

Dynavector P-75

Dynavector P-75 phono preamplifier.
\$699

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Longtime audiophiles will recognise the Dynavector name as a Japanese producer of high quality phono cartridges featuring exotic jewel cantilevers and the amazing looking 500 series tonearms. In recent years Dynavector have branched out with a range of well received pre and power amplifiers designed by Australian Jonathon Davies in conjunction with longtime New Zealand Dynavector distributor/audio personality/racounteur Frank Denson of Denco Audio. Together they form the basis of Dynavector Australia/New Zealand.

Good things in small packages?

The DV P-75 is a simple metal box adorned with a dark acrylic faceplate featuring an illuminated Dynavector DV logo. The back features a matching acrylic plate with cut-outs for the mains

input socket, a hard-to-use mini earthing post and two sets of horizontally mounted RCA jacks for output and input. These are securely

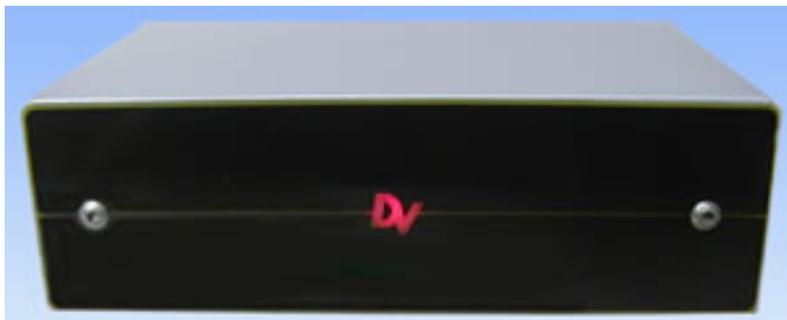
mounted to the chassis (hooray - absolutely no wobbles when plugging/unplugging cables), well spaced horizontally but a little cramped vertically so avoid any cables with large plug barrels.

Inner beauty

In true "never judge a book by its cover" fashion the little Dynavector eschews fancy aesthetics and packaging to concentrate on what really matters: the internal components, good design and execution.

In this price range most phono stages either use an off-the-shelf wallwart transformer for power supply or use expensive (and often problematic) on-board power supplies. The Dynavector breaks from tradition by implementing a unique high speed switched supply. Power is supplied by a stock 12V AC-DC adaptor.

Once inside a sophisticated 250kHz switched supply takes over, converting



and regulating the raw DC as required. Dynavector claims this split supply is so effective that the quality of the wallwart has no bearing on the P75's sound.

Catering to both MM and MC cartridges, adjustments are made by opening the unit up and manipulating tiny little jumpers. If you don't have steady hands and sharp eyes, this aspect of setup is best left to your dealer.

High output/moving magnet cartridge users get 40dB gain with 47k Ohm loading, but no capacitance adjustment is available.

The low output/moving coil user is offered 60 or 63dB of gain, suitable for cartridges of 0.2mV or 0.15mV output with loading options of 30, 100 or 470 ohms. Those who like to run MCs at 47k Ohms are out of luck.

A bonus for those with suitable low impedance cartridges is the Dynavector "Phono Enhancer" mode, a circuit innovation devised by the late Dr. Tominari, founder of Dynavector Japan. This dispenses with the usual input resistor and runs the P75 as a current amplifier. Result is the cartridge sees an effective short circuit, supposedly the ideal load. There are three further options for Low, Medium and High output impedance cartridges. In typical audiophile fashion, Dynavector do not specify what Low, Med or High impedance is so it's a case of trial and error.

No enhancements necessary

First listen was to the P75 in standard MC mode with 60dB gain and 100 ohms loading, using a Shelter 501 cartridge on a Well Tempered turntable. From a black silence the overriding impression was of music being reproduced with great clarity and detail. Better than average transparency allowed a clear look into the broad Panavision sound-

staging with life sized images in sharp focus. Tonally nothing was missing or exaggerated; the smooth, extended highs, clean midrange and well timed bass all flowing coherently with good dynamics. Music sounded natural and unfatiguing.

Dr. T calling

After resetting the jumpers the Phono Enhancer was all ready to go. On the Medium setting transparency improved, at the cost of tonal cooling, loss of bass extension and dynamic impact, along with reduction in dimensionality.

The High setting was a large step backwards. With the Low setting my Shelter now sounded more like a Dynavector cartridge than a Shelter.

Without a suitable cartridge (a Dynavector MC perhaps?), this was a far from definitive impression of the Phono Enhancer. Overseas listeners have found the circuit is very cartridge dependent.

A new benchmark

So how does the Dynavector stack up against fellow Kiwis, the Perreux SXV-1 and reigning New Zealand champ, the Plinius Jarrah?

The Perreux exceeds in user friendliness but is easily out-performed by the Dynavector/Plinius duo. The Jarrah is powerful, controlled and musical with a slightly dark balance, weighed towards the lower end of the spectrum. The P-75 has greater transparency with a lighter than life, slightly drier balance coupled to greater detail and a slight loss in dimensionality and tonal bloom. One the romantic, the other the intellectual. I would be happy with either but with the Jarrah now at \$880, the \$699 P-75 noses ahead to take the top spot as the best value New Zealand made phono stage—*Michael Wong*

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