

Resurrection of a legend

You almost think you can still smell the fresh paint. The fingers gently stroke the chunky, indestructible black switches.

In front of us, unbelievable but true, is a brand-new Garrard 301. And the analogue legend sounds as good as ever!



When the first rumours about a new production of a limited number of this legendary turntable were heard, there was great scepticism. Too often, bold announcements about resurrecting this or that audio legend have come to nothing. Funding problems, technical problems or ultimately uncertain demand are the most common reasons why most well-intentioned projects to „reawaken“ a famous audio component ultimately fail.

There are quite a few candidates for such an ambitious company, if you look at the two or three handfuls of historical hi-fi devices that are currently not only offered at astronomical second-hand prices, but are also actually sold. The Garrard 301 is very, very high on this exclusive list, along with other classics such as the Micro Seiki RX-1500, the J.A Michell Transrotor, Marantz' SLT 12 tangential turntable, of course, and the EMT 930 or the Tech-

nic SP-10, to name but a few of the analogue drives that became legends. The fact that Garrard continuously wrote the history of analogue technology is also proven by a speciality that is often overlooked today in view of the iconic 301, namely the Garrard Zero 100 with its tangential rotary tonearm. But that's another story.

What makes the „new“ Garrard 301 so incredibly appealing is the way it is built. After all, this is not just a new construc-

tion, but a „genuine“ oldie, which has been extensively restored to its new condition mostly from old parts and old drives – so it is a true antique recognised by collectors. One specimen of the 301 per month is currently being built, screwed into a new frame and supplemented with the twelve-inch SME M2-12R, whose design is reminiscent of the „original“ assemblies, such as the SME tonearms 3009 and 3012R. It would have been nice if SME





The SME M2-12R also carries heavy scanners such as the historically suitable „cartridges“ from Ortofon and EMT.



A stepped shaft performs the speed changeover purely mechanically; the friction wheel transmits frictionally to the inner rim of the platter





Only the four shiny screws with which the cast chassis is fixed to the frame are new. The retro charm of the completely rebuilt drive is hard to put into words, as well as the impression of unbreakable solidity and durability.

had brought the 3012 out of retirement on this occasion. But, admittedly, the M2-12R is the better choice because of its superior sound.

Friction wheel?

At the core of the Garrard is its friction wheel drive. You read it right: friction wheel. This old and proven drive principle of turntables was left aside for decades and dismissed as obsolete. But this was wrong – the hype around the 301 came about namely neither because of its beautiful cast aluminium chassis nor because of its wonderful thick toggle switches, but because of its tonal capabilities. Exactly this led to the fact that a large part of the approximately 65,000 specimens produced found their way not only to professional users – such as the BBC – but also into the living rooms of many hi-fi fans around the world, who came to appreciate the 301 as an indestructible tool and shook their heads in amazement at the asthmatically slow start-up of modern belt drives.

The 301 slows down just as quickly as it reaches the set speed: a mechanical brake is then applied to the inner rim of

the platter. All with the help of sophisticated mechanics, mind you, because at the end of the 1950s the designer Edmund W. Mortimer had no other choice. He drew a powerful, very large motor, suspended in a spring system and magnetically shielded, whose stepped shaft drives

„An iconic, elegant turntable delivering audio perfection with modern handcrafted excellence“

a large rubber wheel. Its exact round grinding is the next guarantor for smooth running, because the rubber wheel drives a very heavy cast platter at its inner rim, which was manufactured very precisely at that time. And with the thick, round black knob on the front of the chassis you can set the desired speed precisely – the 301 of course also offers 78 revolutions, controllable by the stroboscopic division of the platter rim. The platter bearing with its conical seat for the turntable borrowed from machine tool technology is another important factor for smooth running, which is why the experienced designer provided a „deep“ bearing, i.e. a long spindle.

Friction wheel? Friction wheel!

If you are suspicious, our measurement technology proves the opposite: the new 301 is absolutely clean, perfectly quiet, smooth, precise and artefact-free, so the „modern“ competition can take a leaf out of its

book. Incidentally, the classic proves that the friction wheel as a turntable drive is justified, not to mention the sonic effects of this high-torque but complex system. However, it should also be mentioned that other, less successful friction wheel designs did not exactly contribute to the good reputation of the principle. By the way, the Garrard was previously sold either as a pure drive module for installation in tables or with a frame. The solid walnut base of our test specimen has a rather hard suspended sub-chassis and four spring feet, whose adjustment takes just as much time as nerves until the 64-centimetre wide beauty is finally „in the water“.

