

hi-fi

WORLD

JUNE 2004

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DIY SUPPLEMENT NO.79
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new Dynaudio 52SE mini

DIGITAL UNPLUGGED

Marantz's Ken Ishiwata hand-builds a most special CD player



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Arcam DV78 DVD player
The art of AV buying
CD player supertest



new Naim Nait 5i integrated
meets Musical Fidelity X-150

MULTICHANNEL MUSCLE

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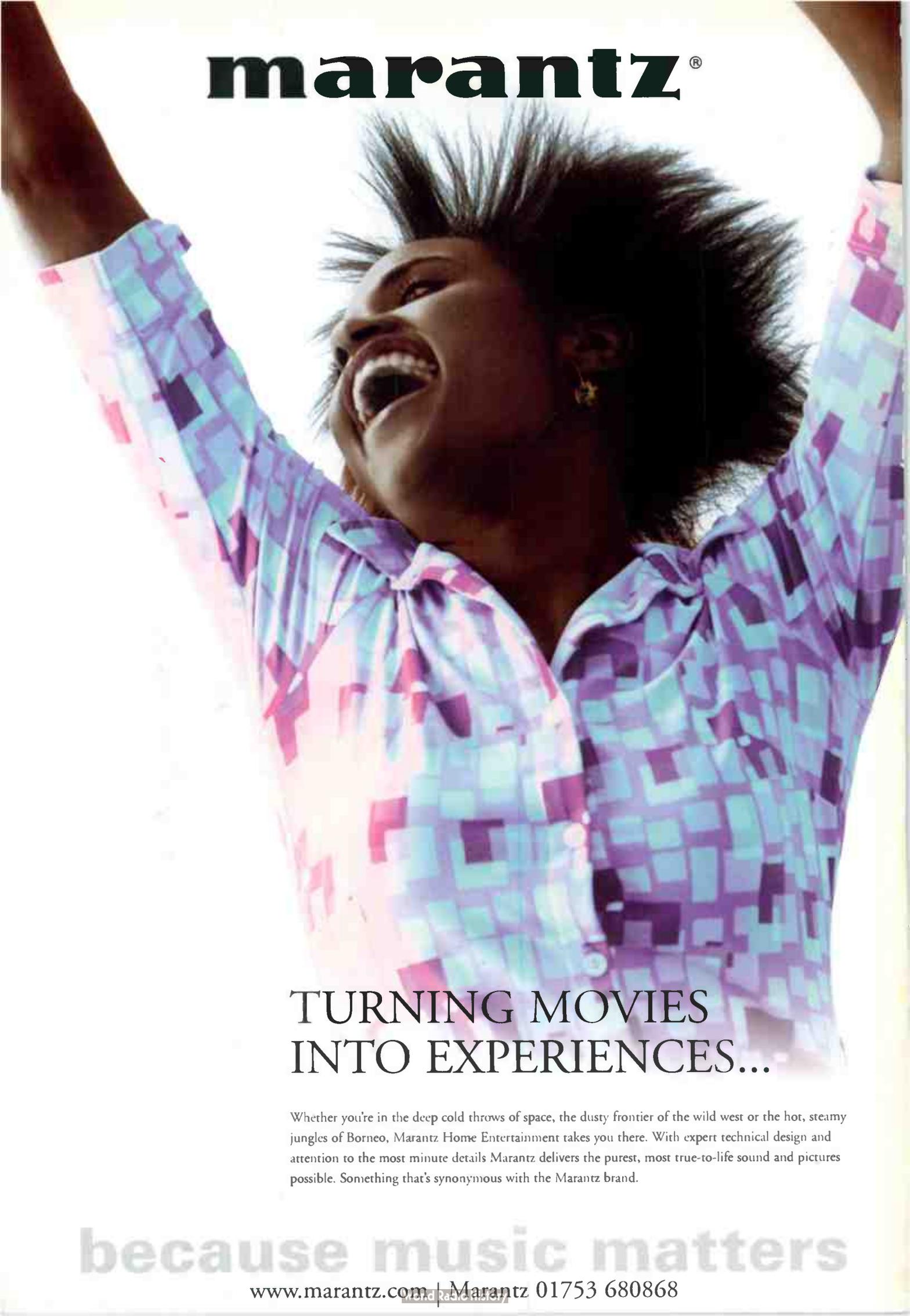
JUNE 2004



COMPUTER AUDIO - APPLE IPOD : AN OWNER'S GUIDE

MARKET PLACE - 100s OF BARGAIN CLASSIFIEDS INSIDE!

COMPETITION - WIN SONY'S SUPERB SCD-XA3000ES SACD PLAYER



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david price

Question: what's a curious copper plated version of a CD player that was last on sale some seven years ago doing on this month's front cover? Why has it displaced any number of great new products, those you'll find splashed all over the other magazines, from *Hi-Fi World's* prized 'shop window'?

Well, because it's probably the most musical digital player yet made. No small claim this, especially when it comes from a 'digital sceptic' like me, yet I really believe it to be true.

Why then make a song and dance over something that will never enter commercial production? Well, some two years back, Marantz's design supremo promised to make me something truly special, and on p12 you can read the story of its inception, creation and – most importantly – Ken Ishiwata's philosophy behind it. I've found the whole project to be a fascinating insight into the digital design process, and an amazing example of just what plain old CD can achieve, too...

Given that not everyone can commission a Japanese genius to handcraft them a digital disc spinner, we've elected to examine several interesting new products. Sony's SCD-XA9000ES is the company's third generation of SACD spinner. Read how it fares on p34, and how it copes against the company's own digital battleship from fifteen years back, the CDP-X77ES CD player!

Denon's DVD-A11 / AVC-A1SRA is the flagship multichannel music system from a company whose name literally translated from Japanese means 'electric sound'. Denon has been at the forefront of Japan's pro-audio and broadcast sectors for thirty years, and does digital seriously. On p40, you can see how our studio mastering man Patrick Cleasby gets on.

Elsewhere, the multichannel theme continues with Arcam's new DV78 DVD spinner on p38, Cambridge Audio's 540R AV receiver on p46, and a budget AV buying guide on p49.

On two channel matters, if I had £800 burning a hole in my pocket and wanted to buy an integrated amp, I'd want to know which is better – the new Naim Nait 5i or Musical Fidelity X-150 – see p50. Vinylistas will love our upsum of the new Ortofon Kontrapunkt range on p57, and Mac lovers our definitive iPod accessories guide on p77. Factor in my very own odyssey into classic Sony cassette decks on p60 – and much more – and this issue is a 'copper-bottomed' good read!

David Price

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.

WORLD VERDICTS:

As a rule we only review products we find interesting, so don't expect too many low scores. Likewise, five globe awards will be few and far between because there's only one superlative product of its type. The £ sign denotes great value for money.

- ● ● ● ● **OUTSTANDING** - Simply the best.
- ● ● ● ● **EXCELLENT** - Extremely capable.
- ● ● ● ● **GOOD** - Worth auditioning.
- ● ● ● ● **MEDIOCRE** - Unremarkable.
- ● ● ● ● **POOR** - Seriously flawed.
- £ **VALUE** - Keenly priced.

www.hi-fiworld.co.uk

HI-FI WORLD

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LONDON, NW6 5LF

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digital surround special:

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visit our website for a comprehensive list of all the products we have reviewed over the past 11 years

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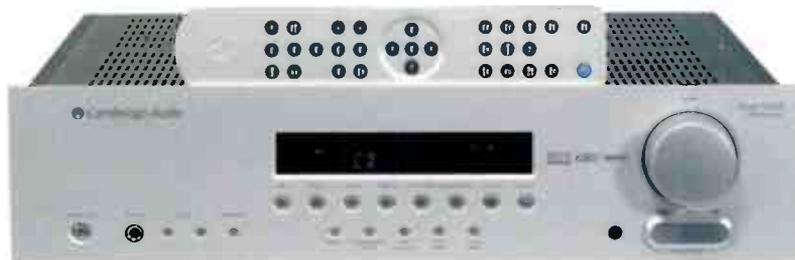
The place to find classic audio components.

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Gold Reference



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What HiFi Sound & Vision

GR20 - "fast and dynamic sound with bags of resolution... fine bass weight...an excellent product from Monitor Audio... we have no choice but to recommend them highly"

What HiFi Sound & Vision

GR60 - "It's a genuine flagship speaker, and offers flagship performance.

In fact, the only thing that isn't flagship about it is the cost of ownership, and for that Monitor Audio are to be heartily congratulated" HiFi Plus

Award winning C-CAM® Gold Dome tweeters



Luxury tool box for GR20/GR60



In-wall and In-ceiling options



GR10, GR20



GR10

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news

ARCAM MULTI TASKS

Arcam's new FMJ C30/P1 pre-power is an interesting solution for those who take two channel stereo seriously, but may also want to go multichannel and not sacrifice sonics. The £1199 FMJ C30 preamplifier is completely DC coupled, with buffered balanced and unbalanced audio outputs (for driving longer cables), has a single stage phono preamp for MM/MC cartridges, large core low flux density toroid-based power supply, audiophile passive componentry and sorbothane damping. It has a unique upgrade path for multi-channel audio - with one plug-in card it can be upgraded to handle 7.1 channels, making it the heart of an audiophile home cinema system. The basic stereo model can be specified with two £1099 FMJ P1 monobloc



Arcam FMJ C30



Arcam FMJ P1

power amps, and then extended as required with up to ten for bi-amped 5.1 surround music. It boasts 185W RMS of

DC coupled power, ultra-low claimed distortion, balanced and unbalanced inputs with daisy chain output for multi-amp systems, an Acousteel critically damped chassis for reduced microphony and the latest SANKEN output devices.



Arcam DV79

Meanwhile, its new £999 DV79 claims "one of the best DVD pictures in the world and absolutely stunning sound", no less! It has HDMI digital video out for the latest plasmas see (www.hdmi.org) plus interlaced and progressive analogue video (both NTSC and PAL) for existing displays. It has an exceptionally high level of video performance, delivering film-like clarity, depth and smoothness. The player has 5.1 channel decoders for DVD-Audio, Dolby Digital & DTS, as well as Dolby Pro Logic II via a 32-bit Zoran audio DSP, top 24-bit 192kHz Wolfson WM8740 DACs for all 6 audio channels, comprehensive bass management, variable crossover from 50-150Hz in 10Hz steps, plus loudspeaker delay and level setting. It plays MP3 and WMA files from CD, with dedicated on-screen browser, HDCDs, CD-R/RW discs and most copy protected audio CDs. Vital statistics are: 430x340x85mm size and 5.2kg. For more details, see www.arcam.co.uk.

AUDIOLAB RE-OPENS?

The Chinese-owned, British-based International Audio Group (IAG), which holds both Quad and Wharfedale in its portfolio, has taken over TAG McLaren Audio. The deal, signed on March 25th, marks the end of TAG McLaren as an independent company, and follows a troubled year which saw speculation that the company was to close altogether. As it owns the once highly popular Audiolab brand, there's a possibility that this name may now resurface. TAG McLaren entered the hi-fi scene on a sea of publicity in 1997, by acquiring Audiolab and rebranding its existing product range in a bid to take it upmarket. Although the company has ended up with an extremely capable range of AV separates, it hasn't been a resounding commercial success, and the wisdom of TAG McLaren's 'entry strategy' (i.e. using Audiolab for its

production capability whilst killing the brand) has often been questioned by industry insiders.

Its troubles came to a head last autumn, when TAG announced it would undertake a major "strategic review," following a number of redundancies at its Huntingdon factory. It subsequently stated that it would, "continue to manufacture its product range and maintain ongoing research and development, and will also continue to provide full after-sales support." At the time of writing, it is understood that IAG is purchasing most of the operation, including the intellectual property rights and the Audiolab name - but not TAG's production facilities - and IAG will continue to operate the TAG McLaren Audio brand for a period and also take responsibility for all servicing and warranty work. *Hi-Fi World* wishes it well.

RUSH RELEASE

Universal Music DVD Video has just released Rush's 'Chronicles: The DVD Collection', documenting Rush's original music videos ranging from their pre-MTV releases, to their Mercury Records days leading up to the late 1980s. The audio soundtrack has been meticulously digitally re-mastered in 2.0 Dolby Digital and Linear PCM Stereo. This coincides with the band's imminent 30th Anniversary World Tour, which comes to Britain this September.



LINN-GUAPHONE?

We all know about Linn Records' great catalogue, which includes classics such as The Blue Nile's seminal first album - but what of this attractively presented 33.33RPM (well, it would have to be, wouldn't it?) "teach yourself Irish" vinyl EP? Have the crafty Celts up in Castlemilk been running a lucrative language learning label ('gael-Linn') behind the backs of us London luvvies? We should be told!

KIMBER KOMING

Russ Andrews Accessories has launched a new range of mains cables, the PK PowerKords and the Palladian PowerKords, manufactured by Kimber Kable.

These run alongside the existing PowerKord range and offer an alternative to the usual woven design. They're stranded

three core types, employing copper specially optimized for mains voltages up to 600 volts and chroma free insulation. The new PowerKords are available in two basic guises - the PK 14 with three 2.08mm conductors, and the larger PK 10 with three 5.27mm conductors. The Palladian models feature unique SVR enhancement technology which dampens electrical standing waves, claimed to allow a freer, more transparent sound with more freedom from grain. Available direct from the mail order company, prices range from £120 for a 1.2m KIMBER PK 14, rising to £820 for the PK 10 Palladian model, including free UK delivery. For more details click on

www.russandrews.com



iTUNES HITS THE SPOT

Apple has announced that over 50 million songs from Apple's iTunes Music Store have now been downloaded. The 50 millionth song, purchased on a March Thursday afternoon, was 'The Path of Thorns' by Sarah McLachlan. iTunes users are now downloading 2.5 million songs per week, which is an annual run rate of 130 million songs per year. Apple CEO Steve Jobs said, "Crossing 50 million songs is a major milestone for iTunes and the emerging digital music era. With over 50 million songs already downloaded and an



Courtesy of Apple

additional 2.5 million songs being downloaded every week, it's increasingly difficult to imagine others ever catching up with iTunes". The iTunes Music Store offers Windows and Mac users the industry's largest online music catalogue of over 500,000 songs with uniform 99 cents-per-song pricing. There are exclusive tracks from more than 150 artists, plus music from all five major music companies and over 300 independent music labels, plus more than 5,000 audiobooks. For more information on Apple products, click on www.apple.com/uk.

HELLO STELLO

April Music, manufacturer of the superb Stello DP200 DAC-preamp reviewed last month, now has UK distribution via Audio Reference, Unit 8 Enterprise Park, Slyfield Industrial Estate, Guildford GU1 1RB. Tel: 01252 702705, Fax: 01483 301412. email: info@audioreference.co.uk; website: www.audioreference.co.uk



IPOD UNDER ATTACK

The resounding, and understandable, success of Apple's iPod has seen a wealth of new products fighting for the mantle of 'must have' music portable. Creative Labs has a new challenger in the shape of its Zen Portable Media Center. This was unveiled by Microsoft Chairman and Chief Software Architect Bill Gates at CES in January no less, and won this year's 'Best of CES' in the Home Audio category. It can store up to 80 hours of video, 5,000 songs and 50,000 digital photos, displaying still or moving images on a large LCD screen. For more information, click on www.creativelabs.co.uk.

SEVENTIES SOUNDS

With its varnished Maple case, this £95 TEAC SRL30DAB Digital Radio portable boasts subtle nineteen seventies 'retro' design cues yet - with a blue, backlit display and 10 DAB and 30 FM presets and six direct pushbuttons - gives nothing away in terms of facilities.



AAC BEATS WMA TO DVD-A

The DVD Forum, responsible for specifying the technical parameters of the all-conquering Digital Versatile Disc, has chosen AAC for the DVD-ROM zone of DVD-Audio discs. The inclusion of this low-resolution (lossy) track suitable for portable devices has long been championed by DVD-Audio figureheads such as Dolby's John Kellogg, thanks to its superior sound quality to MP3. The news comes after a number of competing formats were proposed, including MP3, ATRAC and Microsoft's WMA. Another contributory factor for its inclusion is likely AAC's integral copyright protection measures and history of use by legitimate organisations such as Apple. AAC can also deliver multi-channel content. Whether DVD-A releases actually get a DVD-ROM zone at all is up to the individual labels concerned - despite being the only approved lossy format, its use isn't compulsory. Advanced Audio Coding (AAC) was developed by Dolby Laboratories, Fraunhofer, AT&T, Sony and Nokia to provide high-quality audio that compresses more efficiently than earlier formats.

ENTER: DVD+AUDIO!

Eximius has announced an interesting new product called DVD+Audio Creator, which lets users create DVD-video compliant discs containing multiple music albums from existing CD-Audio discs, in either high quality (up to 24bit, 96kHz PCM) or high quantity (up to 45 hours MP2 at 192kbps) - which are playable on existing DVD video players. The new DVD+Audio format - unapproved by the DVD Forum - should not be confused with the existing DVD-Audio format! Eximius says it uses "a revolutionary and precise resampling and resolution enhancement method that dramatically improves on the original CD sound quality. Detail, imaging and clarity are dramatically enhanced, so that you can hear details you never heard before. Bass lines are deeper, rhythm sections become more transparent, voices are clearer." More information can be found at www.eximius.nl, where there's a trial version for download, giving 14 days of use with a maximum of 4 songs per title and 2 titles per volume.

EMI RESTRUCTURES

British music giant EMI, the world's third biggest music group has announced it is to cut 1,500 jobs, contract out CD production and ditch a number of "niche and under-performing" artists from its roster. The company has said it expected this reorganisation to save about £50m a year, although there

EMI FACTFILE

- 1931 Formed by merger of two gramophone makers
- 1952 Launches its first 33 rpm record
- 1955 Buys Capitol Records, home to Frank Sinatra
- 1962 EMI signs The Beatles
- 1976 Signs the Sex Pistols
- 1983 Releases its first CD
- 1996 Signs the Spice Girls
- 1998 Rejects Seagram takeover offer
- 2000 EMI-Warner merger fails
- 2001 EMI-Bertelsmann merger fails
- 2002 Pays £19m to end Mariah Carey contract
- 2003 Fails in takeover bid for Warner Music

would be a one-off cash cost of about £75m from the job cuts. The company's roster, which includes Robbie Williams, Kylie, Coldplay, and Norah Jones and Radiohead, will be reduced by about 20%. News of this saw its shares jump 18.5 pence to 275.5p on the London Stock Exchange. A spokesman said a small number of the job cuts would take place at sites in the UK, but would not reveal the total figure. Last winter saw the company fail in a proposed takeover of Warner Music, but the group has now announced it has acquired the remaining 20% of Berry Gordy's song catalogue, which includes 15,000 Motown classics such as "I'll Be There" for about \$80m.

next issue

July's *Hi-Fi World* is all about system buying, upgrading and synergy. The team line up three wildly differing set-ups, and explain how to get the best from them. We examine the cult of tweaking, and show some great ways to transform your sound ranging in price from pennies to thousands of pounds. Along the way, you can see some stunning new kit, like Musical Fidelity's X-RAY v3 CD player, Marantz's PM7200 KIS and Mordaunt Short's new 906 to name but a few! Factor in jewels from Linn, Sonneteer, Michell and Stanton and you've no excuse not to reserve your copy now!

next issue

Walrus Systems

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email: mail@walrus.co.uk

web: www.walrus.co.uk



Amplifon WL25 (left): 28W/channel using 6P3, £795
 Amplifon WT40 (centre): 40W/channel using 6C33, £1995
 Amplifon WT30 II (right): 31W/channel using 6H13, £1395

Amplifon is new to the UK, and you will be hearing a lot more about them! These exceptional value for money amplifiers, designed and manufactured in Poland, put to shame more expensive opposition in sound quality, build, and finish. All three models have automatic biasing, so there's no fuss when it's time to change tubes, they all feature heavy toroidal output transformers with a wide bandwidth and 4 and 8 Ohm taps, and the WT30 II and WT40 operate in Triode mode Push Pull, Class A.

They have classic valve amp attributes, sounding sweet and natural, but with enough power in reserve to rock when required!



The Trichord Dino (£299) outsells every other phono stage. Why? It sounds clean and clear, it's fully adjustable to virtually any MM or MC pickup, and when you fancy an upgrade, the Dino+ add-on power supply fits the bill, for an extra £225 (or buy them together from the start for £498).

If you prefer, the Tom Evans Microgroove (£450), suitable for MC pickups, is a worthy alternative, giving a level of detail retrieval difficult to better unless you spend an awful lot more. The Microgroove Plus (pictured above) at £800 is even better, and the famous Groove (£1900), below, has been described in various reviews as being state-of-the-art of phono stages. Like all products of it's standing, don't expect to walk away with one - it needs to be configured by the manufacturer for your particular pickup!



Cawsey (top) may not be the best known cable (others spend more on advertising) but it's quite possibly the best sounding. We have been selling these Australian made silver interconnects for several years and can recommend them without reservation. From £250 to £900 per metre set.



Slinkylinks

Slinkylinks (bottom) are solid silver air dielectric cables with the latest bullet plugs, fantastic sound at an amazingly low price: £195 for a 1.2m set!



The Michell Gyro SE (£895 + arm) remains one of the most successful turntables of all times, and for good reason. Sound is fast, neutral, and open. You have an upgrade route via the HR power supply, and the Orbe platter kit. Popular arms include the Regas, the Tecnoarm, the Origin Live Silver, and of course, the SME.

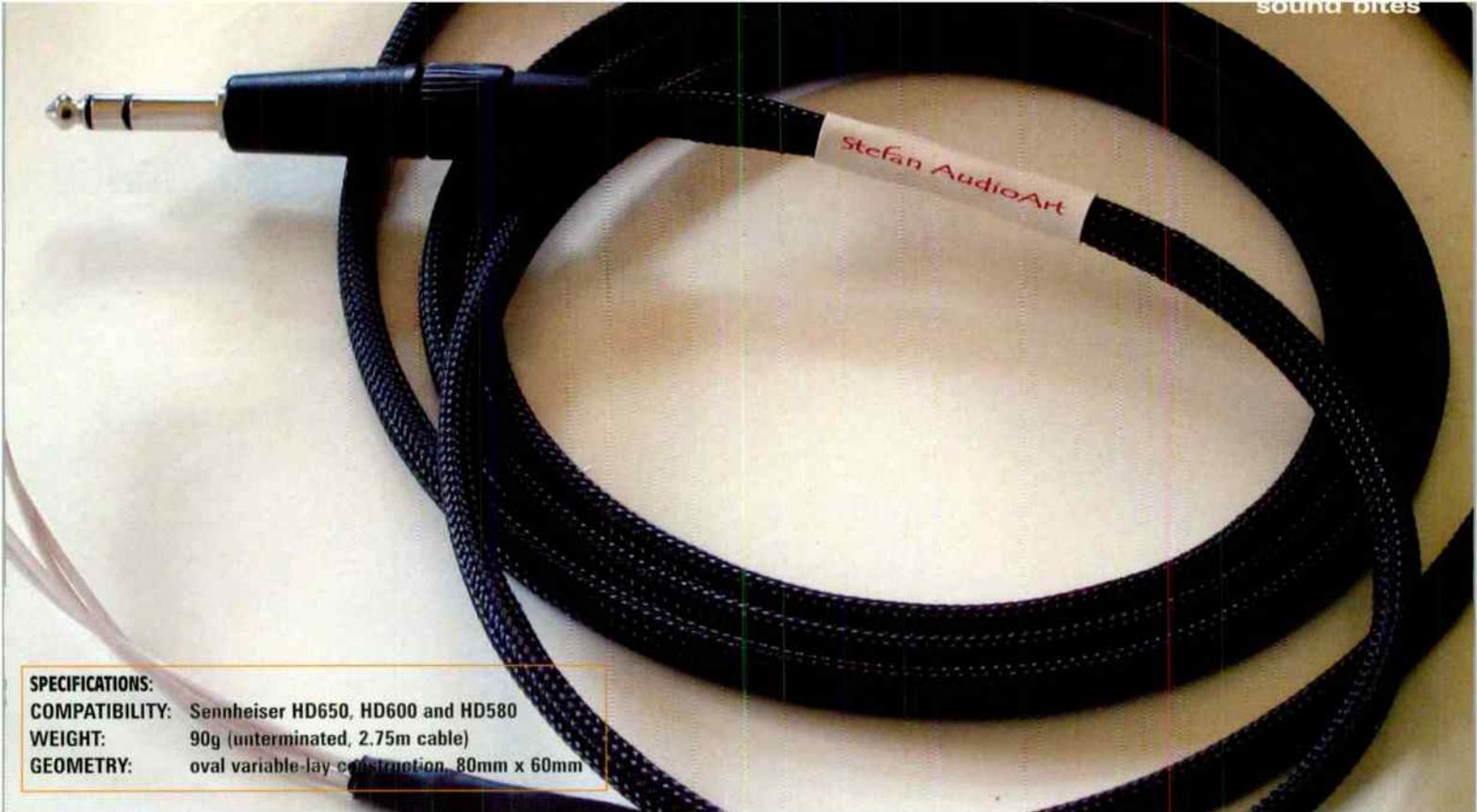
Compare the Gyro to the Spacedeck and the new Roksan Radius in our studio.



Duevel loudspeakers with their unique reflector system may look strange at first sight - don't let this worry you! Just put on your favourite recording, close your eyes, and enter the amazing three dimensional soundstage these omnidirectional radiators recreate. Starting from £1960/ pair for the Venus.



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SPECIFICATIONS:
COMPATIBILITY: Sennheiser HD650, HD600 and HD580
WEIGHT: 90g (unterminated, 2.75m cable)
GEOMETRY: oval variable-lay construction, 80mm x 60mm

STEFAN AUDIOART EQUINOX \$189

If you're a serious headphone user with the latest 'must have' kit, then the chances are that you're running a pair of Sennheiser HD600s. Of course, there are better cans around, but few deliver so much for (comparatively) so little, which is why this design has become so popular over the past couple of years. I'd also venture to suggest that you've bought yourself a Musical Fidelity X-CANS tube headphone amplifier, or an equivalent Creek solid-stater, and are now more than casually contented with the results...

Still, you may well be wondering if there's a way of getting a warmer, more beguiling sound, as the HD600s are just a touch too dry for some tastes. Well, Stefan AudioArt has the answer in the shape of its 'Equinox' Audiophile Headphone Cable. It replaces the standard issue item that comes with Sennheiser HD-580s, HD-600s and even the new HD-650s. If you own any of these, you'll probably be wondering how this is done, and the answer is that your basic Sennheiser cord is actually detachable – the ends pull out from each ear speaker, although you'll have to give them a damn good tug. This done, you simply push the two Stefan AudioArt terminated ends in, and the other end into your standard

6.3mm headphone jack socket.

The Equinox is handcrafted to the highest standard using the finest materials available. Each cable undergoes a special four and a half hour ergonomic assembly process which includes an extensive Ultra-Solder Process. The cable has four conductor, quad-braid field geometry, with ultra high purity copper with individual strain isolation enclosed with a Teflon/Oxygen dielectric finished in black Techflex with white cabling. It incorporates gold plated Sennheiser spade connections and is terminated with a professional 3.5mm heavy-duty black handle connector with gold contacts, or professional quarter inch plug with silver contacts – as specified.

This cable is the work of former Sennheiser Applications Engineer James Serdechny, who has also worked extensively with AKG and Beyerdynamic headphones. After years of designing cables for various audiophile recording studios, he came to thinking that they were the weak link in these headphone packages. He was right – this cable brings quite serious improvements to even the new HD650 (which you'd think would come with top quality wires!) Within seconds, you can hear the way it smoothes out the midband, offers greater depth and dimensionality, a wider tonal palette and most obviously, perhaps, a fuller and more propulsive bass. After just

a few minutes listening, I was transfixed by the air, space and ease that the HD650s had gained – despite previously having marvelled at the standard cabled versions for precisely this reason! Then, when I went back to the stock wires, they sounded thin, astringent and semi-detached.

Overall then, I'd recommend them whole-heartedly. They're expensive, but they really do upgrade the Sennheisers, and the better your headphone set-up already is, the more they'll benefit. Although they'll usefully smoothen and sweeten HD580s, it's worth investing all your available funds on the best cans you can afford (i.e. HD650s), and then get an offboard headphone stage, and then get the wires done. However, being detachable, you can of course remove them before you sell your existing HDs, for use with your upgraded pair – and I would say that the difference they make is so significant that a pair of Equinox-wired HD600s will likely better a standard wired pair of HD650s... The standard cans come with a useful 9ft (2.75m) cable length, and an equivalent run of Equinox, terminated by 6.3mm jack plug on one end and Sennheiser spades on the other will set you back \$189. Stefan AudioArt will do the cable in any length however, so for a quote you should email stefanaudioart@yahoo.com with the length you're interested in.

STEFAN AUDIOART
 115 Grennan Rd, West
 Hartford, Connecticut 06107
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Get The

The story starts some two years ago, when Ken Ishiwata and David Price were propping up a Spanish bar together - talking about classic Marantz turntables, Sumiko tonearms and Koetsu cartridges - and ends with what's probably the most musical sounding digital disc player ever made, the CD63KI DP...

PCM is stupid", declares Ken Ishiwata over a mineral water and a cigarette in a West End hotel restaurant. "What is needed is a fuzzy logic system that lets you use as much or as little space as required to describe a musical waveform". He's no great fan of 16bit, 44.1kHz aad, interestingly, almost less so of 24/192 DVD-Audio. What irks him so is the brickwall filtering demanded by PCM.

"You've gotta understand that PCM was a point in time. They used that coding scheme because they didn't know any better. They had to do it because they couldn't think of anything better back in the seventies. Of course, DSD [Direct Stream Digital, the coding system for SACD - Ed.] is the way to go, because minimizing the need for filtering is so important to the sound of digital... PCM's brickwall filter is a disaster!"

Ken sees DVD-Audio as reprehensible, simply because it replicates the problems of Red Book, but some thirty years later when we should all have known better. Of course, he admits that it's an improvement on 16/44, but it's the PCM (Pulse Code Modulation) system that he hates - one which throws out loads of noise above the audio band which has to be

summarily chopped off, with invariably deleterious results to the music. He thinks DSD is the way to go, although he'd like the 2.8224MHz sampling frequency to be raised "by a factor of a hundred". He thinks it will be possible to substantially upgrade SACD's take on DSD sometime in the not too distant future, as processors get faster.

Warp back two years, and KI and I were having pretty much the same conversation on the merits (or otherwise) of digital over a 'lemonade' or two in Malaga, at the Marantz press launch. Being someone with a penchant for 'classic hi-fi', I added that I thought - although it was a little soft and fluffy - my original, first-generation Marantz CD54 CD player had something special about it that I just couldn't hear in modern machines. Ken's face lit up like a Western Electric 300B. "That's because of that Philips 7220K digital filter," he said, "very musical!" But wasn't it that superb, first swing-arm Philips CDM0 transport, or the 14bit Philips TDA1590 DAC? He agreed that these are held in great regard, but was emphatic that it was the four times oversampling digital filter that gave a beautifully soft sound - and then launched off onto precisely the same tirade against the filtering demanded by the PCM

digital system. Then he added that he could make my CD54 sound even better - or rather, he said he could make it sound 'more musical'... What followed was a couple of years of silence on this front, and then a surprise. My old CD54 I'd sent him had been lost in transit, but he was - he said - about to do an even more extensive job with a new, old-stock Marantz CD63KI Signature.

On April 6th, 2004 I finally received a rather curious looking digital disc spinner at the office. After a long day at work, I raced back to my home in Bristol in my old Rover 3500, at well past licence-losing speeds, in heady anticipation of hearing this amazing, copper plated contrivance. I couldn't wait - I was expecting to be stunned. After all, I had a bespoke, handcrafted CD player there on the passenger seat - claimed to sound 'more musical' than probably the best CD player ever made. With my ears still buzzing from that 4,000RPM banzai M4 dash, I plugged in and was amazed. What followed was an all night 'rediscover your CDs' session. As the "KI DP" warmed through, it became clear that this guy truly does know what he's doing!

SOUND QUALITY

The CD63KI DP is the most

Balance Right

incredibly, exquisitely, seductively, charmingly beguiling digital player I've ever heard – bar nothing – but more of this later. For a long time, I've been polemicising against what I regard as Red Book CD's limited 16bit, 44.1kHz digital specification which – so I'd thought – makes for a chrome plated upper midband that's so tiresome and unlovely when you have to listen to it after you've just spun a vinyl record. Well – horror of horrors – this machine shows absolutely no signs of this whatsoever!

We all know how clanky, glassy, zingy CD's upper midband is, don't we? (If you don't, it's because you listen to CD to the exclusion of all else). But this player simply doesn't have it. It really is like listening to analogue. Not one scintilla of zing. Not one hint of hardness. Distortion came there none...

Indeed, the KI DP has the most amazing tonal accuracy. Like good modern vinyl, it neither adds nor subtracts, and instead 'lets the flavour flood out'. It gives a tremendous insight into what's actually being played. Is that a Roland SH-101 or D50 keyboard (i.e. analogue or digital)? Is that a Strat or a Les Paul? Real brass, or a digital sample? A late seventies all-analogue Ampex 457 recording, or done on an early eighties digital Sony PCM-F1? This machine tells you instantly – quite unlike any other CD spinner I've heard. It connects you right to the original sound, just like vinyl. But hang on, doesn't this rather contradict the view that 16/44 is fatally flawed? Indeed so – more of this later! Meanwhile, let's see what else this can do. At this point it's probably helpful to describe when I first heard a Linn LP12, after spending years with a Rega Planar 3. Suddenly, one could discern all the instrumentalists playing along with one another, rather than a single homogeneous mass of music. This is the other obviously discernable trait of the KI DP. It has incredible depth and insight, which allied to the aforementioned tonal palette, makes for an amazing listen.

Simple Minds' 'Someone, Somewhere in Summertime' was mesmeric, precisely what they once achieved on stage. Layers of sound, swirling keyboards, haunting vocals, brooding rhythmic pauses – they all contributed to an entrancing and seductive sound. Most CD players simply say, 'this is a dreadful transcription from the original master tape', but this one took me right back to that live gig. The Associates' 'Love Hangover' was delicious. The rhythm guitar was brilliantly lucid and expressive. It seemed to have broken free from the shackles of 'digital timing' – another common failing of all CD spinners which makes Chic sound like Kraftwerk, but playing bass and guitar. This terribly mechanical, metronomic feel blights digital (including most DVD-A, I think) and again strips away any organic feel that might have been on the original recording. Yet, as the Irish say, 'there it was gone'!

Okay, so this is one of those quintessentially Japanese, fat, rich, bloated sounding 'high end' sounding CD spinners, then? Absolutely not. Couldn't be further from the truth. It's brilliantly fast. It does everything that a Naim CDX2/XPS2 does. Whereas the aforementioned 'Salisbury Thrill' is incredibly tight, the KI DP is articulate, lucid and organic. It's interesting that Ken's avowed intention was musicality, as opposed to grip. He's achieved a tight and very fluid bass – that's also pleasingly warm and full.

At the other end of the frequency spectrum, this machine has the smoothest, sweetest treble I've yet

heard from 16bit. In fact, it's smoother than I've heard from any DVD-A or SACD – which may seem strange. Okay, it lacks the hear-through resolution of those hi-res formats, but it's wondrously silky nonetheless. Interestingly though, it's not 'silky' in the bland way that many high end Japanese players are. Rather, it has wonderful filigree detailing and insight, which seamlessly stretches right down the frequency spectrum into the midband.

The overall impression is of the least CD-like CD player I've heard, with a truly outstanding and peerless midband as its obvious strength. Female vocals simply don't sound edgy, masked, mushy, brittle or any of the other things digital can do to them. By analogue terms, there's still a very slight veiling – but you can't get everything from 16bit. Yet it's the seamless musicality, expansive range of tonal colours and incredible speed allied to terrific rhythms that makes this truly exceptional.

THE VERDICT

Fair enough, but this begs the question – how is this all possible, if CD's digital specification is so seriously flawed...? Well, Ken obviously believes it is, but ironically it isn't necessarily the 16bit, 44.1kHz

STOP PRESS:

Marantz CD63KI owners can get their machines modified to CD63KI DP specification for £1,000 inc. VAT. The price includes transportation from the nearest Marantz dealer to the factory, disassembly, copper-plating, all componentry and rebuilding. Due to the extensive work required, the process will take around one month. Contact Marantz UK on 01753 680868 for details.



PCM system that accounts for its generally perceived thin and two dimensional sound. He takes up the story, "The reason is that every component part, including the mechanical ones, have their own individual characteristic in terms of sound. That is, in fact, my secret! I can identify those different characteristics by listening the product, and balancing the different mechanical and electronic components accordingly."

Ken believes that CD's outdated PCM coding system makes it very easy to design a poor sounding CD player. Getting around its obvious



technical constraints is a tremendous challenge to designers, but the system itself is not so bad that it's impossible to give true, three-dimensional 'Technicolor' sound. As the CD63 KI DP proves, success with sixteen bit is a matter of

serious tweekery with not inexpensive mechanical and electronic components. "What I am doing is making the balance right. That, in my opinion, is the most important thing in any hi-fi component."

**SPECIAL EDITION STORY:
KEN ISHIWATA ON THE EARLY DAYS
OF DIGITAL**

When I first heard CD I was shocked. I felt the potential of what you could do with this tiny disc – it was amazing. What surprised me most at first was its lack of surface noise! And also because of the measurements – I loved those clean sine waves, unlike analogue which had all that noise. I thought, 'this is the way to go'. Of course, I knew it wasn't perfect, but we had to face reality, which was the mass market, and having more than 16bits at that time was not realistic. Philips and Sony had to make decisions based on the available technology.

I knew that 4x oversampling was the only way to go, but not one Japanese company did! They only started to talk about the number of bits – 16 is better than 14 – that was simply the way they communicated. But of course, if you don't do oversampling, you have to cut the signal very sharply at the top end with a brick wall filter, and this is actually audible right throughout the audio band. If you have such a high order filter, it ruins the sound. I knew this because of some modifications I had done to a (Sony) PCM-F1 digital recorder. I had done some recordings on it, then I started to think about filtering, and so I changed the filter and got very different results.

Another reason digital didn't sound ideal was the culture of studio engineers. When you are recording analogue, of course you get some rounding of the square wave, some colouration. So to compensate for this, the studio engineers used to put the microphones very close to vocalists and mix things very forward. It became standard practice, so even when they switched to digital they didn't change – which explains the

lack of space and hardness in those early digital recordings. Then, the brickwall filtering of most digital machines on playback made things sound even worse!

The original Philips CD100 was a good player, but the Marantz version – the CD63 - had some modifications. There were some changes in the power supply and in the digital filter. We were very happy with the results. To be honest, rival machines like the Sony CDP-101 were no comparison! Then, technology progressed and Philips eventually came out with their 16bit, 4 times oversampling chips.

At that time we had about three thousand CD45s sitting in the warehouse in the UK, and the managing director and marketing manager said, 'What are we going to do with them? Maybe we should sell them for ninety nine pounds? The marketing manager didn't want to do that, but it seemed like we had no choice. So I said, 'Wait a minute, I am going to modify these 14bit machines, and I'm going to make the most musical CD player available, and then we're going to sell them for fifty pounds more!' We finally decided on a limited edition run of two thousand. I did my modifications, and took a prototype to a classical musician friend of mine, and he was amazed. So it came out – and they all sold out without in two weeks. We said, 'what a pity we didn't have more machines to modify!' That was the birth of the Special Edition.

After the CD45LE, we did the CD65 and CD75 Special Edition, and then every year we had a new model, like the CD50SE, CD52SE, CD63SE, CD67SE and CD6000SE. Each generation didn't have a new chipset - up until 1989 when Bitstream came - because fundamentally the digital filter was working

very well. But we changed the mechanisms - the CD100 had a CDM0 and the CDM1 followed. This was the original swing arm, complete with die-cast parts. Swing arms were the best way, as they had better trackability compared to the linear tracking designs the Japanese manufacturers were using. But it did have its problems. It was heavy, and the position control was done by servos which required high current, and this affected the noise floor. We managed to isolate it, but there were problems nonetheless.

We ran with the swing arm transports through the CDM3 and CDM4 right up to CDM9. After that, it was linear, parallel tracking like the Japanese. The Philips/Marantz machines always sounded very different to the Japanese rivals for precisely this reason – they had better (swing arm) transports and superior (4x oversampling) DACs and digital filters. Even the S/PDIF chip was better - that early Philips S/PDIF chip was the best one ever made.

Then there was the BIMOS/CMOS issue. In the semiconductor industry, moving to smaller, lower power consumption chips is the trend – and everything went in that direction, including D-A converters. This is shame, and it's one I couldn't do anything about, as with these you need current – which BIMOS delivers. With CMOS however, which all CD players were using by the mid nineties, it's only 3v or so – and that very tiny current isn't ideal for a D-A convertor. So you can see how things changed. Each new development in digital has been a new challenge – and not always for the better – we've had to find better ways of working with technology that's got cheaper, rather than better. When Bitstream came out, I thought, "my God, what are we going to do...?"



KEN ISHIWATA DETAILS THE MODS:

"As you probably know this player became very popular with audiophiles, and even today I still receive emails asking if there is a chance of getting hold of one, after nearly ten years! I knew what kind of sound DP liked, and the kind of music he listened to, and the fact that he used Yamaha NS1000M loudspeakers and tube amplifiers. So I started to think, why not take the CD63KI - which is one of my favorite CD players - to personalise the sound to his tastes. The objective of this exercise was simply for him to be able to enjoy music from CD, rather than having to listen to LPs, so here's what I did:

[a] copper plate the complete bonnet and front panel to reduce the ground impedance, and at same time reducing eddy currents (of course, the original 63 KI already had a copper plated chassis and rear panel). This means all the metalwork surrounding the mechanism and electronics was now copper plated! This resulted in smoothed out mid-to-mid high frequencies, to give a silky tonal balance.

[b] due to the aforementioned change, the total sound balance was changed, so to compliment the above, I had to rebalance the bottom end and high frequency, but here I had to take consideration of DP's tube amplification and NS1000M speakers. The first thing was to get bottom end matching, done by different wiring and a change in power supply components (replacing the electrolytic capacitors and changing the value of fuse resistors). This was quite tricky - I had to try a few things to get the results I wanted. I used copper wire for the power supply, to get the balance in speed, along with tweaking the fuse resistor value. Then the final tonal balance adjustments were done by electrolytic capacitor changes.

[c] next was the high frequency balance. Again, due to the change made by copper plating, and DP's use of tube amps, I had to compensate for the treble tonality, and give the player a tube-like texture. The first thing I tried was changing the phase compensation in the analogue output amplifier section. The type of capacitors used here can create big differences in the tonal balance, even if they're the same value! On top of it, the speed of sound changes with these phase compensations! I once again tried a few different types of the same value, and finally got a matched balance but with high speed - very rare in the high frequency domain. The next thing was to artificially increase the noise (you can call this as distortion), to give some more tube effect! Extra space in the soundstage was the objective of the change. It wasn't easy, since noise influences the mid-to-mid high frequency band as well... In fact, this was the trickiest part...

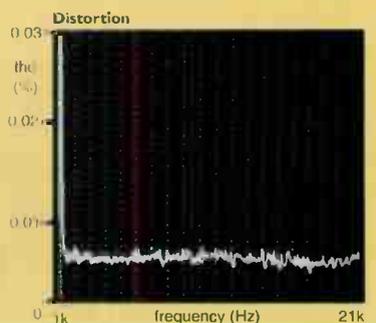
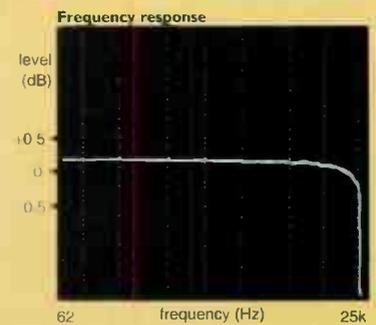
[d] of course, passive components are an important area. For example, in certain places in a circuit, I use Elna Cerafine capacitors and in others Silmics. But you can't just use one type of audiophile component to guarantee perfect results. You need the counterbalancing - both Elnas and Silmics have very good characters, but you have to balance them in the right measure. You have to learn which components have which characteristics, and when you know you can combine them. Capacitors are the most difficult - basically it's a non-linear function you're fighting with. One thing I know is that many people use the same kind of capacitor everywhere - because it's very good - but it actually sounds awful, because balancing is crucial. You have to know the characteristics of those components personally. It has taken years of experience, and I had to create a database on my computer! I'm not especially pro-Japanese, it's just that foreign [that's as in non-Japanese - Ed.] brands aren't predictable. I also tried them and they were very good, and then you expect the next shipment to sound the same and they're completely different! There's a very nice American manufacturer, and they make very good components, but one day they sound one way and the next day they're different. If we don't have consistency then we can't guarantee the performance!

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

I was surprised that this lavishly finished player doesn't match the measured performance of current mainstream designs, making me suspect it is a multibit, albeit with a better spec than most. Our distortion analysis shows a complete absence of distortion components at 30dB, and little quantisation noise too. The Rohde & Schwarz analyzer returned higher values at low signal levels though, giving an EIAJ dynamic range figure of 104dB, not as good as possible. However, being linear at higher levels and with a broad, even response, I would expect the Marantz to have a clean, open sound, likely lively if not sharp, due to a little high frequency roll off. So here's a player that measures well, but also one that looks distinctive. NK

20kHz	98	99
Noise (IEC A)		103dB
Dynamic range		104dB
Output		2.24V

Frequency response	4Hz	20	875Hz
	left		right
Distortion			
0dB	0.001		0.001
60dB	0.41		0.42
80	8.5		8
Separation			
1kHz	113		114



Kandy

**It's not all
black and white.**



Roksan, for those with a little more grey matter.

Beyond the spin

Ironically, just as Compact Disc is reaching its 'twilight years', it is becoming a serious music carrier for audiophiles without telephone number salaries – which is precisely what it should have been all along. In this supertest, Francis Tabor lined up three new mid-price British audiophile CD spinners, plus a Sony multichannel SACD machine and Marantz's latest DVD universal player, with interesting consequences...

Hi-Fi World has made great efforts to debunk the myth – perpetrated by various other publications – that digital is perfect, and indeed that CD sound is getting better. What's undeniable though is that good CD sound is getting cheaper – and it's now possible to buy an extremely capable digital disc spinner for under £1,000.

For example, some early high end CD players – like Meridian's 1984 MCD Pro – can offer quite amazing sonics. Even compared to highly capable, cutting-edge designs like Sony's latest flagship (£1,600) SCD-XA9000ES SACD player in CD mode, the oldster shows it a clean pair of heels in terms of musicality, fluidity and general charm. This fact rather contradicts the marketing departments of large consumer electronics companies who'd like us to believe that all is great which is shiny and new.

However, contrast the performance of mid-price, mid-eighties machines like Yamaha's CDX-3 with the equivalently priced (in real terms) designs you see here, and the new stuff starts to pull ahead – sometimes quite dramatically. Unlike any of the players here, the oldie – although well respected in its day – sounds hard, fuzzy and two dimensional by comparison. This supertest shows that some 'affordable' CD hardware is now little short of superb. Of course, we'd argue that equivalently priced vinyl spinners sound superior still – but that's for another day. The point is that several of the players here offer stunning value, and we find ourselves scratching our 'editorial head' wondering how they've done it.

This is kind of ironic, considering that – to all intents and purposes – Compact Disc is a dying format. Of course, there's massive amounts of software in circulation, and no one's pretending it's going to disappear overnight, but the fact remains that

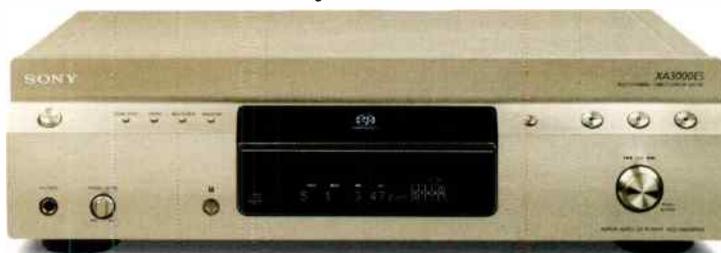
the big, high volume Japanese consumer electronics companies (Panasonic, Pioneer, Denon, et al) no longer make serious CD spinners at all, but only universal machines with 'legacy' CD compatibility.

In 2004, if you want a proper, purpose built 16/44 digital player, you'll have to look to specialist (usually British) companies in the main, many of which are also frantically gearing up to 'go DVD'. So this month's supertest sees combatants from a UK trio of Exposure, Roksan and Naim Audio, plus Sony's mid-price SACD player and Marantz's equivalent DVD universal machine thrown in as references. The Sony is – to the Japanese giant's great credit – an audio only machine with the accent on sonics, and the Marantz is a multi-format audio-video player that's been specially tweaked by one Ken Ishiwata, more of whom on p12!

Roksan Kandy KD-1 MK III



Sony SCD-XA3000ES



Marantz DV8400



Naim CD5i



Exposure 3010CD



REFERENCE SYSTEM:
passive pre-amp
Rotel RB-890BX (modified) power amp
Monitor Audio Silver S8 speakers

ROKSAN KANDY KD-1 MK III



VERDICT ●●●●●

Excellent build, interesting styling and great sound make this an excellent buy.

ROKSAN KANDY KD 1 £595

Henley Designs Ltd

+44 (0)1235 511166

www.henleydesigns.co.uk

FOR:

- Beautiful construction
- Good tempo

AGAINST:

- Cannot play CD-R discs
- Some detail missing at higher frequencies

With just a mains input and switch, coaxial digital output and a pair of analogue outputs round the back, you can't go wrong connecting this handsome machine to your system. The chunky front panel has six buttons, three either side of the drawer. The play/pause button is duplicated - the right hand of each set of three does the same thing. Open the drawer and place your CD on the tray, and it looks odd; as the back of the CD is raised up. No doubt something pushes the disc down when the draw closes to hold it in place while it is spinning! The manual is comprehensive and clearly written. As always with Roksan, this machine is very well made with a high standard of construction. It has a very solid feel to it that was reassuring. Combined with a pretty blue display, it was a delight to use and responded in a very positive way to the controls.

