



## Audience Ohno Speaker Cables and Interconnects

A Powerful, Pliable Featherweight

Neil Gader

The slender profile of Audience Ohno interconnects and speaker cables runs counter to perceived audiophile gospel that high-quality wires must be thick and heavy, with dreadlock twists of conductors encased within unyielding jacketing. Audience turns this stereotype on its ear by returning to well considered and finely executed basics. The cables in its wickedly affordable Ohno line are kinky-whip-thin, unobtrusive featherweights—nicely built and pliable. And, they employ the same six-nines, 21AWG, OCC-stranded copper that Audience uses in its uptown Au24 SE powerChords.

Sonically the Audience Ohno achieved a level of balance and midrange tonal weight and density that seemed almost contradictory to its skinny contours. It was quiet, quick, and extended with well-focused and pleasingly dimensional imaging. Characterized by a slightly warmer, rounder balance, vocals were full-bodied and expressive, and midrange dynamics spirited. Importantly, Ohno's sibilance range was nicely kept in check. Transient behavior was clean and naturalistic. Its resolution was slightly subtractive in the best sense of the word, but a little more brilliance for the *All-Star Percussion Ensemble* [Goldenstring] would have been preferable. But most significantly, there were no additive colorations, or distracting tonality shifts. The top end was extended, although Sara Watkins' lead vocal during Nickel Creek's "Sabra Girl" [*This Side: Rounder*] was a smidge darker in timbre, and a lowered ceiling over the soundstage was noticeable. And during The Police's "Murder by Numbers" from *Synchronicity*, Sting's vocal seemed positioned a step back from the mike. Drummer Stewart Copeland's percussion riffs had appreciable snap and speed, although the omnipotent kick-drum figures didn't convey the same level

of explosive air following the initial transient impact. Ultimately Ohno was not the last word in resolution—that is, the line seemed short on both the deepest excursion and timbral retrieval in the bass region, and on the airy extension in the harmonic range. But given its entry-level mission, Audience Ohno was heroically on the money in most every other respect.

Audience Ohno wires are ideal partners for smaller systems, especially so for those of the desktop persuasion. Easy to position, and so light that they won't tug a loudspeaker off its stands, Ohno offered an unerring sense of musicality at a blue-collar price that might have one of your snobby audio buddies gagging on his Perrier. Maybe the best performance per dollar cable that I've heard in some time.

### Sneak Preview: Au24 SX

Shortly before deadline, Audience delivered samples of its latest flagship cable lineup, the Au24 SX. The successor to Au24 SE (Issues 230, 249), the SX improvements as compared with earlier iterations of Au24 wire include the use of purer copper (now six-nines) and higher quality XLPE dielectric insulation as well as geometry mods. I will have more to say in an upcoming issue, but immediately noteworthy was just how comparable the voicing of this premier cable was with respect to the entry-level Ohno.

With all their ripe midrange weight and sweetness, the two ranges are recognizably of the same family. The major differences—and these are big ones—were dynamic contrast, sensitivity to delicate volume gradations, and ultimately a brilliance factor that cast light in the deepest corners of the soundstage, and restored air and lift to harmonics.

Auspicious news; more to come. **tgs**

### SPECS & PRICING

**Price:** Ohno interconnect, \$199/1m (\$82 per add'l. meter); speaker, \$209/1m (\$20 per add'l. meter)

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