Von Gaylord Chinchilla Analog Interconnect

Most of the expensive cables out there aren't worth their high price. This one is different. Chinchilla is expensive, but it's worth every penny. If you have high resolution components in your system, they deserve to be interconnected by no less than Chinchilla, and you owe it to yourself to stretch your budget (if need be), so you can experience the very best sound that your investment in active audio components can give you. Chinchilla makes a world of difference to a quality system.

Sonically, Von Gaylord Chinchilla is literally in a class by itself. Chinchilla clearly surpasses the sonic performances of other interconnect cables, even the most expensive ones, by a wide margin. Moreover, Chinchilla handily surpasses these other cables in virtually every sonic parameter. Chinchilla is dramatically better in every way, across the board. You name the sonic parameter, and Chinchilla does it better, much better. Transparency, resolution, articulation, individualization, speed, delicacy, revelation of subtle inner detail, intertransient silence, black background, stereo and surround imaging, depth, ambience, space, air and airiness, freedom from artificial glare, freedom from smearing - the list is comprehensive and seemingly endless, of all the things which Chinchilla does superbly, and all the things in which Chinchilla dramatically surpasses other interconnects.

There are some decent interconnects out there, some at moderate prices, which do many things quite well, but still at a markedly lower performance level than Chinchilla. You might be happy with these other interconnects, so long as you don't compare them to Chinchilla. There are also some expensive interconnects out there that do one or two things almost as well as Chinchilla, but then they fall short in other sonic aspects. For example, the Magnan Signature interconnects are superb at treble delicacy, but fall shy of the new Chinchilla standard in some other aspects. The most expensive Kimber interconnects are superb at reproducing a black background in the lower frequencies, but then fall victim to treble smearing and defocus. The best Siltech interconnects are superb at transparency, but impose some artificial glare in the mid to upper frequencies. Chinchilla is superb at everything, and indeed sets a new standard, at a whole new higher plateau, in virtually all sonic aspects.

Chinchilla is naturally most important for high resolution systems, playing the best sounding recordings, for here you can most readily perceive Chinchilla's vast improvement over other interconnects. But Chinchilla is also very valuable in more moderately priced systems, elevating the sound of your system so it sounds as though you had spent far more on your active components. And, amazingly, Chinchilla is even important for home theater systems, for playing film soundtracks.

We deliberately set up an acid test to prove this last point. In our lab's home theater system, while playing film soundtracks, we ran a research experiment to see if Chinchilla could make a sonic difference even on just one channel. To make this test even more acid, the one channel where we substituted Chinchilla was what is arguably the least important channel, a single back surround channel, on non-EX films. We also deliberately used a loudspeaker arrangement wherein the side/rear surround loudspeakers were 45 degrees to the rear, so that they were already portraying abundant surround information to the rear. Since the films used were not EX encoded, there was no new information for the single back surround loudspeaker to reproduce that was not already coming out of the rear surrounds that were 45 degrees to the rear, so the back surround would only be receiving a seemingly redundant matrix mix of the rear surround information already coming from the rear. Under these system setup circumstances, it would seem that the single back surround loudspeaker would be sonically superfluous (indeed, most home theater systems don't yet bother including such a channel and loudspeaker, especially for non-EX films). Thus, sonic improvements in the interconnect should wreak a minimally audible improvement to the overall system sound and the overall home theater experience. And therefore this was the cruelest test we could devise for testing whether Chinchilla is really worthwhile for use throughout a home theater system.

Given this cruel test, could we hear any difference at all, when we substituted a Chinchilla for other expensive high end perfectionist interconnects, changing only the single back surround channel, on non-EX film soundtracks? A huge difference, and a huge improvement! Substituting Chinchilla dramatically opened up the surround space and ambience, and also dramatically

improved revelation of subtle information about sounds coming from the rear. The whole surround experience of the films became even more believable, and more enjoyable.

