

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION

SEPTEMBER 2009 £4.99

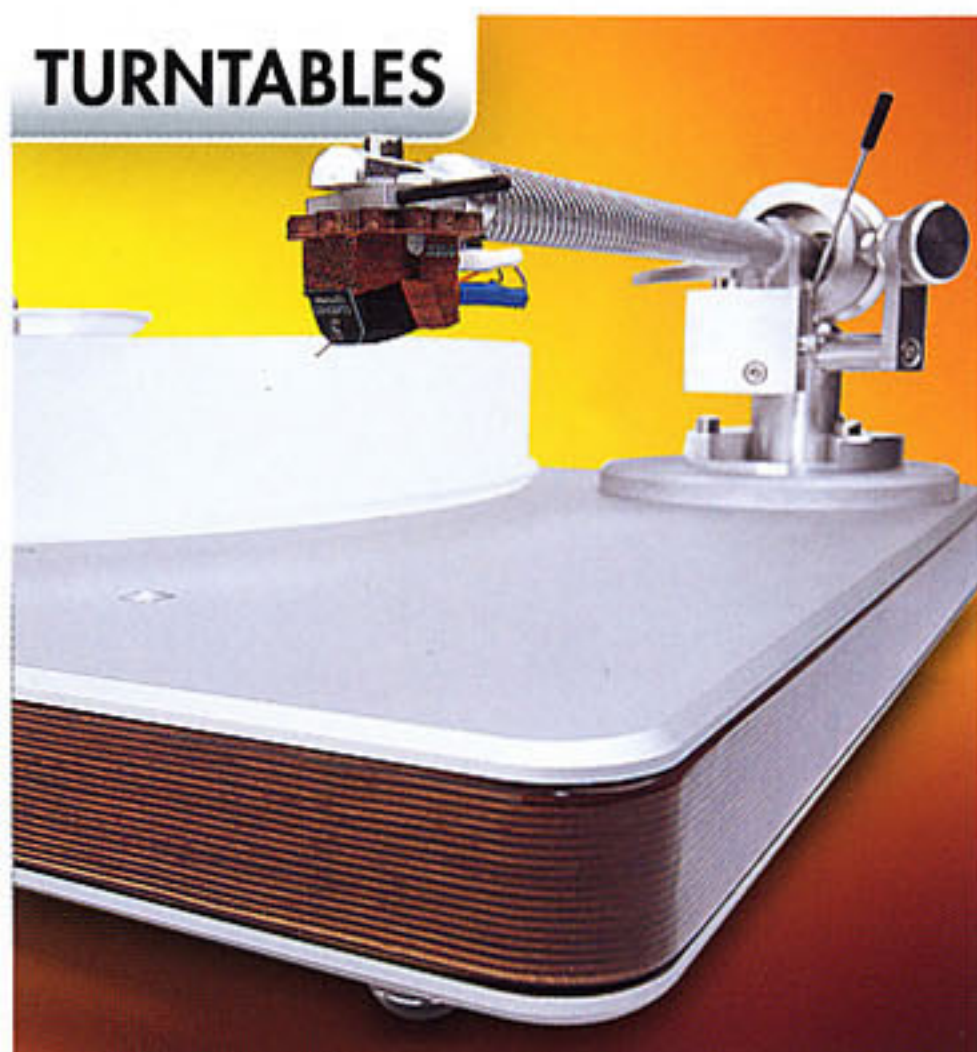
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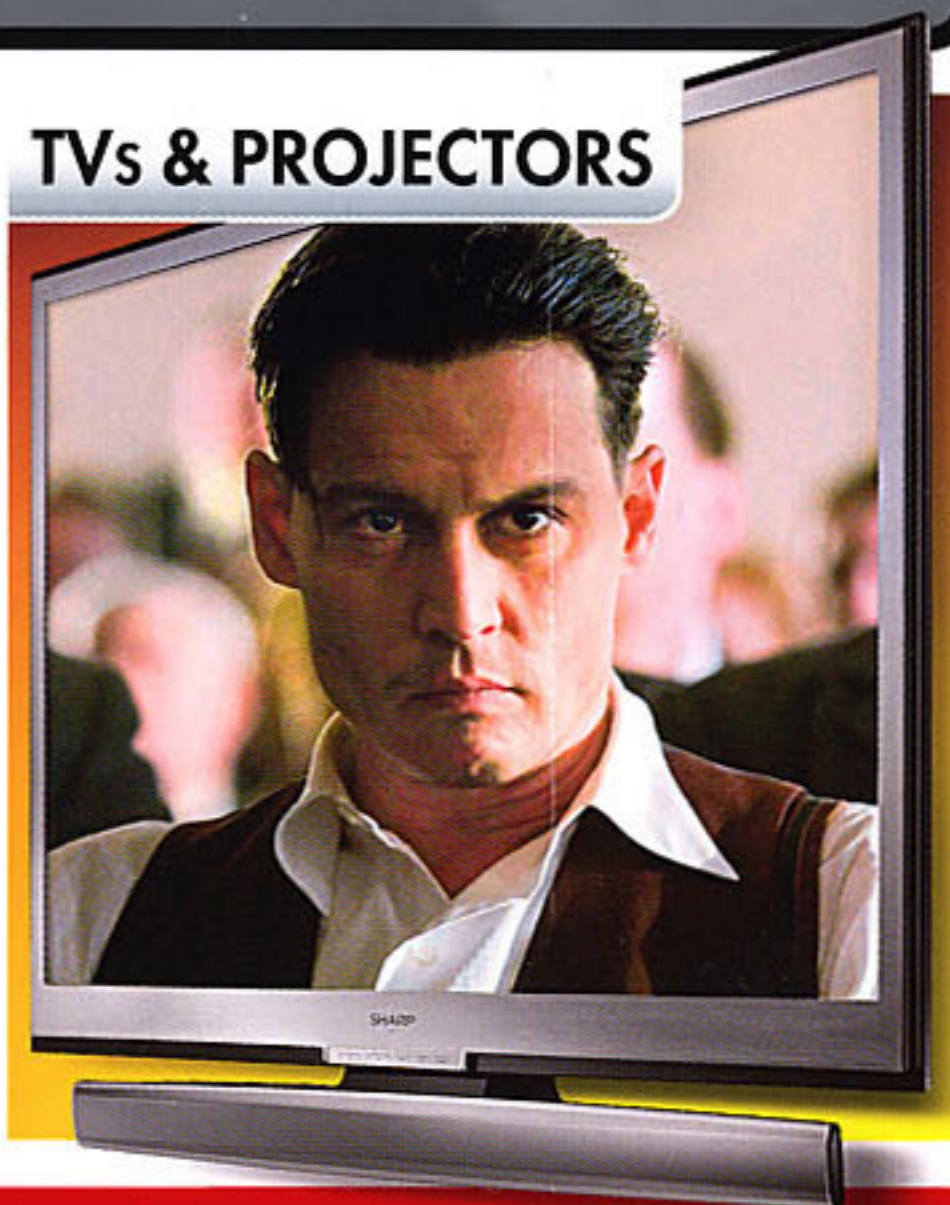


