



TEST.

Finite Elemente Carbofibre° HD

24.04.2020 // DIRK SOMMER

I am lucky with my listening room: even without special damping, diffusers or absorbers it sounds pretty good. However, the interaction of the power amplifier with the tiled floor is anything but optimal: various types of coupling are very noticeable here. Does Finite Elemente's Carbofibre° HD isolation base bring any further improvement?

As for the loudspeakers, things don't look any better either. That's why my long-time favourites, the Kawero Classic, ended up resting on a frantic-looking mixture of the factory supplied Stillpoints and some Harmonix feet. But the ideal speaker platforms are a somewhat different matter. Back when the Brinkmann monos took care of the amplification, the Finite Elemente Cerabases – now named Cerabase° Classic – were responsible for the coupling to the floor. They also took on the job with the Ayon Epsilon. Under Einstein's The Poweramp, the Harmonix TU-666ZX "Beau Tone" replaced the Cerabase, while, later on, their noble version TU-666M "BeauTone Million" received the honours. The short, even more pleasing episode with the Harmonix "The Base" TB-0917, I almost repressed because of its rather deterrent price. Then SSC's Big Magic Base turned out to be a great help here, particularly as in combination with The Poweramp it sounded better than a set of four TU-666M "BeauTone Million", but fortunately at a lower price.

Therefore, there was no reason for me to change the positioning of the power amplifier – if I hadn't talked to its developer Luis Fernandes on the occasion of Wolfgang Kemper's comparison review of an old and a current Pagode rack. He suggested me to try out his Carbofibre° HD base under my power amplifier. Such offers usually leave me rather unimpressed. But in the last century I had already used two Pagode racks to my satis-



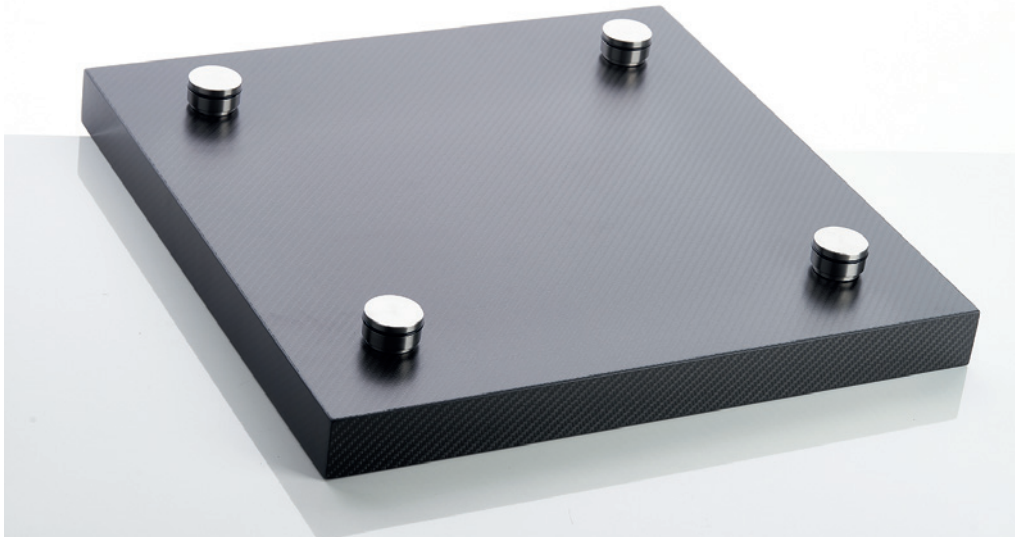
The Carbofibre° HD is superbly crafted all around. It comes up with a five-layer structure: Between the three layers of carbon fibre there are two honeycomb core layers made from a polymer synthetic material

faction. I got even more fascinated by the fact that whenever Luis Fernandes dropped by to install a supposed improvement, his forecasts came to prove true: After that the equipment supports really did perform at a higher level. Thus, I immediately ordered a Carbofibre° HD.

