

# Review

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images by „High Fidelity”



# No 242

July 1, 2024

## PREMIERE

[ THUNDER MELODY is a Polish audio brand, established in 2020. It was founded by Messrs. KONRAD RASIA and RAFAŁ HŁADZIAK and specializes in products for vibration suppression, noise reduction and power supply voltage conditioning. We are testing its top-of-the-line AC power cable Femto Black 2024, it is its premiere. ]

**T**HE THUNDER MELODY COMPANY that I know as a manufacturer focused on eliminating noise from the audio system. And it's not only about artificial ground, passive filters, power supply voltage conditioners, but also about connecting cables. The manufacturer has developed a **proprietary method of noise suppressing** and applies it to all its products. Also in the latest version of the AC FEMTO BLACK power cable.



### AC FEMTO BLACK \ 2024

THUNDER MELODY'S LINEUP is divided into several levels: Silver, Gold and Black. We start with the Silver series, move to Gold and finally to Black. In the latter, as the designers say, there is no upper price limit, because the whole spectrum of techniques, developed by the company, can then be used. And it is to this series that the tested power cable belongs.

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### | A few simple words...

KONRAD RAS  
designer, co-owner

And the thing about showing sound in a **saturated, dense and full way with "air"** around the instruments. Listening to **1** *No Blues*, the opening track of WES MONTGOMERY and WYNTON KELLY TRIO's *Smokin' At The Half Note* album, I was also immediately struck by the smoothness of sounds off-axis and not in the foreground. Placed in the left channel, the leader's guitar was a bit further away than with the Siltech cable and was not as energetic. But that's not because there was any kind of issue with it, but because the Polish cable offers a relaxed sound, where the emphasis is on consonance, on density, on smoothness. Siltech in this comparison is more direct.



To be clear, an energy transfer with the Polish cable is really very good. But you also need to know that it can be made even stronger. In the case of Thunder Melody, by the way, it had a slightly different form, more pastel. The event I "saw" in front of me had an internal "spring" that made **this live-recorded track push forward**, you could almost see the drummer's head moving, as he scooped up the fast rhythm, also remembering that he was part of a larger whole.

AC Femto Black **played this album in a rather warm way**. Not warmed up, but warm. It's a natural warmth, belonging to what we hear around us, which we don't recognize on a daily basis, because it is - just - natural. In an audio system, however, it's something I look for, usually subconsciously. Without it, the presentation seems overly contoured and hard to me. With the tested cable there were no problems of this type. It does not separate the sounds in front of us unless there is an artistic reason to do so, whether in terms of the manufacturer's choices or the arrangement. It plays *legato*, if you know what I mean, and at the same time goes deep into the sound.

Here, under the sounds of the band you can hear conversations from the room, waiters distributing dishes, drinks, etc. The tested cable not so much that it showed this, because it's obvious at the high-end level, but also allowed it to play in such a way that I knew perfectly well that **the instruments are in the foreground**, and the extra-musical elements, although creating the atmosphere of the performance, are in another plane. And not just because they are quieter, but because they belong to a different "order," if I may say so.

The Polish cable offers **strong low frequencies**. They are soft with natural softness and full with natural fullness. Of course, these are just terms, after all, we are listening to a construct of sorts, but one that evokes certain emotions in us. The AC Femto Black manages to lift and convey those emotions. That's why it's such a natural sound. That's not what I wanted to talk about, but rather about the bass. It is low and dense. When, in **4** *...y disputes de todo* from the *From The Green Hill* album by TOMASZ STANKO, the voice of Dino Zaluzzi, playing the bandoleon here, is heard, it is big, it is full, it is - finally - naturally soft.



FEMTO BLACK CABLE has already been indirectly tested as a companion piece along with our 2021 AC Vacuum Infinitum Black filter (more → [HERE](#) - ed.). A few years of experience later, we are pleased to premiere the AC FEMTO Black cable **in its latest iteration '2024'**.

This is our top of the line (BLACK) AC power cable. It is made of three **16 mm<sup>2</sup> copper conductors** and is shielded. The bundles inside are twisted together, and the detailed geometry parameters are based on our years of experience. Among other things, the design emphasizes **anti-vibration aspects**, both through certain geometry characteristics and other techniques to offset the effects of micro-vibration.

For the plugs we chose Furutech "48 Ag" series directly silver plated. Our experience with them clearly suggest this choice, although we have so far used the "50" and "52" rhodium-plated series. The interesting thing is that we had to custom order them, and **they are delivered in vacuum packaging** so that the silver does not oxidize, especially the visible parts. This also means that over time there will be a faded, darkish tarnish of silver oxide on their surface, which may not look attractive, but is still a better conductor than pure silver, not to mention rhodium.



