



SOUNDREBELS

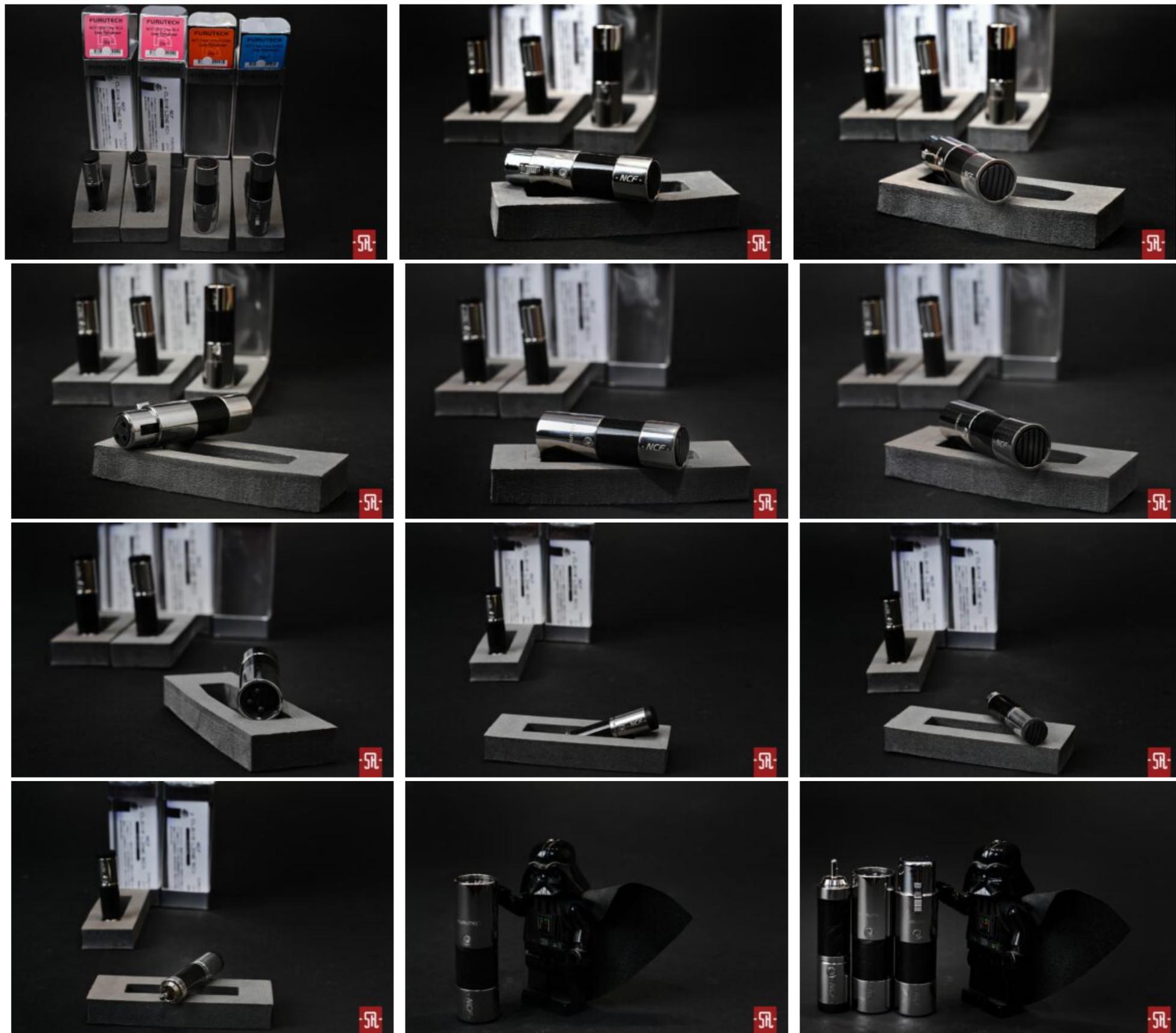
Furutech NCF Clear Line English ver.



