

Mojo Audio Lucent Interconnects

Chris Reardon-Noblet



Mojo Audio Lucent
Copper Interconnects



Mojo Audio Lucent
Silver Interconnects

SUBTLY ATTRACTIVE in appearance like a tailored tuxedo, the Mojo Audio Lucent interconnects bespeak a quiet sense of quality – the Lucent Copper perhaps a Joseph Abboud and the Lucent Silver, with its carbon fiber and stainless steel-barreled connectors, a Hugo Boss.

Both cables use ribbons – of copper or silver reflecting nomenclature – with micro dielectric coating and in a Teflon tube for a near-air dielectric, according to Benjamin Zwickel of Mojo Audio. This configuration “all but eliminates the capacitive effects caused by dielectric absorption, and our edge-oriented parallel ribbon geometry minimizes inductive effects caused by conductor proximity.”

The Lucent interconnects are lightweight and flexible. They route easily and drape nicely, especially if you orient the RCA plugs appropriately in their sockets to account for the ribbon cables’ nearly flat cross-section. The Furutech connectors’ cable clamps are of excellent design, providing a smooth, positive connection without necessitating undue force when unplugging (if you’ll pardon the description).

The Furutech CF-126R (Lucent Silver) and FP-126R (Lucent Copper) both incorporate Furutech’s Alpha-OCC cryogenically treated and demagnetized rhodium-plated center pins and negative leaf contacts. The CF-126R’s case or body uses the firm’s patented piezo ceramic compound covered by stainless steel and carbon fiber. Both have Teflon insulation, differing only in barrel construction. Each interconnect is available with either connector, price varying based on length of cable and model of connector. See Mojo’s web site for more info.

Nota Bene: This is an entirely subjective review. I’ve heard obvious and even gross differences in analogue interconnects from my early days in this hobby, long before the internet filled up with vituperative missives pro and con on the subject. In a very positive way, the Mojo Lucent have again confirmed to me the importance of actually listening when it comes to purchasing interconnects.

In the equipment array for this review, I used analogue interconnects solely between my Benchmark DAC1 HDR preamplifier and Parasound Halo A21 stereo power amplifier. I only used digital sources

where no other analogue interconnect would be required in the reproduction chain. The preamp and amplifier are very well designed in terms of output and input characteristics. Both accept RCA as well as XLR connectors. This minimized the possibility of sonic differences resulting from electrical mismatches or colorations introduced by other analog interconnects. Moreover, both manufacturers opine that their designs require no great expense on cables beyond a good level of quality. Following this reasoning since first putting this system together, I used Canare Star quad balanced analog conductors with XLR connectors at a cost of about \$70 for the pair. They had provided very good sound.

tament to the benefit of balanced interconnects.

When the Mojo Audio Lucent interconnects arrived, Mojo owner Benjamin Zwickel cautioned that they were only halfway broken in (the Furutech connectors require hundreds of hours to sound their best). Identical in basic construction, both cables have “floating” shields grounded at one end. Mojo Audio suggests trying them both ways in terms of signal direction, but ground-at-preamp is how I roll.

With the freshly installed Lucent Copper, I decided to have a sneak preview via my Magneplanar 1.7 loudspeakers. I immediately heard an improvement over the Canare-based and Chord interconnects across a variety of listening material. I perceived an extended frequency

I have never heard the elements of this music so clearly, so precise yet soulful, and so delicate yet swinging.

Upon learning that I would review the Mojo Audio’s RCA interconnects, I swapped out the balanced XLR cables for an excellent one-meter pair of Chorus Anthem 2 interconnects (current price circa \$500) with RCA connectors, just to provide myself a baseline. I heard insignificant differences between the Canare-based and Chorus cables, which I then considered a tes-

response; more pronounced, dynamic and coherent bass; incrementally more lucid vocals and instrumental tonality, and somewhat more coherent imaging against blacker backgrounds. The only significant departure from neutrality that I sensed was a slight emphasis on leading edge transients and a slight diminution of decay trails. In this particular regard, the Lucent reminded me of the attractive character of classic Naim components I own and treasure.

I let the Lucent Copper interconnects burn in for 150 hours (using a USB drive filled with a wide variety of music via my Oppo player set on “repeat”) before listening again, at which time my initial impressions were confirmed. With the Lucent Copper interconnects I felt a closer connection with the music than with the two other interconnects I had used previously. I found listening more stimulating. I *enjoyed* it more. To quote an old Naim saying: There was more *music*. This was achieved with an interconnect that, while indeed more expensive than the balanced Canare-based cable, costs about half the price of my previous reference, the Chorus Anthem 2. This initial impression of the Lucent Copper was confirmed by week after week of continued listening across a wide range of CD and 24/96-based media, during which time the sound did indeed continue to improve. (Yes, I often heard details in familiar recordings that I hadn’t noticed before.) Conclusion: The Lucent Copper is a fine interconnect and a great value.

