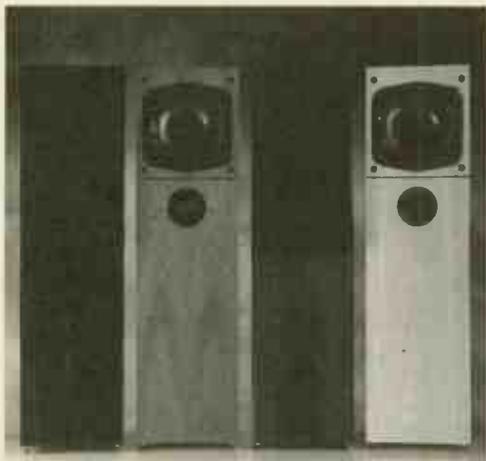
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ROKSAN XPS V P.S.U. £398
REGA EOS PHONO STAGE £398
REGA PLANET CD PLAYER £398

LIST OF S/H AND EX DEMO GOODS

| | | |
|---|-------|-------|
| ROKSAN XERKES PIANO LACQUER BLACK/TABRIZI/MC20 | WAS | NOW |
| ROKSAN XERKES R/W XPS 3 SME IV | £2270 | £995 |
| ROKSAN DS1 POWER SUPPLY | £1995 | £1099 |
| ROKSAN DA1 CONVERTOR | £695 | £450 |
| ROKSAN L1 PRE AMP | £495 | £175 |
| ROKSAN L2 PRE AMP | £2250 | £950 |
| LINN LP12/CIRKUS/ARO/PINK LINN | £1295 | £525 |
| Sonus FABER MINUETTO | £2500 | £1295 |
| TOTEM MODEL ONE | £898 | £650 |
| PROAC SUPER TABLETTE 50 (R/WOOD) | £1195 | £600 |
| ROKSAN DARIUS (KENYAN BLACK) INC. XOVERS+STANDS | £600 | £450 |
| PS AUDIO 2C POWERAMP | £2150 | £895 |
| ROGERS STUDIO ONE SPEAKERS | £700 | £295 |
| PS AUDIO PHONO STAGE 2B (M/M) | £N/A | £125 |
| VOYD FALDI/SCORPIO/ATFS TURNTABLE | £1750 | £100 |
| MUSICAL FIDELITY P140 POWERAMP | £1100 | £450 |
| B&W DM 302 SPEAKERS (NEW) | £399 | £225 |
| MARANTZ PM 55 SE AMPLIFIER (NEW) | £129 | £89 |
| AURA VA 80 AMPLIFIER (NEW) | £249 | £169 |
| IMPULSE H6 HORN LOUDSPEAKERS BURR OAK | £280 | £179 |
| REGA XEL ROSEWOOD SPEAKERS | £1750 | £695 |
| PROJECT 2.1 TURNTABLE | £1040 | £895 |
| PROJECT 1.2 TURNTABLE | £299 | £175 |
| PROJECT 0.5 TURNTABLE | £199 | £129 |
| KEF Q 50 BLACK SPEAKERS | £159 | £95 |
| KEF CODA 9 SPEAKERS | £529 | £395 |
| KEF CODA 7 SPEAKERS | £189 | £139 |
| KEF CODA 9 SPEAKERS | £129 | £99 |
| B+W P4 CHERRY | £299 | £239 |
| KUDOS S 50 24" STANDS | £675 | £499 |
| ATACAMA SE 24" STANDS | £100 | £60 |
| | £80 | £45 |

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| | | NEW | SALE |
|--|--------------|-------|-------|
| EAD CD1000 Series 3 CD player with HDCD | Ex. Demo | £2000 | £1495 |
| Theta Cobalt 307 DAC | Ex. Demo | £700 | £475 |
| Audio Alchemy DDE V1.1 DAC | Ex. Demo | £400 | £275 |
| Sony CDP X339ES-Sony's Hi-End Cd Player + Rem. Vol | As New | £800 | £295 |
| Theta TLC +PSU works with most DACs but amazing sound when partnered with Cobalt 307 | Ex. Demo | £230 | £175 |
| Audio Research LS3B Balanced Line Preamp | Ex. Demo | £2250 | £1495 |
| Counterpoint SA 3.1. Tube Preamp MM/MC | S/Hand(Mint) | | £595 |
| Densen B100 Beat Integrated Amplifier 60w | Ex. Demo | £600 | £425 |
| Densen DM10 Integrated Amplifier 70w | Ex. Demo | £1300 | £825 |
| Townsend Elite Rock Turntable complete with optional upgraded Merlin Power Supply, Excalibur Arm with damping trough and fitted with Audio Technica ATF5 MC Cartridge | S/Hand(Mint) | | £595 |
| Graham 1.5T State of Art unipivot Tonearm - the best arm I've heard! Few hours use only - my own arm supplied boxed | As New | £3000 | £2350 |
| Audio Alchemy VAC in the Box Phono Stage including upgraded Power Supply PS3 | Ex. Demo | £500 | £325 |
| Ortofon MC 2000 MkII MC Cartridge - superb, under 10 hours use by us | Ex. Demo | £650 | £375 |
| Audiomeca Record Clamp will fit all decks with standard spindle (e.g. Linn, PT, Roksan etc) | New | £100 | £75 |
| Mirage:- | | | |
| M-190i 2-way vented Bookshelf Monitor | Ex. Demo | £300 | £185 |
| M-290 2-way, Audiophile Compact Monitor | Ex. Demo | £400 | £250 |
| M-590i 2-way, 4-drive symmetrical Bipolar Radiator | Ex. Demo | £800 | £525 |
| M-890i 2-way, 4-drive symmetrical Bipolar Radiator | Ex. Demo | £1000 | £675 |
| M-1090i 2-way, 4-drive symmetrical Bipolar Radiator | Ex. Demo | £1300 | £950 |
| M5-si 2-way, 4-driver fully symmetrical Bipolar Radiator | Ex. Demo | £2000 | £1495 |
| MBS the World's smallest symmetrical Bipolar Speaker includes matching stands - superb sound | Ex. Demo | £400 | £285 |
| BPS-100 active 100w Bipolar Subwoofer | Ex. Demo | £575 | £395 |
| BPS-150 Active 150w Bipolar Subwoofer | Ex. Demo | £800 | £499 |
| SD Acoustics SD2 Loudspeakers supplied with Origin Live Tripod Stands. - silly price to clear | S/Hand(vgc) | | £249 |
| Magneplaner MG 1.4 Ribbon Loudspeakers - these were good value £1100 new, so if I tell you these are finished with oak frames and oatmeal cloth and in mint condition for £450 - what are you waiting for. | S/Hand(mint) | £1100 | £450 |



