

AUDIO REVIEWS

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PEARL CONSEQUENCE

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN POLAND

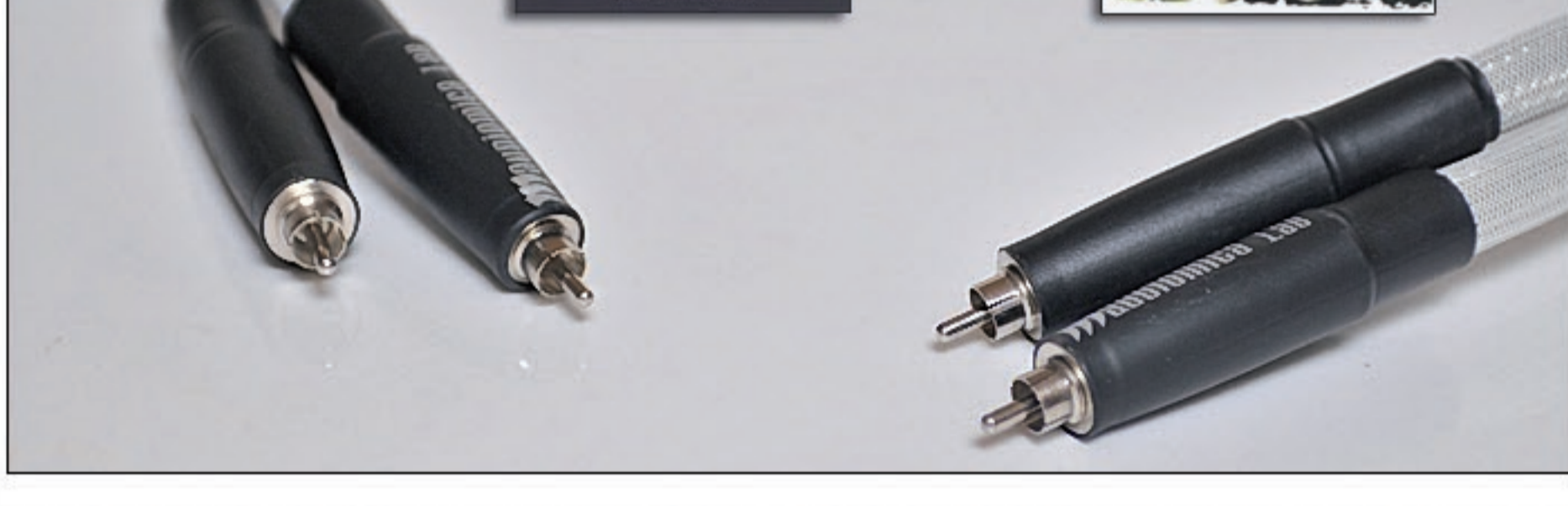
Reviewer: Marja & Henk
Financial Interests: click here
Sources: PS Audio PWT; PS Audio PWD; Dr. Feickert Blackbird/DFA 105/Zu DL-103; Phasore PC and NOS1 DAC
Streaming sources: XXHighEnd; iTunes; Devialet AIR; La Rosita Beta [in for review]
Preamp/integrated/power: Audio Note Meishu with WE 300B (or AVVT, JJ, KR Audio 300B output tubes); Yarland FV 34 CIISA; Qables iQube V1; Devialet D-Premier; Hypex Ncore 1200 based monoblocks; Trafomatic Kaivalya; Trafomatic Reference One; Trafomatic Reference Phono One
Speakers: Avantgarde Acoustic Duo Omega; Arcadian Audio Phoe; Vaessen Aquarius; Pancin Art Technology VZ1 [in for review]
Cables: complete loom of ASI LiveLine cables; full loom of Crystal Cable cables; Nanotec Golden Strada #79 nano 3; Nanotec Golden Strada #79; Nanotec Golden Strada #201; Nanotec Power Strada #306 [in for review]
Power line conditioning: Omtec Power Controllers; PS Audio Powerplant Premier; PS Audio Humbuster III
Equipment racks: ASI amplifier and TT shelf
Sundry accessories: Furutech DeMag; ClearAudio Double Matrix; Nanotec Nespa #1; Exact Audio Copy software; iPod; wood, brass, ceramic and aluminum cones and pyramids; Shakti Stones; Manley Skipjack
Music purveyors: gobuz.com, bandcamp.com, amazon.co.uk, cdbaby.com
Room treatment: Acoustic System International resonators, sugar cubes, diffusers
Room size: ca. 14.50 x 7.50m with a ceiling height of 3.50m, brick walls, wooden flooring upstairs, ca 7 x 5m with a ceiling height of 3.50m, brick walls and concrete floor downstairs
Price of review item: € 4.080 for 1-meter RCA

