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**TRUE COLOURS VIPER**  
**£54.99/m**

These bright red cables with chunky locking plugs possessed a solid sound with meaty, confident bass and broad sound staging. They allied this power with a rare insight. In the Shostakovich, for example, they picked out the delicate phrasing and vibrato in instruments that others in this test had glossed over. Strings were warmer and more detailed in the lower registers than the upper, although at least this balance ensured crisp percussion and clean brass with an attractive bite.

The switch from Classical to Rock caused few problems for the Vipers. With Skunk Anansie these cables brought out the

**CLASSIQUE SOUNDS TRANSLUCENT** **£80/m**

The Classique Translucents are robustly-constructed cables with pure silver conductors and an overall shield connected at one end only in a pseudo-balanced configuration. They were strung between an Audio Analogue Puccini SE integrated and a Pink Triangle Litaural CD with Stravinsky's demanding Firebird Suite nestling in its drawer.

Translucent turned out to be an apt description of this cable's treble, with string transients crisp and clear. There were no audible signs of muffling or, what's worse, harshness or distortion on top. Midrange was also smoothly managed with no trace of chestiness. At the other end bass had realistic depth and never seemed to run out of control, an advantage on systems where the slightest kick can sound like an empty oil drum. All-in-all the tonal spectrum was neatly balanced and very musical.

An outing with Joe Beard on XRCD added exemplary stereo imaging and sound staging to the attributes above. Finally, a convincing touch with vocals yielded some of the more subtle rewards which come with prolonged listening.

Considering their quality construction and very fair price, the Classique Translucents are something of a bargain.

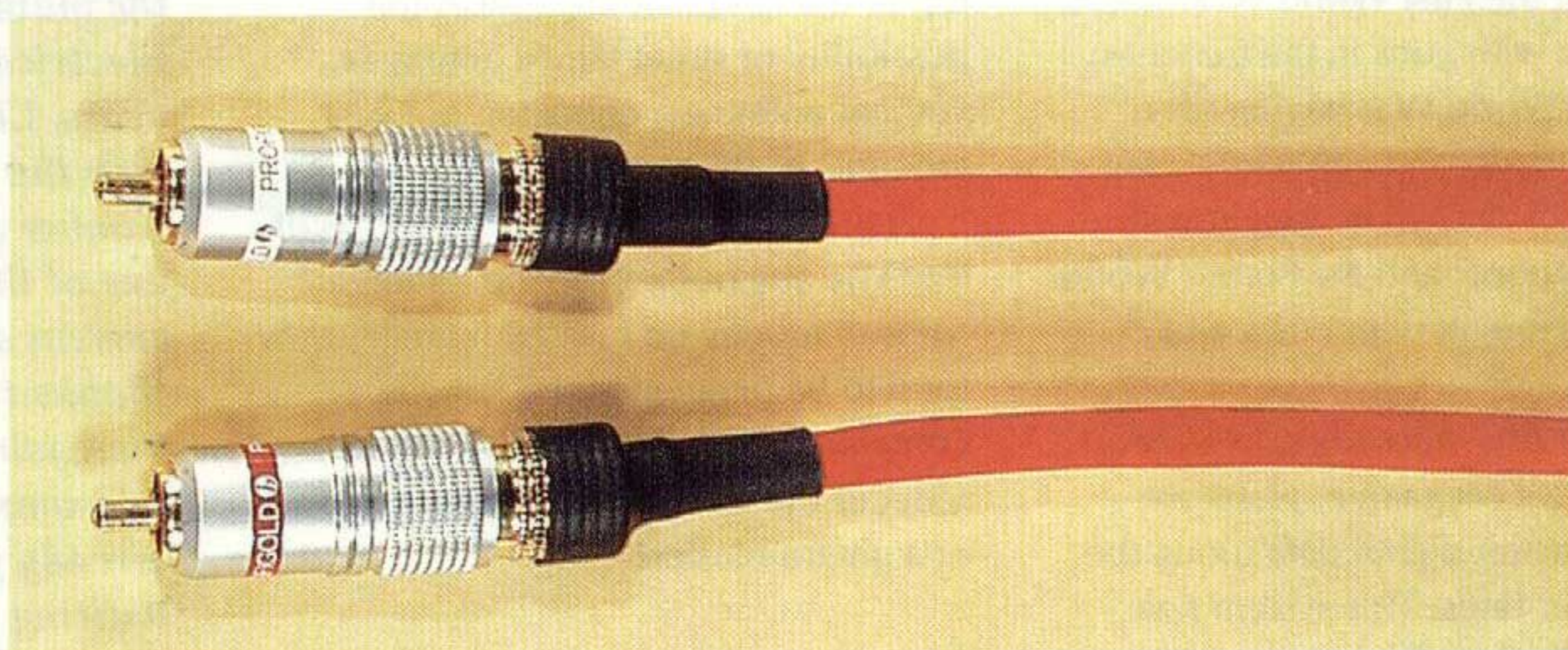
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**ECOSSE MAF REFERENCE CS1-010** **£75/m**

Another interconnect that's obviously been lovingly built, the References gave a vibrant

account of themselves on Classical music. The quiet opening of Shostakovich's Tenth Symphony was the epitome of Slavic cool - the strings had just the right amount of 'swell' to produce that edge-of-the-seat tension. Staccato passages combined a good dose of weight with pace, and the depth to the sound stage was also impressive. As for detail, even the distant moaning and groaning of the conductor was captured!

Very different fare, such as Skunk Anansie's studio-processed 'Weep',



midrange intricacies of the guitar and gave a vivid eloquence to Skin's vocals. When the volume hit 11 on the CD, the True Colours remained comfortably controlled, although a touch of boost in the bass and treble yielded a slightly coloured sound

which actually gelled nicely with this rather clinical, compressed recording. These interconnects might not rate as mega-neutral but they have a smooth, detailed presentation that makes for enjoyable listening.

These are very worthy cables for the money which won't stand in the way of whatever travels along them.

extended the References' run of controlled and transparent signal transmission. This track's Rock formula of quiet verse/loud chorus gave the Mafs a dynamic work-out they evidently enjoyed - vocals were expressive and climaxes taut and exciting thanks to kick-drum that never became flabby while the rest of the music charged through our Concert 8s like a wounded buffalo.

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