

Ultra Sound!

Jon Myles enjoys the sound from Atlas Cables' latest Hyper dd Ultra interconnect.

To say Scotland's Atlas Cables know a thing or two about making interconnects would be something of an understatement. The company is almost obsessive with regard to materials, construction, cable geometry, connectors and how small improvements in all these areas can lead to enhanced overall performance.

I first came across the benefits of this approach some two years ago with their high-end Mavros Ultra which was detailed, neutral and smooth and brought a dazzling transient attack to notes (see Hi-Fi World July 2015).

At £875 for a 1 metre length it wasn't cheap but worth the money in the right system. Now Atlas has trickled down some of the thinking behind that cable into the new Hyper dd Ultra interconnect – which is priced at £395.

The dd in the name stands for dual drain – where twin symmetrical drain wires run between a copper/ Mylar foil and screen constructed in such a way as to maintain consistent low impedance load to the plug, as well as providing complete rejection of noise and signal loss caused by RFI.

The conductor is solid core OCC (Ohno Continuous Casting) copper surrounded by multiple bunch-stranded high purity OCC copper wires insulated by a polyethylene dielectric.

The 'speed' characteristic of analogue cables is determined primarily by the dielectric performance of the insulator applied around the conductor, Hyper's conductors are encapsulated within a high-efficiency gas foamed Polyethylene dielectric, with excellent immunity to interference and noise. Termination is via Atlas's low-mass solder-free Ultra phono plugs, with XLR also available.



It's a chunky cable compared to some other interconnects but construction is superb and the Ultra connectors are beautifully machined, offering a solid grip on terminals.

SOUND QUALITY

Plugging the Hyper Ultras into a Naim Supernait 2 and McIntosh MC152 amplifiers the qualities that come through are speed and precision, bringing detail to the fore.

With Pamela Kurstin and Seb Rochford's 'Ouch, Evil, Slow, Hop' the former's theremin playing didn't just sound eerie but crackled with menace via the Hypers. Rochford's drums also came through with a little extra pounding dynamism.

It's not what the Atlas interconnects are adding to the music but more the fact that they are taking nothing away. Tonally they are neutral so no grain or smear is added to the replay chain.

Listening to Tashi's landmark rendition of Messiaen's 'Quartet For The End Of Time', violin, piano, cello and clarinet possessed total clarity, the interplay between instruments highlighted by the precise

soundstaging these interconnects provide.

Switching back to a cheaper – but still very good – Nordost Leif interconnect it was clear the Atlas allowed more musical power, life and vitality to flow through the system without sacrificing delicate detail.

As such, anyone looking to upgrade their interconnect to bring a little more from a system should seriously give the Hyper dd Ultra and audition. At £395 it represents a value-for-money upgrade.

CONCLUSION

A basically transparent interconnect which presents instruments in a realistic fashion and never restricts the tempo of music. Add in excellent detail resolution and the Atlas should go to the top of anyone's list at this price.

ATLAS HYPER DD
ULTRA £395
(1 METRE LENGTH)



OUTSTANDING - amongst
the best

VALUE - keenly priced

VERDICT

Impressively-engineered interconnect that has speed, resolution and a natural, organic nature.

FOR

- detail
- lack of smear
- build
- speed

AGAINST

- nothing

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