

# the ear

HI-FI MUSIC GEAR

hardware review



## TrilogY 906

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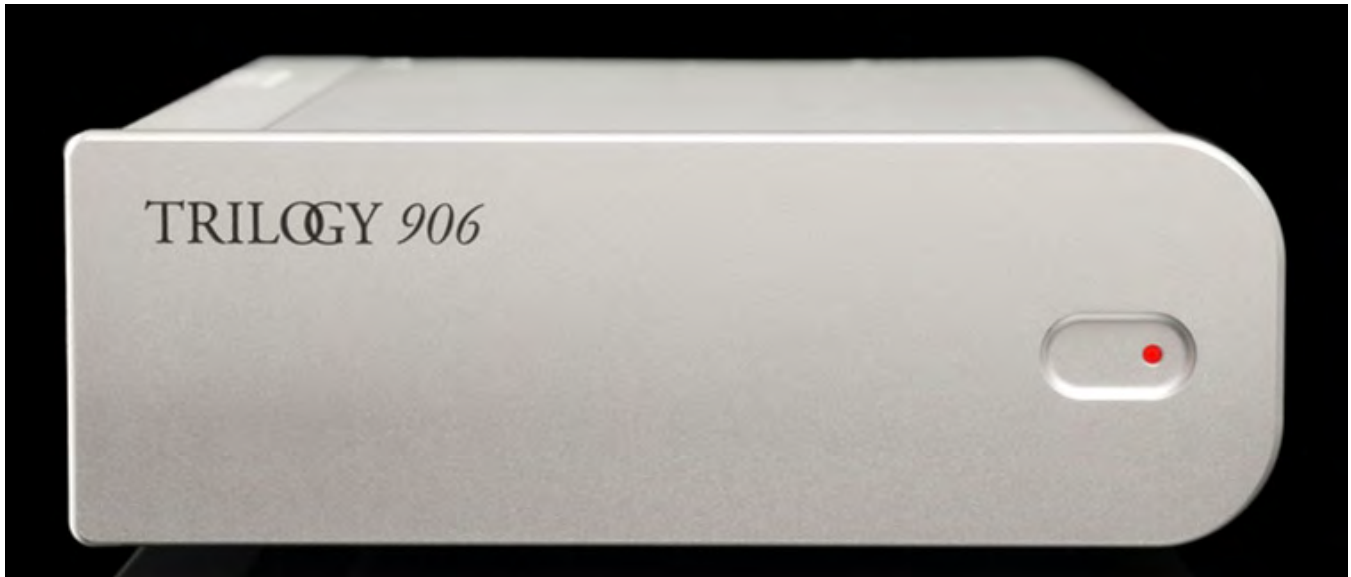
Chris Kelly

I left hi-fi retail in 2015 and moved to Devon, bringing with me the best system that our limited budget would allow, and made a few purchases on the advice of respected industry friends to ensure that I could continue to enjoy my record collection for as long as possible. Included in the equipment which followed us here was a TrilogY 907 phono stage, a very handsome two box device with all the delicate audio parts in one very elegant small box, finished in a lovely gloss black, with a power supply in a second box. I kept that at the heart of my system until last year, when I sold it on. It had an excellent sound and was very configurable to match almost any cartridge via a set of dip switches on the underside. My only reason for changing it was that I had reviewed a rival unit for The Ear and just felt that it had a very slight sonic edge and was also more versatile as far as easy configurability was concerned. The other reason was that bane of the life of everyone who has this hobby/obsession (delete as appropriate) - I just fancied a change.

Fast forward to January 2020 and an incoming message from a friend who runs Tangerine Audio, saying he had just taken on a dealership for the TrilogY 906 because he rates it so highly, and would I like to review one for The Ear? Tangerine Audio's main line of business has been the manufacture of after-market parts for the venerable Linn Sondek LP12, their top plate, armboard, sub-chassis and cross-brace are key components of my own LP12, and are held in very high regard by many other owners of LP12 decks. If the TrilogY 906 has the Tangerine Audio folk excited, then I really should take notice.

