

**NEW**

# RECOVERY

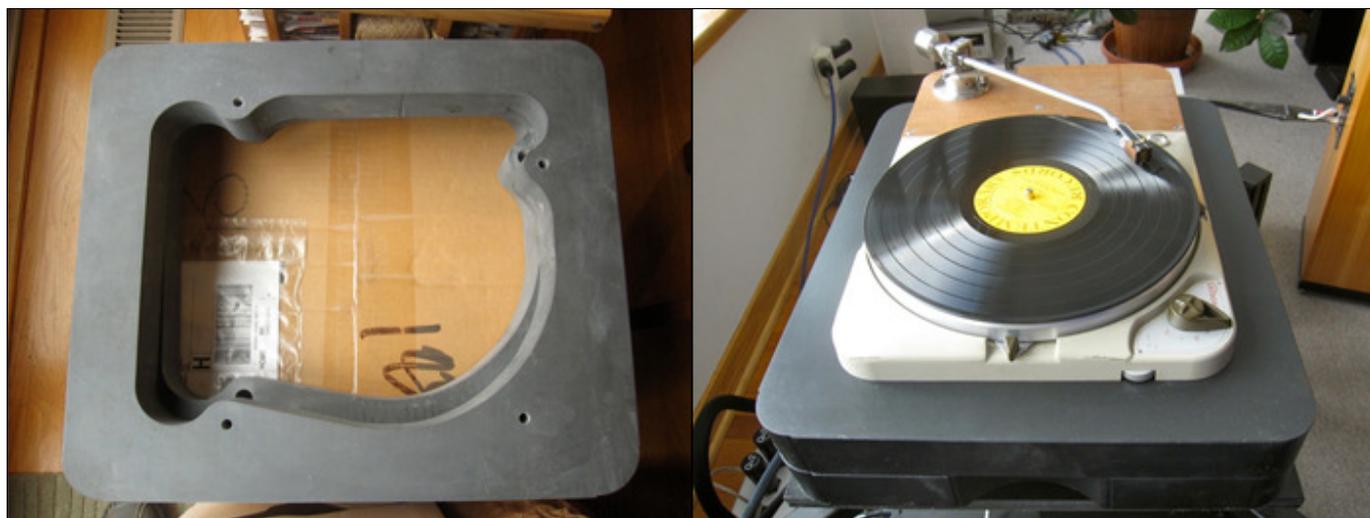
USB Reclocker

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This restoration work took well over a year what with the waiting on ordered parts, scheduling visits to Kevin Kennedy's for help and searching for an affordable CNC machine shop (available through Beauty of Sound). Finally I could move to the main review feature, the Glanz MH-124SX 12" tonearm. I became interested in reviewing it after being made aware of it by original importer [Laufer Teknik](#) in Roxbury/Connecticut. I must thank Hiroshi Ishihara, the Glanz [exporter's](#) Tokyo representative for his unending patience during my laborious lengthy Thorens restoration in preparation for this review. Who is Glanz you ask? I'd never heard of them nor had any of my audiophile friends. Glanz tonearms are manufactured by Hamada Electric in Shizuoka, Japan and exported by Sibatech Inc. Mitachi Acoustics for whom Mr. Hamada developed various analog products was founded in 1951 under the brand name Glanz and closed in 2003. In 1980 Hamada-San established Hamada Electric and secured the Glanz brand license from the Mitachi family in 2008. To quote from the advertising literature: *"Beyond time Glanz's legend has been revived. Many long-established audio manufacturers have vanished since analog audio entered its glacial epoch with the advent of digital. Against this tide Glanz issued products such as tone arms and phono cartridges favored by audiophiles to survive with its ingenious technology. The birth of an ultimate tone arm—the Glanz—proves the real advantage of analog audio and talks of its regeneration."* After reading that my first thought was that the tonearm should be called The Glanz Phoenix.

