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HI-FI CHOICE

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**ULTIMATE GROUP TEST >>>
SPEAKERS**

FEATURING

- > AE Aegis Neo 3
- > Focal Chorus 705V
- > Monitor Audio BR2
- > Mordaunt-Short 904i
- > Q Acoustics 1030
- > Tannoy Mercury F4

BUYER'S BIBLE
The world's best hi-fi rated

Crystal Cable Connect Piccolo

TYPE Analogue interconnect cable

PRICE £260 (1m pair)

CONTACT 020 8971 3909
www.crystalcable.com

Crystal Cable, based in the Netherlands, is the brand famously developed by the ex-concert pianist Gabi van der Kleij, whose husband operates another prominent high-end cable brand, Siltech – although the two brands operate entirely autonomously, by the way. The range of Crystal cables is growing exponentially, but this unusual interconnect design is perhaps the most obvious exemplar of the cable company's craft.

Piccolo's elegant appearance may give some cause for concern. The gold/silver alloy conductor is just 0.3mm in diameter, rising to 1.3mm in overall diameter including insulation, and the cable barely looks thick or strong enough to sustain manhandling. The solid, stable terminations also appear vulnerable, too. But this is more perception than reality. The strain relief built into the design is more up to the job than you might suppose. With extensive use in many systems over a period of some months, which is enough to cause many cables to fall to bits, the Piccolo has never

given us the slightest cause for concern.

Indeed, we were initially predisposed in its favour as it is reminiscent of some seminal experiences with the original DNM Solid Core. It doesn't

really sound like DNM, but it does have some of the same positive qualities.

For a start, there's no lack or

excess of bass. Where it moves out of

DNM territory is in focus and articulation,

which you get in spade-loads. The instrumental

timbre is lean, but fully formed, with a

diamond like precision. Tactile textures, such as

the finger noise on acoustic guitar fretboard or

strings, or the genuinely dynamic sound from

piano, at both *ppp* (very soft) and *fff* (very

EDITOR'S CHOICE

HI-FI CHOICE
magazine



loud) ends of the scale, are beautifully rendered. Most movingly of all, however, is the purity of a well-recorded human voice through Piccolo.

It's rare to find a cable that packs a real punch, class-leading resolution and some very real musical expressiveness without the physical intrusiveness of alternative solutions. Which is why Piccolo is something special. **HFC**

Alvin Gold

VERDICT

CONCLUSION

Thin cables often offer improved handling and higher resolution, as this one ably shows. A modern classic.

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>> 92%