



NEW AMPLIFIERS FROM  
AURA AND ALCHEMIST

# SIEGE MACHINE!

GIANT BASS FROM  
CASTLE'S HOWARD SII  
LOUDSPEAKERS

MARANTZ CD-17:  
THE GOLDEN BOY  
OF CD PLAYERS?

LINN'S  
WAKONDA  
PREAMP

COMPETITION - 3 PAIRS OF HARBETH'S  
HL-P3ES MONITORS, TOTAL VALUE £2,400



WHO SAYS THE

BRITISH DON'T

PLAY BRILLIANTLY

IN EUROPE?

EUROPEAN LOUDSPEAKER OF THE YEAR



At B&W we've just scored another major success. Our CDM1 has now won European Speaker of the Year, which was judged by the Editors-in-Chief of leading photo, video and audio magazines from thirteen countries. High praise indeed. But with a winning team of engineers coming up with a hat trick of technological innovations: outside tweeter mounting, kevlar drive unit and contoured edges for reduced sound diffraction, it's not an entirely unexpected result. For more information call B&W UK on 01903 750750. And see that the best European players don't have to start at £8.5m.



**B&W**



# This Month's World

● Castle's Howard SII loudspeakers produce some of the best bass we've ever heard. Using a novel quarter-wave loading technique has certainly paid dividends. See page 18.

● Aura's VA-80SE-x and Alchemist's Maxim amplifiers are super value - both come complete with a phono stage for under £300. Here's cost-effective engineering at its best. See page 12.

● Celestion's Impact 23 floorstanders show just how strong British loudspeaker engineering is. High sensitivity makes them easy to drive and a smooth response lends a balanced and accurate sound. See page 59.

● J. A. Michell Engineering is Britain's oldest existing turntable manufacturer, founded when Garrard and BSR were king. We interview John Michell and audition the latest incarnation of the Gyrodec turntable. See page 36.

**W**e've seen a wealth of superb equipment so far in 1996. At the lower end of the market British manufacturers still lead the field with their ability to engineer quality products at an affordable price.

The action is shifting though. Only a couple of years ago a variety of good products were available below £200. They gave the budding audiophile an affordable route into hi-fi and music. This is where the real value was, where a clever balance between performance and price had been hard wrought.

Nowadays though, real value is to be found higher up the price scale. Sure, there are more cheap CD players, for example, than ever, but they're not good - just cheap! Moving up to the £300 mark offers more freedom of choice. Here, designers are less constrained by cost and express their abilities more fully.

Perhaps in 1996 we'll see real hi-fi slowly start to redefine itself as something well apart from the budget mainstream.

*Dominic Baker, Editor*

## TEST EQUIPMENT



● *Hi-Fi World* has its own advanced test laboratory and acoustically treated listening room. No other hi-fi magazine has the benefit of such facilities.

● *Hi-Fi World* has a dedicated in-house team of experienced listeners, and uses selected freelance professionals. We review thoroughly by extensive auditioning, rather than by quick-fire group listening tests.

● *Hi-Fi World's* engineering team designs a wide range of products in-house. No other hi-fi magazine is so expert and dedicated.

## LISTENING ROOM

(TREATED BY RPG ACOUSTIC TOOLS)



## IN THE APRIL ISSUE

The only fools in April will be the ones that miss their copy of *Hi-Fi World*. Along with all of the latest news and regular features, there will also be a *FREE* DIY Supplement, No. 21. Here's just some of the latest equipment we hope to bring you:

### ALCHEMIST'S THE ALCHEMIST

Designed in association with Tim de Paravicini, The Alchemist comprises a pair of massive 75watt transformer-coupled solid state single-ended power amplifiers and matching pre-amplifier.

### LINN SEKRET AND SEQUENCE 400

We investigate the art of hidden sound with Linn's Sekret and Sequence's 400 loudspeakers. Both have slim enclosures that can be mounted on the wall or on stands, but can they still produce a full scale sound?

### MYRYAD MI 120

Myryad's remote-controlled MI 120 integrated amplifier combines elegant styling with functionality. We listen closely and investigate the improvements brought about through bi-amping with the addition of the MI 120 power amplifier.

### AIWA AD-S750

Only available through Richer Sounds, but a Dolby S-equipped cassette deck for £149 just had to be investigated by the *Hi-Fi World* team. Could this be the cassette deck bargain of the year?

### COMPETITION - £1500 WORTH OF AURA AND B&W PRIZES

Three prizes of Aura VA 80SE-x amplifiers each complete with a pair of B&W DM 601 loudspeakers.

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**PUBLISHING**  
Publisher  
**Noel Keywood**

**EDITORIAL**  
Editor  
**Dominic Baker**

Editorial Assistants  
**Eric Braithwaite**  
**Haider Bahrani**

**PRODUCTION**  
Production Editor  
**Karen Page**

**ADVERTISING**  
Advertising Manager  
**Caroline Knott**  
Tel: 01245 443555

Advertising Executive  
**Rosalind Day**

**MARKETING**  
Marketing Manager  
**Jon Dolan**

Technical Assistant  
**Nick Lucas**

Contributors  
**Douglas Floyd-**  
**Douglass**  
**David Price**  
**Dominic Todd**

Music Reviewers  
**Peter Herring**  
**Simon Hopkins**  
**Giovanni Dadomo**  
**Jon Clarke**  
**Simon Cooke**

**CONTACT NUMBERS**  
10am - 6pm  
Tel: 0171-289 3533  
Fax: 0171-289 5620  
Individual queries cannot  
be answered by  
telephone.

**MAIL ORDER**  
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**SUBSCRIPTIONS**  
see page 68 for details

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## THIS MONTH'S REVIEWS

### AMPLIFIERS

#### ALCHEMIST MAXIM VERSUS THE AURA VA 80SE-X 12

There's a new Aura - and a new Alchemist - in the budget amplifier market. Both now have phono stages, so Dominic Baker dusted off his vinyl.



#### LINN WAKONDA PREAMPLIFIER 20

Wot no anacondas? Just a box, but one with some sneaky tricks, as David Price discovers.

#### TECHNICS SU-A800S 57

Talk about a pre/power combination on the cheap! Haider Bahrani does.

### LOUDSPEAKERS

#### CASTLE HOWARD SII 18

Loudspeakers almost as big as the British Home Secretary. Noel Keywood went looking for palatial bass and found it in this castle.

#### QLN SIGNATURE 49

Douglas Floyd-Faustus agreed to sign away his soul for a pair of these miniatures. Find out why.

#### CELESTION IMPACT 23 59

These new budget floorstanders may not make a big impression in the carpet, but they definitely made an impact on Dominic Baker.

### VINYL

#### UNISON SIMPLY PHONO 24

Not ones to miss an opportunity, Unison have come up with a valve phono stage to unite with their amplifiers. Dominic Todd and Haider Bahrani find it simply... well, read and find out.



### CASSETTE DECK

#### ONKYO TA-6310 33

Tape became even quieter with Dolby S. Eric Braithwaite listens to the quality of Onkyo's new brand of quietude.

### COMPACT DISC

#### MARANTZ CD-17 29

Bubbly Eric Braithwaite enjoys nothing more than champagne, unless it's the champagne gold of a CD player like this.



#### AUDIO ALCHEMY DDSIII 41

Transportation or digitation? It may be a CD player with a converter inside, but Haider Bahrani preferred to use it just as a transport. Off to the Alabama chain gangs with him...

### TUNERS

#### MERIDIAN 504 TUNER 65



Polish the glass on the top of this tuner all you like, but you'll never match its ineffably polished sound.

## WORLD VERDICT

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

GOOD - Has strong merit. Well worth an audition.

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

POOR - Seriously flawed. Not worth considering.



## REGULARS

### NEXT ISSUE

April showers you with even more hi-fi.

### NEWS

News so hot it's straight out of the chili jar.

### READERS' LETTERS

Views, blues and a world of answers.

### COLUMNS

53, 55, 63

Hare-brained our columnists are not, even in March.

### SUBSCRIPTIONS

61

Don't be wet, take out an umbrella. No, better still, take out a subscription to Hi-Fi World instead.

### WORLD BUYING GUIDE

69

You begged for it, you pleaded for it. Well, you asked for it! World Favourites is back and better than ever.

### DIAL A DEALER

81

Call your local dealer today for that new hi-fi toy you want to play (with). Ahem. So you want proper scansion, go read a poetry book, but you won't buy hi-fi through it!

### SPECIALIST HI-FI DEALERS

85

If you want to go mad in March buying hi-fi this is where to find the dealer to buy from.

### MEET YOUR MAKER

89

And here is where you can check out the manufacturers for what they have on offer.

### HI-FI WORLD LIBRARY

95

The bookworm's guide to audio design.

### MEASURED PERFORMANCE

105

The truth in full, bright, cheerful. . . monochrome, specially colour co-ordinated with the weather this month.

### READERS' CLASSIFIED

120

Sssh! Turn the pages quietly and you may grab that bargain before someone else does.

### ADVERTISERS' INDEX

130

## FEATURES

### FIFTH WORLD!

27

Just gone: five glorious years of Hi-Fi World. Coming soon, the tenth anniversary millennium issue!



### THE TABLE MAKER

36

Meet Michell Engineering, whose turntables are (probably) the only ones to have flown in space.

## MUSIC

The best of this month's albums

### ROCK RECORD OF THE MONTH:

Garbage: Garbage

### CLASSICAL RECORD OF THE MONTH:

Richard Strauss: Tod und Verklarung/Metamorphosen/Vier Letzte Lieder

ROCK AND POP

73

JAZZ

75

CLASSICAL

76

## COMPETITION

Three chances to win! We have three pairs of Harbeth's wonderful new HL-P3ES mini-monitor loudspeakers to give away this month.



STREET  
MUSIC  
CON

# jitterkiller

In digital audio signal processing,  
jitter is distortion.

The Meridian 518 eliminates  
jitter and it does much more  
besides.

If you have a digital signal in  
your Audio or Video system, you  
will benefit from installing a 518  
Digital audio processor.

The 518 also applies noise  
shaping, a technique in which  
distortion is moved from the  
audible range where it interferes  
with the music to a range where  
the human ear cannot detect the  
sound. The 518 also correctly  
matches the 16 bit word length  
to 16, 18, 20, 22 or 24 bit  
allowing, perhaps for the first  
time, full resolution from your  
digital system.

Connect it between any digital  
source such as CD or laser disc  
players and your D to A converter.

We have included our famous  
digital volume control and  
enough inputs and outputs to  
make the 518 operate as a fine  
remote control preamplifier in a  
digital system.

The improvement in sound is  
unparalleled by any other product.



BOOTHROYD STUART  
**MERIDIAN**

Meridian Audio Limited, Stonehill, Stukeley Meadows, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire PE18 6ED. Tel 01480 434334 Fax 01480 432948



# trade winds trade winds trade winds trade winds trade winds trade winds trade winds trade winds trade winds trade winds

## MARANTZ VALVE CLASSICS RETURN

Marantz plan to restart manufacture of three classic valve amps that sold well through the 1950s in the USA. They are the Model 7 preamplifier, which has seven inputs, the Model 8 stereo valve power amplifier and the Model 9 monoblock power amplifiers.

Prices are not available, but it is unlikely they will cost less than a few thousand pounds apiece. We were told that in their time, prices were many thousands of dollars yet sales exceeded 100,000 units.

Marantz was as American as apple pie. Nowadays it's owned by Philips; they bought all rights to Marantz in the USA in 1986. This cleared the way to restart the manufacture and sale of these models in the States. Until now manufacture has taken place in Japan. Americans will love this re-start, but funnily, so will the Japanese, because they are great respecters of industrial tradition.

As life ebbs from the bottom end of the hi-fi market, this is the second move upmarket and back into esoterica by Marantz. Here's more news about their first.

We recently secured the first picture of their new T-1 valve power amplifier, designed and built in Japan, where massive 845 power valves (75W anode dissipation) in push-pull are driven by a 300B driver via a phase-splitter transformer, which itself is fed by a 300B acting as a preamplifier. All stages are transformer coupled. Also, there are no electrolytic capacitors, we are told, those in the power supply using metallised polyester film.

Fixed bias has been employed to give good power output of 75watts from a "low" H.T. of just 970V, that's why there's an adjuster (bias) on the front panel. Aerobox film capacitors, Dale resistors and Johnson's tube sockets have been used throughout, we're told. If you want one, expect to pay a modest £30,000 or so.



## Sound & Vision Bristol

The Sound & Vision show at Bristol this year will be taking place at The Marriott Hotel from the 23rd to the 25th of February. Hi-Fi World will be there again this year, as will a whole host of other members of the Hi-Fi industry.

### Dates & Times

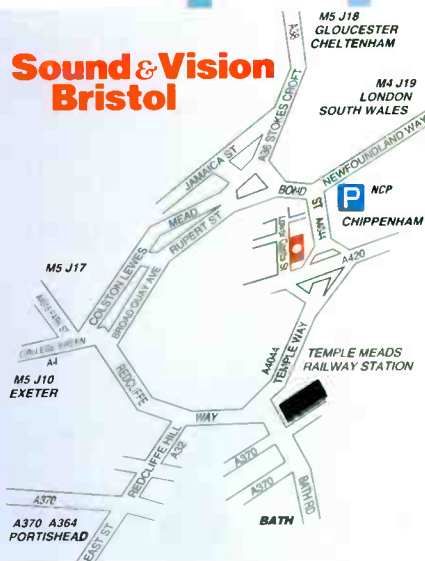
Friday 23 February ..... 11 till 6

Saturday 24 February ..... 10 till 6

Sunday 25 February ..... 10 till 5

Admission is £4 for adults, £6 for couples and £2 for Students, OAPs and UB40s. Accompanied children under 16 are free. See you there!

### Sound & Vision Bristol



KEEP ME SEARCHING FOR A HEART OF GOLD



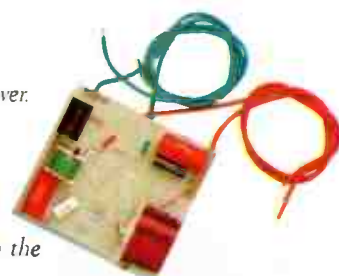
*At Rogers we believe the vital organ of a loudspeaker is the crossover.*

*The life blood of any loudspeaker, no matter how good, is dependent on the crossover.*

*Rogers crossovers are designed to provide maximum signal transmission,  
minimal loss and distortion-free operation.*

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Tel 0181 640 2172. Fax 0181 685 9496. e-mail [gloots@rogerinter-win-uk.net](mailto:gloots@rogerinter-win-uk.net).

Pictured above: O.F.C. hard-wired, hand-built crossover from Rogers. (LS loudspeakers r.r.p. £150 per pair)



## PRISM SYSTEM

With its new DM302 loudspeaker B&W claim to have established a benchmark for both sound quality and quality of construction in the budget loudspeaker market.

This £129.99 'speaker utilises B&W's recently patented Prism system to reduce the effects of internal resonant frequencies. A series of tapered pyramid shapes project into the cabinet to eliminate parallel surfaces between which standing waves may form. B&W also plan to employ the Prism system in their more expensive range of speakers.



**B&W Loudspeakers Ltd.,**  
Meadow Road,  
Worthing,  
West Sussex BN11 2RX.  
☎ 01903 750750

## NO TROUBLE AT T'MILL

Music Mill have been appointed official agents for Living Voice in Scotland. Currently on demonstration is the £14,700 Airscout, a three-way pure horn system offering 105dB sensitivity, a Vitavox drive unit, Khaya cabinets and Bird's Eye Maple details.

A pair of £27,000 Living Voice Air Partner Statesman loudspeakers were used at the publicity launch of Run-Rig's new CD Mara.

Tel Music Mill on: 0131 555 3963

## G'MORNING, HORNING

Definitive Audio have announced the arrival of the revised Horning range of hybrid horn loudspeakers. These Danish three-way units which use Lowther full range drivers, but adopt acoustic techniques for the crossover, have a sensitivity of around 96dB. Prices start at £2,500.

**Definitive Audio, 2 Carlyl Road, West Bridgford,**  
**Nottingham NG2 7NQ.**  
☎ 0115 981 3562



## ORELLE XTC, ETC

Analogue & Digital Audio Limited, the manufacturers of Orelle hi-fi products, have announced the launch of a new XTC high-end range.



The product line includes the POW-1, a 4 x 175W power amplifier retailing at £2,000, the £800 PRE-1 remote control pre-amplifier and the CDT-1 'LE' CD transport and DAC-1 digital converter, priced at £1250 and £1000 respectively which we hope to review in the April issue.

Over the next six months expect the addition of a remote-control integrated amplifier and a smaller two-channel power amplifier.

**Analogue & Digital Audio Ltd., Unit 12, IMEX House,**  
**6 Wadsworth Road, Perivale, Middlesex UB6 7JJ.**  
☎ 0181 810 9388/991 5591

## AND AT A REMOTE EXTREME



A new stereo integrated amplifier from TEAC has remote control for volume and offers balanced XLR inputs. The 50watt A-BX7R is available in black or gold for £699.95. We hope to bring you a review shortly.

**TEAC UK Ltd., 5 Marlin House, The Croxley Centre,**  
**Watford, Hertfordshire WD1 8YA ☎01923 819630**



# PARASOUND

*affordable audio for the critical listener*



**C/DP-1000** CD Player/Transport



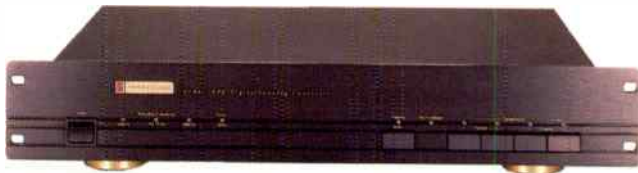
**P/LD-1100** Line Drive Preamplifier (with RC)



**D/AC-1100 HD** Digital to Analog Converter



**P/LD-1500** Line Drive Preamplifier (with XLR outputs)



**D/AC-1600 HD** Digital to Analog Converter



**HCA-1000** Stereo Power Amplifier (THX)

## STOP PRESS!

### BELT DRIVE TOP LOADING CD TRANSPORT £1695

The superb CBP-2000 transport is difficult to equal at almost any price. It's an ideal partner for the D/AC-1600 HD £1449, or for the top of the range DAC-2000, £2495, using Ultra Analogue converter chips and input receiver - arguably the best available in the world today.

The products are designed by **John Curl**, whose legendary designs virtually defined HI-END and set the standards for others to follow. The results speak for themselves. Not even considering the products' low price, they outperform almost any product available.

So, if you're passionate about your music, give us a call for more information on (01752) 731313.



**HCA-1200<sup>II</sup>** Stereo Power Amplifier (THX)



**HCA-2200<sup>II</sup>** Stereo Power Amplifier



# HEYBROOK

Heybrook Hi Fi Ltd  
Estover Industrial Estate, Plymouth PL6 7PL  
Tel: (01752) 731313 Fax: (01752) 733954



## NEAT LITTLE RIBBON

Neat have just updated their Petite loudspeaker which becomes the Petite II. The main alteration is the replacement of the titanium coated plastic dome tweeter by a Tonigen 'Emit' ribbon type which claims superbly open, near electrostatic, treble quality.

Other mods include a revamp of the crossover unit to optimise the match between the new tweeter and the 6.5in treated paper cone bass/midrange unit.

Available in standard black and cherry wood finishes. prices are £745 and £795 per pair respectively.

Neat Acoustics, Unit 1A, Stainton Grove Ind. Est.,  
Barnard Castle, Co. Durham DL12 8UJ.  
☎ 01833 631021

## DIGITAL IN REAL TIME

The Digital Audio Real Time Link, or DART for short, is SDAV's name for its co-axial cable interconnect. Sold direct to the customer with a 14-day money-back guarantee, the price of £49.95 includes postage and packing.

SDAV, Alpha Road, Surbiton, Surrey KT5 8RP.  
☎ 0181 399 6308

## SPENDOR, SPENDOR, BUT NOT MUCH!

Spendor launched its new 2000 series loudspeakers at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas in January. All are reflex designs employing a new elliptical drive unit which Spendor holds is the best shape to avoid spurious vibrations. The 2020 is a two-way stand-mounted 'speaker, priced at £399, the 2030 at £599 and 2040 at £899 are floor-standers, the latter a three-way.

Spendor Audio Systems Ltd., Station Rd. Ind. Est., Hailsham, East Sussex NB27 2ER  
☎ 01323 843474



## LITTLE TOWERS IN DEEP BASS LINE

Those 'just make it big and play it loud, OK' Californians Cerwin-Vega have kindly built a couple of speakers "small enough for the tiny rooms" we Europeans have. The HED 265 Mini Towers at £299.99 offer typically Cerwin-Vega extended bass from their dual-woofer, two-way format. Power handling is 120watts with 91dB sensitivity ensuring the "dynamic punch" that all you C-V heads know and love.

CSE, Unit 9, Centre Park Holdings, The Airfield, Tockwith, Yorks. YO5 8QF.  
☎ 01423 359054

## OUT FOR SIX

Quad's '6' series, including the tuner, has been discontinued now the 77 pre/power combination enters pre-production.

## DVD PEACE PLAN FINALISED

The world's consumer electronics giants have finally agreed a formula to avert a new format war between rival 'Super CD' proposals.

Digital Video Disk, or DVD as it will be known, combining Toshiba's SD and Philips' MMCD, will have a very high data storage capability (4.7 gigabyte per side) for CD-ROM or for full-length feature films on one 12cm disk. The first consumer systems are expected to be on sale by the end of the year. Price of players should be around the £450 mark.

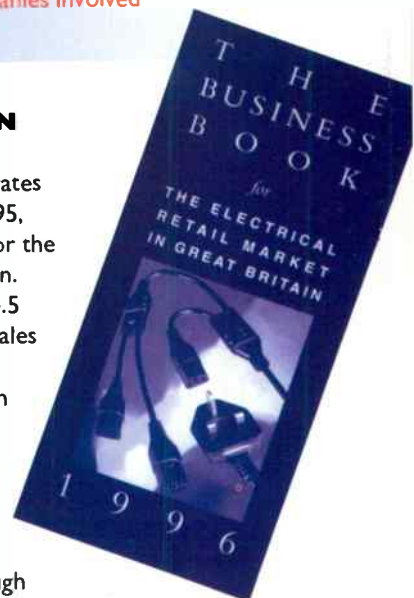
Though the new specification for DVD does not yet include the ARA's proposals for high-quality audio (HQAD) the major electronics companies involved with DVD are said to be supportive.

## SEPARATE, BUT MORE THAN EQUAL

Despite a bad 1994, sales of hi-fi separates were up in the year ending August 1995, according to the The Business Book for the Electrical Retail Market in Great Britain. Year-on-year sales of separates rose 4.5 per cent to 860,000 units as value of sales rose 11 per cent to £194m. Both a revival of interest in 'serious' hi-fi, with some buyers being weaned away from the omnipresent minis, and the continuing popularity of music may well be contributing factors.

Average price of components rose by 2.2 per cent, to £205.90, though while the market value of the CD sector rose 5.2 per cent to £74m, with 349,000 units sold, their share of the market fell from 42 per cent to 41 per cent. Despite lower prices, however, neither DCC nor MiniDisc captured the British imagination.

Source: The Business Book 1996, Chalmer Publishing, Plestor House, Farnham Road, West Liss, Hants. GU33 6JQ.  
☎ 01730 894059



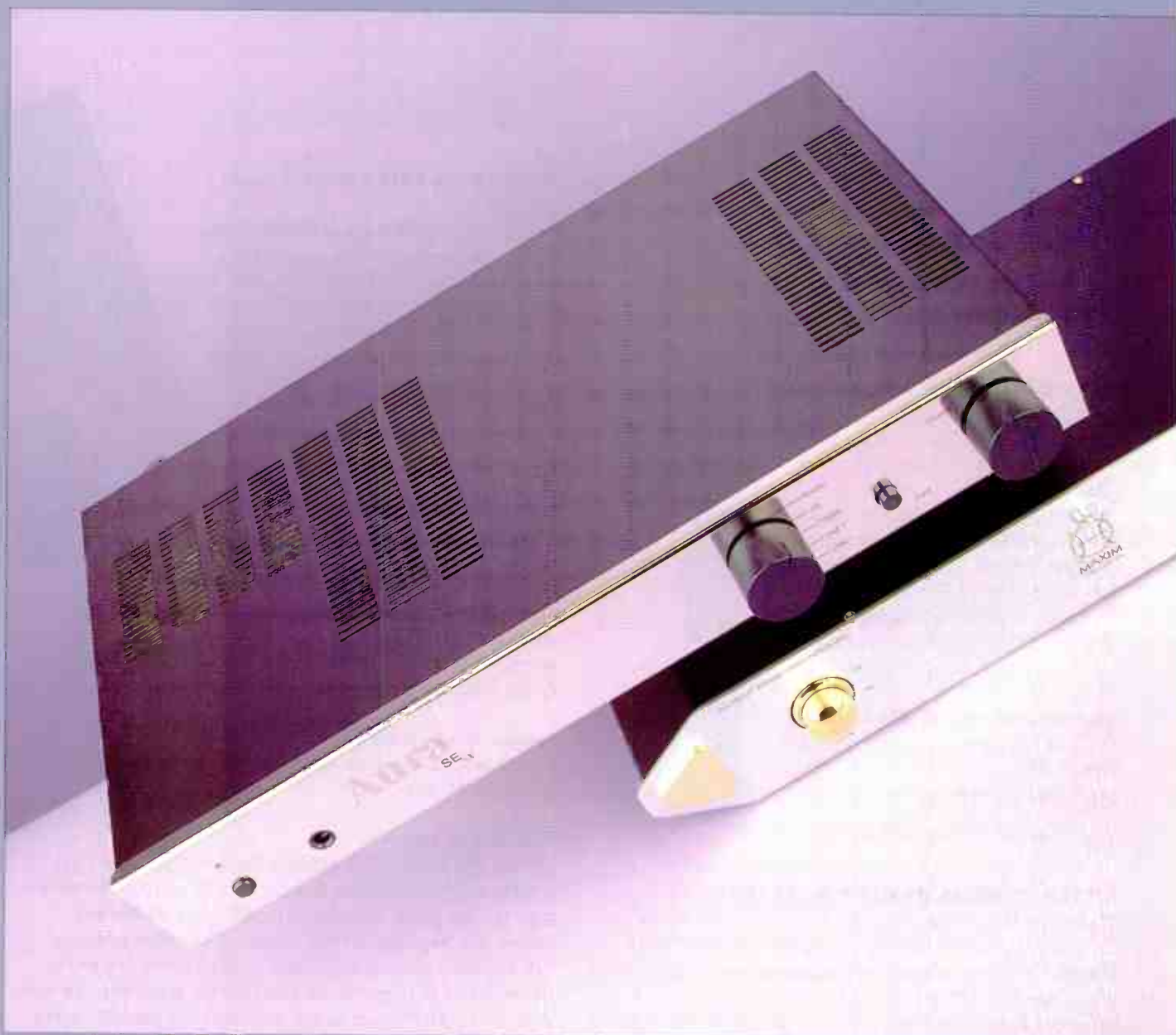
## TGI ON A HIGH

TGI plc, the group which includes Tannoy, Goodmans (GLL) and Mordaunt-Short, have announced a 15 per cent increase in their pre-tax profit, reaching £811,000 in the six months before 30th September 1995. Turnover increased by 6% to £19.2 million, allowing an increase in the interim dividend to shareholders of 1p per share. Last year the group entered into an alliance with Marantz to sell, distribute and market Tannoy consumer products in the UK, Germany, Spain and Italy. On top of this, GLL are now supplying speaker units for the new Ford Fiesta, and links have been forged with the Rover Group.

## POLYGRAM ON A LOW

The PolyGram group, which includes Philips Electronics, expects its earnings, to be announced in mid-February, to be no advance on the previous year. After making over £150m from the film Four Weddings and a Funeral, the music and film side has seen a shortage of hits.

# SILVER, GILT



So vinyl is dead eh? Well answer me this. Why have Aura and Alchemist both just launched new versions of their entry-level integrated amplifiers each complete with a built-in phono stage? Having spent a number of years building up a

valuable collection of LPs, users like me are reluctant to give them up. This message is getting through.

We have reviewed both of these amplifiers before in their line-level guise, where they proved themselves well, so this piece really concentrates on their

abilities with LP. The Aura VA 80SE-x comes in at just £249.95 in black or chrome finish, and the Alchemist Maxim at an equally astounding £299.00. So they are strong rivals on the UK market, and that's exactly how we treated them.



# AND BLACK



**Chrome and gold are their trademarks. Both Aura and Alchemist have now produced versions of their most affordable amplifiers that play black discs as well as silver. Dominic Baker takes them for a spin.**

## **AURA VA 80SE-x £249.95**

Aura's little VA 80 impressed us immensely when we first came across it in our April '95 issue. So much so, in fact, that it was one of the products we selected in January's World Winners '95 Supplement - a select listing of

products that stand out sonically above the crowd.

The line stage of the VA 80SE-x is identical to the standard VA 80, so shares the smooth, unflustered sound that makes it so confident with a wide range of music and styles. It is clear and focused, with clean treble and good bass timing. This is a great achievement at the price, and one of the reasons we use one as an in-house benchmark.

### **Phono sound quality**

First LP out of the sleeve and on the platter was Teenage Fanclub's 'Gene Clark' from their album Thirteen. The long grungy electric guitar introduction, complete with liberal use of distortion pedal, was smooth, rich in harmonic structure and conveyed a great sense of surrounding acoustic. Sustained notes seemed to take an age to decay away into the background, giving the whole a natural, unforced presentation. When the bass guitar and drum finally kicked in, they brought a taut and surprisingly powerful punch to the bass.

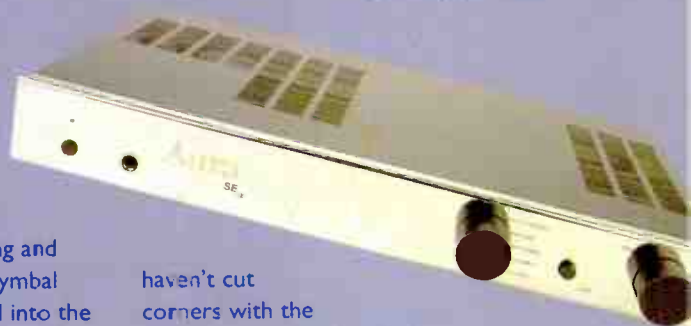
Where the VA 80SE-x impressed me most, especially considering its competitive price, was in the treble. With Texas' 'Southside' the Aura gave a very complete picture of the performance. It was fast, strong and cohesive in its delivery, each cymbal strike clear and sharply etched into the sound stage. Later, listening through the Maxim, it was softer and more dreamy to listen to, not really as authoritative. The transient crack of snare echoing out into the room was more blurred and dispersed. The Aura had sharper focus and greater attack.

To see what it was really capable of at frequency extremes, I stretched it

with Senser's 'Peace'. This track's deep, heavy and melodic bass line and high percussion is enough to show up most amplifiers' limits. Add to this a gentle, echoing female vocal floating out from the speakers into the corners of the room and some inventive mixing, and the Aura might have had its work cut out.

I was surprised to find such a clearly structured, concise and informative sound emerging from our Mission 752s. Not because I was suspicious of the Aura's abilities, but because I had selected this track to try to catch it out. The Maxim was more what I would traditionally expect from an amplifier at this price level. The dynamics of bass notes were not fully captured, adding muddle, and vocals were restricted by a splashy treble quality.

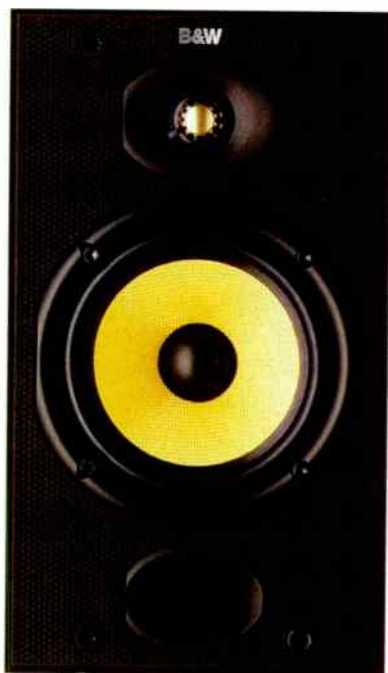
For under £300 the Aura VA 80SE-x is quite an achievement. Through its line-level inputs it is clearer and smoother than just about any other integrated I can think of within its price range. It is especially pleasing to see that Aura



haven't cut corners with the phono stage. This has great treble extension, which is both pure and clean, a smooth midband and solid, tuneful bass lines. Low subsonics aren't fully captured, but any lack here is made up for by the Aura's upper bass punch and detail. Owners of reflex loudspeakers will also value the well-engineered warp filter.

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**What Hi-Fi, November 1995**



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**ALCHEMIST MAXIM £299.00**

Alchemist's recent deal with Ortofon, who have now taken on the role of distributor in the UK, has bought home the importance of the LP. Ortofon have a super range of cartridges, and also represent Czech turntable manufacturer Pro-ject, so they are well placed to recognise the importance of the LP to music lovers.

This connection with Ortofon has seen the birth of the Maxim. Basically it is very similar to the line-level Axiom



*“The Maxim's midrange captured Sharleen Spiteri's powerful vocal superbly. It was captivating”*

reviewed in the September '95 issue, but with the addition of a MM phono stage. There have been a few other small changes, though the only visible one is the new wrap-around casework. The Axiom had a side rail down either side.

Through its line-level inputs the Maxim retains much of the basic character of the Axiom. Both have a sweet and musical sound which suits acoustic pieces particularly well. One of Grant Lee Buffalo's albums took full advantage of the wide soundstage it had to offer. Steel strung guitars were crisp and forward, their harmonics echoing off the walls of the room.

