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Hi-Fi WORLD

DECEMBER 1996 £2.30

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CARBON FIBRE CONE
LOUDSPEAKERS

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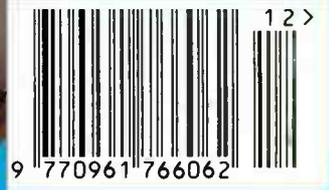
STAR SEARCH -
TOP SOUNDING SYSTEMS



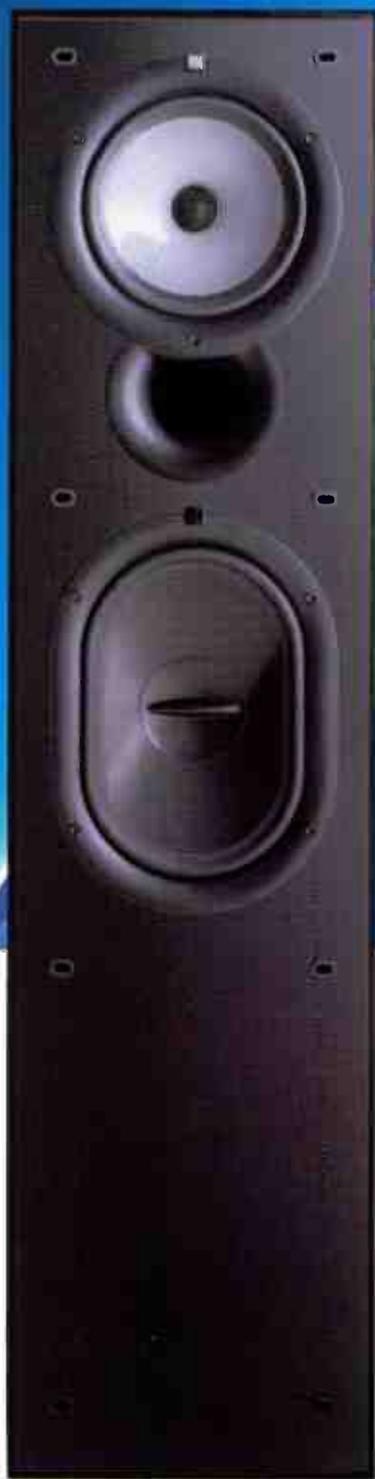
NEW
CYRUS dAD3
CD PLAYER

ARCAM'S NEW
ALPHA 9
INTEGRATED
AND 9P POWER
AMPLIFIERS

THE 800CD:
AUDIOLAB'S
FIRST EVER
INTEGRATED
CD PLAYER



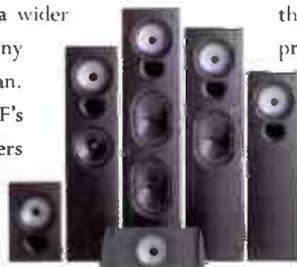
Clearly
better.



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



- Audiolab's first ever one-box CD player gets an exclusive test in Hi-Fi World on page 13.
- Yet another first, Castle are using advanced carbon fibre drive units in the new floorstanding Avon loudspeakers. Read about them on page 16.
- Meridian's eagerly awaited 557 power amplifier and 502 pre-amplifier arrive on page 20. We're impressed.
- Mission's first integrated CD player to join the Cyrus range is with us on page 49.
- We test Arcam's newly launched Alpha 9 integrated amplifier along with the Alpha 9P power amplifier, starting on page 65.
- Star Search: here are three systems born of months of testing. All offer outstanding sound quality. Find them on Page 27.

This month's Hi-Fi World carries a bit of a British theme. The latest equipment from our home shores has been tested and much of it is exciting. Meridian have completed their impressive new 502 pre- and 557 power amplifiers and Arcam have launched a whole new range of electronics. Audiolab and Mission have introduced new integrated CD players under £1,000, and Harbeth and Castle have new loudspeakers, the latter using carbon fibre in its drive units. We know that carbon fibre has promise.

Audio is still one of this country's strengths. In many ways, we lead the rest of the world when it comes to high performance allied to excellent value. There is still a lot of interest in British audio too. The Professional Sound & Light show at Earl's Court was a delight this year. The lower floor was packed with massive loudspeaker systems, live DJs, lasers, lights and high-tech electronic recording equipment. But the Live events have been deserted by the hi-fi industry, leaving no Central London show. A new showcase is needed because there's still a strong interest in hi-fi, as I believe there always will be.

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 JANUARY ISSUE

SONY XE-900E CD PLAYER

Setting the world of CD on its head is the new Sony XE-900E, which moves the disc rather than the laser as it reads the digits. Gimmick or breakthrough? We find out.

TECHNICS SU-A700 Mk3 AMPLIFIER

We listen to the sound of Bamboo with Technics' latest integrated. Fitted with Master Series capacitors, which feature a Bamboo dielectric, Technics claim this amp is more dynamic and natural than its predecessor.

TECHNICS SL-1210 LTD

Since their introduction some 25 years

ago, Technics have made an astonishing 250,000 SL-1200/1210 turntables. To celebrate (and who wouldn't after selling that many), they're releasing a gloss-black-with-gold-plated-trimmings version as a limited edition run of 10,000! Will it appeal to more than German Techno DJs?

PIONEER CT-95

After getting fine results from Pioneer's CT-740S cassette deck in the June issue, we head to the top of the pile with the flagship CT-95.

ARCAM ALPHA 7/8

When can a 7 be an 8? When it's an Arcam CD player. Buy the new £320

Alpha 7 CD player and you'll be able to upgrade it to the £520 Alpha 8 at a later date. We investigate.

KESWICK AUDIO RESEARCH TORINO

Part of KAR's dramatically styled Italia series, the three-way Torino loudspeakers grace our listening room.

COMPETITION - WIN EVERYTHING!

Once again it's that time of year where everything we review in our special Christmas issue can be won. That's one helluva lot of Christmas presents!

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THIS MONTH'S REVIEWS

AMPLIFIERS

MERIDIAN 502 PRE AND 557 POWER AMPLIFIERS

20

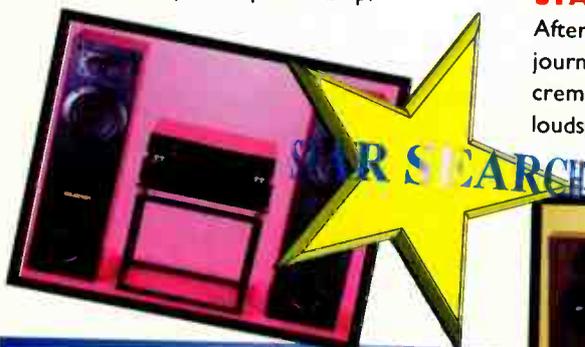
For £2700, you could snap up Meridian's new pre/power pairing. But was Jon 'Scrooge' Marks impressed enough to part with his readies?



ARCAM ALPHA 9 INTEGRATED AND 9P POWER AMPLIFIER

65

One feature shared by all components in Arcam's new Alpha range is upgradability. Dominic Baker takes a look at the merits of the Alpha 9 integrated before bi-amping with the addition of an Alpha 9P power amp.



COMPACT DISC

AUDIOLAB 8000CD

13

Having impressed Jon Marks with their two box 8000CDM/DAC combo in October, Audiolab unleash their new £1000 integrated player. Dominic Baker is our man at the scene.



CYRUS dAD3 CD PLAYER

49

Another new integrated CD player born of separate transport/DAC parents is Mission's Cyrus dAD3. Dominic Todd was present at the delivery.

LOUDSPEAKERS

CASTLE AVON

16

With a history of innovative loudspeaker design behind them, Castle now embrace carbon fibre technology in their new Avon. Noel Keywood reports on the results.



HARBETH HL-K6

23

David Price tries out the latest standmounters to emerge from the respected Harbeth stables.

SYSTEMS

STAR SEARCH SYSTEMS

27

After months of arduous listening (a hi-fi journalist's lot is never an easy one) to find the creme de la creme in CD players, amplifiers and loudspeakers, we reveal three top-notch systems.



WORLD VERDICT



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



GOOD - Has strong merit. Well worth an audition.



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



POOR - Seriously flawed. Not worth considering.

REGULARS

NEXT ISSUE

All the newest and best in hi-fi that we'll be filling next issue's pages with.

NEWS

If it's information from the cutting edge of hi-fi that you're after, this is where to look.

READERS' LETTERS

Discover how to tune a room and make a system sing with letters from this month's varied post-bag.

COLUMNS

Words of wisdom from Hi-Fi World's audiophile sages.

HI-FI WORLD LIBRARY

If in-depth hi-fi knowledge is your goal, take a look at our well stocked library.

WORLD BUYING GUIDE

A thorough run-down of all the products we would be happy to use ourselves, from the budget to the not-so-budget.

MEET YOUR MAKER

Search for the source of all the equipment that fills the homes of music-lovers and you'll find these manufacturers.

WORLD AUDIO DESIGN

If the words 'kit' and 'sonic satisfaction' are high on your list of priorities, home in on our in-house goodies for the DIY-inclined.

SPECIALIST HI-FI DEALERS

Save yourself the bitten nails and grey hairs that component-matching anxiety brings - let the experts do all the work for you.

3 DIAL-A-DEALER 89

The system of your dreams is just a phone call away, courtesy of the dealers on these pages.

7 MEASURED PERFORMANCE 103

Hi-Fi World's electronic surgeons peer inside this month's hopefuls to check their vital signs.

41 READERS' CLASSIFIED 118

With six pages to choose from, there are bargains to suit every audiophile, from the aspiring to the well-heeled.

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FEATURES

JAPANESE HI-FI PART 2 36

This month David Price reports from the front line of the Japanese format war and investigates the components you'll find in hi-fi heaven.

FIRM FOUNDATION 56

With the hi-fi stacked in a corner and your 'speakers on a bookshelf, more likely than not you'll hear noise instead of music. Read on with Noel Keywood and find out how to get your system singing.

DIY SUPPLEMENT

This month, alongside book reviews and four pages of DIY letters, we reveal the new version of our KLS3 loudspeaker. This retains its carbon fibre drivers, but now sports a new version of the superb Audax gold dome piezo-electric tweeter. Dominic Baker revels in the advantages of an active, three way system with the BSS Omnidrive digital active crossover. And Sovtek's brand-new 300B gets its first test.

MUSIC

ROCK AND POP 81
RECORD OF THE MONTH:
Sponge: Wax Ecstatic

DANCE AND AMBIENT 84
RECORD OF THE MONTH:
CJ Bolland: The Analogue Theatre

JAZZ 87

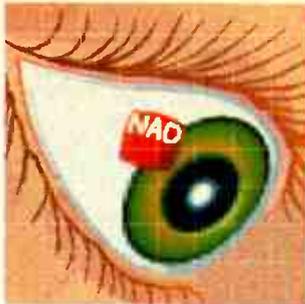
CLASSICAL 93
RECORD OF THE MONTH:
Shostakovich: Symphony No 11 in G minor,
Op103 - 'The Year 1905'

COMPETITION - PAGE 68

Is there just a hint of jealousy at the World offices as we watch all that lovely hi-fi winging its way to our competition winners? Of course not. Well, just a little perhaps, especially when this month's prize is a superb TEAC/Meridian/Harbeth system worth over £4500.



SOUNDZONES



218 THX stereo power amplifier

worth looking into



The NAD 218 THX stereo power amplifier is one of the most sophisticated hi fi components we have ever produced. Yet for all its brilliant features and astonishing levels of performance, it remains true to the NAD "no nonsense" design philosophy.

The very first feature you'll notice is the weight of the 218 THX, due partly to the heavy construction of the chassis and front panel, designed for rack mounting, (its advanced specification makes the 218 THX ideal for professional studio use). But the increase in weight is largely due to the massive Hølmgren toroidal mains transformer.



WHY SO LARGE AND WHY HOLMGREN?

Apart from being the ideal design for the huge amounts of power it is likely to nandle, the Hølmgren offers other advantages. A conventional transformer can be affected by AC mains to produce hum or even buzzing, whereas a Hølmgren transformer isn't. Plus, a Hølmgren transformer because of its unique design, will not affect other adjacent components.

A feature which doesn't add much to the weight of the 218 THX but certainly adds to the weight of its performance is the bank of eight capacitors, rather than a single pair. This is a comparatively low cost benefit which makes a better power



supply because several smaller capacitors have a faster recovery time and have less equivalent series inductance and resistance than a single pair.

The 218 THX incorporates fully balanced XLR inputs, allowing the use of long runs of cable between pre and power stages, without the risk of interference.

This thoughtful yet simple feature offers the opportunity to set your system up more flexibly and of course it's a benefit if you are bridging two 218 THX's for mono and locating them nearer your speakers.

The circuitry includes left and right channel pcb's, offering lots of benefits. They include less

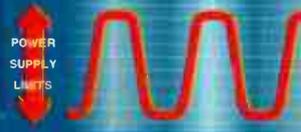
complicated pcb's meaning extra reliability, more separation of circuits, so like the Hølmgren transformer, less interference

going out or coming in. All this, plus lower build cost too, means more savings again towards the specification of better components.

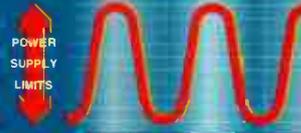
Any amp which is overdriven, (unlikey on the 218 THX because it is so powerful) can produce distortion or "clipping". The NAD Soft Clipping circuit gently transforms the

waveform, rounding off the peaks, preventing "dynamic overload" and heading off damage to your ears and your speakers, without losing the sense of musical drama.

Hard Clipping



Soft Clipping



There are other more hidden features too which provide specific benefits. Typically, the 218 THX incorporates extensive non intrusive protection circuitry. This prevents damage from accidental overload or misuse which can lead to overheating or circuit failure.

Finally for those for whom the letters THX are somewhat of a mystery, let us briefly explain.

George Lucas, creator of the 'Star Wars' epics, went to extraordinary lengths to ensure that the sound quality of his films exceeded anything Hollywood had previously produced and he laid down exacting

specifications covering distortion, noise, power etc. to encourage manufacturers to develop products which will reproduce his sound tracks to the standard they deserve.



NAD was first with a power amplifier which met these challenging standards and won the right to carry the THX badge. The 218 THX continues this principle of quality first.

So what do you get for your not insubstantial investment at the end of the day?

A thoughtfully designed, utterly reliable, acoustically stunning 2 X 200 watts, bridgeable to a more than you'll ever need 700 watts mono, with more headroom than your window frames will thank you for, which could even change the way you perceive music.

But with all this capability none of it is a fashion statement. The 218 THX is designed, not designer. Every feature of the 218 THX enhances performance and reliability.

That's why our slogan "pure and simple" is as relevant today for equipment as advanced as the 218 THX as it was when NAD was created more than 20 years ago.



NAD ELECTRONICS LIMITED. NAD BUILDING
401-405 NETHER STREET LONDON N3 1QG. TELEPHONE 0181 343 3240

NAD pure and simple.

NAD GET INTEGRATED

NAD's latest arrival is the 317 integrated amplifier. Maintaining family tradition, NAD use their 214's 80w power amplifier section in the 317, complete with hefty toroidal transformer. Fronting the power amplifier is an IC-free pre-amp built from precision metal film resistors and polypropylene capacitors. Precious metal fans will appreciate gold-plating on all input switching relays as well as sockets.

And you needn't worry that upgrading will mean a new amplifier. Not only can the 317 be bridged to produce 240w, it also possesses separate inputs for pre- and power sections, allowing bi-amping. Complete with a remote control that will operate other NAD components through NAD Link, the 317 costs £469.95.

Also joining the ranks is the 218 THX power amplifier. Weighing in at £849.95 and a very considerable 23kgs, the 218 is capable of supplying 200w. Unlike many other amps, whose power supplies contain a single pair of large reservoir capacitors, the 218 relies on a bank of smaller caps. This configuration lowers the supply's inductance and cuts down on capacitor recovery time, claim NAD. To reduce crosstalk, left and right channels are laid out on dual mono, mirror image PCBs. A final touch is the separate, regulated power supply dedicated to the input stage which suppresses interstage interference.

NAD
401-405 Nether Street,
London N3 1QG
Tel: 0181 343 3240



START QUEUING FOR KEF

Based around a clear polypropylene-coned Uni-Q driver is KEF's new Q Series. This driver, which KEF claims gives a better off-axis response and a smoother midrange than previous units, is shared by all the new 'speakers. Sitting pretty at the budget end of the range is the £200 Q15 standmounter with its single, reflex-loaded driver. First of the floorstanders is the £350 Q35, again with a single Uni-Q, while an extra £150 buys the Q55 with its additional 160mm bass unit. Standing out from the rest of the range are the £800 Q65 and £1000 Q75. These both use a new 'Racetrack' 6in. x 9in. oval woofer, in the Q75's case, alongside a passive radiator.

KEF Audio
Eccleston Road,
Tovil,
Kent ME15 6QP
Tel: 01622 672261



THE BRITISH APPROACH

TEAC's new CD-3450 Special Edition CD player joins that growing band of components designed in the UK for manufacture overseas. The player uses a 1-bit DAC which passes on its signal unhindered by capacitors thanks to direct coupling between stages. A TOS-link optical digital output is fitted to enable the connection of an outboard DAC, and



trade winds

"JOIN THE COGNOSCENTI"



The *Caspian*

ROKSAN

Stonehill
Huntingdon
PE18 6ED
ENGLAND

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FAX: +44 (0) 1480-432777
EMAIL: INFO@ROKSAN.CO.UK

headphone users are also catered for. The CD-3450SE comes with remote control for armchair athletes, and sells for £199.95.

TEAC

5 Marlin House,
The Croxley Centre,
Watford,
Herts. WD1 8YA
Tel: 01923 819630

HANG THE DJ

If you've had enough of verbose DJs interrupting your favourite tracks, then Eurosats have an alternative. Their new £329 Manhattan MDR satellite receiver is specifically designed for reception of the DMX and ADR channels. While Astra



Digital Radio transmits over 30 regional radio stations, DMX offers more than 60 non-stop CD-quality music channels free from DJ interruption. The Manhattan also possesses an optical digital output for connection to an external DAC.

Eurosats

1 Oxgate Centre,
Oxgate Lane,
Edgware Road,
London NW2 7JA
Tel: 0181 452 6699

BRITISH APPROACH II

Replacing their PMA-250III integrated amplifier, Denon have come up with the PMA-250SE. As with previous models, the main design work was carried out in the UK in conjunction with Denon Japan. The Special Edition's most important upgrade over the '250III is a power supply with 50% greater reservoir capacity, said to improve dynamics and produce a more consistent sound. While there are 5 line level inputs, lovers of vinyl needn't feel neglected - an optional phono stage is available at a £15 premium.



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

VIRTUOSO PERFORMANCE

Owners of low power valve amplifiers and horn 'speaker fans should be of good cheer in this Christmas season. Bravura, manufacturers of the large Brio and Accelerando horn loudspeakers, have just introduced the £2995 Virtuoso. More affordable and smaller than its predecessors, the Virtuoso also features a new midrange and treble horn which, say Bravura, helps the 'speaker produce a smooth, even response. Sensitivity, at 104dB, is a valve lover's dream and the single Lowther PM6C driver promises an easy load for zero negative feedback amplifiers.



Bravura,
White House Hall,
Hadlow Road,
Kent TN11 0AJ
Tel: 01732 851408

MYRYAD DIGITS

The latest member of Myriad's equipment line-up is the MC 100 CD player. The heart of the MC 100 is a Sony 1-bit Pulse Length Modulated DAC. This incorporates four separate converters to provide a pair of push-pull outputs for each channel. The signal is then fed to an analogue filter built around a high speed op-amp before passing on to the discrete, Class A output stage. Eleven regulated power lines help maintain isolation between stages, while jitter is reduced by synchronising the transport with the DAC's timing signal. Sporting remote control, the MC 100 will set you back £699.95.



Myriad Systems
2 Pipers Wood,
Waterberry
Drive,
Waterlooville,
Hants. PO7 7XU
Tel: 01705 265508

DON'T GET KNOTTED

The new Ixos 607 loudspeaker cable is aimed at audiophiles on a budget. For £1.95 you get a 192 strand, high purity OFC cable which is designed for low capacitance and inductance despite its slim 1.55mm width. To make installation easier, the underside of the cable's plastic jacket is coated with adhesive, so no tacks or ties are necessary.

Ixos
Unit 2,
Desborough Ind. Pk.,
High Wycombe,
Bucks. HP12 3BG
Tel: 01494 459981



trade winds

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 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.

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.

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

What more could you ask?

BOOTHROYD STUART
MERIDIAN

Meridian Audio Limited

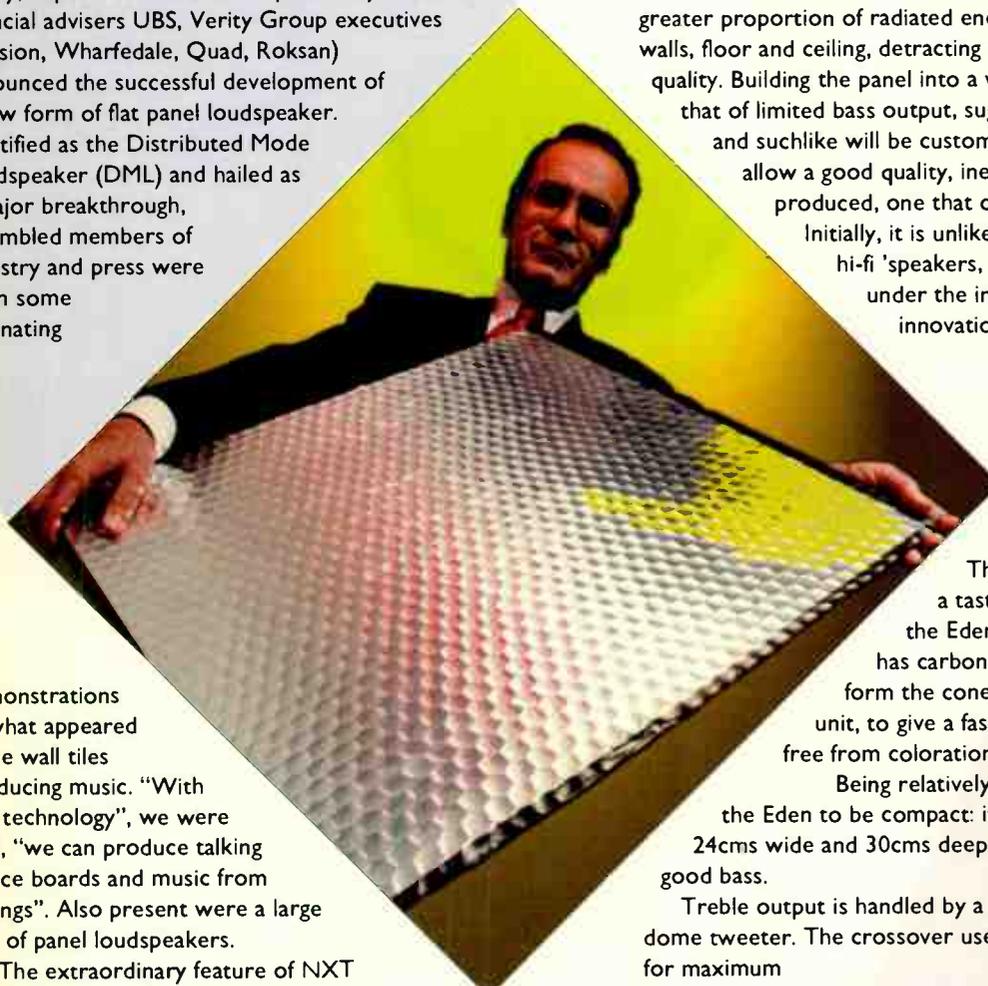
Stonehill, Stukeley Meadows,
Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire PE18 6ED

Tel 44 (0)1480 434334

Fax (0)1480 432948

MISSION LAUNCH RADICAL NEW FLAT PANEL SPEAKER

Friday, September 27th. In the plush City offices of financial advisers UBS, Verity Group executives (Mission, Wharfedale, Quad, Roksan) announced the successful development of a new form of flat panel loudspeaker. Identified as the Distributed Mode Loudspeaker (DML) and hailed as a major breakthrough, assembled members of industry and press were given some fascinating



demonstrations of what appeared to be wall tiles producing music. "With this technology", we were told, "we can produce talking notice boards and music from ceilings". Also present were a large pair of panel loudspeakers.

The extraordinary feature of NXT technology, as Verity call their DML, is that the sound it radiates is of uncorrelated phase all over the panel, front and back. So the panel does not beam high frequencies toward listeners. This means it radiates sound all round, from front, back and sides, right up to 20kHz.

At low frequencies, however, the front and rear begin to take on a specific phase and the response forms lobes, just like a conventional loudspeaker, as cancellation sets in. So NXT needs a subwoofer.

Verity Group bought rights to this technology from the Ministry of Defence. It relies on a fairly sophisticated understanding of materials behaviour. As a result, this aspect of the DML is complex and difficult to understand.

Verity told us they had spent £2million in world-wide patent searches to avoid infringement, and to pay for their protective patents. Apparently, everyone and his dog has tried to get panels to radiate sound effectively and masses of patents exist. Verity claim that none of them operate a panel in the manner of NXT, however.

What does all this mean for hi-fi? Radiation from all round gives an unusually even spread of acoustic power into a room,

which many people will like. There is no listening hot spot. So an NXT 'speaker is easy to listen to.

It has low distortion too, another good point. However, a greater proportion of radiated energy will be reflected from walls, floor and ceiling, detracting from overall perceived quality. Building the panel into a wall solves this problem and that of limited bass output, suggesting stations, airports and suchlike will be customers. In the home, NXT will allow a good quality, inexpensive loudspeaker to be produced, one that can be positioned anywhere. Initially, it is unlikely to challenge conventional hi-fi 'speakers, but this could well change under the influence of future innovations.

CASTLE ANNOUNCE EDEN

Castle have been out in the garden again, cultivating loudspeakers.

This time they've come up with a tasty piece of temptation called the Eden. Forget apples - this Eden has carbon-fibre. It has been used to form the cone of the 6.5in bass/mid-range unit, to give a fast, clean sound completely free from coloration, Castle claim.

Being relatively small, the new driver allows the Eden to be compact: it measures 50cms high, 24cms wide and 30cms deep. Reflex loading is used to get good bass.

Treble output is handled by a ferrofluid cooled polyamide dome tweeter. The crossover uses polypropylene capacitors for maximum transparency and it can be bi-wired.

All that stands between desire and fulfilment is £499. This makes available a wide choice of finishes: black, cherry, walnut, plus natural, medium and antique oak.

Those interested in lush surroundings may well opt for Rosewood or Yew options at a price that would have made Eve blush: £529.



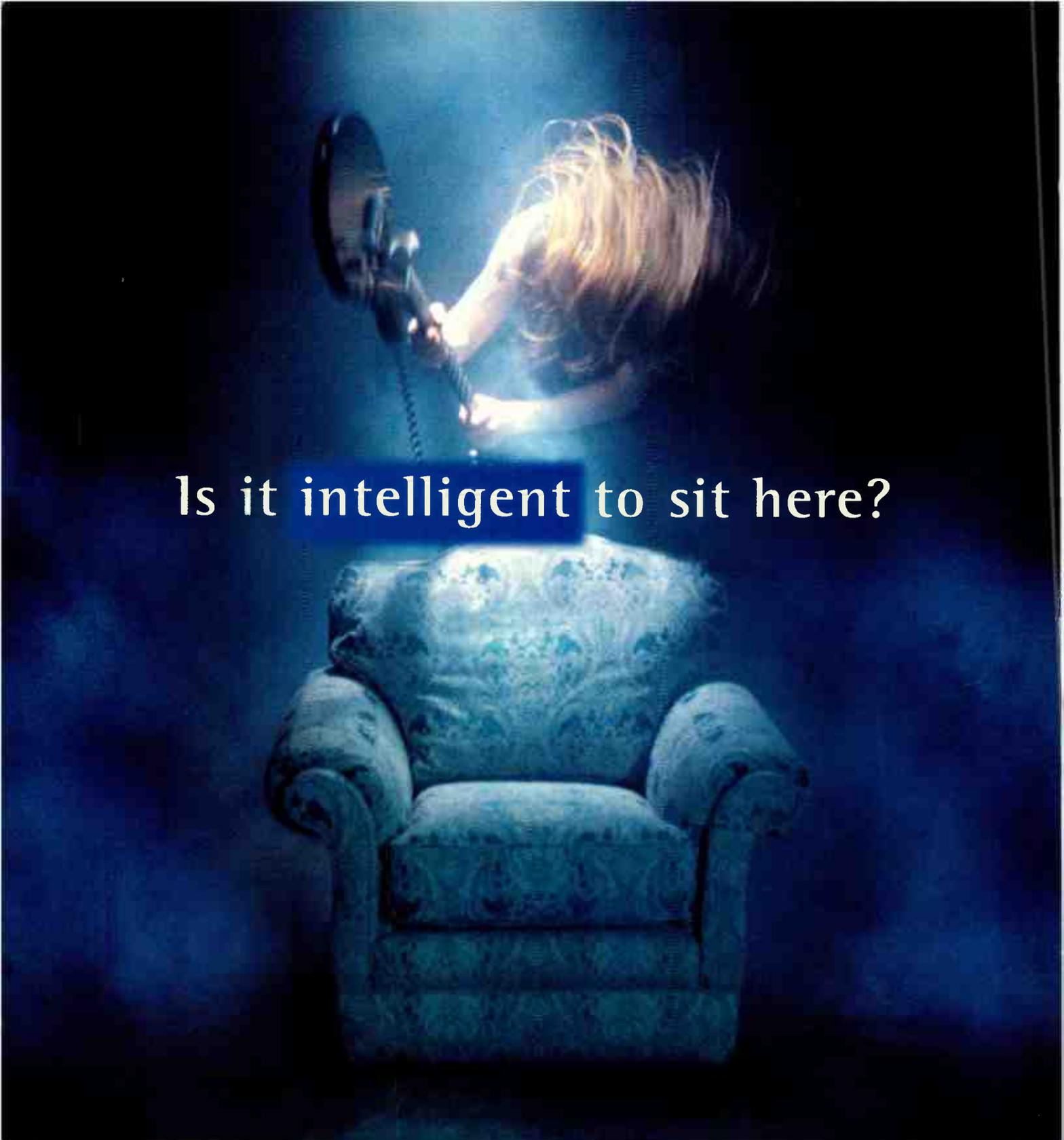
Castle Acoustics Ltd
Park Mill,
Shortbank Road,
North Yorkshire
BD23 2TT
Tel: 01756 795333

DEMONSTRATION - SCOTTISH HI-FI EXHIBITION

Britain's first demonstration of NXT will take place on Friday 15th November at the Scottish Hi-Fi Exhibition. Venue is Royal Scot Hotel, Glasgow Road, Edinburgh. Call Colin McKenzie at Hi-Fi Corner: 0131-556-7901

trade winds





Is it intelligent to sit here?

SRS ()[®]
Sound Retrieval System

The lead guitarist of 'Mission Aborted' is about to smash his axe over your head. Don't worry, it won't hurt a bit. You see you're listening on a Sharp SRS 3D Surround Sound system, so it sounds so real you feel like you're actually there. Using the revolutionary 'Sound Retrieval System', the audio system engulfs the room with vivid, 3D Surround Sound from just two speakers. And because you get the same effect wherever you are in the room, you can get up and rock around to your hearts content. There are 4 audio systems with SRS available. Each one provides a more affordable alternative to normal multi speaker 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/R for further information.

SHARP
INTELLIGENT THINKING



World Radio History

STRENGTH IN DEPTH

Using experience gained developing their up-market CD transport and convertor, Audiolab have produced their first CD player. Dominic Baker is surprised to find it challenges the best.



The development of Audiolab's new 8000CD CD player owes a lot to its expensive two-box brother. Many of the techniques Audiolab have learnt in reducing jitter and improving signal integrity find their way into the 8000CD. To great effect - this player had us arguing about whether it deserved to be given a top slot. Not bad at the price - £1000.

Its heart is Crystal's new CS4329 DAC chip, a device which is itself a development from the popular CS4328, recognised for its clear treble and punchy bass.

There's only a single BNC co-axial digital output provided on the rear. According to Audiolab, this gives lower jitter than a standard optical output, if properly implemented. Two pairs of audio outputs are provided though, to allow the 8000CD to serve two systems.

For this review, as with most CD players we test at Hi-Fi World, the 8000CD was asked to stand comparison against our in-house reference CD set-up, comprising 8000CDM transport and Pink Triangle Da Capo convertor. This front end represents the best part of £3000, so a direct comparison is not valid. But the fact that the 8000CD is still being used in the reference system a couple of weeks after it was installed says a lot for its performance straight away.

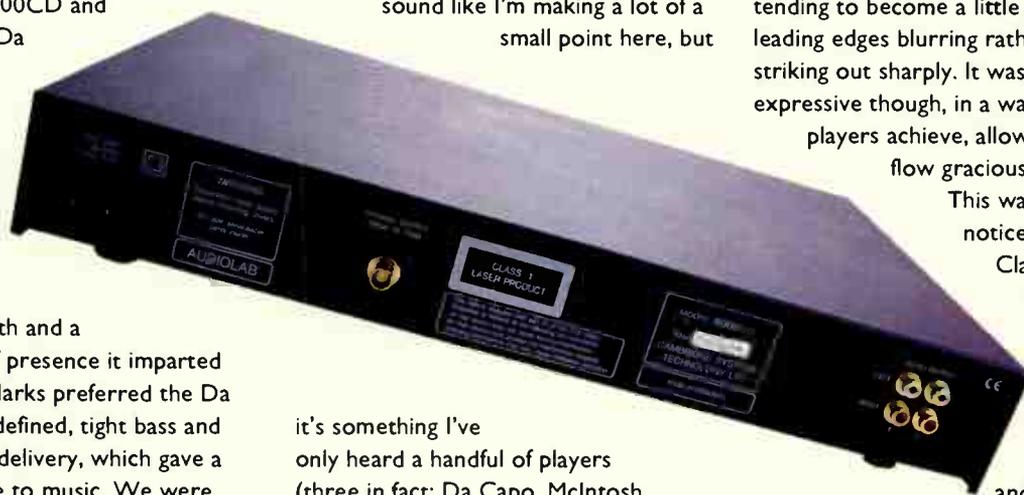
We listened intently to the new 8000CD, taking turns to swap between the 8000CD and Pink Triangle's Da Capo convertor connected to the Audiolab's digital output. I preferred the 8000CD for its soundstage depth and a superb sense of presence it imparted to vocals. Jon Marks preferred the Da Capo's cleanly defined, tight bass and more cohesive delivery, which gave a firmer structure to music. We were giving precedence to different parameters, so our choice differed. What we did agree on though was that the 8000CD is one of the few players under £1000 that trounces the £500 Marantz CD-63 mkII I-Signature. And that a £1000 player should even come

sonically close to the £1400 Da Capo DAC is quite something.

When swapping from the Da Capo to the 8000CD for the first time, I thought I'd struck gold. It had a wide, open and spacious soundstage, wonderful presence to vocals, and biting



attack on cymbals. The Da Capo almost sounded midrange bland and confined by comparison. But what had really made me sit up was that the 8000CD had proper depth to its soundstage. It may sound like I'm making a lot of a small point here, but



it's something I've only heard a handful of players (three in fact; Da Capo, McIntosh MCD7009 and DPA 1024) achieve to such a believable extent.

With such depth and body to vocals, The Cranberries played with real verve, creating a solid soundstage. Images were properly proportioned and precise, although not as tightly defined

as with the Da Capo. It was difficult to know which was 'right' here; the Da Capo located images more tightly in a smaller soundstage, which Jon preferred. I found the 8000CD's more open and spacious images and staging musically captivating. Jon felt the precision of the Da Capo was more accurate.

In fact, the 8000CD was musical in a way I wasn't expecting. The word 'clinical' seems to appear in Audiolab reviews regularly. It's a label that they've had to put up with for a long time, even when it's not really merited. The 8000CD certainly breaks the mould here, having the kind of tactile and believable feel for music that made the Quad 67 CD so endearing.

