

# CONNECTION

## 50 Years of Rock

Five decades of music  
history through the  
lens of renowned  
photographer  
Gered Mankowitz

### Inside

Sabina Scuibba  
Future of Hi-Fi  
Lorem ispom  
Sons of Kemet ism  
Jazz ispom  
Lorem ispom  
Nait500 ispom  
Radio ispxcvom



## Ovator S-800

The flagship Ovator S-800 loudspeaker is now available in a range of custom finishes including several painted colour options and a special carbon fibre veneer (pictured). Talk to your Naim specialist retailer to find out more.

# welcome



Combining the modern with the classic has been an over-arching theme for Naim in 2013.

The DAC-V1 and NAP 100 are the perfect examples of this dichotomy. On one hand a completely new product

category which reflects the changing way many of us choose to listen to music, and on the other, a classic distillation of our learnings from the past 40 years of audio engineering. Combined they offer more than the sum of their parts and, like all Naim products, cut right to the heart of your music.

We also redesigned what is perhaps our most iconic range of products in 2013, the NAIT integrated amplifiers. Gain an insight into how our engineers approached the design of these products on pages 8-9.

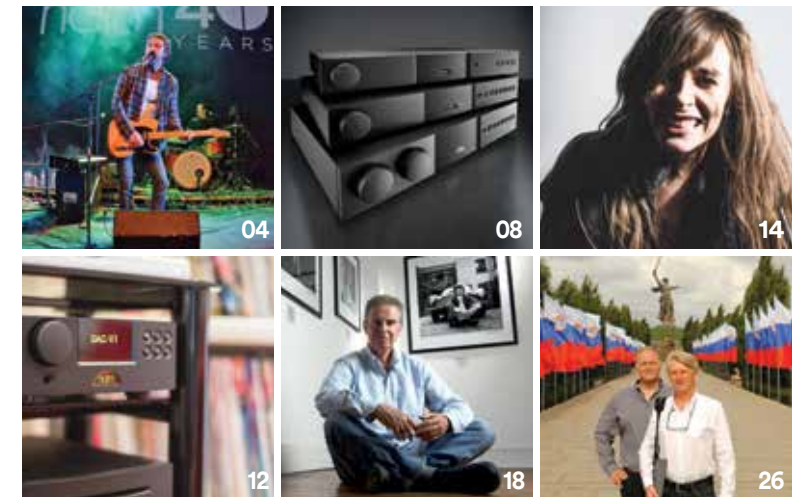
Many of you will remember Sabina Sciubba from her now classic collaboration with Antonio Forcione on *Meet Me In London* in 1998. We're incredibly excited to be able to announce that she is back at Naim Edge Records and will release her debut solo album in 2014. You can find out all about it on pages 10-11.

Interviews with the MOBO award-winning Sons of Kemet from Naim Jazz Records (pages 14-15) and the renowned music photographer, Gered Mankowitz, on his experience working with some of rock and roll's most iconic figures (pages 18-19) round up this year's music features.

These are just a few of the highlights from this latest issue of Connection. As I've looked back over 40 years of heritage in music and audio this year, I've been reminded of the journey we've taken and the exciting position it puts us in to announce something very special at CES Las Vegas. Stay connected to our website and social feed this coming January to be the first to find out more. In the meantime, enjoy the music!

Paul Stephenson  
Managing Director

## inside



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Creating the NAP 500 power amplifier

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## Modern & classic

Our new products in 2013 combined the best of classic Naim engineering with entirely new technology. The new DAC-V1 and its partnering power amp the NAP 100 demonstrate this ideal blend of modern and classic.

The UnitiQute 2 all-in-one player benefitted from an upgrade to its design alongside the launch of new software (Version 3.2) which enables full multiroom functionality on Naim streaming products (see pages 16-17). We also redesigned one of our most iconic product ranges, the NAIT integrated amplifiers, to celebrate our 40th year.

You can read about how our engineers approached the design of these new products on pages 08-09.

## Take five

A total of five Naim products won recognition at the 2013 What Hi-Fi? Awards in London. The CD5si won the overall Product of the Year award in the CD player category alongside wins for the NAIT 5si and DAC-V1. The UnitiQute 2 was triumphant for the second time since the original was crowned Product of the Year in 2010 and the NAC-N 172 XS secured an award for Best Streamer for the second year running.

## MOBO for Sons of Kemet

New Naim Label signing Sons of Kemet secured the MOBO award for Best Jazz Act at the 18th annual ceremony in Glasgow in 2013. They become the second act from Naim Jazz Records to achieve this recognition after Empirical took home the prize in 2010. You can read about their infectiously rootsy debut album *Burn* on pages 10-11.

## naim label New releases



**Max Raptor**  
*Mother's Ruin*  
The first full album from British modern punk-rock band Max Raptor follows the success of their 2011 mini-album *Portraits*



**Sons of Kemet**  
*Burn*  
Winner of the 2013 MOBO Award for Best Jazz Act, Sons of Kemet's Naim debut is a new take on jazz mixed with Caribbean folk



**Empirical**  
*Tabula Rasa*  
The new double album from the quartet the *Daily Telegraph* once called 'the coolest of Britain's young jazz bands'.



**Kairos 4tet**  
*Everything We Hold*  
The first set for Naim Jazz by saxophonist Adam Waldmann demonstrates his trademark combination of crossover appeal and serious jazz chops.



**Pylo**  
*Bellavue EP*  
Bath-based Pylo unleash a first EP of big, sweeping rock'n'roll tracks written back home in the Somerset hills.



## Forty Years

2013 marked the 40th anniversary of Naim Audio. Racing driver and engineer Julian Vereker turned his attention to designing hi-fi in the early 1970s, and on June 4th 1973 founded Naim in Salisbury. To celebrate, we held an event for staff, friends and partners in the city, featuring a display of historic Naim products, a cake in the shape of a complete system, and performances by Naim Label artists past and present, including a brief reunion of Antonio Forcione and Sabina Sciubba.

## Naim readers' letters

We receive numerous customer letters, emails and posts on our social channels and really appreciate the efforts made by our friends and customers to keep in touch. Here are just a couple of examples.

A few weeks ago my SUPERNAIT amp needed to be serviced and, coincidentally on the same day that I took it in, Alan at Hi-Fi Cinema had received his new SUPERNAIT 2, which he was happy to loan to me. When I plugged the SUPERNAIT 2 into my system for the first time I was immediately struck by the massive improvement in sound quality and definition of the soundstage – absolutely remarkable! A week later I collected my SUPERNAIT and joked with Alan that I was "about to be disappointed" – how true that remark turned out to be. The SUPERNAIT has been a very good amp but it pales into insignificance when put up against Naim's new generation of NAIT's. It was a very easy decision to upgrade! I have been a proud owner of my SUPERNAIT 2 for some four weeks and it is a pleasure to note how the

sound continues to improve giving more depth and warmth, enriching the mid and upper ranges, to produce an amazing soundstage to listen to, and at any time of the day.

