



The leading edge adjourned – HARMONIX TU-812MX LP Clamp

~ BY 7500MARTIN

Two years ago, I was very much enthusiastic in CAS (computer as source), due to my cash flow problem at that time, I was forced to sell my Harmonix TU-812M LP clamp which I had used for many years! In those days with no TU-812M LP clamp, I was more or less feeling a little lost! During the period when I was most fanatical about LPs, basically as long as I could afford it, I would not hesitate to buy it back again! The TU-812M is the survivor after so many cruel tests and comparisons.

There is some discussion in the Internet that a LP clamp selling for more than twenty thousand dollars is a cart before the horse's behavior. I personally noncommittal, but my heart still tends to agree. After all, audiophiles are a bit crazy sometimes without common sense! Equipped the LP clamp selling at more than twenty thousand dollars with the turntable system including the tonearm valued at no more than sixty thousand dollars, some of the LP fans would ask whether this twenty something thousand LP clamp could turn the pheasant to be the phoenix? I'll tell you honestly, the LP clamp has to match well with the turntable! If it matches well, the performance will be excellent. Otherwise, there is nothing special and unexciting! During my LP peak time, I owned three turntables at different price points, while the TU-812M at that time worked very well with all these different combination with good performance. This was why I kept it for a long time until I switched to devoted into listening in another format - CAS!

The following review is to share with those audiophiles listening to LPs but never have the Harmonix TU-812M LP clamp at all. After all, the TU-812M have been discontinued for a year, but the factory suddenly popped a successor model TU-812MX! What is the difference in sound between the TU-812MX and TU-812M? Regrettably, I sold my TU-812MX six months ago, and I am sorry that I could not do the actual AB comparison. However, many LP lovers and senior audiophiles who are friendly with me and trust me that they would like to lend me their TU-812M. I'll later describe in another write up about the sound performance of the TU-812M TU-812MX respectively! On the other hand, I would like to thank the Harmonix distributor in Hong Kong for lending me their first TU-812MX for review.





Since my Pioneer Exclusive P3 has been sold for a long time, so the following is just to share my listening experience of using my Brinkmann Balance + Rockport 6000 + Goldfinger Statement system for the reviews, some of you might think it would be unfair, but also hope you forgive me!

At first, the combination with or without the TU-812MX at my home, the improvement in sound was not too prominent while the high frequencies were audible suppression! After re-reading the instruction manual, particularly emphasis the damping material on Platter surface will directly affect the TU- 812MX performance. I immediately doubt whether the Brinkmann Balance glass Platter surface causing the problem. In fact, Brinkmann has offered its own LP clamp to match with its glass surface Platter! Fortunately, I do have several different LP mats at home ready for a rainy day! Firstly, I listened with the Sunshine STS 1 which is a thin metal plate LP mat (without the TU-812MX), and I felt it was positive. At least, it did not sound as real dead as it was using with the Brinkmann original LP clamp! Therefore, all of the following comparisons would be using the

Sunshine STS 1 thin metal plate LP mat as the base, and then I do the comparison with or without the TU-812MX. For the LP enthusiastic audiophiles who are interested in the TU-812MX, please be sure to pay attention to what type of material your turntable Platter surface is used.

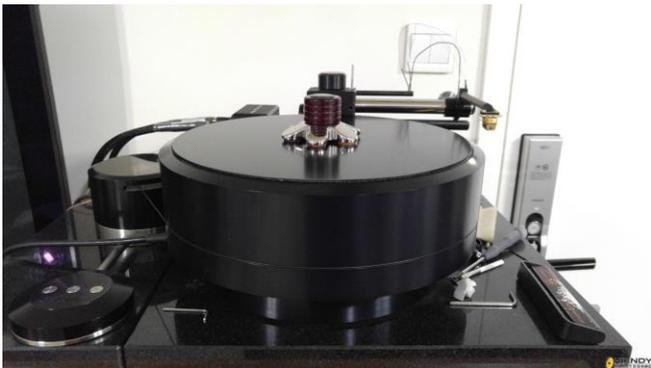


Testing among different types of LPs, including Jazz, classical, pop, and even some Audiophiles LPs, I can sum up several features of TU-812MX ! Traditional LP clamp would usually cause high frequency significantly compressed! However, after using with the TU-812MX, no audible high frequency compression or dull was found. It actually still maintained proper luster in the high frequency, but for some reason, I did not know why the sound pressure level seemed to be reduced a tinny little bit (need to tune a little step up on the volume control). After repeatedly comparisons, I finally realized that the original frizzy noise in the high frequency has restricted me to tune up the volume, and now the annoying frizzy noise being swept away by the TU-812MX; then the high frequency is more linear. Therefore, I can tune up the volume level naturally!



Without using the TU-812MX, the vocals tend to sound like a loose knot and lack of three-dimensional. After using with the TU-812MX, the imaging of vocal is so much clearer and sharper with three-dimensional. Moreover, the low frequency is also much more solid and steady. For example, listening to the LP-Horowitz in Moscow, in the past without the TU-812MX, the piano sound was always lacking cohesion and the intensity between the keys was also somewhat vague! After adding the TU-812MX, although the result was not earth-shaking, the difference had given me a great shock and amazement. In addition, it also improves the low-frequency to be so detailed, and also obviously a lot clearer.

Talking about Harmonix, everyone will think of the excellent tuning skills of Mr. Kiuchi. Perhaps, you will think about whether this TU-812MX is another unique tuning taste of Mr. Kazuo Kiuchi. However, after a few days of tests with back and forth comparisons, I could hardly find any of the Harmonix taste in the sound character. In fact, starting from the Million series, the Harmonix sound orientation is highly diluted in comparison with the Harmonix lower priced models. Therefore, if you want to find the Harmonix characteristic in TU-812MX, it is not easy.



In conclusion, if you want me to simply describe the TU-812MX, my first thought would be the word "neat" - well-organized sound field, clean and clear sound imaging, slightly refined, but never pretentious. In fact, using only one turntable to evaluate the performance of the LP clamp, I personally

think it's not entirely appropriate. It was because that a few years ago, I had also owned a Shenmu 神木 LP clamp, and the selling price of which was nearly thirty thousand dollars with six months delivery leadtime. However, I found its performance at my home system was very poor and no prominent at all. Until I had the opportunity to meet another experienced senior audiophile who told me that the designer of this Shenmu 神木 LP clamp, Dr. Tam, was actually using the Oracle turntable as his reference, but I was using a hard platter turntable to go with it. Thus, I had not used the Shenmu 神木 LP clamp in the right way. Therefore, this time, I also borrowed a Thorens turntable which comes with a soft platter from another distributor with whom I am also familiar for further test with the TU-812MX.



The results are generally similar to what I have experienced with my own system (with hard platter) at home, but there are also more detail out of the low-frequency and the momentum is also more powerful. Really much bigger improvement than in my own system.

