

Review VDH The CNT  
by Jaap Veenstra, 08/2023, on :



## Van den Hul “The CNT” Calm, Natural and Tremendously Good!



## Pros

- Unprecedented neutrality!
- Very smooth
- Stress-free playback
- Spacious

## Cons

- Price
- Doesn't look fancy

**Price: € 6000**



***If your author is completely honest, he must confess that he is totally not a fan of ultra expensive cables. The fact is that the differences between a decent cable and an ultra expensive one is usually – with some exceptions – quite marginal. Unless a manufacturer really pulls out all the stops and takes a totally different approach. And that is what Van den Hul has done with 'The CNT'. What a bizarrely beautiful cable this is!***

Your author is sitting on the couch with colleague Martijn to listen to the Audio Physic Spark (6). A very interesting and bizarre little speaker. Well: little speaker... it is a large bookshelf.

While we're tweaking to get the optimum result, we also tried some cables to check the balance of this speaker. "I still have a CNT lying around... why don't we try it?"... Assuming it's bound to do *something*, we connect it between the preamp and power amp. And when I press **Play... wow...** That's not subtle! But first, let's take a look at what this cable is now...

# Carbon Nano Tube – CNT

We are used to the idea that a conductor is made of metal. Silver, gold, copper.. these are excellent conductors, after all. However, there is one material that conducts even better: **graphene**.

Graphene is the basis for **CNT**. Both Yeti and VdH use MWCNT: multi-walled CNT

We have tested a CNT cable before. Namely, the **Yeti NextGen**, also a very nice cable. But as we know, the conductor is only one part. And although the Yeti is also CNT based, Van den Hul uses a different source for its CNT and the cable is constructed differently; different plugs, different jacket – may be a bit fancier considering the price – and a different method of connecting the CNT to the plugs. After all: CNT cannot be soldered

CNT/graphene conducts extremely well – better than silver even – but because only a very thin strand is used in the cables – we are talking about the thickness of a hair – the conductivity is still low. And thus the resistance is high. This does not matter, however, since only a few volts need to pass through it and in an interlink the resistance of about 40 Ohms is not a problem: in many cases we go from a low to a very high impedance (kilo-ohms). So the 40 Ohms of the cable is not a problem. With a speaker cable, it is different. And Van den Hul has taken that into account. Unfortunately, this is also reflected in the price...



# The Van den Hul The CNT



Van den Hul's high-end cable comes in a few flavors: balanced, single ended and as a speaker cable. Although this is the top line – the Platinum may be more expensive, but Van den Hul sees this as its "Halo product" – the finish is incredibly understated. Yes: it comes in a nice case, but that's about it. No bling ... no frills... no champagne or gloves in the case. Just a cable. Nice and down-to-earth.

The price of a CNT is from 6000 Euro. We can talk long or short about that: it's just a lot of money. This is a "happy few" product. A cable for someone who has his system all set up and wants to put a big dot on the 'i'.

We tested the Van den Hul CNT (XLR) next to the Grimm TPM XLR. The Grimm has been our go-to interlink for years, because it is extremely neutral AND affordable. A fine combo

## The test setup

- TAD Evolution 2 loudspeakers
- Pass Labs XP-12
- Pass Labs X150.8
- Mutec MC3+ reclocker with AAI pucks
- Alpha Audio PC with Jcat USB and Ethernet cards
- Grimm TPM cabling
- Isotek Titan
- Yeti Reference filter (sources)
- YETI Power cables
- Van den Hul Nova speaker cable
- Driade Flow speaker cable

## The Sound of... CNT?

We don't need to write pages and pages about the "sound" of a cable. We are not the medium for that either. We can also sum up the sound of the CNT quite easily: it's not there. Period. It is all calmness and control that washes over us..... we both sit in silence and perplexed listening for a moment...

# CNT Versus Grimm TPM

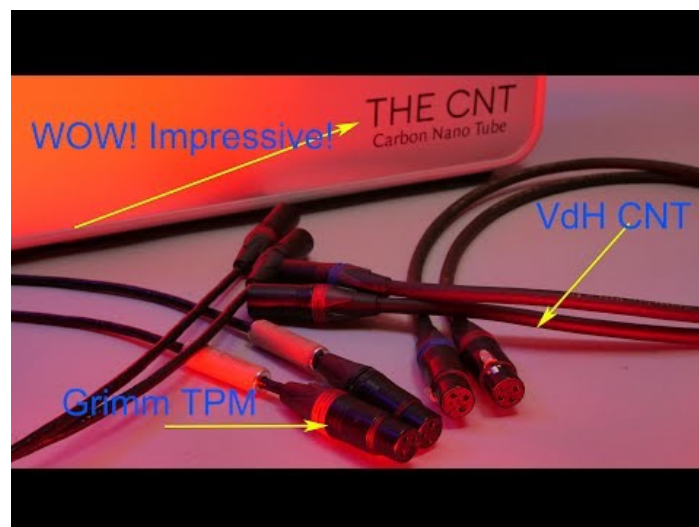
Now we wrote the same thing about the Grimm TPM. And we still stand by this statement. The Grimm TPM is a cable that you don't actually hear. It is a cable with no distinct flavour. And yet the difference with the Van den Hul The CNT is quite large.

