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POSITIVE FEEDBACK ONLINE - ISSUE 23

REVIEWS
 hardware

acrolink and oyaide

AC power cables

as reviewed by Victor Chavira and Danny Kaey



one

Power cables are an important link in the audio chain. A good power cord upgrade can have the same positive effect on music as a component upgrade. Power cables can also be a source of electromagnetic noise. A good power cord will address noise and shielding far better than a generic stock power cord. I recently had the opportunity to audition a very effective and affordable power cable from Acrolink.

Acrolink 6N-P4030PC power cables are manufactured in Japan (imported by the Lotus Group) and constructed from six nines oxygen free copper. The cables are terminated with one of three Oyaide AC plugs. My review sample came with rhodium over silver blades. Direct gold and palladium over gold blades are also available for additional cost. Nothing seems unusual so far. However, Alan Kafton of Audio Excellence AZ, then cryo-treats each power cord twice followed by an accelerated break-in process on his proprietary Cable Cooker. For a more detailed discussion on the advantages of cryogenics, consult the articles on the topic in the previous issue.

VICTOR CHAVIRA'S SYSTEM

LOUDSPEAKERS

Marten Design Miles II (primary system) and B&W DM 302 (secondary system).

ELECTRONICS

Magnum Dynalab MD-208 receiver (primary system) and Troll integrated (secondary system).

SOURCES

Phillips DVD-963SA player (primary system) and Apple Mini-Mac (secondary system) and a LINN Axiss turntable with the Adikt cartridge.

CABLES

Nordost Quattro-Fil interconnects, Analysis Plus Oval 9 speaker cables, and El Dorado power cords (primary system). JPS Ultraconductor speaker cable, Nordost Blue Heaven interconnect (secondary system).

ACCESSORIES

Audio Magic Stealth Power Purifier, Vibrapods, Townshend 3D sink Table), and Echo Busters (primary system). Monster Cable HTS1000 power center (secondary system).

**Oyaide 037 plugs (rhodium-over-silver)**

The Acrolink power cable was first inserted into another cryogenically treated device, my Audio Magic Stealth Power Purifier. The result was not subtle. While listening to Neil Young's new CD *Pairie Wind*, I was impressed with the improvement in noise reduction. The background became notably darker and silent. On a song such as "Falling Off the Face of the Earth", Young sings just above a whisper. With less grunge in the system, his voice and guitar were rendered with finer resolution. Musical pitches and durations sounded more precise and focused.

The second area of improvement was dynamics. Edgar Varèse's *Ionisation* as performed by the Los Angeles Philharmonic under Zubin Metha is challenging and dynamic composition for percussion. The Acrolink power cord seemed to allow components upstream to create effortlessly explosive crescendos. Musical momentum was also noticeably enhanced. Pace, rhythm, and timing advanced with greater accuracy and swing.

I substituted the Acrolink with the power chords in each of my components and experienced similar improvements over my Nordost El Dorado power cords. However, the most effective results were noted when the Acrolink was connected from the AC wall outlet to the Audio Magic Stealth. I also plugged the Acrolink into my 27 inch flatscreen LCD TV. I was pleasantly surprised to see that images appeared more focused and colors more vibrant.

Although I only had the Acrolink power cord for a brief time, I was greatly impressed with its performance and price. My Nordost El Dorado power cords are very good but they were clearly surpassed by the Acrolink, Oyaide, cryo'ed cords. Alan Kafton should call the Acrolink power chords "Sling of David" because they are giant killers. I look forward to purchasing an Acrolink in the near future and experimenting with the different blade compositions. Also, stay tuned for a review of the double cryogenically treated Oyaide AC wall outlets. **Victor Chavira**

two

In my review of Alan Kafton's exceptional [Power Wing](#) in the last issue of *PFO*. I mentioned his new high-value Acrolink power cords, which have the same jewel-like Oyaide receptacles that are featured in the Power Wing. I was so impressed with these world-class value leaders that I felt the need to dig a little deeper and give them a separate review. It almost seems oxymoronic to use the words "value" and "world-class" in the same sentence, but I have no choice but to refer to these astounding power cords in this way.

To be honest, I am not sure whether I am reviewing the Acrolink 6N-P4030PC power cords or the process by which Alan Kafton turns the stock copper cords into

DANNY KAEY'S SYSTEM**LOUDSPEAKERS**

Marten Design Miles II.

ELECTRONICS

E.A.R. 899 integrated and
E.A.R. 324 phono stage.

SOURCES

Sony SCD-1 CD player,
Brinkmann LaGrange w/2-arm
and Brinkmann EMT cartridge.
Brinkmann Tube Power Supply.

