

hi-fi

P. 50

WORLD

AUGUST 2004

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PrimaLuna's superb new Prologue One integrated amplifier

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standmounter vs. floorstander supertest
low life: why buy a subwoofer?
born again: Dynalox UniQorn
speaker secrets spelled out

AUGUST 2004



**MARANTZ SA-8400 * STELLO S200 * AUDIO ANALOGUE PRIMO
MUNICH HI-FI SHOW * THORENS TD125 * CAMBRIDGE AUDIO 540D**

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World Radio History

Welcome!

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David Price

If the sixties brought us stereo, the seventies transistor power and the eighties digital audio, then the nineties was surely the decade of the floorstanding loudspeaker?

Suddenly, the world couldn't get enough of these sleek, modern looking boxes, standing tall and slim as they radiated copious quantities of bass into our designer domiciles...

And, ermm, that was the trouble. Because floorstanders have larger cabinets to contend with, it's all too easy to buy a slack sounding, poorly braced boom-box that plays basslines half a beat behind the rest of the music.

This month's supertest on p17 takes an inside look at this phenomenon, when we compare three floorstanders from KEF, Revolver and Tannoy with their smaller, standmounting brethren - and find some most interesting differences!

On p13, Noel Keywood explains everything you need to know about them - to make your buying decisions easier. Then on p36 David Price tries one of the most eccentric floorstanders around - Dynavox's UniQorn, and on p38 Noel Keywood examines the subwoofer phenomenon. Finally, on p34 we test Epos's brand new M22 - not to everyone's taste, but suffice to say that just like the classic ES14 of twenty years back, it's a seminal rock loudspeaker!

Elsewhere, we have some great solid-state amplification in the shape of Stello's S200 power amplifier on p51. Being a tube integrated however, PrimaLuna's Prologue One would have a tough time with the M22s, but sings with gentler loads, such as the Revolver RW45s or Dynavox UniQorns. Read our review on p56.

Digitally speaking, we have Musical Fidelity's superb new X-RAY v3 CD spinner on p47, while p40 sees our review of Marantz's new SA-8400 two-channel SACD player (yes, that's right - it's stereo only!) Cambridge Audio's S40D Azur DVD player, reviewed on p54, completes the package.

Analogue addicts aren't forgotten, with Stewart Wennen's reassessment of the classic Thorens TD125 on p72, and his review of the superb new Graham Slee Era Gold V phono stage on p59...

Factor in a Munich High End hi-fi Show report, the latest hi-res software releases, a comprehensive twelve page buying guide and five pages of cutting-edge comment from the team - and please be upstanding for this month's *Hi-Fi World!*

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.

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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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For Sale

PERFORMANCE MULTI-CHANNEL MUSIC/HOME CINEMA SYSTEM

containing four components, all virtually brand new, complete with original packaging & manufacturer's warranties: high-fidelity CD player, DVD (Audio & Video) player, SACD player and a comprehensive AV processor. **A bargain at £2,995 the lot.** (Same price as the Linn UNIDISK SC player I've replaced them with). For more info/specs etc... phone 0500 888 909 and ask for Ivor. I'm also open to offers for my rather attractive multi-shelf equipment rack.

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news



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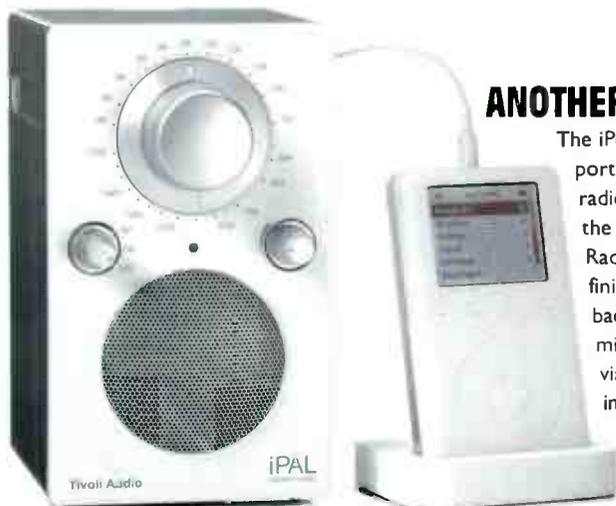
Denon's forthcoming Media Server is a fully-integrated media server for music, video and photos - an all-in-one twenty first century entertainment system. It comprises the NS-S100 Multi-Media Server and the NS-C200 Multi-Media Client, the former being the first product of its kind to combine: personal video recorders (PVR), personal audio recorders (PAR), data backup and a multi-zone distribution controller. The early-sample system has as its foundation a Linux-based Denon Network Server equipped with two 120GB hard drives (including one removable back-up mirror). It also features a multizone controller, dual independent PVRs with EPGs (powered by the acclaimed ReplayTV Service), dual PAL TV/ analogue cable tuners, music server, dual FM tuners and a built-in CD player with a ripping function and title lookup information powered by Gracenote. Out in the first quarter of 2005, expect to pay around £2,500...

MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE:

Mordaunt Short's Genie is a petite speaker package with 'striking and distinctive styling' to match its 'radical, cutting edge engineering'. ermm, it says here... The cabinets - available in silver and black - are constructed from high quality, die cast alloy ensuring exceptional rigidity. Such inertness is fortified by sculpted profiling, which has inherent mechanical strength. The form should improve sound quality, where the lack of parallel surfaces almost completely eliminates coloration. The magnetically shielded designs - four satellites and a dedicated centre -



house Mordaunt-Short's latest generation proprietary Continuous Profile Cone drivers - either 10cm or 9cm in size - allied to the company's 25mm aluminium dome tweeter. This ensures perfect tonal matching. A muscular subwoofer, powered by a 200W digital amplifier, completes the package. For more information on this eccentrically styled £800 sub-sat system, click on www.hello-genie.com or call 0845 128 3951



ANOTHER MINI ADVENTURE...

The iPod Mini has a new friend in the shape of Tivoli's new iPAL portable radio. Ruark, sole UK distributor of the Tivoli Audio radio product range, has announced details of a new version of the popular Tivoli Model PAL (Portable Audio Laboratory) Radio. Virtually the same as the standard PAL, it comes finished in a striking high gloss white front panel and silver back - to match the new iPod Mini. It also includes a quality mini-jack lead, so the iPod can be plugged in and listened to via the iPAL (albeit in mono). Price is £139.99. For more information, click on www.ruark.net/tivolilindex.htm.

NORWEGIAN GOOD?



Since 1997, Norwegian firm Hegel has been manufacturing high quality hi-fi equipment, and has garnered a fine reputation for itself. Its new CDP4A is said to be 'the most advanced technological CD player' HEGEL has ever made. With a built-in decoder for HDCD® discs and 24-bit 192kHz true balanced multilevel DAC with synchronous upsampling, it promises fine

sound. Shipped in 'Pearl Silver' with a glass-blasted front panel, the machine's design has been awarded by the Norwegian Design Council. For more information, click on:

www.hegel.com

SLIMLINE TONIC



AOpen's new ESV-289U is a slim external 4x Dual Mode DVD burner that can be given a 'fashionable new look' by exchanging the top cover. A USB 2.0 design, it provides 4x DVD+R, 2.4x DVD+RW, 2x DVD-R/RW, 24x CD-ROM, 8x DVD-ROM, 10x CD-RW and 16x CD-R reading/writing. A 2MB data buffer, CD Text compatibility and a bundled software package comprising Nero Ahead, NeoDVD, PowerDVD and VideoStudio7 completes the bill. A power adapter supporting connection to three different types of power points (European, UK, Australian) is also supplied. For more details, click on www.aopen.nl



ONE FOR ALL

Linn's new 'entry level' universal disc playing source and control component, is now shipping. The UNIDISK SC player is a complete high-fidelity audio and video source component with integrated surround-sound processing and control. The latest product to feature Linn's SILVER DISK ENGINE™ universal disc playing technology, the UNIDISK SC player is designed to access to all the new high-definition music and movie formats. Linn's founder and Managing Director Ivor Tiefenbrun said, "This is simply the most significant integrated product from Linn. Our unique expertise in the fields of universal disc playback, integration and control has helped create the best integrated home entertainment product available. UNIDISK SC is a complete pitch-accurate AV source and control product offering by far the highest standards of performance and easily the best value product on the market. A new generation of Linn multi-channel product, UNIDISK SC provides all you need to access and control music and movies across all quality audio and video formats. Only Linn's integrated design and manufacturing capability can deliver such advanced technology." Although it's been at shows for months now, the UNIDISK SC player is at last available (in black and silver finishes) from authorised Linn retailers for £2,995. For a review of its high end big brother, a product Linn say is more biased to top quality music reproduction, see p51. For more information on either product, click on www.linn.co.uk

THE X-FACTOR

Proof positive, as if we needed more, that Naim Audio is no longer quite the same company once run by its illustrious founder Julian Vereker, is the new 5x range. Under the stewardship of ex-sales director Paul Stephenson, Naim's ultra-competitive new range has taken the fight to the market, so to speak, rather than simply letting disciples and devotees come to it. First came the 5 series, then a revamped classic range, then the recent 5i variants (just tested in *Hi-Fi World*, and very impressive indeed), and now the new x range. The new Naim CD5x, NAC112x and NAP150x are claimed to deliver significant improvements in performance to their predecessors the CD5, NAC112 and NAP150. The changes, a result of 'technical and engineering improvements', are not easily seen in the published

specifications which remain the same, but are claimed to be 'easily discernible in the listening experience'.

The £1,450 CD5x CD player sports an improved CD transport mechanism (Philips VAM1202/12), new improved CD tray PCB, new analogue output stage on a separate PCB, switchable DIN or phono outputs, new dedicated large toroidal transformer for stiffer power supply, CD and CDRW compatibility, Pacific PMD200 Digital Filter and HDCD decoder (which re-dithers the digital words after processing them), 24 Bit dual mono Burr Brown DACs (as used in CDX2 and CDS3), and continues to be upgradeable by the addition of the FlatCap 2 or HiCap power supplies.

The £680 NAC112x has a new main board design, new display PCB using SMT for lower noise, two switchable DIN or phono inputs, RC5 socket for easy external remote control without line of sight, optional RS232 connector for external system control and new rear panel layout for ease of use on a Fraim. The volume control of the NAC112x uses a Naim designed resistor ladder to allow two-way feedback of level, ideal for multi-room control systems. This allows different inputs to have different sensitivities allowing different inputs to sound similar in sound level. It can be powered from the supply provided by the NAP150x, or upgraded by adding a FlatCap 2 or HiCap power supply. The £795 NAP150x sports a new toroidal transformer for improved regulation, separate transformer windings for CH1 and CH2 and Preamp (the NAP150 combined CH1 and CH2's windings), uprated preamp power supply to improve the performance of the preamp, and the new Fraim-friendly rear panel. See www.naim-audio.co.uk for more details, and watch this space for a review!

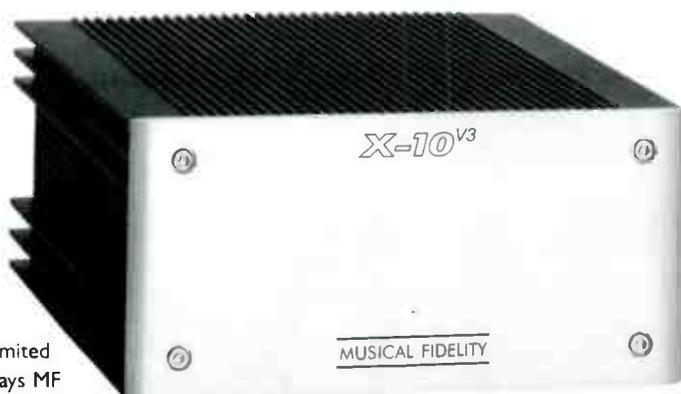


SPOTTED:

Cruising the idyllic waterways of Venice, a boat bearing the sacred letters 'SME'... Well, the company is reported to have been a supplier to the aerospace industry, but diesel tugs? Could this be Alastair Robertson-Aikman's best kept secret, or merely a flight of fancy for the skipper who was carrying new, boxed, TVs and micro systems from shore to shore...?

TUBULAR BELLE

Musical Fidelity's original X-10D tube buffer stage was a remarkable product, which probably did more to get thermionic valves into modern hi-fi homes than anything else ever made - it sold a staggering 48,500 units. The new X-10v3 will only do one tenth as well, because it's being made in a limited edition of 4,850 pieces. This, says MF supremo Antony Michaelson, is down to the relative scarcity of its 'exclusive mu-vista tube'. It is claimed to 'transform the sound, in a most musical fashion, and it does so without adding any significant noise or distortion'... and can be used on the output of a CD player, in the tape loop of an integrated amplifier or between a pre and power amp. The X-10v3 uses a military specification 6112 valve, what MF calls the 'mu-vista', said to have superior technical performance to its earlier 'trivistor' tube. Price of the X-10v3 is £299 inc. VAT. For more details, click on www.musicalfidelity.co.uk.



next issue

Yes - it's that time again - September's *Hi-Fi World* magazine is jam-packed full of vinyl and LP related goodies. We start with a review of the new Roksan Xerxes turntable, and continue with a roundup of the latest affordable moving magnet cartridges. We have Whest Audio's new phonostage, and Koetsu's legendary Red moving coil. Noel Keywood's 'Turntable Toolkit' tells you everything you need to know about the hardware, and more... Factor in Musical Fidelity's new X pre-power amplifier combo, Harbeth's LS3/5a-based Monitor 20S mini-monitors, a six-page DIY audio computer project - plus much, much more - and you'd be mad not to reserve your copy now!

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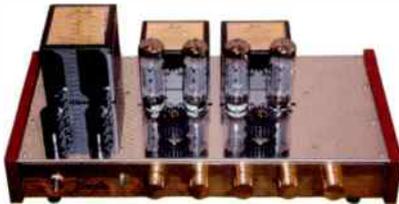
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web: www.walrus.co.uk



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 proving to be a huge success both with reviewers and customers alike - we are delighted! Now made in the EC (a warm welcome to our Polish neighbours is in order), this range of three models, all superbly built, all featuring automatic biasing, and all with large, wide bandwidth toroidal output transformers suitable for 4 or 8 Ohms, offer superb value for money. Sound quality is reminiscent of the best classic designs of the past, but modern circuit techniques and transformers give an authority of presentation and power reserve often lacking in older designs. Truly modern classics!



The Jadis Orchestra Reference (left) from France, at £1699. Output of 40W/ch using KT90s, and even featuring that long missed attribute, tone controls - my, takes me back!

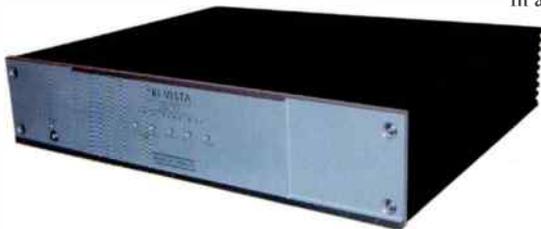
The Consonance M100S (right), £1595, is proving to be a reviewer's favourite, offering a delicacy which is a speciality of the 300B output valve, giving here 25W/channel.



For people who prefer the authentic Star Trek look, the Shanling STP80 (left) fits the bill perfectly! With superb build quality, remote control, digital level indicator, 35W/ch output, all for a mere £1295. Oh, it sounds good too, by the way.



The Audiovalve Assistent 20 (yes, it is spelt like that) is a little gem from Germany, with a very musical performance - sweet as a nut, we say, 30W/ch output, in a neat chassis, for £1600.



The Musical Fidelity Trivista DAC: We have secured some of the last remaining UK stock of this brilliant device. An utter bargain for £1200 - and, as they say, once it's gone, it's gone! Don't delay - pick up the phone now.



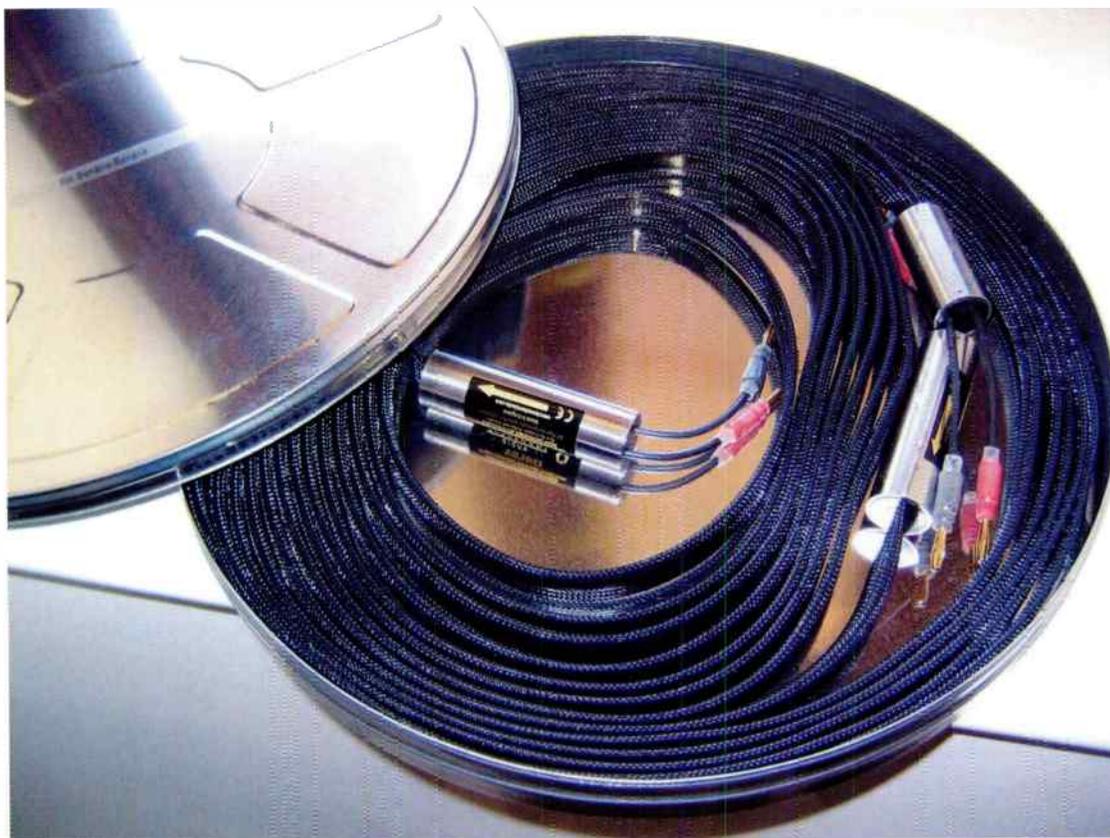
Cawsey may not be the best known cable (others spend more on advertising) but it's quite possibly the best sounding. We have been selling these Australian made silver interconnects for several years and can recommend them without reservation. From £250 to £900 per metre set.



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



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TOWNSHEND ISOLDA DCT

LOUDSPEAKER CABLE £150/M

Regular readers will know that *Hi-Fi World* is not a fawning fan of expensive interconnects, so when we review something that's into Lottery Winner territory, it's got to be either interesting or special. Townshend's Isolda DCT is just such a product - and also extremely pricey from £300 for a 2m run to £800 for 7m run of pre-terminated cable.

The company has a reputation, justified in our opinion, of coming up with particularly offbeat and innovative products - the Maximum ribbon supertweeters are a classic case in point. Not everyone in the audiophile community is convinced of the need for something that goes right up to 90kHz - especially with bandwidth-limited CD - but, well, they work - and that's enough.

As for the Isolda, Max Townshend argues that wherever electronic signals are transmitted by wire, it is the ability of the interconnecting cable to match impedance - and not resistance - to the source that's critical. He says most cables fail to achieve this, with the mismatch typically twenty-to-one as most speakers have a nominal impedance of about eight ohms and

typical cables a characteristic impedance between 100 ohms and 400 ohms.

The Isolda is claimed to have a characteristic impedance of eight ohms. To achieve this, it must exhibit very low inductance and high capacitance. As high capacitance can upset some amplifiers, a passive 'inaudible inductor' is fitted in parallel with a damping resistor, inserted in series with each leg of the cable, at the amplifier end. The two inductors also act as a filter to prevent radio frequency interference (RFI). Furthermore, the very close spacing of the conductors in the cable provides a further level of RF rejection.

In addition, the copper conductors are subjected to deep cryogenic treatment (DCT) and post-tempering prior to assembly. The copper is slowly cooled to about -190 degrees Celsius, held there for a number of hours, and then gradually returned to room temperature. DCT, claims Townshend, is proven to improve the lattice structure of copper, eliminating small 'dislocations'.

The cable is beautifully constructed, as you'd expect for something costing the same as a half-decent CD spinner. The two flat strip conductors and their proprietary insulation are sheathed in polyester braid, terminated at each end with non-magnetic stainless steel cylinders. These enclose the cable

transition as well as the inductors at the amplifier end. Flexible, PTFE insulated silver-plated copper wire tails connect to banana, spade, BFA or Speakon connectors to complete the cable. The strip conductors are arranged to slide over each other, through the braid and through the cylinders, to minimise buckling when coiling the cable. It can be laid under carpet and folded at right angles. It must not, however, be walked upon. The final *piece de resistance*, not wholly relevant to sonics, are the film cans in which the Isolda comes!

The sound is very special - I've never heard such an invisible loudspeaker cable. To be fair, I've never heard such an expensive one either, but given the fact that you already have a £10,000-plus system (and many do, these days), I'd suggest you give the Isolda serious consideration. Essentially, it's wonderfully open, with tremendously unfettered dynamics, gloriously supple and fluid rhythms, excellent tonal colouring (my Chord Odyssey 2, excellent as it is at a 'mere' £18/m, sounded positively monochrome by comparison) and amazing detail. Its depth, dimensionality and spatial accuracy is quite disarming. I tried with both a K5881 tube amp and Quad 909, with both Quad 989 electrostatics and Yamaha NS1000Ms - and got consistently excellent results. Recommended, providing you've got the rest of your system first...

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Not for conservatives



The comprehensive range of turntables by Pro-ject, design is perhaps a little less conservative than the norm and yes, products are available in blue, and red, and yellow, and green.

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Speak easy!

Loudspeakers are not a mystery - from ports to panels, baffles to boxes and cones to coils, they all use well documented designs, technologies and philosophies. In this feature, Noel Keywood details how every aspect of a 'speaker affects its sound...

There's been no shortage of innovation in loudspeakers since Rice and Kellogg, working for General Electric of the USA, produced the world's first dynamic drive unit in 1925. Horns, ribbons and electrostatics, which still confront us today in the showrooms, were all in existence then, but the dynamic or coil driver, as it is known, has proven its practical worth over the years and become dominant.

Today, the dynamic driver'd two-way loudspeaker is everywhere. Hardly surprising then that people should say nothing much has changed in loudspeakers. NXT apart, little has - for eighty years! Nowadays, advances come from improved materials and greater design sophistication through computer modelling. So where once you chose between a dynamic speaker that looked like a wardrobe or an electrostatic that looked like a radiator, now you are faced with aluminium, titanium, Kevlar, carbon fibre, glass fibre and a host of other wonder substances, in a complex spectrum of products. These materials add to a bewildering array of technologies that confront you in a loudspeaker showroom...

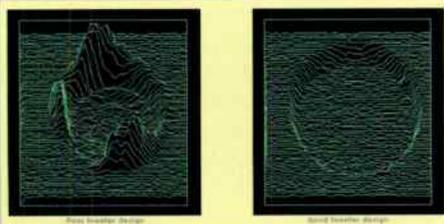


Fig 1
At left you can see the irregular behaviour of a poor dome tweeter 'breaking up', and at right how a good dome tweeter should behave to give a clean sound. When a dome tweeter breaks up it colours the sound. Laser shots from KEF.

ENCLOSURES:

REFLEX



By far the most common cabinet configuration for a box loudspeaker, putting a 'port' in a 'reflex' cabinet is a cheap but effective method of getting deep bass from it. Engineers say the port's output 'integrates in the far field', shorthand for "it may or may not work in a real room". Luckily it usually does - but rarely seamlessly. Bass quality from a reflex isn't always the best, relying as it does on internal box bounce and serendipitous integration of port output. All the same, modern ported loudspeakers go low, whilst being simple, light and easy to manufacture. That's why commercially, they reign supreme - but purists often insist on other types. Example: **Mission 770**.

INFINITE Baffle



Otherwise known as a closed box loudspeaker, this is a simple but effective way of getting bass from any drive unit.

Once the most common form of loading, ported loudspeakers of the same size (volume) go lower, making the simple IB rare. However, IBs give cleaner bass with less waffle than a ported cabinet and are always worth a listen. Properly done, they're capable of very tight and grippy bass with a clean, uncluttered midband. They're often easier to place within a room, thanks to the lack of port interaction, and often sound good pushed close to the rear walls. The downside is that IBs are obviously less efficient and harder to drive compared to reflex designs, requiring a muscular transistor amplifier. Example: **Linn Kan**.

TRANSMISSION LINE



In theory, the Transmission Line is a perfect way to load the rear cone of a loudspeaker, for good bass. In practice, Transmission Line bass is smooth, deep, well damped and free from the

'bounce' of closed or reflex enclosures. Some criticise it for being 'slow', but this may be due to the deep lows it can produce. To be effective the internal line must be long, making a good TL big, heavy, internally complex and expensive. IMF and then TDL once built huge TLs. Nowadays, PMC make them. Worth considering for larger rooms of 18ft+, if you want smooth bass of endless depth. Example: **IMF TLS80**.

HORN



The horn is the only way to properly couple a cone drive unit to a large volume of air in a room. It's an acoustic transformer. To work well it must be long and the

mouth huge. A full size horn seemingly moves a room, giving bass of incomparable power and speed. Small horns aren't worth the effort though, producing no deep bass, plus lots of distortion - there's no effective compromise to be had. Because of their impractical size and cost, few decent horns exist, but good ones are popular with tube amps, thanks to their ultra high sensitivity and ease of driving. Example: **Tannoy Westminster HE**.

DRIVERS:**(I) PANEL
(A) ELECTROSTATIC**

The electrostatic uses a super-light panel of film, much like Cling-film, to produce sound. Possessing almost no

weight, it potentially offers far greater accuracy and less colouration than a cone loudspeaker. Full range electrostatics are large, need mains power and, because they radiate from front and rear, should ideally be used in a long room (18ft+) to 'lose' the rear wave. A sensibly sized panel cannot produce really deep bass, nor go very loud, so is sometimes partnered with a dynamic bass unit, such as in Martin Logan Claritys or the Cadence ES. It can reproduce speech, vocals and instruments with a natural smoothness that is unique, however. Bass can be augmented with a subwoofer. Example: **Quad ESL-57.**

(B) NXT

An exciter is used to make a stiff panel produce sound. Based on mathematical analysis techniques, it gives well defined and predictable results from a panel of special construction. NXT panels work well, giving a clean, open and cohesive sound. Bass depth is determined by panel dimensions so a subwoofer is usually needed. Unfortunately, NXT hi-fi speakers are still rare. Example: **TDK-S80.**

(C) RIBBON

Ribbon tweeters are enjoying a minor revival at present and ribbon midrange units also exist. Although quite difficult to engineer, when done properly they give great results. Expect a super clean

sound that's delightfully open and clear - and also very fast. However, ribbon drivers do not work at low frequencies and often invariably poor crossover engineering between ribbon and the inevitable cone bass driver gives a two-part sound. Elac make some fine ribbons, very well engineered. Example: **Elac FS207.2.**

(II) DYNAMIC

At the heart of every dynamic loudspeaker lies a small coil or wire set in a magnetic field - the 'motor' as it is called. It works on the same principle as every electric motor, from tube train to toothbrush - electric that is. The coil is the bit you'll burn out if you use too much volume, especially over a long period. Check out the temperature of a 100W light bulb to see what 100W means to a loudspeaker coil in terms of heat. There are alternatives to the motor, such as electrostatic attraction and piezo electric resonance, but little can compete in terms of cost and practicality. Dynamic transducers come as either domes or cones:

(A) DOMES

The most common type of tweeter, comprising lightweight dome of plastic, cloth or metal, driven by a coil of fine wire and magnet (i.e. motor). At worst domes can sound peaky and sharp, at best can sound very civilised. This depends on the material in the dome. Cloth tends to be smooth but veiled, metal the opposite - although the type of metal is key. Beryllium - the lightest metal in the Periodic Table - is superb, but ultra expensive to manufacture, as the JM Labs Grand Utopia shows! Huge strength for light weight makes titanium a number one choice for aircraft parts, but can be bright and zingy when used in loudspeakers unless carefully damped. As a rule, ribbons better dome tweeters. There's also a lot to be said for using a large dome midrange - because they're phase coherent with dome tweeters, yet they are rare in hi-fi, if not in studio monitors such as those from Pioneer's sister brand TAD. The best example was the beryllium dome Fostex unit used in the Yamaha NS1000M. Sadly, most large midrange domes sound coarse and brash, probably because they are just badly engineered.

**(B) CONES**

A loudspeaker cone may look simple enough, but its behaviour is complex. At low frequencies it pushes air as one unit. As frequency increases sound radiation moves progressively down



toward the centre dome, or dust cap, until it comes almost entirely from this point. In effect, the dust cap is radiating out through the cone, influencing polar dispersion and crossover phasing, generally for the worse. Obviously, a quacky sounding plastic cone with a resonant aluminium dust cap would be like combining two 'speakers' in one, sounding audibly incohesive due to differing properties of cone and dome. So drive unit cone materials and construction are crucial to basic sound quality. Here's what's available:

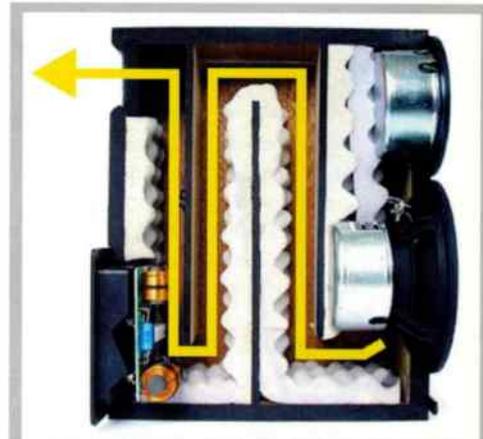


Fig. 2
In a PMC transmission line loudspeaker, a lightly damped line leads from the rear of the bass unit out to a rear port. The yellow line shows its path back and forth, constrained by baffles within the cabinet.

METAL

Cones are used in woofers, mid/bass and most midrange drivers. Aluminium combines strength with light weight and reasonable damping. Expect a clear, open sound from aluminium drivers, but also watch out for a 'clatter' reminiscent of aluminium saucepans being rattled around in the kitchen sink! This can be pervasive and makes for a tonally monochromatic sound. Audition using string instruments like violin to check for this. Good aluminium drive units give a vivid sound and project well. Nice when done well. Example: **Acoustic Energy AE-1.**

CARBON FIBRE

Has a good reputation and an ardent following. Gives a well damped, almost 'dark' sound with good inter-transient silences. Generally easy on the ear, but not dull sounding. Wilson Benesch in particular favour carbon fibre as a structural material in all their hi-fi products. Some even say carbon based materials are empath-

	SENSITIVITY SPL/W	POWER W
HORN (LARGE)	98dB	1.6
HORN (SMALL)	96dB	2.5
FLOORSTANDER	92dB	6
STANDMOUNTER	90dB	10
BOOKSHELF	88dB	16
ELECTROSTATIC	86dB	25
BOOKSHELF (IB)	84dB	40
	82dB	63
	80dB	100

Fig. 3

A chart of loudspeaker sensitivity shows how different types compare and the power they need to produce a loud 100dB sound pressure level (SPL) one metre in front of them. Large speakers are most sensitive, needing far less power than miniatures, especially sealed box (IB) bookshelf types. In practice the powers shown need to be doubled or more for a normal room...

ically correct for carbon based life! There's no doubt that most people find carbon resistors and carbon cables very neutral sounding, and carbon fibre loudspeaker drive units do seem to possess similar properties. Interesting! Example: **Castle Howard S3**.

GLASS FIBRE

Glass fibre matt cones can exhibit quite a harsh 'crack' when they break up. Glass fibre is another modern material with a bright, clean sound and great projection, but a tendency towards harshness when pushed hard into break up mode. This can be wearing after a while, especially if you listen loud, so audition carefully. Example: **Revolver R45**.

KEVLAR

Kevlar is a light, stiff and very strong synthetic fibre used in things like bullet proof vests. Kevlar cones generally work well in all areas but shine in none. Kevlar gives a clean sound with fairly good projection, but there's something granular about it and levels of detailing could usually be better. Example: **B&W CDM-1**.

PAPER

Paper cones are both light and stiff, for a fast and efficient sound. However, paper and to a lesser extent pulps and treated pulps are inconsistent in their properties and can sound coarse and coloured as a result, due to multiple minor resonances. Often 'fast' sounding at low levels, at high levels paper cones often crack up badly, sounding rough and unpleasant. Example: **Wharfedale E70**.

CERAMICS

A recent idea is to impregnate a fibrous cone with a ceramic powder and fire it to produce a light, stiff and inert composite. Generally this gives

a clean if unremarkable sound. Mission have used ceramic composite cones. Example: **Mission 782SE**.

POLYPROPYLENE

The fave rave for late seventies loudspeakers, this material gives a well damped and smooth sound, but is slower than paper and has a tendency to 'quack' - giving a distinctively nasal midband tonality. It's also a tad slower than metal and paper. For a while, it was *de rigeur* for every self-respecting monitor speaker, but has now fallen out of fashion. Example: **Spendor BC-1**.

HDA

High Definition Aerogel came to the market in the mid nineties, offering a seemingly ideal combination of light weight and low distortion. Very stiff and rigid, they have a characteristically fast sound like carbon fibre, but obviously more forward and explicit. Example: **Mission 752** (ironically this is the smoothest and warmest HDA-coned speaker ever made!)



Fig. 4
Big loudspeakers go loud. This is the recently introduced Yorkminster from Tannoy, standing over one metre high and 600mm wide (2ft) wide. Tannoy claim sensitivity of this big reflex is 94dB. Our chart shows it needs 4W or so to produce 100dB!

TERMINOLOGY

POWER HANDLING

The power handling of a loudspeaker, quoted in Watts, is the power at which it destroys itself - not how loud it will go. To go very loud a loudspeaker needs lots of drive units, or a few very big ones, in order to produce acoustic power. Most high power hi-fi speakers nowadays have at least two bass units working in parallel, in addition to midrange and tweeter. Putting a lot of electrical power into a loudspeaker, especially at a party, is likely to burn it out. Aim for a few hundred watts maximum with normal hi-fi products. Happily, in loudspeakers, size makes for efficiency so large loudspeakers do not need large amounts of power. A good floorstander produces 90dB (loud) from one watt and a Tannoy Westminster 99dB (very loud). Big speakers can go loud cleanly and they don't need much power to do so, except in very large rooms. Fig.3 shows typical sensitivity values and how much power is needed to produce a loud 100dB sound pressure level, or SPL.

BI-WIRE

The bass and treble units of a two-way loudspeaker are fed by separate wires from an amplifier. The impedance of each crossover section ensures that high and low frequency currents only are carried by the respective sections, allowing cable to be optimised for its purpose, usually heavy cable for low frequency current and light multistrand (e.g. Litz) for high frequencies. Generally gives a crisper sound.

SPIKES

Spikes help physically stabilise a loudspeaker to prevent it rocking back and forth as a reaction to cone movement. They pass through carpet and pierce wooden floor, helping improve time domain definition and enhancing the general sense of tightness and control.

MASS LOADING

Some floorstanders have a lower chamber for sand or shot loading. When filled, this stabilises and damps the cabinet. It's a cheap and very effective way of getting fast, clean bass transients and superb all-round definition, but a sand filled cabinet is heavy and difficult to move!

BAFFLE

This is the front panel of a loudspeaker that holds the drive units. Open baffle loudspeakers (dipoles) have no rear enclosing cabinet, and for deep bass the baffle must be large, no less than 14ft across to get down to 40Hz. In practice it is possible to use 3ft-4ft and rely on room gain (i.e. resonance) to support bass output, or a subwoofer. With closed box loudspeakers (IB or reflex) the front baffle should ideally be smooth and free from sudden discontinuities, be profiled to have rounded edges (it must not have a lip) and have asymmetric drive unit positioning for best stereo imaging. Narrow baffles are better than wide ones. This is the main reason modern loudspeakers are tall and narrow, with vertically stacked drive units.

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Nottingham Tram Line - mistaken vanity purchase - hardly used	offers?	£200m
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STEREO TIMES

Size Matters

What's the difference between floorstanding and standmounting loudspeakers? And how do these translate in practice? In this month's supertest, Noel Keywood rounds up standmounters from KEF, Tannoy and Revolver and puts them against their floorstanding brethren. The differences are surprising and - not as you'd necessarily expect...

In the sixties, large horn loudspeakers invariably sat on the floor, whereas in the seventies, big boxed designs went on castored stands, only to be wheeled out from behind the settee for serious listening. It wasn't until the eighties that the speaker stand truly came of age, and manufacturers began developing what then became known as the 'standmounter'.

The nineties heralded the 'floorstander' boom (*excuse the pun*) - long, tall, narrow baffle designs separated from terra firma by nothing more than four spikes. British buyers took to these in droves, as there was the promise of deeper, stronger bass, no need to spend money on costly stands, and the appeal of what was undeniably a handsomely shaped loudspeaker. Suddenly it seemed there was little, if any, reason for the continued existence of standmounters, save for folk with seriously diminutive listening rooms...

Well, this month's supertest shows that there is - indeed - more to it than that. We've put the smaller and bigger brothers from three families of affordable loudspeakers against one another, and far from showing the inevitable superiority of the respective floorstanders, we've found the standmounters have stood up surprisingly well. Read on for our findings, and turn to p25 for Noel's conclusion...

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TANNOY FUSION 2



REVOLVER RW45



KEF Q1

VERDICT ●●●●●

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KEF say their popular and acclaimed Q1 "performs equally well on a shelf or stand mounted", a slightly different proposition yet again to other loudspeakers in this report. Most are aimed at one or t'other - not both. In the case of the Q1 you would need a big shelf to accommodate it, because with rear terminals included it would overhang even a 12in shelf. It's best suited to stand mounting and KEF balance its bass output for this positioning our measurements show, for the Q1 is not short of bass.

The price of the Q1 - more than twice that of the similarly sized Tannoy - reflects use of their Uni-Q coaxial drive unit, which places an aluminium dome tweeter at the base of the woofer cone. This gives a stable sound balance wherever you listen, sitting or standing. The image is also tightly focussed and well defined. So here is another option to consider - a premium small speaker that can be moved back close to a wall. Is Uni-Q in a cabinet this size a better proposition than, say, a budget floostander? KEF quote a lower response limit of 45Hz after all, which is low. Our measurements suggest the Q1 just about achieves this, but then so do most of its rivals in this report.

In line with its quality pretensions the Q1 can be bi-wired, but links can be left in place if single wire is used.



SOUND QUALITY

As small loudspeakers go this one is expensive, but it has a great reputation. It is a stand mounter though, not always so convenient, yet placed on stands close to a rear wall the Q1s sang straight away. They are lively, open and dynamic, seemingly lacking little reproducing the Corrs 'Give me a Reason', from their DVD. The track is a tad bright but well founded and the Q1s got the balance right, with a firm, clean bass line, delightfully clear, natural vocals and a little shine further up the range. Spinning wideband DVD showed the small cabinet's front port does whoomp a little, drawing attention to small amount of boxiness, but it was forgettable. The Q1 has never sounded deficient, one of its great strengths. Its possible to make a

loudspeaker this size go low enough to sound convincing with most types of music. It handled strings of Dvorak's 9th well, putting body in cellos - a small amount of sheen being acceptable in the scheme of things.

The Q1s don't go as low as a floorstander and I expected the later Q4s to make up for any deficiency, but as with the Tannoys I found the situation a little more complex. Subjectively, the Q1 has grander and more resonant bass than the Q4 and, as measurement suggested, goes just as low, in spite of lacking a bass unit. This stand mounter gets a great performance from a compact cabinet, if a tubby one against the super slim Q4. The Q1 makes a good argument for the well engineered compact - all it lacks is foundation-shaking lows.

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

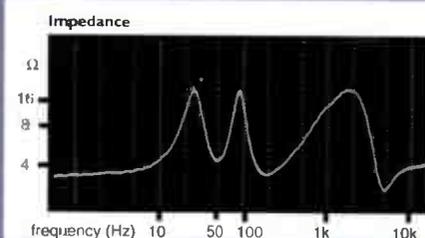
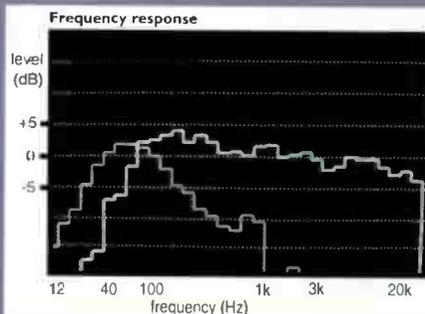
KEF have subtly altered the Q1 since I last measured it. Frequency response is now flatter, with less low frequency emphasis. Bass runs flat down to 63Hz before starting to roll away slowly to reach -5dB at 40Hz. The port, tuned to 50Hz, damps quite well, at this frequency giving the Q1 solid sounding but enthusiastic bass.

Across midband and treble frequency response is flatter than before, but the Uni-Q tweeter now rolls down above 10kHz - unexpected. This tweeter normally runs flat to 20kHz but the impedance curve shows quite clearly KEF have reduced high frequency input. As a result of all this the Q1 is now more accurate, will be less full bodied, will have

deeper and perhaps drier bass, and finally should have smoother but more obvious highs.

KEF use a 3.6ohm bass driver and this draws more current than most. Voltage sensitivity was high at 88dB, but this is to be expected in view of the low overall impedance value of 5ohms.

The latest Q1 will sound smoother than before, less fulsome and likely more detailed. As a load it remains demanding. NK



KEF Q4

The recently introduced Q4 from KEF is a super-slim floorstander fitted with a single, small 130mm Uni-Q driver, aided by a 130mm bass unit. Just 820mm high and 180mm wide, weighing a light 9.1kgs, it's a compact package that's visually unobtrusive. Alongside, the Q1 looks squat and dumpy. Since the upper Uni-Q driver houses an aluminium dome tweeter at the base of the woofer cone, in spite of its small size this is a three-way loudspeaker.

The Q4 is a modern lifestyle product perhaps, one to fit unobtrusively into a contemporary lounge. It has been balanced for near-wall use our measurements showed, and it worked best in such a position. It can be argued on technical grounds that the Q4 is most suited to a small, bass lively room, where it should strike a perfect balance by not over-energising it. This loudspeaker is very different in basic character to the larger floorstanding Q7 further up the Q range which has ample bass.

Super-slim floorstanders are a great idea, but they do topple easily, even when well spiked. I've had a few keel over during repositioning under review, and this again means a sheltered position is best.

With grilles on or off the Q4 looks smart and modern. It can be bi-wired and the front port allows near-wall placement.

SOUND QUALITY

Celine Dion's soaring vocals in 'New Day Dawning' highlight immediately one of the beauties of KEF's Uni-Q driver: its superb way with vocals, projecting a clear, detailed image out of the speaker. I was standing at the time, but it made little difference. A coaxial driver doesn't change its sound much wherever you are listening - standing or sitting. The small Uni-Q unit in the Q4 has a great midrange, uncoloured and detailed, one that brings you very close to vocals.

With a smaller cone than the Q1 and a smoother response, the Q4 showed itself to be more academic in its approach to music. This is a serious hi-fi loudspeaker where KEF engineers seem to have decided to trade enthusiasm for accuracy. As a loudspeaker the Q4 images superbly and is very detailed. It handled strings of the Berliner Staatskapelle with alacrity, displaying less of the sheen once common to KEFs fitted with their aluminium dome tweeter.

As a floorstander though the Q4 is not the proposition I expected, from my experience with both the Q1 and Q7. It delivers dry but light bass lines, even when pushed back against a wall to excite room modes. From the 24/96 digital of B.B. King's



DVD, 'Riding with the King', to driving bass lines in Angelique Kidjo's 'Agolo', the Q4s never approached a moment when they might boom. This loudspeaker doesn't attempt floorstander bass! It's best viewed as a small, quality speaker that occupies minimal space in the home. It frees up living space, rather than giving a bigger sound - a new role for this type of loudspeaker!

VERDICT ●●●●£

A highly accurate mini-stander, very revealing and with great projection. Lacks bass punch, and the Q1's liveliness, although more accurate. Use in small rooms.

KEF Q4 £399

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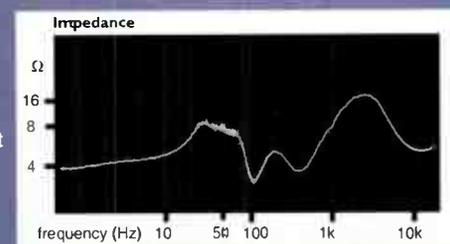
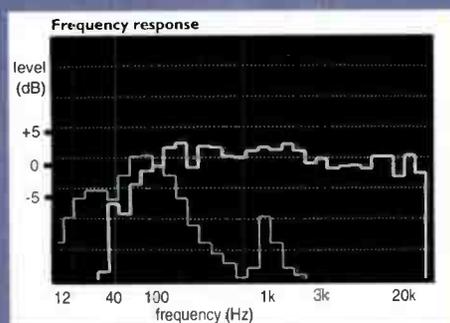
MEASURED PERFORMANCE

An interesting feature of the Q4 is lowered treble output. The tweeter has been pulled back to soften the speaker's sound and give it more body. It's a move that will make KEF's aluminium Uni-Q tweeter less noticeable and hopefully more integrated than before. All the same, its output is strong from 8kHz to 20kHz so the Q4 will not sound dull.

A slow roll down in bass output below 100Hz suggests strong damping and a balance suited to near-wall use. The lower limit for forward output is 40Hz (-6dB), so the Q4 goes low, and the port reaches down a little further, but the roll down will lighten bass subjectively. The Q4 delivers less low frequency energy than the Q1.

The impedance characteristic is less peaky than usual at low frequencies, likely due to the arrangement of the bass drivers. This loudspeaker should sound well damped and fast as a result. Sensitivity was a normal 87dB but measured impedance low at 5ohms.

Measurement shows the Q4 has some unusual and distinctive properties. It has been balanced for smaller rooms I suspect. NK



TANNOY FUSION 2

VERDICT ●●●● £

A budget standmounter built down to a price, the F2 offers a lot for the money. Basically accurate enough, if unrefined, it's fair value.

FUSION 2 £149.90

Tannoy Ltd
 ☎ 44 (0)1236 420199
 www.tannoy.com

The relatively new Fusion range from Tannoy offers a modern no-frills product, made in China to be competitive. Quotes as low as £110 are available for the bookshelf Fusion 2, yet it's not a small speaker by any means. You seemingly get a lot for your money with this one, plus the respected Tannoy badge on front. Like many competitors, Tannoy manufacture more complex and expensive speakers, notably their dual-concentrics. But for the purposes of our comparisons I wanted to find out just what they offer buyers with a bang up to date design like this.

There's no mention of wideband with the Fusion 2 nor does it have a metal dome tweeter. Instead, Tannoy use a woven fabric dome with layer damping, suggesting smooth treble with less of the obvious brightness common to metal domes.

The Fusion 2 tweeter mates with a fibre pulp cone bass/midrange unit. It is housed in a reflex cabinet carrying a front port. Although this suggests shelf mounting, at 275mm deep the F2 is really a stand mounter. Tannoy recommend it's kept 0.5metres (20in) from a rear wall.

Rear terminals accept 4mm plugs or bare wire, and have removable bi-wire links. A choice of Apple or Dark Oak veneer finishes is available.



SOUND QUALITY

After warming up, the Fusion 2 had quite good bass extension, whilst not being able to reach down as far as the Fusion 4. The opening drum strike in Angelique Kidjo's 'Agolo' was missed altogether, but bass lines were otherwise delivered well enough, although the cabinet did thrum through the front port. Placed on stands close to a rear wall where it had the best chance of driving the room, the F2 still fell well short of the F4 in bass drive, leaving Tannoy's big floorstander clearly ahead, justifying its size.

However, there were other differences between the two that came into the picture. Lack of a tweeter peak and good integration between the drivers gave the Fusion 2 better focus and cleaner sound

stage imagery. Here it was appreciably more capable than its bigger brother - a surprise. I had no trouble with Ashkenazy playing Rachmaninov's Piano Concerto No2; higher keys were a little emphasised but otherwise the Fusion 2s were warm, full bodied and convincing enough.

Bass lines in Christina Aguilera's 'Can't Hold Us Down' had heft, her vocal delivery was balanced, if short of detail, cymbals were harsh. In spite of its hi-fi specification the tweeter is none too alluring. All the same it was in better balance than that of the F4.

The two speakers are unlike in small but important details that set them apart in many ways, unrelated to their intended niche as standmounter or floorstander. There's devil in the detail, as they say...

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

The Fusion 2 slid through our tests with the sort of ease only a well engineered and balanced product can. Frequency response was flat and the tweeter well integrated from a reasonably broad range of frontal mic.

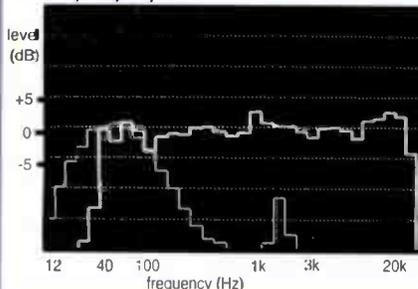
The tweeter peaks a little and this may be heard as a little brightness to the sound. Bass output is ruler flat to 40Hz, good for a small cabinet. In use though this will make the Fusion 2 sound a little dry or light unless used close to a rear wall. The port, tuned to 48Hz, damps well enough and has output down to 25Hz.

The Fusion 2 measures out at 6ohms nominal impedance

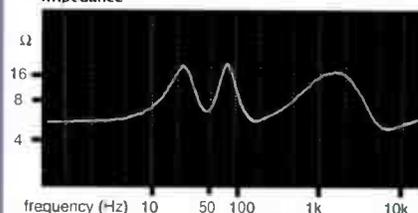
with pink noise, having a 5ohm DCR bass unit that rises to 12ohms at 2kHz before handing over to a 5ohm tweeter. This helps toward a good sensitivity of 88dB, whilst ensuring the speaker isn't too taxing as a load.

The Fusion 2 is accurate, sensitive and well balanced all round. It will sound dry and lacking warmth unless used close to a wall. NK

Frequency response



Impedance



TANNOY FUSION 4

At nearly one metre high, Tannoy's Fusion 4 is tall - taller than Revolver's RVV45, although Tannoy limit the Fusion 4's visual impact by keeping the front narrow (204mm). With a price tag of £349 that commonly gets cut to £299, the F4 keeps Tannoy competitive in the budget floorstander market.

With Fusion 4 you get a full size floorstander cabinet, fitted with the same 165mm bass and treble units seen in the F2. In this case they are supported by an additional bass driver to give greater power handling. The tall cabinet is neatly finished with an artificial veneer, giving it a clean simple appearance, lacking embellishment. Slightly austere, that's for sure, but on target for the price.

The F4 produces more bass than the F2, since it is balanced differently, but it doesn't - surprisingly - go much lower, cutting off sharply below 40Hz, our measurements show. The ports of the F4 and F2 are tuned to 40Hz and 47Hz respectively, so there's not a lot in it considering the big difference in size.

The bass units work full range up to the crossover point, in what is known as a D'Appolito arrangement. D'Appollito produces a more consistent sound, but it stretches the image vertically. Reduced boundary support keeps the bass tight and tuneful, Tannoy say.