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AMPLIFICATION

| | Today's RRP | S/H |
|--|-------------|-------|
| Nakamichi Stasis PA7E 200w/200w | £1950 | £675 |
| Quad 306 Mint | £350 | £260 |
| Audio Innovations Series 1000 Pre Series 200 Power | £1300 | £695 |
| Craft Series V Pre/Power | £1200 | £500 |
| EAR Head Amplifier | £600 | £250 |
| Nakamichi IA-3 Amplifier | £350 | £250 |
| Roksan L1 Pre-amp ex dem | £1595 | £1275 |
| Roksan L2 Pre-amp ex dem | £995 | £795 |
| Roksan S1 Poweramp ex dem | £1495 | £1195 |
| Quad 44 Quad 405 Pre/Power | £575 | £375 |
| Cyrus One Amplifier | £270 | £180 |
| Cyrus II Amplifier/PSX | £595 | £395 |
| Moth Passive Pre 2 x Monoblocks | £599 | £399 |
| Yamaha DSPE300 Processor | £649 | £349 |
| Yamaha DSPA1000 A/V Amplifier | £899 | £595 |
| Quad 77 amplifier (ex-dem mint) | £849 | £649 |
| Naim 160x3 power amps/Alps PSU | | |
| NAC42 Pre/Naxo/Linn Isobariks | £7000 | £2750 |

CAREFULLY USED HI-FI WANTED CASH READY, WE'LL COLLECT

CD PLAYERS/CASSETTES/TUNERS/REEL TO REEL

| | Today's RRP | S/H |
|------------------------------------|-------------|------|
| Harmon Kardon Citation 15 Tuner | £795 | £175 |
| Nakamichi ZX7 Ref. Stand. Cassette | £1495 | £795 |
| Kenwood KRV6050 AV Receiver | £399 | £239 |
| Quad 77 CD Player (ex dem) | £899 | £699 |
| Rotel RCD965 Discreet | £425 | £249 |
| revox 877 Reel to Reel | £1399 | £699 |

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TURNTABLES

| | Today's RRP | S/H |
|---|-------------|------|
| Michell Gyrodec R8300/ATOC5 | £1000 | £625 |
| Technics SL110/SME 3009/Shure 97 | £599 | £250 |
| Linn LP12/LVII Itok/AT05/Cirkus/Trampolin | £2000 | £895 |
| Linn LP12/Basik/Citofon | £899 | £499 |
| Thorens TD180 MKV/Stanton 500 | £399 | £199 |
| Mission/Nagaoka MP20 | £249 | £149 |
| ROKSAN Xerxes/Akito/1012/PSU | £1400 | £795 |
| Systemdek Mission Arm Grado | £350 | £245 |
| Linn LP12/Syrnix P2, Koetsu Rosewood | £2250 | £575 |

PART EXCHANGE - OUR TRADE IN PRICES ARE UNBEATABLE AGAINST ALL THE TOP BRANDS WE STOCK

LOUDSPEAKERS

| | Today's RRP | S/H |
|------------------------------|-------------|------|
| Spendor S20 Walnut Mint | £770 | £500 |
| Yamaha NS1000 Rare in Cherry | £1399 | £700 |
| IMF TLS50 | £508 | £165 |
| Tannoy 609 Biwire | £300 | £180 |
| REL Strata Subwoofer | £500 | £395 |
| Rogers LS3/5A | £700 | £350 |
| Roksan System 937 (ex dem) | £600 | £480 |
| Acoustic Energy (ex dem) | £1175 | £875 |
| Castle 900 walnut (ex dem) | £300 | £200 |
| Jamo 507 (ex dem) | £800 | £600 |
| DALI 450 (ex dem) | £700 | £575 |
| Celestion SL6 | £399 | £220 |
| Monitor Audio MA800 | £795 | £495 |
| Rogers LS7 | £550 | £300 |
| Time Window 1A | £999 | £499 |
| Polk Audio RT8 Mint | £595 | £295 |
| Lentek Monitors | £1000 | £375 |
| KEF Q30 ex demonstration | £379 | £279 |

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PRIVATE

**NAIM/LINN BUY/SELL. 52, CDS, 250, 135, 140, HICAP, ARO, 72, 82, ETC
TEL BOB 01382 819732**

AUDIO TECHNICA OC9 moving coil cartridge (unused) £180.
Tel: 01249 812 565

LINN EKOS TONEARM rewired with Audionote silver wire with Audionote ANV silver arm lead. £700.
Tel: 0161 434 5680

LINN KAIRN PRE-AMPLIFIER and Linn LK280 power amplifier £950 ono. Exposure VIII power amplifier £195 ono. NAD 910 Dolby Pro Logic surround sound processor £195 ono. Aiwa Dolby B & C cassette deck £50 ono.
Tel: 01423 528 256 (Harrogate)

REEL TO REEL Professional 1/4" tape 1200ft 7" spools all boxed/unused. Also leaders and splicing tape. Will split but prefer to sell together. Offers.
Tel: 01451 832 177 (Cotswolds)

LARGE SPEAKERS HUGE SOUND. Pair of Nightingale NMI monitors, bass units KEF B139, mid range Peerless. Height 865 mm, width 405 mm, depth 280 mm. Oiro £300, but best offer will secure anyway - we need the space!
Tel: 01543 251 281

PAIR SNELL K SPEAKERS plus stands £150. Topaz 1m interconnect £10. Lynwood mains filter £30.
Tel: 0181 556 9102

PAIR FULL RANGE ELECTRO-STATICS (not Quads) very large and unusual. Offers? Pair Quad II Concordants EL34 x 2 + 6550. Good condition £350. Exchange, swap, WHY.
Tel: 01295 261 863 eves (Oxfordshire)

HEYBROOK HBI LOUDSPEAKERS upgraded to S3 with Heybrook stands £100. Pioneer A300X £110 both boxed and mint.
Tel: 01905 830 120 (Worcester)

ION NEXUS SPI PRE (MM/MC Boards), Nexus SAM 40 power, X-Pak I PSU, X-Pak 2 PSU. Boxed. Cost £1,100. Wanted £550 ono. Rega ELA speakers. Cost £405. Wanted £200.
Tel: 01663 744 803 (Stockport)

DNM 2A PRE AMP with single power supply £300. Exposure VIII power amp £200, Linn Ittok tonearm £160.
Tel: 01189 328 282 day, 01189 477 542 evenings.

WANTED: ARCAM BBS DAC. BB3 for sale, £100.
Tel: Steve 01763 848 390 weekday eves only. (Herts/Cambs)

WANTED: PAIR OF MERIDIAN DSP 5000 digital loudspeakers and one DSP 5000C digital loudspeaker. Will pay up to £3000.
Tel: 01423 528 256 (Harrogate)

COMPLETE SYSTEM, LINN LP12, Lingo, Akito, K9, Exposure pre/power amps, Linn Kaber speakers, Pioneer cassette, tuner, Marantz graphic, Philips CD, all cables £3000 ono.
Tel: Adrian P. 01734 819 990

THORENS TD124 II and manual. Mint condition. £185.
Tel: 01302 724 384

LINN KEILIDH SPEAKERS + plinths £525.
Tel: Tim - Pager No. 0941 119 432 Please leave a contact telephone number.

