



Ultra Black

Waveform™ II →

Ultra Black

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**Tellurium Q**

*Please play this recording at normal listening levels  
like any recording too high a volume is not recommended*

- Track one (1):** a quick check that your cables are working and installed correctly and a pre-check of your speaker drivers.
- Track two (2):** The main burn in track, while you can play the whole recording in a loop repeatedly this is the main burn in track for new components in your system.
- Track three (3):** a rapid yoga session for your system to wake it up and insert a little life in to your music. Thank you for choosing Tellurium Q! We hope you have many years enjoyable listening by using your Cable and system preparation recording.

Tellurium Q



**The topic of cables can trigger strange reflexes in some people. Even today, claiming that cables might sound different can still spark the most heated of arguments.**

## Just trust your own ears

And yet it's so simple: either cables make a difference to the sound or they do not. And hey, you can easily just try it out. Sonic benefits may have a purely physical basis, for example better screening, the use of superior materials, or they create a synergy with the connected components which you can't readily understand, perhaps because it's not possible to measure the effect with the usual methods. So I would just like to appeal to all skeptics, doubters and pseudo-scientists: relax, open your ears and lay disbelief to one side for a moment.

Just such an experience led to the founding of the English firm Tellurium Q in 2009. Tellurium Q's president Geoff Merrigan was working as a business advisor for a recording studio which was considering replacing the cables because they were not satisfied with the sound. As a qualified chemist, Merrigan was of the opinion that cables could not have the slightest effect on sound quality – either they worked or they didn't. However, he was proven wrong, and founded a business based on this lesson. He took on board Simon Lomax, an experienced music producer, whose ears are the final arbiter in the tuning process of every new Tellurium Q product.

Before they brought the first product to market, they tested every last detail of cable production, from cable structure right down to the solder. After extensive research and endless experiments, the first Tellurium Q cable, the Black, was introduced in 2010, and since then has won award after award. Incidentally, tellurium itself is a rare chemical element and the 'Q' simply stands for quality. The marketing claim for their products is "Audio products to combat phase distortion" – they start with phase distortion and attempt to minimize it. Merrigan says "A cable acts as a filter. When a signal is transmitted through a cable, various frequencies shift in relation to one another. The result may be compared with trying to look out of a frosted window. The technological challenge is to neutralise this filtering effect through the use of suitable materials, handling processes and cable geometries, such that a more natural open sound occurs – until you have a clear window, to stick with the analogy." At Tellurium Q, they even go so far as to consider precisely what a signal actually





is. The preliminary answer is that we're not talking about a constant flow of electrons, as it is over-simplistically presented in school physics. According to Merrigan, the electrons (for which the description "particles" is also only one model) actually travel considerably slower than previously thought – and at differing speeds. No wonder, then, that "signals" can become muddled and smeared.

In this way the Englishmen attempt to penetrate ever deeper into this far from banal subject area to arrive at the ideal synergy of all materials in the signal path. That involves understanding which material, in what quantity, in which position, and how it is incorporated, will play the desired role in achieving the overall synergistic result. Though as to exactly which mate-

rials are used, Tellurium Q remain pretty tight-lipped. There are three ways of dealing with this question: say nothing, tell all, or give away just a little information. At a guess, I'd say 90% of companies would go with the "partial disclosure" option, although I can imagine that the exact amount of information disclosed would vary greatly from one firm to another. So what should we make of Tellurium Q's stance? I find it appealing and 100% understandable. Why? On the one hand, Merrigan hopes that his competitors will at least buy his cables, disassemble them and

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### Partnering equipment

**Turntable:** Pear audio Captain John Handy **Tone arm:** Pear audio Cornet 1 **Cartridge:** Grado Reference Sonata 2, Decca Professional **CD transport:** Philips CDM 4/19 modifiziert **DAC:** Tobian Dac T7 **Integrated amplifier:** Accuphase E-260, Soulnote SC710 **Loudspeakers:** Wolf von Langa Son, Suesskind Audio Phänomen **Cables:** Lautsprecherkabel Belden 9497 und Audio Consulting, Audio Consulting, Funk Tonstudioteknik, Lencomotion NF-Kabel

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analyse them, rather than have the details of all his development simply handed to them on a silver platter. On the other hand, he is appealing to our ears as opposed to our reasoning. Potential buyers may often have preconceived ideas about copper or silver or solid core conductor versus braided. Tellurium Q rejects all that as well as the speculation raised in marketing.

