

His Master's Toys

From Innovation to Master Innovation – Clearaudio is taking things to another level, in the truest sense of the word: With a second platter and magnetic coupling it is growing towards the „Statement“.



by: Stefan Schickedanz

Men love to tinker. What started as a child with Lego, Fischer Technik or a Märklin metal building set, often continues as doing DIY around the house, in the garden and on a motorbike. But when it comes to this record player, the journey is not the destination. In my mind I was already playing my favourite records when I realised: first work, then play. With lofty expectations I enter the listening room and stand, facing the imposing stack of three big numbered boxes. First, a deep intake breath, I mutter something unprintable under my breath – and because I'm a non-smoker, I didn't first pop outside the door for a ciggie to calm the nerves, but instead, rolled up my sleeves and started by opening box no. 1 of 3.

Did Clearaudio by any chance include an elaborate base with the new „Statement“ , or what other reason could there be for so many boxes? At least the Franconian Vinyl-Masterminds managed to awaken my curiosity more than anyone else has been able to do for quiet some time.

Then I open the second box and marvel at a similar sight: Did Clearaudio send the same turntable twice? This quickly proves not to be the case as soon as I look at the instructions. The people from Erlangen have sent us the Master Innovation as a multilayer sandwich construction with a non-contact magnetic drive, which the world has so far only seen on

„Statement“, which costs in excess of € 100.000. Also on there are: the Clearaudio magnetic bearings with two ring magnets for both bearing halves, and an antimagnetic ceramic shaft.

The lower unit looks like an Innovation-deck with steel subplatters and a thick turntable manufactured from POM – a teflon-like synthetic material. In its upper surface more than two dozen small high-performance magnets are embedded in circular arrangements.

The upper part has higher supports, which are put down directly onto the lower turntable. That makes space for another hanging acrylic plate, which also has circular magnets on its lower side positioned in a mirror image to the ones above. Through the effect of same pole repulsion, the lower drive platter will, after the assembly of the second level, push it upwards until it hits the triangular mounting profile of the multi-layered aluminium and acrylic inserts (also with wooden inserts on request) and can't be turned by the lower plate. Only after the top turntable, which consists of two parts, has been mounted – it is identical to the one in Innovation – can it turn freely.

The heavy weight pushes it down and it floats gently and elegantly, spring-mounted like a hovercraft on its magnetic bearings.

With wide-eyed marvel, I continue with the assembly of the tone arm. In this case, Clearaudio has delivered a Universal 12". I position the light metal and carbon piece of German engineering

artwork with the care with which you would handle a raw egg. With a spacer ring and headless screws I position the arm to its correct height and mount with even more care still another Franconian speciality: the cartridge Titanium V2 – also a Clearaudio MC system with gold

coils. With ample curiosity, I take my chronograph from the pocket of my jacket that is hanging over the back of the chair. Before I took it off in order to protect it from the strong bearing magnets, I started the stop watch to measure the amount of time needed for the assembly.

After more or less exactly one and a half hours, I was able to start the stylish monument with the touch of a button on the speed selection dial integrated in one of the three columns together with the motor. Everything was working exactly as it should thanks to the exempla-

ry instruction manual, which has coloured illustrations for each step and provides easy to understand commentary on what needs to be done. If by chance, the manufacturers of the monstrous Japanese AV control units or the designer of many of the European design stereos read this,



Attractive appearance: Consisting of two Innovation turntables, this Master Innovation has not only magnetic bearings, but also a magnetic coupling system, acting between two heavy acrylic platters for a contact-free transfer of power. The magnets are embedded in a ring on the platters facing each other, and therefore repel each other. The effect: the upper platter and the two sub-platters float on a magnetic cushion, so the vibrations of the motor remain trapped in the bottom part.

”

Robert Suchy, Manager of Clearaudio

„If you already own an Innovation, you can upgrade to a Master Innovation for half the price of around 7,000 Euro“

then I have one bit of advice to give you: Send your engineers to be trained in Erlangen, in order to learn how to produce really good instruction manuals.

There, they can also take a lesson in

precision engineering and watch how the 308 millimetre long radial tonearm Universal 12", with its capacity to finely adjust the Azimuth and the VTAs (Vertical Tracking Angle), is created by hand. The

pre-assembled counter weight fitted nicely to the 9 gram heavy Titanium V2, and therefore I didn't need to wait long much longer for the sound check, during which I had to face the same problem as

Mass product: There are very few record players in the world that consist of two heavy turntables with subplatters and a hanging subplatter.



people, when they go to a concert and the artist performing is - simply put - a stunner. I couldn't tear my gaze away from this Franconian monument; on the one hand appearing as solid as the city walls of Nuremberg themselves, while on the other, displaying an unparalleled filigree finesse.

