



Kinabalu Support Systems

Kinabalu Platforms - general

Kinabalu platforms normally require the addition of a set of couplers and decouplers to form the complete support solution (see Kinabalu Couplers/Decouplers). There may be occasions where couplers/decouplers are not suitable or not required, such as when supporting spiked turntables or loudspeakers.

Standard Kinabalu Platform

The basic Kinabalu platform is a solid granite plinth which has a honed top surface. The top edges and side edges have a 5mm 45 degree bevel and the plinth has 4 soft Sorbothane feet (50mm dia and approx 20mm thick) bonded to the underside. These soft feet ensure there is a high level of acoustic decoupling between the platform and any shelf which it is stood upon.

Plinths are cut from a type of granite called 'SPI Grey', used because it has a very fine and uniform crystalline structure which gives a consistent audio performance. More fancy types of granite often have significant discontinuities within the material and whilst they may look good they don't always perform in a predictable manner. The top surface is honed by machine; this cuts off the polished layer normally found on the top surface, leaving the fine granular structure of the material exposed. This is essential to ensure that the tips of the coupling tripod (see couplers) reliably 'key' directly to the crystalline structure of the granite.

Although a relatively economic support solution (compared to the Super and HiRez Kinabalu) the performance improvement this platform brings when used under equipment is immediately noticeable. When properly set up with a coupling tripod and decoupling feet, the sound is more spacious with better imaging, more detail and a noticeably lower noise floor. Digital sources in particular lose that grainy 'digital' sound; the upper registers being far more listenable and fatigue free. Dynamic range improves too, the system is less susceptible to level dependent distortion so dynamic peaks don't sound so distorted and compressed, and as a result the rhythm, pace and timing of a performance is lifted significantly.

Super Kinabalu Platform

The Super Kinabalu is the mid-level product in the range of support platforms. It offers considerable performance benefits over the standard Kinabalu. The Super Kinabalu platform consists of the standard Kinabalu plinth built into a base frame which houses an acoustic absorption labyrinth. This labyrinth is a complex physical structure which creates a long, low impedance acoustic route that drains acoustics away from the top granite plinth.

The labyrinth is housed within the base frame and the underside of the base frame is fitted with 4 soft Sorbothane feet (50mm dia and approx 20mm thick). These soft feet ensure there is a high level of acoustic decoupling between the platform and any shelf which it is stood upon. Because of the compliance of these soft feet, the maximum recommended weight that the platform should support is 15kgs. The standard product comes fitted with a base frame constructed from aluminum alloy with a black powder-coat finish.

The performance that this platform delivers is a significant step up from the standard Kinabalu. This occurs because the addition of the acoustic labyrinth allows improved drainage of unwanted acoustic energy, lowering yet more the acoustic noise floor in anything the platform supports. As a result the musical presentation gains more freedom, has greater dynamic range and becomes even less volume dependent. Soundstage becomes wider and front-to-back depth more readily apparent. The gains in control markedly improve perceived bandwidth; highs are more delicate and extended and lows are more stable and consistent with far better separation and timing. Overall though, the musical flow is the real winner; there is a pulse and drive to the music that just makes so much more sense.

HiRez Kinabalu Platform

The High Resolution Kinabalu is currently the top in our range of support platforms. It offers an exceptional level of performance, improving quite considerably on the already high standards set by the Super Kinabalu. Again the 'HiRez' Kinabalu incorporates the same SPI Grey granite top surface (see Kinabalu) but this time it



is fitted into a deeper base frame. Within this frame is housed an acoustic labyrinth of considerably more complexity than that in the Super Kinabalu. What this does is create an even more complex drainage structure which enables this platform to sink away even more acoustics.

This larger labyrinth, built within the base frame, increases the depth of the frame by 10mm. Like the other Kinabalu platforms, the HiRez is fitted with soft Sorbathane feet underneath(50mm dia and approx 20mm thick) which provides decoupling from the supporting shelf. But this time 16 feet are fitted (4 at each corner) which allows the platform to support items weighing up to 80kgs. This product comes fitted with a base frame constructed from aluminum alloy with a black powder-coat finish.

