

Feet first

The right kind of support is crucial to ensure a loudspeaker is able to give its best. Could **Lee Dunkley** be developing a foot fetish?

This is the second time in as many months that I've found myself grappling at the base of my speakers to fit them with some kind of isolation device designed to aid decoupling between them and the listening room. Last month it was Townshend Audio's Seismic Isolation Podium (HFC 426), and this time around it's the turn of IsoAcoustics' GAIA II isolation feet that I am fitting to the stabilising support plinths at the base of my Dynaudio X38 floorstanders.

IsoAcoustics is a Canadian-based firm specialising in a range of audio equipment support stands and component pucks with acoustical isolation properties, hence the company name. Its GAIA range is designed to work with floorstanding speakers and replaces the supplied floorspikes or feet. The set best suited to a specific speaker will depend on its weight, but with three sizes to choose from – GAIA I, II and III are specified to work with loads of up to 100kg, 54kg and 32kg respectively – there's an option to fit most designs.

Each four-piece GAIA set contains a tailored combination of M8, M6 and ¼-20 thread types with prices ranging from £199 for the 32kg GAIA III

through to £599 for the 100kg load capabilities of the GAIA I. The GAIA II (£299) is the best match for my speakers and is assembled using the M8 screws, which are fitted to the base. Installation is a simple enough process and included with the feet is a spanner for making fine adjustments, along with different-sized knurled locking washers in order to ensure a more secure fit.

The GAIA feet are finished in a dark chrome metal housing with an unspecified rubberised internal structure that provides a stable footprint and prevents vibration and ringing from the cabinet to floor and *vice versa*. Once installed, it's important that the IsoAcoustics logo faces forward so that the lateral decoupling can be at its most effective, although those that are averse to logos can turn it a further 180° out of sight if preferred.

Once all four feet are firmly in place, movement of the speaker is a little more flexible. It's not quite to the same extent as when it was sat on top of Townshend Audio's Seismic Podium, but it has the kind of wobble when touched that suggests that the GAIA's acoustical isolation works its magic in a similar manner.

DETAILS

PRODUCT
IsoAcoustics
GAIA II

ORIGIN
China

TYPE
Loudspeaker
isolation feet

WEIGHT
217g

DIMENSIONS
(WxHxD)
52 x 35 x 52mm

FEATURES
• 4x isolation feet
per box
• M8, M6 and ¼-20
fixings threads

DISTRIBUTOR
SCV Distribution

TELEPHONE
03301 222500

WEBSITE
isoacoustics.com

Sound quality

Having spent some time living with Townshend Audio's Seismic Podiums supporting my floorstanders, it comes as a relief to the eyes of some household members to see the less obtrusive GAIA take their place, presenting a more seamless aesthetic with the speaker itself. Acoustically, the feet don't seem to perform that differently, with the same sense of clarity to the midrange and wide soundstage that I've been experiencing with the Townshends. There's little in the way of midbass bloom that can easily be energised in my room, but it doesn't disappear to quite the same extent as it does with the Seismic Podiums and there's just the slightest hint of interaction with the room.

Timing is good, meaning that the fast beats of Liquid Soul's *Revolution* are clean and free from any bass hangover, making it so engaging that I can't help but turn the volume up higher. It's the kind of performance that sees what started out as one track leading to listening to another as a veil is lifted and I hear further into the music. Suddenly, the speaker sounds free and unaffected by the characteristics of the room.

A 24/96 version of *Human* by Rag'n'Bone Man streamed from Qobuz gives a captivating mix of thumping bass line, male vocal and jangling percussion. It sounds spectacular with the GAIA feet in situ and opens up the mix to allow you to peer inside and explore whichever instrument you choose to follow around the expansive soundstage.

Conclusion

There's no doubt that the GAIA feet provide a high degree of isolation that gives the speaker the opportunity to breathe and display a level of clarity and openness that's easy to hear. Music just sounds right with them in place, and the price is right too ●



Hi-Fi Choice

OUR VERDICT

SOUND QUALITY ★★★★★ **LIKE:** Easy to fit; neat looks; effective performance

VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★★ **DISLIKE:** Nothing at the price

BUILD QUALITY ★★★★★ **WESAY:** Has a dramatic effect on speaker performance and looks pretty too

FEATURES ★★★★★

OVERALL