*Ken Robson, UK (customer email)*

I am a new Naim customer and have just bought one of your NaimUniti 2 all-in-one players. I can't tell you how impressed I was, from the in-store demo to getting it home and setting it up! What a fantastic introduction for me into the world of audiophile grade kit. The unit is so easy to use and the manual CD tray with magnetic puck is a pure stroke of genius. Please carry on making such fantastic products.

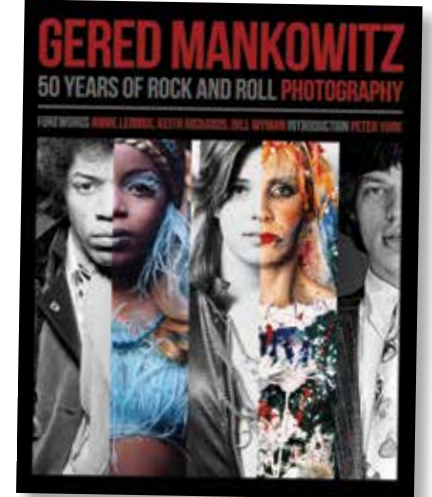
*Rich Stone, UK (Facebook)*

## WIN 50 Years of Rock & Roll Photography

This year we're hosting a competition for you to win one of five signed copies of *Gered Mankowitz: 50 Years of Rock and Roll Photography*, as featured on the front cover of this issue of *Connection* and on pages 18-19. To enter, simply choose one classic and one new album you've been listening to recently and why through any of our social channels listed below (you can also include a picture if you like). For inspiration check out some of our favourites on page 23.

The competition is open worldwide and will close on Friday 31st January 2014. The winner will be drawn at random on Monday 3rd February 2014. If you are one of the lucky five we will contact you via the social channel you shared your album picks with us through.\*

\* Visit [www.naimaudio.com/connection-competition-2014](http://www.naimaudio.com/connection-competition-2014) for full terms and conditions



## Naim Radio on-air

Launched in July 2013, Naim Radio brings a stream of original, authentic and eclectic music from Naim Label at 320kbps MP3 to owners of network-connected Naim products. The service is available via the Naim's Choice menu on all streaming products, or online at [naimaudio.com](http://naimaudio.com) and [naimlabel.com](http://naimlabel.com).

## Naim community

Join our thriving community of followers and fans and share your views on everything hi-fi with us at:

- [naimaudio](https://www.facebook.com/naimaudio)
- [@naimaudio](https://twitter.com/naimaudio)
- [naimaudiolt](https://www.soundcloud.com/naimaudiolt)
- [naimaudio](https://www.youtube.com/naimaudio)
- [+naimaudio](https://plus.google.com/+naimaudio)
- [forums.naimaudio.com](http://forums.naimaudio.com)

# The human experience

While music can be analysed physically and mathematically, its purpose is the subject of intense debate. Alan Sanderson of the University of Southampton explores the arguments.

If we examine music recordings using a spectral analyser we reveal very little about the beauty of music. There's nothing inherently good or bad, or happy or sad about the notes themselves. But when they are received by the human ear, processed in the auditory system and presented to the areas of the brain that deal with memories, emotions, patterns and physical movements we experience something whole, but wondrously intangible. What is it about patterns of vibrating air, perceived as pitch, timbre, rhythm and harmony that evoke emotional responses?

The scientific fields of psychoacoustics and auditory neuroscience have begun to unveil how music affects the brain to give rise to our subjective experience. However, to address the reasons behind music being so deeply and profoundly ingrained in the human condition, we have to rely on the theories of anthropologists, psychologists and evolutionary scientists.

## The purpose of music

The ultimate purpose of music has been debated since Charles Darwin wrote on the subject and it remains controversial. Among the many varied opinions, two prominent

arguments dominate current thinking on the topic. Steven Pinker, a cognitive scientist and popular science writer, asserts in his book *How the Mind Works* (W W Norton, 2009) that music was not a unique driver of human evolution. He uses the metaphor 'auditory cheesecake' to describe how music creates joy and allows communication by piggy-backing on our language systems. According to Pinker, music is an indulgence for our

**“There's nothing inherently good or bad, or happy or sad about the notes themselves”**

language system in the same way that cheesecake overstimulates our taste for sugars and fats that were scarce in our ancestor's diet. This argument proposes that language is a faculty of the mind that evolved because of its obvious benefits to primate social living. Music, Pinker argues, is better explained as a by-product of language having no clear advantage itself.

A contrasting argument for the origin of music originates from Charles Darwin's theory of sexual selection, which operates by

the preference of the opposite sex. The reasoning is that musical ability is attractive and increases an individual's chances of mating. The interesting spin to this concept is that the musical trait such as the ability to play piano might only serve as evidence of the individual's wider fitness. An analogy found in nature is the peacock whose tail feathers are produced at a significant cost with no clear functional advantage to the male. The message to the potential mate is that he is healthy enough to construct this luxurious ornament and have energy to spare. In a similar way, musical skills demonstrate physical and mental capacities to our potential mates. Daniel Levitin, a prominent figure in the field of auditory neuroscience, places himself in the Darwinist camp. He argues in his *This is Your Brain on Music: Understanding a Human Obsession* (Atlantic Books Ltd, 2013) that music has many roles that have arisen through their evolutionary advantage. An important example is that listening and playing music together promotes group bonding, which is essential for the formation of society. Individuals exhibiting this capacity for performing and listening in groups would have reaped the benefits of team working



## Musical perception investigated

Did our brains evolve to be musical or is music a by-product of our capacity for language? There are obvious differences between music and speech with regard to frequency content and intensity fluctuations. This distinction is reflected in our perception – we can instantly decipher a word from a musical note, which is made possible by our auditory system and cognitive ability. Imaging techniques such as functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) reveal specific patterns of activity in the brains of listeners. Some areas of the brain are exclusively activated by one or the other, while other areas have dual function. So there is a grey area joining the neurology of speech versus music. What makes music feel different in emotional terms? This aspect of music perception is attributed to the limbic system which contains the dopamine regulated circuits that activate when we eat, have sex or take certain drugs. Predictably this area is active while we listen to music. It is thought to be an ancient part of the brain that evolved to motivate animals to engage in behaviours that have biological benefits. In the case of music, the direct benefit is elusive.

which increased their chances of passing their genes into the next generation.

The fact is that music plays a central role in most of our lives. The evidence discussed here shows the universality of music in human populations and in our personal lives. Its origins are complicated and interwoven with language but there is no doubt about its importance. Scientists and clinicians are now making the most of the language-music relationship by developing musical training

schemes that help people with problems processing speech. Participation in musical activities will not improve our hearing but it will expand our ability to listen which is an investment in our future wellbeing. ■

• Alan Sanderson is a teaching fellow at the Institute of Sound and Vibration Research at the University of Southampton. His background is in neuroscience, audiology and music production.

In 2013 Naim has launched not only its first ‘desktop’ digital-to-analogue converter, the DAC-V1, but also a complete new line-up of NAIT amplifiers. Electronic Design Director Steve Sells and Senior Engineer Dave Barber tell Andrew Everard how digital and analogue development go hand in hand, and how computer modelling is making the design process both faster and more intriguing.



