

# Solus issue

**A believer in mains power conditioning, Tony Bolton considers the issues tackled by Isotek's Solus Evo 3 mains power conditioner.**

**T**he mains power that comes into our houses is something that we all take for granted, expecting it to confirm to certain parameters regarding voltage and the frequency of the alternating current. These aspects are controlled by the energy companies that supply your electricity, but there are issues over which they have no control that can adversely affect the sounds coming from your hi-fi. These can include RFI (Radio Frequency Interference) and extraneous noises from the power supplies from common household products such as fridges and computers.

For the last decade Hampshire based IsoTek have been developing equipment that goes a long way to ameliorating, if not entirely solving these problems, and their latest design is the Solus Evo 3, under discussion here.

As the name suggests this is the third generation of units to bear the Solus name. This one uses technologies, such as IsoTek's proprietary KERP and Polaris-X that have already appeared in some of the Company's more expensive products. The former, Kirchoff's Equal Resistance Path, equalises resistance across all six of the mains outlets at the back of the Solus whilst Polaris-X shunts AC mains borne noise to earth without compressing the dynamic range of the music. There is also a Unique Individual Differential Gate filter network to eliminate cross-contamination between the outlet sockets.

The Solus also provides protection against mains spikes and surges with up to 22,500

Amps of instantaneous protection on tap. The unit will deliver up to 2300 VA allowing quite substantial power amplifiers to benefit from its filtering. Internal wiring is silver plated oxygen-free copper. All of this is housed in a 444 x 105 x 305mm (w x h x d) steel casework with a brushed alloy facia. The units are available in either black or natural aluminium.

Setting up is simple. The Solus is placed in a suitable position, preferably on a shelf so that the ventilation holes underneath are not blocked, the chosen equipment is plugged in to it and the mains supply is connected to the IEC socket at the back. A blue LED will then glow at the front to signify power is present. (It is worth noting that IsoTek refuse to supply cheap off the shelf mains cables with their products, so discuss the choice of suitable cables with your retailer.)

Mains borne noise is one of those things that we are not aware of until we listen to a system without it. The immediately obvious advantages are a lower noise floor, giving the impression of darker, blacker silences in between notes, and the shape of the notes themselves are tidier. The opening attack of a sound, and its decay are more accurately described, sometimes being faster in their opening, and tailing off more naturally, while sounds that start quietly - the opening drum roll in Greig's Piano

Concerto, for instance, seem to start earlier, last longer and the impact of the final strikes, melding with the opening piano chords, have far greater impact.

I found that the odd extraneous noises that can interfere with FM radio listening all but disappeared, and the sound, as with that from CD and LP, seemed to have far greater presence in the room. I also found that although the overall volume of, say an announcer's voice seemed slightly reduced, the difference between the quiet and loud bits of music seemed considerably greater (a quick check with my iPad mounted SPL meter revealed that the volume was exactly the same).

The Solus can be used either on its own or in conjunction with a Titan, leaving the power amps to the latter and the source components to be fueled through the Solus. This seemed to provide a little more air and definition around the more delicate noises such as triangles and small percussion instruments.

Overall an excellent product that provides a substantial upgrade to the sound of your entire system. Rather than upgrade individual components I would recommend listening to your system through a Solus. You may well be surprised at just how good it actually is, and how much our polluted mains detracts from its performance.



**VERDICT**   
Provides effective cleansing of the mains supply at an affordable price - recommended.

**ISOTEK SOLUS EVO 3 MAINS CONDITIONER**  
IsoTek Systems  
[www.isoteksystems.com](http://www.isoteksystems.com)

**FOR**

- noticeably lower noise floor
- improved attack and decay of notes.
- smoother and tidier presentation of music.
- prevents cross-contamination between components.

**AGAINST**

- nothing I can think of.