Anchorwave Interconnect and Speaker Cable

Date Added: 11/01/2012 by Aaron Knock

My system:
Speakers: Focal 816V
Speaker Cables: LessLoss Anchorwave (3m)
Amp: Yamaha RX-A 3010
Interconnects: Kimber PBJ
Source: Cambridge Audio 650C
Power cords: LessLoss DFPC Original; LessLoss DFPC Signature
Power conditioner: LessLoss Firewall
Power distributor: Furutech e-TP60

Before the Anchorwave I used the Kimber PBJ interconnects ($150 for a 1m pair). I've been quite pleased with their performance. I don't like incremental upgrades (who does?), and so where the PBJs have been known to play ball with much more costly interconnects, I knew this was going to be an expensive endeavour. The nice thing about LessLoss is that, since you're buying straight from the company, you know you're probably paying nearly 2-3 times less than had they made the product available by importing, distributing, and then finally selling it to you through a dealer. So, even though the Anchorwaves cost 5 times what the Kimber does, there's consolation in the fact that you're probably getting what would otherwise be a $2000-plus interconnect, but for under a grand. Of course, the question comes to mind, "well, does the Anchorwave offer 5x better performance than the PBJ?" No. Of course not. But for me, the differences don't have to be 5x greater for them to be significant.

There were many significant reasons I chose the Anchorwave interconnects over others. First, I already have the Anchorwave loudspeaker cables, and I've been exceptionally pleased with their performance. Second, (and maybe this is the same as the first), for system synergy. Since I was already having excellent results with the Anchorwave speaker cables, and since I couldn't afford what seemed like the Holy Grail of interconnects (the LessLoss Tunnelbridge), it only made sense to completely employ this cable technology from the source to my loudspeakers. Third, the cost. I know from experience (also inferring from press and user reviews) that the loudspeaker cables perform very well among much more expensive cables. So it seemed reasonable to expect the same from the matching interconnects. Lastly, I knew that if by some chance this interconnect was a disaster, I would have no trouble getting my money back. All my previous experience with LessLoss suggests that Louis Motek makes great efforts to make customers happy. I don't know how he does it: runs the business and still finds time to quickly offer generous replies.

When I first listened to the cable, the thing that immediately struck me was the drop in noise. I expected that from the LessLoss power cables, but I didn't expect it like this from the interconnect. I mean, yes, I heard this kind of thing with the Anchorwave loudspeaker cables; I think it caught me off guard because I was now hearing that enhancement at the next level so-to-speak. I've recently placed my speakers even farther from the back wall. While it gave me a much better soundstage, I lost a lot of low end (no matter from where I evaluated in the room). With the Anchorwave interconnects I was very pleased to hear some of this bass restored. I also experienced something totally unexpected. I was listening to a song where the instrument positioning just sounded lop-sided on stage (like the right speaker was imaging the musicians lower than than the left). I'd always just written this off as a quirk in the recording. But when I heard the song through my new interconnects, the sound stage was balanced. That was a shocker. The other things I noticed were subtle improvements, probably from the drop in noise: I noticed an all around enhanced clarity and detail. I can say that some things sounded identical to the Kimber, particularly with sounds when you pay attention to the pronunciation of words in male and female vocals. Nevertheless, I haven't yet found anything that sounds worse. In the end, I must say, there certainly were notable differences from switching to the Anchorwave interconnects. It makes me want to listen to all my favourite tracks all over again, just to hear what I've been missing.

One thing I love about the interconnects is the locking connectors. I really appreciate having control over how tightly the connectors mate with my gear. Nothing feels cheap about this cable. From end to end, everything looks and feels as if it was very well built. The cable is reasonably flexible, so I had no problems installing it. Despite its simple external appearance, it has a certain element of beauty. It's nice to trot behind the components and admire it from time to time, especially if you become familiar with the technology inside.

