

Anti-Cable Speaker Wire & Interconnects

By Anthony Nicosia

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Specifications:

Anti-Cable Speaker wire:

Specifications (taken from www.anticables.com website) With the two wires spaced about 6-12 inches away from each other:

- Resistance = 0.00318 Ohms/foot run
- Inductance = 0.82uH/foot run
- Capacitance = 0.002nF/foot run

With the two wires twisted 3-4 full turns per foot the specifications change to this:

- Resistance = 0.00318 Ohms/foot run
- Inductance = 0.30uH/foot run
- Capacitance = 0.048nF/foot run

\$100 for a 10' stereo set

We will make a Stereo pair set of them any length you need at \$10/foot (\$25 minimum).

Anti-Jumpers:

Specifications (taken from www.anticables.com website)

- Used to strap bi-wireable speaker when single wiring
- Accommodates post spacing from 1-6 inches
- Longer lengths available on request (great for Maggie owners)
- Excellent sound quality
- Banana plugs available (see order page)
- A high performance, low cost solution

\$25 set (Spades)

\$45 set (Banana)

Anti-Cable Interconnects:

Specifications (taken from www.anticables.com website)

"The Anti-ICs use the same design concept as the Anti-Cables . . . They utilize the same red coated wire, but of a much smaller gauge."

\$100 for a 1 meter set terminated with Neutrik RCA plugs

\$150 with Eichmann Bullet plugs, and \$200 Balanced with Neutrik XLR plugs (1 meter pairs)

anticables@hotmail.com

Technical Contact:

Paul Speltz: <http://www.anticables.com>

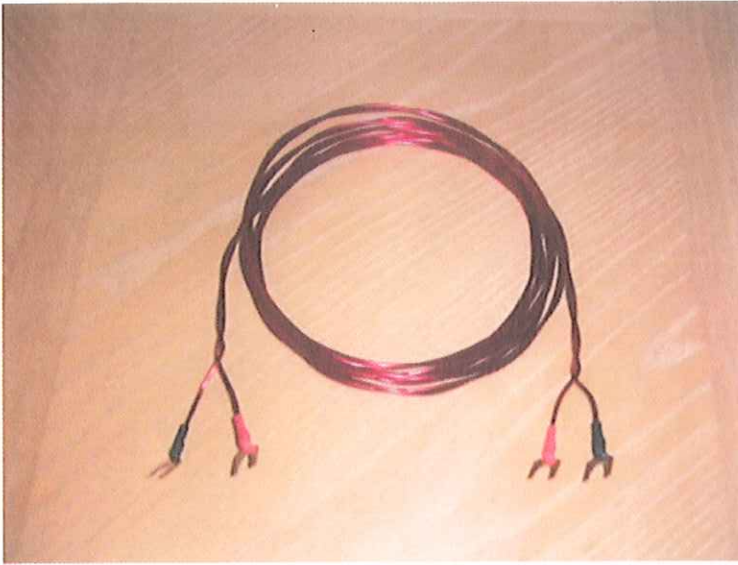


Right off the bat the Anti-Cables sparked my interest. One of the first things you learn in writing is to have an opening sentence that grabs the listener and pulls them into the story. When I hear "anti" anything the rebel in me wakes up. Why, I was born in 1951, a baby boomer. I graduated High School in 1969, a member of the flower power generation. I was even at Woodstock for the original concert not the later event done a short while ago. I even bought a three-day ticket, which sadly has long since been lost. I remember sitting in my fifth grade science class and being told to believe nothing unless it could be proven to me. My science teacher was a little bit of a radical and I liked him. So when I heard of something called Anti-Cables I was naturally drawn towards their website.

Paul Speltz came up with the name because he felt his products offered a solution to the usual sonic signatures, hyperbole, and high prices of today's cables. It was "Anti" cable establishment. I like that.

Anti-Cables are based on the approach that air is the near perfect dielectric and that the plastic dielectric materials in other cables taint their sound. To help rid Anti-Cables of this coloration Paul's uses only a very thin red coating to cover his 12-gauge speaker wire, instead of the thick plastic insulation found on many cables.