Top to bottom:  
NAIT 5si,  
NAIT XS 2 and  
SUPERNAIT 2  
intergrated  
amplifiers



Top to bottom:  
DAC-V1 digital to  
analogue converter  
and NAP 100  
power amplifier



Steve Sells  
Electronic Design  
Director

“Many more ideas and ‘what ifs’ can be modelled and tested in the time previously taken to work up one prototype of a circuit.”



Dave Barber  
Senior Engineer

“The final evaluation of a product’s performance always takes place in the listening room.”

# Design stories: concept to reality

In the past, every circuit change would involve building prototypes and testing them; now we can start by modelling all of this on the computer before we begin to build physical prototypes. We can explore how even the very smallest change affects the whole design, right through to the thermal effects of the location of components,” Naim Electronic Design Director *Steve Sells* is explaining the way the design process for Naim’s new products has changed, and how those changes have influenced not just the DAC-V1 desktop digital-to-analogue converter, one of the company’s most popular new arrivals, but also that of the all-new NAIT range of integrated amplifiers.

Sells points to the location of the output transistors in one of the amplifiers: “Using computer modelling, we could work out not just the best position for these components in sonic terms, but also to meet regulations on the maximum temperature for the product.

This doesn’t just speed up the design of products – it also allows much greater creativity and experimentation, in that many more ideas and ‘what ifs’ can be modelled and tested in the time previously taken to work up one prototype of a circuit or even a whole product.” As Naim Senior Engineer *Dave Barber* puts it: “It allows us to run through many versions very quickly, try things – even the ones we’d probably never even have bothered with in the old ways. And it can throw up some real surprises and new avenues for exploration.”

Also, the two explain that it’s now much easier to carry over the technology from one product to something completely different, from the headphone amplifier in the DAC-V1 going into the new NAIT line, and the digital isolation techniques developed for the NDS finding their way into the DAC-V1, along with DAC technology from the NDX and SuperUniti.

Dave Barber says that while the idea of designing a desktop DAC that accepts a direct connection from a computer was attractive, it posed a number of problems, notably the need to isolate the DAC circuitry from electrical noise from the computer or picked up on the connecting cable. To that end, the USB input makes no use of the power connection on the computer USB output, galvanic isolation is used to exclude noise completely, and bit-perfect test routines are built-in to make sure the DAC is getting what’s on the digital music files.

For all that, the engineers still found that different cable constructions, and indeed different lengths of USB cable, had audible effects on the sound during listening tests. Barber explains: “After all this computer modelling and analysis the final evaluation of a product’s performance always takes place in the listening room.” In the new NAIT range – the NAIT 5si,

NAIT XS 2 and SUPERNAIT 2 – the approach has been one of improving components and power supplies to improve sound quality and dynamic headroom, while also simplifying the layout of the products by reducing features.

Most notable is the loss of the original SUPERNAIT’s digital inputs: Steve Sells explains, while this move apparently flies in the face of what others are doing, it was an easy decision.

The design team was determined to get maximum performance from the amplifier without increasing the price, and taking this “stripped down” approach enabled a significant gain while at the same time actually reducing the cost of the new amplifier. Or as Sells puts it: “It’s not easy to improve upon an icon. But by staying true to the stripped-back purest approach that won the original NAIT such a loyal following, I think we’ve managed to do just that.” ■

# Burning bright

Naim Label's Sons of Kemet, winners of the 2013 MOBO Award for Best Jazz Act, are the rising stars of a new generation of jazz.

**S**ons of Kemet, led by multi-reedist Shabaka Hutchings, were crowned Best Jazz Act at the 2013 MOBO Awards. Winning the award gives further accolade to a quartet who have stormed onto the contemporary jazz scene, winning praise from fans and critics alike with their earthy visceral sound.

What does it mean to Hutchings to win the award? "It means a lot. The MOBOs are one of the last awards that actually recognise jazz in the mainstream. It's pretty amazing that we got this opportunity." And how important is it to have jazz represented in the mainstream? "I think it's important because it seems like people's perception of jazz, by in large, is different from what's actually happening. It's really important for people to have musical options."

The band comprises Hutchings, Oren Marshall on tuba, and drummers Tom Skinner and Seb Rochford. Hutchings explains why he chose this unconventional lineup: "One of the things I was checking out was a lot of West African music, and I wanted to get that real drum-heavy sound."

I also wanted to take away the emphasis on the saxophone. I think with two drummers, there's so much rhythm that it means the sax is almost part of that

rhythmical framework." Marshall was added because "the tuba brings a lot to the music. It changes its function, sometimes it can act as bass, sometimes rhythmically and sometimes as a soloist. On another level, there is also something about the sonics of the tuba that's warmer; it has this really earthy sound."

The award follows the release of their infectiously rootsy debut album, *Burn*.

Hutchings, fiercely passionate about his craft, describes how the album evolved: "I wanted the main feature to be the combination of old and new and the actual recording to sound like those old Afrobeat records. Just a raw sound so it's really natural but then something that still makes it sound like its 2013." How was that sound created? "In the recording studio we played without any separation or headphones.

I went in telling the engineer that I wanted the vibe to be the most important thing. So we just sat in a circle and placed the mics so we didn't get lots of spill."

What is the standout track for Hutchings? "Song for Galeano" means a lot to me. Eduardo Galeano is one of my absolute favourite authors, he's really changed the way I see lots of things." *Burn* includes an affecting cover of 'Rivers of Babylon', but

Hutchings explains that has nothing to do with Boney M, "I've not actually heard the Boney M cover, I know it as a Caribbean, Rastafarian champion song, one of those things that cuts across cultural borders."

Now looking forward to some big stage gigs and toward a new album, Sons of Kemet's star is on the rise and they are burning bright for the new generation of jazz. ■



MOBO 13

“It seems like people’s perception of jazz, by in large, is different from what’s actually happening”

## Setting the studio alight

*Burn* Mix Engineer Dilip Harris has an impressive back catalogue, having worked with the likes of Zero 7, Roots Manuva, Jamiroquai and Michachu. In his own words, Harris grew up in the fertile musical environment of Camden in the 1970s. He was schooled by Jamaican music and trained in the recording arts in the Hip Hop factories of New York in the late 1980s.

**Q How did you approach recording *Burn*?**

**A** We recorded the album at Antonio Feola's Fish Factory studios onto multitrack tape. At times monitoring was strained, as two drummers can get quite loud, but for the most part it facilitated a fluid creative environment. Because we were using tape we would track three takes of each piece, choose a favourite, transfer it to a computer and then repeat the process with the same reel of tape. After this initial session Seb took the tracks away to edit and then I mixed those tracks down to tape for mastering at my studio. With these distinct stages of production, the record had a very hybrid format of both analogue and digital.

**Q How did you cope with the spill between the two drum kits?**

**A** When one has a very sympathetic room, the spill between instruments can be a major proponent of atmosphere and allows the room to become a character itself. Shabaka was keen to use spill as an element in the recordings - the bleed across all the microphones created the intangible soup from which Sons of Kemet could emerge.

