



# A DIAMOND IS A GIRL'S BEST FRIEND

by Anke Kathrin Bronner

## Gentle reader,

Extraordinary events demand extraordinary measures! So, contrary to normal practice, we ask you to lay your copy of Hi-Fi+ aside (just for one moment, of course)! Call your wife (or girlfriend) and show her a Diamond. No, not jewellery, but the first turntable for ladies! Yes, for ladies! The German manufacturer Scheu Analog (who make bearings and Perspex platters for many a German 'table) has finally responded to a long-standing requirement with a new type of record player.

But why a turntable for ladies? The thinking behind the Diamond goes like this: Women like listening to music at least as much as men do. But generally, the whole ritual involved in playing records, not to mention the risk to the cartridge and therefore life and limb, means they'd rather grab a CD or SACD instead of vinyl. That's a great loss for the analogue scene! So, why not provide a "plug and play" model and which proves in addition that hi-fi equipment doesn't have to be bland, clunky, bulky, unwieldy and butch? The Diamond is a lovely and stylish turntable, like a three-legged starfish or a triangle with "round edges". It comes in trendy colours and is easy to use. In fact, it looks more like a fancy objet d'art than a turntable. Your wife will love it! But, as you know: It is not only the appearance, but the practice and performance that matter. So, Scheu have combined their curvaceous motor unit with a modified RB250 and

a Benz Micro Silver MC cartridge. This combination works wonderfully well. So well that she will (finally) be convinced that the right equipment is able to influence the sound AND is worth the money, thus finishing all those tedious discussions about your hobby and the expenditure it entails. Finally, you don't have to share your system any longer, as she'll now have her own toy! But best of all, this is no toy, but a full-grown, high-class turntable! Not just a treat for the eyes... a treat for the ears!

Scheu started in the turntable business 20 years ago, gaining a worldwide reputation for his products along the way. The analogue community has long appreciated the terrific sound as well as the compact, substantial yet elegant constructions that typify the company's



designs. For the last three-years Ulla Scheu has been at the helm, and it is her that came up with the idea for the Diamond.

Actually, the Diamond is little sister to "Das Laufwerk No. 1", Scheu's top-of-the-range model. In contrast to "Das Laufwerk" with its 35kg weight, the Diamond is a lightweight at only 17kg. The 50mm platter is made of acrylic, and the multi-layer plinth, too. The

electronically regulated DC motor with fine-speed adjustment for 33 and 45rpm and thread drive, is a deliberately low torque design, to minimize transmitted vibration. The accessories include a roll of thread, a strobe disc, special bearing oil and the original packaging for the Benz Micro, complete with bubble level, screwdriver and mounting screws.

## Now, ladies...

Should you purchase a Diamond then it's the lady of the house who should install the deck. Open the box and nearly everything is already where it should be. The cartridge is pre-mounted and adjusted. Assuming no mishaps in transit it should be spot on. You just have to fill the bearing with oil (from the syringe) and put the platter on the bearing. Just be careful of your

fingernails and your long hair! You don't want to damage yourself or your new best friend. Then you just have to put the thread around the platter and pulley and space the motor to provide tension. Check the speed with the strobe disc, remove the stylus guard, and that's it! It is really that simple. In fact, connect the output sockets to the main system's pre-amp and you can start listening

immediately – and it should sound great!

I would however recommend checking the settings, first of all the VTF (Vertical tracking force). My Benz Micro came with 1.75 grams, but the optimum tracking force according to Benz is 2.0 grams. In fact, by increasing the VTF, the sound became noticeably more ▶

► detailed and the soundstage suddenly had more depth, while the music became cleaner and more fluid, so I would highly recommend this step! It really is quite simple to do, and just involves reading the instructions with a little care. (If all else fails, please ask your husband or boyfriend – it will make him feel so much better!)

Benz' intention with the Silver was to create a natural sound, not a cartridge "Diva". Its strengths are widely known – neutral to warm sound, especially the midrange, with pleasing heights and a tight bass. The RB250 also delivers a warm and substantial sound, with low surface noise while its rigidity makes it a good match for a low-compliance cartridge like the Benz. Scheu have replaced the original counterweight and plastic stub with a much heavier weight running on a metal post, keeping the mass closer to the bearings to improve the sound. I would suggest investing in the optional record weight too.

So, what can I tell you? It seems that this 'table is equally at home on classical music and pop as well; it even handled vast orchestral passages without any complaints! It sailed through my favourite Paganini concerto with Salvatore Accardo from the Italian audiophile label fonè. As a violinist I know the sound and range of the instrument and so does this record player – perfectly. Yet it was equally at home with Katie Melua's latest album *Piece By Piece*. Not surprising as Katie inspired me to test the turntable – she owns the very first Diamond and loves it. The Diamond is solid, stable and unflustered by even the busiest music. It's simplicity of set-up is echoed in the clarity of its sound and music.

**Gentle reader**, please consider: awareness is the key. Don't say afterwards that we didn't warn you! You might just be playing with fire. Once your wife has acquired a taste for vinyl, her own vinyl, she will after your stylus gauge, your test record and then your favourite LPs. In short: EVERYTHING!

And she might just drive you crazy with questions about VTA, azimuth, overhang... But bear in

The Diamond-Rega-Benz combination is a real dream-team. It eclipses even much higher priced combinations with its natural, neutral and detailed sound. Despite the entry-level price tag, you are purchasing a really solidly built and surprisingly weighty deck. It's a beautifully crafted, easy to handle turntable, full of style and finesse, a genuine little sister to "Das Laufwerk"! The design is ladylike, young, fresh and drop-dead gorgeous – and for me, there's nothing to touch its performance at the price. And I'm sure, once you've listened to it, you will agree: a Diamond is (not just) a girl's best friend! ➤+



mind: All this agony is for a good cause! You can finally show her just what a smart guy you are!

Of course, if a man wants to own this extraordinary turntable (and there have already been some requests...) it doesn't have to be pink. You can also order it in black, transparent or just about any other colour you like. And the Diamond offers enough possibilities when it comes to adjustment and upgrades. You could go to work on the Rega arm, but with a range of armboards available for other tonearms, maybe a more substantial upgrade makes more sense. Either way, the Diamond is well worth the effort.

#### TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Type:	Thread-drive record player including phono-stage
Motor:	DC low-torque
Speeds:	33 and 45 RPM, manually adjusted
Tonearm:	Scheu modified Rega RB250
Cartridge Type:	Benz Micro Silver moving-coil
Output Level:	2.0mV
Dimensions (WxHxD):	480mm x 115mm x 430mm
Colours:	Pink, black, transparent, other colours on request
Price:	€ 1.990,00

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