Date Added: 10/07/2012 by Frank

I like playing with cables, in fact so much so I used to be in the business of making and selling them. I have not lost that fascination at all even now, so when the opportunity arose to evaluate some LessLoss Anchorwave RCA interconnects from Scott Nangle Audio [located in Scotland, UK], it piqued my curiosity and simply couldn't be missed.

I am told these are hand built with in-house materials and you can without any doubt see the quality and workmanship that has gone into these cables. The Anchorwave interconnects sent to me are oval in cross-section, are no lightweights either and have a large curious rectangular tag of faux leather "butterfly wing" near each connector that looks strange at best and makes connecting them up no easy task with vertically aligned RCA sockets, because they obscure the bottom socket if the topmost one is connected first. My tip is to connect to the bottom RCA socket first and aligning these "wings" out of the way to make connecting up the top set easier. I tried to slide them up the cable but they seem firmly attached to the connector. They do though give the cables a clear identity so they are unlikely to be confused with any other brand of cable.

Whenever I have a new set of interconnects to evaluate, I do my level best to ignore them during any burn-in period and will have the system on as background music only while I am busy doing other things, so it came as a surprise to me that this cable somehow DEMANDED my immediate attention. It wasn't drawing attention to itself by having luscious bass, or crisp treble, or fireworks a-plenty with vivid dynamics, but it was none of those in isolation that drew me into the sublime sounds these cables were producing, most unlike any other cable heard to date. There wasn't soaringly high treble definition to grab you, there wasn't a bottomless bass to beguile you, there wasn't a seamless midrange to enchant either, and yet there I was being drawn inexorably into the music I was hearing because of it's sheer involvement and taken well beyond the proverbial toe tapping stage, into the murky realms of me singing along with the music too. Gosh and yeuk too.

Many a time in the past while auditioning cables I will have had the "Crikey, not heard that before" moments as isolated events, but this cable turned those moments into an endless joined up procession of musical joy, so CD after CD went into the player long into the nights and time simply stood still for me. Even the CDs I would normally dread playing took on a whole new musical character, one of those being George Michaels "Older" album which has some awful stings in the treble registers and no shortage of sibilance that can be painful enough to keep the volume turned down low. The Anchorwave managed to untangle this recording and lose the sting, yet still present the fine treble, reverb and ambience details this CD has tucked away, so it isn't just masking or attenuating the treble either. When it comes to the bass registers, this cable had to beat my own all time favourite bass communicator from Virtual Dynamics in the shape of their Genesis interconnects - now sadly no more. The Anchorwave easily outperformed the Genesis in every respect, because while the Genesis was always bass articulate, coherent and never shy of the lowermost octaves, it sacrificed the topmost registers and midband accuracy to achieve that, whereas the Anchorwave has no such traits and reproduced the entire audible band with accuracy, neutrality and sheer musicality.

To sum up then, these cables don't "do hi-fi" and to me that sets them well apart from the herd which will have degrees of that trait in their make-up. What they do do, is transmit the music in a way that not too many folks are familiar with and if you have owned high end cables like Nordost and Chord it will come as a shock that a cable can be so MUSICAL and you can listen for many hours and then some. In value for money terms they are not cheap but I would see that as an investment rather than anyone continue on a journey for a long time trying cable after cable to find one with equal musicality. Would I buy them myself? Of course I would ;-)

Associated equipment:

Eastsound E5 CD player, XTZ Desire A-1000D3 amp, Focal Chorus 706V SE, Randall Research silver interconnects, Tellurium TQ Black speaker cables, Belkin conditioner

Date Added: 10/06/2012 by Aaron Knock

I love my new Anchorwave speaker cables. Like most, I only have so much money for hi-fi, so I try to make upgrades in as few steps as possible. I just might stick with these cables for the rest of my life.

Since owning the Anchorwave speaker cables, I've had chance to compare them against two very different cables: expensive Siltech cables, and relatively inexpensive Kimber 4TC. I'll discuss the Siltech comparison at length since it's more interesting.

