

# Affordable\$\$Audio

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## Acoustic Revive: RGC-24 Ground Conditioner SIP-8F, BSIP-2F Short Pins IP-2F Vibration Protect Pins CS2F Outlet Stabilizer

By Anthony Nicosia

[anthonymicosia@affordableaudio.org](mailto:anthonymicosia@affordableaudio.org)

### Specifications:

RGC-24 Ground Conditioner

Dimensions: 88 X 18mm (main body)

Weight: 384g

Length of cable: 50cm

RCA plug connection adapter included

Price: \$450 each

SIP-8F, BSIP-2F, IP-2F Pins

Length: 32mm (including hot pin) X Dimension 11.5mm

Weight: 9.2g

Eight SIP-8F short pins to a package (for RCA input terminals)

Two BSIP-2F short pins to a package (for XLR input terminals)

Two IP-2F vibration protect pins to a package (for RCA output terminals)

Price: \$225 per package each

CS2F Outlet Stabilizer

none given at the website

Price: \$175 each

Manufacturer: SEKIGUCHI MACHINE SALES CO., LTD

<http://www.acoustic-revive.com/english/index.html>

US Distributor: The Lotus Group

<http://www.lotusgroupusa.com/>



The components from Acoustic Revive that I am about to review today can either be looked upon as a system used in unison, or individually if your budget or needs do not allow. Those of you who have been reading my reviews, starting with my initial introduction to Acoustic Revive products in the September 2008 issue of "Affordable Audio", will by now know something about the company. For those of you who are new to Acoustic Revive products let me sum a few things up rather quickly. This company is very well know in Japan, where it is located, and word of its products have now spread worldwide as reviews continue to come forth telling of their excellence. Acoustic Revive makes audio accessories that continue to amaze me with their positive effects on my audio system and their relatively modest pricing on most products. When you look at the world of high-end audio and what people are charging Acoustic Revive is quite reasonable indeed. For what they do and the quality of the product, versus what they charge I consider them a bargain. No, they are not "inexpensive" in terms of the bottom of the rung pricing in audio, but when you look at them in the context of being high-end products, they appear to me a relative bargain.

There are warnings that come with these products from Acoustic Revive. You should contact your dealer, follow the instructions that come with these devices and by all means check with the manufacturer of the equipment you are using them with if you are not sure. I always recommend reading the manufacturers instructions carefully and asking as many questions as you can before using any product in your system, especially if you are doing things like grounding

equipment or short circuiting an input or output terminal. That being said, let us now move onto the equipment on hand.

Today I am going to place in my review system an RGC-24 ground conditioner, both SIP-8F and BSIP-2F short pins as well as two CS2F outlet stabilizers and a set of IP-2F vibration protect pins. These can actually be used all together on one component, such as a preamplifier, or individually on separate components within an audio system. The total

minimum price for using one set of these is only \$1075 (more if multiple sets are needed or two stabilizers are used as I experimented with).



First up is the RGC-24 Ground conditioner which is said to help improve the sound of ones system even if proper grounding has already been accomplished. Complete technical details of this product and the theory behind it can be found on the Acoustic Revive website. One of the claims of this product is that even when you use more than one RGC-24, there is an improvement in the signal to noise ratio and sound image which thereby improves the sound. Inside the main body is a blend of natural ore and the outside cable is a 2.6mm X 2.2mm oval shaped PCOCC-A single line cable. It is made with a natural silk

buffer material (Acoustic Revive believes strongly in the positive effects of the use of silk in their products), a flexible Teflon coated copper pipe, and a carbon paper SF tube (CSP). Where the cable connects to the RGC-24 main body there is a high-grade rhodium plated banana plug. On the other end of that cable which connects to the audio equipment is a gold plated Y rug (spade connector). When there is no ground terminal simply use the supplied RCA connection adapter (IP-2) to connect the RGC-24 to an unused RCA input or output terminal on your equipment. The RGC-24 was by far the most impressive of the group of products being reviewed today. For \$450 it could be considered a must have piece of gear for the audio system wanting that little something to help push it over the top in terms of sonic improvements. I did not have a ground contact on my Placette Passive preamplifier so instead I used the supplied IP-2 adapter. My preamplifier is raised up, as it rests on four damping products, allowing for room to put the RGC-24 underneath. I thought to play some songs from the John Lennon Cd (Imagine) and it was so enjoyable I listening to the entire Cd without stopping, taking notes along the way. As always I listen to the music first without the tweak and then many times with and without as need be to get a proper sense as to its effect if any on the music. With the RGC-24 there was no doubt to me that it was having a definite positive effect on my music system. I immediately felt as if someone had turned the volume up slightly as the songs sounded less smeared. "Twist and Shout" took on an immediate energy burst as it sounded more alive and intimate. Whatever song I heard I felt as if the soundstage separation was slightly better, more controlled so to speak. The layering of instruments and performers on the stage also took on an added clarity while the music felt more relaxed and natural. Even the "shout" at the beginning of the song "Revolution" was more subdued, less shrill and more pleasant to hear. The RGC-24 gave John Lennon's Cd a nice three-dimensional feel to the performance that I had not noticed before. Moving the RGC-24 to either an input or output terminal seemed not to effect the quality of sound nor did moving it about to different spots under my preamplifier. I did notice though that placing it under rather than far away from my preamplifier did make a difference for the better. One thing I noticed with the RGC-24 is that it did not come with any damping material for use on the back of the RCA adapter and so I did not try any there. All the other products tested today though did have the supplied damping material and were tested with such. A quick note on that, this damping material was purchased from fo.Q (pronounced pho-cue, pho like in photo and Q just like the letter sounds). They make excellent damping accessories and sell them under their own name as well as supplying them for numerous Acoustic Revive products. Their effects were positive and I placed them on the backs of all the plugs reviewed here today with the one exception noted above.

