

**Review:**

## **Shunyata Research Hydra Typhon QR Power Filter**

*by Steve Plaskin*



The last several years have seen Shunyata Research enter a particularly creative period with the release of the Hydra Denali Series and the higher performance Hydra Triton v3 power distributor. Caelin Gabriel, founder and President of Shunyata Research, has released his new version of the Typhon power filter-the Typhon QR. The Typhon QR is not just an update of the original Typhon released in 2011, but a complete redesign based on Caelin's work in the medical field of electrophysiology and the incorporation of new Shunyata technologies first introduced in the Hydra Denali Series of power distributors.

The Typhon was originally conceived as part of a larger state-of-the-art power conditioner that included the Triton power distributor. To reduce the overall size and weight of the original design, the Typhon was designed to act as a pre-filter for the Triton distributor's 8 outlets. By making the Typhon and Triton units separate, it gave customers flexibility in the application of Caelin's ultimate design.



**From Shunyata:**

*The original Typhon was a “parallel” device that plugged into one of the Triton’s AC sockets and acted as a large secondary noise reduction filter. Two massive NIC™ devices (Noise Isolation Chambers) were employed that contained Shunyata’s patented ZRCa-2000 compound to absorb and dissipate high-frequency noise. The Typhon was also used to provide additional power conditioning to amplifiers and other audio products plugged into the same electrical circuit.*

*While the external case size and faceplate will be familiar to present Typhon owners, the Typhon QR retains nothing else from the original unit. The Typhon QR is now a “series” device that plugs directly into the wall outlet and feeds the Triton v3 with a special power umbilical. When one places an order for a Typhon QR, Shunyata will ask for the proper termination of the power umbilical cable to fit the intended component and the necessary length (1.5-meter standard). The umbilical cable is equivalent to a Sigma EF which is a more flexible version of the Sigma NR AC cable. The umbilical length is no longer sensitive in terms of performance as it was the former Typhon.*

For this review, the Typhon QR was connected to my AC outlet with a Sigma EF AC cable. The connector on the umbilical cable is a C19 for connection to the Triton, although a C15 can be ordered for connection to an amplifier.

The Typhon QR retains the use of two enormous NIC tubes, but these have been completely redesigned internally with different sub-assemblies/filter agents potted within. Grant Samuelson, Marketing and Sales Director at Shunyata Research, told me that the patented NIC’s are oriented differently in the case compared to the original, mainly to facilitate a direct connection.



More from Shunyata:

*QR/BB™ devices are found in the Typhon QR improving system dynamics, especially when used with high powered amplifiers. The patent pending QR/BB™ modules employed in the Typhon QR are much larger than those utilized in the Triton v3 and nine times the volume of those used in the Denali.*

*The Typhon QR's chassis, composed of heavy gauge steel and aluminum, has been optimized to dampen vibration eliminating the need for a special shelf or optimized stand. The SSF-50 Shunyata Footers, also found on the Triton v3, are now used on the Typhon QR. These footers are composed of high-grade stainless steel and an energy absorbing polymer isolate.*

*The conductors used in the Typhon QR are Shunyata's proprietary ArNi® conductors made from the highest grade of certified copper available and formed into a "hollow tube" VTX™ geometry. These are then treated with the KPIP™ (Kinetic Phase Inversion Process) for 2 days. According to the company, KPIP™ significantly reduces the need for extensive home burn-in of the Typhon QR allowing most installations to achieve optimum performance in several days.*

*A Hydraulic Electromagnetic Breaker, as found in the Triton v3, is employed in the Typhon QR. This breaker does not limit current when heavily loaded and can operate up to the maximum current level without the negative limitations found with fuses or thermal breakers. As with other Shunyata products, the Typhon QR's parts and materials were designed using the DTCD® (Dynamic Transient Current Delivery) measurement analyzer. DTCD® measures instantaneous current through low impedance electrical conductors and contacts allowing Shunyata to obtain maximum current delivery performance from the Typhon QR.*

*Given that the Typhon QR is a “series” device, new application possibilities are now available that the original Typhon could not perform. What I am getting at is that the Typhon QR is no longer just an add-on to the Triton. It can be used to power any component, and most specifically, feeding a large power amp seems to be the likely component to benefit from the direct use of the Typhon QR.*

My audiophile mind went into a fantasy mode where I saw a Typhon QR feeding my Ayre Acoustics MX-R Twenty amp. But this audio adventure is going to require a pair of Typhon QRs. Fortunately, Shunyata supplied the necessary Typhon QRs for this review.