Even without having to close your eyes you could dive into the deeply into the music. The relatively high tracking force of 2.8 grams allows the needle to amazingly „scrape“ each and every oh so small nuance out of the vinyl. This is the way, that a vinyl record needs to sound today in order to make people sit up and listen: crystal clear, sharply contoured and full of information about the acoustic space throughout. With Pink Floyd's „Dark Side Of The Moon“ you can hear each ever-so-subtle echo effect in their utmost clarity. Equally convincing was the traceable and smooth dying away of the notes. These qualities also stood out to great effect for Sara Ks „In The Groove“. Impulses were crisp and sharp.

But what I really liked and what conveyed the reading proficiency of the

whole system of turntable, tone arm and MC system most convincingly was the bass range. When it came to aspect, Clearaudio dream-team's approach was extremely sharp and focussed on delivering that bass. With this device, you can explore the lower octave levels in all their detail. It almost felt, as if the record grooves were as big as the Mariana Trench and the listener could dive with a special submarine into its deepest nooks and recesses in order to illuminate everything perfectly with its spotlights. That gave classical music with its kettle drums the necessary authority, but also made jazz records like Benny Goodman's „Christopher Columbus“ („40th Anniversary Concert“) sound fantastic, where the drum-heads seem to be tightened just that bit more for the drum solo.

Also great: Voices sound free and uncompressed, with an excellent clarity. If you expect warm and thick luscious tone colours from a record player, you might find this configuration of the rather brightly tuned Master innovation a little mundane. But nobody can complain about a lack of information. <



Test-LP

Peter Gabriel
– I

Peter Grabiels first solo album offers much musical variety and is full of sound experiments. In comparison, the current work of the ex-Genesis lead singers seems almost monotonous.



The Author

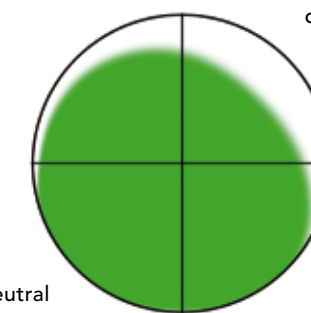
Stefan
Schickedanz

He brought some of his records to the listening test, that he had been listening to 35 years ago. Back then he worked meticulously on his record players and cared well for his records by attaching an automatic record cleaning brush. That's why they still sound good today.

AUDIophile Character

effortlessly
spacious soft

thrilling
emotional
dynamic



AUDIophile Potential



Recommendation

This technical monument creates a perfect optical and acoustic harmony with its Universal 12" arm and the MC system Titanium V2 by Clearaudio.

Clearaudio Master Innovation

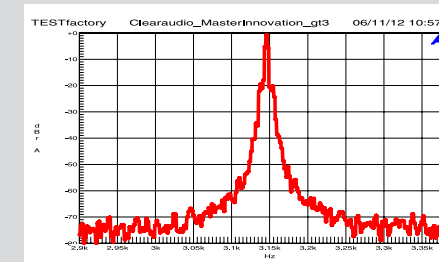
List price: €17,000
Warranty Period: 5 years
Weight: 58,5kg
Dimensions (W x H x D):
44 x 42 x 50 cm
Surfaces: Panzerholz (high density
plywood), Transparent or black
piano lacquer

Sales:

