

LessLoss Cables: A tale of amazement

By Roeland Vereecken



Original Dutch version: <http://www.puresound.be/LessLoss-stroomkabels-van-de-ene-verbazing-in-de-andere/>

When you are writing as an audio reviewer, a lot of time is spent surfing the web, looking for interesting new products and possible review opportunities. It was a year or two ago I stumbled upon the name "LessLoss" for the first time, I think, when I saw someone at a Dutch message board using them. I checked the website, but since my interest in cables was rather low at that time, I quickly forgot about it. Now, somewhat later, I am working on my cabling after moving to a new house and having created two power groups specifically for audio. In search of better power cables, the name LessLoss pops up very often and all the reviews (professional or not) all rave about their qualities. Reason enough for me to contact LessLoss and request a review sample to see (sorry, hear) what the fuss is all about!

The very diligent and nice owner, Louis Motek, responded almost immediately and we quickly agreed on several review

samples of the LessLoss cables to cable my system. The package Louis sent me consisted of 4 LessLoss DFPC Original cables and 2 DFPC Signature cables. DFPC stands for Dynamic Filtering Power Cable and this already gives away that the cables intend to have some filtering effect, but more on that below.

The package arrived very quickly with UPS and upon opening the packages (every cable was packed separately), I was at first somewhat confused. At first glance, all cables looked exactly alike and the labels on the packaging bags gave nothing away about the cables being the signature version or not. After checking with Louis and cleaning my glasses, it quickly became clear that the difference between the standard DFPC Cable and the Signature version was a fourth blue thread weaved through the cable. I do feel however, that the bags could be labeled better for blindsighted people like myself...



The LessLoss DFPC is made of three wires braided together, each wire covered in a black purple cover. In the Signature version a fourth wire covered in a blue wire is added. The LessLoss DFPCs are quite large and robust, but are quite flexible and easy to handle. According to the LessLoss website, the wire used in the manufacturing of these cables receives a certain metallurgic treatment LessLoss calls FlowFlux and which should be superior to cryogenic treatment.

The plugs used are those from Oyaide. LessLoss auditioned a lot of power plugs before settling on this particular Oyaide model. The plugs are expensive (EUR 105 a piece in Belgium) and are constructed of red polycarbonate, with black polybutylene terephthalate forming the body that holds the metal pins in place. Pictures really don't do these plugs justice! The Oyaide IEC plug was tested by LessLoss for hundreds of connect/disconnect operations and maintained a firm grip as well as having excellent sonic characteristics.

About LessLoss and its cables

Louis Motek, a Lithuanian resident with roots in Texas as well, is the owner, developer and soul of Less Loss cables. He was raised in a musical family and he was a jeweller as well as a recording studio engineer for several years in New York before returning to Lithuania. As is shown from the biography you can find on the LessLoss website, music was and is one of Louis foremost passions, not only as an audiophile but also as a very gifted multi-instrumentalist (with cello, saxophone and piano as his main instruments).

He started the LessLoss company some years ago starting from the idea that

most power cables do not address the most important problem, resistance. On the LessLoss website, a very elaborate explanation of the design philosophy can be found and to show you how deeply and well thought the cable is, a small excerpt seems in place:

“This is where the skin effect comes in handy. We utilize very much metal for our conductors. This provides our cable with low resistance. The conductivity of the cable is extremely high with a metal cross sectional area of 4.72 mm² per conductor, of which there are three in each cable. The power frequency is 50 or 60Hz. As this frequency is low, the very large diameter of the wire represents no loss, since such a low frequency is not affected by any skin effect current concentration. However, the higher frequencies, which we want to filter out, remain at the skin. And it is precisely here where it is possible for us to filter only the undesired electromagnetic fluctuations while leaving the 50 or 60Hz energy cycle completely alone. The attenuation of this low frequency does not even take place. In fact, the porous conductive material mated to the skin of the cable actually enlarges the effective cross sectional area of one conductor assembly to a whopping 6 mm², bringing the entire cross-sectional area of this three-wire cable to 18 mm². This is between 5 and 4 awg.”

As you can read, the construction of the LessLoss cables is hardly what one would call 'run off the mill'. And from the extract it also becomes clear that this cable, unlike what the name might make you suspect, does not contain any active filtering circuitry but actually makes use in a very clever way of the skin effect and the resistance of the materials to filter out unwanted rubbish from the power signal and to provide the components with better power.

