Three for all

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How substantial are these changes? Rega claims that only two parts of the Planar 3 are shared with the outgoing RP3, effectively making it all new. If you look closely, however, it quickly becomes clear that while the basic form is the same as before, there are some key differences. The plinth is stiffer and has a much improved finish over the preceding model and it’s available in black and white high-gloss finishes. The bearing is also re-worked with a new brass central section that improves fit and quality to lower the noise floor and reduce the stress on the bearing itself. This is in turn mated with a new sub-platter that is stiffer and built to tighter tolerances than the preceding version. Key to the way that the Planar functions is a new bracing system that links the arm mount and bearing together. This comprises a 3mm plastic bottom bracket and a visible top bracket with a metallised skin. This makes the Planar 3 a great deal more rigid and controls the movement between the two. Rega calls this arrangement a ‘stressed beam’ and claims that coupled with
the stiffer plinth, the Planar 3 is considerably more inert than any previous version, which should audibly reduce distortion.

The arm has been even more audibly reduced. The Elys 2 cartridge produces a clean, energetic, and expansive soundstage, with the Planar 3 providing a superbly controlled and precise sense of direction.

The Planar 3 has gained a bass response which allows it to sound believable and consistently enjoyable. The Planar 3 has an extremely smooth sound that is free from distortion, which is a hallmark of Rega's design philosophy.

The Planar 3 is the first Rega deck to be designed and manufactured in the UK, and it is a testament to Rega's commitment to quality and excellence. The Planar 3 is a true masterpiece, and it is sure to be a classic for years to come.

Finish off these substantial implications with genuine sense of fun. What else is there to sound like a Rega deck should, yet have achieved to date. At E55 without cartridge, the Planar 3 has a comfortable performance advantage over pretty much any turnable at the same price. The Planar 3 has proven to really suit up to much in the way of light: In The Funk Firm’s Flavours (E500), which EBI minus a cartridge is a hefty £200 more than the Rega in the same conditions. The Funk Firm has an outstandingly open and natural presentation and faults despite the use of CD motors hugging the timing and overall presentation. For the same money, though, it would be possible to trap the Rega with the optional TT-PS1 (£50) — which would likely narrow the Funk Firm’s advantages and still give you/100 spaces change for cartridge shopping.

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Sound quality

In many ways the sonic performance of the Planar 3 echoes the aesthetic improvements that have been made. Connected to a Cyrus Phono Signature phono stage (E50), and Naim SuperAudio 2 integrated amplifier, it manages to sound very much like a Rega deck should, yet simultaneously more capable and infectiously lively. Selecting Motion by The Cinematic Orchestra as a starting point, the complex but magnificent Ode To The Big Sun demonstrates the abilities and motors through the complex beat with an absolute assurance and a genuine sense of fun.

Where the differences start to show is in the way that the Planar 3 presents the complex and slightly congested midregime of the track. It opens up the material, never making anything disjointed or confused, but instead managing to create a sense of space and soundstage where many similarly priced rivals struggle. There is a three dimensionality to the Planar 3 which allows it to sound believable and consistently enjoyable.

This spaciousness doesn’t require a toe tapping beat to reveal itself either. The lovely Airs of Air’s Moon Safari is involving and intimate. The Planar 3 still possesses an ambience that makes it sound real.

The beautiful Alfi Neuburg is delivered with an almost liquid quality with Beth Hirsch’s vocals layered effortlessly across a soundstage that is simply exceptional. With the sweeping, semi-orchestral Telstar, the Rega effortlessly up the scale but keeps that same fantastic sense of involvement.

Something that helps across a wide variety of music is the fact that the Planar 3 has gained a bass response that is deep and rich. There is a clear sense of the platter. It’s still flesh and the whole deck rests on the stiffer plinth, the Planar 3 is considerably more Inert than any previous version, which should audibly reduce distortion.

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