

CLARUS CRIMSON INTERCONNECT CABLE £775

CRIMSON CLARUS LOUDSPEAKER CABLE £1975

Clarus is a new name on these shores. Hailing from America, the company is the brainchild of cable designer Jay Victor, who has previously produced products for companies such as Monster and Audioquest. He is the holder of 40 world wide patents in cable technology and has applied his knowledge to produce high-end cables under his own brand name.

At the top of the range are the Crimson interconnect and speaker cable. These have been developed from eight years of research, which has resulted in the granting of five of those patents. His research has led to the conclusion that single large gauge conductors are required to transmit bass frequencies accurately, while the midrange signal seems to be better served by a flat ribbon design. The treble is carried on a "Spiral Ribbon Conductor" which is made by wrapping thin foil strips of high grade OFC copper around a core comprising polyethylene strands which are then covered by a thin layer of polyethylene insulation to prevent strand interaction. Each of the types of cable are also insulated from each other. At each end of the cables are blocks in which these differing sections are gathered together before being terminated in the Company's own type of plugs. Heavy duty phonosockets are used on the interconnect while the speaker cables are available with either spade or banana plug terminations.

Given the amount of cable and insulation inside each length, it is unsurprising that these cables are fairly stiff and quite bulky, and this needs to be taken into account

when planning your installation. The speaker cable in particular, can only be gently curved around corners and is heavy enough that stand-mounted speakers would need to be well secured to prevent them being pulled off their stands by the weight dangling behind them.

The interconnect is less stiff but did lift a small phono stage such as the ANT Audio Kora 3T slightly on the shelf.

Having installed the cables I started my listening and found myself presented with a very wide and sonically open soundstage. I was immediately impressed by the sense of space and air that was carried with the music. I felt that I was listening to performers working in a spacious and well lit environment. Playing Beethoven's 'Egmont Overture' left me with the feeling that I had a seat, centred in the auditorium and at the same height as the orchestra which allowed me to focus my attention, as I wished, on the differing strands of the performance that was flowing out of my speakers.

Although the sound was airy, I could not accuse it of lacking in substance, but neither did it have the slightly crowded effect that some cables can produce when an orchestra gathers it's full force for a crescendo. It seemed able to tread that very fine line between producing a sense of a realistic impact and drive to the finale of this piece, and maintaining a cool, even handed dissection of the construction of the



sound, for me to analyse and digest.

Going to the opposite musical extreme, listening to Janis Joplin's solo 'Mercedes Benz' from her final LP 'Pearl' and I felt her as an almost tactile presence in the room as she made a heartfelt request for her car, colour TV and a night on the town. The throaty giggle that terminates the track had an almost eerie level of realism to it.

This openness is, of course, a double edged sword, requiring excellent performance from all of the electronics in a system, because this cable strikes me as being very honest. It will not mask any errors in reproduction being made by any part of the audio chain. Get it right and you will be rewarded with an exemplary performance of your music, but if any component is sitting on its laurels a bit, then you will be equally aware of it.

Given the explicit and detailed nature of this sound I would hesitate to use it in some circumstances. My experience of Nuforce digital amplifiers would make me wary of using them with this loom, I think the sound would be a little too exposed to be truly musically enjoyable. On the other hand, Prima Luna amplifiers, with their deep, dark and full-bodied tonality would be a lovely combination with the Clarus, the cables letting the richness of the tonal palette shine through. I used it with my reference Leema Acoustics Tucana 2 amplifier and Chario Ursa Major loudspeakers and found that the sound struck a good balance between analytical detail and musical coherence.

At £775 for a 1m pair of interconnects and £1975 for two 3.5m lengths of speaker cable these are expensive wires, but the performance that they offer, in a well tuned system, make them worth the money. **TB**



soundbites