

# Lateral Audio Stands LAS-9 Cadenz Vr equipment stand

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**A**udio equipment stands are slaves to two masters: decorative aesthetics and sonic performance. These two aspects are often thought of as being in direct opposition to one another; the sonically excellent – but brutal-looking – home oil rig vs. the refined wood, leather and glass audio furniture that underperforms in the sound department. Lateral Audio Stands is one of the rare exceptions

that straddles the great divide between ‘how it sounds’ and ‘how it looks.’

Lateral Audio Stands’ range of audio supports and stands are no strangers to these pages; the company’s top-tier LAS-4 stand being reviewed by AS in issue 173, and the simpler, entry-level LAS-9 Cadenz in issue 199. The LAS-9 Cadenz Vr is, you’ll not be surprised to read, a development of that latter model. The ‘Vr’ bit denotes the use of wood veneers to the visible surface of the

stands, the better to cover the ‘how it looks’ bit, but there are other changes to the design that merit a re-visit.

## Design and construction

The basic design carries over from the LAS-9 Cadenz: crisply machined high-quality fibre board shelves clamped between thin-walled tubular steel uprights which have Delrin end caps. This means the surfaces which bear on the shelves benefit from the Delrin’s absorbing and insulating capabilities, the better to minimise transmission of



EQUIPMENT REVIEW  
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» energy into and between the various levels. It's a doddle to put together, and the spiked feet are threaded and thus offer a levelling facility.

The review unit was supplied with the optional Counterpoint spikes, which have locking nuts with hex flats, so they can be securely nipped up once adjusted to level. The actual uprights don't have to be tightly fastened; finger tight is plenty secure and allows the Delrin to do its job as intended. The review unit also came with matching floor protector shoes; helpful on our wooden floor and for keeping me out of the doghouse.

The main difference, wood veneer aside (the finish of which is excellent and worth the extra on aesthetic grounds alone), is that the machined grooves that form Lateral Audio's 'dissipation array' are more complex in nature and are worked into both the top and bottom surfaces. This means one set of grooves is visible from the top, cutting through the full depth of the shelf, with additional, shallower

grooves machined into the underside. The idea is to break up vibration modes and disrupt the propagation of vibrations through the stand. Overall, the lasting impression is of a thoughtfully worked-out design, nicely implemented and well finished off.

Lateral Audio charges the same, per tier, regardless of the height of the columns you specify, and there are four height options, ranging from 120mm to 280mm, which should accommodate a wide range of equipment. As AS noted in issue 199, the LAS-9 Cadenz is a stand scaled to match the lower and midrange parts of the equipment market and priced very competitively. The additional complexity and finish of the Cadenz Vr takes the concept further upmarket, but still some way below the higher end LAS-4, which makes it a reasonable proposition for customers with more expensive equipment but who aren't in the 'you could fund a space mission for that much!' league.

I used the Cadenz Vr with my regular Accuphase DP570 and

E-480 combination, a pairing that sits conceptually closer to the LAS-4's fare. No pressure, then. Moreover, although these two models don't tend to display 'The Princess and the Pea' tendencies, they are not insensitive to their surroundings. Many equipment support systems I've used have, shall we say, failed to impress. Some, I'd even go so far as to say they broke the music.

The Lateral Audio Stands Cadenz Vr didn't break the music. The timing stayed tight and toe-tapping, dynamics were decidedly decent, pitch and tonality were precise and tuneful. Patricia Barber's 'Hunger' from *Mythologies* [Blue Note] starts with vocal and electric guitar singing and playing in unison. The Cadenz Vr was clearly able to show that the guitar also follows the vocal very closely indeed in terms of pace, phrasing and intonation; it's not an accompaniment, or a dialogue, it's mimicking Barber's voice. It's key to the opening, and easily glossed over. So, we're fundamentally in a good place.





