

2015 THE INNER EAR

 siltechcables.com/reviews/the-inner-ear/

Siltech delivers high performance at a royal price with the new Emperor and Empress cables

Ernie Fisher, The Inner Ear

The Emperor Crown warranted my attention as soon as I heard its price. I reasoned that, as the most expensive cable I have ever seen/heard, the price may be indicative of its accomplishments as a conductor. First heard connected to the Crystal Cable's Arabesque loudspeakers at the Montreal Audio Fest back in April of 2009, I was fascinated, curious and a bit skeptical as well. When I was asked if I wanted to review it, I said yes of course, because I had to discover and verify what this is all about.



The two cables under review belong to Siltech's new Royal Series of cables which they introduced to "make a statement" for the company's 25th anniversary. For the occasion head designer and principal of the company, Edwin van der Kley, searched through any technology that could further improve and outperform the unique G6 technology already used in Siltech's cable designs. More about this in the tech section.

Appearance

Were it not for the unique termination used on the Emperor Crown, it would be difficult to differentiate it from so many others. It is about 25cm thick, wrapped with a black weave as so many others. However, the ends sport a metal cylinder from which a pair of

flexible leads emerge. In addition, six solid metal pucks come with the cable to decouple them from the floor and prevent micro vibrations from diminishing its performance — nice touch.

The Sound

My in-house Wyetech Labs Ruby monoblocks and matching preamplifier (both finished prototypes with a projected retail tag of about \$45k) served as my first auditioning system. A pair of Ethera Vitae and a pair of custom made speakers completed the auditioning system. I replaced my in-house Aluminata speaker cables with the Emperor Crowns, although I left the Aluminata interconnects between amp and preamp in place. I hypothesized that it would be easy to ascertain the ECs performance since I am intimately familiar with all other components in the system combination. It was, and here are some of the remarkable results.

Whereas the Aluminata speaker cable reached down into the low frequency domain without hesitation and with razor-sharp resolution, the ECs managed to elicit quite a bit more harmonics above fundamental tones. This made bass more realistic, more gratifying and better suited for hearing its source and its personality.

When I compared the cables' tonal balance I found little difference as both brands exhibited a smooth musical flow without favouring or omitting any parts within the audible frequency range. However, the ECs managed (again) to provide better symphonious structure to the music, perhaps a bit more articulate in the midrange region. However, no cable known to me can match the EC's smoothness at high frequencies; the degree of sonic refinement is off the chart.



I wanted to see/hear what this cable can do for lower priced audio gear and tried it with an unconventional system arrangement: a Bel Canto S300I integrated amplifier (around 3K) connected with the above mentioned loudspeakers. Though expecting improvements, I was not prepared for the dramatic results which, in a nutshell, converted an otherwise fine audio system into high performance high-end. This authenticated the value of the cable as a signal conductor of the highest quality.

The Empress Crown interconnects came in brand new and it took a couple of weeks to hear their peak performance. Like the speaker cable, they extracted the music's harmonic structure across the entire audible frequency range not accentuating any specific part, but highlighting, nevertheless, its capacity to reproduce inner detail, tonal equilibrium, the music's timbre and hue. I admired the cable's ability to faithfully reproduce the hard sound of horns, the woody quality of a double bass, the personalities of various pianos, such as a Yamaha, a Steinway or a Boesendorfer grand. While the interconnects seem free of any sonic defects or aberrations, I'd also say that they sound neutral enough to fade into the background, highlighting instead the musical signal it is asked to carry.

Synopsis

The Emperor Crown speaker cables are the best I have ever heard in the systems used for the listening tests. Their sonic attribute engraved itself with the combination tried for the listening tests and refined all the important elements for which audiophiles and music lovers strive. The list includes, among other things, resolution, smoothness, imaging, air, texture, body and, most importantly, a very high degree of neutrality, which allows a rather clear audition of a system's hardware. This is a good thing, though it can be dangerous as the cable exposes all imperfections of speakers and electronics. I like the metal cable supports and careful auditions showed that floor vibration, usually caused by the loudspeakers' bass energy, does deteriorate resolution and spatial elements, if only by a diminutive extent.

The Empress Crown interconnects' sonic accomplishments are, to me, not as stunningly obvious, but then again, they should not be as they simply disappear in favour of the music. Used as conductors between amp and preamp, they will show off the quality of these components. Used to connect source components such as CD players, tuner, etc., they will surprise as they convey signal with an organic touch rarely found in cable design.