SOUND QUALITY

As a budget floorstander the Fusion 4 sounds big bodied and muscular - but not bloated. As I expected it has reasonably well controlled bass, held in good proportion to all else, although there's blandness and imprecision at low frequencies, plus an obvious boxiness, likely issuing from the front port. With The Insane Clown Posse some good lows were produced, if not strongly. Bass lines from Angelique Kidjo's 'Agolo' were delivered firmly enough, but the opening drum strike was muted. Heavy bass induced box boom though. All the same the F4 went lower than the F2 and sounded bigger.

I expected the gentle strains of Beethoven's Moonlight to pass unblemished but higher keys were emphasised and hardened, likely by the tweeter. A little box bloom was again evident. Unfortunately, with Rock or Classical the tweeter made itself known, introducing some brightness and a little harshness, more so than the Fusion 2. This was an important difference between them.

Another big difference was the image focus of the Fusion 2 against the vertical smear of the F4's D'Appolito arrangement. In a head-to-head the F2 delivered a clearer



and more precise sound stage and in my view this gave it a decisive advantage.

In all then, the Fusion 4 did justify its size as a floorstander and Tannoy have kept it in balance at low frequencies. Against it were a prominent tweeter and some sound stage muddle. There's more to a floorstander than just size and bass performance.

VERDICT ●●●£

A big floorstander at a reasonable price, the Fusion 4 gives plenty of bang for the buck, but is unrefined. Balanced bass but brash treble, and muddled imaging.

FUSION 4 £399.90

Tannoy Ltd.

+44 (0)1236 420199

www.tannoy.com

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

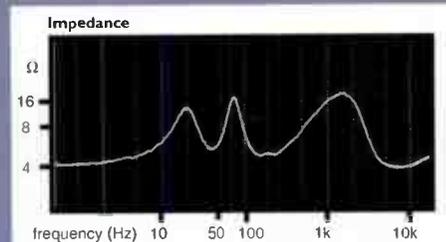
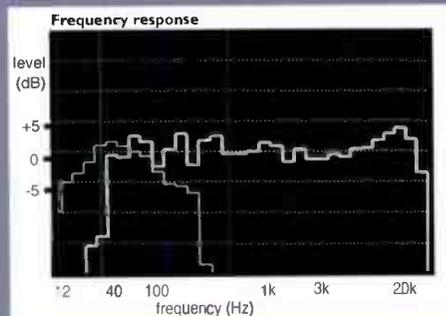
The Fusion 4 has a pronounced treble peak of +4dB at 12kHz that with some CDs will introduce perceptible high frequency sharpness, or spit. A downward trend in response up to 4kHz is likely to give what appears to be a reasonably fulsome balance though, even one that may seem a little warm.

The F4's large cabinet and twin bass units produce generous amounts of low bass, with full output maintained down to 40Hz. There was some box boom under test and this may well be related to the uneven bass response. The port is tuned 40Hz and damps fairly well. It extends output down to 30Hz or so, so the F4 goes low and will

sound weighty.

Sensitivity was an impressive 91dB. However, impedance measures 6ohms with lows of 4ohms, so the speaker draws current. A rapid drop in impedance at crossover indicates reactance in the load. The F4 isn't an easy load, but balancing this, it needs little power.

The F4 measures well, albeit with obvious bass and treble emphasis. It will go very loud even with low power amps. NK



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SYSTEM 8 ★★★★★		SYSTEM 9 ★★★★★		SYSTEM 10 ★★★★★	
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REVOLVER RW16

The RW16 is a solid little speaker, standing 335mm high and 230mm (9in) deep. A rear port means the speaker must have space behind it to 'breathe', a shelf at least 10in deep is a minimum, alternatively it can be stand mounted.

Revolver balance the RW16 for near-wall use by tailoring bass output to prevent boominess. Here then is a quality small loudspeaker that can, according to Revolver's spec., get down to a low 48Hz - little short of a floorstander.

The RW16 has a 130mm bass/midrange unit with glass fibre cone, working in conjunction with a metal dome tweeter. Glassfibre usually gives a clean, fast sound and metal dome tweeters are not backward at coming forward, so from its spec it looks as if the RW16 will have an up-front sound. In practice though both drivers are well developed and sounded smooth and refined. Revolver say they bevel the cabinet edges for improved dispersion, a subtle shaping that does give obvious benefits.

The bass/mid is shielded, allowing use close to a TV. Bi-wire terminals on the rear accept 4mm plugs or bare wire connection. Revolver offer the RW16 with Light or Dark Cherry veneers, and contrasting grill cloths. The little loudspeaker is solidly made and attractively finished, with a rich wood veneer.



SOUND QUALITY

The RW16 is a loudspeaker that resolves instrumental timbre beautifully. It is also sparkingly clear, highly detailed, dry and fast. Spinning Toy Matinee's 'Turn it on Salvador', a 24/96 recording on DVD, showed the RW16s suit modern programme, resolving the extra drama and range DVD can provide, and even its cleaner bass. The RW16 doesn't go really low but it does have a level of grip and a sense of balance that was the best in this group. I was almost startled at what the RW16 could do with a dramatic recording like Telarc's SACD of Mahler's Symphony No6. In the finale dramatic orchestral dynamics had a frightening degree of scale.

Comparison with the floorstanding RW45s was fascinating. With such deep bass the RW45s

should hold all the cards, but in practice the RW16s were so fast and dramatic, at times they made the RW45s sound too fruity. Measurement confirms the RW45 is over-large, but it took the RW16, rather than the other loudspeakers, to make this point. Most surprising was the RW16's ability to convincingly reproduce Cesar Franck's Choral No2, 32Hz organ notes gently moving the room. Measurement confirms the RW16s reach down this far: With superior low frequency resolution, vice like grip and eye popping dynamics, I felt some would take the RW16 rather than the RW45.

In this case then, a superb stand mounter questions its floorstanding brother. Only if the RW45 were a little tighter at low frequencies it would be convincingly ahead.

VERDICT ●●●●● £

Fast, clear and punchy, this baby has unparalleled grip and speed. Revealing of instrumental timbre like few others, the RW16 is a class act. Restrained lows, but they are there.

REVOLVER RW16 £399.00

Acoustic Partnership

+44 (0)870 047 0047

www.revolveraudio.com

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

A shelving in bass output below 250Hz, to avoid boom when wall mounted, marks out the RW16. Some slight peaking above this will be cancelled by an out-of-phase wall return, so the in-situ response should be very flat.

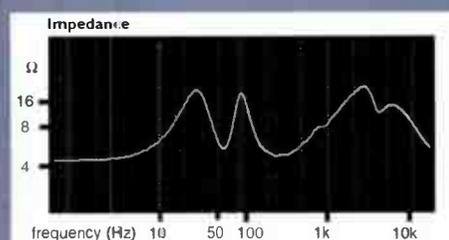
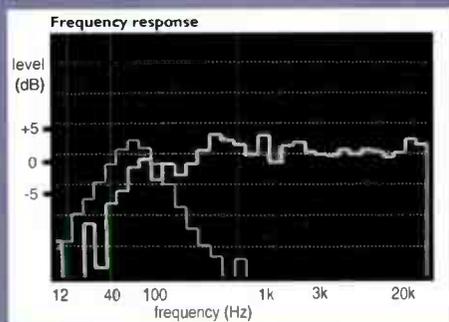
Low frequency output rolls away below 63Hz, which is also the port frequency. Bass should be well balanced and quite fast, but with less unevenness than usual with wall positioning.

Across the mid-band and treble the RW16 is nicely flat, so it will be accurate and detailed. Expect lack of colouration too, since unevenness is caused by minor resonances, which in turn colour the sound. A very flat response suggests lack of

colouration.

Sensitivity was high for a small loudspeaker, measuring 88dB, albeit aided by use of a 4ohm bass unit, but that's common nowadays. As a load the RW16 is easy enough, needing a moderate amount power - 60watts should be fine.

This is neatly engineered loudspeaker that measures well all round. It has been carefully tailored for wall positioning. NK



REVOLVER RW45

VERDICT

Smooth, uncoloured and revealing, the RW45 also has oodles of bass. Good all round, it's a big hearted floorstander, an exemplar of the breed.

REVOLVER RW45 £1199.00

Acoustic Partnership

+44 (0)870 047 0047

www.revolveraudio.com

The RW45 is big, but not overpowering in a reasonably sized room. Well made and nicely finished with real wood veneers, this loudspeaker is traditional but solid and unassuming in appearance. Three 160mm glass fibre coned drivers are used, one for the midrange and two lower down to handle bass, loaded by a rear port. At the top sits a metal dome tweeter, behind a protective grille. Cabinet edges are beveled for good surface wave dispersion, to clarify imaging. So this is a standard three-way, even if it doesn't look like it. A long grill covers the drive unit array. The RW45, distinguished by an all-wood finish, is a tweaked version of the R45 I recommend regularly.

At 17kg the RW45 is weighty enough to sit firmly on a spiked plinth, standing 930mm high, 250mm wide and 318mm deep. It's all very normal perhaps, but this loudspeaker to my mind epitomises what a good floorstander can and should offer - no excuses. A discussion of the merits of shelf mounters with floorstanders needs this to illuminate the full spectrum of performance that's available. Revolver quote a lower bass limit of 38Hz, we measured 25Hz (-6dB point). That's low - very low! - and well beyond a bookshelf cabinet, so the RW45 seemingly has a decisive advantage over smaller rivals and can demonstrate the advantages of size.

SOUND QUALITY

There's less shine and character across the midband of this upgraded R45, in comparison to the old one I know well. However, it is so silkily smooth and mild mannered across the midband as to be seemingly characterless against rivals. From the gruff tones of Jackie Leven singing 'Extremely Violent Man' to the soaring highs of Renee Fleming's 'Madame Butterfly', the RW45s instead let the character of the music through. They wonderfully resolve the full range of each recording, its timbral character and even the sense of location.

Spinning wideband DVDs like *Riding With the King* or something more strenuous like Foreigner's 'Luane', shows they handle Rock with aplomb, putting force behind bass guitar, resolution to vocals and treble so integrated it's simply part of the performance.

A big floorstander should go low and here the RW45s perform. They are big at the bottom end and there's some boxiness to be heard, but with DVD I was aware of ethereal subsonics in a mix, such as The Insane Clown Posse's 'Murder Rap' where the room was spasmodically 'energised' by deep tones. It's a pity to miss subsonic events like this, because

they are part of the picture, yet most listeners do. By revealing such effects a big floorstander proves its worth.

Although technically similar in many respects, the RW45 differs radically from Revolver's standmounting RW16 in its musical presentation. It's big hearted, easy going and powerful, just what you'd expect from a good floorstander in fact.



MEASURED PERFORMANCE

With a big cabinet and twin bass drivers the RW45 has oodles of bass output, maintaining full level down to 40Hz, below which it rolls away, measuring -6dB at 25Hz. This is very low; you feel 25Hz rather than hear it.

The port is broadly tuned around 30Hz, extending output down even further. So the RW45 justifies its size, reaching down to produce lower bass than is common from hi-fi loudspeakers. A lift in output around 80Hz shows, however, that some enhancement exists.

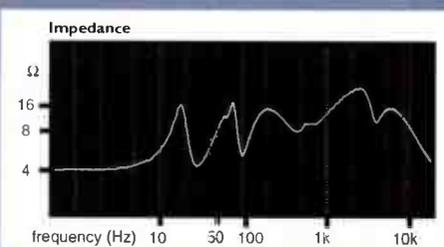
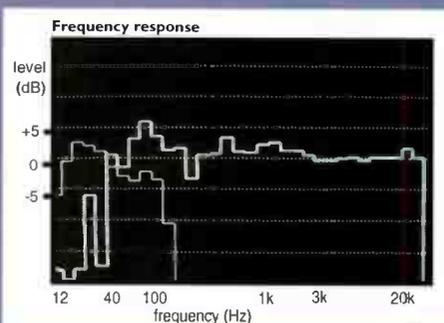
A high measured sensitivity of 90dB means they'll shake the room from just a few watts.

The bass unit is a 4ohm unit but overall impedance measures 7ohms, due to high midband

impedance. So the R45s don't even need a lot of current; they are a relatively easy load for any amplifier, even an 8ohm valve amp.

Frequency response above the bass region extends flat right up to 20kHz. Absence of minor peaks and perturbations suggest low colouration, as well as high accuracy.

The R45 measures well, fulfilling all the promises of a big floorstander. NK



Conclusion

According to the text books any floorstander should, due to its greater size, have deeper bass, be able to accept more power and go louder than a standmounter. But you can see immediately from our close comparison that it just isn't that simple.

KEF's Q4 floorstanders didn't go lower than the Q1 standmounters. For deeper bass you must move up to the Q5 and Q7, with larger diameter drive units. The Q4 is a tightly targeted floorstander designed to slot unobtrusively into smaller rooms, without occupying either shelf space or much floor area. It also makes a harder drive toward high fidelity. KEF have damped down both the high treble and the low bass of other Q speakers, to give a tighter, more accurately balanced sound. The Q4 fits into a room easily and integrates well, but is not a speaker to shake the floorboards. It's aimed at smaller, resonant rooms where it's likely to strike a good subjective balance - a floorstander without deep bass. It shows how small differences of design intent can invalidate simple preconceptions, a warning to look and listen carefully before buying! For bass the Q1

REVOLVER RW45



REVOLVER RW16



standmounter is a better bet - not the sort of outcome I'd expect!

The picture is slightly clearer between the two Tannoy's. The Fusion 4 aims to give you a lot of loudspeaker for the money and largely succeeds. It reaches downward nicely, reproducing bass lines with vigour, free from the huffing and puffing of smaller speakers. Tannoy have elected to keep the bass under control so although not exactly tight, it isn't loose or overblown either. It's easy enough, with a big cabinet, to allow a bass reflex to peak up, making it deliver big lows. But light damping also makes for a tubby sound that can be tiring, something the F4 largely avoids. Twin bass drivers also handle power so you can go loud. The Fusion 4 offers a larger sound, but the picture was complicated by other unexpected factors. Its peaked-up tweeter was a little obvious, not only giving the F4 a brighter sound than the F2, but making it conspicuously less accurate and 'right'. The Fusion 2 by way of contrast sounded smoother and better integrated. The Fusion 4's D'Appollito arrangement of central tweeter flanked by twin full range bass/mids robbed it of the image focus and clear sound staging of the Fusion 2. For those that want a big sound the Fusion 4 gives it; for those willing to sacrifice bass power for clear imaging and an even tonal balance the Fusion 2 is the one to go for. So again the choice between standmounter and floorstander is complicated by other factors. Revolver offer the clearest choice between small and large in this group, mainly because they've maintained clarity of purpose, but also because their engineering has been effective in getting each model to fulfil its role. For example, the R16's shelved bass makes for a dry sound that is fast and controlled when against a wall. The RW45's raised bass output gives

it enormous bass heft, as most people expect from a floorstander. Each loudspeaker has been neatly tailored to its purpose.

What I loved about both these loudspeakers was their ability to reveal the innate qualities of any recording, especially the broad timbral palette of musical instruments. It's a rare ability but a valuable one. To this the RW45 adds prodigious amounts of bass, whilst the R16 swings in the other direction with an engagingly dry, tight delivery. In both cases they offer just what you'd expect from standmounter and floorstander alike.

Big cabinet, big performance? Well that's what we'd hope, but it isn't so simple, our comparisons in this report show. If you are faced with a choice between floorstander and standmounter, there's a lot to consider. Big floorstanders do, for the most part, deliver a big performance. Just watch out for the downside, those hidden penalties, some of which we've identified in this review. Small loudspeakers commonly make a strong argument for themselves, especially when you look at their price tag...

KEF Q1



KEF Q4



TANNOY FUSION 2



TANNOY FUSION 2



great HI-FI WORLD COMPETITION giveaway

WIN REVOLVER'S SUPERB R45 LOUDSPEAKER WORTH £899 IN THIS MONTH'S GREAT COMPETITION!



Here's your chance to win one of the best mid-price floorstanding loudspeakers on sale, ideal for tube amplifiers or low powered transistor designs, but a joy to listen to with anything! In Hi-Fi World's review last September, Noel Keywood opined: "What Revolver has produced here is a three-way loudspeaker with twin bass drivers for extra bottom-end oomph. A metal dome tweeter works with a large 165mm glass fibre cone midrange unit, below which sit two 165mm cone glass fibre bass units. The midrange sits in a sealed chamber (infinite baffle loading) whilst the two bass drivers are reflex loaded by a chamber fitted with a rear mounted port. Twin bass units

accept more power and move air more easily than a single driver of the same dimensions... The R45s are fairly big, standing 930mm high, 250mm wide and 318mm deep. The lower plinth is solid but can be spiked for better stability on uneven wooden floors. The rear connection panel has removable links to allow biwiring. At 17kilos, the R45s are hefty but the light pearlised Maple veneer and silver grey cloth on the side panels make them look modern and sleek... They need little power: one watt gave a massive 90dB... With four 300B triodes glowing brightly, the R45s fairly hammered me with just 10watts or so... At normal listening levels I was using just a few watts; a 3watt amplifier was enough!

accurate sound with the very latest standards of clarity and resolution from any amplifier they are paired with. If you want high quality floorstanders that can blow you across the room, give them a try. Or if you just want to hear the full might of an orchestra vividly conveyed, again give them a try. The market may be crowded with floorstanders, but there's plenty of room for one as good as this.

If you'd like to win these superb loudspeakers, then all you have to do is answer the following four easy questions, and send your entries to: August Competition, Hi-Fi World Magazine, Unit G4, Argo House, The Park Business Centre, Kilburn Park Rd, London NW6 5LF

Competition Questions

- [1] What did NK say revolver had "produced here"?
 - [a] a pig in a poke
 - [b] a three-way loudspeaker with twin bass drivers for extra bottom-end oomph
 - [c] the strange noise of floorboards
 - [d] the sound of old bones rattling
- [2] What are the dimensions of the R45?
 - [a] 930x250x318mm
 - [b] 1930x250x318mm
 - [c] 930x1250x318mm
 - [d] 930x250x1318mm

- [3] What did NK have "glowing brightly"?
 - [a] four 300B triodes
 - [b] three French hens
 - [c] two turtle ducks
 - [d] ...and a partridge in a pear tree ("Aha!")

- [4] How did NK describe the loudspeaker's performance?
 - [a] "not bad"
 - [b] "fair enough"
 - [c] "wicked"
 - [d] "big, clean and accurate"

August Competition
Hi-Fi World Magazine
Unit G4 Argo House
The Park Business Centre
Kilburn Park Rd.
London NW6 5LF

Hi-Fi World Competition rules 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.

CONGRATULATIONS
...to Mr. Patrick Carson, of Bramley, Leeds, the winner of our June 2004 competition.
A Sony SCD-XA3000ES SACD Player is on its way to you!

Sevenoaks SOUND & VISION



Sevenoaks Sound & Vision stocks a wide range of Hi-Fi separates, DVD players, amplifiers, speakers, plasma screens, LCD televisions and projection systems from all the leading manufacturers.

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.

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



ARCAM EXTENDS DiVA RANGE

Arcam has added two exciting new products to its highly successful DiVA range.

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. Whether playing movies or listening to music, the DV79 will not disappoint.

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

CYRUS DAC-X

Cyrus' new **DAC-X** is one of the world's finest Digital to Analogue Converters, allowing any CD player to be upgraded to the very latest 192Khz DAC technology. In true Cyrus tradition this new decoder can also be supplied - or upgraded - with dual mono, fully balanced, pre-amplifier cards built-in. This Pre-amplifier version will be known as the DAC-XP



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 DENON AVR3805 DURING JULY*

ABERDEEN (OPENING SOON)

BEDFORD
BIRMINGHAM
BRIGHTON
BRISTOL
BROMLEY
CAMBRIDGE
CARDIFF
CHELSEA
CHELTENHAM
CRAWLEY
CROYDON

EALING (OPENING SOON)

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
SWINDON

SWISS COTTAGE
TUNBRIDGE WELLS
WATFORD
WEYBRIDGE
WITHAM (ESSEX)
WOLVERHAMPTON

PLEASE SEE PAGE 7
FOR ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE
NUMBER DETAILS



HI-FI SEPARATES

Michell Gyro SE
Turntable / RB300 Tonearm
£1049.95



WORLD NO. 1
Best Buy
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*



Pro-ject 1 Xpression
Turntable (Black)
£209.95

WORLD NO. 1
Best Buy
2003

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

Pro-ject 1 Debut II
Turntable (Black) £119.95

WORLD NO. 1
Best Buy
2002



THE PROJECT RANGE
STARTS AT ONLY £119.95

Arcam DiVA CD73T
CD Player
£399.95

WORLD NO. 1
Product
of the year
2003



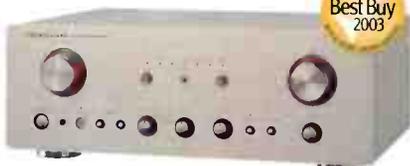
FREE GRADO SR60 HEADPHONES WORTH £90 WHEN YOU PURCHASE AN AMP AND CD TOGETHER FROM ONE OF THE FOLLOWING MANUFACTURERS - ARCAM, CYRUS & ROKSAN*

NOT IN CONJUNCTION WITH ANY OTHER OFFER OR PROMOTION



Marantz
CD5400 CD Player
£119.95

SAVE
£30



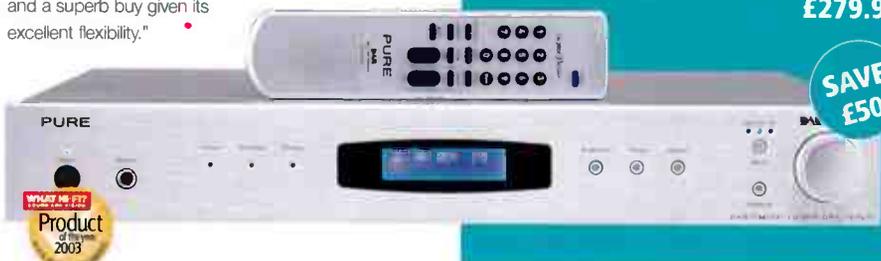
Marantz
PM7200 Amplifier
£249.95

SAVE
£80

WORLD NO. 1
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. Sick 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."



WORLD NO. 1
Product
of the year
2003

SAVE
£50

DIGITAL RECORDERS



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

"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

WORLD NO. 1
Product
of the year
2002
Pioneer PDR-609



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? AUG 03
★★★★★

SEE FREE GRADO SR60 HEADPHONE OFFER

Mission
780 SE Speakers £349.95

"The revamped Mission 780s are hugely enjoyable; anyone with up to £400 to spend should consider these standmounters. Mission's clever move has paid off."

WHAT HI-FI? MAY 03
★★★★★



FREE QED CABLE
WORTH £60

MJ Acoustics Reference 100
Subwoofer (Black)
£349.95

"You get a high level of detail and the kind of impact most sub-£1000 floorstanders would struggle to match. The verdict's simple: buy with confidence."



Best Buy 2003

FREE QED CABLE
WORTH £60



FREE QED CABLE
WORTH £50

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
£120 WITH SPEAKERS OVER £999

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."



FREE QED CABLE
WORTH £60

Best Buy 2002

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

"Timing and rhythm are excellent. CJ 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



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 01
★★★★★

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

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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.

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.

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***ADDED VALUE OFFERS - FROM RANGE AVAILABLE IN-STORE. NOT IN CONJUNCTION WITH ANY OTHER OFFER. ADVERTISEMENT VALID UNTIL AT LEAST 28/07/04, 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-Ray[®]** 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-Ray[®] is equal of some of the most expensive players on the market.



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 When purchased with speakers over £299*
When purchased on its own £849.95

"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."



Denon DM31 UD-M31 CD Receiver

£189.95 When purchased with speakers over £59*
When purchased on its own £199.95

**SAVE
£40**

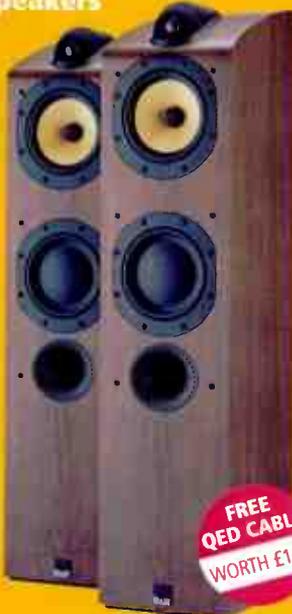
"The D-M30 was exemplary, as its three What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision Awards clearly show. The D-M31 is even better, making it phenomenal value for money."

OPTIONAL RECORDERS:

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

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 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 £120***



**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 28/07/04, E&OE.

experience more

experience more

experience more



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

Best Buy 2002

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

PRICE EXCLUDES CABLES & STANDS

SAVE
£129

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



SEPARATE HI-FI SYSTEMS



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

PRICE EXCLUDES CABLES & STANDS

SAVE
£149

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



SEPARATE HI-FI SYSTEMS

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
£1789.95

PRICE EXCLUDES CABLES & STANDS

FREE SOUNDSTYLE RACK
WORTH £300*

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.

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

TURNTABLES

Goldring GR1	£139.95
Michell Gyro SE/RB300 ESO GOLDENING CARTRIDGE*	£1049.95
Michell TechnoDec (Ex Arm)	£599.95
Project Debut Phono S8	£169.95
Project Debut II (Black)	£119.95
Project Debut II (Colours)	£134.95
Project 1 Xpress in	£209.95

TUNERS

Arcam DVA T61	£199.95
Cyrus FM X	£499.95
Denon TU260L MKII	£99.95
Harman Kardon TU970 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 DVA CD72T	£399.95
Arcam DVA CD82T	£499.95
Arcam DVA CD93T	£699.95
Arcam DVA CD192	£849.95
Arcam FMJ CD33T	£1299.95
Cyrus CD6	£599.95
Cyrus CD8	£999.95
Cyrus DAC-X	£749.95
Denon DCD485	£119.95
Linn Genki	£1099.95
Linn Ikemi	£2199.95
Marantz CD5400	£119.95
Musical Fidelity X-Ray TM	£899.95
Musical Fidelity A3.2	£999.95
Musical Fidelity A308 [®]	£1999.95
Quad 99 CD-P	£999.95
Roksan Kandy KD [®] MKII	£594.95
Roksan Caspian M	£1099.95
Rotel RCD02	£379.95
Rotel RCD1072	£594.95

CD RECORDERS

Pioneer PDR609 CD-RW	£169.95
Yamaha CDR-H1300 CD-RW	£449.95

AMPLIFIERS

Arcam DVA A65 P.us	£ CALL
Arcam DVA A80	£599.95
Arcam DVA 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 Kolektor 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	£979.95
Musical Fidelity A3.2 Pre	£999.95
Musical Fidelity A3.2 Power	£999.95
Musical Fidelity A308	£1999.95
Quad 99 Power	£549.95
Roksan Kandy KA1 MKII	£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	£149.95
Acoustic Energy Aegis Evo Three	£279.95
Acoustic Energy Aelite 2	£449.95
Acoustic Energy Aelite 3	£749.95
Acoustic Energy AE1 MKII (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 XQ1	£749.95
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 Klassik Music Ex Speakers	£849.95
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	£649.95
Jamo DVR50/A355PDD Inc Speakers	£899.95
KEF KIT100 Inc Speakers	£1199.95
Linn Klassik Movie Di Ex Speakers	£2299.95
Teac Legacy 700/LS-L800 Inc Speakers	£799.95

MULTI-ROOM AUDIO

Cyrus Linkserver 160	£2999.95
Cyrus Linkserver 250	£3499.95
Cyrus Linkport	£649.95
Cyrus Linkwand	£199.95
Yamaha MusicCast MCX A10	£599.95
Yamaha MusicCast MCX 1000	£1799.95

DVD PLAYERS

MAKE & MODEL	REGION 2	MULTI REGION
Arcam DVA DV88 Plus	£599.95	£599.95
Arcam DVA DV78	£699.95	£699.95
Arcam DVA DV89	£799.95	£799.95
Arcam DVA DV79	£999.95	£999.95
Cyrus DVD8	£1199.95	£1199.95
Denon DVD-2200 Universal	£ CALL	£ CALL
Denon DVD-2900 Universal	£ CALL	£ CALL
Denon DVD-A11	£ CALL	£ CALL
Denon DVD-A1	£1599.95	£1599.95
Harman Kardon DVD22	£299.95	£299.95
Harman Kardon DVD31	£399.95	£399.95
Denon DV360	£69.95	£79.95
Pioneer DV565A Universal	£139.95	£159.95
Pioneer DV575A Universal	£149.95	£179.95
Pioneer DV668A Universal	£ CALL	£ CALL
Pioneer DV868A Universal	£ CALL	£ CALL
Toshiba SD330E	£69.95	£79.95

Yamaha DVD-S540	£119.95	£119.95
Yamaha DVD-S1500	£399.95	£399.95

DVD RECORDERS

MAKE & MODEL	REGION 2	MULTI REGION
Panasonic DMR-E55 DVD-R	£ CALL	£ CALL
Panasonic DMR-E65 DVD-R	£ CALL	£ CALL
Panasonic DMR-E85 DVD-R	£ CALL	£ CALL
Pioneer DVR3100S DVD-R/RW	£379.95	£399.95
Pioneer DVR5100HS DVD-R/RW	£469.95	£499.95
Toshiba RD-XS30 DVD Recorder	£429.95	£ TBA

A/V AMPLIFIERS RECEIVERS & PROCESSORS

Arcam AVR200 A/V Receiver	£599.95
Arcam AVR300 A/V Receiver	£1299.95
Arcam AVB/P7 A/V Pre-Processor/Power	£5499.95
Cyrus AV8 A/V Processor	£1099.95
Denon AVC-A1SRA A/V Amplifier	£ CALL
Denon AVC-A1SR A/V Amplifier	£2199.95
Denon AVR1604 A/V Receiver	£ CALL
Denon AVR1804 A/V Receiver	£ CALL
Denon AVR2803 A/V Receiver	£ CALL
Denon AVR2805 A/V Receiver	£ CALL
Denon AVR3805 A/V Receiver	£ CALL
Harman Kardon AVR330 A/V Receiver	£599.95
Harman Kardon AVR630 A/V Receiver	£999.95
Marantz SR4400 A/V Receiver	£269.95
Marantz SR5400 A/V Receiver	£349.95
Onkyo TX-SR601E A/V Receiver	£ CALL
Onkyo TX-NR801E 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	£929.95
Pioneer VSA-A101 A/V Amplifier	£2199.95
Rotel RSP1065 A/V Receiver	£1799.95
Rotel RSP1066/RMB1075 A/V Pre/Power	£1799.95
Rotel RSP1098 A/V Processor	£2294.95
Yamaha DSP-AX750SE A/V Amplifier	£ CALL
Yamaha DSP-AX640SE A/V Amplifier	£299.95
Yamaha DSP-Z9 A/V Amplifier	£ CALL
Yamaha RX-V440RDS A/V Receiver	£219.95
Yamaha RX-V550 A/V Receiver	£ CALL
Yamaha RX-V640RDS A/V Receiver	£349.95
Yamaha RX-V650 A/V Receiver	£ CALL
Yamaha RX-V1400RDS A/V Receiver	£ CALL
Yamaha RX-V2400RDS A/V Receiver	£ CALL

A/V SPEAKERS & PACKAGES

Acoustic Energy Evo 3B	£749.95
Acoustic Energy Aego P5/II	£499.95
Artcoustic Diablo	£994.95
B&W VM1/AS1	£849.95
B&W DM300 AV	£999.95
Castle Compact CC3	£999.95
Energy Take 5.1	£399.95
Energy Encore	£999.95
Infinity TSS750	£499.95
KEF KHT1005 £100 FREE QED CABLE*	£499.95
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Three's Company

From the name responsible for one of the most characterful two-way standmounters ever made - the ES14s, if you're in any doubt - comes a brand new pair of three way floorstanders. With an entirely different formula, can Epos repeat the magic? David Price decides...

There is a small but loyal bunch of audio aficionados for whom the eighties will be forever Epos. The company's first - and many believe best - design, from the fertile mind of Robin Marshall, was total anathema to the established lore of loudspeaker design of the time. When it came out in 1985, the hi-fi world was still struggling to get out of the seventies. Wide-baffle, multi driver floorstanders (for the want of a better phrase, as you just put them on the floor, often behind the settee...) with crossover networks more complex than Nigel Lawson's tax policy, ruled the roost.

The ES14 however, was a compact - although not small - standmounter, complete with its own bespoke stands. It was a two way design, using cleverly matched drivers to facilitate the simplest, smallest crossover possible. It wasn't perfect, with a slightly pendulous bass on the earlier versions, but was still one of the most musically effective transducers of that decade - particularly when aspirated by a Linn Sondek LP12 turntable and Naim pre-power amplifier... It did dynamics, timing and tunes like the very best of them.

Since then, the brand has gone through a few twists and turns, but has come back with a range of eight loudspeakers (up from just two a year earlier), which is garnering warm praise - the ELS-3 baby standmounter we reviewed about

eighteen months back being a case in point. The £949 M22 is the latest in the range, and is about as far from the original '14 as the company has got. This is - shock horror - a true three way!

There is of course, nothing wrong with three ways. In fact, if done properly, they're better than two ways. The trouble with most seventies designs, however, was that they were real dog's breakfasts - often a random assortment of drivers bought in from miscellaneous manufacturers, perfunctorily screwed into a baffle as wide as the Clifton Suspension Bridge.

The driver complement comprises a 25mm aluminium dome tweeter with neodymium magnet system, a magnetically shielded 150mm polymer coned midrange driver with 32mm voice coil complete with injection moulded phase plug, utilising the Epos diecast aluminium chassis, and another matching one for the bass. The M22 is tri-wirable, thanks to three pairs of metal five-way binding posts providing separate feeds to each of the drive units.

The cabinet itself is a low diffraction design, eliminating secondary sources of sound, improving stereo imaging and detail resolution. Extensive internal bracing reduces cabinet coloration. The 875x 200x 250mm cabinet is in two sections internally - the top section houses the tweeter and mid range, whilst the lower section housing the bass unit goes right to the floor. It's a

study affair, each speaker weighing in at 17kg, and comes in a choice of black ash, light cherry or dark cherry finishes. A black finished £79 'M Plinth' is available as an option, giving the speakers a more secure grip on the floor.

SOUND QUALITY

It's perfectly possible to get high efficiency levels out of a ported, floorstanding loudspeaker of this size, but at just 86dB [see MEASURED PERFORMANCE], the M22s don't go this way. Quite unashamedly, they're like the old ES14s, inasmuch as they're power hungry and demand serious grunt for high levels. The good news is that, unlike the 1987 model, Naim's latest Nait puts out closer to 70W than 7, so it's easier to find a partner - I'd counsel a Nait 5i or Musical Fidelity X-150, both around £900.

The result is that, with Christine Aquilera's 'Stripped', you get a strong, driving bass. Deep subsonic effects could be felt, wafting into the room gently beneath the rap. Whilst the M22s peak at 40Hz, they produce output down to 25Hz. Indeed, when 'Can't Hold Us Down' kicked in, they produced massive deep bass (due to the 40Hz peak in their output), with a slight loss of power on higher bass notes. All the same, these speakers go very low with serious grunt, and yet are well defined with it. In my system, it did become a tad too heavy at times - so careful positioning is in order. The prodding bassline of 'Walk Away' was unusually dry and grippy - almost certainly due to the speaker's unusual electrical damping. The M22s resolve bass instruments, one from the other, rather than a generic bass boom.

It melds smoothly into the midrange, too. Aquilera's vocals were clear with a well constructed image, but with a hint of softness and some lack of inner detailing in absolute terms. The transition to the treble wasn't so sweet, however. Rimsky Korsakov's Scheherazade (Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Erato label) is a slightly hard DDD recording that became slightly edgy through the M22s. Strings were well separated and clear and the kettle drum in the background was deftly picked out with forensic detail. Although brass sounded full and rich, with individual instruments nicely spot lit, there was an air of hardness in the sound and little resolution of tonal colours. Cymbals could sound clanky, with just a hint of sizzle hovering in the background. Generally, fast and detailed, the M22s are also a little

pointed, with a steely tonality.

The result is an extremely strong, open, accurate sounding loudspeaker with a commandingly rhythmic nature, but little in the way of tonal colouring (in the positive sense). Make no mistake, this is a rock speaker. Feed it with a smooth, well-produced pop-rock song and it's in its element. Norah Jones's 'Come Away With Me' is just what the Eposes were designed for! Stunning definition, vivid images and breathy, in-your-face vocals were all around.

A showroom demonstration with this track would likely convince many that these new Eposes are peerless. But you can hear them working up to 2kHz-3kHz before getting a tad ragged, just as response measurement suggests. The hardness

and depth perspective, immediately putting singers into a studio acoustic. Low level subtleties became apparent, even though the rendition was a lot softer edged generally, and ultimately less impressive.

Ultimately this is the key to the M22s. They are brashly impressive, in the best sense of the word. They're never uncouthly unpleasant sounding, but do lack smoothness, subtlety and finesse. Yet they rock. Unfailingly fast and engaging, they give a brisk and exciting sound, which also seems far better controlled than usual. Just as I can heartily recommend the Revolver R45s if you like a light, warm and breezy listen, so I can enthusiastically suggest the Epos M22s for those about to rock. Crisp, articulate treble allied to a fast and

"The result is an extremely strong, open, accurate sounding loudspeaker with a commandingly rhythmic nature"

comes from the upper registers handled by the midrange unit, where it is actually beginning to break up - hence the 'hard' coloration. Substituting Revolver's R45s showed the Eposes middling stereo imaging

dynamic midband and superbly deep, controlled and powerful bass make these among the best at the price for this particular genre - but lovers of other musical styles might like to look, and listen, elsewhere.

VERDICT

A fast, commanding and engaging rock loudspeaker, but its forward character is not for everyone...

EPOS M22 £949

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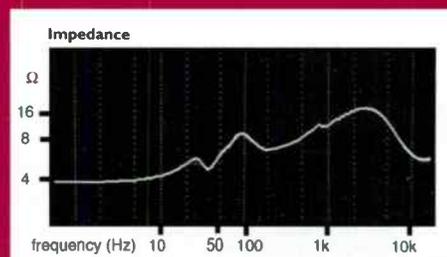
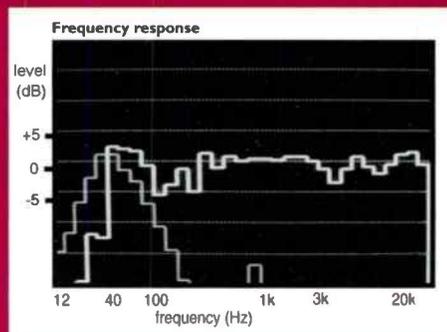
MEASURED PERFORMANCE

I'm starting to see some unusual impedance curves these days - mostly good ones. The m22 is ported but it doesn't have a typical ported impedance characteristic, meaning electrically or acoustically - likely both - it is very different from the norm. The impedance curve of a loudspeaker tells story; it reflects acoustic conditions. With the m22 it suggests smooth, efficient bass power transfer from amplifier to loudspeaker and into air. I'd expect tight, well damped bass of good quality. The frequency response also looks a little unusual at low frequencies, holding up strongly to 40Hz - peaking in fact. This suggests plenty of bass. The only blemish is a dip between low bass and upper bass which, in conjunction with bass peaking, will subjectively make for an accentuated and possibly divorced sound.

All this apart, the Epos m22 has a reasonably even overall response trend, remaining flat within a few dB right up to 20kHz. There was more fine variation than is often the case with well damped materials and

I'd expect a bit more character as a result. However, the m22 is accurate and will sound detailed, but not thin or bright. Sensitivity was a normal 86dB and impedance a measured 6ohms.

I would expect a fast, detailed sound from the m22, likely with great bass quality. NK



strange days?

Not all loudspeakers are created the same, but rarely do we see designs as extreme as DynaVox UniQorns. The irony is, says David Price, someday past, all loudspeakers were made this way...

Do you remember the nineteen seventies? With chocolate brown Austin Allegros, Space Dust and Raleigh Choppers, that decade spawned its own unique brand of silliness - and that's before you mention the hi-fi! To put it mildly, there wasn't exactly a shortage of madcap audio

products - from Lecson's striking

ACI-API pre-power amplifier combination to the weird Nytech 'calculator tuner amplifier'. Yet for me, by far the most 'off the wall' were the loudspeakers.

From Linn's Isobarik to KEF's 104aB, a veritable sea of designs using hopelessly complicated, multi-element crossovers allied to stupidly inefficient Bextrene drive units, made for sensitivity figures the like of which we'd never witnessed before - nor indeed would we ever see again...

As a general rule, it was 'start at 86dB and work downwards' time. If your loudspeaker clocked in at a heady 88 or 89dB, then it was obvious that you as a designer had contravened one of the most serious edicts of the new audio order and had instantly to go back to the drawing board - to add more elements to your crossover, substitute an even more inefficient KEF drive unit or throw in a Peerless supertweeter or two.

If you failed to design a loudspeaker that required at least 50W to say 'boo' to a goose, you were guilty of the heinous crime of being 'old hat', and you might as well buy a pair of Quad IIs, an old pair of Tannoy Dual Concentrics and listen to 'Sing Something Simple' on Radio 2...

How so? Well, those were the early days of transistors. The technology was still in its relative infancy, and folk were revelling in the low (measured) distortion figures and stellar power outputs. Of course, they didn't have op-amps back then, so transistor watts were still pretty pricey, but even spending around £120 on a decent mid-to-late seventies budget amp like a JVC-JAS11G would give you a heady 35W RMS per channel - more than a Leak Stereo 20 owner could dream of.

At the higher end of the scale, Naim's NAP250 provided a stocky 60W or so per side, and a strong, muscular bass with it. Quad's 405 'current dumping' power amp was also capable of driving loads that even the 303 of ten years previous could only marvel at. If you were serious about hi-fi back then, you got yourself the

amp with the biggest boots you could afford, and then set about pairing it with a stupidly insensitive speaker. Result: lower SPLs than your old TL12s powering Quad ESL-57s. But hey, it kind of seemed to make sense - just like excrement-coloured Allegros, sweets that went 'bang' in your mouth and pushbikes with tiny front wheels...

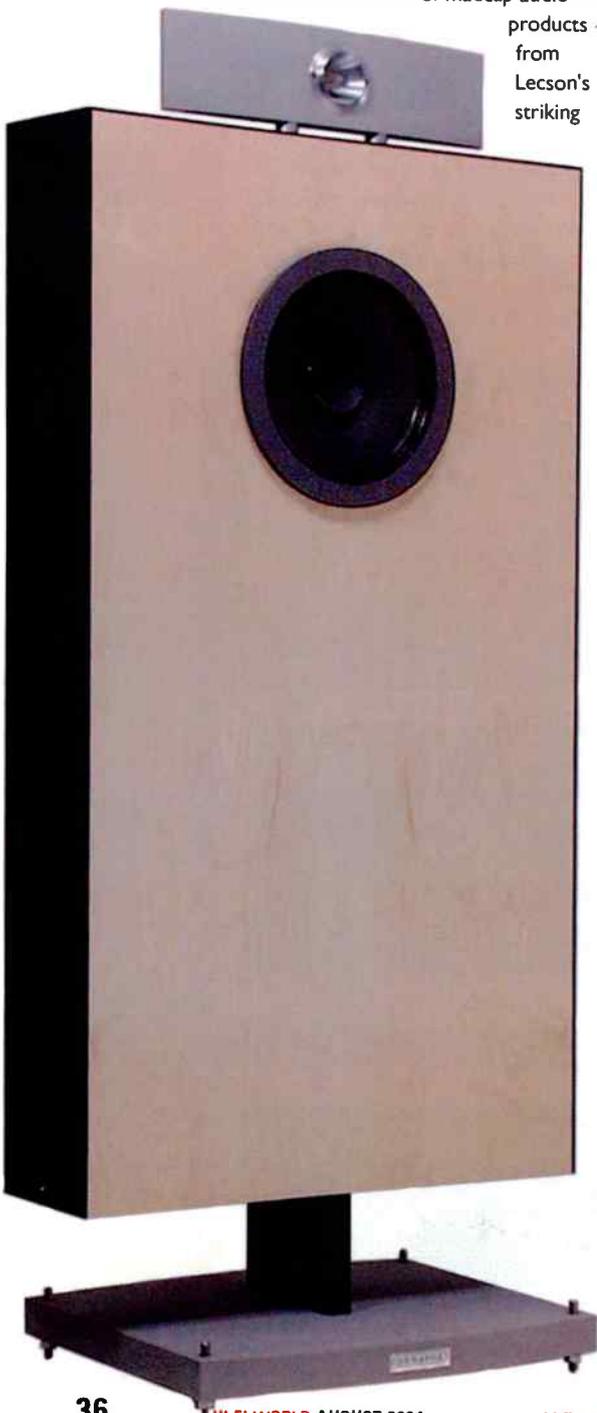
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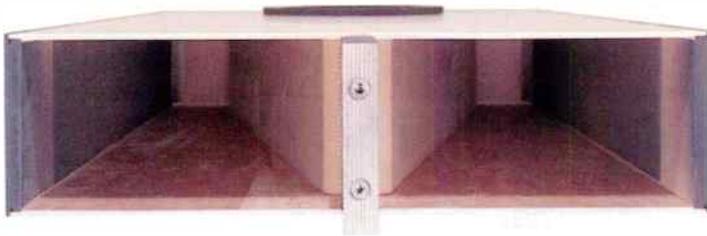
Just a decade earlier, one tenth of those transistor watts issuing from a tube amp driving large enclosure, wide baffle, single drive unit, crossover-less loudspeakers would have made more sound, and of (in many respects) better quality too, than any seventies behemoth box. As such, DynaVox's UniQorns aren't actually the radical beasts that they appear, but unremittingly conventional - and if you're the owner of a tube amplifier of any description, downright plain olde common sense.

This is precisely the key to the UniQorns. They are not designed to be rivals to mainstream floorstanders from the likes of Mission, Tannoy or KEF, but unashamedly a specialist product for a very particular type of audiophile - a low powered valve amp owning one, with a relatively small listening room.

This big one-and-a-half way box uses an eight inch (200mm) paper coned full range driver, with a one inch (25mm) horn loaded aluminium dome tweeter with Neodym magnet inset. The cabinet is attractively - but not lavishly - finished in a very clean, modern looking grey Nextel, although hardly exudes superb build. You get the impression that it's been made just well enough to do what it needs to do, and no more... Measuring 1100x500x130mm, it's actually very big - a true wide baffle design - although it's unusually thin, too, making it easy to position quite far back against the rear wall. Each speaker weighs a not inconsiderable 13kg.

The result is a loudspeaker with a claimed impedance of 8 ohms, sensitivity of 96dB and a power handling of 3 to 30W. In truth, we





measured the sensitivity at a 'mere' 93dB but with an even easier load of 9.5ohms. In practice, this makes for an amazingly easy load for even very low powered valve amplifiers, such as Single-Ended Triodes.

SOUND QUALITY

Connect the UniQorns up to any tube amplifier (or low powered transistor amp for that matter), and you're instantly aware that these speakers are something out of the ordinary. Whether this is a good thing, or a bad thing, however - depends on you!

First and foremost, they're fast - incredibly, dazzlingly and arrestingly fleet of foot. They make even the very pacey Mission 782SE seem slow, cumbersome, fussy and overweight. This is down to that paper drive unit, large internal volume and horn loading. Strummed acoustic guitars have blisteringly fast attack, the leading edges of the notes coming over very explicitly.

This speed is allied to a tremendously expressive dynamic ability - there are few loudspeakers anywhere near this price that can signpost the relative difference in levels between a softly brushed snare drum and when it's hit hard with a stick. The combination of great attack transients and true dynamic articulation makes for an extremely lucid and communicative speaker, one that puts all other price rivals in the shade. This is its defining characteristic - fed with just a few watts and a good source, it can sing like a canary.

The downside is serious coloration. Tonally it's very light and forward. As NK's measured performance shows, its bass does not go down as low as DynaVox claim - they say around 40Hz, but it sounds more like 80 or higher. This can be assuaged by placing them right against a rear wall, Linn Kan-style, and careful tuning with cables and a sympathetic front end, in which case it becomes deeper and fuller, although - as NK notes - a small subwoofer would be ideal, cranked up to the upper end of its range. This way, the UniQorns become more like midband drivers, and sound obviously

more at ease.

The other problem is the midband spike. There's definitely a particularly 'alive' section of the frequency range, which adds a feeling of speed and drive (as if the UniQorns needed any more of this...) This needn't be a problem, and if you're a fan of either Linn Kans or BBC LS3/5as, then you might even like this heightened 'presence' region. But the fact remains that it's not neutral, and in the loudspeaker market of 2004, many folk will regard this as simply too extreme and/or unacceptable. If you like fast and furious music making, but via tubes rather than Naim transistor amplifiers, then you'll love the Dynavoxes, but if not, then look elsewhere.

In addition to the light bass and presence bump, then there's another issue to be addressed. Thanks to the paper drive unit - which gives it that brilliant speed - the tonal palette is relatively restrained. Everything, whether it was recorded in a warm and sumptuous studio - such as the original Stax release of Isaac Hayes' 'Theme From Shaft' - or on a cold digital console via a Sony PCM-FI

digital recorder - like Grace Jones' 'Slave to the Rhythm', sounds pretty similar in terms of tonal richness (or lack thereof).

The treble is surprisingly good, actually. That aluminium dome tweeter is a reasonably couth affair, and works fairly seamlessly with the full range drive unit. Its close proximity to the main driver makes the loudspeaker almost appear as a point source - despite those wonderfully wide, retro, front baffles - and the result is fine image projection. The Dynavoxes push music right out into any room with total ease, making most of today's two or three way, multi-drive unit designs seem lost in space.

CONCLUSION

These are possibly the best loudspeakers I've reviewed in a long time - and the worst. Frankly, their dry tonality, midband forwardness and light bass make them awful in absolute terms. Yet feed them with a single ended triode tube amp with just a couple of watts and they'll go louder - and sound faster - than a six pack of Naim NAPI35 power amps driving Linn Isobariks. And all this time, they're tremendously expressive and musically articulate, following the tune of a song like few - if any - others. As such, they're likely to become a cult loudspeaker. Recommended - but make sure you know what you're doing, and why you're doing it!



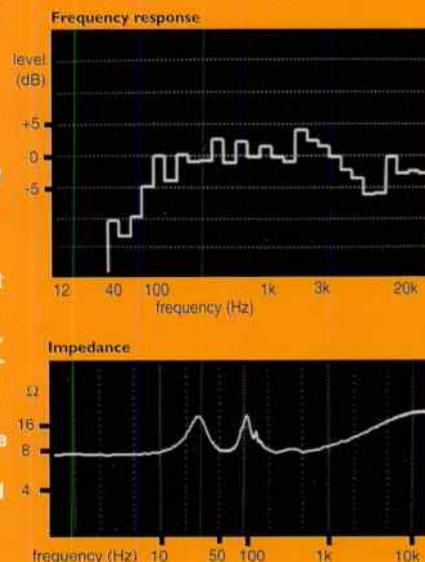
MEASURED PERFORMANCE

The measured performance of this loudspeaker suggests it's been aimed at low power valve amps - especially Single-Ended Triodes I suspect. Sensitivity is enormous, measuring 93dB from 2.8V input (one nominal watt). With a measured impedance of 9.5ohms slightly less than one watt is drawn, making the UniQorn exceptionally efficient. Being largely resistive it is also a very easy load, exhibiting little energy storage and minimal impact upon feedback. Around 40watts would be an upper limit for a loudspeaker like this with 10watts or so quite acceptable for reasonable volume.