Although the presented cable is our top-of-the-line solution, we absolutely do not approach it as "audio jewelry". We do not add things that are unnecessary or even detrimental to its performance. In our products, we **discontinued such additions**, because most often they do not positively affect the performance, and even spoil it, instead giving only a good visual feeling. Where visual artistry can be shown, such as Panzerholz housings, and it is positive for the effects, there we try to do it as well as possible. Maximum Minimalism.

As usual when testing our products, we recommend that **final listening be left "for the morning"**, when the cable has relaxed and the whole system has been "filtered" under new conditions. Then one gets an even higher degree of realism, organic feeling, black background, calmness and order in space and at the same time ease in rendering every impulse. KR

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MISTER CONRAD MENTIONED the packaging of Thunder Melody products and that they pay a lot of attention to it. And indeed, the AC Femto Black cable comes in a sturdy case, which also, among other things, guns, expensive camera lenses and other products that require solid protection are sold in. A plaque with the company's logo was placed on the lid. Inside, I found no documents, certificate or anything like that, which would give the buyer a sense of "care". And yet a **product at this price should carry the hallmarks of a luxury product.**

When the leader's trumpet and John Surman's baritone saxophone enter in unison in a moment, they are strong and quite "forward". This is because the tested cable **does not smooth out the sound**. It slightly distances it in the planes, but does not smooth it out. The softness I spoke of is an intrinsic softness resulting from the high resolution, not a modification of the attack. Here it could be heard particularly well, as the recording made in 1998 at Rainbow Studios by Jan Erik Konshaug is stunningly "in tune" with the experience in this regard.



Despite the fact that it was already a time when this phenomenal sound engineer was already using (from about 1998) a **digital DAW Pro Tools** station. It also came out great at the beginning of **6` Quintet's Time**, where Surman plays bass clarinet and Andres Jormin strums the strings of his double bass with a bow. What I got was a big, solid yet intrinsically soft sound with great depth, both in terms of the stage and within the bodies of instruments.

I had a similar feeling listening to the opening sequence of HERBIE HANCOCK's *Head Hunters* in the excellent 2020 reissue on SACD. It's 1973, but Davis' former collaborator is already in the world of synthesizers. Such is the analog bass synthesizer that begins, the aforementioned, **1` Chameleon**. The Polish cable showed its density, energy, but did not deepen anything. It's bass, but from the mid and upper range. It's important not to change it, because the whole thing is set quite low and doesn't need "boosting". AC Femto Black **maintained the selectivity of the recording**, not letting it sound too dry, which happens to me really often in tests, but also did not change the timbre of the bass.

And this is because it is a cable in which the **proportion between the different bands** is very well preserved. It's neither "warm" nor "cold" in the sense that it doesn't emphasize or withdraw anything. But also, the way I hear it, with stronger sounds from the upper midrange, previously it was a trumpet and now synths, it gives off a lot of energy. So I wouldn't consider it a "cure" for bright systems. Yes, it plays quite dark, warm, but - I'll repeat it again - it's an internal darkness and warmth, shaping the bodies from the inside, not the timbre modifications. Let me explain with a concrete example.

Recorded two years earlier, offering classic sound, CAROL KING's *Tapestry* album has a rather stifled sound, and the vocals sound like they were recorded with a cheap microphone and were heavily compressed. It's a great album, to be clear, musically it's a firecracker. The rhythm in **1` Feel The Earth Move** was excellent, and the "blending" of all elements was superb. The Polish cable **slightly emphasized the attack of sound** in it, which was unusual in that I had not heard this before. It was as if it "wanted" to extract more information from the recording than there is actually in it (sorry for the anthropomorphization but I can't help it - that's how I see it).

But, listened to immediately afterwards, **2` So Far Away** sounded smooth, warm, with a strong kick drum kick and a nice melodic bass underneath. So it's not that the cable always sounds the same. It is differentiating, it is resolving, and it is also selective. But in addition to the tendency to play soft and warm sound, it also shows the opposite, that is, it tends to **"open up" the midrange**. The treble with it are perfectly dense and eminently in tune with the rest of the presentation, so it's not about them. The point is rather, the way I see it, in the stronger opening of the upper midrange.

To verify these observations I reached for PETER GABRIEL's *I/O* in SHM-CD version, and played the "Dark-Side Mix". As you know, contrary to the name, it's a mix with a lighter sonic signature. The

The cable is very thick and quite flexible - except for both ends. These are simply rigid elements several centimeters long. And they determine the minimum distance of the device from the rear wall. In my case, these are 33 centimeters and this is the absolute minimum. Since the AC Femto Black weighs quite a lot, **it is necessary to provide it with some kind of support** so that it does not break the IEC socket in the powered component. From the outside, it resembles KBL Sound's series cables - there, too, there are bundles twisted together under the black mesh.

