

Rack no Roll

A vinyl support system that also aims to remove noise from the hi-fi chain, Paul Rigby reviews Blue Horizon's Professional Rack System.

Arguably, the best shelving mount for any turntable is a wall shelf as it is isolated from unstable flooring. Sometimes, wall shelves are not a possible option, though. Hence, any alternative turntable shelving system has to be stable and must remove invasive noise.

The Professional Rack System (PRS) hopes to do that very thing. It features a bespoke triple layer bamboo laminate, with the grain running in opposing directions and the central lamination running vertically. The idea here is to prevent standing waves forming.

The PRS rack modules can be configured into many shapes and sizes: single height: 600 x 450 x 30mm, and double height 1140 x 450 x 30mm. In addition, when funds allow, you can upgrade the basic system by adding component shelves and steel spike isolation between tiers as well as the accompanying Sanctum isolating platforms. If you already own a rack, you can add the Sanctum isolation shelves under individual audio electronics.

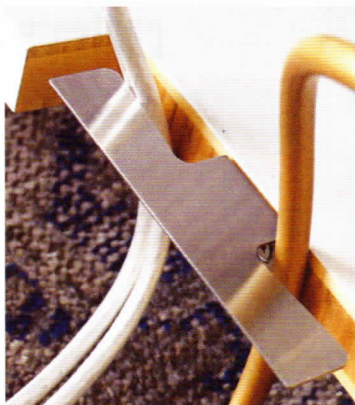
A cable management system keeps loose wire under control and allows signal and power cable to be kept separated too.

On my Avid Acutus turntable I played David Gray's album, 'White Ladder' and the track 'Please Forgive Me', recorded at a relatively low volume and featuring voice, piano and acoustic guitar but also, in parts, a dynamic and high-energy series of percussive beats adding to the sonic

variety.

Ordinarily, at high volumes and during crescendos, Gray's voice could sound a little pinched in the upper mids leading to listening fatigue. Using the PRS, that threat was lowered considerably.

Adding the Sanctum platform to the shelf, noise dropped further, adding a slight reverb shimmer to the lead vocal for the first time



and a deep, bass echo effect to the drums. In fact, the bass of the drums dominated the rear of the central stereo image. The contrast between that and the light synth runs were markedly greater.

I then added the upgraded, top-of-the-range spiked parts to the legs, separating the single, long leg look into sections, separated by those spikes to give the system a separate tiered effect. I played ex-Genesis man Anthony Philips' 'Sides' and the track 'Um & Aargh'. The result? The soundstage was enormous! The amount of air and space infused throughout all dimensions was significant in the overall sonic improvement.

Playing the finger picking guitar of Leo Kottke and



'Morning is the Long Way Home' from 'Ice Water', the guitar was no longer a chaotic mess of strings but an instrument where the strings flew in precise formation, adding a beguiling lyricism. Meanwhile Kottke's Johnny Cash-like vocal offered a bass clarity that provided a strong central focus to the pacy rhythms of the track.

CONCLUSION

For each upgrade, the sound enhancements were quite startling in terms of the decrease in noise, increased accuracy and clarity afforded to the music. The improvements are not subtle, by any means, showing just how important is the tackling of the many flavours of noise. A top quality shelving system is critical in that endeavour. The PRS shelving system is certainly that.

TYPICAL PRICES:

Three shelf rack, bamboo: £1,605
 Three shelf rack, bamboo with Sanctum equipment support shelves: £2,352
 Three shelf rack, available in bamboo with Sanctum equipment support shelves & spike isolation: £2,742

(A new 30mm, matt finish MDF shelf version, £990. Also available in Cherry, Walnut or Maple, prices on application.)

BLUE HORIZON PROFESSIONAL RACK SYSTEM



OUTSTANDING - amongst the best.

VERDICT

Simple to put together, sturdy and easy to use, the PRS shelving offers a valuable sonic upgrade.

FOR

- simple assembly
- build quality
- lowers noise
- adds clarity

AGAINST

- nothing

Blue Horizon
 +44 (0)118 981 4238
www.soundfoundations.co.uk

