

mit sl cables

positive-feedback.com/Issue70/mit_slcables.htm

Positive Feedback ISSUE 70

november/december 2013

mit

SL-Matrix50 Interconnects and SL-Matrix90 Speaker Cables

as reviewed by Robert Youman



It's becoming very clear that we have entered the dawn of a new day in the industry. There are many new cutting edge audiophile products that are just entering the market that can really make a difference in sound quality. My hope is that consumers are realizing this and are taking advantage. It also gives me hope that we can break through to the MP3 IProduct crowd. We need to help these folks realize how rewarding this hobby can be and to keep the momentum going!

The MIT SL-Matrix50 Interconnects and SL-Matrix90 Speaker Cable are perfect examples. MIT and founder Bruce Brisson have an impressive legacy. It all began back in 1984 with some very creative breakthrough technologies and unique product offerings. Many of the industry's leading manufacturers use MIT cables to design and voice their components. Just take a walk through any of the big audio shows and events. You will find MIT everywhere from entry level systems to some of the most expensive

state of the art demonstrations. You will also find MIT in many of the finest professional recording studios in the world.

MIT Multipole™ Networks - Overview

It is always impressive when flagship technology finds its way to other price points in the portfolio. In this case we steal some thunder from MIT Oracle product development. The technologies and designs behind the SL-Matrix cables are impressive. I want to get this correct, so I will just quote some of the back story directly from the MIT website. Please see the three paragraphs below.

"A key element that was always missing when discussing the performance of audio and video cable was the ability to quantify performance through test results. After years of R&D, MIT announced the development of the Efficiency Scale, a test and measurement program that correlates sonic qualities of cable with test-bench performance. Using proprietary software designed by MIT in conjunction with Hewlett-Packard, MIT was now able to measure a network's complex impedance, including its phase, and calculate its in-phase power and losses. These are the very factors that show how efficiently a given audio network or cable will pass the music signal from input to output. MIT was able to combine these results into a single graph to characterize and correlate a network's sonic performance to what the ear hears, something no other cable company has the ability to do.

Multipole™ networks are wired in parallel, passively correcting the problems that are inherent with ordinary cable designs. All cables have one ideal area where the capacitance, inductance and resistance are balanced for proper articulation. This describes a single-pole of articulation. With Multipole™ networks, MIT can create additional poles (within the cable) for ideal behaviour over a broader range than "just cable." With the advent of new micro-components, MIT can now provide improved performance without increasing package size for ease of installation. Think of it as getting the best part of multiple cables, all in one sleek package.

The SL-Matrix90 speaker and the SL-Matrix50 audio interfaces create additional poles of articulation in the network, optimizing the musical intervals within each octave, resulting in a High Definition (HD) presentation. The SL-Matrix90 HD speaker cable when paired with the SL-Matrix50 HD interfaces excel at maintaining the timbre of the individual building blocks of the musical foundation of the recording - the percussion and bass instruments - allowing your system to reveal the true textures of a musical piece from its foundation, on up. By controlling articulation from the deepest bass regions up through the critical middle C region and beyond, the natural harmonics of the percussion and bass instruments are maintained in their original and proper relation to their fundamental notes. This results in the timbre and textures of the rhythm section being faithfully presented as a whole. It is these critically essential textures that allow a system to recreate the layering of instruments within the soundstage—the ultimate end game in high-end audio, so sought after by audiophiles."

Related to the studies mentioned above, I also highly recommend that you check out the additional analysis and graphs on the MIT website that demonstrates how correct cable design can impact the audible range of human hearing. These graphical representations describe how articulation poles can be tuned to optimize lows, mids and highs for better cable performance. A picture is worth a thousand words. Very interesting reading!

Review System

Magico Q7 Speakers

Vitus Audio RI-100 Integrated Amp (w/Phono Stage)

Playback Designs MPS-5 CD/SACD/DAC

VPI Aries Extended Turntable

VPI 12.6 Memorial Tonearm

Van den Hul Frog Cartridge

The MIT SL-Matrix50 Interconnects and SL-Matrix90 Speaker Cable

Synergistic Research Element CTS Power Cords

Magico QPod Footers

Caveat Emptor

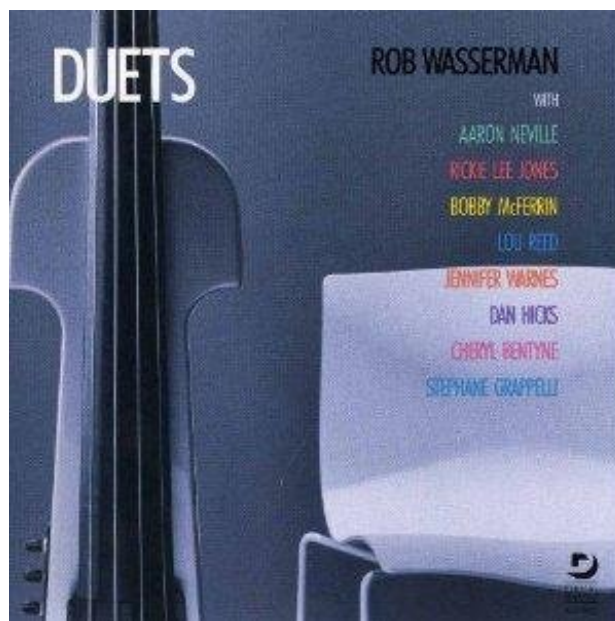
System synergy and personal taste are critical when evaluating high-end audio products. This review is based on my subjective requirements, my subjective ears, and my specific system and listening room. These combinations of components are only a few data points of many that exist out there. For further insight into my personal biases, check out the "Meet The Writers" section of *Positive Feedback*. Please consider my comments and analysis appropriately.