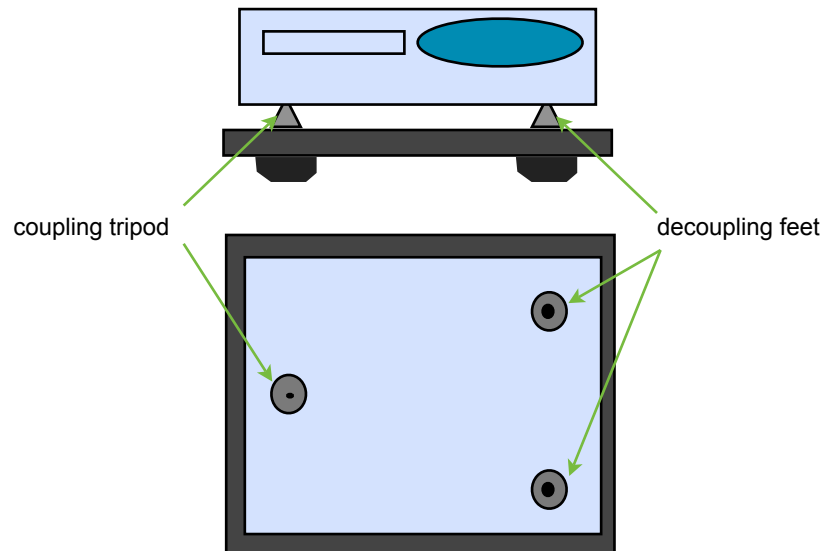
Used under the sort of high quality components you would expect to match with a platform of this value, the gain in extra fidelity is impressive. As well as even more control, dynamic range and perceived bandwidth, and further improvements in image placement and darker backgrounds, there is a real step up in transparency and resolution. The added transparency opens up the view into the recording; it just gets much cleaner and clearer and there is obviously less hash and distortion present, so you can follow all the elements of the recording with a lot more ease. Indeed, with the HiRez Kinabalu most people hear whole new layers in their favorite recordings that they didn't even know were there before. The improvement in resolution comes down to an added ability to resolve complex inner tonal detail of delicate music, but also to really scale up and keep a far better grip on complex and energetic stuff.

Kinabalu Platforms - specs

| platform type | dimensions | platform weight | weight platform can support | sag - typical height reduction under load | build detail/finish |
|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|---|--|
| Standard Kinabalu | 430mm x 360mm x 40mm | 5Kgs | <15Kgs | 3-4mm | SPI Grey Granite with top and sides honed, edges with 45 degree bevel. Fitted with 4 Focalpods under. |
| Standard Kinabalu | 480mm x 400mm x 40mm | 5Kgs | <15Kgs | 3-4mm | |
| Super Kinabalu | 440mm x 370mm x 58mm | 9Kgs | <15Kgs | 3-4mm | Black powder-coat aluminum base with acoustic labyrinth internally. Top surface is SPI Grey granite (as per standard Kinabalu). Fitted with 4 Focalpods under. |
| Super Kinabalu | 490mm x 410mm x 58mm | 9Kgs | <15Kgs | 3-4mm | |
| HiRez Kinabalu | 440mm x 370mm x 68mm | 11Kgs | <80Kgs | 3-4mm | Black powder-coat aluminum base with acoustic labyrinth internally (x2). Top surface is SPI Grey granite (as per standard Kinabalu). Fitted with 16 Focalpods under. |
| HiRez Kinabalu | 490mm x 410mm x 68mm | 11Kgs | <80Kgs | 3-4mm | |

Kinabalu couplers general

The Vertex AQ coupling tripods are a key component in the Kinabalu support system. One of these coupling tripods, together with a pair of decouplers (see decouplers) is used with a support platform (see platforms) to form the complete system. In simple terms, the purpose of the coupling tripod is to provide a low acoustic impedance route between the baseplate of a player and the top surface of the Kinabalu platform. The coupling tripod and 2 decoupling feet hold the player or amp up off of its own feet. They would be set well apart, say the 2 decoupling feet near the front and rear right corners of the player, and the coupling tripod half way along the left edge as shown in the diagram below.