According to Luis Fernandes, the autonomous Carbofibre° product line is intended to offer customers the possibility of achieving a significant sound enhancement for the installed equipment, even on surfaces such as sideboards, lowboards or the floor. In addition, the Carbofibre° bases are also intended as a sonic alternative to the pagode° amp platforms, if, for example, the available space is not sufficient or special dimensions are required. The excellent sound characteristics of the honeycomb core material used for the shelves of the new



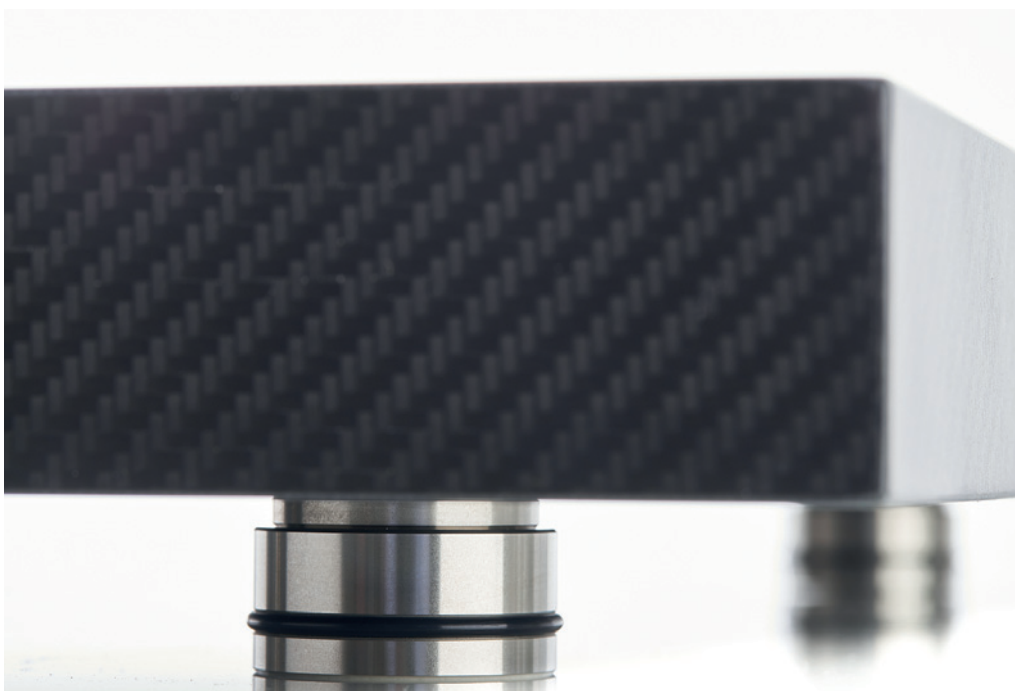
Thanks to the embedded bubble level it's easy to align the base correctly



The base rests on four feet

pagode° MKII generation, which are made of a polymeric material, get significantly improved in combination with the carbon fibre all-round coating, as the resulting extreme torsional stiffness in conjunction with the ultra-light honeycomb core ensures optimally controlled resonance damping and dissipation. The result is said to offer improved resolution and fine detail, a wider dynamic range and a much more coherent sonic image.

As the tiled floor in the listening room is not entirely level, it's an advantage that the Carbofibre° HD can be perfectly aligned in no time at all thanks to the height-adjustable feet and the built-in bubble level. After that is done, I first listen to Georg Breinschmid's wonderfully varied and bizarre double CD Breinl nd: The Austrian



Obviously, the feet are height adjustable

bassist and his changing players uninhibitedly mix short moritates, a very individual, 20-minute interpretation of "Carmen Fantasy" full of quotations and allusions, as well as rough musical and lyrical nonsense. So it perfectly fits that the last song is entitled „A beginning" ("Ein Anfang"). That's certainly not everyone's cup of tea and moreover not particularly audiophile, but for anyone with an affinity for quirky Austrian humour it's the music tip of the month.

After the Carbofibre° HD being ready for the comparison test, I relocate The Poweramp back on the Big Magic Base and get started with the Keith Jarrett Trio and their "God Bless The Child": When the power amp changes to the Carbofibre° HD, you could think of someone having turned the volume control one or two degrees to the right. Gary Peacock's bass gets slightly more crisp, but stays as full-bodied as before. The cymbals shimmer in richer colours, and the bass drum appears to be a bit bigger and more powerful. Often a more voluminous bass is responsible for the fact that the playback seems to be slightly slowed down and the musicians seem to perform with a little less enthusiasm. Fortunately, this is not the case here: With the Carbofibre° HD a very solid bass foundation and the tremendously gripping groove are fortunately not in competition with each other. Thanks to its new supporting base, the Einstein amp swings up to top performance in both disciplines: In the end it feels even more comfortable on the Carbofibre° HD.



