

Music to move the soul

A great composition can swing our emotions
and bring joy and peace to the heart



Visitors to the store can try out equipment in the sound proofed acoustic studio.
內的隔音試聽室提供優質音響設備，供顧客試聽。

Listening to music is one of life's joys. It can lift the spirit, and make us feel good. That's why, psychologists say, people tend to sing in the shower, or tap along to a favourite tune. Simply letting one's mind be swept away by music that's inspiring can be the greatest tonic in the world.

It can be therapeutic, too. A medical study by London's Chelsea and Westminster Hospital has found that, in addition to measurable physiological benefits, music reduces blood pressure, lowers the heart rate, and de-stresses the mind.

The love of music is universal. Shakespeare likened music to "the food of love". Music, it's been said, is "what feelings sound like". As the great composer Ludwig van Beethoven wrote, "music is the mediator between the spiritual and the sensual life." In modern times, even author J.K. Rowling, who kept the world spellbound with her Harry Potter series, is a fan. "Ah, music," she has famously said. "A magic beyond all we do here!"

Just as beauty may be in the eye of the beholder, so too can individuals hear sound differently. While the average hi-fi listener might be content to merely enjoy a song or a tune on a reasonable quality system, purists seek exceptional sonic performance. The most enthusiastic of these music devotees, who will settle for nothing less than top-end audio equipment, are known as audiophiles.

Audiophiles live for the sweet sound of music. They can spend their whole lives – and vast sums of money – in pursuit of the perfect sound.

One audiophile describes the exquisite sensation of

being lifted up by music to a place of perfect peace. It sets the mind totally free to become so totally absorbed that you forget where you are. In one blissful instant, they explain, the listener is no longer at home, but transported to the most exquisite concert hall, in a front-row performance by the finest orchestra in the world.

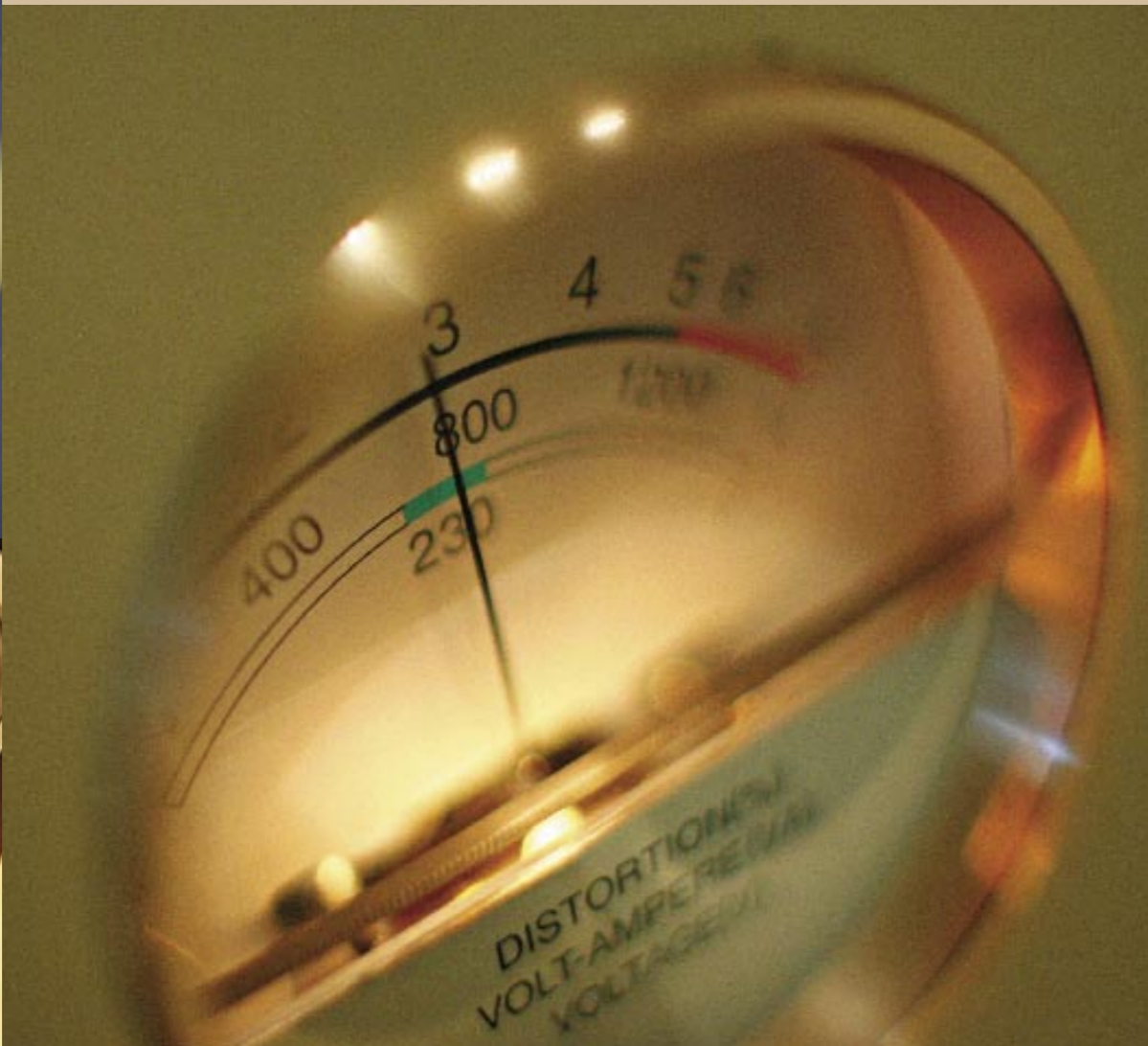
Such music gives a feeling of warmth, serenity and comfort. And that is why audiophiles will spend a small fortune on equipment – because, they say, it really does make a difference.

