



As Clean As It Gets

Audio Desk Systeme Vinyl Cleaner

By Lawrence Devoe

If you groove to the beautiful music that black vinyl discs produce, then you understand that there is a price of admission charged by the noise that gunks up the grooves.

The search for the ultimate groove cleaner, as older vinyl enthusiasts may remember, began with the Cecil E. Watts Dust Bug. Suction-mounted to the turntable plinth, it had a plastic arm terminating in a small brush and plush roller that swept the grooves and picked up, well, dust. The demand for more effective record cleaners led to automated or semi-automated machines. You could start with the VPI 16.5 or Nitty Gritty 1.0 (each about \$400 to \$500), or move to the mega-buck Keith Monks KMAL (about \$5000) professional record cleaner.

The vinyl renaissance has since yielded many options between such price extremes. By way of full disclosure, I own more than 10,000 LPs and two record cleaning machines, the VPI 17F and Loricraft PRC 3 (a “poor man’s” KMAL). I first saw the Audio Desk System Vinyl Cleaner at the 2011 T.H.E. Show. Robert Stein of Ultra Systems, the exclusive Audio Desk Systeme distributor in the US, kept dropping one LP after another into the gaping maw of this modern marvel. I was completely enthralled.

There are Record Cleaners, and Then There are Record Cleaners

Audio Desk Systeme, Reiner Glass’ German-based company, specializes in LP and CD cleaning equipment. The ADS Vinyl Cleaner dramatically differs

from most other record cleaners that require placing your beloved platters on a turntable, applying some kind of cleaning fluid, and spinning the record. When one side is cleaned (often with a suction system), you have to flip the disc and clean the other side. It’s absolutely essential that the cleaner’s turntable surface remains ultra-clean. Otherwise, the previously cleaned side again becomes soiled.

By contrast, the ADS Vinyl Cleaner stands upright, eliminating the turntable from the equation. You add 4.5 liters of distilled water and a 20ml flagon of proprietary cleaning solution, which enter a reservoir. A proprietary sponge goes into a small side trough and, during the cleaning cycle, traps debris. *(continued)*

REVIEW

The record is placed into a main trough between two rubber guides. Pushing the “on” button transfers the cleaning fluid from the reservoir to the trough that, when full, initiates a record spin cycle. Four microfiber rotors gently agitate the cleaning fluid around both record sides. After a minute or so, the fluid drains back into its reservoir, starting a four- to five-minute blow-dry cycle. A dinger indicates a complete cycle and, voila, out comes a super-clean record.

In layman’s terms, the cleaning process uses ultrasonic frequencies that create microbubbles and minute liquid jets that enter the grooves and literally blow out contaminants. For particularly dirty records, pressing the unit’s “on” button for a longer period extends cleaning time. A green light indicates a full fluid reservoir, a yellow light shines during cleaning, and a red light signals the need for a refill. One full tank of fluid handles up to 200 LPs, fewer if your discs are seriously grimy. The sponge needs to be periodically removed and squeezed out; microfiber rollers get replaced after cleaning 500 records. Fluid replacement is easily done via a release port on the unit’s rear of the unit and repeating the set-up process.



Cleanliness is Next to Godliness

Buying any record cleaning system requires a significant leap of faith, particularly given when \$3895 is at stake. Will this finely engineered German machine resurrect your precious vinyl? After cleaning more than 500 LPs (all previously cleaned with one of my other record cleaners), I can assure you that before-and-after comparisons are simply no contest. The ADS cleaner brings out more life from my records, with noticeable reduction of surface noise. Most ticks and pops are gone. I continually hear details previously hidden within the grooves. Reduced surface noise also enables higher listening volume that comes without the audible nasties that have always been vinyl’s Achilles heel.

In the true sense of set it and forget it, this is the most user-friendly record cleaning system I have ever used. Is the ADS vinyl cleaner the answer to your analog prayers? If you have a large collection of new and/or used LPs, your investment already far exceeds the cost of ownership. The answer, then? A resounding yes! ●

Audio Desk System Vinyl Cleaner

MSRP: \$3895

MANUFACTURER

Audio Desk Systeme

CONTACT

audiodesksysteme.de (factory)
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