GALE FORCE 4 SPEAKERS - Floor standing, slimline, excellent performance £175 ono.
Tel: 01422 842 022

TDL STUDIO 3 TRANSMISSION line speakers plus TDL stands. Reluctant sale for £425 or serious offer. (current price over £1000) Can demonstrate. Boxed.
Tel: 01386 423 957 evenings (Evesham)

LINN TUKANS, ROSEWOOD FINISH, 9 months old, hardly used, boxed as new, stands included. Cost £600. Sell £350 ono.
Tel: 01242 527 481 eves/w/ends

REVOX B77 TAPE RECORDER. Very low home use only. 1/4 track, 3 3/4 and 7 1/2 I.P.S. Can demonstrate £450.
Tel: 0191 281 0260

SME IV TONEARM, VGC, £450. Ortofon MC2000, less than 20hrs use, £300. Upgraded to Rohmann. Kinshaw Perception 2-box phono stage, £200. Also two DPA The Power RF mains filters, £40 each or £70 pair.
Tel: 0181 830 7214, Chris.

QUAD 67 CD PLAYER £575, Ruark Talisman II speakers £475, both items mint condition, boxed with manuals.
Tel: 01978 780 580 (Wrexham area)

MUSICAL FIDELITY A1 Class A amplifier £135. NAD 7020E receiver £95. Sony TCRX55 cassette deck £65. Garrard SP25 Mk5/Shure M75-6 in plinth £25.
Tel: 01268 795 235 (Essex)

VERY RARE EAR 529 Monoblocs, 500 watts per channel, recently overhauled by Tim Paravinci. £1500, or may exchange.
Tel: Andy 0171 928 8242 (Waterloo area)

AUDIOLAB 8000C Four months old, boxed, pristine £375. Musical Fidelity T1 FM tuner guaranteed 10 months £230. Maplin Millennium valve monoblocks new valves £245.
Tel: Robert 0121 427 8810 (B'ham)

REVOX A77 Mk3, Hi-Speed, half track. Mint condition, original instruction book, NAB adaptors and tapes £325 or exchange for a Quad 66 CD player or tuner.
Tel: 01275 835 334

DPA RENAISSANCE intergrated amp, less than 1 year old, mint, still under guarantee., can demo. £300 ono.
Tel: 01283 840 466 (Midlands)

AUDIO NOTE ANSP Speaker cable. 2 metre pair terminated with gold plated spades. Bargain at £550 (list £1100)
Tel: Gerard 0181 743 7809 after 7pm

KEF REFERENCE 103.2 SPEAKERS, black Ash, with Partington spiked stands and Audioquest Brown cables (2 x 6m) £220. Also Geoff Bull upgraded Philips CD650 player £200.
Tel: 01903 205 585 evenings (Worthing)

MONITOR AUDIO STUDIO 20SE's for sale, 9 months old, piano black lacquer finish, immaculate, boxed, £1750 ono.
Tel: 01753 883 377 or 0385 231 850

PINK TRIANGLE Da Capo DAC (1307 filter) and Cardinal transport with re-clocking card. Massive soundstage, smooth and open. Cost new £2700, only one year old, asking £1450.
Tel: 01296 437 314 (Aylesbury)

PIONEER 12 Disc CD player, remote control, black unit, only 18 months old, still boxed as new. Cost £550, sell for only £220 ono.
Tel: 0973 254 183 or 01905 767 274

KEF REFERENCE 103/4 speakers, mint £675 ono. (cost £1300) Kef Kube 200 for use with Reference series speakers, offers? (cost £375) 4 x 10 metre lengths Mission stranded speaker cable £12.50 per length.
Tel: 01703 738 935 (Southampton)

AUDIO INNOVATIONS Series 500 integrated amp, Triode-coupled, new output valves, perfect, boxed £450. Audionote ANB speaker cable, 6m pair £95, 4m pair £65. Audioquest Lapis interconnect, incredible £175.
Tel: 0181 747 1968

NAIM/RUARK. Naim NAT 02 tuner, mint £480. Also Ruark Talisman speakers (Mk1 with Mk2 tweeters) mint £399.
Tel: 0161 351 1598 after 7.30 pm/weekends

PAIR DENON POA 4400A mono blocks. 160 watts rms each. Cambridge C100 pre-amp £600. Pair Harbeth HL monitors (walnut) £250. Yamaha CDX510 recently serviced £95.
Tel: 01544 318 189

RADFORD SC25/STA35 Pre-power amplifier £850 (£2400 when new). Audio Alchemy DST digital cable £120 (£200 when new). All in excellent condition.
Tel: 0181 559 9562 or 0181 270 0595

KRELL KSA-100 Poweramp. Cost new £5150. Unmarked. Big and heavy. Phantastic sound, holds speakers in iron vice-like grip. £1950 for quick sale. Will demonstrate.
Tel: 0161 904 8081

LINN SARA speakers, walnut, stands £250. Mission PCM2 CD player £150. Marantz 65SEII CD player £100. All boxed in excellent condition.
Tel: 01543 686 845

FERROGRAPH SERIES 5, 3 speed valve, mono, aluminium case, mint condition with large quantity spares and new tapes £300. Mullard mono 10 watt valve amplifier and pre-amp £50. Shure cartridges new £5 each.
Tel: 01425 619 376 (New Milton)

CROFT ENIGMA 'ELITE' Pre-amp. Modified by Glen Croft, latest caps, 9 months old, 20 hours use. Absolutely mint condition and superb sound. Cost £1600. Mega Hi-Fi bargain at only £750.
Tel: 01902 786 818 (Wolverhampton)

LOWTHER ACOUSTA speakers/PM6 drivers, tatty £125. Leak Delta 30 vgc £35. Pair AR22BX speakers, GWO £35. Rogers Cadet power amp, needs valves £25. Quad 303 faulty £15. Teac cassette faulty Free! to a good home. Goods located in Cheshire. Can deliver/demo, within reason.
Tel: 01633 262 904 (Newport)

Help ! I must sell all this equipment before I move house = Low Prices

Speakers
1979 Pioneer HPM1 Walnut 4-way enclosure
Mint Condition.

Turntables
Technics SL-110/SME3009/V.15-3
Technics SL-1400-2
Dual 601 fitted V15-3
Pioneer PL12D (6 available)
Pioneer PL512 (4 available)
Pioneer PL514 (2 available)
Pioneer PL100 (2 available)
Pioneer PL 300 c/w new cover

Garrard AP76, G.850
JVC JL-A.20 (Black)
Technics SL-1510, dark metallic
Fons CQ30. (33-45-78, each vari-pitch)
NAD 5120 (Tube arm) boxed
Leak 3001, (Grey/Brushed Alloy)
Goldring Lenco GL75
Goldring Lenco GL78
Lenco L-78 (3 available)
Pioneer PL-X.50, Drawer model
Garrard 86SB
Toshiba SR-A.230
Also various Hitachi, Akai and Panasonic units - all must go

Tuner Amplifiers
1983 Revox B.780 receiver in Textile Grey
Rotel RX1203. 120 wpc alloy fascia Large!
Pioneer SX950, alloy fascia, Walnut case
Leak 3400 Receiver
Rogers Ravensbrook (Teak sleeve)
Galactron 150, Large
JVC R-7000 Casseiver
Aiwa AF-3090 Casseiver
Pioneer SX-990, Wood sleeve
Sony STR 7065A receiver
Goodmans 3000E
Pioneer SX939
Aiwa AX7300K (2 available)
Akai AA-R.21L, Green Digital display
Philips 22R1702, Lots of buttons

Cassette Decks
Revox B-710, 3 head machine, Textile Grey
Sony TC-K.81, 3 head, wired R/C
Sony TC-K.45, also TC-K.30
Tandberg TCD.340A, in black
Pioneer CT-F.700
Teac A 450 "Reckiller" (3 available, also Teac A-350 and A-360.S
Marantz portable cassette recorders, CD-330 3head.

