

# ADVENTURES IN HIGH FIDELITY AUDIO

AN INDEPENDENT AUDIO AND MUSIC REVIEW MAGAZINE



Archive

Contact Me

Hello And Welcome

News, Comments & Information

Reviews

## Latest Reviews

- The Analog Manufaktur Germany (AMG) Giro Reference Power Supply - Making the wonderful better?
- Neutrik NA3FMX - Correct Phase Made Easy
- AudioQuest Dragonfly Red - Diminutive Super Star
- Steven Wilson - Mandela Hall Concert

## Latest News & Info

- Dealer Visit - Kantata Audio
- Copyright Infringement - Outing - isecope.com and technocratsblog.com
- Kantata Audio - Show Case Show - Crowne Plaza Hotel Saturday 23rd March 2019

Aug  
04  
2013

## High Fidelity Cables CT1 Digital Cable - 'Redefining the SPDIF Interconnect'

Interconnect Cable Review, Reviews



In this day and age of USB driven DAC's and computers being used as digital music transports its nice to see a company still prepared to develop a new coaxial digital cable for traditional - I will resist saying legacy - SPDIF digital data transfer (1) Despite the growing popularity of computers as sources of music, be they MACs or PCs, desktops or laptops there are numerous CD transports and separate or matching DACs still in use day to day by countless audiophiles world wide, even new designs coming onto the market place and thus coax digital cables still have their place in many systems.

Least anyone dismiss this market relevance, there is even a case to be made, and one that is regularly made among the computer audiophile community, that using coax digital cables for computer audio applications sounds better than USB cables - that however is a discussion for another day and I only include this to add weight to the argument for a new range of coaxial digital cables. The subject of this review, the CT1 Digital being the entry level one in a three cable range which also includes the CT1 Enhanced and CT1 Ultimate.

The High Fidelity Cable CT1 Digital

Search



Keep your self up to date with our latest news and reviews by subscribing to rss feeds or email updates

Enter email address

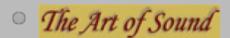
Subscribe



## Links



Tapeheads.net



The Art of Sound



Turn Me Up!



We Support the Real Stereo Campaign

Shortly after completing my review of the High Fidelity Cables CT1 analogue interconnect, Jonas Harrow of High Fidelity Cables asked me if I would like to review the CT1 Digital cable and as I had been very impressed with the CT1 analogue cable I didn't require much time to ponder my answer - yes please was my more or less immediate response.

A few weeks after the email exchange a 1m CT1 digital cable landed in my post box and it looks identical to the CT1 interconnects except for an orange band around the Pinlock RCA connector.



High Fidelity Cables say this about the CT1 Digital and the technology it embodies:

'A digital cable carries its signal as an analog waveform. These analog waveforms differ from normal line level signals, they operate in the Mhz range at very high bandwidth frequencies. Magnetic Conduction provides a superior approach to digital signal transfer.

#### MAGNETIC CONDUCTION TECHNOLOGY

Magnetic Conduction is a patented method of signal transfer for electrical energy. It uses a controlled magnetic field as the pathway for the signal. Testing at the University of Toronto show dramatically reduced distortion and increased signal to noise ratio compared to typical cables. The conductor is a unique and proprietary alloy specifically designed to work with this technology.

#### PINLOK RCA CONNECTOR

Traditional RCA connectors cause the signal to micro arc across the resistive pathway of the connection. Our patent pending PinLoK RCA connector has an oversized pin that will compress to enter a normal RCA socket. Spring tension then continues to push and expand the inserted pin for maximum contact pressure. This increase in surface contact lowers the amount of micro arcing and reduces distortion.

#### MAGNETIC WAVE GUIDE

Skin effect in a cable is created by opposing magnetic forces which cause the signal to push to the extreme outer edges of the conductor. Our magnetic wave guide technology creates a tunnelling effect focusing the magnetic force into the middle of the conductor. This eliminates the cause of skin effect and preserves the time and phase aspect of the original signal.

#### MECHANICAL VIBRATION DECOUPLING

Micro vibrations are introduced into an audio system by a multitude of sources and will follow the signal path looking to dissipate to a larger mass or point of stress. Each of our cables feature extensive mechanical vibration decoupling. Multiple conductive plates made with a specialized powdered material are used to dampen the vibration transfer within the connector itself.

#### INTELI SHIELD

High Fidelity Cables uses a dual shielded coaxial design that has extremely high rejection capability. This coaxial design is combined with Magnetic Conduction's patented ability to control unwanted electro magnetic interference. This particular geometry gives all our cables a class leading ability to filter out unwanted radio waves (RFI) and stray magnetic fields (EMI).

#### MICRO SIGNAL TRANSFER

Quiet passages of music and subtle audio details are represented by lower power electrical signals. In conventional cables these micro signals are easily prone to loss and distortion because they lack enough current to move through the conductor. Lab testing has shown Magnetic Conduction technology to preserve and keep these micro signals intact, resulting in large performance gains for audio system reproduction.'

