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For free literature on the mercury mX range from Tannoy, call 01753 680868 www.tannoy.com

nother year, loads more gear, as we say in the hi-fi business. As every twelve months pass, so us stalwart reviewers encounter yet more new technology to

fuel our burning fire for all that is audiophile. Not this year, however. The only gear that's made me want to raid the Pope piggy bank has been resolutely traditional - even retro - in design, and come from the likes of KEF and Quad. Maybe it's just me getting on a bit - pipe and slippers and all that - or maybe it's that 'real' hi-fi has come to the end of its natural life, SACD and DVD-A or not?

It's a bit like the gradually decaying classical recording industry. Who needs another version of a popular seller like Beethoven's Ninth? Although a new rendition may add a bit more spright or insight, you can't help thinking it's all been done before. The enormous back catalogue of recordings statistically dictates this and the real musical enjoyment is invariably found in these earlier recordings.

Likewise, another £500 integrated amplifier arrives on the doorstep, for example, and it's good - very good - but it still doesn't overwhelm in the way it should. Reading David Price's column this month, it seems I'm not alone in this view. Maybe the whole point of our hobby is that we have to regress to progress? Indeed, browsing through an old 1997 copy of World I came across DP writing about the forthcoming format war between SACD and DVD Audio. That was three years ago and DVD-A still has to materialise in a

It appears the recording industry has put the mockers on the whole thing - how many people are going to buy these discs when they finally arrive? Something else will probably have come along in the meantime anyway. Of course, SACD is here at last and it's great. You can even buy it in Richer Sounds, but I still fear it's yet to achieve any real market penetration. Pop into any record store, no matter how big, and ask if they have any SACD discs? You'll be greeted with a blank expression as they fumble for the security alarm under the counter,

No, I'm more interested in the technology

involved in new formats, than seeing them as outlets for my particular musical edification. These days that comes from records I love fed into vacuum tubes and large black radiators with Quad badges on the front. Tweaking is fine but in my experience the best upgrade is to pop down the local for a couple of swift halves and come back to your record collection with your mates. Your hi-fi will have never sounded so good, trust me. It's not that I'm cynical, I just get my musical fix trawling through old vinyl played on traditional hi-fi.

You may be thinking, if this is his view then why is he doing this job? Well, I can still appreciate the qualities of many new products on the market, like Naim's brand new Nait 5 or Linn's Genki/ Kollektor/ LK 140/ Ninka combination, plus a number of modern reworkings of older, classic designs like Quad's ESL-988. Indeed, the first 'proper' hi-fi I ever encountered was courtesy of a musical mate in Carshalton with a Micro Seiki DDX-1000 turntable, Quad IIs and a pair of ESL-57s. After a long introduction to the fineries of this particular set up, he treated me to a privileged earful of this Bacchanalian luxury. "Where's the bass?", I thought. "Call that hi-fi?" I must admit to have been far more taken with the esoteric look of the system than with the sound emanating from it.

Encountering the new Quad electrostatics and valve amps was enlightening stuff. After a few stints in both the performing and professional audio side of things, not to mention a few years of listening to a lot of hi-fi, I was smitten. A pair now proudly sit in my listening



how we test the products

- Hi-Fi World has its own advanced test laboratory and acoustically treated listening room.
- Hi-Fi World has a dedicated in-house team of experienced listeners. 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
- NICE PRICE Represents
- EXCELLENT Superb sound
- 🗬 🏟 VERY GODO
- _ ADEQUATE Room for improvement
- _ PODR Seriously flawed. Forget it!

Half globes are added for those products that we feel are between categories

World Radio History

HI-FI WORLD

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Dominc Todd listens to the latest budget player Kenwood.

T+4 DVD1210R DVD PLAYER



This stylish high tech player from Germany promises to be a real audiophile DVD treat. Simon Pope check its credentials.

loudspeakers



£120 budget boxes from Mission. Noel Keywood listens in.

amplifiers

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The replacement for Denon's successful PMA-350 has arrived. Dominic Todd sees if it has its predecessor's quality.

EXPOSURE 2010 TITANIUM



Exposure return to the fold with a new integrated. Simon Pope listens with interest.

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The Nait 5 is the brand new entry level integrated from Salisbury's finest. David Price does the honours.

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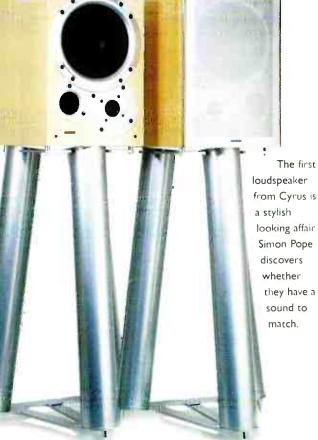
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David Price takes us through the company's rich heritage and interviews the chief designer.

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David Price waxes lyrical over Tannoy's gargantuan Westminster 'speakers.





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Is DAB radio good value at £299? That's the price of Videologic's new DRX-601E.

he release by Videologic of a DAB tuner priced at £299, the new DRX-601E, potentially brings a new dynamic to Digital Audio Broadcasting. Until now it has has been languishing, with tuner prices of £500-£800 or more.

To see how Videologic's new tuner changes things, we tested it against a quality VHF/FM tuner from Denon, the TU-S10, priced at £350. Denon specialise in broadcast equipment in Japan, producing fine tuners.

Is VHF/FM still worth buying, or is it just way out of date in a digital age, as broadcasters tell us?

VIDEOLOGIC DRX-601E

Styling isn't a word you'd use for the DRX-601E. It is a functional black box built by standard

but still got only four segments industry method, of the Videologic's 16 using a meter to light. In theory at least, Lounge arrived. The tuning knob

> pressed steel chassis, steel cover

and extruded front panel. With just one tightly packed main circuit board inside and a small toroidal mains transformer the unit is light and easy to place, aided by reasonably compact dimensions of 430mm wide, 310mm deep and just 59mm high. It stacks

nicely and there's remote control. Inside lies one main board with tightly packed surface mount components, dedicated Panasonic DAB chips and a 'Made in Japan' head unit.

Videologic supply a simple wire aerial. I hung the ends vertically from a nearby wall fitting, as many people will, and pressed Autotune. The receiver told me to wait then came up with BBC stations only. This was in a first floor room, brick building, Central London, a normal enough location.

After wire twiddling the weaker commercial station ensemble arrived, but not all programmes, like The Lounge, surprisingly.

My rooftop aerials supply VHF and UHF at 1-10 millivolts. The UHFTV aerial gave the best DAB signal

segment signal strength

this is good enough and finally The

simply scrolls the tuner

between all the pre-tuned stations: twist to tune, press to select. It was a delightfully easy and reasonably selfevident process.

Unprepossessing it may be, but this tuner has a good range of facilities. The normal user will appreciate the scrolling display of the track being played (where the station provides such info.) plus station name and type (Rock, Sport, etc). The technically minded can use the signal strength

meter to assess aerial effectiveness. There's also data rate and channel number.

At rear the Videologic has a 75ohm F Type aerial input - not common in Britain - an SP/DIF digital output (co-axial and optical), audio output and audio input for loop through of an analogue tuner. I connected the SP/DIF to an external DAC to see how this affected sound quality, but there was virtually no difference.

From the outset it was clear to me that the DRX-601E had a fine sense of clarity and delivered, tight bass of good quality. VHF tuners are often weak here. A Hitachi FT-5500 tuner - good technology but now a little old - got close to the DRX-601E but consistently sounded a little fuzzy or soft by comparison, although at times a little more fulsome too. Even in its day though, the Hitachi was more a technical marvel than a revelation in sound quality. This shows, however, that the Videologic will outrun an old tuner.

Denon's TU-S10, however, was on a different level to the Hitachi.

DENONTU-SI0

Designed, Denon say, for Europe's now crowded VHF/FM airwaves (sardine packed in London) the TU-\$10 has a 'six gang' front end for high selectivity. Denon don't say much about the IF stage or demodulator, but they would not skimp. The chassis is copper plated internally, something the Japanese deeply believe in, to reduce surface currents.

The TU-S10 offers medium wave and VHF/FM. It has 40 station memories, so it can recall as slickly as

I trade winds

MADONNA NETWORKED

An estimated 9 million Internet users around the world watched an exclusive Madonna webcast sponsored by Microsoft late last November, according to event organisers. Despite widespread reports of problems with fans trying to access the streamed event because of technology glitches, the webcast still ranks as the largest such musical event ever. The previous record holder was the Microsoft-sponsored

Paul McCartney webcast that drew about 3 million users. Madonna performed for about half an hour, one of her few live shows since last September's release of her new album, 'Music'. Interestingly, Madonna wasn't paid for the event, but stands to generate substantial income from follow on CD and merchandise sales available from Microsoft's website, www.msn.co.uk

HIGH 5 FROM NAIM

It appears Naim Audio is prepared to stake a claim for the mid-price market. Following the launch of the first two components in the new look 5 Series, the Nait 5 integrated and CD5 CD player, Naim has announced the arrival of the new NAC112 and NAP 150 entry-level pre and power amplifiers. Both amps have the black finished, low vibration aluminium casework of the Nait 5 and CD5.

The NACI12 attempts to combine the best characteristics of Naim's excellent top-of-the-range preamps and deliver them in a £625 package. It has a discreet resistor ladder volume and balance control, managed by microprocessor. A dedicated powered output on the 112 is saved for an outboard Naim phono stage and all six line inputs are individually adjustable in gain to accommodate a variety of sources.

The NAP150, with an output of 50W per channel continuous into 8Ω , uses a version of the new circuitry designed for the awesome £10,000 NAP500 power amplifier. This endows the NAP150 with far faster signal transition times and better rejection of power supply noise, says the company. In common with other



5 series components the NAP 150 uses a low vibration chassis, anti resonance circuit board mounting pillars and specially designed compliant feet, all in a £725 package.

Available now in the trademark 5 Series black, this combination promises much, and at a total of £1,350 could turn out to be one of the buys of the year. Watch this space...

Naim Audio Southampton Rd. Salisbury Wilts SPI 2LN Tel: 01722 332266

www.naim.co.uk

INTENSO LOOKING

Intenso has already sold over 100 million blank CDs across Europe, and is now looking for a slice of the UK recordable media market. Its colourful range includes 74min/ 650MB and 80min/ 700MB CD-Rs and CD-RWs, plus audio CD-Rs (for hi-fi CD recorders) and black faced CD-Rs (for games). A quick spin in a Pioneer PD-R509 CD recorder and a Creative Labs PC CD-RW Blaster cofirmed Intenso's claim that they're 'grade A' quality, making them fine value at £2.99 per pack of 5 data CD-Rs.



next issue

Here's a small selection of what we hope to bring you in next month's edition...

MERIDIAN 502/557 PRE & POWER AMPLIFIERS

month we listen to this classy compared to the Huntingdoncess digital engineering experts. Will the deliver the sonic goods?

WHARFEDALE Pi30 LOUDSPEAKERS

These are part of the new Pacific range, intended to return Whartedale to the forefront of 'speaker design. Will they succeed? All is revealed in four weeks.

MARANTZ SA1 SACD PLAYER

This is the £5000 flagship digital disc spinner from Marantz, leaturing battle-hip build and high quality components. Read all about it coxt month.

trade winds

SONY CHANGE TRACK

The only booming area of hi-fi hardware CD sales right now is recorders. The likes of Philips, Denon, Marantz and Pioneer have all had popular sellers in the stores for several months now, but what of Sony? The Japanese giant's official position has been that MiniDisc has been its priority - after all, why introduce an in-house rival to the format the company has

done so much to promote throughout the nineties? With this in mind, the arrival of Sony's new CDR-W33 CD recorder in its native Japanese home market marks a substantial sea change in the company's marketing strategy. Retailing at Y75,000 (£440), the 4.6kg unit is well specified and nicely built. One unique feature is switchable Super Bit Mapping

(SBM), which dithers digital recordings for a more natural sound. Previously only available on Sony's DAT machines, this would instantly give the CDR-W33 an edge in the competitive UK market.

www.sony.co.jp/SonyDrive



SIZMIK ACTIVITY

Linn has a new subwoofer, or 'Active Bass Reinforcement Loudspeaker', called the Slzmik 10.25. A compact, powerful, efficient design, it is intended for high fidelity music, home-cinema and multi-room applications. Using digital signal processing and adjustable triple filters, it's said to deliver over 1000 watts of music power via a 10 inch long-excursion drive unit.

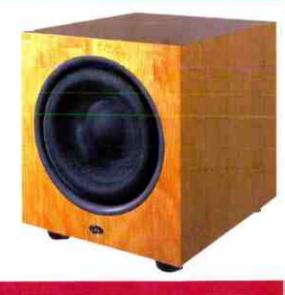
The 'cool running, hum and buzz free' Linn Sizmik 1000 amplifier is a 'Class V' amplifier using Switch Mode Power Supplies, high density linear power amplifiers and DSP in a balanced bridge configuration. Three buttons offer adjustable digital low and high pass filtering plus

subwoofer gain. Adjustable signal sensing enables the Sizmik to power up automatically from standby mode to full operation when it detects an input signal and to revert to low power standby after an appropriate and adjustable time period.

The Linn Sizmik 10.25 is available in Black at £995, or American Cherry and new Maple finishes for £1030.

Linn Products
Tel: 0500 888909

www.linn.co.uk



LIGHTENING THE LOAD...

Panasonic's £200 SJ-MR200 is claimed to be the lightest ever MiniDisc portable. Barely bigger than an actual MD, it weighs a waif-like 94g without batteries. All the more impressive are its claimed 38 hour playback and 15 hour recording times (from one battery). With 40 second anti-shock memory, backlit remote and S-XBS bass booster, it looks set to give its Sony MZR-91 rival a real hard time.

Panasonic Help Line Tel: 08705 357357



SHOW TIME!

Bristol Sound & Vision 2001 will soon be here again. From Friday 23 to Sunday 25 February, I Oam to 5pm, you'll be able to see vast quantities of hi-fi and AV equipment, from Arcam and Audio Analogue to Wilson Benesch and Yamaha, with everyone from Heybrook to Unison Research along the way.

As usual it's at Bristol's Marriott Hotel (tel: 0117 929 4281). Entry fee is £6 (£3 concessions) and if you've got any enquiries, check out the website at

www.bristolshow.co.uk

World Radio History

A NEW DAWN





In search of a new musical experience? Naim's Series 5 range of audio equipment is exceptional. Even by Naim's exceptional standards. Expect no frills or gratuitous gadgetry. Our business is sound. Pure and simple. Just sit back, listen and believe.

THE ULTIMATE MUSIC SYSTEM



trade winds

email: news@hi-fiworld.co.uk Whi-fiworld.co.uk



After Hi-Fi World's 'CD RIP' feature (November 2000) comes more bad news for Compact Disc. A new survey from market research company MORI, says 'virtual record collections' may replace CDs within the next five years. The study, commissioned by Creative Labs as part of an in-depth look into home audio technology, reports that British music buyers are entering the 'second stage' of digital music where CD collections will

soon be replaced by music stored on portable devices. It says British youth are at the vanguard of this 'audio revolution' and are leading the rest of society in planning to abandon CDs in favour of digitally downloadable music.

MORI interviewed 1,629 adults aged between 15 and 64 in July 2000, and found that 37% of under 25 year olds say they will stop buying CDs within 5 years, and 33% of Internet users envisage storing 'all' their music on portable devices within the same time frame. Using the wider age range of 15 to 64, 24% of music buyers said they will stop buying CDs within 5 years, suggesting young people are most receptive to online music. The survey also found that currently, 14% of British music fans download music from the

www.creativelabs.com

HACKED OFF - YET AGAIN



November's Trade Winds we reported on how the multi-industry SDMI (Secure Digital Music Initiative) committee put \$10,000

up for grabs to anyone who could break one of the proposed digital watermarking codes. At www.hacksdmi.com they distributed audio files protected by six security systems - four that embed watermark signals into music, and two that encrypt music files, a potential \$60,000. The SDMI has spent the last two years looking for a viable security standard for digital playback, Little did they know how quickly they would have to pay up, as two hackers are now \$5,000 each better off!

One is a 21 year old American drummer and regular user of Napster for sampling downloads, Will Palmer. The other is a Finnish student, Olli Parviainen, a 25-year-old information science undergraduate at the Helsinki University of Technology. Both of them were first time hackers.

According to Palmer, "the entire process of identifying and removing the watermark from the music samples took an afternoon". He also believes that any encryption or protection system is only viable for a period of six months maximum.

There is a disclosure agreement that prevents the winners from revealing their methods of cracking the code. However, Palmer had little computer programming knowledge, but was experienced in audio editing and mastering, apparently suggesting a commercial audio editing program could have been useful in the task. He is reported as saying that he, "approached the challenge from a purely musical perspective".

It's the same story in Finland, where it took the hacker just one evening to break the same security system. Like his fellow successful hacker, Olli Parviainen has experience with digital music programming.

According to many commentators, the SDMI has reduced the possible systems down to Verance's watermark and one other, as well as two cryptographic systems developed individually by EMI and Philips Electronics.

The biggest problem with watermarking in hi-fi currently lies with DVD-A. Doubts have been cast from industry professionals about the 'inaudibilty' claims of the new Verance watermark. The original security code was cracked by a hacker and the launch of DVD-A postponed by months. Good news for the many sceptics, though, as this new hack could delay the release of DVD-A discs even further until the record industry is satisfied that the system is hack proof.

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regulars

COMPETITION



Here's your chance to win a pair of Mission's top of the range 783 loudspeakers..

READERS LETTERS



Hi-Fi World's team reply to your letters and e-mails.

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The World team get to grips with issues facing both the industry and hi-fi alike.

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A comprehensive selection of titles covering audio, valve amplifiers, loudspeakers, solid state electronics and more.

DIAL-A-DEALER

Who sells what, and where to find them.

MEET YOUR MAKER

Who makes what, and how to get in touch.

WORLD **FAVOURITES**

Components which we know to be truly worthy of audition.

CLASSICS

88

Our list of products that have stood the test of time.

MARKETPLACE

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READERS CLASSIFIEDS

The definitive place to find classic audio components.

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computer audio world

SOUNDBYTES

The latest news, including a close look at Sony's new VAIO audio computer

E-MUSIC GOES EAST



We go to Japan to bring you the low down on all the latest AAC portables

CREATIVE LABS DAP **JUKEBOX** 55. 57

This cracking new audio player gets an indepth test from David



TURTI EBEACH MONTEGO II PLUS 58

David auditions a budget soundcard

that's serious about making music.

Price.



diy supplement

TUNING UP OUR KIT and KaT KT88 VALVE AMPLIFIERS BUILDING WILMSLOW'S GEMINI KIT LOUDSPEAKER 10 **CAUGHT IN THE WEB** 13

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Noel Keywood compares it to a top rank VHF/FM tuner, Denon's TU-S10.

the Videologic. In London the Videologic got thirty seven stations, whilst the Denon auto-tuned 20, not including medium wave. Its IF can be switched to narrow to improve selectivity and reduce interference from nearby stations. There's an input attenuator and aerial A/B switching but, inexplicably, no signal strength indicator. Remote control is provided, plus Radio Data System (RDS). So this is a very well equipped tuner and it is also a serious piece of VHF/FM tuner technology.

The TU-S10 is quite bulky and not too pretty in my view. A tuner like this will work from an indoor wire, but give audible hiss, unlike the Videologic. However, a VHF tuner will continue to work right down to almost no signal (one millionth of a volt) and will get stations even in basements, unlike DAB. For optimum quality though, a VHF tuner needs ImV or more. I hooked the Denon straight into my external aerial to push it into full quieting (>ImV) on most stations. For top quality VHF demands use of an effective aerial.

The TU-S10 is an awesomely good tuner, that's for sure. It possessed the clarity of the Videologic, if not the razor sharpness of its transients, due to frequency response differences. Superficially, DAB sounded clearer, but Radio 2 - always good for transmission quality - showed quite clearly that the Videologic (and the external DAC) was missing a bass octave. Bass guitar, especially with reggae tracks, came through with force and control through the Denon, which was exceptional in this area. The Videologic lost the power of the fundamentals, leaving behind only the

suggestion of a bass line, made by the harmonics. After a lot of changing over between stations duplicated on VHF and DAB, like Heart, it became clear that the TU-S10 offered a broader, more balanced sound than the DRX-601E, with startling clarity and supple bass particular strengths, but also with greater insight that revealed instrument textures and vocal nuances. By contrast the Videologic came over as a little bland and sterile, but my suspicion is that this is due to MUSICAM and the DAB broadcast chain.

And hiss? At -78dB there was none on VHF. Studio noise predominates at this level. The TU-S10 was as quiet as the DRX-601E. But of course you must give a VHF tuner more than ImV from the aerial to achieve this.

By VHF standards the TU-S10 is one fine tuner, one of the best I have ever heard in fact. Videologic's DRX-601E got unlucky!

CONCLUSION

tuner.

I was more impressed by Videologic's tuner than I had expected. It autotuned with no hassle, presenting thirty seven stations immediately from a piece of wire hung from the wall without any hiss. To most listeners it would be the best thing they had ever heard and it was delightfully easy to use. It's a fine

The Denon needed
more work in tuning in and
memory setting (best not to use
the auto memory set mode) but it
offers equivalent convenience and

World Radio History

better sound quality, especially for Rock music broadcast at high quality levels. The Denon also demands a serious aerial if it is to show what it can do. All the same, this is one extraordinary tuner, unequivocally one of the best I have ever heard. Had the Videologic not met it, then it might have prevailed. The Videologic is an excellent tuner for £299. This is a sensible price for DAB.

VIDEOLOGIC DRX-601E £299.00
VideoLogic Systems
Home Park Estate
Kings Langley, Herts WD4 8LZ
tel: 01923 277488
fax: 01923 270188
www.videologic.com

DENON TU-S 10 £350.00

Hayden Labs. Hayden House Chalfont St Peter, Bucks SL9 9UG tel: 01753 888447 fax: 01753 880109

can I get DAB?

Around 30% of the UK population are unable to receive DAB, lacking a local transmitter. The West Country, South Coast, Northern Britain, and much of Scotland are not currently served. To see if you can get DAB -

Telephone

Digital Radio Helpline -0870 90 90 250 BBC Helpline 08700 100 123

Websites

www.bbc.co.uk/digitalradio
www.ukdigitalradio.com
www.worlddab.org

Aerials

www.antiference.co.uk tel: 01543 267160

WORLD VERDICT

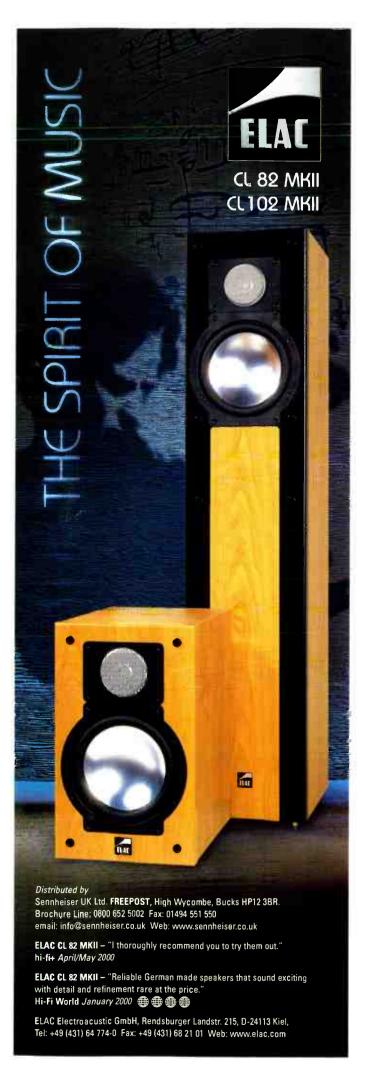
WIDEOLOGIC

Lots of stations, easy to use and fine sound quality, but bright. Deep bass absent.

Measured
Performance see
page 111

WORLD VEHDICT
DENON
Easy to use,
vividly clear, with
strong, supple bass.
A top VHF tuner unusually good.

Measured
Performance see
page 111





listening to DAB

Here's a run down of stations available on the Digital Audio Broadcasting wavebands

igital radio has a lot to offer - and there's more to come. A claimed 70% of the population are able receive it, although the audience for DAB radio in Britain probably numbers no more than 5000 or so at present, due to

the high price of tuners. More stations are available on DAB than VHF/FM, and more are due. Here's a look at what DAB offers.

ome obvious musical genres, like
Reggae, are conspicuously absent at present. You won't get pirates broadcasting on digital to fill the gaps either; the technology is too complex and expensive.

We have included London local progammes as an example of local DAB. Stations like XFM can be found in most areas, so can Sunrise or Asian radio. Capital, Heart and Kiss are also common. Expect around 12 local DAB stations, plus BBC nationals, to be available to you - if you live within range of a DAB transmitter.

The BBC are planning another five national DAB channels, broadcasting music from their archives (live concerts and sessions, plus interviews), Plays and Comedy, an Asian station and a Black music station.

NATIONAL DAB STATIONS

BBC

parliament **Parliamentary** BBC Radio I new music BBC Radio 2 popular music BBC Radio 3 classical BBC Radio 4 speech BBC Radio 5 dedicated 24hr live BBC Radio 4 **BBC** World Service international **BBC Travel** travel data

COMMERCIAL

Classic FM classics Virgin Radio contemporary talkSPORT all sports teenage chart & club Core classic Rock Planet Rock Prime Time easy listening One Word speech based Life music for adults Bloomberg talkMoney24hr financial **ITN News** latest news PrimeTime Radio old melodies plays, books etc Oneword

LONDON DAB STATIONS

from BBC

GLR talk and news from C.E. DIGITAL

Capital FM contemporary
Capital Gold best of rock
Kiss 100 dance
Magic hits from the last four decades
News Direct news & commerce
Xfm Modern Rock
Sunrise Radio Asian
LBC News, Views

from SWITCH DIGITAL

Heart soft rock
The Lounge horizontal rock
BigLondon big rock
MinistryofSound dance
BBC London live talk
Travel Now travel info
WLON The Mix

Jazz FM jazz
The Groove soul and funk

Pater in the later of marky

f you go down to the shops today you're sure of a big surprise - digital radio for just £59.99! Lots of 'em in fact, at all sorts of prices, with the words 'digital' plainly visible on the front. But they're analogue.

These are normal radios with digital tuning, which offers the convenience of push-button station selection. All the same, the description 'digital' is confusing for people. You will find 'digital' radios commonly have VHF and Medium wave, a sure sign they are analogue radios!

Also, there are 'digital scanners', a type of radio receiver that can cover 0.5MHz right up to 2GHz, including the DAB band (174MHz-240MHz). They will not decode DAB though. Luckily, scanners are not common on the High Street or there would be even more confusion. Both these categories are analogue; only DAB is digital radio.



A 'Digital World Receiver' from Philips. This is an analogue radio with digital tuning.

CD SMOOTHIE

Dominic Todd thinks Kenwood's new DPF-3030 CD player is a smoothie



enwood's new DPF 3030 replaces their highly regard ed DP 3080 so it has a reputation to live up to.

Kenwood have improved their unique D.R.I.V.E. filter system, which reduces quantisation errors at low signal levels that produce a stepped waveform instead of a smooth one. Kenwood reckon this provides a more natural sound quality.

The rest of the player is pretty much standard fare. There's a one-bit DAC, and optical digital output. The main output is also remotely adjustable. It's a pity, then, that a machine as well specified as this doesn't have the ability to replay CD-RW discs; something that may put off the home-recorders.

The overall finish is now as good as anything at this price point, and reliability and a long life you can take as read if Kenwood's past reputation is anything to go by.

The player was plugged into my usual system, with both a NAD C520 (£170) and Cambridge D300SE (£170) at hand to act as benchmarks.

It was good to see that the new '3030 has lost little in terms of refinement in transition from '3080. The Cardigans, 'Erase and Rewind', flowed from the 'speakers as effortlessly as one could expect from this class of CD player. The bass was a touch lightweight in comparison to the NAD, yet both its sense of cohesion with the mid-band, and fine definition are unusually good at this price. The guitar and vocals were equally well refined although, at times, perhaps too much so. Nina

Perrson's vocals, in particular, lacked the usual Scandinavian 'edge'. The sound staging was fine, but a little extra depth would have been appreciated. Whilst one could never call the Kenwood lean, it didn't quite have the expansive 'bloom' of rivals; something which isn't always necessarily a good thing in the budget market.

A rather less processed and grander sound came courtesy of the Divine Comedy's 'Here Comes the Flood'. Both Piano and brass sections were reproduced with a realistic timbre. However, the vocal arrangements came across as a little pinched. This seemed to compress the sound stage to a degree.

Many budget hi-fi separates show a preference for a particular type of music, and I discovered the Kenwood to be one of them when I switched to jazz vocalist Tina May's 'After The Love Has Gone'. The smooth, mellifluous balance really seemed to suit acoustic jazz. May's vocals had presence and a true sense of realism thanks to the ability to hear her patterns of breathing. The latter is a trick usually only associated with more expensive machines, but I guess Kenwood would accredit this to the D.R.I.V.E. system Once again the bass response was a touch light,

long term listening. A total lack of exaggerated vocal sibilance helps here too.

