

IsoAcoustics

ZaZen II isolation platform



DEDICATED ISOLATION

FURNITURE has been a growth category in recent years. As the number of high-quality all-in-ones has increased, the need to invest in a complete equipment rack has reduced, with a platform placed on a piece of furniture being all many people need. They can also be used to provide a degree of additional isolation for a turntable; a device that always benefits from as much sequestration of the playing surface as you can provide.

IsoAcoustics has an extensive range of isolation products and the ZaZen range is its most affordable platform yet. There are two, almost visually identical, versions available. The ZaZen I is designed for devices weighing up to 11.3kg while the slightly thicker ZaZen II seen here is for those up to 18.1kg.

Best foot forward

Both versions are made from a single piece of extremely dense fibre board. This has no voids or spaces in the construction, which renders it extremely inert. Underneath are four integrated isolators. The idea is that the density of the platform provides an inert surface for your equipment, which is then partially decoupled from the object it is placed on by the feet.

The density of the platform and the extremely limited travel of the feet means that the ZaZen isn't affected by something that has

uneven weight distribution being placed on it. With a Michell GyroDec, for example, there is considerable overhang of the turntable to the right but a quick check with a spirit level shows that the platter is completely level. The platform itself is well finished and is attractive in an unobtrusive sort of way.

Having divested my GyroDec of its usual isolation platform, I let it run placed directly on my Quadraspire QAVX (HFC 395) rack for a few days to get a handle on how it performs without any additional isolation before adding the ZaZen II. Doing so yields immediate improvements to the performance. Listening to Portishead's *Dummy*, the most

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surprising benefit is to the bass frequencies. There is no real change to the depth, but the definition and control is noticeably improved.

The generally quiet nature of the Michell means that there are no significant gains to be made to perceived overall noise, but there are small but worthwhile improvements to the fine detail on offer that are presumably down to information that would otherwise be lost without the additional decoupling. On a very high

quality pressing like Hayden Thorpe's *Diviner* there is greater perception of Thorpe's movements behind the piano. Individually, these extra details are tiny, but cumulatively they combine to create a performance that is far more lifelike and has a greater degree of tangible reality to it.

The effect on conventional electronics is less profound, but never detrimental. I use an Arcam SA30 (HFC 462) running as a Roon endpoint and there are some incremental gains. The bass response enjoys similar benefits to the GyroDec; not increasing in depth, but enjoying some useful improvement to the levels of definition and control.

Listening to a Rega Planar 10 (HFC 456) via the SA30 sees a serious boost to the three dimensionality of the stereo image and a noticeable increase in fine detail.

Isolation station

Given the sensible asking price of the ZaZen, the benefits that it offers for turntable users are too obvious to ignore. This is a superbly well made and very capable piece of isolation furniture able to handle turntables of varying shapes and sizes without issue. The gains for electronics are perhaps less easy to demonstrate, but if you are placing your hi-fi on a piece of conventional furniture, it is likely that the ZaZen offers real benefits, making it well worth seeking out. **ES**

DETAILS

PRICE
£230
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OUR VERDICT

