



# Cables section

**Y**ou love 'em or hate 'em. Cables raise some people's hackles, but Hi-Fi World readers tell us repeatedly cables improve their sound and are a great upgrade. So here we are with Loudspeaker cables, interconnects and mains cables, as well as accessories such as connecting blocks in a dedicated section. If you hate 'em - don't look. But if you love 'em you now know where the goodies are.

We will look at affordable products across a single manufacturer's range.

**This month Paul Rigby looks at Nordost cables**

## **SPEAKER CABLES**

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## SPEAKER CABLES NORDOST PURPLE FLARE



**A**riving as flatline cables, the Purple Flare features banana plugs and Fluorinated Ethylene Propylene or FEP insulation. Packing in fourteen conductors, it includes a silver-plated, 99.9999 OFC core.

### SOUND QUALITY

Using my Tellurium Q Blue as a

reference and playing The Beatles' 'Free As A Bird', on CD, from 'Anthology 1', the most noticeable point was Paul McCartney's contribution. The Purple Flare showed fine detail during his acoustic guitar work but with a touch less exuberance, despite being rather lively in the upper mids. McCartney's work on the Oberheim OBX8 analogue synth was intriguing. There was plenty of

focus from the Nordosts with similar separation but, again, slightly less verve and passion.

On vinyl, specifically Ella Fitzgerald's 'Bewitched', there was an admirable rendition of the vocal delivery that is tough to do well. The Purple Flares provided that classic presentation but also managed to etch it with emotive detail that gave the song character. The stereo image was rock solid, sitting in a broad soundstage that allowed the piano to stretch and dance, giving the song a swinging backdrop. There was also enough instrumental separation to present the percussion, which was low key and rather lazy, with enough pace to provide key supportive detail.

### CONCLUSION

The Nordost Blue Heaven speaker cables provide a considered and detailed examination of music. Focus and instrumental separation were notable highlights.

### NORDOST PURPLE FLARE £445 FOR 3 METRES



**EXCELLENT** - extremely capable

#### VERDICT

An incisive cable that digs deep into the mix to extract a wealth of detail.

#### FOR

- detail
- focus
- generous soundstage

#### AGAINST

- dry midrange

Nordost

+44 (0) 1455 283251

[www.nordost-cables.co.uk](http://www.nordost-cables.co.uk)

## SPEAKER CABLES NORDOST FREY 2



**A**lso insulated with FEP, this precision micro-mono-filament constructed cable includes twenty-two conductors and is made from sixty micron, silver-plated 99.99999%, solid core OFC.

### SOUND QUALITY

When you fit cables of this level of

quality, you really do start to hear the sonic realities, for the first time. The Frey 2s provided a tremendous sense of depth within the soundstage. Be aware, though, that excitable upper mids can be produced if you mix and match cable brands and don't pay attention to other distortion issues. Properly installed, though, the rock solid stereo image provided confidence

in the system while a great sense of focus offered excellent tonal characteristics.

A boisterous midrange delivered a wealth of detail. Harrison's rhythm guitar, midway through the song, was clear and distinct while McCartney's bass was solid and foundational.

Turning to Ella Fitzgerald and 'Bewitched', her delivery was effectively handled via the Freys. There was great depth to the soundstage that allowed Fitzgerald to emote effectively, altering the emphasis to accentuate each line or word. Meanwhile, the largely hidden guitar was heard effectively on the periphery of the soundstage while bass was subtle yet generated confidence in the rhythm.

### CONCLUSION

A self-assured set of cables that allows the music to flow easily, giving each instrument and vocalist time and space to perform at the best of their abilities.

### NORDOST FREY 2 SPEAKER CABLES £2,670 FOR 3 METRES



**OUTSTANDING** - simply the best

#### VERDICT

A complex aural layering, during playback, provides a sonic feast for the ears.

#### FOR

- tonal interpretation
- animated midrange
- passionate delivery

#### AGAINST

- careful set-up

Nordost

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## INTERCONNECT CABLES NORDOST PURPLE FLARE

**NORDOST  
PURPLE FLARE  
INTERCONNECT  
CABLES**  
£200 FOR 1  
METRE



**OUTSTANDING - simply  
the best**

**VERDICT**

Grabbing the music by the scruff of the neck, the Purple Flare exhibits both control and careful sonic management.

**FOR**

- focus
- low distortion
- detail

**AGAINST**

- nothing at the price

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**T**he Purple Flare is a fully-shielded design using six, silver-plated 99.9999% OFC solid-core conductors, precision wound in a minimum cross-section configuration, insulated via FEP, and hand-terminated in the USA.

**SOUND QUALITY**

Using a pair of Epiphany Atratus as a reference and spinning the 'Free As A Bird' track, the Purple Flare provided a mature level of playback, offering a high degree of control over the midrange while providing a richer suite of lower frequencies. Distortion was low which

helped to reveal a host of detail in the centre of the soundstage. The vocal performance was quite calming, despite a rather lively upper midrange. George Harrison's Stratocaster guitar provided a welcome extra focus that settled easily into the mix while McCartney's analogue synth displayed a splendid instrumental separation. Turning to Vivaldi's 'Four Seasons' on vinyl, the interconnects successfully navigated the violin solo which provided a rendition that was neither too aggressive nor too tentative. The emotion from the solo was plentiful while retaining an intimacy and delicacy that suited the mood of the ensemble. Supportive strings provided welcome texture and a sense of depth to the soundstage.

