

Review of EAT's Massive Record Clamp, by Piero Gabucci, 07/2019 on :



In the audio playback world, listening to records involves so many other factors besides just the record and turntable – so many accessories are needed to produce the best sound and performance possible.



Introduction



Turntables are finicky, every aspect must be perfectly set up – the speed, alignment, leveling, isolation, a clean and static-free surface, stylus cleaned and conditioned, etc., you get the idea.

One aspect, however, is sometimes omitted or ignored and could make a significant difference in what you hear, clamping the record tight to the platter. Considering the minute physical contact between the stylus and the record surface plus the fact that almost any vibration can cause unwanted noise. Reducing the opportunity for any interference can make a record sound “cleaner”.

Design and In Use

E.A.T. (European Audio Team), is in the business of playing records. I'd reviewed their amazing [E.A.T. E-Glo S Tube Phono Preamplifier](#) last year and was blown away by its performance.

In addition, you will read other reviews on this site for E.A.T. turntables, cartridges, tonearms, and other accessories. One such accessory is the E.A.T. LP Clamp Massive. 84mm in diameter, (3.3”) but weighing 0.8 kg or 1-3/4 lbs., the Massive is beautifully CNC-machined and polished to a flawless stainless-steel surface. It has a rubber base to fit comfortably onto your record.

Modestly priced turntables generally do not include any way to secure the record to the platter, my Marantz TT-15 S1 came with a plastic clamp that relies on pressure between the clamp and the spindle. Although it is adequate, what I've never liked is that I need to pry it off by twisting. I've always expected to break it or have it worn out losing its grasp. To date, it hasn't yet it remains slightly annoying.



A heavy clamp is a better solution for many reasons. Although it may not be the best solution for all turntables (especially suspension-type), a clamp goes on and off easily and lays the record flat to the platter pad. It also helps records that may have some warpage, leveling the surface for the stylus to track properly.

Other methods include perimeter metal rings that weigh the record down or if your spindle is threaded, a screw-type clamp works. Each of those types can produce other issues and can harm your records.

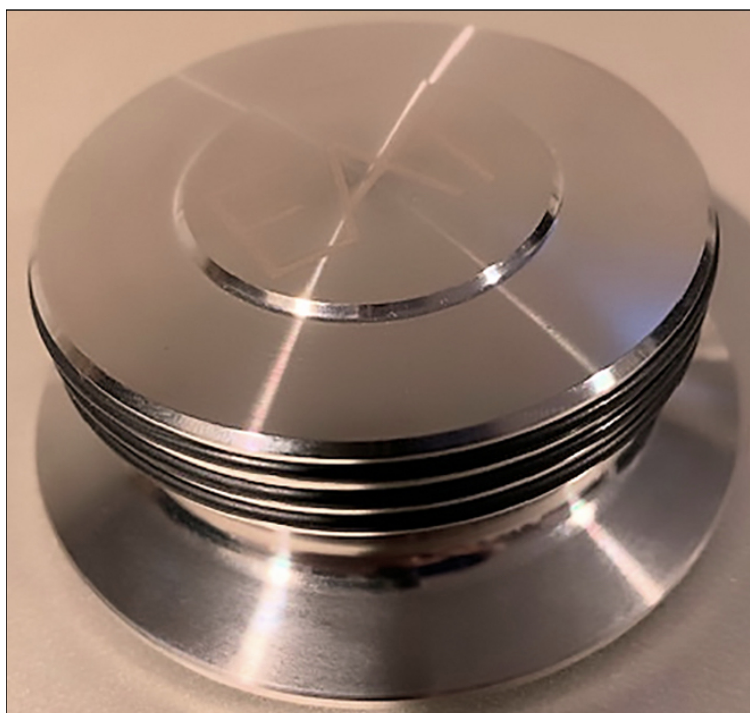
The logic is that clamping down on and dampening the record, reduces vibration, but can it also hurt the sound? There is an argument that it could alter the sound unfavorably – some might prefer the resonance (think feedback) noises and there are those who say a clamp sucks out the bass or might make the record sound “unnatural”.

There is also the argument the extra weight could wear out parts like the belt, motor or bearings sooner.

Setup and Listening

I did go through a minor adjustment to make sure my turntable was properly set up – checked that the table was level, cartridge alignment, tracking force, azimuth, and tonearm level to the platter. I also replaced my Ringmat with the original felt mat, which has a smooth and even surface. The Ringmat has raised cork circles that didn't support the weight of the E.A.T. Clamp Massive as the inner part of the record, (the width of the label) would compress beyond flat.

I measured the speed of the turntable with and without the heavy clamp and found no difference. The convenience of using the Clamp Massive on and off the record is a pleasure compared to my plastic clamp.



For me, I can hear the difference clearly – a lower noise floor, blacker images, and the frequency seems wider, highs seem lighter and crisper while the bass seems tamer. On the negative side, I did also notice a bit more definition in the clicks and pops no matter how clean my records. Deal breaker? Not for me, at all.

As for the physical damage to my turntable, I have always “helped” the platter with a spin before turning on the motor, this preserves the belt from wear and the motor from jumping to proper speed abruptly. I check to make sure the bearing is well lubricated with a drop of oil every six months or so.

Conclusions

This accessory is a welcome addition to my system and the modest cost is well worth the investment, it gave me more than \$200 worth of improvement. I highly recommend the E.A.T. Clamp Massive.