

ORB Hi-end CRE-2 Cartridge Energiser

This interesting little device warms up the cartridge's cantilever suspension by exciting the stylus with a gentle 800Hz sine wave. The theory behind this is that your cartridge performs at its best after a warm-up period of about fifteen minutes, as some vinyl addicts will attest. This device carries out this function, eliminating the requirement to play a record for that period of time and thus reducing wear of your prized long playing records.

I must confess that I do find that the sound from my audio system does improve after the first side or so of record playing. I had attributed this to my valves warming up (as I often use an all-valve system), but it may well be due to the cartridge warming up too. To use the CRE-2, place the stylus on the silver mirrored platform and press the Start button. Indicator LEDs show the remaining time from fifteen minutes in five minute steps.

In use

To test this device out, I first warmed up my system without playing a record for half an hour. I then listened to a track on a record and compared this to playing the same track after running my cartridge on the CRE-2 for the prescribed time period (with the volume at minimum, of course!). I then re-listened to the same track and I could detect a slight overall improvement in terms of ease and general musicality...

The Energiser can also be used for demagnetising your cartridge by shorting out the pins on the back of your pickup before using the device. I tried this out and can say that there was an improvement in clarity, and especially an audible tightening up of the bass. Expensive, but effective. **NR**



DETAILS

PRICE: £288

CONTACT:
01733 350878

WEBSITE:
ANALOGUE
SEDUCTION.NET

OUR VERDICT



ISOkinetic ISOdek DAB1/DAB2 isolation platforms



The DAB1 is made from a single sheet of 15mm black acrylic fitted with double-sided Delrin and absorbothane feet. Delrin is a hard acetal resin and absorbothane is extremely good at absorbing vibrations with excellent anti-slip properties. The only disadvantage is that it tends to stick firmly to any smooth surface, making it difficult to move the platform. However, this can be overcome by fitting to the exposed surface a disc of black paper, which adheres to the absorbothane but not the table!

The DAB2 adds another 15mm thick acrylic shelf underneath the top shelf, milled top and bottom to the two shelves. The inherent surface tackiness of the absorbothane effectively holds the two shelves together nicely. The resultant platform is beautifully made, very solid and weighs in at around 6.5kg.

In use

Firstly, the DAB1 was placed under my CD player and I perceived a noticeable improvement in the midrange, with the music flowing more easily. I then listened to the same pieces of music with the DAB2 in place and there were further improvements to be heard, particularly with the dynamic range. During a natural pause in the music when everything went quiet, the silence was almost palpable. Overall, the sound felt more realistic and natural. Similar improvements, though not quite as great, were heard when the platforms were used under my amplifiers.

These are extremely well-made units releasing real sonic improvements; they're fine value for money. **NR**

DETAILS

PRICE: DAB1
£145, DAB2 £235

CONTACT:
0208 241 8890

WEBSITE:
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OUR VERDICT