For those of you who have a better technical understanding than I and a curiosity for the explanations, please visit the website of LessLoss. I myself am more a man of eating the pudding and enjoying it, than wanting to know how the pudding became such a delicious mixture of texture and flavour...

On another note, the LessLoss website does not only give the visitors ample informations on the design and the designer of the products, but Louis even is so generous to offer FREE music to everyone willing to download it. The offered pieces can all be downloaded in high res (24bit/96khz) and offer a taste of how high res downloads can sound. The files on offer mainly concern classical music, but among them are great performances. I strongly encourage you to listen to Vytautas Sriubikis playing parts of Bach's only ever Partita for Flute Solo in the Baroque Church of St. Catherine in Vilnius or the Mephisto Waltz No. 1 from Franz Liszt recorded in the Vilnius Music Academy. All peices are recorded with LessLoss cabling and combine great sound with excellent musicianship. Next to showing Louis' generosity, this also shows how involved Louis is in music and how much he loves what he's doing. If only there were more people like him in the business!



Listening to LessLoss

In the extended time Louis graciously granted me to listen to the LessLoss cables, I used them in a variety of settings to really get a handle on how they sounded. This means I not only used them in my own system, but that I also dragged them around to all my audiophile friends to try it out in their systems and to be able to compare the LessLoss with a variety of other power cables. The results where at least surprising...

But let's start at the beginning... I first used a single LessLoss cable on my CD-player, the way too cheap for its performance Astin Trew AT3500 plus. I have always felt that a Cd-player is usually most sensitive to cabling, followed by the preamp. At the Astin Trew, the LessLoss replaced an excellent and far more expensive Legenburg power cable. The Legenburg cable used to cost around 2,000 dollars and as far as I know, the company is now sadly out of business. I have always loved the cable since it made my equipment sound more musical or so I thought...

To my big surprise, the LessLoss, with a cost price of almost only a fourth of the Legenburg, bettered it in almost every aspect. Not only did it keep the musicality of the Legenburg, but it added a better defined soundstage, a greater dynamics and it seemed as if another veil (so to speak) was removed from the music. The Legenburgs character was a bit more

laid-back, but the LessLoss was not so much more upfront as more 'real'.

Let me make this clearer with an example. There are some musical pieces that I often use to review cables and gear. One of my latest 'discoveries' is the label Channel Classics This is a relatively small Dutch label that brings out high quality classical music from very respected performers. Fairly recently I bought the box set with the Bach Mattheus Passion performed by the Belgian Sigiswald Kujken and his orchestra La Petite Bande. La Petite Bande was founded in 1972 by Sigiswald Kujken, and although it was not meant to become a permanent orchestra, the success of several recordings by the group under the direction of Gustav Leonhardt was such that it began to give concerts regularly. All its members are internationally renowned early music specialists.

This particular recording of the Mattheus Passion is not only exquisitely recorded, it is also a radically new interpretation of the work in the sense that it does not make use of a full choir or a full orchestra. The interpretation was inspired by years of historical research and the result is a highly transparent performance of the Passion. With the LessLoss cables, this transparency became accentuated (not meaning bright) and the stage was better defined increasing the intelligibility of the chorus and the soloists. The dynamics in the piece were also on a startling new level. The way the LessLoss cables lifted the musical interpretation for me made me better get into the music and I dare to say Bach's Mattheus Passion never brought me to tears in such a way as on that evening with La Petite Bande and the LessLoss DFPC.

Looking at another example, the BBC album of the Tindersticks, with its

exquisite version of 'Tiny Tears', the sound was ameliorated in the same way by the LessLoss cables. The deep baritone of Stuart Staples got a glow and his grumble seemed to come from even deeper in his body. As he sang that tiny tears make up an ocean, my hair came up straight and a tiny tear formed in the corner of my eye. Reinstalling the Legenburg on the Astin Trew made the music sound more distant, somewhat more veiled and not nearly as involving. Shocked by what the installment of just one cable brought to my system, I decided it was time to see what happened when I went LessLoss all the way...

First up was my preamp (the undeservedly unknown Herron HL-1). Renewed listening made me realise the cumulative effect the LessLosses have. With the preamp also "LessLossed" (if it is not a verb yet, they should make it one), the noisefloor seemed to become even lower and the dynamics and musicality became even greater. The effect was not the double of installing the first cable, but once again it was a significant step up from the Legenburg. It seemed the 'sound bubble' became somewhat bigger and you became more immersed in the music. My first experiences with power cords already amazed me at what difference a good cord could make, but a difference as big as the LessLoss cables made was something I had not yet expected...

