

HI-FI

## Hijiri HCS-25

**TEST** 2018-05-15 Arkadiusz Ogrodnik

**We are testing the new speaker cable, Hijiri HCS-25, characterized by a tight, dynamic and, at the same time, natural sound, offering total freedom and perfectly recreated space.**

Japanese Combak Corporation is surely known to many audiophiles around the world for their excellent Reimyo electronics, Encore columns and high-end Harmonix cables, which have been presented here many times. Quite recently, the producer has launched a new brand called Hijiri, which perplexed those who observe the audio market. But after all, Kazuo Kiuchi, the company founder, is an experienced player and he knows what he's doing.

Hijiri cables are supposed to be placed higher than Harmonix, constituting an exclusive "jewelry" for the most demanding audiophiles. And indeed this is the case, because Hijiri cables from Million series are the absolute best. Suffice it to say that Million power cord is considered by many reviewers the best power cable in the world. Unfortunately, the prices of these cables go hand in hand with their quality, so they can make your jaw drop. However, in the case of the newest "jewelry" from Hijiri, Kazuo Kiuchi has managed to surprise everyone even more. It turned out that the brand's latest products tested by me – HCS-25 speaker cables, and HCI-R10 analog interconnects (which will be reviewed in a month) – beat the new record, but this time not in the highest price but in the lowest! Yeah, I couldn't believe it either.

In Japan, special care is taken so that every gift is nicely wrapped. It is also visible on the example of Hijiri cables, especially the brand-new signal interconnects, HCI-R10, which I've received for testing. They come in an elegant box, which style is characteristic for the land of the cherry blossom. In this nice, flat box, there are cables wrapped in plastic and a sheet with most important data - specification and a short description of the new model's qualities.



As a whole, it is very appealing, and when holding the cables I got the feeling of touching something exclusive and special – at last the legendary cables that were unattainable to many music lovers and audiophiles, are now available at a price close to Harmonix models from a lower shelf. It is Kazuo Kiuchi's gesture towards the enthusiasts of top sound quality and the Japanese Hijiri brand.

The works on the HCS-25 speaker cable and HCI-R10 analog interconnect continued for almost three years. The producer doesn't reveal details about the construction of the cables, giving only some information about the wire material (PCOCC copper) and terminals (PCOCC copper, dual gold and rhodium plated). The cables are in a neat sleeve (probably nylon braid), and have medium rigidity – they didn't put up much "resistance" when I plugged them.

## **Naturalness and perfect proportions!**

Having some experience with cables from Harmonix (I also got pretty familiar with Hijiris), I approached them with cool and distance, because only with such an attitude I was able to objectively evaluate the musical qualities of HCS-25 model. By the way, it doesn't matter whether it is Harmonix or Hijiri (or any other brand), brand-new cables always require some time to achieve an optimal sound. The process usually takes several dozens of hours.

Therefore, once you plug new cables, it is a good idea to listen closely how the whole system sounds, so that you can compare how much it changed once the cables burn-in.

Many users will be surprised how after several or several dozens of hours, the system's sound will change with the new, burnt-in cables. Hijiri HCS-25 are of the kind that require good and long burning-in. After a week or two from plugging them in, the changes in sound will be clearly noticeable. At first, HCS-25 sounded rather modest, especially when it comes to timbre and musicality. Also I felt that the range of trebles was somewhat deficient, maybe not closed-in, but it lacked some brightness, compared to other products made by Combak Corporation. After about a week of everyday use, there is a radical change. I was really amazed by the effect of the burning-in on the cables, compared to how they sounded right after unboxing.

HCS-25 offer outstandingly smooth and balanced sound, which was not that surprising, because Hijiri cables are famous for perfect tonal balance, which is one of the most important factors deciding about naturalness and faithfulness of sound reproduction. The fact is that HCS-25 didn't present such incredibly smooth and slightly sweetened and warmed sound that I know from most products by Harmonix. But on the other hand, and to my surprise, its sound was characterized by greater precision and detailness of reproduction, which I could notice for instance when listening to pieces with a harpsichord or lute, or melodies rich in details, in particular when it comes to highs. HCS-25 reproduces the dynamics effortlessly, especially in macro scale – the attack is immediate!



