Subject: OLD MC CARTRIDGES
Posted by Manualblock on Fri, 04 Jun 2004 23:42:17 GMT
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Like to bring some observations to the table. Many say that older MC carts. are bad for records due to the cantilever suspension components drying out and magnets losing strength. I have tried an older model Empire MC Gold on the Linn and cannot tell if there in fact is any degeneration. My older model Denon DL 103 is approaching 5 yrs. now and still sounds fresh compared with my buddies Denon of a newer vintage. I wonder if anyone has any info. or test results that can clarify this subject. Older MC's go very cheap compared to new models and I am contemplating having the Denon re-tipped. My control is a Shure Type 3 that is of course quite old but still compares favorably to the MC's. Two Grado's, a G2 and Green model round out the stable but I am not a big fan of them possibly due to the mass of the Ittok causing incompatibility problems. Any interest out there?

Subject: Re: OLD MC CARTRIDGES
Posted by Wayne Parham on Sat, 05 Jun 2004 05:21:35 GMT
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Interesting subject. I'd like to know if there is any concrete information as well.This isn't really the same thing, as it's a 1970's MM cartridge, but I'm quite fond of the Audio Technica AT20SL. It was sold as a limited edition unit and came in a wooden display case. I've managed to keep two of them in really good shape.I'm always concerned that needle replacement may become impossible. So far, there has always been a replacement that was suitable, having a high quality tip and cantilever. But the thing I worry about with turntables is losing the ability to service them, and needles are the primary concern. Belts for belt-drive tables rate a close second.

Subject: Re: OLD MC CARTRIDGES
Posted by Manualblock on Sat, 05 Jun 2004 14:10:32 GMT
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Belts come in standard sizes and many are interchangable so that shouldn't be too much of a problem; Referring to my ealier post you have obviously found a cart you like in the AT and they are excellent sounding carts. My point I think is should we be wary of using these discontinued units in the future. I know there have been studies done as to the longetivity of suspension but I personally have not been able to detect any problems. Do you use the AT's on a daily basis or are you saving them as much as possible? I love the Empire and figure I might as well burn it up now and hope for the best. Tracking force of 2.5 grams is the main issue with the Empire.

Subject: Re: OLD MC CARTRIDGES
Posted by DRCope on Wed, 09 Jun 2004 16:16:48 GMT
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Hi Wayne!As fond as you are of the vintage AT, there are far better cartridges out there, even among the MM ranks.As to belts, I have a supply of Rega belts that I laid in when I was still a Rega dealer, so you're covered.A bit off topic: You should try a trio of iso-bearings under your table. Repeated tests in my shop and at a couple New England Bottlehead meetings confirm that it's the next best thing short of a suspension. Firmer, more extended bass, more coherent, less strident everything else . . . . If you try it, stay with aluminum bearings. Steel and other extremely hard metals take on a nasty hard edge.

Subject: Re: OLD MC CARTRIDGES
Posted by Wayne Parham on Wed, 09 Jun 2004 23:37:02 GMT
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I'm sure there are products out there that are better than Audio Technica; It's really a retail product line like Shure. But the one I'm so fond of isn't a run-of-the-mill $49.95 cartridge - It was a late 70's statement product that cost several hundred bucks. It's actually a very nice cartridge.

Subject: Re: OLD MC CARTRIDGES
Posted by Wayne Parham on Thu, 10 Jun 2004 14:27:46 GMT
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Actually, I don't use the AT20SL's much these days. One is in its original case and is in storage; The other is mounted on a Technics direct drive turntable that I also have in storage. It's a fine table, but I haven'tused it in a couple years. I pretty much retired it and started using a Rega P2 that I bought from David Cope at Triode & Co. last year.

Subject: Re: OLD MC CARTRIDGES
Posted by Manualblock on Thu, 10 Jun 2004 23:50:16 GMT
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Mr. Cope, I see by your post you are or were involved with TT's on a retail basis. In my earlier post I asked of anyone who may have an opinion concerning re-tipping of old MC's. I wonder if you might have experience with that aspect of the field and if so may I prevail upon you to offer an opinion regarding the value of performing that operation. Positioning the squash balls under the

TT; one on each corner, seemed to help those areas you cite for the iso-bearings; although the bearings probably have a more pronounced effect due to their greater isolation properties. Also, considering the strides made in construction and materials for MM cartridges, do you find MC's to be cost effective any longer? I think this is one area where there have been noticeable gains in quality in recent years. Thanks J.R.

Subject: Re: OLD MC CARTRIDGES
Posted by DRCope on Fri, 11 Jun 2004 13:13:53 GMT
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I'm afraid I haven't got any experience with re-tipping. Sorry.Yes, lo output mc's are still the best way to get ALL the music off the vinyl, but choice of cartridge must be considered in the context of the phono front end (table, arm, step up), as well as the context of the system as a whole.One place where a blending of lo output mc and moving mag cartridges takes place is in the Audio Note IQ3, which is a moving mag cart, but uses the stylus tip and square cross section titanium cantilever used in the far more expensive AN mc carts. It creates a very interesting middle ground. There may be other examples of this that I'm not aware of. Anyone know of any others?

Subject: Re: OLD MC CARTRIDGES
Posted by Manualblock on Fri, 11 Jun 2004 14:54:10 GMT
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Thanks for your kind reply. The word on this street is that the Audio Note carts are some of the best out there and in fact that would be my choice when the old MC's I am using wear out. The extra step up in gain needed may have been worth it 15 yrs. ago but I believe with the newest technologies available it's probably better to spend your money on MM. How do you stand on record wear and MC's?

Subject: Re: OLD MC CARTRIDGES
Posted by DRCope on Fri, 11 Jun 2004 15:12:17 GMT
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Well, the increased mass and lower compliance (generally) make for increased demands on accuracy of alignment and tracking force. But as long as you're dealing with a high quality stylus tip, it shouldn't be a concern. At least, I haven't found it to be an issue, and know people who play incredibly rare old vinyl using nothing but moving coils and have no problems and no worries.Too light is NEVER a good thing, although going light as possible was very trendy 25 years ago.

Subject: Re: OLD MC CARTRIDGES
Posted by Wayne Parham on Sat, 12 Jun 2004 05:27:56 GMT
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Hi Dave,John and I have just been having a similar discussion about tracking weight.When setting my turntables up, I always did it fairly simply using measuring weights and visual inspection. I also listen for distortion, and that's generally sufficient.But I've also always had an oscilloscope around, and it comes in handy for this too. Using a test signal recording, you can check the setup with sweeps and test tones. Look for waveform distortion which appears when the tracking weight is set too light. Just one more thing that can be done to ensure that everything is setup right.Hi-Fi News Analogue Test Record
Cartridge Setup