

HiFiCollective's Glasshouse Takman Metal Film Stepped Attenuator

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Hot on the heels of the successful HiFiCollective Takman stepped attenuator, which utilise the "REX" range of Carbon Film Resistors, comes a variant based on the Takman "REY" range of metal film resistors.

These resistors are designed specifically for audio equipment and features thin film material made mainly of Ni-Cr-Al materials, brass end-caps and non-oxygen copper wire. High-precision is achieved by using laser trimming and high stability and high sound quality are achieved with special coating materials.

Takman recognises how sound is influenced by the various structures and materials used in the manufacture of these resistors. Magnetism, inductance and electrification caused by contact resistance and vibration all contribute to a flat and coloured sound. This results in an edgy brightness with an overall lack of accuracy and detail. To remove these incidental noises, Takman developed their first audio grade resistor, the MAESTRO, the predecessor to the REX (carbon film) and the REY (metal film). Takman has developed manufacturing techniques that can be used for mass production, together with the use of superb quality materials to produce these audio grade resistors that offer outstanding specifications.

After installing this attenuator in my preamp, my first impressions were very favourable. This attenuator presented a bright, clear sound, but also had a superb bass response, which is a feature shared with the Takman carbon film version. Carbon film resistors are known for their smooth and warm sound while metal films have a brighter sound. However, metal films can often be a bit harsh and also bass-light. This was certainly not the case with these metal films. In fact, their bass response was reminiscent of the Shinkoh tantalums and they balanced this excellent bass with a crisp top-end.

Listening to Vivaldi Concertos for Two Violins with Viktoria Mullova and Giuliano Carmignola and the Venice Baroque Orchestra (a recent release from Archiv 00289 477 7466) demonstrated the clean sounding violins that were never swamped when the full orchestra kicked in. I personally love the sound that metal films offer in terms of realism and the Takmans are fine examples of this.

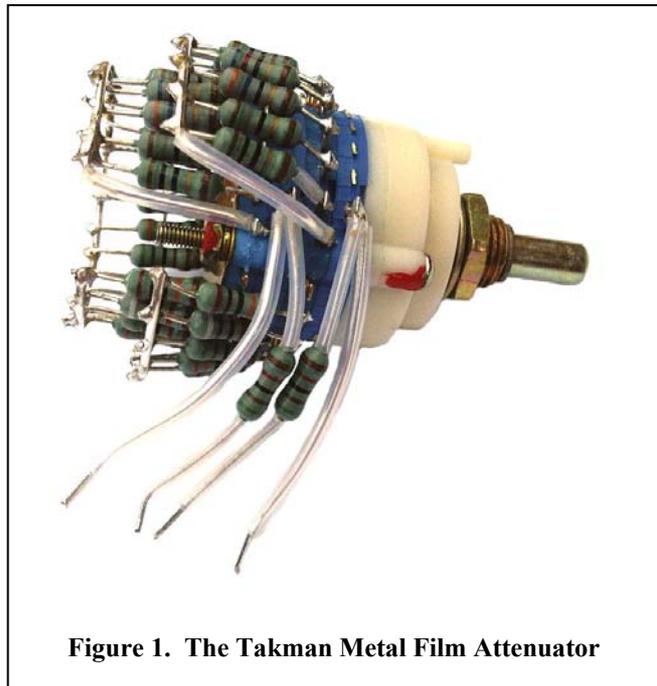


Figure 1. The Takman Metal Film Attenuator

Vocals were also well balanced and positioned more forward in the sound stage than with carbon films. Instruments were clearly positioned and there was plenty of breadth and depth to the sound. Cecilia Bartoli - The Vivaldi Album (Decca 289 466 569-2) is a fantastic CD for demonstrating vocal performance. The system fitted with the Takman attenuator responded well to the extreme changes of tone and tempo in the recording, as well as the breath-taking vocal gymnastics of Cecilia Bartoli! Also, Miss Bartoli was positioned just in front of the speakers with the orchestra stretching well behind, giving a clear presence in the room.

Conclusions

This attenuator is one of those rare beasts that can offer all the clarity and brightness of metal film without sacrificing the lower registers. It can certainly give the Shinkoh attenuator a run for its money!

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