

Sumiko

Olympia MM cartridge



JAPANESE MANUFACTURER
SUMIKO has recently added some new models to its Oyster range of moving-magnet cartridges, one of which is the Olympia you see before you. As it is a moving-magnet cartridge, the stylus, cantilever and magnet assembly are removable and easily changed. Interestingly, the Olympia utilises the same cartridge body as the company's lower-cost Rainier and more expensive Moonstone models, meaning that the differences between the three are entirely contained within the stylus assembly – allowing you to upgrade through the range by simply changing the stylus.

The Olympia has the stylus mounted on a bespoke cantilever claimed to offer greater channel separation and better sound quality than the lower-cost Rainier. The cartridge body has pure copper internal wiring and an integrated low-resonance body and generator system designed to reduce internal resonances. The 0.3 x 0.7 micron polished elliptical stylus has a bespoke cantilever with a smaller magnet than the Rainier and generates 4mV output across a standard 47K ohm load.

Diamond geezer

The Olympia weighs 6.5g and has a rated compliance of $12 \times 10^{-6} \text{cm/dyne}$ (or $12 \mu\text{m/mN}$), which puts it towards the low end of the medium-compliance cartridge range. The cartridge should be well-suited to medium-mass tonearms between 11g and 25g. The stylus tip is an elliptical diamond and the required tracking force is between 1.8g and 2.2g with a recommended force of 2g.

Fitting the Olympia to my modified Jelco SA-750 arm is quite easy as it has a removable headshell and an overhead mounting design with standard 0.5in-spaced mounting holes. After fitting the cartridge, I replace the headshell and align the unit before setting the



tracking force to the recommended 2g. I then connect the output of my record deck to an ADL Stratos (HFC 455) phono stage.

I start off with a rousing recording of Tchaikovsky's *Symphony No.4 in F minor* played by the Cleveland Orchestra. I am pleased to say that the drum is reproduced beautifully and is very well extended. The exuberant presentation of the full orchestra, for which this performance is noted, is remarkably well rendered. The strident trumpet blasts during the opening *andante sostenuto* are clear and bright without sounding at all harsh – a perfect balance.

The first track from *A Day In The Life* by the Quentin Collins All-Star Quintet, *Angola*, has a crystal-clear opening percussion with fantastically sharp attack, beautifully coupled with the punchy drums. The piano then plays some gentle chords followed by the double bass to add some full basslines. Finally, Collins joins in with his flugelhorn playing the main melody. I am drawn into the performance as it combines intimacy with superb clarity and a foot-tapping tempo. The brightness of Collins' daCarbo carbon

fibre flugelhorn, which combines elegance with up-front detail, is beautifully reproduced.

Tony Mottola's *Summer Samba* is tuneful, light and airy. The flute solo is bright and the interplay between guitar and wind instruments is perfectly balanced. The bass is tight and clear, and the tonal detail of each instrument is perfect.

Sax appeal

With The Pierre Gossez Jazz Quintet's *Bach Takes A Trip*, the Olympia conveys an air of openness and clarity. *Caravelle* is played on the sax with harpsichord, piano and drums. The harpsichord sets the pace and when the saxophone comes in you are rushed along by the energy of the performance. The piano joins in with a great improvisation and the piece ends with a return to the main theme played by the whole ensemble. The timing is excellent and the rhythmic excursions are handled well. The Olympia cartridge is great value for money with refined performances across a wide range of music. **NR**

DETAILS
PRICE
 £225
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OUR VERDICT
 ★★★★★