

The King of Frogs

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Master van den Hul must have strongly kissed the analog muse there. His Frog is a fairy-tale MC cartridge that does not overlook the hi-fi fan, but rather is tender and sensitive. A frog's perspective in an acoustic manner.

Alt Jouk van the Hul enriches his cartridge zoo. Beside his, due to its long cantilever and filigree body, Grasshopper named top cartridge, the green housed Frog is available since quite some time. It contains plenty of hereditary material from the Grasshopper series. As such the by pairs selected long-crystalline copper coils from the Grasshopper III are also used here. The front magnet, in which field the coils move, and the precise suspension originate from the Grasshopper IV top model.

Lab report

Both channels of the Frog supply exactly 0.65 millivolts output voltage at five centimetres per second. At the recommended tracking force of 15 milliNewton the system cleanly tracks more than 60 micrometers. Simply outstanding, the high, well-balanced channel separation shows 34.5 respectively 38 decibels at one kilohertz. The very linear frequency response drops minimally at the higher tones.

Attachment: Half inch

Warranty: 1 year (on request a free check with adjustment after the first 200 hours playing time)



At the end of the thin cantilever the only 0.00032 gram heavy VDH 1S shaped diamond is found. Its flanks are just two millionth of a meter wide. The needle is allegedly shaped in such a way that it does not grub the bottom of the groove nor does it touch its top edge where scratches can lead to interfering noise. Indeed I have hardly ever experienced a cartridge with such little by-sound. Also the needle noise remains very quiet.

The Frog ranks among the regular output level MCs. Specially sensitive phono preamps are not necessary. Only the termination impedance requires a little experimentation. At the pre-preamps that I use the usual 100 ohms were too low, attack and charisma were missing. Only at 500 to 700 ohms these develop to full bloom.

Fine-tuning is absolutely worthwhile, because the runned-in Frog enqueues itself without any trouble under my favourites. It lets the timbres shine. Instruments keep their natural energy and corporeality, voices come a little one-dimensional, but characteristic and shade-rich. Two audiophile combinations particularly impressed me: On the one hand its worldly spacious imaging joins with a captivating accuracy in positioning, on the other hand, despite the offered tonal wealth, one

does not miss any bit of structure. This mixture is rare and works out perfectly balanced to my ears.

The Frog with its medium compliance (around 35 μ /mN) superbly fits my SME V tonearm. At 15 milliNewton tracking force it scans even the meanest passages practically without error. Due to its sharp stylus edges alignment errors stand out clearly. A cartridge alignment gauge here only may be considered as a rough guidance. Especially the tonearm height needs to be figured out consciously until soundstaging and focusing are optimal.

Amongst its competitors the Frog enthusiastically collects points. As such it appears to be sweeter, better-mannered in rendering than the likewise excellent Rohmann from Ortofon, which behaves more direct though not more musical. No doubt, with the Frog the Dutch Pope of analog has succeeded in providing a fantastic MC at the appropriate price. Certainly also something for your analog zoo!

Testprofile van den Hul Frog around 2950 German Marks

"The best cartridge available at this price", praises van the Hul his Frog. And the man is right!

STEREO test judgement

Excellent ***

Noble ingredients and a fine tuning make the system a precious analog piece. The colourful, deeply structured sound combines with a high tracking ability at medium tracking force. For best performance the alignment and the termination resistance must be right.

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