

Roksan's Radius is not just an alternative to other middle-market decks, it tries to be at home in esoteric systems as well



ROKSAN RADIUS

At a time when everyone is telling us that the turntable has had its day, those Wales-based iconoclasts at Roksan Engineering have decided to launch a middle-market model to sit alongside their well-rated, high end Xerxes record deck.

The Roksan Radius sells for £400 without a tonearm, or for £550 ready-fitted with the Roksan Tabriz, the arm the record deck was designed primarily to be used with.

The Radius was also designed to provide more than just an alternative to the other mid-market decks available. While admitting that its performance ceiling is below that of the Xerxes, Roksan still wanted it to work with more esoteric equipment without its limitations becoming painfully obvious – ideal if your primary system is an expensive CD-based one and you need a turntable for playing an existing LP collection, for example.

I think such people will be very satisfied with and pleasantly surprised by the Radius. It certainly did the business with Miles Davis' *It Never Entered My Mind*, succinctly capturing the mood and the mechanics of

the quintet's playing. The demanding acoustic bass line never troubled the deck: it kept it under tight control while successfully demonstrating the instrument's power. At the other end of the dynamic scale, brushed drum and cymbal work was conveyed with similar dexterity.

The Haydn disc, which I always use to try and provoke misbehaviour from a deck, was handled with measured care. The Radius conveyed the power of the soloists and choir but never overstepped the mark towards raggedness. It gave a slightly distanced perspective of this work but never lost its animation or vigour. Vocals were expressive and natural.

It seemed fitting that I should test the Radius with *Mediterranean Sunrise* (from *Friday Night in San Francisco*), a track Roksan once used to demonstrate the Radius to me and a real test of dynamics and articulation. The Radius coped very well, tracking each of the guitarists' drag-strip runs up the fretboard and reflecting subtle dynamic changes, the individual character of the instruments used and the spirited nature of the performances.

BEST POINT

Well-balanced overall presentation

WORST POINT

Veneered finish would add class

SPECIFICATIONS

Price Radius/Tabriz arm, bought together (£550)

Roksan Corus Black moving magnet cartridge (£110)

Type manual turntable with electronically switched speeds (33,45)

VERDICT

What makes the Radius successful is the artful balancing act it performs. While it's not so explicit as the Xerxes, it is, nonetheless, a revealing and involving deck to listen to. Happily, its bandwidth isn't obviously limited and the player always sounds complete and controlled – but not at the expense of excitement.

RATINGS

Value for money	★★★★☆
Performance	★★★★☆
Build quality	★★★★☆
Compatibility	★★★★☆
Overall verdict	★★★★☆