

Perils of Focusing on the Frequency Domain.

We, audiophiles and music lovers, are fixated on the frequency domain. With the exception of Pace, Rhythm, and Timing (PRAT), which we even lump into one category, everything else is frequency dependent. If the music is “forward” it has significant treble. If it is “laid back”, it is the opposite. If the music is “rich” or “full”, it has significant bass. If it is “thin”, it basically lacks bass energy. Pretty much every way in which we describe a music system relates, in some way, to the frequency domain.

This is natural. After all, music is made up of lots of frequencies. It’s also very easy to measure frequency in various ways. And most every change to a system will also manifest itself with some sort of perceived alteration to the frequency perspective.

BUT! There are pitfalls to having a singular focus on the frequency domain. And the most egregious of them all is the fact that, in an attempt to attain accuracy in a stereo, the frequency domain is literally a moving target. How do you, after all, define accuracy in the frequency domain?

You cannot, in fact, define accuracy in the frequency domain because even the frequency balance in real life is highly dependent on a multitude of variables. And with that being the case, how on earth can we hope to achieve any sort of accuracy in our stereo systems? Without a set of recordings where the original performance AND performers are intimately known to the listener, we are doing nothing more than guessing.

And so it becomes very easy to simply throw up our hands and claim, “This is what sounds accurate *TO MY EARS.*” Or, “We all hear differently therefor there is no such thing as accurate.”

The problem with tacitly resigning ourselves to molding a system to our particular frequency related tastes, or around a particular set of recordings/musical styles, is that there will always be a multitude of recordings that end up as unlistenable. In other words, we are strictly limiting the scope of music we listen to simply because some of it doesn’t sound “Right” on our systems. This recording is too bright! That recording is too bass shy. And on and on! Never mind that the performance itself may have been brilliant. As music lovers, we at CH Acoustic, find this to be unacceptable. And it is a major reason why we began our quest of developing truly accurate cables for stereos.

Let’s look more closely at this by using a specific example.

The musical group Rodrigo Y Gabriella has a number of studio and live recordings. For our example, we’ll take just two. Let us consider the “Live in Japan” recording and the “Live in France” recording. With these two recordings we have the same two artists playing the exact same instruments on a variety of the exact same songs. The only differences are the venue, the crowd, recording techniques, and the day they were recorded. But this is more than enough to render two very different sounding recordings. And most listeners will end up preferring one recording over the other.

But too many times the personal preference will come down to which recording sounds “best” on a particular stereo system based on the relative frequency spectrum. After all, the two recordings have

slightly different spectral balances with respect to frequency. On a stereo system that has a balance favoring one of these recordings, the other one will be less desirable to listen to. Some might even go so far as to say that one of them is a “bad” recording.

But the truth is that they are both remarkably good recordings! And if one were to dismiss either of the recordings based on its particular performance within a certain stereo system, that person would be missing out on half of a tremendous listening experience! The reality is that these recordings differ in the way the performers interact with the crowd. They differ in the type of “energy” the crowd presents. They differ in what the performers bring to the stage on their respective days. But to any person who appreciates Rodrigo Y Gabriella, both recordings are of equal value. If a fan were to prefer one of these recordings over the other, it should be based not on frequency domain characteristics, but on the nature of the specific performance. After all, one is in a relatively small and intimate venue. The other, in a much larger stadium type setting. These are the differences that should stand out, and how they impact the performer/audience interaction. The key, therefore, is to not have a system that favors one recording over the other based on frequency balance. The goal is to have a system that allows the listener to appreciate BOTH!

This is why we, at CH Acoustic, always stress the importance of the time domain when listening through our products. Any company can lay claim to being the “best” when looking through the lens of the frequency domain! And far too many do! But there is no definable guide post in this regard! This is why we have, from the very beginning, sought to make the most accurate cables possible with regards to the time domain. This is not to say that we have neglected the frequency domain. Quite the contrary! We have built a cable that truly exhibits equal power across the entire frequency spectrum. It lacks nothing in any area when it comes to frequency characteristics. It is, measurably, balanced in every respect of the term. To be perfectly blunt, if another cable seems to outperform ours in a particular frequency domain aspect, it is likely that a lack of performance in every other area is simply accentuating the highlighted area. Because it is far more complicated to create a cable that does not distort with regards to timing, so when you do, the frequency domain simply falls into place.

But more importantly, we have a legitimate claim to being the most accurate cables on the market specifically because our cables do far less to corrupt the time domain of the musical signal. And this is exactly why most comments we receive, with regards to our cables, is how they not only connect the listener to the emotional content of the music to a much greater degree. But they also find that a far greater number of their existing music collection goes from “bad” or “average” to “good” or “great”.

If you find that you listen to singular recordings from start to finish without stopping. If you find yourself “discovering” recordings in your collection that you previously thought to be mediocre or poor. If you find that your toes are tapping more than ever before. Is this not what enjoying music is all about? Is this not better than the never ending chase of trying to find that perfect frequency balance? A goal that, even if achieved, will only be achieved when listening to a fraction of available content!