The Kenwood could sound dramatic with the right material. 'Strumgliding', off the Swim Team's compilation disc, provided a suitably window-rattling bass line when required. Politeness pervaded again though, with the synthesised drums lacking a certain edge, to the detriment of the track's atmosphere. The timing and consistency couldn't be faulted, though, as was the case with all the previous tracks.

To describe the Kenwood as smooth seems as though I'm damning with faint praise. Yet, in many respects, this is the one word that can justifiably sum the '3030 up. Detail resolution, timbre and timing also all rate as above class average. The player does shine more with acoustic work rather than Rock or Dance genres.

The level of sonic sophistication still impresses at this price level. Add that to improved cosmetics and it's hard to imagine a better all rounder, just don't expect a bright sound. It's certainly a player to audition.

KENWOOD DPF 3030 £199
Kenwood Electronics
UK Ltd
Kenwood
House,
Dwight Rd
Watford
Herts WD1 8EB
Tel: 01923 816444



page 111

yet the

overall

balance had

a seamless and

beguiling nature

that would encourage



The original Q Series won so many awards that it was tempting to leave well alone.

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There's no such thing as perfection - but now, you can get pretty close.







RHYTHM STICK





Denon have re-vamped the PMA-350SE amplifier into the UK-tweaked PMA-355UK. Is good rhythm enough, Dominic Todd wonders?

bought a PMA-350SE I was so impressed by it. Four years on, have Denon moved the game on with its replacement, the new PMA-355UK? Nowadays, there's the NAD C320 (£200), Cambridge A500 (£200) or Marantz PM6010OSE (£230) to compete.

Although having crept up slightly in price to £230, there's plenty that's new. A quick glance reveals a remote control (useful), mm phono stage (handy), a second set of switchable'speaker and tape outputs (good), pre-amp outlets (also good) and tone controls (matter of taste). With the possible exception of the tone controls, all good stuff.

With my trusty PMA-350SE alongside, I began listening with Eagle-Eye Cherry's, 'Long Way Around'. Immediately striking was the definite Denon signature. A strong taught bass line that drove the song through with vigour. Vocals were powerfully projected well ahead of the rest of the mix. It was also good to hear the two guitar tracks clearly separated

from one another, their own unique characteristics clearly defined. Slightly less impressive was the 'width' of sound. Although by no means poor by class standards, there wasn't quite the expansiveness of one of the Denon's key rivals, the NAD C320. Likewise, the overall balance could occasionally sound slightly mechanical and detached from the music. Everything was there but it just didn't seem to quite gel together. For example, percussion sections became more confused as the mix became more complex.

Female vocalists can prove testing for even the finest amps. I selected the next disc, Kirsty MacColl's, 'England 2 Columbia 0'. As with the previous song, the vocals stood out with a bold presence. The resolution of fine detail was undoubtedly better than average for an amp of this price, but once again it didn't quite do enough to really involve me.

Maybe the Denon just wasn't happy with the music genre. The 355 appeared happier with Richard Thompson's raw folk drawl than had been the case with previous female vocalists. Lead vocals enjoyed a clarity and level of separation that allowed me to focus upon the subtleties of accent and emphasis but treble performance proved to be a let down here. Cymbals shimmered brightly with a fine, even decay, as soon as the balance erred towards the side of 'busy' the Denon seemed to lose it a little. Overall, the balance was suitably punchy, with a good rhythmic drive.

The Denon has everything you'd ever want, featurewise, from a stereo amp. It appears to have taken a step back from its predecessor, if only a small one in sound quality. Whilst there are few at this price that can match its balance of drive and punch with such good detail resolution, it lacks the ability to allow the listener to forget they're listening to a hi-fi, unlike the less mechanical sounding NAD C320. Proof then, that newer isn't always necessarily better.

DENON PMA-355UK £230

Hayden Laboratories Ltd.

Hayden House

Chiltern Hill

Chalfont St. Peter

Bucks. SL9 9UG

Tel: 01753 888447

230 .td. use Hill ter UG

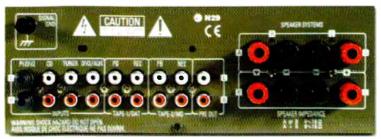
An exciting sound with excellent drive and bass. A sometimes harsh treble and slight lack of cohesion stop top honours, though.

Good value.

Measured Performance see

page 111

WORLD VERDICT



A lot of changes-and still rather a lot of money.



Speakers as universally revered as our Reference Series are a tough act to follow. After all, what can you do to improve on excellence?

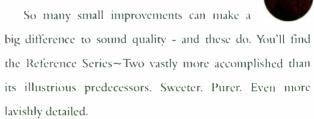
Rather a lot, as it happens. Take the high order crossovers. for example. They've been completely redesigned, using advanced polypropylene capacitors for even greater lucidity. And every crossover is further fine-tuned to match the parameters of each individual drive unit. We even found ways of making the drivers themselves

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book-matched veneers, now including Cherry and the highly figured pale Albina Burr, with corners carefully radiused to eliminate residual edge diffractions. In all, literally hundreds of

edge diffractions. In all, literally hundreds of painstaking improvements were made.



Like all the best things in life, they still don't come cheap - but to anyone who really appreciates sound, they're better value than ever.







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Image conscious

Mission's new m71 loudspeaker produces great images, Noel Keywood finds.

ission include a 'how to set up a hi-fi loudspeaker by numbers' guide with their new, budget M71s. It's short, succinct and on the nail. I followed it and ended up listening to great a performance, good enough to wonder: "who needs a big loudspeaker?"

The m71s exhibit "a lively and highly detailed midband", as well as "an astonishing low frequency performance seldom found in a compact enclosure" Mission say. I've read it before, but their claim has substance. Measurement told me this new small 'speaker was designed to be a wall mounter (close to a wall, not against it) and sure enough Mission's guide confirmed this, saying 10-30cms was needed to the rear wall.

Placing a loudspeaker close to a rear wall gives more bass, but it is lumpier, due to phase additions and subtractions. The further out the better, for imaging and smoothness. Just don't let the distance to the floor match the distance to the rear wall or the lumps will get large. Because every room is different I experimented, but the m71s delivered good, deep bass even when far from the wall.

However, assuming most people would buy a 'speaker like this because it can be kept back to free up floor space, that's how I reviewed them. In line with Mission's guide I tried the optional foam bungs for tighter bass, ran the speakers in for 24hours and pointed them straight down the room, rather than toed in. This gives a beautifully broad sound stage, at least, from a loudspeaker able to construct such a thing - and the m71s could. After a while I toed the speakers out a little and found they could still construct a solid and credible central image. Toeing out gives an almost ethereally large sound stage, bringing real dimension to large orchestras in particular. Aiming more energy at side walls won't work in all rooms, but when it works it gives impressive results - and the m71s can pull it off.

In their last line of advice Mission say their 'speakers will work with ''competent budget electronics' but will improve as the source improves. So they should - and it is an important point in the real

world, What Mission are saying is the m71s are not difficult to drive. Our tests confirmed this. They go loud with around 40-60watts, as loud as any rivals, so they don't stress budget amps. Mission recommend 75watts maximum. Bi-wiring is possible; I used it and got better insight into a performance. However, throwing money at budget 'speakers to make them sound better is a bit unrealistic. A good sound should be possible from normal use; I used single wire van den Hul Royal Jade Hybrid running to a Mission Cyrus 7 amplifier most of the time.

A Cyrus 7 is a solid-state amplifier I can live with (being a valve man). It's smooth, it has stage depth and good imaging. I tried toeing the m71s out slightly to dampen their treble; they are a little on the 'shiny-bright' side even with a smoothie like the Cyrus, so I would beware of matching the m71 to hard rockers like the Naim Nait5,TAG Maclaren 60i, or most Far East amps (e.g. Denon), all of which have forceful treble. Think Creek or Cyrus perhaps, something with smoothness and finesse.

I've never warmed to hi-fi products tuned exclusively to hard rock. There's a strong element of rocker in this 'speaker though, ameliorated by subtler properties. The m7 Is have real speed, aided by a glassy edge to transients that make them incisive. If you want fast rock from a miniature, they've got it. There was plenty of bass power in the metronomic drumming behind Billy Idol's Rebel Yell, but better still Idol had real presence in the room, vividly defined and in great voice. The m7 Is have good bass punch, lots of speed and great imaging. They're fine for this sort of Rock.

Mission have engineered in a fine sense of bass control too. Although I could hear some box 'boing' at times - and definitely a little box colouration from the port - the m7 Is have fast, tight bass that also goes quite low. Even though real deep bass is attenuated, it's still there. The bass line behind Clapton and Santana on The Calling had more power behind it than you'd expect from such a small box, underpinning their performances well. I got no improvement using the foam bungs, but then I never do.



idea is better suited to big cabs with boomy bass, to stop them over-energising rooms.

Of all their strengths, imaging of the m71s was most impressive. They consistently placed performers in a wide arc across the end of the room, with a fine sense of insight and space around the images. Unlike the larger 783s I reviewed in our December 2000 issue, the small m71s really projected into the room, a feature that would impress anyone. Projective imaging like this, which relies upon good electrical properties, plus a cleverly contoured front baffle, can make a small 'speaker sound improbably large. Toeing out a little increases the effect. This was the m71's greatest strength: a big sound, full of life and detail.

And their greatest weaknesses? They have a slightly dry, glassy hard quality to them that doesn't especially favour orchestral strings and occasionally brought emphasis to sibilance on bright CDs. At the same time the 'speakers weren't harsh.

At £129.90 it's worth spending just a little more on good cable and stands for the m71s to get the best from them, because they are good enough to deserve it. These are loudspeakers I could live with, they are so revealing and accurate. You'll wonder whether you ever need a bigger loudspeaker.

MISSION m71

£129.90 Symphonix Ltd Huntingdon PE29 6EY tel: 01480 451777 fax: 01480 432777 www.mission.co.uk

competition

HI-FI WORLD'S

GREAT COMPETITION GIVEAWAY

WIN A PAIR OF MISSION'S £1000

FLAGSHIP 783 SPEAKERS IN OUR SUPERB COMPETITION!

ant to start the twenty first century with a bang, but can't because you've emptied your piggy bank over Christmas? It's a familiar situation, but worry not because we have the solution! If you've got a dose of the post-Christmas blues, Hi-Fi World has the remedy in the shape of this month's competition.

Mission is now one of the world's most famous loudspeaker companies. with a brief but full history that includes many best sellers. Based in Britain's 'hi-fi Mecca' of Huntingdon, the company was started in 1977 by Farad Azima. The engineering talents of his brother Henry soon meant the brand was making waves with products like the 700 and 770, which fast won plaudits from countless UK and international hi-fi magazines. Mission loudspeakers became famous for their exciting, punchy, musical sound, combined with clean midband and fine imaging. This was achieved by Henry's talents at using high technology materials and carefully voicing his 'speakers for real world listening rooms.

A litany of successes followed, from the quintessential budget 760 'mini monitors' of the early nineties, to the storming 752 floorstanders which were the first mass-market loudspeakers to use HDA (High Definition Aerogel) in 1995. Mission went from strength to strength, introducing sweet sounding silk dome tweeters when everyone else was still using edgy metal domes, and innovative cabinet bracing arrangements for extra rigidity. The

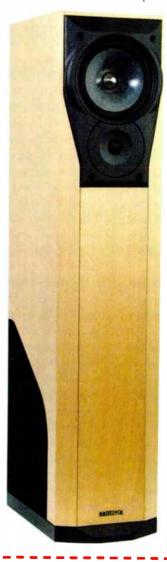
bold X-Space of 1998 pioneered the use of NXT flat panels and showed Mission's mastery of new technology. Always offering excellent value for money, the company's latest flagship series comprises the 780 standmounter, plus 782 and 783 floorstanders. True to tradition, the range uses new technology in the shape of the Keraform mid/bass driver.

The £1000 783 is one of the finest 'speakers available at its price, as we found back in December's Hi-Fi World. Exceptionally well put together and solid as a rock, it has a wonderfully sophisticated sound. Mission has put a lot of work into reducing cabinet colorations by using asymmetry to disperse panel resonances and foam damping to reduce cavity resonances. Although resembling a two-way design, the 783 is actually a three-way 'speaker with a side firing 200mm bass unit for a tight, deep and tuneful bass. The Keraform matrix bass/mid cone is used to minimise coloration, which it does with aplomb and the soft dome tweeter gives a smooth and sweet high frequency response.

Noel Keywood found the 783 to have, "a silky smooth and beautifully civilised performance... It performs equally impressively with all types of music. Rock has grip and control with a generous frequency spread combined with a fast and exciting sound due to that stiff drive unit... the kick drum on Billy Idol's 'Pumping on Steel' kicked hard, with lightning attack and real punch. Cross fade images shot between 'speakers like

bullets. The track's tricks really came across".

To win these exceptional loudspeakers simply answer the following questions on a postcard, and send it to the address below before January 31st 2001. The lucky winner will be picked out of Hi-Fi World's well-worn baseball cap!



Competition Questions

- [1] Mission is based in John Major's parliamentary constituency of:
- [a] Huntingdon
- [b] Brixton
- [c] Kensington and Chelsea
- [d] Dumfries
- [2] The company was founded by the Azima brothers, whose first names are:
- [a] Bleep and Booster
- [b] Farad and Henry
- [c] Watt and Ohm
- [d] Smith and Jones
- [3] Mission loudspeakers are
- famous for using:
 [a] recycled kitchen
 utensils
- [b] Dustbin lids
- [c] High tech materials like HDA and Keraform
- [d] sticky-backed plastic
- [4] In Hi-Fi World's December 2000 review of Mission's 783, we found them to have:
- [a] "a wonderfully full and exuberant bass response"
- [b] "a silky smooth and beautifully civilised performance"
- [c] "an unparalleled ability to emote"
- [d] "a kickin', bangin' sound, man,"

Please send all entries to: February

Competition, Hi-Fi World Freepost LON3478 London NW6 6YR

">congratulations!

The lucky winner of December's KEF competition is Mr. Philip Hurst of West Bridgford, Nottingham. The response to our monthly competition has been beyond our wildest expectations. Keep the entries flooding in, as the more you respond, the bigger and better the prizes get.

Many thanks!

Capo; unc

After new investment and a spring clean Exposure has launched an all-new integrated amp at the audiophile public. Simon Pope welcomes the famous brand back.

ast your mind back ten years and think of five leading British audiophile amplifier manufacturers. The name Exposure would invariably be on the list. At one point in its previous existence, it was practically head to head with the likes of Naim. However when the latter, under the visionary leadership of the late Julian Vereker, started to expand its empire, Exposure stuck to its humble origins. Consequently a company, that perhaps should have deserved wider recognition since its launch in 1977, didn't fulfil its potential share of the hi-fi market.

Recently it has struggled, and even went through an abortive sale until a glimmer of light was spotted at the end of the tunnel. The far east is always interested in investing in 'traditional' British hi-fi brands like Exposure whose names carry prestige, and with this in mind Malaysian money appeared on the table back in March 2000. Thus was born the new Exposure Electronics Ltd.

This new found financial stability

meant the company could start manufacturing with little constraint on finance or time, at a lower price. It's currently working on the next wave of products, including CD players, tuners and amplifiers, and also plans to venture into Home Cinema. 'Old' Exposure front man John Farlowe is the newly appointed chairman, with Andrew Whittle brought in as MD. Whilst finance is from Malaysia, the first products are still fully manufactured in the company's Sussex HQ, although gradual development in the far east may well occur, with assembly probably based still in the UK.

The first new product was the non-remote version of the 2010 amplifier. The version we have here has remote controlled volume and input selection as well as numerous tweaks on the original. Aesthetics are still very much in the traditional Exposure mode, with a no-nonsense attractive look that retains an air of specialist hi-fi. It's straightforward enough, with most of the emphasis on the inside. Corners are nicely

rounded with an overlapping front plate adorned with two smoothly motorised knobs (Alps volume pot and input selector) that feel good (and expensive) to the touch. Exposure has made a nod to modernity with the inclusion of three blue LEDs on the 'titanium' silver fascia (also available in classic 'eighties' satin black), and they're quite the brightest I've seen too. You can always save on electricity though, as the amp can double up as room lights.

Round the back we have connections for six line inputs - our sample had no phono inputs but a MM or MC stage is available for £100 extra. Two sets of 4mm loudspeaker sockets are flush with the casing. There is also a pre out for upgrading to the soon to be launched power amplifier in the range. Inside there is output circuit protection in the event of shorting. Power is conservatively rated at 50W per channel. It's of sensible dimensions and sensible weight, and all components in the 2010 come with a three year guarantee.

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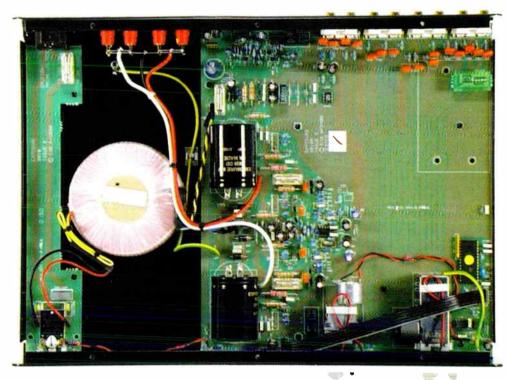
MERIDIAN

SONIC SLAM

I say 'conservatively' rated, because those 50 watts sound like a heck of a lot more. Using a Linn Genki CD player, Mission 782 loudspeakers and Nordost cabling, I was immediately hit with a fast, punchy sound very much in the old Exposure vein. It's no wonder that the company was always compared to Naim, as the sound is fundamentally similar. There's an overall presence, control and bass slam that makes for a very involving listen. After burning in the 2010 for a couple of days the amp really came into its own and a tad more warmth was added to the sound to give a better tonal balance.

It's a superb performer with rock. The Screaming Tree's 'Dust' was first in the Genki's drawer and I was instantly hit with a big guitar sound that was both powerful and cohesive. Mark Lanegan's gruff, sixty-a-day voice was realistic and forward, with the drum (one of the best ever recorded, in my view) extraordinarily detailed and powerfully driven. Most impressive though was the tight and deep bass control. Low end grunt is rarely found at this price coupled with such control and tunefulness. Such slam was also found in Underworld's electronic dance music. 'Push, Upstairs' from 'Beaucoup Fish' had relentless energy and drive, bass was solid and taut and the treble showed real detail, with all the tiny intricacies of the percussion present and correct. Still, it wasn't quite the most neutral or smooth sound I'd ever heard, though.

Moving to classical showed how the 2010 excelled in threedimensionality. Whilst the previous



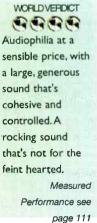
Exposure sound could be somewhat two-dimensional and flat, the new amp had an ambience and depth with classical that I frankly didn't expect. Pierre Boulez's note-perfect reading of Mahler's ninth symphony is one of DG's latest audiophile-quality recordings, and has a spacious depth to the sound which was highlighted by the Exposure. The enormous orchestra had weight and presence but wasn't artificially pushed forward, giving a naturalness to the orchestra matched at this price only by Audio Analogue's Puccini SE. What the Exposure doesn't have to same degree as the Puccini is a sweetness of treble that benefits classical music, but at least its great dynamics and weight make up for it. This said, it's still far less raw than previous Exposure amps, and adds a touch of ambience, making its reproduction of classical music superior to its predecessors.

This new Exposure sound is highly

addictive. It combines the slam, power and immediacy of the old amps with an ambience that was lacking before. The sound, whilst still tiring to some ears perhaps, is less dry and sterile and now enjoys some warmth too. It still isn't for 'old buffers' though - that isn't what Exposure is about - so if it's EL34style sweetness you're after you should still look elsewhere. A fine amp for the price, then, that prefers kicking rock or banging techno over the impressionistic mist of Debussy's orchestration. Highly recommended as a step up from entry level integrateds.

Exposure 2010 Titanium £599
Exposure Electronics Ltd.
The Works 59 North St.
Portslade East Sussex
BN41 IDH
Tel: 01273 423877
www.exposure-hifi.co.uk





After the split with Mission, it was only a matter of time before Cyrus launched its own loudspeaker. Simon Pope auditions the Cambridge company's first solo effort, the CLS70.

back in the early eighties as the electronics wing of Mission. Under the charge of Henry and Farad Azima, it made high quality electronics at sensible prices. With sleek looks and lively sound, the original Cyrus I and 2 amplifiers gathered strong followings. More recently, the latest 5 and 7 integrateds and the aCA7 and SmartPower pre/power have also gained critical acclaim, especially from us here at Hi-Fi World.

Mission and Cyrus recently went their own separate ways. This opened doors which had previously been shut for Cyrus. While its erstwhile partner had already dabbled in amplifiers with the striking 767/777 pre/ power combo of the late seventies - the ones with the company name moulded into the front panel - it had steered well clear of 'speakers for obvious reasons.

Now the borders are down the Cyrus CLS70 is here. Although the company will do an NXT flat panel 'speaker early in the new year, this is a standard two-way design, albeit with outlandish high-tech looks that would blend in with the set of any of the Alien movies!

VITAL STATISTICS

The first thing you notice about this 'speaker is its weight. Build is outstanding, with detachable polypropylene and metal grills, attached with metal fixing pegs. Whilst this may not sound groundbreaking, it's a welcome "cheerio" to bent up plastic fixing pegs. Indeed, the Cyrus CLS70 is full of little details like this which, you soon realise, justify the £800 price tag. The maple veneer for the cabinet for example,

comes from Italy and is smooth and beautiful to the touch. Size is quite chunky for a standmount at 220x330x300mm with an effective volume of 15 litres.

You don't just find attention to detail on the outside either, as its internal engineering is pretty special too. A two-way front ported, bass reflex design, it features a trick 165mm air-dried composite paper cone bass/mid unit complete with a machined aluminium phase plug. A 25mm coated, exposed silk dome tweeter deals with high frequencies. The crossover is a second order design using high specification components, such as air core LF coils and polypropylene HF caps. The cabinet features layered damping technology, as apparently used by the aerospace industry (for passenger airline sandwiches, perhaps?), striving for a rigid yet inert enclosure that's heavy and thick.

THE SOUND OF CYRUS

We used the CLS70s with their matching Tripod stands, expensive, high quality brutes with vicious bottom spikes best kept well away from any Persian silk rugs you may have. The advantage of these is that the CLS70 can be firmly bolted to the top plate of the stands to ensure extra rigidity and bass control. The whole look of these 'speakers and the stands is definitely one for the boys - in your face, modern and macho! One thing to note is that they take a lot of driving, especially for a bass reflex

Once partnered to a beefy amplifier, however, they bust out bass with the best of them. Free from the waffle and flab often associated with ported 'speakers, they sound more akin to closed cabinet designs. The bass-heavy electronic pumping of Underworld's 'Push, Upstairs' from the album Beaucoup Fish powered through the room with great attack and control. Bass was deep and fast, and the incessant pounding of the sampled drums kept me on the edge





Where these 'speakers found the going harder was with recordings that need space, air and delicacy like the Emerson Quartet's recent live recordings of the complete Shostakovich string quartets on DG. The superb artistry of these players needs a sound that will carry the delicacies and playing techniques forward, but the CLS70s - perhaps due to relatively low sensitivity rather strangled the atmosphere and made the music slightly compressed. This was a shame, as the recording venue, the Harris Concert Hall in Aspen, is a generous and warm one. Anyone familiar with these pieces will know this is the last thing such music needs, as its tight writing makes it already claustrophobic enough. However the sound was always controlled and cohesive, detailed and exciting when the music called for it.

A showpiece Reference Recording of Copland's 'Fanfare For The Common Man' played by the Minnesota Orchestra found these Cyrus loudspeakers far more at home. The deep bass extension in this recording gave the opportunity for them to show have in the nether
regions. The bass drum intro
thumped impressively with a natural
decay and realistic dynamics. The
accompanying brass instruments were
bright and well polished and here
there was more space to the sound
than I found with the Shostakovich
pieces.

The CLS70s are excellent with powerful and exciting music - classical, rock and dance included. Yet when the forces get smaller and more warmth is needed to create ambience, they seem to wane a little due to their power hungry nature. This apart, they're a

finish. Those who want bass - and plenty of high quality low bass - from a standmount should look no further but if your tastes are a bit more refined you could find them a bit dry. They work best with powerful, smooth sounding amps like Cyrus's own aCA7.5 and SmartPower combination, for example. There's plenty of classy competition around at this price level, so any standmounter has to be good to justify an £800 price tag. Fortunately the Cyrus CLS70s just succeed in holding their own, thanks to that superb build and controlled power.

quality product with fine build and



Great build. Excellent with rock and dance but could do with some warmth with acoustic music.

Great pumping bass for a standmount!

Measured Performance see page 111

TANNOY

With a remarkable seventy five

years of history under its belt, Tannoy has something to shout about. David Price profiles the Glasgow 'speaker manufacturer's illustrious past and talks to its chief designer.

From Andrew Lloyd Weber musicals to the BBC, from ITN to NBC, from Tokyo Broadcast to Universal Studios, from the Sydney Opera House to the Hard Rock Hotel in Las Vegas, Tannoy loudspeakers can be seen and heard all around the world. Indeed, so omnipotent are the company's products that it's the only hi-fi manufacturer ever to have its own place in the Oxford English Dictionary.

It was at the end of the nineteenth century that Tannoy's founder, Rupert Guy Fountain, was born in Selby, Yorkshire. Changing his name to Guy R. Fountain in 1905 he later moved south to London. Radio was the new wonder of the time, spurring innovation. Guy was just 25 when he built his first wireless, developing a passion for audio electronics that would shape the rest of his life.

Shortly after John Logie Baird transmitted the first television pictures in 1926, Guy founded the Tulesmere Manufacturing Company. At the time, early radio sets used expensive, short lasting dry batteries or 'wet' lead acid cells that were in constant need of charging. Dissatisfied with the expensive mercury vapour rectifiers these chargers used he

began researching ways of simplifying the charging process, perfecting a new type of electrolytic rectifier which used two different metals, Tantalum and Lead Alloy. The name Tannoy was coined when he subsequently set up a tiny factory in Dalton Road, West Norwood, London to manufacture them.

The company was renamed Guy R. Fountain Ltd. in 1928, owners of Tannoy brand name. Bertram Mills Circus was an early customer for Tannoy Public Address equipment. Back

then
Tannoy
P.A. used
valve
amplifiers with
Western Electric
555 tubes driving
Voigt loudspeakers.

Two years later the thriving company moved to a new factory in Canterbury Grove and by the time the Second World War started in 1939 it was





employing a workforce of 40 people. Contracts with the Ministry of Defence saw PA systems installed in RAF airfields. 'Tannoy' fast became a verb, then a household name. By 1944, there was even 'a Tannoy' in the House of Commons too and in 1947 the word entered the Oxford English Dictionary for the first time.

A catalogue of ever more ambitious P.A. installations continued for Tannoy, from the UN building in Geneva to acoustically synchronised fairground systems. It was 1948, however, the year LP records were introduced and Bell Labs invented the transistor, that Ronald Rackham



produced Tannoy's well known 15" Dual Concentric loudspeaker unit; Decca ordered 900.

The company became increasingly involved in the recording side of audio, and studios from Decca's FFRR to EMI's Abbey Road bought Dual Concentrics.

Tannoy launched its 10" III LZ bookshelf loudspeaker in 1988, followed by the Monitor Red range the next year. By the time SME debuted its first pickup arm a year later, Tannoy had already appointed its first agent in Japan and Taiwan. Guy R. Fountain's son Michael was made MD

As Beatlemania gripped the world, Tannoy introduced its VariTwin Mk II Stereo pickup and the Lancaster loudspeaker. P.A. duties in the world cup the following year went to Tannoy and the famous Monitor Gold Dual Concentric range made its debut.

The 1970s started strongly when the new QE2 ocean

liner got its P.A. and Sound Reinforcement courtesy of Tannoy, and George Martin's Air Studios were kitted out with Monitor Golds.

Disaster struck in 1974 when a fire at a cone manufacturing facility destroyed all

the tooling, the result being no Dual Concentrics for 8 months. At this time the company was still in Norwood, but was looking a bit dated to the outside world. Hi-fi was now flowing in from Japan, stimulating a mass market in which Tannoy played little part. Everything was about to change.

In 1975 the company was sold to Harman and duly moved from London to Coatbridge in Glasgow, where it remains to this day. Harman sold Tannoy on to Beatrice Foods in 1977, also the year the company's founder, Guy R. Fountain, died.

Tannoy's management team

from Beatrice Foods in 1981, starting a new era. By the early eighties, the tube-obsessed Japanese market was appreciating the benefits of Tannoy's large Dual Concentrics, and the Westminster picked up the country's coveted Golden Sound award. On a more modest level, the

two-way Planet range
was launched, including the Jupiter, Venus,
Mercury and Saturn.
This was extremely
well received, the
Mercury picking up a
number of accolades.

