

Harmony Quickstep

Jon Myles finds Black Rhodium's new Quickstep loudspeaker cables and Harmony interconnect are a potent combination.



Black Rhodium Quickstep.

Black Rhodium owner and chief designer Graham Nalty knows a thing or two about hi-fi cables – as evidenced by the number of awards his company's range of products have received.

The brand has built a loyal following over the years and makes much of the fact that the majority of its cables are designed and hand-built at its premises in Derby in the East Midlands.

So when Graham announced he'd come up with a new loudspeaker cable and interconnect pairing which are some of his most sophisticated yet it, obviously piqued our interest. Especially when the design is based upon the outstandingly open and clean-sounding top-of-the-range Thunder offering.

Now, a 3 metre terminated pair of Thunder cables will set you back almost £5000 while the new Black Rhodium Quickstep comes in at a more affordable £400 for the same

length. However the two do share some design elements.

Accompanying the Quickstep and designed with similar characteristics is the Harmony interconnect which costs £320 for a 0.5 metre terminated pair or £370 for a 1 metre length.

First, the Quickstep. It's available in a range of colours – black is standard but blue, green, red, white and yellow are all available for a small premium – and comes equipped with the proprietary Graham Nalty Legacy

Black Rhodium Harmony.



Range GN-I rhodium-plated straight line connectors which are eminently sturdy and provide a firm fit.

Like much of Black Rhodium's range, great emphasis is placed on the suppression of mechanical vibrations and the pick-up of radio frequency interference from the likes of radios, wi-fi networks, mobile telephones and even central heating systems.

With the Quickstep this involves

"the backing instrumentation has a depth and breadth to it - allowing you to hear exactly what the individual players are doing"

the use of two separate and complementary materials in the construction to dampen micro-vibrations which can muddy the sound as well as thicker, braided insulation than found in most loudspeaker cables and increased distance between the conductors to reduce the magnetic field in the wire.

The Harmony interconnect employs a similar construction with the internal wires insulated in silicone rubber, for its low dielectric loss. It also comes fitted with gold-plated Hourglass Silhouette RCA connectors for long-life.

All this technology means the cables are a little thicker than many similarly-priced rivals but to their credit they are flexible and easy to fit

into even the tightest spaces at the back of a hi-fi rack, making installation easy.

SOUND QUALITY

Having listened to the range-topping Thunder cables a few months ago, I was impressed at how similar in presentation the Quicksteps are. They are not quite as crystal clear but they do share some attributes – mainly the sense that they let the

music flow in an uninhibited nature without adding too much character of their own.

Used between a Creek Evolution 100A integrated amplifier and a pair of Martin Logan ElectroMotion ESL X electrostatic loudspeakers (see Noel Keywood's review this issue) they had excellent detail and an ability to let me hear what the components were doing.

Jacques Brel's voice on 'Ne Me Quitte Pas' from the Infiniment CD collection was especially well-defined. There was no sense of any smear or cloud to the vocals but instead a naturalness to the presentation. The catch in his voice when he starts the final verse also came out of an almost eerie silence,

adding to the emotional impact.

Behind that the backing instrumentation had depth and breadth, allowing me to hear exactly what the individual players were doing.

Adding the Harmony interconnects to the mix between the CD player and the Creek built on this. There was an obvious synergy as they have a similar characteristic which is open, involving and exceptionally clean.

Listening to guitar on Pierre Bensusan's 'Altiplanos', the leading edges of notes were picked out starkly, while it was easy to pick out where he had changed the tuning of his instrument on some tracks.

Not all cables at this price will give you such an insight. The only downside is that if you are looking for cables to tune a system that is perhaps not ideal, these Black Rhodiums are probably not for you.

They will not mask problems by accentuating bass or smoothing off treble response in sharp components. They are a lot more honest than that – which is a good thing if you are happy with your source, amplifier and loudspeakers as they have the ability to bring the best out of them at a reasonable price.

CONCLUSION

Black Rhodium's new Quickstep loudspeaker cables and Harmony interconnects come highly recommended. They get out of the way of the signal in a way few others do at this price and allow you to hear the music unsullied and in all its glory.

HI-FI WORLD

**BLACK RHODIUM
QUICKSTEP
LOUDSPEAKER
CABLE £400
3 METRE
TERMINATED PAIR**

**HARMONY
INTERCONNECT
£320
0.5 METRE
TERMINATED PAIR**



**OUTSTANDING - amongst
the best.**

VERDICT

Open, engaging cables that allow you to hear exactly what your components are doing.

FOR

- crystal clear sound
- construction
- flexibility
- reduce smear

AGAINST

- won't flatter poor components

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