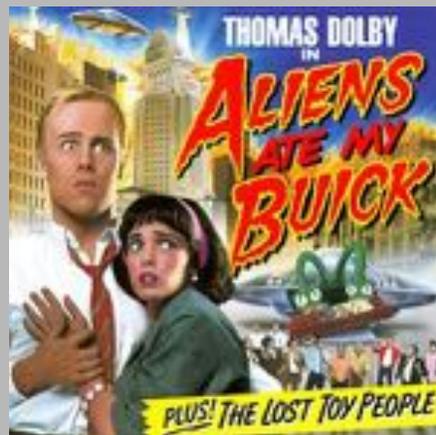
Excited by what I had heard from the CT1 analogue interconnects I couldn't wait to give the CT1 Digital cable a listen and after a suitable amount of run in that is exactly what I did.

#### Review Music

As this review was conducted over a few months quite a lot of varied music was used but for the purposes of consistency re review comments I will stick to talking within the context of these following recordings.



Dead Can Dance - Into The Labyrinth Mobile Fidelity SACD



Thomas Dolby - Aliens Ate My Buick



Dali Demo CD

#### Review System



The system comprised my normal reference components but with the addition of a Micromega Data and Dialog CD transport and DAC, PAD Dominus digital interconnect, my cost no object reference digital cable and XLO AES and RCA to RCA digital interconnects, my long time main stream references ( the cables in question are not though current production XLO cables) Front ends used: Marantz SA7 SACD player as transport, AMR DP777 DAC. Amplification used was: Balanced Audio Technology VK300 se integrated amplifier, Gallo Reference SA amplifier. Speakers Anthony Gallo 3.1 speakers. All equipment was housed on Clearlight Audio Apeckt racks and cabling was a mixture of Atlas Mavros speaker cable and interconnects. I also used High Fidelity Cables CT1 interconnects. Mains cables were Audience AU24 and Mark Grant 2.5. No mains filters, conditioners or regenerators were used.



### Listening

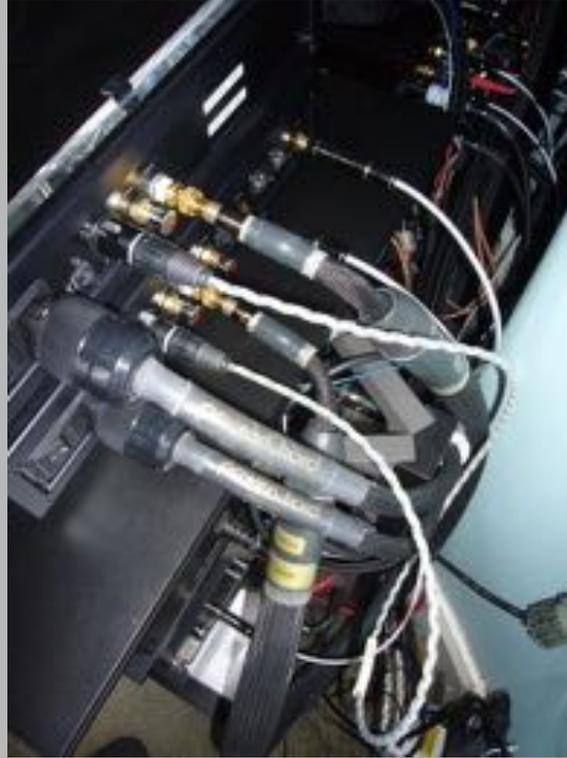
After a prolonged run in period in which I spent quite a bit of casual listening to the CT1 digital cable hooked up either between the Micromega transport and DAC, or the Micromega Data/Marantz SA7 as transport and AMR DP777 DAC the time came to do the review proper and in order to do that I removed the CT1 cable and switched to my PAD Dominus digital cable and used it as the reference hook up for a few weeks.



This cable is massive, looking like some kind of wickedly perverted piece of medical equipment (if Christian Grey has a high end HiFi the cables would no doubt be Purist Audio Designs (PAD) Dominus ones) and is somewhat notorious for going off full performance a day after its moved or re connected.

It uses a fluid surrounding the signal core which has various EMI, RFI blocking characteristics but because its fluid it seems to require a settling period after being moved. When I bought the cable originally I was sceptical about this caveat - imparted by the seller - but indeed my subsequence experiences with it confirmed the caveat.

Anyway after two weeks of settling I began serious comparisons including an XLO RCA to RCA AES XLR digital cable and a pecking order was quickly established with the Dominus outperforming both of the XLO cables and although the differences were not massive, they were still easily audible.



The Purist Audio Design cable was the more open and detailed digital transfer cable and along with better weight and scale to the mid and bass it also provided greater access to hearing more of the spaciousness of studio recordings soundstages and in particular live recordings acoustic. The PAD Dominus removed a layer of constriction and obfuscation in the music I was listening to. Of course there will be those who say that 'bits are bits' and as long as a digital cable is 75ohms (2) etc then what I heard must be a placebo affect etc and I am deluded as differences can't exist in digital data transfer - well in my experience they do and can and if the PAD cable was somewhat revelatory then the High Fidelity Cable was about to take this particular Alice well and truly to Wonderland



Adding the High Fidelity Cables CT1 digital cable between the Micromega transport and DAC which allowed switching comparisons to be made between the XLO and PAD cables (I also listened with single cables hooked up only) sounded veiled and not subtly so. Best analogy and its an oft used one was that the view was great via the other cables but using the CT1 revealed the window to opaque and dirty and to quite a surprising degree.



