

EQUIPMENT REPORT



VooDoo Iso-Pod Isolation System

That Voodoo That You Do So Well

Neil Gader

Hiding beneath almost every high-end component is one of its most unsung heroes: footers. Their importance to audio performance is well recognized, yet with the exception of a few manufacturers (typically high up in the food chain), most have pretty much yielded this segment to aftermarket specialty “tuners.” Thus we find isolation footers arriving in all shapes and sizes, materials and technological compositions. There are discs, cones, pads, points, pucks, and pods, but whatever the configuration, the mission is by and large the same. By using principles of decoupling and mass-loading, acoustic (airborne) and internal mechanical resonances are reduced—with the excess energy removed through heat dissipation.

Few of us are complete strangers to these devices but I needed to crank up the old Way-Back machine to recall my first encounter with isolation appliances. And I mean *all the way back* to The Mod Squad’s Tiptoes, the Steve McCormack-designed, pointy aluminum cones that transformed the sound of a pair of small, loose, and lively AudioPro subwoofers I was using in the 1980s. Bass performance firmed up immediately; pitch became more tuneful and extension tighter and more dynamic. Most footers today owe a debt of gratitude to isolation pioneers such as McCormack and his Tiptoes. (Today, see SMC Audio and McCormack Audio for more information.)

Which brings us to the Iso-Pod Isolation system from VooDoo Cable (a company whose fine power cords I’ve reviewed in the past.) Based in Oakland, California, VooDoo uses a slightly different formula to achieve isolation goals. Outwardly the Iso-Pods look like innocent, circular discs. Their flat, felt-covered surface makes them very stable beneath a component. But inside, things get more interesting. Each Iso-Pod is actually a pair of CNC-machined aerospace alloy discs that are suspended from within by three small zirconium ball bearings that rest in tiny

individual dimples. Like a ball-bearing sandwich, the assembly is held together by powerful opposing magnets centered in each disc. Iso-Pods ship in combinations of three or four discs.

For this evaluation I placed three Iso-Pods beneath the superb MBL C51 integrated amp (Issue 243) and the Parasound JC 3+ phonostage (Issue 245). These components don’t lack for quality factory isolation footers, but the addition of the Iso-Pods was still transformational in multiple ways. For example, during Vaughan Williams’ *The Wasps Overture* [RCA], the busy wind and string sections represent the swirling activity of the hive. Immediately notable was greater buoyancy around each note—no less intense than I’d heard previously, but with an additional airiness and lift to the sound that was both sweeter and less astringent. The articulation of the concert harp displayed improved inner detail—easily buried in this performance, it also emerged in its own atmospheric pocket with each string pluck clearly articulated and stable in space.

Turning to Mobile Fidelity’s recently released and outstanding 45RPM vinyl set of Miles Davis’ *Kind of Blue* [Columbia], the Iso-Pods removed the fine dusting and smear from images, and sharpened focus. I noted a firmer, more intelligible bass line, and finer volume gradations from Bill Evans’ piano playing alongside Coltrane’s tenor sax. The ’Pods created a more lively sense of light and rhythm from the drum kit. Reversing course and removing the Iso-Pods left the same tracks a bit drained of atmosphere and air. The presentation was less cohesive, micro-dynamics were flatter and less involving.

VooDoo’s Iso-Pods are among the easiest and most effective products that I’ve come across to increase resolution and extract detail. They are reasonably priced, nicely finished, and, for this reviewer *are staying right where they are*. A worthy accessory for the “tuner” in all of us. **tbs**

PRICE

Iso-Pods

Price: \$299 (set of 3); \$399 (set of 4)

VOODOO CABLE

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