



Quadraspire

Qplus Reference acoustic supports

BACK IN THE pre-CD days of the seventies, we knew full well how turntables were susceptible to 'acoustic feedback' because if you turned your hi-fi up too loud you'd get the most dreadful squeal coming through the speakers. These days we are thankfully spared that, but modern hi-fi separates are still more sensitive to air and ground-borne vibration than you might imagine. Most are microphonic to the extent that you can hear them perform audibly better when sitting on a properly designed equipment stand.

There are two ways of dealing with this: isolating your hi-fi or allowing it to sink vibration better so the resonances go through the equipment rather than buzzing around inside. Impoverished tweekers cut tennis balls in half and place them under their separates, while well-healed ones splash out on exotic equipment supports to sink the vibration or absorb it. But what is there for those on the lookout for an elegant compromise that sits somewhere in-between?

Plus points

Quadraspire's Qplus range, comprises the £120 Evo (HFC 435), the Qplus Advanced (HFC 438) for £300 and the Qplus Reference at a cool £900, tested here. The Qplus range, by the way, is not designed for use under loudspeakers; for this task the company has its QC floor protector and sound enhancer as well as the QX7 heavy-duty version.

The Qplus Reference mimics the performance of Quadraspire's X Reference rack system, and so comprises two bamboo 'biscuits' either side of a one-piece non-ferrous metal carrier which has bolts of different types top and underside. The result is a structure that's highly inert and relatively light. It is not designed to offer isolation, the idea is to take energy out of the product as expeditiously as possible. The way to use them is to place each of the four pieces under the feet of the product, rather than bypassing them altogether.



Having had a positive experience with the baby of the Qplus range – the Evo – it doesn't come as a shock to me to hear the difference that the flagship makes. This depends on your system and the equipment you choose to put the acoustic supports under but beneath either my CD player or amp, the Qplus Reference supports bring about an obvious opening up of the

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sound, a general decluttering of the recorded acoustic and a surprising improvement in depth perspective. What is even more apparent, however, is the rhythmic ease that the supports confer to music. It becomes more involving to listen to, yet there's no sense that the tonal balance has been altered; indeed if anything it smoothes things out just a touch.

Objects in the mix seem to fall into place better, as the music acquires a more natural rhythmic gait. The

Police's *Wrapped Around Your Finger* is a thing of beauty when heard through a properly performing system, but can be leaden and plodding if not. The Qplus Reference brings a dramatically more organic flow to the song. There's a greater sense of urgency to playing and the overall dynamics of the recording are starkly improved. There is substantially less 'mush' right down at the edge of audibility, meaning that the snare work is more sharply etched and jumps out of the mix more dramatically. At the same time, the bass guitar playing is noticeably more expressive and tuneful.

I had expected that the Qplus Reference supports would make the greatest difference under a source component, yet in my system placing them under my integrated amplifier delivers the greatest benefit. Although one of the pricier hi-fi tweaks around, the Qplus Reference proves way more effective than I anticipated. The design is nicely executed, and you will be surprised by the improvement in sound that it can deliver – especially in an already highly capable hi-fi setup. **DP**

DETAILS

PRICE
£900 for four
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OUR VERDICT