Gathering strength progressively the company became the founding member of TGI

Group

(Tannoy/Goodmans International), and started reorganising the range yet again. After the middling sales performance of the distinctive Profile series, the more conventional looking Mercury range arrived, and proved a great success. With one of Europe's best selling loudspeakers on its books again, Tannoy was cautious about changing too much, and the subtly revised mX series was the result last year. At the same time, the company made sweeping changes, launching the new Saturn and Revolution ranges, giving the product line up of today.

www.tannoy.com



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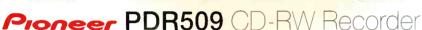


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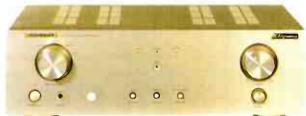
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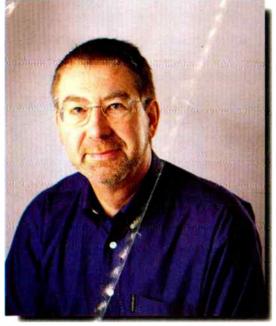
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TANNOY/



DAVID PRICE INTERVIEWS ALEX GARNER, TECHNICAL DIRECTOR, TANNOY.

the Autograph was brought up to date with the Westminster Royal, which has a huge reputation and following around the world.

Now, the Dimension Wideband range and the add-on

SuperTweeter look set to become 'classics' for the next generation of music lovers.

WHAT IS TANNOY'S PHILOSOPHY?

To be a world class designer and manufacturer of all types of speakers, for both consumer and professional applications.

HOW ISTANNOY DOING RIGHT NOW?

As a subsidiary of a plc, I can't give specific sales figures but our holding group TGI plc has a publicly stated turnover of around £55M, and Tannoy is a substantial part of this. Our market is split into three equal sectors, the Far East, Europe and North America. Our product ranges have always catered for individual tastes in different markets, both consumer and professional. We have a very healthy spread around the world.

WHICH PRODUCTS CAPTURE THE COMPANY'S ESSENCE?

In the beginning, under Guy R
Fountain's control, Tannoy produced
corner horn enclosures incorporating Dual Concentric designs which
have a massive following. Speakers
like the Autograph and Corner GRF
(signed personally by Guy Fountain)
are still highly regarded. The
compound horn loaded design of

WHAT ARE YOUR FAVOURITES?

The Westminster compound horn loaded speaker is still my favourite BIG speaker (four men are required to lift it into place) and when carefully set up this speaker can stir up the emotions with its fast transient performance. The 15 inch Duals never cease to amaze me in theatres around the world where the audience has no idea that they're providing substantial sound amplification for the performance.

Current favourites include the Dimension 12 Wideband for it's ability to make your brain to forget you're listening to speakers.

WHAT OF TOMORROW'S TECHNOLOGY?

There are many things to be investigated, such as new materials, finite element analysis to simulate the auralisation of speaker systems, innovative magnetic drive systems, cabinet construction and materials, filter design, active systems for the consumer world. There's time, amplitude and phase relationships in the psycho-acoustic interactions of

the ear, body and brain, and visually new and attractive industrial designs. Commercially we don't want to branch out into the other parts of the sound reproduction chain except to explore and innovate electronic systems where they can have a direct effect on speakers.

WHERE DO YOU SEE THE FUTURE?

You can expect a move towards speakers offering very wideband performance with linear time responses. Expect more focus on appearance - our speakers will blend more effectively into domestic and business properties and also include a few 'statements' about classical British and European design thinking.

Active electronics will be incorporated within our speakers in the search for musical experiences in both consumer and professional applications.

Audio will continue to compete against the many other demands on peoples' spending abilities. I see a joining together of the various sources - movies, video, computing, broadcasting, home automation, music delivery software, home studio composition and recording. And they all require an audio element to make them acceptable to human beings.

Music is a part of our lives and will continue to be so. Fashions will change and the appearance design of audio will follow suit. The basic requirement for sound to be heard in a natural way will always be present and there will always be a dedicated band of people who appreciate this concept and hunt out the very best way of doing it.

speakers corner

SPEAKERS' CORNER Tannoy's Alex Garner joined the company in 1976 as Chief Transducci Engineer. He had previously worked for Wharfedale for 6 vears designing loudspeakers, before which he'd completed a degree in Electrical and Electronic Engineering at Leeds University. David Price spoke to Tannov's top speaker man about the company, the speakers, and the future.

power points

why dual concentrics are better, - Tannoy owes much of its success to Dual Concentric technology. By positioning the tweeter immediately behind the bass driver cone, all frequencies emanate from a single point. - This 'point source' mirrors the way sound is produced in real life, giving a naturally located and well dispersed acoustic. It also gets a frequency response and phase response that is not affected by nodalcancellation that's unavoidable in conventional multi-way speakers. The system is also able to go loud without compression. and is famous for its fine transient response and load characteristics. - There are a number of famous designs based on this principle, including Stentorian, KEF, the RCA "LCIA" and the famous Altec 604series. Tannoy's successful use of dual concentric drivers has made its speakers a particular favourite of valve amplifier users around the world, particularly in the Far East.

CROWNING GLORY

David Price casts an affectionate ear over Tannoy's most outrageous creation ever, the Westminster Royal Dual Concentric loudspeaker.

here are big 'speakers, massive 'speakers and Tannoy Westminsters. Surely one of the most striking things ever to make a sound, other manufacturers' top-ofthe-range designs look small and flimsy by comparison. The king of Tannoy's Prestige Range, this product is truly remarkable, however you look

Intimidating physical presence aside, the fact that it's lasted so long is a testament to Tannoy design philosophy. While loudspeaker fads come and go, the Westminster has remained loyal to tradition. For example, back in the seventies and eighties, everyone from KEF to Linn were doing hopelessly complex, multi-driver designs that sapped power so much you needed a direct line into the National Grid to get a squeak out of them. Back then, the Westminster would have seemed a silly irrelevance, a ridiculous anachronism, a blast from the past. Now though, tubes are back in fashion and efficiency is good, and the big Tannoy's design seems plain commonsense.

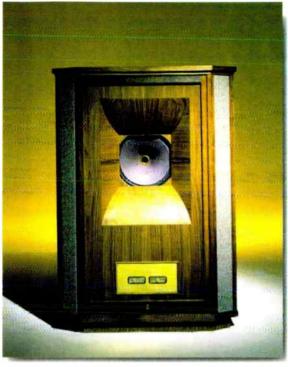
Although its styling makes it look like something from the early Baroque period, it does not sound old and limp. Actually, this is one of the fastest, most lithe and musical speakers you'll ever hear. This is down to a combination of its huge Dual Concentric driver in Tannoy's largest 15 inch (380mm) incarnation, and the awesome compound horn loaded 530 litre cabinet. The result is a mind boggling 99dB sensitivity figure, which even if powered by a Discman would most likely blow your windows out. Couple this to 225W RMS power

handling, thanks to the driver's premium spec twin roll fabric surround, Alnico magnet system and Tulip Waveguide, and you've got something that's louder than a Motorhead gig with the PA turned up

The frequency response characteristics are another reason to drop your jaw - the Westminster goes down to 18Hz (at -6dB), making it possibly the best ever loudspeaker for the likes of Roni Size and LTI Bukem - drum'n'bass will never sound the same again. Despite this the dual concentric tweeter manages 18kHz (at -6dB), which is just about decent enough for smooth treble. But couple it to Tannoy's Prestige SuperTweeter, and you're really talking.

With its massive power handling, tremendous sensitivity and subterranean bass characteristics, the Westminster can easily get the better of most PA stacks, but its air shifting abilities aren't really the point. Musicality is what this speaker has in spades, thanks to its lightening transient response (a drive unit with a magnet the size of China moving a featherweight paper cone is hardly going to be slow, now, is it?) There's also the fact that the Dual Concentric design crosses over acoustically at 200Hz and electrically at IkHz, both of which are a long way from the ear's most sensitive area. Factor in the Westminster's almost unique attribute of having an enclosure with a wavefront area approaching that of real instruments, and you can see why sound flows out of this behemoth so effortlessly.

The downsides of the Westminster are twofold. Firstly, with



Tannoy's Westminister Royal Dual Concentric loudspeaker

that huge paper cone flapping around in the breeze, there's quite a lot of cone distortion that you wouldn't get with stiffer, more advanced materials like Aerogel or Carbon Fibre. So don't expect it to be as refined, subtle and detailed as an electrostatic. The second problem is placing the darned things. Assuming you can afford to buy a pair, you'll have to be rich to own a listening room large enough to swallow two 1395x980x560mm boxes (or should that be buildings?). Oh, and best pay someone else to install the combined 276kg of heavily damped and

internally cross-braced solid walnut with 25 birch ply!

It's a shame that these loudspeakers are so comprehensively ignored in their home market of Great Britain. Ironic, considering that in Far East markets they're practically de rigeur for lovers of valves and vinyl. Used in conjunction with a decent single ended tube power amp and a well preserved Garrard/ SME/ Decca combination, there are few better ways to experience jazz music without going to New Orleans. Still, this latter option may be cheaper in the long run - if you can find a pair of Westminsters, expect to pay what the seller is asking, which will likely be at least a king's ransom.

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review

alive and kieking



Naim's long awaited '5 series' is finally here, offering punchier sound, superior finish and greater sophistication. David Price auditions the Nait 5 integrated.

emember the original Naim Nait? I do. After reading a glowing review of it back in 1986 in the now defunct Hi-Fi Review, I lusted after one for ages. When I finally got to a dealer for a dem, I realised it wasn't really for me. Although superbly musical, it was far too compromised in other respects and just not a practical solution to my upgrading problems.

The subsequent Naits (that's 2 and 3 - I presume 4 was omitted, thanks to it being an unlucky number in the far east?) were less extreme, but still far too out-on-a-limb for most hi-fi buyers. The 2 was little more than a I with slightly more power and neater styling, while the 3 was to the 2 what the 2 was to the I, if you see what I mean. By the time I reviewed the Nait 3 back in 1994 it was definitely a more practical proposition, but you still got the feeling you were buying something overly reminiscent of British hi- fi's 'cottage industry' past.

Against this background, the new 5 is a revelation - pull it out of the box and its new low-vibration cast and machined aluminium chassis feels as beautifully built as any of the company's high end stuff. Then there's the styling. I for one couldn't help thinking Naim's early nineties re-style wasn't very successful, so I wholeheart-

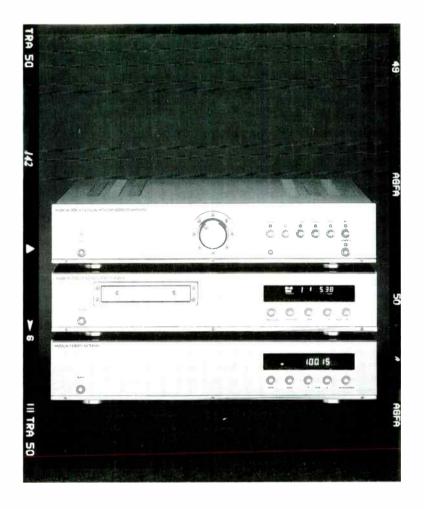
edly welcome the new '5 series' look with its styling cues taken from the company's flagship NAP 500 power amplifier.

OK, so the new front panel isn't going to win any Design Council awards but it looks neat, subtle, well judged and classy. Indeed, if Naim offered the option of a silver finish, you could even call it modern! Better still are the ergonomics. The simple row of backlit push buttons for source selection and muting are superb to the touch (far nicer than the slightly tacky feeling Nait 3) and lend an air of sophistication. Shame about that rough volume pot, though.

In truth though, none of the above have ever been Naim strengths. To its credit, through the years the company has remained unfashionably unconcerned with features and fittings, instead choosing to focus its gaze on the what lies within. Rather than fitting sonically dubious digital volume controls or crude motorised potentiometers, the preamp section has a discrete resistor ladder (a hard wired network of top quality, hand selected resistors) which acts just like an old fashioned volume pot, except that it's more accurate, reliable and quieter. The power amp section is a downsized version of the awesome NAP 500, offering faster signal transition times and better rejection of power supply noise. The new transformer has separate windings for the preamp and power amp circuits, and unlike the Nait 3 all preamp supplies are double regulated.

In total contrast to its predecessor, all six inputs on the Nait 5 are controlled by a microprocessor. This only powers up to interpret a button push, and then goes to 'sleep' again so as to not pollute the signal path with noise. By using this 'fly-by-wire' system, it means Naim can also offer userprogrammable gain matching for each input, a unity gain option for surround sound systems and remote controlled balance too. As per Nait 3, there's a preamp output for hooking up the brand new NAP 150 power amp, a plug-in power supply option for a FLATCAP (which can drive the Nait 5's preamp and a CD5 CD player at the same time), and the excellent sounding Stageline phono stage option. It's a very versatile set- up, with great flexibility and upgrade options built in as standard.

Naim customers are more sophisticated these days. Lest we forget, there was a time back in the 'flat earth' eighties when many of the company's acolytes wouldn't have a CD player in the house, let alone contemplate buying a remote control preamp.



A3 RANGE.

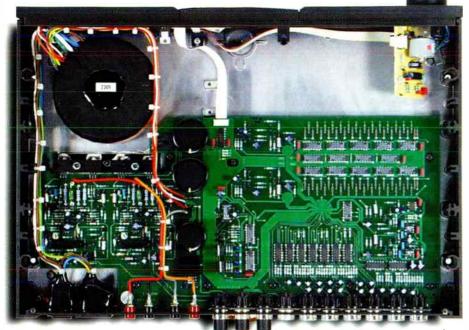
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POWERFUL, ROBUST, BUILT.



The trick Naim has had to play is to keep these extremists on board, whilst appealing to an altogether more 'real world' brand of listeners, those who've grown up used to the idea that you don't have to sandpaper your stylus at the end of every track. The key design objective of the Nait 5 was to embody this.

SOUND QUALITY

If, as LeCorbusier would have it, 'design is intelligence made visible', there are some very bright people at Salisbury right now. Despite its radical engineering changes, the unmistakable Naim sound is still very much there. First and foremost this means a delightfully strong, firm and tuneful bass - this amp takes any piece of music and frames it around the bassline. This becomes the architectural foundation for the rest of the mix - everything that subsequently appears in the music is woven into those all important low frequencies. Compare the Nait 5 to any other integrated, from Cyrus's 7 to Sonneteer's Alabaster, and its rivals seem soft and spongy by comparison. As sure as night follows day, the Nait 5 spotlights glaring weaknesses in the way these amps reproduce music, like it's saying 'look what they're doing wrong'.

The way the Nait 5 handles dynamics is totally unlike other

sub-£1000 integrateds. Amazingly, even at really high volume levels driving difficult loads, the baby Naim goes ever louder when the occasion demands it, while others run out of steam despite their higher 'on paper' output power. Driving my big Yamaha NS1000Ms hard (which have high sensitivity but are a nightmare load), the Nait just kept going louder without a hint of break-up, whereas lesser amps just lose it in the bass or trigger their thermal cut outs. The only better amps I've heard in this respect are Naim's own NAP250 and Musical Fidelity's XA-200 - every other one I've tested - valve or transistor, power amp or integrated has come off severely bruised after trying to wrestle my NS1000Ms at very high levels.

The combination of power and control is the key to the Naim sound, one which some love and others hate. Music suddenly becomes tremendously urgent and engaging, what ever it is you're listening to. Because basslines don't stop playing as soon as there's a loud bit elsewhere (i.e. a drum hit hard, or crashing piano cadences), you get a convincing sense of 'liveness'. If this is what you're after, no other integrated amp anywhere near the price comes even close.

The trouble starts when you begin to listen 'critically', rather than relaxing into the groove of the music. As you'd

expect, Chic's 'Good Times' is a feast of rhythms through the Nait 5, but the female singers' voices sounded just a touch too glassy. Those deliciously sumptuous strings - a jawdropping delight with valves - came across as generic and airbrushed, almost is if they'd been sampled. Those hi-hat cymbals that feather through

the song sweetly with other amps sounded grey, unatmospheric and rolled off through the Nait. It's lacking in other respects too. MJ Cole's 'Crazy Love' showed how the Cyrus 7 set up a considerably wider soundstage which really reached out of the speakers and grabbed you. The Nait 5 on the other hand seemed to be working on an altogether smaller canvas. Although image location was supremely tight and accurate within the soundstage, the soundstage itself reached out less both vertically and horizontally.

So, the new Nait 5 is nothing new inasmuch as it's a highly focused design which over-achieves dramatically in some respects, but is an also-ran in others. What's so great is the balance Naim has struck with its new baby it's so supremely capable at what it does well AND it now boasts similarly accomplished build, facilities, connectivity and upgradability. This makes it one hell of a bargain if a punchy 'transistor' sound is what you crave. It's arguably the world's best entrylevel audiophile amplifier right now, a sort of Subaru Impreza Turbo of the hi-fi world. True enough, compared to the Naim Nait 5, all other integrateds sound positively pedestrian.

Naim Nait 5 £799

Naim Audio Southampton Rd.

Salisbury Wilts SPI 2LN

Tel: 01722 332266

the wax

One of the great things about Naim amps is that vou can be sure thev'll have a quality phono stage. All Naits, from 1 to 3 have been well endowed in the vinyl department, and the 5 is no exception. This time though, Naim have used a separate box called the Stageline Impressively, you can drive it from a separate Flatcap or Hi-Cap PSU but even fed from the Nait 5 it sounds superb. Vinyl's naturally smooth and rich sonics seems to suit Naim phono stages down to the ground, complimenting their tight, detailed and fast character. The result is a wonderfully fluid and musical sound from MM or MC Nait 5 owners should have no hesistation choosing it over similarly priced rivals from other manufacturers.

WORLD VERDICT

An exquisitely musical, dynamic and punchy sound but flawed elsewhere. Superb build and ergonomics make it a far more accomplished all rounder, and one of hi-fi great bargains right now.

Measured Performance see page 111



review

T-FA, VERY

The latest in a fast developing line of 'audiophile' DVD players hails from the



hen the first few DVD players from the likes of Panasonic seeped onto the market, many audio reviewers' ears pricked up at the smooth, sophisticated sound, especially with 24/96 audio recordings. As the public became more interested in the format, things tailed off at the audiophile end slightly and the next generation of models concentrated on what's essentially the bread and butter of the Digital Versatile Disc, visuals.

What goes around comes around however, and in addition to high-end DVD models from Meridian and TAG McLaren Audio we've recently seen UK audio companies such as Arcam and NAD launch AV products with the emphasis on audio performance. They're not alone - DVD players from specialist hi-fi companies such as Musical Fidelity, Roksan and Sonneteer are imminent.

Another company renowned for its audio products trying out the choppy DVD waters is German highend manufacturer T+A, with the DVD 1210R. Until very recently 'Theory plus Application' was little known outside Germany and Scandinavia. The company was founded in Herford, Germany in 1978 and started by designing transmission line and active loudspeakers. Now the product range is so varied it even includes CD players, amplifiers, loudspeakers and other electronics, including digital A/V

systems in the Meridian mould, plus its own TV.

However, there's no hint of 'Jack of all trades, master of none' about T+A. Although its heart remains in true audiophile hi-fi, it has put equal time, research and preparation into every product. Like Naim, the distinctive 'house' looks are functional and cool, concentrating on what's inside as opposed to flashy front panel adornments. It's this deep belief in true hi-fi that benefits the DVD1210R. Whilst other manufacturers' high end DVD players simply don't match their similarly-priced CD players (Denon's £1,500 DVD-5000 springs to mind), the DVD1210R most certainly does.

HIGH TECH

The drive mechanism used in the 1210R is a pressure cast chassis with linear laser guidance and two matched lasers of different wavelengths, each designed specifically for DVD and CD discs. It also reads CD-R/RW discs and the trademark slimline but solid casework ensures very little vibration indeed. The DVD 1210R also uses the same dual mains power supply unit as the 1210R CD player, which has separate sections for digital and analogue circuits with separate transformers. Number crunching is by 24/192 digital converters used in double mono, symmetrical mode, leaving the 1210R

potentially upgradeable to DVD-A.

Round the back we have three digital outputs, one coaxial in stereo mode for an external stereo DAC or digital recording use, plus one optical and one coaxial for connection to a surround processor. Analogue outputs are limited to stereo only (two sets), the lack of surround analogue outputs showing the 1210R has no internal decoder, like Philips' DVD960 'audiophile' player. Presumably the manufacturers think discerning buyers will appreciate the advantages of an external processor, or alternatively could be showing that this is predominantly an audio player that also happens to play DVD discs. On the video connection side we have a SCART AV output, coaxial video out and an s- video socket.

One of the most impressive and interesting aspects of the player lies in its four digital audio filters. The 1210R employs a programmable digital signal processor which can use digital filters capable of better oversampling than that found in 'off the shelf filters, the company claims. In addition to the ordinary filter setting (long FIR) there is a short FIR filter [1], an IIR [2], a Bezier/IIR [3] and pure Bezier type [4]. These four filters all have different but subtle tonal characteristics that proved effective and fun to play with. The look of the player is one of sleek sophistication. This is deceptive as it's

MUCH

German high-end engineering company T+A. Simon Pope is suitably impressed.



not
the easiest of
machines to use once
you're slouched on the sofa with the
remote, although the front panel has
an unusual bounty of controls when
compared to the competition.

MUSIC TO THE EYES

Hard work usually pays off, and all the hours put into the DVD1210R results in one of the finest sounding DVD players around. It really deserves the branding 'hi-fi' and all the trappings that come with it. When one listens to a DVD player these days you can't help judging the sound of it with a certain amount of trepidation. Most punters buy them because they play films and also happen to do audio very much as a second fiddle. Not so here. Indeed, I completely forgot I was listening to a DVD player because it spins CDs so damned well!

Everything I put into the drawer achieved a sense of detail and smoothness that is the mark of a true high end CD player. The Smashing Pumpkins' 'Machina' blasted through my Mission 782 'speakers

control. Most important was the fact that I could hear everything that was going on, which is no mean feat as this is one pretty tripe recording! It's as if the producer got a little too drunk one night and tried every outboard effects unit in the studio, all at once. The result is a sound which demands the best equipment to bring out every layer in the mix, which the T+A did without any problems. Billy Corgan's Kermitlike vocals were detailed and forward, with just the right amount of sibilance while the awesome drumming of the opening track beat away behind, every nuance and cymbal hit clear as a bell. When the guitars became a bit too grating, a swift run through the filters smoothed out the edges very subtly.

Next I trawled through my usual array of acoustic review discs such as Copland's Fanfare For The Common Man on Reference recordings, Eric Bibb and Needed Time's 'Good Stuff' on Opus 3 and Beth Orton's 'Trailerpark'. All were reproduced with control, sensitivity and involvement in equal measures, each one passing the essential 'toe tap test' - and when you tap your toes to music you don't particularly care for,

you know your hi-fi is doing its job.

Remembering that this thing actually played video discs as well, I loaded up Karajan conducting the Vienna Philharmonic in Dvorak's ninth symphony (with such as musical sounding player, it hardly merited The Matrix) and linked it up via SCART into the TV. Getting the settings sorted was a bit of a hassle, especially with the slightly ambiguous remote but once I was up and running in two-channel mode the performance was excellent. Picture quality was natural and clear and for a moment I was transformed into the Musikverein's front row watching the old man wag his stick at first hand. This is where blockbuster movie haters can still benefit from the DVD format. The whole point of hi-fi (correct me if I'm wrong here) has always been to bring live performance into the home, so you could theoretically say that, at this level, DVD is one step closer to this, with the prospect of DVD-A a further leap forward.

The DVD1210R is a bit of a rarity among DVD players because you basically forget it is one! In direct opposition to the majority of the competition, this machine plays music so well that it's worth considering as a primary music source that just happens to play films, rather than the other way round. If I have any complaints, it's that it can sometimes sound unmistakably Teutonic (i.e. a little sterile and dry), but it's always controlled and detailed. So if you're thinking of buying a CD player at this price, give yourself an earful.

T+A DVD 1210R £1,500 BBG Distribution Ltd. Unit 3 Barrett Way Tudor Rd. Harrow Middlesex HA3 5QS Tel: 020 8863 9117



makes music its priority.

Measured

Performance see page 111





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MERIDIAN	M33 (PAIR) ACTIVE	£1199	RE, SO, STW
MERIDIAN	DSP5000 DIGITAL ACTIVE	£2699	SO, STW
MERIDIAN	A500	£499	STW
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MISSION	783 (BEECH)	6693	NEW NEW
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	•		
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KEF	55S (WHITE) SURROUND	99	PL
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MERIDIAN	M60 CENTRE	£899	STW
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LETTER OF THE MONTH

LET'S GET PHYSICAL

Dear David.

First let us get one bit of nonsense out of the way. Of course MP3 has a physical form! You may not be able to pick it up like a CD or a record (unless you count picking up the complete hard disk) but it is there on your hard disk. You can (with a small enough pointer) point to exactly where it is. Even when being downloaded it has physical form. If you don't think electricity is physical, try sticking your finger into the nearest three-pin socket!

As to MP3, you seem to miss one important point. It exists for one reason only, bandwidth. Currently, and you must stress the currently, we haven't got the bandwidth available to transmit the full musical content (taking, for now. CD as representative of full musical content.) The rule of thumb is that processor power doubles every 18 months. Bandwidth is doubling in less time than this, and don't forget that we are considerably behind the States. MP3 is going to have a considerably shorter life than CD.

This in itself will probably dictate

that the digital component of your hi-fi system will be a PC, simply because it is cheaper to change software rather than hardware. Hardware will have its place. My soundcard can take input from either my DAT player, CD player or CD recorder, and store it for re- transmitting to either of the recorders. I eventually expect a combination of hardware and software to handle DAB, SACD and DVDA. One problem. PCs are currently just so noisy, I can't have it running for serious listening. As for my (huge) vinyl collection? Well first it keeps growing as people ditch their collections and I can't resist the bargains!

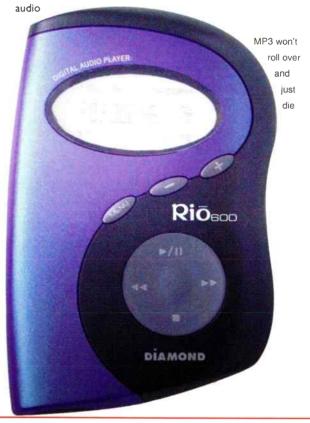
I'm one of those people who don't believe that YET you can tear the Mona Lisa into a million pieces (bits) and then stick it back together and expect it to look the same! When the sampling rate and word size has significantly increased you will need even more bandwidth. It will happen. At that time CD will be recognised as a stepping stone. One of the DVD formats will probably be significant. MP3 will be lucky to get a mention!

Anton Britten anton@ab-computing.com

Hi Anton, Well, yes, if you want to be completely pedantic then atomic

particles have a physical form too.

What I was trying to do was to draw a distinction between formats and media. Traditionally, they've been conjoined - CD for example, is a 16/44 PCM digital



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format stored on a 650MB optical disc medium. MP3 and the new generation of compressed formats can be stored on all variety of media, from hard drives to memory cards to CDs, and more. For me at least, this is a very exciting development and makes music potentially far more accessible.

You're right to say that MP3 is simply a line drawn in the sand - a format that's become popular due to a particular set of historical, cultural and technological circumstances. When bandwidth increases and importantly - the cost of flash card memory decreases (industry insiders predict it will drop to one quarter of its current price in one year from now) - then another format will come along. My bet is that MPEG4 will be this year's big thing (with AAC as a subset), but MP3 is still a massive 'legacy' music resource. As vinyl proves, popular formats don't die overnight!

I completely agree that the digital components of hi-fi systems will start migrating to computers. In fact, they're already doing it, as Sony's new VAIO audio computer shows. I'm now running two systems, one computer based for general audio duties - including making music compilations for portables, the car and casual listening - plus international radio listening (streamed over the Net) and vinyl archiving. My other system has become my 'shrine to vinyl', highly tuned and focussed on this fantastic format. It also runs a CD player and DAT, which plays stuff recorded on my audio computer, plus my CD collection. I seem to have evolved this arrangement and it works very well, and I suspect many other people are doing the same.

How important MP3 will be in the scheme of things ultimately doesn't amount to a hill of beans. Of course, I've been enthusiastically arguing its case, but I'm really talking about it as a generic term for 'digitally downloadable music' (including AAC, WMA etc). I don't actually worship at the altar of MP3's coding algorithm at night - actually my true passion is analogue which is a completely different kettle of fish! No, I just love the possibilities and the potential for music fans opened up by the Internet and music portals in general. DP

CONTROLLED DEVICES

Dear Hı-Fı World.

I hope you may be able to advise me on my current dilemma. I am looking to upgrade my amplifier and speaker combination but I'm having more difficulty fulfilling all the criteria than I anticipated.

I currently own an Audiolab 8000C/P driving Linn Keilidhs with an Arcam Delta 250 Transport / BB50 DAC. I actually quite like many aspects of the sound including the punchy quality and the way the music is projected into the room. Unfortunately, when the going gets tough the system falls apart. Complicated multi-layered tracks with difficult rhythms seem to become messy, as does harsher sounding rock. I'd like to find a system with better control in difficult circumstances. A little more detail and warmth wouldn't go amiss either.