The TrilogY 906 has been around for a while now, so this is not a review of a hot new 'must-have' gizmo, but rather another chance to look at a device which has slowly but surely built a fine reputation since its launch. British audio engineer Nic Poulson founded TrilogY back in in 1990 and has dedicated the last three decades to building a roster of audio products which reflect his own belief in performance, reliability, pride of ownership and value for money. He also has a fine eye for elegant design and the 906 phono stage is a small but attractive single box. A single red LED on the front glows, but not too brightly thank heavens, to show that the unit has power, but other than that discretion is the key word. On the back panel, things are equally low key. A pair of gold plated RCA inputs and an earthing post sit beside a matching pair of RCA

sockets for the output. The onboard linear power supply is supplied current through a standard IEC socket. Using the same settings for my Gold Note Machiavelli Red cartridge as I use on my regular phono stage, I adjusted the switches on the underside, and connected it to my Yamaha A-S3000. The owner's manual that comes with the 906 is a model of clarity, so set up should present no difficulty to even the less technical new owner. In any case, your dealer should help you with this straightforward procedure.



**Sound quality**

Because it was the last album I had played before switching phono stage, I cued up my copy of pressing of Bob Dylan's *Blood On The Tracks* (Mobile Fidelity). Not the recent eye-wateringly expensive 45 RPM version, the 33 RPM one that I play often. Track one is 'Tangled Up in Blue', which at first listen sounds pretty straightforward but within it there are multiple guitars, bass drums and of course his Bobness's voice, which requires perfect timing from the system to really sound right. The Trilogy 906 was absolutely spot on in every way. Absolutely on the money. Instead of playing just one track, I played the whole album. I was genuinely surprised by the effortlessly musical the sound that issued forth from my baby Harbeths. Audio memory can be deceptive and I don't trust mine completely, but I felt that the 906 was at least as good as I recalled the 907 had been. The next few days were most enjoyable as I trawled through my record collection pulling out albums I haven't played for a while, and rediscovering lots of gems that I had almost forgotten I own. I am a bit of a JJ Cale fan ( ever since Whispering Bob Harris played lots of tracks from *Naturally* on his Radio One evening show back in 1972), and played my original copy of that first album as well as the recent pressings of his later album *Closer To You*; the lovely laid back Tulsa sound just flowed over me. The late great Mr Cale was





in the room with me. Fantastic. I played a pretty eclectic selection, from Kiri Te Kanawa singing the Songs of the Auvergne to Iron Maiden's *Book of Souls* and lots more besides, and the 906 served it all up with a perfect blend of tuneful and fast bass, wonderful midrange and sparkling treble. Music flows effortlessly yet has all the pace rhythm and timing that even a Naim diehard could crave. The 906 brought every album I played to life, regardless of genre. It projects a very credible image of the musicians into the room - the soundstage has width, height and depth. During the review period I switched amplifiers, replacing the Yamaha with an all digital Lyngdorf TDAI 3400. With the Trilogy 906 plugged into one of its analogue inputs, I was able to enjoy vinyl replay as much if not more than through the all-analogue Yamaha. It may seem counterintuitive that a device which converts an analogue signal to a 24/192 digital stream can sound this good, but I can only report what I heard.

If you, like me, have a reasonable record collection and a record deck and cartridge with which you are happy then the Trilogy 906 will give you years of audio pleasure. There are plenty of good phono stages available for under £1,000 - I have been lucky enough to hear a few of them - but I genuinely think that this unassuming but reassuringly solid British-built device is the pick of the bunch. I shall give the last word to another friend of mine who manages a well-established and successful hi-fi shop in South West London, with whom I was discussing the Trilogy 906 just the other evening. 'A brilliant bit of kit - I have yet to lend one for a home trial that has not been purchased'.

#### **Specifications**

*Type: Solid-state, MM/MC phono stage*

*Phono inputs: 2x RCA sockets*

*Analogue outputs: single ended RCA*

*Input sensitivity: variable*

*Input impedance: six values from 70 Ohms to 47K Ohms*

*Input capacitance: four values from 100 to 420 picofarads*

*Output impedance: 150 Ohms*

*Output level: not specified*

*Signal to Noise Ratio: not specified*

*Dimensions (HxWxD): 48 x 140 x 220mm*

*Weight: 1.7kg*