The Siltech (model 770L) costs more than $4,000 more than the Anchorwave. The system belonged to a local hi-fi shop. It consisted of:

Moon 700i amp ($12,000)
Moon 750 DAC ($12,000)
Siltech 770i ($3,000)
Siltech 770L ($6,200)
Focal Electra 1028 Be ($9,000)
LessLoss DFPC Signatures / Firewall (provided by me)

What differences would I hear (if any)? Would they even be significant? Would I walk away disappointed with my Anchorwaves? I really didn't know what to expect. My dealer was quite clear (a very experienced fellow, but never heard of LessLoss) he said he'd tried high-end cables from Nordost and Cardas, (among other loudspeaker cables brands), but that for years, nothing has been able to compare to the Siltech. So, before I even finished unpacking the Anchorwaves, he laughed and told me that I was about to be seriously disappointed. I came in not knowing what to expect, but it seemed he already had it figured out before we even hit play.

This isn't about to be one of those glorious conversion stories. No, in fact my dealer is still determined to think the Anchowaves are an overpriced hi-performance cable. He said he'd prefer Kimber 4TC at $200 for 2m. Of course, I think that's bloody insane. Let me explain why.

We began listening to with the Siltech cables in place. This was yet without any LessLoss power cables or Firewall (just some low cost Shunyata power cables). When we switched to the Anchorwaves, as soon as I hit the stop button, he chimed in, "Yup! Just what I thought: poorly balanced; too much bass and too much treble…" Now, I was actually disappointed at this point, too. The differences between the cables were like night and day—nothing subtle about it. I heard some nasty highs that were painfully obvious, and the bass levels had increased as well. (Keep in mind, this is with the Siltech interconnect, not the LessLoss Anchorwave interconnects). I heard lots of "I told you so" at this point. But this is where it gets interesting.

I then used two LessLoss DFPC Signatures, with a LessLoss Firewall between them, to power the Moon 750 CD player. Then I used the remaining DFPC Signature to power the amp. With this setup, we then sat back to listen. Immediately there was a radical improvement: all that nasty treble was gone! I was blown away. The cable's balance was much more settled. This time, as soon as I hit stop, I said, "Wow! All that rubbish in the treble range is now gone." After a few moments of silence, he then remarked how there was much too much bass. I proceeded to ask genuinely just how one can determine whether that's just the way it was meant to be: perhaps that's what the recording just sounds like. He suggested that after more than two decades of listening, you just know. I really didn't think the bass levels were out of balance, or overbearing, at this point. Nevertheless, there was still another surprise to be had.

We switched back to the $6,000 Siltech cables. This time we had LessLoss power cords and Firewall at work, just like with the Anchorwaves. A few seconds after hitting play, I just grinned (to myself). I had just received something of a lecture from this guy as to why all that bass shouldn't be there, and how the Siltech cables just do it right; yet, here we were and the bass levels sounded virtually identical to those of the Anchorwaves. Oddly enough, he didn't say a word about it. Neither did I: I was there to hear cables, not for any "I told you so" purposes. What I also noticed was that, in contrast to the Anchorwaves, the Siltechs sounded very much coloured in the mids and highs. One might describe it as very smooth, or silky. Whatever it was, while it may have been "smooth" or "silky," it now sounded like a coloration rather than something natural. That's definitely not what I'm looking for in a cable. I want something as close to colourless as possible, and there's no doubt in my mind that the Anchorwaves were doing a better job at it than the Siltechs.

What I was able to draw from this experience is firstly, the importance of power filtering. Without the LessLoss cables, I would never have heard the potential of the Anchorwaves. If I was a Siltech owner, I might've attributed the cable's coloration's to another component and erroneously replaced it instead. I have no doubt that, additionally, listening with the system over time, many more notable things would become apparent (just like they have in my own system). Even the dealer was quick to acknowledge the virtues of the LessLoss power filtering, after the fact. I'd swear by those products.