**Q The tuba has an interesting role on the album, how did you capture that?**

**A** I heard the tuba in Shabaka's arrangements as occupying the low end but also weaving melodies and rhythms around the saxophone. Thus, in recording and mixing it required a lot of sensitivity... and also a lot of welly.

**Q There is a lot of energy to the album, but also a lot of clarity between the different instruments. How did you achieve this?**

**A** This was one of Shabaka's key requirements - clarity and atmosphere. I think the lack of serious sub bass helped and also the choice to split the drummers over the stereo image.

# A personal approach

Demonstration, installation and thorough system set-up is a vital part of the experience of buying Naim – it’s a service you can expect from every one of our specialist retailers across the globe. We visited *Ultimate Home Entertainment Solutions (uhes)* in Warwickshire, UK, to understand their unique approach to customer service.

**W**hen we spoke to *uhes*, the company was in the process of planning an installation for a new customer: he’d just been in for his demonstration and was expecting the team to arrive within a few days. Norman Solomon explains that while every customer’s requirements and eventual system choices are different, this one was fairly typical of the kind of systems the company has been installing of late.

The client originally came to *uhes* for a demonstration of the Ovator S-400 loudspeakers – the company keeps just about every Naim product in stock for immediate demonstration. “So he motored over this morning, came and had coffee and a tour of the house,” says Solomon, “and then we started listening and going through the system possibilities. He genuinely thought he wanted a CDS3, to replace his CDS2 but, following a demonstration, he quickly warmed to the idea of digital streaming.” The customer went on to order an NDS with a 555 PS, NAC 252 with a SuperCap, a NAP 300 and a pair of Ovator S-400 loudspeakers. “We spoke this morning (Thursday) and scheduled the installation for next Monday.” Solomon says that, subject to stock availability, it’s possible to do such set-ups in so tight a time frame, but he emphasises the company’s willingness to set-up systems purely for the purposes of demonstration. Quite apart from the obvious elements – sorting out the proper support,



Installation experts offer a personalised service for optimum system set-up



positioning and cabling of the system, and taking the customer through the operation of the system to ensure they’re familiar with every aspect of it – such an installation will also involve the all-important ‘digital plumbing’. That involves the set-up of the ripping system and NAS device, and making sure the customer is familiar with this side of the system, too. And of course *uhes* offers full after-sales service and advice, should the customer stumble across something they feel isn’t clear. “The difference between a poorly set-up system and one which has been professionally installed can be night and day.” Solomon exclaims. “That includes in the user experience, with the correct digital set up, and perhaps even more importantly in the sound quality.” ■



## Naim retailer in focus: *uhes*

*Uhes* offers an exceptional retail experience. It can do anything from demonstrating a UnitiQute 2 to installing a complete system with a six-figure price-tag. Co-founder Dr Norman Solomon says that a customer defined what sets it apart best as ‘lavish customer service’. That means anything from providing lunch for visitors to complete custom installation services. Of course, the premises help: it started up in a castle but now, though still in the Cotswolds, is based in Stirling House, which

Solomon calls a ‘footballer’s mansion’, in the village of Great Wolford, Warwickshire, and offers six demonstration rooms plus service and other back-up departments. As well as the excellent rooms, proportioned and furnished like the rooms in customers’ own homes, the new location is also the base for a thriving installation business. Talking to Solomon, he emphasises the role played in this installation work by his business partner Ian Rocchi [pictured] whose background is in industrial

robotics and automation. Rocchi is responsible for planning and seeing through often complex home installations. Whether a customer comes to buy a single component or a complete system, the treatment is the same: the chance to listen to as many options as they wish in a number of rooms, followed by the offer of an extended home trial period, and then installation of their chosen product to their satisfaction. That’s what lavish customer service is all about.

# Comme Toujours

Sylvia Patterson talks to Sabina Sciubba about her journey from the seminal *Meet Me In London* of 1998 to her debut solo album *Toujours* due for release through Naim Edge Records in March 2014.

Sabina Sciubba, celebrated femme fatale, has a lifelong connection to Naim Label. In 1994, aged 19, the stunningly sultry vocalist was discovered in Hamburg by Naim's virtuoso guitarist Antonio Forcione. Their resulting collaboration, *Meet Me In London* (1998), is an audiophile classic and the best-selling album in the label's history. So began Sciubba's singular career, soon living in New York fronting the Brazilian Girls (signed to US jazz label Verve in 2003), a sort of avant-garde electro-punk Scissor Sisters featuring one girl (Sciubba) and no Brazilians. Sciubba was (and remains) both a vocal and visual enigma, singing in four languages (English, German, French, Italian), forever covering her eyes with conceptual hair and wearing outfits Lady Gaga would approve of (one billowing frock appeared to be a ventilation shaft, made of crepe). Today, after a move to Paris in 2009, a soon-to-end band hiatus and the birth of her two children, she finally comes home, back to Naim Label with her debut solo album, *Toujours*, a compelling, intimate, narcotic dreamscape you might call The Parisienne Velvet Underground and Nico, with jokes.

"I haven't listened enormously to the Velvet Underground but it's a good soundtrack for real life," she purrs, in her low-slung, pan-European accent, a truly global citizen born in Rome, raised in Munich and Nice. "I wanted something for a more contemplative audience. Sometimes with Brazilian Girls I think, 'I want people to hear my voice but they're dancing and screaming!'"

*Toujours*, written on guitars in Paris and produced by Brazilian Girls' producer Frederick Rubens, is New York new-wave carousing with Serge Gainsbourg, an

art-punk, multi-lingual, Marlene Dietrich hypnotising the hobos in a Weimar Republic dive-bar. A lingering side-ways glance at contemporary life, opening track Cinema laments cultural decline, likening the fall of movies to "an old whore who has lost her charms". On *Toujours*, meanwhile, she decides "we might as well be happy", the song's DIY, semi-animated video a homage to Pythonesque surrealism, Sciubba on a donkey, playing a ukulele, a star around her head, wearing nothing but a goofy smile. This is not what we expect from a femme fatale and partly a rejection

of today's sexually aggressive, physically 'perfect' pop sirens.

"Yes, because I find it all ridiculous," she snorts. "I wanted no make-up and no photoshopping. Well, I did take a bit off my belly because I had just delivered a child – don't tell anybody! – but I found it refreshing, 'I don't give a shit, this is how I look, boom, take it or leave it.'"

It took seven months of experimentation, "getting the donkey to walk took three weeks", the original idea "a parody of an archetypal Messiah image". To get to that point took a less theological image.

"I photographed myself naked, sitting on a closet, like a French dresser," she laughs. "The actual photos are ridiculous. My older son was looking at me like, 'oh no, she's lost it.'"

