

## Review: SME Model 6 Turntable: A Sonic Masterpiece Melding Precision and Heritage

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**Review: SME Model 6 Turntable: A Sonic Masterpiece Melding Precision and Heritage- "Immerse in audio excellence with the SME Model 6, a turntable blending heritage, precision engineering, and unrivaled sonic fidelity for enthusiasts."**



### Introduction: SME Model 6 Vinyl Turntable

In audio excellence, few names resonate as profoundly as SME. With a storied history dating back to 1946, SME, or "The Scale Model Equipment Company," has etched its legacy as a pioneering

force in precision engineering. Renowned for its iconic tonearms and commitment to aerospace-grade craftsmanship, SME has become synonymous with unparalleled quality. 1959 SME took its first steps into audio, setting the stage for a remarkable evolution. In 2020, SME introduced the Model 6, an entry-level vinyl turntable system that encapsulates over seven decades of technological prowess and audiophile dedication.

**Unveiling the Model 6: Where Tradition Meets Innovation:** The SME Model 6 is a testament to the brand's enduring commitment to sonic perfection. Born from the legacy of its predecessors, this turntable exemplifies SME's meticulous approach to design, construction, and musicality. As we delve into the intricate details and performance nuances of the Model 6, we embark on a journey that transcends mere audio playback—entering a realm where each note and detail is meticulously crafted to captivate the true essence of analog music. Join us as we explore the innovations, craftsmanship, and sonic revelations that define the SME Model 6 vinyl turntable.

**Evolution of SME Products: Series I to Model 6:** The success of SME's Series I tonearm paved the way for subsequent releases, including Series II, Series III, Series II R, Series V, Series IV, and Series 300. 1991 SME entered the turntable market with the SME Model 30, marking a new chapter in its product line. Fast forward to 2020, and SME introduces the Model 6, an entry-level vinyl turntable system that inherits over 70 years of technological excellence.



## SME Model 6 Specifications: A Symphony of Precision and Innovation

- **Speed:** Electronic speed change supports 33 and 45 RPM, ensuring versatility in playback options.
- **Drive Principle:** Belt-driven for precision and stability in rotation.
- **Speed Variance:** Minimal speed fluctuations with 0.6% for 33 RPM and 0.5% for 45 RPM.
- **Wow & Flutter:** Meager wow and flutter rates at 0.19% for 33 RPM and 0.17% for 45 RPM.
- **Platter:** Features a 10mm thick glass platter weighing 1.7kg and a felt mat for optimal record contact.
- **Main Bearing:** Constructed with stainless steel and brass to ensure smooth and stable rotation.
- **Signal-to-Noise Ratio:** A signal-to-noise ratio of 67dB for clear and detailed audio playback.
- **Tonearm:** Equipped with a 9" aluminum tonearm, providing precise tracking and resonance control.
- **Effective Arm Length:** 230mm arm length for accurate tracking and playback.
- **Overhang:** A 22.0mm overhang, contributing to proper cartridge alignment.
- **Effective Tonearm Mass:** 9.5g, striking a balance between weight and agility.
- **Wireless Connectivity:** Incorporates advanced WLAN standards (IEEE 802.11a/b/g/n/ac/ax 2x2 MIMO) for seamless wireless operation.
- **Included Accessories:** Comprehensive accessories such as a dust cover, felt mat, singles adapter, power supply, and a phono RCA cable.
- **Power Supply:** Utilizes a 15V / 800 mA DC universal power supply, ensuring stable and reliable performance.
- **Power Consumption:** Energy-efficient with 4.5W power consumption and <2W in network standby mode.
- **Dimensions:** Compact dimensions measuring 457 x 134 x 335mm (WxHxD), offering a blend of form and function.
- **Weight:** A net weight of 5.5kg, striking a balance between stability and maneuverability.



