

## Review of SG in PureSound.BE

On New Year's Eve I travelled to Leiden, NL to visit the introduction of Soundsmith to BeneLux. This new brand (for Holland, at least-ed.) has recently been imported to Benelux by Music2Import. This took place last week in the new building of Sense of Music on the Kanaalweg 48 in Leiden, Netherlands.

### Soundsmith and Acoustic Signature

Soundsmith is an unknown brand to me. That is reason enough to make its acquaintance. Recently I read in the Music2Imports newsletter that it was a very special cartridge. Because the SG cartridge has frequency response of DC to 70Khz with a nude contact line stylus and ruby cantilever assembly which is easily user replaceable. But it also does not need a RIAA filter multi stage preamplifier circuit, and this is special. To understand this I went to the website for Soundsmith to shed some light on the issue, and out of this I distilled the following - RIAA compensation is mandatory for velocity sensitive magnetic cartridges. The SG is an amplitude device that automatically compensates for the RIAA equalization curve, through which an elegant, ultra clean preamp design has been adapted. This is my own translation and understanding of the information on Soundsmith's own website.

### The Setup

The demonstration took place in two spaces with multiple turntables and tonearms. In the big space were two turntables of which the Acoustic Signature Grand Reference (22,000 Euros) with three motors, was the eye catcher. This table was also a premiere for Europe, and for that Marco of Music2 was visibly proud. The other turntable was a Grand Prix Monaco which also looked very impressive. Both turntables were connected to a Luxman C-600 /preamplifier and a Luxman M-600 power amplifier. And the phonostage was also a Luxman, the E-200. The loudspeakers were the well known Dutch speakers DSS Reference. The cabling used I have unfortunately forgotten, but it was nothing exotic.

The Acoustic Signature Grand Reference was utilized with a Dynavector DV507 MK2 arm, and the Soundsmith SG cartridge. So how does this sound, I can hear you thinking? Well, I can be very short about that. What you hear is clean, so that it makes you think of the sound of a CD player, but all this with the note that it does not sound digital or sharp. Amazingly beautiful is probably the better description. At first, I had to get accustomed to this beautiful sound, or to this clean sound, because you lack a certain warmth that you are used to in analog reproduction. At the same time, though, you hear that outer worldly beauty, how beautiful a record can sound and can be, with dead quiet background or at most, the slightest hint of noise. As we switched to the other turntable, the Grand Prix Monaco with Triplanar MK VII arm and Van de Hul Frog cartridge, the well known warmth returned, which was very recognizable to me. While listening a bit longer to the Grand Prix combination, I noticed what you really miss when it comes to micro information and the beauty of the other combination with the SG

cartridge. With the AS and SG there was more rest, and very soon you will surrender to what you are hearing. I completely forgot that I was listening analytically, and that I could not find anything negative about this combination anywhere. Of course, this is the combination of tracking, arm and cartridge, but I do believe that the Soundsmith SG had the primary role of the protagonist in this. All in all, it was worth the journey to Leiden. I was planning on asking for the AS Grand Reference combination for review, but when I heard about the weight of the setup I decided not to. I would really not know how to get over 200 kilos up two sets of stairs to my listening space.

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