

# Pro-ject's latest looks a treat

**Pro-ject Tube Box**  
Phono stage  
£300

★★★★★

**FOR**

Full-bodied presentation, refinement, gusty dynamics

**AGAINST**

Finish could be slicker

**VERDICT**

The Tube Box sounds excellent with a wide range of music. Recommended

A VALVE PHONO stage sounds exotic, doesn't it? Such units are relatively rare, and usually cost a good deal more than Pro-ject's Tube Box. The company already makes a couple of phono stages to cater for its wide range of turntables (see the latest on p9), but this is the first time it has ventured away from the budget sector.

The result is a curious mix of quirky aesthetics and flexibility. Unlike most of the competition, this MM/MC unit gives the user the option to optimise performance for a specific cartridge through the use of dip switches on its base.

Built quality is solid, though finish lacks the polish of rivals such as Trichord's Award-winning Dino. Our unit's On/Off switch had a sticky action – further denting the impression of quality. Even so, we're willing to forgive the Tube Box's rough edges because it sounds so good. How good? Well it's right up there with the very best at the price point.

The Tube Box is a gutsy performer with a rich, full-bodied sound that works beautifully with a wide range of music.



Tube Box phono stage looks like nothing else, but will add plenty of detail to your sounds

LEADING RIVALS

**Trichord Dino**

£300 ★★★★★ Awards 2003

This nicely made box is flexible and sounds lovely – an Award winner

**Sonneteer Sedley**

£499 ★★★★★ June 1999

Pricier than the Tube Box: impresses with its transparency and resolution

*Ella and Louis* – the Louis Armstrong/Ella Fitzgerald duet disc – benefits from the phono stage's authority and impressive resolution. The unit's weighty presentation gives the performers a palpable presence between the speakers.

Move on to Nirvana's *Smells Like Teen Spirit* and the powerful bass drive comes to the fore. The timing is good, and dynamics are wonderfully vivid.

There aren't many star phono stages at this price, so we're happy to report the number of options has just doubled.