SOUND QUALITY

A very competent player with an enjoyable sound. I dug out Kate Bush's 'Wuthering Heights' to see what this player made of the many different instruments in the mix, and could hear a strong bassline underpinning a clear midband, with plenty of excitement to boot. Despite its obviously musical nature, there was nothing in the way of glare, as per older players at this price point. Indeed, I got the impression that in an attempt to reduce the hardness at high frequencies, Roksan might have rolled off the response a tad [see Measured Performance]. I then went to the BBC Records'

recording of Giuliani's first guitar concerto, where the Roksan proved no less engaging despite the different musical vernacular. Rhythms were very well played, and there was a nice clean guitar sound. Some of the background instruments weren't as detailed and clear as they might have been though, although the lead strings were crisp enough and a lack of hardness most commendable. It was a pleasure listening to this player, and it proved very relaxed throughout the Haydn symphonies on the same disc. too.

With the more up-tempo strains of The Mavericks' 'Trampoline', the Roksan proved it could rock with the best of them. 'Dance The Night Away' has always been a favourite,

and this player did it great justice. Mary Black showed the Roksan's delicate side. 'Carolina Rua' from 'No Frontiers' showed excellent channel separation, as well as fine voice rendition. On this CD I could hear all the individual instruments well separated across the soundstage, but still felt that there might have been a little something missing at the high frequency end. Whatever, the Roksan proved an intelligently balanced and capable all rounder. It's happy with a wide variety of music, and manages to give an exciting and engaging listen without ever straying into hardness or grain. Factor in that superb build and charismatic styling, and it has a formidable blend of competencies.

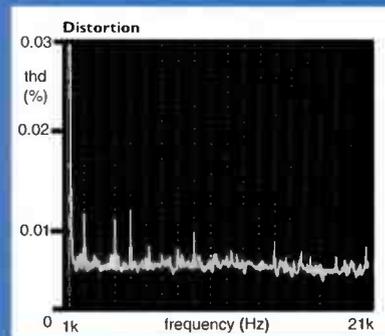
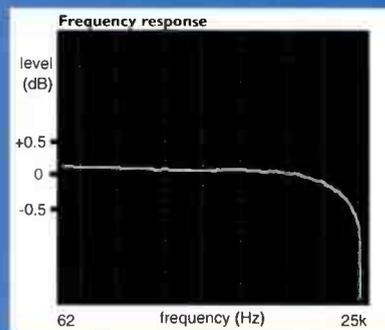
MEASURED PERFORMANCE

There were some distinguishing features to the Kandy. Frequency response rolls off to measure -1dB down, rather more attenuation than is usual. Starting from 5kHz the effect will be audible, removing the bite and sheen of CD. There's no doubt the Kandy II will be an easy listen, perhaps more analogue in its balance. Although our distortion analysis shows some harmonics at -30dB, all the same this player was linear at low levels, returning a fine 11dB dynamic range value for example, and half as much distortion at -80dB than some.

The Kandy II will likely have an easy sound, but also one that's clean and dynamic. It looks very interesting from a measurement perspective. NK

Noise (IEC A)	-94dB
Dynamic range	111dB
Output	2.25V

Frequency response	4Hz - 21Hz	
	left	right
Distortion		
0dB	0.002	0.002
-60dB	0.22	0.2
-80	5	4.6
Separation	left	right
1kHz	105	104
20kHz	95	96



SONY SCD-XA3000ES



A luxury player by any standards, the manual has no less than 28 pages of information - and that's just the English part! It's packed with features - it even has a headphone socket with its own volume control. The manual states that you cannot play a CD-ROM - I assume it means a computer data disc, because it played computer-created audio CDs fine, as did all the other players in this test. The Sony also played a finalised disc made on a Philips CD recorder, including the text title of the CD, being the filename used when making the recording - the only player in the group to do this. If you don't like the display, you can even turn it off.

Another press gives information about SACD discs, if one is being played. That option is not available when a standard CD is being played. Incidentally, the default display option also shows the index, a feature included on some early machines that seems to have been dropped on more recent ones. This is sometimes used by recording engineers to indicate a point in the music. In use, you can feel the quality as the draw opens quietly and smoothly, and there's very little mechanical noise from inside as the player searches for tracks on the disc.

SOUND QUALITY

This machine played everything I threw at it with consummate ease, and was wonderful to listen to. It managed to be relaxing without ever being boring. While it didn't make the listener sit up and take notice in the manner of the Marantz, neither did it miss out on much. No longer can

we say that the big Japanese names cannot match similarly priced British machines for sound. This Sony had all the smoothness of the Naim, and much of the excitement too. Mary Black was superb - the detail on 'Columbus' was quite something and had me reaching for the track button to play it again. Then I just had to listen to The Mavericks, but enough of the loud tracks. 'Fool #1' saw the instruments beautifully separated, with the opening guitar just sitting there with tremendous solidity.

The sharpness of the bass in 'Kite' from Kate Bush was clearer than with most of the other players here. It had a very tight sound, yet was never brittle, and boasted plenty

of the 'blackness' you get around individual notes on the better machines. Although capable of playing the new SACD format discs, this player is well able to confirm that the better recordings in the traditional CD format are indeed excellent. It's another of those 'consummate all rounders' then, offering far better CD sound than it has a right to at the price. It's a tad drier and more measured sounding than the characterful Roksan, but this will appeal if you're into classical music. Oh, and it also boasts a choice of two-channel or multichannel SACD, which pushes its sonics onto another level. Its blend of talents at the price are hard to argue against.

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

Sony always engineer CD to a high standard, offering the best specs possible and this player is no exception. With CD it produces little distortion, with SACD it's minimal, our Rohde & Schwarz analyser reading SACD's noise floor. SACD will resolve signals below -100dB and our 5% distortion reading is actually noise.

SACD bandwidth reaches 38kHz (-1dB) before output rolls down to -3dB at 45kHz. Although there is output at 98kHz it is low.

CD manages the usual figures, with a super flat response to 21.2kHz (-0.05dB) with continuous signals, but only to 5kHz with an impulse, suggesting digital processing and a softer sound than usual (Sonz are normally glassy bright). The player had very low distortion of 0.2% at -60dB resulting in large 112dB EIAJ dynamic range value. Output was low at 1.86V. There was a little programme related jitter, peaking at 100pS, not large but not as good as possible.

I suspect this player will sound unusually smooth and easy going. Scny seem to be trying to tame the hardness of CD to bring it into line with SACD's presentation I have noticed with other

players. That seems to be the case here. NK

Frequency response (-1dB)

SACD 2Hz-38kHz

CD 5-21.2kHz

Separation 110dB

Distortion (-60dB)

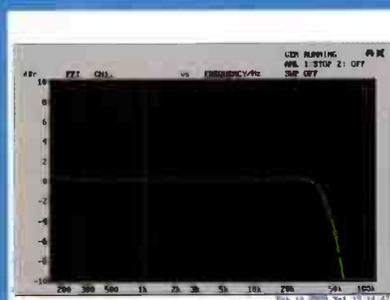
SACD 0.08%

CD 0.2%

Noise (IEC A wtd) -104dB

Output 1.86V

Dynamic range (CD, EIAJ) 112dB



VERDICT ●●●●● £

A dizzying array of facilities, fine build, SACD playback and excellent CD sound make this the best value player in the group.

SONY SCD-XA3000ES £600

Sony UK Ltd

+44 (0)1932 816 786

www.sony.co.uk

FOR:

- Build quality
- Fantastic sound stage
- Features including head phone output

AGAINST:

- Size - too big front to back

VERDICT ●●●●●£

Exciting, engaging and enthralling – here's a universal player that's made few obvious sacrifices with its CD sound, although match with care.

MARANTZ DV8400 £900

Marantz
 ☎ +44 (0)1753 680 868
 www.marantz.com

FOR:

- Compatibility with almost every type of disc
- Enjoyable musicality

AGAINST:

- Confusing manual
- Bright sound needs careful matching



This universal machine will play DVD-A and SACD formats as well as CD, although for the purposes of this review we are looking only at the Compact Disc performance. Obviously, it's not a strictly 'like for like' comparison, but prospective buyers will want to know if there are any tradeoffs involved when buying a multi-format, multichannel machine – even an excellent one such as this. As expected, this Marantz will play finalised discs recorded either on a computer or on my Philips CD recorder, but unlike the Sony doesn't display the track filename of a computer recorded disc. Build was exemplary as we have come to expect from all but budget priced machines today, although not quite as solid as the Sony or Naim. Facilities are wide ranging, and it takes quite some time to find out the limits of what it can do - try it with all your different discs and see if you can find one it can't play!

SOUND QUALITY

Most impressive, just so long as you like your sound on the bright side. While other manufacturers seem fit to 'voice' their players to give a softer sound, Marantz hasn't taken any obvious steps to dull this one. The result is an engaging, upfront and detailed sound, but one that will require careful matching in some systems to work well. The good news is that modern speakers are becoming ever smoother and more couth, and the Marantz's own AV receivers, such as the new 5400 OSE, are smoother and sweeter than most. Methinks this latter fact is no

coincidence! With the Giuliano CD, I heard for the first time some background noise on the recording - what sounded like the pumping of a noise suppression system. Subsequent checking with the other machines confirmed it to be on the disc and not a fault with the player, but it was interesting that I first spotted it on the Marantz.

Kate Bush's 'The Kick Inside' sounded most musical, with lashings of inner detailing giving a fascinating insight to mix, but her voice did sound just a little too 'brightly lit'. With the Mavericks the Marantz was very propulsive - play it loud when the neighbours are out and the band are all there strutting their stuff with

aplomb. Quieter tracks on the disc were also impressively clear in their presentation. More relaxed was Mary Black. Again, a bit like Kate Bush, her voice was clear and she sang with authority, demanding that you listen carefully to the lyrics. And that's the key to the DV8400 – it's demanding, commanding and musically engaging. This is obviously very desirable – and shows that unlike so many other DVD universal machines (like Pioneer's DV757i, for example) Marantz hasn't opted for a soft, slovenly CD sound. It does mean it will need careful matching however, to something like the aforementioned Marantz AV receiver.

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

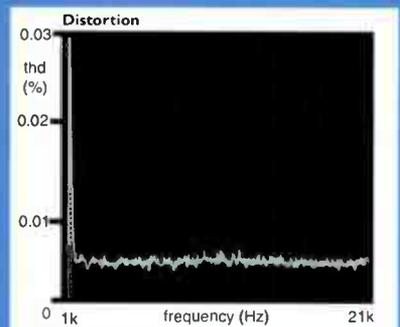
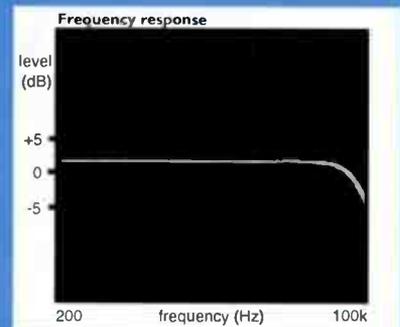
Whilst the measured performance of CD always comes in within tight limits, SACD is still in its infancy, with less certain results. Having said that today's players usually reach 50kHz or so before rolling down to -20dB or so at 100kHz and the DV6400 fits this category. With output -1dB at 48kHz and -15dB at 100kHz it reaches far above CD's 21kHz limit, whilst at the same time not matching DVD-A's performance, which often measures flat to 100kHz.

SACD is also very linear, a little more so than DVD-A I'm finding from measurement. The DV6400 gave superb results from both CD and SACD in this respect, managing just 0.01% distortion at -60dB from SACD, about twenty times lower than CD. It has a similarly large advantage at -80dB and can resolve minute signals.

The DV6400 returns fine results from CD and SACD. Obviously, with the latter results are far above anything CD can achieve and look impressive by any standard. NK

Frequency response	(-1dB)	
CD	4Hz - 21.2kHz	
SACD	4Hz - 48kHz	
Distortion	CD	SACD

0dB	0.0005%	0.0003%
-60dB	0.19%	0.01%
-80dB	9.3%	0.02%
Separation (1kHz)	112dB	
Noise (IEC A)	-97dB	
Dynamic range	112dB	
Output	2.0V	



NAIM CD5i



Hi-fi equipment these days tends to look very samey, but not this one. Round the back there are those quirky DIN connectors, plus a pair of phono sockets now. The fascia is no less esoteric - front panel buttons offer previous track, next track, stop and play. There's more on the diddy little remote control, but none to open or close the drawer. Try pulling gently on the mysterious knob at the left of the drawer, and pivoting at the right, the draw will now open! But your experience of the different way that Naim does things doesn't end here. When you open the draw you will find a magnetic puck sitting tightly on top of the turntable. Lift this off, place the CD on the turntable and replace the puck to hold it firmly in place. What an excellent idea! Why does nobody else do this? The usual direct track selection, programme and repeat functions are on the remote - but that's your lot. This machine has the air of a purpose-dedicated music playing machine, with barely more facilities than a turntable! Features freaks should look to the Sony or Marantz. Build quality, finish and ergonomics are superlative, as one has come to expect from this top manufacturer.

SOUND QUALITY

The CD5i turned out to be a little different from my expectation, almost as though someone has decided to tame the sound from previous models. Indeed its presentation was actually softer than the Marantz, but without suffering any loss in detail. Listening to Kate Bush I was left feeling that the distinctive high pitched character of her voice

was a little muted, as those the rough bits had been smoothed off. Despite that, channel separation was better than other players, with individual instruments more clearly spaced across the sound stage. Rhythm was tight and timing superb. This player produced some very foot tapping music. Midband was excellent, the Mavericks sounding very upbeat and danceable. The Giuliani guitar concerto gave a relaxed sound, solo guitar being beautifully presented and located with breathtaking precision. Detail of the plucking was splendid, a fine performance from Edoardo Catemario! Mary Black sang beautifully through this Naim too. Indeed, the more I listened to

all kinds of music, the more I felt that here was a player designed to give a natural sound with surprisingly warm tonality - the hardness and glare associated with Naim from the days of yore has gone. In fact, my only worry came when I listened to a brass band recording made directly to CD at a live performance, where the sound was too nice, lacking bite through my reference system. This is a clever indication of the voicing of the Naim - it should work superbly through the partnering Nait 5 amplifier, which will 'lift' it. Overall then, a brilliantly capable design with the accent on just playing music - providing its correctly matched. Features fans look elsewhere.

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

The convolved impulse response of this player differs from most. Our analysis shows a small amount of treble lift before the fast roll off of the anti-aliasing filter. Swept tone measurement confirmed this result. It suggests the CD5i will have fast transients and possibly a well lit sound that may at times seem bright, depending upon the recording.

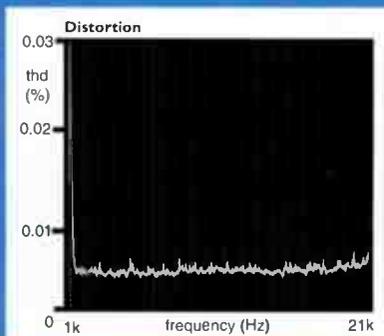
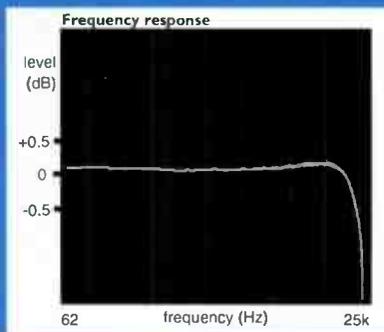
Distortion was low at all signal levels and a good EIAJ dynamic range value of 106dB was achieved. Output was a little lower than Philips standard 2V, which is surprising, so the CD5i might well sound a little less forceful if compared directly with rivals of higher output - a subtle point this.

The CD5i measures well in all areas but it does appear to have unusual filtering and will likely have its own fast sound. NK

Frequency response 5Hz - 20.6kHz

Distortion	
0dB	0.002
-40dB	0.025
-80dB	11.3
Separation	
1kHz	98dB
20kHz	88dB

Noise (IEC A)	-98dB
Dynamic range	106dB
Output	1.94V



VERDICT

Surprisingly warm and smooth, here's a brilliantly musical machine that will enchant - just don't expect a wide range of features!

NAIM CD5i £825
 Naim Audio Ltd
 +44 (0)1722 332 266
 www.naim-audio.com

FOR:

- Style and operation
- Smooth and musical sound

AGAINST:

- No digital out option
- Lack of facilities



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EXPOSURE 3010CD



VERDICT ●●●●●

This machine gives the greatest insight into the music, with one of the most beguiling balances here – but so it should at this price.

EXPOSURE 3010 £1,200
 Exposure Electronics
 ☎ +44 (0)1273 423 877
 www.exposurehifi.com

- FOR:**
- Excellent build quality
 - Super smooth and musical sound
- AGAINST:**
- Unusual BNC connector for digital out
 - No track skip feature

Another minimalist design from Exposure, like the matching 3010 amplifier reviewed last month. You don't get the blue LEDs from the amp with this CD player; instead the display has nice red characters. If you don't like them you can switch the display off, leaving just the red power-on LED alight. In addition to the mains supply button on the front panel, you get just six others. Open/ Close, Play/Pause and Display On/Off are toggle buttons which will change from one state to the other. Stop, Next Track and Last track are the remaining functions that can be selected from the front panel of this player. There are more features available from the remote - you can repeat a track or repeat the whole disc, play tracks at random and program your favourite selection. Round the back, you find a pair of digital outputs - one optical and one (BNC) coaxial - in addition to the mains input and stereo audio phono sockets. If you're not using a digital output, you can disconnect it inside the player. The Exposure 3010 plays finalised CD-R discs, which is good for those who create their own material. The drawer opens quietly and smoothly, with a feeling of solid confidence - something that reflects the excellent build.

SOUND QUALITY

Starting with Mary Black's 'Columbus', I heard the best instrumental separation of the group. Quite an experience, I could hear each one very clearly and her voice was

bright and enthusiastic yet totally devoid of hardness - quite an achievement! The Giuliani concerto was also beautifully performed. Again, the instruments were clearly spaced and their individual positions nicely described. There was a degree of 'blackness' between the sounds that's unusual even at this price. The Mavericks' 'Dance The Night Away' is quite a brash recording, and the Exposure was merciless in exposing the rough edges - this player won't flatter to deceive. But give it a good disc and will reward with an excellent performance.

Kate Bush's voice carried just the right tonality, neither hardened and emphasised nor dulled or muted. The bright bass and drum opening to 'Kite' was foot tapping stuff, and the

whole mix wonderfully crisply conveyed. The overall sound was very smooth, yet obviously more incisive than any of the others here. At first, it seemed to have a lack of high frequency detail, but this was only a temporary illusion, as when called upon it was all there! Indeed my CD recording of a live brass band performance confirmed this was the closest sound to the original performance of all the players in this test. In short, the Exposure is the player that treads just the right path between smoothness and musicality, without any hardness or glare anywhere. Maybe it's to be expected considering it's twice the price of the others here, but shows that Exposure have done the job properly all the same.

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

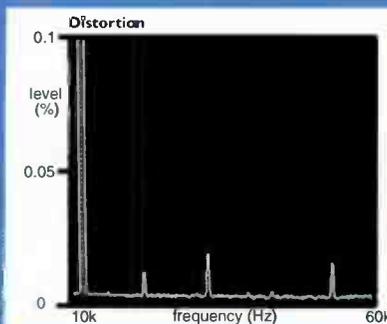
The CD3010 has a smooth, extended response that reaches 21.25kHz analysis shows. The slow roll down above 5kHz will have a plateau effect upon the player's response characteristic that in use should add up to a smoother sound with a less aggressively bright air than most. At the same time, being just -0.3dB down at 20kHz means the player will not sound dull or warm.

Distortion and noise were low, very good results being achieved down to -40dB or so, with some rise below this relative to other players degrading the -60dB EIAJ dynamic range value to 104dB. The subjective effect of this is slight.

The CD3010 should sound nicely balanced in a tonal sense, and clean too due to low noise and distortion on high level signals. NK

Frequency response 4Hz - 21.25Hz

	left	right
Distortion		
0dB	0.001	0.01
-60dB	0.44	0.45
-80	4.4	4.6
Separation	left	right
1kHz	110	112
20kHz	98	99
Noise (IEC A)		-112dB
Dynamic range		104dB
Output		2V



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VERDICT ●●●●●

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- *Hi-Fi World* (page 15, May 2004)
by David Price

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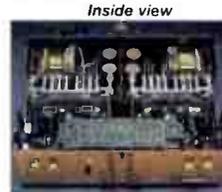
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Conclusion

We didn't choose the six worst players we could find for this test – quite the reverse. All are excellent in some respects, while some are in many. Least expensive was the Roksan Kandy at a commendably low £595. Roksan has used much of the Caspian design, and indeed some of the internals of the Kandy are just the same. As such, it's hard to fault at the price. It did everything well, was not too warm and soft nor hard and dry. Overall, an endearingly musical machine, with its own individual style to boot.

Next was the Sony. If SACD is useful to you (and why not), and/or multichannel, then this represents the best value in the group. It has a good, straight-down-the-line sound that's clean, detailed and dry. It's not the most expressive, warm or beguiling – but very neutral and thorough. Factor in its supreme ergonomics, feature count and overall packaging, and many will make it their automatic choice.

Naim's CD5i comes next. In some respects, this was the best sounding of the group. It's obviously extremely musically articulate, yet surprisingly smooth too. Only the Exposure beat it comprehensively, it that's several hundred quid more. The Naim was generally more laid-back, but certainly not possessed of a muggy fall-asleep sound. People who have always thought of Naim as having too bright a character should definitely audition this one - they'll be well surprised. Factor in the superlative style, build and no-nonsense minimalist feature count and ergonomics, and it's the audiophile-on-budget's choice.

Next comes the Marantz, which offers just about every option you can think of and – with DVD-A, DVD and SACD playback too - the promise of transcending the format war. Although it is emphatically not hard, it has a brightness that some will love, while others will loathe. The effect is to show up the higher frequencies in a more detailed light, and also speeds the bass somewhat. Match carefully, to a Marantz AV receiver for example, and it should delight. It's a lot of machine for the money, and – very unusually – doesn't sacrifice CD sound at the altar of multichannel and movies.

And finally, the Exposure 3010CD is the one in this group if price isn't a consideration, and neither is its lack of hi-res format playback. Build is exemplary, with a certain elegance that even the latest generation from Japan cannot match. Sound quality is the smoothest, yet offers tremendous grip and insight without sounding ever being showy. Put simply, it's the most natural here, and as such is worth the extra cost if you want the best. The only fly in the Exposure's ointment is the more expensive, non 'i' version of the Naim CD5 at around the same price, and the £400 more

expensive top end Sony SCD-XA9000ES reviewed on p34 – happy auditioning!

SOURCE MATERIAL:

Giuliani 'Guitar Concerto No 1'	BBC Music MM237
Kate Bush 'The Kick Inside'	EMI 0777 7 46012 2 1
Mary Black 'No Frontiers'	Dara 032
The Mavericks 'Trampoline'	MCA UMD 80456

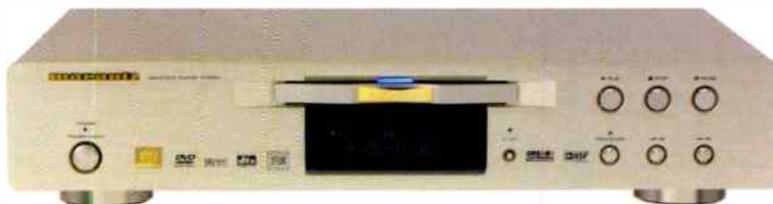
Roksan Kandy KD-1 MK III



Sony SCD-XA3000ES



Marantz DV8400



Naim CD5i



Exposure 3010CD



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Here's a chance to win a CD player with a difference. Sony's SCD-XA3000ES also offers superb quality stereo and multichannel sound, and you can switch between these at the press of a button. In *Hi-Fi World's* recent review, David Price wrote:

"This is one of the most attractive Sony digital disc spinners I've seen for many a year.... This looks cool, clean and contemporary – and exquisitely well finished... The XA3000ES is an extensively 'breathed on' budget machine, getting an altogether larger (430x 290x 124mm) and sturdier (8.2kg) casing which is presumably less susceptible to sound-degrading resonances, upgraded Twin R core mains



transformer (with separate analogue and digital supplies) and peppering of middle-ranking Nichicon and Silmic capacitors all the way from downtown Akihabara... A reasonably quick access (by SACD/DVD standards) transport plays CD, CD-R/CD-RW and SACDs, (there's) a defeatable fluorescent display complete with CD Text and 'music calendar', the 'Multi-jog' knob for track selection, gold plated headphone jack with volume control, a litany of playback modes including (32 track) program play, random play, all tracks repeat and one track repeat.

Superficially it has quite a punchy and upfront sound – just like Sony 'three series' CD players of yore. That means incision, grip, attack and no small degree of listening fun... the SCD-XA3000ES has a fluidity (if not a tonality) that's quite analogue in its style – precisely what we concluded about the XB970 a few months back, indeed. When I say analogue, don't confuse this with soft, mushy, laid-back or any of those other tired

epithets. The 3000ES isn't any of these. Indeed, it's actually more upfront sounding in both CD and SACD modes than the Pioneer DV-868 DVD universal player I had on hand for comparison purposes. This machine actually sounds more laid back and tonally warmer than the Sony. But the Sony does have a lyrical character in the mid-band which gives it 'listenability' that the Pioneer lacks... The Sony is simply the better listen. It's also dramatically better to look at, ergonomically superior, easier to use and has the joyous bonus of not requiring connection to a video display... It's a very musically engaging and communicative design... Brilliant ergonomics, nice build, fine CD playback and great SACD sound make it superb value.

If you'd like to win this superb player, then all you have to do is answer the following four easy questions. Send your entries to: June Competition, *Hi-Fi World* magazine, Unit G4, Argo House, The Park Business Centre, Kilburn Park Road, London NW6 5LF

Competition Questions:

[1] What formats does the Sony play?

- [a] CD, CD-R/RW, SACD
- [b] DVD-A
- [c] SACD, LP
- [d] Elcaset, MiniDisc, AT-RAC

[2] What does SACD stand for?

- [a] Silly And Colourful Disc
- [b] Super Audio Compact Disc
- [c] Seventies Are Cool Decade
- [d] Super Analogue Circular Disc

[3] How did DP describe the Sony's midband character?

- [a] "voluble"
- [b] "affable"
- [c] "lyrical"
- [d] "amiable"

[4] From which company does the Sony corporation come?

- [a] Norway
- [b] Sweden
- [c] Aardvark
- [d] Japan

June Competition
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Hi-Fi 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.

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...to Mr. Chris Penn of Hawick, Scotland, the winner of our April 2004 competition.
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From starter systems to custom designed multi-room and home cinema installations, our friendly staff are available in all stores to advise, demonstrate and guide you through the home entertainment jungle. If you're interested in home entertainment and want to avoid the confusion, contact your local Sevenoaks Sound & Vision store and **experience more.**

0% interest free option[^] is available on most products.

[^]Written details on request. Licensed credit brokers. Minimum balance £400. Subject to status.



CUSTOM INSTALLATION

Are you looking to neatly and seamlessly integrate a Home Cinema or Hi-Fi System into your home? Our Custom Installation experts are fully trained in all areas and provide a prompt, reliable and professional service. Whether you're looking for lighting control systems, a dedicated home cinema installation with a retractable screen and built-in speakers or an integrated control system, Sevenoaks Sound & Vision has the solution.

SAVE UP TO **50%**
OFF ORIGINAL SELLING PRICE

SPECTACULAR OFFERS ONLY ON THE SEVENOAKS WEBSITE

HUNDREDS OF BARGAINS AVAILABLE
FROM OUR 49 STORES NATIONWIDE

SPECIAL BUYS • OVERSTOCKS • EX-DISPLAY • END-OF-LINE
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and click on **Special Offers**

WHY RISK VIRTUAL SHOPPING WHEN
THERE'S A **REAL STORE** NEARBY?

PRODUCT NEWS

ARCAM EXTENDS DiVA RANGE

Arcam has added two exciting new products to its successful DiVA hi-fi and home cinema range.



The 7.1 channel **AVR300** home cinema and music receiver will impress even the most discerning listener. This audio performance is matched by a feature set that meets the requirements of today's most demanding A/V enthusiasts

The British designed and manufactured **DV79** is an affordable enthusiast level DVD-Audio Player that delivers one of the best pictures in the world along with Arcam's legendary sound quality. It is equipped with an HDMI digital video output for the latest plasmas and projectors plus interlaced and progressive analogue audio (both NTSC and PAL) for existing displays. Whether playing movies or listening to music, the DV79 will not disappoint.

**CALL YOUR LOCAL
SEVENOAKS STORE FOR
A DEMONSTRATION.**



NEW

**Denon AVR3805
7.1 A/V Receiver**

The AVR3805 is the replacement for the highly acclaimed '3803. This is a major model change - every element has been examined and upgraded. The '3805 is supplied with a radical new handset - the

RC970. This advanced remote control is fully backlit and features full learning capability and is pre-programmed for most major brands.

**FREE GRADO
SR60 HEADPHONES
WORTH £90**

WITH THE AVR3805
DURING MAY*

BEDFORD
BIRMINGHAM
BRIGHTON
BRISTOL
BROMLEY
CAMBRIDGE
CARDIFF
CHELSEA
CHELTENHAM
CRAWLEY
CROYDON
EDINBURGH
EPSOM
EXETER
GLASGOW
GUILDFORD
HOLBORN
HULL
IPSWICH
KINGSTON
LEICESTER
LEEDS
LINCOLN
LIVERPOOL
MAIDSTONE
MANCHESTER
NEWCASTLE
NORWICH
NOTTINGHAM
OXFORD
PETERBOROUGH
PLYMOUTH
POOLE
PRESTON
READING
SEVENOAKS
SHEFFIELD
SOLIHULL
SOUTHAMPTON
SOUTHGATE
STAINES
SWANSEA
SWINDON
SWISS COTTAGE
TUNBRIDGE WELLS
WATFORD
WEYBRIDGE
WITHAM (ESSEX)
WOLVERHAMPTON

PLEASE SEE PAGE 7
FOR ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE
NUMBER DETAILS

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World radio history

Sevenoaks

SOUND & VISION



HI-FI SEPARATES

Michell Gyro SE Turntable / RB300 Tonearm £1049.95



WHAT HI-FI? Product of the Year 2003

"The Gyrodec SE sounds great, combining the best sonic characteristics of rivals... Quite simply, the Michell Gyrodec SE is terrific. Nothing compares at this price point - it's well deserving another Best Buy."

CLAIM £50 TOWARDS THE GOLDRING CARTRIDGE OF YOUR CHOICE*



Project 1 Xpression Turntable (Black) £209.95

WHAT HI-FI? Product of the Year 2003

"Compared with a £200 CD player this deck sounds remarkable: dig out your vinyl and give the Xpression a spin."

Project 1 Debut II Turntable (Black) £119.95

WHAT HI-FI? Product of the Year 2002



THE PROJECT RANGE STARTS AT ONLY £119.95

Arcam DiVA CD73T CD Player £399.95

WHAT HI-FI? Product of the Year 2003



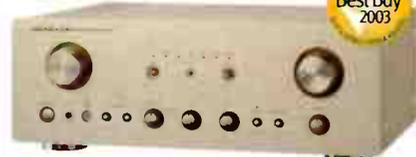
FREE GRADO SR60 HEADPHONES WORTH £90 WHEN YOU PURCHASE AN AMP AND CD TOGETHER FROM ONE OF THE FOLLOWING MANUFACTURERS - ARCAM, CYRUS & ROKSAN*

NOT IN CONJUNCTION WITH ANY OTHER OFFER OR PROMOTION



Marantz CD5400 CD Player £119.95

SAVE £30



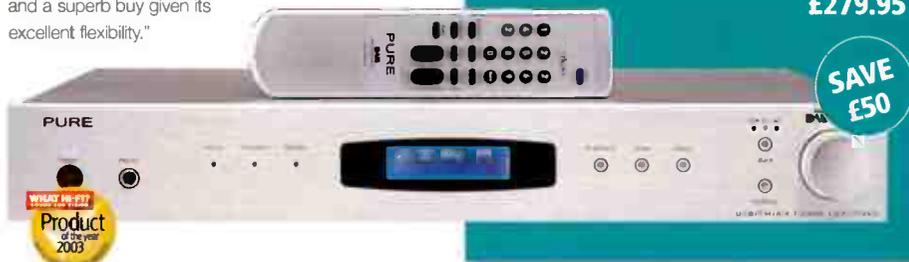
Marantz PM7200 Amplifier £249.95

SAVE £80

WHAT HI-FI? Best Buy 2003

"This is one of the most powerful amps in its class, at 95w per channel, and it sounds it with anything from dance to a big orchestral work, offering a delicious combination of poise and impact. Stick with fast, dynamic speakers such as B&W DM601 S3s or KEF's equally capable Q1s and the results will amaze."

"So do you buy a digital tuner? Or an analogue one? Now you don't have to pick: just buy Pure Digital's DRX-702ES! Whether on FM or DAB, this tuner sounds superb... The overall balance is powerful, clean and crisp, making this a fine tuner by any standards, and a superb buy given its excellent flexibility."



WHAT HI-FI? Product of the Year 2003

SAVE £50

DIGITAL RECORDERS



Yamaha CDR-HD1300 CD-RW/HD Recorder £449.95

WHAT HI-FI? Product of the Year 2003

SAVE £80

"No more wasted CD-Rs: in a stroke of genius, Yamaha had the idea of combining a CD recorder with a hard drive, enabling you to edit your music before burning it to disc. The result was "the excellent CDR-HD1000, and the CDR-HD1300E is its younger, cheaper and vastly superior sibling. It's the best home-recording solution currently available."

Pioneer PDR-609 CD-RW Recorder £169.95

WHAT HI-FI? Product of the Year 2002



DAB RADIO

Pure Digital DRX-702ES Analogue/DAB Tuner £279.95

experience more

experience more
experience more



Cyrus
Pre X Pre Amplifier £999.95
Mono X Power Amplifier (Each) £1199.95

"This Cyrus pairing isn't cheap but listen to a well-run-in sample and its array of talents is hard to beat. Load your favourite CD into a capable player, turn up the Pre X and the sonic magic will be worth every penny."



WHAT HI-FI? #108 03
★★★★★

Mission 782 SE
Speakers £899.95

"Well, with the exception of the alderwood-veneer finish, these floorstanders look identical to the standard model, although there's a new tweeter and crossover design. One of the advantages of the three-way configuration is that each driver deals with only a narrow section of the frequency range, and the designers optimise each unit to perform its respective task. Mission's engineers have excelled in this area: these elegant floorstanders sound beautifully balanced and few rivals under £1000 can match their wonderful levels of clarity. The 'special edition' tag is overused but these talented floorstanders are bona fide sonic stars."



WHAT HI-FI? June 03
★★★★★

FREE QED CABLE WORTH £80*



FREE QED CABLE WORTH £60*

NEW

KEF Q4
Speakers £399.95

The Q4 is one of the latest additions to KEF's acclaimed Q Series. At the heart of this floorstander lies the Uni-Q driver array - a 130mm die-cast chassis housing a long throw cone and coincident mounted 19mm aluminium dome HF unit. This driver arrangement makes the speaker much easier to place in the room and alleviates the 'sweet spot' found on 'ordinary' speakers. This has been combined with a dedicated 130mm LF unit for extended bass output which belies the size of its diminutive cabinet.

FREE QED

SPEAKER CABLE

WORTH

WITH ALL HI-FI SPEAKER PAIRS OVER £299*

£60 WITH SPEAKERS OVER £299
£80 WITH SPEAKERS OVER £499

FREE QED CABLE WORTH £60*

B&W
DM602 S3 Speakers £299.95

"These solidly made standmounters perform well across the whole range of musical styles... Add these speakers to your hi-fi system and you're guaranteed magnificent integration between the drivers and an even tonal balance."



Best Buy 2002

Roksan Kandy
KD1/III CD Player £594.95
KA1/III Amplifier £594.95

"Timing and rhythm are excellent. DJ Shadow is delivered with clarity and a tight bass, while at the other extreme the treble is sweet and detailed, getting the most from Wagner's *Ride of the Valkyries*. The result is a breathtaking Best Buy amplifier that betters its competition with ease." KANDY KA1/III AMPLIFIER - AWARDS 2003



WHAT HI-FI? Best Buy 2003

"The Kandy KD1/III CD player offers a great array of talents - team it with its amp stablemate and you have something close to the ideal visual and sonic combination."

WHAT HI-FI? Dec 03
★★★★★

FREE

GRADO SR60 HEADPHONES WORTH £90 WHEN YOU PURCHASE AN AMP AND CD TOGETHER FROM ONE OF THE FOLLOWING MANUFACTURERS - ARCAM, CYRUS & ROKSAN * NOT IN CONJUNCTION WITH ANY OTHER OFFER OR PROMOTION

PRICING POLICY

We always try to ensure our prices are highly competitive. In the event you can find the same products and excellent service at a lower price, please bring it to our store managers' attention.

0%

FINANCE OPTION*

Spread the cost of buying. 0% finance option is available on the vast majority of products we stock.

*Written details on request. Licensed credit brokers. Minimum balance £400. Subject to status.

PLEASE NOTE: SOME PRODUCTS MAY NOT BE AVAILABLE AT ALL STORES. PLEASE CALL BEFORE TRAVELLING.

*ADDED VALUE OFFERS - FROM RANGE AVAILABLE IN-STORE. NOT IN CONJUNCTION WITH ANY OTHER OFFER. ADVERTISEMENT VALID UNTIL AT LEAST 02/06/04, E&OE.

Sevenoaks SOUND & VISION



NEW

MUSICAL FIDELITY



Musical Fidelity has unveiled two integrated amplifiers and a CD player as part of its revamped X-series. The 40 wpc, **X-80 (£599.95)** and the 80wpc **X-150**

(£799.95) amplifiers feature a dual-gang analogue volume control and high-output transistors for each channel. The X-150 also includes a high quality phono stage.

The **X-Ray³** CD player **(£899.95)**, is the replacement for the legendary X-Ray and uses the same DAC and upsampling

principles as the acclaimed Tri-Vista SACD player. From a technical standpoint, the X-Ray³ is equal of some of the most expensive players on the market.



B&W 704 Speakers

£1399.95

The 704 speakers are part of B&W's new 700 series. These floorstanding, two-and-a-half-way, vented box speakers and are available in a variety of attractive finishes. In a recent What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision group test the 704 offered "Remarkable openness and clarity that is unrivalled at this price."

FREE QED CABLE WORTH £80

WHAT HI-FI? THE SOUND & VISION GROUP TEST 2004
★★★★★



Cyruslink

WIRELESS NETWORKING

MUSIC ALL AROUND THE HOME

You've heard of hi-fi - now welcome to the world of wi-fi! Wi-fi devices allow you to network a range of devices together - from your music system to your PC - without the wires. For example, a multiroom server like Yamaha's MusicCAST can wirelessly send music to up to five 'client' playback systems dotted around your home. That music could be stored on the MusicCAST server device or other sources - existing hi-fi kit, maybe, or an internet radio station or MP3 files from your PC: plug-in adapters make it easy to wi-fi-enable products.



YAMAHA'S MusicCAST
MCX-1000 DIGITAL SERVER
& MCX-A10 CLIENT

YAMAHA MusicCAST	
MCX A10.....	£599.95
(MusicCAST Client)	
MCX 1000.....	£1799.95
(MusicCAST Server)	
CYRUSLINK	
Linkserver 160.....	£2999.95
(Four Zone HD Server 160Gb Drive)	
Linkserver 250.....	£3499.95
(Four Zone HD Server 250Gb Drive)	
Linkport.....	£649.95
Linkwand.....	£199.95



Cyruslink

AVAILABLE AT SELECTED SEVENOAKS SOUND & VISION STORES



COMPACT HI-FI SYSTEMS



Linn Classik Music System (Ex Speakers)

£799.95

SAVE £50

"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? Product of the Year 2003

Denon DM31 UD-M31 CD Receiver

£199.95

SAVE £30

"The D-M30 was exemplary, as its three 'What Hi-Fi?' Sound and Vision Awards clearly show. The D-M31 is even better, making it phenomenal value for money."

OPTIONAL RECORDERS:

DMD-M31 MINIDISC RECORDER • DRR-M31 CASSETTE DECK
NB - PRICE EXCLUDES SPEAKERS

PLEASE NOTE: SOME PRODUCTS MAY NOT BE AVAILABLE AT ALL STORES. PLEASE CALL BEFORE TRAVELLING. *ADDED VALUE OFFERS - FROM RANGE AVAILABLE IN-STORE. NOT IN CONJUNCTION WITH ANY OTHER OFFER. ADVERTISEMENT VALID UNTIL AT LEAST 02/06/04, E&OE.

experience more

experience more

experience more



SEPARATE HI-FI SYSTEMS



SEPARATE HI-FI SYSTEMS



SEPARATE HI-FI SYSTEMS

Rotel
RCD-02 CD Player
RA-02 Amplifier

HI-FI SYSTEM
1

Monitor Audio
Bronze B2 Speakers

For this recommended Hi-Fi System we have combined Rotel's highly rated RCD-02 CD player and RA-02 amplifier with Monitor Audio's beautifully balanced Bronze B2 speakers. This package gives a powerful, fresh and vibrant sound. The compact 'B2' speakers, available in a variety of finishes, were awarded 'Best Buy' by What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision, with the sound being described as "Superb... Speakers don't get much better than the B2's".



WHAT HI-FI? Best Buy 2003

WHAT HI-FI? Best Buy 2007

The RA-02 amplifier features remote control and a phono input. The RCD-02 (★★★★★ - What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision - August 2003) is HDCD compatible and includes a digital output for connecting to a digital recorder.

SYSTEM PRICE
£799.95

SAVE
£129

PRICE EXCLUDES CABLES & STANDS

HI-FI SYSTEM 1 - NOT IN CONJUNCTION WITH ANY OTHER OFFER OR PROMOTION



HI-FI SYSTEM
2

Arcam
CD73T CD Player
A65 Plus Amplifier

KEF
Q4 Speakers

Arcam and KEF both have an enviable reputation for producing great sounding kit without breaking the bank. This system shows why with a well balanced sound that's both musically involving and enjoyable.

At the front of this package is Arcam's upgradeable CD73T CD player - a What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision 'Product of the Year 2003'. We've coupled this with Arcam's complementary A65 Plus integrated amplifier and KEF's new Q4 floorstanding speakers featuring KEF's unique Uni-Q technology for easier room placement.

WHAT HI-FI? Product of the Year 2003

SYSTEM PRICE
£999.95

SAVE
£149

PRICE EXCLUDES CABLES & STANDS

HI-FI SYSTEM 2 - NOT IN CONJUNCTION WITH ANY OTHER OFFER OR PROMOTION

Roksan Kandy
KD1/III CD Player
KA1/III Amplifier

HI-FI SYSTEM
3

Monitor Audio
Silver S6 Speakers



WHAT HI-FI? Best Buy 2003

The combination of Roksan's Kandy MK3 CD and amplifier is, according to What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision, "Something close to the ideal visual and sonic combination" (December 2003). We have partnered these with the Silver S6 floorstanding speakers from British

speaker specialists, Monitor Audio. The combination of Roksan's excellent rhythm and timing, with its tight bass and sweet detailed treble coupled with the 'S6's' ability to stay unruffled even when the music is at its most complex, makes this a remarkable system.

SYSTEM PRICE
£1499.95

SAVE
£289

PRICE EXCLUDES CABLES & STANDS

HI-FI SYSTEM 3 - NOT IN CONJUNCTION WITH ANY OTHER OFFER OR PROMOTION

Sevenoaks SOUND & VISION



PRODUCT RANGE

An outstanding selection of products are on display and available for demonstration at all Sevenoaks Sound & Vision stores.

Headphones, some products may not be available at all stores. Please call to check availability before travelling.

TURNTABLES

Goldring GR1	£139.95
Michell Gyro SE/RB30G E50 GOLDRING CARTRIDGE*	£1049.95
Michell TecnoDec	£599.95
Project Debut Phono SB	£169.95
Project Debut II (Black)	£119.95
Project Debut III (Colours)	£134.95
Project 1 Xpression	£209.95

TUNERS

Arcam D VA T61	£199.95
Cyrus FM X	£499.95
Denon TL26CL MKII	£89.95
Harman Kardon TU97C DAB/AM/FM	£299.95
Marantz ST4000	£99.95
Pure DRX 701ES DAB	£199.95
Pure DRX 702ES Analogue/DAB	£279.95

CD PLAYERS

Arcam DINA CD73T	£399.95
Arcam DINA CD82T	£599.95
Arcam DINA CD93T	£849.95
Arcam FMJ CD33T	£1299.95
Cyrus CD6	£599.95
Cyrus CD8	£999.95
Denon DC0485	£119.95
Linn Genki	£1099.95
Linn Ikemi	£2199.95
Marantz CD5400	£119.95
Marantz CD17/II M	£799.95
Meridian 507	£1194.95
Musical Fidelity X Ray	£899.95
Musical Fidelity A3.2	£ CALL
Musical Fidelity A308*	£ CALL
Musical Fidelity Tr-Vista SACD	£3994.95
Quad 99 CD-P	£999.95
Roksan Nandy KD1 MKIII	£594.95
Roksan Caspian M	£1099.95
Rotel RCD02	£379.95
Rotel RCD1072	£594.95

RECORDERS

Pioneer PD1609 CD RW	£169.95
Yamaha CDR-HD1300 CD RW	£449.95

AMPLIFIERS

Arcam DINA A65 Plus	£ CALL
Arcam DINA A80	£599.95
Arcam DINA A85	£ CALL
Arcam DINA A90	£849.95
Arcam FMJ A32	£1149.95
Cyrus 6	£599.95
Cyrus 8	£799.95
Cyrus Pre X Pre	£999.95
Cyrus Mono X Power	(Each) £1199.95
Denon PMA355	£179.95

Linn Koektor Pre	£574.95
Linn LK85 Power	£544.95
Marantz PM4400	£149.95
Marantz PM7200	£249.95
Musical Fidelity X 80	£599.95
Musical Fidelity X 150	£799.95
Musical Fidelity A3.2	£ CALL
Musical Fidelity A3.2 Pre	£ CALL
Musical Fidelity A3.2 Power	£ CALL
Musical Fidelity A308	£ CALL
Musical Fidelity Tr-Vista 300	£3994.95
Quad 99 Power	£549.95
Roksan Nandy KA1 MKIII	£594.95
Roksan Caspian M	£999.95
Rotel RA-01	£249.95
Rotel RA-02	£349.95
Rotel RA-1062	£594.95

SPEAKERS

Acoustic Energy Aegis Evo One	£129.95
Acoustic Energy Aegis Evo Three	£249.95
Acoustic Energy AE1 MKIII (From)	£1699.95
B&W DM601 S3	£249.95
B&W DM602 S3	£299.95
B&W 704	£1399.95
B&W 705	£899.95
KEF Q1	£249.95
KEF Q4	£399.95
KEF X01	£999.95
Linn Katan	£649.95
Mission m31	£119.95
Mission 780SE	£349.95
Mission 782SE	£899.95
Monitor Audio Bronze B2	£199.95
Monitor Audio Silver S1	£299.95
Monitor Audio Silver S6	£599.95
Monitor Audio Silver S8	£799.95
Monitor Audio Gold Reference 10	£799.95
Monitor Audio Gold Reference 20	£1499.95
Quad 11L	£379.95
Quad 12L	£499.95
Quad 22L	£894.95
Ruark Epilogue II	£344.95
Wharfedale Pacific Evolution 30	£649.95

HI-FI SYSTEMS

Denon 201 Ex Speakers	£499.95
Denon DF101 Ex Speakers	£299.95
Denon DM31 Ex Speakers	£199.95
Linn Classic Music Ex Speakers	£799.95
Onkyo CS210 Ex Speakers	£199.95
Teac Legacy 600 Ex Speakers	£199.95
Teac Reference 300 Ex Speakers	£449.95
Teac Reference 500 Ex Speakers	£569.95

DVD SYSTEMS

Denon ADV-M71 Inc SC-M51 Speakers	£499.95
Denon DVD-770SD/AVR-770SD Ex Speakers	£599.95
Jamo DVR50/A305PDD Inc Speakers	£549.95
Jamo DVR50/A355PDD Inc Speakers	£699.95
KEF KIT100 Inc Speakers	£1199.95
Linn Classic Movie Di Ex Speakers	£2199.95
Teac Legacy 700LS-L800 Inc Speakers	£849.95

DVD PLAYERS

MAKE & MODEL	REGION 2	MULTI REGION
Arcam DINA DV88 Plus	£599.95	£599.95
Arcam DINA DV78	£699.95	£699.95
Arcam DINA DV89	£799.95	£799.95
Arcam DINA DV79	£999.95	£999.95
Cyrus DVD8	£1199.95	£1199.95
Denon DVD-1400 Universal	£299.95	£329.95
Denon DVD-2200 Universal	£ CALL	£ CALL
Denon DVD-2900 Universal	£ CALL	£ CALL
Denon DVD-A11	£ CALL	£ CALL
Denon DVD-A1	£1699.95	£1749.95
Harman Kardon DVD25	£279.95	£279.95
Harman Kardon DVD22	£299.95	£299.95
Harman Kardon DVD31	£399.95	£399.95
Pioneer DV360	£69.95	£89.95
Pioneer DV464	£89.95	£109.95
Pioneer DV565A Universal	£159.95	£ CALL
Pioneer DV668AV Universal	£ CALL	£ CALL
Pioneer DV868AV Universal	£ CALL	£ CALL
Samsung DVD-HD935	£149.95	£149.95
Tag McLaren DVD32FLR	£ CALL	£ CALL
Toshiba SD330E	£69.95	£ CALL
Yamaha DVD-SS40	£119.95	£119.95

DVD RECORDERS

MAKE & MODEL	REGION 2	MULTI REGION
Panasonic DMR-E55 DVD-R	£ CALL	£ CALL
Panasonic DMR-E60 DVD-R	£ CALL	£ CALL
Phillips DVDR70 DVD+RW	£229.95	£ CALL
Phillips DVDR80 DVD+RW	£329.95	£ CALL
Pioneer DVR3100S DVD-R/RW	£399.95	£429.95
Pioneer DVR5100HS DVD-R/RW	£499.95	£529.95
Toshiba RD-XS30 DVD Recorder	£459.95	£ TBA

A/V AMPLIFIERS

RECEIVERS & PROCESSORS

Arcam AVR200 A/V Receiver	£599.95
Arcam AVR300 A/V Receiver	£1299.95
Arcam AV8/P7 A/V Pre/Processor/Power	£5499.95
Cyrus AV8 A/V Processor	£1099.95
Denon AVC-A11SR A/V Amplifier	£1199.95
Denon AVC-A11SR A/V Amplifier	£2199.95
Denon AVR1604 A/V Receiver	£229.95
Denon AVR1804 A/V Receiver	£299.95
Denon AVR2803 A/V Receiver	£ CALL
Denon AVR3803 A/V Receiver	£599.95
Denon AVR3805 A/V Receiver	£ CALL
Harman Kardon AVR8500 A/V Receiver	£1299.95
Harman Kardon AVR330 A/V Receiver	£599.95
Harman Kardon AVR630 A/V Receiver	£999.95
Marantz SR4400 A/V Receiver	£289.95
Marantz SR5400 A/V Receiver	£349.95
Onkyo TX-SR601E A/V Receiver	£ CALL
Onkyo TX-NR601E A/V Receiver	£ CALL
Pioneer VSX-C501 A/V Receiver	£329.95
Pioneer VSX-D812 A/V Receiver	£319.95
Pioneer VSX-AX31 A/V Receiver	£649.95
Pioneer VSX-AX51 A/V Receiver	£949.95
Pioneer VSX-AX10i A/V Amplifier	£2199.95
Rotel RSK1065 A/V Receiver	£1799.95
Rotel RSP1066/RMB1075 A/V Pre/Power	£1799.95
Rotel RSP1098 A/V Processor	£2294.95
TAG McLaren AV30R A/V Processor	£ CALL
TAG McLaren AV192R A/V Processor (From)	£ CALL
Yamaha DSP-AX640SE A/V Amplifier	£299.95
Yamaha DSP-29 A/V Amplifier	£ CALL
Yamaha RX-V440RDS A/V Receiver	£199.95
Yamaha RX-V640RDS A/V Receiver	£349.95
Yamaha RX-V1400RDS A/V Receiver	£ CALL
Yamaha RX-V2400RDS A/V Receiver	£ CALL

A/V SPEAKER PACKAGES

Acoustic Energy Aego P5	£349.95
Acoustic Energy E690 3B	£699.95
B&W VM1/AS1	£849.95
B&W DM300 AV	£899.95
Castle Compact C03	£999.95
Energy Take 5.1	£399.95
Energy Encore	£999.95
Infinity TSS750	£499.95
Jamo D6 PTX	£1499.95
Jamo D7 THX Ultra 2 (from)	£3249.95
KEF KHT1005 £100 FREE QED CABLE*	£499.95
KEF KHT2005 2 £150 FREE QED CABLE*	£799.95
KEF KHT5005 £200 FREE QED CABLE*	£1199.95
KEF Q7 AV £300 FREE QED CABLE*	£2199.95
M&K K5 £250 FREE QED CABLE*	£1699.95
M&K K3	£1894.95
M&K Xenon 25	£2249.95
M&K 850 CS35/AV850	£3899.95
Mission M30 AV Pack	£449.95
Monitor Audio Bronze B2 AV	£799.95
Monitor Audio Bronze B4 AV	£949.95
Monitor Audio Radius	£999.95
Ruark Vita 120	£1699.95

SUBWOOFERS

B&W ASW675	£649.95
MJ Acoustics Pro 50 (Black) £60 QED CABLE*	£299.95
MJ Acoustics Pro 100 (Black) £60 QED CABLE*	£599.95
MJ Acoustics Ref 100 (Blk) £60 QED CABLE*	£349.95
MJ Acoustics Ref 1 (Black) £60 QED CABLE*	£699.95
REL Q150E MKII (Brittlex Black) £100 QED CABLE*	£499.95
REL Q201E (Brittlex Black) £100 QED CABLE*	£724.95
REL Q400E (Brittlex Black) £100 QED CABLE*	£999.95
REL Quake (Brittlex Black)	£349.95
REL Strata III	£549.95
REL Stampede (Black) £100 QED CABLE*	£549.95
REL Strata 5 (Black) £100 QED CABLE*	£699.95
REL Storm III	£699.95

PLASMA

Fujitsu P42VHA30 42"	£3299.95
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major third?



