

Totally Wired

Music systems for the quality conscious

Review:

Bassocontinuo Lyra XL4 rack, Ultra Feet and the Aeon Light



Bassocontinuo

You can't eliminate vibration but you can always reduce it'

This simple statement from Lorenzo Belloli the founder and CEO of Bassocontinuo, during a zoom meeting with us in July 2023, is one of those wonderful moments of clarity. It defines what makes Bassocontinuo better.

To put it another way – we can always find ways to make things better.

You probably have an understanding that while every music system generates vibration – that's the how the sound we hear is produced – this vibration can also have a negative effect on how the system actually works. Shaking the components while they are trying to produce music isn't wonderful.

For years, this has been at the heart of turntable design. If there is one problem with the audio industry it's the selective use of science; For a long time we've been as guilty as anyone with this, running with the simplistic Linn 'if it sounds better, it is better' line but not being able to say exactly how much better or even why. As someone with a BSc(hons) degree I've always been a bit uncomfortable with this and it's just the same when presented with specifications which are often little more than selling points.

Gut feeling might be a starting point but it will only take you so far. Trial and error works after a fashion but it's more sensible to simply not make the errors. And here's what really makes Bassocontinuo better – they take a seriously scientific approach to reducing vibration with their racks and accessories. Working with Politecnico di Milano and specialist designers and crafts people, Lorenzo has grown Bassocontinuo into the global premier audio rack manufacturer. And we're excited to be on board with them.

Yet music is still at the heart of the operation and in a typically Italian way, there's plenty of passion and style behind the science 100% of the componentry is locally sourced – 'We are strongly connected with our territory: we're cooperating with tens of workshops and artisans which like to create unique objects, helping us to bring our Italianity around the world. We're "made in Italy" ambassador and we're very proud of it.'

Bassocontinuo have been around since 2008 but it was only in late 2022 that they came on to our radar and that's not too surprising given we may well be their most physically distant reseller. And the first actual rack only arrived here a few weeks ago, so we're very much at the start of this particular journey.

While almost every system we've built with our clients benefits from better quality cables – either Kimber or KLEI, none are accommodated on a purpose designed rack. It's always just been about storage or concealment with precious little thought given to performance.

What we can immediately tell you is that Bassocontinuo produce a quality product that actually does everything they say and then some. The design and finish is far better in real life than the pictures and in terms of everything else we do, these racks are both affordable and great value – even when we climb into the upper reaches of their range. But more on that soon.

The Lyra XL4 rack



At home with the Lyra XL4 rack – this gave an immediate and worthwhile improvement to the entry level NuPrime/Lumin system.

The first arrival was a simple two shelf rack finished in walnut veneer to match our Sonus faber speakers – the Lyra XL4 2.1 to be exact. This is really where Bassocontinuo start; by their own description of 'luxury entry level'. While initially hesitant about the price, the moment the two boxes were delivered, as I started to unpack and assemble, all doubt was gone. The weight, attention to detail, design and material quality were easily equal to a pair of entry level Sonus faber speakers – if we are to make an obvious and similarly priced comparison.

The sound quality improvement made over the designer coffee table it replaced was obvious, immediate and as significant as any I've heard with various components and cables over many years of listening. As we've already said – a great start.

With the first shipment, we're already able to supply several different options, mainly centred around the Lyra XL4 range. While I've gone for a specially finished shelf choice, the standard black or white finish is more economic and you're able to further sharpen the look with a choice in colour in the legs.

Bassocontinuo have a great on-line tool where you can actually assemble your own rack and see exactly what it will cost in NZ\$ [here](#).

Bassocontinuo are also completely upfront as to why you need a rack [here](#) – it's seldom you'll find things laid out so clearly.

Being a global supplier and forming partnerships with many of the real heavy hitters in the high end audio industry, Bassocontinuo can seem almost intimidating in their range and cost, especially at the upper end. This is where our local perspective comes into play.

Ultra Feet – the affordable & enhanced isolation system



The Bassocontinuo 'Ultra Feet' in action

We've always known vibration is an issue. Well over three decades ago the Mission Isoplat was our 'go-to' solution. Later, the carbon fibre Black Diamond Racing cones ended up supporting many of our best components. There was never any doubt that they worked.

Now Bassocontinuo have applied the same rigour used in their rack designs to a line of affordable isolation feet. These are for use with almost any component and as we have already found, the results are compelling.

Like the racks, the approach to the Ultra Feet is evidence driven. There are several 'levels' of feet but the key to understanding which is best for you is actually the weight of your components – in most cases the Level 2 Silver Ultra Feet are what you'll want as these are ideal for components in the 0.4-10 kg range which covers almost every NuPrime model.

The reason for this is that the Ultra Feet use different materials to absorb vibration – a light component will get the most isolation from a 'squishy' foot whereas something heavy needs a material that won't deform as much. Each of the ultra feet also used differing materials top and bottom which further improves performance. And the two metal halves are threaded together to allow precise levelling. You can also further fine tune performance using either 3 or 4 feet.

