

Minitest

Compact Discs aren't immune to dirt and dust, so **Neville Roberts** tests some affordable cleaners...

Marigo Labs

3D Stabiliser CD Tuning Mat and Evolution Signature CD Mat

PRICES: £74.94 (3D MAT), £149.95 (CD MAT)
CONTACT: 01733 350878 WEBSITE: ANALOGUESEDUCTION.NET

THE 3D STABILISER MAT and the Evolution Signature CD Mat are manufactured by Marigo Labs and are available from Analogue Seduction. These mats are designed to extract the best performance from your SACD, DVD-A, DVD-V and CD discs by addressing issues that centre around vibration, stray magnetism, static and optical diffraction. Marigo mats are absolutely flat and designed to be placed on top of a CD prior to and left *in situ* during playing.

The 3D Stabiliser Mat employs a carbon fibre and Kevlar composite, with embedded ultra-fine silver wire for stray field suppression. The mat has an anti-static gold coating on the underside and optically absorbent green coating on top. With this mat, I noticed a definite improvement in the realism of the sound, which by contrast made me realise that the instruments had sounded somewhat constrained in the past.

The top-of-the-range Evolution Signature CD Mat makes use of a proprietary composite material that has been created using an embedded carbon nano-tube structure which dramatically reduces the level of disc vibration, it's claimed. As with the 3D Stabiliser mat, the Evolution Signature CD Mat is placed on top of an optical disc, and it does indeed offer improvements in realism and detail which I found particularly noticeable with vocals.

VERDICT ★★★★★ THE SONIC IMPROVEMENTS when using both mats are clearly demonstrable, although the Evolution Signature takes these improvements to the next level.



Audience Auric Illuminator

PRICE: £49.95 CONTACT: 01775 761880
WEBSITE: HIGHENDCABLE.CO.UK

THIS OFFERING FROM HIGH END CABLE is a treatment and cleaner for optical discs. It is specifically designed for use with CDs, DVDs, LaserDiscs and SACDs. The Auric Illuminator is essentially a two-stage process for what's described as an 'optical disc playback resolution enhancement'. The first stage is to reduce the amount of ambient light entering the disc and reaching the optical path of the player's laser system. The second stage is to clean and treat both surfaces of the disc to remove static electricity and prevent future static build-up. On the playing surface, this will also enhance the optical transparency by reducing reflection and refraction.

The treatment kit includes the Auric Illuminator Pen, a marker template, a large bottle of a clear treatment gel and a pack of non-abrasive disposable polishing cloths. The CD or DVD is treated by filling in the central clear area with the Illuminator Pen marker using the template supplied, and the outer rim of the disc is also blacked out with the marker. Then, the disc is treated on both sides with one drop of the gel spread on each surface and finally buffed with one of the supplied cloths.

Treated discs seemed less harsh at the top end, generally quieter, smoother and easier to listen to, and supports a blind test carried out by High End Cable where they played two copies of the same CD to customers – one treated and one untreated. Without exception all listeners noticed an improvement with the treated CD.

VERDICT ★★★★★ NOTICEABLE audible improvements after treatment make this a worthwhile investment.