## Design and Construction: Aesthetic Simplicity and Precision

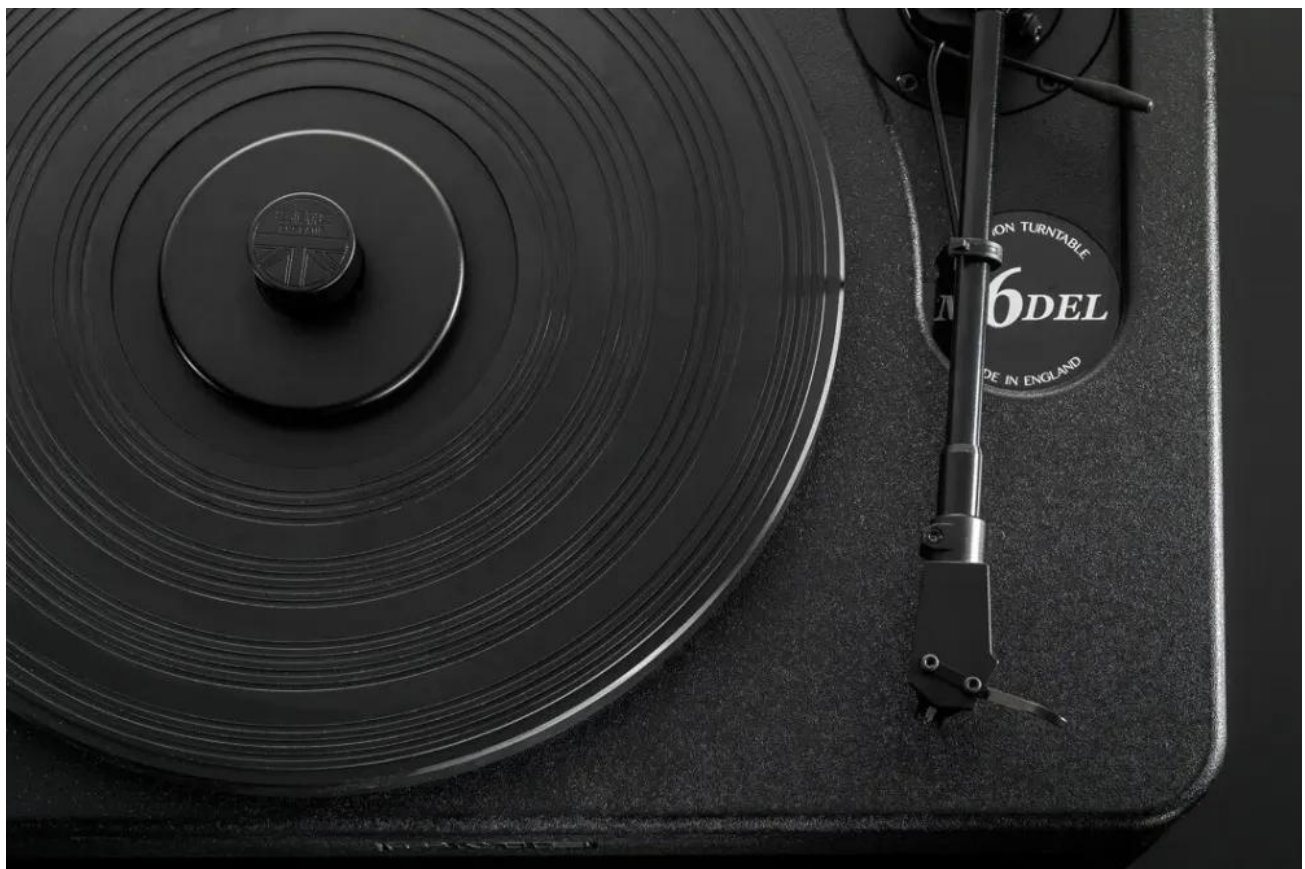
The ethos of SME's design philosophy is eloquently captured in the Model 6 vinyl turntable, where

aesthetic simplicity converges seamlessly with unwavering precision. As the turntable emerges from its packaging, the first impression is refined elegance. SME's commitment to crafting a visually uncluttered masterpiece is evident, eschewing unnecessary embellishments in favor of a clean, timeless design.

