

## YOUR VIEWS

# Sound Off!

Correspondents express their own opinions, not those of *Hi-Fi News*. We reserve the right to edit letters for publication. Correspondents using e-mail are asked to give their full postal address (which won't be published). Letters seeking advice will be answered in print on our Sound Off pages, but due to time constraints we regret we're unable to answer questions on buying items of hi-fi or any other hi-fi queries by telephone, post or via e-mail.

## EXPERIENCE OF SHM-CD? READER SEEKS VIEWS ON 'SUPER DISC' FORMAT

Do any of your reviewers have experience of the SHM-CD format? Recently I saw that Universal Japan had reissued the first five Budgie albums, so I went ahead and bought three of them.

I have just been listening to my favourite, *Bandolier*, which I have owned for 40 years on pre-recorded cassette, vinyl, CD and remastered CD. To my ears this is the best version of the lot, richer-sounding yet at the same time clearer (I made out some lyrics I never heard before).

My system includes an Oppo BDP-105 BD player and a pair of Linn Klimax 350A speakers.

*Angus Lang, via email*

Ken Kessler replies: I discussed SHM-CDs in depth back in January 2009, and have referred to them and the other Japan-only 'super' discs from time to time because they have impressed me enough to invest in them, despite prohibitive pricing.

They suit me as a reviewer in particular, because the titles I own are also in my regular CD and LP collections, so the comparisons are enlightening. SHM-CDs and SHM-SACDs (both of which use a protective

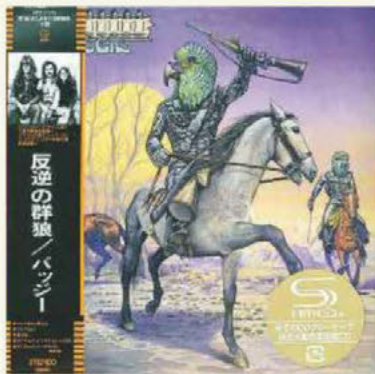


**ABOVE:** Ken Kessler explains SHM-CD's roots in LCD technology in *HFN* Jan '09

layer of superior transparency) and the later Blu-spec CDs (CDs pressed on Blu-ray stampers), have uniformly impressed me, especially SHM-SACDs given my predilection for 'regular' SACDs.

What all three seem to do is narrow the gap between the sound of digital carriers and analogue LPs, which remain my reference. To give you some idea of the scale of improvement, the difference is similar to that between a normal CD and a gold CD, and the main benefit is a matter of sonic refinement.

Because I am, in my dotage, less prone to absolutism in most things (save for wine, pickles and politics), I am happy to segue from FM radio to vinyl LP to SACD to streaming in a single listening session. But I do recommend that listeners try at least one favourite title on SHM-CD or SHM-SACD (or Blu-spec CD), despite the costs, which are typically £18-£30 per title. You will be pleasantly surprised! A good place to start your search is [www.cdjapan.co.jp](http://www.cdjapan.co.jp).



**ABOVE:** The 2016 SHM-CD version of *Bandolier* costs £23 from [amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk)

Send in your views to:  
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## Is my player an Hitachi clone?

THE GERMAN CD PLAYER WITH JAPANESE DNA

Having read the Vintage Review of the Hitachi DA-1000 CD player in the September issue I now wonder whether Dual marketed a clone of this player. This is because I have one in my collection that looks the same as the Hitachi.

*Remi Balestie, via email*

Tim Jarman replies: There was indeed a Dual version of the Hitachi DA-1000, Remi, and it was known as the CD 120. A few other lesser-known names (in the UK in any case) also took the Hitachi machine and produced their own badged versions: Brandt, Nordmende and Thomson to name but three. Hitachi rivalled Philips in this respect, although Philips must still be able to lay claim for having the largest number of OEM derivatives for any one model.

As for Dual itself, the company was well-known for budget turntables in the UK but its full German range included complete systems, some of them quite ambitious. It was natural therefore for the company to want to get into CD as quickly as possible.

Dual ceased trading in 1982 and was sold to French company Thomson SA. In 1988 the brand returned to its homeland when Thomson sold Dual to German manufacturer Schneider Rundfunkwerke AG.

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