It's not always easy to track down the latest and best audio equipment, and more importantly, to test it first hand. Which is why the opening of the Best Denki in MegaBox would have been music to the ears of hi-fi purists.

This expansive modern megastore is the biggest home electronics outlet in Hong Kong. It also introduces the city's only dedicated professional acoustic studio – a specially designed sound room where customers are welcome to sit down and relax, and hear and compare hi-fi components from leading international brands.

One of the key advantages, however, goes beyond the product range. Music enthusiasts will often linger there for hours, enjoying the company of kindred spirits who also share their passion.

Of course, perfection doesn't come easily. There is no simple formula to integrating amplifiers, CD players and speakers. As with tuning a fine musical instrument, it takes a trained ear, as well as patience. Answers are only found when dials are tweaked or speakers repositioned, allowing comparisons to be made.



The best, most stylish equipment is needed to create the purest sounds. 要體驗細緻完美的音響效果，就需要最先進的高級音響設備。

This is very important, says Henry Au-Yeung, the store's director and chief merchandiser. "You should be able to test each one – otherwise, how do you know what you are buying?"

He explains that high-end audio is a lifestyle choice. Professional success brings the means to afford privileges that bring joy and comfort to life. Many successful people want an exquisite hi-fi in their homes, for their own relaxation and their family's enjoyment. In this purpose-designed space, they can experience what the music would sound like in their own living room.

Here, the wall coverings, ceiling height, even the floor carpets all feature anti-reflection sound-absorbing materials and diffusers, enabling the listener to hear more of the speakers, and less of the noises around them. Close the sound-proof glass door and you are transported to a place of blissful acoustic perfection.

Many customers will have researched online the latest products from names like British brand Cyrus, Accuphase from Japan, Marantz from the United States, and Chario from Italy, and are keen to discuss them with the store's specialised consultants.

The opportunity for hi-fi customers to meet with other enthusiasts comes in special events organised periodically at the store. One day it might be an educational seminar, or the debut release of an anticipated new product. At other times learned customers might be invited to participate in a focus group to test and provide feedback on products not yet released on the market.

New customers are often surprised to find such high-end audio equipment available in a chain store. Throughout the store there are comfortable armchairs and sofas, offering a quiet place for a few moments' rest.

This is true lifestyle shopping, for those who appreciate the best.

