

Coherence Systems ADD Powr Sorcer Apprentice power conditioner

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Back in issue 208, we looked at the Sorcer X4 from Coherence Systems. The Sorcer Apprentice is an inline variant of that clever power conditioner. However, power conditioner is merely the catch-all description. Bill Stierhout's description is closer. These are 'electronic harmonic resonator' devices.

This could easily place the whole ADD Powr line firmly into 'oddball' territory, were it not for Bill Stierhout's track record. He invented a product called QuantumSymphony Pro, which became the QRT (Quantum Resonant Technology) system that Nordost has used so successfully over the last 15 years. Since selling that technology to Nordost, Bill Stierhout has not exactly sat on his laurels.

Stierhout's connection with QRT also pre-approves ADD Powr products for dismissal by audio's many cynics. The legitimately sceptical – those who might question the concepts underlying these products but are prepared to 'give them a listen' – should read on.

Fourier and square waves

As described earlier, the Sorcer Apprentice power conditioner is a harmonic amplifier or resonator, which ADD Powr claims saturates the power supplies of components with harmonic frequencies (like a tuning fork) that is said to increase the energy of the audio material. Greater audio harmonic energy, goes the claim, means greater listening pleasure and satisfaction. More specifically, the Sorcer system is claimed to inject very low frequency

square waves into component power supplies. This, ADD Powr claims, is based on Fourier's series and harmonic resonance, which is said to result in the Sorcer boosting the signal-to-noise ratio of the system.

Stierhout believes his system provides an energy boost to the audio signal level, which may be as great as 10–15%, and an acoustic energy increase that ranges from 0.25–1.00dB.

ADD Powr is fond of a few analogies to get the message across. Stierhout likens the Sorcer Apprentice's performance as putting the right fuel in your sports car, or the difference between stargazing in a city or 60 miles from the light pollution. In other words, the quality of the mains AC power helps lower the system's noise floor. >>



EQUIPMENT REVIEW
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» Setting aside the harmonic technology, the Sorcer Apprentice has four line transformers and an EMI line filter. It features two outputs for your system, although the claims made about the Sorcer Apprentice apply just as much if it's connected anywhere on the AC line. For giggles, I tried the Sorcer Apprentice as a bulwark against the horrors of phone chargers and plugged them into the Sorcer. Then I tried it between wall and system. It worked in both settings. It did its job just plugged into the wall with no power cords connected.

Here's one of the few concerns with the Sorcer Apprentice; the two power connectors are either hospital-grade US sockets or Schuko connectors for EU plugs. There are no UK connectors available.

The Great Get-Out Clause

Around about now, a reviewer will say something like "Your Mileage May Vary" when it comes to power products. There is a reason for this; no two mains AC installations are alike. The conditions in one person's home and surroundings – from electrical, electromagnetic, and magnetic considerations – are very different to the next. However, with the Sorcer Apprentice, that doesn't seem to matter too much. It works universally, whatever the AC mains does.

What it does so universally is bring out the best in your system, Naturally, the better the system, the more it can bring out. This is not necessarily a quality issue, more a 'is it well put together, almost irrespective of cost' concern. If you have a poor-sounding system because it isn't assembled or installed with care, all the Sorcer Apprentice will do is throw that poor sound into a sharper accent.

A good system that is correctly 'sorted' on the other hand, sounds significantly improved. It takes a couple of hours or more to harmonise the power through the house and the system, but suddenly what was good springs to life, and is several notches better than before. It's not a 'fireworks' change and more a slow realisation that everything seems more in the right musical order.

Sure, the dark backgrounds are darker and backgroundier. Music seems clearer, more physically in space in front of you, more focused and more like you expect to hear music in a live setting. But more realistically, the Sorcer Apprentice makes your system sound like you always expected it to sound.

Those who want quick A-B tests are in for a long wait between A and B, because the Sorcer Apprentice takes a while to percolate through your system. A rapid-fire A-B test is changing the

crew of the spaceship midway through the countdown. But wanting an A-B test is probably missing the point.

Now here's the weird part. There's something about the sound played with the Sorcer Apprentice *in situ* that is like a dopamine hit, or it turns your brainwaves from Beta to Alpha, and you are in musical chillax territory. This makes no sense to the "yes, but what did it do to the soundstage?" listener, but the Sorcer Apprentice seems to act at a deeper level.

Logically, there is no way a black box can monkey around with my brainwave state, pump my brain with happy chemicals or otherwise mess around with my wetware because I am not connected to the Sorcer Apprentice. But each time I played my system with it in place, I relaxed into the music faster and easier. The music just 'felt right'. I don't think there's the vocabulary to express that in observational terms.

Return to Angular

Removing the Sorcer Apprentice returned the system over the next couple of hours to its more angular, less cohesive and more relaxing nature.

It's hard not to be impressed by the ADD Powr Sorcer Apprentice, even if the reasons why it is so impressive are not the stuff of normal audio observations. It makes a good system into an exceptional one. +

Price and contact details

Price \$3,299

Manufacturer Coherence Systems/
ADDPowr

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