

FURUTECH

Review

POSITIVE FEEDBACK ONLINE

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hardware

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audio

furutech

the Evolution line of cables

as reviewed by Peter Davey



PETER DAVEY'S SYSTEM

LOUDSPEAKERS

Apogee Scintilla - 1 ohm model with all new ribbons by Graz. New steel stands fabricated by True Sound Works.

Apogee Diva - 4 ohm model with all new ribbons by Graz. The tweeter is the SLW model, for a faster sound.

ELECTRONICS

Plinius SA-250mkIV amplifier and a BAT VK31-SE preamplifier.

SOURCES

Apple iMac 24" running Leopard and Frontrow/iTunes. Pop Pulse Digital conversion device handling the USB to SP/DIF duties. Assemblage D2D-I jitter reducer and up-sampler and an Assemblage DAC-3 fully balanced DAC.

CABLES

Furutech Evolution Series Power Cables, Furutech Evolution Series Speaker Cables (BiWire), Furutech Evolution Series XLR Balanced cables, PAD Contego digital SP/DIF cable, and CyroParts USB cable.

ACCESSORIES

PS Audio Premier power plant in Limited Edition black and PS Audio power ports.

Being a music lover and affording the gear to be able to really try to reproduce what musicians were trying to do are t two phrases that are not usually synonymous with each other. Also as a reviewer who has a real world budget for this hobby puts me in a difficult position! While reviewing every expensive esoteric cable known to man (which I've done on occasion) can be a lot of fun, it always comes down to what I can really afford to put into my system.

It was suggested to me that I look into a company called Furutech, based out of Japan. I had my reservations at first, but then looking around and doing some research, I thought... wow; these are some really sweet lookin' cables, without a high price tag! I mean, obviously they've got a few different lines of products but with just the craftsmanship of the cables alone I knew I had to get some in to try out. In comes Jonathan Scull of Scull Communications to our editor Dave Clark. Dave told me that they were interested in a review of their Evolution line and I jumped at the chance!

I was sent several power cords at different lengths, as well as a few balanced sets of interconnects. On top of that I received 2 sets of speaker cables terminated with spades as well. Initially when receiving them, I was impressed with the packaging. Each cable comes in it own box nicely labeled and tied down. Most high-dollar cables come in a fancy air-tight case... Why pay for packaging?

Furutech has been around since 1988, they aren't well known yet, and I believe that might be because they used to be big into the AV type cables. They have their own process of making the cables AND their own terminations which can keep the costs reasonable. The first time I had heard about them was in an ad for their IEC type power connectors. They've got some really interesting designs, some including carbon fiber. It's nice to see a manufacturer get involved with their own terminations, rather than to use someone else's; it gives a sense of engineering and a nice personal touch.



I have several different manufactured cables in my system, none are the same brand. It was suggested that I go ahead and swap out all of the cables in my system to reap the full benefits, to start out with a clean slate. Makes sense... I ended up with: 3 sets of Balanced XLR cables, 2 sets of speaker cables terminated with spades (as shown above), and 4 power cords of various lengths.

As you can see, they've done a nice job on the aesthetics part. Nylon jackets, heat shrink, with a nice heavy feel to them. The only quip I had was with the power cords. While functional, they were extremely stiff. I've used many power cords and while I can understand that the gauge wire used can be quite stiff depending on how it's configured, this has to be the stiffest cable I've ever used. A problem with this is if you choose to get a few short runs (1 meter) it's not easy to orient the ends correctly.



I decided to try this out on my dedicated system, which consists of a BAT VK31SE preamplifier, Assemblage D2D-I/DAC 3.0, and Plinius SA-250 amplifier. This system is all balanced so I chose to review these cables only. I do have a few single-ended sources but didn't get the chance to review these types of cables. The speakers are a completely refurbished (new ribbons) set of Apogee Scintillas. In my opinion these speakers are extremely analytical and full of timbral accuracy. Hearing midrange and highs on foil only drivers brings a sense of realism, and can really bring out the best (and worst) in any cable.

I must also add that I had these cables put on a cable cooker for about 50 hours. I have heard the effects of cable cooking and believe it can really accelerate the breaking in of cables. Connecting these cables up to my system took minutes; each XLR snapped into place with a nice firm click and the speaker cables had industry standard sized spades, fitting into the binding posts was easy. The speakers I use are bi-wire only, which was my reasoning behind two runs of speaker cables. I really wanted a single cable that I could bi-wire with but they didn't offer such a cable in their Evolution series. This might make it more attractive to people that wish to bi-wire their

speakers and not have an additional run per channel.

Music Listening

Let's get to the good stuff. I currently use an iMac as my digital front end, which streams the signal digitally to the D2D re-clocker then into my DAC. This allows me to store all of my music on my network letting me change up my musical preference in seconds. I listen to a broad range of music including rock, acoustical, jazz, future jazz, ambience, world, Indian, and African. All of my music is stored lossless, meaning it's not compressed. Since my musical interests are very broad, I think I got a good handle on the characteristics of these cables. To say that a cable induces no coloration on sound is simply impossible. Any metal depending on its configuration and purity will change the sound. The question is, did the Furutech cables have a positive or negative effect on this?

At times I like to listen to music in a background sense, while reading or relaxing. What was interesting about these cables is their low noise floor. Listening to music at a lower level really brought out sounds and instruments with detail that I hadn't heard before. These micro-dynamics are what really make a good recording stand out.

I played an album by Anjani, *Blue Alert*. There was a technique used in this album with what sounds like a microphone close-range to her mouth. The midrange from her voice is to die for, and these cables really seemed to bring out the best in them. I did notice a bit of a warmer presentation from these cables. This could be described as a more laid-back sound. I actually prefer this sound, comparable to putting in a nice tube based pre-amp. Anyone knows that foil only based drivers can bring out the best and the worst in any recording, but it's nice to know that a cable can take a bit of the edge off.

I then moved onto some Dead Can Dance, which usually has a nice loud vocal edge and wild percussion that seems to be endless with decay. What a sound! I really enjoyed the influence these cables had; to me this is exactly how this group should sound; very soft yet loud and dynamic. Then the obligatory *Gladiator* soundtrack, simply breathtaking... Some parts of this album really give me the chills, and let me tell you the Furutechs weren't a letdown at all during any passage. I was able to pinpoint every instrument on stage and when the crescendos kicked in... Ah, pure bliss.

All in all, every cable has their strength and weakness, some manufacturers tend to spend too much time on making the cable look out of this world without putting a lot of time into the sound. I have used Audio Magic, Kubala Sosna, and Purist Audio cables in my system and I will say that the Evolution cables really kept up with the bigger dogs. If you ever have the chance to audition a set of Furutechs, jump in. I guarantee

you will enjoy! I will have more to say on these as my cable journey continues. **Peter Davey**

Evolution interconnects

Retail: RCA/\$490 per pair, XLR \$560 per pair (1 meter length)

Evolution speaker cables

Retail: Evolution-04 \$450 (2 meter length)

Evolution AC cables

Retail: \$500 (1.8 meter length)

Furutech

web address: www.furutech.com