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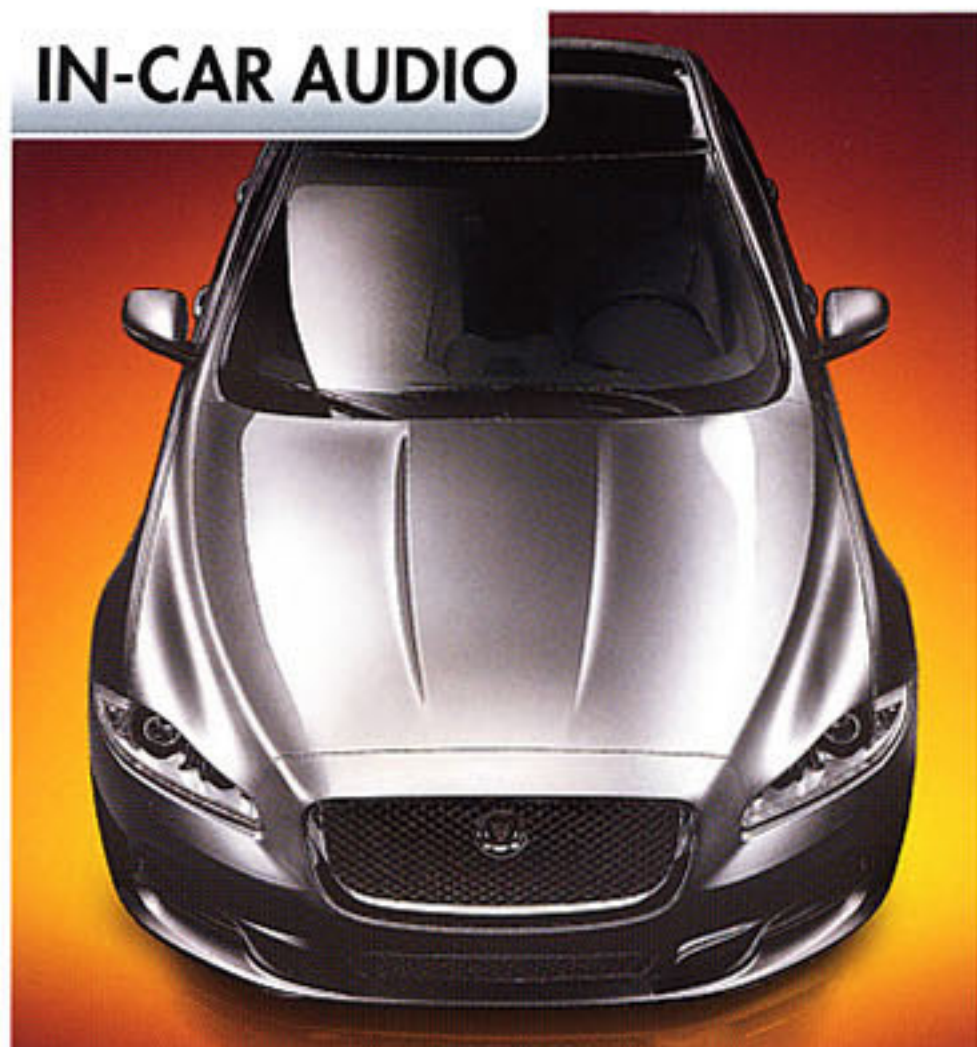
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Clearaudio Performance



