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# Tasty Table

**EAT's new mid-priced C-Sharp turntable and C-Note arm offers a great-sounding, thoroughly well-designed vinyl disc spinner for not a lot of money, says Paul Rigby .**

**B**ased in Prague in the Czech Republic, EAT is in the fortunate position of owning and sharing a factory with turntable giant Pro-Ject (EAT boss Jozefina Lichtenegger, is married to Pro-Ject's founder Heinz Lichtenegger). All EAT turntable

are normally much more skilled".

The external power block trails a bell wire to a plug. Lichtenegger was unable to fully describe the nature of the power supply but it seems to be of a 'Never Connected' type. It

collectable was used though" quipped Lichtenegger. The platter sits on top of a belt-holding sub-platter and both are constructed from an aluminium/magnesium alloy sitting on a bronze bearing.



parts are made on site, which keeps costs down. Jozefina Lichtenegger was keen to emphasise, though, that EAT is a wholly separate company and, apart from a few screws, shares nothing with Pro-Ject. In fact, the sixth floor of the factory is wholly EAT which includes its own infrastructure, staff and designers.

Addressing the turntable, Lichtenegger first discussed the C-Note arm. "It's a hybrid Cardan/unipivot made from carbon fibre with copper internal cable" she said. "You can change the azimuth and VTA with adjustable locking nuts. It comes with a silicon damping liquid plus a lightweight, aluminium headshell".

The anti-skating compensator uses a nylon thread and must be passed around the back of the housing to hook onto a small peg on its outer side. This can be fiddly but Lichtenegger disagreed "It shouldn't be difficult unless you have big fingers! I'm a woman so I find it easy. You can maybe ask your wife to help for that part of the set-up. Women

holds the speed changer buttons (33.33rpm and 45rpm) plus a 'standby' button. The selected button's light flashes until the required speed is met whereupon the flashing light becomes a steady emitter.

The low-profile deck itself holds a large 340mm diameter platter which EAT sees as an alternative to thick, small diameter platters. "With our platter, more mass is actually moving while the actual weight of the turntable is kept low" said Lichtenegger.

On top of the platter is a fixed (recycled) vinyl mat. "Nothing

The motor is fixed in a lower plinth, separated from the tonearm and bearing by a suspended chassis. "They're constructed by a sandwich of carbon fibre



and MDF. The suspension features a series of seven conical thermo-plastic elastomer pieces to remove vibration" said Lichtenegger. "They are far superior to Sorbothane".

Produced by Ortofon, the elastomers were available in much wider, more customised densities. EAT also found that this elastomer was far more stable than Sorbothane, which changed its inherent properties over time.

So, let's put the C-Sharp into perspective. If EAT can produce a turntable at a cheaper cost because it owns the factory, how does that equate to a competing manufacturer who does not and must out-source more expensive parts? How much should this C-Sharp turntable actually cost? "Probably around £4,000" said Lichtenegger. Which puts this

£2,500 turntable into some sort of perspective.

### SOUND QUALITY

I began the sound test without the use of the supplied clamp to judge the sound quality of the basic deck and then to see how the clamp altered the final sonic signature.

Spinning an instrumental piano rendition of 'You'll Never Walk Alone' from Nina Simone with a cello accompaniment and minor secondary cymbal percussion, this complex rendition is adorned with frills and rolls that threaten to bloom and invade the cello space.

Yet, from the first few bars of this music, I was impressed by the solidity and maturity of the EAT's output. This turntable is obviously the result of some considered design tenets because there is a focus here which breeds confidence in the listener.

Tonally, the piano was appealing and remained



*The C-Note arm is a hybrid Cardan/unipivot design.*

top of the scale during the musical climax. Despite a touch of midrange dryness, the cello remained rhythmic while the brief burst of treble via the cymbal was calm and rich in tone.

For a more up tempo contrast, I turned to David Bowie and his 'Always Crashing In The Same Car' from his 1977 album 'Low'. Again, I was impressed with the low noise output on this track. It certainly benefitted the overall presentation. Despite a touch of midrange dryness again that slightly restricted the air and dynamic extension, there was plenty of detail revealed by the

low noise rendition such as the shy rhythmic guitar that sat underneath the Bowie vocal. The EAT easily targeted this instrument, allowing my ear to make out the often hidden performance. The lead guitar, which has a tendency towards stridency in more uncontrolled turntables, not only exhibited tight control but offered no hint of being shouty or forward on the EAT. At all times the guitar was incisive and exacting. Percussion was also focused, although it was not the meatiest that I've ever heard. There was plenty of zip and vibrancy, though.

Finally, the soundstage was both full and wide, giving the music a real epic nature while detail could be heard at each extremity, doubtless the result of the excellent arm performance, as confirmed by our

so as Simone upped her game and became more energetic in her performance. The rise to the final crescendo excited many piano resonances. At this point, the entire performance could easily have become uncontrollable yet the EAT's low noise output helped to not only allow the ear to peek inbetween each note but also prevented the ultimate upper midrange hardening at the

