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## Dear Brian,

Currency fluctuations are a challenge for an importer like myself but at the moment it's good news for hi fi enthusiasts. Although the exchange rate against the US\$ has been fluctuating it has been more stable against the UK pound and Euro.

As a result there are some great buys at present from suppliers like Origin Live, Graham Slee, Moth, Loricraft and The Cartridge Man.

I have repriced all their products over the last few weeks so if you haven't browsed them recently you might be surprised at the current pricing.

The fact that we don't carry much stock of these products means we can adjust our pricing to take advantage of the favourable exchange rate, unfortunately it also means that if the rate falls we have to adjust accordingly.

As an example the OL Aurora turntable which was \$2090 is now \$1727. The Cartridge Man's MusicMaker MkIII cartridge is now \$1210 (previously \$1650). And the GSP Reflex M2 or C is \$990.

Over the last 5 years or so that we have been selling T-Amps I have often been asked whether there is a more powerful version available as the standard one is only 10W per channel. Well now there is! Dayton have released their 50W per channel T-amp - see the story below.

Our listing of a few CD and SACD titles last time resulted in quick sales of the Mark Levinson's Red Rose Music Vol.1. This is a classic jazz recording that has been re-released on SACD. I have only another 16 copies at the same price (\$25 + GST) and highly recommend it. In the words of one reviewer *"if you've ever felt the need to own a truly remarkable reference recording with which to check the capabilities of your system, impress audiophile buddies and be reminded about what a solo piano, guitar, violin or blues singer really sounds like, this is one album you ought to own."*

While on the topic of music titles we are now able to offer a wider range of audiophile LPs and CDs from the excellent Rockian Trading catalogue. <http://www.rockian.biz/index.htm> See the article below.

Enjoy your music

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## DAYTON DTA-100 T-amp

We have been importing T-amps for over 5 years and have sold hundreds in that time, initially from Sonic Impact, now Trends Audio and Dayton Audio. They provide outstanding value for money as the sound quality is excellent, but at about 10 watts per channel are most suitable for quite efficient speakers or small rooms.

Now Dayton Audio have released a 50 watt per channel model. Using the Tripath TK2050 chipset this takes the T-Amps into new

territory where they can drive some seriously good speakers to impressive sound pressure levels.

I heard about this amp a few months ago and have been keen to give it a try but stock hasn't been available. When the first unit arrived I hooked it up in my office where I spend a lot of time listening to ABC Classic FM while working. My setup for the last few months has been a Sansui FM tuner as the source to an original Sonic Impact T-Amp driving a pair of Jordan JX92S in an omnidirectional configuration. My initial impression was that there was no difference between the TK2050 based amp and the TA2024 based original T-Amp which has had rave reviews from many reviewers.

I then moved the DTA-100 down to the family room where a Trends Audio TA-10.1 drives a pair of Decibel Omni speakers from a Yamaha tuner, digital TV or PC. There, because of the larger room and higher volumes often used, the greater control and headroom of the DTA-100 were evident. I have often spent time reading the paper and listening to DIG radio or ABC FM in that space at quite elevated sound levels and certainly the DAT-100 provides a more controlled sound at the higher levels than the TA10.1 while retaining the overall clarity at lower levels. In particular, as we have a two storey home, I found that when watching a TV program at a moderate to high level the voices are clear as a bell upstairs in the office and this is not something I had noticed previously.

So my experience with the DTA-100 is very satisfactory, and at \$198 I think it represents even more of a bargain than the original T-Amps. [http://www.decibelhifi.com.au/category45\\_1.htm](http://www.decibelhifi.com.au/category45_1.htm) As well as the higher output there are some other improvements: RCA input sockets on the back plus a 3.5mm input socket on the front, a 6.35mm headphone socket, banana plug speaker terminals, metal case, and a 24V 5amp power supply.

The first shipment to my supplier sold out in a few days and they can't tell us when they will be getting more but at the time of writing we have 7 units immediately available.

## Rockian Catalogue

Rockian Trading is based in Melbourne and they import a wide range of titles from more than 20 exceptional labels. These include Chesky, Mobile Fidelity, Linn Records, Stockfisch, Cala Records, AIX, Sheffield Lab, Reference Recordings, 2L etc.

Recent releases on 180g vinyl include Little Feat "Dixie Chicken", Madeleine Peyroux "Bare Bones", Elvis Costello "My Aim is True" and these have been added to the [Audiophile Recordings category on our website](#).

