



Paul Leung

Taking vibration control to the next level

Nordost Sort Füt



At the time of writing this review, I was listening to my favorite collection of CDs non-stop. My KEF Reference 207/2 sounded as if it underwent a major upgrade. The amount of details revealed by my loudspeakers, the spatial presentation of the musical images, their outlines and even the soundstage seem to be taken to the next level. Don't get me wrong. KEF hasn't really released any upgrade kit for 207/2. What I did was installing a new set of Nordost Sort Füt to support my loudspeakers. Sort Füt is designed by Nordost, a well renowned American manufacturer of high end cables and accessories, to control resonance in loudspeakers and racks, replacing the standard spikes which does not often do a satisfactory job. The effect of Sort Füt is simply so impressive that I've got to share my excitement with my friends in the audiophile circle immediately.

Jaw dropping effects

I'm not entirely sure if it's because the original spikes did so poorly, or it's because Sort Füt performed so well, the acoustics of my system before and after the installation makes a word of difference. I have a few friends who are also audio critics hearing the difference. They proved the significance of difference by concentrating on the music and not talking much in the whole audition session.

Before I installed Sort Füt, I selected a few tracks from my favourites CD collection for establishing a baseline. This includes Jacky Cheung's "Snow. Wolf.Lake" and Tchaikovsky's Symphony No.6 "Pathetique" performed by Evgeny Mravinsky / Leningrader Philharmonie and Mozart's Sonata for Piano and Violin, K.547 performed by Ingrid Haebler and Henryk Szeryng. After listening to these tracks, we started the installation with care. Coming with the Premium Package is a set of laser



levelling system which ensures both loudspeakers are positioned in the same level. I followed the original toe-in angles. More importantly, I used the laser levelling system to make sure the vertical positions of the tweeter and the base drivers on both the left and right channels are identical.

It took us quite a while to get the setup properly done and verified. Then it's time for all of us to enjoy the results. First we played "Calm Down" from "Snow.Wolf.Lake". The first two phrases played by piano were striking enough to arrest

everybody's attention. The harmonics of the piano and the subtle reverbs in the recording venue were much richer than before. The sound of cymbals spread gradually from left and right, followed by an extremely harmonious string prelude. It was so stunning and impressive! When Jacky Cheung sang the first phrase, we felt strongly the subtle emotion changes. The ambience transformed my listening area into an operatic scene. I couldn't believe that was the effect my system was capable of creating. I also couldn't believe there was so





much detail getting lost due to the vibrations in my loudspeakers before Sort Füt were installed.

The effect is not limited to the amount of details revealed. It also substantially improves the three dimensional effect and the stability of the audio images. When I play chamber musics such as Mozart's Sonata for Piano and Violin, K.547 (the early West Germany print), the sound of the piano becomes clearer and more transparent after Sort Füt were installed. Every note appears to be more pleasantly shiny. Violin sounds even more impressive. Not only can I feel the hardly noticeable variations of the friction between the string and horsehair (of the violin bow), but I also virtually see Henryk Szeryng bowing right in front of me. His violin is so three dimensional. It creates strong senses of vertical and horizontal distances from the piano. I can easily tell the musical instruments "look" clearer and sharper. Their outlines also look unambiguous and vivid. I was under the impression effects as such can only be achievable by loudspeakers with metallic cones. It's absolutely amazing that even paper cone based drivers in KEF Reference 207/2 can do something similar. A miracle indeed!

My loudspeakers are good at playing large scale orchestral music. They are able to reproduce a gigantic soundstage when playing symphonies of Tchaikovsky, Beethoven, Mahler and even Shostakovich. The bass is punchy. Strings and wood winds are highly textured. My only complaint is that, when the whole orchestra play together, the sound become muddy and some details go missing. I was under the impression that it's because the support of the loudspeakers is not solid and stable enough. But honestly I didn't know how to deal with it. Now that we have eight pieces of Sort Füt displaying their prowess,

when playing the most blasting paragraphs of the "Pathetique" Symphony with a large amount of low frequency double bass sound, the overall sound images does not turn muddy or cloudy at all. The positions of the musical instruments are still rock solid. The string instruments sound a lot more harmonious with stronger energy. As the music climbs to the climax, the texture of the orchestral sound becomes more complicated and surprisingly there appears no loss of detail at all. I could even say everything is intact.

Listening is believing

To be frank, when I bought Sort Füt, I did not read any review, not to mention that I bought them based on nobody's recommendation. The product was so new that I could hardly find anything useful for reference. But why did I pick Sort Füt? There is actually a story around it...

A few weeks ago I was trying out the new Trinity DAC (which is one of the best DACs I have ever listened). I borrowed a set of Nordost Sort Kone TC from Audiotechnique to support the DAC so that I can get better sound out of it. After then, I inadvertently used them to support my reference CD player (Esoteric K-01). I was shocked by the tremendous improvement it made to the playback. Although I didn't eventually buy them as the player was lifted too high when I used the cones, I was still very impressed by Nordost with their vibration control products.

After then, Audiotechnique started using Sort Füt to support their Dynaudio Evidence Platinum speakers. I don't think I need to tell you how impressed I was. But I can tell you that's exactly the reason I decided to buy them for my loudspeakers at home.

Keep it simple

In total, I need 8 piece of Sort Füt for my loudspeakers. I decided to buy a Premium Package and four standard boxes of Sort Füt. The Premium Package contains a set of four Sort Füt, a laser levelling system, a tool for adjusting the height of the Sort system, and three sets of threaded adaptors. The standard Sort Füt box contains only one Sort Füt and three sets of threaded adaptors similar to the equivalence in the Premium Package.

What interested me most is the laser levelling system. The build quality is world class. There are multiple level meter for measuring the level at different angles. It requires two AA batteries to operate. When it's switched on, there is a red laser beam emitted and projected a small red dot onto another object at the same height. The Premium Package comes with a small plastic target device, which can be placed on one of the loudspeakers. With the laser emitter placed on the other loudspeakers, one can tell if both loudspeakers are positioned at the same height and more importantly if they are precisely levelled. Nordost also includes a specially tailored lens for the laser emitter, which turns a red dot into a vertical or a horizontal line. If I use this lens to project a horizontal red line across two loudspeakers from my sitting position, I can easily tell if both loudspeakers are positioned on the same level.

There is one thing that is worth mentioning here. The tool for adjusting the height of Sort Füt is extremely easy to use. The finial dome contains 4 holes evenly distributed around it. You can insert a rod to rotate it and adjust the height. It makes a significant difference from some typical loudspeaker feet that requires a lot of tools or efforts to get the height right.



Conclusion

From the official website, Nordost has not provided any detail how vibration is eliminated in practice. It just said the product was constructed in a combination of Aluminium and Bronze. There is a finial dome to minimize the effect of vibration. There are 3 ceramic balls (ZrO2) to minimize the contact surface area while providing physical stability to components.

The reason that one would use Sort Füt is very simple. Unwanted vibrations compromise musical details, dynamics, three dimensional presentation and textures. Sort Füt is designed to dissipate these vibrations and allow them to escape.

The total cost of the Premium Package plus four standard boxes of Sort Füt is HK\$24,800. Is it expensive? Yes, of course! This is not something everybody could realize its cost effectiveness given the size and the nature (as accessories). But I can tell you as a user, Sort Füt is one of the most cost effective accessories I have ever bought! 🎧