



A review of the Rogoz Audio 3RP1/BBS



Audiophilism is not only about collecting and in some cases using everything which is powered, either from a wall socket or via devices such as speakers or headphones. Audiophilism is something broader: it is an entire room dedicated for listening – audio stands, platforms, pads, carpets, as well as acoustic panels and the wife's moods. The latter can really mess up audiophilism, even obliterate it, by providing arguments such as: "now we have a child", or "I will never set foot in this room". Never address such arguments directly. Instead prevent them from being raised in the first place. Let's make it clear though – I am absolutely pro-children – permanent loneliness is destructive. At least for most people. So, even though children are inseparable part of a normal life, after several months of babyhood they grow up and you're once again free to make noise. Your wife though – who is by no means less important, but will surely not grow up to the noise – needs to be approached with skill. Something nice and pleasant should work wonders. Buy her a nice dress, hand her a bouquet of nice flowers with a beaming smile, and sneak in some audiophile gear. Well, the gear should be nice too. So, it is important, in particular for non-bachelor audiophiles, that their audiophile corner would be showy rather than marring, i.e. be composed of gear that not only plays well, but also looks good. Sometimes it can be quite a challenge – designers tend to have odd ideas, or the equipment that matches best in terms of audio just happens to look like ice cream and pickles. Here it gets tricky, even more so if we care a lot about a particular set of equipment. Is there any solution then? Of course there is. Place the gear on some nice furniture, so that this mess at least looks good. Try to arrange it so that the ugly parts do not stand out. Audio stands and platforms are your allies, provided that they do look good and cover any ugliness or expose everything that is attractive. And with or without wife or kids – it's always more enjoyable to listen to nice-looking gear, so our own selfish audiophile interest is also satisfied.



I żeby jeszcze wszystkie platformy w Polsce takie były – Rogoz Audio 3RP1/BBS.

I know, I'm a male chauvinist pig and that I started in an unusual way. I have started this piece the other way round. After all, Mr. audiophile man pays the most attention to the beauty of the music that he wants to enjoy and take pride in. A audio stand, platform or stand should, first and foremost, benefit the audio, never mind the appearance. But I have started this way on purpose, as the Rogoz Audio Company pays a lot of attention to the looks.

I'll come back to that later in a few lines, now let me just mention that even though Rogoz Audio was founded in 2007, the history of the company dates back to the 80s and 90s. It was back then that the founder of the company, Janusz Rogoż, obtained experience both as an audiophile and an employee of the Silesian Philharmonic. As his educational background involves both visual arts and musicology, he combined these aspects to create exclusive accessories that foster the beauty of music in a number of ways. It all started from the differences between the live performances of Karol Szymanowski pieces under the baton of Karol Stryja and the recordings of these performances. Janusz

Rogoż was a witness and participant of the recording and could hear the difference with his own ears. This prompted him to seek ways of improving the audio. He started with speaker stands, then added audio stands, and then platforms. At first, Janusz just made the furniture for his own use, then he made some more for his friends, and shortly his reputation snowballed and success followed. Today, Rogoz Audio is the successor of these experiences, and a worldwide company at the same time. It is represented on all continents, and its production output is counted in tonnes, not pieces. Nevertheless, the primary goal of the company has always been music. This is the point after all. To accomplish this, the manufactured pieces are not only tested for the audio reception of the end-users and the designers but also undergo laboratory testing of acoustic response dissipation on audio stand's tops as well as other state-of-the-art trials. The results are supposedly outstanding – we have to take the researchers' word for it, and just focus on pure listening.

Let's briefly go back to the visual appearance. For Janusz as a visual artist, the appearance is of the essence. Therefore, the designs are flawless, so that the intended harmony of their shape continuously affects the listener in a discreet way, made obvious only during moments of reflection. It is the concealment and highlighting that I've touched upon. Equipment on Rogoz Audio stands and platforms just looks better. And this is a value on its own. The aesthetics of music meets the visual appearance so as to elevate the overall satisfaction even further. But the design of the frame itself, and the technical solutions that improve the sound is just not enough. The finish, i.e. lacquers and veneers also matter. And here we find a real showcase of caring for the customer. The base catalogue offers 2500 colours, each in three degrees of gloss: matte, semi-gloss and high gloss. Even if a colour is so unique that it cannot be found among the 2500, a dedicated colourist will match a custom one on request. This has happened. Customers really do expect it. And this is true not only for colours but also for veneers. Once a customer requested the product to match century-old walnut furniture whose polish has darkened over the years. No problem, let's just pick a perfectly matching darkened veneer. Rogoz Audio takes pride in accepting any challenge. This is the reason behind the expansion of the company and its reputation. Perfection, perfection and once again perfection – this is the secret of success.

