

# hi-fi news

THE HOME OF REAL HI-FI

& Record Review

## ULTIMATE HI-FI

2010 – the year's finest products & vintage audio heroes

rarely recorded **HOLST**  
**THE PLANETS**  
SIR ADRIAN BOULT  
London Philharmonic Orchestra  
Gustav Meitner Choir

### VINYL ICON GUSTAV HOLST

Out of this world: The Planets Suite

'We originally  
built 50 but  
sold 30,000'

Audio Milestone, p116

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- The Best Music of 2010
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- Opinion: our columnists speak out
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- Hi-Fi @ Home: corner horns and the hi-fi museum



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• **TURNTABLES** Amazon to Thorens • **DIGITAL PLAYERS** Cambridge to Simaudio Moon  
• **AMPLIFIERS** Devialet D-Premier to Pass Labs • **LOUDSPEAKERS** B&W to Wilson Audio

UK £4.00 US \$9.99 Aus \$9.95



hi-finews  
EDITOR'S  
CHOICE

AUDIO  
FILE

Balanced preamp and stereo power amp. Rated at 30W Class A  
Made by: Luxman, Japan  
Supplied by: Select Audio  
Telephone: 01900 813064  
Web: www.luxman.co.jp; www.selectaudio.co.uk



## Luxman C-600f/ M-600A (£5995 each)

**W**ith the C-600f preamp and the M-600A stereo power amplifiers, Luxman has delivered its interpretation of current generation solid-state excellence. The power amp offers balanced or single-ended operation, the option of converting it into a bridged

*'Their best is a marriage of detail and warmth... just like a Krell KSA-50'*

monoblock of up to a specified 120W/8ohm, plus a couple of neat touches on the back. Like all new Lux products, an indicator tells you with the press of a button if your mains polarity is correct. Another rear panel delight is a quartet of the largest speaker terminals I've ever seen, a nod to those who like tight terminals, but with an aperture for banana plugs.

The C-600f, meanwhile, can accept two balanced sources, five unbalanced, tape in/out via RCA phonos, and two sets of main outs, both available in balanced or unbalanced mode. Also included are on/off triggers, its own mains polarity tester and an earthing post.

Both units show clean faces to the world. The power amp has LEDs to indicate standby, balanced operation and bridged mode while lights glow from the sides of the square panel to indicate power levels. The preamp's display is more conventional, with text readouts to indicate source, volume settings and other modes.

**A NEW EXPERIENCE**  
What always seems to separate the good from the great is the airiness on the right channel percussion during Jimi Hendrix's 'The Wind Cries Mary'. It's a silky wash that

favours tube playback. As open as you could want, the performance had a sense of space that – even though you know it's an artificial, studio-bound soundfield – rendered speakers invisible. And yet the open terrain, the spacious stage which seemed to have had its boundaries extended, was far from the system's greatest virtue. That it was, like all well-designed solid-state hardware of no evident compromise, ghostly silent, with those black velvet backgrounds against which to present the sounds, is almost a given. The Luxman combination did such a sterling job with transparency that we were able to discern layering even with mono recordings, like the take of 'Piggies' from The Beatles' *White Album*.

Vocals were an area where we expected negatives to emerge. Perhaps we'd experience a dearth of warmth, maybe a trace of sibilance. Nope – Alicia Keys' prodigious talents were amplified, her 'Ode To New York' possessing a poignancy that proved far more elusive in other systems. And while in no way detrimental to the overall performance, the experience was strengthened by a new intimacy. Which is, after all, what a good system should convey when intimacy is appropriate.

### VERDICT

You'd be hard-pressed to suggest that one unit here dominates the other in establishing the character of the performance. So, while both proved fascinating partners with other makes, they deserve each other to deliver their best. And their best is a marriage of detail and warmth reminiscent of a Krell KSA-50. Truly delicious. ☺

**ABOVE: Amp LEDs indicate standby, balanced operation and bridged status; we don't recommend stacking due to Class-A heat generation, but the two look great this way!**

### HI-FI NEWS SPECIFICATIONS

Power output (<1% THD, 8/4ohm)	115W / 200W
Dynamic power (<1% THD, 8/4/2/1ohm)	120W / 225W / 380W / 590W
Output impedance (20Hz–20kHz)	0.030–0.075ohm
Freq. resp. (pre/power, 20Hz–100kHz)	+0.0 to –3.9dB/+0.0 to –3.1dB
Input sensitivity (pre/power)	267mV (0dBV)/102mV (0dBW)
A-wtd S/N ratio (pre/power)	96.2dB (0dBV)/83.9dB (0dBW)
Distortion (pre/power, 20Hz–20kHz)	0.002–0.008%/0.0002–0.03%
Power consumption (Idle/Rated o/p)	265W/315W (4W standby)
Dimensions (WHD, pre/power)	440x117x407/440x189x420mm