

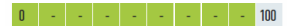


Pro-Ject The Classic

The deck comes pre-fitted with an Ortofon 2M Silver cartridge which is an MM design, based on the 2M Red, but with coils wound from silver rather than copper. Finally, while the platter is normally topped with a basic felt mat, distributor Henley Designs supplied our sample with a £20 Pro-Ject Cork-It cork mat.



Sound Quality: 83%



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I think Pro-Ject would struggle to make a bad turntable, but occasionally it comes up with a design that genuinely redefines that is possible at a particular price point. The Classic is a model that can safely join these ranks, turning in a performance that is polished and confident, but without some of the rough, over-exuberant edges that can mar more affordable creations.

The stereo images cast by my PMC loudspeakers were now stable and very neatly ordered. And this gave the performers plenty of space and made individual instruments easy to follow, while simultaneously offering a cohesive overall picture. The Classic served up a wealth of information and ordered it beautifully, only displaying its 'affordable' credentials by limiting the spread of sound much beyond the loudspeakers. Frankly however, the bits *between* them were so enjoyable, this really didn't seem to be a major issue! Vocalists were rendered with plenty of scale and located neatly to the fore of the action behind them. Al Jarreau was heard enjoying himself performing 'Mornin'' from his album *Jarreau* – I swear I could 'hear' the smile on his face.

It's a very rare thing for me to say, but I can even think of a few directdrive designs that would struggle to match The Classic for the snappy starting and stopping of low end notes. As a result of this, The Classic never came close to sounding lightweight or tinny. Instead, rhythms were tracked with rail-like security ensuring the deck brought all kinds of songs to life with ease. At the top end, The Classic package also turned in a highly capable performance. Treble was certainly detailed, sounding very open and precise with good source material. Fed a well-recorded LP, The Classic's top end was largely clean, and blessed with a pleasing crispness.