Standard Kinabalu Couplers

The standard coupling tripods come in two sizes, and these are defined by their height. The two heights available are 19mm and 35mm. The two tripods are in similar proportions, the taller one a scaled-up version of the smaller (see photographs). Importantly, there is no difference in the performance of these two products. Their acoustic conduction properties are the same. The 19mm coupling tripod is the more commonly used, provided the player's feet are less than 19mm (or can be removed). The 35mm tripod is required when the player has taller feet which cannot be removed, or perhaps a deep front faceplate or other protrusions requiring the extra height.

Because these products couple so effectively, minimizing the acoustic impedance between player and platform, they allow a massive and demonstrable improvement in performance when used with their partnering kinabalu platforms. In our opinion, when used in the context of the complete Kinabalu support system, other spikes and cones available on the market do not compete.

HiRez Kinabalu Couplers

The 'HiRez' coupling tripod is a device that offers quite a considerable performance improvement over the standard coupling tripod. The core element of this product is actually the standard 35mm coupling tripod. But the sculpted lower half of the tripod is circled by a brass ring to create (when upside down) a void that looks like a little egg cup, with the three sharp points of the tripod extending about 2mm beyond the lower edge of the ring (when it's the right way up). In this void we then construct a micro acoustic labyrinth which creates multiple acoustic paths of varying lengths in the bottom of the tripod.

Whereas the standard coupling tripod is very effective at transmitting acoustic energy from your player into the kinabalu platform it does so down three very low impedance 'routes' of equal length (top tip, down to the three bottom tips). However, in the HiRez tripod there are also dozens of low impedance routes of varying length, criss-crossing between the lower three points. This structure now means, because of the varying path lengths, that the energy coming from the player is being broken down into lots of separate waveforms, each with a slight phase difference, as it passes through the tripod.



In terms of sound quality, compared to the standard tripod, the HiRez lowers the background noise floor even further and delivers even more transparency. Music gains more color and contrast with this tripod. Intended to be used with the HiRez Kinabalu (see HiRez kinabalu) to give our top performing support system, these 2 really do give an astonishing lift in performance to any quality system.

Kinabalu decouplers

As you can see from the photographs, there are 2 sizes of decoupling cones available and yes, you guessed it, they come in 19mm and 35mm heights. They come as a pair and you match the correct sized pair up with the size of coupling tripod that you need, so that you end up with 3 supports of the same height. But why do we do it like this. Well, as we know, it's the coupling tripod that does all the important work, by draining the acoustic energy away into the platform underneath. So why not just use 3? Well apart from the obvious extra cost, it doesn't sound better that way! It turns out that if 2 of the 3 supports actually deliberately 'decouple', that is, do not provide an efficient acoustic route, the best and most consistent results are achieved.

The cones decouple by the use of a rubber 'O' ring on the bottom, and a rubber nipple on the top. The rubber/metal interfaces are very dissimilar in their acoustic conduction properties, which creates and acoustic impedance mismatch. Relatively little sound will pass through that boundary. Of course, we also need some stability and security when the supports are in place, so the 'O' rings and rubber nipples provide a good grippy contact keeping our equipment safely where we put it.

Kinabalu Couplers/Decouplers - specs

| coupler/decoupler type | height | Build detail |
|------------------------|--------|--|
| Standard coupler | 19mm | Tool steel tripod. Carbon impregnated and heat treated. 3 sharp points on the base, 1 sharp top point. |
| Standard coupler | 35mm | |
| HiRez coupler | 35mm | Based on the standard coupler with addition of brass ring and micro acoustic labyrinth within. |
| Decoupler | 19mm | Aluminum cone with top rubber nipple and rubber 'O' ring on the base. |
| Decoupler | 35mm | |