Subject: Re: Cheap Turntable?
Posted by hurdy_gurdyman on Mon, 16 Apr 2007 19:53:33 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

There are tons of decent turntables out there available for under $200. Some for under $100. Tables made from the late 50's through the early 90's can work great. Look for models that have good press from hobbyist in the various forums. This will give you an idea of which models to look for in any given brand. Popular brands include AR, Denon, Dual, Lenco, Pioneer, Technics, Thorens, and newer tables like Rega. There's no real reason to go more expensive until you hit lunatic-fringe in your needs. At this stage, I wouldn't worry to much about which drive system is used. They all are capable of great sound. Idlers and belts do need replacing (usually about every ten years or so), but are not real expensive. New belts cost about $5-$15, idler re-builds about $35-$45. You can have a machinist make a new idler wheel that uses O-rings. This will then cost you about a buck for a new one. It'll need to be precision ground, but this should only take a machinist about 10 minutes or less to do. I had one made, and it works great. All the different drive systems have pros and cons. In this price range, there's not a lot of advantages one way or another unless you plan on things like massive hand-made plinths and other not-so-easy tweeks.Look for tonearms that are low to medium mass. You don't want any of those high mass arms from the 50's and 60's. They did make some nice medium mass arms back then that sound pretty good with the right cartridge. Unfortunately, the better ones tend to cost more than I think you want to spend unless you get lucky. It happens sometimes. An old AR-XA (about $50 typically)has a medium mass tonearm with no anti-skate or anything but is amazing just how good it can sound, so don't judge just on complexity and features. Check around for others experiences. Heavy platters, as a rule, work better. I'd say about 3 or 4 pounds is the lowest one should consider. Direct drive tables tend to have the lightest platters because of the difficulties in their design, while belt drive tends to have the heaviest. Idlers tend to be in between with some rivaling some belt drives in weight. Again, once over about 4 pounds, I wouldn't make it a priority. They are all capable of good performance. It's just a bit easier to get a heavy platter smoothed out.There are some real nice vintage treasures out there just waiting for someone to use them again.Dave