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hi-fi WORLD

AUGUST 2002

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**DIY SUPPLEMENT No. 67
INSIDE THIS ISSUE!**

& computer audio

QUAD BOX



Quad's 11L loudspeaker tested



PLAYING TAG

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**DVD32FLD DVD player from
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● plus

- Unison Research Unico amplifier
- KEF Q1 speakers
- Panasonic DVD-RA61 & Toshiba SD510E DVD players
- AudioValve Avalon monoblocs
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- Naim AV2/NAP 175 processor & power amp
- CD, MD and SD Card portables group test
- **Computer Audio World**
 - Elac's 301 Micro Monitor loudspeakers
 - Creative Labs' Extigy USB soundcard
 - Lacie Fusion CD writer

AUGUST 2002



COMPETITION
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UNISON RESEARCH *UNICO*

The new Unico integrated amplifier from Unison Research has an impeccable pedigree. Triode valves give the purity of sound that makes listening a pleasure. With styling of understated elegance and 80 watts of power, Unico offers an unbeatable package. As top reviewer Ken Kessler put it (Hi Fi News, July 2002): "No integrated I've used in recent memory delivers so much at this price". Unico is pure luxury – at a sensible price. Complete with radiowave remote control.

Unico Remote (line) £750, (line + phono) £800

OPERA *SP2*

Beautiful to behold and a delight to listen to, Opera loudspeakers are the genuine article. The solid hardwood 'boat-tailed' cabinet allows the SP2's top quality drive units to produce a lovely, natural sound. Italian craftsmanship, advanced acoustic technology and the very finest materials make SP2 the perfect choice for the discerning music lover.



* Opera SP2 (mahogany), £1350/pair. Other finishes available.

TRIANGLE *Loudspeakers that love music*

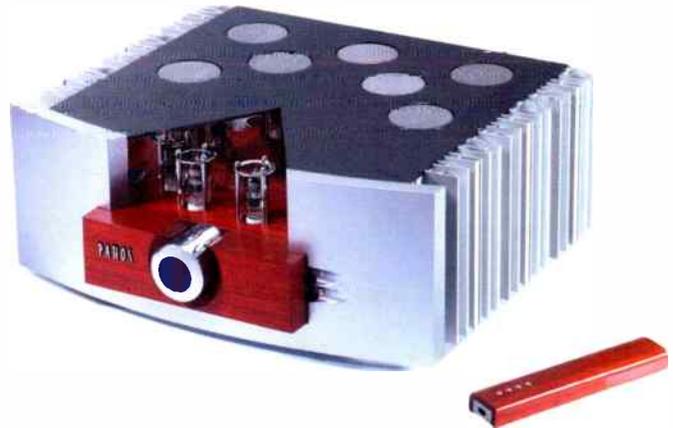
Five stars for sound and five stars for value. Triangle are regular winners of top accolades from the world's most prestigious reviewers. As What Hi Fi recently put it "Rarely have we come across loudspeakers that are so lively and communicative....they turn in a sparkling performance that makes others seem bland in comparison". Listen for yourself. You'll be amazed.



Zerius 202

*Zerius 202, £695/pair

PATHOS ACOUSTICS *The Unorthodox Approach*



After almost two years of design, prototypes, testing and listening, the stunning new Logos integrated amplifier is finally here. For the lucky few who will own one, it has been worth the wait. Logos is an object of rare *bellezza* - a swan in a world of ugly ducklings. A future classic. And as a machine for playing your favourite music, Logos is simply *delizioso*. Look, listen, and you will know exactly what we mean.

*Pathos Acoustics Logos, 110 Watts/channel, £2495

Contact us for more information or visit our website



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World Radio History

Listen to a selection of Austro-Germanic orchestras and the one trait that will (or should!) be uniform throughout them will be a warm and rich sound. Violins are invariably free from

brightness or edge, woodwind has a natural and rich reedy and woody sound, brass will be well rounded and rarely raspy and even percussion sections have an organic sound that blends seamlessly with the rest of the orchestra as a whole. Composers such as Wagner and Bruckner sound marvellously homophonic and richly textured in the hands of a band of this type, with depth and cohesion beyond your wildest dreams.

Then do the same with a selection of American orchestras. Whilst many will to a certain extent have some string richness and warmth (especially those with a history of European musical directorship such as Cleveland or New York) the overwhelming impression you get from this type of orchestra is one of intricate detail and transparency, as well as rhythmic and dynamic precision. It's an entirely different ball game from their Teutonic colleagues.

Now do the same with a selection of these respective nations' hi-fi and you'll find that, weirdly, the opposite occurs. German hi-fi is generally transparent, bright and rhythmically accurate, whilst the typical American high-end sound is somewhat smooth, sweet and refined. It's a strange one, just as some of the world's most traditionally musical countries now have the worst pop music on the globe (David Hasslehof reaches No.1 Germany, Italy has Zucchero... need I go on?).

Whilst fumbling with the radio controls recently I came across a fascinating discussion on Radio 3's excellent 'Music Matters' programme. An, alas, nameless contributor was decrying the way in which music has become 'big' - not in the business sense but in the sonic sense. Claiming that because of recording techniques in classical music and in the way that we listen to it at home, we have gradually been forced into a way of listening to music

that simply isn't representative of the real thing on the concert platform. He had a point. How many times have you been to a classical concert, and because of the acoustics or the seating arrangements (or both) been disappointed? I simply doesn't sound like it does at home. You don't get that shiver down the spine from your favourite moment - and even if you did you couldn't play it again like you can from the comfort of your sofa.

These examples demonstrate that musical reproduction in the home often barely resembles that which we suppose it is meant to emulate or recreate. The crux of the matter is this - hi-fi components are designed to make music enjoyable, that's the be all and end all of it. And the shocking truth is this: it doesn't have to sound like the real thing, as often this can be inferior when it comes to sound quality. In most cases I'd rather hear a full orchestral tutti of a Mahler symphony through my hi-fi than sitting in the back row of the stalls in the Festival Hall, where it sounds like a wet towel has been wrapped around your head! I'd opt for the choir seats any day, where the sound is completely unbalanced but at least you get to see the conductors face - something you can't do at home! Maybe it's about time that manufacturers stopped making specious claims that their equipment is just like the real thing and just accept the fact that the two are, praise be, just different. ■ ▲



Simon Pope

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 value for money.
EXCELLENT - Superb sound, among the best available.
VERY GOOD - Well worth a listen.
ADEQUATE - Room for improvement.
POOR - Seriously flawed. Forget it!
 Half globes are added for those products that we feel are between categories

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computer audio world

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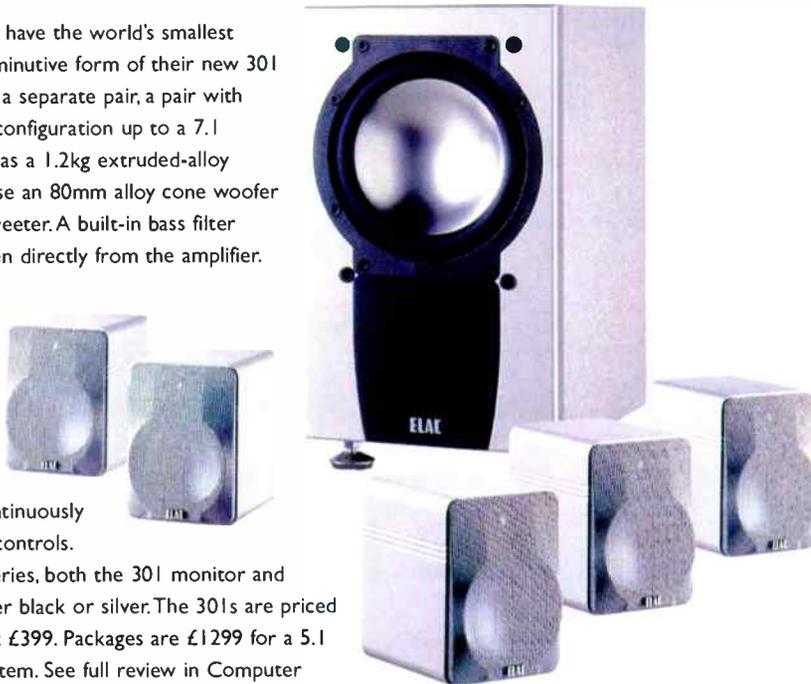
world news

ELAC IN MINIATURE

German company Elac claim to have the world's smallest high-end loudspeaker in the diminutive form of their new 301 "micro monitors". Available as a separate pair, a pair with matching subwoofer or in any configuration up to a 7.1 system, the all-aluminium 301 has a 1.2kg extruded-alloy cabinet. The drive units comprise an 80mm alloy cone woofer and a wide dispersion dome tweeter. A built-in bass filter enables the satellite to be driven directly from the amplifier.

The front firing matching SUB 301 subwoofer can deliver 80W of power and uses a 18mm long throw, alloy sandwich woofer with a high efficiency port. Other features include a phase switch, multiple inputs, plus continuously adjustable crossover and level controls.

Known as the Cinema 3 Series, both the 301 monitor and subwoofer are available in either black or silver. The 301s are priced at £398 per pair and the sub at £399. Packages are £1299 for a 5.1 system and £1697 for a 7.1 system. See full review in Computer Audio World on page 81.



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HEAR ALL ABOUT IT!

After a relatively quiet period in the UK, Californian 'speaker specialists NHT (Now Here This) announced the introduction of the entry level SBI in the UK, through a new distributor. The SBI is part of a new "Super Audio" series which promises to raise the standard on price/performance value with "enhanced driver response". The SBI is a bookshelf design with the classic NHT look of rounded edges and eight layers of piano black lacquer for a deep gloss finish. Designed as the progeny of the SuperZero, the minuscule SBI (10.25in D x 6.25in W x 6.75in D) features a 5.25in polypropylene woofer and a 1in fluid cooled aluminium dome tweeter. The SBI is available now priced at £299 per pair.



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KRELL'S NEW SHOWCASE

At the recent Home Entertainment 2002 show in New York, Krell demonstrated their latest products to hit the market. The £5,000 Showcase preamp/processor is loaded with specifications and facilities. It features Krell's Current Mode, discrete Class A direct-coupled circuitry with balanced outputs and user-configurable input assignment and system macros. It's also THX Ultra certified and includes processing for THX Surround EX, DTS6.1, DTS NEO:6, Dolby Digital, Dolby Digital EX and Dolby ProLogic II. There are nine Krell Music Surround modes and Krell's seven channel digital room equaliser. A multi-channel analogue input for SACD and DVD-A bypasses all the digital circuitry. As well

as the preamp/processor, there is the Showcase amplifier which is available in three configurations: five channel (£5,000), six channel (£5,990) and seven channel (£6,755). It offers 125W per channel into 8ohms which is created by the help of a massive 1,400VA toroidal transformer with 10,000 microfarads of filter capacitance.

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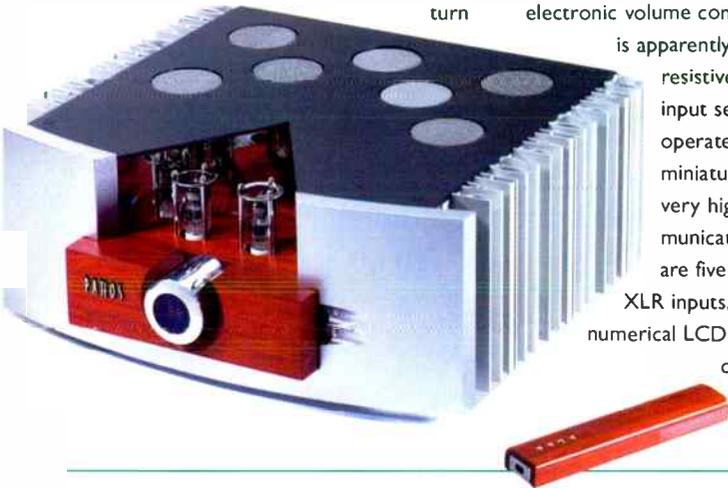
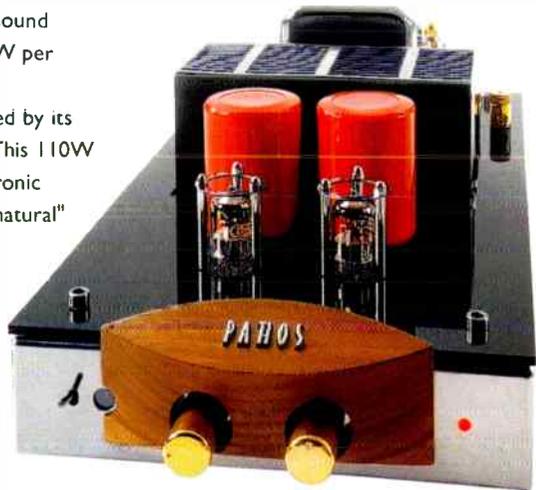


▶▶ PATHOS LEAST RESISTANCE

Two new cracking looking amps have been launched from the stylish high-end Italian manufacturer, Pathos. Both are valve/solid state hybrid designs. First up is the new version of the Classic One integrated, priced at £1125. This revision of their 'budget' amplifier has paralleled the development of their other new product, the Logos. It features a new high quality electronic volume control that adds, they say, to an increased frequency response and in turn

improved "reconstruction" of the sound stage. Power output is rated at 70W per channel.

The Classic One is accompanied by its striking bigger brother, the Logos. This 110W integrated design features an electronic network that's been laid out in a "natural" feedback-free design. The preamp section is a pure valve based, balanced design and operates in pure Class A. There is a 100-step electronic volume control which is apparently 100% resistive and the input selector is operated through high-tech miniature relays developed for very high frequency telecommunication applications. There are five RCA and two balanced XLR inputs, a smart two digit numerical LCD display and full remote control. The Logos is priced at £2495.



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▶▶ NAD'S BUSY BEE

The Latest NAD amplifier design from Bjorn Erik Edvardsen is the latest generation model derived from his classic 3020 design, first introduced way back in 1978. The new £220 C320BEE features a number of improvements on the current C320. Onboard, there is NAD's exclusive PowerDrive Technology, a "more refined" version of the Power Envelope technology developed in the eighties by the company. The idea is basically to make a power supply of a given size act as though it's actually more powerful in a working (ie. loudspeaker driving) situation. A "smart" power supply creates a high dynamic power and low impedance drive capability. This optimises itself for high current or voltage,

depending on the conditions of operation.

There's also an upgraded toroidal transformer and better smoothing capacitors, which contribute to a higher power rating of 50W per channel, compared to the 40W of the existing C320. Tone controls have also been tweaked, increasing the boost/cut range by 1.5dB, and there's a better quality volume control. The C320BEE comes with a new system remote handset, the SR-4.



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next issue

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

BUDGET AMPLIFIER GROUP TEST

We gather the best integrated amps available for under £200 and give them the full HFW treatment. Which will truly impress?

DENON DVA-1 DVD-A PLAYER

This is the new all-singing, all-dancing DVD player from Denon. Built like a tank and packed full of facilities, it promises to be one of the finest available.

CYRUS ICON X4

Here is the latest version of the stylish NXT panel 'speaker' from Cyrus electronics. How will the new improvements sound? We reveal all next month!

TWO'S C



Panasonic DVD-RA61

As the DVD market floods with new products, so prices start to plummet. Alan Sircom brings two DVD-A players priced at £400 together in a high resolution head-to-head.

Thanks to DVD's unparalleled success, there are products available at virtually any price.

And because sales have rocketed,

companies are aggressively pricing feature-rich players.

These DVD Audio/Video players from big name brands are a prime example: DVD-Audio is still a very new technology and in other circumstances might command a high price tag. But, because DVD

Video is in

such demand at the moment, competition is hot and DVD-Audio has to be included on mid-price players, like the Toshiba SD-510 and the Panasonic DVD-RA61.

Both models cost 'around' £400 (although DVD players do not fall under the same legal ruling that prevents manufacturers from quoting a list price for TV sets and mini systems, many big Japanese manufacturers politely refuse to suggest a retail price) but judicious shopping around on-line can shave £50 or more from that figure. And both players have very similar speci-

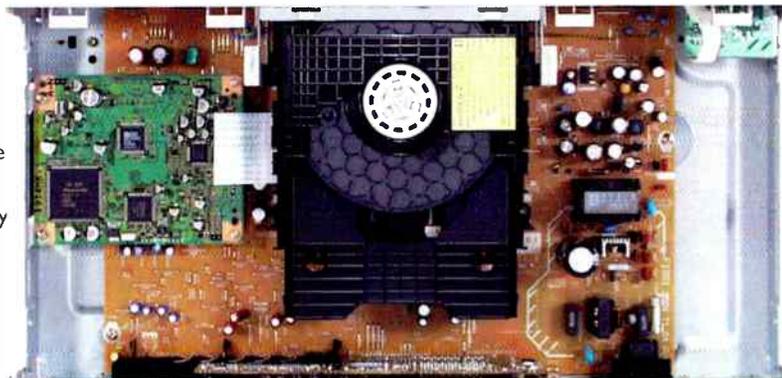
cations. Both play DVD-Audio, DVD-Video, DVD-R, CD-Audio, CD-Video (a precursor to DVD-Video that was very popular in Asia), CD-R/RW and

Toshiba have an easy to control zoom function for video nutters.

Similarities are stronger than differences, though. Both have 10bit,

54MHz video DACs, both play DVD-Audio in 192kHz, 24 bit resolution for both channels in stereo and 96kHz, 24bit resolution all round for six channel sound.

There are operational differences but they are minimal.



The inside of the DVD-RA61 is nicely laid out, catering for plenty of features

even play MP3 tracks burnt onto CD-R/RW. They also include built-in Dolby Digital and DVD-Audio decoding through the 5.1 channel outputs. The only differences between the two in a way reflects the intended market of the two players; the resolutely home cinema Panasonic can decode DTS multichannel discs, while the more audio-friendly Toshiba can support CDs encoded with HDCD.

Panasonic do make one useful concession to hi-fi listeners though: a headphone socket (complete with a yucky virtual surround option).

IDENTICAL TWIN

Both are rather traditional looking players, eschewing the latest trend for extremely slim DVD players, promoted by the likes of Pioneer and Sony. Neither player is particularly heavy, however, and the Panasonic's casework is insubstantial. Of the two, the Panasonic is the more button-intensive on the front panel, thanks to track handling controls on the left side of the fascia. This makes the Panasonic moderately more handy if the remote goes AWOL, but functionally the front panels are very similar otherwise.

OMPANY



Toshiba SD-510

The back panels show bigger differences between the players. Most of their layout and line-up is identical, but Panasonic has included a useful second Scart socket for videophiles who may want to pass AV signals from their DVD player to a TV. However, Toshiba includes a trio of component video connections which can also be used in Progressive Scan mode for NTSC projector systems. Bear in mind that most TV sets in the UK do not accept component video, more commonly coming with SCART, which offers high quality RGB. The Toshiba also has coaxial digital output as well as a Toslink (Panasonic has only one optical link).

A DVD player can often stand or fall by its remote control and its on-screen graphical user interface. The remotes are both pale grey, with very similar thumb-joysticks.

Once again, there's not a great deal between the two; the Toshiba remote has zoom functions to hand, but obscures lesser functions behind a flap. The Panasonic's remote is more elegant, even if it is festooned with buttons in comparison.

Both set-up menus are simple to use. The Panasonic's may lack the colourful 3D iconography of the Toshiba, but both will have you up and

running in under half an hour. Both set loudspeaker delay times in microseconds instead of distance, but this is explained in both manuals with equal clarity.

A big difference between the two in day-to-day menu use is that the Panasonic relies on an information bar which can seem confusing, whereas the Toshiba has a graphical user interface that obscures the picture. For ease of understanding the Toshiba wins, but the Panasonic comes close.

In an ideal world, testing a DVD Audio/Video player means using it in three distinct systems: a stereo hi-fi setting, a home cinema system and a multi-channel music set up. However, in practice this is almost impossible; instead, the DVD players were tested as CD players in their own right

through a Musical Fidelity A308CR pre/power combination driving a pair of KEF Q7 floorstanding loudspeakers. This was then removed and the multi-channel side of its performance was investigated using an Arcam AVR200 integrated amp, a 5.1 channel Mission 7 Series speaker system and a REL Q150E subwoofer. Cables used were from Kimber and Cardas, although custom low impedance speaker cables (made by Musical Fidelity) were used to connect the A308CR power amplifier to the speakers. An old but functional Audio Alchemy digital-to-analogue converter was used to see how the players worked as CD transports. Video was connected by a RGB-only QED SCART cable to a 32inch Toshiba widescreen TV set acting as monitor (this was wheeled out of the

room for dedicated stereo listening). All the kit sat on the same deliberately wobbly Quadraspire Q4 Reference table.

DVD-Audio replay shows the biggest difference between the two players. The Panasonic player has a rich, fullness to its sound that is extremely attractive. This works well in home entertainment



Although having similar features to the DVD-RA61, the SD-510E's layout is very different



The DVD-RA61 features two Scart connectors

systems, as opposed to outright multi-channel hi-fi systems that demand pin-sharp precision. Its dynamic range was good too, in a very natural manner. The slightly brash sound of home cinema equipment will benefit from the Panasonic's smoother, richer presentation. Using DTS's distinctly audiophile-quality DVD-Audio discs, the sound of Larisa Stow's voice was smooth and full-bodied like a good claret, but with a fair amount of wispy seductiveness. It bordered on the syrupy, though. It was never going to offend anyone, but the Panasonic could be too polite for some users. If you have a good multi-channel set-up that is built with music in mind, the Panasonic's performance may be a bit too thick set.

POSH TOSH

In contrast to the Panasonic's richness, the Toshiba has a more detailed presentation. Music moves from channel to channel with a precision that is more like good CD replay. It is arguably the more transparent of the two players with very precise detail from bass to treble. It is not as immediately dynamic as the Panasonic, but the Toshiba's dynamic range is more subtle and just as sweeping. The Larisa Stow disc used above lost little of her seductive vocal charms but the sound was anything but full and rich. Instead, presentation of detail is both the focus and attractiveness of the Toshiba. This may make the Toshiba sound a bit thin in a traditional home cinema set-up, but for more modern multi-channel audio sound, this is pin-sharp stuff.

There is a lack of depth to both players. The room is filled with sound thanks to the multi-channel DVD-Audio format. However, there is no great depth to the image on either player. The Panasonic does a better job of filling in the gaps because of its richness. By contrast, the Toshiba

relies more on a coherent sound from the electronics in the rest of the chain. This becomes all the more striking when used with a disc that is less hi-fi oriented, such as Buena Vista Social Club. Here, the ambience played through the Panasonic makes the performance more like a smoky club, but the Toshiba makes it more like a Cuban recording studio. In short, the Toshiba is the more cerebral and the Panasonic is more luxuriant. It's a simple case of head vs. heart.

The difference between the two is like the difference between a pair of Quad Electrostatics and a pair of Castle Howards. Both are extremely fine loudspeakers with a lot in common, but the Castle owner would call the Quad 'thin' while the Quad user would find the Castle 'too stodgy'. In fairness, though, the differences between the two players, even through DVD-Audio, is compar-



Although having only one Scart socket the SD510E is still very user friendly

atively slight and certainly not as marked as the Quad vs Castle debate. In most respects, comparisons are closer to judging one pair of Quad Electrostatics to another pair of Quad Electrostatics – the two players are that close in performance terms.

The most important performance for hi-fi enthusiasts remains the CD replay of these two players. Unless you are a real DVD-Audio propeller head, more than 99% of your collection will remain CD-based for some time. And it is also with CD replay that the performance of DVD players often falters.

FINAL ANALYSIS

These are two competently-engineered players, and their CD replay is similarly competent. That's a polite way of saying, both players fall in the 'good but dull' CD playing category. The sound of both is pretty and polite and with a reasonably wide soundstage, but both lack drive, dynamics and image depth. Play something with a bit of oomph – Led Zep for example – and some of the energy just seems to have left the performance.

They are not identical, though. The Panasonic is the more refined of the two, with a pleasant but uninspiring balance that favours the genteel Mozart end of the spectrum. By contrast, the Toshiba has a bit more grunt and HDCD decoding means it sounds like the more extended of the two in the bass and treble. It raises the CD performance by a notch, to the level of a decent £200 CD player in a hi-fi system. This is one of the few DVD players under £1,000 that could be used as a CD player replacement, but in most cases those with a good CD player should stick with it.

Using either of these DVD players as a CD transport is an exercise in futility, though. Neither PCM output is much cop. Using both

through their Toslink outputs was terrible, making the on-board digital decoder of the DVD sound a lot better. The Toshiba's coaxial connection fared slightly better, but it still sounds as if the PCM digital output is incoherent and ill-focused. Perhaps the demon jitter is at play.

Last comes the DVD-Video performance. The Panasonic has greater adjustment of the video settings to tweak the picture to suit your TV set, but the Toshiba has more preset video and noise reduction settings. Both are pretty vivid straight out of the box, however, with slight differences between the two. The Toshiba's picture is packed with

detail; the Panasonic is dripping with vivid colour. Careful tweaking of picture settings can make both near enough identical in performance. DVD-Video sound is also pretty much identical between the two, although the lack of DTS decoding in the Toshiba does give the Panasonic the upper hand, especially as DTS is beginning to take hold with the best reissues on UK DVD. Once again, the DVD-Video sound is richer on the Panasonic and more detailed on the Toshiba, but the differences are not as marked as on DVD-Audio. Moreover, played through Toslink the outputs are nigh on identical.

Ultimately, there is hardly anything between these two players; if you have to travel an extra 20 miles to buy one over the other, save your petrol and go for the nearest! Both do DVD Audio and Video extremely well, and cope with CD better than most DVD players could dream of. Of the two, the Toshiba scores a notch above the Panasonic in almost every category. It is a bit easier to operate, sounds ever so slightly better and is more geared for the audiophile thanks to that coaxial digital socket. The Panasonic does have a headphone socket, however... ■ ▲

Panasonic DVD-RA61 £400

Panasonic UK Ltd
Willoughby Road
Bracknell
Bucks RG12 4PF
Tel: 08705 357357
www.panasonic.co.uk

Toshiba SD-510 £400

Toshiba UK
Frimley Road
Frimley, Camberley
Surrey GU16 7JJ
Tel: 08704 424424
www.home-entertainment.toshiba.co.uk

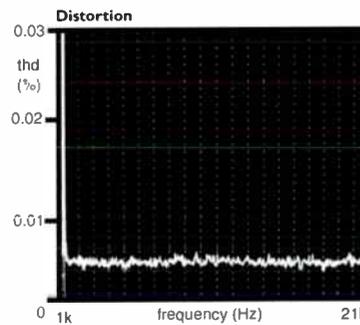
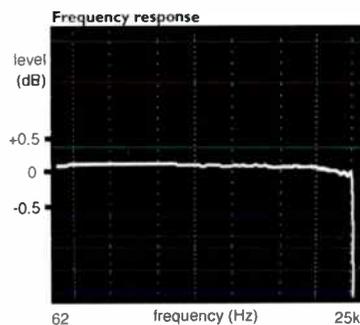
MEASURED PERFORMANCE

Panasonic DVD RA61

The Panasonic has a smooth, even frequency response that extends out to 20.9kHz with CD. Our analysis shows a gentle roll down at the top end. With 24/96 programme analogue bandwidth extends out to 48kHz, measurement showed, avoiding the truncation introduced by earlier chipsets. As a result 24/96 recordings will sound more open and dramatic, with greater contrast to CD. **NK**

Frequency response 4Hz-20.9kHz
left right
Distortion

-6dB	0.004	0.004	20kHz	-86	-85
-30dB	0.018	0.02	Noise		-118
-60dB	0.62	0.66			
-9027	27		Dynamic range		-104
			Output		2.25
Separation	left	right			
1kHz	-99	-100			



MEASURED PERFORMANCE

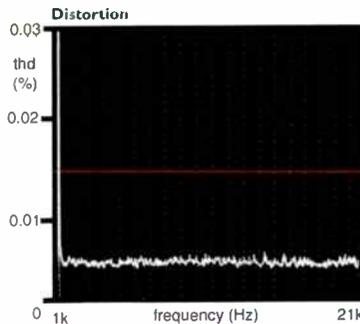
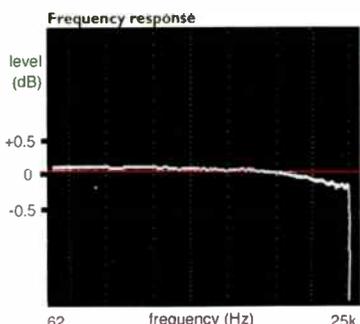
Toshiba SD-510

A slowly falling high-end characterizes this player's response, which in use will likely translate to subtly softened treble. The player will have a little less digital glare. With 24/96 programme frequency response reached 48kHz on the nail before cutting off. Output above 20kHz was smooth. With a 24-bit, -60dB test signal returning 0.1% distortion (mostly noise) I would expect high resolution recordings from this player to give clearly improved results over 16bit CD.

Distortion from the A/D converters was low at all signal levels. Toshiba have put some effort into the audio side of things. This helped toward a high dynamic range

figure from CD of 110dB. **NK**

Frequency response	4Hz-21kHz	Separation	left	right
	left	1kHz	-114	-115
	right	20kHz	-92	-92
Distortion		Noise		-110
-6dB	0.004	0.004		
-30dB	0.015	0.018		
-60dB	0.4	0.45	Dynamic range	-110
-9027	27		Output	2.04



World Verdict



Panasonic DVD-RV61
Warm sounding DVD player that is good with DVD-Audio too but a mediocre CD performance.



World Verdict



Toshiba SD-510
Detailed DVD player which is one of the few that works well as a CD. Decent performance from all sources, but it's still not time to ditch that CD player yet!

THIS IMMO

Quad has sprung a pleasant surprise on us all with their first, modern in-house designed moving coil loudspeaker, the Quad 11L. Simon Pope reveals all.



Here's a little word equation for you: Quad + loudspeaker = electrostatic. I don't think anyone well immersed in the art of audiophile discussion would argue much with this. It's due to Peter Walker's ground breaking design that Quad made its name with electrostatics, a tradition it maintains with two latest generation models.

But a few diehards out there may well recall that not so long ago (1997 to be precise) there was a Quad 10L. Whilst bearing the name Quad, this moving coil 'square' cabinet 'speaker' was made for the company by Spondor. It was in production for only two years. Although overshadowed by its bigger electrostatic brother, the 'speaker had a small cult following. Since then, the company, even under its new Chinese ownership has stuck resolutely to its roots with a small range of electrostatic 'speakers and a valve pre and power combination that could be transported back to the sixties where it would fit in just fine. Not that there's anything wrong with this - the industry needs a bit of retro appeal.

With the universal success of the new Diamond range from Quad's sister company, Wharfedale, it would seem a wasted opportunity not to carry some of the expertise at hand over into the more 'sophisticated' brand of Quad. After all, Wharfedale have perhaps done more than most

to prove that something manufactured and developed in the Peoples Republic of China needn't be tosh. The engineers and R&D depts. are in place in their 700 employee factory in Shenzhen, as is the money, so it only seemed fair to let the Quad brand have a go.

HOUSE STYLE

Enter the brand new Quad 11L - the company's first in-house designed moving coil loudspeaker and a 'clean sheet' design. If looks are anything to go by it's a winner the moment you take it out of the box and slip off the classy little draw string bag. You're greeted with a superbly finished product that oozes class, confirmed by a gentle stroke of the silky smooth cabinet. It's a loudspeaker very much in the traditional mould: there's no

sci-fi metal additions to the box or bizarre and funky colours, for example. However, a piano laquer finish like this doesn't usually come cheap. A retail price in the UK of a grand (if you pardon the pun), minimum would be typical. The 11Ls, however, are £380 a pair for all finishes. Options available are Piano Black, Piano Rosewood, Piano Maple and Piano Bird's Eye (nothing to do with fish fingers, incidentally). An expert in gloss finishes was hired from a piano manufacturing company to oversee this production stage - it's not just hi-fi companies that look to the East for production! The result is a finish that would do justice to a Bosendorfer - it's that good.

The cabinet appears to be a real labour of love for Quad, and remember labour is a lot cheaper in

MORTAL COIL

China so 'labour intensive' work needn't result in a mortgage crippling product. It's constructed using 18mm veneered MDF sheets. When veneered, the 'speaker moves to the lacquering process for the piano finish. Once applied, it's left to dry before being polished. An impressive six coats are applied over a week long period for the desired luxurious look. The cabinet alone is worth the price, but as a bonus the company decided to put drive units in it!

DRIVE TIME

The drive units in the IIL are also designed and manufactured in-house. The 135mm long throw bass driver uses a resin impregnated Kevlar diaphragm. Resin is used for stiffening to create good pistonic motion. The intrinsic self-damping properties of Kevlar helps keep resonance to a minimum. A phase plug sits in the centre of the unit. Whilst this bears more than a passing resemblance to the Kevlar unit used in Wharfedale's Diamond range, Quad emphasise that there are differences. Attention has been paid to the suspension system of the unit to allow for control under extremes of power and it sits in a special die-cast aluminium alloy chassis. It also features a dual wound voice coil, hand wound on an aluminium alloy former to remove heat from the coil area.

Last but not least, the bass driver incorporates a high-gauss magnet assembly. This is an expensive, very fine grain, powder magnet designed to provide a high density of magnetic field lines around the voice coil. The result apparently improves timing and rhythm due to better magnetic control over the coil and diaphragm.

A 25mm fabric dome treble unit uses a neodymium magnet with a



ferrofluid cooled voice coil and claims to have the ability to produce information up to 37kHz, achieved by reducing weight in the diaphragm and coil assembly.

At the rear of the 'speaker are two narrow ports, used to reduce distortion in the upper bass region. Placement slightly away from a rear wall is recommended.

Also on the rear are two pairs of decent quality binding posts for bi-wiring should you wish.

A personal favourite small bookshelf 'speaker of mine is the £600 Royal Menuet from Dali. This petite Danish beauty has much in common with the IIL in that it has a beautifully finished cabinet (although not up there with the IIL) and a sophisticated and sweet sound that's also neutral thanks to a thick, dead cabinet. The Quad easily matches the Menuet's impressive performance for just over half the price. There is an unmistakable 'high-end' sweetness to the sound that marks it out as a Quad, as opposed to a Wharfedale.

This is surely intended, as the company are at pains to point out the IIL isn't merely a Wharfedale Diamond in shiny boots! And it isn't; there's much more to it than that. So much so that I started to treat it as a £1,000-plus model and became increasingly - and perhaps unfairly - critical.

MUSIC TIME

Starting the listening off with Paul Weller's Stanley Road I was immersed straight into the music. With such a good recording, the Quads showed that they have a true monitor-like appeal in the best sense of the word. One thing that the cute little IIL has inherited from its radiator like electrostatic brother is lucidity. There's oodles of intricate detail to be found in the fast and wonderfully neutral sound. Cymbals, for example, are smooth yet very natural and acoustic guitar tracks, intended as accompanying detail, become easily discernable as an essential part of the mix.

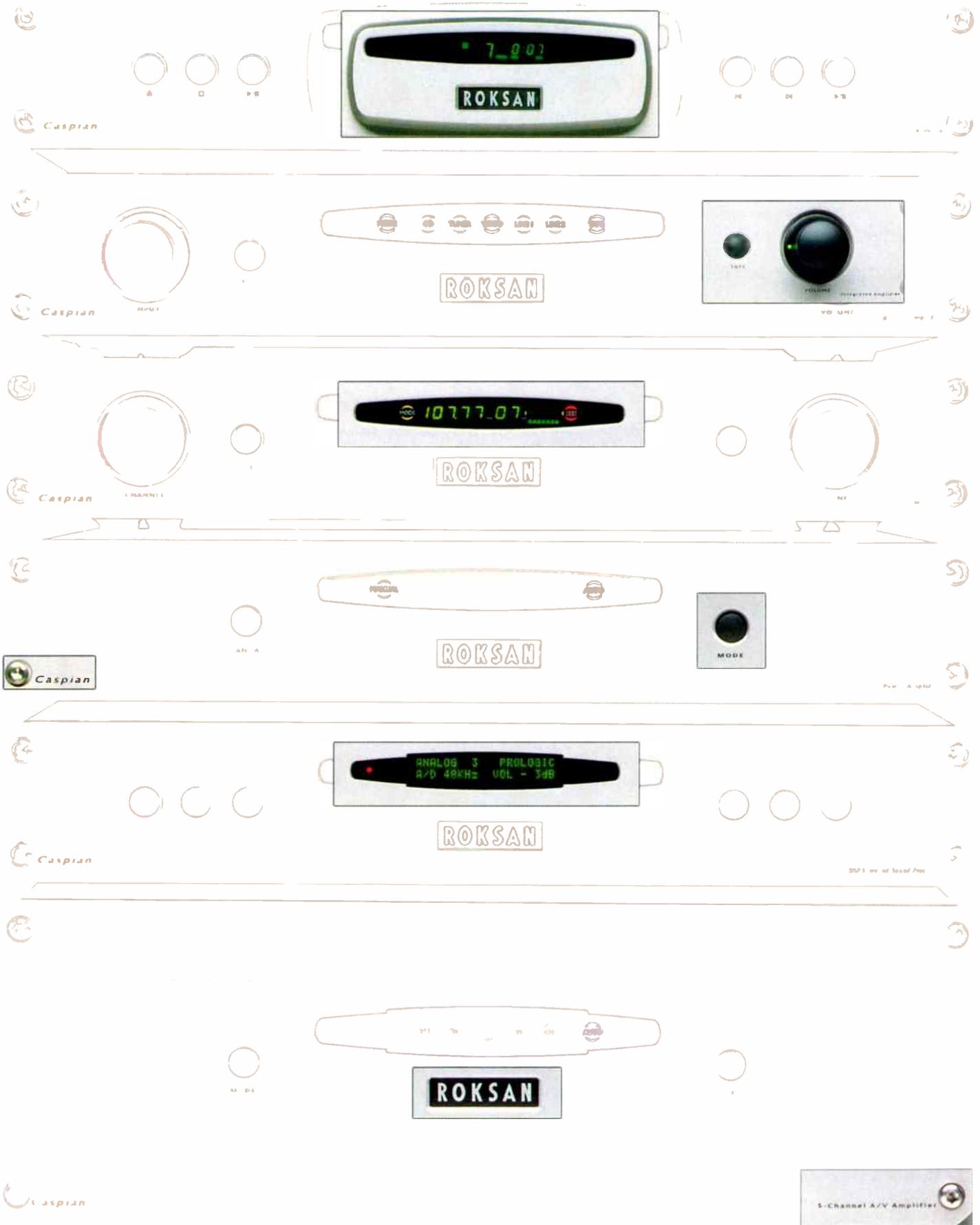
Vocals are warm and forward, but don't take your head off.

The presentation was big and spread out, in total contrast to the IIL's humble dimensions. Imaging was executed with professional monitor-like precision and there was good depth to the sound stage too. Of course, a good recording helps but the IILs aren't as fussy as some other high quality 'speakers out there. A whole host of rock recordings were tried out, with only the overtly compressed ones bringing out a slightly edgy upper midrange response.

And one more thing: the Quads can be caned. A session of the Foo Fighters and the first, in yer face Oasis album 'Definitely Maybe' showed that the IILs can actually take some pounding - although brandishing the Quad label, they're

ROKSAN

The full picture....



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World Radio History



beautifully rendered and there's an overall sense of presence and immediacy that's almost addictive. Again, if pushed, the 11Ls will take it, but a slight edge creeps into the midrange. Overall, though, they have an accurate and precise sound that will bring hours of involving listening.

The 11Ls can be easily summarised - they're a bargain! Detail, speed and presence is up there with the best bookshelf designs of at least twice the price. The competition's good at this price point but the 11Ls are in a different ball park. Nothing I can think of comes near to them when it comes to sheer quality of build - in this respect you could say they are underpriced.

The likes of Mission's 780 have a similar neutrality and speed but the Quads have that extra touch of monitor-like finesse that brings them out of the midprice bracket and into the upper echelons of audiophilia, just as the Wharfedale Diamonds belie their humble price tag. I'd go one step further and say that the 11Ls beat the Diamonds in terms of value for money.

As for downsides, it's difficult to find any. When fed with duff rock recordings, the midrange could become a tad shouty, especially when pushed, but this is about all. They are also fairly hungry when it comes to power, needing a good 60W per channel or thereabouts. Such comments are a bit churlish, though. Put the 11Ls in front of any experienced listener, with a good recording (or a bad one for that matter), and ask them to put a price to both the sound and the finish and I would guarantee even the most parsimonious would guess at least £300 over top.

The 11Ls will be joined later in the year by a larger standmount, plus two floorstanders and a centre speaker, so all bodes well for a cracking range. That battalion of cabinet polishers in China will be busy for some time to come I suspect. ■ ▲

tough little things.

A trawl through my jazz collection saw the Quad's comfortably at home with both Miles Davis and Chet Baker on vinyl. The sheer intimacy of small ensemble brings out a very musical and communicative sound in the Quads. 'Kind Of Blue' was a revelation when price is considered. Phrases were

Quad 11L £380

Quad Electroacoustics Ltd.
Sovereign Court
Ermine Business Park
Huntingdon
Cambs
PE29 6XU
Tel: 0845 458 0011
www.quad-hifi.co.uk

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

Nice smooth, even reproduction of a pink noise test signal suggested the 11Ls would measure well - and they did. The Kevlar drive unit of this 'speaker has a controlled, resonance free output that makes for a smooth response, up to the point where it meets the tweeter. The two match up seamlessly, with no trace of a crossover dip to soften the sound or remove detail. The soft dome tweeter continues smoothly up to 20kHz.

With few peaks or dips and an almost ruler flat trace right across the audio band Quad's 11L is certainly an accurate loudspeaker. Subjectively it may sound a little light or bright in general balance, except in a well furnished room. It will also sound detailed and coloration free.

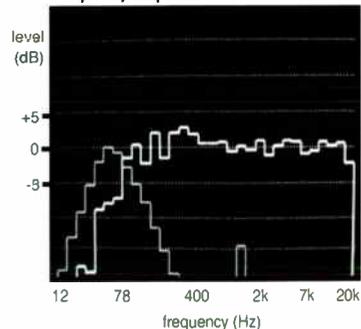
At low frequencies the 11L rolls down smoothly, suggesting it is best placed close to a rear wall. The two rear ports are tuned to 51Hz, which is quite high. Bass will likely sound firm and fast, rather than big or low.

As a load, the Quads measure out at 6ohms overall. With a four ohm bass driver and eight ohm tweeter this is expected and in line with current design convention. Sensitivity was good at 87dB SPL from a nominal watt of input (i.e. 2.8V) and there was little reactance in the load to upset amplifier feedback.

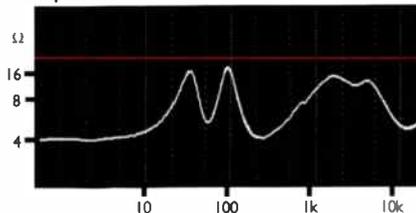
The Quads measured well in all areas. They are a very well executed piece of design work, but the balance will be on the light/fast side

of things. NK

Frequency response



Impedance



World Verdict
£★★★★

Pretty much sets a new standard at the price. The gorgeous looking 11L is also a sophisticated and neutral sounding winner. A bit of a bargain.

LOGICAL PF

With the growing emergence of digital radio it's all eyes on format leaders Videologic as they launch their long awaited portable model. Simon Pope listens with interest.



Many people think this will be the year that digital radio broadcasting finally goes mass market. We are promised £100 digital radio incorporated systems before the end of the year and more digital-only stations are sure to materialise. If this is a way of persuading the masses to move to digital radio, the industry needs something else. It isn't television and most listen in on the way to work in the car. Having said that, millions of digital television subscribers listen to digital radio broadcasts every day without realising it, since the technology is not revealed by the TV companies. Strange, eh?

There have been a few DAB (Digital Audio Broadcasting) hi-fi tuners from the likes of Arcam and Cymbol, right up to Sony, but it's the Videologic models that have so far had the lion's share of the - admittedly small - market. The number of dedicated stereo tuner listeners is small compared to those using ordinary domestic radios. This sector lies between the hi-fi and in-car markets as far as number of listeners is concerned, so it seems sensible to come up with a portable, of good quality to reflect DAB's potential in this respect.

And they have - at a price. The new DRX-601EX costs - wait for it - a fairly whopping £495 which for a 'portable radio' isn't cheap. Now here's the good news. It's a pretty serious bit of kit - beautifully built and

well finished. The style is clean, fresh and modern in contrast to other 'high-end' portable radios that favour the retro approach, such as those from Tivoli or Roberts. The use of a real wood veneer and inlaid aluminium adds to the striking understated look and the layout of the fascia is uncluttered and easy to navigate. The buttons on the front are accompanied by a fast-tune knob and an attractive blue LCD display.

This radio uses the same electronics as the DRX-601ES hi-fi tuner, including a 24bit/96kHz DAC (along with its psycho-acoustic compensation technology) but has two built-in bass/mid 'speakers with concentric tweeters. There's a host of connection options, including analogue audio output for connection to an external stereo amplifier, analogue inputs for portable players to utilise the in-built 'speakers, as well as coaxial and optical digital outputs. A simple but effective remote control completes the package.

After a quick read through the shortish manual I found the DRX-601EX pretty much a doddle to use:

basically one knob does all the important tuning work. Indeed, a little 'trial and error' experimentation should have anyone being a dab (if you pardon the pun) hand within five minutes or so. There's very little to it, which is one of its big pluses. Those concerned with the aerial situation should be happy to know that the supplied screw-on telescopic DAB aerial (of the FM style) worked a treat in a fairly 'difficult' area of Buckinghamshire, with only a few cracks and gurgles upon moving the unit or aerial from one position to another. An external aerial can of course be used. In a further nod to hi-fidom the unit has stereo analogue outputs transferring it into a hi-fi separates tuner if you should so wish.

When it comes to sound quality the DRX-601EX was as impressive sonically as it is aesthetically. The overall sound was warm and rounded, and it projected well out from the confines of the compact casework. This created a nice spread of stereo sound that is very different from what you'd expect. Bass was full and tuneful (within the limits of the case, of

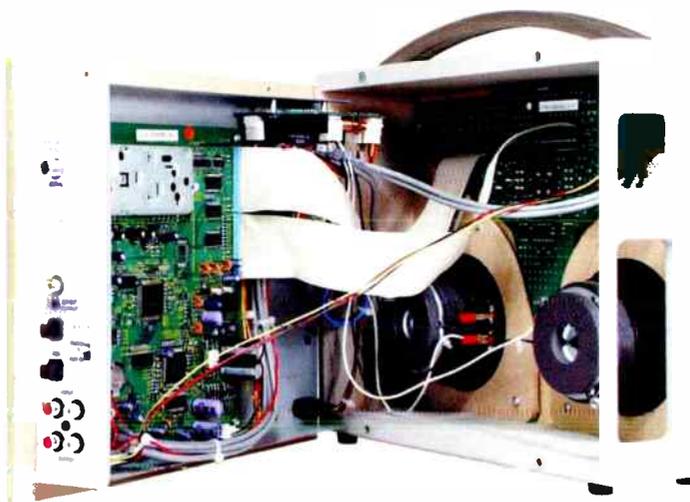
PROGRESSION

course) and the top end nicely rolled off, bringing a certain sweetness to the sound. There's a good sense of balance throughout the frequency range.

