

Attractive Audiophile Cable : Harmonix

The famous audio tuning specialist, Mr. Kiuchi, and his Japanese audio company, Combak Corp. have been producing their hi-end audio components under the brand name of "Reimyo" and also marketing their tuning devices, room tuning devices, powercords, Enacoms and different types of audiophile cables under the brand name of "Harmonix". They also making a speaker under the brand name of "Bravo".

The image of Combak Corp. products are the quality but not quantity. Every single product are carefully designed and made for different application. For example, the Reimyo, I have listened to their DAP-777 D/A converter, CDP-777 CD Player, CDT-777 CD Transport + DAP-999EX D/A converter. All of these components offered very wide soundstage, lively, detailed and elegant, sweet, smooth and very appealing sound performance. Moreover, their 300B amplifier PAT-777 filled of the outstanding oldies type of sound which is completely different from today's generation of the 300B amplifier. No matter which type of sound you prefer, you'll definitely agree with me that the PAT-777 is also a very special component being fine tuned.

Tasty Powercords

Harmonix cables includes digital cable, audio signal cables, speaker cables, powercords etc. Although there are not many different models in each category, the overall performance is excellent and full of sweet and warm feeling in the sound that you feel very comfortable to listen. The character of Harmonix cables is very different from the conventional Japanese audio cables. Harmonix cables is obviously richer, full body & tasty. I personally found that they work extremely well to match with the Japanese audio equipments – soft & smooth while most of the Japanese audio equipments sound blend and harsh, it'll help to smoother the sound so as to make it more appealing and attractive.

Ten years ago, the distributor of Combak Corp. sent us 5 different types of Harmonix cables for our review, including HS102 digital cable, CI-230 audio cable, CS-120 speaker cable, X-DC and X-DC Studio Master AC powercords. It was the first time I experienced the Harmonix cables. I still clearly remember that the prices of the CI-230, CS-120 & XDC10 were not high, the sound performance was very good and impressive – sweet & warm, smooth, good imaging without sharp edges, it's very elegant, musical and romantic. The Studio Master (today's version has been upgraded with Wattgate connectors) deeply impressed me. Its richness and full body but also very powerful – not just very powerful bass but also very tasty when you use them on the preamp or power amp. I have recommended a few audiophiles to use it. With regard to the digital cable, I prefer those sound clear, true, fast type- like the Goldmund Lineal, the richness and body are the secondary. Therefore, I was not as crazily impressed with the HS102 as with the other 4 types of Harmonix cables.

Perhaps those 2 types AC powercords , XDC 10 & XDC Studio Master, of which their transparency, clarity, transient might be a bit old style in comparison to today's standard. I have recently reviewed the improved version of XDC 10, the XDC2 AC Powercord being sent from the distributor; it obviously sounds a lot more clear and transparent, very detailed and excellent ambience. The melody is a lot smoother and more elegant, more focusing. The sound character is still the conventional Harmonix style – elegant and romance, but it is so natural (no coloration). It sounds so musical and attractive in reproducing the true sound. You can get an honest truthful and transparent feel.

XDC2 truly touches my heart. Its unique attractive character is totally different from what I have recently reviewed. Cardas is tasty but the XCD2 is very tasty to be more lively, detailed and ambience. Furutech is very solid and powerful, but XDC2 is a lot more elegant and romantic. GutWire Power clef2 is good but it's a bit too sensible. XDC2 reminds me of the Acoustic Zen 3rd Generation Krakatoa and Aural Symphonics Missing-Lin Prince.

HS-101 Evergreen

In these 10 years, the HS101 speaker cable is the most mentioned cable by our magazine amongst all the Harmonix cables. Many of our reviewers have used them, and they are still selling in the market. The list price for a 2.5M speaker cable is HK\$13,210.- All Harmonix cables are made of pure copper, to accomplish its natural full body audio performance.

HS101 speaker cable features the same Harmonix character - sweet, smooth and warm sound, excellent transient without any uneasy in the sound performance. There is no problem to reproduce the dynamic heavy bass. The soundstage is wide with good 3D feel. Perhaps you may find the ambience and details are not the top class, but it is actually very good. We love to use it on those systems utilizing metal drivers or ceramic driver which sound too bright or too harsh so as to tune them to sound more pleasing, smoother with feelings.

Early this year, we have visited a friend using B&W 800D speaker system and Chord SPM1400E monoblock amplifier. River called him "a detailed serious audiophile", and he is using 2 pairs HS101 speaker cables. River said that it helped the system to create the best vocals. Moreover, it did not cause any limitation to the performance of the Diamond tweeters. The HS101 speaker cables help to make it just right and it is highly regarded by the owner. The high frequency is so detailed, can see the peak but not rough. During the end of the visit, one of the visitors suggested to replace the HS101 with another very expensive, higher clarity type of cable that has definitely improved the sound of the system a bit. It is true that the HS101 speaker cable is not the most clarity type of cable on the high frequency. However, Harmonix does make several different models of HS101 speaker cables. There is a HS101 Super Max speaker cable applying new technology to treat the high frequency, and the price is of course quite high, the list price is HK \$44,300 for a 2.5M pair. It'll help to get the best high frequency performance. It can be used to for the high/mid pass of the above system and keep the original HS101 for the low pass connection and it'll sound great.

Today, the new HS101 EXQ is the best full range speaker cable. It can eliminate 99% of the electromagnetic waves to enhance the frequency spectrum amazingly better. It brings out astonishingly clear with rich of details, wider soundstage and unparalleled separation in sound. The price is very reasonable (cheaper than the SuperMax). The list price is HK\$35,650.- for a 2.5M pair. An alternative choice is the HS101 SLC (Sophisticated Listener's Choice). The list price is HK\$30,710.- for a 2.5M pair.

I learnt from the manufacturer's website that the major difference in the production of these HS101 speaker cables are the copper materials. The EXQ utilizes the high purity and absolutely directional PCOCC while the SLC utilizes the new formula of OFC. The Super Max also utilizes the directional PCOCC. We are looking forward to reviewing the new HS101 EXQ cable.

There is also a famous interconnect cable offered by Harmonix, the HS101GP (Golden Performance) and I have listened to it long time ago. I can still remember its rich and warm sound, very detailed but it does not sound as lively as the speaker cable. Recently they have launched also a more economic version, the HS101 Improved interconnect.