Out of the box, the Typhon QRs were bright sounding necessitating a day or two of use to allow the units to settle. Since the Typhon QR was treated with KPIP™, this break-in period was significantly shortened allowing one to enjoy the Typhon at full performance without a week or more of play.

It didn't take me long to determine that the Typhon QR significantly improved what I was hearing from my Ayre Acoustics MX-R Twenty amps. I was so startled by the overall improvement to the sound, that a week later, I removed the Typhon QRs to convince myself that I was not experiencing an expectation event.

Spatial performance of the Ayre amps improved significantly. The soundstage became more holographic in presentation with superior front-to-back depth than I had heard before the inclusion of the Typhon QRs. I also observed a wider soundstage with better height recognition, but it was the front-to-back depth that seemed to pull the music out into my

listening room. As I listened to well recorded classical music, I was able to fully appreciate the acoustics of the recording venue that was diminished when the Typhon QRs were removed.

Musical details emerged from well known recordings that I had previously not heard. It was as if I had removed a not-so-subtle veil from the musical performance and was now enjoying an intimacy with the performers that was quite uncanny. I have no doubts that the Typhon QR not only dropped the noise floor, but also improved the dynamics of the music played through the Ayre amps. Both micro and macro dynamics were enhanced. The resolution of transient detail emerged from an ultra-quiet background with stunning realism and immediacy.

I also perceived a slight reduction of a subtle hardness to the sound that I never knew was present until it was resolved with the Typhon QR. Some might refer to this sonic benefit as being more analog-like in sonic character.

As I documented the sonic changes to my system with the Typhon QR feeding my Ayre amps, it occurred to me that I heard somewhat similar improvements when I recently reviewed the Sonore Signature Rendu SE – optical Ethernet to USB output. The Signature Rendu SE is a network streamer that is designed to reduce Ethernet noise by the use of an optical input. But the magnitude of improvement with the Typhon QR was much larger and even more impressive than that created by the Signature Rendu SE.

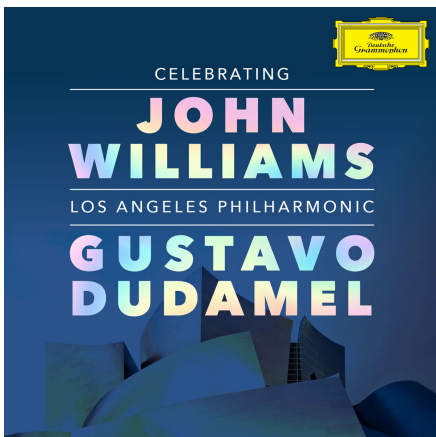
It was now time to experience the Typhon QR in the Hydra Reference Stack which consists of the pairing of the Typhon QR with the Triton v3 power distributor. Shunyata Research considers this combination their highest performing power distribution system. The Typhon QR was connected directly to the wall outlet and the Triton v3 powered directly from the Typhon QR; both connected with Sigma NR AC cables. I connected all of my front-end components with Sigma NR AC cables to the Triton v3. This included the Ayre KX-R Twenty preamp, the Playback Designs MPD-8 DAC, and the Ayre P-5xe phono preamp. My Sonore Signature Rendu SE (optical) was connected to the Triton with an Alpha NR AC cable.

My sonic impression of the Hydra Reference Stack was that this was one magnificent combination. The sonic improvements I heard were similar to those perceived with the Typhon QR powering my Ayre monoblocks. The Typhon QR added enhanced dimensionality to the soundstage of my system-and given just how good the Triton V3 performed, this was no small accomplishment. Detail retrieval, macro and micro dynamics, and overall immediacy were all exemplary emerging from the quietest black background I have yet experienced.

