

Chord Company

C-screenX speaker cable



IF YOU EVER wanted an example of how not to conduct a debate, then the subject of hi-fi loudspeaker cables comes pretty close to the top. I still remember the sniggering among 'those in the know', when people started buying purpose-designed speaker cables instead of fitting the same sort of wire you'd buy from Tandy to install your doorbell. But just a decade or so later, many audiophiles would have called you a heretic if you weren't spending vast sums of money on exotic cables for your setup.

Hopefully, we've now reached a happy medium where common sense has prevailed and people are prepared to spend money on speaker cables, while not obsessing over them. This is the sort of buyer the C-screenX will appeal to. It's a high-quality, low-budget option that's practical, easy to use and entirely unpretentious.

Let's twist again

It sports 9mm diameter multi-stranded oxygen-free copper conductors. Its white dielectric is made from Chord Company's new XLPE (Cross Linked Polythene), which both protects the shielding and is malleable so you can bend it around corners. It's a twisted-pair configuration inside to reduce interference, and the wires are enclosed in a PVC casing to reduce mechanical noise and space the conductors correctly.

I've never understood the appeal of speaker cables that are thicker than drain pipes with a luridly coloured outer sheath; I'd rather mine were as slim, subtle and unobtrusive as possible (sonically and visually), so C-screenX fits this bill. My review sample comes in 2x 3m form, terminated with classy looking metal banana plugs. As tested a stereo pair cost £165; that's 6m at £7.50 making £45, plus £120 for factory termination. Of course, you're perfectly at liberty to not go for termination, and either do it yourself or get your dealer of choice to do it for you.



C-screenX has a smooth, balanced sound with just a touch of sparkle in the upper midband to liven up dull systems, without ever veering into brightness. It's good rhythmically, with an easy musicality that lets things ebb and flow nicely. Dynamics are decent too; it certainly doesn't sit on them and carries the force of high

C-screenX fits the bill perfectly for slim, subtle and unobtrusive cabling

energy music well. The latter is important, as some similarly priced designs can seem harsh, flat or thin.

The Dolphin Brothers' *Love That You Need* is a quintessentially Eighties pop production, full of chiming digital synths and sharp percussion. It's really tightly syncopated, and pulls you in by virtue of its transient speed and dynamics. The C-screenX copes admirably, capturing much of the intensity, serving up a spacious, fairly three-dimensional sound.

The Chord Company cable also does well with less processed programme material. The Crusaders' *Street Life* comes across as smooth and tonally slightly warm, entirely as it should be. Hi-hat cymbal sounds have a realistically metallic clang without descending into hardness, and the bass guitar is taut and expressive. In the midst of all this, Randy Crawford's knock-out voice is allowed to soar, sounding rich and powerful without ever becoming in any way strident.

Treble yell

At £7.50 per metre it's not perfect of course; there's a subtle diminution of fine detail and you lose the true three dimensionality of pricier cables, which also tend to have purer treble and less midband imprecision. Still, it's a great performer at the price – so if you're after an affordable, fine-sounding, no-nonsense loudspeaker cable, then here it is. Chord Company's C-screenX ticks all the boxes, and is particularly good value if you terminate it yourself. **DP**

► DETAILS

PRICE
£7.50/m
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OUR VERDICT

