

hardware review



Bassocontinuo Classic Line Lyra XL4 2.1

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Let me start by asking a question. Which component in your audio system has been with you the longest? For me, that's an easy one – my rack. Since I bought it in 2009 every single other item in my system has changed, from all the cables to all the electronic components and loudspeakers. It has very occasionally crossed my mind to think about changing racks but the thought is quickly dismissed – why fix what isn't broken? To be fair, if I had applied that philosophy at the start of my audio adventure I would have a much healthier bank balance today, but where's the fun in that. Generally speaking, racks don't get the pulse racing in the way that other new components do. Thus it was that when I was offered a chance to review the latest version of the Bassocontinuo Classic Line rack I was happy to agree, if only to see whether a midrange rack in 2021 was appreciably better than the 12 year old Quadraspire, which back in the day cost (allowing for inflation) a similar sum to the new Italian device.

When the courier arrived at Kelly Towers he was carrying four boxes, as each level of the rack comes in its own package. My first compliment to the manufacturer is for the quality of the packing. The shelf itself is completely protected and all the stainless steel components have their own custom cut-outs in a separate sheet of foam. Within the four boxes were everything needed to build a four shelf rack, if you need more the modular design means that you and your retailer can configure the rack to meet the needs of your system. Similarly, adding an extra shelf later would be no issue at all. The review sample has black shelves with walnut inserts and polished stainless hardware. Other finishes are available. It passed the most critical of tests inasmuch as my better half approved, I also think it is a most handsome thing, and helps to bolster the reputation of Italian design. It is highly functional but also good looking.

If you are like me and just the thought of tackling a self-assembly task fills you with a certain dread, do not be concerned. Assembling the Classic Line was extremely straightforward and took me about an hour and a half. The enclosed pictorial instructions are explicit and unambiguous. All the 'moving' parts are extremely well engineered and go together very easily. Each shelf has its own spikes that sit in an indentation in the hard black disc fitted in the top of the supports with polyurethane decoupling washers underneath. Bassocontinuo say that in this 2.1 version of the Classic Line they have deployed a 'zero shaking' tightening system with 50% more rigidity than the original version, and the net result is an extremely solid feeling structure once it is in place. I also like the way that it can be built up one shelf at a time once the bottom shelf has been positioned. My room is carpeted so the spikes go directly onto, and through, the

carpet, but there are well made floor protectors supplied with the bottom shelf to protect wood, stone or vinyl floors. I checked with my spirit level, and every shelf was perfectly level, which is of course especially critical for turntables. You choose legs of the required height for each shelf so that the rack can accommodate component of almost any height, the usable footprint on the lower shelves is 56.5x 56cm with the top one increasing width to 66cm. Currently I have a chunky McIntosh MCD85 SACD/CD player on the bottom shelf, with a Copland CSA150 integrated amplifier/DAC above, then my Gold Note PH10 phono stage and on top of the unit sits my Linn Sondek LP12 turntable.



Sound quality

Once everything was wired together the next stage, obviously, was to listen. I am very happy to report that I could not hear the rack at all! I put on a record and stood directly in front of the rack, stamping my feet like a petulant toddler. As far as I could tell playback was totally unaffected. So I then jumped up and down – no mean feat for an unfit 15 stone man – and again the music flowed cleanly from the loudspeakers. I couldn't of course test the rack on a wooden or suspended floor but I suspect that it would still turn in a very solid performance. Playback from the disc player was equally flawless, despite my best efforts to disrupt it.

On my own rack I use additional isolation devices between the shelves and the components and I tried the same on the Classic Line, installing the excellent Vertere Iso-Paw feet between the shelf and the Gold Note PH10. If they made a difference on the guest rack it was so imperceptible that any difference might have been imagined, it really was that hard to discern. Which indicates that the rack provides decent isolation on its own.





The Classic Line is positioned as one of Bassocontinuo's most affordable rack systems, but it is no way compromised in its performance. If you are starting out on your audio adventure this would be an excellent component to consider and I rather think that 10 years from now whatever else has changed in your system, your rack will have been your constant companion. It is more than good enough to support whatever new devices that you introduce into your system. If you already have a rack and like me have not felt the need to upgrade it, you might find that the Classic Line turns out to be the best way to get an uplift in performance from your system. It is very easy to recommend and I shall certainly miss it when it goes. I think I have answered my own question – a 2021 design definitely out performs one from the first decade of this century. It comes with a five year guarantee from it Milanese manufacturer, but I suspect it will be with you for a lot longer than that. Bravissimo Bassocontinuo.

Specifications

Type: equipment isolation stand system

Material: wood, steel

Decoupling: elastomer PU between shelves, SBR rubber spike discs

Component weight: max 70kg

Height between shelves: optional 90, 140, 190, 290mm

Usable shelf area: 565 x 560mm

Top shelf area : 660 x 560mm

Shelf thickness: 25mm

Finishes: walnut, wenge, lside white, Cerbero black, optional stainless steel

Warranty: 5 years