Subject: Cheap Turntable?
Posted by britjojo on Wed, 11 Apr 2007 04:14:45 GMT
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My funds are really tight right now, with a toddler in the house and with no longer working, so I need to go budget. I sold all my equipment that I previously used for parties, so now I need a little something for my personal use to play my records. What would you recommend?

Subject: Re: Cheap Turntable?
Posted by Wayne Parham on Thu, 12 Apr 2007 02:48:09 GMT
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I'd look for a good used Technics direct drive, like an SL-1200. You can also sometimes find entry level Regas and VPIs for just a little more money but still pretty cheap. I'm talking about five hundred bucks, something like that.

Subject: Re: Cheap Turntable?
Posted by dvautier on Thu, 12 Apr 2007 22:36:45 GMT
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I think the best TTs were made 1980-90 timeframe. There has been no significant technological advance since that time. the mechanics have not changed, only metal to plastic which may not be so good. I find the best deal is at record shops and craigslist and sometimes 2nd hand stores but the supply of good 80s TT is going fast. You have to look and feel the unit. Ebay will not work, believew me. You can get a real lemon.Don’t get enamored with brands. There are many good quality ones out there.I prefer direct drive. There are no idler wheels and belts that get brittle with age.I like real heavy platters. The heaver the platter the better. It means that the manufacturer was serious about making a good product.I like standard cartridge headpieces. You can mount anything in there. don't expect to find a good TT with a good cartridge. the cart is usually trash.Speed calibration is nice but you can get devices that do this.Antiskating is a must. Weight calibration is a must.I don’t like builtin preamps. in fact I hate them.I hate like linear tracking things too.Anyway—that’s my thinking.expect to pay $60 to $100 for a good TT.For more worthless advice see:http://dvautier.home.comcast.net/audio/audio.htm

Subject: Re: Cheap Turntable?
Posted by hurdy_gurdyman on Mon, 16 Apr 2007 19:53:33 GMT
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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

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Subject: Re: Cheap Turntable?
Posted by britjojo on Wed, 18 Apr 2007 04:06:59 GMT
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Excellent advice-thank you! I hadn't even considered looking for an older TT-I am used to working with far newer things and I guess I was being a little blinkered to the other possibilities. I actually already have a 1970's Waltham in the loft that still worked the last time I dug it out, and I am sure that with a once over it could be up and running. It was the only thing that would play my older, warped so much that they looked like a roller coaster vinyls

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Subject: Re: Cheap Turntable?
Posted by busybeehelpers on Tue, 29 May 2007 00:51:00 GMT
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I am not sure how tight your funds are exactly but I have been to some local audio stores and seen very simple turntables for as little as $99. They aren't fancy but they work well.