## Those nuanced aspects of performance are baked into the performance of the Lateral Audio Stands Cadenz Vr.

» Youn Sun Nah, the extraordinary Korean jazz vocalist, sings a slightly unsettling version of 'My Favourite Things' on *Same Girl* [ACT]. Accompanied only by a strangely disturbing glockenspiel (it'd definitely have earned *The Sound of Music* a 15 rating back in the day) it's so effective because of that incongruity. And that comes through well enough to achieve the desired effect. This is also perhaps where the difference between the Cadenz Vr and stands like the LAS-4 begin to show; there's a subtle blurring between each crystalline glockenspiel note, while on 'Pancake' from the same album, her vocal articulation doesn't quite reach the heights I know she's capable of, but the energy and timing of the piece remain tight and enjoyable.

### On the floor

But here's a thing, I've heard similar, negative effects on loudspeakers using metal floor protectors, and in removing them the blur around the glockenspiel was much reduced, and Ms Na's articulation took on another level of subtlety and poise. This is very much a 'Your Mileage May Vary' moment, however. This was interesting, not least because it suggests the stand has real promise.

I'm an inveterate audio tweeker; if it doesn't have an array of cones, pods, pads or pucks, you aren't trying hard enough. But such tweaks rely on a good foundation, and the Lateral Audio Stands Cadenz Vr is a good foundation, both for 'normies' who want a damn good stand and for those of us obsessive-compulsives who view a good equipment support as a launch pad. Encouraged by this, I tried a few other tweaks. Now 'The Hours' backing choir (from the same Patricia Barber *Mythologies* album)

had form and structure, and imaging and soundstage was more solid and stable; Iiro Rantala's 'January' from *my finnish calendar* [ACT] had a richly dark and sonorous piano; 'February' regained its carefree playfulness. Vikingur Olafsson's account of Philip Glass' *Etudes* [DG] reminded me why his interpretation had so completely changed my views on the merits of Glass as a composer, and why this disc is rarely far from hand.

Those nuanced aspects of performance are baked into the performance of the Lateral Audio Stands Cadenz Vr, otherwise they wouldn't be possible to be teased out by my hours of tweaking. And to most people, they probably don't need to go too far down the hot-rodding line to achieve the same levels of performance. But, regardless of whether or not you are wired in the same way as I am, the Lateral Audio Stands Cadenz Vr is a good solution. That speaks to a rare flexibility in stand design; often equipment stands that offer good performance fail to play nice with the other kids; by sounding so intrinsically right out the starting gates and responding well to tweaks, the Cadenz Vr not only straddles the divide between 'looks good' and 'sounds good', but also brings some degree of rapprochement between 'fit and forget' and 'just one more cone...'.

### Lessons learned

There are some useful lessons here: notably that the stand/floor interface can be at least as important as the stand itself, but also that in the LAS-9 Cadenz Vr Lateral Audio Stands has itself a product which will not only do justice to an inexpensive system as My First Hifi Stand™ but has the potential to raise its game as your hardware

improves. Yes, somewhere down the line, the stand may become a limiting factor but that may be further on the journey than you first expect, because here is a stand which allows you to exploit the potential of tweaks and upgrades to system support, without the pressing need to replace the underlying structural element to realise those benefits. No blind alley this.

There's always a concern when a company comes up with a 'tweener' product. It can be the top model pared back too far, or the entry-level design 'pimped up' out of all proportion. This isn't simply a concern for stand makers or even audio companies in general. It applies universally but Lateral Audio Stands gets it right. The Cadenz Vr sits perfectly between the company's entry and top stand and is a worthwhile addition to the portfolio. It's well worth trying out! +

### Technical specifications

**Lateral Audio LAS-9 Cadenz Vr modular equipment rack**

**External dimensions (mm)**  
600(w) × 455(d)

**Internal platform size (mm)**  
500(w) × 360(d) (to inside edge of uprights)

**Leg/spacer height options**  
120; 160; 220; 280

**Weight capacity (per shelf)** 30Kg

**Price** 2-Tier £595;  
£200 per additional tier

**Counterpoint spikes** £95

**Counterpoint spikes and floor protector shoes** £125

### Finishes

**Standard** Oak; Black Oak; Maple

**Extra cost** Walnut (add £20, per shelf)

**Manufacturer** Lateral Audio Stands, UK  
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