There's a sweetness in the treble that makes for enjoyable and unfatiguing listening. It's perhaps a touch soft - the McIntosh CDM7009 I mentioned earlier is every bit as sweet, but with better high frequency extension that gives more insight. But then the Mac's nearly three times the Audiolab's price.

Again comparing the 8000CD to our reference, bass was fuller and delivered with greater authority. It wasn't quite so well defined though, tending to become a little muddled with leading edges blurring rather than striking out sharply. It was fluid and expressive though, in a way few other players achieve, allowing music to flow graciously along.

This was particularly noticeable with Classical pieces, where bass parts were full and flowing, benefitting from richness and character.

Cellos sounded powerful, their woody texture and thrumming resonances intact. While kettle drums at the back of the stage didn't have quite the definition and transient attack to make them totally convincing, the scale and power was certainly all there.

Without doubt, the 8000CD is one of the best players around at £1000. It is a notable step up from the Marantz CD-63mkII KI-Signature, which itself has seen off so much of the competition below £1000. But more than that, it is thoroughly musical with a sweet treble, lucid and full midrange and powerful bass. It's been a long time coming, but Audiolab's first integrated CD player has proved itself well worth the wait.

Dolores' voice, which can often sound slightly rough on lesser hi-fi, was smooth and gentle on The Cranberries' 'War Child' through the 8000CD. Strings swelled sweetly behind her, building into the music a sense of melancholic yearning which the Audiolab managed to transmit without difficulty. The images populating the soundstage were all clearly defined, making individual instruments more obvious on the heavier mixes of this album. 'Hollywood' pointed out this player's power, bass lines pounding out of the 'speakers. This helped the rhythmic content of the track to emerge unscathed and kept my feet tapping and head bobbing.

Another CD full of complex, heavy

mixes is Carnival Jump Up, Steel Bands of Trinidad and Tobago. On this bass-fest of an album the Audiolab showed off its upper-bass dynamics. Where it fell slightly short, however, was on the lower frequencies played by the bass

"The 8000CD certainly breaks the mould. . . having the kind of tactile and believable feel for music that made the Quad 67 CD so endearing"

drum section of the orchestra. It couldn't quite muster sufficient clarity here to tell apart the various drums, instead sounding slightly thick and blurred. But this CD has caused problems for most of the players I've used it on, so the Audiolab is far from disgracing itself in this respect.

Next up was some good, old-fashioned Rock and Roll in the form of Janis Joplin's Pearl. Dynamics were at the forefront of the 8000CD's presentation once more, percussion crashing, vocals soaring and bass punching out of the 'speakers. Imaging

was concise, keeping everything orderly no matter how frenetic the proceedings became. Vocals were powerful and expressive; Janis really let rip.

Representing Classical music were Tchaikovsky and Bach. The former's Symphony No6 Op 74 in B minor 'Pathetique' emerged smoothly and gracefully from the Audiolab. Strings were naturally dynamic, their lack of confusion part of the reason for the depth of the soundstage. The choir and woodwind sections of Bach's Mass in B minor both went to prove the 8000CD was doing a good job of treading the tonal straight and narrow, even if it did miss out on that last final touch of colour

which assures the realism of the piece.

Switching to our in-house Pink Triangle Da Capo DAC brought a greater feeling of substance to bass and definition to treble, strings and Rock percussion showing this up most clearly. The range of tonal colours also broadened, although the meagreness of the improvement showed how good a job the Audiolab's internal DAC was doing ●

AUDIOLAB 8000CD

£1000

Cambridge Systems Technology
Spitfire Close,
Ermine Business Park,
Huntingdon,
Cambs.
PE18 6XY
Tel: 01480 415600



• The 8000CD under development at the factory in Huntingdon.

WORLD VERDICT 
 Sweet treble and full midrange give a lucid and full sound. The 8000CD makes music.

Measured Performance
see p103



CARBON CASTLE

Noel Keywood, honorary president of the carbon fibre drive unit fan club, enjoys Castle's latest delivery, the Avon.

If you spend weekends gadding about the skies in your private jet or blasting around a secluded race track in a McLaren F1, then you'll be enjoying high technology shared with Castle's new Avon loudspeakers. Carbon fibre is used in turbine blades, racing cars and many other places where enormous strength and light weight are required.

Loudspeaker cones also need to be both strong and rigid, if they are to have a wide operating range, and with two-way designs like the Avon, this is especially important.

Castle's bass/midrange unit uses a woven mat of carbon fibre stiffened by a hard set resin, the normal structure employed for loudspeaker cones. This driver is reflex loaded, in an unusual arrangement where the port fires downward onto a plinth, a technique Castle favour. The floor is used as a reflecting surface to reinforce the bass. And from experience with other Castle 'speakers, I know it works well.

What carbon fibre delivers is a clear, bright sound that's very clean, if not as squeaky clean as HDA (High Definition Aerogel). It has a relatively sweet tonality about it, but this is weak enough that it amounts to a barely perceptible sonic signature rather than an overt

coloration. And this is what I met with in the Avon: it delivers unusually forward, out-of-the-box vocals that come across as impressively clean yet easy to listen to. Having said that, it's best to warn you that the Avon is dry, seemingly bright against most of its competitors, and very lucid. Angelique Kidjo's megaphonic vocals hit me really hard, as I'd hoped. Her shouts on 'Agolo' were vivid and the complex percussion backing her wove a dense pattern of sound that was impressive in its filigree detail.

There's no doubt the Avon is breathtakingly detailed and throws out a wealth of information, but the absence of a midrange dip makes its sound brightly lit against the sort of performance delivered by plastic cones. The electronic effects of the Beatmaster's Hey DJ I Can't Dance To That Music were laid bare, strung out between the 'speakers with almost embarrassing insight; other 'speakers simply don't analyse these effects in front of you with surgical insight to reveal their artificiality. Betty Boop sounded a little light; I wanted some more warmth and body behind her vocals and recalled, when engineering

our own KLS-3 carbon fibre drive unit 'speaker, how we put in a bit of upper bass lift to give this. The Avon on the other hand has a ruler flat response.

The efforts of Ashkenazy's right hand were highlighted in Rachmaninov's Piano Concerto No2, but as the violins entered, I was reminded of just how sweet they can sound when heard through carbon fibre, the strings

"The efforts of Ashkenazy's right hand were highlighted in Rachmaninov's Piano Concerto No2, but as the violins entered, I was reminded of just how sweet they can sound when heard through carbon fibre, the strings vibrating deliciously."

vibrating deliciously. By contrast, cone break up within lesser drivers adds screech, jitter and muddle to violins. The Avons pull them out of the mix, dangle them in front of you and say, "There - violins!"

These are "in your face" loudspeakers, possibly not to everyone's taste. This is because they are brutally revealing, projecting images forward in a relentless fashion. The polyamide laminated fabric dome tweeter of this 'speaker doesn't let go either, reproducing highs with vigour. Cymbals rang strongly, if not with quite the sonority of some top rate designs. This tweeter is more amenable in its delivery than the metal dome designs I've criticised in earlier Castle 'speakers, but at the same time, it's still a little, er, vigorous. Stereo images were well placed and the soundstage satisfactorily constructed, if not especially deep because there was little very low frequency ambient information.

Castle's bass loading system gave the tightest, punchiest bass I've heard for a long time. It appears to cut bass off sharply at around 40Hz, so there's little low bass rumble, but by eliminating low frequency overhang subjective

speed is maximised. Few 'speakers have their low frequency dryness and control, and Rock fans who love speed and grip will be happy. The Avon's were unmatched in identifying rhythm.

Avon buyers would be well advised to choose a smooth partnering amplifier, like Aura's VA-80. And CD users must take on board the fact that most 'speakers, by dint of cone break up and midrange crossover dip, soften the glare of CD. Not so the Avon; it must be partnered with a good player. Vinyl addicts will love this 'speaker though; it perfectly suits the warm, fulsome bass of LP and the upper midrange droop of most MM cartridges.

Although a little academic in their correctness, the Avons are, all the same, impressive. I've not heard such a well engineered and successfully modern loudspeaker for a while. In a well furnished room with smooth partnering equipment Castle's new 'speaker offers a level of insight, clarity and control that few rivals can at present match ●

Castle Avon

£699

**Castle Acoustics
Park Mill,
Shortbank Road,
Skipton,
North Yorks. BD23 2TT
Tel: 01756 795333**

WORLD VERDICT

Taut, dry bass and lucid midrange, but need matching to warm ancillaries to avoid sounding bright.

**Measured Performance
see p103**

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

LONDON

NI
Grahams Hi-Fi
190a New North
Road
0171 226 5500

SW11

Oranges & Lemons
61/63 Webbs Road
Battersea
0171 924 2040

W4

Martin-Kleiser Ltd
108 Chiswick High
Road
0181 400 5555

SOUTH

Ashford, Kent
Soundcraft Hi-Fi
40 High Street
01233 624441

Chelmsford

Rayleigh Hi-Fi
216 Moulsham Street
01245 265245

East Grinstead

Audio Designs
26 High Street
01342 314569

Kingston-upon-Thames

Infidelity
9 High Street
Hampton Wick
0181 943 3530

Rayleigh, Essex

Rayleigh Hi-Fi
44a High Street
01268 779762

Southend-on-Sea

Rayleigh Hi-Fi
132/4 London Road
01702 435255

Uxbridge

Uxbridge Audio
278 High Street
01895 465444

MIDLANDS

Banbury
Overture
3 Church Lane
01295 272158

Birmingham

Sound Academy
152a High Street
Bloxwich
01922 493499

Leicester

Listen Inn
6 Hotel Street
0116 262 3754

Northampton

Listen Inn
32 Gold Street
01604 37871

Shrewsbury

Creative Audio
9 Dogpole
01743 241924

NORTH

Cheadle (Stockport)

Audio Counsel
14 Stockport Road
0161 428 7887

Oldham

Audio Counsel
12/14 Shaw Road
0161 633 2602

Sheffield

Moorgate Acoustics
184 Fitzwilliam St
0114 275 6048

SCOTLAND

Edinburgh

Russ Andrews Hi-Fi
34 Northumberland
Street
0131 557 1672

Glasgow

Stereo Stereo
260 St. Vincent Street
0141 248 4079

POLISH WITHOUT THE SPIT



Jon Marks enjoys his encounter with Meridian's shiny new 502 pre-amplifier and 557 power amplifier.

Having previously concentrated on light and compact amplifiers using switched mode power supplies, the 557 marks a bit of a departure for Meridian. My spine vividly confirmed that; when Meridian say they use a massive 1.6kVA toroidal mains transformer, they mean it. Trying to swing this beast into our

rack had me yearning for a forklift truck. If you're still unsatisfied with those 200watts on offer though, the 557 can be bridged to produce over 800watts.

Doing the delicate work upstream of the 557 for this review was the new 502 remote control pre-amplifier. Hiding away under the unassuming

gloss black glass top is a fully balanced, dual mono design constructed with high grade components. These include Nichicon electrolytics and audio grade polypropylene capacitors with a low-flux toroidal transformer. And with its chunky desk-top remote, the 502 can be used to control an entire Meridian system.

The 502/557 immediately made a positive impression with their rendition of Jimi Hendrix's 'Are You Experienced?' from Kiss The Sky. There was a naturalness to the presentation that caught my attention. The Meridians were an open window into the emotion in the music, not producing their own coloured version of events, but accurately relaying the feeling in the music. I could tell that this was going to be one of those rare combinations that help keep my faith in hi-fi alive.

'Voodoo Child (Slight Return)' and its astonishing guitar riff was a real 'blow my mind' affair, guitar somersaulting around the soundstage while percussion stood out clearly in the mix next to Hendrix's phasey vocals. Image clarity and detail were both first rate, playing their part in building a wide, transparent soundstage hanging free of the 'speaker cabinets, in this case Heybrook's Sextets. But it was the Meridians' easy-going presentation that really impressed me, music never sounding the least bit artificial or processed.

The rhythm set up by the bass guitar on 'Stepping Stone' was infectious. 'Castles Made Of Sand' was another opportunity for bass ability to show, the 557 stopping and starting the Heybrooks' cones without straining or curtailing harmonics and decay.

Wondering how the 502/557 would react to a bass heavy, highly complex mix, I popped Carnival Jump Up (Steelbands Of Trinidad And Tobago) into the Audiolab 8000CDM. The steel drums on this CD are capable of producing lightning fast transients, and these came loud and clear through the Meridians, putting a bass-happy smile on my face. There was tonal colour in abundance too, capturing the innately warm sound of drums and neatly separating gently struck cymbals from the dominant bass section of the orchestra.

The Meridian combo continued to pull out the stops with Buddy Guy's 'Slippin' In' through the Sextets. Drawing on the 557's smooth power, the tortured vocals were really getting their message across. Cymbals through that revealing Tonigen ribbon tweeter perfectly complemented the lament of Buddy's guitar playing, each

"The Meridian pair, and the performance as a whole, remained unruffled as my internal organs started bouncing to the beat."

pluck of the strings carrying weight and impact. The solidity and precision of the imaging allowed the piano to stay firmly out at stage right while drums kicked along at centre rear.

The Meridian/Sextet pairing also thrived on a diet of Moloko. I'd had a sneaking suspicion that 'Butterfly 747' would be able to blast out to its heart's content, and I was happy to be proved right. The thunderous opening synthesiser grew under the rest of the instruments, only to disappear with lightning speed as the drum'n'bass kicked in. Being a bit of a generous soul, I thought the neighbours should be let in on this one, so I duly flicked up the volume on the 502's remote to more seismic levels. The Meridian pair, and the performance as a whole, remained unruffled as my internal organs started bouncing to the beat, the Heybrooks' bass drivers coming perilously close to their end-stops.

The tonal smorgasbord that is Bach's Mass in B minor possessed colour and stature. The various musical strands that go into making up this piece retained their individuality, each adding its weight to the whole instead of folding together in an amorphous mass. I had no difficulty at all telling Catherine Dubosc's voice from that of Catherine Denley as they duetted on 'Christe Eleison', the images of the two being set firmly side by side at the front of the soundstage. The same went for the choral rendition of

'Kyrie Eleison' that followed, the purity and power of voices lending the performance substance. David Woodcock's solo violin was also sweet and smooth as he played the 'Air', enjoying fine tonal colour.

Timpani rolled and thundered and cymbals crashed as I embarked on Carl Orff's Carmina Burana. Strings and voices rose together in the crescendo of 'O Fortuna', building to a truly explosive peak. 'Reie', by contrast, showed

off the 502/557's delicacy to good effect, soft strings and muted brass flowing gently along with accompanying background coughs and shuffles.

With their mix of abilities - relaxed, natural rhythmic flow, firm control, broad soundstaging and wide tonal palette - the Meridian 502 pre-amplifier and 557 power amplifier make for a well balanced combination. They'll have supplies of midnight oil plunging ●

502 Pre-amplifier £1295
557 Power amplifier £1400

**Meridian
 Stonehill,
 Huntingdon,
 Cambs. PE18 6ED
 Tel: 01480 434334**

WORLD VERDICT

502 Pre-amp ●●●●●
 Transparent, detailed sound with good tonal range and very natural presentation.

557 Power amp ●●●●●
 Great control and dynamics allied to seductive smoothness. A rare combination of power and delicacy.

Measured Performance
 see p103

"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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GOLD BLEND



**Harbeth's HL-K6
loudspeaker is an
exotic mix of old and
new, finds David Price.**

Most hi-fi manufacturers make simple products and throw money at advertising in the hope they'll sell. A few, like Harbeth, operate at the other extreme, making

sophisticated, well-engineered products which sell more on merit than brand identity. Still, a little more market presence wouldn't do Harbeth any harm - for a company approaching its

twentieth birthday, you'd think more people would know of them by now.

Ironically, their highest profile is in Japan, where their BBC credentials mean more than any amount of glossy

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They're aware that many manufacturers are now trying to duplicate the unique design and outstanding performance of Mirage, the inventors of the original Bipolar loudspeaker. Yet they're equally aware that no one has even managed to

The Bipolar M-151 speaker has earned the acclaim and awards of audiophiles around the world. Its dual 8" subwoofers in individual chambers generate amazingly accurate bass down to 20Hz while proprietary tweeter and midrange designs ensure minimal distortion and optimal dispersion.

Now Mirage is setting new standards in

"Since there aren't any faults that we can hear, the standard in loudspeaker design may well be at hand... the benchmark of modern engineering."

- THE INNER EAR REPORT

channels, subwoofers and satellite surrounds. No matter where you are in the room, with Mirage Bipolar you're utterly immersed in the most spacious, three-dimensional music and sound effects imaginable.

So you can put off purchasing until the next millennium, in hopes that the imitators will eventually catch up. Or you can live in Mirage

For those of you that think
that modern life has been
immeasurably improved by
the advent of nuclear power,
soap operas and the ending
of all wars, you should replace
all your records with CD's.

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MC 3000
Mk II

ortofon

01753-889949

advertisements ever could. But Harbeth aren't just about manufacturing the LS3/5a so beloved of oriental audiophiles. They've got an impressive range of their own designs, including the HL-P3ES, a mini-monitor far superior to the aforementioned Beeb design from which it's descended.

Slotting in at £975 is the HL-K6, Harbeth's definitive medium size standmounter, which designer Alan Shaw feels is his best yet. Indeed, considering the amount of work that's gone into it - four years

of SERC (Science and Engineering Research Council) sponsored research into exotic cone materials - it should be something special. To cut a long story short, the K6 has ended up with a 200mm injection-moulded bass unit of 'Radial' material (Research And Development Into Advanced Loudspeakers - an acronym of which even the Japanese would be proud). This is a custom blend of various ingredients including carbon fibre and polypropylene. Taking care of treble duties is a black SEAS anodised aluminium dome tweeter. Like all Harbeth loudspeakers, they're beautifully built and finished in Walnut, Black Ash, Cherry, Teak or other fruits of the rainforest.

On audition, the Harbeths were impressive from the word 'go', offering an unusual combination of classic monitor neutrality with real speed and grip. Rather than the floppy warmth of certain polypropylene-based BBC designs, the HL-K6s show the smack of firm drive units and rigid cabinetry. Working on some powerful Dance courtesy of the KLF's '3 AM Eternal', the Harbeths displayed taut, tuneful bass, a glass-clear mid and open, detailed highs. Bass was surprisingly light for such a large standmounter, but made up for what it lacked in extension and weight with excellent control. The song's bass line punched out expressively, integrating convincingly

with a self-effacing mid-band that offered impressive, monitor-like low-level detail resolution. Neutral without being bland, the K6s unravelled the mix's many strands, managing the unusual feat of sounding musical and very clean and detailed at the same time.

"Harbeths were impressive from the word 'go', offering an unusual combination of classic monitor neutrality with real speed and grip."

Buoyed by this flying start, I moved to my loudspeaker torture track, Elektric Music's 'Showbusiness'. This electronic production forsakes warmth for swingeing dynamics and thunderous bass. Again, the Harbeths showed their firm grasp of rhythms, displaying a Naim-like ability to stop and start in the blink of an eye. Dynamically strong, the HL-K6s managed to convey the impact of the electronic snare drum's lightning transients. Despite all the fireworks, the K6s weren't imaging as well as I'd hoped, so I tried winding up the volume a tad. Now at last things began to fall into place; driving the room more confidently, the Harbeths projected better, vocals imaging slightly forward of the 'speakers' axis.

Only at this point did the Harbeths start to reveal their imperfections. On the song's "Seeing is believing" refrain, the metal dome tweeters hardened up to show a touch of sibilance. Although several orders of magnitude better than most other metal domes, they still lacked the sweetness of good fabric units. Indeed, when asked to reproduce the fluegel horn and tenor saxophone on Herbie Hancock's 'I Have a Dream', things got a little steely. Still, careful matching should assuage this - I'd err more toward vinyl with smooth moving coils than CD players of an uncouth persuasion. I also detected a slight upper bass boxiness, particularly evident

on the double bass runs in the same song, but this never became intrusive.

As expected, the Harbeths were most impressive on Classical, such as IMP's recording of Bach's 3rd Concerto for harpsichord and strings in D major. The allegro of the first movement saw the K6s displaying excellent speed, clarity and depth, the mid-bass driver imposing very little tone of its own. It was more neutral than even HDA or carbon fibre, I'd say. Cellos could have done with a touch more warmth, but were

beautifully breathy and crisp, while violins were dry but never wiry. Again, with enough volume, soundstaging was strong and image location excellent.

All in all, another pair of impressively musical and clean sounding boxes from Harbeth. But don't forget they need plenty of watts and a refined front end to give of their best. If you're after a sophisticated pair of loudspeakers for under £1000, you'd be mad to overlook them - they really are that good.

Harbeth HL-K6

£975

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Tel: 01444 440955

WORLD VERDICT

Clean, musical and classy - Harbeth have done themselves proud again.

Measured Performance

see p103



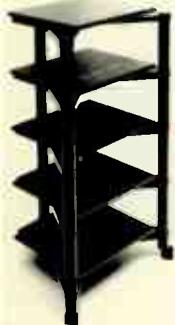
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SYSTEM STAR SEARCH

After three months of in-depth listening, Jon Marks and Dominic Baker reveal Star Search's winning systems.

Our Star Search began in September, when we tested a group of six mid-price CD players with a keen eye on the best sonic performance available. From these selected players, the Marantz CD-63 MkII K-Signature and the Trichord Genesis emerged victorious.

In the following issue, it was the turn of six amplifiers to show their mettle. Used with the CD players chosen in September as well as our in-house reference system, we found

three that delivered exceptional sound quality: the Mission Cyrus III, Pioneer A-100X and Rotel RA-970BX.

November found the final link in the hi-fi chain coming under scrutiny with a group of seven loudspeakers. Again, three stood out above all others: Heybrook's long-lived HBI S3, B&W's high-tech DM 602 and Celestion's sonically imposing Impact 23s.

This month we bring our Star Search series to a conclusion, putting together the winners of each heat to assemble three excellent systems. The decision to assemble three systems was based on the winning loudspeakers. Heybrook's HBI S3s are tonally pure and transparent, but possess a light bass that is best suited to classical or acoustic music in small rooms. The Heybrooks, therefore, form the core of our recommended bedroom or study system.

B&W's DM 602s have quite a different sound. They're punchier and more engaging, but less subtle as well.

Their powerful bass means they work well in

medium size rooms with a more upbeat musical diet like Rock and Dance.

They're also capable of producing party levels without sounding dynamically squashed.

Celestion's Impact 23s fall somewhere between the Heybrooks and B&Ws in terms of

character. They have the best balance of the three with a solid and extended bottom end powerful enough to drive large rooms matching a range of tonal colour and transparency through midrange and treble that can reveal the subtleties in all styles of music.

Of the three amplifiers chosen, only one made it through to the final system selection. Mission's Cyrus II recently went through an upgrade (now III) which included a price hike to £600, pushing it beyond this test's price range. And wherever it was used, Rotel's RA-970BX simply fitted in better than the Pioneer, proving just how important system matching is. The Pioneer is still a fine amplifier in its own right, but in every combination we tried, the Rotel was invariably more at home.

Trichord's Genesis player found favour in our bedroom system, where its soft nature countered a slight brightness in the HBI S3s, yielding a smooth and detailed sound. This proved to be an ideal balance, as excessive treble energy in a small space becomes aggressive and fatiguing.

Regular readers can't have failed to notice the praise Marantz's CD-63 MkII K-Signature has received in these pages. It is a finely balanced machine, smooth and detailed midrange and treble going hand in hand with solid bass. Feeding the neutral sounding and powerful Rotel, it allowed the qualities of both B&W's DM 602s and Celestion's Impact 23s to shine.

All three systems offer outstanding value, giving a level of performance that far exceeds the sum of the parts. A well judged system should give years of service, encouraging you to listen to and enjoy your music. These systems do just that. ●

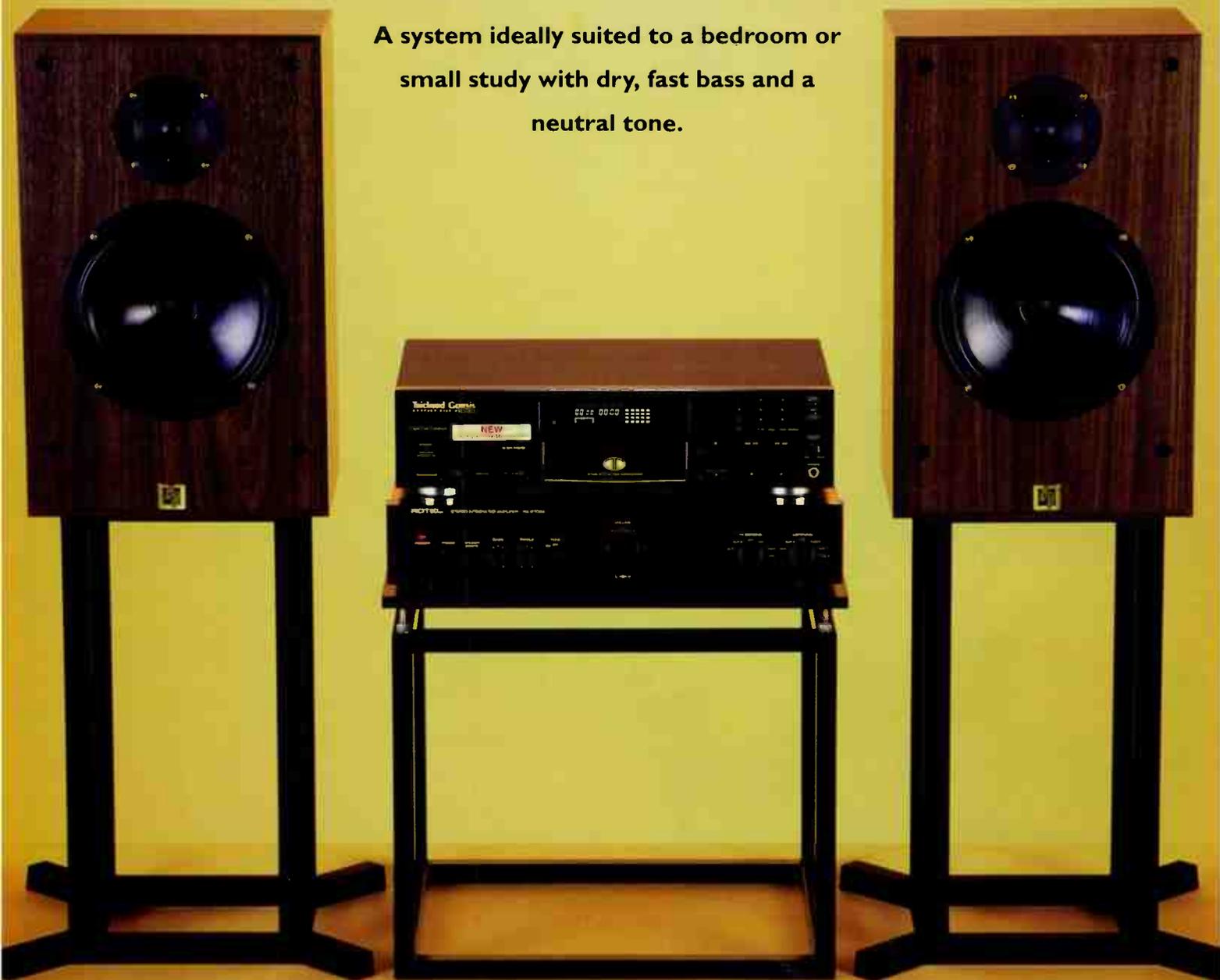


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SYSTEM ONE

**TRICHORD GENESIS★ROTEL RA-970BX★
HEYBROOK HB1 S3**

A system ideally suited to a bedroom or
small study with dry, fast bass and a
neutral tone.



First I headed for the addictive rhythm and spiky synthesisers of Moloko's 'Day For Night'. I was greeted by crisp percussion and clear vocals, backed up by atmospheric synths that give this track its air of seductive mystery. Lower down the Heybrook's response, bass was tight and tuneful, not driving as deep as either the DM 602s or the Impact 23s, but weighty enough for a smaller room. The dryness of the bass should avoid setting off room modes that result in boomy and one-note bass.

'Day For Night' flowed into 'I Can't Help Myself', which again revealed the combination of crisp, clear electronic percussion and vocals allied to rhythmic bass. Here, that mid/bass driver managed a good impression of extension on the driving, grungy synth that makes up the bridge in this song. Seeking some drum'n'bass, I moved up to track 12, 'Butterfly 747'. Drum machine rhythms pumped away hard and fast, producing a feeling of scale and power counterpointed by the hi-hats that ricochet around the mix.

Wiping the metaphorical sweat from my brow, I took the tempo down a peg with John Lee Hooker's Boom, Boom. Raising the hairs on the back of my neck with its menace was 'I'm Bad Like Jesse James', where J LH's throat-full-of-gravel vocals were accompanied by sparse, but powerful guitar dynamically relayed by this system. Adding a sense of ambience to the performance was the metronomic foot-tapping, its reverb echoing loud and clear through the HB1s. 'Same Old Blues Again' had dynamic kick-drum and bass guitar to give it rhythmic direction, the harmonic structure and tone being particularly well revealed by this system. Proof positive of this



system's ability to convince with its tonal colour came from 'Boogie At Russian Hill', where funky Hammond, frenzied lead and bass guitar all

"Trying The Cranberries for dessert, I was impressed by the way this system's imaging unravelled the heavy mix of songs like 'Hollywood', the frenetic 'Salvation' and the headlong rush of 'The Rebels'."

benefitted from life-like colour.

Switching Boom, Boom for Boys For Pele, I homed in on 'Father Lucifer'. Tori Amos' voice was smooth and natural, rather different from the anaemic picture a lot of 'speakers paint. Tonal clarity made the looped vocals on this track, where Tori Amos comes at you from three different directions at once, easy to listen in on individually. 'Marianne' was smooth and clearly intelligible, the subtle detail the system supplied adding a sense of space to the presentation and capturing the yearning in this song. 'Talulah', as expected, was powered along purposefully by its military precision harpsichord and percussion. Each instrument played its part in producing a naturally cohesive result that made me want to carry on listening and savouring this CD.

Vivaldi's Four Seasons was rhythmically and tonally telling. Here, the Heybrooks' dry bass helped to tip the tonal balance slightly to the brighter side of strictly accurate, but the range of orchestral colour on offer and the insight into the music more

than made up for this slight aberration. Violins were smooth and detailed, their strings sounding attractively tart without becoming sharp, while cellos had an impressively organic body resonance that gave the piece substance lower down. Notes flowed in a relaxed, easy way, coming together in a musical whole. Summer confirmed this system was doing its job of communicating the emotion in the music properly, its majesty and anger contrasting with Spring's grace and joy. The voices of the Magnificat choir on the Golden Age CD demonstrated that in terms of tone, subtlety and detail this system is a corker.

Trying The Cranberries for dessert, I was impressed by the way this system's imaging unravelled the heavy mix of songs like 'Hollywood', the frenetic 'Salvation' and the headlong rush of 'The Rebels', allowing individual instruments to be heard instead of blurring together. This lucid presentation also helped retain the spread of the soundstage. Dolores' vocals and the deep, resonant organ note of the synthesiser at the intro of 'Electric Blue' combined to produce an ecclesiastical atmosphere. It was followed by the guitars and percussion of the main body of the song, all clearly and securely placed in the soundstage.

'What's Happening Brother' from Marvin Gaye's What's Going On CD sounded suitably mellow and laid back, percussion again crisp and detailed. 'God Is Love' had the bass guitar supporting Marvin's soulful vocals along with tambourine. On the classic 'Mercy, Mercy Me' it was easy to locate the jangly guitar, which usually gets submerged below the rest of the song, to the far right of the stage ●

Heybrook HB1 S3	£269.00
Rotel RA-970BX	£249.95
Trichord Genesis	£549.00
Heybrook HSB1 stands	£109.95
Chord Co. Chrysalis (1m pair)	£29.99
Chord Co. Rumour (3m bi-wire)	£135.40
System Total	£1343.29

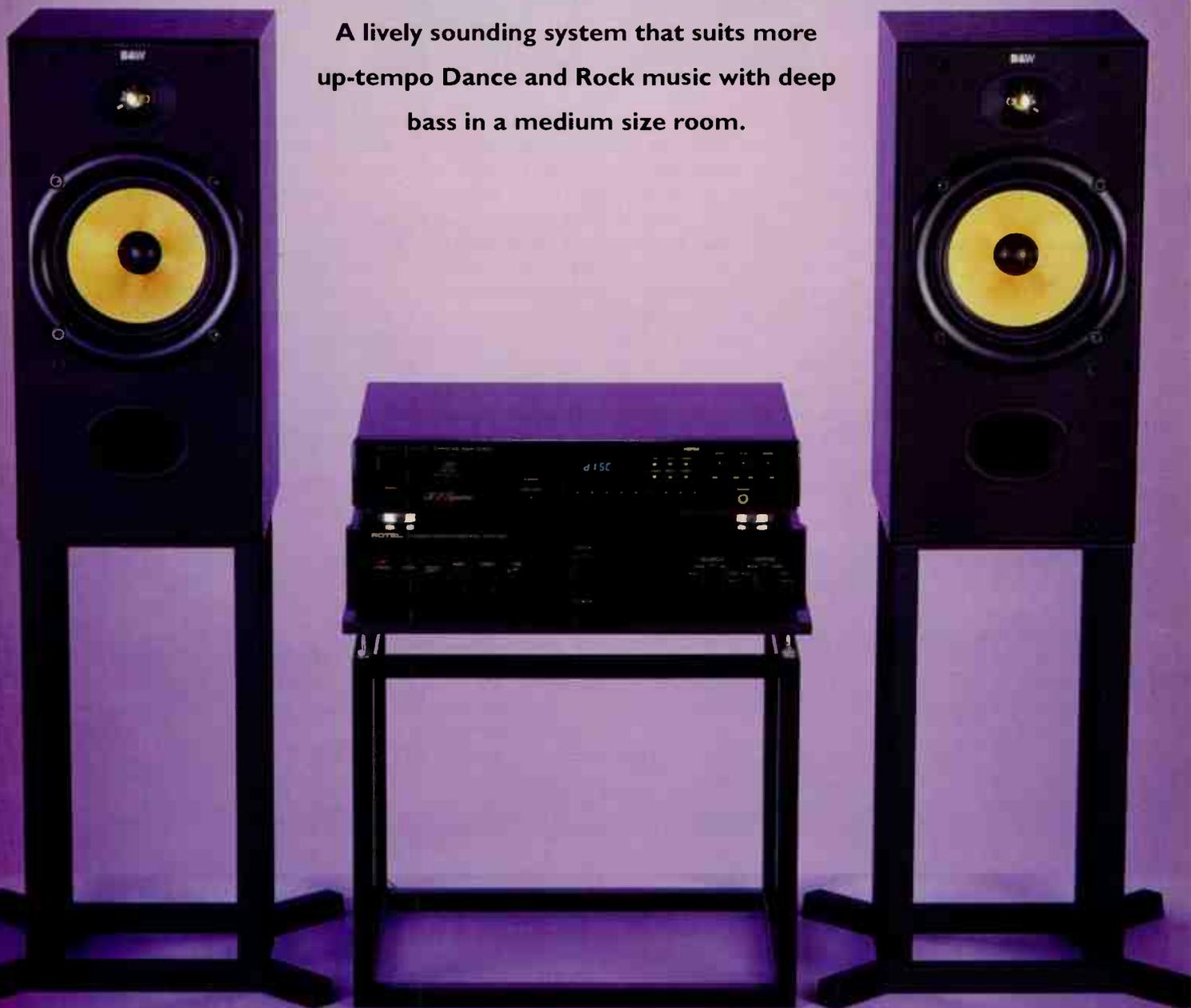
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System

TWO

**MARANTZ CD-63MkII KI-SIGNATURE★
ROTEL RA-970BX★B&W DM 602**

A lively sounding system that suits more
up-tempo Dance and Rock music with deep
bass in a medium size room.



