

- SMc Audio -

Hand-Tuned Performance by Steve McCormack

the Carbon / Siltech Wire Transformation

I spend a considerable amount of time evaluating the sonic effects of parts on my equipment designs. This is a fundamental part of my work as a designer - the exact mix of parts and materials I employ allow me to achieve the specific “voicing” I am looking for in a component. In my view, the basic circuit design defines how good a piece of audio gear **can** be, while the execution of the physical design determines just how good it actually **is**.

In my role as the designer for McCormack Audio, I have become quite adept at choosing a mix of parts that allows me to achieve excellent overall performance at relatively low cost. As an audiophile, however, I am always looking for ways to achieve the best-possible performance, period.

While significant improvements have been made in all categories of parts over the past several years, wire has perhaps been the single most volatile element. Be that as it may, the wire mix I have used in my amplifier upgrades has been stable for several years. Although I have continued to evaluate promising wire designs, I have not found any new wires that offered overall performance beyond what I have been using...until now.

I have now developed a new wire mix which **dramatically** improves all aspects of performance, to the point that I still find myself shaking my head in disbelief. Until I heard this, I would have argued that such a degree of improvement from wire alone was not probable, and perhaps not possible. This new wire set has transformed my Revision A Gold upgrade from a superb amplifier to a literal “window on the performance” that is utterly relaxed, liquid, and sweet, while delivering razor-sharp transients and incredible transparency and detail. Words simply fail to convey what this new wire mix has to offer.

So, just what **is** this amazing new wire? What metallurgy does it use? How pure is the copper or silver? Is it cast in a nitrogen atmosphere while being blessed by virgins? What the heck is it?? Well, my friends, part of it is not metal at all. That’s right - the key wire technology that made this dream a reality employs no metal at all - it is made from carbon.

I have been intrigued by carbon-based wire technology ever since I encountered “The First” and “The Second” carbon-conductor interconnects from A. J. van den Hul. These products were popular when they were introduced, but proved to be problematic in some situations. I was struck, however, by their remarkable liquid purity and absolute freedom from any grain, grit, or grunge. That memory stayed with me, and was brought back into focus recently when I evaluated a sample of Siltech’s metallurgical prowess.

Siltech is a Dutch company well known for the advanced metallurgy they employ in their (often very expensive) cables. They were kind enough to provide me with a sample of one of their exotic gold-silver hybrid wires, and I must say that I was unprepared for the jump in clarity and dynamics it delivered, along with the sheer amount of detail that it resolved. But, the amplifier's voicing was thrown out of balance, and I was left with a dilemma: how to incorporate this superior new wire and maintain the critical balance of my design.

Considering this problem brought back my earlier experience with carbon wire, and I felt that it was worth exploring. This is much easier said than done, however - carbon wire is unlike any metal wire and terminating it is very difficult, requiring both chemical stripping and advanced crimping techniques. When I had sorted-out the technical details, I was able to combine Van den Hul carbon wire with a Siltech gold-silver hybrid (carbon for low-level signals, and Siltech for speaker outputs). The result was simply stunning - a true window onto the performance, with a sweet, liquid grace that I have long dreamed of. I now refer to this as the **Carbon / Siltech Wire Transformation**.

This performance breakthrough is now ready for you to enjoy. I have finalized the details for the DNA-1 and DNA-0.5, and the DNA-2. Owners of the DNA-125 and 225 will be pleased to know that I have decided to incorporate this new wire arrangement into the **Platinum** and **Gold Edition** upgrades for those amplifiers. The carbon wire alone works its magic beautifully in my preamplifiers, and I will have wiring upgrades for the TLC-1, ALD-1, and Line Drives available shortly. RLD-1 owners will find it already included in their **Platinum Edition** upgrade.

A word about cost... The raw wire is expensive material, and the carbon wire requires labor-intensive handling and termination. This makes the upgrade moderately expensive. But, if you reduce this upgrade to mere economic terms, you are doing yourself a disservice. It is my considered opinion that **this represents the single most important performance element I have ever added to my equipment**, thereby making it the most cost-effective, as well.

Finally, I suspect that there may be some audiophiles who will come to the conclusion that I have simply found a fortuitous combination of synergistic elements. They might be lead to believe that carbon wire is "soft-sounding," or "rolled-off in the highs," and is acting as a sort of filter to balance a bright or forward characteristic in the Siltech wire. They could not be more wrong. This carbon wire sounds incredibly fast and transparent, but - far more importantly - it eliminates a host of irritating, obfuscating distortions. In fact, carbon sets a new performance standard for wire, but you must hear it for yourself to truly appreciate what this means. Carbon still has appreciable resistance (compared to metal conductors), so it cannot be applied universally. The Siltech gold-silver hybrid handles the high-current connections beautifully, providing wide-open dynamics, tremendous clarity, razor-sharp transient detail, and incredible low-level resolution, along with the natural, relaxed liquidity that I prize so highly.

Every so often an advance occurs in audio that allows you to experience your music collection as though it were new again. I believe that this is just such an advance, and I take pride in offering you my **Carbon / Siltech Wire Transformation**. **Your music deserves it!**

the Carbon / Siltech Wire Transformation

**for DNA-1, installed with upgrade - \$500
Retrofit for DNA-1 Rev A or B - \$650**

**for DNA-0.5, installed with upgrade - \$425
Retrofit for DNA-0.5 Rev A or B - \$575**

**for DNA-2, installed with upgrade - \$550
Retrofit for DNA-2 Rev A or B - \$950 (yes, there is a lot of labor!)**

for DNA-125 Platinum Edition and Gold Edition amps - included

for DNA-225 Platinum Edition and Gold Edition amps - included

**for the ALD-1, TLC-1, and Line Drive preamplifiers - coming soon
Please refer to the upgrade literature for those products.**

- SMc Audio -

929 El Pajodo Place
Vista, CA 92084

phone: 760-732-0352 fax: 760-732-3209

e-mail: SMcAudio@pacbell.net web: www.SMcAudio.com