



Atlas Cables Element Achromatic £86

The Scottish-based specialist's entry-level offering aims to be achromatic in every sense

► DETAILS

PRODUCT
Atlas Cables
Element Achromatic
ORIGIN
UK

TYPE
RCA analogue
interconnect

FEATURES
● Conductors:
OCC copper
● Dielectric: PEF
● Screening: coax
construction only
● Connectors:
achromatic RCA

DISTRIBUTOR
FutureShop

Sporting an elegant pearlescent white outer sheath, the Element Achromatic certainly looks quite fetching. The term 'achromatic' literally means without colour, which fittingly enough is also Atlas Cables' sonic design goal.

The Element Achromatic makes use of conductors with an increased OCC copper content when compared with the company's previous Element interconnect. The OCC (Ohno Continuous Casting) process was developed by Professor Ohno from the Chiba Institute of Technology to manufacture a very high-purity single grain copper or silver wire. The Element Achromatic also has a new physical design that is intended to stabilise the concentricity along the complete length of cable and reduce inter-strand distortion.

For the insulation, PEF (Polyethylene Foam) is used. This is a durable, lightweight, resilient, closed-cell material known for its excellent vibration dampening and insulation properties. There are two types of foaming process available for making PEF and Atlas uses the gas-foamed method. The company considers that this creates a more inert, consistent and higher quality product. The cable is terminated in Atlas' non-compression and constant impedance Achromatic RCA plug. It is connected to the wires

using a cold-welded, solder-free crimping process. The contacts are self-cleaning and employ a rifled pin profile designed to improve the alignment during manufacturing. The body material is low mass and non-conductive to eliminate any eddy currents in the plug.

The flexibility of the Element Achromatic cable makes it easy to fit around the back of equipment and it easily connects to my phono stage and preamp. The RCA plug is a good, snug fit onto my phono sockets.

Sound quality

With the Bach *Partita*, the stately opening chords of the first movement *Sinfonia* really grab my attention from the off. The harpsichord sounds like it was recorded in a large room and I am made very much aware of the atmosphere of the recording venue. This is something I really like as it adds to the realism of the recording and I get the sense that Pinnock is playing right in front of me. The detail and expression of individual chords is well reproduced and the imaging of the instrument is excellent. As with the Performance Audio 40i, the notes from the instrument are clear, precise and tuneful – all of which contribute to the elegant authority of the music.

Moving from JS Bach to Cole Porter, Clare Teal's vocals stand out clearly

with this cable. In particular, the interplay between the vocals and the brass instruments comes through really well and the micro-timings that define the swing element of the music are well maintained. The brass instruments shine through nicely without being at all harsh, demonstrating a great tonal balance. The excitement of Teal's vocals is brilliantly conveyed and her performance sparkles with energy.

Progressing onto the modern jazz of Yuko Mabuchi, the positioning in terms of both width and depth of the four performers is very clear in my room. All of the improvisations show off the individuality of each of the musicians and the pace and timing are well reproduced.

The detail and expression of individual chords is well reproduced

The full orchestral performance of *Romeo And Juliet* further exemplifies the spaciousness of the recording, while the music appears to fill every nook and cranny in my listening space, which is lovely. The opening trumpet blast is clear and flows nicely in the grand flurry from the orchestra. The dynamic range of the recording is also really good, with significant contrasts throughout the whole movement. This interconnect presents a nice and open sound with plenty of space around the instruments. I consider that this perfectly demonstrates just how much cables can significantly affect the quality of the reproduction of an environment, and in this regard it comes up trumps.

All in all, the Element Achromatic RCA interconnect represents excellent value for money and sounds really good across a wide range of different musical genres ●

Hi-Fi Choice

OUR VERDICT

SOUND QUALITY

★★★★★

VALUE FOR MONEY

★★★★★

BUILD QUALITY

★★★★★

FEATURES

★★★★★

OVERALL

★★★★★

LIKE: Full and open sound presentation
DISLIKE: Nothing at the price

WE SAY: A nice and flexible cable that's at home with a wide range of music