

Product Announcements

Pro-Ject True Balanced Connection Products

A new series of products to help raise the performance of any analogue system

Didcot, Oxfordshire – 19th April 2022

Pro-Ject Audio Systems, the multi-award-winning European producer of class-leading hi-fi stereo equipment, is today announcing the launch of three new made-in-Europe products that are all encompassed by an overriding philosophy: *True Balanced Connection*. The X8 turntable (£2,099.00 SRP) and matching Phono Box S3 B (£349.00 SRP) and Phono Box DS3 B (£529.00 SRP) phono stages are all balanced devices that support Pro-Ject's concept, and are available in the UK now.

All Pro-Ject turntables are balanced signal sources by their nature, but the ability to exploit this beneficial technology has traditionally only been available to more high-end or bespoke analogue systems. Pro-Ject's *True Balanced Connection* concept intends to extend these benefits to a broader variety of vinyl enthusiasts than ever before.



The interconnect cable between a record player and a phono stage is prone to pick up noise on the way. That noise and interference can stem from a lot of unavoidable sources, such as household appliances, wi-fi and bluetooth devices, other power cables and audio amplifiers. Unshielded (i.e. RCA) interconnects can amplify the picked-up noise and make it audible through your speakers, interfering with the pure musical signal.

Balanced (typically XLR) cable connections double the wires carrying the musical signal – with one side inverted. In this case noise still gets picked up by both wires, but with one side reversed. When the signals are re-joined at the phono stage, the picked-up noise is cancelled out by the opposing signals. The benefit of this is a louder, cleaner musical signal that has doubled in size with almost no remaining noise.

The benefits of *True Balanced Connections* therefore include:

- ✓ interference-free signal transmission
- ✓ increased dynamics
- ✓ improved signal to noise ratios

All new models are available in the UK from April 2022.

X8 in detail

The X8 is a mass-loaded high-end turntable with features more commonly found at premium price points. From its over-sized, heavyweight wooden plinth, through to the precision-lathed, TPE-damped aluminium main platter, and on to the 9" Evolution tonearm finished with a Quintet Blue, it is a complete turntable solution for high-end audio systems.

The X8 draws inspiration from other high-end turntables in the Pro-Ject range. The thick, heavy MDF chassis is expertly shaped and finished to provide both a stylish aesthetic and a sturdy platform from which the key performance parts of the turntable can do their work.

The main platter is precision-cut from a single piece of aluminium and lined with a ring of TPE rubber damping to produce a heavy non-resonant base that contributes to highly accurate speed stability with very little fluctuation. The platter is mounted on an inverted ceramic-tipped main bearing, bolstered with magnetic support, for fluid rotation without resistance.



The platter is driven by a perimeter drive belt, connected to a low-noise AC motor. The motor is controlled by an AC generator with adjustable speed control for convenient switching between 33 and 45 RPM as well as a clean, low-noise power signal.



The X8 is pre-installed with Pro-Ject's popular 9CC Evolution carbon fibre tonearm. The 9CC EVO can be found on many popular high-end turntables, and features a one-piece, tapered carbon fibre tonearm tube, mounted in a heavy-weight bearing block with high-quality ABEC 7 ball bearings. The tonearm is also VTA and azimuth adjustable for perfect cartridge mounting.

In the UK, the X8 is also supplied with the award-winning Ortofon Quintet Blue moving coil cartridge, as standard. The Quintet Blue is recognised for its detailed musical performance, and perfectly complements the X8's own high-end ability.



As the X8 is supplied with a Moving Coil cartridge, it is also part of Pro-Ject's *True Balanced Connections* concept. By upgrading to a 5pin > XLR cable, and connecting to one of the company's balanced phono stages (such as the Phono Box DS3 B), you can benefit from increased dynamics, less noise and improved signal-to-noise ratios. Going true balanced is like hearing parts of your music that were not there before.

The X8 is supplied with height-adjustable TPE-damped feet, a removable dust cover, a felt mat and a semi-balanced Connect-IT E 5P > RCA phono cable for easy set-up out of the box. It's available in high gloss black, high-gloss white or real-wood walnut veneer finishes.

