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The last edition of HIFICRITIC carried a review by yours truly of the G9 Audio *NERO MkII* valve amplifier combo, and in the first paragraph I wrote as follows: “As I understand it, G9 Audio is a Russian hi-fi brand, based in Moscow, but its *NERO MkII* amplifiers are actually built in Estonia”. Apparently this isn’t the case at all, so my apologies, though I should also point out that the amplifiers were quite devoid of any ‘country of origin’ information.

Getting used to my new Naim *Statement* pre-amplifier has proved quite tricky. I initially purchased it primarily because I’ve been using Naim’s top pre-amp for some 40 years, and the newcomer certainly sounds quite wonderful. But it does seem to have been designed with little reference to the company’s earlier *NAC552*, which I used at the heart of my hi-fi system for well over a decade, and therefore became very familiar with its facilities and vicissitudes.

Moving to the *Statement* involved a number of changes that were largely unexpected. The reduction in the number of inputs (from six to five) was a bit inconvenient, as was the lack of ‘record output’ socketry, both of which are particularly useful in a review context. However, the most irritating omission was the lack of a stereo/mono switch, which I consider is vital for replaying mono albums. I’m still happy to have made the change, but will have to make a few lifestyle adjustments, and will continue to miss that mono button.

Nigel Finn has sent his apologies for the absence of his *Rock & Pop* reviews in this issue. We actually met and chatted during the Bristol show at the end of February, and he fully intended to send me his copy by the end of the following week. Midweek, however, he visited a doctor who definitely pressed the wrong button on his back, leaving him in considerable pain and quite unable even to sit down, let alone write 1500 words. As a person of above average height myself, I have enormous sympathy with Nigel, wishing him well and hoping that he’ll be better in time for our next edition. In the meantime he suggests readers should check out a new 32-track 2xCD or 4xLP release called *Nightbird* from the late Eva Cassidy, which comprises the complete Blues Alley live concert and includes eight previously unreleased tracks.

Paul Messenger
 Editor

NOTE

Readers may note that subscription rates went up for 2016 (eg to £65 UK) and thus we are requesting top ups for old subscription payments. New subs are set automatically at the new rate (£76 for EU and £84 USA and Rest of World). Thanks, Martin Colloms