

Slinky by name ...and silver by nature By Greg Fleming

**Slinkylink interconnects. \$350 for 500mm,
\$400 for 1m**

**Slinkylink speaker cable. \$525 for 3m
terminated**

It's a well kept secret but New Zealand produces some world class audio equipment. Plinius and Perreux amplifiers, Image speakers and now Slinkylinks, which are as far as I know our first locally made cabling.

Interconnects (the wire that goes from the source to the amp) and speaker cabling (from the amp to the speaker) is a competitive and somewhat controversial industry overseas – with prices having recently reached the absurd (Nordost's Valhalla for example, a set of which will set you back a Ponsonby house deposit!!).

Some believe there's little difference between a cheap cable and those of extravagant prices. They're wrong of course – different cables do sound different and anyone serious about getting quality audio from their stereo should pay attention to them – although shelling out thousands is also ridiculous in my opinion.

At \$400 for a one metre RCA interconnect and \$525 for a three metre pair of speaker cables Slinkylinks are clearly aiming at the audiophile market. What sets their product apart is they're made of silver rather than the usual copper.

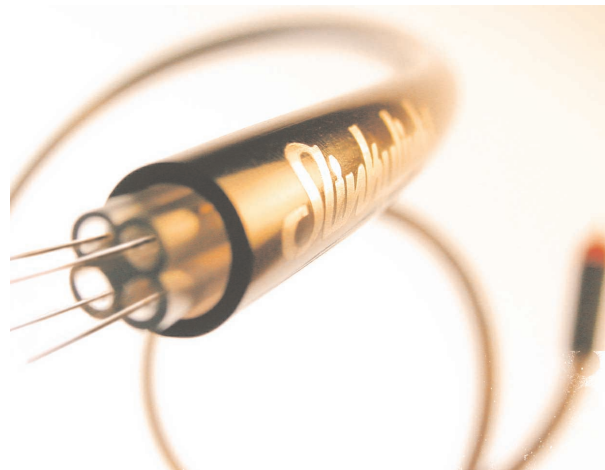
Furthermore the silver wire is surrounded by a layer of air thus there's nothing to interfere with signal – “Plastic coating kills cable” says the user manual. “Every time metal wire touches anything, the signal deteriorates... It's called dielectric loss and every material has its own dielectric property... The most optimum substance for leaving a signal intact is air... Slinkylinks unique design surrounds wire conductors in air, to deliver unhindered audiovisual signals.”

Unlike some, Slinkylinks don't attempt to blind you with science and keep their theoretical literature simple and approachable (if suspiciously vague). Impressive theory alone is worthless – it all depends on how it sounds whether it be made of silver, copper or lead!

Prices are very reasonable considering silver cables habitually fetch high prices. “Silver,” say Slinkylinks “is nature's best natural conductor. And thin is good too, the thinner the better. That's why Slinkylinks silver conductors are just 0.25mm thick.”

Plus the speaker cable is packaged fetchingly in what could pass for a biscuit tin. Cute.

Although the cables seem sturdy and well built – the tough “bullet-plug” RCA terminations are sourced from Eichmann Products in Australia and are in use on several well regarded interconnects in the USA and elsewhere – at first glance the Slinkylinks appear rather ordinary looking. Fine with me, no one ever sees the things anyway! How do they sound?



In my system the Slinkylinks replaced my Nordost Solar Wind (copper) interconnects (which retailed a couple of years back for around the same as the Slinkylink interconnect) and the speaker cables replaced my Audioquest Forrest + which at around \$500 also priced close to the Slinkylink speaker cable.

First off both new cable pairs sounded harsh and brittle – a sure sign that some break in time was needed. I returned to them three days later after having put CDs on repeat for that time. The improvement was palpable. Indeed I hadn't heard my system sound so dynamic especially at the top end – it was more open, more extended and more detailed.

On Ibrahim Ferrer's superb self-titled CD the musician's were more easily separated and subtle nuances unnoticed before were now apparent. Nice. There was more resolution all round – yet whilst the bass was tighter and faster than before it also seemed a little quieter in the mix, not as “fat” as I was used to. I also found that I needed to turn the volume higher to get the same level.



Whether the overall sound was better or worse than with my copper cabling really comes down to personal taste – though the characteristics of silver cables were quite distinctive to my ear. A superb top end, wonderful detail and faster, tighter bass – if that's what you like Slinkylinks are for you.

Do audition Slinkylinks as system synergy and personal taste account for much. If you're after silver cabling it's really a no-brainer. The Slinkylinks interconnect impressed me the most – things simply sounded more natural (what better qualification can one get?) and I'm seriously thinking of buying a pair.

The lack of a bi-wireable speaker cable is my only real complaint – especially when Slinkylinks are aimed at the audiophile. Slinkylinks recommend using two sets of Slinkylink speaker cables use with bi-wired speakers.

Slinkylinks can be proud of these products. Both hold their own with others costing three or four times the price and have the added advantage of being locally designed and manufactured.

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