

Digital Chord

Resident analogue head Tony Bolton finds some digital interconnects that tickle his musical tastebuds.

From their base on Salisbury Plain, near Stonehenge, the Chord Company have been busy creating a new range of digital interconnects using their 'Tuned ARAY' technology.

They are tight-lipped about the details of this new configuration so I can only give you basic details about the construction of these cables.

But, suffice to say, anyone who believes digital interconnects don't make a difference should take a listen to these.

After running the cables in for 150 hours I listened to a range of music and settled on a CD of Janis Joplin performing at Woodstock Festival in 1969 (Columbia/Legacy 88697 48243 2) for the comparative listening. This was played via my Njoe Tjoeb 4000 Reference CD player with the interconnect sending the signal to my Teddy DAC (which upsamples to 24/192).

The most affordable of these three leads is the Anthem. This cable is made with solid core silver-plated conductors, insulated with PTFE and shielded with foil and a high-density braid. This is covered with a PTFE outer jacket. The plugs are Chord's own VEE 3 RCA plugs with an ABS outer shell and silver-plated connectors.

Compared to the cables supplied by most manufacturers with their equipment this cable is light years ahead in every aspect of the sound. I found Joplin's vocals projected forward of the musicians and disentangled from the morass of sound that had previously surrounded it.

The bass sound gained definition and allowed me to follow the rhythm more accurately, while treble sounds were far smoother and more palatable.

After such a good performance I was interested to see

how much it could be improved and was not disappointed by the results when I plugged in the Signature interconnect.

This is a bulky lead that uses high-purity, single crystal solid core conductors, insulated with gas-foamed polyethylene.

There is a dual layer composite shield, a high-density braided shield offering 95% coverage in conjunction with a semi-conductive shield layer. Chord's own ultra-low mass RCA plugs are used.

Although it costs nearly twice as much as the Anthem, I felt the Signature offered excellent value for money with a performance that was, to my ears, twice as good.

The soundstage seemed to become a lot bigger, with space and a little depth visible between the performers.

The bass sound gained a little in weight but a lot in descriptiveness, letting the boogying nature of the bass line on 'Try (Just a Little Bit Harder)' really getting going.

The vocals gained in clarity and I was aware of the background hums and noises from the equipment for the first time.

The Indigo interconnect uses a polished silver-plated copper conductor, insulated by PTFE and surrounded by a combination shield of high-density silver-plated copper braid and heavy gauge silver-plated foil. Precision machined

acrylic plugs with PTFE insulation are fitted.

Now I found the sound had a depth and vibrancy that I have not heard through this part of my system before.

Micro details of Janis Joplin's gravelly voice and her relationship with the microphone were

obvious - as was the speed of the attack of the guitar notes. Drums had real punch behind their sound and I felt the timing had much more cohesiveness.

I felt that the Signature offered the best combination of sound-per-pound, the Anthem giving a dramatic improvement over stock cables.

But the real delight was the Indigo. It offered insight and musicality and made listening to digital sources a far more involving experience.



CHORD CO ANTHEM DIGITAL TUNED ARAY £230.00 1M



OUTSTANDING - amongst the best

VERDICT

good sounding cable that offers a detailed take on sound with well projected vocals and good timing

FOR

- timing
- strong central image
- good bass presence

AGAINST

- nothing at the price

CHORD CO SIGNATURE DIGITAL TUNED ARAY £410.00 1M



OUTSTANDING - amongst the best

VALUE - keenly priced

VERDICT

excellent performance for the price with open and dynamic sound

FOR

- good boogying rhythm
- wide soundstage
- well-textured sound

AGAINST

- nothing

CHORD CO INDIGO DIGITAL TUNED ARAY £910.00 1M



OUTSTANDING - amongst the best

VERDICT

superbly open and detailed sounding cable with beautifully timed and solid bass sound

FOR

- fast powerful bass
- open and spacious sound
- obvious background info in recording
- good timbre

AGAINST

- price

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