Pushing the steely sharpness of guitar strings forwards and out of the 'speakers with crystal clarity, I knew right away that this system was going to be an attention grabber. Having slipped Primal Scream's Give Out But Don't Give Up CD into the drawer of the Marantz, the system had immediately leapt into life. High up the fret board, the electric guitar melody cut sharply, metallic leading edges stabbing outwards before decaying softly. What the B&Ws had that so few loudspeakers convey was a real sense of dynamic contrast, free of compression and blandness.

Dry and clean, the Rotel remained cool and unflustered even at high levels. It gripped the B&Ws firmly at all times, tightly controlling their every cone movement, and giving the impression of tremendous headroom. The system's character was easy and confident, and dealt competently with a wide range of music. Taking the Marantz's detailed, transparent upper registers and solid bass lines, the Rotel and B&Ws produced an expansive and effortless sound, capable of providing a truly full scale performance.

Imaging too was impressive. In fact, it was quite breathtaking for such a modest system, handling Primal Scream's 'Free', where the vocal was strongly located at centre stage, stretching forward of the 'speakers. Bass guitar's powerful, plucked thwack emerged from the left, while lead acoustic guitar, just to the left and behind vocals, was crisp and rounded. In addition to the fine imaging properties of this system was superb stereo separation, creating a wide expanse of sound across the stage.

The system gave an extremely lively, detailed and articulate sound on Counting Crows' August and Everything. It wasn't forced or pushy in any way, but full of life, the whole perfectly in balance regardless of what I threw at it and how hard I pushed it,

and believe me, I pushed it hard.

Pumping a mixture of Drum Club's drum 'n' bass and Carl Cox's ultra-hard

"The tonal purity and smoothness of the Marantz allied to the clean, neutral power of the Rotel helped bring an air of refinement to the B&Ws' treble."

Fantasia mix through the system gave it a real full range test, and it coped handsomely, its power and control producing effortless drive and dynamics. Classical music is all very well for assessing tonal shading and definition, but it's namby-pamby compared to a full-on, hard core dance track.

With the Marantz's solid bottom end and plenty of power and control from the Rotel, the DM 602s produced quite awesome bass in every respect. The strong bass guitar introduction to The The's 'Helpline Operator' was irrefutable proof of this fact, the incredible extension through the 602s literally rattling windows, pictures and any other items in the room not securely bolted down.



However, unlike many 'speakers at this price level that attempt to create a similar impression of bass power, the B&Ws didn't boom or become overblown. Instead bass was tight, fast and dynamic in a way that escapes most, even at twice the price. In this respect

they're up there with more esoteric, audiophile designs like Epos' ES12s, quite an achievement at £300. Massive

Attack's 'Better Things' actually sounded as if its tempo had been stepped up, such was the speed and articulation on the deep bass line. Few loudspeakers are able to differentiate between the notes on this track so clearly.

The tonal purity and smoothness of the Marantz allied to the clean, neutral power of the Rotel helped bring an air of refinement to the B&Ws' treble. Although never offensive in any way, the tweeter in the B&Ws can become a little too metallic and sharp in its attack at times. This is really their weakest area, but with such a finely balanced front end, it never got out of hand. In fact, I quite liked the extra crisp insight this afforded, matching the dry presence of the midrange well.

The Marantz CD player and Rotel amplifier are certainly class leaders, capable of seeing off competition over a wider price range than you'd expect. But the DM 602s were something really special, outperforming their price tag to such an extent that I'd recommend their audition to anyone in the market for a 'speaker under £1000. They kept

me gripped and enthused by every piece of music I played. It was like lifting the bland veil that covers so many 'speakers' sound, making music so interesting and informative I had difficulty pulling myself away.

B&W DM 602	£299.95
Rotel RA-970BX	£249.95
Marantz CD-63MkII KI-Signature	£499.95
Heybrook HSBI stands	£109.95
Chord Co. Siren (1m pair)	£65.00
Chord Co. Rumour (3m bi-wire)	£135.40
System Total	£1360.20

SYSTEM THREE

**MARANTZ CD-63MKII KI-SIGNATURE★
ROTEL RA-970BX★CELESTION IMPACT 23**

Tonally clean and with extended bass this system has a powerful sound that will fill large rooms well.



Butterfly 747' with its eerie background synthesisers immediately set about producing a large soundstage for the drum machine to bounce around in, rubbing shoulders with samples and hi-hats along the way. Bass lines hammered out of the 23s with gusto, helped by sharp leading edges and a nimble upper bass that added to the impression of speed and punch. Imaging was solid, with none of the song's ingredients mixing and blurring together in spite of the musical pyrotechnics going on at both ends of the spectrum.

Another string to the system's bow was the way it handled 'Killa Bunnies' (lyrically not aimed at animal lovers, this one), with its taut drum machine and vocal intro followed by a bass line that really had the floorboards panicking at its intensity.

The Beloved-style bird noises that form the backdrop to 'Ho Hmmm' came through the powerful vocals unconfused, images remaining well defined and separated. Vocals themselves were smooth and unconstrained, the Marantz/Rotel/Celestion combination tracking their progress without trouble.

Electronic drums had a taut resonance that built up this track's feeling of speed, bass control being evident also on the Housey synth that breaks through in the last few minutes as the mix gets progressively more complex and climactic. The system's clarity and control made short work of 'Dominoid' as well, keeping the bass tightly focused while handling the processed vocals with a deft, smooth touch.

My thirst for driving rhythm still unslaked, I enlisted the help of John Lee Hooker and Boom, Boom. The title track had me happily spinning the Rotel's volume control, generously letting the neighbours in on the music. The great man's guitar strutted its stuff across the bass and drums, sounding cool. This Blues roll continued on 'I'm Bad Like Jesse James', the Celestions' extension working a treat

on J LH's throaty singing, giving it realism.

Next, I sloped on into 'Trick Bag (Shopping For My Tombstone)'. This had some real tickled ivories keeping the striding bass and delicate cymbals company, the shimmer on the cymbals testament to the Marantz's subtlety and tonal abilities, while the bass gave the Rotel a chance to show off its drive and

"I knew I was going to enjoy The Cranberries through this set-up, and 'Hollywood' immediately confirmed it was going to be the case."

control. Dynamically, the way these components portrayed drums was very impressive, the tight skins snapping out under the impact of the drumstick. Almost a maxim for hi-fi journalists, 'Bottle Up And Go' had the 23s' dynamism putting in another appearance on the hard-plucked strings and shuffling snares.

Swapping the Blues for ruffs and a powdered wig found me enjoying the

The flow of the music was excellent, giving the Four Seasons a natural feel. As Summer turned into Autumn, and Autumn into Winter, the system continued to impress with its lack of musical bias, Vivaldi sounding as enjoyable and convincing as Moloko and John Lee Hooker.

I knew I was going to enjoy The Cranberries through this set-up, and 'Hollywood' immediately confirmed it was going to be the case. Huge, floor-shaking drums opened the track, but they weren't loose or uncontrolled. Dolores really let rip with her vocals, which came through undiluted, the same applying to the cymbals that were taking a pounding from the drummer. Lead guitar jangled towards the front of the soundstage while kick-drum thwacked with impact and extension from further back.

Boys For Pele followed The Cranberries, starting out with 'Caught A Lite Sneeze'. Harpsichord was detailed, dynamic and possessed good tonal colour, its freshness contrasting strongly with the obviously artificial drum machine that crashes through the song. There was the same power to the delivery of vocals here as had manifested itself on The Cranberries. More subtle was the following 'Muhammad My Friend', where piano notes died away into a clear, spacious acoustic, unmolested by the bass of the intro. The Marantz's disc-reading skills made their presence known

in the way piano notes ran the full gamut from soft and gentle to powerful and heavy, all the intermediate gradations present and correct ●



ebb and flow of Vivaldi's Four Seasons. The KI-S came up trumps here, pulling all the subtle tonal information off the disc for the Rotel to pass on to the Celestions. Summer opened with real verve, crescendos convincing in their scale, especially at the end of the fourth movement. The following movement, with its solo violin punctuated by menacing cellos, showed what this system could do for detail and space. The bowing and air around the solo violin were clearly revealed, providing a lull before the thunderheads explode in Summer's final movement.

Celestion Impact 23	£299.00
Rotel RA-970BX	£249.95
Marantz CD-63MkII KI-Signature	£499.95
Chord Co. Chrysalis (1m pair)	£29.99
Chord Co. Rumour (3m bi-wire)	£135.40
System Total	£1214.29

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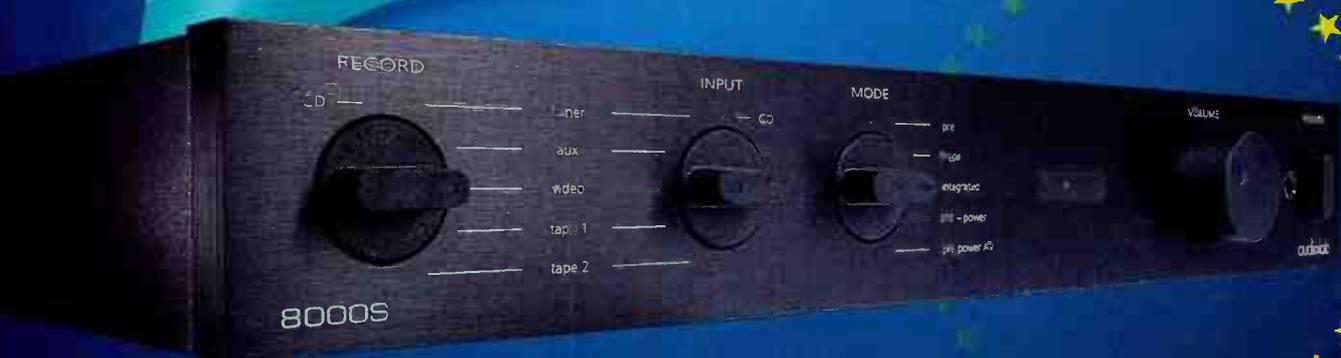
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SYSTEMS CONCLUSION

Lumping an assortment of quality components together without a second thought for the synergy between them is unlikely to be very successful. Component matching is important whilst significant differences in sound quality exist between components. And even if a system sounds impressive in a large demonstration room, wheeling it back and setting it up in a room without cat-swinging space may still produce disappointment.

We have spent the last three months carefully selecting the best CD players, amps and 'speakers for our group reports. Additionally, more time has been spent finding out which components work together to give music that elusive tingle factor.

This month's three systems were chosen with room compatibility as a high priority, ranging from System One for the study, through System Two, aimed at medium size rooms, to System Three with its ability to fill the largest of rooms.

Possessing lighter, drier bass than the other two systems was the Heybrook/Rotel/Trichord combination. There was rhythm aplenty though, keeping feet tapping through a host of albums. Dynamics were also convincing, with guitar and percussion, for example,

coming across as fast and clean. Transparency joined a fine sense of detail on the midrange's list of merits, clearly revealing the purity of female vocals and adding a feeling of space to the sound. Setting off the Heybrooks' slight treble brightness was the softness of the Genesis' upper registers, resulting in a tonal balance and range of contrast that made your average system sound bleached and colourless by comparison.

The Rotel RA-970BX accompanied by B&W's DM 602s and Marantz's CD-63MkII KI-Signature, produced a very lively sound. The system handled Rock and Dance particularly well thanks to the 602s' ability to make even the smallest dynamic contrasts stand out, making for a presentation full of scale and realism. Keeping firm control over the B&Ws was the Rotel, its uncluttered sound perfectly complementing the Marantz's subtle, detailed midrange and its solid bass.

The 602s' stable imaging contributed to the soundstage's clarity and depth, but where these 'speakers really stamped their authority on the proceedings was in the bass, which was nothing short of outstanding at this price. Most small 'speakers are engineered to have loose, overblown lower registers to give the impression of

depth. But the 602s have punchy, focused bass with real extension, just right for filling medium sized rooms with engaging music on a life-like scale.

Those looking for a system combining some of the best qualities of both of those already mentioned could do no better than the KI-Signature, RA-970BX and Impact 23s. Here, real bass control made for a sense of unfettered rhythm whatever the musical genre, nimble upper bass from the Celestions marrying perfectly with the drive and solidity of the Rotel and Marantz's bottom end.

The Blues brought a tear to the eyes courtesy of this system's ability to transmit the atmosphere of the music. An even tonal balance helped as well, with orchestral sections clearly separated and vocals smooth and pure. Adding the icing to the cake was the Celestions' ever-present ability to endow music with a natural scale and undiminished power, in contrast to many loudspeakers which sound as though they've been designed to impress by 'shouting' at you.

With three of the best systems to choose from, now's the time to dust off all those unloved and unlistened CDs. Make that trip to your dealer and pick up a hi-fi that's music to your ears ●

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Liskeard,
Cornwall
PL14 3NH
Tel: 01579 342866

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

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

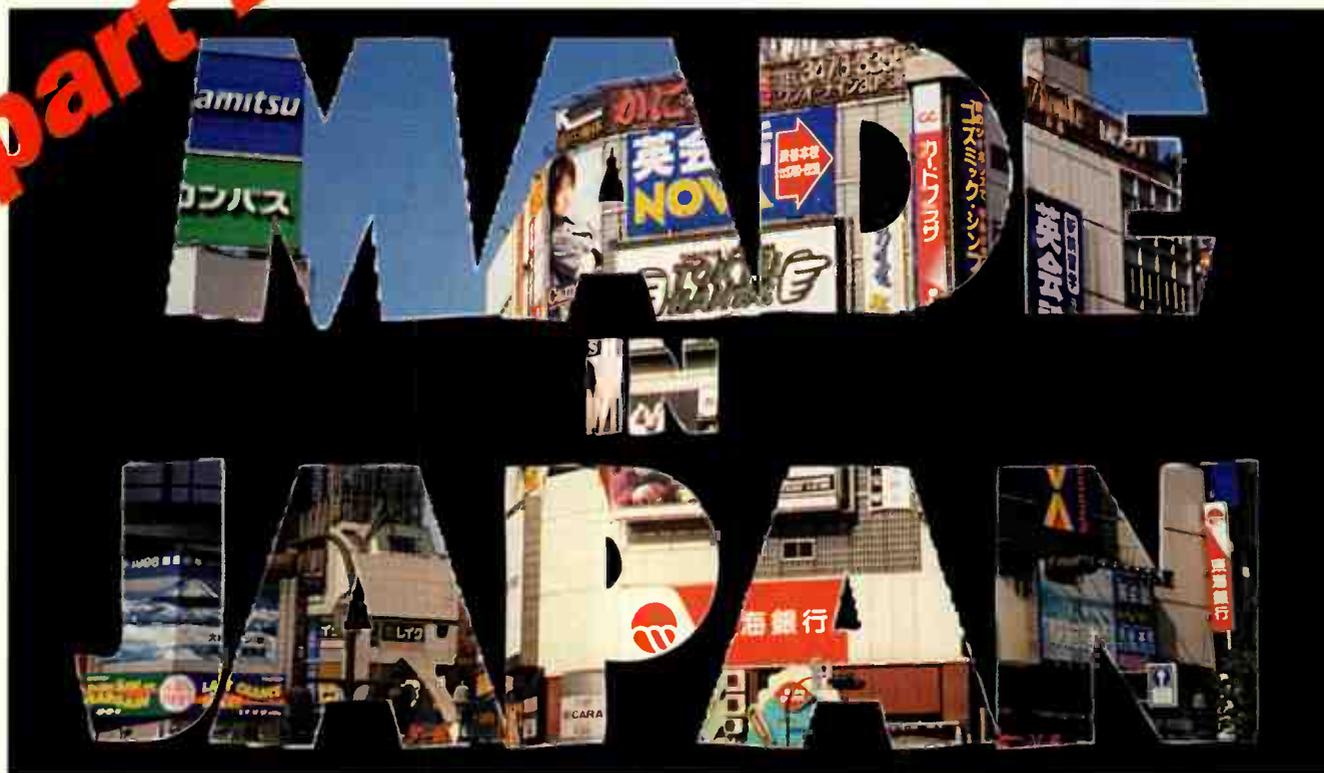
Rotel
25 Heathfields,
Stacey Bushes,
Milton Keynes,
Bucks. MK12 6HR
Tel: 01908 317707

Trichord Research
73 Church Street,
Malvern,
Worcs. WR14 2AE
Tel: 01684 573524

Marantz
Kingsbridge House,
575-583 Bath Road,
Longfield,
Middx. UB7 0EH
Tel: 01753 680863



part 2



David Price continues his in-depth look at the Japanese audio scene.

One of the keys to understanding Japanese people is the word *otaku*. It isn't really translatable into English, but it describes someone who's totally, obsessively immersed in their particular interest or hobby. And as any Japanese will tell you, Japan is full of otakus.

Japanese hi-fi otakus are at a disadvantage to Western hi-fi buffs because, cruelly, their listening rooms are invariably a lot smaller. With Tokyo's real estate value greater than that of the entire United States, space is an expensive commodity, so listening rooms are often tiny. Fortunately, they never let this get the better of them, showing TARDIS-like interior design skills, squeezing the full monty of kit into the smallest of rooms. If there's space to swing a cat, thinks the hi-fi otaku, there's plenty of room for a pair of Tannoy Westminster

Royales and a brace of Conrad-Johnson Sonographe monoblocks.

The Japanese hi-fi press don't help matters either, with reader's system features

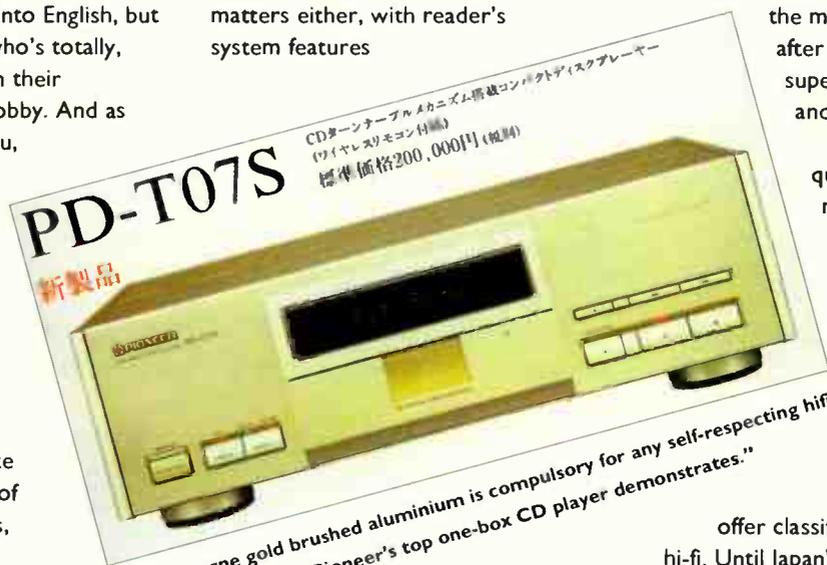
who's designed and built over five hundred different loudspeakers (and keeps them all in his house), the man whose wife left him after he bought a £35,000 superfi system - read them and weep!

The magazines' quality of writing is matched only by their breadth and diversity - some routinely review key new products with every single permutation of matching ancillaries on the market - no mean feat!

They've also started to offer classified ads for second-hand hi-fi. Until Japan's bubble economy burst a few years ago, most 'obsolete' hi-fi was deemed worthless and when the time came for replacement, it was simply left out with the garbage!

BACK TO THE FUTURE

The strength of the Japanese market is its diversity. The umpteen million lumpen black box separates Japan



showing rooms packed with indecently expensive high end kit sandwiched 'twixt the inevitable horn loudspeakers. Journals like Stereo Sound, MJ and Audio Accessory brim with assorted tweaky tales - the best coin to sit under your sub-table spikes (¥500 is a favourite), the retired guy

makes are a healthy staple for the world's audio punters, but aren't regarded with such delectation at home. Instead, tasty looking 'mini-compo' (mini-systems to you and me), as pioneered in the eighties by Aurex and popularised in the nineties by Denon, eat heavily into budget black-box separates sales.

The real action is in upmarket separates that are rarely exported to cash-poor markets such as our own. This market sector relies on tireless innovation and forward thinking, engendering a healthy spirit of Research and Development. Outsiders can't help but be impressed by the sheer momentum of the hi-fi scene, the big manufacturers managing several model range changes a year. Japanese people are highly receptive to new technology, and refreshingly lack the cynicism of many Europeans. Indeed, one of the most popular phrases to be heard in TV commercials is *shinhatsubai* ('new product'), chanted like a mantra, like an automatic guarantee of sales success.

FORMAT WARS

When CD was introduced in Britain, it was greeted with little interest, or even derision. It took a big push from the electronics giants and three long years to make any major inroads. By contrast, Japan embraced it so quickly that three years after its introduction, most big music companies like Victor, ALFA, Sony and Polystar had stopped pressing vinyl completely!

But it hasn't all been plain sailing - until a couple of years ago Japanese CDs were very expensive at around ¥3000 (£18), and only after a government inquiry did prices drop by twenty-percent. Today, they face stiff competition from bulk American imports sold at ¥1000 (£7) a shot.

Likewise, DAT didn't suffer the false start it did on Western markets, and by

the end of the eighties it was a common sight in many audiophile homes, and a popular provider of background music in shops, thanks to its long play capability. Blanks are readily available (even some supermarkets sell them) and discounted, prices can be as low as ¥350 (£2) for a 90.

In Japan, pre-recorded music cassettes have always been

blanks and a CD library membership is a very cost-effective way of building a music collection, as many enterprising students have discovered.

As for DCC and MiniDisc, although the Japanese press generally agree that the former sounds better, DCC has had a hard time. At the time of its launch, major music retailers like Tower Records put Technics recorders and a sprinkling of pre-recorded tapes in stores, but to little avail. On the other hand, Sony targeted MiniDisc more at department stores and

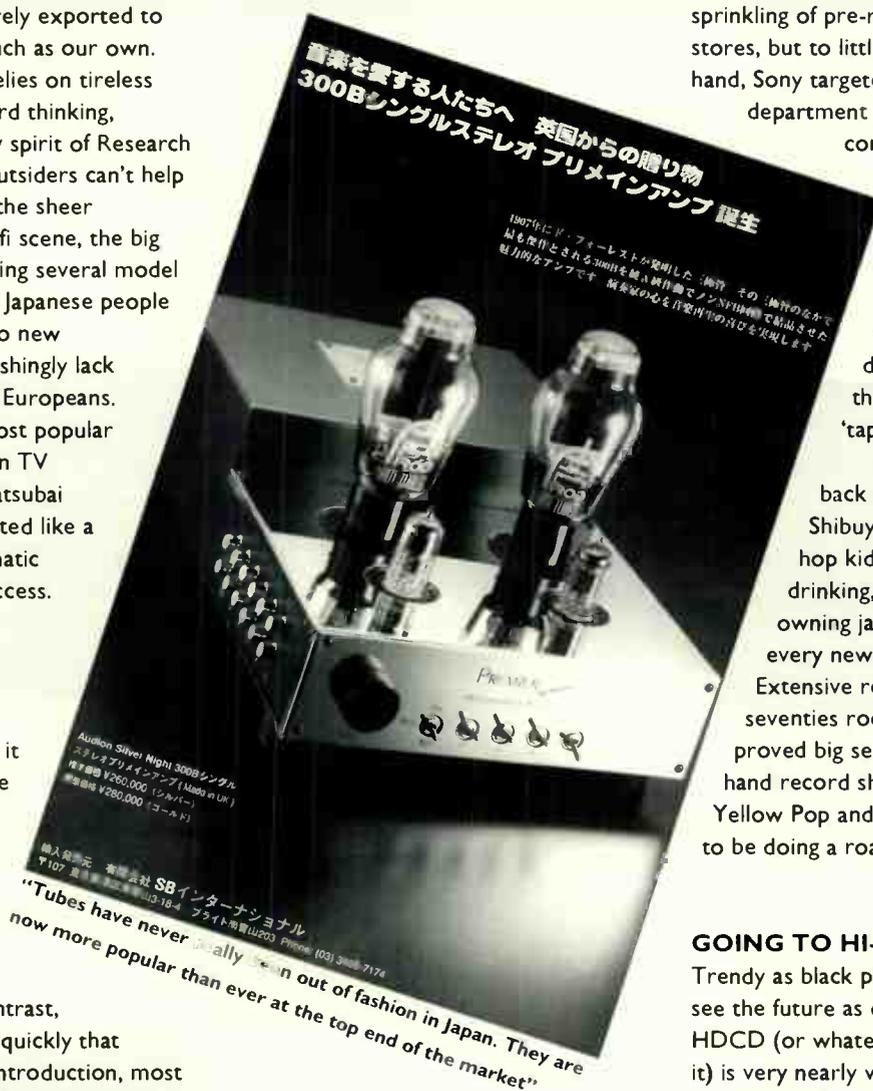
convenience shops - and cleaned up. MD seems to have struck a chord with fashion-conscious teenagers born in the age of random access discs, and with lots of their friends' music to 'tape'.

Nowadays, vinyl's back in fashion, with trendy Shibuya (Tokyo's Soho) trip hop kids and Johnny Walker-drinking, vintage turntable-owning jazz fans alike chasing every new jazz LP going.

Extensive reissues of sixties and seventies rock on vinyl have also proved big sellers, while second-hand record shops like Audio Union, Yellow Pop and Record Hunter seem to be doing a roaring trade.

GOING TO HI-FI HEAVEN

Trendy as black plastic is, most Japanese see the future as digital. DVD, SD, HDCD (or whatever you want to call it) is very nearly with us all, and doubtless will be embraced with open arms and wallets, invariably long before us Westerners get our hands on it. All the more reason then for audio-hungry hi-fi lovers to jump on a plane and pay Japan a visit. Flights aren't too expensive but the dangerous hotel bills will probably negate any savings you make on hardware purchases, which is a shame. Still, the people are friendly, the weather good and the food even more mouth-watering than the hi-fi. Heaven indeed!



seen as a poor relation to CD and have failed to really take off, but blank tapes are all-pervasive. Not only are they dirt cheap (under £2 for a decent metal 90) but thanks to Japan's unique copyright laws they're very handy for taping CDs from Japan's extensive network of specialist CD libraries which rent albums for a couple of pounds a night. Investing in a budget Nakamichi (at half UK prices), a stack of

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A.E.S. UK has a new series of products being premiered at the Ramada Hi Fi show in September. The "Carlisle", a hybrid amplifier providing 80 Watts of power with the ultimate in detail, sound stage and control; The "Argisle" speakers, designed to match the quality of the Carlisle. Both of these products are designed and offered as a "complete package" as well as individually.

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TECHNICS RS 9900

An enormous late-seventies monster two-box cassette deck that makes the Dragon look like a Walkman. One unit contained a three motor closed loop dual capstan direct drive transport, the other the record and replay amps. Even the price tag was fearsome, the equivalent of around £4000 in today's money.

NAKAMICHI DRAGON CASSETTE DECK

Nakamichi's Dragon series of separates have always been popular on their domestic market, but none achieved the notoriety of the cassette deck. More than a decade old, the Dragon is

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no longer the absolute best, but there's a lot to be said for 'period charm', as any Bentley Turbo R owner will confirm.

SONY CDP-R1/DAS R1

Sony's late-eighties two box player was one of the first attempts to take CD seriously as an audiophile format, and judging by its clean, detailed sound, all that armour-plating didn't go to waste. Very big, very heavy and very good.

TECHNICS SP10

Most Technics turntables were nothing to write home about, but this was something else altogether. The SP10 replaced ageing Garrards in Japan's recording and broadcast studios, offering the unusual



From the beginning the Technics SP10 Mark II was designed as a 'no-compromise' broadcast standard turntable.

It is already installed in many broadcasting stations both here and abroad. The reasons are many and varied.

In 1969, Technics were the first to introduce the DC electronically controlled direct drive principle to the world with the SP10.

With the experience gained we've never looked back, and the SP10 Mark II represents a considerable advance in turntable technology.

Take speed accuracy. Wow and flutter are an insignificant 0.025% WRMS. And speed drift \pm or -0.002% . Rumble is also very low at -70 dB.

Through the use of a quartz locked drive system a very high torque is developed by the motor. This results in an instant start facility which takes the record from 'stop' to 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ in 0.25 secs.

And in addition you can change from one speed to another very quickly. 33" to 45 in 0.1 sec.

Another benefit is that a record can be easily cleaned 'on air' with no audible speed variation.

The three speeds (33, 45, 78) are selected by illuminated microswitches and the start/stop function can also be remotely operated. Extremely useful if you are operating a bank of turntables.

The power supply is separate and the mains supply is not directly linked to the turntable, thus avoiding any possible hum problems.

For more information about these and other benefits just write to Technics, S.L.I. I.D.R. Tel: 0494 77916.

Technics

The SP10 Mark II Quartz-controlled Direct Drive Turntable.

"Technics' top deck - still a favourite today"

combination of top-notch measured performance and super sound quality, as satisfied customer Herb Belken, president of vinyl specialist Mobile Fidelity Sound Labs, will testify.

YAMAHA NS1000M

Yamaha's formative attempt to build a studio monitor in the mould of top B&Ws and KEFs turns in an extremely clear, dry sound that came to epitomise Japanese speaker tastes. High tech beryllium mid and treble drivers belie its elderly origins. Many people still swear by them.



"Classic Japanese studio monitor"

MARANTZ 2500

This European-owned, part-Japanese company of American origin was the worthy winner of the 1977 'you cannot be serious' award for receiver design, with 250W per channel, a built-in oscilloscope for multipath indication and more gleaming metal than a '57 Chevy. What were they on, we ask ourselves?

DENON DL-103

One of Japan's longest serving products with roots going back to the late fifties, Denon's ubiquitous moving coil cartridge is still alive today, if a little unsteady on its feet. Recording studios love it for its dry, punchy sound, but its Mount Fuji-shaped stylus profile isn't the best for inner groove detail. A charmer nonetheless.

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ROOM-INATING

Please help me if you can. My system contains a Pink Triangle LPT-GTI, Roksan Tabriz zi and Ortofon MC 15 Super. The amp is an Exposure 15, with KEF Q60. All items are suitably stand mounted (S. O. and Target) and connected with Exposure cable.

I have recently moved and my new sound room is somewhat smaller (12'x15'x8') with wood flooring. My problem is the system now sounds a touch overbright (it was a close run thing in my previous room, 13'x18'x7.5' with a concrete floor).

I enjoy a neutral(ish) sound with articulate bass with a clean mid and clear

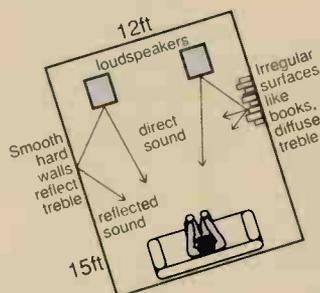
treble (any form of distortion drives me crackers but the sound in my new location is clean but cold).

What in your opinion is the best way forward? Should I change my cartridge to something like a Denon 204? Is my amp up to it? Should I change both? Or anything else? My options seem endless, but errors can turn out very dear!

Just to burden you further, could you point me in the right direction regarding CD players; what sort of price range should I be considering for a player that would mesh well with my system?

Steve Hollingbery
Hove,
Sussex.

If the system was satisfactory before your move, then the only thing to have changed is the room. You would be best advised to consider modifying your room acoustics first, since even



the best components can do nothing to improve a poor room.

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LETTER OF THE MONTH

FAST LANE

A letter by M. D. O'Connor in the October, 1996 issue stated that subjective terms like "fast", "tight" and "speed" in reviews were meaningless. Whilst I and many others understand his need for accurate portrayal of instruments and voices in a given acoustic, we also show additional understanding of rhythm and timing, qualities that for many of us are the real key to long-term musical involvement.

Consider music for two acoustic instruments played live in a sitting room. Mr. O'Connor would no doubt be perfectly happy with the pitch and timbre, the detail, and the imaging because it would be the real thing. But, if one of

the instrumentalists cannot keep time with the other, would Mr. O'Connor still be satisfied with the performance?

Some people do not know that rhythm and timing can be poorly portrayed by hi-fi components. Even Quad has argued that if musical involvement is not heard through their systems, then it cannot have existed during the recording.

I too, used to believe this myth, until I attended a Naim demonstration courtesy of Billy Vee's in Lewisham. Recordings were played which almost brought me to tears, especially Adolphe Adam's 'Julsang' (Proprius PRCD7762). Yet I already owned this music, and it

never had that effect when played on my own system, in spite of how accurate it sounded. There was definitely some other quality that the Naim gear allowed through which impressed me, one which I had hitherto been unaware of.

If Mr O'Connor can grasp this he might well be able to judge and enjoy Rock and Pop music. If he can't, then so be it. But it does him, and Quad, little credit to ignore or to pour scorn upon amplified music, for whatever reason. Would it really be so bad to appreciate the likes of Abba, REM and Buddy Holly, as well as 'real' music?

Richard Ward
London,
SE13.



The writer of the 'Letter of the Month' wins a free subscription to Hi-Fi World

Brightness and hardness result from a surplus of reflected treble energy off walls, ceiling and floor. If you have a hard floor, then carpeting it will do wonders for the sound. Even a rug in the centre will help considerably, if you don't fancy wall-to-wall carpeting with underlay. Brightly patterned Durries from Habitat, Ikea, etc will help; they suit polished wooden floors.

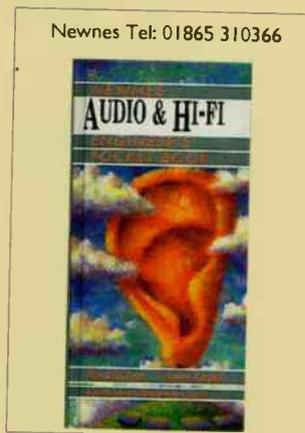
With the side walls get a friend to hold a mirror and move it along until you can see an image of the loudspeakers from your listening position. At this point, and over an area around it if possible, hang something that will break up (diffuse) treble energy from the loudspeaker. Acoustic tiles, egg boxes, books on a shelf or bookcase, a wall hanging (Durry again, perhaps with a layer of felt behind it), or similar will do the trick. Treat both side walls alike, if possible.

There's not so much you can do with the ceiling, except use a large, fabric lampshade on a pendant fitting, if this happens to be in the right position. Treating the ceiling too heavily can compress the stereo soundstage downward, by removing what the brain interprets as height information. Many authorities advise against ceiling treatment as a result, but of course a little experimentation here won't hurt.

This sort of treatment, applied with some imaginative skill, can improve the decoration of

a room, as well as make it easier on the ear (fewer reflections) and better in terms of hi-fi reproduction. Stereo imaging and general cleanliness of sound will improve greatly.

Finally, look behind you! If you sit against a rear wall, treat it to remove reflections. Again, an absorptive or diffusing panel will help. NK



Newnes Tel: 01865 310366
For some more information on room acoustics, have a read of the Audio and Hi-Fi Engineer's pocket book.

FRENCH FOCAL

Having recently visited the Buxton Hi-Fi show I was impressed by the Focal (JM Lab) PS2.1 loudspeakers, yet here is almost a complete manufacturer's range which has not, to my knowledge, received other than the briefest of attention in the UK hi-fi press. Do you have any experience of these loudspeakers, or any plans to review any of the JM Lab range in the near future?



You'll have no problem bi-wiring your Cyrus I to your kit 'speakers when they're finished.

My interest is provoked by the realisation that these speakers' larger siblings, the PS5.1s, are available in kit form at a substantial saving and I plan to build a pair this summer. This in turn, however, raises a query regarding bi-wiring.

My current system (Rega Planar 3; Arcam Alpha One CD; original Cyrus I amp; AR 18 loudspeakers) cannot be bi-wired as the speakers do not have this facility, but the ones I plan to build have two sets of terminals and would doubtless benefit from bi-wiring. Is it necessary for bi-wiring that the amplifier also has two sets of terminals, or do both the treble and bass signal leads originate from the same pair of binding posts?

If the former, then my Cyrus I cannot be bi-wired either. If the latter, then I have no problem bi-wiring, do I? Which leads (pun intended) to the second part of my query: I read occasional reviews of speaker cables and the like wherein the characteristics of some cables produce a sweet treble, while others offer a firmer bass.

