

Back in Black

Tellurium Q has updated its award-winning Black cable – and made it even better, says Jon Myles.



Tellurium Q may be a relatively young company but it has forged an impressive reputation for constructing high-quality audio cables during its eight years of operation.

One main area of its focus has been engineering as clean and phase neutral a path for electronic signals passing through loudspeaker cables and interconnects as possible.

If implemented correctly, this should give a more transparent, focussed sound with less smear and the reduction in perceived timing of musical pieces it brings.

It's an approach that works. I use Tellurium Q's Silver Diamond cables in my main system and they are capable of bringing the best out of the most revealing 'speakers and amplifiers.

But the product that first brought the Somerset-based outfit to the attention of hi-fi aficionados was its Black loudspeaker cable which debuted back at the start of this decade.

"Strings contain texture, bass has a real heft and vocals sound more relaxed and secure in their presentation" we commented on first hearing them (Hi-Fi World August 2010 issue).

So when Tellurium Q's managing director and designer Geoff Merrigan told us there was an updated version

– the Black II – we couldn't wait to get our hands on it.

As ever with Tellurium Q there was little (well, actually, no) information provided on the materials or geometry of the cables themselves. It's a matter of unboxing, plugging them in and listening.

In shape they are a thin ribbon design with excellent flexibility and fitted with Z plugs. The price is £54 per metre so a 3m set comes in at £324.

SOUND QUALITY

Alongside the Black IIs I also received a set of the original cable for comparison – and the step-change in performance is apparent.

Improved tonality was the first thing that struck me, especially with acoustic instruments. Keith Jarrett's piano on 'The Carnegie Hall Concert' had more body and weight to it with a rich, resonant presentation. Here was the sound of a real instrument playing.

While the original Black cable was good this new version takes all its qualities and builds on them with a sense that it is letting even more of the musical information through.

Timing, especially, seemed better and more focussed with a total

absence of smear or haze around instruments. With a slice of classic electronica such as Kraftwerk's 'The Model' the flip-flopping bass line had a rock-solid beat to it but wasn't overly dominant, allowing the intersecting synth lines above to shine through.

There was a feeling the Black II cables were imposing very little of their own character on the music but just allowing the signal to pass to the 'speakers unimpeded.

Of course, no cable can be totally neutral and these are not quite as transparent as the Silver Diamonds, being a little darker in tone. But that doesn't mean they are veiled – female vocals such as Diana Krall's coming over with superb air and emotion.

In fact, they excel throughout the frequency spectrum – relaying powerful bass when it's on the record and soaring saxophone lines when they are there.

CONCLUSION

An update to an already outstanding loudspeaker cable, the new Black II cables improve on the originals to a remarkable degree. Highly recommended.

HI-FI WORLD

**TELLURIUM Q
BLACK II £324 (3M
PAIR)**



**OUTSTANDING - amongst
the best.**

VALUE - keenly priced.

VERDICT

Clean, open and free of any smear, the Black II cables make music breathe. A worthwhile upgrade to any system.

FOR

- outstandingly open
- clean highs
- powerful bass

AGAINST

- nothing

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