

MILLENNIUM Silentor and CD Enhancement

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Millennium Silentor Center Weight And M-LP Carbon Fiber Platter Mat

Millennium is their name, and carbon fiber is their game. These products are also from Aaudio Imports. I decided to try them after being jazzed by Millennium's carbon fiber M-CD damper. But I was pretty skeptical that they would make much of a difference on my fully tricked-out VPI Aries 3, which has the Super Platter upgrade as well as the VPI center and periphery clamps. But wrong again.



Let us start with the center weight. Comparing the Millennium Silentor (\$349) with the VPI, both are beautifully machined hunks of stainless steel, differently shaped but roughly equivalent in mass.

The VPI clamp has two damping rubber bands around the low circumference. The Silentor has a thin carbon fiber layer on the bottom where it contacts the LP label, which covers eight holes filled with crushed quartz for improved damping. A rubber O-ring fits over the spindle for additional damping. (It makes a cute little 'pop' sound when the clamp is lifted off.)

Comparing the two center weights is easy. I start with the VPI clamp, and after listening for a while lift the stylus, replace the VPI with the Silentor and resume play. The difference is not large, but is easily discernible. With the Silentor clamp, bass is tighter and, in most cases, — not always — deeper. In the midrange and upper octaves, I perceive improved focus, especially on piano, and gains in image specificity. I won't claim that I could walk into the room with a record playing and identify which center clamp was in use. But in A-B comparisons the differences are easily audible, and to me worthwhile.

Millennium's M-LP-Mat (\$349), only 3 mm thick, has two surfaces: the carbon fiber side is backed with a thin fabric that feels like velvet. The mat can be used with either side contacting the record. As you might expect, with the fabric side up the sound is slightly softer and warmer, with leading-edge transients less sharply defined than with the carbon fiber side up. I tried it both ways, and preferred the livelier, more dynamic and detailed presentation with the carbon fiber contacting the LP.

The comparison methodology was similar to what I described with the clamps, except that I had to remove the LP in order to place the mat. The first few times I did this, I also raised the arm slightly to maintain the same VTA — although the 3 mm difference is not critical with my JMW 10.5i arm and Dynavector XV-1s cartridge, which is less fussy about VTA than many moving coils. After a while I stopped making that adjustment, and I couldn't hear any problems related to the small VTA alteration.

The M-LP-Mat comes with a small lightweight puck, about an inch in diameter and also faced with carbon fiber where it contacts the record. Apparently, it's for use with sprung turntables such as Linn or Thorens, for which the Silentor would be too massive. I think I'll send it to a friend who is still using a B&O 4002 linear-tracking table, and see what it does for him.

With the mat's fabric side up, there is little difference in sound from just using the VPI Super Platter alone — and what difference I perceive favors the platter without the mat. But with the carbon fiber side up and the Silentor clamp in place, there is enough improvement to warrant keeping these goodies.