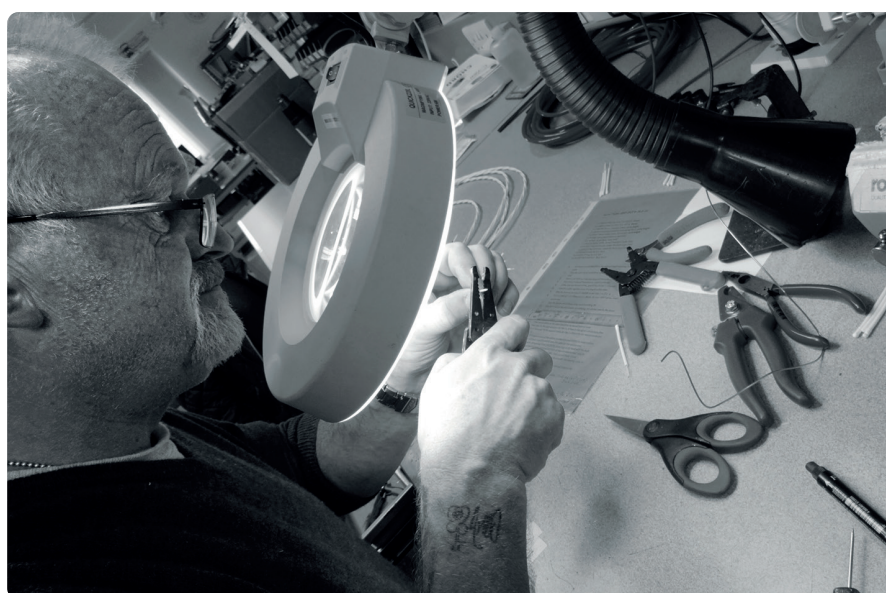


“Everything we make should preserve and deliver the musical purity of the signals they are transmitting”

In business for 40 years, **Chord Company** enjoys a reputation for audiophile interconnects, cables and accessories

Based in Amesbury, Wiltshire, and a short ramble from historic Stonehenge, the dedicated team of music and cinema lovers that work at Chord Company have been designing and hand-building multi-award-winning high-performance audio-visual products since 1985. This talented group is essential in maintaining Chord Company's famously high standards of quality and service.

Chord Company was originally founded by Sally Gibb, working from her then home in Salisbury, in response to demand from an overseas distributor wanting high-quality interconnects for use with Naim Audio amplifiers. Sally drew a logo, designed the packaging and started testing prototypes. The first prototype was named Chrysalis Cable and the Americans swiftly returned with an initial order of 250. These were built on a kitchen table (health and safety legislation was different back then), before being tested, packed and taken along to the Post Office. Invoices were typed on a typewriter. After two steady years, Chord Company got its first positive press review by one-time *HFC* reviewer Malcolm Steward. Demand quickly outgrew this improvised workshop, so new and larger premises were found, along with new staff members, drafted in to cope with increasing sales. It was at this early stage that the company principle that everything it makes, whatever its level, should preserve and



deliver as much as possible of the musical purity of the signals that they are transmitting was hit upon.

Hi-fi retailers soon found that these cables improved performance, so Chord Company started supplying the UK market. Such was the good relationship that the company built with its overseas and UK customers, that many of them still sell and distribute Chord Company products to this day.

Although the Chord Chrysalis is not a particularly expensive cable, it set standards at its price point and soon gathered good

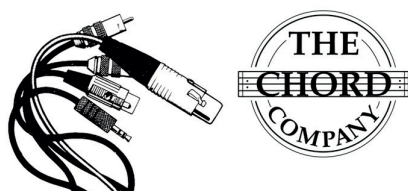
reviews in the hi-fi press. It also set the standard for all future products.

In 1994 the Cobra cable won a Best Cable award, which saw a significant rise in interest and a corresponding increase in business. Within a year, the company was forced to move yet again.

The number of production staff had to be increased in order to meet the demand, particularly from UK retailers. Cobra, albeit the guitar/instrument cable version, is still part of the Chord Company range today.

1999 saw the creation of Chord Company Rumour, its first speaker cable and still a staple of the range today.

The company continued to grow, in size and status, into the new millennium and moved into its current purpose-built home in 2004. That year also witnessed the debut of Chord Company Signature speaker cable, with its advanced shielding and construction methods, and part of an acclaimed, new high-end range. This triggered a series of major advances and innovations, that continue to this day and have recently incorporated a range of high-performance mains distribution blocks, noise-reduction devices and the English Electric EE1 Network Noise Isolator.



CHORD COMPANY

UNIQUE TECHNOLOGY

■ Advanced, multi-layer screening/shielding

Conductor configuration and layers of all-important shielding become increasingly complex as the ranges ascend. Foil shields provide excellent protection against high-frequency noise, while woven braid shields are particularly effective at blocking low-frequency interference. By combining these two types of shields, Chord Company developed cables that could effectively mitigate both high and low-frequency noise, making them ideal for the noisy environments of modern technology.

■ Taylon insulation

Taylon insulation virtually eliminates the temperature-related phase instability and mechanical variation that mars the sonic and musical performance of PTFE, delivering a remarkably natural, musically communicative and expressive performance – challenging the best and most expensive cables available.