Pearl Consequence - Cross section



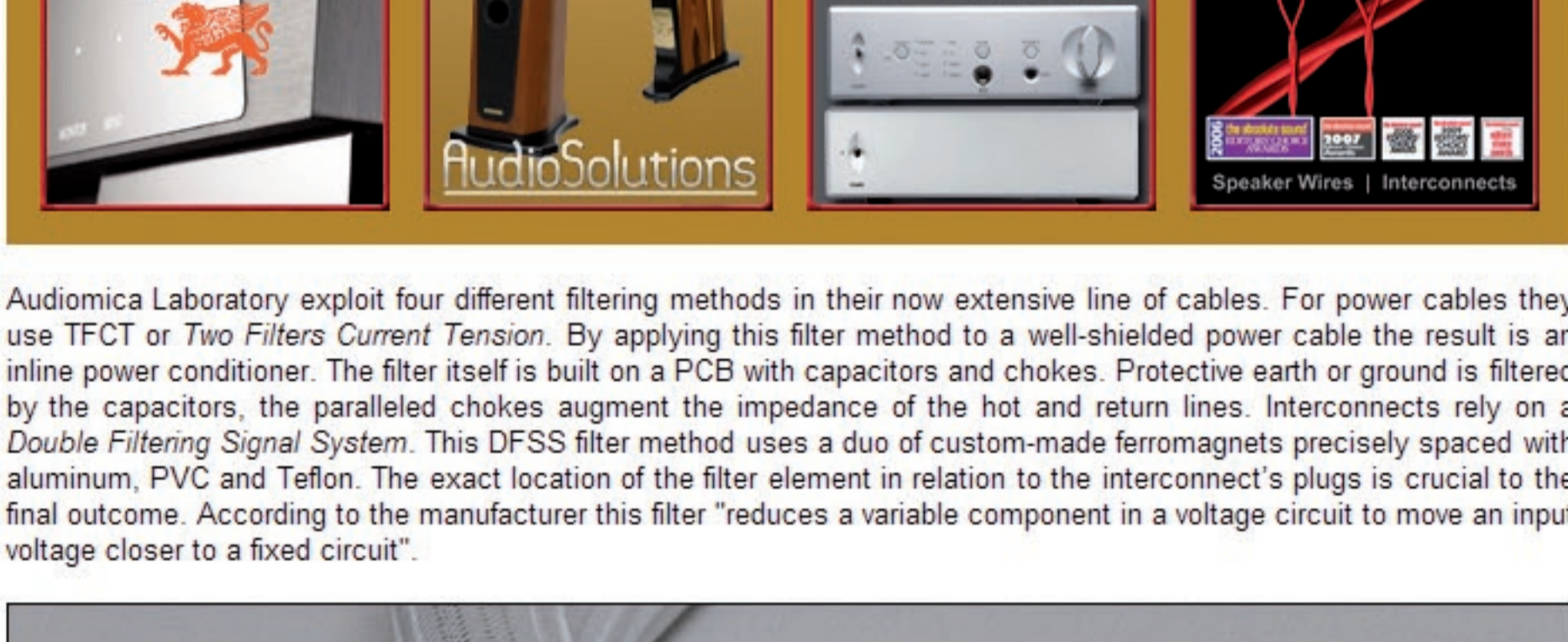
Audiomica Laboratory is another of the great number of Polish audio companies which do not appear on the radar of the average music lover outside Poland. That's a shame. During the last Warsaw audio show we met many representatives of innovative high-quality companies that until then had been unknown to us. Proof of their quality came not only from show exposure but at home with samples brought straight from Warsaw or delivered later to us in Holland.