Alchemist's Maxim has a free sound; the music flowed out unhindered. This makes it fluid with simpler pieces, but it does have a habit of becoming confused as the music becomes more complex. But then again, at £299 it certainly doesn't disgrace itself in the face of current competition.

**Phono sound quality**

Right from the start the Alchemist Maxim's open and clear midrange was obvious. It showed superb projection with the electric guitar introduction to Teenage Fanclub's 'Gene Clark'. Although there was an overall softness in the treble, giving the Maxim a warm balance, a little ringing and sibilance accompanied cymbals.

Texas' 'Everyday Now', although still gentle in the treble, had a detectable sharpness

setting in on strong cymbals.

I suspect that the Maxim has quite high treble distortion and to avoid excessive sharpness treble has been gently rolled off.

This is certainly preferable to a too-bright balance, but

being cleaner and possessing more insight the Aura definitely had the edge here.

Further down, the Maxim's midrange captured Sharleen Spiteri's powerful vocal superbly. It was full and rounded, spreading out from the 'speakers. The Maxim was captivating here, with the kind of openness that draws you into the performance.

The Maxim's simple warp filter gives it a dry bass quality. Low frequencies aren't rolled off as fast as in some examples, giving better subsonic bass, but upper bass punch and speed suffered as a result. It didn't have the same firm hand as the Aura here. It was less able to convey the true conviction of a bass line in full swing.

Where the Maxim was most at home was with light acoustic tracks like REM's 'Shiny Happy People'. Here its more forward midrange projected Michael Stipe's and Kate Pierson's vocals and lead guitar clearly across the stage, giving an intimate feeling to the music. The gently played strings sounded natural enough; if anything the

Maxim exaggerated the harmonics so they spread out into greater space than they really should have done. The dry bass of this track helped too, giving the Maxim an easier time and allowing it to better concentrate its efforts.

**CONCLUSION**

At the end of the day one thing stuck in my mind. Whenever I had swapped between the Aura and the Alchemist I always found myself turning up the VA 80SE-x and backing off with the Maxim. The Aura was cleaner and smoother at high levels where its super bass punch really drove things along. The Maxim had more of the subsonic rumblings on LP, but upper bass was too dry for my taste, and confusion could set in on heavier tracks.


That's not to say that the Aura is the be-all-and-end-all of this contest though. To my mind it is the better all-rounder, and will behave well in a wide range of systems. The Maxim needs a little more care in matching, but offers a musical and enjoyable sound that at the price few could grumble about. The choice is yours ●


**Aura VA 80SE-x** £249.95  
**Alchemist Maxim** £299.00

**Aura Designs**  
Marlborough Road, Churchill Ind. Est.,  
Lancing, W. Sussex BN15 8TR  
☎ 01903 750750

**Alchemist (distributed by Ortofon UK)**  
Chiltern Hill, Chalfont St Peter,  
Bucks. SL9 9UG  
☎ 01753 889949

**WORLD VERDICT**

Aura VA-80SE-x   
The Aura has a smooth and civilised sound with fine detail.

Alchemist Maxim   
Fluid and musical, but less balanced and confident than the Aura.

**Measured Performance**  
see p105-111

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## audiolab



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The new **8000S** stereo amplifier offers the same flexibility and outstanding sound quality as every other Audiolab product. At the turn of a switch it will perform as either an integrated amplifier, delivering 60 watts per channel, or by connecting a second power amplifier it will act as the pre-amplifier in a quality pre/power combination, offering superb control with most loudspeaker's.

As a stand alone pre-amplifier the **8000S** delivers many of the features found on the new **8000Q**, such as Zq technology and remote control operation. The **8000S** also caters for the addition of an Audio Visual Decoder and an active sub-bass system. This ensures that it is an ideal amplifier for future upgrades with the capability of adding the very latest in Home Cinema.

For details of the Audiolab range, including the new **8000S**, **8000A**, **8000P**, **8000C**, **8000T**, **8000CDM**, **8000DAC**, **8000PPA** and **8000Q**, contact your local Sevenoaks Hi Fi.

## arcam



ALPHA 1 CD

The much acclaimed **ALPHA 1** CD Player is Arcam's most affordable CD Player to date. A multi-level Delta Sigma digital to analogue converter means the **ALPHA 1** provides musical reproduction of unparalleled quality. As with the renowned **ALPHA 5+** CD Player, the **ALPHA 1** offers a minimalist layout ensuring ease of operation and the traditional, uncluttered look of top quality British equipment.

The **ALPHA 1** is also an ideal aesthetic and sonic match for Arcam's own award winning **ALPHA 6+** amplifier. These two models combine to provide the convenience of a full remote control system, as well as outstanding sound quality. At Sevenoaks Hi Fi you will discover the Arcam **ALPHA** and **DELTA** series of products.

## ruark



TALISMAN II

Refined musical presentation and style are the hallmarks of all Ruark loudspeaker's. With the knowledge gained from years of experience as a member of the Guild of Master Craftsmen, they refuse to accept compromise. The **TALISMAN II**'s are a testament to these very high standards. Incorporating a bass reflex design, the Seas tweeter and bass/mid range driver combine to offer poise and coherence, ensuring that their performance is as elegant and polished as their fine real wood veneers.

To audition the Ruark range, including the new **ICON**, visit your local Sevenoaks branch.

## meridian



506

All Meridian components, from the simplest to the most complex, are designed to be operated by the touch of a single button on their MSR remote control.

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Then an 18 bit Delta Sigma conversion stage ensures that bass notes are delivered with real slam, while detail is natural. These are characteristics common to all Meridian CD Players, including their finest integrated model the **508** and the magnificent **500** and **563** CD transport and DAC. However, the real benefits of the **506** materialise when it is used with other Meridian components, like the **551**, **504** and **A500**'s. Thus, creating an advanced and flexible, full remote control system.

## cyrus



III

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On Tuesday 20th February, at the Jarvis Rivenhall Hotel, Essex. Audiolab and Monitor Audio, two of the finest manufacturers in Britain bring their products to Essex. The doors will open at 7pm, a musical presentation will follow at 8pm and concludes at 9pm with a competition prize draw. For further details and a complimentary ticket telephone 01376 501733.



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## monitor audio



### STUDIO 12

The breathtaking **STUDIO 12** loudspeaker's from Monitor Audio, offer a no compromise approach to design and construction. This is obvious the first moment that you see them, whether they are finished in a standard satin veneer or a luscious grand piano lacquer. All of the models within the new **STUDIO** series offer a combination of a gold anodised tweeter and an aluminium alloy bass/mid range driver. When they are partnered with suitable amplification the **STUDIO 12**'s offer remarkable transparency and the necessary focus to reproduce complex passages of music with glorious accuracy.

## rotel



### RC&RB970BXII

Designed and developed in the UK, the amazing **RC** and **RB970BXMK2** pre and power amplifiers deliver audiophile sound quality and flexibility. By adding a second **RB970BXMK2** power amplifier, you can bridge the two in mono, providing incredible control with a wide range of quality loudspeaker's. The **RC&RB970BXMK2** also offer the same slimline styling and characteristically solid build quality as all Rotel products. Even though Rotel adhere to a minimalist style a separate record and listening facility with split volume control means that you have finite adjustment, especially when recording. While the addition of the new **RQ970BX** phono equaliser ensures vinyl replay of the highest standard. For further information on the Rotel range, which includes the **RA970BX** integrated amplifier, **RCD970BX** CD Player and the new **RDD980** and **RDP980** CD transport and DAC, simply contact your local Sevenoaks Hi Fi branch.

## marantz



### CD63SE

The **CD63SE** offers the kind of sparkling performance normally associated with audiophile CD Players.

Marantz are one of the few dedicated manufacturers that aim to make recorded sound as realistic and enjoyable as is possible. This development of hifidelity has led the Hi Fi press to bestow numerous Best Buys and Recommendations upon models within their range.

At the heart of the **CD63SE** is a high mass drawer mechanism which provides precise CD transportation with accurate tracking and retrieval of the information stored upon the disc.

The **CD63SE** also offers a logical upgrade path via either its optical or coaxial digital outputs. With this pedigree it represents exceptional value for money.

## castle



### HOWARD II

Castle's mastery of quarterwave bass technology is evident in the **HOWARD II**'s. Beneath their handcrafted, real wood veneer cabinets are more closely specified components. A new crossover network combines with the off-set metal dome tweeter and fibre polymer bass/mid range driver to ensure that the **HOWARD II**'s are adept at handling all types of music well, especially classical. The **HOWARD II**'s encapsulate all of Castles style, offering nine real wood finishes including a sumptuous rosewood and yew. At Sevenoaks Hi Fi you will discover the Castle range, which includes the superb new **ISIS**.



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On Thursday 7th March, at the Hilton National Hotel, Watford.

Meridian will demonstrate their range including their new Audio Visual equipment. The doors will open at 7pm, a musical presentation will follow at 8pm and concludes at 9pm with a competition prize draw. For further details and a complimentary ticket telephone 01923 213533.

# CASTLE

**Noel Keywood enjoys bass as powerful as a siege engine from Castle's latest monument, the updated Howard loudspeakers.**

I couldn't hear the tune, because I was 60ft away at the time. But I could feel the bass line moving the air and the fabric of the building. I'd been told the Howards can deliver great bass, and from where I was sitting it was sounding like it.

Despite initially sounding dynamically a bit flat while running in, now the rumbling bass line of Angeliqe Kidjo's 'Houngbati' was sounding ominous, like a distant freight train. The power of really deep bass can't be heard in a conventional 16ft x 12ft room, but from another part of the building it was making itself known. At 60ft or so away I could get the full force of a 20Hz note.

Although you can't judge a 'speaker on its bass performance, at the same time most listeners ask us for "deep, tight, tuneful bass". Not many of today's speakers meet this requirement. With the Howard Castle use a quarter-wave horn to load the 8in bass/midrange unit. Like a horn, but unlike a transmission line, the flare increases with distance from the driver venting, as a large mouth, downwards through the base of the cabinet.

Theory says that a horn - and only a horn - can efficiently couple a drive unit into a room; it's an acoustic transformer. Horn design is about tuning a drive unit to a room. It's apparently obvious and sensible, but in practice only large horns work, and even they do not deliver deep bass. Worse, small (truncated) ones usually don't work, booming and doubling.



# OF STRENGTH

What Castle have achieved is a horn of manageable proportions that does work.

The beautifully veneered cabinet stands 104cm high, is 28cm wide and 38cm deep. Black cloth grilles cover a forward firing bass/midrange unit and, beneath it, a metal dome tweeter with phase plate. A top grille covers an upward firing full range unit that aids low frequency power handling, while also improving dispersion and opening out the sound stage.

The Howards kept a wonderful grip on complex rhythms, maintaining a tight and perfectly ordered picture with Isaac Hayes 'Summer in the City', from his latest Branded album. They had tremendous pace and grip, especially on low bass, where I suspect the horn plays its part.

I was surprised to be confronted by fulsome plucked acoustic bass on Steve Earle's recent Train a Comin' album; I hadn't even realised that Earle's always fascinating array of instruments now extended to acoustic bass, but the Howards put me right, pushing the instrument into prominence.

Reach for Eddie Reader, also accompanied by prominently recorded acoustic bass, and the Howards

showed me its quality could have been better on this record. They have great bass resolution, as well as power.

Arch bassist Robbie Shakespeare had the building moving with the tightest subterranean bass work I've ever heard on 'Make 'Em Move', from Language Barrier. Whoa! This was really funky, far and away the best quality I've experienced - justice at last for Mr Shakespeare's beautiful walking bass

lines. It sounded and felt like a dinosaur doing a hokey cokey.

Trouble is, this album, which has an abundance of hard treble, brought my attention to Castle's metal dome tweeter. I was aware that the 'speaker had detached treble, a little too prominent for its own good in my view although of satisfactory, if not superb quality. Language Barrier put so much energy through the tweeter that its role in the scheme of things become rather too great.

I had begun to notice that, as dramatically tight and exciting as the Howard could be, something was lacking. In the upper bass region (80-120Hz) the Howards are a little restrained and they can sound peculiarly dry when there's no deeper stuff present. Hand drums and Toms suffered most. Billy Idol's frantic 'Rebel Yell' came over as flat and a little harsh, not the interpretation provided by most 'speakers.

While the Howards image very well, forming a voluminous sound stage with nicely etched images upon it, vocals were a little back in the mix; they don't project singers as far out into the room as do some modern speakers. I was intrigued by the way a performance

held together when I stood up and walked around the room, doubtless attributable to the upward firing driver.

Vocals sounded natural enough, free from obvious colouration and well balanced whether male or female. There was a little loss of insight and fine detailing, in comparison to a 'speaker like one of the KEF Reference Series.

This was apparent with classical strings. Violins congealed into what

sounded like a single instrument at times, akin to a modern synthesiser, on the Philharmonia's Tannhauser overture, recorded at the Kingsway Hall. I hastily replaced the grilles to damp things down, the metal dome tweeters seemingly preparing for lift off.

The recording is an old one and is, in itself, a bit hard. However, a good speaker will reproduce the orchestra's string sections well, portraying the air and space around them, as well as capturing the busily hovering violins as individual entities working in delightful harmony. I was a bit surprised and very disappointed that the Howards couldn't manage better on such material. They gave me little of what I know is available from this superb performance: the activity, the atmosphere and the drama. It's a testing work, that's for sure, but at this price I would expect more.

With the Howard, Castle have created a pretty impressive and dramatic performer. A wonderfully tight bass coupled with a clear, open midband makes this loudspeaker something special. I'd certainly recommend auditioning the Howard. It's a big 'speaker but it has an even bigger sound.

**Castle Howard**

**£1,099**

**Castle Acoustics  
Shortbank Road,  
Skipton,  
N. Yorks. BD23 2TT  
☎ 01756 795333**

## WORLD VERDICT

Fantastically deep and tight bass, but some treble sharpness requires careful matching.

**Measured Performance  
see p105-111**

❖ *The Howards have great bass resolution, as well as power* ❖

# SNEAKY DEVIL

**It's small, black and does more than you'd expect. David Price listens to Linn's modular-upgradeable Wakonda preamplifier.**

**H**aving auditioned much of Linn's new range of Brilliant-powered electronics recently, it's hard to get excited about what looks like another small black box. But the Wakonda is an interesting proposition.

For such a tiny box it can do so much, taking easily fitted 'Sneaky' modules, bringing a whole vista of possibilities into view, from multi-room line drivers/receivers to the Kudos tuner module our review sample came with. For those with an aversion to an excess of wires and even more black

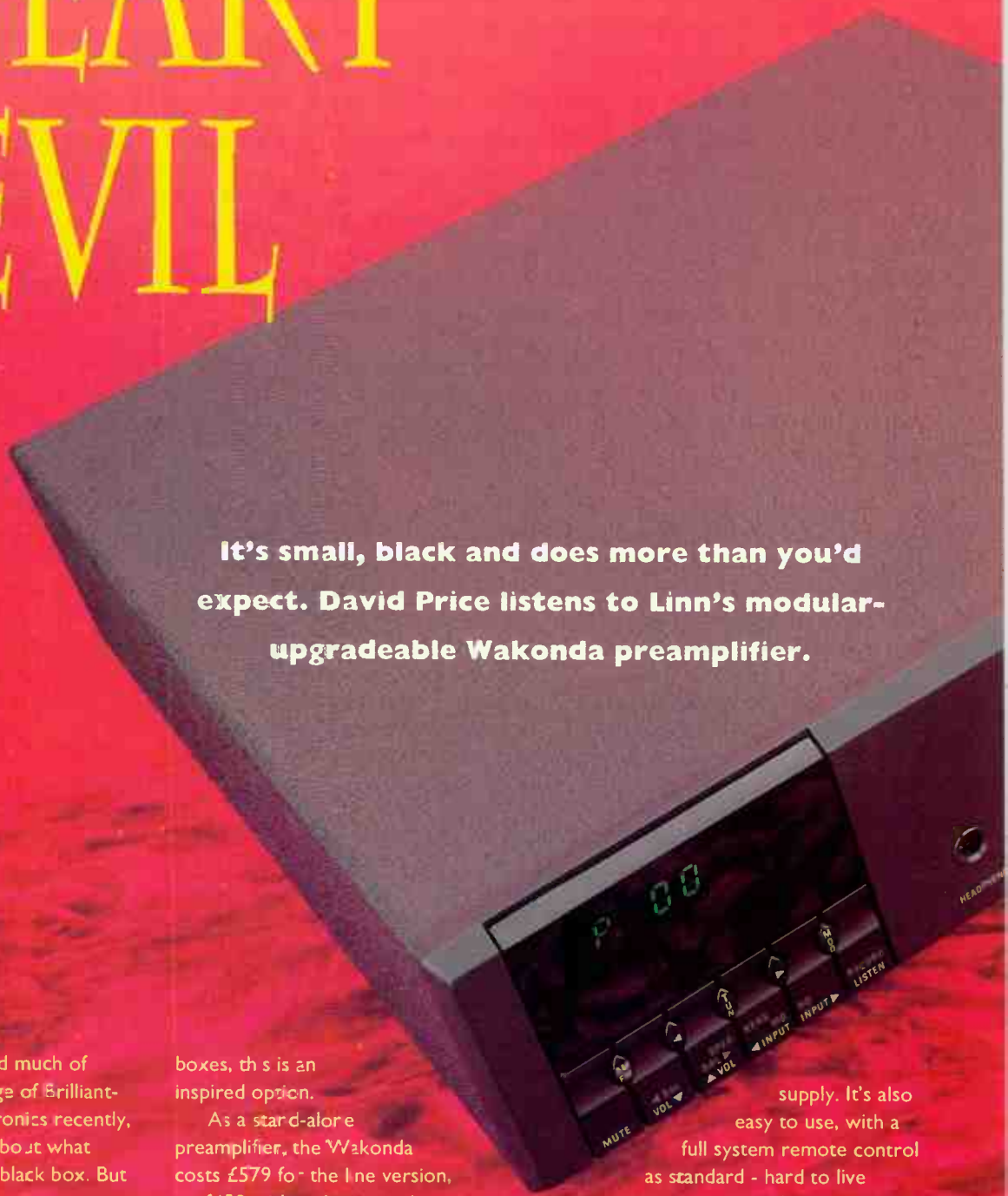
boxes, this is an inspired option.

As a stand-alone preamplifier, the Wakonda costs £579 for the line version, or £639 with a phono card, switchable from MM to MC via internal jumpers - not beyond the capabilities of the average audiophile, but not half as convenient as having a switch at the back, Audiolab 8000C-style.

The Wakonda is a light machine, partly due to its elegantly simple internal circuit layout, and partly thanks to its advanced switched-mode power

supply. It's also easy to use, with a full system remote control as standard - hard to live without once you've got one - and clearly marked front panel buttons with an informative display. Overall construction quality is up to Linn's usual high standards, as are its ergonomics, making this preamplifier a breeze to live with once you've become used to it.

My original intention was to put the Wakonda against Audiolab's £500 entry level 8000C preamp, but it soon





became obvious that Linn's new baby was sonically far superior, which was a surprise to say the least. So it suddenly found itself facing the big guns in the shape of one of Audiolab's best products, the seriously good £1000 Audiolab 8000Q. Here, it had its work cut out, as you'd expect!

In short, the

Wakonda wasn't quite up

looking seriously good value. On this busier recording, the Wakonda again performed well, making an admirable stab at all the layers of wah-wah guitar and strings. Soulsville's finest could throw at it.

Again, the emphasis was on rhythms, which drove the song along very forcibly. The Audiolab, on the other hand, brought greater focus, and a smoother sound with none of the Linn's subtle upper mid emphasis.

Although the 8000Q's kick drum -

get up and go there for all to hear.

Moving to the 8000Q brought a better sense of what was happening in the recorded acoustic, with a slightly smoother tone, but again the Audiolab had trouble keeping up with its adversary's dynamic abilities.

Satisfied I'd got the measure of the Linn's line-level performance, it was now time for some vinyl, courtesy of Linn's very own LP12/Ekos/Archiv/Lingo/Trampolin, and very enjoyable it sounded too. So good is the phono card that the sounds pouring forth were the best I'd heard all day, a big improvement on the Audiolab/Pink Triangle silver disc combo - maybe unsurprising considering it's £4000 of front end.

In comparison to the best phono stages, Linn's lacks a little air and space, but it is still up there with the serious stuff - not bad for £80!

With its built-in flexibility, sophisticated remote-control user interface and excellent sound for its modest price, Linn's new Wakonda is an essential audition. The only criticism I can level at it, this being Hi-Fi World after all, is that it hasn't got any valves inside. That's the problem with some black boxes ●

Linn Wakonda £579  
(with phono card) £639



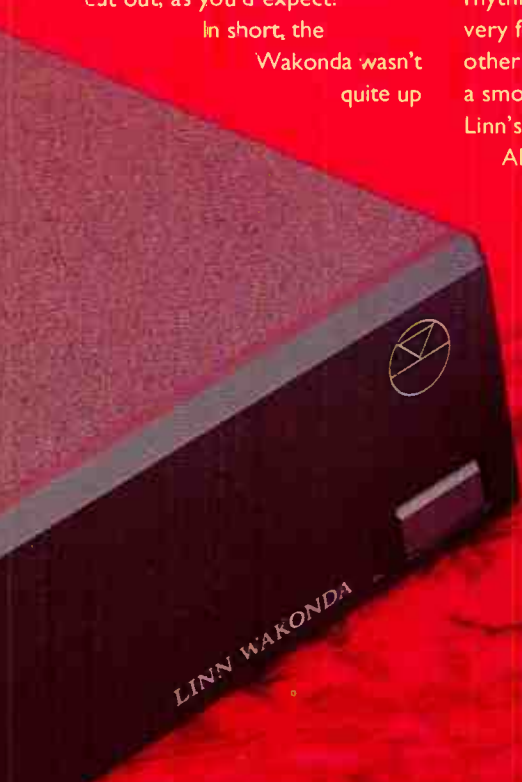
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Eaglesham,  
Glasgow G76 0EP  
☎ 0141 307 7777

**WORLD VERDICT**



An unobtrusive and highly flexible design that sounds great for the money - excellent value.

**Measured Performance**  
see p105-111



to the Q, but it made a valiant effort nonetheless.

Bjork's 'Army of Me' came through the Linn with surprising detail and clarity - more than you'd expect at the price, exhibiting unexpected pace and grip. However, changing to the 8000Q shed some light on the Wakonda's little indiscretions. The Audiolab had significantly more stage depth, and a smoother upper mid and treble.

The Linn in turn fought back with a more dynamic, energetic presentation that seemed to catch rhythmic accents better. Although its focus on low level instruments in the mix was also good, this seemed to be the Q's particular forte. Despite the merest whisker of compression on transients, it had more grasp of what was going on at the back of the acoustic, imparting more of the recording's air and ambience.

Moving to Isaac Hayes' 'Life's Mood', I was wondering if I'd missed something - after all, the Wakonda was already

and bass in general - had a richer, fuller sound, it still seemed to jump out of the mix more with the Linn. Despite this, the Wakonda struggled when things became really animated, the Q bringing greater intricacy to rhythm guitars and strings, while piano pads had better sustain.

Moving on to less funky, classical sounds, the second movement of Rimsky Korsakov's Scheherazade (Chicago Symphony Orchestra/Daniel Barenboim) saw the Wakonda showing great poise and control, with a satisfyingly natural timbre on solo violins and oboe. Its brio shone through as much with classical as with pop - its

# CYRUS PRE-POWER

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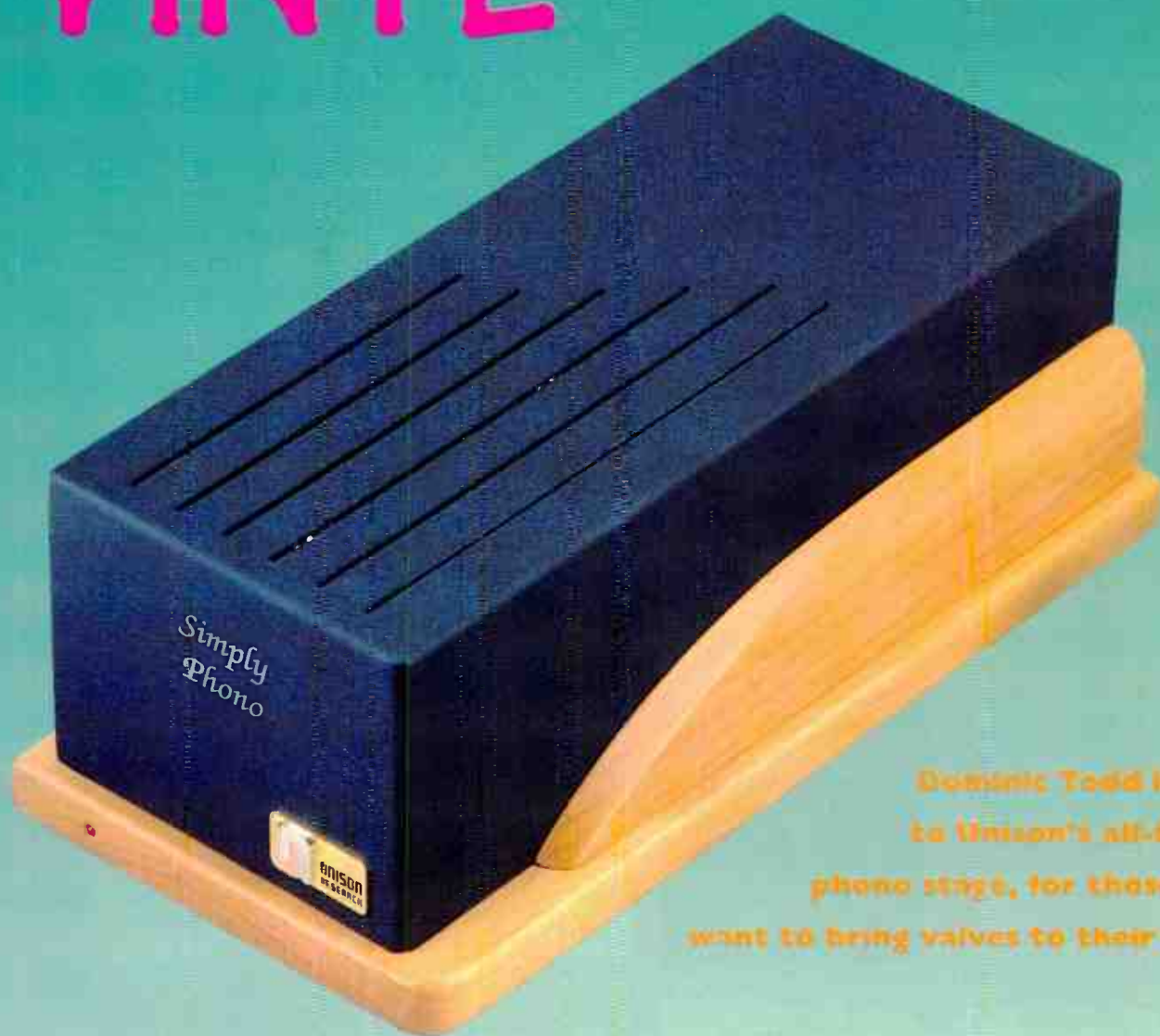
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# VALVES FOR VINYL



Dominic Todd listens to Unison's all-triode phono stage, for those who want to bring valves to their vinyl.

If you're a regular reader of this magazine you can't have failed to notice the wonderful Unison Simply Four valve amplifier on the front cover of the October 1995 issue. At £1495 it not only looked pretty, but it offered a sweet sound quality that was at home with all types of music. Likewise the less powerful Simply Two, reviewed in the August 1995 issue. All

that was missing was a facility for black discs. But not any more.

Unison have now introduced a matching phono stage, which takes its power directly from either of these amplifiers. It's priced at a reasonable £495. Like the Simply Two and Four, the Simply Phono offers the same unique styling, dripping with wood, as well as superb build quality.

Not surprisingly, it's also valve driven, relying on three ECC83 double triodes. Input impedance is adjustable and, unlike some of its competitors, thanks to external switches is possible without having to delve around within the box swapping resistors around. My only complaint is that the input and output phono sockets are a little too close, causing WBT-type locking phono



plugs some problems. As mentioned above, the Simply Phono as tested here takes its power from either a Simply Two or Four integrated. In future the Simply Phono may also be available with its own outboard power supply, making it a stand-alone unit suitable for use with any line level integrated amp.

But the real test for the Unison will be to see if it can woo Unison amplifier buyers away from competing designs from Michell, Audiolab and others.

The Simply Phono was quite noisy at higher volume levels, but this only really intruded with quiet passages of music, something that's worth bearing in mind if you listen to classical music.

Otherwise, Schubert's Symphony No.8, played by the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra was alluring. Music poured from the 'speakers and crescendos were reached without a hint of the strain or forcefulness that can afflict mediocre transistor stages.

If anything, though, violins could sound just a little too smooth at times, with the combination of valves in both amplifier and phono stage perhaps over-egging the pudding somewhat.

Those used to absolute transparency in their equipment may find the sound slightly veiled when listening to a full orchestra. Dynamic scale was hard to fault, however. The ability of the Unison to hold on to deeper bass notes and burst into life when needed created a tension in the music which in some ways made up for its lack of total clarity overall.

With Rockin Jimmys' 'By The Light Of The Moon' the Simply Phono performed well. The sound stage was expansive, with vocals powerfully portrayed and projected ahead of the rest of the mix. Having said that, it couldn't quite manage the holographic affect that a Michell Iso can achieve. The bass line was tuneful and it successfully underpinned the whole performance without dominating it. Guitar strings weren't quite as finely etched as the more analytical Michell Iso HR and percussion could also seem a little softened. Yet the overall balance still managed to draw me into the music in a beguiling manner.

Donald Fagen's 'Kamakiriad' was

presented with an equally involving and atmospheric depiction. The lazy bass line was deep and extended, albeit a tad tardy at times. Midrange detail was well retrieved from the groove, with individual instruments sounding clearly separated, allowing the listener to follow separate musical strands. Stereo width and depth again fell behind that of rivals but this is not a strong point with the Unison amplifier in any case, it should be noted. Yet the music hung together as a whole, its very cohesiveness making up for the slight clouding.

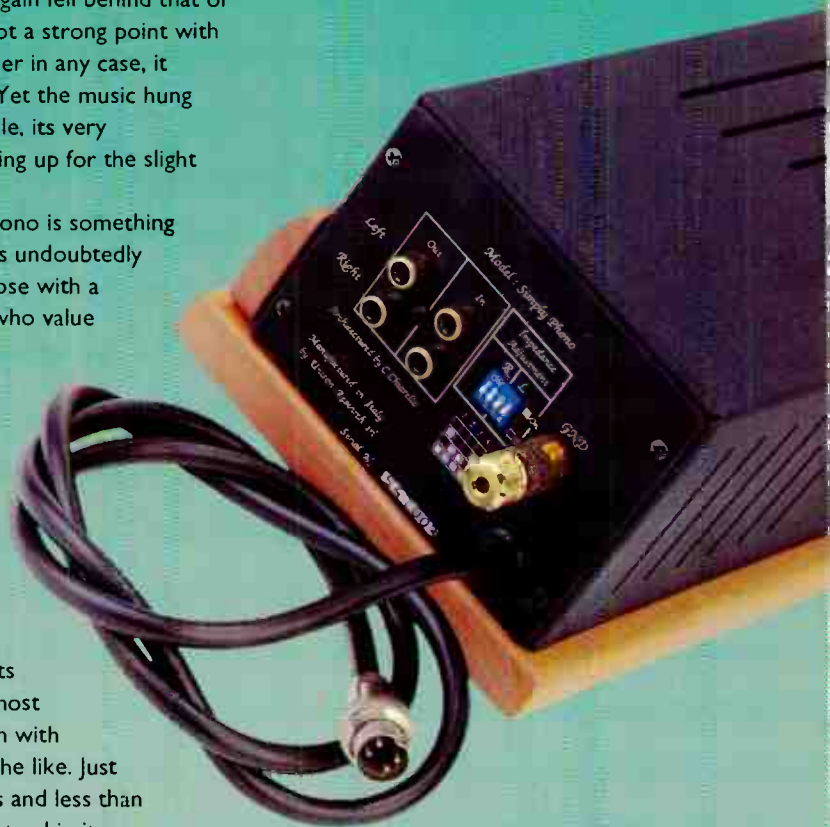
The Simply Phono is something of a mixed bag. It's undoubtedly flawed, but for those with a Unison amplifier who value musical integrity and involvement above out-right transparency, it represents a fine choice. Far from being just an 'add on' it performs well in its own right, and almost stands comparison with Michell's Iso and the like. Just a lack of openness and less than first rate imaging stand in its way. Yet if you already have a Unison, and want something equally well built and good looking, the Simply Phono makes a strong case for itself.

**Haider says:**

The Simply Phono is a very elegant stablemate for Unison's Simply Two or Four amplifiers. It's clean, relaxing, open and easy going. This is a set-up that allows you to sit back, close your eyes and enjoy the music. I had Texas's Rick's Road LP spinning and it wasn't long before I found myself wishing I was up there playing with them. Definitely involving stuff. The timing, particularly in the bass, wasn't precise, but it had a captivating fluidity.

However, this does not add up to perfection. John Lee Hooker's 'Boom Boom' was a bit too crisp in the upper midrange and could become loose in the

bass. And on track two of the same CD, 'I'm Bad Like Jesse James', I could almost feel JLH's low rumblings resonating in his chest. A hint of colouration in the lower mid-band, perhaps, but nothing to be too concerned about. This a jazz-and-blues man's type of machine ●



**Unison Simply Phono**

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**WORLD VERDICT**

Liquid sound with great dynamics, but a little hissy and muddled too. Beguiling, but not perfect.

**Measured Performance**  
 see p105-111

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## FIVE GLORIOUS YEARS

**Still young and beautiful: this month we're five years old! Dominic Baker, now a little older, looks back.**

This March 1996 issue marks the fifth anniversary year of Hi-Fi World. Next month will see the 50th issue. No, the calendar isn't wrong. We started in March, 1991.