Secondly, I've walked away knowing that the Anchorwaves can play some serious ball with cables more than triple in cost. I suspect too, that with matching interconnects, or the LessLoss Tunnelbridge, the Anchorwave speaker cables have yet much more to offer. When I first sat down to listen to my system with the new Anchorwaves, the improvements were so significant that I just started laughing.

For any musicians out there, you should know what I'm talking about. Imagine as an amateur player, you play something on your instrument. You then hear some professional play the same thing. The differences can be so striking that you just sit there and laugh (or feel depressed because you realize just how bad you are by comparison). Well, that's what it was like for me when I got the Achorwaves. Before that, I owned Kimber 4TC loudspeaker wire. There's just no comparison. Thanks to Louis and the people at LessLoss, I'm content to cross off "loudspeaker cables" from the long term hi-fi upgrade list.

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Power conditioner: LessLoss Firewall
Power distributor: Furutech e-TP60

Date Added: 10/04/2012 by Steve

I've been gradually replacing all my Shunyata cabling with LessLoss products. I was never unhappy with my Shunyata power cords, interconnects, or speaker cables, and in fact I chose them only after a lengthy comparison with other products. But the switch to LessLoss cables has been a revelation, and I'm glad that financial necessity forced me to make the change in stages. It allowed me to appreciate the contribution of each type of cable.

First to go were my top-of-the-line Shunyata power snakes, replaced by LessLoss Signature cables. (Actually, they were first replaced--and bettered--by the Original DFPC, and those cables impressed me so much I immediately upgraded to the Signatures--a dramatic further step forward.) Then I replaced my interconnects with Anchorwave interconnects, and then finally I replaced my speaker cables with the Anchorwaves. At each stage, the improvement was startling. Music was more natural and less electronic; countless new details emerged from very familiar recordings and my preferred test tracks; imaging and soundstage were much more tangible and lifelike. And after each round of replacements I was convinced that I'd reached a level of realism from which any further improvements could only be very subtle. But then when I replaced the next set of cables, the improvements were not subtle at all. So now that I'm fully cabled LessLossily, I suppose next I'll have to upgrade to Blackbodies or some other weapon in the company's arsenal. I believe I've learned not to underestimate the benefits of introducing more LessLoss products into my system.

One more thing: As I introduced more and more LessLoss cables to my system, I also noticed that occasional but persistent moments of irritating edginess on certain otherwise good recordings began to disappear. I'm quite sure this was not because the LessLoss cables colored everything lovely. Crappy, irritating recordings still sounded crappy (sometimes in even greater detail). Evidently, what had changed was that I was no longer hearing some of the relatively minor flaws in the otherwise first-rate cables I had been using. To me, this was further confirmation that the LessLoss cables do indeed distort less--and conspicuously so.

I should add that I'm a musician, an acoustic musician, and I know what instruments sound like. As far as I'm concerned, the LessLoss cables are one of the great bargains in audio.

Date Added: 05/30/2012 by Steve

I recently acquired two sets of Anchorwave interconnects to compare to my Shunyata Aries-S ICs. I've lived happily with the Shunyatas for many years and still feel they're a class act. But the Anchorwaves clearly surpass them, in ways that remind me of the virtues of the DFPC Signature (5 of which are currently in use in my system). I could go

through the usual list of apparent cliches in describing how the Anchorwaves excel--say, by mentioning extra layers of detail, better imaging, greater tonal weight and more lifelike timbres (what my wife sums up as added richness). But I think the best way I can convey my excitement about the Anchorwaves is to mention that I planned to write my comments several days ago. However, whenever I had the time to sit down and crank out a paragraph or two of appreciative comments, I also had the time to listen to familiar recordings and discover how much better they now sounded and to experience the surprise of hearing many details that my Aries had failed to reveal. Each time, my audio enthusiasm and hedonism trumped what I felt was my obligation to write a mini-review.

Let me just add that the Anchorwaves are beautifully made and very reasonably priced. LessLoss continues to impress me with its innovative and cost-effective engineering.