Stations such as Radio 3 and Radio 4 had a nice 'dead' neutrality to them, with voices clean and realistic. In a live studio music broadcast, acoustic instruments on Radio 3 had a convincing sense of vibrancy and life to them. Other commercial stations didn't suffer from as much studio processing as found on FM.

The DRX-601EX is described as portable digital radio, but that's somewhat underselling it. Think of the unit as a dedicated stereo digital radio tuner with in-built stereo 'speakers and a metal handle! The sound justifies this description and it also psychologically softens the blow of shelling out £500 for a 'mere' portable radio.

Ultimately, it's the price that will limit sales of this radio; if it were £300 less it would be a bargain. As it is, it's a very useful bit of kit if you're an audiophile that's into radio and have a



little wonga to throw at the latest gadget. Physically and sonically it's a winner. In terms of value it is not. Perhaps making it a 'hybrid' model including FM, like Sony's tuner, could help justify the price a tad more. The price issue, however, is invariably high with a 'first'. It is brave of Videologic to release such a ground breaking product. It's still early days for DAB and perhaps, somewhere in a zone with Harrods at

its centre, there's an appropriate audience for such a radio. ■ ▲

Videologic DRX-601EX £499

Videologic Systems
Home Park Estate
Kings Langley
Herts WD4 8LZ
Tel: 01923 260511
www.videologic.com

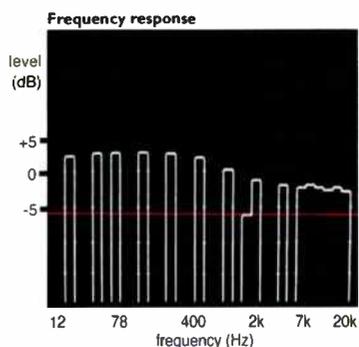
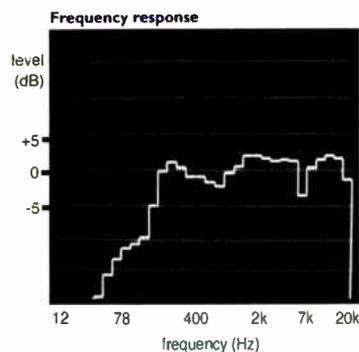
MEASURED PERFORMANCE

This Videologic radio uses the DRX-601ES circuit, hooked up to a power output stage to drive the internal loudspeakers. The 601ES circuit is compensated to produce the frequency response shown here, a third-octave analysis made from off-air test transmissions. Videologic have boosted lows by around 1.5dB and cut highs by the same amount, to bring DAB more into tonal alignment with original source, and with parallel vhf/fm transmissions. My own comparative listening tests show that this degree of compensation, although quite strong, is what it takes to get DAB sounding right, meaning not thin and shrieky. In this radio, the compensated signal then goes to the internal loudspeakers. Here Videologic again

demonstrate their commitment to quality by fitting drive units that measure surprisingly flat from 160Hz right up to 20kHz, our third-octave analysis shows, with "tone" (treble cut) at zero.

So in a nutshell, this is very accurate radio that does more than full justice to DAB; it actually improves it! Connected into a hi-fi system via its analogue outputs it is in effect a DRX-601ES, so you are getting two in one here – a portable radio and a hi-fi tuner. **NK**

Frequency response (-dB) 160Hz – 20kHz	
(analogue out) 20Hz-20kHz	
Distortion	0.01%
Separation	88dB
Noise	-82dB



World Verdict



A fine bit of kit with a genuine hi-fi appeal. The only thing against it is the heavy price tag.

FRONTAL



Tag McLaren Audio is on the offensive with its new 'value for money' front loading digital transport, the DVD32FLD. David Price listens in.

Let us not forget the mighty TAGMcLaren DVD32R, a humungously impressive (and expensive) digital disc spinner which amazed and delighted us last year with its swanky top loading transport. The merest glance of that disc lid gliding across to reveal the laser was enough to break many folk into a sweat, such was its beautifully slick and smooth motion. Underneath it, of course, was a brace of DVD disc reading technology second to none. Nice one, guys.

Unfortunately, the fact that TAG wanted £4,000 of your hard earned cash for the privilege of owning one was sufficient to dissuade a substantial number of potential purchasers, who took one look at the price tag and ran screaming in the direction of their Denon dealer. Yes, it's rather a lot of money for something that doesn't even have digital converters built in, isn't it? Indeed, if you wanted anything from the TAG range that decoded its datastream, you'd be asked to splash out an additional £2,800 or so for the AV32R processor. Ouch!

It is for this reason that what you see before you has come to be. In a spare moment when they weren't begging Mika Hakkinen to come back to the track, the company took the

view that - for some strange reason - people wanted an 'affordable' high end DVD spinner, if that isn't a contradiction in terms. The provision of the DVD32R minus its 'surprise and delight' factor (i.e. the top loading transport) let them shave crucial pennies from its purchase price, the result being the £3,000 DVD32FLD (as in FrontLoaDer).

While the DVD32FLD's more conventional disc loading arrangement should not drastically degrade the sound, there were valid reasons for the DVD32R's skywards orientation. Essentially it allowed the drive motor and servo electronics to be mounted onto the heavy, mass loaded sub-chassis. Personally I'm not a huge fan of tray-based transports, because the disc drawer arrangement adds complexity along with more bits and pieces to resonate inside. Still, the 'budget' version retains all the R's other features, including a mech. that plays DVD, CD, CD-R and CD-RW discs with NTSC and PAL video, PCM, Dolby Digital, MPEG and DTS digital encoding at 96, 48 and 44.1kHz sampling rates with 16, 20 or 24 bit resolution.

The FLD also sports its big brother's TAGtronic Synchronisation Link clock sync facility (which ties it to the AV32R's internal ticker) for

ultra low jitter, and there's the various composite, S-Video and component video connection outputs to go with its three digital audio outs (two coaxial, one optical).

Although there's no digital audio conversion, the 32-bit Mediamatics Pantera-DVDTT RISC processor has MPEG decoding, 10-bit video DACs and an NTSC/PAL encoder built in. SACD and DVD-Audio discs aren't yet catered for, but there'll doubtless soon be software and hardware upgrades. Indeed, the TAG uses re-programmable flash memory devices that can be upgraded to support new features and formats via a software download from the website (www.tagmclarenaudio.com).

Although the front loader lacks the 32R's sense of occasion, it's still an immaculately screwed together product in its own right. The fascia is beautifully hewn, and the 445x100x320mm casing extensively damped. Inside there's a neatly laid out multi-layer printed circuit board with selected audiophile components, twelve independent power supplies and a sizeable, high quality toroidal transformer. Sorbothane mounting feet complete the package underneath.

Driving Naim AV2/ NAP150/ NAPV175 decoding/amplification and

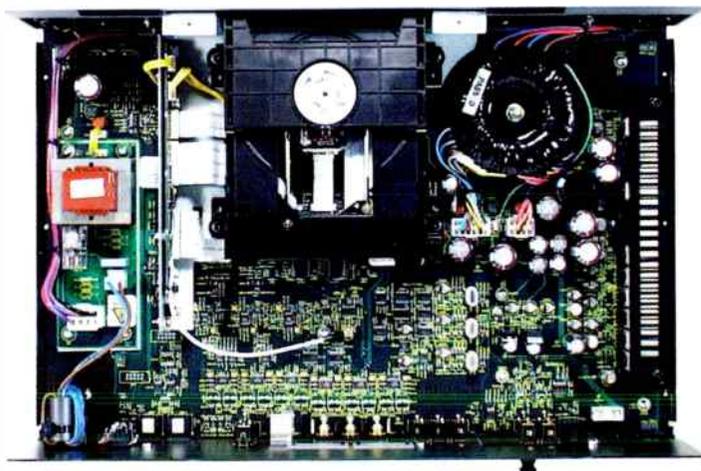
ASSAULT

M&K S85/ SS150 speakers, the DVD32FLD put in a near faultless performance. My major gripe was the remote control, which although sporting all the latest programmable buttons and flashy backlighting, was a pig to use and about as responsive as a Minardi backmarker with a flat tyre. It made the process of track selection a pain, so much so that I ended up using the few fascia buttons to administer operations.

Happily, its sound elicited more favourable reactions. Starting with the 5.1 DVD video mix of The Eagles' 'Hotel California', the FLD showed itself to be a tight, upfront performer with oodles of detail. Essentially very neutral, it gave tremendous insight into this famous recording (and indeed its superb remastering). The midband is particularly impressive - glass clear with very strongly articulated imaging (in the title track it's mostly across the front three channels - the surrounds are cranked right down, giving just a touch of ambience).

Of course, treble quality is largely a function of the preamp/processor's digital converters, but it's still easy to tell that this transport isn't exactly over-endowed with jitter. Cymbals were extremely crisp, with more sheen than a certain household spray polish, while the leading edges of the guitars were sharp as a knife. The result was a very 'alive' and vivid sound that majors on the music's rhythms and dynamics. Factor in oodles of air and atmosphere and the result was an extremely engaging, yet sonically informative sound.

While the TAG's bass performance on DVD wasn't bad, neither was it as strong as a sledgehammer. Rather, it carried the same trait over to CD, when it again sounded firm, lithe and insistent, but



never generous or overblown. Indeed the same tight, taut, clean, clear signature was again in evidence.

Overall of course - as you'd expect - CD sound was dramatically poorer, but the DVD32FLD still put in a trenchant performance with The Verve's 'Bittersweet Symphony'. Once again it cut to the quick, with a high contrast midband that revealed the medium's shortcomings a touch too much, methinks. Bright and bouncy, forward but never strident, the TAG again got into the music's groove without a moment's hesitation. It was impressive and engaging enough to conclude that those wanting a serious CD spinner that also plays DVDs should put this close to the top of their list.

This was confirmed by its brilliance with a DTS 5.1 recording of Eric Clapton's 'Let it Flow'. DTS 5.1 discs are, of course, essentially non-standard Compact Discs (playable through offboard DTS decoders, such as the one built into the Naim AV2), and are capable of superb sound. The 32FLD positively sang - scything through the murky 'vintage' analogue recording to throw up stacks of

detail and atmosphere. Again it majored on the music's accenting and phrasing, but this time serving up a fulsome, strongly articulated bass (seemingly always a characteristic of this codec) too.

It's an interesting product alright, the DVD32FLD, offering just that little bit extra (in terms of sound quality, if not features) over the likes of Pioneer's DV-747A. Whatever format you feed it, it comes up trumps with a characteristically clean and open performance. Still, it's a lot of money to pay for only marginally superior sound to a number of designs snapping at its heels at under half its price. Whether you'll buy it depends, I suspect, on whether you've already got a TAG system and want something to match it. ■ ▲

Tag McLaren DVD32FLD £2,999

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Tel: 01480 415600
www.tagmclaren.com



World Verdict



An excellent digital transport without a doubt, but faces stiff competition at the price.

ROCK ON!

David Price tells the story of one of hi-fi's most fascinating turntables, the Townshend Rock.

▶ The world of high-end turntables is a weird and wonderful one. In no other area - possibly with the exception of loudspeakers - do you find so many different ways of addressing a particular engineering problem. Townshend's Rock is one particularly charismatic design, single-mindedly focusing on an area of vinyl replay that most manufacturers simply overlook, or choose to ignore. It's gone through numerous evolutions over the years, but retains an incredibly faithful band of devotees who praise it with near religious zeal. Over the past few years we've had copious correspondence from readers pledging their allegiance to the Rock. So to please those, and probably a lot more besides, here's a comprehensive guide to one of the most controversial designs in the hi-fi universe.

SYNCHRONICITY

If Professor Jack Dinsdale hadn't fainted at the Harrogate hi-fi show in August 1979, hi-fi history could have been very different. After an early start and a long train journey he made it to the show at 11.30am and began exploring it frenetically, forgetting to have anything to eat. Suddenly, he writes, "the hall began to rotate, my legs lost their feeling, and I realised that I was passing out in the crowd". His next memory was that of sitting in a chair and being invited to drink a cup of coffee with a generous nip of brandy inside, by a stranger with a strong Australian accent. Max Townshend (for it was he) duly asked him if he'd like to buy one of his pickups!

Dinsdale declined, but a few weeks later invited Max over to see



some "unusual technology" at Dundee University's Cranfield Unit for Precision Engineering. The story goes that its designer Michael Clayforth-Carr played part of a record through a nondescript amplifier with unremarkable results, and then repeated it with a novel oil-filled damping trough in position. Max's jaw, "dropped to the ground", prompting him to thrust a cheque for a four figure sum into Dinsdale's hand. He duly called three British companies - including Garrard - to which he'd offered options, to tell them his project now had a sponsor. Thus was born the Townshend Rock.

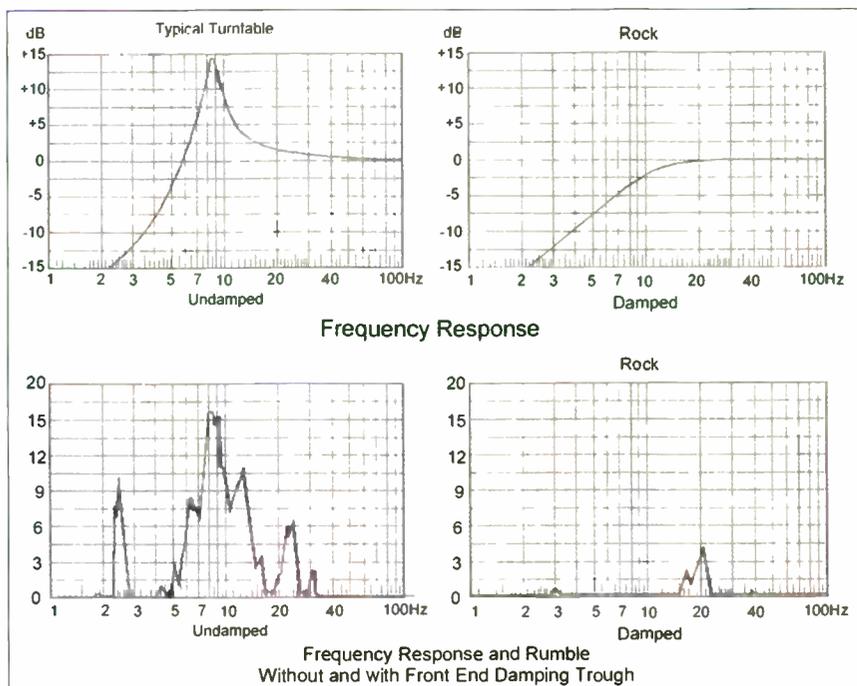
The story begins back in the late 1960s, when Dinsdale was working as Professor of Mechatronics at Cranfield. While designing precision machine tools and instruments, he began to think that from a theoretical viewpoint (i.e. Newton's laws of motion, kinematics, lines of action and reaction of forces, etc), contemporary turntables broke many of the rules by which he was working. He also felt that a number of new ideas, techniques and materials were emerging that he could apply fruitfully to the problem of turntable design.

He duly started work on a "hydrodynamic non-contacting

bearing", the patent for which the CUPE management opted to sell to "a successful British manufacturer of record decks", namely Garrard at Swindon. Its finances worsened as the company was famously acquired by Plessey who, in Dinsdale's words, "had no background or, it seems, interest in sound reproduction". It was duly sold on to the Brazilian company Gradiente, but to no avail. Sadly, throughout the twenty year duration of the patent's life (1972-1992) nothing was ever marketed using the technology, and it was never licensed or sold back to its creators!

After a serious illness, he moved to an academic appointment with the Cranfield Institute of Technology (now Cranfield University) to set up a new graduate teaching department in 1976. He formed a small group to begin working on a turntable incorporating novel thinking on both the bearing and tonearm. Rejecting the classic 'dashpot and piston' model for tonearm damping at the arm pivot because it "hardly solved the problem", they opted to suspend a dashpot over the turntable, just in front of the pickup where it could move along with the record. Thus was born the arc-shaped dashpot - or curved damping trough - that the Rock would use.

The idea was patented, the team set about integrating it with the bearing into a prototype turntable.



Comparative graphs showing frequency range and rumble results for the Rock both with and without the damping trough.

Dinsdale wanted a plinth with a stiff, very well damped material like synthetic granite, but this wasn't practical at the time, so high-density chipboard reinforced with aluminium sheet was used. A proprietary AC motor driving the platter via a belt was used. Finally, thanks to the happenstance of the 1979 Harrogate hi-fi show, Max Townshend heard the first complete Rock and duly became the sponsor.

The prototype was still far from a commercial reality, and it was at this point that an ex-Open University student, John Bugge, joined the course and decided to develop it. Dinsdale wrote that, "although he had no background in high quality audio, nor any particular interest in the subject, he set to with a will to tackle the design and manufacture of plinth and platter in synthetic granite, damping trough in the same material, hydrodynamic fluid bearing, and also the two areas which had not been worked on yet: the drive for the platter and the detailed design of the arm".

Following the completion of his Masters Degree in 1980, Bugge set up a company to manufacture the Rock player for Max's company Elite. To get to the market, Dinsdale says that, "some corners were cut which perhaps should not have been". The deck won a prize for Design and Engineering at 1983's Chicago Audio Show but in spite of this sales failed

to materialise and Bugge's company was wound up later that year. What followed was the series of Elite Townshend Rocks we all know and love, spanning the original Rock (1981), the Rock II (1984), the Avalon (1987), the Rock Reference (1989) and the Rock Mk.3 (1992).

ROCK OF AGES

It's hard to understate just how different the original Rock was when launched. In a world dominated by independently sprung subchassis designs housed in conventional wooden plinths, it was quite something. Back in the early eighties, the template that Thorens laid down with the TD150 many years earlier still held sway - as evinced by the omnipresence of the likes of Linn's LP12, Ariston's RD11, Dunlop's Systemdek, Thorens' TDI60S, STD305 et al.

The design was a classic case of form following function. With no dustcover (as standard - it was a £65 option) and just a simple on-off switch and power LED to play with, it offered neither the elegance of the Linn or the style of its Michell or Oracle rivals. Rather, it was a purposeful design built to maximise rigidity while storing the least amount of energy. The original plinth made much use of mineral filled resin for mass and damping, making it a weighty affair. In later models, this was replaced by gypsum, used both in

the platter and plinth, which was encased in a fabricated metal skin.

The base and platter were acoustically decoupled from the outside world by an air-filled damped synthetic rubber suspension chamber. As the deck developed, further attention was paid to isolation. By the introduction of the Townshend Rock 3, Seismic Sink-style decoupling had been added to the main base unit with a pneumatic 'inner tube'. Three adjustable feet were used for levelling. Round the back, a pair of RCA phonos were fitted, the idea being - presumably - that you could choose your own interconnects.

A 24-pole synchronous AC motor (a la Linn, Rega, etc.) was used to drive the heavy 2.9kg platter via a thin rubber belt to the inner platter. Unlike the Mazak outer platter damped by a felt or rubber mat so beloved by its rivals, the Rock's disc damping was taken care of by the platter's plastic enamelled surface, later to become cast and turned acrylic. Speed change was effected by hand. The platter spun on an inverted fluid-damped bearing with a tungsten-carbide thrust pad, cut with a spiral groove to carry the oil upwards.

Interesting stuff, but the Rock was always most famous for its damping trough (originally metal, later plastic) mounted at the pickup - rather than arm pivot - end. Max Townshend argues that damping is essential for any pickup cartridge, but

that the traditional way of doing it is largely ineffectual. It is, he says, akin to driving a car just on its springs, with the dampers (commonly called shock absorbers) removed. "Imagine how that would ride", he says.

The system, pioneered on the very first Rock, employs a headshell mounted outrigger moving along a silicon-filled trough that arcs across as the cartridge tracks the groove. Filled to within a millimetre of the lip with silicone fluid, it damps the arm/cartridge resonances around 10Hz before they can be fed into the system. Using it involved swinging the trough out, placing the LP on the platter, screwing the clamp down on the threaded spindle; swinging the trough back over the LP and cueing the stylus into the groove. It's less fiddly than it sounds, and has become something of a 'rite of passage' to Rock devotees!

SOUND VIRTUES

The Rock is one of the best turntables I've heard. Obviously it has improved through its various incarnations, but it retains a quintessential musical correctness that has been there since day one. Rather than possessing a distinctive character (in the way that a number of high-end decks do), it just seems to disappear into the music. The result is a very organic, rhythmically coherent sound that pulls you right into the mix.



Max Towshend (foreground) and Prof. Dinsdale with an evolutionary range of Towshend turntables. . .

The Rock Reference is - to date - the prime exponent of the concept originated at the Cranfield Institute all those years ago. Without the trough, it sounds a perfectly fine turntable - most CD users would probably think it amazing, in fact. But swing it across and cue up with the trough and you find yourself grinning from ear to ear, with the look of someone who's just found the road to Damascus.

What hits you first is the soundstaging - the recorded acoustic becomes so much bigger and more believable, to the extent that where the recording permits, you can even hear the four walls. Then there's the combination of rhythms and dynamics

- the deck strings the music's tiny variations of pitch and volume together in an incredibly cohesive way. Importantly however, all this insight doesn't earn the Rock the label 'analytical' in the sense that - for example - older Michells could be. As well as all that focus, it has a beautifully organic quality.

Tonally, the Rock must have been a shock back in the early eighties. It lacks all the bloom and colour (however unnatural) of classic designs like the pre-Lingo LP12. In fact, in a sense it sounds quite CD-like. Bass is very firm and even, but

lacks the euphonic warmth that some of us love vinyl for, or the weight of Michell's Orbe, Technics' SP10/III or Garrard's 301/401.

Is it the ultimate vinyl spinner? That's very much a matter of taste. The question is about as easy to answer as trying to define the best work of art or top car design. Yet the Rock is an incredibly distinct and charismatic machine that - if its particular blend of strengths suits you - will make you unhappy with the compromises inherent in all other decks. As such, everyone involved in the project, from James Dinsdale for originating it some thirty years ago, to Towshend Audio for keeping it alive today, should be praised. ■ ▲

MAX POWER

Towshend Audio started in Sydney, New South Wales in 1977. Max had a Shure V15III cartridge which was "bright and edgy and I couldn't stand it". EFI (Elite Electronic Industries) were marketing Parabolic plug-in-replacement styli for a range of cartridges so he bought one for the V15 and was bowled over. He duly acquired the agency to distribute the range in Sydney, and thus was born Towshend Audio.

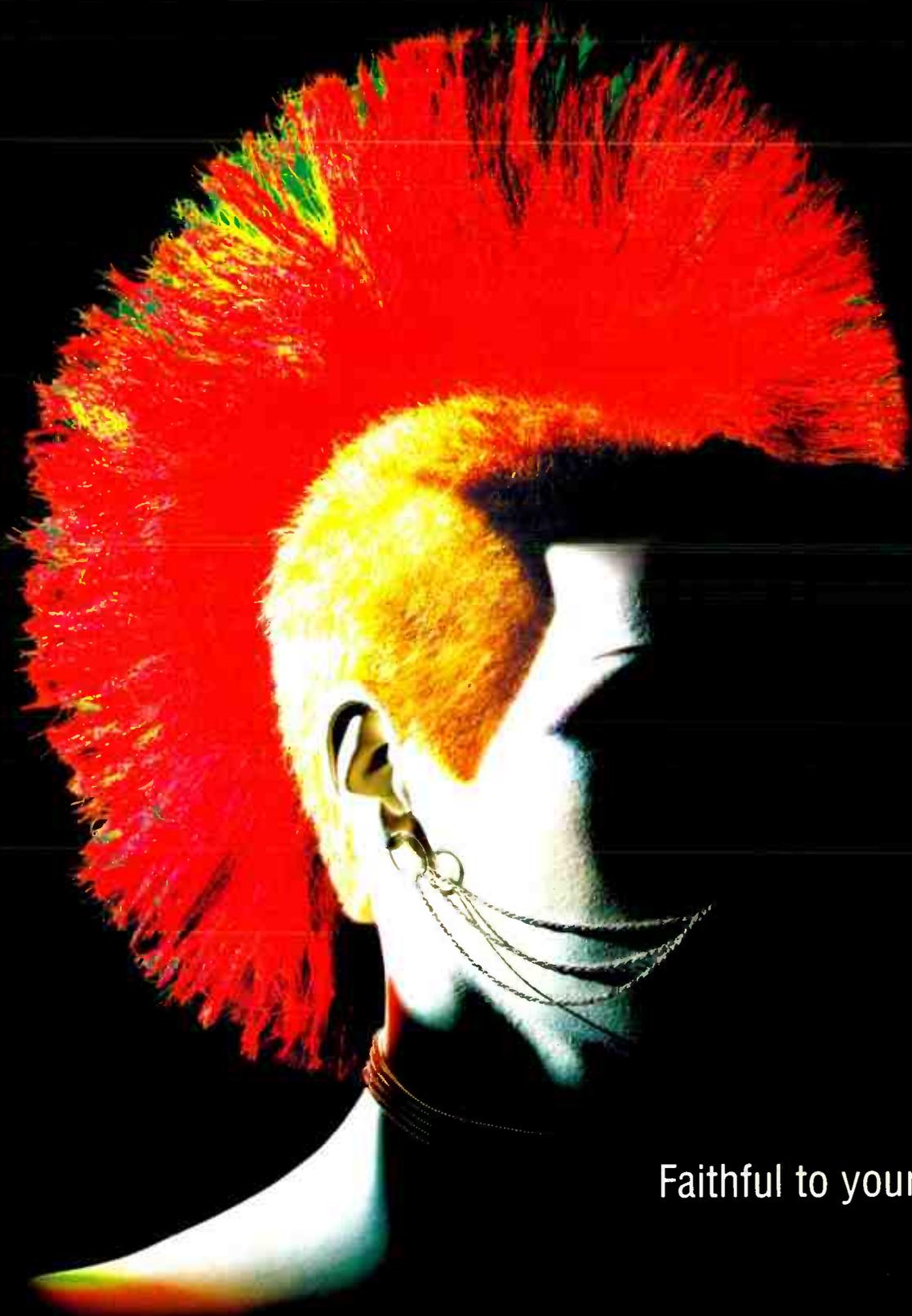
He first got into hi-fi in the early 1950s, at about the age of eight. His family had a big radio gram with 5 valves, 12in loudspeaker and a 78RPM record changer. "This I loved!", he says. It was ripe for modification, so he duly undertook some serious tweaking. He took the speaker out onto the bench, painted dilute sulphuric acid onto both sides of the stiff plastic, closed surround and ran it at 50Hz for 3 days to

soften up the suspension. Max says he got "loads of bass" from this, and "loads of treble" by ultrasonically (half an egg shell) the dust cap of driver to make a whizzer cone! "I had caught the bug and it just carried on from there as my goal in life - to make the best hi-fi possible!"

The chance meeting with Jack Dinsdale in 1979, when Max was over in the UK promoting Elite cartridges, sealed his fate. What impressed him most when he first heard the Rock was, "stability, a huge reduction in record noise, elimination of the pick up arm 'jelly wobbles' that cause mistracking, woofer cone pumping, stylus jumping, subsonic overload of the power amplifiers, distortion and gross coloration". The Rock's "master tape-like solidity" has been with it since day one. "All of the Rock family sound quite similar," he says, "but 99% of people,

including myself, rate the best to date as the Rock Reference. Oddly, there's a tiny minority who prefer the MK II (Elite) Rock. The new Rock turntable, now in final development, is the best by a bit!"

These days, Max says he's saddened by the general fall off in the popularity of hi-fi in favour of home cinema. "I am not surprised, because of the generally poor sound quality of most hi-fi, even in the so called high-end. I think overall sound quality has got worse in many ways in the last 20 years, thanks to the woefully inadequate 16 bit 44.2kHz 'thumbnail picture' (D) format." He's optimistic about the emergence of what he calls 'big picture formats' such as SACD, DVD audio and 96KHz DTS however, which he thinks is set to give audio a boom in the next three to five years.



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BAFFLED? NO

Vandersteen Audio are responsible for 'speakers somewhat different from the norm. Bereft of a cabinet and in a bi-polar design, Simon Pope encounters the 2Ce Signature.

In the world of loudspeaker design there are two schools. One strives to create the best sound from the traditional front facing moving coil drive unit in a cabinet, the other dares to stick its neck out with something decidedly different. Doing something decidedly different of course leaves you open to criticism from the conformists and success is perhaps less certain. I'm sure there were doubters when Peter Walker first introduced the Quad ESL57 to an unsuspecting public back in the late fifties. Now the electrostatic is an industry benchmark and design classic.

Anyway, life's too short for boring hi-fi, so thank goodness for the likes of Vandersteen audio. Vandersteen have been on the fringes of the UK market for a few years now. After a few attempts at distribution, including at one stage, from Arcam, the company's range of 'speakers are now being brought to our shores by the newly revitalised Exposure Electronics. Being a slightly non-conformist design, in the mould of, say Shahinian or Carlsson, the response to their particular way of going about things has been somewhat varied but there's without doubt some interesting things going on here. The 'speakers we have here are the latest version of their 2Ce model, this time bearing the addition 'Signature' to the name.

Since the company's inception in 1977, Vandersteen has been playing with concepts such as "minimum-area" baffles for driver mountings that eliminate the cabinet edge. The model Two has developed from years of experience. It is a classic Vandersteen design of aligned drive

units inside a steel frame covered with a fabric sock. The resultant look is rather like a Quad electrostatic on steroids (and so is the sound, sort of – more of which later!).

These 'speakers are not the prettiest puppy in the litter but at least there's a nod to the WAF (Wife Acceptance Factor) in the wood veneer trim at top and bottom. There is a hefty steel framed, spiked base which bolts to the bottom of the speaker for stability and to provide de-coupling from the floor.

Starting from the top down, the highly damped alloy dome tweeter is a dual-chamber design in an attempt to improve range and linearity. The particular alloy was chosen for its superior strength and resistance to break-up. Next down we have 4" midrange and 8" woofer cones that use cast-metal baskets. Both drive units use filled polycones to ensure high stiffness, superior internal damping and greater neutrality than metal alloy.

Lastly, at the bottom and firing out of the rear of the 'speaker there is a 10" "Active Acoustic Coupler" using a long fibre cone. This bass unit is responsible for supporting the front firing woofer and extending the low frequencies down to near trouser flapping level.

The 2Ce is a package that's distinctively different from the norm. Here's the good news, though. Although the aesthetics are definitely



an acquired taste, the sound actually isn't.

With all that's going on in the 2Ce Signature they could suffer from over-complexity. However, I was somewhat taken back by the sound quality of these 'speakers.

Firstly and most noticeably was the relative lack of boxiness and coloration, something that makes panel and electrostatic 'speakers so appealing. The lack of cabinet makes for a neutral and precise presentation that whilst not delivering ultimate detail, provides a fast and exciting sound.

Secondly, when placed in from a rear wall by at least two feet, their well-balanced and full frequency range coverage makes itself known. The 2Ce can deliver deep and fast bass that's not only impressive but also very well balanced with the rest of the frequency range. For a three-way

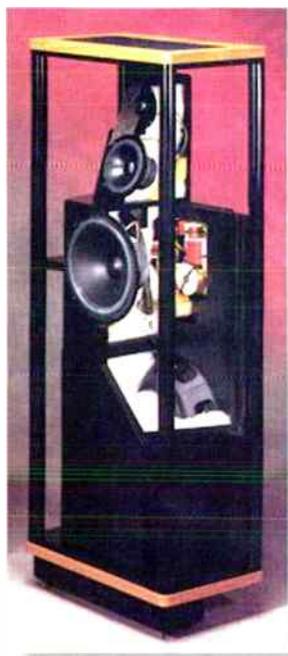
T EXACTLY.

speaker it all seems to blend very well. Paul Weller's 'Stanley Road' (as you've probably guessed by now, one of my fave test discs) had amazing attack and excitement. The drum kit powered into the room, with the bass drum driving the sound on marvellously. Vocals were good and clean, and imaging was equally impressive, giving a loyal representation of the mix.

Nirvana's 'Nevermind' on vinyl confirmed to me that the 2Ces are a fine rock 'speaker. With 'Smells Like Teen Spirit' the bass drum again kicked like a mule and the chorus charged at me like a wounded buffalo.

Mahler's fifth symphony with Bernstein conducting the Vienna Philharmonic on DG showed just how big the Vandersteen's can really sound. With deft precision and speed, dynamics between the skeletal like passages and full orchestral tutti appeared as realistic as you can get from a hi-fi – no mean feat! Strings were full sounding, but at higher frequencies a touch of scratchiness made itself known.

With their scale and power it would be easy to mistake the 2Ces



The 2Ce Signature is a 3-way, bi-polar design

for a pair of brutes but they can recreate the intimate experience of Yo-Yo Ma playing Bach's cello suites. There was good body and warmth to the instrument and a fine level of detail and ambience.

I recommend these 'speakers highly. They were definitely a pleasant

surprise. Practically, they're not the best bet as they need a bigish room in which to breathe and have to be placed a fair way from a rear wall due to that 10" rear firing bass unit. Also, they take a bit of driving – at least 80W to be safe (although a WAD 40WV valve amp had a damn good go at it!). If you can cater for these traits and are after a 'speaker in the two grand range I'd eagerly suggest a listen. They have detail and clarity in abundance and a very powerful yet highly neutral sound. If pushed to far, they will shriek a little in the upper midrange but unless you're a deaf Motorhead roadie with a pair of top range Krell monoblocs this shouldn't be a problem. As I said earlier it's good to come across something different that actually delivers the goods. These are fine sounding 'speakers that whilst are undeniably unusual are pleasantly lacking in sonic quirks. ■ ▲

Vandersteen 2Ce Signature £1,999

Exposure Electronics

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www.exposurehifi.com

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

With its stepped drivers this loudspeaker does not lend itself to nearfield measurement. The drivers integrated well in the far field though and our response shows that the basic balance of the loudspeaker is right. The many peaks and dips in our analysis are room effects, since we did not use an anechoic chamber.

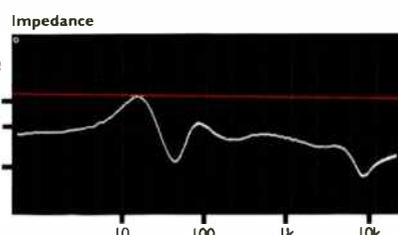
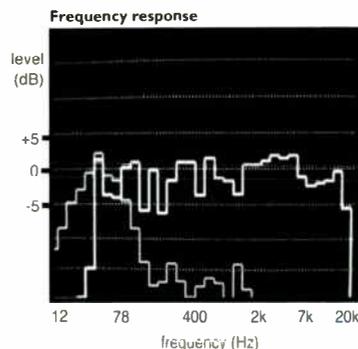
This certainly isn't a loudspeaker to compete with today's 'super flat' designs from companies like KEF, for example, but then Vandersteen have their own set of claims and the 2CE is accurate enough for me to view it as satisfactory in this area. The noise test signal sounded a little characterful so the 'speaker isn't the most neutral available, and a metal dome tweeter with phase correction plate

is not ideal either.

The rear firing bass unit reaches down to 75Hz, no less, so the 2CE will have deep bass and it should sound pretty solid.

As a load the 2CE hovers around 60ohms and is largely resistive. It is one of the easiest loads available so although the Vandersteen may be a little unconventional in some areas the 'speaker is reliably correct here. Sensitivity was a reasonable 86dB for one nominal watt of input (2.8V) and impedance measured 60hms.

The 2CE will likely have its own particular presentation. It measures well enough, even if it isn't as accurate as many modern designs. **NK**



World Verdict



Highly enjoyable sounding with deep bass and a fast, neutral sound. May not be everyone's cup of tea but highly recommended for audition.

VINYL

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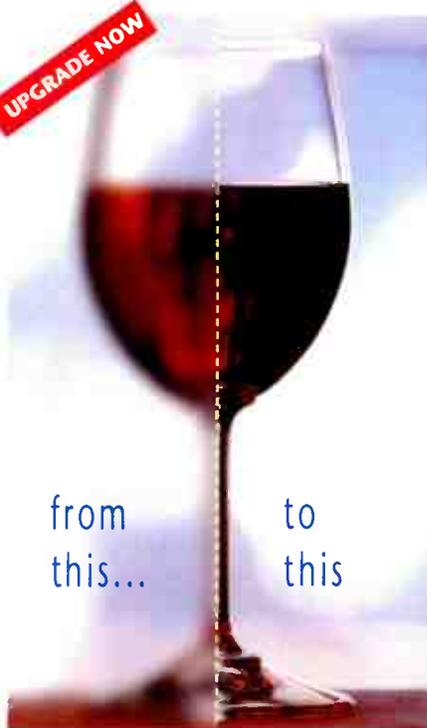
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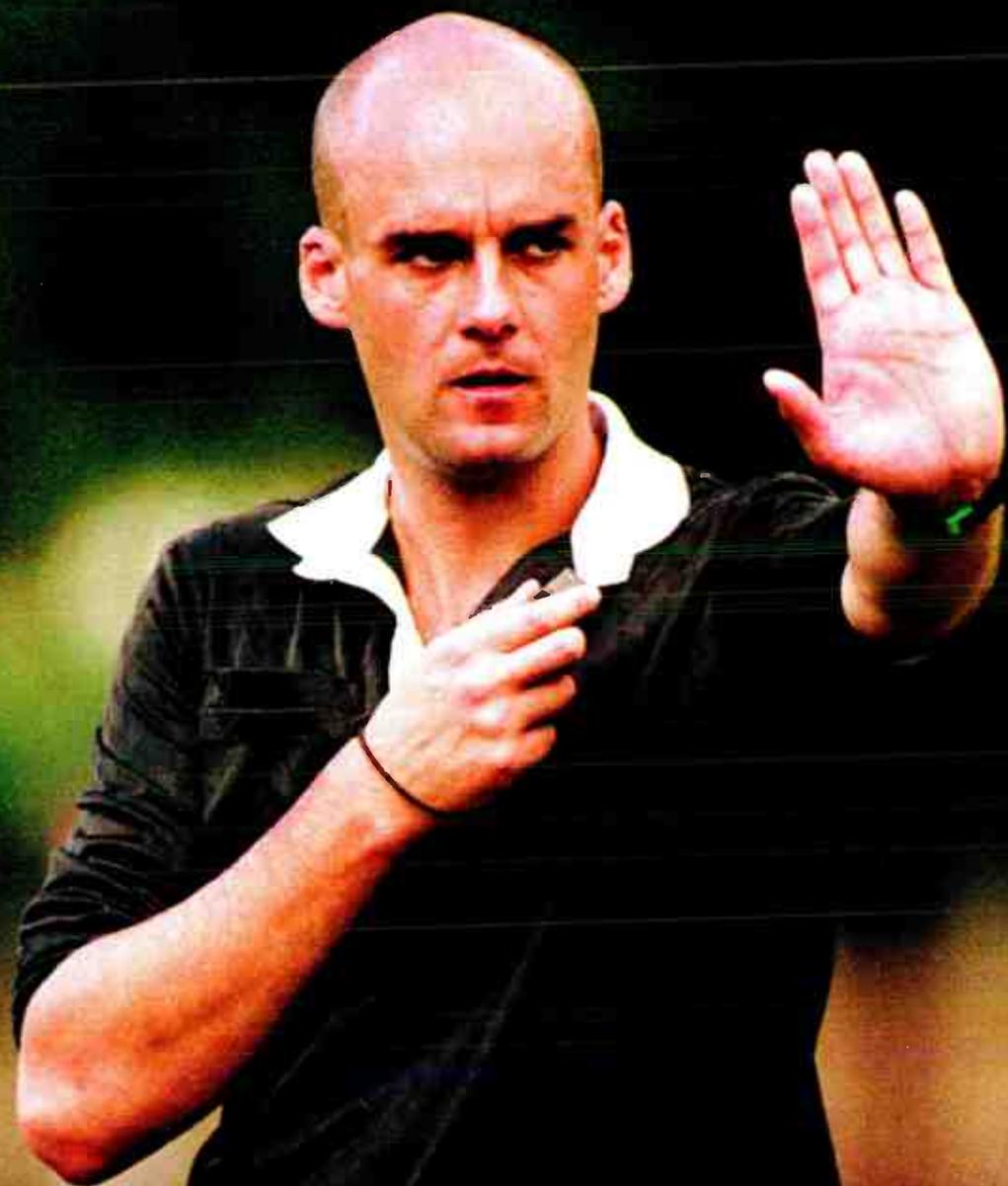
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- Linn** Kollector Pre Amplifier **£494.95**
- Linn** LK85 Power Amplifier **£494.95**
- Marantz** PM4200 Amplifier **£139.95**
- Musical Fidelity** A3 2 Pre Amplifier **£999.95**
- Musical Fidelity** A3 2 Power Amplifier **£999.95**
- Musical Fidelity** NuVista M3 Amplifier **£2974.95**
- Roksan** Caspian MKII Amplifier **£894.95**



ARCAM

SOUND & VISION

DiVA CD72T CD Player

£429.95

DiVA A85 Integrated Amplifier

£749.95

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When CD72T & A85 purchased together (Package Price £1099)

DiVA CD72 "The CD72 will have you jumping out of your seat from the very first notes. Both powerful and punchy, it delivers every ounce of air and detail present from detailed midrange to smooth, singing treble. Sometimes a product comes along that sets new standards..."

WHAT HI-FI? ★★★★★ Awards 2001

DiVA A85 "You'll have realised by now that we rather like this amp. It took us completely by surprise, and further strengthens Arcam's already impressive product range... The A85 is superb, and we can't wait to put it up against its peer in a group test."

WHAT HI-FI? ★★★★★ March 2001



MONITOR AUDIO

Silver 8i Speakers £699.95

"No other speaker in this test can match the Monitor Audios when it comes to delivering seismic basslines with sofa rattling power and weight. That this part of the spectrum also enjoys plenty of speed and control confirms the Silver 8is' position as bass kings... A great speaker needs more than simply great bass, however, and the Silver 8is do far more than merely thump. With the likes of Curtis Mayfield's 'Move On Up', they produce a sound of such verve that it becomes hard to sit still... They produce music with plenty of excitement - but don't forget the subtleties too. Add excellent build and an easy load and these Monitor Audios make a formidable case for themselves."

WHAT HI-FI? ★★★★★ April 2001

Free
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worth £60
with ALL Speakers
over £500

VideoLogic DRX-601ES Digital Tuner £299.95

Save
£30

"New name, new format, new winner: the VideoLogic story is as simple as that. The £299 DRX-601E digital tuner came out of nowhere to establish the firm as a major player in the digital tuner market. With this upgrade, VideoLogic goes one step further: it's still a DRX-601E at heart, but quite apart from the sleek silver styling and sexy blue LEDs it now has a better, white-on-blue display, and what the company calls 'Psycho-acoustic Compensation' - a form of signal processing designed to make the tuner sound less digital... And it works: the DRX-601ES has a presentation that's rich, clean and extremely informative. Bass is big and powerful, while the midband and treble are well controlled. The style alone would justify the slight price rise; the sound quality makes it a Product of the Year."



WHAT HI-FI? ★★★★★ Awards 2001

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ROKSAN

Kandy
KC-1 CD Player £544.95
KA-1 Amplifier £544.95

Kandy KA-1 Roksan's entry-level amp is an impressive piece of equipment, with an exceptional finish and a feature list including a line-level input that can be switched to a MM phono stage. The power rating of 110W into 8ohms is one of the meatiest here and it pays dividends in the Roksan's powerful, dynamic performance... But it's not all about bluster: the Kandy displays its gentle and deft touch with Stravinsky's *The Firebird*, which is played with insight and detail. The soundstage is wide and well-defined, and the individual vocalists of the massed choir and performers are easy to follow. Things can get quite exciting at the top end with stringed instruments, but it doesn't get bright or hard. It's also capable of getting impressively loud while remaining in control and without colouration...

So all fared well, but there has to be a winner and for us it's Roksan's Kandy KA-1. Recent upgrades have served the KA-1 well, and apart from its exemplary built quality it sounds absolutely stunning. In testing it did everything we asked of it, providing great insight with classical music and vocals, but also getting down and dirty with dance music's demanding beats and the crashing rhythms of rock. A first-rate product."

Free
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 £100 when Kandy KC-1 CD &
 KA-1 Amplifier purchased together

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ February 2001

MISSION

78 Series

15%
 OFF RRP on all
 78 Series Speakers.
 Offer also includes
 Free Speaker Cable*

782 bases its performance on a 165mm Nomex bass unit fitted to a reflex enclosure ensuring excellent low frequency extension from a graceful and compact cabinet. The **783** houses a larger 200mm bass unit with massive motor system, capable of floor shaking, yet tightly controlled low frequency extension. Both use Keraform midrange drivers for outstanding clarity and midrange detail coupled to superb dynamic range together with Mission's silk dome tweeter.

The **780** and **781** are the pinnacle of Mission's research into creating a three dimensional soundstage, extensive bandwidth and dynamic range from the smallest possible cabinet dimensions. The **780** is massive in its sonic capabilities. Its 130mm Keraform bass unit is carefully matched to a novel reflex enclosure for full bodied bass extension, the qualities of Keraform produce a dynamic and ultra detailed midrange. In the **781** a 165mm Keraform driver takes advantage of a larger cabinet to extend bass performance and increase efficiency whilst maintaining that superb midband transparency and finely detailed treble.

780 "Versatile and with a sound that works well with a wide variety of hi-fi kit, these speakers were worthy of this title last year, and this year have achieved the tough task of making it the double."

WHAT HI-FIT SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ Awards 2001



WHAT HI-FIT
 Awards
 2001
 Product of the Year

Speaker Selection

Acoustic Energy Aegis Evo One	£179.95
Acoustic Energy Aegis Evo Three	£349.95
B&W CDM 1NT	£749.95
B&W CDM 7NT	£1249.95
B&W DM303	£179.95
B&W DM603 S3	£599.95
Cyrus CLS70 (Black)	£799.95
KEF Cresta 2	£99.95
KEF Q3	£399.95
Linn Katan (Maple)	£634.95
Linn Ninka (Maple)	£894.95
Mission 780	£249.95
Mission M71	£129.95
Monitor Audio Gold Reference 10	£799.95
Monitor Audio Gold Reference 20	£1499.95
Ruark Epilogue II	£344.95

KEF Q1 Speakers £249.95

"Overall the Q1s are excellent speakers. Some rivals may edge ahead on a short audition, but give these standmounters a little time and they're sure to impress. Are they better than the likes of B&W's 601S3 or Mission's 780s? The answer will have to wait for a group test. But until then it is fair to say that these are the most competitive speakers that KEF has had at this price point for years"



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WHAT HI-FIT SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ May 2002



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World Radio History



System Selection

- Cyrus** Quattro Ex Power Amplifier & Speakers **£849.95**
- Denon** 201 Ex Speakers **£599.95**
- Denon** DM50 Ex Speakers **£249.95**
- Marantz** Eclipse 19 Inc Speakers **£549.95**
- Marantz** Eclipse 21 Inc Speakers **£649.95**
- Marantz** Eclipse 22 Inc Speakers **£699.95**
- Marantz** Eclipse 25 Inc Speakers **£799.95**
- Tag McLaren** Aphrodite Ex Speakers **£2994.95**
- Teac** Reference 100 Inc Speakers **£269.95**
- Teac** Reference 500 Ex Speakers **£679.95**
- Yamaha** Pianocraft E150 Inc Speakers **£249.95**



LINN

Classik Music System £999.95

"Since the Scottish company added a tuner to the amp/CD player, mouths have gaped even wider in appreciation. The addition of colour options panders to the public's taste for kit to match their interior design, but it doesn't just look lovely in the lounge: the Classik sounds simply marvellous. Boasting fine impact and drive, it retains its grip even as it thumps out rock and dance tracks. Ask it to play quiet acoustic music and its smooth, liquid presentation impresses still further. The Classik offers the performance you'd expect from high quality separates in one lovely package - this is a very superior product."

