

PRO-JECT VC-S CLEANER

INDUSTRIAL-STRENGTH WASHER-DRYER FOR YOUR VINYL

£349 www.project-audio.com

When it comes to cleaning your records, this is a high-end solution. But how does it work? And does it deliver? **Ian Peel** comes clean...

Glance across this page and you might think we have a new, minimalist turntable on test. But this device doesn't play records, it cleans them. And we're here to test out the full package: that's the VC-S system and its bundled record clamp, 12" vacuum arm (a version for 7"s has also just been launched), goat-hair brush and bespoke cleaning fluid.

So how does the process work?

There are three main steps. First of all, you need to place your record on the turntable and fix it in position. This is done with a metal plate that covers over the labels to protect them, and a ball that screws onto the central pin to hold it in place.

A word of warning – it's quite a heavy ball, so place it and remove it carefully, as dropping this could spell the end for the record you're cleaning, dirty or not!

SPIN ME RIGHT ROUND

The next stage is to set the turntable rotating, the same as you would with a record player. Although for this process, you then squeeze on some record-cleaning fluid and gently apply the brush as it rotates, to spread the fluid across all the grooves.

As for what fluid to use, Pro-Ject (and their dealers) supply their own 'Wash-IT' formulation for modern-day vinyl and a separate solution, Wash-IT 78, for 78rpm shellacs. But note that this fluid – both before and after use – is strong stuff and, on account of its isopropyl alcohol ingredient, is deemed

TURNTABLE

120

REVIEWS



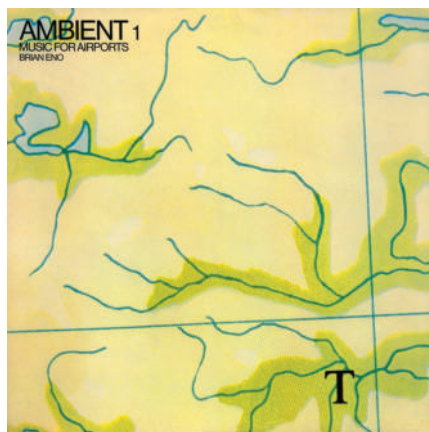


more smearing, easier scratching and the need for a very light hand with a brush, so as to avoid inadvertent marking.

At £350, this is a heavyweight piece of machinery, with a heavyweight price tag. And it cleans your vinyl so well that you're unlikely to need to clean each piece again for many years. If you're a dealer, or have a massive collection, it's a no-brainer, though.

If you're a high-end or luxury buyer, it's also a must. You can't be risking a £1,000 needle in the grooves of a dusty old record, and this looks the business, design-wise, so would enhance your setup rather than spoil the aesthetic.

That said, if you have the space, I suggest you position your VC-S a good distance away from your main hi-fi. Running at full strength, the unit draws a lot of power from the mains. And it's also pretty loud. So much so, that one of Brian Eno's ambient albums would be entirely drowned out if



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with all your years of dust and grime mixed into it – right out of the record's grooves.

NEW SENSATION

The process doesn't take long, either. Just two rotations with the vacuum-cleaner-type part in place, ideally; one going clockwise and one anti-clockwise.

The results are impressive. Hovering a vacuum above a record that's covered in solution feels dangerous, but the results speak for themselves. Every speck of dust is removed – including the kind of 'haze' of dust that many years, or very brutal brushing, can wear into the grooves. We tested the VC-S on LPs from the 60s, 70s and 80s and all looked as good as new, scratches aside, of course.

I would advise that you spray the solution and treat the 80s albums very carefully, as the one we tried was from the latter end of the decade, when the grooves were getting shallower and shallower – which, if anything, led to

you were using the Pro-Ject cleaner at the same time.

But then again, if you cleaned up an LP such as Eno's 1978 *Ambient 1: Music For Airports* – which, during the almost four decades of its life, will have inevitably become very dusty – on the VC-S, then the result would be completely sensational: like a trip back in time to the day you bought it. ●

'hazardous household waste', so should be taken to your local recycling centre, as opposed to being poured down the sink. We also recommend trying Plane Groovy's Vinyl Clear fluid solution (*Long Live Vinyl* news, Issue 2).

With one side of your record covered in cleaner, it's time for the magic to happen. Bring what looks like a cross between a turntable tonearm and K-2SO's arm from *Rogue One* over the record and activate the power.

That arm is in fact a massive, very powerful (and very loud!) vacuum cleaner, which lifts the Wash-IT solution –

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QUICK CLEANING
PROCESS

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HEAVY



SCORE
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