



## Soundstring Cable Technologies

We Met In San Francisco

Dave Thomas

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### Associated Equipment:

#### Digital Front End

Electrocompaniet  
EMC-1 CD Player

#### Amplification

Electrocompaniet EC  
4.7 Pre-Amp  
Electrocompaniet  
Nemo Mono Amplifiers  
deHavilland Ultra  
Verve Pre-amp  
deHavilland GM70  
Mono Amplifiers

#### Loudspeakers

Talon Audio Peregrine  
X  
Penaudio  
Chara/Charisma

#### Cabling

Virtual Dynamics Nite  
II Interconnects (XLR  
and RCA)  
Virtual Dynamics Nite  
II Speaker Cables (Bi-  
Wired)  
Virtual Dynamics Nite  
II Power Cords

#### Power Conditioning

APC Power  
Conditioner (modified  
by Talon Audio)

#### Accessories

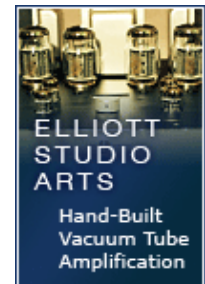
DH Labs Cones and  
Discs  
Golden Sound  
Acoustic Discs

### Sweetie?

While attending the HE 2003 Show in San Francisco back in June, I was making my usual rounds to check out some of the heavy hitters amongst the loudspeaker manufacturers. I had my girlfriend in tow so I decided to expose her to some of the gargantuan speaker systems that I threatened to bring into our home such as the towering Dali Megalines, the enormous Avantgarde Trio and Basshorns, and the intimidating Wisdom Audio M-75 Adrenaline system. It was while we were in this last room that a truly startling discovery was made, "Ooh Sweetie look, these cables are so cute."

As you have probably guessed, I was "Sweetie" and it was my girlfriend who first discovered the delightful new cables from a company called Soundstring Cable Technologies. They were sitting on a display table nestled in some very attractive wooden cases with red velvet linings and were being used throughout a complete Wisdom Audio system.

To her credit, the cables were cute ... er, uh I mean handsomely built. The power cords feature distinctively styled one-piece molded connectors, the RCA interconnects have finely cured wood housings, and the XLR cables use the excellent Neutrik connectors. All Soundstring cables are covered in an attractive "harvest gold" cloth material. These cables possess many nice design features which I will get to later in this review, but the immediate appeal that they had to me was that they were extremely flexible and easy to manage. Bear in mind that I was fresh off of living with two sets of cables that were sonically wonderful but so stiff that they could almost double as speaker stands. The Soundstring cables on the



other hand were more like jump ropes, very handsome jump ropes and not at all cute.

After I spent a considerable amount of time listening to the Wisdom system I was prepared to find out that these very attractive and wonderful sounding cables had some scary price tag and that I would have to chalk these cables up as just another high-priced audiophile product that I would never consider purchasing for myself. So I grabbed a price sheet to see how much these cables cost. Shockingly enough there was not one price on the sheet that was more than a few hundred dollars. At first I thought that the prices that I was looking at were just for the connectors, but they weren't. I couldn't start begging Soundstring's VP of Sales, Andrew Miller fast enough for a set of cables to review. The sound in the Wisdom room, which featured the previously mentioned M-75 system, Wisdom's own mono amps and a (modified Accuphase) Wisdom SACD Player was one of the best at HE 2003. The soundstage was huge as you would expect from the Wisdom speakers but there was also a generous amount of detail and air. I tried not to listen too critically because of the obvious disadvantages to a system performing under show conditions. But it didn't take long for me to realize that there might be something special going on with these cables.

By the time the cables arrived, I had already spent a considerable amount of time with fine cables from Dynamic Design which I reviewed some months ago and had just started getting into the excellent Virtual Dynamics cables which I began reviewing shortly thereafter. So I took the cables to the home of fellow Stereo Timer Mike Wright and asked him to put the cables into his system so that they could begin breaking in. I didn't realize then how difficult it was going to be for me to get the cables back.

After about three or four weeks I stopped by Mike's house to hear how the cables sounded in his system. His system consisted of a Sony XA7ES CD player, Thor linestage, Jeff Rowland Model Five amp, and Martin Logan Quest speakers. He had replaced his reference Synergistic Research cables with the Soundstring.