A couple of years ago, my esteemed colleague Alexander Draczynski wrote enthusiastically about the Tellurium Q Ultra Black speaker cables. Since then I've had the opportunity to listen to various cables by Tellurium Q, either at shows or whilst reviewing, and I was always quite taken with them, regardless of which model. At the 2016 "Norddeutsche Hifi-Tage" hi-fi show in Hamburg, Geoff Merrigan personally recommended the Ultra Blacks after analyzing my system components, and who am I to disagree? Therefore I accepted the recommendation, complemented by Ultra Black interconnects, as well as the digital cable (only available as Black and not Ultra Black). It was important to me to connect up my system exclusively with Tellurium Q cables in order to avoid the possibility of any effects due to mixing cables of different concepts. The Ultra Black speaker cable has two solid core conductors spaced at a constant distance from each other along the entire length of cable, fitted with hollow banana plugs at each end, as I believe DNM previously did. The interconnects and digital cable are equipped with Tellurium Q's own plugs and sleeves, similar to the WBT connectors but with the difference that these sleeves are plastic. I find it sensible and good that the Englishmen make you aware that these should not be done up too tightly.

I've been able to listen to the Ultra Black/Black cable combination in my system for several months now. H.E.A.R Distribution Director Arnd Rischmüller gave me the choice of brand-new or previously run-in cables. I chose the brand new option. This gave me the opportunity to familiarize myself with Tellurium Q's burn-in CD, which delivers a kind of intelligent "fitness programme" for each and every frequency range in an unusual sequence. Does it work? You betcha! Normally I use either a classic braided cable by Belden, which in the hi-fi scene is generally regarded as a good value no-nonsense cable for valve amps and high efficiency speakers; or the highly musical solid core copper cables from Audio Consulting in Switzerland.

I won't beat about the bush: the Tellurium Q cables are far better than mine. Why? It's this coherence and yet simultaneous improvement in resolution. Usually you gain one at the expense of the other, but not here. By compa-



ri-son, my cables tend towards sounding vague, washed out, smeared – even the considerably more expensive Audio Consulting cables. I notice this particularly with two recordings. Ondas – Cantigas de Amigo are beautiful, and of course, sad 13th century love songs by Martin Codax, brilliantly contemporized by the vocal group ViviBiancaLuna Biffi and Pierre Hamon with his mediaeval flutes (Arcana A 390, CD, Austria 2015). Such a song can quickly irritate, and these flutes can easily sound penetrating and overpowering. Yet with the Tellurium Q cables the notes and sounds become music, contexts become clear, emotions transcend musical reproduction, you can hear the wood, the vibration of the vocal cords: magical! And it's just the same with one of my reference recordings, Emmylou Harris' Wrecking Ball (GRACD 102, CD, UK 1995). A system can easily lose its grip on the multi-layered cascades of sound served up by musician and pro-

ducer Daniel Lanois. As a listener you can quickly lose the pleasure in such wonderful music under these circumstances. But here these layers of sound (for example on "Where will I be?") take on a previously unheard lightness and stress-free transparency, with Emmylou's incomparable, high yet fragile voice the crowning glory.

The Tellurium Q Ultra Black cables achieve component status: that is to say, before changing any of your system's components, you should audition these cables first.

Moreover, the interconnects and the digital cable offer great bang for your buck. □

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### **Tellurium Q, Ultra Black and Black speaker, interconnect and digital cables**

**Prices:** Ultra Black loudspeaker cable (3m stereo pair) 2,150 Euro, Ultra Black interconnect (RCA) (1m stereo pair) 495 Euro, Black Digital Waveform II (RCA) digital cable (1m) 500 Euro

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