

DFPC Reference

Date Added: 01/22/2020 by Matjaz Kaltnekar, Slovenia

I admit being a little late to the party. The DFPC Series power cables have been in the meantime replaced by the C-MARC power cables. But better late than never.

While I could never dream to own such an expensive power cable as the DFPC Reference at an original price of 1.824 USD, since my whole system consists of components in the 2.500 EUR range (Marantz SA14S1 SE and PM14S1 SE by the late famous audio guru Ken Ishiwata and B&W 805S speakers connected by Siltech Classic Anniversary 330L loudspeaker cables), I am very pleased that by the price reduction I could upgrade from the Original to the Reference range.

Since I listen mostly to female vocal jazz like Patricia Barber, Jacintha and Melody Gardot, I prefer a certain sound – let's call it a seductive midrange. I abhor shrill highs and don't really need an extra deep bass, since the B&W 805S don't go below 46 Hz. I prefer stand mounted loudspeakers like the 805S over floor standers since they "disappear" better in the room. A precise stereo image is also very important to me.

So much for the introduction. Now to the first impressions. Thank God I have been informed of the long burn-in time by Mr. Motek as the first sound was one of very shrill highs. I usually use Patricia Barber's song The Thrill is Gone from Cafe Blue for checking cymbals and the double bass. The cymbals were very zingy or should I say glassy. While listening to the double bass I had the impression of listening to a bass guitar like Santana's. The imaging that before was very directional, came out from just the speakers. I said: "OMG, what have I done. Buying something without prior auditioning." The fact about getting 70% of the final sound during initial listening referred to by an article about burn-in by Mr. Motek seemed very far-fetched. Thankfully that is why a 30-day money-back guarantee exists.

But I knew I had to persist. I let it run through the whole night and another day and on the third day the image nicely opened up. The same song with the title The Thrill is gone should be renamed to The Thrill has returned since Patricia Barber's voice now gave me goosebumps. The instruments were settling down nicely an octave or two, my wife even commented that maybe the piano sound was even a little bit too dark. But for me the sound was just perfect and I was in seventh heaven.

A perfect example was A Taste of Honey from the same CD. It starts with the guitar. I have never heard the fingering of the strings as clearly as that evening. When Patricia started to sing, it was really a taste of honey. After that the drums joined the guitar and as I have already said I really don't need a super deep bass. What has gotten to me, was the uncanny rhythm of the bongo drums. I couldn't help myself to start tapping with my foot to the rhythm of the drums.

Another singer that always gives me goosebumps is Jacintha. Moon River from her CD Autumn Leaves is a perfect example of her seductive voice. It is supposed to be a cappella singing. Only if you listen very closely you can hear a piano in the back of the hall during the first 2:20 minutes. The LessLoss DFPC Reference power cables with its quiet background have produced these details as no power cables before.

Jacintha's bonus track from the same CD Here's to Life is a brilliant performance by Jacintha and the famous jazz pianist Kei Akagi. By the sound of it I could swear it was a Steinway. Only the best power cables bring out the texture of the piano like this. I am not sure if I can describe this correctly, but the note from the hammer strike on the piano string takes much longer to decay than with previous power cables giving the music a much more powerful presentation. There is some theory involved with this - you can google it under "Modelling the Decay of Piano Sounds". I am more and more amazed how many more details I get out of the same recordings that I have thought I knew so well.

Now for my final impressions after two weeks of burn-in. I have a sampler CD Ballads in Blue from Enja Records where for testing purposes I usually listen to the first two songs by Melissa Walker (A Time for Love) for the piano and Dusko Goykovich (No Love Without Tears) for the trumpet. I usually jump over the next songs to the last song by Chet Baker (I Fall in Love Too Easily) for his unusual voice where I never know if it is really a man singing or is it a mezzo-soprano voice like Ella Fitzgerald. Also the trumpet and string instruments (orchestra) are very nicely recorded. As it is a live recording it starts with applause. You can always hear a cables time coherence by listening to hands clapping or fingers snapping. With lesser cables the image is very diffuse, it seems to come more from the

loudspeakers as from a central audience. Here you can really feel like you are sitting in the audience