Up for review today will be a pair of his 10' factory braided speaker wire with spade terminations on both ends. The optional twisting of these cables is said to lower the inductance and provide better top end extension. I did not unbraided the wire to test this nor did I ask for a set of separated cables to compare to. Paul also sent me two sets of Anti-Jumpers with, banana plug endings, to be used with my Legacy Focus 20/20 speakers. I requested and received two pairs of his least expensive Neutrik bullet plugs, in one-meter lengths, as I was looking to make this an "Affordable"



review. You may upgrade to Eichmann Bullet plug connectors for a cost of only \$50 more per set. The Anti-IC's were used between a Monarchy Audio Dual 20-Bit D/A Converter (modified by Monarchy Audio) and my Placette Passive Preamp while the other pair connected my Monarchy Pro-70 amps to the Placette.

The recommended break-in time for these cables ranges between 100 and up to 500 hours. Paul later informed me via email that he thought if you played the music louder it would shorten the cable break-in time, thus the discrepancy in time found with his customers. I immediately unpacked and installed them in my system leaving them on until I reached 120 hours. I did not do any serious listening during that time but I definitely did sit down to make note of how things were changing as time progressed. All the wires were left together in my system and therefore had the same break-in period for each. Only when I took them out to listen for individual sonic signatures did I

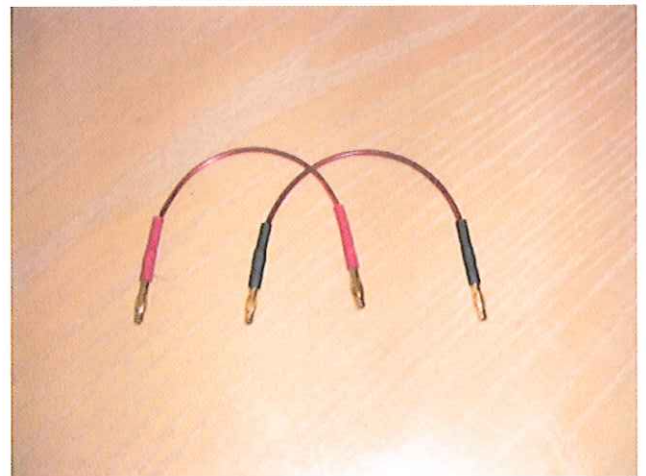
break them up as a unit. When I did this I pulled them with equal time out so they all had the same amount of break-in time on them at the end.

Starting with the Anti-Cable speaker wires their look and feel was just fine. Lightweight, flexible and I think attractive with the red paint (I like a little color in my life). I had the spade-terminated version and found them easy to install although Paul recommends you tighten them down using a tool for better contact. His point being that this better contact equates to better sound. You can bend them easily for fitting around corners or equipment. You can even bend them to go over or under other wire, which is something you cannot do with conventional cables. Once bent they stay put but can be easily bent back when need be. I really liked that aspect of the Anti-Cables.

Paul's IC's were also flexible, lightweight and their Neutrik RCA connectors were easy to put on while the fit was good and tight. Again they have that ability to bend around other wires and to stay put when bent. That is just great when trying to keep them distant from other wires to avoid hum issues. I only wish more cables could do this. They also have a very unique look to them with the single wire in the middle and the other spiral coiled around it. I found this to be very high tech looking and I liked it.

I requested the Anti-Jumpers with the Banana termination and I must tell you the fit was excellent. If I had to do it over again though I would have opted for the Anti-Cable speaker wire with the Banana termination and the Anti-Jumpers with the spades. I think that it is more important to have proper contact with the speaker cable, but that is just my guess. Easy to bend and I think they looked great on the back of my speakers, where I suppose only my wife and I look. She looks when she dusts. I know she dusts my equipment because she told me that is how she can tell when I get something new, smart woman.