"How much did you say these cables were again?" Mike asked, as we got ready for a listening session. "These things were giving some really expensive cables more than a run for their money Red." Yes, Mike was truly taken with the Soundstring cables, and no, I'm not going to tell you where I got the nickname "Red". After a few hours of listening to the cables in his system, I was eager to get them home and into mine. Mike tried valiantly to persuade me to let him keep the cables a while longer but instead I promised to let him borrow my Electrocompaniet CD player while I was gone on vacation. Finally, he let me go and I waited until I got home to tell him that I lied.

### **Sounds Like Teen Spirit**

Knowing I would have the new cables home soon I had gone out and bought some new music to listen to. Among the new discs was These Are The Vistas [Columbia 087040] from a difficult to pin down group called The Bad Plus. They're music blends everything from Ornette Coleman to Black Sabbath and everything in between. Track



3, a cover of the Nirvana classic, *Smells Like Teen Spirit* is one of the more interesting tracks on this disc. This grunge rock standard is performed with a decidedly jazz flavor. This is a tune that is all about building rhythms and not explosive dynamics or deep bass. It's a tune that benefits from a system that puts a premium on speed and clarity. These are probably the best attributes of the Soundstring cables.

### Power Cords



I spent a few days listening to music with stock power cords on all my system components particularly on my Electrocompaniet Nemo monoblocks where I expected to notice the biggest difference. True, just like the other cords that I had reviewed this past year the Soundstring power cords did make a huge difference. In fact it was such a

big difference that I felt compelled to compare them, not to the stock cords but to the far more expensive Dynamic Design power cords that I reviewed a while back. Let me cut to the chase here, I was expecting to hear a difference but what I heard was ... nothing. That's nothing as in no hum or background noise. The slight bit of background noise that I heard in the Dynamic Design cords did not exist while using the Soundstring. The instruments within the soundstage were very well defined and sized. The depth of stage may have been slightly shortened compared to the Dynamic Design cords but not by much.

Andreas Vollenweider's CD *Kryptos* [Sony Classical SK 60237] has a photo in the liner notes of the Symphonic Orchestra of Zurich which is supporting him on track 6, *Wanja The Wanderer*. The photo shows where the huge kettledrums were positioned in the back of the orchestra. The Soundstring power cords helped present a soundstage that realistically rendered the position of those drums and most of the other instruments. The Dynamic Design also accomplished this but with slightly more power.

### Speaker Cables



The speaker cables are flat out neutral. I mean there was no discernable sonic color at all. Be very careful about the quality of the recordings you play because you won't get any help from these cables. They will reveal all the warts in a poor recording but they will reward you with a realism beyond their price point. I tried to sneak Genesis' *Invisible Touch* CD [Atlantic 81641]

past these cables and they reminded of just what crappy recordings that otherwise talented band could produce. Electronic drums never



sounded so grating. My entire collection of '80s New Wave and pop music was rendered useless. Oh, so I suppose you don't have a copy of the *Footloose* or *Miami Vice* soundtracks in your collection. Well excuuuse me!

Anyway, the payoff here is that these cables will render acoustic music with all the natural nuances you crave with pinpoint imaging and nearly holographic instrument placement. These cables love speakers that emphasize midrange performance such as the Penaudio Charisma/Chara monitor and subwoofer system which I used for much of the evaluation.

*Jazz at the Pawnshop* [FIM CD 014-15] is one of those discs that somehow has managed to creep its way into the collections of almost anyone who fancies themselves an audiophile. I was reminded of why that was during my listening sessions to evaluate these cables. I'm Confessin' is a sweet melodic tune that features the lyrical vibes of Lars Erstrand. The combination of the Penaudio speaker system and these cables was a revelation. Notes just seemed to hang in mid-air and evaporate. Arne Domnerus' clarinet solo had the same quality. This was a wonderful listening experience.

### Interconnects and P-Funk



I proceeded to add in the Soundstring interconnects. Now in order to be a well-rounded reviewer I knew I was going to have to subject these cables to some tunes from the other end of the music spectrum. So hang on tight Soundstring! Here comes P-Funk! Now if you're not familiar with the legendary funk/acid-rock bands Parliament and their alter-ego Funkadelic, I implore you to run out and find as much of

their music as you can. These bands are headed by what I like to think of as the "Lennon and McCartney of Funk", lead singer George Clinton and bassists William 'Bootsy' Collins. This twosome closely supported by keyboard prodigy, Bernie Worrell, dominated the R&B charts throughout the '70s and early '80s with such hits as *Not Just Knee Deep* and *Mothership Connection*.



