

Vacuum State Cables

by Roy Gregory

Vacuum State delivered both their Silver Wire interconnect and their Copper Foil speaker cables. The former is almost as minimal in appearance and dimensions as the Crystal Piccolo, and looks rather nice in its thin black sleeve. Constructed from three, thin solid-core silver conductors, employing one for signal and two for return, these are enamel insulated and tightly twisted before being terminated with Eichmann Silver Bullet plugs. You don't get much simpler than that, a simplicity that's echoed in the speaker cable. This uses two copper ribbons, placed back to back with a thin layer of urethane insulation between them, producing a 25mm wide, flat cable, much in the



style of a Goertz or one of the various other, similar designs.

The cable itself is sleeved just like the interconnect, although the finishing where it interfaces with the 4mm Z-plugs leaves a little to be desired. True purists can of course dispense with the plugs altogether and simply cut "spades" into the end of each foil ribbon, a fragile but undeniably direct connection. Bought fully built,

interconnects will set you back £400 for a 1m pair (with an additional £150 for each extra meter), the speaker cables the same, whilst kits are available (direct from Vacuum State only) for around half that. Maximum lengths in both cases are 3m, making this one of the shorter cable options on offer. In use, their flexibility, compact dimensions and good quality terminations make the Vacuum State cables a cinch to use. In the absence of a matching power cords I stuck to the CrystalPower cables and block, which seemed closest in terms of conceptual simplicity.

No matter what system I used them with, these cables came as a breath of fresh air. Clean, quick, open, detailed and dynamic, as soon as the music started you found yourself relaxing and forgetting about their performance, focusing instead on THE performance. In that sense, they offered the same sense of rightness and musical coherence that made the Crystal Piccolos so engaging, but without that more affordable cable's subtle sins of omission. As a result they are both more detailed and more musically expressive, not just letting you hear the background details on the TvZ track more clearly and easily, but making more sense of them too; you hear the dog bark more clearly, but it's also less intrusive. Likewise, the snatches of whispered conversation are fully revealed for the first time in this group, as is the point at which our would be backing singer first starts her low, hummed harmony, something

that escaped the notice completely with all the other cables here.

The dynamic range and harmonic complexity are welcome too. For the first time you really get a



sense of the low-frequency power available from Jackson Browne's guitar on *Solo Acoustic, Vol. 2*, for the first time you realize that there are two instruments (guitar AND mandolin) on the opening bars of 'Copperhead Road'. This level of detail, transparency and musical coherence is something I associate with the best cables. In comparison to those the Vacuum States come up short on colour, absolute weight, dimensionality and micro dynamic texture, but they don't fall far short in any category – except price, which makes them a real bargain. These cables are certainly not cheap and they lack the finish, termination options, range and robust construction of more mainstream offerings. Instead, they major on performance, pure and simple – which actually sums their sound up pretty well!



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