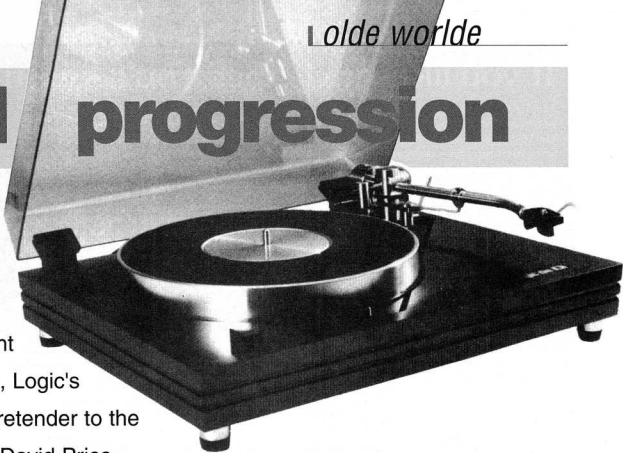


logical progression



Linn's LP12 turntable has had many rivals over the years, each claiming to offer a worthwhile improvement in sound. Back in 1981, Logic's DM101 was the new pretender to the Sondek's throne, says David Price.

For much of the seventies and eighties, Linn's LP12 was the undisputed king of vinyl. New title challengers came and went, but the Sondek remained on top. Ironically, because these aspirant kings of vinyl didn't turn out to be quite as good, they ended up unfairly overlooked and ignored. This always seemed strange to me - rather like saying if you're not Number One in the charts, nobody will play your song on the radio or stock your records! Such were the politics of hi-fi magazine publishing back then.

The upshot is that there are a large number of fine high-end turntables around that most people have either completely forgotten about or never even heard of in the first place. Along with Ariston's RD11, the JBE and the original Dunlop Systemdek, Logic's DM101 is just such a deck. No, it isn't the greatest device ever to spin a Long Playing record, but *Olde Worlde* aficionados should find it well worth a look.

Costing £299 in 1981, it was an expensive piece of kit. Like the Linn it was a well finished, belt driven design using the familiar Philips/Impex 24 pole AC synchronous motor; modified with a quarter inch thick steel mounting plate to reduce vibration. The 356x483x153mm plinth was a solid Medite affair finished in satin black, with a wonderfully nineteen seventies smoked Perspex dustcover. Again, 'a la Linn', it used a two-piece

cast aluminium platter with a hardened steel spindle set into the inner platter. The 2.5kg outer platter was machined to have almost all its mass at the rim, and topped by a Michell Focus-style bonded red felt mat. The aluminium bearing housing contained two plain bronze bushes, together with a hardened steel thrust pad with a ground and lapped face, with a ball concentrically located in the end of the spindle.

This is all pretty conventional stuff, but the Logic's design had a twist. The 8mm aluminium subchassis took tonearms directly via adaptor plates, obviating the need for sound-degrading armboards. This was then suspended at three points using an ingenious double spring arrangement - both springs were attached to round steel plates at one end, and at the other to brackets mounted opposite each other on the plinth, meaning the brackets hung in the middle. This meant that if the chassis movement caused one spring to compress in one direction, the other spring would have to extend by the same amount. The result was more effective damping, and less long term drift out of adjustment. Chassis levelling was done by a simple screw adjuster.

Overall then, the Logic was an extremely thoughtful design, a fact born out when you listen to one. Compared to a similar vintage Sondek, the DM101 sounds slightly

lighter, faster and breezier, with a firmer bass that lacks just a bit of the LP12's extension. Move on up the frequency range and there's noticeably less clutter, with a clearer and more neutral lower midband that images more positively. Soundstaging is tighter with better image location - this was always a weak point of the Sondek - and there's a touch more detail too. What the Logic doesn't have is the bounce of its Scottish rival. More interested in neutral, even-handed information retrieval, the DM101 proves less rhythmically and musically engaging, which is probably why hi-fi journalists of the day came out in favour of the Sondek.

Nevertheless, it's still an extremely pleasant listen, especially when you consider how cheap these babies are second-hand. Pay around £100 to £150 for a good one, and you've got yourself a front end that's both dramatically better than Regas or Projects, and far superior to any CD player under a grand. Many Logics were partnered with SME III's, Mission 774s and Syrinxes, but you can easily fit a modern SME 309 or the ubiquitous Origin Live/Rega RB250 if you can find an adaptor plate. The result will be most enjoyable, especially when you remember how little money you've spent to get round this good. In the thrusting new digital world of 2001, this twenty year old stalwart is still a surprisingly logical choice, Captain. ■▲