£1670

IF YOU'RE INTO aesthetics this Clearaudio is a winner – it's stylish and sleek, with a white finish covering a satisfyingly damped Staron (artificial stone) and aluminium dense fibreboard plinth.

But looks aren't everything. The real heart of the Performance lies in its ceramic/magnetic bearing. This little device uses opposed magnetic fields to

“What you hear on the Clearaudio is exactly what is cut into the grooves”

remove any frictional contact between bearing shells, therefore making the platter 'float'. It's doubly impressive as this creates virtually no noise.

This Performance came with the Satisfy tonearm, and the wooden-bodied Maestro cartridge. Hidden at the side is the motor, a separate unit that fits into a cut-out in the plinth and drives the belt. Our only gripe is that the motor housing could do with being a bit wider, as it's easy to knock when turning it on or off.

↑ FOR

A transparent, honest and highly detailed sound; aesthetically pleasing build

↓ AGAINST

Occasionally lacks cohesion; manual speed change; midrange can lose projection; no top cover as standard

→ VERDICT

Still up there with the best around, the Performance hasn't faded with the passage of time



We started with the complex *Straight Street* by John Coltrane. Immediately you notice the level of detail on display, especially in the treble range. The cymbals crackle, the saxophone reaches out to you, and the bass is well defined.

Attention to detail is exemplary

What you hear is exactly what is cut into the grooves. Close your eyes and you could be back in 1950s New York. Put on something mellow with close harmonies such as The Beatles' *Yes It Is* and this turntable's attention to detail shines through, spotlighting individual instrumental and vocal performances.

So, are there any quibbles? Yes, but only minor ones. The turntable's midrange might be transparent but it isn't projected as strongly as we'd like, and we'd like a slightly more muscular presentation. Cohesion, too, sometimes feels no more than competent.

Don't overestimate those failings though: we think this is a cracking deck. It delivers Performance in spades.

SPECIFICATION

Speeds 33 $\frac{1}{3}$, 45 **Man/auto/semi op** Yes/no/no
Phono amp No **Tonearm/cart** Yes/yes **Belt/direct drive** Yes/no **USB** No **Suspension** Yes **Finishes** Perspex **Size (hwd)** 13 x 42 x 33cm

www.clearaudio.de

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