



**Audio Physic: VCF V Magnetic Pucks**



## Strong Shoulders

*by Marco Kolks*

### VCF V Magnetic Vibration Control Feet from Audio Physic

Perhaps there is no product in the world that cannot be made better. The vibration control feet with SSC technology are already a great product and good value for the money. Products you buy because you know you need them, and there is room for more products like this in the hi-fi sector.

When Manfred Diestertich unveiled his string technology many years ago, he was acclaimed by the experts as a pioneer among German developers. This visionary spirit has paid off, as the latest generation of pucks that he has developed for Audio Physic works with a combination of SSC technology and magnetic bearings, to offer an SSC solution even for heavier loudspeakers from Audio Physic. The roughly palm-sized pucks are high enough to extend beyond the standard feet that accompany most components. Thus, for an initial listening session, it is not absolutely

necessary to unscrew them. Of main concern for Audio Physic are of course the versions with threads for loudspeakers. The delivery scope includes two different lengths of M8 thread adapters (for different Audio Physic loudspeakers) and a "component" adapter. A set consists of four basic feet plus 4 short M8 adapters and 4 long M8 adapters, along with 4 adapters for components.

What it takes to achieve proper decoupling from the mechanical environment is something that developers still do not seem to take very seriously. Otherwise I am at a loss to explain why amongst so many so-called high-tech products the issue of feet and stands, which



actually carry the entire weight on their shoulders, should be treated like a step-child. After all, the placement of each individual component is the logical next step after purchasing good racks. The decoupling effect of component footprints and loudspeaker feet on imaging performance is in fact additive. And only the sum of both really makes sense in terms of the best possible sound reproduction. The same applies to the proper set-up of loudspeakers. Because the decoupling issue equally affects all the components in the ensemble.

Each product has a tonal character. In order to try out an extreme example, I hooked up an "old" CD player from Consequence Audio. Even today it performs impressively,

although it reached its zenith just over 15 years ago. Musically speaking, nothing has ever surpassed it. The player, set up on a Rotel model, still rests on its standard feet. If you now remove them and replace them with SSC pucks, it is preferable to be sitting in a listening room without any witnesses. Any conservative hi-fi aficionado would incredulously ask: "What the heck do you need that for?!" So take a deep breath. Listen to the song again from the beginning and repeat the question. What you really need now is a notepad to jot down all the differences.

The 13 pieces "Kissed by a Song" by Dynaudio, distributed by Inakustik, are available on CD and also as an LP, by which you really may feel kissed, as the name

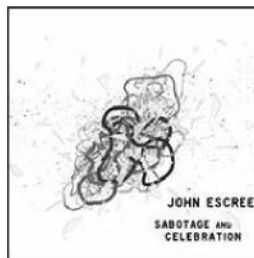


**Liv**

*Build my own world*

*Zeitart*

*American songwriter poetry, Norwegian folk music, jazz and a touch of Indie Rock: As diverse as her preferred styles are, her own music is equally multifaceted. The German-Norwegian songwriter Liv sings in English and Norwegian, and composed, arranged, conducted and produced her own album, "Build My Own World ". Those slightly familiar with this scene will feel right at home with Liv's musical storytelling.*



**John Escreet**

*Sabotage and Celebration*

*Whirl Wind Recordings*

*Whirl Wind Recordings has been among the top jazz labels for quite some time now. John Escreet released his fifth album "Sabotage and Celebration" with this label. He is considered one of the best and most innovative composers and pianists of modern jazz. Here the English musician, who now lives in New York, has practically created a monument for himself. "Sabotage and Celebration" is very intense music and should be heard in complete solitude in order to perceive the intricacies.*

of the set implies. Exclusively female vocalists and singer songwriters from the indie, folk and jazz scene can be heard here: Diana Panton, Susan Wong, Sara K. and many more in superb sound quality. With the new stands, the fundamental tone and the bass draw the listener's attention far more effectively. I'm actually stunned at what the Consequence Audio unit is able to put out all of a sudden. The quality of the bass and fundamental culminates in a compact, sonorous fundamental tone. For the discerning listener, it becomes obvious that it is not sterile or synthetic but in fact extends far into the lower range. The voices, in particular of Susan Wong, take on an even more distinctive timbre. They



have more substance, sound more authentic, and thus fascinate the listener even more.