Unfortunately, there's a penalty to pay in absence of low bass. The UniQorn gets down to 100Hz, below which it rolls off rapidly. It will have very light bass as a result and really needs a subwoofer. There's a +5dB peak at 1.6kHz too, which will improve speech intelligibility but may also add some coarseness and perhaps 'spitch'. Above this output rolls down before bouncing back to extend smoothly to 20kHz. Subjectively, this will add a little mildness and detract from fine detailing. The UniQorn will

have a distinctive sound as a result of all this and it may well appeal, but it isn't strictly accurate and at times may well mislead, for better or worse, according to programme balance.

The UniQorn has some radical properties. It measures unusually well in some areas and badly in others. Whether it appeals or not will depend largely upon personal preferences, as well as matching equipment. NK



CONTACT

Although Dynavox doesn't have a UK distributor as yet, its products are on sale to UK buyers via the www.musicconnection.de website. Enquiries can be sent to Ulf Moning at Dynastation@musicconnection.de or you can call him on 00492402 750135. [*denotes approximate price]

VERDICT

Dazzlingly fast and brilliantly efficient, these loudspeakers are a riot with low power tube amps, but match carefully and don't expect great finesse!

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 Music Connection
 ☎ +00492402 750135
www.musicconnection.de

low life



Subwoofers are a much-maligned part of the hi-fi world. Their heavy association with AV - in which they're an essential part of the 'home cinema' experience - has left them tainted as far as many audiophiles are concerned. But all this needn't be, says Noel Keywood, as he listens in on REL's latest Stadium III...

overlap region where both sets of loudspeakers are energising the room. To avoid a booming sound all you can do is turn down the subwoofer, but then you'll hear no deep bass from it, which rather defeats

too much deep bass through because it may overdrive Home Cinema subwoofers. In hi-fi, plenty of Rock albums carry subsonic effects; the heartbeat in Pink Floyd's 'Money' has a 25Hz fundamental for example. The 32ft pipe of a large organ is tuned to 16Hz and this is about the lowest you should go.

Home Cinema has made subwoofers commonplace. The 5.1 channel Dolby surround-sound audio of a DVD video disc has a Low Frequency Effects (LFE) channel to handle the explosions, accidents and general sounds of mayhem that would destroy an ordinary loudspeaker. Home Cinema subwoofers aren't quite the same as the traditional hi-fi type though. Tuning (bass management) is carried out in the receiver, not in the subwoofer. They aren't suited to hi-fi. Home Cinema subs. are simply meant to produce low frequency effects to accompany a film soundtrack; high fidelity isn't an issue when it comes to explosions.

Will a Home Cinema subwoofer do? If you use small bookshelf loudspeakers it's likely to give you lows you haven't heard before and may well be better than nothing - just don't expect great bass quality. If you use hi-fi bookshelf or standmount loudspeakers, they'll reach down to at least 80Hz and often 60Hz. Home Cinema subwoofers work from 100Hz down, so they will overlap your main speakers - and this is the problem. You'll have too much bass in the

the object...

In truth, there's no substitute for a real hi-fi subwoofer, such as this REL Stadium III, but it must be accurately tuned to the main loudspeakers if it's to deliver good quality low bass. A tunable subwoofer should have an upper limit that can be adjusted from 100Hz down to at least 40Hz; REL's can be tuned to work from 30Hz downward, or just 25Hz on the larger models. An upper limit of 25Hz on REL's bigger subwoofers is to match big loudspeakers that already go low, taking them down even further. But how far? Let's look at this because it is what a sub. is all about.

It is possible to drive a room right down to 5Hz, where you just feel the effect. Research shows that your internal organs vibrate at these frequencies! It's dramatic stuff, but to move a room effectively at 5Hz takes enormous acoustic power and gets in the way of everything else if you allow a subwoofer to do it. Most go down to 15Hz or so, and no further. This is to prevent excessive cone movement and damage, especially with LP where 5Hz warp signals exist. Although the LFE channel of a video DVD can reach down to 5Hz or so, most producers won't allow

Stereo systems have two channels and REL recommend a subwoofer on each, 'for best results'. This isn't to produce subsonics in stereo, because below about 80Hz you will not be able to detect where bass is coming from. It is to drive a room more evenly. Otherwise, careful positioning is generally sufficient to get a good result.

Biggest bass comes from a corner position. This may be convenient, but it excites the room's main resonant modes, giving a boomy sound in smaller rooms. It may seem best in large rooms, bigger than 18ft max. Otherwise, asymmetric placement away from boundaries (i.e. walls, ceiling and floor) will give the smoothest, best damped sound. You can't get a subwoofer off the floor of course, especially a monster Stadium III, but if you can use it as a table, away from walls, it should sound good. Concealing and protecting mains and signal leads is a problem of course. Against a wall, as REL note, one third of the way down one side is a best starting position when experimenting.

A subwoofer like the Stadium III takes bass from both stereo channels of a hi-fi system, adds it together into one (mono) channel and sends it to a

single channel amplifier inside the cabinet that drives one huge bass unit. So you get to hear bass whichever channel it is on. It also works with a Home Cinema system too, by switching out the filtering needed for hi-fi.

It's most convenient to connect up from an amplifier's Preamp output, which is varied by the volume control (you can't use the Tape Output, because its volume isn't varied). For this connection, known as 'low level', REL fit a pair of normal phono sockets. Alongside them is an XLR input for balanced low level connection.

stage depth and dimensionality and can even improve stereo imaging. All this is in addition to the primary function of revealing deep bass. I say 'revealing' because it's interesting to hear just what is on some CDs; trick sound effects, such as doors closing and - nowadays - inserted low frequency tones to add a sense of power, suddenly appear as if from nowhere. And with DVD Video, soundtracks can be frightening.

The other obvious benefit of a sub is to fill in when your existing amplification/ speaker package simply can't manage. The most obvious example is with valve amplification -

“to move a room effectively at 5Hz takes enormous acoustic power”

Many amplifiers don't have a suitable low level output, so REL provide an input that connects up to the loudspeaker outputs of an amplifier. The signal here is much bigger so this is the 'high level' input of the REL, handled by a single Neutrik Speakon plug. REL recommend this method of connection, saying it gives bass best matched to that of the main channels.

For smooth, solid sounding bass that runs deep, a subwoofer must be tuned in properly - and this is difficult. I have tried many times to tune in by ear and the results aren't usually too clever! I know this after switching on a spectrum analyser with measuring microphone and looking at the result. It usually shows a small peak, which causes some softness. It takes a few seconds to banish and then - presto - bass is perfect! As REL suggest, subjectively it's best to tune from lowest cut off frequency, adjusting upward. Set subwoofer volume to a low-ish level - and certainly not high. Because of the difficulty of getting adjustment right, and because of the bad affect misadjustment has upon quality, it is worth spending time experimenting when tuning in.

Is a subwoofer worth the hassle and expense? Yes, there are unexpected benefits. They make for a more relaxed sound, add a sense of

you've got a fine sounding twenty watt tube amp, but it just seems to run out of puff when you press 'the loud pedal'. An active sub, with a chunky 100W (or so) transistor amplifier inside, can give your system a real fillip - tightening up and energising the low bass, just when your valve amp is trying to go AWOL. Very subtly tuned in, with just a tiny amount of gain and working well under 100Hz, it can give much needed slam and grunt.

Interestingly, subwoofers can work just like supertweeters. Whereas most tweeters go pretty high, having an additional HF unit can often take the strain off your existing tweeter, giving not just additional high frequency extension but an altogether smoother midband too! Subs can actually tighten the bass higher up the frequency range, giving more grip and a sense of effortlessness where there was previously strain. The critical point is to make sure you've tuned out the sub as much as possible - in this instance, less is most definitely more.



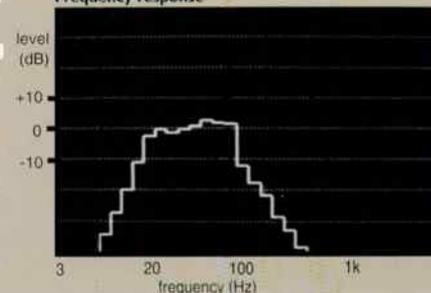
MEASURED PERFORMANCE

The Stadium II delivers full output - and massive output - from 20Hz up to 100Hz our analysis shows. Below 20Hz REL roll output down, probably to reduce cone flap and mechanical bottoming, always likely with a ported design like this one, especially with 5Hz record warp signals from a turntable. It also maintains 'speed' since sub-20Hz signals decay slowly. Full power at 20Hz is enough to briskly shake most rooms and have people a long way off involuntarily participating, for deep bass at high power carries through a building. It's worth remembering that a subwoofer like the Stadium III can output a lot of acoustic power at 20Hz, much more than most loudspeakers and you feel this rather than hear it!

The Stadium's adjustable low pass filters could lower the upper frequency limit from 100Hz down to 22Hz and a volume control sets level.

The Stadium III had a smooth and flat band-pass response under measurement and is usefully adjustable for matching purposes. It works well. NK

Frequency response



REL STADIUM III SPECIFICATIONS

Size: 558x590x390mm
 Weight: 39kg
 Finishes: Black ash, cherry, light oak, rosenut, walnut
 Drive unit: 250mm long throw
 Power: 200W
 price: £1,500
 web: www.rel.net



Stereo-style

Marantz's decision to release its dedicated two-channel stereo SA-8400 SACD player, with no multichannel decoding, would seem to be swimming against the tide - but it's no less of a machine for it, says Haden Boardman...

See DP col P78

Marantz has long had a fine tradition when it comes to CD players. For much of its recent history, it was a part of the Dutch giant Philips, which cannot have hindered the development of some of the superb machines manufactured over the past twenty years. So after a recent management buyout, the subsequent founding of a new company and Marantz merging with another great Japanese name, I was more than looking forward to see what this new machine had in store...

And what an intriguing bit of kit it is - an SACD/ CD player with two channel outputs only! But the company is no stranger to interesting projects, from its tweaked 'Special Edition' CD players, for example, to audio servers and now even a new turntable! Although its lack of multichannel functionality might sound counterintuitive, there are doubtless many audiophiles out there who have absolutely no intention of going multichannel, but have every interest in the superior sound SACD can convey.

Although the SA8400 has no go-faster "SE" or "LE" badges, the clear heritage of Klipsch tweaks is evident from the copper plating of the chassis, the use of copper screws to hold the thing together and Marantz's beloved

HDAMs (special op-amp modules). Straight out of the box, this is an undeniably pretty machine. It's nicely finished in an anodised champagne gold with matching buttons (although a black casing is available as an option), and the CD tray has a swish gold 'SACD' badge proudly advertising its position in life.

Intriguingly, on the rear of the unit is a filter switch labelled "standard" and "custom". The former limits the high frequency response, and is designed not to upset amplifiers which may get a little flustered when presented with high frequency harmonics SACD is capable of. The latter position removes this and lets the SACD discs play the full range of their wide bandwidth capabilities.

SOUND QUALITY

The unit sounded sweet straight out of the box, but was left on repeat for a good hundred hours before any serious listening took place. Straight on with Kruder & Dorfmeister's 'K&D Sessions', and the disc really flowed - bass was smooth, natural and organic in texture. Some CD players make this feel either overblown or under-developed, but the Marantz had the balance just right. As the disc progressed, I became ever more aware of the unit's subtly laid back approach, compared to - say - a Cyrus CD6 or

the new Musical Fidelity X-Ray v3. Both these machines were on hand for comparison, the Cyrus £100 cheaper, and MF £100 more. On this very upfront sounding disc, the Marantz was more listenable, possessing the correct weight and slam, and showed an edge in holding this track together.

Switching genre to Italian opera further emphasised the machine's cohesion. Vocals seemed more 'analogue' compared to the Cyrus and the Musical Fidelity, with a solid but atmospheric stereo image. Width, height, and general stereo image were incredibly well conveyed; this player had a solid soundstage which seemed to envelope the listener in the recorded acoustic. This was one area in which for me, the Marantz was clearly a better machine to live with, compared to the MF.

Both rival units clearly had a more upfront presentation; the Cyrus in particular was almost too bright... which frankly might suit some systems better, but I simply found it less easy to listen to. Still, the Marantz in the wrong system could sound dull. Bass, an area in which many CD machines can sound thin, was fulsome - but did not have the gut-wrenching capabilities of the Musical Fidelity. Switching to a DMP dual layer audiophile CD/SACD (but sticking to the CD layer - something

the Marantz strangely did by default!) revealed a further insight into the Marantz's character, underlining its overtly laid back presentation compared to the English players.

This machine may exist as a stand alone CD player, but surely one cannot ignore the SACD compatibility. I have about 30 Super Audio Compact Discs, some of which I feel are incredibly successful, and others frankly no better than the 16/44 PCM CDs. My first SACD player was the fantastically well screwed together Sony SCD-777ES. Great detail - no, amazing detail - but as a CD player, to quote Jerome Kern and Dorothy Field's all time classic "A Fine Romance", was as cold as yesterday's mashed potatoes! Frankly even the budget Pioneer DVD universal designs had more soul. No such fears with the Marantz though...

First disc tried was the dazzling Willie Nelson's 'Starlight'; Tin Pan Alley classics with Booker T Jones and his band backing the legendary

don't worry about the SACD... Bizarrely, another ZTT release - Frankie Goes to Hollywood - was much more successful, however this disc has been totally remastered.

Thankfully, the Marantz is a dedicated two channel machine, and ignores the multichannel stuff. Yet this machine shows why we all should have an SACD player; SACD on this machine was superb. The DSD (Direct Stream Digital) technology really works well, and is a vast and clear improvement over conventional CD replay.

CONCLUSION

Overall then, I was very impressed with this new Marantz machine. It's an interesting one, inasmuch as it eschews multichannel SACD, and works very well as such - perhaps by not biting off more than it can chew (at the price)? As a standalone CD

REVIEW SYSTEM

home-made transformer-based stepped attenuator
type passive preamplifier
EAR 509/II valve power amplifiers
Chario Delphinus loudspeakers
Chord Signature cables
Russ Andrews power chords and conditioners.

FACING THE UNIVERSALS

Comparing the SA-8400's SACD sonics to a couple of universal players by Denon and Pioneer showed a big advantage to the dedicated two channel Marantz; Denon's DVD 2900 was shown a clean pair of heels on SACD, as was the Pioneer '868. Perhaps this was unsurprising - after all these machines are similarly priced, yet play multichannel DVD-Vs, DVD-As and SACDs (not to mention CDs and a plethora of other formats too). Many stereophiles simply may never use this functionality...



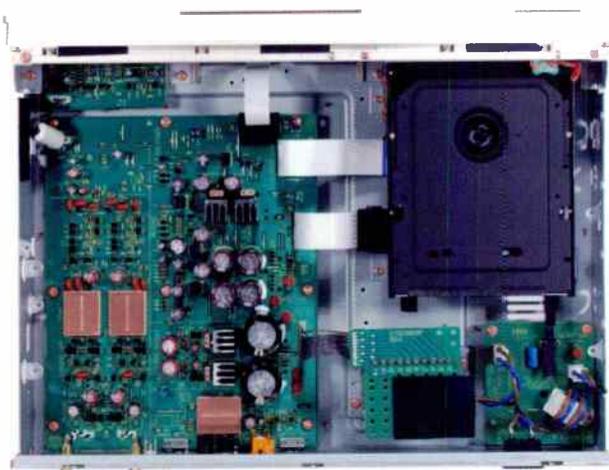
VERDICT ●●●●£

A brilliantly well considered two channel SACD machine with excellent, if a little oversmooth, CD sound to boot. Superlative value.

MARANTZ SA-8400 £699.95
Marantz UK
☎ +44 (0)1753 680868
www.marantz.com

Mr Nelson. This is a real 'warts 'n' all' disc - wide bandwidth, tape hiss, the lot. It's truly awesome, and in SACD mode, it sang like I've rarely heard before. A sad confession; 'Jazz at the Porn Shop' on SACD was, well, analogue-like, I don't have (and am not buying) a decent vinyl version of the disc, but SACD was excellent. Weirdest was Propaganda's 'A Secret Wish' because this was mastered in pure PCM. Swapping between CD and SACD layer was interesting. The SACD layer did seem slightly softer, with a tad more height, but frankly if you have the original album or LP,

player I prefer its more analogue tendencies over the many strong competitors at this price point, and the great SACD performance is a free bonus. Its character may be a little too euphonic for some tastes, lacking the transparency of machines such as Musical Fidelity's new X-RAY v3 [see p47], but others may love it.



MEASURED PERFORMANCE

SACD players don't usually play the 2Hz track of Philips test disc but this one did, measuring no loss at all. Not that music goes down to 2Hz, but it shows surprising expectations from the format. At the other end of the audio spectrum SACD in theory reaches 100kHz, but most players are well down in output here, the SA8400 measuring -18dB. Like most of the current crop this player hits 38kHz before response rolls away smoothly, still a good figure. There isn't the brick-wall filtering used in CD.

Frequency response with CD shows a slight downward trend at high frequencies, our analysis shows.

Distortion levels were low with CD and very low with SACD. This player resolved a -100dB signal with just 2.8% distortion, a performance beyond CD, if not DVD-A.

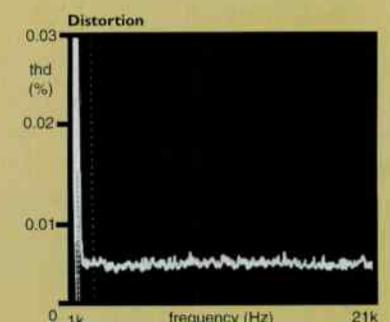
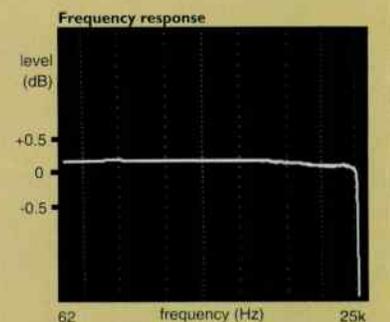
Output was high at 2.4V.

The SA8400 put in an excellent set of figures for CD and SACD. It measures well. NK

Frequency response (-1dB)
CD 5Hz - 21.2kHz
SACD 2Hz - 38kHz

Distortion
-6dB SACD 0.002% CD 0.002%

-60dB	0.032%	0.28%
-80dB	0.34%	5.2%
Separation (1kHz)		112dB
Noise (IEC A)		-111dB
Dynamic range		110dB
Output		2.4V



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ones for all?

Italian hi-fi specialist Audio Analogue is now chasing the 'style system' market with its cute, half-sized Primo CD and amplifier combo. The ever-fashionable Dominic Todd is your judge...



Made in Italy". So said the label on the box as I pulled out Audio Analogue's latest CD and amplifier... Nothing odd in that you might think, but from the land of sharp Armani suits, intoxicating Ferrari cars, and even some pretty esoteric hi-fi, the last thing you'd expect is a product that appears exceptionally good value. Yet, at least at first glance, the Primo amplifier and CD are just that...

Long-term readers will be familiar with the Puccini model from the same company. Well, as with this, build quality and finish seems exceptionally good. Unlike other manufacturers they haven't elected to use a pressed steel case with a fancy front panel. Instead, as with the other models in the range, there's a full aluminium chassis. This, combined with the countersunk top bolts, gives the Primo combination an impressive air of sophistication and quality.

Yet it's not quite faultless here. The front panel isn't quite as thick as it looks and the bolts and screw heads underneath aren't

countersunk, but these are minor gripes. Of more serious concern is the particularly dowdy remote control. When budget manufacturers such as Cambridge can produce tactile and weighty devices at a third of the price, there's really no reason for this type of plasticity affair to slip through into production. Worse still, was the confusing labelling that had me pressing the wrong button even after prolonged exposure to the device.

Still, at least a remote control is standard, as is a sensible number of other features. The amplifier has five inputs, including one that can be used for phono. There is a single tape loop, and all the phono sockets are gold plated, as are the 'speaker terminals. The only feature that I can see some missing is a headphone socket; otherwise it's nicely spec'd. As with the amplifier, the CD player errs towards a few useful features, with clean tidy styling being the main benefactor. Yet there is still a repeat function and a coaxial digital output. As is more often the case these days, programming and random functions

are not provided.

Opening up both models shows how Audio Analogue's build integrity continues with the internal electronics. Whilst the component quality is no better than average, both units appeared immaculately assembled. But (as is the fashion today) the CD player actually uses a CD-ROM as its transport - a Samsung SC-152 device - which didn't always work in a noiseless fashion (I hope this and the poorly aligned display are early sample issues that will be sorted out?)

At the heart of the amplifier is a substantial Toroidal transformer. This and the four 4700uf capacitors are responsible for producing the more than respectable 70 watts power output. So just how good value is the Primo pairing? Well, considering the build quality and power output, I was quite surprised to find the price to be £475 apiece. No, this isn't ultra bargain territory, but it looks very keenly priced, especially when compared to the obvious rivals from Cyrus (CD6 and 6 amplifier). Yet they cost £600 each. Even more expensive is the Musical Fidelity X-Ray (V3) CD player at £900, although this does

have a particularly pukka DAC. The matching X-80 is also £600. However, this type of product is bound to attract a wider audience than usual for Audio Analogue and the Linn Klassik (now £850) and Teac Reference 500 (£800) shouldn't be ruled out either. Both of these rivals also include a tuner and the Linn, in particular, offers a pretty convincing sound quality as well.

With the duo hooked up to a pair of Mordaunt Short 906 Avants, I began by listening to Daft Punk's 'Aerodynamic'. First impressions were generally good. That quoted power output of 70 watts per channel certainly made itself felt, with a punchy, yet tight bass response. The excitable electric guitar was also given the verve and definition that are crucial in this mix. Less good was the sound stage, which just didn't feel as though it belonged to an amplifier of such power. The music simply didn't pour into the room in the manner of, say a Marantz PM7200K1 which, remember, is only £25 more expensive! Furthermore there even appeared to be something of a hole in the centre of the sound stage. For the moment I was prepared to put this down to the recording, but would monitor it closely on future tracks. Sound staging aside, the duo sounded very well matched and impressed with a cohesive and well controlled sound quality. Whilst not being the most whippet-like in terms of speed, the timing was sharp enough and about what you'd expect from full size separates of this sort of price range.

Next up was Norah Jones's 'Shot The Moon'. This was less impressive than the Daft Punk, although it wasn't easy to pinpoint exactly why. The vocal texture was good, certainly

better than the more expensive "style" type systems, yet it almost sounded too polished. Ultimately I put the lack of listener interaction down to the average timbre and lack of fine detail. The piano, for example, sounded distinctly ordinary and the cymbals clinked rather than shimmered. Other finer details of percussion seemed absent altogether. Again, the limited sound staging didn't help matters. If only the vocals had reached a little more into the room and the sound had enveloped the listener more, then the whole experience might have been a little more moving.

Yet don't get the impression that the sound was totally unconvincing, as it wasn't. In some respects it was quite impressive yet, at least in this case, it just failed to really connect with the listener. It was as though the raw edges of the music had been polished out, leaving a fine presentation and good control, but not a great deal of fine detail. 'Mama Told Me Not to Come' by Tom Jones with the Stereophonics, showed the Primos in a far better light. The control of the music was first rate, with a particularly taut bass response. Coming from such a small case made the Primos' vice-like grip of the music all the more impressive. Yet for all its energy and control, there was still that gap in the sound stage...

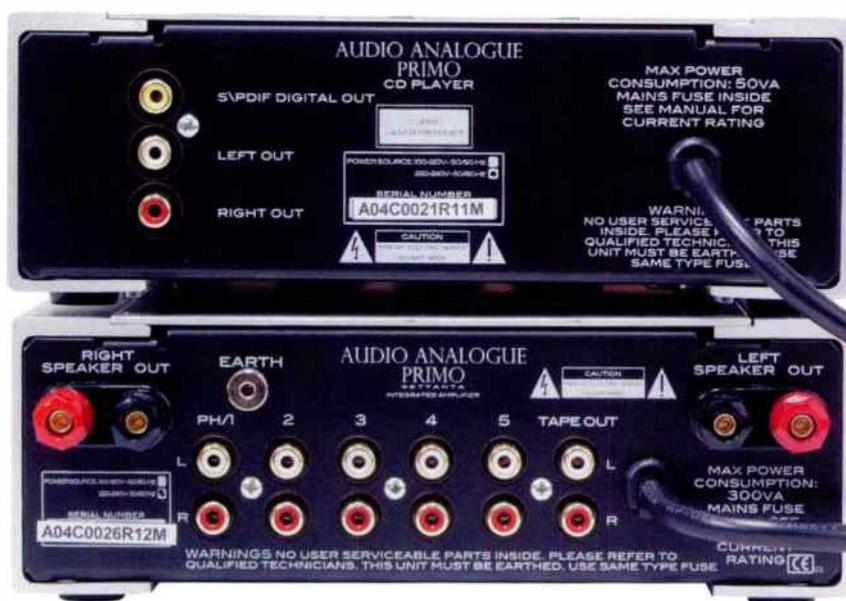
Eventually I changed speakers and their positioning, and found that with them about one and a bit metres apart (as opposed to the usual two), the staging tightened up. I suppose that a system such as this would be quite likely to be placed on a shelf with a 'speaker either side, so such narrow staging may not be a problem. Yet for the keen audiophile,

this limited width of sound will come as a disappointment. Furthermore, for all the control the pair showed, they didn't quite manage to be as involving as the better full size separates at this price. Fine as the sound quality was, it lacked the quality to encourage one to sit down and listen to music just for the sake of it...

If nothing else, then the Primos did at least prove consistent with different music material. The Cardigans' 'Erase/Rewind' again benefited from a big sound, with a hard-hitting bass response and excellent control. Yet, controlled as the sound was it once again seemed reluctant to disperse far from the loudspeakers' extremities. Good as the vocals' textures were, they would have benefited further from being separated to a greater degree from the rest of the mix, and pushed forward into the room. The sound certainly had integrity, with a smooth integration across the frequency response, yet it could also come across as slightly mechanical. The synthesised "heartbeats" of this track, for example, came across as somewhat stilted. On the plus side, along with the well-resolved vocals, the guitar definition was well portrayed. Over all, I'd describe the sound as proficient, perhaps even professional, yet lacking in intimacy.

The lack of engagement was also an issue with Frank Zappa's still hilarious 'Valley Girl'. It was powerful and energetic, just as it should, but on further listening just didn't quite captivate me. The electric guitar is quite key to the song's pace, and it just lacked the necessary detail and resolution. Likewise, for the best effect, the drums didn't have quite the attack they could have had. Conversely, the cymbals had rather too much attack. Or, more accurately, too much splash. This wasn't really a problem that I'd encountered with other music, so I'm happy to put it down to the recording. Yet it's worth being aware of when matching 'speakers. As before, the actual vocal definition was particularly good, it was just a shame that said 'Valley Girl' sounded so distant and recessed within the sound stage.

Chabrier's 'España' played by the Vienna Philharmonic, conducted by John Gardiner, was presented in a more favourable light. The dynamic response was excellent with the sound remaining cohesive and uncompressed during even the most dynamic and complex sections. There was good attack from the percussion



"SMALL IS THE NEW BLACK"

In 1981, the electronics division of Mission Cyrus decided to market a shoebox-sized amplifier. Whilst it was far from being the first mini-separate, the combination of its crisp styling, proportioning, and solid build quality gave it something of an iconoclastic status. In effect it was a "lifesty.e" product before the term had even been invented. Others have followed, but it's taken the city apartment "lifestyle" to see a renewed interest in the shoebox hi-fi. Musical Fidelity sited Cyrus as a key inspiration for the X-series. Likewise, when chatting to the chaps that import Audio Analogue, it only takes moments before the name Cyrus crops up again. It's quite possible that this is the future shape of hi-fi...

with a particularly solid response from the kettledrums. Brass was vibrant and the whole performance had all the drive and integrity it needed. That having been said, this is a piece of contrasts, and where more subtlety was required the Primo combo was less successful. Detail from the harpsichord, for example, during the quieter sections was somewhat muffled. Again, for all its drive, the sound stage again lacked width.

CONCLUSION

The success of the Analogue Audio Primo combination ultimately depends upon how you judge it. As a style type system it is undoubtedly one of the best. The only competitor that gets close is the Linn Klassik, and even that doesn't have quite the drive and power of the Primos. Yet, crucially, the Linn does have a tuner and is packaged in a single box. As a package system, it's ultimately the more convincing. Which leaves the Primos in the rather more awkward position of having to compete with separates of both large and small sizes. As a rival for Musical Fidelity's X-range goes, the Primos fail. They simply can't compete in terms of resolution or staging. Then again, the MF combination does cost a hefty £550 more. It comes closer to the Cyrus 6 combo. Indeed there are areas, such as bass weight and control, where I would even say it eclipses the Brits. Yet, ultimately the Cyrus equipment engages the listener more often than the Audio Analogue. That has to be the greatest disappointment with this combination. When the Puccini, from the same company remember, costs just £50 more and sounds so good in this respect, the lack of listener involvement is an added disappointment.

It seems that AA have, rather than maintaining this balance, decided to choose a deliberately more upfront and punchy sound. Hence the

Primo is nearly twice as powerful as the Puccini, but not nearly as good. In some respects I can see why Audio Analogue have chosen this route. As smart apartment audio, sitting on

"floating" wall shelving, pumping out the latest mixes, it does actually work very well. Indeed, even the audiophile would be impressed by the control, cohesion and taut bass response. Yet they would be less impressed by the lack of fine detail and less still by the flawed sound stage. Analogue Audio needn't be too downhearted, though. The finish is excellent - a couple of sample faults on our review CD player notwithstanding. This should win it many friends before they've even heard it. Marketed to the right audience, there are likely to be a lot of happy punters out there. But the bottom line is that you could do better with full size separates, especially the CD source. Recommended then, but not universally so...

VERDICT ●●●

Excellent by style system standards, but not quite up to the best full size separates at this price.

AUDIO ANALOGUE PRIMO
CD/AMPLIFIER £950
UKD
 ☎ +44 (0)1753 652669
 www.ukd.co.uk

- FOR**
- Build and finish
 - Musical control
 - Good value
- AGAINST**
- Tacky remote
 - Limited sound staging
 - Not always engaging

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

The Primo has a balanced output, where both output terminals carry signal, so neither must see ground in an external accessory, such as a subwoofer. Power measured a healthy 72W into 8ohms but increased little into a low 4ohm load, measuring 81W. The amplifier wasn't happy in clipping, showing instability into 4ohms, so it should not be over-run.

Distortion levels were low, but importantly comprised second harmonic only, at all outputs and frequencies, so I'd expect a fairly uncoloured and smooth sound. Low end frequency response was curtailed to 58Hz (-1dB), an unusually high limit. It will make the Primo seem spry, but not heavyweight in delivery. It may well suit bass heavy 'speakers, but not bass light small bookshelf models, for example. The upper limit was 50kHz (-1dB).

Sensitivity was very high at 140mV for full output.

The Primo measures well and should give good results, but it will sound speedy rather than powerful in nature. NK

Power	72watts
CD/tuner/aux.	
Frequency response	58Hz-50kHz
Separation	88dB
Noise	-95dB
Distortion	0.05%
Sensitivity	140mV
dc offset	8/12mV

Output from this player was low at 1.5V; Philips standard requires 2V or so.

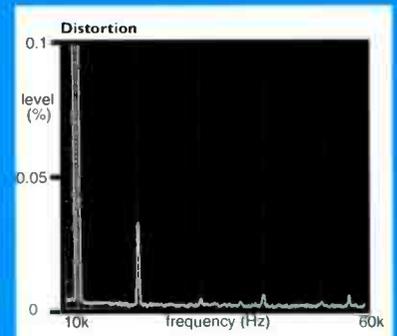
Frequency response reached just 6.6kHz before rolling off to measure -2.2dB at 10kHz and -7dB at 20kHz, giving a warm or dull sound. This is severe and unprecedented, but unlikely to be due to a fault. Some designers choose to roll off CD treble, but rarely by so much.

Distortion measurement was overwhelmed by a high noise floor, and noise measured a very high -73dB. As a result dynamic range was poor at just 87dB.

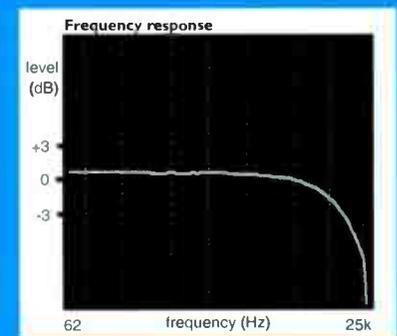
The Audio Analogue Primo CD player measured poorly in just about all areas. NK

Frequency response	10Hz - 6.6KHz
	left right
Distortion	
-6dB	0.008 0.008

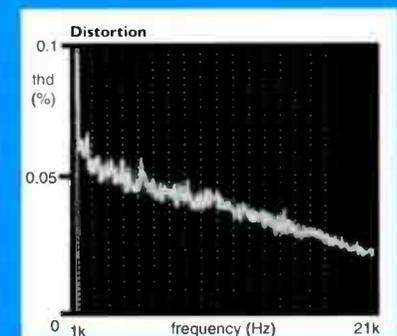
-30dB	0.1	0.12
-60dB	2.7	2.7
Separation	left	right
1kHz	88	89
20kHz	79	79
Noise (IEC A)		-73dB
Dynamic range		87dB
Output		1.5V



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CD



CD

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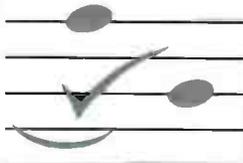
Stereophile's opinion on the 2-channel amp: "an absolutely first class amp...remarkable talents."

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WA



Light Fantastic

Musical Fidelity's new X-RAY v3 has just beamed into the thousand pound CD player fray promising shining sonics from new technology. But does it dazzle David Price?

It's 'tough on the streets' for £1,000 CD players. Quality is now very high, and there's a variety of British machines with some very obvious strengths.

Naim's CD5 is beautifully built and a hoot to listen to, especially if you like rock or dance. Creek's CD50/II is smoother, sweeter and more subtle and beguiling, but a little less exotically styled. Then there's Exposure's 3010CD, a new machine that's also winning many friends thanks to its beautifully warm, liquid sound. Factor in a variety of impressive hi res models (Pioneer DV-757i, Marantz DV-8400, Denon DV-2900, etc.) that do a decent job of CD and great things with DVD-A, DVD-V and SACD, and it's a veritable embarrass-

ment of riches out there in mid-market digital disc land. Gone are the days of clunky and clanky but charming British cottage industry specials and meticulously well built Japanese mid-fi that's about as musical as a motorway cone... So Musical Fidelity's new £899 X-RAY v3 has a real fight on its hands...

Interestingly then, MF hasn't taken the path of least resistance by sticking it in a 'me-too' full width, silver box within a bought in, off-the-shelf display and control panel. Rather, this machine really does have the feel of an exotic, bespoke hi-fi separate. Its black-painted 216x100x345mm casework is extruded from aluminium and weighs in at 5kg. The whole machine feels very rigid, and the front

panel is done in beautifully machined, brushed aluminium with neat buttons and legends in a crisp new typeface.

Inside, the X-RAY v3 uses an independently damped subchassis for vibration isolation. Musical Fidelity says much attention has been paid to the board layouts, with precise PCB track lengths and orientation, power supply configuration, internal layout and screening and mains transformer winding design. The 24bit, 8x oversampling Delta Sigma dual differential upsampling (to 96kHz) DAC is the same as that found in the superb TriVista SACD player (one of my all time favourites). It is claimed to have very low jitter and distortion - see Noel's Measured Performance. Round the back is a single pair of gold plated



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RCA phono line outputs, and coaxial and TOSLINK digital outs, plus an IEC mains input.

Powering up the X-RAY v3, I was struck by how nice it feels. Although the standards in the class are getting very high now, this machine feels special, in no little part thanks to its small footprint 'half width shoebox' case and classy backlit, dimmable and defeatable LC display. This latter item really sets it apart from the cheap, uneasy-on-the-eye fluorescent types found on most machines. It's also very informative; being alphanumeric it tells you what mode the machine's in, whether repeat is selected, etc. The remote's a run-of-the-mill affair with Philips control codes - fair enough, but a nice Cambridge Audio 640C-style aluminium affair would have really topped off the whole package.

SOUND QUALITY

Interestingly, when you get into the thousand pound price bracket, designers really do have some leeway to do what they want with the sound of their digital disc spinners. At half this price, it's more a case of trying to make a CD player sound as least 'nasty' as possible, whereas here the engineers can begin to pick and choose their sonic priorities. As such, each manufacturer's product isn't just about whether or not it can do a decent machine, but also what its view of a good machine actually is. The X-RAY v3 shows Musical Fidelity has got it right on both counts.

This player has an extremely 'well rounded' nature. It's not quite as obviously liquid as the Exposure, nor as apparently detailed as the Cyrus, nor as punchy as the Naim, nor as dimensional as the Creek. But still, it seems to work better over a broader range of programme material than all of these. In short, its sound is a shrewdly judged mix of the best of the rest, offering most of their respective strengths and almost none of their weaknesses. I was quite struck by how consistent it sounded, no matter what type of music was thrown at it and what system it was placed in.

Essentially, the X-RAY v3 has a highly neutral tonality, which just rests on the bright side. Bass is slightly more fulsome than some at the price, although it performs the clever trick of also being impressively quick and lithe too. Naim's CD5i is even faster still, but lacks the MF's ability to signpost the true tonality of instruments - for example, the fat valve-amp driven bass guitar sound on The Who's 'Won't Get Fooled

Again'.

Despite this 'body' to the low frequencies, there's lots of energy and articulation - it's not simply a case of 'boom-boom'. This infuses nicely with the midband, which is obviously drier and more neutral - and also extremely detailed. Indeed, the X-RAY v3 is a surprisingly forensic machine, which is something that its bouncy musicality tends to divert attention from. Listen, and there's a wealth of detail, with very accurate left-to-right stereo image placement (one of the best I've heard at any price) and oodles of subtle, textural information. Its midband is also rewardingly fast - very nearly up to Naim standards, yet again with greater insight too. This makes for a heady (and rare) combination of a pleasant and accurate tonality with true speed and expression.

Roxy Music's 'True to Life' showed what I believe to be the MF's greatest characteristic to its best effect. Vocals are brilliantly clean and clear, with remarkably low distortion. The result is that the silken strains of Bryan Ferry came over with uncanny realism. There's none of the coloration you get from contrivedly warm sounding CD players, nor any of the grit that comes as standard with some of the more analytical designs. Rather - and this could well be a function of the upsampling and/or low jitter - vocals are splendidly creamy (when in reality that's how they sound), yet can be hard and raucous too (such as in Roger Daltrey's louder moments)... The X-RAY v3's adeptness at recreating a natural vocal sound is unmatched at the price, in my experience. This really gives it the edge in the listenability stakes, making it an always engaging, yet never fatiguing, listening partner.

Treble is also quite special. Just as the upper-midband is wonderfully unimpaired by the usual 16bit, 44kHz chromium plating, so the high frequencies are supremely natural too. Lou Donaldson's 'Alligator Boogaloo', a late sixties all-analogue BlueNote recording, proved sublimely spacious and atmospheric, with a

highly authentic zing to ride cymbals that never so much as hinted at descending into hardness. The Roland TR909 hi-hat sound on Groove Armada's 'Whatever, Whenever' was exquisitely silky, without losing so much as a scintilla of the bite.

If there's one single objection, then it's the X-RAY v3's middling depth perspective. It's not bad, but - unlike practically every other aspect of its performance - doesn't shine particularly bright. Choral and orchestral music was wonderfully open, with the ability to 'hear through' the recorded acoustic to the smallest of details, but it never really hung in space as convincingly as it might. It tended to image fairly close to the plane of the loudspeakers, and not fall back particularly convincingly. Still, perhaps this asking too much of an already unusually accomplished product (at the price) - few machines at twice the outlay are appreciably better...

Overall then, I was deeply impressed with Musical Fidelity's new X-RAY v3. As I said in my preamble, almost uniquely at the price, it has nearly all of the strengths of each of its rivals, few of their weaknesses, and an obvious (and highly desirable) character of its own too. A brilliant combination of smoothness, 'hear through' clarity and musicality - plus those superb ergonomics and an fine build and finish - make it a cracking machine.

VERDICT ●●●●●

Opens, even and detailed sonics with an irrepressibly musical nature, make this sleekly styled CD spinner a winner.

MUSICAL FIDELITY
X-RAY V3 £899

MUSICAL FIDELITY
 (+44 (0)20 8900 2866
 www.musicalfidelity.co.uk

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

The X-Ray V3 has an unusual frequency response characteristic, with a slight lift toward high frequencies and a sharp cut off at 21kHz. The only Sony players have measured like this in the past. The filtering used looks sharper and deeper than usual, making me suspect this player will sound clean but strong in treble delivery.

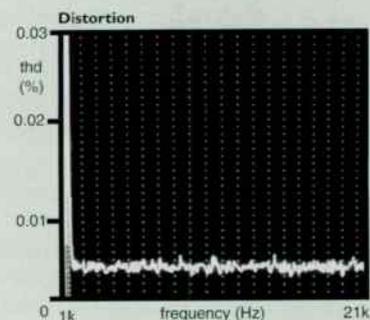
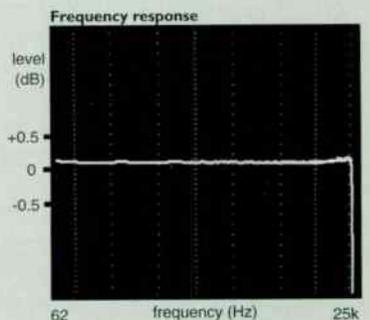
Distortion levels were low right through the dynamic range of the player, from full output to -80dB. Noise was very low too, the noise floor of our distortion plot shows. In keeping with this result, and low distortion at -60dB, the EIAJ dynamic range figure was excellent at 111dB.

The X-Ray V3 produces an unusual set of measured results, but it's up with the best all round. It will likely have a clean, fast sound with no sign of added warmth. NK

Frequency response (-1dB)
 CD4Hz - 21.4kHz

Distortion	CD
-6dB	0.001%
-60dB	0.2%
-80dB	4.3%

Separation (1kHz)	113dB
Noise (IEC A)	-113dB
Dynamic range	111dB
Output	2.1V



Mellow Stello?



I love tube amplifiers - there's no more enthusiastic champion of the breed than I. Yet there comes a time in everyone's hi-fi life when twenty-something watts from even the best thermionic valves simply don't cut it with certain loudspeakers. Ultimately, when tricky loads and/or large rooms and/or dance music is involved, there's no substitute for good old solid-state stomp.

But at what price? Going from valve to transistor invariably means teeth-rattling upper midband, or veiled and vague solid-state mush... right? Although it's all too often the way, as the song says, it ain't necessarily so... What the world needs now is a sweet transistor amplifier. One that delivers toe-curling power into awkward loads, yet sounds open and organic across the midband - precisely what the £1,495 Stello S200 promises. But

does it deliver?

Well, to a large extent - yes. This beastie promises 200W per side, with bridgeable monoblock operation going up to 600W 'without breaking into a sweat' - "kowabunga", as Duke Nukem would say! The power amp stages comprise four pairs of J-FETs (push-pull parallel output circuitry with SANKEN MT-200 power transistors) with custom-designed non-polar coupling capacitors and fully balanced circuitry - including bias stabilisation, 'sound correction' and multiple protection circuits. In the power supply, a chunky 1,000VA custom-made transformer is used with a capacitor bank of 180,000uF.

The Stello is superbly finished, as per the DP200, in the familiar brushed aluminium (435x94.5x345mm) case weighing in at a healthy 14kg. Being South Korean, perhaps it's unsurprising that this doesn't

look like a piece of Japanese high end (because it's not!) - rather, the company has given it a distinct, subtle but extremely high quality finish. In this respect, it's a bit like Naim Audio's bespoke but beautiful designs.

Round the back, there's one pair of unbalanced RCA ins, one pair of balanced XLR ins, 12V Trigger (RCA) and some rather odd looking, albeit substantial speaker binding posts which only accept banana plugs with a bit of lateral thinking... The balanced XLRs are easily selected by flicking a small 'dip switch' at the back, one per side. Stereo-Bridged operation is achieved by a similar action. A switched IEC completes the package.

SOUND QUALITY

This isn't the world's best power amplifier by any means, but I have to say that its all round ability at the price is quite something. Essentially, it



After our review of April Music's novel DP200 DAC-preamplifier, we were keen to try the matching power amplifier. The S200 is claimed to be able to drive practically any load, so David Price tried it with practically every one...

has an open and expansive character, with very little in the way of upper midband hardness. At the bottom end, it's a strong and confident performer, whilst up top it's smooth and detailed.

Zero 7's 'I Have Seen' showed this device to best effect. The opening bass sequence proved it to be fast and lithe 'downstairs', with a strong and insistent low frequency performance which never once hindered the rhythms of the song. Indeed, it's a surprisingly subtle and fluid performer. While this amplifier never feels completely 'in the groove' (and I don't know any solid-state designs that do), it nevertheless has real rhythmic acumen. I was genuinely impressed by the way the bassline counterpointed the acoustic percussion - it was very much more than simply a 'technical' thing. Instead, you could hear how the bass played off and against the drum kit,

giving the song an effortlessly intricate and involving feel.

Moving up the frequency band, and the S200 shows a clean pair of heels to any immediate price rivals

“what the world needs now is a sweet transistor amplifier...”

I've heard. It's very detailed and obviously fast, yet doesn't suffer from 'analysis paralysis' - this isn't one of those ultra-explicit high end solid-state designs which falls over itself to recover low level information and breaks its (musical) back in the process... Rather, it conveys a very crisp and well delineated recorded acoustic, with a notably expansive stereo image and decent stage depth too.

Isaac Hayes's 'Cafe Regio's' on Stax LP was a great test of its

transparency, and by and large the S200 did very well. Once again, its bass was obviously - and impressively - strong yet taut. Midband was delicious, as only a decent power

amplifier can do - this is a sublimely well recorded track, and with a decent amp it assumes three dimensions and lights up in colour. The Stello achieved a great deal of this. Horns and strings were delightfully smooth, with only the very slightest hint of wiriness (I've not heard a transistor amp that doesn't have this, save a Class A Sugden). By and large it let the flavour flood out, taking great trouble to signpost the peculiarities (or not, as the case may be) of the acoustic.



very tidy rear panel is typical of superb construction standards...

This openness, allied to a fine sense of scale (left to right, and back to front) makes it very well suited to classical music, too. My treasured DG vinyl pressing of Beethoven's Symphony No.9 gave a satisfyingly enveloping sound, with genuinely impressive depth perspective - this is nothing like the bad days of solid-state power amps like the Audiolab 8000P, when everything was bunched up around the plane of the speakers. String timbre was very good - obviously this is no high end tube amp in this respect, but the S200 really did provide a sense of the 'breathiness' of cellos and the zing of violins, without descending into wiriness.

Up top, the Stello boasts a very accomplished treble too. It's open and smooth, yet doesn't get overly silky like certain Japanese high end. There's great speed and bite with Kraftwerk's new 'Tour de France' - the hi-hat sound proved extremely percussive, whilst satisfyingly sweet too. Kate Bush's 'Moving' showed how seamlessly it shifted from the midband to the high notes, with a refreshingly naturalness. On this brilliant analogue recording, the cymbals in the drum kit boasted blistering attack, fine texture and a reassuringly accurate metallic sheen - without ever sounding hard.

What then of its alleged driving capabilities? Well, the S200 does not sound like a bit bruiser. It has no Neanderthal leanings. But hook it up to every tricky load you can think of

THE MATCHING PREAMP

The DP200 is an unusual device, offering a 24/192 upsampling DAC with a welter of digital inputs and outputs - plus one analogue in. It's fully balanced, with the option of ye olde unbalanced RCAs. Sound is superb at the price, and the upsampling really works well. There's even an optional MM/MC phono stage, which performs nearly as well as some standalone offboard phono stages costing as much as the whole DP200. Oh, not forgetting the built-in headphone amp too, which is a cracker. This is a brilliant all rounder, offering exceptional value for those with lots of digital sources to switch. The only downside is the annoying, fiddly control layout. Still, if ever you get tired of this, you can flick a switch on the back, whereupon it turns into a fixed output DAC (with analogue/phono switching retained too, so it's also a phonostage) which you can hook up to a separate preamp... It's awfully versatile, and as such we reckon this just might be our 2004 'product of the year' - although you'll have to wait 'til Christmas to find out!



- from Yamaha NS1000Ms to Quad 989s to the original series one Linn Kans - and its sound changes not one job. It's unflustered by any programme material you give it, from thumping, highly compressed trance to crashing classical.

CONCLUSION

At £1,495, April Music's Stello S200 is as much a bargain as the DP200 we tested last Spring. Once again, it's its all-round competence that

impresses so much. I can think of no rival that offers such clear, clean, smooth power in such quantities. Of course, there are even more transparent designs around, and more powerful ones too, but none that I've heard at this price offer such a happy combination.

VERDICT

Oodles of smooth, clean power with plenty of pace and pleasing subtlety too. Factor in exquisite build and a low price and this is true audiophile bargain.

APRIL MUSIC
STELLO S200 £1,495
 Audio Reference
 ☎ +44 (0)1252 702705
 www.audioreference.co.uk

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

With a measured power of 225W into 4ohms and 144W into 8ohms this power amplifier has plenty of leeway to drive even inefficient loudspeakers to good levels in medium to large rooms. Power supply regulation was fair, not up to Naim standards but on par with most rivals. I noticed the amplifier went into very soft clipping (overload), free from drama like transient instability, a good point.

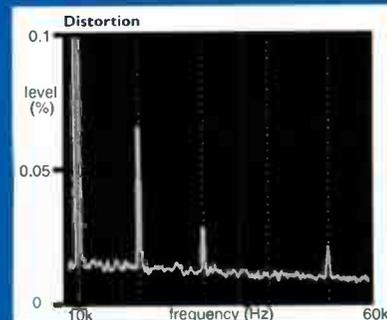
Distortion structure was primarily second harmonic up to medium power levels, right across the audio band, including high frequencies where higher orders usually prevail. The Stello looked good in this respect. As power increased third harmonic took over, which might sharpen the sound at high volumes.

Frequency response extended very low, down to 3Hz, but rolled off smoothly above 30kHz (-1dB). This should help toward an easy delivery.

With low noise, an input sensitivity

of 0.92V and very low d.c. offset this amplifier measured well in all respects. It should give a good account of itself. NK

Power	145W
Frequency response (-1dB)	3Hz-30kHz
Distortion	0.08%
Noise (IEC A wtd)	-120dB
Separation	84dB
Sensitivity	0.92V
D.C. offset	-1mV / 0.5mV



AZUR

Cambridge Audio's budget Azur range is rapidly gaining a reputation as 'the NAD of the noughties'... In this latest instalment, Dominic Todd auditions the new 540d DVD player...



Unlike its ancestors, the 540d doesn't push expectations on the spec per pound basis. Indeed, the lack of SACD decoding actually puts it at a slight disadvantage to truly universal rivals such as the Pioneer DV565. Yet when it comes to the quality of both componentry and casing, the Cambridge is at a definite advantage. Whilst most rivals use 11-bit video DACs, Cambridge use six 12-bit/54Mhz devices. To further enhance the picture, progressive scan is also provided in both PAL and NTSC formats. This, combined with the component video outputs, has a beneficial effect to the pictures depth and stability. If your TV is so equipped it's well worth using. On the sound front, Cambridge uses a Crystal CS4360 24/196 DAC. It's interesting to note that although this is totally different to the Wolfson chip found in their 540c CD player, the quoted measurements are remarkably similar.