My local Sevenoaks Hi-Fi has been knocking out Monitor Audio Studio 50s on the cheap, so I went along, initially thinking they might work with the Audiolabs. Apparently not. The treble and midrange detail improved dramatically although had a slightly zingy sound and the control under pressure was amazing. Unfortunately, all bass weight and warmth had disappeared and it sounded like a satellite/subwoofer combination without the subwoofer. I then tried the Ruark Talisman IIs. These had a nice overall sound but were lacking in the drama department and sounded a bit flat. Next I tried the Monitor Audios with a Musical Fidelity A3CR pre/power combo. This was massively bottom heavy and all the mid and treble detail got overwhelmed. I had high hopes for that combination too.

Finally, I booked a demonstration at a different dealer and I got to listen to some ProAc floorstanders (I forget the model) and some KEF Reference 2 - both driven by my Audiolabs. They both sounded quite good although the ProAcs seemed to lack a bit of bass weight, something I suspected was down to my amp. Unfortunately, there wasn't enough time to even shortlist them let alone make a decision,

That's where I am now. In an ideal world, I'd find an amp to go with the Monitor Audio Studio 50s. This is mainly because Sevenoaks Hi-Fi (Bromley) have been really helpful and patient, allowing me home trials and plenty of time sitting around in their listening room. Ultimately though, the music comes first so the right equipment must take priority. I have

£4000 to £5000 to spend and listen to everything - Jazz, Dance, Rock, Classical, Peruvian Ritual Folk Music and anything else I can get my hands on.

Someone, somewhere knows the answer.

Gareth Cameron

I hate to say it, as it's probably the last thing that you want to hear, but there are plenty of options open to you. Alas, we only have a certain number of pages reserved for letters. So here's my particular suggestions.

Firstly, you say that you'd appreciate a little more warmth in the sound, plus detail as well as control. In that case, ditch the Audiolabs. Whilst they're fairly controlled and powerful, the sound can often be a little cold and hard. This can also be the case with the Studio 50s and putting them both together could well take your fillings out. The Arcam pairing is also knocking on a bit and can sound a little dull if put into the wrong situation, i.e. the one they're in now, so your source could do with sprucing up.

The first, and by far the easiest, option is to sell everything, pop down to Sevenoaks and ask to listen to the Linn system I reviewed last month. The Genki CD/Kolektor pre/LK140 power and Ninka 'speaker set-up is one not to be sniffed at. Whilst the individual components won't work quite as well in a hotch-potch arrangement, together they're very impressive. The new Ninka 'speakers replace your existing Keilidhs and improve on them in many ways. They're more three-dimensional, with deep but taut bass weight and a real kick, yet in a Linn system they can also sound warm and detailed. The whole shebang will set you back no more than £3,500 including Linn cables, if you so wish.

My second suggestion would be to perhaps try the Musical Fidelity A3CR pair again, this time with the KEF Reference 2s. The big, civilised sound of the KEFs will balance out the transparency of the MFs and you'll get a mixture that could take some beating. This would leave you a grand or so to spend on a CD player, for which I would go with Arcam's CD23 in the FMJ series which has good tonal balance that shouldn't mess with the overall sound, and is very easy on the ear.

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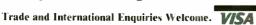
loudspeaker cables in Silver Plated Copper or Pure Silver. Our mains cables add weight, power and scale, and with non-inductive RF filtering (£10.00) and overvoltage protection (£3.00) enhance performance still further. Gold plated AV eables, both RF (£19.95) and OFC Scart with PTFE insulation (£19.21), help bring picture quality in line with NICAM sound resolution.

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Thirdly, you could take the valve option. A good choice would be the excellent Copland CDA289 CD player matched with the their 30W, CTA-402 pure valve integrated. This isn't the treacly smooth sound much beloved of many old school valve heads, but rather the combination has oodles of detail and spark, mixed with sophistication in buckets, courtesy of those vacuum tubes. These two will cost you around £3,700 leaving £1,300 to make up your £5,000 budget. You'd need a pair of 'speakers with relatively high sensitivity to cope with the output of the CTA-402 (your power hungry Keilidhs are out of the picture here). You could go for B&W's DM605 S2s for £1,400. With a sensitivity of 91dB, these have excellent bass control and a big, open sound. Alternatively there's KEF's new revamped Reference One-Two at £1,350, or even Mission's £1,000 783s with their mix of punchy drive, deep bass and detail.

Whichever route you take I hope your Peruvian pan pipes sound a little more detailed. **SP**



The 783s could feature in your set up

BACK TO BASS-ICS

Ny system comprises a Garrard 401 m hear. MDF plinth St. E 3009/Lir K5 Sony CDP 21 r Cyrus 1 Mk II, Denon TU260 tuner Linr K2 speaker cable and Mordaunt Short MS20 speakers It used to sound preat when I lived in London where the living room was almost square with a high calling My new flat in the sticks is an affic conversion. The living room is fairly long the walls pent upwards from around 1.5 metres from the floor and the ceiling is only just over 2 metres. Due to restrictions in layout my speakers fire across the room and I'm sure they'l be better firing down from the ricinowend in Lordon the system really filled the room with warmth all around and was very punchy in the bass, now it is very loose.

I really don't want to spend too much as we're saving to buy a place, so I can't afford mistakes, hence the letter. How can I get my mund bass back for a few hundred guid. Should I put the old SME plug cable back buy a Goldring 10+2 as I tend to trink or change the speakers as the problem was there with my old 1022. In your December issue you rated the Tannoy Merchy min 3 highly but Riche. Sounds are currently selling the Audrik Symphony 6 for only £200 or should I consider a sub-woofer? I like the idea of floorstanders for appearance and us I like my bass. I listen to almost anything bar reggae, but my taste varies from classical, folk, modern jazz to quite a lot of dance music and electionic.

Paul Rizzardi.

Ironically, your last room had theoretically inferior acoustics to your present attic flat. Square listening rooms are an acoustic nightmare, a breeding ground for standing waves that hang around and muddy the sound. Part of that fulsome bass was, I suspect, actually coloration added by your room. It just so happens that you'd assuaged your acoustic nasties by using a brightish cartridge. Now

you've moved to a more neutral room your system's true colours are showing.

As vinyl's your main source, start with the cartridge. As you already have a Goldring body, a 1042 is the easiest upgrade. It's a far more symbiotic match than your K5, which is well off the pace these days. Next, rather than going for a new set of budget floorstanders, I'd get a REL Q50 subwoofer, simply because it lets you tune your system to what is an unfamiliar and potentially difficult room better. Also, by going this way you're giving yourself more leeway to experiment with positioning of your existing speakers.

The Tannoy mx3s are indeed excellent loudspeakers, and might give a quick fix. You'd find they're faster and better extended than your old MS20s, but they still may not add the oomph you're after thanks to their more even upper bass response. True, they go down lower, but also lack the Mordaunt Shorts' upper bass peak which is already injecting some perceived weight into the sound. It's a common mistake to assume floorstanders instantly add bass they'll extend it, but not necessarily increase the amount unless they're positioned too near a wall or corner, in which case they'll ruin the sound. No, in your unusually dimensioned room, a high quality sub matched to smallish standmounters should work much better. After this, an OL RB250 tonearm upgrade should tighten things up even more. DP



The Rel subwoofer will add that extra bit of oomph





world mail



The Cyrus 7 could have the tonal balance you require

"REBUILD BLUES

I have been extremely happy with my system for several years, but have just had the Quad ELS 57s rebuilt and suddenly things don't seem to be quite as satisfying as they were. The amplifier especially suddenly seems a bit unadventurous. My usual equipment comprises: Quads, FM4, CD63SE. Origin Livel Ortofon 510/ Creek OBH-8SE, Sony MDS-JE520 and a Leak Stereo 20.

I have recently tried my bedroom amp in the system, a Rotel RB890 which has good detail but no depth or warmth. At the moment I have a Mission Cyrus One which is a good cross between the two other amps but the input switch is dodgy. I can get round it by using the record switch with the input to tape and the recorder on, but wonder if I should consider a new amp and if so which? At what level?

The system seems well balanced and at this stage I can't upgrade everything to the level the Quads would probably justify. The Cyrus is a surprise. It seems to punch well above its weight. The Rotel is in theory much more powerful (I assume) but soon runs out of grunt into the Quads. I suppose I could consider getting the Mission fixed but its getting on a bit and can I get spares?

Gordon Steadman

What an amazing mish-mash! A Leak Stereo 20 and an old Cyrus One? It's like saying you run a Bentley and an old Escort RS2000 and quite like both! In truth, the Leak is potentially far superior to the Cyrus, but could be a bit past it and sounding flat and squidgy. The Cyrus sounds the opposite - bubbly but one dimensional. The question you have

to ask yourself is do you like that forward transistor sound, or will you go the way of the thermionic valve? If it's the former, then consider the new Cyrus 7, which is a cracking tranny amp with much of the Leak's refinement and most of the Cyrus One's vim. If you haven't got £800 to spend and want to take a punt on the second-hand scene, then a late model Mission Cyrus Two (and possibly PSX) would do just fine for around £250. As for fixing the One, Cyrus could probably do it for you quite cheaply, or it's hardly impossible to do yourself with a soldering iron. But then you'd still be left with an amp you're not completely happy with, so I'd consign it to the attic. Another way, possibly better long term, would be to get your Leak amp rebuilt by GT Audio - a properly fettled Stereo 20 is an excellent sounding device by any standards. SP

"WE WILL ROCK YOU

Hi-fi World continues to be excellent, with a coherent point of view and an interesting mix of articles. One I particularly like is 'Olde Worlde', but you haven't yet featured the idiosyncratic Townshend Rock, which has some interesting features, and merits some recognition as un interesting contrast to the Linn philosophy. I gather from DP's comments you don't think much of it. The standard item may well not be up to modern standards, but it's very amenable to tweaking, and this might change your minds about any inclusion in a future issue, especially as they're sometimes available second-hand

The tuneurm can be easily rewred, the motor upgraded, and a separate power supply added. I find the Manticore PS quite excellent. With a dedicated wall mount to effect isolation, and an Audio Technica OC9, the sound is detailed and crisp, and the presentation utterly stable. I have been using the Rock in various guises for years, always with AT cartridges, since these seem to suit the deck well, but now the OC9 is quite difficult to find. Could you suggest a good alternative.'

Roger Simmonds

Don't get me wrong, Roger, we at World really rate the Rock. It certainly has a small but signifcant place in the great hi-fi scheme of things. As you rightly say, it's very tweakable - like many high end turntables - and is capable of excellent results if meticulously prepared. My original comment a couple of months ago was simply observing that a new Michell Orbe is ultimately a better all rounder, as you'd expect it to be with many years of subsequent development. Doesn't make the Rock a bad deck though, far from it. Cartridges are a tricky issue, as the Rock needs a peppy performer. If you're looking for a mid-price MC then go for a Lyra Lydian Beta which has Audio Technica-like get up and go, albeit with superior musicality. If you're on a tighter budget then Dynavector's DV20X-L is the one to use with an MC phono stage under £300. Another tweak to try is a Base SP-OI sub-table placed under the deck on the wall mounted isolation platform. DP =



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The latest news, including a close look at Sony's new VAIO audio computer

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We go to Japan to bring you the low down on all the latest AAC portables

Creative Labs DAP Jukebox 55, 57

This cracking new audio player gets an in-depth test from David.

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STORAGE WAR HEATS UP

It's probably fair to say that the market for digital music portables is at least equivalent to the number of Napster users, which is currently put at 30 million. As a result, a battle is now emerging amongst developers of storage media to fit them. Flash memory is currently the favoured solution - made by the likes of SanDisk, Samsung, Toshiba, Hitachi and Sony, it can be found in virtually all MP3 players right now, despite being relatively expensive. Nevertheless, SanDisk predict sales rising from 4 million in 2000 to 7.8 million next year and 13.3 million in 2002. Still, there's a sense that there's a gap in the market for cheaper music storage. Last year lomega introduced the PocketZip disk (formerly known as Clik), which is a cute 40MB disk one quarter of the size of a CD that sells for around £15. Now, DataPlay has announced a rival system that stores

500MB for around £15.
The company hopes to have the disks on UK shop shelves

computer audio

by mid-2001. Whether this will be needed depends on the price of flash memory though. Currently, huge demand for it in devices like mobile phones and digital cameras has kept supply short and prices high. But with new factories being built to manufacture it, prices are predicted to drop by 75% within a year from now, from \$2 per MB to 50 cents. Meanwhile, lomega has announced a portable audio player that uses both flash memory cards and disk systems, called the HipZip, and Creative Labs now has its hard disk-based DAP Jukebox, which gets a full review on page 55.

SONY HAS IT ALL

October 2000 saw the Japanese launch of Sony's PCV-MX3K VAIO audio computer, the first ever PC offering fully integrated audio capability. Boasting CD, MiniDisc and FM Stereo sources, plus full MP3 functionality and optional DVD and TV/Video, it catapults computer audio and multimedia into the 21st century. The sleek main unit comes with an orange backlit LC display showing everything from radio station names to CD text, and there's bundled 'OpenMG Jukebox' software offering fully integrated recording and dubbing between CD, MD and MP3 sources using Sony's proprietary ATRAC 3 codec.

The front panel of the computer has a large rotary volume control knob with a dedicated 'record' button. There's also a front mounted headphone jack and USB socket for portable audio devices. There's extensive control options in software, including source selection, tone controls, recording quality etc., as well as the most comprehensive timer record facility yet seen on any audio device, using Sony's 'Media Bar MX Stage' software.

A one bit Delta Sigma DAC does digital conversion duties, and a 2x10W RMS amp is included onboard to drive the matching ported VAIO loudspeakers. There's a built-in modem for music downloads, and plenty of room to

hard drive. Full MPEG I and 2 capability is included, and there are also two remote controls to play with! It's an amazing package, and Japanese AV retailers tell Computer Audio World that it's proving a

real sales success in its native Japan. We hope Sony bring it over here as soon as possible, but if you want to see more you can always point your web browser at www.vaio.sony.co.jp/

RADIOHEAD - COMPUTERS OK!

Radiohead's US record label Capitol Records has attributed much of the success of the band's new album to its online marketing activities. Radiohead's new 'Kid A' album was extensively promoted on the Internet, using an on-demand listening promotion involving one thousand web sites, as well as strong pre-release marketing. Ironically, the album was also available on Napster in its entirety for quite some time before the album was released in the UK or The States, but there's no way of telling whether this helped or hindered its sales. Capitol's press release declined to mention the online file swapping site at all, which is curious considering the band's recent pro-MP3, pro-Napster pronouncements!

SONY GETS REAL

Sony and RealNetworks have gone into partnership in a bid for music format supremacy. Sony's ATRAC audio codec forms the back end of the latest RealAudio player, claimed to make RealPlayer sound better than ever at high compression rates. Sony can now put a recognized face on ATRAC, which to all but MiniDisc devotees is a pretty anonymous technology. The deal also means all Sony devices will support RealAudio from this year.

www.realaudio.com

BOXMAN SHUTS

Swedish online music retailer Boxman has closed down, and may go into voluntary liquidation if it can't find a buyer. Another 'dot com' casuality, the company's backers include pop bands Roxette and Ace of Base. As recent as last year it was considered a leading music software retailer, operating for three years in eight European countries and claiming over 700,000 customers.

www.boxman.com

remember pounding the streets of Tokyo during Japan's scorchingly hot summer of 1998, in search of new and interesting audio/visual happenings. MiniDisc was the big thing at the time, and Sharp and Sony were fighting it out doggedly in every electronics and 'camera' store I visited for MD portable supremacy. DVD was still very much in its early days (and still is, arguably) so there was little of any interest in the portables field, bar a couple of notable exceptions from Panasonic and Pioneer.

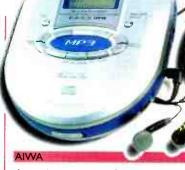
Now, as I write this at the end of 2000, things couldn't be more different. Cassette has almost totally disappeared off Japanese shop shelves and MiniDisc has the feel of a mature format whose aura of excitement is waning, if not its actual sales. Whereas the CD portables market of two years ago was bristling with new and exciting designs, today there's little new to look at. DVD's growing steadily, but the real action has been in - yes, you've guessed it - MP3 players, or "digital audio portables" to use the name everyone's adopting right now. (Lets ignore the fact that CD, MD and DVD walkies also technically come within this ambit!)

Whether it's a shopping arcade in Kichijoji frequented by the general public, or Shinjuku's Yodobashi Camera which attracts audio geeks from miles around, MP3 is

Sony VAIO audio PC's front panel includes MD drive

Sanyo has surprised many

by its early entry into the digital audio portables market, and the quality of the products it is offering. Whereas Panasonic has put all its eggs in the one AAC basket, Sanyo has taken the more sensible approach of offering dual format MP3/AAC players. It too is doing players in both the traditional 'walkman' and new 'headphone' designs, but is offering lower prices. Sanyo's SSP-HP7 is a headphone product that costs just Y37,000 (£225). The specs are lower than the Panasonic though, as it offers just 32MB of memory from its MultiMedia (MMC) card and higher weight at 154g. It also has 1.5mW lower power output at 3.5mW per side. Again connection is by USB, and the player comes bundled with Sanyo's version of the Liquid player, a set-up CD, batteries and carrying case. The conventionally styled SSP-PD7 offers the same features in a sleek (38.6x 83.5x 24.8mm), metallic finish case weighing 58g complete with MMC card. There's a backlit, dot-matrix LC display, too. www.sanyo.co.jp/STS/



An early entrant - as far as the Japanese are concerned at least -Aiwa's range now comprises the Y39,900 (£240) MM-FX500 `portable MP3 recorder' and the Y23,000 (£140) CD/MP3 player. The former is a neat looking conventional MP3 walkie weighing in at 77g and measuring 65x89.9x18.7mm. The twist is that it's got a built in microphone which records voice content in MP3 format for storage on your computer hard drive, making it just perfect for student lectures. It's nicely made with 32MB of MMC storage, and features a wired remote control and headphones. The XP-MP3 is essentially a CD walkman using a data CD-ROM drive, allowing it read MP3 music CDs written on computer data CD-Rs. It comes with

all the usual Discman features, but



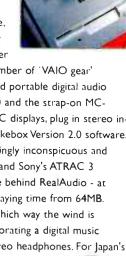
SONY

Sony's October 2000 launch of its stunning VAIO audio computer (as featured in this month's news section) looks set to do much to advance the cause of multi-format. multimedia music. But there's more, because the Japanese giant is never one to rest on its laurels. November

25th, 2000 saw the release of a number of 'VAIO gear' products, including two stick-shaped portable digital audio players, the pendant styled MC-S50 and the strap-on MC-PTTW. Both feature dinky backlit LC displays, plug in stereo inear phones and Sony's OpenMG Jukebox Version 2.0 software. Weighing a mere 33g, they're amazingly inconspicuous and look superb. Both run WMA, MP3 and Sony's ATRAC 3 format, soon to form the backbone behind RealAudio - at 105kbps this gives 80 minutes of playing time from 64MB. However, Sony's MC-PHI signals which way the wind is blowing, in Japan at least, by incorporating a digital music player into one side of a set of stereo headphones. For Japan's youth, phones are a potent fashion accessory, so these should go down just great! Finally,

Sony is also offering the PCGA-JRI which is a USB digital walkie which connects direct to one of Sony's Psion-style personal organisers. At the time of going to press, prices on all these have yet to be announced.

www.vaio.sony.co.jp/





everywhere. With characteristic pragmatism and interest in the new, the Japanese have taken to this format - and indeed its rivals - with unbelievably little fuss. Whereas the British audio scene feels it has to take some kind of overarching 'pro' or 'anti' stance (usually the latter, unfortunately), the Japanese simply regard computer audio as an exciting new audio possibility.

However, while British and US music portals have burgeoned, the Japanese have been a bit slower off the mark in this respect. This has meant that most Nipponese fans of 'e-music' either go to Napster like the rest of the world, or to their domestic record company sites for

downloadable sounds. The hardware side of things has also been slow off the mark too, arriving too late to make any mark in 1999 or 2000. However, the big Japanese companies are finally in on the act, and boy have they come up trumps. If you expected Sony, Sharp and Sanyo versions of pre-existing US designed, Korean built MP3 portables, then you're very wide of the mark. The big Japanese audio manufacturers are now launching a raft of extremely impressive - almost stunning - products which remind us that it's the 21st century we're living in science fiction is rapidly becoming science fact! Here's the pick of the bunch:



TOSHIBA

In a daring deviation from accepted convention, Toshiba calls its MEAIIOAS a 'mobile audio player'. Aside from that, its specs aren't radically different to Panasonic's SV-SD70, which means 64MB from a sleek oblong case measuring 50x97x12.5mm and weighing a middling 75g. The player is another dual format AAC/MP3 design, running the former at 128, 64 and 32kbps giving around 60, 120 and 240 minutes playing time respectively. It comes in (G), (D) and (P) variants, marking out its pale blue, orange and pink secondary colour schemes respectively. There's a fine pitch backlit display and Toshiba bundles its 'Audio Manager' software. Price is to be confirmed at the time of writing. www.toshiba.co.jp/mobileav/

www.sharp.co.jp



The strikingly styled WA-HPI is Sharp's entry into the digital portable fray, a headphone model featuring a display set into the middle of the headband, rather than in one of the earpieces. It comes in three lurid finishes, from the carbon fibre-look -ZB and blue flame -ZA to the dreadful plastic wood veneer effect -ZC (last seen on Korean car dashboards!) Y48,000 (£295) buys you the package which includes 64MB from a Sharp MagicGate Memory Stick (a la Sony), rechargeable battery and charger. Dodgy colour schemes aside, it's a slick product which weighs just 149g all in, and includes a USB connector and top notch software. ATRAC 3 and MP3 comes as standard, but there's no AAC compatibility as yét.

PANASONIC Matsushita's mass market AV brand offers the SV-SD01, a digital audio player in the shape of a pair of stereo headphones with a confirmed price of Y49,800 (£300). Using Panasonic SD cards (in either 32MB or 64MB), this player runs AAC at 128, 96 or 64kbps bitrates, giving 64, 86 or 129 minute playing times respectively. Weight is quoted at 104g including card, and the frequency response 20Hz-20kHz -

which is AAC's theoretical limit anyway. Bundled with Panasonic's SD-Jukebox software, the player hooks up to your PC via a USB interface. Panasonic also offer the SV-SD70, which is a more conventionally styled design retailing for the same price. It features a cool looking backlit inverted LC display and comes with a strap that lets you wear it like a watch. Together, these new AAC players should give Panasonic a weighty market presence, and extra cred amongst computer audiophiles thanks to its single-minded adoption of AAC.

www.panasonic.co.jp/avc/audio.



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DAPS David Price is enraptured by the possibilities of Creative Labs' new DAP Jukebox digital audio player.

ranco de Bonis has a good reason to be a happy man he's European Brand Manager for Creative Labs' Audio products. In that capacity, he's demonstrating the company's brand new DAP Jukebox to a group of assembled computer scribes on a rainy Dublin Friday afternoon. Yours truly is present at this assembled gathering of hungover hacks (Guinness, Dublin, journalists geddit?), struggling to keep my eyes open during the morning after the night before. But as soon as Franco announces the DAP, I'm sitting bolt upright, thinking, "wow!" This new gadget from Creative Labs is by any standards a landmark product for audio, very much a taste of things to come.

Although it looks - rather disingenuously in my opinion - like a conventional CD Discman, there's actually no CD transport inside at all. Rather, nestling on a densely packed circuit board is a small 2.5inch notebook-grade 6GB hard drive. This is a dedicated device specifically designed to store music data files. Although visually similar to any other IDE drive, Creative say the firmware has been rewritten to optimise it for accessing large music files at high speeds.

How many music files? Well, that

all depends on the quality that you encode them, but given that an average pop song in reasonably good 128kbps MP3 format takes 4MB, that's around 1,500 songs or around 150 CDs-worth! Even if you want the best 320kbps quality option, you're still talking around 650 songs, equivalent to a shed-load of MiniDiscs or cassettes. Last but not least, it also records pure, uncompressed 16/44 PCM as WAV files. This means you can make identical, bit-for-bit digital copies of music CDs and store them on the DAP - the only downside being that at around 60MB per song, you can 'only' record about a hundred before you run out of disc space. Pretty impressive, huh? I thought so too.

Outside, its 125x37x125mm clamshell case boasts a slick 55x28m backlit alphanumeric liquid crystal display. There's a smattering of control buttons on top, including Play, Forward, Reverse and Stop, plus rocker switches for navigating menus and special keys for Library and EAX (Environmental Audio eXtension, natch). Underneath is a battery box taking AA cells, into which four supplied NiMH rechargeables go Creative say they last four hours, which isn't far off the mark.

Round the back are three 3.5mm

stereo minijacks, including two LINE OUTs and a LINE IN to 'record' CD, MD or DAT sources, or even your LP12/Linto. There's also a headphone socket, power point and - most usefully - a USB connector. The latter means quick and easy connection to PCs, as well as that vital hi-fi lifeline, a direct digital audio feed. A TOSLINK optical digital in and out would have been nice, though.

PLAYING THE UKEBOX

So, what does it do then? The answer is 'not much without the bundled Playcentre 2 software'. It's a daft name for an impressive bit of code which gives the DAP tremendous power and versatility. It consists of two windows, one showing all the music on your PC, the other the music on the DAP Jukebox. You can then move your music to and fro at the click of a button.

Specifically, Playcentre 2 has a number of ways of looking for music on your PC. One is 'My Computer', which accesses your entire hard drive. Another is 'PC Music Library' which is a special folder on your computer you've designated to store your fave choons. You can also look at the CD loaded into your CD-ROM drive, whether it's a

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conventional audio CD or an MP3 data CD-R. The idea is that you import music files from the Net or your CD-ROM to your music library, then label them (Playcentre will go online and access the Compact Disc Data Base to find out what they are by itself if you can't be bothered), then squirt them to the DAP Jukebox. Squirt is the operative word, since a typical four minute pop song in 128kbps MP3 (i.e. 4MB long) takes a matter of a second or two via the fast USB link.

The sort options are staggering. You can display music by album, artist, mood, tempo or genre, and compile hundreds of playlists which in old parlance would be like 'compilation tapes'. If you've got your 150 CD music collection stored on the DAP Jukebox, you can bring together Saxon, Judas Priest and Motorhead for hours of Spinal Taplike silliness. Or pull together Pat Metheny, Herbie Hancock, Stanley Clarke and Quincy Jones for some laid-back jazz. The point is that you don't actually have to re-record or transfer the songs with a playlist, it's just a case of joining groups of themed tracks and giving them a name for easy access. It's a fantastic system, and makes the once impressive 'Favourite Track Selection' system found on early nineties Philips CD players look like something from the ark. Better still, the DAP Jukebox's Playcentre 2 is the best implementation of playlisting I've seen so far, which is no faint praise.

SOUND QUALITY

Playing your music involves selecting your tracks into the 'play queue', which is a bit like stacking up your singles on an autochanger (an analogy which rather dates me, I'm afraid). You select your artist, genre, tempo, playlist (or whatever), then

press 'Play' and the Jukebox does its stuff. This is where hardened hi-fi hacks such as yours truly would expect to be greeted with the usual appalling cheapo portable sound, but it isn't so.

It is to Creative Labs credit that after penning such an impressive piece of cutting-edge industrial design, they bothered to think seriously about its sound. To wit, the Fraunhofer Advanced MP3 codec comes bundled with the DAP, which means fine sounding MP3s and bitrates going right up to 320kbps. What's more, with 6 gigs of storage you can store many hundreds of tracks at this maximum quality bitrate and not have to worry about what it's doing to your computer hard drive. At bitrates of 192kbps or better, the DAP gives any MiniDisc player (maybe with the exception of Sony's superb MDS- JA555ES) a seriously hard time. The audio electronics are excellent (at the price) with no nasties audible and a full, clean musical sound

Of course, this £379 doeverything super-gadget isn't going to trounce your dedicated high end hifi, but really is good enough to plug into the AUX input of your amp and listen at least half-critically. With 320kbps MP3, high treble and low bass are just a touch too soft and fluffy, but there's always an impressive force and drive to the sound, with plenty of detail, bold (almost analogue-like) soundstaging and even a good bit of depth perspective. It sounds great through its headphone jack too, IF you deliberately use a sensitive pair of cans. It doesn't have the beefiest headphone amp in the world and this is one area that could be improved. Recording WAV files, you get a close facsimile of what was in your CD-ROM drive, with just a touch of dryness and looseness added from the unit's DAC and



Computer Audio World's listening room, yesterday

analogue audio outs.

The great news is that the DAP Jukebox is reasonably future-proof. Not limited by any one format's theoretical limitations (16/44 PCM notwithstanding), it is 'codec agnostic' (to use the latest buzzword). This means that while it currently supports MP3 and WMA, its reprogrammable firmware will let it handle new digital audio formats and software extensions as they become available. This means AAC, MP4 and whatever else comes along, and will have the added benefit of letting you store even more music files, as the new formats get ever more efficient with their 'bit budgets'. Creative Labs are famed for superb support for their products via their website downloads, and the DAP should be no exception.