Everything was boxed, packed very tightly and sent to me. Enclosed was a flier printed on the front and back for the speaker cables as well as a one sided flier for their interconnects. Instructions on how to handle the cables and details of the break-in process can be found there. I found these instructions most helpful and informative. One particular instance was the recommendation to wrap any excess speaker cable around a wine bottle (of which I have plenty) to get a coil effect to form a loose hanging spiral, nice designer touch I think. Try that with other cables, I think not.



Paul's speaker cables replaced my Canare 4S11 speaker wire with Monster Cable spade connectors. I bought these maybe three years ago. In bulk wire they can be found listing at \$1.67 a foot (times my 20 feet= \$33.40 plus \$39.98 for monster termination= \$73.38) These Canare speaker cables where an excellent value as they replaced and sounded better than another set of cables that listed for \$500. The Anti-Cable ICs replaced my PS Audio Transcendent Inter-



connects (solid silver series) from the xStream Audio Series, another very fine cable listing for \$349.95 a pair. So let's see two pairs of IC's equals \$699.90 plus speaker wire at \$73.38 equals a total of \$773.28. While the same length Anti-Cable speaker wire at \$100 and two pairs of IC's at \$100 each equals \$300 total. Ok so we have saved \$473.28 (give or take a little as the Canare can be found at a discount but we are not talking much money here) and you would not have to do any laborious cutting and stripping of speaker cable to install spade terminations. As for the jumper cables, I did not price check them because I am currently using the stock jumpers that came with my speakers, but \$45 sounds reasonable enough.

However I want not only affordability but quality as well. So let's proceed to the next step in the equation and here how they sound, first together and then as separates, to justify them at their particular price points.

Right out of the box and heard as a "system", with all the cables playing together, everything I played sounded overly bright. Paul does warn you though, on his enclosed flier, that this is expected from his IC's when they are breaking-in so not to worry. The soundstage was good but not to the extent it later would develop into. I did though notice that vocals, male or female, had a very alluring quality to them. I checked back later, for some more very casual listening, at 36 hours. Now we were getting somewhere, the bass-starting coming on yet the vocals remained intact. Ok Paul I am going to resist now until close to 100 hours have expired and see what happens. Between 100 and 120 hours I found the cables to be sufficiently broken in to the point where this review can really start.

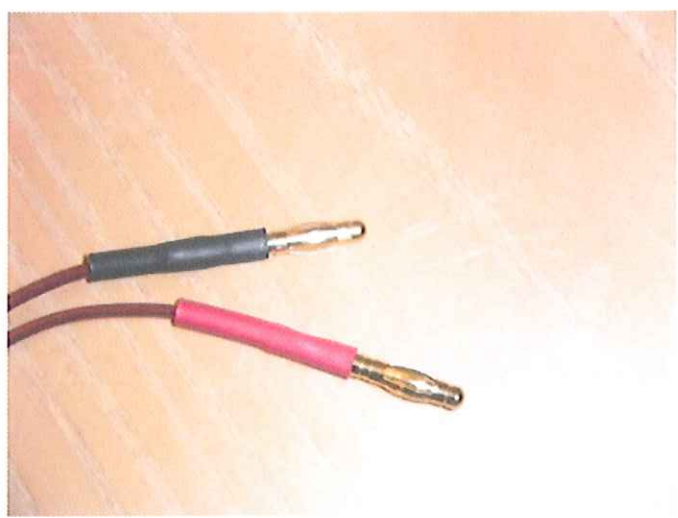
I have mentioned the sound during the break-in process because I don't want people to buy and return them before they have a chance to sound their best. These cables truly do change and it would be a shame to not give them their just do because of impatience. I am glad I waited, as you shall shortly see.

Having heard an inspiring display of vocal renditions during the break-in process, I have chosen to start my review on that note. From the soundtrack of the motion picture, Across the Universe, I first played "I Want To Hold Your Hand". This is of course an original Beatles song, as are all the songs in this movie, and performed by T.V. Carpio. Carpio is of Chinese-Filipino ancestry, the daughter of Asian singer Teresa Carpio and born in Oklahoma City (Oklahoma), in 1981. She is one great singer and when you hear her voice using the Anti-Cables, wow!! Paul's cables take away the CD/cable grunge found in most systems, replacing it with a very natural presentation of the performance as it was recorded.

