

DS Audio

ION-001 Vinyl Ioniser



STATIC ELECTRICITY CAN be a right pain for vinyl devotees. Whether it's clicks, pops or crackles, the sound can be very irritating, especially during quiet passages of music. Static can be a real problem during warm, summer days, but also in the winter months as most of us live in modern houses with central heating, which can dry the atmosphere and increase the likelihood of static build up. Apart from distracting pops and clicks, there is also the increased noise floor, which static electricity can introduce into the signal path, masking important subtle musical details and information such as ambience and depth.

Vinyl is a great insulator and I remember making, as a child, an electrophorus using an old vinyl LP as the dielectric plate and a metal plate with an insulating handle. The idea was to rub the LP with fur or a cloth to generate a negative charge as a result of the triboelectric effect (generating a static charge through friction). The metal plate was then

placed on the LP and the top of the plate was touched to remove the electrons, which had been repelled by the charge on the LP. The plate was then removed holding the insulating handle and now had a positive charge, which could be used to generate a spark onto the hand of an unsuspecting person – in my case, my poor, long-suffering mum! Anyway, the issue is that an LP is a great originator of static electricity through the triboelectric effect, which can be generated by the simple act of removing it from its jacket, the stylus drag in the groove or even from the rotation of the record on the platter causing the LP to rub on the air above. So, as you play a record, the static actually increases.

There is a wide variety of devices around to help combat static electricity. For many years, I have used my trusty Milty Zerostat gun, which incorporates a piezo-electric crystal device that generates a stream of negative ions when you squeeze the trigger and a stream of positive ones when you release it. That, of course, will neutralise the static charge before you play a record, but doesn't help with the charge that's generated as you play it. This is where the DS Audio ION-001 Vinyl Ioniser comes in.

The ION-001 operates silently via a fanless design and emits positive and negative ions across the record's surface while it's playing. The device is about 18cm tall with a square base and a slightly tapered black tower, and you stand it beside your turntable's platter preferably within 5cm of the record's edge – the closer the better.

Positive and negatives

A handy placement guide is included to help position the ioniser. This paper template fits over the spindle of your turntable to show the distance at which the ioniser will be most effective. Although the ION-001 will operate outside the optimal position, its effectiveness diminishes the further away it is from the platter, so it should be as close to it as possible. The unit contains four ionisers (two for positive ions and two for negative), which are stacked

one on top of the other behind two rectangular ports that are situated to face towards the platter. Because the accumulation of static on the surface of a record increases as you play it, the constant bathing of the rotating LP in positive and negative ions is claimed to virtually eliminate all static. What I find particularly nice is that the ports also contain built-in green LED lights, which indicate whether the unit is powered on or off. A dimmer knob located on the side next to the power switch allows the LED brightness to be adjusted as desired. Although the ION-001 is mains powered, this power indication feature is important as the

The noise floor is lower and there are no annoying clicks during playback

mechanism has a 10,000 hour half-life. Although it would take about 10 years with three hours a day of use to reach 10,000 hours, given its cost, you'll only want it powered on when playing records.

After positioning the ION-001 correctly on my Vertere MG-1 MK II turntable, I place a Chasing The Dragon LP of JS Bach's *Cello Suite 1 in G Major* on the platter and listen to the recording. I then turn on the ION-001 and I can tell it's working as I can detect a faint smell of ozone when close to it. After admiring the green shafts of light emanating from the ports, I play the LP again and detect a lowering of the noise floor, coupled with an absence of annoying clicks during the performance. The LP lifts off the platter easily without any static pulling and without attracting dust.

OK, pricy it may be and whether it's the right product for you will very much depend on how deep your pockets are. Having said that, it is cheaper than most high-end phono cartridges, does its job perfectly and is therefore very much to be recommended. **NR**

DETAILS

PRICE

£1,600

WEBSITE

soundfoundations.co.uk

OUR VERDICT