For reasons of politics, now a matter of historical record, Sony came out in favour of SACD as its preferred digital audio format, leaving DVD-A for the likes of Pioneer and Matsushita. The company's first machine was 1999's SCD-1, eventually followed by the second generation, multi channel SCD-XA777ES of 2002. Now, the company's flagship player has reached its third major incarnation with the i.Link-equipped SCD-XA9000ES. David Price listens in...

To me at least, SACD still has the whiff of a rather oddball and anachronistic audiophile format which, strictly speaking, needn't really be here at all - were it not for the political will of Sony. This is ironic, because this consumer electronics giant is often characterized by specialist audiophiles as being a hard-bitten, cash-chasing multinational in pursuit of the bottom line above all else.

Put it this way: non-audiophiles simply don't understand why anyone should bother with this format - as Compact Disc has 'perfect sound' anyway, right? As for its recently acquired multichannel capability, if you want surround sound, then you'd get it from your DVD player anyway, wouldn't you...? Then, if you are a spec-savvy audiophile, you'll doubtless be aware of the theoretical limitations of SACD's DSD coding system. That 2.8224MHz sampling frequency, allied to one bit words, actually struggles to match 16bit PCM for resolution at high frequencies. By comparison, 24/192 DVD-Audio romps away in the data

rate race. Once again, so why bother with SACD?

The answer is that SACD does have, done properly, real sonic benefits: it doesn't have sound degrading video circuitry in the same box (unless it's via a DVD universal player, anyway). It avoids the sonic drawbacks of the drastic 'brick wall' filtering that the PCM coding format demands. And the discs are playable without recourse to one of those dam fiddly video menus, which requires you to turn your telly on when you might not otherwise wish to...

Interestingly, these are all benefits that audiophiles like you and I might instantly appreciate - and indeed treasure - whereas Joe Public wouldn't give a fig. This, counter-intuitively perhaps for many audiophiles, paints the Sony Corporation as one that's interested in sonics first, profits second. It's interesting that very few other manufacturers - notably, Musical Fidelity - have done SACD players, to the exclusion of DVD-A. Good for Sony, say!

Where then does this leave the

SCD-XA9000ES? Well, after the original 1999 SCD-1 and its more affordable SCD-777ES stablemate, and the 2002 SCD-XA777ES, this machine is Sony's third evolution of its flagship Super Audio Compact Disc spinner. Its predecessor, which added multichannel playback and channel level adjustment and bass management, was regarded as something of a major advance - but surely this, with time-delay adjustment for its 5.1 channel analogue outputs and direct digital i.Link output, is the most significant since the original SCD-1. After all, this machine is the first to make SACD signal processing and digital-to-audio conversion possible in the processor/ preamplifier - making for theoretically better sound and far greater flexibility.

The 9000ES is, as you'd imagine, the highest in Sony's ES audiophile range of machines, and retails for around £2,000. Outwardly at least, it shares much of the entry-level £600 SCD-XA3000ES architecture. That brushed aluminium front panel looks as swish as ever, and the jog dial knob, minor control buttons, display



and headphone jack are a delight. Measuring 430x127x387mm it has the same dimensions as the cheaper machine, but at 16.2kg is a good deal heavier. Importantly though, there's a new button on the left marked 'i.Link' – pressing this bypasses the machine's internal digital-to-analogue converters and audio output stage, and instead routes six channels of DSD data out the back of the IEEE1394 (FireWire) jack [see box].

Inside, the changes run deeper. Rather like some luxury car marques, Sony tradition has it that all its ES machines are outwardly similar, but the more you spend, the sexier things look under the hood. To wit, there's a sturdy frame-and-beam chassis, with some copper plating to reduce the ground impedance and reduce Eddy currents. The dual laser transport has the DSD decoder sitting immediately on top, while behind lies the beefy power supply complete with two of Sony's R-core transformers. As per usual high end ES practice, the analogue output circuitry gets its own screened sub-enclosure at the back of the casing.

As far as passive componentry goes, it's a veritable designer label fest, with lots of Nichicon capacitors. The DACs are those of its SCD-XA77ES predecessor, getting digitally filtered DSD data direct from SACD, or upsampling to 2.8824MHz and downconverting to 1bit from an 24bit, 8x oversampling filter for CD. In multichannel mode,

two DACs are used per each of the six channels, whereas in stereo mode six DACs are used per channel, summed to reduce noise – a nice touch.

SOUND QUALITY

It's very good. It's not quite as amazing as some other reviews have intimated, but let's remember it's not a £4,000 machine, but a do-it-all £1,600 player. Interestingly, it uses Sony's own High Density Linear Converter circuit, which made its debut on the £1,200 1990 CDP-X77ES (and has since been followed by Sony's Current Pulse 1-bit converter) – and I just happened to have one of these machines to hand for comparison... If you've been buying every generation of Sony top-of-the-range silver disc spinner since then, you'll not find the SCD-XA9000ES improving on the X77ES's two channel CD sound. In fact, it's not as good [see box]. But in its own right, on its own terms, it's still quite superb.

Being a top Sony, it has a very precise sound. It's not gushingly musical, and prefers instead to plough a slightly cerebral furrow. That means an ultra tidy, super clean, amazingly detailed performance which doesn't emote like analogue (or indeed the Marantz CD63 KI DP reviewed in this issue). So

it won't induce a sense of heightened euphoria when you slide a CD in. Rather, it succeeds by being amazingly open and even right across the audio band. YMO's 'Technopolis' on CD was beautifully delicate, considered, smooth and clear. Bass was strong but dry, midband expansive and three dimensional, treble wonderfully delicate. You get a great sense of all the multi-tracked, multi-layered sounds, all playing together engagingly. There's not a trace of hardness or 'shout'. It's all very architectural, yet deliciously subtle – as the 'X77ES, albeit lacking the earlier machine's tremendous articulation. By comparison, the oldster sounds a bit like the CDP-557ES – Sony's last ever manic TD1541A-aspirated 16x4 machine.

By the standards of rival two grand CD players (and there aren't that many around any more), it gives little away. Naim Audio's CDX2 (at £800 more) is more articulate, more fluid, more bouncy. Yet the Sony has all – if not more – of its detail, plus superior dimensionality. This is an important point, because an SACD player will have been bought to replace a serious mid-price player, and this doesn't embarrass itself here. Oh, and it blows away any DVD-Audio, or universal machine I've heard with CD. It's a worthwhile upgrade on the SCD-XA3000ES (at a grand less) too, offering depth, dimensionality and detail that this already very capable machine lacks.

Yet ultimately, although the Sony gives a good feel for the texture of a female voice, for example, it does so rather matter-of-factly. There's no basking in the sumptuous sound of

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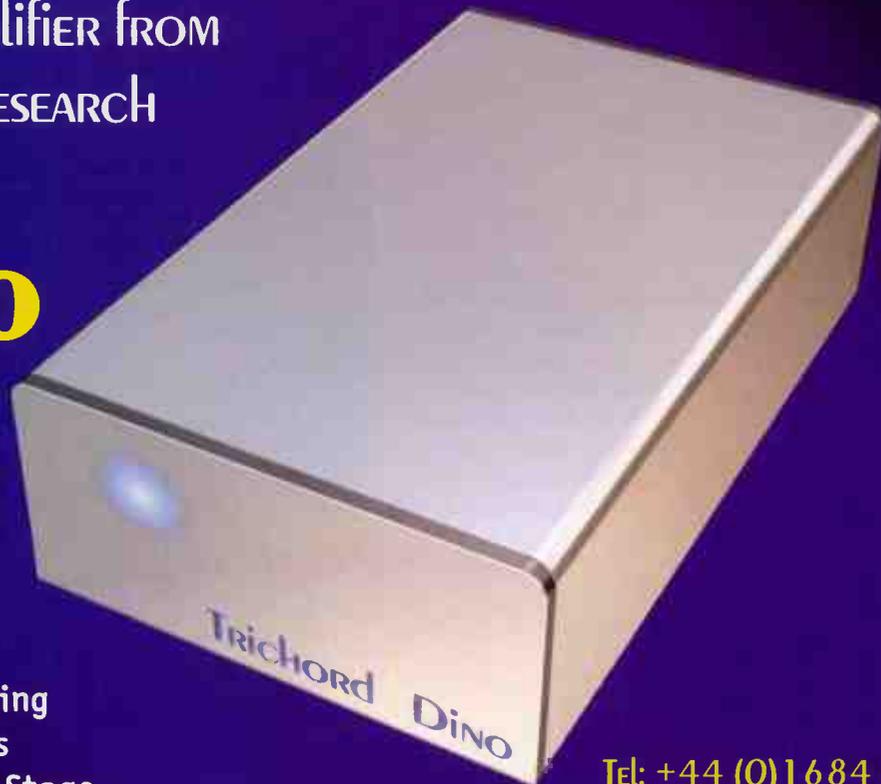


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SEVENTH HEAVEN?

One of the defining characteristics of the SCD-XA9000ES's sound is Sony's custom High Density Linear Converter Bitstream DAC, which gives it such a clean and even yet incisive sound. This made its debut in the 1990 CDP-X77ES, and marked a radical move away from multibit. Compared to the model's immediate predecessor, 1988's CDP-557ES, it sounded obviously less engaging yet dramatically more transparent and open. Yet the CDP-X77ES takes on the former role when compared to the SCD-XA9000ES in 16/44 PCM mode – it's obviously more muscular in the bass, and has a sense of life and bounce that contrasts with the 9000's unerring neutrality and openness. The '77ES also feels obviously better built – the disc tray, in particular, is the most exquisite I've seen this side of a Linn Sondek CD12 (although the Karik 3 is almost as good). It feels like a Lexus, compared to the rather lightweight (but well screwed together) Honda Civic of the SCD. As both Sonys cost about the same in real terms, it's obvious that pennies have been saved to pay for that complex dual laser transport (to facilitate SACD) and all those (twelve) D-A converters. It shows that nothing's for free. But then again, the SCD-XA9000ES playing SACD (be it stereo or multichannel mode) makes the CDP-X77ES sound crude. You pays your money, and takes your choice...!



Randy Crawford's voice, for example. You're not amazed by the deep, resonant piano tones on Kate Bush's 'Moving'. It's all nicely even and incisive, but it doesn't major on timbre or textuality. It's pure, straight down-the-line high end Sony silver disc fare. Make no mistake, Marantz's SA-12 is warmer and more beguiling on CD – and the no-longer-available Musical Fidelity Tri-Vista SACD (at over twice the price) blows it of the water.

With SACD, it's more of the same. Roxy Music's 'Avalon' showed a welcome improvement over the CD version, with real smoothness, detail and dimensionality which culminated in a deliciously luxurious sound. Even me, Mr Vinyl, could happily live with such delicacy of touch, such sophistication. It's decently musically engaging, but again lacks the Rotweiler bite I'd secretly been hoping for. Bryan Ferry's voice was obviously creamier than anything I'd heard from CD, but there was still a slight stand-offishness that had me yearning for the (again, I must add, more expensive) Marantz SA-12 or Musical Fidelity. In short, it sounds like an extremely accomplished bit of hi-fi, but not mad music maker. Maybe I'm being harsh, because I don't think there's anything around at this price that does what it does (i.e. CD and SACD) so well – it's just that it's a jack of two trades, and master of neither.

Moving from bottom to top, and you'll find it oh-so-even and smooth. Bass is grippy, taut and propulsive (quite Naim-like, in fact, although it lacks the articulation and expression), giving a wonderfully open window into the 'nether regions' which will instantly endear it to classical music fans – especially organ music aficionados. Midband is its forte – wide open and beautifully

proportioned, with images hanging well back behind the speakers with both SACD and CD – if called upon so to do. It really does have that proverbial 'walk around soundstage'. Treble is pure high end Sony – anyone who's heard a CDP-R1/DAS-R1 will know what I mean – clean, crisp, delicate and dry. Single ended triode tube stuff it is not. Yet it integrates so naturally with the midband that the effect is of a player that almost dissolves into the music. It's only when you come back to more 'characterful' performers that you realise that music can be more multi-coloured and rousing. I've been

deliberately critical of this player, to show you where it falls down compared to the best (of their respective fields), but the big picture is one of a beautifully built, ergonomically exquisite and wonderfully svelte and pleasant sounding player. Given that you don't want to go searching for the classifieds for a CDP-X77ES CD spinner and/or seek out a Musical Fidelity SACD, then it really is an excellent purchase. I think it also predisposes itself to tubes and warm loudspeakers, where its consummate tonal

'neutrality' will let these ancillaries shine. Quintessential high end Sony stuff, then – superfi refinement at mid-fi prices. Hats off to Sony for doing an 'affordable' high end audiophile multichannel machine, one that eats similarly priced universal machines for breakfast.

VERDICT ●●●●●
Super build and ergonomics allied to excellent CD and SACD sound make this a brilliant 'real world' high end digital disc player.

SONY SCD-XA9000ES £1,630
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MEASURED PERFORMANCE

This is a very low distortion player, even with CD. Sony usually manage to push values down on top models and they have done so with the XA9000ES, with CD returning just 0.02% distortion at -60dB and SACD 0.04% at the same level. As you would expect SACD's greater resolution becomes most obvious the further down you go, so for example at -80dB the XA9000ES produces just 0.13% distortion from SACD against 4.3% from CD. I expect to see 5-6% from CD at this level, but Sony have shaved the figure by a small amount to come up with a class leading result here. Largely as a result of low distortion this player manages no less than 111dB dynamic range with CD.

Where in the past Sony CD players have consistently had a ruler flat frequency response, this one shows slight roll off at high frequencies. I've noted before that Sony seem to be adjusting CD these days to better match SACD subjectively, the latter sounding far smoother and silkier than CD ever did. Traditionally Sony CD players have sounded quite glassy in their treble

ranges but I suspect this one will not. With SACD, frequency response extends up to 40kHz (-1dB) before falling away fast to -38dB at 100kHz.

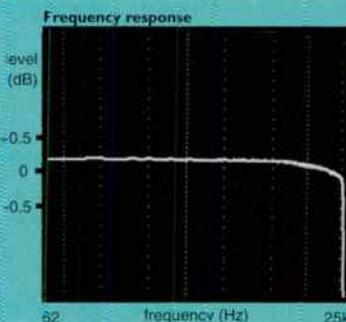
Sony CD players (and Philips I should also say) always turn in a fine measured performance and the XA9000ES was no exception. I would expect a silky smooth sound from both CD and SACD. NK

Frequency response (-1dB)	
CD	4Hz - 21.25kHz
SACD	4Hz - 40kHz

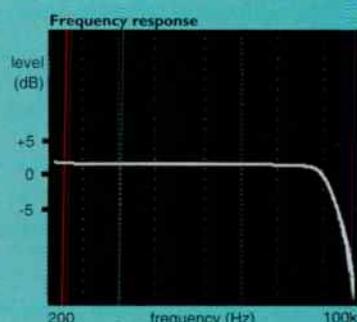
Distortion	CD	SACD
-20dB	0.004%	0.001%
-40dB	0.015%	0.006%
-60dB	0.2%	0.04%
-80dB	4.3%	0.13%

Separation (1kHz)	112dB
Noise (IEC A)	-113dB
Dynamic range (CD)	111dB
Output	1.9V

SONY CD



SONY SACD



DIVA for

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 Motion Adaptive Progressive Scan

Bravely disregarding both SACD and DVD-Audio, Arcam has produced an affordable audiophile DVD spinner. Dominic Todd listens to the new DV78...

There's never been any doubt as to the effectiveness of Arcam's DVD players. The DV89 is a front line choice for anyone looking for serious sound quality as well as a decent picture. Yet at a minimum of £1,100 they've never been cheap. Realising the need for something a little more affordable, Arcam has produced the DV78. Fortunately the company claims that, thanks to simplified construction, the £700 DV78 should sound just as

than £150, it seems Arcam has taken a big risk on the DV78's standard CD sonics being above and beyond the call of duty. No complaints with the picture spec' as a PAL/NTSC Progressive Scan circuit with component outputs is standard. You'll also find that the DV78 should play most copies, including MP3s, with no problem.

The finish is to Arcam's usual high standards, with the only sign of cost cutting being the new and, I have to say, rather tacky remote control.

Yamaha DSPAX640 amplifier, the Arcam showed fine DVD player credentials. The front mounted navigation button, in particular, should be singled out for ease of use and thoughtful design. Lose the DV78's remote control and you're no longer stuffed, which is more than you can say for many of the rivals...!

In terms of picture quality, I found the DV78 every bit as good as the best at this price point. With Progressive Scan switched in, the picture was totally flicker-free and rock solid in terms of resolution. Detail was precise and accurate, but there wasn't the rather overblown colour aspect that afflicts certain rivals. Instead colours were natural and made for an involving picture.

Thankfully there were none of the jagged edges that can also blight certain DVDs, and the picture moved with great alacrity when needed, without leaving ghosting. In terms of soundtracks I found the DV78 to be a revelation. Its picture may be no more than a match for its better rivals, but the sound quality is in another league. To further scrutinize this I swapped the Arcam across to my usual system and feed it some CDs.

Unsurprisingly, when fed with Annie Lennox's 'A Thousand Beautiful Things', the sound reminded me very much of Arcam's own rather good

"I wondered if Arcam had done enough to make up for the DV78's lack of universality... the answer is an emphatic yes"

good as its big brother. Certainly the specification is particularly good at this price point. Simplified it may be, but the Arcam's construction shows real care. The 32-bit Zoran audio DSP works in conjunction with a high quality Wolfson 24/192 DAC. In addition, the toroidal mains transformer and low jitter clock show attention to audio detail often lacking at this price point. Being able to play HDCDs is a plus, but the biggest minus of all has to be the lack of either SACD or DVD-A. When there are now players offering one or the other for less

Still, I'd rather Arcam spend the money on the gubbins inside, especially considering the none-too-lazy competition. Most rivals, such as the Denon DVD2900 and Pioneer DV868Avi offer both SACD and DVD-A, but then neither has Arcam's reputation for CD sound quality. If it can reproduce CDs with real conviction, then it may just be enough to make up for the lack of universality.

Certainly, in terms of ease of use, I encountered no problems with the DV78. Hooked up to a Hitachi PMA400e plasma and through a

a song



CD73. Bass didn't reach down quite as low as it might, although the exquisite control and tautness more than made up for this. Looked at in perspective, the Arcam's bassline was still deeper than that of the Denon DVD2900 and musically in another dimension. Vocals were extremely well resolved with just a hint of sibilance blighting an otherwise flawless performance. Likewise the guitar had the type of timbre that you'd expect from a decent CD player rather than a DVD. Super timing, texture and decent sound staging all added up to a sound that was truly enjoyable to listen to and certainly a match for the cream of the £400-£500 CD player brigade.

As you'd expect from an Arcam, the DV78 was especially impressive with Classical music. Schoenberg: Gurrelieder, (Berliner Philharmoniker, conducted by Simon Rattle) had all the drama necessary. Although generally refined and smooth there was ample fire in the DV78's belly when dynamic clout was called for. If anything, the strings were perhaps a tad too smooth but then, given the likely AV amp system match, this isn't necessarily a bad thing. Certainly the string timbre was well above average and the staging first rate.

I didn't think The White Stripes' 'The Hardest Button To Button', would lend itself quite so well to the

Arcam's refined persona, but it still generally impressed. The rawness was slightly gentrified with a softening of dynamics. Yet percussion was still crisp and there was oodles of detail including lengthy cymbal decay. The guitar also motored along with convincing growl and, whilst not the most thrilling of presentations, I couldn't fault the Arcam's timing and sense of fun.

Fun was also a surprising element of Nelly Furtado's 'I'm Like a Bird'. Here the taut bassline suited the pop-bop down to the ground. It strode through the song with immense confidence and vivid detail. Part of the appeal lay in the depth of sound stage, which went a long way to make up for the DV78's ultimate lack of real grunt. Vocals were slightly nasal, just as they should be in fact, and were well projected from the rest of the mix. As with the other tracks I also found a truly musical nature to the Arcam's performance that majored on letting you hear the individual textures and resonances that go to make up each particular instrument. As before the DV78 was never less than engaging to listen to.

At the beginning of the review I wondered if Arcam had done enough to make up for the DV78's lack of universality. As you can probably tell by now the answer is an emphatic yes. Those seeking SACD and/or

Unlike rival companies, Arcam still produces all its hi-fi in house. This means that rather than outsourcing, usually to the Far East, production of the DV78 is kept within the UK. The company claims that the price-to-performance ratio has been achieved by re-engineering the DV88+ design for more efficient production. Simplification of the circuit board and power supply has led to reduced manufacturing costs without, apparently, impairing, the sound quality in any way. The only question it raises is - why anyone would now buy the DV88+?

FOR

- Natural picture
- Engaging sound
- Fine finish

AGAINST

- No SACD/DVD-A
- Tacky remote
- A tad pricey

DVD-A will be immediately put off by this machine, but those with a more open mind have a treat in store. As a DVD player, the Arcam can confidently hold its own against the already impressive Denon and Pioneer - it's every bit as well made as its Far Eastern rivals, and rather less daunting to use, too. The only real let down here is the less than pretty remote, but then at least it's functional. The picture may not be the most vivid but its natural and solid image is likely to offer longer-term satisfaction. And as a stand alone CD player the Arcam is almost unique in that it's pretty much the only sub-£1,000 player that can genuinely cut it as a star music performer. My only slight gripes, sonically, were a lack of really deep bass and slight over refinement of some instruments. Neither, though, can get in the way of the DV78's utterly convincing timing and beguilingly musical nature.

For anyone looking to combine DVD and CD, and who isn't too bothered about universality, then the DV78 more or less chooses itself.

VERDICT ●●●● £

Arcam has succeeded in showing that a quality DVD doesn't need SACD or DVD-A to shine. Class leading sonics, and an impressive picture, back it a winner.

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having iLink connectivity is not essential: effectively that its inherent musical qualities override the future proofing the more open digital link gives. As the sports pundits say, this is 'a tough ask'...

For £3,000 you have the right to expect impressive build quality, and Denon does not disappoint. I think I should have consulted my osteopath before taking on this review, as the unit weighs in at a substantial 29kg. The styling and finish are of the highest quality. As you would expect, an inspection of the rear revealed an almost fully comprehensive selection of connectivity options.

Video switching is available at composite and S-video quality throughout, and as per my ageing Yamaha three component inputs on phonos are provided, with one component monitor out. There are five coaxial digital inputs, and six optical ones, as well as two optical outputs. One item which may encourage those who retain separate DVD-Audio and SACD players is that there are two sets of 7.1 channel analogue inputs. There is even a Dolby Digital RF input, for anyone still harbouring a Laserdisc player! There are enough stereo analogue inputs to meet any reasonable need, including a middling moving magnet phono stage. Of course there is only one Denon link port, but that should be all you'll ever need with the DVD-A11 as your universal player.

There is such complexity in a device such as this, which endeavours to cover all possible bases as the entertainment hub of your living room, that the prospect of reading the huge manual can



be quite daunting. With the AVC-A1SRA even the remote gets a separate tome! Now, you are going to end up using this controller all the time, so you had better make sure that you get on with it. As a Yamaha man I am quite attached to my multiple button programmable remote, and I was quite heartened to see that the DSP-Z9 had retained almost exactly the same device, so if I were to switch I would need to be

know what I like!

The fascia of the unit is in fairly conventional A/V amp 'big knobs and pull down flap' territory, although if anyone appreciates front video connections, you don't get them here. In operation there are a multiplicity of green and red LEDs which light up depending on what signal is being received, which can be distracting if it is in your line of site in a darkened room, but that is really

"I should have consulted my osteopath before taking on this review"

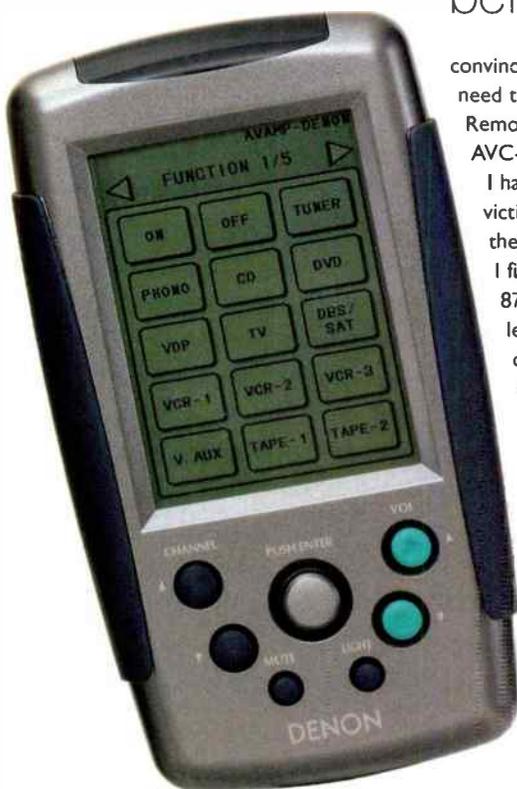
convinced that I could do what I need to armed with the RC-871 Remote which comes with the AVC-A1SRA.

I have to say that I may be a victim of my prejudices, but this is the one area of this whole setup I find hard to live with. The RC-871 is a backlit touch-screen learning remote in the mould of a Phillips Pronto, with the customary manufacturer presets for other devices, and macro programming ability. I simply found that what I could do in the dark with one satisfying slab of keys for the Yamaha, I had to do by flicking between various sub-menus on the RC-871. If you're used to this kind of approach, you'll be fine with this remote, but I

my only complaint about what is basically a very handsome unit.

As is the matching DVD-A11. This is another big beast (with a typical £1,600 price tag of similarly impressive scale), dwarfing my Toshiba SD900E DVD-Audio player, which I had previously thought of as quite substantial. Add the 13kg to that of the amplifier and you're going to need some fairly substantial shelving!

Set-up was naturally a joy, as all that is necessary to get up and running for CD, DVD-Video and DVD-Audio use with the Denon amplifier was power, and the supplied Denon Link Cat5 cable to plug them together (having first switched Denon Link on in the Setup screen). Of course if you listen to stereo or surround SACDs you will currently need a 6 channel analogue



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Revolver 45 speakers - standard finish	£700	£900
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connection too. (The analogue outputs of the DVD-A11 allow for 7.1), but hopefully not for much longer! [See Upgradeability box]. Other audio outputs include both optical and coaxial S/PDIF, and two iLink (marked as IEEE1394) 4 pin outputs [See Digital interoperability box]. If you like to watch pictures with your audio, your choices are legion, but in my case I am constrained to RGB video, using one of the two SCART outputs. In fact there are two outputs each for composite, S-Video, and component, and for the latter we even have the choice of component on BNC as well as phonos. For those of you with the latest projectors or plasma displays, there is the option of DVI-D (HDCP) digital connection.

In use, the loading tray seems pleasingly solid, and the smooth feel and positive action of the front mounted buttons and twist and press mode selection controls gives a sense of very well tooled mechanics. The mode selection is very intuitive to use when switching between stereo and multi-channel SACD modes, and when switching in the Pure Direct mode to defeat video circuitry when listening to DVD-Audio (or anything else for that matter). The remote control is again a slight let down, being the same as those for units lower down the Denon range it does not scream "flagship!" at you.

In terms of its capabilities, the DVD-A11 is fairly typical of the new breed of universal player, playing as it does CDs and both audio and video DVDs in all writeable varieties, as well as SACD. CD nice-to-haves include the usual VCD, SVCD, MP3, Windows Media Player and photo disc abilities. Having a large battery of HDCDs as I do, it was a delight to note that the flagship Denon disc spinner includes HDCD decoding,

UPGRADEABILITY

The issue of the technology and logistics of the upgrades necessary to both switch all DVD-A11s to Denon Link "Third Edition", and to upgrade pre 'A' mod amplifiers to 'A' status is key if you're making the decision to purchase a DVD-A11, and to the consumer satisfaction of current AVC-A1SR owners. Thankfully, Denon has a fine track record in this area, having previously marketed an upgrade kit to bring the electronics of the prior flagship model, the AVC-A1SE to AVC-A1SR level, and they ran a free Denon Link S.E upgrade programme for owners of the original AVC-A1SR/ DVD-A1 combo. The good news is that it is highly likely that by the time you read this, details of the AVC-A1SR to AVC-A1SRA upgrade path including pricing should be available on the Denon website, the bad news is that it seems unlikely that the underlying architecture of amplifiers of AVC-A1SE origin will be able to make the second leap to SRA level. At the present time Denon is unable to confirm if the upgrade necessary to make DSD pass out of the DVD-A11 will be chargeable (unlikely), or even whether or not the upgrade will simply consist of the mail-out of a firmware upgrade on CD, as there appears to be a possibility that it may require hardware mods at Denon headquarters once again.

although in this system it is a moot point, as the HDCD decoding is taken care of by the amplifier, with the transport just supplying the augmented bitstream across the Denon Link.

Naturally the DVD-A11 as supplied by Denon is a Region 2 DVD-Video player. However it should be noted that many online suppliers can provide one with a region-free modification at a slight premium. A couple of popular sites even offer the machine region free

probably only 'Friends' on when I swapped the Yamaha out of my customary set-up for the Denon, the sound was instantly more pleasing. Sky's Dolby Digital 5.1 programming also sounded highly convincing.

The digital connection also seems to give the amplifier's Pro Logic IIx processing plenty to get hold of – the Cinema setting gives Pro Logic encoded material a nice enveloping surround soundfield, and the Music setting can make flicking through the music channels bearable

"The digital connection also seems to give the amplifier's Pro Logic IIx processing plenty to get hold of..."

and able to play RCE protected discs for the usual £1,600, so you can't say fairer than that.

For the purposes of this review I essentially replaced my normal set-up with the Denon duo. From the very first the AVC-A1SRA convinced me of its admirable musical abilities. I habitually watch television using the optical S/PDIF output of my Sky+ box routed to my DSP-AX1 amplifier, but even though there was

– the Sugababes 'Caught Up In The Middle' resolves into an exciting surround version that wouldn't be a million miles from what a surround mixer might come up with.

Let's discuss DVD-Video performance briefly. In a word, it is stunning. The first disc I stuck in was David Gilmour's 'Royal Festival Hall' DVD, and on my Toshiba 3787DB connected via RGB SCART, I was almost forced to draw breath – the



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image quality was so detailed and colourful. The six 12bit 216MHz Video DACs on the DVD-A11 were really showing their worth here. And the sound? On this disc we have a choice of 24/48 PCM Stereo or full bitrate Dolby Digital and both sound impeccably rich through Denon Link, although the former is far preferable, approaching DVD-Audio quality as it does.

The step up from my own setup was also notable as I was rounding up my review of the Porcupine Tree 'In Absentia' DVD-Audio for last month's issue – I had previously given it numerous spins on my usual Toshiba SD900E/ DSP-AX1 set-up, but there was a definite step-change in the coherence of the surround soundfield when the Denon pairing was substituted for my own gear, a finding entirely consistent with the evidence of my DVD-Audio comparison testing which was done using Neil Young's new 'On The Beach' disc. The ability to convey the nuances of the 24/176.4 stereo would be a worthy gauge of how the digitally linked universal Denon competed with a dedicated DVD-Audio player in a similar price bracket, the trusty SD900E. The result was close but although the Toshiba's presentation was extremely detailed, the benefit of multiple 24/192 Burr-Brown DACs working outside the transport was that the interaction of Levon Helm and Rick Danko's fantastic contributions to Revolution Blues had a more lifelike musicality, and a much greater sense of localisation in a very full soundstage, Rick behind it, and Levon out in front. Both players were able

IEEE1394 TERMINOLOGY

Throughout this review I have consistently used the term i.Link to refer to the multichannel digital link based on the IEEE1394 standard. i.Link is in fact simply Sony's name for IEEE1394, just as FireWire 400 is Apple's. But as other manufacturers have adopted the name in the hi-fi context it seems to be the most appropriate term to use.

to provide some sense of height in the recording, but the Denon did this more often. Glorious!

The one area in which the Toshiba did outshine the Denon pairing was in HDCD playback. Although the HDCD of 'Avalon' can't compete with the SACD stereo, the analogue output of the Toshiba gets close, giving a lifelike feel whereas the AVC-A1SR, whether fed the bitstream from the Toshiba or the DVD-A11, comes across as veiled and grainy. However, the Toshiba can't compete with the DVD-A11s great standard CD playback across Denon Link. Pink Floyd's 'The Final Cut' gave a very clean and neutral sound, with much more detailed precision making for the kind of pleasurable listen which just makes you want to stay put and play it again (I did). The Denon also justifies its price tag being double that of the Pioneer DV-868-AVi, showing a greater degree of vocal clarity when playing CDs.

Surround SACD playback through six channel analogue is also very fine, with the delicacy and power of Bjork's Vespertine inhabiting the room with a great sense of air, but I am almost tempted to defer final judgement until Denon Link is DSD capable – I would imagine that the evidence of its efficacy in solidifying the image delivered as a DVD-Audio transport

is highly likely to be duplicated for SACD.

I have lived with this set-up for a number of weeks now, and I have constantly been reminded of how pleasing it sounds in a huge variety of different modes. As to whether the amplifier's quality makes up for its lack of the more interoperable i.Link digital connectivity, I would argue that as long as you are happy keeping all your digital multichannel eggs in one basket for the life of your system, Denon Link replaces the need for any i.Link capability.

That grail of DSD capability being added to Denon Link, obviating the need for expensive multi-channel interconnects – seems tantalisingly close, current estimates suggest that we may be a couple of months away now. Despite this, it is almost inevitable that the next generation Denon flagship will add i.Link connectivity alongside Denon Link. However, Denon engineers would argue that with a transfer rate three times greater than that of i.Link's 400mbps, Denon Link's greater redundancy and lower jitter brings an audible advantage. Time will tell.

If I had £4,600 in my pocket right now I'd be heading down to my nearest dealer, (although I might want to audition the DSP-Z9 first) but unfortunately I haven't. The saving starts now...

VERDICT

While other digitally-linked pairings which support both high resolution formats are available now, this one is lining up to be the two box universal surround solution to beat – once Denon Link supports SACD.

DENON AVC-A1SR/ DENON DVD-A11 £4,600
Denon UK Ltd.
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www.denon.co.uk

FOR

- Impeccably Musical Sound
- Comprehensive Surround Processing
- Denon's upgradeability track-record

AGAINST

- Lack of i.Link (AVC-A1SRA)
- Uninspiring Remote Controls
- Back-to-base upgrades necessary?

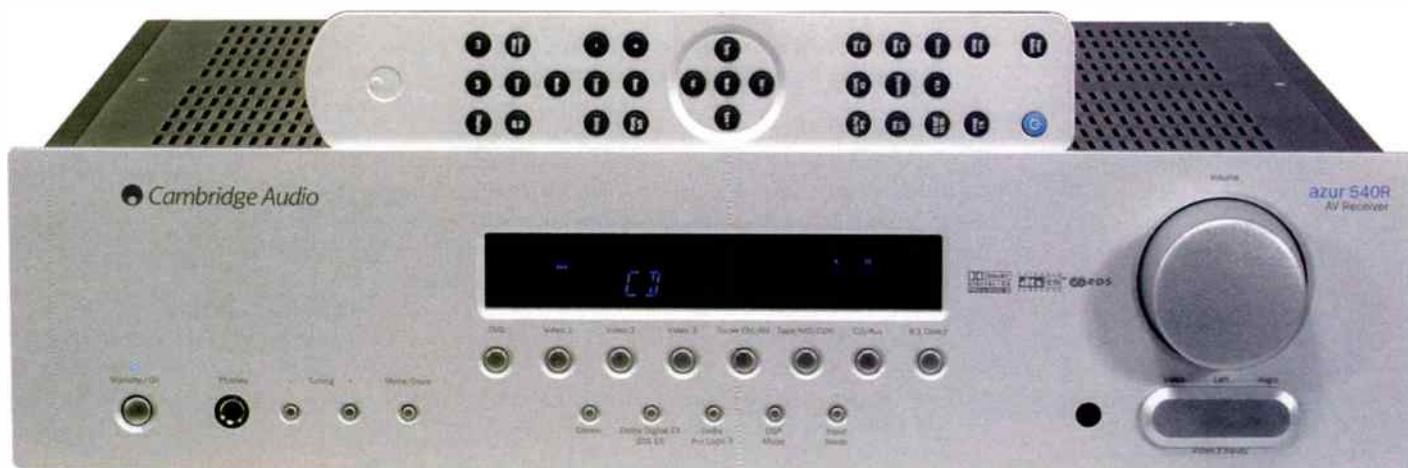
DIGITAL INTEROPERABILITY

The i.Link outputs on the Denon DVD-A11 can actually be set to communicate using one of two protocols. One is Denon's own protocol (shades of Denon Link 2 here) and one is the open standard which most other i.Link capable machines will use – a protocol called A&M. As with most open standards, what should work well in theory is often reluctant to do so in practice, and so it proves. Attempts to connect the

DVD-A11 to a Pioneer VSX-AX5i were frustratingly close to success, as when link testing the Pioneer indicated it could see a Denon DVD-A11 and the Denon's IEEE1394 indicator stopped flashing but no sound emerged when play was pressed! Denon has reported similar difficulties connecting a DVD-A11 to a Yamaha DSP-Z9. Like us, the manufacturers are just trying to feel their way through this morass of technological cleverness, and contacts between the big protagonists like Denon, Pioneer and Yamaha happen at the highest levels in Japan, but also in local territories. Anecdotal evidence suggests that Pioneer players have been seen successfully playing through i.Link into Sony amplifiers, and indeed we will be testing this configuration next month.



film studies



After great success with its 'budget audiophile' Azur range, Cambridge Audio has launched its first ever integrated multichannel receiver, the 540R. Dominic Todd breaks out the popcorn...

Despite having produced some of the best regarded budget amps and CD players of recent years, Cambridge Audio and AV have never been synonymous. Indeed, the Azur 540R is its first ever integrated multichannel receiver. As with the rest of the Azur range, the 540R makes an extremely good initial impression. The casing is solidly built and damped, with a solid aluminium front panel worthy of designs twice the Azur's price. Much ink has already been spent describing the Azur remote control but, needless to say, its weighty, aluminium-faced gate would impress you even if you'd spent well into four figures.

Like NAD, Cambridge Audio prides itself on the highest quality components at an affordable price. In a £250 multi-channel receiver one doesn't expect Black Gates and Alps, but good Crystal DSP and DAC chips come standard. Furthermore, the built-in six channel amp is discrete, so you won't find those nasty ICs more commonly found on this type of unit. What you will see is an awful lot of functionality - and the concomitant socketry - for your money. 6.1 decoding offers a rear centre speaker, and is available in both Dolby and DTS formats. Furthermore, the more traditional 5.1 is also available, as are the

analogue Pro Logic and Pro Logic II decoders. The only absentee of note is DTS Neo.

There are six line level inputs, two digital coaxial, three optical and a 6.1 input which allows for the easy connection of an SACD player. Home recording fans will be pleased to find optical and coaxial outputs, although the single tape loop could be rather limiting. The video socketry comes in all flavours, and especially worthy of note are the two component and three S-VHS inputs. As it's a receiver, there's also a built in RDS tuner [see box]. Needless to say, with the exception of the single tape loop, there is little to fault with the Azur at this price.

SOUND QUALITY

Surprisingly, competition is rather thin on the ground at this level. The closet rivals I could find were the Yamaha RXV-440RDS (£300) and the Pioneer VXS-D812 (£330). Both are capable, but neither offer any palpable benefits over the Cambridge - at least when it comes to specification. Sound quality, of course, is a very different issue, and to see if the Azur lived up to its reputation, I hooked up a Denon DVD-2900 and sextet of Mordaunt Short Avant loudspeakers.

To keep things simple, I began by listening to Daft Punk's

'Aerodynamic' in stereo. In this mode the 540R claims 100W per channel and, from the evidence here, sounds like it. Even with just two 'speakers, soundstaging was impressively expansive with a good reach into the room. Lower bass notes sounded slightly soft at frequency extremes, but had fine drive nonetheless. While this is no Naim Nait 5i, there was enough attack to make this a surprisingly enjoyable listen - I say 'surprisingly' because multi-channel amplifiers of this price aren't renowned for musical finesse. At higher volumes the sound did harden slightly, but you'd have to be really pushing it for this to surface. Generally the good timing and punchy, upbeat presentation made for an involving listen.

Of course, plenty of power and attack are all very well, but with music such as Norah Jones' 'Don't Know Why' they're less important than textural detail. Here the 540R was more of a mixed bag. Double bass had good depth and fine timbre, and piano sounded suitably realistic. However, Jones's vocals were a little course at times, and subtle nuances of sound were also rather glossed over. But let's get things into perspective though - the Azur still auditioned a whole lot better than its price rivals, and would even make a fair account of itself


VERDICT ●●●●£

Shock horror - Cambridge Audio makes another budget wonder!

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FOR

- Surprising sound quality
- Superb value
- That remote control

AGAINST

- Runs hot

against some purpose-built stereo amplifiers at this money. Although the balance lacked a little detail, at least the basics of good timing and a smooth, seamless soundstage were there. If Jones's vocals didn't quite manage to raise the hairs on the back of your neck, then one at least couldn't help be struck by the soulful and dynamic presentation.

Switching to DVD, and the popular 6.1 version of 'The Lord Of The Rings: The Fellowship Of The Ring', showed the 540R in fine form. In multichannel mode, the Cambridge offers 80W per channel, and this was enough to give the soundtrack all the presence it deserves. The envelope didn't sweep as seamlessly as the Yamaha, but it was a close call. Perhaps of more importance was the effortless nature of sound that refused to become harsh or grainy. With this type of film score, the fact that the Azur wasn't the most detailed of performers actually counted in its favour. With so much happening at times, plenty of the action could clearly be depicted yet the performance wasn't overwhelmed. I found that even at higher volume levels I didn't suffer from the fatigue that can be afflicted by many more clinical sounding surround sound amplifiers.

The same was true of hi res multichannel digital audio. With a DTS DVD-A version of Bach's 'Sheep May Safely Graze', I found the channel steering far from intrusive. While the front 'speakers still accounted for the bulk of the mix, the surrounds proved effective at providing suitable gentle ambience - giving an intimacy that most stereo designs would struggle to recreate no matter how effective their image projection. String tone was melodic and reasonably fluid, with just a slightly metallic hint to some of the frequencies to indicate that you weren't listening to something more expensive. Given its budget status then, the Azur put in a fine performance.

CONCLUSION

First, when it comes to two-channel sound, the 540R isn't as good as the

best stereo amplifiers at this price - the similarly priced 640A from the same company does an obviously better job here. That said, the 540R is far from outclassed; that extra power over most stereo amps of this price gives it superior scale and punch. What it does just miss out on, however, is that last degree and detail and finesse. You'll find that a good stereo amplifier will enhance instrumental timbre, and add a little texture. Not a huge difference, but enough to make many think twice.

Yet that's only the half the story. That the 540R gets so close to stereo amps is impressive in itself, but factor in the multichannel capability and the Azur begins to make some of its two channel rivals appear distinctly poor value. Fed with DVD-A or SACD, the Azur can truly give you a taste of just what these formats are capable of. Even though it may lack the cinema sound sophistication of some of its rivals, musically it's miles ahead of any of them. I'd even go so far to say that this is the first AV receiver at the price that can genuinely be used for both film and music with similarly impressive results.

TUNER, SURPRISE

Whilst most of the Azur's rival's tuners are something of an afterthought, the Cambridge's analogue design is actually rather good! Although not up to the company's own (Creek inspired) T500, it's certainly better than you'd expect - with a spacious, natural acoustic and impressive sensitivity, meaning it worked well even when the signal wasn't the strongest.

IN THE BEGINNING...

Cambridge Audio's first foray into multichannel audio was short, but sweet. The V500 was a Dolby Digital decoder with no onboard amplification or video switching. Its lack of DTS was something of a bugbear, but the 5.1 input made it ideal for DVD or SACD players with onboard decoding. As with most Cambridge products the sound quality was excellent at the price, although the setting up process could take time. It was designed with Cambridge's matching P500 60W power amps (£150 each) in mind, but was flexible enough to use with a wide range of other equipment. The initial £200 price tag soon came down to £100. Today, Richer Sounds stores still have a few ex-display models about, and at around £50 are a bargain in the true sense of the word.

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

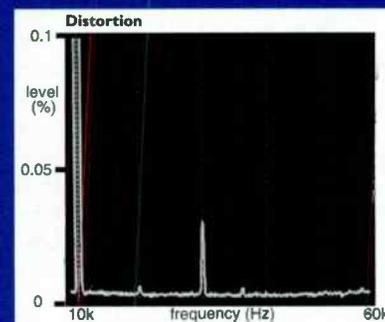
The 540R has plenty of power, delivering 120watts per channel with one channel driven, rising to 170watts into a low 4ohm load. With all six channels driven this will of course fall a little, but it shows the Azur 540R is a powerful receiver that can go loud if need be. Distortion levels were low through the CD/line inputs at 0.03%, or via Direct In which measured 0.01%. However, CD in goes through a digital processing system and bandwidth is limited to 22kHz (-3dB), with some filter roll off before the cutoff that will add warmth to the sound. Via Direct In there is no such limit; the -1dB point measuring out at 26kHz.

The VHF/FM tuner will have a bright sound, frequency response measurement reveals, due to the mpX filter peaking above 10kHz. There was +1.7dB of lift at 10kHz. Noise was reasonably low at -68dB IEC A weighted and all other parameters satisfactory for a good performance, although not a match for good independent tuners.