**stereoplay
Highlight**

EMT
JSW Platinum
4.800 euros
Distribution: Gaudios sound concepts
Phone: 0043 / (0)3 16 33 71 75
www.gaudios.info

Measurement diagram

Frequency response & crosstalk
Exemplary low, symmetrical crosstalk over a wide frequency range

Measured values

Output voltage L/R:	1,32/1,50 mV
System impedance	24 Ω
Depth scanning capability	90 μm
High frequency distortion L/R:	0,06/0,03 %
Deep resonance (am SME)	10,7 Hz
System weight	018 g
Recommended contact force	2,35 g
Recommended tonearm class	medium

Evaluation

Conclusion: The top EMT with sapphire-needle carrier, gold-plated Alnico magnets and rhodium-plated body can cope with many tonearms at medium needle yield, inspires with its clear, tidy and yet extremely musical sound and is also metrologically flawless. A guarantor for virtually unlimited listening pleasure.

Measured values	Practice	Value
9	8	10

stereoplay Test result

Sound absolute top class **64**

Overall result **91 points**
Price/performance **high-end**

Equipped by the sales department with the EMT top model JSW Platinum, the Garrard 301 enthused us from the first second we heard it: enormous acceleration, captivating dynamics, pitch-black background and colourful shimmering richness of sound.

Not to mention the highly impressive EMT scanner that plays its part here, the analogue legend conveys a level of authority, richness and concentrated pressure that we have never heard before.

Friction wheel? Friction wheel! Friction wheel!

Added to this is a super-wide sound range, formally charged with the finest spatial information and extending far out beyond the loudspeaker level. You should also have heard the low-frequency definition of the 301 to get an idea of how high the bar is set here: growling, brutally fast, playfully springy.



Fantastically good crosstalk attenuation: EMT top model JSW Platinum

Fascinating!

The impressive, still referencable sound of torque and highest smoothness in combination with the SME tonearm and EMT scanner proves that it is completely right to pay homage to this turntable monument. And the reborn Garrard 301 guarantees another half century of listening pleasure!

Roland Kraft ■

Attention to detail

The scope of delivery and the documentation of the „new“ 301 are appropriate for the price. Tools and transport securing devices for the sub-chassis are also included in the enormously large box, as

is the meticulously reproduced accompanying book with its impressive technical drawings. Incidentally, the power supply unit of the sound icon is located inside the frame. We don't see any

need to change the included SME tonearm cable or the „old“ SME headshell, which certainly didn't turn out to be a sound inhibitor here, and fits well with the style of this total work of art.



stereoplay Highlight

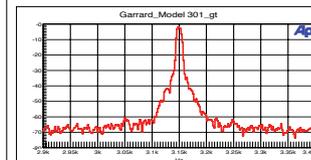
Garrard Model 301

28.000 euros

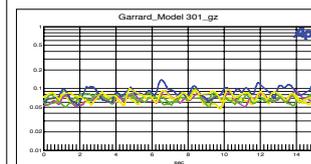
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Dimensions (WxHxD): 64 x 22 x 48 cm
Weight: 20 kg

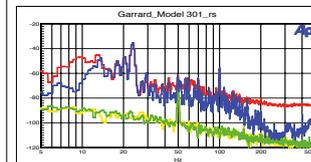
Measurement diagrams



Synchronising tone spectrum
Narrow tip without noticeable side bands



Synchronisation fluctuations vs. time
Keine Ausreißer oder Unregelmäßigkeiten, No outliers or irregularities, very precise synchronisation



Rumble spectrum
Practically the same with coupler and plate

Measured values

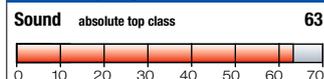
Synchronisation, evaluated	±0,07 %
Set speed, deviation	0,0 %
Rumble interference distance, evaluated plate/coupler	71/72 dB
Tonearm weight class	medium
Consumption	
Standby/operation	0/11 W

Evaluation

Conclusion: The little miracle called Garrard Model 301 is as good today as it was in its time, which fortunately will last another half century – that's how long a 301 runs at least – and gives us a turntable that is unassailably good from today's point of view. Huge compliments to the people who made this possible. Oh, and the serially installed SME M2-12R is a highly underestimated tonearm, which SME unfortunately no longer sells individually...

Measured values	Practice	Value
9	9	10

stereoplay Test result



Overall result	91 points
Price/performance	high-end