

Purist Anniversary and Aqueous Cables

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I've never appreciated ready answers, mainly those that do not support reformulations or questioning.

It was the very incapacity of my catechization teacher to answer a simple and concerned question from a 7-year-old boy that chased me away from the Catholic Church.

Therefore, I haven't had the first communion, and at the early age I refused to attend the solemn masses in the Sunday mornings.

The rupture occurred when asking the teacher from the first communion preparatory course to explain to me how the Church could affirm that God had created the sky to "embellish the men's nights", if most of the stars were much earlier than life here on earth?

As a response, I was taken out of class.

Even my mother, a fervid catholic at that time, got indignant by the sister's incapacity to deal with the subject.

I believe that many readers must be thinking that I got completely crazy for starting a subjective audio test talking about the memories of my first childhood.

And it surely is! Even though, when I started to organize information related to the Purist Audio cables to plan the text, it came to my mind that all of us, in some phases of life, would like to have ready answers for countless subjects.

Many of them also related to technical areas.

Wouldn't it be easier if there was the best amplifier in the world or the best CD Player or Movie Projector?

At least, everyone that had the purchasing power to buy the best things would do that and solve their problem. And those people that didn't have it, would buy the second, the third or the tenth best product.

Even so, although many manufacturers insist on affirming that their product is "The Best", actually, the great majority of audio enthusiasts know that the reality is not like this.

Fortunately, because that's the only manner to keep the mind open and ready to recycle opinions, get to know new perspectives and make like a constant search.

The only thing that still touches me as an article writer is knowing that I can still be surprised!

And I can ensure to the fellow reader that I am constantly surprised.

Thus, it's possible to endure the troubles of the profession and go ahead with the head up and the most important, happy!

Of course that there are surprises and surprises, but regardless of the size of the black box revealed to our ears, some of them stand out in such a way that they change all our auditive reference.

And one of the products tested here is part of this select group that came to turn everything upside down.

We have already tested this manufacturer's input cables, the **Musaeus**, and we also had a good contact with the **Venustas** line; and now, we had the privilege to be the first publication in the world to receive the new commemorative lines of the **Purist Audio**'s 20th anniversary: the **Aqueous** and **Anniversary** lines, which will only start to be commercialized in January 2006.

Once more, the merit is not ours, but Mario's from **Audioland**, who managed to convince the **Purist** to provide us with the cables for test.

According to Mario, the tests carried out with the **Musaeus** and **Venustas** lines and mainly our methodology got Jim Aud, the company's Founder-President, very amazed, and it may surely have helped, but I still believe that the praises must be given to everyone from Audio Land.

The **Purist Audio** was founded in 1986 and its founder, the engineer Jim Aud, has a holistic view (see box with his interview) of how to manufacture audio cables.

In the development of a new cable, it's considered all the objective and subjective parameters that interfere in the final quality of an electrical signal conduction.

Thus, the **Purist** has its own parameters for insulation, mechanical problems and selection of raw materials.

The company was the pioneer in the use of cryogenic treatment, which has been very common in the cables manufacturing, but the **Purist** started two years before any other manufacturer. Nowadays, the company combines the cryogenic treatment with an immersion into a powerful magnetic field to align the crystalline structure of its wires.

In its cables, the **Purist** has always used an association of copper, silver and gold. And its RCA plugs are made by the manufacturer itself, with the same material as each cable, in order to ensure a minimum signal loss. According to the manufacturer, such plugs are made in such a way to avoid getting loose from connectors, releasing the use of the common-locking rings in many RCA plugs of the market.

For the development of its cables, the **Purist** uses computer modeling and has its own factory to develop all prototypes.

Every new model is delivered to 50 "Beta" testers spread throughout the United States, for tests under normal use conditions. The feedback from such Beta testers is used for fine-tuning of each new product.

For Jim, the **Purist**'s basic concept since its foundation is to produce extremely noiseless cables, because cables cannot make noises like electronic products, but, on the other hand, they receive the sound's physical vibrations from other sources, EMI and RF interferences from a range of sources, including the Sun. However, the noise received by the cables does not sound like a buzz or scream (Hum and Hiss), but like a masking effect in the signal output.

This effect, which is still little measurable, becomes better noted when in a test with various cables – the better plated one presents the highest transparency.

Each cable from the new **Anniversary** line (Top of the Line) takes 100 hours to be built.

