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Mini Reviews Of The...

HiDiamond AES/EBU Big One digital cable

Review By **Steven R. Rochlin**

Life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans. – John Lennon

Since 'spare time' has been in the negative range for *many* months, HiDiamond and Nordost have been *very* patient for the delay in getting their reviews done. Those reading this will have to realize I'm going to move fast and furious so keep up! I feel honored to have the opportunity to review the Nordost Heimdall 2 headphone cables, HiDiamond AES/EBU Big One digital cable and JH Audio Roxanne IEMs. All three of these are incredibly well made and are built to the highest of quality standards. The smallest of details in construction were well thought out and each one should bring you many years of reliable use.

HiDiamond Big One AES/EBU Digital Cable

Price: €2500 For 1 Meter Length

HiDiamond has earned many awards in Europe over the years and have met owner Salvatore at the Milan show in Italy quite a few times. He is a smart, charming gentleman who has many years of experience designing and manufacturing cables. When he offered for me to review their Big One AES/EBU cable I was at first hesitant as do not use that connection much; generally using S/PDIF coax or USB for most things. Since my fave DAC, the [Gryphon Audio Kalliope \(reviewed here\)](#), handles AES/EBU it was time to use that digital input and give it a go.



HiDiamond's Big One digital cable is made with their 4VRC copper cooking... for four times in order to obtain a reduction in values of inductance, capacitance and resistance. It is also mixed with graphite! HiDiamond feels that graphite is a great way to block the noise generated inside of a cable, yet without introducing noise. For those who feel cable mechanical noise is a myth, have personally heard it in a few different systems. If you tapped on a cable it would clearly thump through the loudspeakers. Sounds crazy, I know, yet have heard it for myself and it is true. HiDiamond boasts that their insulator of XLPE is 100 times better than normal Teflon and thus the cable, overall, provides greater linearity and low amplitude of the sine wave, which results in "the naturalness of musical signal emission". Unlike RCA S/PDIF that takes some engineering prowess to achieve a *true* 75 Ohm impedance, AES/EBU's 110 Ohms via XLR is a bit easier to accomplish.

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Cable impedance mismatch can cause signal reflections (which are very bad for signal transfer, see [Wikipedia](#)). This is part of the reason why I hate the RCA connector folks. In addition, what idiot would design a connector that connects the positive signal *before* the ground? As you can see from the connectors, they are very high quality and the carbon fiber brings about the look and feel of fine Italian art meets high technology. I love the style and flair of Italian design!

Normally one expects things to get all happy at 100 hours of burn-in, yet then was advised more is better... up to 500(!) hours for the HiDiamond Big One to fully settle in. I borrowed a Bryston BDP-1 and fed that to the Gryphon Kalliope as could do comparo's in a variety of ways. After much switching and trial and error, analyzing the HiDiamond Big One was tougher than first blush. Won't bore you with all the input swapping and USB plus my custom in-house handmade S/PDIF cable to the Bryston... plus the HiDiamond AES/EBU to the Kalliope direct. Let us get right to the point. The HiDiamond is a very smooth, musically involving cable. There is a richness in natural texture that never sacrificed detail. Dare I say this, it was *almost* as if you added a top quality NOS triode within the signal chain. Think along the lines of NOS Bugle Boy or perhaps Telefunken here. Not romantic and lush 300B types, more like a VT4C/211 or mesh plate... Top-to-bottom cohesive sound structure meets harmonics as perhaps only the Italians can do it. If you use AES/EBU, you really should try the HiDiamond Big One for yourself. Just be sure to give it *plenty* of time to break in. Enjoy the Music,

Steven R. Rochlin

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