Sunny Cable Technology 1000 Series Cables

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At first it was loudspeakers, now it is cables. Like loudspeakers a decade or so ago, of late cables are making frequent "big splash" appearances. But unlike speakers, which are most always easy to notice since good looks and good sound are bound to open doors, getting a set of new cables on the playing field can be a real struggle for the innovator. Where new models from proven cable companies can rely on their established legacies, a new cable company starts from zero.

So, how does a brand-new cable company get noticed? To be sure, innovation and technology are essential, but I see luck as also playing a part here. At least that's what my encounter with Sunny Cable Technology indicates.

Close Encounter of the Near Miss Kind

It all began at the recent CES. It just so happened that I was waiting for someone outside of the Press Lounge at the Alexis Park in Las Vegas, just hanging out when the rain came. So, I duck into the nearest room. The sign says Sunny Cable Technology. Never heard of them. Inside, the first thing that hits my sight is astounding and outrageous. Curling around one side of the room is a *humongous* cable. At about four inches in diameter and

more than 20 feet long; it's an awesome sight. I'm told it is an a.c. power "cord". And guess what it is called? The Anaconda! "Give me a break!" I think to myself. I am completely turned off. This is so much over the top, with no practical application in sight.

But, on the other hand, over the years I have found that cable evaluations under show conditions are pretty well futile endeavors. The only way to come to terms with the possible merits of a cable is in the privacy of my home, with my own gear and records. So this Anaconda was too much snake for me. Time to go.

As I was leaving one of the exhibitors, Andre Au, offered to explain the merits of the firm's products. When I asked if he was technically oriented, he replied "No." So, I was still leaving. At this point in my CES show coverage work, my mind needed something that made hard engineering sense, not just marketing stories. But then Andre pointed out that Sunny Lo, the inventor and designer of the cables, was in the next room and introduced me to him.

"What is it that sets your product apart from the rest of the cables?" I asked Sunny.

"My cables have a minimum of self-inductance. It's a design that is currently patent pending. I call them 'Time Accurate Cables'." Hmm, "no self-inductance"? Now, this could be interesting. And, he pointed out, the Anaconda is an experimental iteration of a power conditioner product that will be consolidated into something considerably more practical.

Okay, now we were getting somewhere. Sunny proceeded to talk about the sonic benefits of reducing self-inductance in wire for audio applications. He also displayed an intensity that I found appealing. To be sure, most all designers are passionate about their inventions, but Sunny had a sincerity that stood out, that intangible quality that made me pause and listen closely to what he had to say.

Sunny explained that his cables are "Time Accurate" and his goal is to transmit a signal that is as clean and unaltered as possible by "preserving the exact variations in voltage and current as they are transmitted with respect to time." The quest of his design is to have no distortion added by the cable as a signal passes through it, be it an interconnect or a speaker cable.

By significantly reducing self-inductance, time related aberrations are affected so that, according to Sunny, group delay is practically eliminated. He also has taken great pains to keep outside interference to a minimum by employing elaborate shielding schemes for his cables. I left the Sunny room at CES somewhat skeptical, but, I had to admit, my interest had been piqued.

Tech Talk

Shielding is easy to understand, but self-inductance is a bit more sophisticated. However, let me make it perfectly clear – or at least as clear as I can. Self-inductance is a natural physical phenomenon and not a figment of Sunny Lo's or anyone else's imagination.

Inductance is commonly associated with coils or inductors. We know, for example, that cross-over filters are likely to include inductors. And capacitors. And resistors. While a resistor is basically a frequency-independent component and it is effective right down to a d.c. current, capacitors and inductors present an impedance that varies with frequency. An inductor will increase in impedance as the frequency goes up, while

the impedance of a capacitor will decrease with increasing frequency. A capacitor will block d.c., while an inductor will pass a direct current.

But a cable is not a coil. So, what's this self-inductance deal?