Marantz CD-320 3head
Toshiba PC-230 and PC-X.15
Sony TC-124CS Portable stereo units with speakers. (2 available)
Sony TC-K.75, 3 head, similar unit
Technics RS-M.250, and RS-M.235X
Pioneer CT-F.7272, Walnut sleeve
Akai CS-M3, also GX-M10
Hitachi D-22S, and Hitachi D-33S
Akai GX-C46 deck, int. power amps, also other
Aiwa, Trio, Sharp machines.

Amplifiers
Pair of Marantz MA6 Monoblock 130 watt amps with Ishiwata mods
Armstrong 521, Teak sleeve
Marantz 1090, 80 wpc
Toshiba SB-230
Pioneer SA-810 Valve model
Pioneer SA-610, 70 wpc
Leak 3900A (Roiel RA1312 equiv)

Reel Tape
Teac A-3340-S 4-Channel, Musician
Sony TC-111 Early portable
Realistic 999B, Sanyo MR-805, Sony TC-640, and TC-366, Ferrograph 7
Massive Grundig MS80 Stereogram, with fitted
Garrard Model A Auto turntable.
Leak Troughline-3, Stereo tuner, also Sony, Toshiba, Metrosound, and Rotel tuners.

Ferrograph RTS-2, complete Audio test set
Wayne Kerr RA 200 Frequency Response Analyser, draws F/R curve on screen, has its own low distortion sweep and specific frequency signal generator built in.
Yamaha YSU-3 Shop Hi-Fi comparator unit, 10 inputs, 10 amps, 20 pairs speakers, selectable
Teac AN-180 Dolby noise reduction unit
Silver Reed EX-55 Electronic Typewriter
Radiometer Test FM Stereo Generator
Pr. Early KEF B.139 Bass Chassis
Yamaha DD10 digital drum machine

Fender Squier Stratocaster, Guitar, in sunburst 1960's Jedson LP style guitar, natural finish
Westfield Red Guitar, similar, as new
Palmer 1970's Jumbo acoustic guitar
Approx. 500 unused styli for magnetic, ceramic and crystal, some budget cartridges.

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1978 Fiat 900T mini camper van, in red.

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0 1 7 8 4 4 6 1 4 0 6 o r 0 9 7 3 3 1 7 3 2 5

| | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|----------|-----------|--|---------|-----------|
| Audiomeca Mephisto..... | ED..... | £1,599.00 | Meracur Transport..... | ED..... | £3,400.00 |
| Mark Levinson 31 transport..... | M..... | £4,450.00 | Magneplanar MG3A..... | M..... | £1,695.00 |
| Counterpoint IIE..... | ED..... | £1,499.00 | Koetsu Chang..... | | £1,400.00 |
| Teac VRDS 10..... | M..... | £399.00 | SD3 + Target Stands..... | | £275.00 |
| Audio Note DAC 3SIG..... | ED..... | £1,599.00 | NEW IN THIS MONTH | | |
| CAT SL1 Phono..... | M..... | £2,850.00 | Krell KSA 150..... | | £2,100.00 |
| Counterpoint SAIL..... | M..... | £3,450.00 | Krell KSA 250..... | | £3,300.00 |
| Audio Research SPI4..... | M..... | £1,550.00 | Krell KSA 100..... | | £1,499.00 |
| Trilogy 901..... | M..... | £499.00 | Audio Research VT60..... | | £1,750.00 |
| LFD PAI/LSI..... | M..... | £899.00 | Audio Research SP11..... | | £1,750.00 |
| Jadis JP 80..... | M..... | £6,250.00 | Audio Research SP9..... | | £899.00 |
| Adyton Pre Amp..... | ED..... | £1,900.00 | Mark Levinson 38s..... | | £3,750.00 |
| Arion Pre Amp..... | ED..... | £799.00 | Counterpoint SA20..... | | £1,150.00 |
| Counterpoint SA4..... | M..... | £3,900.00 | Wadia 6..... | | £2,000.00 |
| Jadis Defay 7..... | M..... | £3,099.00 | Wadia 15..... | | £2,000.00 |
| Audio Research LS3..... | M..... | £1,250.00 | Y.B.A. C.D.2..... | | £1,699.00 |
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EXPOSURE 18/19 Pre/power mint £800. Van Den Hul 2nd XLR, XLR £70. Teac VRDS10 CD player, mint £400. Audioquest Quarts phono £50. All boxed, cost new £2400, sell complete £1200
Tel: 01206 855 291 (Colchester)

MAGNAPLANAR MG 3.3R, Oatmeal, as new, but well below half price £1500.
Tel: Steve 01962 713 832 (home) or 0181 975 2311 (work)

LINN EKOS Perfect condition, can demonstrate £650 (now £1500 new). Roksan Xerxes, new bearing, latest power supply (PSU3), Rega RB300 £495. All boxed.
Tel: 01425 473 734 eves

ROXAN XERXES, Rega RB300, Rega cartridge £490. Quad II, 22, FM1 £350. Nightingale NMI loudspeakers £150. Rogers Cadet 3 stereo amplifier £110. Musical Fidelity BI integrated amplifier £110.
Tel: 0191 281 0260

SUGDEN SDA-1 Digital to analogue converter, fabulous analogue style sound, one of the very best (and most under-rated) British DACs. Little used - have upgraded to DAX £495 ono.
Tel: 01254 812 881

IRELAND: Cyrus 3, Mission 751s, Standesign Z20s, Monster cables, gold plugs. Excellent, boxed, manuals. Cost IRI 000; price IR700 ono. Sony CDP-715E IR200 ono. Delivery/demo Cork area.
Tel: Colm Ryan 021 353 344

MARANTZ 1060 Stereo amp £60. Marantz 1530L receiver/amp £60. Radford SCA 30 stereo transistor amp £45. Nelson Jones stereo tuner £35. Quad MC module for 34 preamp £15.
Tel: 01372 467 264 (Esher)

QUAD AMPLIFIERS 405/2 £180, 44 £180, 303 £90. Turntables, Thorens 150/11 £35, GL75 £35. Kef driver pairs B139, B110A, T27A £40. SME 3009/II renovated by SME £100.
Tel: 01274 667 882 (Bradford)

MANA ACOUSTICS Phase 5 turntable stand and power supply table, comprising 'Soundstage' Reference table and two additional Reference top sections with separate power supply table. All in vgc, cost new £850 plus £150 for PS Table, will accept £600 for both or will consider splitting.
Tel: 0181 291 1744