WHAT HI-FI? ★★★★★ Awards 2001

Free

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Mission M71 Speakers worth £129



WHAT HI-FI? ★★★★★ Awards 2001 BEST BUY
Systems Best Buy £501-£1000

TEAC

Reference 300 System £499.95

Save £50

"Teac's Reference 300 system is an absolute belter. The company's Reference series has won lots of awards and many admirers in the past, and the 300 range at £200 less than the bigger 500 series, is no disappointment. Your £600 buys you everything but speakers: an amplifier, tuner, CD player and cassette deck... As beautifully built as we've come to expect from Teac, this system delivers the goods with style."

WHAT HI-FI? ★★★★★ Awards 2001

DENON

D-M30 CD Receiver
SC-M50 Speakers

£199.95
£69.95

Save £30

"Denon's gorgeous D-M30 has a fine pedigree - and a record of success. Its forebear the D-M3 kept impressing us with its balance of good looks and great sound, winning two What Hi-Fi? Awards on the trot. Now the latest generation takes home a Product of the Year gong two years in a row. On its own merits, too, as this is much more than a refresh of the D-M3. Upgraded audio circuitry, improved power supply and the Mission-designed speakers all improve the package. The sound is superb well-balanced and weighty... It's a big system in a very cute box."

WHAT HI-FI? ★★★★★ Awards 2001

Optional Recorders:

CDR-M30 CD-RW Recorder • DMD-M30 MiniDisc Recorder • DRR-M30 Cassette Deck

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WHAT HI-FI? ★★★★★ Product of the Year 2001





J A Michell Gyro SE Turntable £1017.95

Founded in Borehamwood by mechanical engineer John Michell. For over thirty years, Michell Engineering have been at the forefront of quality audio, with world-wide appreciated products like the GyroDec and Orbe Turntables. In the early eighties, the revolutionary GyroDec Turntable, with its elegant and effective suspension system, was introduced. The Gyro SE is a smaller and cheaper package that retains the classy sound of the GyroDec and can be upgraded to the full GyroDec specification by adding a plinth and dustcover.

Save £50 towards a *Cartridge of your choice!

"The beautifully engineered Gyro SE not only looks the part but has a wonderfully clean and fluid sound."

★★★★★ What Hi-Fi? July 1999

Price includes Rega RB300 Tone Arm



LINN

Genki CD Player £994.95 Majik Line Amplifier £694.95

Save free Interconnect Cable* worth £150 when Linn Genki & Majik purchased together

Genki "Tempting though it is to think of Genki as a Glaswegian word, it's actually Japanese, and the nearest definitions we could find involve vitality, vigour and spirit. And used as adjectives, these words go a long way towards describing the sound of the Genki, which always manages to communicate the music first and foremost, and let the rest of the hi-fi thing look after itself.

It's a very well-thought-out player, too, from its clear and simple control layout to the provision of four sets of analogue outputs, two at fixed level, and two with level control. Completing the package is a 24-bit Burr-Brown DAC and Pacific Microsonics HDCD filter. Few owners will worry about all that stuff, however, as they'll be too busy enjoying the way Genki plays music, its purity of tone and sense of drama on Mozart's Don Giovanni being a fine example of its talent. By any standards this is a superb player, and not just one for the army of Linn enthusiasts." ★★★★★ What Hi-Fi? March 2000

Majik The Linn Majik is a sophisticated control amplifier complete with on-board stereo power amplifiers. A core entry-level product for powerful and flexible control of hi-fi, video or multi-room installations. 'Sneaky' add-on modules expand its functions. It can accommodate many source components. The Majik is available in two versions: The 'Phono' version has five line-level inputs and one Moving Magnet phono input and the 'Line-level' version has six line-level inputs.



A limited edition of 500

Musical Fidelity has enough nuvistor tubes to build 500 Nu-Vista 3Ds and also to hold a spare set for every unit. (The limited edition Nu-Vista preamp, power amp and integrated are proving to be remarkably reliable, with a tube failure rate of about 0.1%). Music lovers don't need SACD technology, they just need a better CD player. Now a lucky few will be able to own the Nu-Vista 3D compact disc player. Out of the total production of 500, 265 are allocated for sale in England, and of these, 97 have already been reserved.

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MUSICAL FIDELITY

NU VISTA

3D CD Player £2999.95

Save free Interconnect Cable worth £150

"It's hard to put your finger on exactly why and how the 3D CD Player turns in such a performance and to a certain extent it's a pointless exercise: it just does. OK, so at three grand it's a serious financial commitment, but if you're after a CD player to last 'til you take your final breath it could well fit the bill. Get a move on, though, numbers are limited to just five hundred and they'll sell, believe me. Simply get a listen to one and go back to your reference player - all will be revealed." HI-Fi World October 2001



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who are sevenoaks?

Founded in 1972, Sevenoaks Sound & Vision are one of the largest, and most successful hi-fi and home cinema retailers in the country.

Each Sevenoaks Sound & Vision outlet stocks a wide range of quality products, covering all categories of specialist home entertainment, from DVD Players to Widescreen Plasma Televisions and Projection Systems, all at highly competitive prices.

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stock clearance

With over forty outlets nationwide, the Sevenoaks Sound & Vision group stock and display a wide range of products. As technology delivers improvements in performance, so individual models and product ranges are changed or superseded. The preceding models are made available at a reduced price, for clearance. Visit our Website for an up-to-date list of the clearance stock, listed by outlet, within the Sevenoaks Sound and Vision group.

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THRILLER



When one of Britain's most fervent exponents of 'purist' two channel audio systems comes up with a five channel preamp and matching power amps, you begin to realise that times are changing. David Price boogies down to Naim's new AV2/NAP 150/NAPV 175.

Naim Audio needs no introduction - it's arguably the most focused specialist hi-fi brand in the world. Followers of the marque know precisely why they love Naim, and its detractors are equally clear about what they dislike. As Linn has left 'the high ground of minimalist audiophile purism', now only Naim is regarded as carrying the flag. Such is its 'source direct' ethos that even the provision of remote control raised eyebrows a few years back!

Into this context steps Naim's brand new £2,200 AV2 preamplifier and £1,195 NAPV175 three channel power amplifier which, for the very first time (in conjunction with an additional £795 NAPI 150 stereo power amp), gives full on 5.1 channel surround. Don't think for a minute, however, that you're getting chunky brushed aluminium fascias, graphic equalisers, a multitude of DSP modes and multi-button learning remotes. No - this is multichannel Naim-style.

Of course, 5.1 channel systems are ostensibly there to reproduce the audio channels of DVD movie discs. But Naim will tell you (quite rightly) that its AV system is essentially a high end hi-fi that just happens to handle the extra 3.1 channels you need for home cinema. It's for Naim devotees wishing to move to multichannel and newcomers to the brand alike, with good old fashioned sound quality placed at a premium. It's also useful to point out that audio and video are converging apace thanks to the remarkable possibilities offered by DVD. Whether it's watching *The Matrix* or listening to a stunning multichannel mix of 'Hotel California', 5.1 is becoming harder and harder to live without.

Rather than launching a separate new AV range, Naim has taken the very sensible path of Cyrus et al, by introducing additional products to complement the existing hi-fi line up. This preamp looks and works like its

stereo designs but offers basic additional multichannel functionality for when you want to put the LPs or CDs down and play movies or listen to your DTS, DVD-A or SACD multichannel music discs. So Naim fans needn't worry, there's been no dramatic break with the past. If it makes you feel better and helps you sleep at night then compare it with Pioneer's VSA-AX10 high end multichannel integrated, and the Naim combo seems laughably minimalist - like a Lotus Elise to the Pioneer's fully loaded Lexus. On-screen displays? Video switching? Not on your NAP250! So incidental is this sort of thing considered that you'll have to buy the optional VSI video switching box!

What you do get - however - is the basic 'core' of essential AV functionality, including Dolby Digital, Dolby Prologic, DTS and DTS ES NEO decoding with automatic mode switching, fully programmable input

selection, digital bass management (which is in the Dolby spec anyway, so Naim isn't giving you anything 'extra' here either) and - err, that's it. Round the back, there's a mess of digital inputs (2 coaxial, 2 TOSLINK) and outputs (2 coaxial, 1 TOSLINK) plus six analogue inputs (3 DIN and - shock! Horror! Three RCA phono) which can be configured for 5.1/7.1 multi channel. There's also a tape loop, RS232 port for upgrades and multi-room configuration, RC5 input for multi-room applications and the aforementioned VSWITCH port for connection to the forthcoming VSI video controller

Using the AV2 is easy enough, if you take some time to learn it. The large volume knob and Input and Mode buttons are straightforward, and the four little pilot lights for stereo, DTS, Dolby Pro Logic and Dolby Digital self explanatory. But the lack of on-screen display and minimalist fascia mounted LED make it tricky to know precisely what's happening when setting up, unless you're methodical. In a sense, set-up is best left to your friendly local

4-pin DIN line inputs, three pairs of loudspeaker sockets and an IEC mains input. The NAPI50 has but one 4 pin DIN line in and two pairs of loudspeaker sockets and an IEC mains in.

As ever, build quality is superb. The casings and chassis are hewn from low vibration cast and machined aluminium, and inside you'll find meticulous attention paid to eliminating mechanical resonance and electrical interference, arguably the two worst foes of high quality sound. They all feature special circuit board mounting pillars and compliant feet, and the AV2 has heavily screened analogue and digital circuitry, independently aspirated from the dual wound toroidal transformer are used.

A Motorola DSP56362 takes care of digital signal processing duties (100MIPS at 100MHz), offering separate analogue-to-digital and digital-to-analogue conversion at the usual 32, 44.1, 48 and 96kHz sampling frequencies. The time-aligned analogue filter circuitry features high grade, close tolerance Polystyrene capacitors and metal film resistors.

triodes - so to speak - you won't. We're talking an extremely lively, incisive, detailed, involving, emotive, dramatic and punchy sound that seems to inject any kind of music you play with an uncommon amount of zip and zest.

Using a TAGMcLaren DVD32R as a digital transport (feeding the AV2's onboard converters) and M&K S85/SS150 front, centre and surround speakers, I could really feel all the energy committed to tape during the recording of The Verve's 'Lucky Guy'. There seems to be hundreds of different strands in the mix which this system scythes through with impunity. It's incredibly detailed, and offers a tight, clean and open window on the music. Better still is the traditional 'Naim' surprise and delight - through rival systems (such as Cyrus's AV5/Cyrus Power) you get looser and warmer bass, with a sense of the tiny dynamic inflections in the playing.

Move to the more sedate sounds of early James Taylor and you'll be gripped by this Naim combo's poise and power. Images are wide and bold



Unusually for Naim, the AV2 features phono inputs

Naim dealer.

The NAPV 175 is the new, partnering three-channel power amplifier, designed to be used with the current stereo NAPI50 power amp. Together, you get 5x50W RMS quoted output power. Although this may sound rather 'modest', tradition has it that thanks to the serious power supplies, Naim Watts tend to sound rather louder than most others! The cases are identical - like the AV2 they measure 58.4x432x301mm. Round the back you'll find the NAPV 175 sports two

The power amps offer dedicated power supplies for each signal channel, with separate transformer windings, rectifiers and capacitors - and selected audiophile components.

SOUND QUALITY

In stereo mode, the AV2/NAPI50/NAPV175 sounds much like the NAC112/NAPI50, which is to say excellent. If you're either a devout Naim disciple - or are willing to be persuaded - you'll love it, but needless to say, if you spend evenings at home polishing your single-ended

- not in the loose, sumptuous valve sense - and tightly located. Again, the bass is strong and tight with an unusual amount of energy - you really get a sense of the physicality of the recording even, with the bass guitar player pushing and shoving the strings with zeal. Guitars were crisp and clear, cutting through the mush of the mix like a knife through butter. There's so much feeling here - I could really take in all the emotion coming from Taylor's brilliantly wielded steel string guitar.

Tonally, there's an ever-so-slight

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What's new, Pussycat?

Where do we start?!

Conrad Johnson - superb amps from the US. The fabulous MV60 power amp is on demo now, with the PV-10 preamp.

Duevel - omnidirectional speakers from Germany which are rapidly gaining loyal followers. We now have all 3 models on demo.

Kuzma - well respected turntable/tonerarm. Origin Live - their brilliant new tonearm, plus Rega arm wiring and counterweight mods.

ES Lab - British built full digital amp.

Gamut - solid state powerhouse from Denmark.

Trichord - the well known and liked Dino and Delphini phono amps.

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HI-FI WORLD 2002

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web site: www.originlive.com



tendency towards stridency (thanks in part to the rather 'basic' recording quality of the disc itself, and the less than flattering 16/44 digital source), and a rather 'brightly lit' treble. This tends to invest the vocals with a small degree of sibilance and make the impassioned female backing vocals slightly hard work. You can't really freeze the action and luxuriate in the texture and grain of all the different sounds on the disc in the same way you could with, say, an equivalently priced Unison Research tube amp. A DG CD of Paganini's '24 Capricci per violino solo op.1' (Salvatore Accardo) showed the combo's 2-channel character at its worst - shrill and sharp, even if it was gobsmackingly fast and fluid.

Interestingly though, move to multichannel and any 'signature' this Naim combo has becomes far less obvious. Cue up a DTS 5.1 music disc of Paul McCartney's 'Band on the Run' (running at 16/48 resolution) and the title track positively shines. DTS audio discs offer sweeter sound than CD and the overall effect is very fulfilling. McCartney's vocals are rich and resonant, and despite the imperfect audio quality of the original recording, there's a welter of things to take in. The saxophones on 'Jet' sounded beautifully breathy coming through the right surround channel, while the guitar and bass guitar punching out of the left front and surround channels was deliciously tight and taut. The result was something altogether more

convincing that plain old 16/44 CD - air, space, depth, subtlety, power - it's all there!

This is great, because your average DTS decoder - hidden in the innards of some dodgy AV receiver - simply doesn't come close. With the Naim combo, it's like the curtains have been opened and the sun's shining in. The same goes for DVD Audio. The NAPV 175 is (as you'd expect) a brilliant complement to the NAPI 50, and the result is dynamite - The Eagles' 'Life in the Fast Lane' proved riotously good fun. On lesser systems it's either thin and hard or soft and dull, but the Naim caught the mood perfectly. Guitars, hi-hats and snares showed stunning speed - I really got into the groove of the tune and felt the sense of great musicians playing brilliantly in time.

Those lightning attack transients made for a seat-of-the-pants AV experience, too. Whereas lesser sound systems smear and smudge the music's constantly varying dynamic peaks and troughs, the Naims locked onto every inflection, accent and pause like a limpet. The supremely tight and grippy basslines and glass-clear midband made for a genuinely moving emotional experience playing music DVDs.

808 State's 'Optical' was a riot of colour and sound, the Naim kicking out vast tracts of bass with unceasing verve. Despite the iffy codec that is Dolby Digital, these amps made a brilliant fist of it. The soundstage was alive with detail, yet it was all handled

with so much grip and composure. Interestingly though, the opening part of Quentin Tarrantino's 'Jackie Brown' (complete with Bobby Womack's brilliant 'Across 110 Street') showed the dramatic audio side slightly upstaging the visuals! Still, this was the exception not the rule.

All in all, Naim's first multichannel system is a joy. Awesomely fast and dynamic, superbly insightful and with massive reserves of power, it's so far ahead of most other multichannel systems, it's almost off the map. My time listening to this system confirms what I've kind-of suspected for a long time, that Naim stuff is more neutral than many of its critics have come to think. Much of that famous 'forwardness' is the sound of 16/44 CD rather than any failings on Naim's part. Now that 'high resolution digital audio' is here in DVD-A, SACD and DTS forms, Naim kit sounds all the more convincing. Gripping stuff! ■ ▲

Naim AV2/NAPI 50/NAPV 175 £4,190

Naim Audio,
Southampton Road,
Salisbury,
Wilts
SP1 2LN
Tel: 01722 332266
www.naimaudio.co.uk

Many thanks to Audio Excellence, 65 Park St., Bristol BS1 5PB (tel: 0117 926 4975) for their help in preparation of this review.

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

Producing 50W per channel into 8ohms the Naim has enough output to go healthily loud. However, Naim amplifiers hold up well under higher current demand, this one delivering 80W into 4ohms. Since most modern loudspeakers use 4ohm bass units to optimise sensitivity it is this level of power that will be delivered in practice, so there's a bit more available than the quoted power.

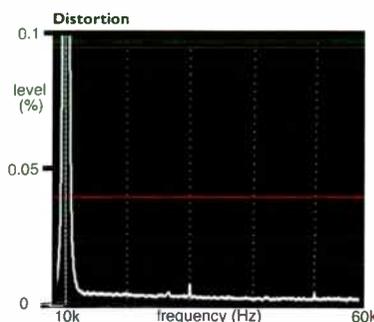
Distortion levels were very low in the midband, from low to high output. The harmonic structure looked benign enough, with second harmonic dominating, third well suppressed and no higher orders. At

high frequencies the amplifier still looked clean, the worst case figure being a respectable 0.03% near full output at 10kHz. Into 4ohms the figures were little worse.

With very high input sensitivity of 150mV, low noise, wide channel separation and the usual curtailed audio response of Naims, this model measured well and much like its stable mates. **NK**

Power 50watts
CD/tuner/aux.
Frequency response 10Hz-25kHz
Separation 83dB

Noise -104dB
Distortion 0.01%
Sensitivity 150mV
dc offset 15/7mV

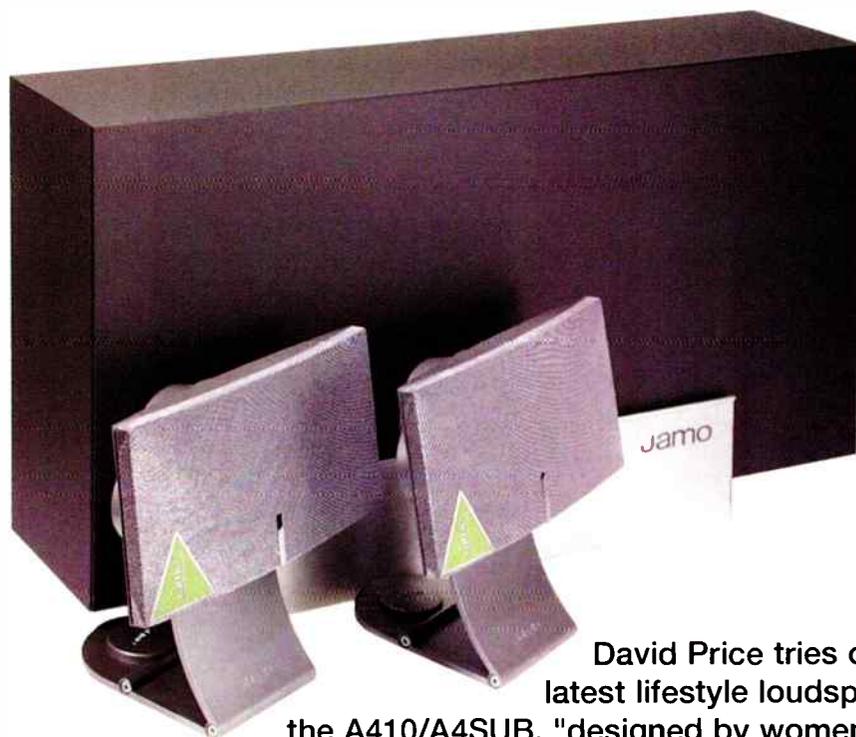


World Verdict



A great way to enjoy multi-channel audio or video, and two channel too. Expensive, but many will feel this is their ultimate home cinema system.

THE GENTLE



David Price tries out Jamo's latest lifestyle loudspeaker system, the A410/A4SUB, "designed by women for women".

▶ The idea behind this £507 loudspeaker system is that - surprise, surprise - the fairer sex puts aesthetics and design on a par with sonics. Its creators - industrial designers Brigitte Smedegaard and Sine Weis - were told to "go home and dream - and dream big". Hmmm.

The satellites are innocuous little things - frankly I've seen more attractive designs elsewhere. Although they're flat designs (measuring 220x110x88mm), they contain conventional moving coil drive units, namely a 25mm dome tweeter and 80mm midrange driver. Together, Jamo claim a frequency response of 120Hz-20kHz for them, along with 50W power handling and 6 ohm nominal impedance. The magnetically shielded cabs are sealed (no bass port is used) and made of high quality plastics weighing in at 1.6kg apiece. Again they're well built and finished, but I've seen better in the (rather unusual) shape of KEF's £499 KMS2002 'eggs'. They come with neat wall brackets, but Jamo offer a very natty pair of cast

aluminium (90cm) STA410 stands for an additional £89.

The subwoofer is more strikingly styled. Reminiscent of a late 1970s Bang and Olufsen receiver, its hinged aluminium flap swings up to reveal the minor controls. Jamo say it's designed to be 'on show', rather than stuck under the coffee table as you'd do with your average black box sub. It's quite large and heavy (at 325x600x154mm and 11kg), and uses a long, slim sealed box with two relatively small 203mm drive units, one of which is powered and the other of which is passive. The latter duly acts as a passive 'auxiliary bass radiator', a form of reflex port. Inside is a 100W RMS amplifier possessing three controls, for volume, cut-off (60-200Hz) and

phase (0-180 degrees), concealed under the aforementioned neat flap. Jamo says the sub works between 40-200Hz.

Being passive, the satellites connect directly your amp's loudspeaker terminals, while the sub plugs into one of your preamp outputs (or failing that, a tape out). I hooked the sats up to my World Audio K5881 power amp, and took a PRE OUT from my KLPP1. Sources included my Michell Orbe/OL

RB250/Ortofon Kontrapunkt

B and a Pioneer DV-747A DVD-A player. No sensitivity figure is quoted by Jamo, but being small, closed-box

designs they're hardly going to win any awards in this area.

Not since I had VideoLogic's Sirocco some three years ago have I heard something this small sound this big -



TOUCH?

and this musical. Don't think that you can stick the Jamos on the end of a cheapo mini system; they're very open and demanding of their ancillaries. Kicking off with Steely Dan's 'Rikki Don't Lose that Number' on vinyl, I was staggered by how open and upfront they are. These 'speakers image incredibly boldly into the room, projecting out in an almost holographic fashion. Instruments and vocals hang in space in an almost eerie way, while the recorded acoustic drops back impressively far behind the plane of the speakers.

Despite such a direct and unfettered nature, the Jamos don't sound harsh or forward in any way. Air's 'All I Need' showed the midband to be bright and clean, but not hard or strident. It's surprisingly good at textural detail too - the singer's voice was deep and resonant - so rather than listening to the drive units you really feel you're hearing the source.

Treble, by contrast, isn't so hot. It's perfectly adequate but a little curtailed and rolled off at the very top. The real star of the show is the

bass, however. Never boomy or overpowering, the sub integrates brilliantly with the satellites and adds firm, strong, insistent reinforcement to the lower regions. The overall effect is of an extremely fast and musical, yet unexpectedly couth

speaker system at the price. Here is an interesting alternative to mid-price floorstanders, and one not to be overlooked! 🏆

Jamo A410 £79 each
A4SUB £349

Jamo UK Ltd.
Oakfield Park,
Bilton Road,
Rugby,
Warwicks CV22 7AL
Tel: 01788 556777
www.jamospeakers.com



MEASURED PERFORMANCE

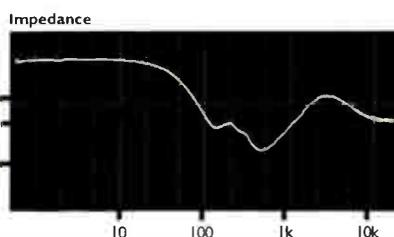
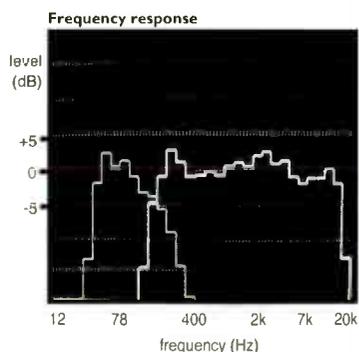
The satellites of this system measure quite flat from a head-on position. There was some lateral asymmetry though, treble increasing to left of centre, but decreasing to right. This may well make the sound stage move right a little unless the satellites are perfectly positioned. The shallow cabinets had some colouration, likely producing the peak at 250Hz, but overall their frequency response was well controlled, with good treble extension and no crossover suckout. As a result they should sound detailed enough.

The subwoofer works from 200Hz down to 40Hz, before cutting off sharply. It is an active bass unit rather than a subwoofer, because there are no subsonics. All the same it has a smooth, well controlled

response and matches the satellites seamlessly.

Impedance of the satellites starts to rise below 500Hz, reaching 8ohms at 200Hz, their lower response limit. Below this frequency impedance rises steeply, so they are not affected by bass signals, even though connected for full range working. Sensitivity of the system was a reasonable 86dB when set flat. The greatest limitation of small satellites though is usually limited maximum volume before harshness sets in.

Measurement showed this system is fundamentally quite accurate. It is also an easy amplifier load, so it measures up to hi-fi standards. 🏆

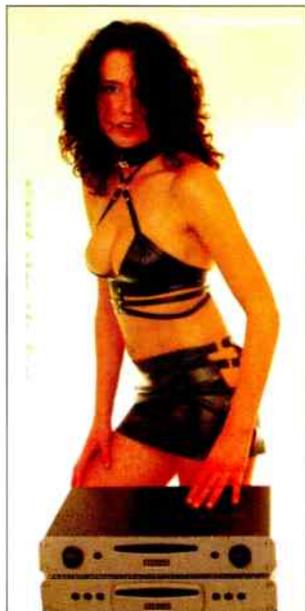


World Verdict



Despite the unusual, 'lifestyle' aesthetics, these are genuinely capable speakers capable of taking on conventional box designs and winning.

SOUNDS PERFECTION



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internet: www.definitiveaudio.co.uk email: shout@definitiveaudio.co.uk

TAKE THE POWER BACK

Simon Pope listens to three power cords designed to get your set-up singing a little better.



▶▶ ECOSSE REFERENCE BIG RED POWERCHORD £99

It's big, it's red - it's the Big Red Power Cord! Rarely does one get the opportunity to describe a mains cable as striking looking, but this one undoubtedly is. Ecosse have made a bit of name for themselves since their launch. Their impressive range of 'speaker cable and interconnects have won various awards and received glowing reviews. Now they've turned their hand to mains cable. The cable, suitable for applications up to 200W, consists of a unique rope-lay monocrystal conductor weave which is combined with a double screen of aluminium foil and tinned copper. The plug is an audiophile grade M&K Toughplug with silver plated fuse clips for low contact resistance.

As a one time sceptic it took a while for me to realise just what a difference a good quality power chord can make. With the Big Red Powerchord all the characteristics are present. Pitch-black background, deeper soundstage and an overall more focussed sound. Instruments gain more clarity and space. The biggest difference came with acoustic music, which gained more presence and lucidity and a better sense of realism. The Big Red Powerchord is a good upgrade, not the cheapest of its type on the market but a solid product - and a great colour to boot.

Ecosse Reference Cables
0141 353 0509
www.ecosseecables.co.uk

KIMBER LoPOWERCORD £75

Five years ago Kimber (via UK distributor Russ Andrews) were one of the very, very few cable manufacturers to preach on the merits of clean mains and the importance of specialist shielded mains cable. Now the market is awash with rivals.

The outside layer is double shielded by a foil and a braided thimble and the veins are all shielded with a ferrite socket. Inside the power plug sit an integrated coil and capacitors, which act as a mains filter, of sorts, adding another string to Kimber's bow.

This cord can be used in all applications but there is the HiPower cord for use with power amplifiers.

The look of the Kimber is slightly less, er, funky than the Big Red but it has the added bonus of a high quality connector in the shape of the company's WATTGATE IEC.

Sound wise, the Kimber is a safe bet. Noise floor was extended, as was the soundstage, and vocals had more clarity whilst retaining warmth. Detail was clean and intricate, yet retained a nice smoothness. Things rarely got edgy or harsh, as they can with some cables. You won't jump out of your seat with the excitement of it all but neither will you be left wanting, as everything is smooth and open. A good buy.

Russ Andrews Accessories Ltd.
01539 825500
www.russandrews.com

KEMP ELECTRONICS KE Lo-POWER CABLE £36 per metre (£12 per extra 0.5 metre)

Unlike the others here, this company specialise solely in mains supply and filtering. The cable reviewed here is the lowest priced in this round up. Two versions of the KE Power Cables are available, again, one for power amplifiers and the other, reviewed here, for any other application. The technology used here is quite advanced for the humble price tag and echoes that of the Kimber cable. Conductors are internally shielded by a ferrite socket and double shielded externally with foil and a braided metal sleeve. Again, a coil and capacitors are located in the mains plug to act as filters.

Sound wise, the Kemp is a good buy. It offers virtually the same level of lucidity and overall tightening of sound as the Kimber, but at thirty five quid less. Some things such as brass and strings were slightly brighter, but not the extent of harshness or any grate in the sound. There was an impressive amount of detail, highlighted well with unaccompanied choral music, and silences were truly silent - adding realism to the overall presentation. When the price is considered the Kemp power cable is an effective upgrade and a bit of a bargain. ■ ▲

UKD
01753 652669
www.ukd.co.uk

World Verdict



Kemp electronics

Good value for money, the Kemp cables are clean sounding and lucid.

World Verdict



Kimber LoPowercord

The first and still one of the best. Competition is now strong but the WATTGATE makes a big difference.

World Verdict



Ecosse Reference Cables

A good upgrade but not the cheapest option. Well focussed and clear sounding.

TRES BIEN



David Price thinks Unison Research's brand new Unico valve/MOSFET hybrid integrated amplifier is more than the sum of its parts.

Even though the Cold War is over, in hi-fi - at least - some people are still fighting it. Many folk still line up around 'the two' opposing transistor and valve camps, convinced that theirs is the superior system and that their rival has no redeeming merit. As far as they're concerned, never the twain shall meet. As for me, I don't care - I use both. I have a high-end valve system which gives me massive amounts of musical fulfillment and never fails to blow my socks off when called upon so to do. In another room is my 'mid-fi' transistor system, which varies between Cyrus and Naim electronics, and is no less compelling to listen to in its way. Both hit the button and make things magical, and both can do what the other can't. Frankly, I'd find it hard to be without either.

Unison Research - lest we forget - has built its name on producing some amazingly well suited and booted single-ended triode valve amplification. Quintessentially Italian, its quirky, charismatic products have become famous for their combination of real wood and stainless steel finishes, and modern tube-based circuitry. Recently, its SR1 integrated signalled a minor change of direction in its use of an ECC82 triode input

stage and an output stage using complementary pairs of power MOSFETs. The idea was to combine the strengths of two respective technologies, to get the best of both worlds. The new Unico you see before you continues the plan.

At £750 (plus an extra £100 if you want the MM/MC phono stage), it's a lot cheaper than the SR1, but I'm afraid you lose those amazing looks and the undeniable sense of occasion they lend to any listening room. Instead you get a nicely made oblong steel box - not entirely dissimilar to Audio Analogue's Pucini in size and appearance (maybe a bit nicer), complete with two large control knobs - one for input, one for volume. The two accompanying LED indicators serve an additional purpose - when the amp is in its 'warm up' phase they flash rapidly until things have stabilised. Yes, it's even got its own self-diagnostics!

Look inside and you'll get a strong sense of *deja vu* - it's pretty much an SR1 circuit complete with dinky valves, chunky MOSFETs and a big toroidal transformer dispensing the juice - even the 2x80W RMS rated power is the same. The circuit uses only a minimal level of feedback (8dB), and an overdrive LED shows when distortion levels exceed one

per cent. Go round the back there are two pairs of chunky loudspeaker binding posts and a brace of gold plated RCA phono inputs and outs. The supplied remote is a joy - it's hewn from wood, offers just volume up/down control, and is RF powered rather than infra-red.

It's an interesting sonic proposition. No - don't expect a cheap, conventionally styled AudioNote Ongaku, or even 'just' a soberly styled Unison SET valve amp. It expressly does not sound like one of the aforementioned tubular belles - rather, it's very much like the SR1 whose circuitry it largely shares. This means you get what in transistor terms would be described as a warm and sepia-tinted sound, or in tube terms is quite 'hard and punchy'. The Unico seeks to give a taste of both cultures, and in this respect - at least - succeeds brilliantly.

Cue up some smooth Stevie Wonder ('Lately') on your turntable (via a valve phono stage, preferably) and you get an impressively wide - panoramic even - soundstage, with loads of depth and atmosphere. Detail isn't quite as good as, say, a Cyrus 7, but there's still plenty for the taking. Maybe this is missing the point, because the fun comes from taking in all the textural detail. No,

ENSEMBLE!

this amp isn't as good as a decent (and far more expensive) tube amp in this respect, but you still get more than your money's worth of timbre and grain. Instead of Stevie's voice sounding like a very good hi-fi recreation (as the Naim Nait 5 would manage), you get a believable human crooning out in front of your fireplace. This is the magic of valves and the Unico - if not Marvo - is still quite adept at pulling rabbits out of hats.

Better still is when you feel you could use some sterner stuff. Up the pace a tad and add some Sly and Robbie and you've got Grace Jones' 'My Jamaican Guy'. Thanks to its complex syncopations and occasional slam on the bass drum, this track seems to really take it out of amplifiers, and often the tube type come out looking rather the worse for wear. The Unico wasn't in the least bit worried - in fact, it thrived. Again it set up a wide acoustic, with strongly articulated images and a great sense of depth. Tonally it was smooth and just a little on the sweet side of neutral, with a warmish bass and silky treble. Although not overblown - or loose in the traditional tube sense - bass guitars had a pleasant 'bloom' that most

definitely wasn't there when I switched to a Naim CD5.

Rhythmically, the Unico is also impressive. It's definitely 'up for it' when it comes to pushing a tune along, and really tries its best to impart the twists and turns of Grace Jones. Ultimately though, it simply doesn't have the grip of the Naim - it's fast alright, but the bass is just a little looser and it tends to sit on transients just a touch more, too. Still, that bass drum showed slam that can only come from an amp packing some serious firepower - the faster Naim simply didn't have the grunt to pin you back in your seat like the Unico, when it could be persuaded.

It's only when you play some beautifully recorded acoustic music that things start to err. Mahler's Symphony No. 10 (Simon Rattle/Berliner Philharmoniker) on DVD-A shows the Unico is a little too coloured for comfort (if neutrality is an important criterion, that is). Everything seems to be invested with a faint 'orange glow', like an Autumn morning. It's great if you're playing nasty digitised pop like The Spice Girls '2 Become 1', but not if you're trying to hear what's on the disc. Oh well, can't have everything for £750, I guess! Overall then, a



brilliant alternative to the Naim/Cyrus/Arcam (etc) treadmill - if you want something a little different, yet no less competent (or flawed!), then this is a brilliant bet. It's very rare to find sound and especially build quality at this price and it offers a superb option in the midprice integrated market. Bellissimo! ■ ▲

Unico £750

UKD

Tel: 01753 652 669

www.ukd.co.uk

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

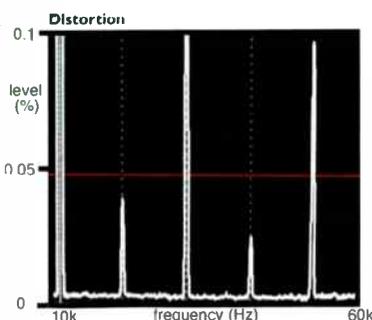
The MOSFET output stage of this amplifier delivers plenty of power, but it also produces a fair bit of distortion, perhaps a little too much. Delivering 98W into 8ohms and 144W into 4ohms, the Unico possesses levels of power delivery beyond most valve amps, so it capitalizes upon the use of solid-state devices. However, there was some odd-order (sharp sounding) distortion into low 4ohm loads, 1W at 10kHz throwing up 0.34%. Levels hovered around 0.7% or less into 8ohm loads, which is fair, but since an increasing number of loudspeakers these days are 4ohm the Unico sails a little close to the wind here. It is likely to have a fairly glassy bright

sound, perhaps with a little hardness at times, according to the loudspeakers used. It should be matched with care, favouring warm/high impedance sound 'speakers like Catsles, rather than brighter/low impedance Missions for example.

Frequency response was very wide, stretching from 3Hz right past 150kHz, so the design is fine for DVD and SACD. Input sensitivity was typical enough at 400mV and noise low.

Speaker choice will be important with this amp. Because it is load sensitive, I would expect a bright, open and likely dynamic sound, but with brightness. **NK**

Power	98watts
CD/tuner/aux.	
Frequency response	3Hz-150kHz
Separation	58dB
Noise	-88dB
Distortion	0.18%
Sensitivity	400mV
dc offset	3/26mV



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LETTER OF THE MONTH

PARTNERING BUSINESS [1]

In April 1998's HFW David Price discusses the Yamaha NS1000 speakers: "power

amps such as Naim's NAP250 which without soft Bextrene or polypropylene cones to hide behind, could sound - yes that's right - forward, fatiguing and fizzy". Fine, but then we go to November 2000 and David concludes in another recommendation for the Yamaha speakers, "although they don't really sound completely at home until there's a NAP250 geeing them along". Anyway his unerringly consistent approach certainly persuaded me and I've gone and bought a pair of Yams! Problem is what to do with my Naim amps?

Donald J O'Donnell
Glasgow

I've been quoted out of context again - and you could knock me down with a feather! But my general point is precisely as above - these speakers need a mucho macho amp to drive them, but - power output aside - they're ruthlessly revealing of its

tonality. The NAP250 is not, frankly, the world's sweetest amp - so you'll have to perform some remedial tweaking. To wit, use the best source you can - preferably vinyl (pre-Lingo LPI2s work magically with NAP250s, methinks), with a tube phono stage - and junk your NAC05 speaker cables in favour of DNM Reson or suchlike. Turn the Yams' midrange controls down to -3dB, and the treble pots down to -1dB, and run them close to the rear walls slightly toed-in with the grilles on. Good luck - you should have an extremely powerful and musical sounding system if you manage to tame it!

DP ■



Mr. Price's use of Yams is a World mail favourite topic. . .

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II ► PARTNERING BUSINESS [2]

Hi David,

I own a pair of Yamaha NS1000M loudspeakers. I have used them with Pioneer A400 and vintage Leak TL12.1 (KT66) and TL10 amps. They sound okay, but I would like to partner them with better amps. I gather you use these speakers as reference. Could you please let me know what other partnering equipment you use (amps, cables, stands, CD player, etc)?

C Kahawita
Brisbane, Australia

Yamaha NS1000Ms are one of the most charismatic loudspeakers I've ever heard - and they seem to elicit vastly differing reactions. Many British hi-fi journalists for whom I have great esteem loathe them, whereas in Japan they seem more revered than Quad ESL57s. This is surely because they are incredibly transparent, thanks to the use of Beryllium domes for their treble and midband drivers. Chemistry students will know that this is the lightest metal in the periodic table. The combination of ultra low mass and ultra high rigidity (better than Titanium or Aluminium, for example) is almost ideal for loudspeakers, and gives stunningly low distortion with tremendous speed. The problem is that Beryllium is an extremely difficult (and thus expensive) material to machine safely, which is why Yamaha gave up making them after some twenty years.

The upshot is that the Yams sound smooth and fat through trad valve amps and grossly forward and harsh through in-your-face solid state amplification. They're so revealing, and so able to disappear and let the source components beam through, that they're a pain to partner. This would explain why so many people get such differing results.

With this in mind it's hard to recommend partnering equipment; it's a case of suck it and see. Despite their decent 91dB sensitivity, they're a tricky load and not suited to tube amps unless they're of the beefy variety. I use a modded World Audio K5881 power amp (20W), which can drive them to highish levels - midband is sublimely smooth and textured, but bass is loose and frankly marginal. I also have a pair of Musical Fidelity XA-200 transistor power amps (200W), which give a brilliant vice-like grip in the bass, but a 'brightly lit' upper mid band. Preamp is a valve World Audio KLP-PI with

Panasonic volume pot.

My rule of thumb is to start with a good source - only high end vinyl is truly up to the job (I use a Michell Orbe/OL Silver 250/Ortofon Kontrapunkt B), but the new DVD-A/SACD players (such as Pioneer's DV-747A) are just about good enough too. Then find an amp that balances the source's tonality with an ability to serve up a decent amount of power - this may be valve or transistor depending on your taste. Interconnects are then your final tuning aid (LFD's SpiroLink 3 best suit me, along with DNM Reson speaker cable), plus a sturdy pair of stands (Atacama B200s). **DP ■**

II ► BRAVE NEW WORLD

While I don't consider myself an audiophile, I have a sizeable record and CD collection, which I like to hear well reproduced. To this end my main system comprises a Pioneer 301-disc multiplexer, playing through a Musical Fidelity X-ACT DAC, Audiolab 8000C and MF X-A50s and a pair of Quad ESL 57s. I've recently become a reluctant convert to the world of home computing, and bought a well-specced PC (512k RAM, 40 gig hard drive, Windows XP with DVD & CDRW), but I'm afraid I neglected its audio potential, so am in need of some sensible upgrade advice.

Firstly, the soundcard that came pre-installed sounds pretty dreadful, and when fed out to a spare NAD amp and Rega Kytes it also produces sound at what seems like about half line level. It also struggles with Quicktime, producing a 'jittery' sound. Can you recommend a soundcard that gives me decent sound and volume, preferably also with the ability to decode Dolby 5.1 surround from the DVD drive?

Secondly, should I junk the inbuilt (nameless) CD-RW drive in favour of something like the TEAC 540E? At £140 this seems like a very cost-effective upgrade! Incidentally, what brand of blank CD-R would you recommend? Finally, what software should I be using to get the best audio potential from my PC? I imagine your response might be, "depends what you want to do", but that's the whole point - I don't yet know what I can do, but I'm determined to make the most of what I've got!

Ian Hayward

With the right kit, you'll find that your PC can be an invaluable complement - rather than substitute

for - your hi-fi. You're correct to identify your soundcard as the biggest problem - the bundled designs are invariably rubbish, and often contain weedy audio output stages that struggle to drive line level inputs, which explains your volume deficit. If you didn't want 5.1 decoding, I'd unreservedly recommend TerraTec's AudioSystem EWX 24/96 for £150 - it's a great way of getting two channel audio in and out of your computer, and even offers real 24/96 resolution to boot.

Still, if you must have multi-channel, you could do a lot worse than Creative Labs' Audigy. Frankly its digital converters aren't as good, but they're still respectable and the whole package is brilliant for 'starters' such as yourself. It gives full 5.1 Dolby Digital decoding, and there's a wealth of software, including Steinberg's WaveLab Lite, which does hard disk recording, audio restoration and editing, and is an ideal introduction to computer audio. It also has very good hardware audio acceleration, which will end your 'jitters'. Factor in its handy 'LiveDrive' connector box (complete with front panel FireWire socket) and it's brilliant package.

As for CD burners, the TEAC 540 sounds great value, but why not try out what you've got first? It may be perfectly adequate given good 'brand name' media. Personally, I use Sony or TDK blanks, and try to buy 650MB (i.e. 74min) as opposed to 700MB if at all possible (which I record at 2x or 4x), as they seem to track better in portables and car players.

Syntrillium's Cool Edit Pro is the Holy Grail of PC audio software as far as I'm concerned, but at nearly £300 it's an unattainable one for many. You could always download Cool Edit 2000 from the company's website (www.syntrillium.com) for \$69, and upgrade later. It's more powerful than WaveLab (in some respects) and has a much better user-interface. **DP ■**

II ► UP THE WALL

Dear HFW

I need your help again! Several years ago you gave me some good advice on room acoustics, which worked out fine. Current line-up is much the same as then: Pink Triangle LPT GTI with Tabrizzi



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AR, and MC15 cartridge, Exposure 15 amp, Marantz CD63 Mk2 Kl. Speakers are B&W P4s, bought second hand to replace my defunct KEFQ60s.

I need to replace the P4s. They need too much space in my room which is 3.5 x 4ms. They are also too dark sounding at low to medium levels while the treble gives a good impression of sandpaper, initially impressive (fast) but very wearing over the longer run.

I'm looking for smallish floorstanders that work well when sited very close to the walls (so my wife tells me!). I'm not sure what price levels to target - £300 to £1000? Ideally they need to be fairly neutral but not clinical, well extended in overall response with good imaging and soundstage (not looking for much I know)! I do need a clue as to where to start auditioning.

I also notice that Dynavector's DV10X4 cartridge is currently in favour. Would it be a worthwhile upgrade on my MC15? Any guidance would be most helpful. Many thanks for years of good listening and great reading.

Steve Hollingbery
Hove, Sussex.

Finding a pair of floorstanders to fit your criteria actually shouldn't be too much of a problem, Steve. For the kind of characteristics you're looking for, though, it looks like the upper end of your price bracket is where you'll find the answer. I presume by "walls" you mean a rear wall, as very little around will work well positioned right in the corner of a room.

Sorry to bang on about the Mission 782s yet again, but they actually fit the bill very well. Being a closed cabinet design with no bass ports they can work very well close to a rear wall and they are slim and fairly small in stature. A side firing bass unit delivers the tight lower frequencies. This can be placed facing either inwards (good imaging and depth of stage) or outward facing (wider, more open breadth of sound). The treble won't be as harsh as you're finding with the B&Ws and the Missions are highly detailed, and due to the thick infinite baffle cabinet construction, very neutral without being sterile. They are also bang in the middle of your budget at £700. The larger £1,000 783s are the same design except with further bass extension and cabinet size, so may be

beyond your room's capabilities.

Even cheaper and fitting is the often overlooked SuperTwo from NHT. NHT's designs have a unmistakably high-end sound to them, with smooth, sophisticated treble and a clean, dry, yet rewarding sound. This model is a downward firing bass reflex design, lifted from the floor by supporting brackets either side of the cabinet - all for a somewhat bargain £550. Elsewhere you could seek out Tannoy's Eyriss 2, a dry and smooth sounding medium sized floorstander that can be picked up for around £850, or for a slightly warmer option that still delivers plenty of detail and insight, there's the SP2 from Opera. This is a slim built floorstander with a solid hardwood cabinet. The bass reflex port is downward firing onto a wood plinth so placement to a rear wall is possible. The only problem here though is that they are priced slightly over your budget at £1,100 but the extra £100 does get you that gorgeous hardwood cabinet..SP ■



Opera's SP2 is slightly overbudget but superbly finished and smooth sounding

► YOUNG AND OLD

I've just had an RB300/Ortofon MC15 fitted to my old Systemdek IIX, replacing a Linn Basik+K9 combo. An equally ancient QED CD 240 (SA board fitted) has given way to an Arcam A85 and a Rotel RQ970BX phono stage. Meanwhile, bi-wired B&W 601 S3s now perch on the Alphason stands (floor spikes/ Blu-tak) that once supported a pair of 600is. I use Qunex 2 interconnects and two separate runs of QED Silver Anniversary cable. I've now

got a bigger, more impressive sound with wider soundstaging, more detail and better separation, but vocals can sound harsh, grainy and somehow compressed. If there's a lot of sibilance on the recording this tends to get exaggerated, too. In fact, I find it painful and have started reverting to my yet-to-be-upgraded Technics SL-PG520A CD player, which handles vocals more politely.