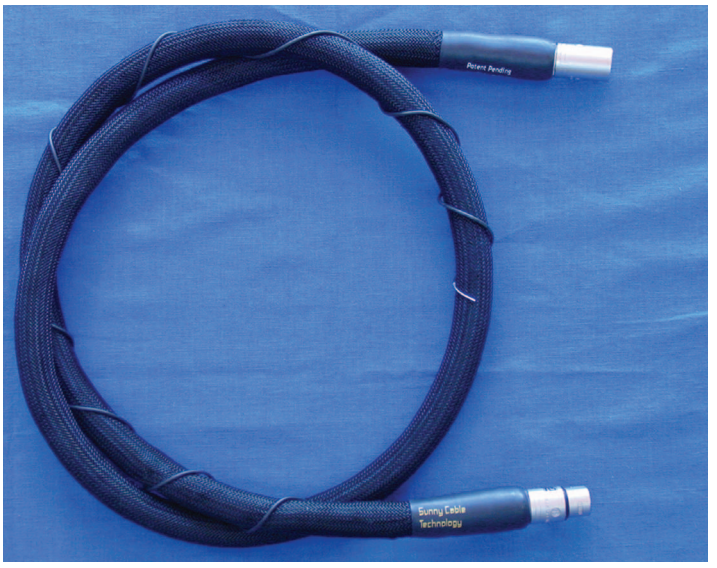
It all starts with an effect that is summarized by Lenz's law: The induced electro-motive force in any circuit is always in a direction to oppose the effect that produced it.

This declares that even a perfectly straight length of conductor has some inductance. Physics says that current in a conductor produces a magnetic field surrounding the conductor, and when the current changes, the magnetic field changes. These fluctuations cause relative motions between the magnetic field and the conductor, and, consequently, an electro-motive force (emf) is induced in the conductor. This emf is called a "self-induced emf" because it is induced in the conductor carrying the current. But the polarity of the counter electromotive force is in the *opposite* direction to the applied voltage of the conductor. The overall effect will be to oppose a change in current magnitude. The emf produced by this changing magnetic field is also referred to as "counter electromotive force" (cemf).

So for an increasing signal voltage, self-inductance will create an emf that will oppose the increase in the signal voltage. And when the signal decreases, self-inductance will create an emf that will oppose the decrease in the signal voltage. This is an impediment referred to as an impedance. Obviously something undesirable.

Since self-inductance is a natural phenomenon, the trick is to minimize this effect. That's precisely what Sunny Lo claims to have done with the method that he has incorporated in his cables. Obviously it's a unique approach, one worthy of having been granted a patent-pending status. And probably an actual patent when all the forms get handled by the government.

Onward: Some weeks later arrangements were made to get review samples and a package of prototypes arrived post haste. Sunny cables come in three Series: 600, 1000, and Supreme. Each series provides increasing performance advantages and is priced accordingly. What I installed was a complete set of interconnect and



speaker cables as well as a.c. power cords from their 1000 Series.

Of course, the cables had to undergo the dreaded (at least by me) settling-in process and so another 10 days went by. That would give the cables a solid 240 hours to burn in, exceeding the minimum of 200 hours that Sunny recommends.

Product Description

When you see the Sunny Cable products, adopt a "don't judge a book by the cover" philosophy. Nothing on the outside suggests the sophisticated design on the inside. Of course, that's true at least to some degree of all cables. However, the performance level of any cable is not determined by how slick or plain it is.

Sunny Lo did reveal a few of the design principles incorporated in his products. Since this is a patent-pending design, some of the implemented ideas and methods could not be divulged.

But there were several notions he did discuss. Only solid-core conductors are used and a single run for each of the required conductors is employed. Thus single-ended and speaker cables use a total of two conductors, the balanced cables use three. However, the actual conductor cross-sections and materials are proprietary. The conductor sizes are chosen depending on application. Speaker cables and a.c. cords will, obviously, use a larger cross-section (gauge) than the interconnect cables. A "core" of the cable is enclosed in a proprietary damping material to control the vibration of the conductors. Multiple shielding materials are selected for the most effective shielding properties. In the 1000 and the Supreme series, a separate external ground wire is provided for the shield. All of these ground wires are then gathered to a common ground plate and end up connected to the house ground at an a.c. outlet to complete a star-ground configuration.