And it got even better! Coupling the last two DFPC's to my power amps, the Channel Island Audio's D-100's, a class D design with roots in Belgium but manufactured in the USA, really astounded me. The effect on the power amps might have been the least if you took it separately, but the cumulative effect of a fully LessLoss cabled system was really jawdropping. Now the puzzle pieces came together and it seemed as I

was no longer listening to music, but more to real musicians performing in my listening room. This was really something I never experienced before in this magnitude.

I started playing one of my favorite CD's, "Solitary man" by Johnny Cash, and I was intensely moved by hearing and feeling Cash' his "joie de vivre" as well as his pain from his sickness and the inevitable end that was coming to him... The same went for Warren Zevon's last album. The final album before his death contains a cover from Bob Dylan's "Knockin' on heavens door". Knowing that the man died soon after the recording of this album makes the experience of him shouting out of the top of his lungs "Open up for me" an extremely intense experience. With the LessLoss cables in my system, the performance was so uncannily "real", that the experience became even more intense. Need I say I was really touched that evening?

Travelling around with these cables to fellow audiophiles only confirmed my findings with these cables. Every system I inserted the cables in, be it with tubes or solid state, be it mid- or high-end systems, all benefited from the LessLoss cables and gained similar results (see a list of all the used components below). The LessLoss brought more of the performance into the room creating more music with better dynamics, a lowered noise floor and a cleaner, wider and deeper stage. Differently put, the music system seemed to disappear to make place for the music and the emotions. And it was clear the performance of the LessLoss cables was system independent. The higher res the system



was, the more the DFPC shone, but even in modest systems the qualities of the DFPC became immediately apparent.

One of my friends was, just like me, brought to tears when rediscovering his favourite Bach Cantate (*Wer weiss, wie nahe mir mein Ende!*) as performed by John Elliott Gardiner (the Pilgrimage Recordings) with the LessLoss cable in his system. His NAT Reference Preamp and Tentlabs CDplayer really benefited from the power cords and though he still had some troubles due to a nearby factory, it seemed the disturbances were greatly reduced and the noise floor was severely reduced. His wife even thought I had brought a whole new component instead of just changing a cable... This just shows how much difference the LessLoss cables can make!

And just when I thought it was time to start writing down my conclusions, I remembered I also had two Signature versions lurking around waiting to be heard. To be frank, I did not expect a great improvement on the Originals since I already found them to be so wonderful.

But boy, was I in for a surprise! I had two of the Signature's at my disposal and I hooked them up to my preamp and CD-player. Listening back to the music I listened to with the original DFPC's, I almost immediately noticed that they did everything the original DFPC's did... and then some more! They had the extended dynamics, the lowered noisefloor, the musicality and the ability to bring the musicians into the room, but they took everything even one step further. I must say I could hardly believe what I heard. For less than the double of the price of the DFPC

Originals, the Signature version went a lot further in added realism in the music. In a good high res system, this is definitely the cable to go for. It will almost literally blow your mind and this is definitely the one I will be saving up for...

Final comments

As I am finishing this review, I am listening to Bob Dylan latest album (Together through Life) and while I hear him sing that "*Beyond here lies nothin', Nothin' but the moon and stars*" I feel that I can apply this phrase to the LessLoss cables as well. When listening to my system with the LessLoss cables I do not feel that I have to change much anymore, I can just relax, listen to music and watch the moon and the stars... The standard DFPC's already go a great length of what is possible, but if you want the very best, do not doubt and go for the Signature version. Listening to music will never be the same.

Even more so, I hold the LessLoss cables so high that I need to discuss with my dear wife about our budget, because Louis is not getting back all his cables! I sincerely thank Louis Motek for the opportunity to listen to the LessLoss cables and being able to write my impressions on them. I am quite sure we will be hearing a lot more on him and the LessLoss company in the future!

My final sentence goes out to all those that still don't believe a power cable can make a difference: try the LessLoss, you will be surprised with what you will hear...

Used components:

Pre-amplification: Herron HL-1, NAT Reference

Power-amplifiers: CiAudio D-100, Classé CA-301

Integrated amplifier: Cayin Spark 500

Source components: Astin Trew AT-3500plus, Tentlabs CD, CEC-5100, Northstar Extremo DAC

Loudspeakers: Hyperion HP-906, Audio Physics Caldera, Davis Acoustics Nikita

Powercords: Legenburg, Siltech SPX-30, Furutech, Lapp

Further cabling: QED, Purist Audio Design, John Van Gent, Siltech, Chord

