

Scheu Classic Mk II

Price: 590 Euro

by Roland Kraft, Photographs: Rolf Winter

Synergy with the Denon 103 creates a situation where the whole is greater than the sum of the parts ...

Turntable manufacturers Scheu Analog have now been in existence for more than 20 years. In that time, their Classic tone arm has certainly lived up to its name. Now it is being reintroduced in completely reworked form. The base of the tone arm has been newly developed, its counterweights are now coated in shining nickel and both the anti-skating and lift mechanisms have been modified, too.

The design of the Classic is undoubtedly very smart and its fundamental simplicity makes it well worth consideration. It is in the final analysis a "long" twelve-inch tone arm made of

laser-cut, U-profile aluminium with a single needle bearing. It has simple counterweights as well as horizontally mounted trimming weights at the sides. The nitrogen hardened and polished needle bearing with its finely tapered tip and the corresponding recess in the arm profile itself are precisely flanked to the sides by short threaded extensions, upon which large knurled nuts act as simple but effective horizontal position trimmers. Like the old SME 3012, the anti-skating force is provided by a small weight attached by a thread to one of the side extensions. The counterweight is in

two sections and is really simple, involving a clamping screw which can be adjusted inside the U-shaped profile and with its own threaded side arm for fine adjustment of the tracking weight. It is thus essential to use a tone arm balance.

The cabling runs without any intermediate contacts from the pick-up directly to the truly superb Neutrik plugs and is only affixed by means of self-adhesive foam rubber pads inside the U-profile when the tone arm is installed. Conspicuously, the leads for each channel are not twisted together, which would certainly help the signal-



The Classic is available in ten and twelve-inch versions. If there is enough space on the turntable, the latter is definitely the one to go for

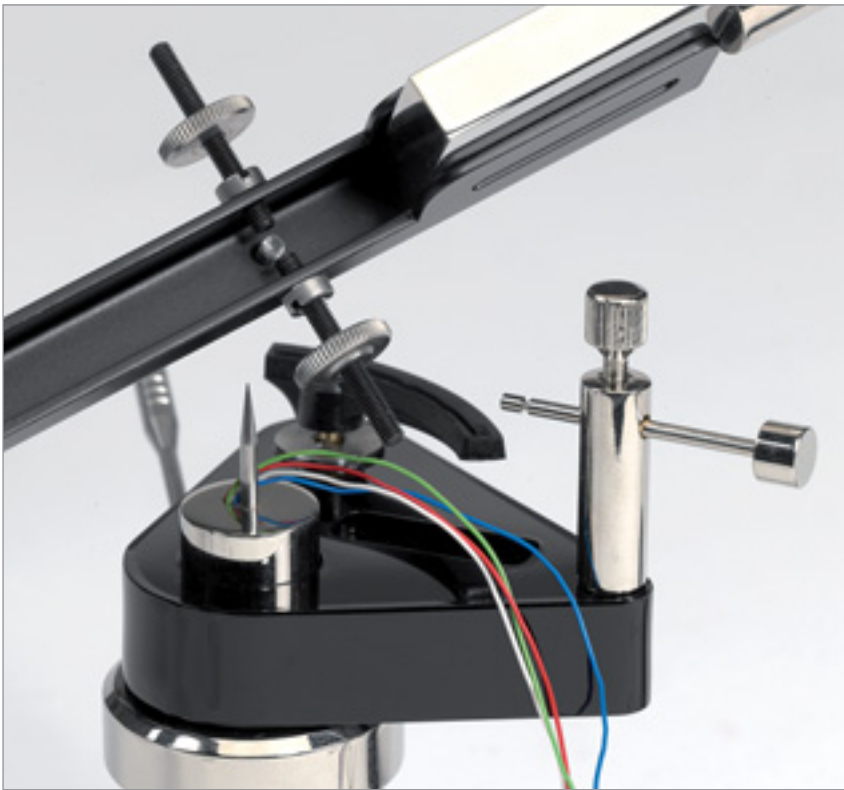
to-noise ratio. There is nothing to stop owners doing this themselves, though, as the leads are more than long enough. The only flaw in terms of appearance, albeit an acceptable one, is the fact that a loop of cable dangles near the bearing at the back. It needs to be long enough to avoid impairing the movement of the arm. For the pick-up, some first class spring plugs are supplied. With an assembled range of 293 mm between turntable spindle and bearing, with the counterweight channel extending beyond it, too, the Classic is an impressively large example of its type. The turntable must therefore have enough space available for

it. Obviously this needs to be checked before purchase.

