

Turning point

David Price tells the story of the design that changed the course of Linn loudspeakers – the long lost Nexus LS250

Never let it be said that Linn loudspeakers are uncontroversial, and nor have they ever been. Every box to come out of the company's Glasgow factory has always got enthusiasts arguing about its relative merits. There has never been a time when a Linn speaker has glided by attracting little in the way of comment, and this was especially true of the company's first range (Isobarik, Sara and Kan), which was developed back in the seventies.

Although highly able in some respects, these speakers were quite flawed in others – as was the competition. So when the time came to replace Linn's first generation in the mid-eighties, it was a tough challenge. This was not least because many audiophiles had built their systems around existing Linn speakers, and wouldn't take kindly to a dramatic change in the way it did things.

Enter Dr Rod Crawford, the new chief Linn loudspeaker designer. Born

in Tasmania, Australia, he had an illustrious academic career with a first-class honours degree in applied science at Melbourne University, majoring in physics and metallurgy, and a doctor of philosophy from the Department of Materials Science at Oxford University. In 1985 he found himself working with "an extremely good" industrial designer (Alastair Brown, who was a graduate of the Glasgow School of Art) and two "excellent" model makers, to produce the Nexus LS250.

Linn's names have often been nonsensical or just plain odd, but this new moniker spoke volumes. It was literally the intersection between the old world of Linn speakers and the modern generation that you see today, the model that crossed over from the old to the new. The LS250 suffix came from the fact that it was originally intended to sell for £250 in the UK, apparently. In the great scheme of the company's many products, the Nexus has virtually been forgotten today,



The story of Linn Products

1973

Ivor Tiefenbrun launches the company, while Pink Floyd release *Dark Side Of The Moon*



1974

Linn follows the Sondek LP12 turntable with its Isobarik speaker as *Tubular Bells* debuts



1978

Birth of the Asak moving-coil cartridge for the LP12 and *Rumours* to put it on



1986

The Nexus LS250 is introduced, while Madonna's *True Blue* becomes the best-selling album of the year