At the heart of the Model 6 lies a meticulous construction process that underscores SME's dedication to precision engineering. The turntable, power supply, and tonearm are all from a proprietary high-density resin polymer developed in-house. This material, subjected to precise CNC processing, imparts lightweight characteristics and exhibits exceptional rigidity. Such a combination ensures optimal damping and vibration suppression, elevating the listening experience to unparalleled heights.

The turntable's surface, featuring multiple circular grooves meticulously processed by CNC machining, serves a dual purpose. Beyond its visual allure, these grooves enhance the contact friction between the turntable and the vinyl record, reflecting SME's commitment to maximizing sonic fidelity. This intentional choice of materials and craftsmanship elevates the Model 6 beyond a mere audio device, making it a tactile and visual representation of SME's dedication to the pursuit of acoustic perfection.

In an industry where details matter, even the shock-absorbing feet beneath the turntable are crafted from the same high-density resin polymer as the turntable body. This holistic approach to material selection and construction attests to SME's unwavering commitment to every facet of the design process. The result is not just a vinyl turntable; it is a meticulously crafted instrument that stands as a testament to SME's enduring legacy of precision and excellence in analog audio.



## Key Features of Model 6: Tonearm and Power Supply

At the heart of the SME Model 6's sonic prowess lies its meticulously crafted tonearm and innovative power supply, seamlessly converging to create an audio masterpiece that transcends conventional expectations.

The Model 6 comes in two versions, each featuring a tonearm of exceptional pedigree. The standard iteration has the SME M2-9 tonearm, while the Model 6 Classic boasts the SME M2-9R silver-plated J-shaped tonearm. This distinction allows audiophiles to tailor their experience, with the Classic version catering to those seeking a slightly elevated performance, allowing for heavier cartridges.

The blackened version of the M2-9 straight arm designed exclusively for the Model 6 exemplifies SME's commitment to innovation. Crafted from new stainless steel, the tube arm incorporates a damping layer that enhances sound balance. The outer surface, finished with a unique bright black coating, serves an aesthetic purpose and is a high-tech application designed to improve tonal performance.

The Model 6's tonearm wire further underscores SME's dedication to sonic excellence. Utilizing a pure silver wire sourced from Crystal Cable, a renowned manufacturer in the high-end audio realm, the tonearm wire bears the SME logo as a mark of quality. The result is not merely a conduit for electrical signals but a finely tuned element that contributes to the overall clarity and precision of the analog playback.



Complementing the tonearm, the Model 6 features a split power supply, a design choice that permeates the entire SME range, from entry-level to flagship models. This external power supply isolates the delicate electronics from potential interference and showcases SME's commitment to providing users with a sophisticated and user-friendly experience.

The power supply system, reminiscent of SME's highest-end turntable, the M-60, is a testament to innovation. Beyond the standard 33 and 45 rpm speed selection, the Model 6's power supply

introduces a remarkable fine-tuning capability. By simply pressing and holding the circular knob for a few seconds, users can adjust the rotation speed with an astounding accuracy of 0.01 rpm, reflecting SME's commitment to precision in every aspect of its design.

In the marriage of tonearm and power supply, the SME Model 6 creates an unparalleled synergy, delivering a listening experience that transcends the boundaries of conventional audio playback. It is a testament to SME's legacy and a beacon of innovation and uncompromising quality in analog audio.

## Installation and Setup: User-Friendly Approach

In keeping with SME's commitment to providing a seamless and user-friendly experience, the installation and setup process of the Model 6 vinyl turntable is a testament to thoughtful design and accessibility.

The journey begins with the unboxing, revealing a turntable that arrives with the tonearm expertly pre-installed at the factory. This meticulous attention to detail ensures precision and simplifies the initial steps for users, eliminating the need for intricate assembly. The turntable, carefully encased in layers within the packaging, reveals a design that exudes classic simplicity, devoid of unnecessary complexities.

