

Tellurium Q Statement cable system

by Jason Kennedy



It's not hard to be cynical about cables: after all, how hard can it be to solder some plugs onto piece of twin-core wire and build a speaker cable? Yet most people can hear differences between cables if they are given a chance, and the things *do* make a difference, quite a profound difference in many cases. Some have attempted to give cables a notional value in the hierarchy within a system, suggesting you should spend at least ten percent of the system value on the connections, but these are fundamental parts of the signal chain – without them there would be no sound (even wireless systems have to have some cables even if they are only delivering power).

I would argue that regardless of system price you need bloody good cables, as you want as much of the signal as possible to get from the source to the speakers in any situation. In fact, I imagine it would be possible to put together two systems of the same price where one devotes 10% to cables and the other considerably more and find that the latter is the better sounding of the two. The problem is that a lot of

cables act as filters allowing certain frequencies through more easily than others, and these filters interact with the source and load in different ways, which is why choosing the right cable for a given system isn't easy. Geoff Merrigan at Tellurium Q seems to appreciate all of these facts and more. He has spent thousands of hours listening to different conductor materials, different dielectrics, and even different solders. And he has produced what many have found to be extremely good cables as a result.

The Statement is Tellurium Q's ultimate loudspeaker cable, a very chunky beast of a conduit that has to be folded into its container because coiling it up damages its structure. Inconveniently, Geoff is not very forthcoming about the topology or materials of his cables, which makes him open to accusations of being a purveyor of 'snake oil'. His response is a fair one; if he told the world what goes into the product it would be copied and he wouldn't benefit from all the time and effort he's put into R&D. Most manufacturers do this to some extent; they may seem to be telling all but there are always key

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► details that are kept under wraps. What Geoff will say is that it's not about speed, the fastest conductor is not necessarily the best in his book. He points out that there is no single thing that makes a good cable, it's a combination of factors including the way that, “materials affect ranges of frequencies in dissimilar amounts”.

He also talks about trying different solders on the terminations, admitting that “we have tried numerous mixes and diverse percentages of silver in the solder but at the end of our testing and development we chose a solder with no silver whatsoever (no lead either).” Even the connectors themselves have seen a lot of research beyond the type and plating which is silver or appears that way; he states that “we specify the thickness of the plating and what has to be in the plating bath and what should not be.”

In testing Statement, I have to say that I was impressed. One of Tellurium Q's favourite topics is phase coherence, something that you should be able to achieve if you can get all frequencies to travel through the conductors at the same speed. If this is the source of the excellent timing and coherence that these cables deliver then they appear to have succeeded. This is the first thing that hit me when I got the system up and running; at first it seemed a little odd, but I suspect that's because most other cables blur the timing of certain frequencies and fail to achieve such tight cohesion. But once you find that groove it is irresistible; Stevie Wonder's 'Superstition' [*Talking Book*, Motown] is a phenomenal track when it's as coherent as this, it is very difficult to sit still in the face of such precisely defined funk. This doesn't mean that it's clamped down and neutralised, it means that the music flows without effort, propelled by a rhythm section that is locked together yet as supple as a snake.

I also love the dynamics that Statement delivers, even compared to similarly beefy cables this produces the power and drama of an orchestra in full effect. I reverted to an old favourite in Beethoven's Fifth [Barenboim, *Beethoven For All*, Decca], and revelled in the dramatic power and the fine textures of massed string instruments. This is a telling piece and not an easy one to deliver in a domestic setting, but with this cable it became realistic and totally compelling. At the other end of the scale, the quieter end, this cable is exceptionally good at pulling out the details that make a singer

PRICES AND CONTACT DETAILS

Type: RCA Interconnect

Price: £4,320/1m pair

Type: XLR Interconnect

Price: £4,740/1m pair

Type: Power cord

Price: £4,740/1.5m cable

Type: Loudspeaker with silver plated 4mm locking terminations

Length: 5m pair

Price: £1,740/mono metre

Manufacturer: Tellurium Q

URL: statement.telluriumq.com

Distributor: Kog Audio

Tel: +44 (0)24 7722 0650

URL: www.kogaudio.com

or instrument palpably real. I first noticed this with Patricia Barber's 'Company' [*Modern Cool*, Premonition] where there is a glow of sorts around the voice that is usually not audible. It's presumably a studio effect provided to spotlight the voice but, not one that many cables expose so well.

I had to try a favourite live track, Ryan Adams and the Cardinals playing 'Hallelujah' [*Live at Das Haus*, archive.org], this is large scale but you don't get the dynamics that Statement delivers and nor do you get the perspective that it provides. I'm talking about the micro dynamics that add depth by rendering the voice, the band, and the audience in the correct ratios. This enhances the realism and makes you want to listen harder and longer. Imaging is in the Premier League, with instruments and voices placed precisely in a soundstage that reflects the recording with great fidelity.

I could rave on about this extraordinary cable but realise that at this price you won't believe me: the only way to find out is to listen for yourself. But beware; once you hear what Tellurium Q is capable of you won't forget the experience in a hurry. You have been warned! +