

# TARA LABS

*Celebrating a Decade of Sound*

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## **TARA Labs** **RSC Speaker Cable**

RSC stands for rectangular solid core, and this is the cable God listens to according to the ads appearing in the audiophile press. It is expensive at \$1170 per twelve foot pair, but it is worth it. The sudden transition between Ocos\* and this cable was shocking. The added transparency without brightness, grain, or etchiness, meant no going back.

TARA RSC gives the feeling of implacable control, the kind of brute force control a high-powered amp has when it allows the natural intra-instrumental dynamics of music to seem gentle, off handed, carefree, with a natural lilt. Dynamics and bass and treble extension are the best and go hand in hand with this feeling of natural control. This cable breathes life into the music and does so without colorations or accommodations to system inadequacies. I've already spilled the beans on this stuff, but let me back up and tell you something about construction.

There are two conductors per leg (+ and -) of approximately 14 gauge oxygen free copper. They are rectangular in shape and are helixed around a polymer center core with a polyethylene dielectric, chemically

treated for lower absorption and high permittivity. Positive and negative legs of each cable are separate, not bound together in a common jacket, allowing some tailoring in the configuration of the cable for your amp. Instructions packed with the cables reveal that for vacuum tube amps the conductors are loosely twisted, about one complete turn every 20 inches. That provides an inductance of .00022 mH/ft and a capacitance of 10 pF/ft which the manufacturer states is optimal for tubes. For solid state amps, the + and - legs are left running across the floor in a loose parallel arrangement which changes the measurements to .00068 mH/ft inductance and 5 pF/ft capacitance.

The rectangular shape of the conductors and their specific dimensions were chosen for maximum phase coherency and frequency linearity and extension. This design also avoids multiple skin effect, linearity, oxidation, diode, and inferior conductivity problems inherent in stranded wires. You really need to call TARA Labs (541 488-6465) to get the [three papers](#) which discuss the technical underpinnings of this design because it gets way beyond the scope of this article.

Bass. It's there, it's very controlled and in the right proportions; it goes very deep and is not additive with the signal. The "Aria" of Bach: The Goldberg Variations, transcribed for organ, comes through with bone rattling bass, albeit in integrated, appropriate amounts. The cable adds nothing to mid-bass fatness, already too prominent in most popular recordings. Keith Jarrett's Standards, Vol. 2 is such a recording and this cable cleaned up some of it without reducing the output in this range inappropriately. In other words, my previous cable was contributing to the problem. The presence of this type of quality bass was a reminder of the emotional impact these octaves give to the music, as in Bruch's Kol Nidrei where the cello's body was more palpable than with other cables. Which moves us up toward the midrange.

Midrange. Detailed, natural, rich. I've heard many cables which retain some of the same midrange character from recording to recording. That's obviously a coloration. I've never heard a cable change it's "sound" as completely between recordings as this cable and that tells me it is contributing less to the sound. More soundstage details are heard more clearly and helps account for this change in sound; the cable is decoding the sound of the room. Woodwinds have the proper "woody" sound, brass are

brassy, piano Harmanics are accomplished well. In other words, the identifying sonic cues which tell you what the instrument is made of are heard with this wire.

Treble. Strings, brushed cymbals, triangles are all reproduced with great extension without the sound going bright or glassy. Dense, complex sounds in this range like cymbals and massed strings are well separated and have no splashy "ssshh" effects. Musicality is there. Sweetness is there, though not in the quantities of the Highwire product. Recordings which I know to be silvery and thin, like the Kiri te Kanawa recording listed in the interconnect survey, remain silvery and thin-not "silver-pink." So you have a choice to make based on what your system is doing and what it can handle. Realistically, with your tweeter's performance, do you need a forgiving wire or one that is very smooth, but also very extended? Judging correctly and with self-honesty in situations like this is what makes your system musical and makes you a successful audiophile.

I know of no economical alternatives to this wire!  
Indications: dark through slightly bright systems; systems undergoing upgrading where a neutral reference is needed. Contra-indications: systems already too bright where sound tailoring is indicated.

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*Manufacturer's Notes:*

\* A portion of this review dealing with speaker cable by Highwire has been deleted from this reprint. Address and phone numbers have also been updated to reflect current information. Original review text is otherwise unchanged.

TARA RSC Master Speaker Cable, \$990/ten foot pair.

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