

HARMONY

In Japanese

In a report for the last issue of STEREO, the Linn Klimax pre-amp proved to be too good mechanically to benefit from other feet. However, something else has been found that harmonized and is capable of enhancing other equipment.

By Uwe Kribach

The Homo hifienses in me has been faced with a dilemma for years: To what extent may, or should, accessories be used to describe the musical qualities of equipment? Naturally when you're dealing with an amplifier that cost 1,000 euros it would not be very practical to buy a power cable for the same price just to use it to assess its sound quality. Things become a little more difficult, however, in the case of much more expensive equipment. Still, one could take the standpoint that every sound enhancer has its own personal note, which should not get mixed into the description of the device actually being reviewed.

In the course of time, I have come to hold another point of view. It seems to me that the use of proper accessories is almost unavoidable since electrical outlets everywhere bear their own different sources of faults, while whatever spot you choose to place the equipment on soon reveals its own tonal character. Only when the full potential of a piece of equipment is exploited, can it be judged in greater isolation from its present surroundings. After all, wouldn't it be like not seeing the forest for the trees if you ignored a 10,000-euro amplifier that sounds much better when combined with a tool that cost 1,500 euros?

And so, I was not completely happy in concluding the Linn Klimax report with a – however minimal – critical judgment of the sound. Instead of the hoped-for improvement, this outstanding pre-amp got worse when other feet were used. That's why I had Virgil Warren, the importer of those often extremely helpful Harmonix products, supply me with a set of TU-210 ZX. These are supposed to be particularly well-suited for all digital devices, pre-amplifiers and lighter tube amplifiers. It soon became clear that the four feet simply did not want to attach themselves directly to the bottom panel of the Klimax, preferring instead to simply wind up between its feet and the surface it was sitting on.

This is what then it sounded like: In "Creamy Thighs" from the marvelous Jun-Miyake CD *Innocent Bossa in the Mirror* (Nektar/Tropical Music), the trumpet became brighter with more presence, while the effect on the drums was astonishing. They not only presented more body, allowing the skins to be heard more clearly, but above all their blending with the guitars was suddenly better. Not just quicker, but also more organic – now they were really playing with one

another. “Who Could Win a Rabbit” on Animal Collective’s *Sung Tongs* (Fat Cat/Hausmusik) was delightful and revealing. It not only sounded stronger, but in those places with the common bass frequencies, the door to the room vibrated right along with what was to be sure a very loud, yet low level. It definitely forged more energy. From that point on the drum sounds came from further away. Didn’t I say in the Klimax report that it was possible to do something more with reproducing the range? Well, here it was!

Even more musically striking was the improvement to “*Thé Auf Harem D’Archimède*” by Ricardo Villalobos (Perlon/Neuton). Here the spatial dimensions were clearer, each sound had its own tonal sphere, and everything seemed to be louder. This curious, fantastic electronic music suddenly became its own hyper-realistic self and the improvements helped turn it into a more intuitive and more physical listening experience.

Stravinsky’s “Le Chant du Rossignol” conducted by Pierre Boulez (DG) was absolutely mind-boggling. What had previously been a quite distant and therefore seemingly small sounding orchestra now came closer to the fore with a greater dynamic and improvement in size; the room became much wider and the part with the deep notes was transformed, as was the whole interpretation – turning it into a truly brilliant and pleasurable event.

Mr. Kiuchi, the developer of Harmonix, does not disclose in the least how he gets so much of that genuine harmonizing effect out of his wood and metal constructions. The fact that it even works with a so well-perfected device as the Linn Klimax pre-amp, is quite startling. And it simply underscores how careful one should be in making such final judgments about the sound, especially regarding equipment of the highest class.

Photo Caption:

Compelling for the sound and your wallet: The Golden Toe TU-210 ZX is available from Warren Quality Systems (Tel: 06732-936961) for 840 euros.