



Factory-terminated loudspeaker cables  
 Made by: AudioQuest, California  
 Supplied by: AudioQuest UK  
 Telephone: 01249 848 873  
 Web: www.audioquest.com

Price: £2910 (3m stereo set, terminated in 4mm plugs)

AUDIO  
FILE

# AudioQuest William Tell Zero

One of the founding fathers of the audiophile cable scene, California-based AudioQuest has been developing its conductor technology for no less than four decades. The William Tell Zero featured here is part of the 'Folk Hero' series – prices range from £2340 (2m pair), £2910 (3m) to £3480 for a 4m pair, with £570 per extra metre. This ranks as affordable when compared to the flagship 'Mythical Creatures' series that tops out at £20k for a 2m set of the Dragon Zero...

The materials and geometry of the cable derive from AQ's understanding of skin-effect and

'The electric cello and strings posed an edge-of-your-seat threat'

its efforts to minimise non-linear conduction between adjacent strands. In this instance, three dissimilar-diameter strands are employed per leg of the cable, AQ specifying its PSC+ copper (an OCC copper subject to

additional annealing), and each individually insulated with a thick PE dielectric.

The 12 gauge cross-section, strand spacing and gentle twisting combine to offer low resistance with moderate capacitance and inductance, though we'd probably not advise lengths over 5m or so. Otherwise, the thickness, and stiffness, of the cable is largely accounted for by the multiple braid, foil and conductive carbon screens that envelop each trio of conductors, providing comprehensive EM and RF shielding. A choice of spade and banana plug terminations is offered, all heavily silver-plated, and 'cold-welded' to the strands using miniature grub screws.

The 72V DC power pack velcroed to the destination end of this directional cable is AQ's DBS (Dielectric Bias System), wired between the drain and shield to impress a polarising voltage across the internal dielectric. AQ postulates that this fixed electrostatic field rapidly 'forms' the dielectric and hastens the 'run-in' time of its cables (see <https://patents.google.com/patent/US7126055B1/en>).

## BULLSEYE

Whatever the rhetoric – and AQ does produce a lot of literature – the impact of these William Tell Zero cables between our Constellation monoblock/B&W 800 D3 [HFN Oct '19/'16]

LEFT: Packaging fit for a Folk Hero – AQ's hard shell cable case comes in a lavishly-illustrated box



ABOVE: Deep within the William Tell Zero's outer braided jacket and carbon/foil screens are three SST (Spread Spectrum Technology) PSC+ (Perfect Surface Copper) conductors

amp/speaker combination cut straight to the chase.

There was an immediacy here, reflected in the tangible, edge-of-your-seat threat posed by the electric cello and string section underpinning 'Why So Serious (The Dark Knight)' [Hans Zimmer – *Definitive Collection*; Silva]. And yet, despite this sense of urgency, attack and power, the system also conveyed the finest subtleties with what was described at the time as a 'considered delicacy', free of any grit or grain.

A challenging listen on some systems, the acoustic jazz of Craig Taborn Trio's *Chants* [ECM] possessed a little extra velvet with the AQ cables in tow, the composition's intriguing melody still weaving its typically hypnotic patterns but without the edginess that we've heard before.

## VERDICT

While not 'entry level', AQ's William Tell Zero still offers plenty of slam for your bucks, although you'll need very robust sockets on the rear of your speakers and amp to manage the bulk of its 'Y-shaped' terminations. Securely fastened, this cable squeezes as authoritative a sound as possible from your system, with a smoothness and freedom from 'hash' that'll soothe the most furrowed of brows. ☺



## HI-FI NEWS SPECIFICATIONS

Series Inductance (1m loop)	0.79µH
Parallel Capacitance (1m)	203pF
Resistance (1m loop)	14.3mohm
Leakage	150Mohm
Power Loss (8ohm speaker)	0.0155dB/m