Located in the southeastern region of Poland not far from the border with Slovakia lies the hometown of Audiomica Laboratory, Gorlice. Here a group of young audio-minded friends led by Łukasz Mika started experimenting with all the audio cables they could lay their hand on in their domestic market. As a hobby mind you. Some people collect stamps, others dive deeply into the effects of wires, shielding, dielectrics and termination options. After a long period of pure hobbyist research, 2003 came around. It had become time to convert all acquired knowledge from investigating the construction of and then listening to all those audio cables into a product of their own. Under the name Audiomica Laboratory they began to serve the Polish market with an ever expanding line of audio cables. Now the time has come for the rest of world to meet their products.



Whilst cable development research is ongoing, one of the insights of their research was that a cable's performance is not only the result of the combination of metallurgy, geometry, shielding and dielectric composition but that a substantial gain in quality can be obtained by means of filtering.

Filtering and cables are two ingredients which when combined instantly set off alarms within the audiophile community. That's a silly reaction if you ask us because any cable in fact is a filter already. That's why all cables have a sonic influence. The real trick is to match the best cable-induced filtering to the rest of the audio chain. [MIT, Transparent, DNM and HSM would agree as all their cable products include filters, some even user-adjustable - Ed.]



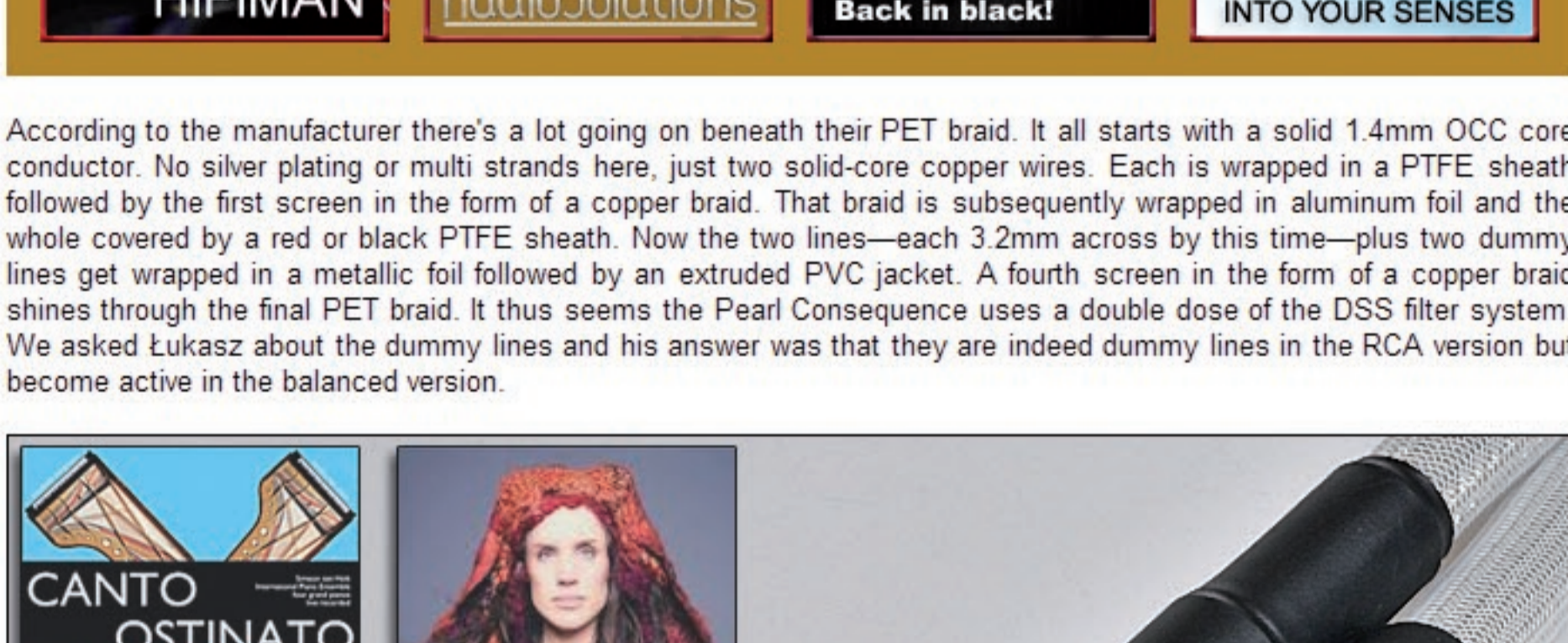
Audiomica Laboratory exploit four different filtering methods in their now extensive line of cables. For power cables they use TFCT or Two Filters Current Tension. By applying this filter method to a well-shielded power cable the result is an inline power conditioner. The filter itself is built on a PCB with capacitors and chokes. Protective earth or ground is filtered by the capacitors, the paralleled chokes augment the impedance of the hot and return lines. Interconnects rely on a Double Filtering Signal System. This DFSS filter method uses a duo of custom-made ferromagnets precisely spaced with aluminum, PVC and Teflon. The exact location of the filter element in relation to the interconnect's plugs is crucial to the final outcome. According to the manufacturer this filter "reduces a variable component in a voltage circuit to move an input voltage closer to a fixed circuit".