CABLES
Audio Magic and Analysis Plus
interconnect and speaker
cables.

monsters by a double-cryogenic treatment process that is quite unlike the process used by others. (See Dave Clark's [interview](#) with the gentleman behind the process in *PFO* Issue 21.) After achieving success with the Power Wing, Kafton felt the need to provide a truly world-class power cord at a reasonable price. In a world in which you can spend thousands of dollars for a power cord, \$400 or so seems beyond cheap. If, for some reason, you think that low cost and high-end sound don't go together, you are doing yourself a disservice and should be reconsidering your position, not to mention saving yourself a whole lot of money. That's how good these power cords are!

Each cord begins life as 6-Ns copper wire made by the Acrolink company in Japan. Both ends are then terminated with ultra-high-quality Oyaide receptacles, in one of three plating choices—gold over gold, rhodium over silver, and palladium over gold—each of which offers its own sonic picture. I must admit that I wondered whether this was just a tad too much, although at the price (rhodium/silver is \$400 for a 1.5m cord, gold is \$425, and palladium/gold is \$450), you don't have to spend much to find out.

The first time I heard the double-cryo'ed Acrolink power cords was at a friend's house. His system was fitted with a whole bunch of Shunyata's top-of-the-line, \$2000 power cords, so it was truly one of those "wait and see" moments. The wait was over quickly. About 10 to 15 seconds after inserting ONE gold-plated Acrolink cord in the system, all of us had expressions of ecstasy on our faces. The Acrolink cord was not only better than the Shunyata, it completely trounced it in all respects. How's that for a shocker AND a bargain? The music was simply more present, yet it didn't sound artificially enhanced. The Acrolink cord simply allowed electrical signals to come through with less restriction. A simple copper cord (albeit double-cryo'ed) was able to dethrone a product generally regarded as world class? You better believe it! And the best part was that more Acrolinks (and fewer Shunyatas) improved things even more.

A few weeks later, Alan presented me with one pair each of the new power cords. Because I was finishing my review of the Power Wing, I was all the more eager to find out what would happen if my entire system were powered with double-cryo'ed, Oyaide-equipped power cords. As was the case at my friend's house, the results were nothing short of jaw dropping. Good recordings became even better. My Marten Design Duke loudspeakers and Velodyne DD-15 subwoofer gave me so much more of the music that I couldn't believe I had merely switched out a power cord. I was already in audio nirvana by way of the Power Wing, but adding the power cords gave me a sonic picture even more full of the colors of the sonic spectrum. The sound was vivid, dynamic, silent, and natural, all at once.



Oyaide 079 plugs (direct gold)



Oyaide 046 plugs (palladium-over-gold)

Running each version of the cord "naked" (i.e., without the aid of the Power Wing) showed me that the Oyaide receptacles give pretty much the same sonic picture as the Oyaide outlets employed in the Wing. The gold receptacles sounded rich, colorful (not colored!), vibrant, and three-dimensional. The palladium/gold receptacles had greater resolution and enhanced higher frequencies, though they also sounded a tad cooler. The rhodium/silver receptacles were my favorites, as they offered all of the vividness of the gold cords, but without the extra bit of sweetness. They retained the gold cords' phenomenal soundstaging, along with incredible dynamics and presence. Playing the recent RCA SACD of Gershwin's *Piano Concerto* was revelatory. The dynamic swings were simply amazing. Bass also seemed more present on Zero7's first album. The recordings of the French band Phoenix (which you may have heard during the movie *Shallow Hal*), which are incredibly un-digital (if somewhat on the warm and syrupy side of neutral), sounded their best with the rhodium/silver cords. The gold cords added another layer of refined smoothness, but on some CDs, the sound was a bit too warm. The point here is that you must experiment with all three connector types. Only in direct comparison will their differences emerge, and only your personal preference can guide you. I preferred the rhodium/silver and palladium/gold cords, as they suited my system and tastes better than the gold cords, and much better than any of the other cords I had been fooling around with.

I was fortunate to receive the Acrolink power cords while the Power Wing was still available to me. If you happened not to read my review of the Wing, suffice it to say that you will be hard pressed to find a better solution to your line conditioning needs, especially at the Wing's very reasonable, direct-to-consumer price. Couple that with the exceptional follow-up service that Alan Kafton provides, and you have what may be the best line conditioner on the market. Coupling the Wing with the exceptional Acrolink power cords will leave you with the following issues to resolve: How many power cords does your system require, and what configuration of Oyaide connectors should you choose? You will no doubt end up acquiring a Wing (if you don't already have one), and wiring your entire system with these magic power cords, as the effects of the Acrolinks and those of the Power Wing are altogether cumulative.

Is there a better power cord out there? I'm sure that someone is already working on one, or it already exists, but I haven't heard it. Was my revelatory experience that much better than, say, a component upgrade? Unless you try it for yourself, you will never know, though my guess is that the Acrolink power cords and the Power Wing will allow your components to give the best sound that they have to offer. **Danny Kaey**

Retail 1.5 meter pricing

With Oyaide 037 plugs (rhodium-over-silver): \$400

With Oyaide 079 plugs (direct gold): \$425

With Oyaide 046 plugs (palladium-over-gold): \$450