Short of the lack of SACD, there's really very little else to criticise about this machine. Every output you could want has been provided, and the IEC mains connection will please those who prefer to upgrade their mains leads. Of further interest to audiophiles is the casing that, like the rest of the range, has been developed to quell resonance and vibration. For a £230 pound DVD player this is highly unusual and unlikely to be found amongst rivals. Rivals aren't as prolific as you might think yet, perhaps most formidable of all, is the Pioneer

DV565 (£250). At technically a little more money you've got the Sony DVP-NS930V (£300) and the Marantz DV4300 (£250). I say, "technically" as in reality you're quite likely to find all three for considerably less on the high street, thanks to an intensively competitive DVD market place.

As is customary, I began by evaluating the 540d's picture quality. Obviously those 12-bit video DACs have an effect as I found the picture to be comfortably above average. Even without the progressive scan, there was a fine depth of field and decent stability. Colour performance can often be a matter of taste, but few would argue with Cambridge's natural balance. I felt it lost some of the rivalling Sony and Pioneer's vitality, yet more than made up for it in other respects. Flesh tones, for example, were portrayed with a greater sense of realism than anything else I've seen at this price. Overall, then, the picture quality will suit those who prefer realism to intensity, and is amongst the best at this price.

With the DVD teamed up with its matching 540r AV receiver and a Mordaunt Short Avant 'speaker package, I initially began by listening in stereo, with an Azur 540c CD player alongside for comparison. First off was The Divine Comedy's 'Charmed Life'. To begin with I was slightly disappointed by a rather weak piano tone and flat sound stage. It certainly didn't appear to be as good as its CD namesake. Yet all was not lost. Although the vocals didn't have quite the presence of the CD player, they

were at least richly textured. Likewise the detail from both guitar and, what sounded like, banjo was excellent in comparison to the competition. Bass has a surprising weight too, although without quite the control of the dedicated CD player. Whilst the banjo was neatly separated from the rest of the orchestration, the sound could occasionally become a little muddled. That said, it was at least smooth, and had a rare sense of flow. Rare, that is in context to rivals, many of whom still sound somewhat mechanical.

Raising the tempo somewhat was Jeff Healey's 'The Damage is Done', which proved surprisingly involving with foot tappingly sharp timing and plenty of detail from the guitars. Vocals were well separated from the rest of the mix, even if they lacked the reach into the room of the standard CD player. My only real concern was the somewhat vague percussion presentation. Even given the limitations of a £230 DVD player I hadn't expected quite as much, "splash", from the treble, especially as the 540d was so refined in other respects.

Classical music highlighted an area of concern that isn't alone in afflicting the 540d DVD player. During the quieter passages of Finzi's Eclogue for piano and strings, I was conscious of a ticking noise from the transport. A second sample suffered similarly and is something to bear in mind if you listen/watch at low volumes with the unit close to your listening position. Otherwise, the piano tone was again not the strongest. A decent £150 CD

BET?



VERDICT ●●●●£

Perhaps not a landmark product, but without doubt one of the finest DVD players at this price.

CAMBRIDGE AUDIO 540D £250

CAMBRIDGE AUDIO

+44 (0)207 940 2240

www.cambridge-audio.co.uk

FOR

- Class leading sound
- Natural picture quality
- Expensive feeling remote

AGAINST

- No SACD
- Transport noise

PAST TIMES

Cambridge Audio was actually in the DVD field from fairly early days. Like the new 540d, their first DVD player was very solidly built. Yet the performance of the 2001 (£250) DVD300 was barely above average. What turned around Cambridge's fortunes was the 50-series. The DVD 53, 55 and 57 may not have had quite the quality of finish of the earlier and latter players, but they all offered a phenomenal specification for the money. At £150, the DVD55 was the cheapest DVD player at the time to offer full Progressive Scan. Likewise, the £200 DVD57 offered DVD-A way before it was the norm at this price. Today the market has caught up but, judging by the success of the 540d, the experience obviously hasn't done Cambridge Audio any harm at all...

player, for example, would probably be better, but it was certainly as good as Cambridge's budget CD5 player. The string tone was far from being the richest or most lush, but it did have a smoothness characteristic of the Crystal DAC. Although the dynamics were ultimately rather softened, the fine timing and seamless response made for a pleasant listen.

Switching to DVD-A made the sort of marked improvements we've come to expect. With the sound now split between 5 'speakers, the dynamic scale improved immensely. With Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker Ballet, there was also an element of control that had been missing from CD. Being surrounded by 'speakers also improves the sound stage, yet even ignoring this I felt that the front 'speakers alone were pushing the sound further into the room. Although the library of DVD-Audio discs is somewhat limited, you'd be foolish not to buy just a handful at least, just to hear the difference that it can make.

Although one could never call the

good as its dedicated CD brother it would perhaps be churlish to expect so. Dynamic scale and control simply aren't as good as the CD player, and neither is instrumental timbre. That said, the general flow and cohesive nature of the player is good enough to shame most rivals. The bass response is also surprisingly good. Move to DVD-A and the results are exceptionally good. Again I believe the Cambridge to be best in its class here too. It is something of a shame, however, that SACD wasn't also incorporated. Whilst the SACD catalogue is also looking a bit on the slim side, it can't be denied that the 540d's closest rival, the Pioneer DV565, receives a substantial boost here

540d's sound quality stunning, the context has to be born in mind. As a £250 DVD player on which to play CDs I believe that there is none better. Whilst it's not as

for its inclusion. Of course, we shouldn't forget that class leading sound quality is all very well, but is not conclusive in a DVD player. Fortunately the Cambridge matches its smooth, refined sound to an equally mature picture quality. I'd hesitate to call it class leading, as it comes down to personal choice, but it's certainly unlikely to disappoint most potential buyers. Certainly it produces ones of the most natural pictures for its price. Factor in the quality finish and decent feature count and it's clear that Cambridge have, yet again, produced a class leader. Now there's a surprise...

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

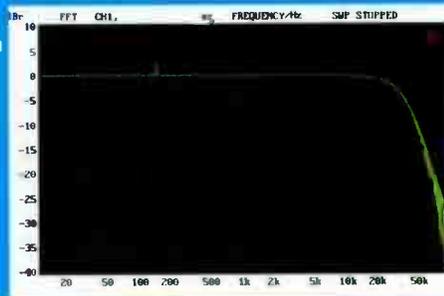
With a 96kHz sample rate test signal, frequency response was -5dB down at 48kHz and with a 192kHz sample rate test signal it was -10dB down at 48kHz. The roll off was smooth and analogue like in both cases, likely giving DVD Audio less openness in its sound, but less glassiness too. With CD, however, the player had response emphasis at both low and high frequencies, likely giving a small sense of 'loudness' enhancement.

Distortion levels were low, measuring 0.0003% at 0dB and 3% at -80dB, a normal result for DVD-A well implemented. With CD the figures were good if not exceptional, as a 108dB EIAJ measured dynamic range value indicates. Noise was low and output normal.

The Azur 540D is a bit of a mixed bag, audio wise. It will sound lively with CD, but softer with DVD Audio. Cambridge seem to be trying to counter common criticism of DVD players that they make CD sound dull and DVD

bright. Whether the Azure is successful here only listening can decide. NK

Frequency response	
CD	4Hz-21.8kHz
DVD	4Hz-23kHz
Separation	98dB
Distortion	0.004%
Noise	102dB
Output	2.1V



Tubes strike!

There's certainly no shortage of fine sub-thousand pound transistor amplifiers on the market, but finding a good tube design at this price is another matter. Newly formed Dutch company PrimaLuna looks set to change this with its £800 Prologue 1 integrated, says Dominic Todd...



I normally look at a product's rivals later on in the review, but in this case I think it's worth examining them straight away.

Take a deep breath and consider the Naim Nait 5i (£700), Musical Fidelity X-150 (£800), Arcam Diva A90 (£850), Cyrus 8 (£800), and Sugden A21a (£900). By anyone's standards, it's one formidable list of opponents, and life certainly isn't going to be easy for any new kid on the block. Yet the PrimaLuna has one critical key ingredient that all these rivals lack; thermionic valves.

Whilst one would imagine the Class-A Sugden to be the closest sonic rival, actual tube amplifiers are still pretty rare around this price. Unless you're prepared to build one of the World Audio kits, then the closest rival is probably Icon Audio's £900 Stereo 40i. Rather like the Icon Audio, the PrimaLuna also uses 4 EL-34 valves and is also built in China. It appears that PrimaLuna's Herman van den Dungen wasn't alone in his thinking [see panel]...

Irrespective of where it's made, I was actually very impressed with the Prologue 1's build quality. It's certainly no Naim Nait, but succeeds

in different ways.

For a start there are no circuit boards. Everything is hard wired and, by and large, very neatly and professionally too. I could only find a couple of solder joints whose ragged finish just let the side down. The great advantage of hardwiring, of course, is that it makes tweaking so much easier, although I'd let the warranty run its course before attacking with soldering iron!

Component quality is fair, and actually a little better than you'd expect at this price. As well as the EL-34s, there are Russian Electroharmonix 12AX7 and 12AU7 driver valves. The ALPS volume pot is a decent device and operates smoothly. The internal 'speaker cable isn't of especially high quality but the plastic encased speaker binding posts were better than I'd expected. You don't by an amp' like this for features but, even so, it would be nice to find an output to compliment the four line level inputs. This won't be an issue for digital recorders, but for recording from and/or to analogue, this could be a pain. The unit looked good with evenly applied paint and a very practical valve guard. Overall, when it comes to style, fit and finish, PrimaLuna can be proud of this first attempt.

SOUND QUALITY

Hooked up to a pair of Mordaunt Short MS906 Avant loudspeakers, I found the Prologue 1 considerably

more than adequate in terms of sound quality. As you'd expect from this type of amplifier, with Capercaille's 'Why Won't You Touch Me?', there was some softening at frequency extremes. Yet although the bass certainly lacked the tautness of the Naim Nait, it did actually pack quite a substantial punch. In terms of bass weight the PrimaLuna is up there with the best at this price. Yet it was the midrange that really impressed, especially with this type of music. There was a mellifluous tone to the lead vocalist and great presence too. The downside was a slight lack of clarity in terms of staging, although it never became bad enough to suspect a 'speaker of being reverse phased.

A smooth and beguiling midrange you'd kind of expect from a valve amp', but the intricate detail of higher frequencies was rather more surprising. Whilst there are transistor rivals that are more incisive still, there was plenty of detail and space around the percussion. The highlight, however, had to be the violin's timbre, which instantly relegated the transistor rivals to sounding rather mechanical. Yet it didn't get it all its own way. At higher volumes the sound did noticeably harden, and the sound became harsher at just the point when the others would be just starting to get into their stride - careful loudspeaker matching should alleviate this, however...

The outstanding string tone that I'd heard before was present again with 'The Divine Comedy's 'Sticks and Stones'. With the possible exception of the Sugden A21a, I felt that the string timbre was matchless at this price and just the type of 'taste of the high end' that PrimaLuna probably had in mind. Again the vocals had a great sense of body, with good height of stage. My only quibble here would be that although the vocalist was portrayed with great



presence and clarity, the staging was rather flat. A rival such as the Musical Fidelity X150 would have pushed the sound further into the room. Of course this is very much a presentational issue and whether you prefer your music to be presented before you, wash over you, or fired towards you with precision and force is down to personal taste. The PrimaLuna is very much a "presenter" in this case.

Of more concern was the soft bass, which, in this case, meant that the song lost some of its drama. The key here is that, more so than with its rivals, the choice of a pair of taut and efficient 'speakers is crucial to making the most of the amp'. Intriguingly, whilst the stringed timbre had been superb, the brass section was less so. By the standards of its leading transistor rivals, I found the upper mid-band slightly cloudy, and thus reducing the focus and realism of some of the brass sections...

Neil Young's 'Old Man' showed that qualities that had impressed or otherwise before needn't necessarily remain consistent across different music types. Whilst I'd found the staging to be a little flat previously, when the pace picked up about a third of the way through this particular song, the Prologue 1 could clearly reach deep into the room. More impressive still was the resolution afforded to steel and slide guitar. Whilst it wasn't massively analytical, one really could hear the clear textural differences between the two. The fact that I noticed, again that these weren't simply two ordinary guitars, is the type of detail typical in the PrimaLuna's presentation. It will get you thinking about the music again. An intimate experience then, even if the percussion wasn't as crisp as it could have been.

Royksopp's 'Remind Me' continued with the surprisingly upfront vocals, yet it was more the intensity of the introduction that impressed. This device obviously had a real affinity with the music, in a way that would make the casual listener stop what they were doing and sit down for a more serious listen.

Cone-flapping bass wallop was also on the agenda, but just don't expect the cones to be moving in the most linear of fashions. Whilst there's ample noise to annoy the neighbours, the control isn't quite there. Indeed after a spell with a Naim Nait 5i you may even feel obliged to call the Prologue 1's bass crude. No matter, because the PrimaLuna rallied in other areas. There were subtle effects drawn from the music that some competitors would miss altogether. Combined with the terrific attack in the lower midrange (just before it all goes soft), this really made for a captivating listen.

The same wonderful depth of insight into the music (for an amp' of this price) was present with Alexander Borodin's 'In the Steppes of Central Asia'. If you like a real sense of the recording venue then this could be just your type. Again, it's this sort of quality which you'd expect from a much more expensive amplifier, even if the rather subdued brass section isn't. As before the fluid and natural string section was rather slighted by a less than energetic brass, which lacked both bite and presence. I also noticed that whilst the dynamic scale was generally good, it could become a little compressed when the music became denser, especially so at high volume levels. Otherwise the smooth, seamless flow of music came as a welcome antidote to some of the rather more mechanical sounding transistors.

Unless you chose totally unsuitable 'speakers, it would be hard not to warm to the PrimaLuna. With simpler music there's often a level of insight and realism that's way above the usual class standard. Whilst the bass is rather soft, its

weight can't be faulted, and with the right sort of 'speaker - such as Revolver's R45 - could produce transistor-busting dynamics. Yet the PrimaLuna's not without its weaknesses too. Compression can set in, and the lack of bite can make some instruments sound lacklustre. Here, perhaps, is one of those rare amplifiers that would actually suit a 'speaker that is obviously bright in balance.

If you're looking for the consummate all rounder at this price then, clearly, the PrimaLuna isn't it. As well as the sonic disadvantages there's also the lack of a recording output, remote control and headphone socket to consider. Not to mention the bulk...Whereas a Nait will happily slip into the tightest space, and work reliably, the PrimaLuna won't. But then again it's a specialist product, and I love it all the more for being so. Take a bit of time in matching a system around the PrimaLuna and it will illuminate music like very few others this price. At £800, it's an absolute bargain!

VERDICT ●●●●£

A refreshing change from the transistor competition with a captivating presentation. Excellent finish and build quality makes for a package strong on value.

PRIMALUNA PROLOGUE 1 £800
PISTOL SOUNDS
 ☎ +44 (0)208 971 3909

- FOR**
- Musical insight
 - Finish and build quality
 - Excellent value

- AGAINST**
- No recording output
 - Limited features
 - Soft bass response

PRIMA WHO ARE?

PrimaLuna are a brand new company associated with Herman van den Dungen of AH! fame. The intention was to create a model range that offered more than a taste of the high end, but for considerably less cash. Unsurprisingly this has mostly been achieved by building the products in China. As well as the Prologue 1, there is the Prologue 2 version, which features KT-88 tubes instead of EL-34s. In the future, PrimaLuna intend to introduce an automatic bias circuit and tube-fuse-protection. These have mainly been requested by the US and Japanese markets. Of more interest to us is the possibility of a pre/power version and possibly even tube sources such as tuner and CD. As is often the case, it all depends upon demand.

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

The Prologue One produces 40W per channel from its 8ohm winding. The figure drops to 36W from the 4ohm tap due to reduced coupling efficiency. This is all you can get from EL34s running in auto-bias push-pull.

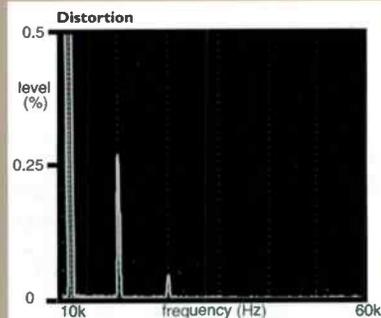
Distortion was low at low power output, measuring 0.25% second harmonic, a good result. Unfortunately, levels rose rapidly, hitting 1% at 8W output, with higher harmonics climbing steeply. This will sharpen and brighten the timbre, making for a fast but likely glassy, or shiny presentation, compromising the neutrality that is possible with valves. This will be due to leakage inductance or winding capacitance in the output transformer, influenced by how well it is layered and sectioned.

With good bass extension and low distortion swinging near full output at 40Hz the Prologue One should have plenty of grunt. Noise was low and hum negligible.

The Prologue One measures well in

most areas, but it will not sound as neutral as is possible due to its distortion characteristics. NK

Power	40watts
CD/tuner/aux.	
Frequency response	4Hz-33kHz
Separation	72dB
Noise	-95dB
Hum	1mV
Distortion	0.2%
Sensitivity	230mV



Golden Era?

Stewart Wennen auditions Graham Slee's Era Gold V phono stage.



VERDICT ●●●●●

Superbly open and three dimensional sound allied to excellent detailing makes this one of the very best at the price.

GRAHAM SLEE ERA GOLD V
PHONO PREAMP £460
HiAudio
☎ +44 (0)1443 231458
www.hiaudio.co.uk

REFERENCE SYSTEM
ORIGIN LIVE ANORA GOLD
HADDOCK GH242 INTEGRA
MUSIC MAKER MARK 2
PASSIVE PRE-AMPLIFIER
CROWN DC 306A
ATC SCM35

Here's something that you don't see every day - a hand built phono stage that's surprisingly affordable (at £460) considering its fine sound. The Era Gold V is said to be the result of many years of research and development by Graham Slee, a professional design engineer with many years experience in the broadcast audio industry. It accepts almost any moving iron pick up cartridge with an output between 2mV and 10 mV, and with an impedance of 47k ohms and input capacitance of 100pF.

The unit comes housed in a very smart alloy sleeve, onto which fit the front and rear panels. Attention to detail is evident in the fit of these; I couldn't feel any gaps along their edges. Inside, the accuracy of the solder work is superb - I've rarely seen it as neat and clean. The rear panel sports four phono sockets for inputs and outputs, and has a proper ground terminal. A note to all users: it's vitally important to mount the power supply unit on a different surface to the main case and in a position where its mechanical vibration does not interfere with the Era Gold V itself.

SOUND QUALITY

The listening session took place over a week, and I played an enormous

amount of vinyl. To demonstrate the unit's capabilities I placed a copy of Beethoven's piano symphony No.3 on the turntable, and was immediately disarmed by its detail retrieval. I could instantly tell the piano was obviously not a Bosendorfer, so I checked the sleeve to find that it was a Yamaha - an impressive feat for any phono stage to perform. Orchestral dynamics were not sullied in any way, giving the performance all the rich warmth the producer intended.

This quality was not restricted to symphonic music, as John Williams played his flamenco guitar (as a solo instrument) and ably demonstrated that mastery of his art. Supertramp's classic 'Crime of the Century' provided an enormous stereo image with what seemed unlimited stage depth. Bass was extremely strong and full, without ever sounding overblown. I was therefore not surprised to hear Nina Simone's Masters at Work remix of 'See Line Woman' played with so much emotion.

Despite all that obvious detailing, this phono stage sounded smooth right across the frequency spectrum. Bass was rich, but the midband integrated well and was even right the way up to the treble. In many respects, it's a balance similar to Trichord's stock Dino (£299), with a

nicely warm and expansive sound. The difference, however, was in its detailing, which was a whole step above the basic Trichord, and the way it took all of that information and weaved it together in such a consummately musical way. Just as Wayne Rooney likes to run with the ball, so this phonostage is a dyed-in-the-wool music maker!

So the big thumbs up then... This brand is not famous, but judging by the quality of this example, it deserves to be. If a relaxed, yet engagingly rhythmic, presentation is what you seek, with smoothness and dimensionality - then look no further. It's an obvious and significant upgrade on my budget 'fave rave', the Trichord Dino, adding depth, dimensionality and real rhythmic propulsion whilst retaining the cheaper design's essentially satisfying tonality. The Era Gold V is a product that neither diminishes nor exaggerates the performance; rather it displays the music even handedly, yet with great gusto. Heartily recommended.



[pics: u, v, w, x]
 "My speaker's bigger than yours..." There was a lot of high end one-upmanship going on at Munich, as you'd expect. While last

year's Frankfurt Show was more into trad horns, Munich seemed to possess more than its fair share of curious Dalek-shaped designs. In truth, my fave was the good olde fashioned B&W Nautilus, a snip at just £25,000 per pair...

Despite this being a high end show, DAB was much in evidence, as this slickly styled Perstel proved, complete with Dansette

style front dial. Pure

Digital's The Bug was a walk on the wild side - in screensaver mode the display grows eyes which follow you around the room!

Last but more certainly not least was Mordaunt Short's new Performance loudspeaker.

Despite some curious promotional activity outside the show involving fire-eating (?), this up-and-coming manufacturer did itself proud, with a very open and fast sound, which was ever-so-slightly on the warm side of neutral.



Marantz was out in force, with its new TT-15S1 turntable. Around £1,000 buys you this exquisitely finished integrated player, which is essentially a

Clearaudio deck reworked to Marantz specifications. It sounded

superb - and is long overdue in this writer's opinion. Also there was the SA-11S1 SACD player and PM-11S1 - both were deeply impressive, and the latter even boasts a very special MM/MC phono stage...



PROBABLY THE BEST DIY KITS IN THE WORLD

World Audio
design

www.worldaudiodesign.com

Tel: 01245 450 651

NEW KIT

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 its 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)



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 brushed aluminium 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, phono, 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

PROBABLY THE BEST DIY KITS IN THE WORLD

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 SU4), using a heavy duty choke to achieve exceptional smoothing. The output transformers are 14% Ultra Linear tapped to keep distortion down to its lowest level and the kit is totally hard wired utilising three tag boards. It has five line level inputs, plus a tape-in and



tape out, all controllable from the front. Simon Pope says, "This integrated 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)

KAT34 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 SU4 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 SU4s and European 6AU6s & ECC82. Simon Pope says, "Not to put too fine a point on it, the sound these monoblocs create is among the finest that can be encountered in hi-fi." Our 300B PSE kit bears an affordable price of £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 SU4 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.



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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 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). 6:1 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 8.5Watts.

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

add KECL82 Printed Circuit Board 200mm(w) x140mm(l) x1.6mm(d)

Kel84 Printed Circuit Board 280mm(w) x 135mm(l)x 1.6mm(d).

KIT88/KAT88 Printed Circuit Board 140mm(w) x 310mm(l) x 2.4mm(d)

Kel34 Printed Circuit Board 140mm(w) x 310mm(l) x 2.4mm(d).

Kel80 Printed Circuit Board (a pair) 120mm(w) x 215mm(l) x 2.4mm(d)

HD83 Printed Circuit Board 140mm(w) x 160mm(l) x 1.6mm(d).

PSU-II Printed Circuit Board 105mm(w) x 130mm(l) x 1.6mm(d)

PRE-II Printed Circuit Board 105mm(w) x 130mm(l) x 1.6mm(d)

PHONO-II Printed Circuit Board 105mm(w) x 130mm(l) x 1.6mm(d)

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AMPLIFIER KITS DESCRIPTION	ORDER NO.	QTY	UK (inc vat & carriage)	OVERSEAS (exc. vat & carriage)
Kecl82 (8 ohm)	Kecl82 (with valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£195.00	£170.00
2A3PSE with valves (4ohm or 8ohm, pls specify)	2A3 PSE (with valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£570.00	£485.00
2A3PSE without valves (4ohm or 8ohm, pls specify)	2A3 PSE (without valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£470.00	£400.00
KaT6550 with valves (4ohm or 8ohm, pls specify)	KaT6550 (with valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£580.00	£495.00
KaT6550 without valves (4ohm or 8ohm, pls specify)	KaT6550 (without valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£450.00	£380.00
KiT6550 with valves (4ohm or 8ohm, pls specify)	KiT6550 (with valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£615.00	£525.00
KiT6550 without valves (4ohm or 8ohm, pls specify)	KiT6550 (without valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£485.00	£415.00
KaT34 with valves (4ohm or 8ohm, pls specify)	KAT34(with valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£480.00	£410.00
KaT34 without valves (4ohm or 8ohm, pls specify)	KAT34(without valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£415.00	£354.00
KiT34 with valves (4ohm or 8ohm, pls specify)	KiT34 (with valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£515.00	£440.00
KiT34 without valves (4ohm or 8ohm, pls specify)	KiT34 (without valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£450.00	£385.00
Kel84 with valves (8 ohm)	Kel84 (with valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£298.00	£255.00
Kel84 without valves (8 ohm)	Kel84 (without valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£268.00	£230.00
PSU II	PSU - II	<input type="checkbox"/>	£205.00	£175.00
PRE II	PRE - II	<input type="checkbox"/>	£215.00	£185.00
PHONO II	PHONO II	<input type="checkbox"/>	£110.00	£95.00
PAS II	PAS II	<input type="checkbox"/>	£235.00	£200.00
Step ups transformers for MC use with PHONO II	MC - step up (pair)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£80.00	£68.00
HD83 with valves	HD83 (with valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£195.00	£167.00
300BPSE with valves (4ohm or 8ohm, pls specify)	300B PSE (with valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£1197.00 per pair	£1020.00 per pair
300BPSE without valves (4ohm or 8ohm, pls specify)	300B PSE (no valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£895.00 per pair	£765.00 per pair
300BPP with valves (6 ohm)	300B PP (with valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£1197.00 per pair	£1020.00 per pair
300BPP without valves (6 ohm)	300B PP (no valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£895.00 per pair	£765.00 per pair

PARTS DESCRIPTION	ORDER NO.	QTY	UK (inc vat & carriage)	OVERSEAS (exc. vat & carriage)
2A3 mains transformer	2A3 PSE mains T	<input type="checkbox"/>	£115.00	£98.00
6550 mains transformer	6550 mains T	<input type="checkbox"/>	£120.00	£105.00
34 mains transformer	KiT34 - mains T	<input type="checkbox"/>	£100.00	£85.00
kel84 mains transformer	Kel84 - mains T	<input type="checkbox"/>	£60.00	£47.00
HD83 mains transformer	HD83 - mains T	<input type="checkbox"/>	£40.00	£34.00
PSU II mains transformer	PSU-II - mains T	<input type="checkbox"/>	£40.00	£34.00
300B mains transformer	300B - mains T (each)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£115.00	£98.00
34/6550 choke	KiT34 - choke	<input type="checkbox"/>	£40.00	£34.00
kel84 choke	Kel84 - choke	<input type="checkbox"/>	£20.00	£17.00
300B choke	300B choke	<input type="checkbox"/>	£40.00	£34.00
2A3 PSE choke	2A3 PSE choke	<input type="checkbox"/>	£40.00	£34.00
PSU II choke	PSU-choke	<input type="checkbox"/>	£20.00	£17.00
6550 output transformer (4ohm or 8ohm)	6550 - O/P T (pair)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£130.00	£112.00
34 output transformer (4ohm or 8ohm)	34 - O/P T (pair)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£130.00	£112.00
kel84 output (8 ohm)	Kel84 - O/P T (pair)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£90.00	£78.00
2A3 PSE output transformer (4ohm or 8ohm)	2A3 PSE O/P T (pair)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£130.00	£112.00
HD83 output (multiload secondary)	HD83 - O/P T (pair)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£100.00	£86.00
PRE-II driver transformer	PRE-II - driver T(pair)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£80.00	£68.00
300BPSE output transformer (4ohm or 8ohm)	300B PSE - O/P T (each)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£110.00	£94.00
300BPP output transformer (6ohm)	300B PP - O/P T (each)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£110.00	£94.00
kel84 PCB	Kel84 - PCB	<input type="checkbox"/>	£30.00	£26.00
kel34 PCB	Kel34 - PCB	<input type="checkbox"/>	£12.00	£11.00
kel80 PCB	Kel80 - PCB(pair)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£52.00	£45.00
KECL82 PCB	KECL82 - PCB	<input type="checkbox"/>	£25.00	£21.00
HD83 PCB	HD83 - PCB	<input type="checkbox"/>	£20.00	£17.00
PSU II PCB	PSU-II - PCB	<input type="checkbox"/>	£20.00	£17.00
PRE II PCB	PRE-II - PCB	<input type="checkbox"/>	£20.00	£17.00
PHONO II PCB	PHONO-II - PCB	<input type="checkbox"/>	£20.00	£17.00
tag board	TAG	<input type="checkbox"/>	£4.00	£3.00
ALPS 50K dual potentiometer	ALPS - 50K	<input type="checkbox"/>	£14.00	£12.00
ALPS 100K dual potentiometer	ALPS - 100K	<input type="checkbox"/>	£14.00	£12.00
stepped attenuator (10K or 50K)	Attenuator + resistor pack	<input type="checkbox"/>	£75.00	£65.00
LCR 22.5uF 440Vdc polyprop. Cap	LCR - 22.5U	<input type="checkbox"/>	£10.00	£8.00
Jensen 0.47uF 630V, aluminium foil	JEN - 0.47U 630V	<input type="checkbox"/>	£20.00	£17.00
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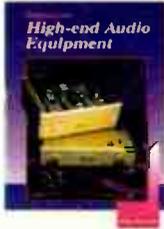


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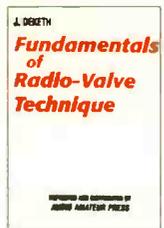
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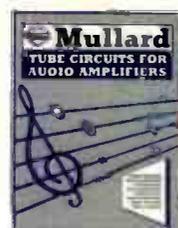
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Classic Thorens decks are now all achieving a degree of collector status, with prices of the earlier designs soaring thanks to interest in the Asia-Pacific region. Traditionally, many UK audiophiles have viewed them as worthy, but not quite deserving of their premium prices over in the Far East, so we thought it was time to reappraise the TD125. Stewart Wennen pits one against a state-of-the-art Origin Live turntable, and looks back at the company's redoubtable history...

It's such a pity that having reached the engineering heights of the TD125, Thorens introduced the TD126 mark 3 - which was in comparison a poorly built turntable, even though it was much more expensive. The TD125 is superb, providing it's used with a decent plinth system. The supplied one, offered by Thorens, is not to the standard set by the motor board and can be improved upon measurably. Still, in this test, the TD125 had to make do with the original. Indeed, no care was taken to fettle it properly - I literally connected it to AC mains electricity, installed the tonearm and switched on.

It went against a new Origin Live Aurora Gold using identical pickup arms and cartridges on both turntables. The tonearm was the Hadcock GH242 Integra, chosen because the top arm tube is easily removed from one turntable complete with cartridge and installed on the other. This dictates that both arm bases are in exactly the same attitude to the centre bearing - no mean feat - and as a result we are listening to the turntables and not the pickup arm and cartridge. The latter was my current reference - the Music Maker mark 2.

THE LISTENING

The first record on the platter was James Brown's 'Get Up Off Of That Thing', and imagine my surprise as this thirty year old turntable performed nearly as well as a turntable costing almost £2,000! This

is no small feat, as anyone who's read my thoughts on this bang-up-to-date UK designed and built machine will know...

Although the differences were relatively subtle, I noted that the TD125 had a slight bloom in the bass region, but exhibited a very smooth transition from base to mid and mid to treble. The TD125 image definition was superior to the Aurora Gold both in height and width. The width of the image on the TD125 was astoundingly good and its grip of the music seemed to be almost vice-like.

Next on the platter was UB40's classic 'Present Arms' LP. A strange choice to check turntables with but if you can get a copy and listen to it, the depth in the image on this album is staggering due to fact that it's a late, all-analogue recording when the recording gear was superb. The depth portrayal of both turntables was extremely good. Honours at this point went to the Aurora Gold, in that it seemed to have an extra few metres of stage depth in comparison to the TD125 - although with precision of placement within this image from left to right the TD125 beat the much more modern turntable!

This was confirmed by listening to Ry Cooder on his feted album 'Bop 'Till You Drop'. Percussion is the driving force of this album and was almost frightening in its precision on both turntables. Save for lower bass articulation, both machines seemed to run neck and neck. The Thorens was just a little warmer in the upper bass, but overall possessed marginally

lighter low frequencies.

I bought two box sets last week - the Mozart-Bernstein Symphonies No35 to 41 and the Tchaikovsky Symphonies No 4, 5 and 6 conducted by Herbert von Karajan. Both went on either turntable with superlative results. Once again, the OL deck seemed to hang the recorded acoustic back notably further, yet the Thorens provided a slightly more expansive left to right stereo image with obviously superior location. Once again, the Thorens appeared beautifully seamless, with a sweet, extended treble and warmish, but slightly lighter bass.

Thorens' TD125 is a forgotten turntable, but now that vinyl's back in fashion, I feel it could achieve the acclaim of its old brother, and indeed the classic Garrards too. Its engineering and build is no less than staggering. After having not being used for many years, my example was plugged into the mains cold and nearly outperformed a meticulously well set up, state-of-the-art modern design... Watch this space for a feature on Thorens TD125 plinths, setting up and tweaking very soon in *Hi-Fi World!*



Origin Live Aurora Gold; neck and neck with Thorens TD125...

THE THORENS STORY

The roots of Thorens were implanted in 1883, when Herman Thorens first registered the company. It was established at St Croix in Switzerland. The company's aim was to produce fine musical boxes and movements which were to be sold to the general public and other equipment manufacturers. In 1903 Thorens manufactured its first Edison type phonograph, and altered the product line to the manufacturing of horn gramophones for the new shellac records.

In 1913 Thorens started manufacture of cigarette lighters, which was continued until 1964, and also manufactured harmonicas until 1952. Its first contribution to the hi-fi industry as we know it was the development of the first direct drive (electrically driven) gramophone. By 1929 it had developed the first electric phono pickup that employed a magnet principle. This cartridge was called the Omnix and required a tracking force of 110 grams - apparently quite light for the time!

By 1940 Thorens was involved in the production of professional disc cutting lathes and pickup cartridges, and by 1957 had introduced the legendary TD124 hi-fi turntable. This was supplied without tonearm, but did include an armboard. It also had such novel features as a slipping clutch to decouple the top platter from the lower platter to enable records to start up with the stylus already in the groove, because pickup arm lifts at the time were almost agricultural in their design. It also had an electrically illuminated stroboscope at the front of the platter. This coupled with a variable speed enabled one to set the speed accurately.

By 1965 Thorens had introduced the famous TD150, which was a totally different application of the acquired knowledge of their Research and Development department. It

sported a three point suspended sub-chassis system. This enabled the motor to be on a different plane to the pickup arm and main bearing assembly. At the time this was a ground breaking principle, which many manufacturers have imitated ever since with differing degrees of success. Both of these turntable types were over-engineered, in that the bearings were over-sized as were the motors, although both have been considered to be bass-light by many people that have owned them in the past.

The TD125 was introduced to combat the problems that these turntables exhibited in their audio reproduction. Again, the TD125 was a three point suspended sub-chassis turntable with a synchronous motor and belt driven system. It shared some features with the TD124 such as the electrically illuminated stroboscope and the variable speed. Unlike both of its predecessors it had an electronic speed change system. Due to the fact that the TD125 had a synchronous motor, speed change was very simple. This was achieved by altering the frequency to the motor, thus altering the speed. This was a great advantage over both of its siblings as they used mechanical means to change speed. By the very nature of electronic speed control this enabled the TD125 series to be much quieter in operation than virtually any turntable available in 1968. Again the TD125 was massively over-engineered with a very large motor combined with a first class main bearing assembly so its longevity was never in doubt.

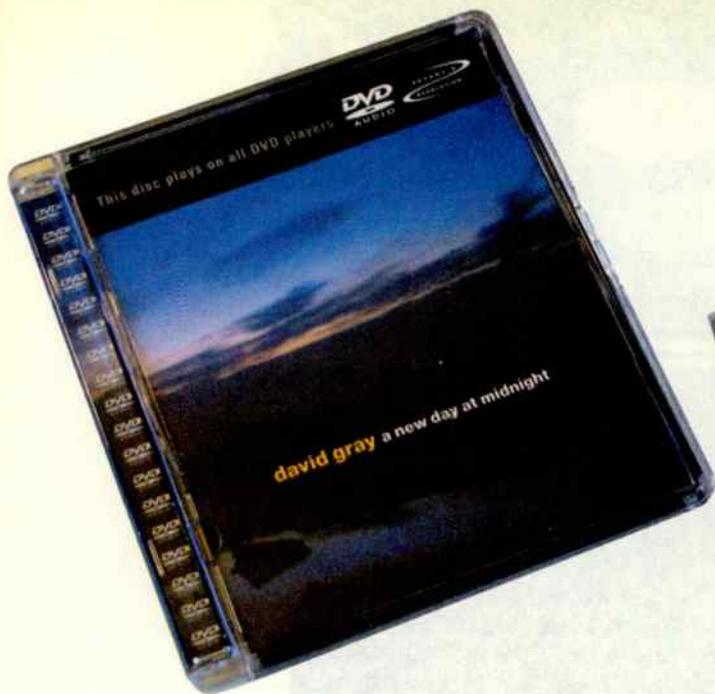
Electronically corrected motor control was extremely rare. Garrard opted for an eddy current brake on their 401 much the same as their

301. This had various problems due to the fact that this brake had two magnets in very close proximity to an alloy disc. If the disc was not at 90 degrees to the magnets, this would vary the speed of both of these turntables. Thorens obviated this by installing a WIEN bridge oscillator circuit that in effect controlled the speed of the TD125. This is an elegant method of changing speed due to the fact that there is no mechanical contact with the motor, save for the belt that drives the turntable sub-platter.

In 1972 Thorens introduced the TD125 mark 2 that came supplied with the TPf6 tonearm, which due to the passage of time and unfamiliarity with this product had all but disappeared. Refinements to the oscillator control circuitry were made and the platter bearings were all completely redesigned with solid tip shafts. This bearing is possibly the finest turntable main bearing ever made, although in continued use it will probably need recharging with lubricant. The TD124 continued in various versions until 1983. Some commentators have stated that the TD126 mark 3 was possibly the beginning of the demise of the very fine transcription motor that Thorens had produced.

As an aside, EMT produced a professional version of the TD125 that was called the EMT928. It had all of the features of the TD125 plus a uni-pivot tonearm. It also had a different control panel layout and a much larger stroboscope light. The 928 is a very rare beast and is consequently very expensive, due to the small number of 928s built. The 928 confirms that the design of the 125 is really extraordinary, so much that even professional turntable suppliers like EMT thought that it deserved their sacred logo...





DAVID GRAY
A NEW DAY AT MIDNIGHT
 (DVD-AUDIO: 24/192 STEREO
 24/96 MULTI-CHANNEL)

After a couple of months of relatively slim high resolution pickings, this month sees a fistful of releases from each of the three major labels featured here. From a UK perspective David Gray is the most interesting prospect from Warners - not least for its 192kHz stereo track. Those who read pro-audio magazines will have known that this project was being worked on in London for much of last year - was the wait worthwhile?

As a CD, 'A New Day At Midnight' was never going to fail to sell in serious numbers, following on from the hugely successful 'White Ladder'. That album seems unlikely to make the transition to multi-channel, as the home recorded nature which was partially responsible for its magic would most likely make the tracing and rejigging of its constituent ProTools parts a nightmare.

Of course its successor was made in a whole different audio league, and the benefit of its George Marino mastering was that the original 1/2" analogue stereo master could be transferred to PCM for DVD-Audio at maximum resolution. The result seems to endorse the views of those who believe that adding an analogue transfer can magically enrich the sound - the

isolated 24/96 centre speaker vocal on 'The Other Side' can't match the great phantom image on the stereo track.

The involving multi-channel mix was done by Strongroom surround main-man Mike Nielsen, who did the Feeder SACD, and the Snow Patrol disc also featured this month. Mike told me that Gray's manager was initially unconvinced by surround, but as is always the way, once he was sat in the middle of the studio and had the stereo-surround A-B treatment he agreed that it just sounded better. Enough said. As he also manages Damien Rice, don't be surprised if 'O' gets the treatment at some point.

NEKTAR
A JOURNEY TO THE CENTRE OF THE EYE
 (HYBRID SACD: STEREO AND MULTI-CHANNEL DSD)

I always feel like a gap in my musical education (rock faculty) has been exposed when I come across something old and worthy of attention that I have never heard of. Nektar are one of those bands - someone of my prog-rock tastes should really have been aware of, at least by name, but alas no. It took the advance buzz about the possibility of multi-channel SACDs forming part of Eclectic Discs' current reissue campaign to bring them to my attention.

Admirably the small UK set up

Eclectic have gone to great lengths to ensure that their Nektar remasters are of the highest quality, sourcing original tapes to be used on CD for the first time and creating significant added value on all titles, with the still-extant band heavily involved and comprehensive sleeve-notes throughout.

This 1971 debut forms the SACD part of the initial trio of releases. It is accompanied by CD's of 'A Tab In The Ocean' and 'Recycled', both of which for different reasons have the bonus of the whole album being available in two different mixes on one CD (the 1976 mix of the former is reputedly matrixed Quad). We are in firmly mellotron-centric concept album territory on the debut, with a production style not unlike similar albums of the period from Genesis or King Crimson, brilliantly recorded by Dieter Dierks.

The new transfers from the original masters, both stereo and multi-track, sound fantastic, and the surround mix, which was done by Eclectic head honcho Mark Powell and his business partner Paschal Byrne at the latter's Audio Archiving Company concern, is suitably discrete and adventurous, with organ and rhythm parts behind your head and disembodied voices in the centre of the room. If you're a fan of the genre this is a great album to take a punt on.



**SNOW PATROL
FINAL STRAW
(HYBRID SACD: STEREO AND
MULTI-CHANNEL DSD)**

I was extremely pleased when I was told at the beginning of this year that Mike Nielsen (here mis-credited as Mike Nelson) was working on a surround mix of this album at Strongroom Studios. It demonstrated Universal's intention to use the format to promote newer acts which have yet to go global, a trend which looks set to continue as I can exclusively reveal that the hugely successful Keane album is scheduled for the same treatment – hopefully to be released before the end of the year. Again, the fact that Final Straw is now on sale and regularly heading up the SACD top ten at www.play.com is encouraging – despite some last minute finessing of the mix which delayed it slightly. (It would seem that ProTools projects make the process of tracking down flown-in additions even more difficult than in the equivalent analogue case – you are entirely at the mercy of the organisational discipline of the original engineer). At least a timescale of months is an improvement over the years-long lead times of certain still-to-arrive legendary DVD-Audio projects!

For the uninitiated, Snow Patrol are firmly in the area of "the new Coldplay" wimp-rock acts which

were always bound to appear after the success of 'Parachutes'. Final Straw was their first major label album after a couple of indie efforts. Building on good word-of-mouth, the album really took off after the chart success of Run (you'd know it if you heard it – light up, light up, as if you had a choice...), and to a lesser extent the more recent Chocolate (this is the straw, final straw...). Final Straw doesn't quite have the "rest of the album's as good as the singles" factor that 'Parachutes' and 'Hopes and Fears' have, but for fans of indie guitar rock it is an SACD not to miss, with both its DSD incarnations bringing increased presence and excitement.

**SANTANA
SUPERNATURAL
(DVD-AUDIO: 24/96 STEREO
24/96 MULTI-CHANNEL)**

After the initial isolated release of Elvis Presley's recent compilation as a DVD-Audio it was heartening to see a raft of BMG titles join it in the states late last year. After a little bit of coaxing BMG UK Imports have brought these discs to the UK, although whether in sufficient numbers is open to question – they never seem to be in stock at www.play.com. I did see them on sale in the rather sad little high-resolution unit on the desk at the back of the Piccadilly Circus Tower Records

around the time they were first imported – I can offer no guarantee that they are still there.

The repertoire is not very rock – there are only the two recent Santana albums, and the Foo Fighters One by One among a very urban selection which includes Wyyclef Jean, Alicia Keys., Outkast and Usher.

As a lifelong Santana fan I felt a warm glow when his move to Arista resulted in the massive success of this album, even if I found it hard to love the 'multiple famous friends' approach as much the original band-based albums. This disc has the benefit of a pristine hi-res version of the stereo master which knocks the horribly compressed CD version into a cocked hat, and multiple videos – it's just a shame that the surround mix is not a stellar one.

It is to be hoped that the laboured Sony-BMG merger does not stymie the release of further DVD-Audio titles, or turn them towards SACD – the solid approach to making these discs decent multimedia efforts should be applauded. I would hazard a guess that all of the BMG titles will end up being converted into 24/48 Dual Discs as the Usher disc was for the market test – particularly as I have had unofficial word that the format has received ratification from the DVD Forum. Snap up the 24/96 versions now...!

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noel keywood

Listening to hi-fi for a living strikes most people as the perfect job. I have access to most of the hi-fi made on the planet, or so it seems from a box count made on any one day, and I can listen as long as I want. Manufacturers are impeccably helpful, providing as much data as I could ever wish for a really thorough understanding and, they hope, appreciation of what I am listening to. This must surely answer any questions over what's best and what to buy?

It sounds wonderful, I know, but simple situations like this have an unfortunate habit of being a little more complex underneath it all. After more years reviewing than I care to recall I still haven't found the ideal loudspeaker and this month's look at floorstanders and standmounters reminded me how difficult it is to be absolutely sure about 'rightness' and what's best, or more simply what is most enjoyable.

Measurement provides mountains of data, mostly invaluable. But after interpreting it, a lot of the mystery is stripped away. With it goes some of the wonder too, replaced by a knowledge that seems more like cynicism to others. It isn't easy to tell someone the loudspeaker they love so much sounds the way it does because, measurement shows, it doesn't work very well. This isn't how to win friends and influence people! Loudspeakers remain very imperfect. We still listen to colouration from just about every part of them which won't go away no matter how much development effort is put in. When one type is banished, another type suddenly becomes obvious.

It should be possible, you might think, to move air a bit better than the way we do it today, take a big step forward and put an end to a lot of the problems. A better drive unit is needed, less prone to colouration

and a myriad of other effects that degrade its performance. After all, the dynamic drive unit we use today was developed and patented in 1925.

The physical difficulty of turning an electrical signal into sound is as daunting as ever, the ways of doing it many and ingenious, and their drawbacks intractable it would seem from a reading of the history. In the last eighty years, a lot of people have

the dynamic drive unit we use today was developed and patented in 1925...

had a lot of ideas for a better drive unit. When radio was being developed at the start of the twentieth century there was no end of innovation and surprising as it seems now, the moving coil driver was just one of a stream of novel ideas. It wasn't pre-eminent as it is today. Thumbing through Gilbert Briggs book 'High Fidelity' (1956) I came across some fascinating early devices. There were modulated jets of compressed air, a piezo electric loudspeaker, a hot wire loudspeaker, a carbon arc loudspeaker and the fascinating lonophone! This modulated a radio frequency corona discharge, generating sound waves that dispersed through a horn.

Something similar was available from lonofane until recently I seem to recall, until someone pointed out that the ozone produced by corona discharge wasn't a great way to promote long term customer relationships! Apparently the idea arose in 1899 from investigation into the singing carbon arc of early London street lamps. Which just goes to show how old a lot of these ideas are...

The most ingenious way of producing sound though is a recent

idea, one that's so novel I was startled by it. Two high frequency sources - high power tweeters in effect - produce sound as a difference signal (beat) between them. If, say, one unit produces an inaudibly high 50kHz tone and the second a 51kHz tone, an audible 1kHz difference tone will be produced between them. What a fantastic idea, I thought initially. High frequency drive units are small, so this at least seemed to be way of producing low frequencies from something smaller than a barn door. I had visions of an entire orchestra being reproduced by just two tweeters mounted in the ceiling. But of course it isn't so simple.

Two tones don't produce a third, except under special circumstances. The air carrying them has to be driven into what is termed 'non linear behaviour' which means using extremely high sound pressure levels. I would guess nowadays there's not much chance of doing this happening without health concerns, since exposure to high level noise causes hearing damage. As fascinating as it is, one developer of this loudspeaker seems to have quietly dropped the idea, leaving us with the good old dynamic driver.

Perhaps some day we will get a better loudspeaker, but all efforts to dislodge the traditional cone drive unit in a box have failed to date, in spite of enormous effort and ingenuity. We have become accustomed to the sound of a dynamic driver in a box, even though it is coloured and contrived. The bouncy bass, the vivid sheen to cymbals, the rich, wooden thrum to cello that I still hear in today's loudspeakers makes them as varied and entertainingly different as ever, but difficult to choose between in the last resort, even for a reviewer. So, no, there still isn't a perfect loudspeaker. ●

david price



About a year ago, yours truly decided it would be a wheeze to put the new 5.1 channel digitally remixed SACD pressing of Pink Floyd's 'Dark Side of the Moon' against the original multichannel mix done in 4.0 analogue surround (i.e. 'Quadraphonic'). To be frank, I hadn't expected much - if anything - from the 'quad' mix, as the format had - to one who'd never before experienced the joys of this early surround system - always seemed something of a joke.

To one who came of age after the 'busted flush' that was quadraphonic, the format seemed a madcap anachronism, something the recording industry - in conjunction with the major consumer electronics brands of the day - dreamed up as a new way to sell music to people. Yours truly acquired his hi-fi 'knowledge' in the eighties, when there was move to minimalism after the excess of the seventies, a move to synergistically matched stereo systems that sounded greater than the sum of the parts. Quadraphonic seemed but an irrelevant conceit.

But could 5.1 SACD and DVD-Audio be a case of history repeating? Now, I'd always looked forward to these formats with heady anticipation, as the promise of superior sound seemed nothing short of gobsmacking to someone who'd had to watch in horrified silence as the world moved from analogue to 16bit, 44.1kHz PCM digital.

Yet I hadn't quite expected the formats to become synonymous with surround sound - and a wave of multichannel remixes, often in very dubious taste (and with commensurate artistic merit). There is, of course, no reason why both these hi

res formats shouldn't be about pure, perfect stereo sound (something they've got a far more valid claim to than CD) forever...

It was with no small measure of interest, then, that I encountered Marantz's SA-8400. If you've read Dominic Todd's review, then you'll

There is, of course, no reason why both these hi res formats shouldn't be about pure, perfect stereo sound

know that this isn't just a cracking £699 CD/SACD player, but a purpose-designed two channel one at that. Fascinating, isn't it? A move back - on the part of a major manufacturer like Marantz - to stereo. How so?

Trainspotters will remember the Marantz SA-1. Launched in 1999, it was the company's first SACD spinner, and stereo only, of course. Then came multichannel SACD, and suddenly every SACD player seemed to be 5.1, with 2.0 reserved for the CD layer. Was that it, I wondered to myself? The end of stereo SACD, crushed by the wheels of industry?

Three years ago, the writing seemed to be on the wall for two channel: "oh death, where is thy sting?". There was a rush to surround sound, and DVD players and AV receivers were where it was at. I got the feeling that I, as an unashamed stereophile, had been issued with the call, "come in, your time is up!"

How times change. According to Gfk-Market, the growth area that is 'home theatre in a box' (i.e. all-in-one DVD systems) has suffered massive value erosion in 2003-2004, with prices down 48%! As for DVD

players, a staggering 44.5% of all machines sold in Europe now cost under €75 (£50), and 89% cost under €200 (£125). Prices have hit rock bottom, and the market has reached maturity.

DVD's huge surge in popularity, and the resultant price crash, means only one thing - that many 'value added' manufacturers will be unable to compete, and some may move out altogether. Put simply, if you want to make money from selling DVD players, you'll have to flog squillions of boxes for next-to-no profit. The knock-on effect is that, non-mass market brands like Marantz are now actually

moving back to two channel. Indeed, that company's MD Terry O Connell confides, "Prices are going up here - it's still a very profitable business for us"...

