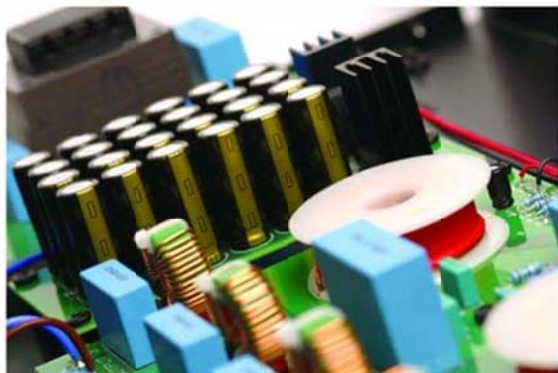




ISOL-8 MINISUB WAVE £699

Your mains electricity supply is a nasty place to be – if you're a piece of hi-fi equipment, that is. We think of electricity as being pure and natural when, in fact, it is infected by rubbish in the shape of harmonic distortion, radio frequency interference, noise from other connected items and DC components. This bunch of electro-bandits degrade the sound quality by preventing the circuits in your hi-fi



chain from performing properly. They literally 'get in the way'.

The ISOL-8 MiniSub Wave power conditioner has been designed to reduce or eradicate this multi-stream distortion by filtering it out while leaving the rest of the signal untouched using a new Transmodal filter topology for the low power sections such as CD players, turntables and the like.

But enough technology, what does it sound like? I began by hooking up my valve-staged Icon CD-XI CD player, via a bog-standard cable to the mains. I then span the overly compressed 'Stronger' via The Sugababes and then placed the Wave in between the Icon and the mains. Even after a few seconds, the improvements in sound were evident with an obvious elevation of clarity. The removal of a large amount of distortion brought several dimensions of emotion back to the vocal which sounded far more relaxed than

voice, that were previously largely masked, now revealed a far more nuanced performance, with a raft of new elements that came into play.

Behind the vocal, I could hear the synth-inspired string effects rising from the music which gave a more romantic and even compassionate tone to the early part of the track. Also, at this point, a bass-lead, low frequency tone that had previously sounded rather tremulous, now

revealed itself to be nothing more than a highly vibrational synth effect that now shook with dynamic power. In fact, bass sounded like it had been scrubbed clean, polished and newly presented, making it sound tighter and positively frisky.

With so much distortion reduced or eradicated, the Wave did two things. Firstly, it managed to paint a widescreen soundstage that encouraged subtle upper

midrange details but, unlike some cheaper power conditioners, it did so without cutting into the resident dynamics.

Moving to my Avid Acutus analogue turntable set-up I compared its performance when connected to the ISOL-8 MiniSub Wave to direct mains connection. This demonstrated that the better quality the product and the more complex its construction, the better the benefits. Listening to a selection of jazz via Ella Fitzgerald and Duke Ellington, connected to the mains direct, was like listening to a friend while standing in a crowded bar. The information was there, the communication could be achieved, most of the emotion could be discerned but the surrounding ambient distortion blocked the more subtle aspects of

softer. She sounded like she had stopped trying and was now enjoying herself. The Wave released far more filigree elements that arose from her performance, revealing previously unheard emotions while the backing orchestra stopped sounding like a mushy melange and now started to sound like a group of individual instruments.

Overall, the upper midrange lost that sense of hardness that the mains-only connection forced upon the music. That was backed up with the trumpets, which now had texture while the trombones provided an individual tonal personality for the first time. Bass, meanwhile, started to play a significant part in the song, giving the track drive.

The ISOL-8 MiniSub Wave provides a significant aural improvement to your music – whether that be via a digital or analogue source. It won't conjure up new musical strengths but it will allow your hi-fi to properly perform to its true potential, quite possibly for the first time.

If you listen to your hi-fi chain now, you will probably wonder what on earth I'm wittering on about. "I can't hear any distortion!" you will cry. Yet, if you have always lived with distortion, if your untreated mains supply has been the only thing you have ever connected your hi-fi to, then is it any wonder?

The only way you will hear any difference is if you remove the distortion. It's a bit like living your entire life in a disco. Try walking out of the door and hearing the silence. Listening to distortion free hi-fi? It's a whole new world. And let me tell you this...the ISOL-8 MiniSub Wave is just the beginning. **PR**

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