Now for the piece de resistance. Before that last song there is a piano recording by Abdullah Ibrahim (Eleventh Hour) which I usually jump over during testing as there has been nothing special to the recording until now. Now for the first time I could really appreciate why Enja Music have put this song on the sampler. There are some cymbals which until now were all seeming to come from the same space in the recording. Now for the first time I could hear that there were actually 3 distinct directions (very close but nevertheless in separate space). I have read something like that in one review but I always take such reviews with a grain of salt. Now I can really understand what the reviewer was trying to convey. There are some authors that swear they can identify a brand of cymbals like for example the Zildjians from other cymbals. I am not nearly that far but the same as with piano notes I can distinctly hear the longer reverb/decay of the cymbal strike. Also in the piano you can hear the pedals being pressed, the very details that have been missing until now.

Also all the shrillness that I have heard on the first day has gone out of the recordings. The cymbals have now the right sound, the brushes don't sound like sandpaper any more. The trumpet still has the brassy sound that I love so much and the piano has a very lifelike appearance.

Let me say at the end that I am very thrilled by the improvement the power cables have made to my system. I have spent a lot of money on my system already but this was one of the best investments I have made until now.

Date Added: 03/08/2016 by Private Hell Recording

Another DFPC Reference, this time feeding a Synergistic Research QLS-6 and ATC SCM25A Pro studio monitors. This replaces a JPS Labs Aluminata. Most interesting results were:

1. Better transient definition, especially in the bass.
2. I was able to actually angle my monitors out to get a wider field without sacrificing center image.
3. Natural frequency response.

- Private Hell Recording

Date Added: 01/02/2016 by Casper

I have owned the Shunyata Zitron Anaconda & LessLoss Reference DFPC power cable at the same time. After comparing them on my Devialet D200 system, I observed that the LessLoss power cable was much better than the Shunyata power cable. The sound is more solid, more dynamic, more clear, there are more details & it is more musical. Higher C/P ratio compared with Shunyata cables (2/3 price only).

Highly recommend for all Devialet users.

Date Added: 06/15/2015 by derekw14

I own this power cord since a few years, after having been given the opportunity to audition it alongside the other LL power cords models, in my own system, thanks to Louis Motek friendly, professional and patient customer service. The DFPC Reference has been a pillar of my stereo system since then.

If you can afford it, it is by far the best sounding model in LL range, not just a slight improvement for many more \$\$\$ like with a lot of other manufacturers.

Actually, as Louis advised me, when coupled to a high quality (but not that expensive) power strip like BPT products, you get a high quality and great value power distributor for your whole system, that beats a lot of far more expensive power conditioners (that often thicken or slow the sound IMHO).

Naturally, it works wonders to power directly a particular component, I use it on my Dartzeel amplifier to great results. I compared it to other very well known - and sometimes more expensive, power cords and the DFPC reference was the clear winner, much more open sounding, airy and "atmospheric".

In my experience the DFPC Reference is one of the bona fide best quality power cords in the market, and offers remarkable value for money. It does not hurt that the build quality is superb.

Date Added: 03/15/2015 by Private Hell Recording

This is top of my list for power cables and I have tested or owned everything, Audience, Shunyata, JPS Aluminata, etc. I use this cable in my dedicated room reference system on a Devialet 200. Just perfect. Power, space, impact, but most importantly, neutrality. No hype, no sheen, no bloated bass, just the music.

Date Added: 02/18/2015 by Martin Ölmedal, Stockholm/Sweden

When I first got in touch with Louis and the DFPC cables some years ago I had tried out numerous power cables. I was also a bit of a septic regarding the impact of power cables on sound quality. This attitude was however about to change...

Yes, I had heard definite changes in sound character when switching between power cables, but was the sound just different or was the sound quality actually better? I believe a lot of people tend to think of these two aspects as one when listening to changes in sound character. A change in sound character is by many easily confused with "something got better", i.e. sound quality. This is due to how our hearing works.

Our hearing, for evolutionary reasons, is best at for example picking up changes in sound and a identifying a specific sound (like speech) in a otherwise noisy environment. Using your hearing to point out what sound sounds better than other sounds takes practice. It's a bit like knowing how to find a good wine - all wines are different but you need to know what you are looking for when deciding what's good and what's not.

