



## DIGITAL AUDIO CABLE OF THE YEAR

### Shunyata Alpha USB | Reviewed in Issue 175

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In the Alpha line, Shunyata shields the USB cable from any external interference thanks to a complete silver-mesh shield. It also plays extremely close attention to the nature of the USB conductors and terminations. Each conductor is silver-plated continuous cast copper set in a FEP dielectric. The cable is impedance matched using what Shunyata calls its ‘Precision Matched Z (PMZ)’ concept.

This means that tolerances of the conductor surface, dielectric extrusion, and the precision of the braided shield are held to minute variances. The conductors are then connected by hand to custom-designed USB A and B terminations, said to reduce junction-related distortions in the cable. Shunyata also uses the company’s unique ‘Kinetic Phase Inversion Process (KPIP)’, which is said to be a cable-conditioning methodology, meaning running in is not required or recommended.

In our test, we found that, “sounds that were already extremely open and natural sounding became that bit more natural and open sounding. The timing of this good, but sometimes laid-back APL DSD-S snapped into greater focus, the already quiet DAC just got that bit more chilled out in background noise resolution.” While it works best with computers rather than dedicated music servers, we still think “it makes USB sound better!”

