

ROBERT DEUTSCH

IsoAcoustics Gaia

LOUDSPEAKER ISOLATION FEET

IsoAcoustics Inc. has its head office in Ontario and its manufacturing facilities in China, and is headed by Dave Morrison, who for 20 years has been involved in designing radio and television studios for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. The IsoAcoustics products are the result of this experience. Although relatively new on the consumer-audio market, IsoAcoustics' speaker-isolation products have gained wide acceptance in pro audio; their client list of recording and mastering studios includes Blackbird (Nashville), Mastering Palace (NYC), Flux (NYC), United Recording (LA), the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Skywalker Ranch, and Abbey Road.

I first became aware of IsoAcoustics at the 2015 Montreal Salon Son et Image, where they had a demo comparing the sounds of two pairs of Focal 906 loudspeakers on Focal floor stands: one set rested on IsoAcoustics Aperta speaker stands; the other speakers were raised on laminated wood blocks, to match the height. All speakers were at the same height, with the same distance between the speakers of each pair. The results were impressive; the speakers on the Aperta stands evinced, to quote my show report, "a general tightening of the bass and less smearing in the midrange, and even the treble."¹ I made a mental note to keep an eye on IsoAcoustics, and to review their products when the opportunity presented itself.

That opportunity came after the 2017 Consumer Electronics Show, where I learned that IsoAcoustics had some new products: the Gaias, a series of isolation devices designed for floorstanding speakers. There are three models of Gaia, the I, II, and III, for various weights of speaker; the total price of a set of eight Gaia Is for a two-channel system is \$1119.98.

The Gaia follows the same patented principles used in the Aperta, but rather than a speaker stand, it's



a footer that screws into the bottom of the speaker's base, replacing the spikes or other footers provided by the speaker's manufacturer. Each of my Monitor Audio Platinum PL300 II speakers² has a plinth with integral rubber pads, as well as optional spikes. I'd been using the spikes, but had some reservations about their effectiveness compared to the pads. I had no such reservations about the Gaias' effectiveness. They made an across-the-board improvement in the sound—almost as if Monitor had revised the PL300 II to a new model, the PL300 III. As I'd heard in IsoAcoustics' demo of their Aperta stands, there was a tightening of the bass, which also seemed to go deeper. For most of my listening, I used a McIntosh MC275 LE, a tube amp not particularly known for the accuracy of its bass reproduction, having

a touch of midbass warmth. However, with the Gaias installed, the MC275 LE's bass seemed to become more neutral, with less midbass warmth—a welcome effect.

The aspect of a speaker's sound that I value most highly is its ability *not* to sound like a speaker—a lack of "speaker sound." In my review of the Platinum PL300 II, I praised it for its low level of speaker sound. Well, with the Gaia Is installed, the PL300 II had even *less* speaker sound, perhaps an effect of the Gaias' attenuation of the speaker's spurious resonances. I heard more of the music and less of the speaker. Not only that—instruments and voices were more precisely defined on the soundstage, which itself was wider and higher.

A remarkable product. ■

1 See www.stereophile.com/content/ssi-robert-deutsch-day-1

2 See my review of Monitor Audio's Platinum PL300 II in the November 2016 issue: www.stereophile.com/content/monitor-audio-platinum-pl300-ii-loudspeaker.

SPECIFICATIONS

Description Isolation feet for loudspeakers.

Price \$1119.98/set of 8.

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