BOSE 901 SPEAKERS Mark 7 with stands and EQ. One cabinet slightly damaged hence only £645 ono.
Tel: 01242 227 119

DARK TEAK IMHOF Equipment cabinet. 54x21x24". Three lidded compartments. Easiglide castors. Ideal for Quad, Garrard, Thorens, valve amps etc. Excellent condition £160
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NAIM AUDIC NAC 42.5 preamp, NAP 110 power amp and Snaps power supply. All vgc. £400.
Tel: 01245 284 321 evenings after 6pm (Chalmsford)

LINN LP12 Circus Valhalla, Ittok LV3, Dymavector 17D2 Mk2 (Sept 95) £980. Exposure XI, VI's, IV pre-power amp £1550. Naim IBLs £550. Pioneer CLD 2950 Laser Disc player £590. Lynwood mains conditioner £150. All excellent condition. Wanted Naim SBLs, Mana supports, Meridian 565, REL Subs.
Tel: 01934 522 635

TEAC P700/D700 Transport/DAC mint condition £1000 ono. Will possibly split. Quad 520f 100 watt professional power amp £300. Marantz CD94 fair condition £250.
Tel: 01843 584 030

NAIM HI-CAP (Silver Edge) £320. Naim 62 pre amp £250. Grace tonearm on Linn arm board. Offers! Wanted: 02 tuner Naim.
Tel: 01623 796 266 (Nottingham area)

PINK TRIANGLE Da Capo, 18 Bit filter with Chord Pro-Dac interconnect £990. NAD 502 £100. Both very little used, superb condition and boxed. Can demo.
Tel: 01732 742 888 daytime (Sevenoaks)

GYRODEC, SME 309, Audio Technica OC30, only 30 hours use £695 (cost £2000). Kinshaw Perception phono stage £195 (cost £525) Audio Synthesis pre amp £95. Denon DL 304 cartridge 10 hours use £65 (cost £200) All excellent condition.
Tel: 01623 798 210

RUSS ANDREWS 4TC speaker cable, 2 x 5 metre lengths terminated £75. Plus Siltec silver interconnect 600mm long £100.
Tel: 01222 830 127

M&K V125 ACTIVE Subwoofer. Mint very little use. Many rave/best buy reviews. £550.
Tel: 01945 463 077

PAIR OF KEF 105-3 Black Ash with Kube 200. Boxed, instructions, mint £1300 ono. Pair original 105 silver wired £450 ono. Leak Delta tuner £15. Wanted: Kenwood L1000T tuner.
Tel: 0121 628 3423

WANTED: E.A.R. 509 MkII power amplifier. FOR SALE: Leak 20 amplifier rebuilt and revalved. Leak Troughline tuner with valve decoder, mint, superb sound, sensible offers.
Tel: 01745 331 681

Exposure XV Supremely musical integrated amplifier. MC phono £375. Roksan Hot Cakes. Hi gloss black inconspicuous TV sound, or deluxe extensions £90.
Tel: 01553 840 973

NAIM HI-CAP Power supply, new style, 10 years old £390 ono.
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ROKSAN AMPLIFICATION: L2.5 pre-amp, two S1.5 power amps, DSI.5 power supply. Silver finish. Also Teac VRDS-T1 Cambridge DacMagic 2 (improved version). Telephone for further details.
Tel: 01245 356 325 (Chelmsford)

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WADIA 21 CD Player, boxed as new £3550. Also Audio Research CD-1 boxed in excellent condition £2150. Will demo to a serious buyer.
Tel: 0956 265 063

REL STADIUM Sub 100 watt integral amp. Will demonstrate. Little use. £450 (£800 new)
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PAIR ORIGINAL Model 'Apogee' Caliper ribbon loudspeakers, Piano black finish, working well, reluctant/surplus sale. Nearest to £500 cash, buys! May P/X for 4 channel 8 track tape (Akai) recorder + cash.
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CAMBRIDGE CD1 CD PLAYER HEAVILY

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| MERIDIAN ARGENT 3 SPEAKERS, ROSEWOOD - MINT | £995 | NEW | £1495 |
| RESTEK CHALLENGER INTEGRATED AMP - MINT NEW | £799 | | |
| CITATION 18 TUNER ORIGINAL ATIERICAN V.G.C. | £295 | S/HAND | £650 |
| SOTA COSMOS VACUUM PLATTER - MINT | £1995 | S/HAND | £4400 |
| CRYSTAL REFERENCE TURNTABLE (WALLMOUNT) | £1495 | S/HAND | £2500 |
| MERIDIAN 606 DAC - MINT | £795 | E/D | £1450 |
| GOLDMUND MIMESIS 3 POWER AMP BALANCED, MINT | £1995 | S/HAND | £5000 |
| TANDBERG TPA 3009A MU2 MONO POWER AMP MINT | £1095 | S/HAND | £2195 |
| MARK LEVINSON ML12A PREAMP PLS124 POWER SUP. | £995 | S/H | £2400 |
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| KEF 102.2 SPEAKERS, ROSEWOOD + KUBE + STANDS | £595 | S/H | £1150 |
| APOGEE STAGE SPEAKERS + STANDS, MINT | £1695 | S/H | £3454 |
| ACOUSTIC ENERGY AE3 SPEAKERS + STANDS, MINT | £995 | E/D | £2075 |
| ADCOM GFA565 MONO AMPS, BALANCED, VGC | £1250 | S/H | £2000 |
| WHARFEDALE OPTION 1, 4-WAY ACTIVE SPEAKERS, GREY & WHITE, 1 OF ONLY 5 PAIRS, SUPERB, VGC | £1995 | S/H | PHONE |
| CARVER AMAZING SPEAKERS, PIANO BLACK, VGC | £895 | S/H | £2300 |
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| MARANTZ CD65 MK2 SE CD PLAYER, MINT | £175 | S/H | £350 |
| MARK LEVINSON NO20 REF MONO AMPS BALANCED, MINT | £4995 | S/H | £1100 |
| GRYPHON XT PREAMP + AC, MINT | £2250 | S/H | £5485 |
| ELECTROCOMPANET MW100DMB BAL AMP MINT | £1295 | S/H | £2018 |
| ALPHASON SYMPHONY TURNTABLE & ARM PLUS ATLAS SUPPLY, PIANO FINISH, MINT | £1295 | S/H | £2700 |
| MERIDIAN 506 MK2 CD PLAYER, MINT | £750 | E/D | £950 |
| AUDIO RESEARCH SP9 PREAMP, SILVER, MINT | £895 | S/H | £1700 |
| MARK LEVINSON No20.5 MONO POWER AMPS, BLACK, BALANCED, MINT | £5995 | S/H | £12500 |
| AUDIO PLAN CONCEPT SPEAKERS, BLACK, MINT | £795 | S/H | £1750 |
| MARK LEVINSON ML10A PREAMP, MINT | £1250 | S/H | £3800 |
| ROVLAND MODEL 5 POWER AMP BALANCED, MINT | £2500 | S/H | £5250 |
| SUMO ARIA PANEL SPKRS, OAK, VGC | £795 | S/H | £3000 |
| GENESIS 8300 SPEAKERS + STANDS, PIANO BLACK, MINT | £995 | E/D | £1895 |
| AIR BEARINGS SUPERB INC CARTRIDGE ETC MINT | £5995 | S/H | £13262 |
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| PRIMARE 928 SERIES PREAMP + MONO AMPS BAL MINT | £3995 | S/H | £9750 |
| MERIDIAN M20 ACTIVE SPEAKERS + STANDS BLACK MINT | £795 | S/H | £1400 |
| MERIDIAN D6000 DIGITAL ACTIVE SPEAKERS MINT | £5995 | E/D | £9250 |
| ALON IV SPEAKERS BLACK MINT | £1895 | S/H | £3800 |
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Tel: 01705 690 093 (Portsmouth)

