



Origin Live **Calypso** **Multilayer/Silver** £3,660

This might be one of the high-end specialist's more affordable offerings, but it still has plenty going for it

DETAILS

PRODUCT
Origin Live Calypso Multilayer/Silver

ORIGIN
UK

TYPE
Belt-drive turntable

WEIGHT
15.7kg

DIMENSIONS (WxHxD)
465 x 133 x 393mm

FEATURES
● 33 & 45rpm
● Origin Live Silver tonearm

DISTRIBUTOR
Origin Live

This company has been going since the late Eighties and at the turn of the century began fielding some impressive-sounding vinyl spinners. Former naval architect Mark Baker now has a dizzying range of turntables and tonearms, all of which are fastidiously designed and built. They tend to be aimed more at hobbyist buyers, because setting them up is a little more involved a process. This is the case with the Origin Live Calypso deck, Multilayer platter and Silver tonearm featured here – at £2,290, £650 and £720 respectively.

The combo takes a good hour to properly build up and there are plenty of adjustments. The perspex sub-chassis has to be perfectly height adjusted to get the offboard DC motor to sit right,

for example. Don't be deceived by the lack of shiny, brushed metal or other such exotic finishes; general quality of build is very high.

Almost everything has a precise feel; the ultra-thick main bearing is quite a thing to behold and the tonearm feels silkier to hand cue than it looks. The arm lacks convenience touches like spring-adjusted tracking force and bias, but this saves money to be spent elsewhere. The motor switch looks a bit low rent, but then again the spun aluminium cueing lever is classier than the Technics. Once carefully fettled on a level surface, this combination runs faultlessly and looks elegant with a rather sculptural aspect to its design. Only the packaging lets the side down; it does its job but is unlikely to be the subject of an unboxing video! The instructions are superbly written but could be presented better, too.

Sound quality

The Calypso Multilayer/Silver proves a really impressive performer. It has a big, spacious sound that's strong on dynamics, involvement and tonal purity, with excellent detail retrieval. In fact, it doesn't sound like how many perceive a traditional belt-drive deck to be at all. It's not soft, recessed and warm in the least; rather, it's just

on the smooth side of neutral with a highly transparent feel.

It's the combination of this tonally pure character, allied to impressive stereo soundstaging, that makes it such a strong performer. *Maybe I'm Amazed* sounds commanding with instruments running far stage left and right and vocals set precisely in the middle. Stage depth is strong too, and the result is an immersive sound. Pitch stability is very good, the deck timing really nicely. It's a little less frenetic than the Technics, yet sounds completely natural with this track.

Your Dreaming is also lots of fun, with plenty of scale and grip. However, while the Technics SL-1200G seems to lock onto the percussion, the Calypso focuses more

A big, spacious sound that's strong on tonal purity, dynamics and involvement

onto the backing synthesiser pads. This makes for a more beguiling, immersive sound that is less impressive on a superficial level. Still it is more involving than the Acoustic Solid, Linn, Luxman and Rega all the same. The track also gives it the chance to show off its fine bass. Not quite equal to the Technics, it is still really impressive with a crisp, dry and tuneful bottom end, underwritten by a lot of power.

For all the above reasons, the Origin Live fares particularly well on *Alligator Bogaloo*, too. It sets up an intricate organ and drum groove, with lots of body to the Hammond and an earthy timbre too. It is most capable dynamically too, working better at highlighting the player's accenting in a way that few others here can equal. The Elgar piece is lovely too, showing this deck to be a great all-round performer ●



Hi-Fi Choice

OUR VERDICT

SOUND QUALITY ★★★★★ **LIKE:** Clean; open; vivid; engaging sound

VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★★ **DISLIKE:** Involved set-up process

BUILD QUALITY ★★★★★ **WESAY:** A superb enthusiast's turntable

FEATURES ★★★★★

OVERALL

★★★★★