Opinion 1

It is well known that the Japanese company Furutech has a wealth of different cables, available “from the spool”, as well as factory confectioned, but they also do not forget about people wanting to upgrade their systems using different kinds of accessories, often called audio trinkets. Starting with the universal Destat, brushes and vinyl disc straighteners, through cable supports (**NCF Booster / NCF Booster Signal**) and ending with power strips (from the budget **60** all the way up to **Pure Power 6**) and power conditioners. As you can see there is a lot to choose from. So trying to be on top of the new products the company proposes and having tested the **NCF Clear Line** dedicated to power, when we saw, and touched, during the **Munich High-End** the signal brethren of the **Clear Line**, we were very impatient waiting until those arrive to the Katowice based RCM, the distributor of the company in Poland. So once the first supply finally arrived in Poland, we have decided to immediately test them. So if you are wondering what Furutech prepared for their acolytes this time, in the form of the NCF Clear Line RCA and two versions of the NCF Clear Line XLR, I encourage you to read on.





As you can see in our image gallery, the tested items present themselves in a surprisingly classic way, as they look like the top plugs made by the mentioned manufacturer, for purely practical reasons. This makes the RCA version be in fact a modification of the CF-101 (R) and the XLRs of the CF-101 (R) and the 602 (F) respectively. The difference you can see with your naked eye is, that compared to standard plugs, there are special NCF damping clips in the place, where the cable is usually attached, and the carbon weave was replaced with a more “impressionist” version. Digging a bit deeper, it turns out that the carcasses are made from a special, anti-resonance version of stainless steel, and, what is supported by the company nomenclature, the proprietary material called NCF (Nano Crystal2 Formula). The “impressionist” layer is a result of “forging” four layers of hybrid carbon fiber NCF. The outer layer is made from special, heat resistant nylon and NCF, while the whole is bolted together with dedicated stainless steel bolts, applied with torque known only to the manufacturer, what means, that those are a significant part of tuning the whole thing. Inside those plugs we will find a half-closed air chamber, which serves as another element of the damping system. But as you probably can already guess, this is just an introduction to the main part of the system, the true core of the Clear Line – using hybrid ceramic capacitors, covered with a special, high performance, silver colored damping coating. The capacitors themselves have, at least according to the manufacturer, the ability to be specially “tuned” allowing to eliminate all kinds of distortion and noise generated on the input/output terminals of audio devices.

Moving on to the section devoted to the sound, or more specifically the influence of the tested plugs on, not even the device where they are plugged in, but the whole system, we go down the easy way and say that it is consistent with what the **power version** did. And it would be a very true and correct observation if not for a small “but”. And this “but” is what I will tackle here. But let us start from the beginning. During our previous encounter, we mentioned that there was some apparent darkening, which is also present here, but better understood, palpable and readable. With the signal version of the NCF Clear Line you can clearly hear, from the first played notes, that this “darkening” is only related to the unpierceable darkness of the background, and its velvetiness – the microcosm, in which the musicians and vocalists are placed, and not relating to them. So the contrast and precision of their placement increases, and our ears are reached only by the “correct” sounds, and not their irritatingly unstable ephemerids, degraded with parasitic distortion and artefacts. In short, the presence of the tested contraptions does not in fact improve, but provides repeatability, which is very hard to achieve nowadays. So without them are we confined to the very unpredictable randomness? Yes, as depending on the time of day (and night) the amount of noise and distortion is dramatically different, and while with the NCF Clear Line they are maybe not completely negligible, and here I will allow myself to build a safety buffer, because I will not exclude, that we can reduce them even more, but it becomes so very efficiently reduced, that our system will sound the same regardless if it is morning, afternoon or the time of siesta, unless we have a demolition going on just outside our lawn, a new metro line is being built under our house, or we live near an airport. So you will no longer need to wait until midnight to fully enjoy listening to the dog barking on “**Hunt**” by Amarak.