STRUCTURE



Let's get specific and talk about the specifics of the Rogoz Audio 3RP1/BBS platform. Its top is separated from the supporting structure by means of a patented Balancing Board System (BBS), which combines the advantages of point support and slidability. Screwed spikes made of high-carbon steel, i.e. quite soft steel, are screwed in underneath the supporting frame. This brings out the best from the spikes or cones – the kinetic energy of vibrations is transmitted only in the vertical plane. As a result of minimum contact surface, the energy is mostly converted to heat and not transmitted further. This solution can be

imagined as a conical filter that converts vibrations to harmless heat. That's not all, however, as the support point of the cone is not fixed. It is ended with a cap made of carbon fibre which matches a hollow steel bed attached to the underside of the supporting platform. This allows the structure to slide, which converts more vibration energy into frictional heat.

Combined, this is an advanced equivalent of a vibration isolator based on balls instead of spikes – also characterised by minimum contact surface and additional lateral sliding. Ball-based solutions, however, require the balls to be rigid, which in turn causes resonance in the upper band and hardens the sound itself. Making the balls less rigid just lowers the initial point of resonance, and if the balls are too soft the contact surface increases. As a result, the negative feedback loop closes, and the only thing left to do is to use a greater number of relatively soft balls to distribute the load. This, however, also increases the total contact area, which once again defeats the purpose. The Balancing Board System is a successful alternative to the above. It combines relatively hard spikes with a very hard bed with an intermediate layer of carbon fibre, which improves the dampening of vibrations and allows increasing the friction surface. Since the point of filtering is located at the side of the spike, it fulfils its purpose and also leaves some room for additional slippage. All this together improves the dissipation of vibrations by limiting them only to three points of support, in order to, as described in Polish Patent P.404137, improve the heard sound.



The platforms are intended to be used with virtually all kinds of audio gear, from turntables and CD players to speakers. The maximum load is 100 kg, and the moderate cost is PLN 2800. The platform is equipped with a top which dimensions match the size of audio devices, whereas the platform itself is slightly broader – the support structure extends a few centimetres on both sides. Both the top and the supporting frame are made of MDF and HDF boards, i.e., plywood layers of medium and high hardness.

As I have mentioned on several occasions, it is not only the technology that matters here, but also the appearance. The platform looks astonishing and the coat of lacquer is genuinely impressive. It does not get outshined even by Accuphase DP-700 fished with outstanding quality veneer. The platform is aesthetically crafted and adds beauty to anything that is placed on top of it. Its form evokes the long Japanese tables that people kneel by, and the illusion of a double top with a spacing slot and the side grooves visible from the front and from the top give the platform a dark mysterious look. As a result, a piece of audiophile gear placed on top of it ceases to be a mundane block and starts to look more mysterious. And that was the point – this is the magic that turns ugly into beautiful and the oddness into harmony.

But aesthetics is one thing, and the impact on the sound is another. So let's tackle the sound.



A teraz odpowiemy sobie na pytanie – czy to naprawdę działa?

I had some luck when it came to testing as I have had just received powerful Avantgarde Duo Grosso horn speakers for review. I will not elaborate on the speakers though, as they were tested a year and a half ago together with Accuphase top power amps and a preamp. This time the speakers will only supplement the company's integrated amplifier, which had been brought for review by the owner of Avantgarde, as agreed in Paris. Of course I will comment on them on a few occasions, but they are not the point of focus here. Not on purpose anyhow. Never mind the purpose, what matters is that the Avantgarde speakers are indeed powerful and make the entire room tremble – and this is the perfect opportunity for the platform to shine. If it can, that is.

With the gear on the platform, I started to listen. This listening took more than I had intended, the sound was so exquisite and the horn speakers performed outstandingly. Even if they would do better in a larger space, they still sounded spectacular. The high ceiling, floor on joists and the shape of the room served their purpose. But I'm drifting off topic once again. Or not – the sound with the player standing on the platform does matter.