One noteworthy aspect of the Model 6 is its adaptability to user preferences. While the standard version comes with the SME M2-9 tonearm, the Model 6 Classic offers an alternative with the SME M2-9R silver-plated J-shaped tonearm, catering to those with a penchant for a slightly enhanced performance and compatibility with heavier cartridges.



For users venturing into vinyl turntables for the first time, the Model 6 ensures a user-friendly approach. The cartridge, a crucial element in the analog playback system, is not included, allowing users the flexibility to choose a cartridge that aligns with their preferences. Although installing a cartridge may require patience and attention, SME provides original rulers and instructions to guide users through the process, ensuring a smooth and precise setup.

The material of the cartridge cover itself exemplifies SME's dedication to user convenience. Crafted from a lightweight magnesium alloy with an adjustable position design, the cover facilitates effortless cartridge replacement. Including the SME logo on the tonearm wire, a pure silver wire sourced from renowned manufacturer Crystal Cable, signifies meticulous attention to detail, reassuring users of the authenticity and quality of every component.

The tonearm's blackened M2-9 straight arm, specially designed for the Model 6, boasts a unique construction. Made of new stainless steel and incorporating a damping layer, it contributes to sound balance and the turntable's overall aesthetic appeal. SME has considered every aspect of the setup process, ensuring that even for users new to the vinyl world, the learning curve is gentle, and the transition into the high-end analog experience is accessible and rewarding.

The SME Model 6's installation and setup embody a user-friendly philosophy, embracing both novices and seasoned audiophiles alike. Aspiring vinyl enthusiasts can confidently embark on their analog journey, reassured by SME's commitment to simplicity without compromising the brand's hallmark precision and performance.

## Listening Experience: Capturing Analog Magic

As the stylus delicately meets the vinyl grooves on the SME Model 6, a transformative listening experience unfolds, capturing the ethereal magic that defines analog audio. The soul of this vinyl turntable lies not just in its precision engineering but in its ability to transport listeners into a realm where each note, resonance, and nuance is felt with unparalleled clarity.



When playing records on the Model 6, a unique blend of stability, texture, dynamics, and intricate details emanates from the speakers. Even in its entry-level guise, the turntable conjures a sonic landscape that resonates with the warmth and authenticity inherent in analog playback. The intrinsic charm of vinyl, often described as an elusive “analog magic,” becomes tangible through the SME Model 6.

Navigating various musical genres, the Model 6 reveals its comprehensive and high-quality music playback capabilities. The vinyl system’s resolution is showcased with remarkable finesse, rendering each instrument and vocal with a level of detail that digital formats often struggle to replicate. SME’s heritage in precision engineering becomes audibly apparent as the turntable effortlessly breathes life into every note and articulation.

Incorporating the factory-supplied record clamp, bearing the SME ENGLAND + British flag emblem, adds a layer of stability to the playback. The circular record ring, crafted from a unique high-density hard material, enhances the record’s stability on the turntable. These subtle details and SME’s commitment to excellence create an immersive and stable platform for the analog playback experience.



The SME Model 6’s prowess becomes particularly evident when exploring live recordings. The ability to reproduce the energy and ambiance of a live performance is nothing short of mesmerizing. Listening to Alison Krauss and Union Station’s “Live” album, the sound is not merely impeccable; it transcends the boundaries of audio reproduction, transporting the listener to the



heart of the performance. The instruments, the audience’s reactions, and the artist’s nuances are all conveyed with a realism that redefines the listening experience.

Transitioning to Norah Jones’s “Come Away With Me,” the Model 6 continues to impress. The turntable faithfully restores the album, presenting a balanced and authentic sonic palette. Based on the nuanced interplay of instruments, Norah Jones’s vocals unfold with a natural and lifelike quality. The soundstage expands, allowing each element to breathe, creating a captivating auditory panorama.

