

Audience Au24 powerChord

Alpha Dog

Neil Gader



In all honesty, the AC power cord survey I conducted in Issue 208 turned out to be a kind of mind-blowing experience. I expected differences among these cables but not to the extent that I observed. In that article I referenced a density factor—an enveloping mix of harmonic and dynamic saturation—that each cord conveyed to varying degrees. In my summary I stated that “they [all] tended to speak the same language but with different accents and inflections.” Shortly after completion of that piece, Audience offered me its premium Au24 powerChord for review. After my experience with these mid-priced cords, I was intrigued.

The Au24 powerChord is a low-resistance, low-impedance, unshielded design that uses 684 strands of high-purity Ohno mono-crystal copper that equates to 10 AWG for the entire cord. WattGate IEC/plugs are standard equipment, though other connectors are also available. The Au24 is very flexible, which means easy handling and potentially less damage to conductors.

In tonal color, there’s a lighter cast to the Audience’s balance that gives Shelby Lynne’s “Just A Little Lovin’” vocal firm image definition, and a little quicker attack on the steady high-hat transients on this track. The Audience—and this is subtle, mind you—hones in on instruments with a highly discerning focus that tends to resolve images and preserve micro-detail and micro-contrasts more clearly. The Audience shares much in common with my long-time references (my references during the survey as well), the Synergistic Research Tesla Hologram. For example, during Mark Cohn’s “Ghost Train,” both cords have a smooth open top-end and an effortless flow of energy in the midband. During the Holst Suite No. 2 with the Dallas Wind Symphony [Reference Recordings], the Audience in particular evoked a more forward signature and an immediacy that seemed to “push” wind instruments into the hall. Only in the bottom octave did the Synergistic distance itself from the Audience.

It was a shade denser, more extended, and harmonically more complex in the bass during Janis Ian’s “In The Winter” from the terrific LP reissue of *Between The Lines* [Boxstar/ABC].

Eugene Kissin’s solo piano on *Pictures at an Exhibition* [RCA] was most revealing of the subtle distinctions between the Au24 powerChord and my reference AC cord. It called to mind the contrasting sonorities of pianos manufactured by Böesendorfer, Bechstein, and Steinway—the weightier more somber notes from one, the more brilliantly illuminated voicings from another. Seen in that light the Audience portrayed rapid single note lines with slightly better articulation, crisply struck and succinct. The Synergistic seemed a bit slower, more throaty, and summoned a hint more harmonic bloom, as if the hammers had a bit more felt on them.

The Audience’s signature hinges on being a top-down inside player, capturing a breath more air off a baritone sax mouthpiece on *ReVisions* [Chesky], and a little more air when Joni Mitchell soars above the treble clef on *Blue* [Reprise]. In contrast, the reference cord’s largely bottom-up macro approach leans more to the seductive, spatial aspects of the performance. Interestingly in soundstage cues the Audience paints a more vivid soundstage in width and image spread, while the Synergistic demonstrates stronger front-to-back dimensionality. It’s like looking at the same canvas in an art museum from slightly different perspectives.

The Audience Au24 powerChord is a superb AC cord—an alpha cord in a virtual dead heat with another alpha cord. It was a performance that I could liken to the archery contest in *Robin Hood* where the Sheriff’s reigning champion strikes a bullseye followed by our hero who splits the presumptive winning arrow down the middle. Different approaches, yet on balance it really was that close. But, for this audience of one, it was a feat that sure struck a bold chord in me. **tas**

PRICING

AUDIENCE

120 N. Pacific Street #K-9
San Marcos, CA 92069
(760) 471-0202

audience-av.com

Price: \$2200 (6' pr., \$150 per foot additional)