

Dream Stream

Does size matter? Yes, says Black Rhodium – and Jon Myles agrees as he tries out the company's new Stream power cable.

Different manufacturers will quote different attributes and assets for the design of their hi-fi power cables. But not many list length as a key component. Black Rhodium do, though.

In fact they say they've carried out extensive listening tests to prove it. And so, fresh from their Derby HQ in the East Midlands, comes Stream – a high-end lead boasting a precise construction and terminated to exactly 1.7 metres. Longer lengths are available at a premium to the £450 standard cable but Black Rhodium's main man Graham Nalty says 1.7m simply sounds the best.

Graham first showed me a prototype of the new cable at the High End Show in Munich earlier this year, but it has now finally reached production.

The company tested various different mains cables during the design of Stream and came to the conclusion that cables in multiples of 1.7m gave a greater improvement to components than those of slightly below or above – perhaps down to the fact that this aligns closely to the quarter wavelength of the 50Hz mains frequency.

Internally Stream uses silver-plated copper conductors with a silicone rubber insulation for low dielectric loss. Increased distance between the conductors reduces the interactive magnetic field. A metal screen is employed to combat RFI while the whole cable features a thick, braided sheath and either a standard 13 amp UK or Schuko plug can be specified on order.

While Stream is thicker than



your standard mains cable or cheaper after-market alternatives, it is still sufficiently flexible so fitting more than one in a tight space between a rack shouldn't be a problem.

SOUND QUALITY

Whether it's Black Rhodium's wavelength theory, all the screening that goes into Stream or a combination of both, it certainly proves its worth in action.

Starting with a Naim Uniti playing both CD and high-resolution streamed files, the music had a tighter, more focussed sound. The kick drum on Pixies' 'Here Comes Your Man' had more depth to it through a pair of Neat Iota Alpha loudspeakers, the wandering bass line having plenty of definition.

Playing Dusty Springfield's 'I Only Want To Be With You' the soaring strings moved from a homogenous whole to individual instruments – with Springfield's vocals anchored firmly between and above the little 'speakers.

Switching to a McIntosh MC152 power amp, the Stream cable had even more impact. I was struck by how well it presented a stereo image

– seeming to push the music further out into the room. With Model 500s 'No UFOs', the left/right effects were positively ricocheting off the walls, so precise was their placement.

That's not to say this cable is clinical in any way, however. It accentuated the McIntosh's rich, velvety midband throughout Jacques Brel's 'Infiniment' to bring a warmth to his Gallic vocals without losing any of the bite. Indeed, I've rarely heard this collection sounding so good – as evidenced by the tingle in my spine when Brel takes a sharp intake of breath partway through and the music drops out before coming back a second later.

That's the beauty of this new Stream cable – it makes components sound more precise and controlled yet at the same time imparts a rich tonality which makes all music sound organic and free-flowing.

CONCLUSION

Who thought power lead length could make a difference? Black Rhodium, obviously – and Stream proves them correct. It's an excellent cable and amongst the best at its price-point.

HI-FI WORLD

**BLACK RHODIUM
STREAM £450
(PER 1.7 METRE
LENGTH)**



**OUTSTANDING - amongst
the best**

VERDICT

A tuned-length mains cable with great sound.

FOR

- stereo imaging
- clarity
- focussed sound
- rich midband

AGAINST

- not cheap

Black Rhodium
+44 (0) 1332 342233
www.blackrhodium.co.uk