

PARADIGM SHIFT

A new turntable from British manufacturer Avid? This isn't something that happens every day. And certainly not in the ambitious regions of their portfolio.





System Partners

Phono Preamplifiers:

- Alders & Lange Vinyl Engine VE-100 F
- Soulnote E-1 Ver.2

Integrated Amplifiers:

- Symphonic Line RG10

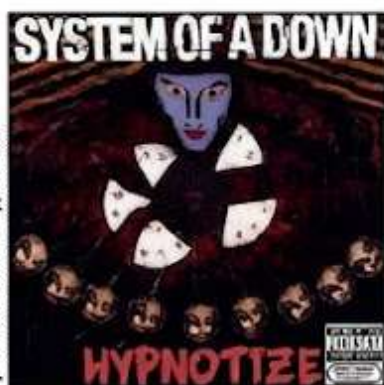
Loudspeakers:

- JBL L300

Competitors

Turntable:

- Transrotar Messime Nere / Studio 12*



Played

System Of A Down
Hypnotized

Mogwai
Come On Die Young

Crippled Black Phoenix
Great Escape

Archive
You all look the same to me



The Ionic is the smallest of the three Avid MCs, but already adds 3,000 euros to the bill

General

If new, then correct: Indeed, quite a lot has happened with the new 'Relveo' model, distinguishing the turntable from the well-known decks from a rather sparsely populated region west of Huntingdon, Cambridge. Owner and designer Conrad Mas is an old hand in the hi-fi business and actually founded Avid HiFi back in 1995. And I can rightly say that we have closely scrutinized every Avid turntable produced over time (okay, not every one of the numerous nut the numerous variations).

If you want to categorize the 'Relveo', released last year for the company's 30th anniversary, it is closest as the successor to the 'Volvere' model, which we of course also had in the issue—almost—almost 20 years ago (LP 4/2007). The Relveo is optionally available with or without a pre-mounted 'Altus V2' tonearm. The deck alone costs 7,500 Euro, in a bundle with the arm, 9,000 Euro. That is not just one of the proverbial bar-

gains, but in light of what is offered, completely reasonable. Anyone who doesn't want to worry about the 'Cartridge' can co-order the 'Ionic' MC pickup, available individually for 3,000 Euro.

The Relveo appears visually compact, which is also due to its rather impressive overall height of around 200 millimeters. It comes in the classic 'oil rig' design, meaning: the structure is supported by three rather massive cylindrical columns, which determine a large part of the visual impression. And now, fans of classic Avid architecture must be brave: Conrad Mas completely dispensed with the extremely elaborate sub-chassis construction on the Relveo, which distinguishes the aforementioned Volvere and the topmodel Acutus. Instead of an elaborate suspension system adjustable in length and thus in spring stiffness, there are conical elastomer dampers in the cylinders, which provide decoupling of the good 13 kilogram heavy machine from the surface. This is no comparison to the extremely effective decoupling...



*Included Accessories:
a usable alignment
alignment gauge and a
good tonearm cable*



*The tonearm features two
concrete anti-skating mechanisms*



From a purely external perspective, the Relveo is a typical Avid turntable. The advancements are in the details.

For example, like the Acutus, which almost doesn't care about the surface it stands on. Relveo owners will have to get used to engaging with the topic of support bases just as intensely as the rest of the turntable-operating world. However, the device does provide help in the form of finely height-adjustable feet, which we very much welcome.

While the three bearing towers are held in place by an impressively massive chassis plate, the "sub-chassis" suspended from it recalls delicate high-technology: The proven sheet metal construction, with its numerous corners and angles, looks a little like a stealth bomber, yet forms a light and very rigid base for the platter bearing and tonearm suspension, which very effectively transports any resonances towards the dampers. Avid has done this forever, and there would have been absolutely no reason to change the proven arrangement.

The arm base is an integral part of this construction, which undoubtedly limits the mounting possibilities for tonearms.

