Prelude
Made by: Black Rhodium, Derby
Supplied by: Black Rhodium
Tel: 01332 342233
www.blackrhodium.co.uk

AUDIO FILE

Salsa
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Black Rhodium Prelude

Having developed a low-microphonic cable specifically for musicians' electric instruments, Black Rhodium introduced this Prelude audio interconnect with similar design characteristics. Prelude is a coaxial cable whose 2.5mm cross section signal conductor is made of multiple strands of silver-plated OFC with PTFE insulation. The coaxial screen, braided closely to aid RFI rejection, is also silver-plated OFC.

An electrostatic shield of conductive carbon/graphite compound between the inner insulation and the coaxial screen is claimed to minimise microphony.

With a bright green PVC outer sheath, the left and right channel cables are twisted lightly together and collared 12cm from each end by a band of shrink tubing upon which directional arrows are printed. The twisting is said to improve musicality; certainly it can help to reduce hum pickup in 'noisy' environments. The Prelude is solder terminated with gold-plated phono plugs with a split centre pin.

IMMEDIATE GAIN

The string bass beginning of Diana's Krall's 'My Love Is' sounded strong, clear and tuneful with a velvet texture while a less forceful 'snap-of-the-fingers' helped create a pleasing sense of three-dimensionality. The tonality of Diana's voice appeared a little less creamy, almost as if there was a minor lift in the presence region. As a result the song sounded more immediate and intimate, as if being performed in a less reverberant acoustic.

The highly processed electronic production of Dire Straits' 'Telegraph Road' worked in the test system's favour, the slightly 'dry' tonality of the Prelude taming the track's sometimes shrill tendencies. With its strong bass delivery the dramatic drum 'thwacks' were truly explosive while the fervent and unrestrained resonance of the piano was agreeably rounded. Increased subjective presence further highlighted the acoustic guitar that lacked some 'attack' to the plucked strings but demonstrated clear and natural decay.

HFN SPECIFICATIONS

Series Inductance	0.28µH
Parallel Capacitance	453pF
Resistance	65mohm
Leakage (DC, 1m)	>100Mohm

Sound Quality: 78%

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Black Rhodium Salsa

Available both as a two-core (featured here) and a chunkier four-core bi-wire/amp speaker cable, each of the Salsa's multistrand conductors are formed of 19x0.45mm strands of silver-plated copper. The insulation is a silicone rubber, as is the cable's off-white outer sheath, making it supremely flexible despite its substantial 9mm diameter. The conductors run in parallel within the sheath.

The Salsa's conductors are silver-soldered to gold-plated 4mm banana plugs whose plastic outer shells are fully encapsulated in a heatshrink tubing to provide added strength and give a professional finish. The heatshrink is colour-coded, branded and marked for cable directionality. As Salsa is available off the reel and since Black Rhodium also offers a bespoke cable construction service, pretty much any type of termination is available on request. See Black Rhodium's website for further details.

ROCKIN' ON

Engineer Geoff Foster's production of *Both Sides Now* is particularly 'fruity' and resonant at low frequencies which, with the Salsa cable, resulted in bass that verged on the overwhelming, making it difficult to pitch the notes. Joni Mitchell's voice seemed magnified too, forward in the mix with a 'rosy glow' and increased weight.

This made for a full-on, rockin' performance of 'The Chain', the kick drum of Mick Fleetwood's kit combining with John McVie's bass to rattle our chest cavities. It really sounded as if the amplifier's volume control had been wound-up a couple of notches. In practice, of course, it had not.

Even the chamber music ensemble seemed 'heavier', cellos and basses combining with percussion to deliver a loud, powerful rendition of the opening March to *A Soldier's Tale*. Brass and woodwind didn't appear lacking in any leading-edge detail, with good resolution of subtle reverberation details and ambience clues. But the tonality of the instruments was mellowed by the subjective presence lift and weight of bass. This is a cable for bright-sounding systems.

HFN SPECIFICATIONS

Series Inductance (3m loop)	1.93µH
Parallel Capacitance	191pF
Series Resistance	38mohm
Loss (over 3m run into 8ohm)	0.041dB

Sound Quality: 80%

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