I then replaced them with the Lucent Silver interconnects and let those interconnects burn in by the same method. Five days later, I sat down to listen. At first, I was disappointed. Everything seemed sonically vague. Vague as in flaccid bass, flattened imaging, similar-sounding sibilants and limited dynamic response. I checked the Lucent Silver’s orientation. Same as the Lucent Copper. “Jeez,” I thought. But since Benjamin Zwickel had indeed warned me that the Furutech connectors could take hundreds of hours to break in properly, I left the Silvers in my system, cranked the preamp’s volume up to maximum and went away for another week.

NOTES

Mojo Audio Lucent Ribbon RCA Interconnects, copper with Furutech FP-126R plugs, \$299.95 per one-meter pair; silver with Furutech FP-126R plugs, \$699.95 per one-meter pair; connector upgrade to CF-126R, \$200.00 additional. Mojo Audio, 1971 McKees Rocks Road, McKees Rocks, PA 15136; phone 412/735-3618, web site www.mojo-audio.com, various contact methods via web site.

Associated Equipment

Benchmark DAC1-HDR preamp and DAC; Parasound Halo A21 stereo power amplifier; Oppo BDP-93 universal network 3D Blu-ray disc player connected via e-SATA to G Technology 500-GB G-Drive; Sony X33ES cd player as transport via optical cable; MacBook computer via Airport Extreme, USB cable and optical cable; Kimber 8TC speaker cable in shotgun configuration; Magneplanar 1.7 loudspeakers; PS Audio P300 Power Plant a.c. regenerator; LAT International AC-2 power cords; iTunes, Decibel and Pure Music playback software.

And *what* a difference that week did make! When I returned, turned on my power amp, and sat down to listen, from the first notes, I was amazed. Glorious, intoxicating sound. I had been prepared to swap out the Lucent Silvers and focus this review on the Coppers – but what I now heard was the finest sound from any system I’ve owned. The ugly duckling interconnect had become a swan; a link purportedly only needing to be task-adequate had enabled a new level of sound quality. *Whodathunk?*

Analysis or pleasure? Take your pick. To wit: Nick Drake’s *Five Leaves Left*, which I first heard on LP in 1970 and which I rank among the greatest singer-songwriter albums ever recorded. More than ever before, listening to a 2000 Universal/Island-remastered British CD I was able to appreciate Drake’s precise elocution – saw-toothed Zs, hissing Ss, velvety V’s – the unique vocal quality of his slight tonal wobbles around a true pitch; his extraordinary colors; the alternately flutey, feathery, woody, always rounded vocal tones; his nasality not in the sense of whiny but in the rich resonance of Drake’s vocal oeuvre. There is up-close, “you are there” reproduction of his virtuosic steel-string finger picking. Accompanying string instruments go from resinous to sweet. While I had never heard the elements of this music so clearly, I’ve also never been able to wallow in its gestalt so freely – precise yet soulful, delicate yet swinging.

Analysis combined with raw enjoyment, detail with gestalt: To me those are the benefits of transparency to the source, which is what the Mojo Audio Lucent Silver enables in my listening area. I won’t bore you with further description, suffice it to say I traversed score upon score of songs from doo wop to hip hop,

many of which I’ve grown to know intimately from hundreds of listenings over the years. Each seems freshened, carrying an impact close to a first listening, the recording seemingly a generation closer to the master tape. Characteristics of acoustic space and/or artificial reverb were particularly well reproduced. It was fascinating to so easily hear two or more discrete reverberation characteristics on some multitrack recordings, reproduced with continuousness and coherence. No, I wasn’t smoking anything. But do you get it that I am completely taken with the Lucent Silvers?

I’ve learned, sometimes through expensive mistakes, that cost does not always correlate with performance or listening pleasure in this hobby of ours – at least in the price ranges where I’ve been able to experiment. This is especially true with regard to speakers, phono cartridges, turntables and interconnects. But I can say this about the Mojo Audio interconnects: The Lucent Copper is an excellent, highly competitive interconnect that punches well above its price range, however if you can afford the additional gelt the Lucent Silver just may bring your system to a new level of performance, as it did to mine. Both cables are highly recommended.

As well as a lifetime warranty for the original owner, Mojo Audio Includes a 45-day no-risk audition period during which the full purchase price will be refunded; a 90-day full value upgrade period, and a six-month period during which Mojo Audio will allow 80 per cent of the purchase price toward an upgrade. They will even credit 70 per cent to an owner who wishes to upgrade as long as a year after purchase. Those are some user-friendly terms!

Reprinted by permission of The Audiophile Voice

© 2012 Guts & Elbow Grease Publishing Ltd., P.O. Box 43537, Montclair, N.J. 07043.

Subscriptions are \$12.00 for six issues; \$24.00 for 12 issues or \$36.00 for 18 issues within the U.S., **Canadian subscriptions** are \$25.00 for six issues and \$42.00 for 12 issue, in U.S. dollars, please. Overseas subscriptions are \$66.00 for six issues.

Please make payment by check or money order in U.S. funds.

You can also use PayPal at our web site www.audiophilevoice.com.

We do not use credit cards so as to help keep overhead low.

Send payment, in U.S. funds, to

The Audiophile Voice, P.O. Box 43537, Upper Montclair, N.J. 07043

If you have a question, e-mail us at audiophilevoice@verizon.net or phone us at 973/509-2009.



TAV

Reprinted from
The Audiophile Voice
Vol. 15, No. 3