It seems like I joined the team only yesterday, yet it was September 1992. Noel, after five years of editorial hurly-burly, feeling that is all a sane man could take, has now moved upwards to a more managerial role as publisher. He hopes to find more time on his hands to enjoy music, and will continue to contribute his views and opinions to Hi-Fi World. A mad passion for music and hi-fi kept me tightly bound to World, and it is perhaps this that now sees me in place as Editor.

Noel and myself both come from an engineering background, and had a desire to design and build our own audio equipment. So it wasn't long before the first ever Hi-Fi World DIY Supplement was born. We virtually killed ourselves sawing wood and beating metalwork to bring you those early projects.

I can well remember the blisters and bruises left from hand-punching the first steel chassis for the prototype Mullard 5-20. And Noel tells fond tales of Christmas Day that year, spent sawing up pieces of timber for KLS1, our first loudspeaker project. Thankfully we learnt quickly, and next month sees the 21st DIY Supplement.

Over the last year I feel we have significantly improved our reviews procedure. Most articles are written in-

house utilising our RPG Acoustics treated room. The treatment provides a more neutral and accurate balance, making listening tests very consistent. We still use select freelance reviewers of course, Douglas Floyd-Douglass and Dominic Todd for example, but their findings are carefully checked in-house. At least one member of the in-house team will audition the same piece of equipment in our own 'controlled' environment.

The last year has seen some of the most interesting developments in audio since its inception. In fact, over five years we have seen some startling innovations and some unexpected revivals. Despite the gloom-and-doom merchants who have been predicting the demise of hi-fi ever since Hi-Fi World started, this magazine has always kept its strain of optimism. Never have we allowed ourselves to forget that the machines and the measurement are all for one purpose - playing music.

Predictions are always tricky. We have seen the appearance of two new formats, Digital Compact Cassette and MiniDisc, and their virtual disappearance from the scene. There has been a plethora of new manufacturers starting up; sadly, there have been a number who have been lost to the scene as well. KEF and Celestion, the first 30 years old and the

second into its second half-century, almost collapsed, but fortunately were rescued to carry on their part of the British hi-fi tradition.

Who would have thought at the beginning of 1995 that by the end Quad, within sight of its 60th anniversary, would finally lose the independence it had had from being a family firm and be bought out by Verity PLC, which owns Mission and had earlier taken over another classic name, Wharfedale?

Still, these names are still alive and most decidedly, so are we. By coincidence, we will be celebrating our tenth anniversary in the first year of the millennium. Judging by the last five years, it will be upon us before we know it. We'll be there, so will hi-fi, and so will music ●



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# CHAMPAGNE COCKTAIL



**In love again - even  
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for the champagne gold  
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Disc player from Marantz.**

**P**erfect for listeners to Melody FM lounging in the gloaming with a champagne cocktail in one hand and a bowl of stuffed olives in the other. That's not a judgement on Marantz's CD-17. It's my verdict on Don McLean's *River of Love* on the Marantz CD-17. Since the day the music died on him this old Don has flowed under a fair few bridges and into easy-listening mode. The CD-17 couldn't help but make it painfully obvious.

But the champagne just has to flow over Marantz's £800 CD player. It took nearly an hour to stop singing the tunes I'd played; the spell ending with quizzical looks from passers-by as I launched into 'S'wonderful, s'marvellous. . .

So just what is it about the CD-17 that makes it worth breaking open a whole case-full, let alone a bottle, of Dom Perignon? Put a recording like Mingus Mingus Mingus on and hey! it's spring. A track like 'Il B.S.' stops and

you can't help but go 'Yeah!' just as though you'd been there in 1963.

It's spring in the step, too. We'll come back to Mingus in more detail later, but he showed the CD-17 had a ballet-dancer's sense of rhythm. Like the Mingus album, *The Omnibus* Wind Ensemble's *Music by Frank Zappa* is recorded in 'glorious analogue', as Peter Herring writes about their recent classical release in this issue. The sound is superb. Everyone on the Clapham

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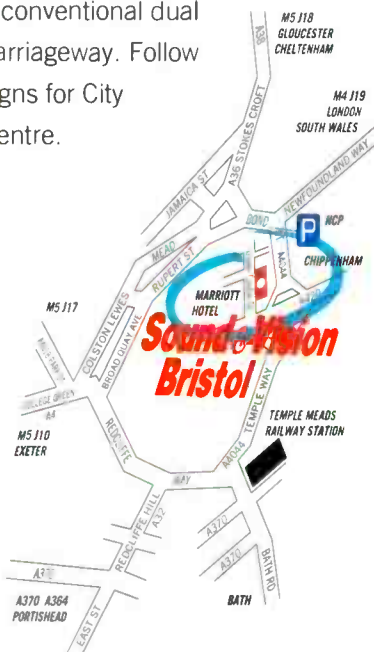
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# Sound & Vision Bristol



Omnibus should ride this one as well.

The arrangements are wild, with woodblocks mixing it with snares, xylophone with glockenspiel and vibraphone, clarinet with bass clarinet and even contra-bass clarinet. So many CD players would make a complete hash of telling the difference between them, but not the CD-17. If the percussionist was swapping between Chinese temple blocks and tapping a Tom with the heel of his palm it was unmistakable.

So was this player's rhythmic integrity. Zappa went in for some - by normal classical standards - odd time signature changes, but the CD-17 never lost track. Not even after the opening swinging bars of 'Dog Breath Variations' suddenly become raucously weird or throughout the exaggerated Weill-ish rhythms of 'Be-Bop Tango'.

Equally balletic, believe me or not as you please, was Klemperer's EMI recording of the Flying Dutchman and Tannhauser overtures. It takes a CD player with a touch - or more than a touch - of high-end presumption to stop Wagner, or Klemperer for that matter, sounding heavy. What the Marantz did was show the conductor's deftness of control, with the Philharmonia not just following his beat but totally in tune with him. The slow build-up to a crescendo depends not just on the tempo, but on all the orchestral building blocks being in place every second until, like a child's tower, the tension is strung high enough to fear the lot will topple.

This needs truthful dynamics and a full range of tonal colours as well to come off. Here the CD-17 displayed some of the best characteristics of its elder - and more expensive - brother, the CD-16. Fortissimo horns weren't swamped by trumpets or trombones, nor first violins by the seconds playing a little softer. Walter Legge, who produced this recording, was a master of the recorded orchestral balance, and the CD-17 conveyed both its subtlety and the ambience of Kingsway Hall without muddle or exaggeration.

If we are going to be picky, then the components of the orchestra did not have that silhouette-cut-out clarity I recall from the CD-16 or some more expensive players. Although the orchestra played free of the loudspeakers, forward and in a plane with the cones of the Harbeth HL Compact 7s, this example of Legge's work does have a deeper perspective than the CD-17 could reproduce. So did The Sixteen's Bach B Minor Mass. Yet James Bowman's counter-tenor was pure as I heard it in the control-room.

But with such a wealth of differentiation of tonal colour and



dynamics, this is a small complaint at the price. That and vocal purity was noticeable even on Elvis Costello's Kojak Variety on the Dylan song 'I Threw It All Away' when you could practically hear that the clothes peg he used for the essential Zimmerman nasal drone was obviously plastic, not wood. Yes, all right, it's not April yet, but this CD player can be really illuminating about the technical quality of mixes and the nuances of both vocals and instruments.

Even so, it will also rock. The base line for bass used to be Marantz's fondly remembered CD-94 MkII. Yet the CD-17's, if not immediately obvious, goes true first, then deep, which is far better than just deep. Witness the heavy piano chords at the beginning of Costello's Dylan imitation; even when they mix it on other tracks with a Hammond organ in pure '50s pastiches (sorry, 'tributes') the Hammond still bubbles away

distinctly around the back.

Better still, the obligatory heavy footwork from the drummer on Skunkhour's acid jazz album Feed was as close an imitation of an underground train diverted to just under the floorboards I've heard since I visited someone who lived only a few yards above the Circle line.

Which brings us full circle back to Mingus. Somehow, that album encapsulated all that's so good about this CD player. The crystal-clear difference between different mutes, the whiskery sound of wire brush on cymbals, the wonderful, slightly dry but rich, timbre of the double bass, all added up to more quality than might be expected from any CD player under a grand.

Maybe under two. Yes, full-range though the sound was, the width of the piano was more constricted than off the LP through a four-and-a half grand's worth of turntable, cartridge and head-amp, but not by the three-quarters you might expect from the price differential. I still went 'Yeah!' softly and respectfully at the end. That means the CD-17 passes the 'makes real music' test instead of simply spinning CDs, and that's the hardest test to pass of all ●

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A very clear, sweet and musical sound places the CD-17 up with the best.

**Measured Performance**  
 see p105-111

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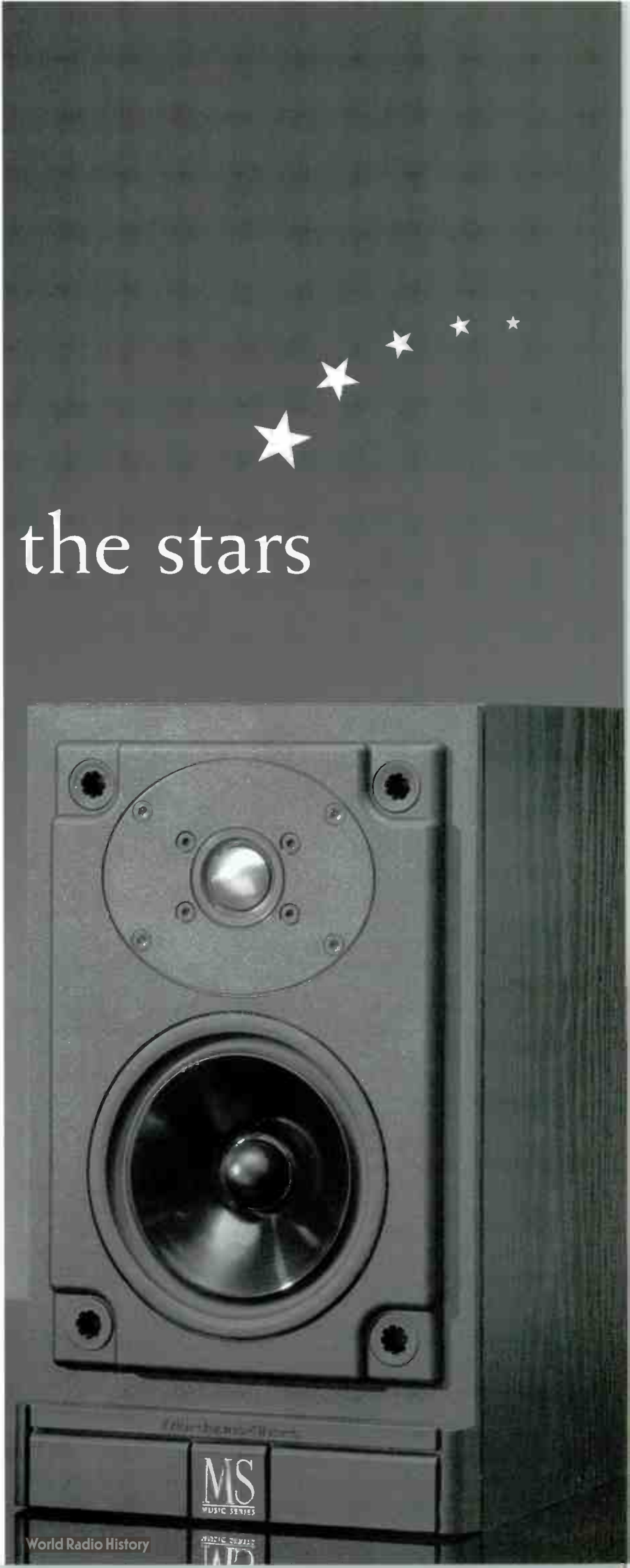
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# THE SPECTRE IN THE MACHINE

**Developed from Dolby's 'Spectral Recording' system, Dolby S Noise Reduction features in Onkyo's latest cassette deck, the TA-6310. Eric Braithwaite plays ghost buster.**



Very likely all but a few percent of cassette deck buyers only use them to record a tape for the car. It's almost perverse, therefore, that Onkyo should produce a deck that treats pre-recorded cassettes with more respect than a CD dubbed onto tape.

Take 'Diamonds and Pearls', by The Artist Formerly Known As Prince. The cassette is perverse in its own way; a hologram on the insert, when it's waggled, shows a young lady stroking the former artist's chest. It has bass which theoretically should put hairs on anybody's. Onkyo's cassette deck didn't quite do a King Kong job, said bass

being more of an acceptable impression than the real thing, but it did have a spot more substance than came out of any of the dubs later.

Unusually, pre-recorded replay was competent, if not spectacular. Even a couple of Chopin Nocturnes slid over the head without any faltering, despite piano being the instrument that shows

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up transport deficiencies. This Decca recording had a reasonably well displayed piano image across the speakers and an acceptable tonal colour. Sharper definition in the frequency extremes - a little more sparkle in the treble and a touch more attack in the bass - would have been desirable, but otherwise this was a good result.

When it came to recording, however, the Onkyo turned out to be acceptable rather than anything special. Clearly, Dolby S noise reduction is now flavour of the year, and Onkyo has adopted it wholeheartedly. So much so, that it was markedly preferable to Dolby C which displayed that veiling and diffuseness that has given it a bad name. It's not that Dolby S is innately superior, but that in this case, Onkyo's TA-6310 apparently prefers it to Dolby's other efforts. That said, it was not such a determined advance over this deck's Dolby B as has been displayed in some other cassette decks.

Years of digital have made our ears less forgiving and raised our expectations insofar as we demand a closer copy of the original than was acceptable in years BC (Before Compact Disc). Even with Dolby S and chrome tape, there was a slight degree

*“Years of digital have raised our expectations.... we demand a closer copy of the original.”*

of (bearable) cuppiness on Eric Clapton's 'Hound Dog' vocals, which were irritatingly more recessed and therefore less bearable on metal tape. In fact, metal tape did not fare well. A slight gain over ferric or chrome tape in a degree more of depth perspective and a firmer central image was not really sufficient to compensate for coarseness.

Brubeck's 'Blue Rondo a la Turk' is a

neat test piece. On ferric, the piano was pulled slightly more forward than the source, with the percussionist's triangles quite tight and clean. Paul Desmond's alto sax was a touch sweeter. As with pre-recorded tapes, however, the bass left something to be desired. Neither kick drums nor double bass could be persuaded to clearly separate; they left a recorded aura behind them, instead of perceptible substance.

Perhaps a Wagner overture is an unkind test, but the Onkyo lapped the CD with decent if not exceptional honours.

Ferric tape found the blaring brass and heavy orchestration a little too much to take, shying away a little from the opening violins in The Flying Dutchman overture and softening their pungency.

Chrome did offer a little sharpening, but the dynamic scale of the overture was, perhaps inevitably, reduced.

Metal tape improved the focus betwixt and between violins and cellos,

but the whole orchestral perspective became too laid back, so the advantage of a perceptible cleaning-up of the instrumental sections turned out to be outweighed.

Operating convenience the

Onkyo has a-plenty, including individual track search, CD-player-like repeat functions and the option of remote control via a matching Onkyo amplifier. Tape type selection is automatic of course, and tape biasing is done via Onkyo's 'Accubias' system which only takes a few seconds. From a purist's and experienced user's view, the biasing sounds slightly 'off', with metal tape

being least adaptive. Too many recordings on metal tape could not be rid of a disconcerting 'watery' sheen in the treble, as though the music was being recorded through a film of dew.



Probably only a few cassette deck buyers view the format as one for serious home or off-air recording. Dolby S or no, the Onkyo is not for that admittedly picky and small market. For those who want decent tape dubs for the car to while away the jams or to have something in their ears apart from wind while roller blading, the TA-6310 will probably serve well enough ●

**Onkyo TA-6310** £329.95

**Audio Club**  
401-405 Nether Street,  
London. N3 1QG  
☎ 0181 343 2082.

**WORLD VERDICT**

Poor quality record head relies upon Dolby S for salvation. Barely satisfactory results

**Measured Performance**  
see p105-111

# GYRO'S REVENGE

**After 14 years on the sidelines, the Michell Gyrodec turntable is finally getting the recognition it deserves. David Price talks to designer John Michell and listens to its latest incarnation, finding its beauty more than skin-deep.**

**M**ichell Engineering is Britain's oldest existing turntable manufacturer, John Michell proudly proclaims. "We go back a long way — a decade before Linn, Pink Triangle or any other of today's big names. When I appeared on the scene, Garrard and BSR were doing forty thousand turntables a week."

In 1965, he set up shop in Borehamwood. The next year he was making models for Stanley Kubrik's classic *2001: A Space Odyssey*. "I spent two years making models from aluminium, plastic and acrylic," he says. "Working in the film industry, I met many really talented designers, and learnt a lot about shapes and textures."



One result was manufacturing the Reference Hydraulic Transcription turntable, originally the Transcriptors'. Its striking looks won it healthy sales and a cameo appearance in Kubrik's *A Clockwork Orange*. "Loads of Hydraulic Reference parts later turned up in *Star Wars*," remembers John, who also contributed twenty pairs of eyes for the robot C3PO.

The Reference Electronic soon appeared, using a Papst DC motor to give speed control instead of the more messy trough of hydraulic fluid. But when Linn's LP12 appeared, its lower price prompted a simpler, more affordable design, the Focus One.

By the end of the seventies he was working on the Gyrodec. Launched in 1981, it aroused a mixture of interest and suspicion, not least because its radical design was so different to conventional belt-drive super-decks of the day. It was fifteen years on when a new power supply, the QC, really put the cat among the pigeons again, taking the Gyro ahead of its competitors in the sound quality stakes.

## The Gyro Sound

The Gyrodec has always sounded different to other top turntables. Colouration is low, the chassis ruthlessly exposing the partnering hardware and software. The standard Gyro sounds almost stark – clean and detailed but not terribly seductive.

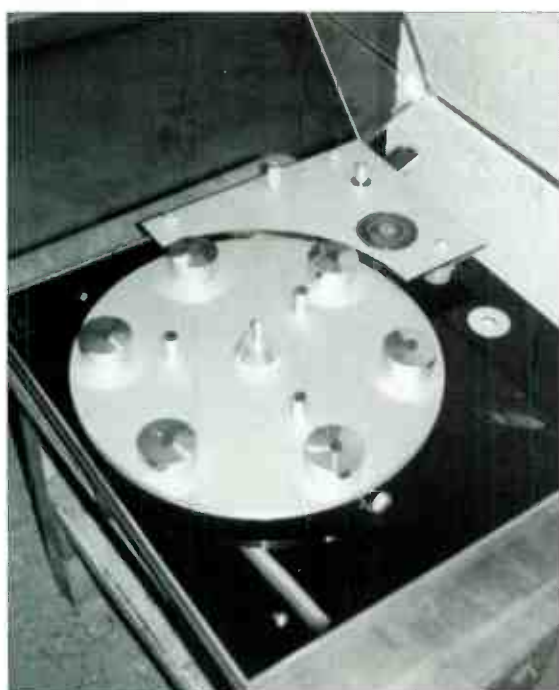
Compared to the LP12 or 401, the QC Gyro has a more architectural sound. Bass is slightly less powerful than the 401 but almost as tight and tuneful. The mid-band is so clean that it's pretty much down to your partnering tonearm and cartridge to get it wrong. Treble is super-smooth and detailed with great harmonics, making for a really tangible sound – well recorded rock cymbal work is something else. Individual strands of the mix are delineated clearly, and cast solidly in a super-wide soundstage.

With such spatial accuracy, production effects always sound very impressive, which has prompted the Gyro's detractors to accuse it of

sounding 'showy' and 'glossy'. A fairer criticism is its lack of sumptuousness. Many like vinyl for its euphony.

With the quartz-controlled QC power supply the noise floor seems to extend down to nothingness, while at the other end of the dynamic scale leading edges acquire greater solidity and precision. Soundstaging is even better, with instruments hanging effortlessly in place undisturbed by other events. Although bass becomes bigger, tighter and more tuneful, most remarkable of all is the high frequency performance, which catches instruments' harmonics in a way other decks can only dream of.

The entry-level standard-powered model, which is supplied with a Rega RB300, is a capable, affordable, starter system. With a top class pickup arm, QC power supply and (better still) Orbe mods, it's an awesome device – most certainly more than just a pretty face.



Before the Gyrodec: the Reference Hydraulic

## There is a vinyl future

Looking at the sales figures for turntables, you'd think that a man whose lifeblood is the vinyl disc would be worried, but John Michell is quietly confident.

"CD has separated the wheat from the chaff. It's taken over the mass market where it now rules supreme. We're not after those sales, but are happy to return to getting a large piece of a small market, like we used to in the sixties. We're not interested in growing, we're about the same size as we've always been, and

are selling Gyros, Orbes, Mycros and Syncros as well as we ever have done."

Confident that mass market trends have little bearing on his specialist business, John curtly dismisses any idea that CD sounds better than vinyl. While digital audio is better than it used to be, he says, the same is true of vinyl. "The goal posts have been moved." He is adamant that LP's potential is far superior to existing replay equipment still.

The designer on the design... page 39

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...continued from page 37

## Designing the Gyrodec

David Price speaks to John Michell

Trying to get John to make a dramatic pronouncement on turntable design wasn't easy. Asked about the single most critical aspect of turntable design, he looked tortured searching for an answer. "There's no substitute for engineering," he said, finally. Trying to pin him down on the specifics of designing the Gyro brought a lengthy reply.

### Balancing act

"With the Gyrodec, we made a circular chassis, put the bearing on the centre and made three holes for springs equally spaced, so the whole thing is radial, meaning it's all in balance. We put the tonearm between two springs, and to counteract the destabilising effect its weight has on the chassis, we put lead weights between the other two springs."

Custom armboards are machined to weigh exactly 1kg when fitted with their particular tonearm. This gives a constant balanced weight which sits on a sprung suspension.

Unlike other sprung decks, because the chassis is balanced, it's not necessary to change the frequency of the springs to level the deck. Balanced, constant-rate springing also facilitates a high mass chassis. "I'm a great believer in floating mass. It gives increasing immunity to extraneous vibration. The Gyrodec has 13kg floating on balanced springs – probably the heaviest platter/ bearing/chassis in existence."

### Platters matter

Enormous platters do bring problems. "They're not necessarily better," he says. "The only way you make platters really heavy is by using solid metal. This stops them ringing, but gives poor inertia. The only alternative is to make them hollow,

which gives you a big bell which you have to try and damp with rubber or felt mats." John's preferred solution is to have a medium-weight platter made from inert carbon-loaded acrylic. This is heavy enough to give good momentum. A thin rubber belt driving the platter around its



Engineering can be beautiful. Gyrodec bearing threaded for a new clamp.

circumference eliminates the possibility of a belt-driven inner platter amplifying its surface imperfections into audible wow.

"The biggest problem is the isolation of the motor," he holds. John claims to have been the first to use a slim belt to decouple the motor from the platter, back in the days of the Hydraulic Reference. In 1981, conventional wisdom was that a short thick belt driving a small circumference inner platter was the way to do things.

Duly, the Gyrodec got double belt drive simply because of public suspicion that a single tiny diameter belt couldn't drive its heavy platter. So can you use a Gyro with just one belt? "Try it," says John, "it sounds better." Why?

"Because reduced contact area with the platter's outside edge means the belt transmits less motor noise."

### Finding your bearings

Bearings are another key component. The Gyro uses an inverted bronze bearing, with a chrome vanadium thrust ball and a case-hardened steel shaft heat-shrunk into the housing. Because the platter's centre of gravity is lower than the ball, it's constantly forced into the centre where it's held rigidly to extremely high tolerances. A spiral groove takes oil up the shaft, returning it through a hole offset in the side down a minute central hole, so, driven by the platter rotation, the oil is self-circulating, seldom needing replacement. This all makes for an ultra rigid long-lasting bearing assembly.

### The material world

John believes in using expensive materials which can be worked with easily, rather than spending more time (and money) on intrinsically less suitable materials. This, he says, is the reason that Michell products use hand-polished acrylic sourced from Denmark.

"It's very expensive," says John, "but it's a very good damping material – stronger and more rigid than wood. It looks very good and machines beautifully – we take a piece of good material, machine straight into it, thread it and the edges are hand polished, and it's done, finished. We spend money on material and save on labour."

Surprisingly to those unfamiliar with Michell products, aesthetics are a secondary consideration. His designs look so striking, surely this is his first priority? "If you make something properly it will always look good. We use the right materials for the right purpose" ●

**Michell Gyrodec** £765  
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### Announcement

The last twelve months have proved a period of great deliberation regarding the way forward for Audio By Development. We have always held that we must be able to believe whole heartedly in a product before we will recommend it to our customers, but last year we began to question the change in direction being pursued by a number of established manufacturers, and we felt that in some cases sonic attributes were being sacrificed in the interest of greater commercial success. Some fine established products were discontinued, or increased in price beyond all reason, and with their loss it became much more difficult to assemble systems with the 'magical synergy' that is so important. Considerable time spent searching has proven to us that there are still manufacturers who's primary aim is to develop and market benchmark products with performance and reliability that justifies their cost, whilst remaining firmly in the specialist Hi-Fi arena, and not entering the mass market Audio / Video camp.

Of course synergy will always be paramount and we have now assembled a range of new systems based around these products that we believe will hold the listener in disbelief that they are being entertained by recorded music. There can never be a substitute for a live performance, but with our present line up, we consider that we have come closer than ever before. Our reference system is unquestionably expensive, but it is intended to provide state-of-the-art reproduction, with long term reliability and upgradability as future developments permit.

If this has to be next years aim, and you currently require a more economic solution, then we can offer complete systems starting at £1200 which will more than hint at realism, alternatively, we can advise on integrating new components in to your existing system.

We hope to be providing a number of musical evenings over the next six months to introduce some ground breaking new products, so watch this space, and if you can't wait then we will be pleased to chat over your enquiries, so give us a call.

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# DIGITAL ALCHEMY

**Audio Alchemy practice the art of conjuring a digital signal from a silver disc with their DDSIII CD transport (and player!). Transmutation from sound to written word by Haider Bahrani.**

Can the transport mechanism for a CD really make that much difference? When, like the Audio Alchemy DDSIII, a CD player behaves better as a transport bypassing its own convertor, the answer is yes - but more of that later.

With an Audiolab 8000CDM transport close at hand a comparison was inevitable. At £699.95 the Audio Alchemy is near enough half the price of the Audiolab, but what it gets right - and as a transport there is a lot that it does - shows up some of its more expensive counterparts. The DAC used was a Pink Triangle Da Capo through Audiolab 8000Q pre-amplifier and 8000M mono block power amps driving a pair of Mission 752 loudspeakers.

Beverly Craven's 'Missing You' from her first album is to my mind her masterpiece with its New Orleans horns, brushed snares and pathetically haunting vocals. Compared with the Audiolab, Beverley's voice was perhaps set a bit too far back in the sound stage and grainier at the top end. Kick drums and snares were a little dry, I noticed.

What the Audio Alchemy lacked here, however, it made up in its breadth of sound staging. Although I found the DDSIII more spacious-sounding, it was still standard Nescafe and the Audiolab the Gold Blend - fuller bodied and smoother on the palate, but both satisfy that caffeine craving. 'Rock'n'Roll Star' off Oasis's Definitely Maybe album, was raw, dynamic, but the vocalist was

hiding somewhere behind the grainy guitar thrash. The bass was so pacey it was in trouble of becoming hyperactive. Eric Clapton's Stratocaster on 'Behind the Mask' didn't really project as it should.

For the first ten minutes of Tchaikovsky's Symphony No.6 Op74 in B minor I could have been listening to either transport mechanism. The DDSIII had a subtle dryness, though; compared to the Audiolab there was a lack of fluidity. The violins were slightly shallow in body and spread a little too liberally across the stage with a breadth that seemed a touch unnatural.

Audio Alchemy have made an effort to obscure the fact that the DDSIII is in fact a CD player. I can see why. Through the in-built convertor the image contracted into a ball and the dynamics had taken Valium. Beverley Craven sounded as if she could do with a woolly jumper or three and Bjork's 'Violently Happy', from Debut, which normally sounds seriously in your face, was not doing very much other than attracting just a little of my attention.

The DDSIII is basically a good-quality transport - it has one electrical output, there is no optical one - with a basic convertor added. Unfortunately, TEAC's VRDS-T1 is a couple of hundred pounds cheaper and it's a killer. Quite honestly, it is difficult to justify the extra expense of the DAC in this transport ●

**AUDIO ALCHEMY DDSIII £699.95**

**Path Premier**

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## WORLD VERDICT



Fundamentally a good, exciting transport allied with a basic CD convertor.

**Measured Performance  
see p105-111**



# W



## ONE LAST CASSETTE DECK

I wish to upgrade my Dolby S cassette deck. Currently I use a Sony TC-K611S which is a superb machine, except that on certain brands of tape the transport jerks the tape for a while until the reels are evenly loaded.

Your October '95 issue warns of the end of cassette. Does this mean that the chance of a Nakamichi with Dolby S has gone?

I believe you are correct about cassette's future, so before it is too late I need a reliable deck to take me beyond 2001!

**Alan Wells  
Reading,  
Berks.**

*The most advanced decks around are certainly the Nakamichis. I'd aim for at least the DR-2, the first three-head deck in the range, if you want top quality sound that will last. Nakamichis are imported by B&W loudspeakers, who have a competent service department for these machines, so I'd expect back-up service to be available for many years*



If you want the best performance from cassette along with reliability, the three-head Nakamichi DR-2 is a great choice.

to come. DB

*Don't hold your breath for a Nakamichi with Dolby S. They never accepted that Dolby HX Pro was necessary, cynics suggesting this was only to avoid paying Dolby a licence fee. In fact, my 10kHz Saturation tests clearly show that a Nakamichi without Dolby HX Pro is better than most cassette decks with it. There's always an argument against signal processing and Nakamichi usually adopt it, which is why I think it unlikely they will ever adopt Dolby S. The question is: are they right?*

*For general purpose domestic recording, perhaps not. It's appropriate for Sony, et al, to fit Dolby S, always bearing in mind that Dolby charge considerable amounts for a licence, as well as a royalty fee on each unit sold, so S decks carry a hefty price premium.*

*Tape enthusiasts, and many, many professionals - and remember that Nakamichi is a common choice for professionals - prefer to avoid signal processing. That includes me. These days a Nakamichi can make superb recordings onto metal tape without any signal processing at*

*all, whilst most other decks cannot. Slight residual background hiss can be eliminated by using Dolby B; there's no need for anything else, including Dolby S.*

*Curiously, Nakamichis are more alone than ever in being able to achieve this. As cassette recorder and tape sales go into decline within the world's industrialised economies, and due to the Japanese Yen's rise, quality heads (all of which are Japanese)*

*capable of exploiting metal tape become less affordable and available.*

*Nakamichi make their own heads for the DR-2 and higher models, and I can assure you they leave other decks standing. Also,*

## Letter of

### LOWTHER LOVE

Like Balestie Remi (December 1995 issue) I enjoy my music through Lowther Fidelio speakers, although I use the higher flux PM5A drive units (2300 Gauss), rather than PM7Cs (1900 Gauss) fitted as standard. My valve amplifier is a World Audio Design 4watt single-ended triode unit, rather than the Audion 300BSE.

The results are absolutely superb and I cannot speak too highly of the Fidelios. With a good recording there appears to be nothing electrical or mechanical between myself, as listener, and the musicians with their instruments.

However, I take issue with M Remi in referring to

Lowther as technology from the twenties. True, Voigt took out his patents on horn-loaded loudspeakers then and Lowther 'speakers stem from these. While I am in no sense linked with the Lowther company, I have been a happy user of their products for many years.

In that time they have moved from plastic to much stronger metal driver chassis. Diaphragms have changed. Aluminium speech coils came into use but have now been replaced by a magnetic alloy (Hi-Ferric).

Cabinets have been completely redesigned to eliminate standing waves which caused low-frequency cut-off problems. Magnetic flux has been increased. Speech coils have been shortened.

*Send your letters to Hi-Fi World Postbag,*



# r l d



metal tapes have become much quieter and more consistent in their surface coatings (fewer agglomerations) over the past few years.

As run-of-the-mill heads decline in quality,

they are less able to exploit these improvements. Nowadays, for instance, my tests clearly show that decks costing up to £250 can get less signal onto metal tape than ferric and chrome tape, which may seem a bit daft. This is because metal tape needs much higher bias, which in turn brings about earlier magnetic overload (saturation) in poor heads, due to the high overall (signal+bias) flux levels.

Nakamichis can fully exploit metal tape improvements, especially with outrageous tapes (!) like Sony ES. Your average domestic box of wheels would burst into flame trying to magnetise this stuff properly! It's great tape of course, but - er - a trifle impractical. Using ES in a cooking recorder is a bit like putting Methanol into a Fiesta.

So don't expect to see Dolby S on a Nak. 'cos it doesn't really need it. Boggers recorders do - and more than ever as head quality declines, because Dolby S, like C, has peak companding (i.e. overload prevention) to avoid this, but it's all more signal processing of course.

Finally, your TC-K611S shouldn't jerk so badly at the start or end of tapes. Look at the tape to see if it is lying unevenly on the hub, caused by continual stopping and starting. This will cause the tape to bind against the shell. The cure is to wind/rewind completely from one end of the tape to the other. If the machine still jerks, then either the cassette is at fault (remove, put a pencil in the hub and wind manually to check for resistance) or the recorder needs a service (belts, brakes).

This is a problem innate to cassette by the way, because of poor tape guidance within the shell. Even the best machines cannot overcome this problem. NK

## VINYL REVIVAL

It has taken me 10 years to see the light! The vinyl light that is. Like so many, I abandoned my LPs almost overnight when CD arrived, but luckily continued to give them house room as it would have left an unsightly cavern in my hi-fi unit if all the LPs had disappeared.

