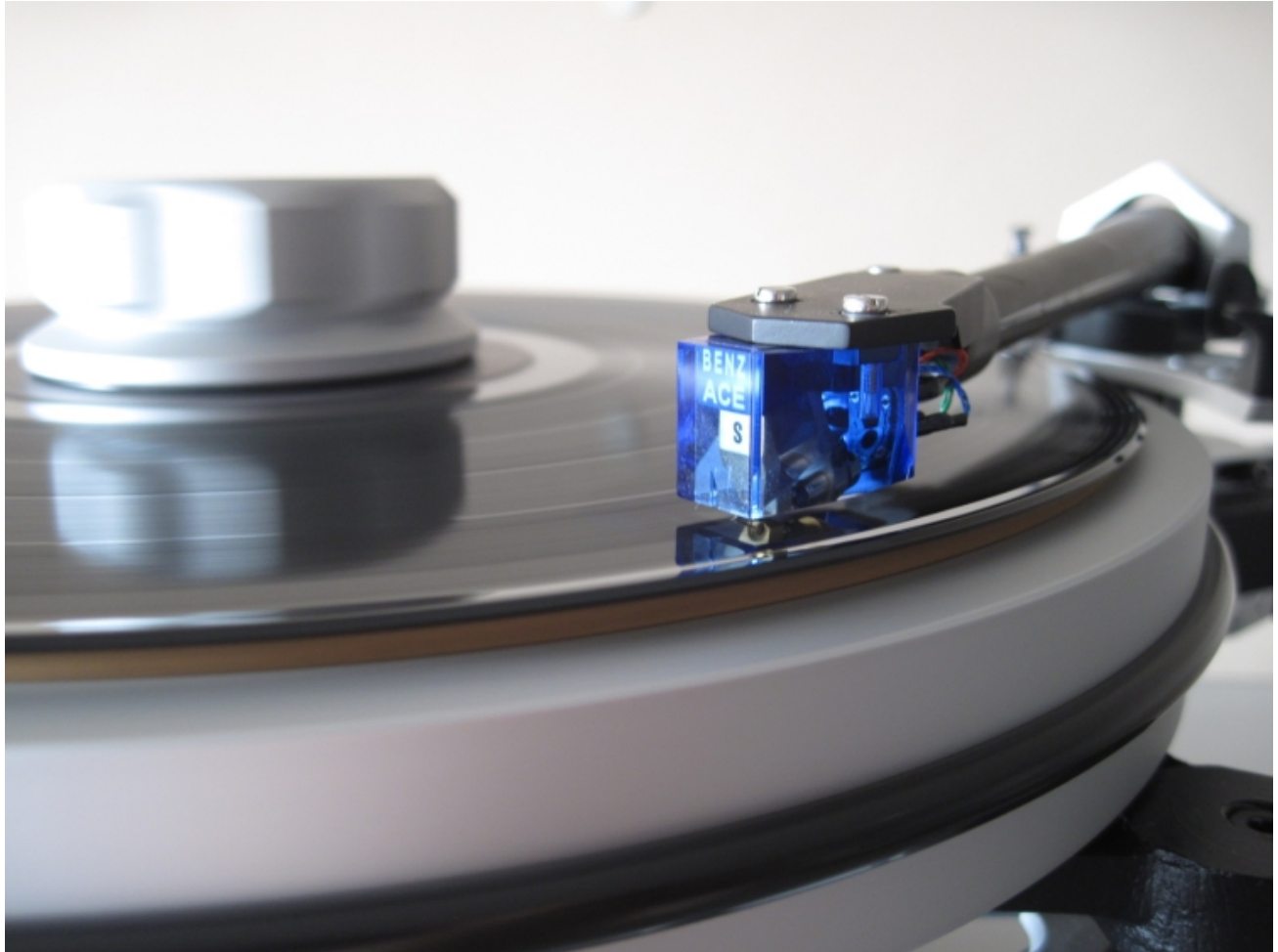


Analog Reviews, Analog Source Reviews

Benz MC Gold, ACE L and ACE LH – Quick Impression



Christiaan Punter | 25 November 2014



MC Gold Used with: **Michell Tecnodeck and Tecno Arm**

MC Gold is Benz' most affordable product, and it seems to offer good value for money, but it is no substitute for the brand's dearer cartridges. Both ACE L and ACE SH have significantly better tracking which results in clearer "S"es, especially with older, more worn records. Its resolution seems to be ok, until you