Downsides? Well, call me pedantic but its 440g weight does seem a bit of a chore after using CD portables that weigh less than half as much. But then again, they don't offer nearly ten thousand minute playing times, so I guess I can't complain. This bulk, plus the lack of a remote control (one's said to be in the pipeline, though) and no direct digital ins and outs (although you can buy USB converters that give this facility), is all I can think of before scratching my head. If you already have a PC and harbour even the slightest interest in music, it really is a remarkable bit of kit. Franco de Bonis has the easiest job in the world selling this.

CREATIVE LABS DAP JUKEBOX £379
Creative Labs 01245 265265
www.creativelabs.co.uk

WORLD VERDICT

A landmark

computer audio

product

computer audio I ISIAMO Iffallo

David Price rides the wild surf to audition

Turtle Beach's new Montego II Plus audio card.

nlike many other soundcard manufacturers, Voyetra Turtle Beach has been making computer audio products for years, and acquired an enviable reputation amongst serious users in the process. The £129.95 Montego II Plus is the latest evolution of a card that's been around for a while now, but is still far from old hat. We thought we'd take a look.

The first thing that struck me when opening the box was the quality of the card, the packaging, the manuals and the bundled software. While you'd expect to see a well assembled product from manufacturers asking £200 or more, such fine build is unusual at this near-budget price. The specification is good too. Your money buys you an 18bit /48kHz full duplex audio card with both S/PDIF optical and gold plated RCA digital inputs and outputs. The company claim "outstanding audio quality", quoting a signal-to-noise ratio of better than 97 dB (A weighted), low 0.0032% THD at -90dB (A- weighted) and a frequency response of 10Hz-20.5kHz (+/-I dB).

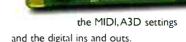
The digital audio processor offers full duplex recording and playback with independent sampling rates. Automuting cuts off the signal after periods of digital silence, while 16 hardware digital mixers are available for audio mixing, and all sample rate conversion is done in hardware for faster speeds with no additional CPU load. There's the increasingly common Aureal 3D 2.0 interactive sound positional audio wave- tracing engine for clever sound effects from games, and a 10 band graphic equaliser built into hardware. A wavetable synthesiser is fitted, offering 64-voice hardware and 256- voice hardware-accelerated software wavetable synthesis, as is full MIDI. The card uses its PCI bus to transfer data

faster than ISA sound cards, and lets you mix up to 96 DirectX streams without recourse to your PC's CPU resources, meaning any audio work you do on it won't slow the rest of your system down.

The Montego II Plus package comprises the main 'mother card' and a plug in digital interface 'breakout board' that attaches to the former via a ribbon cable. Together they offer stereo AUX IN, MIC IN and optical and coaxial digital ins, plus LINE OUT, two pairs of speaker outs and optical and coaxial digital outs. The card also comes bundled with Turtle Beach's AudioStation 32 audio application which lets you play and edit WAV and MIDI files, as well as playing your audio CDs through the CD-ROM.

Installation was easy enough. You unscrew two expansion covers at the back of your PC and then push the main card into a spare PCI slot on the computer's motherboard, ensure there's an empty slot (of any type) next to it for the breakout board to fit in. You then screw both boards into place and connect them up with the supplied ribbon cables. There's also a CD-ROM connector which goes onto the 4-pin header marked 'CD IN'. Next you switch the PC on, with the enclosed set-up CD in the CD-ROM, and install the drivers. Then it's the usual 'plug'n'play' routine as Windows looks for them on the CD-ROM and installs them. Last but not least, you reboot.

The supplied software is excellent. AudioView 32 is a fully featured digital audio recorder and mixer (a la SoundForge XP), and PC Audio Mixer is like a glorified Windows Volume Control, letting you set levels for everything from the analogue auxiliary inputs to the digital ins. The Digital I/O Control Panel gives you full control of



Its sound will be familiar to anyone using a CD player with a budget Crystal Semiconductors DAC inside, because that's what the Montego uses too. This means it's warm, fluffy and quite musical, lacking the more precise. analytical feel of budget Sony players, for example. There's a pleasantly full bass, although it's hardly extended, and a wide, open midband with a reasonable amount of detail and stereo imaging. Treble is obviously looser and more smeared than the better budget CD players, but still listenable enough. Essentially though, it gives a fine performance for the money, and easily the equal of your average £129.95 hi-fi CD separate.

In the scheme of things, it's not an awesome bargain like Yamaha's evergreen WF-192XG, but it's still comfortably better than VideoLogic's £80 SonicFury, for example. This makes it serious value for money, a worthwhile first audio card and the one to have if you simply don't want to spend £200 on a Guillemot MaxiSound Isis. Build, features, set-up and bundled software are as good as you'll get at the price, proving that this is a quality item through and through.

Turtle Beach Montego II Plus £129.95 Etcetera Distribution (01706) 228039 www.etcetera.co.uk



PC equipped with Windows 95/98/NT4.0, 75 MHz Pentium CPU or higher, 16 MB RAM (32 MB required for NT). Hard drive with approximately 12 MB free for software installation, available PCI slot. CD-ROM drive. powered speakers and/or headphones.

WORLDVERDICT

. .

Fine value for money budget audiophile soundcard, with the emphasis on quality build and classy packaging. Recommended. SUBSCRIPTIONS



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KEL84 VALVE INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER KIT

This is our brand new low cost, beginner level amplifer kit, featuring the popular a pair of EL84 valves in push pull configuration per channel. providing 15 watts into an 8 ohm load, plenty for most medium sensitivity loudspeakers. The output transformers are Ultra Linear, keeping distortion down to a minimum. Un front we have the ECE80 valve a extremely smooth pentode/triode tube. The Kel84 has an extremely low hum level to solid state standards. The kit is based on a printed circuit board. We have given the kel84 a high class look with a 3mm anodised front panel and our famous chrome custom made knobs. The amplifier has the capacity to receive 5 line level inputs, plus one monitor input, with a tape output included, all controlled from the front panel. Both the phono sockets and 4mm banana socket speaker terminals are the gold plated. The Kel84 mains switch is , positioned at the rear of the amplifier and is

easily accessible, the mains is received via an IEC lead, an earth post is also positioned at the back

This kit is suited to the beginner in that the instructions now include pictures as well as diagram, making them very easy to follow. At a UK price of £250.00 all inclusive you cannot ignore this kit. Simon Pope says The quality that can be gleaned from this amp is a fine introduction to the joys of the valve sound. The KEL84 will highlight all the intricacies and depth of detail in your favourite recordings whilst retaining a warmth and fullness. This combination of both detail and warmth is almost the exclusivity of pure valve amps and is rare at this price point."

The Kel84 weighs in at 10kg. External dimensions with valves are 300mm(w) x 270mm(d) x 150mm(h).



Here is the amazing KiT88. The circuit is similar to that of the ever popular KEL34 with a few changes to incorporate the Tesla, JJ branded KT88 power tetrode. This is a pure Class A push-pull design providing 36 watts into an 80hm load. Gary Devon has come up with a gem of an output transformer (E/I). Combined with the KT88 it offers a virtually unmatchable result for a valve amplifier. Frequency response measured 11Hz to 75kHz, separation 71dB, noise 98dB, sensitivity 400mV and distortion 0.03%. "As valve amplifiers go, the KiT88 is one of the best measured performances I have ever come across", says Noel Keywood. Jon Marks says. "The KiT88 pulled a series of surprisingly fast, meaty basslines out of its trickbag when dealing with Suzanne Vega's Nine Objects Of Desire album. As if

this wasn't enough, the mid and treble were nice toocymbals had a deliciously natural, golden shimmer without sounding soft, and vocals were extremely transparent and crisply defined. KiT88 didn't hang around when it came to exploiting the virtues of its four output valves on numbers such as 'Leaves' and 'Suspect Sustain' from Cirrus' Land's End Jazz CD. Saxophone had a wonderfully smooth, realistic character, and acoustic guitar mixed speed with harmonic richness to very impressive effect. Asian Dub Foundation and Moloko showed no sign at all of the sluggish, woolly bottom-end and poorlydelineated bass beats that most valve amps are to blame for Which makes the KiT88 an all-round, high end bargain." Weight 16kg, external dimensions with valves are 330mm(w) x 300mm(d) x190mm (h).



ALL NEW SERIES II MODULAR PRE-AMP KIT

The PRE-II is a valve pre-amplifier with six inputs, tape monitor and two sets of output sockets. It utilises a high quality line driver transformer and x5 gain. The PHONO-II is a dedicated valve phono stage that incorporates a step up transformer for MC users. Finally,

PSU-II is a power supply unit that feeds both the PRE-II and PHONO-II

Power Supply Unit (PSU-II) Pre-amplifier (PRE-II) £175.00 Phono Stage (PHONO-II) £100.00 Moving coil step-up transformer £70.00



THE ALL NEW 300B PSE MONOBLOC KIT

Our Parallel Single Ended amplifiers offer the ultimate sound quality, featuring two of the beautfully linear 300B directly heated triode in the output stage (per monobloc) pushing out 20 watts into an 8 ohm load. At the front we have a 6AU6 pentode and the famous ECC82 as the driver valve and the kit utilises a 5U4 rectifier valve for the power supply in combination with a 10H choke, giving an extremely quiet supply. For the mains and output transformers we have used the E/I type. Feedback is

switchable for all those purist out there and the kit is totally hard-wired. For those that require valves we provide the superb Tesla 300Bs. Russian 5U4s and European 6AU6s & ECC82. Simon Pope says, "Not to put too fine point on it, the sound these monoblocs create is among the finest that can be encountered in hi-fi." Our 300B PSE kit bears an affordable price of £795.00 (UK price) excluding valves Each monobloc weighs 23kgs., external dimensions with valves: 25cm(w) x 38cm(h) x 22cm(d) per monobloc.



KEL80 MONOBLOCK AMPLIFIER KIT

Following the success of our budget KEL34 40watt kit amplifier, we have come up with a 'bigger brother' design. The output stage utilises two pairs of TESLA EL34 pentodes in parallel-push-pull mode, allowing KEL80 to turn out 80 watts into an 80hm load. Heading up the input stage we have the wonderfully linear Russian 6AU6 working into an American 5687 phase-splitter. KEL80's output transformers are 40hm and 80hm tapped. With an input sensitivity at

around 380mV for full output, it will happily partner both passive and active pre-amplifiers. It is easy to assemble. Simon Pope says, "The proof of the pudding is in the eating and the KEL80 is a feast for the ears, with solid bass attack, lightening fast reactions, that emphasises musicality as well as power, at 590.00 GBP a pair, a definite valve winner. Each monobloc weighs 12kgs., external dimensions with valves: 14cm(w) x 8cm(h) x 43.5cm(d)



HD83 VALVE HEADPHONE AMPLIFIER KIT

The HD83 is our new headphone amplifier, a beautifully simple design using Mullard ECL83 valves, a triode and power pentode housed in the same envelope. It works directly from any source, be it CD tape, tuner etc., or from an amplifier's tape out or pre-amp sockets. The circuit utilises high specification output E/I output transformers that will drive any headphone load from 16 ohms to ove 300 ohms depending on how the secondaries are

wired up. The HD83 is a single-ended design with the power pentode wired up in triode configuration for that added punty and is a quiet as a mouse. For sound quality Jon Marks says, "The bass is punchy and controlled without becoming artificial. while treble has the cospness of the best solidstate, with the tonal purity, delicacy and speed associated with valves. External dimensions 18cm(w) x30cm(1) x 8cm(h) weight 4kg



mains transformers & chokes Kel84 mains transformer 1.5 nct stack, 90mm(h)x 80mm(w)x 95mm(d) dop through fitting with zinc cap. Secondaries: 07/240V 300mA, 3 15/0/04 315V, 55 A, suitable for 120/240V operation

KiT88/KaT88 mains toroidal transformer

oroidal transformer 120mm da. x 60mm(h) Secondanes 1954/04/95/,450må/04/27V, 100mA/3.15V-0V-3 15V.9A, suitable for 120/240V operation

300B PSE mains E/I

JOHN TOE MAINS EVI transformer 130mm(m) x 95mm(m) x 115mm(d), odop through fitting with zinc cap Secondaries, 380V-07/380V, 180M-A 150-07/150V, 25mA 10V-5V, 1 2A 10V-5V, 1 2A

Kel80 mains toroidal transformer (encapsulated) 130mm da x 65mm(h). Secondanes 195-V0V-195V.390mA/0V-27V. 100mA/3 15V-0V-3 15V.7 5A, surtable for 120/240V operation

HD83 mains toroidal

80mm dia x 35mm(h) Secondane 0V-165V,75mA/3 15V-0V-3 15V,1A sufable for 120/240V operation

PSU-II mains toroidal transformer 80mm dia x 35mm(h) Secondarie 0V-270V,60mA/0V-10V.2A, suitable for 120/240V operation

TRANS1 mains toroidal transformer 95mm dia x 50mm(h) Secondaries 0V-370V.150mAv0V-6 3V.3 5A World Radio History

300B E/I choke 65mm(h) x 70mm(d) x 80mm(w. con frame fitting, 10H 180mÅ,

Kel84 E/I choke 0.5 inch stack, 40mm(h)x 35mm(d)x 70mm(w) clamp fitting, 1H 250mA

PSU-H E/1 40mm(h) x 35mm(d) x 70mm (w) clamp fitting, 15H, 20mA

output transformers Kel84 E/I Ultra Linear push-pull

Kel84 E/I Ultra Linear push-pull output transformer 1 25 inch slack, 76mm(h)x 65mm(w)x 76mm(d) Primary - secondary, 8K with 12 5% UL tap - 8bhms, max c/p-15watts, max current 150mA valves El 84 etc.

current 150mA valves EL84 etc Kit88/Kat88 E/I push-puli output transformer 80mm(w)x95mm(l)x100mm(h). Primary-secondary 10K - 80hms, max o/p-40watts max current-160mA valves-KT88 6550, EL34

MILTON KEYNES, BUCKS MIK16 8HS - CALL FOR DETAILS ON 01908 218 836

KLS10 HIGH TECHNOLOGY COMPACT MONITOR

Our mini-marvel uses an Audax carbon fibre bass/midrange unit, married to the world's most advanced tweeter, the piezo-electric gold dome HD3P from Audax, KLS 1U offers high perfor mance from a small package. The main speakers are designed to work alone, or with a dedicated subwoofer to extend their bass. Alone, they are suited to near-wall mounting and can be tuned by port adjustment to suit personal taste and location. They are easy to drive and need just 30-60watts. KLS10 is unique. Technically advanced, yet compact and relatively inexpensive. There is little to match it. Sensitivity 89dB 1W 1m, 15mm MDF, internal volume 9Ltrs, external dimensions 19cm(w) x 31cm(h) x 23cm(d)

Drive units & Crossover KIT £394 00 £358.00 Drive units only





KLS10 GOLD SUBWOOFER

Designed to compliment KLS10 Gold stand mounters by providing a deep and open bass The subwoofer is inexpensive, easy to build, comprising a simple crossover network to a high quality 8 inch Acrogel dual voice coil unit. A must for all KLS10 Gold customers. Sens. 89dB,

volume 25 litres, external dimensions 28cm(w) x 43cm(h) x 34cm(d)

DRIVE UNIT & CROSSOVER KIT £149.95 Drive unit only





Here's a storm for you - KLS9, with its BB4 alignment bass cabinet and Audax High Definition Aeropal 8in bass/midrange unit Designed by Nuel Keywood to possess optimal bass damping and a clean step response. Aided by a teensy bit of bass lift, KLS9 really thunders: it will re-arrange your furniture. But it does not waffle, falling silent when there's no bass in the music. Aided by a high power 1in fabric dome

tweeter, KLS9 is detailed, evenly balanced and images superbly. It is an easy 120nm load and is 88dB sensitive. For amps up to 60W. Easy to build and great for beginners. Internal volume 70Ltrs 18m MDF external dimensions 25cm(w) x 93cm(h) x 40cm(d).

Drive units &

crossover kit £230.00 Drive unit pack £160.00



KLS14 COMPACT TWO WAY STANDMOUNTER

The KLS14 is an extremely simple design and was designed to complement our new Kel84 budget amplifer. It uses a H26TG-35-06, a 26mm fabrice dome tweeter from Vifa and a Seas CA21RE mid/bass 8 inch doped paper cone, driver from Seas. It is a 20 litre ,sealed box design and is a friendly load so will work well with most amplifier types from 10 - 100 watts. Simon Pope says, "The sound of the KLS 14 is exciting and immediate, it also has an overall fluid and smooth response which adds a touch of sophistication to the sound, so it's never too harsh, It's basically everything you hope for in a standmount but rarely encounter, creating a big sound from a small size and deep bass with control." It has a frequency response of 50Hz 18kHz +- 3dB, a good sensitivity of 89dB and a nominal impedance of 8 ohm. Internal volume 20.6 litres external dimensions = 376mm(h) x 312mm(d) x 256mm(w) Drive unit & crossover Kit £165.00 Drive unit Pack £125.00



KLS3 Gold Mk II

ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY THREE WAY LOUDSPEAKER KLS3 Gold uses the latest version of Audax's innovative oval gold dome piezo electric tweeter, giving it the sweetest and most extended treble. Married to a 4in. carbon fibre cone midrange driver for neutral and clear reproduction, and a powerful

8in. bass driver for superb depth, this is our top-of-the-line reference speaker. Sensitivity 90dB at 1W/1m, 25mm MDF, internal volume 60Ltrs, external dimensions 26cm(w) x 100cm(h) x 35cm(d). Drive Unit & Crossover kit £575.00 Drive Unit Pack £450.00



capacitors, potentiometers & upgrade kits

- a.BLACK GATE 220UF, 50V electrolytic
- b.BLACK GATE 4700uF, 16V electrolytic
- c.JENSEN 0.47uF, 630V paper in oil
- d.LCR 22.5uF 440Vdc polypropylene capacitors (wire leadouts radial) 100mm(h) x 45mm diameter
- e.ANSAR 22.5uF 630Vdc nolypropylene capacitors (wire leadouts radial) 85mm(h) x 45mm diameter
- f. ALPS blue audio grade 50K or 100K dual log potentiometer 8.5mm diameter fitting hole

KiT88 upgrade kit

- 4 x Jensen 0.47µF. 630V 4 x Black Gate 220µF, 50V 2 x Blak Gate 4700µF, 16V 1 x 100K alps pot

KaT88 upgrade kit

- 4 x Jensen 0.47uF, 630V 4 x Black Gate 220uF, 50V 2 x Black Gate 4700uF, 16V

Kel34 Printed Circuit Board

2 4mm(d) Kel80 Printed Circuit Board

Keleu Pro---(a pair) 120mm(w) x 215mm(l) x 2 4mm(d) HD83 Printed Circuit Board

1 6mm(d)
PSU-II Printed Circuit Board

105mm(w) x 130mm(l) x 1 6mm(d) PRE Printed Circuit Board 105mm(w) x 130mm(l) x PRE-II 140mm(w) x 310mm(l) x 2 4mm(d)

1 6mm(d) PHONO-II Printed Circuit Board

105mm(w) x 130mm(l) x

Tag board 2 x 16 connections (hard wiring) 40mm(w) x 140mm(l) x 3mm(d)

Special offers K5881 chassis 70mm(h) x 400mm(w) x 325mm(d) ideal for hobbiesis, has punched holes for 4 octal & 4 B9A valve bases, 2 x 78 lam and

1 x 120 lam. Front has switch hole, Rear has 4mm spk. socs. & phono socket pair.

Kel34 chasis
330mm(dix 190mm (h) ideal for
the constructor who requires a
compact chasis to incorporate 4
octals, 2 B9A & B7G bases
mounted on kel35 PCB - £12.00
2x 78 lam hofes, and fixing for a
115mm dia foroidal mains rear
has 5 phono pair holes & 2 XLR
holes





Kel80 E/I parallel-push-pull out-put transformer 95mm(w)x115mm(l)x133mm(h). Primary-secondary 4.6K - 8 & 4ohms, max o'p-80watts, max current-25mM Valves-EL24,5881,6L0

HD83 E/I single ended output transformer 40mm(wix50mm(l) x55mm(h) Primary-secondary 4K - 4 x 640hms windings, max oip-1watts, max current-25mA valves-ECL83etc

Pre-II E/I driver transformer 80mm(w)x60mm(l) x65mm(h) 6.1 step down transformer, ma current-10m/A vaives-6922etc

printed circuit boards Kel84 Printed Circuit Board 280mm(w) x 135mm(t)x 1 6mm(d) KiT88/KaT88 Printed Circuit



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PHONO II

PSU - II - K240/120

MC - step up (pair)

KiT88 upgrade

KaT88 upgrade



www.worldaudiodesign.co.uk

Kel84-K240/K120 (with valves)

KiT88-K240/120 (with valves)

HD83-K240/120 (with valves)

Kel80 -K240/120 (with valves)

Kel80 -K240/120 (without valves)

KiT88-K240/120 (without valves)

KaT88-K240/120 (with valves) KaT88-K240/120 (without valves)

Kel84-K240/K120 (without valves)

		kits		

Kel84 valve integrated amplifier kit (with valves) Kel84 valve integrated amplifier kit (without valves)

PSU II power supply unit module PRE II pre-amplifier module

PHONO - II phono stage module (with valves)

Moving Coil step up transformers

KiT88 Valve integrated amplifier kit (with valves)

KiT88 Valve integrated amplifier kit (without valves)

KiT88 upgrade kit

KaT88 Valve integrated amplifier kit (with valves)
KaT88 Valve integrated amplifier kit (without valves)

KaT88 upgrade kit

HD83 Valve Headphone amplifier kit (with valves) Kel80 Valve Monobloc amplifier kit (with valves)

Kel80 Valve Monobloc amplifier kit (without valves)

300B PSE Valve Monobloc amplifier kit (with valves) 300B PSE Valve Monobloc amplifier kit (without valves)

KLS9 Drive Units + Crossover Kit etc

KLS10 Drive Units + Crossover Kit etc

KLS14 Drive units

Kel84 E/I choke 300B PSE choke

PSU-II E/I choke

KLS14 Drive units + Crossover Kit etc

KiT88/KaT88 mains toroidal transformer Kel80 mains toroidal transformer(encapsulated)

300B PSE-K240/120 (with valves) 300B PSE-K240/120 (no valves) order No.

KLS3G-D KLS3G-C

KLS9D KLS9C KLS10D

KLS10C KLS10-subD KLS10-subC

KLS14C

order No.

Kel84 - mains T

Kel80 - mains T

HD83 - mains T

Kel84 - choke

300B - choke

PSU-choke

Kel84 - PCB

Kel34 - PCB

HD83 - PCB

PSU-II - PCB

PRE-II - PCB

ALPS - 50K

ALPS - 100K

AERO - 150U AERO - 220U

TROBO - 470U

TROBO - 100U

ANSAR - 22.5U

LCR - 22.5U

JEN - 0.47U

BG - 220U

BG - 4700U

KEL-CHAS

K5881 - CHAS

SAFETY GLOVES

TAG

PHONO-II - PCB

Kel80 - PCB(pair)

88 - PCB

PSU-II - mains T

300B - mains T (each)

Kel84 - O/P T (pair)

88 - O/P T(pair) Kel80 - O/P T(pair) HD83 - O/P T(pair)

PRE-II - driver T(pair) 300B - O/P T (each)

88 - mains T

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loudspeaker kits

KLS3 Gold mkll Drive Units

KLS3 Gold mk II Drive Units + Crossover Kit etc

KLS9 Drive Units

KLS10 Drive Units

KLS10 Drive Units + Crossover Kit etc KLS10-Subwoofer Drive Units

parts description

Kel84 E/I mains transformer

HD83 mains toroidal transformer

PSU-II mains toroidal transformer

300B PSE E/I mains transformer

Pre-II E/I driver transformer 300B PSE E/I output transformer

KiT88/KaT88 Printed Circuit Board

Kel84 Printed Circuit board

Kel34 Printed Circuit Board

Kel80 Printed Circuit Board

HD83 Printed Circuit Board PSU-II Printed Circuit Board

PRE-II Printed Circuit Board

PHONO-II Printed Circuit Board

TRANS1 mains toroidal transformer

Kel84 E/I push-pull output transformer

Kit88/Kat88 E/I push-pull output transformer

HD83 E/I single ended output transformer

Tag board 2 x 16 connections (hard wiring)

Alps blue audio grade 50K dual log potentiometer

Alps blue audio grade 100K dual log potentiometer Aerovox 150uF 500Vdc v. high quality electrolytic

Aerovox 150ur 500 vac v. high quality electrolytic TROBO 470uF 450V high quality electrolytics TROBO 100uF 450V high quality electrolytics

LCR 22.5uF 440Vdc polypropylene capacitors

Jensen 0.47uF 630Vdc paper in oil capacitor Black Gate 220uF 50Vdc electrolytic Black Gate 4700uF 16Vdc electrolytic

Ansar 22.5uF 630Vdc polypropylene capacitors

Kel80 E/I parallel-push-pull output transformer

£160.00 £230.00 £358.00 £394.00

£450.00

£575.00

(inc vat & camage)

671.00 £149.00

£100.00

£15.00

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£12 00

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igital Audio Broadcasting has been with us for five years, but few are listening. During May 2000 a European Broadcasting Union Conference in Stockholm declared that DAB, "has been held back by the unwillingness of manufacturers to cut the price of receivers". More sinisterly, they state, "European administrations need to be convinced that a migration timetable from analogue to digital radio is needed". By this they mean switching off VHF/FM to force people to buy DAB, which is a political hot potato if ever there was one.

Declarations like this annoy me. DAB is a clever system in all respects except one: it was designed by broadcasters for broadcasters, which is why only broadcasters are listening. DAB is the broadcasting equivalent of Concorde - way ahead of its time and

convincingly elegant, yet commercially bananas.

Blaming manufacturers, the European Broadcasting Union shows how unworldly people who are funded by public money can be. DAB is an astonishingly complex technology, so much so that no manufacturer, except the largest, could ever produce a DAB receiver in-house. Companies like VideoLogic, whose tuner I review in this issue, have to buy in a 'solution', meaning a dedicated chipset or even a complete board system, costing hundreds of pounds. This is why the price of DAB tuners is so high. The latest price I can get is "around £40 out" for a complete DAB board solution, resulting in a tuner costing at least £200.

It wasn't manufacturers who got together to design DAB, as the EBU seem to imagine, but the European Union. European governments and publicly funded broadcasters between them decided the broadcasting technology devised by Germany's Rundfunktechnik (IRT) in the early 1980s should become part of European research project Eureka 147. To cut a long story short, we ended up with a radio transmission system of undoubted ability that no one could produce at a sensible price.

And things are getting worse, too.

Although Europe represents a sizeable

market of 385 million, the other great markets of the world - USA and Japan have both rejected DAB. As a result, both American and Japanese chip manufacturers have little incentive to get involved in a complex technology which may never sell, and this is a real problem. The situation on the ground is complex. DAB chipsets are made by Panasonic, Temic, Philips and Hitachi - three Japanese companies and one European. Although Philips Components produce the 3500 DAB chip in the USA, European Philips Consumer Electronics does not have a DAB receiver in its product range due to supposed lack of demand

Those who want FM 'switched off' believe this will create the demand Philips says is missing, but why should EU consumers be forced to abandon existing

they mean switching off VHF/FM to force people to buy DAB

analogue radios and hi-fi tuners they're perfectly happy with? FM is a thoroughly good broadcasting system that not so long ago was considered the height of technology. I come across comments like, "my radio cost £20, it's waterproof and gives great quality in the shower. I don't need anything else". Analogue radios are inexpensive, effective and everywhere. They range from cheap 'transistors' up to Denon's TU-S10 which I've reviewed this month, and gives astonishing quality. The problem for DAB is that it must convince people that it's obviously better than FM for them to move to it willingly, and at present it simply can't, in my view. Analogue radio already gives 'near CD quality' and DAB can do no better.

The truth is that DAB was conceived to benefit broadcasters. The slippery business of listening figures drives their actions. They like quoting 'potential' audiences, as defined by coverage areas, which in turn are defined by hiss levels. As DAB gives less hiss on weaker signals, so it extends coverage and magically expands audience figures. Hey Presto - both the BBC and commercial broadcasters can claim much larger audiences! Of course, for them to do

this we all have to throw away our radios and buy new ones, meaning the listeners are effectively being asked to subsidise broadcasters.

