

Pro-Ject Debut III



A new tonearm graces the latest incarnation of this popular and affordable turntable

Pro-Ject Debut III

Over the past few years I have reviewed several iterations of the Pro-Ject Debut turntable and found each to offer a level of performance that belied the price. Here we have the Debut III, the obvious visual change from previous models being a new tonearm. This is a one-piece arm-tube mounted on what the company describes as 'inverted horizontal bearings, consisting of two hardened stainless-steel points

range and has a claimed output of 4mV, making it suitable for most m-m phono stages. There's also a deluxe version of the deck, with built-in Speed Box variable speed controller and Phono Box phono stage, for just £180.

The Debut III proved easy to set up, merely requiring the arm counterweight to be fitted and balanced, and the anti-skate weight placed on the appropriate notch of the three available. (I found the middle position to give the best results with the OM5E's 1.75g tracking force.) Once the platter and felt mat were in position all that was

enjoying the performance but being aware that the cohesiveness of the presentation began to disappear when the music headed towards *fortissimo* sections.

Playing the same recording with the Debut III revealed a more solid and deeply textured sound. Not only was there a fuller and better shaped body to the sound of the cello, but the playing seemed to have a bit more passion and intensity to it. The attack of du Pré's bow on the strings was now determined and precise, and the whole piece had greater energy in its rhythm and flow.

Once again Pro-Ject offers excellent value for money in both build quality and performance, and the new arm offers serious cartridge upgrading potential to release the latent capabilities of this well thought out deck. Add plinths in a range of colours at £15 extra and you've a winner. ■

Tony Bolton

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Hi-FiNews verdict

The Debut III comes in a range of finishes, with options for speed control, and represents a further advance in performance. Pro-Ject's new tonearm offers the potential for a better cartridge to be fitted.

It took a matter of just a few minutes of listening to spot the greater maturity in both size and presentation of the sound

bearing in sapphire cushions'. These are located in a gimbal style of bearing housing. The motor is also new, and is said to be quieter than the original. It is decoupled from the plinth by a rubber band suspension, and drives the 1.3kg sheet steel platter via a flat section drive belt. The chrome-plated stainless steel hub spindle runs on a polished ball-bearing in a brass housing.

The deck still measures 415 x 320 x 118mm (wdh) and comes with an Ortofon OM5E cartridge fitted as standard. This is the baby of the Ortofon

left to do was plug in the 16V output wall transformer, connect the pin to the back of the deck, insert the captive phono leads into a suitable input and play records!

It took just minutes of listening to hear a greater maturity in both the size and presentation of the sound. Although the preceding model was a good performer its limitations were apparent when presented with complex sounds. I remembered listening to Jacqueline du Pré's 1965 EMI recording of Elgar's Cello Concerto [ASD655] and