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Tel: Jim 01206 861 457

LINN LK1 PREAMP Latest spec £125. Mordaunt-Short MS 5.10 speakers, hardly used, boxed £45. Revolver turntable, Linn LVX arm, Shure cartridge £75.
Tel: 01295 272 925

ARCAM ALPHA CD Player, excellent condition with remote and manual £195.
Tel: 01491 410 369 (Oxfordshire)

PAIR QUAD ESL 57s, bronze £425. Quad 22 + 2 x II power amps £325. All excellent condition. Spare valves, handbooks.
Tel: 0121 622 2230

QUAD CD67-FM4-34 (Russ Andrews modified)-606 II £1600. All mint. Gladly demonstrate.
Tel: 01977 620 558

FOR SALE: AUDIOLAB 8000A, 92 model good as new condition. £295 ono. WANTED: One Woden output transformer to match existing item, to build stereo Williamson amp. Primary 10K, with secondary tapings of 1.7 ohms each. good condition required.
Tel: 01787 476 924

QUAD ESL Speakers (bronze fronts) excellent condition £325. Denon DR-M14HX remote control cassette machine, with full operating instructions £75. Pair KEF Concertos, excellent condition £85.
Tel: 01285 655 476 or 01285 654 489 (Glos)

JOHN SHEARNE Phase 2 amplifier, latest spec, as new, hardly used £340.
Tel: 01642 559 204

REGA PLANAR 2. 18 months old fitted with Ortofon cartridge and recently new stylus. Excellent condition and sound. Genuine reason for sale. Box, receipt etc. £120.
Tel: 0113 252 1016

LINN SYSTEM Comprising of Keltik speakers, 4 LK100s, Karin pre, Karin CD, Numerik DAC, Kremlin tuner, Klout power amp, one pair of Tukans, K400 cables. cost new £17,500. All mint. £8000. May split.
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SNELL TYPE E Series II £650. Mission Cyrus II plus PSX, mint £300. Quad 33, 303, FM3 in sleeve £150 Quad service. £300. Ortofon speakers 445, 4 way 90dB £125.
Tel: 0181 504 2575 (East)

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Tel: 0421 881 487 day or 0118 966 9889 eves & weekends.

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QUAD 67 CD Player with Trichord Clock 2 mod. Mint condition, superb sound £600.
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NAIM 62/90 PRE-POWER Amps, plus phono boards and 20m NAC5 cable. Little used, mint, boxed with manuals, can meet halfway. £550 ono.
Tel: Nick 0171 577 4940 day or 01483 726 863 eves

MUSICAL FIDELITY B200 integrated amp, MC, MM, 4 line inputs. Boxed with manual (Best Buy Hi-Fi Choice) £150 ono. Denon DCD 1560 CD player. Flagship model (mint) cost £600, accept £250.
Tel: 01634 387 686

MUSICAL FIDELITY P270: II, excellent £699. Naim NAT 101 + Snaps tuner £325. Celestion 700SE £750. Meridian Argent II rosewood speakers £499. May P/X. All mint.
Tel: 01225 480 990

REL STADIUM Sub Woofer £400. Acoustic Energy loudspeakers AE2 + stands £500.
Tel: 0181 606 9978

SYSTEMDEK IIX900 Turntable complete with Moth tone arm and Audio Technica AT110E cartridge. Rogers LS8a speakers. Bi-wireable. Both excellent condition. Rarely used. Offers.
Tel: 01628 776 941 (Berks)

LINDLEY LEAK Stereo 20. Black piano finish, silver-wired throughout. New Golden Gragon valves. Original. Offers? Audio innovations LI active valve line pre £200 ono. Both recently serviced and in mint condition. Speakers: Lumley Reference 3.5 floorstander £750 ono. Dynaudio Audience 15 floorstander £775.
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AUDIOLAB 8000 DAC £425. Quad 44 pre amp and Quad 405 power amp £300. JR 149 loudspeakers (KEF B110 T27) £100.
Tel: 01224 646 473

AUDIOLAB 8000P £400 ono. Sony ICF-SW7600 dual conversion receiver £100 ono. Pioneer CT-960 tape deck £50 ono
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TANNOY 611 £150. Systemdek IIX/900AP + RB250 + Goldring 1022 £200. Cyrus II amp + PSX £300. Aiwa AD-F410 tapedeck £30. NAD 5120 CDP £70. Target T/T wall shelf £20. Target 2 tier wall shelf £30. No offers. All for £600. Buyer collects.
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LINN LP12, LVX, Black £250. Rega 3, RB300 £175. Arcam Delta 110, BB50 digital pre-amp £375. Arcam Delta 120.2 power amp £250. Arcam Delta 250 CD transport £475.
Tel: 0860 627 202 (SE London)

INTERCONNECTS: Chord Solid 1m £55 (£99). Cardas Quadlink 1m £100 (£200) Cogan Hall Intermezzo E-M 1m £140 (£340). Digital Links: Siltech HF-6 0.5m £50 (£100), Cogan Hall EMD 1m £85 (£200). Happy to demonstrate. They all sound different!
Tel: Jerry 01372 468 266

LINN KABER Loudspeakers, black, perfect condition, boxed, plus pair 6 metre K600 cables £1295. Linn Kudos AM/FM tuner, perfect condition £595.
Tel: 0161 429 0963

ION NEXUS SPI Pre-amp, X-PAK2 power supply, four MA40 monoblock power amps £1100. Cyrus FM7 tuner £300. Goldring 1022GX cartridge (unused) £60. Mana Sound Frame £50.
Tel: 01244 345 461 (Chester)

WANTED: RECORD cleaning machines required, V.P.I., Nitty Gritty etc, in good condition.
Tel: 0181 558 3383

ARCAM BLACK BOX 3 £150. AR Powered Partners (amplified speakers) £150. Marantz CD63B original top loader, immaculate £150. Audio Technica ATH 70 electret headphones £65. All items boxed, mint condition, little use.
Tel: 01708 523 545

WOODSIDE RADFORD STA 35 £550. Sugden Pre C51 power P51 radio R51 £295. All mint and boxed. WANTED: Radford STA 15.
Tel: 01446 735 768

TOWNSEND ROCK turntable, plinth & lid. Silver wired Excaliber arm. Decca cartridge £500 ono.
Tel: 01635 550 980 (Newbury)

