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haymarket

3 Rega RP6/Exact

£1000 ★★★★★

Take a peek inside Rega's trophy cabinet and you will find a couple of *What Hi-Fi?* Awards confirming our hearty admiration for Rega's RP6/Exact combo. It's been our go-to package in recent years, but how does it fare against some of the new, and improved, competition out there?

You can buy an RP6 turntable without the Exact moving-magnet cartridge, although we wouldn't recommend it. The pair work so well together, there's little to be gained by going through the potential trials and tribulations of mixing and matching.

Twist to the turn

Rega tends to add its own twist on turntable design and this is evident in the RP6/Exact. The turntable uses a layered glass platter, which is thicker and heavier on the outside of the disc. This increases inertia and helps to promote greater speed stability, without adding too much weight to the plinth

and main bearing. Rega's engineers have long felt too much mass spoils the sound.

This school of thought also helps explain the lightweight plinth. Rega ensures extra rigidity by using a special resin coating - and it also adds extra bracing between the tonearm and main bearing.

Isolationism stance

The deck's lack of isolation (apart from three rubber feet, that is) means careful positioning is a must. A level, rigid surface away from speakers (they give off their own vibration and air movement) should be your starting point before spinning any vinyl.

Unlike the other three turntables in this test, the Rega has an external power supply, which also doubles as the speed control. It's not the neatest solution and gives off a homemade feel, but this doesn't detract from performance.

The RP6 shines. It's an enthusiastic listen, with bags of detail. The deck rumbles through Jamie T's *Limits Lie* with a great sense of scale and deep solid

drum kicks. His vocal sounds expressive and direct, especially as the track builds up to its final crescendo. Tracks come at you from a regimented and well-organised soundstage.

Dynamic and expressive

Holst's *The Planets* demands greater insight, control and dynamic flux, but it's dispatched with relative ease. The RP6/Exact pairing delivers the quieter lows and crashing highs with real vigour. This turntable is one of the most expressive and enthusiastic you can buy at the money.

So far so good for the Rega. But as you've already seen, Clearaudio and Pro-Ject have put in decent showings, and we've still Thorens to come...

Rating ★★★★★

FOR Engaging, detailed sound; well-matched own-brand cartridge; fine build

AGAINST Not quite plug-and-play

VERDICT Relatively simple styling, but don't let this fool you - the Rega is one of the top performers at the money



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