Therefore, it will be part of a special edition to celebrate the date and maybe it won't remain forever in line (I myself think it is very little likely to occur, because the cable is an excellence in all aspects, except if Jim has any other card up his sleeve).

The **Aqueous** line will position itself between the **Musaeus** and the **Venustas** lines. Its great advantage is the use of the material called *contego* (a Latin word that means coat, cover, shelter and shield. It is a semifluid silicone paste with load (dope), for the RF suppression and mechanical damping. The *contego*, according to the manufacturer, was an increase in the performance of the already superior rejection to RF and EMI, reducing by 2 db the background noise).

And as the signal wire (a compound of gold and copper (something very uncommon, provided that most of the manufacturers mix silver and gold).

However, regarding the **Anniversary** line, the amount of *contego* is much higher (see illustration of the cables construction) and the signal wires used are: copper, silver and gold.

For the test, we received a little before the Hi-Fi Show, the 1-meter Balanced **Anniversary**.

And, soon after the event, we received a pair of XLR, a pair of RCA and a pair of loudspeakers from the **Aqueous** line.

When we were running in the **Anniversary**, there were coming so many queries regarding the product construction and sound characteristics that I suggested an interview with Jim Aud, because I found it convenient to talk about our views and try to extract some additional information.

Thus, at the end of this text, you will find a short interview with the children's father.

Most of the time, all the cables were used in our reference equipments. Amplifiers: **Accuphase A 60 and Audiopax model 98**, pre-amplifiers: **Audiopax model 5 and Accuphase C 2800**. Digital sources: **Transport CEC L 1** and converter **MSB Platinun Link Plus**.

Loudspeakers: **Dynaudio Temptation, Krell Resolution 3 and Opera SP**.

In order to give you an idea of the impact caused by the **Anniversary** balanced cable installation in our system, it's enough to say that even running the risk of the product not being totally run-in, it was part of the main system presented at the Hi-Fi Show in our room.

Sometimes you get fascinated by a cable's sound signature, and in other times by its speed, transparency, dynamics or even its warmth, naturalness and musicality.

It's not usual to have an only package that offers all of that. For the time being, I have never had the good luck to listen – in an only product – such a big coherence and balance among all the factors which I consider as essential for a cable to be put on the top of the podium.

And consider that I have already listened and had wonderful cables with a set of exceptional qualities, but comprising all of those qualities and with such plenty, able to move the entire system one step ahead, I hadn't.

The **Anniversary**, even not run-in, offers moments of complete incredulity, or that feeling that you may be mistaken and that it may be just an auditive illusion.

Let's see the facts: in a reference system, in a well-done and well-mixed recording, there is no difficulty for you to hear the air displacement from a guitar amplifier, the visceral impact of a tympanum or the pressure on chest caused by a baritone saxophone.

Usually, the air displacement occurs in large dynamic variations (*fortissimos* of the orchestra, for example).

Now, I've never heard in any reference system, whatever the price, the air displacement simultaneously from several instruments of a rock band like Megadeth, Morphine or LIVE, with the volume pressure used in the mixing of each instrument and even the saturation of the amplifier distortions without mixing saturation and air displacement.

Another example: the track 8 of Andre Mehmani's SACD – Lachrimae. When we were mixing the disk, we could hear the noises from the fingering of the bass notes only when we closed the other instruments' channel.

It was enough, however, to open the clarinet or the piano channel, and the noises vanished.

With the **Anniversary**, everything is heard. Not only the fingering noise, but also the use of the piano pedals, the noise from the clarinet reed, from the chimbau pedal, etc. etc.

But, before any hasty audio enthusiast thinks that the cable has the transparency as the most evident characteristic, remember what I wrote some lines above: "never with such plenty and so much balance".

Therefore, the noises of a recording become inherent to that recording" – and not as a separate detail or a standout.

Harmony and balance are the **Anniversary**'s most relevant characteristics. The richness with which it presents the colors can make any audio enthusiast dizzy, because we are not talking only about color accuracy, but also about recreating the whole musical event around each instrument, like: the musician's intention, performance difficulty, modulation and interpretation.

In a live performance, as the instruments sound in a symphonic work, your brain feels as if it were alarms (mainly at Sala São Paulo, which has enough airing to receive any classical work).