Moving onto another one of my favorites, from the same movie, I heard "Let It Be", performed by Carol Woods and Timothy T. Mitchum. This song has it all, vocals, choirs, piano, everything to test the Anti-Cables. Immediately from the opening notes the Anti's step out of the way and let the music play through. Timothy's voices rings strong and clear while Carol Woods with the background choir has strength and spaciousness galore. If the cables can truly break-in further than this, I'm sticking around to hear more.

I could tell that vocals would be the Anti's strength from my first listen, so now onto some mid to lower region bass territory. Congas and percussions played in, "Put Your Light On", from Carlos Santana's Supernatural CD were good as was the rough sounding voice of Everlast. To me Carlos sings through his guitar, and when he "sings" on this track it sounds so sweet and the Anti's once again do a good job here.

When this next CD came out in 1992 it was extremely popular at all the audio salons and shows. Of course I'm talking about Eric Clapton's Unplugged CD. Track 6, "Nobody Knows You When





"You're Down & Out" is one of the CD's great sleeper songs. It starts out with Eric Clapton playing solo on guitar and then everybody kicks in. Two lines from the song are as follows, *"Once I lived the life of a millionaire, Spent all my money, I just did not care."*

If that is how you are with audio equipment then the Anti's are not for you. If however you have empathy with the following lines, from the same song, then you are going to be a happy camper.

*"I get my hands on a dollar again,
I'm gonna hang on to it till that eagle grins.*

*'Cause no, no, nobody knows you
When you're down and out."*

Yes these Anti's are a bargain and they keep your money where it belongs, in YOUR pocket. Don't worry though you are still getting quality sound pumping through those little wires.

So you say, "I want bass". Well, "I don't think you can handle the bass" (playful misquote from the movie "A Few Good Men") But if your ready to try the song to hear is track 7 on the Supernatural CD, "Maria Maria". Lead vocals are served up by The Product G&B and even some vocal help from Carlos Santana. I don't know how these thin little wires do it but there it is. A perponderous amount of bass was present, enough to fill a good-sized room and to make you smile. Now this wasn't sloppy bass we are talking good strong tight bass notes here, the type that you can really feel.

Lets now see what happens when I replace just the Anti jumper speaker cables with the standard brass ones that came with my Legacy speakers. I left the rest of the Anti-Cables in except for the jumpers and than sat back to listen. Right away I could tell something was different. It was missing that sparkle in the vocals and upper high frequency extension. Bass might have been a little bit less full also. Now don't expect miracles for \$45, but I was pleased with the results and I am glad that I discarded the factory jumpers.

Next I put the jumper cables back in and replaced the Anti speaker cable with my Canare 4S11 speaker wire. I had recommendations from two well-respected local audio salons that used Canare cables even with their high end products. As I said before they replaced \$500 speaker cables in my system and I was happy with them. The Anti speaker cables though took my system to another level. Even though the volume remained the same as before the sound was noticeably louder with the Anti's. This I attributed to clarity in the full range of the musical spectrum. It was as if someone had removed something that was in front of my speakers and now I could hear more clearly. This is some good speaker cable.



I next replaced the Anti IC's between the DAC and Placette preamp with the PS Audio cables leaving everything else Anti-Cable. On one level this was a tough choice, yet on another a very simple one really. The PS Audio cables are indeed excellent silver interconnects. When listening with them in I noticed just a slightly more forward presentation of

background vocals. With the Anti's however I felt that overall clarity was improved, as if someone had turned up the volume slightly. The choice here would be very system dependent and a matter of personal choice. Now for the easy part, \$349.95 for the PS Audio IC's or \$100 for the Anti IC'S. If money did not really enter into the equation than the choice is more difficult, but for this review of "Affordable Audio", the answer for me was quite clear. Besides, my PS Audio cables are broken-in to the tune of about a year. My Anti IC's only have 132 hours on them. As Paul had mentioned, some readers noticed improvements for up to 500 hours, so maybe they will get even better. If they don't that's ok with me too as I like them just fine as they are now.

