





## FROM TOP TO BOTTOM

For decades, the majority of the best cartridges came from Japan. But what about 2024? Since 2019, the Chinese company Skyanalog has managed to reinterpret this mantra and score points in all price categories.



400 Euro vs. 6500: The two new Skyanalog cartridges serve different target groups

### The beginnings

Initially, there were no cartridges in the programme of company boss Jack Leung, which was due to the fact that he developed and built cartridges for a number of other companies. It was understandable that Leung wanted to demonstrate his expertise with his own products. Here in Germany, the Skyanalog cartridges were brought to the attention of listeners by the excellent sales work of TCG boss Eckard Derks and have earned a secure place in our analogue world.

### The P-1M

The Skyanalog carousel is turning pretty fast, maybe that's the 'Chinese' speed. But frankly, we wouldn't mind if some of the cartridges stayed in the programme a little longer. After the green P-1G, the P-1M is the latest addition to the most affordable Skyanalog cartridges. What does that mean? Typical of the P family is the open generator in an excellently manufactured aluminium housing. The holes in the housing make it easy to adjust, which is something every pickup should be able to

do by now, because nobody needs to fiddle with M2.6 nuts any more. The workmanship of this pickup is also impeccable. The data sheet for the P-1M describes the stylus type as 'Hyperspherical 5x250 µm'. What exactly this could mean has given rise to speculation. So I asked the two Skyanalog representatives at the High-End show in Munich what kind of stylus it was. They answered 'Conical' like a shot from a pistol. Round needles, my old love, mounted in the classic way on an aluminium needle carrier. Healthy output voltage of 0.4mv (at 3.54cm/s, i.e. a good 0.5mv) and an impedance of 4 ohms - so it can be connected to the same peripherals as my Koetsu Black. The system weight of 10 grams is also suitable and the needle compliance of 12 makes it perfect for use in the Schick tonearm. The recommended tracking force of 13 mN is surprisingly low, but that's not a bad thing. I find it interesting that Skyanalog only recommends a needle brush for cleaning the needle and advises against the use of liquids. This is exactly our experience and, purely by chance, we are currently preparing a story on the subject of needle cleaning.

## Does that sound good?

The sound of the P-1M is described as 'pleasantly tuned' or 'slightly rounded'. This can be understood from the published measurement values - a presence and treble dip roughly between 1kHz and 10kHz combined with a juicy bass and a treble rise well above 10kHz is meant. I was a little worried whether I would like the system at all, whether I might not have become 'contaminated' with high-end in the meantime, because I do have some fine cartridges in daily use. But that's rubbish - you can always recognise an old love and when I write that, I mean the good old Denon DL-103, which is still in production. Let me put it this way: the P1-M is the DL-103 of modern times with better means. It does everything better than the 103, and does so significantly, but retains the homogeneous

integrity for which the 103 is still so highly regarded. 'No Place To Hide' by the Crusaders is one of my favourite island tunes that I've heard so often and rarely with as much fun as with the P-1M. The piece builds on a fat bass, like a wave that rolls towards you and gets bigger and bigger. And when it finally arrives, I just want to throw myself into it. This is exactly how the Skyanalogue depicts it: the fat bass, the sparkling Fender Rhodes by Joe Sample, the guitar licks and the juicy horns. It sounds round, rolling, simply delicious and ultimately like my favourite thing to listen to for most of my life. I actually wanted to give away John Lee Hooker's 'The Folk Lore Of' because it just didn't carry me away emotionally. Gone, the P-1M also opens up this world and makes me marvel at the diversity in the supposed simplicity of Hooker's music. That is high art.



*Only the Diamond is allowed in the noble oak box*

## Teammates

### Turntable:

- Garrard 401 mit Schick 12
- Transrotor Massimo Nero / Studio 12

### Phono preamplifier:

- Manley Oasis

### Preamplifier:

- Soulnote A-2
- Stax SRA-12S

### Power amplifier:

- Acoustic Masterpiece M-101

### MC transformer:

- Air Tight ATH-3

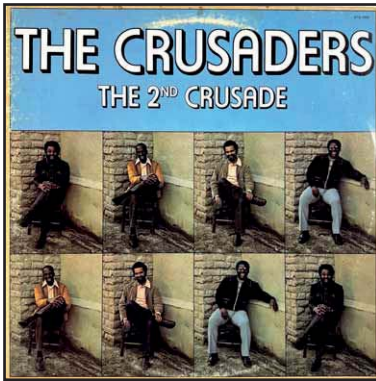
### Loudspeaker:

- Epos ES-14N
- Greenwall Ivy

## Competitors

### Pickup Cartridge:

- Benz ACE SL
- Denon DL-103 GL
- Skyanalogue G-1



What we played

**The Crusaders**  
The 2<sup>nd</sup> crusade

**John Lee Hooker**  
The Folklore Of

### Flagpole, opposite side

At this point, we leave the undoubtedly exciting world of 400-euro MCs and turn to a big surprise. Skyanalog has barely shaken up the established world of cartridges with its 'Reference' model when Jack Leung and his team come up with the next top performer: The new big thing is called 'Diamond' and you can already guess from this what's behind this: it's the stylus. And why now? Because the manufacturer is celebrating its 25th birthday these days and wanted to present an anniversary model befitting the occasion.