If you are bi-wiring, I assume that it is advisable (due to differing impedances/capacitances etc.) to use the same cable for

both runs to the speaker, but I would be interested to learn if any experiments have been tried with, for example, silver plated cable to tweeters and solid core copper to woofers, and whether any particular combinations have been found to work better than twin runs of either cable.

Steven Dickinson Davyhulme, Manchester.

JM Lab still have no UK importer for their loudspeakers. The company is part of Focal, based in France. Focal manufacture a range of very high quality drive units, supplied in the UK by Falcon Acoustics, Tel: 01508 578272. JM Lab produce a range of loudspeakers using these Focal drivers. Falcon in the UK can supply the kits you are interested in, as well as anything else you'll need for their construction. Drop them a line with a stamped addressed envelope, they said, for all literature. Their address is: Falcon Acoustics, Tabor House, Norwich Road, Mulbarton, Norwich NR14 8JT.

To bi-wire these loudspeakers you are right in your assumption that both sets of cables, bass and treble, feed off one set of terminals on your amplifier, so you have no problem here. When bi-wiring was the latest fashion, attempts were

made to use optimised cables dedicated to bass and treble individually, but with no long term success. I'd advise using the same cable for bass and treble. Feel free to experiment though, you can't do any harm and this kind of tweaking can be fun. DB



Chord Co. Tel: 01722 331674

Try a set of Chord's Cobra interconnects between the Arcam Alpha One CD player and Cyrus I.

TRAIL TRAVAIL

I have travelled the hi-fi trail for many years, starting pre-teens listening to my Uncle John and his mates playing the sounds of Chuck, Buddy and Little Richard. Luckily, I had indulgent parents, and I soon had my very own 'Dansette' record player. This golden era lasted through my Pop, Mod, Blues, Soul, Rhythm & Blues years, 1957-67.

Then came marriage and my first stereo. A combined amplifier and turntable with attached speakers (wow!!) Whilst collecting net curtains from a department store, I heard the Beatles on a stereo Radiogram and I was hooked. That in turn became my National Panasonic music centre. I then made a real mistake, saying good-bye to

several hundred mint singles - hello cassettes!

My National Panasonic was then replaced by a JVC rack system which later became separates - Dual 506, Denon amp (100 watts) and Kef Concorde 'speakers. As cool Jazz-Funk replaced the frenzied 'Night Fever' disco era, my next upgrade made its debut. Enter Michell Focus One with Linn Basik arm, Quad 303/33/FM3 and Heybrook HB2s. I settled down quite happily with this system, and I managed to withstand the siege of CD and two house moves until one day, I heard a CD player (an Ariston CD 3) that actually sounded comparable with my beloved turntable. This new addition made my wife really happy as she could now enjoy her music (she did not really like touching the turntable as she knew how much it meant to me).

The word 'zappability' entered our vocabulary. Zappability was created when my wife could 'zap' to her favourite tracks by remote control - something she could not do with vinyl. Once again the race was on. LPI2 came along with Naim 62/140, later to be joined by Micromega DAC, Hi-Cap power supply and Epos ES11. Then Ittok LVIII, Circus and Trampoline joined the team.

I now come to



The treble peak which contributes to the AT-OC5's bright sound is clearly visible here. Ortofon's MC 10 has a flatter response.

the whole point of this epic. I love the sound of my present system and like Eric Clapton - I have returned to my

roots. Listening to the Blues, and buying vinyl - albeit at £25 a shot, which I consider good value - from Audiophile International.

I would like to upgrade the Audio Technica AT-OC5 cartridge. Any suggestions (£200)? Is it possible to bi-amp with the 140s? Is it possible to bi-amp ES11s? (they are the bi-wireable type).

Lingo, Armageddon or new CD player? This is a dilemma. What CD player would you recommend? Vinyl and CD about equal in numbers.

Bob Walker
Esplanade,
Rochester.

I suggest you replace your AT-OC5 with an Ortofon MC 10 Supreme moving coil cartridge. Like the AT it has fast, punchy bass. However, the OC-5 had peaky treble and was overbright in my view. The MC 10 measures flat but still has clean, vibrant treble, giving it a similar character, but with more refinement. Like the OC-5 it is very suited to Rock. Ortofon tell us its price is £299.95, a little out of your range, but they offer 10%-25% off the price of a new cartridge, if you trade in your old MC. I suggest you 'phone them on 01753-889949.

Naim told me there's no problem bi-wiring with a Hi-Cap. Both power amps can be plugged into this supply and it parallels the input connections too. Without the supply you have to solder up a jumper lead to connect the inputs in parallel. You can of course bi-amp the ES11, Naim's suggestion being that you use one power amp for the bass on either channel, and one for the treble on either channel. NK

Audiophile Int. Tel: 01276 855578



Run your new Ortofon MC 10 in with one of DCC Compact Classics choice pressings.

TOP RANKIN

Please could you provide me with some advice and also information. My current system is; TEAC P500 Transport, Arcam BBI (with Crown grade chip set), Pas01 Passive Preamp, Krell KSA50 MkI, Celestion SL600 Si. The amplifier has been slightly modified with the kind assistance of Mr Russ Andrews and the speaker crossover has been removed to a separate box close to the amplifier and all components upgraded to Kimbercaps and Russ Andrews inductors. I have also bypassed a notch filter section of the crossover in order to reduce the number of components.

This provides me with a very easy to listen to system with little listener fatigue. I also realise it is not the most dynamic of systems, but is certainly much better in this area than the original components. However, the CD converter is not only showing its age, but it is also suffering electrical problems. Due to its age I feel a repair may neither be possible or even economical. Please could you suggest a current replacement that would work with the above. I don't have a lot to spend at present so £250 would be about the limit. I do appreciate that this is not a great deal, but in my view components seem to range from sensible prices to

van den Hul Carbon Cables



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- Clearwater £6.99
- Snowtrack £9.99
- CS122 Hybrid £11.99
- D352 Hybrid £19.99
- The Magnum £37.99

Interconnects

- The Source £49.99 (0.8m)
- D102III Hybrid £59.99 (0.8m)
- The First £199.99 (0.8m)

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silly prices with very little in between.

On a more serious point I was recently changing channels on my satellite system when I landed on the CMT channel. I have never really liked country music in general but I do like KD Lang and Lyle Lovett. A group were playing with one male and three female singers. The music was brilliant with voices to die for. Their name was The Rankin Family and they come from Canada, but as yet, this is as much as I know. Please, if anyone has any information about a current release, I would be grateful.

**Andrew McBride
Walton,
Liverpool.**

Spending £250 on a replacement for the BB1 will be a sideways step and a waste of money in terms of the improvement you'll gain. It really will strangle the potential of the rest of the system. I understand that it has to be replaced because it is faulty though, so you are left with little choice here.

Bluntly, what I'd do is sell the whole lot. It should reach a very reasonable price as you have some expensive and esoteric items there. With the money you get, allocate around £2000 or so towards assembling a better balanced system, which will almost certainly out-perform what you have, and pocket the change for a nice holiday or several hundred new albums.

You need to visit a good dealer where you can audition a new system properly. A good start would be Marantz's CD-63MkII KI-Signature CD player, a Meridian 551 or Audiolab 8000S integrated amplifier and Epos ES12

loudspeakers. This should give you a sweet, musical, dynamic and enjoyable sound, the system being better matched and tuned. At the very least,



Meridian's 551 integrated will give you a more dynamic, better balanced sound.

sell the TEAC transport to help toward the Marantz CD player. This alone should bring a worthwhile improvement.

As far as the Rankin Family go, you could try their Collection album which was released on Grapevine Records on October 14th. Any good record shop should be able to order a copy for you. DB



This Chord Cobra interconnect will do your new system proud.

AUDIO WITH AUDION
In March this year I decided to upgrade my ageing hi-fi set

up and in doing so found myself smitten by valves. I eventually ended up with

the following system: Audion ETSE Sterling operating as a power amp due to its restricted number of inputs; Rose RV-23S valve pre-amp; Arcam Alpha 5 Plus CD player and Monitor Audio MA-11 Gold II speakers. The speaker cable is Monster Bi-Wire and the interconnects are a mixture of Audioquest Topaz 2, Hi-Q Silver and Tandy Gold.

I would appreciate some answers to questions that have been generated by your excellent magazine. Namely, how does a modern valve unit compare with second-hand vintage valve gear such as a Quad II? What speakers are really suited to valves? Shall I look for a pair of re-conditioned electrostatics or continue with my well loved and polished MA-11s?

Do you consider the Alpha 5 Plus to be worth upgrading to the '6' or purchasing a separate DAC? I know, questions, questions, but I am learning that this upgrade bug just keeps digging its teeth in.

And finally how about a regular article on vintage gear. According to your sales section an awful lot of equipment is ripe to change hands, but I'm sure not all of us know the quality of the items advertised.

**Nigel Masters
Heccington,
Lincolnshire.**

A modern valve amplifier, at least one that has been designed properly, should provide a wider bandwidth and lower distortion, due to the

higher grade modern components and materials available today. For example, the Quad II, although a sweet and musical

sounding amplifier, won't produce the same bass depth and power or have such extended treble compared to a modern design. The Quad II has quite a soft, midrangey sound, whereas your Sterling should be clearer and more open at the top with more welly at the bottom end.

With the Sterling's limited output power you are going to need some sensitive loudspeakers to get the best results. Heybrook's HB1 S3s and their Quartets fit the bill nicely here, both offering high sensitivity and a smooth, high overall impedance that will match a valve amplifier well. I can't think of many other models at an affordable price that have the kind of easy drive characteristic you need, but look for 88dB+ sensitivity and an impedance curve that stays between 6-12Ω across the whole audio band.

... 47 ▶

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The Arcam Alpha 5 Plus player is a smooth, detailed sounding player which I suspect will shine through even better once you have found a good match between amplifier and loudspeakers. Upgrading from this level really does demand you look at two-box systems, first adding a DAC and then a dedicated transport at a later date. DPA's Enlightenment would be a good choice, with the kind of detail and

Newnes Tel: 01865 310366



Find some answers to your questions inside the Audio and Hi-Fi Engineer's Pocket Book.

With this length in mind, will my system suffer from voltage drop and if so, is there any simple remedy to this problem?

Would it help if I chose high sensitivity speakers (perhaps you could recommend some between £500 and £600)? Should I bi-wire the speaker or should I aim to upgrade to a pre/power amplifier?

Looking at the problem from a different angle, is there a maximum length for speaker cable? If so perhaps you could let

same time, would be to have your Nait 3 converted by a Naim dealer so that you can access the pre- and power amplifier sections separately. This would cost around £15 for the kit of parts plus labour on top. The pre-amplifier section of your Nait 3 could then be used to drive both its own internal power amp section for your existing

HI-FI IN A BOX

At present my hi-fi system, which consists of a Pink Triangle LPT, Rega RB300 tonearm, Linn K18 cartridge, Naim Nait 3 amplifier and Linn Index speakers, is in our small box room. It's a bit too small (9ft x 9ft), but it's a room on its own, away from neighbours so I can play the system whenever I like and as loud as I like without upsetting them.

But there are occasions when I would like to listen to my system in our main lounge, so I plan to buy some floor-standing speakers for this room and drive them from my existing amplifier in the box room. Unplugging one set of speaker cables and plugging in another set won't be a problem. But by the time I have run cables from the amplifier across the room, up the walls, across the ceiling, down the walls, etc, etc, running from one room to the other I am looking at a cable run of at least 60ft.

me know. Then I could site my new speakers with this in mind.

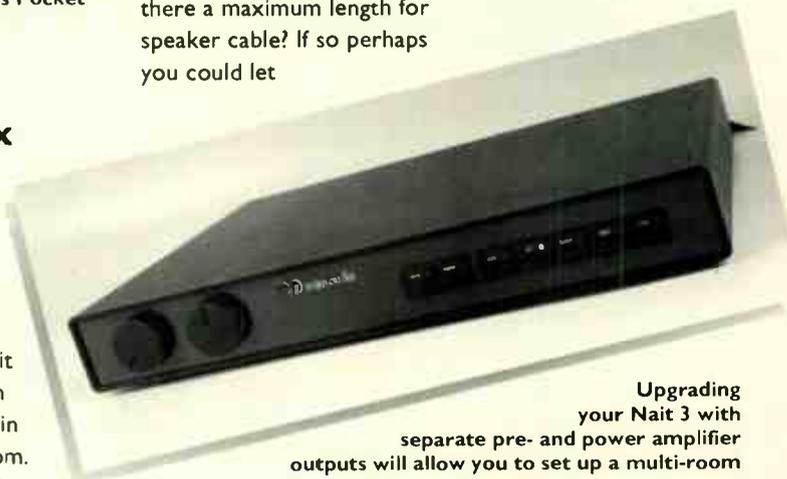
**R. J. Clarke
Gravesend,
Kent.**

Naim didn't think you'd have too much of a problem driving 60ft of their A5 cable with your Nait amplifier, its total resistance only being around 0.2Ω, not really enough for you to lose a significant amount of power.

A sensitive loudspeaker will certainly help here, allowing you to get the most out of your amplifier. Naim have two new floorstanding loudspeakers, both claiming healthy 89dB sensitivity, so these may be worth an audition. The £596 Intro fits your budget nicely.

Another option, and also an upgrade at the

system, and a £427 NAP90 power amp, say, in your lounge. The pre-amplifier section of the Nait 3 will happily drive this length of interconnect without loss, and having the NAP90 close to the loudspeakers would certainly bring a worthwhile improvement to the sound. Any Naim dealer will be more than happy to explain and demonstrate this system to you. DB



Upgrading your Nait 3 with separate pre- and power amplifier outputs will allow you to set up a multi-room system.



Heybrook's Quartets, with their high sensitivity and smooth impedance, would make the perfect partners for your Audion Sterling amplifier.

spaciousness that your valve based system will relish. DB

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*Review of PASSION - Martin Colloms
HiFi News April '93 and November '94*

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LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON

Cyrus' new dAD3, based on the dAD7, has a slimmer price tag and cheaper mechanism. Dominic Todd finds out if it can keep sonic quality in the family.



As we enter a season of hysterical political campaigning, the question on everyone's lips is just how good we feel about the feel good factor. The FGF certainly seems to be taken seriously among British hi-fi manufacturers. Most of the big players, such as Arcam, Audiolab and Celestion, are bringing out a plethora of surprise new models.

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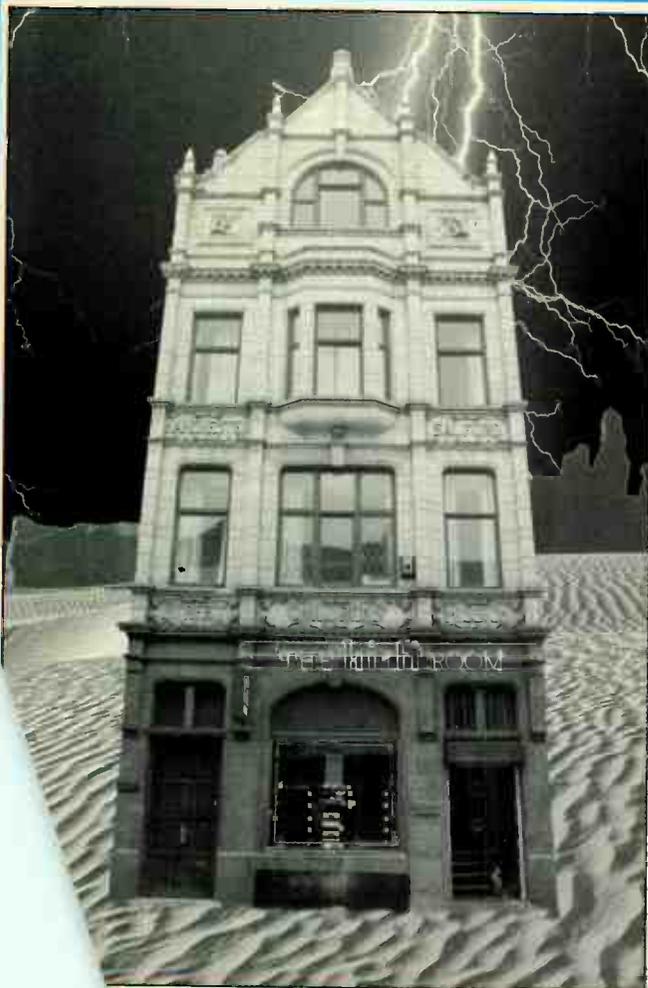
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The new Cyrus dAD3 CD player from Mission is a case in point. A machine that undercuts the dAD7 by £300, yet gives little away, wasn't really expected. The main difference is a switch to a cheaper CDM9/12 transport in place of the top loading, 'professional' version used for the dAD7. Otherwise, the exquisite diecast casework, 18 bit DAC chipset and the ability to upgrade (with the addition of a PSX power supply and/or an uprated internal DAC known as the Q-Module) are largely unchanged. An outboard DAC is also an option, although it's a shame to see that this can only be accessed via an optical output (the dAD7 also features an electrical one).

The first disc to be digested by the slightly noisy Cyrus was Jam Nation (World music inspired by Peter Gabriel). To borrow a line from Volvo, the dAD3 proved itself to be a true control freak. With 'Sunstroke', it displayed a taut, powerful bass, sharp transients and effective dynamics, a combination that makes you sit-up and take notice.

Don't get me wrong - there's never any suggestion that the Cyrus is all brute force and no subtlety. Proof par excellence of this was provided by female vocals, which were smooth and well projected. Bass had fine depth and background percussion could clearly be heard without it being 'thrown' at the listener. The only small faults were a slight edginess to female vocals and an electric guitar timbre that was perhaps too smooth - a little more energy and effervescence wouldn't have gone amiss in the higher frequencies.

'She Moved Through The Fair', reiterated the Cyrus' sonic prowess. As well as sustaining shelf-rattling bass notes, electric bass guitar had texture and definition, each individual strum and finger movement clearly audible. Such detail partly explains why the bass never dominated the mix; despite its obvious presence, the whole frequency range

was smoothly integrated. And while vocals lacked the holographic portrayal of the dAD's costlier stable-mate, they still formed part of an excellent soundstage for a £600 machine.

"She Moved Through The Fair, reiterated the Cyrus' sonic prowess. As well as sustaining shelf-rattling bass notes, electric bass guitar had texture and definition, each individual strum and finger movement clearly audible."

Classical music didn't prove quite such a success, however. On Corelli's Concerto da chiesa No. 8 there was a hint of muddle when a larger instrumental backdrop joined the quartet, and the quartet itself wasn't quite as well defined as it should have been. This diffuseness wasn't helped by a slight edginess to the lower treble of the violins. In all fairness, though, this is something that you'd only really notice when comparing the dAD3 to a machine as coherent as a CD-63 KI-Signature. These glitches meant the music wasn't quite as involving as before, and didn't tug at the heart strings to the same degree. Yet the dAD3 was still more than competent in terms of soundstaging, depth and instrumental timbre.

Female vocalist Sheryl Crow found the Cyrus more at home musically, her portrayal sounding tonally natural and well separated from the rest of the mix. Timing was excellent, with the strong bass once again proving no hindrance to upbeat rhythm. That said, the player could at times sound as though it was going through the motions rather than beguiling the listener - details such as a guitar which lacked the last degree of definition detracted from the overall vitality. Despite this, in the final reckoning the dAD3 pulled through due

to its superb handling of musical contrasts. Helped by a very low level of background noise and sharp transients, the Cyrus fashioned a dramatic and realistic picture of the music.

Sonically the Cyrus dAD3 is up there rubbing shoulders with some of the best at its price, but it doesn't quite top the wants list. Its disappointing performance with Classical music, edgy lower treble and slight lack of vigour at higher frequencies see to that. A KI-Signature, for example, would provide all the dAD's control, but with an even more coherent and balanced sound. But because the dAD3 is so good with Dance, Jazz, Funk

and a range of vocal styles, and still better than average with other types of music, it rates very highly. The dAD still has a trump card to play, though. While a few rivals offer better sound quality, not one can come close to matching the Cyrus' combination of style, build quality and upgrade potential. And for many would-be owners, I can see this as justification enough for choosing the dAD over its rivals. Thanks, dAD ●

Cyrus dAD3

£598

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

WORLD VERDICT



One of the best with a dramatic and lively portrayal of Dance and Rock. Can sound slightly lacklustre with Classical.

Measured Performance

see p103

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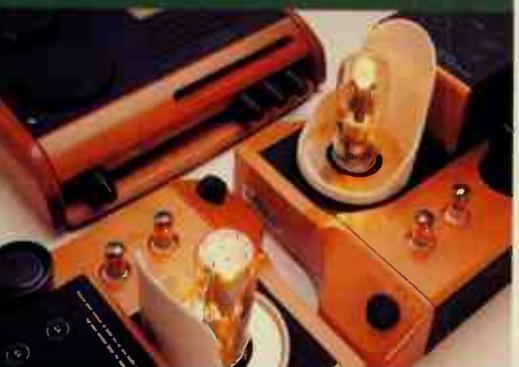
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Polypropylene quacks and paper cones have a 'cardboard' sound. The material of a cone imparts a coloration to music (especially vocals) similar to how that material sounds in everyday use. Some modern mineral-loaded plastics are very neutral compared to the older materials, but they can sound cold and hard in a loudspeaker. Carbon fibre has a different signature though. It delightfully combines the sort of cleanliness and lack of coloration that modern plastics display, with a peculiar sweetness.

Imagine, for example, a bell made of brass and a bell made of iron. They'll both ring, but the brass one will sound sonorous and sweet, whilst the iron one won't.

In spite of the fact that carbon fibre has one of the most attractive characters I've ever heard in a cone material, it has been a long time coming to market. I believe Marantz used it way back in the late 1970s, but apparently the 'speaker had problems and was no great success. There was a lot of talk in those days about carbon fibre's wondrous properties, talk which the aero industry hyped up. Rolls Royce use it in their RB211 turbofan engine, an auspicious start indeed.

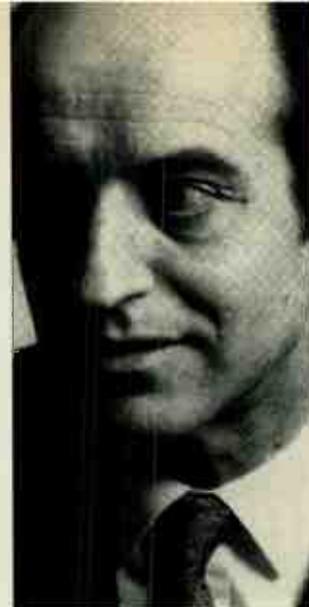
Nowadays carbon fibre is famous for withstanding those dramatic Formula 1 crashes. Even when the car has shed its wheels along with just about everything

else, the driver is still able to emerge casually from his protective carbon fibre tub.

In loudspeakers though, we need more than just strength allied to light weight. The material's internal damping must be just right, so it doesn't break up too badly. Our work with carbon fibre drive units has shown us that they don't have the smooth response roll-off of heavy, well damped plastics. On the other hand, they don't break up as badly as treated paper. Carbon fibre lies neatly between the two sonically, with a crisp, clear sound free from any coarseness.

All the same, while we first used carbon fibre-coned drivers in 1994 for our KLS3 loudspeaker, it has only rarely put in an appearance in commercial loudspeakers. That's why I made a beeline for the Castle Avon floorstander when it arrived. Castle know their stuff and I was

Mysteries from Noel Keywood



hoping to hear something a bit different and a bit better than run-of-the-mill plastic-coned 'speakers. All in all, I think the Avon is a real success. It has a forward sound, but then carbon fibre does have an uncanny ability to project images strongly. There's no artifice behind this; our measurements show the Avon has a flat frequency response. It doesn't rely on special effects. One loudspeaker engineer, upon hearing our KLS3 project images so strongly, declared it must have a midrange peak. But it doesn't - that's just the way a good carbon fibre driver performs.

The use of high technology cone materials is a long awaited initiative from Britain's loudspeaker manufacturers. Better cone profiles with wave breaks, smoothed contour changes and such like would also help improve the breed.

My experiences with electrostatic and ribbon drive units have vividly taught me what a difference good drivers can make. But I also know that in a depressingly large number of cases, manufacturers spend as little as possible on the drive units of commercial loudspeakers. Some take a perverse pride in buying in and using the cheapest possible drivers, and by cheap I mean as little as £2 apiece. Even with a high overall mark up ratio of x8 (not manufacturing profit, since it includes dealer margin), two drivers of this

sort will contribute around £35 to the final buying price. If it's a 'budget' design costing around £200 then drive units will constitute £50 or 25% of the materials cost. At £500 however, a total drive unit bill of £50 is disproportionately low. I've heard manufacturers brag about this sort of achievement, as if squeezing an acceptable performance (well, that's their view) from cheap drivers was equivalent to turning water into wine.

This approach perpetuates mediocrity. That's why we've always been so keen to fly the flag for high technology drive units. Low cone weight also contributes to high sensitivity. So high tech. drivers should give a loudspeaker that needs less power.

The industry's disregard of drive unit quality is slowly receding, under pressure from ourselves, who use both carbon fibre and High Definition Aerogel (HDA) in kit 'speakers, and manufacturers like Mission who use HDA in their new Freedom Series. As these synthetic materials appear in commercial loudspeakers I feel sure people will clearly hear and appreciate their benefits. It's good to see a company as skilled as Castle - who have a tradition of making their own drivers - offering the market carbon fibre in a well designed package like the Avon. It's a speaker worth hearing ●

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Hi-Fi World is looking for an editorial assistant with good technical knowledge. Ideally, we would like someone who has studied electrical engineering and is keen on hi-fi. An ability to write simply but clearly is preferred.

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FIRM foundations

Here are some tips that'll help you to get the best from your system, courtesy of Noel Keyword.

As most hi-fi buyers realise, it's pointless spending hard-earned dosh on quality components without a second thought for setting them up to work at their best. Seeing a system that consists of a tottering tower of black boxes and a spaghetti-jumble of scrawny cable is enough to bring tears to any audiophile's eyes. But where should you turn first to get the best from your hi-fi - cables, stands, spikes. . . ?

SYSTEM SUPPORT

Hi-fi systems are most conveniently located on wall shelving or purpose designed racking systems, such as those from Mana Acoustics. Wall racking, on

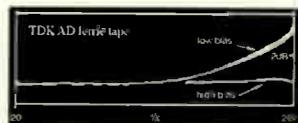
adjustable spur shelving for example, is effective in keeping intrusion down to a minimum - few people enjoy sharing their lives with black boxes. Custom racks sound better and should be considered for expensive systems.

CD PLAYER

CD players are relatively religion-free. They can be placed anywhere, bearing in mind that a solid, level surface well isolated from vibration is best. This is where dedicated stands, stabilised by their own weight and floor spikes, win out over bouncy wall shelves. And remember to use good signal cables to make the connection to the amplifier.

CASSETTE

If a cassette deck has no tape-tuning system, then you need to find tapes that will match the deck. As tapes rise in performance (i.e. their coercivity increases), they sound progressively brighter - and they get more expensive. So, for example, if a cooking ferric like TDK D gives recordings that sound a little dull or warm, choose a more expensive formulation like TDK AD; it will sound brighter and more balanced. The same applies to chromes.



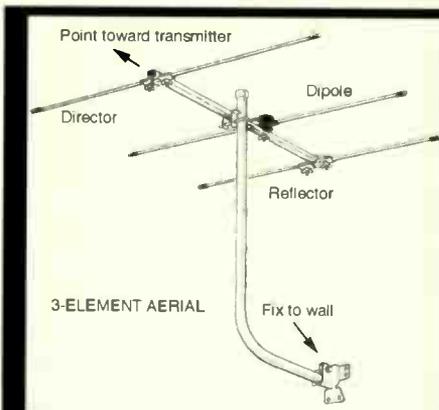
A high performance ferric tape like TDK AD gives good treble quality but requires raised bias if it is to sound balanced.

Compare a recording to a CD original to assess quality.

Ferrics are cheap but hissy. Good ones accept strong bass and are suited to heavy Rock, but you'll find treble overload causes muddle and dulls cymbals, etc.

Chromes are quieter than ferrics, but are more prone to bass and treble overload than ferrics. They suit Classical music.

Metals resist overload better than ferrics and chromes, giving cleaner treble in particular. But they're more expensive and these days many decks aren't good enough to exploit them fully.

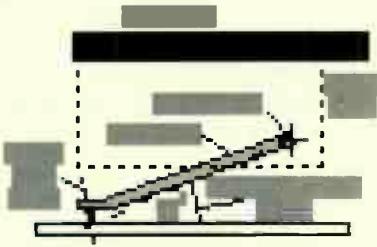


You only get real clarity and insight from a tuner when it's receiving a strong aerial signal of 1mV or more. In most parts of Britain, this means using a loft or outdoor aerial like this one.

TUNER

The key to getting really good results from any hi-fi tuner lies in feeding it a strong aerial signal. Forget all those amazing sensitivity figures - they don't relate to hi-fi sound quality. To give their best, all modern VHF FM tuners need 1mV or more from the aerial, and only those within about 10 miles of a transmitter can expect to approach this with an indoor aerial. Powered indoor aerials do not offer any benefit. They amplify noise and garbage as much as the signal. Use a full size multi-element aerial mounted as high as possible, in the loft or on the roof if possible, to get a clean, strong signal.

RECORD PLAYER



The vertical tracking angle and stylus rake angle of a cartridge are important parameters set by the manufacturer. Get them right by adjusting arm height so the arm is horizontal.

A pick-up cartridge is a very sensitive vibration transducer. Consequently, record decks must be mounted on firm surfaces, as far away from loudspeakers as possible. Sturdy wall shelves are a good choice.

Very low tracking forces encourage mistracking, which damages groove walls faster than anything. Better to track at a heavier force, to keep the stylus in contact with the groove. These days, 1.8gms or so is a commonly quoted

figure and is best adhered to. Moving coil cartridges usually need 2gms or more.

Ensure your cartridge is upright (looking from the front) to optimise stereo channel separation, and the arm is horizontal, for correct stylus rake angle and cantilever vertical tracking angle.

Be sure to keep your stylus very clean. It pushes aside a lot of fluff and rubbish in the groove. Use a soft stylus brush and stylus cleaner to remove gunk of all kinds, brushing from back to front.

Avoid cold air from a window. It will lower tracking ability. Ensure a deck works in the warm.



Here is the damage caused to a record groove by mistracking. The stylus has ploughed a signal into the top wall and pitted the bottom wall, causing permanent damage.

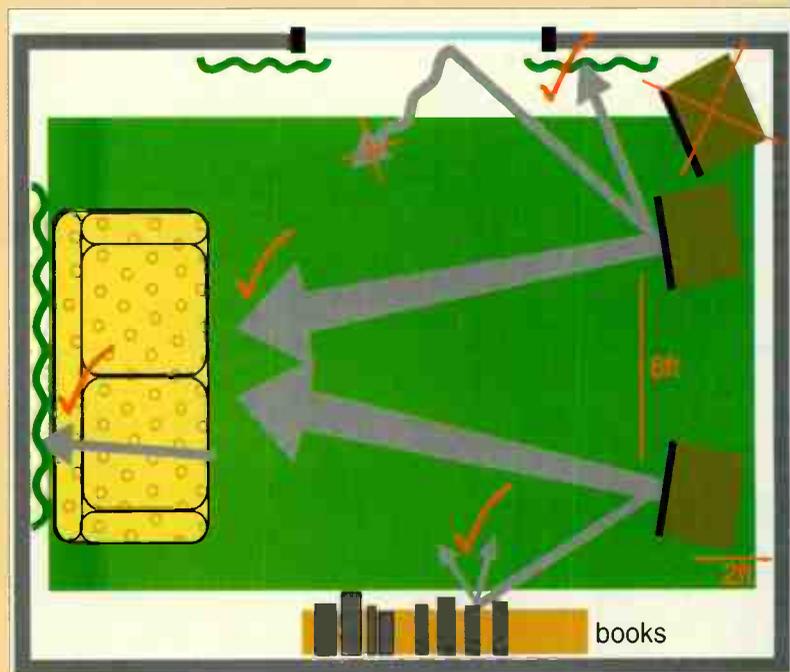
LOUDSPEAKERS

The idea of stereo is to set up an illusory soundstage between the loudspeakers. Performers should be positioned on this stage as if it was real and in front of you. The strength of effect is dependent on equipment and recording, but relies on basic conditions being met. Keep the 'speakers around 6ft apart and make certain they fire at the listening position without furniture between you and them.

A good perception of depth can be recreated by keeping the 'speakers away from a rear wall. This positioning gives the best stereo soundstage illusion.

Placing speakers against a wall strengthens bass output, but it also makes the response lumpy. Stereo image sharpness is reduced in this position as well, so there's a compromise here.

Finally, quite high transient currents pass through 'speaker cables. Keep them as short as possible and use thick cable. Special cables, bi-wiring and suchlike alter or improve quality. Rigid stands, sitting on floor spikes, improve transient handling and sharpness of stereo imaging.

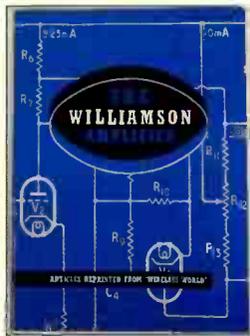


Check your room acoustics. Use books (irregular surfaces) to disperse sound, and curtains to absorb it. Do not put speakers in the corner, and keep them away from the rear wall (except wallstanders). Space roughly 6ft apart.

