

SOUNDBITES – RINGMAT CDi BLUE STATMAT AND RINGMAT DAMPERS

Neville Roberts

Ringmat CDi Blue Statmat - £32.50

Ringmat Dampers - £40/pair

Ringmat Developments have established themselves as one of the UK's leading LP record support mat designers and latterly have moved into the more esoteric area of dampers for CDs and equipment.

Ringmat CDi Blue Statmat

The latest offering for silver disc spinners to emerge from Ringmat is the CDi Blue Statmat. The theory behind the Statmat is that during play, a CD revolves at a very high speed in a closed and dry environment and this, combined with the heat generated by the CD player itself, causes a gradual build-up of electrostatic fields on the CD. The static does not cover the CD evenly, but rather appears in the shape of low-voltage hot spots randomly spread over the disc's surface. The fields rapidly change as the CD is played and this, it is claimed, has a detrimental effect on the all-important timing of the digital signal. The purpose of the Statmat is to dissipate this static and hence eliminate static induced signal phase distortion by dispersing the low-voltage hot spots while a CD is being played.



It sounds good in theory and I have to say that it is indeed one of those gadgets that you can clearly hear a difference! With the Statmat the sound does have a more open characteristic, together with sharper and more precise image placement. Instruments are altogether more authentic and especially the piano sounds more convincing as a real instrument in the room.

The other area where the CDi mat seems to score is to do with un-cluttering the sound stage. On pieces of music where there is a lot going on such as with a full orchestra, the instruments can merge together, particularly in the louder passages. The Statmat does seem to tighten up the instruments, yet they almost seem to be more together as if the timing between the notes is more accurate.

I have been testing the Statmat with CDs, but Ringmat claim similar improvements with DVDs, SACD and other similar media. At just under £35, I reckon this is a very good buy and well worth the investment.

Ringmat Dampers



According to the manufacturers, Ringmat Dampers represent a new approach to vibration absorption in loudspeaker and equipment cabinets. The construction of the Dampers is very similar to that used for Ringmat Feet, but with important differences as they are used on top of, rather than underneath, speakers and equipment. As with Ringmat Feet, Ringmat Dampers are intended to work in much the same way as Ringmats by absorbing vibrations in the cabinet. The unwanted vibration energy is dispersed into the air.

The Dampers can be purchased singly to use on equipment or in pairs like these for use on top of loudspeakers. The instructions recommend that the dampers are positioned in the quadrant in the corner bearing the least weight of the loudspeaker. As most

loudspeakers have the drive units mounted on the front, it is suggested that the Damper is place towards the rear and then moved around to find the best position.

After carrying out extended listening tests spanning a wide range of musical genre, on my system I can best describe the effect as 'subtle'! With chamber music, pieces with solo instruments and singers, it was very difficult to discern any difference with the Dampers, regardless of their positioning. With fuller orchestras, rock music and so on, it is possible that the bass was slightly better controlled. The instructions do state that it may be required to reposition the loudspeakers to help correct errors in the timing of the music, so it was difficult to apportion any changes to the Dampers or the fact that the speaker positions had changed. In the last paragraph of the instructions, it states that if "...no improvement in the sound can be perceived from using the Damper, this is likely to be due to the system containing a large proportion of phase errors or because the positioning of the speakers does not provide an appropriate co-incidence of direct and reflected sounds" - hmmm!

However, undeterred and on the suggestion of a friend, I tried them on a pair of stand-mounted speakers in my study. This time and to my surprise, there was a noticeable cleaning up of the sound – most noticeable in the treble regions. In particular, a loud note played on a solo piano was clearer with the Dampers in place on the top of the speakers at the back.

In conclusion, if you have a spare £40 burning a hole in your pocket, you may want to experiment with the Dampers, especially if you have smaller speakers, but for my money I would definitely use it for the CDi Blue Statmat and use the change to purchase some of your favourite tippie to enjoy while listening to the music!

Contact Ringmat Developments on +44 (0) 1277 200210 or email webmail1.04@ringmat.com or visit their website at <http://www.ringmat.com>

--ooOoo--