DAB uses less transmitter power than FM and takes less radio space. Governments have learnt they can make big money auctioning the airwaves. Mobile telephone licenses brought in billions for this government and I see the Radio Authority is asking a mere £25k for a license to broadcast commercial stations in London on just one small part of the DAB spectrum, block 12B, for twelve years. How much do you think they'll get selling off FM when all the transmitters are switched off? Obviously DAB's efficient use of the radio spectrum frees up more of it to be sold off. The only losers in this are the general public, who will have to pay out for DAB radios and also for the £10 million the BBC has spent to date on the transmitters. DAB hasn't been held back by the "unwillingness of manufacturers to cut the price of receivers" as the EBU believe, but because it was poorly conceived. It isn't being bought by the public because it's too expensive and is likely to stay that way, now that both America and Japan have walked away.



review |

connec

CHORD COMPANY CHORUS £200/METRE

The next step down from the Chord Company's Anthem range-topper, the Chorus is a far more 'industrial' looking design than the others tested here. Apparently four years in development, it has 'twisted pair' construction with a braided, floating screen. Both the conductors and shield are silver plated and all the insulation is Teflon. It's terminated with the Chord Company's usual silver plated phono plugs using silver solder to create a single material signal path. Incidentally, there should be little problem with getting your negatives and positives muddled either. No more squinting at the connector for the red and black bands here, as one whole cable is red and the other black!

The Anthem is a favourite of this magazine, due to its naturalness and way with phrasing which makes it so inherently musical. This attribute carries down to the Chorus, which has a lyrical, smooth sound coupled with bone crunching bass. The sound may be a tad dry for some tastes, but to me adds to the overall realism of the cable. It has the knack of making complicated passages of music sound remarkably easy going, an example being The Screaming Trees' heavily processed and complex mix, which was handled with a deftness that impressed immensely. Bass was well focused and detail was brought to the fore in both the midrange and high frequencies. Drums were well defined and guitars smooth and tuneful, as opposed to merely noisy. Its innate smoothness is well suited to classical vocal music such as the Verdelot madrigals on the Linn Records label. Voices were rich in timbre and lacked

any edge to the sound. The general ambience could have picked up a tad more but I got an immensely enjoyable and

This cable is particularly well suited to valves and smooth sounding equipment, where it brings out the best in warm components. It will also calm down over-bright or harsh

systems with its tuneful and sympathetic ear. Highly recommended.

The Chord Company
30a Sarum Business Park

Wilts SP4 6EA Tel: 01722 331674

Portway Salisbury

www.chord.co.uk

SONICLINK CONTROL £135/METRE

easy listening experience with the Chorus.

Part of the all-new Second Generation range, the Control supersedes the long-lived Blue Nickel and is slightly different in construction, look, sound and price. We now have a fatter sheath with weight and substance, certainly different from SonicLink's previous tradition of 'bootlace' cable. It's altogether more luxurious looking, with the addition of SonicLink's new solid, chunky plugs. It also takes a price drop, as the Blue Nickel sold for £150 per metre. The Control is constructed of four individually insulated solid core nickel conductors, two at 0.5mm and two at 1mm thickness, all screened, with PTFE insulation.

This new breed of SonicLink has a slightly warmer sound than you'd expect. Its cables have always had a tradition of 'brightness', one that I personally didn't mind. The advantages of this sound are rhythmic attack and good detail and separation. The Control keeps these traits and adds some roundness to the sound, giving a less raw account of things. The Screaming Trees 'Dust' album had presence and excitement - 'old' SonicLink traits - but added a smoothness of vocal line and warmth in the midrange, especially with the heavy guitar layers. This warmth was best

exposed was in acoustic vocal music - the Verdelot madrigals showed good detailing, voices blended well and the edge to high female voices which often occurs with this recording was absent. Staging and separation were also good.

A well balanced cable from SonicLink, then. If you favour detail and cleanness of sound or need to spark up a dullish system, it could well be for you.

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Fancy a quick and easy upgrade? Simon Pope listens to five premium interconnects priced above £100.

MONSTER CABLE M1000i £299.95/metre or £219.95/0.5

Monster Cable hails from San Francisco and comes to the UK by Lenbrook, distributors of NAD and Dali amongst others.

This cable, as the inhabitants of its homeland would say, is one heavy mother, and is far the weightiest interconnect I've come across. It's actually onstructed from 'virgin' copper and features

constructed from 'virgin' copper and features
Monster's MultiTwist design which aims to minimise
intertransient noise and improve dynamic range. The
M1000i also features three 'precision-wound
Bandwidth Balance networks'. These multiple- gauge
groups of wires separately guide the bass, mid and

high frequencies down the cable and are specially wound to optimise varying magnetic fields.

Monstrous by name,

monstrous by nature? No way - this is

a fine sounding interconnect indeed. It may lack the neutral transparency of others but still boasts a tremendously musical sound. Highlights are dynamics, plus a rock-solid, super tuneful bass. The Screaming Trees sounded full and powerful, with a strong physical presence and a very deep sound stage. The detailed drumming and thumping kick drum had a good dose of 'wow' factor, the panned tom-toms showing up the excellent imaging of the M100i. The lyrical elegance of Verdelor's madrigals had plenty of detail and presence.

The M1000i is by no means cheap, but you get a strong and sophisticated sound for your money. Here's a cable that makes a big difference.

Lenbrook UK Ltd. Unit 2, Wolverton Rd. Old Wolverton Milton Keynes MK 12 5NP

Tel: 01908 319360

www.lenbrook.co.uk

VAN DEN HUL INTEGRATION HYBRID £199/0.8 METRE

Like the SonicLink Control, the Integration is a replacement quadruple core cable from the pioneer of carbon cable technology, and the first product in the latest Fusion Series. This uses a totally new conductor which combines pure copper, zinc and silver, as opposed to the two stranded metal cores of the D-102 III which the Integration replaces. This is combined with vdH's famous Linear Structured Carbon technology, so the conductors are embedded in a layer of the carbon structure. The appearance of the Integration is very much van den Hul, and isn't going to win the 'Best Looking Interconnect' category at the next international hi-fi awards dinner! The 'gold' halogen-free Hulliflex jacket is actually more 'mud brown' to my eyes, but who's going to notice it hidden behind an array of hi-tech hi-fi anyway?

It would, however, stand a chance of winning the 'Best Sounding Interconnect' gong. Here we have all best van den Hul traits, like neutrality, mixed with firm rhythmic grip and fluidity. The Screaming Trees' 'Dust' album had depth and breadth, the Integration creating a big yet extremely cohesive sound with every layer of the complicated mix clearly audible. Drums and bass sounded powerful and detailed whilst the treble is innately smooth to the ear, with vocals well positioned and rough and ready, which is no bad thing as Mark Lanegan sings as if he's gargling with shards of glass. Moving on to Renaissance vocal music saw the Integration delivering a sweet and extremely natural sound, making the bare and exposed voices wonderfully realistic.

Van den Hul's carbon technology is some of the finest around. It gives a full yet very natural sound to any recording, studio-based or acoustic. Highly recommended.

van den Hul UK Ltd. Unit 12 Imex House 6 Wadsworth Rd Perivale Middlesex UB6 7JJ Tel 020 8997 4280

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with a range of eleven interconnects and four 'speaker cables available in a range of terminations. The Silver Signal 100 sits in the middle of the interconnect range (£25-£490) and is constructed from three alloys, the first two of which are silver and copper, while the third remains a 'company secret'! All Precious Metals cables use

Precious Metals cables are designed and distrib-

uted by high-end AV specialist Picture The Sound,

PRECIOUS METALS SILVER

SIGNAL 100 £120

the company's own AirTight plugs, a one-piece, solder free design. The cable is prepared and inserted into the plug, then crimped into a hex shape that hermetically seals the design. This apparently removes most of the air and the plug is surrounded by an air tight non-conductive adhesive.

All this, plus the 'secret recipe' alloy seems to pay off, as its musical traits are as valid as anything else tested here. They have a uniquely sprightly sound that's ideally suited to rock music, as I found with The Screaming Trees' guitar driven 'Dust' album. Drums were fast and furious, with bass guitar notes quick and deep. Vocals were clean and forward, if a tad sibilant, and the overall sound very open. With classic vocal music in the form of an HDCD recording of the Renaissance Madrigals of Phillipe Verdelot songs on the Linn label, the Silver Signal 100 showed good detail and presence, with a wide sound stage and fine imaging. Female vocals didn't suffer from too much edge and male singers

were realistically portrayed.

This isn't the smoothest sounding cable around but the treble is sweet and the bass response excellent. A super-fast and exciting performer.

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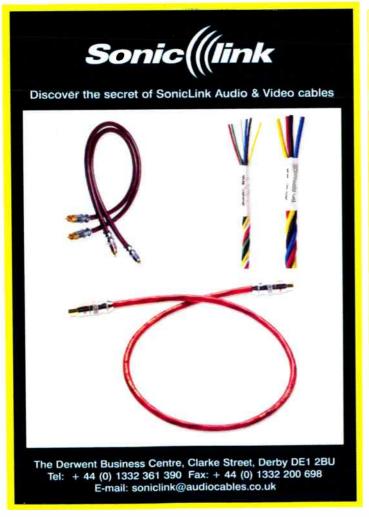
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001 - A space odyssey. The mission, if I chose to accept it, was to throw out all my old hi-fi junk in the desperate search for much needed additional cubic centimetres inside my listening room. Fortunately, I didn't. My spring cleaning efforts came to nought and I instead found myself powering up all my old, discarded hi-fi separates for a real blast from the past.

Right now, my system comprises a Michell Orbe/Linn Ekos II/Linn Archiv vinyl front end, Michell Delphini phono stage, World Audio Design KLP-PI preamp, World Audio Design K5881 power amp (Nicholas Lucas Signature edition) and Yamaha NS1000M loudspeakers. In support roles there are Michell GyroDec/SME Series III/Dynavector 10x4, Rega Planar

3/Goldring 1042 and Dual C\$505/Audio Technica AT I 10E turntables, Sony CDP-557ES and Marantz CD54 CD players, NAD 3020. Myst Rose Scion and Cyrus 2 integrated amps,

Mission 752, Linn Kan, KEF Coda and Tannoy Mercury loudspeakers, plus Musical Fidelity XA-200 and Leak TL12+ power amps.

Phew. It may take a lot of space, but it's a great way to remind myself how I used to live. Having kept my old cast-offs, I'm in the fascinating position of being able to warp back to them whenever I so desire.

The Clash on my 1980 vintage Dual/ NAD/ KEF Coda system still sounds enormous fun. By modern standards it's comically loose but there's still an innate musicality. Most remarkable is its ability to fill the room with sound, something that takes a big step backwards if you substitute the Dual for my 1985 Marantz CD54 silver disc spinner. 'London Calling' suddenly becomes a thinner and less gutsy sounding album. Warp ahead to 1985 and wire up the Rega Planar 3/ Myst TMA3/ Tannoy Mercurys and there's a tidying up of sound with better detail, bass and treble extension, but analogue's essential naturalness and warmth is still much in evidence. By today's standards there's a lot

wrong with it, but it's still great fun to listen to - now I understand why I couldn't stop playing The Smiths' first album for the best part of a year!

Resurrect my 1990 system (Sony CD/ Cyrus 2/Linn Kans) and 808 State's 'Ninety' is brilliantly fast and punchy, with stacks of detail and dynamics. Yet it lacks the ease and insouciance which the 1980 system had in spades. Playing techno music, it's grippy bass and incisive, glassclear treble is a treat, but somehow it's an empty experience. By the mid nineties I was back with vinyl, running a Michell GyroDec/ Rose Scion/ Mission 752s. A cracking combination, it brings together the warmth of the '80 system with the grip of the '85 and the detail of the 90, and adds more too. This one finally feels like

Whereas modern transistor amps superficially convey oodles of detail, I can now see what they're missing...

situation

demands.

Whereas

modern

now see what they're missing; vast amounts of textural and timbral information that makes instruments shimmer and voices astound. Suddenly, Randy Crawford's 'One Day I'll Fly Away' sounds breathtaking.

It's amazing that it's taken me so long to get this quality, but now I wonder how I ever lived without it. Now I can go into friends' houses and listen to some otherwise gobsmacking systems, but come out feeling empty because it's like I've been listening in black and white. It's a shame that so few people - even avowed hi-fi buffs - actually know how awesomely sweet, open and three dimensional carefully chosen valves and vinyl can sound. If you don't, as indeed I didn't for so long, it's harder to make informed choices about what it is you actually want from your system. In turn, this could lead you to spend an awful lot of cash and for it to still not feel 'right'. My advice is to audition as many types of systems in as many places as you possibly can. That way, you'll reach a point when you never want to upgrade again far quicker. This will be a major boon if like me you always hang on to your old gear - at least you'll win the







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observers can hardly failed to have
noticed the expeditious arrival of
constant 'new tech' within the industry.
Hardly a month goes by without there
being a development within DVD or memory recording systems.

Yet, until now at least, this explosion of new technology does seem to be very much driven by source. That is to say, even though the front end of our hi-fi systems look set to change, as they've done already, the actual amplification and speaker side stay pretty constant.

Despite a tweak here and there amplifier technology has remained fairly consistent since the wide spread introduction of the transistor in the 1960s.
There wouldn't be much, if anything, inside a typical amplifier today that would surprise an amp. designer from the sixties.
Stick memory, MiniDisc, DVD and even the now seemingly ancient C.D. would all be very different prospects.

Now, after decades of evolution rather than revolution, amplifiers finally look set to change in a big way. It probably won't surprise you to hear that the new technology is based around those blessed ones and noughts collectively known as digital. Digital amplifiers have been around for over a year now but, as is often the case with new tech., only at steep prices and in limited quantities.

Until recently, you'd be talking a five-figure sum from advocates like Sharp.

Towards the end of 2000, though, they reduced this substantially to a, still rather substantial, £3300 with their new SM-SX I model. Whilst the format may not have the speed of progress within the industry of Digital Radio (DAB) or Super Audio Compact Disc (SACD), there are benefits that could come as a surprise to many, including myself.

According to Sharp, digital amplifiers are far more efficient than conventional ones in that they consume only half the mains power for a specific output. This helps reduce physical size by nearly 70%. It also results in less heat - one fifth of conventional amplifiers. There's potential here for "lifestyle" and personal products where low power consumption is crucial.

It looks likely then that the digital age is

to, if not exactly sweep across, then at least infiltrate the amplifier market.

But what of the other link in the chain? The basic design of the loudspeaker harks back to a time so long ago - the early 1920s - that even amplifiers appear like spring chickens in the grand scheme of things. Loudspeakers too have seen recent challenges to the conventional way of doing things. Flat panel technology from the NXT group works well and shows potential. Yet I believe a wholesale switch by loudspeaker manufacturers is still some way away. From a retail point of view, NXT

a product that's compact, efficient and discreet with decent sound quality couldn't fail, could it?

'speakers remind me of WAP mobile
'phones. Technically there is an advantage,
yet the consumer remains pretty unconvinced because they don't see a great
practical benefit. A mobile 'phone really
can change the way we go about our
lifestyles, yet one that connects to
the Internet elicits the
response "so what", from

many. The same is pretty much the case with 'speakers. A 'speaker fulfils a crucial role and simply being much flatter doesn't necessarily excite the masses. Yes, one can hang the 'speakers on the wall, or use tiny panels. Yet these aren't (at the moment) full range, and require a subwoofer to provide the oomph. Bearing in mind that a similar sound can be reproduced from a conventional satellite 'speaker not much bigger than a light bulb, there seems little point. I don't mean to mock the technology as it's still in its infancy and, as the new icons should prove, has much potential. Yet I know consumers are going to look at the 'speakers and think they don't look a great deal different from other designs on the market today. Unlike the digital amplifier in a personal stereo that allows it to be tinier than ever before, the benefit to the layman seems harder to justify. NXT has to prove itself on sound quality alone for the time being.

Whatever the outcome from these developments, surely the best possibly use of both technologies has been over looked? Despite the many benefits of active 'speakers, they are still sorely undersold. I know from a retailers point of view it's tricky selling something that combines two processes, as the reason most want separates in the first place is because they are just that: separate! Yet I can't help but think how good an active 'speaker combining both a digital amplifier and NXT technology could be. Surely

a product that's compact, efficient and discreet with decent sound quality couldn't fail, could it?

One for the wish list methinks!

Dominic Todd

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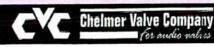
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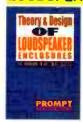
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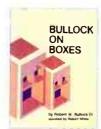
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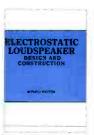


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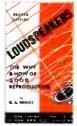
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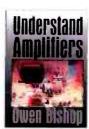
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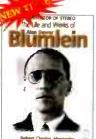
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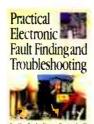
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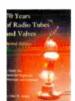
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welcome to a vo

Here's a list of products that are a good buy. We've thed to cater for a range of tastes, identifying strong products in every area. We're agnostic so you'll find a wide range of products, from valve pre-amps through to MiniDisc players. Products marked are recently out of production but make a good second-hand buy.

Prices shown are those at the time of the review



Roksan Caspian CD player Solid is a ROK

ARCAM FMJ CD23 £1100 This British-built player is extremely versatile. Controlled and detailed with a musical insight that few match. (Jul 2000)

CAMBRIDGE CD4SE £200 A touch soft in the treble but outstanding in every other respect. (Feb 98)

KENWOOD DP-3080/II £180 Has great clarity and presence for the price. Not as naturally expressive as the CD4SE though. (Feb 98)

LINN KARIK III £1775 Under rated and overlooked, the final Karik was a gem. Superb transport gives a brilliantly tight, grippy dynamic sound, albeit tonally rather dry.

MARANTZ CD-17 KI-S £1100 The Marantz excels in all areas, Without doubt this is one of the most involving CD players on the planet. Build quality is also exemplary. (Sep 97)

MARANTZ CD-63 MKII KI-S £400 Similar to the CD-63SE but more powerful bass and an all-round smoother sound. The famous KI tweaks pay off again. Whether or not it is still pre-eminent against the vastly improved competition is a matter of opinion.

MERIDIAN 506 20-BIT £1100 Very detailed and revealing player. More cerebral than visceral sounding, however (May

MUSICAL FIDELITY X-RAY £800 Commonsense sturdy CD player of exceptional ability. Clear and detailed with high quality internal processing system The X-Ray is inclined to show up poor recordings, but it's only doing its job! (Feb 99)

This dynamic top of the range Silverline spinner delights with any type of music. Exciting, sophisticated sounding and highly recommended.(Jun 2000)

ROKSAN CASPIAN The Caspian has a smooth, slightly bright

sound with some of the clearest treble in the business. Very engaging, dynamic character. (Aug 97)

ROTEL RCD 951 HDCD capability at a midrange price. Plain Jane looks but solid construction. There is some higher than average measured distortion which may take the edge off this otherwise tempting product. (Aug 99)

COMPACE USG TRAVEFORTS

SONIC FRONTIERS TRANSPORT £6999 Cutting-edge design and technology combine to make this one very desirable product. The only problem is the fantasy hi-fi price (Sep

Cheap it isn't, but then it sounds like a million digital dollars. Nothing short of superb. (Jun

TEAC VRDS TE Excellent mid-price silver disc spinner with a powerful, expansive and warm sound, Easily beats most sub-£1000 designs. A good choice for the budget conclous who want the best.(Feb 95)

CAMBRIDGE AUDIO DACMAGIC 3 Superb value for money with extensive facilities and solid, detailed sonics. Upgrades any sub-£300 player.

DCS FLGAR €8500 Future-proof convertor which will handle 24/96 and 24/192. Extremely open and natural performer. (Nov 97)

DPA LITTLE BIT 3 ₹799 A taste of the high end on a budget. Rich, clean, punchy sound transforms budget CD players.

MIDIMAN FLYING COW £299.9 Excellent as a DAC and doubles as an ADC for archiving to CDR (Jun 98) Great value, as is junior version Flying Calf at £109 (Feb 99)

MUSICAL FIDELITY X-DAC £300 A bargain for normal CDs and even better with HDCDs. (Nov 97)

SONIC FRONTIERS PROCESSOR 3 £6999 Quality never comes cheap! This DAC oozes class and when matched with the Transport 3 is certainly up with the best (Sep 98)

LINN SONDEK LP12 BASIK Off the pace these days in many respects but still an extremely sweet and engaging listen with a quintessentially analogue sound

MICHELL GYRODEC SE Exquisitely built, infinitely upgradeable deck that gives true high end sound at mid-fi

MICHELL ORBE Fantastically capable all rounder with commanding, powerful, detailed sound that gets the best from almost any arm and cartridge. Supreme build, brilliant value (Apr

ORIGIN LIVE STANDARD (KIT) Good in standard form with AC motor; frighteningly good with a DC motor and

PINK TRIANGLE TARANTELLA Not only does the Tarantella have more style than a catwalk full of models, it also combines PT's usual clarity with real authority. (Oct 97)

PRO-JECT DEBUT Straight out of the box and onto the shelf! Nothing short of a bargain. Vinyl's never had it so good, so cheaply!

REGA PLANAR 2 £214 Brilliant starter deck with extremely polished manner Better built £274 Planar 3 is a great all-in-one package that eats mid-price CD players for breakfast.

ROKSAN XERXES X DSU or XPS 3.5 power supply £150 170 extra. Excellent pitch stability from a new 5wiss motor and outboard power supply Very tight bass, fine dynamics and revealing clarity,

SYSTEMDEK IIX900 RB250 A fine all-rounder and easy to upgrade too. More depth and breadth than Rega Planar 3. (Sep 94)

VESTAX BDT-2000 A stylish looking deck with infinitely variable speed 16-90 rpm, DC belt drive and built-in MM phono stage. Good value, with plenty of chassis room for alternative arms, if required. (Sep 99)

TONEARINE

HADCOCK 242 SE Latest of a long line of unipivot arms. Added mass makes the 242 suitable for both low compliance MCs and straw-in-the-wind high compliance types. Revised geometry and chromium plating completes a first-class job (Jun 2000)

Truly endearing and charismatic performer wonderfully engaging mid-band makes up for softened frequency extremes

Some may prefer the simpler RB250 at £130. Detailed, tight, rhythmic sound but tonally rather grey and cold-sounding. Still excellent value, though





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world favourites

Prices shown are those at the time of the review



Musical Fidelity X-Cans2 Warm, sumptuous, sweet sound

SME 3009SH Once state of the art, but no longer. Weak at frequency extremes and detail, but its legendary serviceability makes it a cult in Japan. Can be picked up for peanuts secondhand. (Jan 93)

SME 309 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. Like the older SME 3009 series, this arm is also available in 10" and 12" versions. (Jan 93)

AUDIO TECHNICA Great starter cartridge that's refined, detailed and musical beyond its price. Best value MM

GOLDRING 1012GX An accomplished MM with a solid bass. slightly forward midband and clean transients. Very reasonable price for such an able performer. (Jul 93)

DNM MICA Betters Goldring's 1042 and costs only £135 on trade-in. An assured and transparent MM.

DYNAVECTOR DV20X-H The best modern budget MC combines deliciously sweet sound with fantastic get-upand-go. High output version works a treat with valve phono stages too.

MUSIC MAKER

When mated with a good quality arm, this hand finished high-output pick-up gives an ear-boggling account of itself. Very high compliance ensures maximum information retrieval. An absolute (grain orientated) gem.

ORTOFON MC 7500 Conclusive proof that there's hope for the world. It's a long time ago now but this highpriced favourite still earns its niche - CD lovers would die if they heard it. (May 94)

ORTOFON MC 15

Not quite as good as the dearer Supremes but the Super II is a splendid introduction to the joys of moving-coil cartridges.

GOLDRING 1042 One of the best Moving Magnet cartridges going, with beautiful treble and muscular bass. New low price makes it a bargain.

ORTOFON ROHMANN In a way it's MC 2000 meets MC 7500 with great tonal strengths and a dynamo sound.

INTEGRATED AMPLIFIERS

AUDIO ANALOGUE

PUCCINI SE 1595 This superbly-built Italian integrated has a lucidity and control which leaves others nowhere. Sound stage a wow. (Dec 97)

AUDIOLAB 8000a Well rounded integrated with smooth and detailed sound plus a huge feature count. Great build makes later versions a top used

DENON PMA-250SE £160 It might not have bags of grunt but the Denon can sound exceedingly natural and open. (Feb 97)

McINTOSH MA6800 ₹3735 The MA6800 not so much plays music as takes control of it, with effortless bass drive.

MISSION CYRUS 2 Classic eighties minimalism combines arresting styling with clean, open, lively sound. Further upgradable with PSX power supply.

MUSICAL FIDELITY

£160

Warm, sumptuous, sweet sound h/phone amp. gives startling results with a decent set of headphones.

NAIM NAIT 3 €575

Superb rhythms and dynamics make for great music making, but tonally monochromatic Super optional phono stage makes it ideal for vinyl junkies.

ROKSAN CASPIAN £695 Smooth, warm integrated with remote control that works happily into most 'speakers. (Dec 97)

SONNETEER ALABASTER Builds on the strengths of the Campion with ample control, colour and drive. (Oct 97)

PHONO STABES

CREEK OBH-8 SE £180

Punchy, rhythmic character with oodles of detail makes this a great budget audiophile product

LFD MISTRAL PHONO STAGE *

€300 The Mistral has a warmth and involvement that make many pricier stages sound overpriced.

MICHELL DELPHINI

MONOBLOCS £1995 Analogue tour-de-force gives supremely clean,

detailed and finely resolved sound with breathtaking dynamics. Great value, even at this price.

MUSICAL FIDELITY X-LP £125 One of the famous MF X series. Full marks throughout for clarity and detail. Switchable between MM and MC. Indestructible build! (May 99)

PRO-JECT PHONO BOX €39 Not the last word in many respects but a thoroughly honest piece of work. Inexpensive introduction to all that vinyl has to offer. MM and MC provision plus choice of two impedances.

ROKSAN ARTAXERXES X £950 With the Attessa PSU the Artaxerxes X MM/MC stage still shines. Great stage depth, neutrality and tonal colour. (Oct 97)



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SONNETEER SEDLEY

Combines transparency and fine dynamics with excellent rhythmic ability. (May 98)

Suffers from un-defeatable tone controls but an extremely good value piece of kit. Partners the similarly budget level AMC 2200 power amplifier, also at £150. Comfortable beginners' choice. (Mar 99)

AUDIO ANALOGUE

BELLINI

Showcases AA's characteristic mix of clarity and musicality and blasts the competition. (Apr 98)

CHORD CPA1800

£1800

Clarity, insight and control are second to none - an addictive mixture. (Mar 98)

CROFT VITALE ₹350

A modestly priced valve pre-amp with exceptionally transparent performance. MM phono stage plus three line stages are standard. Volume controls are separate for each channel, thus giving balance adjustment A remarkable item in all respects. (Feb 2000)

£1000

Almost valve-like in its smoothness, the linelevel Pre-1 is warm and seductively clear. (Nov 96)

ARCAM 9 *

With 70W on tap, the 9P will drive most loudspeakers with a spacious and detailed sound. Good bass welly too. (Dec 96)

CHORD SPM400

£1400

There's a sense of effortless power to the Chord that gives music real scale and presence. (Mar 98)

MARANTZ MODEL 9 *

£8000

Authentic reproduction monoblocs still more than cut the sonic mustard. Highly expensive and highly sought after. (Mar 97)

MICHELL ALECTO

€1989

Crisp, clean and beautifully controlled with gorgeous styling. Partnered with the £1650 Orca this is a superb winning combo. (Oct 98)

MUSICAL FIDELITY X-A200 £1000/pair 200W of high-end monobloc power in a grooved tube. (Aug 98)

NAIM NAPISO

£1060

Partnered with a NAC82, this has classic Naim control, and a superbly rhythmic

CAMBRIDGE T500

An extremely engaging tuner with a performance at odds with its low price. Not exactly a Troughline, but you may not notice... (Feb

Excellent detail, separation and dynamics. A great little tuner and unbeatable at this price. (May 98)

A positive dreadnought of a tuner. Sweet and refined but with a heavy punch when needed A tuner of this quality demands a decent aerial. (Jul 99)

MISSION CYRUS FM7

Clear and lucid sound puts it up with the best. Superb build too. (Apr 94)

The NAT03's warm, atmospheric sound is further proof of Naim's proficiency with tuners. (Sep 93)

SONY ST-SA3ES

Beguiling RDS tuner for the sonically discerning. Good ergonomics and sensitive too.

CASSETTE DECKS

AIWA AD-S750"

₹200

Sonically a very decent machine at the price. Comes fitted with Dolby B, C and the dead handy Dolby S. (Apr 96)

AIWA AD-S950

£300

A stable transport, superb head and Dolby S make the AD-\$950 an excellent all-rounder. (Feb 95)

KENWOOD KX-3080

€160

A simple deck, but excellent-quality head and transport give top quality sound.

(Oct 96)

PIONEER CT-S740S

€430

A great piece of engineering from Pioneer. with first-rate sound. (Jun 96)

YAMAHA KX-580SF

₹250

The 'SE' tag is more than a marketing gimmick, Sound is solid and clear with Dolby S. (Sep 97)

LOUDSPEAKERS

CASTLE EDEN

Impressively vice-free 'speakers that offer great transparency and involvement. One of a select band that simply makes music regardless. (Mar 97)

EPOS ES12 *

Strong, punchy bass is allied to finely detailed, articulate midrange and sparkling treble. (Oct



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KEF CRESTA I

Delightfully sophisticated presentation for the price. Won't blow the roof off, but will deliver a very musical sound. (April 2000)

KLIPSCH HERESY II

An outstanding high sensitivity loudspeaker with midrange and treble horns coupled with infinite baffle 12" bass driver. Effortless, fast and accurate. (May 99)

MISSION 752 *

Cracking mid-price mini towers combined HDA drive units and metal dome tweeters with surprisingly warm results. Benign load characteristics makes them great for valves.