Sunny is not fond of gold-plated terminals having found such plating to sound poor. Instead, everything is either made of solid silver, like the speaker spade lugs and the two-mm solid-silver wire connections, or he chooses the thickest silver plating he can for the RCA and XLR connectors. But what about the oxidation of silver? No problem. Sunny pointed out that silver oxide is about as good a conductor as silver itself.

Brass rules for their a.c. power cables. The a.c. plugs and receptacles have been selected for the best sonic performance and are sourced from manufacturers who use brass.

All their cables are enclosed in a woven nylon sheath. The color is black. Yes, the speaker wire conductors are different colors one red, the other white.

The cables are not very heavy and flex rather easily. The a.c. cords have a rather prominent presence and come with a cable diameter of about 1½ inches in diameter. The diameter of interconnects is in the ¾ inch range, while speaker cables are closer to an inch in diameter. Sunny explained that the cables do not need any support means and can be placed directly on the floor because they incorporate exceptional shielding and internal damping provisions. I was assured that the cables can withstand rather vigorous bending. Sure enough, they could be bent and twisted, and retained whatever shape I desired to complete the interconnections and power requirements.

The Set-Up

The following 1000 Series cables were installed: A single-ended pair of interconnects from my Esoteric X-01 CD/SACD player to the H-CAT P-12B preamp, a balanced pair of interconnects from my preamp to my Jeff Rowland Design Group Model 12 power amps and a pair of speaker cables to my Avalon Eidolon speakers. Each of these Series 1000 cables come with an individual ground wire originating at the signal source end of the cable. All these ground wires were connected to a common ground plate which, in turn, was connected to the house ground terminal in one of the dedicated a.c. power sockets which resulted in a star-ground configuration.

A.c. cords with 15-amp IEC connectors were used with my Esoteric X-01 CD/SACD player, G-0s clock, Sony SCD-1 CD/SACD player, H-CAT preamp, while

NOTES

Sunny Cable Technology D1000X Digital Interconnects and P1000 a.c. Power Cables, $1,500 per meter; **S1000R and S1000X Signal Interconnects,** $1,250 per meter, and **SP1000A, B, or C Speaker Cables,** $875 per meter. Sunny Cable Technology, PMB 238, 21C Orinda Way, Orinda, CA 94563; phone 925/258-3688, fax 925/258-9862, e-mail info@sunnycable.com, web site www.sunnycable.com.

Associated Equipment
Esoteric X-01 CD/SACD player with Esoteric G-0s clock, Teac Esoteric P-70 Transport and D-70 DAC, Ayre Acoustics CX-7e CD Player, North American Products H-CAT preamp, Jeff Rowland Design Group Synergy IIi preamp and Model 12 monoblock power amps, Avalon Acoustics Eidolon Loudspeakers, TARA Labs ISM Onboard The 0.8 interconnects, TARA Labs Omega Loudspeaker Cables, and Echobuster and ASC tube Traps room treatment.

20-amp IEC cords were installed on my JRDG Model 12 power amps. A Sunny Cable Technology BNC/BNC digital cable conveyed the clock signal from my Esoteric G-Os Master Clock Generator to my X-01 player.

The Sunny Sound

I'm happy to report that the sound of the Sunny cables in my system was excellent. What I heard was utterly immediate, focused, and highly transparent. The sonic presentation featured a smooth spectral distribution that extended very generously at both ends of the frequency range. I got the impression that the noise floor was way low, since the music appeared to emanate from a very dark background. This setting imbued the music with an almost eerie character, where details and microdynamics appeared to spring to life in a startlingly alive manner. Since these low-level essentials were remarkably proportioned, the sweeping exuberance of dynamics was articulated with an earnest flair.