The standard feet can be replaced by the higher-quality Cerabase°, Cerapuc° or Ceraball°

In Abdullah Ibrahim's "Calypso Minor", as expected, the bass drum and the propulsive double bass sound somewhat less solid and full-bodied with the SSC base. The tonal balance changes a bit when the Einstein finds its way back onto the finite element base. Here I feel reminded of the „Tilt" control found on old Quad solid state preamps, which allowed subtle tonal displacements. But thanks to the SSC base, the grand piano not only seems a bit brighter, but also slightly more airy sounding. So, I simply will not get around Patrice Heral's "Improvisation"...

It is a real pleasure to experience how much pressure the kettledrums unfold in the course of the test track, taken from the album Le Concert Des Perfums, when the Carbofibre° HD is carrying the Einstein power amp. The sonic image gets so three-dimensional that one feels like walking around the percussion instruments. When the SSC base serves as rest for The Poweramp, the musical happening displaces itself a little bit further away from the listener into the depth of the room. It somehow seems a bit bigger, but the instruments aren't that tangible anymore. Here I rather tend to the tonally more convincing Carbofibre° HD.

As with the test of the Ansuz Switch, I hear towards the end the piece "Ride of the Valkyries" („Ritt der Walküren“) from the album The Symphonic Ring (Der Symphonische Ring) with the Duisburg Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Jonathan Darlington. The prelude to the third act presents itself in a more whirring and flustered way when the SSC base is involved. The Carbofibre° HD keeps a clear overview in the seething action and, thanks to its slightly darker timbre, makes it easier to follow the individual instrument groups. This also benefits the accuracy of the spatial imaging. And, I now feel more attracted to the tonality of the sonic image: very convincing!

STATEMENT

In my listening room, Finite Elemente's Carbofibre° HD helps the power amp to evolve richer timbres, more pressure in the lows, higher rhythmic accuracy and better definition. This one you shouldn't miss!

LISTENED WITH

Turntable	Brinkmann LaGrange with tube power supply
Tonearm	Thales Simplicity, Einstein The Tonearm 12
Cartridge	Lyra Olympos SL and Etna, Transrotor Tamino
Phono amp	Einstein The Turntable's Choice (bal)
NAS	Melco N1Z H60/2, WDMycloud
Streaming bridge	Auralic G1
Up-sampler	Chord Electronics Hugo M-Scaler with Poweradd
D/A converter	Chord Electronics DAVE
LAN switch	Ansuz Acoustics PowerSwitch D-TC Supreme
Pre amp	Audio Exklusiv R7
Power amp	Einstein The Poweramp
Loudspeaker	Goebel Epoque Aeon Fine
Cables	Goebel High End Lacorde Statement, Audioquest Dragon HC, Tornado (HC) and NRG-Z3, Swiss Cables
Accessories	AHP sound module IV G, Audioquest Niagara 5000 and 1000, Synergistic Research Active Ground Block SE, HMS wall sockets, Blockaudio C-Lock Lite, Acapella bases, Acoustic System feet and Resonators, Artesania Audio Exoteryc, SSC Big Magic Base, Harmonix Real Focus and Room Tuning Disks, Audio Exklusiv Silentplugs

MANUFACTURER'S SPECIFICATIONS

Finite Elemente Carbofibre° HD

Material	ultra-light honeycomb cores made from polymeric synthetic material with all-round coating and middle-layer made of carbon fibre, multi-layer construction
Application	for light to heavy components
Dimensions (W/D/H)	450/400/45 mm (CFHD01), 500/475/45 mm (CFHD02), special dimensions available upon request
Useable height	67 – 77 mm (incl. adjustable feet)
Load capacity	100 kg
Special features	height-adjustable feet made of precision-manufactured stainless steel, 30 mm precision bubble level for perfect levelling of the isolation base
Options	CERABASE°, CERAPUC° or CERABALL° feet available as an upgrade
Price	1,800 euros (CFHD01, CFHD02)

MANUFACTURER

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