ROTEL RC/RB 970 BX Mk II, used 6 hours, boxed, as new £280 ono. Leak 2060 speakers, rehoused, reconed, 12" bass units, mahogany. Very good, very heavy. £200 ono.
Tel: 01 444 413 782 (Sussex)

VINYL COLLECTION As a whole or in three parts 190 classical, 150 rock, 94 jazz. Many collectors items. Serious offers. Also Linn LP12 (black), Ittok, 1988 model, transit damage - offers. Rotel RQ-970BX phono stage £90.
Tel: 01803 770 006

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| B&W AS6 ACTIVE SUBWOOFER | EX DEMO | £399.00 | £499.00 |
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| CARVER C1 SONIC HOLOGRAPHY PRE-AMP | S/HAND | £295.00 | £???.?? |
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| IMF TLS80 TRANSMISSION LINE SPKS | S/HAND | £495.00 | £???.?? |
| AKAI MB VALVE REEL-TO-REEL (MINT) | S/HAND | £350.00 | £???.?? |
| RAM 150 MONITOR SPEAKERS (SH) | S/HAND | £150.00 | £???.?? |
| ARC 101 MONITOR SPEAKERS (SH) | S/HAND | £150.00 | £???.?? |

ATTENTION!! DISTRIBUTORS, LIQUIDATORS, MANUFACTURERS & IMPORTERS OF HIGH QUALITY AUDIO EQUIPMENT, PLEASE OFFER YOUR EX DEM/EX REVIEW/SURPLUS/REPACKS ETC.

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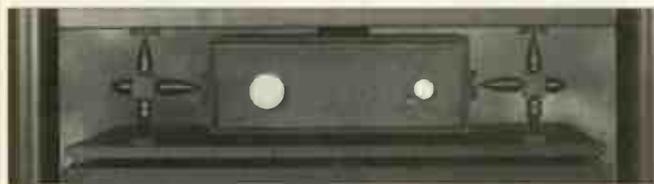
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Mission / Cyrus 753 loudspeakers in rosewood, S/H
\$425

Alright, so this is a column filler. There are not all that many second hand items this month. Having said that, it's probably about time I mentioned some new products that may be of interest.

At the "affordable audiophile" end of the market, I have found a well matched system in the shape of the Trichord Genesis CD player, Densen Beat amplifier, Royd Doublet loudspeakers supported on Something Solid stands and linked with Chord Siren Interconnect and Nordost Flatline Twin or Chord Rumour loudspeaker cable.

This is one of those more - than - sum - of - the - parts systems and costs around £1800. I can also demonstrate with the K1 Signature if you really insist.



hi-fi for grown-ups

By the time you read this the new and aptly named Trichord Revelation CD player should be available at a little under £800. Genesis owners can upgrade for the price differential.

At a more exotic level I am having real success with the Unison Research Smart 845 power amplifiers controlled by either the Audio Synthesis Passion or Graaf WFB Two pre-amplifier.

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MISSION CYRUS 2 amplifier, excellent condition, black case, boxed £200 ono.
Tel: 01536 515 718 (Northants)

CAMPAIGN AUDIO Design cables: two silver I/Cs, 0.6m £30 each. Four mains £15 each. Four way block £30. Two Isoplats £15 each. Job lot £160. Save £20 (£392) May split.
Tel: 0181 429 1788

AUDIO ALCHEMY DDS III £450. DDE VI.1 PSU £245. Data Stream tranceiver, psu £120. Trichord Pulsewire 75 digital interconnect 1/2m. terminated BNC £20. Pulsewire analogue interconnects 1/2m. Terminated Neutrik phono's £50.
Tel: 0181 449 8639 (Barnet)

MERIDIAN 207 CD/Preamp, MM phono stage M.S.R. £375. Meridian 204 tuner £290. Meridian M30 MkII active speakers/stands £750. Meridian tuner 6 presets sep psu £65.
Tel: 01493 851 296 (Gt Yar-mouth)

REEL TO REELS. Vortexion WV8 valve mono £40. Vortexion CBL valve stereo £200. Ferrograph Series Seven mono £30. Pair of Lowther Acoustas £120. All working.
Tel: 01932 821 563 (Surrey)

TDL RTL 2 Floorstanding speakers in as new condition. Nearly 2 years old, but unused since January '96 £190 (£300).
Tel: 01429 270 711 (Hartlepool)

B&W 620i FLOOR Standing speakers. Kenwood 5050 r/ controlled amplifier. Seven inputs. MM/MC disc. Kenwood 7050 bitstream CD player. Excellent reviews available on request. Cost £1200, accept £895. As new.
Tel: 0161 437 5372

TDL STUDIO 3 Loudspeakers including stands and 5m pair of bi-wire Audioquest Crystal speaker cable £475 ono.
Tel: 01403 241 304 (Horsham)

WANTED: MICHELL Gyrodec, RB300 (QCPSU?) For Sale: B&O Beovox 3800 speakers, Beogram 2000 turntable and 3000-2 receiver amp - condition is OK, but turntable needs attention: make an offer, I need the space! Also, Manticore Mantra turntable, Linn Basik plus tonearm and cartridge with ATN-95E stylus, all in excellent condition. A bargain at £250 ono.
Tel: 01206 860 832 (Colchester)

NAIM NAP 140s x 3. New style. Pristine condition £400 each. RMS Revelation II loudspeakers. Mint (7 months) condition. "Cherished" by What Hi-Fi. New £1900, sell £1200 ono. Partner's degree forces sale. Demo easy.
Tel: 0114 266 7668 (Sheffield)

MUSICAL FIDELITY F25 Pre amp, new model, MM and MC inputs, only 4 months old, £1050 (£1500). TD 125 MkII/AT1009 original plinth cover, excellent condition £195. Quad 34 pre-amp £175.
Tel: 0121 602 2591 (Birmingham)

MONITOR AUDIO Studio 20SE, Studio 15 upgraded to Studio 20SE current spec, rosewood finish. Bargain at £1100. 2m pair Audio Note ANSP speaker cable £450.
Tel: Gerard 0181 743 7809

REVOX B215 CASSETTE, B780 receiver, B225 CD, B795 turntable, B77 reel to reel, all manuals £2450. A77 £350
Tel: 0181 451 1066

MUSICAL FIDELITY Preamp 3A and two MA50 class A monoblock power amplifiers. Excellent condition. Considered to be one of the best sounding power amplifiers made. £575 ono.
Tel: 01736 60367

WANTED BY A DISABLED Hi-Fi Enthusiast. Nakamichi DR1 or preferably a sensible priced CR7E. Can travel 150 miles.
Tel: 01376 571 384 (Kelvedon, Essex)

SONIC FRONTIERS SFS-50 Power amplifier with gold Aero Tubes/Coolers £800. Audio Research SP8 valve pre amplifier £650. Both excellent condition. WANTED: Cambridge CDI compact disc player (working or non-working) and Quality Assurance Module for Cambridge CDI. Also wanted: Marantz CD15 compact disc player.
Tel: Rod 0121 705 1142