Tanya’s “Blank Space” offers a contemporary reference, and the Model 6 proves adept at rendering modern tracks with finesse. What may have been overlooked in previous digital renditions is now laid bare. The sound’s clarity, detail, and richness elevate the listening experience, prompting a reevaluation of the familiar track through the lens of analog authenticity.

In essence, the SME Model 6 encapsulates the quintessence of analog magic. Its ability to faithfully reproduce the subtleties and complexities of music sets it apart, making every listening session an immersive journey into the heart of the performance. With the Model 6, SME extends an invitation to embrace the rich tapestry of analog sound, where the magic lies not just in the music but in the extraordinary way it is unveiled through precision engineering and a commitment to audio excellence.

## **Usability and Functionality of the SME Model 6: A Seamless Analog Experience**

The SME Model 6 stands as an epitome of precision engineering and sonic excellence and provides users with a seamless and intuitive analog experience. From setup to daily operation, the turntable embodies usability and functionality, ensuring users can effortlessly navigate the world of high-end vinyl playback.



The initial setup process of the Model 6 is characterized by its user-friendly approach. The tonearm arrives pre-installed at the factory, streamlining the assembly for users and eliminating complexities associated with intricate installations. While the standard version includes the SME M2-9 tonearm, offering exceptional performance, the Model 6 Classic caters to audiophiles seeking an elevated experience with the inclusion of the SME M2-9R silver-plated J-shaped tonearm. This flexibility allows users to tailor their setup to align with individual preferences and system requirements.

The absence of a bundled cartridge, while requiring users to select and install their preferred cartridge, grants the freedom to choose based on personal sonic preferences. SME provides original rulers and instructions to guide users through the installation process, ensuring optimal performance without compromising ease of use. With an adjustable position design, the lightweight magnesium alloy cartridge cover facilitates easy cartridge replacement, emphasizing SME's commitment to user convenience.



One notable feature contributing to the Model 6's functionality is its external split power supply. This design isolates delicate electronics from potential interference and underscores SME's dedication to providing a sophisticated and interference-free environment for the turntable. The power supply system, reminiscent of SME's highest-end M-60 turntable, offers more than speed selection. Users can fine-tune the rotation speed precisely, showcasing SME's commitment to providing a customizable and user-centric experience.

The daily operation of the Model 6 is marked by its simplicity and reliability. The turntable's stability during playback is complemented by the circular record ring and the SME ENGLAND + British flag emblem on the record clamp, enhancing the overall user experience. The shock-

absorbing feet, crafted from the same high-density resin polymer as the turntable body, further contribute to a stable, vibration-free performance.

Regarding usability, the SME Model 6 caters to both seasoned audiophiles and those venturing into vinyl playback for the first time. Its thoughtful design, meticulous construction, and user-friendly features make it an accessible gateway to high-end analog audio. As users engage with the turntable, they find that every detail, from setup to operation, has been meticulously considered, ensuring that the SME Model 6 delivers sonic excellence and an immersive and enjoyable analog journey for enthusiasts of all levels.

## **Technical Excellence and Unique Functions of the SME Model 6: Elevating Analog Precision**

The SME Model 6 is a paragon of technical excellence, seamlessly blending cutting-edge engineering with unique functions that redefine the landscape of analog audio playback. From its precision-crafted tonearm to its innovative power supply, each element contributes to a tapestry of unparalleled performance, setting new standards in high-end vinyl turntables.

Its meticulously designed tonearm lies at the core of the Model 6's technical prowess. The blackened M2-9 straight arm, tailored explicitly for this turntable, showcases SME's commitment to innovation. Crafted from new stainless steel and featuring a damping layer, the tonearm enhances sound balance. It undergoes a unique bright black coating process, a high-tech application to improve tonal performance. The result is a marriage of aesthetics and functionality, exemplifying SME's dedication to form and substance.

