

Hybrid hook-ups

Getting entwined in a revered van den Hul classic connect — now sporting new attire — is budding media marquis ANDREW WONG

van den Hul M.C. D 102 Mk III Hybrid interconnects

THOSE who know a little more about audiophile-quality cables will certainly be familiar with the name van den Hul. After all, it was Professor A.J. van den Hul who turned the audio world upside down with his cutting-edge carbon cables a few years ago.

Having been an influential contributor to the engineering and research of audio cables, the professor has proven himself with many designs that have withstood the test of time. Here, on evaluation, is one of his mid-price offerings bearing a hint of his carbon cable technology — the M.C. D 102 Mk III hybrid.

Its physical design retains the vdH hallmark styling, with a rubbery, yellow-orange outer jacket terminated with high quality gold-plated RCA connectors

bearing the vdH marque. I wasn't able to have a peek at its cross-section as the cable is proprietarily terminated — I hate to disappoint technophiles out there but as the evergreen hi-fi adage goes, "it's the sound that matters!"

Having used a pair for more than six months in various systems which included mid-priced sources and amplifications to high-end components, I found the 102s to be neutral without emphasis on any specific spectrum of the audio bandwidth. It provided a fairly honest view of your source components — in comparison with the legendary Monster M1000 Mk3 interconnects, which sets a solid bass foundation to your music, the 102 prefers to carefully balance both frequency extremes.

In terms of character, it had more "body" than my reference Kimber PBJ interconnects and proved to be friendly with valve components. Used between pre and power amplifiers, it retained a sense of air and detail with much confidence while stereo imaging was very well handled. I know Shah doesn't have many happy memories of vdH's The First interconnect, which is a full carbon cable, but I think the 102s might be a little more palatable for him.

At RM430 per metre pair, I recommend it whole-heartedly to audiophiles out there who long for a pretty impressive and neutral cable ... but at a price that won't make your wife freak out!



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