



MoFi Electronics MasterTracker £800

The group's first moving-magnet offering is another US export with a connection to the record-making business

DETAILS

PRODUCT
MoFi MasterTracker

ORIGIN
High-output, moving-magnet cartridge

TYPE
USA

WEIGHT
9.7g

FEATURES
• Aluminium body
• Stylus tip: Micro-Line
• Tracking force: 1.8g-2.2g

DISTRIBUTOR
Karma AV

Drawing on over 40 years of making records at Mobile Fidelity Sound Lab, the MoFi Electronics division is focused on improving the sonic integrity of audio reproduction in the home. The American company's products are the result of decades of experience in the studio and multiple collaborations with some of the world's best audio designers.

The design of all MoFi cartridges begins with looking at where record production starts, ie: at the cutting lathe. The cutting head of a typical lathe consists of two coils positioned at 45° from horizontal (and therefore at 90° with respect to each other). Incidentally, the cutting stylus for a lacquer disc is usually a heated ruby, and this stylus is replaced after 10-20

hours of operation. The MasterTracker is the top of the company's Tracker series of cartridges, which also includes the StudioTracker and the UltraTracker (HFC 434). The MasterTracker features a V-Twin dual-magnet generator, which mirrors the layout of the cutting head that originally makes a record's grooves. The cartridge employs two powerful and low-mass magnets aligned in a V formation and parallel with the record surface. The generator coils are made from pure Ohno continuous-cast copper coils. The body of the cartridge is made from a well-damped, billet aluminium body that has been specifically designed to control resonances in order to provide a tight and accurate bass reproduction.

The tapered cantilever is fitted with a Micro-Line stylus tip. As with the Vertere Sabre overleaf, the stylus is not customer-replaceable. The Micro-Line diamond stylus, which is shaped like the cutting head of a record lathe, is designed to precisely trace the walls of the vinyl groove.

Sound quality

Listening to the Don Rendell and Ian Carr Quintet, the bossa nova rhythm of *Latin Blue* has a wonderful realism and clarity in my listening room. The presence of the saxophone and trumpet is particularly impressive.

Trevor Pinnock's rendition of JS Bach's *Partita No.2* displays a lot of clarity and detail in the stately

opening and then moves swiftly to the tuneful and cheerful main section. The harpsichord has superb detail when played with the MoFi cartridge, as well as a real presence and there is no lack of the low-level detail that you often get with moving magnets. The harmonics of each individual note during the louder crescendos show no sign of muddiness, especially when the opening *Sinfonia* progresses into the energetic section. I have heard this section sounding like a cacophony of noise in the past, rather than the tuneful assembly of notes that I enjoy with the MasterTracker.

Winding up the turntable speed to 45rpm to spin the Lyn Stanley LP, the focus and clarity of her vocals in *It's Magic* are both excellent with the MoFi cartridge, and the soundstage is expansive. Having said that, the instruments are not quite as rich as I

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am used to hearing from this recording and the top-end does feel a tad cold to my ears.

The stately plucking of the strings of the National Symphony Orchestra during the opening of Chabrier's *España* are pleasingly strident, clear and refined. The music flows really well and the cartridge tracks this powerful piece with its large-scale dynamics and deep bass very cleanly too – just as I would have expected with my revered Shure V15 cartridge of yesteryear.

Overall, the MasterTracker is a, er... master tracker both in name and nature. It delivers a very musical sound that is easy on the ears due to the lack of edginess that you can sometimes get when using a moving-magnet cartridge ●

Hi-Fi Choice

OUR VERDICT

SOUND QUALITY

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LIKE: Smooth and detailed; excellent tracking ability

VALUE FOR MONEY

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DISLIKE: Slightly cool top-end evident with percussion

BUILD QUALITY

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