Finally lets try my PS Audio Transcendent Interconnects in place of the Anti IC's between the amp and preamp to see what difference this might make. Of course before doing so I once more put the Anti IC's back between the DAC and the preamp. Here I think is where the Anti-IC's make the biggest improvement in sound presentation. If I only had a budget for one set of interconnects I would first place them between the amp and preamp. Later of course I would still buy a second set to use for CD to preamp connection as budget allows. Once again it was as if someone had turned up the volume maybe two notches. This is a very detailed cable and I felt that I was hearing almost all there was to hear from whatever recording I played through them. I liked the PS Audio cables as they sounded smooth and seductive, but the clarity of the Anti's just won me over. This is another personal choice for the listener, but for me I chose the Anti's.

When heard as an entire package, the Anti-Cables had this uncanny ability, at least in my system, to place the singer dead center between my speakers. These cables do so much right it is hard to imagine someone not liking them. I constantly found myself turning up the volume to hear those crystal clear vocals. Unlike some systems when the volume gets up to high things get congested, with the Anti-Cables in everything remained clear and controlled.

Final Thoughts

Overall I find the Anti-Cable package of speaker wire, speaker jumpers and interconnects to be a steal for the money. At \$345 for the set I see no reason not to buy it all. My PS Audio interconnects cost me \$349.95 alone (in the silver wired version) and we are talking about getting two sets of Paul's IC's, a pair of 10' speaker wire and a set of speaker jumper cables all for \$5.95 less than one set of PS Audio IC's. The price coupled with its unique ability to bend, allowing it to go over or under other wires, is just something you should find hard to resist. Keep this in mind and add to it the fact that you are also getting first-rate sonics is a package that I think will keep you happy for quite a long time.

Having talked to Paul on the phone he has informed me that he is offering Digital as well as Phono interconnects not yet on his website so give him a call and get the details.

No wire is perfect and of course I am not saying that you can't find better, but you will probably do so at a cost many times greater than what Paul is charging. Having heard this package of Anti-Cables, had someone told me the total price was three or even four times what it was I would not have flinched a muscle. This is not entry-level wire, just entry-level price. Contact Paul and see for yourself. Perhaps like me you'll wonder, "How does this wire sound so good and yet sell for so little?"

Manufacturers Response: When Anthony described the Anti-Cable speaker wires sounding "as if someone had removed something that was in front of my speakers and now I could hear more clearly", and that "the sound was noticeably louder". I am reminded of years ago when I first put an Audio Alchemy de-jittering box between my CD transport and DAC; the exact same thing happened (clarity & a perceived increase in volume). The link between the Anti-Cables and Anti-Jitter hits the nail on the head.

Jitter distortion (in digital audio), and Dielectric Effect distortion (in cables) are both time based distortions. Both tend to smear the time domain of the music signal. When a transient music event gets time smeared, it loses amplitude energy, in exchange for lasting longer in time. Think back to your Calculus classes where the energy under two curves are equal, but one is taller and faster, and the other is not as tall, but lasts longer.

When the time smearing distortion is removed the music sounds clearer and dynamically louder. Anthony also noticed an increase in volume with the Anti-IC interconnects, and here again, this is a result of the "Anti's" near total elimination of dielectric material (minimizing dielectric effect distortion) benefiting the music.

The more complicated the music becomes; the less tolerant we are to listening to time smeared audio. Remove this distortion and there remains a purity of tone, and the ability to delineate all the musical nuances, keeping the music a meaningful experience even during large orchestra movements; rather than running to turn down the volume because the orchestra turned into a sonic monstrous train wreck. This is why Anthony found himself able to consistently turn up the volume to hear those "crystal clear vocals".