

[Analysis Plus Big Silver Oval Speaker Cable \(TAS 215\)](#)

By [Neil Gader](#) Sep 23rd, 2011



These cables should come with a warning. Something like, “The Analysis Plus Big Silver Oval is one of the most ruthlessly honest speaker wires available.” The BSO won’t editorialize, EQ, or otherwise skew the sound of your current system. This caveat emptor is provided as a courtesy to those audiophiles seeking a quick tweak or refreshment of the sonic palette of their existing rig. Ain’t gonna happen. Don’t even consider begging. What the BSO will do—and in impressive fashion—is let you hear more of what you already have, for better or worse.

A little back story. Audiophiles know Analysis Plus by virtue of its audio and video cables. In fact, the thrust of this company’s work has been in the field of computer simulation. Like a high-tech trouble-shooter, Analysis Plus has created advanced models of ICs, engineered prototypes for piezoelectric dental teeth cleaners for a Taiwanese firm (dentistry, who knew?), designed shielding for MRI rooms, and modeled and designed electromagnetic shielding for antilock brake sensors for Ford. It also turns out that AP’s Big Silver Oval cable is something of a celebrity. NASA purchased sixty feet of this wire for a specific task where the requirement for rise time could not be fudged—in this instance carrying 120A current pulses at 80V. Not too shabby a credit to have in your resumé. Now, back to audio.

The Big Silver Oval is a nine-gauge cable in a coaxial configuration that features pure silver conductors over a stabilizing strand of oxygen-free copper (OFC). This structure is then woven around a structural dielectric that preserves the hollow-oval conductor geometry. Don’t be distracted by the unadorned look of the Big Silver O—it vouches for the fact that AP spends more quality time in the R&D lab tracking performance than chatting up interior designers. Its research has found that the hollow-oval configuration engages the conductor more uniformly and efficiently—a fact borne out by the wire’s very low resistance value even at the upper-frequency extremes where increased resistance and sluggish rise-time can roll-off the top end.

Some very expensive cabling was pulled from my system in order to clear a path for the Analysis Plus, but from the very outset of my listening sessions I encountered nothing less than a natural, balanced musical flow that was virtually undisturbed by treble edginess, harmonic losses, or transient smearing. Its overall sonic character was a relaxed one, exceedingly neutral with a hint of warmth and just a very slight transient softening in the treble. In this way the BSO is more akin to Synergistic Research Tesla Apex than Wireworld Platinum, both veteran references of mine. For example, in the opening bars of *The Wasps Overture* by Vaughan Williams played by the LSO under Previn [RCA] it captured the earthy tonality of the ominous doublebass notes, as the string sections morph into a hive of wasps in an intense swirl of rapidly changing amplitudes. Time and again the BSO’s very rich and cohesive midrange and well-defined bass proved to be two of its foremost strengths.

Turning to one of my “big gun” direct-to-disc recordings, Copland’s *Fanfare for the Common Man* [Crystal Clear], the Atlanta Brass Ensemble was reproduced with lively transient action and dynamic thrust. The smooth top end offered good air and finely grained detail for the winds and cymbals. Bass drum impacts were fearsome in their

intensity, while the array of kettledrums across the back of the stage had rock-solid specificity. This is a recording where most of us will run out of loudspeaker before running out of wire capability.

That is why the appearance of the Wilson Audio Sophia 3 proved so fortuitous. Generally, after I've put in my time evaluating a component, I put it aside a while. When I return to that product it's like I've mentally rebooted, and I find myself touching on areas that I might not have fully considered initially. Though I figured I'd gleaned the essence of the Big Silver Oval, the Sophia 3 presented a great opportunity to recheck my findings and further explore the issue of transparency and big-bore dynamics. The full-range nature of the Sophia was like manna from heaven for the Big Silver Oval wires. During Carmen the individual sections of the chorus (men, women and children) were well resolved, each occupying specific positions on stage, with the timbral energy and harmonics unique to each—a gravity that seemed to lighten or grow weightier depending on the chorus being featured—clearly reproduced. The imaging of each grouping was spectacular. What isn't always heard in its entirety, however, is the near subliminal low-level backdrop behind these images. It's the sense of the stage, and the hall's back wall that supports the music. Its effect is almost completely atmospheric and yet is essential to creating the reality of a live concert. It requires resolution at all levels to reveal the full extent of space and ambience in this recording. If the BSO didn't take me all the way there, like I perceive the reference Wireworld Platinum does, it got exceedingly close.

With no serious sonic missteps, the BSO's subtractions are only of the most modest kind. During Stravinsky's Pulcinella, for example, the bell of a trumpet doesn't quite open up fully in the dynamic sense, suggesting a hint of top-end constriction. At the other extreme, a bowed bass viol misses the final bloom of resonance that should appear to surge up from beneath the floorboards like a rising tide. And were the strings of the harp as individuated as possible? Not quite—they were just a little vague on low-level pianissimos. So, yes, some flagship wires will buy you even more ambient expression, dynamic explosiveness, and harmonic complexity. But first you have to make sure that all other system variables are just so—something to keep in mind when you wade into high end's heady waters.

The Analysis Plus Big Silver Oval is the kind of wire that touches all the areas that matter to me. Sure, I've heard cables that will better the Big Silver Oval by tiny margins here and there, but I've never heard a better cable near this price. It handily exceeded my expectations. And in my book, that's the biggest plus of all.

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