Okay - the 'speakers aren't yet properly run in, and the amp and phonostage are only a fortnight old, but if youth were the problem then CD would sound similarly ropey too, wouldn't it? So is it my ears? Having reached my forties I was expecting to be rounding off excessive treble all on my own, but the reverse seems to be happening! So what have I done wrong? Although I auditioned most of the kit before buying I never listened to the whole ensemble (and being offered a couple of good deals coloured my purchasing choices more than somewhat). Surely this lot should sound reasonably good in combination? Or is this a marriage of incompatibles? Tell me I can make it sound better without spending a shed-load of cash?

Finally, can you recommend a good second hand CD player for under five hundred quid?

Craig Harris
Manchester

Well, I was seventeen years old when CD reached Britain in 1983, and couldn't believe how shrill the damn thing sounded. I was amazed that nobody else into hi-fi (invariably older than me) seemed to realise, either. Eventually I put it down to my callow lugholes, and some twenty years later, the same players through the same systems sound more bearable. Maybe this is my ageing ears, but then again it could have been me sticking my head down a PA stack at that Motorhead concert in 1984! Anyway, down to business.

Question - why didn't you hear the system together before you bought it? To get it back on song I'm afraid you're going to spend even more, so it was a false economy.

First, I doubt if your Arcam A85 is comprehensively better than your QED, which had a far sweeter (albeit less powerful) sound. Second, the Rotel phono stage is now thoroughly outclassed by the likes of Creek's

OBH-8SE, which is smoother and more musical. Third, the MC15 has rather clinical tonality - a Dynavec DV10x4 would have worked far better in this context. Fourth, the standard RB300 can be a bit stark in the midband in some installations. From this we can surmise that you've got a poorly matched system.

Answers? A multi-pronged attack is the order of the day. First, get your Rega modded with the OL counter-weight stub. This will give a smoother, sweeter midband with a bigger, more fulsome bass. Second, change your phonostage for a Creek. Then when funds permit, go the whole hog and get a Dynavec DV-20XH (£299) high output MC, which should really get your deck singing. A Base SP-01 (£60) sub-table should add weight to your bass and smooth the midband out still further. Finally, clean all the parts of your deck that come into contact with the belt (i.e. pulley and inner platter) with isopropyl alcohol. A Ringmat would also help, but ultimately I'd bite the bullet and go for a new (Michell GyroDec SE) turntable before you spend too much

money on your deck. Cheapo second-hand CD player?

A Marantz CD63KIS would give you £250 change from your £500 to put to your turntable, and bring a nice, sweet, musicality to silver discs. **DP**

►► HOTCH POTCH HOP SCOTCH

I love the way your magazine is more than just a collection of reviews and does not leave those of us with slightly ageing but mostly faithful equipment out in the cold. I have a problem about spending about £250 at the most, rather than thousands, but I feel part of the same community as you and your contributors.

My dilemma for some time has been whether to upgrade my amplifier or my CD player to deal with the problem of rather glacial CD sound, particularly with modern digital recordings. My set up consists of the original Marantz CD63 (with Musical Fidelity X-ACT DAC and Musical Fidelity valve line stage X10D), the Pioneer A400X amplifier and Sony SS-176E speakers. Other sources are a Rega

Planar 3 with Bias cartridge, a Sony TC RX70ES cassette deck, a Kenwood KT 660L tuner, a Goodmans VN6000 Nicam video (frequently used for recording FM radio as well as TV) and a Sony TC-266 half track reel-to-reel machine only used in playback mode with the 400 odd 7" tapes I acquired from the estate of a BBC engineer! Please don't ask me when my eight track is arriving. . .

The problem is that everything works fine with the exception of CD, which as you can see I have taken the greatest trouble over, with the two Musical Fidelity add-on units. I should add that the problem is worse without the extra units. As now constituted the sound can be quite impressive with acoustic instruments or chamber or "naturally" recorded material from Naxos, but with prestige modern digitals from DG or EMI the orchestral tuttis can sound very edgy and uncomfortable. Studying various old reviews it seems that the Pioneer, although highly regarded, is felt to sound hard on top and CD63 reviews suggest something similar. So have I just brought together two pieces of equipment that were

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Art Audio Diavolo 300B SE - black and gold - v tidy, v young.	£3000	£4000
Art Audio VP1 Line pre-amp	£600	£1400
SJS Model 1 pre-amp. Serious - rare.	£700	-
SJS Model 2 pre-amp. More serious - more rare.	£1400	-
Cary 5500 line pre-amp	£400	-
Cary CA2A3 power amp	£550	-
Art Audio Concerto - triode coupled 6550 power amp - spotless	£1500	£2500
Audio Innovations Series 500 and 700 int. amps classics.	£500 / £600	
Michell Orbe Full 4.5 years old, SME armplate, AC PSU, Papst motor QC	£1275	£2100
Michell Orbe Full, 1 year old	£1600	£2100
Michell Orbe SE V nearly new.	£1600	£1995
Wadia 860x battleship CD player - serious.	£4950	£7800
Living Voice Airscout mk2 - very rare opportunity - moving into airing cupboard forces sale. Smokin'	£9500	£19500
Celestion A2 rosewood - absolutely spotless - boxed.	£900	£1600
Linn Keilidh - passive. Brown speaker.	£400	£750
Mirage M890i Canadian floorstander.	£450	-
Snell Type JII two pairs with high mass stands - classic. each -	£500	-
Ortofon MC7500 20hours use - fabulous opportunity.	£1500	£2000
AudioNote DAC5 with 2x Border Patrol MB PSUs.	£10500	£20500
Musical Fidelity NuVista CD player.	£2000	£3000

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never meant to be bedfellows even with the two Musical Fidelity "pillows" in between. The part of the Pioneer that is supposed to be a problem - the phono stage - has not proved to be so, at least with an MM cartridge. I did try it once with an MC (Sumiko BluePoint) and was disappointed.

My original plan was to change the amplifier but I cannot find an obvious replacement without paying £500+ (an Audio Analogue Puccini for instance). Secondhand Audiolab 8000As are fairly common but they too have a reputation for hardness in some quarters. I have also seen a cleanish second-hand Musical Fidelity B2 but know nothing of this amplifier, which looks like a later version of the A1. However, it may be better to replace the CD player until the money for a Puccini is available, as there is so much that the A400X does well.

The Cambridge 4SE, which regularly appears in "World Favourites", suggests itself, or perhaps other models from the same stable. Would an Arcam Alpha machine be worth looking out for? Are there other models I should consider that would pair well with the Pioneer? Also, whatever I buy, is it likely to work best straight or using my Musical Fidelity units?

**Richard Thomas,
Leics.**

Wow. One step at a time, Richard! That's a real HFV classic, stir-fry system you've got there. But sometimes whilst looking like an explosion in a Lasky's warehouse (RIP), they can sound pretty cohesive and musical, often by mere pot luck.

Right, where do I start? At the source, of course. I know the DG feeling well. One of my favourite readings of Bruckner's ethereal seventh symphony is a mid-seventies analogue DG recording. On CD it sounds as if someone has hung two wet blankets over the 'speakers - but I still play it as it has a certain something, musically, over the competition. Their early digital efforts are even worse. The latest DG recordings are a vast improvement on these early digital nightmares of the eighties, with their frighteningly edgy violins and compressed and glassy sound, but they're not all perfect. I've heard some great ones and some howlers. It all depends on where it was recorded, who recorded it and, to an extent, which

orchestra, conductor, etc. Remember bands such as American orchestras are decidedly 'brighter' sounding than their European (especially Austro/Germanic) counterparts.

Finding a CD player to meet the criteria you require at budget level is difficult, if not impossible. Generally, players up to £400 or so sound brighter and harder than their more expensive cousins. There are a few smoothies hiding among the ranks, though. Look to new products from NAD and Marantz. The new £220 C52 Ii is an involving and sweet player with all the classic NAD traits such as a fairly neutral and forward sound but doesn't sting like many others at the price. Further up the price scale at £300 there is the slightly long winded Marantz CD6000 OSE LE (Original Special Edition, Limited Edition!!). Whilst not being the most chocolatey smooth player around, it has a well balanced quality that belies its price tag.

Sony have some exciting and well detailed players under £300, such as the CDP-XB740E, but you may find this a little too hard with your dreaded DG recordings. The ideal is the Rega Planet, a very analogue sounding player, which at £498 is presumably over budget. Look out for a second hand Planet if possible.

As for amplifiers, you're on the right track with the Audio Analogue Puccini. This will give a less immediate and more subtle sound than the Pioneer. It may not have the ultimate clout but is better suited to classical music for my money. **SP ■**

► ROUND AND ROUND WE GO

Hi-Fi World is a great mag - I like the balance between the subjective review and the instrumented analysis, even if they don't always seem to agree!

My turntable is a Thorens TD150MkII that I picked up last year for £10 in a record shop. I like the sound of it, but the tonearm has obviously not worn well over the years and there is clear friction in the bearing that is preventing it from tracking smoothly across the record. This is so bad that I have stopped using the bias weight; on my test record the arm swings outwards initially on the blank parts of the record, before stopping.

I have seen many good arms on eBay for reasonable money, but I do not

have the kit to set up the suspension for a new arm.

My first question is - how much should I expect to pay for this service (suspension set-up)? I have been quoted a mindboggling £150 for this - because I am just a student, this makes up a significant percentage of my entire system!

Secondly, what arm would you recommend with this deck? And thirdly, why are DC brushless motors considered to be superior to inductive AC motors in the hi-fi community? The rest of my system comprises a Grado Prestige Blue, running into the Pro-Ject Phono Box. My amplifier is a Marantz PM-57, driving a pair of ageing Celestion Ditton 44s.

Des Weller

Hi Des, thanks for reading - and yes, if you read every last dot and comma of the mag you're bound to find contradictions, but please remember these are reviewers' individual opinions, and written in specific contexts too.

As for your Thorens, you can of course get it rebuilt, fit a new arm, etc., but the cheapest way to get good sound in the short term would be to buy a second-hand Rega Planar 3 for around £95 (if you look hard). The Thorens is ultimately more capable, but needs a lot of fettling and a decent arm (such as an OL modded Rega RB250) which would cost this much anyway. If it's a quick fix for the least amount of cash you want, get a Rega! By the way, any decent dealer should be able to strip and rebuild a deck for around £50 - in fact you can probably do it yourself if you've ever had a Meccano kit as a kid.

There are several reasons for going DC. First, they don't transmit 50Hz mains noise. As our mains supply is notoriously full of mush, any rubbish going into an AC motor will come out the other side and be fed into the record as it turns, manifesting itself as a blurring of bass notes and coloration further up the frequency spectrum. Second, they don't suffer from the 'cogging' effects of AC synchronous motors, giving a more stable speed (in theory). Third, the AC motors used in most turntables tend to be a variation of the Philips/Impex 24-pole type, which is a cheap, nasty, weedy and noisy little thing - and anything (in my opinion) is better than this! **DP ■**

A MOVEAB

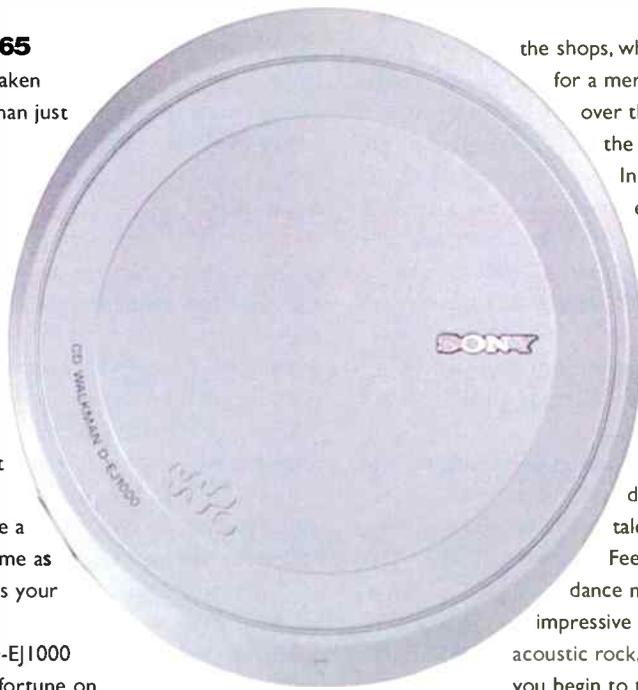
Summer's here and the time is right for dancing in the street. But first, sit down and find out what we recommend for the purpose!

SONY D-EJ1000 £165

In Japan, portable audio is taken incredibly seriously. More than just the province of kids and students, vast numbers of Nipponese commuters fire up their trusty Walkman, Discman, MP3 player or MiniDisc twice a day. Trains, you see, are the normal way to get to work (because they run on time, and the nation's network of toll roads aren't the easiest to traverse). To wit, everyone seems to have a walkie, and so they've become as much a fashion statement as your tie, watch or handbag.

This is where Sony's D-EJ1000 fits - in a land that built its fortune on miniaturisation, a country where 'less' really is 'more'. This is the smallest, lightest, slimmest and sleekest CD portable around. Indeed, Sony has rather a tradition of this kind of thing - it was the first company to launch a CD Discman, and very soon introduced a 'top of the range model' which it has assiduously updated and refined over the past decade. Weighing just 129g and measuring a mere 13.2mm deep, the '1000 is the ultimate 'little big man'!

This Japanese built machine's charms are more than just vital statistics, though. Its top plate is cast from silver painted magnesium, making it exquisite to the touch. (The lower section is merely metalised plastic dressed up to look like the top!) The unit comes with Sony's top stick remote, complete with a beautifully crisp, alphanumeric backlit LC display that even shows CD Text. There's also a Palm Pilot-style base unit that functions as both a stand for your beautifully crafted portable and a charger too. Neat. Up to 115 hours of battery life is claimed - not bad



considering the first Sony Discman gave six hours from four alkaline AA cells! The usual 'G-Protection' is provided, which resisted all my attempts to upset it. It also boasts CD-R/RW playability, but most Sonys for the past five years have performed this feat without so much as a word.

The player's controls are mostly available from the remote, but are also neatly dotted around its circumference. They're a pain to use, so Sony presumably expect you'll stay with the stick. The headphone socket is separate from the line out, which also functions as an optical digital out. Be warned that this isn't a standard TOSLINK connector, so you'll have to buy a special Sony cable if you want to plug it into your hi-fi. Still, it's a great feature if you have a portable MD recorder - two tiny units will take care of all your playing and recording needs. The pack also contains the two required rechargeables, a half decent set of in-ear phones and a neat carrying case.

This unit costs around £165 in

the shops, which is a lot of money for a mere CD portable. Is it over three times better than the £50 Aiwa in this group?

In terms of design and ergonomics - yes - but certainly not if sound quality is your major criterion. It's undoubtedly tighter and more rhythmic than both the Aiwa and top Sony Discmen of yore - but that doesn't tell the whole tale.

Feed it some high energy dance music and this is an impressive machine, but switch to acoustic rock, jazz or classical and you begin to think it's very dry and barren sounding. Tonally there's less 'light and shade' than either the Aiwa or the Panasonic. It's detailed alright, with fast transients and a decent dynamic ability too, but there's little sense of the tonality or 'colour' of the original recording. That said, all else is fine. Bass is even and tight, midband clean and smooth, and treble crisp and well described with no splash or undue brightness. It's a satisfyingly mature and civilised listen - and as such unlike a great many lesser CD portables - but not a real music maker.

Make no mistake, this is a lovely thing to have - and is doubtless desirable for the most stylish commuters on the Yamanote line - but it's not a major sonic advance on the Aiwa which costs under one third of its price. With this in mind, you'll have to draw your own conclusions about its value for money - or lack thereof.

Sony UK
Tel: 01932 816000
www.sony.co.uk

World Verdict

SONY D-EJ1000

Expensive but highly desirable. The best quality CD portable around if you wish to shell out.

LE FEAST

AIWA XP-V731 £50

Unlike either the Sony or Panasonic, this Aiwa will win no awards for style or construction quality. It is not a piece of inspired industrial design, an extension of your trendy 'high tech' lifestyle or something to pull out of your pocket and place casually on a table at a svelte wine bar. No, it's plastic, costs £49.99 and you'll probably find it in the Argos catalogue this Christmas.

All the more surprise then that the catchily named XP-V731 isn't half bad sounding at all. In fact - shock horror - in some respects, it's the best of the group. Which isn't to say that it's transcendently splendid, but rather that the others here have had all the extra cost of their purchase price spent on slinky designer bits and pieces (backlit remotes, cool plastic cases, base units, etc) and not on audio electronics.

This is a fairly small (little wider than the diameter of a Compact Disc) and slim (22mm) CD portable, or it is until you take a look at the Sony or of course the Panasonic. It's made in China, from Ford Escort dashboard-grade plastic, which has had a thin layer of silver paint applied that will doubtless start wearing off as soon as you take it on the road. The buttons are cheapo shiny plastic too, and the display - despite being decently comprehensive (it will show track number and time together, for example) - is hardly as crisp as the others here.

It has a range of features, ranging from 'Jog Beat' (which generates rhythmic tones to pace your exercises!) to 48 second anti shock (which works well), a handy timer switch off, a claimed 41 hour battery life from two AA cells and 'DSL Dynamic Super Bass' (go figure). There's an AC adapter supplied as standard, and standard AA rechargeables can be used if you wish, but aren't supplied. The single 3.5mm headphone socket is

controlled by an electronic volume control which on its maximum setting makes it a 'line out'. All in all, it's a classic value for money package, with most features you could reasonably want.

The remarkable thing about the Aiwa is its sound quality, or rather the fact that it won't peel paint off your walls or smash your patio doors - despite its low, low price. No, it is not a Linn CD12 - nor will it ever be - but neither is it so terminally nasty and unbearable that you'll be reaching for the Panadol. It's clean, smooth and has no obvious nasties - its sins are those of omission rather than addition. To wit, you can cue up a CD and get more than a passing hint of what was originally encoded onto it.

Indeed, it showed itself to have a wider tonal palette than both the Sony and the Panasonic, and made a fair stab at conveying the texture of the strings on the 4Hero track, and the grain of the singer's voice. Despite the decently wide and detailed midband, the frequency extremes were a little less impressive.

Nothing was really amiss in the treble, it's just that hi-hats were slightly splashy and loose. Bass was weaker and less well articulated than the others here, lacking any real clout. Considering the unit's 'line out' volume was a little down on the Sony, this could be a symptom of a rather anaemic analogue output stage.

Overall, the Aiwa is brilliant at the price. Decent sound, a sensible range of facilities and reasonable ergonomics mean you simply can't go wrong. And, as you carry it around through the hustle and bustle of daily life, you needn't worry about damaging or scratching it either, simply because it's so cheap to replace. Genuinely excellent value for money.

Aiwa UK
Tel: 0870 168 9000
www.aiwa.co.uk



World Verdict



AIWA XP-V731 £50

Not quite top of the sonic pile but excellent value for money.

◀ **PANASONIC SV-SD80 £200**

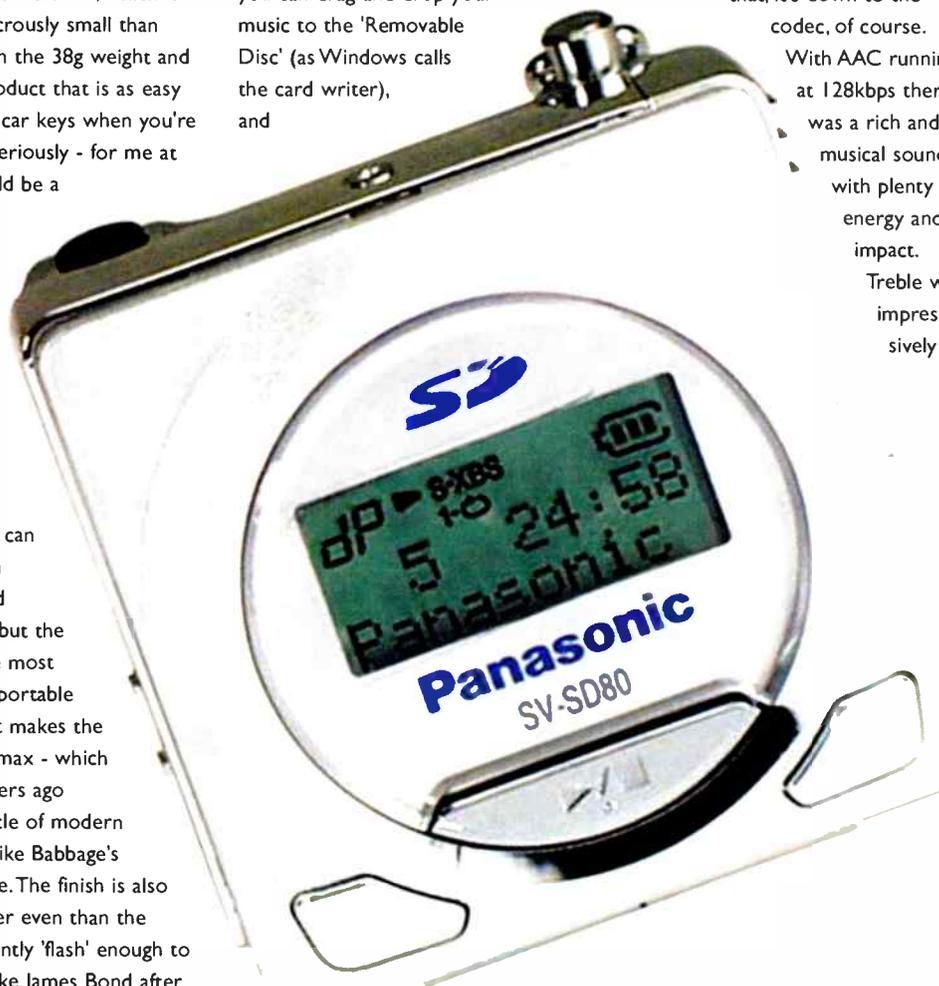
Is it really four years since Panasonic's first SD Card-based AAC portable hit the shops in Japan? I was over there during France 98, and remember gasping in admiration when I say my first one. The £200 SD80 you see here is some three generations later on, and frankly looks and feels it, too. Whereas the original '70 measured 50.8x49.2x15mm - the latest is a trifling 42.2x41.6x15.8mm, which is even more ludicrously small than before. Factor in the 38g weight and you've got a product that is as easy to lose as your car keys when you're late for work. Seriously - for me at least - this would be a real issue that would deter me from buying one.

The obverse of this, of course, is its inconspicuousness. Nice as the Sony Discman is, you can hardly stick it in your pocket and forget about it, but the Panasonic is the most 'stealthy' audio portable I've ever seen. It makes the dinky Vivanco Vmax - which only two summers ago seemed a 'miracle of modern science' - look like Babbage's Analytical Engine. The finish is also exquisite - better even than the Sony. It's sufficiently 'flash' enough to make you feel like James Bond after an hour with Q. Play/pause, track skip and volume buttons are all you get, but also all you need.

You get more accessories than even the Sony - there's a protective carrying case, neck strap, armband for wearing the unit like a watch, docking station for recharging the internal battery, USB SD card reader/writer, in-ear phones (not bad sounding) and a set-up CD complete with USB driver for the card writer and a custom version of RealJukebox. Finally, there's a 64MB SD card, which gives a good two hours of music using the impressively compact AAC coding format.

Getting going is like a putting a puzzle together - you have to install

the battery, place it in the docking station, plug in the AC adapter and wait for the red 'charge' light to appear. Then you plug the USB lead into your computer at one end, and the card reader at the other. Then insert the CD ROM into your PC, the card into the reader, and let the install program guide you. This done, RealJukebox will let you rip new AAC files from your PC's CD-ROM drive, or convert existing MP3 files. Then you can drag and drop your music to the 'Removable Disc' (as Windows calls the card writer), and



then unplug the card and insert it into the Panasonic player - and go! Frankly, using the most fiddly CD portable in the world is a doddle compared to all this, but I guess you get used to it.

Still, suitably hooked up to some headphones and taken out and about, this thing is peerless. Panasonic has even gone to great trouble about its power provisions. A small, rectangular nickel-metal-hydride rechargeable battery is supplied that gives around 18 hours of playback, but the player's protective case has a slot for an additional AA battery which together gives nearly 50 hours. There's a mode switch on the side, which gives access

to four equaliser presets, but it's fiddly. The tiny alphanumeric display isn't easy to read either, and it's a shame it isn't backlit. My final gripe is the RealJukebox software, which is far less intuitive to use than, say, Windows Media Player 7.

For a tiddler, the SD-SV80 sounds mightily impressive. It has an excellent analogue audio stage, giving a clean and punchy sound with

decent grip and dynamics. After that, it's down to the codec, of course.

With AAC running at 128kbps there was a rich and musical sound, with plenty of energy and impact.

Treble was impressively

sweet and clean, and bass quite warm and full - I was actually impressed by this unit's musicality running compressed audio, compared to the rather clinical Sony running 'raw PCM'. Overall then, a deeply satisfying bit of kit to use, if you can be bothered with all the file transferring and conversion you'll need to get your player going. It's also a stunning thing to behold, and will impress and amaze. If a 'digital audio portable' is for you, this is as cool as they come.

World Verdict



PANASONIC SV-SD80 £200

Very cool and stylish with decent sound but a bit of a drag when it comes to practicalities.

Panasonic UK
Tel: 08705 357357
www.panasonic.co.uk

SONY MZ-N1 £240

Touted as "the brand new technology that will revolutionise the use of MiniDisc". NET MD is the largest single development of a format that's now reached its tenth birthday. It's all about integrating the format with computers - which is where Sony perceives the portables market going. It's been done before, not least in the company's range of home-market VAIO PCs and the MDS-PC1 (and its descendants) hi-fi separate, but NetMD is said to take things onto a higher level.

and the MZ-N707), boasting the obligatory magnesium body and kitchen sink-length feature list. It's a beautiful thing to behold - nice and sleek at 78.7x71.8x16.9mm, and light at 117g including battery - but I can't help thinking that earlier generation machines like the MZR 900 look nicer. The box contains the unit itself, the USB cradle, a rechargeable NiMH battery, an external AA battery case, stick remote control, in-ear phones, AC adapter, USB cable and carrying pouch. Also included is a CD-ROM with the OpenMG software (Windows 98, 98SE, 2000/XP and ME compatible). The USB cradle doubles as a charger, which in turn gives around 79 hours playback time from the supplied NiMH rechargeable and single AA cell. Charging time is around three and a half hours.



A brand new application interface that connects MiniDisc players to PCs via their Universal Serial Bus (USB) connectors, central to its ethos is - wait for it - copyright protection. 'Approved' music files can be transferred to (and from) the MZ-N1 at higher speeds - up to 1.8x for standard play mode and 16x for LP2 or 32x for LP4 Long Play modes. Music can also come from online NetMD-compliant electronic music distribution services. The player also recognises existing ATRAC and ATRAC3 audio codecs, so NetMD recordings can also be played on existing MiniDisc machines.

The £240 MZ-N1 is the flagship model in the new NetMD Walkman range (also including the MZ-N505

Despite the bewildering array of facilities, it's easy enough to use. The software installs easily and offers powerful 'playlisting' facilities, akin to a CD jukebox. The 'Group' function helps you keep track of up to 320 minutes of music, by letting you store a vast number of tracks in easily identifiable 'directories' by artist, album, genre, etc. There's a three line alphanumeric display which thoughtfully includes separate left and right level meters, along with the one incorporated into Sony's familiar stick remote. There's a jog-dial to help negotiate the player's menu system

and smooth operation still further - last seen on the old R50 until the MZR-909 reinstated it last year.

This portable is as slick as they come to use then, but what of the sound? Interestingly, I got the best results from real time recordings in the SP (Standard Play) mode. Cleaner and more involving than music transfers made from my PC using the OpenMG Jukebox software, I found this was down to the different codecs being used. It seems that ATRAC DSP Type-R is used for 'conventional' SP recordings (at 292kbps), but not for high speed computer 'ripping'. To further confuse matters, in LP2 (132kbps) and LP4 (66kbps) modes, ATRAC3 (a la Sony's Memory Stick Walkman) is employed! Confusing, no? ATRAC DSP Type-R is Sony's 'flagship' audiophile MD codec, claiming twice the signal processing power of previous versions of ATRAC, with specific improvements at higher frequencies.

Providing you stick to the traditional style of recording, then, you get a very bouncy and enjoyable sound which is more polished in some respects than any other player here. Bass is strong and lithe, treble crisp and midband very vital and dynamic. By contrast, 'ripped' CDs sounded a tad dull and clinical, lacking the bounce and clarity of the 'recordings'.

However, past experience suggests that even using DSP Type-R, rival Sharp units will sound fuller and more musical still.

Sonics aside, my only criticism is the Sony's slightly flimsy feel - it's very light and well finished, but doesn't feel as robust as the older, aluminium bodied designs. The battery door, for example, doesn't feel it's sturdy enough for the rigours of the road. Overall though, it's a brilliantly packaged little product, offering incredible sophistication in a tiny package. MiniDisc fans will love it, but whether it will win new converts to the venerable format, I'm not so sure. ■ ▲

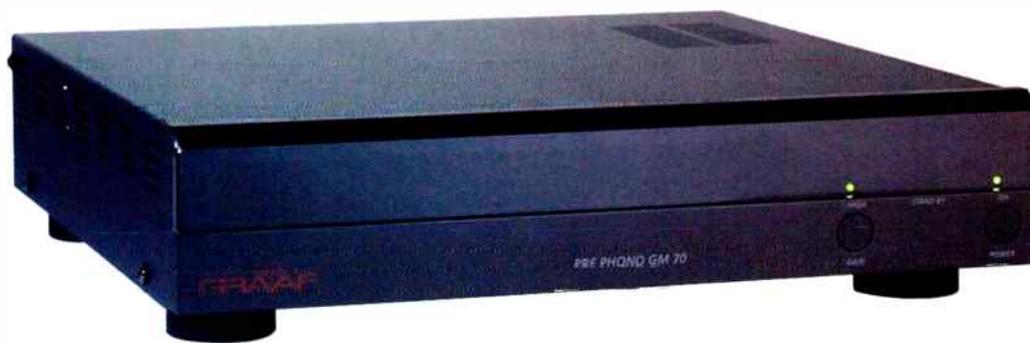
Sony UK
Tel: 01932 816000
www.sony.co.uk

World Verdict



SONY MZ-N1
Smart, compact bit of kit but just fails to excite when it comes to sonics.

BOY FOR THE BLACK STUFF



High end valve amps don't get much slicker than GRAAF's stylish designs. We listen to the GM 70, their brand new all valve phono stage.

Modena in northern Italy has two musical claims to fame. One is that it's the birth place of a certain Luciano Pavarotti, the other being the fact the tubular high end experts, GRAAF are based there. Founded in 1985 GRAAF (Gruppo Ricerche Audio Alta Fedelta) was the brainchild of a few high-end audiophiles one of whom was Giovanni Mariani, company partner and valve amp designer. The result is a range of high-end

amplifiers renowned for their sweetness and style, the 200W GM 200 output transformerless power amplifier being their top dog.

The £2,000 GM 70 reviewed here features a full-size, black aluminium chassis, combined with transparent tinted front plate for a full, cool stylistic effect. When powered up you'll spot, through the fascia, the glow of two pairs of PC900 tubes in the input stage and another two pairs of 6922 valves in the gain

and outputs stage. RIAA e.q. is made by a completely passive network located after the gain stage and there is separate filtering for this stage, plus the RIAA and output stages.

The GM 70 is a switchable moving magnet/moving coil design. MM/MC selection is executed by use of one of the two snazzy piezoelectric switches (labelled 'high gain') located on the front with a slick skim of the finger, the other switch being for standby/on.

Round the back there is a power switch, a six position knob for various input loads and two sets of analogue inputs, plus one output. The second pair of inputs is for those who require a custom load of the exact value.

Sonically the GM 70 is a honey. It's sweet and light sounding in the best tradition of the audio valve without lacking body or depth. Put on an open sounding recording such as the Sugarcubes's "Birthday" and you'll be amazed at the sheer space and light present. Drums were extremely realistic and clean and Bjork's squeaky vocals were super clear, with great presence. This open aspect to the GM 70 highlighted a



deep soundstage that stretched right back to the rear of the room - very impressive. Moving on to Grieg's Peer Gynt Suite No.1 on a very fine old Decca recording with the London Symphony Orchestra, the GRAAF made much of instrumental colour and timbre. The bass drum had beautiful depth and realism, woodwind sounded nicely open and strings very sweet. Indeed, the overall orchestral sound was beautifully lucid and spacious.

A wide selection of records, of varying musical styles and contrasting recording quality all came up trumps, but suffice to say, the better and more open the recording, the better the GM 70 sang.

Valve phono stages are the best way of gleaning detail from your vinyl, and the GRAAF GM 70 is one of the most neutral and natural sounding I've come across. It isn't as full or forward sounding as some rivals but



The GM 70 uses PC900 valves in the input stage and 6922 valves for the gain and output stage

what it lacks in ultimate presence it makes up for in its flawless detail retrieval, imaging and beautifully smooth treble. As far as value for money goes, £2,500 isn't cheap for a phono stage but if you have the money and you treasure your vinyl

the GM 70 is one of the finest phono stages on the market. It has an unmistakably sweet high-end sound that's incredibly musical and easy to live with. Expensive, but highly recommended. ■ ▲

Graaf GM 70 £2,500



UKD
23 Richings Way
Iver, Bucks
Slough, SL0 9DA
Tel: 01753 652669
www.ukd.co.uk

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

The Graaf valve phono stage has two gain settings, measuring x200 for MM and x600 for MC. The first figure is on the high side, but since MMs peak at around 5mV from the average disc my measurements show, the unit will give 1V out max, which is within its output limit of 6V.

The x600 figure for MC is a good median value, although very low output designs from Linn, for example, need more ideally, up to x1000 or thereabouts. The Graaf is best used with high output MCs, like Ortofons.

Distortion was low enough up to 1V out but it did start to rise above this figure, so the Graaf is best not pushed too hard. Frequency response measured flat right down to 5Hz. There's no IEC warp filter below 40Hz to prevent cone flap in

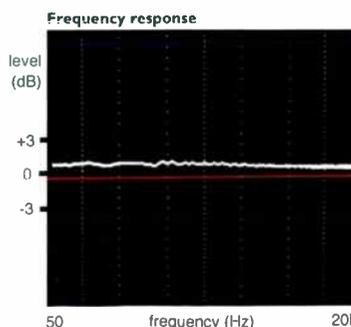
reflex loudspeakers, so warped records may be problematical. There will be plenty of good, deep bass though, since this unit followed the 3180uS LF time constant better than most. Our response analysis clearly shows there's no shortage of low frequency gain.

Equivalent input noise (output noise / gain) was a respectable 0.35uV (IEC A wtd.). This is fine for MMs and OK for high output MCs, although some hiss will be audible. It is too high for low output MCs though; where hiss will be audible.

The Graaf measured well in all areas. Good valve phono stages can be dramatically different from solid-state and I suspect the Graaf is a product well worth hearing. **NK**

Frequency response 5Hz-30kHz

Separation	81dB
Distortion	0.02%
Gain	
MM	x200, 46dB
MC	x600, 56dB
Overload	
MM	30mV, 6V out
MC	10mV, 6V out
Noise (input noise. IEC A)	
MM	0.35uV
MC	0.35uV



World Verdict



Not cheap, but sonically as sweet as a nut. Open, warm and highly detailed.

JOIN TI

The latest version of KEF's Uni-Q drive unit finds its way into the midprice market with the Q1. Dominic Todd listens to the entry level model in the new Q Series.

KEF's Uni-Q drive unit places the tweeter at the centre of the woofer cone. The benefits of this are noticeably superior imaging and a more 'solid' sound stage. KEF Uni-Qs have been well received since first launched in 1988. They have been revised regularly to keep them up to date.

The company recently launched a new "Q" range. Baby of this range is the Q1, the model I review here. It features a newly developed aluminium dome tweeter within a fairly standard looking 165mm Polypropylene woofer. Interestingly KEF hasn't opted for a Kevlar or carbon-fibre mix for the woofer, despite such materials being popular amongst rivals.

The shape of the cabinet shows flair with strong tapering to the rear but, whilst the finish is fine, it's at £250 a pair it's a shame real wood veneer instead of vinyl couldn't have been used. The KEFs look appealing and do a better job of harmonising with typical domestic interiors than many of their rivals. Rivals who aren't exactly thin on the ground. The greatest threats probably come from the Mordaunt Short 902 Signature (£200), B&W 603 S3 (£250) and Mission 780 (£300). Of course, intriguing technology is all very well but it's worthless unless the sound quality is up to scratch.

With this in mind I hooked the KEFs up to my usual system and began by listening to The Pet Shop Boys' 'Birthday Boy'. From the outset it was quite clear that I was listening



to a coaxial design, and a well-engineered one at that. The sound staging was especially good for a 'speaker of this price, being particularly impressive in terms of the 'height' of sound. Furthermore, imaging was uncannily stable to the degree that vocals and instruments were always clearly defined within the stage. This wasn't solely due to the 'speakers' format, but also to fine integration between tweeter and woofer. Although the metal dome treble unit did add a slight sibilance to Lowe's vocals, generally the KEFs remained consistent and well behaved throughout their frequency range.

Perhaps as a consequence of such good manners, the bass response was just a little lightweight, but there was enough to underpin most types of music, including this pop. Also worthy of mention was the above average projection of sound away from the 'speakers and strong detail retrieval that gave electric guitar an especially convincing presence.

Jennifer Warne's 'The Panther' provided me with a beautifully

resolved vocal response. This was supported by an excellent guitar timbre. The whole effect was one of a very pleasant, open and transparent sound. Although the tweeter had previously appeared a little bright, here it was in its element, revealing subtle nuances of detail from the percussion that some of its rivals would leave untouched. Yet, despite the Q1s being so informative and detailed, they managed not to sound mechanical or stilted. In fact, the opposite was very much the case, with the recording providing a most beguiling listen, such was their cohesiveness of presentation.

Turning the wick up somewhat with Jeff Healey's 'My Life Story' showed off the KEF's excellent timing characteristics. Timing was no doubt helped by the lack of any truly deep bass, but such was the pace and vigour of the track that this wasn't to the detriment of the overall sound. Once again, vocals were extremely well projected beyond the rest of the mix, and the Q1's pulled off the trick of defining individual instruments

THE Q

whilst bonding the performers together. If I had one complaint, it was that piano did lack a little body, although it's fair to say that this can be quite a common problem in 'speakers of this price range.

The Q1 had fine tonal resolution; it was far from a 'grey sounding' loudspeaker. Plenty of colour and texture was given to both vocals and instruments alike.

Finzi's Eclogue for piano and strings proved surprising in some respects. It was presented in a mellifluous manner and ebbed and flowed with grace, yet it sounded curiously bland. The string tone in particular lacked a little bite although, in this case, piano timbre was fair. The scale of sound was only really hinted at and there was a slightly metallic edge to higher frequencies. Having said all that, the sound wasn't unpleasant to listen to and given the Q1's price, and the competition at this price, it would be unfair to expect too much from symphonic music.



KEF's perseverance with their coaxial Uni-Q drive technology seems to have paid off. In general the Q1s are a likeable 'speaker that show few unpleasant traits and work well with a wide variety of music. They do lack a little scale, and won't attempt to reach the sort of bass frequencies that some floorstanders of this price would have little trouble with. That metal dome tweeter could also just

occasionally betray its construction by sounding a little harsh at times.

Other than these small gripes though, the KEFs impress with their expansive sound staging, excellent detail retrieval and generally cohesive nature. They're the sort of 'speaker that one could live happily for many years with, knowing that their sonic characteristics won't become tiring after time. Furthermore, such is their transparency, they could withstand several upgrades from amplifier and source before they became out of their depth. Highly recommended. ■ ▲

KEF Q1 £250

KEF Audio Ltd
Tovil
Maidstone, Kent
ME15 6QP
Tel: 01622 672261
www.kef.com

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

The coaxial drivers in KEF's Uni-Q unit give a consistent radiation pattern, so they sound much the same wherever you are in the room, sitting or standing. The balance KEF have struck for the Q1 favours low frequencies, with highs falling away gently. This sort of characteristic gives a loudspeaker a full sound. There's a little peaking in the treble unit, a sign that it will likely display some characteristic metal dome brightness, and it may just be KEF have kept tweeter output down a bit to deflect attention from this. Since Uni-Q drivers usually sound quite lively and dynamic the Q1 should have punch.

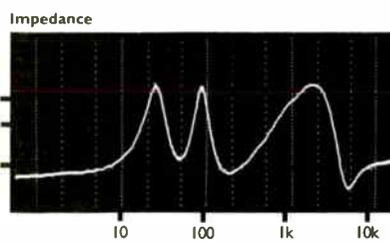
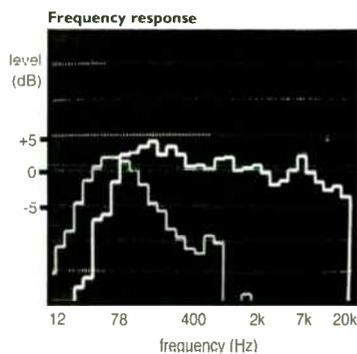
Bass output from the driver reaches down to 40Hz and below this the port takes over. It has a broad, well damped characteristic, making a contribution down to 30Hz

or so. The impedance curve shows it is symmetrically tuned for best damping of the bass driver. Kef use a 3.6ohm bass driver though and this does draw current – more so than most.

The impedance curve dips very low, to 3ohms in fact, and there's substantial reactance at 3kHz, where the rate of change of impedance is steep. An impedance dip corresponds with the response peak here, suggesting both could be alleviated by a little re-tuning. Voltage sensitivity was high at 88dB, but this is to be expected in view of the low overall impedance value of 5ohms.

The Q1 will likely sound full bodied and dynamic. There may be a little character to the treble. As a load it is demanding, magnifying differences between

amplifiers. It should be matched with care. **NK**



World Verdict



Superb sound quality with excellent detail that's easily up there with the best at the price.

UK SUBSCRIPTION £27

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SLOPING OFF

Nakamichi's golden age was its mid-seventies 'ski-slope' cassette deck period, from where the 600 came, reckons David Price.

Back in 1973 cassette was, lest we forget, a 'joke format' designed by Philips a decade earlier for dictation purposes. It's hard to understate the importance of this company to audio's great pantheon - the 1000 went in and 'scorched the earth', changing everything. Suddenly cassette was a credible, high fidelity music carrier, capable of mixing it with top open-reel decks of the day. The fact that it used tiny tape running at a measly one and seven eighth inches per second was mind boggling - how could Nakamichi squeeze a quart out of the proverbial pint pot? Accepted audio wisdom just couldn't have predicted it.

The 1000 was a three-head, dual capstan, two motor machine running Dolby B noise reduction and DNL (Dynamic Noise Limiting). This was impressive, but it didn't explain the stunning sound. The answer was the machine's supreme engineering depth - everything had been designed up to a performance level, rather than down to a price. The motors, transport and heads were all superb bespoke items that you simply couldn't find anywhere else - even an Aiwa OEM parts catalogue. This stunning bit of kit was partnered with the 700 Tri-Tracer, a downsized but only slightly sonically inferior machine offering Nakamichi sound to a few more buyers

In 1974, two new machines joined the fray. First was the 500 Dual Tracer, offering a two head transport for the first time, and the accompanying 550 'Versatile Cassette System' which was essentially a portable version and some say the first real 'Walkman'. The 500 was relatively short lived, for it was soon replaced by the 600 you see before you, which ushered in near-1000

levels of build and performance from a redesigned 2 head transport. A stylish new 'ski-slope' fascia - doubtless inspired by Mario Bellini's stunning Yamaha TC-800GL from 1974 - completed the picture. It was available in a choice of silver or black finished brushed aluminium and had an optional Perspex dust cover

The 600 cost £350, no small sum for any piece of hi-fi, let alone a cassette deck. As a gauge, a Linn LP12 would set you back around £294 at the time, so you can see this was no cheap machine. For such a princely sum however, you got absolutely mind-boggling, jaw-dropping performance. In the seventies, your average cassette deck struggled to stretch up to 11kHz with Ferric tape, and wow and flutter figures of 0.5% weren't unheard of - but the 600 offered 20Hz-20kHz and 0.09% (peak DIN weighted)! This was possible thanks to a superbly designed and made record/replay head and superbly aligned - albeit relatively simple - transport. The final link in the chain was superb audio electronics which were as crisp and clean as was possible to find in any tape machine.

The 600 is fully configurable for either Ferric (EX) or Chrome (SX) tape. Metal tape for cassette use had not been invented and Nakamichi wasn't a fan of Sony's new-fangled FerriChrome formulation. A built-in 400Hz test tone is provided, which in conjunction with separate left and right pots for recording level, bias and IM suppression (Nakamichi's proprietary intermodulation distortion suppression system) for



both EX and SX tape, lets you tailor the machine to the tape with great accuracy. No other rival design offered such adjustment, and the result was an incredibly convincing sound, even by today's standards.

Set up the 600 for TDK SA and you get a bright, powerful and lively sound which doesn't just impress in the hi-fi sense but also in terms of musicality. There's so much energy you wonder how cassette could ever sound so bad on other machines. Bass is taut and powerful, with real slam and drive. Midband is wide open, with stacks of detail and strong image. Treble is deliciously crisp and atmospheric. In 2002 it sounds great, but in 1975 it must have blown people's minds! To put it into context, it's a far more natural sounding, and higher resolution recorder than, say, Pioneer's perfectly good PD-R609 CD recorder!

These days you'll have to keep your eyes open for a 600, or its 600 II successor (from 1978-79, which adds a headphone socket to the formula). Still, you may be surprised by how inexpensive they are - this is because they're not the most prestigious of Naks (i.e. ZX-9, Dragon, CR-7E). You can pick them up for under £200 if you look hard. It's worth it though - no other deck offers the such a heady mix of brilliant sound and madcap seventies style. ■ ▲



stock clearance

Newcastle Continued

Norwich 01603 767605

Table listing audio equipment for Newcastle and Norwich, including items like Tannoy RC Centre Speaker, Arcam DVA CD92 CD Player, and various amplifiers and tuners.

Nottingham 0115 911 2121

Table listing audio equipment for Nottingham, including Acoustic Energy Aego 2 Loudspeakers and various CD players.

Oxford 01865 241773

Table listing audio equipment for Oxford, including Acoustic Energy Aespt 307 Centre Speaker and various amplifiers.

Peterborough 01733 897697

Table listing audio equipment for Peterborough, including Arcam DVA T51 Tuner and various CD players.

Plymouth 01752 226011

Table listing audio equipment for Plymouth, including Def Tech Pro 80 Speaker Package and various amplifiers.

Reading 0118 959 7768

Table listing audio equipment for Reading, including Acoustic Energy AE1 II Loudspeakers and various CD players.

Sheffield 0114 255 5861

Table listing audio equipment for Sheffield, including Arcam CD92 CD Player and various amplifiers.

Southampton 023 8033 7770

Table listing audio equipment for Southampton, including Acoustic Energy Aego 2 Sub Sat System and various amplifiers.