### Cantilever & Co.

Skyanalog pick-ups have already attracted attention in the past by using more exclusive materials for this component in hitherto untypically civilised price regions. Boron, ruby, sapphire - these have long been available at prices that you can only dream of elsewhere. And according to reports, the tiny precision components are even produced in-house and are not bought in from the well-known suppliers. Now Skyanalog has taken the next hurdle and is offering a cartridge with a diamond cantilever. For a relatively reasonable 6500 euros. Why is



*The P-1M is the new entry-level model from Skyanalog*



*Considering its price, the P-1 deserves a big recommendation*



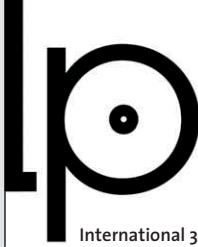
*The P-1M housing is open at the bottom and allows a view of the construction*

## Skyanalog P-1M



- Price
- Distribution
- Phone
- Internet
- Warranty
- Weight

approx. 400 Euro  
TCG, Nordhorn  
+49 5921 7884927  
[www.tcg-gmbh.de](http://www.tcg-gmbh.de)  
2 years  
approx. 10 g



Skyanalog  
P-1M

International 3/24

» I don't want to exaggerate and claim that this is the best cartridge in the world. It doesn't want to be. But it is a system with which I can listen to music with great satisfaction. And Holger Barske knows how much more you can do with it.



*The Diamond is a special model for the company's 25th anniversary*

this being done? Because the combination of diamond cantilever and diamond stylus promises extreme rigidity combined with low weight. It is obvious that such a combination can follow the groove flanks better than practically any other. As with the Reference, a very narrow 5x80 µm micro-ridge diamond is used at the end. As the diamond combination is quite susceptible to resonance, the suspension of the needle carrier required a few tricks, which were also incorporated into the design of the second generation of the 'G' models. This can also be seen in the cabinets: G1, G2 and G3 are very similar to the Diamond in appearance - apart from the golden anodised finish of the top model. The details of the generator design have been somewhat lost due to the translation from Chinese, but we are happy to believe that the choice of materials, manufacturing precision and adjustment effort had to be adapted to the Diamond's ultimate standards.

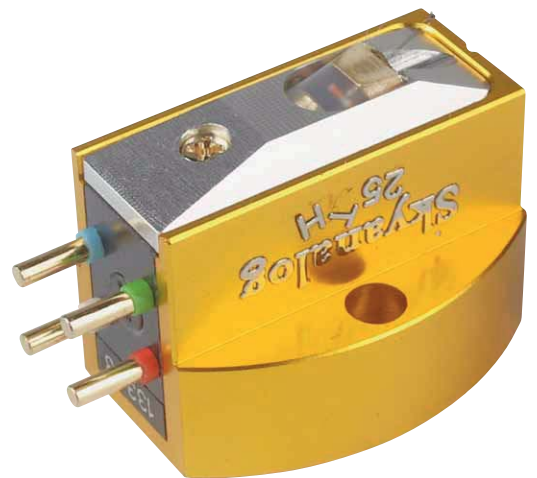
## Sound

At 15 µm/mN, the Diamond is one of the medium-hard suspension systems and should feel at home in a variety of tonearms. In Transrotor's Studio 12, it certainly did and immediately made people sit up and take notice. Neil Young's legendary recording 'Live At Massey Hall' from 1971 is a great indicator of the subtle, and the atmosphere conjured up by the Diamond here is simply breathtaking. The great Ortofon Verismo comes to mind, which is similarly capable of creating such magical microcosms. The Diamond delivers an outstandingly free and large spatial image with super-precise reproduction. I like it best on the Manley Oasis with 200 ohms, but as always it depends on the particular setup. With this inspiring combination of subtlety and stability, even Coltrane's 'A Love Supreme' becomes a real experience and no longer sounds as historical as it used to.

*Christian Bayer / Holger Barske*



*Visually, the Diamond is similar to the newly renovated G series*



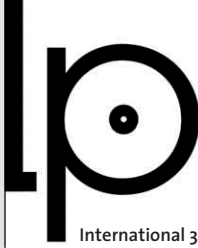
*As the name suggests, the Diamond has a diamond stylus carrier*

## Skyanalog Diamond



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approx. 6,500 Euro  
TCG, Nordhorn  
+49 5921 7884927  
[www.tcg-gmbh.de](http://www.tcg-gmbh.de)  
2 years  
approx. 10.7 g



Skyanalog  
Diamond

International 3/24

» Even though the extremely fine and stable Skyanalog Diamond is probably one of the best pick-ups currently available, our recommendation for purchase must of course be the marvellous P-1M. Although it can't hold a candle to the Diamond in any respect.