It is mainly in the calmness that The CNT brings. This calmness is mainly found in the midrange. Where the Grimm still tends to put some 'pressure' on hard piano notes, the CNT certainly does not. Nothing slips... nothing is intrusive. It's just bizarre to experience

And who thinks: ahh... less detail, right? And perhaps a little less "grand" in terms of imaging? No! Absolutely not. The CNT places very nicely in the width and height and brings the ambiance of a room very convincingly. The Grimm TPM plays a little more forward than the CNT. The Van den Hul has a little more stage feel. Quite pleasant, to be honest

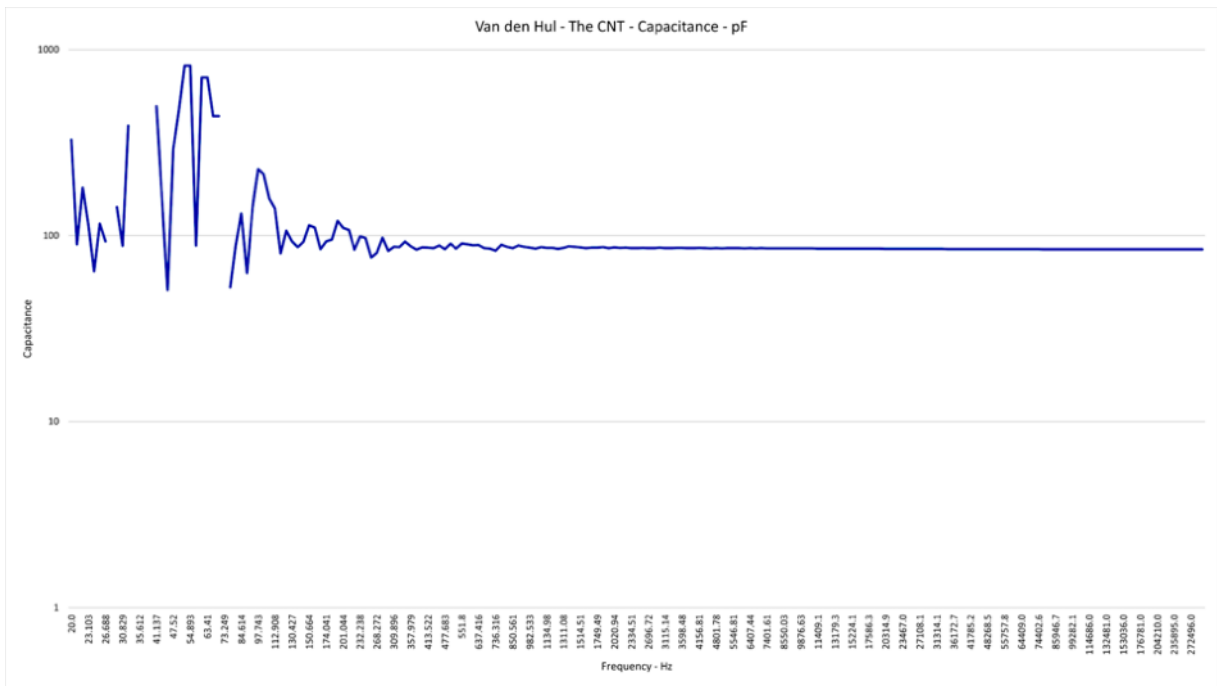
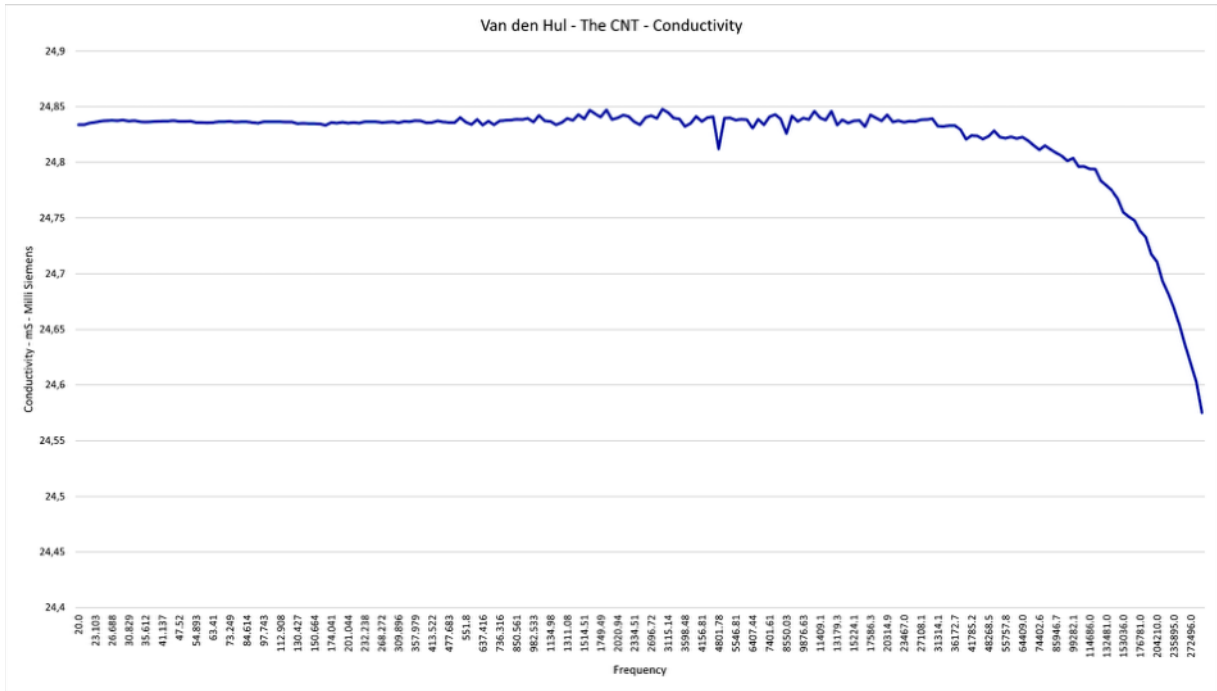
We have created samples for our [Patreon members](#) to download. Then you can hear for yourself the difference between the Grimm and Van den Hul

