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Review: Namiki Symmetry Response RCA Interconnects

Posted Sunday, July 9, 2017 by [miy-taww](#)

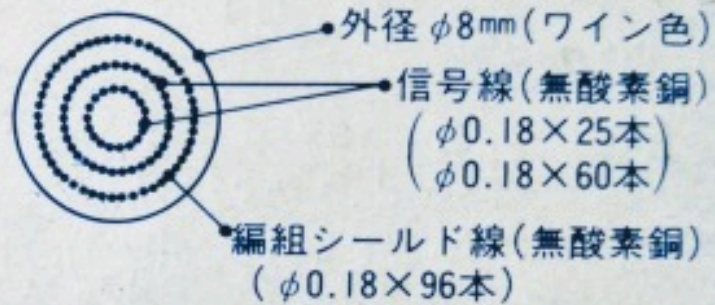


Flexible, musically engaging and boasting an interesting construction twist, this IC is a great option if your system needs an energy boost.

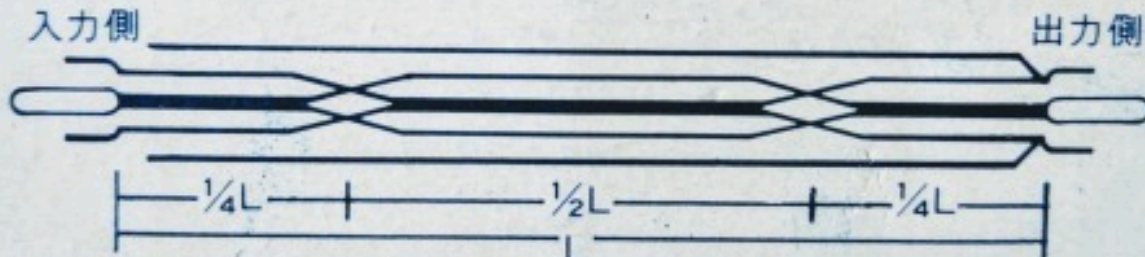
When I moved to the California Bay Area, I finally had the opportunity to spend some time with the amiable CC Poon of [Monarchy Audio](#). Now retired, he still enjoys dabbling with gear and has a warehouse full of goodies from his years in the industry. One of the interesting things he dug up was a stash of interconnects from Japan that he bought back in the 80's, the "Symmetry Response (SR) Cord" from a company called Namiki. He's now selling these for \$249 per 1M pair (\$299 for 1.5M), and asked me to give them a listen.

● 直流抵抗: $0.03 \Omega / \text{m}$ 静電容量: $260 \text{pF} / \text{m}$

● 構造: 電線断面



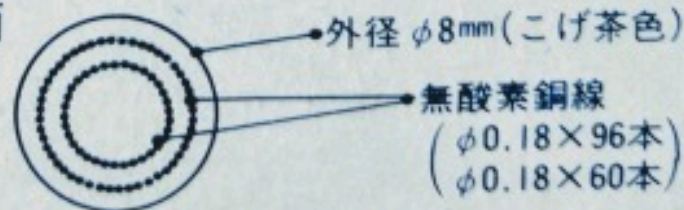
シンメトリー接続



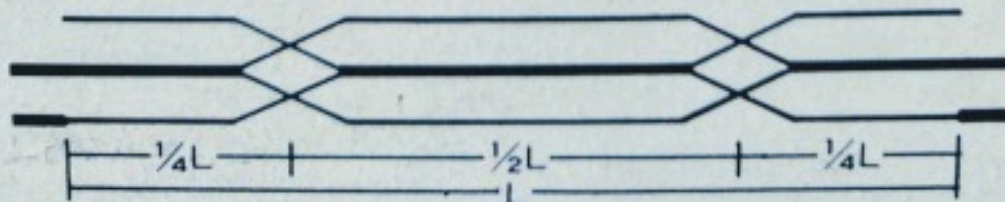
★スピーカーコード

● 直流抵抗: $0.015 \Omega / \text{m}$

● 構造: 電線断面



シンメトリー接続



Google Translate, not so helpful... 😞

The packaging is almost entirely in Japanese and the Google Translate app was of limited usefulness, so here's CC's explanation of the cable's design:

- The cable has 3 layers of conductors
- The length of the cable is divided into three sections
- When the signal has traveled $\frac{1}{4}$ length along the cable, the pure copper conductor layers carrying the signal exchange positions (per diagram attached)
- When the signal has traveled a further half length ($\frac{1}{2}$) of the cable, the layers change back to the same configuration as the first $\frac{1}{4}$, thus completing the final $\frac{1}{4}$ length
- Real symmetry is now achieved (as the name implies)

Hmm... the electrical engineer in me is skeptical, but hey, as long as it sounds good...