Other recent releases on Gold CD, SACD or Blu-ray Disc include The Doobie Brothers "Taking It To The Streets", The Band "Northern Lights - Southern Cross" and "Cahoots", Yes "The Yes Album", Ray Charles "The Genius Sings The Blues", Lisbeth Scott "Charmed", Chick Corea "Children's Songs 1 - 20", and numerous classical titles.

We won't be adding all titles of the extensive [Rockian Catalogue](#) to our website so if you would like to order a title send us an email first so we can confirm price, availability, and postage. There are generic codes in the Vinyl Audiophile Recordings (RKNLP) and CD/SACD Titles (RKNCD) categories which can be used to place an order online. Put the catalogue number and description in the Customer Instructions section of the order. Or you can place your order by phone.

The [Rockian Catalogue](#) is a treasure chest of new and older titles which make wonderful gifts for a music enthusiast.

ORDERS OF TWO OR MORE TITLES ARE POSTAGE FREE.



## New Ortofon moving coil cartridges

There's been quite a change in the Ortofon moving coil cartridge line up. New models include the Vivo Red and Blue, which replace the Tango, Samba and Salsa. Above the popular Rondo range are the Cadenza models, replacing the Kontrapunkt range. At the top is the Windfield and A90. All have been added to the website. [http://www.decibelhifi.com.au/category50\\_1.htm](http://www.decibelhifi.com.au/category50_1.htm)

I often get asked which is better; moving coil (MC) or moving magnet (MM) cartridges. Moving magnet cartridges are cheaper to manufacture, so in the lower price ranges there are many more MM models to choose from. Once you get above about \$500 the situation reverses, not much choice with MM but plenty of MC. If you look at Ortofon's current range of hi fi cartridges, there are some conclusions which can be drawn. Firstly, they only have the older OM and the newer 2M ranges of moving magnet cartridges giving a total of 6 models (there were more until recently). But there are five ranges of moving coil, plus the reintroduced MC20 and the two special models at the top, a total of 15 models. So it's fairly obvious where Ortofon's development effort is focused.

When you look at their pricing we find that the MM cartridges vary from \$66 to \$847, but the MC vary from \$269 to \$5377. Another consideration is that some MC cartridges have a higher output (like MM) which means they can be used with a normal phono stage,



whereas most have a low output which requires a step-up device or high gain phono stage. There are only 4 HOMCs in Ortofon's range and the most expensive is only \$519 so that indicates to me that high output moving coils might have some limitations compared to LOMC. So back to the original question, which is better. If MM are cheaper to manufacture does that mean they are better value for money, or is MC inherently better? If you are willing to spend about \$500 which should you choose out of the 2M Bronze (MM \$489), X5-MC (HOMC \$519), or Vivo Blue (LOMC \$447)?

There are other factors to consider. MM cartridges have replaceable stylus assemblies so when you damage or wear out a stylus you can purchase a new one and simply plug it in whereas with MC cartridges you have to purchase a new one or get it retipped at the Garrott Lab. Another factor is that most MC cartridges have a very low output which means there has to be an extra stage of amplification which can also cause hum problems to be magnified.



As a rule of thumb I have often said that if a MM and MC cartridge are the same price the MC will probably be better, but after this little analysis I'm not so sure. If anyone has done some comparisons I'd be interested to hear the findings.

If you are interested in this topic there's two publications by Ortofon which are worthwhile reading. ["Everything you always should have known about pick-up cartridges, but didn't know to ask"](#).

and

[Advanced Phono Cartridge Guide](#). Both these documents are courtesy of SpeakerBits.com.au . For information about the Ortofon company, their products and technology link to [www.ortofon.com](http://www.ortofon.com) .

#### Linn product news

Linn have announced that after 20 years designing and manufacturing world-class units they have ceased production of CD players. The reason for this is that digital stream players outperform CD players and they feel the future of digital music is with downloads of high resolution music files as offered in various formats from their linnrecords.com and other websites. In order to play such files Linn have several DS players, including the Majik DS for \$3960 and the Sneaky Music DS which includes an amplifier for \$2420.

You can also use a normal laptop computer to download and play digital files. You'll get a better result if you feeding the signal to your preamplifier via a Trends UD10.1 DAC plugged into a USB port rather than the headphone socket. I have been experimenting with this recently and getting impressive results, particularly when I connected the digital output from the UD10.1 to my DAC3.0. The [Linn Records website](#) has a lot of useful information about digital streaming and there are some free tracks available to download if you want to try yourself.