It is also worth noting that while in case of the power cleaning device the choice of space to place it in was very obvious, and quite limited at that – you needed to plug it in a free socket on your power strip – the tested contraptions allow us to have quite a substantial array of applications, as you can plug them into any of the inputs or outputs of your devices. And here a formal remark, that with the tested Furutech, as with many other things, you should not exaggerate and one piece, or in very worked out systems maybe

two, of those plugs should be sufficient. And again, not per device, but per the whole system.

But going back to the main aspect of our test, so the influence of the Clear Line on our system, with the increase of resolution we have also an increase of dynamics. And interestingly not in the macro, but in the micro scale. But this may not be as binary as it may seem. This comes from the fact that in the macro scale it is much easier to come through the eventual noise and parasitic moire or rust. Of course their contour and differentiation will be clearer with the Furutech, and some additional Jules will be added, but it will be the micro scale, where the intensity of the improvements will be most obvious. And to experience this, you do not need to obsessively search for nuances in audiophile recordings, like the almost hermetic ones prepared by the label 2L in the likes of „Alt hva mødrene har kjempet” by Kammerkoret Aurum, or even the commercial, big band “Grit & Grace” by Jennifer Wharton, because even in the seemingly totally chaotic and cacophonous of “Disintegration” by Hegeroth it will be clearly audible. How? Well, for example in the form of better separation, better showing of the complexity and multiple layers of the composition and the apparently negligible delicacies operating on much lower intensity levels than the first line growls, riffs and blasts.

Within the final summary, I will perversely claim that the Furutech NCF Clear Line are not for everybody, and their application does not always make sense. Because they are ... too cheap compared to where its application would be most sensible, explainable and really audible on a level that would legitimize their usage. How is it possible? It is just that their presence will not save a bad configuration, neither they will convert a budget device into a high-end killer. They will improve something, but this improvement will be a step sideways, or a not so rational attempt to save a component, that should be exchanged for a higher classed one. This is why I will say/write something that is painfully honest and subjective – in budget systems, when you have a loose 1.5 thousand zlotys, then you better invest that money into better cables, or better components, instead of buying those Furutech, as it will not make much sense.

However if you do have a system, that more or less represents the final stage of development you want to achieve, then you should experience the influence of the tested Furutech for yourselves. This seems as obvious as it is inevitable.

