



“Best sound at the show award”

VIENNA SHOW

“For me ORIGIN LIVE in the analog sector is the discovery of the year!”

IMAGE HI-FI - GERMANY (EDITOR)

“Sets a new reference”

HI-FI WORLD



“best buy”

TNT AUDIO

“this is one of the truly special products I’ve reviewed in the past 18 years”

STEREOPHILE (M FREMMER)

“The best tonearm I’ve heard ”

HI FI WORLD - (EDITOR)

Winner of Stereo Times magazine Most wanted component of 2004 award



“Simply stated, the Origin Live Illustrious tonearm / Aurora Gold turntable produce the best musical results of any turntable I’ve ever heard, regardless of price....It sets a new reference”

STEREO TIMES

## VINYL REPLAY

# System Philosophy & upgrading

## ULTIMATE PERFORMANCE

*for your system*



# Choosing your components

*It is possible to make staggering improvements and achieve outstanding results with a little forethought*

## Defining questions

It is easy not to realise the weak links in a system. To think a better cartridge is the route to better sound very common. However this is not always a wise choice in comparison to the benefits of upgrading other components. Before you invest in upgrading or renewing items it is helpful to ask a few questions.

- What is your final aspiration? - it is better to work in stages if you have a restricted budget. E.g. -acquire your chosen "best" turntable and then later order your "best" choice of arm. This is better than compromising with an "all in one package"
- Which components will yield the greatest rewards in performance?
- If saving is going to take a while, would a temporary budget component be a good solution?

## Upgrade paths

Common questions on upgrade paths are:

*"How much should I spend on a cartridge?"*

*"Is it worth rewiring a tonearm for a budget turntable?"*

*"Should I upgrade my current deck or change it entirely?"*

*"What level of performance does the dc drive upgrade add to my deck?"*

Assessing upgrade priorities is not always easy. If you are using a vinyl front end, accepted wisdom is that you should split your total system value (in financial terms) roughly as follows.

Source: Turntable / arm / cartridge / phono stage = 65%

Amplifier = 15%

Loudspeakers = 20%

## Breakdown of front end

The approximate contribution to performance of components within the source or "front end" of a system is shown below. *Contribution does not necessarily equal price.*

Turntable = 40%  
 Tonearm = 30%  
 Cartridge = 10%  
 Phono stage = 15%  
 Support table / isolation 5%

The only way to sensibly quantify contribution is to do comparison tests. Magazines used to highlight the



importance of front end hierarchy by setting up two identical Linn turntables - one with a £400 Ittok tonearm and £20 AT95E cartridge. The other with a £150 Basik tonearm and £500 cartridge. Which sounded better? It may be a surprise, but the £20 cartridge in the better arm outperformed the expensive cartridge in the lesser arm.

## Phono stage

The phono stage is much more significant than the amplifier. It contributes over 80% of the amplification of low output moving coil signal and 95% when you get to bass frequencies. For moving magnet outputs, this figure is approx. 60%. Would you trust 95% of amplification to a £1 chip in an expensive integrated amplifier? So called "Good" phono stages in integrated amps are only "good" relative

to other integrated amps and rarely, if ever come close to a decent external phono stage - the reason is not just lack of advanced design. A phono stage in an integrated amp or pre-amplifier is severely degraded by sharing it's vital power supply with other amplification stages. Having said this there are some atrocious stand alone phono stages at the £100 mark that will absolutely cripple any vinyl system - we refuse to advertise these even though they are in demand and recommended by unscrupulous or un-knowledgeable sales people.

## CD based system split

The performance of CD players does not vary nearly as much as that of turntables, so the split is quite different. For example, if you have a £200 CD player you could easily apportion up to £1000 on the amp and £1000 on the speakers - the complete reverse of thinking for vinyl.

The relatively low cost apportioned to a CD player does not mean vinyl is expensive by comparison. Recent turntable / arm combos at just £200 are reviewed as outperforming £400 CD players - properly set up vinyl replay is capable of going so much further than CD.

## DC motor upgrade / arm upgrade / or new turntable?

The DC power supply system will add around £700 of worth in performance terms to most turntables. This makes it a very good investment and far more cost-effective than upgrading a cartridge due to system heirarchy. The DC motor upgrade is worth putting on any deck costing more than £300, unless you plan to spend around £1000 on a new deck. If your deck is around the £300 mark and you do not plan to spend more than around £250 on an upgrade, you should go for the DC motor kit and/or a Rega arm upgrade.



# Product philosophy



**O** rigin Live consistently represents the highest performance level possible in any given price bracket.

In fact, customers and reviewers alike time and again report Origin Live outperforming other products at many times the price. While reviews provide important perspectives, we recommend auditioning equipment whenever possible.