I have to emphasize, however, that Hijiri doesn't color anything and doesn't boost the dynamic range, as is the case for example with the great speaker cables from Nordost. When it comes to HCS-25, sound naturalness is a priority, and perfect balance is kept at all times, which is a key factor deciding about faithfulness of music. Also in the low range the cable manifests perfection, which consists in "smoothing out" all the transferred signals – the bass

sounds exactly the way the enthusiasts of the most faithful and uncolored reproduction would want it to sound.

Similar can be said about midrange, characterized by natural sound, but at the same time having full extension, which was noticeable especially when listening to jazz or classical music. HCS-25 was exceptionally good with vocals, presenting human voices with emphasis put on realism, just like in the most expensive equipment. When it comes to presenting stereo, Hijiri maintained total freedom (the only restraint can be imposed by the columns or amplifier) when drawing the soundstage. All the proportions between individual instruments, as well as considerable amount of air, allowing even the subtlest sounds to be carried in space, were there.

## **Good to know**

In a leaflet attached to HCS-25 cables – apart from the description of qualities and construction details (as always, there is not much information in this area, which is typical of this Japanese producer) – there is an information printed in red to highlight its importance, saying that the cables require long burning-in to achieve their full potential. As a result, you shouldn't expect any spectacular improvement of sound right after plugging new cables into the system. On the other hand, the change that occurs after a few days of burning-in (playing for a few hours a day), proves the hypothesis that the cables need some time to achieve their best acoustic qualities, which is common for these Japanese products.

## **Summary**

Testing audio cables is always somewhat problematic, because unlike electronic devices or columns, you cannot take them apart, look inside and name what components have been used to make them. It is a challenge for a reviewer. In the case of typical equipment you simply check which solutions and hardware a given manufacturer used, and based on this, you can guess what to expect. But when it comes to cables, usually everything is kept secret, so we can rely only on external examination and then on our ears. That's why in the case of cables, the prestige of a brand, measured with good products launched over the years, is so important.



No doubt, the name of Harmonix and Hijiri owner – Kazuo Kiuchi – constitutes a brand on its own, which earned respect and trust. It seems that trust plays the most important role here, because who would spend a so much money on a cable if they wouldn't believe the product to be of the highest quality? In the case of Harmonix and Hijiri, no one should have any doubts, because the legendary quality and acoustic excellence, confirmed by praises of audio reviewers all over the world, speak for themselves.

Hijiri HCS-25 is an exceptional product, especially in this price range, designed for the most demanding users, who cannot afford the ridiculously expensive, high-end cables from Hijiri. So for a relatively fair price (compared to other Hijiri cables), you can have a very good quality cable. By the way, due to the sophisticated and, most of all, natural sound of Hijiri HCS-25, I'm seriously considering buying these cables to use them as reference for similar products in this price range.

## Verdict: Hijiri HCS-25

- **Sound quality**

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

- **Quality / Price**

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

- **Look**

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

- **Performance**

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**Pluses:** Tight, rhythmical, dynamic, but at the same time natural, with unlimited freedom and perfect soundstage presentation

**Minuses:** The product is so sophisticated, that it will be appreciated only by those, for whom naturalness of sound has the highest priority in the search for acoustic perfection

**In general:** It will work best in refined and uncompromising systems – there are no limits

### Overall evaluation:

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

#### PRODUCT

Hijiri HCS-25

#### TYPE

Speaker cable

#### PRICE

PLN 7 190 (2x2 m)

PLN 8 590 (2x2,5 m)

PLN 9 990 (2x3 m)

#### DISTRIBUTION

Moje Audio

[www.mojeaudio.pl](http://www.mojeaudio.pl)

#### KEY FEATURES

- Directional construction
- Terminals made of high quality PCOCC copper, double plated with gold and rhodium
- Conductors based on PCOCC copper
- Hand crafted