



QED Reference Audio 40/ Signature Revelation **£242**

An affordable cable loom from one of the UK's longest established cable companies. How does it compare?

DETAILS

PRODUCT
QED Reference Audio 40/Signature Revelation

ORIGIN
UK

TYPE
Interconnect/
speaker cable

FEATURES

- Interconnect: silver-plated copper with foamed polyethylene dielectric
- Speaker cable: silver-plated copper conductor with Teflon dielectric
- Prices: interconnect £100/1m, speaker cable £17/1m unterminated

DISTRIBUTOR
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Like most interconnects here, the Reference Audio 40 is a silver-plated copper affair, arranged in a special complementary way – the two conductors have different diameters, and this is said to give an alternative path for high-frequency audio signals to avoid time smear. The foamed polyethylene dielectric is claimed to reduce the amount of signal lost to cable capacitance. QED's Analoc plugs are fitted, said to be a low eddy current design with copper instead of brass used. They feature an outer locking cylinder that needs to be screwed forward before the plug's 'blades' can be locked onto the RCA phono socket, then the locking cylinder needs to be tightened back up for a (very) secure fit.

The Signature Revelation speaker cable uses 10 silver-plated oxygen-free copper central conductors, which are claimed to provide very low resistance alongside high levels of detail. These cores are separately insulated and arranged around a hollow core of polyethylene; QED calls this its Aircore technology and it's claimed to reduce inductance.

Sound quality

Before the QED loom, the panellists have taken a mixed view of the various wires played to them. They've found positives and negatives, liked some and been lukewarm about others. But two out of the three listeners express a strong preference for this set of cables, applauding it for its clean, open, even sound that doesn't try to do anything too clever. Instead it is very accomplished at almost every facet of the music, and makes things look rather easy.

"Everything is joined up," says one panellist, and so it proves. The Lorde track plays better than it has through most others here. Although not necessarily the warmest or most expansive, it just seems to gel the bass with the rest of the music – which is something several others fail to do. It doesn't sound too steely in the midband, giving a nice smooth sound to female vocals, and treble is crisp and finessed. Musically the loom works very well, the beat bouncing along in an enjoyable way. The result is a surprisingly easy listen, when previously the track hasn't quite made sense.

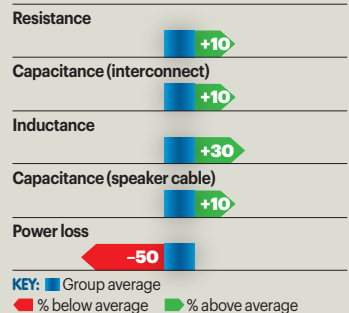
The REM tune is described as sounding, "head and shoulders better" by one panellist. There is a fine sense of depth to what can sound a pretty close and claustrophobic mix. One can hear lots of detail too, with the keyboard backing track coming through from the second verse, where previously it had been submerged. Tonally the QED isn't the warmest or most sumptuous here, but it is very even and transparent and doesn't seem to be trying to add or subtract anything

ON TEST

Superbly finished, QED's Reference Audio 40 interconnect is essentially a coaxial design albeit with two independently insulated multistranded signal conductors with one core thicker than the other. There's also a two-layer screen and return path comprising an outer braid and zinc/manganese jacket, affording a combination of low-ish 75mohm/m resistance and 79pF/m capacitance with a very low 0.18µH inductance.

The partnering Signature Revelation speaker cable, itself inspired by QED's 'Silver Spiral', has a standard figure-of-eight geometry but its inductance is lower than expected at 0.48µH/m thanks to the construction of the signal and return legs. These comprise 10 PTFE-insulated bundles of 19x0.1mm silver-plated copper strands, also pushing its loop resistance down to a respectable 20mohm/m with a low 27pF capacitance. It's the best of all worlds! **PM**

RESULTS AT A GLANCE



much. This means that it's likely to work well with a wide range of systems. Moving to the Duke Ellington piece and the pattern continues. One adoring panellist describes it as, "good bass rhythm and control, nice, cohesive, great sound, head and shoulders better".

Another of the panellists isn't quite so enamoured; they appear to yearn for the expansive yet sumptuous midband of the Ecosse, and find the QED a little too anodyne and bland when playing Julian Lloyd Webber's cello work. All of which just goes to show how much taste plays a part, but still this remains a superb result considering its low price ●

Hi-Fi Choice

OUR VERDICT

SOUND QUALITY ★★★★★ **LIKE:** Wonderfully easy yet open and engaging sound

VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★★ **DISLIKE:** Nothing at the price

BUILD QUALITY ★★★★★ **WE SAY:** A superb cable loom; nothing to criticise at the price

FEATURES ★★★★★

OVERALL

