



# Chord Company PhonoARRAY

**WINNER**  
GROUNDING



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## **Magic ARAY**

In steps Chord Company's PhonoARRAY. Physically, it's a surprisingly weighty, 10cm-long CNC'd aluminium cylinder, terminated at both ends by a speaker-type terminal. One terminal connects to the thin grounding lead from a tonearm, while the other has a screened lead attached that connects the PhonoARRAY to the phono stage. Inside is the ARAY magic, a compound that absorbs high-frequency energy. This sandwiches an inductor that acts as a series filter and is potted in resin to help mitigate any propensity for microphony.

Wired into a system between Origin Live's Sovereign S turntable and Agile tonearm, the Chord Company device left, in the words of reviewer Kevin Fiske, “zero room for equivocation”. Specifically, he says, “musical energy had notched up a tad, bass tune playing was tonally richer and more textured, vocals had been stripped of a degree of grain and now sounded more natural and relaxed, and sound-staging sounded more crisply defined, less blurred”.

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**Y**ou could be forgiven for thinking that the turntable is the one audio component that resolved grounding decades ago. After all, tonearms have been supplied with separate grounding cables between decks and phono stages for years. But as Chord Company is all too eager to communicate, that very act of grounding has a downside: it's conventionally done with a thin wire that, while doing its job to silence hum, also often acts as an antenna, picking up localised high-frequency radiation from switch-mode power supplies, LED lumens, Wi-Fi and so on, and then injecting it into the ground-plane of our audio system where it obscures musical detail.