



Power play

Incorporating features seen in its small mains treatment devices, iFi's PowerStation looks impressively comprehensive says **Ed Selley**

Perhaps best known for its range of compact DACs and supporting accessories, iFi Audio's product lineup also includes a range of power management and treatment options, and the company has now added a full-size mains extension block.

The basic design is a six-way block (eight in Japan and the USA) that has a single IEC mains input on the end with a power switch. Each output is placed in its own isolated chamber to avoid cross contamination and the wiring uses PurCopper – an extremely pure continuous cast copper, intended to maximise performance. Surge protection is quoted at 30,000 amps which should be sufficient to keep your equipment safe in all but the most catastrophic situations.

Where the PowerStation is different from most rivals is the ground arrangements. It has inbuilt ground and polarity detection (and indicators to show you all is or isn't well in this regard) and there is a dedicated 4mm banana-type connection to help you earth reluctant equipment. This is clever in that it works as an either/or device and will only ground if there is an issue with the internal system. This ensures that unwanted noise isn't added by accident. iFi also says that

its existing AC iPurifier2 (HFC 412) can still be used with it to separate analogue and digital devices by plugging it into an unused socket between them.

iFi's Active Noise Cancellation II system is claimed to offer more effective noise reduction – particularly below 40dB – while also having no effect on power delivery itself. All of this comes encased in a hefty but very well made aluminium chassis.

Performance

Connecting up a Naim Supernait 3 integrated amp (HFC 456) and ND5 XS streamer (HFC 352) to the PowerStation along with a TV and Playstation 4 brings up two green lights for earth and polarity so the scope for experimenting with the external ground is limited. The good news is that the performance compared with a reasonable quality switched mains block is significantly improved. The iFi is both dead silent and ensures that devices connected to it are free from unwanted buzzes or hums too – something that the standard block cannot achieve.

This is almost certainly down to the games console. The addition of a Playstation 4 to the selection of connected equipment is not

accidental; I've found over that years that Sony's finest does have a habit of dumping noise back into the mains and affecting devices plugged in nearby. The iFi does a good job of ensuring this is suppressed and not allowed anywhere else. This results in *Love Is Everywhere* by Laurent Bardainne and Tigré d'Eau Douce sounding as dynamic as the mastering intends and the removal of interference makes unpicking the dense arrangements considerably easier.

The other area where there appears to be a consistent and noticeable improvement is the bass performance. Listening via Focal's Kanta N°1 (HFC 454), there is no meaningful increase in extension but the detail and definition to the low end being generated is noticeably improved. The subdued thud at the foot of Nikki Lane's *Highway Queen* gains a grip that simply isn't audible with the conventional mains block.

There is scope to dig a little more from the PowerStation too. Substitute the supplied mains cable connecting it to a wall socket for a Titan Audio Helios (HFC 410) and, without having any appreciable effect on the characteristics of the iFi, there are some further improvements to the detail and cohesion of the lower registers from the bass through to the lower midrange. Likewise, some additional benefits can be had from changing the mains cables on the connected devices.

Conclusion

Even out of the box, though, the PowerStation is a seriously impressive addition. It delivers a meaningful improvement over more conventional mains devices and combines this with some useful and well-implemented additional features. Throw in the excellent build quality, reasonable looks and scope for a little further upgrade and you have a very fine mains conditioning unit indeed ●

DETAILS

PRODUCT
iFi Audio PowerStation

ORIGIN
UK/China

TYPE
Mains conditioning extension block

WEIGHT
1.98kg

DIMENSIONS
(WxHxD)
76 x 96 x 478mm

FEATURES
● Six individually wired and shielded mains sockets
● Polarity and ground indicators
● External ground

DISTRIBUTOR
Armour Home Electronics

TELEPHONE
01279 501111

WEBSITE
ifi-audio.com

Hi-Fi Choice

OUR VERDICT

SOUND QUALITY
★★★★★

VALUE FOR MONEY
★★★★★

BUILD QUALITY
★★★★★

FEATURES
★★★★★

LIKE: Excellent performance; useful features; very well made

DISLIKE: Nothing of any note

WESAY: A well engineered and very capable mains conditioner at a competitive price

OVERALL