The cable from the outside does not stand out in any special way. **A not very favorable impression** is created by the, aforementioned, rigid endings to which the plugs are attached. They are covered with several layers of black heat shrink sleeve. Such terminations are quite common in the DIY world, but they seem out of place in such an expensive product. I thought that high-end manufacturers have already realized this - that is, they offer a special item in which everything must be perfected.

The plugs, on the other hand, are top-of-the-line. The designer talked about them, but let me repeat: they come from the Japanese company Furutech, from its top-of-the-line "48 ag" series. This is a type of plug made of non-magnetic stainless steel, not braided carbon as in the higher series. All conductive parts in them are made of non-magnetic materials (OCC copper) **coated with a layer of silver** using a newly developed technique and subjected to the Alpha process (demagnetization and cryogenic treatment). The Piezo Ceramic series plugs contain nanotechnology, carbon fiber, nylon and polycarbonate inserts. All this is designed to dampen and quench vibrations.

## SOUND

**HOW WE LISTENED** • The AC FEMTO BLACK cable was tested in the **HIGH FIDELITY reference system**. It powered the Ayon Audio CD-35 HF Edition SACD player and was compared to the Siltech Triple Crown cable. It was connected, along with the rest of the power cables in the system, to → **ACOUSTIC REVIVE RPT-4EU ABSOLUTE** power strip, and the latter, via a 2.5-meter Acrolink Mexcel 7N-PC9500 AC cable, to a Furutech NCF wall outlet, which carries a separate power line with its own fuse.



The comparison took the form of AA/BB and BB/AA comparisons with the familiar A and B. The auditioned fragments of songs **were between 1 and 2 minutes** long. Since the system takes a while to go into standby, the comparison was not instantaneous - the pauses were around 60 seconds long.

### » RECORDINGS USED FOR THE TEST \ a selection

- ↳ WES MONTGOMERY & WYNTON KELLY TRIO, *Smokin' At The Half Note*, Verve/Analogue Productions CVRJ 8633 SA, SACD/CD (1965/2013).
- ↳ TOMASZ STAŃKO, *From The Green Hill*, ECM, ECM 1680 | 547 336-2, CD (2009).
- ↳ HERBIE HANCOCK, *Head Hunters*, Columbia/Sony Records Int'l SICJ 10014, 7-inch paper sleeve, SACD/CD (1973/2020).
- ↳ CAROL KING, *Tapestry*, Ode Records/Epic/Sony Music Labels SICP-10120, „We Got Rock! Series”, 7-inch SACD/CD (1971/2017).
- ↳ PETER GABRIEL *I/O*, Real World Records | UMG/Virgin Music Labels Japan UICB-1023-35, 2 x SHM-CD (2023).

» You can find a Playlist with tracks used in the test @ TIDAL → [HERE](#)



recording itself, especially compared to the Carole King album, is quite hard and synthetic. The Polish cable with **2** *The Court* showed everything I'm talking about. It's had a powerful space, surrounding me with a really tight cocoon (when the chorus sings) and **powerful, pretty hard on axis playing**.



The percussion was shown strongly and clearly, which is how it was produced. Over time, I noticed that by turning down the volume by 1, maybe 2 dB, compared to the level at which I listened to music with the Siltech, I was getting the best combination of these two elements of sound with the AC Femto Black. It's incredible naturalness and openness. What's more, I had a great time listening to music with it **at low sound levels**. Siltech tends to energize the sound, so quiet listening is difficult with it - you want to turn up the volume knob and immerse yourself in the sound. The tested cable is much friendlier in this regard - it doesn't force anything on us.

## Summary

CHANGING THE SILTECH TRIPLE CROWN power cable for any other one causes feelings I should be wary of, with dislike of the new cable at the forefront. And that's because it's a cable that is simply fantastic, and it "fits" superbly in my system. The AC Femto Black, however, quickly overcame this internal aversion of mine. For it sounds just as I imagine a **top class, high-end AC power cable** should sound like.

It is: soft, dark, dense, energetic. However, the Polish cable is not the same as the Siltech, it differs from it in several important elements. The midrange is more open with it, and the stage is slightly pushed back behind the line connecting the speakers. It still offers high energy and powerful slam. The Thunder Melody cable, however, shows a world of **slightly more distanced and relaxed** energy, as if more deeply immersed in the cosmos of recorded micro-sound. It does it all effortlessly, as it is a top cable in its own right. ●

THE THING THAT YOU WILL NOTICE AT ONCE, as soon as you plug the tested cable into your system, is the **maturity of its sound** (products do not have a "sound" as such, they only modify the signal, but I will use terms of this type). This is something a person has to learn to notice and identify. Even if he has perfect hearing, without experience and familiarity it can be hard for him to name what I referred to.