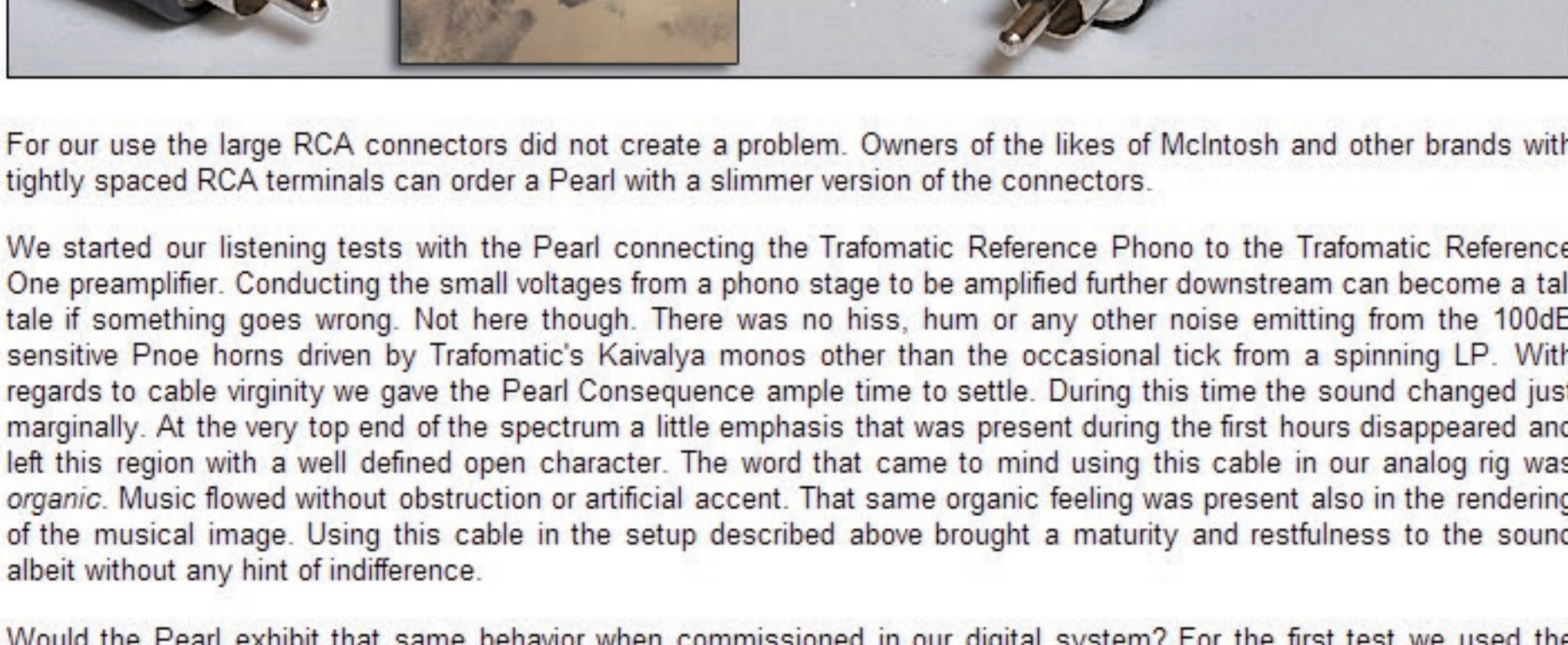
Another filter Audiomica Laboratory uses can be found in their loudspeaker cables where it is called the Powder Filtering Signal System or PFSS. Here the main technology is based on air-gapped chokes. They use iron-powder cores for their higher saturation flux density over alloy-powder cores. Together with an exact placement of the filter element on the cable, their filter technology enables Audiomica Laboratory to adjust a cable's inductivity to the optimal value.

