



Harmonix HS101-Improved-S



Cables from the Harmonix brand are regarded in the audiophile world as being among the best in the world. We will check, how the analog interconnect made by this company, will perform.

Users of Harmonix cables value it mostly for its not pretentious and incredibly musical sound. I personally, was always enchanted by its natural smoothness and lack of aggression in its sound, and that not at the cost of dynamics. In addition, the Harmonix wires are incredibly transparent – they approach the ideal of high fidelity – so they almost do not interfere with the transmitted signals. So if you want to change the sound of your system

by using a cable, the Japanese products probably will not meet your expectations, because they will not up some parts of the sound at the expense of others. This should not be treated as a drawback, absolutely not, in contrary, in audiophile products transparency is the most high appreciated characteristic, and this is also the reason, that Harmonix products are so often chosen by

owners of high end audio systems, as it does not impair the sound it.

I have dealt with many top cables offered by different brands, often very expensive, but a sound like the one offered by this Japanese cable is not to be found at this price level at any competition. The construction details and some other elements related to this cable are a highly protected I



secret of its manufacturer, but even if you would dismantle the cable to its elements, probably you would not know how it works. What is known, that while tuning those cables, many different elements are being taken into account, like inductiveness, capacity and other factors that are a part of the relationship between the conductor and the shield. Harmonix just has an idea and develops it. This Japanese manufacturer keeps on improving its cables, and the tested cable is a visible result of such a policy. In my opinion, the tested model HS101-Improved-S is the absolutely best construction in its price level Harmonix offers. This interconnect is a derivative of the earlier cable HS101 and at the same time the most advanced and developed model.

In case of the tested cable the manufacturer concentrated not only on the process of balancing the things

influencing the quality of the reproduced music, but also used materials and elements of higher quality than in case of previous models. For example the new plugs, with adjustable mounting force are drawing attention – the comfort of installing the cable improved, although I have to confess, that the cable is very stiff on a length of about 10cm from the plug (including the plug), what can be troublesome, when we try to using to bind gear placed near the wall. This is a detail that will not matter for most people, but I needed to mention it for completeness of my review.

Harmonix is almost obsessive about the quality of its products, and its success can be attributed also to the fact, that it takes care about the smallest things. It is worth knowing, that the cables with different lengths (0.75m, 1m, 1.5m) are tuned individually. So there is nothing like the cable being manufactured as a big spool of hundreds of meters of cable, that is being cut to the desired length. Here the cables slightly differ in details of the construction, like symmetry of the conductors or their thickness. It turns out, that even such small details are so important, that Harmonix decided to tune the cables individually.

ABSOLUTE SYNERGY!

Always when I used Harmonix cables, regardless if those were power cords, loudspeaker cables or interconnect⁺ always felt an almost infinite organicity in the sound. Plugging Harmonix cables into a stereo system result in an above average synergy and harmony, which I never encountered before. Of course there are many interesting products on market, some of which I could test myself, and which I respect highly example: Oyaide, Acrolink, Nordo Siltech. Much depends on person: preference or even sympathy. I confess, that for many years I like Harmonix products, and I never got disappointed. The Japanese succeeded in combining all the elements that compose high quality sound in such a coherent way, that Harmonix cables really cannot be praised for only one, chosen asset. For many high quality sound lovers this coherence and homogeneity in the sound of Harmonix is the key to quality. The tested HS101-Improved-S turns out to be better than its two years old predecessor, the HS101-Improved, in a very subtle way. The most visible are the external

differences – new, better plugs, massive and with regulated connection strength, what makes connecting more comfortable. The plating was also improved – now a combination of rhodium and gold is used. It is much harder to discern the differences in sound. The previous model was extremely good, so for the new one to be better, the company had to go for lengths. According to me they achieved that, by a hair, but still. In some aspects of the sound the new interconnect is a tad better. I am talking about the characteristics I value most in these Japanese cables, meaning coherence and musicality. Music rich in detail and differentiated sounded with an even higher finesse, the sound was smoother and the timbre even more natural. Listening to instrumental music, jazz and rock showed, that with this interconnect we have an even higher freedom of sound. This was incredible, how well a cable costing what it costs, can sound! Those small changes place this Harmonix cable in an even better position than its predecessor, because it can now compete with even more expensive competition.

Like I mentioned before, the main asset of this interconnect is the ideal transmission of the music while keeping incredible transparency. On the other hand plugging this cable into an at least correct sounding stereo system may increase the sound quality a lot – as if an invisible veil would be removed from the speakers. I recommend this interconnect to lovers of a true and natural music reproduction, who like to go a step further with their systems in terms of openness of the sound in aspects like timbre, breath, rhythm or musicality.

Arkadiusz Ogrodnik

HI-FI CHOICE Verdict

<p>SOUND QUALITY ★★★★★</p>	<p>Pros: Brilliant coherence between the individual parts of the sound spectrum, natural and unforced dynamics. A master of musicality!</p>
<p>PRICE/QUALITY ★★★★★</p>	<p>Cons: Too stiff near the plugs, may cause problems in installing in components placed near the wall.</p>
<p>MANUFACTURING ★★★★★</p>	<p>Conclusion: It does not impose any scheme of sound, rather perfectly blends into any kind of reproduced music, conveying the complete essence of the sound, without any constraints or coloring.</p>
<p>CAPABILITIES ★★★★★</p>	
<p>OVERALL ★★★★★</p>	