The fact that "Sabotage and Celebration" can thrill jazz fans is due not only to the compositions by John Escreet, which are blessed with an enormous range and expressiveness, but above all to the fantastic



### **Christoph Grab**

*Raw Vision, Unit Records*

*With his ensemble, Christoph Grab sets off a fireworks display of modern jazz, bursting full of ideas and never drifting into chaos, but rather celebrating the intricately-woven compositions and arrangements. "Raw Vision" is a listening to light for everyone who likes to venture beyond the mainstream.*

### **Kissed by a Song**

*Dynaudio/CD/LP*

*This compilation, which originated in collaboration with Dynaudio, is available as a CD and in the analogue version with four LP*



*sides in 45 rpm as an audiophile sampler album from Inakustik. Both the CD and the LP offer brilliant sound quality. The songs by 13 artists from three continents feature a consistent tone that is slightly melancholic, occasionally affectionately forlorn, and sometimes contemplatively sad, and all are dominated mainly by purely acoustic instruments.*

*A HQCD (HiQualityCD) is used as sound media. A polycarbonate plastic with improved light transmission and a special alloy for the reflective layer ensures a high playback quality.*

musicians themselves. They include stars from the scene such as David Binney (alto and soprano saxophone) and Chris Potter (tenor saxophone), along with rhythm section Matt Brewer (double bass) and Jim Black (drums). "Sabotage and Celebration" allows them to unleash their quality in musicianship and shine both as an ensemble and on solos. In this, John Escreet, also at the top of his game, repeatedly stands out with his piano, Fender Rhodes or harpsichord playing, yet overall the performance of the compositions is a group effort. The accented tweets of the saxophones

show more definition with the VCF V Magnetic feet. If you remove the pucks, this definition disappears again.

Because I have several sets on hand, I used the VCF V Magnetic pucks to decouple the 808 MK V pre-amp and the 911 monoblocs from Burmester. Here I had the same experiences as before with the Consequence Audio CD player. But the result in terms of imaging performance was even considerably better. This is due to the fact that high-calibre components respond far more sensitively to changes. There is a distance between the musicians on the stage, and with the VCF V Magnetic, that perceived distance is more believable.

In his home country, the Swiss saxophonist and composer Christoph Grab is among the most renowned musicians in his field, and he is also well-known abroad, as underscored by his collaboration with artists including Wolfgang Muthspiel, Mark Egan, Danny Gottlieb, Frank Möbus or Louis Sclavis. With his project, Raw Vision, it is clearly no surprise that Christoph Grab enjoys the reputation as one of his country's most innovative and technically-gifted saxophonists. The before/after comparison reveals: the fidelity is more precise, linear, colour-accurate, with quicker impulses, more understatement.



The Product: **VCF V Magnetic (Vibration Control Feet)**

Price: 4-piece set 599 Euros

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On the tracks, the Swiss saxophonist manages a perfect split between the tangible and the groovy in the form of "Rohkost" (translated: "raw food"), and the guitars here are reminiscent of John Scofield. With Thomas Luescher's accordion, he adds to his unconventional style another exciting tone colour that above all defines the title piece, "Zeitraffer" ("time lapse"). The latter features a bowed double bass. There is precise definition of the back-and-forth vibration of the strings. Without the VCF V Magnetic pucks, they appear muffled, and the bass seems cloudier at times. With the special feet, a tender passage remains tender, and a loud bang is a loud bang. This also makes the proportions of the bass more natural. Especially at extreme volumes, for this colourfully diverse programme, the VCF V Magnetic pucks make the music seem less strained. Brutal dynamic peaks take on a more effortless, resilient, and agile quality, and above all, distortion-free.

Liv Solveig Wagner sings soft, intimate, chanson-like songs (Build my own world; Zeitart): warm guitar picking, piano flourishes, violin, glockenspiel, melodica, accordion, strings, trumpet, double bass, but hardly any drums. The range of instruments is marked by colourful, playful sweetness. Liv's full and slightly harsh voice creates a beautiful contrast. In her dreamy songs, equally influenced by pop, jazz and folk music, Liv sings of the "Paradise of Applebees", the "Nordic Coastline" or the "Bohemian Girl", occasionally drifts into Norwegian and also throws in an intimate version of the jazz standard "Like Someone in Love". With the help of the VCF V Magnetic feet, the focus is more precise. This also allows you to listen from somewhat greater distances without a dramatic loss of information.

The acoustic result even surprises the developer himself. That is why next year Wolfgang Kisseler from SSC-Hifi will be presenting his own products with magnet technology for lighter components.

In principle, all these experiences can be applied 1:1 to Audio Physic loudspeakers. Because the Avantera from the Brilon-based German manufacturer has become an essential working tool for me, it is only natural that I would use it to verify what I experienced:

The Avantera loudspeakers are already known for rendering myriad details and, in doing so, don't require very high volume. Despite this fact, I attached the VCF V Magnetic pucks with the threads and listened at a higher volume level than usual. The heightened calmness in the imaging and the more clearly-defined contours have a fascinating appeal to me. Listening now reminds me more of my experiences in free-field conditions than of a different living room set-up. It's difficult to find words to describe the effect that this creates. At the very least, the fidelity using the VCF V Magnetic pucks reminds me of the character of an electrostatic speaker. The music is a bit more magical, as there is simply more space. A violin in upper registers can be clearly distinguished and pinpointed on the stage. But unlike even the best diaphragms, the Avantera with the VCF V Magnetic pucks is more powerful in its rendering, and avoids the often slightly ethereal character. In fact, it is much more enchanting and has just the right balance of power.

