



Eulogy too

Vinyl lover Tony Bolton eulogises over Trilogy's new 907 dual-mono phono stage.

They say first impressions count, and a lot of the time it can be true of reviewing. When I opened the box containing this phono stage I was immediately impressed by the solidity and the quality of the finish of the bead-blasted casework of the Trilogy 907 phono stage. This is

machined from a solid billet of aluminum that weighs 1.5kg. Inside, the unit is divided up with channels cut into the metal to provide screening for the different components from power supplies and each other. The electronics add another 0.5kg to the weight and are enclosed with a 1.5mm thick stainless-steel bottom plate.

Externally there is a small red light at the front that glows when power is on. The only user adjustable functions are hidden underneath

where there are four banks of dip-switches. These control gain and cartridge loading. The former can be set for high or low output moving coils, and moving magnet. The loading options include four capacitance settings and nine choices of resistance from 70 Ohms to 47kOhms, so most types of cartridge currently available should be easily accommodated.

The circuit is of a zero feedback Class A dual mono design and features precision polystyrene capacitors in the RIAA section, along with metal-film resistors in what are described as 'critical locations'. 15A transistors are used in the power supply shunt regulators and there is an on board inductor-capacitor to filter the external DC power supply.

This is fed via a Neutrik XLR connector attached to a cable that runs from a stainless-steel case that contains the PSU. The mains flows through a custom made ultra low flux toroidal transformer that sits within a copper Faraday screen. This feeds the Mundorf reservoir capacitors through a bespoke inductor. This

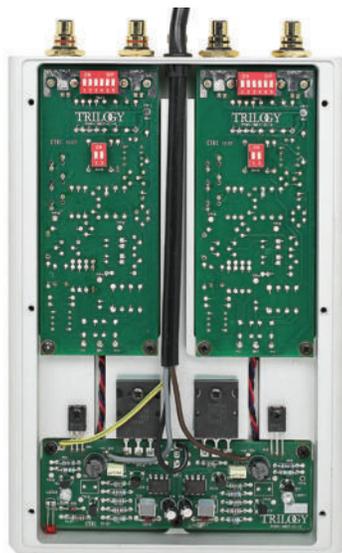
choke input supply was chosen because it produced the minimum of electrical noise.

Setting up took a matter of minutes, involving setting the dip switches for the Clearaudio Concept MC cartridge that now graces my Sondek, and plugging in the leads. The dual mono circuitry means that socket layout is a little unusual with the input and output for each channel being paired off on each side of the case. The earth socket sits between them.

The instructions recommend that the units are left permanently switched on and that they will take about half an hour to attain their normal performance level from cold. I left them on and put a good 48 hours running-in time in before settling down to listen properly.

One of the first records that I played was a original mono copy of Roy Orbison's 'Lonely and Blue'. This record is definitely not in the best of nick, and there were a fair few pops and crackles, but despite the lack of a stereo/mono switch I was impressed with the way that the 907 seemed to

Internal view Trilogy 907 phono stage





The gold plated phono sockets are grouped in input/output pairs, because of the physical separation of dual-mono construction.

draw my focus to the music rather than the interference. I was aware of it but I was still more interested in following the tune rather than being irritated by the background noise. Side one opens with the hit 'Only the lonely' and the gentle sway to the rhythm caught my ear while I sat back and let the combination of guitar and backing orchestra flowed over me. Orbison seemed to stand centre stage in front of me, with a spread of music both behind and to either side of him. It sounded easy-flowing and inviting.

Moving on a few feet along my record shelves I came to Eat Static's first LP from 1993, 'Abduction'. Formed over 20 years ago by two members of the Ozric Tentacles, Eat Static has become one of the longer lived of the electronic music acts, still touring the UK and Europe and releasing new music. This LP introduced their long-standing alien/ space/ UFO themes that reoccur within their music, and provide the excuse for some very weird and bizarre noises that come out of their keyboards, mixed with dialogue from films, drums and guitars. I've seen them live on numerous occasions over the last 19 years and usually find the music has lots of power and energy that really can get a full dance floor moving. The Trilogy seemed to latch onto that energy and run with it, transmitting it through my hi-fi in a very convincing manner. It demonstrated bass that was deep, but that still could move and gyrate energetically, accompanied by a mid band and treble that were both open and well presented.