## Listen to the CNT

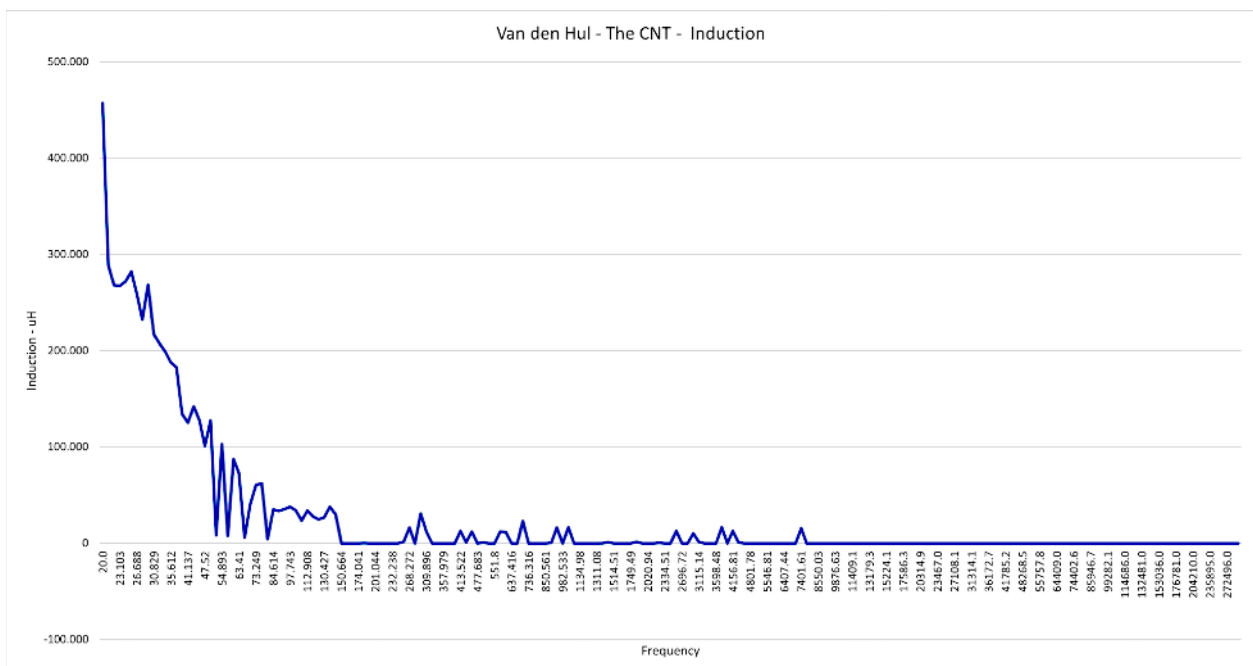
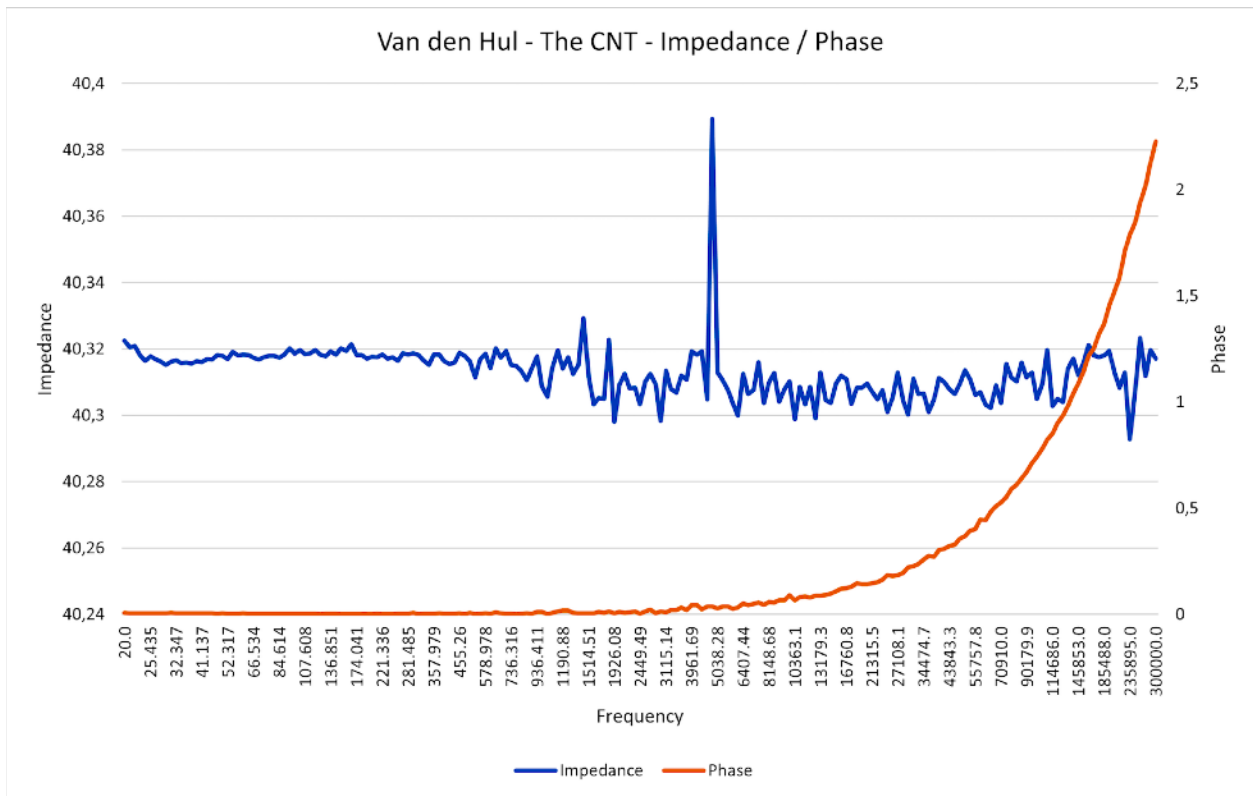


<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PeJKa6dQCXE&t=4s>

# Measurements and conclusion



The Van den Hul – The CNT measures very differently from other cables. In terms of capacitance, we don't see anything crazy: an average of 80pF. That's pretty normal for a 1.5m cable. But impedance, for example, is flat around 40 ohms. That's high. The phase shift is at most 2 degrees. Inductance is around 800 nH, which in itself is not crazy, but the bump at the beginning is noticeable. The Yeti had that, too. Not sure why that is with CNT.





Finally, the conductance: it is obviously very low. However, it too is completely flat... something we never see with a metal conductor. To relate it to listening is difficult. However, it is striking that this cable with virtually no phase distortion and a flat conduction characteristic brings so much calmness. Could there be a relationship?

## Conclusion

What an experience this was. We know that cables can do some things. And, of course, we always hear differences between various cables. However, the Van den Hul The CNT is an entirely different game. This cable is so incredibly accurate that there's really no turning back. So we warn you: don't go listening if you don't have the budget. And if you do: don't send us angry emails!



**ALPHA-AUDIO**  
**APPROVED**