Marcin Olszewski

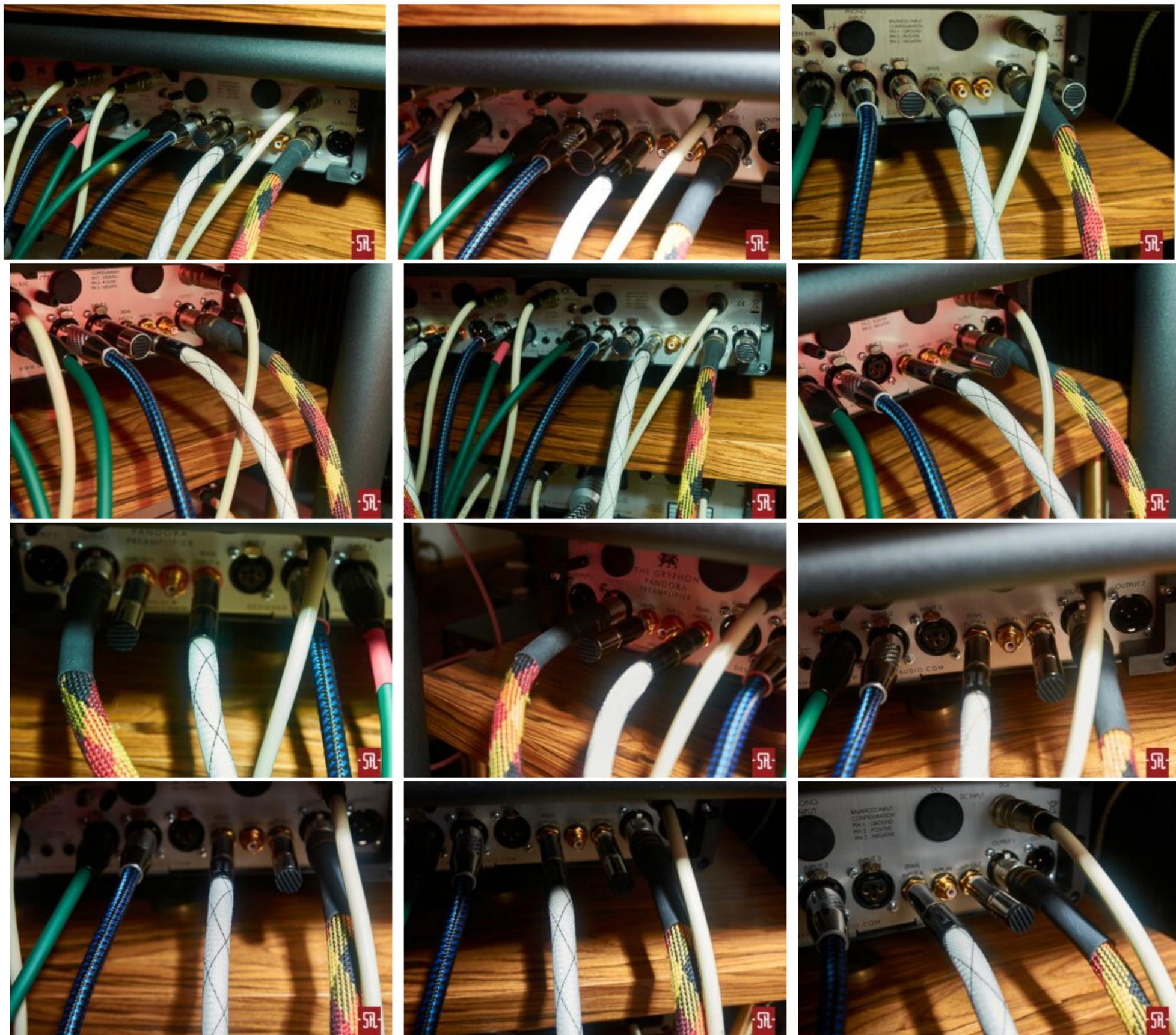
System used in this test:

- CD/DAC: Ayon CD-35 (Preamp + Signature) + Finite Elemente Cerabase compact
- Network player: Lumin U2 Mini + Omicron Magic Dream Classic + I-O Data Soundgenic HDL-RA4TB
- Digital source selector: Audio Authority 1177
- Turntable: Kuzma Stabi S + Kuzma Stogi + Dynavector DV-10X5
- Phonostage: Tellurium Q Iridium MM/MC Phono Pre Amp
- Power amplifier: Bryston 4B³ + Graphite Audio IC-35 Isolation Cones
- Integrated amplifier: Vitus Audio RI-101 MkII
- Loudspeakers: Dynaudio Contour 30 + Brass Spike Receptacle Acoustic Revive SPU-8 + Base Audio Quartz platforms
- IC RCA: Furutech FA-13S
- IC XLR: Organic Audio; Vermöuth Audio Reference; Acrolink 7N-A2070 Leggenda
- Digital IC: Fadel art DigiLitz; Harmonic Technology Cyberlink Copper; Apogee Wyde Eye; Monster Cable Interlink LightSpeed 200
- USB cables: Wireworld Starlight; Fidata HFU2; Vermöuth Audio Reference
- Speaker cables: Signal Projects Hydra; Vermöuth Audio Reference Loudspeaker Cable + SHUBI Custom Acoustic Stands MMS-1
- Power cables: Furutech FP-3TS762 / FI-28R / FI-E38R; Organic Audio Power + Furutech CF-080 Damping Ring; Acoustic Zen Gargantua II; Furutech Nanoflux Power NCF
- Power distribution board: Furutech e-TP60ER + Furutech FP-3TS762 / Fi-50 NCF(R) /FI-50M NCF(R)
- Wall power socket: Furutech FT-SWS(R)
- Anti-vibration platform: Franc Audio Accessories Wood Block Slim Platform
- Switch: Silent Angel Bonn N8 + Silent Angel S28 + Silent Angel Forester F1 + Luna Cables Gris DC
- Ethernet cables: Neyton CAT7+; Audiomica Anort Consequence + Artoc Ultra Reference + Arago Excellence; Furutech LAN-8 NCF; Next Level Tech NxLT Lan Flame
- Table: Solid Tech Radius Duo 3
- Acoustic panels: Vicoustic Flat Panels VMT

