

EQUIPMENT REVIEW

SSC Record Point 420 clamp

by Alan Sircom

Record clamps were an almost lost cause a few years ago. They were either supplied with the record player, or cost a fortune. Occasionally, they were both. The SSC Record Point from Germany represents the much-needed middle ground in record clamping.

The clamp itself looks to be an almost textbook example of all a record clamp needs to be; well-machined enough to make an even load when sitting atop of a rotating platter, massy enough to hold the record down, but not so heavy it compromises the turntable's performance. It's all machined and black anodised aluminium, with a CNC milled steel filling, designed to sit on a spindle, rather than some kind of screw-down arrangement. It's more or less the same size as a hockey puck, and it's called '420' because it weighs 420g.

In fact, it's more complex than it looks. The 'SSC' name stands for 'String Suspension Concept', a tensioned system designed to optimise an equipment stand or platform. The Record Point uses the same system with the lower aluminium cap hiding two metal/textile rings, designed to absorb any resonance feeding in or out of the clamp, while stabilising the record on the platter, all of which is claimed to lower distortion.

Whatever you might think of the claims made, the short and incontestable answer is the Record Point 420 helps. I used it in place of the standard screw-down clamp on an original SME 20, and it just brought things more into line. Transients were crisper, the record sounded quieter. Dynamic range was improved, too, with the turntable sounding more dynamically free and expressive when playing 'Summertime' from *Porgy and Bess* with Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong [Verve]. In short, it just sounded that bit more 'real'. In performance terms, the SSC clamp sits in the same place as its price – better than the lightweight, screw-down affairs that simply clamp the record in place through sheer torque, and not quite as good as the best of the best. However, it's not an absolute price/performance correlation; from memory, the SSC's improvements to leading edges especially puts it closer to the more high-end clamps than its price might suggest.

The weight of the Record Point 420 might preclude its use with some of the more bouncy decks, but most should be able to compensate for the additional weight, and anyone with a turntable either without a suspension, or designed to



work with a clamp of this sort of weight is in for a treat. It's a tougher call to recommend any kind of clamp on something like a Linn, because they have been designed so tightly to not require a clamp that using one typically compromises important aspects of the presentation.

Regardless, SSC makes more than just a clamp in the Record Point 420, at the sort of price where you might just expect a record clamp. It's well worth seeking out. +

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Construction: Aluminium and stainless steel;
SSC textile rings

Weight: 420g

Dimensions (Diameter x Height): 65x26mm

Price: £120

Manufacturer: SSC

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