Linn have added three streaming radio stations to their website. Their entire music catalog is streamed at 320Kbps MP3 which is a higher rate than any other internet radio station or even digital radio. So if you want to sample the quality and variety of high resolution digital music that they offer you can tune in at <http://radio.linnrecords.com/> . If you like what you hear you can then purchase and download in various formats from the main site <http://www.linnrecords.com/> .



On the other hand they have just released a new double LP. Titled "My Oracle Lives Uptown" by William Orbit it will appeal to lovers of electronica. Price is A\$62.50 including postage direct from Linn Records. You can place an order via our website [http://www.decibelhifi.com.au/category63\\_1.htm](http://www.decibelhifi.com.au/category63_1.htm) .

#### Record ReVirginizer

The story in the last newsletter about the ReVirginizer gel cleaner attracted several responses from customers saying it wasn't a new idea. Evidently the technique has been around for years using PVA wood glue, although the fact that it takes a couple of days to dry seems to be one reason why it hasn't been popular. Someone else claimed there was a similar product in the 70s, although I don't remember ever being aware of it. Communications weren't as easy then of course, the hi fi magazines were our main source of news about new products as we didn't have the internet forums like today.



The general reaction is that RRV works as claimed and hundreds of bottles have been sold in Australia. It is now being shipped to the UK and other overseas markets will be tackled soon.

There have been some production delays over the last couple of months but continuity of supply should be reached in the next few weeks. In the future a tube and pump bottle will be provided to prevent any possibility of the gel going hard inside the bottle. We have also requested a 2 litre bottle which will reduce the cost per record.

Find out more at [www.recordre virginizer.com](http://www.recordre virginizer.com) or place an

order here [http://www.decibelhifi.com.au/category9\\_1.htm](http://www.decibelhifi.com.au/category9_1.htm)

## Pro-Ject turntable upgrades

Pro-Ject turntables have been very popular over the last few years and there are several worthwhile upgrades that can improve their performance.

The first and most obvious one is to change the basic Ortofon OM5E cartridge that is fitted to many models. I suggest the Audio Technica AT95HE (\$121) or AT7V (\$198). Both these will provide a clearer, more defined sound from your records.

The pressed metal platter of the Debut models can be replaced with a non-resonant Acrylic one for \$148.50.

Turntables which have RCA sockets can replace the RCA leads with the Connect-It Phono RCA with high quality silver plated RCA plugs for \$121.

All turntables which use the 16V AC motor can be upgraded by using the electronic SpeedBox MkII (\$220) which provides a more stable power source due to its quartz-controlled microprocessor.

The felt platter mats can be replaced with an Origin Live upgrade mat (\$71.50) or for a more noticeable improvement the Boston Audio Mat1 (\$275).

But I would advise against spending too much on upgrading an existing turntable. If you want a really significant improvement in performance you will be better served to trade in on something in a different class. For example if you have a basic Debut 3 which cost you \$495 and were willing to spend another \$570 to upgrade the cartridge, platter, and add a SpeedBox you still wouldn't have a unit as good as the RPM5.1 at \$990 but you would have spent more.



## Lower Priced Digital Radio Tuners

The MAXIMUM MR-2000 DAB+ radio tuner/music player has been reduced in price from \$495 to \$396. See details on our website [http://www.decibelhifi.com.au/category66\\_1.htm](http://www.decibelhifi.com.au/category66_1.htm)

There is also now a lower priced model.

The [Plum Audio Tu-DAB+ 10](#) - is a simple DAB+ & FM tuner if you just want a small, easy-to-use tuner to upgrade your current system to DAB+. At just \$176 it comes with a remote control and does not take up much space. It connects to your amplifier via RCA sockets and has a socket for connection to an external antenna.



## Other Products

The DAYTON patio speakers have been replaced by the [STUDIO ACOUSTICS SA850WA Indoor/Outdoor Speakers](#). Specifications and price are similar. They are ideal to be teamed up with an Amphony transmitter/receiver/amplifier system to provide high quality sound in another room or outdoor entertaining area.

If you need to mount speakers onto a wall or ceiling we now have some neat brackets. For small speakers the CW2809 and CW2804 are inexpensive plastic brackets that will do the job. For larger, heavier speakers the metal BT38 will handle up to 15Kg each. Both are in the DIY Speakers/Hardware sub-category [http://www.decibelhifi.com.au/category40\\_1.htm](http://www.decibelhifi.com.au/category40_1.htm)



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