Technical Information

Speed:	33 / 45 rpm (electronic speed change)
Included phono cable:	Connect it E 5P -> RCA, 1.23m
Aluminium feet:	Height adjustable & TPE damped
Platter:	massive 5,1 kg lathed aluminium
Platter bearing:	inverted ceramic ball, magnetic support
Speed drift:	33: $\pm 0,11\%$; 45: $\pm 0,09\%$
Wow & flutter:	33: $\pm 0,11\%$; 45: $\pm 0,10\%$
Rumble:	73dB
Tonearm:	9" one-piece carbon-fibre tonearm
Effective arm length / mass:	9" (230 mm) / 8,5 g
Overhang:	18 mm
Incl. accessories:	Dust cover, 7" single adapter, felt mat
Power supply:	15V / 0,8A DC
Power consumption:	5W / 0,3 W standby mode
Dimensions lid closed:	465 x 150 x 350 mm (W x H x D)
Dimensions lid opened:	465 x 415 x 420 mm (W x H x D)
Weight:	15kg

Phono Box DS3 B in detail

The Phono Box DS3 B is a dual-mono, fully discrete moving magnet and moving coil phono stage with balanced inputs and outputs. With a host of customisable features, it offers exceptional value for money and brings a notable upgrade to any mid-/high-end analogue hi-fi system.

The Pro-Ject design team took the decision to employ discrete circuitry in the Phono Box DS3 B. Discrete circuits involve no operational amplifiers (op-amps), and the result is a more neutral, natural, dynamic, and vivid sound. They are more complicated to put together and involve a greater variety of components, but the result when utilised in a well-organised electrical layout is a true high-end sound.



This philosophy for the best possible performance carries through to the variety of conveniently placed features the Phono Box DS3 B has on offer. The phono stage can be connected to two turntables at the same time, and each input will save its previous settings in memory so the Impedance, Capacitance (for MM cartridges) and Gain will all be set as you switch between turntables. For MC cartridges, the continuously adjustable load-impedance dial on the front panel allows you to perfectly set the impedance to suit your cartridge and your ears.

As the Phono Box DS3 B is equipped with both balanced inputs and outputs, it is also part of Pro-Ject's *True Balanced Connections* concept. By connecting to a turntable with a moving coil cartridge and using one of Pro-Ject's balanced connection cables, your analogue system can benefit from increased dynamics, less noise and improved signal-to-noise ratios. Going true balanced is like hearing parts of your music that were not there before.

Elsewhere in the Phono Box DS3 B design, the fully-passive and discrete RIAA equalisation stage is optimised for absolute accuracy and signal integrity. Depending on the outputs you are using, this stage is then either directly fed to a fully discrete output stage (when using RCA outputs) or is connected to a fully discrete balancing stage for onward balanced connections.

The Phono Box DS3 B is finished in a steel chassis, covered by silver or black aluminium panels, for extreme rigidity and good electrical isolation. The neat minimalist aesthetic can be further enhanced by the addition of retro-inspired, magnetically installed wooden side panels (available separately). It also features an external power adapter, to keep the sensitive internal signals free from any interferences.

Technical Information

Input impedance:	Stepless 10 – 1000 ohms or fix 47kOhms
Input capacitance:	50, 150, 300, 400pF
Gain (+ 6dB using XLR Out):	40, 45, 50, 55, 60, 65 dB
SNR MM (40dB):	104dBV, 111dBV – ‘A’ weighted
SNR MC (60dB):	85dBV, 91dBV – ‘A’ weighted
THD at 1 kHz:	<0,001% MM, < 0,004% MC
THD (20Hz-20kHz):	<0,005% MM, < 0,01% MC
RIAA-equalization curve accuracy:	< 0,25dB / 20Hz - 20kHz
Subsonic filter:	20Hz with 18dB/octave
Input:	1x 5-pin mini XLR / 1x pair XLR / 1x pair RCA phono
Line-level output:	1x pair RCA, 1x pair XLR
Wiring XLR sockets:	1 ground, 2 “hot” and 3 “cold”
Trigger In/Out:	12V on/off detector
Outboard power supply:	18V/500mA DC
Power consumption:	18V/max.290mA DC, <0.5 W standby
Dimensions:	206 x 72 x 194 (205 with sockets) mm
Weight:	1480g without power supply

Phono Box S3 B in detail

The Phono Box S3 B is a compact, affordable moving magnet and moving coil phono stage with dual-mono layout, discrete circuitry and balanced inputs and outputs. With its spacious, minimalist design layout, it is easily customisable to suit any connected cartridge, and offers unrivalled value for money and performance when connected to any matching analogue hi-fi system.

