



Chord Company GroundARRAY grounding device

NOISE IS THE scourge of any audio system and anything one can do to lower it has to be a good thing. Unused interconnect sockets effectively act as aerials for radio frequency interference (RFI) as they are a 'floating' wire disconnected at both ends – the input selector switch and the input socket end. This unwelcome RFI can easily find its way into the signal path of your system.

To combat this, Chord Company has introduced a series of GroundARRAY high-frequency noise reduction devices. Designed to be put into unused sockets on your audio equipment, they provide a low impedance path to ground for HF noise to improve the noise floor of your system. Each GroundARRAY can be used on any unused analogue or digital sockets.

Well connected

The GroundARRAY is made from precision CNC-machined thick-walled aluminium and is hand-assembled in a time-consuming process at Chord's factory. Each unit contains a number of absorption materials, including a special filling created to deaden noise. The GroundARRAY is available in a number of termination options, including USB-A, RCA, DIN, XLR, BNC, RJ45 and HDMI – the RCA and XLR versions are reviewed here.

I start off by using a GroundARRAY RCA in an unused coaxial digital output of my PrimaLuna ProLogue

CD player. Playing Vivaldi's *Violin Concertos Op.6* performed by The Academy Of Ancient Music, I am instantly aware of an improvement in imaging and detail, which becomes less clear when I remove the GroundARRAY.

With a Sinus CD of French Organ Music played by Albert Bolliger, the *Fantasia Sur La Tierce* by Louis Couperin has more depth and presence and the spaciousness of the church is much more apparent.

I connect a male XLR version to an unused input of my Studer A810 pro tape machine. Spinning a master tape of Tchaikovsky's *Symphony No.2 in C Minor* played by the USSR State Symphony Orchestra, I can detect a

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subtle improvement in clarity, particularly during the crescendos. However, when I fit a second device into the other channel I don't detect any noticeable improvement, so in this case one unit is sufficient.

I next connect a GroundARRAY RCA to an unused input of my valve preamp and play an LP of The National Symphony Orchestra with Rosie Middleton singing *Habanera* from Bizet's *Carmen*. With one GroundARRAY RCA fitted, the vocals are cleaner and

clearer. This time, the improvement is very significant. When the device is removed, the vocals become less distinct. I then connect a second to the other channel of the preamp and detect a further improvement with a subtle reinforcement of clarity and realism. Repeatedly fitting and removing the GroundARRAYs confirms they are lowering the noise floor, the music stands out more, is less grainy and has more refinement. I also have a greater awareness of the atmosphere and presence of the orchestra in my listening room.

Going live

Time for some jazz in the shape of The Yuko Mabuchi Trio. The live performance of Cole Porter's *What Is This Thing Called Love* starts off with a furious introduction with Mabuchi on the piano, swiftly followed by the bass and drums as the main melody kicks in. With the GroundARRAY fitted, I'm pulled further into the performance as the piano sparkles with clarity and energy. The hi-hats take on an extra tingle of realism and the fingering of the double bass is more evident. Here again, a second GroundARRAY device enhances these improvements.

In my system, the effect of the GroundARRAY is most apparent when used with a preamp. This is a great device for any high-end system and having one or two of these units at your disposal will definitely lift its performance to the next level. **NR**

DETAILS

PRICE
£550
TELEPHONE
01980 625700
WEBSITE
chord.co.uk

OUR VERDICT