To wit, with CD player sales down a staggering 33.6% down year-on-year (03-04; Gfk), and the pips being squeezed from the profit margins of DVD machines (including hitherto 'premium' DVD universal players), Marantz is actually moving 'back' to two channel, but with SACD this time. To wit, from next year, the company won't be making CD players at all, but two channel SACD spinners. For sure, multichannel will still be supported, but only in the context of its DVD universal machines, which are first and foremost DVD video players, and require this facility anyway...

It now seems possible that we could actually see specialist manufacturers moving back to two channel. With new stereo SACD spinners and a raft of tasty new turntables from the Marantz TT-15S1 and Roksan Radius to Musical Fidelity's M1, are we on the edge of a new golden age of stereo? ●

dominic todd



The advance of the portable jukebox continues unabated. More of the hardware side of things later, but let's look first at the software. Of course part of the attraction of the portable MP3 is the ability to download from websites. A trip to the Apple site, and you can see for yourself Apple's proud claim that iTunes has already delivered 70 million songs to users in its first year, and now has a catalogue of over 700,000 tracks.

As impressive as these figures sound, I can't help but feel that this is only the tip of the iceberg. At the time of writing the UK launch is imminent, and as worldwide coverage and exposure to the comparatively new technology increases I can only see these figures increasing dramatically. Yet, unsurprisingly, iTunes is no longer in the position of having a virtual monopoly on the market. Software and hardware giant Sony has recently launched a similar site that mirrors Apple's model in many respects. Downloaded songs are available at around 79p, and the catalogue already stands at over 300,000 tracks.

Yet the choice between Apple and Sony sites isn't as simple as it may first appear. Rather than adopting the popular MP3 format, Sony has opted for its own ATRAC compression system. Whilst this is a decent system that can offer compression rates of between 48-256kbps, it brings about serious compatibility issues. With the DVD world only just starting to get to grips with necessary universality caused by competing playback and recording formats, it now appears that the download industry will be beset by the same troubles. As I have mentioned, ATRAC is a respected compression system, yet it is still

used, by and large, only by Sony. This gives a real shot in the arm, again, to Sony's stalwart MiniDisc system, but will prove frustrating to owners of other MP3 portables, including the iPod, with which ATRAC is not compatible. Whether hardware manufacturers will respond with ATRAC compatible MP3 portables or Sony change their software policy

“ after a rather slow start, the time for portable MP3 has now well and truly come... ”

remains to be seen, but I suspect that, in this case, it will have to be Sony that gives...

Nonetheless, the Sony site must be of some concern to Apple, which is now also just beginning to face some real opposition on the hardware front too. It's interesting to note that Apple iPods are now becoming available across a far wider retail base. Indeed, they are now even available at hi-fi stores that have no other interest in the computer side of retailing beyond portable MP3 recorders. What this means is that the iPods will be stripped more and more of their Apple Store allure, and have to face up to comparison at the front line of hi-fi retailing. Of course, with a product as intrinsically fine as the iPod, this shouldn't be too much of a problem, yet there is some increasingly capable competition out there that Apple really needs to be aware of.

One such product that recently caught my eye is the I-River IHPI20. The name itself is indication enough of the recorder's prime target. Priced at around the same price as the 20 gig iPod, it's the latest product to try and out iPod the Apple. At first glance it looks promising too.

The titanium finish isn't quite as funky as the Apple, but it wins the features contest hands down. As well as matching the Apple's 20Gb hard disk it also offers a built in radio, with the ability to record from it via MP3 encoding. An optical input, output and line level sockets are all provided, and there's even a built in microphone: Note that a

microphone for the Apple costs an extra £39.

Being primarily a computer company, and therefore used to a competitive and fast moving market, I'd be surprised if Apple wasn't quick to respond. It has already responded in a sub section

of the market with the recently launched iPod mini. Although not exactly vast, the original iPod wasn't, and indeed isn't, the smallest player on the market. It may have memory on its side, but there were still portables with a decent size of memory and considerably smaller.

The main rival that springs to mind is the Philips HDD060. When launched six months ago it was claimed to be the smallest portable to offer 1.5Gb. At around £170 it has proved to be popular, with many users finding that they don't actually need the 15Gb plus offered by the iPod. It's therefore no surprise to find that the new mini iPod will offer "only" 4Gb at around £200, and a tiny case to match. At the other end of the market Apple can't have failed to notice that the Creative Labs Zen portable that offers 80 hours of video recording and was launched by Bill Gates no less!

After a rather slow start, the time for portable MP3 has now well and truly come. Just how MiniDisc will fare is difficult to tell, but the one sure thing is that portable music users have never apparently had it so good. Now, where did I put that Sony WMD6C? ●

Ijk setright



One of my reasons for having nothing to do with e-mail is that it is so confoundingly common. Just one, you understand, but enough to cause me some embarrassment when the time came to send in my previous column while I was in the USA. There was no way but to have someone e-mail it, and I see from the printed result that it suffered somewhat in the process. Readers deserve, I would like to think, an apology for the errors of keywork and comprehension apparent.

While in Dallas, I thought that I should dutifully explore the Symphony Center – the Morton H. Myerson Symphony Center, no less – that has been so strongly commended for its acoustics. It is the work of the celebrated architect I.M.Pei and the acoustician Russell Johnson, and my guides spoke in glowing terms of the miracles of modern technology applied to the guidance and control of musical sounds in that auditorium. Clearly influenced by the atria that have become so fashionable in big modern hotels and shopping malls, it is tall and slender – what you might call Late Singapore Perpendicular – with a complex and ponderous reflector array, adjustable for height and rake, above the platform. The evening's concert, as I was confidently assured by all and sundry, would prove how wonderful it all was.

As so often nowadays, I was in for a grave disappointment. The Dallas Symphony orchestra is not bad; neither is it small, mustering string sections 60 strong. That strength was not in question when 29 violinists simultaneously embarked on a pizzicato passage; I could see them doing it, but could not hear

what they were doing at all. I have many other criticisms of the acoustics to add, but that will do; I am sure that the faithful of Dallas will continue to believe the ballyhoo, if only because they are paying handsomely for it.

Then I read in an American

“ what matters is that you only need two channels to give you an impression of elevation as well as of azimuth

magazine a review of some surround-sound apparatus, praising it in fulsome terms for its approach to the live concert-hall experience! How ironic, when what we really need is good stereo kit to help us better listen to the music and/or the performance without the blot and fizz (not to mention the distractive audience and the rising costs) of the advanced architectural auditorium.

Sadly, the magazine in question is in the grip, if not of its advertisers, then of scientists. It really believes that sound of 20Hz or less cannot be heard. It strenuously campaigns, in the bigger-is-better fashion, for more channels of surround-sound than we have already, in particular assuming that what we most lack now (apart from a large and costly device for vibrating our chairs while we sit and listen) is a channel for overhead sound. Doubtless it would even believe that scientist who declared in a British publication (I have tactfully forgotten which one) that our outer ears serve no musical purpose. Fair science will concede that those wiggly, fleshy, distortable protuberances (would they be more

admissible if hard, rectangular, and black?) may usefully turn red or blue to show embarrassment or cold, may display jewellery or support spectacle-frames. For listening, it says, we might just as well have plain holes each side of our heads.

What rot! Those ear-flaps,

working in conjunction with the brain, work as direction-finders, and are astonishingly good at it. The brain alone can distinguish between sound events separated by as little as (or perhaps less than) seven millionths of a second: if you hear a bang that much earlier in ear L than in ear R, you know you are being shot at from the

left. What your ear-flaps tell you is whether your assailant is in a trench or up a tree.

Because of their weird shape, they filter the sound spectrum of what you hear. The proportion of certain critical frequencies (ranging from 2.56 to 10.24 KHz) reveals through the brain's comparator whether the sound be coming from overhead, from behind, or from in front. There is even a secondary check frequency for the front. Ear that, and the good old grey matter does its filtering and peak-measuring job on both frequencies before telling you to shoot straight where you are looking.

The technique has been proved to work in pitch darkness by one of America's foremost instructors in pistol combat. For us, what matters is that you only need two channels to give you an impression of elevation as well as of azimuth. If the requisite frequency spikes are present, you will know that the off-stage trumpeters in Verdi's Requiem are actually up in the boxes to left and right, and not merely out in the wings like the chap in Beethoven's Leonora No 3. ●

patrick cleasby



Do you have any thoughts on 'normalisation', the digital mastering process of upping the levels to within a cat's whisker of 0dB - in the name of a louder, more impressive sound? A two-part article in the pro audio magazine *Resolution*, written by Thomas Lund of mastering gear company TC Electronics, recently caught my attention. Its sentiment was heartily endorsed by (friend-of-Hi-Fi World) binaural recordist Mike Skeet in the letters page of the following issue. And finally, Neil Wilkes of Opus Productions, (also a frequent contributor to the most sane surround forum on the web, www.quadrasonicquad.com) recently posted a heartfelt plea on the same subject to the Tully DVD List, which is populated by DVD pros from all over the world.

The subject of loudness - or more accurately over-loudness - is an enormous issue in audio mastering circles. The original *Resolution* article is a learned technical explanation of what mastering engineers are trying to achieve in trying to maximise the digital signal when finalising a recording - and why sailing too close to the wind can spell disaster for musical quality, which is, after all, what any mastering engineer should be trying to preserve at all costs.

As soon as one starts to think about the effects that a signal constantly on the edge of clipping is having on your fatigue levels, and those of your replay gear, and (with the increasing prevalence of digital data compression) also the reduced efficacy of perceptual codecs on this type of material, one really starts to fear that in the future we may not be able to enjoy well-engineered, fine sounding digital audio at all...

Mr. Skeet gave an example of a replication house normalising his carefully prepared audio, which if anything, is an endorsement of why one should use a mastering engineer to finish audio and submit it for replication in a resilient mastering format - supply audio and your

“ We may be stuck with CD for some time yet, and any practice that makes our compressed digital versions even worse than they need to be should be resisted... ”

project is at the mercy of whatever the uneducated slot-loader thinks is the right thing to do with it. The key to the loudness debate is how educated the mastering engineer is, or how well he is able to resist the artist's insistence that it needs to "go up to eleven".

Mr. Wilkes effectively echoed the sentiment of the original article, with palpable passion. I am eternally grateful to him for pointing me to the militant web resource dedicated to this subject, www.loudnessrace.net, written by the highly lucid and entertaining Wes Lindstrom. I strongly recommend that you read this site and decide for yourselves if this is as invidious a trend as I believe it to be. Note too that some of the titles in Wes' victims list were mastered by big names. Really big, expensive names. Read the link to Billy Corgan's apologia for the distortion on the 'Zwan' album and weep.

My own Damascene moment was probably five years ago, the last

time I listened to the original nineteen eighties CD pressing of Roxy Music's 'Avalon'. At the time I had been getting concerned about rumours of all CDs rotting after ten years or so, and looking at the DAC levels I thought Avalon may have been fading away, but I found that when I

increased the volume using the old fashioned knob method, all the dynamics were still there. I was greatly relieved, but in the time since then I have enjoyed listening to CD much less. I had put this down to gaining an ear for hi-res, but now I am starting to have my doubts...

I wouldn't normally side with those who resist the convenience of digital, but in this instance it is the power of computing and the

increasing sophistication of digital dynamic range compression tools which has made this dicing with the (virtual) red light possible. It is ironic that the audible nastiness in which this phenomenon can result is going to be most apparent to those who either push their overcooked digital audio through data compression or simply buy it in data-compressed form. Bloody computers!

I would like to apologise if this missive has caused you stress and anxiety about something of which you had no prior appreciation - but ultimately I decided that this one is not a chimera, and it is worth attempting to join the fight. We may be stuck with CD for some time yet, and any practice that makes our compressed digital versions even worse than they need to be should be resisted. Worse still, what is the point of high resolution audio if the same increasing tendency to dangerous overage ends up making everything sound bad irrespective of resolution? ●

world classics

In this heavily revised section, you'll find the great and the good from audio's glorious past. Most are seminal designs which have earned their place in hi-fi history, but you'll also see some oddities which aren't classic as such, but are great used buys. The year of introduction is given, alongside the original UK launch price. Think we've overlooked something? Then write in and let us know!

DIGITAL

CAMBRIDGE AUDIO CD11986 [£1500]
Inspired Stan Curtis redesign of Philips CD104, complete with switchable digital filter. Lean but tight and musical performer.

CAMBRIDGE AUDIO CD4SE 1998 [£200]
A touch soft in the treble and tonally light, but outstanding in every other respect.

LINN KARIK III 1995 [£1775]
The final Karik was a gem. Superb transport gives a brilliantly tight, grippy dynamic sound, albeit tonally dry.

MARANTZ CD73 1983 [£700]
A riot of gold brushed aluminium and LEDs, this distinctive machine squeezed every last ounce from its 14x4 DAC -super musical



MARANTZ SA-1 2000 [£5,000]
The greatest argument for SACD. This sublime Ken Ishiwata design is utterly musically convincing with both CD and SACD, beating most audiophile CD spinners hands down.



MERIDIAN 207 1988 [£995]
Beautifully-built two-box with pre-amp stage. Very musical although not as refined as modern Bitstream gear. No digital output.

MUSICAL FIDELITY TRIVISTA 2002 [£4000]
When playing SACDs, the sweetest, most lucid and lyrical digital disc spinner we've heard. Old school stereo, pure DSD design. CD sound is up in the £1000 class, too! Future classic.

MERIDIAN MCD 1984 [£600]
The first British 'audiophile' machine was a sweeter, more detailed Philips CD100. 14x4 never sounded so good, until the MCD Pro arrived a year later.



NAIM CDS 1990 [£ N/A]
Classic Philips 16x4 chipset with serious attention to power supplies equals grin-inducing sonics.



SONY CDP-101 1982 [£800]
The first Japanese CD spinner was powerful and involving. Brilliant transport more than compensated for 16x2 DAC, and you even got remote control!

SONY CDP-R1/DAS-R1 1987 [£3,000]
Sony's first two boxer was right first time. Tonally lean, but probably the most detailed and architectural sounding machine of the eighties.



SONY CDP-701ES 1984 [£890]
Sony's first ever bespoke high end audiophile machine used a 16x2 DAC to provide a clinically incisive sound; supreme build quality allied to the pure unadulterated luxury of a paperbook-sized remote control.

YAMAHA CD-X1 1983 [£340]
Nicely built 16x2 machine with a very sharp and detailed sound; sometimes too much so. Excellent ergonomics, unlike almost every other rival of the time.

COMPACT DISC TRANSPORTS

TEAC VRDS-TI 1994 [£600]
Warm and expansive sound made this a mid price hit. Well built, with a slick mech.



ESOTERIC P0 1997 [£8,000]
The best CD drive bar none; TEAC's Tokyo boys pushed the boat out in style. Brilliantly incisive, ridiculously over engineered.

KENWOOD 9010 1986 [£600]
The first discrete Jap transport was beautifully done and responds well to re-clocking even today.

DACs

CAMBRIDGE AUDIO DACMAGIC 1995 [£99]
Good value upgrade for budget CD players with extensive facilities and detailed sonics.



DCS ELGAR 1997 [£8500]
Extremely open and natural performer, albeit extremely pricey - superb.



DPA LITTLE BIT 3 1996 [£299]
Rich, clean, rhythmic and punchy sound transforms budget CD players.



PINK TRIANGLE DACAPO 1993 [£ N/A]
Exquisite; the warmest and most lyrical 16bit digital audio we have ever heard. Clever plug-in digital filter modules really worked!



QED DIGIT 1991 [£90]
Budget bitstream performer with tweaks aplenty. Positron PSU upgrade makes it smooth, but now past it.

TURNTABLES

ARISTON RD11S 1972 [£94]
Modern evolution of Thorens' original belt drive paradigm, Scotland's original super-deck was warm and musical, albeit soft. Still capable of fine results today.

PIONEER PL12D 1973 [£36]

The beginning of the end for the British turntable industry. When vinyl was the leading source, this bought new standards of noise performance and stability to the class, plus a low friction S-shaped tonearm. Later PL12D was off the pace compared to rivals



DUAL CS505 1982 [£75]

Simple high quality engineering and a respectable low mass tonearm made for a brilliant budget buy. Polished, smooth and slightly bland sound.

GOLDRING LENCO 88/89 1963 [£15.65]

Simple, well engineered middleweight with soft, sweet sound and reasonable tonearms. Good spares and servicing support even today from specialists.

LINN AXIS 1987 [£253]

Simplified cut-price version of the Sondek complete with LYX arm. Elegant and decently performing mid-price package. Later version with Akito tonearm better.

LINN SONDEK LP12 1973 [£86]

For many, the Brit superdeck; constant mods meant that early ones sound warmer and more lyrical than modern versions. Beguilingly musical but now off the pace.



TECHNICS SP10 1973 [£400]

Seminal Japanese engineering. Sonics depend on plinths, but a well mounted SP10/II will give any modern a hard time, especially in respect of bass power and midband accuracy.

MARANTZ TT1000 1978 [£ N/A]

Beautiful seventies high end belt drive with sweet and clean sound. Rare in Europe, but big in Japan.



MICHELL GYRODEC 1981 [£599]

Thanks to its stunning visuals, this bold design wasn't accorded the respect it deserved until recently. Early examples sound cold and mechanical, but now right on the pace. Clean, solid and architectural sound.

REGA PLANAR 3 1978 [£79]

Brilliantly simple but clean and musical performer, complete with Acos-derived S-shape tonearm. 1983 saw the arrival of the RB300, which added detail at the expense of warmth. Superb budget buy.

GARRARD 301/401 1953 [£19]

Heavy metal - tremendously strong and articulate with only a veiled treble to let it down. In many respects, better than the seventies 'superdecks' that succeeded it.



ROKSAN XERXES 1984 [£550]

Supposedly the first to 'better' the LP12. Super tight and clean sound, with excellent transients. Less musical than the Sondek, but more neutral. Sagging plinth top-plates make them a dubious used buy.

THORENS TD124 1959 [£ N/A]

The template for virtually every 1970s 'superdeck', this iconic design was the only real competition for Garrard's 301. It was sweeter and more lyrical, yet lighter and less impactful in the bass.



TOWNSHEND ROCK 1979 [£ N/A]

The product of academic research by the Cranfield Institute, this novel machine has an extremely clean and fluid sound. Substantially modified through the years, and capable of superb results even today.

TRIO LO-7D 1978 [£600]

The best 'all-in-one' turntable package ever made, Trio/Kenwood threw their 'engineering best practice' book at this one with startling results. Clean, powerful and three-dimensional sound, ultimately limited by the tonearm.

TO NEARMS

ACOS LUSTRE GST-1 1975 [£46]

The archetypal S-shaped seventies arm; good, propulsive and involving sound in its day, but ragged and undynamic now.

AUDIO TECHNICA AT 1120 1978 [£75]

Fine finish can't compensate for this ultra low mass arm's limited sonics - a good starter arm if you've only got a few quid to spend.

ALPHASON HR100S 1981 [£150]

First class arm, practically up to present-day standards. Buy carefully, though, as there is no service available now. Totally under priced when new, exceptional.



SME 3009 1959 [£18]

Once state of the art, but long since bettered. Musical enough, but weak at frequency extremes and veiled in the midband. Legendary serviceability has made it a cult, used prices unjustifiably high.

GRACE G707 1974 [£58]

This early Japanese example of the tonearm art has a smooth, lyrical sound. Imported by Linn, fitted to early LP12s. Sonically way off the pace now, though.

REGA RB300 1983 [£88]

Inspired budget esoterica. Detailed, tight, neutral sound but tonally grey sounding in absolute terms. Responds well to tweaking, and its cheaper RB250 brother better still.



SME SERIES III 1979 [£113]

Clever variable mass design complete with Titanium Nitride tube tried to be all things to all men, and failed. Charming nonetheless, with a warm and inoffensive sound.

HADCOCK GH228 1976 [£46]

Evergreen unipivot with lovely sweet, fluid sound. Excellent service backup.



LINN ITTOK LVII 1978 [£253]

Arguably the first 'superarm'; Japanese design to Linn specs made for a muscular, rhythmic sound with real dynamics. Now off the pace, but the final LVIII version worth seeking out.

NAIMARO 1986 [£875]

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



TECHNICS EPA-501 1979 [£ N/A]

Popular partner for late seventies Technics motor units. Nice build and Titanium Nitride tube can't compensate for middling sound.

INTEGRATED AMPLIFIERS/COMBOS

DELTEC 1987 [£1900]

Fast, dry and with excellent transients, this first DPA integrated is the real deal for eighties obsessives. Ridiculously punchy 80W per channel from a tiny, half-size box. Radical, cool and more than a little strange.

ROGERS A75 1978 [£220]

The prototypical Audiolab 8000a – lots of sensible facilities, a goodly power output and nice sound in one box. The later A75II and A100 versions offered improved sonics and were seriously sweet and open to listen to.

EXPOSURE VII/VIII 1985 [£625]

Seminal mid-eighties Exposure pre-power, offering most of what rival Naim amps did with just that little bit extra smoothness and sweetness. Still, it's by no means 'sweet' by today's standards, being lean, punchy, musical. It's also possessed of that quintessentially eighties look – frumpy black steel boxes with rough silk screened logos!

**SUGDEN C51/P51** 1976 [£130]

Soft sounding early Sugden combo with a plethora of facilities and filters, complete with seventies-tastic DIN socketry. A sweet and endearing performer as you'd expect, but lacking in power and poor load driving ability, so partner carefully.

VTL MINIMAL/50W MONOBLOCK 1985 [£1,300]

Vacuum Tube Logic was one of the Europe's biggest tube names in the eighties, and it shows. Rugged, professional build and finish allied to a lively and punchy sound (albeit with limited power) make them an excellent used buy.

A&R A60 1977 [£115]

Sweet and musical feature-packed integrated; the Audiolab 8000A used its blueprint to great effect.

**CREEK CAS4040** 1983 [£150]

More musical than any budget amp before it; CAS4140 loses tone controls, gains grip.

AUDIOLAB 8000A 1985 [£495]

Smooth integrated with clean MM/MC phono stage and huge feature count. Extremely reliable, too. Post '93 versions a top used buy.

**MCINTOSH MA6800** 1995 [£3735]

Effortlessly sweet, strong and powerful with seminal styling to match.

SUGDEN A21 1969 [£ N/A]

Class A transistor integrated with an eminently likeable smoothness and musicality. Limited inputs via DIN sockets.

MISSION CYRUS 2 1984 [£299]

Classic eighties minimalism combines arresting styling with clean, open, lively sound. Further upgradeable with PSX power supply.

**MUSICAL FIDELITY A1** 1985 [£350]

Beguiling Class A integrated with exquisite styling. Questionable reliability.

**NAIM NAIT** 1984 [£350]

Superb rhythms and dynamics make it truly musical, but tonally monochromatic. Fine phono stage, very low power.

NAD 3020 1979 [£69]

Brilliantly smooth, sweet and punchy at the price and even has a better phono stage than you'd expect. The archetypal budget super-amp.

**MYST TMA3** 1983 [£300]

Madcap eighties minimalism, but a strong and tight performer all the same.

ROGERS CADET III 1965 [£34]

Sweet sounding valve integrated, uses ECLB6 output valves, even has a half useable phono stage, sweet, warm a good introduction to valves

**ROTEL RA-820BX** 1983 [£139]

Lively and clean budget integrated that arguably started the move to minimalism.

PREAMPLIFIERS**AUDIOLAB 8000C** 1991 [£499]

Tonally grey but fine phono input and great facilities make it an excellent general purpose tool.

AUDIO RESEARCH SP-81982 [£1,400]

Beautifully designed and built high end tube preamplifier with deliciously sweet and smooth sound. Not the last word in incision or grip, but that didn't matter to those who aspired to it.

CONRAD JOHNSON**MOTIV MC-8** 1986 [£2,500]

Minimalist FET-based preamplifier from the Yank valve specialists is brilliantly neutral and smooth with a spry, light balance in the mould of Sugden high end stuff. Something of a curio, but worthwhile nonetheless.

CROFT MICRO 1986 [£150]

Budget valve pre-amp with exceptionally transparent performance.

LEAK POINT ONE STEREO 1958 [£ N/A]

Good for their time, but way off the pace these days. Use of EF86 pentode valve for high gain rules out ultra performance. Not the highest-fi!

LINN LK-1 1986 [£499]

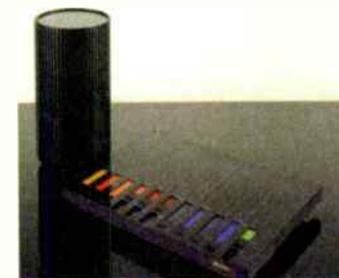
A brave attempt by the Glasgow boys to bring remote controlled user-friendliness to hair-shirt audiophile hi-fi. Didn't quite work, but not half bad for under £100.

NAIM NAC32.5 1978 [£ N/A]

The Salisbury company came of age with this, their classic high end pre. Brilliantly fast and incisive sound that's a joy with vinyl! but a tad forward for digital.

LECSON AC-1 1973 [£ N/A]

Amazing styling courtesy of Allan Boothroyd can't disguise its rather cloudy sound, but a design classic nonetheless.

**QUAD 22** 1958 [£25]

The partner to the much vaunted Quad II monoblocs – cloudy and vague sound means it's for anacrophiles only.

QUAD 33 1968 [£43]

Better than the 22, but Quad's first tranny pre isn't outstanding. Responds well to tweaking/ rebuilding though...

POWER AMPLIFIERS**LEAK STEREO 20** 1958 [£31]

Excellent workaday classic valve amplifier with decent power and drive. Surprisingly modern sounding if rebuilt sympathetically. Irrepressibly musical and fluid.

**LECSON AP1** 1973 [£ N/A]

Madcap cylindrical styling alluded to its 'tower of power' pretensions, but it wasn't. Poor build, but decently clean sounding when working.

MARANTZ MODEL 9 1997 [£8000]

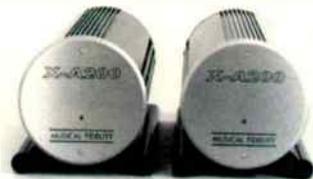
Authentic reproduction monoblocs still more than cut the sonic mustard. Highly expensive and highly sought after.

MICHELL ALECTO 1997 [£1989]
Crisp, clean and beautifully controlled with gorgeous styling. Partnered with the £1650 Orca this sounds delicious!

LEAK POINT ONE, TL10, TL12.1 1949 [£28]
Early classics that are getting expensive. Overhauling is de rigueur before use, using original parts if possible. Surprisingly crisp and musical sound, that's far more modern than Quad IIs. Deeply impressive when in fine fettle.



MUSICAL FIDELITY XA200 1996 [£1000PR]
200W of sweet smooth transistor stomp in a grooved tube! Under-rated oddity.



RADFORD STA25 RENAISSANCE 1986 [£977]

At the time, very possibly the least cool amplifier on the planet – and we're not talking heat dissipation here. This reworking of Radford's original late sixties design was possessed of a wonderfully rich, old school valve sound with enough power (25W) and lots of subtlety.



QUAD II 1952 [£22]
The all-time classic valve amplifier, with a deliciously fluid and lyrical voice. In other respects though, it sounds hopelessly dated. Low power and hard to partner properly.



QUAD 405 1978 [£115]
The first of the current dumpers is a capable design with smooth, effortless power and a decently musical sound. 606 and 707 continue the theme with greater detail and incision.

QUAD 303 1968 [£55]
Bullet proof build, but woolly sound. Off the pace, but endearing nonetheless. Some pipe smoking slipper wearers swear by them!

KRELL KMA100 II [1987] £5,750
Ludicrous monoblock version of the giant KSA-100 is one of the seminal eighties transistor power amplifiers. Massive wallop allied to a very clean and open Class A sound makes this one of the best amplifiers of its type, ever.

PIONEER M-73 1988 [£1,200]
Monster stomp from this seminal Japanese power amplifier, complete with switchable Class A and Class B operation. Clean, open and assured sounding, albeit a tad behind the pace on high speed dance music. Rosewood side cheeks and black brushed aluminium completes the eighties-tastic experience.



PHONO STAGES

CREEK OBH-8 SE 1996 [£180]
Punchy, rhythmic character with oodles of detail makes this a great budget audiophile classic. Partner with a Goldring G1042 for an unbeatable budget combination.



LINN LINNK 1984 [£149]
Naim-designed MC phono stage built to partner the original Naim NAIT - yes, really! Fine sound, although off the pace these days.

MICHELL ISO 1988 [£ N/A]
This Tom Evans-designed black box started the trend for high performance offboard phono stages. Charismatic, musical and punchy - if lacking in finesse.

TUNERS

MARANTZ ST-8 1978 [£353]
Marantz's finest radio moment. Warm, organic sound plus an oscilloscope for checking the signal strength and multipath.



CREEK CAS3140 1985 [£199]
Excellent detail, separation and dynamics - brilliantly musical at the price. T40 continued the theme...

NAD 4040 1979 [£79]
Tremendously smooth and natural sound allied to low prices and good availability make this budget analogue esoterica. Needs a good antenna to work properly, however.

NAIM NAT03 1993 [£595]
The warm, atmospheric sound is further proof of Naim's proficiency with tuners.

PIONEER TX-9500 1976 [£295]
Another of the serious classic solid-staters. Boasts the usual high end Jap package of fine sound, brilliant sensitivity and superb build.

LEAK TROUGHLINE 1956 [£25]
Series I an interesting ornament but limited to 88-100MHz only. II and III are arguably the best-sounding tuners ever. Adaptation for stereo easy via phono multiplex socket. Fed by a modern outboard decoder they're deliciously lucid with true dimensionality.



YAMAHA CT7000 1977 [£444]
Reputedly the best of the classic Jap analogues, this combines sleek ergonomics, high sensitivity and an explicit, detailed sound.

QUAD FM4 1983 [£240]
Supreme ergonomics and styling allied to a pleasingly lyrical sound with plenty of sweetness and detail made this one of the best tuners around upon its launch.



REVOX B760 1975 [£520]
More of a semi-pro machine than a domestic bit of kit, the Revox offers superlative measured performance although the sound isn't quite as staggering as the numbers. Fine nonetheless, and surely the most durable tuner here?

NAD 4140 1995 [£199]
Brilliant affordable digital tuner has a smooth, detailed musical sound plus sensible real-world facilities.

ROGERS T75 1977 [£125]
Superb mid-price British audiophile design, complete with understated black fascia. Fine sound in the true Rogers mould – smooth and sweet with fine dimensionality.

SANSUITU-9900 1976 [£300]
A flagship Japanese tuner designed to steal sales from the likes of Accuphase and Revox, it boasts superlative RF performance and an extremely smooth and lucid sound, along with very fine build and finish.

SONY ST-5950 1977 [£222]
One of the first Dolby FM-equipped tuners, a format that came to nought. Still, it was Sony's most expensive tuner to date, and boasted a very good sound quality allied to brilliant ergonomics.



TECHNICS ST-8080 1976 [£180]
National Panasonic's specialist hi-fi brand was a big hitter back then, and this is no exception. Superb FM stage makes for a very clean and smooth listen with lots of detail and depth.

ANALOGUE RECORDERS**YAMAHA TC-800GL 1977 [£179]**

Early classic with ski-slope styling courtesy of Mario Bellini. Middling sonics by modern standards, but cool nonetheless!

**AIWA XD-009 1989 [£600]**

Aiwa's Nak beater didn't, but it wasn't half bad nonetheless. Massive spec even included a 16x4 DAC!

NAKAMICHI CR-7E 1987 [£800]

The very best sounding Nakamichi ever - but lacks the visual drama of a Dragon.

**PIONEER CTF-950 1978 [£400]**

Not up to modern standards sonically, but a great symbol of the cassette deck art nonetheless.

**REVOX A77 1968 [£145]**

The first domestic open reel that the pros used at home. Superbly made, but sonically off the pace these days. B77 better, but couldn't match the Japanese.

**SONY WM-D6C 1985 [£290]**

Single capstan transport on a par with a Swiss watch, single rec/replay head better than most Naks. Result: sublime.

**DIGITAL RECORDERS****SONY MDS-JE55ES 2000 [£900]**

The best sounding MD deck ever, thanks to awesome build and heroic ATRAC-DSP Type R coding.

**PIONEER PDR-555RW 1999 [£480]**

For a moment, this was the CD recorder to have. Clean and detailed.

MARANTZ DR-17 1999 [£1100]

Probably the best sounding CD recorder made; built like a brick outhouse with a true audiophile sound and HDCD compatibility.

**KENWOOD DM-9090 1997 [£500]**

Serious and sophisticated sound thanks to well implemented ATRAC 4.S; surprisingly musical MD recorder.

SONY TCD-8 DATMAN 1996 [£599]

Super clean sound makes this an amazing portable, but fragile.

LOUDSPEAKERS**ACOUSTIC RESEARCH****AR18S 1978 [£125]**

Yank designed, British built loudspeaker became a budget staple for many rock fans, thanks to the great speed from the paper drivers, although finesse was most definitely not their forte...

BBC LS3/5A 1972 [£88]

Extremely low colouration design is amazing in some respects - articulation, stage depth, clarity - and useless in others (both frequency extremes). Came in wide variety of guises from various manufacturers building it under licence. Partner with Rogers AB1 subwoofers for an extra two octaves of bass!

**LOWTHER PM6A 1957 [£18****EACH]**

This seminal full-range driver is still manufactured. High sensitivity, as fitted to many classic horn designs.

TANNOY WESTMINSTER**1985 [£4500]**

Folded horn monsters which certainly sound good if you have the space. Not the last word in tautness but can drive large rooms and image like few others.

**JR 149 1977 [£120]**

Infamous cylindrical speaker that was ignored for decades but now back in fashion! Based on classic KEF T27 / B110 combo as seen in the BBC LS3/5a. Doesn't play loud, needs a powerful transistor amplifier, but rewards with fine clarity in imaging.

**SPENDOR BCI 1976 [£240]**

Celestion HF1300 tweeter meets bespoke Spendor Bextrene mid-bass unit - and the result is a beautifully warm yet well focussed sound. A little bass bloom necessitates careful low-stand mounting, but these prove that the seventies did have some fine designs after all!

QUAD ESL57 1956 [£45 EACH]

Wonderfully open and neutral sound puts box loudspeakers to shame. Properly serviced they give superb midband performance, although frequency extremes less impressive. Ideally, use in stacked pairs or with subwoofers and supertweeters.

**KEF RI05 1977 [£785]**

Three way Bextrene-based floorstander (complete with castors!) gave a truly wide-band listen and massive (500W) power handling. A very neutral, spacious and polite sounding design, but rhythmically well off the pace. The quintessential nineteen seventies loudspeaker.

IMFTLS80 1976 [£550]

Warm and powerful nineteen seventies behemoth with transmission loading and a mixture of KEF and Celestion drive units. Impressively physical wideband sound but rhythms aren't its forte.

"HiFi Exchange- Mail us your requirements Now"

H I - F I

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CINEMA

MULTIROOM
INSTALL

BUY / SELL

Quarterly Sale items

	Our Price	Original Retail Price
ClaraVox Magnifica (Final Offer)	£2,995.00	£14,500.00
McCormack Line Drive	£395.00	£995.00
Audio Refinement Pre 5	£195.00	£895.00
Quad 33/ 303	£195.00	£430.00
Rogers LS55	£195.00	£430.00

New this month

POWER AMPLIFIERS		
Musical Fidelity F15	£995.00	£2,000.00
Cello Duet 350	£4,995.00	£10,000.00

PRE AMPLIFIERS		
Audio Research LS9	£1,200.00	£2,000.00
Musical Fidelity F22	£395.00	£
Cello Palette Pre	£7,995.00	£

LOUDSPEAKERS		
JM Lab 926	£995.00	£2,200.00

CD PLAYERS & DACS/DVD PLAYERS		
Theta Pro Prime 2	£695.00	£1,900.00

TURNABLES, ANALOGUE, VARIOUS		
PS Audio Power Plant 300 + Ultimate Outlet	£1,300.00	£1,900.00
Nottingham Analogue Hyperspace	£995.00	£2,000.00

AV COMPONENTS		
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		
In Focus 5700	ASK	£3,000.00
In Focus 7200	SPECIAL	£6,000.00
SIM 2 Domino 20	ASK	£3,750.00

Power amplifiers

Krell Showcase 5	£3,995.00	£4,995.00
Tesseract TAM 60 Monoblocks	£2,750.00	£7,000.00
Muse Model 300 Monoblocks	£2,495.00	£4,500.00
Plinius SA 250 mk IV	£2,995.00	£6,350.00
Unison Research SMART 845 Monoblocks	£Offers	£
ART VT60	£995.00	£2,395.00
Ortel SA100 evo	£895.00	£1,200.00
Krell FPB 250m Monoblocks	£4,995.00	£10,000.00
Gamut D200 mk II "Hi Fi Choice Product of the Year"	£On Dem	£3,990.00
Melos 402 Gold Triode Plus Monoblocks 400wpc	£3,990.00	£9,000.00
Krell FPB 600	£5,995.00	£12,000.00
Bryston 4BSST	£1,895.00	£2,350.00
Conrad Johnson Premier 140 SA	£5,250.00	£7,000.00
Krell KSA 80B	£1,395.00	£3,600.00
Mark Levinson 383 Integrated	£4,950.00	£6,000.00
Naim Nait 3	£375.00	£698.00
Cary 805 C Monoblocks "new"	£4,500.00	£8,500.00
Bel Canto Evo 4	£2,895.00	£3,895.00
Cary SLA 70 mk II Silver	£995.00	£2,250.00
Conrad Johnson MF2500	£2,795.00	£4,000.00
YBA Passion Monoblocks	£4,995.00	£9,500.00
Audio Flight 100	£On Dem	£6,500.00
Audio Flight One Integrated	£On Dem	£4,500.00
Linn Klimax 500 Solo 41	£3,995.00 each	£6,000.00
Musical Fidelity NuVista 300	£2,695.00	£1,300.00
Boulder 500 AE	£2,495.00	£5,500.00
ES Lab DX-54	£1,395.00	£2,000.00
Roksan Caspian Integrated	£On Dem	£895.00
Roksan Caspian Power	£On Dem	£645.00
Krell FPB 700dx	£11,995.00	£15,000.00
ES Lab DX-58	£On Dem	£2,995.00
Plinius 8200P	£On Dem	£3,750.00
Plinius SA 102	ASK	£3,750.00
Bryston 4 BSST	£On Dem	£2,350.00
Jadis Defy 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	£On Dem	£16,500.00
Primare 30.1 mk II Integrated	£1,350.00	£1,500.00
YBA Passion Stereo	£3,995.00	£5,995.00
Plinius 250 mk IV	ASK	£6,350.00

AV components

AV COMPONENTS		
Parasound AS1 - 5 Channel	ASK	£3,500.00
Lexicon MC1	£1,995.00	£5,500.00
Lexicon MC8/ MC8B	ASK	£5,750.00
Lexicon RT10 DVD Player	ASK	£2,300.00
SIM 2 HT 300	ASK	£7,500.00
Primare P30 Processor	£1,295.00	£9,000.00
Linn Klassik DVD	£On Dem	£2,000.00
Lexicon MC12 / MC12B	ASK	£810.00/ £890.00
Parasound C2	ASK	£3,500.00

PLASMAS/LCD/PROJECTORS		
From NEC/ Panasonic/Pioneer/Sharp from	£4,000.00	POA
Electrograph Delphi/Selec/Sony/Sanyo	-	POA
Panasonic TH-42 PWD6 "new"	£4,400.00	

Pre amplifiers

Tesseract Tala Pre	£495.00	£1,195.00
Audio Research LS25 mk II	£3,995.00	£5,995.00
Unison Research Mystery One Pre	£1,599.00	£
Audio Research L57	£695.00	£1,750.00
Mark Levinson 380.5	£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	£1,997.00
Cary SLP98L Remote Pre x-dem	£1,295.00	£2,794.00
Conrad Johnson PV14L	£1,650.00	£2,250.00
Audio Flight Pre	£On Dem	£4,500.00
Musical Fidelity NuVista	£995.00	£1,700.00
YBA 2a Line	£1,295.00	£1,995.00

Tom Evans The Vibe Pre	ASK	£2,700.00
Chord DSC 1600E (dac/pre)	£3,250.00	£6,500.00
Boulder 1012 (pre amp/ 24.96 dac/ Phono)	£On Dem	£13,000.00
YBA Passion Pre (inc Phono)	£1,795.00	£5,995.00
Boulder 2010 Pre	£POA	£30,000.00
Plinius 161 "new"	£On Dem	£3,200.00
C.A.T. ultimate reference Pre Amp Inc/Phono "new"	ASK	£7,350.00

Quality speakers

JM Lab Nova Utopia	ASK	£21,500.00
JM Lab Diva Utopia BE Signature Finish	ASK	£7,600.00
JM Lab Micro BE Utopia 4 Stand	ASK	£4,400.00
JM Lab Alto Utopia BE	ASK	£9,999.00
Wilson Benesch Act 2 (1 upgrade)	£4,995.00	£9,000.00
REL Stentor III	£1,795.00	£2,500.00
ART Audio Studio	£695.00	£900.00
Sonus Faber Electa Amator II (no stds)	£1,695.00	£
Revel Studio	Coming Soon	£
Revel Salon	Coming Soon	£
Linn Kielidhs (+ Active Cards)	£395.00	£1,000.00
Talon Chorus X mk II (Upgrade)	£7,495.00	£14,000.00
Wilson ACT 2 (Upgrade)	£4,995.00	£9,000.00
JM Lab Sib & Cub (S.1 spk sys)	£695.00	£859.00
JM Lab Micro Utopia BE	ASK	£4,400.00
JM Lab Mezzo Utopia	£3,000.00	£7,899.00
Audio Physic Avante	£1,995.00	£4,800.00
Wilson Audio System 5.1	£6,995.00	£19,000.00
Avante Garde Trio	£9,995.00	£17,000.00
JM Lab Nova Utopia	ASK	£21,500.00
Revel Ultima Studio	£7,495.00	£13,000.00
ATC SCM 10 Passive Black	£495.00	£1,100.00
Wilson Vtt mk I	£3,750.00	£9,000.00
JM Lab Utopia	£9,995.00	£18,000.00
Reference 3A	£1,750.00	£2,250.00
Audio Physic Spark	£1,150.00	£1,795.00
Talon Kite Centre & Bracket	£795.00	£1,750.00
Aerial Acoustic SW12 Sub Woofer, Maple/remote	£2,995.00	£5,200.00
Mirage M3 si	£1,595.00	£4,100.00
Rel Q 200 E	£On Dem	£650.00
Rel Q 150 E	£On Dem	£500.00
Audio Physic Luna Sub (wood)	£On Dem	£1,799.00
Audio Physic Yara	£On Dem	£995.00
Vienna Acoustics Mahler	ASK	£6,000.00
Vienna Acoustics Mozart	ASK	£1,700.00
Vienna Acoustics S.1	ASK	£3,500.00
Cabasie io 5.1	ASK	£2,170.00
Blue Room Minipod (White)	£225.00	£298.99
Blue Room Minipod + Sub (Blue)	£625.00	£749.00
Blue Room Minipod Sub	£415.00	£468.99
Genelec 205 Active Monitors	£On Dem	£750.00
Audio Physic Virgo III "new"	ASK	£4,000.00
Audio Physic Tempo III "new"	£On Dem	£2,000.00

CD players & DACS

Mark Levinson 390S	£4,500.00	£6,500.00
Acuphase DP67	£3,795.00	£4,400.00
Audio Flight CD 1	ASK	£4,500.00
Ortel 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	£
Gamut CDIR mk II	ASK	£2,950.00
Mark Levinson 31 Transport	£4,000.00	£9,900.00
Audio Synthesis DAX	£1,395.00	£2,200.00
Acoustic Arts Drive I	£1,995.00	£2,890.00
EAD D5P9000 Pro Series III	£3,000.00	£6,000.00
Micromega Classic Solo	£995.00	£2,500.00
Wadia No 27 Dac	£3,750.00	£9,000.00
Mark Levinson 31.5 Transport	£3,995.00	£9,600.00
Chord 5PM 1600E Dac/ Pre	£2,750.00	£6,500.00
Theta Pro Geny	£1,295.00	£1,295.00
Acoustic Arts Drive I/Dac I mk II	£On Dem	£6,500.00
Linn Sonson CD12	£2,995.00	£12,000.00
Linn UNIDISK 1.1	£On Dem	£6,500.00
Linn CD12	£On Dem	£12,000.00
Linn Numerik	£595.00	£1,500.00
Roksan Caspian CD	£On Dem	£995.00
Trichord PD-5 503	£295.00	£500.00
YBA CD1 Delta (Twin psu)	£3,995.00	£5,500.00
YBA CD 3 Delta	£On Dem	£2,200.00
Audiomeca Damnation CD Transport	£2,500.00	£1,600.00
Primare V20 DV/CD	£1,000.00	£1,000.00
Audio Aero 32/192 Capotole CD (Ver. 4)	£On Dem	£4,500.00
Primare V25 CD/DVD	£On Dem	£1,000.00
Boulder 2020 dac	£POA	£24,000.00
Theta Data II Transport AT + link	£1,995.00	£4,000.00
YBA CD Integre "new"	£On Dem	£1,195.00

Turntables & analogue

Nottingham Analogue "The Analogue" 12" arm & deck	£4,495.00	£8,000.00
Oxford Crystal Reference/ Air Tangent	£3,995.00	£
Fanfare FT1 Tuner	£595.00	£1,500.00
Tara Labs 10m Bal The 2 Interconnect	£2,000.00	£5,000.00
Tara Labs FG5 (Mono) pair	£500.00	£1,000.00
Tara Labs The 2 Speaker Cable 4ft	£1,300.00	£3,000.00
Roksan Xerxes 10/D51.5/Artemiz/ jubilee	£4,500.00	£4,500.00
Ortofon Jubilee	ASK	£1,500.00
Roksan Caspian Phono se	£On Dem	£950.00
SME 20/2A	£On Dem	£5,273.53
Roksan TMS2/ Artemiz	£On Dem	£8,500.00
Michell Orbe/ VC/ RB300	ASK	£2,350.00
Project RPM 6 "new"	£On Dem	£500.00
Project RPM9 arm	£On Dem	£1,000.00
PHIT mk IV/ Rokport 6000/ Flywheel/ VPI Stand/ Clearaudio Accurate/ Pump etc "new"	£8,500.00	£16,000.00
Roksan Radius 5 (Acrylic)/ Nima arm "new"	£On Dem	£850.00
Loricraft record cleaning machine	£On Dem	£1,100.00
Earmax Pro	£On Dem	£425.00
SME 30/2 A "new"	£10,495.00	£12,289.00
Moth Record Cleaning m/c	£395.00	£
Project RPM4/ Ortofon 510 "new"	£245.00	£325.00
Ortofon Rohmann	£On Dem	£1,050.00
Ortofon Contrapunkt a/b "new"	£On Dem	£500.00/ £750.00
Michell Gyro SE/ RB300 "new"	ASK	£1,100.00
Audio Synthesis Phono Eq mm/mc	£495.00	£
SME Series V Arm "new"	£1,350.00	£1,650.00
Pink Triangle PT Ext psu	£495.00	£
Plinius 14 Phono "new"	£On Dem	£2,750.00
Nackamichi D3	£195.00	£400.00
Tom Evans - The Groove "new"	ASK	£1,795.00
Clear Audio Reference Mc phono stage X-demo	£1,695.00	£2,065.00
Clear Audio Symphono phono stage X-demo MM/MC	£640.00	£740.00

* Reduced this month

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MAGNEPLANAR SMGA198X [£800]
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MISSION 770 1980 [£375]
Back in its day, it was an innovative product and one of the first of the polypropylene designs. Warm, smooth, clean and powerful sound.



MISSION 752 1995 [£495]
Cracking Henry Azima-designed floor-standers combined HDA drive units and metal dome tweeters with surprisingly warm results. Benign load characteristics makes them great for valves.

HEYBROOK HB1 1982 [£130]
Peter Comeau-designed standmounters with an amazingly lyrical yet decently refined sound. Good enough to partner with very high end ancillaries, yet great with budget kit too. A classic.

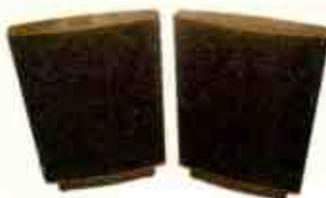
CELESTION SL6 1984 [£350]
Smallish two way design complete with aluminium dome tweeter and plastic mid-bass unit set the blueprint for nineteen eighties loudspeakers. Very open and clean sounding, albeit course at high frequencies and limp in the bass. Speakers would never be the same again...



LEAK SANDWICH 1961 [£39 EACH]
Warm sounding infinite baffle that, with a reasonably powerful amplifier can sound quite satisfying.



QUAD ESL63 1980 [£1200]
An update of the ESL57, with stiffer cabinets. Until the 989, the best of the Quad electrostatics



YAMAHA NS1000 1977 [£532]
High tech Beryllium midband and tweeter domes and brutish 12" woofers in massive sealed mirror image cabs equals stunning transients, speed and wallop allied to superb transparency and ultra low distortion. Partner carefully!



MISSION X-SPACE 1999 [£499]
The first mass production sub and sat system using NXT panels is a sure-fire future classic - not flawless, but a tantalisingly unboxy sound nevertheless!



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World standards

These are the best products we've heard that are currently on sale in the UK, complete with the date they were originally launched and their current retail prices. Watch out for regular updates...!

TURNTABLES

AN TT II/ARM ONE/IQ1 1998 £725
Redesigned Systemdek IIX now off the pace, but the arm and cartridge are both star performers.

LINN LP12/ LINGO 1973 £2100
The quintessential belt drive superdeck offers a beguilingly musical midband at the expense of lumpy bass and nebulous imaging. Latest Lingo brings a new lease of life, with even more punch and polish.

MICHELL TECNODEC 2003 £575
Superb introduction to Michell turntables on a budget. Top quality build and elegant design make it the class of the mid-price field right now.

MICHELL GYRODEC SE 2002 £870
Its beauty is more than skin deep - superbly build and finish allied to clever design equals class leading performance. Latest DC motor with 'Never Connected' PSU make it all the more unassailable.

MICHELL ORBE SE 2002 £1916
Cost-no-object evolution of the Gyro adds massy acrylic platter and two-stage isolation. Fantastically capable all rounder with commanding, powerful, detailed sound that gets the best from almost any arm and cartridge



PRO-JECT DEBUT II PHONO SB 2002 £170
Fuss-free all in one starter turntable, complete with built in phono stage. Not a star performer, but a fine midi system upgrade all the same.

REGA P3 2000 £298
Great entry level audiophile deck with fine bundled tonearm. Tweakable, and responds well to careful siting on a Base platform.

REGA P25 2001 £619
Until the TecnoDec, the best mid-price turntable package. Fine build and elegant styling. Clean, open sound but limited at frequency extremes in absolute terms.

SME MODEL 10A 1995 £3333
Exquisitely engineered deck and arm combo, but dry and clinical sounding compared to rivals. Accomplished performer with classical music, nonetheless.

MICHELL TECNOARM A2003 £399
John Michell's brilliant reworking of the Rega RB250 theme, using blasting and drilling techniques usually seen in motorsport! The result is the best sounding arm at £400, and as good as most at four times the price. Runs SMEV very close in all except bass, and better it for musicality. Stunning.



TECHNICS SL1200/III 1973 £395
Slick build makes it a respectable performer, although the cheapo arm limits it - fit a Rega RB250 and it's suddenly a serious mid-price machine.

TO NEARMS

HADCOCK 242 SE 2000 £649
Latest of a long line of unipivots, with added mass, revised geometry and better finish. Musical like few others at or near the price.

LINN EKOS 1987 £1700
Subtle mods over the years, including revised bearings and the recent new wiring has kept it a serious contender in the superarm stakes. Lacks the SME's slam, the OL's clarity or the ARO's emotion, but has a feisty musicality all of its own.