The Azur 540R receiver is powerful and measures well, but with qualification. Through line input it will have a warm sound, the VHF tuner will sound a little bright, but digital or Direct In will

be in balance. NK

Power	120watts
CD/tuner/aux.	
Frequency response	6Hz-13kHz
Separation	88dB
Noise	-102dB
Distortion	0.006%
Sensitivity	220mV
dc offset	5/-17mV
Tuner	
Frequency response	20Hz-8kHz
Separation	46dB
Noise	68dB
Distortion	0.3%
Sensitivity	40uV



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Moving to Multichannel

...then Dominic Todd has a guide for those considering the transition from two channel to surround sound.

The one that started it all was the Sherwood R925-RDS. In late 1997, this was the first Dolby Digital amp that came in drastically below £1,000. At £400 it undercut its rivals by more than half, and proved an instant sales success. Of course, when it was launched there was little need for the Dolby Digital side of things, but the rapid rise of DVD from here on in, changed the face of hi-fi retailing forever.

These days, Dolby Digital decoding amps can be had from less than £100. Although the Sony STRDE495 and Pioneer VSXC100 both technically retail for around £200, a bit of shopping around should be able to bring that down to more like the £100 mark. Don't expect sonic miracles from either of these, but they are still a huge improvement upon the standard television sound system – although not very good at multichannel audio all the same.

Rather like computer technology there seems to be a new format every year with the two main players, Dolby and DTS, keen to offer you enhancements every step of the way. These days most film buffs wouldn't be seen dead without Dolby Digital EX and DTS ES at the very least. Both formats effectively add a rear centre speaker. Properly set up, the 'enveloping' effect does improve, although the extra wiring involved can prove a cable too far for some.

The two stand out models offering 6.1 technology are the Yamaha RXV440 (AKA the Yamaha HTR5640, in silver) at £300 and the £50 more expensive Marantz SR4400. Both are good, and the

Marantz is one of the first amps that's also truly musical. As you move up the price range from here, it tends to be power output and component quality that improves. The Yamaha DSP-AX640SE (£400) is generally considered to be one of the best all round good eggs at the £500 price point. Interestingly it's one of a tiny handful of AV amps that are just that, amps. For reasons unknown, pretty much every other AV amp on the market comes with a built in analogue tuner and is therefore really an AV receiver.

If you're more serious about your films then you may like to consider the Denon AVR-2803 (£650) or the Pioneer VSX-AX3 (£800). Whilst these won't begin to match the sound quality of a similarly priced stereo amplifier, they both make a decent fist of two channel works. Certainly they're as good as most £200 integrateds, and for the occasional music listener should provide ample rewards. Needless to say, as home cinema units, both are compelling.

Yet if you're really determined to never leave your house again then look no further than Yamaha's RXV1400 (£800) or Pioneer's VSX-ASi (£1200). Both of these introduce several new and enhanced developments in the world of AV. They share the next upgrade in surround sound, which is 7.1. Instead of three rear 'speakers' the outer two are brought to the side of the listener and the single rear centre is supplemented with a second rear. The Yamaha also uses the new analogue Dolby Pro-Logic IIx to great effect, when it comes to utilising the seven speakers for music use. In addition to this it is also one of the cheapest amps to qualify for THX

certification.

THX isn't so much a format as a series of standards created by Lucasfilm of Star Wars fame. If you see this logo then you can be assured of pretty hefty power outputs, bone cracking dynamics and sharp, accurate steering. In addition, the Pioneer has its own unique feature - iLink. This is a high capacity digital link that does away with the need for multiple cabling. A suitable DVD player is required, yet when the two are matched there are sonic as well as convenience features (see the VSX-AX5i review in the March issue).

If you believe bigger is better, then the last word must go to Yamaha - its DSP-Z9 has nine loudspeaker outputs! In addition to the usual seven, two more 'presence' speakers are added at the front. Along with enhanced THX modes, the sound quality is simply stunning with movies, and you'd probably have to spend thousands more on a separate decoding and amplifying system to gain a real improvement in cinema sound quality.

Still, if you're moving to multichannel for near-exclusive audio use, you'll find umpteen channels of marginal benefit – high quality componentry and short signal paths are what count here. For this reason, you'll have to look to largely British-based separates with multichannel upgrade options – from the likes of Arcam, Cyrus, Linn, Meridian, NAD, Naim and Roksan. Those are, inevitably pricey. If sound is absolutely paramount, then we'd still advise – if possible – to keep your purpose built hi-fi in one 'music room', and run a good multichannel AV amp separately in your 'movie room'.

BOX, TOPS



Unusually, Naim's original early eighties Nait amplifier was shoebox sized, while Musical Fidelity's mid-price integrated rival of the day came in full width case. These days, the dimensions have been reversed – with the brand new Nait 5i standard sized, and the just-released X-150 in a half width casing. Yet still the fierce rivalry remains, says Dominic Todd...

Make no mistake, the success of these amplifiers is crucial to both manufacturers. If you're looking for a £500-£800 amplifier this year, then the chances are that your dealer will usher you towards one or the other of these deadly rivals. Both companies are renowned for their audio excellence and often-quirky interpretation in equal measure. Yet for two amps so different in conception and style, there's actually far more in common than you might at first think.

Starting with the Naim, I have to say that I find it one of the most beautifully understated designs around. Not only does it look good, but it also feels good. The controls have a beautifully damped feel and the attention to detail is first class. How many other manufacturers would go to the trouble of counter sinking the bolt heads on the unit's undercarriage? The combined Naim

illuminated badge and remote sensor is also a delight. Rather less welcome is the left-handed volume control [*whaddaya mean! Ed. (left handed)*] and rather sparse range of inputs.

There are just three inputs, with a single tape loop to match. Naim still uses DIN sockets for two of these, but these days a full range of phono sockets also supplements them. Equally as pleasing is the standard remote control. Inside, the build quality is just as thorough, with an over-size toroidal PSU, ALPS volume pot, BHC capacitors and an IEC mains socket. The latter of these is particularly welcome as the captive lead on the Nait 3 was always a bugbear. Heat is dissipated via the casing, which uses a mixture of zinc and aluminium.

The Musical Fidelity also uses its casing as a heatsink, but goes one better with a ribbed enclosure to maximise the surface area. Then again it is more powerful at 70 watts against 50 watts for the Naim. Like

the Naim it uses a dual mono design, and there's also an ALPS volume pot, IEC mains connection and toroidal PSU in place. Musical Fidelity describes the X-150 as a "manly" version of a Cyrus product. To my mind it has the look of a 1970s scientific instrument; a look also favoured by TEAC. Either way, the blue LEDs lend it a classy touch and the extra connectivity over the Naim can't be ignored. It features a standard phono stage and pre-out sockets, and uses convenient binding posts rather than the Naim's 4mm sockets. All that let the X-150 down was an excessive amount of play in the volume control, which somewhat spoiled the quality feel.

Personally I'd take the Naim for style and the MF for convenience. Both are beautifully built and no one would feel short changed from their investment. Competition is prolific and other rivals you might like to consider would include Audio Analogue's Puccini SE (£825), Arcam's

A90 (£765) – which won last month's supertest - and the Cyrus 8 (£800) to name but three.

SOUND QUALITY

With the amplifiers alternately hooked up to my reference system, I began by listening to Daftpunk's 'Voyager'. The Naim made an immediate impression. The sound was pushed well out into the room and the staging was very forthright. As you'd expect from a Naim, the rhythm and drive was top notch. Bass control was superb, but there was also a level of weight above that of previous Naims. Texture and detail from the synthesiser was faithful and detailed, if not quite as holographic or expansively pushed around the sound stage as some. Yet, it was more for control than weight or texture that you'd remember the Nait 5i by. For a basic integrated, the dynamic response and attack was amazing. When the music was meant to stop dead, it did just that. There was none of the bloom or overhang that afflicts certain other amplifiers.

The Musical Fidelity X-150 is not one of these. Although it didn't project the sound quite as far forward as the Naim, it still kept a tight check on the music and provided almost equally taught and accurate timing. At frequency extremes it was slightly softer, but this wasn't always such a bad thing. Although the bass response lost a little in attack, it added a degree of extra weight to the sound. Likewise, whilst the high frequencies lacked some bite, there wasn't the occasional hardening of sound that could afflict the Naim. Of the two, it was the more beguiling but less gripping listen. That having been said, one wouldn't classify either of these amps as anything other than upbeat, hard-hitting and rhythmical. Creamy smooth and soothing in a Class-A manner they certainly are not.

To see these sparring partners would cope with something a little more musically challenging I turned to 'The Old Gumbie Cat' from the musical 'Cats'. As this is a particularly old CD and not the best of

recordings, it can be rendered unplayable by more analytical designs. Unsurprisingly, the Nait wasn't kind to the recording. The male vocal has been recorded with an excessive sibilance and the Naim brought this to the fore. Equally the piano's timbre was no better than average. That having been said, once I'd got beyond these flaws in the recording the reproduction was extremely involving. Let's face it, this is a live musical and live musicals are rarely sparse and beguiling. They are about volume, pace and vivacity. In these respects the Naim was spot on. The timing was exceptional for an amp of this price and both the percussion and brass reproduction had real bite and vigour. If you weren't in the mood, or had particularly bright 'speakers, then the Nait's performance would be simply overwhelming, but as an invigorator I couldn't think of a better substitute at this level in the market.

The Musical Fidelity turned the adrenaline level down, but not by much. There was an obviously more relaxed gait to proceedings, yet the X-150 still did the male vocal no favours. Timing wasn't quite as sabre sharp, but the upside was that the percussion was given rein to show off greater detail and subtle decay. Generally the timbre from both amps was equally as good, but not stunning in either case. The MF had that bit more bass, but we're only talking about degrees here. Like the Nait the sound could harden, and I would fear for my hearing to hear either of these amps played at high volumes through a bright system, with a recording such as this. Get it right though, and both offer the type of sound that, if you're that way inclined, will have you out of your seat and dancing around the room.

Neil Young's 'Old Man', brought the pace down a little and provided a simpler acoustic with which to work with. Of the two it was the Musical Fidelity that I found slightly more involving. Befitting the character of the music it had the slightly more mellow and relaxing presentation. Vocals and guitar were a tad more

natural and lifelike in their presentation. By contrast the Naim could sound ever so slightly mechanical, which detached the listener from getting too involved with the music. Yet when the pace picked up for the chorus it was the Naim that did so with the most gusto. It didn't excessively harden as I feared it might but it still lacked the flow of the X-150.

By now, both amplifiers were developing subtly different characteristics whilst still maintaining a commonality in terms of the musical basics. Much the same was true when switching to Classical music. 'The Montagues and The Capulets', from Prokofiev's Romeo and Juliet, offered the perfect test. Right from the off the Naim had me pinned to my seat. The instruments still sounded like real musical instruments, and there was still form and composure to the music, but the transient response from percussion and brass was breathtaking. Most importantly, the feeling of marching was most accurately portrayed with a solid plod that only wanted for a tad more weight. I suppose if this were to be the case though, then Naim would have a harder time selling their pre/powers. Despite the exciting presentation there was still a sense of delicacy with quieter passages, with details such as the brush of a snare drum clearly being heard. There was no doubt that the X-150 couldn't quite provide the same level of drama. There was a sweeter string tone and more fluid feel to the pace, but the percussion lost out in terms of the crispness and the brass wasn't as vibrant either. By the same token, that relentless, plod that had been so clearly etched by the Naim didn't have quite the same definition or authority. As with previous tracks, the MF did have a little more weight at the bottom end but couldn't match the contrast between louder and quieter passages. In short, the Naim offered the greater level of excitement through better dynamic control.

To finish, I pulled out some good



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old processed pop in the form of Nelly Furtado's 'On The Radio'. It was this song that reminded me of just how similar these two amplifiers can sound. The Musical Fidelity projected a greater vocal presence and had a slightly deeper bass response, yet it was also surprisingly harsh to listen to at times. On a couple of occasions I simply had to turn the volume down to avoid the worst excesses. The Naim didn't exactly provide the most relaxing of listening experiences either. Certainly, Furtado's rather nasal style was hardly portrayed in the most flattering of lights. Yet the soundstaging was particularly three-dimensional and the bass line tightly controlled. Once again, though, the X-150 similarly never wanted for grip or control. Whilst both amplifiers offered an exciting and upbeat portrayal, you wouldn't pick either of them to sooth away the stresses of a hard day at work.

CONCLUSION

Perhaps the greatest of surprises comes from the similarities between these two amplifiers, rather than their differences. Both offer strong rhythmic timing, taut dynamics, and a broad depth of soundstage. Equally, both can also be a little overwhelming, especially if your system is already on the brighter side of neutral. Yet, don't think that the X-150 and Nait 5i are two peas in a pod. Although the differences between the two may be subtle, they add up to make two distinctive sounds. The X-150 provides a little more bass weight, the superior string tone and a little more tonal colour and flow. To counter this, the Naim is the more incisive, with a transient attack that is worthy of amps several classes above. It may occasionally sound a tad mechanical but in terms of dynamic contrast is possibly the best amp at this price, period. Unlike some of the bruisers out there with similar dynamic clout, it doesn't lose the plot when it comes to subtle nuances, and neither does it lose its sense of musicality.

In other respects these amps are closer. Both are well built and offer aesthetic details designed to impress. The X-150 is slightly more versatile and

the Naim slightly better finished but, once again, the differences are small. I had a great deal of fun reviewing both of these amps and few potential buyers would be unhappy with either. However, despite their similarities, picking a winner is easy for me. As neither can claim to be smoothie, then the emphasis must be on high-energy excitement. With this being the case I'll take the more exciting and the more spectacular of the two, which is undoubtedly the Naim. It may be flawed, but the £100 price advantage, exquisite build quality, and occasional sonic fireworks mark it out as the winner of this test.

LITTLE AND LARGE

Both these amplifiers have a rich heritage. The Naim can trace its roots back to the first Nait of 1983. This was shoebox sized, with a power output to match (20 watts if you were lucky). The Nait 3 (1994) was the first full size Nait and, over the years, power outputs have increased making the 50-watt Nait 5i the most powerful version to date. Although the Musical Fidelity doesn't have a direct line of dependency, it can trace its roots back through the first XA range to the late eighties B200. The powerful B-series ran alongside MF's Class A and highly regarded, A-series. The B200 was the Nait's rival of the time and offered a similarly punchy, forward sound but with a higher power output. Few things change, except that it's now the Musical Fidelity that resides within a shoebox and not the Naim!

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

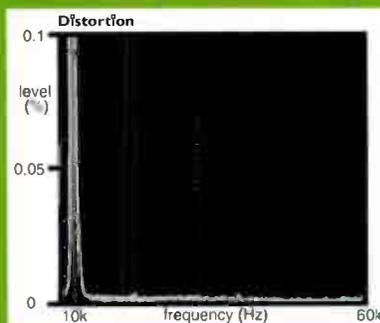
In spite of its compact dimensions the X-150 amplifier generates no less than 100watts into 8ohms, so here's a small amp that will go really loud. With no less than 156watts into 4ohms there's plenty more for low impedance loudspeakers too. At the same time this amplifier stays clean even when delivering close to full power, producing just 0.003% distortion at 1kHz and 0.009% at 10kHz - very low values. And where Class B distortion can actually rise at low levels in the X-150 there was no sign of this, 1watt at 10kHz returning just 0.005%.

Frequency response rolls down slowly above 37kHz (-1dB) reaching -4dB at 100kHz, so there's enough gain to do justice to DVD-A and SACD. At the other end of the scale though is a phono stage that spans 11Hz-31kHz within 1dB limits. Equalisation was accurate below 100Hz, so I would expect good bass weight. All sensitivities were spot on for good matching, measuring 240mV for line inputs and 2.4mV for MM cartridge,

with 50mV overload.

The X-150 is nicely proportioned in all areas to match well, work normally and give plenty of power. It measures very well. NK

Power	100watts
CD/tuner/aux.	
Frequency response	5Hz-37kHz
Separation	88dB
Noise	-97dB
Distortion	0.004%
Sensitivity	240mV
dc offset	5/6mV



MEASURED PERFORMANCE

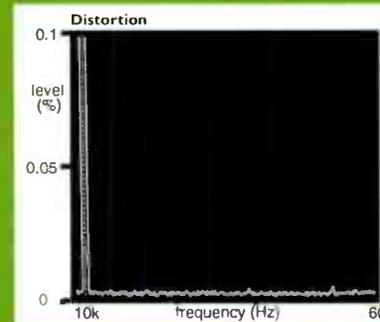
The NAT 5i produces a solid 60watts into 8ohms, good enough for most circumstances unless you want to go really loud. Naims always have good power supply regulation, allowing them to nearly double power into a low load and in this area the NAT5i did predictably well, developing 100watts into 4ohms. Since most bass units these days are 4ohms this amounts to the power you get in practice, which is a lot.

Distortion levels were negligible at all powers and frequencies, the worst-case value being just 0.01% at 10kHz near to full output - a grueling test, but a fine result. This amplifier has enough sensitivity to work with a majority of sources, including low output tuners and cassette decks, so it matches well.

The NAT 5i is a solid performer that measures to the best current standards. It's 'stiff' power supply will likely give

solid bass in true Naim style. NK

Power	60watts
CD/tuner/aux.	
Frequency response	5Hz-52kHz
Separation	88dB
Noise	-98dB
Distortion	0.005%
Sensitivity	270mV
dc offset	2/3mV



VERDICT

NAIM NAIT 5i ●●●●●
 MF X-150 ●●●●£

Both are excellent amps in what they do well. For excitement, control and rhythm these are two of the best. Yet it's the Naim that just has the edge.

NAIM NAIT 5i

Naim Audio Limited
 ☎ +44 (0) 1722 332266
 www.naim-audio.com

- for
- Rhythm and drive
 - Dynamic control
 - Iconic, understated styling

- against
- Sound not the smoothest
 - Doesn't suit all systems
 - Limited inputs

MUSICAL FIDELITY X-150

Musical Fidelity
 ☎ +44 (0) 208 900 2866
 www.musicalfidelity.co.uk

- for
- Power and control
 - Good range of facilities
 - Crisp styling

- against
- Occasionally harsh
 - Needs careful matching
 - Play in volume control

Audience

Haden Boardman gives a big hand for Dynaudio's latest 'Special Edition' Audience 52SE loudspeaker...

Little known in the UK, Dynaudio continues to be one of Denmark's best kept secrets. For more than twenty five years, these Danes have been manufacturing high quality loudspeakers for the domestic, professional, car audio and OEM (original equipment manufacturer) markets. In some ways it is the latter for which the company is best known; quite a few 'famous' speaker designs

and expensive Contour models. The cooking 52 has been around in various forms for the last few years, and this SE version effectively replaces the older Contour 1.1.

Dynaudio makes all its own drivers. Every bass unit in the range has a die-cast chassis, and one-piece carefully profiled MSP cone (Magnesium Silicate Polymer, a Dynaudio invention). The bass unit here is derived from the highly popular and more upmarket Contour 1.3 model. Tweeter technology is based on a soft doped dome, with very powerful magnet technology. High frequency response is claimed to surpass 26kHz [see our Measured Performance]. The

Audience 52SE uses the more upmarket Esostar tweeter, again from the old Contour range. Crossover is a very simple first order device, and built with the highest quality components. These units have very high power handling and have a tough reputation.

Finish of these loudspeakers was top drawer - a flawless wood veneer contrasting nicely with the painted baffle. All screws were nice and tight, the overall build internally and externally was to a very high standard. The speakers are supplied with a pair of foam bungs, designed to soften the bass if placed close to a rear wall. Documentation was frankly a bit thin, a kind of general advice rather than anything totally specific to this speaker.

Dynaudio eschews the idea of biwiring, something I am personally not a fan of either (which is best given a fixed budget - two runs of moderate cable, or one run of better cable?) and the backs of the '52SEs are fitted with a pair of very chunky WBT terminals. Stand-wise, very high mass units are to be recommended, about 60cm high, and I had the speakers blu-tak'd in place. Amplifier wise, as you would expect, these speakers are not very efficient, and in general Dynaudios have a reputation of requiring a good deal of power

(read: big solid-state amplifiers) and the baby 52SEs must be considered a moderately difficult load. Even so, a small 20watt valve amp had no problems making them move, neither did the superb Class A Sugden A21a. In a smaller room, 25 'quality watts' should be enough.

SOUND QUALITY

From the moment they were run, the Dynaudios produced different results to what I am normally use to hearing. Let's face it - my love of light paper cones and horn loaded speakers is as far from the Dynaudio approach as could be feasible! What is noticeable with these speakers is they actually need a warm up. For the first few minutes of operation from cold, they sound almost slow and sloppy, but give them ten minutes at a moderate level and they suddenly begin to open up and communicate.

Kruder & Dorfmeister's 'The K&D Sessions' CD was a great start. These Danes are very cool customers - they are not at all showy or obviously expressive loudspeakers, and in fact compared to my normal 'paper stuff' they could at times seem almost reserved. Yet although the K&D CD is particularly bass heavy, the little speakers lapped it up. Detail was incredibly smooth in its presentation, and the drivers beautifully integrated. What amazed me was the control - bass in particular was deep, powerful and incredibly well controlled by any standards, let alone for such a small box. It was hard to believe I was listening to such a baby box.

On my Jimmy Smith torture tracks, they gave an impressive, weighty and dynamic presentation, lapping up the very brash 'Walk on the Wild Side'. This is a complicated recording with far too much brass, yet the Dynaudios revealed an incisive quality to the recording other systems had missed. Moving on to some DMP Jazz via SACD (DMP does DSD SACD-02) was most encouraging, sounding fast, dynamic



have incorporated its drive units, including one of the last BBC designs.

Yet Dynaudio is of course a brand in its own right, and the speaker I am listening to today is a new 'special edition' model based around the one thousand pound Audience 52, the second speaker in the model hierarchy. Both drivers are replaced with more costly items from the more upmarket

Applause

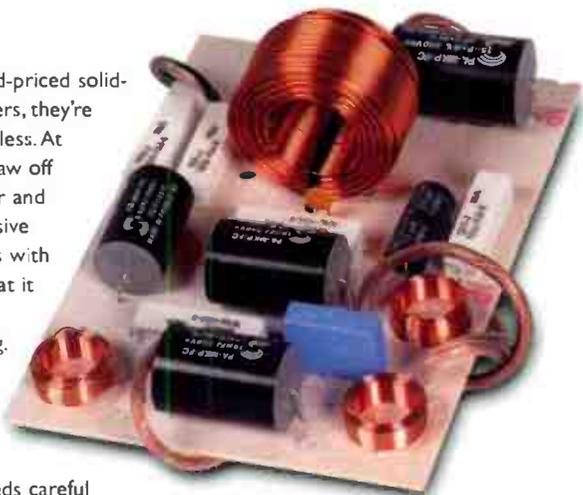
and capable of sound pressure levels better than most large floorstanders at the price. Making a direct comparison to the B&W 705 bookshelf was quite a surprise, frankly in most areas the Dynaudios had them severely whipped.

The 52SE fared less well with the expressive delights of Dinah Washington, where the sound was almost a tad too controlled - as if the little boxes were holding something back that last edge of emotion, that kind of 'X factor' thing... Dinah was not quite as mad about the boy as normal! This may be they're just revealing the truth about an old recording, but if I do have any mild criticism of them then it is on this kind of material, where they're a tad cold and controlled sounding.

To wit, the little 52SE must be used with the best in partnering electronics. In addition to my valve amplifiers, I borrowed a set of Cyrus X mono blocks and preamps. The speakers did not disappoint. At more normal price levels it was a toss up between the Sugden A21a (an amplifier which shouldn't work with them, but does) and the smaller Cyrus 8. Both performed well, although the Sugden remarkably so...

Overall then, these little guys take no prisoners. As a review tool for checking out cable differences or

worrying mid-priced solid-state amplifiers, they're nigh on peerless. At home they saw off several larger and more expensive loudspeakers with such ease that it was almost embarrassing. So the little 52SE is a great speaker, but one that needs careful matching. Indeed, I'd say it should be considered only in the confines of a high end system. Forget trying to use these with five hundred quid amps and CD players, they'll sound plain nasty. But if you have the very best, then an Audition is essential...



VERDICT ●●●●£

A fast and articulate loudspeaker with an incredibly large soundstage, but unforgiving of partnering equipment, and at times a tad over smooth. Superb performance for the price and a real rival to the established names.

DYNAUDIO AUDIENCE

52SE £995

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REFERENCE SYSTEM

Marantz CD12 CD player
Garrard 301/SME 3012/Denon DL304 turntable
EAR 834P phono stage
Transformer-based passive preamplifier
EAR 509/II valve monoblock power amplifiers
Chord Signature interconnects
Chord Rumour speaker cable
Russ Andrews power chords

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

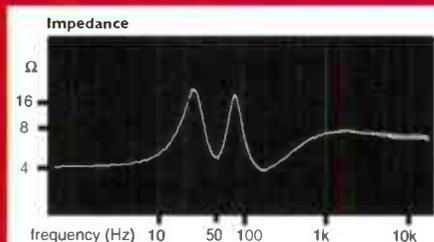
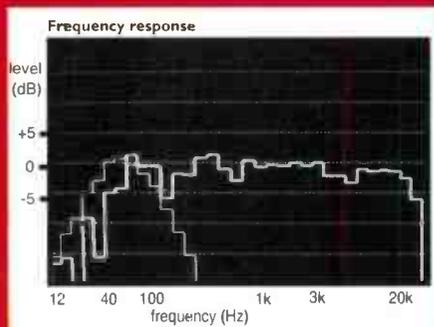
The smooth, warm sound of the pink noise test signal from this loudspeaker told me immediately it had a very smooth characteristic free from peaks. The slight warmth suggested a downtrend - and that is exactly what our analysis shows. This loudspeaker has an especially flat response across the upper midrange and through the treble, indicating a pair of well developed drive units, free of colour and smooth in delivery. Although there is just a slight 1dB or so plateau drop in treble output it isn't enough to compromise the basic accuracy of the Audience 52SE.

Down at low frequencies output is strong down to 63Hz then begins to fall away, reaching -6dB at 40Hz. The port works down to 40Hz though, augmenting output. The Audience looks quite well damped, in that there's no response peaking, but port tuning is narrow, if accurately placed, suggesting a bit of bounce in the sound.

Dynaudio have engineered an almost ruler flat impedance curve, meaning it's largely resistive and doesn't store energy, except at low frequencies around bass

resonance, as always with a reflex. With a 4ohm bass driver allied to an 8ohm tweeter the Audience 52 is nominally 6ohms. Sensitivity measured a respectable - for the cabinet size - 87dB.

The Audience 52SE looks like a well engineered smoothie. Measurement suggests it will sound refined and well composed. NK





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a TO c

Ortofon has augmented its justifiably popular range of Kontrapunkt high end moving coil cartridges. To wit, Stewart Wennen takes a fresh look at the entry-level 'a', and David Price tries the new 'c' for size...

Ortofon's Kontrapunkt range of moving coils emerged a couple of years back, so-called to commemorate the 250th anniversary of Johan Sebastian Bach. It started with the 'a' (£500) and 'b' (£750), has just been joined by the 'c' (£1,000) and the 'h' (£750) too. The bodies are identical save for the different hues (the 'a' gets a splash of black paint, the 'b' blue, the new 'c' green and the 'h' violet), meaning they're all stainless steel and weigh 10g. A tracking force range of between 2.2 and 2.7g is specified, with 2.5g recommended, at a suggested tracking angle of 20 degrees.

Inside, the motor assemblies are identical – the differences between the cartridges are entirely down to stylus profiles, cantilever materials and tolerances. First, the 'a' sports a Fine Line diamond and aluminium cantilever. The 'b' gets a more expensive nude Fritz Giger 80 stylus and harder ruby cantilever. The 'c' retains this stylus, but goes back to an aluminium cantilever (albeit tapered), while the 'h' has exactly the same stylus/ cantilever combination, except that it's far higher tolerated.

KONTRAPUNKT A ●●●●

Moving coil cartridges generally track at heavier pressures than moving magnet types and the 'a' is no exception, needing a good 2.5g for its Fine Line stylus. Whereas the 'b', which is an enduring favourite of *Hi-Fi World*, puts out 0.47mV, the 'a' manages very slightly less at 0.45mV – although this is still a healthy figure and shouldn't present phonostages with much difficulty. As with all

Ortofons, it comes with little gold coloured screws and bespoke screwdriver, which makes fitting easy – but they're not as secure as ye olde Allen bolts, as the screw head offers less purchase than an Allen bolt. You can't tighten them up that much, and even if you do manage to apply real torque, you can feel the mounting screws begin to disintegrate. Ho hum.

After two days of running in, this cartridge proved a capable all rounder – in a way that few MCs at this price are. With the ability to show the finest detail within a mix, it was able to articulate an extremely large stereo image with incredible width and height. John Williams' flamenco guitar had a sense of body which less well developed products rarely achieve. Detail retrieval was astonishing given its modest price. Pink Floyd's 'The Wall' showed how the 'a' had an instinctive grip of the music. Percussion was highlighted, and the rim shots and cowbells were immediately apparent.

It was excellent in basic 'hi-fi' terms then, but in my reference Origin Live OLI could sound just a touch 'matter of fact' and analytical. So I moved it to a Hadcock GH 242 Export, where it really began to sing, proving an engaging music maker. Tracking ability was very good, but not quite as good as my reference Decca London Super Gold, which gave a more three dimensional sound and a more powerful, physical bass. (Kidney punching bass is the order of the day with the London).



Nevertheless, the Kontrapunkt 'a' was obviously more delicate – by which I mean subtle.

Overall then, an excellent mid-price moving coil that succeeds by being a jack of all trades. It's delicate and detailed in a way that few others are at the price, yet lacks that last ounce of fluidity and naturalness. Careful partnering, however, can ameliorate this – try it in a unipivot and its midband really begins to sing. Recommended. **SW**

KONTRAPUNKT C ●●●●●

The reason I'm so fond of the Kontrapunkt 'b' is because it doesn't sound 'traditionally Ortofon'. Historically, this company's cartridges have had a tidy, smooth, incisive and somewhat bland sound. They've always been nice to listen to, but more Simply Red than James Brown – if you see what I mean. Of course, as you go up the range things get far more animated, but the basic 'footprint' remains, methinks. The Kontrapunkt 'b' changed this – bringing a degree of 'in your face' musicality (a la Audio Technica AT-OC9), whilst still retaining the trademark Ortofon tidiness.

Much of the 'engaging' nature of

the 'b' can be ascribed to that hard ruby cantilever, but the 'c' changes back to aluminium, whilst retaining the Nude FG80 diamond stylus. Running at 2.5g, this sounded one of the most secure tracking moving coils around. It was excellent, sounding as if it was locked rigid in the groove. By comparison, some price rivals appear to be hanging onto the groove for dear life! As a gauge, the superb Linn Akiva at nearly £500 more, auditions no more securely.

As always, cartridges need a good running in period, but within some twenty hours (and when given an entire LP side to warm up), the 'c' started making stunning music. Kate Bush's 'The Kick Inside' is always a great test disc – aside from the sublime song writing, she has a voice like few others. In fact, if you've only ever heard her on CD, you'd be delighted by her through the Kontrapunkt 'a' – and stunned via the 'c'. The midband of this cartridge is exquisite – the best I've personally heard from an Ortofon. It is neutral to the last, giving a tremendous 'hear-through' insight into the recording. And so, Kate's voice isn't glassy, icy, brittle or grating at all. The Kontrapunkt 'c' made it exquisitely smooth – silky even. Its tonal and textural ability was clear to hear.

But this is no laid-back smoothie, all lackadaisical and laconic. This cartridge placed Kate's voice in space with tremendous precision – 'Moving' was soaring and expansive in a way I've never heard before. Further down the frequency range, bass was taut and tight yet sumptuous and subtle too. It's no big, boomy rocker this cartridge – always tidy and well controlled, but it could really deliver vast tracts of low frequencies when asked. Right at the top, it was the same story – subtlety, detail and finesse to a degree I've not heard before at this price. The Kontrapunkt 'c' is an interesting development, then. It's far less 'challenging' than the 'b', yet more engaging than the 'a', and has dramatically superior finesse than both. As such, it can only be regarded as superb.. **DP**

CONCLUSION

Think of the Kontrapunkt 'a' as a great all round, entry-level high end MC. It does everything it should do at the price very well, and offers a sizeable upgrade from our favourite high end moving magnet, the Shure

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

Although the most expensive of the four model Kontrapunkt series, the C's nude 80um large radius stylus requires a 2.2-2.7gm downforce and I found around 2.5gms was needed for secure behaviour. Surprisingly, even with this the Kontrapunkt would not negotiate top level test tracks but it managed well enough to cope with real life cuts.

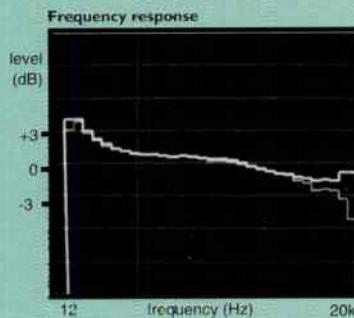
The Kontrapunkt C is well damped, giving an especially clean square wave without the ringing of many moving coils. I wasn't surprised to find little rise in treble output as a result of good damping, our frequency response showing a small slow down trend to -1.5dB at 10kHz with a plateau above this frequency. The low frequency peak is due to arm/cartridge resonance at 14Hz and indicates low cantilever compliance.

Vertical tracking angle measured out at around 25degrees, giving low distortion on vertical modulation.

The Kontrapunkt C measures well in all areas. It will have a well damped, tight and fast sound like any good MC, with no sign of spit or brightness. Bass

output will be strong and the sound full bodied. NK

Tracking force	2.2-2.7gms
Weight	gms
Vertical tracking angle	25degrees
Frequency response (2dB)	20Hz-20kHz
Channel separation	21dB
Tracking ability (300Hz)	
lateral	65µm
vertical	45µm
lateral (1kHz)	20cms/sec.
Distortion (45µm)	
lateral	1.2%
vertical	3.5%
Output (5cms/sec)	0.46mV



VI5VxMR – more delicacy, detail, poise, insight. It isn't the funkier of things however, having that archetypical Ortofon detachment – as if it's stepped back a few paces from the fray of the music. The Kontrapunkt 'b', which we reviewed back on October 2001, brings masses of life, vim, and sparkle to the party whilst retaining the precision and detail of the 'a'. The new 'c' brings the package up to another level – it's truly intricate and beguiling in a way that few cartridges are under, say, the level of Linn's superb 'Akiva' at twice the price of the 'c'. It tracks very well, and offers real emotional involvement and delicacy. All the Kontrapunkts are superb all rounders at their respective price points, but to my ears the 'c' is the most impressive yet. Watch out for our appraisal of the 'h' in the coming months.



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Reeling in

Although these days the format is all but invisible, Compact Cassette was once a massive force in both the hi-fi and music industries. Indeed, much of Japan's remarkable 'bubble economy' was driven by the technology. David Price plots three points in time and compares decks from one of the format's greatest exponents...

Although launched by Philips as a dictation medium in 1963, twenty five years later the best selling music medium in the world was Compact Cassette. Many have made much of the disparity between the cassette's intended use and its eventual destiny, but surely – on reflection – it was no surprise. Why? Because, if there's one trend we've seen since the inception of audio some one hundred years ago, it is miniaturisation - no replacement format has even been larger than its predecessor! Cassette's portability, durability (at least, relative to rival formats of its day) and versatility was precisely what the world was waiting for back in the early sixties.

Of course, the hi-fi community was extremely snuffy about it – simply because of its shockingly low specification. When open reel tape recorders were spinning at 7^{1/2}, 15 and even 30ips (inches per second), cassette tape (which was half the width of basic open reel stuff) ran at 1^{7/8}. The result was something with frankly dire hi-fi credentials by comparison.

Japan Inc. wasn't deterred by such trifling details. Just as Sony's Akio Morita had taken everything from the transistor radio to the video recorder and made it a compact, user-friendly consumer durable, so he – and his contemporaries at Denon, Pioneer, Yamaha,

Nakamichi, Aiwa and Akai - devoted much of the corporate R&D budget throughout the nineteen seventies to making Compact Cassette a viable, high fidelity music carrier.

1976 SONY TC-229SD

By the mid 1970s, Sony had been manufacturing cassette portables for nearly a decade, but had little experience of high end hi-fi stereo recorders. The TC-229SD, however, was a whole new ball game for the Japanese giant. An unashamed high end, high spec front loader, it was an earnest attempt to provide a realistic rival to the company's best-selling range of stereo open reel recorders, such as the TC-377 – and at around £250 in 1976, it was priced no less expensively. Although of fairly modest spec, by the standards of the day the 229 was packed to the gun whales with trick technology. Its two large VU meters and peak LED were straight from the company's more expensive open reels, and about as impressive as you'd find on any cassette deck. It featured the much-vaunted Dolby B NR, complete with switchable MPX filter defeat. The real deal was the full logic transport – meaning that you could change modes (i.e. from rewind to play) without breaking the tape - almost rocket science back then!

More important was Ferrichrome compatibility. Remember, this was five years before metal tape had been productionised

for cassette, and the only choice was Ferric or Chromium Dioxide tape formulations, both of which had their respective problems. Sony's FerriChrome (FeCr) was an attempt to give the best of both worlds (using the higher bias of Chromium and the 120us equalisation of Ferric). It pushed measured performance higher than almost all other decks of the day – the result was 30Hz-16kHz (at -3dB) and a 60dB Signal to Noise ratio (with Dolby off). This was nothing short of staggering, and in conjunction with a 0.06% WRMS wow and flutter figure made for excellent performance.

1981 SONY TCK-81

Six years later, technology had moved on. The biggest advance was Metal tape, which appeared right at the end of 1979 but still hadn't got into general use. This 1981 top-of-the-range Sony was a hastily reworked TCK-75 – which was identical bar the lack of the Metal facility. The other development was a dual capstan transport, complete with separate record and replay heads. At the time, such a configuration was enough to get any audiophile drooling – it was real, rare pools winner stuff. Retailing for just under £300, the '81 was actually a cheaper than the '229 in real terms, especially considering the runaway inflation of the day. And it felt it too. Whereas the former weighed 11kg, and had what looked like a washing machine

Sony TC-229SD



Sony TCK-81



the years

motor inside, at 7kg the latter was an altogether smaller, sleeker and lighter affair – although it had a more delicate and precise ‘Swiss watch’ feel compared to the industrial ‘thunk’ of the 229’s logic control motors.

Although the 229 feels wonderful – a truly satisfying period piece which works brilliantly well considering its lack of advanced features – the TCK81 feels designed to do the job with absolutely no compromise or fuss. To wit, it sports brilliant (and at that time, still very new) LED peak metering with manual or automatic peak hold. Better still, it had a manual calibration facility, which in conjunction with the built-in signal generator and special meter display, allowed the deck to be set up for virtually any form of tape in under a minute. The result was truly impressive; only a mid-price Nakamichi could offer such warm, open and natural sonics. Stable, smooth and effortlessly musical, it was a joy to listen to even with cheap tapes. Expensive TDK MA or Sony METALLIC formulations were blinding – sparkling and incisive, with super dynamics and a quoted 20Hz-20kHz (-3dB) response.

1987 SONY TCK-700ES

From the year that pre-recorded cassette sales overtook those of LP records, comes this swish, £600, all black affair. Whereas the TCK-81 sported a host of features that just a few years earlier were the stuff of dreams, the 700ES brought nothing new to the party. Still, this is an extremely high specification machine, with a brushless, slotless, linear quartz locked direct drive motor

used for the capstan for superb speed stability. Whereas the TCK-81 only achieved marginally better wow and flutter figures than the 229 despite its dual capstan, the 700ES pushed the figures right down to 0.025% WRMS – dramatically better than either of its progenitors.

In other respects though, the TCK-700ES proves curiously underwhelming. The TCK-81 matches it on frequency response (20Hz-20kHz at -3dB on Sony METAL ES) and the 229 actually matches it on S/N ratio (60dB with Dolby out). Sony would doubtless point out that the new Dolby C NR took that figure right up to 73dB with METAL ES, but not everyone was convinced about the alleged ‘inaudibility’ of this new system. Ergonomically, the TCK-700ES is a dog’s breakfast, and doesn’t feel as satisfying as the 229 or as crisp as the ‘81. Worst of all is the lack of a test tone – whereas the 1981 machine has an elegant tape calibration system, the ‘87 machine simply relies on you being able to hear the difference using the off-tape monitoring! The real time electronic tape counter is nice, but the cold blue fluorescent displays on either side aren’t as easy on the eye as the TC-229SD’s warm yellow bulbs, or the TCK-81’s green and red LEDs.

That direct drive capstan is instantly obvious, giving an incredibly tight and solid sound – more so even than the great Sony Walkman Professional. Shame about the head, then! While the record/ replay electronics are probably the best here too, the whole show is let down by a middling record head that saturates earlier than it should do. This means you have to keep the

levels down to around 0dB, or you get distortion and overload – this isn’t painful to listen to, but translates as a feeling of compression.

CONCLUSION

Here are three flagship Sony cassette decks, each separated by around six years, and each very much of their time. The TC-229SD shows that characteristic late seventies ‘battleship build’. The TCK-81 is a technological tour de force, and an ergonomic one too. The TCK-700ES is hit and miss – brilliant in some respects, middling in others, it rather suggests that the company had begun to take its eye off the ball. While in some respects the best sounding machine (providing record levels are kept down), its ergonomics and head performance had actually deteriorated over the 1976 machine! Indeed, ironically, it’s the oldie that probably sounds the most musical. If you can ignore the hiss, its full-bodied, highly rhythmic performance is most reminiscent of open reel. It lacks the rock-like solidity of the 1987 machine, or the sparkling top end of the 1981 deck, but has a tremendously big hearted and expansive nature. In truth, all three of these machines are superb – and a credit to Sony – but they prove that, as always, progress through the years was patchy.

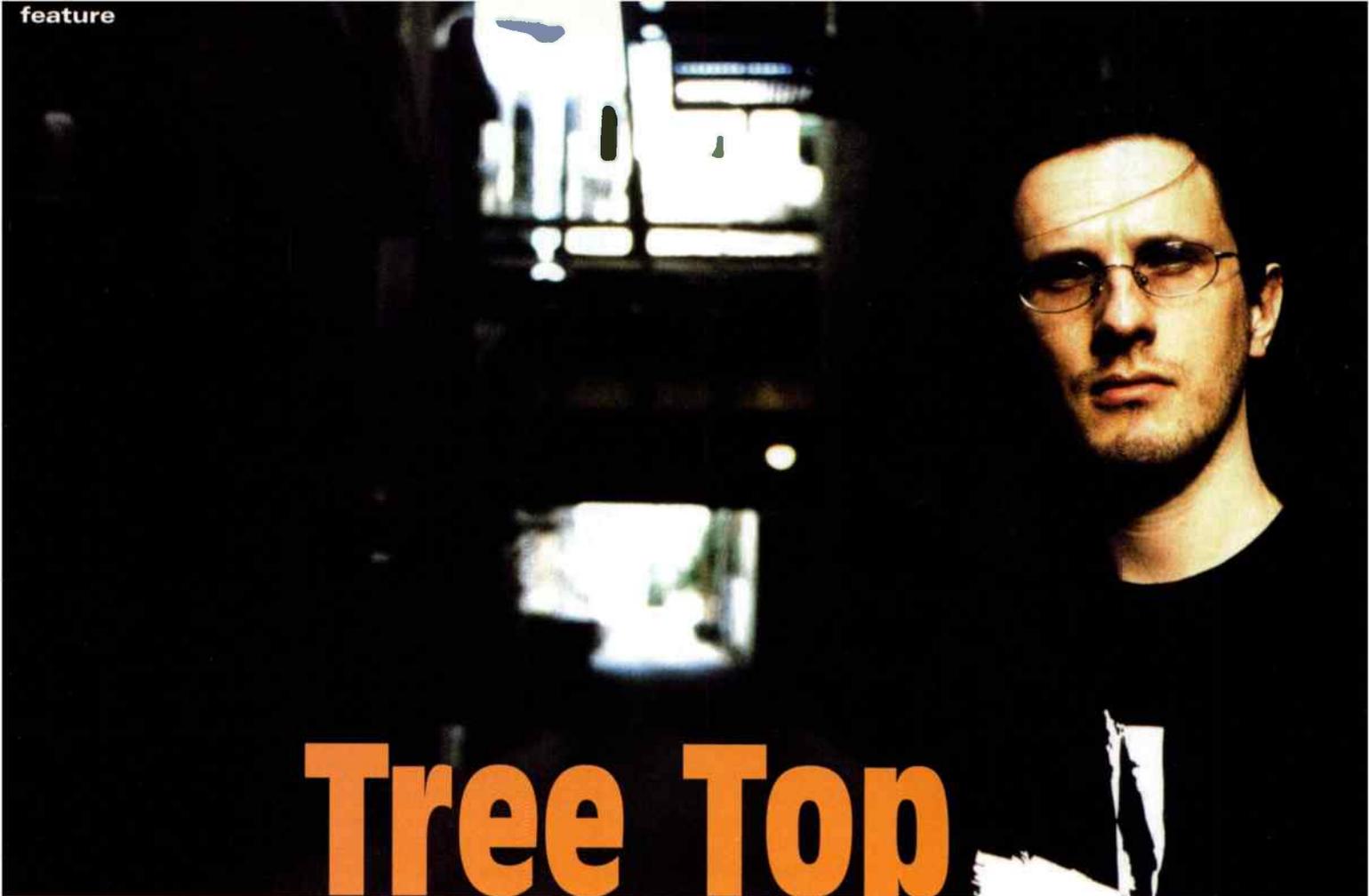
SONY TC-229SD [1976]	
TRANSPORT	●●●●
HEADS	●●●●●●
ELECTRONICS	●●●●●●
FEATURES	●●●●
SOUND	●●●●●●
VERDICT	●●●●●●

SONY TCK-81 [1981]	
TRANSPORT	●●●●●●
HEADS	●●●●●●
ELECTRONICS	●●●●●●
FEATURES	●●●●●●
SOUND	●●●●●●
VERDICT	●●●●●●

SONY TCK-700ES [1987]	
TRANSPORT	●●●●●●
HEADS	●●●●
ELECTRONICS	●●●●●●
FEATURES	●●●●●●
SOUND	●●●●●●
VERDICT	●●●●●●

Sony TCK-700ES





Tree Top

Patrick Cleasby talks with Porcupine Tree main-man Steven Wilson, who also runs parallel projects including no-man, IEM, Bass Communion and Blackfield, about the making of his first DVD-Audio disc...

Shortly before the release of the excellent 'In Absentia' DVD-Audio disc reviewed last month, I took the opportunity to discuss its making with Steven Wilson, but first I asked him how he keeps up with so many simultaneous projects?

"I think for me it's just a question of so many things excite me musically and there are so many genres I want to work in - I find it very hard to focus on a particular project without feeling that I want to go and do something else for a while too, so I'm constantly bouncing back and forth between different genres, different musical styles, working with different musicians, and I have to say that's kind of what keeps it fun and keeps it fresh..."

"I've noticed over the recent PT albums, things are definitely getting heavier?"

"Yes, they have done, writing for 'In Absentia' I was definitely in a heavy phase, I'd just worked with a Swedish band called Opeth, who'd had quite an influence on my writing at the time, but to be honest that's

not necessarily significant. Part of the whole trip for me is not standing still, you have to develop and you have to evolve, otherwise what's the point? You might as well be AC/DC and make the same record over and over again. For me the heavy aspect kept the writing and the direction fresh, certainly for 'In Absentia'. I think it's going to change again - the new record we're working on now, the heavy aspect has been more integrated into the sound of the band, and there will be new strands and new directions.

"But certainly I've always loved heavy music - the first music I fell in love with when I was twelve years old was 'The New Wave Of British Heavy Metal'. All of those bands like Saxon, Iron Maiden, Diamond Head, the whole Neat Records thing, that was the first scene I really fell in love with, so I've always had that heavy thing in the back of my mind, even when my style has gone very far away from that, as it did probably in the mid-nineties - it became much more spacious and trancey and ambient - it was always going to come back, and obviously meeting a

band like Opeth really cemented that re-enthusiasm for heavy, riff-based music. I love great riffs, and when they're nicely recorded and sound big and punchy, I find it so exciting."

"How did the 'In Absentia' project with DTS come about?"

"Well mainly the enthusiasm from DTS's end. I have to say I am not someone who has a surround system at home, obviously I was familiar with the principle, but I wasn't familiar with what you can do with the format in terms of how it would relate to our music particularly - I probably would have got around to it eventually, but this time it was being driven from the American end - they particularly loved 'In Absentia', they were looking for an album by a new band, rather than a lot of the product which is out there which tends to be back catalogue.

"When they got Elliot Scheiner on board, we certainly couldn't turn down the opportunity to have him work on the record. So for me it's been a real learning experience, and I've immersed myself in it too now, and I'm very excited about the

possibilities of doing future records in surround, and conceiving surround records from the beginning rather than trying to reverse engineer it in, which is what we've done this time, albeit, I think, pretty successfully..."

"You worked closely with Elliot Scheiner on 'In Absentia' at the end of last year – did he give you a lot of wisdom in terms of his broad experience of working on these kind of projects?"

"I'm a terrible control freak and the whole idea of giving my album to someone else to mix was in some ways anathema to me, even someone of Elliot's stature, so the management kind of calmed me down, and said "look, you can be there, you can sit with him", so basically I spent a lot of time with Elliot at his studio in New Jersey, learning what does and doesn't work, and of course he's been through this many times so he kind of knows some of the things I was suggesting weren't going to work, but on the other hand, and this is where you get a creative partnership, there were some things I was suggesting to him that perhaps he hadn't tried himself, or hadn't thought of trying himself, and some of those did work.

I have to say Elliot's great with that, he's not the kind of person who's going to say, "I've been doing this for so many years, and you don't know what you're talking about".

"Did you go back and listen to any of the other surround titles which are on the market?"

"There's a very famous story about Orson Welles, when he made Citizen Kane, which is that the reason that cinematographer Gregg Toland wanted to work with Orson Welles on his first movie so much was because he liked the fact that Welles didn't know anything about moviemaking, he didn't know any of the bad habits, and he didn't know any of the prescribed ways that you

are supposed to make movies. I deliberately avoided hearing almost any surround mixes at all, and went into this almost blind because I wanted to have ideas that perhaps people who mix surround sound records wouldn't necessarily have thought of.