VALVE BOOKS

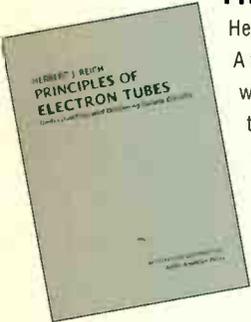
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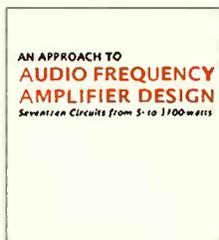
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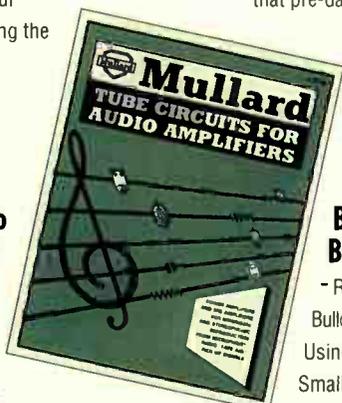
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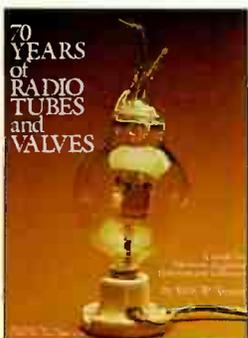
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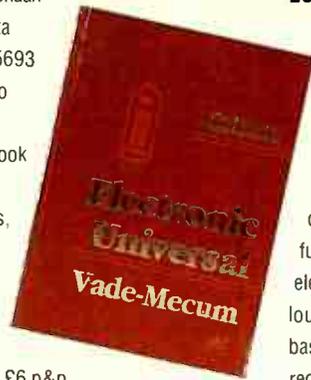
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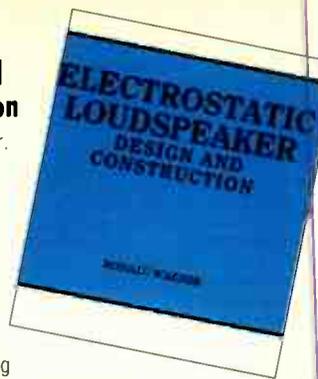
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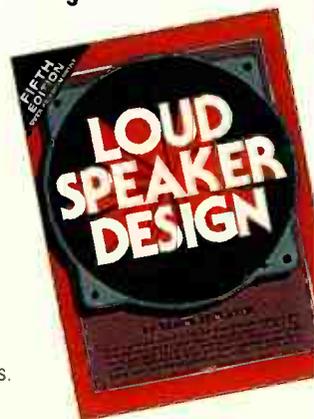
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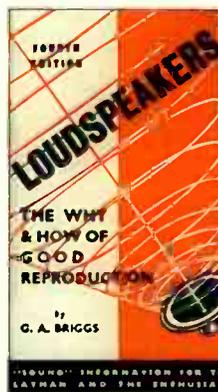
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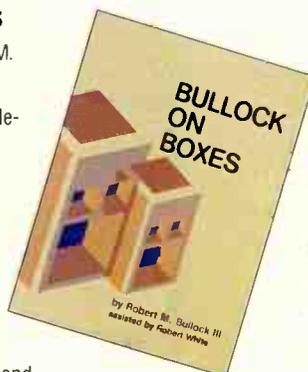
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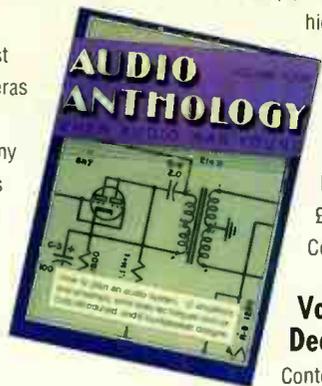
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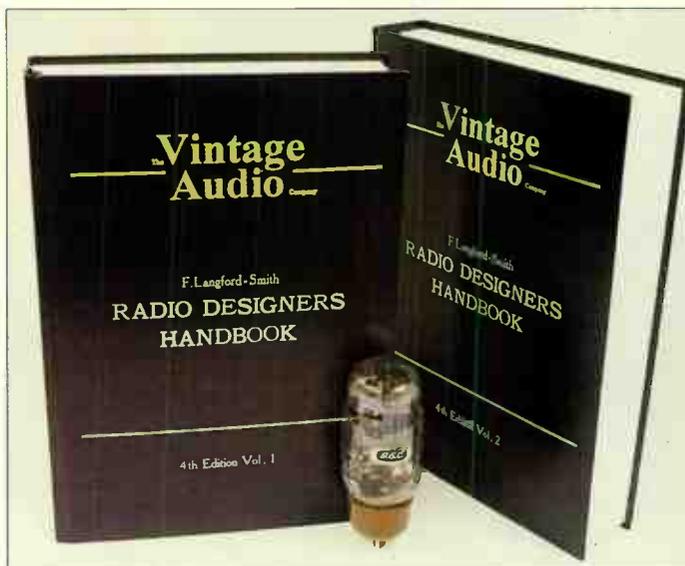
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I worry about people like myself who blow silly sums of money on hi-fi. They often become obsessed with their system to the exclusion of all other aspects of human life, turning into one of those raving hi-fi snobs that everybody hates. They laugh disdainfully at their friends' hi-fis, until very soon they have no friends. And, as the addiction grows, they find themselves listening solely to their systems, not the music they once bought to play on them.

Instead of going to dealers' dems with an open mind, hoping to hear something to bring them closer to the music, hi-fi snobs go to show off their vast quantities of frivolous knowledge. A first listen to new 'speakers will elicit a complaint about those "vulgar" metal dome tweeters, and the insistence that, "If it can't be an electrostatic, only ribbons will suffice". Snobs lament a system's "crude upper bass peak at 120Hz thanks to unsympathetic room resonant modes", when others would call it "boomy". They break out in fits of uncontrollable laughter if the system's not bi-wired, and are always, "quite sure that the left bass driver has been wired out of phase".

Soon, their local dealers are always fully booked and their friends invariably out when they call.

This is what audiophilia gone-mad can do to you. It's not quite autobiographical, but there are still some painful similarities in there. People talk about being bitten by the 'hi-fi bug', but for many it's more like a flesh-eating virus. Once you've got a decent basic system, you want to make it better. So you become obsessed with upgrading. When this doesn't give you what you're looking for, you get into the black art of tweaking. This moves from fiddling with interconnects to rewiring your 'speakers, from upgrading your amp's power supply

audiophilia

David Price



capacitors to building your own power amp.

Such behaviour is all right in small doses of course, but if you ever find that you stop enjoying the music, you've got it bad and might not pull through. Several times over the last decade I've tried to lose the hi-fi bug

been near me can. In fact, such was my euphoria at its new-found musical capabilities that I elected never to tweak again.

Then one day I called on a friend for a drink and had a quick listen to his Rega/Creek/KEF system on the way out. Having bought the whole lot from

sparsely furnished, small, symmetrical and square listening room were dreadful. I couldn't have made them worse if I'd tried. Set up in my new place, my system suddenly came on song, and all thoughts of upgrading, fiddling, tuning and tweaking disappeared. My

record collection swelled and I suddenly realised I had indeed made it to that higher, non-hi-fi dependent state of being. I lost interest in hi-fi for its own sake, and became a far less critical listener.

"Several times over the last decade I've tried to lose the hi-fi bug by performing that last little tweak after which I'd never touch my system again.."

by performing that last little tweak after which I'd never touch my system again. I'd duly attain a Zen-like sense of contentment and forget hi-fi for ever, or so the theory went. Funnily enough though, this never quite worked because something always came along and spoilt it.

For instance, in the late eighties I went through hell trying to get my flat-earth system of the time (Linn Sondek/Ittok LVIII/Supex 1000, NVA amp and Kan 'speakers) working properly. Despite much tweaking of my LP12's innards, I was getting nowhere so I decided to entrust it to my local dealer. It came back sounding great, as only turntables that have never

a good dealer and never so much as tweaked it since, he was a hi-fi agnostic, sensibly preferring to spend his cash on vinyl. As we sat back with a coffee, he cued up MARRS' 'Pump up the Volume', and the sound just blew me away. Either he'd slipped something funny into my Nescafe, or that was the sound of a genuinely well matched, synergistic system.

I was gutted, because by comparison my system sounded like poor AM radio. Trying to figure out why my expensive, super-tuned hi-fi was so inferior, I just ended up exasperated. Indeed I only discovered the reason when I next moved house. The acoustics in my old,

Unfortunately this fulfilment didn't last. For, one Autumn day in 1992, I found a magazine in the newsagent that sung the praises of valves. I'd been intrigued by glowing glass bottles since inheriting an old valve Cossor tape recorder that sounded amazing. Thanks to Hi-Fi World I caught the bug again, and am now assembling my first real post-flat-earth system around a World Audio K5881 valve power amp. So, if you ever manage to kill the hi-fi bug inside you, don't read the DIY supplement! You have been warned. It's a transmitter of contagious audio diseases which can seriously damage your wealth ●

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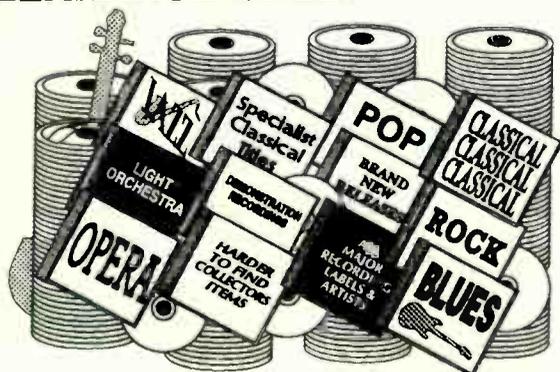
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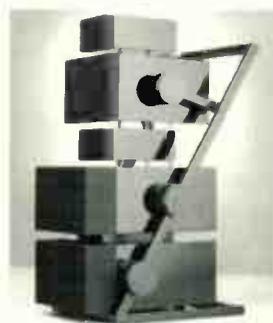
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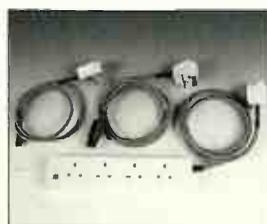
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Fair Views

With the days growing shorter, and last

summer's holiday now a distant memory, you may be one of those whose thoughts have turned to 'cosy nights in'. With this in mind, perhaps the hi-fi is due for an upgrade, and you might even have visited one of the recent trade shows. If you're new to hi-fi, then there's plenty to familiarise yourself with. On the other hand, if it's an ongoing interest, you could be feeling that the hi-fi industry is going through a fairly stagnant stage at the moment. We may be on the edge of great technological breakthroughs in broadcasting, recording and CD, but, as yet, none have really had an effect on the market.

The future of the various recording formats is fairly clear. DCC and Minidisc both seem to be in the doldrums. A combination of scarce pre-recorded software, manufacturer uncertainty, and the sheer strength and popularity of analogue cassette has proved too much even for the likes of Philips and Sony. DAT has established itself as a serious professional format, but is too costly to succeed in the domestic market.

CDR (recordable Compact Disc) is very much the one to watch as prices of both hardware and discs are constantly falling. All it needs is for manufacturers to bring the price of a recorder to below £500, and make blank discs more widely available, and the format could really take off. At the moment though, it seems as comatose as DCC, Minidisc and DAT. However, the continuing popularity of Dolby S on analogue cassette decks, and various new head technologies, has meant that conventional cassette is still thriving.

It's not just the recording media which seem to be watching and waiting. Compact Disc has reached a sales peak,

and new advances are slow to materialise. Genuine 24 bit technology, as pioneered by DPA with their £6000 PDM 1024, is slowly filtering its way down the market. Now that Arcam have taken it on board their latest top-notch Alpha machines, its benefits will begin to

the drive unit magnets in an attempt to lower distortion levels. And laser interferometry (which shows distortion in the form of a three-dimensional graph) was used to design the optimum cabinet. Clearly, they believe the way ahead lies in perfecting existing materials and

have been tuning equipment by ear since the early days. But it does seem that after the great transistor and digital revolutions of the '70s and '80s, and the quest for engineering perfection, more and more manufacturers are going back to basics (a horrible '90s cliché, I know).

This phenomenon happened some time ago with amplifiers. In the '70s, the challenge was to see who could produce the amplifier with the lowest distortion. There was a backlash against this in the following decade when it was realised that just because an amplifier had near zero distortion didn't necessarily mean it would sound good. Amplifiers produced with the benefit of this hindsight may not always have been quite as analytical as their forebears, but usually proved more rhythmical and involving. This enlightenment also saw a welcome revival of valve amplifiers which had often previously be seen as inefficient and plain old-fashioned.

Perhaps, then, it is no bad thing that hi-fi manufacturers are taking a little time to stand back and reflect. We may be on the verge of an explosion in new technologies, but history has shown that, more often than not, the best products are those that have been honed and refined over the years.

from
Dominic Todd,
our man in
retailing



"The future of the various recording formats is fairly clear. DCC and Minidisc both seem to be in the doldrums."

reach a far wider audience. Whether the system will take off like one-bit did six years ago remains to be seen. So far it doesn't seem to have created quite the same buzz within the industry.

Speaker and amplifier manufacturers find themselves in a similar situation. Advances are being made through evolution rather than revolution. Proof of this can be seen in Celestion's new high-end, 'A' series loudspeaker launched at Ramada. Despite the 'speaker market steadily turning its back on metal dome tweeters over the last five years, Celestion, who popularised them in the early eighties, have been constantly refining them. Their new range of 'speakers also features Faraday rings attached to

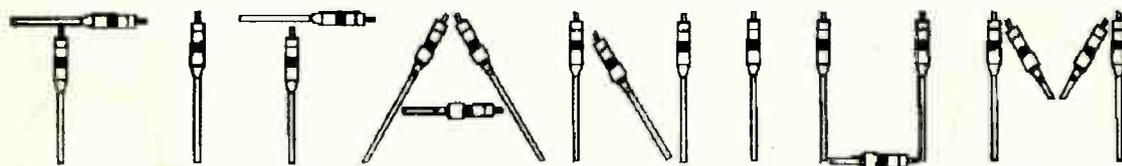
using advanced CAD (Computer Aided Design). Not all manufacturers would agree, however.

A recent discussion with the team responsible for the Danish System Audio loudspeakers showed great enthusiasm for developing 'speakers by ear. Their argument is that technology can only go so far, and at the end of the day, the best hi-fi isn't necessarily the most perfect. By ironing out all imperfections one is left with hi-fi that is, at best, bland. So final development is done by actually listening to component changes and letting the subjective human ear decide.

This method is nothing new in the hi-fi industry. Loudspeaker and amplifier manufacturers

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Kamla Electronics	London	0171-323 2747	V'Audio	Bristol	01179-686005
Doug Brady	Warrington	01925-828009	Hi-Fi Studio	Doncaster	01302-781387
KJ West One	London	0171-486 8262	Heatherdale Audio	Worthing	01903-872288
Midland Audio Exchange	Kidderminster	01562-822236	The Emporium	Norfolk	01379 650744
Music Matters	Solihull	0121-742 0254	Amadeus S.&V.	Sut'n Coldfield	0121 354 2311

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grade alpha

Arcam have just launched a whole new model range, including the Alpha 9 integrated amplifier and 9P stand-alone power amplifier. Dominic Baker tries the integrated then takes to bi-amping.

Arcam's styling gives the new Alpha range a smart, functional look. Their CD players, amplifiers and tuners all share the same dimensions, so they stack neatly too.

Arcam have been working hard over the last few years to make their products accessible and upgradable. This month we decided to look at the amplifiers. Bearing the potential for upgrading in mind, we tried out the Alpha 9 integrated amplifier and a 9P power

amp, which can be added at a later date for bi-amping.

The Alpha 9 integrated is a 70w design with a wide range of facilities. Separate listen and record selectors are provided for the five line inputs and optional phono stage (MM or MC at £50), as well as a second tape loop for a three-head cassette deck or AV processor. There are also tone controls, along with a 'Direct' switch which removes them from the signal path. Two sets of 'speaker terminals on the rear make bi-wiring or connecting a second set of 'speakers easy. There's even a balance control and headphone socket. And a complete Alpha system can be controlled from one hand-set because the 9, like the rest of the range, has a remote receiver.

Also sporting a headphone socket and individual 'speaker switching, the Alpha 9P is essentially the same amplifier as the 9 without the pre-amp stage.

ARCAM ALPHA 9 INTEGRATED

Fed from a Marantz CD-63MkII KI-Signature, bass guitar was taut, well defined and authoritative on the Cranberries' 'When You're Gone'. It gave the track a deliberate and well timed delivery. From bass through to snare, drums had impressive attack and were tightly knit into the mix. But where the integrated immediately scored was with Dolores O'Riordan's vocal. Smooth and full, it pushed clear of the 'speakers in a natural and unforced manner. Treble too was sweet, even with 'speakers as clear and revealing as the Harbeth HL-K6s I used. Cymbals had just the right balance between realistic bite and soft decay, sounding clear and strong without searing my ears.

I had our Star Search amplifier winner, the Rotel RA-970BX, to hand as a reference alongside Audiolab's 8000S. Sonically, as its price would suggest, the Alpha 9 fell nicely between the two. The Rotel's smoothness sounded a little overpolished compared to the 9, which was more detailed and vibrant. The Arcam gave the 8000S a good run for its money, only being

beaten in the end by the Audiolab's extra bass depth and control and more sharply focused sound.

The Alpha 9 integrated was sailing through all my sonic tests with ease. An SBM recording of Tchaikovsky's 'Pathetique' showed its ability to reveal all the rich layers of tonal colour in music, violins coming complete with a thin, woody resonance. Woodwinds



were smooth and characterful, oboe underpinning the flute's dancing melody. The overall scale of the performance impressed, with plenty of space around a well structured image of the full orchestra.

Faster, harder Dance melodies from Moloko gave the 9 a more difficult task to handle. Dub bass on 'Party Weirdo' had the Alpha driving out a strong rhythm, cool and funky. At higher levels a little compression and muddle set in, closing down the spread of sound somewhat. This was only a small effect, but noticeable none the less, especially with complex, wide ranging pieces.

Swapping back to lighter, more acoustic music gave the Alpha 9 a better chance to show its mettle in the fidelity stakes. Heading for the mainstream, Oasis proved a telling test. Tape hiss was clearly noticeable throughout this messy recording, but the Alpha 9 did well to bestow some order and structure on the proceedings. 'Married With Children', one of the simpler, better recorded pieces, was rich with the detail and atmosphere captured by the Arcam. It gave a walk-into-the-studio feel to the track, acoustic guitars and close mic'd vocal sounding

particularly realistic. There was plenty of insight as well, aided by the brightly lit presence of the midrange.

BI-AMPING WITH THE ARCAM ALPHA 9P

Inside the 9 and 9P, the power amplifier sections are identical. The integrated 9 has a simple pre-amplifier section though, so to keep heavy-duty signals away from these more sensitive input stages, it is best used to drive the treble in a bi-amp system.

Connecting the two amplifiers was easy. First, a set of phono leads was wired from the 9's 'pre-amp out' sockets to the 9P power amplifier's inputs. Then, remembering to remove the bi-wiring links from the loudspeaker terminals first, the power amp section of the 9 integrated was connected to the tweeters, and the 9P to the bass.

So the connection is straightforward, but why would you want to use two amplifiers to drive just one pair of loudspeakers in the first place? A power amplifier dedicated to each driver improves control and lowers distortion as the amplifier is only faced with one drive unit, not two or three. Also, because bass and treble are driven from separate amplifiers, a strong transient in the bass won't affect the treble amplifier, which will stay sweet and clean.



With the Alpha 9P on bass duty, The Cranberries sounded altogether more powerful and definite. The qualities of the 9 on its own remained intact, but a stronger sense of power and solidity brought a larger scale to the performance. Treble improved too,



becoming clearer, cleaner and even more detailed. At higher volumes it was notably sweet, but still powerful enough with cymbals to give good attack. In addition, there was more space and atmosphere to the music, decay on strings and hi-hats extended and natural.

A second visit to Tchaikovsky found more presence and a greater ease at frequency extremes. Trumpets enjoyed more dynamic headroom, allowing the volume to be pushed to higher levels without compression becoming audible.

At lower levels as well the increase in detail was noticeable; the sound was more focused, with less blurring on complex pieces.

Moving back to Moloko, 'Fun For Me', with its forceful, electronic bass line and complex percussion effects was faster, punchier and more clearly structured. The 9/9P combo was capable of really pounding this stuff out with a full-on, attacking sound.

A real acid test for treble purity was Steve Earle's 'Esmeralda's Hollywood'. Cymbals, steel-strung guitar, snare and tambourine combined to mount quite an assault with strong treble energy and high-reaching harmonics. The 9/9P gave of its best here, sounding sweet and clearly focused.

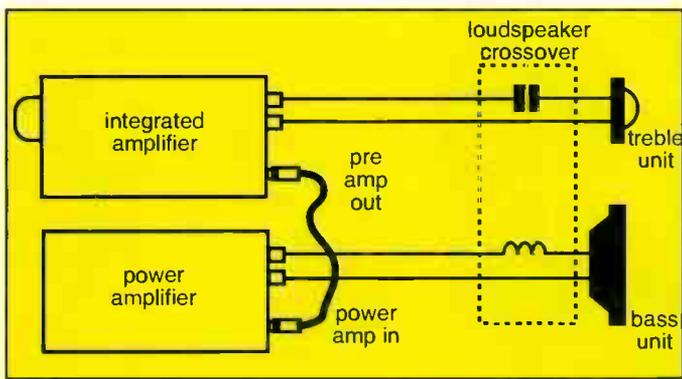
Attack wasn't blunted in any way, with a real bite and metallic sharpness ringing through. Vocals also had great presence, helping to enhance the depth of the performance. All in all, this was an impressively confident and energetic portrayal.

CONCLUSION

At £500 the new Arcam Alpha 9 turns in a creditable performance. It has a fast, crisp sound with open and extended treble that reveals well the atmosphere in a recording. Adding the 9P in a bi-amp arrangement opens things out further still. I must say that I'm becoming quite a fan of bi-amped systems, their extra control and headroom bringing effortless dynamics and a cleaner, sweeter sound at the same time. There are good pre/power combinations around at £900, but I'd wager the Arcam 9/9P set-up will give most some stiff competition.

Arcam Alpha 9 £499.90
Arcam Alpha 9P £399.90

Arcam
Pembroke Avenue,
Waterbeach,
Cambridge,
CB5 9PB
Tel: 01223 203203



Bi-amping connects a power amplifier to each drive unit. The loudspeaker crossover comes in-between, as we show here using a simplified one-component representation.

The amplifier only delivers current over the frequency band of operation of the drive unit. Out of band, rising load impedance curtails drive. This is almost as effective as fully active working.

The benefits are faster, cleaner transients and less apparent muddle.

WORLD VERDICT 
 Either on its own or in combination with the 9P, the new Alpha 9 integrated represents excellent value. A detailed and open sound gives great atmosphere to all types of music.

Measured Performance
 see p103

competition

A SUPERB

TEAC / MERIDIAN / HARBETH

★ CD system ★

WORTH OVER £4500

You could win a complete system this month, comprising; TEAC VRDS-TI transport and D-TI CD convertor, Meridian 502 pre and 557 power amplifier and Harbeth HL-K6 loudspeakers.



Fronting this month's competition system is TEAC's digital combo, the D-TI DAC and TI transport. The TI features TEAC's proprietary Vibration-free Rigid Disc-clamping System (VRDS) and, as with the D-TI DAC (with its chassis copper-plated to reduce eddy currents), is built like the proverbial brick outhouse. In our October review, we found this pairing capable of producing a very clean, lively sound, rock and classical alike benefiting from the TEAC's powerful dynamics. We concluded that both DAC and transport had "been built up to a standard rather than down to a price."

The job of passing on the delicate signal from source to 'speakers falls to Meridian's 502 preamplifier and 557 200w power amplifier. The 502 is a fully-balanced, dual mono design. Component quality is high, with Nichicon and polypropylene capacitors used, as well as a low-flux toroidal transformer. There is also a sizeable remote to transmit your every beck and call to the 502. The powerhouse of the duo is the 557. This back-breaker of a power amp can produce 200w for the timid, while those looking to give their house a structural work-out can take advantage of the 800w on offer in bridged mode.

What impressed Jon Marks about these amps (as you can discover on page 20) was a neutrality and power which gave music a sense of life-like scale and impact without ever sounding anything less than convincingly natural. Completing the line-up of star qualities was a tonal colour and precision of imaging that made it possible to listen into the heart of the music, communicating the emotion caught in the recording.

The HL-K6 is the latest standmounter to arrive from Harbeth. Its conventional looks belie the fact that four years of research into special cone materials have gone into the design of this loudspeaker. The end result is an advanced 200mm injection-moulded mid/bass driver whose cone is constructed from RADIAL (Research And Development Into Advanced Loudspeakers), a blend of carbon fibre and polypropylene, amongst other ingredients. Doing treble duty is a black anodised aluminium dome tweeter from SEAS.

The research has obviously borne fruit - David Price (on page 23 of this very issue) found the K6's combination of neutrality and speed immediately appealing. Dynamics were handled with ease, producing tuneful bass, transparent midrange and detailed treble. On top of this, the Harbeths never sounded less than musical, serving up a sonic treat regardless of genre. A rare mix of abilities, one that we appreciated - we now use the K6s in our reference reviewing system.

If you'd like the chance to turn all here at World green with envy, all you have to do is answer the questions opposite and complete the tie-breaker. Send in your entry form on the back of a sealed envelope or postcard to reach us before December 4th to:

TEAC/Meridian/Harbeth Competition
Hi-Fi World Magazine,
64 Castellain Road,
Maida Vale,
London W9 1EX

Don't forget to include your name, address and telephone number if possible so that we can contact winners promptly.

COMPETITION ENTRY QUESTIONS

- 1) What does VRDS mean?
A. Vertical Radiator with Dishwasher Supplied B. Virtual Random-access Digital Simulator
C. Vibration-free Rigid Disc-clamping System D. Verbal Return of Damp Squib
- 2) How is the Meridian 502 pre-amp configured?
A. Fully balanced C. No sense of balance at all B. Three-legged D. A sandwich
- 3) What is the 557's maximum power output?
A. 2.75mW C. Gas Mark 3 B. 800w D. 16 Centigrade
- 4) What kind of tweeter does the HL-K6 use?
A. Tweety Pie C. SEAS aluminium dome
B. Nuclear powered D. Clingfilm
- 5) What are some of RADIAL's ingredients?
A. Baking Soda and Lemon juice C. Cardboard
B. Carbon fibre and polypropylene D. Sun-dried Yak bladder

TIE BREAKER (obligatory)

Complete the following in less than 30 words

If it's music that you yearn,
Try some amps from John Shearne,
A silky sound that is so smooth,
Gets you right into the groove,

.....
.....

Name:

Address:

Post Code:Tel No.....

Please do not add my name to your mailing list.

COMPETITION WINNERS

SEPTEMBER - JBL S2600 LOUDSPEAKERS,
OCTOBER - SHEARNE AMPLIFIERS

In our October '96 issue, we gave you the chance to win a Shearne Phase 6 pre-amplifier and Phase 3 power amplifier. We also printed the vital JBL competition token. So this month, we have two sets of winners to announce.

The winner of the Shearne competition is:

John Sansom of Wareham.

And the winner of the JBL competition is:

Katherine Dye of Leyton.

Congratulations to you both!

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.

If you would prefer *not* to receive details of new products or special offers please tick the box.

Hi-Fi World magazine is published by Audio Publishing Ltd.

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.

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 more powerful 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. 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.

AUDIOLAB 8000CD £1000

Great presence and body through midrange along with good stage depth give this player a seductive and musical sound. A real charmer.

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 CD1 £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 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 HX900/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 LP12 £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 LP12, 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.

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 the tonal strengths and dynamo sound Ortofon have been putting into their 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.

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.

ARCAM ALPHA 9 £500

A detailed and open sound lends great atmosphere to music. Wide range of facilities too, including optional MM/MC phono stages.

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.

SONNETER 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 pre-amp 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 DSP200S £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 pre-amp, greatly improves on 8000C with a more fluid, musical sound and greater grip. Remote control.

MERIDIAN 502 £1295

Transparent, detailed sound with good tonal range and a neutral presentation. Flexible and remote controlled too.

NAIM NAC82 £1945

This remote control pre-amp 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.

ARCAM ALPHA 9 £400

With 70watts on tap, the 9P will drive most loudspeakers with a spacious and detailed sound. Good bass drive too.

MISSION CYRUS POWER £450

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

ROSE RPI90 £495

Used with the partnering pre-amp it gives 70watts of smooth, relaxing sound.

SUGDEN AU41P £530

Extremely competitive at the price with 100WV 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 606II £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.

MERIDIAN 557 £1400

Great control and dynamics allied to seductive smoothness. A rare combination of power and delicacy.

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.

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 FT-1 is no mere tuner but a 'broadcast monitor' no less, a task at which it acquires itself well, with a clear and powerful sound.

NAIM NAT01 £1380

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

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KENWOOD KX-3080 £160

A simple deck, but high quality head and transport give an unusually high level of performance at this price. Not to be missed.

DENON DRM-650S £230

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AIWA AD-S950 £300

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

PIONEER CT-S740S £430

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HEYBROOK HB1 S3 £269

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REL Q-BASS £350

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REL STRATA £500

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CASTLE AVON £700

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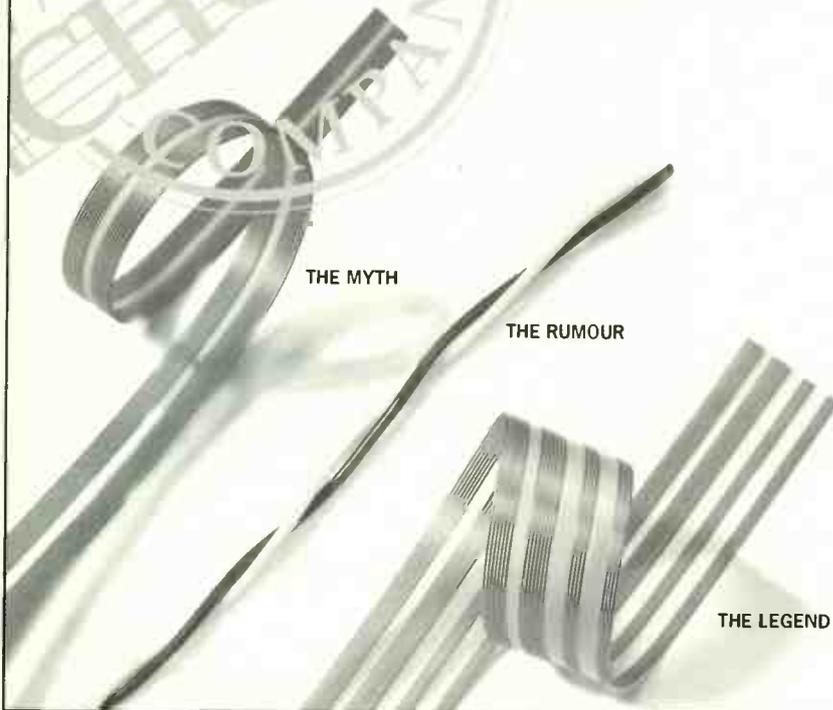
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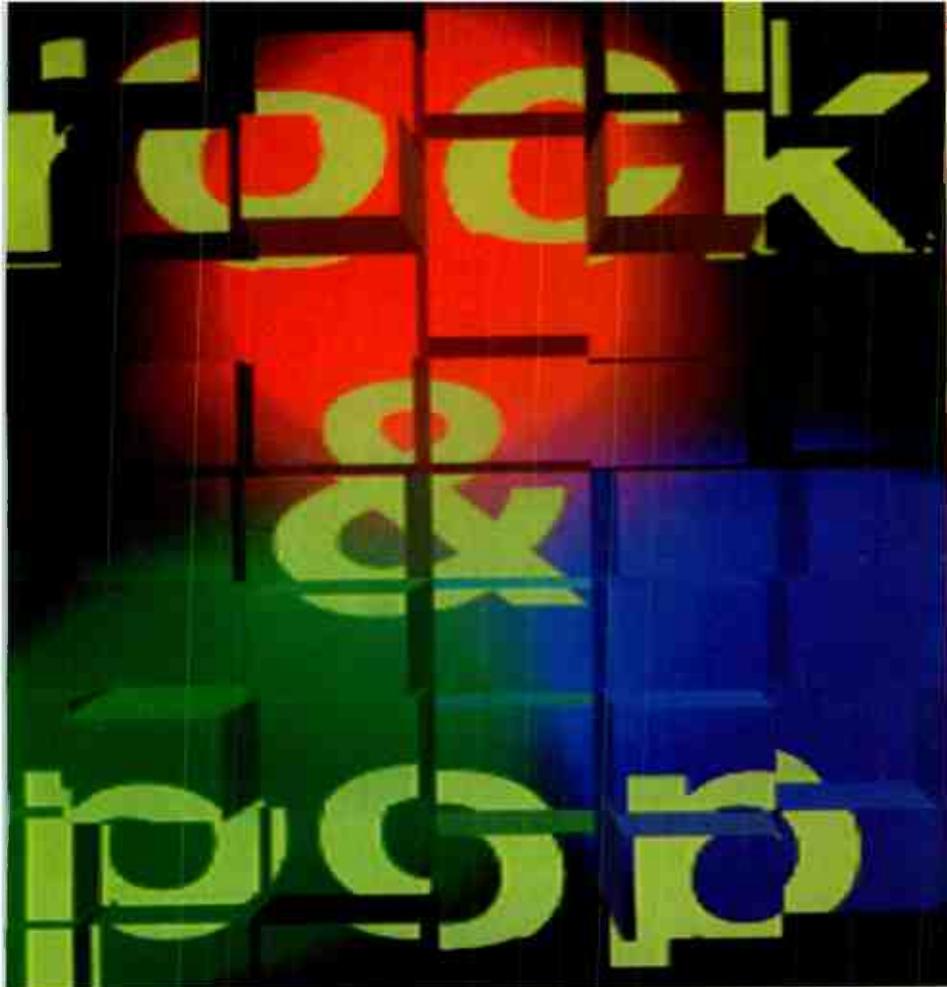
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Certainly it is a real oddity of a record, but that don't mean it isn't one of the most adventurous and awesome to have emerged in years. A sure-fire end-of-year fave.



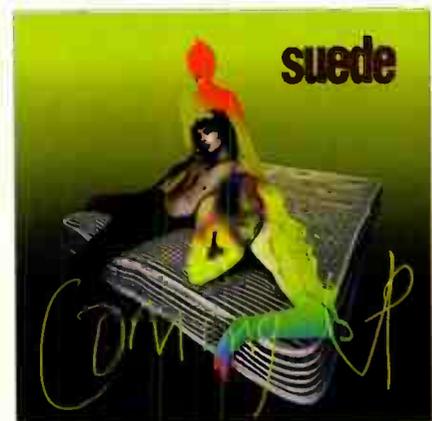
THE BOO RADLEYS
C'MON KIDS
CREATION CRECD194
(Also available on vinyl)

The Boo Radleys have always tended towards the loopy but this fourth album is their craziest yet, a wild wallow in psychedelia nouvelle with less beer than in earlier days. The opening title cut may be a nod to crowd-baiting hard Rock but from then on in it is, for the most part, a demented journey through several dimensions of mad sounds and blown mindscapes. Take, for example, the ensuing 'Meltin's Worm', a spooky and perhaps salutary tale that's all soft, weird vocals, eerily twisted post-Beach Boys backing harmonies and bucketloads of mad axeman guitar - guitar upon

guitar, etcetera. And 'Melodies For The Deaf (Colours For The Blind)' is almost a jolly sing-along, again with a sandbox-era Brian Wilson middle bit, after which it takes off at such a bizarre tangent that one is tempted to think it's two songs stuck together, 'Day In The Life' style.

You can't be psychedelic without treading in the footsteps of early Pink Floyd, hence 'Bullfrog Green' with its Roger Waters phrasing on the vocals offset by more falsetto parts. Other unusual echoes, tributes, call them what you will, include such early folkies as Donovan and even Simon and Garfunkle. As you can well imagine, all this sounds very odd indeed when laid among some of the strangest productions ever heard by human ears.

But that doesn't mean there aren't some great tunes in there. The enigmatic and reverbomanic 'What's In The Box' is one such, all grand melody and guitars that sound like an entire orchestra of Pete Townsend at his wildest and meanest. This will be a real triumph live, no discussion needed. The cynical 'Fortunate Sons' is all booming percussion, nuclear rimshots and enough massed guitar madness to defoliate a rainforest in thirty seconds. But then more glorious harmonies appear alongside gentle acoustic guitars, somewhat Lennonish phrasing and phasing galore in the oddly named 'Ride The Tiger'.



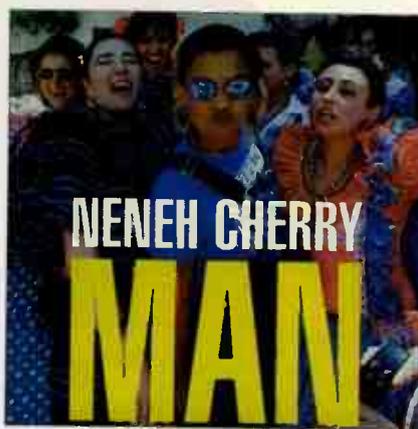
SUEDE
COMING UP
NUDE 6CD
(Also available on vinyl)

Much as I must confess that I loved Suede's debut single, I did, like many fans of Mr Bowie's carrot top era, quickly find singer Brett Anderson's vocal similarities somewhat forced, if not absurd. But my mind's made

rock & pop reviews

something of a U-turn, and this newest disc has helped no end. For example, 'Trash', the hit single and opening cut here, has no small amount of charm. Similarly 'Filmstar' boasts a great zooming bass, punch a'plenty and a grand centrepiece. 'Picnic By The Motorway' would have to be a fave for anyone who's read J. G. Ballard's 'Crash', while druggy 'The Chemistry Between Us' manages to overcome some rather unsubtle drug references chiefly by dint of a strong tune and imaginative arrangements. I did admire 'Lazy', however, largely because of its neat collage of seventies' pretty kids with too much make-up alongside the more contemporary world of raves, cable and Sky TV. The sturdy spinal bass even carries echoes of Paul McC in his moptop glory days. And 'By The Sea' may well be Brett's most honest and personal song to date, an appropriately idyllic romance with gently coaxed ivories and Brett at his most sincerely pained.

