

Akiko Audio – Power Conditioner Minelli

07/01/2019 Thomas Terrail from Audiophil-online.de



The Dutch Brilliance

The first time you hear about “Akiko Audio” you probably wouldn’t guess that two Dutch entrepreneurs founded this company in 2011. Nevertheless, it’s father and son Marc and Sander van Berlo from Maastricht who use the name to express their love for Japanese culture; especially to honour the country’s ingenuity when it comes to the production of high quality audio tuning products.

In Japan, the name is used as a maiden name as well as to denote something of brilliant production. Pay a visit to the small audio manufacturer and you’ll find out why this second meaning is most relevant: the tuning products provide a sound improvement in high-end systems that is truly... brilliant!

At first glance however, the product under review doesn’t seem all that special. At € 895,- the Power Conditioner “Minelli” is one of Akiko’s middle segment tuning products, with its larger brother, the “Corelli”, leading the higher segment. Let’s take a look.

Putting it into use

Connecting the Minelli is really easy: take a power cable and connect the device to the power supply of your hi-fi set by plugging it into a powerstrip or an empty socket in the wall, as long as either is connected via the wiring to the rest of your system. You can use your own (high-end) power cable for this, or use the recommended Akiko Audio cable, the €169,- Powercord HQ Flex Gold.

...when connected directly to the first socket of a power strip...

After a number of attempts I came to the conclusion that the Power Conditioner is most effective when connected directly to the first socket of a power strip. Connect the amplifier to the next socket

and plug in the extra devices, such as CD-players, Streamers or record players, in the remaining slots. The polarity never has to be taken into account, but a separate phono pre-amp should be connected next to the amplifier so it is still close to the Conditioner.



The sound

So, what is that brilliant result we get to hear, or rather, get to experience! How does such a filter actually work?

Every physicist will probably wonder why the current isn't led through the machine the way a traditional filter works: with input going in on one side and output coming out on the other. After all, the Minelli only has one power connection...

... the sound improvement can be heard immediately....

Before I get into the technical details, however, I'd like to reveal that the improvement can be heard clearly pretty much immediately. And it keeps improving over the days to come, or at least that's how I experienced it!

The sound image becomes clearer and cleaner. The diminishing sound of a note on the piano is easier to follow, as if your standing close to the instrument itself. The spaciousness of the sound also increases because the signal becomes detached from the speakers.

When Diana Krall caresses her piano, every note of every strike just sounds clearer and the same goes for the saxophone, trumpets and string instruments. Her voice also comes across less mumbling than before the tuning. Meanwhile, live performances such as those by Nile Rodgers and Chic in Montreux become more upbeat because you feel like you're there, experiencing the vibe of the show yourself.

This increases the fun factor while at the same time decreasing your stress. You listen to your music for longer periods at a time, thereby relaxing more. And that's great! There's simply no doubt about it: the product works. The entire set-up gains one or two levels of quality, which, for a household

system, is a level that you can barely reach with equipment of even four-digit sums. The company has proved to be worth their name: the musical experience definitely becomes more brilliant!

Unlike other filters, which filter out disturbances, I didn't get the impression that the music ever became "tired". Of course, one can still wonder whether the power conditioner works on all kinds of devices, despite their technical differences. But I can be short here: it does! Only the intensity is perceived differently: with a transistor or tube amp the Minelli really gets going, whereas a high-end digital amplifier like a Devialet, which dissolves noise well anyway, doesn't profit from the tuning as much. Nonetheless, the difference can still be heard. Moreover, all feeders are affected by the cleansing effect in the stream.



How it works

But how does the Minelli achieve this sound improvement? The Akiko Audio specialists argue that the Conditioner's primary task is aimed at reducing high frequency noise. These disturbances – usually a hot-spot of radio waves, mobile radio, WLAN and DECT – are taken over from the house current operating at a low frequency, which causes a kind of "noise pollution".

To prevent this is difficult. You would have to equip the building with shielded power lines when it is built or refurbished, but no regular landlord is going to take care of this "electrosmog" problem because the return on investment is simply not noticeable.

... What exactly happens there remains a corporate secret ...

On the inside, the Minelli power conditioner has three carbon tubes, each with its own return, phase and grounding wires. What exactly happens there remains a corporate secret though...

The Blue Horizon Noise Analyzer makes any pollution in the power network audible via a loudspeaker. With it, such disturbances are usually easy to retrace. It was therefore clear to me that the emitted noise really did decrease or even disappear!

