
Subject: Shure V 15Vxmr initial disappointment. Help needed!

Posted by [Kuja](#) on Thu, 14 Jul 2005 10:56:29 GMT

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Hi, The time to replace my ageing Ortofon MC1 Turbo (high output MC) had come. After reading some very good reviews, I decided to treat myself with three times more expensive Shure V 15Vxmr. It is supposed to be a natural match to my retro vinyl setup - a Thorens TD126MkI and SME 3009 s2 improved. Phono stage is a Graham Slee Gram Amp 2 SE. My new cartridge needs some break-in period. How long? How should it sound brand new and what changes in sound breaking-in will bring? My first impressions are mixed... Shure sounds more musical than Ortofon and the bass is fuller, firmer and stronger. But, treble is problematic. There is some lack of high frequency resolution, cymbals are a bit splashy, dull, lifeless... Music sounds as if I put a veil in front of my speakers. I immediately suspected that VTA was not correct. When I mounted and adjusted the cartridge, I did set it visually since it always worked for me in the past. Since it seemed that my usual approach was not working this time, I raised the arm quite high, some 5mm from its initial horizontal position and gradually started to lower it in steps. Unfortunately, I couldn't hear any significant improvement. I tried it with dynamic stabilizer brush on and off - no deal breaking difference... (did change the tracking force accordingly) I actually prefer the sound with the brush in operating position - somehow it is more relaxed. I started to compare my vinyl to my CDs. I am a big Bowie fan and have all his 70's albums on high quality German pressings and also on these latest 24bit remastered CDs. I ended liking the CDs better!!! Slightly better resolution and better treble. The rest is pretty much indistinguishable. My CD player is Rotel RCD 1072. Any thoughts? I hope that it is only a matter of breaking in! On the other hand, I don't remember having this kind of experience with my previous carts (which were mostly Ortofon though). I even bought a spare stylus, since Shure ceased the production of V 15V... Thanks in advance, Aleksandar

Subject: Re: Shure V 15Vxmr initial disappointment. Help needed!

Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Thu, 14 Jul 2005 12:24:08 GMT

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Interesting problem. I don't feel the Shure is a natural match for the SME but it should work. The MC1 is a very bright cartridge, maybe you are used to that and the Shure needs some time to acclimate. If you are experienced, and it sounds like you are; then I would suspect either a set-up problem or a stylus problem. Possibly the SRA is off or mis-aligned. Did you use a record to check the setting of the cartridge? I would try that first to make absolutely sure the set-up is accurate. Does the cartridge mis-track on inner grooves at all? Does your pre-amp have an option to change the cartridge loading? That could be an issue. Let us know.

Subject: Re: Shure V 15Vxmr initial disappointment. Help needed!

Posted by [Mr Vinyl](#) on Thu, 14 Jul 2005 13:12:03 GMT

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Hi Alecksander, I own a Shure V15VXmr cartridge as well. I have it in a Graham 2.2 tone arm on an Oracle Delphi MKIV turntable. I am very happy with it's sound. It comes close to sounding as good as my \$2000 Audioquest 7000FE5 cartridge. No it doesn't sound better but comes a lot closer than one would think given the price difference. That said the Shure's Achilles heel so to speak is it's high end. It is a little rolled off. Not much can be done about it. Although I am not a big believer in VTA making significant improvements some people claim that the Shure needs to have a positive VTA. In other words that the front of the cartridge needs to be pointing down (raise the vta). I haven't noticed anything significant with this move but that's not to say you will not. Give it a try. Personally I think the high end on the Shure is just rolled off. But short of that everything else sounds just fine. I really like the cartridge. In fact I even bought another one just to keep as a spare. Let the cartridge break in a little more. It does sound a little better after break-in. Maybe 50 hours or so. Below is a little review I wrote on another site about the Shure and the Audioquest. Might be of some interest. Hope this helps. Mr Vinyl
<http://www.audioasylum.com/audio/vinyl/messages/310407.html>

Subject: Re: Shure V 15Vxmr initial disappointment. Help needed!
Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Thu, 14 Jul 2005 13:29:20 GMT
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Have you checked to see if his pre-amp is properly loading the cartridge? That is a classic symptom of rolled off highs.

Subject: Re: Shure V 15Vxmr initial disappointment. Help needed!
Posted by [Mr Vinyl](#) on Thu, 14 Jul 2005 13:35:30 GMT
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Hi, Good suggestion. However I own a Manley Steelhead phono preamp that makes loading etc. very easy. I have found the only setting that works with the Shure is the recommended 47K. Anything else makes the cartridge sound like crap. In my system anyway. I can only repeat that I find the high end of the V15VXmr to be a little rolled off. It's not drastic but it's there. Other than this one point I love the cartridge and would buy another in a heartbeat. Mr Vinyl

Subject: Re: Shure V 15Vxmr initial disappointment. Help needed!
Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Thu, 14 Jul 2005 16:54:55 GMT
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I like the Shure myself. I was wondering what the questioner had his pre-amp cartridge loaded at,

it may have an impact on his problem. I find it hard to review cartridges basically; there are just so many variables from table/arm/pre-amp set-up; cables not to mention the rest of the system. So my point is when trying to diagnose problems from afar I seek to simplify the issue as much as possible. Just my way of trying to make it as easy as possible for the basics of troubleshooting to be experienced on the most universal level available. This poster went from a MC1 turbo known to have a rising high end to a Shure that is much smoother up top. I thought maybe he might deal with that first. But hey; what do I know, I listen to a twenty yr old Empire MC Gold. Or a Denon DL 103 not known for tremendous resolution capabilities. Sometimes the Fidelity Research goes into the arm also.

