

FURUTECH

High Fidelity Flux Series Review

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TEST

Interconnect + loudspeaker cable + Power cable Furutech Flux Cable Series

Price: Powerflux (1,8 m): 8350 zł
Lineflux (1,2 m): 8600 zł
Speakerflux (2 x 3 m): 11 300 zł

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Furutech cables, which I am going to describe a little closer, are part of a very new, top series called Flux. Part of the series are:

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- interconnect Lineflux (XLR i RCA);
- loudspeaker cable Speakerflux;
- loudspeaker jumpers Jumperflux;
- turntable cables Silver Arrows;
- AC power cable Powerflux;
- Power filter Flux 50Filter.



Because the filter is an absolute novelty, we did not manage to get it for testing, this is why the system is composed of the interconnect (RCA), loudspeaker cable (2x3m) and power cable. In all cables, except the turntable cable, the same technologies were used:

- OCC α (Alpha) conductors;
- foamed Teflon dielectrics;
- special terminations.

The cables are from specially purified copper, made in a technological process designed in the Chiba Institute of Technology of Japan by Prof. Ohno, hence the name: "pure copper by Ohno, continuous casting". The conductors are stretched in special machines, and cast and cooled in controlled conditions. This results in a conductor, which is one, single crystal. Everywhere else, this copper has a patented name: PCOCC – Pure Crystal Ohno Continuous Casting. But Furutech treats its cables cryogenically, what means, that the cables are frozen to very low temperatures, and then thawed in controlled conditions, what is reflected in their name. And although "cryogenic copper" is mentioned in marketing materials from various companies, only Furutech makes in a really advanced way. Their patented process has three stages: in the first one, the conductors (because we are talking only about a metal treatment here) are cooled by liquid carbon dioxide (-70°C), then in liquid nitrogen (-196°C) and then in liquid helium (-253°C). Finally the metal elements are subjected to a demagnetization process – this manufacturer offers also a special device to demagnetize LPs, CDs, DVDs and cables. The terminations are also unique – all utilize a carbon fiber body, and pure copper, coated with silver and rhodium. Those are also treated cryogenically. Interesting enough, another Japanese specialist, Acrolink, is using similar plugs. Their construction and make are slightly different, but the ideas behind them, are very similar.

It is heard best in recordings, where there is a solid bass line, like with electronics from *Compass Assemblage 23*, but even in the simple recordings like *Quiet Kenny Kenny Dorham* or *Something Cool June Christy*, where the contrabass does not reach very low. I am thinking about a slight shift of the gravity center to the midrange and upper midrange. But everything was put together in such a way, that the sound is not too bright or too light. This "too" is important, because it modifies the previous statement, and defines it better. The medium bass has still the same natural velvetiness, this softness, that was shown earlier by the Powerflux. This sub-range is also really very vivid and well defined, but not as "colorful" as in the power cable. Treble sounds interesting here. Its upper part is slightly softened and withdrawn, what can be heard not only comparing the character of the power cable and interconnect of the Flux series, but also when comparing with my Acrolink Mexcel 7N-AD6300. Frankly speaking it reminds – but not fully – the character of the sound of the Wireworld Golden Eclipse 52, I am still using. And although the power cable from Furutech will prove itself almost everywhere, when thinking about the interconnect, we should make sure, that the system is not overly bright.



Speakerflux

The loudspeaker cable sent me back to the remarks I made with the power cable. This was a similar vivid, slightly delicate sound, with a wide tonal palette. Its absolute dynamics is slightly softened, and the first planes are a bit melted into the background, but only when compared to an equally well sounding competition. This loudspeaker cable had a much more difficult stand in my system, as it replaced the Tara Labs Zero Omega, a cable costing seven times as much. And although Tara's price is absurdly high, and its purchase can only be justified in special conditions, the price of the Furutech seemed laughably low. No, it is not as resolving as the Tara; no – it did not show the frequency spectrum extremes that well, nor was it as dynamic. But its price does not give any chance to other products of that class. Switching over from the Tara was visible, but not tragic. I'll say even more – in a large amount of systems, where there is need for some "softer" element, some velvety finish to the sound, there the Japanese cable can fare better. It will be the same thing in systems, which owners want to take the couch into possession and give a lazy listen to a new (or old, there is no difference) disc, without the need of analyzing it. To those people, Furutech may seem an illumination, because it is fantastically handcrafted and it costs – in the given context – not so much, and in addition it sound incredibly coherent.