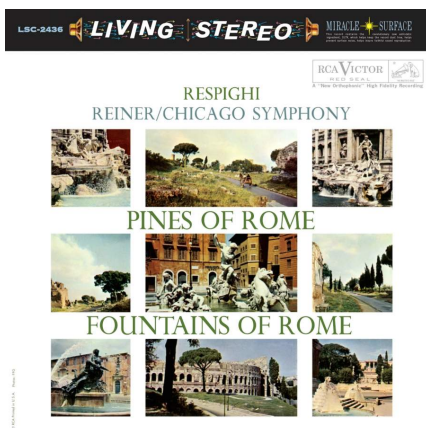


Music played by the MPD-8 DAC enjoyed a significant improvement when the Typhon QR was added to the Triton V3. I found that Kristin Berardi's album Where Or When (24/44.1) obtained increased focus and presence to this Australian jazz singer's voice. No doubt, the reduction of noise by the Typhon QR contributed to the realism and immediacy I was experiencing. The interplay of the guitar, bass, and saxophone with Kristin's voice were more distinct and

alive sounding. The dynamic qualities of this recording also received a boost when the Typhon QR was part of the Reference Stack.



The Typhon QR injected a sense of bloom to a richly layered soundstage when listening to Celebrating John Williams (Live at Walt Disney Concert Hall, Los Angeles-2019), Los Angeles Philharmonic conducted by Gustavo Dudamel (24/96). I not only experienced outstanding inner detail and resolution of transient detail, but enhanced tonal naturalness as well. Removing the Typhon QR seemed to impose a subtle veil to the sound with a loss of the tube-like bloom and dimensionality I had experienced.



The Typhon QR breathed some significant new life into my Ayre P-5xe phono preamp. I went upstairs to my record vault and selected one of the most exciting RCA shaded dog copies in my collection—Respighi, The Pines of Rome, The Fountains of Rome. This 1S,1S 1960 release, featuring Fritz Reiner conducting the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, just blew me away when the P-5xe was powered from the Reference Stack with the Typhon QR. The dynamic levels elicited from this old record were truly impressive and exciting to listen to. The Typhon QR opened up the soundstage capabilities of my old phono preamp to an impressive

level when reproducing the ambient acoustics of the hall. While I am basically a digital file enthusiast, the Typhon QR helped to renew my interest in vinyl.

My Headamp Blue Hawaii SE amp driving the Stax SR-009S phones loved being powered from the Reference Stack with the Typhon QR. For those of you that think that the SR-009S is a little weak in the low-end dynamics department, I would suggest listening to a Blue Hawaii SE powered from a Triton v3 / Typhon QR combination. The Stax phones were more relaxed sounding with the Typhon QR and also benefited from an increase in the spatial characteristics of music perceived with these headphones. The Stax phones captured every inflection and nuance of performances heard with them. Let's just say this is one outrageous headphone system when powered from the Shunyata Reference Stack. For completeness sake, I used a Shunyata Sigma Analog AC cable with the Blue Hawaii SE amp.



How does the Typhon QR compare sonically to the former Typhon v1? It's no contest folks; the Typhon QR is simply in another league performance-wise. Fortunately, Shunyata offers an upgrade path for the older Typhon to QR status for \$3900. The upgrade basically transforms your Typhon v1 into a new unit:

- Upgrade from NIC to QR/BB technology
- New chassis back panel
- Refurbished chassis powder-coating and silkscreen
- Refurbished faceplate or new if necessary
- SSF-50 (stainless steel feet)
- Accompanying Sigma Typhon Umbilical cable

Caelin Gabriel has succeeded brilliantly with Shunyata Research's release of the Typhon QR. Adding the Typhon QR to a Triton v3 will provide one with a power conditioner combination that I found to be musically thrilling in its ability to elicit the ultimate performance from my components. Adding a Typhon QR to my monoblocks, combined with a Typhon QR Reference Stack powering my front-end components, resulted in sound that was amazingly revealing and musically involving.