Brett and company may still be classic no-hope, bored teenagers, but there is every evidence available here that they're on the brink of becoming future princes - ones with plenty to say and even more to teach. All power to their elbows.



**NENEH CHERRY
MAN**
HUT CDHUT38
(Also available on vinyl)

This may be merely her third album but she has a pedigree the length of King Kong's arm. This is down to being born the daughter of rebel Jazz giant Don, stints with the likes of nouveau funksters Rip, Pig and Panic and even Punk dominatrices The Slits, and a sparse but highly successful solo career.

This third LP in a long gestation period finds her as soulful as ever but, for the most part, laid-back and melodic (though she proves more than

once that she can be as potentially forceful as ever). It starts out busy and soulful but ends up with an inspiringly frenetic climax.

The fact that passion is not one of Neneh's shortcomings (not to mention her three offspring to date) is more than evident on the impassioned 'Kootchi': the guitar is lunacy incarnate, there is a true banshee finale and some extremely naughty but still rather restrained lyrics, i.e. "I'll show you the trigger to my bitch switch/And how to play with my witch stitch". Naughty or what? Yet still a zillion miles from the forced coarseness of the likes of Ice-T or the Artist Formerly Known As A Pompous Moron. And as for Neneh's version of 'Trouble Man', one of the bestest songs ever penned by one of Motown's bestest writers and performers, she carries it off with style, imagination and considerable aplomb. It's an admirable and notable achievement.

In short, this is a subtler Cherry than one might have expected, and thus not heavy on the hit singles front. For all that, it remains a subtle work of the imagination, and one that deserves not to go unnoticed. Brave and talented and full of promise.

rock & pop record of the month

SPONGE
WAX ECSTATIC
COLUMBIA 01-484186-10

Public Enemy may well have warned us "Don't believe the hype", but there are exceptions. Sponge for example, are a Detroit-born combo dating from '93. They spent a solid year working their proverbials off, by which time their debut album had sold a million Stateside. They were soon headliners at the influential Lellapalooza tour, are currently supporting that good-taste gent Neil Young, and will visit our shores shortly.

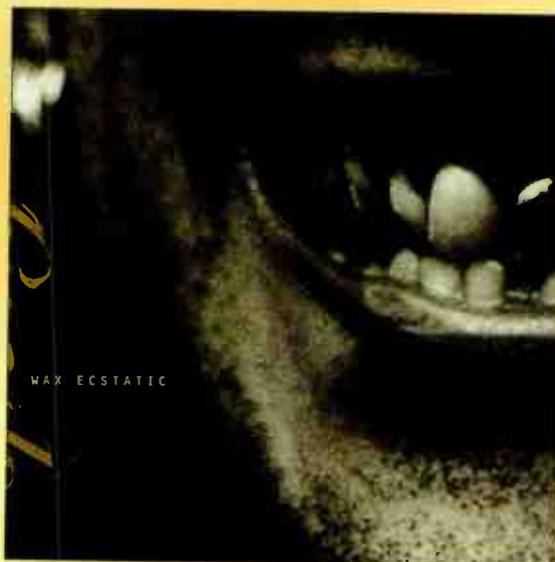
When this second disc kicks off you could be forgiven for thinking the age of stagediving was not over, and scribes of little brain could well be reaching for their 'new Nirvana' labels. This, however, is patently not the case. For together, lead

vocalist Vinnie Dombroski, Joey Mazzola (electric and slide guitar), Mike Cross (electric, acoustic, bass) fellow bassist Tim Cross and drummer Charlie Grover are a formidable and highly talented combination with as wide a spread of talents and styles as

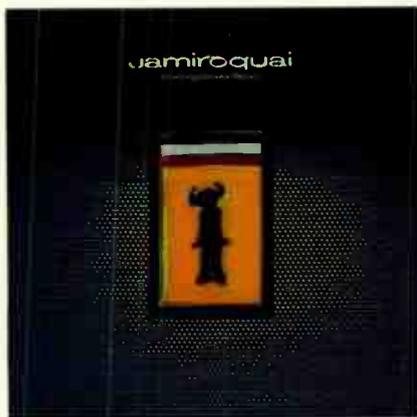
one could wish for. Small wonder Rolling Stone said this was to be one of the ten most anticipated discs of the Summer. Here we find the ghosts of everyone from the classic Stones to the best of Southern Rock - Lynyrd Skynyrd, The Allman Brothers Band

and so on. There are gentle ballads laden with lovely slide, and touches of everything from Blues, Soul and Country.

Examine the rollicking opener 'My Purity' and merely compare with such diverse concoctions as 'I Am Anastasia' (featuring Psychedelic Furs founder Richard Butler on back-ups) or 'Got To Be A Bore', its power chords galore spread over the immortal line, "I hope my head will heal". If anything, concussion is more likely. That said, this is a group of multitudinous grace, imagination, style and consummate professionalism. A name to remember ●



Jon Clarke



JAMIROQUAI
TRAVELLING WITHOUT MOVING
SONY 4839991
(Also available on vinyl)

The prat in the hat is back. And this time the '90s space cowboy says we should be especially 'proud' of him. As Jamiroquai's third album is released, singer Jay Kay informs us with considerable hilarity that his long-lost father would be proud of him if only he could be located.

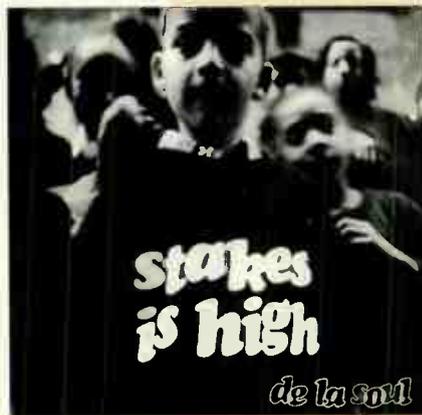
He may not be the most respected personality with his infamous slips of the tongue, collection of stupid hats and far too many Ferraris for his own good, but Jay Kay is really quite an endearing sort of cove. Another thing of little doubt; his band of talented funksters - particularly guitarist Si Katz - know how to knock out a good pop song. The group have already sold 3 million albums worldwide and this should add a few more to the tally.

Despite the originality of the music being called into question once again - Stevie Wonder comparisons abound - Travelling Without Moving is a pleasant little LP, with a series of groovy tracks and irritatingly catchy choruses. The 12-track album, which follows hot on the heels of the band's top 3 single 'Virtual Insanity', is a smooth-edged work bound to give Brit Pop another push into the second division.

Travelling Without Moving - the title track being a case in hand - is classic '70s Disco boogie brought up to date, if only by Jay Kay's excitable and uplifting vocals. The tracks are

generally light and trippy, and bound to pep you up for a top Sat'day night on the town. Take a dose of 'Virtual Insanity' and 'Use The Force' to really get the foot tapping. Using the band's now trademark Didgeridoo sound, 'Didigital Vibrations' and 'Everyday' show a mellower, chilled side of the album.

Not a world different from anything else the boy wonder has done, and if that means maintaining his ever so perfect standards, then indeed his dad should be proud.



DE LA SOUL
STAKES IS HIGH
TBV 1149
(Also available on vinyl)

Many moons ago, we all went wild to Three Foot High and Rising and its wacky singles 'Me, Myself and I', 'Eye Know' and 'Jennifer'. It was an album that heralded a great change in Rap. The sound of De La Soul came to mean Peace and 1988 became an exciting time of rejuvenation for Hip Hop.

When the threesome - Trugoy, Posdnuos and Maseo - came over to the UK they were mobbed and labelled hippies and peaceniks. Things indeed went high and rose to such heights that the debut album soon went Gold. But the band were not happy. They didn't like their mellow image and in 1991 they suddenly returned with a second LP, De La Soul Is Dead.

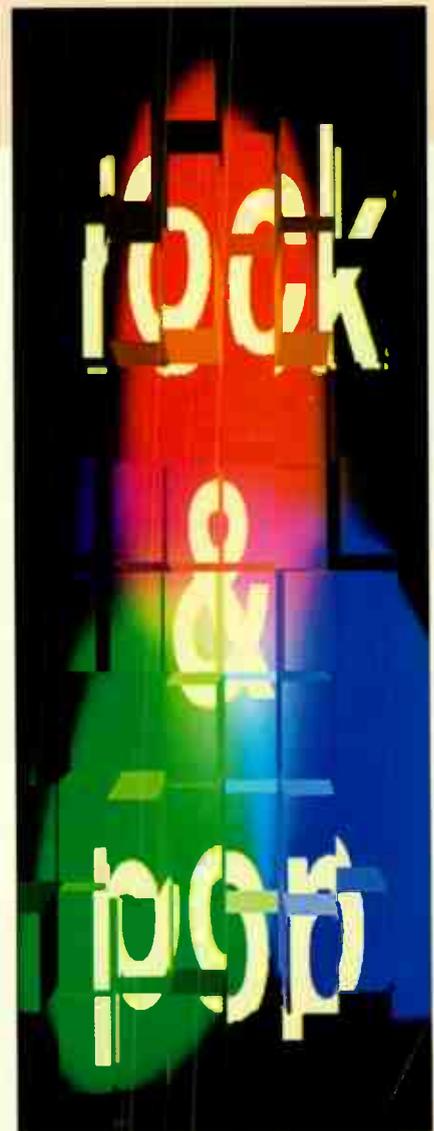
Despite a couple of memorable singles ('Ring, Ring, Ring' and 'Roller Skating Jam Named Saturdays') it was a stinker and lost the band valuable cred points. The result being they disappeared, only to resurface briefly in 1993 with the average Buhloone Mindstate album.

Now in 1996 the threesome are back with a new release. And the stakes are indeed high.

But the new offering is nothing to get too excited about and is a distinctly rap fan-only LP. It has neither the freshness nor the originality of Three Foot High and the rhymes are mostly a few strides behind their best.

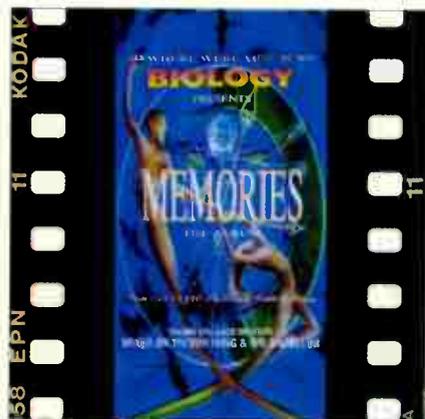
There are, however, many good moments on Stakes Is High and the single 'The Bizness' is a particular case in hand with its lazy rambling style, which has made the DJ world listen up. A pastiche of interesting samples and laid back beats ensures that Stakes Is High is an album as good, if not as commercially viable, as the current vogue in the pop charts, the Fugees.

It is a little disappointing that a band with a very obvious talent for music will never be able to quite match up to their faultless debut, by which they will always be measured. Still, things could, and have been, a lot worse for De La Soul, and Stakes Is High sounds like the start of a return to form ●



dance & ambient

*Viv
Craske*



VARIOUS
BIOLOGY MEMORIES
EMI TV MC BIOLOG 100

Memories, memories. And once upon a time, they were made of this. For *Biology Memories* is exactly what it says, nostalgia from a more innocent time when House was young. In the late '80s House meant burning around the M25 looking for that elusive party, then dancing until dawn in fields and warehouses. Those were days when people really did love each other. Honest.

When the House scene exploded onto UK dancefloors there were the great party organisers: Shoom, Spectrum, Sunrise, Energy and Biology. Biology began in true entrepreneurial spirit with a certain Jarvis Sandy holding his first warehouse party in '89 with the dream DJ line-up of Paul Oakenfold, Trevor Fung, Grooverider, Paul Trouble Anderson and Nicky Holloway. Of course, breaking the law couldn't go on forever, so now we have the party piece repackaged as a double CD stuffed to bursting with that thing we called House.

Mixed by early heroes Kid Batchelor and Trevor Fung, what you get is classic after sweaty classic, House with soul,

Disco tinged and flavoured with Balearic influences. The choicest cuts are tracks like Adeva's 'Musical Freedom', Nomad's 'Devotion', Shut Up And Dance's '5,6,7,8', Coldcut's 'People Hold On' and Bang the Party's 'Bang Bang you're mine'. These and many others here quickly became UK underground classics and were among the first tracks to gain respect on the US scene. And the rest, as they say, is history. . .



GENASIDE I
NEW LIFE 4 THE HUNTED
INTERNAL TRUDC14
(Also available on vinyl)

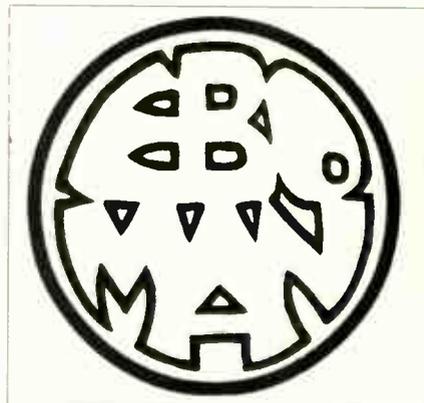
GII are a collective of Brixton-based musicians described by The Prodigy's Liam as, "The people who invented Jungle" when they released their 1991 single 'Narramine'. But don't think that this is another let's-milk-Breakbeat-for-all-it's-worth album, because it occupies a completely different league altogether.

Producers Kao Bonez and Chilli Phats have poked their heads above the Brixton clouds and sought out musical slices from the worlds of Hip Hop, House, Soul - in fact, just about every genre under the sun - then hacked them

all about and transformed them into pure, deranged beauty.

From the moving chill-out grooves of tracks like 'Distant Noises' and 'Come the Fools' to collaborations with the Wu Tang Clan, there's a world of diversity strung together with a head-nodding common thread. Luscious vocals on many tracks come courtesy of Soul II Soul's Ross Windross, while 'Just as Rough' features Jamaica's legendary Eek A Mouse. They even cover (surprisingly successfully) The Red Hot Chili Peppers' ballad 'Under The Bridge'. And just to top the collaborations front they've gone and got The New Power Generation to cover four album tracks for a bonus CD. Erm, yes, well. . .

A superb mishmash of a first album, and it'll slot in nicely at the Portishead/Tricky/Fugees/Nightmares on Wax end of yer Dance collection. Hell, why not buy two copies and frame one on your wall.



EBOMAN
SAMPLING MADNESS EP
XL EPI23CD

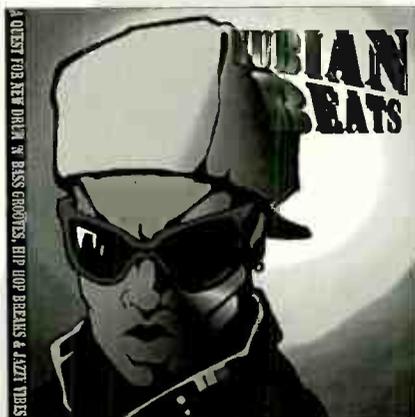
Personally I blame it all on those pesky Chemical Brothers. One hit album of

leftfield Dance for drinkers in indie T-shirts and all of a sudden people are labelling them Brithop (a media label about as lame as Britpop). You mean they're British and you can hop around to a groovy beat? No, a few people doing something a bit different doesn't warrant such spurious terms as Brithop and Amyl House. What I think we're referring to here are clubs such as the Heavenly Social and the likes of Lionrock, Daft Punk and Monkey Mafia. This is the sound of music with souped-up, looped beats and samples, a nice side serving of 303 squelches and a bass heaviness and structure usually left to the Hip Hop brigade.

The thing is though, Eboman aren't British, they're Dutch. And they're signed to XL, so they must have a good buzz flowing, particularly as they've been supporting the Prodigy on their recent tour.

So what about the music then, eh? Well, Amyl House is a good way to describe it (hypocrite!), but a better way is to check out top single 'Donuts With Buddhah' - a slithering, bouncing little number that's bound to get any

job with a pint in his hand making a fool out of himself. And this nine track EP is more of the same. Electro noises by the bag full, 303s moaning painfully and the all important funky, nodding beat. Keep an eye out, their energy's infectious, and Eboman could well be blowing a gail of fresh air into the Dance arena.



NUBIAN BEATS
RUMOUR TRIPCD7
(Also available on vinyl)

It's a funny thing this drum 'n' bass lark. Way back when, it was all Ragga samples and cut-ups complete with moronic MCs, and the word was, "We can't dance to this". Then Hip Hop oozed into the picture and everyone wanted a piece of the action. I'm just waiting for the Spice Girls' Breakbeat pop hit, or perhaps East 17 working with Goldie. OK, that may be going a bit far, but the point is that Breakbeat has opened up from its clique beginnings to allow Jazzy licks, Soul divas and film soundtrack wannabes to join in. And this is where Nubian Beats comes in. From smoky 110 bpm tunes to the old school 160/170 bpm hardcore, this compilation covers all bases from Hip Hop to Jungle and back again, showcasing a range of emerging talents.

On the dark, heavy side there's the likes of Public Domain's 'Levitation', while Nikki C's 'Sunshine Ride' ranks high among the Jazzy coffee-table twitchers. If you want your beats cutting edge and innovative, this could be a good place to start looking

Album & ambient record of the month

CJ BOLLAND
THE ANALOGUE THEATRE
INTERNAL TRUCD13
(Also available on vinyl)

Christian's back again with this, his second album and his first offering since departing influential label R&S for Orbital's home, Internal. Coming from a musical background (his mum used to DJ in a club owned by his dad), and having been making music since he was knee-high to a turntable, The Analogue Theatre screams seamless professionalism and confidence. First album, *The Fourth Sign*, was also a must-have. It took Techno on a deep and intense white-knuckle ride of shimmeringly crisp production with tracks like 'Thrust' and 'Camargue'. It marked a breakthrough for Techno at a time when four-to-the-floor ruled.

And now CJ (the man responsible for Ravesignal's classic 'Horsepower') is back

with the sort of cutting-edge Techno and hard House that could well propel him into the upper echelon of dance alongside Orbital, The Chemical Brothers, Leftfield and Underworld. The first single from the album, 'Sugar Is Sweeter', is already a massive club, airplay and chart success, taking in thrash



guitars and a voice sample that swings between tenderness and viciousness. But what truly sets CJ apart from the Techno sheep with this album is the fact that it is an album, and not just 10 tracks stuck on the same piece of plastic. This is what all the Techno superstars before have needed to do to crossover into the mainstream, so it looks like he can't fail.

CJ takes you from melodic intros to metallic, industrial power beats through weird, spaced-out samples and haunting melodies. Then he brings it all together in a great crescendo to knock your bonce off.

It's hard to pinpoint any one track that stands above the rest, but 'The Prophet' is obviously bound for classic status. With a Willem Dafoe speech sample from 'The Last Temptation Of Christ' building in intensity above a relentless bass line, it'll blow your mind wide open

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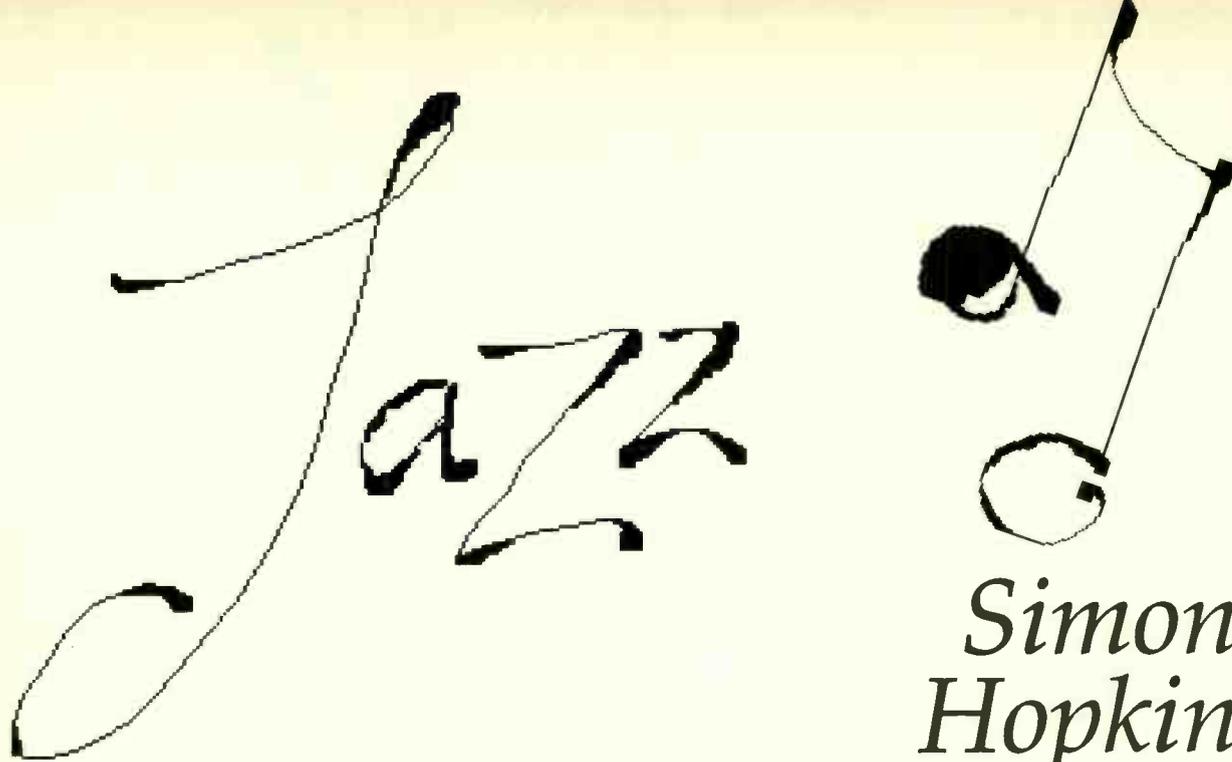
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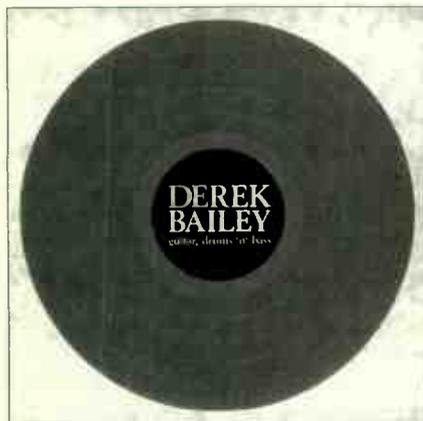
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WorldRadioHistory



Simon Hopkins



DEREK BAILEY
GUITAR, DRUMS 'N' BASS
 AVANT AVAN 060

The rise and rise of Jungle, or Drum and Bass, has been quite a phenomenon to watch, a perfect model of how an element of fringe culture can filter through the cultural strata until it reaches everywhere.

I remember an evening, not two years ago, when a friend, a fellow devourer of the more radical, er, 'New Music', refused to play for me a tape of what was, even so recently, a fiercely underground dance music. Two years on, and Jungle, transformed through some bizarre process of street-level PC into Drum 'n' Bass, is inescapable. The charts, of course, are full of the stuff, but it goes way beyond that. Seemingly every Dance single has at least one format with a Jungle mix, no matter how inappropriate.

Elsewhere, erstwhile yuppie-soundtrackers Everything But The Girl have miraculously melded Jungle rhythms and their own highly distinctive, plaintive balladeering to come up with perhaps one of the year's very small handful of essential pop albums, not to mention a clutch of must-have, mix-laden singles. And TV advertising has been utterly seduced by the stuff (a musician recently commented to me that he knew Jungle had well and truly arrived when he heard it used to advertise an air freshener!)

It's perhaps surprising then, that there hasn't been more overt crosspollination between Jungle and Jazz. It's not just that Jungle has become so ubiquitous, but that the musics share so much. The development of Drum 'n' Bass has been like a microcosmic version of Jazz's, springing from a street music, a music to dance to. Both have grown to become immensely sophisticated and rhythmically dazzling, and are so widely accepted you'd happily play either at a dinner party. It's perhaps an index of our own accelerated culture that a development which took Jazz forty years has taken Jungle a decade at the very outside.

To be fair, there has been some cross-over. John McLaughlin dabbled on his last album, and further towards the avant-rock end of the spectrum, Bill Laswell and various affiliates have been exploring to great effect some common ground between Drum 'n' Bass and improvisatory, ambient textures. That British Free Improv guitarist Derek Bailey should have recorded a Jungle

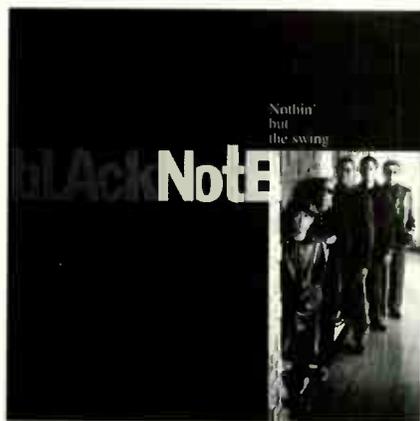
record has to rate as one of the more astonishing facts in recent musical history.

I've banged on about Bailey enough over the years, but it should be reiterated that this last year or so has seen him involved in some pretty extraordinary projects, even by his own standards. Not least of these are Arcana (a power trio with Laswell and Tony Williams) and the brilliant Harras trio with John Zorn and William Parker. But this album trumps the lot. Whether inspired by his association with Laswell and Laswell's own experiments with Jungle, or by private, solo jam sessions for pirate radio stations, Bailey has recorded a series of duets with drum programmer DJ Ninj.

On the surface this is an unexpected pairing. As a musician, a writer, an organizer of festivals and as the man behind Incus Records, Bailey has constantly espoused a radical, non-idiomatic improvisation. By contrast Jungle is, of course, a music of strict, if pretty wild rhythms. Yet this music works incredibly well, Bailey's minute sound incidents piling up against dazzling breakbeats to constantly nerve-jangling effect. It's certainly an eye-opener for types who've always managed to dismiss Bailey, somehow mistaking his boundary-pushing extended playing techniques for technical ineptness. It is impossible to listen to this album and not be amazed by Bailey's ability, and most especially his high-precision timing, which this album has really brought to the fore.

An astounding record.

Simon Cooke



BLACK NOTE

NOTHIN' BUT THE SWING

IMP 11772

Don't be deceived; there's a lot more to this than the Swing itself, but it's very different from Hamilton's sweetness. The feeling is West Coast, with the dry Summer dust trudded by a thousand film noir heroes in stark contrast to Hamilton's New England spring. And if (as they say) down these mean streets a Jazz band must swing, these are the men for the job.

The men are James 'Alto Sax' Mahone, Willie Jones III on drums, Nicholas Payton and Gilbert Castellanos (taking turns) on trumpet, Ark Sano and Greg Kurstin on piano and Mark Anthony Shelby on bass. Tenor saxophone is supplied by a man with a couple of far-from-criminal records behind him, Teodross Avery.

You get thirteen reasonably recorded tracks on this CD, twelve of which are credited to band members.

While the technical side is more than adequate, the band do not seem any less capable or enjoyable for not being allowed to swing free of the 'speaker cabinets. In fact, the restricted ambience lends a certain tautness and energy to the few moments of the CD where the band seem to lose pace. In all, a satisfying set on an album from the harder side of Swing



SCOTT HAMILTON

MY ROMANCE

CCD-4710

Yes, it's time for another outing by Scott Hamilton. Solid as ever, on this occasion he's playing with Joel Helleny on trombone. Ivories are tickled by Norman Simmonds, who plays with similar authority to Jake Hanna while still allowing the lighter side of his performance to shine as required.

Dennis Irwin does duty plucking the bass and Chuck Riggs is the man on the drums. These last two are players who can, with equal alacrity, either play solid backdrop lines or step into the limelight. This is a line-up with a palpable sense of interdependence, their performances displaying a mutual respect and admiration which is clearly audible in the mix.

Hamilton's recent works have left me feeling that he is at best resting on his laurels, and at worst losing that grasp of the music which he once displayed. If this is a feeling you share, just listen to Norman Simmonds' 'Abundance', and you will - I guarantee - find that your doubts don't last through the first four bars. Deeper into the number you might still be able to find fault with Hamilton's authority or ability in this idiom, but to do so would take some fairly extreme churlishness. The album really is one of Hamilton's best, and not just his, but the band's too.

There are ten tracks on this CD, all from Scott's 'home territory'; tracks like the Hart/Rogers title track, Golden/Hubbell's 'Poor Butterfly' and even Hamilton's own 'Sugarchile'. All come from a school of Jazz with which Hamilton has a long-standing affinity. But this time the selection seems to have been made to give him a chance to stretch out on some less covered turf and play away from the rusty old gig favourites which he's covered so well in the past.

This is a well recorded release which shows an excellent player on form with a band to match, all laid out in a luscious, spacious presentation on CD. A must for middle-aged swingers everywhere ●

Jazz

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Classical

Peter Herring

Images of courtly love from Renaissance Italy, a powerful reminder of a bloody episode in Russian history and some far from stately keyboard virtuosity from one of England's stateliest homes come commended this month.



GIROLAMO FRESCOBALDI
Primo Libro dei Madrigali (First Book of Madrigals)
Concerto Italiano; director, Rinaldo Alessandrini
OPUS 111 OPS30-133 (DDD/52.39)

Girolamo Frescobaldi, born at Ferrara in 1583, was a keyboard virtuoso of such repute that, when he was appointed organist of St Peter's in Rome, thirty thousand people are said to have flocked to hear his first performance there. To this day, Frescobaldi's reputation rests upon his output of instrumental music, and on the influence he exerted on German music through his pupils, among them Johann Jacob Froberger. As a consequence, Frescobaldi's vocal music remains largely unknown, but it is a neglect that this sumptuous recording from the French Opus 111 label goes a long way towards remedying.

As with most Italian composers in the generation after Monteverdi, the young Frescobaldi felt it was incumbent upon him to prove his worth as a madrigalist. His First Book of Madrigals was completed in his early twenties and

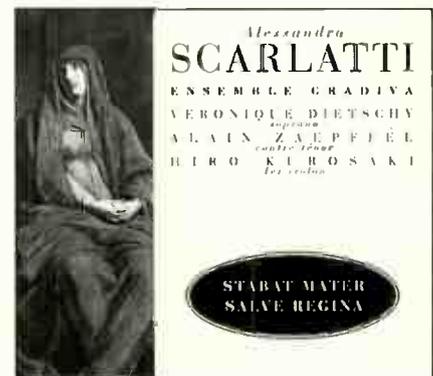
published by the Antwerp-based Phalese in 1608, when Frescobaldi was twenty-five (he had encountered Phalese the previous year, during a visit to Brussels). First, youthful attempts though they may have been, these nineteen compositions display a remarkably individual expressive style; a beguiling mix of charm and purity, with a pungency and intensity that recalls Monteverdi.

The musical language is highly accomplished and refined, sufficient to allow Frescobaldi to indulge in subtle dissonances which enrich the colours of his sound-painting. And while some of the devices employed may lack originality, there is no escaping the emotional impact of much of the writing, as in the exquisite setting of Rinaldi's *S'io miro in te, m'uccidi*.

Regrettably, this First Book of Madrigals also became Frescobaldi's last. In his remaining thirty-five years, he never returned to the genre, preferring to concentrate on instrumental composition. We can only speculate how he would have developed as a composer of vocal music, and whether the often startling invention of his keyboard compositions would have been mirrored in other genres.

The Primo Libro was never republished following its initial appearance in 1608, but a manuscript - bereft of the alto part - is housed in Oxford's Bodleian Library, while the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris was able to supply the full five parts, so allowing the complete reconstruction heard here. And what a delightful and seductive recording it is, wonderfully well sung by the members of the Concerto Italiano under the sympathetic direction of Rinaldo Alessandrini (who also supplies a revealing introduction to the music in the

accompanying booklet). The sheer commitment of the performers makes for an involving experience, one enhanced by the clear, well balanced sound and agreeably airy and resonant acoustic. A commendable achievement by all concerned.



ALESSANDRO SCARLATTI
Stabat Mater
Salve Regina
Veronique Dietschy, soprano;
Alain Zaepffel, counter-tenor;
Hiro Kurosaki,
violin; Ensemble Gradiva
ADES 204752 (DDD/60.48)

It is not often that a record label can claim a 'premiere recording' for a work dating from the early years of the eighteenth century, but that is seemingly the case with this French production of Alessandro Scarlatti's setting of the Marian motet, *Salve Regina*. Moreover, the performance is based on the original manuscript, unearthed in Milan by the counter-tenor Alain Zaepffel, who also makes a memorable contribution to this



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recording. The better known Stabat Mater, a wholly apt partner for the Salve Regina, also benefits in many details from the use of the manuscript rather than the corrupt Italian edition long regarded as the definitive text.

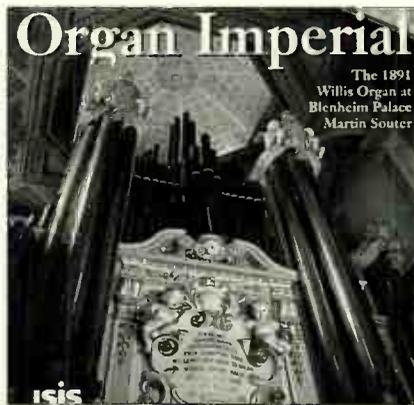
Although Alessandro Scarlatti's achievements are now overshadowed, unfairly, by those of his more famous son, the harpsichord virtuoso Domenico, in his day he enjoyed a notable reputation as a composer of both opera and sacred music. His output of the latter was prodigious: fifteen masses, over thirty oratorios, some sixty motets and a wealth of cantatas. Born in Palermo, Sicily, in 1640, Alessandro studied in Rome and, in 1683, was appointed concert-master and theatre director in Naples. He remained there for twenty years before returning to Rome and then moving on to Florence and Venice, his composing style being enriched all the time by exposure to these different schools.

Scarlatti enjoyed a second spell in Naples between 1708 and 1717, and it was here that his music developed a more intimate and personal character with a greater and freer depth of expression and intensity of emotion. These aspects inevitably spilled over from his operatic works into his religious compositions, including his setting of the deeply moving Stabat Mater, which dates from this period. The work was a commission from the Order of the Cavalieri della Virgine dei Dolori (The Knights of the Virgin of Sorrows), pious men who, annually in the Franciscan church of San Luigi in Naples, honoured the Virgin by dedicating a Stabat Mater to her.

The text of the Stabat Mater, Mary's lament at the foot of the Cross, was the work of a thirteenth century Franciscan monk, Jacopone da Todi, and came to enjoy wide popularity, although it was not admitted as part of the Roman liturgy until 1727. Its most famous setting, and arguably its most harrowing and powerful, is that of Palestrina. Scarlatti's version is in a different vein, rich in rhythmic variations and vocal embellishments, but not lacking in poignancy and dignity. The drama may be restrained, but the work is quietly involving, especially given as persuasive a performance as here. The two vocal soloists are first-rate, and there is a telling contribution from Hiro Kurosaki

on the solo violin, pointing up the vocal lines.

Alain Zaepffel speculates that the delightful setting of the Salve Regina may also have been written for the Cavalieri of Naples, but there is no firm evidence to confirm this. Regardless of any historical associations, it complements the Stabat Mater perfectly. The recording, supervised by Yolanta Skura who has been responsible for many a fine recording on the Erato label, is warm, clear and sensitively balanced, and supplies exactly the right stage for this unexpectedly engaging music-making.



ORGAN IMPERIAL

Music by Edward Elgar, Alexandre Guilmant, Charles Ives, John Philip Sousa, Virgil Thomson, Louis Vierne, Richard Wagner and Charles-Marie Widor

Martin Souter, organ
ISIS RECORDS CD022 (DDD/76.51)

Organist Martin Souter has chosen an intriguing pot-pourri of pieces to show off the capabilities of the 1891 Willis organ in the Long Library at Blenheim House in Oxfordshire. This instrument, one of the largest house organs in the world, was commissioned by the Eighth Duke of Marlborough and built to a very high specification. The front pipes are of ninety-three per cent tin and many of the internal parts of the organ were constructed in mahogany. Organs designed by Henry Willis are notable for the quality of their pipework and particularly mellifluous sound, and that at Blenheim is no exception. The instrument also possesses some special stops, ranging in volume from quiet,

ethereal flutes to a magnificent tuba which is mounted high up inside the organ and supplies the crowning pinnacle to the rightly renowned Willis 'full organ' sound.

