

new equipment reports

THE CONSUMER'S GUIDE
TO HIGH FIDELITY EQUIPMENT

THE EQUIPMENT: Garrard SL 95B, a three-speed automatic turntable with integral tone arm. Dimensions: 16¾ by 14¼ by 8 inches high including base and dust cover; clearance above mounting board: 4¾ inches to clear spindle, 7 inches to change spindle; clearance below top of mounting board: 3 inches. Price: \$129.50; optional base and dust cover, \$6.50 each. Manufacturer: Garrard Engineering Ltd., England. U.S. representative: British Industries Co., Westbury, N.Y. 11590.

COMMENT: The two features of the SL 95B that most apparently distinguish it from the previous SL 95 (test report, HF, July 1968) are the three lever controls at the front right corner of the top plate and the multi-action dust cover. But there have been other changes as well, adding up to better performance. In lab tests the unit did considerably better on speed accuracy, for example, thanks to the improved motor. Whereas the maximum speed error of the SL 95 was 1 per cent (fast, at 45 rpm), all figures for the SL 95B were within ½ per cent of true speeds. Actual speed error measured was 0.3 per cent fast for 33⅓ and 78 rpm, and 0.4 per cent fast for 45 rpm. Speed also remained constant regardless of changes in power line voltage. Figures for arm resonance (a 9-dB rise at 6 Hz) and arm friction (less than 10 milligrams in either plane) likewise were better than those for the previous model. Rumble was the same as in the older model, well down at -56 dB by the CBS-ARLL standard. Flutter, also the same as in the former unit, was a negligible 0.07 per cent.

Operating controls on the SL 95B consist of a speed-and-size switch (like that on the SL 95) at the left of the platter plus three lever function controls to the right (replacing a pair of rotary controls). The former has three 33-rpm positions—for 12-inch, 10-inch, and 7-inch discs—plus a position for 12-inch 78s and one for 7-inch 45s. Each of these settings indicates the record size for which the arm will position itself in automatic cycling. Other size/speed combinations—10-inch 78s, for example—can be played manually, of course. Standard automatic-play and single-play spindles are provided; a large-center-hole automatic spindle for 45s is available as an accessory.

The innermost lever at the right triggers the automatic change cycle. The middle lever, marked "manual," simply starts and stops the motor without triggering the change cycle. The cue lever lowers and raises the arm. Used manually this system works very well indeed. The short manual spindle is free to turn with the record and the platter should the record's center hole be imperfectly formed. (With fixed spindles, an imperfect center hole can cause



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drag that threatens the turntable's speed accuracy.) The automatic arm-return feature of changer operation continues to work in the manual mode. For playing large-hole 45s manually, a spindle adapter is provided with the SL 95B. In automatic operation the SL 95B performed beautifully. Its two-point support system provided flawless record changing in tests.

The arm is the same as that on the previous model: the same effective antiskating control, the same accurate tracking-force dial, and the same convenient slip-out cartridge clip. This arm is, in our opinion, one of the easier designs to use in changing cartridges, both because of the cartridge clip and because it can be rebalanced relatively easily.

The optional base and dust cover deserve special mention. The B2 base has special compartments for the storage of unused spindles. The D2 dust cover consists of two pieces: a back that attaches to the base plus the cover itself, which fills in the other three sides and the top. The cover can be picked up (as it would have to be if the turntable were placed in a well), slid out (from under an overhanging shelf, for instance), or tilted upward so that it rests at an angle while records are being fitted onto the turntable. It can be closed during turntable use, protecting the stack of records from dust accumulation during prolonged use in the changer mode. While we found the tilt-up operation a little more awkward than it is in most designs intended for use only in that way, we believe the design will be practical for a wider variety of installations than any other dust cover we've used to date.

Altogether, a convenient, versatile, and excellent piece of equipment that merits a place in any high-quality home music system.

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