



An Epic Affair

The Chord Company's new Epic XL loudspeaker cables are a class act, says Jon Myles.

It's fair to say the Chord Company covers just about every cable on offer - from digital to interconnects to the plain old loudspeaker lead. Except not all loudspeaker leads are built the same. You can go from one costing a few pounds per metre to something like their flagship Epic XL.

And when I say flagship I really mean it. They will set you back £600 for a set of two 1.5 metre terminated pairs (although, as ever, shop around and you can find them at a lower price).

The reason? Well the Epic XL combines elements of Chord's Epic and Signature Reference/XL speaker cables. A specially chosen soft PVC internal jacket is added to correctly space the shielding and minimise mechanical noise. A high density braid and foil shield is applied to each set of conductors and this in turn is protected by a translucent outer jacket, again chosen to reduce unwanted mechanical noise.

The conductors are also twisted together in a braid-like construction - and if that makes them sound a little

unwieldy then fear not. I found them easy to route even in the tightest of spaces and the quality of the banana plugs is exceptional - gripping tightly to an amplifier's 'speaker outputs.

At this price the Chord Epic XLs deserve to be used with top-notch electronics - so I plugged them into an Icon Audio Stereo 30SE valve amplifier feeding our resident Martin Logan electrostatics (a match made in audio heaven) with sources including CD, a high-resolution DAP (digital audio player) and streaming via Spotify, Tidal and tracks stored on my laptop computer.

SOUND QUALITY

The first thing I noticed when plugging in the Chords was the quality of the bass. No, it's not overpowering nor overly potent but simply potent and tuneful. It provides a solid foundation for all the instruments that float above.

Which means the guitars and vocals on 'Debaser' by The Pixies took on a greater presence - indeed Black Francis' lyrics were more intelligible with a less shouty character.

That's not to say the track loses any potency - it just sounds more together and characterful. Indeed the overall character put me in mind of my current cable of choice - Tellurium Q's Silver Diamonds.

No cable is devoid of an influence on the sound but - like the Telluriums - the Chords impose as little as seems possible and so let you know exactly what your amplifier, loudspeaker and source are actually doing.

Playing Arvo Part's 'Requiem For Benjamin Britten' the decay at the end seemed to go on longer than I remembered on previous hearings but retained its perfect tonality.

This is what the Epic XLs do so well - they allow the music to flow without imposing too much of their own character. As such they represent an excellent buy.

CONCLUSION

I've no hesitation in saying these are some of the best cables I have heard from the Chord stable. No loudspeaker lead is perfect but these will certainly bring the best from your system. Plug in, listen and enjoy.

**CHORD COMPANY
EPIC XL £600 PER
1.5 METRE PAIR**



**OUTSTANDING - amongst
the best**

VERDICT

Open, tuneful and devoid of artificial sound. Rather hefty but easy to route.

FOR

- open
- tuneful bass
- lack of colouration
- construction

AGAINST

- not cheap
- stiff competition

The Chord Company
+44 (0)1980 625700
www.chord.co.uk