

Tellurium Q Statement II is the magic number

Tuesday, June 20, 2023
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Tellurium Q Statement II interconnect cables

Before I discuss the Tellurium Q Statement II, let me start with a hypothetical situation for you to ponder. You have been manufacturing a range of audio components, which have over the years picked up numerous awards from publications around the globe. Your ultimate range, which you have with some chutzpah named Statement, has audio reviewers and the buying public grasping for superlatives. Do you at that point decide (a) to hire a competent individual to oversee the continuing quality of manufacture for which you are known and to make sure that orders are fulfilled in a timely fashion, and take you and your partner for a well-earned high end holiday or (b) stay at home running the existing business while spending every other available hour playing with ways to make your award-festooned Statement products even better? The answer, if you are Geoff Merrigan, head honcho at Tellurium Q, is, and will always be, (b).

At his invitation I visited his design studio in Somerset a few months ago, where he played me both RCA and XLR interconnect versions of the original Statement range, using his reasonably high end system. The latter uses T&A electronics and pair of Vimberg floorstanding loudspeakers and between them they produce a most wonderfully musical sound. As one might expect given Geoff's commitment to maintaining his brand's reputation for value and musicality. The next generation of Statement was an audible step up from the mighty impressive original versions, and was most apparent with the XLR terminated versions.

A few weeks later a box arrived, containing a pair of the original Statement RCA interconnects and a new pair of what were marked as Statement II. Also included was a pair of Statement II XLR terminated interconnects and an Ultra Black II mains cable, which Geoff was also keen for me to try.

When the cables arrived the system in place was my Linn Sondek LP12, an early 90s copy which was almost completely rebuilt for me by Gullifords in Exeter using Tangerine Audio hardware and more modern Linn parts. It carries the original Ittok arm to which is fitted my Dynavector XX2 cartridge. The phono stage was my Gold Note PH10/PSU. My venerable

Yamaha CD-S3000 SACD/CD player and DAC provided the digital side, with our TV plugged into its optical input and the Auralic Aries Mini into the coax input. The amplifier was the Moonriver [404 Reference](#). The loudspeakers were my own Harbeth Compac7ES XDs, connected via Tellurium Q Ultra Black II loudspeaker cable.

Listening to the RCA interconnects

I started out with the original Statement interconnects running from the phono stage to an appropriate input on the amplifier. As has been my habit for some time now I started with Dave Alvin's *Eleven Eleven*, which despite repeated plays continues to captivate me. As the opening chords of Harlan County Line filled the room, I was deeply impressed by the sound and when Alvin's gruff baritone came in there was a palpable sense of the musicians being in the room with me. I let the stylus track across that first side and in the space of three songs I was totally immersed in the music. The clicking of the run-out groove brought me back from Texas to Devon.



Switching the original Statements out and installing the Statement IIs I cued up the same record and returned to my listening seat. I had changed no amplifier settings and yet here was Harlan County Line sounding better than I have ever heard it. The delineation between the instruments was more pronounced but not at the expense of coherence, and then the voice was there. Actually it was here, in front of me, just a few feet away. I felt that I was in some Kentucky roadhouse, surrounded by miners and country people, all absolutely silent as Mr Alvin told us his stories. The Statement IIs were the only difference from the first spin of the record, so I had to attribute this added realism and authenticity to them. It had been fascinating to hear the differences in the TQ studio, but if anything it was even more noticeable and impressive in my own home system.

I spent a couple of days playing records through this system, with my usual reasonably eclectic mix of classic rock, modern pop, symphonic and choral classical music and was absolutely delighted with all of it. My much played 1969 pressing of Colosseum's *Valentyne Suite* (VO1 - the first ever release on Vertigo) bounded into the room all guns blazing. This has been a firm favourite since I bought this copy on release but I cannot recall hearing it sounding quite this good ever before, and I have played it on some very high end systems over the years. Here Jon Hiseman's drum work really shone through (it was his band of course), but all five musicians have their moments of glory on this prescient mixture of progressive, blues and jazz-



rock fusion. In its day it opened my ears to all those genres and it is most certainly still valid today.

I then switched my focus to the Yamaha SACD player. As with the vinyl replay I started with the original Statement interconnects, and selected the SACD version of Pink Floyd's magnificent *Wish You Were Here*. It was so good that my intention to stop it after the first two tracks was forgotten and I thoroughly enjoyed the whole album. I then swapped in the Statement IIs and played it through again. And guess what? It sounded even better, which I had hoped it would but nonetheless was delighted. Somehow, Mr. Merrigan has devised a way to allow even more of the music to be heard without sacrificing anything in the process.

Statement II RCA conclusion

Unsurprisingly, Mr. Merrigan is very reticent about what he has done to improve on the award-laden original version of these interconnects, but whatever it is, it works. If you have invested in the Mk1 version and are now feeling the urge to upgrade my advice would be to do it if you have the financial means. However, before I heard the latest version I thought the original Statement sounded absolutely terrific, and I would very happily live with those. But because Geoff eschewed that luxury cruise and instead invested untold man-hours in improving it, only audition Statement IIs if you can afford them. You have been warned!

Statement II XLR

The Moonriver amplifier does not offer any balanced inputs so for the next phase of this audition I replaced it with the very different all-digital Lyngdorf TDAI3400, it is fitted with optional high performance analogue module which includes both XLR and RCA inputs. For comparison I used a pair of Ultra Black II XLRs, which I have been using extensively for several years and with which I have found no fault whatsoever.

The Gold Note PH10 offers balanced XLR outputs so I connected it to the Lyngdorf and played the first side of *Eleven Eleven* again. The Lyngdorf gives the listener an impeccable account of whatever music is being played through it, with crystal clarity and excellent timing too. I really think it may be witchcraft, but analogue played through this digital wonder still sounds analogue when it pours forth from the loudspeakers. Having set that baseline I then swapped in the Statement Mark II XLR interconnects. Oh-my-goodness! The leap from a very good mid-range interconnect was not subtle at all. Not only did the music seem to have gained volume, I was hearing deeper into the mix, getting a stronger impression of each band

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member's contribution without any loss of coherence or musical drive. It was extraordinary. However, I was using a pair of cables that are not far off the cost of the amplifier, which in the real world may not be very realistic.

Final thoughts on Statement II

What Geoff Merrigan has achieved with this new version of Statement is little short of remarkable. He took an already class-leading product and made it even better. We for whom audio is somewhere between a hobby and an obsession need engineers like him (actually he is a materials scientist by training, which I suspect is very relevant to what he does now) to keep pushing the performance envelope, and risking spousal wrath by postponing that trip of a lifetime. I have huge respect for his unending pursuit of excellence. For those with pockets of insufficient depth, or less than ultra high-end systems, (that would be me for one) that perfectionism is a pretty solid guarantee that the rest of the Tellurium Q range will be equally class-leading. And for the cable-sceptics, while I totally respect your point of view, I will say this; cables do make a difference, and the better your system the great the difference that they make.

Specifications

Type: single ended and balanced interconnect cables

Connector material: not specified

Length: 1m pair

Terminations: silver plated RCA & XLR plugs

Extended warranty: 7 years



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