While the racks are in the same price territory as our better components, the Ultra Feet are less than most cables and produce results that are every bit as significant. I've been especially taken by the improvements to the sound of any drums. Overall there is a much more organic and easy going sound with a definite reduction in glare and ringing.

The neat thing is that you can use the Ultra feet in your existing system and get an immediate hit of Bassocontinuo performance. We've got 3 models in stock right now;

- **The Level 1 Green feet are a general purpose entry level foot that will support a wide range of components from .3kg right up to 60kg**
- **The Level 2 Silver feet are much better for lighter components up to a maximum of 10kg**
- **Level 3 Red feet are designed components from 7.8kg upwards to 15kg**

Levels 5 and 6 are for seriously heavy components but also allow you to better isolate existing racks or furniture that might house your system. There is the suggestion on Bassocontinuo's own [page](#) that the levels correspond to specific lines of racks but everything else I've read so far leads to the conclusion that selecting based on the weight of your components is the way to go.

If the first Lyra rack ticked all the boxes in terms of our introduction to the brand, where do we look for something that's ideally suited to you – our clients? For many, the Lyra series will be the appropriate choice when balancing performance, cost and the practicalities of how many components you have. But what if you have already worked to make your system special and are wondering what's the best way to make it even better? Two words: Carbon fibre.



*Aerospace engineering, automotive and yacht racing, state of the art mountain bikes;
Carbon fibre is a critical element when it comes to high performance.*

'Back in 2015 we were the first to introduce on the market a rack in structural carbon: to this day no one was able to imitate it.

In 2022 we launch on the market an object that demolishes and revolutionizes completely everything that shocked us at the time.

The apparent stiffness of the monocoque frame actually hides a flexible soul which makes of AEON X the new benchmark on the market. We use the same monocoque technology of the F1 safety cells. The structural overlap in the lamination process ensures reduction of peripheral torsion, resistance to static load, low frequency vibration damping. Everything is summed up in a performance never measured before in only 1,7 mm of carbon fibre.'

Read more [here](#) in the Bassocontinuo Carbon Fibre Factory Report.

The Aeon Light

In May 2023 Bassocontinuo launched what we think is our perfect rack – [the Aeon Light](#). Two years in the making and part of the Revolution X range, Aeon Light is even more refined taking the design back to the absolute essentials, making no compromise whatsoever in sound quality and for the first time making use of recycled carbon fibre. But most importantly Aeon Light is significantly more affordable.

Many racks are over engineered with the expectation that you would somehow want to put extremely heavy components on them. But we learned a long time ago that size and weight are not synonymous with sound quality and certainly not value. Modern thinking and design exemplified by electronics designers such as NuPrime show us that ultra transparent, high end and powerful designs don't have to be big or heavy.

So with the Bassocontinuo Aeon Light , the load bearing capacity of the shelves is able to be less (although still 50-60kg – the entry level Lyra 2.4 is rated to 70kg). The shelves are only 2 mm in thickness, but reinforced with monodirectional carbon fibre and structural core to ensure a no compromise loading capacity. The top panel is a 3 mm sandwich made by five materials with two aluminium layers inside. Because of this strength, the shelves are wide and have a useful size of over 580mm allowing us to place two NuPrime components side by side with zero compromise. **And that means less shelves are needed which means even less cost.**

There are a myriad of other technical details that make the Aeon Light an improvement over the Lyra 2.4; This is where we circle back to the first statement – it's about the reduction of vibration and there's always room to do better. Lyra does the best possible job at it's price level – Aeon Light is able to do more as a function of even more advanced design and materials afforded by being able to invest more. Creating the perfect object takes time and dedication and this is why Aeon Light has only just been introduced.

There is absolutely no doubt that turntables lift their performance greatly on the Bassocontinuo racks but this doesn't mean that digital systems won't also gain great benefit. The rapid development of streaming components such as Lumin, some stellar DACs and amplifiers are delivering exceptional sound quality make the inclusion of top quality racking and cables almost mandatory; to not do so is to limit the potential of these individually brilliant components and the gains made easily justify the dollar costs.

By looking to improve the performance of all your electronics, Bassocontinuo take vibration control up to a completely new level and finally we have rack systems that actually look good enough to warrant pride of place in any room.

As you'll see once you start to look over the Bassocontinuo website, you can literally custom design a rack to fit your personal aesthetic, match your components or room. Even better, all the options are modular so if you expand or change your system over time, your rack can also be updated.

We're still taken aback by how much better systems have become in terms of their performance – We'll often listen to an album not played for a few years and be astonished by how much more of it can be heard now. Even better, many of the components that are doing this aren't stupidly expensive which appeals to our inner socialists. Bassocontinuo are another step in this direction, allowing components and systems to reveal even more. This makes the most of your existing investment breathing new life into your system and setting the stage for further improvements.

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