Flux Cable System

To date we tested the following Furutech gear:

- power cable + power strip [FP-3TS20/e-TP80E](#)
- Product of the Year 2006 award [FP-3TS20/e-TP80E](#)
- interconnect + loudspeaker cable [AUDIO REFERENCE III-NI + SPEAKER REFERENCE III](#)
- digital cable [REFERENCE III SERIES AES/EBU](#)
- interconnect + loudspeaker cable + power cable [Evolution Series](#)

SOUND

Discs used for testing:

- Assemblage 23, *Compass*, Accession Records/Irond, 10-1674, CD.
- Diorama, *Cubed Deluxe Edition*, [Accession Records](#), A 114, 2 x CD.
- Ella Fitzgerald, *The Cole Porter Song Book*, Verve, 537 257-2, Verve Master Edition CD.
- J.S. Bach, *Goldberg Variations*, haps.: Matthew Halls, [Linn Records](#), CKD 356, HDCD.
- Julie London, *By Myself*, Liberty Records, MCR-1, LP.
- June Christy, *Something Cool*, Capitol Records/EMI Music Japan, TOCJ-90033, HQCD.
- Kathleen Battle, *Grace*, Sony Classical/Sony Music Japan, SICC-20023, Blu-spec CD.
- Kenny Dorham, *Quiet Kenny*, New Jazz/JVC, JVCXR-0049-2, XRCD.
- Wes Montgomery All-Stars, *A good git-together*, Lone Hill Jazz, LHJ10133, CD.
- William Orbit, *My Oracle Lives Uptown*, Guerilla Studios/[Linn Records](#), AKH 351, 2 x 180 g LP.

Japanese versions of the discs available on [CD Japan](#)

PowerFlux

The first cable from the Flux series I listened to, was the power cable Powerflux. Usually, when I deal with a complete set of cables, then I listen first to the interconnect, then to the loudspeaker cable and finally to the power cable. And after that cycle I listen to the whole set. But this is true for cables from the widely meant "hi-fi" and lower parts of hi-end. But higher on the list, my priorities change – the power cable becomes most important for me, then the interconnect and finally the loudspeaker cable. We can of course think, if the loudspeaker cable shouldn't be placed in the middle, but this would depend on a given set, and my starting point with expensive cables is just like I wrote it. Because I have my private theory, confirmed only by my experience, and nothing else, that this is the hierarchy of the cables in extreme hi-end. Maybe I would not be so sure, if I hadn't the experience with Acrolink cables. In 100% of the cases, they were responsible for the class of the sound of a system, and its character. And this was not only the final cut, an addition, but the base of everything. And only on that base we can build something more. Like I say, this is not something confirmed, only my observations, but those are the things I built my listening methodology around.

And even if would still be searching, and experimenting, trying to match that what I am hearing, with that, what I should hear, the Furutech system would be a good proof, that I am not mistaken (or at least, that I am not mistaken according to ME). From the very beginning, I switched my Acrolink PC9300 to the Powerflux, it could be heard, that it will dominate the sound. The elements differentiating those splendid cables were also shown nicely, the slightly different philosophy of the sound, that was a result of that. And although the Furutech cable costs about the half of the Acrolink, switching over to it was not a shock – and usually it is one, in case of the PC9100 and 9300 – yes, the Acrolink is better, but there is no cliff. I'll even say, that for the price difference the changes were surprisingly small, and were mostly due to a change of priorities, and only later due to a change in quality.



I remember well, how nice it was for me to listen to a set of cables from this company, which I tested in a complete system with electronics and loudspeakers. ([HERE](#)). Although relatively inexpensive, the EVO line was right on target, and transformed the sound of the system from good to splendid. There is something in the idea, to lead the signal as long as possible with conductors of the same kind, using the same cable geometry, to be able to talk about a cable system. One of the followers of this theory is Roy Gregory, the founder, and for years the Editor in Chief of "Hi-Fi Plus", who cabled all his system with [Nordost](#) cables. Also Janusz, the host of most Krakow Sonic Society meetings uses only one brand of cables, [Acrolink](#), having even a cable from this company put in his walls, to lead the power from the fuse to the power socket. He uses power cables and interconnect from that company, and the cabling inside the [Ancient Audio](#) gear he owns were exchange to Acrolink made ones. I made a similar choice. But in his, and my case, the loudspeaker cable is Tara Labs, and not Acrolink, because it turned out, that the American cable fared better. This only shows, that we are not slaves of the "one system – one brand" rule.

This is one of the exceptions, but the rule is just like I stated. Please listen to any of Furutech systems, to be able to see it for yourself. Like I mentioned, not all the Flux cables sound the same, and for me the best part of the system is the power cable, then the loudspeaker cable and finally comes the interconnect. Their sound in a complete system is a resultant of all the elements. This is a strong, full, authoritative sound, with strongly drawn bass, and velvety, slightly withdrawn treble. The midrange is incredibly vivid, although not as expressive, like in my system, but after switching over to that aesthetics, we will learn to admire its coherence, and that what I mentioned: velvety smoothness. Nothing will sting us, nothing will hurt us, there will be no brightening, no sharpness. Sometimes one would like to have better dynamics, but it seems, that we cannot have everything at once. I did not mention it before, but I wanted to wait for the whole set – the Japanese cables draw the sound stage brilliantly. Because the lower midrange is underlined slightly in the sound, also with the cymbals the reverb is heard better, than the sound itself. This results in a certain "distance" and breath. The sound will not be as palpable as in my system, but for the money – just plain brilliant. And with this the sound stage is big, deep and wide, well defined and vivid. This is really something. If anything would be improved, then in the direction I have in my set of cables, I mean that with lower presence of reverbs, due to better resolution, the sound stage is even bigger, and more natural, and the sound sources are more three-dimensional. But as I said – for the money the Furutech I more than OK.