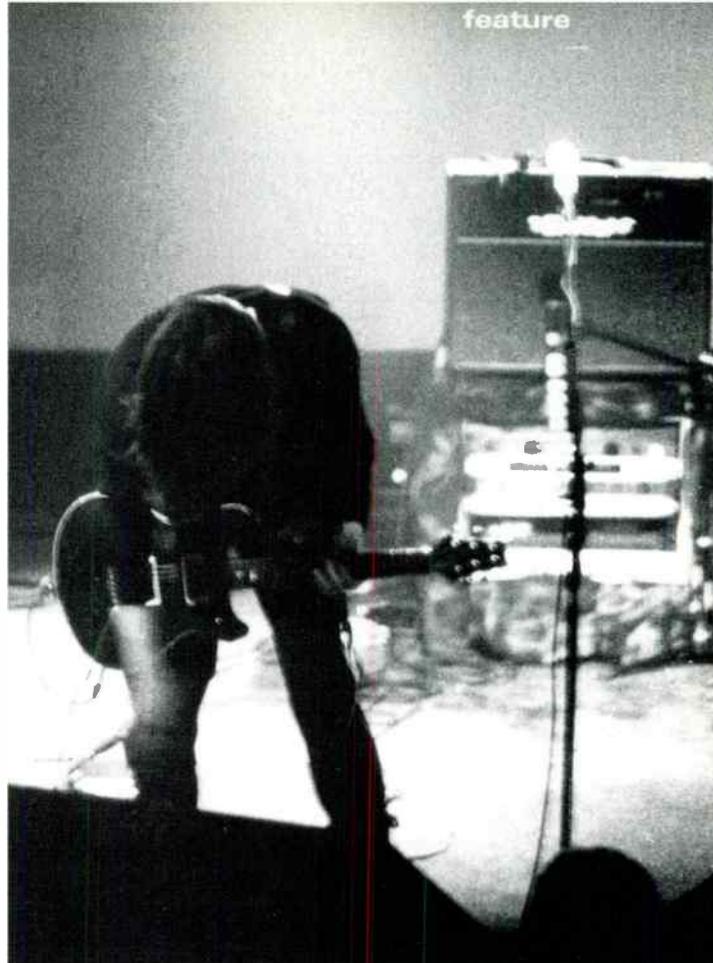
"The one thing I wanted to avoid was to make it gimmicky. The few surround mixes I have heard fall into the trap of being gimmicky – it's always, bang, wallop, things shooting around your head and it's great to listen to once but you wouldn't want to put it on for pleasure. I think what we're trying to do here is strike a balance between something which is very impressive in a "show off your surround system" way, but is also very musical and very enjoyable to listen to over and over again, and I think if we've achieved that there's a possibility that the album could become one of the benchmarks for surround sound."

"So now it's into the studio with Porcupine Tree?"

"Yeah, we've got about 17 or 18 new songs to cut, probably the most material we've ever had ready to record, probably well over two albums worth of stuff – that's not to say there's going to be two albums or a double CD, we're going to cream off the best for a single CD. So I am very excited about that."

Porcupine Tree's label, the Warners affiliate Lava, have acquired the two albums which preceded 'In Absentia' – 'Stupid Dream' and 'Lightbulb Sun'. It seems likely that these may also get the surround treatment, but I asked Steven if the remix programme might reach as far back as early career landmark 'Signify' and further.

"To be honest the idea of remixing all that stuff is depressing to me. I don't know – you get to a point where you think "this album was conceived as a stereo album, it



sounds good as a stereo album, is the production quality really good enough to merit a surround mix?" Going back as far as 'Signify: Signify' was an album recorded on 16 tracks of ADAT at 16bit, I am really beginning to wonder to myself "Is it worthwhile?" It's never going to sound as impressive or as good as 'In Absentia'. I guess in that sense I would rather look to the future rather than to the past."

"Is there ever any prospect of seeing (no-man album) 'Flowermouth' in surround?"

"Actually the no-man stuff would be nice to do in surround – I'd like to do the last album, but again 'Flowermouth' was recorded on 16bit ADAT – it's a nice record but... Put it this way if I got set up at home and got comfortable with doing surround mixes at home you're probably going to end up seeing a lot of back catalogue stuff remixed for surround..."

"Do you ever take a holiday Steve?"

"Yeah, but they're always working holidays. People say to me, "you work too much" and the thing is I don't actually feel that I'm working at all because I enjoy what I do so much and it's what I would be doing anyway with my spare time, and is indeed exactly what I used to do with my spare time when I did have a day job. I have a great time, so don't worry about me. My life is a holiday."



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The Kecl82 is our latest introduction for the true beginner and designed by Andy Grove. A simple and elegant design based on the classic ECL82 valve, a triode and power pentode sharing the same glass envelope. The amplifier consists of two ECL82s per channel, the triode sections work as the input/phase splitter and the pentode sections work in push-pull for the output stage. The amplifier offers 8 watts into an 8 ohm load, the hum level is extremely low, comparison to solid state standards. The chassis is constructed of 1.6mm mild steel with a black powder coat finish, there is only one signal input pair controlled at the front by a volume control for that simple touch. The speaker connects are the standard 4mm banana type, positioned at the rear, as are the mains input which is received through an IEC lead, mains switch and earth post. We have made the construction as simple as is humanly possible with comprehensive instructions. The circuitry is based on a single printed circuit board. Ultimately this kit is for the guy who has always fancied a go at building a kit, but never dared. Simon Pope says, "It's a great introduction to the valve sound. For it's humble price it delivers a full and rich sound with great detail and good depth." Kecl82 weighs 9kg. External dimensions are 30cm(w)x23.5cm(d)x11cm(h)

NEW KIT**KECL82 VALVE AMPLIFIER KIT****£195**

These are our new 6550 series amplifiers. A pure class A design providing 40 watts into an 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".

KIT6550 VALVE INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER KIT £615 KAT6550 VALVE POWER AMPLIFIER KIT £580

The Kel84 features a pair of EL84 valves per channel in push-pull configuration. They give 15 watts into an 8 ohm load. The output transformers are Ultra Linear. Up front the ECF80 input/phase splitter valve has an extremely smooth sound. The Kel84 has very low hum, 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. At the rear is a mains switch/IEC power input, earth post, phonos, and 4mm banana sockets. 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).

**KEl84 VALVE INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER KIT****£298**

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 6SN7 as the driver tube per channel. The valve rectified power supply consists of a 5U4 and a 10h choke. This feedbackless design provides 8.5watts into an 8 ohm load, so a good sensitivity speaker is required above 90dB. 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. Weight - 20kg, external dimensions with valves fitted - 390mm(w) x 360mm(d) x 220mm(h)

**2A3 PSE INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER KIT****£570**

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)	£205.00
Pre-amplifier (PRE-II)	£215.00
Phono Stage (PHONO-II)	£110.00
Moving coil step-up transformer	£77.00
Passive pre-amplifier (PAS-II)	£235.00



SERIES II MODULAR PRE-AMP KIT



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 5U4), 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 brings 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)

KIT34 VALVE POWER AMPLIFIER KIT

£480

KIT34 VALVE INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER KIT

£515

NEW 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 5U4 rectifier valve in the power supply, in combination with a 10H choke, giving an extremely quiet supply. Both mains and output transformers use 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 5U4s 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 £895.00 (UK price) excluding valves. Each



monobloc weighs 23kgs., external dimensions with valves: 25cm(w) x 38cm(d) x 22cm(h) per monobloc.

The 300B PP monobloc shares the same look and chassis as the 300B PSE monobloc. The 300B PP kit has been created for those who prefer a bit more dynamics and drive to their valve sound. With a pair of 300Bs in push-pull configuration providing 26 watts output, these beauties will drive most modern loudspeakers to perfection. Andy Grove's design is totally feedbackless, using a 6AU6 pentode as the input valve and a 5687 as the phase splitter, the power supply uses

a Russian 5U4 for rectification. The kit is constructed by point to point wiring so some experience is required. 300B PSE owners do have the option to buy the conversion kit for £250.00 to turn their monoblocs to push-pull status. Each monobloc weighs 23kg.

300B PSE MONOBLOC KIT

£895 per pair

300B PP MONOBLOC KIT NEW

£895 per pair

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.



HD83 VALVE HEADPHONE AMPLIFIER KIT

£195

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KIT6550/KAT6550 mains transformers

2 inch stack, 130mm(h)x120mm(w)x135mm(l)
drop through fitting with zinc cap. Secondaries
425V-0V-425V, 350mA, 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

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

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

TRANSI 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.

2A3 PSE mains transformer:

2.5inch stack, on a 120 size lamination,
120mm(h)x115mm(w)x95mm(d), drop through
fitting with zinc plated transformer caps.
Secondary winding: 370V-0V-370V, 250mA, 0V-5V,
3A, 0V-4V, 2A x4. Suitable for
110V/120V/220V/230V operation. Can be used
for a valve rectified, dc heater (2A3), dc regulated
heater(input valve) stereo 2A3 PSE/PP amplifier.

KECL82 mains transformer:

1.25inch stack, on a 29 size lamination,
80mm(wide)x70mm(height)x70mm(depth), frame
type 2 hole fixing. Secondary winding: 0V-185V,
200mA, 0V-6.3V, 3.5A. Suitable for
110V/120V/220V/230V operation. Good for low
power amp, solid state rectification achieves a HT
of 240Vdc. Could be used for ECL82 PP/PSE
stereo amp.

MAINS TRANSFORMERS & CHOKES**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 Or 8 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

Pre-II E/I driver transformer

80mm(w)x60mm(l) x65mm(h). 6:l step down
transformer, max current-10mA valves-6922 etc
pre-amp stage

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

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

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 .

2A3 PSE E/I output transformer:

2A3 parallel single ended transformer, 2 inch stack,
78 size lamination. Primary impedance is 2.5K,
secondary impedance is 4ohm or 8ohm, max
current is 100mA. Output is 8.5Vwatts.

KECL82 PP output transformer

ECL82 push-pull ultra linear. 1inch stack, on a 29
size lamination,
80mm(wide)x70mm(height)x60mm(depth), frame
type 2 hole fixing. Primary 7.5Kohm, secondary
8ohms. Max current 85mA.
Good for numerous low output pentode valves in
push-pull configuration.

300B PP E/I push-pull output transformers

2.5inch stack, on a size 120 lamination.
130mm(h)x95mm(w)x115mm(d) drop through
fitting with zinc plated cap. Primary impedance 4K,
secondary 6ohm. Will suit 300Bs, 2A3s etc in
push-pull configuration.

PRINTED CIRCUIT BOARDS

- CL82 Printed Circuit Board 200mm(w) x140mm(l)
- Kel84 Printed Circuit Board 280mm(w) x 135mm(l)x 1.6mm(d).
- EL34/88 Printed Circuit Board 140mm(w) x 310mm(l)
- Kel34 Printed Circuit Board 140mm(w) x 310mm(l) x 2.4mm(d).
- Pre-II Printed Circuit Board (a pair) 120mm(w) x 215mm(l)
- 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).
- HD83 Printed Circuit Board 105mm(w) x 130mm(l) x 1.6mm(d).

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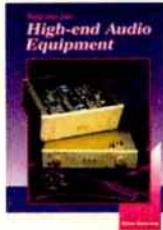
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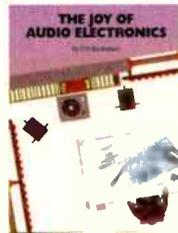


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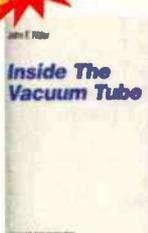


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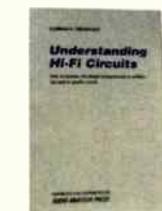
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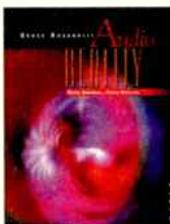
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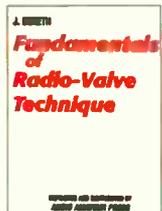
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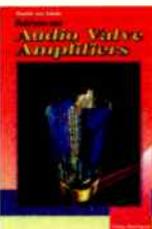
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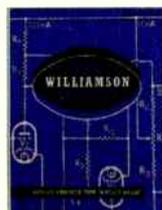
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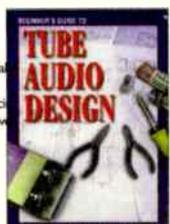
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BJORK *VESPERTINE* (HYBRID SACD: STEREO AND MULTI-CHANNEL DSD)

Bjork's long-time UK label One Little Indian have given her most recent album, which has existed as a 24/48 surround DVD-Audio since its original release in late 2001, a quiet update to SACD form, and soft-launched it from Bjork's own website, as well as other retail sites. The reason for the DVD-Audio was that the Sugarcubes and Bjork have always been licensed to Elektra in the states, and the reason for the SACD is that outside the UK, the US, and Iceland her product was distributed by Universal off-shoot Mother records, now subsumed into Polydor!

Details on the creation of this SACD version are sketchy, but it would be a fair assumption that Mark Stent's 24/48 mix was simply converted to DSD and remastered as a hybrid SACD. It is certainly to be hoped that Bjork's next album is tracked at higher resolutions, as although her bewitching voice, the exotic real instrumentation and the skittering electronica are well suited to a subtle but playful surround treatment which is presented with great detail and precision, higher resolution would have given a much more involving sense of richness.

As to which version punters

should go for, the SACD has the obvious advantage that its hybrid nature means that you have the option to play it in the car, or rip to compressed digital format for portable use. The DVD-Audio does not even have the benefit of any bonus material, having been mastered before any promo videos for the singles from this album were produced. Bjork's next album could reasonably be expected to have a parallel day-and-date surround release just as 'Vespertine' did – in the meantime we can content ourselves with the rumours that Stent has long been engaged in remixing her superb back catalogue for surround.

GEORGE HARRISON *LIVE IN JAPAN* (HYBRID SACD: STEREO AND MULTI-CHANNEL DSD)

'Live In Japan' is the double album which was released a few years after Harrison's successful 'Cloud Nine' project. Harrison performs with what is basically Eric Clapton's band of the period (1991), including God himself. The result is a tidy run through the high points of Harrison's Beatles and solo careers, with the kind of rock solid presentation that you only get with stellar session musicians like Steve Ferrone, latterly drummer of the

Heartbreakers, Nathan East and Greg Phillanges.

As is often the case with live albums the reduced opportunity for creative surround mixing means that the 5.1 version is less than compelling, so the real selling point here, as with the rest of the Dark Horse reissues, is that it is a fresh remaster of an album which has not been available for some time. Strangely the PR material cites the live album's lack of audio extras as the reason why we are given the full benefit of a DSD version for this one, whereas the studio albums are simply conventional CDs with extra tracks. The fact is that the studio albums were all mastered by Simon Heyworth using DSD anyway, and simply down-converted to create the CD masters, so I wouldn't preclude the other 5 Dark Horse label albums seeing the light as stereo SACDs one day, if the format ever garners enough support to make such an idea financially viable.

As the 'Concert for George' DVD has proved, many people hold "the quiet one" in a lot of affection, although as always it is a shame that it took his departure from this mortal coil to remind them of the fact. There are enough of his great songs here to make a purchase well worthwhile, and they will never sound much better than this.

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California Audio DX1-CD Player	£348.00
Copland CDA277 - CD Player HDCD	£789.00
Copland CDA288 - CD Player HDCD	£1149.00
Copland CSA301 MKI - Valve Preamp/Filter	£720.00
Copland CSA303 - Hybrid Preamp/Filter	£530.00
Copland CTA504 - Valve Amplifier	£1099.00
Goldmund Mimesis 6B - Amplifier	£1400.00
Jadis Orchestra - CD Player	£899.00
Krell KAV250P- Preamp/Filter	£1599.00
Krell KSL - Preamp/Filter	£800.00
Krell CD-DSP-Top loader CD Player	£1200.00
Martin Logan Cinema - Centre channel	£949.00
Martin Logan Theatre - Centre channel	£1489.00
Martin Logan Prodigy - Electrostatic	£7299.00
PS Audio UltraLink II - DAC	£589.00
PS Audio Reference Link -Digital Preamp	£1999.00
Sonus Faber Concertino Home Loudspeakers	£429.00
Sonus Faber Grand Piano Home Loudspeakers	£1300.00
Theta Digital Dreadnaught -5 ch-amp	£4799.00
Theta Digital Carmen II - CD/DVD Drive	£2379.00
Theta Digital David II -CD/DVD Drive	£2999.00
Wilson Audio CUB - Loudspeakers Silver	£2900.00
Wilson Audio CUB II w/stands Black	£5999.00
Wilson Audio Witt II Loudspeakers Black	£3400.00
Z Systems RDQ1- Transparent Digital Equaliser	£1050.00

no grey imports - all equipment comes with 1 year full warranty



IRON MAIDEN
DANCE OF DEATH
 (DVD-AUDIO: 16/88.2
 STEREO 24/88.2 MULTI-
 CHANNEL)

The surround mix for Maiden's latest album was completed a year ago by Kevin 'Caveman' Shirley - the man who succeeded Martin 'Headmaster' Birch as their regular producer a couple of albums back. He did the mix more in the hope that it would end up being used than in the certain knowledge, but after a few delays EMI have released their first DVD-Audio for some while.

However he tells me that what he completed was a 24/96 mix, so we can only assume that the presence here of that mix at 88.2KHz, (and indeed, the fact that the stereo track has been dithered down to 16bit), is due to authoring issues at Abbey Road Interactive. The album is on the long side, and a couple of videos have been included, but from the purist point of view it is a shame that other routes of compromise were not taken rather than chopping the full resolution audio down to make space, such as dropping the 16/48 track from the DVD-Video sector. Still, at least we can enjoy a powerful mix with the three guitarists all around and much discrete centre usage for bass and solos.

Kevin says that, as is amazingly common when artists are first introduced to the joys of surround, Maiden main man Steve Harris is now a real convert, and if only enough time could be found he would love to revisit their entire back catalogue. Personally speaking, having parted ways with the band when Bruce Dickinson arrived for the first time, I would love to see those first two Paul Di'Anno albums remixed for surround, but I am sure that many other closet metal fans will be delighted with this title and any others that Harris manages to pack into his schedule.

NEIL YOUNG
ON THE BEACH
 (DVD-AUDIO: 24/176.4
 STEREO ONLY)

Neil Young's quest for a digital medium which is actually adequate as an archive for his ageing tape store seems to have finally found its end. His enthusiasm for the DVD-Audio format has thus far produced the peculiar 5.1 mix for 'Harvest', and the more naturalistic use of rears for ambience on 'Road Rock Volume 1' and 'Greendale', but here we have the first fruits of his digital stereo archive project.

Nearly three years ago his distaste for CD led Young to suggest

that his fabled multi-volume 'Archive' project would appear as 24/192 DVD-Audio before doing so as CD. The suits will inevitably constrain that aim, but it is an indicator of Young's belief in the fidelity of high resolution PCM that despite having completed many transfers at 24/88.2 resolution for putative use as HDCD, on discovering the joys of DVD-Audio he resolved to re-transfer at either 192KHz or 176.4KHz sampling rate. The choice of the latter resolution on the DVD-Audio of 'On The Beach', and the accompanying stereo-only DVD-Audio versions of the other three albums which appeared on CD for the first time last year, was probably made to make the down-sampling to HDCD resolution easier.

The results demonstrate that all the research effort at Redwood Digital has been worthwhile - there is a stunning clarity to the sound on this disc that even surpasses last year's HDCD reissues. I feel for those of you who may have splashed out on those four CDs a mere six months ago, but if you have the playback equipment to get the best out of DVD-Audio, prepare to take the CDs down to the nearest second-hand shop. Don't be tempted to hold your breath and wait for the surround version however - Young has plenty else to do...

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Arcam CD82T CD Player (2Yr G/tee)	£599.00	£499.00	Naim CD5 CD Player (2Yr G/tee)	£1195.00	£895.00
Arcam DV88 Plus DVD Player (2Yr G/tee)	£999.00	£549.00	Naim Nait 5 Amplifier (1Yr G/tee)	£890.00	£659.00
Arcam A65+ Amplifier (2Yr G/tee)	£369.00	£249.00	Naim NAPV 175 3 Ch P/Amplifier (2Yr G/tee)	£1225.00	£895.00
Arcam A85* Amplifier Silver - New (2Yr G/tee)	£799.00	£549.00	Naim NAC 112 S/H Preamp (6Mth G/tee)	£660.00	£369.00
Arcam A85* Amp inc Phono- Blk (2Yr G/tee)	£909.00	£649.00	Naim NAP 150 Power Amp (2Yr G/tee)	£785.00	£615.00
B&W HTM2 Nautilus Centre Spkr - Blk (2Yr G/tee)	£850.00	£499.00	Naim NAP 180 Power Amp S/H - (1Yr G/tee)	£1225.00	£795.00
Linn Kolektor Preamplifier (2Yr G/tee)	£575.00	£375.00	Naim HI-Cap 2* Power Supply S/H (2Yr G/tee)	£899.00	£675.00
Linn Kairn Pro Line Preamp S/H (1Yr G/tee)	£1400.00	£599.00	Naim SL2 Speakers - Maple (2Yr G/tee)	£4995.00	£3595.00
Linn Numerik Dac S/H (1Yr G/tee)	£1100.00	£349.00	Naim NBL Speakers - Beech (2Yr G/tee)	£7700.00	£5495.00
Linn Trikan Centre Spkr - maple (2Yr G/tee)	£549.00	£349.00	Project RPM4 Turntable S/H (1Yr G/tee)	£350.00	£269.00
Linn Espek Speakers - maple (2Yr G/tee)	£2800.00	£1795.00	Yamaha DSP800 S/HProcessor (6Mth /Gtee)	£399.00	£149.00
Linn LP12/Ekos/Arkive Boron (2Yr G/tee)	£5350.00	£2675.00	Yamaha DVD 530* DVD Player (1Yr G/tee)	£149.00	£85.00
Linn Keilidh Speakers R/nut inc stands S/H	£995.00	£395.00	Yamaha RXV 630 RDS A.V. Amp (1Yr G/tee)	£459.00	£299.00
Loewe 24" High Definition 16:9 TV (1Yr G/tee)	£999.00	£549.00	Vibe Zeta SubWoofer (2Yr G/tee)	£600.00	£475.00

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the ipod: an owner's guide

It's the ultimate 21st century toy, the uber-walkman, the most mouth-watering exponent of computer audio to date. And now, with the mini version about to hit these shores, iPod mania is finally going mass market. So here's how to get the most out of this funkified digital jukebox. Alex Pell is your host.



If you're against - or even agnostic about - computer audio, then you'll wonder what all the fuss is about what's ultimately just a laptop hard drive housed in a plastic and chrome box. However, if you've actually seen one in the flesh, or better still taken it out on the road - you'll understand. It is surely the greatest audio 'gadget' to date - no CD or MD portable comes close - with the possible exception of the original Sony Stowaway (nee 'Walkman') cassette player. Still, this doesn't mean the iPod can't be usefully augmented with a choice group of accessories. First up, any self-respecting audiophile wanting to plug an iPod into their proper hi-fi should bite the bullet for a spare cradle, even at the silly price of £29. This is currently the only way to use the iPod's dedicated line-out, which gives far superior sound quality, independent from the volume level on the unit itself. Just remember to use decent interconnect.

ISKIN EXO

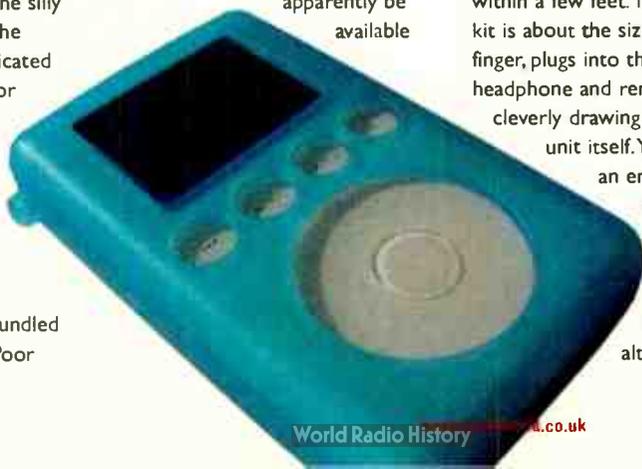
The cheap black slip-on case bundled with the iPod is truly shoddy. Poor

design makes it impossible to operate the device, or even see the screen, which is toe-curlingly frustrating, given that the iPod remote has no LCD. Rather than taking your baby into the world naked and risk scratching its butter-soft plastic screen - a feat swiftly achieved and long repented - a new case is a solid investment. The original Exo case, made by iSkin, is still the best around, as it cleverly leaves the buttons and scroll wheel uncovered, yet still provides a high-calibre level of protection. It's available in a wide selection of colours, with a fruity choice of removable screen protectors too. Mini-sized cases will apparently be available

shortly. It costs £21.99 including the actual case, a removable screen protector and buckle clip, plus external zip bag. Click on: www.iskinworld.co.uk

GRIFFIN TECHNOLOGY - ITRIP2

The £39 iTrip is technically illegal in the UK, as it allows you to 'broadcast' whatever's actually playing on your iPod to an FM radio lurking within a few feet. The cunning bit of kit is about the size of your little finger, plugs into the iPod's headphone and remote sockets, cleverly drawing power from the unit itself. You simply select an empty frequency and then tune your radio into it. Griffin claims the device works with the iPod Mini, although it will



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- Totem
- Transfiguration
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- Trilog
- Van den Hul
- Vienna Acoustics
- VPI
- Wilson Audio
- Wilson Research
- YBA

Quarterly Sale items	Our Price	Original Retail Price	Multiroom Install	Buy/Sell
ClaraVox Magnifica (Final Offer)	£2,995.00	£14,500.00	Audia Flight Pre	£On Dem £4,500.00
McCormack Line Drive	£395.00	£950.00	Musical Fidelity NuVista	£995.00 £1,200.00
Audio Refinement Pre 5 "new"	£395.00	£895.00	YBA 2a Line	£1,295.00 £1,995.00
Quad 33/303	£195.00	£495.00	Tom Evans The Vibe Pre	ASK £2,700.00
SD Acoustics SD1	£325.00	£1,650.00	Chord D5C 1600E (dac/pre)	£3,250.00 £6,500.00
Rogers LS55 "new"	£195.00	£430.00	AV1 52000 MP remote pre	£395.00 £800.00
			Boulder 1012 (pre amp/ 24.96 dac/ Phono)	£On Dem £3,000.00
			YBA Passion Pre (inc Phono)	£3,995.00 £5,395.00
			Boulder 2010 Pre	£P.O.A. £30,000.00
			Plinius 16L "new"	£On Dem £3,200.00
			C.A.T.ultimate reference Pre Amp Inc/Phono "new"	ASK £7,350.00

New this month

POWER AMPLIFIERS	Our Price	Original Retail Price
MF Trivista 300 Int	£2,700.00	£ -
Plinius SA 250 mk IV	£2,995.00	£6,350.00
Unison Research SMART 845 Monoblocks	£Offers	£ -
Orelli SA100 evo	£895.00	£1,200.00
Krell FPB 250m Monoblocks	£495.00	£1,000.00
Krell KSA 505	£1,995.00	£3,700.00

PRE AMPLIFIERS	Our Price	Original Retail Price
Audio Research LS25 mk II	£3,995.00	£5,995.00
Unison Research Mystery One Pre	£1,599.00	£ -
Audio Research LS7	£695.00	£1,750.00

LOUDSPEAKERS	Our Price	Original Retail Price
Wilson Benesch Act 2 (1 upgrade)	£4,995.00	£9,000.00
REL Stentor III	£1,795.00	£2,500.00
ART Audio Scilleto	£695.00	£900.00
ART VT60	£995.00	£2,395.00
Avantgarde (Blue) Uno	£3,750.00	£5,500.00
Sonus Faber Electa Amator II (no stds)	£1,695.00	£ -

CD PLAYERS & DACS/DVD PLAYERS	Our Price	Original Retail Price
Orelli CD 100	£895.00	£1,200.00
PS Audio Lambda Transp/ dac	£1,695.00	£5,000.00
Wadia 860 x	£3,995.00	£7,500.00
Theta Data Pro Prime II	£1,195.00	£ -

TURNTABLES, ANALOGUE, VARIOUS	Our Price	Original Retail Price
Fanfare FT1 Tuner	£595.00	£1,500.00

AV COMPONENTS	Our Price	Original Retail Price
Primare A30.3	ASK	£1,300.00
Primare A30.5	ASK	£1,700.00
Parasound C2 (Halo)	ASK	£3,500.00
Parasound C1 (Halo)	ASK	£5,500.00
NAD	ASK	£ -
Marantz	ASK	£ -

PLASMA PROJECTORS	Our Price	Original Retail Price
In Focus 5700	ASK	£3,000.00
In Focus 7200	ASK	£6,000.00
SIM 2 Domino 20	ASK	£3,750.00

Power amplifiers

Our Price	Original Retail Price	
Gamut D200 mk II "Hi Fi Choice Product of the Year"	£3,990.00	£3,990.00
Melos 402 Gold Tiode Plus Monoblocks 400wpc	£5,995.00	£12,000.00
Krell FPB 600	£1,895.00	£2,350.00
Bryston 4BSST	£5,250.00	£7,000.00
Conrad Johnson Premier 140 SA	£1,395.00	£3,600.00
Krell KSA 80B	£2,250.00	£6,500.00
Krell KSA 250	£4,995.00	£6,000.00
Mark Levinson 383 Integrated	£3,750.00	£8,250.00
Naim Nait 3	£4,500.00	£8,250.00
Cary 805 C Monoblocks "new"	£2,895.00	£3,895.00
Bel Canto Evo 4	£995.00	£2,250.00
Cary SLA 70 mk II Silver	£2,795.00	£4,000.00
Conrad Johnson MF2500	£4,995.00	£9,500.00
YBA Passion Monoblocks	£On Dem	£6,500.00
Audia Flight 100	£On Dem	£4,500.00
Audia Flight One Integrated	£3,995.00 each	£ -
Linn Klimax 500 Solo (4)	£2,695.00	£3,300.00
Musical Fidelity NuVista 300	£2,495.00	£5,500.00
Boulder 500 AE	£1,395.00	£2,000.00
ES Lab DX-S4	£1,795.00	£3,650.00
Krell KAV 250A	£On Dem	£895.00
Roksan Caspian Integrated	£On Dem	£645.00
Roksan Caspian Power	£11,995.00	£15,000.00
Krell FPB 700x	£On Dem	£2,995.00
E.S. Lab DX-S8	£On Dem	£1,550.00
Plinius 8200P	ASK	£3,750.00
Plinius SA 102 "new"	ASK	£3,750.00
Bryston 4 BSST	£On Dem	£2,350.00
Jadis Dey 7 mk III	£2,750.00	£6,000.00
Linn Bass Active Card	£69.00	£120.00
Krell MDA 300	£4,995.00	£12,000.00
Linn Klassik CD/Amp silver	£895.00	£1,030.00
Boulder 1060 Power "new"	£On Dem	£1,650.00
Primare 30.1 mk II Integrated	£1,350.00	£1,500.00
YBA Passion Stereo "new"	£3,995.00	£5,995.00
Plinius 250 mk IV "new"	ASK	£6,350.00

AV components

AV COMPONENTS	Our Price	Original Retail Price
Linn S103 System Controller	£2,395.00	£3,285.00
Parasound AS2 - 5 Channel	ASK	£1,700.00
Lexicon MC1	£1,995.00	£5,500.00
Lexicon MCB/ MC8B	ASK	£500.00
Lexicon RT10 DVD Player	ASK	£3,750.00
SIM 2 HT 300	ASK	£9,000.00
Primare P30 Processor	£1,295.00	£2,000.00
Linn Klassik DVD	£On Dem	£2,000.00
Lexicon MC12 / MC12B	ASK	£8100.00/ £8900.00
Loewe Xemix DVD "new"	£On Dem	£495.00

PLASMAS/LCD/PROJECTORS

Our Price	Original Retail Price
From NEC/ Panasonic/Pioneer/Sharp from	£4000.00
Electrograph Delphi/Seleco/Sony/Sanyo	£4,400.00
Panasonic TH-42 PWD6 "new"	£ -

Pre amplifiers

Our Price	Original Retail Price	
Audio Research LSS mk II	£2,495.00	£6,435.00
Mark Levinson 380 S	£4,495.00	£6,995.00
Krell KRC HR	£2,750.00	£6,949.00
Audio Research LS2	£1,395.00	£3,300.00
Boulder LSAE Pre Amp	£1,750.00	£3,500.00
Klein 7LX 3.5B	£2,900.00	£5,400.00
Audio Research LS3	£795.00	£1,995.00
Cary SLP98L Remote Pre x-dem	£1,295.00	£2,794.00
Conrad Johnson PV14L	£1,650.00	£2,250.00

Quality speakers

Our Price	Original Retail Price
JM Lab Nova Utopia	ASK
JM Lab Diva Utopia BE Signature Finish	ASK
JM Lab Micro BE Utopia & Stand	ASK
Revel Studio	ASK
Revel Salon	ASK
Linn Kieithds (+ Active Cards)	ASK
Linn Chorus X mk II (Upgrade)	ASK
Wilson ACT 2 (Upgrade)	ASK
JM Lab Sib & Cub (5.1 spk sys)	ASK
JM Lab Micro Utopia BE	ASK
JM Lab Mezzo Utopia	ASK
Audio Physic Avanti	ASK
Wilson Audio System S.1	ASK
Avante Garde Trio	ASK
JM Lab Nova Utopia	ASK
Revel Ultima Studio	ASK
ATC SCM 10 Passive Black	ASK
JM Lab Alto Utopia BE	ASK
Wilson Witt mk I	ASK
JM Lab Utopia	ASK
Reference 3A	ASK
Audio Physic Spark	ASK
Talon Kite Centre & Bracket	ASK
Aerial Acoustic SV112 Sub Woofer, Maple/remote	ASK
Mirage M3	ASK
Linn Kabers (Active)	ASK
Rel Q 200 E	ASK
Rel Q 150 E	ASK
Audio Physic Luna Sub (wood)	ASK
Audio Physic Yara	ASK
Vienna Acoustics Mahler	ASK
Vienna Acoustics Mozart	ASK
Vienna Acoustics S.1	ASK
Cabasse io 5.1	ASK
Blue Room Minipod (White)	ASK
Blue Room Minipod + Sub (Blue)	ASK
Blue Room Minipod Sub	ASK
Genelec 205 Active Monitors	ASK
Audio Physic Virgo III "new"	ASK
Audio Physic Tempo III "new"	ASK

CD players & DACS

Our Price	Original Retail Price
Gamut CDIR mk II	ASK
Mark Levinson 31 Transport	£4,000.00
Mark Levinson 3905	£9,000.00
Audio Synthesis DAX Decade (Bal)	£1,795.00
Audio Synthesis DAX	£1,395.00
Acoustic Arts Drive I	£1,995.00
Mark Levinson 31 Transport	£3,500.00
EAD DSP9000 Pro Series III	£2,795.00
Micromega Classic Solo	£995.00
Wadia N6 27 Dac	£3,750.00
Mark Levinson 31.5 Transport	£9,600.00
Chord SPM 1600E Dac/ Pre	£2,750.00
Theta Pro Geny	£495.00
Acoustic Arts Drive I/Dac I mk II	£On Dem
Acuphase DP70	£1,595.00
Linn Soudac CD12	£7,995.00
Linn UNIDISK 1.1	£On Dem
Linn D12	£On Dem
Linn Numerik	£1,595.00
Pink Triangle Da Capo 1307	£895.00
Roksan Caspian CD	£On Dem
Trichord PD-S 503	£295.00
YBA CDI Delta (Twin psu)	£3,995.00
Audio Synthesis DAX Decade	£1,695.00
YBA CD 3 Delta	£On Dem
Audiomeca Damnation CD Transport	£750.00
Primare V20 DVD/CD	£20.00
Audio Aero 32/192 Capitele CD (Ver. 4)	£On Dem
Primare V25 CD/DVD	£On Dem
Boulder 2020 dac	£P.O.A.
Theta Data II Transport AT + link	£1,995.00
YBA CD Integre "new"	£On Dem

Turntables & analogue

Our Price	Original Retail Price
Audio Research PH2 Phonostage	£1,195.00
SME 20/2A	£3,495.00
Tara Labs 10m Bal The 2 Interconnect	£2,000.00
Tara Labs Monoblock FGS	£500.00
Tara Labs The 2 Speaker Cable 4ft	£1,300.00
Trichord Dino (Phone)	£345.00
Roksan Xerxes 10/DS1.5/ Artemiz/ Jubilee	ASK
Ortofon Jubilee	ASK
Roksan Caspian Phono se	£On Dem
SME 20/2A	£On Dem
Roksan TMS2/ Artemiz	£On Dem
Michell Orbe/VCI RB300	ASK
Project RPH 6 "new"	£On Dem
Project RPH9/ arm	£On Dem
VPI TINT mk IV/ Rockport 6000/ Flywheel/ VPI Stand/	£8,500.00
Clearaudio Accurate/ Pump etc. "new"	£On Dem
Roksan Radius 5 (Acrylic)/ Nima arm "new"	£On Dem
Loricraft record cleaning machine	£On Dem
Earmax Pro	£On Dem
Revox B160 Tuner	£450.00
SME 30/2 A "new"	£10,495.00
Mo'th Record Cleaning m/c	£295.00
Project RPH4/ Ortofon 510 "new"	£245.00
Ortofon Rohmann	£On Dem
Ortofon Kontrapunkt a/b "new"	£500.00/ £750.00
Michell Gyro SE/ RB300 "new"	ASK
Audio Synthesis Phono Eq mm/mc	£495.00
SME Series V Arm "new"	£1,350.00
Pink Triangle PT Ext psu	£ -
Plinius 14 Phono "new"	£On Dem
Nackamichi DR 3	£195.00
Tom Evans - The Groove "new"	ASK
Clear Audio Reference Mc phono stage X-demo	£1,695.00
Rega Planer 3 + Hi Fi News Out Board Power Supply	£320.00
Clear Audio Symphono phono stage X-demo MM/MC	£640.00

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obviously be a bit too wide. This techno-chipolata is fairly easy to set-up, but only delivers somewhat mediocre sound quality. There simply aren't many spare FM frequencies around, which makes it hard to get a clear signal. Despite being way overpriced, the iTrip is an ingenious way to crank up your iPod in the car, or inflict your musical tastes on partygoers without using any cables. Probably worth waiting for the improved versions, which are expected soon. Available from www.everythingipod.com or www.altatechnology.com.

CREATIVE LABS TRAVELSOUND



An all-in-one mini speaker system powered by four AA batteries, cheekily housed within a clamshell hinge which folds out to form a useful stand, this has been around for ages now, but an 'iPod-white' version has recently been released on the quiet - as Creative obviously sells its own range of jukeboxes! Sound quality is surprisingly tasty for its weenie dimensions, but think background music, rather than stonking bass. As ever with Creative products, the controls are fiddly, and the overly-discrete power LED makes it easy to leave switched on, which wastes precious juice. The quoted thirty-five hour battery rating is hopelessly optimistic, although it will easily

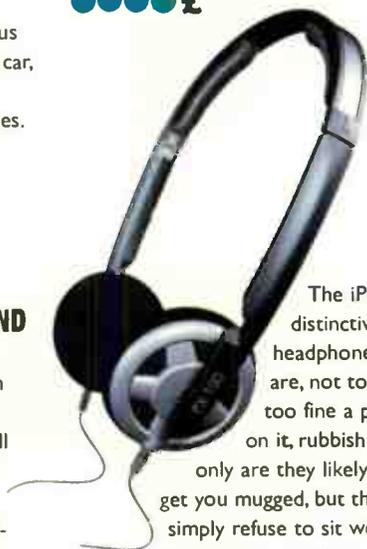


CODE BEAKER

It's a myth that MP3 always sounds rougher than a sandpaper spoon. It's often just a question of which software you're using to compress your CDs, iTunes for Windows does a pretty good job, but the freeware CDEX (<http://cdex-os.sourceforge.net/>) does a much better job. Use the R3Mix preset and then add the latest LAME codec. Make sure you sort out your tagging options properly.

outlast the iPod's maximum of eight hours. The TravelSound will transform any portable music device into a simple music system, and is ideal for a hotel bedroom or poolside ambience. The fact that it now matches your iPod is merely a bonus! Available from: www.apple.com/uk plus selected retailers.

SENNHEISER PX100



The iPod's distinctive headphones are, not to put too fine a point on it, rubbish. Not only are they likely to get you mugged, but they simply refuse to sit well in the ear and sound - at best - average. A pair of Sennheiser MX500s for just £15 is a major sonic boost, but if you prefer over-the-head style cans, the fold-up style PX100s are unmatched. Apple is now punting a new 'in-ear' style headphone for £29. These are cleverly designed to sit halfway up the ear canal, and isolate you from background noise. Apple's version may well look the part, but sounds woeful compared to other in-ear models, like the Sony MDR-EX71SL, which cost just six pounds more at £35. If you're prepared to push the boat out, Shure's E2C for about £75 deliver astonishing detail, despite limited bass crunch, or the even newer E3C's may well cost a seriously hefty £170, but really do swing the bat hard - and are available in iPod-matching white. See the PX100s at www.sennheiser.co.uk.

JBL CREATURE II

The latest incarnation of JBL's £79 Creature II speakers is still a fancy-pants 2.1 self-powered computer package. The sculpted white subwoofer and micro-satellites match the iPod visually, and certainly aren't put to shame in



terms of build-quality either. The bass unit is the rising star here, with nicely swish silver bass and treble knobs, whilst the touch-sensitive volume controls are perched on one of the satellites. As with most 2.1 speakers, the mid-range goes missing in action, and the truly tiny dimensions of the satellites means that the treble lurks on the harsher side of the street. In short, these are ideal for smaller rooms where you have no existing hi-fi, but intend to use your iPod. Despite the obvious lack of a remote and the fact there are better sounding 2.1 computer speakers around, the Creatures will appeal to style conscious iPod-lovers determined to make more use of its alarm function, or anyone hunting an unobtrusive low budget speaker system that looks the part. Click on www.harman-multimedia.com.

ALTEC LANSENG INMOTION



At first glance, these £99 loudspeakers seem great value, in that they offer a dedicated line-out, as well as a built-in cradle connection that can also recharge your iPod. Once folded-up, the whole caboodle is only the dimensions of a medium-sized book and is powered by four AA batteries once on the road. Unfortunately, the world and his dog are now cashing in by birthing white audio accessories to hitch a ride on the iPod's trendy coat tails. Not only does the inMotion's plastic build quality feel cheaper than a broken promise, but the speakers deliver little more back-end grunt than the Creative TravelSounds, which are half the price. If that wasn't bad enough, the line output didn't even work on the supplied unit. Even making allowances for press samples, this is tat of the lowest order that simply doesn't deserve to sit on the Apple website. See www.apple.com/uk.



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noel keyword



DVD video is consuming ever more shelf space in stores and in homes as it elbows out the video cassette. This may be affecting music sales. In the background all is not well with CD. The IFPI recently announced a continuing decline in CD sales in the world's major markets, notably America and Japan. Are we about to lose the dedicated music disc altogether? Let's face it, DVD-Audio and SACD just aren't setting the world alight.

I suspect that for most people the Dolby Digital sound track of DVD video is good enough. DTS imposes less compression and can sound altogether more solid but I'd be the last to notice when 'Scooby Doo' or 'Finding Nemo' is playing. As I've said many times, once you channel sound through six loudspeakers, or more, each one works less hard and contrasts in intensity come across with more impact. This brings to surround sound the ability to deliver large changes in dynamic scale, which is just what you want when Arnie is letting rip and the soundtrack is there only to support on-screen mayhem.

Take away the picture and the intrinsic sound quality of DVD video becomes more apparent and of more concern. Dolby compression does no favours to massed violins, which can sound nebulous, something that seems to afflict all of today's compression systems, especially older ones like that used by DAB. But in a complex picture with many variables I have found that you can gain on the swings what you lose on the roundabouts and that by introducing

time delays in the receiver to compensate for loudspeaker distance, an orchestra at least can be made to sound nicely cohesive even with compressed digital. By making this

” outside the UK the CD seems to be losing favour, but quite why we don't know...

possible, using the Dolby or DTS soundtrack via the digital output of a DVD player brings benefits - it isn't all bad by any means, even if the heavy compression of Dolby Digital brings shudders to audiophiles.

Digital compression might be anathema to serious music listeners but it is no impediment to DVD video sales and DVD is now in most homes. In the battle for consumer attention I can't help feel that DVD video, as a mainstream entertainment format, has captured the interest and imagination of buyers at large and sound quality is sufficiently high to sound plenty good enough over most budget audio systems, or home cinema systems if it comes to that. This alone will satisfy quite a sizeable number of buyers who might otherwise have looked at SACD or DVD Audio is the next step beyond CD.

For the time being in the UK CD sales are holding up well, the BPI tell us in their latest figures. No fewer than 234million were shipped in the UK last year, an increase of over 5% on the previous year. In its heyday the LP topped out at 91m, giving you some idea of how popular and

accessible music now is in Britain. It would seem from these figures that the CD still has plenty of life in it and isn't about to give way to any new fangled format just yet. But it may not

be that simple. Sales in the world's two strongest markets, the USA and Japan, are both in slow decline. Sales in Germany have also been suffering. So outside the UK the CD seems to be losing favour, but quite why we don't know. Is it down to a lack of good new musical talent? Are people switching

over to DVD video and just giving up on CD? What you have to bear in mind is that whilst DVD isn't a direct competitor to CD it is part of the "leisure spend" and £10 spent on a DVD may be £10 lost to CD. I suspect that the big stores, like Virgin and HMV, know this. These days they stock primarily DVD and CD, with no more space given to SACD and DVD-Audio than was granted to MiniDisc.

Will future Blu-Ray discs, boasting 28GB or more, give us high quality video and audio at last, without compromise between the two? With discs needing a protective caddy they will not be cheap and price is always a key issue to acceptance, so I doubt it.

The market is changing. Downloading is becoming common and the CD is under threat, major retailers like Tower Europe closing down for example - a worrying sign. Go into HMV these days and DVD video is everywhere, but you will be hard pressed to find DVD Audio or SACD, both potential successors to the CD. I can't help but wonder whether the music-only disc has had its day. I hope not. ●

david price



Why put a curious looking, copper coloured, one-off version of a long discontinued digital disc spinner on the front

cover of this magazine? Well, what it's the ideas that lie behind it that are so important. It embodies one man's philosophy of digital design. As such, as the ultimate expression of his thinking, it's 'living proof' of the validity of Ken Ishiwata's approach.

There's no doubt that he's one of the industry's most gifted designers - and there is already an embarrassment of riches, I believe. But how did he come to acquire such a vast knowledge? Next month I shall devote my column to discussing Ken's thoughts on matters digital and analogue, but this page is usefully served with the great man's 'hi-fi biography', in his own words:

"When I was a student at high school in Japan, I visited a friend of mine whose father was an audiophile, and he took me to his listening room and played me his system. I couldn't believe it was coming from LP! Then, he said, that's Marantz. I'd never heard of it - never heard of it. Wow! It sounded so sexy, I was really shocked. Then I asked him if I could borrow it, and he agreed. The first thing I did was to look inside, and write down the circuit diagram - I copied it - everything - and then built it myself. When I finished it, I was so excited, and I switched it on. Nothing came out. Then I made it again - and found out that the Marantz Model 7 had a really tricky circuit! Of course, my knowledge wasn't good enough at that time. So I had to go away and study it, and then later realised that

it was oscillating. Then when I finally got it working, it sounded different. How was that possible, as I'd copied exactly this same circuit?

So my first encounter with real hi-fi was the famous Model 7



The Marantz CD63 KI DP embodies one man's philosophy of digital design...

Marantz, and I never thought one day I'd be working for the company, doing the job that I'm doing now. Later, when I started to have communications with Saul B Marantz, I explained my experience from back at High School and he laughed. Of course, Saul B sold his company to Superscope in 1969. The Marantz that I joined in 1978 was under this company but still American owned. In the beginning they did a wonderful job, creating some real high end products. Then they decided to take them to Japan, to make Marantz Japan Inc., together with Superscope. But by the time I joined, they had changed from American design to Japanese design, American production to Japanese production. I'd previously worked for Pioneer, but before I joined I was doing freelance fashion photography, working for myself.

I actually first met Saul B Marantz in his post-Marantz years, when he started was making his Lineage products. It was just him, John Carl and one marketing guy. In 1981, they produced an amplifier, and were having big problems with it, so they called me in Eindhoven, and

asked me to come to New York. So I said why don't you send me the circuit diagram, then I looked at it and said sorry - it just doesn't work.

I'd joined Marantz in 1978, when the company was thinking about its new Esotec high end sub-brand. I started as a coordinator between Marantz Japan and Marantz Europe, and not as a designer at all. But then I went on product training to Japan and met some people designing tape recorders, and I gave them some ideas about back tension I'd

developed when I was at Pioneer in the early seventies. We were having some QC problems; the quality coming from Europe was different from Japan, and they couldn't figure out why. It took me one year sitting on the bench to find out the reason - the way the measurements were being made in Europe was wrong. The product quality was fine, it was our QC process that was faulty!

Marantz was also having problems with its speakers. The 3G, 5G and 7G simply weren't proving popular in Europe. They had to do something about it, and they didn't know what to do, so I said okay, I'm going to design for you - and started to develop the European speakers. My first product for Marantz was the LD50 speakers. Then I started to do all the specifications of the European products, and gave them to Japan, because I knew what Europe wanted - which wasn't American designs. The US was predominantly receiver based, whereas Europe was into amplifiers and tuner separates. The two worlds simply didn't meet. That was what saw me doing design work in addition to coordination work, which has continued to this day." ●

dominic todd



I'd thought it was an April 1st gag: Wooden cone loudspeakers? Surely someone at JVC was taking the Michael? Yet they turned out to be a serious design, which had taken years of development. I'll talk more of this later, yet the incarnation of the 'all wood' speaker did get me thinking that it's been some time since loudspeaker manufacturers have literally thought 'out of the box'...