A recent purchase has been the 2008 vinyl release of Oregon based Pink Martini's first LP. This originally came out on CD in 1997 and launched a career that now covers ten digital releases and five on the sacred black stuff. This copy is a

180grams of very well recorded and pressed vinyl containing music that harks back to the days of swinging jazz sextets with, at times sultry, vocals provided by China Forbes. She opens the first track with a power-house cry of 'Amade Mio', accompanied by swirling harps, then the band cut into a rhumba that had me mesmerised both by the infectiousness of the beat, and the sense of presence of the band in the room. I have heard more pin point accurate imaging but this phonostage somehow got the sense of humanity in the performance which helped make it sound very realistic.

It managed the same trick again when I played the Menuhin's performing Beethoven's 'Kreutzer' Sonata. They first recorded this in 1935 for HMV, and again on this stereo recording in 1959. Although I like the (youthful?) exuberance of the earlier recording, I find this one had a greater weight and gravity to the performance which added to the sense of power in the piece. The 907 rose to the occasion superbly, providing a piano that seemed to occupy two-thirds of the soundstage, with a rich, polished tone, contrasting nicely with the violin situated just alongside the inside edge of the right hand speaker. There seemed to be enough timbral correctness to the instruments that I forgot about 'listening' and just sat back and enjoyed the music.

CONCLUSION

The 907 transmits music. Not all of them do; there are those that focus on rhythm, others give holographic images, whilst others offer a cooler, more academic appraisal of the sound. This one does music first, other

details seem to fall into place as required, not as after-thoughts, but definitely of secondary importance to the proceedings. It 'carries-a-tune' well and has a way with rhythms that is almost guaranteed to get your feet moving. The build quality is first class, and the only drawback from my point of view is the inability to play mono records as well as they can be played. That apart, I regard this as a superb piece of equipment, and as such, I can recommend it for audition, pretty sure that you will come away from the experience as impressed as I have been.

SYSTEM USED:
Linn LP12/ Hadcock 242 Cryo/ Goldring 1022GX and Clearaudio Concept MC cartridge.
Bent Audio TAP-X Passive pre-amp.
2 x Quad 303 power amps.
Kelly KT3 loudspeakers.



Internal view Trilogy 900 PSU.

Underside view Trilogy 907 phonostage.



VERDICT Very well made and musical sounding phonostage.

TRILOGY 907 £1995
Symmetry
+44 (0)1727 865488
www.symmetry-systems.co.uk

FOR
- Beautiful build and finish
- Deep and fast bass
- Good dynamics

AGAINST
- No stereo/ mono facility

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

The Trilogy 907 unusually has warp filtering, gain rolling down below 20Hz. The filter puts a small +0.5dB lift in output around 40Hz and this is just enough to ensure the 907 has a bit more bass heft than rivals. Our analysis shows this unusual characteristic. There is only a -3dB reduction in output at 5Hz so warps are not attenuated strongly, but the effect will be useful in lessening cone flap with warped LPs. Equalisation was deadly accurate across the audio band, lacking the slight treble lift of many stages. This will make the 907 a tad less bright and shiny than many but more neutral in balance.

Gain values were useful for both Moving Magnet and Moving Coil cartridges, the maximum of x3900 or 72dB being fine for low output MCs, whilst x300 or 50dB is fine for MMs. This gives input overload values of 3mV for low output MC and 7mV for high output

MC, and 40mV for MM. Noise levels were very low, moving coil returning 0.07µV of input noise (A weighted). This is low enough for hiss to be inaudible with very low output MCs. The Trilogy 907 measures very well in all areas. It has been carefully engineered. NK

Frequency response	5Hz-65kHz
Separation	76dB
Noise (MM, MC)	0.25, 0.07µV
Distortion	0.005%
Gain	50dB, 65dB, 72dB
Overload	12V out

FREQUENCY RESPONSE