Opinion 2

Our today's meeting will not be the usual review of electronics or loudspeakers. It even will not revolve around an anti-vibration accessory. Instead we will have a look on the effect of removing unwanted, parasitic electric charges hiding in unused inputs and outputs of your audio components. This topic is often omitted by many of us, as you may think, that what could negatively affect the performance of your whole system, if there is no signal flowing through any unused connections. But this is a mistake. Of course, you can negate it, as each and every system, even one badly assembled, will produce sound. But things look different when we are talking to extract the last bits of performance, funding it the best possible working environment. How? For many it can be a shock, but colloquially speaking, we are removing the potential electrical charges from unused signal sockets. Yes, yes, in the big world the problem is known and it turns out to be significant enough, that a renowned brand known from cables and other accessories, Furutech, decided to deal with it. And with the help from the Polish distributor of the brand, the Katowice based RCM, we have received three kinds of inconspicuously looking signal “cleaners” Furutech Clear Line RCA and male and female XLR.





How do the tested products look? You can see that on the pictures, so we have here something that looks like typical RCA and XLR plugs, with the difference, that they have different colors and are plugged with stoppers in the place, where the cable would be. But this is not all, as the Japanese engineers applied inside those plugs ceramic, audio grade capacitors, coated with a layer of damping material, to dissipate the charges. When talking about the carcasses of the Clear Line, their construction is based on liquid crystal polymer resin NCF, made from nylon, glass fiber, crystalline piezoelectric nano-particles, carbon dust and NCF based anti-resonance material, used also for production of Alpha copper, rhodium plated connectors. What is the reason for using such materials? According to the manufacturer usage of the tested plugs should ensure that we get the best possible sound experience. But how is it in reality? Let me discuss that in the next paragraph.

