

Hi-Fi Choice RECOMMENDED

True Blue

Neville Roberts puts the new range of Tellurium Q Blue IIs against its older illustrious predecessors to see how it fares

Since it started in 2009, Tellurium Q has always been reluctant to share any information about the materials used in its products. The company has, nevertheless, built up a reputation for producing high-quality cables that sound excellent.

The company focuses on tackling phase distortion in cables, which it says smears audio frequencies. In order to address this, it employs special blends of materials for the conductors and insulators of its cables and connectors. It also uses multiple stranded conductors of slightly differing compositions and various dielectric materials and geometries.

There are three families of Tellurium Q cables – Blue, Black and Silver – offering increased performance as you progress across them. The company believes that if it brings something to market, it is an enhancement on the previous model and you should be able to hear the improvement. With this in mind, it offered *HFC* the opportunity to make a direct comparison between its entry-level Blue cable range and its successor, the Blue II. Two versions of three types of cable are provided: an RCA interconnect, XLR and a loudspeaker cable. The prices of the old and new cables are the same.

All the cables are very well made and come fitted with good-quality connectors. I test each set of cables individually so that I can clearly identify their effect on my system.

RCA interconnect

I fit each of the RCA interconnects in turn between my valve phono stage and valve preamp. The cables are directional, as shown by arrows printed on the heatshrink sleeving. With the original Blues in place, I choose Handel's *Organ Concerto No. 1 in G Minor* with E Power Biggs playing the organ and Adrian Boult conducting the LPO. With the Blue RCAs, the opening has great depth and a commanding performance on the organ, although I consider the top end a little recessed in comparison with what I am used to. Swapping over to the Blue II, my first impression is that the newer cable is slightly more flexible than the old one, which is a good thing. Sonically, the depth is still there, but the top end is noticeably clearer, which brings the soundstage slightly more forward.

Listening to Laurent Garnier's *Desireless* with the Blue II in place, the deep, well-extended and pounding bass is punchy and well controlled. The top end, especially with the pseudo-vocals, is clear and precise. Swapping back to the original Blue, the bass sounds noticeably blander and less well controlled. The top end sounds slightly edgier too.

Finally, I Musici's take of Vivaldi's *Concerto No.7* sees the solo oboe playing by Heinz Holliger in the first movement sounding particularly lively. Exchanging the original Blue with the Blue II results in extra realism and clarity. Overall, the instruments are more clearly defined within the soundstage with the Blue II and my enjoyment of the overall performance is very much enhanced.

The speaker cable has a more refined top end performance and tighter bass

XLR interconnect

I connect each XLR interconnect between my Studer A810 pro tape machine and my unity-gain balanced-to-unbalanced preamp. Playing a copy-master tape of Yarlung Records' 15IPS copy-master tape entitled *Yuko Mabuchi Plays Miles Davis, Missing*

DETAILS

PRODUCTS
Blue II RCA interconnect, XLR interconnet, speaker cable

PRICE
RCA interconnect: £180 for 1m; XLR interconnect: £235 for 1m; speaker cable: £16.50 per metre + £12 per pair factory termination

DISTRIBUTOR
Tellurium Q

TELEPHONE
01458 251997

WEBSITE
telluriumq.com

HFC_469_Tellurium_Q_Reprint.indd 50 05/11/2020 10:00





Miles is delightful with the original Blue interconnect fitted. The piano is very real and clear. However, when I swap in the Blue II cable, there's an immediate step up in performance. There is a huge improvement with the piano in terms of clarity, detail and imaging. JJ Kirkpatrick's trumpet has a greater clarity and yet is firmly positioned behind the piano, which isn't so evident with the original cable.

A lovely rendition of *Agnus Dei* by Mozart, sung by the soprano Daisy Brown with piano accompaniment, on a copy-master tape from Chasing The Dragon also shows off the significant improvement with the Blue II XLR. Brown's vocals sound edgy and slightly muddled with the original interconnect in place, but with the Blue II, emerges with a polished, crystal-clear joyousness that is truly captivating.

Finishing off with the spectacular *Tarantella* by Sarasate, played by Interpreti Veneziani, the performance is quite staggering with the lively gymnastics of the violinist's fingering throughout the piece. The Blue II releases an additional element of excitement and clarity over the original cable, resulting in the orchestra having greater presence in the listening room.

Loudspeaker cable

I connect both versions of the Blue speaker cable in turn to my 300B valve Class A monoblocks and my transmission line loudspeaker. Starting off with the original Blue and a recording of Werner Müller and his orchestra performing *Delicado*, I am disappointed with the top end performance of the trumpets, which sound a little muddy and harsh compared with what I am used to. With the Blue II the top end becomes cleaner and the bass response in particular tighter and more punchy.

Similarly, with the recording of Mozart's *Agnus Dei*, the vocals of the soprano are brighter and her positioning in the soundstage is better focussed. The performance seems more balanced and real.

Moving back to the Laurent Garnier, the Blue II tightens up the thumping bass when compared with the original cable. However, with the electronically processed sounds of the pseudo-vocals, I am unable to discern any significant difference between either the Blue or the Blue II.

I close proceedings with *Tarantella* by Sarasate. With this copy-master tape recording, the Blue II really has the edge over the original cable and seems to impart an extra sparkle to an already stunning performance. I put this down to a tad cleaner top end, which adds a level of refinement to the spirited violin playing.

Speaker cables can be fitted with banana or spade terminations and can be bi-wired

Conclusion

In conclusion, for each of the three types of cable there are definite sonic improvements for the Blue II over its predecessors. The speaker cable offers the most subtle improvement, resulting in a more refined top end performance and tightening up of the bass. The new Blue II RCAs are a quite significant step-up from their predecessor with a cleaner top end and a punchy and better-controlled bass response. The Blue II XLR really gives a dramatic improvement with noticeably better clarity, detail and imaging when compared with the original. All this is offered at no increase in cost for any of the three types of cable, so if you've tried the original Blues and liked them, you are definitely going to be impressed with these new updates ●

Exchanging the Blue RCA with the Blue II results in extra realism and clarity

Following the review of the original Blue RCA (*HFC* 362), the Blue II has been vastly improved



Hi-Fi Choice

OUR VERDICT

SOUND QUALITY ★★★★★

VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★★

BUILD QUALITY ★★★★★

FEATURES ★★★★★

LIKE: The cables are a definite improvement over their predecessors

DISLIKE: Nothing at the price

WE SAY: Excellent value for money and high-quality cables

OVERALL ★★★★★

HFC_469_Tellurium_Q_Reprint.indd 52 05/11/2020 10:00