Atlas Cables
Element Mezzo XLR

Hi-Fi Choice RECOMMENDED

THE PROVISION OF XLR balanced audio connections on domestic audio equipment is on the rise and there is growing interest for those that utilise professional open-reel tape. Such equipment often has XLR connections, and to meet this demand Atlas Cables has introduced its Element Mezzo XLR.

Screen test

It uses balanced core technology and oxygen-free copper conductors insulated with a gas-loaded, high density foamed polyethylene dielectric. These are screened with a high efficiency braid and the cable is terminated with new copper alloy XLR male and female plugs.

I connect the Element Mezzo between my Studer A810 pro tape machine and my unity-gain balanced-to-unbalanced preamp and play a 15IPS tape of The Quentin Collins Jazz Quintet's *A Day In The Life*. The opening percussion of *Angola* is crystal-clear with the punchy drums enjoying a fantastically sharp attack. When the piano joins in, the gentle chords are subtle, yet precise. Then the double bass, which is deep and well controlled, adds some full basslines. Finally, Collins joins in playing the main melody on his flugelhorn, and I am instantly drawn into the performance, which effortlessly manages to combine impressive intimacy with a real foot-tapping tempo and superb clarity.

Next, I listen to a copy-master tape from UltraAnalogue Recordings featuring Tatsuki Narita on the violin and Yun-Yang Lee on the piano performing Saint-Saëns' *Danse Macabre*. The haunting, stalking introduction on the piano doesn't prepare you for the dramatic opening chord on the violin, which almost makes me jump when it eventually arrives. The tuneful, yet sinister piece is scarily real in my listening room and the two instruments have very clearly defined locations within the soundstage.

The Element Mezzo XLR provides music that is consistently sophisticated and so represents excellent value. *NR*

▶ DETAILS

PRICE
£154 for 1m

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OUR VERDICT
★★★★★