The choice of materials in the Model 6's construction further underscores its technical excellence. The turntable body, turntable, and power supply are all crafted from a newly developed high-density resin polymer, a material with lightweight, high rigidity, and exceptional damping and vibration suppression characteristics. This material, processed with precision using CNC technology, contributes to the turntable's structural integrity and ensures an environment conducive to optimal sonic performance.



A distinctive feature that sets the Model 6 apart is its external split power supply system. Reminiscent of SME's highest-end M-60 turntable, this innovative design isolates the delicate electronics from potential interference, underscoring SME's commitment to providing an interference-free environment. Beyond the standard 33 and 45 rpm speed selection, the Model 6's power supply introduces a groundbreaking fine-tuning capability. Users can adjust the rotation speed with an astonishing accuracy of 0.01 rpm, a testament to SME's dedication to precision and customization. The Model 6's tonearm wire further exemplifies SME's pursuit of sonic excellence. Utilizing a pure silver wire sourced from Crystal Cable, a renowned manufacturer in the high-end audio realm, the tonearm wire bears the SME logo, symbolizing not just a conduit for electrical signals but a finely tuned element that contributes to the overall clarity and precision of the analog playback.

The circular record ring, bearing the SME ENGLAND + British flag emblem, and the shock-absorbing feet made from the same high-density resin polymer as the turntable body further showcases the attention to detail and unique functions embedded in the Model 6.

The SME Model 6 is a testament to technical innovation and precision in analog audio. Every facet of its design and functionality reflects SME's relentless pursuit of excellence, from its bespoke tonearm to its advanced power supply system. The unique functions embedded in the Model 6 elevate the user experience and redefine the benchmarks for high-end vinyl turntables, establishing it as a beacon of technical prowess and sonic sophistication in analog audio.

## **Musical Playback: Unveiling Nuances and Emotion**

As the stylus delicately engages with the grooves of vinyl records on the SME Model 6, a symphony of nuances and emotions unfurls, showcasing the turntable's unparalleled ability to reveal the

intricate layers of musical performances. Beyond merely capturing analog magic, the Model 6 becomes an instrument of sonic revelation, peeling back each track's layers to expose the music's soul.



In exploring various musical genres, the SME Model 6 consistently demonstrates its capacity to breathe life into every note and melody. The turntable becomes a conduit for the artist's intention, allowing the listener to delve into the subtleties that often escape notice in digital renditions. The vinyl playback on the Model 6 becomes an immersive journey into the heart of the musical composition, unveiling details and expressions that redefine the very essence of the listening experience.

Live recordings, a formidable challenge for any audio system, are a forte of the Model 6. The turntable excels in reproducing the vitality and ambiance of live performances, creating an atmosphere that transcends the boundaries of traditional playback. For instance, Alison Krauss and Union Station's "Live" album emerges as a sonic canvas where the instruments resonate with authenticity, the audience reactions are palpable, and the artist's nuances are laid bare. The Model 6's precision in rendering the live experience adds emotional depth to the musical journey.

Norah Jones's "Come Away With Me" finds new life through the Model 6's nuanced playback. Each track becomes a sonic vignette, with the turntable unraveling the layers of Jones's vocals and the interplay of instruments. The soundstage widens, providing an expansive canvas for the subtleties to flourish. The Model 6 does not merely reproduce music; it becomes a conduit for emotional expression, bringing forth the artist's intention with a level of fidelity that resonates with the soul.

Transitioning to contemporary tracks, such as Tanya's "Blank Space," the Model 6 remains unfazed. Modern production intricacies, often overlooked in digital formats, are unveiled with clarity and

richness. The turntable's ability to articulate the dynamics of the music offers a renewed appreciation for the familiar, infusing a sense of rediscovery into each note and beat.