NAIM ARC 1987 £1425
Charismatic unipivot is poor at frequency extremes but sublime in the midband; truly emotive and insightful.

ORIGIN LIVE SILVER 2502001 £625
This fully developed and expertly fettled Rega boasts a superbly even, transparent and tuneful sound. Gives away only a small degree of finesse and dimensionality to top arms.

ORIGIN LIVE ILLUSTRIOUS 2002 £1570
A modern superarm with battleship build. Extremely strong, even and open sound in the mould of the late, lamented Zeta, plus fine tonal colouring. Exquisite.



REGA RB250 1984 £112
Sold through Moth Marketing, this is capable far beyond its price point, with a tight, lean and detailed sound. Responds brilliantly to Origin Live counterweight modification, and well to rewiring.

SME 309 1989 £767
Entry level SME complete with cost-cut aluminium armtube and detachable headshell. Tight, neutral sound with good tonality, but lacks the IV's pace and precision.

SME SERIES IV 1988 £1127
Offers nine tenths of the SMEV's magic at just over half price. Exquisitely built and finished, and a design classic. Faces stiff competition these days, but lovely nevertheless.

SME SERIES V 1987 £1614
The so-called Best Pickup Arm in the World isn't, but comes close. Vice-like bass with incredible weight, ultra clear midband and treble. Does everything except beguile the listener.

CARTRIDGES

ORTOFON KONTRA' B 1999 £720
Surprisingly articulate performer by Ortofon standards. All the brand's usual polish and detail allied to real vim. Loves making music!



AUDIO TECHNICA AT-110 1984 £29
Great starter cartridge that's refined, detailed and musical beyond its price.

DYNAVECTOR DV10X5 2003 £250
A distant descendent of the classic Ultimo 10X, this has warmth and sweetness in spades, allied to a punchy bass. Beats G1042 comfortably.

GOLDRING G1042 1994 £135
One of the best MMs going, with sweet and extended treble and punchy, muscular bass.

LYRIA LYDIAN BETA 1998 £600
An altogether more beguiling listen than the MC30S, although not quite as incisive. Superb all rounder, nonetheless.

SUMIKO BPS 1995 £250
Charismatic performer with rhythm aplenty, but in other respects way off the pace - lacks smoothness and sophistication of the DV10X5.

DYNAVECTOR DV20X-H2003 £395

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

**LYRA PARNASSUS DCT 1997 £1895**

Jonathan Carr's masterpiece is a brilliantly lyrical and fluid performer, with a deliciously sweet tone and immense subtlety and polish.

ORTOFON MC25FL 1994 £285

Strong budget MC with a cleaner and more detailed sound than the Dynavector; more sterile and less emotive, however.

ORTOFON MC30 SUPR' 1995 £550

Beautifully clean and detailed device with real finesse, albeit a tad mechanical sounding.

MUSIC MAKER 1999 £575

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

SHURE V15XMR 1994 £350

The most musical MM yet made – brilliantly dynamic and punchy in the classic Shure mould, yet refined and tidy too.

DIGITAL DISC PLAYERS**ARCAM DIVA CD82T 2002 £600**

Oodles of finesse, but not the most gripping performer at the price. A fine all rounder in the classic Arcam mould.

CAMBRIDGE AUDIO DVD57 2003 £200

Crisp, lively DVD-A sound makes this superb value for money, but 16bit playback is way behind similarly priced CD spinners.

CREEK CD5011 2004 £699

Extensive revisions make this an altogether more beguiling machine, and one of the best at its price. Extremely musical sound that's surprisingly upfront for a Creek design. Excellent mid-price purchase, with only its Marantz rival to challenge it.

CYRUS CD8 2003 £1000

Highly incisive, engaging, grippy and dynamic sound, but needs careful matching to smooth ancillaries. Optional PSX-R adds bass and dimensionality.

DENON DVD-A1 2002 £2500

Middling CD performance, but a genuinely strong DVD-A sound with masses of space and detail. Excellent pictures, too!

**LINN GENKI 1999 £995**

Undeniably fast, lithe, musical and fun - but some won't take to its dry, wry character. Works best in all-Linn systems, where it really rises to the challenge!

LINN IKEMI 1999 £1950

Has the brilliant focus and clarity of the previous Karik III with a dose more tonal richness and polish. More grip and poise than most at any price - still superb!

MARANTZ CD6000KI 2001 £500

Brilliantly warm and voluptuous sound will endear it to vinylphiles and tube lovers alike. Musical, colourful, polished and powerful like none others at or near its price.

MARANTZ CD17 II 2002 £800

Of-overlooked middleweight boasts a truly beguiling sound with lots of tonal flavour. Sits awkwardly between the £600 and £1000 price points, where some brilliant value buys reside, though.

NAD C5411 2002 £330

Highly musical and articulate budget machine in the classic NAD mould. Second only to Cambridge's CD500SE in the value stakes.

NAIM CDS 2001 £1195

Taut and grippy like no others at the price, but lacks the warmth of the Marantz CD6000KI at half the price. To wit, it's a very focussed product, best used in Naim systems.

MERIDIAN 507 2003 £1195

Quintessentially Meridian mid-price machine; smooth, warm, expansive and seductively musical. The best all rounder at this competitive price point.

**NAIM CDX2-XPS2 2003 £4950**

A fine high end machine, but add an XPS2 and it becomes one of the most charismatically engaging 16bit machines we've ever heard. Plays music with such passion!

DENON DV-2900 2003 £850

Superbly designed and built do-it-all player that delivers fine sound and great vision. Sonically class of the sub-£1000 DVD universal field, but the i-Link and HDMI direct digital capability of arch rival Pioneer DV-868AVi may swing some towards the latter, and its DV-2200 baby brother is even better value, though.

**NAIM CDS3 2003 £7050**

The most polished Naim CD to date; tremendously capable and musical, but lacks the Rotweiler quality of the cheaper CDX2-XPS2.

ARCAM FMJ CD33T 2003 £1,300

Superbly detailed midband allied to excellent bass extension makes this a powerfully musical machine in the best traditions of Arcam CD spinners. Nothing to criticise at the price, everything to recommend it!

**PHILIPS DVD963SA 2003 £400**

Creamy CD sound allied to superb SACD and DVD video playback makes this brilliant value for money.

REGA PLANET 2002 £498

Rhythmic and beguiling performer, although lacks the warmth of tone needed to better its Marantz rival. Superb ergonomics and design, nonetheless.

REGA JUPITER 2002 £1000

A Planet on steroids, this machine adds depth and breadth to its baby brothers already impressive sound. Good, but facing stiff competition.

MARANTZ SA-17S1 2003 £1400

Brilliant CD playback comes close to the best at any price, while SACD performance is almost as convincing - superbly warm and three dimensional nature makes listening a joy. However, the lack of DVD-Audio decoding and poor feature count makes it look middling value compared to some of the universal players here.

**CAMBRIDGE AUDIO 640C 2003 £250**

Tremendously well-rounded yet engaging sound makes this the best budget silver disc spinner by far. Build quality is excellent at the price, and the styling bang up to the minute. Blistering value for money.

CREEK CD5011 2004 £699

Extensive revisions make this an altogether more beguiling machine, and one of the best at its price. Extremely musical sound that's surprisingly upfront for a Creek design. Excellent mid-price purchase, with only its Marantz rival to challenge it.

MUSICAL FIDELITY TRI-VISTA21 DAC 2003 £1,200

Superbly neutral and expansive sound makes this offboard digital-to-analogue converter an excellent upgrade to any mid-price CD player - fed by a decent transport, few 16bit players at any price come close.

**DENON DVD-2200 2003 £499**

Superb do it all mid-price player; fine DVD-A and SACD sound allied to excellent video performance will be all many could ever want. Ultimately it's a little bright and mechanical sounding, but you have to go into high end territory to truly better it. Stunning value.

PANASONIC DVD-S75 2002 £120

Real ability and fine measured performance for an unbelievably low price. Impressive in its own way, if not truly audiophile. If you just want a cheap DVD spinner with DVD-Audio as a bolt-on goodie, this is the one.

PIONEER DV-868AVI 2003 £799

Pioneer's most accomplished mid-price machine to date, this boasts full DVD-A/SACD playback, a welter of facilities and the all-important HDMI video and i-Link audio digital outputs, making it nigh-on future-proof. Factor in fine - if not outstanding - sound and superb pictures and it's practically impossible to fault.

SONY SCD-XB790 2003 £250

Quite unlike any other budget Sony CD spinner we've heard, here's a very 'analogue' sounding machine that's smooth and warm and even. Factor in fine SACD playback and this machine is a brilliant budget buy – unless you want DVD-Audio that is, which it lacks.

**ORELLE CD100EVO** 2003 £1,200

Extremely engaging and musical sound, but maybe a tad too bracing for some tastes. Superb aesthetics complete an attractive package.

DIGITAL RECORDERS**APPLE IPOD 40GB** £399

Genre-defining best of breed, thanks to supreme ergonomics and build allied to fine sound.

PIONEER PDR-609 2001 £200

Brilliant value CD recorder that makes excellent recordings from its digital inputs. Half decent digital converters, too.

PHILIPS DVDR880 2003 £370

Poor CD audio playback, but makes great DVD video recordings and boasts fine ergonomics. Top AV value.

SONY RCD-W3 2002 £250

Usual superb Sony ergonomics make for non-sense budget buy. Fine direct digital copies, but analogue input poor. Middling sonics, but there's a digital output!

YAMAHA CDR-HD1300E2002 £600

HD means MD-style ease of editing, but compromises recording quality ever-so slightly. Add decent CD replay and it's a fine all rounder nonetheless – top value.

**ONKYO MB-S1** 2001 £1100

An interesting machine complete with MP3 functionality, but high price, fussy ergonomics and over-smooth sound make it mediocre value against the Yamaha.

PHONO STAGES**CREEK OBH-21SE** 2003 £250

Musically enjoyable yet highly refined for the price – a superb buy. Gives the Dino a real hard time.

EAR 834P 1993 £400

Classic tube design with a deliciously warm and expansive sound – shame about the loose bass and veiled treble!

LINN LINTO 2000 £900

A musical and incisive performer, with more speed than the Delphini at the expense of detail and tonal colour.

QED DISCOVER 1995 £35

Rhythmic, bouncy sound via battery, although it's bright and forward. Great value, but £100 more on the X-LP is well worth it!

TRICHORD DINO 2002 £299

Great all rounder with switchable MM/MC. Fast, fluid and smooth like no others at the price.

TRICHORD DELPHINI 2003 £995

The very latest 'Never Connected' variant is easily the best, bringing velvety smoothness to an already refined and engaging performer. Neutral to a fault – some will mourn the passing of the charismatic ISO.

MUSICAL FIDELITY**XLPSV3** 2003 £249

Fine all rounder at the price, which a satisfyingly full bodied sound that's smoother than the Creek but a tad less engaging. Only Trichord's Dino, with its easy upgradability for just £50, reflects badly on this fine bit of kit.

PROJECT PHONOBOX LE2004 £99

Great little box that improves on most bundled phono stages found in budget integrated amplifiers, adding detail and definition and a measure of smoothness too. If £100 is all you're prepared to spend, then do it happily on this, but you'll get obviously better results from the £250 brigade.

AMPLIFIERS**ARCAM DIVA A65 PLUS** 2002 £370

Classic budget Arcam fare – decently sweet and open with sensible facilities and plenty of power.

**ARCAM FMJ A32** 2001 £1150

For those who value serious power and labyrinthine facilities over outright clarity or grip. A very impressive all rounder with an unusually muscular power amp at this price.

AUDIO ANALOGUE**PUCINNI** 1999 £495

Brilliant value mid-pricer is a real step up from budget designs. Smooth, fluid, natural sound with adequate power and no nasties. Fine phono stage too!

AUDIO NOTE OTO SE 2000 £1199

This baby tuber is beautifully sweet and creamy, but lacks solid-state's clarity, detail and incisiveness. Low, low power means speaker choice critical.

AUDIO NOTE SORO SE 2000 £1699

Wonderfully out-of-the-box sounding tube middleweight is all about sweetness and fluidity. Limited power and loose bass, but little the worse for it.

CYRUS 6 2003 £600

Cracking do-it-all mid price design, bringing svelte sound, good connectivity and upgradeability and stunning style and build.

CYRUS 8 2003 £800

Unusually warm and lyrical for a solid-stater, with decent power and punch. PSX-R adds dynamics, detail and dimensionality.

**MERIDIAN 551** 1994 £895

Evergreen middleweight is a serious performer even now. Tonally a tad dry, it's still very smooth and svelte with bags of power, detail and grip. Class act.

MUSICAL FIDELITY**A308** 2002 £2400

Impressive monster integrated. Vast power delivered with clarity, even-handedness and finesse. Musical, with real tonal colour. Separate pre-power version better still, but less good value.

NAIM NAIT 5 2001 £845

A fast and thrilling listen, thanks to taut and articulate bass and midband. Surprisingly polished for a budget Naim amp, both sonically and ergonomically.

**NAD C320** 2002 £220

Not the giant killer that the 3020 once was, but a very strong budget design. A great starting point; forms a fine system with NAD's partnering CS41i CD player.

SUGDEN A21A 1993 £1020

The most musical amplifier at the price, bar none. Delicious Class A sound is smooth, sweet and wonderfully transparent with true tonal colour. Low power, so match carefully.

HEADPHONE AMPLIFIERS**SUGDEN HEADMASTER** 2003 £600

Unusual combined preamplifier and headphone amplifier, this boasts a surprisingly smooth and open sound which suffers only when compared to preamps at twice the price.

MUSICAL FIDELITY**X-CANSV3** 2003 £249

Mr Michaelson's best headphone amplifier to date, with an extremely open and explicitly detailed sound plus serious bass wallop and the ability to drive any phones to very high levels. Errs towards brightness with some headphones, so match carefully and use smooth cables.

PREAMPLIFIERS**CREEK OBH-12** 2000 £220

Brilliant value budget passive, giving little away in sonics to far more expensive designs. Connectivity and build aren't great, but what do you expect at this price?

**MF AUDIO PASSIVE PRE** 2003 £1010

Novel and effective pre with switchable gain via a transformer, and balanced operation. Open and incisive sound, yet makes most active rivals sound edgy by comparison.

NAIM NAC112 2002 £660

Affordable admission ticket to the Salisbury high end experience. Detailed and dynamic, if tonally rather lacklustre.

LINN LK140 2000 £800

Dry and grey sounding, but decently dynamic and musically engaging all the same. A worthy worker in a budget Linn system.

MUSICAL FIDELITY

A308 CR 2003 £2400
Superb transistor behemoth, worth partnering with any high end CD player or preamp. Oodles of grunt served up with poise and purpose.

MARANTZ SM-17 2001 £700
Useful budget power amp with plenty of clean transistor power. Not the most transparent, but sweet and clean all the same. Fine build completes a great value package.



NAIM NAP150 2002 £795
Driven by a decent source and a NAC112, this gives highly enjoyable results - providing you like the Naim sound! Taut, fast and feisty despite its relative lack of power.

QUAD 909 2001 £900
The latest current-dumper has a smooth and expansive character with enough wallop to drive most loads. Not the most musical, but super value all the same. Lovely build, finish and Quad's legendary service are nice.

CROFT TWIN STAR 2003 £1750
With a taste of the best of both tube and transistor, this latest update of the Croft classic is a truly endearing experience.



GRAAF GM20 OTL 2003 £3,300
Awesome output transformer-less valve power amp gives dazzling speed and incision, with an ethereal soundstaging and delicious filigree detail. Tremendous punch belies its humble 20W power rating. Factor in one of the most exquisite finishes this side of an Aston Martin and it's very hard to say no...

SUGDEN MUSICMASTER2003 £1,300
Quintessential Class A Sugden sound is not warm as many expect, but extremely neutral and open with real tonal colour. By comparison, tubes sound bloated and standard solid-state hazy and brittle. Superb when partnered with efficient loudspeakers like Revolver R45s, but many will find it underpowered.

**INTEGRATED AMPLIFIERS**

AUDIO RESEARCH VS1552003 £2,895
The Naim NAP250's tubular alter ego; oodles of power allied to a strong bass and smooth open midband makes this a brilliant all round amplifier. Lacks the subtlety and finesse of the low powered single-ended brigade but makes up for it with sheer brio.

CREEK A501R 2004 £550
Consummately smooth yet engaging sound makes it a serious player at the price, but don't expect Creek's traditional sumptuousness. Fine value nonetheless.

MONRIO MC207 2003 £1,100
Powerful, muscular sound allied to real finesse makes this unusual integrated an essential audition at the price.

MARANTZ PM-17MKII KI MODIFIED 2004 £1,500
Gloriously offbeat do-it-all design with a truly warm, smooth and three dimensional sound. Think of this as a latter-day Audiolab 8000a - with a good deal more colour and finesse - and you'll have its measure. Lowish power output at the price, but fine real world speaker driving ability.

UNISON RESEARCH S6 2002 £1,625
Tremendously musical and lithe sound with real finesse and subtlety too. Very slightly upper mid forward encourages careful partnering with ancillaries (Revolver R45s are ideal), but overall fantastic value for money.



ORELLE SA100EVO 2003 £1,200
Fine build, exquisite design and a wonderfully lucid sound make this an essential audition at the price.

AV AMPLIFIERS

DENON AVR-2803 2003 £650
Superb mid-price 7.1 channel extravaganza with nearly all the decoding power you'll ever need. Powerful, open and clean sound (at the price) makes it capable with music, and superb on movies. Fine ergonomics and great build makes this receiver hard to beat as an all-rounder.



NAIM AV2/NAP 150/NAPV 175 2002 £4,190
Brilliant audiophile multichannel pre-power amplifier combo; not as good with music as a two-channel Naim set-up at the same price, obviously, but surprisingly close. Elegant control layout plus a strong, clean and brilliantly engaging sound make this a serious crossover product. Ultimately lacks power compared to similarly priced Arcam gear, but is more musically involving.

PIONEER VSA-AX51 2004 £1,000
The ability to hook up to Pioneer's DV-868i via i-Link (nee FireWire) means that this multichannel AV amplifier can do all the digital conversion onboard makes the a very special product, which when used with the aforementioned DVD spinner sounds better even than the sum of its parts.

**LOUDSPEAKERS**

EPOS ELS-3 2003 £200
Plenty of brio and a decent degree of refinement makes this budget baby a fine value contender.



B&W CDM1 NT 2002 £750
Fine clarity and imaging allied to pleasing warmth and great rhythmic cohesion make these standmounters an essential audition.

CASTLE CONWAY 3 2003 £930
Superbly smooth and crisp performers, with a big hearted musical sound. Ultimately coloured though, with a slow, plummy bass.

CYRUS CLS70 2001 £800
Charismatic performer with a fast, tight and open midband, but lacks cohesion and scale.

KEF Q1 2003 £250
Highly polished and articulate standmounters at the price, but demand good ancillaries for best results.

KLIPSCH HERESY II 1997 £1100
An outstanding high sensitivity loudspeaker with midrange and treble horns coupled with infinite baffle 12" bass driver. Effortless, fast and accurate.

TDK S-80 2002 £90
Ingenious NXT multimedia sub/sat system has a wonderfully even and open sound - like baby electrostatics.



LINN NINKA 2001 £995
Major on rhythms and dynamics, making them an involving listen. Reasonably refined, too - but tonally disappointing.

MISSION 782SE 2003 £900
Bright and tight design capable of brilliant speed and grip, at the expense of warmth. Demands high quality, high powered ancillaries.

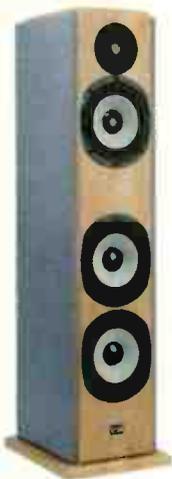
W'DALE DIAMOND 8.1 2001 £120
Still the best baby budget standmounters around. Tight and grippy thanks to Kevlar drivers, but invariably limited in the frequency extremes.



MONITOR AUDIO B4 2003 £350
An unusually smooth and lucid performer at the price, and its 3-way design means it drives rooms well. Fine engineering, but build and finish so-so.

REVOLVER R45 2003 £899

Wonderfully easy to drive floorstanders that are a dreamboat for tube amplifiers, and great for party-minded transistor users too. Great attack transients, fluid and musical bass and midband and couth treble make them fine all-rounders.

**MORDAUNT SHORT 9142002** £300

Warm, detailed and articulate performer, but a touch loose in the bass and veiled up top. Fine partner for budget valve amps.

NAIM ALLAE 2002 £1990

Taut and grippy like few others, this speaker majors on transient speed. Surprisingly smooth for a Naim box, with nicely etched treble. As always, tonally dry.

QUAD ESL-988 2001 £3400

Wonderfully neutral and self-effacing with sublime imaging and projection. Treble lacks extension, bass lacks weight - although the pricier 989 answers the latter resoundingly.

PERIGEE FK-1L 2002 £5000

Charismatic Aussie ribbon design with deliciously open mid and treble, allied to fine bass weight. The right room and ancillaries essential. Engaging, musical and powerful sound. Superb.

MARTIN LOGAN CLARITY 2003 £2,895

Supremely transparent and open with brilliant depth perspective and image projection. The midband is up there with the very best at any price, while the bass and treble integrate well but don't especially shine. Dynamically limited, with middling bass punch, but that's not the point - that deliciously fluid and intricate midband wins great respect.

**TANNOY EYRIS DC1** 2003 £699

The combination of dual concentric treble/midband drivers plus supertweeters make for a very spacious and expansive sounding loudspeaker, albeit one that's a little bright and loose in the bass. An excellent mid-price design well worth auditioning.

MONITOR AUDIO GR60 2002 £2,295

In some ways, these come close to Yamaha's legendary NS1000Ms, thanks to their tremendous clarity, great transients and 'full-fat' wide bandwidth performance. Bright and clean, but never fatiguing or uncouth. A truly accomplished all rounder that gives a real taste of 'super-fi' at a reasonably affordable price.

TOWNSHEND MAXIMUM 2003 £800

Another brilliant niche product from Max, these ribbon aspirated supertweeters add space and atmosphere to any good high end loudspeaker, and more surprisingly perhaps make things more fluid and musical too. Superb affordable esoterica.

HEADPHONES**JECKLIN FLOAT TWO** 1998 £99

Wonderful panel-like sound from these esoteric-looking headclamps.

SENNHEISER HD-590 1998 £199

The company's best real-world cans to date. Open and smooth with plenty of detail. Brightly lit midband makes them an ideal partner for a valve headphone amp.

**SENNHEISER MX-500** 1999 £19

Our unqualified recommendation for those seeking a serious sounding pair of in-ear phones. Smooth, detailed and musical.

SENNHEISER PX-100 2002 £29

Cracking pair of lightweight open back cans ideal for personals, but good enough for real hi-fi use. Superb build allied to a smooth and engaging performance make them the spiritual successor to the HD400s.

**INTERCONNECTS****WIREWORLD OASIS 5** 2003 £99/M

Excellent mid-price design with a very neutral, silky and self-effacing sound. Superb value for money.

CHORD CO. CHAMELEON 2 £90/M

One of our favourites, these are musical performers with a smooth yet open sound.

VDH ULTIMATE THE FIRST £260/0.6M

Carbon interconnects that help you forget the electronics and concentrate on the music. Miraculous transparency. Tight and tuneful bass mixed with air and space results in a cracking cable for the money.

**DNM RESON** £40/M

Neutral and transparent - a steal!

TCI CONSTRICTOR 13A-6 BLOCK 2003 £120

Top quality 'affordable' mains outlet block, with fine build and good sonics. Well worth the extra over standard high street specials, which sound coarse and two-dimensional by comparison.

NORDOST BLUE HEAVEN £150/M

Some of the fastest and most transparent cable around.

**VINYL****CLEARAUDIO REFERENCE** 1996

£4,070

Fine bass articulation and power allied a stunningly open and atmospheric midband and beautifully etched treble makes this one of the very best sounding turntables at any price. Michell's Orbe offers marginally more impactful bass, but can't touch that amazing mid. Exquisite.

ORIGIN LIVE AURORA GOLD 2004 £1,470

Seminal 'entry level high end' deck showing Mark Baker's characteristically obsessive attention to detail. The result is an extremely wide open and natural sounding machine that lacks the Michell GyroDec's slightly 'mechanical' nature - along with some of its scale and accuracy. Ideal for those seeking that classically beguiling vinyl sound.

**GOLDRING GR-1** 2004 £140

Essentially a Rega P2 built down to very low price and bundled with a decent Goldring MM, this is cracking value for money. Head and shoulders above its immediate rivals, it offers a surprisingly musical and detailed sound that will stun those new to vinyl - which is precisely what it was designed to do.

THORENS TD190 2003 £290

Ease of set up and use, allied to fully automatic operation mean that, although hardly the last word in performance, this deck is most certainly a model of convenience.

The Amazing 'Tjoeb 66' Amplifier



Following in the footsteps of the acclaimed 'Njoe Tjoeb' CD player AH! Of Holland have breathed their valve magic into the 'Tjoeb '66' amp. High-end sound at a very affordable price.

Ideal for those who want the silky warm tones of valves combined with the muscle of solid state!

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AH! of Holland take a basic CD player and substantially modify it Inc adding a second power supply, an AC noise killer, a low jitter clock, a new PCB with valve output stage. Only quality audiophile parts are used such as Wima and Vishay. The Swiss Upsampler by Anagram technologies uses Analog Devices AD1895 2nd generation 24bit sample rate converter. For the upsampling a Wolfson Microelectronics WM8740 DAC chip, 24bit 192khz chip. The result is simply stunning value!

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ROKSAN RADIUS 5 2003 £1750

Fantastic value allied to intelligent, interesting and 'out of the box' design makes for a wonderful entry-level superdeck. Open and musical sound is more inviting than the Mitchell TecnoDec rival, and the bundled Nima Unipivot arm is a superstar.

**TUNERS****ARCAM T61** 2002 £1250

This sleek looking and refined sounding FM/AM tuner isn't the last word in musical involvement, but is fine value, nonetheless.

**ARCAM DT81** 2003 £650

A fine radio, hampered only by its seriously compromised DAB medium. Probably the best DAB tuner ever, but one for Digital Radio enthusiasts only...

CAMBRIDGE AUDIO DAB300 2003 £1150

Fine ergonomics allied to great ease of use and respectable DAB sound makes this superb value.

**DENON TU-260L MK II** 1998 £130

If you want the best FM sound at the lowest possible price, then this ancient tuner remains peerless after all these years. There are better analogue designs around, but are either near-impossible to find or are now long-deleted.

CYRUS FM X £500

Great for Cyrus users, but its dry and precise sound can't match the best of the rest at the price. Worthy, nonetheless.

**MYRYAD MT 100** 1999 £600

One of hi-fi's nice surprises, this is a beautifully designed and built bit of kit with a deliciously sweet and svelte sound which really does justify its high price.

PRIMARE T21 2002 £600

Seriously accomplished design with mature sonics, great styling and fine build.

**NAD S400** 2003 £600

Highly accomplished specialist high end analogue tuner with a deliciously open and lucid sound, but it can't quite match the Myryad all the same.

PURE DIGITAL**DRX-702ES** 2003 £249

Great with Digital Radio, but thin a tad sounding on FM at times. It's a top hybrid, nonetheless...

**SYSTEMS****DENON D-M31** 2003 £250

Excellent CD receiver package with surprising sonics and a brilliant tuner as a bonus, although its amplifier section doesn't quite match the Onkyo. Optional speakers are mediocre.

ONKYO CS-210 2003 £300

Superb value thanks to excellent sound, great build and ease of use, but the bundled 'speakers' rather let the side down.

LINN CLASSIK MOVIE SYSTEM DI 2002 £2,995

Superb ergonomics and performance from this one-box beauty, but it's just a tad expensive and in value for money terms, compares poorly to the original Classik Music System.

**PIONEER NS-DV990** 2003 £799.95

Whiz-bang technology fest with DVD universal playback, discrete display and NXT flat panel speakers. Superb for the spare room or study - truly intelligent and elegant design - but don't expect it to match the sonics of AV separates.



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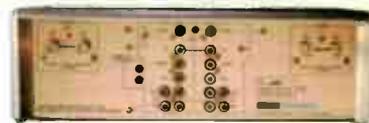
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Letter of the Month

HI HI HI!

I just thought that you'd be interested to know that the new 1GB Hi-MD format Walkmen being released by Sony this month all support ATRAC, WMA, MP3 and uncompressed Wav recording (94 minutes on a 1GB disc), as do the single minidisc recorder and solid-state recorder, but the Hi-MD machines achieve 1GB rewritable using the same 780nm laser as standard minidisc machines! That is, not DVD's 650nm or Blu-ray's 405nm. They also allow data transfer at 9.8Mbps (about the same as a DVD) compared to standard MiniDisc's 1.25Mbps. Interesting?

James Morrow

Sony seem are trying to broaden the remit of MD to that of a general purpose computer storage disc, with good audio and video functionality. They've done the same with VAIO computers and are busy criticising Microsoft for trying to barge their way into Consumer Electronics and failing dismally, so you can see what's on their mind. Enough of that though.

Hi-MD discs hold 1GB and are reportedly going to cost around £5. I can't find anyone selling them to check this, but if so they'll look good against Zip discs for example - I paid no less than £8 apiece for some 100MBs the other day. Ouch. I don't suppose computer Hi-MD drives will appear, but you never know. In the

meantime, as well as being able to store computer data and pictures via a USB connection to a support cradle, a Hi-MD recorder will also record music of course, its original function. MiniDiscs have a basic capacity of 177MB, just as launched back in 1991. A new Hi-MD recorder can pack 300MB onto an old style disc, or 1GB onto a new Hi-MD disc. It will record direct from a hi-fi system or from a plug-in microphone. Bandwidth remains 20kHz, but the ATRAC compression system has been updated to ATRAC 3, with data rates from 48kbps (low quality) to 256kbps (5:1 and very good quality). Using this mode a 1GB becomes effectively 5GB, meaning you could get around 8 CDs on board, should you want to record CD at very high quality.

Since this new Walkman comes with computer management software it's being compared to Apple's iPod. The Sony can be had with an on-board tuner though and its disc is removable. Storage capacity is a fraction of the iPod's 15GB (minimum) but price is a reasonable £230 at present. As snazzy as an iPod may seem - and I love Macs - I never quite took to portable mp3 players; 10,000 tunes on one disc sounds like a nightmare to me. You'd need to be a librarian to cope.

I suspect disc price will be a deciding factor for Hi-MD. If Sony

can hold Hi-MD discs at £5 or less they may well become popular. I for one would be amazed to see MD finally make it, but stranger things have happened - the survival of LP being one of them methinks! NK

Hi James - I think Hi-MD is not Sony's finest hour. It's without doubt an advance on MD 'classic' (if that's what it's to be called?) of course, but it smacks of Sony in denial about the brilliance of the iPod. Noel should try the navigation on one sometime - he'd be pleasantly surprised! Anyway, Sony seem to have lost their edge with mobile music - an area where they've traditionally been untouchable. The iPod is as important in the great scheme of things as the original Sony Stowaway (aka Walkman) cassette player was back in 1980. It's not just iconic, but a brilliantly practical proposition, and the launch of the new Apple lossless codec (giving uncompressed CD storage in half the disc space) makes it all the more compelling. By contrast, Hi-MD smacks of interesting new technology being injected into a near-moribund format in the hope of giving it a stay of execution. MD is of great sentimental importance to Sony (especially in Japan, where it's still relatively popular), and by introducing Hi-MD they're putting it on life-support.

DP



enough to stave off the iPod onslaught?

LESS OR MORE?

I was most interested in Noel Keywood's recent articles where he dealt with multi-channel sound and high resolution digital audio. With regard to multi-channel, Noel stated that it would be easier to create a high quality sound in a domestic setting using a multi-channel system with small speakers than by using the traditional stereo approach with large speakers. I am intrigued by this suggestion but wonder how far it can be pursued? Would this still apply for the same budget, for example £1,500 spent on a traditional stereo amplifier and speakers versus the same spent on a multi-channel amplifier and speakers?

As for high(er) resolution digital audio, does Noel think that SACD/DVD-A can take off before music servers with large hard-drives and purchasing music over the internet takes over? For myself, I am not convinced that any new medium will be able to get a foothold before this technology becomes dominant but then maybe it will become a niche product like vinyl?
Steve Murphy.

In all the hot air and technicalities of surround-sound, some simpler points get overlooked. And they may well be just as important, or more important to users with a life to lead (rather than reviewers!), and easy for them to make judgements about too.

Most of us have no trouble believing that five loudspeakers in a room will be more intrusive and more of a nuisance than two. I started out thinking this way, but after lots of huffing and puffing and a bit of DIY with a Black & Decker, ended up reaching the opposite view.

Two big floorstanders sited a few feet from a rear wall take up a lot of space. The area around and behind them becomes all but inaccessible to humans. It's where the hi-fi and video goes, plus your mags and perhaps some vegetation to hide a clutter of mismatched boxes, as well as tangles of cables.

Those two loudspeakers have to fill the room and they can work hard to do so if you play reasonably loud. Dynamic compression sets in and many sorts of distortion rise dramatically. Most of us don't thrash our beloved stereo loudspeakers, I know, but I have noticed that five hi-fi loudspeakers doing the same job as two sound more relaxed and - interestingly - more dynamic. Hardly surprising really, but this is a benefit of surround-sound few people

mention. Each channel of a five channel amplifier has an easier time too and today's surround-sound amps often deliver 100W per channel, so they have massive reserves.

Surround-sound has some interesting advantages over stereo that I've found audible and significant. If five good quality hi-fi loudspeakers can be installed on shelves, freeing up floor space, and if a big subwoofer is used to augment bass, you end with an impressive sounding system that's also room friendly. It takes more work to install, especially when it comes to hiding cables and getting them under a door, setting up firmly located stands close to a rear wall or installing appropriate shelves. However, a lot of Hi-Fi World readers like tackling home mods like this. There's always satisfaction to be had from a fully worked out, well installed system. Whether installing surround sound like this is a good idea depends upon you and your home. I have found it well worth the effort.

A conventional surround-sound system handles stereo so there isn't any conflict with internet downloading of stereo files. Many modern DVD players replay mp3 files burnt to CD on a computer. If internet downloading of music takes off then CD sales may well suffer, but in Britain at least this isn't happening at present - CD sales are stable - even if the success of Apples iTunes site suggests this may not last. DVD movies are too large to download like this however and DVD is hugely popular, which provides continuing justification for surround-sound in the home. I suspect SACD and DVD-A will never replace simple stereo, but they are likely to continue because there has been such a massive commercial investment in surround sound. **NK**

MORE THAN THIS?

I am very intrigued to know why so many seem to think that even the very best of multi-channel integrated amps do not perform as well as dedicated two channel amps, regardless of price. Top integrated AV amps all have massive power supplies which, as far back as I can remember, is one of the most important aspects of any amp with high current, low impedance drive and high power outputs. The decoding sections of these amps are far superior to any decoding section found in most CD and DVD players, bar the very extreme high-end stuff and most

people agree with me on this particular aspect.

With the levels of engineering and build quality found in AV amps why is it they are still supposed to be way behind stereo amps? Is it that people are using these them incorrectly, feeding them from the analogue output of a CD or DVD player or even an analogue phono stage and expecting to get the same results?

All of the analogue inputs into these amps are converted to digital and then back to analogue before being passed on to the amplifier stage, which means that for analogue inputs there are two additional conversions before the signal reaches the main amplifier section. By feeding AV amps with a digital input from the CD or DVD player only one DA conversion takes place inside the amp so it stands to reason that better sound will be had. Not only that, but because the DA conversion takes place right next to the main power amps there is no long analogue connection between the output of the player. What do you think?

Ian Stuart

In the early days A/V amps were meant for Home Cinema and sound quality wasn't much of an issue. Only with the arrival of DVD-A and SACD did their function get reappraised and sound quality become an issue. Their bad reputation lingers, even though today's AV amps are pretty respectable. However, when so much is of offer for so little money, relatively speaking, surreptitious cost cutting is taking place, as you discover when trying to connect up heavy loudspeaker cable to wobbly terminals, and such like.

As you note, all the normal line inputs of an AV amplifier or receiver get converted to digital for subsequent processing, then converted back to analogue again, unless you use the optional Direct inputs. There's a noticeable improvement in quality when a direct digital connection is made. However, having measured and listened to a number of these modern A-D, D-A systems I am surprised at how good they are in the general scheme of all things AV.

These days A/D and D/A chips all come from the same few companies, like Analogue Devices, Crystal, Wolfson, etc. so I would not bet on their being great differences between players and receivers. Meridian like to make the point, however, that it makes sense to

carry out digital-to-analogue conversion at the very last moment, and just once of course, meaning all digital sources should be digitally linked to an amplifier with on-board D/A convertors. But whilst we are a long way from living in an all-digital AV world nothing like this is going to happen. As AV gets progressively more complex I suspect the simplicity of analogue will maintain its appeal to those who just can't be doing with all those on-screen menus. **NK**

SERIOUSLY FLOORED

The loudspeaker group test - "Floored Genius" in *Hi-Fi World*, March 2004 was quite interesting, though I am surprised that the Quad 21L was not included, as it is of similar design to three of the tested speakers, in the same price area as four of them and is manufactured by the same company who currently own Wharfedale, hence it would seem to be the more logical competitor with the other tested speakers than the cheaper Wharfedale Evolution 20.

Recently when auditioning CD players I had the opportunity to hear the other three Quad 'cabinet' models. The 11L works okay to medium volume levels but does not reproduce low bass, and in its attempts there is audible muddying of the music. The 12L is substantially better, with only the lowest octave rendered pitchless, compression and loss of detail not occurring 'till higher volume levels. The 22L is a little compromised by a slightly "slower" bass than its midrange and treble and that may be a characteristic of some "2 1/2 way" cross-over type speakers as the more expensive B&W 704 has a similar bass response, although better overall than the Quad 22L.

I had high hopes for the 21L, being a simple 2-way tuned to a lower frequency than the 12L. Unfortunately, the Quad stockist near me had sold out of 21Ls so I suppose someone likes them!

I have heard the Monitor Audio S8. I think it may be a different type of 2 1/2 way to the B&W and Quad as the bass was more in time with the midrange and treble. I heard it in a different room and system than the other speakers, and with only a limited range of material, though I remember its sound as similar to that described in your Group Test review.

A *Hi-Fi World* comparative test, with measurements, of Quad 12L versus 21L, would be interesting as both seem to have the same drivers and cross-over and differ only in their cabinets. The 12Ls image better and present detail more clearly with their grilles off - though that will not surprise you, other

than pleasantly! Thank you for an interesting magazine.

Chris Taylor

Your comments strike me as pretty accurate, but there are a few points to add. Generally, smaller cabinets image better and sound "faster" as they lack deep bass. Large floorstanders like the 22L are for people with bigger rooms. The twin bass drivers of a 2 1/2 way loudspeaker are there to deliver bass power, without excessive distortion. They also need to be able to cope with the amplifier power demanded, without overheating. Larger rooms have lower room modes and are better damped, but they are also more difficult to excite. A loudspeaker like the 22L is usually best in this situation. Used in a medium or small room it may well sound slow. I have designed many loudspeakers, put them in a wide variety of rooms and heard a lot of feedback from users. The room can be a real confusing factor when it comes to bass quality. A small floorstander like the Quad 21L is a good compromise. They are beautifully finished and the silk dome tweeter is less harsh than many of the metal units, which likely appeals to typical Quad owners. **NK**



**Unison Research
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COME TO MY (HEARING) AID

I would like your expert assistance regarding my gear upgrade. My current system comprises Audiolab 8000A - I have had this great amp for some years and I now use it as a pre-amp driving two Audiolab 8000M monoblocks - bought second-hand last year in mint condition, plus Triangle Celius 202 floorstanders - bought new two months ago - and Marantz CD 63KI SI Musical Fidelity X-10D.

Some audiophile friends of mine with extensive knowledge and very expensive gear told me that my amplification and CD suck and need to be changed. However, when I went to an

audio store to audition my Triangle speakers (I also carried with me my Audiolabs) I had the chance to hear them driven through a number of other amps - Symphonic Line RG 9, Densen B200/B300 XS, Pathos Twin Tower and Vincent pre-power. The source was a Densen B400 and all cabling was very expensive Nordost. To my ears, my Audiolabs were more "alive" and real than all of them, only lacking a little bit of air among instruments and very slightly better defined bass nuances when compared to the Symphonic RG 9.

Of course, my audiophile friends disagree with me and tell me I have a hearing problem. Actually, I do not care since for me to find something to beat my Audiolabs I would have to spend Euro 3000 or more and the benefit would be very marginal. However, I agree that I need a better CD player and cabling. So what I think I will do (?) is upgrade current power cords in amps to LAT or Shunyata Diamond backs, buy good interconnects for amps (Cardas Golden Reference?) - but should I buy a better CD player - in my opinion the only weak link in my system except cables? I would like your expert opinion on my amplification (am I deaf hearing my Audiolabs to be that good?).

My favourite music is blues and jazz (John Mayall and Tsuyoshi Yamamoto styles), acoustic (Antonio

Forcione) and good old rock like Led Zep, Doors, Jethro Tull, Lynyrd Skynyrd and I favour good instrument separation and real, lively presentation (bass lines, liquid mids and realistic highs - no tizz-bizz on cymbals).

Mike Lianas

The Audiolab 8000a integrated was great value in its time, but the 8000M monoblocks were rather dull sounding and didn't really continue its success. The matching pre-amp was thin, bright and quite unpleasant, I seem to remember. It was all a bit of a shame really, since the engineering was good enough. I

suspect a lot of this was down to component quality. Some hardy souls are rebuilding early Quad solid-state amps like the 303 and reporting fantastic results with modern audio grade components. Commercial solid-state amplifiers are slowly improving in this respect and I'm sure you would hear the difference a top Roksan, Myryad or Arcam amplifier would make to your system. The Marantz CD63 KIS is normally considered a weak link in any system, but I have always had reservations about the intrinsic quality of CD, given its poor resolution, and personally would prefer to use a multi-format machine like Denon's DVD-2200/2900 or Pioneer's 757/868 models, in order to spin audio DVDs and SACDs, as well as CD. Minor shortcomings in CD quality, which aren't great in my view, are more than compensated for by access to high resolution formats. **NK**

I think that if most of your music is on CD, then it's best to find a player that really shines with this format - and any hi res compatibility should take a second place, especially as we're not quite sure of the future of DVD-A and SACD as yet! To wit, I'd counsel a Marantz SA-1751 (£1,400) which is a cracking Compact Disc spinner, which also happens to make very nice noises with SACD indeed. It has a warmth and openness which will flatter your Audioblats - and here I agree with Noel, in that they need all the help they can get!

The 8000A was never a great amplifier, but towards the end of its life it was undeniably great value, especially if its myriad facilities were important to you. Frankly, it - and the 8000M monoblocs - is holding your system back. big time. The 8000A as a preamp is probably less harmful than the 8000Ms, which are indeed thin and astringent. We found their only redeeming feature to be that - unlike lots of the other British stuff we had in the office at the time - the Audiodrabs didn't keep blowing up! So... I'd counsel the following. If it's an expansive warm sound you like, get a Unison Research S6 valve integrated (£1,600), whereas if you want a fast, punchy, grippy performance then try Naim's new Nait 5x (£1,200). **DP**

REACHING FOR MY WALLET...

I am thinking about making changes to my system, along the lines of a new CD player and/or speakers, with a total budget of around £1,200. Advice so far

seems to be contradictory. On the one hand I am told that there has been bigger advances in speaker design than CD players in the last ten years, or the complete opposite.

My equipment is Roksan Xerxes/ Rega RB300/ Rega Elys, AR CD-06 Multibit CD player (purchased 1990) Ion Systems Obelisk 3X plus XPak 1 (alternative Creek 4140 S2) Creek T40 Tuner QED Silver Anniversary speaker cable Sennheiser HD590 headphones, Hi-Fi News Tabor speakers (large stand mounted speakers with Son Audax units, built late 70's).

When I originally purchased the Creek amplifier, I was also going to buy a turntable and speakers. However, after a demonstration of the system with my speakers and with others, I kept mine and put the money towards the Roksan.

I listen to headphones as much as the speakers, so one option may be a CD player and headphone amp. Musical tastes are country rock/ folk rock/folk/guitar instrumentals and weird (wife's comment)...

I live in a mid terrace house so listening volumes most of the time are modest. Room is approximately 6x4m. I have noticed one quirk with my system and that is that it improves every time I reach for my wallet. I realise that I need to listen before I buy, but any advice you can give me would be much appreciated...

Dennis Everard

CD players have become a little more refined over the years, but the basic digital coding scheme has changed not one jot, of course. Unlike analogue, digital resists progressive development; when outdated it must be scrapped completely. Modern turntables and cartridges tend to underline this - they have never sounded so good, so you made the right decision to spend money on analogue in my view!

In spite of appearances, loudspeaker drive units have improved quite substantially over the years and you should notice this when comparing the Tabors with other designs. However, people become very accustomed to the 'sound' of their loudspeakers and often cannot wrench themselves away easily. You may have to spend some time listening to some of the easier sounding modern designs available, from Castle and Mordaunt Short in particular, I would suggest.

Current fashion is to make loudspeakers sound obviously bright, so they appear more detailed in a

showroom demo, something you may come up against. So tread carefully and be prepared to reject any loudspeaker that sounds bright, hard or tizzy. Good ones with a natural, unfatiguing balance do exist. **NK**

It's tricky to comprehensively upgrade your whole system on that budget, because the kit you have (CD player notwithstanding) is very good, even if it's a little old. Indeed, maybe should you wait until an individual item goes bang before you upgrade, as you're going to struggle to buy better amps or speakers for just £1,200. With this in mind, I'd say you should replace your CD, which is the weakest link. Of course, CD in general hasn't dramatically improved in the time since you bought your AR, but your AR wasn't the best and there are now some really good silver disc spinners at this price. To wit, get a Naim CD5x (£1,200) if you're into drive and excitement, or Musical Fidelity's new X-RAY v3 if it's warmth and smoothness you crave. Marantz's SA-1751 (£1,400) offers a good mix of the two, plus SACD, for a little more money. Start saving for an Audio Research VS155 (£2,895) tube integrated for when your lons exit their mortal coil. **DP**

ORIGIN OF THE SPECIOUS...

You're doing a rather good job at producing a genuinely interesting hi-fi mag, which is why I have just repeated my subscription. But I have to get something off my chest as it has been niggling at me. Your love of all things Origin Live is plain, but sometimes that spills over into comments which are just plain unfair. Even in the intensely subjective world of hi-fi you cannot reasonably suggest that the fit and finish of Origin Live arms compares with that of SME... and I speak only after having a careful look at several Origin Live arms.

The same goes for the suggestions that Michell decks such as the Orbe compare with the build quality of an SME deck. Just spend a few minutes examining them and the truth about build quality will be plain. There is no sensible comparison in engineering terms, or at least only if you think a Fiat is of similar build quality to an Audi!

And while in Victor Meldrew mode, I think you hinted at a profound truth a few months ago when you observed that the EAR valve phono stage was technically and audibly inferior to a solid state rival but still seemed to be as musically satisfying. The world of hi-fi

is full of highly detailed and transparent components that are ultimately sterile and unmusical. I know because I have spent hard earned cash on them. Just why are components such as the EAR technically inferior but so much more listenable? And before I am hauled off gibbering to myself, has anyone else noticed that the new Quad electrostatics sound inferior to the old 63s? They have a brash brightly lit upper mid range completely absent on the original model. Must be off to take my medication.

Peter Skinner

Hi Peter - thanks for writing, and I take all your criticisms in the constructive spirit in which they were intended, but Fiat and Audi? I think you don't just need to take your tablets, but up your dose! I agree that SME quality is superlative. With the exception of the new M2 arm, which I'm not terribly impressed with, all of this company's products are exquisitely hewn. There's nothing like the feel of a Series V in the hand. But... that doesn't mean other companies can't equal them with some products, in some contexts. The OL Illustrious is - as near as dammit - as well built as a SME V, although I'd agree that the finish doesn't quite have the same 'Leica camera' quality. As for Michell turntables, I'd have to disagree. I think they're as well finished, and actually better engineered, than SME decks. This is reflected in the fact that a GyroDec thrashes the pants off a SME 10 in terms of sonics. Still, in the spirit of reconciliation, my second system is fed by a GyroDec/SME IV, and boy what a combination (sonically, ergonomically, aesthetically)!

On to your second point, I don't know! It's possible to make stuff that measures superbly, but which simply doesn't make music a moving and emotional experience - and I think this has been a recognisable tendency with hi-fi manufacturers for a great many years. I think it's probably the culture of audio engineering, which by definition tends to be an 'empirical' and 'objective' one, with measurements as an end in itself, rather than a means to the end of getting superior sound... This said, we get a lot of stinkers arriving at World Towers, with distributors telling us how the kit has been designed to sound good rather than measure well. The result is usually appalling technical performance and often bad sound to boot - and even questionable safety. Often, manufacturers who celebrate their reliance on subjective listening are really just

trying to hide duff design... To wit, I think I'll join you and Victor Meldrew in the medication queue... **DP**

SPECIAL REQUEST

Hello Mr. David Price - could you tell me which tuner sounds better, the Creek T43 or the Naim NAT 03? Please can you describe the sounds? Thank you a lot for your service.

Christo Anestis

The Naim, I'd say, although I'm sure that statement would have Setright stop his Honda Prelude in a cloud of Toyo tyre smoke if he read such a summary reply. He's a big Creek fan, and with the T43 I can see why. It's a splendiferous tuner, with a brilliantly open and warm (read: natural) sound for not very much money. The Naim is sharper, more dimensional, more incisive, and more engaging. It takes you closer, but can actually be less pleasant to listen to, given the poor quality of most FM broadcasts, optimod compression, aerial multipath and the like. So I'd say go for the Creek to relax and enjoy the music, or get the Naim plus a proper aerial, and never listen to anything but Radio 3 live broadcasts, for a truly immersive FM experience... **DP**

WINNER TAKES IT ALL?

After being nominated as Letter of the Month I have now received the May and June editions of Hi-Fi World and the pair of Precious Metals interconnects. This means that I shall now have no excuse for not buying a CD player, which I have resisted; being perfectly happy with my considerable collection of LPs, which I have been collecting since the early 1960s...

As it just so happens, I have been buying the occasional CD for a few years now, which I have been able to play on my computer, via cheap headphones; a quite pleasant experience, all things considered. I have now decided to buy a CD player, so that I can make the most of my recent purchase of a pair of Mission 71i speakers; half price from my local 'Richer Sounds' store. Since I bought the speakers, I have been rediscovering the joys of Radios 3 and 4. They make a considerable difference to the pleasure I get from my records, too. I must get started on sorting out my record deck this year, also.

After that... well, I shall have to upgrade my amplifier; something with valves, methinks. Probably one of your kits. Shame you don't still do the one with the 5881 valves, as I heard one several years ago and was much impressed. No doubt, one of your more recent designs does equally as good a

job, but, seeing a recent comment by one of your writers, concerning his continued love of the 5881 design, I would sooner have one of those. Maybe I'll see about digging out the relevant DIY supplement and building it from parts, assuming that the transformers are still available. Thank you, once again, for a very enjoyable magazine. Keep up the good work.

Russ Betts

Our pleasure, Russ! **DP**

KI DP - THE COMEBACK 11

Read your article with avid interest as I am an owner of CD 63KI and have been considering a CD upgrade for about 4 years now. In fact I was actually trialing the Chord 64DAC when I saw the cover of Hi-Fi World in WH Smith...