That sound, I should add, has been captured with ravishing fidelity by recording engineer Edward Horn. Using just a pair of omni-directional microphones, he has succeeded in capturing not only the full range and wealth of detail of the instrument, but also the generous ambience of the room in which it is housed. The clarity and presence of the sound is striking, not least in Martin Souter's gloriously unbuttoned performance of Sousa's Stars & Stripes Forever - pure kitsch perhaps, but fun. This is one of three American pieces on the disc, doubtless reflecting the strong transatlantic links of the Marlborough family. The others are Charles Ives's splendid set of variations on the tune America (better known to us Brits as God Save the Queen), and Virgil Thomson's equally enjoyable variations on Shall We Gather at the River?

Edward Elgar makes three appearances in the programme, first in a transcription of Pomp and Circumstance March No 1 (aka Land Of Hope and Glory) then in the Imperial March composed in 1897 to mark the diamond jubilee of Queen Victoria's reign. The finest of the Elgar pieces, though, is the allegro maestoso from the G Major organ sonata of 1895, richly melodic and reminiscent of Wagner in its long-breathed phrases and continually evolving themes.

It is Wagner who supplies the final flourish to Martin Souter's recital, with a rousing performance of the overture to Tannhauser, but not before he brings us three items from the French organ repertoire: the well-known (hackneyed, I would suggest) Toccata from the Organ Symphony No 5 of Charles-Marie Widor, and the pleasingly less familiar Berceuse of Louis Vierne and - a real oddity - Alexandre Guilmant's Fantasy on two English melodies, the melodies in question being Home! Sweet Home and Rule Britannia. An interesting combination to say the least. All are played with great virtuosity and panache by Martin Souter, who clearly sounds as though he enjoyed making this recording. I certainly enjoyed listening to it, if occasionally more to savour the technique than the content ●

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EMILY SHOSTAKOVICH

**Symphony No 11 in G minor
Op 103 'The Year 1905'
St Petersburg Philharmonic
Orchestra; conductor,
Vladimir Ashkenazy**
DECCA 448 179-2 (DDD/55.23)

Of Shostakovich's overtly 'Soviet' symphonies, the Eleventh is unquestionably the most convincing and affecting. The reason for this is not hard to find: despite its precise programme and historic references, this is music of enduring relevance, a tribute to the courage of the Russian people, not a paean to their leaders. Few other works of art so effectively portray brutality and suppression, and, it has to be said, bloody horror.

When the symphony was first performed in 1957, it was greeted with a measure of scorn by many Western critics. They believed it to be little more than superior film music or - worse - mere propaganda (it was written for the fortieth anniversary of the October Revolution). But, then, could anyone in the West be wholly in sympathy with a work intended to recall and reflect upon one of the pivotal moments in Russian history?

On a bleak, cold day in January 1905, a huge demonstration of workers and their families converged on the Winter Palace in St Petersburg. It was a peaceful protest about food shortages and the appalling conditions under which people laboured in Russian factories and farms. The protesters wanted to make an appeal to the Tsar - they even carried portraits of him and religious icons. Their ruler, however, was conveniently absent. But Tsar Nicholas II had left behind his Cossack bodyguards. Did

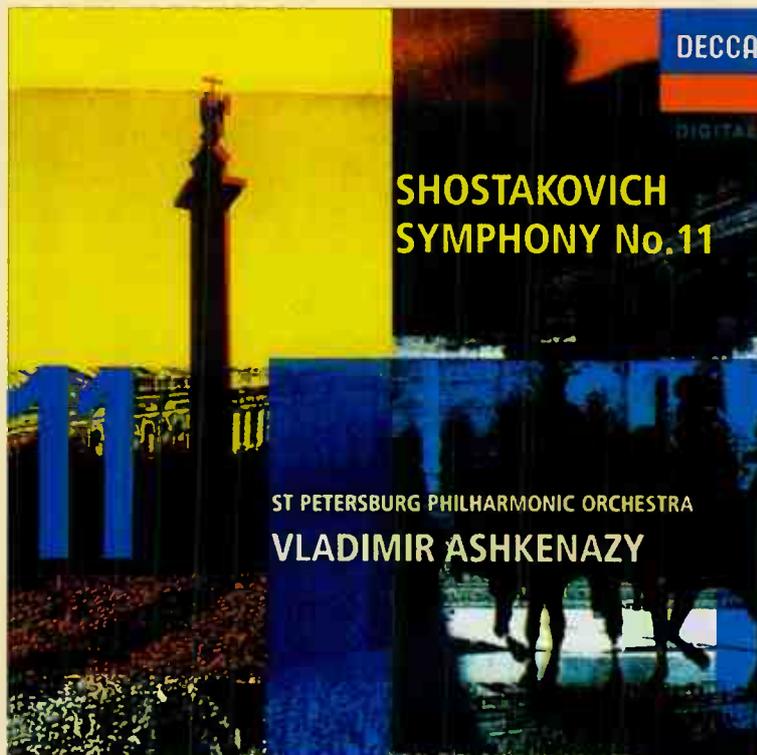
the guards fear the crowd was going to attack them? Did they imagine this bedraggled, unarmed horde was about to storm the Palace? Whatever, a shot was fired, panic broke out, and a massacre ensued. Those that were not mown down by gunfire fell under the swords of the Cossack cavalry. At least one thousand died, and the snow-covered square in front of the Palace was stained deep with blood.

It was, said Shostakovich, a turning point - the moment the people stopped believing in the Tsar, and the beginning of the end of the Romanov dynasty. In the Eleventh Symphony,

much more than just an historic tableau. Was it coincidence that Shostakovich was composing this rallying call against oppression while Soviet tanks were crushing the Budapest uprising of 1956 at the cost of some 20,000 Hungarian lives? The timelessness of the symphony's message is encapsulated in the third and fourth movements, the former a sombre, chilling requiem and the latter - Tocsin (Alarm) - sounding a warning to all oppressors.

Andrew Huth's illuminating essay reveals that, surprisingly, the Eleventh Symphony has been little heard in

Russia in recent years, an unfortunate consequence, no doubt, of its associations with the Communist past. Yet there is no hint of unfamiliarity in the playing of the St Petersburg orchestra, who clearly share their conductor's belief in the work's enduring qualities. This is a thrilling and compelling performance and, importantly, Ashkenazy conveys the overall symphonic structure of the work where other conductors have

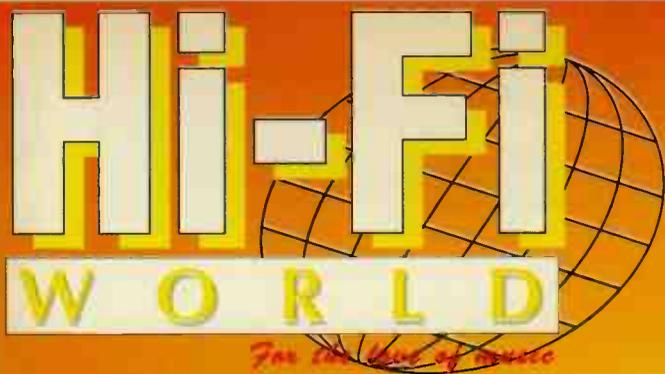


that defining moment is portrayed in music of frightening, almost unbearable power and nightmarish intensity. It could so easily have crossed the boundary into crassness but it is redeemed by the clarity, economy and integrity of Shostakovich's musical language.

Of course, it is also vital that such a work is performed with conviction, and here this new recording succeeds triumphantly. For Vladimir Ashkenazy, who was present at the premiere of the symphony in 1957, it embraces

seen it more as four, almost unconnected tableaux (which could not be further from the truth: the symphony is full of thematic links).

The recording, made in the Great Hall of the St Petersburg Philharmonia, is as distinguished as the performance, one of Decca's finest. Weight, scale, impact, detail, clarity - all are present in abundance. I hesitate to use the well-worn term 'demonstration quality' - to me it denigrates the musical experience - but very demonstrable this production is ●



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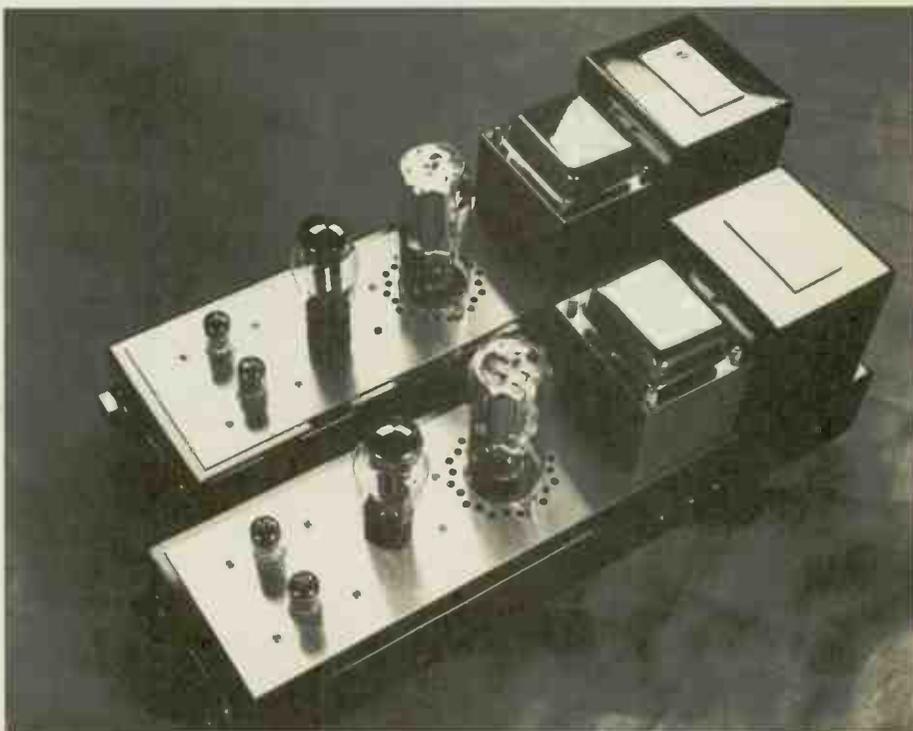
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MERIDIAN 502/557

The 557 power amplifier was impressive in the way it doubled power as load was halved. Few amps do this, Naim's being the best example. It demonstrates superb power supply regulation which usually means the amplifier will deliver sledge hammer bass. The 557's output rose from an impressive 200watts into 8Ω to a massive 380watts into 4Ω, enough for large rooms and power hungry loudspeakers.

Bandwidth was a wide 5Hz-33kHz, the upper limit being just high enough to give flat response to 20kHz and the lower limit matches that of CD. With big 'speakers this sort of downward extension can be heard.

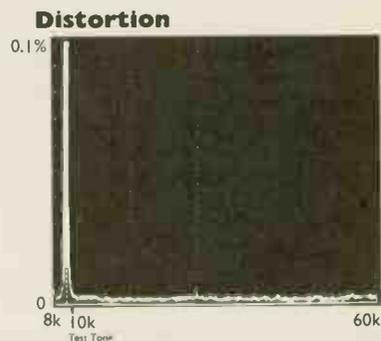
Sensitivity was very high, again like that of Naim's, measuring 60mV. This is high enough to match a tuner like a Leak

Troughline.

Distortion was incredibly low, even when delivering full output power at high frequencies (10kHz), a gruelling test.

The 502+557 combination measured superbly in all areas. NK

Power	200watts
CD/tuner/aux.	
Frequency response	5Hz-33kHz
Separation	81dB
Noise	-93dB
Distortion	0.007%
Sensitivity	60mV
dc offset	1mV



ARCAM ALPHA 9/9P

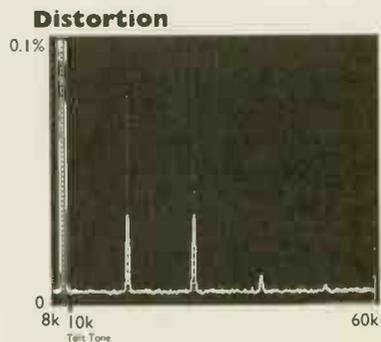
The Alpha 9 delivers a healthy 84watts per channel, and no less than 130watts into a low 4ohm load. This is more than enough to make even insensitive 'speakers go loud, so the Alpha 9 can cope with most domestic situations.

Distortion was reasonably well suppressed, measuring 0.006% in the midband, but rising to 0.04% at high frequencies, with a spread of odd order harmonics, especially into a low 4ohm load. Some slight treble roughness or graininess might be evident as a result.

Bandwidth was wide at 6Hz-34kHz; there should be good bass slam. The tone controls worked very well, giving a useful 8dB of lift and cut at spectrum extremes.

Sensitivity of the integrated amplifier was normal at 180mV, but that of the power amplifier alone low at 700mV. Otherwise, the 9P power amp measured like the integrated. Both turn in a creditable performance. NK

Power	84watts
CD/tuner/aux.	
Frequency response	6Hz-34kHz
Separation	70dB
Noise	-90dB
Distortion	0.04%
Sensitivity	180mV
dc offset	2mV



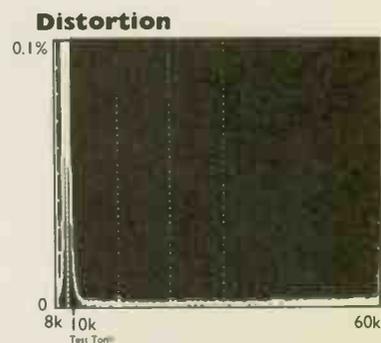
ROTEL RA-970BX

The RA-970BX is a real powerhouse, turning out 100watts per channel into 8Ω and no less than 156watts into 4Ω. This is an amp for insensitive speakers, big rooms and headbangers.

It has an incredibly wide bandwidth of 8Hz-150kHz, for deep bass and open treble. However, wideband amps usually sound bright too.

With minimal distortion and noise, the RA970BX measured well. It's a great amp for those who want plenty of power. NK

Power	100watts
CD/tuner/aux.	
Frequency response	8Hz-150kHz
Separation	88dB
Noise	-94dB
Distortion	0.004%
Sensitivity	200mV

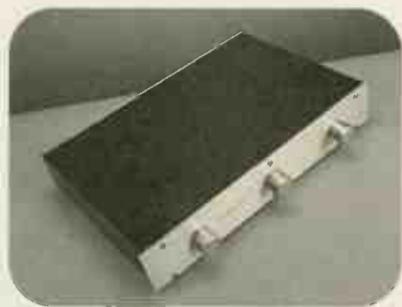


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- QUAD FM II, (for 22) with stereo decoder. £60
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CD PLAYERS

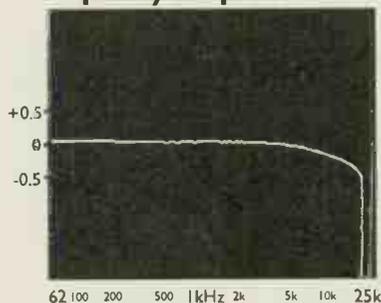
AUDIOLAB 8000CD

The 8000CD is the first player I've measured to use Crystal's new CS4329 convertor chip. In measured terms it proves itself well in the Audiolab, setting a high level of performance. It is very linear, distortion staying low at all levels. At -30dB, a level picked to represent a typical music signal, there are no distortion harmonics visible, and at -60dB, distortion is as low as the best yielding a healthy dynamic range of 111dB (EIA) test.

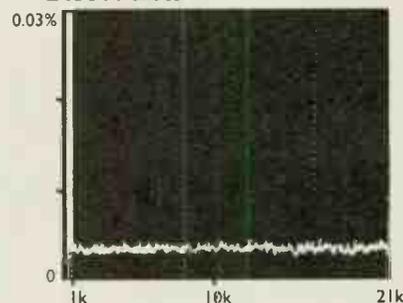
This, allied to a frequency response showing subtle bass lift and a gently rolled off treble, should ensure a smooth sound. Output was spot on the Philips standard at 2.0V. With wide channel separation and low noise, this completes a set of measurements revealing fine engineering. DB

Frequency response	4Hz-20.8kHz		Separation (dB)	left	right
			1kHz	120	113
			20kHz	84	98
Distortion (%)	Left	Right	Noise		-112dB
-6dB	0.005	0.005	with emphasis		-112dB
-30dB	0.006	0.004	Dynamic range		111dB
-60dB	0.36	0.37	Output		2.0V
-90dB	28.8	28.7			

Frequency Response



Distortion



MISSION DAD3

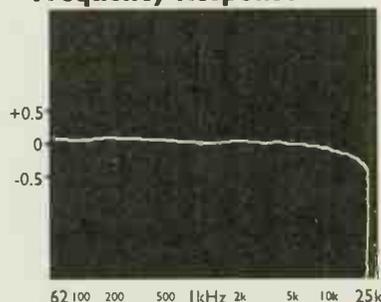
Showing a little bass lift and gentle treble roll-off, I'd expect the Cyrus CD player to have solid bass and smooth treble. This is a response characteristic becoming more and more common in CD players we measure, helping to bring extra fullness to bass and remove sting from CD's treble.

Combined with low distortion this should give a smooth sound. At -30dB some 2nd, 4th and 5th harmonics are clearly visible. Even order distortion is generally innocuous though, so it is only the small amount of 5th that may add a little sharpness. At -60dB the Cyrus turns in the lowest figure I've measured at 0.22%, so it resolves low detail well. The distortion structure of each channel was identical too and channel separation above 100dB even at 20kHz. This suggests careful board layout and highly tolerated components have been used in the Cyrus CD.

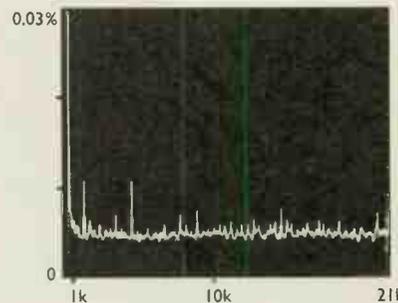
Output was 2.1V and noise low enough to be inaudible at -101dB. A nicely engineered player. DB

Frequency response	4Hz-21kHz		Separation (dB)	left	right
			1kHz	115	113
			20kHz	109	108
Distortion (%)	Left	Right	Noise		-101dB
-6dB	0.005	0.005	with emphasis		-101dB
-30dB	0.025	0.026	Dynamic range		110dB
-60dB	0.22	0.22	Output		2.1V
-90dB	29.8	29.7			

Frequency Response



Distortion



MARANTZ CD-63mkII KI-Signature

On the test bench the Marantz measured well. Frequency response was smooth and flat, but with a subtle plateau lift around 5kHz. I'd expect detail to be pushed well forwards.

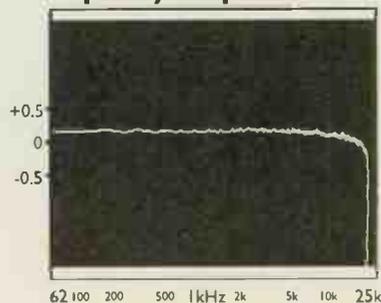
Distortion figures were around average at all signal levels. There was just the smallest amount of 2nd order poking through the noise floor, but even order distortion tends to be innocuous anyway.

Separation was very wide, being above 125dB at 1kHz and 20kHz. Dynamic range exceeded the 100dB barrier and noise was very low indeed.

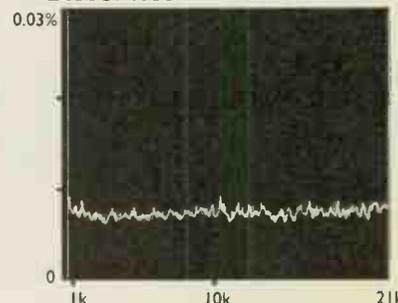
Compared to the 63SE reviewed in the May'95 issue most of these results are virtually identical, with the exception of distortion which appeared slightly worse. HB

Frequency response	4Hz-21kHz		Separation (dB)	left	right
			1kHz	132	137
			20kHz	126	127
Distortion (%)	Left	Right	Noise		-123dB
-6dB	0.006	0.006	with emphasis		-123dB
-30dB	0.027	0.028	Dynamic range		103dB
-60dB	0.8	0.7	Output		2.3V
-90dB	47.6	41.9			

Frequency Response



Distortion





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We would like to thank the following:

- Link House magazines/Hi-Fi News for putting on a great Ramada show.
- *Hi-Fi Choice*, Marantz, Audiolab, Cabletalk & Mordant-Short (especially Gary Mardell of MS for services beyond the call of duty, ie replacing drive units at a moment's notice. Sorry about that) for helping with our competition in room 1140, which has proved to be an overwhelming success.
- ATC for producing the amazing

- 100As (you were right Alan Ainsley, we could not blow them up!)
- Naim Audio for the best tonearm in the world (ARO) and the NAC 52 preamp.
- Path group for the Sumiko Sho cartridge.
- The following people for giving their time and effort (in no particular order): Paul Ogle, Ian Wright, Davey Cameron, Adrian Cowderoy, Tony Vassello, Paul Williams and – of

course – Damian.

- And – the biggest thank you to all the music lovers who attended the show.

- Hope to see you all next year.

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CD PLAYERS

TRICHORD GENESIS

The Genesis player is based on the Pioneer PD-S504, but modified by Trichord. Its frequency response shows strong treble roll-off, 1dB down at 15.2kHz with both channels displaying virtually identical characteristics. This I would expect to give a soft, warm sound.

Distortion levels were low right across the board. At -30dB, a level picked to represent a typical music signal, there's only a small amount of 2nd harmonic visible. As even order distortion is generally innocuous, especially at such a low level, I'd expect a smooth sound from the Genesis. Separation remained above 90dB even at 20kHz. No noise figure could be obtained because the Genesis mutes under test.

The dynamic range figure of 105.9dB is very good echoing the low distortion at -60dB. Output voltage was above standard, the Genesis providing 2.4volts rms. Apart from the discrepancy in the frequency response the Trichord Pioneer fares well. HB

Frequency response

4Hz-15.5kHz

Separation (dB)

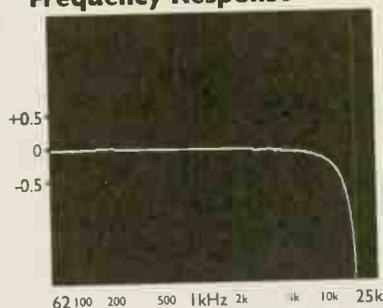
	left	right
1kHz	122	124
20kHz	96	99
Noise		N/A
with emphasis		N/A
Dynamic range		105.9dB
Output		2.4V

Distortion (%)

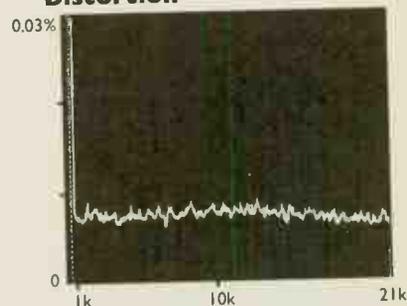
Left Right

	Left	Right
-6dB	0.006	0.006
-30dB	0.020	0.019
-60dB	0.56	0.62
-90dB	30.1	31.5

Frequency Response



Distortion



LOUDSPEAKERS

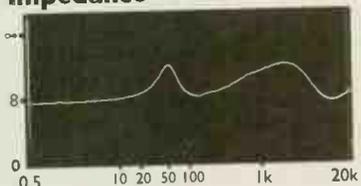
HEYBROOK HBI 53

Age matters not, it would seem in the case of Heybrook's HBI, 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.

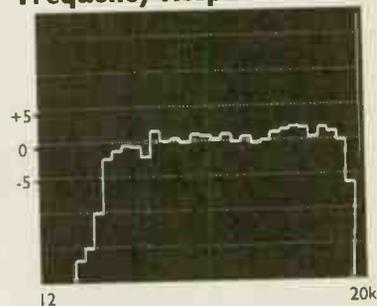
The HBIs are sensitive too, producing 89dB SPL at 1m from a nominal watt (2.83V) pink noise signal. This coupled with a smooth

impedance curve averaging out at 8.2Ω will make them very easy to drive. Fine engineering. DB

Impedance



Frequency Response



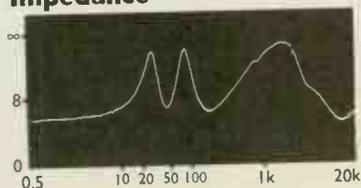
B&W DM602

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.

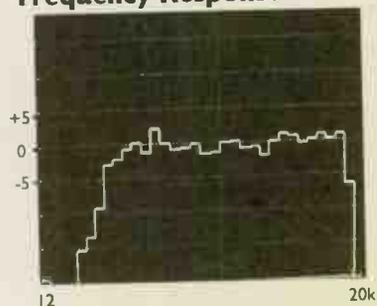
With a highish sensitivity of 88dB at 1m for a nominal watt (2.83V) pink noise signal, the B&Ws should go loud with few watts. Overall impedance is 7.2Ω, but they are strongly reactive, described by the sharp

changes in the impedance curve. Most modern amplifiers should be able to cope with this well enough though. DB

Impedance



Frequency Response



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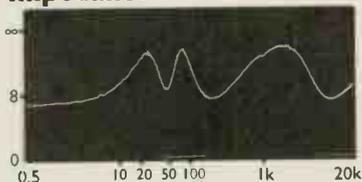
LOUDSPEAKERS

CELESTION IMPACT 23

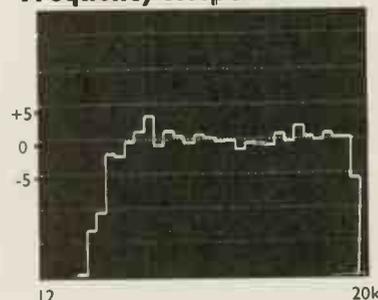
Celestion's Impact 23 has been very carefully engineered, the frequency response being especially flat. There are some subtle trends though, including a peak in the bass around 160Hz which will help to give them good punch and speed. Through the midrange there is a very shallow dip above which treble 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



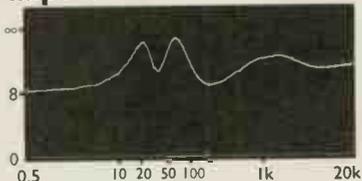
CASTLE AVON

Castle have chosen to use a carbon fibre drive unit for bass/midrange duty in the Avons, allied to a fabric dome tweeter. Carbon fibre is light and stiff, generally giving good sensitivity and a clean, fast sound. In the Avons though, some of this sensitivity has been traded against bass extension. They produced a just below average 85dB at 1m fed with a nominal watt (2.83V) pink noise signal. With a high overall impedance of 11.5Ω and a smooth impedance curve indicating a mainly resistive load, most modern amplifiers should have little problem driving the Avons.

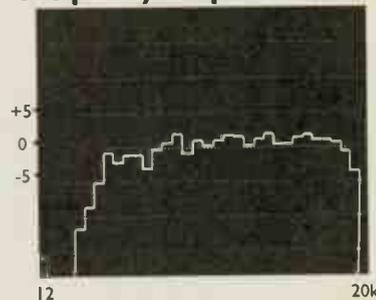
Frequency response is impressively smooth through midrange and treble, although their output here is 1-2dB above bass level. I suspect that bass will need to be reinforced by near-wall placement to balance

the Avons, but this is no bad thing allowing them to be kept discreet in domestic surroundings. The Avons appear to be well engineered on paper, the magic of carbon fibre can only be heard subjectively though. DB

Impedance



Frequency Response



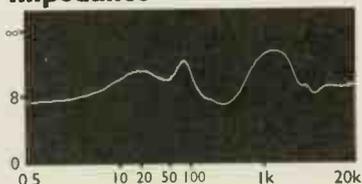
HARBETH HL-K6

As with all Harbeth loudspeakers I've measured over the years, the new HL-K6s have a flat and smooth frequency response. There is the slightest dip at the crossover point, but it's so small it will be inaudible. Other trends that may affect subjective performance are a gently rising treble response for extra detail and insight and a lift in the bass for a good solid punch. I would expect the Harbeths to have a balanced, but punchy and informative sound.

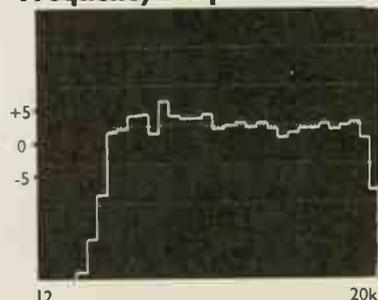
With an average sensitivity of 86dB at 1m, and an overall impedance of 8.5Ω, the 'K6s will be easy enough to drive. The impedance curve is a touch lumpy, hinting at their reactive nature, but it's nothing that any

modern amplifier shouldn't be able to cope with. I'd aim for a quality fifty watter for best results. DB

Impedance



Frequency Response



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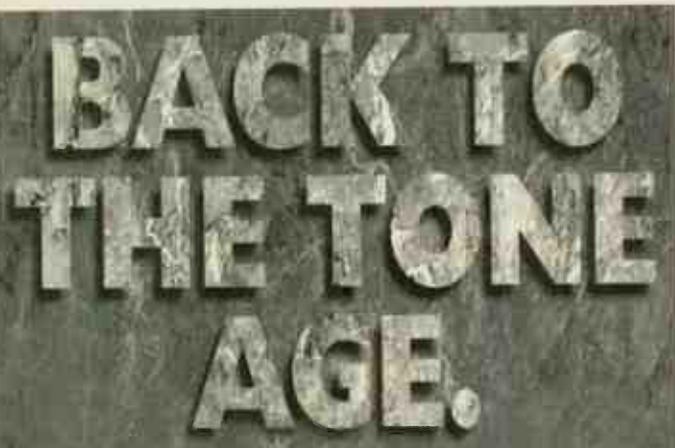
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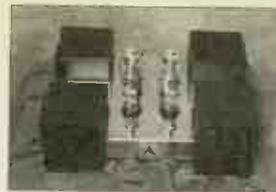
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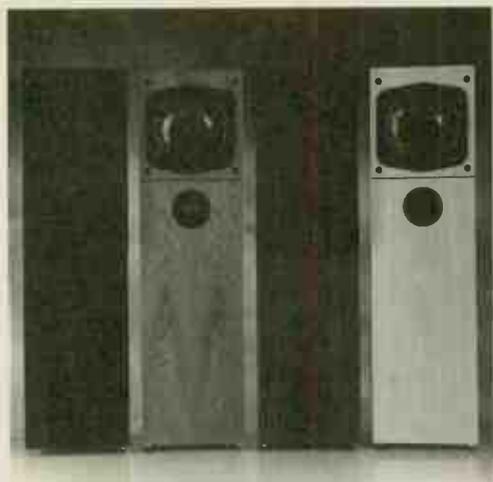
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Valves and the CD medium

Of all hi-fi 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 high 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 meters and it is beautifully built!



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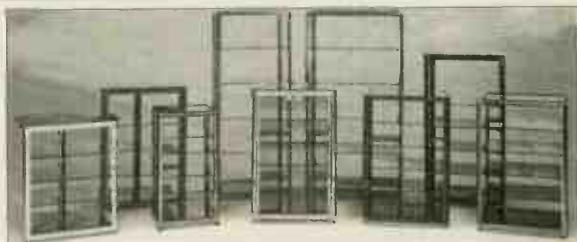
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Thorens TD180 MKV/Stanton 500	£399	£199
Mission/Nagaoka MP20	£249	£149
Linn LP12/Syrinx P2, Koetsu Rosewood	£2250	£575
Systemdek Mission Arm Grado	£350	£245
Linn LP12/Syrinx P2, Koetsu Rosewood	£2250	£575

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Base 301 Mk4	£380	£280
EPOS ES11/Teak/Bi-wire/Stand	£640	£450
Spendor S100 Mahogany Mint	£2125	£1300
Spendor S20 Walnut Mint	£770	£500
Yamaha NS1000 Rare in Chery	£1399	£700
Misson 751 Black E x dema	£300	£265
Tannoy 609 Biwire	£300	£180
Rega EL8 Black Mint	£300	£240
Acoustic Energy (ex dem)	£1175	£875
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
B+O Beocentre 9000 + RL60Mk2 mint	£1700	£695

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Classified Ads

For details on how to place a Classified Advertisement, please see page 129

PRIVATE

NAIM/LINN BUY/SELL. 52, CDS, 250, 135, 140, HICAP, ARO, 72, 82, ETC
TEL BOB 01382 819732

LINN LP12 Circus Valhalla, Ittok LV3, Dynavector 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 ovno. 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, 3 years old £390 ono.
 Tel/Fax: 01543 481 149 (Lichfield)

ROKSAN AMPLIFICATION: L2.5 pre-amp, two S1.5 power amps, DS1.5 power supply. Silver finish. Also Teac VRDS-T1 Cambridge DacMagic 2 (improved version). Telephone for further details.
 Tel: 01245 356 325 (Chelmsford)

COPLAND CD288, Mint, virtually new £1250. Mark Levinson No. 27 mint £1700. Elite Rock turntable, Excalibur, Merlin, perfect £650. Audio Innovations 1000 MC transformer £140. Seismic Sink £100.
 Tel: 01442 877 853

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)
 Tel: 01302 349 791

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.
 Tel: 01446 746 162 or 01222 460 989

PIONEER CLD2950 Laserdisc player, used 3 times! Cost new £699, accept £450 ono. Cash needed for hi-fi upgrade!
 Tel: 01404 822 193

NAIM NAC82, NAPI80, S cartridge boards, 24V power supply, boxed and immaculate, 20 months old £2000.
 Tel: 01705 690 093 (Portsmouth)

ROTEL RA840 Amp £65, Technics CD SLP300RC £75, Technics AA 50w amp £99. Garrard 401/AT1005/Neat £299. Complete Star Trek 1, 79 episodes VHF CIC HiFi £299 ono. Exchange? Audiolab HiFi etc.
 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.
 Tel: Jerry 01702 353 777 (Essex)

REL STENTOR Mint condition and boxed. Half new price at £750. Telephone after 6.00 pm
 Tel: 01275 543 447 (Bristol area)

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)

CELESTION 3 SPEAKERS £45. Celestion LS24 stands, sand filled, spiked £30. KEF Coda 7 speakers £70. Marantz PM4 amp £185.
 Tel: 01634 363 374 (Kent)

AUDIO INNOVATIONS Series 800 Anniversary power amp and L1 pre-amp. Purchased new in March, mint condition with all original packaging. Paid £1.825 asking £1100.
 Tel: Darren 0181 348 5993

TANNOY CHEVIOT MkII floorstanding loudspeakers. 12" D.C. drive units. Type 3128. 90dB sensitivity. Excellent condition. Fine example of these awesome, and in Mk II version, rare loudspeakers. £395 ono.
 Tel: 01886 888 772 (West Midlands)

ACOUSTAT SPECTRA Electrostatic hybrid loudspeakers. Big, efficient, easy to drive. Were £1300, will accept £300. Can dem/deliver.
 Tel: Steve 01895 616 537 day or 01923 823 112 eves (Northwood)

SWAP IBM PS/VP 486 DX 33, 8mb RAM SVGA, MS Mouse Windows plus Multitech 28.8 modem (new) for quality CD player or £500.
 Tel: John 01344 26793

QUAD 66 PRE AND 606 Power amplifiers, complete with full remote control. Absolutely mint condition, boxed, can demonstrate £800 ovno.
 Tel: 01421 881 487 day or 0118 966 9889 eves & weekends.

DNM SERIES 3 Pre amp with 6 pack power supply. Excellent condition just serviced by DNM £700. Macintosh 2205 200wpc solid state amp, excellent condition. Offers. Linn LP12 1985/6 with Zeta arm and Briar Gold Bug cartridge. Excellent condition. Reasonable offers.
 Tel: 0181 679 9770

QUAD 67 CD Player with Trichord Clock 2 mod. Mint condition, superb sound £600.
 Tel: 01628 789 360 (Berkshire)

NAIM 62/90 PRE-POWER Amps, plus phono boards and 20m NACS 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 L1 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.
 Tel: 01265 42772

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
 TEL: 01229 871 384

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.
 Tel: 0151 734 3724

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

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Two-Way Lowther based Horn speakers with huge dynamics and fine resolution. High efficiency (96dB/1Watt), wide bandwidth designs with low colouration and excellent timbre reproduction. An ideal compliment to low powered valve amplification. Price £3555.00

*BRAVURA Loudspeakers.