Date Added: 02/19/2012 by Jukka

Bought a 2nd pair of Anchorwave loudspeaker cables to bi-amp my speakers. They aren't quite burned in yet, but what a difference compared to a jumper connecting the bass and midrange/tweeter. Coherence, coherence and coherence again. There is better definition and control. That and equal signal input to the drivers leads to so much better timber and tone purity that you just have to smile. That little sibilance in women voices and higher frequencies is gone also. But what I hadn’t quite foreseen was the incredible addition the purity/coherence gave to the soundstaging. So much more size and depth and awesome realism (well, hifi realism that is ;), but wow! =)

Ok, it did cost some to get biwiring, but it has definitely been worth it. I'm very pleased.

Date Added: 01/23/2012 by Olivier Bourdouxhe

Big applause and congratulations for this remarkable product that the Anchorwave most certainly is and for Louis's responsiveness with my questions/issues :-) A real professional who really cares about music and his customers.

In my high end system (with tube preamp and amp), the Anchorwave interconnect with XLR connectors definitely brings more dynamics, larger, higher and deeper soundstage with more details in all frequencies. My system finally breathes, without any congestion.

I haven't tested all the cables available on the market, obviously. Yet, this one - used between my Jadis JPS 8 tube preamp and my Antelope Zodiac Gold DAC, with one set of Jadis JA 200 mono block tube amps - surely ranks above the others I've tried so far. Don't underestimate the influence of cables on your system. If your system is already good, why should you prevent yourself by improving it?

In my case, the Anchorwave interconnect brings what I had been looking for for some time. Most highly recommended, and Louis did not pay me to write this! :-)

Date Added: 11/28/2011 by Jukka

I’ve been listening – happily I may add. I’ve had the cables since beginning of September and am very happy with them. Mind you, my old cables were no sluggish and sleazy ones. Some very know reviewers have used/use them extensively. And, for an example, the interconnects have bettered every other IC I’ve tried so far up to the $2000 range – until now. (I won’t name the make of my old cables as I still think highly of them and don’t want to dismiss the manufacture of the cables I’ve been happy with for many years.)

But after getting new speakers a couple of years ago (Ascendo C8 Renaissance) it started to dawn on me that there is probably more to be revealed in the music than I was getting. Since then I’ve been testing many cables, different configurations, different materials – some even so expensive that I wouldn’t/couldn’t have bought them. But I had to know what was possible.

Listening to all these cables and doing DIY vibration control tests on my own cables I came to the conclusion that the cables I could justify to pay a bundle for have to have a few certain qualities:

- Litz geometry wire

- copper conductors of very high quality
- a reasonable conductor(s) area
- vibration control
- no shielding, or better yet, shielding that doesn't have affect on audio frequencies (LessLoss)

Just as a note: no silver cable I've tried has floated my boat in the timber department and no thin cable/wire has given the dynamics that music played through full range speakers need. Shielding again seems to kill some of the liveliness and soundstage.

Well as every reader of the LessLoss website knows, LessLoss fulfills these requirements in spades. But still - after listening to so many different cables without hearing anything substantially better than my own, I still wasn't quite sure I'd want to take the pain to try one more cable make. But finally with a little leap of faith I took the plunge and ordered – and haven't looked back since.

The interconnects and speaker cables have very much the same type sonic signature. If you've heard the interconnects you've heard what the speaker cable can do - you'll just get more of the same. The speaker cable's super qualities just let you hear what exactly the IC's are capable of. So what are the qualities?

Open, detailed, dynamic, correct timber, big soundstage, spot on frequency balance, presence - everything really. My older cables were quite good at these qualities also but the Anchorwaves are just in a league of their own. No question about that. No point in going into detail though about the sound and instrument timbers here, as it's all there. One aspect though that clearly differs from all other cables is the natural beauty and purity of the music. In all other cables there seems to be, more or less, a certain shouting/ringing affect present in the music, especially in speaker cables. It's kind of an aura surrounding the music and soundstage, you can never quite shake it off. It cuts away from the easy naturalness and contributes to the listening fatigue. The louder you listen the quicker it starts to get to you. The LessLoss Anchorwave IC's and speaker cable have none of this – or at least in diminishing amounts. The presentation is just so musical, natural, dynamic, detailed and full bodied with no stringent sounds, no hi-fi treble, no smudginess. What else could one want? Looking at the competition and the materials used, they are even very reasonably priced.