The Pro-Ject design team took the decision to employ fully symmetrical and discrete circuitry in the gain stage of the Phono Box S3 B. Discrete circuits involve no operational amplifiers (op-amps), and the result is a more neutral, natural, dynamic, and vivid sound. They are more complicated to put together and involve a greater variety of components, but the result when utilised in a well-organised electrical layout is a true high-end sound.



The Phono Box S3 B is extensively customisable to suit the moving magnet or moving coil cartridge it is connected to. With five Impedance (Ω), four Capacitance (pF) and four Gain options on offer, there are very few cartridges this box of tricks cannot accommodate.

As the Phono Box S3 B is equipped with both balanced inputs and outputs, it is also part of Pro-Ject's *True Balanced Connections* concept. By connecting to a turntable with a moving coil cartridge and using one of Pro-Ject's balanced connection cables, your analogue system can benefit from increased dynamics, less noise and improved signal-to-noise ratios. Going true balanced is like hearing parts of your music that were not there before.

This requires engineering that has never been seen at this price point and opens up iconic mid-level turntables, such as the Debut Pro, to the benefits of *True Balanced Connections*.

Elsewhere in the Phono Box S3 B design, the semi-passive RIAA equalisation stage is optimised for absolute accuracy and signal integrity. Depending on the outputs you are using, this stage is then either directly fed to the output stage (when using RCA outputs) or is connected to a balancing stage for onward balanced connections.

The Phono Box S3 B is finished in a steel chassis, covered by silver or black aluminium panels, for extreme rigidity and good electrical isolation. The neat minimalist aesthetic allows for good spacing between controls on the front panel and connections on the back panel, despite its smaller size. It also features an external power adapter, to keep the sensitive internal signals free from any interferences.

Technical Information

Input impedance:	10, 50, 100, 1k, 47k ohms
Input capacitance:	50, 150, 300, 400 pF
Gain (+ 6dB using XLR Out):	40, 45, 60, 65 dB
SNR MM (40dB):	103dBV, 110dBV – 'A' weighted
SNR MC (60dB):	85dBV, 90dBV – 'A' weighted
THD at 1 kHz:	<0,001% MM, < 0,005% MC
THD (20Hz-20kHz):	<0,008% MM, < 0,01% MC
RIAA-equalization curve accuracy:	<0,3dB / 20Hz - 20kHz
Subsonic filter:	at 20Hz with 18dB/octave
Input:	1x 5-pin mini XLR / 1x pair RCA phono sockets
Line-level output:	1x pair RCA, 1x pair XLR
Power supply DC:	18V/500mA
Power consumption:	18V/170mA DC, <0.5 W in standby
Dimensions:	206 x 55 x 153 (164 with sockets) mm
Weight:	930g without power supply

Notes for Editors

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About Pro-Ject Audio Systems

Pro-Ject Audio Systems are widely recognised as one of the finest turntable manufacturers in the world. Their mission is simply to produce the best sounding analogue components at the most competitive prices possible. The current range spans a wide variety of price points, with a variety of products targeted to key demographics or to accommodate any of the modern listener's unique requirements.

Based in the Austrian countryside, Pro-Ject Audio Systems use specialised manufacturing partners in mainland Europe to produce all their products.



About Henley Audio

Henley Audio has been importing and distributing industry-leading hi-fi equipment to the UK and Ireland since 1997. With a passion for great sound and a firm focus on brand integrity, we work to deliver excellence in both product and service.

Formed as the result of a management buy-out of Ortofon UK, Henley Designs Ltd. (trading as Henley Audio) operates in-house sales, marketing, service, support, and warehouse teams to offer the full turn-key solution for suppliers. The brands we represent are not only highly regarded in their own right, but they also share a symbiotic relationship with other brands in our portfolio.

For more information, visit www.henleyaudio.co.uk

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