Single way Lowther based horns- the classic configuration. Enormously dynamic and efficient with extended bass and fine resolution. Fine cabinetwork and good leads. Two models: Brno and Accelerando. Price £5950 and £6600

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Audio Innovations s200 pre-amp	£250	(£350)
Audio Innovations s700 line integrated	£450	(£1199)
Audio Innovations s800 power amp	£600	(£1050)
Audio Innovations T2 moving coil step-up transformer	£200	(£450)

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PRODUCTS

- Meracus Transport £2999
 - Audiomeca Creature £1150
 - Audio Note DAC 3 £899
 - LFD DAC 3 £1995
 - Wadia 3200 DAC £699
 - Koetsu Urshi £999
 - Jadis JP 80 mm Pre £3500
 - Spectral Phono stage £1550
 - Melos Pre 222 £1200
 - Melos Chargold Pre £1600
 - Addison Pre £1499
 - Audio Research LS2 £1200
 - Audio Research LS3 £1050
 - Futtermann OTL 3 £2999
 - Rowland Model 2 £3350
 - Audio Research D200 £1899
 - Spectral Power Amp £999
 - Adyton Opera £1699
- SPEAKERS**
- Rockport Synergy £10,999
 - Audiophysic Virgo £2750
 - Audiophysic Spark £1450
 - Audiophysic Step £999
 - Proac Response 3 Sig £1850

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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 3S £550. Sugden Pre CS1 power PSI radio RS1 £295. All mint and boxed. WANTED: Radford STA 1S. 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 I 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

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 Isoplates £15 each. Job lot £160. Save £20 (£392) May split. Tel: 0181 429 1788

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 Yarmouth)

REEL TO REELS. Vortexion WVb 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)

SME TEAK Plinth with cover. SME arm 3012 Series 1. Garrard 301 deck. Shure M75ED cartridge £150. Complete Tel: 0181 524 3443 eves or w/ends (London E4)

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 (QCP5U) 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, Manticoere 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 (Colechester)

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 F2S Pre amp, new model, MM and MC inputs, only 4 months old, £1050 (£1500). TD 12S MkII/AT1009 original plinth cover, excellent condition £195. Quad 34 pre-amp £175. Tel: 0121 602 2591 (Birmingham)

MONITOR AUDIO Studio 20SE, Studio 1S 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 B21S CASSETTE, B780 receiver, B225 CD, B79S turntable, B77 reel to reel, all manuals £2450. A77 £350 Tel: 0181 451 1066

MUSICAL FIDELITY Preamp 3A and two MASO 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-S0 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 CDI S compact disc player. Tel: Rod 0121 705 1142

AUDIO ALCHEMY DDS III £450. DDE V1.1 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 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 S2/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

B&W 620i FLOOR Standing speakers. Kenwood S050 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

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 S + 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 CDPI01 £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 B1-4S £200 ono. Tel: 01642 559 078 (Stockton-on-Tees)

REVOX B760 Synthesized FM tuner £475. Revox B710 Mk2 (Dolby B & C) cassette deck £450. Revox B750 amplifier £125. Revox B79S Turntable £125. Quad 44 pre-amp £100. All vgc with original instruction books. Will split. Offers accepted. Tel: Andrew 0181 786 7167

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

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 Armcable, Denon DL304, Tools, £1000 or P/Ex cash plus Roksan Radius, Naim CDI complete £1000. Tel: 0181 558 5942 (East London)

CROFT EPOCH Valve pre-amp (phono), black, excellent sound £350 (£550 new). IMF domestic monitor T/lines, size, 40 x 17 1/2 x 19 3/4 ins, vintage classic £350. Rogers T75/2 tuner, mint £65. Tel: 01273 541 462 (Brighton)

AUDIOLAB 8000C Preamps £375. Rogers Cadet bi-ampl monoblock £300 (pair). Sugden A21a class-A amps (early 1970s) £275. Arcam Alpha S+ amps £130. B&W DM 601 speakers £130. Kenwood KRV-60S0 AV receiver £175. Buyers must collect. Tel: 0121 326 8083 (Birmingham)

NAIM HI-CAP Old style, mint condition £250 ono. Delivered. Tel: 00 3531 459 1432

LINN LP12 Valhalla, Cirkus, Trampoline. Ittok LV11. Ortofon MC20 Supreme (120hrs) Excellent condition, with boxes. Dealer set-up & service Sept 96. A true bargain £750. Wanted, Laserdiscs. Tel: 01977 732 458

FOR SALE: SBLs Mint condition £800. Naim 32.S/Snaps/bi-amped 140s Avandale upgraded. Best Naim you will ever hear £1000. Tel: 0141 942 8415 evenings.

FERROGRAPH LOGIC Monoblock recorder heads brand new, half track stereo type BR16Z and BP16Z. One pair only £70. Also one only BR16Z £35. Tel: 01386 553 942 evenings only

"AVONDALE" QUAD 44 Pre-amp with external psu. Excellent punchy sound £400. Ortofon TS moving coil transformers, nice sound £30. Pye VHF/2D continental valve radio, vintage, GWO £35. Tel: 01273 541 462 (Brighton)

AUDIO INNOVATIONS Pre-amp £300. First Audio amplifier £800 for sale. £1000 if purchased together. Will demonstrate. Tel: 01923 282 129 (Herts)

LINN KANS & MKII Lead filled stands £200 ono Tel: 01256 475 139 (Basingstoke)

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- RCF PROJECTORS** - WE HAVE JUST INSTALLED THE NEW LS5001-WS WIDESCREEN PROJECTOR IN OUR DEM ROOM - VIEW IT NOW!!
- KRELL FB200** - THE REPLACEMENT FOR THE 100S DUE ANY DAY AND BY ALL ACCOUNTS A MASSIVE IMPROVEMENT
- SONUS FABER CONCERTO AND CONCERTINO** - DEVASTATINGLY GOOD!
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AVI SCM50A Black Ashr	£5000	£3950
AVI S2000MC CD Player	£1149	£ 750
AUDIOLAB 8000C Pre Amplifier	£ 550	£ 395
B&W 800ASW Sub Bass unit	£1500	£1150
B&W DM604 loudspeakers	£1000	£ 750
CYRUS Discmaster & Dac Master CD Transport + DAC	£1500	£1250
EPOS ES25 Walnut loudspeakers	£1655	£1250
KEF Model 100 Centre Speaker	£ 359	£ 269
HARMAN KARDON FL8450 Multi Play CD	£ 350	£ 250
MISSION 752 Rosewood loudspeakers	£ 580	£ 395
RUARK Templar Rosewood	£ 500	£ 395
SENNHEISER HE60/HEV70 Electrostatic Headphones	£1000	£ 595

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ARCAM ALPHA 6	CD PLAYER	NEW	£599.00	£450.00
ALPHA ONE	CD PLAYER	EX DEM	£300.00	£249.00
BOSE LIFESTYLE 5 MK2	SYSTEM	EX DEM	£1750.00	£999.00
CELESTION SL300'S	LOUDSPEAKERS	NEW	£1100.00	£595.00
CELESTION 5000'S	LOUDSPEAKERS	S'HAND	£899.00	£349.00
DENON DCD 825	CD PLAYER	EX DEM	£240.00	£180.00
DENON DRA 565RD	RECEIVER	EX DEM	£330.00	£250.00
HEYBROOK TRIO	LOUDSPEAKERS	EX DEM	£373.00	£225.00
HEYBROOK HEYSTACK	LOUDSPEAKERS	NEW	£499.00	£375.00
KEF MODEL ONE	LOUDSPEAKER	EX DEM	£1299.00	£899.00
MARANTZ PM-44 SE MK II	AMPLIFIER	NEW	£199.00	£129.99
MARANTZ SP 50	PRO LOGIC AMP	S'HAND	£220.00	£120.00
MARANTZ CD 53	CD PLAYER	EX DEM	£199.99	£150.00
MERIDIAN 501 V	PRE AMPLIFIER	EX DEM	£875.00	£699.00
MERIDIAN 555	POWER AMP	EX DEM	£695.00	£545.00
MERIDIAN 563	DAC	EX DEM	£795.00	£399.00
MERIDIAN A 500	LOUDSPEAKERS	EX DEM	£750.00	£350.00
QUAD 77	AMPLIFIER	EX DEM	£699.95	£499.95
QUAD 66	PREAMPLIFIER	S'HAND	£897.00	£399.95
QUAD 66	CD PLAYER	S'HAND	£699.00	£299.95
QUAD 306	POWER AMP	S'HAND	£350.00	£225.00
QUAD ESL 63	LOUDSPEAKERS	S'HAND	£3449.00	£1800.00
QUAD 44	PREAMPLIFIER	S'HAND	£475.00	£195.00
QUAD 405	POWER AMPLIFIER	S'HAND	£400.00	£195.00
ROTEL RCD 940 BX	CD PLAYER	EX DEM	£249.99	£150.00
RUARK SWORDSMAN	LOUDSPEAKERS	EX DEM	£329.00	£200.00
RUARK TALISMAN	LOUDSPEAKERS	EX DEM	£749.00	£599.00
TANNOY 633 + PLINTHS	LOUDSPEAKERS	EX DEM	£350.00	£275.00
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RTL 2	LOUDSPEAKERS	EX DEM	£299.90	£199.95
RTL 3	LOUDSPEAKERS	EX DEM	£399.00	£275.00
SYSTEMDECK 165	LOUDSPEAKERS	EX DEM	£300.00	£250.00
TECHNICS SBM 500	LOUDSPEAKERS	EX DEM	£500.00	£350.00
YAMAHA DSPA 970	AV AMPLIFIER	EX DEM	£799.95	£550.00
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PRIVATE

WANTED: ELCA5ET Machine in any condition. Also Elcaset service manual and test tapes.
Tel: 01228 592 136 (Carlisle)

PAIR OF PHILIPS Digital active speakers + digital pre-amp. Original price £1700. Part exchange welcome.
Tel: 01323 842 227 (E. Sussex)

VALVE AMPLIFIER, Mullard, thirty watts per channel ultralinear, Sovtek EL34s, bespoke not taken up, hence only £250. Williamson triode or ultralinear, monobloc/stereo, 15-50 watts, from £250. Enquiries:
Tel: 0181 427 1378 (Harrow)

LINN LP12 (Black) Valhalla, Cirkus, Trampolin, Zeta tonearm (Litz wired) £625. Linn Basik Plus arm £40.
Tel: 01273 870 007 after 6pm (Brighton area)

UNISON RESEARCH Simply 2, 6 months old, as new. Breaks my heart to sell this beautiful sounding amp, but needs must, due to redundancy. Best offers around £700.
Tel: 01780 64149 (Stamford, Lincs)

EPOS ESII Speakers black. Epos stands, mint condition £275 ono. NAD 4020B tuner, as new, boxed £40.
Tel: 01743 232 959 work or 01743 821 298 eves.

WANTED: LOWTHER Cabinets, Fidelio or Bel Canto, without drive units.
Tel: 01344 776 445

MARANTZ CD10 Trichord II modification £525. Aragon pre-amp 24K £450. Meridian 205 power amps £450. KEF 104/2 speakers and Kube 200 £495. Nakamichi DR 2 cassette £300. Musical Fidelity T2 MkII tuner £95. Dual CS505/4 turntable £95. Target AER/5 £85.
Tel: 0181 502 5634

LINN LK1 Pre-amplifier £175. Mission Cyrus One amplifier £110. Pair Tannoy 611 Mk2 speakers £250. Cambridge Audio digital converter £80. Naim NAC 32 pre amp £130. Sugden T48 tuner £60. Philips CDI with video cartridge £350 worth of accessories £350 vgc.
Tel: 0181 406 4460 (Croydon)

STUDER REVOX B77 Mk II, domestic use only, mint condition, unmarked, serviced February, including 4 Ampex 456 spools, 2 leader tapes, 2 splicing tapes, cleaning kit. Can demo. £650.
Tel: 01707 372 652

AXIOM 80 Goodmans 10" twin exponential P.M.L. loudspeakers with duplex cantilever suspension, 15 ohms, in original round wooden makers packing case. Offers.
Tel: 01202 422 813

WANTED: REVOX Speakers 100wpc, also microphone, earphones, equaliser, W.H.Y.
Tel: 01923 443 490

MERIDIAN D5P5000 Active digital loudspeakers, new £3300. Accept £1750. Meridian 500 Series CD transport. New £1200. Accept £650. Both items remote control. Vgc.
Tel: 0468 865 788 day, 01205 722 000 eves

MUSICAL FIDELITY MC2 speakers, boxed £145.
Tel: 01547 520 465

NAIM 62 PRE, 90 Power amp, old style £350. Mission 731 speakers £60. Mission 761 £80. Arcam Alpha 5 plus CD £300. Target stands £35. Gale bi-wired speaker cable 2x7m=£20. All in vgc. Genuine cable.
Tel: 0865 559 737 anytime (Oxford)

MICROMEGA STAGE I CD player. Excellent condition, boxed with manual and newsletter £370 ono.
Tel: 0181 810 0488 (West London)

TUBE TECHNOLOGY Unisis valve amplifier. Excellent sound and condition £1750 new accept £850 ono.
Tel: 01903 716 275 (West Sussex)

WANTED: MUSICAL Fidelity power amp P140 in good condition! Please write to: Paul Hartmann, D-45473 Mülheim, Boverstr. 4 B (BRD) (Germany)

LFD MC2 PHONOSTAGE with external PSU £1500 new. One of the best £495. Van den Hul MCI cartridge, perfect condition £295. Wanted: Monster Alpha Genesis 2000.
Tel: 01242 231 766 (Cheltenham)

STILTECH MC4-24 5 Silver interconnects with WBT plugs. 18" pair and 12" pair £160. New Sonic Link Titanium interconnects, metre pair (cost £195) £95. MA5 Powerchord £55. Post free.
Tel: 00 3531 459 1432

GARRARD 401, SME 3009 Series II, Ortofon cartridge on Teak plinth with cover. Spare spindle for 401 and Shure cartridge. Excellent condition £170. also Leak Stereofonic tuner £20.
Tel: 01244 679 388 (Chester)

ROGERS LS3/5A (Teak), 5 years old, vgc (11 ohm), lightly used £300 ono.
Tel: 01233 662 502 (Ashford, Kent)

KRELL AMPLIFICATION KSP-7B balanced pre-amp, external power supply, adjustable MC/MM options, KSA-200 200wpc Class A power amplifier, bi-wire outputs, both mint, boxed with instructions. Giveaway £3250. May split.
Tel: 01449 676 335

WANTED: JBL 52600 or similar horn or horn hybrid speakers. Private enthusiast.
Tel: 01902 786 818 (Midlands)

ATC 20 5PEAKERS, black, boxed, mint £750. Target R1 stands £175. ATC 10 speakers £600. Target R2 stands £150. Chord SPM 1200B power, 6 months old, boxed, mint £2,500. CPA 2800 pre £2500. Wanted: Sonab speakers.
Tel: 01226 710 605 (Yorkshire)

NAIM 42.5, MINT (Serviced and updated by Naim '95) £160. Naim MC boards, unused, cost £70, bargain £25. Can send anywhere. Linn K9, giveaway £25.
Tel: Kevin 01202 342 072 day or 01202 523 319 eves

VPI HW19 JUNIOR turntable with RB300 £650. VDH MC2 cartidge, mint £625. Mosquito high end monitors with stands £225. Everything less than 12 months old and vgc.
Tel: 01536 418 091

NAIM ALL New Style, ex-demo, immaculate, boxed, 5 months old. 250-£1200, 82-£1550, HiCap-£450, SBLs-£1000 ono. Can demonstrate.
Tel: 0161 980 4374

LINN LP12 Afrosomia, Ittok, Koetsu Black immaculate £500 ono. Elite MCP 555 £40, Coral 777E £20. all items original packaging, careful, low use.
Tel: 01277 622 461 evenings.

PIONEER A400 amplifier in perfect condition, boxed with manual £150. Armstrong S21 amplifier, in excellent condition £50.
Tel: 01252 622 403 evenings (NE Hampshire)

LEAK STEREO 20 New valves £300. Audio Innovations S200 power amp £300. First Audio mono amps, Choke PSU £600/pr. Hand built stereo amp £700. Assorted PX4 O/P tubes £10.
Tel: 01305 784 050

HARBETH HL-COMPACT 7, Walnut. As reviewed in June issue of Hi-Fi World, vgc. Cost new £1329. £795 ono.
Tel: Jeff 01302 781 387

MUSICAL FIDELITY F22 Pre-amp, phono stage, remote, immaculate condition with box (cost £1100) £650.
Tel: 0181 800 5840 (London)

CASTLE CHESTER (natural Oak) £400. Arcam Alpha Plus CD £125. QED headphone amp £30. Castle Howards £750. Aura VA100 Evolution amplifier £200 + TU50 tuner £125 + CD50 £175.
Tel: 01952 502 097

LINN KAIRN 'Brilliant' - phono £800. Klout power amp £1200. Both as new, boxed. KEF 104 Kube equaliser £50.
Tel: 01295 780 363 or 0831 809 346

NAIM EQUIPMENT. CDI, 82, 180 x 2, Hi Caps x 2, Naxo 4/2, SBLs (new version) All items in mint condition with boxes, receipts etc. For details:
Tel: 0181 270 9393 evenings

REL STENTOR Subwoofer, immaculate condition, as new, can demonstrate.
£1150 ono.
Tel: 01252 614 055

MERIDIAN 501V Preamp £400 (£785). 563 DAC £400 (£750) 6 months old. 601 preamp £900 (£2750). TDL Studio Ones, Stands £350 (£750).
Tel: Bert 0181 853 4646 weekdays. 0181 473 4057 evenings.

PAIR OF TDL Studio 4 speakers with stands. Walnut ex con with boxes. Cost £1600, £950 ono. Pair of original KEF 105 silver wired £500 ono. Wharfedale DDI headphones in box £30.
Tel: 0121 628 3423

EXPOSURE DUAL 7 pre amp plus two Exposure 6 power supplies. All three as new condition. £295.
Tel: Andy 0171 729 5066 (Bethnal Green, London)

WANTED: BANG & OLUFSEN Beogram 2000/3000, other Dataline models considered. Still after B&O CDX CD or similar!
Tim: 01252 616 938

WOODSIDE/RADFORM MA-50 Class A valve 50w monoblocks, excellent condition, boxed £650 each. Nakamichi RX-505 auto reverse cassette deck, vgc £275.
Tel: 01245 252 651 (Chelmsford)

MICHELL ARGO (new front panel) with Hera PSU £525. Michell ISO (MC) with Hera PSU £325. Both excellent condition. Also Doxa 5-2 speakers £250.
Tel: 01344 21388 (Ascot)

NAIM AUDIO System comprising CDI, 82, Hi-Cap, 250. Will not split. All new style and boxed. £3650 (£6200 new) Matching (green) Soundstyle 4-shelf tripod support available.
Tel: 01283 513 126 (Midlands)

MARANTZ CD-63 KI Signature, new £400. Loudspeaker cable: 6x6m Cable Talk 3, 2x7m Naim NAC5, phono interconnects: 5xMonster M1000 (lots of bass), 3 x XLO Pro 150; 1x Chord Siren.
Tel: Michael 0171 937 7935 evenings

MICHELL GYRODEC Complete with QC power supply. As new. Bereave-ment sale.
Tel: Dennis 01905 25198 anytime (Worcs)

PINK TRIANGLE PT T00 with RB300/ATFS £400. Target stand £25. Epos ES14 speakers with Epos stands £200.
Tel: Gill 0171 503 5854

AUDIOLAB 8000C/P £800, B&W P-5 rosewood speakers £580 (both one year old, boxed. Also Roger's Cadet valve power amps £300 pair.
Tel: 0121 326 8083 (Birmingham)

FOR SALE LINN LK100 power amps boxed excellent condition can dem if required £325 each. Wanted Linn/Naim tuner must be recent spec
Tel: 01925 860720 (evenings/weekends)

KEF REFERENCE 107 Loudspeakers, active Kube Equaliser, floorstanding, black Ash, superb transparency and bass, mint condition, little used. boxed with instructions, 4 years old, bargain £1295 (£3600 new)
Tel: (01449) 676335

E.C. AUDIO LECTERN power amplifier 40watts per channel superb sound. £450.
Tel: 01395 255 323.

NAIM NAP 135 Mono Bloc power amplifier (one only). Perfect working order. 4 years old. Naim main dealer report available. Slight facial damage. Open to offers.
Tel: 0191 416 1092 (ansaphone)

AUDIO NOTE M1 phono pre-amp £500. Stax Lambda Signature headphones 5RM T1 valve mint £750. AVI Reference CD player, new £950. Lumley Reference LM2 loudspeakers £2800, new slight scratch £2500.
Tel: 0121 784 8765

VANDERSTEEN 2CEs excellent full range Sterophile magazine favourite reference speakers. 2 years old, stands, boxed £1000 (or swap for Quad ESL 63s)
Tel: 0181 741 3343

MERIDIAN 201 Preamp £350. Musical Fidelity pre-amp 3A £195. Audion Sterling valve amplifier £395. Quad FM4 £250. Quad 405-2 £200. Tannoy Cheviots £350. Harman Kardon Citation II preamplifier £150.
Tel: 01403 251 587

Vd HUL MCI SPECIAL (unique), mint, unused since retip 9/96. RRP £1000. Best offer secures. Also HFW No.4 12/1995. Offers or swap for Trichord Digital turntable.
Tel: 0171 412 7410 (w) or 0181 989 6434 (h)

IPL 53TLs Mahogany, just run in, £230. Goldring GL75 turntable, Leak Delta 75 receiver original with manuals £40 each. AKG K300 headphones, new, boxed £40. Leak Sandwich spares or repair, offers.
Tel: 01494 874 381 (Bucks)

LINN LP12 Black, Valhalla, Ittok, Asaka, mint condition, boxed £495.
Tel: 0181 523 1134

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AUDIOLAB 8000C PRE-AMP	EX DEMO	£450.00	£520.00
AUDIOLAB 8000P POWER AMP	EX DEMO	£660.00	£750.00
MUSICAL FIDELITY E600 CD PLAYER	EX DEMO	£495.00	£599.00
REL Q BASS ACTIVE SUBWOOFER	EX DEMO	£280.00	£350.00
REL STORM ACTIVE SUBWOOFER	EX DEMO	£595.00	£695.00
REL STADIUM II 100W ACTIVE SUB	EX DEMO	£795.00	£995.00
YAMAHA YST-SW200 ACTIVE SUB (R/C)	EX DEMO	£295.00	£399.00
B&W AS6 ACTIVE SUBWOOFER	EX DEMO	£399.00	£499.00
B&W PCS8 PASSIVE THX SUBS (PAIR)	EX DEMO	£995.00	£1500.00
B&W ASW800 THX 200W ACTIVE SUB	EX DEMO	£995.00	£1500.00
B&W P6 FL STANDING MONITORS (BL)	EX DEMO	£850.00	£1100.00
DALI 450 FL STANDING (MAHOGANY)	EX DEMO	£450.00	£700.00
KEF REFERENCE MONITORS 102/2 (BL)	EX DEMO	£595.00	£750.00
KEF Q60 UNI-Q (BLACK ASH)	EX DEMO	£350.00	£420.00
ROGERS LS33 MONITORS (BLACK)	EX DEMO	£195.00	£250.00
MONITOR AUDIO MA201 SPEAKERS (BL)	EX DEMO	£240.00	£300.00
BOSE ACOUSTIMASS 7 (3 SPEAKERS+S/W)	EX DEMO	£630.00	£830.00
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BOSE 1000XL SPEAKERS	EX DEMO	£85.00	£115.00
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DALI SCS CENTRE +SSS REAR SPEAKERS	EX DEMO	£340.00	£440.00
CANON SC10 CENTRE SPEAKER	EX DEMO	£95.00	£130.00
BOSTON ACOUSTICS S25V CENTRE SPKR	EX DEMO	£95.00	£150.00
YAMAHA NS-C80 CENTRE SPEAKER	EX DEMO	£75.00	£100.00
REVOLVER COLT/RICOCHET 5 SPKR PACK	EX DEMO	£175.00	£260.00
VIVANCO IR 7600 INFRARED HEAD/PH	EX DEMO	£95.00	£140.00
VIVANCO IR 6500 INFRARED HEAD/PH	EX DEMO	£65.00	£90.00
SONY TCK 617S DOLBY S CASSETTE	EX DEMO	£275.00	£330.00
QUAD MODEL 66 REMOTE CON PRE-AMP	S/HAND	£550.00	£850.00
CARVER C1 SONIC HDLDGRAPHY PRE-AMP	S/HAND	£295.00	£????.??
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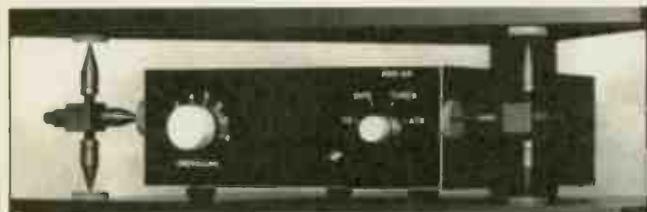
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Second hand & ex dem equipment

news

Triangle Zephyr loudspeakers ex display with "something solid" stands were £810 **£550**

Heybrook HB1 S3 loudspeakers, black **£199**

Audiovector 3 loudspeakers black ash, ex dem RRP £1500 **£1100**

Royd Squire loudspeakers walnut, ex display Were £400 **£299**

Graaf WFB Two valve pre-amplifier with a stunning (solid state) phono section. A real bargain S/H **£825**

Teac VRDS T1 CD transport and matching DAC. Ex display was £1049 **£750**

Mission 765 large (meaty, beefy, big & bouncy) floor standing loudspeakers in black ash finish. Cost about £700 S/H **£245**

Last month my newsletter section ended up partly on the "cutting room floor" Here it is again!

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 Siem 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.

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.



hi-fi for grown-ups

This combination, with the right source, has sounded pure dead brilliant into a wide range of loudspeakers from Audiovector, Harbeth, Rogers, Triangle, AudioNote, Rohrer and Martin Logan.

Come and listen. The coffee machine is fixed and you are welcome to call for a relaxed chat (or just to "suss" me out).

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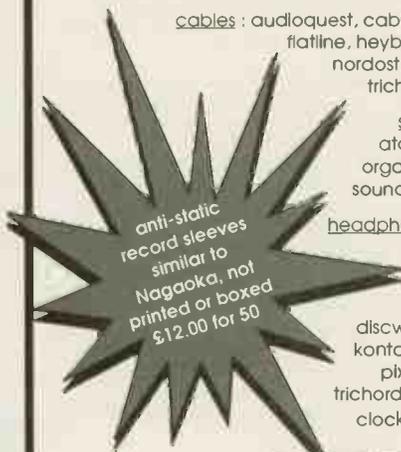
cartridges : denon, goldring, lyra, ortofon, roksan, sumiko

cables : audloquest, cable talk, chord company, flatline, heybrook, ixos, kimber, kontak, lfd, nordost, ortofon, qed, sonic link, trichord, van den hul, xlo

stands : alphason, apollo, atacama, heybrook, sound organisation, something solid, soundstyle, stands unique, target

headphones : beyer, earmax, grado, jecklin, sennhelsler, stax

accessories : audloquest, bib, densen demagic, discwasher, goldring, hunt, ixos, kontak, last*, michell, milty, moth, pixall, qed, rms, rata, shure, trichord (Including genesis player, clock II + digital output board)



*please phone for details

signals

Direct

signals, martlesham heath, ipswich ip5 7ua
tel / fax 01473 622866 mobile 0802 176 319

LEAK POINT One TL10 amp, with pre-amp in original condition £225. Also Nytech CPI12 pre-amp with MM phono stage (vgc) only £175.
Tel: 01462 678 158 (N.Herts)

AUDIO RESEARCH VT60 Stereo power amp. About 1 year old. Perfect condition £1700. For quick sale (£2650 new)
Tel: 0181 688 6565

ART AUDIO Quintet valve power amplifier £450. Audio Synthesis Passion passive pre-amplifier (Vishay version) £320. QED phono amplifier plus external power supply £40.
Tel: 01962 851 802 (Hampshire)

NAIM CDi £1100 ono. Naim NAC62, NAP140 c/w 3.5 bi-wire metres Linn K20 £550. Boxed & excellent condition. Marantz SP-50 s/s processor c/w KEF speakers £100.
Tel: Michael 0131 657 3622 between 6-9pm

TANNOY BERKELEYS 15" Dual concentric drivers, excellent, rosewood £500. Garrard 401, SME 3009 £125. Leak Troughline Stereo £100. Connoisseur 3 speed transcription, Decca FFSS arm/head £75. Goldring G.88 £25.
Tel: 01709 555 403

MERIDIAN 605 Mk2 monoblocks 150 wpc, mint £995. 5D Acoustics SD1 Mk2 loudspeakers - latest drivers and tri-wireable, mint £585. Naim NAC 32.5 + external psu. Giveaway £195. Meridian 200 transport - mint, £395.
Tel: 01394 460 281

QUAD 405-2 £195. Technics SU-A40 preamp £65. Yamaha T700 AM/FM tuner £50.
Tel: 01788 810 179 (Rugby)

IMPULSE H6 horn speakers, piano black (£1400) £665 ono. Heybrook Sextet II speakers, Walnut, new £899. DPA Enlightenment DAC £460. Arcam Alpha 5 CD £250. LPs £2 each.
Tel: 0171 268 6270 day or 01689 855063 evs.

NAD 304 AMP, as new £120. Pioneer A400 amp, as new £140. Cambridge P35 amp £50. Thorens TD150 £20. Ariston Maxim CD £150. Can Opener headphone adaptor £40.
Tel: 0114 221 5271

ROTEL 965BX CD Player, winner of various Hi-Fi awards. Features include remote control, program, index, search and random. Also quality interconnect (cost £320 + £40) 2 1/2 years young, boxed as new £180 ono.
Tel: 01245 224 024

BEARD CA35 Pre-amp and P35 Mk II power amp, boxed £675 ono.
Tel: 01582 580 667

NAIM 32.5 £175, Naim 12S re-wired by Jimmy Hughes with tape monitor. Offers? Target wall shelf £25. Soundstyle tripod equipment support, five shelves ideal Naim, black £100.
Tel: Terry 01376 349 210 evenings

RADFORD SCA 30 Stereo transistor amp £75. Radford 5C2 valve preamp £75. Dynaco PAS 3 valve preamp £140. Dynaco PAT 4 transistor preamp £85. Nelson Jones preset tuner £40.
Tel: 01372 467 264 (Esher)

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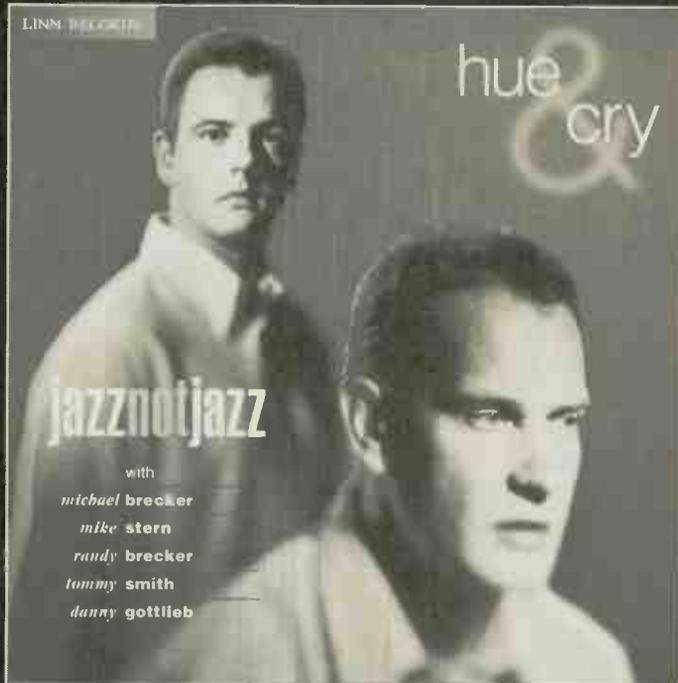
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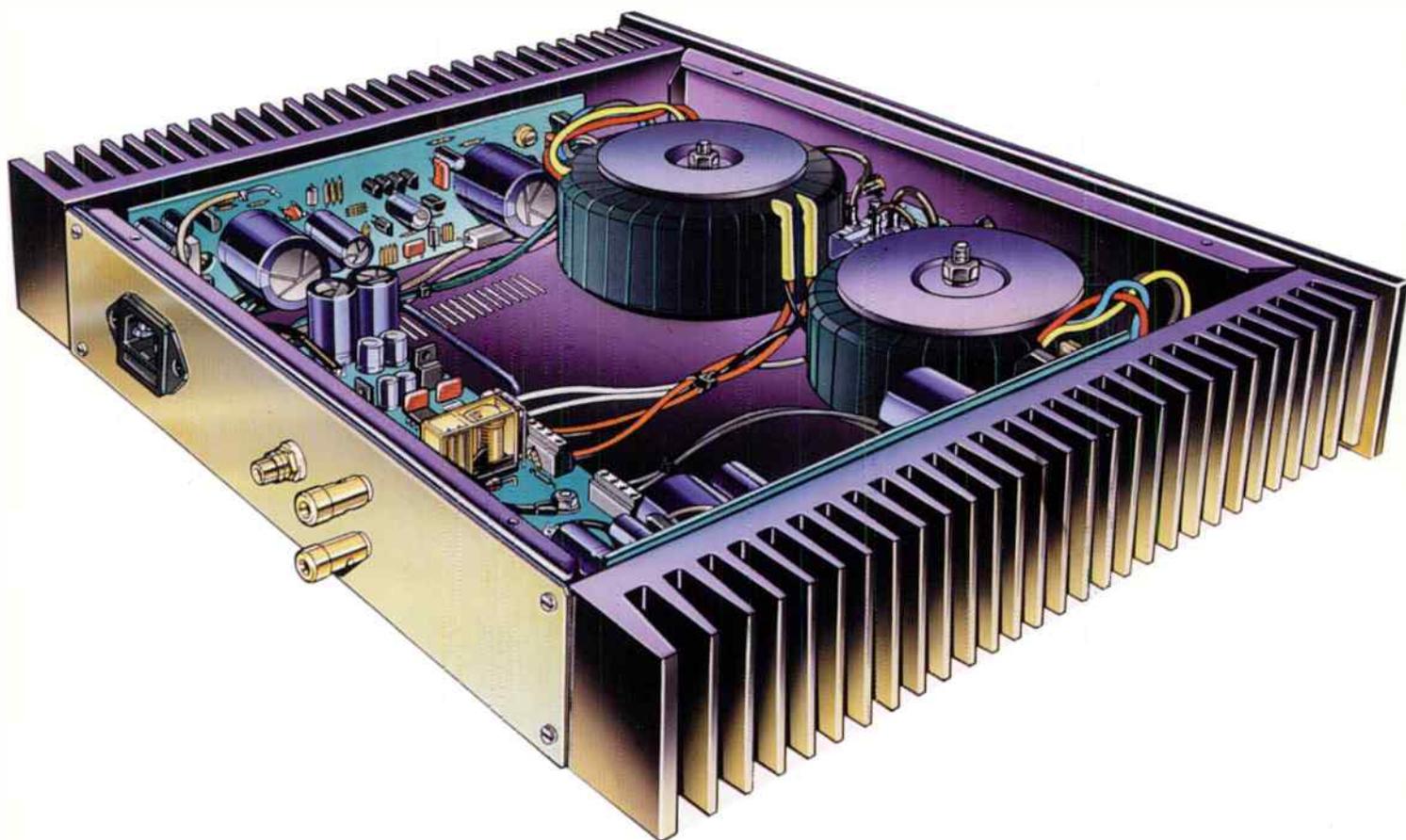
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