Furutech Daytona 303 Power Conditioner and Flux-Series Cables

Chris Martens

More often than not, *The Absolute Sound* elects to review power conditioners and power-distribution products as separate entities from signal-bearing cables, and under normal circumstances this approach makes perfect sense. In the case of Furutech's new Daytona 303 power conditioner and Flux Series interconnect, speaker, and power cables, however, I would like to break with standard practice and treat Furutech's components as a complete system. Why? The answer in a nutshell is that, in my practical experience, these components work much better (and much more synergistically) when used as a coherent power/signal-delivery package, rather than as piecemeal solutions. Let me begin by providing some technical background on each of the system elements.

The Daytona 303 is most ambitious and versatile power-conditioner/power-distribution box that Furutech has offered to date. Like almost all of the firm's power-delivery products, the Daytona 303 takes a "first do no harm" approach to its job. In practical terms, this means the Furutech uses ultra high quality, high purity components throughout (and by "components" I mean everything from chassis metalwork to power outlets to internal wiring), and provides a baseline of 5250 joules of surge protection, plus a *passive* noise-absorption system implemented though liberal application of 3M's EMI-absorptive GC-303 material in the Daytona's interior. What words can't adequately described is Furutech's almost fanatical attention to even the smallest and most seemingly insignificant construction details. For example, all internal conductors in the 303 have been subjected to Furutech's proprietary "alpha process" cryogenic and demagnetization treatments, and are, says Furutech, "insulated with resonance-absorbing tubing."

Four of the Daytona 303's ten AC-outlets (grouped as two banks of two outlets each) are geared for use with analog audio components (preamps, power amps, phonostages, and the like). Accordingly, those four outlets are—apart from the passive noise-absorption system—

otherwise unfiltered. The six remaining AC outlets (again grouped as three banks of two outlets each) are reserved for digital components (disc players, digital transports, DACs, or—for home-theater types—TVs, projectors, cable/satellite boxes, etc.), and provide both passive noise absorption and active digital noise filtration. Finally, as convenience touches, the 303 provides three pairs of surge-protected coax connections (75-ohm type), three sets of surge-protected phone line connections (one in, two out), front and rear XLR-type connections for an included plug-in LED lamp, a sequencing switch, 12V control connections, a way cool front-panel display that continuously shows voltage and current while providing go/no-go monitoring lights to indicate any abnormal conditions that might arise.

Collectively, Furutech's Flux Series cables are the most sophisticated the company has ever produced, and are designed and built in keeping with what Furutech terms its "pure transmission" philosophy. Again, strict attention to detail is the order of the day. Accordingly, the LineFlux interconnect cables uses solid alpha-process OCC copper conductors housed inside double shields, with special polyethylene insulators/vibration dampers. The cables are terminated with robust sets of mechanically non-resonant RCA or XLR connectors wrapped in six layers of carbon fiber and equipped with burly, rhodium-plated, stainless-steel connector pins. The SpeakerFlux speaker cables, in turn, offer similar construction details, but are terminated with non-magnetic, rhodium-plated, high-purity copper spade lugs or banana plugs.

Finally, the PowerFlux power cables use alpha-process pure copper conductors, polyethylene insulators housed within PVC vibration-damping sheaths, Furutech's innovative FI-50 piezo-ceramic AC inlet and outlet plugs, and a patent-pending system of metal cable clamps and pressure plates to help reduce "mechanically and electrically induced noise."

Frankly, dry technical details, while interesting to some, really don't do much to convey what makes the Furutech system special. So, permit me to cut to the chase.

Furutech's Flux Series cables, when backed up

by the Daytona 303 and PowerFlux power cables, are—by a country mile—the most revealing cables Furutech has ever made, and among the most revealing I've yet heard, regardless of price. (The Flux Series cables go far beyond what the Furutech's former flagship Reference Series models could do, which is saying a mouthful given that the References are no slouches when it comes to performance).