I recently upgraded my amplifier from an early 8000A to the Copland CSA14, and now I can't stop playing LPs! The CD player is a carefully auditioned Arcam Alpha 5 Plus. Naturally, instead of being totally satisfied with this revelation I am wondering, as we perversely do, whether a modest cartridge upgrade from the K9 is called for.

I have Heybrook Sextets with a REL Strata sub-woofer (on a low L.F. setting) with a Walker CT58 turntable and Mission arm.

The K9 doesn't find much favour in your columns. Two or three years ago most journals seemed to prefer it to the same Goldring cartridges that you now suggest as an upgrade. Can you explain and advise please!

**John Reader  
Hemel Hempstead,  
Herts.**

You don't mention which Mission arm you have, which makes it difficult to recommend anything. Generally, we find the K9 bright and gritty and prefer the smoother balance of the Goldrings, which have a big, full bass and super detail. I think many found the K9 impressive, with its bright and forward balance being

## the Month

There have probably been other changes of which I am unaware but I think those mentioned give the lie to any implication that Lowther are stuck with twenties' technology.

Resonant boxes were also in use 60 years ago and still abound today - do they rate as old-fashioned technology?

One of the problems with Lowther is that virtually all their production is exported so they have no retailers where you can hear their products; you generally have to buy direct from the factory in good faith.

**Noel Parks  
Brockenhurst,  
Hampshire**

Fascinating how tenaciously listeners can

cling to a particular sound. Having started in the hi-fi press when Led Zep were gods, platforms were de rigueur and towering Cambridge R50s (£98!) seemed to point the way ahead, it's fascinating that as the year 2000 approaches the gentle wonders of the thermionic triode, in easy alliance with a highly sensitive horn loudspeaker are still so appreciated. This is occurring not only in Britain, I should add, but in Japan and the East, from where it is spreading outward. Hi-Fi is becoming an interest with many parallel faiths, rather than the pursuit of one dogma or another. It's all the better for it too I believe. NK

64, Castellain Road, Maida Vale, London W9 1EX.

perceived as greater detail and insight, but after longer listening we found it fatiguing, and many readers have found the same.

Going on the quality of the rest of your system, since you have a superb amplifier and loudspeakers, I suspect that a really good moving coil would be worthwhile. Your system is certainly capable of resolving the extra detail and transparency this would bring. We currently find the Ortofon's especially good, having a neutral and open balance with super dynamics.

Moving Coil cartridges put a lot more energy into a tonearm than an MM, so a rigid arm is needed for best results. A Rega RB300 is normally regarded as the minimum requirement for an MC. If you have the 'S' shaped arm, replace it with one of these. If you have the Mechanic, hang on to it for dear life, they are excellent arms and very rare. Use these with an MC15 Super II, which is top value at £125. If you really get into vinyl, it'd be well worth having a look at a new turntable too. A Systemdek IIXe 900 would be an ideal choice. Its dry, neutral sound would complement your system well. DB

A K9 with Sextets? You joke Sir! Are there any dicky birds perching happily on the trees outside, or have they all fled? The Sextet (MkI) was always on the bright side and its Tonigen ribbon tweeter spits out treble with force, but also with supreme accuracy and unmatched revelation.

Put nasty treble in, something a K9 provides without shame, and migration will likely set in early in your neighbourhood. You must provide

this 'speaker with pure and sweet treble, then it'll return the compliment by fully revealing these qualities.

The Tonigen works from 6kHz upwards, a region where stylus profile starts to predominantly determine what a cartridge can achieve. Any old elliptical just won't do.

You must get a quality cartridge and, at the risk of repeating myself (but I will!) you are faced with Goldring's Geiger tipped 1042, which offers gorgeous treble, full of detail and activity, or one of Ortofon's moving coils. I can clearly discern the improvement an Ortofon MC25FL (Fine Line profiled stylus) offers over an MC25E (Elliptical), when using Sextets, so if you are critical and want the best, here's where you might start.

Dominic is prudently balancing the requirements of your pocket against your ears by suggesting the cheaper MC15. A Sextet really demands the best you can possibly afford if it is to sound right, an Ortofon MC20 Supreme (£350) being ideal in my view. NK

#### ARMING A GARRARD

I have enjoyed your excellent magazine for the past three years and as a result of your recommendation I purchased a Garrard 401. I replaced the SME plinth with 1in MDF which rests on a well-mounted target shelf. The original rubber mat has been replaced with a glass platter from Slate Audio. I intend to purchase a granite plinth shortly.

My main query is over my tonearm, an SME 3012 MkII. Rightly or wrongly, I had this arm refurbished by SME two

years ago. It cost me nearly £150 but now looks brand new. It supports an Ortofon MC15 Super II cartridge into a Pioneer A400 which drives Epos ES14 Mark II speakers.

I have received differing advice regarding this arm. A technician at SME told me not to be over-hasty in replacing it, whilst Slate Audio recommend the Rega RB300 as a minimum. If the Rega is significantly better, would I hear this with my cartridge? Your advice would be valued since the length of tonearm will seriously influence the plinth size. Would it be better to save up for an SME 312 in the future and keep the 3012?

My second concern is with my amplifier and speaker combination. I use an Ortofon T5 MC transformer with the moving magnet stage. I find it gives a punchier sound. Why should this be? Furthermore, with moving magnet cartridges why does the moving coil phono stage make them sound muffled and not simply louder?

To prevent cone flap I have tried plugging the reflex ports with the foam plugs which Epos provide. This prevents the cone flap but I find there is a loss of ambience with a compressed soundstage.

I believe I require a phono stage with a warp filter. Ideally, I want clear, sweet treble, a fluid, spacious midrange with tight, tuneful bass-lines.

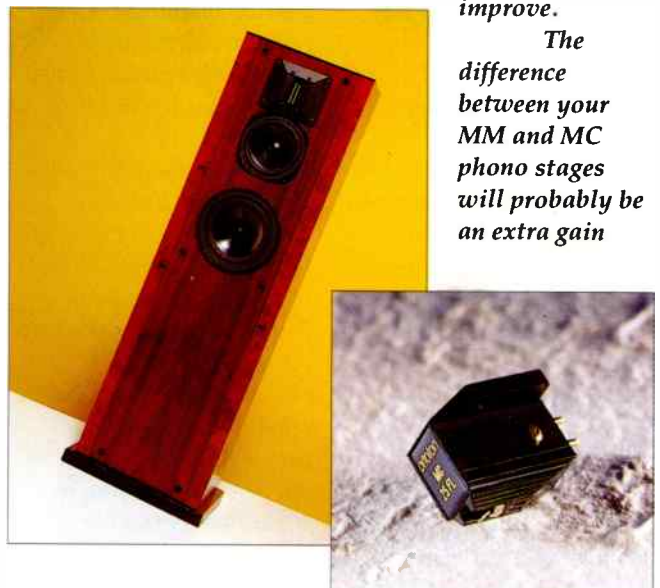
I have considered a change of amplifier but feel the Audiolab 8000A a bit clinical and lacking in emotion and have been told that the Sugden 21a is over-priced and under-powered. Or perhaps I need to change my speakers? Help!

Please make your 'World Verdict' globes clearer and print the winning verses for your competitions (as you used to). It's both helpful and highly amusing. Perhaps you could have a 'wooden spoon' for the worst entry. More articles on symbiotic amp/speaker combinations would be welcome.

**Mark Richards  
Westbury On Trym,  
Bristol**

*I would definitely go for the Rega RB300 or, if funds permit, an SME IV. Both these arms will suit an MC far better and should improve detail and dynamics. This, in combination with your MC15 Super II and Garrard 401, is an excellent combination, one that you'd have to spend a lot more on to improve.*

*The difference between your MM and MC phono stages will probably be an extra gain*



Precise, clear treble from Heybrook's Sextet loudspeakers makes cartridge choice critical; try the smooth sounding Ortofon MC25FL.





The ultimate arm for a Garrard 401; the Hi-Fi World inspired Garrard 401 Celebration SME IV tonearm.

*calls from people who didn't agree with our verdict and, of course, thought theirs was better. Sadly, we do not have time*

*stage, normally with a gain of x10 to suit the lower output of an MC cartridge. It will also load an MC properly. The loading conditions for MM and MC are different, which is why your MM sounds muffled driving the MC stage. It may also be overloading it! A step up transformer loads an MC properly, and steps up voltage enough to drive an MM stage. The T5 transformers are probably higher quality than the extra x10 gain stage of your MC input, hence the better sound.*

*An ideal match for the MC15 Super II is the EAR 834. These may be hard to find now, but they're worth tracking down. This has a warp filter that also adds a slight lift in the bass to avoid it becoming thin. So you'll still get powerful bass lines, but without the cone flap.*

*The problem with the 'World Verdict' globes being near-invisible has now been sorted - sorry.*

*We will be trying to do more system reviews in the future, but please remember that the Measured Performance section often contains extremely valuable information that will help you match equipment.*

*We used to print the winning entries to the competition, but we were being overwhelmed by*

*to get into such discussions. DB*

*Being low impedance devices, Moving Coil cartridges need to be matched into a low impedance load if their (excellent) innate signal-to-noise ratio is to be fully exploited.*

*However, this does not mean a high input impedance transistor (or valve) stage slugged with a resistor, so much as a transformer to provide the necessary voltage step-up. Then, MCs are actually more efficient and quieter than MMs.*

*Transformers have problems. Whilst a good active stage (i.e. preamp) commonly sounds better than a transformer, a poor one, usually cobbled up from a crummy silicon chip to give x10 gain, with a 100Ω resistor in front to give the required input impedance, is usually what you get and it will sound worse. Some of these things hiss like an agitated adder. I hope that gives you some idea of the trade-offs facing you here.*

*Moving Magnet cartridges have signal coils with lots of turns of fine wire, to get high output. This gives them a generator whose impedance rises with frequency. A 47kΩ MM input load affects this little, but the 100Ω input load of an MC stage has a*

*severe effect, attenuating high frequencies, resulting in a muffled sound. NK*

## HI-FI ON A SHOESTRING

I bought a Rogers Cadet III stereo integrated amplifier at a car boot sale recently for a fiver. It looked sad and grubby amid the surrounding consumer compost and I thought: "here are the spare valves for my Rogers HG88 III".

It was cleaned up and internally looks unaltered. I applied switch-spray to the controls, valve-pins and bases, after dusting out the chassis with a fine soft brush. It is the late III stereo type, seven valves, three Brimar ECC 807s plus four ECL 86s, integrated on a single chassis.

Placed within my set-up of Tannoy I2in dual concentrics, type HPD/315/8, and Trio KT5300 tuner (circa 1973), it performed perfectly, comparing well with my HG88 III (valve, circa 1965) except for a pronounced hum. The Tannoys are efficient and the Cadet drives them with ease.

Your feature, 'Cadet Force' (Dec. 1994) has been valuable, although I failed to notice at the time that the Supplement was missing. The hum is less obtrusive on radio due to the high output of the Trio, but phono is a different matter.

My turntable is a white Garrard 301, with an SME 3009 and Shure M75EJ type 2 cartridge. Like the Cadet, these components originated in various car boot and jumble sales over the last five



A Rogers Cadet III integrated, pictured here with the matching Variable Tuner, is a good start if you're on a tight budget.

years, hence the elderly cartridge. Surprisingly, with the help of a Shure SFG-2 Force Gauge, it tracks even quite heavily modulated recordings (e.g. Holst's Planets, Karajan, Decca SXL 2305) with some tenacity, well enough to make a neighbouring CD midi-system owner quiver with disbelief!

My budget is on the slim side. I have to care for my crippled father who is 85 and I spend with care. Over the last five years I have spent around £25 on equipment, bit by bit restoring where necessary. I have also amassed around a thousand LPs, virtually all classical, in variable condition and age. Kitchen sponge cloths (new) in cold running water, work wonders in cleaning discs without adding to existing damage.

The Rogers HG88 III and Cadet III appear fairly similar and sound alike, both presumably originating in the mid 1960s. Up to a certain output level they can drive electrostatic headphones, Stax SR-3 and SRD-6, latter not mains-powered, also probably fairly old, from the early 70s, in all likelihood.

I know very little about electronics, but if I know what a component looks like and where to find it, I can often replace it. The HG88 was not too good originally, but I came across a biscuit-tin full of valves one Sunday morning, and I was able to replace several in the amplifier to good effect.

Your magazine has only been known to me in the last couple of years. I had no idea that valves were still in use in modern equipment. I bought the Garrard 301 because of its appearance, which is better than my Garrard SP25 III. The SME was on a 1970s turntable which was past restoring, although the arm was perfect.

Can the Cadet III be restored to a humless quality

continued on page 47...

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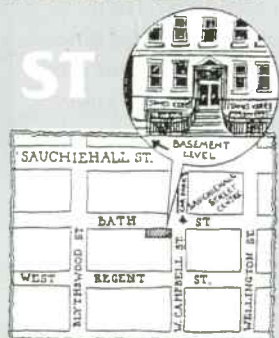
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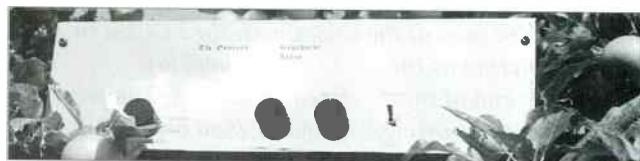
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# Signing up

**QLN's Signature loudspeaker has Douglas Floyd-Douglass signing up for full membership of the QLN adulation club.**



**A**t the Cumberland show there was one room in particular where I immediately noticed that treble quality seemed special. It wasn't that bright, sharp or clinically precise sound sometimes associated with quality transducers or certain ribbon designs. On the contrary, I found it unrestrained, unbiased toward any frequency band and completely listenable. My immediate assumption was that a really expensive pair of active

loudspeakers, or a secret Russian prototype of a metaphysical 'out of the box' experience had been invented.

I can report with delight that I was wrong on both counts. It was a QLN Signature loudspeaker, a startling individual, thoroughbred from cabinet to crossover, with a wood finish that

smells so good you could eat it (I must have been a squirrel in another life).

What makes the QLN series special in technical terms is the external crossover unit which QLN call the Splitfield Passive Crossover. About the size of a CD player, it can be placed away from the loudspeakers. This placement avoids internal sound pressures that set up vibrations which stimulate the microphonic tendencies of components, an effect now commonly

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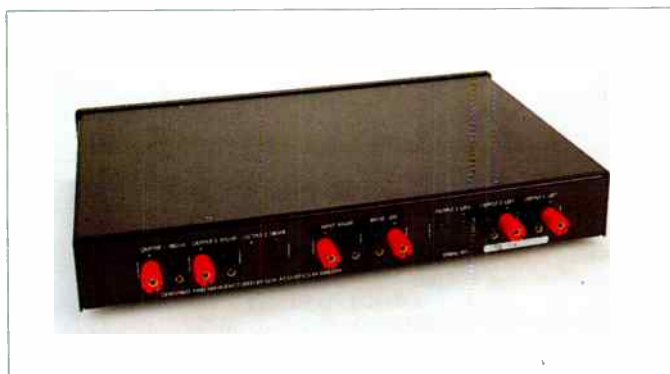


thought to colour and distort the signal.

With this potential benefit, QLN recommend use of the finest cable. I used QED 79 strand and I would concede it was a compromise. Doubtless, a more expensive cable would give better results, but I just had to listen to music, and the cable was really of no consequence at that stage. I was prepared to improve it later, should I feel it worth doing - and I did.

QLN should really include 'speaker cables, perhaps as an option (I would certainly pay 10 per cent extra for matched cables), not only to ensure optimum response of this fine product, but also to save the trouble of cutting up the only length of consistent cable that you have available, as I had to!

The width and proportion of sound stage from the Signatures was quite incredible - at least as good as many large hybrids that cost a lot more. In particular, on vocal tracks, the voice was clearly dissociated from the loudspeaker enclosure and placed perfectly in the middle of what can only be described as a tangible sound stage. The sensation of depth was extraordinary. When listening to arrangements with large instrumental sections, I could clearly place the instruments, from left to right and front to back.



One crossover feeds both loudspeakers with individual cables for each driver.

To complement the novel crossover arrangement, the QLN cabinet has been designed to eliminate internal resonances and standing waves, which cause a cabinet to sound 'boxy' and

unnatural. To test its effectiveness I chose 'Gunners Dream', from Roger Waters' Final Cut. Everything from the miaowing cat to the rasping cello was delivered in the proper time and space. Musically, it was very involving.

The Jam's 'That's Entertainment'

*“a thoroughbred from cabinet to crossover, with a wood finish that smells so good you could eat it (I must have been a squirrel in another life)”*

was neutrally rendered. The level of insight was such that I could clearly hear the reverb going in and out on the backing vocals - not something one is usually aware of. I was startled by the depth which the Signature was capable of rendering. I sensed the engineer's fast pulse as he leant forward to move the fader in response to the performance. It was exciting stuff.

Handel's 'Fireworks' propelled the soundstaging abilities of the Signature into orbit. The full orchestra appeared large and uncompressed; the music seemed eager to get out. I tend to listen for woodwinds, cellos and bass, because they are often suppressed by many playback systems in their inability to deliver both the constituents of a performance and also the essential richness of harmonic structure and fine associated nuances, which for me constitute musicality.

The muted horns really did sound muted,

and when they opened up, boy did they blow. Strings were warm and enveloping, but at the same time strategically placed in the ambient soundfield. When I listened carefully, I

really could separate the first from the second violins, and the woodwinds, which are typically soft, were given an audible breathing space.

Crowded House's 'Into Temptation' provided another example of the depth of soundstage the Signatures can pride themselves upon. The vocal was perfectly central, veering only with the movements of Neil Finn in response to musical changes. This album was recorded by Tchad Blake, a respected American recording engineer who I met at Peter Gabriel's Real World Studios last year.

It was a joy to have a pair of speakers like the QLN's which could do his engineering and the musicianship justice. The bass was as it should be, not boomy or chesty, but thumping, just the sound you would expect from a 22inch acoustic bass drum, surprisingly soft in comparison to modern samples or digital drums, but with real resonance and the harmonic content of a natural instrument.

Separation was of monitor standard, and when listening with my eyes closed, I could almost feel the cool metal touch of a console beneath my palms. Here's a loudspeaker that really gets you there, which, at the price, makes it a superb choice. I give it top rating ●

**QLN Signature**

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**P**hew! Five years as editor - and I'm going out to grass, willingly, as a 'publisher'. So, for once, let me tell you a little more about publishing, rather than hi-fi.

When I started Hi-Fi World in 1991, nobody told me the odds are stacked against privately-run magazine start-ups. Most new magazines last barely more than a few issues, because of the prodigious economics. A six-figure bank loan barely covers a few months' bills for printing them, so understandably private publishers are thin on the ground. I was lucky enough to have an understanding bank manager.

This little matter apart, the big obstacles are getting a high-volume web-offset printer to accept the job if you want credit, as well as finding a good distributor to deliver the magazines to newsagents around Britain and, preferably, around the world. Bear in mind that 30,000 magazines consume 10 tons of paper, meaning a distribution system has to cope with huge tonnages overall. They employ lots of men and warehouses everywhere. It costs.

The final bridge I had to cross was cross-examination by W. H. Smiths! In law, not only are the publisher and editor responsible for what goes into print, but so is the distributor, printer and newsagent.

Quite understandably, W. H. Smith wanted to be sure I was the sort of person who knew what "legal, decent and honest" meant before they would allow the magazine to appear on their bookshelves.

Had they said "Niet!" my little project would have died on the spot, since W. H. Smith accounts for roughly 30 per cent of news sales and is an important outlet. Luckily, they said "Da". I said "Wha!" - and was on my way. I remember dancing down Old

Holborn that fine morning.

Hi-Fi World has been successful because it is editorially-led; that is, editorial quality and integrity take precedence. Long experience in the hi-fi press, working first as Editor of Hi-Fi Answers back in the seventies, then as a freelance working for all the titles (Practical Hi-Fi, Popular Hi-Fi, Audiophile, Hi-Fi for Pleasure, Hi-Fi Sound, Hi-Fi Answers, Which CD and Hi-Fi Buyers Guide?, Hi-Fi Review and Flat Response?) persuaded me that mainstream publishers were seriously out of touch with the interests of readers.

One idea reigned: money and its acquisition. The notion that a better product was the best way to achieve this was never seriously discussed. In meetings I attended with the publisher as a young editor of Hi-Fi Answers (aeons ago!), the talk was about "page yields" and "moon targets", strange advertising terms and concepts that were alien to me. I used to imagine salesmen roaring off to the moon on toytown rockets every month.

There was great reluctance to talk about improving editorial, because it cost money. It didn't make any (or so they thought). That seemed like putting the cart before the horse to me, but being young, and faced with a relatively youthful and extremely

## *Mysteries from Noel Keyword*

forceful publisher called Michael Heseltine, I admit I said as little as possible. I never saw him throw a mace, but boy! I believed he could.

It's an editor's job to decide on and guide through the actual content of a magazine, so inevitably when I started this magazine I was the editor. Trouble is, someone has to run the financial side of the business, which includes advertising sales, printing, hiring and looking after staff, premises, equipment and convincing the bank manager the graph is going up, not down, as he'll discover if he stands on his head (silly man!).

The publisher traditionally reigns over all but at Hi-Fi World the editor considers the wishes of the readers and the publisher is subservient to this end. If it wasn't so, then I fear editorial quality would diminish, as it has done in our national newspapers, most of which are in serious decline.

Note how, these days, British newspapers share so many headlines and stories. Just as bad, their publishers have no qualms about giving priority to advertisements, even to the extent of printing them on right-hand pages. For many years, being the pages readers naturally looked at first, the right-hand page was sacrosanct, reserved for writing.

Putting ads in a prime position like this makes money - and also shows where most publishers think their best interests lie. I think they are very wrong, and so do readers of course, as declining circulations show.

Some readers write to say they would prefer a magazine without advertisements. Economics preclude this. Up to 50 per cent of the cost of U.K. magazines is usually borne by advertising. If this were not so, prices would double and sales doubtless plummet.

The only major ad-free magazine I've come across is Viz, but it has massive sales and, presumably, different economics. However, a magazine stuffed with ads is making serious wonga and could undoubtedly afford to pay for more editorial to keep the two in balance but, as I've explained, publishers invariably don't see it this way.

Anyway - five years editing this magazine from start-up is enough! The publisher here will be a back-ground figure, not a Rupie or a Michael. It's not a mace I hope to be able to wield, but a soldering iron. That's because at the end of the day my first love is designing and building hi-fi equipment, as well as reviewing and writing about it. I'm looking forward to this publishing lark ●

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I know we've written before on the virtues of high-sensitivity loudspeakers, but I feel it's such an important subject that it deserves greater appreciation.

Over the last 20 years or so, advances in loudspeaker technology have been few and far between. The drive units we see today in modern commercial loudspeakers are not that far removed in terms of performance from, say, a good KEF unit of the '60s. The reason I am so keen to push for more sensitive loudspeakers is that here is an area where the benefits yield an obvious improvement, both subjectively and in terms of measured performance.

A loudspeaker's sensitivity indicates how loud it will go for a given input signal. It is effectively a measure of efficiency; a loudspeaker with a higher sensitivity figure is more efficient at turning the electrical signal from your power amplifier into acoustic energy.



Dominic  
Baker

db on the  
level

opinion

accurately. A heavy cone is harder to stop and start and more likely to slur notes. This is a common problem with loudspeakers, especially in the bass, where this inability to control the cone causes significant and audible distortion.

Aiming for more sensitive loudspeaker systems is not a new idea. Paul Klipsch, known for his

amplifier for a given sound level in a room, it too will be working in a more linear region where distortion is lower. So not only does a high-efficiency loudspeaker produce less distortion itself, but it also reduces the distortion produced by a given amplifier. It is as simple as that.

This gives us something positive to aim for in audio, something I believe will bring about a significant improvement in sound reproduction. A loudspeaker so efficient that it only needs a fraction of a watt to be driven would allow the audio chain to be significantly simplified. Not only would the loudspeaker have far lower distortion and greater resolution of detail, but the amplifier could be simplified down to little more than a pre-amplifier stage. Without the need for tens of watts, the traditional high-power amplifier stage could be done away with completely.

This massive simplification of the audio reproduction chain I am sure would bring about a vast gain in quality. The output stage of an amplifier is responsible for the majority of the distortion it produces. The pre-amplifier stages are much more linear, often requiring little or no feedback, and can be based on the simpler single-ended topology, the power

gain afforded by push-pull working being no longer necessary.

With the greater resolution bought about by a high-sensitivity loudspeaker, amplifier quality becomes far more critical, requiring higher-quality devices and components. But by doing away with the cost and complexity of the output stage of an amplifier, this would free up funds for designers to concentrate on the best possible components for the remaining stages.

Such systems aren't that far away either. There already exist a number of audiophile enthusiasts dedicated to high-efficiency horn loudspeaker systems and very simple, low power, single-ended valve amplifiers. It is in designs such as these where rare, esoteric components are found: silver-foil capacitors, solid tantalum resistors, silver-wound transformers and so on. For the commercial mass-manufacturer these components are presently out of reach.

But if loudspeaker research provides us with the higher-sensitivity loudspeakers needed to simplify amplifier design, these high grade components will become commonplace in audio systems. Then we'll all benefit from an increase in performance and musicality ●

*“simplification of the audio reproduction chain would bring about a vast gain in quality”*

As an example, a loudspeaker with a sensitivity of 80dB (low) needs to be fed with around 30watts to produce the same sound pressure level as a 95dB loudspeaker (high sensitivity) with an input of just 1watt. This high-sensitivity approach holds numerous benefits.

A more sensitive drive unit, by its very nature, has a far lighter cone, able to respond faster and more accurately to the incoming signal. This brings increased detail resolution: the loudspeaker is better able to reproduce the minute signals associated with low-level detail. The increased ratio between magnet strength and cone weight also allows the cone to be controlled far more

extensive work with horn loudspeakers, was a great believer in the virtues of high-efficiency transducers.

A horn loudspeaker has a typical efficiency of between 10 and 50 per cent, whereas a direct-radiator type systems (sealed box or reflex) manage between one and eight per cent: hence Klipsch's passion for horns. An article of his appeared in *Audio* during the early '60s, reprinted in *Audio Anthology 6*, where he clearly presents the arguments for increased efficiency.

Among them, he points out the direct correlation between loudspeaker efficiency and distortion. Not only this, but if a loudspeaker needs less power from the partnering

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World Radio History



# REMOTE TECHNIQUE

**Haider Bahrani brushes up on his handiwork with a remote control unit and Technics' SU-A800D amplifier package.**

**T**he SU-A800D pre/power combination, as it says on the cover of the operating instructions, is a U.K. only product. So one can only imagine that they've done their utmost to please us stiff upper lip types. They haven't done too badly in my reckoning. The look is still typically Technics - no points for imagination here - and the build quality is lightweight too, another Japanese trade mark. We were all a bit surprised to see the speaker posts move when nothing more than a 4mm plug was pushed in.

The SU-A800D package is a little unusual though. It comprises an SU-C800U preamplifier and the SE-A800S 70watt per channel power amplifier. The preamplifier takes its power from the SE-A800S, so it cannot be operated alone, but it does have the convenience of remote control, both for volume and source selection. Technics use a motorised volume control within the remote control system, a better option than a voltage controlled silicon chip.

The pre-amplifier has five line level inputs, including two tape loops, plus a moving magnet (MM) phono stage. Switchable A/B speaker terminals are provided, allowing for multiple speaker connections and bi-wiring.

In sound quality the Technics was a faithful enough amplifier, with accurate timing and the ability to handle transients as effortlessly as a chimpanzee jumps from tree to tree. Sade on 'No

Ordinary Love', was as smooth as she ever was I felt, the bass well controlled, not too tight nor overbearing. But top-end percussion sounded more like harsh river rapids than a gently running shallow stream.

I found the sound stage confined to



the space just between the speakers. Performances were seemingly held in, although despite the lack of stage width, the imaging was accurate, if at times confused. This was obvious on John Lee Hooker's 'I'm Bad Like Jesse James' when at times instruments were cluttered together, giving the impression that the players were on top of each other. Cymbals and high hats sounded a little splashy at times.

With CD the Technics wasn't that inspiring, so I decided to put the phono stage to test. Subjectively this is very pleasant, especially with female vocals. Texas's Sharleen Spiteri was centre stage and right up front on 'So Called Friend' from their Rick's Road LP. The guitars

were a bit over-emphasised in the upper-mid frequencies and the bass, though well timed, was a bit too relaxed. Tina Turner's 'What's Love Got To Do With It' was laid back and very easy going, but again vocals were well defined. The bass here erred on the boomy side, mainly due I believe to its light timbre. This often gives the impression of a relaxed, comfortable sound.

Technics have presented us with a system that's difficult to criticise too much, because it displays no overt blemishes. If it's solid build quality you're looking for then this is no Volvo; more a 1970s Toyota maybe. All the same, for £399.95 there's a lot of power here and some jolly features including remote control ●

**Technics SU-A800D**

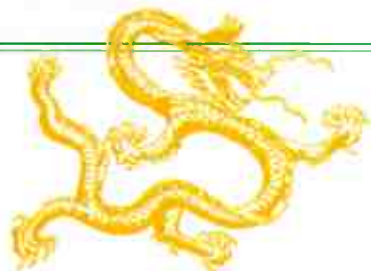
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## WORLD VERDICT

Clean, smooth sound, but a little sterile and the treble can become splashy.

**Measured Performance**  
see p105-111



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# MEET ZE MONSTER!

As they set about capturing the acoustic space and natural openness of Teenage Fanclub's 'Tears', I became aware that Celestion's Impact 23s had something quite special to offer. They had a clean, dry, coherent sound that had a rightness to it from the moment I pressed 'Play' on the CD player. Not a bad start for a £300 floorstander, eh?

Tonally they are as pure and uncoloured as any at the price. So much so, they'd bring a hot flush to the baffles of many more costly rivals. Cellos had richness and body against the lighter timbre of violas and violins soared sweetly above them. Here, the Impact 23s proved something of a rarity, allowing notes to flow smoothly upwards through upper midrange to treble.

A late addition to the Impact range of loudspeakers, the 23s are a design aimed more at the UK audiophile than perhaps some of their fellows. They feature a 6inch paper bass/midrange unit allied to a 1inch fabric dome tweeter. Although not especially expensive-looking, a good paper cone married to a fabric dome tweeter can give a very accurate tonal quality, which Celestion have captured especially well with the Impact 23s. It was further underlined with *foné's* beautiful recording of Locatelli's Op.IV. More and more apparent throughout my listening tests was the Impact 23s' ability to capture the tonal colour of stringed instruments and reproduce them in a thoroughly convincing and musical fashion.

An aggressive-looking baffle, with a menacingly large reflex port, had me



## Dominic Baker gets closer to P J Harvey through a monsta speaker, Celestion's new Impact 23.

anticipating a big and powerful bass. Not so. They do go deep - the subsonics on Stereo MCs' 'Everything' shook the double glazing - but they certainly aren't fat in the bass.

Since I was really enjoying them, on went P. J. Harvey's seminal album, *To Bring You My Love*. While 'Meet Ze Monsta' clearly showed they weren't shy of plumbing the depths, 'C'mon Billy' provided further evidence of their abilities in the higher registers. Polly's vocal had a large stage to play upon, strings echoing off the studio walls to create a great sense of acoustic space. Upper harmonics were captured well, the fabric dome tweeter smooth, clear and insightful to the end.

With a powerful and dynamic sound, the Impact 23s certainly made engaging listening. Throwing Muses' 'Snakeface', with its metronomic percussion and sharply defined transients, was dealt with deftly. Each strike of percussion started and stopped abruptly. Lowest notes could become a little confused, but no more so than any of the Celestions' rivals around the same price.

If they have a weakness, and at £300 it can be only a minor one, it's the bass. I used the Impact 23s around 2ft from a rear wall, and a good 3ft in from the sides. Upper bass is dry with thin recordings, tempting you to push the 'speakers further against the wall to bolster the bass, but on tracks with more substance this caused an irritating upper-bass boxiness with little real improvement in terms of extension. Many more expensive designs suffer worse failings though, and with careful placement, the Impact 23s achieve more than most.

Not quite a visual treat, but a sonic bargain nonetheless.

**Celestion Impact 23** £299

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### WORLD VERDICT

Powerful, dynamic, musical and convincing. A bargain among floorstanding loudspeakers.

**Measured Performance**  
see p105-111

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Remember the days when CD was a novelty? When hi-fi shops cautiously offered a small CD player display tucked somewhere between the shelves of turntables and a growing tide of black components?

Music shops approached the new technology rather gingerly too. But then, who could blame them after a stream of wonder-products had suffered rapid obsolescence?

It was the time, remember, when VHS had dealt its final blow to Betamax, which suffered terminal decline from then on.

The CD displays then were reminiscent of many stores' displays of Digital Compact Cassettes or MiniDiscs today: a single half-empty carousel in the corner of the shop with the recordings of the few mainstream artists who had been brave enough to launch into the new format.

But then, Compact Disc was to create its own culture. As the format slowly began to be accepted, the tweaking of CD players started in earnest. A few music shops were incredibly brave and offered music on CD only. Many of them gained cult status in the years before the format really took off in the late eighties.

How things have changed. Now it's the turn of turntables to lurk in the murky corners of hi-fi shops, while the once trend-setting music shops which had been daring in not selling vinyl have been joined by the major high street retailers. Now it's the turn of vinyl to have a cult following - with a vengeance. Vinyl, simply, is refusing to die.

Its cause has been taken up on several fronts. First is the collector. Where there is money to be made there will always be the collector. Although prices for both new and used vinyl have been rising steadily over the past five years there is still

# Fair Views

from Dominic  
Todd, our man  
in retailing



opinion

money to be made from the good old black stuff. But beware if you want to try it: you really have to know what you're doing if you are going to make a buck or two.