The same thing can be said about changes in sound quality when using different power cables and power filtering devices. You have to be able to discern and separate the numerous nuances and characteristics that makes up music to tell if a sound or a whole pice of music sounds more lifelike or not. This usually takes some practice and is also one of the reasons why many audiophiles use high quality recordings of the human voice when reviewing hifi gear. We all have a similar reference of how a voice should sound in order to sound convincingly natural and lifelike.

However, the impact on sound quality made by the DFPC Reference is so apparent and unquestionable that even a person completely unfamiliar with the intricacies of high end audio immediately can hear the sonic benefits of the DFPC Reference in any given hifi system. The DFPC Reference achieves a very dynamic, highly defined, coherent and - most importantly - extremely lifelike sound.

With first the DFPC Original and now the DFPC Reference in my system I know for sure that power cables not only affect sound quality, but have a substantial impact on your system's ability to produce a high quality sound. The proof is there for anyone to find with the DFPC Reference. Just give it a listen. Highly recommended!

Date Added: 10/17/2014 by Algis and friends

Over several days and at different times during burn in, I hosted an intensive power cord shootout in my prime listening room. My room was custom built according to plans drawn up by our best local acousticians. The dimensions of the room are acoustically generous. After acoustical modeling with specialized software, repeated measurements were made during different phases of the building and installation process, to ensure that real-world results indeed follow.

This space is some 6.5m wide, 10m long, and 5m high (21 ft. wide, 33 ft. long, 16.5 ft. high) in size. The side walls are not parallel, nor the front and back walls. The structural ceiling is actually some 1.5m above the acoustical ceiling one sees in the picture. The walls, too, are acoustically purpose-built structures built some 1m in from the actual carrying walls. It's really a venue for the top possible reproduction of comprehensible, intelligible and controlled sound.

I'm a life-long audiophile. I've gone through myriad changes to my systems throughout the years. In this one, I

spent the past 10 years fine tuning the interplay between the various components. Special attention was given to the equipment stands/feet as well as to cabling.

We compared six fine power cords:

- #1: Atlas Eos from Scotland
- #2: Nordost Valhalla upgraded with Oyaide 004 connectors.
- #3: LessLoss DFPC Signature
- #4: Siltech Ruby Double Crown
- #5: LessLoss DFPC Reference
- #6: Nordost Odin

In terms of price (least to most expensive):

- #1: Atlas Eos (246 USD)
- #3: DFPC Signature (1149 USD)
- #5: DFPC Reference (1824 USD)
- #2: Nordost Valhalla (5800 USD)
- #4: Siltech Ruby Double Crown (13,500 USD)
- #6: Nordost Odin (19,600 USD)

Upon first listen of the DFPC Reference, without any burn in, our first impression was promising. We decided to connect it somewhere to burn in for about four days without further listening for the time being.

In the meantime, the Nordost Odin and Valhalla, the Siltech Ruby Double Crown, the Atlas Eos, and the DFPC Signature were already all burned in long before and had been part and parcel of my system for years. Their sonic characters were intimately known to my group of friends, and recognizable on different pieces of gear throughout the system. We've been listening here together for years.

After four days of burn-in, now in direct comparison with the DFPC Signature, we found the DFPC Reference obviously superior. So superior, that it only took the first couple of notes in the music to clearly tell. This opinion did not waver throughout the evening.

After the next few days, what became apparent was that the DFPC Reference burns in differently than any other cable we tried previously. It seems that even after 8-10 days, an unmistakable evolution in the sound quality was still being perceived. Presumably this has to do with its very low noise floor, which is immediately evident.

After this second, longer interval of burn-in, our comparisons began in earnest. First, special attention was given to draw comparisons between the DFPC Signature and the new DFPC Reference. It (the Ref) gave a huge leap forward in terms of dynamics, lowered noise floor, and the fact that individual instruments seem to free themselves more than ever from one another. At first with the DFPC Reference, it seemed that the sound was somewhat lighter in character, but it also revealed during the course of the evening to be still morphing into more colorful tonalities, even after the 2 weeks of burn-in before. We decided to keep burning it in for another few days before comparing to all the others. Also, this would give our local group time to organize the arrival of more listeners from Berlin, Riga, and Kiev.

