

Following my most recent record stabiliser, the “puck” that’s not a puck from David @MCRU. I agreed to test this new kid on the block against the competition, or at least the competition I have to hand at home. Vinyl is my main source of choice and although press reviews in the “comics” have their place, I prefer to use my own ears and my many years of vinyl playback to decide on an opinion. Obviously, this is my opinion, but over the years, my approach has been consistent when evaluating different vinyl accessories, where usually if it makes a positive difference, I will buy the product. I am lucky that across the hi-fi industry, I often get new things sent to me for trial and I am still amazed that there is still a thirst for that Vinyl Valhalla, for retrieving as much detail, balanced and musical as possible from the record groove.

I have no affiliation with any manufacturers or suppliers, and I am not a reviewer; my views are my own based on certain criteria and hopefully my feedback is of some assistance for anyone looking for a record stabiliser.

Equipment

I could have used many turntables to undertake these tests, but I decided on my Nottingham “Anna Log” turntable as the reference point. One reason being, that Toms designs are very musical, the Anna Log especially is designed not to use a proprietary mat, as it uses a graphite platter top around 25mm thick that deals with the record support. This levels the playing field as many of the record stabilisers/pucks have “mated” record mats so for these tests if we can call them that, is designed to compare apples with apples.

Next up is the Anna 12” unpivot arm, I have tried many, many arms, but this one is perfect for this turntable, although few will be aware of how good it really is. It has been kondo rewired back to the energizer and is running a different unpivot damper I am also testing. Lastly, the DS Audio DS003 and energizer completes the front end, this is currently running 600+ hours still in A1 condition and a perfect match for the Anna Log. For these tests the Martin Bastin wave mechanic was replaced with a custom DECO audio governor, this imho is superior to the wave mechanic, switches to 45 rpm without the need to move the belt and more interesting the voltage to the motor, can also be adjusted to present an amazing soundstage, quite unique.

I settled on a Mark Levinson 5805 for the amplification, imho the Swiss army knife of amplifiers, battleship build with most features not touching the surface, but for direct analogue playback, the DS003 through its energizer is top class. Ghekkco RCA's (on trial) feed the 5805 and MCRU Ultimate speaker cables, that then feeds a pair of DALI Epicon 6's on Townshend podiums of course.

The contenders

MCRU -PWC Record stabiliser (£149)	
Black Ravioli-ground (£500)	
Solid Steel -weight (£150)	
Hexmat- Molekula (£120)	
Stack Audio Serene stabiliser £195)	

The Black Ravioli (BR) has been my go-to device for a while now. Conscious of its £500 price tag but its musicality outweighs its cost imo. However, my first review of the BR when originally sent one to try was mixed. At the time I was using a hexmat Eclipse, with a Funk Firm Houdini. I found that the BR was fighting against the Hexmat and the Houdini, reverting to the modest Molekula made a significant sonic improvement over the BR with this configuration. However, move on 12 months or so, remove the hexmat eclipse, the Molekula and Houdini go back to using the turntable as intended (no mat) and the BR was head and shoulders above the other stabilisers.

The tests

All sessions started after a 45 min warm up, volume settings remained constant with a host of vinyl and Artists, that I know particularly well.

Starting with the Molekula, I played 4 sides of different albums to understand the sonic differences, I then moved to the Solid Steel weight, completing the same exercise with the other stabilisers. This was to compare the stabilisers with the same albums, the difference being that for consistency, that I finished with the Molekula again at the end of the session.

This process eliminated the Solid Steel weight as a contender. None sounded poor at all but, there were many differences some more subtle than others that would be explored with different Artists to add some emphasis on bass, vocal, mid-range, soundstage etc. I carefully selected 6 different albums to run the next tests, using the same process. The Molekula was next to be eliminated as I believe this stabiliser is best suited to a supplementary mat such as the Eclipse. Although the overall sound was still good and could be lived with, the overall soundstage and musical experience fell just short imo. Likewise, the Stack audio Serene stabiliser bowed out

next to the BR and MCRU devices as it just sounded a little slower and sometimes slightly coloured in presentation on the Anna Log.

So next tests after agreeing the final shoot-out, out of the racks came a few firm favourite albums that I know extremely well. I have purposely not read the reviews of these two devices as, I was simply looking to find the most authentic, musical and capable reproduction of the vinyl using the Anna Log for my ears, without getting bogged down in techy hi-fi speak or possibly influencing my decision.

Conclusion

Again, my opinion using the restraints of the system and no sub-mat, was that overall, the MCRU stabiliser that's not a puck, had edged in front of the BR presenting an improved musical performance from 6 of the 10 albums I had just played. I repeated this with a different 5 albums and both devices as expected by now, were very good and predictable after many hours of listening. The final test, which my wife will agree drove her nuts, was to play the latest 2025 remastered Tracy Chapman first album and the MOFI Fleetwood Mac Tango in the Night, track for track, switching between the two devices to hear each track in isolation, then repeat playing the full albums with each device once more. To corroborate my outcome, I undertook this test twice over another two days, luckily, I like both these albums, not sure that my wife does now.

What I would say is that on cost grounds alone, you would not expect these two devices to be so close in sound quality and although VFm always needs some consideration, I was always looking to determine the best overall sound imo, using my set up not on cost. I rarely put pen to paper as I am not a fan of most hi-fi comics, but the MCRU device is really something especially at this price point, suffice to say I have a new go-to stabiliser that really sings on my Anna Log turntable, that I genuinely believe is the bargain of the vinyl revolution, for my ears anyway.

Records used

ABC	Lexicon of Love 2	1 st Press
ABC	Lexicon of Love	2024 Miles Showell remaster
Barclay James Harvest	Ring of Changes	1 st Press
Fin silver	Crossing the Rubicon	
Fridolijn Van Poll	Catching Currents	
AC DC	Back in Black	
AC DC	Highway to Hell	
Gerry Rafferty	Night Own	Miles Showell remaster
Gerry Rafferty	City to City	Miles Showell remaster
George Michael	Listen without Prejudice	

Boston	Boston	Kevin Gray Remaster
Fleetwood Mac	Rumours	Kevin Gray 45 rpm Remaster
Fleetwood Mac	Tango in the Night	MOFI
Eagles	Hotel California	MOFI one step
ELO	Eldorado	MOFI one step
Donald Fagen	Nightfly	MOFI one step
Donald Fagen	Morph the Cat	
Steely Dan	AJA	MOFI one step
Envy of None	stygian waves	½ speed master
RUSH	Moving pictures	Abbey road remaster
RUSH	2112	Abbey road remaster
Paul McCartney	Flaming Pie	Miles Showell remaster
Dire Straits	Brothers in Arms	MOFI and Miles Showell remaster
Grace Jones	Slave to the Rhythm	
Prefab Sprout	Steve McQueen	2016 remaster
Tasmin Archer	Great expectations	
Georgia van Etten	Deep Black Water	
Jo Harman	People we Become	
Antonio Forcione	Meet me in London	NAIM label
Antonio Forcione	Tears of Joy	NAIM label
Antonio Forcione Quartet	Live	
Tom Petty	Full moon Fever	
Chris Jones	Roadhouses and Automobiles	45rpm Dynamic Edition
Angus & Julia Stone	Down the Way	
Alison Moyet	Alf	2019 remaster
Yello	Toy	
Boris Blank & Malia	Convergence	