Chinchilla's dramatic sonic improvements, even on this cruel test, prove several things. Since Chinchilla can extract and reveal dramatically more information from film soundtracks, which are themselves less sonically revealing than most dedicated music recordings (both surround and stereo), this proves that Chinchilla is vital to all home theater setups, and is even more crucial of course to systems when playing high quality music recordings (both surround and stereo). Also, since Chinchilla provided dramatic sonic improvements even on the arguably least important channel (the back surround speaker for non-EX films), this proves that Chinchilla is crucial for every channel of every surround sound and home theater system, as well as of course both channels of a stereo system (where both channels are sonically very important). In short, this cruel test proves that all quality home theater and surround sound systems can dramatically benefit from Chinchilla, and from using Chinchilla for every channel.

We naturally verified this by setting up our lab research system with Chinchilla for all seven channels, and playing a wide variety of films and surround music recordings. Chinchilla, installed throughout a system like this, provides a magnificent reference surround experience, on a level that far surpasses what we have been able to achieve with other expensive high end interconnects. The sheer believability of the surrounding space and ambience, and the sheer realism of all surrounding sounds (revealed so effortlessly, so transparently, and without artifice), make for a jaw dropping suspension of disbelief, and a stunning elevation above what our lab research system can deliver using other interconnects.

As a further acid test, we also tried substituting Chinchilla on the surround channels while playing simply two channel stereo recordings. With these two channel stereo recordings, the surround channels do not contain any new musical or spatial information, but merely present a matrix derivative (chiefly with hall ambience) of the information that's already in the two main front channels, and are sonically beneficial only in that they present this essentially redundant information to the side and rear of the listener's head, where the Damaske effect allows the listener to more easily hear hall ambience contained in the two channel recording. Here too, in this new acid test, Chinchilla scored a decisive victory over other expensive high end interconnects. Chinchilla, substituted in either just the side surround channels or just the rear (or back) surround channels, made the surround space and ambience much richer and more believable, even from a mere two channel stereo recording. And, when we substituted Chinchilla in all channels, the total sonic experience was truly magical, aurally transporting us to the surrounding space of the original venue, even from mere two channel stereo recordings. Since most of us have a huge library of two channel recordings, this makes a surround system, with Chinchilla interconnect all around, worth its weight in gold, for the richly rewarding musical experience we can all freshly rediscover from our two channel stereo libraries.

Chinchilla even handily surpasses Von Gaylord's own Legend VI interconnect, which we have praised very highly in the past, and which does still provide an excellent experience at a more affordable price. The Legend VI is still better overall than virtually all other interconnects, but in some cases by a small margin, with some debatable pros and cons. Chinchilla however is in a whole other league, and Chinchilla's sound simply surpasses that of the excellent Legend VI, in every sonic parameter (see list above), and by a wide margin that is easily perceived and richly rewarding, so easily worth the higher price. Chinchilla is simply the best interconnect investment you can make in upgrading the sound of your system.

Chinchilla's transparency advantage over other interconnects is particularly noteworthy, because it is at once subtle and dramatic. It is subtle because it lets you hear deeper into the subtle inner details of the music, the sonic events, and the ambient space. It is not the overt, superficial kind of pseudo hi-fi transparency that some other cables exhibit when they limn merely the outlines of the music more sharply and/or brightly. It is important because it brings you closer to the genuine reality of what live acoustic music, and live sonic events, actually sound like. So it wreaks a dramatic improvement in the reality and believability of the whole listening experience, even while using subtl means to achieve this end.