Sciubba, 38, is an old-school maverick spirit, a lifelong musical obsessive who, as a child, wanted "to marry Michael Jackson", before veering off into left-field jazz, Billie Holiday and global underground electro-pop. "I'm so extreme in my personality, I go very much all the way with what I like, until I overdose," she notes,

**“Most record companies definitely vote for safety over taste. Personal taste even. It's all to do with corporate structure: people who make decisions don't even listen to music”**

rather tantalisingly. Today she remains uncompromising, "too idealistic", maintaining her originality in the face of a traumatised, risk-averse music industry. She came home to Naim for a reason: creative freedom.

"Most record companies definitely vote for safety over taste, personal taste even," she laments. "It's to do with corporate structure: people who make decisions don't even listen to music, they look at numbers and cross people off lists who don't make money. But that's true for everything."

On the brooding, gallows-funny *Fields Of Snow* she opines, dramatically, "and now we have no money!", a love story set against austerity. In France, she notes, government cuts are "painful", taxes "hardcore", while a creative generation struggles in our online world of give-us-your-art-for-free.

"It's terrible," she despairs. "In my circle of friends – and I live in an upper scale neighbourhood – everybody is broke. And they don't admit it! I'm not starving but compared to five, eight years ago I definitely have much less money."

The internet, she adds, while good for artistic autonomy, is hopeless for reality.

"Personally, because of the way it affects our daily lives, I would just like to blow up the whole internet system," she announces, becoming more radical by the second. "Everyone is always on their cellphones and computers and I find it absolutely horrible. People don't even see each other anymore, it's all on bloody Facebook."

It is, she hypothesises, a primal problem no-one could have foreseen: we're hard-wired to instantly respond to alerting lights.

"The human reaction to movement and light is you look at it," she notes. "Otherwise there would be flashing danger and we wouldn't turn around. The internet is the same: there's no way somebody can not look, it's so tempting. It's made to be that way, not by evil spirits, by people who genuinely think it's great but at the same time we should speak together, make music together, learn instruments. My children, it's impossible to keep them away from YouTube. I was considering terrorism!"

Spoken like a true Parisienne.

In 2014, meanwhile, before the Brazilian Girls return, she'll take *Toujours* on the road, touring the great European capitals with a band. Can we expect an appearance from a donkey?

"Touring with a donkey is unfortunately very expensive," she smiles. "Maybe I'll project one onto one of my bandmates!"

That's the spirit. Welcome home ... ■

*Toujours* is scheduled for release through Naim Edge records in March 2014.





# Fill your whole home with music

The latest firmware for Naim streaming products and hard disk player/servers offers not only the ultimate in multiroom audio but also in how you want your music to be stored.

It's just five years since Naim rewrote the future of hi-fi with the arrival of the original Naim Uniti, building on the successful launch of the HDX the year before. From a single Uniti product, combining a CD player, network music player and amplifier, the range has now grown to encompass network systems with and without CD, two hard disk player/servers, a streaming preamplifier, two DACs and of course a complete range of network players.

And since the arrival of the first Naim network products, the abilities of the range have expanded with improvements and upgrades in software and hardware. Starting with just a UnitiQute 2, or almost any other Naim streaming product, you can now listen to radio from anywhere in the world, play music way beyond the resolution of standard CDs, or even fill your whole home with sound.

It's the future of hi-fi, but it's possible right now: Naim's music streaming products allow you to set up Multiroom operation on one device, and then stream whatever it's playing – from a UPnP source, an internet radio station, or even an iPod or USB memory stick – to up to four more Naim streaming products around the house.

Using the n-Stream app on iPhone, iPad or iPod touch you can decide which extra rooms the music is streamed to while you're listening – perfect if you're moving between the kitchen and living room or dining room while preparing a meal. Activate Party Mode to bring all streamers online simultaneously and enable group volume control for the whole party. No more cranking up the level to try to fill the



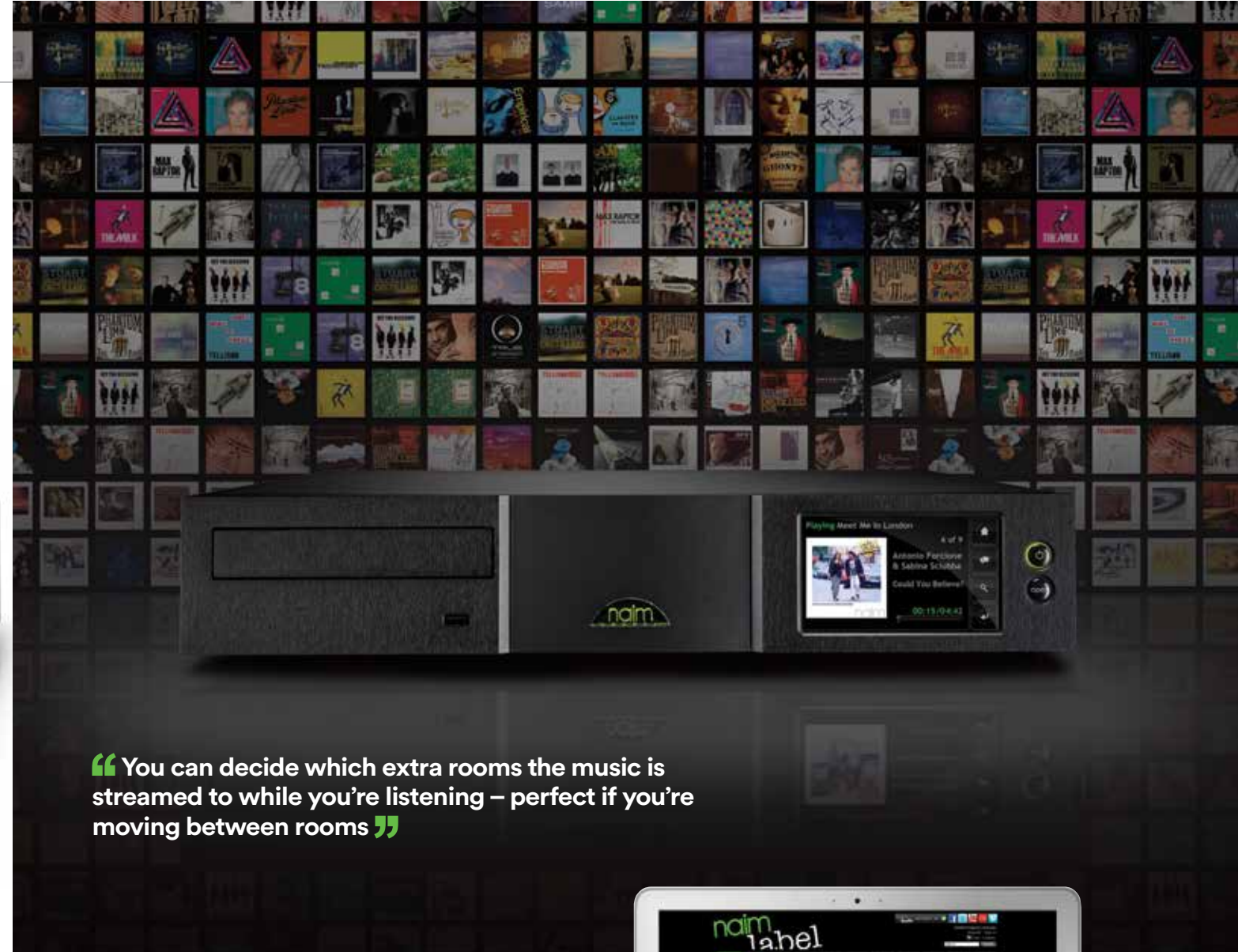
With Naim's streaming products music can reach every room in the house



The n-Stream app offers comprehensive control of Naim streaming products

house from a single system: now your entire Naim collection can work together to get the party going.