The second front is made up of those who already have vinyl collections, often built up over years, which they are understandably reluctant to replace. And many

held very much in affection by many an audiophile. Along with valve amplification, it still seems to represent an ideal in terms of musical involvement and realism for many a hi-fi (read also music) enthusiast. This comes partly through its sound quality but also through the hands-on aspect of owning a record deck too.

rather steep prices commanded by audiophile pressings, there is still an extremely buoyant secondhand market largely untouched by the collector.

The going rate for a mainstream album in excellent condition from a specialist music shop appears to be from £4-£8. This is still a lot cheaper than most new CDs, so you can understand why many people are keen to build up a collection of quality secondhand records instead of CDs at full price.

Finally, vinyl owes a great deal of its new lease of life to the dance/mixing music culture. In a time when the DJ is often seen as being more important than the music being played, it's no coincidence that most of the top-ranking (and highly-paid) of them still prefer to mix from vinyl.

Incidentally, after all these years, the Technics SL1200/1210 is still the preferred deck. With the dance culture branching out and gaining increasing popularity, especially amongst the young, the image of vinyl is facing a renaissance, reflected in the strong sales of budget semi-pro turntables.

Vinyl, it seems, isn't ready to accept a fate as only novelty value just yet. Its popularity flies in the face of all those who said it would be on its deathbed by now. Long may it remain alive ●

*“It is no coincidence that most of the top-ranking (and highly paid) DJs prefer to mix from vinyl”*

continue to expand their record collections. After all, despite vinyl's newfound glamour, it is still not ashamed to show its face at car boot sales and the odd village fête.

And consequently there is still a good trade in turntables at particular price points too. The good folks who have hung on to their record collections are still buying budget turntables in the £50-£150 price category by the bucket-load.

The NAD 5120, soon to die, is always a firm favourite at £129.95 and, in the shop where I work, rather ironically outsells the same company's budget 510 CD player by two to one. Vinyl is also

There is more contact with the source; more involvement is demanded from the listener in terms of choosing the best arm, cartridge or support arrangements and the best set-up. And then there is the fun of shopping for records, which, though they are often not cheap, is rewarded with recording quality, in many cases, far better than that of several years ago.

There has been something of a sea-change in the music retailing business too. When once it was trendy to sell only CDs, now it is vinyl that many shops and mail-order companies are dedicated to. For those who can't afford the often

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# GLASS AUDIO?

**M**eridian's gear has always had that simple but luxurious look that puts the Bauhaus right into your house, as you might say if you were Tom Wolfe.

Part of the elegance of the glass-topped 504 tuner is that multiple control functions are disguised via a few simple push buttons. No horribly cluttered display that looks like the Manhattan skyline at night on this tuner. No display at all, even: if you prefer the look of Manhattan in a power cut, you can switch it off.

Tuning in a station is simple on this FM only design. Scan the band for a transmission and the frequency pops up; a second later so does a numerical indication of signal strength. If it's properly tuned in, the figure is bracketed between single arrows. If it isn't, then a double one shows you whether to tune a step or two up or down. Thirty presets, all of which can be given alphanumeric names, should be enough even now the UK airwaves are filling up.

Remote control is either through wired communication between the tuner and other Meridian components, or a separate remote. But why no RDS, the supreme convenience feature of all? It can't be the 'Not Invented Here' syndrome: it was, dammit. Anyway, that apart, the Huntingdon company hasn't stepped over the wrong side of the meridian line and traded features for sound quality. It's pretty good at telling it as it is, or maybe a little worse. That old-timer 'Out of Time' by Chris Farlow was a timely reminder that however good it sounded on a Dansette, it ain't grown up enough since for a real wireless to make it better.

All the same, the 504 tackled heavy rock percussion via Virgin FM with some aplomb, kick drums alive and

kicking very cleanly without any triangles or cymbals fizzing or splashing. A spell with Jazz FM brought similar pleasure, and some dismay, showing up what was possibly an afterthought in the mix which sounded like someone tapping a biscuit tin instead of a snare.

Haydn's 'Lamentation' Symphony on R3 was a rather dry, precise, but mechanical performance. But it turned out to be Pinnock and

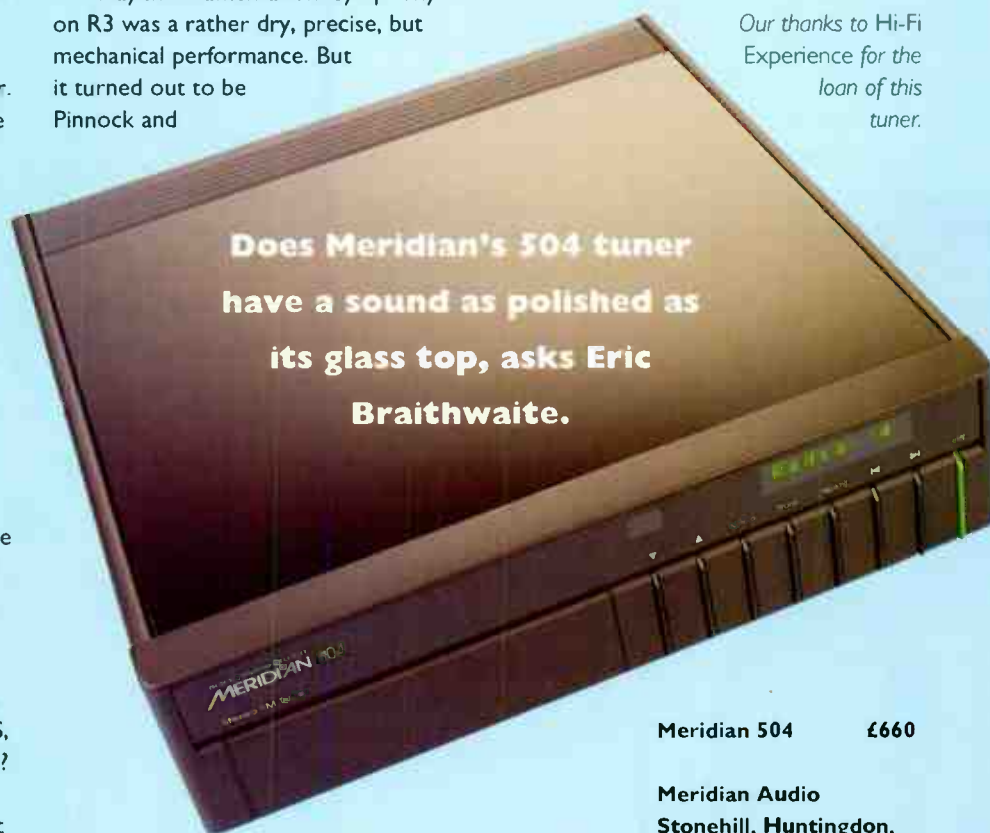
the English Concert, and on reflection at least some of the lack of excitement was down to them rather than the Meridian. The noticeable amount of hiss on R3 transmissions, however, must have been down to the tuner.

On the other hand, a live recording of Beethoven's 'Harp' quartet showed the Meridian's mettle, with a sweet violin and cool but well-tempered viola and cello sound. While the piano in Liszt's Totentanz (for piano and

orchestra) was deep and, ahem, grand, a little less refinement would have boosted the dynamic contrasts of the Philharmonia's accompaniment.

A pretty neutral midrange nonetheless held hints of a cuppiness on tenor voices, however. Depth perspective was somewhat on the shallow side, and no matter how credible the imaging was, it didn't quite have the solid holographic feel of Rotel's RT990BX or the dynamic toughness of Quad's 66FM. Or of the exceptional Fanfare FT-1, but then that is twice as much and there isn't much else in between. Not exceptional, but not half bad either ●

*Our thanks to Hi-Fi Experience for the loan of this tuner.*



**Meridian 504** £660

**Meridian Audio**  
Stonehill, Huntingdon,  
Cambs. PE18 6ED  
☎ 01480 434334

## WORLD VERDICT



A clear, neutral sound with good punch. Has strong rivals at the price, but acquits itself well. Hissy on R3.

**Measured Performance**  
see p105-111

# THREE CHANCES TO WIN A TOP MINI-MONITOR

**WE HAVE THREE PAIRS  
OF HARBETH HL-P3ES  
LOUDSPEAKERS,  
WORTH A TOTAL OF  
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**T**his month we've gone mad. We don't just have one pair of what Dominic Baker called "the finest mini-monitor available for under £1000"

to hand out. No, three readers will each have the chance to pick up a pair of Harbeth's superb small loudspeakers, the HL-P3ES.

Now run by Alan Shaw, Harbeth is maintaining a long tradition of designing and building high-quality British monitor loudspeakers. The company (founder Dudley Harwood whose surname, combined with his



wife's first name, formed the word 'Harbeth') found a ready market for its first home-grown miniature, the HL-P3.

Back in February 1993 Hi-Fi World celebrated a group of top British products and inevitably, this amazingly expressive miniature had to be one of the select few.

Now it has been revised, with a slightly deeper cabinet, completely redesigned crossover and a new drive unit, shielded against electro-magnetic interference. Hard to believe that it could be better than the original, but that is exactly what Dominic Baker discovered in his February '96 review.

"With the new HL-P3ES Harbeth have ensured they stay at the top of the mini-monitor league," he wrote. Now is your chance to be right at the top with them. To enter this super competition, simply complete the questions and tie-breaker opposite.

Please send your entry on a POSTCARD, or the back of a SEALED ENVELOPE, and completed in block capitals, to arrive no later than 4th March 1996 to:

HARBETH HL-P3ES LOUDSPEAKER COMPETITION  
Hi-Fi World Magazine  
64 Castellain Road,  
Maida Vale,  
London W9 1EX

**JANUARY ISSUE COMPETITION**

In the January issue of Hi-Fi World we were offering...Everything! The lucky winners were:

- Simon Alper of Cambridge - Audiophile BASE
- M. J. Mallett of Cornwall - Arcam Alpha 6 CD
- John Higgins of W. Midlands - Sonneteer Campion
- M. Wilde of Hemel Hempstead - Arcam Alpha 6+
- L. Ashburner of Guildford - Chameleon Ruby
- P. Bransfield of Coventry - NEAR 10M louspeakers
- A. Lincoln of Winchester - TEAC CD5 CD player
- C. Nash of Reading - Denon DCD-315 CD player
- Diane Avery of Bournemouth - B&W DM601
- John Peck of Ipswich - Acoustic Energy AE100
- J. Imrie of Sudbury - NAD613 cassette deck
- Paul Carroll of Marlow - Light Metal cables
- Wilf Brown of Leicester - Castle Isis loudspeakers
- Christopher Drury of Bradford - van den Hul cables
- S. Ball of Scarborough - Revolver Purdey
- B. Kingsford of Bury St Edmunds - KEF Coda 8
- Steven Hill of Pontefract - Mordaunt Short MS20i
- Steve Clarke of Newcastle - Celestion Impact 15

Congratulations.

**COMPETITION ENTRY QUESTIONS**

*Cut out and affix to the back of a sealed envelope*

- 1) How did the name Harbeth originate?
  - A. From amalgamating the names of the original founder and his wife.
  - B. Because the first Harbeth loudspeaker prototype used hardwood from Bethlehem.
  - C. It just came out of thin air.
  - D. It was a combination derived from hardwood (cabinet) and polyethelene (driver cone).
- 2) Hi-Fi World included the original HL-P3 among its 'Best of British' reviews in which year?
  - A. 1991
  - B. 1995
  - C. 1994
  - D. 1993
- 3) The HL-P3ES loudspeakers are shielded. Against what?
  - A. Stray sword thrusts.
  - B. Electro-magnetic interference.
  - C. Nuisance phone calls.
  - D. Lightning strikes.
- 4) What is the main difference between the cabinet of the HL-P3 and the HL-P3ES?
  - A. It's smaller.
  - B. It's cross-braced inside.
  - C. It's veneered inside and out.
  - D. It's deeper.

**TIE BREAKER (obligatory)**

Devise a snappy slogan in not more than 20 words extolling the virtues of the HL-P3ES:

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**COMPETITION RULES AND CONDITIONS OF ENTRY**

- [1] Only one entry per household will be accepted. Multiple entries will be automatically disqualified.
- [2] In the event of more than one entrant submitting all-correct answers, the winner will be picked from the tie-breaker by the Editor. We will endeavour to publish the results in the second issue following the closing date. Purchase of the magazine is not a precondition of entry.
- [3] No correspondence about this competition will be entered into and the Editor's decision is final.
- [4] No employees of Audio Publishing Ltd. or of any companies associated with the production or distribution of the prizes may enter.

Don't forget to include your name, address and daytime telephone number on your entry form so we can contact winners promptly.

If you would prefer *not* to receive details of new products or special offers please tick the box. *Hi-Fi World* magazine is published by Audio Publishing Ltd.

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- Sam Spade-Connector during his undercover investigations into the Mystery of the Lost Chord. He subsequently solved the case by utilizing a pair of ORTOFON SPK100 speaker cables.

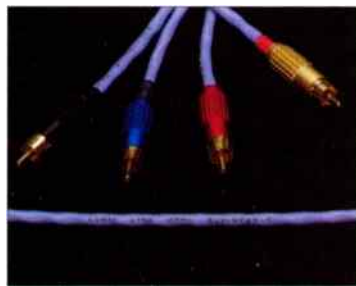


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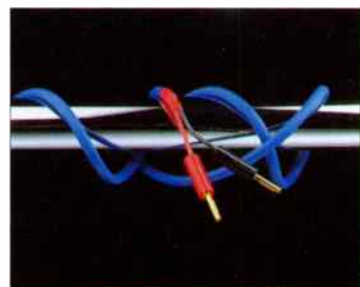
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## COMPACT DISC PLAYERS

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### NAD 510 £200

A competent all rounder with lifelike soundstaging and impressive treble clarity.

### GRUNDIG CD3 £240

Good detail and broad, clearly defined sound stage. Can sound incredibly refined and delicate for the price.

### ARCAM ALPHA ONE £300

An excellent entry-level player from Arcam that's far better than equivalently priced Japanese machinery.

### MARANTZ CD-63 Special Edition £350

A superb budget buy. Addressing the problems of the CD-52II SE, its detailed and musical sound embarrasses many expensive players.

### NAD 514 £350

The 514 conveys deep bass notes with conviction and weight. A supremely relaxing player to listen to with fine build quality.

### ARCAM ALPHA FIVE PLUS £480

A well built mid-price player that's a great all-rounder. Although highly musical and engaging, it has lost some of the warmth that made its antecedents so pleasant to listen to.

### LINN MIMIK £839

The Mimik does what it's designed to do very well, with super-tight rhythmic presentation and plenty of detail. It can sound rather grey and clinical though.

### QUAD 67 £875

One of Quad's best products for a long time, the 67 is warmer and smoother than most, yet is highly musical and revealing. Good enough to frighten many rivals.

### DPA RENAISSANCE £895

Words cannot describe its infinite variety, but suffice to say you'll love it or hate it. Highly emotional, involving presentation with not a hint of self-doubt.

### MARANTZ CD-16 £1399

An extremely neutral CD player, smooth and reserved in its performance. Beautifully built too.

### LINN KARIK 3 £1600

Superb one-box player. Its supremely rhythmic, musical sound with delicacy and finesse puts it up with the best of the rest.

### NAIM CDI £1600

This single box 16-bit player sounds very engaging compared to your average bitstreamer. Has that vital tingle factor of the larger, two-box CDs.

### MCINTOSH CDM7009 £2635

A thoroughly inspiring machine. One of the most musical CD players around; sweet, open and detailed.

## COMPACT DISC TRANSPORTS

### TEAC VDRS-T1 £550

Not as substantially built as its chunky looks suggest, the T1 is nevertheless a good entry-level transport with a warm, expansive sound.

### ARCAM DELTA 250 £800

A well-built transport with serious sound quality. It partners the BB50 well, especially when sync-locked.

### AUDIOLAB 8000CDM £1300

Beautifully built and finished, the CDM is packed with sensible features and performs superbly, day-in day-out.

## CD CONVERTORS

### DPA LITTLE BIT III £300

A lot more weight at frequency extremes than the II and far better control. For £300 there's nothing to beat it.

### PINK TRIANGLE ORDINAL £837

Pure, smooth sound free from hardness. One of the best at any price, losing little to the big guns.

### DPA ENLIGHTENMENT £795

Some believe this to be the best convertor around. A truly charismatic performer, it dives into rock music with rare passion.

### AUDIOLAB 8000DAC £800

A supremely competent product up to Audiolab's usual high standards, this convertor has a detailed, albeit clinical sound.

### PINK TRIANGLE DA CAPO £1450+

Offers a choice of filter modules, all up there with the best. The Da Capo is superb in many respects, but can sound a touch polite on rock.

### DPA 1024 £6000

Proof positive that today's CDs needn't sound CD-like! Uses an in-house discrete convertor, and DPA haven't skimmed on the build either!

## TURNTABLES

### GARRARD 401 second-hand

In a decent plinth with an arm of SME309 calibre, the 401 has a highly authoritative overall sound with the most solid, expressive bass in the business. Very musical, but treble isn't up to modern standards.

### THORENS TD124 second-hand

One of Thorens' best-ever turntables. Needs a modern plinth to give of its best. Duly installed, it's good enough to face off the Garrard 401, swapping some of its bass power for a more delicate, incisive treble.

### SYSTEMDEK IIX900/RB250 £330

A fine all rounder and easy to upgrade. Brings more depth and breadth than a Rega 3.

### RESON rs1 £600

A lean, yet vibrant sound quality that really draws the listener in. With good detail and rhythmic integrity this is an impressive turntable package.

### MICHELL GYRODEC £800

Stunning looks, build and engineering, and don't underestimate the sound. Standard PSU and Rega arm gives a detailed, architectural, if undynamic sound. With QC PSU and SME V, its scale and insight kills the competition at the price.

### PRO-JECT 6.1SA £999

The Pro-ject places the listener in the best seat in the control room. Outrageous dynamics and a punchy, seriously deep bass. Comes with Sumiko arm and Ortofon MC30 Supreme.

### LINN SONDEK LP12 £840 - £1530

Cirkus bearing puts it back up with the best. Superbly beguiling, rhythmic sound that plays jazz like few others, but lacks the Gyrodec's detail or imaging. With a Lingo PSU and EKOS tonearm, you'll forget CDs were ever invented.

### PINK TRIANGLE ANNIVERSARY £1200

One of the finest-sounding turntables around, the Anniversary takes the listener nearer the recording studio than almost any other deck. Works with Rega, Linn and SME arms alike.

### MICHELL ORBE £1950

The Darth Vader of analogue, the Orbe builds on the strengths of the Gyrodec. An ultra-tuneful, expansive sound.

### SME MODEL 20 £2495

Including the excellent SME V tonearm, the Model 20 is possibly the last great turntable, unless you've got £11,000 for the Model 30, that is.

## TO NEARMS

### REGA RB300 £130

Supremely capable at the price, but not quite humankind's salvation as has been suggested. Detailed, tight, rhythmic sound but tonally rather grey and cold-sounding.

### LINN AKITO £300

A well made entry-level tonearm which works especially well with the LP12, but struggles to match the RB300 on other decks.

### SME 3009SII £375

This Paleolithic device doesn't bother with frequency extremes or detail, but its legendary serviceability makes it a cult in Japan. Oh death, where is thy sting?

### SME309 £570

A down-market version of the IV and V with aluminium armtube and detachable headshell. Tight, neutral sound with good tonality, but lacks the IV's pace and precision.

### SME IV £850

A Series V with lower toleranced bearings, cheaper cables and no damper. Still vastly over-engineered and almost capable of its bigger brother's sonic fireworks. SME's best value product.

### SME V £1235

A masterpiece of precision engineering with a cohesive, ultra-transparent sound. A dream to set up and use.

# World favourites guide

## **LINN EKOS** £1400

A thunderous battleship of an arm, with a very impressive sound, masses of detail and dynamics, but lacks the SMEV's cohesion and musicality.

## **CARTRIDGES**

### **ORTOFON VMS-2E** £110

Warm, full-bodied, punchy and fast. Not to be sniffed at for a tenner. Can be upgraded with a better stylus at a later date.

### **GOLDRING 1012GX** £60

An accomplished MM with a solid bass, slightly forward midband and clean transients. £20 buys the faster, more dynamic 1022GX.

### **GOLDRING 1042** £100

The best moving magnet available. Has an extremely cohesive sound that's warm but highly involving. Deliciously delicate treble and strong, powerful bass.

### **ORTOFON MC15 SUPER II** £109.95

An excellent budget moving coil with a smooth, polished, detailed sound. Tracks superbly but verges on the analytical at times. A bargain.

### **ORTOFON SUPREMES** £225-£450

The MC10, MC20 and MC30 Supremes all offer superb sound and value for money, with a distinctively rich, smooth and detailed musical performance. The valve brigade love them.

### **LINN KLYDE** £450

The Klyde's soft treble and prodigious bass mean it's tonally unbalanced, but it's still a real music-maker that many will love in the right system.

### **ORTOFON MC2000** £650

We came across this one in an SME IV on a Garrard 401; it duly gave one of the best results we've ever heard.

### **LYRA LYDIAN** £649

A truly musical, sophisticated device that makes most other MCs sound frigid.

### **VAN DEN HUL MC-10** £840

Fluid bass, finely etched treble and highly tuneful in between. The MC10 is honey, pure and simple.

### **ORTOFON MC7500** £2000

Conclusive proof that there's hope for humankind. Makes music of enormous scale and vibrancy. CD lovers would die if they heard it.

## **INTEGRATED AMPLIFIERS**

### **NAD 3020** second-hand

Classic sweet sounding, punchy budget super-amp with strong phono stage. Able to embarrass many modern budget amps.

### **NAD 310** £130

A real hi-fi amplifier at a bargain price. Forms the heart of a separates system that will murder any midi system at twenty paces. No phono stage, but you can't have everything at this price.

### **DENON PMA-35011** £220

A good, clean sound with plenty of drive behind it creating a wide expanse of sound. Powerful too.

### **ARCAM ALPHA 5** £230

A well-engineered budget amplifier with a bold, exciting presentation. Plenty of power and facilities, but lacks subtlety.

### **DENON PMA 450II SE** £270

A solid, refined sound with plenty of power make this a good all rounder, but hard and steely with the wrong ancillaries. Mediocre phono stage.

### **AURA VA-80** £280

The VA-80 is superb for the price with a confident, powerful sound. One of the smoothest around, it is capable of embarrassing more upmarket competition.

### **PIONEER A400X** £300

A good budget amplifier but not as competitive as it once was. Phono input lets the side down somewhat.

### **AUDIOLAB 8000A** £500

A jack-of-all-trades whose facilities, build, power and top-rate phono input make it a steal. Sound is good, but less involving than the Naim Nait 3.

### **NAIM NAIT 3** £500

A taste of high-end audio. The most involving, musical design at the price, but low power means it won't work in all systems. Superb phono stage is £100 extra.

### **MISSION CYRUS 3** £500

Superb engineering, a solid cast chassis and a clear, spacious sound. Phono stage could be better.

### **STEMFOORT SF-60** £550

Excellent bass drive and fine midband presence. Powerful too.

### **SONNETEER CAMPION** £579

An amplifier that delivers near studio definition along with exemplary timing. Utterly gripping.

### **DPA RENAISSANCE** £595

Rich and smooth, the Renaissance is one of the sweetest amps around, if lightweight.

### **SUGDEN A21a** £640

Class A transistor amp. Rich, crisp, deep, tight sound and it images well too. Wonderful.

### **MERIDIAN 551** £795

Beautifully-built integrated with a sweeter, clearer sound than mid-price alternatives. Plenty of facilities and remote controllable.

### **UNISON SIMPLY 2** £995

This single-ended valve amplifier is smooth, sweet and open. An extremely musical amplifier.

### **UNISON SIMPLY 4** £1495

Sonically similar to the Simply 2, but with more power and control.

### **AUDIONOTE OTO SE** £1500

Ten watts of the sweetest sound around. Use sensitive speakers though, because it's unlikely to crack windows or trigger earthquakes.

### **McINTOSH MA6800** £3735

The MA6800 not so much plays music as takes control of it, with effortless bass drive and a three-dimensional sound stage. Versatile with a broad range of abilities.

## **PRE-AMPLIFIERS**

### **NAIM NAC32.5** second-hand

Naim's one-time top preamp is still a force to be reckoned with thanks to its precise, fast sound and excellent phono stage.

### **ROTEL RQ-970BX** £130

Superb value entry-level phono stage with audiophile quality components and clear sound.

### **DPA DSP200S** £495

Not quite the S0S, but there's little to match it at this price if outright sound quality is your priority.

### **ROSE RV23-S** £495

This interesting valve/transistor hybrid has a smooth, rich, spacious sound.

### **AUDIOLAB 8000C** £520

Versatile with superb phono input. Can sound sterile, but latest version is much improved.

### **MICHELL ISO/HERA** £530

This phono stage has fine midband and treble detail, with taut bass. The £850 ISO/HR brings more of everything, and for many people is the last word on the subject.

### **AUDIO INNOVATIONS P2** £749

Fantastic bass and super insight make this one of the best phono stages around. One for vinyl lovers.

### **AUDIOLAB 8000Q** £995

Excellent line-level only preamp, greatly improves on 8000C with a more fluid, musical sound and greater grip. Remote control.

### **NAIM NAC82** £1945

This remote control preamp thrusts detail forth in true Naim fashion.

## **POWER AMPLIFIERS**

### **QUAD II** second-hand

Classic valve monoblock with many thousands still in use around the world. Archetypal warm, smooth valve sound, although not the last word in detail or dynamics.

### **LEAK STEREO 20** second-hand

The Stereo 20 can sound impressively up-to-date, although power and detail are ultimately limited.

### **QUAD 405II** second-hand

Solidly built, but lifeless sounding, power amp which can be substantially improved by a Quad factory service.

### **MISSION CYRUS POWER** £450

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

### **ROSE RP190** £495

Used with the partnering preamp it gives 70watts of smooth, relaxing sound.

### **SUGDEN AU41P** £530

Extremely competitive at the price with 100WV of unusually smooth, full-bodied sound.

### **SHEARNE PHASE 3** £619

A neutral, highly dynamic and thoroughly exciting amplifier. A sonic bargain.



**QUAD 606II** £675  
Quad's latest 140W powerhouse is smooth and civilised, but engagingly musical. Legendary back-up service.

**DPA DPA200S** £750  
Better than anything else at the price. Not as dry as the 50S.

**NAIM NAPI80** £900  
Partnered with a NAC82, this has classic Naim control, making for a superbly rhythmic presentation. A touch lean for some tastes.

**MICHELL ALECTO STEREO** £1300  
A refined transistor amplifier with valve-like transparency and a full, warm, easy-going sound. The £1800 Alecto monoblocks have rare lucidity and three dimensional realism.

**AUDIOLAB 8000M** £1500  
Beautifully built, powerful amps that will drive anything you care to throw at them. Detailed, analytical sound, but a touch grey compared to valve rivals.

**CHORD SPM 1200** £2995  
This is one of the best solid-state power amps around, with a massively powerful, dynamic and detailed sound.

## TUNERS

**LEAK TROUGHLINE** second-hand  
Our favourite way of listening to the wireless. A deliciously smooth, mellifluous sound that will have you junking your transistor radio in seconds. Ergonomics are crude, and you'll need a decent aerial and stereo decoder.

**NAD 402** £160  
If sound quality is your priority, the 402 has no solid-state equal at or anywhere near the price. Warm and open sound.

**KENWOOD KT-6050L** £300  
Very, very tuneful and as clear and detailed as CD. Tuners like this have you sitting in your seat wondering at the sheer wealth of music out there.

**MISSION CYRUS FM7** £300  
Clear and lucid sound that puts it up with the best regardless of price. Superb build and superior ergonomics to the NAD.

**ROTEL RT990BX** £500  
High quality Michi-based tuner with a sophisticated, forward sound with great imaging and soundstage. Sensible facilities and remote control.

**NAIM NAT03** £500  
The NAT03 is further proof of Naim's proficiency with tuners, with a warm, easy sound and a good sense of atmosphere.

**QUAD 66FM** £535  
High quality, smooth sounding minimalist tuner with Quad's legendary reliability and build.

**FANFARE FT-1** £1350  
In its native US the FT1 is no mere tuner but a 'broadcast monitor' no less, a task at which it acquits itself well, with a clear and powerful sound.

**NAIM NAT01** £1380  
The best solid-state tuner available. For better radio, live in the studio.

## CASSETTE DECKS

**AIWA AD-F850** £230  
A real bargain with fine recording quality and good playback.

**PHILIPS DCC 730** £250  
Arguably the best home recorder around for under £250. Digital playback gives a good 'analogue' presentation and analogue playback is reasonable too. A DCC bargain.

**AIWA AD-S950** £300  
A stable transport, superb head and Dolby S make this an excellent recorder.

**NAKAMICHI DR2** £600  
Where serious cassette decks start. The DR2 pushes recordings to the limit, remaining unflustered at all times.

**TEAC V-8030S** £650  
A top deck that's wonderful to use. Gives superb results for those who want the best from cassette, with or without Dolby S.

**NAKAMICHI DRI** £850  
Better still than the DR2, with manual head azimuth adjustment to boot.

**NAKAMICHI CR7** £1500  
Kills every other cassette deck and stamps on their graves. And the CR7 doesn't need baubles like Dolby S, either!

## LOUDSPEAKERS

**MISSION 730iSE** second-hand  
Big clear sound and tuneful bass with plenty of punch. An audiophile bargain at a budget price.

**KEF CODA 7** £129  
Arguably the new king of budget standmounters, the 7 has a highly musical presentation.

**MISSION 731 LE** £149  
An extensive reworking of Mission's entry level 'speaker, much tighter on transients and more refined treble. Neutral and revealing, there's little to match them at the price.

**B&W DM601** £200  
Tight, solid and tuneful bass with a clean and pure tonal quality. Midrange is a little laid back, but sound stage is wide and open.

**TDL RTL 2** £300  
Bass on a budget from one of TDL's best floorstanders. Solid, vibrant and spacious sound.

**SYSTEMDEK SYSTEM 931** £300  
One of the best mini-monitors around, with a coherent, involving sound that really sings.

**EPOS ES11** £445  
Extremely refined, well engineered standmounters that need distinguished partnering equipment if they are not to sound over-polite. Improved crossover from May '95.

**REL STRATA** £500  
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**MISSION 752** £500  
More capable than many twice the price. Using advanced High Definition Aerogel drivers, the 752s are clear, crisp and focused. Good sensitivity makes them easy to drive.

**TANNOY D100** £650  
This small dual-concentric loudspeaker produces believable three dimensional imaging.

**EPOS ES14** £675  
Epos' classic first loudspeaker has a forward, rhythmic presentation that will eat poor ancillaries for breakfast.

**CASTLE CHESTER** £700  
Good sound allied to Castle's exquisite cabinetry and finish. Quarter-wave bass loading.

**PROAC STUDIO 100** £700  
Excellent monitors with detailed, natural sound and plenty of atmosphere.

**HARBETH HL-P3ES** £799  
A fine example of good loudspeaker engineering. The top of the mini-monitor league.

**UKD CALLAS** £850  
High quality sound with a high quality bass from this solid walnut miniature.

**SPENDOR SP3/I** £890  
Beautifully built and finished with superb midrange, treble detail and clarity.

**KEF REFERENCE SERIES ONE** £995  
The KEF's combine pin-point imagery and detail with a smooth and polite balance. Good, agile bass too.

**HEYBROOK SEXTET II** £1129  
Heybrook have retained the strengths of the original Sextet, whilst improving on bass extension and smoothness. Treble and imaging still up with the very best.

**KEF REFERENCE SERIES TWO** £1500  
A truly endearing 'speaker, with clarity, cohesion, detail and precise imaging. Bass has superb extension.

**EPOS ES25** £1505  
Epos' best. Combines near-uncoloured tonality with characteristic fireworks in the rhythm department. Superb by any other name.

**SPENDOR SP7/I** £1970  
This big Spendor is very appealing thanks to its lucid sound and valve-friendly load.

**QUAD ESL-63** £2860  
A reference against all other loudspeakers, with superb imaging qualities and genuine transparency. Earlier ESL model is an excellent second-hand buy, and both enjoy that legendary Quad service back-up.

**TANNOY WESTMINSTER ROYAL** £10,000  
An incredibly dynamic, detailed full-range horn design with a rich sound. Its high sensitivity predisposes it to valve amplification.

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### Giovanni Dadomo



Public Enemy on Def Jam's 10th anniversary album

#### VARIOUS ARTISTS

**Def Jam 10th Anniversary  
Collection**

DEF JAM/ISLAND 314 523 851-2

● A boxed set of 54 cuts commemorating a decade of one of the most innovative and influential labels to come out of America in, uh, the last ten years. Hard to believe, perhaps, but Def Jam's story really does border on the miraculous.

Started off by college-going vinyl junkies Russell Simmons and Rick Rubin - from the latter's Manhattan Uni bedroom - the label quickly became a byword for class, quality and controversy.

From the punk-rap fusions of the Beastie Boys, the black silk sheet sensuality of L L Cool J to the mighty and unarguably awesome soundscapes of Public Enemy, Def Jam inspired a generation of young people just as surely as Tamla-Motown 20 years before.

Most of the acts are household



names, and deservedly so - what price Ice T's Rap/Metalwork without the previous example of Public Enemy's adventure with Anthrax, 'Bring Tha Noize'? And if not everyone on Def Jam achieved stellar fame, then it's still welcome to revisit past glories from the likes of Redman, Nice and Smooth or Erick Sermon's dapper 'Stay Real'.

An essential, nay quintessential, stomp down memory lane. No real record collection should be without it.

#### BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

**The Ghost of Tom Joad**

COLUMBIA 01 481630 10

● The Boss is back and - with the odd cut featuring members of The E Street Band - he's largely on his own-some in that most cuts are sparse instrumentation-wise, i.e. with that aching, ever-more-knowing voice accompanied simply by guitar and keyboards c/o the man himself.

