# **Contents**

## 4 MAGICO M2

After an exhaustive (and sometimes exhausting) review procedure, Martin Colloms finds these slimline speakers from the Californian company are capable of superlative performance – but explains that the secret is all in the set-up

#### 16 THE BRISTOL SHOW 2019

A fixture on the British hi-fi calendar for more than three decades, this show is packed with new product launches, and provides the chance to hear some superb systems. Ed Selley was our man on the ground to bring you all the news

## 19 McINTOSH MA9000

Chris Kelly was looking forward to hearing this big integrated amplifier from the celebrated manufacturer, but he wasn't quite ready for its size or weight. But after an all-too-brief review period, he came away more than impressed

# 22 STAN'S SAFARI

Stan Curtis casts his mind back over the strengths and foibles of some of the studio recorders he has owned and used, and recalls the days when amplifier designers could turn to a ready stock of 'cost no object' components made to military specification

#### 24 MAKING DISTORTION MEASUREMENTS MORE RELEVANT

We all though that the less distortions a system has, the less it will add to, or subtract from, the sound. But which distortions should we be targeting, and how do we best measure them? Keith Howard investigates,

# 29 VERTERE DYNAMIC GROOVE DG-1

Designed as an entry-level turntable model for the British company's range, the DG-1 opts for some highly innovative solutions in the quest for simplicity, from thread bearings to a flat beam tonearm. Chris Kelly discovers that this leads to excellent performance

## 33 NAIM ND555 REVISITED

After spending more than a year with the Salisbury company's flagship network player, Martin Colloms takes time for a thorough reassessment. He starts by adding a second 555PS DR power supply, to create a £27,000 digital front-end for his reference system

## 37 JBL L100 CLASSIC

One of the most distinctive designs from catalogue of the American manufacturer – thanks to its distinctive Quadrex foam grilles – has been reinvented for the 2020s. Chris Frankland explains that this is much more than just an exercise in nostalgia

## 41 AVID INTEGRA

Ed Selley spends time with the Integra integrated, the entry-level model in the British company's ambitious amplifier lineup. It's impressive, not least for the quality of its built-in phono stage

## 44 FOCAL CHORA 806

Kevin Fiske likes the midrange of these speakers from the 'affordable' end of the French company's line-up, but is less than enamoured with what they do at the frequency extremes

#### 46 TOWNSHEND ALLEGRI REFERENCE

Martin Colloms is a big fan of transformerbased passive preamplifiers, and there's more to this remote-control newcomer than just saving the wear on his floor

## 50 MAGICO SPODS

After his experience with the MPods provided with the Magico M2 speakers, Martin Colloms returns to the SPods with renewed enthusiasm

## 52 MANFRED EICHER

In the concluding part of his survey of the life and work of the founder of ECM, Mark Prendergast suggests ten of the label's 'must hear' recordings

## 58 CLASSICAL MUSIC

The latest releases are considered by Andrew Mellor

60 JAZZ

Greg Drygala takes a listen to some of the more innovative jazz releases

## 62 SECONDHAND STARS

Steve Harris continues his bargain-hunting habit, revealing more of his latest finds

## 64 SOUNDSTAGE

Andrew Everard pays tribute to two of his influences – Ken Ishiwata and Malcolm Steward – both recently passed away



Magico S2 loudspeakers (p4) all the effort in set-up pays off in a remarkable sound



Vertere DG-1 (p29)