Introducing new materials to speaker design was, of course, all the rage in the 1980s. It was Celestion who first introduced the metal dome tweeter with the 1984 SL6, which was to start a whole wave of metallic transducers that would be 'de rigueur' for the following decade or so. Indeed, the metal-coned mid/bass unit soon followed, and the Acoustic Energy AE1 became something of a legend over its lifetime. Yet Celestion only made a handful of other designs with the copper dome before changing tack. The SL6 was followed by an improved SL6S, and the rather oddly proportioned SL12. Most interesting of all was the SL600, whose Aerolam (honey coned aluminium used in aerospace technology) cabinet was, at the time, the height of esoteric loudspeaker design. Later, the SL700 was developed which shared the cabinet material but, crucially, switched to an aluminium tweeter, as did the Si versions of the SL6/12. I don't think anyone has used copper since, and with an average sensitivity of 82db from the SL range of the time, that's hardly surprising!

After experimenting with Aerolam and ribbons in the 1000 series, Celestion became all conventional in the early nineteen nineties and launched the rather bland 100/300 followed by the more impressive, but still conventional, A Series. This was a pattern reflected in

others within the industry. Weird and wacky was definitely to be avoided at all costs during the nineties, and the occasional concrete or slate speaker was seen as an amusing aside rather than a serious contribution to the advancement of loudspeaker design.

In fact the loudspeaker industry as a whole became so weary of criticism that some manufacturers

“ wooden cone
loudspeakers?
Surely someone at
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went right back to basics in completely disregarding any material other than paper and cloth for their drivers. One only needs to look at some of the major players of the time, such as Tannoy and Wharfedale, to see how the metal domes were dropped and the cabinets became simpler in what many saw as an exercise in, another popular phrase of the time, 'dumbing down'.

The fact is that, whilst speaker technology may not have been at its most thrusting, generally there was nothing wrong with the sound of most of the 'speakers of the time. Refining existing technology and improved computing aids that could calculate cabinet stresses and so forth, brought about an improvement on a sound per pound basis that had, in my opinion, been just as great as that of the 1970s to 1980s. As an example of this, just compare Tannoy's M15 of the late 1980s to their more recent MX2. Both cost about the same, even without taking inflation into account, yet the MX2 has a sense of integration and realism that the M15 couldn't begin to compete with.

Nonetheless, as hi-fi sources and computer-based audio have

developed at a rate of knots, the old loudspeaker is looking precisely that, old. There may not be anything wrong with existing loudspeakers, but every technology needs waves of progression, even if this does lead down the odd blind alley along the way.

And so, back to the present day, and JVC's wooden cone speaker.

Apparently it took Japanese engineer Mr Imamura, over twenty years to perfect. He'd often toyed with the idea of a wooden coned speaker, but had run into practical issues such as the cone cracking during manufacture or playback. The answer came in soaking birch wood in

Japanese Sake, which allows the wood to mould without cracking. JVC claim a more natural sound than usual but, at this stage, it's hard to gauge any benefits as the only model to be marketed so far is attached to a rather ordinary mini system.

Of course JVC aren't alone in trying out new materials. Those who attended this year's Bristol show couldn't have failed to notice WA's rather fetching solid limestone speakers. Yet, with all due respect to WA, JVC are in another stratosphere when it comes to public recognition. It's the kind of design one would expect from a cottage industry, or even as a prototype from one of the larger manufacturers, yet to go right ahead and actually market a wooden speaker as part of a mini system is bold indeed. Of course JVC can afford to be so bold, with such a tinny part of their profit resting upon such a venture, yet it's still encouraging to see the major players beginning to take a few more risks. Hopefully a few specialist speaker manufacturers will take up the patent and we can judge as to whether wood is truly good or not. In the meantime I don't think I'll ever look at Sake in quite the same way again. Kan bai! ●



Ijk setright

There must be many a careful planner, thoughtful of his prospects of upgrading his array of apparatus, who reckons that the thing to do one day when funds permit

is to enhance what his chosen outfit does by adding a sub-woofer. Very few are the affordable speakers that go deep; scarcely numerable are those which do it well. Adding a basso profundo to your electroacoustical choir might be a very effective way of extending the limited range of, say, a pair of small shelf-size monitors. Many are those who claim that it does work surprisingly well, seeming to improve what the existing speakers are doing as well as adding what they cannot encompass.

I tried it ages ago, but was disappointed. The machine in question was Swedish, but I cannot recall its name: I was sold it by Thomas Heinitz in Paddington, who was at the time recommending it as the perfect bass partner to a pair of LS3/5A soprani. I never went to him again – not because of what he sold me, but because he spoke rudely about the clarinet-playing of Reginald Kell, whom I still rate as the second best – after Artie Shaw – that I have ever heard.

Whatever its name, I set up this big black Swede in colloquy with my early Linn Kans. They may be (I still have them, and trust I always shall) dimensionally the same as the BBC LS3/5A, but they never sounded such meagre half-pints, and such was the accuracy of their bass that, faint though it was, it could be heard quite a long way down. That may have been the trouble, for I never felt that I had satisfactorily tuned the complementary rolls-off to effect a smoothly

blended transition from Kans to sub; nor was the sound of the latter as seemly as that of the former, giving a sense of going downpitch from lovely to lubberly.

The real trouble, I thought – and

“ my early Linn Kans may be dimensionally the same as the BBC LS3/5A, but they never sounded such meagre half-pints...”

so I still think – was that the sub-woofer was, like most of its kind today, a device which merged both channels into mono. Science was to blame: scientists assured us that we were unable to sense the direction from which low-frequency sound came, and that accordingly it was sufficient to have but one sub-woofer and permissible to park it anywhere in the room. Funnelling off the bass from two stereo channels and shovelling it all out through one hole was, I concluded, a sure way to muddy the sound.

I had heard of somebody who used two of these things, one for each channel, but that was in a special circumstance: his 'satellite' speakers were actually two pairs of Quad electrostatics hung on the wall, one above the other and with the sub-woofers immediately below them. It might have made sense to try a second Swede, so that I had one beneath each Kan, but if I were to do that I might as well have a proper pair of floorstanders in which the whole lot was properly integrated.

So I gave the sub away, and in due course bit the bullet, buying a pair of

Isobariks. After all, what was an Isobarik but a brace of Kans (duplicated so that one set of drivers faced forwards and the other upwards) with a subwoofer at the bottom? It was good reasoning, very good: the full stereo separation of each channel all the way down (only sometimes cheated by vile record companies who would mono the bass for other and unforgivable reasons) was supported by proper factory-refined crossover duties over the whole gamut, and those Isobarik basses were awfully good. But oh, if only I

could have afforded the upgrade to active operation! It would have been cheaper than inviting the London Philharmonic home to play, but it was not feasible. The active version, apart from all its brilliance and precision, was worth at least another half-octave of extension, but mine perforce played passively for the rest of their lives. It would have been nice to report that they had died on active service...

Because proper sub-woofers contain their own power amplifiers, they can provide the effects of active operation in the area where it is most critical, leaving the effects of passive circuitry evident only as between treble and mid-range. A stereo pair of them, underpinning appropriately selected small speakers, might be a very good proposition indeed, and some day I must try it. To secure an agnate synergy with the rest of my stuff my obvious choice would be Linn Sizmiks, but there are plenty of others out there which might better suit different outfits. You are welcome to try it without waiting for me; just make sure that you get two of them. ●

patrick cleasby



When I first started my association with this magazine six months ago it was as a software and gadget man, rather than as a heavyweight hardware reviewer. This month all that changed as I got my hands on the particularly heavyweight flagship Denon universal player/combo, a real harbinger of the way forward for the surround enthusiast.

If I have one reservation about the concept of universal players, it is a technological one rather than anything to do with their frequently exemplary audio performance. The concern is simply that there is more to go wrong. The feat of making a tidy piece of kit with the best electronics for all the various bits of decoding which need to happen is admirable, but it must make the testing load on manufacturers enormous.

Nowhere is this more visible than with the new formats, and although SACD production is so tightly controlled that instances of player incompatibility are very rare, and generally restricted to SACD playback as CD on DVD machines, DVD-Audio is another kettle of fish. The problem is in the video user interface component of the disc, and the complexity of the software needed to produce it. In theory, the DVD-Audio specification should ensure that authoring and playback conform to the rules, but in practice, just as in the early days of DVD-Video, incompatibilities occur and currently universal players are where most of these gremlins reveal themselves.

I experienced one this month - the DVD-Audio of Neil Young's 'On The Beach' has photos/ lyrics/ tracks options on screen as the high resolution stereo plays, but on the Denon DVD-A11 the button highlights are not visible, making

extras navigation awkward, if not nearly impossible. A trivial example, but as US owners of Pioneer's DV563A universal player have discovered, if the problem is such that the audio is rendered unplayable, you're going to end up an unhappy punter.

The good news is that if the issue turns out to be hardware related (many of the current issues seem

” SACD production is so tightly controlled that instances of player incompatibility are very rare, but DVD-Audio is another kettle of fish...

related to a recent upgrade in the most commonly used DVD-Audio authoring software), responsive companies with designs which now habitually permit firmware upgrades from CD are able to fix these issues without the hair-raising prospect of product recalls. Indeed, early DVD-A11 units were seen to make DVD-Audio menu access slower than should be due to some redundant internal status checking, and a firmware upgrade is now available to patch those machines which went out before production could be updated.

This is all heartening - and with the everyday use of the internet it is essential for companies to be this responsive - there are places where consumers from around the world can congregate, compare notes and kick up quite a stink if their concerns are not heeded and their problems resolved. Although these places can be populated by some scary individuals, ultimately they are useful and worthwhile to drive consumers and manufacturers towards the correct answers.

Six months ago I opened my innings here at *Hi-Fi World* with a report on the technical status of the two high resolution formats. Frustratingly little has changed during that time, but the first rays of light are starting to appear. While Warners predictions of being on-stream with production Dual Discs by the end of the first quarter proved optimistic, no doubt hampered by the purchase of the company's music division, initial feedback from the limited trials in the US market indicates that surprisingly few complaints over disc thickness have arisen, and the discs flew off the shelves.

The most impressive thing about this very public experiment with a possible new format variation was that all the major record companies were involved. If

all of them are happy that this is a format which works technically, you can bet that much marketing muscle will be put behind various flavours of product with DVD on one side and CD on the other before the end of the year, once the DVD Forum have (hopefully) confirmed that the new variant is able to bear the DVD logo at their meeting in June. Just don't bank on any Sony discs bearing DVD-Audio data just yet...!

The other good piece of news from the DVD-Audio camp was reports that the DVD Forum had agreed on the use of the AAC codec to distribute pre-prepared compressed digital versions of DVD-Audio content in a ROM folder on the discs in future. The reason given - "because it sounded better than the others". A pure commonsense decision for once, hopefully unmediated by big business interests and more to the point, an endorsement of my hearty support for AAC since I started banging on about things Apple all those months ago! Here's to the future... ●

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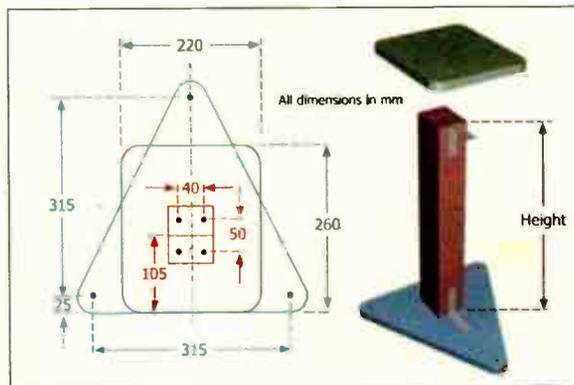
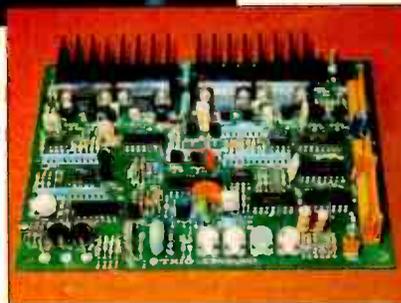
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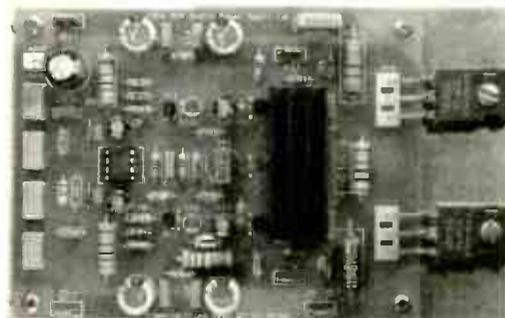
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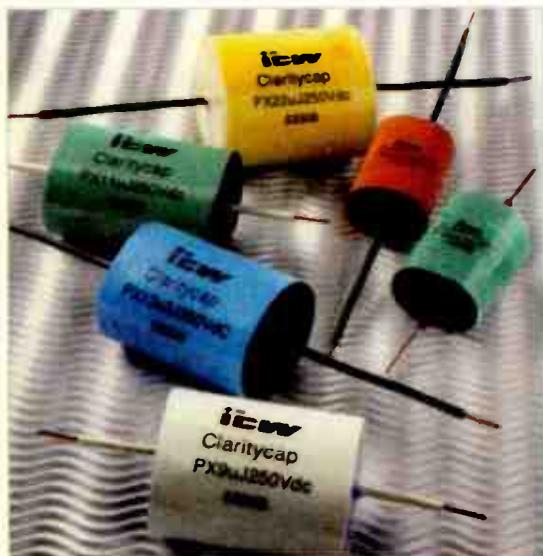
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The PW, PX, SA and DTAC ranges, are featured on the ICW website which is at www.claritycap.co.uk. This website is intended to provide customers with as much information as possible, so take a look and see. Here in England, ICW has appointed Expotus Components as their UK distributor. Their website is at

www.expotus.com, so check out this site too. Our photos show some of the PX range and a couple of Expotus branded capacitors.



VERONICA KITS

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SPEAKER DESIGN SOFTWARE

So you've always wanted to design your own speakers? You've done reflex enclosures with ports of all shapes and sizes, but now you want to broaden your horizons and try transmission line speakers?

Help is at hand, but you have to get it from the States. Accurate predictions of system response are now available, it is claimed. I hope this software gives a detailed description of the material used for absorbing the sound along the line. Bailey's long haired wool was a great idea, but it was nigh on impossible to put exactly the same quantity in exactly the same place in any pair of speakers. These days, manufacturers design their own foam and are particular about its sound properties. Accurate machining is also needed to guarantee that any speaker is exactly the same as any other sample of the same model.

The software is called TLwrx Transmission Line Software and starts off, for some reason, as version 3.00. Developed by G.L. Auspurger of Perception Inc, the software is the result of specific research into the behaviour of transmission line speakers. The program was written to model the behaviour of this type of speaker and developed to provide engineers with reliable information at the design stage.

The software CD is distributed by Old Colony Sound Laboratory, the product division of Audio Amateur Inc. The disc will contain the three articles by Auspurger which appeared in *Speaker Builder*, an alignment chart and application notes. Price is \$129 and the CD, ref SOF-AUG, can be ordered online at www.audioXpress.com. Further information from

Other CDs available from Old Colony Sound Laboratory include an animated version of the Williamson amplifier - CDAA2 @ \$12.95 and the first ten years of *Audio Amateur* magazine, from 1970 to 1979, ref CDAA70S this one costs \$39.99.

rebuilt with surgical precision

Paul Johnson calls in the help of an expert to rebuild his classic Trio L-07D...



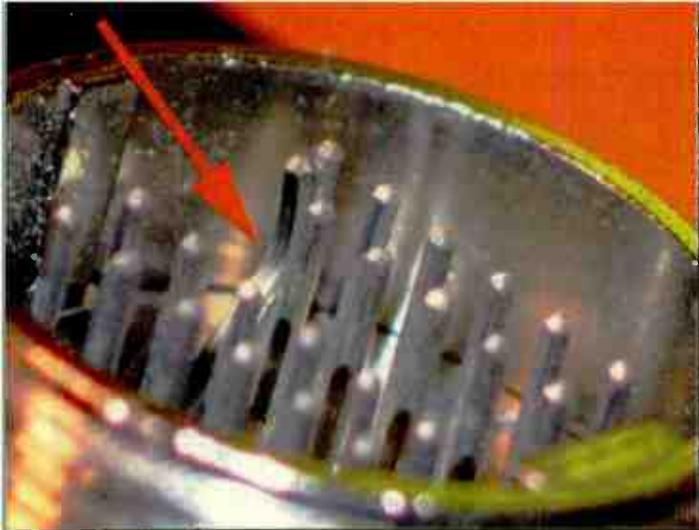
From an era now long-gone, Trio/Kenwood's L-07D turntable was their statement product at the start of the 1980s. During this 'Golden Age', the big Japanese multi-nationals produced some stunning 'cost no object' turntables – usually direct drive – in a bid for 'World Domination'. Sitting somewhere at, or very near, the pinnacle of this engineering excellence, was the L-07D. A limited production run, featuring the innovative use of metal, wood and composite stone, ensured a raft of heady reviews. Fast-

forward twenty years and this deck has, in some circles, attained 'cult' status.

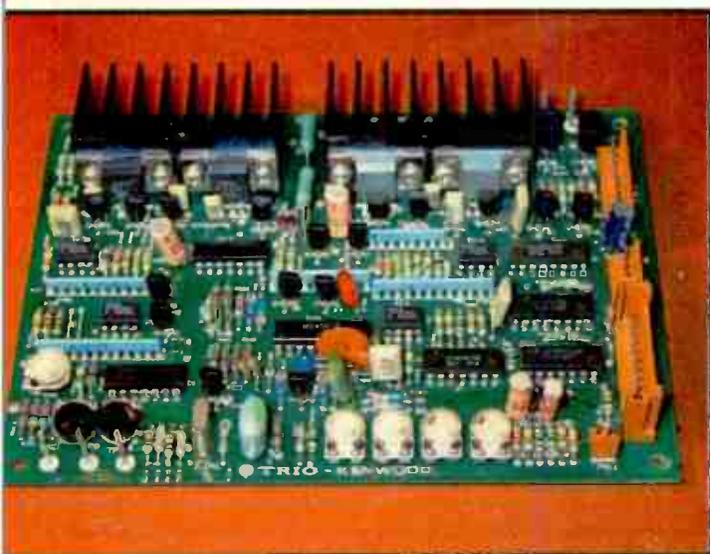
Innovative, ground-breaking engineering comes at a price. As a recent advert for a yoghurt-based product suggests, pleasure has to be balanced with a certain amount of pain. It's probably safe to say that every L-07D in existence has had some form of 'corrective surgery' – defective motors, processors and power supplies seemed to go with the territory. However, a working, correctly set-up L-07D (especially sporting a modern tonearm) is

capable of producing stunning results and that is where my journey began.

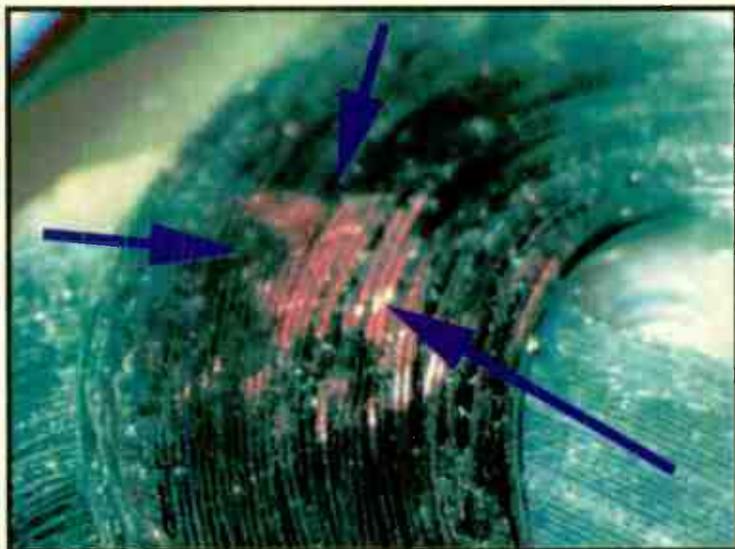
Looking for a turntable, I decided to don my cyberspace wetsuit and surf 't'internet' (thank you Peter Kay), whereupon my search engine drew my attention to the 'Direct Drive Museum' (c/o Geocities). I had decided to go down the 'pre-owned' route, based on the simple premise that I could get much better for less (we all like that!). 'In' the 'Museum', I was treated to a veritable feast of direct drive delicacies, but my attention was drawn to one particular model, which stood out



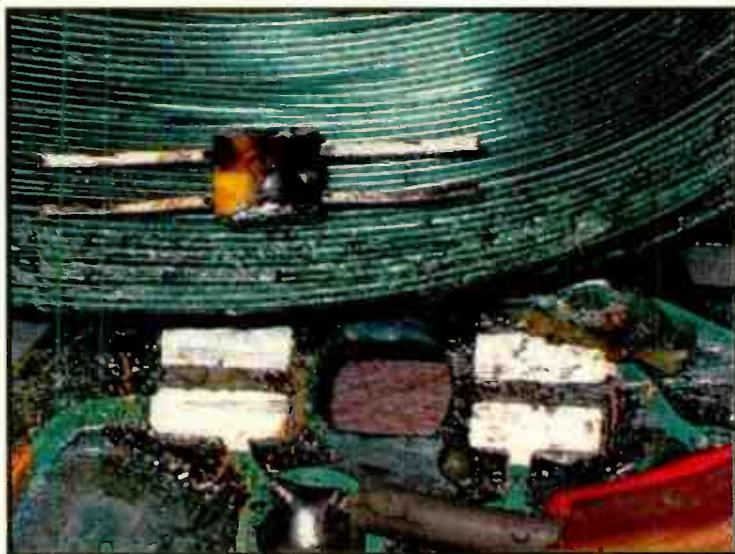
Bent 'B6' connector pin



Extricated logic card



Worn spot on stator coil



Out with the 'bad' hall element

above the rest – the L-07D. Something clicked – I wanted one, and the quest began. I quickly lost count of the number of telephone calls I made and websites I visited. Responses ranged from "What was that, again?", "Who are you?" to "Even if I did have one, I certainly wouldn't sell it". Oh boy, this wasn't going to be easy. Cutting a long and somewhat repetitive story short, I eventually found a private seller through an extremely helpful dealer in Edinburgh. Amicable negotiations ensued, faltering on a couple of occasions, but eventually the deal was done. I owned an L-07D.

Now, I can't plead ignorance here. I was fully aware that there was

a slight problem at the time of purchase. Every so often, the platter would 'stall' when the start button was pressed. "Never mind!" I thought, "it's been in storage for a long time... it probably just needs a service (!)... I can get it sorted, can't I?!" Getting the deck home and set-up was truly exciting and using it was a joy. However, the platter stalling bugged me like an unreachable itch! Another quest began (here we go)... to deal with the stalling. I carted the deck round to several engineers – no mean feat it weighs over 80lbs – all of whom were Kenwood authorised service centres. Some were clearly not enamoured at all, "nice, mate, they don't make 'em like that

anymore" – well, he was right there. My last engineer came the closest to identifying the problem, with the ultimate conclusion that: "It's scrap!" Kenwood had no replacement bits and now the unit wasn't working at all – Gutted. A myriad of options presented themselves to me: sell the deck, store the deck, scrap the deck (never!) or start searching 't'internet'... again.

It was a speculative e-mail to Ralf at the 'Direct Drive Museum' that was to give me hope. Call me a cynic, but I wasn't expecting a reply. Too many bad experiences. As if to prove me wrong in style, by return post Ralf gave me a name – Howard – "he has repaired motors and

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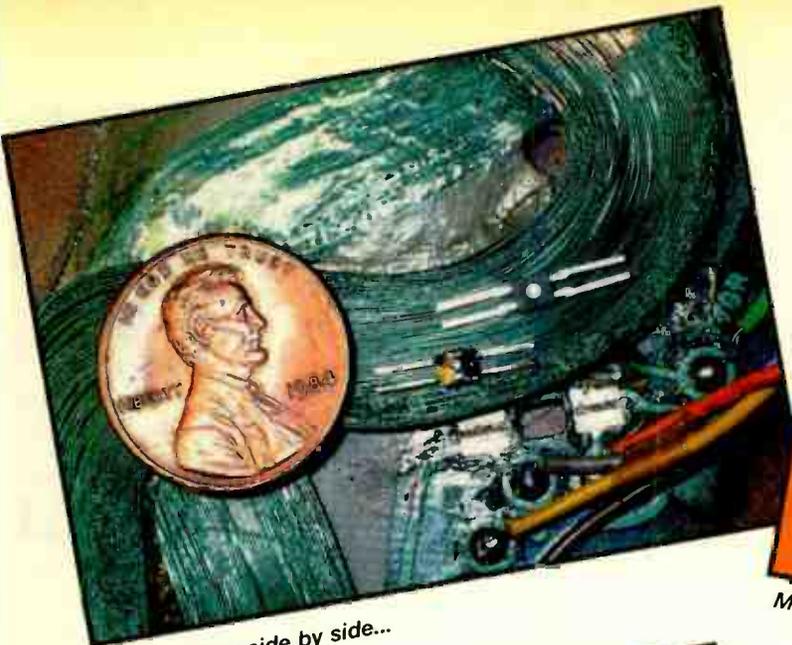
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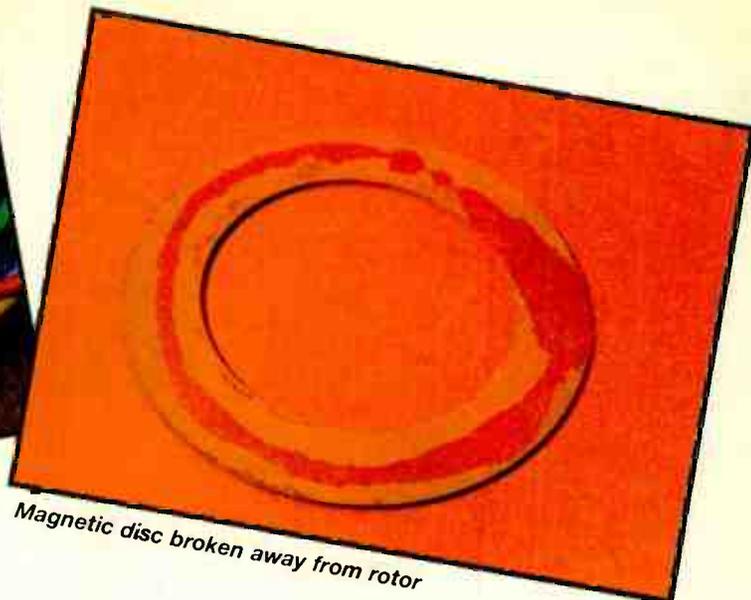
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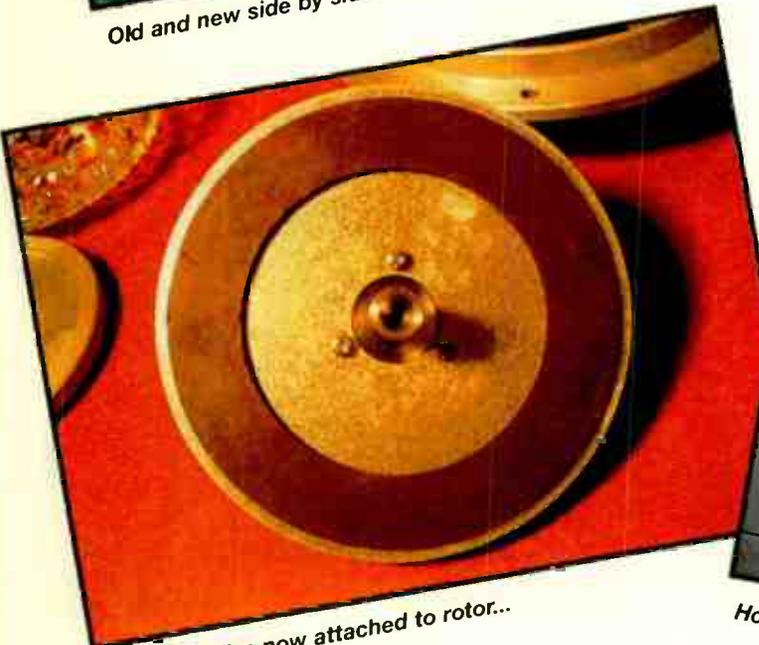
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Old and new side by side...



Magnetic disc broken away from rotor



Magnetic disc now attached to rotor...



Howard's deck waiting for my motor...

controllers from L-07Ds from the US, Singapore and the UK"...oh my goodness, could this man be my saviour? Tentatively, I sent an e-mail to Howard, cynicism rapidly reaching 'half-life' level! Howard, I have a "Trio in need" and, by return post, he told me "I can help!"

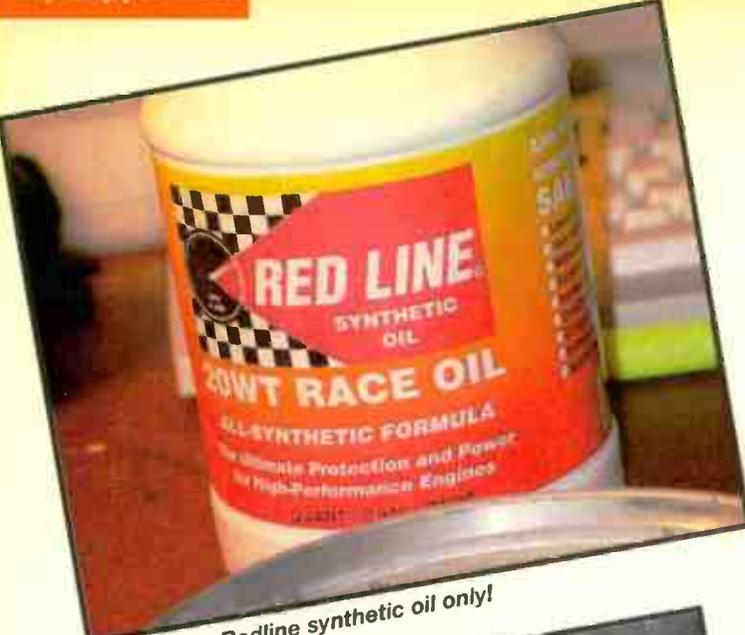
A series of e-mails established credentials and important deck-related information. Was it first or second generation (different stator coils) and how I needed to go about dismantling the unit. Carefully following Howard's instructions and with a loaded, carefully placed mug of coffee, I began to extricate the parts he required: motor, switching unit, connector panel and controller. As Howard owns several examples of this venerable deck, it was not necessary to send the plinth, thank

goodness. A re-mortgage was not part of my plans! Having packaged and despatched my bits, I commenced an anxious game of waiting. Within 48 hours, I received word that my (very) precious bits had arrived, just ahead of Hurricane Isabel! A couple of days later (largely thanks to a day off work, courtesy of the aforementioned hurricane) I received some stunning e-mails; amazing close-up pictures of the deck and the faults (see images) accompanying an assessment of the problem. A defective hall element and one dead set of stator coils, hence the stalling. A bearing on the 'oil-wagon' (it was running on vapours), together with a bent and shorting connector pin were all conspiring to annihilate my precious L-07D.

More amazing images

accompanied updates on the repairs. Howard's camera work brilliantly captured the repair process, including a demonstration of a soldering master class. Such an attention to detail is not on the whole surprising, as Howard is an Orthopaedic Surgeon by trade, who taught himself electronics theory when his own, and first, L-07D gave up the ghost in 2002. A re-built control unit (new capacitors, transistors and diodes etc – a fully refurbished power supply), switching unit, connector unit and a fully repaired and serviced motor later, the bits were winging their way back to Blighty! So, what of the cost? Parts at cost and shipping. Labour, some 12-15 hours, was absolutely free. Amazing!

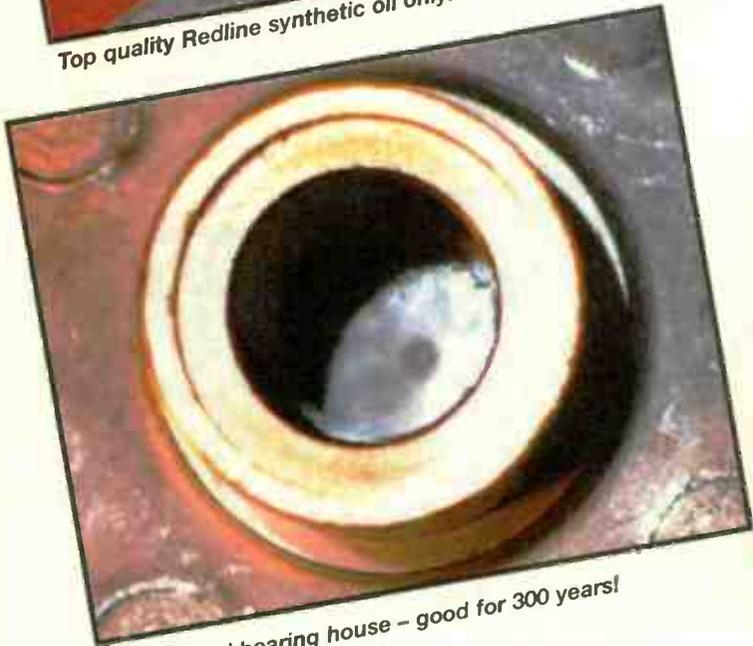
Excitement was at fever pitch when everything arrived – talk about



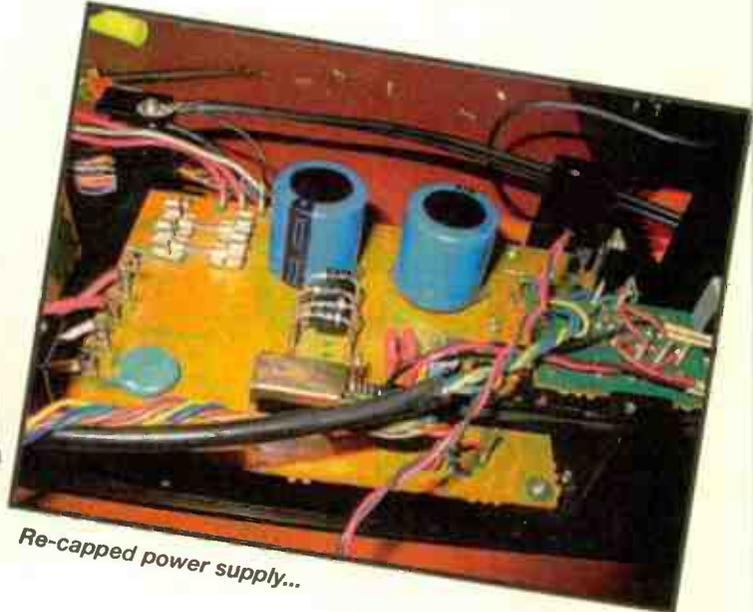
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carefully does it - measuring the lubricant



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Re-capped power supply...

well packaged – it took a week just to get everything out of the boxes! Again, I followed Howard's detailed, yet simple (they needed to be) instructions for re-assembly. Switch on was a momentous occasion – wow – it works and perfectly! In addition to the repairs, Howard has refined the calibration process for speed stability etc... the deck was completely on-song. Improved quality components made for far greater stability. The power supply barely gets past room temperature whereas it used to get quite warm. Pitch and image stability are now rock solid. Correctly set-up, my deck is stunning. Howard has the facilities to replace any of the components on the logic card, as well as any of the deck's circuit boards, including the chipsets, although in my case, integrated

circuit replacement was not necessary. His repairs are aimed at providing trouble-free use not just for 2 years but 20 plus... I have every confidence that the aim will be achieved.

It's been quite a journey! Not only have I now got a fully functioning 'legend' to spin my vinyl on, but I've also made a new friend. A lovely chap to correspond with, Howard is clearly an expert when it



et voila... repaired motor!

comes to the L-07D. Any owner of an ailing or un-serviced unit would do well to seek his help. You won't regret it!

Stand & Deliver!

Stewart Wennen gets out his screwdriver and sharpens his saw blade...

I cannot understand why hi-fi freaks spend so much money on very poor hi-fi supports. Commercially available loudspeaker stands cost between £60 and up to almost £200. They display characteristics that are the very opposite of high fidelity reproduction. These include poor horizontal and vertical support, questionable centre of gravity and a poor finish. Of course they display resonances that are very difficult to control. Most of these stands are made from steel which is covered with a painted surface.

I decided to construct a pair of stands which had to be inexpensive, easy to build and addressed some of these problems. They also had to cost less than £20 to build. The stands are made from three basic sections: the base, the central support and the top plate.

THE BASE PLATE

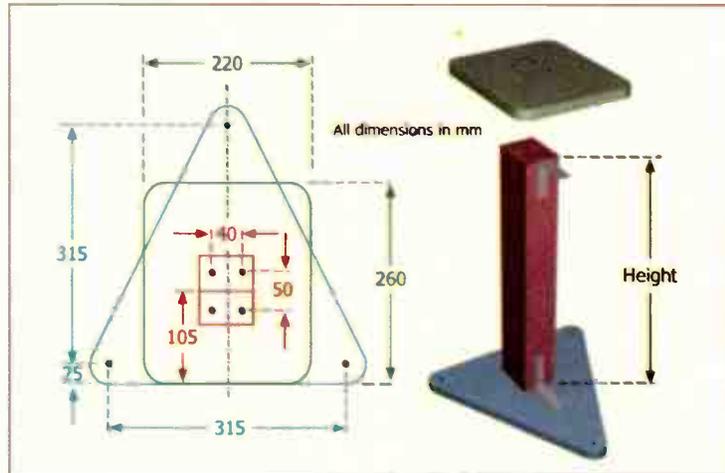
This was cut from one inch shuttering ply, but 18mm hardwood ply will do. It is most important to lay out the plate with all of the lines on the surface of the timber. These dimensions must be checked THREE times before cutting. The curves at the corners were achieved by placing a glass on the surface and then drawing round it.

The spikes I used were 8mm which I purchased from my local hi-fi dealer. These screw into T nuts which I got from Screwfix direct. When inserting the T nuts use a G clamp. Try not to use a hammer as the blows can mark the timber.

THE CENTRAL COLUMN

I constructed my first pair from 3 by 2 which I laminated together using 3 inch number 12 screws to make the timber section twice as large. This also affects the stand as this method of construction aids the dispersal of structural resonance. Here is the simplest way to achieve the best height for the loudspeaker:

1. Measure the height of the treble unit from the bottom of the cabinet
2. Subtract this dimension from 32



inches (this is the average height of the ear whilst sitting down)

3. Also subtract the thickness of the top plate and the base plate including the spikes!
4. We now have the height of the central column!
5. Armed with this data we can now cut the column to height.

THE TOP PLATE

This is constructed from the same material as the base plate. And again draw the lines on the surface of the timber. Then check your dimensions THREE times before cutting. Use the same glass to achieve the same profile as the base.

ASSEMBLING THE STAND

This is very simple to achieve as the stand is well designed. Follow the diagram. Remember that all holes have to be pilot drilled with a 3mm drill before drilling the clearance holes to suit the screws. The central column also needs to be glued to the base plate and the top plate as well as being screwed together. I used repair brackets as well to support the top plate as well as the base plate.

These were screwed into the stands using 12mm no 7 countersunk screws. All holes have to be countersunk. Screws should be steel, countersunk, pozidrive, and the length chosen to suit the type of timber you are using.

POSSIBLE MODIFICATIONS

The dimensions of the stand can be

changed but they must have the same proportions. The mass of the stand can be increased, especially the base plate, but remember that more mass will alter the sound. Generally more mass means that bass notes will be slower. Also you can add up to three central supports which will increase the stability of the loudspeaker.

Hardwood stands are another option. This type of timber is much more expensive and sounds much crisper so caution should be exercised as to the choice of materials. Finishing the stands is entirely up to you but do remember to sand the timber down to a surface that is as smooth as a baby's skin.

HOW THEY SOUND

These stands add very little to the signature of the loudspeakers. The image gains in height, width and depth. They have the ability to produce bass frequencies in excess of the loudspeakers' performance. I built these stands specifically for a pair of ATC SCM12 loudspeakers and was delighted with the results. They seemed to present the stereo image in a fashion akin to being at the movies. With little or no resonance coupled to a small mass they presented an extremely wide, very deep and spectacularly high image. The decay was exactly as I expected, especially on piano.

Good luck with your loudspeaker stands - I am sure you will be as delighted with the results as I was!

book review

Mike Ballance reviews the BRITISH RADIO VALVES The Vintage Years: 1904 - 1925 by Keith R Thrower



had two grids, but should not be confused with the 'screen

What a mine of information this book is! Most of the early part is historical in nature and makes a fascinating read. Later on you get tables and appendices galore - the best of both worlds is here. Lavishly illustrated with photographs of early valves, it's only a pity that these pictures are all in black and white only. Each chapter ends with a comprehensive set of references.

The first chapter describes the early growth of the British valve industry with mention of many manufacturers. The Valve Manufacturers Association was formed in 1923 for the purpose of ensuring, 'unity of practice in the sale of Radio Valves'.

Subsequent chapters cover the Fleming Diode, Early 'soft' valves (not a hard vacuum and sometimes filled with gas at a low pressure) and bright emitter triode receiver valves. After bright emitters you get a chapter on dull emitters, so there's no excuse for not knowing the difference!

An interesting development was the four electrode valve. This

grid' of later tetrodes (and pentodes). The function was entirely different, enabling lower anode voltages to be used. Next comes transmitter valves of the period 1916 to 1925 and a whole chapter is devoted to Post Office valves.

The last chapter describes bases, caps and connections, again with many pictures of the different types used. But that is far from the end of this book. There are no less than seven appendices, followed by a general index and lastly an index of early valve types. Comprehensive? You can say that again!

Keith Thrower's first book, 'History of the British Radio Valve to 1940' was published in 1992. A subsequent book is planned, presumably to cover those valves manufactured after 1925.

*by Keith R Thrower
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Letter of the Month

NOW HEAR THIS

Your recent article comparing digital recorders with a Nakamichi Compact Cassette recorder has caused me to experiment, and this is one we can all try at home! Try recording an analogue source using MiniDisc, but restrict the dynamic range of the recording to about 70dB, similar to that of a cassette tape recording (i.e. record to a peak level of -30dB).

The resulting recording, to my ears, retains many of the qualities of analogue sound. I do not know if this is a psychoacoustic effect, or if the ATRAC data compression algorithm adjusts in some way to restricted dynamic range in allocating the bitrate to where it is really needed. I have noticed that when using MiniDisc to record from a hissy radio station the complex signal (complex because of the hiss) overwhelms the available bitrate and the recording sounds flat and poor. The potential for wide dynamic range of ATRAC does not appear to be helpful if the original source has a high noise floor.

With this in mind, I have long felt that the key to the problems of digital sound is the inappropriate use of its wide dynamic range by excited recording engineers. The dynamic range of the recording should be a question of aesthetic judgement, and not dictated simply by the recording technology. At a live performance we choose how far away from the musicians we sit. With a recording we have to trust the engineer to choose for us. Many seem to wish to use the available technology to its maximum potential, regardless of the consequences and the listener is thrust unwillingly up on stage with the performers. Perhaps we have to go through a novelty stage with the introduction of any new technology? I remember the introduction of colour TV when every High Street dealer had one on display with the colour turned up to painful levels to attract attention. Several of my CDs sound like those early colour TVs looked!

The wide dynamic range potential of digital recording might be useful, but how often? High resolution digital

formats now have an available range of 144dB. Impressive, but what's it for? Phil Spector's 'wall of sound' actually has a dynamic range of only a few dB; it sounds exciting on a portable radio and was intended to do so. Most pop music is listened to on basic equipment (portables, in-car, walkmans, MP3, or in the 1960s - a Dansette record player), and wise recording engineering takes this into account. Consequently much pop doesn't have a wide dynamic range, and can be listened to in a noisy environment on pretty basic equipment. Incidentally, the psychoacoustic effect of this compression is that the music never sounds too loud, or indeed loud enough. This kind of music does not require wide dynamic range.

Unlike the 'wall of sound' and its many variants, acoustic music does have a maximum loudness. This also sets a limit on the useable dynamic range of the recording. Too dynamic a recording replayed loud enough to hear ambience and decay can, at its peak levels, exceed the maximum realistic loudness of the instruments. This is very easily done with a quiet instrument like an acoustic guitar. If it sounds louder than a guitar then it can't be a guitar! I don't know what it is. But if it no longer sounds like any guitar ever sounded, it can't be hi-fi either! And if we adjust downwards the replay level so that peaks are realistic, ambience and decay disappear into the noise floor, together with rhythmic subtlety also. These are the very weaknesses often unfairly blamed on digital sound. We should not welcome a technology for the way in which people choose to use it.

So for a lot of music, wide dynamic range is not only irrelevant but can be undesirable. If MD or CD had been designed with a maximum dynamic range similar to the vinyl LP, could the available bitrate have been better employed? How much better would it sound? Vinyl can sound wonderful although in practice it struggles to achieve a 60dB range. There are no bad recording technologies, just bad recordings, caused by inappropriate application of the technology. Even 78s can be enjoyable with vocal music but

with piano, forget it! But then I have heard some poor CDs of piano too; one does not listen to piano with one's head inside the instrument, not before the 9 o'clock watershed anyway. Stravinsky once asked, "Why high fidelity, isn't fidelity sufficient?"

Phil Jesson

Fascinating observations, Phil! The interesting thing is that MD and CD don't behave in completely similar ways in this respect, because with CD, it's a simple case of keeping the levels as high as possible (so long as they don't clip 0dB), because uncompressed PCM distorts more as the levels drop. This explains why compression actually suits CD. However, with MD, as you say, you're 'selectively' allocating the scarce resource that is bits. To wit, if you run the levels lower, all that data space that was going to be used for amplitude can now be reallocated to low level signals (and better describe harmonics, atmosphere, dimensionality, etc.). What you're effectively doing is tricking the ATRAC codec into giving you more of what you want, and less of what it thinks you want! The problem is that, of course, at lower levels, you run into the aforementioned bugbear of linear PCM - the fact that as the amplitude drops, so the distortion rises...

As always, it's a trade-off, and methinks some very careful and controlled listening tests are in order. (I don't imagine for one minute that Sony boffins haven't done this - it would be fascinating to see their findings...). Anyhow, the trick with ATRAC is to keep the signal as simple (and uncompressed) as possible - hence surface noise from vinyl (or even samples in rap music) and suchlike forces the system onto the back foot, and the results are easy to hear...

Meanwhile, what you say about LP is correct; it has a relatively restricted dynamic range; but what it proves is how sensitive the ear is. Even signals of just a few dB, often

below the level of ambient noise (road noise outside, fridges, mains hum) can be heard very clearly from vinyl. The beauty of LP is that – providing it's a fine pressing played on top quality gear – even at these very low levels, it's very linear and accurate, unlike (PCM) digital which is completely freaking out, turning in massive distortion figures, especially at high frequencies. By some accident of science, our ears are much more amenable to the strengths of analogue (low distortion at low levels) than those of digital (low distortion at high levels). So all you theologians out there, think on this – does this then mean that God listens to vinyl and not CD? Now there's a pub argument if I ever heard one... which brings us to this gem of a letter: **DP**

Linn Sondek), the discs were £10, which was twice the price of an LP, and there weren't many of them, as several companies held back from producing them for a year or two. Most of the LP vs. CD debate originated from manufacturers of record decks, who could see the threat to their position, and from hi-fi journalists who invented a conflict to help sell their magazines.

I enjoy listening to my LPs and my CDs, and I expect I'm no different from most listeners who are interested in the music and see no need to worry about a spurious "great debate". I've just been looking at Hi Fi Choice no. 37, published in 1984, which reviewed over 40 cassette decks. The author said that on two of the best decks it was, "difficult to tell the difference between the deck and compact disc". This wasn't just damning with faint praise, because

naturally wanted to buy the follow up. But which format? It's readily available on vinyl for £11.99 at my local independent record emporium, or for £10 on CD down the road from the Megastore. Which do I choose? That's precisely why people are still talking about which is best. It's not journalistic hyperbole or sensationalism – we're in a situation where a piece of music is available on two rival formats at similar prices, and a choice has to be made. We're all into getting as close to the music as possible, and we need to know the best way to do this – hence 'the great debate'. Demonstrably not spurious, then...

As for your comments about Noel's assessment of the best cassette decks being hard to tell from CD, I would simply say that if you press 'play' on a CD player and 'record' on a Nakamichi cassette deck, then you'll get something sounding very similar to the original CD (possibly nicer, as analogue tape adds warmth). There's nothing contradictory here. However, cue up a high end turntable and hit 'record' on the Nak and you'll get an altogether better sounding recording, thanks to the superior source. Moreover, feed a crossed pair of electret condenser microphones into a Nak and you'll get a startlingly good live recording that will, indeed, sound better than LP due to it being a 'first generation' master. This isn't rocket science. As for Noel's article on DAT, again he was right: the higher 48kHz sampling frequency of Digital Audio Tape gave an obviously better sound than CD's 44.1kHz – a trend that DVD-Audio has continued, upping the sampling rates right up to 192kHz with encouraging results.

So... yes, I think it is worth talking about the issue of digital sound quality, as there is still a choice – just like you don't have to buy a Microsoft Windows-based PC to compute. It doesn't mean we're anti-digital, but that we're anti-lowest common denominator digital – what the hardware and software companies still sometimes tell us is 'perfect'. I too have lots of CDs, and try my hardest to get a good sound from them, and mostly succeed. But there's nothing like good all-analogue recording on vinyl (preferably with valves, too) to remind you how bad digital of any resolution is! As for the Zero 7 album, I bought it on vinyl for me, but my brother's getting the CD for his birthday. Thanks for reading. **DP**



MiniDisc users – try Phil Jesson's psychoacoustic test

THE GREAT DEBATE?

"The war is over"? I'll believe that when I see it – if I see it. What will you all find to write about instead? Just look at the articles in the April issue to see how hung up you all are about analogue vs. digital. Or was that the final Shrove Tuesday of indulgence before the ashes of Lent and a long-overdue return to objectivity?