As is often the case with ultra-revealing products, there are some caveats in order. The Daytona 303/Flux cable package will represent a positive step forward in some systems, but not in all. As near as I can tell, the 303/Flux package "syncs" particularly well with associated components that offer the desirable (and indeed, almost "magical") combination of ultra-high resolution and inherent smoothness—a combination offered by products such as YG Acoustics' Carmel loudspeakers, for example. But under other circumstances the 303/Flux package can and sometimes does tell you things about associated system components that you might prefer not to know. Where this is the case, a better option might be to use Furutech's also excellent but just slightly more forgiving Evolution II Series cables, which I have also sampled of late.

When matched with components that can make full use of its strengths, the 303/Flux system offers six key benefits that are simply addictive:

- Unusually quiet backgrounds (perhaps especially attributable to the Daytona 303 and the PowerFlux power cords).
- Resolution sufficient to convey tons of low-level sonic detail.
- Blazing transient speeds without apparent overshoot or ringing.
- Superb high-frequency "air" and extension (though this is an area where some might find the Flux cables a little too good for their own good).
- Clean, taut, articulate bass.
- Genuine neutrality—meaning, however, that the Furutech package provides absolutely *no* suppression of unpleasant treble artifacts that might be introduced by other system components.

To see how this plays out in real-world performance, let me give some illustrations based on experiences I had when switching over to the Furutech system while working on my recent review of the YG Acoustics Carmel speaker. Before the Furutech package arrived, the Carmels sounded great in my system, offering near full-range sound, plenty of resolution, exceptional soundstage width and very good (though perhaps not absolutely class-leading) front-to-back stage depth. I tried adding the various Furutech components on a piecemeal basis with mixed results, but when I brought all the Furutech elements together at once, the sound of the Carmels really took off.

Bass, already one of the Carmel's strengths, tightened up just a bit while pitch definition got better. Mids opened up in a subtle but very meaningful way, letting voices sound more nuanced and real, while the both the leading and trailing edges of notes became more detailed and more believable. In particular, hall reverberations as captured on good recordings, seemed to gel in a more palpable, plausible way (a good example would be the rich reverberations heard in the excerpt of Tavener's *Icons of Eros* as captured on the Reference Recordings 30th Anniversary Sampler HDCD). But the biggest jump in performance came in the area of soundstaging, where both stage width and, especially, depth improved markedly—I think because the Furutech package allowed very low-level soundstage cues to be reproduced cleanly and clearly, rather than getting lost beneath the noise floor. Overall, my sense was that the Furutech system let me hear how incredibly good the YG Carmels (and the Rega Isis/Osiris components driving them) really could be. And that really is the whole point.

When matched with the right associated components, Furutech's flagship power/signal-distribution package can supply the perfect finishing touch—one that lifts system sound quality from the "extremely good" level on up into the space where sonic greatness lives. tas

SPECS & PRICING

Furutech Daytona 303 Power Distribution/ Conditioning Module

AC Outlets: Ten, four unfiltered with passive noise absorption only (for use with analog components), six with passive noise absorption plus active digital noise filters (for use with digital components).

Other inputs/outputs: Three pairs of 75-ohm type coax connections with surge suppression, three phone connections (one in, two out) with surge suppression, sequencing switch, front and rear connections for included LED lamp, front-panel displays for voltage and current with monitor lights to indicate abnormal conditions (if any).

Surge suppression: 5250 joules.

U.S.

Furutech Daytona 303 Power Distribution/ Conditioning Module

Price: 414 mm x 265 mm x 149mm: $2940

Furutech LineFlux Interconnect Cables

Price: 1.2M RCA: $2135

Price: 1.2M XLR: $2433

Furutech SpeakerFlux Speaker Cables

Price: 3M: $3395

Furutech PowerFlux Power Cables

Price: 1.8M: $2380

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U.K.

Furutech Daytona 303 Power Distribution/ Conditioning Module

Price: Not distributed in the UK

Furutech LineFlux Interconnect Cables

Price: 1.2M RCA: £1,720

Price: 1.2M XLR: £1950

Furutech SpeakerFlux Speaker Cables

Price: 3M: £2735

Furutech PowerFlux Power Cables

Price: 1.8M: £1800

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