I will show how good the sound was with the Rogoz Audio platform, by describing how bad the sound became when I took the CD player off the platform and put it on a stand manufactured by another company, Base Audio. I have not checked how the player would perform directly on the floor. It would have been a certain disaster, as the sound was much, much worse even on the Base Audio audio stand. I was utterly surprised. As I was expecting only some nuances at most, I made big effort to catch these nuances. Quite unnecessarily. Even a half-deaf person would hear the difference. Most briefly – after taking the platform out of the equation, the sound just died. That's right – in audiophile terms it rolled straight down into the valley of death. It turned gray, faded, lost its warmth. Just like a corpse. I could not believe my own ears. Fortunately, I was not alone. Karol, who has a few tests of this kind under his belt, saw my face and told me not to be so surprised, as this was exactly what it usually looks like. "I told you that you would hear it", he said with utter certainty. OK, but that much? The message with the platform was warm, something like the temperature of the human body; maybe little lower, but the warmth was surely there. Without the platform it became even worse than the air in the room, it was slightly colder than that; not as cold as tap water, but lower than the ambient temperature.

At least that's how I felt it immediately after switching. The colours faded even more. Everything went gray. It was as if someone was adjusting a TV set and turned colour almost all the way down. It was awful. With this audio stand the dynamics also degraded a lot. But it gets worse. The sound as a whole lost its smoothness and became lumpy. As if the curves of the melody that previously bent beautifully, now became lumpy and jagged. This was more like driving on a rough road instead of flying a sport aircraft. I won't tell you what you can do with such music. If I was the owner of all of this, and someone took this damn platform away from me, I'd be furious. It gets even worse. It all started banging. It's not surprising, driving on a rough road and all, but these bangs were not only due to the loss of melody, but also because of the distortion of the percussion instruments and denaturalisation of the reverbs. All in all, it got really ugly. The apex of listening without the platform involved the collapse of the stage. On the Rogoz Audio platform almost all, or at least most music events occurred behind the speakers, and the depth was so spectacular that you could almost throw stones at it. Without the platform everything got flattened to two meters at most, thus pushing the sound mostly between the speakers.

There must have been other differences as well, but I honestly admit, I didn't listen to the Accuphase player away from the platform for long, as it was very unpleasant. Even though I felt relieved that the reviewed item performed outstandingly, and I can honestly say, even scream, that it is worth every one of the more than two thousand PLN it costs (of course, provided that you can afford it), the music itself was not inspiring. In an instant I realized what the reason was: the CrystalCable power cord worked wonders only with the Accuphase player. After all, it was on the platform the whole time...

Or maybe I let myself be deceived? This happens sometimes. You change something in the setup – a device or a cable – and suddenly you hear clear improvement. You're quite proud of yourself then, until you decide to check the previous setup once again and it turns out that there's no real difference. The sound is just as good, and there had been no improvement at all. So I also returned to the original setup, and did so quite promptly, as without the platform the sound had no longer been enjoyable. Then everything immediately went back to the spectacular status quo, as if someone put a model railway engine back on track. (Does anyone still play with model railway? Do small engines and carriages still derail? Reportedly. Phil Collins has or used to have incredible models. Today everyone is about computers...)



To sum up, the Rogoz Audio 3RP1/BBS platform performed spectacularly in both directions during the test. And there's no indulgence at all in this opinion, it was just perfect. I frankly admit, I had not expected that. I have nothing more to say other than that I'm all for the platform. The Rogoz platform, that is. The only thing left for me is to negotiate – maybe they'll let me keep it longer, of course for promotional purposes. That quite unlikely, but hey, a man can hope.

And, last but not least, let me add something. Someone clever and inquisitive might check the review of the Accuphase DP-700 player and see that it was not tested on any platform, but still the review is extremely enthusiastic. This is true, except that the player was tested not with speakers but with headphones, and those are quite unlikely to make the room tremble. This does not mean, however, that the headphones audio does not get improved – the player itself vibrates when rotating the disc, the transformers vibrate, but surely this does not even come close to the trembling that the Avantgarde speakers made while playing out loud. This made me realise how different the review of the split Accuphase DP-900/DC-900 would be, as if both its parts were placed on separate platforms, or even on one platform, jointly.

A COMPLETE SET INCLUDES

- 1 platform
- 4 height-adjustable spikes
- BBS between shelves
- 4 massive anti-scratch disks protecting the floor

MATERIALS USED

Balancing Board System:

- a steel bearing inserted into the shelf – A10X steel
- intermediate pieces – carbon polymer
- height-adjustable spike – high-silicon NZ3 steel

Support structure and shelves/tabletop:

- legs – sandwich structure: MDF + S235JR steel core
- shelves – sandwich structure: MDF + HDF

APPLICATIONS

- CD players;
- analog gramophones;
- power amplifiers;
- integrated amplifiers;
- preamplifiers;
- other loudspeakers

Excerpts from the English translation of the review Rogoz Audio 3RP1/BBS Anti-Vibration Platform from HiFi Philosophy, 10/03/2015