**CONCLUSION**

The Nordost Purple Flare interconnects provide a welcome focus to any soundstage, giving you a true rendition of the performing instruments.

## INTERCONNECT CABLES INTERCONNECT FREY 2

**NORDOST FREY 2  
INTERCONNECT  
CABLES**  
£1,150 FOR 1  
METRE



**OUTSTANDING - simply  
the best**

**VERDICT**

Providing a sprightly, clean bass response, the Nordost Frey 2s provide the ear with a full array of detail.

**FOR**

- shimmering midrange
- detail retrieval
- wide soundstage

**AGAINST**

- install with care

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**B**uilt with Nordost's proprietary Micro Mono-Filament construction, to create a virtual air dielectric complete with suspension system, the Frey 2 provides silver-plated OFC solid-core conductors and FEP insulation throughout.

**SOUND QUALITY**

Spinning The Beatles' track, it was noticeable how up-front the midrange was with the Freys. This allowed the midrange details to be pushed from the rear of the mix to provide the ear with a broad sweep of the track's detail. Paul McCartney's vocal solo was etched

with further detail that sat firmly within the stereo image. Treble can be a little fizzy if you neglect distortion in other parts of your system: Nordost is keen on a 'whole system' approach when installing their cables so dealer advice is important. Bass, via Ringo Starr, was clean and fast in terms of transients with admirable weight. Turning to Vivaldi, the entire ensemble shone and fizzed with an enthusiasm and lively nature. You felt that the orchestra were keen to get on with something that they'd really been looking forward to: strings flowed with a underlying strength while violin soloist attacked the music with passion, midrange being clean, open and sparkling.

**CONCLUSION**

A vivacious suite of cables that will pick up your dozing hi-fi and inject life into it.



## POWER CABLES NORDOST BLUE HEAVEN



Including the recognised FEP insulation high-speed, low-loss Micro Mono-Filament construction plus three cores, the Blue Heaven also features 65 strands of 99.9999 OFC.

### SOUND QUALITY

Starting the sound quality tests with

The Beatles' (often, in this guise, known as 'The Threetles' because John Lennon was only there in spirit) 'Free As A Bird' and utilising Black Rhodium's Cratos as a reference, the noted Blue Heaven focus was much in evidence. Paul McCartney's vocal solo was direct and fully formed as was Harrison's Stratocaster guitar

solo. McCartney's acoustic guitar rhythm play showed that the Blue Heaven couldn't quite reach those extended upper mid frequencies and that those same upper mids were slightly forward in nature. That said, the Blue Heaven did provide a solid, characteristic bass that rooted the track to the ground, allowing the mids to rotate around them. Playing the Vivaldi Four Seasons vinyl, the violin ensemble confirmed that forwardness within the upper mids but also how much detail that it could extract from the midrange, providing an additional sense of emphasis from the violin soloist.

### CONCLUSION

The Blue Heaven power cord has a single-minded approach to sonic replication, providing a slightly bustling approach to detail retrieval while providing the ear with a perceptive approach to the music itself.

**NORDOST BLUE HEAVEN POWER CABLE**  
**£155 FOR 1 METRE**



**EXCELLENT - extremely capable**

#### VERDICT

Offering a solid, textured suite of low frequencies, the Nordost Blue Heaven exudes energy and vivacity.

#### FOR

- focus
- characterful bass
- incisive midrange

#### AGAINST

- forward upper frequencies
- recessed midrange

Nordost

+44 (0) 1455 283251

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## POWER CABLES NORDOST FREY 2



The Frey 2 uses the Nordost Micro Mono-Filament construction combined with silver-plated OFC solid-core conductors and FEP insulation. MMF conductors help dissipate mechanical energy while additional

conductors help further diminish low-level storage.

### SOUND QUALITY

The Frey power cable was a bit of a bruiser, hitting the senses with a bass wallop. On The Beatles' track, bass guitar and Ringo's drum kit packed

a powerful, mass-laden punch that provided weight to the overall track. The midrange remained open and transparent, allowing detail to flow uninhibited.

The Vivaldi piece was smooth and yet vivacious. There was no sense of familiarity with the orchestra keeping the music vital and alive. The Frey 2 maintained an incisive examination of the strings, providing a delicacy within the treble and upper mids that was quite remarkable at times.

### CONCLUSION

The Nordost Frey is a jealous cable. That is, it doesn't get on well if there are non-Nordost cables within your hi-fi system. Ideally, with all of these Nordost cables, you really should also retain a single type throughout in addition to paying attention to distortion. Otherwise, the cables tend to get rather grumpy and shouty. More than any other cables, Nordosts benefit from dealer advice.

**NORDOST FREY 2 POWER CABLE**  
**£1,350 FOR 1 METRE**



**OUTSTANDING - simply the best**

#### VERDICT

Big and meaty, the Nordost Frey 2 power cable provides low frequency control combined with transparent mids.

#### FOR

- bass power
- transparency
- incisive detail

#### AGAINST

- Requires careful installation

Nordost

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