### SIP-8F

Looking next at the short pins and starting with the SIP-8F connectors where we get eight to a package. Each SIP-8F is made for use with the unused digital or analog input terminals on the back of your audio equipment. This is used partially to prevent noise and dust from getting into your components via the unused terminals. Each pin is made of nonmagnetic gold plated brass and 2017 Duralumin to help improve the sound while lessening noise and vibration



that tends to be harmful to the true reproduction of recorded music. Acoustic Revive further claims that SIP-8F plugs reinforce the back panel of the equipment which also helps cut noise and improves sound quality. As with most equipment there are some cautions. In this case do not use them with output terminals or REC out terminals as this will cause the sound to stop. The second warning says that the SIP-8F has a remarkable effect on the digital output terminal of a CD transporter but that you must check with your CD manufacturer or dealer just to be sure. I did not have a transporter on hand for this review. With the short pins comes the vibration damping material, simply peel off the pre-cut sections and apply to the back of the pins as needed using as many as you feel improves the sound. If you notice it is robbing the music of its impact and clarity just remove the damping material and use less or none at all. Moving right along now to the IP-2F connectors, they are to be used with vacant RCA output, not input terminals, on the back of your equipment. The center-pin of the IP-2F is non-conductive so as not to short out the Output terminals otherwise we would have no sound emitting from our system. Again it is made of the same substances and has the fo.Q damping material, that may be used with it like with the short pins mentioned above.



First I disconnected my phono stage and tuner from the inputs on the back of my preamplifier and inserted the SIP-8F's in their place. Secondly I attached the IP-2F for use with the second output terminal on my Placette. I did notice the same effects as with the RGC-24 mentioned above, but to a lesser degree as their effects were more of the subtle variety. Do not be fooled though, changes took place and definitely for the betterment of the music. After adding the short pins my system took on a greater sense of ease when playing music which I felt brought it closer to a live presence than before. They were easily worth the price of admission. I had enough short pins, eight total, at a cost of only \$225 to not only use them on my main system but to take some and place them in my home theater setup as well. I listened to Neil Young's Cd (Prairie Wind) "He was the King" selection. I was impressed with how at ease the music sounded and though it was not an in-your-face change I was still impressed and liked what I heard. Feeling that I was on the right track with these pins I now turned to my vinyl rig.

Here again I unplugged everything from the input terminals except my source, in this case the phono stage. The song "The Look of Love" was popular in the 1980's, and is a song I really like, so I used this for a reference. Here with vinyl playback I noticed more of an improvement than I had heard when listening to Cd's. Separation of instruments and voices was clearer as well as a sense of a more natural tone to the music. Nothing earth shattering but there nevertheless. The changes were indeed welcome and when listening over time gave the sound a less fatiguing effect than when listening without them.



#### BSIP-2F

The BSIP-2F is for use with XLR inputs but unfortunately for me it would not work with my Monarchy Audio amplifier. When inserted into the vacant unused XLR input the sound from my audio system ceased. It did no apparent harm and when removed the music returned to normal, but I could not test its effectiveness. As stated above, Acoustic Revive recommends checking with your manufacturer before using the BSIP-2F and I now see why. After talking on the phone to CC Poon of Monarchy Audio, he sent me an email explaining the following: "The XLR Input in our SM-70 PRO is internally connected to the RCA. You should use one or the other at a time, but not both." This explains why when I shorted the XLR input the music of course ceased to play because I was also shorting out the RCA terminals. So unfortunately I could not test the BSIP-2F plugs but can only say that they were well packaged and looked to be of the same high quality construction as with all Acoustic Revive products I have tested to date.

