

Hi-fi music systems have simple designs

The sense of hearing is indeed a gift to mankind. Apart from its practical use, a subtler appreciation comes in the form of music. In other kingdoms of nature, this sense has developed only as an extension of the survival instinct. Not so with humans. We can actually heighten the joy of living by applying this sense perception to beautiful sounds in the form of music.

The basis of entertainment is sound and its application to vision. In modern times, a music system is a very basic requirement. These systems come in various shapes and sizes, and naturally various price ranges. High End audio systems are very expensive. They could even cost a couple of lakhs of rupees. However, not all expensive systems are High End.

The aim of any High End music system is an authentic reproduction of the original sound source. No other fancies are taken into consideration. Looks are not important. Sound is the ultimate goal.

A Low End and a High End music system will have the same basic principles. There will also be a similarity of components like amplifiers, cassette decks, CD players etc. The difference lies in the superiority of the quality of electronic components used in the High End systems, the circuit designs and the design goals.

You may be surprised to know that a Low End music system actually has more special features like

remote controls, double cassette deck, complicating tone controls, jazzy looks, whereas a High End system may end up looking up like a crate and may not even have a simple tone control for bass and treble.

Audiophiles using such systems often find the need to use accessories like interconnecting cables which could be as expensive as \$5,000 for a metre. These cables

are used to link up the amplifier to the cassette decks and so on. A regularly available cable can be as cheap as Rs20. Speaker cables could be a little more expensive.

The phenomenal costs of these are not because they may be made of gold but because a lot of research has gone behind them and their production techniques are expensive. To an audiophile who can afford it, money then becomes

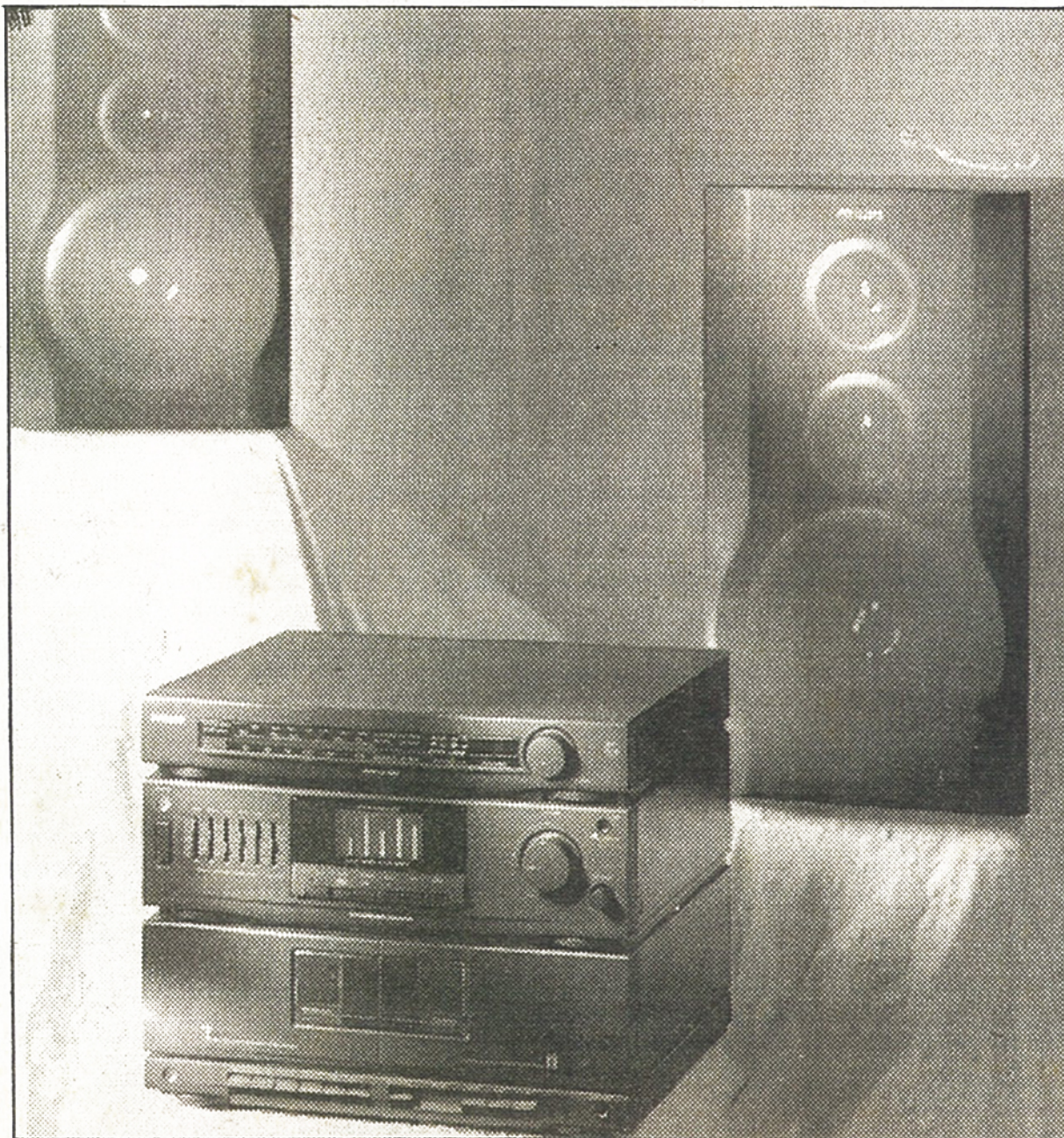
just a piece of paper. If there is any piece of equipment which will help preserve the authenticity of the original sound then it must be had.

A High End music system is like a Ferrari. It requires constant care. Believe it or not, the users are never fully satisfied with its performance. They are always fine-tuning and tweaking the system and the surroundings to upgrade its performance.

A High End system user is not really looking for enjoyment of the music but would like to be enthralled by the system's performance or the changes in its performance levels brought about by his ingenious tweaks. He either feels great about how the system sounds or is totally depressed. Rarely does an audiophile sit down to listen to music.

Not all companies manufacture such equipments. In fact, companies that do are not commonly known. To name a few, Jeff Rowland, Conrad Johnson, Mark Levinson are all known for their amplifiers and pre-amplifiers. Thiel Audio and Wilson Audio are both known for speakers. Monster Cables, Van Der Hull, Straight Wire are known for great cables.

The thing with super hi-fi is that there is no end. Achieving musical realism at home depends on selecting the proper hardware and optimally installing it in the listening room.



Sanjay Malvi