Southgate 020 8886 2777

Table listing audio equipment for Southgate, including Arcam Alpha One Amplifier and various CD players.

Table listing audio equipment for Swansea, including Pioneer A300R Precision Amplifier and various CD players.

Swansea 01792 465777

Table listing audio equipment for Swansea, including Arcam FMJ DT26 Digital Tuner and various amplifiers.

Watford 01923 213533

Table listing audio equipment for Watford, including Acoustic Energy Aego 2 Spkr Package and various CD players.

Brighton 01273 733338

Bromley 020 8290 1988

Croydon 020 8665 1203

Guildford 01483 536666

Sevenoaks 01732 459555

Tunbridge Wells 01892 531543

Witham 01376 501733

Table listing audio equipment for Brighton, Bromley, Croydon, Guildford, Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells, and Witham, including various amplifiers and CD players.

Large table listing audio equipment for various locations including Fujitsu PDS5002E 50 Plasma Screen, Jamo D6 SUR Surround Speakers, and many other items.

TEUTONIC

AudioValve from Germany specialise in beefy sounding valve amplifiers. Simon Pope grapples with the Avalon, their latest monobloc power house.



Think of Germany's contribution to hi-fi technology and perhaps

you'll come up with manufacturer's whose products are at the cutting edge of technological design, such as Burmester or T&A. These use battle-ship build quality to underline the German's prowess in engineering and combine it with that unmistakable German high-end sound - smooth and detailed, but with an intricacy and cool detachment that can leave some listeners cold.

The German audiophile circuit does, however, have a hardcore group of DIY and valve enthusiasts, even if they are somewhat overshadowed by the solid-state camp. Browse the magazine shelves at a German airport you will likely find a journal dedicated to all things DIY in audio, with the an editorial intro accompanied by a picture of the editor hacking away at a 'speaker cabinet or aiming a soldering iron at a biscuit tin with two 300Bs protruding from the lid!

With their strong engineering background it's odd then that few German valve designs make the headlines. Perhaps the most famous of them is AudioValve whose latest power amp monoblocs are featured here. All AudioValve products are designed by a certain Herr H. Becker (no relation to his Wimbledon-winning compatriot, I presume) and

feature fairly advanced and modern circuitry combined with the natural characteristics of the audio valve. Their products usually deliver a power output more akin to their solid-state colleagues and in this respect can be thought of as like a hybrid design, combining the best of both worlds - solid state power with valve sweetness.

The Avalon monobloc amps we have here are no exception to this power rule. They deliver a muscular claimed 75W from each amp which is no mean feat from a valve amp of their relatively humble size (w-d-h 210 x 320 x 220 mm). Weighing in at 15kg apiece these aren't exactly back breakers but neither are they of build quality attributable to Fisher Price. The one thing that doesn't exactly grab you is the styling. The gold lettering and red plastic switches aren't exactly going to win any design awards but at least you can say it's unique! The chassis is constructed from 4mm laser cut steel and plastic in the company's individual 'double decker' design, with the double PCB layout and valve configuration under the tinted plastic top plate for all to see.

The Avalons, like all other AudioValve products, feature

automatic bias regulators (i.e. autobias) to ensure uniform current flow and match all the valves used. These amps are a more powerful addition to the line up of monoblocs in their PPP30 and 45 Series. Using eight EL34 valves and one ECC82 and 883 the Avalon, like all AudioValve power amps, uses a parallel push-pull circuit. Round the back there are 'speaker outputs for both 4 and 8ohm loads.

Those familiar with the sonic traits of valve amplifiers may get something of a shock at first listen to the Avalon. Switching from our own 32W EL34 push pull design to the AudioValves was a real eye (or rather, ear) opener. The Avalon has an unmistakable touch of the solid-state sound to it. I was immediately hit by the visceral, muscular quality of the sound. It has weight and power in abundance and a speed which belies the ten valves glowing atop of the chassis. This is certainly no single-ended purist design sound. The emphasis here is on immediacy and power as opposed to ultimate transparency and instrumental timbre.

Radiohead's 'Insomniac' on 10" vinyl highlighted the forwardness of the sound. In the excellent 'Pyramid

TONIC

Song' Thom Yorke's plaintive vocals were well placed between the 91dB Living Voice Avatar 'speakers, and the piano had excellent body and presence. As the drum kit joined the mix an added oomph of bass extension was felt and the sound oozed weight and clout. Paul Weller's Stanley Road on CD had the Avalons dredging the depths of the low frequencies to come up with some powerful and gripping rhythmic traits. These amps know how to deliver a beat.

You'd have guessed by now that traditional valve characteristics are not to the forefront of the Avalon's arsenal but that's not to say they don't exist. OK, so don't expect the same variety of timbres and colours that you'd achieve with a 7W single ended but there's a little more here than to be found with your average 100W solid state. In the Paul Weller disc there was a deep and realistic sound stage that's found with good valve designs. Instruments were also well placed in the mix and layers of sound were easily discernable. Where the Avalons are a bit lacking is in the midrange. Good valve amps open up the midrange to create a natural and rounded sound. The Avalons are a bit rougher around the edges than I'd

expect from a valve amp, creating a hardness when pushed that also crossed over into the treble, despite the EL34 being renowned for its sweetness. This also restricts the openness of the sound with good acoustic and classical recordings. André Previn's Teldec recording of Strauss's Alpine Symphony with the Vienna Philharmonic is a fine, transparent reading but failed to open up here as well as it could. Very good when compared to a solid-state sound, however, but in comparison to other valve amps a little thin and closed in. This said, most other pure valve design can't quite match the clout and pace that the Avalons have, or the dynamics for that matter.

If you're looking to move from solid-state to valve but don't wish to lose rhythmic grip or bass extension, for example, they may be an appropriate choice. If you want that pure open midrange and valve transparency though, you won't find it here. A high quality 20W with those traits partnered with a good, sensitive pair of floorstanders would be better.

Think of the Avalon as a solid stater with a warmish tint, though, and you're nearer the mark. Worth a listen if not quite top of the pile. ■ ▲



Audiovalve Avalon £2,195

Wollaton Audio
134 Parkside
Nottingham NG8 2NP
Tel: 0115 852 3858
www.audiovalve.de

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

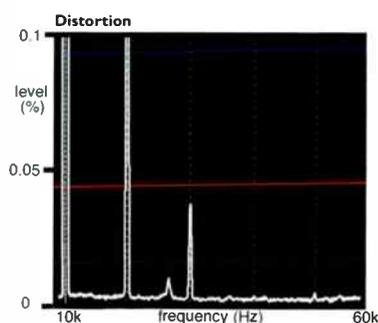
This amplifier produced surprising amounts of power in the midband – no less than 55W before obvious waveform peak clipping set in. However, the spectrum analyzer clearly showed distortion rising progressively from 12W (0.7% thd) or so, with an extended harmonic structure – an unusual pattern for valves, and not a particularly good one. At high frequencies levels were twice that of the midband, but the real problem lay at low frequencies. The output transformer could manage just 3W before the 1% distortion threshold was reached and

levels rocketed above this. Whilst such behaviour isn't uncommon in valve amps - especially vintage designs - it is unnecessary. A better transformer would likely give this amplifier a more usable and realistic power bandwidth for audio purposes.

There was 4mV of hum on the output, where less than 2mV is needed. Frequency response was an acceptable 16Hz-22kHz

The Audio Valve will go loud, but it will likely sound congested and perhaps a little coarse. It really could be better. **NK**

Power	55watts
Frequency response	16Hz-22kHz
Noise	-89dB
Distortion	0.2%
Sensitivity	840mV



World Verdict



Good power, rhythmic muscle and bass extension for a valve amp but not the last word in warmth or transparency.

PROBABLY THE BEST

NEW DEMONSTRATION ROOM NOW OPEN AT 12A SPRING GARDENS, NEWPORT PAGNELL,

KIT6550 VALVE INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER KIT & KAT6550 VALVE POWER AMPLIFIER KIT

£595



KIT6550
upgrade kit now
available £130

NEW KITS

£580



KAT6550
upgrade kit now
available £120

These are our new 6550 series amplifiers. A pure class A design providing 40 watts into a 8 ohm load. (available in a 4 ohm version if required) A truly high end design by Andy Grove, using Svetlana 6550Cs in push-pull (any 6550 or KT88 tube can be used with this amp). It features valve rectification (5U4) a choke pi filter power supply and is hard wired. Weighs 19kg with dimensions 390mm(w) x 330mm(d) x 190mm(h)

with valves or 220mm(h) with cage. Simon Pope says - "If you favour attack and rhythmic grip, together with a smoothness of sound that's incredibly easy to live with, the KIT6550 could well be the kit amp for you. The 6550 is one for those who like a valve sound married to the attack and clout of a good quality solid state design".

Kel84 VALVE INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER KIT

This is our brand new, low cost, beginner level amplifier kit. It features a pair of EL84 valves per channel in push-pull configuration. They give 15 watts into an 8 ohm load - plenty for medium sensitivity loudspeakers. The output transformers are Ultra Linear, keeping distortion down to a minimum. Up front the ECF80 input/phase splitter valve has an extremely smooth sound.

The Kel84 has very low hum, to solid-state standards. For simplicity the kit is built on a printed circuit board. A strong steel chassis is fronted by a 3mm anodised front panel and attractive chromed custom made knobs. There are five line level inputs, plus one monitor input, with a tape output included, all controlled from the front panel. The phono input sockets and 4mm banana socket speaker terminals are gold plated.

At rear is a mains switch, an IEC power input and an earth post.

This kit is aimed at beginners. The instructions include pictures as well as diagrams, making them very easy to follow. At a UK price of £278.00 all inclusive you cannot ignore Kel84. 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 that is almost exclusive to pure valve amps and is rare at this price point."

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

£278



2A3 PSE INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER KIT

The 2A3 PSE integrated amplifier offers a seriously hi-end sound, but without the cost usually associated with single-ended amplifiers. The stereo chassis houses, on the output, 2 x 2A3 in parallel single ended configuration and a single 65N7 as the driver tube per channel. The valve rectified power supply consists of a 5U4, with a combination of a hefty 10H chokes and 2 x 100uF 500V capacitor in a pi filter configuration, giving superb smoothing. This feedbackless design provides 8.5watts into an 8 ohm load, so a good sensitivity speaker is required above 91dB. It can accept 6 line-level inputs fully controllable from the front panel. We provide the excellent Alps Blue potentiometer as standard. The amplifier is hard wired so plenty of scope for tweaking in the future. Simon Pope says, "The 2A3 PSE is extremely impressive piece of kit, good imaging, wide sound stage, nicely extended on the high frequency and tremendous bass thump - I want one".

weight - 20kg, external dimensions with valves fitted - 390mm(w) x 360mm(d) x 220mm(h)

£550



DIY KITS IN THE WORLD

MILTON KEYNES, BUCKS MK16 0EE - CALL FOR DETAILS ON 01908 218836

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)	£195.00
Pre-amplifier (PRE-II)	£195.00
Phono Stage (PHONO-II)	£110.00
Moving coil step-up transformer	£77.00
Passive pre-amplifier (PAS-II)	£215.00

NEW!



KAT34 VALVE POWER AMPLIFIER KIT & KIT34 VALVE INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER KIT

£480



**KAT34
upgrade kit now
available £120**

NEW KITS

£495



**KIT34
upgrade kit now
available £130**

KIT34 is a 32 watt stereo valve integrated amplifier, featuring a pair of EL34s, in push-pull mode, per channel, plus an ECF80 pentode/triode as input/phase splitter. The power supply is valve rectified (2 x SU4), using a heavy duty choke to achieve exceptional smoothing. The output transformers are 14% Ultra Linear tapped to keep distortion down to its lowest level and the kit is totally hard wired utilising three tag boards. It has five line level inputs, plus a tape-in and tape out, all controllable from the front.

Simon Pope says, "This integrated bring together the best sonic virtues of our Kit88, kel34 and top of the range 300B PSE in an affordable package. The highlights of the sound are a deep and taut bass response, together with an open and highly detailed mid and high frequency response that only the best valve designs can achieve... a true valve classic" Weight 22kg, External dimensions with valves fitted - 390mm(w) x 360mm(d) x 210mm(h)

300B PSE MONOBLOC KIT

Our Parallel Single Ended amplifiers offer ultimate sound quality. Each monobloc has two of the beautifully linear 300B directly heated triode in its output stage, producing 20 watts into an 8 ohm load. At the front we have a 6AU6 pentode and an ECC82 as the driver valve. This design utilises a SU4 rectifier valve in the power supply, in combination with a 10H choke, giving an extremely quiet supply. Both mains and output transformers we E/I pattern.

For purists, feedback is switchable and the kit is totally hard-wired. For those that require valves we provide the superb Tesla 300Bs, Russian SU4s and European 6AU6s & ECC82. Simon Pope says, "Not to put too fine a 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 £875.00 (UK price) excluding valves. Each monobloc weighs 23kgs., external dimensions with valves:

25cm(w) x 38cm(h) x 22cm(d) per monobloc.

**300B PSU
upgrade kit now
available £150**

**£875
A pair**



KEL80 MONOBLOC AMPLIFIER KIT

Following the success of our budget KEL34 40watt kit amplifier, we have come up with a 'big brother' design. The output stage uses two pairs of TESLA EL34 pentodes in parallel-push-pull mode, allowing KEL80 to turn out 80 watts into an 8ohm 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 4ohm and 8ohm 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, lightning fast reactions, that emphasises musicality as well as power. At £649.00 a pair, a definite valve winner. Each monobloc weighs 12kgs., external dimensions with valves: 14cm(w) x 8cm(h) x 43.5cm(d).

**£649
A pair**



HD83 VALVE HEADPHONE AMPLIFIER KIT

The HD83 headphone amplifier is 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 out sockets. The circuit uses high specification E/I output transformers that will drive any headphone load from 16 ohms to over 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 added sonic purity, and it is as quiet as a mouse. For sound quality Jon Marks says, "The bass is punchy and controlled without becoming artificial, while treble has the crispness of the best

solid-state, with the tonal purity, delicacy and speed associated with valves." External dimensions 18cm(w) x 30cm(l) x 8cm(h) weight 4kg.

£195



World Audio design

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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. KLS10 offers high performance 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 Unit & Crossover kit **£433.00**
Drive Unit only **£394.00**



£433

KLS10 GOLD SUBWOOFER

Designed to complement KLS10 Gold stand mounters by providing deep and open bass. The subwoofer is inexpensive, easy to build, comprising a simple crossover network with a high quality 8 inch Aerogel 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 **£164.00**
Drive Unit only **£78.00**



£164

KLS3 GOLD MK II ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY 3 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 **£633.00**
Drive Unit Pack **£495.00**



£633

Upgrade your KLS3s to Gold status. Includes latest oval gold dome piezo tweeter and all components.

£363

for

Mains transformers & Chokes

KIT6550/KAT6550 mains transformers
2 inch stack, 130mm(h)x120mm(w)x135mm(l) drop through fitting with zinc cap. Secondaries: 0V-240V 300mA, 0V-5V, 6A, 3.15V, 0V-3.15V, 9A, suitable for 120V & 240Vac operation

KEL84 mains transformer
1.5 inch stack, 90mm(h)x 80mm(w)x 95mm(d) drop through fitting with zinc cap. Secondaries: 0V-240V 300mA, 3.15V-0V-3.15V, 5.5A, suitable for 120/240V operation

KIT88/KAT88 mains toroidal transformer
120mm dia. x 60mm(h). Secondaries: 195V-0V-95V, 450mA/0V-27V, 100mA/3.15V-0V-3.15V, 9A, suitable for 120/240V operation

KIT34/KAT34/KIT6550/KAT6550 choke
1.25 inch stack, 65mm(h)x105mm(w) with fitting holes x 60mm(d), clamp fitting, 2.5 H, 350mA

300B PSE mains E/I transformer
130mm(h) x 95mm(w) x 115mm(d), drop through fitting with zinc cap. Secondaries: 380V-0V-380V, 180mA/150-0V-150V, 25mA/0V-5V, 1.2A/0V-5V, 1.2A/0V-5V, 3A/3.15V-0V-3.15V, 0.4A suitable for 120/240V operation

KEL80 mains toroidal transformer (encapsulated)
130mm dia. x 65mm(h). Secondaries: 195V-0V-195V, 390mA/0V-27V, 100mA/3.15V-0V-3.15V, 7.5A, suitable for 120/240V operation

HD83 mains toroidal transformer
80mm dia. x 35mm(h). Secondaries: 0V-165V, 75mA/3.15V-0V-3.15V, 1A, suitable for 120/240V operation

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

TRANS I mains toroidal transformer
95mm dia. x 50mm(h). Secondaries: 0V-370V, 150mA/0V-6.3V, 3.5A 300B E/I choke 65mm(h) x 70mm(d) x 80mm(w) open frame fitting, 10H, 180mA.

KEL84 E/I choke
0.5 inch stack, 40mm(h)x 35mm(d)x 70mm(w) clamp fitting, 1H, 250mA

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

KIT34/KAT34 mains transformer
2.5 inch stack, 120mm(h)x115mm(w)x95mm(d), drop through fitting with zinc cap. Secondaries 365V - 0V - 365V, 300mA/0V - 5V, 6A/3.15V - 0V - 3.15V, 7.5A. Suitable for 120/240V operation.

Output transformers

KIT6550/KAT6550 E/I 16% TAPPED UL push-pull output transformer
2 inch stack, 80mm (w) x 95mm(l) x 100mm(h), drop through fitting with zinc cap. Primary-secondary 4.5K, 16% UL tapped. Secondary 4 Ohm, pls specify on order. max output 45 watts, max current 180mA, valves, KT88, 6550 etc

KEL84 E/I Ultra Linear push-pull output transformer
1.25 inch stack, 76mm(h)x 65mm(w)x 76mm(d) Primary - secondary, 8K with 12.5% UL tap - 8ohms, max o/p-15watts, max current 150mA valves EL84 etc

KIT88/KAT88 E/I push-pull output transformer
80mm(w)x95mm(l)x100mm(h). Primary-secondary 10K - 8ohms, max o/p-40watts, max current-160mA valves-KT88, 6550, EL34

KIT34/KAT34 E/I 14% tapped Ultra Linear push-pull output transformer
2 inch stack, 80mm(w)x95mm(l)x100mm(h), drop through fitting with zinc cap. Primary-secondary 6.4K, 14% UL taps, Secondary 8ohm, max output 34watts, max current 150mA, valves EL34, 6L6, 6CA7

KEL80 E/I parallel-push-pull output transformer
95mm(w)x115mm(l)x133mm(h). Primary-secondary 4.6K - 8 & 4ohms, max o/p-80watts, max current-250mA valves-EL34, 5881, 6L6

HD83 E/I single ended output transformer
40mm(w)x50mm(l) x55mm(h). Primary-secondary 4K - 4 x 64ohms windings, max o/p-1watts, max current-25mA valves-ECL83 etc

Pre-II E/I driver transformer
80mm(w)x60mm(l) x65mm(h). 6:1 step down transformer, max current-10mA valves-6922 etc pre-amp stage

300B PSE E/I parallel single ended output transformer
130mm(h) x 95mm(w) x 115mm(d), drop through fitting with zinc cap. Primary 1K5 Secondary 8R, output .

Printed circuit boards

- Kel84 Printed Circuit Board 280mm(w) x 135mm(l) x 1.6mm(d).
- KIT88/KAT88 Printed Circuit Board** 140mm(w) x 310mm(l) x 2.4mm(d)
- Kel34 Printed Circuit Board 140mm(w) x 310mm(l) x 2.4mm(d).
- Kel80 Printed Circuit Board (a pair)** 120mm(w) x 215mm(d)
- HD83 Printed Circuit Board 140mm(w) x 160mm(l) x 1.6mm(d).
- PSU-II Printed Circuit Board** 105mm(w) x 130mm(l) x 1.6mm(d)
- PRE-II Printed Circuit Board** 105mm(w) x 130mm(l) x 1.6mm(d).
- PHONO-II Printed Circuit Board** 105mm(w) x 130mm(l) x 1.6mm(d)

Hi-Fi World in Malaysia at Millennium Hi-Fi & Av. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

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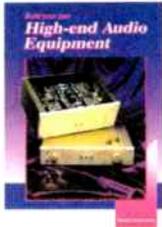
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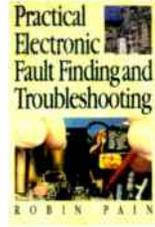
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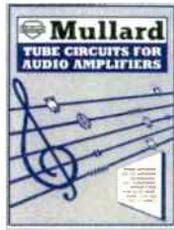
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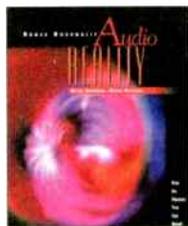
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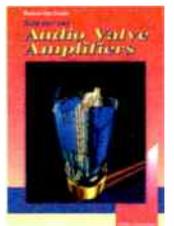
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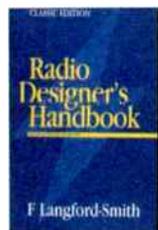
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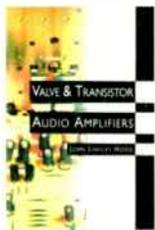
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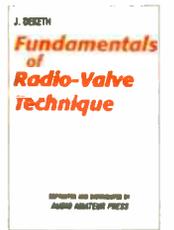
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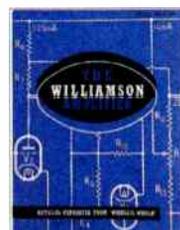
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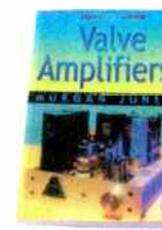
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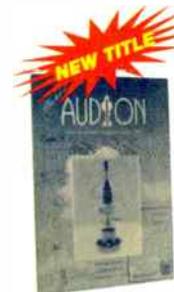
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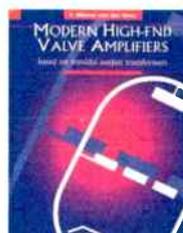


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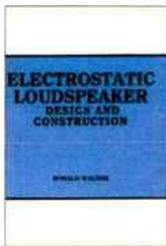
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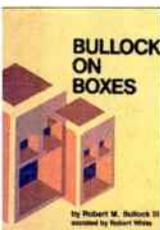


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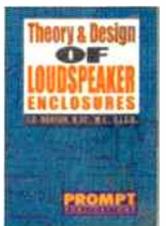


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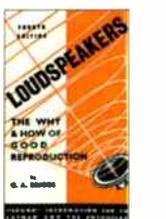
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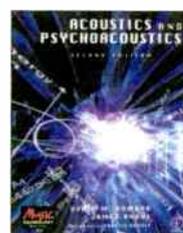


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World Radio History

As I contemplate the shambles of what remains of my hi-fi system after a reviewing session, the notion of a hi-fi reviewer being equipped with a mystically perfect hi-fi system takes on a curious irony. But readers want to know what reviewers use because of all people they have heard the greatest number of products and should know which are best. But I am not so sure it is as simple as that ...

My favourite amplifier sits forlornly on the floor, because it needs to be used with my favourite speakers, which are 60 miles away being used as World Audio Design demonstrators. My favourite preamp was a prototype, which means it was thrown together and can be a little temperamental, as under-cooled voltage regulators and such like slowly expire.

Ask me what I listen to at home and my answer is: everything and nothing!

Everything because the constant flow of equipment into and out of my lounge is prodigious, at the limits of what Westminster traffic wardens will allow as I load and unload.

Nothing because what I actually relax in front of to listen to, rather than review, spends so little time in place it might as well not be there. Then there is the matter of taste, as well as professional necessity.

Whilst reviewers may well be able to agree on what is the best cassette deck, or perhaps the best tuner, war breaks out over the best loudspeaker. At extreme left field we have something like Quad's wonderful electrostatics. The original 'radiator' ESL-57 could sound awful, or wonderful, depending upon the room. I had a pair, then the German Braun variant and finally a pair of ESL-63s. The poor ESL-63s were subjected to every assault possible and now lie, wrecked, in my loft. Quads suit me, there's no doubt, and they are a great reviewing tool, but size and price will always limit their appeal. Quads might be a necessity for reviewers, but they are not going to make it into Comet tomorrow because people want to get a better take on Rock Steady Crew.

My beloved Quads had to suffer every amplifier going, as well as becoming the center of a DIY project. Finally, I took to designing World Audio Design loudspeakers so they made way for boxes. Valve amps need better load characteristics than those of most commercial loudspeakers, and designing a loudspeaker to be an easy load for an amplifier really isn't so difficult. All the same, there are few loudspeakers available that use good modern drive units, have high sensitivity and offer either a well defined 4ohm or 8ohm load. Manufacturers understandably feel

” Ask me what I listen to at home and my answer is: everything and nothing!

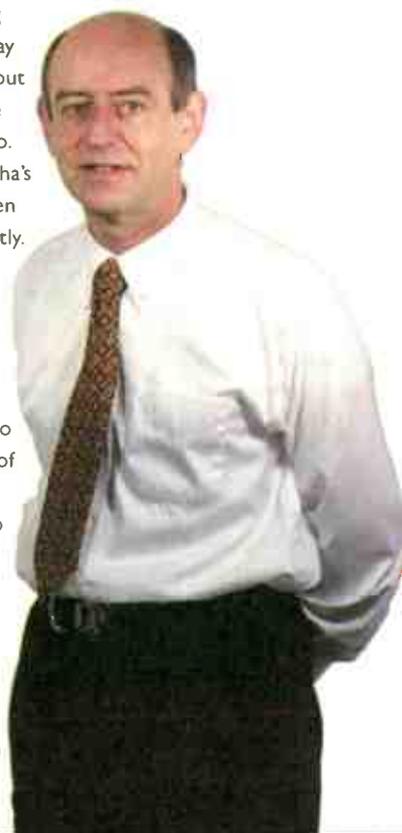
that solid-state amps are able to cope with what they produce, although I am not so sure.

Can I name a good loudspeaker? There are lots of good ones, but other than the Quads, no great ones that really stand out. I am attracted by the idea of mating an Audax HD3P gold dome piezo tweeter to a beryllium dome Fostex unit in order to get a smooth polar radiation pattern and an even forward response. The thinking here is that the HD3P is far and away the best tweeter I have ever heard but it is an imperfect match to any cone midrange unit - and most domes too. The result would be similar to Yamaha's now defunct NS1000s, that have been appearing in our letters pages recently. The NS1000s may have had more going for them than we realize; I suspect a good dome treble and midrange arrangement might give delightful results, but 'speakers like this are not commercially available so there is plenty of scope in the field of loudspeakers, even now.

Until recently I haven't been too impressed by surround-sound systems. Most A/V amps are hard, crude sounding devices - and they take up more real estate than glowing valves. DVD players have tended to major on providing a picture, with more slow modes than a Reliant Robin. Now though, things

are starting to get serious. Philips new DVD 962SA I reviewed last month was a fine CD player and had an excellent 24/96 audio replay section - but sadly it would not play DVD-A. All the same, a player like this opens up a lot of possibilities. If 24/96 recordings start to become common a good player like the Philips is quite a blast to listen to. To date, most players could not do justice to 24/96. The DVD962SA could - and it gave the sort of jaw dropping dynamics most people think of as the sound of hi-fi. With a true audiophile amp like the Marantz PS17 it looks as if surround-sound may be losing its Home Cinema crudity in an attempt to appeal to those who don't want to have their ears sonically syringed.

There is of course one other problem with surround-sound, the universal one of how to get a cable past the door. I am already eyeing the floorboards, planning some sort of underfloor cabling system to make the rear speaker cables a permanent and invisible installation. Once the floorboards are up the destruction of my listening room will be complete. This matter of what a reviewer listens to - it isn't so simple you know! ●



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When I recently reviewed Acoustic Energy's Aesprit 300 'speakers I was told they had been designed to look good in the modern home. This implied that some aspect of their design had changed in order to satisfy this criterion. Yet, to my eyes at least, they looked like a thoroughly conventional pair of 'speakers, veneered in a light maple wood. They didn't look very different, except for the veneer.

What this comment reveals is that many manufacturers feel under threat. Under threat from the post-chintz Ikea world, under threat from the trend for city living and under threat from the previously unconventional.

With DVD just having made it into the Guinness World Records book as the fastest growing paid for consumer entertainment product in history, you'd have thought that 'speaker manufacturers would be going great guns on the coat tails of the AV industry. Yet there is real concern that the conventional loudspeaker just isn't popular with buyers today. In short the average loudspeaker is, or at least perceived as being, often too big, roughly finished, sombre in colour, and designed to deliberately dominate and impose itself upon the room.

In some situations this is exactly what's needed. For the bedroom DJ, for example, it's desirable, yet for many others it's not. Even the bachelor in his pad is turning away from such products in favour of subtle metals, light woods and compact curvaceous designs. It's not such bad news for all involved in the 'speaker industry though.

Although ridiculed by many in hi-fi, Bose are now seen as leaders in the field of domestic acceptability. Their brand image is built on this. It's an association others would give their eye teeth for, given half a chance. In my opinion the sound quality of the sub/sat systems produced by Bose isn't as good as a decent conventional loudspeaker system but there can be no doubting their suitability in terms of aesthetics for the home and compactness for in-car applications. Such is their reputation outside of the hi-fi

industry that a car advertisement could read: "...air conditioning, electric seats, BOSE, CD etc". The presumption being that everyone, at least in the market for a premium car, knows exactly what and who Bose are. Could you imagine the same advert with the Bose name substituted by KEF, Tannoy or Celestion? It seems unlikely at the moment, despite the three being lead players within the UK 'speaker market.

Bearing this in mind, it came as little surprise to hear of Celestion's bid to return to the mainstream with what they term a "SoundStyle" range of

”What this comment reveals is that many manufacturers feel under threat.

products. As Bose apparently already own the license for the name LifeStyle, Celestion's SoundStyle system (also registered) is their attempt to gain a chunk of the same market. With this will hopefully come increased brand recognition for a company whose name and image has faded from public view over the past few years. Looking at the new range, which includes some particularly attractive glass and aluminium designs, the signs look good. Yet, there's a part of me that feels it would be a great shame if companies such as Celestion focused upon lifestyle products to such an extent that their range of conventional 'speakers withered and, eventually, died. After all, their current A and F series are amongst the best designs at their respective price ranges, and not even unbearably ugly either!

Celestion are by no means alone here. Most of their UK based rivals, such as Mordaunt Short, are either entering the sub/sat field, or tweaking existing designs to make them appear more domestically acceptable. Here I am thinking of the Acoustic Energy's I mentioned earlier or Tannoy's Eyriss range.

All these manufacturers should realise that despite the success of DVD and the pressure put upon them by dealers crying out for domestically unobtrusive designs, there is still a

good market for conventional, decent sounding 'speakers. Many people predicted Compact Disc player sales would collapse as DVD players took off, but this hasn't happened. Sales are down a few percent amongst most retailers. This is without the effect of SACD, which may or may not kick in to boost the CD market further.

I would caution manufacturers rushing to join this fray, although innovation is important and valuable. NXT's flat panel technology is still in its infancy but it's showing real promise from a range of designs, from PC add-on to the high-end. What's more, current home cinema 'speaker packages show that by adapting an existing technology new markets can be explored, without compromise on performance.

If manufacturers start to consider 'speaker aesthetics a key element of overall design then this can only be a good thing. I just hope we see improvements in performance, rather than the virtual absence of hi-fi standards that good design in the past seemed to bring as an inevitability. Then a standard box with maple veneer won't be seen as innovative. ●



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TDL Studio One (Transmission-Line Monitors) VGC	650.00	299.95
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Well, last month's feature about fitting a decent arm to Technics' SL1200 turntable elicited a tremendous response. It seems that we have more younger readers into vinyl than we ever imagined. After all, the club and DJ scene is based around vinyl replay and what do you read for hints and tips - the NME? Stewart Wennen's brilliant modification has got countless Technics-owning readers and DJs interested in unlocking the potential of their decks. But what of the DJs for whom he originally conceived the arm transplant? I've had contact from Family Tree's Stephen Naylor who shared his thoughts on living with his newly revitalised tool of the trade.

"In my 25 years of being a DJ, Stewart is the only sound engineer I have actually got to know professionally. My own fault perhaps, for not learning more about the hardware, and concentrating too much on the software - so to speak!

The underlying fact is that most DJs have very little knowledge about sound systems and how they work, let alone hi-fi knowledge. In fact, considering that they get let loose on equipment worth considerable sums of money, it doesn't seem important to the club owner that the person they have just hired may not actually know how to use it properly! If the owner's car was treated like his sound system, it would probably end up in the scrap yard. Maybe it is time that some sound engineers became DJs, so that one of these trendy 'skills transfers' could take place. Now that would be interesting!

It was, however, by talking to Stewart, describing the sound we wanted and playing examples of the music we intended to play, that he was able to build our 'Club Family Tree' sound system. It was important to us to get the sound we wanted. However, we wouldn't have been able to do this with an 'off the shelf' system, and certainly not for the price we paid.

I bought my own Technics SL 1200 turntables from a 'proper hi-fi' shop rather than a DJ supplier. The reason for shopping here was that it was the

first hi-fi shop I had come across that actually knew what the turntables were used for. I bought them for personal use at home and for this reason was advised to buy a Quad amplifier and Heybrook HBI loudspeakers. I used a Citronic SM450 as my mixer. I was told that perhaps from an audio point of view the Technics could be better, but I wanted to use them to mix records together, and for that they are still the best. Now then - add an Origin Live-modded tone arm and you suddenly have the best of both worlds!

“If the owner's car was treated like his sound system, it would probably end up in the scrap yard.”

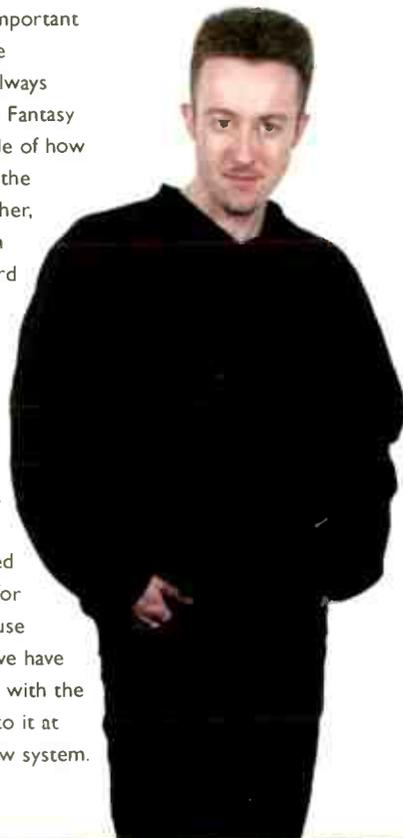
When our 'sound system' got together to compare the turntables - we found the improvement from Stewart's modification became instantly apparent. The long drum intro of John Cutler's 'Its Yours' (Chez records US 12in) sprang to life - the music became sharper and lyrics so much clearer. The beats of the music were more clearly defined, both through the system and the headphones (which are important for mixing). Old records were improved too. Side Effect's 'Always There', a seventies classic (on Fantasy Records US 7in) is an example of how the modification 'cleaned up' the recording and made it smoother, bringing out sounds that even long familiarity with the record had not been noticed. The record we always use to check the system - 'The Nervous Track' by Nu Yorican Soul (on US Nervous Records 12in) sounded fresher and the bass tighter and sharper.

In all, Stewart has replaced the arms on four turntables for us so far. The arm is easy to use when cueing or mixing, and we have had no problems whatsoever with the modification. After listening to it at home, it felt like hearing a new system. It can most certainly be

recommended".

These comments from Stephen echo quite a few letters we've had from fellow audiophile DJs who are experimenting with, or searching for ways of making their DJ decks sing like a proper hi-fi turntable. After all, just like hi-fi addicts, DJs are there to enjoy the communicative properties of music and the best way of doing this is to make it sound as good as possible.

This advancement is brilliant for the hi-fi community as it brings in fresh blood. Unlike many professional musicians, DJs are actually bothered about how reproduced music sounds and only the specialist hi-fi market can cater for their needs. You never know, one simple arm transplant could lead to a full scale body replacement in the matter of a few months. Keep reading, guys (and gals)! ●



David Price

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SPECIALIST HI-FI DEALERS

HI-FI WORLD'S GREAT COMPETITION GIVEAWAY

WIN ONE OF FOUR SUPERB PRO-JECT DEBUT TURNTABLES IN THIS MONTH'S COMPETITION.

► This month we have four Pro-ject Debut turntables to give away, courtesy of distributor Henley Designs. Henley Design distribution was founded in 1997 by Laurence Armstrong, Nick Fuller and Paul Latham who between them had experience of over 35 years in retail and distribution and worked together in Ortofon and Pro-ject distribution before the launch of Henley Designs. The initial brands the company dealt with were only Pro-ject and Ortofon but in the period of five years their portfolio has expanded to accommodate British hi-fi stalwarts Roksan, Austrian 'speaker manufacturer Vienna Acoustics and American cable specialists Audioquest, as well as the German headphone company Beyerdynamic.

Since the early days before Henley's inception, when the partners shared premises with Hayden Laboratories, the company's expansion meant they had to move premises no less than three times. The current varied portfolio of brands and products signifies their belief in system synergy. The latest of these moves resulted in Henley being based at new premises consisting of over 12,000 sq feet of office and warehouse space, so there is adequate room for natural expansion. The set up includes a full service dept., sales and accounts, customer service and warehousing.

The Pro-ject Debut was launched in 1999 and became one of hi-fi's benchmark products in a couple of weeks. The package of turntable, arm and cartridge at a little over £100 ensured that this Pro-ject would become a success story. And it all came true, as more than 1000 Debuts are being sold a month. In these days of digital audio that's no mean feat. Rumours of vinyl's demise have been greatly over emphasised, as Henley will attest with their success over the years.



First using Pro-ject back in 1992 where they found out that they worked well with the Ortofon cartridges they distributed, the founders of Henley took over UK distribution. In 1993 the Pro-ject 6 was given an award for best turntable and from here on Henley worked with Pro-ject to develop new products. One of the results of this was the Debut turntable which took the market by storm and undoubtedly helped to contribute to the recent rise in the vinyl LP's popularity. In the UK more turntables are sold than both tuners and cassette decks combined and last year Henley alone sold more than 14,000 turntables - a mind boggling figure.

Consequently Pro-ject are apparently now the largest manufacturer of turntables in the world. At HFW we found the debut to be an outright bargain. It delivers a solid and precise sound that gets your old (or new) vinyl records

singing like Canaries. And getting your hands on one couldn't be easier. Simply answer the questions below on a postcard and send it to the address below by July 31st. The first four correct entries out of the bag will receive one of these cracking turntables. ■ ▲

Hi-Fi & Computer Audio World Competition rules and conditions of entry

1. Only one entry per house hold.
2. Multiple entries will be automatically disqualified.
3. Purchase of the magazine is not a pre-condition of entry.
4. No correspondence will be entered into.
5. The Editor's decision is final.
6. No employees of Audio Publishing Limited, or of any companies associated with the production or distribution of the prizes may enter.

Competition Questions

[1] Name one of the founders of Henley Designs?

- [a] Laurence Armstrong
- [b] Laurence Llewellyn-Bowern
- [c] Neil Armstrong
- [d] Lawrence of Arabia

[2] Which headphone manufacturer do Henley distribute?

- [a] Sennheiser
- [b] Grado
- [c] Beyerdynamic
- [d] Stax

[3] How many square feet does the company's new premises occupy?

- [a] 4,000
- [b] 8,000
- [c] 12,000
- [d] 14,000

[4] How many turntables did Henley Designs sell last year?

- [a] 4,000
- [b] 8,000
- [c] 12,000
- [d] 14,000

August Competition
Hi-Fi World Magazine
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CONGRATULATIONS!

...to Mr. Kevin J. Holland of Glasgow, the winner of our June competition. An Exposure Electronics 2010 CD player and matching 2010 integrated amplifier is on its way to you!

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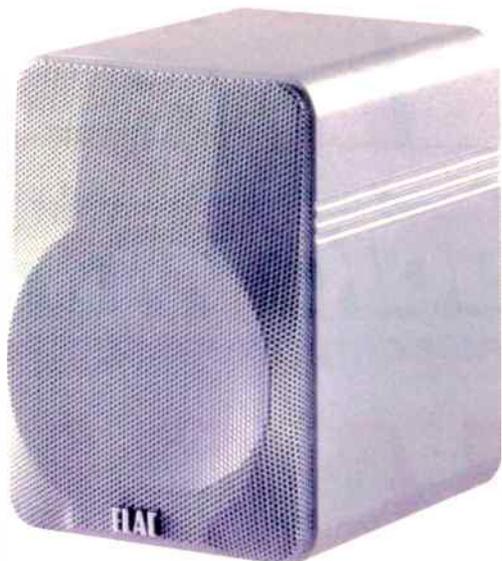
Will Elac's new 301 'micro monitor' loudspeaker be the classic that the Garrard of the same name became? David Price investigates.



Elac's dinky 301 monitors are pretty impressive little things. True, you can buy a hi-fi bookshelf design of far more sizeable dimensions for the same money, but you'd never get this kind of build quality. For their tiny 121x91x92mm size, the 1.2kg cabinets feel incredibly solid, thanks to their extruded aluminium structure with non-removable metal grilles. Underneath this you'll find Elac's proprietary 'ring-dome' tweeter paired to an 80mm long-throw woofer with high-power voice coil, ferrofluid cooling and that famous aluminium cone. The 'audiophile' crossover splits the two drivers at 3,850Hz, and has bass filtering

which means the unit can be connected directly to hi-fi amp terminals directly, without overtaxing the driver. The result is a claimed 80-21,000Hz (+/- 3dB) and a claimed 50W RMS power handling. The 301 is fully magnetically shielded, and comes with chunky, gold-plated, offset binding posts, plus wall brackets for mounting.

At 300x200x270mm and weighing 8kg, the SUB301 looks like a fully-fledged hi-fi speaker. The micro monitor's metal cab is no longer in evidence, but the silver lacquer finish is nice all the same (like the 301 micro monitor, black is also available). The 180mm alloy sandwich driver is front firing, ported and aspirated by an 80W RMS amplifier. An electronic



many sat/sub systems - although I ran the sub crossover frequency just a little higher than the implied 100Hz optimal level. Best of all was the sub's ability to go seriously loud with no undue signs of distress.

Overall then, here's a brilliantly crisp sounding system with a clean, detailed, fast midband that projects brilliantly into space and drives even big rooms well. The only downside was the treble, which was just a little too 'metal dome' for my liking - clean and fast but with a hint of its own coloration. The silk dome fitted to, say, Mission's 782 hi-fi floorstander is a lot more self-effacing. ■ ▲

◀ crossover offers overdrive protection, an adjustable crossover frequency from 40-180Hz (which suits the 301 nicely), volume level adjustment and a phase switch. There's a choice of both loudspeaker inputs and RCA phono inputs. Elac claims a frequency response of 30Hz-240Hz (+/- 3dB). The unit comes complete with all leads needed, a front grille and a spike kit.

I have to say that my first moments listening to the 301 sat/sub combo were disappointing. Driven from a Pioneer DV-747A (in CD mode) feeding a Cyrus 7/PSX-R integrated amp (with the PRE OUT jacks driving the sub), they sounded rather lightweight. But perseverance paid off - the sub was tightly spiked to the floor and run firing at the rear wall from about 30cm away, while the satellites were Blu-tacked to my marble mantelpiece, pressed hard against the wall Linn Kan-style and toed in by about 15 degrees. With a bit of running in and decent speaker cables, suddenly things got dramatically better. In fact, even after a few hours running criminally high volumes I just kept trying new music, just for the fun of it.

Essentially, with such small and rigid cabinets, you're not going to get much in the way of bass bloom or overhang. The result is that - along with the all-aluminium driver complement - things sound incredibly tight and fast and engaging. They do not, however, sound coarse or hard - rather, it's like opening the curtains to a bright summer morning - the light shines in, to sometimes quite alarming effect. Rod Stewart's 'Maggie

May' has rarely sounded so crisp and percussive, with that sublime guitar (and mandolin) work propelling the song along with incredible gusto. Here is a speaker that loves to boogie. With this in mind I tried some electronic dance, in the shape of LTJ Bukem. The combo show brilliant transient ability and true grit when it came to handling high volumes - even at very high levels they failed to sound compressed, unlike KEF's rival KMS 2002 'eggs'. Most impressive was integration with the sub - you'll need some careful fettling, but suitably adjusted and located the system is tight and fluid with just a hint of boxiness from the sub at high volumes. There's certainly no sense of a hole in the upper bass, as you get with

Elac 301 Micro Monitor £199

Elac Sub 301 £399.00

www.elac.com



World Verdict



Rhythmically entralling performers in an impressively compact package.

ON THE ROAD

David Price goes out and about with Creative Labs' brand new Extigy external portable USB soundcard.

With over one hundred and fifty million soundcards shipped, Creative Labs must be doing something right. The company made its name with the SoundBlaster, then the Live, and most recently the Audigy. Each new generation of card has added vast new tracts of functionality, connectivity and software - almost to the extent that there's so much to learn and install that it detracts from the product's usability. Quite simply, it would be hard to know what more to ask for. Except.

The Extigy you see here answers the one last line of my wish list - as its name alludes to, it's external. This means that rather than having to fiddle around with a screwdriver opening your PC's case and poking around with the motherboard, you simply plug it into the USB port (fitted to almost every PC since 1997) and go. At least, that's the theory.

In truth, installing the Extigy proved a pain - for me, at least. First, when you first plug the thing in, Windows does its usual thing and says it's detected new hardware. Creative Labs resolutely refuses you to go along this simple, well-worn installation route - putting the driver disc in, pointing Windows in the right direction and letting the OS finish the job. Rather, you have to hit the cancel option, and insert the installation disc and follow Creative Labs' own long-winded rigmarole. All well and good, except that a third of the way through the installation process, the system hung up for no apparent reason. To cut a long story short, the uninstallation file was corrupted and I eventually had to reinstall my entire Windows OS. Not a great start, and a lot more long-winded than putting a soundcard in a PC - which I can do in under five minutes! Still, don't let that

dissuade you - I presume it was a one-off disc read error, or suchlike. I just wish they'd let you have the option of installing the drivers directly.

Anyway - assuming your computer isn't as tetchy as mine - you should find the Extigy reasonably easy to install. There's a drivers-only install option (from the Creative Labs installer) which takes just a minute or two. But if you wish to avail yourself of the generous bundle of software provided, expect a long evening beside your PC. It takes 160MB and an age to get onto your hard drive. Yes, it's all very nice but frankly there's too much. After installation, Creative Labs software pops up everywhere, from first-boot to your control panel. It's almost as if they've got designs on Bill Gates' job.

So, it's a great idea to, have an easy-to-install external PC soundcard, it's just that with the Extigy, the 'easy to install' bit kind of got lost in translation. If you can live with this, then this new product still has things going for it.

First, being outboard - so to speak - its sensitive audio circuitry is a good distance away from the maelstrom of mechanical and electrical noise you get inside the average PC. Having the digital converters and analogue output stage a cable's length from your computer's switched mode power supply is no bad thing. In theory at least, this should give better sound. Another thing that should help with the sonics is the fact that it has - shout it out - 24bit, 96kHz digital converters with a claimed 100dB signal-to-noise ratio.



