

This Beauty is Stacked

It's a great temptation to take a whack at it. But is the woodshed really the kind of place where you can lay bare the secret of Harmonix?

Virgil Warren has managed to utterly astound me. Again! And this time at the HIGH END in Munich, in one of those dubious containers. The Harmonix distributor had assembled a full range of his products, which, not least because of the way they performed so masterfully together, left me no choice but to postpone my other engagements at the show. Could such impressive authenticity, the total

naturalness of spatial reproduction (which the cramped container had all but eliminated from an acoustics perspective) and this superb vitality and magnificent sound be originating from the hardware alone? It was during the pauses between the tracks that I gradually discovered the full extent to which the assiduous Mr. Warren had taken the essentials of music listening – space and equipment – to new sonic heights. And yet, Harmonix products, those essential keys to unlocking a superb sound experience, never present themselves as forward or even pretentious.

After seeing how the RFA-7800 acoustic tuning elements (*image hifi* No. 92, Edition 2/2010) led to

unanimously favorable comments and some pure amazement among my HiFi aficionado friends, I was now ready to try out something more literally full-bodied.

Virgil Warren recommended the TU-201 MK2 tuning feet as the next step. These are available in a black or reddish brown wood finish, either in the form of a square block, which are as large as four CD cases stacked on top of each other, or in a rounded shape (TU-202 MK2). Harmonix deliberately and quite understandably maintains its silence about the mix of material and know-how that underlie these tuning devices. What we do know is that the TU-202 MK2 is “made of hybrid wood layer.” Four small flat pieces of wood on the bottom and a distinctive little gold label identify the “correct” alignment of each of these extra feet at its assigned spot. As someone who places little value on decorative features, I always turn the label side toward the rear, especially since the speakers are in my line of sight while listening to music during the day. However, here is where Harmonix also offers something quite substantive. You can pile several hundred kilos onto each of these hard-surfaced and practically resonance-free extra feet – just the right thing for all kinds of weighty sound converters and amplifiers. And when you look very carefully at the reddish brown version, there appear to be choice segments of solid wood joined together and applied between two thin wooden surfaces ...



Be that as it may. The only thing that matters is “what comes out of the back end” – or in this case, what comes out of the front, since my goal is first and foremost to experiment with and compare notes on all sorts of speakers. First up were my Stereofone Duras, which come equipped with casters as a standard feature. Speakers can be positioned easily and quite quickly thanks to the generous surface space that these Harmonixes offer. Life with wood floors has got me into the habit of always placing speakers with spikes (B&W Cabasse, Duewel, Linn, Vienna Acoustics) on small pucks so as to not damage the underlying surface.

Whether an omni, dipole or classic direct radiator: the fact that a Harmonix-footed speaker stands four centimeters higher than before and renders the stages somewhat “loftier” is something that becomes noticeable mostly with very good acoustic recordings, but does not play that

big a role in terms of homogeneity. The crucial thing is that the TU-202 MK2 enhances the structuring of both large orchestras and chamber music ensembles, and yes, even fully electrified brachial bands, and lets you feel the concentrated energy of their performance. The dynamic range and flow of details are more natural and better integrated. Such vastly improved sound transparency also makes it much easier to gain insights into the intrinsic musical complexity and relationships.

Naturally, you don’t have to share my opinion that the gain in consistency and musical flow from the TU-201 MK2 is at times substantial and can well be worth

every cent of its proud price per set. The results will depend largely on your current system’s configuration, the extent and complexity of the installation and, of course, on the original financial investment that was made – here I still recommend a healthy ratio of the mandatory (speakers) to the discretionary (TU-201 MK2) of at least 2:1, if not more. And now back to the Dura speakers, which, standing barefoot (without casters) atop the harmonizing bases, audibly feel themselves pampered. It’s almost as if you can hear them sigh, “Aaah, a pedicure!”

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Tuning Feet Harmonix TU-201 MK2

Styles: Reddish brown or black finish, also available in round shape (TU-202 MK2)

Weight Limit: >100 kg/each **Dimensions (W/H/D):** 125/40/125 mm **Warranty:** 2 years

Price per Set: 1200 euros (set of 4)

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