As a fourth filter option in addition to any of the above, the Polish manufacturer uses a Double Screening System. As the name implies there is an extra shield added to a multi-conductor cable where each individual line is already screened. All screening is meant to minimize RF and EMI interferences from both external and internal origins. For review we received a one-meter pair of Pearl Consequence interconnects. Audiomica Laboratory uses the first part of a cable's name to denote the specific cable whilst the second part indicates the series which the cable belongs to. So the Pearl is a member of the Consequence range which is the current their top of the range.

Packed in a nice but not exuberant wooden box the cable looks fairly plain. A greyish—officially white—open woven PET braid offers a glimpse at the underlying shielding. Heavy black shrink tube carrying the company's name and logo covers the rhodium-plated RCA connector completely. That connector is a fairly thick and long affair of almost 2cm across where the cable itself is just 15.5mm. This interconnect is remarkable flexible for its diameter and fairly tight bends can be executed easily though with care.



According to the manufacturer there's a lot going on beneath their PET braid. It all starts with a solid 1.4mm OCC core conductor. No silver plating or multi strands here, just two solid-core copper wires. Each is wrapped in a PTFE sheath followed by the first screen in the form of a copper braid. That braid is subsequently wrapped in aluminum foil and the whole covered by a red or black PTFE sheath. Now the two lines—each 3.2mm across by this time—plus two dummy lines get wrapped in a metallic foil followed by an extruded PVC jacket. A fourth screen in the form of a copper braid shines through the final PET braid. It thus seems the Pearl Consequence uses a double dose of the DSS filter system. We asked Łukasz about the braid lines and his answer was that they are indeed dummy lines in the RCA version but become active in the balanced version.



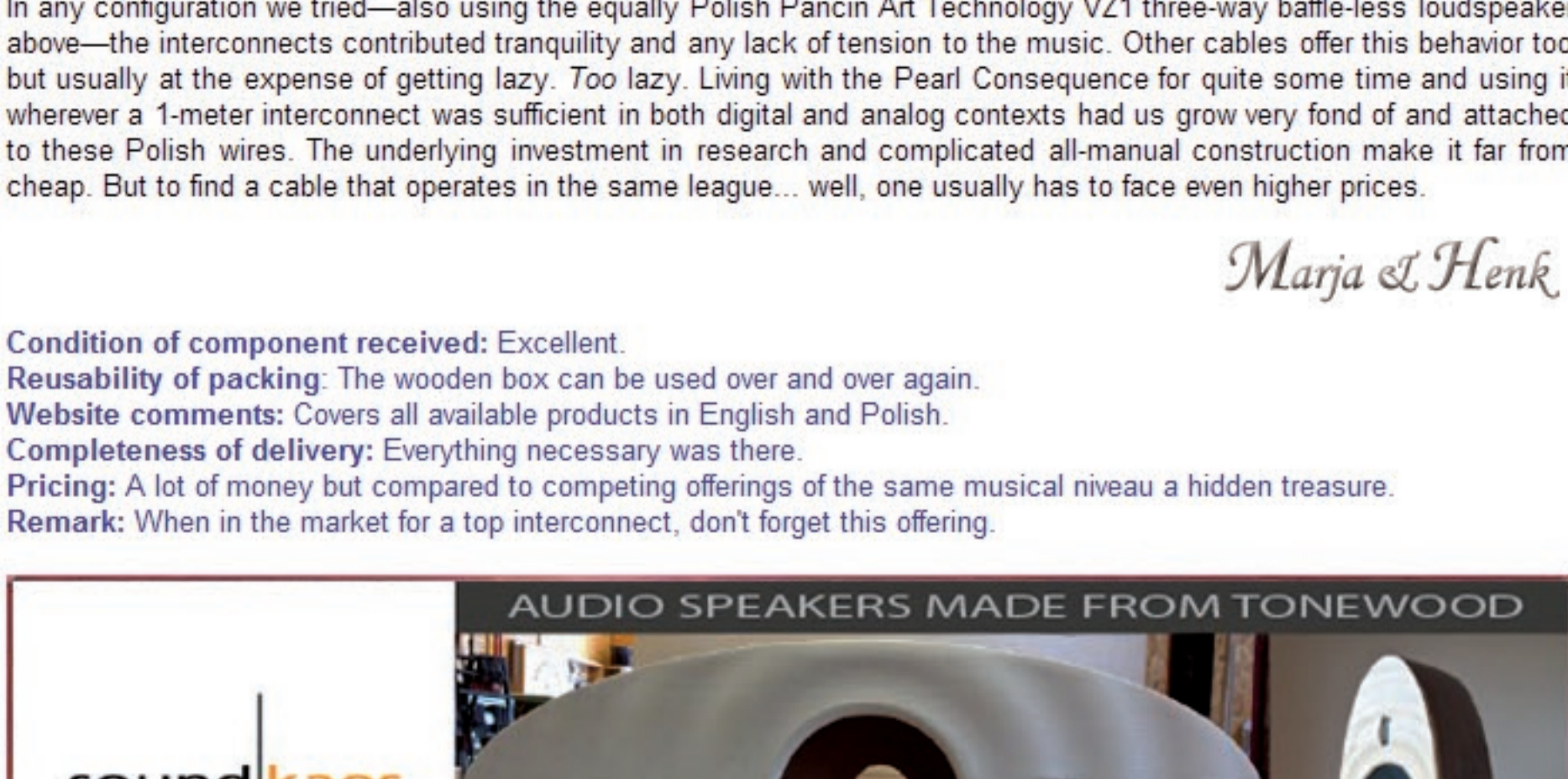
For our use the large RCA connectors did not create a problem. Owners of the likes of McIntosh and other brands with tightly spaced RCA terminals can order a Pearl with a slimmer version of the connectors.

