

REVIEW: KECES BP-1200 – DIRTY POWER



Disclaimer: The sample of the BP-1200 was sent to us in exchange for this review. Keces is not related to Headfonia in any way.

Intro

Dirty power. Sounds like a problem a snake oil salesman would drum up, doesn't it? It sure does to me. Of course, as long as you are getting power, that is all that matters, right? It either comes or it doesn't; it isn't going to affect the sound coming out of your headphones. At the same time, however, I noticed that, for critical listening, I'd have to do it in the late evening, generally on weekends, or the music being produced by my system just doesn't sound as good. During the daytime hours, the sound isn't as clean as I know it can be. The bass is opaque and lacking detail. The high frequencies are unusually rolled off. There was obviously something going on. Even though it always seemed to happen during the day, and clean up at night, I still went through the process of elimination: Quirky cables and interconnects? Not the issue. Try different component combinations? The issue persists. Soon, the only thought I have left is power. What if there is something to that "dirty power".

Literally, as these thoughts are running through my head, Arthur Power gets in touch with me, asking me if I would be interested in reviewing Keces Audio's power transformer. This, of course, is a piece of tech that is used to help clean up, and eliminate dirty power heading into your equipment. My response, of course, is, "are you f#%King kidding me?!" That is timing worthy of Jack Benny right there. Let's see if there is any truth to all this dirty power business.

Keces Audio

Keces Audio, as you may remember, is a Taiwanese company, known mostly for their linear power supplies. They recently branched into DAC/amp territory with their S3, a terrific unit that, sadly, will probably pass under the radar, and never get the love it deserves. Based on the quality of the Keces S3, I jumped at the chance to test some of their other wares. The item of the day is the BP-1200 balanced isolation power conditioner. First, I will try to offer a short explanation of what dirty power is. To my understanding, dirty power is when high frequency electrical "noise" gets onto the mains wiring of your house. It can be caused by houses or businesses upstream of your house, but in more modern areas it is likely to be something inside the house. Computers, TVs and florescent bulbs can be big causes of dirty electricity. Apartment complexes, as you can imagine, can have a really problem with this. I am not going to go any deeper into the science here, because, for all intents and purposes, I would bet typing gibberish. Instead of regurgitation things I only half understand, I will provide a couple informational links at the bottom.



Keces Audio BP-1200

With that out of the way, let's look at the Keces Audio's Bp-1200 balanced isolation power conditioner. The first thing I noticed is how heavy it is. I went to pick up the box after it arrived and nearly threw my back out. The website says 12kg (26lbs), but I am suspicious of that number. Looking at it, it definitely bears a family resemblance to the S3. It is all black and feels bullet-proof. On the front, there is a light that tells you if the unit is on or off, and a little power button. On the back, are four sockets to plug your gear into. There really isn't much to describe. It really is just a giant black box. The only accessory it comes with is a power cord. Not sure what else would expect to come with something like this.

What the BP-1200 does is it uses a transformer with two windings to transfer energy via a shielded magnetic field so there is no actual connection to the original power wires. I have been told that not only do recording studios use such technology, but so do hospitals, where their precision instruments can be very susceptible to dirty power. As before, I will provide a link where what the BP-1200 actually does will be described in greater detail. The thing with me is, I am less concerned with how it works (I am not very scientifically inclined), than IF it works. So, let's hook it up and see what, if any, difference it will make.



The Result

Can you say Hallelujah? You can call it snake oil all you want, but there is no denying the huge difference it makes in my sound system. It is literally night and day (as in I listen to it during the day, and it now sounds like it does during the night hours). I am going to use the Hifiman HE-560 to describe the changes as it is a well-known quantity at this point . And what is one thing we know about the HE-560? It has amazing bass quality. Hearing the bass of the Hifiman HE-560 sound like a gelatinous blob has to clue you into something being wrong. There is a lack of detail and clarity in all frequencies, and a total lack of air when I find myself with the opportunity to listen to music during the day. When fed through the BP-1200, the amazing detail and texture of the bass come back with amazing clarity. Instrument detail and transient response across the spectrum are greatly enhanced (or, should I say, made to sound like they should). The proper amount of air up top returns.

I am as skeptical as anyone when it comes to products with miraculous claims made about them. In the audiophile world, nary is there a forum page where someone doesn't have a bridge to sell. I really wasn't sure what to expect with the BP-1200. But it did exactly what I hoped it would do. Now, when I have the opportunity to fire up my system during the day, I can rest easy knowing I have the same great sound quality that I have at night.



Conclusion

So, would you benefit from one of these? If you have no issues ever with your system, things sound like they should at all hours of the day, and you think I am full of crap, this probably isn't for you. However, if some of the things I said here ring true, if some of the issues I described sound familiar, you owe it to yourself to give this a try. Before you start buying crazy upgrades for your headphone cables or interconnects, maybe this is what you need. Keces audio actually has three models available: this one, the BP-1200 which retails for \$799, the BP-600 (two outlets) for \$499 and the BP-2400 (eight outlets) for \$1399. Buy the one that fits your needs. It made a huge difference for me.

Specifications

Input Voltage	110V-120V or 220V-240V
Output Voltage	110V-120V or 220V-240V
Power VA	1200 VA
NO. Outlets	4
Casing	4mm Aluminum
Dimension (WxDxH)	300x220x133mm
Weight	12KG

Informational Links

<http://www.enjoythemusic.com/magazine/manufacture/0712/>

<http://www.emfields-solutions.com/howto/what-to-do-about-dirty-electricity.asp>