Listening and there was lots of listening, left me with listening notes that read not unlike those I had when comparing the CT1 analogue cables to my other reference interconnects. Using the digital CT1 interconnect (well run in 100 hours +) was akin to removing a heavy curtain, which allowed the light to flood into all the places the PAD and XLO cables did not.

At no time though was music hyper detailed or anything spot lit it was just much easier to hear more of the music and in a totally natural way with no emphasis being put on any part of the frequency band.

Listening to Thomas Dolby's Aliens Ate My Buick subtle and not so subtle details stood clear in their own acoustics, for example via the XLO and PAD cables the word 'soon' (2 mins and 17 secs) which is whispered after the line 'train leaving', on Budapest By Blimp and sits far back in the acoustic lacked, focus, space and air and was harder to hear clearly but via the CT1 the word which had been a mere phantasm before had solidity, dimensionality and stood clear in its own space and much greater clarity than before and then could clearly be heard fading as an echo into the recordings acoustic.

My listening notes have numerous time markers re subtle and not so subtle aspects of this track which stood out: 4mins and 37 seconds left channel solo vocal solid and clear, greater clarity, body and surrounding space, 5 mins 40 sec guitar solo better defined. 6min 18 sec guitar solos last notes fade into and are blended into some mysterious animal's roar. At 7min and 40 seconds the massed voices of the football styled choir sweeps in and as I found with the analogue CT 1 cables it was possible to hear many of the voices as individual entities within the whole, they had their own voice so to speak as individual parts of the whole. The degree of clarity, as it had been when first encountered during the CT1 interconnects review, was breath taking and every aspect of this complex and subtle music was beautifully portrayed.

Hugh Masekela's magical track Stimela (The Coal Train) sounded wonderfully open and detailed, as did Dead Can Dance's - Into The Labyrinth album and time and time again the definition, detail and clarity that the CT1 Digital cable brought to my listening experience was breathtaking and amazing.

I could go on writing superlatives and dissect track by track, nuance by nuance but I think it unnecessary the CT1 Digital interconnect has done exactly for digital connection within my system what the CT1 analogue interconnect had done for analogue connection and that is - quite simply put - to allow more of the music to be heard.



### Conclusions

I can't say that the High Fidelity Cable CT1 digital interconnect is the finest digital cable on the market as I have not heard every digital interconnect extant but within the context of my system, my room, my music, my listening priorities it outperformed my other long term digital cable references, whether used between the admittedly slightly elderly Micromega transport and DAC (the CT1 Digital and analogue interconnects brought a total rediscovery of what this two box CD player can do), Marantz SA7 and AMR DP777 or the Micromega Data and AMR DP777 the experience was both revelatory and very, very enjoyable.

This is the entry level digital interconnect in High Fidelity Cables range and based on this reviewer's experience the next cable up range the CT1 Enhanced must be quite something else indeed - maybe someday I will get to experience that next step.(3)

The High Fidelity Cables CT1 Digital interconnect is Highly Recommended - with the usual caveats re your mileage may vary.

Neil

**Product** - High Fidelity Cables CT1 Digital

**Retail Price (USA)** \$800 per 1m single cable (each additional 0.5 m is \$100)

**Source of Loan** - Manufacturer

High Fidelity Cables  
3941 Legacy Drive  
Suite 204, B-230  
Plano, Texas 75023  
USA  
Website: [www.highfidelitycables.com](http://www.highfidelitycables.com)  
Email: [info@highfidelitycables.com](mailto:info@highfidelitycables.com)  
Telephone: +1-972-312-1902

(1) SPDIF is short for (Sony/Philips Digital Interconnect Format)

(2) As several pieces of equipment I own are fitted with BNC furniture I used high quality BNC adaptors on the CT1 cable. This in the main facilitated quick easy change overs and also helped me avoid over stressing the RCA digital ins and outs some of my gear has fitted. Being honest these pinlock connectors grip so tightly that I actually managed to strain my shoulder and arm pulling one of the BNC adaptors off.

As mentioned in my review of the CT1 analogue interconnect, care must be taken fitting these cables and removing them. If your equipment isn't well made then I can easily see damaged sockets resulting from what I have termed the Vulcan death grip of the Pinlock RCA connectors.

(3) I am delighted to be able to say that in the not to distant future I will get a chance to hear the CT1 E and CT1 U Digital cables in my own set up, so a review of both cables will be forthcoming soon.

 Posted by admin at 4:41 pm

Sorry, the comment form is closed at this time.

 High Fidelity Cables CT1 Interconnect - A Revelation! MARK GRANT 2.5 SILVER AND GOLD MAINS CABLES 