Subject: Makes sense.

Posted by [Mr Vinyl](#) on Thu, 14 Jul 2005 17:23:43 GMT

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Also money spent does not equal knowledge. So you go and listen to whatever makes you happy. I make no judgments. Or at least I try not too. Two hydrogen atoms walk into a bar. One says, "I've lost my electron" The other says, "Are you sure?" The first replies, "Yes, I'm positive..." Mr Vinyl

Subject: Re: Makes sense.

Posted by [Russellc](#) on Fri, 15 Jul 2005 18:26:24 GMT

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I also use the V15Vxmr and have extra stylus for it, and previously used ortophon, both om20 and om 30. The shure does need some break in time. While breaking in, it was all over the board. seems like it sounded really good right off the stick, then sounded worse, then gradually broke in. It is somewhat rolled off on the high end. My understanding is this was an intentional design feature. I myself find that the cart sounds best with a slight "tail up" vta setting. some of the older "V" series before the V15Vxmr were somewhat zippier on the high end. I think the newer version sounds best of them all, and even at 350.00 is a bargain. Stylus should be available for five years, according to shure. Russellc

Subject: Yes, I agree...

Posted by [Mr Vinyl](#) on Fri, 15 Jul 2005 19:40:24 GMT

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My experience with the Shure V15Vxmr is similar to yours as far as break-in is concerned. Fortunately I was able to buy a couple of the V15Vxmr at \$200 each from Jacks Music Factory before the prices went up. Overall a very impressive cartridge for the money. Wish I could find a

cart that tracks as good with all the sound of the V15Vxmr plus a better highend. That would be a nice find.

Subject: Re: Yes, I agree...

Posted by [Russellc](#) on Sat, 16 Jul 2005 19:20:37 GMT

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I too got a cheap one, I think 215 was what I paid, and what a bargain. I have had lots of friends over the years use shure, and have borrowed a couple, but this is the first one I "bought" one and it ever a bargain. I found most of the earlier examples to zippy on the high end. The V15Vxmr is anything but. I have had it a little while now, and while it doesn't need one yet, have bought a new stylu for it when needed. If I still feel the same in a year, I will buy another stylus to stick away. If after another year I STILL feel the same, I will buy another. Shure says they will have available stylus for 5 years, and I guess we are well into the first year. They claim the body can last 50 years! I may find another favorite by then, but am quite impressed for now. I have used better, but at much greater cost, and this thing defines tracking. It also is a perfect match for my vintage Infinity Black Widow tonearm. I think it is well worth the 350 or so that remaining dealers are selling them at, as stylus will be around for a while. Russellc

Subject: Re: Shure V 15Vxmr initial disappointment. Help needed!

Posted by [DCE](#) on Sun, 13 Nov 2005 02:33:46 GMT

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Hello. Remember the Shure is sensitive to the loading capacitance. The recommended load (250pf? if I remember correctly) has been shown in articles to be pretty much a max value for a slight roll-off in the treble and minimal resonance "ringing" above the audioband. The capacitance of your phono lead interconnect adds to the loading cap in the phono stage. The cartridge may have too much capacitive loading. This will produce a excessively rolled top end. This seems to be often overlooked in this world of MC usage. The heavily sheiled cables used for phono interconnects can have fairly high capacitance. Then if the phono stage is also loading the cartridge with, say , a 150-200pf cap (fairly common); the high end will be rolled. Check your interconnects for their capacitance and add it to the Slee's 100pf. The Shure will have a flatter or slightly rising high end (like some MC's) if loaded with less capacitance. One article of a couple years ago showed about 100-150pf worked very well with out causing much of a response peak above the audioband. Try a lower capacitance phono interconnect or reduce the loading cap in the Slee. All that said, the V15 WILL open up with further use. Even if I let mine sit for too long between uses, it take an album or so to re-bloom as it were. I have run thru many much more expensive carts with out finding anything that tracks as well as the Shure and has its balances of sonic virtues. It is not overtly exciting, but brings a very balanced presentation to the table at an incredible price! I use a V15MRxV in a SME V arm and it sounds wonderful. And, yes like some of the other posters, I bought a spare (the whole cartridge as I glue the generator assembly in for

better sound, but thats a different subject altogether!)Dan