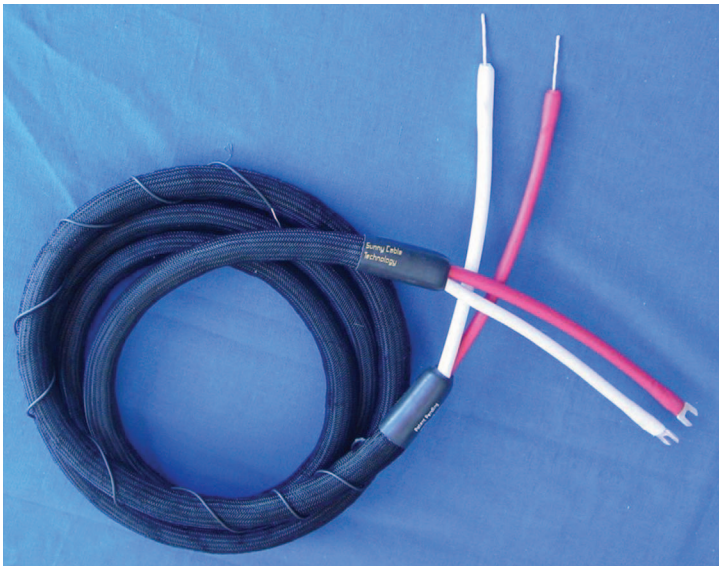
These cables brought a thoroughly involving quality to the system. The texture of the instruments had a multihued subtlety that contributed in conveying the intricate nature of the remarkably detailed presentation. The tactile articulation of the musical intricacies was exceptionally engaging and unusually engrossing. As a result, a pleasantly poignant replica of the recorded event – one with a minimum of distracting distortions — was created.

Let me make it clear that I am not talking about some very appealing sonic signature. These Sunny cables are not about coloration. Instead, they appear to be without any specific characteristic that would point to a particular pleasing aspect. Their strength is always to remain as neutral as possible even during encounters with the most difficult musical passages. I observed a soothing effect that was especially welcome when sonic calamity seemed imminent during complex musical sections. That's when the gradations of the dynamic shadings were rendered carefully delineated. That's when these cables appeared to bring a calm clarity to the reproduction.

And the staging I encountered – simply outstanding. I was captivated by myriad sonic clues that appeared dispersed in a very striking manner, all blending to create a marvelously vibrant soundstage. A credible sense of the dimensionality of the performers in the acoustic space was on exhibit in a revealing and natural way. The individual instruments had clearly defined boundaries, which, along with their specific locations in the stage, culminated in arresting portrayal of the images in the soundspace. Rare was the case where the instrumental distribution within the soundstage was not clearly presented. Of course, it all depended on the specific piece of recorded material.

One of the most encouraging overall sonic benefits I observed was long-term listening. The Sunny cables just would not tire me. In fact, it was the opposite. My listening sessions were so enjoyable that they became longer and longer. Cliché or not, that's what these cables did for me and my system.

Of course, these are not perfect cables. I feel there are some aspects of the performance that could fare better. But that's the nature of any component, of course. It also could be the Sunny 1000s in my system. I felt that ultimate transparency, more air at the top, and more



extension and power at the lower end of the spectrum are areas where the 1000 Series could do a bit more. However, from what I've been told, Sunny Lo has taken cable sonics to the next level with his top-tier "Supreme" model. Now, unfortunately for us who have not achieved the Bill Gates level of income, the Supremes come in at four times the cost of the 1000 Series. Still, if it is better, you'll have to go listen for yourself and then decide.

I do have to add at this point that the integration of the overall performance of the 1000 Series cables I had in my system was exceptionally well executed. I suspect that it is this culmination of desirable performance qualities that produced the very enjoyable results that I've reported. So, whatever minor misgivings there are, I sure would expect the "Supreme" cables to take care of them and, knowing Sunny Lo, provide a number of additional very pleasant surprises.

The Summary

Having the Sunny cables in my system has been a wonderful experience. These cables exhibited numerous positive and important performance assets that, as the well-integrated set that they were, went a long way towards bringing me a wealth of meaningful musical enjoyment. It was thrilling, educational, and exceedingly fulfilling. I can hardly ask for more.

Would I recommend that you try these Sunny Cable Technology cables in your own system? You bet I would!