So I'm settled. No more desire of cable search for me. Maybe these aren't the best cables in the world, but they are the best I've heard and I find it hard to imagine anything being seriously better. Well, of course there probably is something a little better out there, even LessLoss has the Tunnelbridge interconnects... But these cables are so good that one has to raise the question of whether you need better ones any more? ...and just as a reference: I do get to listen to live music almost daily. So even with my VAC amps and Ascendo speakers, I'm quite sure that the Anchorwave cables are not the limiting factor to my musical nirvana if I still want to upgrade some day. Not a bad place to be. =) I'm happy.

Date Added: 06/03/2011 by per brolin

Thanks, Louis, for making the cable problem disappear. After I tried many diffrent cables in the high end segment, I stumbeled onto one of your power cords.

I must say it was a revalation, when I plugged in the first DFPC the music just started to sound right. The system played acurately in all of the frequences, more body and at the same time more contour on the tones and this is compared to an Electraglide Ultra Khan II (Statement R) that I used on my Burmester CD 001.

After a week I ordered a DFPC to the system, and the result is amazing. Later I tried my DFPC in a friend's system, the results were the same.

This got me thinking, if Louis Motek can get a power cord to sound this good, what can he then do with the interconnect and speaker cable?.

Later I mailed Louis to ask if they did an XLR version of the Anchorwave interconnect (at that time he just had the RCA version on his webpage).

I got a response within an hour that they had just begun to produce the XLR interconnect and that I could order one if I wished.

I placed my order later that week, containing one XLR interconnect and one speaker cable.

Now I have used the interconnect and speaker cable about a month and must say that they are at least equally impressive as the power cords.

I have tried some of the highest rated cables in the world and I don't know any i'd rather have than the Anchorwave.

This includes Nordost Valhalla, Purist Audio Design Proteus Provectus, and Cardas Golden Reference.

This cable has the same neutrality and warmth of the Cardas Golden Reference but has a better focus and PRAT.

The PRAT actually reminded me of the Valhalla, the soundstage is huge and well defined. Honestly I don't think you will find any cable that is much better than the Anchorwave, that's worth the extra money. Of the cables I have tried, this is clearly the best, no matter the price.

Date Added: 05/15/2011 by Alan Carruth

I am no stranger to LessLoss products as my system now has Signature power cords, a Firewall (original version), Blackbodies, the DAC 2004 MKll, and most recently the Tunnelbridge interconnect system all with great success.

I was very excited to compare the new Anchorwave speaker cables to my Nordost Valhallas.

My speakers are unique, the Wilson Model 5 WATT/Puppy, in allowing for a personalized umbilical jumper cable between the woofer (Puppy) and the mid/tweeter (WATT). I therefore have 2 Valhallas for each speaker.

In my comparison, I decided to try 2 Anchorwave cables on the Right speaker to compare with the Valhallas on the Left. Even without breaking in the Anchorwaves, my ear was immediately drawn to the Right. I then compared all kinds of music switching the channels around with the interconnects to keep the content the same and the test more accurate.

The Anchorwave sound was more true, better definition, more natural sound stage. I could appreciate an edge and smear to the sound from the Valhallas versus the Anchorwave. I have since replaced the Valhallas with 4 Anchorwave cables. Now broken in, the sound is unbelievable. The music is 3 dimensional. Great space around the singers and instruments. Enormous sound stage. Natural. Everything is placed correctly. Tons of space around the singers and instruments. Even my poor recordings sound great! A joy! I give the Anchorwave the highest recommendation.