



Corrupting Absolutely

SIMAUDIO MOON 820S POWER SUPPLY

By Jeff Dorgay

A handful of manufactures offer additional or upgraded power supplies for their components; the 820S is a new offering in the Simaudio MOON lineup. It provides extra power-supply capacity and regulation to any pair of Sim components—either a mixture of analog and digital, or two of the same type. The rear panel has a pair of four-pin connectors marked *analog power* and a pair of five-pin connectors marked *digital power*. Unplugged from the wall, the original device connects to the 820S via umbilical cord, with power still controlling it as usual. Your configuration will depend on whether you mate the power supply to the 610LP or 810LP phonostage, the 650D or 750D DAC/transport or the 740P preamplifier.

Oddly enough, *Stereophile's* resident analog expert Michael Fremer put the 820S through its paces with the MOON 650D *digital* player, while I have conducted my listening with Sim's fantastic MOON 610LP and MOON 810LP phonostages. I will have a follow-up report when my own personal 650D arrives as a reference component.



Beginning with the 610LP and a record I know well, the Classic Records 45-rpm remaster of Peter Gabriel's fourth album (known to some as the *Security* album on their clear "clarity vinyl"), I go straight to "Lay Your Hands on Me." The increase in all three dimensions of the soundfield is dramatic—as it should be for an \$8,000 upgrade—pushing it slightly ahead of the 810LP's performance without the external power supply. As the 820S can power two devices simultaneously, it is very easy to switch back and forth between and observe the results.

If you've got a system capable of high-resolution playback, and I'm assuming you do if you already own either the 610LP or the 810LP, suffice it to say that both of these fantastic phonostages benefit equally from the 820S. Of course, if you've already dropped \$13,000 on the 810LP, you might not be so ready to spend another \$8,000 to push the boundaries even further. But consider yourself warned: There's no turning back once you hear the improvement the 820S makes, especially if you have a mega cartridge like the Clearaudio Goldfinger or the Lyra Atlas.

A Major Change for the Better

With the 820S in the mix, both of the aforementioned cartridges go from *wow* to *kapow*, particularly in terms of dynamic impact, low-level detail retrieval and overall soundstage size. The most amazing thing about analog is that there's so much information in those tiny grooves. Every time you think you've reached a plateau, the barrier is shattered, and this is what the 820S brings to the picture. *(continued)*



During “Lay Your Hands on Me,” when Gabriel’s synthesizer comes in after about a minute, it has height and plenty of texture with the 810LP by itself, but bringing the 820S online separates it from the mix so it feels about three feet in front of the couch and just above ear level. All of us auditioning this new setup keep going back to tracks we know well and continue to be dumbfounded by the 810LP/820S combination.

Perhaps the best way to audition something like this is to drag out the warhorses that you know intimately—those tracks that are burned into your psyche so deeply that you know immediately when something’s been changed. During another favor-

ite, Pink Floyd’s *Wish You Were Here*, everyone present instantly agrees that the intro to “Welcome to the Machine” sounds more like an elevator than ever before, especially when it comes to the resounding *thud* at the bottom of its journey. These are the analog moments you live for, geeky though they might be.

Soundstage size and dynamics are easily recognized, but another benefit of the 820S that should not be discounted is the ease it brings to the overall presentation, which is especially apparent with acoustic instruments. Violin and piano recordings are always tough to reproduce, but with the 820S, they sound more natural than ever. Violin can sound harsh

and strident, even on the best systems, and while the added impact of the 820S pulls me in, the decrease in listener fatigue is what keeps me convinced that it’s a winner.

Tracking through some of my favorite Blue Note reissues, I can’t help but notice how much more lifelike cymbals sound from a textural perspective. The leading and trailing edges of transients on the piano and drums are crisper, and the transitions from soft to loud and back are smoother. On one level, it’s like going from experiencing a great 16-bit/44-kHz recording to hearing it again in 24/192. I am hoping to hear the same delta with the 650D.

Maximizing the Investment

Still, \$8,000 is a lot for just a power supply, no matter how good it is. What really makes the 820S a killer deal is if you have *two* Sim components to plug into it. You get even better performance for the dollar by spreading the expense across two components. While I can’t comment yet on any performance drop with a digital and analog component connected simultaneously, I do not notice any collapse in soundstage or dynamics, or an increase in background noise level, when using the unit with the 610LP and 810LP at the same time.

No matter what I listen to, more information is available with the 820S and either phonostage, and it is now tough to live without.

Usually, once a component offering major resolution is no longer in my reference system, it’s easy to forget the improvement it made and get back to business as usual. Even after days without the 820S absence, I found it nearly impossible to listen to records, so I had Sim send it back—and it’s not going home to Montreal until they send the RCMP.

Even if you only pair the 820S with one Sim component, the upgrade is substantial enough to invest. As Mr. Fremer mentions in his review, should you borrow one of these from your Simaudio dealer for a weekend demo (which I highly suggest, to really put it through its paces), I doubt you’ll be returning it on Monday. It’s that good. ●



Simaudio MOON 820S power supply
MSRP: \$8,000

MANUFACTURER
Simaudio Ltd.

CONTACT
www.simaudio.com

PERIPHERALS

Preamplifier
Robert Koda K10, Pass Labs Xs

Power Amplifier
Pass Labs Xs300 Monoblocks

Speakers
Dynaudio Evidence Platinum

Cable
Cardas Clear

Analog source
AVID Acutus Reference SP turntable, TriPlanar tonearm, Lyra Atlas and Clearaudio Goldfinger cartridges

Phonostage
Simaudio MOON LP610 and LP810

Power
IsoTek Super Titan