21 Days In

Finally, after three weeks of burn in, everyone felt that the performance of the DFPC Reference had settled. It was now time to compare to all the others. It was an unambiguous result: the DFPC Reference topped all our other cables.

When the Odin was introduced, it seemed at first that its dynamic characteristics were better than those of the DFPC Reference, but through a constant coloration of those dynamics, we found ultimately to be less organically musical and more harsh and irritating in sound. We decided to keep the Odin in the system and give it a longer listen. Fatigue set in. Switching back to the DFPC Reference, the music now sounded more organically musical, had more color and emotional content. So we decided unambiguously that the DFPC Reference topped the list! And we lost no detail.

On subsequent days, we tried the DFPC Reference on various pieces of equipment (DAC, CDP, amps), and it

proved its excellence regardless of what gear it was powering.

If anybody would like to hear how the DFPC Reference sounds, they are welcome to come over for a comparison with the Odin, and you'll find it sounds better than the Odin. And we are talking about a 1:12 difference in price.

In my main system I also use the LessLoss Tunnelbridge.

Algis

Date Added: 10/17/2014

Today I use the LessLoss Reference power cord, and to be quite honest, I do not think this product has serious competition. I'm using it with Devialet. It is so much better than anything else I've tried!

Date Added: 07/06/2014 by Anthony C

As a user of the Devialet D Premier dac/amp, I am pleased I purchased the DFPC reference cable.

It wasn't that I set out to make a general system upgrade - but that's what I got, I'm glad to report. I had originally sought to cure certain treble distortions and thinness of sound by introducing some tone control for added warmth through cabling changes. I had a headache about what to do for the best.

Happily Mr Motek stepped in with some gentle 're-education' on the difficulties of putting our perceptions into words in any meaningful way - and the absurdity of tone controls. So I flashed the plastic.

Ever-sceptical, I confess it was more in trepidation than excitement [oh what fun we have] that I hooked up the Reference PC. I needn't have worried. The result was wonderfully portrayed music - just so much better in every aspect than I heard [even] on the £500 cable I had in my system.

As to the aforementioned treble issues, it didn't disappear, but at least I know where to look for the cure. I am taking a long, hard look at the source, [MacBook Pro SSD] and the good news is the Mr Motek with his vast experience has offered to assist. Can't say any fairer than that! Anthony C.

Date Added: 05/10/2014 by Rainer Weber

I am totally stunned how unbelievably good the DFPC Reference power cord is.

I installed a 2m sample to connect my Thrax Dionysos preamp and could not believe it. Everything sounds as if it had more power, more dynamics and especially more speed and pace. On the other hand, also the tone colours are massively improved - it sounds so right!

I did not expect so much improvement on the tone colours but it must be due to less power line interference and modulation with the music.

The staging is deeper and more 3D and the clarity on the stage extremes (back and sides) is hugely better. Now you can easily identify what is going on on the very far end (side and back).

I can not higher recommend a cable like this one and will try to swap more cables into my system.

PS:

My old cable (which was outperformed by the DFPC Reference) is in the price range of 7000 Euro. The DFPC Reference is a real deal.

All the best,

Rainer Weber

Date Added: 03/11/2014 by Erick

Your DFPC Reference cables are really too good to describe.

The Reference differs greatly from the DFPC Signatures.....more transparent ...more air....more details...very very good control (on high volume).

The improvements are from the bottom end to top end.

Thanks again.

Regards,
Erick

Date Added: 03/02/2014 by Karl

Addendum to my review of 12/03/2013.

I now have all my equipment powered by DFPC Reference power cords. They were burned-in for nearly 300 hours prior to connecting them to the monoblocks. I have had two Reference feeding the CD player and preamp for several months now. Knowing what they do for the music I VERY anxiously awaited the arrival of these additional two Reference power cords. I am not disappointed. This is a real treat. I love them.