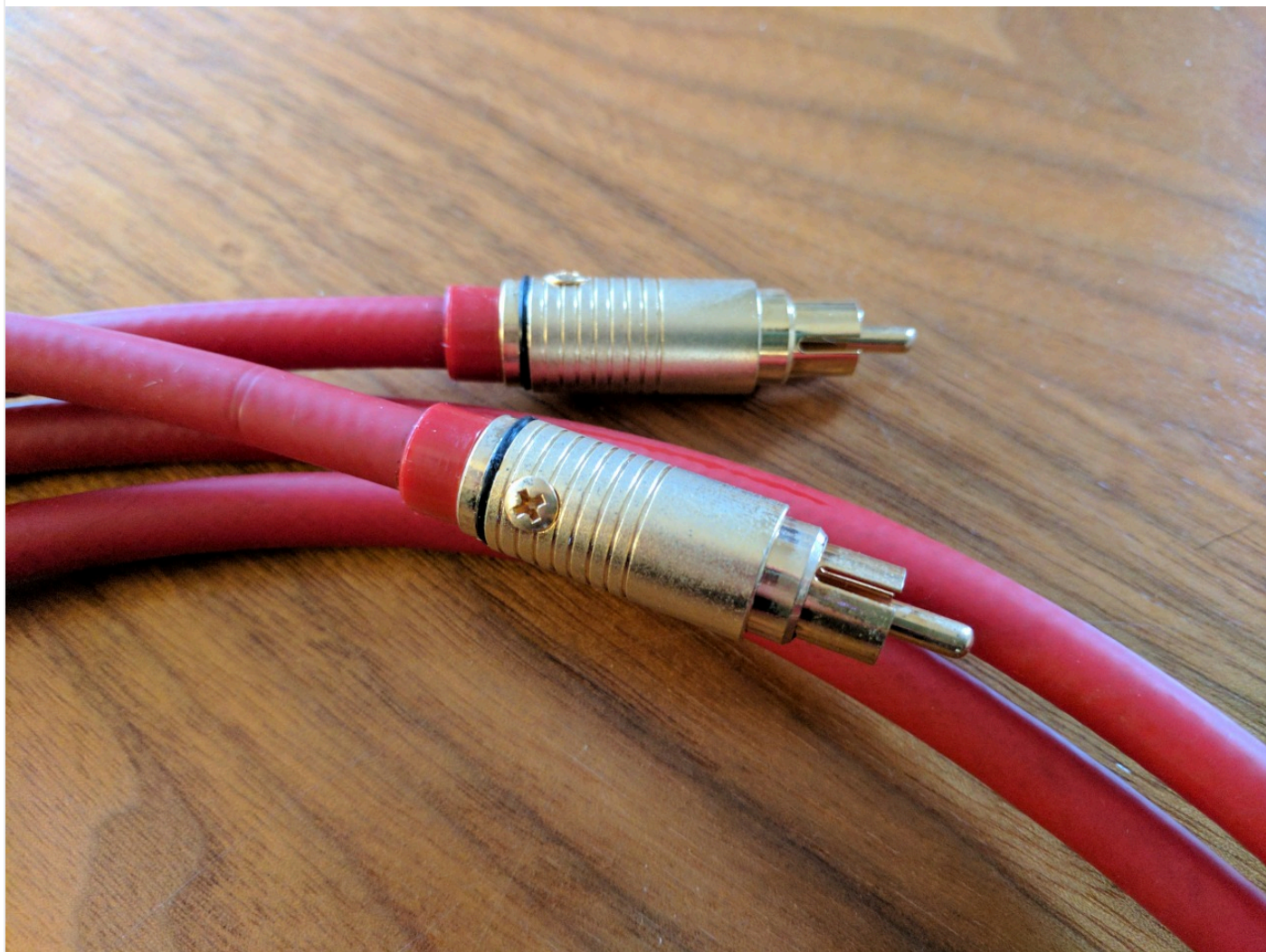
More materially, rated capacitance is rated at 260pF per meter (about 80pF/ft), resistance 0.015Ω per meter. The capacitance figure is pretty moderate, so I don't expect it to cause any problems with finicky source components. Resistance is typically inconsequential in an IC since it's a high impedance circuit, but just as a matter of trivia, it's about equivalent to a 16.5 gauge wire which is more in speaker wire range.

