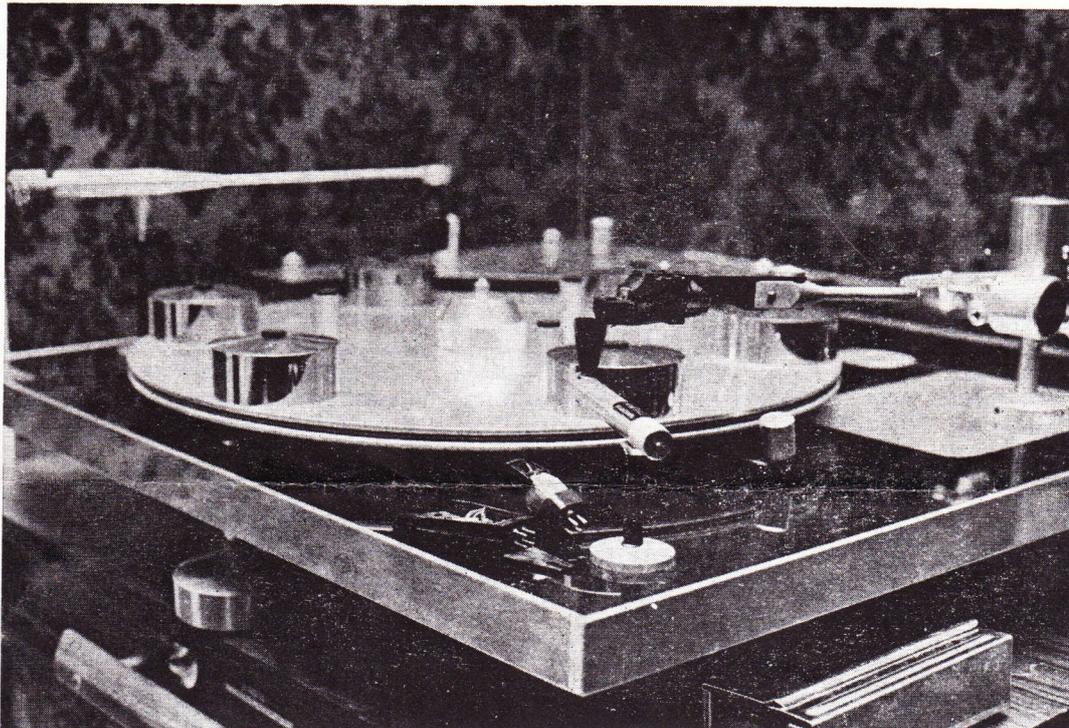


Q I've recently been rather lucky and have acquired a sufficient number of £p's to set up a good quality audio system. The trouble is that now I can afford a first class system I suddenly find I haven't got the first idea on what to spend my money. What would you buy if you were in my shoes?



Top system spotlight

When the difficult job of saving for an expensive system has ended, and the day on which the long-awaited visit to the dealers is at hand, it might safely be assumed that the problems are over, and only the rewards remain. Or is this the case?

It is easy to see that serious potential problems confront the buyer of a budget system.

The choice of units available is very large, the results are less than predictable, and there is always the budget to be considered with all its restrictions. At the top end of the market, the problems, although different, are no less complex and circumscribing. We can reasonably assume that the variety of products available will be somewhat lower, and that, with few exceptions, a certain standard of sound reproduction will have been achieved. One might almost expect a uniform 'sameness' of sound excellence.

It seems logical to expect only one type of perfection, and this should be an exact facsimile of the original sound, which in turn would be the same result from any manufacturer, or combination thereof.

Fortunately, at least for the manufacturers, we have yet to reach this state of the art, and indeed artistry seems still to play a virtually equal part to science in

the results we often experience! So, within the confines of availability, we still have some choice in the particular compromises that we can live with. Styling, ergonomics, and the compatibility with the decor of one's home can, however, be a matter for the latitudes of personal taste, and obviously the allure of fine workmanship, carefully monitored and brought to fruition will always be a major selling point, even when the other parameters have been finally ironed out, assuming that this should ever be the case!

It might almost seem that, having removed the major physical obstacle of expense, we were deliberately courting further difficulties, instead of enjoying the expected benefits. We hope that readers will not assume this to be the case, but realise that we are trying to rationalise the probable difficulties of this month's recommended high quality system in a logical manner, and show the reasoning behind our final choice, which has proved to be unique in combining the appeal of superb aesthetics and the enjoyment provided by professional standard sound reproducing equipment.

We have deliberately been more thorough than usual in our examination of the particular components, both in their assembly as an interconnected entity, and also individually in conjunc-

SYSTEM PROBLEMS

