

TUNING FEET

Harmonix RF-808Z „MILLION”

Manufacturer: **COMBAK CORPORATION**

Price (when reviewed): **9990 PLN**

Contact:

Kazuo Kiuchi | 4-20, Ikego 2-chome, Zushi-shi
Kanagawa 249-0003 | Japan

→ COMBAK.net

» MADE IN JAPAN

Provided for test by: **AUDIO ATELIER**



[The Harmonix brand is owned by the Japanese company COMBAK CORPORATION along with its brands: Reymio, Hijiri and Bravo! Their owner is Mr. KAZUO KIUCHI, who also runs the Master Music label, where he releases reissues on XRCD24s. We are reviewing the RF-808Z "MILLION" tuning feet.]

MR KAZUO KIUCHI is a man of many talents, as he oversees the process of creating electronics, cables, anti-vibration products, speakers, and is also a music producer. When we get to know his products, we will be surprised to see that their sound has certain characteristics in common, such as fullness, density and resolution. As far as I know him, and I've personally known him since 2009, he simply strives for **music to be rendered in the fullness of its emotions.**



When he visited us years ago to meet the Krakow Sonic Society (meeting No. 72!), he said:

“For me, elements of a system are equivalent to individual organs of a person. Look at me – I have a head, arms and legs, and many organs inside. All of them have to interact with each other, they have to "agree" with each other so that I am healthy, so that I feel good. What's more – the energy flowing through me, energy from the cosmos entering the earth through me, must not have any resistance on the way, it must flow unhindered.

I believe that we are part of something bigger – nature, the universe – and for everything to be OK with us, we must live in harmony with them, we must respond to their pulse. Look at my player – the casing is the skin and the circuit boards are the internal organs. I also have lungs, I have a liver and a heart. I treat the components of the player and devices in general in the same way.

\ more → [HERE](#) \ PL

In an interview I conducted with him at the time, when I asked him about the relationship between kendo – of which he is a master – and music, he stated that **he tries to act in the spirit of Japanese tradition**. The most important things for him are concentration, stoicism and judgment, to which he added truth, dignity, integrity and respect immediately afterwards. "When I develop a new product," he said, "this is what is most important to me." (more → [HERE](#) \ PL).

No wonder, then, that the company's materials regarding the Harmonix RF-808Z "Million" tuning feet begin with the exclamation: "It's all about MUSIC!"

RF-808Z „Million”

The "RF-808Z MILLION" are tuning feet. Their role is to dissipate and eliminate vibrations from equipment by converting them into heat. Unlike the products of Pro Audio Bono, Franc Audio Accessories or Finite Elemente, where vibrations are extinguished in the micro-motion of a ball mediating between two planes, or Divine Acoustics and Stillpoints, where we deal with a blade that is a mechanical diode, Harmonix feet extinguish vibrations **using their own mass and where different materials come into contact**.

You can put them under the feet that the devices are equipped with, but I know from experience that they work better placed **directly under the bottom panel of a device**. These feet are part of the prestigious "Million" series, which also includes the REI-168 "Million" spikes, the RF-909Z spike bases and the RF-900M "Million".

The RF-808Z "Million" **come to us packed like a gift**. Inside a simple white cardboard box is a balsa wood box, and there, in Japanese paper, you will find four beautifully crafted feet. I say "beautifully crafted" because they are among the nicest products of their kind in the world. Small, 33 mm high, with a diameter of 50 mm, they are made of three types of materials and consist of two parts.

The lower part is a twist-out flat "foot", thanks to which the **given device can be levelled**. From the bottom, in the fret, an uncovered piece of wood was pressed into it. The upper part is the proper one. Like the lower one, it is made of brass coated with an anode that is unique in appearance and resembles shiny (!) titanium. On the very top there is a several-millimeter layer of wood covered with high-gloss varnish.