This may seem strange to some of you, but the accessories coming from Japan really do work. Most importantly, they do it in a way that was described by the manufacturer, cleaning the sound coming from our speakers. The result of that is the removal of excessive ambient noise from the music reproduced. The sound becomes cleared and free from that veil covering the virtual stage. This translates proportionally into an increase of energy and dynamics of the sound. The removal of sonic dirt allows the quietest sounds to shine, we hear more than only the loudest ones, so we can listen to music with lower amounts of decibels, and also hear a wealth of artefacts, that could be regarded as symbolic, but in fact very important, as they really enrich the music. It becomes more colorful, more virtuoso, with an enriched palette of different impulses, and thus more interesting than before. It is so intensive, that when listening to lyrical creations – jazz, classical or vocal music – there is much more emotion touching our soul, and with rock or electronic music, the elimination of those sonic litter allows us to turn the volume knob up. Do you think this is not relevant? If yes, then you are mistaken, because in both cases, distortion massacres the readability of the material, and as such, the joy of listening. And the fact, that each of the genres gains in different aspects of their existence, then this is the result not only the intentions of the artists, but, I would even say most of all, of the abilities of the recording engineer. Unfortunately this is an issue with most rock productions, so if we have any tools to influence the final quality of our beloved music, we have to utilize them skillfully. But what do I mean with “skillfully”? Well, as it often happens, we can exaggerate with any action. While one NCF Clear Line does its thing, and it has spectacularly positive results, applying two will amplify the effect of calmness. It will still be a good move, but I can see situations, where it could become too much of the good thing. But this is something you will need to test on your own system. But what happens if you use three? As you can imagine, the final sound evolves in the direction of using the second one, and thus will probably end in becoming too sweet. This is of course no allusion to the Furutech accessories, because always too much is too much, but I have also mentioned, that the reaction to those will be the individual reaction of the system in question. I easily used two pieces. And the effect? Let me put it this way. In jazz there were times when I felt coming close to the sensibility of using that amount of those cleaners, but in rock, this was the water to the mill for this kind of instrument misuse, regardless of the quality of the recording. So as usual, we need to make some kind of compromise, larger or smaller. Is it a bad thing? Not at all. It is always better to have a choice than not to have it and be confined to just one option.

So reaching the finale of this text, I am obligated to define, if there is sense in using this kind of accessories at all, and who would I recommend them to. I hope, that from the report from listening I wrote above it is clear, that the Furutech NCF Clear Line is not just a toy for the rich, but an almost indispensable tool in reaching the highest possible

quality of sound. How many of them you should use is the result of personal choice. And as I mentioned the necessity of our own actions on this field, the amount of potential beneficiaries remains unknown. And with this I could say, that everybody should test those devices in their system, as those can become another big step in chasing the ultimate sound.

Jacek Pazio

System used in this test:

Source:

- transport: CEC TL 0 3.0
- streamer: Lumin U2 Mini + switch Silent Angel Bonn N8
- DAC: dCS Vivaldi DAC 2.0
- Master clock: Mutec REF 10 SE-120
- reclocker: Mutec MC-3+USB
- Shunyata Research Omega Clock
- Shunyata Sigma V2 NR
- Preamplifier: Gryphon Audio Pandora
- Power amplifier: Gryphon Audio Apex Stereo
- Loudspeakers: Gauder Akustik Berlina RC-11 Black Edition
- Speaker cables: Synergistic Research Galileo SX SC

IC RCA: Hijiri Million „Kiwami”, Vermouth Audio Reference

IC XLR: Tellurium Q Silver Diamond, Hijiri Milion „Kiwami”, Siltech Classic Legend 880i

Digital IC: Hijiri HDG-X Milion

Ethernet cable: NxLT LAN FLAME

Power cables: Hijiri Takumi Maestro, Furutech Project-V1, Furutech NanoFlux NCF, Furutech DPS-4.1 + FI-E50 NCF(R)/ FI-50(R), Hijiri Nagomi, Vermouth Audio Reference Power Cord, Acrolink 8N-PC8100 Performante, Synergistic Research Galileo SX AC

– Table: BASE AUDIO 2

– Accessories: Harmonix TU 505EX MK II, Stillpoints ULTRA SS, Stillpoints ULTRA MINI, antivibration platform by SOLID TECH, Harmonix AC Enacom Improved for 100-240V, Harmonix Room Tuning Mini Disk RFA-80i

– Power distribution board: POWER BASE HIGH END

– Acoustic treatments by Artnovion

Analog stage:

– Drive: Clearaudio Concept

– Cartridge: Essence MC

– Phonostage: Sensor 2 mk II

– Eccentricity Detection Stabilizer: DS Audio ES-001

– Tape recorder Studer A80

Distributor: **RCM**

Manufacturer: **Furutech**

Prices

NCF Clear Line RCA: 1 199 PLN

NCF Clear Line XLR: 1 675 PLN

Link do tekstu: [Furutech NCF Clear Line English ver.](#)