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Audio Ramblings - the mhdt Havana DAC and the **Bel Canto USB Link 24/96**... with a few words on the Xavian Mediterranea loudspeakers

by *Dave Clark*



“... Get the Havana and add into the mix the Bel Canto 24/96 USB Link. This means that you can still use your USB out (and USB cable of choice ... **but instead of a USB connection, one can go into the DAC's S/PDIF for a cleaner more resolving sound** (it should be noted that USB is a very dirty place and in many respects is one of the worst ways to get 'music' either in or out—so I am told by people in the know). **The Bel Canto Link will clean up the jitter (and all that noise and crap that USB carries from your computer) to a very great degree.**”

“The Bel Canto 24/96 Link (\$495) accepts a computer-derived USB input of **up to 24 bits and 96 kHz** and **outputs the signal on a 75 ohm BNC (S/PDIF)**. The USB Link 24/96 includes a Stereovox XV2 BNC/BNC cable with an RCA

adaptor for the S/PDIF connector. **The Link is compatible with native drivers on Mac and Windows, features a reference crystal oscillator for low-jitter clock recovery, is self-powered via USB input (which benefits from LC filters and low-noise local regulation and means no added cables and such to get tangled in), and offers galvanic isolation between computer and audio system to prevent high-frequency noise.** Easy to use (plug and play) the Link addresses things that some USB connections are unable to ...**the Bel Canto guys know their stuff and the Link really cleans up the digital signal.** The Midi in the Mac shows the Bel Canto 24/96... click and play. And it passes 24/96!”

“**Yeah, the Bel Canto Link is killer.** ... Closed the gap to the pricier stuff to a great degree—not that it was the great equalizer, but it sure did elevate the DAC in question to a much higher level. The Havana DAC now presented the music with a superior sense of resolution and ease... there was more *there* to hear with-in the music. **With the Link in the chain, the music was now more holographic-ly**

dimensional with less edge and grain. Not that one noticed any grain and such in the Havana prior to the Bel Canto, but certainly now with the Link doing its thing the absence of said grain and such was clearly *audible*. **Nice... smoother and yet, more resolved."**

"I found that the Link worked equally well with any DAC I tossed its way, including the Cary 306 Professional. In every case the music took on an improved (obviously to varying degrees depending on the quality of the DAC, though in every case it was one of "a positive difference") in warmth and naturalness with a greater delineation of notes and instruments; no hint of fatigue or analytical *nasties* to ruin the music. Nice indeed. ... The Bel Canto is a great way to connect that USB source to a S/DIF DAC... it works and it works quite well. The Bel Canto USB Link is a must have!"

Thank you Dave Clark!

Bel Canto music products merge artfully with your lifestyle, your music, and your audiophile passions. Designer John Stronczer uses less power to do more with elegant, efficient designs. They're compact, sleek and hip enough to flatter any room.

Look for more reviews of the USB Link 24/96 and other Bel Canto components coming soon!

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