The larger the dynamic variation, the stronger the alarm. There is no intention to get mistaken about the possibility to recreate in a household room the dynamics found at Sala São Paulo, but the **Anniversary** is able (in due proportion) to keep that auditive comfort and that so-desired airing so that you can relax and do not worry about piloting the amplifier volume.

No cable, for the time being, had allowed me to listen to symphonic works in different volumes with so much clarity and auditive comfort, let alone allowing different volumes for the various hours of the day.

Whether in reduced volumes at dawn or in broad daylight, what the **Anniversary** offers to you are the performances in which the dynamic variations are always very well marked.

That's different from all the other cables, in which the optimum volume is only one. And if you try cheat, the sound gets condensed, rough and causes fatigue.

We laughed when we remembered of Pavlov and the dog that slobbers when he hears a bell ring. But I have some records for ages, and regardless of the settings, the volume has always been the very same. A good example is Rachmaninoff Piano Concert number 4, by the Finlândia Records label, that under the current system, before the advent of the **Anniversary** cable, couldn't operate in the preamplifier **Accuphase** for more than 8 hours during daylight and 9 hours in the **Audiopax**.

And at an unearthly hour, the volume was 7 hours in the **Accuphase** and almost 8 hours in the **Audiopax**.

My conditioning was so intense that I took some days to dare to raise the volume on **Accuphase** and enjoy performances with a higher sound pressure (as the work demands).

Nowadays, my fellow reader, I listen to this same record during the day for almost 10 hours and nothing happens.

Another very beautiful example of this cable is that the sound seems literally to spring up from the silence, and not being ejected from the setting. When one is in a recording studio, the silence before the musicians' entrance is obviously the recording room's.

As I stay together with the musicians in my productions, and not in the technical room, I enjoy very much observing the entrance of each instrument, the way how the work's melody, the rhythms and variations are getting built.

The first moment all the musicians play at the same time is a great surprise. And even after you have got familiar to the song, each detail can still surprise you.

This passage – silence / sound is magic and very difficult to be maintained at the moment of mixing, but, when it occurs, it can be of great worth for the evaluation of any product's background noise

Fortunately, our recordings are made real time, without multi-channel tricks, and therefore, the silence is very preserved, and I'd even say, worked up.

In André Geraissati's SACD, track 11, the contrast between the silence and each note is essential even to understand the arrangement proposal.. This track was rehearsed five times, and we recorded it three times. In all of them, I stayed at the recording room with André, about 4m away from him.

I could feel the notes decline, the silence in the room before the song restarting.

In all my systems, I could only hear the electronics silence, it means, the digital silence. Through the **Anniversary**, the sound springs up from the silence of the room and once more penetrates into the digital silence.

I can affirm that it was the most extraordinary example provided by this cable, because I kept on my auditive memory the silence of the room and the micro-dynamics variations of the instrument and the musician's intention.

And the **Anniversary** was the only cable so far to surpass the arduous obstacle caused by the electronic silence, and showed that the receiving had preserved this important recording element.

With this trump card in hands, I searched out in other jazz and symphonic music recordings if the silence of the room had also been preserved.

And the answer is that the recordings extended for several dawns (and they go on while I am writing this article).

This cable's capacity to recreate so many details and with such a high-level of accuracy, is partly due to the way how it treats and drives the signal.

Nothing predominates in it. It is not possible to say that it is better in tonal balance than in textures reproduction, or that its focus and clipping are of better quality than the harmonic body reproduction.

But don't think I am going to say that it's the best cable in the world, because I haven't tested all cables in the world to make such a fool assertion.

However, I can say, and I will say with all assurance that it is the cable that most fascinated me and filled me with delight to listen during my 48 years of age.

It provided me with something that I always sought in my settings: the certainty that in well-done recordings, everything that was picked up can and must be reproduced. And it brought something more: a set of virtues and qualities that make the electronic music reproduction even more delightful and exciting.

As regards the **Aqueous** cables, they are quite like the **Anniversary**, I'd say that in some aspects, they are even of better quality than the **Venustas** cable (maybe on its thresholds), and can be from the gold, silver, entrance gold configuration, a great acquisition.

Yet the **Anniversary** is a case apart. It supports systems that, just like it, are quite balanced in all aspects and have the rare virtue of making us participate in the musical event, like we never did.

I hope to receive soon one more pair of this cable to conclude the upgrades in our reference system.