And if this isn't quite as skeletal a disc as Nebraska, it's still a long way from crossover works such as Born To Run or the deliberately anthemic Born In The USA. Major clue - the title refers to the Depression-era hero of John Steinbeck's novel The Grapes Of Wrath. For Great Depression then, read recession late nineties version. It's Bruce doing what he does best.

ruminating on the vagaries, vices and virtues of blue-collar life and all its major/minor tragedies, the whole thing rendered in the simple but often achingly beautiful simplicity of 'Philadelphia'. More than ever you get the impression that there's a Great American Novel trying to get out from within Bruce Springsteen's psyche.



As on previous sallies, he continues his romance with the road, with life's underdogs struggling to get by the best they can. It's been said before but I'll say it once more - where would this man be without a driving licence?

This doesn't mean that Ghost... isn't a frequently moving, obviously deeply-felt collection of mini-portraits. Titles like 'Highway 25' may well verge on self-parody, but then you get a gem



RECORD OF THE MONTH

● Isn't it great, that shiver up the spine you get the first time you hear what you just know is a great record? It's a feeling that for most of us gets rarer as we get older, but then that just makes it all the more special.

It's no accident that music, along with smell, is among the most evocative of sensual experiences. I can recall exactly where and when I first heard, oh, at least fifty of my absolute faves - and Garbage's 'Queer' is just one such item. (I won't bore you with my list this time, so you'll have to supply your own.) The wonderful thing is knowing I'll recall the taste of that special moment if I hear the record ten or even twenty years from now.

You've surely heard the single from this album and the LP's selling like the proverbial hot thingies - a rare occurrence of positive proof that quality will occasionally out as they say. The name's as much of a misnomer as Pulp's. For the record,

GARBAGE  
Garbage  
HROOM D3145C



Garbage are built around the legendary-by-association Butch Vig (drums), fronted by the divinely haunting vocals and guitar of Shirley Manson (surely no relation!) plus Steve

Markes and Duke Erikson who handle guitars (both lead and bass) as well as keyboards and assorted loops,

FX *et al.* Garbage manage to achieve the strictly urban, densely hypnotic, strangely strange but oddly normal, sort of sounds that carry echoes of such grand assemblies as early Velvets, Television, Big Black und so weiter. Titles such as 'Supervixen', 'Fix Me Now' and 'My Lover's Box' clue you in to what the big papers would probably call 'Baudelaireian postmodernist rock'.

This may sound unutterably pretentious. Luckily the music on this stunning debut is anything but - dense, wildly evocative, deeply moving in all sorts of unexpected ways yet with its roots firmly in the great urban rock traditions. So delightful to find such aural pleasures in a season traditionally oozing with sugarcoated dreck, not to mention real garbage. A wizard disc, no reservations.

like 'Dry Lightning' and most - if not all - is forgiven. There may be too little bombast for major radio play here, but only a philistine could deny that this is as close to a scholarly work as rock'n'roll probably ever gets.

Steinbeck, yes, even Harry Crews, is echoed in this brave, frequently simpatico work. It grows on you, as Stephen King said in his 'Creepshow' cameo. Brave little soldier, yes, but I wish there was a glossary explaining some of the more obscure bits of Mexican parlance. Still, it does sound damn convincing. Rock's Robert De Niro is definitely back in gear.

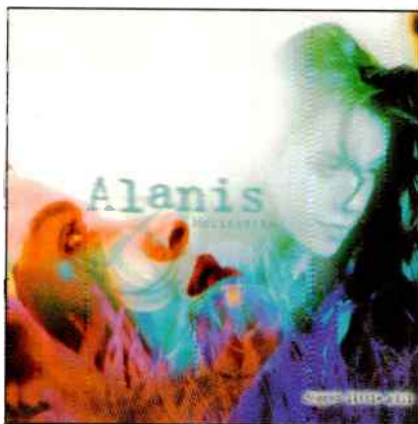
Jon Clarke

**ALANIS MORISSETTE**  
**Jagged Little Pill**  
MAVERICK 9362-45901-2

● Alanis Morissette sounds like foreign tosh, and on the surface, the wingy, politically-correct foreign tosh of the k d lang, Michelle Shocked and Tracy Chapman school.

But sweet Alanis - the current darling of the music scene - is a lot, lot better than that. While she most

certainly has her finger on the political pulse, she is the voice of the disaffected Generation X and 1996 could well be her year. It could even be argued that she can't get much bigger. She has already shifted millions of copies Stateside of this, her debut album, and



looks set to sell many more.

Recorded in Hollywood, numerous talented musicians, including Flea and Navarro from the Red Hot Chili Peppers, do their bit on Jagged Little Pill. 'All I Really Want' and 'Hand in My Pocket', the two singles, have been floating around various charts, clubs and radio stations for some months now. Morissette's is a distinct voice, one of

substance, now familiar to music lovers nation-wide.

She is the Kurt Cobain of female rock with a similar, almost twisted eerie voice. There are shades of the Cranberries, Bjork, even Suzi Quatro. The music is broadly rock, but it crosses into soul, dance and R&B. It is catchy, moving, clever and original at best - a touch bland at worst. Closest stablemates: for me, Radiohead.

Lyrical Alanis offers a vivid look at modern day issues and problems. These are torturous love songs of some quality. Catholicism, weight loss and sexuality all come out for an airing. Some of the most powerful words come from 'You Learn': "I recommend getting your heart trampled on to anyone/I recommend walking around naked in your living room/Swallow it down (what a jagged little pill) it feels so good." Or from 'One Hand in My Pocket': "I'm here but I'm really gone/I feel drunk but I'm sober/I'm high but I'm grounded". Alanis is angry, confused and has things to say. Make sure you lend her an ear.

Rock + Pop





Simon Hopkins



**PHAROAH SANDERS**  
**Karma**  
IMPULSE! IMP11532

● Much of the great Impulse! catalogue - including many lost gems - is finally seeing the light of day in beautifully 20-bit remastered editions, packaged in digipaks whose artwork remains as close to the original as possible.

It's difficult to pick one, but the tenor saxophonist Pharoah Sanders' *Karma* made an especially welcome reappearance for me.

Sanders is one of the music's true giants. After a decade of playing R'n'B, in the '60s he became one of the leading lights of the American avant-garde, bringing to this dark and challenging music the earthly passion of the blues.

*Karma's* main piece is the mammoth 33-minute 'The Creator has a Master Plan'. Recorded at the beginning of 1969, it is a fantastic fusion of jazz freedom, blues intensity and the zeitgeist's psychedelic spirituality.

Sanders leads a nine-piece group (look out for James Spaulding's wonderful flute and Lonnie Liston Smith's fine piano) through the kind of lilting funk groove which has formed the basis of so much latter-day (risibly-monickered) acid jazz. Sanders contributes some marvellous R'n'B sax before the whole show collapses into spiralling caophonous chaos.

Over the subsequent years, jazz has turned its back on such a fusion of funk and freeform, and has done so at its loss. *Karma* remains a masterpiece.

## Simon Cooke

**ANDREA VICARI**  
**Lunar Spell**  
33JAZZ 026CD

● Following on from the impressive debut album of Andrea Vicari's Suburban Gorillas, *Lunar Spell* is a lighter, less complex work with a smaller band. The ones behind Vicari's piano compositions are Mornington Lockett on tenor and soprano saxes, Phil Robson on guitar, Dorian Lockett on bass - both acoustic and electric - and Tristan Maillot on drums.



*Lunar Spell* does 33Records proud all the way from the metronomic piano and skins opening of 'You're Reported' to the last strollin', steppin' bars of the 'Last Chair Blues'. If you liked the Suburban Gorillas album, get this; Vicari's star is still rising, and has a way to go yet.

**THE BASIE ALUMNI**  
**Swinging for the Count**  
CANDID CCD79724

● The eight alumni of the Basie band swing some excellent tunes for, by and in the style of the Count. The Alumni are Harry 'Sweets' Edison and Clark Terry on trumpet - Terry also playing flugelhorn - Seldon Powell on tenor sax,



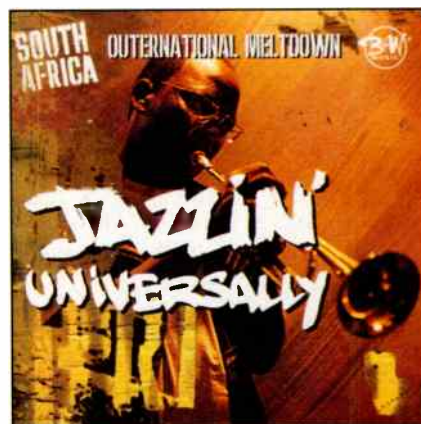
Bucky Pizzarelli providing a Basie-trademark strummed rhythm line on guitar, 'Sir' Roland Hanna subbing for the Count's piano, Milt Hinton on bass, and Bobby Durham on drums. The eighth is album producer Mark Morganelli who provides additional trumpet on his own track 'Basie Like'.

Do I need to say how good these players are? They could teach the newer, younger generation of jazzers volumes about swing. With just nine tracks and ending in just under fifty-six minutes, it does not swing for long enough.

**SOUTH AFRICA**  
**OUTERNATIONAL**  
**MELTDOWN**  
**Free At Last**  
BW076  
**Healer's Brew**  
BW077  
**Jazzin' Universally**  
BW078

● These three CDs are the record of a single fortnight of recordings and concerts by more than fifty South African musicians from all shades of the musical and cultural spectra.

It's less of a melting-pot than a salad-bar though; you can pick what you want and leave the rest. 'Free at Last' has the strongest jazz-rock feel of the three,



while *Healer's Brew* leans toward traditional music and chants; *Jazzin' Universally* is self-explanatory.

Though the atmosphere and relicts of apartheid are these albums' raw material, the exhilaration of cross-cultural ties and the sudden openness of the country makes these CDs less politically charged and heavy than they might have been.

Some musicians will be familiar to HFW readers: Airto Moreira, Byron Wallen, Moses Molelekwa, and Spho Gumede. Other names will be less familiar, although Jose Neto and Pops Mohamed will be known to many. All I can say is, try one.

# Classical

## Peter Herring



### **BOLD, FEARLESS & RASH** Music from the Courts of Burgundy 1363-1477

Sirinu (Sara Stowe, soprano; recorder; psaltery; percussion/Matthew Spring, hurdy-gurdy; lute; gittern; rebec; shawm; voice/Jon Banks, harp, sackbut; recorder; percussion; voice/Henry Stobart, recorders; shawm; bagpipes and tabor; voice)

Ensemble Music Label EML007 (DDD/51.32)

● Between 1363 and 1477, the Court of Burgundy attained a previously undreamt-of wealth and status. Under its four dukes - Philip the Bold, John the Fearless, Philip the Good and Charles the Rash - came a glorious flowering of late medieval art.

While we may have little empathy with the cultural and social traditions and conventions which ruled life at the courts of Europe during the fourteenth century, the art which flourished in that environment continues to delight the eye and - as is richly evident here - the ear.

The music would have been performed both by the elite musicians of the ducal chapel, and by no less skilled itinerant minstrels. It is this unexpected variety of style and interpretation which Sirinu so vividly conveys. The filigree delicacy and charm of songs of courtly love is juxtaposed with earthy rustic ditties and rumbustuous dances; and it's pleasing that the four members of Sirinu are not

**This month, a taste of some medieval French confections, a sample of Swedish musical smorgasbord, a sumptuous feast of Strauss and Karajan - and, of course, a special children's menu.**

shy of bringing character, colour and humour to their interpretations. The performances have great finesse, but none of that excessively 'precious' refinement which some ensembles bring to music of this period.

Much of what Sirinu play, inevitably, can only be attributed to the ubiquitous 'anon' and 'trad', but names such as Pierre Fontaine, Jacques Vide and, most famous of all, Guillaume Dufay, one of the greatest composers of the fifteenth century, have survived with a number of pieces.

The strong influence of English music at the Burgundian court is represented by two pieces by Robert Morton, sometime music teacher to Charles the Rash, and by the delightful ballade 'Myn hert is lust', attributed to John Bedyngham. It is a collection full of surprises, some captivatingly limpid and serene, others robustly noisy!

The recording, engineered by John Whiting, makes very effective use of the Calrec Soundfield microphone in its full ambisonic mode, with a couple of AKGs used very discreetly whenever a touch of 'spotmiking' was deemed necessary to the balance. The result is mightily convincing, sometimes startlingly so, and provides an ideal sound-stage for the performers.

### **VIRIDITAS PER OMNIBUS** Omnibus Wind Ensemble Opus 3 CD19304 (AAD/75.27)

● Only the boldly audacious would invest in this recital by the Swedish Omnibus Wind Ensemble without knowing its musical content, yet they would find that investment richly rewarded.

The ensemble was formed in Uppsala in 1981 and took the slogan 'From Mozart to Zappa' to emphasise its commitment to all genres of music. This issue, however, devotes itself to Swedish music, both old and new.

The latter is represented by the

likes of Karl-Erik Welin whose *Viriditas per Omnibus*, a 1988 commission from the ensemble, gives the CD its title (roughly translated as 'life for all'). This is an intriguing piece, punctuated throughout its seventeen-minute length with quotations from Stravinsky and Mendelssohn.

Jazz trombonist and composer Eje Thelin's brilliant *Circo della vita* (Life's Circus) opens the programme in arresting fashion, full of colour and vibrancy and concluding with a whirlwind dance in 36/8 time. In a gentler vein, three arrangements of pieces by Tor Aulin are pure delight, and no less enjoyable is the incidental music to Molière's *Amphitryon* composed by the German emigré Joseph Martin Kraus, who came to Sweden in 1778 and did much to further and improve music-making in his adopted land.

In contrast, Johan Agrell took the path from Sweden to Germany and, if his charming duet in *A Major* for two flutes is anything to go by, certainly



benefited from the experience. The Omnibus Wind Ensemble's generous programme concludes with a piece from one of the best-known of Swedish composers, Hugo Alfven. It is deliciously light music, uniformly well-played by the ensemble and, as with all Opus 3 issues, recorded in glowing, unadulterated analogue.



## RECORD OF THE MONTH

**RICHARD STRAUSS**  
**Tod und Verklärung (Death and Transfiguration)**  
**Op24/Metamorphosen for 23 solo strings/Vier letzte Lieder (Four Last Songs)**

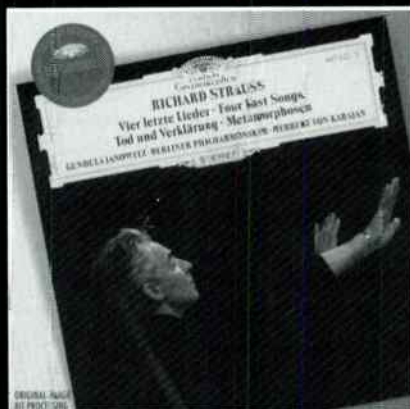
Gundula Janowitz, soprano; Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra; conductor, Herbert von Karajan  
 Deutsche Grammophon 447 422-2 (ADD/77.11)

● This is another of DG's 'Originals' reissues, a series where - as recounted in these pages a while back - everything is done to give the Compact Disc an LP quality, from reproducing the original sleeve to printing the famous yellow label on the CD as if it were vinyl. Marketing gimmicks apart (and a very alluring gimmick this is), the recordings chosen for this elite treatment generally fully merit it.

Karajan's Strauss is a glowing example and LP collectors will note with pleasure that the original vinyl coupling has been augmented with Gundula Janowitz's performance of the Four Last Songs, so completing a 77-minute programme which Ivan

March aptly describes in his booklet note (which, incidentally, concentrates on conductor rather than composer, so look to other sources for the musical background) as a 'valedictory triptych'.

It has been opined that Karajan was at his best in second-rate music, with Richard Strauss cited as an



example of the latter. This, of course, is the kind of flippant one-liner which music critics are apt to spout. Karajan did excel in Strauss - a host of great recordings testifies to that - and there are works by Strauss which are shallow, even pretentious, in content,

although the craftsmanship is never in doubt. But the three compositions here are not among them.

Tod und Verklärung is arguably the greatest, most profound of the tone poems; Vier letzte Lieder is the apotheosis of Strauss's writing for the soprano voice, something at which he was unsurpassed; and Metamorphosen, written among the ruins of Germany in 1945, though still written with consummate eloquence and skill, is as heartfelt an expression of anguish as could be imagined.

This reissue, collectors will be pleased to note, employs Karajan's superb seventies interpretations of Tod und Verklärung and Metamorphosen in refined ADD transfers from the analogue tapes. These are wonderfully expressive performances, beautifully played, as are the Vier letzte Lieder, although the creamy-toned Janowitz does not quite match the intensity of, say, Elisabeth Schwarzkopf or Lucia Popp.

However, in all other respects (and pace the critics) this is great music, supremely well played, and by any standards a notable bargain in its new, if unashamedly nostalgic packaging.

**SERGEI PROKOFIEV**  
**Peter and the Wolf - a musical tale for children Op 67**  
**CAMILLE SAINT-SAENS**  
**Carnival of the Animals - Grand Zoological Fantasy**  
**GEORGES BIZET**  
**Jeux d'Enfants**

Sir John Gielgud, narrator; Vivian Troon and Roderick Elms, pianos; Royal Philharmonic Orchestra; conductor, Andrea Licata  
 Tring/Royal Philharmonic Collection TRP046 (DDD/63.00)

● This is not the first occasion that the unmistakable voice of Sir John Gielgud has graced a recording of a children's classic: I recall a memorable rendition of Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland made for Nimbus. And Sir John is no less endearing in his telling of the fable of Peter and the Wolf, ever compelling but never condescending.

What a pity, therefore, that he was not better served by the recording engineers who give his voice a dry,

hugely-inflated position in the sound balance, utterly at odds with the orchestral backcloth. Something closer to equilibrium could surely have been achieved on the mixing desk to do justice to what would otherwise have been a treasurable recording.



The other children's favourites here, Saint-Saens's Carnival of the Animals and Bizet's Jeux d'Enfants - both purely orchestral, of course - are far more successful. The Italian conductor Andrea

Licata directs a sprightly and colourful Carnival, ably assisted by Vivian Troon and Roderick Elms in the concertante piano parts.

It's amusing to recall that this Grand Zoological Fantasy, probably Saint-Saens's best-known composition, along with the Third Symphony and the Danse Macabre, was suppressed by the composer. After just a few private performances, he withdrew the piece fearing the effect it might have on his reputation as a 'serious' composer. Yet 'The Swan', with its melting cello solo, is now Saint-Saens's single most famous musical work.

Saint-Saens's compatriot, Georges Bizet, had no such hang-ups with his charming Jeux d'Enfants (Children's Games), which receives a sparkling performance here from the RPO. The work began life as a series of miniatures for piano duet composed in 1871 from which Bizet extracted five and orchestrated them. The suite is short, but full of humour and charm and ends with a lively 'Galop' which is guaranteed to lift the spirits.







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**HAMPSHIRE AUDIO LIMITED**, 2-12 Hursley Road, Chandlers Ford, Hants, SO53 2FU. Tel Southampton (01703) 252827/265232. 3 Hi-Fi and 2 Home Cinema/Dolby Surround Sound Demonstration Rooms, one with Projection TV and an 8' wide screen. Brands stocked include ARCAM (incl. Xeta), Audiobab, Audioquest, Celestion, Cyrus, Denon, Gradient, Infinity, KEF, Marantz, Meridian, Mission, Polk, Quad, Rotel, Selec, Sennheiser, Soundstyle, Tannoy, Target Audio, Thorens, & Yamaha. Established 1969, we offer a 2-year Guarantee covered by our own well-equipped Service Dept. We have a large FREE car parking facility and we are located within 3 miles from Junction 14 (M3/M27 Interchange) and Junctions 13 (M3) and 5 (M27). Closed Mondays, except in December. Late Night: Thurs to 8pm. BADA Founder Member. All deposits fully covered by BADA Bonding.

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**SEVENOAKS HI-FI** 478 St Albans Road, Watford, Herts. Tel 01923 213533. The UK's leading independent hi-fi and home cinema retailer, specialising in quality products for discerning customers. Open six days, with dedicated single speaker and audio visual demonstration rooms. Major credit cards accepted, 0% finance available (details upon request), home trial and installation by arrangement. Major brands stocked include Arcam, Audiobab, Castle, Cyrus, Denon, KEF, Marantz, Meridian, Michell, Mission, Monitor Audio, Musical Fidelity, Quad, Rotel, Ruark, TEAC and Yamaha.

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**RADLET AUDIO**, 9 Holywell Hill, St. Albans, Herts, AL1 1EU. Tel. 01727 855577. Mark Levinson, Proceed, Proac, Tube Technology, Teac, Audiobab, Stax, ATC, Audio Alchemy, EAR, Sumiko, Quad, JBL, Denon, Creek, Michell, Micromega, XLO, Alchemist, B&W, Ruark, LFD and many others. Home trial facilities, free installation, Service Dept., Visa/Access, Open 9.30 - 5.30 Mon - Sat.

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## KENT

**KIMBERLEY HIFI**, 193 Broadway, Bexleyheath, Kent. Tel 0181 3043272. Pioneer, Technics, Kenwood, Marantz, Denon, NAD, Aiwa, Tannoy, Mission, Rotel, Wharfedale, Castle. Separate dem room, no apt necessary. Free installation, service dept, instant credit facilities. no early closing.

**V.J. HI-FI**, 29 Guildhall St. Folkstone Kent Tel: 01303-256860. Stockists of: Mission, Tannoy, J.B.L., Pioneer, Philips, Aiwa, Marantz, Musical Fidelity, Quad, Yamaha, Denon and much more besides. Full audio and home cinema demonstration facilities. Fully bonded BADA members. Interest free credit available (subject to status). Open Mon-Sat 9:00-6:00

**V.J. HI-FI**, 119 High St Margate Kent Tel: 01843-226977. Stockists of: Mission, Cyrus, Quad, Tannoy, J.B.L., Sound Effects Range, Musical Fidelity Yamaha, Denon Meridian, Sound style and Target Equipment Racks. Full audio and home cinema demonstration facilities. Fully bonded BADA members. Interest free credit available (subject to status) Open Mon-Sat 9:00-5:30

**DOVER HI-FI**, 43 High Street, Dover. Tel: Dover 207562. Suppliers of quality hi-fi equipment including: Arcam, Akai, Aura, B&W, Denon, Jamo, JPW, Mordaunt Short, NAD, Panasonic, ProAc, Quad, Rotel, RuArc, TDL, Technics, Tannoy. Part exchange. Listening room. Service and repairs. Credit facilities. Access/Visa. Open 6 days 9-5.30.

**ELECTRICAL DISCOUNT CENTRE, EDC**, 138 pelham Road Gravesend, Kent DA11 0JH. Tel: 01474 569601. Pioneer, Marantz, Technics, Akai, JVC, Jamo.

**ELECTRICAL DISCOUNT CENTRE, EDC**, 109 The Broadway Bexley Heath Kent DA6 7JH. TEL: 0181 298 7880. Pioneer, Marantz, Technics, Akai, JVC, Jamo.

**SEVENOAKS HI-FI** 28 St Johns Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. Tel 01892 531543. The UK's leading independent hi-fi and home cinema retailer, specialising in quality products for discerning customers. Open six days, with dedicated single speaker and audio visual demonstration room. Major credit cards accepted, 0% finance available (details upon request), home trial and installation by arrangement. Major brands stocked include Arcam, Audioblab, Castle, Cyrus, Denon, KEF, Marantz, Meridian, Micromega, Mission, Quad, Rotel, Ruark and Yamaha.

**SEVENOAKS HI-FI** 4 Railway Street, Chatham, Kent. Tel (01634) 846859. The UK's leading independent hi-fi and home cinema retailer, specialising in quality products for discerning customers. Open six days, with dedicated single speaker and audio visual demonstration rooms. Major credit cards accepted, 0% finance available (details upon request), home trial and installation by arrangement. Major brands include Arcam, Audioblab, Castle, Cyrus, Denon, KEF, Marantz, Meridian, Michell, Mission, Monitor Audio, Quad, Rotel, Ruark, and Yamaha.

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**SEVENOAKS HI-FI**, 109-113 London Road, Sevenoaks, Kent. (01732) 459555. The UK's leading independent hi-fi and home cinema retailer, specialising in quality products for discerning customers. Open six days, with dedicated single speaker and audio visual demonstration rooms. Major credit cards accepted, 0% finance available (details upon request), home trial and installation by arrangement. Major brands stocked include Arcam, Audioblab, Castle, Cyrus, Denon, KEF, Marantz, Meridian, Michell, Micromega, Mission, Monitor Audio, Quad, Rotel, Ruark and Yamaha.

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**PRACTICAL HI-FI**, 43 Friargate, Preston. Tel: 01772 883958. The audio visual specialist, expert advice, instant demonstrations, best prices, instant free credit, part exchange welcome. Extended warranty. Stockists of Yamaha, Kenwood, Denon, Sony, Technics, Onkyo, Marantz, Pioneer, Mission, Kef, Jamo, Celestion, B&W. Also stockists of LaserDiscs. **PRACTICAL HI-FI**, 84 Penny Street, Lancaster, LA1 1XN Tel: 01524 39657 - See our main entry under Lancaster. **PRACTICAL HI-FI**, 33/35 Knowlesy Street, Bolton, Lancs Tel: 01204 395789 - See our main entry under Lancaster.

**PRACTICAL HI-FI**, 10 Preston New Road, Blackburn, BB2 1AW Tel: 01254 691104. See our main entry under Lancaster

**PRACTICAL HI-FI**, 81 Whitegate Drive, Blackpool, FY3 9DA Tel: 01253 300599. See our main entry under Lancaster.

**NORMAN AUDIO**, 131 Friargate, Preston, Lancashire, PR1 2EE. Tel: 0772 253057. Fax: 0772 562731. Marantz, Pioneer, Yamaha, Audioblab, Arcam, Mission, Cyrus, B & W, Kef. Send for your catalogue. Home cinema dem room plus three sales areas. No apt necessary, free install. service dept. instant credit subject to status. Open 9.30-5.30, late night Wed-8pm.

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**AUDIO CONCEPT**, 27 Bond Street, Ealing, W5 5AS. Tel: (0181) 567 8703. Acoustic Energy, Audioblab, Aura, B&O, B&W, Boston Acoustics, Canon, Castle, Denon, Dual, Evolution, Infinity, JPW, KEF, Marantz, Mission, Monitor Audio, Musical Fidelity, NAD, Nakamichi, Onix, Quad, Revox, Rogers, Rotel, Systemdek, Target, Teac, Thorens, Van den Hul. Two dem rooms. Interest free credit, free local delivery & installation, service department. "Hi-Fi Specialists without the attitude"

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**HIFI EXPERIENCE**, 227 Tottenham Court Road, London W11. 0171 580 3535. Arcam, Audioblab, Mission, Cyrus, Quad, Celestion, Kef, Meridian, Rogers, Tannoy, Yamaha, TDL, Thorens, Marantz, Nakamichi, Musical Fidelity and many more. Open 10.00-7.00 Mon-Fri. 9-6 on Sat. Service dept, Credit facilities, delivery and free installation.

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**THE LISTENING ROOMS**, 161 Old Brompton Road, London SW5 0LJ. (0171) 244 7750/59. Fax (071) 370 0192. Linn, Quad, Meridian, Nakamichi, Arcam, Audioblab, Acoustic Energy, SME, Audio Research, Krell, Wadia, Theta, Apogee, Martin Logan, Pioneer, Nanny, Systemdek, Stax, Pink Triangle, Michell, Monitor Audio, Yamaha, Marantz, Kef, Bose, Celestion, Epos, Mission, Denon, Neat Petite. Mon-Sat 10-6pm.

**THE CORNFLAKE SHOP**, 37 Windmill Street London W1P 1HH. Tel.(0171) 631 0472 Fax (0171) 436 7165. Tues-Sat 10-6, Thurs 10-7. The specialists for the highest quality of sound, for one room or many more. Full advice & installation service available. Multiroom specialists & worldwide mail order service. Brands carried include: ATC, AVI, Rega, Naim, Mark Levinson/Proced Royd, and many more.....

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**ZEBRA**, 18-24 Brighton Road, South Croydon. Tel: 0181 - 688 2093. The UK's First and Finest Home Cinema Store. 3 Demonstration Rooms. Laser Disc CRT and Projection TV Centre. Many brands stocked including Arcam, Audioblab, Meridian, Lexicon, Kef, Pioneer, Rotel, Yamaha, REL and Panasonic. Mon-Sat 9.30-6.00pm. All major credit cards accepted. Finance available. Evening demonstrations by appointment.

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**SEVENOAKS HIFI** 162 Powis Street, Woolwich, London Tel 0181 855 8016. The UK's leading independent hi-fi and home cinema retailer, specialising in quality products for discerning customers. Open six days, with a dedicated single speaker and audio visual demonstration room. Major credit cards accepted, 0% finance available (details upon request), home trial and installation by arrangement. Major brands stocked include Arcam, Audioblab, Castle, Cyrus, Denon, KEF, Marantz, Micromega, Mission, Monitor Audio, NAD, Pioneer, Quad, Rotel, Ruark and Yamaha.

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## MIDDLESEX

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**THE AUDIO SHOP**, 6 Hill Street, Raunds, Northants, NN9 6NN. Tel: 01933 622325. Rotel, Denon, Marantz, Philips, Kinshaw, Moth, Pro-ject, Royd, TDL, JPW, Bose, Wharfedale, Goldring, Orton, Chord Co., Van Den Hul, Audioquest, QED, Sound Org., Beyer, Sennheiser, etc. Service dept., Home Demos., Free Installation, Easy Parking, Open 9:30am to 5:30pm (closed Wednesdays).

**LISTEN INN**, 32 Gold Street, Northants NN1 1RS. Tel. 01604 37871. Fax: 06404 601430. Naim, Linn, Rega, Audiobal, Arcam, Cyrus, Royd, Nakamichi, Mission, Denon, Rotel, Nad, Heybrook, Marantz, Chord Co. etc. etc., Open 10.00 - 5.30 (Closed Thurs)

**THE AUDIO SHOP**, Hi-Fi Specialists. Appointed stockists of: Ariston, Creek, Denon, Dual, Goodmans, JPW, Mordaunt-Short, Rotel, Royd, Tannoy, 6 Hill Street, Raunds, Northamptonshire. Tel: 01933 622325

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**CHANNY AUDIO**, 18-18a Eldon Street, Tuxford, Nr Newark, Notts, NG22 0LH. Tel. 01777 870372. Pink Triangle, Absolute Sounds, Micromega, DPA, Alchemich, CD developments, SME, Meridian, Ruark, Rotel/Michell, Audion, Monitor Audio + much more. Three demo rooms inc. Home Cinema, home trial, free installation, service dept. Access, visa, credit facilities, Mail order, Mon-Sat 9.30-6.00, Sun and evenings by appointment.

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## OXFORDSHIRE

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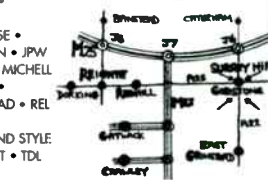
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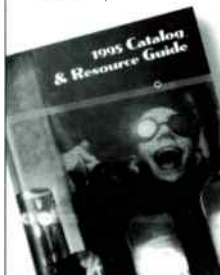


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KIT	4WSE-K240/120	<input type="text"/>	£385	£330
BUILT	4WSE-B240/120	<input type="text"/>	£585	£495
<b>K5881 20W push-pull valve power amplifier</b>				
KIT	K5881-K240/120	<input type="text"/>	£395	£350
BUILT	K5881-B240/120	<input type="text"/>	£595	£550
<b>K5881PSE 17W single-ended valve power amplifier</b>				
KIT	K5881PSE-K240/120	<input type="text"/>	£650	£555
BUILT	K5881PSE-B240/120	<input type="text"/>	£850	£725
<b>300B 28W valve power amplifier</b> (prices do not include valves)				
KIT	300B-K240/120	<input type="text"/>	£850	£725
BUILT	300B-B240/120	<input type="text"/>	£1150	£950
<b>KLPI line level preamplifier</b>				
KIT	KLPI-K240/120	<input type="text"/>	£345	£295
BUILT	KLPI-B240/120	<input type="text"/>	£545	£465
<b>KLPP1 full valve phono preamplifier</b>				
KIT	KLPP1-K240/120	<input type="text"/>	£495	£425
BUILT	KLPP1-B240/120	<input type="text"/>	£695	£595
<b>KLS3 3-way carbon fibre driver floorstanding loudspeaker</b>				
Drive Units + Crossover kit etc	KLS3-C	<input type="text"/>	£350	£300
Drive Units	KLS3-D	<input type="text"/>	£230	£200
<b>KLS4 2-way carbon fibre driver standmounting loudspeaker</b>				
Drive units + Crossover kit etc	KLS4-C	<input type="text"/>	£230	£200
<b>KLS6 3-way HDA driver floorstanding loudspeaker</b>				
Drive Units + Crossover kit etc	KLS6-C	<input type="text"/>	£825	£700
Drive Units	KLS6-D	<input type="text"/>	£640	£545
<b>KLS7 2-way carbon fibre driver floorstanding loudspeaker</b>				
Drive Units + Crossover kit etc	KLS7-C	<input type="text"/>	£195	£170
Drive Units	KLS7-D	<input type="text"/>	£110	£95
<b>AUDAX DRIVE UNITS (P&amp;P Extra, please add £5.75 for individual units or tweeters, otherwise add £10)</b>				
<b>High Definition Aerogel</b>				
3inch midrange	HM100Z0	<input type="text"/>	£35	£30
4inch midrange	HM130Z0	<input type="text"/>	£45	£40
6.5inch bass/mid	HM170Z0	<input type="text"/>	£50	£45
8inch bass	HM210Z0	<input type="text"/>	£60	£55
<b>Carbon Fibre</b>				
4inch midrange	HM130C0	<input type="text"/>	£40	£35
6.5inch bass/mid	HM170C0	<input type="text"/>	£45	£40
8inch bass	HM210C0	<input type="text"/>	£55	£50
<b>Fabric Dome Tweeters</b>				
25mm 92dB for 2-way systems	TW025M0	<input type="text"/>	£15	£13
25mm 92dB for 3-way systems	TW025M1	<input type="text"/>	£16	£14
34mm 93dB - powerful sound	TW034X0	<input type="text"/>	£25	£22
Oval Gold Piezo electric dome tweeter	HD-3P	<input type="text"/>	£225	£195

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*"Music is more than a bunch of sine waves."*

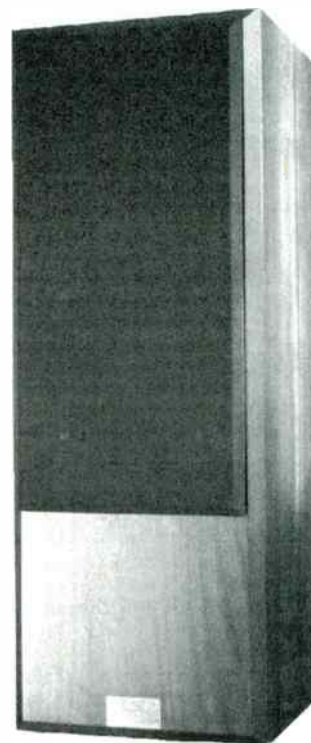
## ORCHID

PRECISION AUDIO



It was 1822 when Jean Baptiste Joseph Baron De Fourier invented the Fourier transform, the powerful and elegant mathematics which can describe a complex signal such as music in terms of a collection of simple sine waves, and in so doing laid the foundations for the way we now measure the fidelity of a hi-fi component in terms of its "frequency response".