Characteristically fast, punchy Mission sound from the Aerogel mid/bass and silk-dome tweeter. (Jul 98)



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TANNOY AMS8 £2700 Buld sounding pro active monitor with solid b < , clear midi rige and delicious treble. (Aug 961

TANNOY MERCURY m2 " £140 A true audiophile bargain which embarrasses in its more expensive boxes. Never mind the price, let your ears decide. (May 97)

KENWOOD DM-9090 £500 One of the best MD players yet. ATRAC 4.5 gives clean and very musical recordings from this Kenwood (Jan 98)

SONY MDS-IB930Q £250 Great mid-price machine that adds better build and facilities to the '530's already excellent sonics.

SONY MDS-JA50ES £1300 This Sony can put the wind up Nakamichi cassette decks when used with better blank MDs (Apr 98)

SONY MDS-JESSSES €520 MiniDisc recorder The best sounding MD deck made so far. thinks to awesome build and heroic ATRAC-DSP Type R coding.



Alesis Masterdisk A glimpse of the future

SONY MDS-JES10 An impressive sound and unmatched convenience make this MiniDisc player an excellent buy.

ALESIS MASTERDISK A groundbreaking hard disc recorder with a built-in CD drive. An amazing bit of kit, and a glimps: of the future. (July 2000)

KENWOOD DMF-9020 €500 An excellent tool for home recording,

combines convenience, superb sound and a fair price.(Aug 99)

MARANTZ DR-17 Probably the best sounding CD recoder on the market. Built like a brick out house with a true audiophile sound. HDCD compatible.(July 2000)

PHILIPS CDR-765 £360 One of the first twin deck recorders/players that boasts high speed dub facility. Playback could be warmer, but still a bargain. (Oct 99)

PIONEER PDR-555RW Excellent mid-priced CD recorder that both plays and records with equal panache. (Oct 99)

SONY TCD-8 DATMAN ₹599 Super clean and detailed sound makes this an amazing portable. Not as robust as it should be though.

DENON DVD-5000 Monster build, as you'd expect at this price. Facilities and gadgets galore and drop-dead high end looks. A very smooth and sophisticated sound, although not as good as similarly-priced CD players.(Mar 99)

£700 PIONIFFR DV-717 Well built and a solid performer, with a 'true' 24/96 digital output. Facilities in abundance and a controlled, exciting way with CD replay. Shame it lacks a Dolby Digital decoder!) (Sep 99)

SONY DVP-S725 One of the best buys in the DVD market. Available in a dodgy white case, but the facilities and performance more than make up for this. Excellent with both music and visuals, and a whole host of up to the minute facilities to keep you occupied.(Mar 2000)

fool of!

JECKLIN FLOAT MODEL TWO Wonderful panel-like and open sound from these esoteric-looking headclamps. Do not wear in public unless you like being made a SENNHEISSER HD-490 Good value cans with an exciting and bassy sound. Everything one should look for in headphones at a sensible price.



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Linn LK100 Power Amp S/H (1Yr G/tee) (650.00)	£425.00	Naim Nait 3R Amp (1Yr G/tee)(799.00)	£599.00
Linn Genki CD Player S/H (1Yr G/tee) (995.00)	£650.00	Naim AV1 Surround Procs E/D (2Yr G/tee) .(1835.00)	£915.00
Linn Keilidh Spkrs Rosenut inc Stands (985.00)	£729.00	Naim CDX CD Player E/D (2Yr G/tee) (2335.00)	£1639.00
Linn Kaber Active Spkrs/Cards S/H(1Yr G/te)(2850.00)	£795.00	Naim NAC 82 Preamp S/H (1Yr G/tee) (2360.00)	£1650.00
Linn Isobarik Aktive Speakers (1Yr G/tee) .(3500.00)	£995.00	Naim NAP 250 Power Amp S/H Old Style .(1350.00)	£949.00
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Naim NAC 72 Preamp E/D (1Yr G/tee) (790.00)	£499.00	Naim SBL Passive Speakers S/H (1Yr G/tee)(2475.00)	£1595.00
Naim NAP 140 Power Amp E/D (1Yr G/tee) (815.00)		Naim SNAXO 2/4 Crossover S/H (1Yr G/tee) (770.00)	
Naim 102 Preamp S/H (1Yr G/tee) (1145.00)	£799.00	Nakamichi DR3 Cass/Deck S/H (449.00)	£249.00
Naim NAP 180 Power Amp S/H (1Yr G/tee) (1155.00)		ProAc Tablette 50 Speakers(599.00)	
Naim HiCap Power Supply S/H (1Yr G/tee)(760.00)	£475.00	ProAc Response 2 Spkrs S/H (1Yr G/tee) .(1995.00)	£1250.00

World Radio History

WChalassas

CASSETTE

NAKAMICHI DR-2

A great machine with Nakamichi's legendary heads. The lowest cost 'true' Nakamichi at the time, retailing for £600.

NAKAMICHI CR-7

The last of the great ones, and definitely the best Nakamichi ever (yes, better than a Dragon)

YAMAHA TC-800G

Early classic in serious cassette. Its ski-slope looks got it a cult following once it had ceased to be simply ugly.

CD PLAYERS

MERIDIAN 207

Beautifully-built two-box with preamp stage. Very musical although not as refined as modern Bitstream gear. No digital output.

PIONEER PD-91

Built-to-last player with easy upgrade routes for modifiers. Not knockout as it stands but get one cheap and have a go!

CAMBRIDGE CDI

The first two box player with weighted mechanics and even an optional Dropout/error counter.

Radical and effective at the time - a classic.

AMPLIFIERS

LEAK POINT ONE, TLI2 & TLI0

Ancestors of hi-fi, consequently expensive nowadays. As with all vintage valve stuff, overhauling is de rigueur before use, using original parts if possible.

LEAK PRE-AMPS

Line of 'good for their time' preamps. Use of EF86 pentode valve for high gain rules out ultra performance. Not the highest-fi.



Garrard 401 A legendary turntable.

LEAK STEREO 20

Excellent workaday classic valve amp. In good order the 20 will not disgrace itself. Various upgrades are available from specialist repairers.

LEAK TL12+

Plentiful monobloc equivalent of Stereo 20. Reasonably inexpensive and a tweakers' dream. Genuine valve hi-fi on a budget.

NAD 3020

You can't argue with success! NAD's budget transistor integrated gave thousands their first taste of hi-fi and remains great value.

QUAD 33/303 PRE/POWER

Great style and construction, also bullet proof. Warm and wooly sound, but easy going. A good introduction to early transistor audio classics.

QUAD 22/II PRE/POWER

One of the all-time classic valve amplifiers. Unusual circuit but it works beautifully. 22 pre-amp not up to today's standards.

SUGDEN A21

Seventies transistor integrated has an eminently likeable smoothness and musicality. Limited inputs via DIN sockets.

TECHNICS SE-A5 Mk2

Nice transformer and electronics, shame about the casework. With tweaking, this 150watter can sound sweet.

LOUDSPEAKERS

KLIPSCHORN

Not exactly plentiful or cheap but a splendid beast. For efficiency they have seldom been equalled. Space hungry!

LEAK SANDWICH

Rather warm sounding big infinite baffle but cheap with it. With a reasonably powerful amp can sound quite satisfying.

LOWTHER PM6A

High quality full-range driver; still manufactured. High sensitivity, as fitted to many classic horn designs.

MAGNEPLANAR SMGa

Touch dry in the bass but a technological loudspeaker with genuinely musical abilities.

MISSION 770

Father of the 77 range which continues to this day. Well mannered with a warm sound and a kind load to an plifiers.

QUAD ESL57

Unrivalled. Properly serviced there is nothing like them. Their natural presentation may make them caviar to the general.

YAMAHA NS1000M

Hi-tech favourites of the Japanese and Americans. Viewed more warily in the UK but can give excellent results.

classics

TANNOY GRF & AUTOGRAPH

Folded horn monsters which certainly sound good if you have the space. For Tannoy vintage see HFW November 1998.

WHARFEDALE SUPER 8 RS DD

Ideal experimenters' driver. High sensitivity ~14,000 Gauss magnet and extended frequency range.

Inexpensive too!

TANNOY YORK, LANCASTER ETC.

Many similar models of infinite baffle or reflex design. Not the last word in tautness but the drivers work well in modern cabinets.

VINYL

ACOS LUSTRE

Very honest piece of kit, well made and easily adjusted. Vinyl beginners could do very much worse.

ALPHASON HRIOOS

First class arm, up to present-day standards. Buy carefully, though, as there's no service available now.

ARISTON RD11

A one-time king of turntables very similar to the Linn LP12. Now deposed but worth a look at the right price.

LINN AXIS

Uncomplicated, lower-price version of the famous Sondek. Less expensive than some of its stablemates.

GARRARD 301 & 401

Legendary turntables, once fairly plentiful. Excellent back-up available; many different custom plinths available. High quality.

GOLDRING LENCO 88 & 99

Great deck for the kitchen table enthusiast. Garrard fans won't look at 'em but cheap and capable. Servicing available.

HADCOCK 228

Recently out-classed by Hadcock's updated 228 Special Edition but a proper hi-fi arm for all that. Makers still service.

MICHELL FOCUS ONE

20 years and still going strong. Early runner in the 'modern' turntable cycle with a first class arm. Factory servicing available.

SHURE M75

Recent line-contact improvements have left the M75 behind but the wide range of needles make it a handy tool.

SME 3009 IIS

Everlasting classic tone-arm. Spares permanently available from SME. No longer the last word but peanuts second-hand.

THORENS TD 124

Best classic deck ever? Judging by the prices they fetch it's possible - 78rpm too!

THORENS TO 150

Mid-price deck with a keen following. No real difficulty with servicing novices may find the suspension system unnerving.

TRIO L-07D

Knockout heavyweight from 1980 with stainless bearing and 111b platter! Not a give-away and beware! - spares scarce.

TUNERS

LEAK TROUGHLINE (ORIGINAL)
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hi-fi. Limited coverage of 88MHz to
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LEAK TROUGHLINE II & III MONO Arguably the best-sounding tuners ever. Adaptation for stereo easy via phono multiplex socket.

LEAK TROUGHLINE III STEREO Excellent tuner with indifferent stereo decoding circuit. Best when adapted to use modern outboard decoder.

MARANTZ ST-8

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Metaxus Charisma Pre (M.M. M.C. Phono-Stage) MINT Boxed Etc. (Sounds Superb)	1600 00	6/200
Linn LK+1 Pre • Dirak Power Supply (M.M. M.C. Phono-Stage) VGC Boxed Manuals	NA	295 00
Linn Pretek Pre (with M.M. / M.C. Phono-Stage) VGC	400 00	179 95
Croft Vitale Valve Pre-Amp. (M.M. Phono-Stage) The NEW Pre-amp. (Superb at this price) Availab	ole to Special	
Order Only (Selling Very Well And Delivery Times Now Approx 10-Days) NEW	Standard	350 00
	Deluxe	400 00
"(Timber Fascia Brass Contol Knobs) (Matching "Musica" Power Amp Now Available Please Pt	one For Details)	
John Shearne Phase Two Int. MINT / Boxed Etc.	690 00	479 95
John Shearne Phase Three Power Amp MINT Boxed Etc	640 00	(Deposit On)
Quad 77 Pre 77 Power Remote Control Station MINT	1750 00	925 00
Quad 44 Pre-Amp (Buff) VGC / Manuals	600 00 +	229 95
Quad 405 I Power-Amp (2 x 100 Watts) VGC Manuals	N A	189 95
(Together With The 44 Pre For 389 95 Saving 30 00)		
Quad 33 Pre / 303 Power (2 x 45 Watts) VGC	N A	175 00
Technics SU-C909 Pre /SE-A909S Power (Virtual Battery Remote Control) VGC	500 00 +	349 95
Meridian 101B (M.M. Boards) (Black) MINT (Rare Black Version)	N A	149 95
Audiolab 8000A (DIN Version) MINT Manuals	500 00	219 95
Musical Fidelity MVT Pre Amp / Power Supply (M.M. / M.C. Phono-Stage) MINT / Boxed	1200 00	425 00
Musical Fidelity 8-200 (2 x 70 Watts Mos-Fet Int. With Phono) GC	400 00	189 95
Musical Fidelity B-1 (2 x 40 Watts Int.) VGC	300 00	129 95
Musical Fidelity B-1 (2 x 40 Watts Int.) (Another One) VGC	300 00	129 95
(Buy The Two And Bi-Amp. For £225.00)		
Rotel RC-972 Remote Pre MINT / Boxed (Deposit On)	275 00	179 95
Marantz PM-55SE Remote (2 x 50 Watts Int.) MINT. As New Boxed	200 00	109 95
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QED T-231 VGC	NA	59 95
Sugden R-21 FM VGC	NA	80 00
Revox A-76 FM VGC Boxed Manuals	N/A	199 95
Quad FM-3 VGC	NA	95 00
Quad FM-4 VGC	NA	199 95
Quad 77 FM (8us) VGC	700 00	399 95

Denon DRM 550 (HX-PRO Etc.) MINT AS NEW	160 00	99 95
Marantz DCC-82 (Digital Recorder) MINT Boxed / With Tapes (Good Selection Of Tapes Available)	650 00	179 95
Nakamichi RX-202E (Auto-Reverse Mechanism Etc.) VGC	N A	399 95
Pioneer CTS-4405 (Dolby S Etc.) MINT Boxed		180 00
Marantz SD-53 (HX-Pro Etc.) MINT	200 00	99 95
Arwa ADF-640 (3-Head / 2-Motor Etc.) MINT	300 00	89 95
Sharp MDMS-200 (Portable Mini-Disc Recorder / Headphones / Power Supply) MINT / Manuals	300 00	149 95
Yamaha K-320 (2-Motor / Dolby B.C.) MINT boxed		

LOUDSPEAKERS

Audio Note ANE / D. (94dB / ISO Watts Bi-Wire Etc.) Rosewood L.5. And Stands VGC ' Boxed	1769 00	995 00
Audio Note ANK / D (92dB 100 Watts Bi-Wire VGC Boxed	620 00	369 95
Monitor Audio Studio 12 (Rosewood) MINT / AS NEW / Boxed / Manuals	00 0011	695 00
Monitor Audio R-100 Minis (Black) VGC / Boxed	250 00	99 95
Systym Reference Monitors (Cherrywood) MINT	1500 00	795 00
B&W 802 Series 80 Monitors VGC (Deposit On)	2000 00 +	795 00
Kef Q-5S Floorstanders MINT / Boxed	500 00	379 95
Yamaha SW-90 (100 Watts Active Sub-Woofer) MINT Boxed	130 00	99 95
Epos ES-22 (Cherry) Tri-Wire Etc. VGC. Cabinet Marks	1200 00	549 95
Arcaydis ASC Stand-Mount MINT Rosewood	400 00	249 95
Rogers AB-1 (Rosewood) (5ub-Woofers For LS-35A) VGC Boxed Manuals	499 95	199 95
Royd Minstral Bases MINT (Rosewood)	300 00	169 95
Royd Sapphire Minis (Bi-Wire Etc.) MINT	250 00	139 95
Musical Fidelity MC-2 (Bi-Wire) VGC	400 00	139 95
Mission 730 Floorstanders GC / Cabinet Marks	N A	189 95
Mission 700 Minis VGC	139 95	79 95
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Mordaunt Short Festival III MINT	350 00	129 95
Wharfedale Modus Two (Black) VGC	200 00	89 95

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arantz CD-67 II Original SE (Remote Digital Out) VGC	350 00	189.95
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arman Kardon HD-7500 (Remote) VGC	350 00	129 95
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VINYL		
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Thorens TD-280 / Stanton 680 Mk II Cartridge VGC (But Lid Tatty)	260 00	129 95
Mission Tonearm (Linn Fix) VGC	N/A	69 95
ADC 1600 Direct-Drive Ortofon VMS-20E Cartridge VGC	300 00	109 95
Project 0.S (Ortofon FF-ISE Cartridge) MINT But No Lid	170 00	89.95
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(Switchable Impedence) NEW (Ex-Display)	399 90	
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	105.80	89 95	
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Krell FPB 200	£4,750.00	£7,000.00
Sugden Audition c	£599.00	€799.00
Musical Fidelity A1000	£995.00	£1,500.00
Musical Fidelity XA50 Monos	£350.00	€500.00
Plinius 250	£Dem	00,000,82
Audio Note Kasi	£14,950.00	00,000,002
Lavardin Model IS Integrated	£1,495.00	£2,200.00
Boulder 500 AE	£3,495.00	25.500.00
John Shearne Ref 5 Mono blocks (as new)	£1,395.00	£1,700.00
Adcom GF 565	£1,295.00	£2,200,00
Audio Note Nero (as new)	£7,995.00	£18.500.00
Audio Note Ongaku (new)	p.o.a.	£45,000.00
Audio Research Classic 150 M/blocks	£4985.00°	£12,000.00
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Burmester 850 Monoblocks	£1295.00°	23.000.00
Cary 300 se LX20 Monoblocks	On Demo	£5,250.00
Cary 572 SE Monoblocks	£1,950.00	\$2,350.00
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Counterpoint SA12	£795.00	£1,400.00
Exposure IX Power supply	£795.00	£1,500.00
Exposure VIII	£450.00	£700.00
Jadis Defy 7 MK III	£2,950.00	£4,790.00
John Shearn Reference Phase 2 Integ.	£575.00	€799.00
John Sheam Reference Phase 3 Power Amp	£550.00	£749.00
Kenwood L1000C pre/ L1000M Power Amp	£1,495,00	£2,500.00
Krell FPB 300	\$6,500.00	£9,990.00
Krell FPB 600	€8,995.00	£12,900.00
Krell KSA 250	£2,750.00	€6,700,00
Meracus Intrare 6 (int) X-demo	£1,795.00	£2,000.00
Naim 250 (Old Style, just serviced)	₹795.00	. 3
Sugden AU51	£995.00	£1,500.00
Pioneer A300 Int	290.00	2180.00
Quad 77 Intergrated	€450.00	00,000
Rogers E40A (new)	£1,485.00	£1,848.00
Quad 306	£275.00	£400.00
Quad 405	£225.00	3
YBA 3x Pre/PWR	£1495.00°	£2,400.00
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* Reduced this month



Amplifiers

Plinius 16L	\$2,800.00	£3,200.00
Cello Audio Palette mi	£12,000.00	£28,000.00
Boulder L5AE	£2,495.00	£3,400.00
Krell KSL pre	£1,295.00	£ -
Sugden AU51 c Pre	2695.00	£1,000.00
Audible Illusions L1	£1,795.00	£2,000.00
Naim 82 Control Unit	£1,695.00	£2,300.00
C.A.T. ultamete referance Pre Amp Inc/ Phono Star	ge X-Demo £5,195.00	\$5,750.00
Tube Tech Seer Pre Amp	\$850.00	£935.00
Naim 82 + Super Cap	£3,390.00	£4,475.00
Audible Illusions P3A Pre MM/MC	On demo	£3,140.00
Audio Research LS9	£1,995,00	\$2,500.00
Electrocompaniet EC 4.5 (new)	£895.00	£1,195.00
Exposure VII	£295.00	00.0082
Exposure XI pre XII psu	£795.00	£1,500.00
Jeff Rowland Consumate + phono (3box)	£3750.00°	£8,000.00
John Sheam Phese 6 Pre	£995.00	£900.00
Mark Levinson No 28	£2,250.00	£4,000.00
Meridian 541 Dolby Surround	2650.00	£1,095.00
Naim 42.5	£195.00	£450.00
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Speakers

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Sonus Faber Guarneri + Stand	£3,895.00	£4,000.00 £5,500.00
Cello Serafin (Active Speakers)	28,995.00	£12,000.00
JM Lab Electra 915.1	Ex Dem	£1,896.00
Sonus Faber Grand Pianos + Bases	£1,395.00	21,900,00
Audio Physics Tempo III	£On Dcm	£2,000.00
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Cadence ES	£1,496.00	£3.500.00
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BC Acoustics Araxe	€895.00	£1,195.00
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Audio Physics Rhea Sub	£2,350.00	£3,099.00
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Linn LP12/Lingo/Ekos/Arkiv/Cirkus	£2,250.00	€4,000.00
Michell Syncro RB300	£450.00	6 .
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Musical Fidelity XLP Phono Stage	£95.00	€149.00
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CD Players & DAC'S	Was	Now	
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Kenwood 9010X Clock 3 moded Transport	N/A	275	
Monrio 18B2 DAC	950	399	
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Rega Jupiter Transport/Io DAC	975	750	
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Garrard 401/Aphelion/RB300 (As New)	N/A	599	
Garrard 401/Aphelion/SME 3012/V15	N/A	499	
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Linn LP12/Cirkus/Lingo/Ittok/OC30	2600	849	
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Michell Syncro RB250/Grado Silver Nottingham Analogue Paragon I Linear Tracking Tonearm	749 1600	399 395	
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Rokksan Xerxes Piano Lacquer XPS 1 (SME Cut)	1295	450	
Roksan Artemiz Tonearm (Latest version)	895	650	
Roksan DS 5 Attessa PSU	549	399	
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DPA Enlightenment (New style)	799	499	
Graaf WFB Two (New & boxed)	1750	1199	
Mod Squad Line Drive AGT	599	299	
Michell ArgoHR/Hera	N/A N/A	475 129	
Naim Audio 32 MM/MC Preamplifier OCM 55 Preamplifier	995	399	
Rega Cursa Preamplifier Remote/Phono	475	349	
Roksan L1.5 Preamplifier (Silver)	2250	950	
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Audiolab 8000S Integrated	900	529	
Audio Note P2SE Valve Power Amplifier	1499	795 849	
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Bartelomeo Transperenza ST140 Power Amplifier	1500	695	
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Naim Audio Hi-Cap (Old Style)	N/A	379	
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Rega Big Brio Amplifier	298	199	
Rega Luna Amplifier	375	245	
Rega Maia Power Amplifier	475	349	
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AVI S2000 MC 24-BIT CD	XD	£995	£695	MONRIO ASTY CD	XD	£700	£495
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AUDIO ANALOGUE PAGANINI CD	XD	£750	£569	PROJECT 1.2	XD	£200	£149
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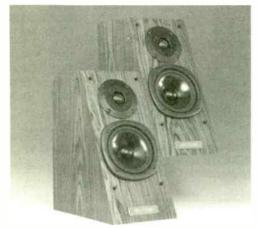
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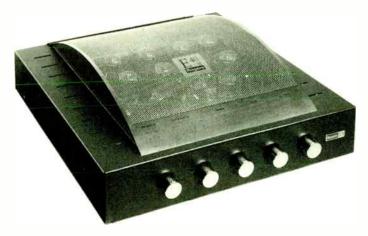
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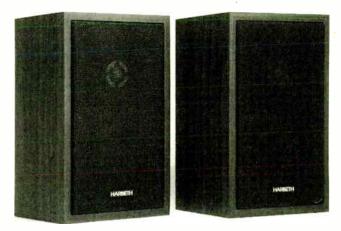
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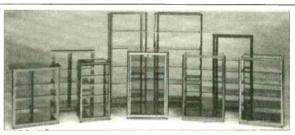
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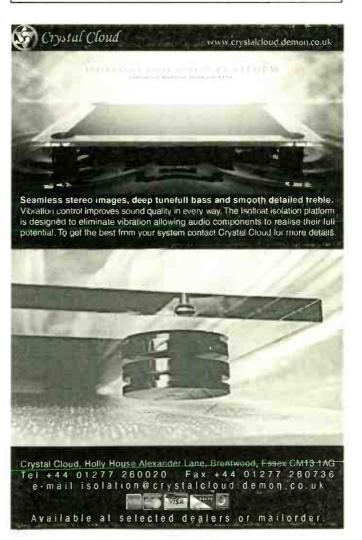
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UPGRADE YOUR TURNTABLE

"If you are thinking of upgrading your system.....the Origin Live dc-motor kit should be high on your list for consideration" TNT AUDIO internet magazine April 2000.

"The single most important upgrade you can ever make to any record deck concerns the motor drivenothing can compare you for the shock of going DC, in a word Gobsmacking" COMMON GROUND MAGAZINE

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Whether you own a Linn Lingo or a Rega, the results of upgrading to the Origin Live dc motor and advanced power supply are simply astounding. This high grade motor kit is designed as a drop in replacement for almost all turntable motors. Decks benefiting so far from this ultimate of upgrades include Linn. Roksan, Michell. Systemdeck, Rock etc. With a 12 Volt power supply it is safe and easy to fit. Guidance instructions are provided. At £250 with money back guarantee if not impressed this is a bargain out of all proportion to it's value in terms of performance. An optional, larger purpose made transformer is also available as an add on at £175

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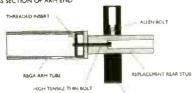
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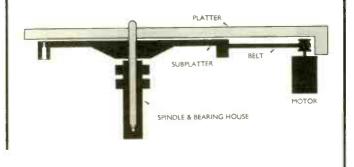
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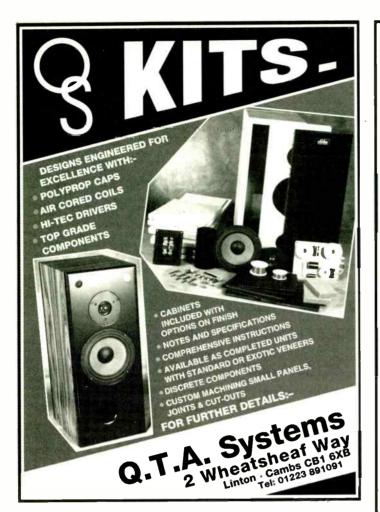
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mish, suit alf SF speakers	1,800	799
CONCERTINO	599	430
ONCERTO	945	750
ONCERTO GRAN P.	1,550	1,290
LECTA AMATOR 2	2,849	1,950
CUARNERI HOMAGE	5,795	3,750
IGNUM	1,250	999
XTREMA	N/A	2,850
MATI HOMAGE	11,450	8,750

Prices refer to new/mint condition and sealed

WHARFEDALE mod. AIR DALE, huge cabinet £ 200 the pair! LOWTHER Acoustat
Cabinet £ 100 the pair; Belcanto £ 1,500 (piano finish) rare, few made; Fidelio £ 1,100. Drive Units: (each) PM6A £ 235; PM7A £ 290; PM2A £ 350. MAUHORN beautiful cabinet for PM2A £ 1,000. QUAD FSI. Black or Bronze £ 600; AUDIO NOTE ANSP Pure Silver Speaker Cable £ 300 (2 x 1.5m) £ 500 (4 x 1.5m) <u>A.B.T.</u> simply the best (for Sonus Faber) from £ 100 per meter!!

ARDOO VALVES

PX4 POA; PP3/250 POA; KT61 £ 15; KT66 G.E.C. £ 50/60; EL34 MULLARD POA; EL84

HI-FI SOLD, BOUGHT. Tel./Fax: 0181 343 0533 Tel.: 0790 1976 441

POA: BCC\$2 Mulland £ 8 each: PCC\$3 Mulland £ 10 each; E88CC Brimar/Mullard/Pinnacle £ 7 each; also GZ32/34 and other rectifiers. Please phone for details and prices.

VINTAGE/MODERN JURE Introducing the new Italian NIGHTINGALE valve integrated/power amps: AFS 20 £ 1,250; AFS 30 £ 1,699; ADM 20 TBC; LEAK TL 10 £600/650; TL12+ £ 350 (pair) or £ 150 single; TL12.1 £ 1,300-1,450 (pair); Stereo 20 £ 450; TL 50 POA; QUAD II good/mint £ 550/600; QUAD 405 mint £ 280; <u>RADFORD</u> STA 15 with preamp £ 800; STA25 £ 1,000; <u>UNISON</u> RESEARCH: SMART 845 bargain £ 2,800!!!; SIMPLY 2 £ 999; PENTODE 35 £ 1,490; AUDIO ANALOGUE PUCCINI £ 350 (mint); PUCCINI SE £ 550 (mint); ROGERS HG88 £ 300; Cadet III £ 200; BEAM ECHO DH7 etc. £ 1,300; M7 preemplifier phono £ 5,000; CONCORDANT EXHILARANT line pres (£ 900) £ 450; CROFT Vitale £ 475; GRAAF Venti-cinque £ 900; JADIS DEFY 100 £ 2,000;

TURNTABLES/CARTRIDGES/ARMS

GARRARD 301 POA; 401 £ 0; MICHELL Gyrodeck MKII ex-demo £ 750; MicroGyro Arm £ 500; NOTTINGHAM ANALOGUE
MENTOR REFERENCE (one of the best in the market) mint condition £ 2000; Interspace £ 350; Spacedeck £ 550; HyperSpace £ 1,190; NOTTINGHAM The Foot (12" tone arm) £ 850; SME 309 £ 550; SME 3009 £ 130; SME 3012 £ 250; ORTOFON Rohmann mint/sealed £ 750; MC10 Supreme £ 210; MC20 Supreme £ 375; MC30 Supreme £ 425; AUDIO NOTE IO-V £ 1,000; SUMTKO Blue Point S £ 199

D PLAYERS/DAC

C.E.C. TL2 Belt Drive as new £ 1,350; AUDIO NOTE DAC 4 bargain £ 2500. AUDIO ANALOGUE PAGANINI £ 650.

