

finite elemente CARBOFIBRE isolation base

by Nicholas Ripley



Carbon fibre has forever been revered by designers of almost any audio component as *the* magic material to allow Heaven on Earth as a matter of course! While that may be somewhat remote from the truth of reality, there is no question inherent properties of carbon fibre do bring a high degree of rigidity with suitably controlled resonances and very low mass/weight into play.

What we have here is a prudent and pragmatic application of what we have already witnessed as an effective option on *pagode MkII* equipment racks from finite elemente in *Hi-Fi+* #185. Applying the same structural approach, Luis Fernandes is offering self-standing platforms made out of the, already established, melange of a carbon fibre wrapper, proprietary honeycomb structure within and suitably modified “stainless steel” (standard Cera feet are a cost option, so those supplied could not be given the same family name, but are an excellent clone) with M8 setscrews serving as corner supports. A nice and accurate spirit level in a centre front position rounds off the spec sheet.

Optimised resonance absorption is, at least on paper, quite critical towards the end result in your living or music room and what reaches your ears, brain and soul. Add torsional rigidity to this and the whole matter gets slightly more complicated – any two components have to add up to a tuneful and mutually fulfilling entity. finite elemente have already had years of experience and knowledge when developing their excellent Resonator Technology for pagode racks, and it comes as no surprise that what needed to be achieved with the Carbofibre platforms (both as here and as a superior sounding option for the racks) benefited from that.

Carbofibre is available in two sizes (450 × 400mm and 500 × 475mm) and two grades of thickness – SD version (which I spent time listening to) is 23mm high (thick), while the more expensive HD model is 45mm high with a much higher upper loading limit.

Listening to the Carbofibre SD platform under either a fairly capable analogue LP playback system or a digital source told a very similar story to what I experienced when comparing the standard maple/honeycomb shelves (platform) within the ►

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► pagode Edition MkII rack, albeit to a considerably more evident and much easier to determine effect. Just as when part of the tensioning frame within a rack, Carbofibre on its own brings a much more naturally transparent, resolving and musically rewarding rendition of almost any recording, irrespective of the complexity of musical contents. A sense of calm and peaceful control with politely pronounced rhythmic firmness is what one notices first relative to the sound of the same component sitting on said surface without the Carbofibre. Perhaps even more importantly, embedded harmonic structure of the music seems to have gained additional cohesion and sense, with a more palpable, and easier to mentally register, dimensionality of the soundstage. Overall sonic signature becomes more fluid, flowing and an evident lowering of the noise floor of the sound, in general, allows listening at lower level without a loss of the actual resolution. I am reluctant to dissect my subjective impressions into bass, midrange or treble in this particular instance for a simple reason that those as a whole happen to be a product of nothing else but, more or less successfully, controlled resonances and minimal and correct kind of harmonic distortion. If you insist, I will say that Carbofibre makes lower and upper bass no less full bodied than when not engaged, but certainly more controlled and tuneful. And *that* on its own, as we know, immediately sorts out and puts in place most, if not all, possible issues of broad midrange and crucial (for imaging and soundstage) areas of treble from its low to the ultra-top end. Again, the most pleasing element of the Carbofibre sonic signature, as I heard it, was a highly transparent, seamless and smooth nature of the sound at all times. I could not resist cranking up the volume of my preamplifier. I could not reach the Level 11 from the Spinal Tap in my quest, but I can assure you it was possible to play everything considerably louder than I could even contemplate before. There was no saturation, let alone headache. Something, perhaps, for owners of either non-suspended or excessively suspended turntables to consider and mull over.

Reviewing products that we far too often call ‘accessories’ or ‘ancillaries’, is mostly ungratifying work to embark on. Firstly, because the eye of the beholder tends to belittle those things compared to an even moderate discussion about amplifiers, speakers, sources or any other ‘important’ element

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Carbofibre SD

Sizes: 450 × 400 × 23mm and 500 × 475 × 23mm

Design: Carbon Fibre (outer) and honeycomb (inner) structure, adjustable stainless steel feet with M8 setscrews (option ad additional cost: Cerabase Slimline, Cerabase Compact or Cerabase feet), front centre spirit level

Price: £1290 incl. VAT (either size)

Carbofibre HD

Sizes: 450 × 400 × 45mm and 500 × 475 × 45mm

Design: Carbon Fibre (outer) and honeycomb (inner) structure, adjustable stainless steel feet with M8 setscrews (option ad additional cost: Cerabase Slimline, Cerabase Compact or Cerabase feet), front centre spirit level

Price: £1790 incl. VAT (either size)

Manufacturer: finite elemente GmbH

URL: finite-elemente.eu

Distributor: Audiofreaks

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Tel: +44(0)208 948 4153

of an audio system. Secondly, because, almost like cables, those tag-on potential miracles yield diametrically different results in any variety of application or circumstances. In a system that already performs well, they will be an icing on the cake and make good better. Equally so, if such an additional tool happens to be truly and honestly good in what it aims to do, it will expose what you already knew was wrong, but never admitted to yourself. Or, if you like, an isolation base, supporting platform (call it as you like) as Carbofibre will do just that. No more and no less.

There is no real conclusion or epilogue to this short story. finite elemente Carbofibre is a fairly costly, but proportionally beneficial addition to any superb, excellent, very good or aspiring to be any of those, audio system. Simple to set up and simple to use it does exactly what their creators wanted it to do in a consistent and honest way. It takes away nothing good and it adds nothing to make it worse. And, while the music is playing, in between those two extremes of possibility, you might surprise yourself and keep it forever. +