完美音樂此中尋

聽音樂是人生樂事。它能振奮人心，令人心情暢快。難怪心理學家說，人喜歡在洗澡時唱歌，或隨著喜愛的旋律打拍子。音樂可說是世上最有效的興奮劑。

倫敦撒爾西及西敏寺醫院的一項醫學研究發現，音樂對身心有益，能降低血壓、減慢心跳及舒緩精神壓力。

人對音樂的熱愛，無分彼此。莎士比亞把音樂比作「愛的食糧」；也有說音樂是「表達情感的聲音」。正如偉大的作曲家貝多芬寫道：「音樂是靈與慾的中介。」就連憑藉哈利波特系列風靡全球的現代作家羅琳，亦同樣為音樂著迷，她的名句是「音樂啊，是超越凡人的魔法！」。

所謂「情人眼裡出西施」，每個人對音色的要求及感覺都有所不同。對一般人來說，普通音響播放出來的歌曲或旋律，已足以滿足他們的要求；音響發燒友則追求卓越的音色；至於音響狂迷，就只有最優質、最頂級的音響設備，才能成為他們的心頭好。

這群愛玩高級音響的人，為美妙的音樂而活，他們願意花上畢生時間，大灑金錢，為的只是追求完美的音色。

據其中一位形容，音樂可調和強烈的情緒和感覺，讓人達至平和的境界。它令精神釋放，讓人陶醉其中，渾然忘我。他們解釋，高級音響可令人於頃刻間，恍如離家走進宏偉的演奏廳，欣賞世界頂尖樂團在他們面前奏樂。

這種音樂可帶來和暖、平靜、閒適的感覺，正好說明為何愛好高級音響的人，願意花錢添置器材，因為正如他們所說，音質的確截然不同。

要覓得最新、最佳的音響設備實非易事，能否作第一手測試是一個關鍵。這正解釋為何香港最好電器在MegaBox開業時，音響發燒友如此欣喜若狂。

這間時尚大型旗艦店，是香港最大的家居電器影音專門店，它引進本地首個經特別設計的專業音響系統專區，讓顧客安坐其中，欣賞和比較各國國際知名品牌的音響設備。

其實這專區最吸引人之處，不僅在於其多元化的產品，對熱愛音樂的人來說，他們還喜歡花數小時在那裡跟志同道合的人互相分享和交流。

當然，完美難求，要把揚聲器、CD播放器、擴音機組合在一起，將器材調校至完美無雜音並非易事，除了要有一對訓練有素的耳朵外，還講求耐性，需要經過仔細的調校，或改變揚聲器的擺位，再經過不斷測試比較，才能呈現完美音色。

香港最好電器董事兼採購部主管歐陽先生認為那是非常重要的事。他說：「每套組合都必須經過測試，否則你怎知道自己買了什麼？」

他解釋，高級音響是一種生活享受。只要經濟上負擔得起，便可花錢締造舒適愉快的生活環境。因此，不少成功人士都想在家添置一組優質的音響器材，讓自己和家人消閒享受。在店內這個刻意營造的空間裡，顧客可感受到音響器材放在家裡的真正效果和感覺。

這裡的牆身、樓底，甚至地毯都做到吸聲和防迴音設計，顧客主要只會聽到揚聲器播放的聲音，而不受周圍雜音的騷擾。只要關上隔音的玻璃門，顧客隨即進入一個完美愉快的音樂空間。

很多顧客會在網上搜尋各個品牌的最新產品，包括英國著名的Cyrus、日本的Accuphase、美國的Marantz及意大利的Chario等，他們還喜歡與店內的專業顧問交流。

店內會定期舉行活動，讓一眾音響顧客及發燒友互相交流。有時候會舉辦專題研討會，或是全新產品的簡介會；有時又會邀請熟客參與意見小組，對未推出市場的產品進行測試或給予意見。

對於連鎖店有這樣完備的音響設備專區，很多新顧客都感到很驚訝。此外，店內到處都是舒適的扶手椅和沙發，讓顧客在寧靜的環境下，享受片刻悠閒。

對追求完美的人來說，這才是最佳的消費模式、最好的生活享受。