However, in one test the noise of the analyser did not change. But there's a reason for that: the Power Conditioner does not use any electrical components or active suppressive filters, which is why the device achieves its results without any negative side effects such as the loss of dynamics in the sound.

... a technology that drives some physicists to the point of desperation

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This has been made possible by a technology that drives some physicists to the point of desperation. Akiko Audio treats (parts of) its devices *energetically*. In this case, the aluminium front panel and the – unknown to us – interior of the three carbon tubes.

This technology isn't new, but not a lot is known about it either. It was successfully tested and put to use nearly fifteen years ago by a German company named Gabriel Tech which specialises in the field of building biology (or *Baubiologie* as it is known in Germany). Those who have already tried the products will swear by them.

This technology was then adopted by Creaktiv Audio for the audio sector, later followed by companies such as Phonosophie, Albat or Vortex HiFi in Germany.

The methodology for treating the components varies in length – which is about all we know. Gabriel Tech mentions up to four days for its "informing" treatment, whereas "activation" – which is also referred to as the settling of certain frequencies – takes several weeks.

Usually aluminium and glass objects are treated with this technology, but Akiko Audio has taken a different path in order to reach their goal.



The general impression

In terms of technology the Power Conditioner Minelli truly fits its sort. The case is of high-quality material and very sturdy. The aluminium front has the name milled into it and you get the option of a silver or black front. The recommended power cable (the Akiko Audio Powercord HQ Flex Gold) is also made with professional care and both the cable and the conditioner are made by hand. With high-quality connectors, it sits stably in the socket or IEC connector and barely generates any contact resistance. At € 169,- this cable is a special offer among the complete range of power cords and is therefore also suitable as a cheap upgrade for those who want to get rid of their accessory strips.



1 Akiko Audio Powercord HQ Flex Gold (photo: KB)

In conclusion

Akiko Audio's "Minelli" Power Conditioner is a great way to get more out of your system: the sound improvement is clear. Listening to the high-end becomes less nervous as the sound becomes more enjoyable and relaxed. At the same time this is also proof that high-frequency interference is not heard through the system under normal circumstances, but *is* perceived subconsciously.

As always, critics will argue that the suppression technology used here simply does not exist. But I recommend forming your own opinion, and that quite simply means listening to a sample yourself.

This is best done at home through your own system. Father and son Van Berlo recognize this, as they know that every listening environment is different. Therefore, you can always rely on their thirty-day return policy, on any of their devices.

Technical specifications

Power Conditioner Minelli

- Height: 101 mm.
- Length: 213 mm.
- Width: 159 mm.
- Weight: 1.1 kg.
- The Power Conditioner "Minelli" contains neither electrical components nor active power filtering.
- The Minelli has no on/off switch, display or LED-lighting to prevent extra contact resistance and unnecessary power pollution.
- The Akiko Audio Powercord HQ Flex Gold (1.50 meters) is recommend as a connection cable.
- The 6 mm thick aluminium front panel has been energetically treated.
- The Akiko Audio Power Conditioner "Minelli" is handmade and all soldering was done with silver solder.
- Fits 90 to 250 Volts at 50-60 Hz.
- Comes with a high-quality gold-plated ceramic audio fuse and Tuning Chip.
- 30 days money back guarantee.
- 10 years manufacturer's warranty.

RRP: € 895,- (as of January 2019)

Akiko Audio Powercord HQ Flex Gold

Standard length 1.50 meters (4.92 feet), any other desired length is available on request.

- Made in the EU.
- Handmade.
- Cable diameter 12.2 mm (0.48 inch).
- Schuko plug with gold-plated contacts.
- The HQ cable has 4 x 2.5mm "oxygen-free" copper conductors, each with 39 twisted strands.
- XLPE cross-linked polyethylene insulation with excellent line resistance.
- Foil and braided copper shielding.
- Black socket.
- Halogen free and PVC free.
- Equipped with two high-quality, cryogenically treated, Akiko Audio connectors.
- Also available for the US.

RRP: € 169,- (as of January 2019)

Manufacturer / Sales

Akiko Audio
Churchillaan 69
6226CT Maastricht
The Netherlands

Tel: +31 (0) 43 – 8 515 561
E-mail: info@akikoaudio.com

Web: <https://www.akikoaudio.com>