



RCM Audio theRIAA Mk II

WINNER
PHONO STAGE



RCM Audio's theRIAA is a two-box, extraordinarily flexible dual mono MM/MC phono stage with an external power supply, that uses integrated circuits in place of discrete components in critical parts of the circuit. Unlike most products that undergo a revision, theRIAA made almost no external changes to the product. It's all about the circuit. As such, the headline changes to the MkII version of theRIAA are that both power supply and main PCBs now use stiffer boards and better-laid circuit tracks.

The power supply capacity is also improved, using much better and faster capacitors from Elna and Silmic with lower equivalent series resistance (ESR). These devices simply didn't exist a decade ago. Improvements to components have made for more significant power reserves and a faster-acting power supply. Regardless, the RCM Audio phono stage's linearity to the RIAA curve achieves a remarkable $\pm 0.1\text{dB}$ across the 20Hz–20kHz range.

Alan Sircom said, "While the phono stage doesn't make you want to upgrade everything else in the chain, it does make you appreciate just how lifelike an excellent cartridge can be." Adding that "The curious thing about theRIAA is that it is unbelievably resolving of records and components alike, revealing their characteristics with ease. Still, it doesn't make that process something strenuous or uncomfortable."

He concluded by saying, "Yes, there are some truly lovely sounding phono stages out there, but this one I know backwards and value it for its absolute faithfulness to the intention of both cartridge designer and most importantly, the recording. It exposes the differences – and similarities – between cartridges. But perhaps, more importantly, it can get past the artifice of audio and bring you closer to the music itself. And that is the goal of all good audio equipment, after all."

Reviewed in issue 193

RCM Audio • www.rcmaudio.pl

“ It can get past the artifice of audio and bring you closer to the music itself. And that is the goal of all good audio equipment, after all.