DESCRIPTION

The full name of the power cable from the Flux series is as follows: Powerflux Power Cord Featuring FI-50 (R+MR). This is an important addition, as it points to the incredibly technologically advanced plugs, which were employed. This is a subsequent time, that I see a similar solution at Furutech and Acrolink. The body of the FI-50 plugs is made from woven carbon fiber sealed with co-polymer and finished with steel elements (from non-magnetic steel). Acrolink uses aluminum finish. The material for the plug itself is also special – it is an element made from piezoceramic material. It combines two "active" elements: ceramic, micron sized pellets, and carbon powder – both combined with nylon and glass fiber. The contacts are made from OCC α (Alpha) copper. A part of it is a mechanical solution, designed to improve contact, named Flux Damper Earth/Ground Jumper System. The conductors in the cable are of course also made from OCC α (Alpha) copper – we have three runs of 68 wires wound together. The shield is made from the same copper. The isolator is PE.



The Furutech, has a higher set tonal balance. The Acrolink sounds in an incredibly full and authoritarian way, having a lower drawn midrange. The Powerflux sounds slightly higher (not brighter, I am not talking about that), accenting somewhat the 1kHz range. This results in a fresh, open sound. The whole transmission is also slightly soft, nice - something very characteristic for this manufacturer. If I would present the sound of the Acrolink PC7100 (because this is the same price range) as a piston, then the Furutech would be a piston surrounded with steam. I apologize for this comparison, but this is how it sounds. When we deal with a mono recording, like the first set of recordings from the album *A good git-together* Wes Montgomery All Stars, or from *The Cole Porter Song Book* Ella Fitzgerald, then with the Furutechem the sound came through a wider "corridor" than with the Acrolink. The edges of the sound were slightly foggy. But in this case, I would opt for the Powerflux, and not the PC7100, because the sound had a better perspective, breath, something, that made the monophonic recording sound quite natural. And mono, is a very defective sound, in terms of physiology. The PC9300 makes it different, because due to the higher resolution it gives the precision of the PC7100 with the vividness of the PC9100. But like I said, at its price, the Furutech gives an unexpectedly, surprisingly, good sound. The treble is slightly stronger than in the PC9300, similar to that, what we get with the PC7100. It is not bright, not harsh, rather pastel, rather vivid, but there is more of it, than in the top Acrolink. So there is no accent on the hissing sounds, but rather the "t" and "p" are stronger. The Furutech has something extra - a strong, pulsating, "swinging" bass. It sounded very nice with electronics from *Assemblage 23*, or the mentioned Montgomery. This is also characteristic for this manufacturer. This is not booming, not extending it, but there is something down there, what makes all recordings fuller, having some like a counterweight for the upper midrange.

Lineflux

The interconnect sounds slightly different than the power cable - I mean, that to be logically correct, the changes brought by it to the signal are different, to the changes implemented by the power cable. The Lineflux sounds lighter. The bass is slightly softer, and not so authoritative.

The loudspeaker cable are equally flexible, as the power cable, what is a big asset. They are also made in a similar way to the power cable, at least when we talk about used materials - below the fabric we can see the purple cable. The interconnect is different. Anyway, the manufacturing quality of the cable is brilliant, I have not even the slightest remarks. Single cable is covered with a nice mesh, and the places where the plus and minus cables go out is covered with a nice shell from stainless steel. The conductors are made from OCC α (Alpha) - there are six runs of 43 twisted wires (each with a diameter of 0.18mm). The runs are wound with cotton. The dielectric is the same as in the power cable - it is a high quality PE. Interestingly, the cable is shielded - aluminum tape and copper braid were used for this purpose. Also interesting are the connectors - spades on one side, and bananas on the other. All metal elements were made from OCC α (Alpha) and were rhodium plated. The body of the plugs is made from carbon fiber - the banana plugs can be dilated by a screw.

The interconnect is also flexible, but different to the power cable, directionality is marked on it. Because this is OCC α (Alpha) copper, so it is cast and not drawn, so it has no initial direction, then this must be a result of the electrical construction of the cable. It seems, that the Lineflux has a semi-balanced construction. It is very nicely made, with metal elements on the mesh, and splendid plugs CF-102R (XLR - CF-601MR/CF-602FR) from OCC α (Alpha) covered with rhodium, and carbon fiber body. A very similar plug is used by Acrolink. The cables are also made from OCC α (Alpha) copper -solid-core, 1.3mm diameter each. From the company materials we can see, that we deal with two identical cables, one for the plus, one for the minus and the shield. And in reality there are two shields. The dielectric is high quality polyethylene. The cables have 13mm external diameter. Despite being solid core, they are quite flexible, like I mentioned in the beginning. And they look very nice.

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