We started our listening tests with the Pearl connecting the Trafomatic Reference Phono to the Trafomatic Reference One preamplifier. Conducting the small voltages from a phono stage to be amplified further downstream can become a tall tale if something goes wrong. Not here though. There was no hiss, hum or any other noise emitting from the 100dB sensitive Phoe horns driven by Trafomatic's Kaivalya monos other than the occasional tick from a spinning LP. With regards to cable virginity we gave the Pearl Consequence ample time to settle. During this time the sound changed just marginally. At the very top end of the spectrum a little emphasis that was present during the first hours disappeared and left this region with a well defined open character. The word that came to mind using this cable in our analog rig was organic. Music flowed without obstruction or artificial accent. That same organic feeling was present also in the rendering of the musical image. Using this cable in the setup described above brought a maturity and restfulness to the sound albeit without any hint of indifference.

Would the Pearl exhibit that same behavior when commissioned in our digital system? For the first test we used the Pearl Consequence as an analog interconnect between the Phasore NOS1 DAC and Hypex Ncore 1200 monos driving Avantgarde Duo Omega horns. Again we noticed the tranquility the cables brought to the virtual stage. It felt as though they reprimanded us to not hurry and simply go with the flow. Our impression from the analog setup that had led to the word organic repeated itself for the digital setup. We don't think we're wrong suggesting that the lack of any silver in the cable contributed to this relaxed character.



Another configuration we used was with the Pearl connecting a La Rosita Beta music streamer with our Audio Note Meishu driving the Avantgarde horns. Music was sent via WiFi from an iMac running iTunes with a special La Rosita plug-in to the Beta. Here the digital signal is processed further and finally output analog from the La Rosita's DAC. La Rosita's software makes wireless transmission more robust than standard iTunes without plug-in and sends data in larger chunks through the air. Of course the musical experience now changed to a more romantic take from the use of 6SN7 and WE 300B tubes in the Meishu. Wooden tones got some extra attention and the lightning-fast truly transparent character of the Ncore modules was swapped for a mellower less forward behavior. Here the Pearl coupled the world of chips, bits and bytes with the world of vacuum, filaments and transformers seamlessly. Once more we noticed the expansion of the virtual space particularly in the depth domain.



In any configuration we tried—also using the equally Polish Pancin Art Technology VZ1 three-way baffle-less loudspeaker above—the interconnects contributed tranquility and any lack of tension to the music. Other cables offer this behavior too but usually at the expense of getting lazy. Too lazy. Living with the Pearl Consequence for quite some time and using it wherever a 1-meter interconnect was sufficient in both digital and analog contexts had us grow very fond of and attached to these Polish wires. The underlying investment in research and complicated all-manual construction make it far from cheap. But to find a cable that operates in the same league... well, one usually has to face even higher prices.

Marja & Henk

