

FURUTECH

HiFi World (UK) – ADL H118
September 2013



REVIEW



Ear Candy

Tony Bolton shuts out the noise of the world and gets immersed in the sound of the new ADL H118 headphones.

Alpha process is applied to all metal parts of the headphones and involves cryogenically freezing the components down to between -196 to -250C. After this they then go through a ring demagnetisation process.

I started listening to Dave Brubeck's LP 'Time Out', played on the Clearaudio Master Solution via the Agena phonostage and the headphones output of the Tucana II amplifier. I was impressed with the sense of space around the performers and the smoothness of the sound. This American second pressing is in excellent condition and I found that I had a feeling of near intimacy with the Quartet that listening through loudspeakers just cannot provide. Eugene Wright's bass seemed to be a substantial instrument, with good weight to the plucked strings resonating against the wooden body, yet at the same time Joe Morello's usage of the high hats seemed nicely balanced on top of the piano and saxophone sounds, being neither too muted nor overblown.

Furutech's ADL H118 headphones are tapered to fit around the ear and have an adjustable headband. They do not fold flat enough to go in a pocket, but fold in on themselves to fit into their case. The ear pieces are padded and finished in leatherette, the combination forming a fairly good noise seal around the ear, and proving quite comfortable over extended listening sessions.

The custom made diaphragms are actuated by 40mm high-flux neodymium magnets, and feature a ring between the voice coil and the diaphragms to keep ultra high frequencies in phase. The coils are made of copper coated special aluminium alloy wire.

The 3m long cable features a rhodium plated stereo Alpha mini XLR socket to connect the lead to the left earpiece, and a gold plated 6.3mm plug that unscrews to become a 3.5mm plug. The

I changed over to CD and put on Astral Projection's album 'Amen'. This is uptempo Goa Trance that has a substantial bass beat and the usual sonic mayhem of sounds swooping around the soundstage. I was pleased to find the bass retained a certain level of decorum, maintaining the beat, but not overpowering the mid and upper frequencies, although on a couple of tracks this was a close run thing.

The soundstage seemed quite wide, although not the biggest that I have heard through headphones; that honour going to a long defunct pair of AKG units that I owned several years ago.

After this I changed over to my Nakamichi Dragon and a Deutsche Grammophon release of the 'Eroica' on Chromium Dioxide tape. Over the years I have played this tape on this machine through every set of headphones that I have owned, and I can honestly say that this was the best that I have heard it through 'phones. I was particularly impressed with the ADL's ability to transmit the wide swings between quiet and loud that this music possesses. Small groupings of instruments were treated with the same degree of fidelity as the orchestra at full power, and at no time did I hear any signs of compression to the music.

ADL also market the iHP-35 upgrade cable for these and other makes of headphones. Priced at £75 for 1.3m or £100 for 3m. This lead seemed well worth the money, adding a sense of precision to the leading edges of sounds, and letting sustained notes decay away for longer, to a seemingly quieter conclusion than the standard cable allowed.

I found that the sonic balance of the ADL H118s, with the upgrade cable, seems just right to my ears. Heavy bass of modern electronica was unable to upset their equilibrium, and more conventional music was presented with care and diligence to the sonic balance. I was so impressed that I now own a pair, and can only recommend that you try a pair for yourselves.

ADL H118
HEADPHONES
£225.00



OUTSTANDING - amongst
the best

VERDICT

New headphone design from Japanese high end accessories manufacturer, that are both comfortable and sonically well balanced.

FOR

- well balanced sound
- comfortable
- good separation of instruments

AGAINST

- nothing at the price

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