In essence, the SME Model 6 is not just a turntable but a vessel for musical storytelling. Its exceptional playback capabilities transcend the realm of precision engineering, venturing into the realm of emotional resonance. The nuances and emotions embedded in every groove become the focal point, inviting listeners to embark on a sonic journey where music is not merely heard but profoundly felt. With the Model 6, SME redefines the art of musical playback, elevating it to an experience that goes beyond the technical and embraces the profound connection between the listener and the soul-stirring essence of the music.

## **Analog**

In high-end vinyl playback, the SME Model 6 is a symphony of precision, elegance, and sonic brilliance. From its inception within the aerospace industry to its evolution into a distinguished audio brand, SME's journey culminates in the Model 6, an entry point into the world of analog audio that encapsulates decades of engineering mastery. Beyond its technical excellence, the Model 6's user-friendly design and unique features make it a compelling choice for both seasoned enthusiasts and those taking their first steps into the captivating realm of vinyl.

As the stylus glides over the grooves, the Model 6 becomes a conduit for the essence of music, faithfully unraveling the nuances and emotions woven into each track. Its blackened M2-9 tonearm, innovative power supply, and meticulous construction stand as testaments to SME's commitment to pushing the boundaries of analog precision. Whether rediscovering the warmth of classic recordings or immersing oneself in the intricacies of contemporary tracks, the Model 6 invites audiophiles to embark on a journey where each note is a revelation and every listening

session a celebration of analog elegance. With the SME Model 6, the timeless allure of vinyl playback is not just preserved; it is elevated to an art form that beckons enthusiasts to savor the richness and authenticity of music in its purest analog form.



### Reasons to Consider the SME Model 6: A Sonic Masterpiece for Analog Enthusiasts

1. **Unrivaled Sonic Precision:** The SME Model 6 is a pinnacle of audio engineering, offering unparalleled sonic precision that faithfully reproduces the richness and authenticity of analog music. From its meticulously crafted tonearm to the innovative power supply system, every element is designed to elevate the listening experience, making it an ideal choice for audiophiles seeking uncompromising sound quality.
2. **Engineering Heritage:** With a legacy dating back to 1946 and a precision engineering foundation for aerospace industries, SME brings decades of expertise to the Model 6. The turntable inherits the brand's commitment to excellence, ensuring that each component is crafted with precision and attention to detail, resulting in a product that is a testament to SME's heritage.
3. **User-Friendly Design:** Despite its high-end capabilities, the Model 6 is user-friendly. The pre-installed tonearm and thoughtful features, such as the external split power supply and fine-tuning options, cater to both seasoned vinyl enthusiasts and those new to the analog realm. It invites users to experience the magic of vinyl without the complexities often associated with high-end turntables.
4. **Versatility with Cartridge Choices:** The Model 6's flexibility in cartridge selection allows users to tailor their setup to match individual preferences and system requirements. While it doesn't come with a bundled cartridge, this deliberate choice grants users the freedom to choose a cartridge that aligns with their sonic preferences, offering a customizable listening experience.

### Considerations Against the SME Model 6:

1. **High Price Point:** The SME Model 6, a high-end turntable, has a premium price tag. For those on a budget or seeking an entry-level option, the cost of the Model 6 might be a limiting factor. However, the investment reflects this turntable's craftsmanship and engineering excellence.

2. **Requires External Phono Amplification:** The Model 6 does not include a built-in phono stage, requiring users to invest in a separate phono preamplifier. While this allows for flexibility in choosing a preferred phono stage, it adds cost and consideration to the overall setup.
3. **Advanced Features may be Overkill for Novices:** The Model 6 boasts advanced features like fine-tuning rotation speed. While these features contribute to its technical excellence, they may be considered unnecessary or overwhelming for individuals new to vinyl playback.

**In Conclusion:** The SME Model 6 is a compelling choice for discerning audiophiles who prioritize sonic excellence, engineering heritage, and a user-friendly design. Its premium features and craftsmanship justify the investment for those seeking an authentic and elevated analog experience. However, individuals with budget constraints or those looking for a more straightforward entry into vinyl playback might find the Model 6's advanced features and price point less aligned with their needs.