The latest version of the software for Naim hard disk player/servers – the HDX and UnitiServe now gives you more music storage options. If you'd rather make more of your storage space without adding extra drives, you can rip music into FLAC with lossless compression rather than CD-standard WAV, or indeed



“ You can decide which extra rooms the music is streamed to while you're listening – perfect if you're moving between rooms ”

convert an existing WAV library into FLAC. You can also make a 'shadow' copy of your music library in MP3 quality, for playback on portable devices or in the car, for example.

Naim's entire streaming range can now play music way beyond CD quality, making the most of your audio system with albums downloaded from the Naim Label Hi Definition Download Store or other sites in 24bit/96kHz or even 24bit/192kHz quality, approaching the quality of the original master tapes made in the studio. Listen to a Naim Label recording such as the classic *Meet Me In London*, or a new release like Empirical's *Tabula Rasa*, and you'll hear just what this new world of high-resolution downloads can do. ■



**Want to hear what's available on Naim Label?**  
Now you can sample the entire catalogue, courtesy of the Naim Radio service, streaming a range of music from Naim Jazz, Naim Edge and Naim Classical. You can find it in Naim's Choice on any network-connected Naim product or online at [naimaudio.com](http://naimaudio.com) and [naimlabel.com](http://naimlabel.com)

# Shooting stars

Now celebrating 50 years as a rock photographer, the work of Gered Mankowitz has captured Jimi Hendrix, The Rolling Stones and Oasis. Connection's Giles Chapman caught up with him ahead of his new exhibition at the Atlas Gallery, London.

**Y**ou can almost sense the jostling reverberations, the sudden drops and leaping steps, of 'Hey Joe', as your gaze is matched by Jimi's in Gered Mankowitz's pictures.

Funnily enough, though, the guitar legend's deft handiwork was largely unknown when Hendrix sauntered into his studio for the photo session in February 1967.

"It was just before 'Hey Joe' was released in the UK," Gered says. "He'd been brought over by [the producer] Chas Chandler in 1966 and it was all just about to happen for him – everything was to play for – so he was optimistic and happy. Actually, he was a quiet, almost humble person.

"I can't say I liked his music that much. Not at the time, anyway. But it was quite clear he was really special just in his appearance and charisma. He wore that look better than anyone else. It was fantastic to be able to photograph this fabulous looking, yet still vulnerable, man."



“He wore that look better than anyone else. It was fantastic to be able to photograph this fabulous looking, yet still vulnerable, man.”

Hendrix takes his place among a huge collection of portraits selected from Gered's extraordinary 50 years working with rock stars. He's lit and framed his way through rock-'n'-roll, glam rock, punk, New Romanticism and Brit Pop to the present day. Sometimes film or advertising has lured him away but always he's returned to working with musicians. In the late 1960s, this included a long relationship with the Rolling Stones, and Gered's portraits and photographs encapsulate the swaggering insouciance they made their own.

## Working with the Stones

"You know, that intense look – unsmiling, unflinching: I didn't style it but that's what we wanted. In the early 1960s, we were trying to break the glittery, showbiz mould; the idea of performers controlled by impresarios and aimed at young people. I wanted to fight that, to find a moody, sexy look with an edge.

"Yet actually I wasn't very experienced, and now I think my photographs have an innocence and a naivety to them. I was uncluttered by experience. I always found the Stones charming. It was their manager who was intimidating. I photographed them for three years, including touring the USA. They trusted me not to take advantage, and they knew I imposed a limit on myself."

## Era-defining work

He clearly had great fun in the thudding, garish '70s era of Slade and Suzi Quatro, but is this really the same image-maker whose lavish work also helped define ABC and The Eurythmics in the 1980s?

"The music scene was more professional again, and artists such as Annie Lennox sought people like me. This time we were both adding the polish," explains Gered.

Indeed, the photos from Gered's later period, including those of The Jam,

Generation X and Kate Bush, are ones he's long wanted to expose anew.

"I guess the '60s images are the first things people want to see because it was a time of exceptional cultural influences. All my later stuff has been under the radar. When I moved studio, I was dragging my 'archive' around in plastic bags – keeping it under the desk, piles of old negs used as a footrest. Even though I did my first show in 1982, I wasn't exactly fastidious at cataloguing. I am now.

"It was amazing to be in at the beginning of some exceptional careers. Still, with bands like The Moody Blues and Status Quo, I've been there at a few twilights too..." ■

• *Gered Mankowitz: 50 Years Of Rock And Roll Photography* is published by Goodman at £30.

• *Gered Mankowitz: Vintage Stones* opens December 5th at Atlas Gallery, London until the end of January 2014.

# Spur of the moment

Bentley recently launched its new Flying Spur sedan with a complete redesign of the marque offering not only advances in speed and comfort, but in personalisation. Of course, Naim was integral to this process, specially designing its audio system to provide the customer with the ultimate in car sound system.

**B**entley released the original version of the Flying Spur in 2006. Back then marque enthusiasts marvelled at its handsomeness, W12 formation engine and hushed ambience, but also its remarkable 195mph top speed. Now there's even more reason to be excited as the British engineers in Crewe reveal an all new Flying Spur sedan.

The twin-turbo engine remains the heart of the car. Most everything else is redesigned. You notice that immediately in the lower, more sculptural profile that, doubtless, would interest Henry Moore's ghost. Almost all the 600 components in the cabin are brand new.

This new saloon signals a step-change in the scope of the absolute personalisation offered by Bentley that's possible.

Naim's input here is an extension of our partnership with this British engineering icon. The Naim For Bentley premium audio system becomes the ultimate upgrade for listening exhilaration inside the Flying Spur.

Actually, the car's very structure has enhanced the system. It's more rigid but the computer-controlled selectable air suspension is more cossetting than the previous marque. Fastidious aerodynamic and sealing attention has cut noise. The doors have fewer parts, for extra refinement. There are underfloor acoustic panels and insulation, acoustic glazing. What's more – even the wheels and tyres of the New Flying Spur have been selected with the awareness of a unique audio experience in mind.

Within this becalmed framework, Naim has designed new custom-made, advanced acoustic speakers for the rear to deliver its renowned 'as-live performance'. As on other Bentleys specified with the innovative system, there are 1100 watts of amplification and Digital Signal Processing, with 15 modes matching either seating position – the Flying Spur can come with either four or five seats – and/or musical genre.

