

Encounter with Audio Magic Products

I recently had a new house built and decided to make some changes to the location and placement of the stereo. In my last house I had a dedicated room that was 14' 4" wide by 20' 6" deep with 9' ceilings (about 2,500 to 2,600 cubic feet). It was a good room but not really a great listening space. In the new house I wanted a more open space that I could reasonably control but not enclose it in a room or box space. I decided to try to place the system in a large room that was 16' 8" wide by 48' 6" deep with 9' ceilings. There are a few adjoining open spaces toward the back of the long wall so now I had about 9500 to 10,000 cubic feet to play with.

I resolved to not change anything in the system and try to integrate what I already owned and see what would happen. I'm not a fan of throwing money around without good justification and reasoning. Since I didn't know how the changes would affect the system components I wanted to try exactly the same set-up. I believe room acoustics are more important than most of us are willing to admit. I figured I had nothing to lose and that I might learn some interesting lessons along the way.

I had two separate and dedicated 120-volt lines and one dedicated 240-volt line installed into the room. I essentially replicated the old room and was ready to give it a go. I have always believed that to set-up a system correctly you have to start with the foundation which I consider to be the electrical system. I really try to have a very quiet and consistent flow of electricity to power the system. This has proven to be very hard and a challenge over the years. In a new construction area, you often have strong demand so the electricity can be noisy and fluctuate more than I like and affect the sound.

I brought everything from the last house which included balanced transformers for both analog and digital lines, Furutech distribution boxes with GC-303 EMI-Absorbent Internal Coating and dedicated Furutech and Cullen power cables and two Tweek Geek Bybee SE AC Adapters. I had my system in the last house very quiet and consistent in how the electrical system interacted with my music.

I got everything set-up and running and noticed that there was a very low-level noise that brought the perceived black level up enough that it started bothering me. I knew of Audio Magic and Jerry Ramsey so I decided it might be worth talking to him and seeing what options he may have to address my problem. Audio Magic has a lot of products and many are hard to quantify with common science. They address real problems but the technology and science behind the products are either not conventional or not shared because of the proprietary nature of his products. I know this bothers a lot of people but I have always been of the opinion that I listen and make judgements based on what I hear in my system and my acoustic space. Either I got a reduction in noise and the noise floor moved back down or I don't. Either it worked without taking away from the overall sound or it had other deleterious effects that I couldn't live with. I listen with my ears, head and heart and make my own decision. This approach takes some time in order to rule out biased thinking and just hearing something different and not really better.

The main product we decided to try was the Ground Disruptor Blue Dot Premier (\$950) to address the noise issue. We also decided to try a couple of his latest Super Fuse Bees Wax

Ultimate fuses (\$225 each), one for the DAC and one for the preamp which the Ground Disrupter Blue Dot Premier was plugged into. The question to be answered was did any of these products or combination of products really lower the noise floor without harming the sound of the system to achieve the reduction in noise.

From the Audio Magic website: "The Ground Disrupter Blue Dot Premier deals with ground noise in two different steps. This module contains two different ground planes that are designed to funnel ground noise through two passive filter devices. The "Blue Dot" also contains a "Pulse Gen Module," which cancels RFI/EMF noise that rides on the ground plane of audio components. Plugged into a power outlet and connect the single RCA cable coming out of the Blue Dot to an unused RCA input in the system. The resulting lower noise floor leads to improved detail, imaging, and reduction of "glare," all with no negative side effects."

Sounds like marketing mumbo jumbo but what did I have to lose? Maybe noise or maybe the good audio qualities that my system had? I gave it a try. I have already done a lot to reduce RFI/EMF noise in my system. Between the balanced line transformers and the GC-303 EMI-Absorbent Internal Coating in the Furutech distribution boxes I figured that I was pretty well covered. I have had this unit in and out of my system over that last two months and put simply it did reduce the noise floor and open up the ability of my system to reveal very quiet passages without feeling that the music was being affected by noise. I'm not convinced that it improved imaging detail but rather that it allowed my system to reveal what was already there but covered up. Imaging was about the same although the three-dimensional aspect of sounds within the soundstage seemed more real so this was hard to quantify. I really could not find an area that I thought resulted in any negative side effects. I was rather surprised and kept going back and forth for weeks with many different genres of music to see if I might be fooling myself with wishful thinking.

Jerry suggested that the addition of a couple of Super Fuse Bees Wax Ultimate fuses would enhance the effect of the Ground Disrupter Blue Dot Premier and that there was potential synergy in this combination.

From the Audio Magic website: "We are now using a push-pull I Core design instead of the single core, and we have upgraded our Black Out powder mixture for a broader noise absorption parameter. But these audio fuses will give you tighter bass and yet sound relaxed with a very natural sound. The soundstage will become bigger and deeper, more detailed with better layering, and better micro detail, and all with a relaxed musical presentation."

Replacing the older Audio Magic Nano-Liquid fuse which I owned with the new Super Fuse Bees Wax Ultimate on the pre-amplifier was easy. Replacing the fuse on the Schiit Yggdrasil DAC was not fun. Lots of screws and headache and I finally got the fuse replaced. Frankly, I treated these fuses as a set since there was no way that I would take the fuse in and out. Either they worked their magic (sorry, bad pun) or they didn't. The proof was in listening. This took another few weeks of listening and I found that they made some differences but they were smaller than the Ground Disrupter Blue Dot Premier. Their enhancement to the Blue Dot was mostly in the areas of better layering and better micro detail. These were small differences but musically meaningful in my system and set-up.

I found the Audio Magic products to offer good value for the return on the improved sound I was experiencing. I found the Ground Disrupter Blue Dot Premier to really reduce the noise floor and help improve the area I was concerned about. Is this the best product to attack my noise problem? I really have no idea. I know there are a lot of options, different technologies, and different price points. I thought the reduction in noise and overall improved sound was worthwhile considering the price. The fuses had an effect on the sound but it really wasn't focused on the noise issue but enhancing the layering the depth in the soundfield and they revealed micro detail in a musically engaging way. The combination of the three products just seemed to make the sound that much more real. Less noise and more of a sense of 'realness' that helped me suspend disbelief.

I believe that these Audio Magic products were reasonable in price, addressed sound issues in a positive way and offer reasonable value to the audiophile. Your mileage may vary but I suggest that you give his products a listen if you are trying to fine tune your sound and achieve the best that you can. Good listening!

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