

Shunyata Research Omega QR-s power cord

by Alan Sircom

Fans of British TV from 15 or so years ago might remember Mr Doovdé by the *Phonejacker*, Kayvan Novak. His schtick was to phone up companies and repeatedly – and frustratingly – pronounce acronyms as proper names, such as ‘Derveder’, ‘Doovday’ or ‘Doovdé’ in place of ‘DVD’. So, I am pleased to review Shunyata Research’s Omega Querse power cord, especially as it comes supplied with a trio of Derfs cable elevators. OK, so it’s Omega QR-s and DF-SS, but from here on in, when you see the term DF-SS, you’ll be thinking ‘Derfs’. Sorry, Shunyata.

Omega QR is the absolute pinnacle of Shunyata’s research and development in power cord and took three years of iterative product testing to deliver a performance that sets the standard for eliminating any kind of dynamic compromise between outlet and component. The people heard it, loved it... and then whined about how inflexible it was. So, Omega QR-s was born; a cable that takes the technology found in the very top power cord Shunyata makes with the sort of flexibility that means your DAC or phono stage isn’t floating in mid-air.

Like most things Shunyata, the Omega QR-s bristles with Shunyata’s own technology, each neatly described by its own acronym, none of which get the Mr Doovdé treatment for brevity. Omega QR-s uses a QR/BB module (which provides a local reserve of energy to mitigate the inductive reactance of the power cord, but without resorting to an R/C network)

and a NIC (Noise Isolation Chamber) device in the central tube surrounding the cable, which is already one of Shunyata’s Noise Reduction designs. Factor in the company’s VTA-Ag (outer copper strands with a solid silver core) conductors, its own CopperCONN connectors with carbon fibre outer shells, a design optimised for optimum current delivery by its proprietary DT/CD measurement system and finalised with Shunyata’s KPIP kinetic phase inversion run-in process and you have a lot of tech in one chunky cable inside its own flight case.

Shunyata’s Omega QR-s is one of the most dynamically unconstrained power cords out there, and that’s saying a lot. Granted this needs some big-hitter electronics to fully realise, but it lets the dynamics through almost irrespective. Meaning if you end up with one of those ‘reviewer’s folly’ systems where the cable is five times more expensive than the device it pokes into, you still hear the dynamic freedom of expression. Naturally, if order is preserved and you use something really high-end (I used the Gryphon Ethos CD player, ▶



“I expected quiet backgrounds (it’s a Shunyata thing) but they fell away still further than anticipated.”



PRICE AND CONTACT DETAILS

Price: £7,500 (C15/C19 socket)

Manufactured by: Shunyata Research
URL: shunyata.com

Distributed in the UK by: the Shunyata
Distribution company

Tel: +44(0) 330 223 3769
URL: shunyata-uk.com

▶ which I hope doesn’t remind Gryphon that I have the Ethos CD player), then that ‘dynamics, unconstrained’ presentation takes on a gravitas all its own. This applies just as much to small-scale ‘girl-with-guitar’ music as it does with an orchestra playing at full tilt, but perhaps the best example of how it works well is with the soundtrack to *Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom* [Branford Marsalis, Sony]. Playing ‘Those Dogs of Mine’, the separation between vocal and piano is marked, and Viola Davis rasping vocal and its inherent humour comes through perfectly. But really, the whole album is extremely well recorded and benefits from the extra sense of dynamic freedom the Omega QR-s brings.

This also comes with a marked increase in soundstage size and solidity. Instruments have their own three-dimensional space marked out in many systems, and often that comes with a sense of being rooted to the floor, but here that doesn’t just take on a three-dimensionality; it gains a visceral, physical presence that’s almost unnerving. Playing Mozart: Piano Concerto No 23 in A [Momo Kodama, Seiji Ozawa, Mito Chamber Orchestra, ECM] and the spacing and the spaces around the orchestra are perfectly portrayed, and the piano is both beautifully rendered and sits in its own rooted position in space more ably than with other cables. It adds to a sense of focus both in audio and musical terms that is sublime.

I expected quiet backgrounds (it’s a Shunyata thing) but they fall away still further than anticipated with Omega QR-s. It’s like even the quietest electronics have more to give, and even the quietest power feed has noise to be removed. Omega QR-s does that brilliantly. Actually, ‘brilliantly’ is not the right word, as there is no additional ‘brilliance’ to the sound. The tonality of the system remains unchanged... Omega QR-s just brings out the best in the kit you have, whatever kit you have.

The trio of DF-SS ‘Dark Field Suspension System’ cable elevators act like a little suspension bridge for your Omega QR-s, with the cable resting on a stretchy black polymer between the two towers of each riser. The riser itself is

made of a hard black polymer, is mass loaded (you can hear the contents move if you shake it) and has a little set of adhesive feet to stop it from sliding around on a hard floor. The idea is the cable never touches the floor, thereby keeping ground-based vibrational energy at bay. Given the proximity of power cords and speaker cables to loudspeakers and the vibrations loudspeakers can put into the floor around them, this sounds like a sensible idea. And DF-SS is one of those “I kind of wish they didn’t work to keep me sounding credible” devices that damn well ends up doing good. I mean, by the standards of the ‘self-appointed keepers of the hard science’ end of audio, the idea that power cords make a justifiable difference is nonsense, so placing said power cord on cable risers is about as close as it gets to literal nonsense on stilts. I guess me saying they further focus that already focused sound of QR-s enough to justify their inclusion probably makes me the Mad Hatter. More tea, anyone?

Although there are those who insist on the top of the tree no matter what, in reality, Omega QR-s is the top of the Shunyata tree for everything except Class AB power amps delivering more than about 200 watts per channel. If you are bringing some really heavy amplifier firepower to your listening room, then Omega QR has the extra fortitude you might need. For everything else, QR-s is probably your best bet. +