As the Spur's 6-litre engine growl builds slightly as the car surges to high cruising speeds, the driver can select an NFB (Negative Feedback) system option to

**“Naim has designed new custom-made, advanced acoustic speakers for the rear to deliver its renowned 'as-live' performance”**

automatically adjust the volume and frequency response in tandem. Naim engineers spent hundreds of hours on the road optimising it, because only subjective experience of the balance at differing speeds could truly fine-tune it.

Redesigned separate subwoofers add gravitas to the bass performance, while each seating position is, in effect, an acoustic hotspot, the delivered sound built up from layers of minute time delays and frequency response shapes. Naim's scintillating sound quality and performance can be partnered, for the many owners worldwide likely to be chauffeured, by comprehensive multi-media

connectivity in the rear. Once you set out to custom-create your own Bentley, though, budget and imagination are the only limits.

Tim Hodgson, Bentley's UK VIP relationship manager, is steeped in Bentley's bespoke possibilities. “The process usually starts with a visit to our factory – that's always an engrossing day in a place of great interest,” he says.

“People are amazed by the main assembly area or our wood shop with all our craftspeople deep in concentration. One American called it, aptly: ‘A candy store where there is just so much candy.’”

The regular Flying Spur palette offers 17 paint colours, and 100 optional ones. But once you get into the Mulliner Driving Specification menu, five more leather upholstery options are added to the 12 standard ones, five choices of wood veneer, three more wheel styles, quilted leather detailing is offered, and the car can be set off with beautiful details like ‘jewel’ petrol filler cap and sporty, drilled pedals.

Hodgson explains. “A car like this is often a celebration of achievement. As long as the car is road-legal, we can do almost anything, like when we made a special armrest for a customer with a physical problem.”

Bentley, of course, would never admit to employing ‘Taste Police’.

“Every customer is an individual, and we absolutely respect that. Anyway, we can use diagrams, computer configurations, or sometimes even ask a designer to produce a rendering to show how good a car will look with the right colour and design choices.” ■



Bentley's new Flying Spur sedan



Every detail of the interior requires the attention of experienced Bentley craftsman





Top to bottom:  
CD5si CD  
player & NAIT  
5si integrated  
amplifier

# Sound designs

Connection caught up with Group Director of Design, Simon Matthews, to talk about his background with Naim and his approach to industrial design.

**Q What is your background working with Naim? And when were you first introduced to the brand?**

**A** First and foremost I have been a music lover since I was a child and a hi-fi nut since the late eighties. My first ever experience of Naim was being blown away by an in-store demonstration and spending a long summer break during my degree working all hours to buy a NAIT for my system. I never looked back! After graduating in Mechanical Engineering and also in Product Design, my first experience of Naim in a working sense was during the late nineties when I was fortunate to meet and briefly work with Julian Vereker. Since that time I have been responsible for supplying the bulk of Naim's product design output whilst working at two of the UK's finest industrial design studios. The journey is complete since I took on the role of Group Director of Design in 2012.

**Q What does your current position as Group Director of Design entail?**

**A** Fundamentally I have to drive forward and deliver a vision for the visual and physical

appearance of all product output for the group. My job is to try to capture the heart and soul of each brand and represent that in the physical domain. The goal is always to create designs that delight and excite our customers old and new, and also aim to do justice to the technologies and electronics that lie within these magical boxes.

**“The goal is always to create designs that delight and excite our customers old and new”**

**Q How closely do you work with Naim engineers when designing products?**

**A** I work to align with the engineering, management, marketing and purchasing teams when creating conceptual design output on all new development programs. I then remain working very closely with all the teams to help ensure that the end results are manufactured with as much integrity and inherent performance as possible. This methodology and

approach applies as much to our entry level products as it does to flagship equipment.

**Q What has been your favourite Naim product to design so far and why?**

**A** I have to say that as a music head I don't find it at all hard to get motivated by the idea that my designs are contributing to the overall satisfaction our products provide. As much as I love working on our flagship equipment from the NAP 500 onwards, I get equal pleasure developing our entry-level products as the challenge is always to deliver a true and Naim experience across our entire portfolio, with no exceptions.

**Q What kind of work inspires and influences your design?**

**A** I like to look at the creative output of designers and artists in many fields. I love the functional purpose of an Eames chair, the tailoring in a classic suit and also great architecture. Obviously Dieter Rams is a pivotal figure in hi-fi design and is also very inspiring to me. And please don't get me started on vintage guitars and watches because I could be here all day!

# What we're listening to...

Members of the Naim forum will know this topic well – over 13,000 individual music recommendations have been posted in the last year alone. We asked some of our staff to share one favourite new and classic album for *Connection* and got some interesting results...



**Lee Sanger**

*Production Operative (Speakers)*

A new album that I've been listening to a lot lately is David Guetta's

*One Love*. It's an uplifting mix of dance and vocals. A popular choice, but a good one.

There's one album that stands head and shoulders above the rest for me and that's Metallica's 1991 *The Black Album*. It's a defining moment in heavy metal and in the band's outstanding career. It shows off their diversity from classic heavy thrashers to power ballads. But above all it's just great music.



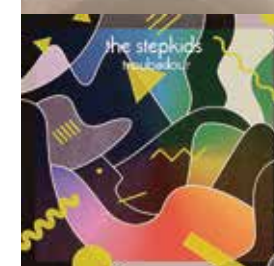
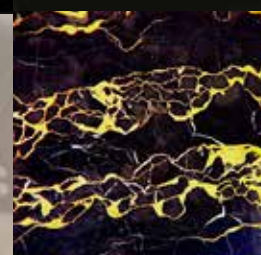
**Ryan Latham**

*Director of Marketing & Communications*

Recently I've dusted off Terry Callier's 1998 album *Time Peace*.

Sadly he passed away in 2012, but I was lucky enough to see him perform this album and I just keep coming back to it. He had a background in jazz, having toured with George Benson for one, but musically this work bridges soul, folk, and jazz beautifully. For me 'Keep Your Heart Right' is the stand-out track.

New to my playlist is *Troubadour* by the The Step Kids from Connecticut which is another album that delivers funky, jazz-inflected R&B. 'Moving Pictures' is my favourite track, great song structures – reminds me of Steely Dan.



**Becky Clark**

*Software Test Engineer*

My new choice is Korn's first album since 'Hed' (their original guitarist) rejoined them,

*Paradigm Shift*. My favourite track is 'Spike in the Veins', it gets your blood pumping with haunting vocals from Jonathan Davies.

I saw Incubus perform songs from *Make Yourself* at the Manchester Carling Apollo when I was still at school. To this day it's one of the best live gigs I have ever been to. A blend of rock, acoustic, hip-hop and nu-metal with amazing vocals from Brandon Boyd. The best track is 'Drive'.



**Kenny Vaughan**

*Naim Label Assistant*

My new pick is *Instrumentals Vol. 2* by Clams Casino. As a producer he has used

his material with modern hip-hop artists such as Mac Miller and A\$AP Rocky but is equally capable of driving any track from standard hip hop to epic, inspirational scores of modern justice. Tracks such as 'Leaf', 'Numb' and 'One Last Thing' all need to be listened to.