As the feet are extremely durable and solid, **they do not actually have a load limit** (within reason, of course); the description on the company's website says: "several hundred kilograms". And you can combine them with another Harmonix product, The Base TB-0917, which the manufacturer strongly urges you to do. These are simply miniature platforms with a round shape, ø 140 mm in diameter and 34 mm in height, made mainly of wood.

■ THE LISTENING SESSION

↳ **THE WAY WE LISTENED** ↳ The Harmonix tuning feet were tested in the "High Fidelity" reference system. **I always test tuning feet in my system in the same way** – under the signal source, sometimes using other devices. In my case, it is the Ayon Audio CD-35 HF Edition SACD player (Nº 1/50).



It has been standing on the excellent Pro Audio Bono PAB CERAMIC 70 UNI feet for some time, and it is to these that I compared the Harmonix ones (test → [HERE](#) \ PL). Since the (four) feet of my player are screwed on permanently, it is hard to compare them with free-standing feet. So, I usually unscrew them and place the player on three feet – in exactly the same configuration as under the Ayon Audio Spheris III preamplifier. Years ago, I chose to arrange them in the following way: **there is one at the front and there are two at the back**. It was the same this time as well.

I move the SACD player during a test. Its cabling **must be more flexible** than the cables I use on a daily basis – and I use the Siltech Triple Crown ones. So, in a test of anti-vibration bases, I swap them for the much more susceptible, also high-end Crystal Cable Absolute Dream (RCA interconnect) and Harmonix X-DC350M2R Improved-Version (AC power cable). The comparison involves listening to the same fragment of a song (2 minutes) on the reference feet and transferring it to the test feet.

» ALBUMS USED IN THE TEST \ a selection

- \ PATRICK NOLAND, *Peace*, Naim Audio naimcd065, CD (2002).
- \ CHARLIE HADEN & CHRIS ANDERSON, *None But The Lonely Heart*, Naim naimcd022, CD (1998).
- \ JEAN-MICHEL JARRE, *Electronica 1: The Time Machine*, Columbia/Sony Records Int'l SICP 30788, Blu-spec CD2 (2015).
- \ LAURIE ANDERSON, *Homeland*, Nonesuch Records 524055-2, CD + DVD (2009).
- \ DEPECHE MODE, *Enjoy The Silence*, Mute/Alfa Y-12-3B, Maxi-SP (1990).
- \ JOHANN VALENTIN MEDER, *Sacred Music*, MDG 902 2192-6, seria „Musica Baltica, Vol. 7”, wyk. Goldberg Baroque Ensemble, dyr. Andrzej Szadejko, SACD/CD (2020).

»«

USUALLY, THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN different anti-vibration feet and, more broadly, between anti-vibration products, are clear and repeatable. In a well set up system with at least good resolution, that is, the ability to differentiate, no matter how much it costs, replacing product X with product Y allows you, after just a few minutes, **to form the first conclusions**. It was different in the case of Mr Kiuchi-san's feet.

And that's because this time I was comparing them to an equally exceptional Pro Audio Bono product, and not to just any feet under some product. And it's not even a matter of whether there was or wasn't a difference, because that was acutely clear to me, but **I was rather unable to interpret the differences**. Listening to PATRICK NOLAND's piano, recorded by Ken Christianson at the Union Church (a church in Hinsdale, a town in Illinois, USA) with the Japanese feet, I heard sound as rich in harmonics and as palpable as with the Polish ones.

The technique Christianson uses for his recordings, which is purist recording without editing on a Nagra IV-S stereo reel-to-reel tape recorder through two 1979 AKG 414 EB microphones, is very transparent, and thus every change in the track is perfectly clear (more on the True Stereo technique → [HERE](#)). **So, the change I am talking about was clear**. But it wasn't until a while later, after several A/B/A repetitions and a few songs further along, that I was ready to form my first conclusions.