The only thing more unique than the music of these bands was the titles of many of their songs. Try being 14-years-old and telling your folks that the song you're blasting on the family stereo is called *Promentalshitbackwashpsychosis Enema Squad*, or as Clinton called it, "... music to get you sh\*\* together by." And I can't begin to imagine the kinds of mind-altering substances led to the creation of tunes like *Night of the Thumpasaurus People* and *Lunchmeataphobia*. Okay, so much for the goofy names. You're probably wondering what kind of music did they play and how did it sound coming through my system wired with the Soundstring cables. Well, the answer is, good, damned



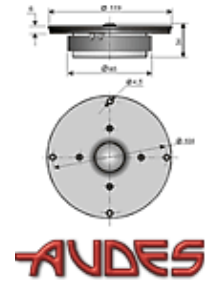
**CDP-502**  
Reference  
Disc Player



**CLASSE**  
www.classeaudio.com

good.

Flashlight, is the featured track from the classic Parliament disc *Funkentelechy vs. The Placebo Syndrome* [Polygram 824501]. It features Worrell's groundbreaking synthesizer wizardry and is buoyed by Bootsy's bass (try saying that three times fast). The Soundstring cables did a very good job of maintaining the systems composure despite a slight fuzziness on the chorus of singers that are a staple in P-Funk recordings. The Virtual Dynamics and Dynamic Design cables handled this disc with a little more authority but only a little. When considering the price differences, the Soundstring is still a stellar performer.



### Sounds Like A Century of Design Experience

In most applications the Soundstring cables were damn-near equal to or in some cases better than the more expensive designs. That is a testament to the more than 100 years of combined experience of the Soundstring design team who have developed OEM cables for other companies for years and are anchored by Jed Hacker, a well-known New York City veteran broadcast industry musical producer and director. So while Soundstring Cable Technologies may be a new company, it has long and strong roots

According to the company's white paper details, Soundstring has a new and completely different design criterion that achieves results not possible with other cables. Their cables are inversely designed for the human hearing range. Their patented Starfire Tricormaxial™ power cord and audio cables are made using dual three-conductor Progressive Geometric Gauge™ design construction. Each conductor is individually insulated with premium grade 80°C VW-1 flame retardant PVC. The jacket is a very soft, flexible 105°C high gloss PVC, surface printed with directional arrows to insure uniform current and signal flow to and from all components. The jacket is covered with a premium grade abrasion resistant tightly woven Nylon multi-filament in a very attractive coppertone color. Their patented Progressive Geometric Gauge™ design enables all signals and frequencies to independently seek the path of least resistance as they travel virtually unimpeded at incredibly fast speeds over the individual conductor surfaces, from termination to termination.

Also, all Soundstring cables have 99.99% pure oxygen free finely stranded electrolytic ropelay copper. The circular mil area of the three Progressive Geometric Gauges™ used on each leg of the cables is the equivalent of a #10 gauge copper. Their patented design virtually neutralizes skin effect and promotes very fast heat dissipation. This means that your components do not "work" as hard as with traditionally designed cables, resulting in much a cooler operation and longer component life. The Progressive Geometric multi-gauge design greatly reduces traditional "break in" time.

### Conclusion

Soundstring Cable Technologies are a much needed injection of sanity in a cable marketplace that often leaves you shaking your head and not because you were stunned by a cable's performance. It's a rare bargain in high-end audio. It's easy to work with, is thoughtfully designed, sonically spectacular and a very handsome

looking cable to boot. Highly recommended!

**Specifications:**

*All*

**Soundstring Cables:**

- *Made in the U.S.A*
- *Come with a 100% lifetime guarantee against any manufacturer defect.*
- *Are covered in custom decorative harvest gold cloth material.*

**Power Cord**

**Price: \$475 6ft.**

**Interconnect**

**Price: \$419 RCA 1m Pair (Add \$35/pair for XLR connectors)**

**Speaker Cable**

**Price: \$575 6ft Pair**

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Soundstring Cables

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