



DETAILS

PRODUCT
Sumiko Blue Point No. 3

ORIGIN
Japan

TYPE
Moving-coil/high output moving-coil cartridge

WEIGHT
6g

FEATURES
• Elliptical stylus
• Aluminium alloy cantilever
• New resonance control body

DISTRIBUTOR
Henley Audio Ltd.

WEBSITE
sumikophono cartridges.com
henleyaudio.co.uk

particularly strong. The 25th Anniversary remaster of Air's *Moon Safari* has a lush and full quality that suits it perfectly. When the gorgeous surge of strings in *Talisman* comes in, the performance is discernibly made of separate instruments presented as a single, cohesive whole. Compared with the more expensive Songbird (and some rivals closer in price) there isn't the same level of out-and-out bass extension but, crucially, the Sumiko never feels lightweight.

Eliza Shaddad's gloriously emotive vocal turn in *In The Morning (Grandmother Song)* has all of its passion and angst preserved and has the scale and sheer presence required to make her utterly believable. Music of this sort of tempo suits the Blue Point No. 3 very well as it seems to agree with the flowing and natural presentation many products from the brand display. You can argue that with more high-tempo offerings there are more exciting possibilities, but the Sumiko can handle most styles and rhythms without sounding slow or confused in any way. Also potentially very appealing is the fact that it is forgiving both when it comes to worn records and less than stellar modern pressings. While it benefits from a little care in its setup, I also suspect it is easier to get good results from the Sumiko than it is from some rivals with a more advanced stylus profile.

Good point

Sumiko has updated one of its long-running cartridge favourites. **Ed Selley** sees if the latest model is a worthy successor

Like a number of cartridge manufacturers, Sumiko is a firm advocate of the 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it' approach. The Blue Point No. 2 was a perfect case in point. One of the first high-output moving-coil designs, it has been a mainstay of the range for quite some time now, making the arrival of the No. 3 a notable event.

The new cartridge uses the same stylus, cantilever and generator that were present in the Blue Point No. 2. High and low-output versions are available with the latter giving 0.5mV and the high output (as tested here) 2.5mV. This is lower than what a more conventional moving-magnet cart can achieve, but should be fine to work into an MM phono input. The aluminium cantilever and nude elliptical stylus aren't the most sophisticated pairing you'll find at the price, but should work effectively without nanometre accurate setup.

Sumiko has garnered a great deal of fresh data from its more recent designs. As a result, the Blue Point No. 3 pays appropriate attention to resonance. The new body is designed to limit all

unwanted resonance in the audible frequencies. Sumiko says these changes alone are enough to extract much more performance from that carried-over generator and stylus assembly.

There are some useful gains to convenience too. There are now threaded inserts to make installation simpler than before and the 6g weight (less fixings) won't be too much of a challenge for most tonearms. The Sumiko is relatively long, however, which means some cramped headshells might struggle a little to fit the tags and align it correctly.

Sound quality

Connected to an AVID Ingenium Twin and SME M2-9 tonearm (*HFC 379*), the Blue Point No. 3 achieves many of the same positives that I found when I tested the vastly more expensive Songbird (also in high output form) in *HFC 465*. This is not a cart that sets out to deliver every last micro dynamic detail in a recording and it would be a stretch to call it forensic. Instead, there is always a feeling of the whole piece being conveyed convincingly. Its tonal realism and involvement are

Conclusion

What this adds up to is a cartridge that might not blow you out of your seat on an initial listen, but that manages to deliver a performance that will cover off a wide selection of musical styles (and quality of record) without coming up short on any of them while being easy to fit and use across a wide variety of different turntables. This is a welcome update to a longstanding favourite that should win over a new generation of fans to its evident charms ●

Hi-Fi Choice

OUR VERDICT

SOUND QUALITY
★★★★★ **LIKE:** Rich, tonally engaging and vibrant sound; forgiving presentation

VALUE FOR MONEY
★★★★★ **DISLIKE:** Not the most dynamic; long body

BUILD QUALITY
★★★★★ **WE SAY:** A capable high-output moving-coil cart that delivers compelling results in a selection of systems

FEATURES
★★★★★

OVERALL

★★★★★