

# TELLURIUM Q SYSTEM ENHANCEMENT CD



Set-up and test LPs and CDs have been around for many years. Most have someone telling you which speaker is the left one and that the other one must be the right. You might also get tracks to test whether you can still hear up to 20,000Hz, which is usually quite upsetting. Some will remember those vinyl discs to help you get the best bias or weight on your stylus (*still have mine -stuart*), and the more recent CD test discs try to help all your equipment achieve their optimum mechanical, electronic and magnetic harmony. As Geoff Merrigan, a director of cable manufacturer TelluriumQ and the voice on the opening track-identifier of this 3-track test-disc, tells me on the bump for this CD that most music we listen to hardly exercises the

equipment we play it on. Just like if we just go for a short walk every night we are hardly likely to succeed in a marathon. By only playing music it could mean that your system can get into a "rut". Merrigan explains of his 'Cable and System Preparation/Refresh disc' that it "takes your system through a full workout of frequencies and tonal changes that is specifically designed to stretch your system's components and bring new life into your music". With a title that rolls off the tongue like a brick, Geoff just likes to call it their 'System CD'.

And certainly this album is no slouch for the weak system... or listener for that matter. After the track identifier the next track lasts 60 minutes and 17 seconds and includes a plethora of rhythms, frequency

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sweeps and even morse code. This is a serious "musique concrete" workout, but one that I have to admit I enjoyed listening to, and even playing along to with my guitar. Just like my washing machine I soon got used to turning it on and getting on with my life. The sounds, whilst working to a repeating series of musical phrases, are designed to make your speakers work for their living, even when they're not set to high volume. There are also no pure ratio intervals in the tracks, meaning that the waves of the speaker cones don't form similar patterns of motions. For example a 1kHz tone with a 500Hz and 2000Hz is less effective in waking up your equipment than a 1kHz and 701Hz duo, even if the former trio is much more musical! Putting a frequency analysis across the tracks, no single frequency is missed out. The shorter and more animated third track is designed as a yoga session to wake up the hifi and "inject a little lithe life in to your music". There are similarities with the previous track, but this one goes a whole lot further. I have tried lots of test discs, and where many might tempt you with gimmicks, this one is just plain honest. Even the durations on the box for the two important tracks are marked simply as 60 minutes and 10 minutes. I mean, does 17 seconds really matter when you have left the machine playing for an hour, and is it important that track three says it is 10'20"?

Having been brought up on wavelets and chirps from other well-known enhancing and rejuvenation discs, it was nice to hear something different. In Merrigan's disc the chirps were more musical than simply increasing sinewave frequencies that are nothing more than annoying. However, where my customary discs have some very quick transient samples (fast attacks) the Merrigan disc was more musical, and forgiving. There were no passages that for me made me worry that my system couldn't cope, and I was happy that the CD also allowed my subwoofer to have a workout. This disc covered the lot, though perhaps a few minutes shorter and perhaps further track with sweeping frequency tracks designed to remove residual magnetism could have been useful. But I wasn't complaining.

Whether or not there is a market for a CD test disc anymore is another matter. Whilst it will be many years before I do away with the shiny disc player many will ask whether a HD disc covering greater frequency bands will be with us soon. Tellurium Q have no intention of making one. Indeed, creating this disc in the first place was not intentional. Mr

Merrigan's German distributor wanted to produce a test CD to accompany the Tellurium Q cables being sold there. When they were let down by a company who didn't produce one Merrigan just thought, "why the hell don't I just do it myself". With experience of music production he got together with help from Simon Lomax, who he had worked with on a meditation CD back in 2002, to produce his own test disc. He wanted it to be different to every other test disc out there. He didn't want "an annoying set of boring test signals". He wanted something that you could sit in the same room while it was playing "and not want to rip the speaker cones out". This album is a lot more forgiving to humans, and to speaker cones for that matter. And more than that, it really works.

Most of my cables are already well run-in, after hundreds of hours of playing, but music on its own cannot ever efficiently open up your hi-fi system's range sufficiently in a mechanical, electronic and magnetic way. A set up disc such as this makes it happen a lot more quickly and more, so even my old workhorse cables seemed to open up tighter and quicker after being exercised by this album. I connected up some old QED Profile 4x4 speaker cables that I had never used, though had always loved the look of. I also tried the same with the Slee Spatia cables from GPS Audio. The latter sounded slow and unclear initially, but after time with the CD the sound opened up with quicker top and deeper bass end and became very respectable for a company better known for headphone amps and phono-stages. I wanted to run in some new headphones I have for review so decided to play a wav-copy through my Fiio X5. I fell asleep. Whilst it happily woke up the headphones it had the opposite effect on me. This CD is like a double-strength medicine, curing the audio ailments quicker than others I have used in the past, and much less gimmicky. It also plays nice music.

## CONCLUSION

When I first got this CD I thought, yep, here's another gimmick, but I was very wrong. This disc might have a complicated name, but it really is a no-frills unassuming silver disc that does a whole lot more. This is first-aid for your hi-fi, and something you will keep as important as you do your medicines. What's more, the very meditative music on it is not all that bad either.

**Janine Elliot**