

Chord's cords

Tony Bolton explores the capabilities of the latest versions of some tried and trusted interconnects from the Chord Company.

The model names of Chorus, Anthem and Signature have been featured on the Chord Company product list for a number of years now, but recently they have all undergone upgrades and are now in Mk 3 configuration.

The most affordable of the three is the Chorus Reference priced at £350. This is a new design with a tri-conductor configuration using silver-plated oxygen free copper and insulated with PTFE. The conductors are arranged over a spiral and shielded with a 95% coverage woven braid and heavy gauge foil. Chord's VEE 3 plugs are fitted, made with an ABS outer shell, silver plated contact areas and PTFE insulation around the central pin.

The £450 Anthem Reference interconnect uses heavy gauge, silver-plated oxygen-free copper connectors arranged in a repeating spiral and insulated with PTFE. The cables are then over-extruded with PVC to minimise mechanical noise. The shielding is provided by a dense braid and a heavy gauge foil over-wrap. VEE 3 plugs are fitted.

The most expansive cable in this review is the £765 Signature Tuned ARAY interconnect. This replaces the Signature Plus in their range and is a new design made with high-quality silver-plated conductors and PTFE insulation and two layers of a high density silver braid for shielding. This is covered with a white PTFE outer extrusion. Chord's ultra low mass RCA plugs are fitted. The silver-plated pin is surrounded by PTFE insulation, as is the silver-plated return connector. This is covered with a machined acrylic plug casing.

After thoroughly running in each cable on my Blue Horizon Cable Burn In Accelerator, each one was listened to for an evening before doing comparative listening with CDs of Ivo

Janssen playing Bach Preludes and Fugues on the piano (VOID Classics. VOID 9812) and Shpong's 'Museum Of Consciousness'. (Twisted Records. TWSCD45).

I started my listening with the Chorus cables and was presented with a big, quite warm and easy-going sound that was underpinned by a very solid bass. The central image of the flute in the first part of Shpong's opening track 'Brain In A Fish Tank' was very strong and the sound seemed to be very firmly placed just within the speaker boundaries. The piano sounds in the Bach were good, although I felt that the harmonics on a heavily struck chord using the sustain pedal showed slight traces of confusion in the definition of the sound.

Changing cables to the Anthem gave a very different presentation of the same tracks. Although the central image was still a focal point, I felt that the sounds to either side of it were more integrated to it creating a more cohesive soundscape. The bass seemed to move a little more freely and I had a perception of greater weight and agility to the rhythm.

Janssen's piano was better displayed with more attention seeming to be focussed on the intimacies of his touch on the keyboard. The music felt as though I was better able to explore it easily and the detailing of the ringing harmonics were more obviously displayed.

There is quite a jump in price to the Signature interconnect (£765) but the improved performance seemed commensurate with this. Michelle

Adamson's vocals in 'Brain In A Fish Tank' had far more space to flow naturally than with the previous two cables and I was very much more aware of the layers and the differing textures of the sounds, both natural and electronic in this track.

The Bach pieces sounded far more natural and flowing, with the harmonics successfully decoded so that I felt I was listening to a more lifelike rendition of the music.

All three cables seem to offer good performance for the prices. The Chorus should suit leaner sounding systems while the Anthem will provide a shot of bass driven adrenaline for those that need it. The Signature stands head and shoulders above both and, despite the price, offers, I feel, excellent value for money.



CHORD COMPANY CHORUS REF. £350.00 1MTR



EXCELLENT - extremely capable.

VERDICT

Smooth and rich sounding interconnect. Will suit lean or thin sounding systems.

FOR

- full bodied sound
- solid bass

AGAINST

- may be too warm sounding for some systems.

CHORD COMPANY ANTHEM REF. £450.00 1MTR



OUTSTANDING - amongst the best.

VERDICT

open and spacious sound with excellent imaging.

FOR

- focussed soundstage
- excellent dynamics
- good treble detail

AGAINST

nothing at the price

CHORD COMPANY SIGNATURE TUNED ARAY £765.00 1MTR



OUTSTANDING - amongst the best.

VERDICT

good vocal projection combined with tight timing and a natural tonality make this cable extra special

FOR

- accurate texture and timbre
- good focus on micro details

AGAINST

- nothing, not even price

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