MERIDIAN 601 Digital pre amp. Meridian 602 CD transport. Meridian 204 tuner. Cost almost £6,000 new, asking £1850.
Tel: 01323 842 227 day and evening. No timewasters (East Sussex)

NAIM AUDIO CDS 52/Super Cap, 2 x 135s, walnut SBLs, tripod stand. Between 6 months and 2 years old. All latest spec. May split. £9250 ono.
Tel: 01626 333 191 or 01626 331 784

LINN ISOBARIKS, Latest drive units, stands and external crossovers £1100. Linn Ekos £650. Linn Troika £220. LP12 and Lingo £595. Naim Hi-Cap, black £325. All mint and boxed.
Tel: 0191 281 0260

AUDIOLAB 8000A Boxed as new £300. Arcam Alpha 5 + CD player, brand new, boxed £300. Rega ELS speakers, new £275 ono.
Tel: 01225 404 431

WANTED: VINTAGE British Hi-Fi. All things Quad, Leak, Radford, EAR etc considered (valves or transistors. Must be in good, functioning condition. Buyer will collect. Offers
Tel: 01243 376 923

SONY 770ES TUNER £140. Sony SS86E speakers £45. Sony Biotracer turntable £45. Sony CDP101 £40 all vgc. Boxed. Wanted: Old Hi-Fi Mags, Michell Perspex PSU, Rega R200.
Tel: 016974 78537 (Cumbria)

EPOS ES11, Black, dealer upgraded to 1995 specification, with stands and boxed £265. Audioquest Video Z (1m) still in packaging £28.
Tel: 01483 420 660 (Nr Guildford)

REVOX G36 MkII 111 tape deck, high speed, half track, full mechanical rebuild by Revox engineer, superb £695. Leak TL 10s, pair, totally original, revalved with original valves £425.
Tel: 01603 714 528 before 10pm

GYRODEC EXPORT (Bronze) latest spec. with RB300 arm and Gyro power supply £625. Quad 34 preamp (grey) £160. Quad 240 professional power amp, 80 watts per channel £325.
Tel: 01603 714 528 before 10pm

SPENDOR SPI/2 Speakers + MAF stands, immaculate condition £750, or exchange for DPA power/pre amp. ART Audio Quin-Tet Triode MkII power amp £750
Tel: 0181 531 5979 day or evening

SUB-WOOFER For Sale. Audio Pro BI-45 £200 ono.
Tel: 01642 559 078 (Stockton-on-Tees)

AUDIO INNOVATIONS Pre-amp £300. First Audio amplifier £800 for sale. £1000 if purchased together. Will demonstrate.
Tel: 01923 282 129 (Herts)

THORENS TD160 II. Rega RB300. Solid mahogany plinth. AT450E0CC. Perspex top. All in vgc + 50 LPs mixed. £300 ono.
Tel: 0181 874 4484

LINN BASIK turntable with Goldring 1012 GX cartridge £250. Rotel RQ 970BX phono stage £75. Both in excellent condition. Possible deliver within reasonable distance of Stamford, Lincs.
Tel: 01780 64149

SME TEAK Plinth with cover. SME arm 3012 Series II. Garrard 301 deck. Shure M75ED cartridge £150. Complete
Tel: 0181 524 3443 eves or w/ ends (London E4)

PINK TRIANGLE PT T00 very rare battery power supply, Rega RB300 arm, Stilton modified Audio Technica AT0C9, hardly used in past 5 years £525.
Tel: 01245 329 982 after 7pm

NAKAMICHI PA-7E Power amp. Big + heavy. Wonderful for any job. 200 watts p.c. £650
Tel: Martin 01832 274 352

ATC SCM 10s (Walnut) in excellent condition. £450 ono (cost £1000 new)
Tel: 01474 357 088 or 0956 458 785

RUARK EQUINOX in dark walnut £950. Can demonstrate.
Tel: 0181 427 6936

CABLE TALK Concert 2 bi-wire, 2 x 7m lengths. Half price £150 ovno. Also Quad ESL 63 speakers, 18 months old, boxed as new £2000 ovno. (now £3500 new)
Tel: 01623 871 950

SLATE AUDIO Speaker stands, 19 inch, superb, genuine reason for sale. Cost new £350 accept £170 ono. Sound Organisation three tier equipment rack, cost £120 accept £65 ono.
Tel: Phil 0171 265 0155

MICHELL GYRODEC, QC power supply, SME 309, VdH Arm cable, Denon DL304, Tools, £1000 or P/Ex cash plus Roksan Radius, Naim CDI complete £1000.
Tel: 0181 558 5942 (East London)

CYRUS INTEGRATED Amplifier £399. Moth 100 monoblocks new £750. SME 309 tonearm £429, SME IV tonearm £975, Moth 30 Series pre amplifier + power amplifier £399. All credit cards accepted.
Tel: 01582 24414

SERIOUS KIT NORTH

NEWSLETTER No 3

Hi folks, You've guessed it as soon as the "season" arrives so does the Newsletter. Plenty to talk about this month mainly that Serious Kit have taken plunge and opened a shop. This means simply that you don't have to make an appointment simply walk in drink some coffee, peruse over some of the finest Hi-Fi in the world. Demo facilities are available, but it would be advisable to book an hour or so for those of you who wish to have a serious listen. Of course home demos are still available. New products this winter include a new florstander from Pro-Ac the studio 250. Excellence is assured from this sonic bargain. Audio Note have amazed me with the arrival of the Ankoru mono blocks at 70 watts of class 'A' power these amps are simply awesome. To listen to the Ankoru's simply ring me, these amps will be busy so book early as usual as this time of year I have many ex dem and s/hand units available including:

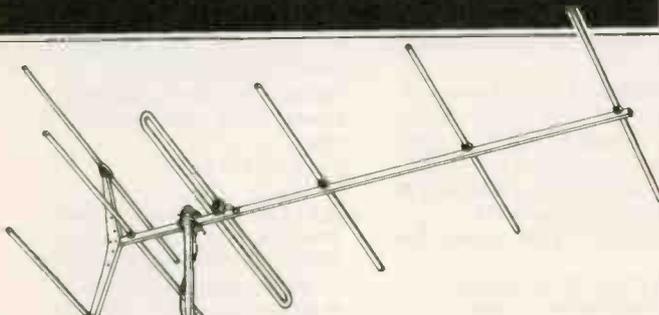
| | | | New Price |
|-------------------------|----------|------|-----------|
| Pro-Ac Studio 150 | £1200.00 | Ex/D | £1399.00 |
| Pro-Ac Studio 200 | £1300.00 | Ex/D | £1850.00 |
| Pro-Ac Response 2 | £1000.00 | S/H | £1399.00 |
| Audio Note Quests | £2200.00 | Ex/D | £2750.00 |
| Sugden Symetra M/blocks | £1350.00 | Ex/D | 1550.00 |
| Sugden Optima Cd | £500.00 | Ex/D | £700.00 |
| Sugden Au51 DAC | £1050.00 | Ex/D | £1299.00 |
| Sugden Au51 Transport | £1100.00 | Ex/D | £1399.00 |
| Sugden Au51 Power | £1200.00 | Ex/D | £1450.00 |
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