Hurrah! The problem is that, like the Audigy, the Extigy downsamples to 48kHz as soon as its datastream reaches the outside world, so it's not quite as nice as it seems. Oh well.

Still, you can't argue about the fact that it's a great upgrade to notebook soundcards, which are in all cases terminally unpleasant and crude devices. You can replace your desktop PC item relatively easily, but until now you've been stuck with the one in your portable. The Extigy ends this tyranny however, and also offers a stack of new ways of connecting to the outside world. There are seven outputs (including optical digital) and five audio inputs (including optical and coaxial digital), letting you connect it to MiniDisc and CD recorders, DVD players, home-theatre systems, surround-sound speakers, microphones, and even MIDI sequencers and musical instruments.

Specifically, the front panel offers TOSLINK in and outs, line in, mic in (with level control!), headphone jack (with volume control) that doubles as a line out. Round the back there's the USB jack, MIDI in and out, S/PDIF in and out, and 3.5mm analogue output

Quoted Specifications:
 S/N Ratio (A-Weighted): >=100dB
 Crosstalk (Left/Right and vice versa): -97dB
 THD at 1kHz (A-Weighted): 0.006 %
 Frequency Response: 10Hz to 23kHz (+/- 3dB)

◀ three jacks for Dolby Digital 5.1 surround sound (front, rear, and centre/ subwoofer), plus a power socket for the external 'wall wart' AC adapter. Cleverly still, the Extigy can work as a standalone digital converter - for hooking up to MD portables, CD discmen, DVD players or even video gaming consoles like the X-BOX or PS2.

Did I mention it has full Dolby Digital decoding and 5.1 analogue line outputs? Silly me - of course it does! There's dedicated Dolby Digital (AC-3) hardware, DSP decoding with support of up to 24-bit I/O data format, plus the ability to decode Dolby Digital streams from the optical or coaxial inputs, or the host PC via the USB connection. As per Dolby Digital, there's an Optimum bass management feature that lets you set up the system for different sizes of loudspeakers.

When it is hooked up via USB to a PC, it also offers a stack of clever DSP effects under the guise of Creative Labs' EAX function. It offers - through the bundled software - Audio Clean-Up (which removes scratches, pops and hisses from tapes and LP records), Time Scaling (which lets you speed up or slow down audio while maintaining accurate pitch), DREAM (ahem - Dynamic Repositioning of Enhanced Audio and Music, which allows the interactive repositioning of stereo content in a surround 5.1 environment) and EAX 1.0 and 2.0 (positional technology for games). Oh, and this is all controllable via the supplied remote control!

All in all then, the Extigy has enough to keep the saddest gadget fan happy until Sony releases the new PlayStation 3. So how does it sound? The answer is pretty good - considering (a) it's low £149 price and (b) mind numbing feature count - but not quite up there with the likes of what I'd call 'serious' soundcards like Guillemot's ISIS or TerraTec's EVX24/96. As with all audio electronics, a good few days running in doesn't hurt - it sounds rotten straight out of the box. I tried mine

through a Cyrus 7/PSX-R driving Mission 782 loudspeakers, with my Rock P3-600 notebook doing the number crunching.

First, CD playback (using Creative's bundled PlayCenter software and my PC's internal TEAC CD-ROM) was head and shoulders



above the sound of my notebook's bundled soundcard. It's smooth and clean, with a good degree of detail and a reasonable rhythmic snap.

Compare it to a hi-fi CD player like a Marantz CD-6000 OSE and you'll find it wanting - there's a lack of tonal colour and bass and treble are both slightly curtailed. However, there's absolutely no sense of listening to AM radio that you get with cheapo soundcards. Blondie's remastered 'Parallel Lines' proved bouncy and crisp, with satisfyingly sweet hi-hat sounds and no coarseness to vocals. The A-D converters weren't that bad either, decently smooth and clean with no digital nasties audible. MP3 playback was surprisingly good. PlayCenter offers a full range of bitrates, up to 320kbps and also fast VBR. The only problem is that it installs its own codec into your system, and sets it at priority 1. I went into the SETTINGS/CONTROL PANEL/DEVICES/AUDIO COMPRESSION CODECS, and switched my beloved Fraunhofer codec back to priority 1. This done, I found the Extigy a pleasant player of compressed audio - sweet and smooth with few artefacts. Shame there's no AAC on offer, though. My only real criticism was that - through my steam age PC - there was an occasional jumping, as my computer struggled to squirt its audiostream out of its USB port and run a



Windows application at the same time. (In fact, the Extigy's latency is 40ms, compared to the Audigy's 2ms or less).

Value is the name of the game here - plus a bucketload of flexibility. It's a brilliant companion to those forced to use their notebooks for audio duties. I can't honestly say the bundled software is the best of its type, and frankly there's too much of it (and it clogs up your hard drive), but ignoring this, it's still great value for money. Factor in the

likelihood of discounting, and it's practically impossible to say no!

Creative Labs Extigy £149.99
www.soundblaster.com

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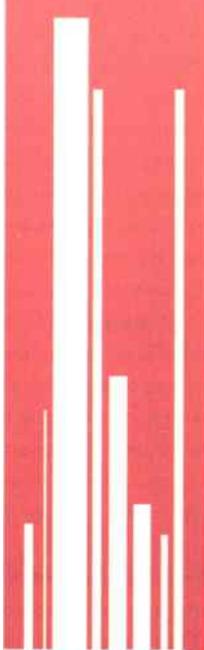
IM Tuner lets you select from 25 different stations, with more than 30 stations per genre.

MUSIC SOFTWARE

MixMeister creates 'killer' mixes from MP3 music files.

CREATIVE RECORDER

Lets you record .WAV files for use in your Windows applications. Creative Recorder can record from multiple audio sources, including CD Audio, Line In, Microphone, MIDI and more.



World Verdict
 £

Good sound allied to a bewildering array of facilities, connections and software makes it brilliant value for money.

TITLE FIGHT

As any MiniDisc user knows, adding titles to discs can be a right pain. David Price looks at an interesting new gadget claimed to make life easier, the MD Titrer.

The best way of spotting an audio anorak is to check out his MiniDisc collection (assuming he has one, and if he's serious then he will). Load one of his MDs into the player and wait approximately two seconds - if the disc title comes up on the display then it looks likely. Cue up the first song, and if the track name appears too, then he most definitely is.

You see, titling MiniDiscs is one of the most boring and time-consuming activities known to man (okay, apart from polishing your mains plug fuses.), so if someone has taken the trouble it basically means they should get out more. Indeed, in Japan, the word for 'nerd' is 'otaku', which literally translated means 'stay at home' - is it any coincidence that MD is so popular there?

There are, of course, a few ways around 'the problem' (if you are serious enough to regard the issue of titling your tracks as such). You could always buy a Sony MDS-PC3 which comes with a hardware link and software that lets you type names in via your PC. Alternatively, certain Sony home recorders have a socket that let you plug in a computer keyboard directly (but you wouldn't want to be seen with this: "what's this for darling?", "Errm.. it's for titling my MiniDiscs.", "oh, I see, goodbye").

So, to the rescue comes one Dan Morelle, whose MD Titrer (point your browsers at <http://go.to/mdtitler>) costs £35 including UK post and packing. It doesn't work with every MD machine, rather it's aimed specifically at Sony portables (currently the MZ-R37,55,70,90,91, 700, G750 and 900).

The kit comprises a Titling unit that plugs into the back of your PC's parallel port (which is nice and stealthy, lest for some reason you shouldn't want others to discover



your covert MD titling activities) and the MDCOM 1.0 software. It's compatible with Windows 95, 98, 2000, ME & XP, but you may have to download the NTport driver from the website. Sadly though, Mac users are ignored completely. The other end of the Titling unit goes straight into your MD portable's remote socket (which is situated right next to the headphone output) via the supplied cable.

To commence your nefarious titling activities, first check that no one is looking, then install the software, screw in the Titling unit to your PC's printer port and connect the cable to your MD machine (which should be switched on), and do a restart (because it isn't USB, you can't just plug and go). Next click on the MiniDisc Control Centre icon, and you're off.

The software comes up in a small window, and offers a number of facilities. Firstly, the remote control functions are duplicated, meaning you've got control of your player's transport (i.e. play/pause, record, stop, etc.). You can also add or remove tracks from the disc's table of contents displayed in the window. Last but not least, you can type both the disc name and assign names to all tracks present - in a matter of seconds via your keyboard.

Once you've typed them all in, press 'Go' and the Titling unit takes

over. It works by issuing remote control commands (via the software, which switches the resistance between two of the remote control pins - the value of the resistance determines what function is issued). You can watch in

amazement as the display on your MD portable changes, letter by letter, cycling through its entire character set at high speed and then stopping when it reaches the relevant one, then moving on to the next, etc. It's just as you'd add titles via the machine's menu, but about one hundred times faster!

There's little more to say - it does what it says on the label, so to speak. It would be nice if there was a Mac version, and a USB connector rather than the clumsy, old-hat parallel port. The software is pretty bullet-proof, but this too could look a little more modern, I guess. If titling your MiniDiscs is - as Austin Powers would say - "your bag, baby", then you can't really fault this quirky little product. Warmly recommended! ■ ▲

MD Titrer £35 (inc. free MD)
<http://go.to/mdtitler>

(World-wide shipping takes 5-10 days with online tracking, UK postage takes 3-5 days via Recorded Delivery. Secure online ordering available via PayPal)



FULL METAL JACKET

LaCie has come up trumps with its new aluminium cased Fusion external CD writer, says David Price.

▶▶ **W**hen Nokia launched its 8850 mobile phone just over a year ago, the ad copy went something like, "because you don't buy watches just to tell the time". That - in a sentence - is precisely why I think this is the best CD burner you can buy right now.

In my humble opinion, CD burners are just about the most boring thing it's possible to review. I suppose interconnects come close, but even they can be more easily distinguished between, thanks to their inevitable sonic footprints. No, if I have to review a computer CD writer, I have to take a sharp intake of breath and pray I'll get to the end of the page without nodding off.

With this in mind, I was frankly amazed when I opened up the box of LaCie's new Fusion external CD-RW. Why? Because it's more than a machine to burn digital optical media, it's a piece of art in its own right. I'd had high hopes for Sony's Digital Relay a couple of years back - but opening the box revealed a beautifully drawn bit of kit, with the build quality of mid seventies Ford Escort Popular Plus. Frankly, it made your average 'own brand' cornflake packet look like a Panzer Tank. Not so this LaCie - it is exquisitely designed - and - built.

Okay, I admit it's not technological state of the art. If we're to be brutally frank then all the latest CD recorders should have a FireWire interface for sizzling transfer speeds (and a DVD-ROM facility wouldn't hurt, either), but you simply can't have it all - this is the sexiest computer peripheral ever made and costs just £129 plus VAT. Think of it as the PC equivalent of a Cyrus hi-fi separate - the rare coming together of form, function, build and finish.

Just to rehearse the arguments in

favour of not turning out your stuff in tawdry plastic cases: aluminium is stronger, less prone to cracking, and lighter. It is less resonant, generally, and won't look like it's been dragged through a hedge backwards after you've used it a couple of times. In Japan, everyone knows that Sony's prize project is MiniDisc - to compromise this would mean a huge loss of face to the Japanese giant - with the result that it had never (until recently) made an MD portable that didn't come in the aforementioned metal case. Enough said?

Now that we've established the Fusion's finer aesthetic points, it's time for the meat in the sandwich. It offers the new USB 2.0 interface. It has a 24x12x40x mech, which means it can record a full CD in less than 4 minutes, meaning data backup can be performed at 12x and the drive reads CDs at 40x. It weighs 570g, and measures a highly portable 35x130x173 mm.

USB 2.0, lest we forget, means it's hot-pluggable (so it connects to any USB-equipped computer and can easily be shared between users, and is easily installed in a few seconds without rebooting) and also a lot faster than the original USB 1.1 generation of devices. USB 2.0 is expected to gradually come as standard on new PCs. Forty times faster than USB 1.1, the new interface delivers transfer rates of up to 480 Mb/s while retaining backward compatibility with USB 1.1 controllers. When plugged into a USB 1.1 port, the LaCie Fusion



downshifts to 4x4x6x speeds.

The package comes complete with an international power supply, USB 2 cable, and user manuals on CD. It's also bundled with Easy CD Creator for Windows 98SE/2000/ME/XP, and a two-year warranty. It's easy to use - just switch on and plug in, and your Windows OS says it's detected new software and is searching for the drivers. Point it in the direction of the supplied setup CD, and you're off - simple as that. Then it's just a case of loading the supplied EzCD 5 CD authoring software. This, as regular readers will know, is a fine piece of code, but it's tailored for ease of use, rather than 'power users'. To wit, if you want to know where every sector of the data you're writing is going, you'll have to get Nero instead.

The LaCie works brilliantly. It feels great to use and burns fine sounding CDs, but as always if it's audio CDs you're burning it's safest to keep the speeds down. Sound is excellent - clean and smooth with just the merest scintilla of blurring and softening of the soundstage. If FireWire and BURN-Proof functionality aren't at the top of your list, then this is the one. Beautiful! ■ ▲

LaCie Fusion £151.75

www.lacie.co.uk

World Verdict



Brilliant design and build quality allied to a low, low price makes this an essential purchase - if its modest notch feature count isn't a problem.

welcome to

world favourites

Here's a list of products that are a good buy. We've tried 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 as a ROK

COMPACT DISC

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 95)

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)

NAD S500 £1000
This dynamic top of the range Silverline spinner delights with any type of music. Exciting, sophisticated sounding and highly recommended. (Jun 2000)

ROKSAN CASPIAN £895
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 £300
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)

COMPACT DISC TRANSPORTS

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 98)

TEAC P-30 £2500
Cheap it isn't, but then it sounds like a million digital dollars. Nothing short of superb. (Jun 97)

TEAC VRDS-T1 £600
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 concious who want the best. (Feb 95)

DACs

CAMBRIDGE AUDIO DACMAGIC 3* £99
Superb value for money with extensive facilities and solid, detailed sonics. Upgrades any sub-£300 player.

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

DPA LITTLE BIT 3* £299
A taste of the high end on a budget. Rich, clean, punchy sound transforms budget CD players.

MIDIMAN FLYING COW £299
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)

TURNTABLES

LINN SONDEK LP12 BASIK £1100
Off the pace these days in many respects but still an extremely sweet and engaging listen with a quintessentially analogue sound.

MICHELL GYRODEC SE £775
Exquisitely built, infinitely upgradeable deck that gives true high end sound at mid-fi prices.

MICHELL ORBE £2000
Fantastically capable all rounder with commanding, powerful, detailed sound that gets the best from almost any arm and cartridge. Supreme build, brilliant value. (Apr 95)

ORIGIN LIVE STANDARD (KIT) £145
Good in standard form with AC motor; frighteningly good with a DC motor and battery PSU.

PINK TRIANGLE TARANTELLA £680
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 £110
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 £1295
DSU or XPS 3.5 power supply £150/170 extra. Excellent pitch stability from a new Swiss motor and outboard power supply. Very tight bass, fine dynamics and revealing clarity. (Jan 97)

SYSTEMDEK IIX900*/RB250 £330
A fine all-rounder and easy to upgrade too. More depth and breadth than Rega Planar 3. (Sep 94)

VESTAX BDT-2000 £225
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)

TONEARMS

HADCOCK 242 SE £649
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)

NAIM ARO* £975
Truly endearing and charismatic performer - wonderfully engaging mid-band makes up for softened frequency extremes

REGA RB300 £180
Some may prefer the simpler RB250 at £130. Detailed, tight, rhythmic sound but tonally rather grey and cold-sounding. Still excellent value, though.

Prices shown are those at the time of the review



Musical Fidelity X-Cans2
Warm, sumptuous, sweet sound

SME 3009SII £309
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 second-hand. (Jan 93)

SME 309 £689
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)

CARTRIDGES

AUDIO TECHNICA AT-110E £30
Great starter cartridge that's refined, detailed and musical beyond its price. Best value MM under £50

GOLDRING 1012GX £74
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 £185
Better Goldring's 1042 and costs only £135 on trade-in. An assured and transparent MM. (Feb 98)

DYNAVECTOR DV20X-H £299
The best modern budget MC combines deliciously sweet sound with fantastic get-up-and-go. High output version works a treat with valve phono stages too.

MUSIC MAKER £575
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. (Feb 99)

ORTOFON MC 7500 £2000
Conclusive proof that there's hope for the world. It's a long time ago now but this high-priced favourite still earns its niche - CD lovers would die if they heard it. (May 94)

ORTOFON MC 15 SUPER II £140
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 £130
One of the best Moving Magnet cartridges going, with beautiful treble and muscular bass. New low price makes it a bargain.

ORTOFON ROHMANN £1000
In a way it's MC 2000 meets MC 7500 with great tonal strengths and a dynamo sound. (Apr 96)

INTEGRATED AMPLIFIERS

AUDIO ANALOGUE PUCCINI SE £595
This superbly-built Italian integrated has a lucidity and control which leaves others nowhere. Sound stage a wow. (Dec 97)

AUDIOLAB 8000a * £495
Well rounded integrated with smooth and detailed sound plus a huge feature count. Great build makes later versions a top used buy.

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. (Sep 95)

MISSION CYRUS 2 * £299
Classic eighties minimalism combines arresting styling with clean, open, lively sound. Further upgradable with PSX power supply.

MUSICAL FIDELITY X-CANS2 £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 £995
Builds on the strengths of the Campion with ample control, colour and drive. (Oct 97)

PHONO STAGES

CREEK OBH-B 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 Atessa PSU the Artaxerxes X MM/MC stage still shines. Great stage depth, neutrality and tonal colour. (Oct 97)



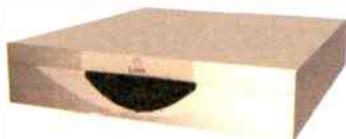
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Naim NAP 500 Power Amp £7995

Linn CD12 CD Player normal price £12000
Naim NAP 500 Power Amp normal price £10995

world favourites

SONNETEER SEDLEY £399

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

PRE-AMPLIFIERS

AMC 1100 £150

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 £475

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)

XTC PRE-1 * £1000

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

POWER AMPLIFIERS

ARCAM 9 * £400

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 NAPI80 £1060

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

TUNERS

CAMBRIDGE T500 £180

An extremely engaging tuner with a performance at odds with its low price. Not exactly a Troughline, but you may not notice... (Feb 99)

CREEK T43 £399

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

MARANTZ ST17 £600

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* £300

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

NAIM NAT03 £595

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

SONY ST-SA3ES* £250

Beguiling RDS tuner for the sonically discerning. Good ergonomics and sensitive too. (Apr 97)

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-S950 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-580SE* £250

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

LOUDSPEAKERS

CASTLE EDEN £469

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

EPOS ES12 * £495

Strong, punchy bass is allied to finely detailed, articulate midrange and sparkling treble. (Oct 96)



Kef Cresta I loudspeakers
A very musical sound

KEF CRESTA I £100

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

KLIPSCH HERESY II £1100

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 * £495

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.

MISSION 771 £170

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

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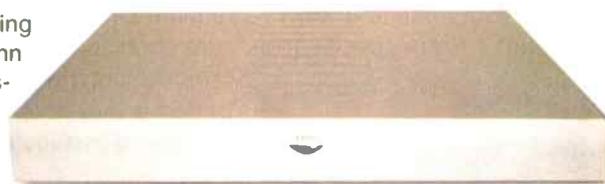
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Linn summer promotion for Klimax and 5125 Amplifiers

The Linn summer promotion this year revolves around the stunning Klimax twin and 5125 multi channel power amp. If you are a Linn owner and would like to upgrade to the Klimax or activate your system with the 5125, both with huge savings please contact Ian Ridge on either number above or email lanR@billyvee.co.uk

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- Deferred & Interest Free Credit available 0% APR - Call for details.
- Arcam, B&W, Linn, Naim, Rega, TAG & more available for audition

Your chance to own one of these stunning amplifiers



Available from June. Call now to arrange your audition

QUAD ESL 63 * £3450
A reference against which all other loudspeakers are judged, the '63s have superb imaging and genuine transparency.

TANNOY AMS8 * £2700
Bold sounding pro active monitor with solid bass, clear midrange and delicious treble. (Aug 96)

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

MINIDISC PLAYERS

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-JB930Q £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-JE55ES
MiniDisc recorder £520
The best sounding MD deck made so far, thanks to awesome build and heroic ATRAC-DSP Type R coding.



Alesis Masterdisk
A glimpse of the future

SONY MDS-JE510 £300
An impressive sound and unmatched convenience make this MiniDisc player an excellent buy.

DIGITAL RECORDERS

ALESIS MASTERDISK £1400
A groundbreaking hard disc recorder with a built-in CD drive. An amazing bit of kit, and a glimpse 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 £1100
Probably the best sounding CD recorder 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 £480
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.

DVD PLAYERS

DENON DVD-5000 £1600
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)

PIONEER DV-717 £700
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 £490
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)

HEADPHONES

JECKLIN FLOAT MODEL TWO £99
Wonderful panel-like and open sound from these esoteric-looking headclamps. Do not wear in public unless you like being made a fool of!

SENNHEISER HD-490 £50
Good value cans with an exciting and bassy sound. Everything one should look for in headphones at a sensible price.



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A simple and effective upgrade

INTERCONNECTS

CHORD COMPANY CHAMELEON 2 £90/m
One of our favourite favourites, the Chameleons are musical performers with a smooth yet open sound.

DNM RESON £40/m
Neutral and transparent, and a steal at forty quid!

NORDOST BLUE HEAVEN £150/m
Some of the fastest and most transparent cable around. A simple and effective upgrade.

VAN DEN HUL ULTIMATE THE FIRST £260/0.6m
Carbon interconnects that help you forget the electronics and concentrate on the music. Miraculous transparency.

LOUDSPEAKER CABLE

CHORD COMPANY RUMOUR £9.95/m
The Rumour is our reference at the price. Tight and tuneful bass mixed with air and space results in a cracking cable for the money.

DNM RESON £6.95/m
This cable has a transparency of sound that's rarely heard at the price. Excellent value for money.

NORDOST BLUE HEAVEN £375/3m pair
This isn't cheap, but it sounds absolutely fab. An open and spacious sound that simply carries music.

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Bluroom Minipod Speakers Var colours . . . (289.00)	£199.00	Marantz DV4100 DVD (1Yr G/tee) 50% . . . (399.00)	£199.00
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Linn Karik/2 CD Player S/H (1Yr G/tee) (new 1850.00)	£895.00	Naim NAP 250 Power Amp S/H (1Yr G/tee) (1805.00)	£999.00
Linn 5105 Power Amps (2 Yr G/tee) 50% . (1200.00)	£600.00	Naim NAP 250 Power Amp (2Yr G/tee) . . . (1805.00)	£1445.00
Linn Kan Speakers (2Yr G/tee) (325.00)	£229.00	Naim Intro Spkrs - Beech (1Yr G/tee) (790.00)	£579.00
Linn Keosa Speakers (2Yr G/tee) (495.00)	£299.00	Naim NAP500 Power Amp (2Yr G/tee) . . (10995.00)	£7995.00
Linn Ninka Cherry Spkrs (2Yr G/tee) (985.00)	£725.00	ProAc Tablette Speakers (2Yr G/tee) (649.00)	£459.00
Linn 5150 Subwoofer-Cherry (2Yr G/tee) . . (2999.00)	£1950.00	Pioneer LCV10 Laptop Port/DVD 60% (999.00)	£399.00
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Linn Keilidh Blk S/H (1Yr G/tee) 50% (775.00)	£387.00	Vision 42" Plasma (1Yr G/tee) 50% (5150.00)	£2575.00
Linn Keltik Speakers Wal (2Yr G/tee) (6000.00)	£3950.00	Yamaha KX493 Cassette Deck (2Yr G/tee) . (179.00)	£129.00

welcome to world classics

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 pre-amp 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 CD1

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, TL12 & TL10

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' pre-amps. Use of EF86 pentode valve for high gain rules out ultra performance. Not the highest-fi.

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.



Garrard 401
A legendary turntable.

QUAD 22/11 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!

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AERIAL ACOUSTICS	10T	Reference Loudspeakers in Santos Rosewood including Special Plinths	Ex.Demo/Mint	£8700	£5750
	7B	Loudspeakers in Natural Cherry including Special Plinths - 5 Star Best Buy - Home Cinema Choice*	Ex.Demo/Mint	£5000	£3150
	5	Loudspeakers in Natural Maple including Special Plinths	Ex.Demo/Mint	£2755	£1930
	CC3B	Centre Speaker in Natural Cherry + Special Adjustable Floor Stand - 5 Star Best Buy - Home Cinema Choice*	Ex.Demo/Mint	£1800	£1135
	SR3	Rear Surround Bipolar/Dipolar Switchable Loudspeakers Black - 5 Star Best Buy - Home Cinema Choice*	Ex.Demo/Mint	£3000	£1995
	SW12	400W Active Remote Control Subwoofer with Parametric Equalizer finished in Rose Walnut. *5 Star Best Buy - Home Cinema Choice*	Ex.Demo/Mint	£4800	£3025
CLASSE AUDIO	CAV-150	Multi-Channel Switchable Power Amplifier - 3,4,5, or 6 Channels (6x 150w to 3x 300w) S/E Inputs. (Silver/Black) *5 Star Best Buy - Home Cinema Choice*	Ex.Demo/Mint	£3600	£2495
EZO	ARIA	Integrated Amplifier with 2 x 40w and Preamp Output with Remote (Silver)	Ex.Demo/Mint	£450	£285
	NANDA Face Nord	Preamplifier - 2 Analog Channels, Dual Mono, 3 Transformers, Balanced Inputs/Outputs (Silver)	Ex.Demo/Mint	£1000	£625
	K5.5	(5 x 100w) Multi-Channel Amplifier, 6 Transformers (Silver) *5 Star Best Buy - Home Cinema Choice*	Ex.Demo/Mint	£1500	£945
MIRAGE	BPSS-210 + LFX-3	250w Active Bipolar Subwoofer (Piano Black) with 3-Channel Active Fully Adjustable Crossover (Limited Edition)	SecondHand/Mint	£2300	£995
	OM-C3	2-Way, 3-Driver Shielded Centre Speaker or L / C / R (Matte Black)	SecondHand/Mint	£299	£165

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- Chord
- Clear Audio
- Denon
- DNM
- Egglaston Works
- Electrograph Delphi
- Genelec
- Gryphon
- Graham
- Imerge
- J M Lab
- Krell
- Lexicon
- Linn
- Loewe
- Lutron
- Lyra
- Mark Levinson
- Michell Eng.
- Musical Fidelity
- Naim
- NEC
- Nordost
- Oracle
- Ortofon
- Plinius
- P.M.C.
- Primare
- Project
- Quadraspire
- REL
- Rockport
- Roksan
- Rotel
- Ruark
- Seleco
- SME
- Straight Wire
- Sugden
- Tara Labs
- Teac
- Totem
- Transfiguration
- Trichord
- Trilogy
- Van den Hul
- VPI
- Wilson Audio
- Wilson Research
- YBA

H I - F I

HOME CINEMA

MULTIROOM INSTALL

BUY / SELL

Quarterly Sale items

	Our Price	Original Retail Price
Kenwood LI000C pre/ LI000M Power Amp	£795.00	£2,500.00
Exposure VII pre + XII psu	£595.00	£1,200.00
Harmon Kardon AVPI	£175.00	£ -
Cary 572 se Monoblocks	£1,295.00	£2,350.00
Dynalab 5DA 2.8	£195.00	£600.00

New this month

POWER AMPLIFIERS		
Musical Fidelity F15	£1,395.00	£2,500.00
Audio Innovations S1000 mk III monos	£1,395.00	£3,000.00

PRE AMPLIFIERS		
Audio Synthesis Passion 8M bal/ remote	£1,095.00	£1,895.00
Musical Fidelity F22	£695.00	£1,500.00
Audio Innovations L2 Pre	£299.00	£699.00

PRE POWER AMPLIFIERS		
Musical Fidelity F15/ F22	£1,995.00	£4,000.00
YBA Pre 2/ Amp 2 HCDT	£2,395.00	£5,000.00
Audio Innovations S1000 monos/ L2 Pre	£1,595.00	£3,700.00
McCormack Linedrive	£395.00	£995.00

LOUDSPEAKERS		
Wilson 5.1	£7,250.00	£18,900.00
SD Acoustics SD1	£695.00	£1,650.00
Martin Logan SL3	£1,995.00	£3,399.00

CD PLAYERS & DACS		
Meridian 508/20	£995.00	£1,800.00
Oracle CD2000 Player	£4,995.00	£9,000.00
Audio Note DAC 5	£10,995.00	£19,500.00
Musical Fidelity NuVista CD	£2,495.00	£3,000.00
Micromega CD3 + Duo pro	£1,395.00	£3,000.00

TURNTABLES ANALOGUE, VARIOUS		
Koetsu Red Sig. (100 hrs use)	£995.00	£1,899.00
Oracle Delphi mk IV	£1,995.00	£4,200.00
Moth Record Cleaning m/c	£395.00	£ -

Power amplifiers

Audio Research D200	£1,495.00	£3,250.00
Krell Kav 500i	£3,495.00	£5,498.00
Audiolab 8000 A int	£295.00	£600.00
Krell KSA 80B	£1,595.00	£3,847.00
Audio Research VT150se	£7,495.00	£16,800.00
Goldmund Mimesis 3	£1,495.00	£5,150.00
Gamut D200	£395.00	£3,250.00
Krell FPB250M	£6,450.00	£10,000.00
Bryston 4 BST	£On Dem	£2,050.00
Musical Fidelity A 300 int	£995.00	£1,600.00
Krell FPB 600	£7,995.00	£12,900.00
Audio Research M300 Monoblocks	£4,995.00	£6,500.00
Naim Nap 90	£295.00	£650.00
Krell MDA 300	£4,995.00	£12,000.00
Oracle S3000 Integrated	£On Dem	£9,950.00
Bryston 7 BST Monoblocks	£On Dem	£4,000.00
Cary SLA 70 mk II Silver	£1,295.00	£2,250.00
Linn LK 100	£345.00	£650.00
Boulder 500 AE	£2,850.00	£5,500.00
Acuphase E203 Integrated Amp	£795.00	£ -
Melos 402 Monoblocks	£4,495.00	£9,000.00
Krell FPB 300	£5,995.00	£9,990.00
Linn Klassik CD/Amp silver	£895.00	£1,030.00
Boulder 1060 Power	£On Dem	£16,500.00
Cary Audio 300 SE Sig WE300B	£3,495.00	£5,304.00
Primare 30.1 mk II Integrated	£1,350.00	£1,500.00
Plinius 5A100 "new"	£On Dem	£3,400.00
Krell 250 A/3 3 Chanel amp	£2,995.00	£4,698.00
Graff GM200	£4,750.00	£8,000.00
Cary SLA 70 mk II	£995.00	£2,250.00
Audio Research Ref 600 mk II	POA	£40,000.00
YBA Passion Monoblocks	£On Dem	£8,995.00
YBA Passion Stereo	£On Dem	£5,995.00
Krell FPB 300c	£8,500.00	£9,998.00
Sunfire 300 Power Amp	£995.00	£2,400.00
Plinius 250 mk IV	£On Dem	£6,000.00
Audio Note Kasi	£12,495.00	£30,000.00
Cary 805 C Monoblocks	£On Dem	£8,250.00
Krell FPB 600 c	£9,995.00	£14,994.00

AV components

AV COMPONENTS		
Linn Klassik DVD	£On Dem	£2,000.00
Krell HTS (AV Processor)	£4,495.00	£6,498.00
Audio Refinement Pre 5	£On Dem	£895.00
Audio Refinement Multi 5 (Power) "new"	£On Dem	£2,250.00
Lexicon MCI	£3,500.00	£5,500.00
Lexicon MCI2	£On Dem	£8,100.00

TELEVISIONS & DVD PLAYERS BY LOEWE

Loewe Xenix DVD	£On Dem	£495.00
Loewe Aconda	£POA	
Loewe Planus + Std	£POA	
Loewe Xelos + Std	£POA	
Loewe LZA Active Speakers	£POA	

PLASMAS/LCD/PROJECTORS

From NEC/ Panasonic/Pioneer/Sharp	from £4000.00	POA
Electrograph Delphi/Seleco/Sony/Sanyo	-	POAa
Panasonic TH-42 PWD4	£4,995.00	

Pre amplifiers

Audible Illusions P3Amc	£2,450.00	£3,400.00
Meridian 603 Pre/Dac	£1,200.00	£2,450.00
Magnum P200 Pre	£795.00	£1,970.00
Audiolab 8000 Q Pre	£695.00	£1,295.00
Audio Research SP9 mkII	£895.00	£2,100.00
AVI 52000 MP remote pre	£495.00	£1,000.00

Mark Levinson 380 5	£4,250.00	£6,900.00
Krell KRC 2	£1,995.00	£3,400.00
Hovland HF100 Line Pre	£POA	£4,950.00
BAT VK50SE	£5,295.00	£6,500.00
Krell KSL 2 Pre	£1,750.00	£3,000.00
Cary 5LP98L Remote Pre x-dem	£1,795.00	£2,794.00
Boulder 1012 (pre amp/ 24.96 dac/ Phono)	£1,795.00	£3,000.00
Trilogy 901 Pre	£495.00	£995.00
Krell KSL + Phono	£1,295.00	£ -
YBA I Alpha Pre mm/mc + psu	£On Dem	£4,900.00
YBA Passion Pre + mc	£On Dem	£5,595.00
Boulder 2010 Pre	£POA	£30,000.00
Plinius 16L	£On Dem	£3,700.00
C.A.T. ultimate reference Pre Amp Inc/ Phono	£On Dem	£5,750.00
Audible Illusions P3A Pre MM/MC mk II	£On Dem	£3,140.00
Naim 42.5	£150.00	£450.00

Quality speakers

JM Lab Electra 926	£On Dem	£2,149.00
JM Lab Cobalt 826	£On Dem	£1,279.00
B+W DM 602 52	£195.00	£330.00
Infinity Kappa 9	£1,495.00	
ATC SCM 20A	£1,995.00	£3,300.00
Audio Physic Avanti III X-dem	£6,499.00	£7,499.00
Dynaudio Contour 1.3 + stds	£695.00	£1,400.00
Genelec 205 Active Monitors		£750.00
Audio Physic Caldera	£5,995.00	£10,000.00
Audio Physic Virgo III "new"		£4,000.00
Acoustic Research LST	£495.00	£ -
Thiel 7.2	£7,995.00	£14,000.00
ATC SCM 20 SL (Black)	£1,295.00	£2,051.00
Soundlab A3 Plus	£3,995.00	£12,900.00
JM Lab Utopia (Ex Dem)	£12,495.00	£18,799.00
Vienna Acoustics Mozart	£1,095.00	£1,500.00
Audio Plan Contrast 3	£1,395.00	£3,200.00
Avalon Ascents	£6,995.00	£12,000.00
JM Lab Micro Utopia + Std	£2,750.00	£4,248.00
JM Lab Micro Utopia + Std Blk "new"		£3,899.00
JM Lab Mezzo Utopia	£5,499.00	£7,799.00
Audio Physic Tempo III "new"	£On Dem	£2,000.00
Naim 5BL's	£1,295.00	£2,225.00
ClaraVox Magnifica	£6,995.00	£14,500.00
Ensemble Speakers PA1	£995.00	£2,000.00
Audio Physic Caldera "new"	£On Dem	£10,000.00
Audio Physic Libra		£4,799.00
Audio Physic Spark "new"	£On Dem	£1,749.00
Rogers LS55	£330.00	£430.00
Klipsch	£795.00	£1,700.00
ATC SCM 10 +stds	£795.00	£1,200.00

CD players & DACS

Primare V20 CD/DVD	£795.00	£1,000.00
Thule Spirit CD	£695.00	£900.00
Meridian 602 Transport	£795.00	£1,750.00
Madia X 64.4 AT&T/ Bal	£1,595.00	£5,000.00
Micromega Duo CD 3 Transport	£895.00	£1,795.00
D.P.A. Enlightenment DAC	£395.00	£825.00
Theta Pro Geny	£595.00	£1,295.00
YBA CD I Delta "new"	£On Dem	£4,400.00
Audio Aero "new"	£On Dem	£3,500.00
Oracle CD1000 Transport	£On Dem	£3,950.00
Tag Maclaren CD220R	£995.00	£1,500.00
Audio Lab 8000 DAX	£995.00	£1,600.00
Mark Levinson 30.5/ 31	£9,995.00	£24,000.00
Sony CDPR1/ DAS R1	£2,995.00	£6,000.00
Krell KPS 25s 24/96	£14,995.00	£22,500.00
Acuphase DP70V	£1,895.00	£ -
Acuphase 90/91	£6,995.00	£16,000.00
YBA CD Speciale	£395.00	£675.00
Audio Refinement CD Complete	£650.00	£875.00
Boulder 2020 dac	£POA	£24,000.00
Krell KPS 25c	£18,995.00	£23,498.00
Theta Data II Transport AT + link	£1,995.00	£4,000.00
YBA CD Integre	£On Dem	£1,195.00

Turtables & analogue

Project RPM4/ Ortofon S10 "new"	£On Dem	£325.00
Project RPM5/ Ortofon Rohmann "new"	£On Dem	£2,050.00
Ortofon Rohmann	£On Dem	£1,050.00
Adjuster Racks (Aluminium/ Perspex)	£On Dem	From £300!
Krell Kav Processor	£6,500.00	£14,000.00
SME 30/2 A "new"	£9,850.00	£12,289.00
Pierre Lurje J1/ SLS	£1,695.00	£4,000.00
Michel Iso Phono + Hera	£325.00	£495.00
Goldmund Reference/ T3F	£8,995.00	£30,000.00
Ortofon Kontrapunkt a b "new"	£On Dem	£500.00/ £750.00
Michell Gyro SE/ RB300	£On Dem	£1,100.00
Elemental 4 Tier (Fixed)	£1,295.00	£2,000.00
Roksan Shiraz	£450.00	£1,000.00
Michell Orbe/QC	£1,495.00	£2,200.00
Audio Synthesis Phono Eq mm/mc	£795.00	£ -
Voyd Valdi/ Orion	£695.00	£ -
Gryphon Phono Pre-Amp (dual mono) Head Amp	£795.00	£1,600.00
Parasound TQ1600 (remote tuner)	£295.00	£400.00
SME Series V Arm	£995.00	£1,650.00
Wilson Benesch Act 2	£895.00	£1,400.00
Rotel Michi Phono	£695.00	£1,200.00
Rockport System II c/w Air stand, vac hold & arm	£18,000.00	£33,000.00
Musical Surroundings Phonomena Phono Stage	£495.00	£ -
Pink Triangle PT Too SA/RB3005/W	£795.00	£ -
Plinius 14 Phono		£2,750.00
Transparent Audio Music Wave Ultra XL Bi-Wire	£2,100.00	£4,000.00
Cary PH301 MMJMC	£895.00	£1,695.00
Nackamichi DR 3	£225.00	£400.00
Tom Evans - The Groove	£On Dem	£1,795.00
Clear Audio Reference Mc phono stage X-demo	£1,695.00	£2,065.00
Rega Planer 3 + Hi Fi News Out Board Power Supply	£320.00	£423.00
Clear Audio Symphono phono stage X-demo MMJMC	£640.00	£740.00
Lavardin Reference Phono	£On Dem	£2,500.00
Linn Akito	£150.00	£250.00

* Reduced this month

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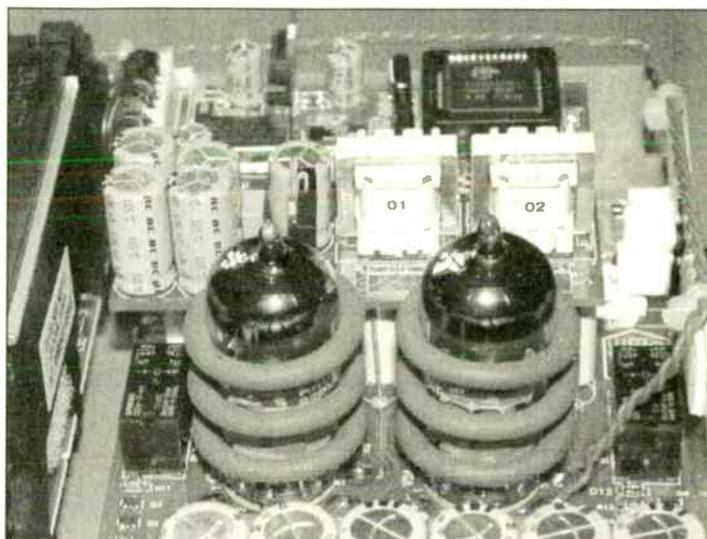
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Are Upgrades Really Worth it? Neville Roberts finds out.

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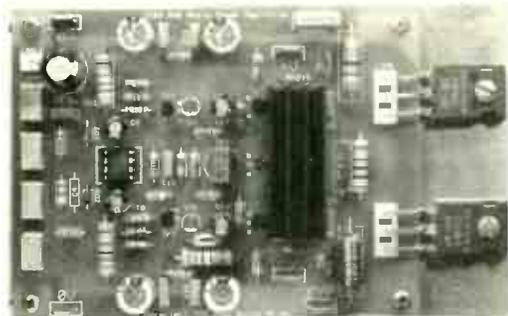
GEC Audio Tube Data, reviewed by Andy Grove

DIY LETTERS

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WHITE NOISE

AUDIO KITS, MODULES, COMPONENTS



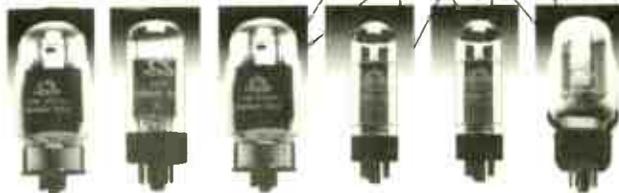
PRODUCTS INCLUDE:- Power Amplifiers 30-250W, Preamplifiers, Phono stages, Active Crossovers, Power Supplies, Buffer Amplifiers, Balanced line drivers / receivers, Stepped attenuators, Gold plated connectors, Cables, Capacitors, Resistors, Semiconductors, Transformers, Subwoofers, Loudspeaker drive units

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TECHNICAL & GENERAL

SOME NECESSITIES - FROM THE ORIGINAL CLASSIC TURNTABLE SPECIALISTS

CONNOISSEUR			P&P
	BD1/2 Drive Belt	£12.60	£1.90
	BD1/2 Motor Suspension kit	£15.50	£2.50
	SAU.2 Headshell	£18.50	£2.90
	SAU.2 Connecting Lead	£16.50	£3.20
GARRARD STANDARD MODELS			
	Wired arm tubes	from £14.50	£2.90
	Cartridge carriers (sliders)	£12.50	£1.90
301/401 Transcription models			
Original	Thrust pad assembly	£13.50	£2.50
Original	Idler tension spring	£3.65	£1.90
Original	Brake pad	£3.40	£1.90
Xeroxcopy	Owners Manual 301 incl. full size mounting template	£9.30	£1.90
	401 " " " "	£7.20	£1.90
Replacement	301 control knobs On-Off/Speed select	pair £21.50	£2.90
Replacement	301 suppressor unit	£7.20	£2.50
Replacement	301 motor pulley (-2%), (-1%), (Std), (+1%)	each £16.50	£2.50
Replacement	301 Chrome mounting bolts nuts, washers.	set £7.85	£2.50
Recommended	Lubrication set - early 301 or 301/401	(specify) £7.20	£1.90
GOLDRING/LENCO			
	Idler wheel (lock-nut or clip fixing)	£22.50	£2.90
	Tension spring	£3.85	£1.90
	Arm pivot bearings - with fitting instructions	£9.85	£1.90
	Spindle/Main bearing assembly	GL 69/72 £21.00	£3.90
	" " "	GL 75/78 £26.50	£3.90
	Chassis suspension springs (set of 4)	set £21.25	£3.90
	Headshells	from £23.25	£2.80
	Instruction books	from £5.20	£1.90
THORENS			
	TD.124 series		
	Idler wheel original	£29.50	£2.90
	Idler wheel our redesigned replacement	£16.50	£2.90
	Drive belt	£24.65	£1.90
	Suspension rubbers ('mushrooms')	£17.50	£2.90
	TD.150/160		
	Drive Belt	£19.35	£1.90
	Suspension springs (-1%), (Std), (+1%) (set of 3) set	£14.50	£2.90
	Suspension - main bushes (set of 3) set	£14.50	£2.90
	Armboards TD.150 blank	£12.50	£2.50
	TD.160 "	£10.20	£2.90
CECIL WATTS	Dustbugs & spares - incl. Preener wicks		

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KIT & COMPONENT NEWS

► DYNAMITE SITE



This a wonderful hi-fi web-zine, available in English or Italian. The great thing about this site is that it is created by a non profit organisation so all reviews are impartial. The site covers all areas of hi-fi, including listening tests of amplifiers, loudspeakers etc., interviews, monthly editorials, book reviews, plus DIY and Tweaking. The site is rich in content and definitely worth a look.

www.tnt-audio.com

► AWAY IN A MANIA

Sunday 30 June sees the second Audiomania jamboree which will be held at the Castle Sports complex in Spalding, Lincolnshire. Described as being "the friendly show for anyone interested in audio" admission is £2 and there will be a wide range of stalls ranging from audiophile recording specialists, Vivante and Direct Disc, to exhibitors such as Transcription Horns and Icon Audio. Classic audio products are, of course, also on sale.

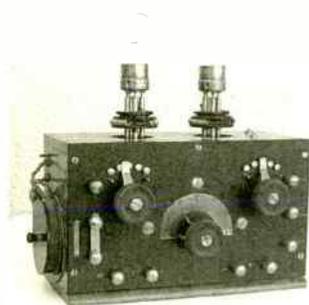
For further details ring
01775 680030 after 1pm

► STORMING AHEAD

www.nightstormer.com is one great loudspeaker DIY site, created to assist in the design and build of home constructed loudspeakers. It has an easy to use audio glossary, covering all those hi-fi terms that you may not fully understand. There is a frequently asked questions section that covers some very fundamental topics and a useful conversions and formulas page to save you scouring through your copy of Loudspeaker Design Cookbook. Also, it details numerous audio articles and technical data.

www.nightstormer.com

► CROSS CHANNEL TUBES



Pericaud battery radio of 1922

Take hi-fi back into the dark ages with tsf.com. This is a French site that specialises in old radios and phonographs, and even if this isn't your cup of tea it is definitely worth a look. Don't worry if your French isn't up to scratch, just click on the British flag in the top left hand corner of the home page. www.tsf.com is a large site with huge amount of information, detailing lots of vintage equipment, the history of wireless and of 78 rpm records. It has lots of hints and tips on antique radios and phonos. So if you have a old Bakelite radio from the Thirties that your grandfather gave you, this is the site to use to find out a bit more about your heirloom. This is a proper museum site. Just have a look at this Pericaud battery radio of 1922 for an example of what to expect.

www.tsf.com

Radio and Gramophones of olden times



► JENSEN INTERCEPTION

For all DIYers and tweekers looking for an upgrade path, Audio Specialists have announced that they are the UK distributors for the Tobais Jensen range of products. The line includes aluminium, tin, copper and silver foil audio signal capacitors. The company also offer a full service for Quad II amplifiers and a rewiring service for all vintage tube amps using high purity silver wire throughout. For details contact the company at:

audiospecialists@talk21.com

► LONDON LOVES

On a recent search around the web we came across this interesting site. As the name suggest it is a band of brothers located in the London area who have a passion for the world of DIY Hi-Fi. The website, created in 1997, discusses members' projects, interesting tales from the world of audio, links to other sites of importance and they have a bi-monthly newsletter. It's open to all comers as long as you have an interest in DIY! The great thing about this group is they meet up regularly at various venues around London for discussions. No doubt great alliances have been forged within this friendly Hi-fi Circle. Keep it up, chaps.