I had not expected a significant improvement because my monoblocks have always worked better without any line conditioning. From what I am hearing the DFPC Reference seem to be acting like very powerful line conditioners and not just simple power cords. I have finally found something that helps my amps.....actually helps them a lot. I would say what impresses me the most is the significantly improved air, sustain and decay which of course contribute a great deal to musicality. It should be noted that bass and mids are notably improved as well.

I must admit these results were quite unexpected. What I am hearing is the kind of improvement I have previously experienced when upgrading caps in the system.....not what I have heard with previous power cord changes. To my ears the improvement with everything fed by the Reference power cords is something like going from really good caps to "approaching-magical-caps". A wonderful surprise....."astonishing" would actually be a better description. I delayed sending this feedback a week or so because I wanted to be sure.....and yes this really is what I am hearing. Louis and his team have come up with something quite extraordinary here.

We all know that just like building your house on a good foundation, each element of an audio system is built on the stages before it and the AC powering a system is right there in the foundation. The DFPC Reference appear to establish an astonishingly solid foundation for everything else. I would definitely encourage others to try the Reference DFPC. I felt really quite guilty about ordering these last two Reference.....especially when my wife saw the bill. I bravely defended my purchase all the while feeling that in truth I was being over-the-top extravagant. After all wasn't I likely getting 90% of the benefit of the Reference by using them on the CD Player and preamp? Well, at least in this system I would say it was more like 60% of the possible benefit. Let me repeat that and underscore it.....even though I was very impressed with the first two DFPC Reference....."I would say it was more like 60% of the possible benefit." with only two Reference in the system. Definitely don't feel guilty now.

I also love video and editing pictures. After trying a Reference on both the TV as well as my picture editing computer monitor I had to order two more.

Karl

Date Added: 02/13/2014 by Neal

20 minutes out of the box, connected to my preamp, and I am very impressed -- and after some 40 years as an audiophile, I do not impress easily. More to follow after I experiment with different sources and longer burn-in, but

there is an IMMEDIATELY audible sense of greater quietude, more natural and "present" voices, and greater, more organic instrumental detail. And the Reference cord replaced one of the stars in the PC firmament. This could be a game changer. I thought the DFPC Signature was a great PC, but the Reference is an entirely new dimension. It is also a physically beautiful cord, and aesthetics count. Kudos.

Date Added: 12/03/2013 by Karl

Extraordinary!

I recently replaced two DFPC Signature power cords with a pair of DFPC Reference. These now power the Preamp and CD player. I still have DFPC Signatures powering the monoblocks. The improvement is really quite significant. Introducing just these two DFPC Reference power cords sounds better than using an \$8000 line conditioner I had a few years ago. For several years now we have been using your DFPC Signature throughout the entire system. Now, having heard the new Reference power cords I would like to order two more. I have to find out what an entire system, including the pair of monoblocks, sounds like when fed by these new cords.

I don't think I can add a lot to the very insightful reviews of the DFPC Reference that have been provided by other articulate customers. I should note however that whenever people talk about the blackest of black silences little "caution flags" pop up for me. In my experience many times those black backgrounds are achieved at the expense of the subtleties and nuances which constitute the heart, soul and very life of truly extraordinary music reproduction. In short it is very easy to block out not only unwanted noise but in the process go too far and kill some of what is desirable in the music. In my opinion you have masterfully avoided this pitfall with the DFPC Reference. In fact you have not only avoided this insidious trap, but you have done what you set out to do, you have made it possible to further enhance the enjoyment of the heart and soul of extraordinary music. Congratulations!

If you have read this far and are still considering trying the DFPC Reference, I would encourage you to take the plunge. They are really something quite special.

Karl

Date Added: 09/14/2013 by Mark Bartlett

We have been using the LessLoss DFPC Signature cables in our Hi-Fi system for more than two years now, so when I received a Newsletter from Louis Motek notifying me that they had developed a new, higher performance power cable there was quite a sense of excitement.

Firstly, a bit of background on how I arrived at LessLoss. I did not merely get lucky and immediately stumble across the LessLoss brand. It was suggested to me by a friend who similar to me had gone through various other cable brands with mixed results and limited success.

Having tried and tested several other power cables up to the £1000 price point, the better of the group offered some fine attributes, but they ultimately ended up behaving as tone controls.