Clearly, your article is glowing and I am almost tempted to rush out to the Marantz factory with my trusty KI in hand and demand they upgrade to DP levels on the spot. However, before I do that, I thought to myself, this model hasn't been reviewed by anyone else and hence it's only one man's opinion (as erudite as he may be [aw shucks - Ed.]) but more importantly, it has been designed with your own equipment in mind and wonder how the DP would perform in anyone else's?

I have a Musical Fidelity M3 amp with Celeus speakers. Hence my key question is how do you think it would perform with this equipment? (Would the DP be better than the Chord 64DAC or the Trivista 21 DAC when partnered with my KI?) Also, is there any upgrading of the power cord involved? If not, should there be or should there at least be an IEC connection? Finally, as the KI is probably six years old is it likely to fail relatively soon after all these mods or is there a new warranty on the DP?

Nick McAuley

Hi Nick, Well, I've tried the KI DP in a number of systems now, and it's still surprising me. It's dazzlingly fast and engaging, yet still possessed of an almost supernatural ability to show the true tonal colour of the record. Frankly, it's in another league to the Chord and MF DACs, superb as both are... If you've got a CD63 KI, then I'd say go for it - although I'm sure Marantz wouldn't be too happy as they've been swamped with requests for mods already... As for the IEC connection, no, it has a captive lead. Ken Ishiwata would go spare if you tried to fiddle with this, as he's voiced the whole upgrade around the existing one. Interestingly, if a player

can sound so good with a middling mains lead, it kind of suggests how low down the power cable is in the great scheme of things, doesn't it...? The only reason people spend £200 on an aftermarket IEC cable is that they can make an easy swap, rather than having to re-solder half the board inside with no guarantee of better sound... **DP**

KI DP - THE COMEBACK [2]

I read your review of the Marantz CD63 KI DP player with interest, but was left with two questions: What was the rest of the system used for the test? KI mentions some Yamaha speakers, but other than 'tubes' the amplification is not defined. And what does the player sound like when paired with more mainstream components (e.g. transistor amps)?

Jon Herbert

The system was: Michell GyroDec/SME Series IV/ Ortofon Kontrapunkt C turntable, Trichord Delphini NC phono stage, MF Audio Passive Preamp, World Audio Design K5881 power amplifier, Yamaha NS1000M loudspeakers. As for the sound, I refer the honourable gentleman to the answer I gave some moments before, etc... **DP**

KI DP - THE COMEBACK [3]

I was just about to order a new CD player before reading the review of the CD63KI DP player from Marantz. First off, it looks like nothing I've seen on the market before and reading through the article it seems to sound like nothing before. However, do you think this machine will work in a variety of systems or only ones with a particular tonal balance? From my understanding this player was assembled to give a certain sound to tonally match a certain system, would this be correct?

I currently use a Marantz CD63KI player with Roksan Caspian M series amp and Mission 782SE speakers. Cables are Chord Anthem and Odyssey 4 and mains cables/purifiers from Kimber Kable. I was going to purchase the new Roksan Caspian M series CD player. Do you think the upgraded Marantz will out-perform that machine? The sound I like is vinyl-like but I don't want to lose the attack, speed and rumbling bass that I have at the moment. Could you please give me an honest opinion as both options are hardly pocket money?

Paul

Yes - it will work with a variety of systems. Ken went to great trouble to make it get the best from my

NS1000M loudspeakers (which are super-fast), so he made the player super fast, too! But it's also tonally warm and sweet too, with a tremendous tonal palette (which the Yams love - and me, for that matter). Put simply, I think it's far to say that anyone who deliberately buys and reads this august journal will probably also find the KI DP very much to their tastes. We're not into ear-bleeding transistor amps or Barry White-style smoochy valve amps here - just a natural, organic, musical sound - and I suspect that's what you guys like too... I think the KI DP will easily outperform the Roksan in all the ways you specify, although the latter might have a slightly more solid bottom end. **DP**

GRAND DESIGNS

I am looking to upgrade the vinyl replay part of my system. I have a Naim NAP250 amp, Meridian 588 CD and a Roksan Xerxes turntable with a Rega RB 600 arm. The arm has been Incognito-ed and sports a Michell counterweight. The cartridge is a Benz Micro Glider. The whole lot has been fully rewired using some of Russ Andrews' best. I am basically pleased with the system, but would like to improve the vinyl side. I would like your thoughts. I am more than happy to go second-hand and would look at two options. Spending a thousand or spending two thousand. I have been thinking along the lines of either blowing the whole lot on a cartridge (if so which one?), or upgrading the arm, or both (if so which). It has even crossed my mind to trade in for an LP12 Lingo! Ekos! Troika, as these can easily be acquired for less than two grand.

Graham Redfern

Personally, I wouldn't go for a Linn, as if you move to an LP12 from a Xerxes then you'll find things sound rather vaguer and more smeared. For example, the opening guitar arpeggios on Kate Bush's 'Babushka' are deliciously crisp and tight on a Xerxes, but even a Lingo'd Sondek will soften and muddy them. Although the Linn is in some ways more musical than the Xerxes, I fear you'd keep noticing its failings in comparison. So... methinks a cartridge would be in order. I'd go for an Ortofon Kontrapunkt C (£1,000) as a great, brilliant tracking all rounder, or a Koetsu Red (£1,400) for a more musical and beguiling, if slightly less secure, sound. Either of these would give your Naim amplification the tools to

do the job, so to speak, and make the Benz sound a tad dazed and confused by comparison. **DP**

TEC-TALK

A review on the JA Michell Tecnoarm prompted me to write to you for advice. I am a professional DJ in search of an improved sound. I have modified my two standard Technics SL1200 turntables with stock Rega RB250 arms using the adaptor board available from Origin Live. Cartridges are Grado DJ200 (which is a hardier version of their Prestige series). I plan to rewire the arms with the Incognito rewire kit soon.

The last thing that has me in doubt is the choice of counterweight upgrade. I understand that there are sonic differences between the several that are available. I play fairly jazzy vocal house music as well as 70's Jazz-funk, soul, and disco. Can you recommend a counterweight that has the punch for dance music as well as the subtlety for jazz and acoustic/electric music. My own feelings tend towards the JA Michel counterweight at the moment. Maybe I'm just splitting hairs here, but any insight on this obscure subject would be gratefully accepted! I am using a pair of old (but good) Studer Revox phono preamps which accompanied the Technics SP10 broadcast turntables here at the S.A.B.C. in Cape Town, South Africa.

Nick Birkby

A professional DJ in search of improved sound? Does such a thing exist...? Sorry for being flippant Nick, I know there are some of you about, although the guys I see spinning decks in clubs usually seem most interested in improving their image... Anyway, I'd have no hesitation in recommending the TecnoWeight. Its effect is not as far reaching as a fully OL modded RB250, but you don't have to send your arms back to OL and you still get more than half the improvement for less than half the price. If you're looking for a good, easy, obvious upgrade to the Rega 'platform', then this is it. Compared to your stock arms, you'll find a smoother but more open midband, better treble extension and air, but a faster, tighter and more extended bass. But the best thing about the Michell for you is possibly the easy - and accurate - tracking weight setting system. **DP**

OH GO ON, IF YOU MUST...

Just to let you know how much I appreciated the June issue of Hi-Fi World. The magazine goes from

strength to strength. It seems to me that virtually all your competitors have lost their way. They are uncertain whether to be 'Home Cinema' magazines, dumbing down their pure hi-fi and music reviews, or reviewing such expensive high-end equipment to the exclusion of all else that music lovers and especially young music lovers are put off hi-fi altogether, because they perceive the price of entry is too high.

Don't get me wrong. I have nothing against high-end equipment that improves upon the state of the art and gets us closer "to the original sound" but in the past, breakthroughs quickly filtered down to more affordable price points and therefore were a real encouragement to music lovers to get a foot on the hi-fi ladder. Now it seems that at least some manufacturers use price as a sign of exclusiveness, which is not always reflected in development costs and build quality. There seems little chance of any improvements filtering down to lower price points.

There is a real need to encourage new music lovers towards good hi-fi if it is not just to become an expensive backwater for the wealthy few. I think Hi-Fi World has achieved a particularly good balance in this respect in that it covers a full range of equipment (including home cinema) but is always careful to note value for and even more particularly and probably uniquely make comparisons to equipment from the past to see if there have been any real musical benefits. This also gives music lovers the option of buying really high quality second-hand equipment from an informed perspective. The June issue was especially good in this respect with comparisons of the Sony SCD-XA 9000ES to the earlier CDP-X77ES, the report on the CD63KI DP and the "Reeling in the Years" article on cassette decks.

The DIY supplement is also excellent and provides another low cost route to quality hi-fi ownership. As a Trio (Kenwood) L-07D turntable owner of 24 years standing I particularly enjoyed Paul Johnson's article on the rebuilding of his turntable by 'Howard'. I still think that one has to go along way to better this turntable in musical and build terms which is why I have not found a need to change mine over all these years. I am sure that Paul's, now brought to a probably better than new standard by Howard, is sounding even better. I have suggested to Paul who is a fellow member of the Yahoo L-07D group http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Kenwood_L-07D that an interesting follow up article would be to compare his rebuilt turntable to a couple of state of the art turntables from the present day. If you could arrange a comparative review I

think Paul would be happy to loan his L-07D for this and it would be a real opportunity to hear what (if any) improvements have been made over 25 years to what many of us still consider the finest musical source. Keep up the excellent standard.

Jim Watts

You say, "now it seems that at least some manufacturers use price as a sign of exclusiveness, which is not always reflected in development costs" - what on earth gave you that idea? You old cynic, Jim! As for the Lo-7D shootout, I'm up for it. 'Tone-meister' Stewart Wennen has currently got my Sony TTS-8000 and his Technics SP-10 in bits on his (unfeasibly large) test bench, and is trying to rebuild both for this very purpose. He's then going to put OL Silver 250s on them all, so it's going to be cantilevers at dawn... **DP**

WELL, BLOW ME DOWN!

I have just been reading the May issue, which is the first time I have read your magazine for many years. I am amazed by the developments that have passed me by in all this time.

I did not realise that you could pay £1,695 for an amplifier with the performance of a 1950s radiogram. But there it is, made in China, where the average wage is £20 a month, full of valves that probably only cost pence to buy from source, as they are all made on the machinery that was practically given to them when the European manufacturers ceased production. I would love to see a breakdown of the costs involved. I bet the mark up is embarrassing.

I did not know the mains lead affected the audio quality! But I suppose that if you pay £130 for such an item, it must do something! It is not explained however, how far back you have to go to complete the upgrade. Is it as far as your consumer unit, or do you have to silver plate the cables all the way back to the National Grid?

According to one of your advertisers, mechanical noise travels up the cables, rattles the circuits, is turned into a signal, and is amplified by the system! Well. Blow me down.

I am familiar, from the "old days", of strange properties being ascribed to amplifiers etc., but what does "sound lacks finesse" mean (NAD amp)? It has a frequency response from 5 to 75,000Hz, a distortion of 0.002%, and a power output of 120 watts. What else can it do? What is meant by this lack of finesse? The only other thing involved is the interface with the speaker, but I doubt if the designers of the experience of the NAD team would have got this

wrong.

Back to the advertisers again, There is a firm selling capacitors from £10 up to £20 or so. I have news for you, you can buy most types of capacitors for not more than a quid at the outside, from Maplins!

Finally, "tremendously strong and articulate, only a veiled treble let it down". What is it? It is a turntable, the Garrard 301. I thought, up to now, that all it did was to rotate the record, not play it. Oh well, we live and learn.

My point in writing this letter, which you obviously will not publish, is that I object to people with no technical knowledge being taken for a ride by people such as yourself. I am sure that you and your contributors are aware, for example, that £130 mains leads are a complete waste of money or that statements such as "valve rectifiers improve the sound" are complete balderdash. If so, I wonder how you can live with yourselves, or do you really believe such stuff?

Although I have been retired from the electronics and broadcasting industries for 10 years, the laws of physics and common sense have not changed in that time. So do not assume, that the writer is just a head case with a bee in his bonnet. It is just that I do not like to see people being "ripped off", which I am sure that you would not be a party to would you?

D. S. Jones

Well, I'd love to see you locked in a lift with Ken Ishiwata! As you obviously never go anywhere near hi-fi shows (where these things you polemicise against can be readily demonstrated - just walk in to one room, sit down, listen, repeat the process in the next, hear the difference, etc.), I doubt that will happen. Still, although I obviously can't agree with your 'I'm an engineer and a capacitor's a capacitor' thesis, I concur wholeheartedly with your objection to people being ripped off. Which is why you'll not find us recommending telephone number-price tag cables rolled on the thighs of Buddhist nymphets and then doused in gold leaf. **DP**

(NON) STEAMY WINDOWS

Last year I replaced my Ion Obelisk 2 amplifier and Ruark Swordsman loudspeakers with Musical Fidelity X-LPSIX-A2 amp and Vienna Haydn loudspeakers. Music was bass light, so I added a REL Storm which transformed the whole soundstage. CDs are fine from my Arcam CD72 but vinyl on my Linn Axis/Akito/K9 was a disaster - there was no detail or presence. This appeared to be due to worn arm bearings, so I

replaced the deck with a Rega P25 fitted with a Dynavector 10XIV. The detail is now excellent but there is no excitement - Tina Turner's 'Steamy Windows' sounds too laid back! So I tried my son's pre-amp, a WAD Phono 2, which improved things but still didn't quite hit the button. Please can you help me to regain the excitement so that I want to listen to vinyl? Where have I gone wrong?

David Cocks

The Akito and K9 did give good, solid bass and those Tina Turner tracks always had plenty of it to exercise the stylus. One of the fastest, punchiest MMs I have ever heard - and loved! - was the Shure V15VxMR. Forget the old V15 "soft" sound; the VxMR is more like a Decca London done properly - and I suspect it was designed to be. This thing has real get up and go - fantastic. You may be interested to know that Shure recently took over its UK distributors and are re-organising things to make their still-alive cartridge range more visible to all those who love vinyl. Formerly trading as HW International you can now find them as Shure Distribution on the 'net, or 'phone 020 8808 2222 (London).

If you want to go further then get a Garrard 401 with Rega RB300 (at least) and then consider an Ortofon MC10 Supreme. This Moving Coil (MC) is also fast and punchy, yet crystal clear in an MC manner (phone Henley Design on 01235 511160). The Garrard, possessing powerful rim drive, has a sense of grip and speed that should bring a smile to your face. You will hear a little hiss using a valve phono stage; a super-quiet solid-state design is needed if you want to eliminate it completely. **NK**

ALRIGHT, I'M TIGHT!

When my Musical Fidelity A1 finally went into meltdown a year ago I acquired a Naim 32-5/140 combination from my local dealer. After spending years seemingly listening to music with cotton-wool in my ears, the Naim amps were a real blast of fresh air and the subsequent addition of a HiCap helped even more. However my initial enthusiasm has worn off a little and I find the sound a bit harsh and lacking in bass. I've since tried a few different amp combinations (Naim 135s, Unison Research Unico, Kora Explorer, MF3a & MF P180, Audio Research D130 and Kinshaw preamp) and the only one that delivered any real improvement in the bass area through my Monitor Audio MA352s was the D130 albeit at the

expense of a somewhat laidback sound.

I'd be really grateful for some advice as to whether I should stick with the Naim amps and go for a warmer front end (Linn LP12?) to replace my Systemdek IIX/ RB250/ 540MkII, and Marantz CD player to replace my Naim CD3. Or should I bin the amps and look at something from the Audio Research range? Valves?

Whatever I get will have to be second-hand due to limited funds (alright, I'm tight!). I know the MA352s are not particularly bass heavy in their original form but mine have been modified by an engineer with an additional driver in each cabinet, custom crossovers and a whole load of modifications to the inside of the cabinets. They now sound very clear and nimble but are just waiting to be partnered with the right equipment.

Mike Farrow

In a sense, valves would give you an immediate injection of warmth, but firstly you'd miss your Naim amps' speed and zest (especially as this is what you loved after switching from the Musical Fidelity A1), and secondly you'd struggle to find a decent tube amp that does what you want second-hand - methinks you'd have to buy a new Unison Research S6 (£1,625) which has much of the speed of Naims with a sweeter and richer sound. So the easiest solution would be the front end - and a Linn LP12 would be ideal. Pick up an early nineties example with Ittok II tonearm for a few hundred quid, and have a Cirkus kit fitted by your local dealer, along with a Goldring G1042 (£120) cartridge and you should find things take a distinct turn for the warmer. An ideal digital partner would be Marantz's CD6000 KI Signature, which has a similarly 'plump' tone. **DP**

SINGAPORE SLAM

I live in Singapore and recently bought a DVD player (the 'local' version of a Pioneer DV656). The TV is a UK-bought Philips 28PW6006. And this is where the problem arises. In Asia, SCART connections are not very common: the TV has SCART and conventional 75 ohm (?) inputs whilst the DVD player has standard video, S-video and component video outputs. Is there anyway in which I can connect the DVD Component outputs to the TV's SCART input - thereby improving the (already good) picture quality? I am currently using the standard video output to a SCART input. If no, what about the s-video output - can I input that via the SCART?

For CD playback, I have an 'old'

Marantz CD72 and it may interest you to know that I think that it sounds more musical than the new DVD player does (even my wife agrees)!

On a separate issue, I am planning to replace my amp (currently an Onix OA21). The speakers are Linn Keilidhs. I am considering a Cyrus 8 amp but the Singapore Linn dealer does not stock Cyrus kit (and vice-versa) so I cannot audition the combination. Would you recommend the Cyrus amp with the Linn speakers? This would then be followed, funds permitting, with a Cyrus 6 CD player. Your advice would be much welcomed.

Stephen W. Cook, PhD
Asia Pacific, GlaxoSmithKline Pte Ltd

This is the set I use and it accepts and works well with S-Video into Scart, but not Component, which is an altogether different proposition.

The DV-656 can play CD, DVD Audio and SACD, in addition to compressed audio (Dolby and DTS). Which of these sounds less musical than CD? For my money they are all different; CD will sound thinner and flatter than a dedicated hi-fi CD player; DVD Audio can sound hard and challenging, or dramatic and clean, according to your tastes and the recording; SACD is commonly smooth and dynamic. With SACD in particular though, a lot of material is re-hashed 24/48, meaning it's smooth (24 bit resolution) but has the same bandwidth as CD (i.e. 21kHz). They don't tell you this on the label but my spectrum analyser clearly shows the tell-tale brick wall cut off at 21kHz. Naughty really.

At present I find DVD-A and SACD recordings differ widely in sound quality, according to source material; neither has the consistency of CD. But this is a good thing. At last the medium is able to reveal recording quality instead of imposing its own (1970s!) quality limitations. It's early days technology and sound wise; studios can barely keep up with the fast pace of change in consumer electronics so don't write off DVD Audio or SACD. I love some of it - 6.1 and 7.1 is a stunning experience when done properly, which is neither difficult nor expensive.

The Cyrus 8 is a pretty sleek performer with PSX-R. It sounds a little constrained (for the money) without it. Tight bass should suit the Keilidhs, bringing a useful sense of control. I haven't tried the combination but don't see problems. To play CD the Cyrus 6 is as good a choice as any in this context. **NK**

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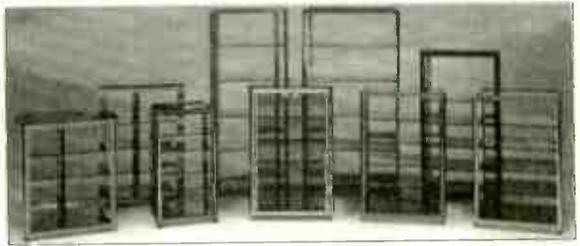
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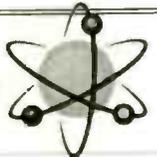
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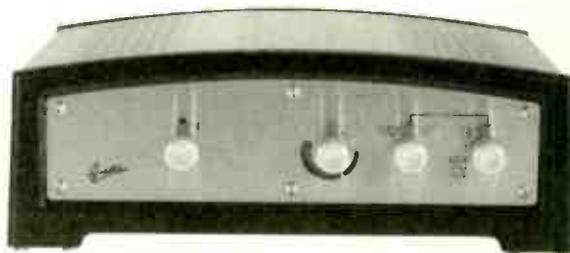
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GNLM 05/04

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AC-2 Power cable compare with products costing ten times as much, then decide

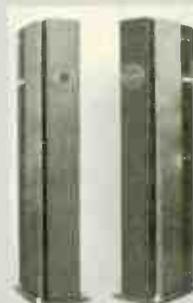
SILVERFUSE is a near alloy of silver and copper. IT IS NOT SILVER PLATED OR SILVER CLAD Plating (or clad, which is the same thing as plating) causes a dioding effect when signal is passed through resulting in brightness and distortion. The Silverfuse process starts with seven nines OFHC copper wire with a diameter that is slightly larger than the required size. It is then pulled through a trough of molten silver. The wire with a silver deposit, is then forced through a compacting die where it is subject to tremendous pressure. The silver and the high purity copper are fused together into a near alloy. The compacting fusion also reduces the wire diameter to the desired size. No dioding subsequently occurs with this process. The result provides for the benefits of silver; which are excellent definition and clarity, with the high purity copper benefits of warmth and mellowness.



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FRT-4 (Phono Trans)	£500	£198
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GARRARD 401 + SME 3009II+ V15III	£950	£595
GOLDRING Lenco GL85 white	£175	£ 75
KOETSU CARTRIDGE	1495	695
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LINN Basic Turntable	£600	£345
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LINN LP12 Rosewood/Akito	£750	£894
LINN LP12 Afr/SME3009III	£1250	£ 595
LINN LP12 BASIK/K9	1000	578
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Itock/Ortofon Kontrapunkt		
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MICHELL Gyrodec	£870	£740
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PROJECT Debut Debut 2	£150	£ 98
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LINN MIMIK CD	1000	348
LINN Numerik DAC/Karik CD Trans	£3350	£2296
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MAGNAPLANAR MG3.3	£2995
MARTIN LOGAN Aeon (As new)	
MARTIN LOGAN CLSII (walnut)	

McINTOSH ML-1 (Rare circa '65)	£500	£298
MERIDIAN M3 Active	£1000	£ 298
MERLIN TSM-SE (Mini)	£1600	£998
MISSION 753 (Rosewood)	£799	£425
MISSION 771E	£195	£135
MISSION 760SE (blk)	£149	£75
MISSION 773 (L.Oak)	£295	£195
MONITOR AUDIO R252 (Teak)	£195	£98
MONITOR AUDIO Monitor 2 (Rose)	£400	£195
MONITOR AUDIO Studio12	£1200	£596
MONITOR AUDIO Studio 14 (Marked)	£900	£2995
MORDAUNT SHORT Ci (centre)	£295	£145
MORDAUNT SHORT 40i	£650	£295
MORREL Bass Master Oak (Marked)	£1600	£599
MUSE 15" OAK SUBWOOFERS (2)	5000EA	2148EA
NAIM SBL	£1500	£898
PINK TRIANGLE Ventral	£1500	£750
PMC DB1 incl. stands (as new)	£795	£595
PROAC Tablette 2000	£649	£495
PROAC Super Towers	£1000	£595
PRO-AC Response 2 (cherry)	£1895	£998
PRO-AC Studio 125 (Cherry)	£1050	£695
PRO-AC Studio 200	2000	995
QNR Monitors (Black)	£1200	£369
QUAD ESL-63 (Teak)	£3000	£1295
QUAD 21L	695	495
RED ROSE R3	£3500	£2228
REGA XEL (Black)	£990	£640
REL STORM	750	498
REVOX Elegance (silver)	£450	£376
ROKSAN Ojan 3 Black	£995	£398
RUARK Broadsword (Rosewood)	£700	£329
SNELL III Inc. Stands		£378
SNELL J3 High Sensitivity Monitors	£770	£349
SONUS FABER Concertino's	£595	£475
SONUS FABER Grand Piano	£1695	£1196
SONUS FABER Amati	£11,800	£7996
SONUS FABER Electa Amator II		
Inc. ironwood stands	2800	1796
SOUNDLAB Dynastats	£3200	£1100
Soundlab A1 electrostatics (solid cherry/white grilles)	13500	7498
SPENDOR S20 (Black)	£510	£296
SPENDOR S3 Speakers	£650	£455
SPENDOR C3 Centre Speakers	£450	£400
TANNOY Berkeley	£1000	£498
TANNOY Buckingham	£5000	£2495
TANNOY M3	£200	£ 75
TANNOY DC2000	£200	£ 95
TARGET RS4 (circa 1977) scratched	£250	£125
TARGET TM1 (circa 1977) scratched	£200	£ 75
TDL STUDIO 1	1000	395
THIEL CS2.2 Discoloured veneer	£2500	£896
TRIANGLE Icare	£1500	£345
TRIANGLE Comete XS	£450	£295
WHARFDALE 519	£275	£ 95
WILSON AUDIO 6.1 (Black)	£21,500	£9996
WILSON GRAND SLAM X1 (SERIES II PLATINUM)	69000	39998
WILSON BENESCH Act One (upgraded to incl. tactic drivers)	£6999	£4498
YAMAHA NS-C80	£120	£75
ZINGALI Colosseum Sub/Sat	770	568

● Tuners Tape Misc

ACOUSTIC RESEARCH RD-06	£200	£48
BEYER DT990 Headphones	£200	£98
DBX 118 noise reduction unit	£250	£ 65
DENON DRM 22	£200	£55
DENON TU450L	£150	£ 65
DENON DR-M07	£150	£65
DENON D250 Mini System	£1000	£295
Dynalab FT101A Tuner	1400	698
LEAK FM Stereophetic Tuner	£150	£75
Linn Pekin	545	376
LUXMAN ST50 (Rare)	£900	£555
LUXMAN T210	£295	£145
LUXMAN T50A	£695	£395
MAGNALAB 101 Tuner		POA
M.I.I. 330 1m pair Phono	£475	£338
M.I.I. 330 1.5m pair Phono	£520	£358
M.I.I. 750 3m pair Speaker / Spade	£1000	£678
MYRIAD T30 Tuner	£250	£128
NAD 402 Tuner	£125	£ 68
NAIM NAT 01	£2500	£1298
NAIM NAT 03		£498
NAKAMICHI 480 black	£495	£196
NAKAMICHI 481Z (Silver)	£495	£166
NAKAMICHI 600	£400	£198

QUALITY HI-FI WANTED Cash ... Trade-in ... Commission Sales



X-Demo & Second Hand Items – August 2004

	Was	Now			
CD players DACs & Transports			Siltech SPX10 0.5m mains cable New Boxed	105 55	
dCS Purcell Upsampler Non Firewire S/H	2999	1695	Siltech LS 25 2x 2.5m speaker cable x-demo	499 249	
dCS Delius 24/192 DAC Non Firewire S/H	5999	2995	Spectral MH-330 15ft Interconnect RCA-RCA x-demo	800 499	
Krell KAV280CD x-demo	3999	2999	Spectral MH-750 15ft Interconnect RCA-RCA x-demo	1400 799	
Mark Levinson No 360s x-demo	7495	4499	Spectral MI-350 20 ft Speaker cable x-demo	2100 1199	
Naim CD2 Player S/H	1989	975	Tuners & Tape Decks, Power Supplies		
Micromega DUO CD3/DUO PRO S/H	2799	999	AKG C1000 Condenser Mic S/H	241 110	
Primare D30.2 CD Player "B Stock"	1500	995	Magnum Dynalab FT-R Remote Switcher for FT101A/Etude (New&Boxed)	450 279	
Theta Pro Basic II DAC with Oscom/Balanced S/H	2990	1195	Primare T21 RDS Tuners "B Stock"	600 399	
Theta Generation V Balanced S/H	6290	2499	Bargains Under £100		
Thule Spirit CD balanced O/P x-demo	900	449	Arcam Alpha II CD Player S/H	N/A 79	
Unison Research Unico Valve CD x-demo	1195	895	Midland Audio X-change is looking for:-		
Turntables Tonearms & Cartridges			Audio Research		
Clearaudio Solution/RB300 x-demo	1595	999	Krell		
Graaf GM70 Valve Phono Stage x-demo	2999	1599	Mark Levinson		
Kuzma Stabi/Stogi S Turntable New& Boxed	1295	1299	Naim Audio		
Lehmann Audio Black Cube SE New& Boxed	650	449	Dcs		
McCormack Phono Stage New and Boxed	650	399	Wadia		
Rega Planar 3/Heed PSU/Bias S/H	630	269	cash paid call John Roberts: 01562 731100		
Preamplifiers			Suppliers and installers of High Quality Audio Systems		
Electrocompaniet EC 4.7 Preamplifier x-demo	1295	995	47 Laboratory	J M Labs	
Gryphon Allegro/Sonata Dual Mono Preamplifier x-demo	10500	4999	Accuphase	Krell	
Cyrus 7.5a Preamplifier S/H	795	479	ATC	Kuzma	
Amplifiers			Audio Physic	Lavardin	
Bel canto EVO2i Integrated x-demo	3195	2499	Audio Research	Mark Levinson	
Bel canto EVO2 Poweramplifier x-demo	2892	2299	Avalon Accoustics	Martin Logan	
Conrad Johnson Premier 140 Valve Power Amplifier S/H	7000	4750	Avid	Michell	
Gryphon S100 Class A stereo power amplifier S/H	N/A	2500	bel canto	Nagra	
Graaf GM100 Valve Power Amplifier x-demo	4500	3250	Benz Micro	Primare	
Quad 606 Poweramplifier S/H	N/A	349	Cardas	ProAc	
Primare A30.1 Integrated B stock new and boxed	1500	995	Clearaudio	Rega	
Red Rose Sprit Integrated x-demo	1000	649	Conrad Johnson	Siltech	
Sirius D200 (Now Gamut) S/H	3299	1599	dCS	Sonus Faber	
Loudspeakers			Densen	Spectral	
BKS 107MKII Supreme Hybrid Ribbon Speakers S/H	1795	995	DNM/Reson	Nordost	
Dynaudio Contour 1.3 MKII Birds Eye maple Latest Version S/H	1200	849	Electrocompaniet	Sugden	
DynaStands Master SE S/H	175	119	Finite Elemente	Transparent Audio	
Martin Logan CLSII Anniversary Electrostatics 7 months Old S/H	6700	4795	Graaf	Verity Audio	
Rega Jura Floorstanding Black Ash S/H	450	199	Gryphon	Wadia	
Sonus R4 Stands S/H	329	199	MAX has moved..		
Target R2 Stands S/H	379	215	www.midlandaudiox-change.co.uk		
Townshend Glastonbury II Black S/H	1800	699	call John Roberts Tel 01562 731100		
Verity Audio Fidelio Piano Lacquer x-demo	7995	4499	or Fax 01562 730228		
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Chord Chorus 1m XLR S/H	199	109			
Madrigal CZ Gel 1.5m Balanced new&boxed	599	299			
Madrigal MDC 2 1m Fatboy Digital cable new&boxed	319	159			
Madrigal MDC 2 0.5m Fatboy Digital cable new&boxed	279	139			
QED QNEXII 1m RCA-RCA Interconnect S/H	N/A	22			
Siltech SQ58G3 2x4m Balanced Interconnect x-demo	2370	1499			
Siltech SPX10 1m Mains Cable New Boxed	140	79			

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Lowther Dual position Acoustas lovely birch faced ply PM6A	£550
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Rogers BBC LS3/5A's teak finish very good clean condition	£650
Chartwell BBC LS3/5A's beautiful	£650
Rogers LS3/5A's black	£275
Epos ES 11	£375
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AUDIONOTE P2-SE POWER AMP	£650	£3450
JADIS JPS-2 TWD BOX PRE (WAS £8000)	£3450	£2795
AUDIO RESEARCH LS-22 PRE WITH REMOTE UPGRADE & RE-VALVE	MINT/BOXED	£2795
AUDIO RESEARCH SP-9 MKII	MINT/BOXED	£995
CONRAD JOHNSON PV-4	EXCLT	£495
DAKLEY IMAGE SIX AMERICAN VALVE PRE-AMP INC. PHONO STAGE	REDUCED	£395
UNISON RESEARCH CSP PRE AMP WITH PHONO STAGE	MINT	£695
AUDIO SYNTHESIS PASSION PRE	MINT/BOXED	£350

SOLID STATE

JEFF ROWLAND MODEL 5 STEREO AMP	EXCLT	TBA
KRELL HTS HOME THEATRE STANDARD PRE AMP/PROCESSOR (£7000)	REDUCED	£2250
MARK LEVINSON. NO.23 POWER AMP (200 WATTS/CHANNEL) X 2 MINT/BOXED	EACH	£2795
MARK LEVINSON NO.27 POWER AMP	MINT/BOXED	£2250
COUNTERPOINT SA-20	REDUCED	£895
DENON P0A-6600 MONDBLOCS	MINT/BOXED	£850
AVI-2000 MONDBLOCS (150 WATTS)	MINT/BOXED	£795
ROTEL RB-993 THX CERTIFIED AMP 3 X 200 WATTS	MINT	£995
MARANTZ SC-22 PRE & MA-22 MONDBLOCS	REDUCED	£1100
CONRAD JOHNSON PF-1 PRE INC. PHONO STAGE	REDUCED	£995
ROKSAN LS-2 PRE AMP	MINT	£375
DRELLIE SA-100R REMOTE AUDIOPHILE AMP	REDUCED	£375
CYRUS STRAIGHTLINE	MINT	£275
PINK TRIANGLE INTEGRAL 3 MONTHS USE (£4000)	REDUCED	£2495
PIONEER C-73 PRE & M-73 POWER AMPS	MINT/BOXED	£795
QUAD 606 POWER AMP	£350	£350
THORENS TTA CLASS A POWER AMP	MINT	£450
DENONPMA-900V HEAVY INTEGRATED AMP PHONO STAGE/VIDEO INPUTS ETC.	VCG	£275

CD

PERPETUAL TECHNOLOGIES SIGNATURE-2 PA-3/PA-1 /MODWRIGHT PSU	BRAND NEW/BOXED	£1995
WADIA WT-3200 TRANSPORT & DM X-32 DAC	MINT/BOXED	£1795
ACUPHASE DP-80 TRANSPORT AND MATCHING DAC.(EXTREMELY RARE)	REDUCED	£2250
TECHNICS SL-2100DS-X1000 FLAGSHIP TRANSPORT & DAC (GOLD/WALNUT)	REDUCED	£1795
THETA CARMAN CD/DVD TRANSPORT	MINT/BOXED	£1795
THETA PEARL TRANSPORT	REDUCED	£750
MARANTZ CDA-94 TRANSPORT (AUDI SYN.MDD. AT&T/CDAX)	REDUCED	£575
ADIONOTE CDT ZERO TRANSPORT	MINT/BOXED	£375
AUDIONOTE DAC-1X SIGNATURE	MINT/BOXED	£595
THETA DS PRO GEN III AT&T VERSION	REDUCED	£1795
THETA DS PRO BASIC-11 DAC.	REDUCED	£1095
MONRID 188 DAC & SEPERATE PSU.	REDUCED	£395
MSB LINK DAC-3 24/96 ETC	MINT/BOXED	£395
ROTEL RCD-991 BALANCED OUT ADJUSTABLE DITHER ETC.	MINT	£495
PIONEER PD-91	REDUCED	£375
THORENS TCD CD PLAYER	MINT	£550
AMC CD8a BALANCED & PHONO OUTPUTS	BRAND NEW/BOXED	£145
TECHNICS SLPS 900	VCG	£145

VINYL

CONRAD JOHNSON EF-1 LEGENDRY PHONO STAGE	MINT/BOXED	£1095
LEHMAN BLACK CUBE SE (RETAIL £650?)	BRAND NEW/BOXED	£450
MCCORMACK MICRO DRIVE PHONO STAGE	EX DIS/BOXED	£550
DENSEN DRIVE MC. PHONO STAGE	MINT	£275
DENSEN DRIVE M.C. PHONO STAGE XPS.PSU	MINT	£325

MISC/TUNERS/TAPE

NAKAMICHI DR-3	MINT/BOXED	£250
SONY 3000ES SHOEBOX SIZE GOLD TUNER	MINT/BOXED	£195
DENON TU-600 TUNER	EXCLT	£99
MERIDIAN MSR SYSTEM REMOTE	BOXED	£50

LOUDSPEAKERS

YAMAHA NS-1000M & MATCHING STANDS	MINT	£850
SOUNDLAB MILLENIUM FULL RANGE ELECTROSTATICS (£9300)	EX DEM/BOXED	£5250
WILSDN 5.1 SYSTEM BLACK CRATED ETC	REDUCED	£6495
BKS 107 MK II SUPREME EXDEM	REDUCED	£1250
MARTIN LDGAN CLS11Z & KINERGETICS SW-ROD SUBWOOFERS/X-DVER	REDUCED	£5250
KLIPSCH CORNER HORNS 104 DB BIRDS EYE MAPLE VENEER FANTASTIC!	£3750	£1250
MARTIN LOGAN AERIOUS I	MINT/BOXED	£1250
TAG MACLAREN CALLIOPE	RING	£995
ALDN 11 OPEN BAFFLE FLOORSTANDERS	REDUCED	£1075
LIVING VOICE AUDITORIUM . EX DEM (CHERRY)	REDUCED	£595
CELESTION A-2 FLOORSTANDERS	REDUCED	£550
REGA XEL (WALNUT)	REDUCED	£750
KELLY KT-3 HIGH 95 DB SENSITIVITY CHERRY VENEER	MINT/BOXED	£1095
INFINITY KAPPA-8 REFERENCE	REDUCED	£1350
SHELL C MK-IV AMERICAN DAK VERY RARE/GDDD	REDUCED	£375
EPOS ES-14 WITH STANDS	EXCLT/BOXED	£595
BOSE 901 MK.IV & MATCHING EQUALISER (RECENTE700 SERVICE)	EXCLT	£695
CASTLE HOWARD-2 PREMIUM BEECH FINISH	REDUCED	£395
CASTLE AVON FLOORSTANDERS	VCG	£375
CELESTION SL 600 AEROLAM CABS	EXCLT	£225
ACOUSTIC ENERGY AE-109	VCG	£175
CELESTION DITTON 25 S	AS NEW	£350
ACOUSTIC ENERGY ASW FB-110 SUBWOOFER	VCG	£450
REL STORM-1 SUBWOOFER	£850	£225
TRIANGLE ANTALS MATCHING CENTRE CHANNEL & 2 REAR SURROUNDS	EX.DISPLAY	£225

RACKS/STANDS

SOUNDSTYLE ST-105/ SILVER/BLACK	EX.DISPLAY	£195
SOUNDSTYLE XS 105 S SHELF	EX DISPLAY	£175
SOUNDSTYLE XS 100 4 SHELF	EX.DIS	£95
SOUND ORGANIZATION Z-140		

CABLES

LOUDSPEAKER CABLE	BRAND NEW PACKAGED (EACH PAIR)	£1195
XLO 7.1 SIGNATURE 7 FT PAIR X 2	AS NEW BOXED	£795
PS.AUDIO X-STREAM 3 METRE BI-WIRE	S NEW BOXED ETC	£795
TARA LABS PRIME 1800 18 FEET PAIR BI-WIRE A	EX.DIS	£795
DIAMOND HI SILVER CABLES 3 METRE PAIR LOCKING 4MM PLUGS & 3 METRE PAIR SPADES	REDUCED	£795
MIT MH-750 12 FT.PAIR BI-WIRE	REDUCED	£795
NIRVANA AUDIO SL-SERIES 2.3 METRE PAIR EX DEM. FACTORY TERMINATED		
VAN DEN HUL REVELATION 2 METRE STEREO PAIR TERMINATED VDH. BANANAS	EX.DIS.	£950
VAN DEN HUL REVELATION 2 METRE PAIR TERMINATED VDH. SPADES		£500
QED GENESIS 3 METRE PAIR FAC.TERMINATED-AIRLDCS	AS NEW BOXED	£295
XLO REFERENCE 6 FT. PAIR TERMINATED SPADES/BANANAS		£275
TRANSPARENT WAVE 200 2 METRE PAIR		£175
CARDAS HEXLINK 2 METRE PAIR (FACTORY TERMINATED)	REDUCED	£250
AUDIONOTE AN-SP 2 METRE PAIR (FACTORY TERMINATED)	REDUCED	£325
AUDIONOTE AN-L 4 METRE PAIR (FACTORY TERMINATED)		£225
AUDIONOTE AN-L 3 METRE PAIR (FACTORY TERMINATED SILVER SPADES		£225
AUDIOQUEST CRYSTAL HYPERLITZ 2 METRE BI-WIRE TERMINATED		£75
JPS LABS ULTRA CONDUCTOR 8 FT.PAIR AS NEW (FAC.TERMINATED)		£100
LFD 3 METRE PAIR	NEW BOXED	£150
GOERTZ M-1 3 METRE PAIR (FACTORY TERMINATED)		£150
MUSICAL FIDELITY NU-VISTA 2 METRE PAIR FAC.TERMINATED (VERY RARE)		£225

INTERCONNECT

HARMONIC TECH MAGIC LINK ONE 1 METRE EX DEM	REDUCED	£595
SILVER ARROW 1 METRE BALANCED XLR DEM USE ONLY (£1250)		£650
ACOUSTIC ZEN SILVER SIGNATURE		£495
BLACK RHODIUM BALANCED 1 METRE (£997)	BRAND NEW	£675
BLACK RHODIUM PHONO 1 (£597) METRE	BRAND NEW	£475
XLO 3 METRE PAIR (PHONO) EX.DEM		£225
AUDIOQUEST DIAMOND 2 X 2 METRE PAIRS	£550 EACH	£450
AUDIOQUEST LAPIS 4 METRE PAIR		£175
AUDIOQUEST LAPIS 1 METRE PAIR	BOXED AS NEW	£225
VAN DEN HUL 0.8 MC GOLD XLR		£50
LFD SPIROLINK 4 FEET PAIR	BOXED	£195 EACH
NORDOST RED DAWN 2 X 1 METRE PAIRS	BOXED	£325
NORDOST RED DAWN 2 METRE XLR		£225
NEOTECH PROFESSIONAL CABLE .0.5 METRE BOXED ALMOST NEW		£225
BLACK RHODIUM SYMPHONY 0.5 METRE/1 METRE	BRAND NEW PACKED	£50/65
BLACK RHODIUM CONCERTO AWARD WINNING CABLE 0.5/1 METRE	BRAND NEW PACKED	£80/100
SUPRA EFF-ISL 2.5 FT	NEW/PACKED	£50

DIGITAL

MADRIGAL MDC-1 AES-EBU 1 METRE	BRAND NEW/BOXED	£225
TARA LABS CS AIR REFERENCE AES-EBU	BRAND NEW/BOXED	£250
XLO 4.1 BRAND NEW ONE METRE-£175 2 METRE		£225
NIRVANA 1.5 METRE NEW		£225

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 B+W 80" Nautilus Speakers £5750
 Revel F50 Speakers (new) £4495
 Wharfedale Diamond II Speakers £140
 Elx Floor Standing Liberty 5+ Speakers £2495
 Orchid .W/O Speakers, Ex Demo £150
 B+W CDM1 Speakers £395
 Mission 792 (Stand Mount Model) (Black Ash) Just Reduced From £250
 Audio Physics tempo speaker £595
 Revel LE1 Sub Amp Plus 2 Sub 15's £999
 Eltax Symphony floor standing speakers £395

PRE AMPS
 Burmester 808 mk3 Pre Amp £3495
 Conrad Johnson 16LS Pre Amp £3995
 Mark Levinson ML255 Phono Stage £2995
 Proceed PAV Pre Amp £1395
 Sory 1000 ESD Digital Pre Amp £150
 Conrad Johnson PV14L Pre Amp £1595
 Naim Nac 92 Pre Amp £350
 Exposure 11 612 Pre Amp & Power Supply Just Reduced from £900
 Adcom GTP 450 Tuner/Pre-Amp £350

AMPLIFIERS
 Yamaha CA1010 Integrated Amp £395
 Accuphase E307 Integrated Amp Unused £2295
 Mark Levinson 334 Power Amp £3395

Mark Levinson 431 Power Amp (our demonstrator) List Price £5995 Our Price £4995
 Heybrook Signatures System, Pre Amp, Power Amp & CD Player £795
 Mark Levinson 333 Power Amp £3850
 Mark Levinson 20.5 Ref Mono Blocks, immaculate condition & boxed £4995
 Audio Research D200 Power Amp £1695
 Hafler DH-200 Amp £125
 Michell Alecto Amplifier £395
 Mark Levinson 383 Int Amp £4495
 Conrad Johnson MF2500A Amplifier £1595
 Boulder 102 AE Power Amp £2995
 Chord 1200 Milano Blocks £895
 Musical Fidelity P180 Power Amps With MF3a Pre Amp & Psa £350
 Naim NAP 903 power amp £395
 Revel LE1 Sub Amp Plus 2 Sub 15's £999
 Audionote Neiro Mono amps £395
 Adcom GFA 5300 Power Amp £350

CD PLAYERS & TRANSPORT
 Accuphase DP55V CD Player Unused £2095
 Accuphase DP67 CD Player Unused £2995
 Mark Levinson Ref CD Transport & Dac £3950
 Mark Levinson 37 Cd Transport £2750

MISCELLANEOUS
 Nakamichi 1000 Tri Tracer Cassette Deck £395
 Delek Black Slink Cable £75
 Audio Note (Nondo) Digital Silver Lit cable 1mtr: boxed, mint condition, price new £700, our price £475
 Zett Acoustics Hologram II 18m BiWire Pair (new) Normal Price £1600 Our Price £1200
 Selection of high quality Kontakt Audio Cables, bal & single ended £65
 Hitachi AM-FM Radio Tuner FT-5590 mk2 £150
 Sony Stereo Cassette Deck TC-R502ES £150

Sennheiser T80 Headphones £60
 Lektrostatics CDW-820 Multisystem Converter £125
 Nordost Solar Wind Bi-Wire Single Run 4mtr £75
 Shunyata Ex Demo 1m Artes rca interconnects with locking connectors normal retail £800 our price £425
 Shunyata Ex Demo 1.5 Artes rca interconnects with locking connectors normal retail £800 our price £495
 Shunyata Ex Demo 3m Artes rca interconnects with locking connectors normal retail £1500 our price £995
 Transparent 1.5 mtr digital interconnect £195
 Pioneer Elite DVDCD Player, Region 1 DVD £4495
 Yamaha DVD Player S795 £1595
 Star 4040 Headphones £1595
 Imiti Kondo KSL LP Interconnect (Normal Price £2000) £2995
 Yamaha CI-810 Am/Fm Tuner £895
 Nakamichi bx2 cassette deck £350
 Star SR007 omega ref (SR117 head phone & SRW007) dual triode) Normal Retail £2995 £1995
 Audionote (Kondo) 3mtr pair SP2 speaker cable £595
 Audio Note (Kondo) KSL-LP Silver IIG interconnect 1 mtr pair £350

TURNABLES, CARTRIDGES & LINEARMS
 Selection of brand new discounted cartridges
 Rega Planar 3 Turntable/RB250 £195
 Michell Gyrodeck Turntable with Linn Ittok-LV11 Arm £995
 Koetsu Urush Gokel Unused BARGAIN £90A
 Koetsu Ref Unused BARGAIN £90A
 Michell gyrodeck with qc power supply £395
 Verlier Ebony Wood arm board Normal Retail £800 £425

DACS
 Pink Triangle Ordinal Dac 1307 Filter £395
 Mark Levinson 366 Dac £1995
 CEC DX51 MK2 DAC with CEC TL51 Transport NEW £1995

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This months Delights	POA.
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THETA GEN V DAC (£6200)	£1795
UNISON RESEARCH 845 MONOBLOCKS PLUS MISTERY ONR PREAMP, (£6200)THE BEST 845s AVAILABLE	£2895
ART AUDIO QUINTET 15 WATTS OF VALVE LOVELINESS!	£650
MARK LEVINSON NO23 PWR AMP (£7000)	£2595
MARK LEVINSON NO38 PREAMP (£4000)	£1795
NAKAMICHI CRIE TWIN HEAD TAPE DECK	£150
DNM 3 BOX BATTERY PREAMP OLD BUT RECENTLY SERVICED(BIT LIKE ME)	£495
KRELL KAV 300I INTEGRATED AMP	£1295
DPA ENLIGHTENMENT PRE/PWR	£695
DPA ENLIGHTENMENT PRE(REMOTE)	£395
MERIDIAN DSP PREAMP/DAC THINGY(£2700)	£695
THETA DATA BASIC,PLUS PRO-GEN V DAC (£8200,BOTH JUST SERVICED MINT BOXED)	£2295
CEC DX51/3 DAC (3 MONTHS)	£650
CEC TL51 BELT DRIVE TRANS (3 MONTHS)	£895
PERPETUAL TECHNOLOGIES P-3A DAC SIGNATURE UPGRADE(NEW,WARRANTY)	£895
MONOLITHIC PWR SUPPLY FOR ABOVE NEW,SIGNATURE UPGRADE	£595
KRELL KAV300IIL INTEGRATED (300 WATTS A CHANNEL!) DRIVE ANYTHING! (£3900)	£1995

well thats it for this month!! sorry not much here but we've
 been selling like crazy!! watch this space next month for
 more high end bargains!!

Similar high quality components always required,please ring or leave details
 via email,call us last we try harder!
 Low cost shipping available,demos by appointment only.
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**INDEPENDENT
 ADVICE**

There can be little doubt that most Hi-Fi enthusiasts go round in circles trying to achieve 'that' sound, and in the process waste an awful amount of money. Demonstrations in shops are invariably a waste of time, as indeed is visiting various Hi-Fi shows. The rooms, which account for a large proportion of the final sound, are so different, the speakers will not sound the same, if you should get them home, and let's face it, you should never buy a speaker without hearing it in your own room! If less critical with electronics, the same policy should still apply as this affects the final sound balance of the speaker sound. At V'Audio we specialise in good value equipment and only stock a selected range from AVI, ATC, ALON, ESLAB etc. plus a range of superb projectors/screens for those expanding into the home cinema scene, which offers superb sound on music DVD's, which is one of the most exciting areas of music around at the moment. We are able to visit your home and show you what can be achieved.

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SPEAKERS Price guide

LEAK. 20-75 speakers choice of two pairs, immaculate, restored condition, they stand me in for £1000 a pair so substantial offers please, for these magnificent, superb sounding speakers. Warning they are big!

LEAK. 20-60s These speakers are in first class condition, in original boxes and wrapping including leaflets and instructions. £120.

LEAK. 20-30s choice of two pairs, £75.

BOSTON ACOUSTICS. A40 originals, £50.

TANNOY CHEVIOTTS. rebuilt dual concentrics, cabinets a bit scruffy. £250.

J.B.L. MODEL 4311. professional control monitors. in BBC grey. £250.

MISSION. 710s. rebuilt drive units complete with original box instructions, and home made stands. £75.

PHILLIPS. 3 way hybrids, £25. Large, Czechoslovakian 3 way speakers, in bits, interesting project! £offers.

WHARFEDALE. Ditton 2 or 3, one only, £10.

CASSETTE DECKS

TEAC. V 870. 3 head, same as V 970, but without dbx. complete with box and book. £80.

TEAC. V 880 RX. dual autoreverse, top of the range, box & book. £80.

DENON. DR-M 44 HX. 3 head, box & book. £80.

DENON. DR-M 33 HX. 3 head, box & book. £80.

DENON. DR-M 20. 3 head, box & book. £75.

DENON. DR-M 10.HX 2 head £70.

TRIO. KX 780. 3 head, £80.

AIWA. WX 220. dual 2x hi-speed dubs both sides at once. £90.

MARANTZ. CP 430. 3 head PROFESSIONAL portable. £270.