CASH WAITING for the following valves: PX4; PX25; PP3/250; P650/ P15/280; P12/250; ACO44; PP5/400; R\$241; 300BWE; KT61; KT66 2A3; 211; EL84 (Mullard); LEAK; RADFORD; QUAD I and II; DYNATRON, any RGD amp; GOODMANS AXIOM 80-TANNOY & LOWTHER

AUDIO MATTERS

NEW EX-DEM & PART EXCHANGE EQUIPMENT FOR SALE 020 8255 0572/0973 436135

	LIST	SALE
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Alchemist Kraken Anniversary MkII	£599	£POA
Alchemist Forseti R/C Int Amp	£1250	£650
Alchemist Genesis monoblocks	£1500	£695
Anthem CD player (5 star What Hi-Fi)(ex/d)	£1699	£899
Audio Research D240 Mk.II	£3500	£1195
Audion Black Shadows 845 valve monoblocks	£4000	£POA
Audion Silvernight 300B monoblocks	£2250	£POA
Audio Alchemy drive 3 + V3DAC + 3PSU	£1649	£759
AVI S2000MP Pre + Rata PSU	£1450	£750
AVI S2000 Monoblocks	£1400	£750
Chario Academy 1 solid walnut (ex/d)	£1299	£800
Chario Academy 2 solid walnut (ex/d)	£1649	£1100
Conrad Johnson PV10AL Pre	£1095	£595
EAR 859 pwr. amp	£1599	£750
Krell Kay 3001	£2495	£POA
Krell KSA 80 pwr. amp	£3498	£1495
Krell KSA 250 pwr. amp	£6700	£2500
Krell KSL pre amp	£2298	£995
Krell KAV-S Prologic, AC3, DTS, THX PRE	£13500	£6500
Macintosh 7106 6ch. THX pwr. amp	£4000	£1999
Meridian 207 CD + PRE	012000	£350
Proac Response 4 spks	£12000	£3995
Pass Aleph LFP PRE	£3800	£2195
Quad ESL63 + Stands	£3500	£1395
Spendor SP7/1 spks.	£1995	£650
Tannoy D700 spks. rosewood	£2500	£1250
Theta pearl transport + Progeny dac	£2448	£1250
Wadia 23 CD Player	£2980	£1495

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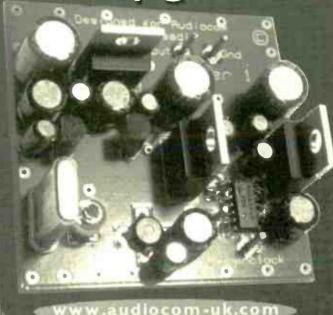
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 ROKSAN Caspian Integrated amp. Excellent condition. Boxed. £495. S/H.

 ROKSAN Caspian power amp. Excellent condition. Boxed. £495. S/H.

 MUSE Model eighteen subwoofer. £1500. S/H.

 ROTEL 985 CD player. £125. S/H.

 SD ACOUSTIC9 3R loudspeakers with matching stands. As new. £500. X/D.

 REGA Planet CD player. Mint. Boxed. Remote. £295. S/H.

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MEASURED PERFORMANCE

TUNERS

VIDEOLOGIC DRX-601E

I could not measure the DRX-601E under lab conditions, lacking a DAB modulator (rare and expensive). However, a lot can be gleaned from transmitted programme and DRAFFT test transmissions, using our FFT.

DRAFFT test transmission stepped tones produced the response shown in our third-octave analysis. The DRX-601E's lower limit (-1dB) was 30Hz. There's some slight bass loss from 100Hz to 200Hz, on stepped tones and white noise bursts, then a marked plateau high frequency lift of + I dB above 3kHz. Transmitted test signals include modulator and MUSICAM performance; they're not a true receiver response, so I'm reluctant to point to the tuner. All the same this isn't a very flat response by VHF tuner standards, as comparison with the Denon TU-S10 shows (the analyses using the same vertical scales). Videologic told me their tuner measured 'flat', albeit not within the unrealistic 0.15dB limits quoted.

DRAFFT appears to confirm what I heard in comparative listening tests: that DAB and/or the DRX-601E emphasise high frequencies a little, giving a bright sound, one that is also a little light on bass. More attention needs to be paid to sound quality before DAB rivals VHF/FM. There's the usual simple and complacent view that because it is 'digital' it is perfect.

Most transmitted DAB programme produced strong music energy levels from 30Hz-18kHz. XFM actually managed 20Hz right up to 18kHz almost flat and I measured and could hear subsonic bass (10Hz-40Hz) from this station too. I noticed that transmitted energy levels cut off sharply at 18kHz though, instead of rolling down smooth-

ly, suggesting MUSICAM imposes an I8kHz limit, making DAB little different from VHF/FM.

The tuner delivers 2.1V output maximum, so it will match all amplifiers easily.

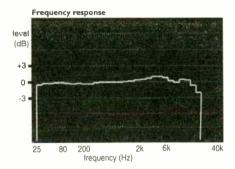
Distortion from a transmitted DRAFFT signal measured 0.009% on a 440Hz, 0dB tone - a very good result. Videologic claim 0.01% distortion at 1kHz. Our analysis shows distortion harmonics barely exist.

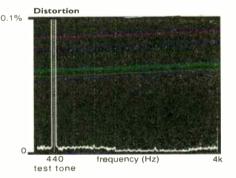
There's no quoted channel separation figure. Psychoacoustically, only 30dB or more is needed for full perceived stereo, and I am sure DAB can achieve this.

Noise measured -103dB, IEC A weighted. There was a measurable 50Hz hum component, giving a -93dB unweighted figure, but this was too low to be audible. The tuner is totally silent in use.

Muting lifted above 6µV or so, making the DRX-601E very sensitive. Videologic told me it has a Panasonic head unit, which obviously has a good performance in this important area. The signal strength display has sixteen segments, of which I could get only 5 to light (around 80µV). It would take a lot of signal to get them all to light I suspect, and Videologic have not linked full illumination to input overload, stipulated as I25mV across 50ohms for DAB. I feel this display could be better thought out and specified in the handbook, which currently says little about it.

The DRX-601E measures well in all areas, except frequency response, which does not look very flat. This could well be attributable to DAB transmission chain characteristics, rather than the DRX-601E.





Comparing the DRX-601E to the Denon TU-S10 clearly shows that DAB measures little better than VHF/FM, their specifications being similar.

A strong point in favour of the DRX-601E is its high sensitivity. This will affect user perceptions, the unit offering full performance from "a piece of wet string", something VHF/FM cannot do. It is an impressive box of tricks for £299.

Frequency response	30Hz-20kHz
Stereo separation	-dB
Distortion (50% mod.)	0.009%
Hiss (IEC A)	-103dB
Signal for minimum hiss	6μV
Sensitivity	6μV
Signal strength meter:	2μV-?
Output	2.1V

DENONTU-S10

The audio frequency response of this tuner extended just a little further than most - to 16kHz rather than 15kHz. The slight blip at the top end of its response, seen at right in our analysis, suggests Denon are using a highly tuned mpx filter to suppress pilot tone at

19kHz, squeezing just a little more bandwidth from VHF/FM. Response limits (-1dB) were 5Hz-16.1kHz, with just 0.25dB total variation across the band. Denon consistently produce good tuners and quite obviously this one measures unusually well. A DAB tuner

can manage little better than this, in theory reaching 20kHz - just a little further right in our analysis.

Distortion was minimal, hovering just below 0.1% in stereo. At this level the generator cannot be discounted from the measurement, although distor-

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		ownsend 600c pre-amplifier with imm/mc phono	£ 125
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ı		larantz PM60100SE int amp/remote Mint Bxd	£ 140
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Bae CCCCCC Gi Jo Kin Ma Rati Va tion figures of 0.05% are possible. Our analysis shows just a little third harmonic in the mono (L+R) channel.

Channel separation was wide at 52dB and noise very low at -78dB in stereo. This is as low as VHF goes and in use it is low enough, hiss being inaudible at this level. The Denon needed 2mV to achieve this performance - known as full quieting - much like any VHF tuner. An outdoor aerial is usually needed for this, except close to a transmitter.

By comparison the Videologic managed -103dB noise, and could do this from an indoor wire. Technically, it is quieter, but in use there was no obvious difference on Radio 3 silences.

Pilot tone and sub-carrier suppression were good, at -77dB and -82dB. The TU-S10 produces little unwanted output.

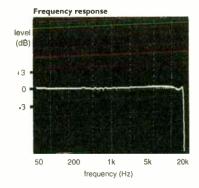
Sensitivity was high at 1.2µV in mono mode, and just 26µV in stereo

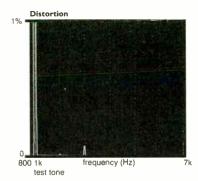
mode (-50dB hiss). This shows where VHF keeps working down to almost no signal, albeit producing a lot of hiss. Stereo tuners mute, just like DAB. Muting can always be lifted by switching to mono, however.

The TU-S10 turns in a fine measured performance, showing just how good VHF/FM is. But it was designed to be good in the first place, hence the insignificant improvement offered by DAB. **NK**

Frequency response	5Hz-16.!kHz
Stereo separation	52dB
Distortion (50% mod.)	0.08%
Hiss (CCIR)	-78dB
Signal for minimum hiss	2mV
Selectivity (at 0.4MHz)	86dB
Sensitivity	
mono	0.8µ∨
stereo	25µ∨
signal strength meter:	none

test results





LOUDSPEAKERS

CYRUS CLS70

This loudspeaker has a slightly odd response in places, the drivers going out of phase above axis. The phase matching is not wonderful, Response varied quite substantially according to microphone position, so where you sit will affect things. Overall, treble is shelved a dB or two below bass/midrange output, whilst bass rolls off smoothly in what looks like quite highly damped reflex loading. Pink noise sounded silky smooth with little bass rumble from the port. Loudspeakers like this are normally used close to a rear wall, and driven by a very powerful amplifier. The result is dry, tight and tuneful bass.

The impedance curve is unusually flat and very high up too, meaning the

MISSION m71

This small loudspeaker has an almost reference standard flat frequency response; our analysis clearly shows there's little variation right across the audio band. Particular strengths are a peak-free tweeter, suggesting smooth sounding treble reasonably free of colouration, and an absence of crossover region suckout. This last phenomenon, in moderation, softens the sound of a loudspeaker but also suppresses detail. Conversely, I'd expect the m71 to sound smooth but highly detailed across its high frequencies. This sort of performance comes from fundamentally good drivers, something that tends to bring more than the obvious

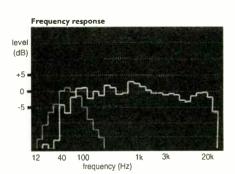
CLS70 has high impedance and is an easy, non-reactive load. The DCR was a high 70hms and overall impedance no less than 9.50hms. However, this did result in low sensitivity of 85dB, another reason for using a powerful amplifier. I should point out though that this is a better option than using low impedance to draw more current, because most solid-state amps produce considerably more distortion than specified when driving low loads, a point commonly overlooked. The CLS70s need a muscular amplifier, a Musical Fidelity or Cyrus Smartpower comlng to mind.

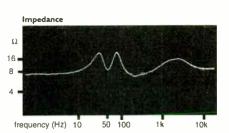
The CLS70 looks as if it's been designed for Rock, so listen first. It will likely sound tighter, faster and more impactful than many reflexes. **NK**

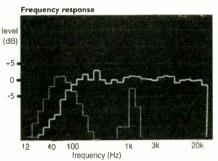
benefits I've mentioned,

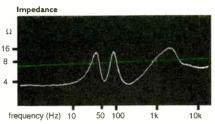
Lacking any bass peaking, and displaying a smooth roll down in output below 80Hz the m71s are likely to sound bass dry and well damped. They should be used close to a rear wall to bring low frequency output up a little. The large port needs some clearance behind it, so stands a foot or so from the rear wall are the best idea. The port peaks at 60Hz and reaches down to 40Hz (-3dB). Our analysis shows it also outputs a strong midrange box honk, which may be returned from a hard rear surface.

The impedance curve shows symmetrically placed port resonance, which









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applies maximum acoustic damping. The port is well tuned to damp the bass unit effectively. The impedance curve is pretty benign too, displaying no sudden V/I phase changes, apart from the peaks around bass unit resonance which all reflexes suffer. Low reactance at middle and high frequencies is a good sign.

The impedance curve has an 80hm upper section and 40hm lower one, measuring out at 60hms overall. However, to an amplifier, pushing most current in the bass region, this will look more like a four ohm loudspeaker - but then most loudspeakers are like this nowadays. Mission are trying to keep

test results

the voltage sensitivity up, so the m71s appear to go loud at any particular volume setting. They have managed quite well; a reasonable 86dB SPL was returned - good for a small loudspeaker.

As always Mission offer a loudspeaker engineered neatly all round in the m71. **NK**

DVD PLAYERS

T+A 1210R

The frequency response of this player varied according to filter used, No1 giving a conventional flat to 21kHz characteristic, as shown in our analysis. No2 and No3 gave faster roll off in the stop band to better suppress unwanted images, The trade off here is a non-flat in-band response, seen as 0.4dB ripple in No2 and a treble peak in Filter No3. The high resolution vertical scale of our analyses (0.5dB/division) emphases these effects

Filter No4 (not shown) rolled down early, measuring -1 dB at 12.6kHz and -3 dB at 20kHz. Subjectively this will be quite audible as a warmth or lack of top end sparkle in the sound from filter No4, depending somewhat upon programme. Modern Dance, for example, which can a lot of treble energy will clearly lack top end zing, but with a lot of classical differences might be difficult to detect.

Filter No4 also gave most energy above 20kHz with 24bit/96kHz sound track audio, although the player had a filter notch at 24kHz that removed a lot of energy. There was a smooth roll down otherwise, as I'd expect of a real harmonic structure, rather than unwanted aliases. The T+A did half a job

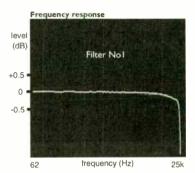
with 24/96 audio.

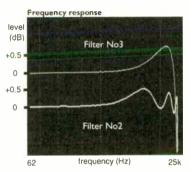
There was minimal distortion, very low noise and high channel separation, so otherwise the player was fine.

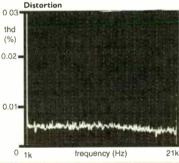
Output was a high-ish 2.5V.

This player will sound smooth with filter No I, probably a bit drier and brighter with No2 and 3, and warm but likely most atmospheric with No4. It's handling of 24/96 sound track wasn't ideal but the audio side can be set as desired, much like the venerable Cambridge CD-1. **NK**

Frequency response (filter No1)	41	Hz-21kHz
Distortion	left	right
-6dB	0.006	0.006
-30dB	0.08	0.008
-60dB	0.3	0.3
-90	27	27
Separation	left	right
l kHz	130	128
20kHz	106	105
Noise		-112dB
Dynamic range Output		110dB 2.56V







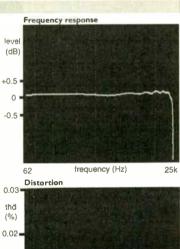
CD PLAYERS

KENWOOD DPF-3030

The DPF-3030 has a shallow dip in its frequency response just above 1kHz, which may well produce a little softness in its sound, even though high frequencies rise back up to normal level. In conjunction with DRIVE, which effectively reduced low level (-90dB) distortions from around 30% to 10% it's likely the Kenwood will sound different from usual, likely smoother and easier going than most budget CD players.

These unusual characteristics apart the DPF-3030 measured well in all areas, so it is likely to give an interestingly different presentation to the norm. **NK**

Frequency respon	4Hz-20.5kHz	
Distortion -6dB -30dB -60dB -90	left 0.006 0.008 0.4 10	right 0.006 0.008 0.39
Separation IkHz 20kHz	left 110 105	right 110 105
Noise		-122dB
Dynamic range Output		110dB 2.2V



frequency (Hz)

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AMPLIFIERS

DENON PMA-355 UK

Developing 66W into 80hms and a healthy 110W into 4ohms, the PMA-355 has enough power for most situations. The power supply has good regulation and the rise in distortion caused by the heavy current draw of a four ohm load did not hamper the Denon in the way it did the Exposure tested this month. As loudspeaker impedances fall this becomes more of an issue. In fact, distortion levels were low all round, the very worst case being at full power, 10kHz into a 4ohm load, where 0.15% distortion was produced. Otherwise levels stayed below 0.1%, as they should in a transistor amplifier.

Frequency response was wide and flat, providing the tone control override switch was in. Otherwise, the PMA-355 had a bizarrely non-flat response, with bass roll-off. The tone controls themselves work well, but at zero they must be switched out.

The phono stage measured very well. It has no warp filter, so there'll be some cone flap with warped records,

NAIM NAIT 5

The Nait is a low power amplifier, producing 32W into 80hms and 56W into 40hms. This is enough to go loud in small to medium rooms, especially if the loudspeakers are efficient floor standers.

Distortion levels were low, even when delivering current into 4ohms, the worst case being 0.06% at 10kHz, full output. Otherwise, levels hovered around 0.01% and, being primarily second harmonic, the Nait should sound smooth and clean.

Frequency response rolls off above 35kHz, again a characteristic likely to make the amplifier sound smooth.

EXPOSURE 2010

The 2010 produced 50W into 80hms and 56W into 40hms, a minimal increase that points to mediocre power supply regulation. In conjunction with quite a steep rise in distortion into 40hm loads the 2010 is best matched to sensitive high impedance loudspeakers for best results. These days, there aren't so many around, Castles being one appropriate choice.

Distortion at high frequencies measured 0.15% at low or high output levels, rising to 0.3% into 40hms. With extended harmonics, this was classic crossover distortion and will likely give an edge to the amplifier's sound.

but more also more deep bass than a filtered stage. RIAA equalisation was accurate right across the audio band and hiss low at -75dB.

This amplifier measured well all round, except for the tone control circuit when set at zero. **NK**

Power	66watts
CD/tuner/aux.	
Frequency response	6Hz-58kHz
Separation	66dB
Noise	-95dB
Distortion	0.017%
Sensitivity	I50mV
dc offset	1/0.8mV
Disc	
Frequency response	I I Hz-70kHz
Separation	58dB
Noise	-75dB
Distortion	0.02%
Sensitivity	2.5mV
Overload	110mV

Sensitivity, noise and channel separation values were normal.

Naim's new Nait 5 is a neat, low power amplifier that measures well all round. It is nicely honed. **NK**

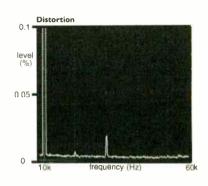
Power	32watts
CD/tuner/aux.	
Frequency response	I I Hz-35kHz
Separation	70dB
Noise	-95dB
Distortion	0.008%
Sensitivity	300mV
dc offset	6/6mV

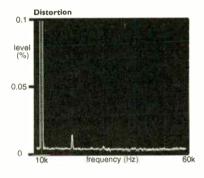
However, frequency response rolls down above 28kHz, which might soften things out a little.

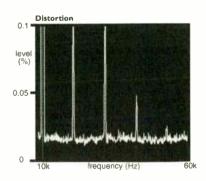
The 2010 did not measure too well by current standards. $\mbox{\bf NK}$

Power	SOWatts
CD/tuner/aux.	
Frequency response	9Hz-28kHz
Separation	70dB
Noise	-103dB
Distortion	0.02%
Sensitivity	260mV

dc offset







12/12mV



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		EX/DEMO	£1,112	£1,000
	M FLATCAP Power Supply	EX/DEMO	£370	£330
	M NAC 72 Pre Amp	S/H		£400
	M NAC 92 Pre Amp	EX/DEMO	£515	£470
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	T VS1.2 Black Surround Speakers	S/H	£400	£200
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	LK RT8 Speaker	S/H	2200	£100
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		S/H	£700	£500
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EXPOSURE 25 amp. Mint condition. Boxed. £500 ono. Tel: Per 01454 411 093 (Bristol area) (Feb(I)

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AUDIO PHYSIC Virgos, cherry £1250. Transparent Ultra: 15 foot balanced, £750 (£2000). Kimber Illuminati DX50 AES-EBU 1.5m cable £200 (£400). Meridian 200, Full Trichord DOB modification, £500. Audio Synthesis Passion8M, remote: £700 (£1700) AS DAX: balanced output version £750 (£3200). Tel: 01312259002. Email: S.hussain@ed.sac.ac.uk (Feb(I)

TUNERS RADFORD, Leak FM, Troughline 3, Quad FM3, QUAD 33, Teac Tascam reel to reel. Tapes new/used. preamp Meridian 101 transformers, chokes, microphones, Mission 771 speakers, magazines, Audio Research MD90. Tel: 0131 332 7536 (Feb(I) SUGDEN MASTERCI ASS AA power amplifier £2000 (£3000 new). 70w Class A, gold plated PCBs, silver signal wires, WBT speaker posts, gun metal grey, 3 months old. Tel: 01635 299 619 evenings (Newbury) (Feb(I)

DYNAUDIO 1.3 MkII contour standmount speakers, 14 months, cherry £1200 new, £885. AVI Biggatron, cherry, 3 months £399. Tel: 0115 952 1820, mobile 07747 762 672 (Feb(I)

MERIDIAN M605 monoblocs SE/Bal inputs, immaculate, boxed, manual £950 ono. Audio Innovations Series 1000 passive controller £75. Hart Phono Stage built by AudioLinks, excellent sound quality £250.Tel: 01624 817 230 eves (Feb(I)

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AUDIOLAB 8000P power amplifier, 2 years old, as new, mint condition, boxed, hardly used £495, Sony ST-S311 FM-AM stereo tuner, RDS-EON, as new, boxed £75. Tel: 0116 237 4533 (Feb(I)

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ALBARRY MUSIC (monobloc) power amplifiers, M1008 Series Two. 200wpc. excellent condition. Cost £1900 (pair). Will accept £850 ovno. Tel: 0133 283 1363 eves after 7pm (Feb(I)

PAIR KEF Concerto £40. Leak amplifier Stereo 70 £40. Leak Delta FM tuner £40. Leak Delta FM tuner £40. Garrard 401 turntable, Lenco Goldring arm, shure cartridge £100. Tel: 020 8480 2060 work, 020 7737 4526 home (Feb(I)

CABLE TALK Reference 2 x1m £75. lxos 103 x1m £20. Yello Power Cord x2metres £15. Carraige paid. Tel: evenings 01224 483 642 (Feb(I)

VPI HW19 MkIII £525.
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BAT VT3i preamp £1500. PS Audio P300 multiwave and fan £1200. Copland CTA 401 £800. Rogers LS3/5A as new £350. Revox B225 CD £150. Tel: 020 8856 1047 (Feb)

ROTEL RB870/RC870 pre and power, manuals £100 the pair. Wharfedale 708 speakers £150, Thorens TD125 IV, RB 250 A.T. cartridge £100. All vgc. Tel: 01483 416 493 evenings and weekends. (Mar(I)

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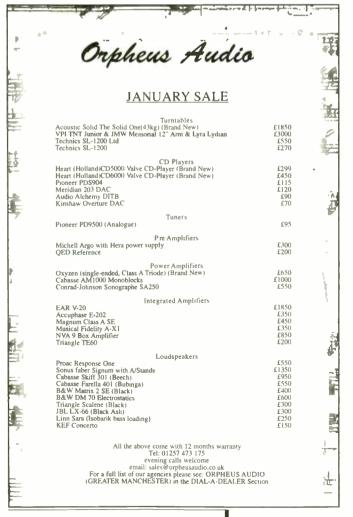
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FERROGRAPH LOGIC Seven Model 7602H half track reel to reel recorder, excellent condition, electronics and sound perfect. New heads fitted by fussy owner. can be heard £275. Tel: 01386 553 942 (Feb(I)

HELIUS SYRIUS 1. Highly neutral floor standing loud-speakers. Electrostatic like transparency with bass from 20Hz. Mint. Light oak. (£2850) £1500. Pioneer CT91a cassette deck. Mint, boxed (£549) £200. Concordant Quad II monoblock valve poweramps. One needs work £150. Tel: 07974 784 638 (Devon) (Feb(I)

MANA REFERENCE table (table and top layer) £200 - and integral power supply table £85 - as new. Tel: 0860 513 729 - leave message if no reply. (Feb(I)

S35A WILMSLOW Audio mini monitor loudspeakers teak veneer finish with black cloth grille. Low usage vgc £150. Tel: 01494 712 565 10am to 8pm (Bucks) (Feb(I)

MICROMEGA DUO CD3 transport and Duo Pro converter (£2000 +) £895. Mission 780SE loudspeakers and Mission stands £195. NAD 402 tuner £95. Audio Alchemy headphone amplifier £125. Tel: 01785 604 576 (Stafford) (Feb(I)

NAIM 180 power amp 4 years old, excellent condition boxed with manual and warranty £680 upgraded to 135's. Tel: 01904 646 023, Mobile: 07944 426 715 (York) (Feb(I)

EXPOSURE XX INTEGRAT-ED amplifier boxed good condition £295. Marantz CD 94 MkII boxed vgc £295. Deltec One Little Bit DAC £75. Tel: Martin 01234 840 840 day / 01536 330 652 eves (Feb(I)

QUAD 57 Electrostatics, rebuilt by Classique Audio. Oak stands £600. Art Audio Maestro triode monoblocks, sixty watts, just rebuilt to latest specification £1450 (£4200) superb sound. Tel: 01424 755 375 (East Sussex) (Feb(I)

ROGERS LS7T speakers £225. Target HJ15 stands £25. Audio-Pro Bi-45 sub woofer £75. Four volt DVC-250.1 speaker units. Not used. £75 each. Tel: 01642 559 078 (Feb(I)

LINN SONDEK LP12 Ittok arm good condition £400. Tel: 01642 363 988 (Feb(I)

QUAD 11's refurbished £350. Musical Reference American valve preamp £200. B&W P5's boxed cost £875 sell £425. Luxman tuner £80. Tel: 01432 275 203 (Hereford) (Feb(I)

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AUDIO ANALOGUE Bellini preamp in silver £250. Donizetti power amp in silver £300. Castle Harlech cherry speakers £450. All as new and boxed. Remarkable value and sound. Tel: 0121 733 1961 (Feb(I)

YAMAHA DSP-A1 AV-amp top reviews in mint condition £750 (£1500). Rel Strata II sub-bass unit £290 (£600). Jamo Concert centre speaker £200 (£500) all boxed. Tel: 0116 271 439 (Feb(I)

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DUE TO Upgrade, Thiel CS3 speakers, £225, Meridian 206 £225, Ortofon 540 cartridge £60, Origin Live Basic turntable £40, M.F. XA200 monoblocks, blackgates fitted £650. Lehmann Black Cube £225. Tel: 0121 745 6516 (Feb(I)

TDL CF200 speakers, boxed as new, one year old, cost £650, sell for £360. Tel: 01943 609150 (Feb(I)



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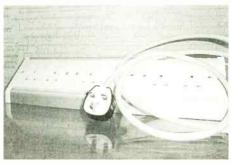
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- 1. Not everyone is honest Buyer Beware!
- 2. Accept no verbal guarantees.
- Have you heard the item or something similar?
 If not, why do you want it?
- 4. Don't pretend to have knowledge it's your fingers that will get burnt!
- 5. Is it working? If not, why not?
- 6. Has it been modified and, if so, have notes been kept?
- 7. Was it any good in the first place?
- B. Don't send cash.
- If you are in the slighest doubt, arrange an audition (see point 4). If it's too far, wait for another time.
- 10. Either buy it or don't: vendors are excusably impatient with 'consultation' exercises.

FOR THE VENDOR

- 1. Not everyone is honest Seller Beware!
- 2. Make no verbal guarantees.
- Even 'nearly new' is still sencond-hand. If the manufacturer's guarantee is no longer in force, your price should reflect this.
- There is very little intrinsic value in second-hand hi-fi; it's only worth what someone will pay for it.
- The best guide to pricing is last month's Classifieds: that a 'classic' was worth £xxx a year or two ago is no guide. Values fall as well as rise.
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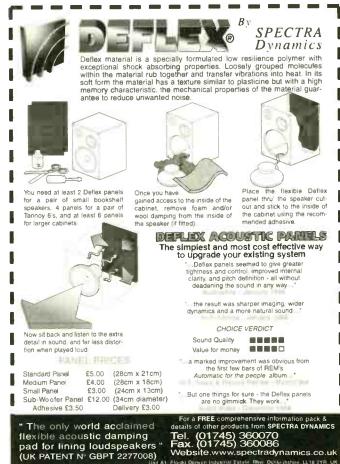
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