But there was always more to the Baron's theory than that, there is the phase response, the forgotten part. And leaving out the phase response provides just half a description. Perhaps nowhere more so than with loudspeakers.

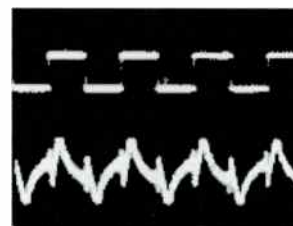


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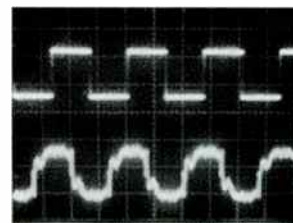
### ORCHID PRECISION AUDIO - THE PHASE LINKED LOUDSPEAKER

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So here's the test that nobody shows you, the square wave test. A square wave contains a very rich spectrum of harmonics. If a loudspeaker can reproduce these harmonics without altering either their amplitude or phase, a square wave will be obtained at the microphone. The first photograph is the response of a respected American loudspeaker trying to reproduce a 300 Hz square wave. You could be forgiven for remarking that the output (on the lower trace) looks nothing like the input (on the upper trace). This is phase distortion. If this measurement was of an amplifier, it wouldn't even merit a review.



Surprisingly, some manufacturers actually state that loudspeakers are generally incapable of reproducing a square wave, due to all sorts of reasons. We don't feel that way, as the lower photograph shows. With enough care, which we have, this higher level of fidelity can be obtained.



But what does it all mean? It means that these loudspeakers reproduce music on a grand scale and preserve all the subtle nuances that contribute to a realistic stereo image, both in width and depth. These loudspeakers are passionate, demanding, and addictive. They fulfil the only criterion left at the high end, that you can just forget about them, be convinced by the music, and not have to work at it. If you would like to know more, write to us at our address below, better yet listen to them at our distributor's and hear real music.

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24 Hz - 22 Khz  
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**KEF Kit 80** - An 8" Auxiliary Bass Radiator augments the output of the main 8" Uni-Q driver used with a DN80 bi-wireable dividing network. This is a floorstanding loudspeaker with exceptional bass response.

**KEF Kit 90** - An 8" dedicated bass unit, 8" Uni-Q and DN90 bi-wireable dividing network give this three way floorstander extended bass output down to 35 Hz (-6dB).

KEF have designed a range of drive units and dividing networks which, with simple D.I.Y skills, can be transformed into State-of-the-Art loudspeakers capable of giving years of truly high-fidelity performance.

Kit	60	70	80
Boxed	£215	280	370
Total	£290	370	460

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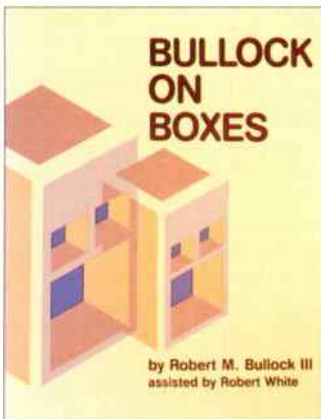
## THE LOUDSPEAKER DESIGN COOKBOOK, 5th Edition, by Vance Dickason.

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This best selling book in the field of loudspeakers offers good, up-to-date practical design information for the home constructor. Like today's manufacturers it uses modern Thiele Small theory and parameters.

## BULLOCK ON BOXES, by Robert M. Bullock

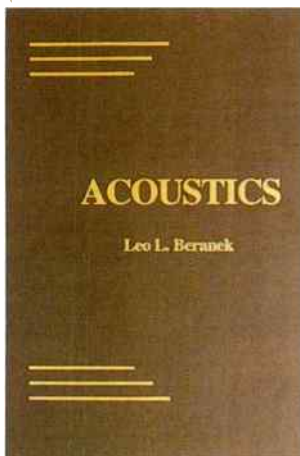
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This book relies on manipulation of Thiele-Small parameters (supplied with all drive units) to optimise reflex box design, but with a calculator and at high school level. With lots of helpful tables and graphs, this straightforward book is every beginners best bet for getting to grips with sizing the box and port of a reflex loudspeaker.

## ACOUSTICS, by Leo L. Beranek

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From analogous electrical circuits important for modelling, the author moves through to microphones then loudspeakers. He covers design factors, showing how theory influences practice in drive units. Loudspeaker enclosure types covered include sealed, ported and horn. The behaviour of sound in rooms, very important for hi-fi, is also covered extremely well here

## QUICK & EASY TRANSMISSION LINE SPEAKER DESIGN, by Larry D. Sharp.

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## THEORY AND DESIGN OF LOUDSPEAKER ENCLOSURES, by J. E. Benson.

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This book covers loudspeaker enclosure design; infinite baffle, reflex, passive radiator etc in great detail, with a highly mathematical approach, making it unsuitable for beginners, but highly authoritative to experienced designers with a good foundation in acoustics.

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### Audio Anthologies - When Audio Was Young

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### Volume One - May 1947 to December 1949

**Summary of Contents:** 9.5watt, 5watt and 6.5 watt 6AS7G amplifiers, 30watt 300B amplifier, valve FM tuning indicator, 30watt 211 power amplifier, cathode follower amplifier using 6V6, an adaptation of the Williamson amplifier, valve phono preamplifier, several horn and reflex loudspeaker designs and much more.

### Volume Two - January 1950 to July 1952

**Summary of Contents:** Ultra linear 6L6 design and operation of the Williamson, a direct coupled amplifier, Williamson type amplifier using 6AS5, 40watt 845 push-pull amplifier, valve phono and line preamps, valves and loudspeaker damping, design and construction of reflex and horn loudspeakers.

### Volume Three - August 1952 to June 1955

**Summary of Contents:** Simple valve phono stage, transformerless amplifier using 6082, 20watt 5881 amplifier, 10watt 6V6 amplifier, stereo valve preamp, high quality valve phono stage, a preamp for the Williamson, low distortion tone control preamp, binaural or stereophonic?, transistor phono amp, corner horn loudspeaker, concrete horn loudspeaker.

### Volume Four - July 1955 to December 1957

**Summary of Contents:** 18watt 5881 amplifier, 4watt single-ended tweeter amplifier, budget 11watt amplifier, versatile bass/treble control, transistor theory, transistor preamp, transistor techniques, battery powered transistor phono preamp, loudspeakers explained.

### Volume Five - January 1958 to December 1959

**Summary of Contents:** Stereo valve multiplex decoder, 7watt EL84 amplifier, valve active crossover and 20watt treble amp/50watt bass amp., monaural, binaural, monophonic and stereophonic explained, heterodyne FM multiplex adapter, transistor preamp, 60watt EL34 amplifier, high power audio amplifiers, hi-fi loudspeaker enclosure.

### Volume Six - January 1960 to December 1961

**Summary of Contents:** Transistor preamplifiers, feedback techniques, the coming of FM stereo, FM multiplex adapters, Tape recorders: distortion, frequency response and noise, 120watt 6550 amplifier, loudspeaker efficiency.

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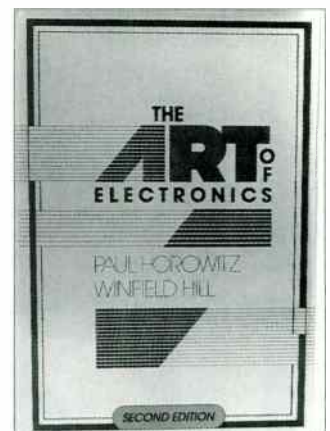
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### THE ART OF ELECTRONICS, by P. Horowitz and W. Hill.

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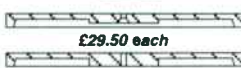
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8 January 1995

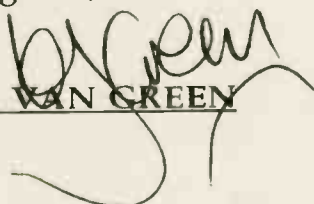
Hello Peter,

Recently you supplied me with Slate Audio speaker stands for my Harbeth Compact 7 monitors and a plynth, arm & cartridge for my Garard 301 turntable. I can honestly say that this was money well spent !

I am a studio engineer and as I use my Harbeths for mixing sessions, it is absolutely critical that they reproduce what has been recorded without colouration, warts & all ! Other stands, despite manufacturers' claims, are not always neutral. Not so Slate Audio. They give me definition from the loudspeaker I have not heard before. They also give me positive immaging.....I can place an instrument or effect wherever I want in the stereo with confidence. Recently I worked with a group that used a 26 inch kick drum...notoriously difficult to record. But I was able to record & mix knowing that what I was hearing was true. The proof of the pudding was when the test pressing arrived at my home and all the 30 & 40 hz were still present and not "rolled off" in the cut. Thank you Abbey Road Cutting Room.

The marble plynth for my 301 is a work of art. I am happy to say that it sounds as good as it looks. I had been listening solely to compact discs at home for the last five or six years, and when I first put up the Slate Audio 301 I must admit to having quite a shock. It took me a short while to get used to the sonics of vinyl. However, once adjusted, forever converted. Now that my cartridge is run in I am more than happy to ditch the CD player in favour of my old records. They have new life, dynamics & energy. Thank you Peter Soper.

Kind regards,

  
KEVIN VAN GREEN

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K1100B Complete STANDARD Amplifier Kit	£395.21
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K2100 Complete Kit	£109.50
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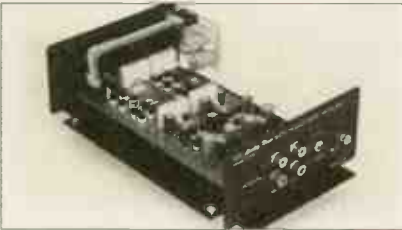
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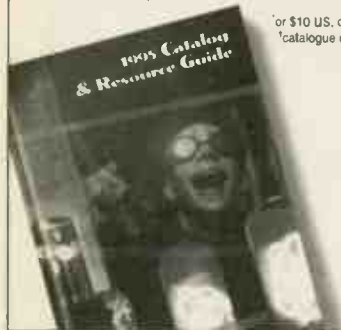


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# AUDIO ENGINEERING

## Announcement.

During 1995 our small company concentrated its time in producing a range of single ended output transformers for use with original GEC/Marconi - Osram, Mullard - W.E. - Edison - Sylvana - Mazda - and Ever-Ready valves.

As these valves are becoming rare, we have been turning our attention to newer valves starting with the 5V811-3, this D.H.Triode is very reliable, rugged, cheap and easily obtainable, but most important, sounds good. Being very dynamic at both ends of the audio range, and of course excellent on vocals, it is fast gaining a good reputation with our customers, and us at A.E.

After building many prototype single ended amplifiers using this valve we are now releasing a set of circuit diagrams and layouts etc. for the home constructor to build his or her own version. Yes Mary, (thanks for the Xmas pud). We also supply a high quality OTX for this project, which also underwent many trials until we were satisfied with the marriage between 6 Kilo's of our iron and copper to the 8oz of glowing Glass, Ceramic and Tungsten of 5V811-3.

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For the complete circuit and layout please send £2.50 cheque or P.O. or equivalent in stamps (preferably Penny Blacks), this covers printing, to:

P.Perry @ (Audio Engineering), 57 Lyndhurst Drive, Leyton, London E10 6JB.

Please Note:

Sadly, we will have to increase our prices after April 96, as raw materials have increased. OTX's will then be around £250 pair inc.

But we will hold back our existing stocks of Iron and Copper until stocks cease, around Dec96 enabling this stock to be used for our old customers who are thinking of building projects this year.

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# MEASURED PERFORMANCE

It's important to measure products to assess performance, find explanations of sound quality and warn of peculiarities or faults. Only Hi-Fi World has an advanced in-house laboratory with digital signal analysis for this purpose. In conjunction with this facility we assess sound quality in our own acoustically treated listening room. We measure most products reviewed. Here's a simple guide on our test results.

## LOUDSPEAKERS

Smooth, flat frequency response is important to ensure a balanced sound. Look carefully at overall trends; rising treble will give a bright sound, falling treble a dull sound. A rise through the midrange normally corresponds with good projection.

High sensitivity (better than 86dB) means less power is needed for a certain volume, meaning a low power amp. can be used.

The impedance curve tells us how easy loudspeakers are to drive. Low or wildly varying impedance is bad; a flat impedance around 8Ω is good.

## CD PLAYERS

Even small trends in frequency response of CD players can affect their subjective balance. Generally, those with a gently rolled off treble and, more rarely, a rising bass will sound best. Rising treble can produce a sharp sound.

The distortion plot we show is taken at -30dB, to represent a typical music signal. High distortion at this level, combined with rising treble, can result in a harsh sound. Yet other effects have to be considered, especially low level linearity, which we also test for, including -90dB signals with dither applied.

## AMPLIFIERS

Distortion from solid state amplifiers should be no more than around 0.2%. Even order (2nd, 4th, 6th etc) distortion is aurally innocuous, but odd order (3rd, 5th, 7th etc) distortion makes for a glassy, hard sound, or grittiness.

Frequency response can be band limited, with bass and treble rolled off just out of the ear's range, or wideband. Each has its own characteristics. Small wideband response variations colour tonal balance.

Power output is easy to understand: the higher the figure, the louder it will go. Just make sure there's enough power output to drive any loudspeakers you intend to use.

## TUNERS

Frequency response, as always, says much about tonal balance and character traits, like peaky treble (due to a mismatched MPX filter). Distortion and channel separation need to be less than 0.3% (according to harmonic structure

and better than 25dB.

Hiss level must be lower than -70dB for Radio 3 silences to be just that - silent. And full quieting, the strength of aerial signal needed for optimum results, should be around 1mV or less

Selectivity, the ability to separate stations under the most difficult conditions should be better than 60dB and sensitivity better than 30μV on stereo.

## CASSETTE DECKS

Replay performance is measured to IEC 94 Standards using IEC test tapes. This ensures that recordings made on a machine transfer to a car player, personal stereo or another domestic recorder properly, as well as ensuring optimum results with commercially prerecorded tapes. Look for a quoted replay response of 40Hz-10kHz, no more than 1% speed error and hiss in the replay amps lower than -58dB.

Recording quality considers frequency response, bias variation, head performance and alignment. Frequency response should stretch from 40Hz-15kHz or so. Head overload (MOL315) must be above 0dB, reaching around +4dB for good results.

From the transport mechanism look for less than 0.15% wow or flutter. Overall (DIN weighted) wow and flutter should be no more than 0.1% or so.

# AMPLIFIERS

## LINN WAKONDA PRE-AMP

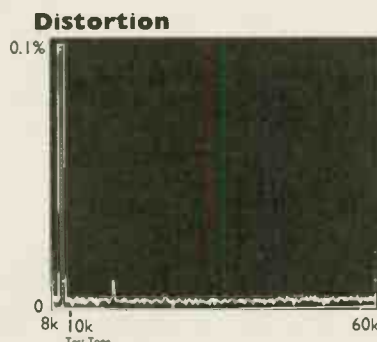
The Wakonda has a limited maximum gain of x2.2 via its tuner/CD/tape inputs, so this is not a preamp for budget sources or older items, which have 300mV or so of output. I prefer to see around x3 gain for good matching flexibility, but having said that the Wakonda will in most cases be satisfactory. Frequency response went low to 12Hz and fairly high to 70kHz, giving plenty of scope for solid CD bass and open sounding treble.

Linn's moving coil cartridges give little output, so I wasn't surprised to measure a high gain of x3125 (1kHz) via phono with the MC board in place. This is about right and will allow the Wakonda to cope with most designs. Not unsurprisingly in view of the gain, input overload was lower than the usual 10mV or thereabouts, measuring 4.5mV, but again this is high enough to avoid problems. Around 1mV is about the maximum from moving coils tracking normally cut LPs.

Linn always include a warp filter, the Wakonda's cutting gain below 42Hz (-1dB). This will give lean but speedy bass. Since most speakers these days are reflex designs, undamped below bass resonance and prone to come flap, a warp filter is pretty important. There was just 0.03μV equivalent

input noise, one of the lowest figures I have ever measured - necessary for low output MC cartridges. The Wakonda is unusually quiet on MC, like all Linn preamps.

With negligible distortion too, the Wakonda measures well. NK



CD/tuner/aux.	
Frequency response	12Hz-70kHz
Separation	74dB
Noise	-93dBV
Distortion	0.01%
Sensitivity (for 1V out)	450mV
Gain	x2.2

Disc (MC)	
Frequency response	42Hz-44kHz
Separation	60dB
Noise	-79dBV
Distortion	0.02%
Sensitivity (for 1V out)	0.32mV
Overload	4.5mV





# AMPLIFIERS

## ALCHEMIST MAXIM AND AURA VA 80SE-x

The Maxim phono stage measured flat within 1dB from 12Hz up to 44kHz. It has accurate equalisation and no warp filter, absence of the latter usually producing weighty bass. Noise was low and sensitivity normal at 3.5mV. Overload was high at 140mV, so in all areas the Maxim worked well on phono. The amplifier delivers 32watts per channel but, having little feedback, produces a lot of distortion (1% maximum) with an extended harmonic structure.

The Aura uses MOSFETs and feedback to banish distortion altogether, even at high frequencies, due to the high gain/bandwidth product of these devices. It also has a good phono stage, but with a gentle warp filter that doesn't savage frequency response too badly. At -70dB on paper the disc stage might look a bit hissy, but this is mainly due to its very high sensitivity of 1.5mV, which offers excellent cartridge compatibility. Equivalent input noise, the only valid noise measurement, was low at 0.45µV CCIR wtd., meaning the Aura will, in use, be as quiet as any rival. Producing 50watts per channel, it has plenty of power, although power supply regulation and line ripple could usefully be improved. NK

### ALCHEMIST MAXIM

Power 32watts

CD/tuner/aux.  
Frequency response 5Hz-50kHz  
Separation 80dB  
Noise -101dB  
Distortion 1%  
Sensitivity 300mV  
dc offset 1mV

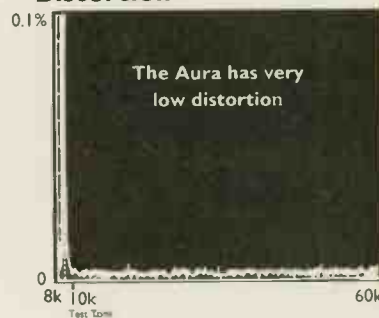
Disc Frequency response 12Hz-44kHz  
Separation -58dB  
Noise -77dB  
Distortion 1%  
Sensitivity 3.5mV  
Overload 140mV

AURA VA80 SE-x  
Power 50watts

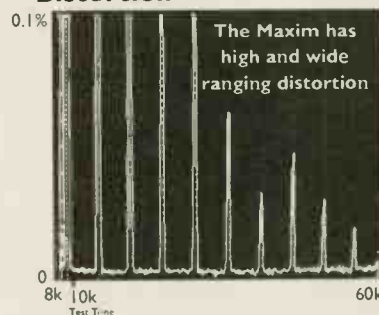
CD/tuner/aux.  
Frequency response 11Hz-60kHz  
Separation 78dB  
Noise -98dB  
Distortion 0.004%  
Sensitivity 200mV  
dc offset 1mV

Disc Frequency response 34Hz-44kHz  
Separation 70dB  
Noise -70dB  
Distortion 0.006%  
Sensitivity 1.5mV  
Overload 80mV

### Distortion



### Distortion



## TECHNICS SU-C800U PREAMP & SE-A800S POWER AMPLIFIER

The SE-A800S power amplifier was a little less powerful than I expected, considering its size and cooling fan. It produced 78watts into a normal 8Ω load and this increased to a good 120watts into a low 4Ω load. Heavily reactive loads did not affect this result. It has enough power to drive most loudspeakers loud in most rooms, but it isn't for insensitive, high power designs.

Frequency response via CD was reasonably wide, stretching from 8Hz up to 40kHz. There was enough low frequency extension to develop good subsonics. Distortion was minimal and, by using MOSFETs, Technics have kept high frequency distortion right down to a low value of 0.004% achieved in the midband. However, MOSFET amps use large amounts of feedback to achieve this, because they are not innately linear.

The phono stage (MM only) has gentle warp filtering, very low hiss and good sensitivity. Frequency response showed a tilt up toward high frequencies and some bass shelving, doubtless due to the 3180µS time constant. Put together, I'd expect a light sound, although this does balance MMs with upper midrange droop, notably Goldring's.

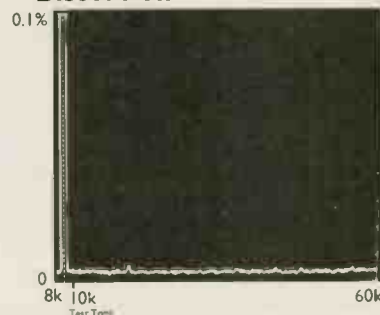
In all areas the Technics measured well, but it is big for the modest power delivered. NK

Power 78watts

CD/tuner/aux.  
Frequency response 8Hz-40kHz  
Separation 65dB  
Noise -94dB  
Distortion 0.004%  
Sensitivity 160mV  
dc offset 0.3/0.4mV

Disc MM  
Frequency response 20Hz-31kHz  
Separation 80dB  
Noise -77dB  
Distortion 0.004%  
Sensitivity 2.3mV  
Overload 130mV

### Distortion



# LOUDSPEAKERS

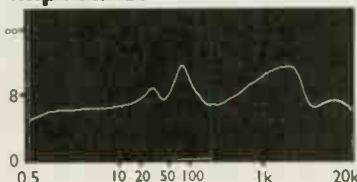
## CASTLE HOWARD SII

The Howard SII's use 1/4 wave bass loading, to good effect too, as can be seen by the frequency response plot below. Bass extends low, full output being maintained down to 63Hz, the limit of our test room. From here upwards to the crossover point the Howards have a smooth response. Unfortunately, there is quite a strong dip in the crossover region, followed by a peak in the lower treble. This may remove some projection from vocals and add a sting to the treble, neither desirable.

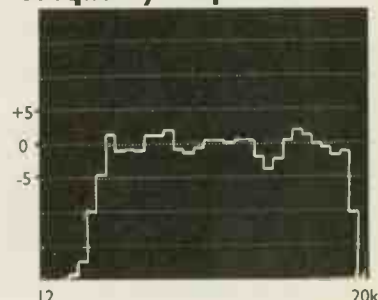
Sensitivity of the Howard SII's was low at 84.5dB, so they will need plenty of volts to

go loud. Impedance was high overall at 10.9Ω though, so they won't draw much current. I'd recommend amplifiers capable of delivering around 60watts (min.) for best results. DB

### Impedance



### Frequency Response



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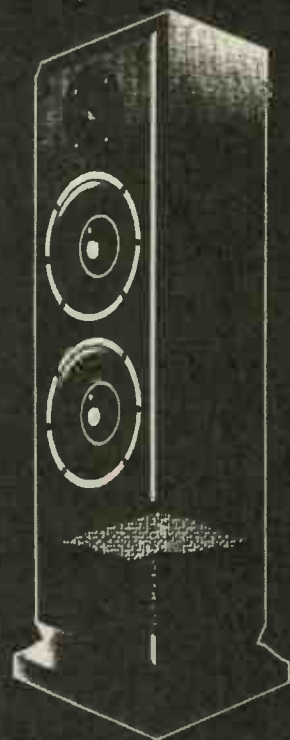
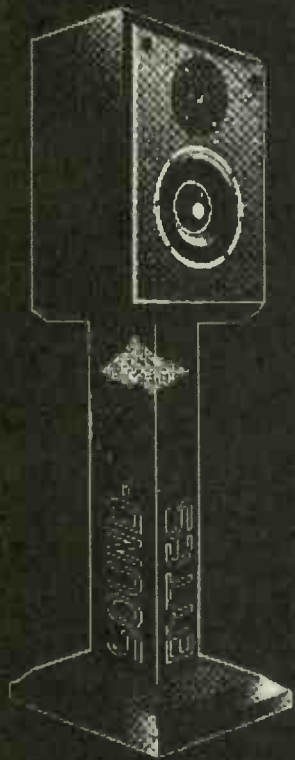
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# LOUDSPEAKERS

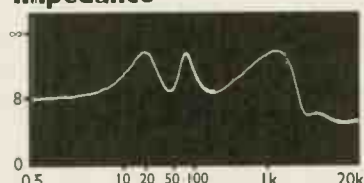
## QLN SIGNATURE

QLN's Signature loudspeakers, whilst not possessing the smoothest response I've seen, are well balanced. There are few dips and peaks, so they shouldn't sound too bright or dull. One of the strongest dips is in the crossover region, where the response falls by around 3dB, but this is still not enough to be intrusive. I'd expect the Signatures to have a natural balance as a result.

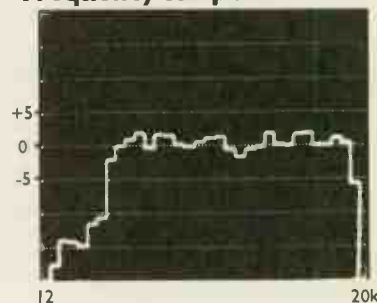
The QLNs are insensitive, producing just 84dB at 1m for a nominal watt (2.83V) pink noise signal. Overall impedance is just above 8Ω at 8.7Ω, but the impedance curve shows a strong dip between 2-3kHz, where it falls from around 30Ω to 4Ω indicating strong

reactance. All the same, most modern power amplifiers will have little trouble with this, especially as they'll need to be meaty 60-100watters to get good volume from the QLNs. DB

Impedance



Frequency Response



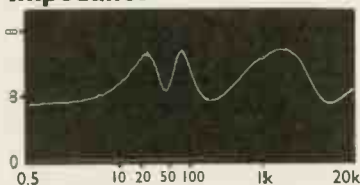
## CELESTION IMPACT 23

Celestion added the Impact 23 model to their range primarily for the UK market. By the look of things it has been carefully engineered, the frequency response looking especially flat. There are some subtle trends though, including a peak in the bass around 160Hz which will help to give good punch and speed. Through the midrange there is a very shallow dip, above which treble gently rises again. These particular trends are not strong enough to colour the sound, but they will ensure a smooth midrange and good insight respectively.

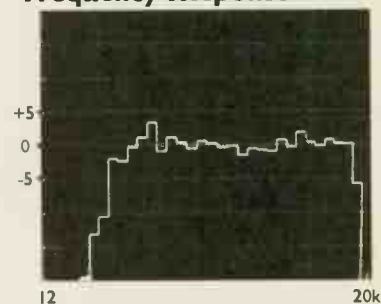
Another good sign is the 23's easy drive characteristics. With a sensitivity of 89.5dB at 1m for a nominal watt (2.83V) pink noise signal and an overall impedance of 9.3Ω, the

Impact 23s will not only go loud with few watts, but won't draw much current either. It was respectable, although not ideal. More modern amplifier of around 20watts should be more than capable of driving Celestion's Impact 23s. DB

Impedance



Frequency Response



# CASSETTE

## ONKYO TA-6310

Like many cassette decks I measure these days, the Onkyo trades head performance against the provision of Dolby S. Because this new noise reduction system has peak-companding, which lessens the effects of overload from strong signals, it seems like a reasonable trade. However, there's only so much peak-companding S can offer. The TA-6310 produced no less than 14% bass distortion with metal tape (TDK MA), for example, and its low frequency response was as flat as the Himalayan foothills, due to poor head contouring. Noise reduction can't eradicate ills of this nature. I'd expect soft or wallowing bass. The head was barely able to accept chrome tape flux, let alone metal tape flux. It's one of the poorest I've measured. Measurements suggest the TA-6310 is best used with a good ferric tape and Dolby S.

Peak record level has been set high at IEC0dB flux. Music peaks cannot be pushed further than this if head distortion is to be avoided - and use of Dolby S is obligatory.

The auto-tune system was approximate in what it did, but they always are. One sample exhibited treble peaking, another treble fall. Manual adjustment is preferable.

The transport held speed well and was proficient enough to give stable pitch. There was little flutter too. I'd expect piano sustains to hold steady.

Replay frequency response was

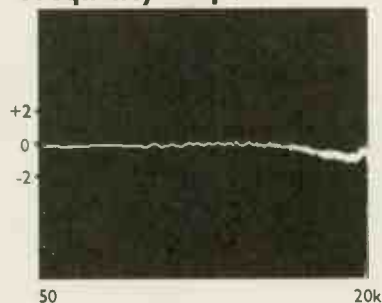
characterised by bass lift, a flat midband up to 6kHz and slow treble roll off above this. It was respectable, although not ideal. More high frequency output is needed for accurate Dolby tracking but in use the Onkyo didn't sound dull with pre-recordeds.

In a nutshell, the TA-6310 has a very poor head and relies on Dolby S to cover its deficiencies - not an impressive design strategy. It must be used with Dolby S and it best suits low-bias ferric tapes like TDK AR. NK

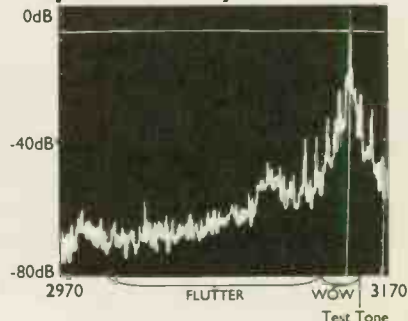
REPLAY (pre-recorded tapes)  
Frequency response (-2dB) 30Hz-12kHz  
Speed accuracy +1%  
Hiss (70uS, Dolby out) -61dB

RECORDING (blank tapes)  
Frequency response (IEC Primary Refs.)  
ferric (IECI) 22Hz-18kHz  
chrome (IECII) 22Hz-18kHz  
metal (IECIV) 22Hz-16kHz  
Separation (1kHz) -48dB  
Distortion (315H) 7%  
Hiss (70uS, Dolby out) -57dB  
Speed variations (DIN total) 0.1%  
Flutter energy (3-3.13kHz) -33dB  
MOL/SAT (IEC Refs) 315/10k  
IEC I (ferric) 3dB/-6dB  
IECII (chrome) -1dB/-4dB  
IECIV (metal) -3dB/0.5dB

Frequency Response



Speed Stability



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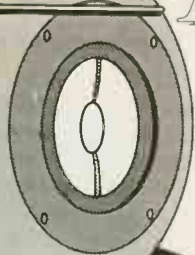
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# CD PLAYERS

## AUDIO ALCHEMY DDSIII

The DDSIII is intended primarily as a transport for the Audio Alchemy range of CD convertors. But it comes complete with its own in-built convertor, presumably to entice buyers who wouldn't immediately splash out on a two-box system. The internal convertor measured well, as well as many of the better Japanese players.

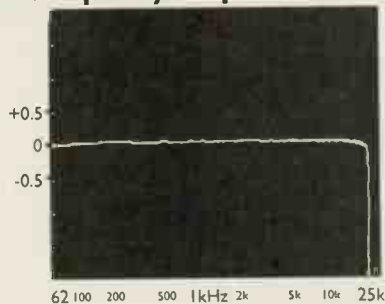
Frequency response was flat but a gentle roll off at low frequencies will give lighter bass than usual. Treble remains flat up to 20kHz, which will give a clear and open presentation, or possibly some brightness.

With distortion levels low right across the board the DDSIII should be free from grain or harshness. At -30dB, a level picked to represent a typical music signal, 2nd and 3rd harmonics are only just visible.

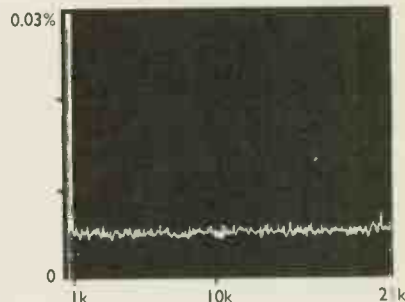
Low distortion at -60dB corresponds to a wide dynamic range of 106.5dB (EIA test). And elsewhere test results show good engineering, with wide separation, low noise and output exactly 2V. DB

Frequency response	4Hz-21kHz		Separation (dB)	left	right
Distortion (%)			1kHz	118	118
-6dB	0.005	0.005	20kHz	100	99
-30dB	0.006	0.006	Noise		-111dB
-60dB	0.6	0.6	with emphasis		-111dB
-90dB	32	32	Dynamic range		106.5dB
-90dB dithered	5.8	5.6	Output		2.0V

Frequency Response



Distortion



## MARANTZ CD-17

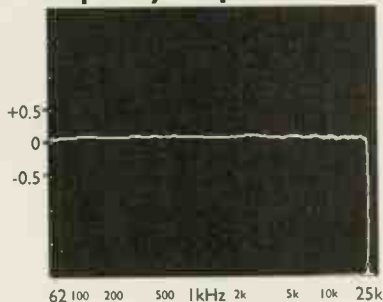
The CD-17 has obviously been very carefully engineered and is well controlled in production. In all areas it measures as well as the best, and is admirably consistent between the two channels showing that the layout has been well thought out too. Frequency response is very flat, with just the slightest treble roll-off.

