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The growth and evolution of the audio industry since World War II has been astonishing. The speed of technological innovation, from portable radios to MP3 players, has been matched only by the proliferation of designs created for these icons of contemporary life. Furniture-style radiogram consoles have given way to sleek metallic exteriors, but audio equipment remains one of the ultimate design statements, reflecting popular culture, consumer aspirations and new developments in sound and engineering. This book traces the development of audio design by decade, from the LP record, the birth of hi-fi and the first transistors in the 1950s, through the Japanese hi-fi boom of the 60s and 70s, the CD and the Walkman in the 80s, to the MP3 and DVD players of today. A specification is provided for each piece, along with a history of the design and its place in the development of both the audio industry and contemporary music.

In addition, special features are included in each chapter on the music and culture of the time, highlighting the ongoing relationship between hi-fi design and popular culture. A wide range of high-quality audio design is gathered together, including work by major figures such as Dieter Rams, Marco Zanuso and Philippe Starck, and each piece of equipment is illustrated.