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Review of the Reed 3Q tonearm by Holger Barske. (Excerpt from HB's review of the Reed 3Q tonearm and Turntables.It S1 Starling).

...Our friend in the rear right hand corner of the plinth, the Reed 3Q, has a great deal of interesting details to offer. And with all due respect to the highly capable turntable, it steals the show – at least optically – in this combination. The arm is available in a manifold of different versions; the fun begins with the 9" Reed 2A at €2,440.

We've got the twelve incher with matt gold metal parts. The latter isn't obligatory, as an alternative there are also white, black and rhodium satin options available. By the way, this last option looks absolutely awesome, but costs an extra €730. The arm is equipped with gimbal bearings and has a harmonious appearance, and I would say that the likelihood that Vidmantas Triukas had never seen a Triplanar or a DaVinci as rather low.

The workmanship shows two things. Firstly: Triukas was originally an electronics engineer (and an exceedingly well qualified one at that, with a history in the periphery of Russian military technology), but his heart is obviously in mechanics. Secondly: he has a good relationship with the University of Kauna and has access to a couple of the finest machine tools around, and you can see it: the finish of the tonearm is absolutely exquisite.

The Reed 3Q is mounted on a solid steel flange, in which the actual arm shaft is hidden. A wide range of height adjustment is possible. In addition, there is a sensitive VTA adjuster, which can also be used during playback. Even azimuth is adjustable, but not in the usual way: the headshell is equipped with a kind of tilting mechanism, adjustable with a screw. A damping mechanism ensures that no play is introduced here. For VTA and azimuth adjustment Vidmantas has developed something extraordinary: A laser located in a second pillar near the arm shaft aids setup. The battery-powered laser projects a short horizontal line on a notch in the fingerlift of the headshell. When both coincide the tonearm is exactly level and the headshell perfectly in parallel with the record. This is all very well, but doesn't help if the optimal VTA isn't parallel to the record, and the headshell needs to be slightly twisted because the cartridge isn't quite straight. If you have the good fortune to have a cartridge where the perfect VTA is achieved with a perfectly horizontal armwand, then the laser adjustment is a fine thing. Adjustment is then so simple, that you really could adjust the cartridge for every record. We all know, that with any tonearm we ought to do this, but honestly, who actually bothers?

The user-friendly height adjuster necessitates an eccentric bearing position, which we're familiar with from the Triplanar; the bearings themselves are spring-loaded conical bearings, in which tungsten carbide cone points are held in sapphire bearing cups, which guarantee minimal friction. The bearings on the pivot arm of the mass-loaded anti-skate device are equally elaborate.

The long Reed 3Q tends towards the heavy side; I don't have an exact figure for the effective mass, but I would guess our test sample was something of the order of 20g. This means it prefers lower compliance cartridges – no problem. Tracking force is adjusted by a low hanging counterweight, while fine adjustment is provided by a built-in screw.

I think the way the cable exits the arm shaft is a great solution, there's no fiddling about with cables underneath the turntable. Speaking of cable, this is Heiko Wingender's renowned "C37 Fine Wire", in this case cryogenically treated and fitted with WBT NextGen connectors. These are also available in pure silver, and, you guessed it: that certainly

doesn't make it cheaper!

First we tried to fit the Benz LP-S and — failed. The cartridge was too heavy for the counterweight and couldn't be balanced. Same story with the Clearaudio Goldfinger. However, there was absolutely no problem with fitting the MFSL C3.5, and that then proved to be an excellent partner for the Lithuanian duo (tonearm and turntable). No surprise there, because the C3.5 has the same generator as the Miyabi Standard, and this is well known to be no wimp. Impact and silence – two things that this setup delivers in abundance.

The bottom line...

The duo from Lithuania spoils you with sheer sonic opulence and flatters even medium quality LPs in the best possible sense. Both components (tonearm and turntable) are absolutely top class, though it's the arm that really triggers the "must have reflex".

Holger Barske

(Translation by Paul Bardo)

Note: All tonearms are supplied with additional counterweights for heavier cartridges and full specifications (including effective mass) are provided.