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TJOEB U

Upgrading the Njoe Tjoeb 4000 Valve CD Player - Are Upgrades Really Worth it? Neville Roberts

In DIY Supplement No.64 enclosed with the April 2002 issue of Hi-Fi World, I reviewed the impressive AH! Njoe Tjoeb 4000 valve CD player from the Dutch firm of DÉ HIFIWINKEL who design and supply the AH! range of products (their web site can be found at <http://www.hifi-notes.com> and their companion site at <http://www.hifi-planet.com> for their own designed AH! products). The standard model I reviewed is fitted with the AH! valve output stage, AC NoiseKiller and SuperCrystal oscillator.

The 'Super' version includes, amongst other things, quality feet, a quality mains lead, CD Mat and Tjoeb Ribs for extra damping on the valves. All these items are available as upgrades, as well as special op-amps, as well as the latest item to emerge from the AH! engineers - a TjoUpsampler. But do these sort of upgrades really make a noticeable difference or are the manufacturers exploiting the inveterate 'tweaker' in us all? I decided to put all the claims to the test.

Before proceeding, I have heard a number of people express concerns about after sales service if they buy products from another country. In my experience of this company, the courteous service I have enjoyed has been nothing short of superb with items turning up as quickly or quicker than if they had been ordered locally! I would argue that it is easier to place an order via the Web than driving into town and finding somewhere to park, etc. Incidentally, if any readers do not have access to the Web, the company can also be contacted at:

DE HIFIWINKEL BV
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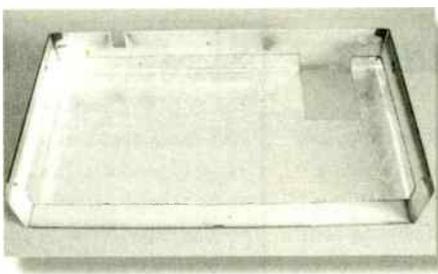
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Anyway, following an exchange of emails with Herman van den Dungen, a founder of the

company, a package of 'goodies' duly arrived.

My first task was to fit the new feet (aka 'Tjoeb Sjoes'). Knowing how important it is to decouple the equipment from its surroundings, I was not surprised to experience a subtle but discernable overall improvement in clarity, especially at higher volumes, with the new feet.

This was further to an improvement in clarity I had achieved previously by fitting a bituminous sound-deadening panel to the inside of the lid. The lid of the Njoe Tjoeb 4000 is simply constructed from a thin sheet of metal folded to form the top cover. The addition of a sound-deadening panel noticeably improved

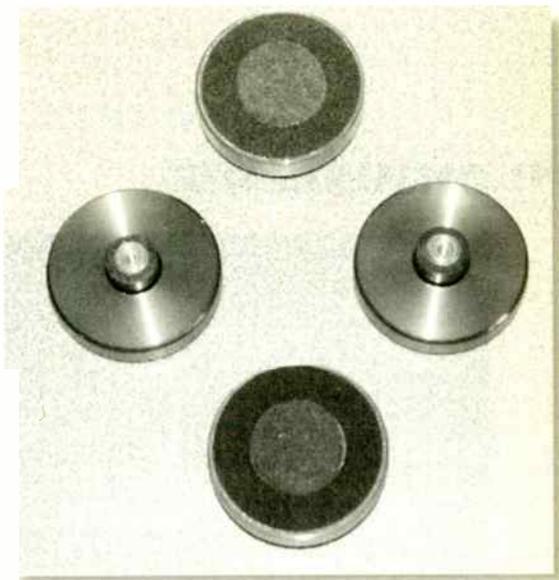


Sound-deadening panel applied to the inside of the lid

detail, especially at lower frequencies. The sound-deadening material can be purchased from car accessory shops and it is self-adhesive and laminated with metal foil.

Turning my attention to the mains lead, it was a relatively straightforward job to replace the standard two-core lead with the 'AC Direkt' power cord supplied by Herman. Further listening tests revealed a general cleaning up of the sound, with better imaging and detail.

Next up was to fit the 'Tjoeb Ribs' to each valve. These cost just over £3 for both valves and consist of 3 rubber rings that fit over the glass of each valve, spaced to give a sinister 'Dalek' look! The theory behind this

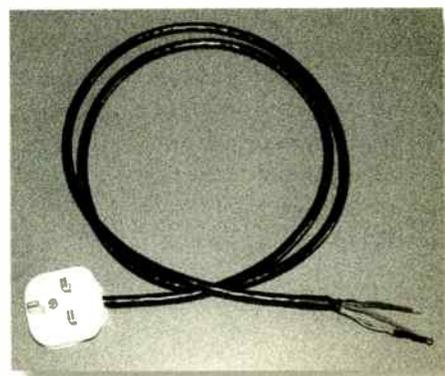


The set of four 'Tjoeb Sjoes'

is that microphony induced by external vibrations is effectively 'exterminated'. These rings are relatively easy to remove and refit quickly. Repeating this process and playing the same piece of music a number of times demonstrated an overall tighter sound with better imaging, predominantly in the lower registers. Again, this was more evident at higher volumes, as you might expect.

All the above upgrades collectively yielded subtle, but clearly noticeable improvements. Indeed, removal of any one of the above upgrades, although a time consuming process, revealed that each item makes a positive contribution to the listening experience.

Moving on to the next item out of the box, I fitted the CD Mat to the copy of Vivaldi Violin Concertos, Op.6 (Decca 455 653-2) I had been using for the other tests and hit the 'Play' button. Before I proceed, I'd better



AC Direkt Power Cable

PGRADE

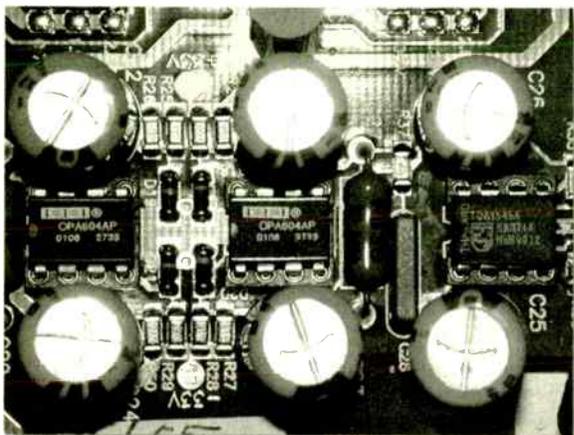


Connecting the power cable

describe where I'm coming from. Whilst a record is a mechanical device, a CD is simply storing numbers that are read by a laser and these numbers are used to define an analogue signal so any changes to the mechanical properties of the CD won't affect the sound, right? WRONG! This is one of those startling improvements that seem to defy logic. Strings sounded sweeter - less harsh yet clearer - more accurate in detail without sounding clinical. The cellos' bass registers were more refined and accurate. This is, in my opinion, a 'must have' addition for any make of CD player and at a little over £10 it is excellent value.

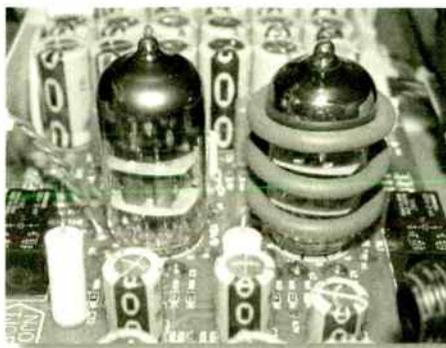
Next for consideration were the op-amps. The Njoe Tjoeb 4000 is supplied with Burr Brown OPA604, but upgrades are available in the form of an Analog Devices AD825 and Burr Brown OPA627; the former is based on a plug-in 'mini board' that sports two silver mica capacitors in addition to the op-amp. A pair of AD825s cost around £19 and the OPA627s cost just under £32.

The two op-amps are fitted in sockets on the PCB to the left of the Philips DAC chip.



The Original op-amps in position next to the DAC

For anyone who has no experience of fitting ICs into sockets - a word of warning! This has nothing to do with the usual precautions to be observed when dealing with static-sensitive devices (ensure you are earthed, etc.) Do not try and remove the IC by grasping it between your thumb



Tjoeb Ribs fitted to one of the valves

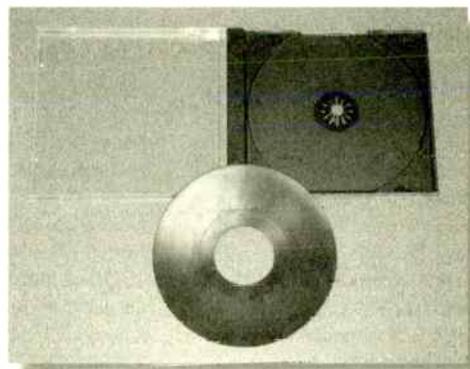
and index finger and pulling. Due to the force you will need to exert to hold it, it will flip round as it comes out of the socket and impale itself in your thumb. This is surprisingly painful and tends to elicit little sympathy from other members of the household!

The correct method is to gently slide a small screwdriver between the IC and the socket on one side and gently prise it a little from the socket. Repeat on the other side. Do this alternately until the IC becomes free and then lift it out. To insert, carefully position the IC on the socket being careful to align the pins with the holes using a screwdriver before pressing down. If you don't do this, you run the risk of bending a pin. Should this happen, don't despair. Remove the IC and straighten the pin(s) using a small pair of flat bladed pliers and try again.

Back to the listening tests. Changing the original OPA604s to the Analog Devices AD825. I ran the player for a while to allow the new devices to run-in, as recommended by AH! I then repeatedly swapped over the devices while listening to the

first track of BWV527 on Bach Trio Sonatas (Hyperion CDA66843), which has an oboe, a violin and an organ providing the bass line. The 825s yielded a sound that was warmer than the 604s. A very easy sound to listen to - bright, yet laid back, blending the instruments together making you feel the performers were working together and enjoying the music.

Repeating the test with the 604s up against the 627s, the latter device produced a cleaner sound, more detailed with considerably better imaging than either the 604s or the 825s. The bass was tighter and well controlled. Overall, there was a greater sense of realism, with the performers being there with me in the living room. The fingering on the oboe was clear and I could easily hear the valves on the instrument



The CD Mat is supplied in a jewel case

closing with a gentle 'click' in the solo passages! A friend summed up the effect when he exclaimed, "Gosh Neville, your CD player is sounding more vinyl!"

Returning to Vivaldi and the last movement from RV105 on a Harmonia Mundi CD HCX3957046 entitled "Seven Concertos", there was startling clarity with all the instruments. I could hear all the ancillary mechanical noises from the instruments, such as the harpsichord, bringing striking realism to the sound.

For me, there is a clear winner in the 627s, given the kind of music I listen to. I felt the sound of the 604s almost too warm - to the point of melting! However, I can see someone who is into jazz in a cool night club with a smoky atmosphere preferring the easy sound of the Analog Devices. Their brighter

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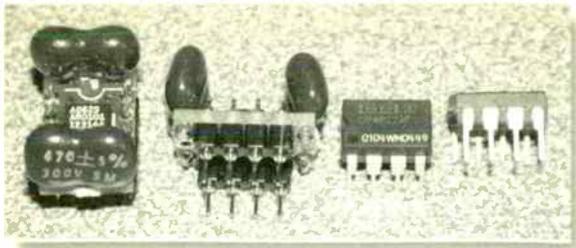
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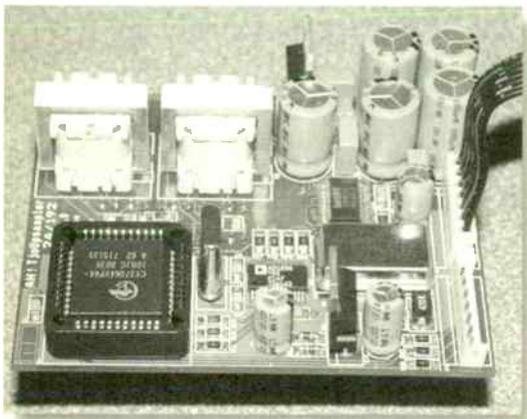
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The new op-amps awaiting trial!

◀ yet smooth sound may suit the smaller loudspeaker set-up that can be rather clinical.

Next to be auditioned were alternatives to the supplied Philips Jan 6922 valves. In my previous article, I compared these against similar offerings from Sovtek and Harma. This time, it was the turn of some Russian Navigator 6H23 NOS valves and Siemens E288CCs supplied by Herman, costing £38 and £130 a set respectively. Both sets were allowed to burn in for 24 hours by running them with a CD playing continuously before



The TjoUpsampler waits for its turn!

commencing the listening tests.

The only way to thoroughly test these, as with my previous valve-swapping experiments, was to undertake the lengthy process of exchanging the valves and allowing them to warm up fully before listening again. It

was a credit to the rugged valve bases that they have shown no signs of deterioration throughout these tests.

So how did they compare against the Philips? I have to say that I really liked the Navigators. The bass was more controlled and there was much better detail, with a very similar sound to the Harmas - lively and energetic. As for the taller Siemens with their

gold-plated pins and higher heater current, could they justify their hefty price tag? They too had better control over the bass than the Philips and excellent detail, but a much fuller, open sound. Strings were easier to listen to and the overall sound was



Which set had the most bottle?

more refined. These valves took everything in their stride. Nothing was going to be a problem to them and they handled whatever the CD threw at them effortlessly. They were good and they knew it! My verdict - if you can afford it, these are the valves to go for. If not, try the Navigators - you won't be disappointed.

Finally, it was the turn of the TjoUpsampler to come under the spotlight. Priced at about £205, this is a 24/192 DAC/upsampler which replaces both the op-amps and the Philips DAC chip and consists of a PCB and a 22 pin

connector 'on stilts' that fits into the two op-amp sockets. The six pins in the middle of the

which, in turn, connects into the now vacated Tjoeb board socket. This may sound somewhat complicated, but is, in fact, a quite straightforward process.

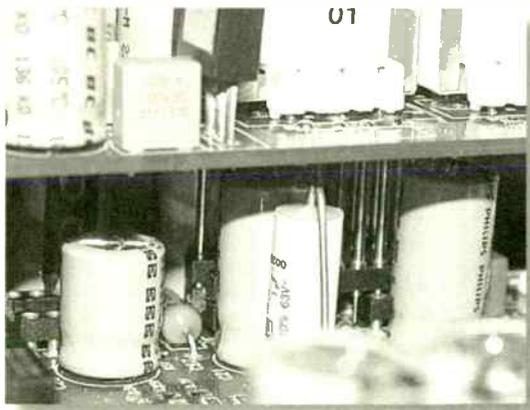
Another subtle upgrade? I think not! The effect was like removing a veil from the front of the sound stage. All the detail was there - I could hear the breathing of the solo violinist in the aforementioned recording of Vivaldi Op.6. Image placement was considerably more accurate - open and spacious, with superb depth. Bass was more extended, yet tighter. Allegros were altogether more thrilling and exciting - there was more going on. Playing a variety of recordings confirmed my initial assessment. Choral music is particularly challenging, as this can often sound muddy. Not so with the upsampler! My recording of Faure's Requiem (Decca 436 486-2) left my record deck quaking in the corner fearing it had met its match at last!

This will definitely convince even the hardened vinyl addict that there is much more on a CD waiting to be discovered than we thought possible. This is, in fact, reminiscent of records in the 70s when huge strides were made in cartridge design.

In summary, all of the options produced a noticeable improvement in sound quality. Overall, the CD Mat would probably win the prize for greatest improvement at lowest cost, whatever your CD player. This item, along with the ribs, feet, mains cable and a digital output transformer are all included with the 'Super' model for an additional £65 or so, which is a very worthwhile investment.

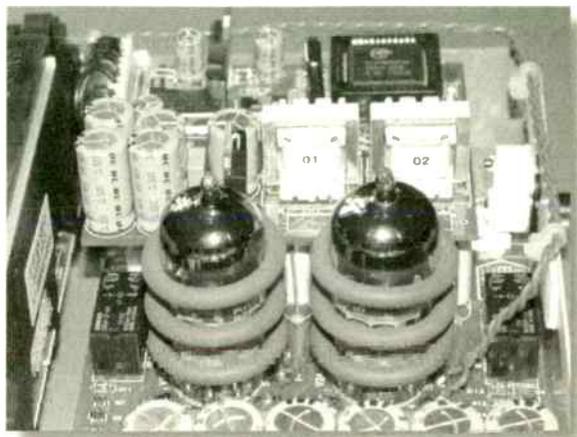
A valve upgrade is definitely worthwhile, with the Siemens as worthy champions and the Navigators a good value runner-up.

Clearly, the TjoUpsampler catapults the player into a different league, but if you can't stretch your budget, the op-amps should very much be considered. One of the beauties of the Njoe Tjoeb 4000 is that you can upgrade in stages, as funds permit. In any case, this is half the fun of Hi-Fi - saving up for the next upgrade. ■ ▲



Installing the Upsampler

connector have no connection and the DAC socket is left vacant - this can be seen on the left hand side in the photograph. In addition, the output from the drive mechanism board is unplugged from the Tjoeb board and plugged into the Upsampler



The finished upgrades

BOOK REVIEW

Andy Grove reviews GEC Audio Tube Data book. A must read for all valve heads.

▶ The bulk of this book contains data and circuits concerning the three best known MO Valve power tetrodes, the KT66, KT77 and KT88, (the KT77 was GEC's answer to Mullard's EL34), some data on the PX4 and PX25 triodes, plus some other stuff. I say this because I think that most people will buy this book for reprinted MOV data sheets and application notes for the aforementioned valves. Being a valve nerd I have originals of the KT66 data, but not for the KT77 or KT88. I managed to get the originals from MOV when they were still open, God knows why I didn't ask for the 77 and 88 at the same time!

In relation to their closure, let me quote a phrase from first section of the book, entitled "Audio Valves in Competition With Semiconductors": "However, from about 1975 onward, there has been a resurgence of interest in valves ...". Typical British "grey men in grey suits" management - close the company just as sales are about to pick up again. Anyway, this preliminary section basically gives a case as to why valves were regaining popularity at the time.

The first full section concerns preamplifiers of various types and there are some fairly whacky things in there, including some pointers as to designing a low noise MC phono input sans transformer, using a high transconductance valve, the 5842 (very similar to the 417A), not a transistor as the

input device. There is also a whole load of information regarding equalisation, tone controls, filters and suchlike.

Two whole preamplifier circuits are provided. These may or may not be of interest to the reader as they are of the "old style" with tone controls, and various scratch filters and so on. I believe, however, that given a garnish of high quality components and a flambé of minor tweaks they would sound pretty good.

To most readers the following sections will be the ones read with a torch under the duvet. These are the reprints of the MOV datasheets and applications notes. The data is very comprehensive and concisely presented. Full curves are given for each valve and various operating conditions, with their attendant distortion figures and power outputs provided too. There is an emphasis upon Ultra Linear operation of the tetrodes and plots are given which show the relation of UL (Ultra-Linear) tapping point to IM and THD figures, very interesting... There are circuits given for the valves, including a huge parallel push-pull KT88 design; this one should be called the MONster.

The power goes up and up through the book, reaching a climax with the KT88 MONster, then you turn the page and find details describing two of the finest ever audio triodes, the PX4 and PX25. An excellent book for all valve heads. **AG** ■ ▲



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D.I.Y. LETTERS

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► 300B OR NOT 300B - THAT IS THE QUESTION

Dear Andy,

Congratulations on your 300B PSE Monobloc Amplifiers.

As I am about to purchase a pair of the above amplifiers, I thought I would write to you, to ask a few questions. The reason I do this is because I have about 60 genuine 6SN7WGTA valves from various manufacturers.

What modifications are required to the above amplifier circuits, to enable me to substitute the ECC82 valves with 6SN7WGTA valves? If it requires a different voltage and current than the standard transformer supplied with the kit, could I have the power transformers wound locally, or could they be supplied with the kit? Also, could the value of the resistors in the power supply be recalculated?

I'm hoping that by substituting the ECC82 valves with 6SN7WGTA will not have a loading effect on your circuit as to alter the overall performance. I'm hoping that because the role of the dual triode valve, configured as a dual

cathode follower, placed between the 6AU6 pentode and the 300Bs, could be replaced by a 6SN7 if the power requirement of the 6SN7 is provided, or will the performance of the 6AU6 pentode be affected by my proposed modification? I hope not, as I have plenty of 6SN7 valves that I can use as replacements should one ever become faulty.

If you feel a circuit modification of this nature is not just a matter of altering a few resistors in the valve circuitry and in the power supply and will result in changes in circuit impedances and parameters, then I will forget the idea.

Hope it's not a complicated modification and I eagerly await your reply.

Richard Lawrence Lewellin, Australia

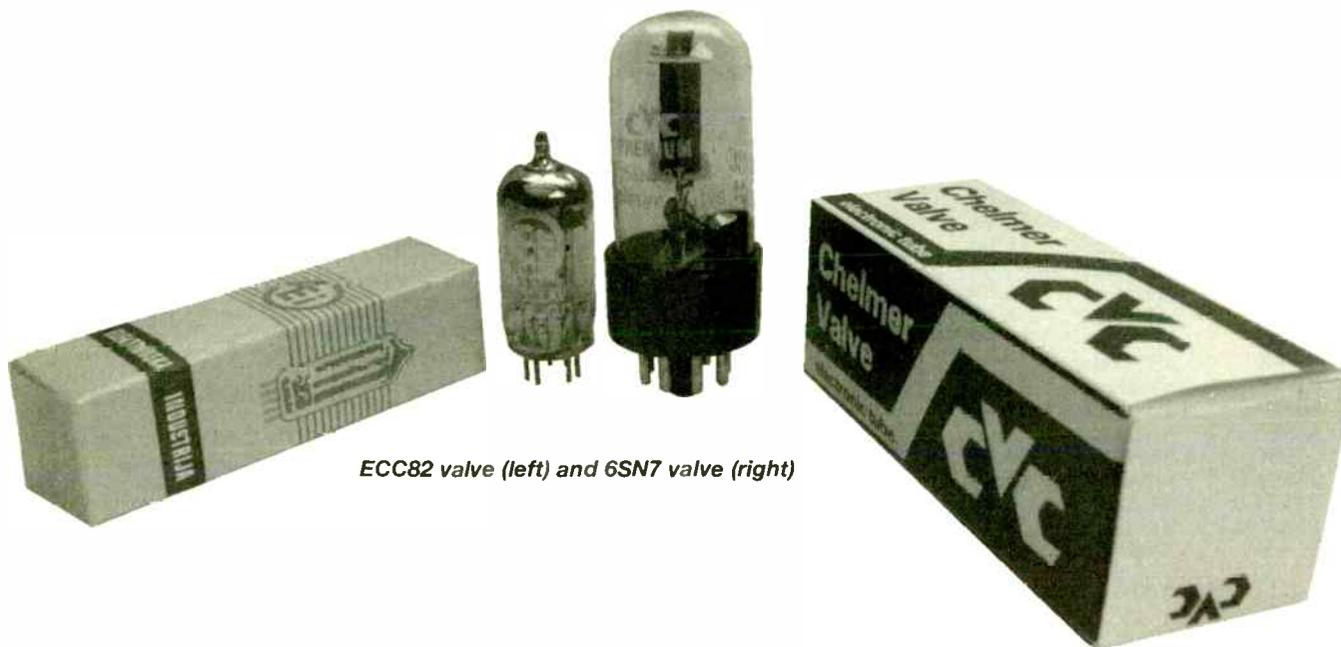
Dear Richard,

The 6SN7 and ECC82 valves are quite similar in their electrical parameters and as

- 1) The driver valve is operated as a cathode follower and,
- 2) The 300Bs obtain a large proportion of their bias from their cathode resistors,

no modification to the audio circuit will be necessary. The 6SN7 will perform excellently in this respect. The heater voltages are the same at 6.3V but the heater current of the 6SN7 is 600mA. The heater winding of the mains transformer should be OK with this, however. Your biggest problem is going to be the fact that the ECC82 has a B9A base but the 6SN7 has an octal base so you'll need to make the mounting hole considerably bigger to accommodate it. Unfortunately, there is not a convertor available on the market, which your 6SN7s could plug directly into with no need for metal work changes. Obviously if you are DIY minded you could make one up. The pinouts are also different. As you may be aware we have used the 6SN7 in our new 2A3 PSE. The valve has a huge following in single ended amplifiers and once you hear it you'll know why. Have a look at the accompanying circuit diagram (p105) which incorporates the 6SN7 in place of the ECC82.

Good luck! **AG** ■



ECC82 valve (left) and 6SN7 valve (right)

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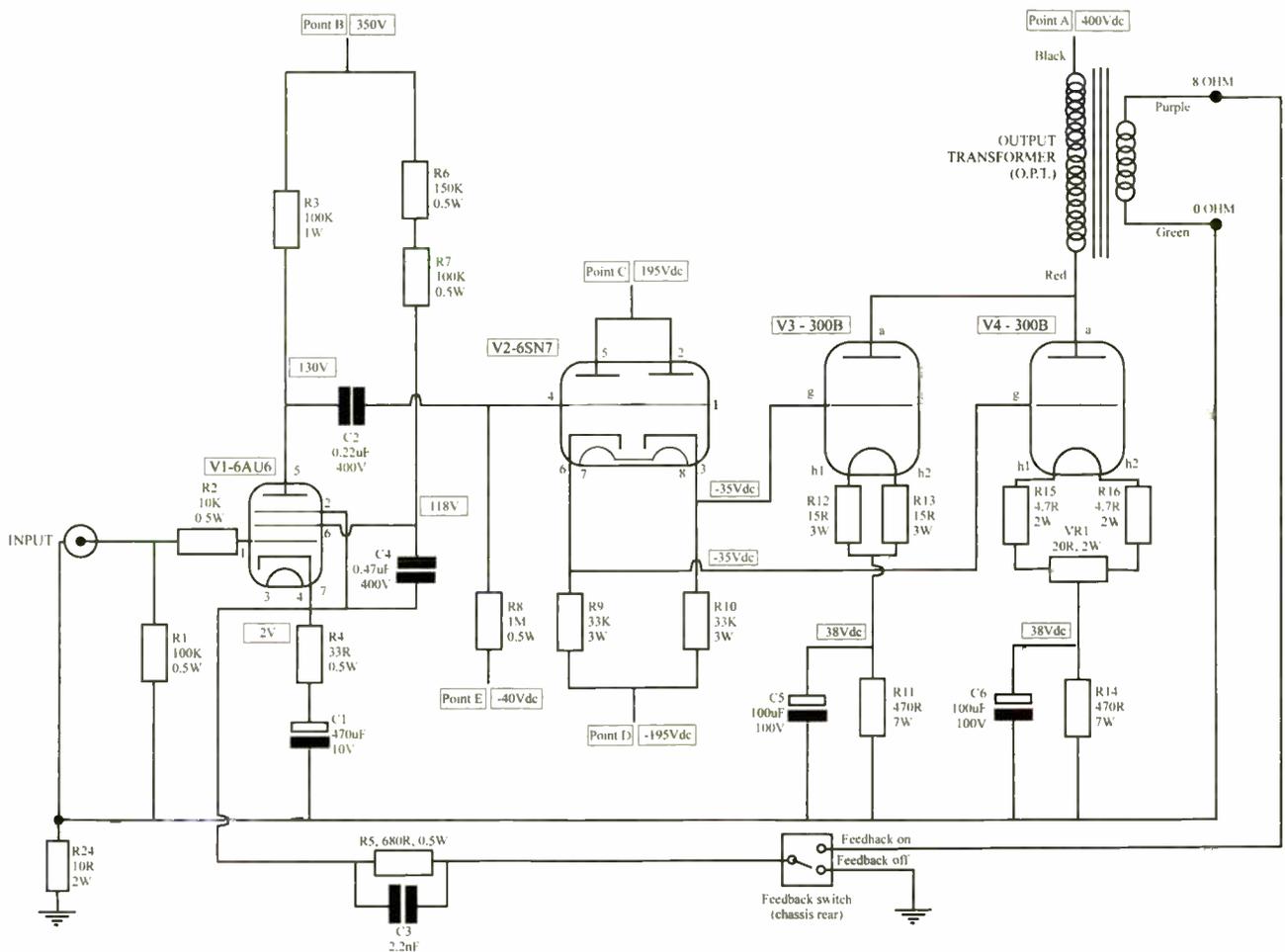


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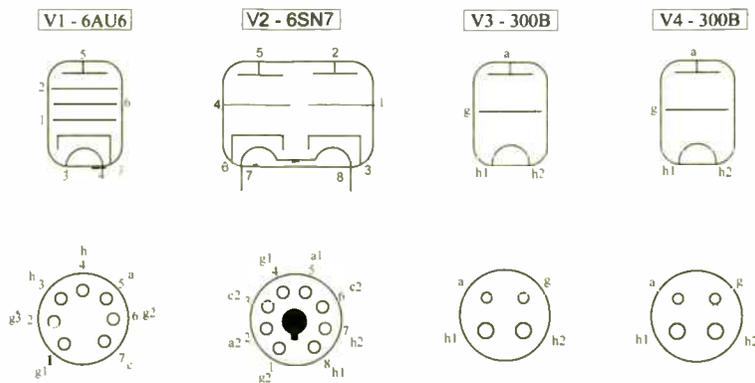
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300B PSE MONOBLOC CIRCUIT DIAGRAM

SIGNAL CIRCUIT - modified to incorporate 6SN7 at V2 position



VALVE PIN LAYOUT



Views are from underneath valve or valve holder
h, h1, h2 - heater hct = heater centre tap c = cathode a = anode g = grid nc = no connection

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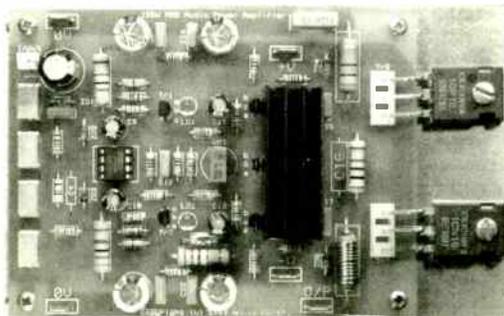
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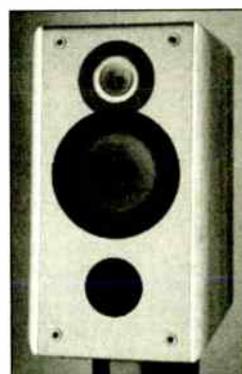
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AUDIO ANALOGUE Donizetti Mono's (X/D)	£920	£727	McINTOSH C.42 Pre	£4200	£2996
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AUDIO RESEARCH DAC1-20	£3739	£899	McINTOSH MC122 Power	£1790	£1296
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AUDIO RESEARCH VT50 Power Amp	£3499	£2899	MERIDIAN 563	£700	£446
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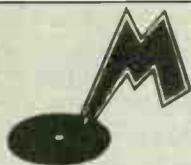
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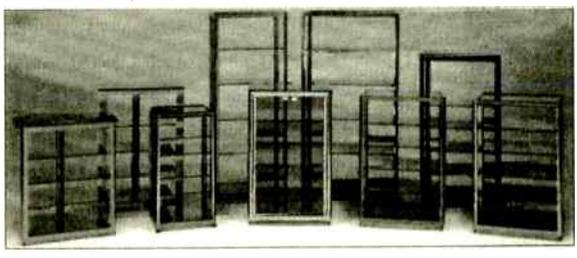
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Sugden Stemfoot SF60 integrated amplifier. 60 wpc. Cost £550 ish new. S/h boxed. One silver, one black. £300



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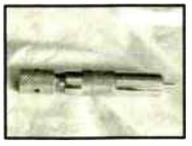
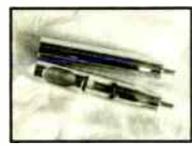
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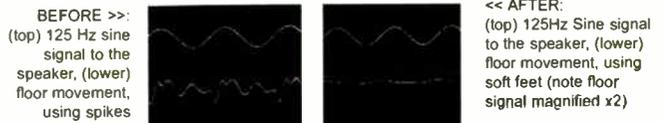
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Visit our website at www.sonicdesign.co.uk to see more details or to read satisfied customer feedback.

Sonic Design Damping Feet are available from all good specialist hi-fi & accessory retailers. (trade enquiries are welcome - email tradesales@sonicdesign.co.uk Or, in case of difficulty, on the internet at: www.sonicdesign.co.uk
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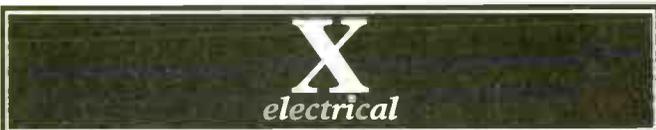
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Rotel RC97 remote control pre-amp.Mint.Boxed £149	Mission Cyrus 2 int amplifier. Ex Condition Boxed £175
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Nad C350 int amp 2 months old Cost £330. Boxed £200	Musical Fidelity E20 pre-amplifier.Boxed/remote. £199
Musical Fidelity E20 power amplifier. 100W.Boxed £275	Kenwood KA4600D integrated amplifier. Black. £60
Cyrus straight line int amplifier. Ex condition £225	Audio Innovations P3000 int class A valve amplifier £299
Musical Fidelity F11 integrated amplifier. Ex cond £160	Audio Analogue Puccini int amplifier. Ex condition £275
Sugden Symetra monoblocks pure class A amplifiers. 50 Watts/channel. Silver front. Gorgeous lush sound. £895 pr	Linn LK1 pre-amp and remote. Good condition £249
Linn LK2 power amplifier. Good condition. £299	Copland CTAS01 power amplifier. Valve. £1800 £799
Quad 118 in various condition and prices. £POA	Naim Nap 180 power amplifier. Mint. Boxed £1799
Quad 77 pre-amplifier with large LCD remote. £495	Sugden A48 integrated amplifier. Ex condition £125
Leak Stereo 20 valve power amplifiers from £POA	Richard Allen pure class A integrated amplifier. £175
Leak TL 101 and pre-amplifier Super cond. £POA	Harman Kardon integrated valve amp.110V. V rare £299
Obelisk 2 integrated amplifier Good condition. £150	Audiolab 8000C pre-amplifier. Boxed/instructions. £299
DDA Renaissance integrated amplifier. Mint. Boxed £299	Mission Cyrus 1 amplifier. Good condition. £120
Quad 303 power amplifiers from £125	Creek 4040 integrated amplifier. 5 pin din version. £79
Nakamichi CA5 pre-amplifier. Ex cond. Cost £750 £375	Nakamichi PAS 100W/CH power amp. Cost £1300 £650
Leak TL 101 single valve mono. Mint-original. £POA	A/R Cambridge A60 int amplifier. Unused. Boxed. £POA
NVA A80 mono power amplifiers X 2. Good cond. £799	NVA A60 stereo power amplifier Good condition £205
VHS2000 VIL int amp & remote. Cost £999. Mint £549	Linn LK100 power amplifier. Excellent condition. £395
Musical Fidelity Pre-8 pre-amplifier. Mint. Boxed £175	Arcam Alpha 3 amplifier. Mint Boxed/Instructions £100
Pye HF58 integrated mono amplifier. Ex condition. £POA	Quad 34 pre-amplifier 5 pin din Boxed. Ex cord £225
Musical Fidelity The Pre-amplifier with MMMC £199	Technics SHGE70 Graphic Equaliser.12 presets £80
Arcam Zeta 1 Pro Logic Cinema amp. Cost £999/100 £450	Quad 33 pre-amplifiers. From £75
Arcam Alpha 2 amplifier. Mint. Boxed/instr £95	Cornossur/Sugden stereo valve pre/power amp mint £249

TURNTABLES

Michell Hydraulic reference turntables. In various condition. As seen on Clockwork Orange. Ring for prices. £POA	Project 1.2 with artofon MC1 turbo. Ex condition. £160	Thorens TD166 MK2 with thorens arm. £89
Linn Sondek with Valhalla and besik + tone arm. £499	NVA phono 2 MC pre-amp + 2 X PSU. Awesome £499	Revolver e/w. Revolver arm & A/Technica £50
Dual 5054 record deck. Good condition/instr £100	Thorens TD125 Chassis only £85	Anston RD50 turntable. Boxed. Good condition £99
	Dual CR95-2 turntable. Mint condition. Boxed £95	

SPEAKERS

Quad 989 electrostatic speakers 8 months old. Bsd. £3300	B&W DM220 slight cabinet marks. Boxed £79
Tannoy Chatsworth with 12 inch monitor golds. £POA	Dynalab 228 ref speakers. Cost £1200 were £450 £249
Rega L18 floorstanding speakers. black ash. Boxed £149	Celestion Dinton 15. Ex condition. £70
Quad ESL57 speakers. All fully serviced with full 3 months warranty. Hear what ESL57s should sound like. Front £750 pr	Pair Quad ESL57 spkrs. Fully rebuilt. Le 4 Reon bass & 2 Reon treble units. All new electronics. 12m warranty. £1199
KeF Q15 speakers. Boxed. Couple of marks hence £79	Castle Kendall speakers Good condition £69
Mission 774 floor standers. Mint/boxed. Half price £199	Rogers LS2A2 speakers. Black ash. Superb £120
KeF C20 Bookshelf monitor speakers in black £60	Magneplanar MG 1.4. Boxed with £400 oak stands. £999
Heybrook Heyliss. Black. Boxed. Ex condition £199	Roksan Qjan 3. Black. Excellent condition. £399
Mordant Short MS120 pearl. Brand new. Black £169	Richard Allen monitor spkrs 3 way. High efficiency. £125
Pair 1 m Keelidh in black with Kustine stands. Absolutely mint. 6 months old 4 yrs warranty left. £900 Bsd £955	Naim Intro speakers in black ash. Mint. Boxed £450
	Castle Penbrooke Good condition. Super sound £90

OTHER ITEMS

Musical Fidelity XLP5 MMMC phono stage. Mint £100	Naim 42.5 pre amp. MM boards fitted £125
Musical Fidelity E60 CD player/remote. Boxed. £150	Musical Fidelity E50 tuner. Ex condition. Boxed. £150
Meridian 602 Transport and 606 DAC with remote control and boxes. Mint condition. Cost over £3100. Sell for £1195	Phillips 101 top loading cd player. Collectable. £125
Michell Iso Phono pre amp and PSU. Ex condition £249	Marantz CD50 CD player. Ex condition £79
Audio Alchemy Dac in the box with separate psu £99	Nakamichi CDP 2L CD player. Ex condition. £200
Project phono box and psu. Ex condition. £22	Rotel 950 CD player. Ex cond. Boxed. £150
Naim CD1 CD player. Absolutely mint and boxed. £895	Audio note CDT Zero CD Transport. Ex Condition £350
Audio note CDT Zero CD Transport. Ex Condition £250	Anva AD-S750 Dolby B-C-S/MX pro cassette deck £400
Quad FM2 valve tuner. Fully serviced. Incredible £49	Technics SL-PG440A Mash CD player/remote. £75
Marantz SD275 twin cassette deck. Dolby BC £75	Cogan Hall loudspeaker cable. 1.5 metre pair. £75
Audiomet silver interconnects. Stunning £89	Technics SL-PS620A CD player/remote. £75
Rotel RQ970 MMMC phono pre-amplifier. £150	Spare armature for SME series 3. New. Unused. Boxed £69
Rotel 965 BX CD player. Excellent condition £195	Teac TR450 tuner. AM/FM synthesised/RDS. Boxed £55
Leak Troughline 3 stereo valve tuner. Fully serviced £249	Quad FM3 tuner in excellent condition. £99
Linn Tuner. Mint. Boxed. Very unusual. Cost £549 £195	Marantz CD63 top loader cd player. Collectable. £125
Arcam Alpha 3 cd player. Mint. Boxed/remote £149	Thorens KTR80L synthesiser tuner. AM/FM. Black. £75
Avantec Beam Echo valve tuner. BM611. AM/FM £40	SME 3019 tonearms from £125
Quad 34 moving coil module. Mint. Boxed £40	SME 3019 tonearms from £125

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TRANSLUCENT. (somewhat of a bargain) Hifi World. Jan 1999
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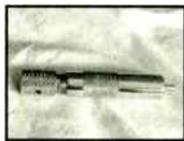
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SONIC DESIGN® DAMPING FEET

Virtues of using Sonic Design Damping Feet

These feet will give a substantial decrease in loudspeaker cabinet movements. This is apparent when you put one finger softly against the top of the front baffle, as it vibrates much less after damping. The transmission of vibrations from the cabinet into the floor will also be reduced. The music will be cleaner, with a less coloured sound quality.

There are two types available for Loudspeakers:

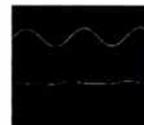
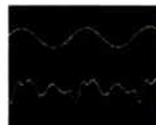
Audiophile Damping Feet provide the best possible isolation and damping but it is important that the feet are optimised to the weight of your loudspeakers. Both the stiffness and size of the feet are selected to achieve this. Speakers within the range 5 to 200 kg can be optimised. Let us know the mass of your loudspeakers and we can advise you the correct set to purchase. **Audiophile Damping Feet** are available for most high-end loudspeakers from 5kg upto 200kg. Price per set of eight feet: £60.00.

The Standard Loudspeaker Damping Feet have a large overload margin, and are lower priced than the Audiophile version. The resonance frequency is a few Hertz higher. The colour is nut brown, except for the stiffest feet which are grey. The standard feet are produced in four different weight classes and do not need to be fine tuned to specific loudspeaker models. **Standard Damping Feet** are available in four sizes: upto 12kg, 12-28kg, 28-50kg, 50-100kg. Price per set of eight feet: £19.99.

And there is one set specifically for CD, SACD, DVD Players:

The CD Damping Feet are made from the same material as the Standard Damping Feet. If the sound of your CD/DVD player is sensitive to vibrations, the CD Feet will be the way to go. The sensitivity to shock and the accompanying mistracking will be reduced with the use of the CD feet. They can also be used with any other audio product that you would like to isolate from vibrations. The set contains four small and one large foot. The large foot is used if the centre of gravity is off-centre or for those CD/DVD players that have five feet. **CD Feet cost £9.99 per set.**

BEFORE >>>
 (top) 125 Hz sine signal to the speaker, (lower) floor movement, using spikes



<< AFTER:
 (top) 125Hz Sine signal to the speaker, (lower) floor movement, using soft feet (note floor signal magnified x2)

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Linn Kaber	£1,995.00	£695.00	D
Linn Keosa	£499.00	£369.00	D
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Meridian M33 Active speakers	£1,495.00	£995.00	N+D
Mission 701 speakers	£160.00	£119.00	N
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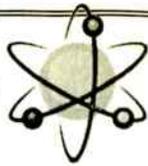


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When Tim de Paravicini does a job, he does it properly, whether it is a custom studio installation of an affordable phono pre-amplifier like the EAR 834P. With years of experience in design and manufacturing, nobody can come close to the unique point of view and life experience he puts into all of his designs.

When first launched, the 834P was the only valve phono stage you could buy with facilities for both good quality moving coil (MC) and moving magnet (MM) cartridges. In addition, the unit could be purchased with a volume control, allowing direct connection to a power amplifier. Now in its seventh year of production its still set the standard with fantastic sound-staging that all transistor phono stages can just dream of, coupled to low background noise and enviable reliability.

There are now four models in the EAR lineup:

The classic 834P uses the same circuit architecture as its more expensive brothers, and shares the same high quality sound through MM type cartridges, it is enclosed in a tough, rigid metal case and is fully "CE" type approved. Price £380.00

The signature builds on the Classic 834P specification by adding a superb moving coil (MC) input stage, as well as the no-extra-price option of a high quality volume control. Price £300.00

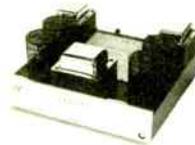
Top to the range, the Deluxe 834P comes in stunning chrome and gold cabinet, and has extra attention and quality control. With different moving coil input options, this unit will fit the most demanding of audiophile systems. For the true vinyl enthusiast, price £800.00

MC3 - The ultimate stage for MC matching with 3 fixed transformer taps to cover all types of moving coil cartridges, and separate left/right grounding. MC3 in used in the new £10,000 312 pre. Price £630.00

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Ear 869 single ended triode integrated amplifier

Improved version of the classic 859 with revised output transformers modified input stage with the addition of an extra signal valve which has allowed an increase to 15watt of single ended power, also the 869 can be used as a power amp. Don't be fooled by its modest power output this amp drives real world speakers. Price £2,298.00

Ear 8L6 Integrated/Pre-main amplifier

Using 8 E1.34 power valves to produce 50watt per channel in push pull class A with in-house designed output transformers. The 8L6 has been designed to meet a wide variety of needs from the most demanding of audio files to the professional seeking high quality monitoring equipment in the studio field. Valve life is long and replacement cost are modest. There is also a balanced power amp version with monoblocking capabilities to produce 100watt per channel. Price £2,298.00

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- Musical Fidelity x-pre valve pre amplifier
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- NAD C270 power amplifier one year old as new
- NAD pro amplifier C160 with remote new £450
- Musical Fidelity Reference 4 monitor speakers
- Micromega Minus integrated amp
- Spendor BC1 loudspeakers
- Hoksan Artimix tonearm
- Cyrus PSX power supply
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- Roksan Xersus with DS4 MK3 PSU with rosewood finish mint boxed
- Cyrus II integrated amp mint
- Project 7 amp fine phonostage
- Arcam Alpha 6 CD player pro 9 mechanism multitbit
- Pioneer PDS06 champagne finish CD player
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- Musical Fidelity XLP phonostage
- Quad 66 CD player
- Quad 33 303 FM3 system
- Quad 77 CD player
- Quad 77 Tuner
- Quad 77 Pro & Power amp
- Quad 66 Tuner
- Neat Critique rosewood finish speakers
- Mission 780 speakers
- Haim NAP160
- Haim NAT101 Tuner with Snaps
- Haim 42 pre amp with phonobooks

- Crimson 610 pre amp
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- Marantz CD63 top loading CD player full working order
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- Spendor prelude loudspeakers
- Rotel RTB50 AX Tuner
- Sony CDP101 original CD player
- C110
- B&W 603 S2 speakers
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- C250
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- Troughline Tuner 3 various
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- £485 EAR 834P
- £195 EAR 834 L valve line stage
- Counterpoint SA 5000 Pro - the ultimate Valve Pre Amp (very rare)
- £995 Audiolab 8000A int amp various from
- Collection Briton 10 bookshelf spk's
- Ref K2 bookshelf spk's
- £350 Leak Sandwich 250 spk's
- £95 Nyltech power amp
- £235 Meridian 206 CD player
- £75 Audio Innovations LZ valve line stage
- £395
- £395
- £595
- £295
- £250 Theta Miles CD player
- £275 Audio Research remote integrated amp
- £225 Quad II monoblocks consecutive serial numbers
- £995 various centre speakers
- £1600 Gale 401 chrome ended speakers with matching stands
- from £150
- £95
- £595
- £275

Due In

- Ref 107 MKII Reference speakers
- Facel Audio M13VX drive units as used in Wilson speakers
- Theta Miles CD player
- Audio Research remote integrated amp
- Quad II monoblocks consecutive serial numbers
- various centre speakers
- Gale 401 chrome ended speakers with matching stands

Selected products from: ATC, Audio physic speakers, Ear Yoshino, Nottingham Analogue, Creek, Triangle, Sugden, Dynavector

ERGO ago-go

Mail order service for quality Swiss headphones
Free next day delivery hotline 01924 406016

- ERGO MODEL ONE £109.00
- ERGO MODEL TWO £149.00
- ERGO MODEL AMT £599.00

ERGOPHONES are designed for fatigue free listening and can be used for many pleasure filled hours without discomfort. Acting as a true earspeaker, they have a wide bandwidth capability coupled with low distortion figures of less than 0.30%.

