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Moon

110LP v2

A well-built and capable entry-level phono stage



If you play records, no other electronic component in your system has as much impact on the sound as the phono stage. There aren't many talented units around the £500 mark, so when we come across something as capable as Moon's 110LP v2, it's something to celebrate.

This is a neatly made aluminium box finished to a high standard. The curved front panel is beautifully machined and makes the 110LP v2 look classier than most of the competition. This phono stage is a switchable unit capable of handling both moving-coil and moving-magnet cartridges. Unlike most rivals, the Moon offers gain adjustment in four increments, starting from 40dB and continuing through to 66dB. This range should be enough to cope with every moving magnet design and all but the lowest-output moving-coil cartridges.

Elsewhere, the 100LP v2 is as simple as most affordable phono stages usually are. There's a single input and partnering stereo RCA output (to go to your main amp), a power port for the wall socket adaptor and a grounding post. Provided care is taken with placement, by keeping it away from other mains powered products and power cables, the 110LP v2 proves suitably quiet and hum-free too.

This is a fine-sounding unit, particularly with moving-magnet cartridges. It works well with Goldring's 2400 mounted to our reference Technics SL-1000R record

This switchable unit can cope with MM and MC cartridge designs

player, and we can't see any reason why it wouldn't work equally well with similarly capable Ortofons, Audio-Technicas etc.

For comparison, we have the cheaper MM-only Graham Slee Communicator (with PSU1 power supply) on hand, as well as the more premium Lindemann Limetree Phono. Overall the 110LP v2 sits well with such talented company.

Smooth, fluid and refined

This phono stage has the classic Moon sonic signature - smooth, fluid and refined - but it has enough in the way of drive and punch to satisfy. With Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony* the 110LP v2 delivers an impressively spacious and expansive performance. Nothing sounds cluttered or confused and it's easy to follow individual instrumental strands. The stereo imaging is accomplished and remains stable even when the music becomes demanding. Overall, insight levels are good, though this isn't a product that goes out of its way to highlight detail. Each piece of information is presented in an unforced and subtle manner, but it becomes clear that the Moon is right up there with the best at the price when it comes to resolution.

This unit has an undemanding nature, which makes it easy to listen to over long sessions. The aforementioned Graham Slee pulls ahead when it comes to dynamic punch and rhythmic drive, but the Moon counters with greater refinement and sweeter tonality. The choice really comes down to taste and partnering system.

We move to Bob Marley's *Catch A Fire* and the 110LP v2 delivers a lovely flowing presentation that is rhythmically surefooted. While the lowest notes are a touch rounded, there's enough in the way of agility and articulation.

The Moon's performance with MC cartridges is less impressive. There's not much to complain about when it comes to noise levels or gain, but when we swap to an Ortofon Quintet Blue MC, we note that large-scale dynamics sound a touch restrained and bass becomes softer. It's important to note, though, that you would have to spend half as much again to get a phono stage that does appreciably better.

The Moon 110LP v2 remains one of the best of its kind at this level. Better built than most, and certainly musically satisfying, it is worth checking out if you're after a quality affordable phono stage.

"Insight levels are good, and it becomes clear that the Moon is right up there with the best at this price when it comes to resolution"



WHAT HI-FI?

RATING ★★★★★

SOUND



FEATURES



BUILD



FOR

- Smooth, refined presentation
- Spacious stereo imaging
- Impressive build and finish

AGAINST

- Less convincing with moving-coil cartridges

VERDICT

A well-built and capable performer - stick with moving-magnet cartridges and the Moon is sure to please