There are no major problems when installing the Classic arm, although it is not for those with two left hands or anyone of impatient temperament. There are a lot of things to adjust, including the height and position of the lift mechanism's base plate, the lift itself and the rather fiddly anti-skating mechanism, where the length of the thread holding the weight needs to be adapted to the situation. Anyone who has ever had to tie new knots in these plastic threads will know just what I mean. What is practical, though, is that the whole profile of the arm can

be lifted off in one piece and laid alongside the base. Regarding adjustment of height between the mounting level and the actual record surface, the Classic proves to be highly flexible.

Since the Classic is being talked up by those in the know for its teamwork with the Denon DL-103, the very first thing I thought of was to use this very stylus, as I had had one lying around in its unopened packaging for a while. It has always been my opinion that all those who take an interest in high-quality hi-fi equipment would do well to go back to the good old "cheap" Denon from time to time, if only to check whether the expensive gem currently occupying the headshell in fact sounds as lively as a wet sack of Portland cement when compared to the 103. I personally must confess to a certain mistrust of fidgety single-point bearings. The Classic, though, can be adjusted cleanly and at the nominal tracking weight of the 103 - as tested, it goes without saying, using the image hifi test plate - it goes well into the 80 micrometre range. In practice, the lateral balancing via the side weights works well, too. My fears that the arm would be inclined to flutter proved to be nothing more than an unfounded cliché. I did have one little quibble with the Scheu, though, when it came to the geometry. The helpful instruction manual restricts itself to figures for assembly length and overhang but provides neither a template nor any figures for where exactly the arm should be aligned in terms of tracking angle. The old Dennesen gauge solved the problem but the pick-up did end up slightly skewed at the end. It was also apparent that the Denon was situated quite near the end of the mounting rail, so that if a rather heavier pick-up were used, it might not be possible to



Hardened "needle" bearing with its recess in the U-profile arm. To the right is the boom over which the thread of the anti-skating weight is led

Tone arm test

balance it properly without using a bigger counterweight.

Ah, the good old DL-103. Still so much more than merely listenable, in my opinion it has a thing or two to teach often over-expensive cartridges about where the standard should lie.

With its warmth, its clarity, its solidness and homogeneity, it concentrates less on the mercilessly analysing all the details than on the actual sound itself. This provides for a tone spectrum which is seldom heard, penetrative, faceted and not too emphatic at the peaks, seemingly able to simply magnify the sound like a magnifying

glass. The new-found enthusiasm for the 103 has certainly come about for good reason: that reason is the Scheu Classic itself. The pair certainly make for an unmistakably harmonious team, eliciting the utmost performance from the Denon in a way that by no means all other so-called compatible arms can achieve. And if my memory for sound does not mislead me, then even the famed SME 3012 must be looking nervously over its shoulder as to whether it keeps its premier position as partner to the Denon, if the Classic has not already overtaken it.

The loud and well saturated sound image of the Denon remains stable with the Classic over a quiet background, independent of volume. This is combined with a sturdy bass, which in typical Denon fashion does not aim for utmost precision but rather adds a little something, lending the sound robustness and credibility. Some "modern" arm and pick-up combinations are anorexic enough for the fashion-show catwalk, but the Classic and the 103 make for a curvaceous contrast, while impressing with relaxed, smooth gliding and stupendous dynamics. A dream team in my opinion,

and one providing value-for-money that can with a clear conscience be described as unbelievably good. By the way, all of this seems to be virtually crying out for the promising Scheu Classic to be combined with further musical partners... ●

Components of the test system

Pick-ups:	Shindo, Koetsu Black
Tone arms:	EMT 309 A23 (SME-Anschluss), SME 3012
Turntable:	Platine Verdier
Transformer:	A23 Hommage T1
Phonostage:	Shindo Laboratory Model Seven, Einstein The Turntable's Choice
Pre-amplifier:	Shindo Laboratory Aurièges-L
Main amplifier:	Shindo Laboratory Palmer 300B, Shindo Laboratory Pavillon Rouge, Welter EbIII, 300B-„Standard“
CD/SACD player:	Marantz SA-11S1 Series II
Speakers:	Auditorium 23 Rondo, Epos ELS 3
Low frequency and speaker cables:	Auditorium 23
Power supply:	HMS Energia Definitiva
Mains lead:	HMS
Accessories:	Bench and spring system by Norbert Gütte Carpentry, Acoustic Systems resonators, Acoustic Solid adjustment set.

image x-trakt

Pros:

Simple but effective technology

Cons:

Lack of an adjustment template

Surprises:

Really quick assembly

What to do with it:

Combined with the 103, it is a real eye-opener

image infos

Scheu Classic 12" tone arm

Principle of operation:

Aluminium tone arm (U-profile) with single-point bearing

Effective length: 305 mm

Overhang: 12 mm

Effective weight: 14 g

Distance from spindle to bearing:

293 mm

Warranty: 2 years

Price 590 Euro

image contact

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