The SR Cord is on thick side (8mm outer diameter), but the satin-finish red jacket is flexible and easy to handle, though there are thick collets ¼th down from each end where as explained above the conductors are criss-crossed. Peeking under the RCA, it appears to be a fairly conventional coaxial wire with a stranded copper center, solid polymer dielectric and stranded copper outer conductor. The diagram seems to imply it's a triaxial cable, but I couldn't confirm this on visual inspection - it's possible there's a foil shield somewhere in there though. (I would hope so, as having the signal ride on the outside of the cable with no shielding doesn't seem like a great idea.) The collets have directional indicators which I followed.



Collets where the conductors are alternated - rather thick, so watch out for snags.

The RCA conductors look fairly conventional but are gold plated, nicely machined and tight-fitting. One weird detail was that the red and black washers, instead of indicating left and right wires, were actually alternated at the ends of each cable, which made no sense whatsoever. I wound up unscrewing the collet and switching them around to the traditional arrangement.



The RCAs are conventional, but have good strain relief and a tight fit.

So how does it sound?

With the obvious qualification that a cable has no “sound” of its own, only in the context of a system and relative to something else... This a bold, energetic cable that doesn’t pull any punches. Swapping them in place of my long-term reference, the DH Labs Air Matrix (\$295/1m pair), between either a Monarchy Audio NM24 DAC or Cambridge Stream Magic 6 v2 streamer and the Bryston B60 integrated was like moving several rows up in the hall and giving the performers a shot of espresso - everything felt more up up front, dynamic and colorful. For instance, when listening to the fast movement of a Haydn Symphony, virtuosic violin passages had more verve and sparkle, as if the section was trying to show off a little more. Brass fanfares punched across the stage with more bite, and solos projected more boldly. I don’t know if the low resistance of the wire is a factor, but music feels like it flows unimpeded through the SR Cord.

The other thing that stood out was the solidity of the lower frequencies, from the bass all the way up through the lower midrange. It was fuller than the DH Labs, giving cellos and bass more body and pushing a bit more energy to my REL T-9 subwoofer. Vocals also had great fullness and presence - Ella Fitzgerald sounded positively gripping. I really enjoyed this aspect as my Merlin TSM's tend towards leanness, and this balanced things out well. I found the sonic character very consistent between the opamp-based Cambridge DAC and the tube-based Monarchy, though it felt like a better match for the Cambridge.

There were some negatives. The top end was a tad hotter and rougher than the DH Labs - my wife almost immediately commented on the brightness. It wasn't bothersome to me, but the treble from the DH Labs is more delicate and refined. Imaging and soundstaging were also superior on the DH Labs - the SR Cord by comparison lacked some air and compressed the depth of the stage, particularly in complex orchestral passage. Sections and instruments in an orchestra are more clearly delineated on the DH Labs, which generally sounds more polished and nuanced.

Is the SR Cord too much? That will depend on your tastes and system. If it already tends towards hotness and forwardness, it might push things over the top. E.g. with my modified Bryston B60, which tends towards mellowness, it was a great match; with the more assertive and ruthlessly transparent Ayre AX-7e, decidedly less so. It's certainly not the most refined wire I've heard, but I loved the boldness and confidence with which music burst of the stage. If you feel like your system could use a shot of adrenaline and presence, the Namiki SR Cord could be just the trick.

Recommended.

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Namiki Symmetry Response Cord RCA interconnect

\$249 per 1m pair

\$299 per 1.5m pair

Monarchy Audio

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#audio #interconnect #wire #rca #review

Jul 9th, 2017

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