



**Maestros of mayhem:**  
We salute the hard rockin'  
majesty of Metallica

**Studio chic:**  
AirPulse A300Pro  
active standmount



# Hi-Fi Choice

**PASSION FOR SOUND**

Issue No. 505

September 2023

## TOP SPIN!

**+ NEWS EXTRA:**  
Launches from  
**Classic Audio**, Leema  
Acoustics, **Cleer Audio**,  
DS Audio & more...

**GROUP TEST**

Looking to upgrade? We put six mid-price  
turntables through their paces

**SHOW  
BUSINESS**

All the latest  
updates on  
the UK  
Hi-Fi  
Show  
Live!

**BUYING  
GUIDE**  
100+ Essential  
Components  
p109



**DOUBLE UP**

Aurender's N30SA  
network music library

**BRING  
OUT THE  
BIG GUNS!**

Fyne Audio's  
Vintage Classic  
VIII floorstander

**Bargain of the month**

Beats Studio Buds + wireless in-ear monitors

**BEGINNERS' GUIDE**

How to place your speakers  
for optimum performance

**LUNAR MODULE**



Simaudio's MOON 250i v2  
integrated amp has lift-off

**"SILENCE IS IMPORTANT"**



Flashback: A rare chinwag  
with Talk Talk's Mark Hollis

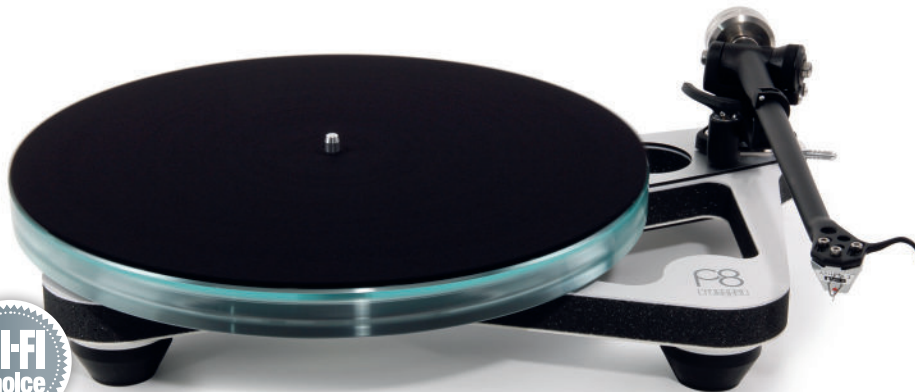
**"SUPERSIZED!"**



Klipsch The Nines wireless  
powered loudspeaker



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£5.75  
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# Rega Planar 8 £1,870

Rega's white knight is a class act in terms of looks, spec and sound, but can it take home the gold?

**DETAILS**

**PRODUCT**  
Rega Planar 8

**ORIGIN**  
UK

**TYPE**  
Belt-drive turntable

**WEIGHT**  
4.2kg

**DIMENSIONS**  
(WxHxD)  
420 x 125 x 315mm

**FEATURES**

- RB880 tonearm
- Glass platter
- Neo PSU with DSP control

**DISTRIBUTOR**  
Rega Research Ltd.

**M** eet the most affordable Rega model that more closely follows the design principles of the seldom seen Naiad turntable that tops its range. The plinth is reduced to a compact, irregular shape made from Tan Cast 8 foam encased between phenolic resin. This plinth contains the motor, bearing and the arm mount, the latter being externally braced between it and the bearing assembly.

The plinth supports a platter made of layers of glass that concentrate the mass at the outer edge. The Planar 8 is the only turntable here with a sub-platter, which the belts operate on rather than directly on the platter and this makes for a neater appearance and simpler assembly as the belts ship in place. The RB880 tonearm is a variation on the standard Rega theme, which means it is both easy to setup and will accept a good spread of cartridges although VTA can only be

adjusted via spacers. No less than three Rega cartridges can be fitted from the factory, however.

The Planar 8 is the smallest turntable here, but it has electronic speed adjustment via its external PSU and the integrated cover is a very good idea that's well implemented. The build and finish are excellent too, with everything feeling solid and reassuring. The only area of the Planar 8's design that will need some care is the rigid and relatively lightweight design requires some isolation to do its best work. Rega does make a dedicated wall shelf for this, but it adds to the cost which is already the highest in the group.

### Sound quality

The likelihood is that you will be willing to make some sacrifices to accommodate the Planar 8. It takes about 30 seconds of *All That You Give* to realise the Rega is rather special.

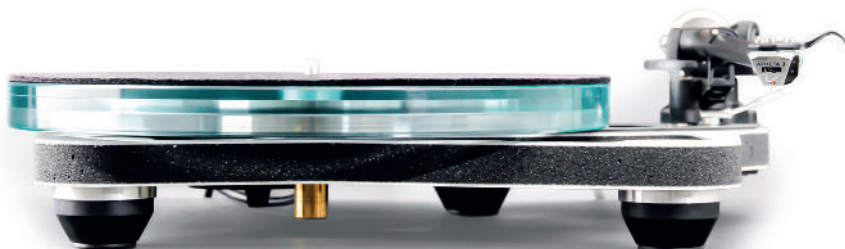
The manner in which it portrays the space of the Albert Hall is in keeping with the better turntables in the group, but the level of fine detail it extracts brings that space to life in a way that can make some other devices here feel a little flat in comparison. The orchestra is weighty and utterly believable and supports a vocal performance that is exceptionally vivid throughout.

These qualities are no less present with Blondie and they help to ensure that Debbie Harry and co. sound absolutely sensational. Once again, it's the detail on offer that brings a great performance to life and this is further helped by the Rega being one of the few turntables here that really has the drive and punch to do this

**It takes about 30 seconds of listening to realise the Rega is rather special**

track justice. When a less frenetic touch is needed with Morcheeba, the Planar 8 ensures that the tune doesn't sound forced or strained and does another blinding job with its portrayal of Skye Edwards and the music that surrounds her.

It probably won't come as too much of a surprise to find that the Planar 8 is absolutely in its element with the Kraftwerk piece too. There's a huge amount of propulsive energy to the sound, but it never gets in the way of the exceptional detail retrieval that ensures you get a real feeling of the elated audience and the space they are in. The bass on offer is sensational too; there are other turntables in the group that can certainly match the Rega for outright depth, but nothing quite manages to combine it with the speed and definition that the Planar 8 so effortlessly stitches in at the same time ●



## Hi-Fi Choice

### OUR VERDICT

**SOUND QUALITY**  
★★★★★

**LIKE:** Outstanding sound; superb build; spec; easy to use

**VALUE FOR MONEY**  
★★★★★

**DISLIKE:** Needs to be properly isolated; VTA on spacers only

**BUILD QUALITY**  
★★★★★

**WE SAY:** A class act, it offers truly outstanding performance while being utterly painless to use and live with

**FEATURES**  
★★★★★

### OVERALL

★★★★★