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This is the final HIFICRITIC editorial for Volume 13, 2019: from the new year, we are planning to expand HIFICRITIC, increasing the number of pages from 60 to 64. Unfortunately, this goes hand in hand with our first price increase for five years – despite ongoing price rises for print, paper and editorial content, and still more so for postal rates. Currently UK annual subscription rates for HIFICRITIC are £65, or £17 per single issue inclusive of postage; overseas rates *pro rata*. The new UK price will be £20 per issue inclusive of postage, and a discounted rate of £75 for our four quarterly issues (see our website for overseas rates).

Unfortunately, we endure a complication concerning PayPal, which manages the subscription database. Here the supply contract is between PayPal and you the subscriber, and may not be altered by HIFICRITIC, so with the new rate we'll have to ask renewing subscribers to cancel their old sub and resubscribe at the new rate – alternatively we will have to continue to request those pesky supplementary payments to top up your historic subscription rates.

We also plan to expand our website content with many more published reviews including music reviews, and also add a wealth of important feature articles. We'd appreciate your suggestions on this topic for HIFICRITIC

A fascinating variety of audio products are to be found in this issue, from the latest finely honed, remote controlled autotransformer volume control from Pal Nagy, the icOn4, to the current incarnation of the Pro-Ject Classic Evo record player.

We scored again on vinyl with the amazing Rega RP10, penned by Jason Kennedy, while Rafael Todes dives deeply into the DCS Bartok and he joined me for the final listening tests to try it out with my Magicos.

Meanwhile the star feature review offering for this issue is a deep assessment of the remarkable Borg loudspeaker, designed and manufactured by Karl Heinz Fink with FinkTeam. The results are undeniably intriguing.

We also have a significant feature on wireless speakers from Andrew Everard, leading to a comprehensive assessment of the Bowers & Wilkins Formation Duo series, also joined by the popular KEF LSX streaming speakers, reviewed by yours truly. Our interest in all kinds of 'cable-free' loudspeakers continues with the Andrew Jones-designed Elac Navis ARF-51 active floorstanders, complete with wireless capability, and the new – and clearly improved – Naim Mu-so Qb 2.

In its latest incarnation the Eclipse TD-510z Mk2 single-driver loudspeaker is reviewed, both 'solo' and when partnered with the exceptionally fleetfooted TD-520 sealed-box, opposed-driver subwoofer, while tech guru Keith Howard has a thorough exploration of the theory, practice and value of subs for music.

Julian Musgrave gets stuck into interconnect cable auditioning, with perplexing results, while we report on the UK HiFi Show Live!, in its new venue at Ascot, for which most exhibitors felt that a repeat attendance was on the cards.

Andrew Everard tells the interesting story of Gato Audio, introducing the powerful DIA-250S NPM at a new price, complete with a review, while Chris Frankland checks out the pillar-like Spondor D9.2 floorstanding loudspeakers.

In a tribute to the still very active Manfred Eicher, founder of the outstanding ECM record label, we have a long-awaited in-depth feature from music guru Mark Prendergast: part one is in this issue, with more to come next time.

Finally there's the usual good complement of jazz, rock and classical music reviews, while our back page 'industry opinion' is penned by Karl Heinz Fink himself.

Martin Colloms
Editor-in-Chief