Of course you're entitled to your views about analogue vs. digital, boring though they have become, but not to try to rewrite history. When CD hit the High Street in 1983 most people had no need at all to take sides. One good reason was the high price of going digital. There were hardly any players below £500 (compared with £360 for a

he also said that a good recorder could "rival or improve on LP standards". His name was Noel Keywood. I believe that a year or two later someone with a similar name wrote an article that led to a great deal of controversy about DAT. Do you really expect us to take these "debates" seriously?

Tony Williams

Okay then Tony – you ascribe the digital vs. analogue debate to hi-fi hacks (like me) kicking up a stink in a bid to sell magazines, suggesting it's all a storm in a (rather old) teacup and not really relevant today – so answer me this: The new Zero 7 album has just come out – the last one was a masterpiece, and so I

THE GREAT DEBATE – PART II

I felt I had to respond to your 'Digital Versus Analogue' feature. I have been playing with hi-fi for forty two years, and have usually come up against two stumbling blocks, lack of money to buy top end equipment, and the wife's usual comments like, "Why do your speakers have to be so big?" [ha ha – Ed.] I feel we so easily forget the reason why things happen as they do, high end equipment has never been cheap, but of late, like the ever widening gap between the rich and the poor, the prices of top end audio is getting silly.

Thirty years ago I could afford an SME arm, Shure V15 Mk3 cartridge and Garrard 401 turntable, but over night the Linn LP12 moved into view and suddenly you needed a £1,000 moving coil cartridge with its own expensive pre-amp, and it all started to get silly money. What we forget now (and some of your editorial staff will be too young to know this anyway!) is that the first CD players sounded a lot better than the cheap vinyl set-ups, with their ceramic tipped cartridges that people could afford then!

My son bought a CD player before me and I remember thinking how hard and clinical it sounded, then along came Level 42 and Mark King and on CD his bass guitar sounded much more punchy and like the sound we had heard at a concert, the vinyl sounded so slow and lacking in attack, so over night I was converted. I have to say that my beloved 'Yes' album and the many other LPs I had, were completely worn out and I was very glad to throw them away, also gone was the hated 'snap, crackle and pop' (record surface noise).

A friend of mine has a very expensive vinyl/valve set up and it really is very pleasant to listen to, but I feel it's almost too cosy, I'm sure the ear likes the microphonic valve sound and the nice warm halo round each instrument and this brings me round to a great mystery - why are some, just a few, CDs almost magical, and lack 'the digital sound'? (In particular, a cheap 'Erato' version of Handel's 'Semele' opera, an RCA Mahler Symphony No 5, ADD and 24/96 remastered). Still, Pink Floyd's 'Dark Side of the Moon' even after another re-issue, still sounds rubbish compared with how I remember the vinyl. There's something going on that isn't quite as black and white as it seems - are the recording studios still using those awful JBL monitors with the harsh treble to mix with, and the mixing desks that use cheap op-amps?

Something's wrong in paradise and I don't think it's all the hated CD format's fault!

Nick Rolls

Something's wrong in paradise? "Paradise"? Are you talking about what likes to dignify itself with the title 'the recording industry'? Hmm... Anyway, I take your point - there's more to it than simply digital vs. analogue. In truth, it's ultimately a case of, 'it ain't what you do, but the way that you do it'. Some CDs sound superb, others lousy, and it's largely down to that famous 'jazz cigarette'-smoking, lager drinking, grubby T-shirt wearing, hair-over-their-ears human sub-species known as recording engineers. They insist on piss-poor studio monitors, over-complex mixing desks and ramping the levels and EQ up to eleven (they love 'Spinal Tap' but just don't get the joke). Not that I'm biased, but that reprobate Simon Pope was once a studio engineer and look what happened to him!

DP

clarity. The STA 100 had plenty of muscle but hardened up somewhat, my MA 15's may have been better than the STA but my pair must have continuous use from new.

My STA 15 is lined up with an Ultimo 20A, Garrard 401, Lecson AC1 and metal Klipsch Heresy's. I did dive in the back of the Heresy's to rewire and stiffen up the cabinets. A word about the Lecson - the supplied interconnect between the AC1 and the APIX power is absolute rubbish, the API X is the best of the Lecson power amps but way off the STA 15.

Right, let's talk about the Leaks! It's interesting that the Leak range has the same characteristics as the Radford range - the more powerful they were the worse they sounded. Of the classic amps, the best is probably a re-built original TL 12+. I have two pairs plus a pair of BBC's re-valved made by sound Sales. I have replaced components and



Studio engineers – just say no, kids!

"BLOODY MARVELLOUS"

It was good to see the Radford valve amplifiers reviewed in your November magazine. Hopefully they will be included in your World Classics List. I have owned eight Radfords over the years, the first I bought new-an original STA 253, after the disappointment with Radford's SCA 30 transistor. After a lot of listening I preferred the STA 15 to the 25 although the latter had probably a better mid band. I like the 15's sweeter sound with its apace and

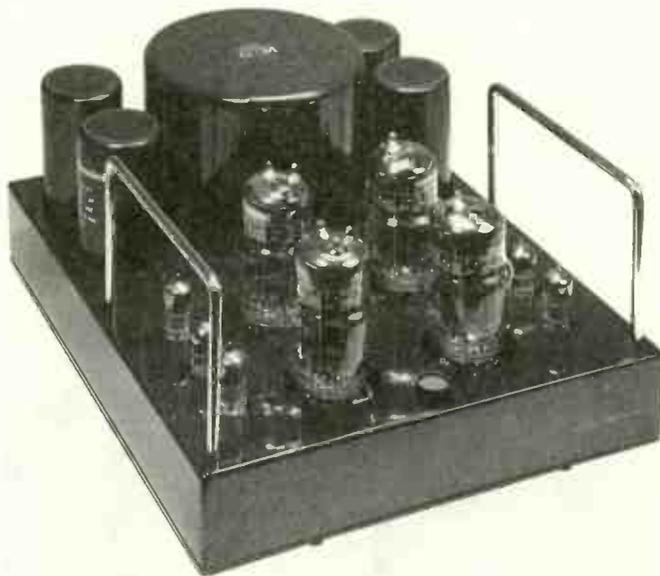
re-wired with PTFE covered silver wire from RS - it makes a tremendous difference. If you like the Leaks, I rate the Stereo 70 transistor. It will see off most modern trannies because of its open information retrieval, with no veiling but with a softened sound. I use one in the bedroom with a pair of Tannoy's or Decca London horns.

I had a hi-fi friend over last week and we did some listening - CD vs. LP. The LP produced more information with a live natural sound,

the CD sounded dry and seemed to have a filter on board. We finally fired up the Leak 12s into Quad ESL 57s fed from a Thorens 124 sited with a big Garrot Decca SC4E-my friend's comment -'It's bloody marvellous'. I found the value amp comparison in your November magazine interesting - the Graff GM 20 OTL is obviously the way forward, provided you have the loot...

Eddie Barradine

interconnects have separate DIN connectors and power and signal don't share an interconnect. The volume control has been replaced by an Alps Black, and I've replaced the balance control with resistors. Thanks to Les Wolstenholme of Avondale Audio for the ideas for these mods, which have increased clarity and dynamic range considerably just as advertised. BTW, the interconnects which came with the amps turned out to be not genuine



Graff OTL - "obviously the way forward, provided you have the loot"

VORSPRUNG DURCH TECHNIK?

I've been meaning for some time to take issue with you on the subject of German cars (no toadying here). Admittedly in expressing terminal ennui with them you've named only the Munichers, but I feel that Audi and VW need to be clearly disassociated from the criticism. From my first Beetle in the 1960s I've found in them an integrity not present in British cars (more's the pity - I blame the traditional English disdain for technology, seen also in bog-standard electronic components in hi-fi, according to NK). We have a 1986 Audi 90 and a 1990 Audi Coupe, and they are involving, incisive, refined and capable of good dynamics when required. My 90 in particular, having five output capacitors, sorry cylinders, produces deep tuneful bass when the volume is increased. Having recently driven many current models, I agree in part on the Munichers, but maintain my stance on VW and Audi. Rant over.

I followed your advice and bought Naim amplification, not the 42.5/110 you recommended but two 42s and a 160 which came my way for unrefusable sums. I've modified one 42 so that the power-in and signal-out

Naim ones, so I replaced them with real black SNAICs and consider it money very well spent - lots more PRAT (Pace, Rhythm And Timing, as one website has it) and timbre too.

Jokes about creeping aside, thanks to you for the recommendation of Naim, of whom I knew but didn't think I could afford! And now I'm hoping you'll find time to reply with two words or one word and one number, being the designation of the floorstanding 'speakers which will become available at a bargain price and work synergistically with my Naims. My Eltaxes, which we thought were quite good, began to buzz unacceptably, so I did what I should've done long before - returned them whence they came and bought a pair of Mission 733 Mk 2s on with which to be going ("Captivating floorstanders ..." says your review summary). Now, however, I think I notice what NK mentioned in his review - a bit of muddle on climaxes or complex passages - hence the foregoing query. Sources, I hear you ask? Denon TU260L Mk 2 and Rega Planar 3 with Origin Live end stub, counterweight and internal wiring.

Finally, an attempt to hit you with a

big issue. Are there any moves afoot to keep Radio 3 analogue and even restore it to its former glory? If so, how can we support said move(s), and if not, can we start one?

Keith Aburrow

Hi Keith - well, if anything, it's those eccentric, wacky Bavarians whose 'autos' I like most from Germany. I personally find the 'Strudel Wagons' (and their badge engineered variants) less endearing. They remind me of much high end Japanese hi-fi - terribly worthy but devoid of charm. Interestingly, Naim Audio recently moved from Jaguars to Mercedes for their directors' cars, and their sales supremo said he just couldn't fault the cars with a three-pointed star. Indeed, when we went for a spin in my old Jag, he began regaling me with tragic tales of his previous Jag's unreliability and lacklustre build. But after a few miles, he had developed the look of a lovesick teenager reflecting on the glorious romance of his first affair, and tearfully confessed, "we just had to get rid of them for tax reasons..."

Speaking of Naims, you have a real classic in the 42/110 combo. Unlike my motor, you can send your amps back home for a full rebuild to better-than-new spec, at very modest prices. This wouldn't be a bad idea for your unmodded 42 (which you could bring up to 42.S spec), and your 110. As for speakers, I'd counsel a mint pair of Epos ES14s standmounters (about £250 second-hand) for a classic system, or the stunning Elac FS207.2 floorstanders (£999 new) for a modern one. The Elacs I think would be particularly synergistic, thanks to their super clean sound and decent sensitivity. Now there's a German design with sparkle... **DP**

THE MISSING LINK

I refer to the new TecnoArm 'A' from Michell Engineering, and your review of it a few months back. I'd like to point out that the technique of blasting does not reduce weight and doesn't come from the 'motorsport' industry. The blasting techniques originate from the Aerospace industry, and what blasting does is to close up the micro fractures in the material. Any piece of metal viewed through a microscope we will see millions of very fine but dangerous fractures. The hammering action of the bead peen pellets (balls) glass or steel, etc. also work as a blacksmith would do hammering at his metal work, hardening the metal. In closing the millions of micro fractures, it vastly

improves fatigue life of the metals, i.e. the microscopic reversals.

This bead peening technique was used in the Aerospace industry some years before the motorsport industry adopted it. The motorsport industry lays behind the Aerospace industry by a fair few miles. When the Concorde first took off, the cars of the time were Austin 1100/1300, Cortinas, etc. When it landed for the last time at Filton, the Concorde did not look out of place parked next to the modern cars. I worked for many years in the bead peening department. I know what it's about, it's so simple but wow is it effective! Aeroplane engines would not work for long without this simple process. The rockets, to the moon and soon to Mars would probably not go there if the materials used on them were not bead peened.

J.S. Ridsdill

Hi there JS – we did see each other at the show and it was a pleasure – thanks for your support. I duly mentioned your letter to Ken Ishiwata, who later popped in to the Hi-Fi World room (he loves his tubes, does KI) and he nodded emphatically and enthusiastically pronounced, "that's right"! As an aside, I live in Bristol, just over the Suspension Bridge, and saw Concorde fly over on its last trip home. As a boy in the seventies, I can remember it going into regular service and buying a model with my pocket money. All I can say is - what a shame, or quel dommage! DP



Michell TecnoArm and British Aerospace/Aerospatiale Concorde – what's the connection?

WHINGE OF THE WEEK

First of all I want to start by saying that I believe Hi-Fi World to be one of the better magazines out there. Due to the somewhat negative content of this e-mail the chances of it appearing in print are pretty low but here goes anyway. The main issue I would have specifically with your magazine is the use of your "globe" rating system which

appears to be similar to What Hi-Fi's, in that globes or stars are awarded to products to reflect their overall quality. The main problem with this system, whether magazine editors believe it or like it, is general buyers still use a hi-fi components rating for deciding on which product to buy.

A number of retailers I have spoken to when auditioning components for myself are frustrated by the fact that a customer will not consider a three or four globe/star product against a five globe/star product on the basis that due to this rating it will not sound as good. This is sometimes despite the fact that a customer has actually listened to, and preferred, the 'lesser' product. The following is a scene I have witnessed on many occasions whilst browsing one of my local hi-fi shops:

BUYER: "I'm looking to buy a new pair of speakers - Megasound Super 7's are supposed to sound good?"

RETAILER: "They are excellent in the right system. Have you considered Dynamics Decibel 12?"

(Buyer quickly looks through the latest copy of his favourite hi-fi mag and finds a short review at the back)

BUYER: "It only got three stars in my magazine - thanks but no thanks!"

This surely isn't helping anybody! It now appears within hi-fi retailers' advertising that they sell systems specifically with 'five star' rated products. It is very sad that the world of hi-fi retail has come to this. I would urge you to reconsider the use of these dreaded globes as they do not serve to help anyone! The following are just a few ways in which I feel the

content of your magazine could be improved:

- get rid of the globe rating system!
- include a list of associated equipment with each of your reviews to give the reader some idea about the system in which the product is used and see next point.
- each month there should be a potted history of each of your reviewers. Their

musical and hi-fi likes and dislikes, how their systems have evolved and also what their current system is with room dimensions etc. In my opinion a components review will be easier to understand with this frame of reference.

- include details of music used in a review and why.
- review more systems. In my opinion a review of a single component is almost worthless as there are too many variables relating to a buyers system. If we all used the same speakers and amps a review of a new CD player would have merit as we would all be aware of the starting point. At the moment everybody is coming from a unique starting point system wise. What sounds fabulous in my system with my cables and in my room may sound awful in someone else's
- feature more retailers - get them to put a system together which they believe works well and then review this.
- bring in new reviewers. The problem with most magazines (and admittedly this is a problem you seem to be addressing) is that they appear to use the same old reviewers time and again. These reviewers also have their work printed in several magazines. Each of these magazines have a different philosophy but use them same people to review. This does not add up to me. Again this does not appear to be an issue Hi-Fi World have but bringing in 'new blood' always adds a different perspective which is useful. And this brings me to the end of my whinge. If you have got this far, thanks.

Rob Moores

Thanks for the criticism Rob, and it's taken in the spirit that it was intended. I hope you've noticed that over the past few months we've started doing some of the very things you suggest, entirely unprompted by your good self I hasten to add (so obviously 'great minds', and all that). Obviously, page space is at a premium and we can't do everything we'd like overnight, but expect a 'potted history' of our (new) reviewers soon...

As for the globe system, you make a great point. If you're a regular customer, you'll have noticed how we constantly implore readers to use them only as a rough guide, and insist that they're shorthand, rather than definitive 'final judgements' on a product's place in the great scheme of things. In fact, we go further than that, and ask readers not to believe us absolutely, and to take what we say as 'food for thought', rather than 'what to think',

unlike some of our rivals. You and I are all grown ups here, and we've got past the 'this rocks, that sucks' stage...

I think systems and synergy are so incredibly important, and that's why we devote acres of room to readers' own anecdotes and findings. You'll also notice a slightly 'unorthodox' mix of products in our group tests – if you want 'eighteen £200 DVD players tested', then you know where to look, but if you want a sense of how much better or worse a £200 DVD is against a £1000 CD player, then you've come to the right place. We're trying to give a bigger and slightly more three dimensional picture, and I hope it shows. **DP**

OFF THE PACE?

I am a newcomer to your magazine and am impressed by the level-headed analysis, and the resistance to join the 'just because it's new it's got to be better flock'. I like your views on vinyl and FM, and have particularly enjoyed your letters section. I am currently faced with two dilemmas, I think it's time to change my amplifier and have some turntable trouble. The amp's started playing up recently and has got me thinking. It began cutting out on the left hand channel, however removing the case and blowing it out with some photographers compressed air seems to have largely fixed it, but have come around to thinking that it is the weak link in my system, and I would now like to change it.

My system has evolved somewhat haphazardly over the years, as a combination of great bargains and carefully auditioned bits to go with them. It started with the Cyrus 2 amp brought from a pawn broker for £50 some ten years ago. Around this grew a pair of Castle Chesters, and a Marantz CD17 KI Sig. Other bargains include a lovely Quad FM 4 (again £50!) and a Thorens TD150Mk2 with an SME 3009 arm and a donated LINN K9 cartridge. I have remained happy with this for several years, but it feels like time to change. It all sits in a modest size room approx 12x14 feet with the speakers across the short axis. The floor is wooden.

Firstly, what do you think I should audition to replace the amp? I quite fancy the idea of Sugden A21, but I wonder if my speakers are sensitive enough. I also quite like the idea of a tube amp, but have the same worries about this. On a different note a friend of mine has an all Naim system that I have always admired. But I wonder if it would be too 'in your face' for my setup

and room-What do you think?

My second problem is my turntable. The K9 died and somewhat rashly I presented myself at a dealer and got a Rega Elys fitted on their recommendation. My turntable was presented head to head against a P3 with the same cartridge, which well out performed it. Is the problem that my turntable is really off the pace now, and should I follow their advice and buy the P3, or is the cartridge just wrong with my turntable and could there be life in the old dog yet? What cartridge would you recommend, and are there any other mods that I should consider doing to the Thorens, or alternately should I consider a completely different turntable? Thank you in anticipation of your valued advice

Bob Heritage

You're right to think that your Cyrus is the weak link. It was an excellent amplifier in its day, and still has a wonderfully energetic and musical sound, but if it's started playing up then it's unlikely it's performing at its best, and frankly, you can buy better. The Sugden A21a is superb – it's extremely open and detailed, and will make your Cyrus sound fuzzy, grainy and two-dimensional by comparison. But it certainly won't bring any extra power to the party. As your room is fairly small, I'd say it would suffice, but you'd do well to upgrade your Chesters at a later date to the Conway III's – which also have a lovely warm and full sound, as well as being relatively easy to drive. If you really do need more grunt, then Exposure's 3010 integrated did

more specialised, lower power design the Sugden best in your system.

As for the turntable, the Rega P3 is a superb deck – much maligned in my opinion and if suitably set up (on a Base SP01 isolation platform, for starters) is capable of great results even with £500 cartridges. I'd say that your Thorens is probably past its prime. You could get a full rebuild done (possibly from Loricraft) and the 3009 rebuilt at SME for a couple of hundred quid, but I wonder if it would compare? Probably yes, the Thorens combo is ultimately more capable, but methinks lots of fettling and tweaking would be involved. So if you want a simple, off-the-shelf solution, the P3 is it. That said, when you're up for an upgrade, you can always send the P3's tonearm (RB300) off to Origin Live for a Structural Mod and rewire... It never stops, does it? Then there's the other option – save your dosh until you have £749.95, whereupon you can buy a shiny new Roksan Radius 5, complete with superb Nima unipivot. This would add real depth and dimensionality to the Rega P3's already very clean and open sound, plus a lovely lilting musicality thanks to that great tonearm. Oh, and it would work with your Elys a treat, but when your boat really comes in, then Shure's V15VxMR (£250) moving magnet is the one to aim for. The Roksan/Sugden/Castle Conway III combo would be an absolute cracker, and look stunning to boot! **DP**



Roksan Radius 5 – thanks to its superb Nima unipivot, this is the ultimate 'affordable audiophile' turntable

very well in our group test last month – it has a very sweet and musical sound, although lacks the A21a's hear-through clarity. The Arcam A90 is the ultimate do-it-all integrated, but you might find a

ENCORE!

Thanks for the excellent review of tonearms in the April issue. It was very useful and I am sure very time-consuming. How about an even more taxing job, a deck review? Turntables

are even harder to A/B than CD players. There are so many variables including tonearm and cartridge synergy. That makes it even more of a taxing problem for your poor readers. How about a stab at comparing say the Orbe or GyroDec, a modded LPI2, Avid Volvere, SME 10, Origin Live Aurora or Resolution, to name but a few. A daunting task I know, but that would make it even more of value to the poor punters out there.

David Wise

Hi David – it's coming. We're just giving 'the Tone-meister' (Stewart Wennen, who did the tonearm reviews) time to recover. He still has more arms in his house than Saddam ever had (oops – bit of politics – my name's Ben Elton, etc...) When SW feels capable of grasping an Allen key once more, rest assured there'll be an analogue special to end all analogue specials (and we might even chuck in a Revox G36 open reel for fun, too!) DP

NAIT ON YOUR LIFE

How about doing a supertest on 'Vintage FM tuners before the death of FM radio'? How about conducting it using Noel Keywood's Leak Troughline 3 FM tuner as a benchmark? I have two vintage FM tuners which you can borrow for such a test: these are a Sansui TN-555 and a Meridian 104. Both are in excellent working condition. I purchased the Sansui TU-555 for 80gns (£84) in Xmas 1970. Several years ago Russ Andrews fitted a Kimber powercord lead and plug, plus a Kimbercap or two inside the bonnet.

The bonnet was beige, which I didn't like, so a garage mechanic sprayed it white. Tim de Paravicini worked on such tuners in Japan in the 1960s. He told me that the TU-555 is based on an American Fisher design. Russ Andrews thought the Sansui sounded like a NAIT tuner. I hope he meant the NAT-01! Over time, the Sansui became quite noisy and bloated – yet its sonic character drew me like a moth to a flame. Recently seriously my Sansui TU-555 sounds very good indeed in my very revealing system, which comprises Korato DVP-10 valve pre-amp with dual mono power supply, Border Patrol SE 300B Western Electric, and a pair of Audiophysics The Spark MK3 speakers, using Kimber cables once again. Happy reviewing!

Phil Jesson

Hi Phil – thanks for the kind offer – yes, we're hoping to do a 'new meets old' supertest of tuners at some

point, and I already have a shortlist in my mind. I'm still reeling from the tonearm test, so don't expect it to soon, though. Anyhow, this brings us to another of our more unusual group activities... DP



the, emm, "Naim NAIT tuner" ...

TRANSMISSION

I was delighted to read David Price's enthusiasm for the IMF transmission line speaker, model TLS80 (Olde Worlde, March Issue, Hi-Fi World). Cambridge Audio manufactured a very similar speaker, the Cambridge R50 monitor, employing KEF 139, 110 and T27 drivers augmented with an STC 4001G supertweeter in a 4-way system with crossover frequencies of 400, 3k and 10kHz. I constructed a pair of speakers identical to these from plans published in 'Hi-Fi Answers' in 1974 ["Build a top-quality transmission line speaker" by C J Rogers].

I drove these speakers originally with a Quad 33/303 system which was replaced a few years ago with the Musical Fidelity XPI001 XAS100 combination, the greater power of the latter of great benefit in terms of overall sound quality and imaging for the reproduction of classical music. I have been wondering recently if it would be worthwhile replacing the components of the crossover network after 30 years 'wear and tear'. The speakers sound fine and I wouldn't dream of replacing them, but I might not have noticed a gradual loss of performance which would only become apparent if off-spec. circuits were replaced.

Incidentally, I am going to replace my aged NAD CD player shortly and have considered the Musical Fidelity A3.2 or the Creek CD50Mk2 as replacements. Any comments or suggestions would be greatly appreciated.

Bill Patterson

Hi Bill – hopefully this month's supertest will be of use with your upgrading... Thanks for the memories – your speakers sound seriously cool. DP

FOR THE RECORD

I want to record my record collection onto CD and record CD to CD.

[1] can I record shop-bought CDs onto CD-R via a hi-fi CD recording machine or do they have protection to prevent this?

[2] if this is the case, do computer CD re-writers get round this, and if so how does the quality compare with a CD recording made on a CD recording machine?

[3] is it possible to record my record collection onto CD using a computer re-writer?

[4] if CDs have in-built protection, why do manufacturers bother to make hi-fi CD recording machines?

Michael Flynn

Hi Michael – you ask some very good questions. Here goes:

[1] yes you can, but you can only record the original disc to the copy, and not a copy to the copy. This is thanks to the Serial Copyright Management System built into digital recorders (CD-R, DAT, MD) since the late eighties, which prevents copies of copies being made. It works by setting a special SCMS bit (binary digit) in the disc's Table of Contents (TOC) to on, which duly tells the recorder not to copy. The original has SCMS set off, but all copies are set on – therefore if a recorder sees the SCMS on in the TOC, it won't record.

[2] Computer CD rewriters simply ignore SCMS, otherwise the quality is pretty much the same, assuming the computer copies are burned at a low speed (the lower the better, ideally 1:1)

[3] yes – record your records to a WAV file using software such as Steinberg's WaveLab, via the analogue line in (from your phono stage or preamp out). Save it as a 16bit, 44.1kHz file and use a CD authoring package (i.e. Nero) to burn it to CD-R (at as slow a speed as your burner will go).

[4] well, SCMS was a sensible system

agreed by the hi-fi hardware and software manufacturers, and then computer audio came along, shrugged and said, "who cares?" - thus turning the music industry upside down. Result: copycoding, and assorted other nasties that are now finding their way onto discs... Meanwhile, album sales are higher than ever, and singles sales disappearing - thanks to MP3s. You couldn't make it up, could you? **DP**

Ah yes - the builders! Got 'em in at the moment for a tiddle up and it is a great time to improve the hi-fi as well as the home. Heaven really!

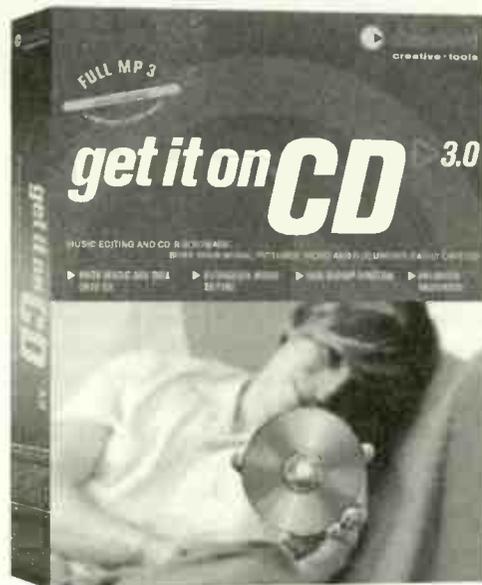
Having sound come from above isn't a realistic experience. And, ignoring this and difficulties in constructing a sensible celestial image, you can only use in-wall loudspeakers (KEF), which are good quality, but not hi-fi. It's fine for quality background music, radio and

clearly the best hi-fi magazine I have read to date. In fact reading your magazine has helped me to put together a nice sounding system from previously owned equipment.

Not being in a position to financially justify purchasing new high end equipment, I took to buying a very nice example of an early LP12 with a Valhalla board and Rega R200 arm, a Creek CAS4040 amp and a CAS3140 tuner. The cartridge currently fitted is a Goldring 920 IGC. The speakers I'm currently using are of Danish build and badged Aurex. I find this system has a nice smooth delivery but it is a little light in the bass. Midband is really excellent and treble is there by the bucketful, if a little uncontrolled. I suppose all this was to be expected given the opinions of your learned contributors and the information presented in your Standards pages. However, the light bass I can live with, but the treble could do with tightening up a little. What would you recommend without resorting to high financial outlay?

Finally, if at all possible, I would like the opportunity to mention and thank via your magazine one of your advertisers, namely the hi-fi company "Trading Post" from whom I purchased the Linn. A really big 'thank you' to Ann, Steve and Robin - top class people. Their communication, dedication and honesty has been truly excellent and a real pleasure with which to do business. **John Ruggles**

Thank you too John - what a nice man. Half tempted to give you 'letter of the month', by way of an incentive for other nice folk to write in and generally invest the letters pages with a feeling of 'love and peace'. Have you noticed how it's the know-alls who always put pen to paper? I don't know, I don't think I can take this any longer... if we don't get ten more toadying letters before May I'm going to do a Reggie Perrin... As for your system - congratulations on bagging a quintessential Hi-Fi World-approved affordable audiophile bargain! Your looseness is down largely to your Rega R200 tonearm - it's a nicely soft and beguiling performer, but way off the pace at the frequency extremes. The obvious easy answer is an Origin Live modified Rega RB250 (£250) tonearm, which will bring real incision and grip to the bass and treble regions, and depth and dimensionality to the midband. At the same time, if you possibly can, get your Linn dealer to fit the Cirkus LP12 modification. **DP**



computer audio - SCMS RIP?

CHANGING ROOMS

I am in the middle of a complete house renovation and the house currently resembles a building site. I know it will not always be like this and, when I am putting things back together again, I would like a decent sound system in my kitchen. The electricians have removed strips of plasterboard from the ceiling of the kitchen in order to run cables for the lighting. (The kitchen is quite large and has a flat roof) This started me thinking!! Would it be possible to install speakers in the ceiling to connect to a hi-fi system which I intend to build into this room? The kitchen is quite large (30ft long and 15ft wide) and may need more than two speakers? Any suggestions on speakers and mounting would be gratefully received.

The roof void is only 7 inches deep (the width of the rafters) so this would be a limiting factor. I would probably have to look for second-hand 'speakers, as most of my funds have been swallowed up by the renovation!

I would be very interested to have your comments and suggestions. Congratulations on a great magazine. I'm glad I decided to subscribe. I don't bother with other hi-fi magazines since I took out my subscription.

Steve

what have you, but it isn't quite what high fidelity is about Steve!

For a good sound, coupled with flexibility, wall mounting is an easier and more practical option. In a kitchen so large you are likely to have enough wall space for small, quality 'speakers like Mission 780ses. Put them on firm shelves, or brackets. Put a small hi-fi on shelves nearby to minimise cabling. Hide it all in a matching kitchen-unit cupboard perhaps. In a situation like this I would recommend DAB, with its wide variety of stations. You could also think about a CD with Hard Disc Drive (HDD) to store mountains of background music at good quality. And don't forget digital TV like Freeview, so you can get TV news in the morning with great sound quality, and radio as well. There's no end of choice and you can definitely liven up breakfast a little nowadays. **NK**

TOAD OF TOAD HALL

I have recently taken to reading your magazine and thoroughly enjoy the writings of all your contributors. I particularly like your sections on World Classics and World Standards. In my own humble opinion I would say it is

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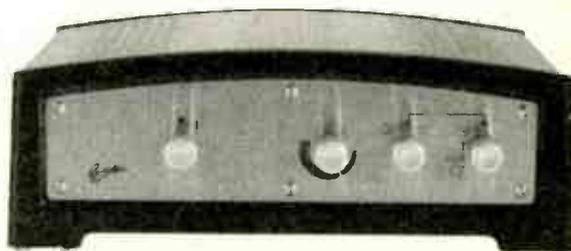
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PIONEER 433MXE Monitor XD	£3995	£2995
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PS AUDIO Ref Link Pre/DAC	£4549	£1997
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REGA ARA (Cherry) XD	£255	£214
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PRO-AC Studio 125 (Cherry)	£1050	£695
QNR Monitors (Black)	£1200	£369
QUAD ESL-63 (Teak)	£3000	£1295
RED ROSE Music Spirit (ribbon tweeters) incl stands	£1200	£896
REGA XEL (Black)	£990	£640
REGA Elo (Black)	£950	£646
ROKSAN Ojan 3 Black	£995	£398
RUARK Broadsword (Rosewood)	£700	£329
SNELL JII Inc. Stands		£378
SNELL J3 High Sensitivity Monitors	£770	£349
SONUS FABER Concertino's	£595	£475
SONUS FABER Grand Piano	£1695	£1196
SOUNDLAB Dynastats	£3200	£1100
SPENDOR LS3/5A (BLK)	£795	£398
SPENDOR BCI/Incl. Stands		£295
SPENDOR S3 Speakers	£650	£455
SPENDOR C3 Centre Speakers	£450	£400
TANNOY Berkeley	£1000	£498
TANNOY Buckingham	£5000	£2495
TANNOY Edinburgh	£2500	£1295
TANNOY M3	£200	£ 75
TANNOY OC2000	£200	£ 95
TANNOY ST50 Tweeters	£650	£448
TARGET RS4 (circa 1977) scratched	£250	£125
TARGET TM1 (circa 1977) scratched	£200	£ 75
THIEL CS2.2 Discoloured veneer	£2500	£896
TRIANGLE Icare	£1500	£345
TRIANGLE Comete XS	£450	£295
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YAMAHA NS-C80	£120	£75

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dCS Delius 24/192 DAC Non Firewire S/H	5999	2995
Krell KAV280CD x-demo	3999	3250
Mark Levinson No 360s x-demo	7495	4499
Naim Audio CDX CD Player S/H	2470	1395
Naim Audio XPS PSU S/H	2100	1199
Naim CD2 Player S/H	1989	975
Theta Carmen CD/DVD Transport S/H	3499	1395
Theta Generation V Balanced S/H	6290	2499
Thule Spirit CD balanced O/P x-demo	900	449
Unison Research Unico Valve CD x-demo	1100	895

Turntables Tonearms & Cartridges

Clearaudio Solution/RB300 x-demo	1595	1099
Kuzma Stabi/Stogi S Turntable New& Boxed	1295	1099
Lehmann Audio Black Cube SE New& Boxed	650	449
McCormack Phono Stage New and Boxed	650	399
Rega P25 Maple x-demo	650	499
Roksan Artexerxes X MC/MM Phono Stage S/H	450	299
Roksan DS1.5 PSU Silver	695	379

Preamplifiers

Audio Research SP11 MK 2 S/H	2950	1599
Electrocompaniet EC 4.7 Preamplifier x-demo	1295	995
Cyrus Ca7.5 Preamplifier S/H	700	499
Gryphon Sonata Allegro 2 box preamplifier x-demo	9739	5995
Linn LK1 Preamplifier S/H	N/A	249
Naim 72 k Preamplifier S/H	789	349
Spectral DMC12 Line New&Boxed	4250	2999
Spectral DMC12 s Phono x-demo	4750	3299

Amplifiers

Audio Research D115 Valve Power Amplifier S/H	N/A	1295
Cyrus Smartpower S/H	600	399
Cyrus PSX-R PSU S/H	350	279
Graaf GM100 Valve Power Amplifier x-demo	4500	3250
Gryphon S100 Class A power amplifier S/H	6000	2500
Gryphon Calisto 2200 integrated S/H	4800	3299
Krell KMA 100 monos S/H	7300	1999
Linn LK 280 Power amplifier x3 S/H	N/A	999
Mark Levinson No335 Stereo Power Amplifiers S/H	8500	4999
Quad 606 Poweramplifier S/H	N/A	349
Red Rose Sprit Integrated x-demo	1000	649
Spectral DMA100s Power Amplifier x-demo	4750	3499

Loudspeakers

Avalon Eclipse Maple x-demo	9800	5999
Apogee Duetta Taupe S/H	4290	1599
Dynaudio Contour 1.3 MKII Birds Eye maple Latest Version S/H	1200	849
DynaStands Master SE S/H	175	119
Linn Active Isobariks PMS Active version Black Ash S/H	N/A	599
Linn Active X-overs for Isobariks S/H	N/A	299
Living Voice Auditorium Avatar OBX-R Ebony x-demo	4000	2499
Martin Logan CLSII Anniversary Electrostatics 7 months Old S/H	6700	4795
ProAc Future One Yew S/H	7995	3795
Sonus R4 Stands S/H	329	199
REL Strata III Subwoofer Cherry X-demo	695	449
Verity Audio Fidelio Piano Lacquer x-demo	7995	4499

Cables & Accessories

Acoustic Zen Silver Signature Balanced 12ft S/H	2700	1399
Cardas Neutral Reference 1m RCA-BNC S/H	550	375
Chord Anthem 1m RCA S/H	270	159
Chord Chorus 1m XLR S/H	199	109
Cogan Hall EM-D 0.6m S/H	199	99
Kimber Powercord 350i Wattgate 6ft S/H	219	139
Madrugal CZ Gel 1.5m Balanced new&boxed	599	299
Madrugal MDC 1pro 1m AES/EBUDigital cable new&boxed	319	159
Madrugal MDC 2 1m Fatboy Digital cable new&boxed	319	159
Madrugal MDC 2 0.5m Fatboy Digital cable new&boxed	279	139
MIT Balanced 1m Terminator CV S/H	399	195
NBS Pro Balanced 1.5m S/H	1800	795

Nordost Red Dawn 0.6m RCA S/H	293	139
Nordost Red Dawn 1.0m RCA S/H	329	155
Nordost Red Dawn 2m Balanced Interconnect S/H	509	349
Opera Lux 3 Tier Table Clear/Stainless x-Demo	950	449
PS Audio Mini Lab Mains Cable S/H	160	99
PS Audio Statement Bi Wire 2x3m S/H	908	499
QED Genesis Silver Spiral 2x3m S/H	399	199
QED QNEXII 1m RCA-RCA Interconnect S/H	N/A	22
Siltech SQ58G3 2x4m Balanced Interconnect x-demo	2370	1499

Tuners & Tape Decks, Power Supplies

AKG C1000 Condenser Mic S/H	241	110
Magnum Dynalab FT-R Remote Switcher for FT101A/Etude (New&Boxed)	450	279

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Arcam Alpha II CD Player S/H	N/A	99
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NVA A80 mono power amplifiers X 2. Good cond. £ 799	NVA A60 stereo power amplifier. Good condition. £ 295
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Transcriptors Hydraulic reference/Decca arm. Mint £ POA	Garrard 301/401 chassis in various condition from £ 125

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Castle Kendall speakers. Good condition. £ 69	B&W DM4 speakers. Black finish £ 85
Kef C20 Bookshelf monitor speakers in black £ 60	Magneplanner MG 1.4. Boxed with £400 oak stands £ 999

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Mirantz CD63 top loader cd player. Collectable. £ 125	Cyrus DAD3 Cd player with remote. Ex condition. £ 275
Trio KT880L synthesiser tuner. AM/FM. Black. £ 75	Rotel RCD 965 BX CD player. Mint. Boxed £ 149
Arcam Delta 150 micam stereo tuner and remote. £ 95	Mirantz CD50 Cd player. Ex condition. £ 79
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IME 3009 tonearms from £ 125	Rotel 950 CD player. Ex cond. Boxed. £ 100
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Mirantz SD275 twin cassette deck. Dolby B/C £ 49	Technics SL-PG440A Mash CD player/remote. £ 75
Aiwa AD-S750 Dolby B-C-SHX pro cassette deck £ 75	Technics SL-PS620A CD player/remote. £ 75
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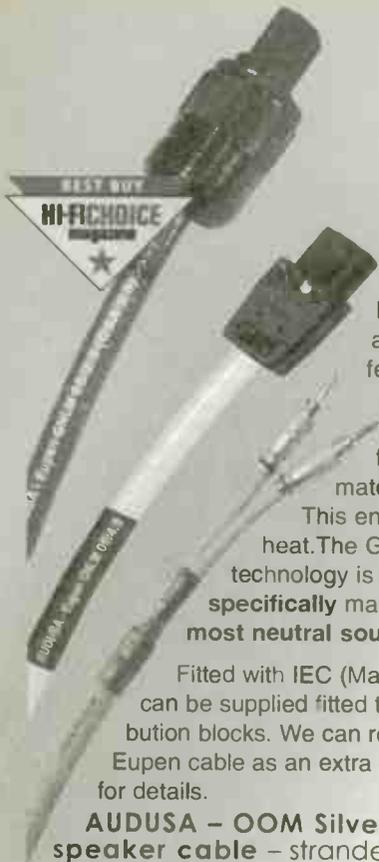
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Eupen GNLM 05/2.5 (CSA 2.5) shown with Marincio IEC 320 will be fitted at extra cost.

GNLM 05/04

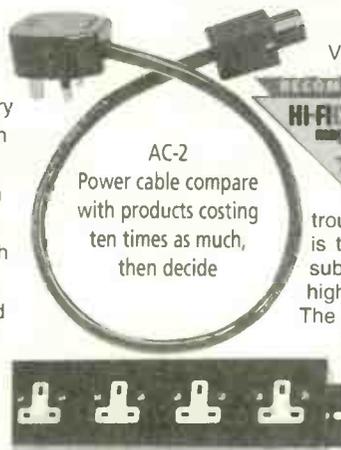
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LOUDSPEAKERS

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REGA XEL (WALNUT)	MINT	£650
KELLY KT-3 HIGH 95 DB SENSITIVITY CHERRY VENEER	MINT/BOXED	£795
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CASTLE HOWARD-2 PREMIUM BEECH FINISH	MINT	£795
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CELESTION SL 600 AEROLAM CABS	VGC	£375

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SOUNDSTYLE XS 105 5 SHELF	EX DISPLAY	£195
SOUNDSTYLE XS 100 4 SHELF	EX DISPLAY	£175
SOUND ORGANIZATION Z-140	EX.DIS	£95

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MIT MH-750 8 FT. PAIR BI-WIRE		£650
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AUDIONOTE AN-L 3 METRE PAIR (FACTORY TERMINATED SILVER SPADES)		£225
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LFD 3 METRE PAIR		£150

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- Linke Integrated Amp rare classic £435
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- Meridian 206 Cd Player £195
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- Pioneer PDR 600 Cd Recorder £695
- Arcam CD53 Cd Player £2750
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AUDIO SPECTRUM Hermes transmission line loudspeakers. Rosewood veneer, twin SEAS pro bass drivers, down to 20Hz, £800. Tel: Hartley 01872 262 398 evenings. (Jun/I)

PARASOUND HCA 2200 MkII dual mono power amplifier. 220 watts per channel, massive power supplies. £775. Tel: Hartley 01872 262 398 evenings. (Jun/I)

NAIM CD1 MkII, mint, boxed, can dem. £795 ono. Naim CDSII XPS, mint, boxed. £3500 ono. Tel: 07971 127859 or 0121 422 4371 after 7pm (Jun/I)

WORLD AUDIO Design KLS3 Gold MkII speakers, external crossovers £300 ono. Nottingham Analogue Tracer Mk4 cartridge, ideal for valve phono. £150 ono. Audax tweeters Two 25 MI pair £30 ono. Tel: 01235 850 393 (Jun/I)

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KLS3 GOLD Mk2 speakers £475. Dynavector DV10X5 cartridge, less than 20 hours use. New arm forces sale, £175. Hovland interconnect Gen 2, 0.6m £100 (cost £280). Tel: 01730 815 171 or mobile 07834 340 372 (Jun/I)

HI-FI/RECORD FAIR. Sunday 30th May 2004. 11.00am to 4.00pm. £3. 9.30am early entry £10. At Egham Sports Centre, Vicarage Road, Egham, 5 mins M25, Junction 13. Tel: 07944 909 209 for details (Jun/I)

NAIM AUDIO HiCap power supply, olive green, 1998, unmarked mint condition, SNAIC lead, manual and box, £445 ono. Tel: 023 8090 5264 or 0795 2067738 (Jun/I)

QUAD ESL57's, very late black pair, recent Quad service, unmolested, excellent. I doubt you would find a better pair. £750. Tel 0113 257 7793 (Leeds) (Jun/I)

NAIM HI-FI System Sale, CD2 CD player, NAC 82 pre-amp, Hi-Cap power supply, NAP 250 power amp, SBL loudspeakers (cherry), QLN Projekt equipment rack (cherry). Complete system purchased new from Grahams HI-FI in December 1997. Mint condition, very low usage, boxed with manuals. For prices please ring Mark 01708 224 319 or 07813 332301 (mobile) (Essex) (Jun/I)

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INCATECH CLAYMORE amplifier £125. Ruark Sabre speakers with stands, boxed, £150. NAD 402 FM tuner £60. Nytech CTA 252XD receiver £70. All in excellent condition. Tel: 01722 334 694 (Jun/I)

WANTED: DENON POA 4400A Power amplifiers, must be vgc. Tel: 02476 395 228 or 02476 348 894 (Jul/I)

MAGNAPLANAR SMGA panel speakers, fantastic sound, great condition £350. Audio Analogue Bellini - Donizetti pre-power amplifiers, silver, recent overhaul £600. All with boxes, manuals. Tel: Ian 01480 811 697 or Email: ian.weitzel@btconnect.com (Jun/I)

LEAK TROUGHLINE 3 Stereo FM tuner, good condition, £85. Ruark CL10 speakers, under 1 year (£900) £395. Musical Fidelity XLPS phono stage, unused £85. Audiolab 8000A £160. Tel: 01661 871 010 (Jun/I)

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RUARK EQUINOX black ash, cableway, dedicated stands, classy monitor, very open sound, easy placement, RRP £2200, bargain £850, plus Rogers Studio 1 still excellent £250. Tel: Kevin 01245 251 235 (Jun/I)

PAIR MERIDIAN 605 monoblock power amplifiers for sale at £750. Croft Epoch Elite preamplifier for sale £550 pair. Shahinian Arc speakers for sale £750. Tel: Nigel 01823 324 243 (Taunton) (Jun/I)

QUAD ESL63, black, excellent condition, serviced by Quad 1999, boxed, £900. Upgraded 988. Townsend Glastonbury, good condition £400. Pair Quad 50E mono amps £170. Quad 34 405-2 grey, mint, boxed £350. Tel: 01446 418 207 (Jun/I)

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ECC34 MULLARD	£40	LS7 GEC	£35	0.25UF 500V PLESSEY	£5	SECONDARYS	240MA DC (CC)	SECONDARYS
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E280 MULLARD	£10	5U4GB RCA	£30	1.7UF 1000V SPRAUIG	£5			6.3 1A 6.3 3A
E281 MULLARD	£13	6733 MULLARD	£125	1UF 400V ICW POLY	£3	GRESHAM 0/F	PRIMARY 200-250 50CS SCR	0-5-6.3 2A
E281 BRIMAR	£12	DE125 GEC	£10	.68UF 400V ICW POLY	£3	SECONDARYS	SECONDARYS	GARDENERS POTTED
E280 BRIMAR	£9	EL84 MULLARD	£15	0.1UF 2000V EIRIE 0/F	£10	350-0-350 200MA	COM: 4-6.3-3A	PRIMARY 115-230 50CS SCR
ECL86 TESA	£10	5B255M STC	£15	0.22UF 630V WHMA	£3	0-250 400MA	COM: 4-5-3A	SECONDARYS
KT66 CLEAR GEC	£70	6P25 MAZDA	£10	1UF 400V WHMA	£2	0-6.3 3A 0-5 3A	COM: 4-6.3-4A	350-0-350 70MA
KT66 GREY GEC	£85	163 GEC	£15	0.22UF 400V MULLARD	£3	0-6.3 2A	£60	3.15-0-3.15 3.5A
KT66 SHOULDERED GEC	£130	211GE USA	£125					700 10 MA
KT61 GEC	£30	EL86 MULLARD	£10	CHOKES				
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GZ37 COSSOR	£50	0.1UF 3040V DUB	£20	5 H 250MA PARM 0/F	£40	6.5 3A 6.5 3A 6.5 2A	COM: 4-6.3-3A	£45
ECC88 PHILIPS	£15	0.25UF 1700V TCC	£20	5 H 180MA PARM 0/F	£40	6.5 400MA	COM: 4-6.3-5A	£95
E88CC MULLARD	£30	0.1UF 5000V DUB	£20	5 H 100MA PARM 0/F	£35	PARMEKO 0/F	PRIMARY 115-230 50SC SCR	SECONDARYS
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EF86 MULLARD	£25	8UF 200V TCC	£7	6 H 250MA PLESSEY 0/F	£35	6.4 600MA 6.5 2A	SECONDARYS	COM: 4-5 3A
EL34 MULLARD	£80	0.5UF 4-0.25UF 350V	£12	16H 30MA PLESSEY 0/F	£30		150-0-150 89MA	COM: 4-6.3 3A (x2)
EL37 MULLARD	£80	12UF 350V DUB	£12	45H 5MA PLESSEY 0/F	£20	PARMEKO 0/F	PRIMARY 115-230 50CS SCR	SECONDARYS
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U18/20 GEC	£30	8UF 1000V DUB	£20	5 H 250MA VARNISHED	£30		PARMEKO 0/F	PRIMARY 115-230 50CS SCR
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M6 GEC	£25	8UF 200V TCC	£8	10H 75MA VARNISHED	£20			
65N7 BRIMAR	£30	1UF 600V DUB	£12	16H 120MA VARNISHED	£30			
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RUARK EQUINOX Speakers with dedicated stands. Stands include external crossovers and bi-wire terminals. Rare chance to buy these renowned speakers. Mint condition in maker's boxes £750 ono (over £2000 new. Tel: 023 8073 8935 (Jun/I)

SPENDOR SPI speakers, walnut, boxed, stands included, perfect £225 ono. Thorens TD150 turntable fitted with SME Series IIS arm and Ortofon MC205 cartridge £195 ono. Tel: 01959 523 794 (Sevenoaks) (Jun)

LYNWOOD MAINS Conditioners (two). The Advanced £50. The Mega £150. Nordost Silver Shadow digital interconnects, 2@ 0.6mtr, £250 ea. ono. Tel: 01249 821 288 (Jun/I)

AUDIOLAB 8000S integrated amp, pre out, remote control, good condition. Can deliver. £235. Tel: Allan 07966 331 080 or Email: allanjturner@btopenworld.com (Tamworth, Staffs) (Jun/I)

ROKSAN XERXES 10 turntable. Rosewood finish. Tabriz arm with Corus Black cartridge. DSU and XPS3.5. Nearly 5 years old. Very light use. Vgc. £795. Tel: 01582 423 791 (Beds) (Jun/I)

RADFORD STA25 Series 3. Excellent condition. Sounds superb following recent agent service. One careful owner since 1969. Matching SC22P (rare self powered version) included for retro enthusiast. £975. 01752 402 273 (Jun/I)