■ Tuned ARAY conductors

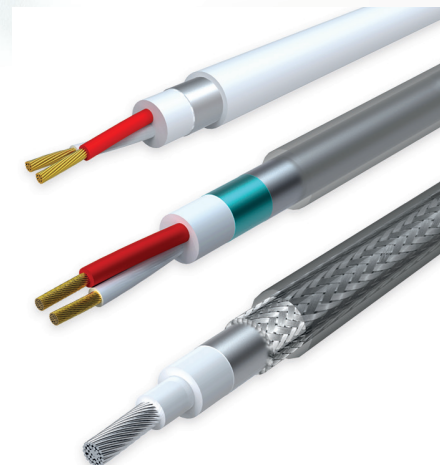
The unique ARAY, Tuned ARAY and Super ARAY technology emerged from a radical idea and much laborious trial and error. The transforming effects of the ARAY was discovered during development work within the Chord Company digital cable range. The ARAY consists of a mechanically tuneable configuration incorporated within the cable construction process.

■ ChordOhmic speaker connectors (& Hex Gun crimp termination system)

ChordOhmic 4mm crimp-on 'banana' and spade speaker connectors are ChorAlloy plated and designed to bring electrical and sonic benefits to any speaker cable. They are fitted as standard to all new Chord Company speaker cable sets as well as being separately available as a retro-fit upgrade and are attached using the Chord Company Hex Gun, which provides a superior long-term connection over the soldered equivalent.

■ ChorAlloy plating

A unique performance upgrade over previous silver-plated connectors. The upgraded ChorAlloy plating is available on VEE3 and PTFE RCA/phono connectors, ChordOhmic speaker connectors (spade and 4mm banana), BNC and mini-jack connectors, certain USB connectors and the connecting pins of DIN and XLR connectors.



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INTERVIEW

“An era where noise management is as critical as signal transmission”

Alan Gibb, Managing Director, Chord Company

HFC: How vital is your original philosophy to how Chord Company operates today?

AG: Our founding principle – that everything we make, whatever its level, should preserve and deliver as much as possible of the musical purity of the signals that they are transmitting – remains the heartbeat of Chord Company. It's not just a legacy; it's a living ethos. From our earliest designs to today's most advanced products, we've stayed committed to engineering products that endeavour to reveal music's full emotional and technical depth. That philosophy led directly to innovations like ARAY technology, which began with a simple question in 2012: "Where do we go from here?"

Have these principles adjusted with technological developments over the years?

They've evolved in tandem with the industry. Cable design is dominated by mechanical engineering as well as material technology: impedance-matching, shielding geometry, bandwidth and phase accuracy. But, as digital systems and RF noise became more prevalent, we have had to tackle these additional challenges. We have since incorporated techniques to mitigate the negative impact of high-frequency noise, especially on the signal ground integrity. The birth of TunedARAY, sparked by a breakthrough modification to our Sarum cable, marked a turning point. It introduced a new way of controlling unwanted high-frequency issues without entering the signal path itself.

How would you categorise the Chord Company house sound?

We don't impose a sound, we reveal one! The Chord Company house sound is defined by transparency, timing and musical coherence. Our cables aim to remove barriers between the listener and the performance. With ARAY technology, for instance, you don't just hear the piano, you hear the phrasing, the intention, the rehearsal behind it. That's the difference between listening and connecting.

How do you go about designing and testing new products?

It's a dialogue between measurement and music. We begin with a technical challenge, say, reducing high-frequency noise on signal grounds and explore materials, geometries and shielding strategies. But, the final arbiter is always listening. Every prototype is auditioned

across diverse systems and genres. If it doesn't make the music feel more alive, it doesn't move forward. That's how ARAY, GroundARAY and PowerARAY, in fact all of our products came to life: through curiosity, experimentation and a lot of listening.

How significant is trickle-down tech to your ranges?

With any new technology, we always try to make the very best prototypes first. It is essential to know what the maximum impact on the music or video quality might be. Almost everything for the prototypes is hand-built: casework, connectors, each individually designed and built locally by specialist

The Chord Company house sound is defined by transparency, timing and musical coherence

companies. The assembly of each of these test pieces can take our best technicians up to a day, depending on their complexity. If the idea has been proved then an enormous effort goes into ensuring that we can produce the product as consistently and as efficiently as possible. Our TunedARAY technology, for example, began in Sarum and now features across our portfolio. Our GroundARAY materials, originally sourced from military-grade anti-RFI applications, have found their way into our PowerHAUS mains blocks, (English Electric) EE1 Plus filters and even turntable earth wires. We believe high-end innovation should improve every level of the listening experience.

What developments do you see happening to the hi-fi industry in the future?

We're entering an era where noise management is as critical as signal transmission. With the explosion of Wi-Fi, LED lighting, mobile devices and digital processing, high-frequency interference is everywhere and it's affecting performance in subtle but significant ways. The future will demand smarter, more passive solutions like our GroundARAY system and EE1 Plus, which clean up the environment without compromising dynamics. We also see a growing appetite for compact, high-performance systems that integrate

seamlessly into modern living spaces.

Can you tell us anything about new Chord Company products on the horizon?

We're constantly exploring new ways to tame noise and enhance musicality. Expect refinements to our digital and power ranges, including expanded applications of our GroundARAY tech. We're also developing new materials and geometries that could push performance even further, all while keeping our products accessible.

Whether it's a flagship PowerARAY Professional noise-reduction system or a clever tweak to a network filter, our goal is the same: to make music sound more like music ●

HFC HIGHLIGHTS

Chord Company RumourX speaker cable

PRICE: £260 for a 3m pair REVIEWED: HFC 512

Featuring silver-plated oxygen-free copper conductors insulated with XLPE, the RumourX is flexible and so easy to route around the listening room. Performances have a real sense of energy and freshness, sounding smooth and detailed throughout.

★★★★★

Chord Company Leyline RCA interconnect

PRICE: £37.50 for 1m cable REVIEWED: HFC 528

A first-time upgrade over standard bundled cables, the Leyline is terminated with gold RCA plugs and comes in lengths up to 3m. Performances are powerful and clearly defined with instruments perfectly placed in the soundstage, making this a superb-value option.

★★★★★