

VAN DEN HUL - The Integration Interconnects



Some Kind of Magic...

Reviewer - Ramsey Raad "Audio Tweak"

System:

- Wadia 3200 transport
- Benchmark DAC1 converter
- NuForce P8 preamp
- NuForce Ref9 SE monoblocks
- Bohlender Graebener 520i ribbon planar speakers
- Bohlender Graebener 210i subwoofer

It's almost midnight, and I'm listening to Marcus Miller, the Fourplay bass player through my Bohlender Graebener 520i's ribbon speakers, and I'm speechless at the new found naturalness that my system is now reproducing. I have recently inserted a new 1mtr pair of XLR of The VDH Integration from pre to power and another pair from DAC to pre; according to VDH, this combination is extremely synergistic in the context of The Inspiration speaker cables gracing such a system.

Well, I can certainly testify of the following:

After substantial, but not necessarily overly prolonged running-in, something truly spectacular happened to my system; the image density lightened up, and my system floated instruments as if on a feathery cloud, something I have experienced in the past and a phenomenon I am quite acquainted with, I can only describe this event as "some kind of magic".

While the bass went deeper and had better pitch than before, and while the top-end sounded clearer with cymbals sounding like true cymbals yet without over-emphasized sheen, that the music now seemed to come from such an incredibly silent gritless background, and give the impression of instruments floating forward and backwards along a wide panoramic and spacious soundstage that had me drowning as if in a sea of sound. So compelling was the experience that I felt like I too was literally levitating from my chair! This "soundstage floating effect" is something that single-ended tube lovers can relate to and know exactly what I'm talking about here; not only did the VDH combination of wires carved solid images into my room, with musicians occupying specific placements with great articulation and realism, but now the soundscape seemed to have been freed from my speakers; how can I explain this? It's like the sound is now coming in a detached kind of way from the speakers (like the speakers have stopped playing and the sound now beams away from them, in a kind of out of phase way), yet, I swear my polarity is 100% correct! It's rather spooky! I attribute this to a HUGE amount of air and an ultra low noise floor that these new wires convey. The more air around the notes/ the more the music and notes float; the quieter the noise floor/ the cleaner the sound. Here is science that works dear friends, forget the bells and whistles, the punchy and the tizzy stuff that cables are so good at initially impressing; magic is all you need, because fellow audiophiles, a live event is a magical thing indeed.

You might ask, well aren't you biased, well NO, because I've never been a great fan of VDH cables, and I've always found his cables too sweet and round for my systems, that was way back then. At least for now, I can honestly say, that A. J. VDH's quest for ultimate neutrality has finally paid off! I am totally blown away by what I am hearing and I have been in the game for far too long to get confused with what my ears want and what my analytical mind seeks. I never thought it possible that at the asking price there was a cable on the market with such transparency and yet a sound that never offends or assaults your ear drums. What you get for the money is a cable that doesn't sound like metal or wires, has no nasty peaks at any part of the frequency spectrum, and yet reveals layers upon layers of micro information from your recordings with utter finesse and outstanding purity of tone. Tonality is definitely the strongest factor and the thing that stands the most with these wires. The moment that you introduce The Integration into an "Inspiration" based system the whole tonal balance shifts towards a slightly darker sound, but HEY... wait!... By that I don't mean dark in the sense that instruments are greyed-out in the process, I mean the tonality becomes liquid-like and has a sense of continuity like honey running; the music becomes tremendously fluid and silky, but also airier while being tonally richer. Brightness is diminished, but detail is enhanced!

All this without fatty midband, but instead the cables open up the mids and infuse it with tremendous spatiality and air!

Rich yet open and fast. Few cables I've heard achieve this sort of balance ever, and I mean EVER; they normally do at the expense of hardness or compression somewhere along the way.

I have purchased all most flagship VDH cables that have been sent to me so far, and the local agent is now insisting that I give the Super Nova a try too, I'm afraid I can't do that I told him, "because I know what's going to happen", I'll spend more and more. But yet, how much transparency can one reach? For me obsession is not the game here; My goal is to achieve the ultimate in grainlessness, tonal balance and magic. I now it and plan to live happily ever after. My quest for cables stops here!!!

Soon I will be evaluating my new range of transports and DACs by Northstar from Italy; a digital front-end that is said to approach the finest of analog front ends out there. I can only imagine what synergy the NuForce Ref9SE, Bohlenders 520is, and VDH combo will produce!!! Stay posted and brace yourselves, Audio Tweak thinks along the same lines as VDH; "Budget High-End Killers" has always been my motto. We're here to prove one point at the end of the day; that is to separate the masqueraders from the genuine sonic marvels!

I am proud to represent the minority of the stereo fraternity, hail to Stereo and to Hell with Home Theater!



Ramsey Raad - "Audio Tweak", August 2006

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