

FURUTECH

HiFi+ (UK) – demag & Destat II

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VPI and Furutech products that uncover the sound of your discs!

by Roy Gregory



As a group we spend a huge amount of time and effort (and not a little money) on optimizing the performance of our systems. First comes selecting the equipment: then placing, adjusting and leveling it: and that's before we consider what's supporting it, the cables employed and the route by which power reaches it. Look at front-ends in particular and that behaviour starts to stray well into OCD territory. From visiting gurus who'll breathe on your turntable to coloured lights that wash the CD as it plays; you really couldn't make it up. But what about the discs themselves? With all that effort expended on the replay chain, how much care are we devoting to our software, ensuring that it too is in tip-top shape? One side effect of the rise and rise of file replay systems is a new concern with the actual nature of the software itself. When is a high-res file really high-res and when are the numbers nothing more than a marketing smokescreen.

It's not just about the original file, it's about what's been done to it since – and how it was done. But why should physical formats be any different.

Just as a file can change, from analogue to digital or RedBook to something glitzier (and not necessarily better) so vinyl and optical discs can 'change' – although in this instance, these physical formats suffer rather more physical issues. Not that the sonic and musical results are any less audible...

Muck you can see...

Let's start with the most obvious and most easily understood example: cleaning vinyl records. With more and more listeners, old and new, appreciating just how much musical value record replay can still deliver, there's been an upturn in both record sales and sales of the equipment to play them. In fact, in terms of physical ►

Which brings us to the DeMag. It looks like a Gerry Anderson space station. A thick, smooth, heavy, silver-grey disc with conical feet and a flared 'tail' extension. A casual glance at the pictures will suggest the DeMag is about the same size as an LP. It's not. It extends a good 3" on each side of an album placed on its central spindle, making it fully 18" across. That's one big lump – and at 11kg it's genuinely heavy too.

But, having found a (large) stable surface to place the DeMag on, the fun can begin. Play a record and get a feel for the way it sounds. Now place it on the DeMag and press the button. Wait for the machine to do its thing and play the disc again. It won't sound like the same band or the same singer! The DeMag strips away grain from within the soundstage and between the instruments, removes glare from the high-frequencies and brings colour and body to the mids. The increase in immediacy, presence, attack, rhythmic integrity and intimacy is remarkable – a bit like the band stepping into the listening room from a space next door. There's so much more purpose in the playing, voices are so much more natural and expressive that it really is hard to credit that you are listening to the same disc.

Furutech suggest the DeMag degausses the record, dissipating residual magnetic fields residing in micro ferrous particles that are present in the black pigment and even the vinyl itself. I couldn't possibly comment on the substance of that claim, but I'll stand by the results, which are little short of stunning and once heard, hard to live without. Which brings us to the rub – don't listen to the DeMag unless you are prepared to fork out the (considerable stack) of cash to keep it. At £1,980 this is not exactly a casual purchase, but the results more than justify the outlay – not least because, like all the other items listed here, it operates right at the start of the replay chain, meaning that the benefits are enjoyed by – and amplified by – every step in the system.

The good news is, that just like the DeStat, the DeMag works on more than just its intended target. Spectacularly effective on records, it's nearly as

impressive with CDs, which have printing on their surface, and many cables where ferrous contaminants can be present in conductors and even some insulators. Simply sit the CD, DVD, BluRay or cable on the DeMag and let it do its thing...

A whole that's greater...

The best thing about all these devices is that their effects are cumulative. Used in conjunction they build on each other, lifting the performance of your physical software to a level you simply won't recognize: all of your software that is – and all of the time. Just as those whose CD players sound better than their record players need to take a long hard look at their turntables, anybody whose file-replay chain is outperforming their more traditional sources should be asking themselves just how much more can be extracted from the software they already own. It really is quite remarkable how much difference even a little basic house-keeping can make. By all means play with a ZeroStat pistol and some manual cleaning, but if you think they make a difference, just wait until you do the job properly! +

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

VPI HW16.5: £750

Manufactured by: VPI Industries

URL: www.vpiindustries.com

Distributed by: Renaissance Audio

URL: www.renaissanceaudio.co.uk

Tel: +44(0)131 555 3922

Furutech DeMag: £1,980

Furutech DeStat II: £395

Manufactured by: Furutech

URL: www.furutech.com

Distributed by: Sound Foundations

URL: www.soundfoundations.co.uk

Tel: +44(0)1276 501392