TURNTABLES

THORENS. TD 125 with very special modified S.M.E. arm, straight titanium arm, and ball or roller bearing pivot, Audiotechnica AT-F5/ OCC.

cartridge, in nice possibly S.M.E. plinth with lid. knocks spots off Linn!! £275.

THORENS. TD 150. Thorens arm no lid, model Linn based on. Rega RB 300, arm available if required. as is £75.

GARRARD.401. in S.M.E. plinth, S.M.E. 3009, arm Shure V15 cartridge, superb condition. £350.

TUNERS.

DENON. TU260L. choice of two both mint with book. £70.

HITACHI. FT5500 mk2. £70.

HITACHI. FT4500. £60.

LEAK. 2300. £45.

LEAK. Troughline mk 1 needs sorting. £25.

LEAK. Troughline mk 2 choice of two or thee some working some not, prices vary accordingly. a good one £70.

LEAK. Troughline mk3 a good one £65.

LEAK. Troughline mk3 stereo. a good one £100.

LEAK. Stereopathic! never bothered to find out if this works! £15.

ROGERS. Ravensbrook. not sure this one works. £15.

TRUVOX. choice of two surprisingly good sound! £25.

TELETON. T300 goes with A400 amp. The pair £25.

PIONEER. SX535 Receiver-amplifier. nice. £65.

AMPLIFIERS

LEAK. TL12 point one, pair of genuine BBC in BBC grey, new GEC KT66s interesting history, need reassembly £2750.

LEAK. TL12 point one plus. in gold, all genuine Mullard valves except EF86s which are GEC. superb condition

can be demoed £450.

LEAK. TL12 point one plus. one only graphite, mint! as above. £200.

LEAK. TL25 point one plus. in graphite, All Mullard valves including EL34s except EF 86s, GEC. condition as gold TL12s above. £600.

LEAK. point one mk 1 preamp mono, no front face, condition as seen, pot luck if it works! rarity value only. £30.

LEAK. point one plus preamps, various. good one, £30.

LEAK. point one varislope preamps various mono & stereo. £30.

LEAK. stereo 30. solid state integrated amp good working condition. £30.

LEAK. srereo 30 plus. choice of two, good working condition, in wooden cases, £40.

QUAD. 405 mk2 slightly modified for studio work, mint, box, & instructions. £250.

TOSHIBA. SY335. preamp. £55.

TRIO. KA 2000A. small integrated amp. £35.

NAD. 3020. integrated amp £75.

B.G.H. Systems 250. power amp, professional studio power amp with hi-fi quality. £200.

AUDIOLAB. 8000 P. power amp. mint, box & book £450.

AUDIOLAB. 8000 C. pre-amp. mint, box & book. £400.

TELETON. A 400. integrated, goes with T 300 tuner above, the pair £25.

PIONEER. SX 535 receiver. £65.

THOMANN. T. Amp. TA 2400 PROFESSIONAL PA POWER

AMP. flight-cased new only used three times, 2X 1200 watts into 4 ohms. excellent. £425

OTHER PROFESSIONAL GEAR

T AMP. TA2400. with book. £425

THOMANN. The Box. PA500P. speakers, with soft cases, only used three times, excellent

sound quality. with boxes & book. £450

BEHRINGER. Eurorack UB 2442-FX Pro rack mounted

mixing desk with built in effects. also only used three

times. with microlight. box & book. £335

BEHRINGER. Ultracurve pro. New! box and books. £163

TECHNICS. 31 band stereo graphic equaliser. nice bit if kit, all sliders have individual I.e.ds that

light up when switched on. £125

FLIGHT-CASE. for above, Eurorack, ultracurve, and tech-

nic EQ, including rack-light and drawer. £195

COMPLETE PACKAGE. mounted in flight-case as is now. £750

MICROPHONES

A.K.G. D3700s 2off, new never been out of the boxes. each, £70.

CALREC. CM 1050. studio microphones, just been fully

reconditioned, as new. 6 off in wooden boxes, phantom power

supply available. each. £110

CALREC. phantom power supply for above. £50.

COMPLETE PACKAGE. above, i.e. PPU+6 mics. £650

SONY. ECM77S. lavallier microphone, as new box & book. £100

SONY. ECM 969. stereo microphone, in original case. £55.

MICROPHONE. stnds, each £15.

MICROPHONE. cables, from each £6.

MIXERS

YAMAHA. EMX 300 stereo powered mixer, 12 mic/line in 4

out plus loads of other ins and outs 250 watts into 4 ohms,

good condition, church use only, never gigned! good quality

professional bit of kit this. £450

SAMICK. SM 1200 mixer, 12-2-1. SIMPLE useful mixer. £100

DYNAMIX. 6-2 mixer, £50

REALISTIC. 6-2 mixer, £35

SPEAKER cables. various Offers.

MISCELLANEOUS

TARGET. wall mounted turntable stand. as

new boxed, £65

TARGET. 2tier hi-fi stands X 3 each:- £65

TARGET. low single tier stands X 2 each £65

VALVES. 3 large boxes of assorted valves, pot luck!

each box £100

RECORDS. hundreds of classical LPs take the lot! £150

78s " " " £100

NB above records only ever played on hi-fi equipment so in excellent condition.

RECORDS. non classical LPs and 45s Offers.

CASSETTES. all sorts Offers.

CABLES. loads of mic, audio interconnect, and speaker cables. Offers.

TRANSFORMERS. various including Leak TL 12+ output, Offers.

CONNECTORS. XLR chassis incl. 5 pin male, line, and many others. Offers.

N.B. All above prices are a guide only. If you aim your offer somewhere near you are unlikely to have your offer refused.

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MB137 MULLARO	£42	616G STC	£45	.5UF 500V DUB O/F	£10	150-0-150 7MA FWR		COM-4-5-3A
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EF86 MULLARD	£25	0.5UF 1000V TCC	£15	50H 50MA PARM O/F	£50			
EL34 MULLARD	£80	8UF 200V TCC	£10	2 H 300MA PLESSEY O/F	£20			
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PAIR MONOBLOCK WAD K5881 amps plus KLPP1 pre-amp £500 complete. Also STRDA50ES Sony digital surround receiver Rogers centre and surround speakers - offers. Tel: 01603 867 599 or Email: alan-karen.howard@mailbox.tv (Aug/I)

REGA PLANET II, immaculate, boxed £250. Quad 34, 405, excellent, boxed, £180 each. Castle Richmond speakers, boxed as new £150. Cambridge P110 amplifier £55. Kef 104AB speakers £50. Tel: 01455 822 070 (Aug/I)

LUMLEY REFERENCE 1.5 chrome valve preamp £250. AVI S2000 MP phono preamp £300. Wanted: Single Quad ESL57 under 16000 serial number. Tel: Tom 020 8986 1762 (Aug/I)

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VAN DEN HUL interconnect cable (balanced) Model XLR Integration 0.8 metre, original box, very good condition £120. Tel: 01224 625 928 or Email: barmonte@aol.com (Aug/I)

PINK TRIANGLE Cardinal transport (new laser) £495. Da Capo four filters spares £495. Pye Mozart singe-ended pre/power amplifier, rare £395. Musical Fidelity A1 £100. Nytech 252XD tuner/amp £50. Tel: 01363 83072 (Aug/I)

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SHUNYATA POWERCORDS - Buck Mamba £350. Viper 2 £480. Acoustic Zen Hologram II biwire 3M £650. Isolda DCT300 balanced interconnect £150. Nordost Shiva 2M powercord £170. Black Rhodium Super 25 3ft £45. Tel: 0131 655 4564 (Aug/I)

TIVOLI MODEL One radio white mint £50. Pure Evoke Elgar DAB £60. Cable pair VdH The First Classic £90. Accuphase T109 tuner, quite marked! hence £250. Tel: weekdays 020 8871 5089, othertimes 020 8871 2345 (Aug)

CAIRN NANDA Face Nord pre-amp £275. Sony CDPX3000ES player £175. STS3000ES tuner £75. Teac P700 transport plus D700 DAC £350. Videologic DRX60IES DAB tuner £90. Tel: weekdays 020 8871 5089, othertimes 020 8871 2345 (Aug)

RESOLUTION AUDIO Opus 21 full guarantee, just purchased, house move forces sale (£2850) accept £2525 ono. Quad 22L birdseye maple (£899), accept £710 ono. Both items mint, boxed complete. Demo Yorkshire. Tel: 07821 095771 (Aug/I)

CROWN DC300A Classic power amplifier in superb original condition, ex Greenwich Audio, 2x 150 watts into 8ohms at £450. Tel: 07932 664 480 (Sep/I)

AUDIOQUEST CLEAR + speaker cable 1.5m pair factory terminated silver and OFC Hyperlitz design, well reviewed. I've moved over to a Sugden/Spendor single wire combo. £230 (£650) Also wanted: Pink Triangle lid. Tel: 07931 366 860 (Aug/I)

EXPOSURE VI/VII/VIII amplifiers £395. AR Legend, Linn LVX & A&R P77 £195. Nakamichi CR2e £125. Rotel RT824 tuner £45. Mission DAD7000 £45, all ono. Tel: 07793 117 383 (Surrey) (Aug/I)

RUARK EQUINOX speakers with dedicated stands which include external crossovers and bi-wire terminals. Rare chance to buy these lovely speakers. Mint condition in makers boxes, £750 ono (over £2000 new) Tel: 023 8073 8935 (Aug/I)

PIONEER PD91 Reference CD player, immaculate condition £275. Audiovalve Assistant 35wpc valve amp, pristine condition £750. Tel: 01252 659 058 after 6pm (Aug/I)

RED ROSE Spirit system, amp ribbon speakers, 30 foot cable £700. Rotel RT02 tuner, R/C, £120. Celestion A1 speakers, cherry + stands £350. First Ultimate interconnects £120. Tel: 0121 246 0486 (Aug/I)

RUARK TALISMAN II loudspeakers, cherry finish, excellent condition, superb all rounders, easy amplifier load, £299 ovno. Dual 505/3 turntable, Trio 3030 amplifier - offers. Tel: 01483 834 906 (Guildford) (Aug/I)

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MICHELL ALECTO monoblocks, 125 watts per channel, exceptional power and quality. Superb valve-like sound. Excellent condition. As new £995. Tel: 020 7263 0825 (Aug/1)

REGA PLANET II, immaculate, boxed £250. Quad 34, 405, excellent, boxed, £180 each. Castle Richmond speakers, boxed as new £150. Cambridge P110 amplifier £55. Kef 104AB speakers £50. Tel: 01455 822 070 (Aug/1)

CREEK 4330 Mk2 SE integrated amp £300. Rotel stereo tuner RT-830AL £35. Aiwa 3 head cassette deck AD-F850 £35. Target Audio stand, 4 tier in black £25. All in excellent condition. Tel: 01274 418 322 (Bradford) (Aug)

NHT VT-2 Front speakers, 48"Hx8"Wx18"D. VS-2 centre speaker. HDP2 dipole surround speakers. all black gloss laminate, excellent condition, new £2600+, £1100 ono. Tel: Paul 07753 200 936 evenings (London) (Aug/1)

CREEK A42 Power amplifier 50+50w £100. Tel: 01442 874 749 (Berkhamsted) (Aug/1)

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 SEPTEMBER 2004 ISSUE IS THURSDAY 8TH JULY 2004
SEPTEMBER 2004 ISSUE ON SALE FRIDAY 30TH JULY 2004**

**DEADLINE FOR OCTOBER 2004 ISSUE IS THURSDAY 5TH AUGUST 2004
OCTOBER 2004 ISSUE ON SALE TUESDAY 31ST AUGUST 2004**

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JULY SPECIAL OFFERS...

Offer 1: All items under £100, get 10% off marked price (or buy 3, get cheapest free) or Offer 2: Any AV item, get 10% off marked price (more than 2 channels confuses the hell out of us!) Loads more cheap separates not listed but also included (ring for details)

Turntableworld - A selection from our stock Most of our turntable combinations come fitted with free cartridge

Alphason	Sonata - ex, black	399
Alphason	Alcaeus - ex, add an power supply	249
AR	EB101/AR arm - vgc, black	99
Garrard	301/SME 3012 - recan unit in Martin Bostin plinth	749
Garrard	401 - nr mint motor unit	179
Garrard	401 - nr mint, boxed motor unit	249
Garrard	401 - ex, Plinthed c/w SME3009	299
Garrard	401 - ex, gorgeous Aphelion plinth	499
Helius	Scorpio - Ex, black/brass	149
Heybrook	TT2/RB300 vgc/ex, heavyweight LP12 challenger	199
Linn	LP12/Lingo/Elkos/Troika - nr mint, black, boxed	1499
Linn	LP12/Lingo/ItokLVII - nr mint, rosenut, boxed	1199
Linn	LP12/Lingo/ItokLVIII - nr mint, black, boxed	999
Linn	LP12/Valhalla/ItokLVII - nr mint, black, boxed	699
Linn	LP12/Valhalla/Akita - vgc, black	599
Linn	LP12/Valhalla/LVX - vgc, black	499
Linn	Bosik, LVX - vgc, black	199
Linn	Itok 12" - ex, black, apparently one of only 20 made	999
Logic	Tempo Electronic/LVX - vgc	149
Michell	Gyradek/RB3000 - vgc, gyropower ps, Orbe platter, smoked case	999
Michell	Orbe/RB300 - ex/ex, boxed	1399
Michell	Orbe - ex, smoked	1199
Michell	Orbe/SME3009 - ex/ex, boxed	1699
Michell	Orbe/Wilson Benesch Act 2 - nr mint, boxed...Stunning!	1949
Michell	Technorm - Best Trade ins	ON DEM
Michell	Technodec - Best Trade ins	ON DEM
Michell	Gyrodec SE - Best Trade ins	ON DEM
Michell	Orbe SE/VC - Best Trade ins	ON DEM
Micro Seiki	DDX1000 - ex, 70s wonder, multiarm copobility	799
Mission	774 - ex, fab 80s tonearm	159
Musical Fidelity	XLPS v3 - ex display, nr mint	179
Musical Fidelity	XLP - nr mint	119
NAD	5120 - ex, wacky placky	79
Origin Live	Rega Arm mads - Best Trade ins	ON DEM
Pink Triangle	LPT/RB250/Reson - ex/ex	379
Project	Debut - ex display, black, boxed	89
Project	Classic - ex display, cherrywood plinth, boxed	299
GED	R232 - good, Rego like deck with Helius type arm	99
Rego	Planor 2/RB250 - ex/ex	149
Rego	Planor 2/RB200 - ex, wood plinth original	119
Rego	Planor 3/RB300 vgc/ex	179
Rego	Planor 78/RB250/Mono Cart - ex/ex	175
Revolver	Revolver/LVX - ex/ex	119
Roksan	Tobriz zi - nr mint	199
SME	309 - nr mint, boxed	479
Thorens	TD150 - great starter deck	69
Thorens	TD160 - vgc, smart silver model	149
Townsend	Elite Rock Mk2 - c/w plinth and lid, nr mint	399
Townsend	Elite Rock Mk2/Excilibur - c/w plinth and lid, nr mint	649
Transcriptors	Skeleton/Vestigal - ex/ex	799
Trichord	Saturn/Vestigal - fair	199
Voyd	Dino - Best Trade ins	ON DEM
Voyd	Voyd - beautiful 3 motor deck, light osh, 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, were £800!!!	299
Acoustic Energy	AE1 - new tweeters, scruffy grilles	299
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
Celestion	D6 - ex, black, boxed	79
Dynaudio	Audience 10 - ex,boxed, black	149
Epos	M15 - nr mint, light cherry, boxed	449
Epos	E51 - fair, 80s classic	99
Epos	ES14 - nr mint, boxed 80s classic c/w dedicated stands	325
Gallo	5.1 - ex display, boxed, gorgeous!	999
Heybrook	HB100 - vgc, superb vfm	79
JPW	Sonata - ex, boxed	59
KEF	103.2 Ref - nr mint, boxed	199
KEF	Coda 8 - nr mint	80
KEF	Q3 - nr mint, dark cherry	199
Leak	2030 - nr mint	79
Linn	Kan - ex, boxed with stands	279
Mission	763i - ex, black floorstander, boxed	119
Mission	70 centre - ex display, boxed	69
Mission	77ci - ex display, boxed	99
Manitor Audio	S6 - nr mint, boxed	299
Manitor Audio	R852MD - scruffy, bobbing wood and stands	79
Manitor Audio	Studio Centre - ex display, boxed	299
Manitor Audio	R700MD - nr mint, black	149
Mordaunt Short	912 - ex display, boxed	149
Mordaunt Short	914 - ex display, boxed	199
Musical Technology	Kestrel SE - ex, ery pretty floorstander	149
NEAT	Critique - ex, walnut, boxed	299
NEAT	Mystique 2 - nr mint v. underrated floorstander, boxed, light ash	349
NEAT	Petite - Best trade ins	ON DEM
GED	Aria - ex display, boxed mini surrounds	39
QUAD	ESL63 - nr mint, just back from Quad service with new boxes	1499
Rego	Kyte - ex, wood finish	119
Rego	EL8 - fair, wood floorstander	119
Rogers	Studio Monitor - Original vgc, with stands - suit valve amps	199
Ruark	Templor - ex, medium sized quality floorstander	199
Tanoy	R2 - good, boxed, slim cherry floorstander	499
Tanberg	Studio Monitor - Ex, large standmount	199
TDL	Studio 1 - vgc, wood finish transmission line	249
Wharfedale	Near Field Monitor - nr mint, boxed, mahogany	79
Wharfedale	Evo 8 - ex display, boxed	179
Wharfedale	Diamond 7.1 - ex, black	49
Wharfedale	Diamond 70th anniversary prototype!	
Whorfedale	- rosewood box like Quad 111, the only pair in the world!!	199
Whorfedale	Pacific P130 - nr mint boxed, light cherry, excellent	299
Whorfedale	S05.2 - nr mint boxed, black standmount	75

Arcam	Delta 280FM - ex, black	79
Arcam	Alpha 7 - ex, black	99
Arcam	Alpha 8 - ex, black	149
Arcam	T21 - ex display, boxed, silver	179
Arcam	T61 - ex display, boxed, rare black	149
Cyrus	FM7 tuner - black, digital, presets, nr mint	229
Cyrus	Original 'Mission' tuner - vgc	99
Denon	TU260L tuner - ex, block, digital, presets	59
Marantz	ST4000 - ex display, boxed, black	99
Marantz	SD4050 - ex display, boxed, twin cassette, black	89
Nakamichi	580 cassette - nr mint, black	199
Nakamichi	BX125 - vgc, black	129
Rotel	RT02 - ex display, boxed, silver	199
TAG McLaren	T20 - ex display, boxed	699
Teac	TX3000 tuner - ex, digital, presets	69
Teac	V1010 cassette - ex, 3 head	75
Technics	STG90L tuner - ex, digital, presets	89

Tape & Tuners

Digital CD, DVD etc		
Many more inexpensive CD players in stock		
Alpha 8 - nr mint, remote		199
Alpha 85E - nr mint, remote		349
CD62 - nr mint, boxed, silver, remote		179
CD72 - nr mint, silver, remote		279
CD3500 - ex, silver/black		279
Dad1 - nr mint, black, remote		199
Dad3 - nr mint, black, remote		275
Dad7 - nr mint, black, remote		399
PSX-R - nr mint, black		249
DP1100 - ex, v. underrated		89
CD-DSP - ex, clear and smoked lids, remote, stunning		1499
CD60 - ex, remote		69
CD46 - ex, remote		49
CD635E - nr mint, remote		69
CD525E - ex, remote		99
DAV4100 - nr mint, remote, boxed		99
DV4100 OSE - nr mint, remote, boxed		129
200 transport and matching dac - ex, superb combination		449
200 transport - ex, Trichord mod, excellent		349
Stage 4 - ex, sweet sounding machine		299
X10D - nr mint		119
T20 - black, nr mint, boxed, remote, bargain!		249
The Transparent Statement - vgc, cased, remote...ultimate NVA		1749
CLD 5B15 - Laserdisc, vcd, cd, PAL, NSTC		119
RCD965BX - ex, block, remote		119
CDP333sed - ex, manual, remote		129
MDP850D - nr mint, remote, loserdisc, VCD, CD, PAL, NSTC		149
CDP4500 - ex, remote		89

Systems, cables and miscellaneous Equipment supports - Your kit deserves them!

Atacama	Audia Technica	ON DEM
B&O	Electronic stylus cleaner	39
Beyer	2200 system - ex, turntable, cassette and tuner, inc speakers	199
IxoS	DT231 galactic - new	30
IxoS	1014 - new 1m interconnect	15
IxoS	1014 - new 5m interconnect	25
Mission	Stance - ex display, silver	49
Nordost	Flotline Gold - new, while stock lasts...	5/m
Pure	Evoke - ex display	69
QED	Profile 4x4 - new, while stock lasts...	5/m
QED	Silver Anniversary biwire - new, while stock lasts...	5/m
QED	Profile 4x4 - new, while stock lasts...	5/m
QED	Profile Silver 12 - new, while stock lasts	7.50/m
Quad	77 system remote - new	60
Sennheiser	IS380 - new, infrared	49
Tivoli	Model 1 - ex display	79
Tivoli	Fall - ex display	89
Yamaha	VS10 decoder & 5 spkr system - nr mint boxed	179

Amplifiers

Arcam	Alpha 7R - ex, as above with remote	149
Arcam	Alpha 10 power - nr mint, boxed	349
Arcam	A65 - nr mint, boxed, remote, silver	179
Arcam	A654 - ex display, boxed, remote, silver	199
Arcam	P75 - ex display, remote, silver	199
Audiolob	8000A - ex, black	229
Audiolob	8000A - ex, black, boxed	249
Audiolob	8000S - nr mint	329
Audion	Silver Knights - Stunning boxed valve monoblocks	1199
Creek	CAS4040 - ex, boxed	79
Cyrus	PSX-R - nr mint, black	249
Cyrus	Cyrus 2/PSX - reasonable condition, nextel finish	225
Exposure	X integrated - nr mint, boxed, black	199
Harman Kardon	Citation 17 and 19 - vgc, boxed	399
Harman Kardon	2x KHA100 - ex	119
Krell	Leak	2495
Linn	2100 - vgc, c/w 2300 tuner	99
Linn	Pretek - ex, black	149
Linn	LK1/Dirok - ex, black, mm/mc exceptional vfm	199
Linn	Magnum Ref.	479
Marantz	MP300 & 2x MF125 - ex/ex, mm/mc, fabulous!	199
Marantz	PM6010 Ki Sig - nr mint boxed, block	149
Marantz	PM6010 Ki Sig - nr mint boxed, block	199
Marantz	1072 - vgc, champagne finish	99
Marantz	SR4200 - ex display, boxed black, ov amp	149
Mission	605 - ex pair boxed monoblocks	795
Mission	Cyrus One - ex, boxed, black plate model, mm/mc	119
Musical Fidelity	E100 - vgc, remote, lano block	199
NAD	352 - ex display, boxed dark colour	249
NAD	302 - nr mint, great value	89
NAD	3020i - nr mint, renowned entry level integrated	79
Planear	A400 - ex, phono	119
Primare	30.1 - nr mint, boxed	799
Quad	405/2 - nr mint, grey	279
Quad	405/2 - good, brown	225
Quad	405 - nr mint, early brass heatsink version	199
Quad	405 - ex, standard brown version	179
Quad	303 - vgc	99
Quad	33/303 - nr mint	175
QED	C300/P300 - Pre/Power, nr mint, proverbial steal at	179
Rega	Luno - nr mint, black, boxed, better than a Brio or Mira	179
Rotel	RB03 power - ex display, boxed silver	199
Shearpe	Phase 2 - nr mint, boxed, blue marble styling	279
Sony	STR-D8940 av amp - vgc, DTS, S.1 etc	199
Sugden	AU41 pre/power - ex, black	499
Trio	2x L-05M - ex, with free preamp - coll for details	749

Call 01325 241888 and don't be frightened of the machine.

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FROM JULY 2004 ISSUE

SONUS FABER Cremona speakers £3500. E.A.R. V20 integrated amplifier £1500. Aloia PST II.0li pre-amp, Aloia 15.0li power amplifier 60 x 60 watts 4 box system £1800. Tel: 020 8531 5979 (Jul/I)

SCANSPEAK HIGH End units. Models 8545. Carbon bass/mid two pairs, 'retail' (£100) each. D2905/9500 treble one pair 'retail' £80 each. Unstarted project. Boxed! 'Guaranteed! Unused' Cost: £560. Sell £280. Tel: 01382 552 072 (Jul/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)

IMPULSE H2 for sale. Horn loaded, floor standing, high sensitivity speakers. £1000 ono. Tel: 07974 274 615 (Jul/I)

AUDIO NOTE ANJ-SPX black silver wired with dedicated cast iron stands (£1900) £799. Audio Note OTO-SE line immaculate condition (£1190) £550. AN-L 2x 4m factory terminated cable £300 (£150) Tel: 07855 444 054 anytime (Jul/I)

QUAD 11L speakers, rose-wood, mint condition £250. Sand filled stands £25. Exposure BI wire speaker cable, 10 metres £20. Tel: 02476 448 344 (Coventry) (Jul/I)

TEAC VRDS TI transport £275. Cambridge Dacmagic £75. Marantz PM66 KI Signature amplifier £175. Above retro fitted IEC sockets. Marantz PM40 SE amplifier £95. Rega Planar 3/ RB300/K9 £175. All mint 0141 357 5308 (Glasgow) (Jul/I)

WANTED: DENON POA 4400A Power amplifiers, must be vgc. Tel: 02476 395 228 or 02476 348 894 (Jul/I)

MICHELL FOCUS One turntable, Linn Basik arm, mint condition, still in box, £400. Quad ESL57 speaker, mint condition £400. Will demostate. Tel: 01332 574 396 (Jul/I)

ARCAM DIVA A855 amplifier, boxed, in new condition. Includes phono upgrade. Bought for £848, sell for £425. Also Arcam Alpha 8R amplifier, sell for £125. Tel: 01495 724 889 or Email: kwscwrfa@aol.com (Jul/I)

NAIM SUPERCAP with SNAXO 3x6, very little use, excellent condition, boxed, 1995, £1550. Tel: 07860 513 729 evenings. If no reply will return message. (Jul/I)

ARCAM FMJ CD23 £550. Arcam FMJ integrated amplifier £500. Arcam FMJ P2S power amplifier £350. B+W 603 speakers £200. All together with cables and interconnects £1400 ono. Tel: 0121 378 0337 or Mobile 079 3288 9319 (Jul/I)

AVANTGARDE UNO Horn speakers £4500. Sonus Faber Cremona speakers £3500. Aloia PSTI.0li pre-amp, Aloia 15.0li power-amp 60+60 watts £1800. E.A.R. V20 integrated amplifier £1700. Tel: 020 8531 5979 or 9790 326 5205 (Aug/I)

NAIM CDX, 2 years old, £1250. Naim XPS, 18 months old, £1000. Chord Anthem interconnect £100. All superb condition/sound with manuals and remainder of guarantee. Tel: 02380 274 494 (Jul/I)

LIVING VOICE Avatar OBX-R, with MkII x-overs, European maple. Exquisite sound, wonderfully dynamic. 94dB sensitivity. The reference speakers to many hi-fi reviewers. New £4000, asking £3000 ono. Tel: 01296 437 314 (Aylesbury, Bucks) (Jul/I)

NORDOST VALHALLA 1m phono interconnect asking £1300. JPS Superconductor + speaker cable. 5 foot bi-wire pair and 5 foot single wire pair - WBT banana plugs. £450, £275 respectively. Tel: 01296 437 314 (Aylesbury, Bucks) (Jul/I)

SUPERB PAIR of Klipschorn corner speakers in American oiled walnut. These awesome speakers are acknowledged as one of the worlds greatest. House move forces reluctant sale. (£6200) £2950. Tel: 01202 388 688 (Dorset) (Jul/I)

REVOX A77 Half track low speed, fully serviced and aligned 01.03.04. Metal chassis, £200. Revox A77 Half track high speed, fully serviced and aligned 01.03.04. wooden case £300. Tel: 07710 82 82 86 (Brighton) (Jul/I)

LYNWOOD MAINS conditioners (two). The Advanced £50. The Mega £125. Nordost Silver Shadow digital interconnects., 2 @ 0.6mtr £225 ono. Tel: 01249 821 288 (Jul/I)

MYRYAD MA120 RC Integrated amp £200. Myryad MT100 tuner £250. Both mint condition. Rega RB600 unused. 4 months old £200. RB300 1 year old £80. Reson Recca MM cartridge, only 40 hours use + spare stylus £100. Several Soundstyle stands - cheap - buyer collects. Tel: 02392 356 955 (Jul/I)

GARRARD 401/SME/M75G2/Plinth £200. Goldring 88 £75. Collaro 2010 £25. Ditton 25s £100. Ditton 44s £80. Mezzos £35. LNB/S8RSDDs £50. Leak 2020s £25. Tel: 0773 309 7673 or Email: nnh@dmu.ac.uk (Leicester) (Jul/I)

MERIDIAN 557 power-amp, 200wpc, under warranty until October 2004, mint, hardly used, £895. Tel: 01993 883 523 (Jul/I)

CYRUS 3i amp, as new, boxed with remote £250. Quad 303, boxed with leads, 1993 service £95. Cambridge CD4SE, excellent condition, remote, £75. Tel: Mark 01206 752 558 (Colchester, Essex) (Jul/I)

SONUS FABER Electa Amator Mk1, ironwood stands, excellent £1600. Tannoy Canterbury 15HE special cherrywood. 42x28x18. Retails in standard walnut £9.5k, brand new, boxed £5k. Tel: Kevin 01245 251 235 (Chelmsford) (Jul/I)

CYRUS SYSTEM: CD7Q CD Player, Cyrus 7 amp, 2x PSX power supply, Smart power. Cyrus Tri-Arbour oak stand, mint and boxed. Cost £3400, sell £1300. Tel: Nick 01253 713 033 (Lancs) (Jul/I)

AUDIO RESEARCH LS25 Mk2 £4000. SPII Mk2 £2000. Michell Orbe SE £1000. Koetsu Red Signature, 900 hrs, £500. Origin Live Silver £300. Kimber 8TC, 8ft bi-wire £120. Tel: 07973 793 892 or Email: stephen@dbn.co.uk (Jul/I)

REVOX A77 Half track low speed, fully serviced and aligned 01.03.04 Metal chassis rack mount £200. Revox G36 Half track LOW speed, takes N.A.B. spools, 1960's model £200. Tel: 07710 828286 (Jul/I)

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NEW RELEASES

!!!	Louden Up Now	£13.90
Bad Religion	Empire Strikes First	£9.90
Bees	Free The Bees	£TBC
Carly Simon	Reflections (Greatest Hits)	£15.90
D12	D12 World	£15.90
Datsuns	Outta Sight/Outta Mind	£14.90
Faithless	No Roots	£10.90
Faultline	Your Love (feat Chris Martin/Michael Stipe)	£15.90
Golden Virgins	Songs Of Praise	£13.90
Janet Jackson	Damita Jo (Virgin US Import)	£21.90
Killers	Hot Fuss	£12.90
Miss Kitten	I Com	£13.90
Mission Of Burma	On Off On	£13.90
Mott The Hoople	Mott (Simply Vinyl)	£14.90
Nick Drake	Made To Love Magic	£16.90
Nina Nastasia	Dogs	£12.90
Orbital	Blue	£TBC
Polyphonic Spree	Together We're Heavy	£TBC
Porcupine Tree	Signify	£22.90
Sixtoo	Chewing On Glass	£13.90
The Cure	The Cure	£TBC
TV On The Radio	Desperate Youth, Blood Thirsty Babes	£13.90

ALBUM OF THE MONTH

BEASTIE BOYS "TO THE 5 BOROUGHS" 2LP £18.90

NEW ROCK, POP AND AUDIOPHILE REISSUES::

Al Green	Green Is Blues/Next To You	each	£13.90
Ann Sexton	Anthology		£13.90
Billy Holliday	Recital (Speakers Corner)		£19.90
Black Sabbath	Never Say Die		£17.90
Eric Bibb	Just Like Love		£17.90
Gene Vincent	Crazy Times/Sounds Like Gene	each	£12.90
Howlin Wolf	London Sessions		£TBC
June Christy	Something Cool		£26.90
Lee Perry	The Upsetter 1968		£14.90
Link Wray	Swan Singles Collection (Sundazed)		£25.90
Martin Denny	Exotic Sounds Of Martin Denny		£TBC
Marvin Gaye	Trouble Man Sountrack		£10.90
Motorhead	No Sleep At All		£14.90
Oscar Peterson	+ 1 (Speakers Corner)		£19.90
Peter Gabriel	Birdy (Soundtrack - Classic Records)		£26.90
Status Quo	Ma Kelly's Greasy Spoon		£14.90
Stone The Crows	Ode To John Law (Akarma)		£14.90

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NEW SALE

ARCAM ALPHA 7R AMP	£280.00	£189.00	D
IMERGE M1000 H/D Sound server	£1500.00	£.0095	D
ARCAM DV88 DVD PLAYER	£1,000.00	£679.00	D+N
ARCAM FMJ A22 AMP	£1,100.00	£679.00	D
ARCAM FMJ A22 Inc DAVE AC3/DTS processor	£1,850.00	£895.00	N
AUDIO RESEARCH LS16 PRE AMP - BLK	£3,500.00	£2,195.00	D
CELESTION - C2 - Floorstanders	£499.00	£299.00	D
CELESTION C1 - Compact speakers	£199.00	£114.00	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
CYRUS DVD7	£1,000.00	£599.00	D
SUGDEN Bijou system (Pre/Power/CD - no spks)	£2647.00	£1795.00	D
AVANCE TECHNOLOGIES Active Subwoofer	£1200.00	£695.00	N
MARTIN LOGAN SCENARIO	£2,498.00	£1,629.00	D
Musical fidelity XCan V2 new	£129.00	£89.00	N
MERIDIAN DSP1500 Subwoofer	£1350.00	£895.00	D
MERIDIAN 556 - 2 CH POWER AMP	£995.00	£649.00	D
MERIDIAN 556 Power amp	£995.00	£595.00	D
MERIDIAN 562v.2 Controller	£1,500.00	£995.00	D
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MERIDIAN 598 DVD Player smartlink (as new)	£3,195.00	£2,395.00	D
LINN Kairn (brilliant PSU) Pre Amp	£1400.00	£ 795.00	D
LINN ESPEK	£2500.00	£1695.00	D
MISSION 78 AS Active sub (new)	£700.00	£450.00	D
MISSION 780 - ROSEWOOD	£300.00	£219.00	D
MISSION 783 - BEECH (Good condition)	£1,000.00	£599.00	D
Denon DYDA11	£1699.00	£1295.00	N
MUSICAL FIDELTY XA100R - INT AMP	£900.00	£599.00	N
PROCEED AVP PROCESSOR. VGC/LIGHT USE	£4,700.00	£1995.00	D
PROCEED PMDT DVD PLAYER. VGC/LIGHT USE	£5,495.00	£2495.00	D
REDROSE Valve system (amp & speakers) lyr old	£10,000.00	£3,995.00	SH
SONUS FABER SIGNUM SPEAKERS	£1,250.00	£799.00	D
VIENNA MALHER (Beech)	£6000.00	£3295.00	D
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AUDIOLAB 8000Q pre-amplifier. Good condition, remote, boxed. Priced for quick sale, £480. Tel: 020 7731 6497 or Email RichardDickinson@compuserve.com (Jul/I)

MONITOR AUDIO Studio 20 SE, cherry, three years old, including very high quality jumper leads, tiny unnoticable scratch and chip on one speaker, otherwise immaculate, boxed, will demonstrate, £920. (£2200). Tel: 0179 451 1407 evenings (Jul/I)

E.A.R. 864 Preamp, mint, boxed, manuals, £850 ono. Nordost 2 metre stereo pair 'Solar Wind' speaker cable, £75 ono. 1 metre 'Blue Heaven' speaker cable stereo pair, £85 ono. Tel: 01745 331 681 evenings. Mobile 07714 530 889 (Jul/I)

HORNING ONE Loudspeakers £725. Audionote OTO SE Signature, £725. May exchange speakers for Quad ELS. Tel: 01273 727 476 (Jul/I)

QUAD 34, FM4, 405-2. All boxed plus all leads, £480 ono. IPL M3 transmission lines mahogany veneer, £140 ono. Tel: 01283 814 422 evenings or 07952 865 404 daytime (Jul/I)

MARK LEVINSON 383 integrated amplifier in perfect condition with all original packaging. £3695 ovno. (£6000). Also Levinson 27 power amp, mint, £1795 ovnc. Can demonstrate either amp. Tel: 01202 624 094 or Email: paulfrend123@aol.com (Jul/I)

WANTED: LUXMAN LV105 integrated 80wpc amplifier. For Sale: Linn LK1/LK280 £500. Hitachi FT5500. Tuner £50. Densen DP Drive MM/MC £200 Tel: 07833 325702 (Jul)

NOTTINGHAM ANALOGUE Spacedeck, latest thicker platter, Rega RB600, Reson Etile, mat, clamp (£1950) £1300. Tom Evans Microgroove plus MC phono stage (£800) £500. New LP's £5, for list Tel: 01453 544 050 (Jul/I)

TRICHORD DELPHINI-NC, Audio Research VT-60, VT-100-II, D-60, poweramps Oracle Delphi, RB300, Quad ESL-57 stands, AN-J/D stands, MF-MX preamp, Leak Stereo-20, Garrard 301, SME-3009imp, Creek T50, Magnum A-200, MP-330. Tel: 0117 955 6555 or 07979 514 450 (Jul/I)

MAGNUM A200 Stereo power amplifier 220wpc, matching 2-box preamplifier. Fantastic sound/build quality (£3500) £1500. Loudspeaker cables, Audioquest Midnight. 5 metre pair/2 metre pair - interconnects, various, giveaways. Tel: Allan 0117 952 1341 or 01179 556 555 (Jul/I)

SUBWOOFER MILLER Kriesel MX 125 200w 2 x 12in drivers, black, superb sound (£1500) £750. Valve amplifier, 50wpc, integrated, four line inputs, volume control, quality construction, excellent sound, (£1500) £500. Tel: Allan 0117 952 1341 or 01179 556 555 (Jul/I)

AUDIO RESEARCH LS9 pre-amp, boxed, manual, remote, as new, £850. AV1 S2000MC CD player, boxed, remote, as new, £475. Tel: 01782 397 971 (Staffs) (Jul/I)

RATA TORLYTE turntable support £195. Mullard EL84's, ECC81's, EF86's RCA and Mazda ECC83's, Raytheon and Tungsol 8814A's (ECC82). All Avo tested. Hitachi speaker cable £30. Wanted: Audionote Kit One. Tel: 0113 255 9475 (Jul/I)

EXPOSURE NEW Classics XXIII preamplifier (£1400) £750, XXVIII power amplifier (£1400) £750, interconnects incl. Also Kimber Select KS-1021 0.5m interconnects (£470) £270. Tel: 020 7609 2764 or Email: robinhull@macunlimited.net (Islington) (Jul/I)

SONY SCD1 SACD/CD player. This sought after high end model is Sony's ultimate statement. Stunning SACD/CD replay with variable digital filters. Pristine condition. 11 month Sony guarantee. £2099. Tel: 07979903989 (Bristol) (Jul/I)

ROGERS LS7 speakers, walnut, boxed as new with Atacama stands, £200. Tel: 01777 704 705 (Notts) (Jul/I)

SNELL K SPEAKERS £250. Matching Huygen K4 stands £145. 8-12 watt valve amplifier £215. Audionote AWW interconnect £175. Mullard and Brimar ECC83's, ECC88's, ECC82's, Avo tested. Wanted: Cogan Hall interconnect Aleph 3/30. Tel: 0113 255 9475 (Jul/I)

SONUS FABER Electa Amator 2's Excellent: £1700. Townsend speaker Seismic Sinks 480 x 390 mm: £ offers Plinius SA250 MK4 Power & M16 pre with phono: £5500. Sony SCD1 £2500 ono H:01789 263515 M:07831 095680 (Jul/I)

AUDIO RESEARCH SP9, valve hybrid pre-amplifier (black). Classic amplifier offering a spacious, detailed, powerful sound. Willing to demonstrate. £900 ono. Please ring Phil on 01254 812 881 or 07957 420202 (Lancashire) (Jul/I)

WANTED: DENON POA 4400A Power amplifiers, must be vgc. Tel: 02476 395 228 or 02476 348 894 (Jul/I)

ROKSAN CASPIAN CD Player in good condition, upgraded to Mk2 spec. £350 ono. Contact Richmond on 07900 398 888 or Email: richmond@go4.it (Malvern, Worcs)

SONUS FABER Cremona speakers £3500. E.A.R.V20 integrated amplifier £1500. Aloia PST II.0li pre-amp, Aloia 15.0li power amplifier 60 x 60 watts 4 box system £1800. Tel: 020 8531 5979 (Jul/I)

SCANSPEAK HIGH End units. Models 8545. Carbon bass/mid two pairs, 'retail' (£100) each. D2905/9500 treble one pair 'retail' £80 each. Unstarted project. Boxed! 'Guaranteed! Unused' Cost £560. Sell £280. Tel: 01382 552 072 (Jul/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)

IMPULSE H2 for sale. Horn loaded, floor standing, high sensitivity speakers. £1000 ono. Tel: 07974 274 615 (Jul/I)

AUDIO NOTE ANJ-SPX black silver wired with dedicated cast iron stands (£1900) £799. Audio Note OTO-SE line immaculate condition (£1190) £550. AN-L 2x 4m factory terminated cable £300 (£150) Tel: 07855 444 054 anytime (Jul/I)

TEAC VRDS T1 transport £275. Cambridge Dacmagic £75. Marantz PM66 KI Signature amplifier £175. Above retro fitted IEC sockets. Marantz PM40 SE amplifier £95. Rega Planar 3/ RB300/K9 £175. All mint 0141 357 5308 (Glasgow) (Jul/I)

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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. (Aug/1)

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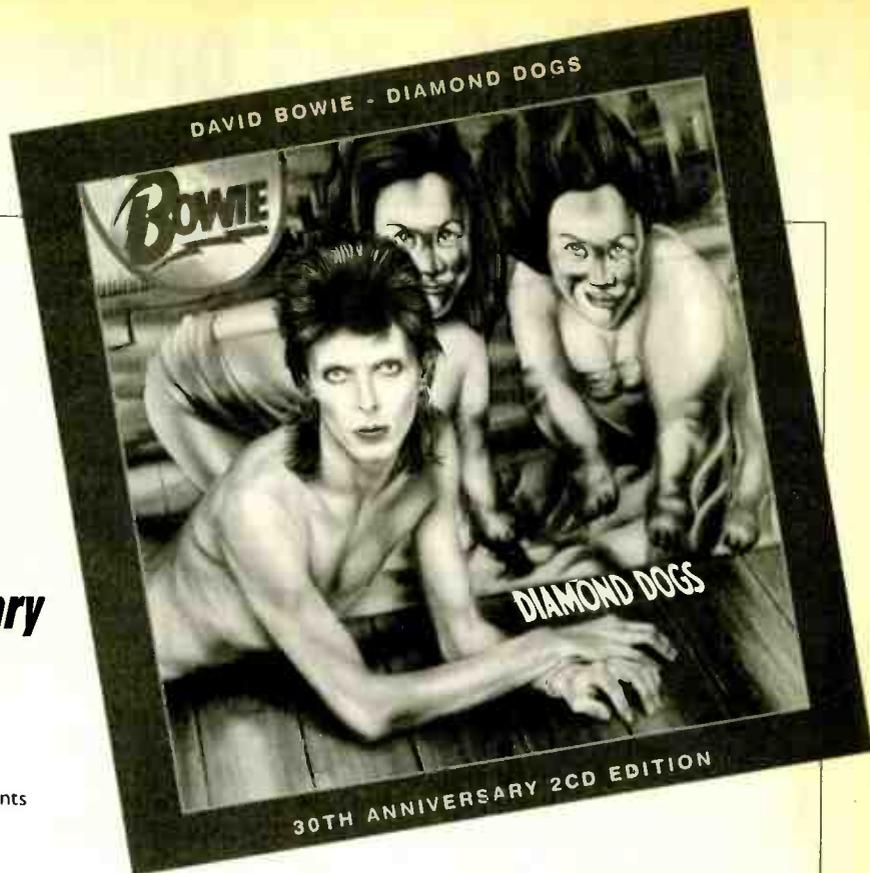
DAVID BOWIE *Diamond Dogs* (30th anniversary 2CD Edition) 1974

Following similar treatments for 'Ziggy Stardust' and 'Aladdin Sane', EMI has extended the completist's dream double disc Bowie Anniversary editions with the culmination of his seminal glam-rock trilogy, 'Diamond Dogs'.

Looking back with thirty years distance it can be difficult to remember how huge Bowie was by 1974, but the excellent BBC film of the period 'Cracked Actor' convincingly demonstrates the degree to which he was the object of teen adulation at the time, as well as (or perhaps accordingly) appearing to be somebody on the brink of nervous collapse. The sleeve notes for this release invoke the culty aura of that documentary in order to support the slightly worrying louche and unhinged vibe which pervades this record, from its cover to its themes and its sounds.

The parents of those 1970s teenage girls would undoubtedly and justifiably have been concerned upon setting eyes on the original sleeve image of Bowie as half man, half well-endowed dog, prior to its careful airbrushing to remove the cause of offence...

The music can also be slightly discombobulating, leading off with the legendary, "this ain't Rock 'n Roll, this is genocide" cry, before the disorientating backing vocals of 'Diamond Dogs' mess with your head, particularly on headphones. In fact the entertaining stereo mix, (on which the self-producing Bowie was assisted by Tony Visconti), makes for a great headphones listen throughout. There is a lush feel to



the music than on its predecessors, elements of funk creep in, with horns adding texture and presaging the white soul which was to follow later in the seventies. The contrast of the horns with mellotron on 'Big Brother' gives a weird feel, which is continued into 'The Chant' of the ever circling 'Skeletal Family'.

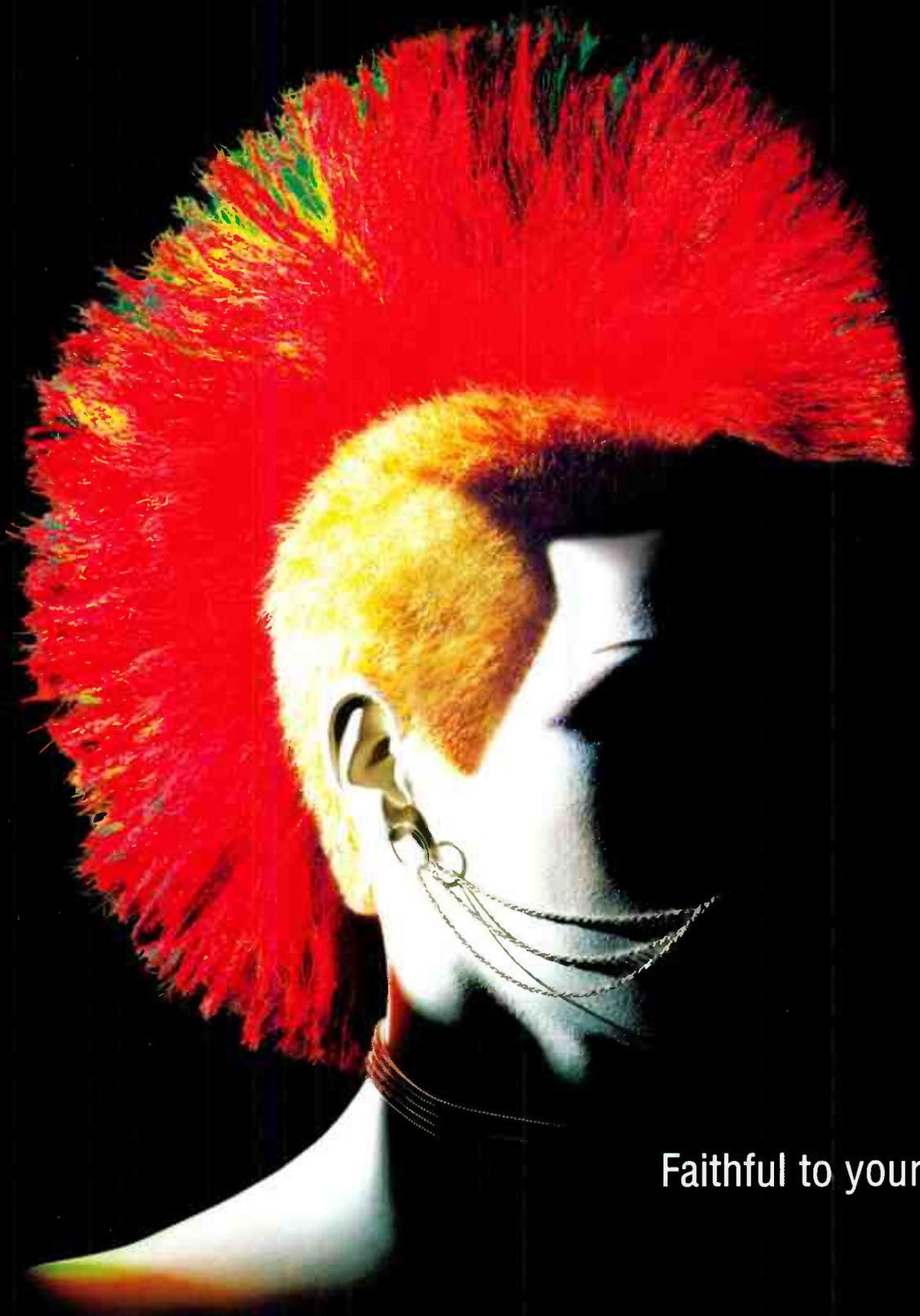
And then it's on to the bonuses on disc two, which include alternate versions of tracks originally put together for Bowie's aborted concept of presenting a rock opera-type show using this material. Just as on the album proper the track '1984' is the closest in styling to early 70s musical theatre of the Lloyd Webber variety, but better (obviously). The US single re-recording of 'Rebel Rebel' is good value – the 2003 remix less so. An uncredited Ronnie Wood gives a great vibe to a version of Springsteen's 'Growing Up', and all-in-all it's a worthy companion disc to a great album.

Bowie's back catalogue is probably one of the most repeatedly remastered, seesawing between versions with and without extra tracks and ending up with the 1999 24 bit remasters having their original running orders restored. These double editions are probably the ideal compromise, but the first discs are still the 1999 versions (for the very simple reason that EMI say, "everybody was happy with them"; a verdict which a good listen reveals as impossible to refute). The second

disc is mastered to the same high standards as the main album. I suspect that only the real completists and those whose Ryko editions are getting slightly tired at 14 years of age are going to want to shell out for a thirty minute disc of extras and an admittedly attractive package (this time a mini LP sleeve format, slip-cased with a comprehensively sleeve-noted booklet).

However prospective purchasers should not resist the urge due to concerns about further Bowie SACDs being just down the track after the initial trio of 'Ziggy...', 'Scary Monsters' and 'Let's Dance' – an EMI contact tells me to expect none in the "short to medium term". EMI has plenty else to worry about, and its hi-resolution strategy will not clarify itself until the first fruits of the DVD-Audio collaboration with DTS have demonstrated their effectiveness in the market. However I have heard a rumour that Tony Visconti has followed up his 5.1 Bowie work on the recent Columbia albums with surround versions of Bowie's 70s Live albums, so we may end up with the situation of Bowie titles split between different high resolution formats at the same label!

Finally, if you're unwittingly holding onto a first CD generation RCA copy do not discard it – for some reason (presumably their scarcity and the fact that they were on the original label) these early CDs have always changed hands for relatively large sums. **PC**



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