This does not mean that power or signal cables should not be carefully chosen for your system or tastes, to the contrary. However, you might not be aware that the power cables in your system whether of Copper, Silver with top Rhodium plugs or additional exotic enhancements are getting anywhere near the best from your system.

I finally took the step and loaned a LessLoss DFPC Signature and swapped out a cable in the system. With LessLoss installed on source component (CD player) the music became "less choked", considerably more musical, coherent, open, and spacious sounding. Needless to say, the loaned cable never went back! Further LessLoss Signature cables were installed with similar results each time, and collectively these cables had significantly improved my listening pleasure.

With the LessLoss Signature cables I felt I had reached very close to the top of the tree in terms of power cable. Satisfied I had concluded that any additional upgrade to power cables was either going to be both very subtle and expensive.

So when the new LessLoss Reference cable arrived yesterday I made the same cable switch as I had originally done, and it took me seconds to hear an immediate appreciable improvement in sound. What I first noticed was how the sound became more coherent, freer, improved spatially, the finer details in the music plucked out and less noise (very low noise floor).

It is that very low noise floor, absolute coherence that enables you to get an unprecedented insight into the recording, dragging you in and completely submerging you, making that "emotional" connection. It allows you to wind the volume up a notch, then a notch further than you would normally dare to go and the music remain intact, wholly listenable and free from hash.

I would encourage anybody to take a serious look at the LessLoss power cables. Once the noise is gone, all that's left is the music!

Date Added: 09/12/2013 by Alan Carruth

I recently received the New DFPC Reference cables and wanted to share my experience with them. I am a long term fan of Louis Motek and the LessLoss products. I have enjoyed continual improvement in listening pleasure as I have added and upgraded my system. I began with the DFPC Originals, the DAC 2004 MkII and Digital Cable. I have gradually upgraded with DFPC Signatures, 12 Blackbody Conditioners, 2 Firewall Power Conditioners in series to a power distributor, a Tunnelbridge Interconnect system and finally 2 pairs of Anchorwave Speaker cables (speakers are biwired). I didn't think I could be happier with the sound, but I learned long ago to stop saying, "I don't think the sound can get any better." Well, I trust Louis and was excited to try the Reference power cords. I ordered 7 cables but decided to try just 2 for a start. I put them in front and in-between the Firewalls and started listening to all my familiar music. The improvement in the sound was immediately obvious! With NO burn-in, the Reference cables are amazing! I hurriedly put the rest of the Reference cables in place and was astounded by what I heard! These cables are a great improvement over the Signature cables. I'll spare you the descriptive adjectives. I've never heard anything closer to live music! I'm talking in the recording studio or concert hall listening quality. If you are wondering whether to buy these cables, the answer is YES!!!! You will not be sorry!

I want to add a time frame to describe my impression of the sound changes as the Reference DFPCs burn in.

*Initial impressions: Much improved clarity and definition over the Signature DFPCs, but the sound stage is a little forward and bright. There is a slight digital edge present.

*30-40 hours: Brightness and digital edge are fading. Sound stage is not as far forward and beginning to open up nicely.

*60-70 hours: Brightness and digital edge are almost gone. Sound stage is open and deep, more natural. Vocals and instruments sounding life like!

*100 hours: The sound is rich, lush and very accurate. No digital edge and no noticeable noise floor! Sound stage is huge. Highs and lows seem to go forever. No listening fatigue!

*150 hours: The music is astounding!!!! You are there!!!!

*200 hours: The sound is hypnotic!!! Even the most complex symphonies and choral music are no longer a challenge to listen to. This is TRUE High Fidelity!

*400 hours: The listening experience continues to improve. Sound stage continues to become more realistic. Very relaxed and natural and yet very detailed and defined. It almost feels surreal. I am experiencing these old recordings as if for the first time. I just can't believe music can sound this good!

Update:

I've now had about 1700 hours of signal time on the DFPC References, and I think things are pretty stable now. Even at 800 to 900 hours there was a transition of a slightly harsher/digital sound which started to disappear at 1200 hours. My goodness! I'm sure I never would have appreciated this on a lesser system! The listening is now sublime! It is smooth, musical, and ultra defined with an enormous sound stage. I couldn't be happier!