

Tellurium's Brand New Black Diamond USB Cable

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Over the past two years or so I have invested, financially and spiritually, in my analogue playback system. I've always been a vinyl lover but upgrading my vinyl playback system (Technics SP10, Thomas Schick 12" arm, various headshells and mono/stereo cartridges) has made me more often to grab a Long Play record for my ultimate listening pleasure. In contrast, playing digital sources has started to taste like fast food, something brains need as a quick fix only.

Not that digital would be bad *per se*. And not that I'd not have allocated decent sums of money and energy for setting up a digital sound system for getting best out of my digital music files and CDs - albeit CDs as media now seem to be more like industrial waste, best ripped to the Mac and buried like never born.

The digital playback system now consists of Sony SACD 777, iMac/iTunes (Amarra/Pure music), BelCanto Ref link, BelCanto DAC3.5 with BelCanto virtual battery. The rest of the system as always: TRI 300b monoblocks with Sophia Princess tubes (4x), modified Zu Definition MK II loudspeakers; Hydra 8/Hydra 2 (3x) power conditioners, numerous room tuning devices, etc. etc.

Despite the quality digital system I've all the time felt that the sound missed something, that something's not right. And now that my vinyl playback system truly shines, the feeling has only amplified. In the absence of reasonable explanations I've focused recently on the digital connection between my iMac and the Belcanto Ref link. Maybe the reason for the less than optimal sound has been lack of a decent USB cable?

For long I had Audioquest Silver USB cable but that kept "sounding" too harsh and 'digital' to my taste. I then tried Tellurium's 450£ Graphite USB, and that with very rewarding results leaving only little to complaint even without an external USB power unit, but especially with it. Separate USB power units such as AQVOX USB Low-Noise 5V are something that I warmly recommend for everybody who, more than average, feels allergic to digital residues in the sound.



Then I got an opportunity - a world premier chance, in fact - to test Tellurium's brand new innovation: The Black Diamond USB cable. Mildly put, it is sensational. It bettered the Reference USB. Most notably, it considerably brought the digital sound closer to the analogue sound of my system. I think the Black Diamond USB can provide a reference level digital sound even from a modest setup, and thus narrows the gab between ridiculously expensive systems and less pricy ones.

There is also a more profound effect. By now only vinyl collectors are considered serious record collectors. With the Black Diamond USB cable in the system it makes sense again to start collecting digital music, of any form. This is not joke. That's how I felt when I waded through my digital music collection the Black Diamond USB joining my iMac and the BC Reference Link.



Overall performance

The Black Diamond USB offers a well-balanced and quasi-faultless sound. Compared to other digital cables I have had the sound is really full-range. There is no sign of distortion whatsoever, even during the difficult-to-reproduce transients.

And as said, the cable must be the most analogue sounding digital cable on the planet. It is also a very forgiving cable. Somehow it appears to improve modest digital recordings, mysterious as it may sound. It kind of amplifies the sound making certain details play louder. *Shadows' Bests* is not my favorite record but now it sounded truly enjoyable. The drumming, the solid guitar sounds were surpassing, not forgetting the improved 3D image. Mark Ribot's guitar in *Silent Movie* became very emotional, more than before. Carlos Bica's stunning *Believer* featured a real-size bass and loads of details (his breathing, sleeves

making sound against the wood etc.). Musica Nuda's (an Italian duo) album produced spectacular dynamics, the bass being almost intolerably massive and physical. And so on. I tried the Black Diamond USB with the USB power unit, but eventually gave it up. The cable seems to be indifferent to usual USB power fluctuation (even iMac's displays can alter it).

Finally

The Black Diamond USB is a paradigmatic product, revolutionary even. Tellurium as a company seems to be like Usain Bolt, running from a triumph to triumph. Geoff Merrigan once told me how disappointed he was with a review giving their product only 4.5 points out of 5. There's some attitude. I was also told that their head designer is an analogue sound lover, which I guess is why the Black Diamond USB sounds so anything but digital.

The only worry I have is that people who would benefit from the Black Diamond USB don't find it or don't find it soon enough. I'd encourage Tellurium to profile their cables more clearly, according to the digital lifestyle of the potential user.

The Black Diamond is for music lovers who strive for a top digital lifestyle, who already have invested quite a bit of money in their digital playback system, and who own a digital music collection for life and are keen on getting the utmost out of it. The glory of the digital sound.

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