

Primacoustic Recoil Stabilizers

Freely admitting to being something of a cynic when it comes to audio 'tweaks' ever since a group of hi-fi aficionados tried to convince him that a phono lead could be directional, **JON THORNTON** assesses a better speaker stand.

With any product that claims snake-oil type properties, my first response is to look for the underlying science. Fortunately, this is an easy job with Primacoustic's Recoil Stabilizers. Essentially an isolating pad for monitor speakers, they are a variation on a well-trodden acoustic theme. Consisting of a pad of high-density foam topped with a fairly hefty chunk of laser-cut steel, and finished off with a non-slip neoprene top layer, the idea is that the foam decouples the speaker from structure-borne resonances in the stand/meterbridge or whatever. In addition, the added mass of the steel plate allegedly minimises the recoil action caused by the movement of the driver.

While you can't really argue with Newtonian Laws, the effect of this on perceived sound quality is a little less clear-cut, but the manufacturer claims that this results in a generally better transient response, with increased detail at all frequencies and a generally tighter



bottom end. The Stabilizers are available in different sizes to accommodate different speaker sizes and weights, and can also be ordered with a shaped foam base that gives a 5 degree down-firing angle if needed. They look nicely made, with the steel plate curving around the front of the foam base slightly. The units supplied for review were the middle size of the range, with a 10-inch x 13-inch base, and weighing in at nearly 5kg each (UK£71 + VAT each). They were set up initially on a console meterbridge, supporting a pair of Genelec 1030As.

Initial A/B tests with another pair of 1030s on the meterbridge without the Stabilizers (not quite A/B as the spacing and angle had to be slightly different as a result) did reveal some quite pronounced sonic differences.

Bass is better defined — actually sounding like you've dropped in a high-pass filter that's clearing all the mud below about 40Hz — but you'd expect that with any degree of decoupling from a resonant structure like a meterbridge. Imaging seems a little tighter too — even after swapping the stabilisers to the other set of 1030s to ensure that it wasn't just differences in monitor spacing that I was hearing.

But for me, the most obvious sonic difference was a very noticeable increase in the definition of the mid-range, with a hugely increased depth of field. And these differences aren't slight — it's a very apparent shift in response.

Moving on, I was interested to see whether the Stabilizers would have any effect when used on an existing high mass, low resonance speaker stand. As you might expect, the differences here were nowhere near as pronounced — although there did seem to be a slight tightening up of the bass again.

At the end of the day, the principles involved aren't exactly rocket science and we've always known about the importance of speaker mounting. What Primacoustics has done though, is package these principles together in an attractive, well-engineered solution. Home-brewed solutions would probably be nearly as effective, but nowhere near as pretty or as compact. For situations where monitors are already mounted on decent stands, the sonic improvement probably doesn't justify the cost. But in less than ideal situations where proper stands just aren't feasible for nearfields, they are worth their (considerable) weight in gold. It's almost like having a new set of monitors. ■

PROS Nice looking, compact design; really does improve the fidelity of nearfield monitors with less than ideal mounting.

CONS Pricey for what they are; not a huge improvement in sound if you already have decent stands.

Contact

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