The Relveo's inverted bearing is also a well-known feature: Conrad Mas still relies on a conical construction; the vertical forces are absorbed by a tungsten carbide ball and a sapphire mirror. The bearing is permanently lubricated and maintenance-free for life.

sovereignly driving the seven-kilogram aluminium platter. It does this with the help of two round rubber belts that run on the outer edge of a quite massive sub-platter. A modern electronic motor control, operated by a rotary switch and two pushbuttons, monitors the speed. One of these switches on the drive, the other changes the speed. Pressing both simultaneously enters the speed adjustment mode, which allows for delicate fine-tuning of the 33 and 45 RPM speeds.

All this is done with great skill and functions almost boringly perfectly – no wonder, as 30 years of design experience are behind it.

With the "Altus V2" tonearm, it hasn't been that many years; Avid relied on SME arms for a long time. In the course of the manufacturer's sales policy upheavals, Conrad Mas eventually felt compelled to develop his own tonearms. After years of experiments with very exotic 3D-printed constructions, he has now decided on two relatively pragmatic models based on classic principles, of which the Altus V2 in particular shines with a few unique features.

The straight nine-inch arm works with a thick-walled aluminium tonearm tube and has an effective mass of



The heavy aluminium outer platter uses four screw heads as "drivers."



Besides the speed switching, the power supply allows for a precise fine adjustment of both speeds

15 grams – classic medium-heavy, then. It is gimbally suspended in both planes using extremely low-tolerance bearings. An absolute special feature is the double anti-skating device, with which the skating for the front and rear part of the record can be compensated separately. The headshell appears to be changeable, but its attachment with a screw does not follow any common standard. The cylindrical metal counterweight sits nice and tight on the rear arm tube section, but can be twisted with good precision. For the signal connection, a proprietary cable is included, which can be plugged into the arm shaft below via an SME connector. Experiments at this point are therefore possible, but not necessary.

The tonearm feels, like the turntable drive itself, good and appears extremely solid and



The tonearm mount is, as is customary with Avid, an integral part of the sub-chassis

well-thought-out. Considering the sums currently charged for even simple arms, it can be considered extremely fairly calculated.

The "Ionic" is the smallest of Avid's three-model MC cartridge series. It is no secret that they use the support of a Japanese specialist for its manufacturing, only producing casing parts in England for it.

What sits there up front – not quite without



Avid Relveo / Altus V2 / Ionic

- Price	approx. 9,000 Euro (Turntable with Arm) / 3,000 Euro (Cartridge)
- Distribution	AudioNext, Essen
- Phone	0201 5073950
- Internet	www.audionext.de
- Warranty	2 Years
- W x H x D	440 x 200 x 370 mm
- Weight	13.5 kg

lp Avid Relveo /
Altus V2 / Ionic

3/26

» He's still got it: Conrad Mas' new turntable design plays expressively, transparently, and technically at the highest level – even without a true sub-chassis.

a certain potential for danger – from the golden front pole plate protrudes a cantilever in the form of a small aluminum tube, which carries an elliptically ground stylus diamond at its end. Not particularly many details about the rest of the cartridge design are known, but all important installation and connection parameters are. Those are all within



Uses a powerful synchronous motor as a drive.

completely uncritical ranges, in addition to the medium-hard suspension, it is important to observe the recommended tracking force of two grams; for termination resistance, the manufacturer suggests the usual 100 Ohms. I am in agreement with the latter, but not with the former: with this, the Ionic sounded with distinctly more grip and richer when I applied 2.2 grams. This shows that the new Avid combination is extremely capable for such adjustments, as it resolves the consequences of such experiments with impressive ease.

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The series of tests began with the late work from System Of A Down, 'Hypnotize', certainly not a typical audition record. Without a doubt, however, the Avid is able to capture the sometimes wild attacks of the band splendidly, and the two singing voices of Serj Tankian and Daron Malakian come to life astonishingly well-separated. The drums pack a punch, and there is a pleasing amount of separation between all the elements that are making so much noise – a convincing start. In terms of tempo, it's a brilliant introduction, but in terms of insistency, Mogwai's monster 'Come On Die Young' from 1999 is at least an equal. This four-record vinyl edition, however, was only released in 2014. It is, and the Avid communicates this emphatically, one of the most emotional and dense rock albums of all time, which thrives to a high degree on timing, transparency, and a certain sparseness. The combination works wonderfully, playing with expansive breadth, excellent separation, insistency. Class machine! *Holger Barske*

*Almost iconic:
the screw-down Avid platter clamp*

