



THE PRODIGY'S
PLATTER IS NO
BIGGER THAN THE
LABEL AREA OF AN LP

REVIEWS RECORD CLEANING MACHINE

Whereas most RCMs feature a revolving 12" platter, much the same as a turntable, along with a suction arm that cleans a whole record side in a couple of rotations, the Prodigy's platter is no bigger than the label area of an LP, while the suction arm features a precision nozzle.

This means it works its way across the playing surface, cleaning as it goes in around two minutes per side. Unlike a tonearm, which moves from a record's outer edge to its inner groove, the Prodigy's starting position is in the inner 'dead wax', and it cleans from the inside out.

Cleaning a record is easy with the Prodigy. Simply place the disc onto the platter, set it spinning, apply some of the supplied cleaning fluid and use the microfibre roller to spread the fluid evenly across the record's surface and work it deep into the grooves. Then place the nozzle on the suction arm in the inner groove and two minutes (per side) later you have a clean and dry record ready to play.

Be sure to have a supply of fresh, lined inner sleeves, though, if you wish to avoid the

'dirty feet into clean socks' problem.

The cleaning fluid itself is a special blend of natural plant-based active ingredients and triple-filtered distilled water, which I find superior to either the alcohol or detergent-based fluids I've used previously. Detergent, I have found, has a nasty habit of loosening grime in the grooves, that is only removed when your stylus literally gouges it out; it's not a pretty sight.

And it's not just old, dirty records that benefit from a professional clean either, as the Prodigy effectively removes unwanted artefacts of the pressing process, as I discover when cleaning my copy of the remixed Beatles *Abbey Road* album released late in 2019. My copy was slightly noisy from the get-go, with some low-level crackle throughout, yet one clean on the Prodigy and the noise vanishes. With that in mind, I dig out a recent reissue of Talk Talk's *Spirit Of Eden*, which was given to me by a friend who was dissatisfied with the quality of the pressing. This album has moments of near-silence and dramatic dynamic swings,

so you really need a pristine copy to enjoy it properly. A brief listen confirms the shocking audio quality, both intrusive crackle and the odd loud pop, but one good clean on the Prodigy and the record not only sounds clean and quiet, but also more vibrant than I've ever heard it before.

This seems to be a wonderful by-product of the cleaning process; eliminating crackle and static-induced distortion allows the music to be heard more clearly, with fine detail no longer being masked by intrusive fizzy high frequencies.

The new Keith Monks Prodigy is a superb cleaning machine and a worthwhile investment for anyone with a cherished collection of vinyl. ●

VERDICT

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PROS Outstanding results, easy to use, improves sound quality, plant-based active ingredients, stylish good looks, value for money

CONS None