It should be said that removing the pucks from underneath Audio Physic loudspeakers is not as easy as swapping them in and out from underneath components. Going "barefoot"

blurs the nuances. High volumes are unpleasantly sharper and more aggressive. Conversely, one might think that a lower volume would lead to a slight loss in dynamics. This is not the case, however. Only the before/after comparison is more dramatic due to the effect of the VCF V Magnetic pucks. At first, the space appears more compressed in depth, then it opens up further and provides even more acoustic ambiance. It has been my experience that when optimal decoupling is achieved, instruments are more firmly grounded on the stage and do not begin to drift off. I am very familiar with products from competitors where the upper registers are dominated by the violins, and they also seem to be playing up in the rafters. Especially with strings and piano, I seem to notice a more natural sound. I can simply hear the resonances produced by a wooden body better with the VCF V Magnetic pucks. Right-hand runs on a concert grand piano flow more vividly and ultimately appear more authentic. The resonance of the grand piano is not lost in planar imaging.

Everything was already fine the way it was before. So I was all the more surprised to learn that putting the VCF V Magnetic pucks underneath loudspeakers and components would have such an impact. In a word, the key advantages are: more crispness, transparency and precision. Because the fidelity appears to have a more well-rounded feeling to it, and is thus more pleasing at the end of the day.

**Conclusion:** All those, myself included, who thought that decoupling of loudspeakers and components was a moot issue have now been clearly put on notice to once again give it in-depth consideration.

*MK*

PS. Wolfgang Kisseler from SSC-Hifi will be presenting his own products with magnetic technology (for lighter components).

**Associated Equipment:**

**Analogue Turntable:** Transrotor Eternita, Pluto 12a;

**Pick-up Arm:** Pluto 2 A, SME V (internal wiring by Clearaudio), SME 3012R;

**Phono Cartridges:** Clearaudio Titanium and Victory H, van den Hul Colibri, Canary and Condor, Stein Music Aventurin 6, Ortofon SPU-Royal, Flair by Phonosophie;

**Transformer:** Ortofon SPU T 100;

**CD Player:** Burmester 916;

**Converter:** Burmester 980, Audio Alchemy DTI Pro 3.2;

**Preamplifier:** Burmester 808 MK V;

**Phono Stage:** van den Hul The Grail (battery powered), Blue Amp Model 42 MK II and Surzur, integrated MC-phono stage 808 MKV Burmester;

**Amplifier:** Burmester 911 MK II (Mono);

**Loudspeaker:** Acapella High-Violoncello;

**Cables (LF/LS/power supply);** LF: van den Hul 3T, Langerton, Acapella (Silber), Dolphin Gold and Black

**Phono Cable:** HMS-Phonokabel Grand Finale Jubilee;

**Digital Cable:** Langerton, Aural Symphonics, Stein Music

**LS:** Acapella Reference Blue (silver), van den Hul The Third;

**Power Cable:** Phonosophie, Blue von Dolphin;

**Power Strip:** Phonosophie;

**Power Supply Accessories:** Power animator and optimizer by Artkustik, Burmester power conditioner, power cable adapter by Hans-Ulrich Rahe (prototype), Phonosophie power sockets AG;

**Bases:** Copulare Tonbasen, Acapella-Musikbasen (also for loudspeakers), Big Block and Speed Block by Acapella, Ducal cable support from Copulare, Shaktis, animator bases by Artkustik;

**Digital Accessories:** CD sound improver by Gläss, DE 2 CD conditioner by Steinmusic;

**Analogue Accessories:** Resonators by Finite Elemente, audio animators and cable animators MK II versions by Art Akustik, DE 3 LP conditioner by Steinmusic, tube tester by Beck Elektroakustik, stencils from Stadthaus, Dr. Christian Feikert, Black Wonder by Aura Hifi, Stein Music, Outer Limit turntable ring by Clearaudio, copper turntable mat by Aura Hifi, cartridge alignment protractors by Pluto Audio, Vorizoo by Blue Amp, Headshell Stability by Clearaudio; Super Tools by Audio Tuning Tools;

**Room Tuning:** High End Novum PMR-resonator, acoustic resonators by Acoustic Systems (Fast Audio), bass booster by Aura Hifi, Super Tools (JH + JJ) by Audio Tuning Tools, MK II room animator by Artkustik, harmonizer by Stein Music, Albat Bioenergetic Solutions Revelator pyramid;

**Cleaning:** Audiotop (Acapella), Fast Audio, CD cleaning machine by Gläss, Double Matrix LP record cleaner by Clearaudio;