Clearaudio
Spardorfer Straße 50
D-91054 Erlangen
Germany

Phone: +49 (0) 91 31 / 59 59 5
Internet: www.clearaudio.de

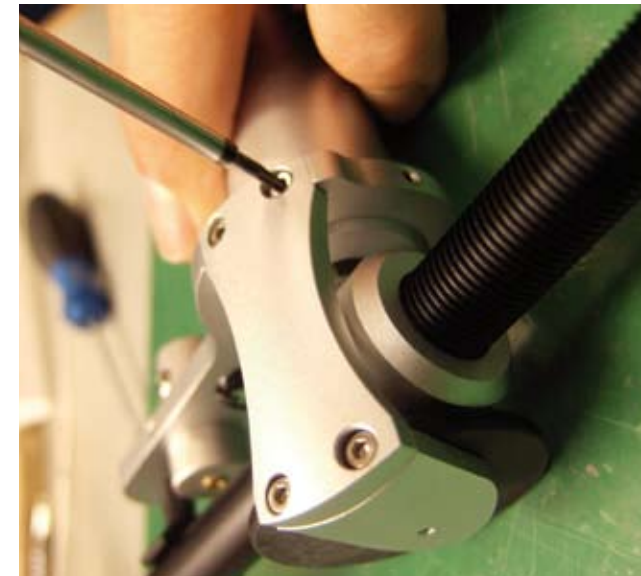
Synchronisation



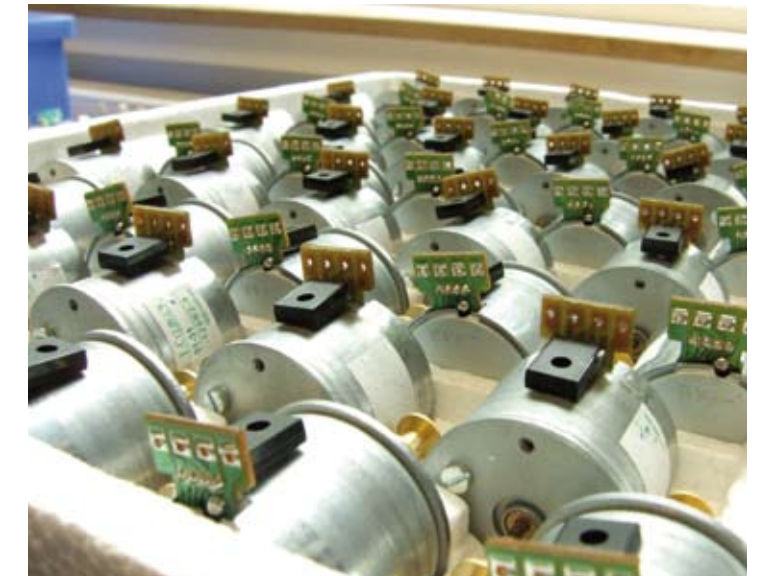
A needle-like narrow peak of the synchronisation analysis shows a perfectly running turntable without any signs of wow and flutter (below $\pm 0.058\%$ weighted). Subsonic noise and drive noise are near the measuring limits and basically non-existing (not shown).

The family business Clearaudio is currently in the process of being passed over to the second generation. With their taking over of the reins, the three siblings Veronika, Patrick and Robert will continue the life's work of Peter Suchy – meaning continued business growth.

By: Stefan Schickedanz



Clearaudio tone arms are built in-house by the hands of experienced specialists at their work bench.



A range of freshly delivered motors, ready for assembly into the company's record players.

Family Business

Idyllic as in a picture book: Clearaudio manufactures out in fresh air, in a section of woodlands in Erlangen. The electronics company Siemens used to make X-Ray films here, which required particularly clean air.

Siemens has ceased production in the meantime, but one of its former engineers found here the ideal conditions for the production of his absolutely high-end record players. The founder of Clearaudio, Peter Suchy possess not only a significant amount of knowledge about audio

playback, he is also a pioneer in the field of fuel cells. Suchy's children in the sister company Nextpem, would like to launch a mini power station onto the market, which would supply sophisticated high-enders with especially clean and stable electricity from their own mini power generating station.

Peter Suchy, who is currently in the throws of handing over the company's management to his sons Patrick and Robert and their sister Veronika, has shaped the marketing of his products over the

last three decades with his daring ideas. His products are today exported to more than 70 countries worldwide. That way, the music lover from Franconia brought the extraordinary linear tone arm to series-production – the Statement TT1 and its derivatives TT2 and TT3. The cartridge is pulled along the groove while hanging from a thread. Suchy's research and production in his own company grew steadily over the years, and will soon extend over the whole of the building complex. Peter Suchy takes us on a tour of the

management areas responsible for the marketing, export and operative arms of the business, and not without pride, shows us many examples of the extraordinary and extensive depth of production: „Clearaudio is a proper manufacturing facility, which does more than just assemble ready made parts“.

The workforce in Erlangen has metalworking machines with the latest CNC technology for turned parts (such as bearings) and work benches, where not only the final assembly of all record players takes place, but also the gluing of the wooden and metal parts of the Statement, which costs in excess of € 100,000.

Especially steady hands are needed by the specialists that assemble the cartridges, when they wind the tiny coils un-

der a magnifying glass. The adjustment of the flagship Goldfinger Statement alone requires four to five days.

Characteristic for Clearaudio is not only the technology behind the products, but also their marketing – a prime example being the highly professional website with its own online shop. And the showroom in Erlangen not only allows the developers to work on the acoustic fine tuning of products – customers will also get an overview of the fantastic and fascinating range of products.

Here are also the high quality recorder and mixing boards to be found, which are used for a further speciality of Clearaudio – their own, lovingly remastered and in the analogue community highly regarded vinyls.



The assembly of the tone arm requires steady hands, patience, and most of all skill



Two generations in the record player dynasty: Patrick, Peter, Robert and Veronika Suchy (from left).

In his museum-like office, Peter Suchy is constantly developing new ideas



The construction department relies on the latest CAD programs.



Electromagnetically shielded chamber for perfect measurements.



The "Statement" is built by hand in the workshop.