The first conclusion is this: the RF-808Z "Million" **brighten up the midrange somewhere around 1 kHz**. So, I'm not talking about the higher midrange, which is dense and dark, like with the PAB feet. Thus, the piano seemed clearer and closer to the listening position – not much, but still. That is, I obtained sound that was open, sonorous, and still quite intimate and close. Even though the church in which the recording was made is a large stone building, the piano was shown close to me and without a long "tail" of reverb – just as it was recorded. That's why this is a different recording than a classic "Christianson".

The Japanese feet showed this characteristic of the *Peace* album without hesitation. It is a product that **releases energy from recordings** and allows us to play them with high resolution. The album *Passion* by the Indonesian jazz singer REYN QOTRUNNADA, with material remastered using the XRCD24 technique under the guidance of Mr. Kazuo Khiuchi, released by his Master Music label, also sounded juicy, powerful and, one might say, loud.

LISTENING TO THE CHANGES THAT the Japanese feet introduced, it was clear that they prefer **sound open also on the stereophonic plane**. What I mean is that with the Japanese feet the Ayon player showed the piano played by the artist in a clear, fast, sonorous way – that's one thing. Secondly, it widened the stereophony, spreading out the left and right hands a bit more, and deepened the reverb superimposed on the instrument. The vocals were shown at a slight distance, as if we were sitting not right in front of the stage, but two, maybe three meters away. The class is the same, but the impressions are different.

Listening to a few tracks from JEAN-MICHEL JARRE's album *Electronica 1: The Time Machine* was very interesting to me. Recorded by the Frenchman with invited guests (remotely, by exchanging files from a DAW), it is one of the musician's best discs in many years. And it sounds excellent. Interesting, but everything I wrote about above, every change, every shift of emphasis **was the best and strongest with this album**.



It is because the low, deep and saturated synth sounds that form the rhythmic backbone of *Automatic (Part 1)*, were both loud and sonorous with the Harmonix feet. These are feet that allow us to extract something from records that usually eludes us because it is recorded in low signals, namely differentiation within a given sound. Whole passages benefited from this – they were lit up, but also smooth, almost creamy at the same time.

And the dynamics... Now, after several hours of listening I can say that I **should have started this test with it** because it is probably one of the most important advantages of the RF-808Z "Million". These feet release some underlying quality from familiar sounds, some kind of internal energy. It manifests itself not with uncoordinated "thumps", or whatever you want to call them, but is **subservient to sounds**. This means it complements them with depth without modifying them.

Conclusions

ANY TEST SUMMARY is a moment of breath for me. Everything is clear now, I don't have to listen to music with an analytical attitude, I can "wind down". Most often I listen then, as it happens, to classical music. As I wrote in the test of the SoulNote P-3 preamplifier, during a

test I rarely reach for this kind of musical expression, because the test methodology I have chosen involves comparisons of short passages, two minutes max, while **classical music requires long listening**.

The summary, however, is something else. I no longer have to do anything, and I can do everything, so to speak. The Harmonix feet have made this wonderfully possible for me. The sacred music by JOHANN VALENTIN MEDER, a German composer, organist and singer of the Baroque period, which I am playing right now, is **incredibly vivid and internally coherent**. The feet show the powerful, very long reverb of the Holy Trinity Church in Gdansk in an excellent way, without blurring, but also without fading out too early. It is very satisfying, excellent sound.



It is because the Japanese feet are like this – **unbelievably satisfying**. They do not impose their vision, do not change the sound, but only enrich it. They fill it from the inside with content and equip it with excellent dynamics. The opening of the midrange translates into sonority and momentum, without brightening. That's why both jazz, electronics and, finally, classical music wonderfully performed by the Polish Goldberg Baroque Ensemble conducted by Andrzej Szadejko, all "came" together in one beautiful moment. Thus: "If to the moment I shall ever say: "Ah, linger on, thou art so fair!", as Faust said. And it would be best for the moment to linger on with the Harmonix RF-808Z MILLION feet. ●