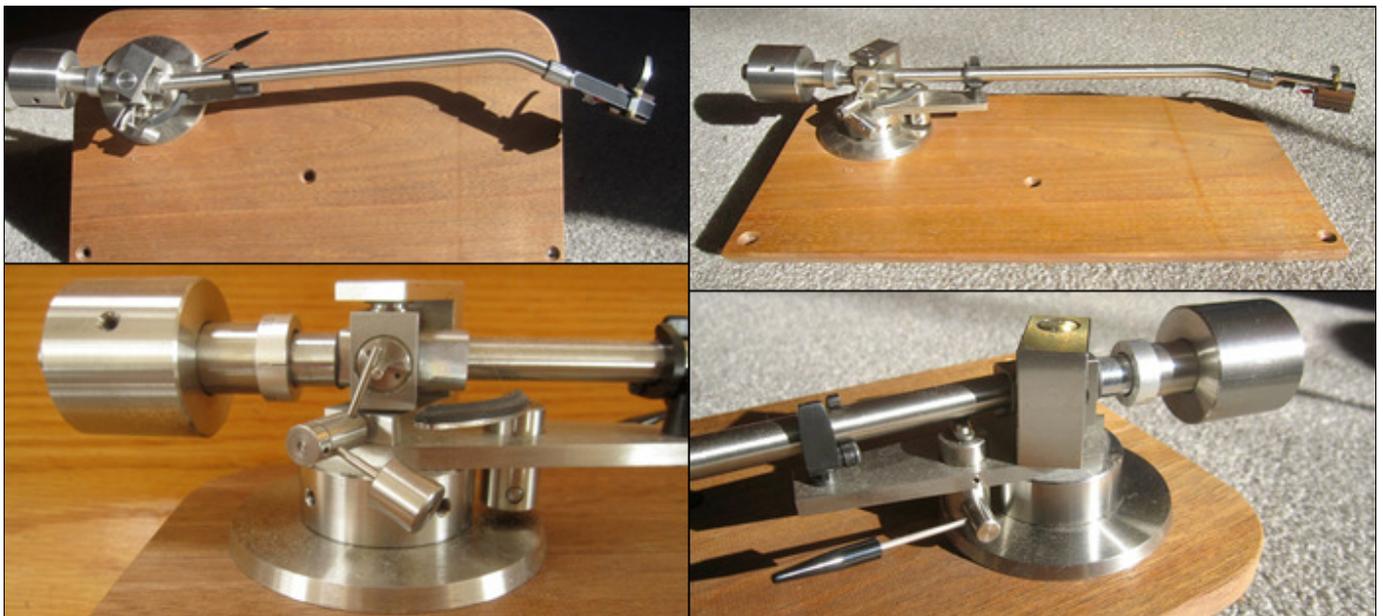


My intent was to compare the Glanz to my vintage Ortofon RMG-309 12" broadcast quality tonearm to which the Glanz has visual similarity. The RMG-309 is designed to primarily accept the Ortofon SPU G-style cartridge series. Theoretically it can work with other carts if you purchase an aftermarket headshell. It would help if the headshell was high mass since the RMG-309 is designed to counterbalance the very heavy (about 33 grams with the inseparable headshell) SPU G-style carts. While you can add mass with mortite, lead etc. to a standard headshell of your

choosing, that's a less elegant solution. At 290 and 309mm respectively, the pivot-to-spindle mounting distances are different for the Glanz and Ortofon. Their headshell offset angles are different too. The Glanz is 20°, the Ortofon 15.9°. An important practical similarity between them does exist. The Glanz also accepts Ortofon SPU G-style series cartridges as its counterweight is sizeable and has enough travel to balance an SPU G as well as any modern cartridge when using the supplied Glanz headshell. That headshell is an unusual design of a narrow bar of stainless steel damped on the top with the cartridge mounting screws tightening into the cartridge by straddling the outside edges of the bar. The headshell is a bayonet mount with a locking collar just like the Ortofon.



