



Nordost

Heimdall 2 headphone cable

WHILE SPEAKER CABLE

upgrades are fairly common, the humble headphone wire is often overlooked. Nordost's Heimdall 2 is such an upgrade and here I have the version suitable for my Sennheiser HD 800 S headphone (*HFC 439*) to compare it with the cable that comes as standard.

The Heimdall 2 is made from four 32 AWG 7/40 OFC conductors that have been individually insulated and twisted using a Litz construction designed to increase the pliability and improve the mechanical dampening. As headphone cables also need to be very durable, Nordost has included an Aramid fibre inside to take the strain away from the conductors. The Heimdall 2 employs Nordost's proprietary Micro Mono-Filament technology with a dielectric of extruded FEP insulation around the conductors. The wires are mechanically tuned lengths that are designed to reduce internal microphony and high-frequency impedance resonance.

Terminator too

The Heimdall 2 is available with a variety of terminations to support most of the major players in the headphone market. Each 2m cable is terminated with a 4-pin balanced XLR male connector on the source end and comes with 3.5mm and 6.35mm adapters included.

After replacing the Sennheiser cable with the Heimdall 2, my first impressions are favourable. The cable is light, surprisingly flexible and there's no microphony noise when I move my head. Playing a direct-cut LP of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Capriccio Espagnol* played by the National Symphony Orchestra, the powerful finale really takes on a significantly greater impact. I can hear more instruments playing and the sheer reality of the performance is spectacular; the imaging is noticeably improved and each individual player is more clearly



identified. What is particularly interesting is that when I revert back to the Sennheiser cable, the sound from each instrument seems to be more blurred and overlaps into the sound from adjacent instruments. The music comes more alive with greater excitement when I switch back to the Heimdall 2. In particular, the bass drum at the back of the orchestra is tighter and punchier.

Branford Marsalis playing Satie's *Gymnopédie No.3* is mournful and hugely emotional. Of particular note is the improvement in air and space around the saxophone.

The vocal performance of Thelma Houston's *Got To Get You Into My Life* is forceful without being at all 'shouty'. The instrumental backing is rhythmic with a bass line that is super tight, yet full and punchy. The emotion and excitement in her voice are splendidly conveyed.

Next I turn to a performance by Italian chamber orchestra I Musici. The solo oboe playing by Heinz Holliger in the first movement of Vivaldi's *Concerto No.7* is lively and

exciting. Again, it's the extra realism and clarity that hits me. Instruments are more clearly defined within the soundstage and my enjoyment of the performance is greatly heightened.

GoGo Penguin's *Smarra* has plenty of clout and punch, as well as a really deep bass line, which is really extended and beautifully controlled with the Heimdall 2 installed.

All that jazz

I finish off with some fast-paced jazz featuring Pierre Gossez playing Jacques Loussier's *Caravelle*. This includes saxophone, harpsichord and piano with drum accompaniment. I am positively propelled along by the energy of the performance. All the instruments are crystal clear and well defined. The bass performance is good and full, and the extreme top end is absolutely sparkling, especially when the hi-hats start up.

Already a great headphone, fitted with Nordost's Heimdall 2 the HD 800 S really does raise its levels of clarity and realism for even greater involvement with the music. **NR**

DETAILS

PRICE

£650 for 2m cable

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WEBSITE

www.nordost.com

OUR VERDICT

