

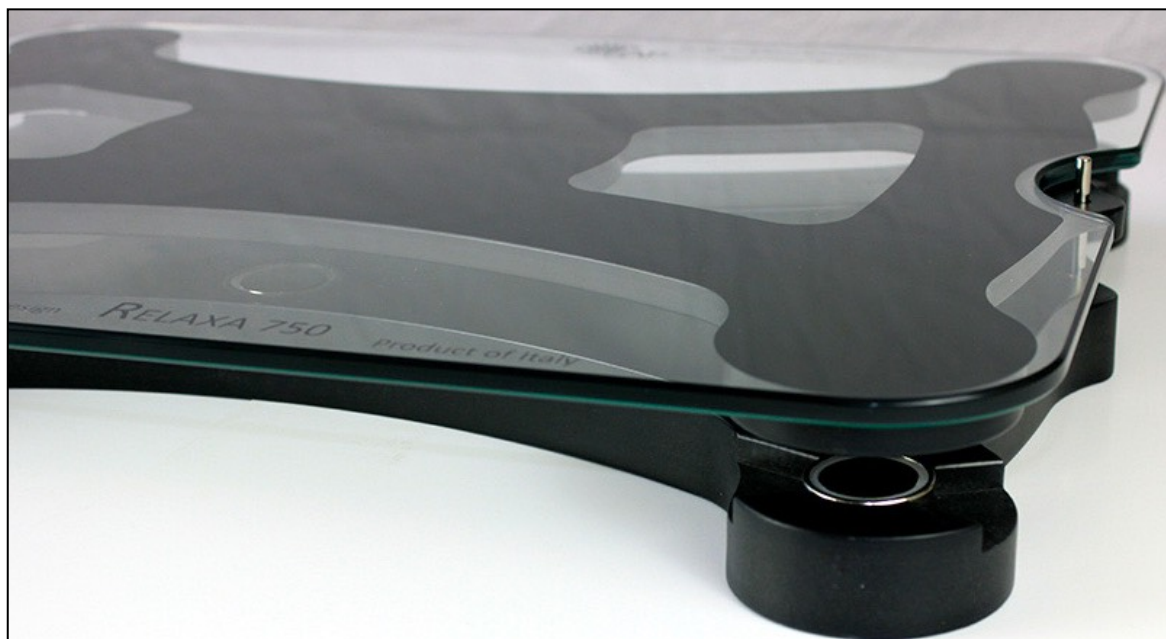
Review of Relaxa 750 by Chris Kelly, 04/2021 on:

**the ear**

## Isolation platform eSseCi Relaxa 750



In the last couple of years I have had the pleasure of reviewing several pieces of Norma Audio equipment, so when the UK distributor Hi-Fidelity told me that they had secured the rights to import another Italian brand I was more than a little keen to try an example of it here. Anthony Mills, the senior director of Hi-Fidelity, was equally keen to have a neutral pair of ears evaluate it, and thus it was that it arrived at Kelly Towers one March morning. The Relaxa 750 Isolation Floating Platform, to give it its full title, was designed Silvano Cremonesi, who established the business in 1999 and patented the idea shortly thereafter. The platforms have garnered several awards over the ensuing years, so it was going to be very interesting to see whether Mr Mills and the European press have backed a winner! My first thought, on collecting the package from the doorstep and bringing it in was that this thing was heavy. Opening the box it soon became apparent why. The Relax 750 consists of two layers. The base is made of an oblong of heavy wood in the shape of an X fitting into the four corners. An array of four magnets, about 2cm in diameter, are set into the centre of the base with an additional magnet at each corner. The latter can be adjusted to set the top plate dead level. The only other feature on the base is a thin metal upright fitted into the centre of each of the shorter sides, their purpose became obvious at the next stage of assembly.



The second piece is the top shelf, made of heavy tempered glass, with strong magnets fitted to the underside to match those in the base. There are two holes drilled in the top shelf and this is then lowered over the two metal poles and the whole top shelf then floats above the base. The uprights are not weight-bearing – they simply hold the top plate in position. So essentially, we have a maglev structure on our rack.

I had put the Relaxa 750 on the top shelf of my Quadraspire XL rack and it just fitted. Hi-Fidelity tell me that they are in discussion with the manufacturer to have smaller versions made which will fit onto the lower shelves of hi-fi racks. Having checked with my trusty spirit level that the device was indeed flat, I installed my Linn LP12 turntable, with a Dynavector XX2 cartridge fitted to the Ittok arm. Prior to the installation I had played three of my regular review albums with the Linn in its customary position on the top of the Quadraspire, to set a baseline in my mind. The albums were the Mobile Fidelity versions of *Blood on the Tracks* by Bob Dylan and *Forever Changes* by Love, along with my 2016 remastered version of *Meddle* by Pink Floyd. The rest of the system consisted of two guest Hegel audio pieces, the V10 phono stage and the H390 integrated amplifier. The loudspeakers were Kudos Cardea C20 floor standers.



To be truthful, I had been slightly dubious that putting this contraption under the turntable (which of course has its own sprung suspension system) would make much difference to the sound, but my goodness it very quickly became obvious that I had been wrong. Very wrong in fact. The additional sense of clarity, of being there in the recording studio was startling. Every instrument became easier to hear in the mix, and the effect was clearly audible across the whole frequency range. The bass emanating from C20s increased in power and tunefulness, while the midrange and treble both gained additional presence and realism. It was as if my LP12 had received a major upgrade.

In my privileged role as a reviewer I have played host to some fine bits of kit over the last few years, but few have had me as surprised as the Relaxa 750. Sometimes I sit and wonder whether what I am hearing is better or just different. In this case there was no such debate – every record I played in this configuration did indeed sound better than I remembered it. My LP12 is a fine sounding turntable, but I had no idea just how fine until I had it floating above the rest of the system on this Italian marvel. I did not have an alternative deck to try with the Relaxa 750, but I can see no reason why it wouldn't work just as well with a non-suspended design. In fact it might work better, as it seems to completely isolate whatever sits on it from outside mechanical interference. Because I could, I took the LP12 away and replaced it with my Yamaha CD-S3000 SACD/CD player. I was wondering if the Relaxa magic would be audible through a digital replay system and somewhat to my surprise it was easy to hear. I played a good number of silver discs, in both standard and SACD format, and the music again seemed to gain in coherence, detail and realism, just as I had experienced with analogue replay.



Somebody with whom I was discussing this device asked whether it was bad to have all that magnetic energy at work close to sensitive components. All I could say was that I could hear absolutely nothing detrimental to the sound, and all that I was left with was an impression that this might be the most cost effective upgrade to the performance of a turntable that I can recall hearing. It is not inexpensive but it works and what's more it works exceptionally well. The makers claim that it will support up to 50kg, which should be more than enough for most components.

There are not many devices that come through my listening room which I really miss when they are gone, but the Relaxa 750 was certainly added to that short list. It is well thought out, well made and, at least in the context of my system, made a significant improvement. What more can you ask for?