All music types are replayed beautifully, offering a remarkable near-field listening experience. We guarantee superb sound quality at sensible price points.

More info available at www.precide.ch and info@audiosynergy.co.uk
Distributed in the UK by Audio Synergy Limited

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HEATHCOTE AUDIO

TEL: 01992 653999 MOBILE: 07860 511111 E-MAIL ADDRESS: HeathcoteAudio@aol.com

VALVE AMPS

JADIS JABO CLASS A MONOBLOCS (WERE £10 000) RE-VALVED SUPERB
GRANT G200 AMS LTD. EDITION 200 WATT MONOBLOCS & G100P PRE AMP
NESTAPOVICH LABS 150 WATT MONOBLOCS (VERY RARE/ FANTASTIC)
LUMLEY REFERENCE 120 MONOBLOCS (TRIODE SWITCHABLE)
EAR 509 MONOBLOCS (1 OWNER FROM NEW/BOXED)
UNISON RESEARCH SIMPLY-4
UNISON RESEARCH ARIA S-2 (SUPERB LITTLE AMP)
PATHOS CLASSIC-1 & REMOTE
GOLDEN TUBE SI-50 REMOTE INTEGRATED (GOLD)
HEAVILY MODIFIED QUADS EL34'S RECTIFIED PSU.S ETC BUILT FROM NEW PARTS
AUDIONOTE M-4 PRE AMP (WITH PHONO STAGE)
AUDIONOTE ZERO REMOTE PRE AMP EX DEM
AUDIONOTE ZERO PRE AMP
CONRAD JOHNSON PV10-AL PRE AMP
MONRIO ASTY VALVE PRE (VERY PRETTY) NEW
MICH RHC-10 PASSIVE PRE AMP
CARY AE-ONE P LINE PRE AMP (EXPOSED VALVES)
AUDIO INNOVATIONS 300 INTEGRATED MM/MC PHONO (CREAM EXPORT CASE)
COUNTERPOINT SA-12 CLASS A VALVE HYBRID (2 X 85 WATTS)
AUDIO INNOVATIONS 500 INTEGRATED (ONE OWNER)

SOLID STATE

BOW TECHNOLOGIES WAZOO-XL (RETAIL £2500)
MUSICAL FIDELITY P-270
MERIDIAN 501-2 PRE-AMP
ARAGON 4004 200 W.P.C POWER AMP
ARCAM 10 INTEGRATED REMOTE & PHONO STAGE/MATCHING 10 POWER AMP
AUDIO ANALOGUE BELLINI/DONEZZETTI PRE/POWER
NAIM NAP 90 POWER AMP
ELECTROCOMPANET EC-1 REMOTE INTEGRATED (WITH PRE-OUT) EX. DIS/DEM
ELECTROCOMPANET AW-60 CLASS A POWER AMP (STEREOPHILE MAG REC)
CRIMSON AUDIO 630C MONOBLOCS & MATCHING 610 PRE/MC PHONO
CAIRN EZO ARIA REMOTE INTEGRATED (VERY PRETTY) AS NEW- FEW HOURS USE
CAIRN 4808 REMOTE INTEGRATED (FEW HOURS USE)
CAIRN K-2 100 WATT MONOBLOCS (FEW HOURS USE)
SUGDEN A-41 PRE-AMP
AUDIOLAB 8000-C PRE AMP
AUDIOLAB 8000-C PRE AMP
ECA VISTA PRE AMP(SUPERB)
TAG MACLAREN 60-1 INTEGRATED FEW HOURS USE ONLY
ALCHEMIST FREYA PRE AMP & 2 GENESIS MONOBLOCS EXTREMELY RARE/BEAUTIFUL
TECHNICS SUC-2000 REMOTE PRE & SEA-2000 POWER AMP
MUSICAL FIDELITY THE PRE-AMP & 2 TYPHONUM BRIDGEABLE POWER AMPS (BALANCED)
MUSICAL FIDELITY 3B PRE/P-140 POWER AMPS
MUSICAL FIDELITY 3A PRE AMP (CHOICE £175-£195)
LINX STRATOS PRE AMP & 2X 120 WATT MONOBLOCS MM/MC ETC (VERY RARE/GOOD)
DPA ENLIGHTENMENT REMOTE PRE AMP (LIGHT DEM USE ONLY SUPERB)
MAGNUM REFERENCE MP 125 PRE & 2 X MF-125 MONOBLOCS(140WATTS)
MERIDIAN MCA (CHOICE OF TWO)
AUDIOGRAM P-1 W02 ITALIAN POWER AMP (2X 45 WATTS) BRANDNEW/BOXED
SUGDEN VINTAGE 51 SERIES PRE/POWER/TUNER
REVOX A-78 AMP COLLECTORS ITEM

CD

MARANTZ CD12/DA12 LE LEGENDRY COMBO GOLD
WADIA 3200 TRANSPORT & 16X64 DAC AT&T ECT
MERIDIAN 518 PROCESSOR (STEREOPHILE MAG FAVE) LATEST SPEC 18 MONTHS OLD
MERIDIAN 583 DAC BALANCED & PHONO OUT
PROCEED PDT-3/PDP-3 TRANSPORT & DAC (AT&T,AES/EBU,COAX,OPTICAL IN)
BALANCED & PHONO OUTPUTS 110V
TECHNICS Z-1000 TRANSPORT & DAC TRICHORD CLOCKED (£5000+) GOLD
REGA JUPITER TRANSPORT & IO DAC
T-1 TRANSPORT
TEAC D-TI DAC
ROTEL RDP/980 DIGITAL PROCESSOR (LOADS OF INPUTS)
ROKSAN DP 1 5 TOP LOADING TRANSPORT
ROKSAN ATESSA DAC & PSU
ROKSAN ATESSA DAC
ARCAM BLACK BOX 50
ARCAM BLACK BOX 3 DAC
AUDIOLAB 8000 DAC
DPA ENLIGHTENMENT DAC
DPA LITTLE BIT-2 DAC
MERIDIAN 203 DAC
TECHNICS SLPS 900 REMOTE VOLUME ETC
ARCAM 8 CD PLAYER
ARCAM DELTA 70 2 CD PLAYER VOLUME OUT/ETC
MYRIAD T-10 CD PLAYER
AMC CD8A(BALANCED&PHONO OUTPUTS)

VINYL

NOTTINGHAM ANALOGUE MENTOR REFERENCE & ARM

MINT £3750
MINT/BOXED £2250
MINT £2495
MINT/BOXED £1850
£1075
MINT/BOXED £895
MINT £750
BRAND NEW/BOXED £795
BRAND NEW/BOXED £750
VGC £500
MINT/BOXED £395
MINT/BOXED £395
NEW BOXED £300
MINT/BOXED £595
NEW/BOXED £395
MINT/BOXED £325
MINT £495
MINT £375
EXCLT/BOXED £650
MINT BOXED £550

BRAND NEW/BOXED £1750
EXCLT £795
MINT/BOXED £550
EXCLT £850
MINT/BOXED £795
MINT/BOXED £650
EXCLT £225
EX DIS/BOXED £750
EX DIS/BOXED £750
EXCLT/BOXED £675
MINT/BOXED £350
MINT/BOXED £550
MINT/BOXED £795
MINT/BOXED £325
MINT/BOXED £295
MINT/BOXED £250
AS NEW/BOXED £495
BOXED £425
MINT £1250
MINT BOXED £895
MINT £550
EXCLT £350
MINT/BOXED £195
MINT £895
MINT/BOXED £495
VGC £695
MINTPHONE £250
£325
MINT/BOXED £195

/BOXED £2000
MINT/BOXED £2500
MINT/BOXED £675
MINT/BOXED £495
MINT/BOXED £1750
BOXED £2250
AS NEW/BOXED £695
MINT/BOXED £325
BRAND NEW BOXED £275
MINT/BOXED £295
MINT/BOXED £495
MINT/BOXED £650
MINT/BOXED £350
MINT/BOXED £225
VGC £125
MINT/BOXED £395
MINT/BOXED £425
£275
MINT £175
MINT £175
VGC £250
MINT/BOXED £195
MINT £275
NEW/BOXED £145

ROKSAN RADIUS-3/TABRIZ ZV DS4 PSU/ARTXERXES-X PHONO
ROKSAN XERXES/REGA RB300/LINN K-9
PINK TRIANGLE PT TOO & PSU (WALNUT/BLACK LID)
PROJECT 6 TURNTABLE & ARM/GOLDRING CART
LOGIC TFMP0 ELECTRONIC & DATUM ARM
TOM EVANS MICROGROOVE & LITHOS PSU
TOM EVANS MICROGROOVE
DPA DSP 2005-D MM/MC PHONO STAGE (VERY RARE)
PS AUDIO IIB MM PHONO STAGE
NAD PP-1 PHONO STAGE

LOUDSPEAKERS

SNELL TYPE A MK III (LEGENDRY TOP CLASS 2 BOX REFERENCE SPEAKER) MINT/BOXED £3750
KLIPSCHORNS FAMOUS CORNER HORN 104 DB SENSITIVE TBA
CELESTION KINGSTONS DIS/NEW (VERY RARE -SUPERB NEW £2500) NEW/BOXED £1750
B K S 107 MK 2 RIBBON HYBRID FLOORSTANDERS (HIGHLY REVIEWED) MINT/BOXED £1250
CELESTION A-3 ROSEWOOD (RETAIL PRICE £2400) EX DIS/NEW/BOXED £1595
CELESTION A-3 BLACK ASH (RETAIL PRICE £2400) EX DIS/NEW/BOXED £1495
CELESTION A-2 CHERRYWOOD (RETAIL £1500+) EX DIS NEW/BOXED £1050
ROKSAN QJANS 3K (ROSEWOOD) MINT/BOXED £795
AUDIONOTE ANE-SP1 AMERICAN OAK FINISH) EX DISPLAY (NEW £3000+) MINT/BOXED £1750
SNELL TYPE E MK3 VERY RARE MINT/BOXED £995
TANNOY LANGCASTERS 15" HPD MINT £575
CELESTION 7000 4FT HIGH RIBBON TWEETER VERY RARE MINT/BOXED £875
SD OBS FLOORSTANDERS(OPEN Baffle) SMALLER BROTHER TO SD1 BOXED £875
MISSION 753 FREEDOM'S BLACK ASH MINT £475
PROAC-3 STUDIO MONITORS (ATC DRIVERS) WALNUT MINT £795
KEF Q-55 FLOORSTANDERS MINT £275
PROAC-2 (VOLT DRIVERS) MINT £350
PROAC SUPER TABLETTES GC £195
CASTLE EDENS EXCLT £395
INFINITY REFERENCE STANDARD KAPPA 5 EMIT RIBBON TWEETER SANTOS ROSEWOOD MINT/BOXED £475
B&W 801 MATRIX S/2 AMERICAN SOUND ANCHOR STANDS/GOLDMUND POLYMER FILLED CONES
LISTEN UP BASS EQ X OVER BOXES HOODS BOXES ETC (WERE £7500 NEW) RARE OPPORTUNITYPHONE
WHARFDALE OPTION 1 HUGE ACTIVE ONLY 4 PAIRS MADE (WERE £8000 NEW)

TUNERS /TAPE

ONIX BWD-1 AUDIOPHILE TUNER & SEPPSU MINT £325
NAKAMICHI CR-3 (DISCRETE 3 HEAD) VERY LITTLE USE MINT TBA
NAKAMICHI CASSETTE DECK-2 MINT £225
TEAC V1010 3 HEAD CASSETTE DECK MINT £125
SONY JA-50ES MINIDISC (RETAIL PRICE £1300) ULTIMATE MINIDISC" GOLD FINISH NEW/BOXED £695

RACKS/STANDS

SOUNDSTYLE XS 105 NEW STYLE (CURVED GLASS) 5 SHELF BLACK OR SILVER EX DIS (£320 RETAIL) £195
SOUNDSTYLE XS 310 AV TABLE (£320 RETAIL) EX DIS £195
SOUNDSTYLE X105 BLACK/BLACK MARBLE GLASS/GOLD TOPS & CONES £150
SOUNDSTYLE TOP TABLES BLACK/MARBLE 3 OFF EACH £50
SOUND ORG Z540 NEW BLACK FINISH MIDI SIZE EX DIS £90
KUDOS S50? 18 INCH SPEAKER STANDS SAND FILLED GC £50
KUDOS ARROW SPEAKER STANDS MINT/BOXED £30
TARGET R4 24 INCH LOUDSPEAKER STANDS VERY HEAVY VGC RES
ATTACAMA R724/ATTABITE (FEW WEEKS OLD WAS £250) MINT £175
AUDIONOTE VERY HEAVY STANDS FOR AN-J VGC £175

SOUNDSTYLE SPEAKER STANDS SOLID PILLAR ATECAMA STYLE 18/24" 1/2 PRICE LAST FEW £50.00

CABLES

LOUDSPEAKER CABLE
MIT MH-750 LARGE BOX/FILTERS 12FT PAIR £895
CARDAS HEXLINK 2 METRE PAIR (FACTORY TERMINATED) £325
AUDIONOTE ANL 6 METRE PAIR £250
AUDIONOTE AN-L 2 METRES (2 PAIRS) TERMINATED £75 (pair)
EINSTEIN 3 METRE PAIR TERMINATED £250
SONICLINK SILVER AERO BI-WIRE 3 METRE PAIR (TERMINATED) £80
DPA IS19 4 5 METRE PAIR (TERMINATED) £175
SILVER SONIC T-14 (AMERICAN) 2 4 METRE LENGTH £50
VAN DEN HUL M C D 352 1 6 METRE PAIR (TERMINATED) £50

INTERCONNECT

LINDSAY AUDIOPHILE SATIN GRAY 2 METRE (AMERICAN NEW/PACKED WAS £480) £200
LINDSAY AUDIOPHILE GRAY 2 METRE £175
OED QUINEX SILVER SPIRAL 0 5 METRE PAIR NEW/PACKAGED £65
OED QUINEX SILVER SPIRAL 0 5 METRE PAIR EX DEM £60
AUDIOQUEST RUBY 1 METRE £50
VAN DEN HUL SOURCE HB (NEW PACKAGED) £50
VAN DEN HUL M C D 102 MK 111 HYBRID 0 8 METRE (MINT) £50
YFERA 1 5 METRE PAIR £60
ROKSAN ANALOGUE INTERCONNECT 1 METRE £75
SHARKWIRE BRAND NEW 4 PAIRS ALL NEUTRIK XLR BALANCED TERMINATIONS THE LOT £195

MOST EQUIPMENT STOCKED IS ONE OWNER MINT/BOXED, SIMILAR QUALITY VINTAGE AND MODERN EQUIPMENT REQUIRED FOR IMMEDIATE CASH PURCHASE.THIS IS A SELECTION OF STOCK FOR A FULL CURRENT LIST PLEASE PHONE/E-MAIL GEORGE. MAIL ORDER A SPECIALITY

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VINTAGE HI-FI Wanted.
 Good quality old micro-phones Reslo, S.T.C., BBC. Hi-Fi speakers, Pye, Tannoy, Vitavox, Goodmans units etc. Garrard 301s + Thorens turntables. SME arms. Anything old and interesting for collector. Tel: 01726 812 966 (Sep/1)

MICHELL GYRODEC export gold dark plinth cover Q.C. PSU, latest spec £850. SME Series V arm mint boxed tools £850. SME Series V arm, boxed, tools, £850. Ortofon MC 2000 Mk II mint, boxed, £245. Tel: Mike 01246 209 578 day 570 556 eves (Aug/1)

KRELL 3001 amp boxed mint £1550 ono. Krell 250 CD boxed mint £1600 ono. Martin Logan Aervis speakers boxed mint £1200. Tel: Richard 07887 821 105 am/pm (Aug/1)

LEAK FM Troughline 3 mono tuner, Radford FMT2 stereo tuner, Meridian pre/amp also Sansui Sony A&R Cambridge Mission 771 amplifiers, chokes available for vintage amps EMI BTR2 ex BBC offers. Misc speaker cones - offers. Manuals available. Tel: 0131 332 7536 (Aug/1)

WANTED: ROGERS, Harbeth or similar, one pair of LS3/5a speakers. Must be in excellent condition. Private buyer. Tel: 01394 388 399 (Aug/1)

A.V.I. S2000m monoblocs. 1 pair. 100 Watts per channel. S 2000mp pre amp, integrated phono stage. £1600. Spondor BC1 speakers. one pair. £275. Spondor SPI speakers. one pair £275. Rogers LS7 speakers. one pair. £225. Aiwa 6900 cassette deck. £125. Tel: 07950 397 933. (Aug/1)

LINN LVV Basik arm £45. A8R moving coil step up device £25. Tel: 01522 884754 (Lincoln) (Aug/1)

CROFT SERIES V valve amps. Bridged pair (monoblocks). Hardwired throughout. New caps. Original boxes. Mint. £750. Quad FM3 tuner. Boxed. Mint. £125. Tel: 0115 937 3783 anytime (Nottingham) (Aug/1)

MUSICAL FIDELITY A300CR power amp. 220w. p/c. New, boxed guaranteed. Cost £2200 sell £1750. F22 pre-amp boxed £600. Tel: 01432 275203 (Hereford) (Aug/1)

QUAD II monoblock amplifiers Serial Nos 42779 & 65515 G.W.O. paintwork a bit tatty. £450. Tel: 01527 546048, Email: geoffg2fty@tiscali.co.uk (Aug/1)

SONY MDS JA 30ES minidisc deck. Mint. With Russ Andrews 4' high current powerkord (Wattgate IEC) and 1m optical lead £280. Tel: 01752 773369 (Aug/1)

ROTHWELL "INDUS" passive pre-amp seven inputs. Gold and beech. Record one input play other. Boxed. Instructions. Sounds better than "no pre-amp". If you know what I mean!! £395 Tel: 01202 481386 (Dorset) (Aug/1)

SONAB 0A6 Omni directional loudspeakers, in built amplifier model, excellent condition £300. Tel: 0113 284 2311 (Leeds) (Aug/1)

HARMONIC TECHNOLOGY single crystal Pro 9+ speaker 8" biwire spades £400. Magic Digital IC 1m £200. Prosilway MkII 2.5m £345. Tel: 0208 850 6287 (Aug/1)

TDL STUDIO 0.75m floor standing speakers. Rosewood veneer complete with TDL stands. £240. Micromega microdrive CD transport £130. Audio Alchemy 1.2 DDE DAC £130. All excellent condition. Tel: 01256 461453 (Basingstoke) (Aug/1)

JADIS JA30 Class A valve monoblocks latest spec blue caps fully re-valved 6 months ago with Sovtec 6550 immaculate condition £2695 ono. Tel: 0161 304 7444, Mobile: 07970 908619 or Email: response.autos@virgin.net (Aug/1)

SHANINIAN COMPASS loudspeakers oak finish £799. Very good condition. Large record collection, all vinyl in vgc. Ring for list classical, rock, jazz etc. Tel: 01457 834465 (Aug/1)

MUSICAL FIDELITY A3CR Pre, A300CR power, new in unopened boxes, 5 year warranty (£3200) £1800. Meridian 207. 205 x 2, 204, 203. £1400 excellent condition. Tel: 07866 434488 (Aug/1)

QUAD 405-2 100w power amplifier, excellent condition, phono inputs, boxed, manuals £248. Rogers LS2/A2 100w black mint, manuals £138. Tel: 0141 337 2744 (Aug/1)

QUAD FM4 tuner £160. Quad 34 pre-amp £160. Quad 606 amplifier £375. Grey with phono sockets, all purchased from new, excellent condition, little used. Tel: 01554 751972 (Aug/1)

AUDIO SYNTHESIS Passion Passive pre-amplifier perfect condition, Vishay resistors, silver wire, WBT connectors, the best, £350 ono. Van Den Hul First interconnect 1 metre £100. Call 01509 215230 ask for Mike (Aug/1)

UNISON RESEARCH 300B's smart monoblocks new/boxed £2500. List £4500. Sony Cass/D TC-229-SD £80. Sony FM tuner ST-3950 £50. Nikko FM tuner S-Line Gamma 40FM £50. Tel: 01562 827710 N.T.W. (Aug/1)

ATC SCM50A Active loudspeakers £3200, ATC pre-amp £2000, Pink Triangle Da-Capo with 1307 filter £600, Micromega Drive II CD transport £250. All vgc. Tel: 01531 640280 (Herefordshire) (Aug/1)

QUAD 989 speakers. Black, boxed (£4600) £3200 ono. Also wanted, Rotel RB5000 power amp or Pioneer Spec 2 power amp or similar 70s power amp (big!) Tel: Conrad 07712 589572 or 01942 720220 (Wigan) (Aug/1)

NORDOST'S SUPERLATIVE Valhalla interconnect 0.6m length carefully fitted with bullet plugs in excellent condition. Sounds incredible! £1050 (new £1900) Tel: 0208 879 0364 (Aug/1)

SONY TA-FA30 ES integrated amplifier excellent condition £150. Tel: 0121 744 1528 (Aug/1)

PAIR QUAD II plus 22 control unit. Original valves plus set of Harma KT66. Good working order. £425. WAD K5881 MkII plus spare set of valves £225. Tel: 01296 436024 (Aylesbury) (Aug/1)

LINN ISOBARIKS walnut, last ever pair before external crossover, superb condition £600. Mana Isobariks stands £200. Exposure Isobarik Active crossover. Only 10 ever made. £250. Naim 2/3 way Naxo £300. Isobarik passive crossovers £40. Tel: 01245 283125 Essex (Aug/1)

MUSICAL FIDELITY A1000 pre-main MM/MC £700. Quad 33/303/FM3 ALPS/VOL phono plugs cables £240. Technics SL150 t/table SME arm Ortofon cartridge. Pitch £210. Revox A76/FM tuner £120. Dual CS508 turntable £70 all ono. Tel: 01597 825018, Mobile: 07748 115355 (Aug/1)

Classified Ads

Classified Ads

Upgrade your turntable

"It's value is nothing short of tremendous"
LISTENER MAGAZINE



"The single most important upgrade you can ever make to any record deck concerns the motor drive ...nothing can compare you for the shock of going DC, in a word Gobsmacking" COMMON GROUND MAGAZINE

"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.

Whatever your current turntable, the results in upgrading to the Origin Live dc motor and power supply are simply astounding. Designed as a drop in replacement for almost all turntables, the Origin Live upgrade kit provides vast improvements to all versions of Linn turntables, as well as Ariston, Rega, Systemdeck, Roksan, Rock, Oracle, Thorens, Well Tempered etc. With only a 12 Volt power supply and a full set of illustrated instructions our upgrade is both easy and safe to install. The upgrade is also offered with a full money back guarantee if you are not satisfied. The kit consists of a high grade dc motor, soldered regulator board and power supply at only £262. This provides an extremely cost effective route to truly high end audio and is significantly superior in performance to other power supply upgrades costing 4 times the price. A larger purpose made transformer is also available as an optional extra at £175.

New breakthrough design - Laminar flow interconnect

A high end sound with a sensible look and price tag
HI-FI WORLD July 2001

The Ultra's are a deeply satisfying musical product and a supreme bargain
STEREO TIMES Aug 2001

"The reference interconnects are a must listen...highly recommended and another winner ..
STEREO TIMES Feb 2002

The new Laminar flow range of interconnects embody an all new ground-breaking design. The "Ultra" version is guaranteed to outperform all other interconnects up to 4 times it's price and the "Reference" is a cable that reviewers use to judge other cables due to it's incredible transparency and musicality.

Don't purchase a more expensive interconnect until you have heard new laminar flow cable. With a full 3 week, cast iron money back guarantee if not satisfied, arrange an audition with your local Origin Live dealer or place an order with us directly.



Advanced interconnect:
£45 per stereo pair

Laminar flow Ultra Interconnect:
£85 per stereo pair

Laminar flow Reference Interconnect:
£159 per stereo pair

Origin live turntables In self assembly form

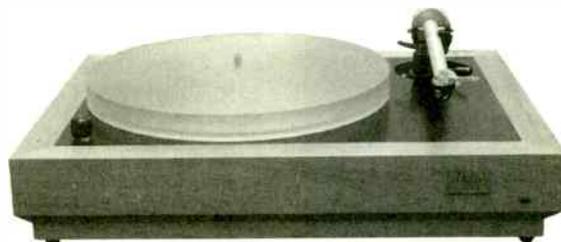
"this Vinyl front end had my jaw heading towards the floor with the solidity and transparency of the music it was making"...the standard came up with crystal clear images set in a broad sound stage"...with all these goodies in place the Standard would give turntables at the £1200 - £1400 mark a hard time"

HI FI WORLD SUPPLEMENT

"Overall a deeply impressive deck...Brilliant value for money ...component quality is superb and the build process is a doddle"

HI FI WORLD March 2002

"the best sounding deck here...sounds fantastic"
(5 stars symbols) WHAT HI-FI MAGAZINE group comparison test of 8 leading turntables



Now you can own a professionally built, high performance turntable at a fraction of the normal cost. Origin Live turntable kits are supplied in 3 different specifications:

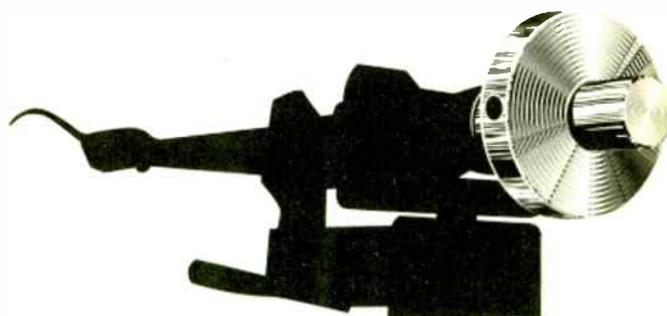
1. The complete standard kit offered with a non-suspended pre-drilled & finished plinth at £349.
2. The complete ultra kit offering a truly high end suspended sub-chassis turntable with beautifully finished solid cherry-wood plinth at £538
3. A standard kit of parts for a plinth of your own design at £282.

All kits are supplied with well illustrated instructions and are easier to assemble than many of today's pre-built turntables.

Optional parts are also offered to allow flexibility and upgrading.

Turbocharging your Rega arm

"Nothing less than total dynamite " HI-FI WORLD



If you are the proud owner of any Rega tonearm, you are now in the enviable position to catapult it's performance into the league of super arms with modifications offered by Origin Live - the structural modification at £75 will enable your Rega to perform at a level exceeding that of arms costing over £1200. High performance rewiring with high grade litz cable is also offered at an additional £70 and external rewiring is £70- this further increases the performance.

"I have to say the Rega modifications turn this humble arm into a real Giant killer. Gone is the rather grey, sterile sound of the cooking Rega. Instead, tonal colour is fresh, dynamics have great speed and impact, and the sound stage is huge."

HI FI WORLD SUPPLEMENT NOV 97
(structural modification to an RB250)

WHAT HI-FI MAGAZINE gave this modification a 5 star rating.

For arm modifications we normally return your arm in 2 - 3 days

FOR FULL INFORMATION SEE WEB SITE OR CONTACT

Origin live, Unit 5, 362b Spring Road, Sholing, Southampton SO19 2PB

Tel: 023 80578877 / 80363249 Fax: 023 80398905 E MAIL: originlive@originlive.com

WEB SITE: <http://www.originlive.com>

LINN SARA 9s. VGC with stands, £350. Linn Troika, only 20 hours use since £385 rebuild by A.J. Van Den Hul, £250. Naim NAP 250s, £750/£800. Tel: 01245 283125 (Essex) (Aug/I)

VINTAGE ROGERS BBC monitor speakers 3-way £200. Tel: 01481 263891 (Aug/I)

MANA REFERENCE 4 stand fabulous for CD or record players £395 (£750 new). Slate Audio speaker stands, wonderful sound and beautifully crafted £295 (£550 new). Both items excellent condition Tel: 01446 792727 (Sep/I)

DPA 200s pre and power amps includes Audioquest Emerald interconnect (£200) be quick at £595. Amps given best buy in Hi-Fi Choice. Nordost Flatline Gold 2x 4m lengths £50. Tel: 01282 705901 (Aug/I)

GOERTZ MI3 Big Boy speaker cable 3m pair terminated with factory bananas. Boxed £225. Solo 4.1B Signature AES/EBU digital interconnect 0.5m – the best £150. Superb C-Core mains transformers. Tel: 01384 271571 (Aug/I)

MARTIN LOGAN Request Electrostatics. Pass Labs Aleph 4 and Aleph P Class A single-ended amplifier. Mark Levinson 36.5 CD transport with HDCD upgrade. 36 digital processor. All boxed, impeccable. Sensible offers invited. Bill 020 7602 7648 (Aug/I)

TUNERS FOR Sale: Pioneer FD-504 RDS Precision £75. Aura TU80 black £60. Both boxed with instructions and in excellent condition. Call 020 7772 5863 (work) or 0207 221 8033 (home) (Aug/I)

AUDIO INNOVATIONS 1000 Mk3 valve monoblocks, 50 watts, Class A, no box hence £575. DPA "The Power". Mains filters, 4-off £50 each. Re-advertised because answering machine lost messages! Tel: Mike 0032 2 512 0952 (equipment in North London) (Aug/I)

MERIDIAN 200 £225. 203 £100. 201 £225. 209 £50. Together £500. Sony Minidisk MDS-JB930E £75. MDS-JB920E £50. Re-advertised because answering machine lost messages! Tel: Mike 0032 2 512 0952 (equipment in North London) (Aug/I)

CYRUS 2 £120, Linn Intek amp £140, Arcam A85 CD 23 FMJ both latest spec, guaranteed £500, £800. Wanted: Forseti power amp and CD working or not. Tel: 07799 415123 (Aug/I)

GARRARD 401 Quad 33, 303, SME 3009 arm Shure N75E cartridge KEF speakers home built all manuals and templates, no reasonable offers refused. Tel: 01229 465378 (Cumbria) (Aug/I)

INTERCONNECTS – CELLO £110 (£450) – Stereophile magazine recommended "remarkably good for the price". Transparent audio power cable plus £85 (£150). Tel: Demetris 07786 430400 or 020 8886 2699 (Aug/I)

NAIM CDS 82 Hi-Cap 250 new style some cable interconnects boxes £395 for quick sale. Might separate items. Offers accepted. Tel: 01142 669726 or Email: sfsponer@hotmail.com (Sheffield) (Aug/I)

BEAUHORN VIRTUOSO DX4, August 2001 (£6900), £3450. Border Patrol 300B power amp, 2 years old (£4000), £2250. Both in mint condition, little used. Tel: 01707 896 760 (Herts) (Aug/I)

BAT VK3i Preamp. Great condition. I love this piece but upgrading to integrated amp so need to sell. Asking £995. In wooden shipping crate. Tel: 07799 416 742 or Email: david_pelleg@hotmail.com (Aug/I)

B&W P4 Tower speakers, cherry finish, kevlar drivers, spikes included. Great hi-end sound at great price (my wife says they must go), asking £350 for quick sale. Tel: 07799 416 742 or Email: david_pelleg@hotmail.com (Aug/I)

WANTED: TURNTABLES and tonearms. All items considered from Linn to Transcriptor, but decks by British companies like NVA, Griffin, Monitor Audio, IMF, Gale especially. Also any associated accessories etc. Tel: 01455 613 489 (Aug/I)

WILSON BENESCH Act1, 8 weeks old, cherry, £3995. Gryphon Tabo integrated 100w, 200w 4ohms, cost £3850. £1900. Bow Wizard 2. 24/192 DACs with the Wond, 4 weeks old £1800. 2 Transparent Reference XL Power Cords £500 each. 16 ft NBS Signature XLR interconnects, cost £4000, £750 ono. Tel: 01206 298 836 (Aug/I)

MUSICAL FIDELITY A3CR pre/power plus additional power amp. Awesome sound, mint condition, boxed. £1800 for all three or may split. Tel: 07764 884 881 (Aug/I)

STAX SIGNATURE headphone system £600 (£1200). Russ Andrews mains purifier with plug sockets £300 (£500). Chord CPA2800/SPM800 £2200 (£5500). TacT 2.0 digital room correction system. Tel: 0131 225 9002 or Email: S.Hussain@ed.sac.ac.uk (Aug/I)

NAIM 32 Fitted 72 boards Naim 110 just serviced with Snaic £295. Lentek int. amp, rare monster £450. Quad 50 D monoblocks, Quad serviced £295. Leak Troughline tuner. Tel: 01264 334 454 or 01264 357 208 or Email: micklobb@hotmail.com (Aug/I)

COPLAND CDA266 CD player, excellent condition £600 ono. rega P2 turntable inc Rega cartridge, excellent condition £150. Tel: 07748 457 422 (Aug/I)

SONY TA 3650 amplifier, minor fault £25. Cambridge Audio A1 Mk3 amplifier, special edition £45. Philips CDC745 £50. Teac V370 cassette £25. NAD 5120 turntable £40. JPW Bookshelf speakers £25. All immaculate. JVC four channel receiver, 40 watts RMS P channel, rare machine in vgc, £90. Tel: 07980 195 292 (Aug/I)

PROJECT PERSPECTIVE w/Ortofon MC25FL £550. Nakamichi CR4E £300. Yamaha KX480 cassette w/remote £100. Yamamura Churchill M4000 3m pr speaker cables £450. All vgc/mint. Tel: Chris 020 8543 5531 evenings (Aug/I)

ROTEL RCD 991 CD player, 2 years old £450 ono. Tel: 0161 286 7832 or 07941 743 312 (Aug/I)

QUAD 34 with 405/2 £350. Quad 34, 405/2 with Audiophile upgrades and separate power supply, offers. Musical Fidelity A100 amplifier £200. Infinity Kappa Reference loudspeakers £350. Wharfedale S.2 loudspeakers £50. Tel: 01224 646 473 (Aug/I)

LEAK STEREO 20 with One Point pre £250. Tonearms; SME 3009 with fluid damper £120. Manticore Musician £120. Decca £40. Connoisseur SAU2 £20. Thorens £20. Garrard 401 motor unit £120. Tel: 01224 646 473 (Aug/I)

ROTEL 965BX CD £50. Yamaha TX530 tuner £50. Aiwa ADF410 cassette £25. Foam surrounds for JR.1495 £30. Turntables for repair: Connoisseur Craftsman, BDI, Fons CQ30, Thorens TD150. Offers. Tel: 01224 646 473 (Aug/I)

WANTED FOR Spares or repair. Faulty or non working Quad 405 power amps. Quad 33, 44 preamps. Quad FM3 tuners. Also required, Denon DL103 cartridges. Contact Mike 01758 613 790 (Aug/I)

LINN Karik 3 CD player £500. Kairn phono preamp (non Brilliant power supply) £500. LK100 x 2 power amps £240 each, LK280/Spark (LK280 is factory LK2 conversion) £250, 2 x 5m LK400 bi wire cable (terminated) £45. All boxed, very good condition. Tel: 07812024471 (Lancs) (Aug/I)

TOTEM Model I Signature speakers £795, boxed as new. XLO 1m interconnects £195 ono. Precious Metal 100 1m interconnects £70 ono. Precious Metal 100 1.5m AES/EBU cable £40 ono. All cables are balanced. Tel: 01636 830 944 (Aug/I)

SILVER - SILVER - SILVER both LAT and AUDUSA Eupen mains cable available with silver plated(heavy duty plating 5-8 microns) MK Tough plug and IEC connectors. Upgrade to the silver plated versions LATInternational add £6, AUDUSA Eupen add £6. Plugs available seperately - MK Tough Plug £8, O Heil IEC £7, M Kayser IEC, Male IEC, Side entry IEC, Bottom entry IEC - £6 each

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AUDUSA-Eupen CSA 2.5



AUDUSA EUPEN GNLN 5.0 mains cable

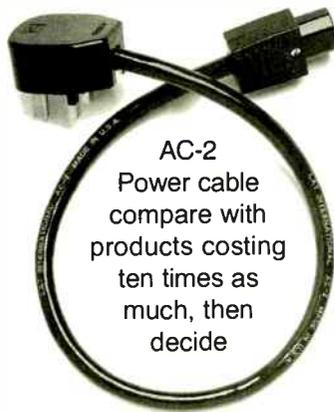
CSA and GNLN Cable with FERRITE TECHNOLOGY - A polymer material mixed with a considerable quantity of homogeneously fine high quality ferrite powder. This compound is called EMC/COM and it can be extruded around copper conductors. The ferrite itself is a non-conducting material, but it has a very interesting magnetic behaviour. As a ferromagnetic material, it will go through hysteresis loops whenever it is under influence of an alternating magnetic field. Consecutively magnetizing and demagnetizing the material will cause considerable losses of high frequency energy. This energy is absorbed in the ferrite grains and converted into heat. This effect is more or less proportional to the field frequency. By coating conductors with a thin layer of ferrite compound, high frequencies will be strongly attenuated, because their energy will be absorbed by the ferrite powder. This applies to high frequency disturbances that are propagating on the conductor and which we don't want to disturb the environment, as well as to surrounding interferences, which we want to prevent from disturbing the signals on our cable. The CSA and GNLN cable which in addition to the above described ferrite technology is further protected with a foil shield and a drain wire and specifically manufactured for High End audio use. Ask for the silver plated contacts on IEC and MK Tough plug for an extra £6.

£48 for 1.0m
£58 for 1.5m
£68 for 2.0m
off the reel £30
for 1st meter, £20
per m thereafter.

Fitted with IEC (Martin Kaiser) and MK Tough Plug. Figure of eight, 16 amp IEC, Bulgin etc also available as well as USA, European Schuko, and other mains plugs. Cable can be supplied fitted to our all steel 4, 6 and 8 way distribution blocks. We can rewire the distribution blocks with Eupen cable as an extra cost option. Refer to our web site for details.

L A T INTERNATIONAL NJ USA - all cables now with SILVERFUSE conductors

LAT AC-2 HI-FI CHOICE - SEPT 2001 - RECOMENDED MAINS CABLE



AC-2
Power cable
compare with
products costing
ten times as
much, then
decide

LAT AC-2 Power cable. We have developed a cabling (weaving) pattern along with an unusual shielding/filtering system that gets rid of the garbage that contaminates your components. The difference you hear with our cord is astounding. Our power cord takes advantage of silver in its design through use of our proprietary Silverfuse conductors. The conductors are 10 gauge and insulated with Teflon; the best insulation available. Fitted as standard with an IEC and MK Toughplug. Other connectors are available incl Schuko, 16 amp IEC, Figure of eight, Australian, Danish plugs etc. 60cm £62, 90cm £75, 1.2m £88, 1.5m £101, 1.8m £112 etc Other lengths available. Off the reel at £45 per meter.

Add £6 for heavy duty silver plated contacts on IEC and MK Tough plug

4,6 and 8 way all steel mains distribution blocks fitted with UK, Schuko or USA type sockets. CE tested and approved mains distribution units manufactured out of heavy gauge steel, finished in black and fitted with high quality Wadsworth 13amp sockets. It has no filters, circuit breakers, surge protection, transformers, resistors, capacitors, LED's, on/off switches, chokes, regulators, just fitted with 3ft of LAT AC-2 mains cable. From £166 for 4 way, £198 for 6 way, £229 for 8 way.

SILVERFUSE is a near alloy of silver and copper. IT IS NOT SILVER PLATED OR SILVER CLAD. Plating (or clad, which is the same thing as plating) causes a dioding effect when signal is passed through resulting in brightness and distortion. The Silverfuse process starts with seven nines OFHC copper wire with a diameter that is slightly larger than the required size. It is then pulled through a trough of molten silver. The wire with a silver deposit, is then forced through a compacting die where it is subject to tremendous pressure. The silver and the high purity copper are fused together into a near alloy. The compacting fusion also reduces the wire diameter to the desired size. No dioding subsequently occurs with this process. The result provides for the benefits of silver; which are excellent definition and clarity, with the high purity copper benefits of warmth and mellowness.

LAT AC-2 mains cable available with 16 amp IEC (MF, KRELL etc), Figure of eight, Bulgin, USA mains and European Schuko plugs. Check our web site for other available variants.

LAT INTERNATIONAL - Analogue, Digital and Video interconnects and Speaker cable. Refer to www.audusa.com for further details or ask for reviews etc - www.audusa.com for list for exdem cable and sub-woofers, power amplifiers, pre-amp porcessor, CD players etc.

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New for 2002 Sunfire True Sub Woofer MKIV - 11 inch cube. Signature True Sub Woofer 13 inch cube and Junior Sub Woofer 9 inch cube -all with two drivers, to as low as 16hz, 116 SPL and 360 cu ins of air movement, 1200 or 2700 watt patented amp technology. Classic Tube Pre-amp, Solid state power amps 2 channel (300 x 2 or 600 x 2) and 5 channel (220 x 5 or 430 x 5 - yes total of 2150 watts into 8 ohms or 4300 watts into 4 ohms) patented amp technology (no heat sinks) and Theatre Grand II processor pre-amp.



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AUDIO PHYSICS Virgos II (speakers) £1400. Audiomecca Damnation CD transport (piano black) £350. Cary-Cad 300B Signature valve monoblocks £2250. Krell KSP-7B balanced pre-amplifier £1200. All boxed. Tel: 020 7349 9675 or 07958 607 613. www.geocities.com/olddaysaudio (Aug(I))

NAKAMICHI 1000ZXL Limited Edition (Gold) boxed £2500. Nakamichi 1000ZXL £1250. Nakamichi Dragon £1200. Nakamichi ZX-7 £895. Nakamichi BX-300 £350. Tel: 020 7349 9675 or 07958 607 613. www.geocities.com/olddaysaudio (Aug(I))

MICHELL GYRO SE, brand new, unwanted gift, sealed box, £710. Linn Katan speakers, 3 months old, £375. Telephone Jules on 01792 280061, E-mail: info@sounddrjuleshifi.co.uk Web: www.sounddrjuleshifi.com (Aug(I))

KRELL KAV300i, 2yrs old, absolutely immaculate, boxed as new, £1500. Bruce Moore Dual Mono pre-amp, immaculate (£8000) £2750. Linn Kairn Pro, pre-amp, silver, 3 months old, as new, £900 ono. Telephone Jules on 01792 280061, E-mail: info@sounddrjuleshifi.co.uk Web: www.sounddrjuleshifi.com (Aug(I))

LINN LINTO, phono stage. 3 months old, silver boxed as new. £650. Arcam 7SE. As new, 1 year old, immaculate £200. Telephone Jules on 01792 280061, Email: info@sounddrjuleshifi.co.uk Web: www.sounddrjuleshifi.com (Aug(I))

KRELL KRC-2 pre-amp, as new £1750. Epos ES11's, Bi-Wireable, mahogany, mint, dedicated Epos stands. £300 ovno. Infinity Renaissance 80 floor standing speaker's, in Oak £600. Telephone Jules on 01792 280061, Email: sales@sounddrjuleshifi.co.uk Web: www.sounddrjuleshifi.com (Aug(I))

SONY CDP RI Reference. Transport Das RI Dac mint. (£6000) £2600. UKD Opera Callas Gold speakers as new £690, Telephone Jules on 01792 280061, Email: sales@sounddrjuleshifi.co.uk Web: www.sounddrjuleshifi.com (Aug(I))

LEIDER SPOOR pure silver speaker cable, 2.01 mtr (£1200) £600. Audio Technica OC9 cartridge brand new £270. VDH D103mk II, interconnect, gold phono plugs, £50.00. Telephone Jules on 01792 280061, E-mail: info@sounddrjuleshifi.co.uk Web: www.sounddrjuleshifi.com (Aug(I))

SALE! AMPS: Audion, Hegel, NAD Silverline. Cables: Argentor, Gutwire, Nordost, Power Snakes, QED, Supra. Accessories: Furutech, Nordost, Perfect Sound. www.audioatmosphere.com stuart@audioatmosphere.com Tel: 01785 711232 (Aug(I))

WANTED - EARLY HI-FI LOUDSPEAKERS
Tannoy, Lowther, Parmeko, Voigt, Vitavox, RCA WE etc
TURNTABLES
Garrard, BBC301, EMT SME, Ortofon, Decca, etc.
VALVE AMPLIFIERS
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DA30, KT66, KT88, PX4, PX25, PP3/350, WE300
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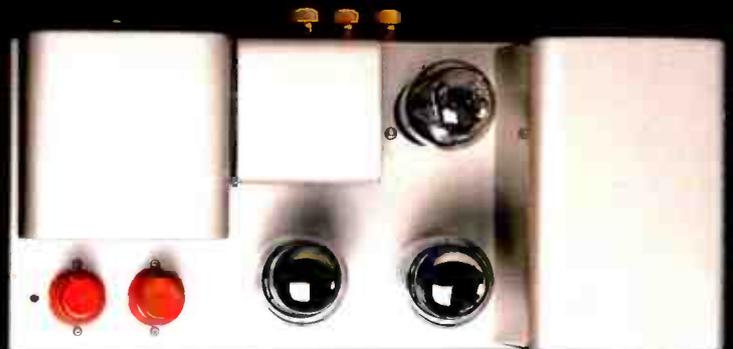
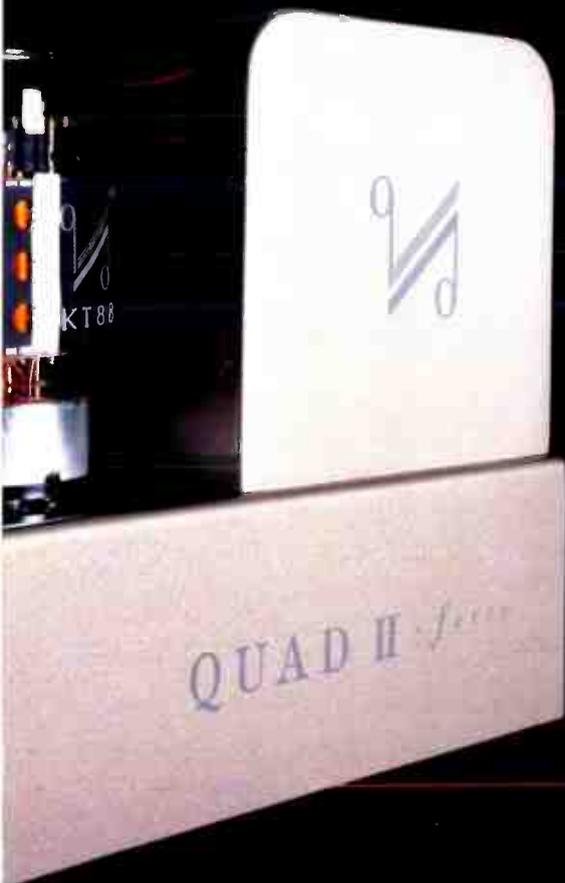
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