This is a distinct advantage of versatility for the Glanz and I gather the primary design goal for the arm. Mr. Hamada the designer is a big fan of the Ortofon SPU cartridges. Both the Ortofon RMG-309 and Glanz have DIN connectors for the phono cables. VTA is adjustable on the Glanz but not Ortofon. Neither provide any mechanism for azimuth adjustment. Both are high-mass gimbal bearing designs suited for low compliance MC carts. In fact the Glanz literature describes the arm as the *Glanz extra heavy weight tone arm*. The total weight is 1.05kg but the specifications do not state effective mass. I inquired but the reply through Hiroshi Ishihara was that the information was unavailable. Looking at the specs there are some notable differences between arms. The specs for the Ortofon RMG-309 are on [Vinyl Engine](#) and those for the Glanz MH-124SX on the exporter's [website](#). First amongst differences is that the Ortofon is made of duralumin while the Glanz is machined from stainless steel. Not just any stainless steel though. Quoting the literature again, "*all parts are made of stainless steel (SS) with the highest hardness but moderate stickiness, qualities which are quite contradictory in nature but ultimately suitable for tonearm parts rather than another tonearm-related conventional material. From the wide variety of SS materials Glanz selected the most appropriate after numerous sound comparison tests which arrived at the highest possible ratio of hardness/stickiness.*"



Mr. Hamada is obviously more than just an accomplished engineer. He balances engineering prowess with empirical trials and his own handcrafting skills. There are two side-facing radial bearings handling vertical rotation while one top radial bearing and one thrust bearing handle horizontal rotation. The arm is all made by hand with even the bearing race inserted into the pillow block by pressurized insertion with a small hammer and sensitive touch. The arm is beautiful to behold particularly the finish. It would not look out of place in a museum of industrial design. Another aspect of the design stressed in the Glanz literature are simplicity and purity. Mr. Hamada's approach to avoiding loss of vibrational energy between cantilever and tonearm is to: 1/ use no adhesives to attach any moving parts which would create an energy transmission barrier, 2/ machine the bearings to extreme tolerances to provide smooth and

direct metal contact, and 3/ add appropriate damping to the headshell, arm wand and counterweight assembly.



An antiskating mechanism and cueing lever are provided but both can be removed to further reduce mechanical resonances. In fact after using the arm for several weeks I removed the anti-skating mechanism and found a subtle but noticeable improvement to the purity and coherence of the sound. I left the cueing lever in place though as I value this convenience. I wish I could say that optimizing the performance of this arm on my restored Thorens TD-124 turntable came easy. It did not. I do not blame the tonearm. The matter that needed addressing was optimizing the turntable's interface with my equipment rack. Do not overlook this very important factor! I gathered all of my isolation/coupling footers and called on the expertise of Pierre Sprey of [Mapleshade Records](#). Pierre generously shipped me a care package consisting of his 1/ four-inch thick maple platforms, 2/ three brass Megamounts, 3/ four Isoblocks, 4/ four brass washers for coupling between the underside of the chassis to the slate top surface, 5/ numerous Nanomounts for various places. The only other thing I wished to try were some round footers made out of slate as fitted on the slate plinth sold by eBay seller jec965 (Jim Campbell). I now had a large arsenal that could be combined in numerous ways thus complicating matters immensely. Still the effort I made to try all of these devices paid off enormously. Changing the footers or platform under the turntable had a large impact on the sound. I also had four phono cartridges on hand: 1/ Benz LP-S (\$5,000) which is normally mounted on my Nottingham Analogue Mentor turntable and Ace Anna tonearm, 2/ Ortofon Meister Silver SPU G-style cartridge (Mk. I version, Mk. II version is \$1,879) with matching Ortofon SPU T-1 step-up transformer (purchased used for \$1,100), 3/ Miyajima Premium mono cartridge (\$980), and 4/ Ikeda 9TT Mono cartridge (\$4,600, on loan from importer [Beauty of Sound](#)).