My classic has to be Prodigy's 1997 album *The Fat of the Land*. The crab on the front cover pretty much summarises the attitude and aura of the entire album – feet in the sand, hands (or claws) in the air, and a motion blur that could challenge the latest Canon SLR with its intensity.

## Now it's your turn

Share your own classic and new album picks with us through the Naim Forum or on our Facebook, Twitter or Instagram pages for a chance to win a signed copy of Gered Mankowitz: 50 Years of Rock & Roll Photography as featured on the front cover and pages 18-19.

See page 5 for more information on how to get involved.

# Born in fire

**T**he distinctive heat sink of the NAP 500 power amplifier has become a hallmark of Naim quality. In order to create this complex structure from solid aluminium we collaborated with a specialist foundry in North Wales more used to casting high-performance parts for aerospace and defence applications than for high-end hi-fi. They offered the kind of quality and fine tolerances our flagship amplifier demanded.

The manufacturing process involves multiple steps — first a pattern is created from which the injection tool is cast. The tool is then heated to incredibly high temperatures (the exact number is a closely-guarded trade secret) by virtue of a massive kiln (pictured) before molten aluminium is injected. Once the part has cooled and solidified the outer mould is broken away with high-pressure water jets to extract the finished aluminium piece.

“The distinctive heatsink of the NAP 500 power amplifier has become a hallmark of Naim quality”

# Spotlight on Russia



Russia is one of Naim's fastest-growing markets – we asked Sergey Gudim, CEO of distributor Alef Hi-Fi, what makes the Russian audiophile tick.

**A**lef Hi-Fi has a network of 100 retailers all over Russia including 40 Naim specialists. Sergey Gudim combines his enthusiasm for hi-fi and passion for music to good effect in his role as CEO. Under his guidance Alef place emphasis on service and demonstrating the Naim experience.

Sergey says the audiophile community in Russia has been developing since Soviet times, when most enthusiasts were into DIY hi-fi. The collapse of the USSR, and the opening up of Russia to western music and hi-fi meant the market began to develop very fast as Sergey explains, "I think that its peak was in 2005 – 2008, and although the financial crisis has hit the hi-fi market hard, people began to think and choose more carefully."

When it comes to their equipment, Russian consumers, Sergey says, "are most interested in product quality – sound is paramount but looks and reliability also play a role." Is Naim's philosophy of looking for the best sound quality, and the emphasis on emotional connection through pace rhythm and timing,

appreciated in Russia? 'Of course,' he says, adding that, "Russia is a country of emotional people, who are very positive about British-made products."

So what do Russian buyers listen to on their Naim systems? "It's not so different to other countries: Russian people enjoy a range of music, from a variety of countries. When we ask them, jazz and blues are favourite; then rock, from soft to hardcore; then classical music; then pop. But our Naim customers tell us they can enjoy all this music on their systems – Naim makes universal products!"

Although high-quality streaming is a bit of an uphill struggle in a market where, as in the rest of the world, "many people prefer to seek free sources rather than pay for them". Sergey sees music streaming growing in Russia, especially among young people, "however, though many audiophiles rip their music libraries to hard drives, they continue to keep their CDs."

It seems there's still plenty of scope for Naim to grow its following in Russia – and it'll do so by delivering just the kind of quality products Russian enthusiasts want to buy. ■

Above: Naim's Sales Director Doug Graham and Sales Manager Jason Gould at the Volgograd Memorial



Above: Sergey Gudim of Alef Hi-Fi



Above: Jason Gould demonstrates the importance of system set-up during essential retailer training in Russia

# Restoring a classic

The story of Paul Warrilow's cherished NAIT amplifier is a 21-year chronicle of life's ups and downs against a backdrop of devotion to listening pleasure. We've recently been delighted to fully rejuvenate this classic example in our Service Department.

**R**estoration' is a term readily associated with fine furniture, old buildings or classic cars, but is equally well applied to hand-crafted classic hi-fi. Can a NAIT really be considered a historic artefact? Well, it certainly is in the context of our heritage. Introduced 30 years ago, it was our first integrated amplifier – a bedrock of our reputation for exceptionally good sound delivery.

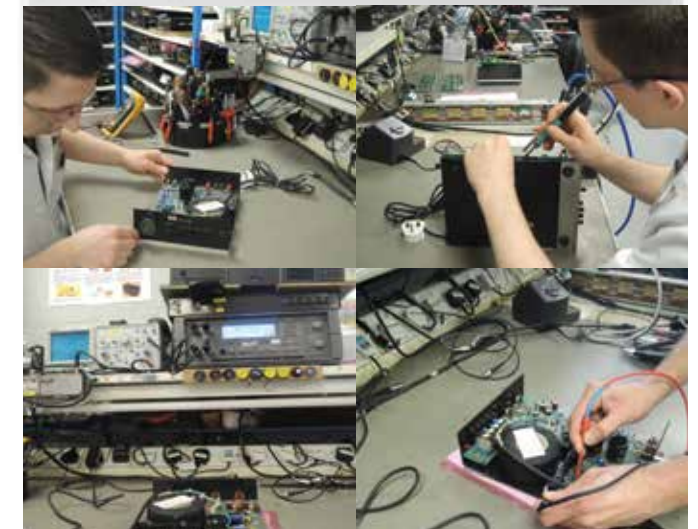
Paul's NAIT is one of the first of these iconic amplifiers ever to be made, dating back to 1983. He purchased it in 1992 as he explains, "I was 22, newly married and pretty skint. But I had a friend who owned a NAIT and an LP12. It sounded amazing and I wanted it!"

It was in constant use for several years before being mothballed to survive growing children, a marriage break-up and a house move. Having moved on to Naim separates Paul sold it on eBay... but infuriated the eager buyer when he couldn't bear to part with it at the appointed hour. Instead, he passed it on to his vinyl appreciative daughter Laura. "It replaced her system, giving a massive difference in separation and clarity. It sounds lovely to this day."

An intermittent fault, however, finally impelled the Warrilow dynasty to deliver its venerable NAIT to Naim for total renovation.

Beverly Haysom, who accepted the commission, has been at the company for 21 years, running the Service Department for the last 10. She typifies the valuable staff longevity that allows almost anything Naim has made (an archive on site contains one of everything) to be restored by experienced specialists. "They pass on skills to new personnel through training, copy boards, wiring copies and, well, just overall integrity," she explains. A detailed inspection and bench test tease out any faults the owner might not even have detected.

"Components get tired and dry out, which will compromise sound quality after a period of time. Voltages can drift and our very old products sometimes need recalibration."



Skilled and experienced specialists work to restore products, like Paul's NAIT amplifier, in Naim's Service Department

Beverly oversees the compilation of a 'work to be done' list, including components for replacement or upgrade. Then the job is turned over to an engineer who painstakingly works through it. An overnight electrical soak, final inspection and listening/function tests, recovering and cleaning complete the programme.

"Laura can't wait to get it back and I'm sure it'll be good for another 21 years." Paul says. Then we'll be pleased to fettle and upgrade it again. But Laura, if it's going to deliver music to you non-stop, we'd rather have it back for a little attention after 'just' 15 years. ■

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