Sound

I am going to start from the bottom up as we begin this evaluation. Let's be very clear about the first of several findings. The MIT SL-Matrix50 interconnects and SL-Matrix90 speaker cable provide some of the finest bass production that I have heard in my system. This should be no surprise as MIT has long been known as a leader in this frequency range. In addition to the expected quality and quantity of authority and thunder, there is also a certain amount of newly discovered sonic texture and dimensionality that makes the results so appealing. This last statement also applies to the entire range of frequencies.

Rob Wasserman's *Duets* CD is an excellent choice for demonstrating what I am hearing. Many would argue that Wasserman is one of our finest musicians on both acoustic and electric bass. He is well known and respected for his solo efforts and his time with the likes of The Grateful Dead, Lou Reed, Ricky Lee Jones, Neil Young and on and on. This release includes an eclectic mixture of different musicians and musical styles with very high production values and sound quality.



"Gone With The Wind" on Track 7 with just Wasserman on bass and Dan Hicks on vocals is a real test. Just inside the left speaker is Wasserman on acoustic bass and just inside the right speaker is Hicks. These are not singular flat representations on one plane. Through the MIT interconnects and speaker cable, both are locked in two distinct three dimensional images with tremendous presence and clarity.

Hicks demonstrates some very entertaining scat skills that may totally surprise you. As he moves up and down the scale, so does Wasserman on acoustic bass—almost like dueling banjos. Even more impressive here is the scope and depth of the lower frequencies. Tone, timbre and weight are spot on. Slam is impressive. You get sizzling dynamics that will have your head spinning.

Next up are mids and highs. When I stated in an earlier preview that "this is not your father's MIT", I was referring to these two frequency ranges. Back in the day when digital front ends were just introduced, I would always run like hell to my MIT stash for a quick and effective solution to the grainy almost clinical sound that was coming out of those CD players. As time marched on and digital became much more representative of the real thing (yet still not the equal of analog just yet), I found these same cables to be missing a certain sense of openness and life.

With the new MIT SL-Matrix line, we now have something very different . If this experience sounds familiar, you really owe it to yourself to check out these new designs. Mids and highs are now airy and extended with tremendous transient speed and articulation. Supplementing this is that wonderful level of sonic texture and dimensionality that I mentioned earlier.

Patricia Barber's *Companion* SACD on Mobile Fidelity exhibits this well. This is a series of live performances in 1999 at the Green Mill Jazz Club right here in my hometown of Chicago.

Barber is known for her jazz singing and piano abilities, but many of her most interesting arrangements are based on pop and rhythm & blues. Her first albums that took off in popularity, *Modern Cool* and *Cafe Blue*, are well represented here.

"Touch of Trash" on track 7 is an incredible roller coaster ride of thrills as Barber demonstrates her most daring and whimsical side. As the song begins, you get another great test of bass as Michael Arnapol surges along and lays down a depth charge like foundation for the other musicians. Barber's vocals come through as breathy and sensual as ever—nicely fleshed out with plenty of inner detail. Jason Narducy, on accompanying vocals, can be slightly edgy if not cold on some systems, but not here. You get a rich harmonic presentation. You gotta love the line "she's just a button short of trash". I have known a few of these ladies in my time - fortunately or unfortunately.

Eric Montzka on drums and Rubin P. Alvarez on percussion jump in and then the mix of cymbals and various other metal percussion begins to fly. All are clearly delineated and properly shaped with plenty of appropriate splash and air around each instrument. No over kill here for effect. You get the excitement but it all sounds very natural and real. Again, this a new MIT in action!

Lastly, we have the Prokofiev "Love Of Three Oranges Suite" conducted by Antal Dorati with the London Symphony Orchestra on Mercury Living Presence records. I am fortunate to own an original pressing given to me by my generous father-in-law. These Living Presence



recordings have reached immortal status, and deservedly so. Recorded in the famous Watford Town Hall in London, an acoustic marvel in itself, we get a reading and a performance that is just tantalizing. Based on a fairy tale by the 18th century Venetian poet and author Carlo Gozzi, the score reflects a definite mixture of humor and satire.

The famous "Marche" movement has seen many different arrangements and interpretations over the years. Jascha Heifetz was one in particular who used it often for his recitals. For me it still stands the test of time. I don't mean to be disrespectful to Prokofiev, but it can on occasion sound like something that John Williams might have composed - the words panoramic and commanding come to mind. Exciting stuff!

The key here is the initial interplay between woodwinds and strings. Again, the MIT cables come shining through. When the brass section jumps in to reinforce the marching tempo, you get a colorful collage of separation and several vivid layers of instruments despite a huge wall of sound. The up tempo rhythms and progressions seem to just float in the air and fill your listening room with impressive scope and clarity. Makes you want to pull out your Sabre Laser and hunt down Darth Vader!

Final Thoughts

I greatly enjoyed my time with the MIT SL-Matrix50 interconnects and SL-Matrix90 speaker cable. It has me rethinking all my prior audiophile prejudices and stereotypes. Component matching and synergy are still critical to the success of any system. With that in mind, and when considering changes or upgrades, these products should without question be on your audition list. Definitely a bench mark to compare against all others. **Robert S. Youman**

SL-Matrix50 Interconnects (1 meter)

Retail: \$4999

SL-Matrix90 Speaker Cable (8 feet)

Retail: \$9999

MIT

www.mitcables.com

POSITIVE FEEDBACK ONLINE © 2013 - HOME