Similarly, Chinchilla's advantage over other interconnects in precise articulation,

individualization, and speed is achieved subtly, with delicacy, not with artifice as in some other cables. Any audio device that is truly fast will sound delicate when reproducing delicate fast transients, and it sounds delicate precisely because it is so fast in coming down the back side of each fast transient, rather than lingering at the transient's peak level. Such lingering, heard from many other cables, is caused by erroneous energy storage, and causes fast transients to sound artificially sharp and hard, which might impress naïve listeners, but is not true to the reality of live acoustic music. Some naïve listeners, hearing Chinchilla's delicacy in handling fast treble transients, contrasted with other cables' harder, sharper trebles, might say that Chinchilla sounds soft in the trebles, but in fact it is Chinchilla that is fast and accurate, while it is the other, harder and sharper sounding cables that are too slow in coming back down after a fast treble transient is over.

Chinchilla precisely articulates, delineates, and individuates the finest details. Yet, because Chinchilla is so fast and so free from undesirable energy storage, Chinchilla's precisely accurate revelation is executed with delicate finesse, and does not sound hard, clinical, sterile, or analytical, as some other cables do.

This leads us to further sonic proof of Chinchilla's genuine speed and freedom from undesirable energy storage. Chinchilla individuates fast treble transients superbly, and has superbly black intertransient silence between treble transients, and then in this black silence Chinchilla reveals subtle details of music and sounds (such as the timbre and texture of musical instruments) that utterly elude other interconnect cables. In contrast, these other interconnect cables, precisely because they linger too long at treble transient peaks, fill in, with lingering energy storage garbage, what should be the blackness of intertransient silence between treble transients, and their filled-in garbage obscures the subtle timbral and textural details that Chinchilla so effortlessly reveals.

This lingering energy storage garbage in other cables also smears or slurs the details at the transient peak, and of course tends to smear the peaks together as well, since there's less of a black silent valley between peaks. This smearing by other cables thus results in poorer individuation of individual details, since the details within each peak are smeared together, and since the peaks themselves are less well individuated from each other, because of the lesser valley separating them.

In some other cables this lingering garbage energy can sound like soft, fuzzy smearing of treble transient information, while in other cables it can sound like hard glare and/or sharp brightness. Either manifestation of this garbage energy is artificial and wrong in its own right, changing the sound away from accuracy and away from the natural sound of real live music that is believable. And either manifestation commits the aforementioned sins of obscuring subtle inner detail and degrading individuation, since the smeared garbage energy lingers in time.

Chinchilla's design evidently excels at minimizing these energy storage problems that plague other cables. That's why Chinchilla can sound so fast and precise, yet effortlessly relaxed, in handling difficult transients accurately and naturally, without the stored energy garbage heard in other cables. And that's why Chinchilla can sound so superior in probing deeper into the music, transparently revealing the subtle timbral and textural and spatial details that take place in the black silence between strong transients.

Chinchilla's superiority at portraying space, surround imaging, and rich ambience is also a natural consequence of its design that minimizes energy storage problems. You see, each strong musical or sonic transient brings you only the direct sound from the source making that sound. But the reflections and reverberation -- which define space, imaging (including depth), and ambience (of the original concert hall venue, or of some alternative venue where a good recording can aurally transport you) -- naturally occur only after each strong transient, since it took some time for that strong transient to reach the concert hall walls and then be reflected back to reach the recording microphones. Thus, the subtle sonic cues that actually define the space, imaging, and ambience of a recording come after each strong transient, and are contained in the relative silences between strong transients. Each and every device in your audio reproduction chain should have minimal energy storage of its own, after each strong transient, so it can itself quickly fall back down to black silence, the better to reveal these subtle sonic cues that the recording contains after strong transients, and which of course are most readily audible in the quietest parts after each strong transient.

Incidentally, there will likely be some hall ambience still lingering in the concert hall, and still contained in the recording, when the next strong musical transient comes along, but those subtle

indirect reverberation cues you can't hear, because the next strong direct sound transient overwhelms them (and does so even for live music), so your best chance to hear the space, imaging, and ambience defined by these subtle sonic cues is in the relative silence between strong transients. That's why intertransient silence (the desirable consequence of low energy storage) is such an important hallmark of the highest grade audio components, and why it so crucial to achieving the very best portrayals of space, imaging, and ambience, as Chinchilla does so superbly.