Distortion was very low too, so I suspect the CD-17 will possess good insight and detail without becoming sharp. At -30dB, a level picked to represent a typical music signal, distortion is invisible, hidden below the noise floor. At -60dB distortion rises to 0.54% which corresponds to a dynamic range of 105.4dB (EIA test).

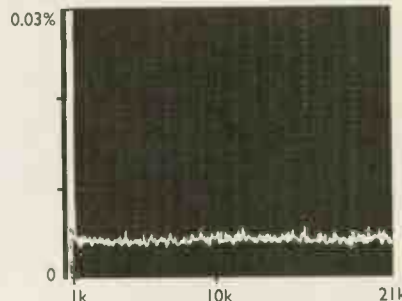
Elsewhere the Marantz turns in an exemplary performance. Separation is greater than 100dB even at 20kHz, noise very low and output just above standard at 2.2V. DB

Frequency response	4Hz-21kHz		Separation (dB)	left	right
Distortion (%)			1kHz	124	124
-6dB	0.005	0.005	20kHz	101	100
-30dB	0.004	0.004	Noise		-107dB
-60dB	0.54	0.56	with emphasis		-106dB
-90dB	28.9	29.1	Dynamic range		105.4dB
-90dB dithered	3.9	4.1	Output		2.2V

Frequency Response



Distortion



# TUNER

## MERIDIAN TUNER

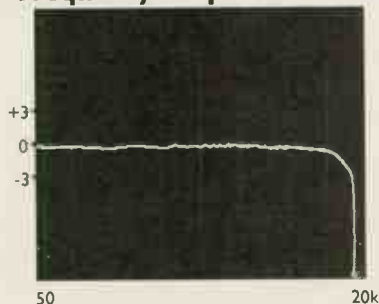
The 504 has a flat frequency response with useful upper treble roll down above 10kHz. This will give good tonal balance and avoid harshness respectively.

Channel separation was high, but the 504 channel blends to reduce hiss as signal strength decreases, turning progressively to mono. Measurement showed hiss never rose above -55dB, but since stereo blended to mono (i.e. less than 20dB separation) below 200µV, this is its effective stereo sensitivity - not a good one. Sensitivity was mediocre and hiss at full quieting, reached at 1.6mV from the aerial, high at -66dB. Modern tuners usually offer -70dB or better, so the 504 is poor in this respect and I would not recommend it to critical Radio 3 listeners.

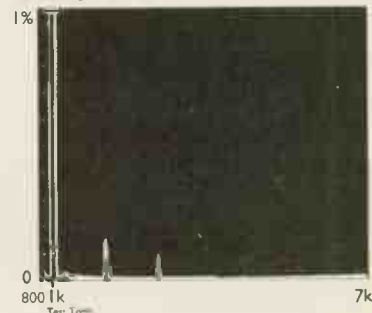
With an absence of useful facilities such as tune indicator or signal strength meter, the 504 offers little of merit. NK

Frequency response	3Hz-13kHz	Selectivity (at 0.4MHz)	73dB
Stereo separation	43dB	Sensitivity	3µV
Distortion (50% mod.)	0.18%	mono	200µV
Hiss (CCIR)	-66dB	stereo	200µV
Signal for minimum hiss	1.6mV	signal strength meter:	none

Frequency Response



Distortion



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This amp has a raw vitality and realism that the others can't match. (Hi-Fi News & RR March)

"The Gamma RHYTHM REF (aeon) is a welcome new comer to the single ended fold the design

offers the sort of acoustics treasures that are usually the domain of far more expensive amplifiers, "Gamma is to be applauded for this exciting new product!" (Hi-Fi Choice Jan. '94) "the Gemini is a peach. Switch it on leave it for a couple of minutes

to settle down and (once run in) it will give a truly amazing sound. CD, radio broadcast tape can all sound stunning through this devise

the Gemini will charm the very best out of your music collection.

for £699 you'd be hard pressed to match this design for sheer sound quality and enjoyment (Hi-Fi Choice March '95) the immediate effect of this new amp was warmth and funkiness.

"Suddenly it had soul" "I had a clearer idea of what they were feeling"

"the Gemini offers a small footprint with a difficult to beat price" (Hi-Fi News & RR Feb. '95)

There's a hugely endearing quality about the Gemini sound, " It has the most attractive price tag: £699 is small money for a decent valve amp, and decent the Gemini is." (What Hi-Fi Feb. '95)

**BUT DON'T TAKE THEIR WORD COME AND BE HAPPILY SURPRISED!**



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As the premier Roksan specialist in the U.K., we now have on demonstration the new Attesa ATT DP3 transport, Xerxes X, and the XPS V Reference Power Supply, and of course, all other products in the Roksan range. Please ring to book a demonstration of this amazing new product range and just hear how real music sounds.

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	E77, E77 Mg	N/A	£36.00		R20 X, OLM 34/35, XLM	£12.50																				
	P77, P77 Mg	N/A	£47.00	Alwa	AN 5/11/30/60/8745	£9.00																				
Audio Technica	AT 95E	£21.00	£12.50		AN 2/50/70/77/D/4932/8743	£10.00																				
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Denon	AT OC 7	N/A	£105.00*		ST 14/15/16/17/19/21	£3.00																				
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Dynavector	DL 110	£65.00	£32.00*	Goldring	G800/820/850 (D110/D120/D130)	£8.00																				
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				Sansul	PN 210/220/240/K65/250T/295T	£8.00																				
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					ST 80/100/153/G6/G13	£8.00																				
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				Shure	N 75-6C/G, N 91 G, SS 35 C	£10.00																				
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				NO 115/143/148/153/220/250 G	£8.00																					
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<p>IN ORDER TO AVOID THE RISK OF DAMAGE TO YOUR CARTRIDGE FROM A STYLUS WHICH IS NOT A SWISS QUALITY DIAMOND STYLUS</p> <p>A WORN STYLUS CAN DAMAGE PRECIOUS VINYL! RECOMMENDED REPLACEMENT AFTER 500 HRS USAGE</p> <p>ORDER BY PHONE OR MAIL</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>PROFESSIONAL/DJ ITEMS</th> <th>DJ PACK</th> <th>STYLUS</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Ortofon DM Pro S</td> <td>£40.00</td> <td>£15.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Concorde Pro S</td> <td>£4.00</td> <td>£15.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>DM Nightclub S</td> <td>£4.00</td> <td>£18.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>DM Nightclub E</td> <td>£8.50</td> <td>£21.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Conc Nightclub S</td> <td>£75.00</td> <td>£18.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Conc Nightclub E</td> <td>£78.00</td> <td>£21.00</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>DJ Packs comprise 1 Cartridge complete +2 styli in a Presentation Box</p> <p>NO CREDIT CARDS PLEASE. SAVINGS ON SERVICE CHARGES AND SUPPLIER SETTLEMENT DISCOUNTS ARE PASSED ON DIRECT TO CUSTOMERS IN OUR PRICES.</p> <p>OVERSEAS CUSTOMERS PLEASE ADD £5.00 TO ORDERS OVER £50 IN VALUE TO COVER INSURANCE.</p>						PROFESSIONAL/DJ ITEMS	DJ PACK	STYLUS	Ortofon DM Pro S	£40.00	£15.00	Concorde Pro S	£4.00	£15.00	DM Nightclub S	£4.00	£18.00	DM Nightclub E	£8.50	£21.00	Conc Nightclub S	£75.00	£18.00	Conc Nightclub E	£78.00	£21.00
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## Riverside Audio

18, Riverside, Cambridge CB5 8HL. Telephone/Fax: (01223) 512253

Our aim at Riverside Audio is to enable the home constructor to build valve amplifiers which combine superb sound quality with the professional finish of the best high end products - at low price. Our proven designs ensure that you get long and trouble free service from your amplifier. We offer our amplifiers in various forms, from circuit designs through printed circuit boards, to full kits and even fully assembled amplifiers for those who cannot wait to listen to them.

The Riverside 4040 is our integrated amplifier. It features dual mono construction and has five line level inputs and both 4 and 8Ω outputs. The output stage is configured in the classic McIntosh connection, which gives stable, wide-band operation even with difficult loud speaker loads. The stainless steel chassis and transformer cover are hand polished to a mirror finish, and come with semi matt black valve cover. 4xEL34, 4xECC83, 2xECC82. A full description, including circuit diagram, is given in our manual, £6.50. Kit £780, fully assembled £995.

Technical specification: dual mono construction, 40W / channel, 12Hz to 25kHz power bandwidth, distortion < 0.1%, five line level inputs, tape output, 230/240V mains input.

Amplifier circuit board: board only £49.50; component pack (including valve bases), add £63; populated board £125; full valve set, add £45. Power supply board: board only £20.50; component pack, add £44; populated board £66. Input board: board only £15.50; component pack, add £16; populated board £33.

The output transformers are configured for McIntosh connection and have excellent low frequency response, and have primary reflected impedance of 3800Ω. Full connection instructions provided. Price £70. The mains transformer is wound for dual mono construction, as this gives superior isolation between channels which sharpens imaging and eliminates inter-channel ground loops in the amplifier. Primary 0-230-240V. Secondaries 2x295V@0.25A (0.4A int.), 2x70V@30mA, 2x70V@5A. Price £60. Other primary voltages can be supplied to special order. Reference book giving connection diagrams, specifications, as well as circuits for using these transformers, £5.

The chassis, comprising main chassis and transformer cover, is hand polished, welded 1/16" stainless steel - NC machine tooled for a perfect fit and clean finish. Each kit also includes a mesh valve cover and baseplate, finished in semi matt black.

Price £310. Also available in mild steel finished in black, £195. For those who wish to use one of these high quality chassis for their own projects, details of the chassis are given in the 4040 manual, £6.50.

Connector kit: 12x gold plated phono connectors, two sets of loudspeaker terminals, an IEC mains socket with integral fuse and switch, and an IEC mains lead with fitted 13A plug, £51.50. Cable kit all cables required for the 4040, £6.

The Riverside P2 phono preamplifier is designed to partner the Riverside 4040 for those who enjoy the vinyl sound. Equalization is provided for moving magnet output to line level. The P2 features a high accuracy feedback RIAA equalization circuit, ensuring a natural tonality, and a regulated high voltage supply per channel. 3xECC83, 1xECC81, 2xECC80. Full details and circuit diagram are in the reference manual, £6.50. Kit £225, fully assembled £275.

Technical specifications: 47kΩ input impedance, 1kΩ output impedance for driving long interconnects.

Circuit board: board only £25; component pack, add £37.50; populated board £70; full valve set £20.

The mains transformer is wound for dual mono construction and is toroidal for low leakage flux. Primary 0-230-240V. Secondaries 2x295V@20mA, 2x6.3V@0.45A, 16V@1A. Price £30. Other primary voltages can be supplied to special order. These transformers are also suitable for power supplies in preamplifiers and other line level valve circuits - details in P2 manual, £6.50.

The chassis (main chassis and transformer cover) is made from mild steel. Each kit comes complete with mesh valve cover and base plate, finished in black. Price £110. For those who wish to use high quality chassis for their own projects, details of the chassis are given in the P2 manual, £6.50.

Connector kit: four gold plated phono connectors, IEC mains socket with integral fuse and switch, and IEC mains lead with fitted 13A plug, £15.

We normally ship within three working days. If we do not have the item in stock we will advise you of expected delivery and confirm before dispatch. P&P (in UK): £2 for each part of £40, maximum of £10; manuals free of charge. Assembled units despatched by courier free; courier service for £10 on other items.

Write, phone or fax for a catalogue sheet of the full range of Riverside products. Please note our new number.



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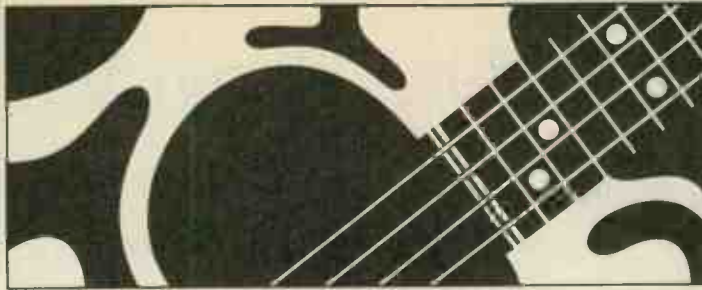
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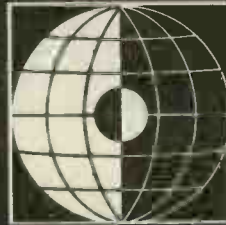
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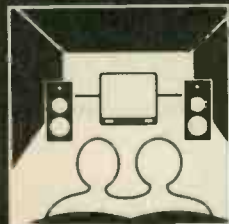
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MFSL 1-238 200gm LP £25  
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### SONNY TERRY & BROWNIE MCGHEE

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The 'soul' of Sonny and Brownie's blues shines through this varied set. It was recorded in an enhanced band setting; with Ario Guthrie, John Mayall, Sugarcane Harris, John Hammond and others. This is classic blues. Check out their covers of "People Get Ready", "Sail Away", "Bring' It On Home To Me" and the intimate chatter and reminiscing heard on; "On The Road Again".

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# HQ

**PHILADELPHIA JERRY RICKS**

**Empty Bottle Blues**

There are a few terms that could describe the sound of this album, one of them would be 'in the room'. If you like that relaxed traditional blues, one man, his guitar, and the bare acoustics of a room, then this is for you. For such a simple arrangement there is so much in this recording, but it is the subtlety of air resonating in the body of his guitar the shape of his lyrics this make this simple Radioton pressing, an equal to any audiophile release. LP only £12



**PINK FLOYD**

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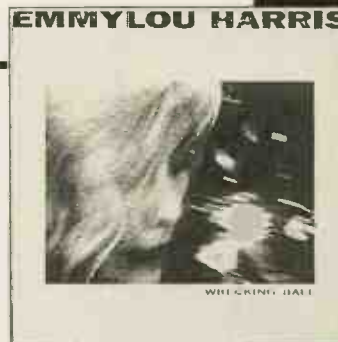
It was worth the wait, way better than I thought EMI were capable of achieving. Recorded in 'Q-sound with an all analogue chain and pressed on 4x165gm vinyl with a fantastic full colour hard back book, this set embodies Floyd's latest concert. From 'Wish You Were Here' to their latest album 'Division Bell' to the complete rendition of the 'Dark Side Of The Moon' album this is a must have. 4LP Box set £44



**EMMYLOU HARRIS**

**Wrecking Ball**

I would not class this record as country although Emmylou's vocal does sometimes lean more toward that genre. It is a very distinctive album with songs having an ethereal quality, the bass is superb and the arrangements put together perfectly. LP £10  
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**MANA WALL SHELF** and custom built 7 tier stand with soundstage. 1 year old. £900 o.n.o.  
Tel: 01628 476 836

**DESPERATE! FOR B&O CDX/CDXII** CD player, other B&O models considered from 'still in the box' to 'box of bits'. Will travel. For sale: Nytech receiver CTA252XD Ok, offers  
Tel: Tim 01252 616 938

**MUSICAL FIDELITY MA65** mono block power amps very good condition £320  
Tel: Brian 01256 461 076 eve

**SLATE AUDIO SPEAKER** stands., the best etc, etc. Worth £370, accept £220 o.n.o.  
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**ROTEL DISCRETE CD** £150, Heybrook Quartet speakers £200, Audio Note OTO £600, Cobalt DAC 307 £400, Alchemist Kraken £300. All approx 12 months old, upgrade forces sale.  
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XE60-25S SE	"	"	2A3, 300B	"	£360
XE60-10SNF SE	"	30Hz-50kHz -2dB	211, 845, VT4C	"	£370
XE60-5SNF SE	"	25Hz-70kHz -2dB	50, PX25	"	£370
XE60-3SNF SE	"	20Hz-80kHz -2dB	300B, 2A3	"	£370
XE20S SE	20	depends on p.imp	Universal (2.5/3.5/5k)	83x78x104H	£240
XE20-600S SE	"	30Hz-100kHz -2dB	6C 33C	"	£230
NY10S SE	10	depends on p.imp	Universal (2.5/3.5/5k)	"	£560
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NYTECH T-AMP	
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SUGDEN A21a	
Music Fidelity P150	
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**DYNACO PAS 3** valve pre-amp £175. **PAT 4** transistor pre-amp £95. **FM5** transistor tuner £95. Tripleton mono valve tuner £65. Connoisseur BD2 integrated turntable £45. All excellent.  
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**MERIDIAN 208 CD** pre-amp. 209 remote. Mint, boxed £675. Sugden floor standing speakers £300. **AVI DAC £300.** Chord 1200 power £1,700. Wanted: CD lift jumbo trays.  
Tel: 01226 710 605 (S. Yorkshire)

**CONCORDANT - QUAD II** power amplifiers, mint condition, completely refurbished, new components, output 37watts £495; Audio Research D-100A power amplifier, 100 watt output, cost new £1800, accept £650. Can demonstrate.  
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**NAIM NAIT 2**, Superb as new boxed £250. Albarry PPI £225. Wanted: Ruark Templars, Sabre 2, Mission 752 or similar, Exposure 15 or 20, recent Valhalla LP12.  
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**NAIM NAC 42.5 / NAP 140** pre/power amp. Old style cases, mint condition £499 o.n.o.  
Tel: Richard 01924 494 035 (after 6pm weekdays. Dewsbury area)

**ION OBELISK 3** pre-amp / X Pak 1 power amp. Excellent sound, mint, boxed £230  
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**LINN SONDEK LP12 Lingo, Ekos, Troika** combination for sale together with Monitor Audio 852 MD speakers and stands. Little used from new. Separation a possibility but price will more pro-rata than the give away figure of £1400 required for the complete system.  
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**CREEK CD60 CD player** £175. Linn Intek amplifier £175. Audio Alchemy DAC in the box £100. Epos ESII speakers + stands £225. All mint, boxed.  
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**LINN SONDEK LP12 Valhalla** with 45 adaptor in black. Ittok LVII, K9 with spare K9 cartridge: Two Target tables all in excellent condition £450  
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**NAIM NAP 140** power amp, as new, two years old, boxed £375 o.n.o.  
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**EPOS ESII SPEAKERS** with Epos stands, boxed as new condition £225  
Tel: 01873 830 124 (eves - S.Wales)

**ROYD EDEN SPEAKERS**, black Ash £150 o.n.o.; Wharfedale Coleridge speakers £600 new, £200 o.n.o.; Pioneer PL-112P turntable, offers.  
Tel: Brian 01376 343 243 or 0860 870 008 (Braintree Essex)

**WANTED: MUSICAL FIDELITY** pre-amplifiers MVT or MVX, also Musical Fidelity Studio T power amplifier.  
Tel: 01274 563 248 (after 6pm)

**ARCAM ALPHA CD Trichord Clock II** Arcam checked £250. **Orelle DAC 180** £275. Audio Alchemy Datastream transceiver £120. Motion Electronics Nicam sound tuner £140.  
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**SNELL TYPE C Mk 2** speakers with 4 latest tweeters £1200. Celestion 7 Mk2 with Heybrook stands £175. Magnum P200 - A200 pre and mono block power amps 325w per channel £2650. VPI Junior LVII turntable £625. All open to offers.  
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**ATC SCM 20 SPEAKERS** and SCM 20 stands, finished in black, new and boxed, Genuine reason for sale, bargain at £1200  
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**SILLY BARGAIN, QUICK UPGRADE SALE** 1 pair Linn Kans with Linn Kan stands & Linn cable, excellent condition, boxed, genuine £160.  
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**RUARK TALISMAN II** speakers, mint £375; 1-5', 1-8' Concert 2 cable terminated £40  
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**GARRARD 401 TURNTABLE** with original instructions and template, near mint with SME 3009/S2 arm with instructions, template and spare head £195  
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**SD ACOUSTICS SD1** speaker. Floorstanding 3 way in black Ash with ribbon tweeter. 4 years old, mint condition £599 o.n.o. (new £1695) Can deliver.  
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**NAIM NAC 53** pre-amp old style £330. Naim NAP 90 new style £250.  
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**EXPOSURE XX AMPLIFIER** FOR SALE: boxed and in mint condition. Five star review. Cost new £625 Bargain at £320. Phone 01703 442183/671237

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**TEAC VRDS 10 CD Player £450,** Sumo Athene Pre Amp £350, A.V.I. Mono Block Power Amps £550, Keswick Audio ARIA Speakers £180, Professional Monitor Co TBI Speakers with Target R3 Stands £425, Rotel 980BX Pre/Power £480, Rotel 970BX CD Player £240, Yamaha KX580 Cassette Deck £140, Mission 753 Speakers £425.  
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**PROAC RESPONSE 2** high fidelity loudspeakers for sale. These are stunning speakers, uncoloured, superb imaging. Incredibly detailed and fantastic bass for a small speaker, also for sale the recommended Target stands that go with these speakers. New, over £2000 for the speakers and £350 for the

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**PINK TRIANGLE PT TOO,** RB300, Ortofon Quartz, boxed £495. TDL Studio 3, walnut £495. Sumo Athene preamp, nine plus poweramp 65wpc class A £795 (£2.2K new)  
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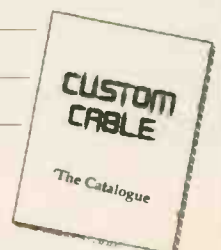
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**WANTED: GLEN CROFT PRE-AMP,** 'e. Carisma Elite', Enigma 'Elite' or higher spec model.  
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**AUDIO SYNTHESIS DAX £795,** Pierre Lurme Romance turntable without arm £665, Oxford phono stage two MC with PSU £365, RB 300 tonearm silver wired £135.  
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**AUDIO INNOVATIONS SECOND AUDIO** monoblocks (6B4G) only £795. No offers please or straight swap for Musical Fidelity A1000.  
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**SUGDEN SDT-1 CD PLAYER,** excellent condition, boxed, £520  
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**KRELL KRC.** A rare opportunity has come to buy this "State of the Art" fully balanced preamp including the phono stage, mint condition. Just under two years remaining warranty. Boxed with manuals. List £7,050. Bargain at £3,550  
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**E.M.T. BROADCAST TURNTABLE,** pre-amp with balanced output £950 o.n.o.; Rogers Export monitors £150 o.n.o.; **WANTED:** Ditton 66 loudspeakers, Crown DC300 amplifier.  
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**ATC SCM10 LOUDSPEAKERS,** black ash, latest model £695; Audio Innovations second audios, new 2A3 triodes, 1000 passive preamp £1095; Meridian 200 transport, Trichord 203 DAC, interconnect £495. All pristine.  
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**ATC SCM50A ACTIVE LOUDSPEAKERS,** mint condition, boxed, mahogany finish, still under makers guarantee. £2,250.  
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**QUAD 67 CD PLAYER** mint boxed with Linn interconnects £550; Naim NAC 32.5 NAP 110 v.g.c. boxed £400; KEF Coda 7s mint, boxed £90  
Tel: 01765 602 006 (North Yorkshire)

**ORTOFON MC30 SUPREME** cartridge, 4 months old, minimal use, forced sale £350 o.n.o.  
Tel: 01222 499 561

**NAIM 42.5 preamp** £160 mint; Naim 62 pre-amp £340; Quad 34, 606 £670 mint, boxes etc; Cyrus tuner £200; Brand new Audio Technica Cartridge, unused £200  
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METAXUS CARLUS INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER CHROME - MINT	£595	EX/DEMO	£895
PINK TRIANGLE PIP 2 MK2 VISHAY MODIFIED PREAMP - MINT	£1,795	S/HAND	£4,500
MARK LEVINSON ML3 POWER AMP - MINT	£3,995	S/HAND	£8,250
CONRAD JOHNSON MV75 VALUE POWER AMP - MINT	£1,295	S/HAND	£2,500
CELLO AMATI SPEAKERS TWIN MOUNTED PAIR IN OAK ON GRANITE STANDS SUPERB V.G.C.	£5,500	S/HAND	£20,000
MERIDIAN ARGENT 3 SPEAKERS ROSEWOOD - MINT	£995	NEW	£1,495
PROAC PROSTATIC ELECTROSTATIC SPEAKERS RARE V.G.C.	£1,995	S/HAND	PHONE
SNELL A3 SPEAKERS WALNUT V.G.C.	£4,495	S/HAND	£6,995
METAXUS CHARISMA PREAMP CHROME - MINT	£895	EX/DEMO	£1,500
EQUATION ZERO SPEAKERS PIANO BLACK - MINT	£695	S/HAND	£1,300
CARY 300B VALVE MONO POWER AMPS 40 WATT TRIODE	£2,995	EX/DEMO	£4,800
HELVIS CYALENE ARM - MINT	£795	S/HAND	£1,400
CABSSIE IROISE MC SPEAKERS CHERRYWOOD - MINT	£1,995	EX/DEMO	£2,700
<b>NEW IN THIS MONTH</b>			
RESTEK CHALLENGER INTEGRATED AMP. - MINT NEW	£799		
CITATION 18 TUNER ORIGINAL AMERICAN V.G.C	£295	S/HAND	£650
SUGDEN AUC15 PREAMP 2 BOC MODIFIED BY AVONDALE V.G.C	£395	S/HAND	£1800
SOTA COSMOS VACUUM PLATTER - MINT	£1995	S/HAND	£4,400
CRYSTAL REFERENCE TURNTABLE (WALLMOUNT)	£1495	S/HAND	£2500
GRYPHON LTD EDISON PREAMP BALANCED - MINT	£3995	S/HAND	£8000
CRYSTAL SIGNATURE TABLE TOP TURNTABLE BRUAR B ARM	£2995	S/H	£6450
MERIDIAN 602 DAC 7 MK2 DAC - MINT	£795	E/D	£1450
AUDIO RESEARCH V70 HYBRID VALVE AMP - MINT	£2495	S/H	£4480
ARAGON 2004 POWER AMP - MINT	£695	S/H	£1295
DYNAUDIO SPECIAL ONES SPEAKERS ROSEWOOD - MINT	£795	E/D	£1249
MERIDIAN 605 MONO POWER AMPS BALANCED MINT	£1550	E/D	£1900
KRELL KR5BP REFERENCE PREAMP BALANCED MINT	£4995	S/HAND	£11500
GOLDMUND MEMESIS 3 POWER AMP BALANCED MINT	£1995	S/HAND	£5000
TANDBERG TPA 3009A MU2 MONO POWER AMP MINT	£10995	S/HAND	£2195
WILSON WATT 3 PUPPY2 + PAWS MINT	£7495	S/HAND	£13645
CREEK 6060 INTEGRATED AMP MINT	£275	S/H	£500
MARK LEVINSON ML12A PREAMP PLS 124 SUPPLY	£995	S/H	£2400
CAT SL1 SIGNATURE PREAMP + PHONO MINT	£2995	S/H	£6000
EXPOSURE 7 PRE 9 PRO SUPPLY 4 REG AMP MINT	£1250	S/H	£2750
MARK LEVINSON ML11 POWER AMP MINT	£995	E/D	£2700
LUMLEY REFERENCE M120 VALVE MONOS MINT	£1795	E/D	£3200
SONY 337 ESD CD PLAYER MINT	£255	S/H	£600
JADIS DEFY 7 MK3 VALVE POWER AMP MINT	£3495	S/H	£5290
KEF 102.2 SPEAKERS ROSEWOOD + KJBE + STANDS	£2995	S/H	£11150
APOGEE STAGE SPEAKERS + STANDS MINT	£1695	S/H	£3454
ACOUSTIC ENERGY 33 SPEAKERS + STANDS MINT	£995	E/D	£2075
COUNTERPOINT SA 3000 VALVE PREAMP MINT	£2995	S/H	£2169
ADCOM GA 565 MONO AMPS BALANCED VGC	£1250	S/H	£2000
MERIDIAN D800B ACTIVE SPEAKERS BLACK MINT	£1795	E/D	£2995
WHARFDALE OPTION 1.4 WAY ACTIVE SPEAKERS GREY & WHITE 1 OF ONLY 5 PAIRS SUPERB VGC	£1995	S/H	PHONE
CARVER AMAZING SPEAKERS PIANO BLACK VGC	£895	S/H	£2300
CELESTION SL600 SI SL6000 SUBWOOFER	£1295	S/H	£2400
MARK LEVINSON ML2 MONO POWER AMPS G.C	£2895	S/H	£15000
LUMLEY MEGAVOX M150 SIGNATURE VALVE AMPS V.G.C	£1595	S/H	£3800
HALES SIGNATURE 2 SPEAKERS ROSEWOOD MINT	£3495	S/H	£6600
MUSE 18 ACTIVE SUBWOOFER ROSEWOOD BALANCED MINT	£2495	S/H	£4000
PIONEER PD75 CD PLAYER MINT	£395	S/H	£900
MERIDIAN 508 SUPER CD PLAYER BALANCED MINT	£995	E/D	£1475
MARANTZ CD 65 MK 2 SE CD PLAYER MINT	£175	S/H	£350
VOYO 5 REFERENCE TURNTABLE ROSEWOOD CYALENE ARM & POD SUPPORT MINT	£3250	S/H	£5590
ROWLAND MODEL 3 MONO AMPS BLACK BAL. MINT	£2250	S/H	£4000
MARK LEVINSON N020 REF MONO AMPS BAL. MINT	£4995	S/H	£11100
CHORD 1200 POWER AMP MINT	£1595	S/H	£3000
PIONEER Q73 PRE & M73 POWER AMP MINT	£795	S/H	£1300
APOGEE CENTRAL MINORS SPEAKERS MINT	£895	S/H	£1345
GALE 302 SPEAKERS BLACK ASH MINT	£275	S/H	£440
THIEL CSS1 SPEAKERS PIANO BLACK MINT	£7995	S/H	£12300
GRYPHON XT PREAMP PLUS MC MINT	£2250	S/H	£5485
ELECTROCOMPANET AW100DMM BAL AMP MINT	£1295	S/H	£2018
MERIDIAN DSP 5000 DIGITAL SPEAKERS ROSEWOOD MINT	£2250	S/H	£3450
ALON IV SPEAKERS OAK MINT	£1995	S/H	£3800
SPENDOR SP91 SPEAKERS CHERRYWOOD MINT	£2395	S/H	£3300
ALPHASON SYMPHONY TURNTABLE & ARM PLUS ATLAS SUPPLY PIANO FINISH MINT	£1295	S/H	£2700
MERIDIAN 506 MK 2 CD PLAYER MINT	£750	E/D	£950
MERIDIAN 508 MK 3 CD PLAYER BALANCED MINT	£1395	E/D	£1685
MERIDIAN 500 TRANSPORT & 563 DAC BALANCED MINT	£1595	E/D	£1990
AUDIO RESEARCH SP9 PREAMP SILVER MINT	£895	S/H	£1700
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NAIM 72 PREAMP 140 POWER AMP MINT	£895	S/H	£1255
MERIDIAN 501 PREAMP & MSR MINT	£575	E/D	£975
MERIDIAN 551 INTERGRATED AMP MINT	£595	E/D	£895
MERIDIAN 555 POWER AMP MINT	£350	E/D	£850
MARK LEVINSON N020.5 MONO POWER AMPS BALANCED MINT	£5995	S/H	£12500
CELLO PERFORMANCE MK 1.5 WITH AC MODS STUNNING 4 CHASSIS MONO AMPS BALANCED MINT	£7495	S/H	£20,000
AUDIO PLAN CONCEPT SPEAKERS BLACK MINT	£795	S/H	£1750
ATC SCM 100 SPEAKERS ROSEWOOD & STANDS VGC	£1795	S/H	£3883
MARTIN LOGAN SEQUEL 2 SPEAKERS OAK	£1495	S/H	£3277
NESTROVIC A1 VALVE MONO AMPS BALANCED MINT	£1995	S/H	£6600
APOGEE CALIPER SIGNATURE SPEAKERS AUTHRACTACTE MINT	£1595	S/H	£3998
<b>JANUARY SALE</b>			
CAL TEMPEST 2 CE VALVE PLAYER MINT	£1500	S/H	£3900
MARK LEVINSON ML10A PREAMP MINT	£1250	S/H	£3800
ROWLAND MODEL 5 POWER AMP BALANCED MINT	£2500	S/H	£5250
CLASSE AUDIO DR15 POWER AMP BALANCED MINT	£1695	S/H	£3400
CONRAD JOHNSON PREAMP 4 VALVE AMP MINT	£1795	S/H	£500
SOTA STAR SAPHIRE 3 TURNTABLE - MINT	£395	E/D	£2500
MARK LEVINSON ML7 PREAMP - MINT	£1995	S/H	£5800
NRG A2015 STEREO AMP 200W CLASS A - MINT	£2995	S/H	£ 6800
SUMO ARIA PANEL SPEAKERS OAK VGC	£795	S/H	£3000
GENESIS 8300 SPEAKERS & STANDS PIANO BLACK - MINT	£995	E/D	£1895
BURMEISTER 838 PHONO STAGE BALANCED - MINT	£ 495	S/H	£1500
DYNAUDIO KRAFT SPEAKERS & STANDS V.G.C.	£1295	S/H	£2720
MARK LEVINSON ML2 REFERENCE MONO AMPS	£2995	S/H	£15000
DYNAUDIO CONSEQUENCE MK2 SPEAKERS FINISHED IN CHERRYWOOD LOOKS & PERFORMANCE	£9250	E/D	£15275
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