

A British Surprise

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VERY LITTLE surprises me in the world of audio, but it does happen once in a while. A recent surprise arrived from the land that last romanced my ears with seductive tunes from the Beatles and the Rolling Stones.



received a package of speaker cables from Tellurium Q, a brand that I had not heard of before. They came packaged in what resembled pizza boxes. My wife, on seeing them, asked me why I had ordered pizza when we were trying to cut down on ‘junk food’. Thereafter, my wife started referring to them, in jest, as the ‘pizza cables’.

It did not help that the cables had a very modest unassuming appearance that added to the impression that they could be the equivalent of pizza in the audiophile cable food chain where you find ‘caviar’ cables that resemble jewellery with prices to match. However all the jesting stopped once we started listening using one of the cables.

I decided to try out ‘black’, one of the more affordable models rather than the top-of-the-line one. What surprised me is that this modest cable, both in appearance and price, was able to punch way above its perceived class.

I compared the ‘black’ to my reference cables, which cost a five-figure dollar amount, fully expecting the latter to be in a completely different league in terms of sound quality. Imagine my surprise when the ‘black’ actually held its own in a couple of departments.

The ‘black’ created a sound stage so deep and wide that when the lights were switched off, it seemed that my listening room had grown in size. Percussion instruments had the speed and impact that I have not heard in this price category before.

One instrument that most cables find difficult to reproduce with accuracy is the piano. Not so with the ‘black’. Each piano note had the weight and timbre that is surprising for a relatively affordable cable.

There are cables at this price that are as accurate as the ‘black’, but few can deliver music with that elusive ‘je ne sais quoi’ property that lets you feel the emotions encoded in the music.

Most cable manufacturers focus on many different technical aspects to get their products to outperform. At Tellurium Q, the main focus is to achieve the best possible phase coherence, i.e., to ensure that there is no phase shift between the treble, mid and bass frequencies in the audible spectrum.

Phase shift tends to smear the sound reproduction. On auditioning the ‘black’, it was quite evident that the designers had achieved their objective. I was, however, amazed that speaker cable performance could be enhanced to this level, by focusing so much on one technical aspect.

How did they achieve this? Well, some cable manufacturers are very open about the technology behind their cables and some are not. The folks at Tellurium Q fall into the second category. I guess they prefer to let their cables ‘speak’ for themselves. As Jerry Seinfeld famously said, “Not that there’s anything wrong with that.”

Having been so pleasantly surprised by the ‘black’, I look forward to auditioning the top-of-the-line ‘ultra black’. Stay tuned!

(If you have any views or queries on consumer electronics, email them to emailmgomes@gmail.com.)