**CS-2F**

Finally let us look at the CS-2F output stabilizer. Here again the outer case is made of 2017 Duralumin and two different kinds of polyolefin for controlling vibration. The two blades that are inserted into open receptacles are made of brass with rhodium plating. This product is to help eliminate noise and vibration and can be used in a variety of places. Place one on a wall receptacle, the back of your audio equipment or even on an unused receptacle in your power supply box. Again the same damping material was included and used in my evaluations of this product. I enjoy listening to Queen and their Cd (Queen Greatest Hits). It is of course filled with plenty of their top songs, like "Another One Bites The Dust", "We Will Rock You" and "We Are The Champions". Lucky for me Acoustic Revive sent me two CS-2F's for this review. I placed one on the power line conditioner where I plugged in my Cd player, preamplifier and phono stage. The other was used with the power supply box where I plugged in my amplifier. Hearing one was good but two definitely way better. I felt that in my system it had a slightly more pronounced impact when used with my amplifier but after I removed them one at a time I could feel a loss of sound quality no matter which one I disconnected from my system. At only \$175 each I would buy two if it is financially possible. The song "Rock and Roll" from (Led Zeppelin) was a nice testing ground for the two CS-2F's. The vocals which always sounded a little holographic, almost as if singing in a slight echo chamber, was even more so with both CS-2F's. Subtle changes in the layering of performers and the decay of notes was also evident and welcomed. I thought that it had more impact than the other plugs but not as much as the RGC-24 which was my favorite.

**Group Experience**

Now for the final comparison I inserted all the products together at one time to listen to the song "You Couldn't Be Cuter" (Yo-Yo Ma & Friends Songs of Joy & Peace). Here we not only have Yo-Yo Ma on cello, but Diana Krall doing vocals and piano while John Clayton plays acoustic bass. This selection is always great but with the combination of Acoustic Revive products the song sound much closer to a live performance. I noticed small details in the sound of the cello and Diana Krall's voice which had previously gone unnoticed by me. Placing them in my system together like this certainly smoothed out the sound of both Cd and vinyl playback while doing it all for a modest sum of money.

In conclusion I must say that these products brought with them a much welcomed change within my system. While the differences with the RGC-24 was more apparent the other products also contributed to the overall improvements that I heard. When used together they made long listening sessions more enjoyable and less fatiguing. This is not to say that they did not enhance the sound during shorter sessions as well. When the master chef throws in a dash of cinnamon or adds a touch of vanilla to the finished dish is it any less important to the overall flavor because its effects are more subtle? To me the RGC-24 was the main course with the various plugs and stabilizer being the slight flavoring without which the meal would not be as spectacular. Once again Acoustic Revive has found a combination of products that give the needed changes to your audio system to push it over the top bringing out the best of what you already own and does so at a relatively reasonable price. If you have a good system already and are looking for ways to get that last ounce of performance out of it you might just be pleasantly surprised at a few, if not all, of the Acoustic Revive products mentioned today.

**The Listening Environment:**

The listening room is 18 foot 8 inches long by 13 feet wide. The room's cathedral ceiling starts at 8 feet high then slopes upward to 13 feet at its peak in the middle. Flooring is a soft hardwood covering with an oriental rug placed dead center in between (but not under) the listener and the audio system. There are no doors that open or shut into other rooms also there are two large openings one facing the speakers and the other to its side and slightly in front of the right speaker. There is one Acoustic Revive RWL-III Panel in the center of the Legacy Speakers as an acoustical treatment for my room. As for my audio equipment it is tucked nicely inside of a Cherry Synergy Twin S30 Salamander audio rack.

**Review equipment:**

Monarchy Audio SM-70 Pro Amplifier  
Placette Passive preamplifier (3 input model)  
Samsung HD-841 universal player  
Oracle Delphi Mk I turntable with custom made interconnects  
Grace 707 tonearm with Denon 301 II MC cartridge  
Whest PhonoStage.20 + MsU.20 power supply  
Legacy Focus 20/20 loudspeakers  
PS Audio UPC-200 Power Center  
PS Audio Power Port Receptacle  
Acoustic Revive RTP-2 Series Power Conditioner  
Blue Circle BC86 MKIII power line pillows (2)  
PS Audio Transcendence Silver interconnects  
Kimber Kable PBJ interconnects  
Anti-Cable speaker wire 10 foot pair  
Anti-Jumpers for Legacy speakers  
Monarchy Audio AC-1 Power Cord one 6 foot length  
Tek Line PC-8 Signature Power Cord one 6 foot length  
Mr-Cable Musician Power Cord 9 foot length (2)  
Cherry Synergy Twin S30 Salamander audio rack

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