

Ansuz Acoustics D2 range of components

by Alan Sircom



“Plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose.” On the face of it, Ansuz D2 remains the same high-performance cable we tried in Issue 152, but it’s more about how things have changed and how all the elements begin to tie together is the point of this review. The use of D2 and the ancillary parts all under the Ansuz banner is the second of three reviews in a cycle; the first being the Børresen loudspeaker design and rounding things off with the full Aavik electronics package. But each part of that chain works independently, and perhaps the one that weaves its magic first is Ansuz. It’s more than conceivable that someone might start with a few Ansuz products in an entirely different system, and enjoy the experience so much that the system ends up a complete Aavik, Ansuz, Børresen system. Such is the impact of the Ansuz family of products.

Last time we tried D2 as a complete family, from mains lead through line-level interconnect and digital cables right through to speaker cables. We hinted at the Mainz8 D2 power distributor in that review and this is now brought up to speed with the latest versions of all these D2 products, plus a PowerBox D2 and the Power Switch D2 network switch. There is further to fall down the Ansuz rabbit-hole with the whole Darkz resonator controls, and the new ‘Rezonator’ platforms, but there are only so many products you can include in one review!

Actually, the reason we can do so many products in one review is there is a commonality to design that makes so much sense in context. The D2 cables are all designed using the same ideas and technologies throughout; it’s not as simple as “the same cable throughout, just changing connectors to define the use”, but neither does the D2 apple fall far from the tree. Similarly, in the electronic components, there are so many common concepts, what applies to one device applies just as readily to another. This also goes some way to explaining the ‘all roads lead to Rome’ concept running through both Ansuz and the electronics and loudspeakers. Commonality of design need not mean lazy design and it isn’t just a way of saving money by using identical modules throughout. It isn’t even a visual tying together of a range (although, in fairness, that is a bonus for some). Instead, ►

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► in the really good equipment, commonality of design criteria leads to commonality of performance. That sounds a bit Maoist, and should probably include something about the joys of tractor production, but you get the general drift; if all your ducks are in a row, things work better.

However, Ansuz takes a similar approach to companies like Kubala-Sosna and Tellurium Q, playing down the design and materials of the device, and asks the prospective buyer to focus on the performance in terms of sound and sound alone. OK, so there are aspects of the package that get called out for being notable, such as DGC (Direct Ground Connector Technology), DIHC (Double Inverted Helix Coil technology) and NSC (Noise Suppressing Coil technology), but these are not given much of an explanation beyond the name itself. When it comes to Dielectricum or the active Tesla Coil technology, all bets are off.

This, however, does give you a pretty basic understanding of what goes under the Ansuz logos, and it's all about the combination of mechanical grounding and noise suppression. The further up the Ansuz line you go, the less quarter the equipment and cables give to these important deleters of sound quality. So, for example, it doesn't really matter how the Tesla Coil technology acts on the power wires, for example; all you need to know is they work to cancel out mains spike noise. So, that arguably relies on a degree of trust (whatever it is does what it is supposed to) but once again the proof is in the listening, and by not paraphrasing too many lines of Star Trek technobabble, Ansuz places the proof on the listening, which takes a 'slightly' different line to many cable brands. The metallurgy, dielectric, and most other technical specifications normally used to describe a cable are considered unimportant. Instead, the performance is defined by direct listener observation, rather than simply parroting the technobabble. It's a laudable approach.... except when you are trying to fill the page!

It also means step changes to cables like D2 are audible but not that easy to discuss in terms of 'what's changed'. It's interesting that I have been using D2 cables and the Mainz8 and PowerBox for some time now, and the new ones are an order of magnitude better. I couldn't tell you why they are better in terms of changes to the technology, but they are better.

The way these work is there are little flying leads coming out of the grounding box on the cables. These connect to the Power Box, and the ►

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- PowerBox itself takes up one additional plug on the Mainz8, and it also works as a star earth. Add in the PowerSwitch D2 to act as the disconnect between all the noise of a network and your local audio system, and you have an extremely cogent system that works well. From here, there are still a lot more things to work with, such as Darkz isolation feet and Sparkz harmonisers, but I'd argue we are already approaching Apex Ansuz.

The worry in any elaborate cable/power/network system is 'overreach'. You want a good cable system to reduce the load on your equipment, allowing the bits of hardware – on which you allocated a lot of time, listening resources and money – to do what you expected, without being influenced, transformed or in any other way jostled by the bits surrounding those components. Too often a cable system adds its own imprint on the performance and while this can often be very good and draw together an inconsistent performance, it's often best if the good stuff lets the other good stuff do its good thing! That's what the Ansuz system is there for; it just lets your system do what it was always meant to do. And in so doing, it makes you realise just how few cable systems, mains and resonance control systems and network systems deliver the same properties so consistently and without imprinteur. That being said, the Ansuz system does rely on a systemic approach; simply slotting one cable into the system will give you some benefit and a taste of what the Ansuz sound has to offer, but realistically it's an all-or-nothing commitment.

If you do jump into the Ansuz pool, what you first hear is just how much bass is being held back by many systems. Power conditioners in particular sound a little more in the way compared to the Ansuz equipment. Sometimes that's a good thing, if your power isn't that clean to begin with. But if you are fortunate to use a power conditioner solely for audio enhancement and not enhancement and power cleaning, the Mainz8 shows just how much impact good mains has on the sound, getting under the music's skin to produce a sound of great richness, clarity and depth, as well as a soundstage unattenuated by the system (in other words, what the recording engineer intended throughout).

PRICE AND CONTACT DETAILS

Mainz D2 power cable: £8,800/1m

Signalz RCA or XLR interconnect:

£12,000/1m pair

Digitalz D2 BNC-BNC digital

interconnect: £7,200/1m

Digitalz D2 Network digital interconnect:

£2,160/1m

Speakz loudspeaker cable:

£13,600/2m pair

Mainz8 D2 power conditioner: £8,000

PowerBox D2 active star earthing: £4,000

PowerSwitch D2 network switch: £5,360

Manufacturer: Ansuz Acoustics

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Interestingly, the degree of control you get over the sound when rigged from front to back with Ansuz D2 grade cables and components might make you re-evaluate your system. You might bring the speakers forward, to compensate for the extra bass you are getting. You might also find what you thought was an effortlessly dynamic system was actually over-exuberance on the part of the prior cables. In this latter case, you'll find the extra grip over the sound that Ansuz brings beguiling, and that may ultimately result in system changes to bring the sound more in line with just how good D2 is. Which leads us back to the beginning and where Aavik and Børresen come into the mix.

Ansuz D2 is not the kind of system you can dip your toe into; it's for orgies or total abstinence... if you try it, try it as a complete system, and if you do, you may never go back. Ansuz's D2 as a package is one of the most cogent system upgrades money can buy at this time. +