On every good recording, from stereo to surround music to film soundtracks, Chinchilla reveals a wealth of rich information about space, imaging, depth, and ambience that utterly eludes other interconnects. Chinchilla makes the sense of an alternative spatial venue much more believable than other interconnects, and is worth its weight in gold for this achievement alone, since Chinchilla can transport you out of your tiny listening room as no other interconnect can.

Chinchilla's tonal balance is very neutral overall, with some tonal politeness in the upper midrange. This tonal balance is similar to what you would hear from live music in a classic concert hall with plush appointments, rather than in a modern hall with concrete all around. So it is innocuous and even euphonic. It helps counteract the unpleasant artifices of the close miking typical of most recordings, by placing the music at a more realistic distance and reducing the unpleasant and fatiguing excess brightness and hardness that close miking imparts. It also reduces sonic glare, thereby enhancing Chinchilla's already superb ability to delve deep into the music to unearth treasurable sonic subtleties that glare blocks and obscures. And it enhances spatial imaging, by allowing you to more easily hear the depth and distance of the spatial cues reflected from the far away hall walls. It certainly is far preferable to the sound of many other interconnects, which have excessive brightness, glare, hardness, and energy storage in the upper frequencies. And it is far preferable to the sound of those other interconnects that, in reducing upper frequency energy to attempt polite musicality, are too defocused, veiled, and murky in the upper frequencies. Unlike all these other interconnects, Chinchilla is supremely transparent and precisely revealing in these difficult upper frequencies, even while it is delicate and polite rather than overbearing.

Chinchilla's diameter is only slightly larger than most analog interconnects, and its special RCA plugs are also slightly larger in diameter, with fat, shiny black outer shells. Chinchilla's larger diameter RCA plug and shell is no problem for most stereo components, where the RCA jacks are spaced a reasonable distance apart. But most AV processors have their RCA jacks placed very close together, since so many have to be squeezed onto the back panel. This close spacing on AV processors does make a very tight squeeze for Chinchilla's fat RCA plugs. We're able to get three Chinchillas plugged in side by side, by putting the middle one straight in, and putting the outer two in at a slight diagonal angle. But putting four fat Chinchilla RCA plugs side by side, into these closely spaced RCA jacks, is impossible, and, depending on the jack configuration on your AV processor, you might need to put in four Chinchillas side by side, in order to hear the sonic benefits of Chinchilla for all surround channels. Is there a solution for this quandary? Not an ideal solution. The best compromise we found was to remove the outer black shell of one of the middle two Chinchillas, which then allowed us to squeeze in four Chinchillas side by side. We researched the sonic implications of various tactics, and this was the best sounding compromise.

Interestingly, we had expected Chinchilla's sound to become even more airy and open when the outer black shell was removed from its RCA plug, since air (i.e. the absence of a shell) is the most perfect dielectric, since unshielded cables generally sound more open and airy than shielded ones, and since shielding is not an issue in our environment and circumstance. But Chinchilla actually sounds more airy and open with its special black ceramic shell in place on its RCA plug, which proves how perfectly and conscientiously Chinchilla's design has been crafted, down to the finest detail.

Thus, there is a very slight sonic compromise when you are forced to remove one black shell, in order to squeeze four Chinchillas side by side (if you need to) into the jacks of your AV processor. Thus, if you are faced with this situation, we urge you to try removing the black shell of first the left of the inner two Chinchillas, then only the right of the inner two Chinchillas, to see which sound you prefer. Incidentally, when you remove the black shell from one end of a given single Chinchilla, you should also experiment with removing the black shell at the other end of this one cable, even if you don't need to for the sake of space (e.g. if going into a multichannel power amplifier with

widely spaced RCA input jacks). We found, as part of our painstakingly thorough research, that, if you must remove the black shell at one end, then that single Chinchilla cable can sound somewhat better

(Continued on page 91)