



Looking like a power amplifier yet featuring six filtered power outputs, the Isotek GII Vision is claimed to enhance both hi-fi and AV systems with better quality mains. Channa Vithana listens in...

# The Mains Thing

It's not everyone who would contemplate spending £550 on something you can buy from Ikea for £5, but to be fair, this isn't quite comparing like with like. The pricier item is an extremely well made and meticulously designed AC mains distribution unit, the latter a cheap-as-chips power block from China!

Indeed, the GII Vision does more than just distribute power. Isotek says that the six outputs are individually filtered to stop components 'talking' to each other or corrupting the clean supply provided by the unit. This is achieved by a series of delta filters on the outputs and a 'sophisticated filter circuit' inspired by work in cryogenics. The company says, "it harnesses the technique used for the switching of cryogenic coils", and talks of its so-called "Polaris-X" technology that draws mains contaminants away from audio components plugged into the unit.

On the rear panel there are six, numbered, unswitched sockets. Numbers one and two have higher current capability, and are rated at 10 amps, making them suitable for integrated amplifiers and plasma screens, etc., while the other four sockets can be used with a source component like a CD or DVD player each having a 6.3 amp rating.

Internally Isotek have hand soldered all the components with silver solder and use 'under stressed' parts for long life. The Isotek's large PCB also features a ground plane upper surface acting as a common mode filter across the whole board,

which Isotek says allows the unit to act as a true Faraday cage, protecting itself from RFI and other components from the job it performs. The Isotek also has power surge protection for all units connected to it.

It's no small fry, the Isotek, and should be placed on a dedicated equipment shelf and kept off the floor to allow adequate ventilation from underneath. Its vital statistics are 444x85x305mm and 7kg.

## SOUND QUALITY

With the Isotek connected, the gorgeous underlying melody to 'Allegro Moderato' from the Sibelius/Nielsen CD became more lucid and involving while the main violin melody intro had enhanced timbre and air. As the composition swells, the violin goes from higher to lower frequencies, the main orchestration begins and - a vastly broader acoustic and musical weight was presented.

Blondie's 'Sunday Girl' was superb with the Isotek, where the music profused in definition and the inherently good musical timing of the reference system became even better. Of particular merit to the Isotek was how it made the hand accordion backing melody to 'Sunday Girl' an integral element with its own identity to an already beautifully sung main chorus.

The Isotek enhanced 'The Ever Lasting Gaze' by The Smashing Pumpkins and brought forth the huge dynamics of the music without any splashy distortions. The music was allowed to flow outwards with every instrument intact and clear,

yet, all elements combined cohesively with a tight musical structure which simply allowed me to enjoy the musical complexity and exhilaration. The guitars on 'The Ever Lasting Gaze' had better timbre and the stunning but deft synthesiser melody which overlaps the chorus became expansive and augmented the ecstatic feel.

The re-recording of 'The Robots' by Kraftwerk became even more elegant because the midrange cultivated beautifully disciplined but delicate fluidity. The individually re-recorded tracks within 'The Robots' were rendered with greater authority imbuing better depth to the music. Timing was stunning while the bass now had finer tunefulness and texture.

## CONCLUSION

The Isotek GII Vision really did make a dramatic musical difference with much higher resolution, timbre, spatiality and impressively - even better timing. It is thoroughly recommend, but really requires auditioning at home as not everyone's mains could be enhanced in the same way.

## TUNING

Substituting a standard mains lead with an optional £80 Isotek Elite from the wall socket into the back of the Vision created even more resolution, but sacrificed a little air and excitement. However, when replacing the standard leads for two Phonosophie AG chords (£180) to the amplification and three six-foot Moray James Cryogenic PWR2.5 chords (\$450/£258 approx) to the CD combination - the music gelled and the superior resolution increased and the air and excitement returned. Expensive, but it bore fruit.

## VERDICT

A genuinely effective and surprisingly cost effective upgrade, but results could vary so a home dem is recommended.

ISOTEK GII VISION £550

Isotek

+44 (0)1635 291357

www.isoteksystems.com

## FOR

- effective mains upgrade
- better timing
- superb resolution/ timbre

## AGAINST

- home audition necessary