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CAIRN NANDA Face Nord pre-amp £350. Sony CDPX3000ES player £230. STS3000ES tuner £90. Teac P700 transport plus free DAC £400. VdH First Classic interconnect £110. Tel: 020 8871 5089 weekdays, 020 8871 2345 othertimes. (Jun)

WANTED FOR Celestion Ditton 25 loudspeakers - Tweeters HF1300 and Super Tweeters HF2000. Must be new units. Tel: 01424 433 901 or Email: dfield11@yahoo.co.uk (Jun/I)

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CASTLE RICHMOND II, solid teak speakers, 25 watts, fully reconditioned by manufacturer £175. Goodmans Module 90 tuner, amplifier £30. Sony cassette deck TC1865D £30. Tel: 07970 842 529 (near Chester) (Jun/I)

MARANTZ CD6000KIS, gold, mint, £275. Arcam Alpha 9 CD, HDCCD, dCS Ring DAC, mint, £350. Sony 3000ES system, CDP3000ES, ST-S300ES, MDSJ3000ES, TAF3000ES, cherry Kef Cresta2 stands, £895. Tel: 0114 286 0635 (Jun/I)

JBL TI 5000 speakers, 3 years old, perfect condition £1500. Bryston 4B8T, 3 years old, black, £1000. Bryston BP20, 3 years old, black £500. Tel: 07773 788 317 (London) (Jun/I)

B+W CM2 standmount speakers, rosenut veneer finish, excellent sound and as new condition, 6 months old. Cost £550, accept £225 ono. Upgrading to 705's. Tel: 0116 284 9087 (Jun/I)

PYE MOZART serviced £400, tuner £50. Quad QC24 pre-amp £375. AVI S2000MP pre-amp (£1300) £395. Tag McLaren DAC20, mint £500. Pink Triangle Cardinal (new laser) with Da Capo various filters £1000. Tel: 01363 83072 (Jun/I)

SILVER INTERCONNECTS (Campaign Audio Design) with locking Cap16 phono plugs. Two 1m pairs at £45 (£210 new) per pair. One .5m pair £30. Superb. Chord Signature upgrade. Tel: 01752 773 369 (Jun/I)

EAR-YOSHINO 834P phono-stage, MC/MM, two years old, fitted genuine NOS Mullards, lightly used, £295. Professionally built passive preamp, three inputs, rare Panasonic pot £145 (£280). Tel: 01424 203 192 (Jun/I)

FOR SALE: Various mains transformers and chokes and some 5U4G, 5R4G, some new some NOS s/h all tested good. Tel: John 07946 302 815 or Email: chairman@sdrs.org.uk (Jun/I)

NAKAMICHI DRI serviced 12/02, £340. Sony TCD3 portable DAT £100. Revox G36, electrical fault £80. Quad FM2 (FM3 casework) £60. Wanted: Metal formula cassette tapes blank or recorded. Tel: 01242 231 766 (Jun/I)

FOR SALE: Roksan Xerxes turntable with SME arm board, very good condition, little use £250. Nagra reel to reel recorder £450. Tel: Matt 07775 560 357 or Email: a.hankinson@clara.net (Jul/I)

UNISON RESEARCH Unico integrated amplifier £350. Kimber select interconnects, balanced 0.5m, KS1121 £180, KS1130 £250. Tel: 01782 633 088 (North Staffs) (Jun/I)

TWO LINN LK140 Power amps £750. Active Cards £60. Wakonda Pre Amp mc/mm £350. SME P.U. Arm £60. Sure 75E mm Cart £20. Tel: 01270 882 647 or Email: john@hope34.fsnet.co.uk

AUDION GOLDEN Knights 300B monoblock amplifiers £1000 ono. Tel: Bill 01274 611620 or 07711 428 195 (Jun/I)

DENON AVC AID (£2000) £600. Denon DVD 3300 (£1000) £400 or both for £900. Ecosse Reference MS-2.3 speaker cable 2x 9ft £100. MS-2.2 1x of 9ft used for centre channel £50. Tel: 0141 646 2545 after 6pm (Jun/I)

QUAD ILL'S piano black, unused £295. Arcam 170.3 CD transport plus AudioAlchemy D.D.E. converter plus AudioQuest Video Z £225. Dieis Solitaire speakers £70. Ruark Broadwords £200. Tel: 01722 430 532 (Salisbury) (Jun/I)

GOLDEN DRAGON 2A3 Triodes plus valve bases (x8). Approx 30 hours use only. £100 (£200) Tel: 07811 195 327 day, or 01935 432 417 evenings. (Jun/I)

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CYRUS SYSTEM, dad3Q, Cyrus III, Cyrus power, Mission 752 rosewood, Chord interconnects and DNM Reson speaker cables. Stands Unique midi sound tower + ISO platform. Cost new £3000, sell £1200. May split. Tel: 07739 078947 or Email: ewan.bowie@tiscali.co.uk (May/1)

COINCIDENT TOTAL Eclipse speakers, www.coincident-speakers.com for details, reviews. Perfect for sess 94dB, 14 ohm, 24Hz to 20kHz, were £6000+ 3 years ago, now £3000 ono. Tel: Nick 01373 463780 or Email: nicholas.welsh@blueyonder.co.uk (May/1)

PAUL HYNES Extreeme valve phono stage MM perfect for Cartridgeman's Musicmaker 4x 6SL7's Jensen coppers caps, new £3000+, £1500 ono. MF M3 New Vista integrated £1800 Quad 57's excellent condition £400. Tel: Nick 01373 463780 or Email: nicholas.welsh@blueyonder.co.uk (May/1)

YAMAHA NS1000M's plus stands. Light domestic use only. Good condition, £600. No offers. Tel: 01935 702643 (day), or 01935 432417 (eve) (May/1)

MICHELL GYRODEC, brown perspex, deep lid with ET2 Airbearing tonearm fitted. Art 1 MC cartridge and Rega RB300 fitted Technics MC 305 cartridge. Superb performance, £1950 ono. Tel: Richard 07710 124262 (May/1)

LEAK VARISLOPE stereo preamplifier. Leak Troughline 3 FM tuner. Sony stereo turntable system PSLX5. Pioneer stereo cassette tape deck CT540. Rosewood reproduction cabinet. Two Leak 15ohms Sandwich loudspeakers, mahogany cases. Offers invited. Tel: 01249 715752 (May)

NAIM CDX mint £1500. Linn LPI2, Cirkus, Armageddon £800. Kimber PowerKords 3/4 feet £30/£50. Naim black SNAIC-5 £30. Naim grey SNAIC-5 £20. Target TT2 £30. Naim Lilac interconnect £25. Mission bi-wire speaker cable £25 (5 metres). Chord Chrysalis Phonos £25. Stands Unique carbon-fibre feet £10. Ancient Quad leaflets £20. Tel: 01285 862539 or 07967 031286 (May/1)

WHARFEDALE PACIFIC Evolution 20 loudspeakers, beech finish, £350 ono. Tel: 01383 416263 (Fife, Scotland) (May/1)

VALVE MONOBLOCKS single ended using 5881. Made by VRR 8 watts, used with Lowthers £350 pair. Tel: 01293 824 667 after 6pm or Email: JLC@beeb.net (May/1)

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SONUS FABER Extrema with stands £3200 ono. Pass Labs Aleph 5 £1600. Pass Labs X2 pre £1200. Krell KAV 300 CD £1300. Tel: Colin 01293 417 785 (May/1)

AUDIOLAB 8000Q pre-amp £650. Audiolab 8000P power amplifier £350. £900 the pair. Audiobab 8000CDM CD transport £450. DPA Enlightenment DAC £450. Trichord Pulsar Series One DAC £450. Transport and DAC £800. Tel: 01296 398 166 or 07801 909912 (May)

NAKAMICHI DRI tape deck £450. Rotel RT990BX tuner £250. Sony DVP-S735D Region One DVD £200. Sony SCD-XB940 SACD £450. 3VC digital VHS HM-DR10000 £350. Tel: 01296 398 166 or 07801 909912 (May)

DNM PREAMPLIFIER B-Primus DNM power amplifier PA3S mint. Nordost SPM cables interconnect DNB speaker cables almost new BCI's boxed totally refurbished by Spondor mint, paid £400 for work. BCI Spondor stands £300. New/sand filled offers. Tel: 01482 842 740 (evenings) (May/1)

LYNWOOD MAINS Conditioners (two). The Advanced £50. The Mega £150. Black Diamond Racing Cones Mk3, one set of three. Mk4 eight sets of three. £20 per set. Tel: 01249 821 288 (May)

ATC SCMI2 speakers stands. Primare 30.1 amp. Rotel 965 BX CD. Audiolab 8000 DAC. Denon 260L tuner. Ecosse cable £4000+, £1700. Red Rose Spirit system £800. Tel: 0121 246 0486 (May/1)

EXPOSURE 15 integrated amplifier, MM phono stage £200 ono. Tel: 01825 761 827 after 6pm or leave message (East Sussex) (May/1)

Turntableworld - A selection from our stock
Most of our turntable combinations come fitted with free cartridge

AR	EB101/AR arm - vgc, black	99
Dual	505 audiophile - vgc, black	79
Garrard	301 - recan unit in Martin Bastin plinth	499
Garrard	401 - nr mint motor unit	179
Garrard	401 - ex, Plinthed c/w SME3009	299
Helius	401 - ex, gorgeous Aphelion plinth	499
Heybrook	Scarpia - Ex, black/brass	149
Heybrook	TT2/RB300 - vgc/ex, heavyweight LP12 challenger	199
Heybrook	TT2/Valhalla - vgc/ex, heavyweight LP12 challenger	129
Linn	LP12/Valhalla/LVII - vgc, aframasia	679
Linn	LP12/Linga/Ekas/Traika - ex/ex/ex, boxed	1449
Linn	LP12/Linga/ItakLVII - nr mint, aframasia, boxed	999
Linn	LP12/Valhalla/ItakLVII - nr mint, rasenuit, boxed	749
Linn	LP12/Linga/ItakLVII - nr mint, black, boxed	999
Linn	LP12/Linga/ItakLVIII - nr mint, aframasia, boxed	1099
Linn	LP12/Valhalla/LVX - fair, aframasia	399
Linn	LP12/Valhalla/LVX - vgc, black	499
Logic	Tempo Electronic/LVX - vgc	149
Michell	Focus One - fair to good nick, with fab Focus arm	249
Michell	Gyrodex SE - Best Trade ins	ON DEM
Michell	Gyrodex/RB300 - vgc, gyrapower ps, Orbe platter, smoked case	1049
Musical Fidelity	Orbe SE/VC - Best Trade Ins	ON DEM
Musical Fidelity	XLP5 v3 - ex display, nr mint	179
NAD	XLP - nr mint	119
Origin Live	5120 - Ex, wacky placky	79
Project	Rega Arm mods - Amazing value	ON DEM
Project	0.5/arm/Ortofon - as new, boxed	99
Project	Debut - ex display, black	89
Project	Classic - vgc, cherrywood plinth, very pretty and capable too	249
Project	Classic - ex display, cherrywood plinth	299
Rega	Planar 2/RB250 - ex	149
Rega	Planar 2/RB200 - ex, wood plinth original	119
Rega	Planar 3/RB300 - vgc/ex	179
Rega	Planar 78/RB250/Mana Cart - ex/ex	175
Revalver	Revalver/Revalver/AT95E - ex/ex	125
Revalver	Revalver/LVX - ex/ex	119
Rakson	Tabriz zi - nr mint	199
Systemdek	IIX - ex, wood finish no lid/arm	79
Townsend	Elite Rock Mk2 - c/w plinth and lid, nr mint	449
Transcriptors	Skeleton/Vestigal - ex/ex	799
Trichord	Dino - Best Trade ins	ON DEM
Voyd	Voyd - beautiful 3 motor deck, light ash, stunning	799
Voyd	Valdi - vgc, mahogany, fab twin motor deck	499

Speakers

Acoustic Energy	AE505 - ex display, superb floorstander	249
Acoustic Energy	AE505 - new sealed box, superb floorstander	299
Base	Pair Model 100s and Subwoofer - nr mint	149
B&W	309 - ex display, maple	199
B&W	600s3 - nr mint, sorrento, boxed	149
Castle	Durham 900 - nr mint, larger bookshelf	149
Castle	Howard - ex, mid oak	549
Castle	Kendal - nr mint, new model in light ash	195
Celestion	5000 - vgc ribbon standmount	249
Celestion	7000 - fair/good, huge ribbon and twin bass bargain!	379
Dynaudio	DL6 - ex, black, boxed	75
Epos	Audience 10 - ex, black	149
Epos	M15 - nr mint, light cherry, boxed	449
Epos	ES11 - vgc, 80s classic	149
Epos	ES14 - nr mint, boxed 80s classic c/w dedicated stands	325
Gallo	5.1 - ex display, gorgeous!	999
Harbeth	HL Monitor Mk II - fair	Offers
Heybrook	Prima - Set of 5 ideal for AV, black	99
Heybrook	HB100 - vgc, superb vfm	79
KEF	103.2 Ref - nr mint, boxed	199
KEF	Coda 8 - nr mint	80
Linn	Q3 - nr mint, mahogany	179
Linn	Kan - ex, boxed with stands	279
Magneplanar	Kaber - ex, boxed, bi or triwire, black	399
Mission	SMGb - vgc, oatmeal, boxed, stands, open panel sound	299
Mission	763i - ex, black floorstander, boxed	119
Mission	70 centre - ex display	69
Mission	77ci - ex display	99
Monitor Audio	S6 - nr mint,	299
Monitor Audio	Studio Centre - ex display	299
Mardaunt Shart	MS308 - ex display, silver baby sub	69
Mardaunt Shart	912 - ex display, maple	149
Mardaunt Shart	914 - ex display, maple	199
NEAT	Critique - ex, wood finish	299
NEAT	Elite - nr mint v. underrated floorstander, maple	379
NEAT	Pelite - Best Trade ins	ON DEM
Proac	One sc - ex display, fantastic miniature	799
QED	Aria - ex display, mini surrounds	39
QUAD	ESL63 - nr mint, just back from Quad service with new boxes	1499
QUAD	ESL57 - working order, cosmetically challenged	299
Rogers	Studio Monitor - Original vgc, with stands - suit valve amps	199
Ruark	Epilogue - good, cherry	149
Ruark	Templar - ex, medium sized quality floorstander	229
Sequence	400 - ex, cherry/grey, floor or wall hang with plinths	149
Sonus Faber	Grand Piano - Ex, black, original and best version	899
Stand's Unique	AV1 - ex, hand crafted, quality drivers	149
Spendor	BC1 - near mint, boxed	249
Tannoy	R2 - good, boxed, slim cherry floorstander	199
TDL	Studio 1 - vgc, wood finish transmission line	249
Tsunami	Sub - nr mint	119
Wharfedale	Eva 8 - ex display	179
Wharfedale	Diamond 7.1 - ex, black	49
Wharfedale	Diamond 40th anniversary prototype!	
Wharfedale	rosewood box like Quad 11L, the only pair in the world?!!	199
Wharfedale	Pacific P130 - nr mint boxed, light cherry, excellent	299
Wharfedale	505.2 - nr mint boxed, black standmount	75

Miscellaneous

Massive	Cable Clearance	Call for details
Atacama	Equipment supports - Your kit deserves them!	ON DEM
Beyer	various	Call for details
Linn	Classik - ex display, silver	699
Mission	Stance - ex display, silver	49
Pure	Evoke - ex display	69
Sennheiser	various	Call for details
Target	TT1 - turntable wallshelf	49
Tivoli	Model 1 - ex display	79
Tivoli	Pal - ex display	89

Digital CD, DVD etc
Many more inexpensive CD players in stock

Arcam	Alpha 8 - nr mint, remate	199
Arcam	Alpha 8SE - nr mint, remate	349
Arcam	CD62 - nr mint, silver, remate	179
Arcam	CD72 - nr mint, silver, remate	279
Arcam	DV27 - ex display, nr mint, remate	999
B&O	CDX - ex, scandinavian style	279
B&O	CD3500 - ex, silver/black	279
Bow Technologies	ZZ8 - nr mint, black boxed	1999
Cyrus	Dad1 - nr mint, black, remate	199
Cyrus	Dad3 - nr mint, black, remate	275
Cyrus	Dad7 - nr mint, black, remate	399
Cyrus	CD7Q - nr mint, black, remate, boxed, lovely	599
Denon	PSX-R - nr mint, black	279
Kenwood	DVD1000 - nr mint, remate, boxed	149
Krell	DP1100 - ex, v. underrated	89
Marantz	CD-DSP - ex, clear and smoked lids, stunning	1499
Marantz	CD635E - nr mint, remate	99
Marantz	CD605E - ex, remate	89
Marantz	DV4100 - nr mint, remate	99
Marantz	DV4100 OSE - nr mint, remate	129
Meridian	200 transport and matching dac - ex, superb combination	449
Meridian	200 transport - ex, Trichard mod, excellent	349
Micromega	Stage 4 - ex, sweet sounding machine	299
Micromega	Optic - nr mint, remate	129
Myryod	T20 - black, nr mint, boxed, remate, bargain!	249
NVA	The Transparent Statement - vgc, crated, remate...ultimate NVA	1749
Pioneer	CLD SB15 - Laserdisc, vcd, cd, PAL, N5TC	119
Ratel	RCD965BX - ex, black, remate	119
Sony	CDP333sd - ex, manual, remate	129
TAG McLaren	DAC20 - ex display	399
Teac	CDP4500 - ex, remate	89
Teac	DVD3000 - nr mint remate	149

Amplifiers

Arcam	Delta 90.2 - good condition, boxed	79
Arcam	Alpha 7R - ex, as above with remate	149
Arcam	Alpha 10 power - nr mint, boxed	349
Arcam	A65 - nr mint, remate, silver	179
Arcam	A65+ - ex display, remate, silver	199
Arcam	P75 - ex display, remate, silver	199
Audiolab	8000A - ex, black	249
Audiolab	8000S - nr mint	329
Audiolab	8000C - nr mint, late boxed	249
Audiolab	8000P - nr mint, late boxed	449
Audion	Silver Knights - Mmmmmmanablocks	1199
Carver	CM1040 - vgc, nice integrated	225
Creek	CAS4040 - ex, boxed	79
Cyrus	Power - nr mint boxed, black	279
Cyrus	PSX-R - nr mint, black	279
Exposure	VIII power - vgc, black	199
Exposure	X integrated - vgc, black	199
Harman Kardan	Citation 17 and 19 - vgc, boxed	399
ITL	MA-80 - ex, sweet mastet design, great mm/mc	129
Krell	2x KMA100 - ex	2495
Lecson	Quattro - Fab 80s integrated	199
Linn	Pretek - ex, black	149
Linn	LK1/Dirak - ex, black, mm/mc exceptional vfm	479
Linn	MP300 & 2x MF125 - ex/ex, mm/mc, fabulous!	199
Linn	PM66SE Ki - nr mint, boxed	149
Linn	PM6010 Ki Sig - nr mint boxed, black	199
Linn	SR4200 - ex display, black av amp	149
Linn	605s - ex pair boxed manablocks	795
Mission	Cyrus One - ex, boxed, black late model, mm/mc	119
Mission	Cyrus Two and PSX - ex, grey, mm/mc	229
Mission	3a pre and 12v off board p/s - nr mint boxed	175
Mission	P150 power - nr mint boxed	199
Mission	E100 - vgc, remate, piano black	199
NAD	352 - ex display, dark colour	249
NAD	302 - nr mint, great value	89
NAD	3020i - nr mint, renowned entry level integrated	79
Naim	Nait 1 - ex, phono	149
Pioneer	A400 - ex, phono	119
Quad	405/2 - nr mint boxed	275
Quad	405 - nr mint, early brass heatsink version	199
Quad	33/303 - nr mint	175
Rega	Luna - nr mint, black, boxed, better than a Bria or Mira	179
Ratel	RTC950L - nr mint pre with built in tuner, remate	125
Ratel	RB03 power - ex display, silver	199
Shearue	Phase 2 - vgc, blue marble styling	299
Sony	STR-DB940 av amp - vgc, DTS 5.1 etc	199
Sugden	A28mk2 - fair, excellent vfm	149
Sugden	AU41 pre/power - ex, black	499
Tria	2x L-05M - ex, rare and gorgeous!!!	749
Yamaha	DSPa3090 - ex, monster av amp was £1500!	249
Yamaha	HTR 5550rds - ex, grey franted av amp	149

Tape & Tuners

Arcam	Delta 280FM - ex, black	79
Arcam	Alpha 7 - ex, black	99
Arcam	Alpha 8 - ex, black	149
Arcam	T21 - ex display, silver	179
Arcam	T61 - ex display, silver	149
Cyrus	FM7 tuner - black, digital, presets, nr mint boxed	249
Cyrus	Original 'Mission' tuner - vgc	99
Denon	TU260L tuner - ex, black, digital, presets	59
Marantz	ST4000 - ex display, black	99
Marantz	SD4050 - ex display, twin, black	89
Nagra	III tape: c/w power pack, case etc	Call for details
Nakamichi	580 cassette - nr mint, black	99
Ratel	RT930ax - ex, black	59
Ratel	RT02 - ex display, silver	199
TAG McLaren	T20 - ex display	699
Teac	TK3000 tuner - ex, digital, presets	69
Teac	V1010 cassette - ex, 3 head	75
Technics	STG90L tuner - ex, digital, presets	89
Yamaha	V510 decoder & 5 spkr system - nr mint boxed	179

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TAG McLAREN 250MR monoblocks in black, boxed, mint condition, still under warranty with Tag McLaren RCA-RCA interconnects. Will swap for Krell KSA-200S, KSA-300S, else £2600 ono. Tel: 07932 063335 or 020 7480 7964 or Email: amwllondon@tiscali.co.uk (May/I)

CROFT EPOCH Elite, wooden fascia, gold knobs, NOS valves (gain too high for my Leak ST20) £475 (£1000) ono. Kimber Silver Streak interconnect £75 (£150). 4TC speaker-cable 3m £95 (£200). Powercord Wattgate £55 (£120). Tel: Alex 01206 511 299 or Email: alexnieatt@yahoo.com (Essex) (May/I)

ENTHUSIASTS CLEAROUT: Audionote ANE-SP, oak, silver wired plus stands £1000. Audionote ANK-B oak £300. Audionote OTO split PSU £750. NAD C160 pre-amp £350. NAD C270 power amp 3 pieces £350 each. The Head M/C transformer £100. Amcron DC300A £200. Audionote silver cables, various. Tel: 01892 539511 (May/I)

PRO-AC STUDIO 125, yew finish, mint condition, excellent sound £575 ono. Mana Reference wall shelf £75. Various cables ring for details. Yamaha K340 cassette deck £45. Tel: 01525 854 652 (Beds) (May/I)

STUDER A725 fully balanced CD player, excellent sound, c/w balanced cables £400 ono. Tel: 01903 741 297 or 07765 230 771 (May/I)

PIONEER CLD1750 Laserdisc player, Trichord clocked, excellent condition, also Laserdiscs. Tel: 01903 741 297 or 07765 230 771 (May/I)

DPA IS.19 SPEAKER Cable, 3mtr pair, cost £180, bargain £90. Tel: 0121 303 1944 or 07817 241 911 (May/I)

NAIM AUDIO SBL loudspeakers, black, s/n 128518, £1200. Naim Audio CD1 CD player, s/n 85969, £500. Naim Audio HiCap power supply, s/n 123266, £370. Naim Audio NAP 180 power amplifier, s/n 122878, £690. All ono, boxed. Current valuations! Tel: 020 8300 3265 (Kent) (May/I)

MERIDIAN 207, two box CD player, instructions, boxed, including 209 master control, £400. Meridian 204 tuner, boxed, no mains cable, £200. Tel: 01883 722841 evenings or Email: a.sharp43@ntlworld.com (May/I)

SPENDOR SPI, rosewood, Rogers Studio I equivalents. cost loads and ain't as good! Deserves discerning audiophiles for £375 each. You can't get better. Also Tannoy T225, £225. Tel: Kevin 01245 251 235 (May/I)

EPOS 22 SPEAKERS (cherry) £380. DPA Enlightenment transport & DAC, little use, with remote £450. Tel: 01225 481 155 or Email: p.g.b.berry@bath.ac.uk

NOTTINGHAM ANALOGUE Spacedeck, brand new, Rega RB250 and Tracer I cartridge, £595. Nottingham Analogue Hyperspace (white) with Paragon I linear carbon arm £1400. Meridian 508 20bit £750. Tel: Philip 020 7912 9410 (Ealing) (May/I)

Mk2 ROCK SIEMIC Sink acrylic and original platters MC 25 FL valve phono stage with silver captive leads, Target TTI no plinth. £500 ono. Tel: 023 92 753 833 (May/I)

QUAD ESL63 with cartons, excellent condition £849. Also 15 Sheffield Lab Direct To Disc Series mint condition £949. Also Sony PCM F1 digital processor £399. Tel: Alan 02392 453 382 (May/I)

ROKSAN CASPIAN integrated amp, silver. Roksan upgrade to Mk 2. Manuals, remote, boxed, mint, £500. Roksan Caspian tuner, silver, boxed, £200 ono. Musical Fidelity X-Cans, boxed, £50. Tel: 07941 213 107 (May/I)

AUDIO MAGIC ST-I speakers/stands, very like Wilson WATT's, truly wonderful, £1100 for quick sale (£3800). Nordost Valhalla digital interconnect, Eichmann Silver upgrade, wooden presentation box, £650 (£1200). Tel: 0131 6610126, 07811 335060, or Email: zebshaw@hotmail.com. (May/I)

DENON AVC AID (£2000) £600. Denon DVD 3300 (£1000) £400 or both for £900. Ecosse Reference MS-2.3 speaker cable 2x 9ft £100. MS-2.2 1x of 9ft used for centre channel £50. Tel: 0141 646 2545 after 6pm (Jun/I)

TANDBERG SERIES 15 machine £50. Chilton M12-4 mixing desk £100. Revox G36 £200. Revox A77 £200. Yamaha KX380 cassette deck £30. Revox A77 acrylic cover £35. Tel: 07710 828286 anytime (May/I)

ROGERS STUDIO 7 loudspeakers, excellent condition apart from small chip on one corner. Teak colour, 120w. Due to weight to buyer collect Glasgow. £349 ono. Tel: 01389 752 044 after 5pm (May/I)

SPENDOR 2040 speakers, 1050mm tall, 4 drive units, black, boxed, £400 (£900). Audio Innovations Alto amp, £80. Marantz CD63, £40. Denon PMA 250, £40. Tel: 01749 678 698 or Email: jeffandmaggie@tiscali.co.uk (Wells) (May/I)

LOWTHER ACOUSTA/PM6A horn loudspeakers with the original and best birch-ply cabinets, PM6A silver drive units, all vgc. Garrott Microscanner Decca London cartridge with Decapod mount. Tel: Richard 020 8991 0762 or 020 8885 6339 (May/I)

MARK LEVINSON ML 23.5 power amp 200 watt per channel, boxed, manual, £2495. Mark Levinson ML 20.5 monoblock power amps, 100 watt per channel. Pure Class 'A', boxed, with manual, £3595. Tel: 01634 387 686 (May/I)

ROTEL RA840BX integrated amplifier 40wpc, phono inputs £200 plus carriage. Audio Technica OC7 phono cartridge with AT630 transformer £120 plus carriage. Tel: 01740 651 637 or Email: jwdavison@breathemail.net (May/I)

AUDIONOTE SPEAKERS E/SP, black, silver wired, stands, boxed, 3 years old, £750. Pro Passion preamp with RCA's, £300. Trichord Pulsar Series I DAC with power supply, £450. Tel: 01993 883 253 or Email: kgtoft9@tiscali.co.uk (Oxon) (May/I)

NOTTINGHAM ANALOGUE turntable, 12" Anna arm, Tracer 4 cartridge, PSU, £3200. Croft Absolute pre-amp £1500. Posselt Albatros loudspeakers £1300. All mint condition. Tel: 01604 404 499 (Northampton) (May/I)

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NEW RELEASES

Aerosmith	Honkin On Bobo	£TBC
Arthur Russell	Calling Out Of Context	£TBC
Beta Band	Heroes To Zeros	£TBC
Calexico	Black Heart - Mini LP	£TBC
Eric Clapton	Me And Mr Johnson	£TBC
Faust	Derbe Respect Alder	£TBC
Gomez	Spilt The Difference	£18.90
Graham Coxon	Happiness In Magazines	£TBC
Iron And Wine	Our Endless Numbered Days	£TBC
Isobell Campbell	Time Is Just The Same	£5.90
Jimi Hendrix	Studio Out-takes Volume 1	£15.90
Morrissey	You Are The Quarry	£15.90
Orb	Bicycles & Tricycles	£14.90
Patti Smith	Trampin	£18.90
Pheonix	Alphabetical	£12.90
Richard X presents	Back To Mine	£15.90
Tortoise	It's All Around You	£12.90
Various	Studio One In Dub (Soul Jazz)	TBC
Von Bondies	Pawn Shoppe Heart	£14.90
Warren Zevon	The Wind	£TBC
Weird War	If You Can't Beat Em, Bite Em	£12.90

NEW ROCK, POP AND AUDIOPHILE REISSUES:

Aaron Neville	Warm Your Heart	£26.90
Black Sabbath	Sabotage	£14.90
Black Sabbath	The Singles (6x7" Box Set)	£25.90
Boys	Live At The Roxy Club	£14.90
Dizzy Reese	Star Bright (Mono)	£12.90
Etta Jones	Hollar	£21.90
Funkadelic	Electric Spanking Of War Babies	£10.90
Janis Ian	Billie's Bones (plus 10")	£26.90
Jimi Hendrix	Martin Scorsese presents Blues	£39.90
Link Wray	Swan Singles Collection	£TBC
Martin Denny	Exotic Sounds Of	£TBC
Nelson Riddle	Lolita Soundtrack	£TBC
Spencer Davis Group	With Their New Face On	£14.90
Stanley Brothers	Earliest Recordings	£15.90
Staple Singers/Curtis M	Let's Do It Again	£12.90
Uriah Heap	Salisbury	£14.90
Various	Midwest Funk (Jazzman)	
Various	American Pre-war Gospel 26-36	£25.90
Weavers	Travellin On	£26.90

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CYRUS DVD7	£1,000.00	£599.00	D
CYRUS 5 AMPLIFIER	£500.00	£329.00	D + N
CYRUS 7 AMP	£700.00	£479.00	D + N
CYRUS AV MASTER - PROCESSOR		£100.00	D
AUDIO RESEARCH LS16 PRE AMP - BLK	£3,500.00	£2,195.00	D
ARCAM DV88 DVD PLAYER	£1,000.00	£679.00	D + N
ARCAM DIVA A75 AMP	£470.00	£309.00	N
ARCAM ALPHA 7R AMP	£280.00	£189.00	D
ARCAM FMJ A22 Inc DAVE AC3/DTS processor	£1,850.00	£999.00	N
TAG MCLAREN DPA32R (Digital pre inc DAB)	£1,990.00	£1,189.00	D
TAG MCLAREN 5R - 5 CHANNEL POWER AMP	£2,995.00	£1,799.00	D
MARTIN LOGAN AEON	£3,148.00	£2,195.00	D
MARTIN LOGAN SCENARIO	£2,498.00	£1,629.00	D
CELESTION C1 - Compact speakers	£199.00	£114.00	D
CELESTION - C2 - Floorstanders	£499.00	£299.00	D
LINN MAJIK - INT AMP	£650.00	£399.00	D
LINN KAIRN - PRE AMP	£1,400.00	£595.00	D
LINN 5140 - FLOORSTANDERS approx.	£2,400.00	£799.00	D
LINN KABERS -BLK		£395.00	D
MERIDIAN 556 - 2 CH POWER AMP	£995.00	£649.00	D
MERIDIAN 596	£2,750.00	£1,925.00	D
MERIDIAN 598 DVD Player smartlink (as new)	£3,195.00	£2,395.00	D
MERIDIAN 561 Surround Controller	£2,995.00	£2,095.00	D
MERIDIAN 562v.2 Controller	£1,500.00	£995.00	D
MERIDIAN 556 Power amp	£995.00	£595.00	D
MERIDIAN 588 CD	£2,100.00	£1,495.00	D
MERIDIAN 507 CD	£1,195.00	£879.00	D
MERIDIAN 568.2 mm Smartlink (as new)	£4,305.00	£2,995.00	D
VIENNA BEETHOVEN Speaker (Beech)	£2,500.00	£1,495.00	D
VIENNA MOZART Speakers (Beech)	£1,500.00	£995.00	D
VIENNA WALTZ centre Speaker (Beech)	£500.00	£350.00	D
VIENNA MAHLER	£5000.00	£2995.00	D
PROCEED AVP PROCESSOR.VGC/LIGHT USE	£4,700.00	£2,579.00	D
PROCEED PMDT DVD PLAYER.VGC/LIGHT USE	£5,495.00	£2,995.00	D
MUSICAL FIDELTY XA100R - INT AMP	£900.00	£599.00	N
MISSION 780 - ROSEWOOD	£300.00	£219.00	D
MISSION 783 - BEECH (Good condition)	£1,000.00	£599.00	D
MISSION 78 AS Active sub (new)	£700.00	£450.00	D
MISSION 773 E (new)	£399.00	£199.00	D
ROTEL RB985 5 Channel amp (new)	£599.00	£349.00	D
NAKAMICH MB10 5-disc multi CD	£500.00	£200.00	D
REDROSE Valve system (amp & speakers) 1yr old	£10,000.00	£3,995.00	SH

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trade ads

Dealers must not advertise in the Private Classified section. Monthly consecutive insertions will be considered Trade advertising. The Publisher reserves the right to judge submissions

Special Internet offer see page 129 for details

NAIM HI-CAP, Mint, olive facia, boxed, serial No 145641. (780.00) £ 470. AUDIOQUEST OPAL Truth RCA, 1.0 mtr (£260) £160. QUAD 989 Brand new, cancelled order (£4600) £4000. Naim NAC 32.5 pre, with phono stage, mint condition £195. Koetsu Red K Signature (£2200) £600. Telephone Jules on 01792 280061, Email info@sounddrjuleshifi.co.uk Web: www.sounddrjuleshifi.co.uk (Jun/1)

LINN NEXUS speakers, good condition £120. AUDIO RESEARCH M300 Mono Blocks MkII status (£12000) £3400. Basis Debut Gold Standard Turntable, inc custom dust cover, (£8,500) £3490. Koetsu Red K Signature *, 20hrs, (£2200) £1250. All mint, boxed. Telephone Jules on 01792 280061, Email: info@sounddrjuleshifi.co.uk Web: www.sounddrjuleshifi.co.uk (Jun/1)

COPLAND CSA28 in black, mint, (£1440) £800. Copland CDA266 HDCD, in black, mint CD Player, £1400, £700. Siltec Arm cable, lcheman bullets RCA's 1.5mts (£400) £250. Siltec 1.0 mtr RCA-RCA (£300) £170. Telephone Jules on 01792 280061, Email: info@sounddrjuleshifi.co.uk Web: www.sounddrjuleshifi.co.uk (Jun/1)

LINN CD 12, Aug 02, mint, boxed as new, (£12000) £7999. Linn Klimax Twin Power amp, 8 months old, as new (£6000) £3800. Linn Kellidh's, black ash, active cards, passive (£1000) £450. AudioTechnica OC9 cartridge brand new £290. Telephone Jules on 01792 280061, Email: info@sounddrjuleshifi.co.uk Web: www.sounddrjuleshifi.co.uk (Jun/1)

WADIA 16, 4yrs, mint (£7450) £2900. Linn Majik inc phono stage, as new, (£900) £650. Mark Levinson ML383 integrated amp (as new) (RRP £6000) £4200. Telephone Jules on 01792 280061, Email: info@sounddrjuleshifi.co.uk Web: www.sounddrjuleshifi.co.uk (Jun/1)

PURE EARTH and dedicated mains (electrical) circuits design and installation service. Contact MainsDoctor 07989 200 961, Email: mainsdoctor@yahoo.co.uk Website: www.mainsdoctor.co.uk We install for all audio and video applications (Feb05/1)

AMAZING CABLES! Solid silver interconnects from £110, with air / teflon insulation and WBT plugs. Solid silver / teflon speaker cables from £250. Fantastic performance, refund guarantee. 0115 982 5772 after 7pm, email bob@skydivers.co.uk (Jun/1)

VINTAGE WIRELESS COMPANY LONDON Website: www.vintagewirelesslondon.co.uk Buy-Sell-Exchange. Vintage wireless and classical audio. Repairs, spares, restoration, modification to all valve equipment. Quad II, Leaks etc, shipped worldwide, best prices, call us at 17 Bell Street, London, NW1 5BY. Tel: 020 7258 3448 Fax 020 7258 3449 Email: vwirelesslondon@aol.com (Dec04/1)

LONDON TAPE RECORDERS. Open reel to reel specialists. Established 30 years. Machines bought, sold and exchanged. Akai, Sony, Pioneer, Teac, Tascam, Revox, Technics. Servicing on selected machines. Tel: 020 7603 0303 or 07950 400 005 (Jul/1)

WORTHING AUDIO True Sound Series Crossoverless monitors 96dB efficiency, single 8" driver, perfect for low powered tube (S.E.T.) and solid state. Dynaudio Crafts, immaculate, boxed, with Dynaudio stands £1250. Musica Collins loudspeakers by Bernard Thiel & Partners (German) £1000. Tel: Worthing Audio 01903 212 133 or 07900 918 882 (Jun/1)

EAR PRODUCTS on permanent demonstration, from the wonderful 869 to the rest of the range. Kora Explora 60 watt hybrid £450. Dynaudio Contours 1.3's Mk2 £699. Harbeth Super 5's £1499. Restek Challenger £600. Omega speaker systems TSR1R £1199. H-Cat P12 £2499. Kora Equinox pre-amplifier MM £995. Kora Hermes 96-192 valve DAC £1199. Tel: Worthing Audio 01903 212 133 or 07900 918 882 (Jun/1)

SILVER ARROW 4N plus - Pure flat silver foil air interconnects and speaker cables. RDC Aspect 3 tier in black. Editors Choice Hi-Fi Plus, £340. Audio Note CD Zero transport plus 1x Signature deck in silver £650 combo. Mains leads, Experience Filtration £75 per lead. £150 four way block. Tel: Worthing Audio 01903 212 133 or 07900 918 882 (Jun/1)

AUDIOPUBLIC, 78 Otley Road, Headingley, Leeds, 0113 217 7294. Yorkshire's newest Hi-Fi retailer, stockists of Naim Audio, Rega Research, Conrad Johnson, Sugden, Dynavector, (cartridges and amplifiers) and many more. Please call for advice. (Jun/1)

THE MISSING LINK. We are proud to announce our new family of no-compromise 5n Pure Silver Cryogenically treated Litz Loudspeaker Cables and Interconnects ... Designed and Made in England by Music Lovers for Music Lovers. A limited number of Demo Cables are available by arrangement... Visit www.the-missing-link.net for information and reviews or phone Mark on 0115 877 9089 (Jun/1)

AUDIOFILE OBJECTIVE for new, Xdisplay and used hi-fi. Have moved from Hoddesdon to Sawbridgeworth, Herts. New location: G 6, Allen House, The Maltings. Tel: 01279 724 024. Parking no problem and free. (Jun/1)

NEW VALVE Amps, powers £260; matching preamp £190; other valve related goodies at www.audioclassics.co.uk or telephone 01942 257525 for more information. Dealer enquiries welcome. (Apr/1)

BRILLIANCE UK-MADE audio interconnects and speaker cables. Synergy Teflon interconnect from £45, "Sound per pound ratio is superb" HFV Jan 04. Digital, multi-channel video cables also available. See www.brilliancehifi.co.uk Tel: 07963 117 341 (Jun/1)

FARADAY SOUND Low density concrete enclosure loudspeakers. Rock solid bass without cabinet vibration. Standmounted, bookshelf, subs and floorstanders. We also sell cabinets and advice. See www.faradaysound.co.uk for photo's and reviews. (Aug/1)

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GATE TOP END PRE MM VALVE STAGE USED £599.00
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ROGERS RAVENSBROOK £75.00
ROGERS MASTER EXCELLENT £599.00
QUAD II MONO BLOCKS GEC KT66X £499.00
GATE 300B PUSH PULL. SEE WEB £2,500.00

VAA70MKII - FL34 PUSH PULL INTEGRATED £399.00
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SHANGLING POWER AMPS (SEE WEB SITE) £2,000.00

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Hi-Fi World

"One of the most enjoyable and musically involving turntables I have ever heard regardless of make or reputation."
Audiophile

Now you can own a professionally built, high performance turntable at a fraction of the normal cost. All OL turntable kits are supplied in various forms:

-A Standard Kit of Parts to enable you to build your own plinth at **£282**

-The Complete Non-suspended Standard Kit offered with a pre-drilled & finished plinth at **£349**

-The Complete Ultra Kit comes in two options. The Ultra Kit Classic offering a truly high end suspended sub-chassis turntable with beautifully finished solid wood plinth.

The Ultra Kit Modern offers the performance of the Ultra Kit Classic combined with the modern day skeletal styling.

Both options available at **£538**



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 transform its performance into the league of super arms with our modifications. The OL structural modification at £75 will enable your Rega to perform at a level exceeding that of arms costing over £1500!! High performance rewiring with high grade litz wire is also offered at an additional £70 and external rewiring is also £70 further increasing 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 on structural modification

What Hi-Fi? gave this modification 5/5

Structural Modification - **£75**
Internal Rewiring - **£70**
External Rewiring - **£70**

For arm modifications we normally return your arm within 2 - 3 days



UNIVERSAL TURNTABLE MOTOR KIT

"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 prepare you for the shock of going DC. In a word, gobsmacking."
Common Ground Magazine

"...if you are thinking of upgrading your system... the OL DC Motor Kit should be high on your list for consideration."
TNT Audio

Designed as a drop in replacement for almost all turntables, the OL upgrade DC motor kit offers vast improvements to all versions of Linn, as well as: Rega, Systemdeck, Roksan, Rock, Oracle, Michelle, VPI, Clearaudio, Acoustic Signature, etc. The kit consists of a high grade DC motor, aluminium electronic control box and offboard power supply. All this provides an extremely cost effective route to truly high-end audio and is significantly superior in performance to PS upgrades at three times the price.

OL Power Supply & Motor Kit - **£339**
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AEI, EMI, Leak,
Rogers, PYE- Quad, WE etc
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Jan 04. Digital, multi-channel
video cables also available. See
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GUIDELINES FOR BUYING AND SELLING SECOND-HAND EQUIPMENT

FOR THE BUYER

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

FOR THE SELLER

1. Not everyone is honest - Seller Beware!
2. Make no verbal guarantees.
3. Even 'nearly new' is still second-hand. If the manufacturer's guarantee is no longer in force, your price should reflect this.
4. There is very little intrinsic value in second-hand hi-fi; it's only worth what someone will pay for it.
5. The best guide to pricing is last month's Classifieds: that a 'classic' was worth £xxx a year or two ago is no guide. Values fall as well as rise.
6. Amateur second-hand dealing is not a big money game: you win some, you lose some.
7. Be prompt with despatch. If in doubt about buyer's bona-fides, either wash out the deal or send C.O.D.
8. There will always be time-wasters; be tolerant within reason!

DEADLINE FOR JULY 2004 ISSUE IS 6TH MAY 2004
JULY 2004 ISSUE ON SALE 28TH MAY 2004

DEADLINE FOR AUGUST 2004 ISSUE IS 7TH JUNE 2004
AUGUST 2004 ISSUE ON SALE 30TH JUNE 2004

The most important and expensive components of a valve amplifier are valves and transformers. £200 or £500 for a pair of huge "push pull" output transformers produces good bass + lots of "inter leaved" windings for better high frequency and "stability". Huge £150 mains transformers gives a less "processed" sound. Selected "matched" set of valves cost £50 or £160. If we could achieve the same quality of sound with £10 volume control, £10 wires, £10 capacitor, we could have saved a lot of money!!!

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Telephone 01634 268662 anytime or 01634 373410 for Mr Andrew Everard's review in Gramophone Magazine and Summary of 21 testimonials from satisfied customers. www.affordablevalvecompany.co.uk

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Ultra Linear £650 £750

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Ultra Linear £1,050 £1,150

£1,250 Triode Connection £1,400

larger transformer

huge transformer

KT88 valves are more expensive than 6550 valve

American 5670 valves

Massive expensive "potted" transformers

Unbelievably huge transformers

American 5670 valves

KT88 valves are more expensive than 6550 valves

Midland  Studio

"This is to debut amplifiers what Led Zeppelin I was to debut LPs: a certifiable masterpiece"

Ken Kessler. Hi-Fi News. February 2004



T+A

Midland HiFi Studio have teamed up with the UK distributor of the T+A V10 Valve amplifier to offer unbeatable part exchange allowances. For more information -

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- Pye PF91 - matching pair in beautiful electronic and cosmetic condition £1800
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- Quad II's with original 22 pre-amp in very good original condition KT66 £800
- Leak Stereo 20 good rebuilt condition with stereo pre EL84 £425
- Rogers Cadet III pre/power very nice ECL86 £155
- Rogers Cadet II pre/power near mint ECL86 £225
- Leak TL10's rebuilt/mint, beautifully clean KT61/SP25 £650
- Tripletone mono single ended/various, all good/working condition EL84 £55
- Dynatron LF15/16 mint excellent pair WITH original cages EL84 £350
- Pye Mozart mono nice single ended EL34 £150

SPEAKERS

- Tannoy Rectangular Yorks 15" reds excellent cloth and cabinets £2500
- Tannoy Canterbury's 12" silvers nice £1750
- Tannoy 3LZ's 10" golds lovely condition £450
- Wharfedale Airdales very nice original condition, a seriously under-rated speaker £525
- Goodmans Maxims brilliant small speaker first bookshelf £85
- Lowther Dual position Acoustas lovely birch faced ply PM6A £550
- Leak Sandwich good condition £120
- Rogers BBC LS3/5A's teak finish very good clean condition £750
- Chartwell BBC LS3/5A's beautiful Rogers LS3/5A's black nr/mint original boxes £750
- QUAD 33/303 £175 FM3 £100 FM4 £250 405 £150 34/306 £400 44 £285 Arcam
- Alpha 8 amp £215 Arcam Alpha 8 cd £165 Marantz CD80 £335 Marantz CD6000 OSE
- £155 Marantz PM60100SE £175 CYRUS 2/CYRUS PSX £345 MYRAD CD £225
- Nakamichi BX2 £115 Meridian 201 pre £345 Meridian 605 monoblocs £875 Heybrook
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PINK FLOYD

The Final Cut (A requiem for the post war dream by Roger Waters)

1983

The title 'The Final Cut' was first brought to light in mid 1982, when the single sleeve for 'When The Tigers Broke Free' from the film of *The Wall* claimed that the track was extracted from a forthcoming album of that name. At the time, the album was supposed to be a collection of tracks thematically linked to *The Wall* but which hadn't made it onto that album. What changed that was the events of the Falklands War, reigniting Roger Waters' burned-out creativity.

In many ways 'The Final Cut' is as much an ersatz Pink Floyd album as the two David Gilmour-led studio albums which eventually succeeded it. Waters had already ousted Rick Wright before the sessions started, and despite Andy Bown's valiant efforts on organ there is an element of the classic Floyd sound that is missing. Nick Mason could obviously see the writing on the wall as Andy Newmark was drafted in to do some of the drumming, and Gilmour was so unenthralled by the content of the album and Waters' autocratic modus operandi that he withdrew his name from the production credits, and barely sings on the album. So this is fundamentally a *de facto* Waters solo album.

'The Final Cut' is a record which fiercely divides even hard-core Pink Floyd fans. The uncharitable view is that it was an album too far for the group, with Waters' lack of melodic and lyrical inspiration leading to a pale rehashing of earlier glories: the charitable one being that Waters' was obviously still railing against the loss of his father in World War II, and the new war gave him a justified opportunity to bring his concerns right up to date, including the then still current apprehension over possible nuclear obliteration on 'Two Suns In The Sunset'. I have always



tended toward the latter view, although my concern over the repetition of simplistic strums on Water's next effort 'The Pros And Cons Of Hitchhiking' started to drive me toward the former in the final analysis.

Having bought the album and then the CD on the first day of release, I somehow failed to notice that a remastered CD appeared ten years ago. Even the compilers of the excellent mini Jap LP sleeved editions of a few years ago reinforced the album's "not-proper-Floyd" status by excluding it from the collection. The reason for revisiting the album now is the remarkable news that it has now been remastered for a second time. This inevitably sets off most people's cynicism detector, a suspicion which is only heightened by the inclusion on the album of 'When The Tigers Broke Free', which has already been used to incentivise completists to purchase the 'Echoes' collection. To my mind it is not its inclusion which irks, but its placement. I always used to love the musical transition from the eerie 'One of The Few' to the emphatic intro of 'The Hero's Return', and the implied link from "What do you do to make ends meet? Teach" in the former, to "Trying to clout these little ingrates into shape" in the latter, so where do they plonk the extra track? Right in

between the two! The sound and theme of 'Tigers' may chime with the rest of the album, but to imply that it has some spurious relevance in its new position is an insult. The inclusion of 'Not Now John' B-side 'The Hero's Return (Part Two)' might have been more appropriate. That having been said, the rest of the album still impresses with its coherent theme of the struggle to maintain the Utopian dream against the various privations of war and the world in general.

The new remaster by James Guthrie shows remarkably little improvement over the 1986 CD master, which according to the credits was done by mastering god Doug Sax. The original still sounds remarkably good, rendering the Zuccarelli labs holophonics just as well as the new version, which only adds some more punch in the big drum fills and a little more realism in the saxophone parts. I can't vouch for the 1994 remaster, which still bore a Doug Sax credit, but on this evidence I would say that owners of the original CD shouldn't get too anxious. Hopefully Guthrie transferred the album to DSD, so we can look forward to an inevitable SACD to provoke even more accusations of cynicism. EMI refuse to be drawn on future possibilities...
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