compare it to the ACE, or even to the affordable Denon DL304-II, which both are much higher resolving cartridges. The Denon is particularly good value for money and offers excellent resolution, but doesn't offer the timbral fullness of sound that the Benz does.

ACE L Used with: **Michell Tecnodeck and Tecno Arm Avid Volvere Technics SL-1210**

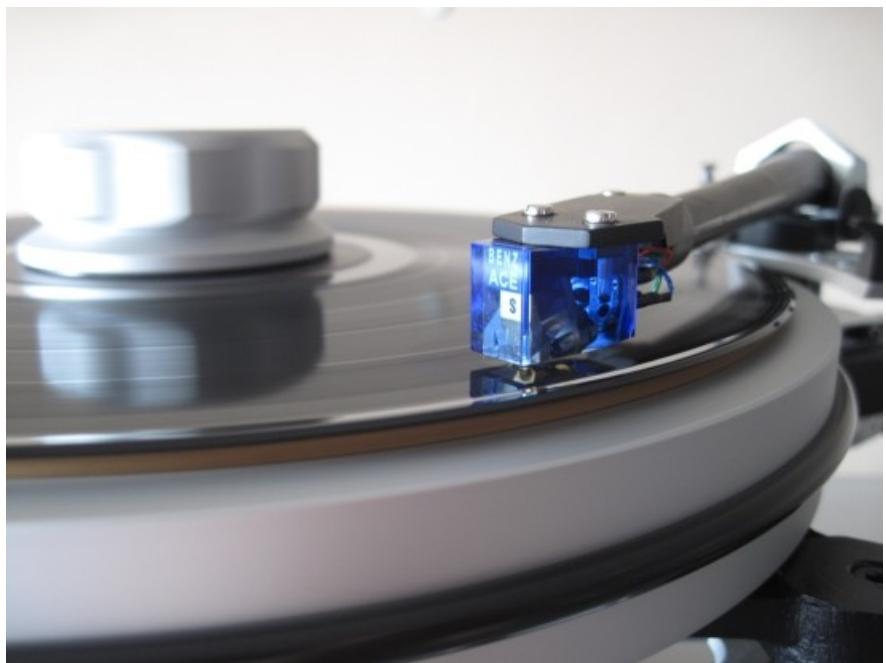


The ACE L is quite a different animal compared to the MC Gold. More detail, better clarity, more articulate and tighter bass, while avoiding any sharpness. Tracking is excellent. While never aggressive, depending on the turntable and the rest of the system, the ACE *can* be a little clean or even clinical, showing you without mercy when a record doesn't sound great. Conversely well-produced records can really sound stellar. The combination with Michell Gyro with Tecnoarm as well as the Avid Volvere with

SME309 results in a well-controlled, sonorous and solid sound that is technically excellent but could do with a little more flow and treble fluidity. A combination that works unexpectedly well is with a Technics SL1200, but of course that still undercuts the ACE's capabilities as the SL1200 has its limits.

ACE SH Used with: **Yamaha PX-2 Avid Volvere Technics SL-1210**

The ACE SH is a high output MC, fit for use with a regular MM phono preamp. This cartridge offers a nice tradeoff between refinement and power. It offers very sonorous and ballsy sound combined with truly excellent tracking (better even than the older initial ACE) and very good resolution. Its drive and dynamic power really is addictive, but it can't quite match the refinement and low level resolution that the more MC-typical ACE L is capable of. Then again the ACE L doesn't quite offer the



power that the ACE SH does, so between these two cartridges it really is a matter of personal preference.