## Unique musicality

**T**he ultimate test for equipment is simple - does it sound like the real thing?

For equipment to sound authentic, it must exhibit extremely good transient speed i.e. notes start and stop when they should or decay as they should. Any blurring of notes indicates that “noise” is being added by resonance somewhere in the system. Impeccable transient speed and great timing are the qualities that set Origin Live products apart from the alternatives. You hear the benefits as

- **Natural** unforced sound
- Wonderful **imaging** and depth of sound stage

- Superb **tonal balance** free from edginess
- **Separation** - the ability to clearly hear all voices and instruments without “masking”

Relatively speaking, digital formats don't have this degree of quality for a number of technical reasons. Analogue players have it in varying measure depending on their pedigree. The more “analytical” players have a noticeable slow and overhung bass decay - in other words the **timing** of the bass is out of synch with the rest of the music

## Why is Origin Live performance better than others?

### Experience & innovation

Origin Live products appear deceptively simple and yet yield astounding results. One of the reasons behind this success is the distillation of over fifteen years of intensive and exhaustive testing. In the years when CD was widely hailed as the superior format, a good number of turntable manufacturers ceased manufacture or simply didn't invest in future design - as a matter of principle, Origin Live fought this trend, believing that Vinyl replay is inherently superior to digital for a compelling number of technical reasons, not to mention

‘Designed to recreate the original sound’

subjective superiority. A fuller explanation of this is available on our web site in newsletter issue 4.

## Low Resonance - the key!

Notice how long it takes the water of a swimming pool to finally settle down after a lone swimmer has left the pool. The waves take on many complex forms - from small ripples to long smooth waves that subside more slowly. In the same way all Hi Fi components are excited into vibration by a number of sources:

- Ground & airborne vibration
- Motor vibration
- The cartridge stylus
- Electrical signals passing through power supply components.

These energy forms need careful consideration. For example when a cartridge vibrates on the end of a tonearm, it sets complex waves in motion along the tonearm. To get an accurate portrayal of micro-vibration on a tonearm it is helpful to picture a miniature man with a sledge hammer banging the stylus in all directions - this produces shock waves that ripple throughout the tonearm structure. If these waves are not controlled and

eliminated quickly, they actually vibrate the cartridge **again** by being reflected back down the tube. Of course this is highly undesirable as you no longer hear the pure musical signal but also an additional spurious signal overlaid on

the top.

For these reasons, superior vinyl replay equipment ultimately depends on controlling resonance. This is exactly what Origin Live products do in spectacular fashion as shown by

extremely low resonance measurements.

## High Rigidity

Why is rigidity important? The way you hear some people talk, you would imagine that rigidity has something to do with low resonance but this is misleading. A sponge is far from rigid but not exactly resonant. No, the reason rigidity is important is that the cartridge needs something to “kick” against if it is to generate a dynamic signal. Designing

fact degrade the sound by introducing distorting resonance into the structure. By way of contrast, Origin Live tend to concentrate on an incredible level of research and development into sound quality. The results of this are not generally publicised because of it's confidential nature but is nevertheless incorporated in the high-quality engineering hidden from view. This is why our products deliver the performance for which they are renowned. We'd rather invest in a better bearing than an engraved dial.



for rigidity extends far beyond the choice of materials - it influences everything from the type of joints to the dimensioning of components.

## Design Philosophy

### Value for money

Origin Live focus on engineering and genuine sound quality rather than expensive marketing which means you get the best value for money. Our top design priority is to recreate the original sound and thus to offer a definite upgrade to your listening experience.

Some products offer showy engineering at the expense of sound quality – on a tonearm, for example, arrays of spring-loaded dials may look high-tech but in

## Upgrading your existing equipment

Spectacular progress has been made in the art of vinyl replay over recent years. Nowhere is this more realised than in the design of tonearms and motor drives. This means that if you have a cherished deck such as a Linn, Roksan, Michell, Rega etc, you can now take it's performance to entirely new levels. The level of improvement will surprise you and probably have you listening to your record collection into the early hours. For example Linn owners changing up from their Ekos to an Origin Live Silver arm say “the difference is simply night and day”.

As Vinyl still represents the pinnacle of reproduced music quality, upgrading your tonearm is one of the best

investments you can make due to the higher relative benefits in performance. Unlike cartridges, a tonearm upgrade will produce a far more profound improvement and last a great deal longer. It is also transferable to other decks should you ever want a change.

Origin Live arms (price for price) always bring a stunning improvement regardless of your current tonearm. In fact even the lower arms in our range will often outperform arms at over three times the price.

If you are already the proud owner of a Rega arm we offer a number of well reviewed upgrades that will transform it's performance.

## Owner satisfaction

You will not find an Origin Live product released into the market unless it is something special. We rely on word-of-mouth recommendation and a reputation for delivering outstanding performance. Owner satisfaction is one of our primary aims and ranks among our greatest achievements.

### Vinyl replay products by Origin Live include:

- Tonearms
- Power supply upgrades
- Turntables
- Phono Stages
- Interconnects
- Upgrades for existing decks

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